Category X: External Systems Relationships

An agency’s external relationships are defined as those relationships which serve to integrate the performance of one system with another. The increased use of multi-unit systems and the increase of interagency agreements between various types of government entities necessitates regular attention to these relationships and the agreements between autonomous operating units. Agreements must be legally adopted, current, monitored, and updated within the accrediting period. Programs which rely on support from external system relationships to meet agency expectations must be referenced in the agreement.
**Criterion 10A: External Agency Relationships**

The agency’s operations and planning efforts include relationships with external agencies and operational systems that affect or may influence its mission, operations, and/or cost effectiveness.

**Summary:**

The department has developed external relationships with public and private agencies. These relationships are found at the local, regional, state, and federal level. These relationships are based upon mutual development and implementation of agreements which benefits both parties. These collaborative relationships have resulted in improved service delivery which supports the department’s mission. Several agreements and programs have proven to be cost effective in terms of both service delivery and department operations. The department Strategic Plan has identified the importance of external relationships and encourages finding new partners for the betterment of the community and the department. Inclusive in this are all the departments within the City’s municipal structure as well as those agencies included within the Douglas County automatic tender aid (joint response agreement) and mutual aid agreements. The department maintains strategic relationships under an automatic tender aid agreement (Inter-Local Agreement) with municipal and county agencies within Douglas County. The department also participates in the Douglas County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and the State of Kansas Emergency Response Plan.
Performance Indicators:

CC 10A.1 The agency develops and maintains outside relationships that support its mission, operations, and/or cost effectiveness.

Description
The department develops and maintains external relationships with jurisdictional and regional agencies through in-kind services, mutual aid agreements, and memorandums of understanding. Locally, these relationships include but not limited to:

- City agencies (Lawrence Police Department, Lawrence Public Works, Lawrence Utility)
- Jurisdictional agencies (Douglas County Municipal, Fire District and Township Fire Departments, Douglas County Emergency Management, Douglas County Emergency Communications - E-911, Douglas County Sheriff’s Department, Kansas State Fire Service Training Institute)
- Regional (Kansas Regional Hazardous Material Teams, Kansas Regional USAR Teams, State Mutual Aid Compact)
- Private organizations (American Red Cross, Rural Water District Associations, Lawrence Memorial Hospital, University of Kansas, Haskell Indian Nations University, etc.).

These relationships enable the department to meet its mission and cost effectiveness through direct or indirect emergency incident support, training opportunities, specialized resources, and in-kind services. The Department’s Strategic Plan supports relationships with external partners to promote improved services.

Appraisal
These relationships have adequately supported department operations in support of its mission and provided cost effective measures that has allowed the department to re-allocate funding to other program areas. As an example, the use of annual multi-agency drills have been effective in the development of department protocols and promoted an improved communication process. The department has established training and professional development opportunities with private organizations free of charge which has led to cost effectiveness. The department has established a “bank” of fire training credits that provides free tuition to department members in pursuit of professional
certifications. Additionally, training has been provided by Lawrence Memorial Hospital that otherwise would have been taught by private vendors for a fee. The combined funding provided by Douglas County Emergency Management has provided hazardous materials team training through grant funding that has effectively allowed purchase of equipment and materials that otherwise would have been financially restrictive for a single entity. The collaboration and cooperation with these outside agencies ensures the department maintains beneficial relationships. Additionally, commitment in some operational groups such as the state search and rescue task force can strain some operating budgets.

Plan

The department believes the benefit in participating with external agencies is invaluable to our successful operations and plans to continue balancing our daily workload with the participation in outside agencies. The department will continue to seek funding when available to reduce the budget impact in our participation in outside agencies.

References

2016-2021 Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical Strategic Plan
Lecompton Fire District Auto Aid Agreement
Douglas County Emergency Management Agreement
State Technical Rescue, Mass Casualty Agreement
Douglas County Tender Agreement
10A.2 The agency’s strategic plan identifies relationships with external agencies/systems and their anticipated impact or benefit to the agency's mission, operations, or cost effectiveness.

**Description**

The department’s Strategic Plan identifies external agency relationships as part of the Strengths Weakness Opportunities and Threat (SWOT) Analysis and Goals and Objectives sections. The SWOT analysis lists external relationships as an opportunity to improve department operations. Goal 4, Objective 4A in the strategic plan supports the development of external relationships that support and improve department programs and services.

**Appraisal**

The Strategic Plan has been effective at identifying external resources that support department operations. Programs and Services (page 20) identified 44 external agencies that potentially have a positive effect on department operations. These relationships have proven to be effective in supporting the department’s mission or providing cost effective benefits. The effectiveness of department operations and services is dependent upon the input of external stakeholders. The department strategic plan represents the participation of external agencies, and provides direction for serving the department and identified surrounding agencies.

**Plan**

The department will continue to provide, as part of its Strategic Plan, a list of external relationships that affect department operations. As part of the SWOT analysis opportunity section, the department will investigate new relationships to support department operations. The department will continue to use the strategic plan process to provide definition of external agency relationships and their impact on its operations and effectiveness.

