

OPERATING PLAN 2025-2026



Utah
**FIRE
RESCUE**
Academy

STRATEGIC 2025-2030 PLAN



LETTER FROM DIRECTOR BRAD WARDLE



On behalf of the Utah Fire & Rescue Academy, I am pleased to present our Strategic Plan (2025–2030) and Operating Plan (2025–2026). UFRA has been embedded within Utah Valley University for over 60 years with the legislative mandate to provide fire training and certification services to Utah fire departments.

This document illustrates the diversity of classes and certifications we deliver to all fire departments within the state of Utah. UFRA offers a broad selection of classes in many different formats: traditional classroom, blended learning, online, and other offerings. Our 32 core classes are free of charge to fire department customers and delivered off-site at locations convenient for the requesting department. UFRA hosts an annual Winter Fire School, which delivers over 82 class offerings to over 795 students representing 180 fire departments in two and a half days. UFRA also offers regional fire schools throughout the year in smaller venues to meet the needs of select regions.

Additionally, UFRA offers 52 certification levels that prove students' competence in varied fire service disciplines. Training classes are free of charge for firefighters in Utah, unlike in most states. All this is possible because of the support we receive from the Utah State Legislature, Utah Valley University, the Utah Fire Prevention Board, and the State Fire Marshal's Office.

UFRA provides quality training by knowledgeable instructors and also provides certifications at all levels from testers who assess students' knowledge and skills. Our latest Quality Assurance Report shows a 93% approval rating from students. UFRA will continue to strive for excellence in all phases of our operation.

During this reporting period, UFRA delivered 612 classes to 6,339 students in Utah fire departments. Additionally, UFRA's Certification Division issued 3,824 certifications to Utah firefighters.

UFRA and its employees take pride in providing exceptional service to our fire service customers. We are committed to delivering quality classes and providing skilled instructors and testers for Utah firefighters. Our top priority will always remain the safety and education of Utah firefighters by enhancing their ability to deliver competent fire services to all Utah communities.

Sincerely,



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Our Story



The Utah Fire and Rescue Academy contributes to the safety and security of Utah by training emergency responders, creating new programs and classes related to fire service emergency response, assisting in the development of current and future fire department leaders, and maintaining a certification program that promotes and ensures a high degree of professionalism in the fire service.

Fire training has been provided through Utah Valley University (UVU) for over 60 years, beginning with Utah Central Vocational School in 1960. UFRA was officially established by legislation in 1993 and over the years has been able to keep pace with a rapidly changing world. The demands on the fire service by our customers, state laws, federal regulations, and national consensus standards have required additional training and higher levels of competency for Utah firefighters.

The fire service continues to evolve by researching and testing new and improved methods to address emergencies. UFRA is committed to leading this charge, as well as ensuring that tried and true skills and techniques are still utilized throughout our classes and academies.

Over the years UFRA has evolved into a modern, dynamic, and responsive organization that takes pride in finding innovative solutions for the training and certification of fire service emergency responders. UFRA is recognized as a leader in fire service training in Utah that provides:

- Training to over 6,339 firefighters annually
- Delivery of 612 classes annually
- A state-of-the-art training facility and mobile props
- Our annual Winter Fire School (which had 795 students in 2025)
- Regional fire schools
- Courses in most disciplines of fire service emergency response
- Certification written exams–increased to approximately 5,328 firefighters annually
- Certification skill exams–increased to approximately 4,904 firefighters annually
- Certifications–increased to over 3,800 firefighters annually
- 52 levels of certification testing–in addition to Utah Live Fire Training Standard (NFPA 1403)



Our Mission



Our mission is to train, certify, and support the Utah fire service at the highest level possible.



Our Vision

The Utah Fire and Rescue Academy at Utah Valley University will continue to be a premier fire training and certification organization in the nation, using consistent quality assessment and improvement strategies.





Our Values

Teamwork

We work cooperatively to achieve our goals. We recognize that each member of our team is important and essential to our success.

Customer Service

We are dedicated to meeting the needs of our customers through effective communication, innovation, and constant self-evaluation.

Accountability

We accept our organizational and individual responsibilities. We are accountable for our actions, decisions, and performance.

