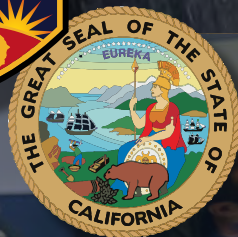




■ BLUEPRINT 2030 STRATEGIC PLAN



2025



■ OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL
STATE FIRE TRAINING

BLUEPRINT 2030 STRATEGIC PLAN

State Fire Training coordinated the development of this report. Before its publication, the Statewide Training and Education Advisory Committee (STEAC) and the State Board of Fire Services (SBFS) recommended this report for approval by the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM).



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DEDICATION

The Blueprint 2030 Strategic Plan is dedicated to the memory and legacy of Chief Ronny Coleman: former State Fire Marshal, State Training and Education Advisory Committee (STEAC) Chair, and Blueprint 2030 Focus Group 1 presenter. Many of the elements of this Strategic Plan are based on the foundation and guidance of Chief Coleman's experience and expertise; we are profoundly grateful for his wise presence in this process.



STATE FIRE TRAINING (SFT) MISSION, VALUES, AND VISION

SFT MISSION

The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) is the CAL FIRE program that protects life and property through the development and application of fire prevention, engineering, training and education, and enforcement.

SFT VALUES

- SFT values the diversity, innovation, creativity, and the resourcefulness of our team.
- SFT staff cares about and respects our relationship with our stakeholders.

SFT VISION

To be a nationwide leader in fire service training, education, and certification.

CAL FIRE - OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL MISSION

The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) is the CAL FIRE program that protects life and property through the development and application of fire prevention, engineering, training and education, and enforcement.

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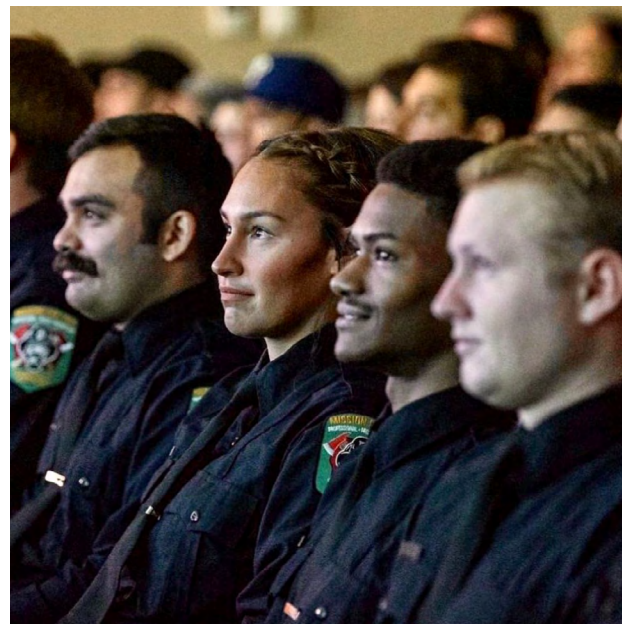
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STATE FIRE TRAINING OVERVIEW

The State Fire Training (SFT) Division within CAL FIRE's Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) plays a vital role in advancing professionalism across the California Fire Service. SFT manages the California Fire Service Training and Education Program, which includes two key components:

- **CFSTES (California Fire Service Training and Education System):** Built on National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards, this program defines job performance requirements and supports professional certification tracks.
- **FSTEP (Fire Service Training and Education Program):** Focused on supplemental training and continuing education, including courses from the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) and other industry standards.

In 1978, the California Department of Education transferred responsibility of California Fire Service Training and Education Program to the OSFM. When the program transferred to OSFM, the legislative intent for establishing the California Fire and Arson Training fund (CFAT) was to provide a self-supporting training infrastructure for California's fire service. Due to this, SFT is a self-funded program, paid for by participant's fees.

In 1995, OSFM was merged into CALFIRE, with SFT as one of six divisions and still funded through user fees from participating California fire service agencies and individuals. The SFT Program is a collaborative effort of the California Fire Service that works together to design and deliver courses that provide fire service personnel at all levels with the knowledge and skills to do their jobs professionally and safely.

