

EXECUTIVE FIRE OFFICER (EFO) PROGRAM HANDBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROGRAM OVERVIEW	2
MISSION, VISION, VALUES, AND BELIEFS	2
MISSION STATEMENT	2
VISION STATEMENT	2
VALUES AND BELIEFS OF THE EFO PROGRAM	2
PROGRAM OUTCOMES.....	2
PROGRAM DESIGN.....	3
<i>Self</i>	3
<i>Organization</i>	3
<i>Community</i>	3
<i>Capstone</i>	3
PROGRAM CURRICULUM.....	4
OVERVIEW & SEQUENCE.....	4
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS	4
<i>Exercise of Executive Leadership: Self</i>	4
<i>Exercise of Executive Leadership: Organization</i>	4
<i>Exercise of Executive Leadership: Community</i>	4
<i>Applications in the Exercise of Leadership: Capstone I</i>	5
<i>Applications in the Exercise of Leadership: Capstone II</i>	5
COURSE DESIGN METHODOLOGY.....	5
MAINTAINING PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY	6
REQUIREMENTS.....	6
PROGRAM DISMISSAL & REINSTATEMENT	7
EFO PROGRAM CONTACTS	7
PROGRAM CONDUCT.....	8
EFO AND THE NFA HUMAN DIGNITY STATEMENT.....	8
PROFESSIONALISM	8
ACADEMIC HONESTY	8
ELECTRONICS POLICY	9
RESEARCH AND WRITING.....	9
APA STYLE MANUAL	9
RESEARCH INTEGRITY STANDARDS	9
SUPPLEMENTAL COURSEWORK.....	10
<i>Executive Planning</i>	10
<i>Fire Service Financial Management</i>	10
<i>Decision Making and Financial Management for Fire and EMS Organizations</i>	10
<i>Management Tools for Fire and Emergency Services Leaders</i>	10
<i>Introduction and Application of Data for Fire and Emergency Services Leaders</i>	10
<i>Administration of Public Assistance for Community Recovery</i>	10
<i>New Executive Chief Officer (or NCO Series)</i>	11
GRADUATION	11
GRADUATE SYMPOSIUM	11

Executive Fire Officer Program Overview

Program Mission, Vision, Values, and Beliefs

The Executive Fire Officer (EFO) Program is the pinnacle of the U.S. Fire Administration's (USFA's) commitment to support the needs of fire and emergency medical services (EMS) agencies in preparing **executive officers** to meet the ever-changing demands of the dynamic communities in which they serve. Consequently, the USFA is focused on supplementing, not duplicating, existing programs of training, technology and research, data collection and analysis, and public education.

Executive Fire Officer Program Mission Statement

To create an environment and opportunities that foster individual growth, development, and an appreciation for lifelong learning as a strategic community leader.

Executive Fire Officer Program Vision Statement

Executive officers providing bold, thoughtful, and innovative solutions to create safe, healthy, prepared, and resilient communities.

Values and Beliefs of the Executive Fire Officer Program

- self-awareness through reflection
- lifelong learning
- integration of fire and EMS organizations into the whole community
- development of sustainable partnerships beyond geographic and political boundaries
- diversity, equality, equity, and inclusiveness to build organizational and community strength
- fostering environments that support open dialogue and respect for all opinions
- recognition of the leadership role in the development of a vibrant and safe community

Program Outcomes

The EFO Program is structured to empower executive officers to develop, maintain, and expand the following proficiencies throughout their careers:

- Demonstrate social responsibility within self, organization, and community.
- Enhance personal and organizational ethics, integrity, accountability, and performance to secure public trust.
- Apply effective communication skills and information technologies to express vision, strategy, policy, resource, and incident-related determinations.
- Strategically plan to foster a safe, healthy, prepared, and resilient community.
- Incorporate diversity, equality, equity, and inclusiveness to build organizational and community strength.
- Prioritize personal and organizational growth through the pursuit and creation of education, mentorship, and other learning opportunities.
- Exercise leadership to meet the technical and adaptive challenges within the organization and community.
- Employ political/strategic foresight and research-based analytical skills to propose, influence, adopt, implement, and evaluate public policy.

