

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

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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)?

METRO 4-SESARM planning is generally consistent with what STAPPA/ALAPCO identify as priority training needs. Each year when the training coordinators meet in the Southeast, national priorities and training opportunities are reviewed and taken into consideration. The final regional priorities are determined with input from the local and state training coordinators and agency directors and are set to address specific needs of the Southeast.

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.

METRO 4-SESARM have generally received funding in the range of \$60-75,000 per year. Our regional organization was a late arrival on the training scene and thus has received what might be called leftover funding. Our region needs better funding support as our training program continues to grow and be enhanced.

3. Is your current request for “off-the-top” Section 105 grant funds greater than or about the same as last year’s request?

We anticipate this year’s funding request being greater than last year’s amount. We currently have 13 courses scheduled for 2002. Generally we presume our expenses to range as high as \$10,000 per course including costs for hotel costs, audio-visual equipment, and incidentals. Therefore, our overall need for 2002 may be as much as \$130,000. We would expect a similar level of training, and thus expenses, for 2003.

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?

METRO 4-SESARM are often in contact with U.S. EPA regarding training providers. We normally use nationally recognized providers and rarely use someone not approved by APTI. If a training provider is not known to our agencies or to EPA, the level of scrutiny of their proposals is much more detailed. We prepare advertisements for training services and review bids utilizing our organization’s network of interested individuals including the executive director, the agency training coordinators, and the agency directors or their designees.

5. Who may attend your training courses? Generally describe who attends your courses and the area where your courses are offered.

Our primary focus is to meet the needs of our member agencies. However, other individuals may attend if space is available and interest exists. We try to rotate courses around the southeastern states as much as possible in the interest of fairness and convenience. Some states are more active than others in the way that they plan and deliver formalized training and this impacts the locations where training is actually held. The actual locations of courses are somewhat concentrated within the boundaries of the agency jurisdictions where the greatest focus on training exists. We locate training where possible to accommodate multiple agency participation and also we cooperate with neighboring regional organizations to provide training across those boundaries. We alternate training sites within a single state by offering courses in different cities to provide as much access to training as possible by the largest number of agencies.

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

Our facilities vary, with larger agencies having official training rooms and satellite downlinks. We utilize Cincinnati facilities in particular to provide training to Kentucky staff. We also use hotels, conference centers, and colleges as locations for training courses. Most of the facilities we use are rented. Not all agencies have full-time training coordinators but the larger agencies usually have extra resources to dedicate a full-time staff person to training. Training coordinators meet via telephone and e-mail regularly. We hold at least one regional training meeting each year and also network together at other national and regional 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.

We primarily facilitate training courses provided by contractors. Our regional organization has not had the funding support to develop a more detailed training strategy including hiring of a full-time training coordinator. We provide feedback to EPA, STAPPA/ALAPCO, and vendors regarding course content and instructors. However, since we do not develop much in the way of training materials ourselves, revision and improvement is limited to what we can accomplish through adjustments to the next advertisement and contract for a particular course.

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.

Training coordinators in the various agencies are responsible for tracking their respective training. This includes the number of staff receiving training and the number of attendees at given courses. We report our training activities in accordance with federal grant work plan commitments. Some agencies maintain electronic data bases containing training records for individual employees. Others do not have the resources to conduct this work. We do not immediately have a course and attendee list available for this past year or previous years due to the current Metro 4-SESARM office transition. We anticipate having a better handle on this in the future. We are attaching a schedule of courses being offered in the Southeast during the FY 2002 cycle.

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

Yes, we do request evaluations. Tracking results in a systematic way is not done. There is not a standardized approach to evaluating courses and different criteria may be used depending on the circumstances. We would like to improve this in the future.

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

Directors of those agencies most frequently participating in training are complimentary of our efforts and give our training high marks. However, there is a mixed level of interest, support, funding, and staff resources dedicated to training. Further, there are budget complications right now which are impacting the ability of agencies to provide training, even though it remains a critical need. Continued and enhanced funding and technical support of training at the federal level are necessary. Many agencies have suffered high levels of staff turnover in recent years which has elevated the necessity of frequent, high quality training. It is important that Metro 4-SESARM efforts to meet training needs are supported in the national training fund allocation process.