Through the efforts of organizations such as the California Fire Chiefs Association, California Professional Firefighters, California Fire Technology Directors Association, and fire departments, courses are delivered to

approximately 26,466 unique students per year. SFT courses are delivered throughout the state at approximately 71 accredited community colleges and local fire agencies and other training providers. Many SFT courses lead to professional certifications. In fiscal year 2022, SFT issued 55,677 course completion diplomas (CFSTES/FSTEP) and conducted over one million hours of student contact hours.

In March of 2019, a comprehensive gap analysis was performed to measure progress and challenges as Blueprint 2020 was nearing the end of its term. While SFT has accomplished some of these goals, others face completion challenges.

1. The 2008 strategic plan was released six months prior to a climate of fiscal contraction and was affected by the political and financial environment following the economic downturn.
2. The subsequent funding and staffing limitations curtailed, but did not fully hamper, an otherwise ambitious 12-year vision for the transformation of SFT.



26K+

Unique students
enrolled per year

71

Accredited training
providers

55K+

Diplomas issued
in 2022

1MIL+

Student contact hours
in 2022

3. Despite the lack of resources, the SFT staff has worked hard to accomplish many action items, including:

- User portal update
- Curriculum and certification updates that align with NFPA standards
- Pro Board/International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) Accreditation

The conclusory words of Blueprint 2020 still hold true today: *"This plan is dependent on one very critical factor—funding! Without a stable and reliable funding source, increases in staff, advances in technology, and participation in the national training models simply will not happen."*

The California Fire Service is in a better position to embrace continued progress toward the

National Professional Development Model and is more effectively served by the limited SFT staff since the initiation of Blueprint 2020. What was extraordinary is that so much progress has been made to update systems and migrate towards the national model despite the SFT fiscal and resource limitations.

In January of 2022, Blueprint 2030 was initiated at the State Training Education Advisory Committee (STEAC). STEAC members concurred with staff that with the expiration of Blueprint 2020, a new forward-looking strategic document was needed to guide SFT efforts into the near future.

BLUEPRINT 2030 PROCESS

The Blueprint 2030 process was developed to provide a high degree of engagement with staff and stakeholders on two separate, simultaneous tracks. While SFT staff was involved in an internal assessment process, focus groups of stakeholders were developing over-arching draft goals for consideration. These two separate processes were then merged into this final product.

Another important component is the phasing of goals to align with fiscal realities. After the goals were developed, implementation strategies that require additional funding, staff, or resources were set aside as *Phase 2 priorities* to be completed if/when commensurate funding is appropriated.

Additionally, Blueprint 2030 action steps are included in an Implementation Action Plan, which becomes the living document that SFT can use to affirm strategies that are based on both validity and priority as well as to gauge progress. It is recommended that updates to STEAC on Blueprint 2030 progress be reported out on a semi-annual basis at a minimum.

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

In May 2022, SFT staff began conducting a facilitated internal assessment focused on reviewing, validating, and confirming organizational values, the mission statement, and the vision statement. SFT members also completed a staffing and workload analysis and organizational development questionnaires aimed to solicit input from staff on work processes improvements and organizational effectiveness. The results from the internal assessment were then analyzed, categorized, and consolidated into several major findings, including revised foundational mission, values, and vision statements.

Findings:

1. SFT staff has a value-based organizational work culture centered on teamwork, collaboration, and integrity.
2. SFT staff builds positive relationships by being responsive, consistent, and dependable as engaged stewards of the SFT system.
3. SFT staff is committed to integrating process improvements as an inherent aspect of daily operations to best serve the needs of the California fire service.
4. SFT staff is focused on providing organizational effectiveness that aligns with fiscal and staffing levels, leads to organizational clarity, and focused priorities to provide viability and value for stakeholders.

FOCUS GROUPS

While SFT staff was engaged with the internal assessment, two stakeholder focus groups were convened to gather input and provide direction for Blueprint 2030. The intent was to reach outside of the usual SFT cadre participants and engage a new set of stakeholders so that fresh and unique perspectives could be elicited; diverse members of the California fire service and including those who were early enough in their careers to be primary users of the SFT system during the timespan of Blueprint 2030.