Executive Fire Officer Program Design

The National Fire Academy (NFA) is the instructional entity within the USFA, and as such, is focused on the supplementation, rather than duplication, of existing programs of education and training for career and volunteer fire and EMS personnel throughout the nation. Through the EFO Program, the NFA seeks to inspire, educate, and empower current and future fire service leaders and create public service champions within communities.



SELF: The first component is a resident course that focuses on self. This component provides learning and practice opportunities that foster the exploration of personal leadership philosophy, life-work balance, theoretical aspects of leadership, and the value of ethics and integrity. This course introduces research practices and communication skills amidst leadership challenges.

ORGANIZATION: The second component of the EFO Program focuses on the organization. It is comprised of substantial self-paced, online pre-course work to provide students with theoretical, academic, and foundational elements that are applied during a resident course focused on building organizational strength. This course will apply analysis and adaptive leadership components that result in building an internal culture that promotes a safer, healthier, more prepared, and resilient organization. Students collect, evaluate, and demonstrate the use of organizational data and research in their pursuit to achieve a diverse, resilient, and safe organization.

COMMUNITY: The third component of the EFO Program transitions the foundational elements previously addressed for the organization to focus on the community. This component is comprised of substantial self-paced, online pre-course work to provide students with theoretical, academic, and foundational elements that are then applied during a resident course. The resident experience underscores the exercise of executive-level leadership in the context of the whole community, and the strategic role of the executive officer within both emergent and prospective events is considered. The central focus is relational interoperability between the many facets required to determine, evaluate, and meet the needs of the community.

CAPSTONE: The culminating portion of the EFO Program is comprised of three pillars to demonstrate bold and imaginative solutions to critical issues, cultivated by the executive throughout the program. Students integrate, synthesize, and apply the knowledge, skills, and perspectives acquired throughout the EFO Program and demonstrate mastery of all program elements during an online, instructor-led course and a resident course. All components of the capstone project are graded assignments. The capstone pillars are:

- **A portfolio** of artifacts is compiled throughout the program and serves as a valuable reference that students can access and build upon far into the future. The portfolio demonstrates the affective as well as cognitive learning domains by integrating program deliverables with a reflection paper that discusses how students receive, respond, apply, and value the lessons learned throughout the EFO Program.
- **A capstone research paper** is the culmination of theory and application where the executive displays both the vision and competencies highlighted throughout the EFO Program. The paper incorporates complex problem identification and exploration, research, data, and the ability to author solutions to multifaceted problems while presenting the information in a convincing, logical, and academically sound format. Details can be found in the *Capstone Research Guide*.
- **A presentation** in the final resident course mirrors a real-life event, such as a town hall, council meeting, or catastrophic event. This essential experience is designed to provide a complex and dynamic environment with both peer and expert feedback that uniquely informs each student's professional and personal insight.

Executive Fire Officer Program Courses

SELF	Resident 10-Day	R5201	Exercise of Executive Leadership: Self
ORGANIZATION	Online Pre-course & Resident Six-Day	R5202	Exercise of Executive Leadership: Organization
COMMUNITY	Online Pre-course & Resident Six-Day	R5203	Exercise of Executive Leadership: Community
CAPSTONE	Mediated 10-Week	M5104	Applications in the Exercise of Leadership: Capstone I
	Resident 10-Day	R5204	Applications in the Exercise of Leadership: Capstone II

Course Descriptions

R5201 Exercise of Executive Leadership: Self

Students are introduced to the EFO Program during this 10-day resident course that establishes the foundation of the exercise of leadership. The first resident experience provides the executive officer an immersive, educational experience with facilitated discussion and introspection to address the relationships of leadership for self, organization, and community. Students are introduced to research practices, expected communication skills, American Psychological Association (APA) style (2020) and writing expectations. Concepts relating to 21st-century emerging issues are introduced to initiate planning for *Applications in the Exercise of Leadership: Capstone I* (M5104).

R5202 Exercise of Executive Leadership: Organization

Students access the Learning Management System (LMS) eight weeks prior to the six-day resident course and complete approximately 40 hours of structured, self-paced, pre-course work. To provide consistency and to facilitate student success, instructors are available to provide timely responses to student inquiries and to grade assignments from the beginning of pre-course work throughout the resident experience.

