

REFERENCE MATERIALS FOR BECOMING AN NWCG L-COURSE PROVIDER



*NWCG Leadership Committee
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INTRODUCTION

RESPONSIBILITIES

Beyond management of the Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program (WFLDP) resources, the NWCG Leadership Committee (LC) has specific responsibilities to provide a fair and impartial standard and evaluation process through which courseware and potential providers of L-series courses can be reviewed. This may include, but is not limited to, review and approval of:

- Proposed courseware materials and support items for inclusion into the curriculum.
- Proposed courseware design and development documentation.
- Prospective provider performance and delivery systems and capability, including instructors.

LEADERSHIP CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

The leadership curriculum is managed by the Leadership Curriculum Management Subcommittee (LCSC). The LCSC provides course design and evaluation assistance upon agency request to determine if a prospective provider (public or private) meets the requirements to become an approved provider. The LCSC is responsible for establishing program specifications, determining program and provider evaluation criteria, and for approving potential providers. The LCSC approves training programs which meet or exceed the established specifications. In support of quality delivery, the LCSC also approves organizations and individual instructors as appropriate.

The LCSC has assigned a Leadership Curriculum Lead (LCL) to each L-course. The role of the LCL is to serve as a point of contact (POC) for the review and certification process of “L” courses and to provide appropriate NWCG review resources as needed to support the process. The LCL works as a coordinator to provide feedback as appropriate to the potential provider during and after the certification process. The LCL also acts as the LCSC POC for all delivery, auditing, compliance, and recertification issues.

L-CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

L-180, HUMAN FACTORS IN THE WILDLAND FIRE SERVICE

L-180 CURRICULUM LEADS

Refer to <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/wfldp-roster> for the current list of curriculum leads.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information, including course description, objectives, target group, minimum instructor qualifications, etc., go to the L-180 page under NWCG Course Catalog on the [Wildland Fire Learning Portal](#).

L-280, FOLLOWERSHIP TO LEADERSHIP

L-280 CURRICULUM LEADS

Refer to <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/wfldp-roster> for the current list of curriculum leads.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information, including course description, objectives, target group, minimum instructor qualifications, etc., go to the L-280 page under NWCG Course Catalog on the [Wildland Fire Learning Portal](#).

L-380, FIRELINE LEADERSHIP

L-380 CURRICULUM LEADS

Refer to <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/wfldp-roster> for the current list of curriculum leads.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information, including course description, objectives, target group, minimum instructor qualifications, etc., go to the L-380 page under NWCG Course Catalog on the [Wildland Fire Learning Portal](#).

Agency personnel seeking approval to deliver this course should contact their area's Geographic Area Training Representative (GATR). New vendors seeking to deliver L-380 should contact the chair of the Leadership Committee (roster found here <https://www.nwcg.gov/committee/leadership-committee/roster>).

This course package is not available from NWCG.

The NWCG [Leadership Committee](#) has oversight and maintenance responsibility for the L-380 Instructional Design Criteria and evaluation process. However, the delivery process used to meet this training recommendation will need to be determined by the hosting agency. Specific course information can be found within this guide.

Selected course material should address these topics:

- Application of leadership styles
- Communicating vision and intent
- Team building
- Detecting operational error
- Managing stress

PRE-COURSE WORK

The pre-course work will be any book from the Professional Reading Program, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/prp>, as a pre-course reading requirement. Use examples from the reading assignment to reinforce content presented in the classroom throughout the training.

The training provider will select the reading assignment and should provide the books to students at least four weeks prior to the course.

L-380 MINIMUM INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS

Refer to the L-380 course page on the [Wildland Fire Learning Portal](#) for minimum instructor qualifications.

L-380 INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN CRITERIA

The L-380 Instructional Design Criteria offers an alternative approach to training. There is no standing course package available. Agencies have the authority to develop lesson plans based on the course criteria outlined here. The purpose of establishing course criteria is to give agencies the latitude to develop or acquire leadership training that fits their organizational needs while meeting the intent of the leadership curriculum. The following criteria are intended for use by training officers and managers for determining their best source for L-380 training. These criteria can be used to evaluate a training product that is developed internally or acquired through other providers such as a contractor, a university, or other source.

INTENT

The L-380 training experience should provide junior leaders with a set of tools and techniques to build and maintain cohesive crews or teams. Beyond a set of tools and techniques, this training experience should be designed to make an emotional and lasting impact. Essential guiding principles for achieving this impact include enhancing the students' understanding of the human dimension when leading others in dynamic work environments; utilizing experiential training techniques that will engage students in ways that challenge them to perform under realistic and high-stress situations; and motivating students to examine their role as a leader and their strengths and weaknesses as a leader.

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

Course Expectations

- Training in Context
 - Utilize group exercises and simulations to apply concepts that are presented during instructor presentations. Exercises and simulations are to comprise 50% of the course presentation, at a minimum.
- Case Studies
 - Provide classroom case studies and references from organizations that normally operate in high-risk, high-tempo work environments. Examples of such organizations include the military, commercial aviation, nuclear power plant operations, structure fire departments, etc.

- Assessment
 - Integrate the After-Action Review process into the exercises and simulations to allow opportunity for self-assessment and for performance assessment by peers.
- Integrated Curriculum
 - Content must be consistent with the preceding two courses in the NWCG leadership curriculum, the L-180, Human Factors in the Wildland Fire Service course and the L-280, Followership to Leadership course.
- Student-to-Instructor Ratio
 - In order to conduct effective exercises and simulations, cadres should be structured to provide low student-to-instructor ratios (eight or fewer students per instructor).

Course Content

- Pre work requirements
 - Select any book from the Professional Reading Program and require it as a pre-course reading assignment. Use examples from the reading assignment to reinforce content presented in the classroom and throughout the training.
- Unit Management
 - Application of Leadership Styles
 - Communication Techniques
 - Team Building and Problem Solving
 - Detecting and Mitigating Decision Errors
 - Managing Stress and Other Human Factors
- Feedback and Evaluations
 - Complete After-Action Reviews and Debriefs daily with cadre
 - Instructor specific evaluations and final course evaluations
- Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program Components – Include the following program components:
 - Select any book from the [Professional Reading Program](#) and require it as a pre-course reading assignment. Use examples from the reading assignment to reinforce content presented in the classroom and throughout the training.
 - Use the [Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles](#) and the [Leading in the Wildland Fire Service, PMS 494-2](#) publication as the foundation for course content regarding the definition of leadership and description of desired leadership behaviors.
 - Reference the following [Leadership Toolbox](#) items:
 - [Leadership Levels](#)
 - [Briefing and Intent](#)
 - [Standard Operating Procedures](#)
 - [After Action Reviews](#)
 - [Crew Cohesion Assessment](#)
 - [Self-development Plan](#)
 - [Wildland Fire Leadership blog](#)

Content Guidelines

The following course content information is a guide for course evaluation or design. The intent of the NWCG leadership curriculum is to create a series of courses that are taken by individuals as they progress in their careers from less complex to more complex leadership roles within the Incident Command System. This series of courses needs to be connected conceptually from one level to the next. For example, the [values and principles](#) need to be expressed using the same terminology at all levels.

Definitions of key terms (e.g., situation awareness) need to be consistent at all levels. The course content information included here should assist training officers, course developers, and managers in evaluating existing courses or in developing new courses to ensure they fit the intent of the NWCG leadership curriculum. For more information visit the [Leadership Levels](#) web link.

The following unit criteria are developed to focus on the learning outcome of each subject matter. Creativity is highly encouraged by all course providers. Focus should be on the learning outcomes for each unit. The Delivery Considerations are simply suggestions from past cadres on what has worked best. This is not a comprehensive list and course developers and cadres are encouraged to determine the mechanism that best fits to achieve the learning outcomes. The suggest course hours for deliveries of this course are 32 – 40 hours of Instructor-Led Training.

