

**STAPPA/ALAPCO
Training Committee
Questionnaire
Of
State and Local Air Quality
Training Providers**

Prepared: January 11, 2002

The STAPPA/ALAPCO/EPA Joint Training Committee developed the following questions to be used in collecting commonly available information from state and local air quality training providers. The information collected will be used, as needed, to assess the training activities and performance of training providers. For example, the information can be used to assist the Committee in situations where total grant requests from air quality training providers exceed the total amount of “off-the-top” Section 105 grants allocated for national air quality training.

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1. How does your training plan (e.g., course offerings) address the air quality training needs identified in the most recent biannual STAPPA/ALAPCO training needs assessment (currently the FY 2002-2003 Assessment)?

The STAPPA/ALAPCO training needs assessment is an important source of information about training needs. All 10 of MARAMA’s agencies participated in the FY 2002-2003 Assessment. In July 2001, MARAMA’s Training Committee reviewed the results of the Assessment with Joy Motheral of SYSTANY, Inc., focusing on results for the MARAMA region. EPA (Jeff Whitlow) helped the Committee consider additional information about the status of various courses. As a result, MARAMA’s course schedule for 2001 covered 6 of the topics and the schedule for 2002 covers 13 of the topics the Assessment listed as most important for the MARAMA region. In cases where a course was requested but it was out of date (e.g., APTI 452), we offered an equivalent alternative (e.g., the CARB 100 series). In addition, MARAMA offered several workshops covering topics where requested courses did not exist (e.g., regional haze emissions inventory and modeling courses) or investigated whether a course should be developed (e.g., NSR for permit writers). MARAMA intends to continue to offer and develop courses or workshops to meet requests expressed through the Assessment.

2. What is your historical “off-the-top” Section 105 grant funding level? Do not include in this amount any base Section 105 grants provided by state and local agencies or other extraneous sources of funding that support your program.

Fiscal Year	Amount
1999	\$105,000
2000	\$105,000
2001	\$125,000
2002	\$135,000

3. Is your current request for “off-the-top” Section 105 grant funds:

Greater than last year?

Less than last year?

Why?

MARAMA agencies are experiencing travel restrictions as a result of reductions in state revenues, thus needing courses to be offered close to their offices. Large agencies (e.g., Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina) have regional office staff who handle permitting and compliance/enforcement work, and thus have a very large number of staff needing training. In addition to the training grant, the MARAMA Directors have committed an increasing amount of base grant funding and have earmarked regional haze funding from the

regional planning organization for workshops and training. MARAMA plans to make its Assistant Meeting Manager position full time in 2002 (currently half time) in order to be able to handle the increased schedule of courses. To maintain its commitment to baseline training in the face of increased costs and demands, MARAMA is requesting a gradual increase in its training grant to **\$140,000**.

4. When you hire external training consultants to provide training, what process or criteria do you use to ensure the cost-effective use of those funds?

We review available options, consider previous experience and course ratings (both at MARAMA and other regional organizations), and consider the course content and cost. For example, in response to MARAMA members' requests, this year we offered training for odor inspectors for the first time. Using information from AWMA and EPA, MARAMA's Training Coordinator determined that two contractors offered odor inspector courses, and that one was much more expensive than the other. She obtained information about the courses' content, requested references, consulted with MARAMA members who were experts in the field, and inquired with EPA and other regional agencies about any experience with the courses. Having determined that the course quality was acceptable, MARAMA chose to offer the option that cost less and allowed a larger class size. The course received excellent ratings from most attendees.

In cases where we are deciding whether to repeat a course previously offered, we rely primarily on course evaluations if the cost of the course has not changed substantially. For example, we find that CARB courses provide an excellent value, as do some EOHSI and APTI courses. However, we will not repeat a course that has been given poor reviews unless we are assured that the course has been substantially improved.

5. Who may attend your training courses?

Only member agencies

National audience

Generally describe who attends your courses and the area where your courses are offered.

Generally, for training courses sponsored by MARAMA, approximately five seats (out of 25 or 30) are made available to state/local agency staff from outside MARAMA who may wish to attend, and we have frequently had attendees from outside MARAMA.

In addition, we seek opportunities to co-sponsor training with nearby regions. In January 2000 we co-sponsored a national Emissions Modeling workshop with LADCO, and in June 2000 we co-sponsored a PM2.5 Emissions Inventory workshop with SESARM (both base grant funded). We are seeking to sponsor a joint NESCAUM-MARAMA Air Quality Monitoring meeting in 2002.