During pre-course work, executive officers build an analytical framework to establish a holistic and objective view of their organization. Leadership considerations and introduction to diverse perspectives are provided through required reading and videos, while students conduct strategic research, data capture, and analysis to determine their organization's existing state.

During the residential experience, students delve deeper into leadership and diversity issues. Facilitated dialogue centers on needs assessment within an organization to develop, grow, and sustain success. Through strategic analysis students refine their organization's existing state and propose an aspired state vision of a safe, healthy, prepared, and resilient organization.

R5203 Exercise of Executive Leadership: Community

Students access the Learning Management System (LMS) eight weeks prior to the six-day resident course and complete approximately 40 hours of structured, self-paced, pre-course work. To provide consistency and to facilitate student success, instructors are available to provide timely response to student inquiries and to grade assignments from the beginning of pre-course work throughout the resident experience.

During pre-course work, executive officers build an analytical framework to establish a holistic and objective view of their community to assess their community's existing state. Students will review the literature and collect data to formulate evidence-based approaches to achieving an aspired state.

Technology will be introduced as potential tools to help achieve a safe, healthy, prepared, and resilient community.

During the residential experience, students will explore the culture of the whole community and the exercise of executive leadership to build trust and create inclusive community success. The self, organization, and community are brought full circle as executive officers discuss and analyze defining moments in their careers. Students are provided a platform to question conventional approaches, enhance creativity, and strategically influence process and policies, to ultimately create an aspired state of a safe, healthy, prepared, and resilient community.

M5104 Applications in the Exercise of Leadership: Capstone I

An online, mediated (instructor-led) course integrates program content topics and is the first step in the completion of the program capstone. The course provides analysis and interactive opportunities at a strategic executive level that leverage stakeholders, influencers, and actors associated with serving a whole community's public safety and risk management needs. Critical to successful program completion, instructors work with students through incremental writing assignments focusing on the capstone research synopsis, research proposal, and research paper draft.

R5204 Applications in the Exercise of Leadership: Capstone II

The final residential experience in the EFO Program requires the student to demonstrate quantifiable action as a catalyst for change while exemplifying the exercise of executive leadership for self, organization, and community. This experience includes a presentation of the capstone paper to mirror a real-life event, such as a town hall or council meeting, where the student attempts to convince the audience of the change they wish to enact. This essential and dynamic experience is designed to provide the executive with peer feedback and expert assessment that uniquely informs each student's professional and personal insight. The capstone paper and portfolio are uploaded two weeks before course start and are graded before arrival.

Course Design Methodology

The goal of the design of the EFO Program learning environment is to provide cohesive and unique approaches to create a richer and more substantive executive learning experience. Thematic threads of terminology and thought that are applied throughout the curriculum include:

- ethics and integrity
- strategic thinking
- integrated planning and execution
- political acuity
- inclusive community
- equity and diversity
- change/adaptability
- development of others and self
- creativity and innovation

All courses are designed to meet the *American Council on Education* standards for graduate-level credit recommendation so that EFO Program students potentially qualify for credit at colleges and universities.

Learning methodologies employed throughout the curriculum include, but are not limited to:

Socratic methodology: Through responding to questioning, or deep inquiry, students gain understanding and draw on underlying assumptions. This method of dialogue allows for deeper learning

on the part of the individual who employs it in their learning processes. This method is applied throughout online and resident courses.

Professional reflection activities: Reflection takes a thought, an idea, or an opinion and uses it as a means of searching out further thoughts and ideas to form an opinion for personal growth. Without reflection, learning does not occur. Reflection activities occur at critical points throughout the program and are kept for portfolio submission.

Professional writing: Students prepare written work that conforms to accepted academic standards for professional papers. Papers reflect original work and give appropriate credit through citations for ideas belonging to other authors, publications, or organizations. All written work is expected to be free of grammatical and syntax errors and should demonstrate critical thinking related to the subject matter.

Professional speaking: During virtual online sessions and resident courses, students practice how to comport themselves to establish trust and build partnerships. This skill is essential to effect change as an executive officer and recognized community champion.