Unit: Prework

Intent: Establish common frame of reference for students and cadre to facilitate discussion of leadership elements and enhance the importance that leaders are readers.

What is the purpose of prework and why is a book required:

- L-380 is the one course in the leadership curriculum where reading a book is required.
- A book captures the greater depth on leadership and human dynamics on a single event.
- To create a “picture/frame of leadership” common to everyone throughout the week.
- To foster a “leaders-are-readers” mentality.

Others prework delivery consideration:

- Book review discussion boards
- Review Leadership Levels and where are they now on the levels.
- Review the WFLDP toolbox.
- Leveraging the Wildland Fire Learning Portal Discussion Board.

Unit: Application of Leadership Styles

Intent: Learning, defining, and recognizing the application of leadership styles and a self-assessment of your personal style.

Delivery Considerations: Utilize multiple movie clips to demonstrate and assess different styles ([Leadership in Media](#)). Facilitate group discussion on example of good leadership. It is essential there is a tie back to prework reading. Create a scenario to practice and evaluate effectiveness.

Learning Outcomes:

- Describe the components of the [Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles](#).
- Identify common ethical dilemmas and how core values support a leader’s ability to address ethical dilemmas.
- Analyze the application of various leadership styles. The analysis should include identification of leadership styles used in a scenario and determination of their situational effectiveness.
- Conduct self-assessment of individual leadership skill weaknesses/strengths and review individual leadership development plans. Refer to the [Leadership Toolbox](#) for the “[Self-development Plan](#).”

Unit: Communication Techniques

Intent: Understanding and demonstrating the communication dynamics around people.

Delivery Consideration: Role playing, scenario based briefing exercises, group discussions, peer to peer evaluations for briefing and debriefing.

Learning Outcomes:

- Describe the components of an intent statement. Refer to the [Leadership Toolbox](#) section “[Briefing and Intent](#).”
- Demonstrate communicating leader’s intent to subordinates.
- Identify methods that a leader can use to improve the level of information sharing with subordinates.
- Demonstrate communication techniques that provide effective feedback in high-stress, high-consequence situations. At a minimum, the techniques addressed should include direct statements, active listening, and message confirmation.
- Conduct a debrief that provides opportunities for team members to learn from a previous event. Refer to the [Leadership Toolbox](#) under “[After Action Reviews](#).”

Unit: Team Building and Problem Solving

Intent: Identify phases of team development, discuss methods to improve team cohesion, and display techniques to address stress and conflict among team members.

Delivery Considerations: Utilize several interactive teambuilding scenarios where feedback is provided by peers and coaches.

Learning Outcomes:

- Describe the phases of teambuilding and the leader’s role in each phase. At a minimum, the leader responsibilities addressed should include establishing standards for team/crew operations, orienting new subordinates, and developing required skill sets within the team/crew. Refer to the [Leadership Toolbox](#) for the “[Standard Operating Procedures Workbook](#)” and the “[Crew Cohesion Assessment](#)” tool.
- Demonstrate techniques for counseling sessions with subordinates. At a minimum, issues that should be addressed include poor performance, resolving a conflict within a team/crew, substance abuse, and harassment.

Unit: Detecting and Mitigation Decision Errors

Intent: Analyze and apply the decision-making cycle to minimizing risk.

Delivery Consideration: Consider parallel industries and utilize case studies, group discussions, tactical decision games or scenarios, presentation by risk management experts.

Learning Outcomes:

- Discuss how the situation awareness (SA) cycle and decision making cycle evolve with experience and increases in scope with responsibility, as well as the importance of gathering and sharing information
- Analyze the error chain on a recent wildland fire accident or other major incident. The analysis should be designed using a commonly accepted model such as Reason’s “Swiss Cheese” model.
- Demonstrate the use of the Risk Management Process as a decision aid for error detection. Refer to the [*NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide, PMS 461*](#).

Unit: Managing Stress and Other Human Factors

Intent: Discuss techniques to identify and respond to the effects of stress on the leader and the team.

Delivery Consideration: Presentation by a clinician or physiologist, discussion with a CISM coordinator, personal story by a traumatic event survivor, group discussion around stress injuries, Utilize the Stress 1st Aid model.

Learning Outcomes:

- Analyze the effects of stress on decision-making. The analysis should include identification of stressors in a scenario and determination of how stress reactions may have affected the overall outcome. Refer to the L-180, Human Factors in the Wildland Fire Service, course for specific content regarding stressors and stress reactions.
- Identify typical team/crew stress reactions and develop stress control measures for those reactions within a team/crew.
- Demonstrate and discuss responding appropriately to an incident of traumatic stress involving a subordinate.

Unit: Promote the Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program (WFLDP)

Intent: to ensure students understand the resources available to continue self-leadership development beyond the L-courses.

Delivery Consideration: Walkthrough each element of the NWCG WFLDP website.

Learning Outcome:

- Self-study Leadership Levels in the WFLP
- Share the available resources in the WFLDP Toolbox that includes. Leadership Levels, AAR, Briefing and Intent, Profession Reading Program, Leading in Media, Crew Cohesion Assessment, LEAD Time, Leaders we would like to Meet, Self-Development Plans, Lead By Example.
- Demonstrate the multiple social media products and how they can be used to for self-continuing education, Facebook, Twitter, Blog, Annual Campaign, Professional Reading Program Discussion Page.
- Share the different experiential learning products student can use to develop local level experiences. For example, staff rides and tactical decision exercises.

L-381, INCIDENT LEADERSHIP

L-381 CURRICULUM LEADS

Refer to <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/wfldp-roster> for the current list of curriculum leads.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information, including course description, objectives, target group, minimum instructor qualifications, etc. go to the L-381 page under NWCG Course Catalog on the [Wildland Fire Learning Portal](#).

Agency personnel seeking approval to deliver this course should contact their area's Geographic Area Training Representative (GATR). New vendors seeking to deliver L-380 should contact the chair of the Leadership Committee (roster found here <https://www.nwcg.gov/committee/leadership-committee/roster>).

This course package is not available through NWCG.

The Leadership Committee, <https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/leadership-committee> has oversight and maintenance responsibility for the L-381 Instructional Design Criteria and [evaluation process](#). However, the delivery process used to meet this training recommendation will need to be determined by the hosting agency.

Selected course materials should address these topic areas:

- Command presence/climate
- Leader's intent
- Command and control
- Rapid team building
- Communication techniques
- Detecting and mitigating error
- Operational tempo awareness

PRE-COURSE WORK

The pre-course work will be a leadership case study assignment selected from the Professional Reading Program, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/prp> or Leadership in Cinema Program, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/leadership-media>.

The training provider will select the assignment and should provide the materials to students at least four weeks prior to the course.

L-381 MINIMUM INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS

Refer to the L-381 course page under NWCG Course Catalog on the [Wildland Fire Learning Portal](#).

L-381 INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN CRITERIA

The L-381 Instructional Design Criteria offers an alternative approach to training. There is no standing course package available through NWCG. Agencies have the authority to develop lesson plans based on the course criteria outlined here. The purpose of establishing course criteria is to give agencies the latitude to develop or acquire leadership training that fits their organizational needs while meeting the intent of the leadership curriculum. The following criteria are intended for use by training officers and managers for determining their best source for L-381 training. These criteria can be used to evaluate a

training product that is developed internally or acquired through other providers such as a contractor, a university, or other source.

