

Florida Fire Chiefs' Association

STRATEGIC PLAN

May 2025 – May 2026



Brant Strategic
Consulting Group, LLC

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Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is a deliberate, disciplined effort that allows an organization to make fundamental and sound decisions based on assessments of the internal and external environments. When approached purposefully, the strategic planning process will guide what an agency does in light of its purpose (mission). Strategic planning results in:

- Increased effectiveness
- Increased efficiency
- Clarity
- Improved Understanding
- Better Decision-Making
- Enhanced Organizational Capabilities
- Improved Communication & Public Relations
- Increased Stakeholder Support

Florida Fire Chiefs' Association Strategic Plan Formulation

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association retained Dr. Gwinnell Brant, of Brant Strategic Consulting Group, LLC, to help facilitate the plan formulation. The strategic planning cycle utilized for this project involves multiple stages: assessing the environment, identifying & prioritizing issues, developing strategies, implementing the plan, and reviewing progress. This report documents the first three stages of plan implementation.

On the afternoon of Thursday, May 8, 2025, the Board of Directors met to discuss recent challenges the Association has faced and the desired process for a new strategic plan. On May 9, 2025, Dr. Brant facilitated a full-day workshop with the Board that resulted in the completion of the first three stages of the strategic planning process, leading to the formulation of specific goals, objectives, and strategies.

The following individuals were present and actively participated in the workshop:

- Chief Michael Choate, President
- Ms. Ngoc Huynh, Executive Director
- Chief Trip Barrs, First Vice President
- Chief Ryan Crawford, Second Vice President (Virtual)
- Chief Carlos Aviles, Secretary/Treasurer
- Chief Harold Theus, Immediate Past President
- Ms. Cindy Morgan, Foundation Chair

- Chief Jeff Wagner, Northwest Director
- Chief Brady Rigdon, Northeast Director
- Chief Ian Kemp, West Central Director
- Chief Chuck Bogle, East Central Director
- Chief Gregory DeWitt, Southwest Director
- Deputy Chief Chantal Botting, Southeast Director
- Chief (Ret.) Jeffrey Money, Senior Member

Assessing the Environment

The assessment phase of the planning process began with Executive Director Hyunh presenting the following to the Board of Directors:

- Progress/status of the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan
- Staffing updates (vacancies and hiring efforts)
- Membership update (counts and lapsed members)
- Finance overview
- Upcoming conference preparation

Dr. Gwinnell Brant then facilitated a SWOT Analysis, in which the Association's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were identified and discussed. Board members actively participated in this assessment process, providing valuable insight and input.

Post retreat, Dr. Brant conducted a supplemental examination and overlaid a PESTEL Analysis to ensure Political (i.e. policy, leadership), Economical (i.e. fiscal impacts, employment issues), Social (i.e. cultural, demographics), Technological (i.e. access, use), Environmental (i.e. consumption, recycling), and Legal (i.e. mandates, laws) aspects were addressed, if applicable, in the process. All aspects of the PESTEL Analysis were adequately discussed and addressed in the workshop, with the exception of Environmental, which is not applicable to the elements of this specific project.

Identifying & Prioritizing Issues

The SWOT Analysis revealed significant strengths of the Association, including strong leadership, education and training offerings, member support and loyalty, and resiliency. The assessment also revealed that essential infrastructure elements were considerably lacking due to the recent fiscal breach and employee departures; legislative influence was also identified as needing improvement. Significant opportunities, however, were identified to assist in addressing these issues. Additionally, threats external to the Association that could hinder the success of the

Association were discussed to ensure appropriate visioning moving forward. (See Appendix B for SWOT Diagnostics.)

NOTE: Because of the recent challenges and assessed weaknesses involving an accounting breach, as well as employee turnover and departures, the Board noted that these infrastructural issues needed to be prioritized and agreed that a one-year plan to “rebuild” these foundational elements was the best course of action (versus a multi-year plan). This will allow the Association to construct a robust foundation for long-term visioning and certain success.

Developing Goals, Objectives, & Strategies

Before goal development began, the Board clarified the mission of the Association to ensure alignment between goals and the purpose of the Association. While the exercise was not intended to rewrite the organization’s mission statement, it affirmed that the following represents the purpose of the Association:

- Advocacy for fire services and Fire Chiefs
- Educating and training current and future fire services personnel in best practices
- Engaging leadership at all levels
- Subject matter expertise
- Providing a supportive community
- Collaborating (internal and external)
- Mentoring
- Establishing a platform for special interests in fire services

Utilizing the SWOT assessment results, Board members began detailed discussions regarding goal development, action items (strategies), assigned responsibility, and expected timeframe for completion. As a result, a total of four goals were developed, supported by five objectives and 18 strategies, as documented herein. (See Appendix A for Goals/Objectives/Strategies.)