Commitment

We are committed to the safety of Utah firefighters. We understand that providing relevant and quality training and certification services enables fire departments to protect citizens in every Utah community.

Agility

We recognize that the ability to adapt in a changing market is a critical component of our success. We will remain aware of outside developments, innovations, and demographic changes by responding and adapting with speed and organizational flexibility.

Transparency

Every aspect of our organization operates in a transparent manner. Our operational, financial, and logistical processes are available for review at any time by our stakeholders and oversight boards.



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Strategic Goal 1



Train fire service emergency responders, fire officers, and fire prevention personnel

1. Provide a comprehensive and relevant “core course” menu.
2. Review and update core courses based on review cycles, changes in “best practices,” and/or changes in fire service consensus standards or state and federal regulations.
3. Create new courses based on customer needs, changes in “best practices,” new fire service consensus standards, and/or new state and federal regulations.
4. Provide one annual Winter Fire School that offers core and non-core courses covering a variety of fire service topics.
5. Provide regional fire schools that offer core and non-core courses.
6. When possible, support training events, seminars, symposiums, advisory groups, and roundtable discussions specific to fire service training.
7. Ensure a qualified, knowledgeable, and creditable instructor cadre.
8. Continue to convert traditional core courses to blended delivery formats.
9. Offer an annual instructor update.





Strategic Goal 2

Certify fire service emergency responders, fire officers, and fire prevention personnel

1. Maintain current certification levels.
2. Create new certification levels based on customer needs, creation of new classes, and/or changes in NFPA standards.
3. Maintain and update test banks and Utah state standards to comply with NFPA standards and/or changes in class curriculum.
4. Ensure a knowledgeable, qualified, and creditable certification tester cadre.
5. Provide an annual certification tester update.
6. Maintain dual accreditation with the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) and the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro Board).
7. Maintain a fee structure for certification testing, including free initial certification tests.
8. Maintain an in-house testing program for written state certification exams.
9. Facilitate quarterly Utah Fire Service Certification Council meetings.
10. Review certification policies annually.
11. Maintain non-affiliated accredited firefighter academy programs throughout the state of Utah.
12. Assist in the development and administration of the Utah Fire Officer Designation Program (International Association of Fire Chiefs).



Strategic Goal 3



Educate fire service personnel by assisting and promoting Utah Valley University (UVU) academic programs

1. Accredite and support the Recruit Candidate Academy for Utah Valley University.
2. Assist and promote Utah Valley University (UVU) academic programs.

Certificates (One Year)

- Firefighter Recruit Candidate, Certificate of Completion
- Paramedic, Certificate of Completion
- Emergency Medical Technician/Advanced Emergency Medical Technician, Certificate
- Emergency Management/Homeland Security Administration, Graduate Certificate

Associate of Applied Science Degrees

- Emergency Services Operations, A.A.S.
- Emergency Services, A.S.

Bachelor of Science Degrees

- Emergency Services Administration, B.S.

Master of Public Administration Degree

- Master of Public Administration, M.P.A.



Strategic Goal 4

Explore new technologies, methods, and programs related to fire training, fire prevention, and certification

1. Identify new methodologies related to class development and delivery.
2. Maintain and develop immersive learning software and practices that enhance training and certification of firefighters.
3. Increase student engagement by using new and existing technology.
4. Explore the use of unmanned systems in all aspects of fire service emergency response and mitigation.
5. Teach new live-fire methods to reduce risks to firefighters.
6. Maintain paperless registration for all training and certification events.
7. Utilize the UVU/UFRA computer lab for expanded teaching and online testing.
8. Research technology-enhanced simulated fire training and prevention programs.
9. Integrate disaster response and recovery into UFRA training classes.
10. Enhance existing software for wildland fire simulations and the Command Training Center.