INTENT

The L-381 training experience should provide leaders of divisions, groups, or Type 3 incidents with the leadership tools to effectively exert command and control over a quickly assembled team in a time-constrained and rapidly changing incident environment. Beyond a set of tools and techniques, this training experience should be designed to make an emotional and lasting impact. Essential guiding principles for achieving this impact include enhancing the students' understanding of the human dimension when leading others in dynamic work environments, utilizing experiential training techniques that will engage students in ways that challenge them to perform under realistic and high-stress situations, and motivating students to examine their role as a leader and their strengths and weaknesses as a leader.

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program Components** – Include the following program components:
 - Select a leadership case study book from the Professional Reading Program, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/prp> or leadership case study movie from Leadership in Cinema, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/leadership-media> and require it as a pre-course work reading assignment. Use examples from the reading assignment to reinforce content presented in the classroom.
 - Use the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp> and *Leading in the Wildland Fire Service*, PMS 494-2, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms494-2> as the foundation for course content regarding the definition of leadership and description of desired leadership behaviors.
 - Reference the following Leadership Toolbox, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox> items:
 - Briefing and Intent, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/briefing-intent>
 - After Action Reviews, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/aars>
 - Self-development Plan, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/self-development-plan>
 - Wildland Fire Leadership blog, <http://wildlandfireleadership.blogspot.com/>
- **Training in Context** – Utilize group exercises and simulations to apply concepts that are presented during instructor presentations. Exercises and simulations are to comprise 50% of the course presentation, at a minimum.
- **Student-to-Instructor Ratio** – In order to conduct effective exercises and simulations, cadres should be structured to provide low student-to-instructor ratios (eight or fewer students per instructor).
- **Case Studies** – Provide classroom case studies and references from organizations that normally operate in high-risk, high-tempo work environments. Examples of such organizations include the military, commercial aviation, nuclear power plant operations, structure fire departments.
- **Assessment** – Integrate the After Action Review process into the exercises and simulations to allow opportunity for self-assessment and for performance assessment by peers.
- **Integrated Curriculum** – Content must be consistent with the preceding courses in the NWCG leadership curriculum: [L-180, Human Factors in the Wildland Fire Service](#); [L-280, Followership to Leadership](#); and [L-380, Fireline Leadership](#).

CONTENT GUIDELINES

The course content information included below is a guide for course evaluation or design. The intent of the NWCG leadership curriculum is to create a series of courses that are taken by individuals as they

progress in their careers from less complex to more complex leadership roles within the Incident Command System. This series of courses needs to be connected conceptually from one level to the next. For example, the Values and Principles, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp> need to be expressed using the same terminology at all levels. Definitions of key terms (e.g., situation awareness) need to be consistent at all levels. The course content information included here should assist training officers, course developers, and managers in evaluating existing courses or in developing new courses to ensure they fit the intent of the NWCG leadership curriculum.

COMMAND PRESENCE AND COMMAND CLIMATE

1. Describe techniques and processes that contribute to building a positive command climate.
2. Establish a positive command climate that promotes communication within a command team and with assigned operational resources.
3. Exercise appropriate levels of command so that positive control is maintained as distance increases between the command team and assigned operational resources.
4. Provide a command climate that encourages cooperation and communication with clients such as the public, municipalities, law enforcement, and political leaders.

LEADER'S INTENT

1. Provide clear command guidance and initial leader's intent for an emerging incident.
2. Communicate and clarify command guidance and leader's intent to team members regarding changing environment and changing mission objectives.
3. Evaluate team members understanding of leader's intent during an ongoing operation.

RAPID TEAM BUILDING

1. Describe the characteristics of a high performing team and the techniques for rapid teambuilding in a time-constrained environment.
2. Apply the teambuilding principles to achieve cohesion in a quickly assembled command team.
3. Identify typical team/crew stress reactions and develop stress control measures for common stress reactions within a team/crew.

COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES

1. Demonstrate communication techniques that focus the organization's efforts and minimize conflict and error in high-stress, high-consequence situations. At a minimum, the techniques addressed should include the five communications responsibilities for firefighters and active listening.
2. Demonstrate adapting communication techniques to the unique needs of different people or situations.
3. Participate in the After Action Review process to provide opportunities to learn as a team from a previous event.

DETECTING AND MITIGATING DECISION ERRORS

1. Describe error detection and mitigation processes at the command level.
2. Integrate contingency planning into an ongoing operation and identify and mitigate error chains as they occur.
3. Enable team members to participate in error detection and mitigation processes during an ongoing operation.
4. Anticipate upstream or systemic errors that may impact your team during an ongoing operation.

OPERATIONAL TEMPO AWARENESS

1. Describe factors that affect operational tempo and command challenges associated with those factors.
2. Detect shifts in operational tempo and span of control within an ongoing operation. Adapt tactics, plans, and leadership techniques to mitigate risks.
3. Analyze the effectiveness of a team/crew's ability to manage changes in operational tempo on an incident and develop future trigger points for managing those changes.

SELF-DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

1. Conduct a self-assessment of individual leadership skill weaknesses/strengths and review previous leadership development plans.
2. Construct a development plan to enhance personal leadership skills using peer feedback, self-assessment of performance, and instructor feedback.
3. Analyze the effects of personal stress reactions on decision-making. The analysis should include identification of stressors in a scenario and determination of how stress reactions may have affected ability to make decisions.

L-480, ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE WILDLAND FIRE SERVICE

L-480 CURRICULUM LEADS

Refer to <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/wfldp-roster> for the current list of curriculum leads.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

For more information, including course description, objectives, target group, etc., go to the L-480 page under NWCG Course Catalog on the [Wildland Fire Learning Portal](#).

Agency personnel seeking approval to deliver this course should contact their area's Geographic Area Training Representative (GATR). New vendors seeking to deliver L-380 should contact the chair of the Leadership Committee (roster found here <https://www.nwcg.gov/committee/leadership-committee/roster>).

This course package is not available from NWCG.

The Leadership Committee, <https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/leadership-committee> has oversight and maintenance responsibility for the L-480 Instructional Design Criteria and [evaluation process](#). However, the delivery process used to meet this training recommendation will need to be determined by the hosting agency.

Selected course materials should address these topics:

- Communication skills
- Command presence
- Situational awareness, vision and change
- Application of leadership skills within a team and organizational environment
- Recognition and reward
- Mentorship, coaching and delegation

PRE-COURSE WORK

The pre-course work will be the responsibility of the provider delivering the course.

Correspondence with the students regarding pre-course work requirements will be coordinated between the provider and the course coordinator.

INSTRUCTOR CADRE EDUCATION CREDENTIALS

At least one cadre member must have, at a minimum, a Bachelor's-level degree in any of the following: organizational behavior, organizational leadership, business management, psychology, or a related field.

INSTRUCTOR CADRE EXPERIENCE

- Experience in facilitation skills in a training and workshop environment.
- Experience in presenting complex multi-day courses.
- Experience in providing principle-centered leadership training.
- Experience in providing training for civilian or military emergency management/response organizations.
- Experience in education, administration, management, or other applicable situations.

INSTRUCTOR CADRE KNOWLEDGE

Instructor cadre must have the ability to provide instruction using the established L-480 Instructional Design Criteria and demonstrate expert knowledge communicating these concepts, personally demonstrating these concepts, and evaluating students to ensure they understand these concepts. The following list includes the primary concepts identified in the L-480 course package:

Personal Assessment Knowledge

Personal assessment knowledge is defined as those leadership and psychology concepts that primarily pertain to the individual, as opposed to the team.