Focus Group 1 was focused on envisioning the future of SFT and creating goals. Participants



“

The intent [of the focus groups] was to hear fresh perspectives from the users of our system and from early and mid-career stakeholders, who will be active users and stakeholders of the SFT system during the span of Blueprint 2030.

were gathered from throughout the state and represented a broad spectrum of our stakeholder community. In addition, SFT sought to hear from some non-traditional voices that were not regular cadre members or otherwise involved in SFT. In a few cases, this was the first SFT function they had ever attended. The intent was to hear fresh perspectives from the users of our system and from early and mid-career stakeholders, who will be active users and stakeholders of the SFT system during the span of Blueprint 2030.

Chief Ronny Coleman, California State Fire Marshal (ret.) was present to set the historical context from his master's dissertation and his vast experience as a former training officer, fire chief, and State Fire Marshal (notes from this session are contained in Appendix B).

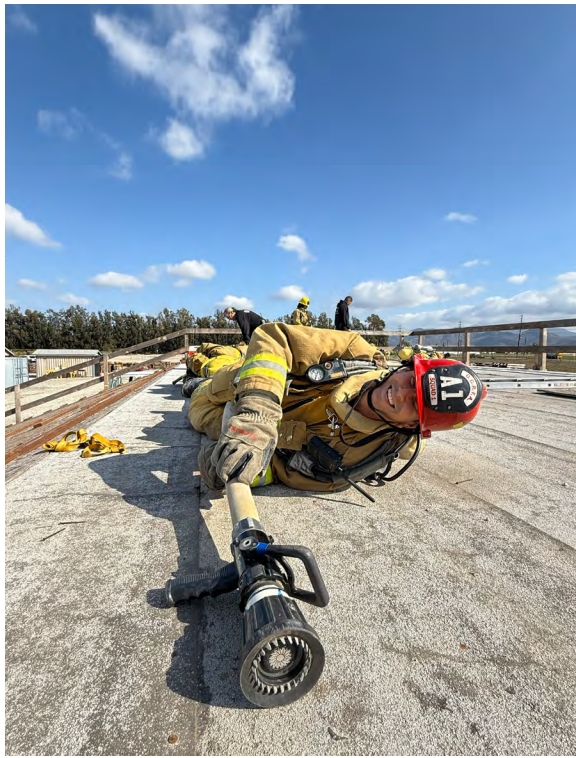
The primary task for Focus Group 2 was vetting and validation of Focus Group 1's proposed goals and priorities. While there was some overlap with four of Focus Group 1's participants to provide clarity and consistency, there were also eight new stakeholders in the room hearing these goals for the first time to set some fresh eyes on what the first group had come up with

and potentially to offer divergent perspectives. Respectful conflict and alternate points of view were encouraged to arrive at the best and strongest possible outcomes.

This included discussions about confirming or redirecting priorities, and in most - but not all - cases outlining prospective timelines. A key factor not covered in Focus Group 1 until after the goals had been set was the two-track fiscal stages. (This was not emphasized with Group 1 because SFT staff did not want to temper or throttle the creation of expansive goals.) Now that the goals were more solidified, however, the fiscal status was day lighted. This arose out of the Gap Analysis of Blueprint 2020, where SFT staff felt pressure to accomplish goals and priorities where there simply weren't the resources to effectively accomplish them.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND REVIEW

After the internal assessment and focus groups concluded their important work, staff took the inputs and merged the two parallel tracks into one document. This was accomplished by taking the internal assessment feedback and categorizing the process improvement and



organizational effectiveness items to align with the goals that the focus groups created. In some cases, wording choices were amended, and some items were shifted into other categories to create an alignment so that clarity and a smooth flow was achieved. But in all cases, close attention, and adherence to the *intent* of the input was maintained.

One major theme was observed from the merging of the internal and external input: external users of the SFT program desire and expect a centralized, highly coordinated, and high-quality system. What is not so easily recognized is that the current system is only marginally funded, and so the SFT system is very de-centralized, diverse and depends on independent private providers to deliver SFT courses. This gap between stakeholder expectations and the actuality of very limited resources results in a tension where the limited staff of SFT stretches to perform at a higher level than the funding and resources provide, leading to ongoing issues of prioritization challenges among staff.

