

Air Force Association Strategic Plan 2012 - 2014

Preamble:

AFA is a non-profit, independent, professional military and aerospace education association. Under its umbrella, the Air Force Association includes the Air Force Memorial Foundation (AFMF) and the Air Force Association Veteran Benefits Association (AFAVBA). We have established a Strategic Plan to ensure the mission, vision, and core values of the Association are properly reflected in its actions and programs at all levels of the organization. The Air Force Association Strategic Plan for 2012-2014 sets the strategic direction for the Association and updates and builds upon previous planning cycles. The plan presents a fully-integrated effort and consensus by the Association's leadership, including all key internal councils, committees, the Executive Committee, and the Board of Directors. It is the collective responsibility of the entire Association to help ensure the AFA Vision is realized and the AFA Mission is accomplished through the strategic priorities, goals, and objectives set forth in the Strategic Plan.

Background/History:

The idea of an Air Force Association can be traced to Billy Mitchell who saw the need for a national civilian society devoted to airpower as a great national asset, dedicated to national security, the betterment of all mankind and having deep 'grass roots' strength. In late 1944 General Henry H. Arnold began the process to form an association of former officers and enlisted members of the Army Air Corps. On January 24, 1946 the formation of the Air Force Association was publicly announced with Lt Gen Jimmy Doolittle as National President. The purposes/bylaws have changed somewhat over the years, but have remained remarkably similar right to today. The original purposes included:

- To preserve and foster a spirit of fellowship
- To assist in keeping the Air Force adequate, strong, and powerful for the defense of our country
- To educate its members and the public on airpower
- To commemorate the memory of those who have given their life in defense of our country
- To perpetuate the traditions of the Air Force

Mission:

Our mission is to promote a dominant United States Air Force, a strong national defense, and to honor Airmen and our Air Force Heritage.

To accomplish this, we:

EDUCATE the public on the critical need for unmatched aerospace power and a technically superior workforce to ensure U.S. national security.

ADVOCATE for aerospace power and STEM education.

SUPPORT the Total Air Force family, and promote aerospace education.

We educate the American people to create an informed public armed with the knowledge to effectively participate in the national debate over the resources essential to maintain a dominant Air Force and strong national defense. Key to maintaining a dominant and technologically advanced Air Force and a strong national defense is a strong and growing economy with a technically superior workforce. This includes a world-class education system, especially in Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines. An educated public is also aware of the necessity and contribution of aerospace forces; it is a public who will support and encourage those who volunteer to serve in the United States Air Force, as well as our nation's other military services. As used in this plan, the term "aerospace" is understood to include the domains of air, space and cyberspace. AFA provides or supports public awareness programs, education programs, and financial assistance to further America's aerospace excellence. This is accomplished through open forums, symposia, publications, and professional development opportunities. An educated public is essential to ensuring an understanding of the needs of the Air Force – a Total Force built on technological superiority, including its workforce and industrial base. The U.S. Air Force has reiterated the critical need for the Air Force Association's assistance in creating a better understanding of the 21st century U.S. Air Force roles and missions by the public, elected leadership, Air Force Airmen, and sister services.

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We advocate because we live in a nation founded upon the principles of democratic participation. Our country makes its most important decisions in a forum of free and open public debate. The wisdom of our political system is the recognition that a free people will raise their voices to demand those things that will preserve and enhance national security. We believe aerospace power and a robust STEM education system are essential to maintaining a strong national defense and national security. Why is STEM education is so important and what must we do? U.S. combat operations share a common linkage – the use of technology to gain an advantage in the battle arena. This capability is the product of an education infrastructure that has cultivated researchers, innovators, engineers, operators, and maintenance personnel who are capable of designing, operating, and supporting these technologies. As we look to the future, it is clear there will be demand for an even higher level of basic education and increasing percentage of individuals with STEM skills. The global economy has "flattened" the world in terms of skills and technology. A new workforce of problem-solvers, innovators, and inventors who are self-reliant and able to think logically is one of the critical foundations that drive our nation's economy and our security. Wide support of STEM is essential to the quality of life for our nation's people. Our status as an independent, professional source of credible information allows us to make our case in places and ways at times denied by statute to our uniformed military leaders. It is our duty as an organization of committed patriots and aerospace professionals to carry the banners of aerospace power and the need for a strong national defense to every level of our society.

