

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

January 14, 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)?

NESCAUM uses not only the STAPPA/ALAPCO Training Needs Assessment to assess the Northeast states training needs but also a Survey which is distributed to the Northeast states' Training Coordinators every year, as well as a Self-Assessment Interview with the Air Director of each Northeast state (every two years). All NESCAUM technical committees are also interviewed over the course of the year. The goal is to not only determine training needs from the bottom-up and top-down of each Air Agency, but also to increase awareness of our training program. After the data is gathered from all sources, NESCAUM determines which subject areas have been identified as being the most relevant for the coming years. Then we identify what courses have already been developed and begin the process of offering as many of these as fiscally possible. For the subject areas where courses do not exist or are outdated, NESCAUM has attempted either to develop these (eg, Top Down BACT and Basic Mobile Sources) or discuss with other organizations, how best to address those courses that are still relevant but in need of updating.

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.

The previous year funding level was \$248,850. This years request is for \$292,450.

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

Greater than last year?

Less than last year?

Why?

NESCAUM is requesting an additional \$43,600 to fulfill the continuing need in the Northeast for courses addressing mobile source issues. In the past fiscal year, NESCAUM developed Mobile Source 101 which was identified as a much needed introductory course by the Northeast states Needs Survey as well as the Director Self-Assessment Interviews. After receiving funding to develop the course, NESCAUM engaged in a 6-month process to develop the course and it has been successfully offered twice. NESCAUM is requesting additional funds to offer this course again and to develop a more advanced Mobile Source Curriculum (see the attached list of possible courses). NESCAUM will develop 3-4 advanced courses over the coming year depending on the level of funding received.

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?

After NESCAUM has identified courses that will fulfill the Needs Survey and Self-Assessment Interview results, we determine which courses exist that will meet the needs. Typically there is little overlap between providers, but if there is, we use the provider located geographically closest to us since this cuts down on travel costs (car versus plane). In cases where we hire a consultant to develop a course we have usually issued an RFP and choose the organization that best fits our needs and budget.

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.

All of your courses are offered in the Northeast to staff of the Northeast states air agencies, local air agencies, and Tribal members. We typically hold 5 spaces for out-of-region students.

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

NESCAUM has a Training Coordinator and course Registrar. We utilize our member states' training facilities and request assistance from the host state with regard to on-site coordination. Each of our eight member states has a Training Coordinator (albeit not full-time one) and they provide assistance with hosting a course. NESCAUM also uses outside contractors on an ad hoc basis to teach courses when necessary.

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.

NESCAUM is engaged in delivering existing courses through CARB, Rutgers, EOHSI, and APTI. We have been developing courses in areas where there is an absence such as mobile source issues and Top Down BACT, and we have begun the process of identifying existing courses needing to be updated. NESCAUM is discussing with Rutgers University a number of courses in need of updating and will use some funds to update some of those courses. NESCAUM technical committees have in the past offered

valued assistance in developing and updating courses, and we will use the expertise found among our member states for this purpose.

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.

We have reported to EPA as a grantee of Training Funds. NESCAUM reports annually to the member states' Air Directors.

In 2001 NESCAUM offered 14 courses. This represented 32 days of training. Three additional courses were funded, scheduled but postponed. These three will be offered in 2002 and include: EOHSI Area Source MACT, CARB Gasoline Facilities, and CSU On Board Diagnostics. If all of our s2001 cheduled courses had been offered, **NESCAUM would have offered 17 courses with 39 days of training.** The following list represents the courses which were held in 2001.

Jan-01	Presentation Skills	10
Feb-01	Top Down BACT	17
Mar-01	Mercury Training	34
Mar-01	Odor School	21
May-01	MWI Negotiation Skills	18
Jun-01	EOHSI Inspection of Gas Control Devices	15
Oct-01	Permit Writing	20
Oct-02	Smoke School	15
Oct-01	MOBILE6 (Lecture)	16
Oct-01	MOBILE6 (Computer)	22
Nov-02	Smoke School	18
Nov-01	Basic Mobile Source Course	30
Nov-01	EOHSI Revised NOx Controls	34
Dec-01	MWI Negotiation Skills	24

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

Every course offered by NESCAUM is evaluated. There are evaluation forms collected at the end of the course, but we have found that an even better measurement of course effectiveness is a request for an evaluation 2-3 weeks after the course has ended. Each of

our member states' training coordinator emails a questionnaire out to the attending students a few weeks after the course has ended asking them to rate the course and other questions related to the usefulness of the course. We track the results and use them when determining whether to offer the course again. For example, if a course has received consistent evaluations describing it as "outdated", if it is to be offered again, it must be updated by the provider.

NESCAUM maintains a data base which also tracks students course work and their credits towards graduation from the Academy.

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

States Air Directors consistently rate the NESCAUM training program as excellent. Every two years NESCAUM staff interview the member state Air Directors (Self-Assessment Project) and ask them to rate the training program. Consistently we receive very high ratings. We are in the process of writing a report on these Directors interviews on these findings and will submit it upon finalization (Spring 2002).