Goal 1: Fortify Association infrastructure to ensure stability and sustainability.

Objective 1.1: Ensure the Executive Director has the resources and support necessary to efficiently and effectively support the Association’s mission, Board of Directors, and members.

- ***Strategy 1.1.1:*** Evaluate staffing levels needed to accomplish the mission of the Association.

Assigned Responsibility: Executive Director

Timeframe: Immediate & Ongoing

- Discussion in monthly meeting for current vacancies
- Semi-annual review at in-person meetings once two initial positions are filled.

- **Strategy 1.1.2:** Recruit and hire highly qualified candidates.
Assigned Responsibility: Executive Director
Timeframe: Immediate & Ongoing
 - Membership & Marketing Coordinator posted by May 12
 - Exhibits & Sponsorship Sales position by May 19
- **Strategy 1.1.3:** Identify communication gaps and develop a communications plan to ensure responsiveness to stakeholders.
Assigned Responsibility: Membership & Marketing Coordinator
 - Create a template for what should be expected from individual areas
 - What information should be shared and how frequently?*Timeframe:* Due by May 1, 2026
- **Strategy 1.1.4:** Improve customer service and support at conferences and other association events.
Assigned Responsibility: Membership & Marketing Coordinator and Exhibits & Sponsorship Sales
 - Vendor registration packet with comprehensive information
 - Board representation at events to interact with vendors and speakers
 - After action and evaluation of surveys at Board meeting following next event*Timeframe:* By Executive Development Conference (July 2025) & Ongoing
- **Strategy 1.1.5:** Evaluate and implement technology solutions, including software and computer programming to replace current systems in an effort to increase efficiency and eliminate duplication of effort.
Assigned Responsibility: Executive Director
Timeframe: Immediate & Ongoing

Objective 1.2: Ensure the Board of Directors is best prepared to make sound decisions and to effectively carryout the mission of the Association.

- **Strategy 1.2.1:** Evaluate the composition of the Board of Directors.
Assigned Responsibility: Chief Trip Barrs
 - Regional boundaries
 - Terms of office
 - Structure of offices
 - Responsibilities*Timeframe:* Due by November 1, 2025
- **Strategy 1.2.2:** Create onboarding process for board members.
Assigned Responsibility: Chief Carlos Aviles
 - Key dates
 - Decorum
 - Bylaws/handbook/strategic plan

- Responsibilities and expectations
- Mission and values
- Contact info for Board Members and section and committee liaison list
- Code of ethics
- Recent history of status of the Association/Foundation

Timeframe: Draft by July 10, 2025; Final by January 1, 2026

- **Strategy 1.2.3:** Identify ways to utilize the regional representatives to assist Association operations; formalize the process.

Assigned Responsibility & Timeframes:

- Fire service death notifications. Responsibility: Chief (Ret) Jeff Money – Due by June 10, 2025
- Recruitment of new members. Responsibility: Chief Chantal Botting – Due by January 2026
- Follow-up with lapsed members. Responsibility: Chief Chuck Bogle/Chief (Ret.) Jeffrey Money (East Central – report by July 2025); Chief Chantal Botting (all other regions by January 2026)

Timeframe & Reporting notes:

- Regional reports at monthly Board meetings to cover all above and report any significant incidences
- **Strategy 1.2.4:** Evaluate and engage committees and sections

Assigned Responsibility: Chief Mike Tucker (with support of regional reps)

- Define sections versus committees – Section Bylaws
- Board members serving as liaisons should touch base with sections/committees once a month and report to the BOD on monthly meeting
- Evaluate viability of section/committees

Timeframe: First report to Board by January 2026

- **Strategy 1.2.5:** Conduct a complete review of current written directives, including FFCA and Section/Committees by-laws.

Assigned Responsibility: Chief Ryan Crawford

Timeframe: Due by May 1, 2026

Goal 2: Ensure stability and wise stewardship of the Association's fiscal assets.

Objective 2.1: Evaluate and implement solutions to ensure fiscal sustainability of the association.

- **Strategy 2.1.1:** Ensure processes, policies, and protocols are in place to ensure fiscal protection and stewardship.