Strategic Goal 5



Create and maintain partnerships with public and private organizations that benefit the Utah fire service

1. Financially assist (through training) the following organizations at their annual conferences:
 - Fire Marshals Association of Utah
 - Utah State Firefighters' Association
 - Utah State Fire Chiefs Association
 - North American Fire Training Directors (NAFTD)
2. Maintain partnerships with federal and state agencies and private organizations.
3. Maintain a Memorandum of Agreement with the Federal Excess Property Partnership (FEPP) Program.
4. Partner with various testing centers throughout the state of Utah for online testing/certifications.
5. Research, and when applicable, apply for/to:
 - Department of Homeland Security grants (AFG)
 - The National Fire Academy State Fire Course Endorsement Program
 - The National Fire Academy "hand-off" programs
 - Private/non-profit foundations
6. Seek "cost sharing" through partnerships with other organizations.
7. Maintain partnerships with federal, state, and/or local wildland firefighting agencies and committees that assist UFRA in providing and/or enhancing wildland firefighting training.
8. Support Utah non-affiliated accredited firefighter academies.





Strategic Goal 6

Evaluate and assess all aspects of UFRA to ensure relevance, compliance, credibility, effectiveness, and a safe environment for students and employees

1. Maintain and upgrade scheduling, resource tracking, and computer software programs to increase organizational effectiveness.
2. Maintain an effective asset control, tracking, maintenance, and replacement program.
3. Follow responsible financial practices within UVU's policies and procedures.
4. Maintain exceptional quality assurance programs that evaluate every core-class delivery and instructor.
5. Evaluate and maintain relevant employee training, qualification, certification, and/or licensing as required by state and/or federal regulations and within the policies of UVU.
 - **Objective 1.** Follow operational safety checklists and algorithms and develop accountability reports prior to and during classes, certification tests, and any UFRA event.
 - Provide training on changes to operational procedures for all staff, instructors, and testers.
 - Maintain data in UFRA databases to account for the number and condition of those participating in training or testing.
 - **Objective 2.** Maintain situational awareness by documenting changes, challenges, and effects of operational changes. This information is to be maintained by UFRA Quality Assurance and provided to the UFRA director.



Strategic Goal 7



Provide superior customer service and communication to the Utah fire service

1. Provide effective and meaningful training and staff development opportunities.
2. Provide single points of contact for fire service customers by assigning program managers and certification specialists to geographical areas of responsibility within the state.
3. Publish the quarterly *UFRA Straight Tip* magazine in hard-copy and digital formats.
4. Maintain a Volunteer Chief's annual roundtable to give the academy's volunteer fire service customers input on training, certification, and logistics related issues.
5. Maintain communication with the Utah fire service via program managers, the UFRA website, and social media.
6. Attend meetings of statewide, regional, and local fire organizations.
7. Communicate and coordinate with the State Fire Marshal's Office, the State Fire Prevention Board, and the Utah Fire Service Certification Council.
8. Maintain online class evaluations.
9. Develop and maintain the UFRA portal accessible through the UFRA website.

Communication

Program
Managers &
Certification
Specialists

*Straight
Tip*
Magazine

Social
Media
Platforms

UFRA
Website &
Portal

Strategic Goal 8



Develop and deliver comprehensive health and wellness education, training, and resource programs to support the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of the Utah fire service, enhancing resilience, performance, and long-term occupational health.

1. Financially assist and manage the Utah Firefighter Cancer Initiative through:
 - Legislative and grant funding
 - Philanthropic endeavors
 - Medical screening costs reimbursement to the Rocky Mountain Center for Occupational and Environmental Health (RMCOEH)
2. Maintain a Memorandum of Understanding with the RMCOEH.
3. Partner with state and federal firefighter mental health resources.
4. Create a health and wellness curriculum for the Utah fire service.
5. Collaborate with UVU and medical entities for a Firefighter Health and Wellness Center.