**References**

2016-2021 Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical Strategic Plan
10A.3 The agency researches, analyzes, and gives consideration to all types of functional relationships that may aid in the achievement of its goals and objectives.

Description
The department identifies the need for all types of functional agreements that support the department in achieving its organizational goals and objectives. These functional agreements include emergency response (auto/mutual aid agreements and memorandums of understanding), mitigation plan reviews (Douglas County EOP), service agreements (FireHouse Programs and ESO), and other service agreements (Kansas State Fire Marshal). The department’s Strategic Plan identifies external relationships and recognizes the need to establish relationships that supports the department’s mission and organizational goals. Strategic Plan Goal 4 is to “continue to strengthen and enhance relationships within the City and County”.

Appraisal
The above processes have adequately met department needs by identifying gaps where functional agreements would be beneficial. Gaps identified in active shooter capabilities in the county has resulted in a Countywide Active Shooter Response Plan. This plan has also recognized the need for identifying new resources. Contractual agreements receive periodic review to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. This process is adequate for the department.

Plan
The department will continue to monitor all current functional agreements. The department will continue to identify areas where service gaps occur and seek functional agreements to enable the department to accomplish its mission. Objective 4 of the department’s Strategic Plan will identify outside agencies that support department programs and goals. Once identified, the department will conduct a needs analysis, meet with potential partners and empower the partnership. The department will continue to research and consider other functional agreements that might enhance the operations of the department and further aid the department in achieving its goals and objectives.
References

Grant Township Agreement

NE Region Transfer of Equipment Agreement – Task Force Trailer

Douglas County Emergency Operations Plan

Active Shooter Plan
10A.4 A conflict resolution process exists between all external organizations with whom the agency has a defined relationship.

Description
The department includes a conflict resolution clause when needed in each agreement. Each agreement may utilize a different method to resolve conflicts that arise between the department and other participating agencies. The Chief of Department or his/her designee acts as the department’s representative in said conflict resolution actions.

Appraisal
The conflict resolution clauses in the various agreements have been adequate thus far for all agencies that participate in said agreements.

Plan
The department will continue to ensure that conflict resolution clauses remain in force within all agreements established between the department and all other external agencies.

References
Cooperation Agreement Concerning the Provision of Emergency Medical Services in Douglas County, Section 11: Termination
**Criterion 10B: External Agency Agreements**

The agency maintains current agreements with those external agencies which support the identified programs. All external agency agreements required to be maintained in support of any program must be current, reviewed, and/or updated within the accreditation period and adopted by the appropriate governing bodies. All agreements should support the agency’s effort to take advantage of any operational and cost effective benefits. Data reports, at least annually, should reflect the impact of each agreement on the agency.

**Summary:**

The department maintains agreements that support department operations. These agreements include emergency service automatic and requested mutual aid, support for the department’s record management system and analysis software, and physical fitness assessments. The fire chief is responsible for the maintenance and review of all department agreements. A process is in place where agreements are subject to review by the City Attorney and may require the approval by the governing body prior to implementation. The department’s command staff aids the fire chief in review and implementation of emergency service agreements.
Performance Indicators:

CC 10B.1 External agency agreements are reviewed on an annual basis and revised as necessary to meet objectives.

Description
Existing department agreements are current and support organizational objectives. The guidelines of the department reflect its participation in said agreements. SOP 102.40 Program Management Assignments identifies the Fire Chief and Accreditation Manager as the positions responsible for managing the review of external agency agreements. Additionally, the Executive Staff participate as part of the review process to ensure the agreements are meeting the department’s objectives.

Appraisal
The agreements entered into by the department are current and support the department’s organizational objectives. Annual review of the agreements ensures currency and appropriateness to mission and capabilities.

Plan
The department will continue to participate in automatic and mutual aid agreements with external agencies. Additionally, the department will incorporate the provisions of the agreements into its operational practices where needed and review agreements when necessary.

References
Mutual Aid Agreements

Automatic Tender Agreements

SOP 102.20 Program Management-Assignments

Executive Staff and Managers Meeting Schedule
10B.2 The agency has a process by which their agreements are managed, reviewed, and revised.

**Description**

As part of any participation in any agreements, the department reviews and revises said agreements as needed. The City legal services department conducts a review of all new and revised agreements to verify consideration of all legal parameters. Additionally, the City administration and the City Commission receive notification from the Chief of the Department of any changes or new agreements for approval. Further, Kansas State Statutes allow for the existence and use of unwritten mutual aid agreements. Per the site team 2012 recommendation the department has established an electronic filing system for secure documents.

**Appraisal**

The review and management processes used have met department and city requirements. The participation by the command staff has aided in the review process by identifying needed changes in procedures or commitment of resources.

**Plan**

The department will continue to monitor this process to ensure compliance and effectiveness. The fire chief will manage the storage, security and access of all agreements.

**References**

External Contract Example

Screen Shot of Electronic Filing System