Data collection, research, and analysis: Throughout all courses, there are opportunities to collect, collate, and analyze data in many forms. Students must employ both qualitative and quantitative research to employ evidence-based planning and action.

Personal journaling: Journaling is used as a means of reflection. This activity is a private process using a written journal. Students use a provided bound journal or an electronic equivalent in which to record private thoughts. Students receive and respond to journal prompts throughout the EFO Program to maximize this unique and powerful leadership development tool. Students maintain control of the journal throughout the program and are not required to share those thoughts and entries.

Maintaining Eligibility

Students have up to four years to complete the program from the time of successful completion of *R5201 Exercise of Executive Leadership: Self* and may move through the program at their own pace. It is anticipated that a student could complete the program in as little as two years. The following conditions apply to a student's eligibility to remain in the EFO Program:

- Students must successfully complete at least one resident course per calendar year. (This is the minimum participation requirement to complete the program in four years; however, students may move through the program as quickly as course schedules and research writing permits.) The EFO Program Administrator will identify and reach out to students who do not meet this requirement to determine an acceptable path forward to ensure program completion within four years. This allows students to plan their coursework around their competing demands.
- Students are expected to notify Admissions at crystal.arnold@fema.dhs.gov and the EFO Program Administrator at tina.crevier@fema.dhs.gov of changes in contact information (e.g., email, phone number, mailing address, etc.).
- Students are expected to notify Admissions at crystal.arnold@fema.dhs.gov and the EFO Program Administrator at tina.crevier@fema.dhs.gov of any change to an employer or in position/title. The email must include an attached letter from the chief of department/agency head supporting the student's continued enrollment.

- The EFO Program requires students to retain their service status. Students who do not hold one of the following ranks or positions within an agency will be removed from the program:
 - a) chief of department or equivalent
 - b) chief officers or equivalent who head major bureaus or divisions (e.g., suppression, prevention, training, EMS, etc.)
 - c) chief officers and senior deputies of state governmental fire or EMS organizations (e.g., state fire marshals, state EMS directors, state directors of fire training, etc.)
 - d) others who serve in key positions of authority or leadership
- Failure to notify admissions or the EFO Program Administrator of a change in rank or position may result in immediate removal from the program.
- Participants who cannot attend a course for which they are scheduled are required to notify the Admissions Office as soon as possible before the class begins; failure to do so may result in the future suspension of eligibility to attend NFA courses.
- Extension requests to the four-year limit will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Program Dismissal and Reinstatement

Failure to maintain program eligibility, violation of student conduct or integrity standards, or failure to meet program completion criteria shall result in dismissal from the EFO Program. The student's sponsoring agency shall be notified when a student is dismissed.

Any student dismissed from the EFO Program for failure to maintain program eligibility, violation of student conduct or integrity standards, or failure to meet program completion criteria may request reinstatement from the NFA in accordance with the following:

- Request for reinstatement must arrive in writing at the NFA within 15 calendar days of the initial dismissal decision.
- The request should include the student's justification for remaining in the program, supporting documentation and correspondence, and signed support of the student's sponsoring agency. The respondent has the right to appear in person (at their own expense), have representation of their choice, and present any witnesses. If the respondent elects to appear in person, notification must be included in the reinstatement request.
- The request will be reviewed by the EFO Program Administrator and the Branch Chief of the Leadership and Community Risk Reduction Branch. The NFA Superintendent will render a decision as soon as practical based on the facts presented by the respondent and staff. The decision will be delivered to the student and the student's sponsoring agency. The NFA Superintendent's decision is final.

EFO Program Points of Contact

Tina M. Crevier
 Program Administrator, EFO/MO
 National Fire Academy | U.S. Fire Administration
 Email: tina.crevier@fema.dhs.gov
 Phone: 301-447-1107

Crystal Arnold
 Admissions/Course Scheduling
 Email: crystal.arnold@fema.dhs.gov
 Phone: 301-447-1524

Executive Fire Officer Program Conduct

EFO and the NFA Human Dignity Statement

Executive officers should always show respect and dignity when interacting with others. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the NFA recognizes the value and potential in all individuals. To support this recognition, the NFA Human Dignity Statement will serve to support a rich and meaningful experience for all.