We support the Total Air Force: Air Force Airmen – Active, Guard, and Reserve; veterans and retirees; Air Force civilian employees; Air Force Academy/AFROTC cadets; and the families who share their sacrifices. We recognize that aerospace power and a strong national defense rest in the hands of the people who have chosen to serve, whether in uniform, or the private and public sectors. We acknowledge that service in our armed forces constitutes the highest form of citizenship, and we honor their service and sacrifices. Without the dedication of those people our nation could not prevail. AFA support also contributes to strengthening these critical defense capabilities by vigorously promoting aerospace education. This includes providing educational scholarships, supporting programs to encourage aerospace education in related STEM disciplines, and recognizing excellence in the teaching of these subjects.

Vision:

The Air Force Association will be the premier professional military and aerospace education association in the nation – dedicated to dominant air, space and cyberspace power, a strong national defense, supporting the men and women of the United States Air Force, and world-class aerospace education.

Our professional nature emphasizes a purpose not associated with individual gain but of service to our society as a whole. We aim to be widely recognized which will enhance our credibility in advocacy, our effectiveness in support and the quality of our educational message.

Our goal is to be beyond 'best,' to be premier. We are an association that strives to be relevant to its members and others that we serve; agile in responding to changing needs of the Air Force and our constituents; effective advocates for aerospace power; and responsive to the needs of the nation and the Air Force that we support.

Air, space and cyberspace dominance should be viewed in its broadest context. Dominance signifies that we should be superior in all critical aspects of the technologies associated with air, space and cyberspace power. It encompasses all military operations associated with air, space and cyberspace. The increasing national importance of cyberspace requires dominance in both offensive and defensive aspects of this dimension to support control of the aerospace dimension. We believe that a strong industrial base is essential to all military activities. Therefore, aerospace dominance includes the industries and academia that support these activities; as well as industries associated with commercial applications of air and space. This then provides a membership base of individuals that have in the past or are now pursuing careers in these defined areas. We strive to be a nationally recognized advocate for aerospace excellence through education. We strongly support initiatives to strengthen STEM education in our nation.

The Association's dedication to a strong national defense is to focus aerospace power in the attainment of national strategic objectives. AFA is therefore committed to advocating that sufficient national resources are allocated to meeting these objectives and to further explain the value of aerospace power to enhance the overall effectiveness of the nation's defense. This entails a dedication to ensuring that military personnel, now and in the future, will have the quality of life resources, and the required systems and training to perform the mission.

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To us this means our association will be characterized by:

- A strong, broad, and knowledgeable membership base.
- A strong financial position.
- High credibility with the Air Force, Congress and the public at large.
- Effective communications.
- World-class aerospace education programs.
- Superior professional development programs.
- Strong field leadership and performance.
- Shared professional values with the Air Force.
- An outstanding *Air Force Magazine*.
- Top quality products and services
- Strong support for educational excellence in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics .

Values:

The Air Force Association embraces the following core values:

Integrity First. Integrity is the foundation of credibility, which is absolutely fundamental to the AFA accomplishing its mission and realizing its vision. As with the Air Force professionals we support, AFA members, both individually and as an association, must conduct themselves according to the highest ethical standards and, in all professional and personal affairs, avoid even the appearance of impropriety.

Service Before Self. Members of the AFA, both individually and as an organization, are committed to serving the nation and supporting the United States Air Force and the Total Air Force family, without the expectation of personal gain. This commitment to “selfless service,” is in keeping with the fundamental values and time-honored traditions of military service.

Excellence in All We Do. To realize its vision of becoming "the premier professional military and aerospace education association in the nation," the AFA is committed to uncompromising excellence in all of its activities. Our efforts to educate, advocate and support must meet the highest standards of accuracy, thoroughness and objectivity. The AFA's effectiveness as an association depends on its credibility and reputation with all of its stakeholders, based first on integrity, but also on the excellence of all of its programs and activities.

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Independence and Non-Partisanship. To effectively accomplish its mission and achieve its vision, the AFA must conduct all of its activities in a strictly independent and non-partisan manner. If it is to maintain its credibility and reputation for objectivity, the AFA cannot be perceived as being unduly influenced by (or beholden to) individuals or organizations seeking to promote their self interests. In particular, the AFA must strive to support the U.S. Air Force without being perceived as simply an extension of Air Force Public Affairs. The AFA must advocate its views on strategies and capabilities for achieving dominance in air, space and cyberspace independent of pressures from companies seeking to win competitive advantage in the marketplace for their particular products and services. Finally, the AFA cannot be perceived to be aligned with any political party or advocacy group.