To address this dynamic, a Blueprint 2030

Working Draft was presented to STEAC as a workshop to address these issues. Specifically, the gap between user's expectations and the reality of limited funding and resources. STEAC members were asked to 1) Review the goals and objectives for clarity and specificity, 2) Identify elements that are in alignment with our current, decentralized, and limited SFT system, and 3) Describe those features that pointed towards a possible future centralized system if and when more resources became available. In addition, this gap has been addressed through a two-track fiscal formula outlined below.

TWO-TRACK FISCAL PLANNING

If the California Fire Service as a collective whole desire a centralized system with SFT staff instructors, the latest technology, and support systems, etc., they would need to change the funding mechanism from user fees to ongoing, sustainable funding through the legislative process. At the point where the resources provided match the expectation level of stakeholders, a more centralized, robust system could be implemented.

To this end, we did not want the current fiscal dynamics to hinder the creative process of the focus groups, so fiscal considerations did not lead at the forefront. However, a close and pragmatic assessment of what is practical with current funding and resources was needed to temper expectations and align it with reality. Items that are not now currently achievable due to resource restrictions should still be noted and memorialized, and if funding becomes available, should be considered for implementation based on levels of funding and priorities. These items are listed as “Phase II” are dependent on additional resources to achieve.

PROCESS SUMMARY

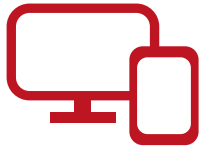
We are deeply appreciative of our staff for all their feedback, effort, and engagement in the internal assessment process. And we are equally grateful for the participants in the focus groups and for their valued input towards a clear future for SFT. We are also indebted to the Sacramento State staff, especially the deft leadership of Dr. Hunt’s facilitation skills and in Ms. Moore’s exceptional note-taking skills.

This document is the result of a three-year process to examine the elements of SFT past practices, the integration of internal and external stakeholder feedback, input, and the creation and development of a stakeholder-based vision for the future of SFT and the California fire and emergency services training system.



BLUEPRINT 2030 GOALS & STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

There are five Blueprint 2030 Goals, each with its own strategic objective statement. The strategic objectives are further subdivided into tactical implementation steps, and those are then broken down into individual tasks. Lastly, Phase II items are listed.



GOAL #1: EXPAND TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION AND ADVANCEMENT

SFT should build upon existing emerging technology to provide a secure multifaceted platform that is easily accessible and designed to support students, instructors, agencies and SFT staff.

1.1 Automate routine processes and maximize capabilities of the Records Management System (RMS) so technology works at full capacity.

1.1.1 Build a "one stop shop" that includes:

- Access to records and information
- Online course registration and payment
- Online certification application and payment
- Use of e-surveys and online reporting systems
- Leveraging digital outreach applications

PHASE II

1.1.2 Expand electronic learning capabilities through a Learning Management System:

- Provide online instructor and course updates
- Streamline/align online course resources for instructors and students
- Imbed live links into course plans



GOAL #2: MODERNIZE COURSE DELIVERY

SFT should design, update, and support the delivery of courses that engage diverse learners through expanded delivery models.

2.1 Keep curriculum current.

2.1.1 Update NFPA-based curriculum within two years of national updates

2.1.2 Update all non-NFPA courses within seven years

2.2 Build capacity to address emerging trends and challenges.

2.2.1 Develop capability to project, forecast, and monitor so that SFT is strategically positioned for change

2.3 Build relationships and accountability with instructors.

2.3.1 Empower and incentivize users and instructors to align with SFT Code of Ethics:

- Imbed ethical training and practice with each professional certification level and track
- Audit 5-10% of courses annually by priority
 - o Instructors of concern
 - o Live fire and rescue courses
 - o First deliveries/pilot courses

2.4 Explore proven aspects of the learning environment.

2.4.1 Embrace and expand remote/hybrid course delivery.

2.4.2 Explore annual continuing education (CE) requirements

2.5 Expand national participation and involvement.

2.5.1 Explore what other states are doing and develop interstate relationships

2.5.2 Expand for IFSAC/PROBOARD accreditation to professional certification tracks

2.5.3 Increase participation and input on fire service textbook development

2.5.4 Increase participation with NFPA and National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) standards and curriculum





GOAL #3: DEVELOP CAREER PATHWAYS

SFT should support clear pathways for individuals to obtain training and education in support of their career goals.