The uniqueness of all individuals at the National Emergency Training Center (NETC) is recognized in their diversity, which can be a resource that enriches the working and learning environment through the sharing of differing perspectives. Equal opportunity is provided to all employees, students, contractors, and visitors. This is supported by:

- ensuring equal opportunity to all employees, students, contractors, and visitors;
- prohibiting all discrimination and harassment;
- supporting affirmative employment policies and practices;
- encouraging employees, students, contractors, and visitors to communicate and behave in a manner that is sensitive to, and acknowledges, the viewpoints of others;
- regarding diversity as a resource that enriches the working and learning environment through the sharing of differing perspectives, experiences, and ideas;
- removing barriers to teamwork through collaboration, problem-solving, and the constructive resolution of conflicts; and
- continuing to identify and eliminate barriers.

Employees, students, contractors, and visitors are expected to treat each other with respect at all times. Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated and may result in appropriate administrative or disciplinary action, including removal and debarment from the facility and the program.

Professionalism

The environment of the EFO Program is intended to be rich in respect, integrity, professionalism, and comradery. Throughout the program, the executive officers, faculty, and NFA staff are expected to demonstrate the stature and demeanor of individuals entrusted with the highest level of public trust.

The EFO Program has an enhanced dress code during all residential experiences. Business casual attire is the required dress (i.e., no jeans, denim, caps, sandals, etc.). In addition, given the dynamics of the EFO Program, the executive officer should bring business attire or Class-A uniform each time they are on campus for a residential experience.

For on-campus or EFO Program-sponsored events, after-hours wear should always be appropriate for the event and reflect positively on the executive officer, their home organization, and the NFA.

Academic Honesty

As part of the NFA community, executive officers are expected to exhibit exemplary ethical behavior and conduct. Acts of academic dishonesty include cheating, plagiarism, deliberate falsification, utilization of ghost writers, and other unethical behaviors.

Executive officers are expected to report academic misconduct when they witness a violation. All cases of

academic misconduct shall be reported by the instructors to the training specialist and EFO Program Administrator.

If an executive officer is found to have engaged in misconduct, and the allegations are upheld, the penalties may include, but are not limited to, one or a combination of the following:

- expulsion
- withholding of stipend or forfeiture of stipend paid

Electronics in the Classroom

Although useful and appropriate in many circumstances, electronics can also be a significant distraction and a deterrent to effective interpersonal communications. Appropriate use of electronics in residential experiences is essential. This program will take advantage of electronic devices in a controlled environment only when appropriate to program content, as determined by the instructor. Students are expected to turn off and put away all electronics, including cell phones and tablets, unless the instructor has indicated otherwise. This allows students to focus on the topics, without the distractions of the electronic world. Executive officers are expected to discuss any exceptions with the course instructor.

Executive Fire Officer Research and Writing

Writing Expectations: APA Style Manual

Executive officers will follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2020) as the sole citation and reference style used in written work submitted as part of course work to the NFA. Assignments completed in a narrative essay or composition format must follow the citation style presented in the APA style manual (2020).

The NFA provides EFO Program students with a variety of resources and materials, to include comprehensive rubrics, guidance, instructions, and the NETC library and staff. NFA's academic programs are designed to be completed without students needing to engage in any external and expensive academic support services, but some students find that they want or need extra academic support. Accordingly, in addition to these free academic support tools, NFA policy allows EFO students to use outside services/vendors to proofread or format assignments prior to submission. However, it is important to note that according to NFA policy, contracted NFA instructors are not permitted to charge EFO students for academic assistance.

Research Integrity Standards

The NFA is committed to maintaining and preserving the highest standards of integrity regarding the EFO Program. Participants and alumni are consequently affected when the EFO Program is associated with any unethical behavior committed by one of its participants.