- **Self-Assessment Tools** – Knowledge and interpretive skills utilizing standard self-assessment tools.
- **Emotional Intelligence** – Understanding one’s own emotions, managing emotions, motivating oneself, and recognizing emotions in others.
- **Analysis of Leadership Styles** – Knowledge of different leadership styles and how they affect team success.
- **Core Beliefs and Values Hierarchy** – Knowledge of how individual core beliefs affect the team or provide a foundation for team success. Assist participants to understand their own values.
- **Self-Improvement Tools** – Knowledge of self-improvement tools for improving personal leadership attributes.
- **Command Presence** – Expert knowledge of command presence principles and the ability to teach students how to develop them.
- **Stress and Resilience** – Knowledge of stress physiology and psychology. Teach the use of common stress recognition tools and methods to manage and recover from chronic and traumatic stress.
- **Attitude for Success** – Knowledge of psychological concepts sufficient to create a successful attitude.

Team/Organizational Leadership Knowledge

Team/organizational leadership strategies are necessary in order to effectively meet organizational goals. This requires knowledge in team dynamics, interpersonal relationships, and leadership in the team and organizational environment.

- **Leadership Development Program** – Knowledge of the overall NWCG Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp>.
- **Vision** – Knowledge of the use of vision to create the foundation for team success.
- **Situation Awareness** – Knowledge of strategies to develop and maintain a common understanding of the team and organizational environment.
- **Team Climate and Organizational Culture** – Knowledge of the effect culture has on team and organizational function. Knowledge of subculture or team climate and its effect on team performance.
- **Motivation** – Knowledge of the psychology of motivation.
- **Rewarding and Recognition** – Knowledge of the distinctions between reward and recognition.
- **Rational and Intuitive Decision Making** – Knowledge of rational and intuitive decision-making models and when to use each model.
- **Delegation** – Knowledge of the use of delegation as a practice to build and increase leadership capacity.
- **Leading Change** – Knowledge of leading and managing change in teams and organizations.
- **Conflict Style Analysis** – Knowledge of conflict styles and methods to diffuse conflict in high-stress environments.

- **Mentoring and Coaching** – Knowledge of mentoring methods and coaching techniques used in the emergency response environment.

COACH QUALIFICATIONS

The required qualifications for a coach include facilitative skills, extensive knowledge of the leadership curriculum, and the desire to help others. The successful completion of L-380 and/or L-381 is desirable, but not required. It is desirable for coaches to hold unit leader level wildland fire qualifications or above and/or occupy a line or staff officer position in a land management organization, examples include district ranger, field office manager, park superintendent, fire management officer etc.

L-480 INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN CRITERIA

The L-480 Instructional Design Criteria offers an alternative approach to training. There is no standing course package available through NWCG. Agencies have the authority to develop lesson plans based on the instructional design criteria outlined here. The purpose of establishing instructional design criteria is to give agencies the latitude to develop or acquire leadership training that fits their organizational needs while meeting the intent of the leadership curriculum. The following criteria are intended for use by training officers and managers for determining their best source for L-480 training. These criteria will be used to evaluate a training product that is developed internally or acquired through other providers such as a contractor, a university, or other source.

INTENT

The intent of L-480 is to provide the target audience with awareness of their own leadership capacities and provide leadership tools that provide strategic direction and influence over others to achieve team and organizational goals. The course should be designed to capitalize on the latest academic research in the field of organizational leadership to develop personal leadership skills and increase organizational effectiveness in the workplace and during incident management operations. The NWCG leadership curriculum establishes and teaches the core values and principles of leadership in the wildland fire service. These values and principles are introduced and reinforced through a robust curriculum of self-examination and simulation that helps transfer these values into actions. The skill sets of leadership remain constant throughout the leadership curriculum; however, how those skill sets are applied within the context of the complexity level of the incident changes at each level in the curriculum.

L-480 makes a distinct break from the structure of L-380 and L-381 targeting current ICS unit leaders, Type 3 personnel, non-wildland fire staff, as well as mid- to upper-level organizational leaders. The course is designed to develop an individual's personal leadership skills and presence in order to increase their effectiveness in a dynamic fire service work environment.

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program Components** – Include the following program components:
 - Use the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp> and *Leading in the Wildland Fire Service*, PMS 494-2, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms494-2> as the foundation for course content regarding the definition of leadership and description of desired leadership behaviors.
 - Reference the following Leadership Toolbox, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox> items:
 - Briefing and Intent, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/briefing-intent>
 - After Action Reviews, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/aars>
 - Self-development Plan, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/self-development-plan>
- Promote the “student of leadership” concept by referencing the Professional Reading Program, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/prp>, Wildland Fire Leadership blog,

<http://wildlandfireleadership.blogspot.com/> or Leadership in Cinema,
<https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/leadership-media>

- **Integrated Curriculum** – Content must be consistent with the preceding courses in the NWCG leadership curriculum: [L-180, Human Factors in the Wildland Fire Service](#); [L-280, Followership to Leadership](#); [L-380, Fireline Leadership](#); and [L-381, Incident Leadership](#).
- **Training in Context** – Utilize coaches during group exercises and simulations to apply concepts that are presented during instructor presentations. Exercises and simulations are to comprise 30% of the course presentation, at a minimum.
- **Student-to-Instructor Ratio** – In order to conduct effective exercises and simulations, cadres/coaches should be structured to provide low student-to-instructor ratios (eight or fewer students per instructor).
- **Case Studies** – Provide classroom case studies and references from organizations both inside and outside of high-risk, high-tempo work environments. Examples of such organizations include the military, nuclear power plant operations, and structure fire departments, as well as large corporations such as Microsoft, Google, and IBM.
- **Assessment** – Integrate exercises and simulations to allow opportunity for self-assessment and for leadership assessment by peers.

CONTENT GUIDELINES

The course content information included below is a guide for course evaluation or design. The intent of the NWCG leadership curriculum is to create a series of courses that are taken by individuals as they progress in their careers from less complex to more complex leadership roles within the Incident Command System. This series of courses needs to be connected conceptually from one level to the next. For example, the Values and Principles, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp> need to be expressed using the same terminology at all levels. Definitions of key terms (e.g., situation awareness) need to be consistent at all levels. The course content information included here should assist training officers, course developers, and managers in evaluating existing courses or in developing new courses to insure they fit the intent of the NWCG leadership curriculum.

INDIVIDUAL LEADERSHIP TRAITS – PERSONAL INVENTORY

Content should include leadership and psychological concepts that pertain to the individual, as opposed to the team.

- **Self-Assessment Tools** – Utilize one or more self-assessment tool(s) to increase understanding and awareness of personal characteristics which affect leadership effectiveness.
- **Emotional Intelligence** – Understanding one’s own emotions, managing emotions, motivating oneself, and recognizing emotions in others.
- **Analysis of Leadership Style** – Knowledge of different leadership styles and how their application affects team success.
- **Core Beliefs and Values Hierarchy** – Knowledge of how individual core beliefs can support or detract from a team’s performance. Knowledge of how individual and team/organizational values conflict affects team function. Assist participants to understand their own values.
- **Changing Behavior** – Knowledge of methods to initiate and sustain changes in individual leadership behaviors.
- **Command Presence** – Knowledge of personal attributes which enable leaders to connect with others and influence team and organizational outcomes. Knowledge of how those attributes combine to form “command presence.”
- **Stress and Resilience** – Knowledge of stress physiology and psychology. Knowledge of the effects of acute and chronic stress on health and performance. Knowledge of the concept of resilience as it relates to methods of recognizing and diffusing acute and chronic stress.

- **Attitude for Success** – Knowledge of psychological concepts sufficient to create a successful attitude.