Furthermore, we often provide travel support for experts from other regions to speak at MARAMA workshops. For example, we brought a CARB expert to our August 2001 Diesel Emissions Control Meeting, and we brought an expert from Vermont to our July 2001 NCVECS OBD II training course.

6. Describe your infrastructure (e.g., training staff, training facilities, training networks/consultants) for providing air quality training to state and local air agencies?

MARAMA's Training Coordinator is a full time position whose sole responsibility is to manage MARAMA's training courses and workshops. In 2000 Ms. Alice Lutrey completed a certificate in Meeting Planning Management at Goucher College with tuition reimbursement from MARAMA.

In 2001 MARAMA hired a part-time Assistant Meeting Manager, who has taken responsibility for scheduling and logistics for CARB courses. In 2002 we plan to make her position a full time position with responsibility for additional logistics and administrative support.

MARAMA's Executive Director takes an active interest in the training program, and all MARAMA staff support agenda development or logistics for several MARAMA workshops throughout the year. Because of MARAMA's expertise in training, the MANE-VU RPO is unique in its emphasis on training for agency staff involved in regional haze planning.

In FY 2000 MARAMA formed a Training Committee, whose members have been active in helping to shape MARAMA's training schedule as well as providing on-site support for MARAMA courses and workshops. Committee members help arrange field trips for CARB courses, find appropriate training facilities, and circulate information about MARAMA training opportunities. MARAMA encourages each of its members to develop agency and individual training plans and has worked on this effort at each of its annual Training Committee meetings.

7. Identify whether you primarily facilitate the delivery of existing training and/or develop training materials and courses, and your process for revising/improving training courses.

MARAMA uses training grant funds primarily to sponsor existing courses, but also improves or develops at least one course per year and provides workshops or meetings to cover immediate needs where courses do not exist. In 2001, eleven of nineteen events sponsored by the MARAMA training grant were existing courses, two were new or improved courses (Rutgers' Advanced NOx Control Course, and Region III's MOBILE 6 training), three were national workshops with significant training content, and three were regional meetings/workshops related to training. Base grant and regional haze funding were more often used for ad hoc workshops, regional coordination meetings, and support for national/regional conferences.

MARAMA's process for developing or improving courses is to work closely with EPA, outside experts, and MARAMA members through conference calls, meetings, and/or surveys, to ensure a high quality product that meets member needs and is useful in other regions. Several examples follow.

In FY 1999 MARAMA hired Rutgers EOHSI to develop an area source MACT course, needed in order for Region III states to accept delegation of area source MACT standards. MARAMA worked closely with experts at Region III and conducted a meeting and numerous conference calls with course developers and EPA and state/local staff to ensure that the course met agencies' needs. MARAMA pilot tested the course and provided information to other regional training providers.

In FY 2001 a similar approach was followed in order to improve an existing course on Advanced NOx Control. In this case, surveys of state/local agency staff were also used to help provide information for course developers and guide course content.

In FY 2000 we hired a Carnegie Mellon University researcher to develop a course explaining a new system he had developed for calculating ammonia emissions. MARAMA directed that the course include both classroom and hands-on training in order to reinforce the material learned.

All three of these courses have subsequently been offered in other regions.

- 8. Have you tracked your past performance in delivering training to state and local air agency staff? Please identify your previous reporting practices (e.g., to EPA) and summarize the number of state and local air agency staff trained per course/topic and the number of courses offered during the last calendar year. If you have statistics for earlier years, provide them too.**

MARAMA submits formal quarterly reports to EPA Region III and EPA OAQPS. These reports include updates to MARAMA's training schedule, evaluations of courses offered during the quarter, and brief information about quarterly accomplishments.

Please see Attachments A, B, and C, which show the number of students attending MARAMA workshops, meetings, and training courses in the past three fiscal years. Our current schedule for FY2002 is attachment D.

- 9. Do you request course evaluations from trainees and do you track the results?**

MARAMA always requests course evaluations from trainees. We report the results to our Board (the Air Directors for MARAMA's member agencies) as well as to EPA. We use the evaluations to help shape our future schedule and decisions about whether to continue to use specific instructors.

10. How do the state and local air directors in your area, as well as your EPA regional manager(s), rate your training program?

MARAMA's directors are very supportive of MARAMA's training program. It is discussed at each of their quarterly meetings, and they consider it to be one of the most important functions of MARAMA. See forthcoming letter from Alan Klimek, MARAMA's Chair, to Howard Wright.

EPA Region III is MARAMA's lead region. Regional staff are very cooperative in working with MARAMA on training workshops and improving courses. We have a very close and productive working relationship with Region III.