3.1 Support professional development training and education programs that:

3.1.1 Align and integrate certification tracks with degree pathways from dual-credit high school programs through doctoral degrees

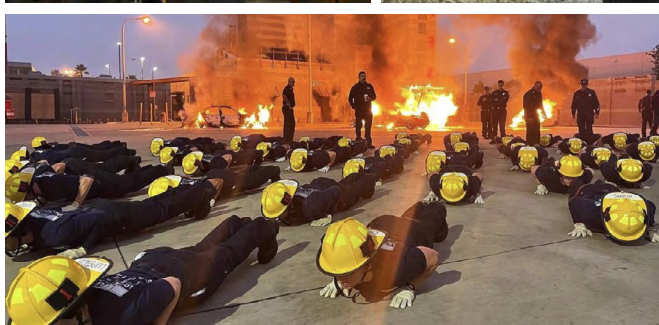
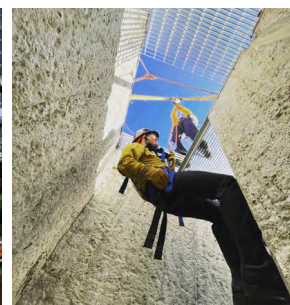
- Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education (FESHE) degree expansion that includes identified state-specific coursework
- Advise educational institutions on integration of SFT tracks into educational curriculum

3.1.2 Strengthen SFT professional certification process for hiring and promotion

3.1.3 Incorporate best practice, quality leadership training programs

3.1.4 Encompass the entire fire service community of practice, including nonsuppression positions such as:

- Lifeguards
- Administrative services staff
- Fuels management specialists





3.2 Provide for comprehensive reciprocity.

3.2.1 Agency transfers

- Federal/Military into our state system
- Out-of-state experience and certification crosswalk



PHASE II

3.3 Support fire service recruitment efforts.

3.3.1 Provide for mid-career changes (civilian into fire service)

3.3.2 Girl's/youth camp presence and support

3.3.3 SFT recruitment outreach efforts:

- Outreach resources (brochures, media, and public engagement)
- Pre-service
- Research into improved selection standards



GOAL #4: CREATE A CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (CQI) PROGRAM

SFT should develop a continuous quality improvement program focused on guiding and empowering all stakeholders within our State Fire Training ecosystem.

4.1 Implement process improvements.

- 4.1.1** Evaluate and validate current and relevant processes based on stakeholders' ongoing feedback and provide recommendations when appropriate
- 4.1.2** Develop clear organizational roles, strategic priorities, and responsiveness methods
- 4.1.3** Align regulations and realistic enforcement measures based on current staffing
- 4.1.4** Conduct ongoing research into best practices
 - Clarify overarching doctrine through the identification of foundational documents (Coleman thesis, white papers, etc.)

4.2 Improve stakeholder customer service, communications and engagement.

- 4.2.1** Clarify and define who our stakeholders are
- 4.2.2** Evaluate SFT branding, logo, and marketing methods
- 4.2.3** Increase outreach through defined performance measures
- 4.2.4** Define and communicate SFT value for stakeholders
- 4.2.5** Conduct periodic surveys with representative audiences
 - Students, instructors, training officers, etc.
 - Create a mechanism for submitting stakeholder feedback, concerns, and recommendations
- 4.2.6** Foster closer support from accounting



4.3 Develop measures of organizational effectiveness.

4.3.1 Organizational behavior and decisions are based on SFT values, strategic direction, data, clear prioritization, and stakeholder feedback

4.3.2 The needs of stakeholders are met through the efforts of positive, well-trained staff members

- Recognition of staffing and resource reality that preserves and promotes the well-being of staff
- Staff investment is demonstrated through succession and employee career planning, professional development, upward mobility, and training/conference participation