Appendix

Annual Operating Plan Matrix

Action	Responsible Division	Goal	Obj
General Staff			
Attend State Fire Prevention Board meetings	Administration	7	7
Attend Utah State Firefighters' Association quarterly meetings	Administration	7	6
Submit Annual Report to State Fire Marshal's Office prior to October 1 every year	Administration	7	7
Provide eight staff meetings annually	Administration	7	1
Attend statewide county chiefs meetings	Administration	7	6
Continue involvement in and delivery of courses for the statewide firefighter mental health initiative	Administration	5	2
Continue to work with our partners in developing a concept plan for a new joint training facility to provide Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) training for the Utah fire service and regional partners	Administration	5	2
Advocate for the Utah Firefighter Cancer Initiative	Health & Wellness	8	5
Review recommendations of the technology summit task force regarding UFRA database programs	Training/Certification/ Transportation/ Logistics	6	1

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Annual Operating Plan Matrix

Action	Responsible Division	Goal	Obj
Finance			
Manage annual Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG)	Finance	5	5
Manage annual NFA grant	Finance	5	5
Manage a Capital Asset Replacement Plan	Finance	6	2
Submit UFRA Quarterly Reports or organize financial information for mandatory audits	Finance	6	3
Provide training funds for annual meetings of the Fire Marshals Association of Utah, Utah State Fire Chiefs Association, Utah State Firefighters' Association, NFTD	Finance	5	1
Planning - Facilities			
Coordinate with UVU Scheduling for non-UVU event requests	Facilities	6	3
Submit work orders to UVU facilities as needed	Facilities	6	3
Coordinate with UVU facilities on installing a back-lit UFRA marquee sign and ES building directories	Facilities	6	3
Coordinate with Emergency Services leadership and UVU facilities regarding room use	Facilities	6	3

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Annual Operating Plan Matrix

Action	Responsible Division	Goal	Obj
Planning - Certification			
Provide certification tester updates	Certification	2	5
Conduct Train-the-Tester classes	Certification	2	5
Review Certification policies and procedures annually	Certification	2	6
Facilitate and schedule Utah Fire Service Certification Council meetings	Certification	2	9
Maintain non-affiliated accredited firefighter academy programs	Certification	2	11
Update test bank for Hazmat Awareness, Ops, Tech (NFPA 470)	Certification	2	2
Update Fire Inspector certification levels and book	Certification	2	1
Maintain Fire & Life Safety Education certification levels	Certification	2	2
Increase in-house tester cadre for written state certification exams	Certification	2	8
Update Confined Space Rescue Awareness, Ops, & Technician	Certification	2	2
Update Machinery Rescue Awareness, Ops, & Technician	Certification	2	2
Update Structural Collapse Rescue Awareness, Ops, & Technician	Certification	2	2

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Annual Operating Plan Matrix

Action	Responsible Division	Goal	Obj
Planning - Certification			
Maintain Technical Rescue, NFPA 1006	Certification	2	1
Maintain Questionmark software	Certification	4	2
Maintain new FileMaker database	Certification	4	2
Provide information transfer between Smartsheet and FileMaker	Certification	4	2
Transition from mailed exam results to emailed results	Certification	6	1
Utilize UFRA Portal services for certification, training, and fire department information	Certification	6	1
Conduct six off-site test audits	Certification	2	4
Planning - Publications			
Publish <i>Straight Tip</i> magazine quarterly, send physical copies to chiefs and stations (and links to digital version to subscribers)	Publications	7	3
Maintain and update <i>Straight Tip</i> guidelines	Publications	7	3

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Action	Responsible Division	Goal	Obj
Planning - Publications			
Maintain and update mailing and email list for <i>Straight Tip</i> magazine	Publications	7	3
Maintain and enhance UFRA website	Publications	7	5
Provide and maintain public posts on social media platforms	Publications	7	5
Provide a Vendor Expo at the 2026 Winter Fire School	Publications	5	2
Provide assistance for the Utah Fire Officer Designation Program	Publications	2	12
Maintain contracts with <i>Straight Tip</i> advertisers	Publications	5	2
Coordinate publication of the UFRA Annual Report	Publications	7	7
Maintain IFSTA Distributorship	Publications	5	6
Quality Assurance/Risk Management			
Evaluate delivery of core classes: instructors	QA/RM	6	4
Evaluate delivery of core classes: curriculum	QA/RM	6	4
Evaluate all regional and Winter Fire School core classes	QA/RM	6	4
Provide safety briefings as needed	QA/RM	7	1
Conduct quarterly facility risk management evaluation walk-throughs	QA/RM	6	5