THE APPLICATION OF LEADERSHIP IN THE TEAM/ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Individuals apply leadership strategies to meet organizational goals. This requires knowledge in team dynamics, interpersonal relationships, and leadership in a team/organizational environment. The following content areas are required:

- **Leadership Development Program** – Knowledge of the overall NWCG Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp>
- **Vision** – Knowledge of the use of vision to create the foundation for team success.
- **Situation Awareness** – Knowledge of strategies to develop and maintain a common understanding of the team and organizational environment.
- **Team Climate and Organizational Culture** – Knowledge of the effect culture has on team and organizational function. Knowledge of subculture or team climate and its effect on team performance.
- **Motivation** – Knowledge of the psychology of motivation.
- **Rewarding and Recognition** – Knowledge of the distinctions between reward and recognition.
- **Rational and Intuitive Decision Making** – Knowledge of rational and intuitive decision-making models and when to use each model.
- **Delegation** – Knowledge of the use of delegation as a practice to build and increase leadership capacity.
- **Leading Change** – Knowledge of leading and managing change in teams and organizations.
- **Conflict Style Analysis** – Knowledge of conflict styles and methods to diffuse conflict in high-stress environments.
- **Mentoring and Coaching** – Knowledge of mentoring methods and coaching techniques used in the emergency response environment.

L-481, ADVANCED LEADERSHIP FOR COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF

L-481 CURRICULUM LEADS

Refer to <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/wfldp-roster> for the current list of curriculum leads.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

For more information, including course description, objectives, target group, etc., go to the L-481 page, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/training-courses/l-481>, under Training Courses on the NWCG website, <https://www.nwcg.gov/>.

Agency personnel seeking approval to deliver this course should contact their area's Geographic Area Training Representative (GATR). New vendors seeking to deliver L-380 should contact the chair of the Leadership Committee (roster found here <https://www.nwcg.gov/committee/leadership-committee/roster>).

This course package is not available through NWCG.

The Leadership Committee, <https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/leadership-committee> has oversight and maintenance responsibility for the L-481 course package and evaluation process. However, the delivery process used to meet this training recommendation will need to be determined by the hosting agency.

Selected course materials should address these topics:

- Establishing a staff value system, team culture, and command presence
- Developing and maintaining a team-level common operating picture
- Developing and communicating leader's intent through a critical thinking process
- Propagating intent at all levels of the incident organization
- Effectively operate in ICS and utilize ICS products and doctrine
- Promoting integration of functional areas and a high-level of teamwork into strategic planning.

PRE-COURSE WORK

The pre-course work will be the responsibility of the provider delivering the course.

It is suggested there be a leadership case study reading assignment selected from the Professional Reading Program, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/prp>.

Correspondence with the students regarding pre-course work requirements will be coordinated between the provider and the course coordinator.

L-481 MINIMUM INSTRUCTOR AND CADRE QUALIFICATIONS

As defined by the Leadership Committee, the L-481 Advanced Leadership for Command and General Staff, course will produce Command and General Staff members who can fulfill the responsibilities of an effective staff officer within the IMT decision process and act as an organizational leader within their own functional areas. This course focuses on leadership within the context of large/complex incident management.

CADRE CREDENTIALS

Instructors for this program must possess education and/or experience in the subject areas listed below to serve as credible mentors, instructors, and leaders in the eyes of the Leadership Committee, evaluation staff and the target audience. The qualification requirements may vary based upon the design of the program and shall be part of the proposed design. Regardless of design, all instructors must be facilitative instructor qualified. Refer to the NWCG instructor levels and requirements in the *NWCG Standards for Course Delivery*, PMS 901-1, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms901-1>.

CADRE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

Demonstrated fluency in the educational components and concepts presented in the NWCG Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp> curriculum: L-180, L-280, L-380, L-381, L-480, and L-580.

- Knowledge of *Leading in the Wildland Fire Service*, PMS 494-2, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms494-2> and other fire service doctrine.
- Knowledge of human and team performance dynamics that underpin and promote cohesiveness, adaptability, and resilience in the complex IMT environment.
- Knowledge of team/organizational dynamics.
- Knowledge of the Incident Command System (ICS) and its' application in an emerging complex incident environment.
- Knowledge of concepts related to time compressed decision making in staff and command environments.
- Knowledge in concepts related to the development and propagation of Leader's Intent.
- Experience in providing training for civilian or military emergency management/response organizations.

If coaches are used in an Incident Command System-based simulation:

COACH QUALIFICATIONS

Coaches, if used, must possess education and/or experience to serve as credible mentors, instructors, and leaders in the eyes of the Leadership Committee evaluation staff and the target audience. This usually includes previous L-series course completion, current or recently current qualification as command or general staff on a Type 1 or 2 IMT.

** While it is a goal for all coaches to have successfully completed L-380 and/or L-381 courses, it is recognized that current Type 1 and Type 2 Command/General Staff personnel may not have had the opportunity to attend. It is strongly suggested that if the coach has not successfully completed L-380 or L-381, they should read *Leading in the Wildland Fire Service*, PMS 494-2, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms494-2> prior to the course.*

Any prospective program must use sufficient resources to provide adequate orientation, interaction, oversight, direction and correction for a student's learning or evaluation activity. If the proposed design uses live instructors, mentors, coaches, or evaluators, the number and positioning of qualified personnel must be adequate to provide for a comfortable span of control given the needs of the proposed instructional sequence.

L-481 INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN CRITERIA

The L-481 Instructional Design Criteria offers an alternative approach to training. There is no standing course package available through NWCG. Potential providers are invited to develop their own course package as they work to become an approved provider by the Leadership Committee. NWCG agencies

may also develop lesson plans based on the instructional design criteria outlined here. The purpose of establishing instructional design criteria is to give agencies the latitude to develop or acquire leadership training that fits their organizational needs while meeting the intent of the leadership curriculum. The following criteria are intended for use by training officers and managers for determining their best source for L-481 training. These criteria will be used to evaluate the design documents and training products developed internally or acquired through other providers such as a contractor, a university, or other source.

INTENT

The intent of this training is to produce Command and General Staff members who can fulfill the responsibilities of an effective staff officer or section chief within an IMT, contribute effectively to an IMT's decision-making process, and perform as an effective organizational leader in their own functional area and as a member of the IMT. This course should engage the course participants in leadership learning within the context of managing a large/complex incident. The course content would include both collective or team tasks and individual tasks. Collective tasks include functions accomplished by the Command and General Staff, maintaining a common operating picture, building and maintaining a constructive team culture, and projecting leader's intent up, down, and across the chain of command. Individual tasks include demonstrating interpersonal and communication skills necessary to function as a productive member of a team, contributing positively to team decisions, contributing to the IMT's common operating picture, working within the team culture, demonstrating effective staff ethos, and projecting effective command presence within their functional areas.

Within the L-series curriculum, L-481 prepares leaders of organizations and facilitates the participant's progress above L-381, Incident Leadership (i.e., Type 3 incident level). Students may or may not have completed L-480, Organizational Leadership in the wildland fire service prior to entering this course. While L-480 focuses on assessing and developing individual personal leadership skills to accomplish long-term organizational goals, L-481 will focus on IMT members functioning with a common operating picture, developing and propagating a consistent leader's intent through intent-based planning and operations, contributing to the decision-making process of a higher-level team, accomplishing short-term incident management goals, and acting in the service of the common good.

Within this context, it is expected that agencies may use L-481 programs for assessing individuals for potential service on IMTs.

COURSE DESIGN GUIDELINES

Integrated Curriculum

The Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program courses (L-series) materials, concepts, vocabulary, models, tools, training aids, and doctrine form the basis for wildland fire leadership development. Many of these items can be found under the Wildland Fire Leadership Development website,

<https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp>:

- Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles for leader behavior, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp>
- *Leading in the Wildland Fire Service*, PMS 494-2, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms494-2> (the foundation for course content regarding the definition of leadership and description of desired leadership behaviors)
- Leadership Toolbox, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox> items:
 - Briefing and Intent, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/briefing-intent>
 - After Action Reviews, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/aars>

- Wildland Fire Leadership blog, <http://wildlandfireleadership.blogspot.com/>

Approved programs must effectively integrate and leverage the appropriate concepts from these materials to accelerate and reinforce learning. Approved programs should improve learner awareness and application of these items.