4.4 Develop CQI success indicators ("SFT is most successful when...") based on:

4.4.1 Strategic goals and objectives are met in a timely manner

4.4.2 Positive stakeholder engagement and SFT responsiveness are reflected in feedback

4.4.3 SFT presence is reflected through media and outreach efforts

4.4.4 Transparent and clearly defined staff roles, methods, and procedures

4.4.5 Timely updates to regulations, policy, curriculum, and internal procedures

PHASE II

4.5 Implement a data-driven decision-making process.

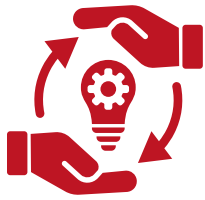
4.5.1 Provide for the gathering of qualitative and quantitative data regarding the overall health and effectiveness of the SFT system

4.5.2 Create a SFT scorecard post data analysis that assesses key areas on a consistent basis

4.5.3 Provide a formal process to implement data-driven changes based on results

4.5.4 Partner with academic institutions to review SFT best practices and methodology





GOAL #5: ARTICULATE A FUTURE FRAMEWORK

If requested by stakeholders, facilitate a shared future vision and needs analysis process for a more comprehensive SFT system to inform potential legislative feasibility efforts.

5.1 Facilitate a process to develop a best-practice vision for a Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST)-like model for an SFT system that may be adopted by California fire agencies.

5.1.1 Evaluate political climate for willingness/support

5.1.2 Gather stakeholders to develop and determine system vision and structure:

- Governance structure
- Labor and volunteer fire department input/support

5.1.3 Conduct a survey of industry best practices

- Research POST
- Other state training systems
- Articulate what an ideal system looks like

5.1.4 Determine desired outcomes based on minimum capabilities and standards for each hazard/sub-discipline

5.2 Articulate SFT staffing and resource needs along with subsequent ongoing, sustainable funding to achieve desired outcomes.

5.2.1 Identify all additional resources needed

- Develop priorities for additional capabilities
- Consider Blueprint 2030 Phase II items

5.2.2 Examine funding sources and options

- Address the priority of declining participation in certification and costs of SFT current user fee-based system
- Develop a needs analysis that explores the establishment of stable, ongoing funding that is independent of the current stakeholder fee system
- Identify potential/alternative revenue sources to achieve financial sustainability
- Explore potential grant/reimbursement programs and determine the staff needed to maintain it



PHASE II

5.3 If new legislation to achieve sustainable funding is enacted:

- 5.3.1 Monitor and maintain the new system and its standards
- 5.3.2 Evaluate effectiveness and minimize system risk as it evolves
- 5.3.3 Ensure ongoing resource and fiscal sustainability
- 5.3.4 Ensure associated oversight needs are met



APPROVAL AND IMPLEMENTATION



SFT MANAGEMENT REVIEW

In addition to providing valuable feedback on the two-track fiscal process and phasing, SFT management reviewed the Incident Action Plan (IAP), sought clarification, and filled in gaps on some strategic objectives. They also conducted a vetting process to validate the tactical priorities and timelines to ensure that they were achievable.

STEAC WORKING DRAFT REVIEW

Prior to submitting the Final Draft, the State Training and Education Advisory Committee (STEAC) was informed on the Working Draft for a discussion on concepts, questions, and concerns. This allowed SFT Management to consider additional stakeholder feedback and input before submitting the Final Draft for agency review and approval.

AGENCY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Once the final draft was produced, the document was forwarded up the chain-of-command and reviewed as part of the “green sheet” process. This review and approval provide information and clarification, ensures alignment with agency programmatic processes, and to obtain approval prior to final stakeholder consideration and approval.

FINAL APPROVALS

The State Training and Education Advisory Committee (STEAC) is an advisory body that reports to the State Fire Marshal. This strategic plan went before STEAC and the State Board of Fire Services (SBFS) for review.

IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN (IAP)

Much like an Incident Action Plan, the Blueprint 2030 IAP is based on management by objectives. Each goal is described, then broken down into strategic objectives, which are further divided by priority and validity into tactical implementation steps, which also identifies specific tasks to be accomplished, who the lead and team members are, and the completion timelines.

The IAP is really the heart and soul of Blueprint 2030; it is a dynamic, living document that continues to be modified as items are accomplished, conditions change, and focus shifts throughout the life of Blueprint 2030.



For access to Appendix A (Briefings), Appendix B (Summaries), the 2022 reference documents, meeting notes, or the Implementation Action Plan, please contact State Fire Training for further information.

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