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Action	Responsible Division	Goal	Obj
Quality Assurance/Risk Management			
Conduct six class QA/RM audits annually	QA/RM	6	4
Publish Program Manager Annual Quality Report	QA/RM	6	5
Publish Annual Injury Report	QA/RM	6	6
Publish Annual Quality Assurance Report	QA/RM	6	3
Publish Regional and Winter Fire School Quality Assurance Reports	QA/RM	6	4
Update Standard Operating Guidelines and Performance Review	QA/RM	6	6
Logistics - Support Services			
Provide equipment training biannually	Logistics	6	5
Evaluate equipment operator certifications annually	Logistics	6	5
Rehab props and support trailers within 24 hours of arrival and get them to a ready state	Logistics	6	2
Evaluate CDL licenses annually	Logistics	6	5
Maintain UFRA Fleet	Logistics	6	2

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Annual Operating Plan Matrix

Action	Responsible Division	Goal	Obj
Logistics - Transportation			
Utilize and maintain UFRA fleet by following Utah state laws and UVU fleet operations, policies, and procedures	Logistics	6	3
Inspect and maintain SCBA according to manufacturer's instructions	Logistics	6	5
Maintain Holmatro Extraction Equipment rotation agreement	Logistics & Finance	6	2
Create Petzl Technical Rescue Equipment rotation agreement	Logistics & Finance	6	2
Maintain Water Mapping Props	Logistics	6	2
Operations			
Deliver Truck Ops, High-Rise, and Big Box courses	Operations	1	3
Continue to update and add additional postings to Firefighter Fundamentals	Operations	1	2
Expand Resource One as an online training tool	Operations	1	8
Maintain Volunteer Officer Development online training	Operations	1	3
Provide Lithium-Ion Battery and Electric Vehicles training	Operations	1	3
Plan and coordinate the 2026 Winter Fire School	Operations	1	4
Provide regional fire schools	Operations	1	5

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Annual Operating Plan Matrix

Action	Responsible Division	Goal	Obj
Operations			
Continue instructor updates and schedule Train-the-Trainers as needed	Operations	1	2&7
Provide NWCG classes off-site	Operations	1	3
Program managers: attend county chiefs meetings in assigned regions	Operations	7	6
Provide support for fire department promotional exams as requested	Operations	1	6
Coordinate and support the delivery of National Fire Academy classes	Operations	1	6
Advanced Training and Special Operations			
Produce firefighter training and skills videos	Adv Training/Special Operations	1	2 & 7
Deliver multiple ISFSI Fire Dynamics classes	Adv Training/Special Operations	1	6
Develop specifications and purchase a mobile Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) prop	Adv Training/Special Operations	4	1
Develop Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) curriculum and create instructor/controller cadre	Adv Training/Special Operations	1	6
Develop specifications and purchase tech rescue equipment	Adv Training/Special Operations	1	3

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Action	Responsible Division	Goal	Obj
Advanced Training and Special Operations			
Develop Tech Rescue disciplines curriculum and create instructor cadre	Adv Training/Special Operations	1	3
Continue to reassess and update the curriculum for the Command Training Center and Fireground Operations and Tactics classes to address the needs of full-time and volunteer fire agencies throughout the state	Adv Training/Special Operations	1	2
Offer instructor updates annually for the Command Training Center (CTC) curriculum	Adv Training/Special Operations	1	6
Firefighter Health & Wellness			
Develop and maintain a Health & Wellness Policies & Procedures manual	Firefighter Health & Wellness	8	
Develop and integrate social media platforms to provide resources on firefighter health, wellness, peer support, education, and occupational health.	Firefighter Health & Wellness	7	2
Develop and deliver comprehensive health and wellness education, training, and resource programs and classes.	Firefighter Health & Wellness	8	5
Build a Health and Wellness cadre of Instructors	Firefighter Health & Wellness	8	4
Collaborate with UVU Health Professionals on the design, development, and continued support of the Health & Wellness Village initiative.	Firefighter Health & Wellness	8	3
Upon request from the UFCI Screening Test Protocol Committee, UFRA will provide a list of eligible firefighters for cancer screenings	Firefighter Health & Wellness	8	1



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