Content must be consistent with the leadership concepts presented in preceding courses in the NWCG leadership curriculum, the [L-180, Human Factors in the Wildland Fire Service](#); [L-280, Followership to Leadership](#); [L- 380, Fireline Leadership](#); and [L-381, Incident Leadership](#).

Student-to-Instructor Ratio

Any prospective program must use sufficient resources to provide adequate interaction, oversight, direction and correction for a student's learning or evaluation activity.

If the proposed design uses live instructors, mentors, coaches, or evaluators, the number and positioning of qualified personnel must be adequate in the judgment of the Leadership Committee evaluators to provide for a comfortable span of control given the needs of the proposed instructional sequence.

Case Studies

Provide opportunities for the student to learn from others or from the collective knowledge of the group. This may be accomplished by presenting classroom case studies and references from organizations both inside and outside of the high-risk, high-tempo incident management work environments. Examples of such organizations include the military, nuclear power plant operations, and structure fire departments.

Student Assessment

Integrate exercises and simulations for the student to demonstrate knowledge of the course content and allow opportunity for self-assessment and for leadership assessment by peers.

To ensure that students are consistently measured and given credit for L-481, the prospective course delivery will also include an assessment system which reflects the program content, is repeatable, and assures consistency across an assessment team.

The assessment strategy should be designed so that the program can use outside or independent agency/client-appointed assessment teams.

The process must provide means by which to assess the key knowledge, skills and abilities identified in the approved training package. A team of current or recently current ICS Command and General Staff will conduct student assessments. The assessment team members should have completion of the 300-level L-course and knowledge of the fire leadership curriculum. The assessment team will document the following student behaviors based on the L-481 curriculum:

- Acts as a productive staff member and leader to produce concentric actions (produces the work).
- Contributes to the team's pursuit of truth (providing and gathering situation awareness)
- Takes actions, demonstrates attitudes, or communicates messages that contribute to the trust state of the team, team development and learning.
- Notices when other team members need help and offers assistance.
- Applies critical thinking to problems and identifies thinking processes to articulate intent.
- Looks ahead to future problems.
- Demonstrates initiative in preparing information and problem solving prior to meetings.
- Is open to learning from others.

- Makes sure position/issue does not get lost in the process.
- Is willing to own the team result and is invested in the team's product.
- Demonstrates awareness of personal habits or idiosyncrasies that work against team discussions.
- Focusses on the end state – does not get inappropriately bogged down in details or process.

TRAINING PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Background

The NWCG leadership curriculum series (L-series) is managed by the Leadership Committee for the purposes of providing critical leader development training and tools for the workforces of the NWCG agencies. The Leadership Committee is solely responsible for establishing program specifications, determining program and provider evaluation criteria, and for approving potential providers.

Within the L-series curriculum, programs at the 100 and 200 levels are available “off the shelf,” as are other non-numbered development tools. The Leadership Committee is responsible for the development and management of these items.

Programs at the 300, 400, and 500 levels (e.g., L-380, L-480, etc.) are provided through organizations who have obtained approved provider status from the Leadership Committee. The Leadership Committee approves training programs which meet or exceed the established specification. In support of quality delivery, the Leadership Committee also approves organizations and individual instructors as appropriate.

The approval requirements vary based on program. For more information on the NWCG program and provider certification process, please refer to [Becoming a NWCG Approved L-Course Provider](#).

Purpose

Provide guidance for potential providers who wish to develop a program that meets or exceeds the established standards for an L-481 training program. This program specification describes the desired outcomes, or end state that any L-481 training program must achieve to receive approval by the Leadership Committee including verifiable/observable. It does not define a specific learning process, or specific package set of courseware.

Prospective L-481 providers are responsible for determining the design, approach, learning objectives, and testing criteria that they believe will secure the defined outcomes. Unlike other L-series course specifications, it does not provide the individual learning objectives, nor does it imply a program's structure or design. It will identify, however, high-level families of topic areas, and desired outcomes or competencies that should be demonstrated by successful students during the learning and evaluation process.

The Leadership Committee is not limiting or providing direction on how a course should be designed, but any prospective program must provide adequate documentation of accomplished analysis, design and development work during the approval process and demonstrate that the proposed program and delivery entity would likely meet the Leadership Committee's desired outcomes. The specification is accompanied by an approval process that is incremental and progressive. Refer to [L-Course Evaluation Process](#).

It is expected that any prospective program would require at least 32 to 40 contact hours plus pre-course work. Course packages that can both accomplish the desired outcomes and use less training time will be considered, provided they are deemed instructionally sound.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Overview

Ordinarily, emergency incidents are managed by local agencies or organizations. However, when a situation escalates and exceeds local capabilities, additional resources and incident management teams (IMTs) are called in to help. IMTs augment the reach of ordinary response organizations, providing the organization and structure to bring in the right people and resources to accomplish the mission. These teams step in to continue the efforts already set in motion by first responders or a local incident organization.

Managing large or complex incidents requires a level of teamwork and integration beyond what is ordinarily necessary. In particular, Command and General Staff (C&G) members need to function as an integrated unit in order to build a common operating picture, plan strategically, and propagate consistent leader's intent throughout the organization. Within this context, salient themes—leadership, teamwork, common staff values, service to the common good, leader's intent, communication, operational culture—expand beyond the confines of the incident organization and extend to cooperators, jurisdictional owners, and political-public spheres.

Training on this level requires integration of human performance and incident management acumen at the strategic level, focusing on the C&G as a functional and integrated team. It must foster professional staff ethos that strengthen and support the team's ability to function collectively while leveraging ICS to maximum effect.

Following are families of topics that comprise the scope necessary for this training program:

- Establishing a staff value system, team culture, and command presence
- Developing and maintaining a team-level common operating picture
- Developing and communicating leader's intent through a critical thinking process
- Propagating intent at all levels of the incident organization
- Effectively operate in the ICS system and utilize ICS products and doctrine
- Promoting integration of functional areas and a high-level of teamwork into strategic planning

1. Establishing staff ethos, team culture, and command presence

The primary purpose of establishing the C&G is to provide a decisional framework and structure in order to process information and glean meaning so that appropriate direction and priorities can be established. Each member of the C&G has a specific functional role and specific responsibilities including a role within the team's decision-making process. The relationships, values, and ethos of the C&G influence the way that information is gathered and integrated, the process of vetting and prioritizing objectives, and methods of relaying decisions and direction throughout the incident organization. Therefore, strengthening common staff ethos, team culture, and command presence are fundamental requirements for building an effective C&G that provides service for the common good while effectively leading their functional areas.

In support of strengthening ethos, team culture, and command presence, the program targets the following competencies:

- Demonstrated understanding and application of command staff values both within the C&G and with external relationships. The NWCG uses the Mission-Driven Values Model as a foundation for behavior and actions of the IMT command staff. The Mission-Driven Values Model (developed and used with permission by Mission-Centered Solutions, Inc., 2011) includes:

- **Service for the common good** – focus on the collective team result and benefit of the greater good of the public
- **High trust state** – Developing/maintaining trust in people and systems
- **Pursuit of truth** – based on the omnipresent need of the best possible situation awareness in dynamic and chaotic environments to ensure plans are based on reality.
- **Form and function defined by the end state** – Despite established systems or processes, the need for adaptability and versatility is essential in complex environments.
- **Individual initiative** – Initiative strengthens resilience in the face of unexpected challenges
- **Continuous improvement** – Honestly encourages and reinforces learning and improvement at all levels of the organization
- Demonstrated the ability to apply the concepts of staff ethos, team culture, and mission-driven culture values to assess and improve self, team, and individual team member performance.
- Demonstrated ability to apply doctrine and value within the decision-making process and during team interaction.
- Demonstrated ability to establish positive rapport and trust with fellow team members to facilitate learning allow for critical discussion, correct performance, and provide service for the common good.
- Demonstrated ability to develop trust and positive working relationship with external entities and/or stakeholders.
- Demonstrated the ability to analyze and understand prospective audiences to develop appropriate message delivery and promote working relationships.
- Demonstrated ability to practice leader behaviors which promote a positive operational culture and climate in which team member resources can be effective.
- Demonstrated effective interpersonal and communication skills and techniques during interactions with fellow team members as well as other external stakeholders.
- Demonstrated the ability to provide meaningful self-assessments, team member assessments, and an overall team-assessment in an effort to improve performance and strengthen team ethos.