Diversity and Inclusiveness. The AFA seeks to include in its membership men and women from every segment of our society, who are genuinely committed to the mission, vision and values of the Association. By increasing the diversity of our membership (e.g., in gender, ethnicity, professional experience, political views, and other ways) we ensure the activities of the AFA are objective, well informed, and representative of all of our citizens.

The Planning Context:

Our Nation, Air Force, and Air Force Association continue to adjust to the ever changing strategic environment. Despite our engagement in two major regional conflicts and other operations around the world, the Air Force and other services are faced with competition for increasingly scarce resources as the nation struggles with mounting budget deficits. The immediate need to prosecute combat operations, operate and maintain existing weapon systems, and support military personnel has diverted attention from the equally pressing need to recapitalize an Air Force whose average aircraft age has reached historic highs. Insufficient investment in new weapons and space systems will only worsen this problem as more resources are diverted to upgrading and maintaining legacy systems to meet continuing near-term commitments. In the meantime, personnel costs have risen dramatically, taking a larger share of the budget each year. At the same time, Total Air Force personnel are being asked to do more with less while facing an unprecedented OPTEMPO. In this environment, the Air Force Association can play an important role in educating Congress and the public about the need for maintaining a dominant Air Force and in advocating for sufficient funding to meet that need.

Air Force leadership recognizes the unique role AFA can play in articulating Air Force requirements, and Air Force members recognize the value of an independent entity to advocate for and support their quality of life. Government agencies and defense industries recognize that we, as a nation, are no longer producing sufficient graduates in the disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) to maintain our technological competitiveness

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in the global marketplace. There is now a national focus on improving STEM education at all levels to enhance our national competitiveness. Numerous Federal agencies are embracing STEM as an integral part of their respective workforce development programs. The Air Force Association is an active partner in supporting stronger STEM education programs and aerospace education at all levels

The Air Force Association faces serious challenges of its own. Membership continues to decline. There is significant concern for leadership, viability, and the vitality of field operations, and program funding is a continuing issue.

Despite these critical challenges, this is also a time of strategic opportunity for the Air Force Association. As an IRS code 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, we must reach out and exploit these opportunities. Credible professional development and support opportunities for our uniformed constituencies and increased outreach to civilian educators can provide a potential source of new members. Partnering with government, industry, and academic organizations through a network of committed State and Chapter organizations “forward deployed” throughout the country can extend AFA’s reach even further. Finally, our nonprofit tax status offers us increased opportunity to obtain resources for our mission through greater emphasis on philanthropic development.

To help inform the content and context of this plan, two important documents, which are attached, were used. These are the Internal Factors Recommendations and Taskings, and the External Factors White Paper. This plan also outlines four strategic priorities and six broad strategic goals and related objectives that directly support the Air Force Association’s mission, vision, and values. AFA committees, councils, and field organizations must frame their goals, objectives, priorities, activities, and metrics for 2012 – 2014 within the Strategic Priorities, Goals, and Objectives established below.

The Strategic Objectives drive the actions of the Association’s in accomplishing its mission and achieving its vision. The association is actively engaged in achieving them. However, due to their critical importance during this Strategic Planning Period, there are four Strategic Priorities on which the association must focus to achieve operational excellence and enhance the AFA’s ability to accomplish its mission:

- **Reverse the Association’s declining membership.**
- **Grow the Association’s financial resources to more fully support the AFA Mission.**
- **Increase AFA effectiveness at the grass roots level.**
- **Expand support of Aerospace Education and STEM activities**

Goals and Objectives

Strategic Goal	Strategic Objective
<p>1 – Educate the Public about the critical need for unmatched aerospace power and a technically superior workforce to ensure U.S. national security.</p>	<p>1(a) Contribute significantly to the understanding of and appreciation for the need for <i>unmatched aerospace power and a technically superior workforce to ensure national security among:</i> + <i>Members of the Executive and Legislative Branches of the federal government;</i> + <i>The general public; and</i> + <i>AFA members.</i></p> <p>1(b) Produce publications, media products and all types of written and electronic communications that educate and inform the public and AFA members about the important contributions of aerospace power to our nation’s security.</p>
Strategic Goal	Strategic Objective
<p>2 – Advocate for aerospace power and STEM education.</p>	<p>2(a) Formulate a legislative agenda to credibly and objectively advocate for the short and long-term needs of the U.S. Air Force and national defense.</p> <p>2(b) Be highly effective in advocating for aerospace power and the importance of STEM education with the public, responsible government officials, and other key stakeholders.</p> <p>2(c) Support efforts to increase national funding for Aerospace and STEM Education.</p>

