

# **National Training Strategy** **For Clean Air Professionals**

October 15, 2009

This document was prepared by the Joint Training Committee (JTC) to articulate a national training strategy for federal, state, and local clean air professionals. The JTC consists of members of the National Association of Clean Air Agencies' Training Committee, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, and the EPA Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance.

## **I. Vision**

A national program providing training for federal, state, and local air quality professionals to develop and enhance the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to accomplish their organizational objectives and support the national clean air mission.

## **II. Goals**

The goals of the national training program are to:

1. Understand the priority training needs of federal, state and local air quality professionals.
2. Provide training opportunities that meet the priority needs of federal, state and local air quality professionals.
3. Utilize course materials that are up-to-date, accurate, complete, and easy to use.
4. Conduct all training using recognized subject matter experts and effective teachers.
5. Deliver effective and cost-efficient training through the use of existing, new and emerging technologies where appropriate.

## **III. Elements of the National Training Strategy**

### **1. Communication**

Achieving the vision of the National Training Strategy will require collaboration among state and local air quality agencies, EPA and other entities contributing to the program's success. Effective communications among the collaborators, and between the collaborators and the end-users, is essential. For example, as EPA's rules, policies and strategic priorities change, communication will need to occur early enough so that courses can be developed and/or existing courses can be modified. Likewise, states and localities will need to communicate information relevant to the specific training needs of their staff.

## 2. Assessment of needs

Needs assessments identify and communicate the training requirements of federal, state and local air quality professionals on an on-going basis. Needs assessments may consist of various formats, including formal surveys and discussions with air quality staff. The assessments will be designed to identify core training needs and emerging issues for new and seasoned staff members. Information obtained through surveys and interaction with management staff is vital to our curriculum development efforts.

## 3. Development of curriculum

Curriculum developers must have a clear understanding of the competencies needed to carry out diverse air quality management responsibilities. Curricula for core and specialized competencies will need to be developed for new and existing air quality professionals. At a minimum, curricula should be developed in the following program areas:

- Introductory core courses covering general air pollution control principles and techniques
- Inspection, enforcement, and other compliance activities
- State Implementation Plan development
- Ambient air quality monitoring and data management
- Permitting including new source review and operational permits
- Mobile sources
- Modeling to support permitting and planning activities
- Hazardous air pollutants and risk management
- Air pollution control equipment

## 4. Development and updating of course content and workshops

There is an ongoing need to develop new courses and update existing course material. The JTC Action Plan (see section IV. below) will include tasks to ensure that all training courses are up-to-date and that new courses and workshops are developed as needed. The plan clearly identifies which partner is primarily responsible for the course and timelines for completion. Development and updating of specific courses may be contracted out to subject matter experts with expertise in developing training materials and delivering training. Such contracts may be short-term or long-term in nature and will follow the procurement requirements of the entity seeking the specified services. The new and revised materials will be made available in the public domain and will not be subject to copyright restrictions in order that the materials may be used and modified without complication. Whenever possible, the material should be designed in such a way that it is suitable for delivery in a variety of forms (i.e., classroom delivery as well as by electronic means such as the Web). The ultimate decision on delivery methods for courses will be made by the JTC with input from the organization creating the course and the selected contractor, since the contractor may have expertise in training methods for the specific subject matter.

## 5. Course format and delivery

Evolving technologies offer new opportunities to deliver training more efficiently and cost-effectively. The JTC will periodically assess training delivery methods to ensure that the methods in use and planned in the future represent the best possible balance between delivery costs and the learning experience.

A student's learning experience is greatly enhanced when a course is presented by a subject matter expert who has the depth of knowledge and experience to respond to questions and offer real world examples to illustrate key ideas and concepts. The JTC Action Plan will include activities and tasks that will aid in identifying the best delivery methods as well as the best instructors.

## 6. Training Program Administration

This element of the National Training Strategy ensures that training is provided in a coordinated manner. JTC members will carry out their responsibilities, as articulated in the Action Plan, including recordkeeping, grant and contract administration, course participant registration, schedule coordination, maintenance and distribution of course material, and course completion certificates.

## 7. Resources

It is important that training be adequately funded on a consistent basis in order to ensure a vibrant training program. The current funding approach provides for forward funding (i.e., Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2009 dollars fund FFY 2010 activities), which is important for planning purposes – such as scheduling of courses, which needs to occur well in advance of the delivery date and before funding is awarded for the year in which a specific training activity is to be conducted. Resources will be sought for training from all partners (federal, state and local) and other sources, where appropriate.

The Joint Training Committee will determine the staffing and financial resources needed to achieve its goals based on a periodic assessment of training needs and will advocate for, and make every effort to secure the resources needed to fully implement the National Training Strategy. The strategy will be structured in such a way that decisions related to increased or decreased resources will be guided by the priorities established in the strategy.

## **IV. Implementation**

The JTC will maintain and implement an Action Plan to achieve the objectives contained in this strategy. The Action Plan will be periodically evaluated for effectiveness and revised as needed to reflect current issues and priorities, budget realities, schedule revisions, and the need for new or revised tasks. At a minimum, the Action Plan will be reviewed on an annual

basis in concert with a review of this strategy, typically for discussion on periodic conference calls and at the annual JTC meeting.