2. **Developing and maintaining a common operating picture.**

On an incident, situation awareness at the IMT level encompasses a broad range of understanding: the context of the incident including the social context, the operating environment and the challenges of that environment, operations to date, the thinking that went into previous decisions, planned operations, and changes occurring within the operating environment. By design, the ICS assigns people to functional areas to make sure that the incident organization is attending to all incident systems and functions appropriately. However, given assigned areas of focus, people naturally gravitate into functional silos, concentrating on responsibilities and concerns within their area to the exclusion of participating in the broader work of the team. A critical challenge for the C&G, therefore, is to develop and maintain a common understanding of the situation, specifically one shared by all team members. The common operating picture (COP) is the term used to describe the situation awareness and understanding shared by all team members.

In support of developing and maintaining a COP, the program targets the following competencies:

- Demonstrated ability to gain perspective of all dimensions of the incident – both in terms of what is happening in operations (tactical) as well as the larger context in which the incident occurs (strategic).
- Demonstrated ability to share pertinent information across the team so that all members have a shared understanding of the salient components and maintain this understanding throughout the incident assignment.

- Demonstrated ability to appraise the soundness of the team’s COP, questioning assumptions and testing the premises of plans over time so that planned operations are always well aligned with the reality of conditions on the ground.
- Demonstrated ability to develop effective interpersonal relationships with personnel already involved in an incident, specifically with outgoing C&G counterparts.
- Demonstrated ability to collect critical information and use sound reasoning and judgment to discern and distill meaningful and relevant knowledge from available information.
- Demonstrated ability to use a variety of communication methods and frameworks, including both listening and questioning, to identify gaps in understanding or risks to operations.

3. Developing leader’s intent

One of a staff member’s central tasks is to provide productive inputs in the decisions made by the Incident Commander. By design, each staff member has a different perspective based on their position. Each staff member distills information and requirements from their functional area to provide relevant perspective to the staff’s deliberative decision-making process. A rigorous and conscientious decision-making process gives rise to robust intent that bolsters initiative and concentric action throughout the incident organization. In support of developing leader’s intent at the C&G level, the program targets the following competencies:

- Demonstrated ability to contribute constructively to deliberative decision making so that resulting decisions are sound and reasonable.
- Demonstrated ability to derive an incident end state that provides a practical road map for returning to acceptable conditions.
- Demonstrated ability to derive and author meaningful incident objectives with an appropriate focus on the real threats to the tactical and strategic values-at-risk.
- Demonstrated ability to guide the development of strategies and alternatives that are congruent with the nature of the threat.
- Demonstrated ability to constructively evaluate proposed plans and courses of action so that they are proportionate and reasonable in consideration of the values at risk and the nature of the threat.

4. Propagating intent-based planning to all levels of the incident organization

The primary purpose of formulating intent is to empower people at every level to exercise their judgment and initiative to accomplish their part of the mission. Information transmitted in the Incident Action Plan (IAP) may provide them with a proposed plan of action, but not necessarily the intent behind the plan. Communicating consistent intent to all levels of the organization enables people to commit to both what they are doing and why they are doing it.

In support of propagating leader’s intent to all levels of the incident organization, the program targets the following competencies:

- Demonstrated ability to explain how an incident end state addresses the values-at-risk as well as how its objectives, strategies, and tactics achieve the end state.
- Demonstrated ability to help formulate and communicate clear intent that will assist resources in understanding their assignment and its role in achieving the larger mission.
- Demonstrated propagation of intent beyond the IMT to the public, elected officials, and others.

5. Effectively operate in the ICS system in the complex incident environment and utilize ICS products and doctrine

The Incident Command System (ICS) is the organizational system that we use to mobilize, staff, track, manage and execute incident activities. The planning process serves as a decisional aid and the

product outcomes reflect and document the decisional processes. Effective use of this system is core to our capability.

In support of effectively operating in the ICS system and utilizing ICS products and doctrine, the program targets the following competencies:

- Demonstrated the effective use of the ICS and its products and doctrine to track and manage resources, and to direct action through the IMT organization.
- Demonstrated the ability to develop collective C&G products/documents that are utilized in the development of an Incident Action Plan (IAP).
- Demonstrated the ability to function within the context of the ICS Planning Process (Planning P) and positively contribute to the distribution of information through briefings and the development of ICS documents, forms, and products.
- Demonstrated ability to accomplish mission objectives and manage the team's time effectively.

6. Promoting integration of functional areas

The effectiveness of the C&G depends on how well functional leaders integrate their respective functional areas into a coherent whole to mount a unified and organized response. Each functional leader has a duty to direct activities within their given area of responsibility and to integrate an understanding of the functional requirements and contingencies into the overall response effort. Each functional area is a critical component of the bigger mission; therefore, integrating all functional areas is critical to success.

In support of promoting integration of functional areas, the program targets the following competencies:

- Demonstrated ability to select most appropriate means for conveying information in light of the situation, audience, time constraints, and information to be communicated.
- Demonstrated ability to keep fellow staff members apprised of information that affects other functional areas or the incident as a whole. This target includes both the ability to assess the relevance of information and the ability to effectively communicate that information.

INSTRUCTIONAL PACKAGE REQUIREMENTS

Complex and large incident management teams are tasked with managing and leading through the most challenging problem sets and disasters. As a result, the consequences of IMT decision making can be far-reaching and highly consequential. Prospective developers seeking Leadership Committee approval for an L-481 program will be required to demonstrate their ability to design and develop a program that can withstand a formal educational systems review process. To that end, the following design and development requirements will be placed on L-481 program applicants:

- The prospective program package must provide evidence that developer has used a generally accepted instructional design methodology (e.g., ISD, ADDIE, MIL-PRF 29612) to guide and document the design and development of the program. This includes the review of course design documents, as well as evaluation strategies and plans:
 - Evidence of a task analysis process that defines the primary tasks and subtasks and connection to the evaluation criteria. This may include an analysis of the learner's operational environment, documentation of delivery methodology.
 - Evidence of design and development activities are based on the former analysis and support the developed terminal and enabling learning objectives. Design documentation must demonstrate that the learning objectives have a logical connection to evaluation strategies, that instructional sequencing and delivery methods clearly support the desired outcomes, and that the learning activities offer a reasonable means to achieve mastery of objectives.

- Course and evaluation materials that are complete and of high quality.

DELIVERY SUSTAINMENT REQUIREMENTS

To assure program delivery is monitored and maintained after Leadership Committee approval, the prospective provider will provide a proposed plan for:

- Instructor training, qualification, and certification
- Provider performance reporting
- Program quality assurance and program updating
- Training activity reporting and record keeping

OTHER PROSPECTIVE PROVIDER REQUIREMENTS

At the discretion of the Leadership Committee, the potential provider may be required to provide documentation of past performance in developing and delivering similar programs. Potential providers may also be expected to show evidence of adequate resources available to provide a sustainable and consistent training service to wildland fire community.