The NFA enforces the appropriate standards of conduct for the completion of research and the potential penalties for engaging in any unethical behavior. **Plagiarism, falsification, or misrepresentation in any writing assignments will not be tolerated.**

Research integrity, as explained in the Office of Research Integrity report referenced below (Steneck, 2007, p. 3), is the use of honest and verifiable methods in proposing, performing, and evaluating research and includes:

HONESTY - convey information truthfully and honoring commitments

ACCURACY - report findings precisely and take care to avoid errors

EFFICIENCY - use resources wisely and avoid waste

OBJECTIVITY - let the facts speak for themselves and avoid improper bias

Individuals who engage in unethical behavior will be disciplined with one, some, or all of the following actions:

- a return of all money expended or reimbursed by the U.S. government associated with the course, to include all travel expenses, room accommodations, books, and an apportionment of the instructor's salary
- a return of the course certificate and (if applicable) the EFO Program completion certificate
- a letter to the current employer, with an accompanying explanation of the violation, stating that the certificate has been revoked
- a 10-year prohibition on attendance at any residential NFA course

EFO Program participants, graduates, and others who discover suspicious work are strongly encouraged to report their findings to the EFO program administrator or any NFA training specialist.

SUPPLEMENTAL COURSEWORK

Executives who wish to expand upon specific skills, such as financial management or utilizing data management tools, and are encouraged to consider supplementing the EFO Program required courses with the NFA courses listed below:

Course	Discussion
R0506 Executive Planning	Course covers both strategic planning and project management. Tying both together provides value as they are mutually supportive concepts.
R0333 Fire Service Financial Management	Course covers budgeting practices, best practices, presentation skills related to presenting to boards/commissions. Focuses on tying community expectations, priorities, and outcomes to budget and how budget supports community needs.
M0488 Decision Making and Financial Management for Fire and EMS Organizations	Combines strategic planning and financial resource management (not as deep as R0506 and R0333).
Q0880 Management Tools for Fire and Emergency Services Leaders	Introductory course on how to set up an Excel spreadsheet, query data, put together pivot tables, use the Excel mapping function, and use other database systems. Good intro course for anyone who will be collecting and evaluating data
Q0696 Introduction and Application of Data for Fire and Emergency Services Leaders	Applies statistical programming to data analysis. Discusses conversion of raw data into useful intelligence, identification of performance gaps, linear regression, and prediction.
R0335 Administration of Public Assistance for Community Recovery	Discusses the Stafford Act and its processes, categories of funding, how to submit for funding, preparing documentation, and development of recovery and mitigation projects

R0763 F/W 0760, 761, 762
New Executive Chief Officer (or NCO
Series)

Examines administrative, political, policy, and human resource
issues facing the chief executive officer.

Independent of NFA, executives who wish to improve on their writing skills may wish to consider the online [Center for Public Safety Excellence Advanced Technical Writing Certificate Program](#).

Executive Fire Officer Program Graduation

Upon entering the LMS for Applications in the Exercise of Leadership: Capstone II (R5204) students will complete a graduation sheet that identifies their supervisor, U.S. Senator(s), Representative(s), and Governor who shall receive notice of their achievement. This information will be provided to the supervisor that a participant specifies for official presentation of their graduate certificate. The congressional information will be used to notify members of Congress of the participant's achievement.

Executive Fire Officer Program Graduate Symposium

The EFO Program Graduate Symposium (R0120) is an annual event for alumni and EFO Program participants. While the symposium is open to all fire service leaders and related professions, priority in housing is given to EFO Program alumni. Current EFO Program students are encouraged to attend, and all fire service executives are welcome to bring their government management colleagues. Note: Each attendee must register through the Admissions process as they would for any course; however, there is no travel stipend for the symposium. Lodging is available. People staying in on-campus housing are required to purchase a meal ticket for the duration of their stay. Dates can be found on the NFA website.

The goals for this event are as follows:

- Provide a curriculum extension and update of the EFO Program.
- Recognize and spotlight outstanding and innovative research by select EFO Program students.
- Provide high-quality presentations by private and public sector representatives.
- Promote continuous dialogue among EFO Program graduates and USFA/NFA faculty and staff.
- Facilitate networking between EFO Program graduates and leaders in the fire and EMS profession.
- Officially recognize recent EFO Program graduates and research winners.

References

Publication manual of the American Psychological Association : The official guide to APA style. (7 ed.). (2020). American Psychological Association.

Steneck, N. H. (2007, August). *Introduction to the Responsible Conduct of Research.*
<https://ori.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/rcintro.pdf>