Assigned Responsibility: Executive Director

Timeframe: Immediate & Ongoing; reporting at monthly meetings

- **Strategy 2.1.2:** Evaluate revenue generating opportunities

Assigned Responsibility: Executive Director

Timeframe: Immediate & Ongoing

- Post-event financial summary report to Board
 - Ongoing for new opportunities
- **Strategy 2.1.3:** Create a timeline for successful transfer of training and education funding responsibilities from the Association to the Foundation.

Assigned Responsibility: Executive Director

Timeframe: Timeline due by January 1, 2026

Goal 3: Support the heart of the Association’s mission – its members – through membership value, member engagement, and increased enrollment.

Objective 3.1: Ensure Association membership processes are informed, innovative, and effective.

- **Strategy 3.1.1:** Convene a committee to evaluate the membership fee structure and report back to Board with recommendations.

Assigned Responsibility: Chief Ryan Crawford, Chief Chantal Botting, Chief Jeff Wagner, Chief Brady Rigdon

Timeframe: First report by July 2025; final decision by January 2026

- **Strategy 3.1.2:** Create a plan to market membership to potential members, including printed materials and engagement at conferences and events.

Assigned Responsibility: Membership & Marketing Coordinator

Timeframe: Due by January 1, 2026

- **Strategy 3.1.3:** Identify ways to increase the value of membership.

Assigned Responsibility: Membership & Marketing Coordinator

Timeframe: Due by January 1, 2026

Goal 4: Deliberately and effectively leverage and increase the Association’s legislative influence.

Objective 4.1: Formulate ongoing processes to increase legislative influence and member engagement in legislative processes.

- **Strategy 4.1.1:** Plan for regular representation in Tallahassee during legislative session.

Assigned Responsibility: Chief Mike Choate

Timeframe: Prior to 2026 session (Committee to start October 2025)

- **Strategy 4.1.2:** Evaluate the viability and benefit of hosting a legislative summit to increase member engagement and build relationships with local legislators.

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Implementing the Plan

Implementation of the plan is intended to begin immediately. Assigned responsibility and timeframes for each strategy will provide the accountability and clarity necessary to ensure successful completion. Executive Director Hyunh will coordinate and track plan implementation.

Review

The Board established a rhythm of evaluation, with an expectation that updates on plan completion will occur at each monthly Board meeting. This will ensure potential challenges are addressed immediately to ensure viability of success.

Florida Fire Chiefs' Association
Strategic Plan – Goals/Objectives/Strategies
May 2025 – May 2026

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SWOT Analysis Diagnostics Florida Fire Chiefs' Association Strategic Planning Workshop on May 9, 2025	
Internal	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking (community) • Executive Director Hyunh • ESLI (Emergency Services Leadership Institute) Program • Conferences – education & training • Hands-On Training (HOT) classes • Diversification of subjects/topics • Influence as experts (legislative, policy, etc.) • Mentorship • Everyone has a voice (small & large agencies) • Culture of Board leadership (inclusivity & engagement) • Resiliency • Great ideas and initiatives • Flexible • Transparency • Member support/loyalty • Collaborations/partnerships (willingness to assist others) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer service (responsiveness to members, vendors, etc.) • Communication of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ membership value ○ events • Vast responsibility (“catch-all” expectations) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Need to prioritize • Staffing (vacancies & levels) • Growth (stunted without funding & infrastructure) • Technology – current software/platforms are lacking • Revenue • Understanding of financial/budgeting/tax filings • Transition of educational programs from FFCA to Foundation • Fiscal Processes • Succession Planning • Documentation of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FFCA history, events ○ Executive Director Responsibilities • Marketing to all (members, potential members, vendors, etc.) • Legislative influence (need to determine intent of influence) • Loss of influence/institutional knowledge with Chief retirements

External	
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be an information source (FC Connect, FC toolbox) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leadership (Contact Info) ○ Agency (Best practices, policies, report templates, etc.) ○ Member benefits • Legislative summit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Build relationships with local legislators ○ Local FC “on the road” ○ Means of member engagement • Legislative contingency during session • Conference improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Communicate content in advance ○ Value ○ Vendors ○ After Action Reports (including survey results) • FFCA Staffing • Adjusting By-laws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to locate qualified staff/candidates • Funding (impact of economy) • No brick-mortar for FFCA (limits engagement opportunities) • Political environment (partners, legislative) • Technology • Membership apathy • Break • Competing Conferences (dates, costs, offerings, etc.)