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Strategic Goal	Strategic Objective
<p>3 – Support the Total Air Force Family, promote Aerospace Education, and honor Airmen and our AF Heritage.</p>	<p>3(a) Conduct effective programs at each level of AFA to recognize and/or support: (1) Air Force Active Duty, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, and civilian personnel. (2) Dependents of Active Duty, Guard, Reserve and AF civilian employees in the achievement of their educational goals. (3) Veterans and retirees (4) U.S Air Force Academy, AFROTC, AFJROTC and CAP cadets.</p> <p>3(b) Develop strong relationships with Air Force senior leaders at both AFA Headquarters and field levels that promote a deeper appreciation of and support for the Association.</p> <p>3(c) Develop and maintain a strong relationship with industry leaders in the Washington, D.C. area and at local levels.</p> <p>3(d) Conduct Professional Education Programs for the Total Air Force.</p> <p>3(e) Sponsor or support education programs that emphasize the need for study in aerospace education in related STEM subjects.</p> <p>3(f) Sponsor programs to recognize educational excellence in the teaching of aerospace curriculum related to STEM.</p> <p>3(g) Promote the awareness of STEM as a national security issue.</p> <p>3(h) Facilitate and encourage programs that inspire America’s youth to pursue careers in aerospace-related STEM fields, such as CyberPatriot, AFA’s national high school cyber competition.</p> <p>3(i) Continue to foster an environment which honors the service and sacrifices of the Total Air Force Family, and our Air Force heritage.</p>

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Strategic Goal	Strategic Objective
<p>3 - Support the Total Air Force Family, promote Aerospace Education, and honor Airmen and our AF Heritage (cont'd.)</p>	<p>3(j) Foster an appropriate environment at the Air Force Memorial which honors the service of all Airmen, sponsors and supports events, develops heritage programs, and increases the knowledge and visibility of the Memorial.</p> <p>3(k) Identify, prioritize, and vigorously support programs and legislation of vital interest and benefit to the Total Air Force Family.</p> <p>3(l) Ensure AFA's Top Issues, initiatives, and programs strike an appropriate balance between people issues and hardware/systems/capabilities requirements.</p>
Strategic Goal	Strategic Objective
<p>4 – Strengthen AFA Field Operations</p>	<p>4(a) Develop leaders that have the knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm to execute the mission and and achieve the vision of AFA.</p> <p>4(b) Develop tools, methods, procedures, and other assistance to enable Field Operations to meet all prescribed standards of effectiveness and to be continually improving.</p> <p>4(c) Achieve positive and sustained growth in membership by increasing the effectiveness of field recruitment.</p> <p>4(d) Enhance grassroots mission effectiveness by improving internal communication within and between the field, AFA Headquarters staff, and the AFA Board of Directors.</p> <p>4(e) Improve efforts to recruit and educate the Total Air Force Family about how AFA is supporting them, and to better inform AFA members and the public regarding this support.</p>

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Strategic Goal	Strategic Objective
5 – Achieve sustained growth in financial support for the Association.	5(a) Develop new sources of revenue through philanthropic grants and corporate investments. 5(b) Educate the membership about philanthropic support of AFA mission. 5(c) Expand and execute viable annual, major gift, and planned giving donor programs. 5(d) Develop recognition programs for donors, planned and sustained annual giving, and member contributions to AFA and the Air Force Memorial Foundation (AFMF). 5(e) Integrate development as a key component in planning all Association activities.

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Strategic Goal	Strategic Objective
6 – Achieve AFA Operational Excellence	<p>6(a) Enhance the management of the Association’s physical assets and grow its financial resources.</p> <p>6(b) Achieve positive and sustained growth in AFA membership.</p> <p>6(c) Increase personal value of AFA membership by expanding and improving AFA Veteran Benefits Association (AFAVBA) products and services to enhance member recruitment and retention.</p> <p>6(d) Enhance the overall marketing efforts, including developing and implementing an effective branding program for the Association.</p> <p>6(e) Continue to improve the communications connectivity and outreach to our external customer sets and our AFA membership and field leadership.</p> <p>6(f) Stabilize and institutionalize CyberPatriot and provide for its sustainment and growth.</p> <p>6(g) Complete transition to an OMB Circular A-110 compliant financial management and accounting system.</p>