L-580, LEADERSHIP IS ACTION

L-580 CURRICULUM LEADS

Refer to <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/wfldp-roster> for the current list of curriculum leads.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

For more information, including course description, objectives, target group, etc., go to the L-580 page, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/training-courses/l-580>, under Training Courses on the NWCG website, <https://www.nwcg.gov/>.

Agency personnel seeking approval to deliver this course should contact their area's Geographic Area Training Representative (GATR). New vendors seeking to deliver L-380 should contact the chair of the Leadership Committee (roster found here <https://www.nwcg.gov/committee/leadership-committee/roster>).

This course package is not available through NWCG.

The L-580 curriculum leads direct this program and evaluation process. However, the delivery process used to meet this training recommendation will need to be determined by the hosting agency.

The National Advanced Fire and Resource Institute (NAFRI) coordinates NWCG sponsored L-580 events. Specific delivery information can be obtained from NAFRI at timothy.regan@usda.gov.

Selected course materials should address these topics:

- Focus on leadership actions, decision-making, and critical thinking at the strategic level
- Include structured facilitation of interactive group discussions and/or activities
- Involve pre- and/or post-study activities related to the specific event

PRE-COURSE WORK

The pre-course work will be the responsibility of the provider delivering the course.

Correspondence with the students regarding pre-course work requirements will be coordinated between the provider and the course coordinator.

L-580 MINIMUM INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS

Instructors for this program must possess education and/or experience in the subject areas listed below to serve as credible mentors, instructors, and leaders in the eyes the Leadership Committee evaluation staff and the target audience. The qualification requirements may vary based upon the design of the program and shall be part of the proposed design. This course is managed by the L-580 curriculum leads, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/wfldp-roster>.

L-580 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles for L-580, Leadership Is Action, are as follows:

- The intent of the L-580 Leadership is Action program is to provide a variety of continuing education opportunities.
- L-580 design should link conceptually to the rest of the L-curriculum by reflecting the formally adopted leadership values, principles and concepts presented at the lower curriculum levels.
- L-580 design should complement other incident management organization training. All L-580 events should be relevant for individuals who function as senior-level leaders and decision

makers, including, but not restricted to, Agency Administrators and incident management organizations (Type 1, Type 2, Area Command, and NIMO).

- L-580 events should focus on education, rather than training, that addresses a variety of challenges and current leadership challenges faced by incident management organizations and senior fire leaders.
- L-580 events should include benchmarking and collaboration with outside organizations.
- L-580 events should foster continuing personal and professional growth, in order to keep pace with current and future workforce needs.

PROCEDURES FOR BECOMING AN NWCG-APPROVED PROVIDER

BECOMING AN NWCG-APPROVED L-180 PROVIDER

This course is offered at the local level using the minimum instructor qualifications and instructor certification guidelines listed in the *NWCG Standards for Course Delivery*, PMS 901-1, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/901-1>. L-180 course material is available through NWCG. An evaluation of prospective providers is not necessary by the Leadership Curriculum Management Subcommittee.

Approval to instruct this course is given at the local level.

BECOMING AN NWCG-APPROVED L-280 PROVIDER

This course is offered at the local level using the minimum instructor qualifications and instructor certification guidelines listed in the *NWCG Standards for Course Delivery*, PMS 901-1, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/901-1>. L-280 course material is available through NWCG. An evaluation of prospective providers is not necessary by the Leadership Curriculum Management Subcommittee.

Approval to instruct this course is given at the local level.

BECOMING AN NWCG-APPROVED L-380, L-381, L-480, L-481, OR L-580 PROVIDER

Prospective providers for any of the L-courses should understand that the intent of the leadership development curriculum is to teach and promote standard leadership terminology and concepts from the entry-level firefighter to the most senior-level fire management leaders. Each class builds on the concepts learned in previous courses. Understanding the core concepts of each course and how they are interrelated is critical to successful delivery at any given level.

Potential to operate as a course provider or lead instructor may be limited by one's employing agency's policies. All employees must function within the ethical guidelines set forth by their employing agency. See below for links to appropriate federal policy.

- USDA (USFS) Guidance, <https://www.ethics.usda.gov/index.htm>
- DOI (USFW, NPS, BLM, BIA) guidance, <https://www.doi.gov/ethics>

***Prospective providers should thoroughly review the course summary for target delivery course prior to beginning the procedure for becoming a provider.**

STEP 1: EXAMINE THE COURSE DESCRIPTION AND MINIMUM INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS

- L-380 Training Page, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/training-courses/l-380>
- L-381 Training Page, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/training-courses/l-381>

- L-480 Training Page, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/training-courses/l-480>
- L-481 Training Page, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/training-courses/l-481>
- L-580 Training Page, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/training-courses/l-580>

STEP 2: BECOME FAMILIAR WITH INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN CRITERIA AND COURSE EVALUATION PROCESS, PROGRAM INTENT, AND RESOURCES

- Research course instructional design criteria.
 - [L-380 Instructional Design Criteria](#)
 - [L-381 Instructional Design Criteria](#)
 - [L-480 Instructional Design Criteria](#)
 - [L-481 Instructional Design Criteria](#)
 - [L-580 Guiding Principles](#)
- Research the lower-level course content.
 - L-180 Course Materials, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/training-courses/l-180/course-materials>
 - L-280 Course Materials, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/training-courses/l-280/course-materials>
- Research the foundational reference material.
 - Become familiar with the intent of the NWCG Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp>.
 - Read *Leading in the Wildland Fire Service*, PMS 494-2, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms494-2>.
 - Review the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp>.
- Become familiar with the NWCG Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program website, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp>.
 - Explore the online Leadership Toolbox, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp> that supports the leadership curriculum and self-development.
- Review the course evaluation process below.

STEP 3: CONTACT THE APPROPRIATE NWCG LEADERSHIP CURRICULUM LEAD (LCL)

- Refer to <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/wfldp-roster> for the current list of LCLs. The LCL may designate a NWCG L-Course Point of Contact (POC) to act in LCL's stead.

Discussion and questions for the LCL/POC should include:

- Capability to assemble a qualified cadre to develop and deliver a training product that meets the established intent and criteria.
- Existing course packages and/or the development of new course packages.
- Procedures for moving forward from proposal to evaluation.
- Approval is required for both the course content/materials and for a lead instructor.
- Roles of sponsoring agency, hosting unit, and Geographic Area Training Representative (GATR).

Course Development Documentation Review

Due to the costs associated with failed live test course evaluation attempts, L-series programs will require a multi-step approval process to help assure that potential programs meet the program specifications before a live test is approved. NWCG may review core design and development documentation, analysis results, proposed delivery support structures, evaluation criteria and methods, and course materials for robustness and completeness. This approval process also assures that students participating in the test course are not subjected to substandard deliveries.

The LC may use third-party review resources (as is done with FEMA courseware) to accomplish key review tasks.

Review and approval of proposed course design documents and content is as follows:

- The potential provider will submit the [Application for Course Document Review](#) with design and development documents to the LCL/POC for evaluation and comment a minimum of 6 months prior to an initial test (alpha delivery). The list of required review material will be agreed upon by the provider and the LCL/POC.
- The LCL/POC will manage a program review of the provider's material and documentation. The LCL/POC may use internal or contract reviewers to ensure that all the required elements of the Instructional Design Criteria have been met.
- The LCL/POC provides feedback to potential provider regarding package.
- Potential provider re-submits all course materials, logistical documents, and other products associated with the delivery to the LCL/POC for review.
- The LCL/POC approves package or returns with comment for resubmission. When package is approved, the potential provider may move on to step 4.

STEP 4: CONTACT THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA TRAINING REPRESENTATIVE (GATR) IN YOUR AREA

GATR contacts can be found on the Wildland Fire Learning Portal, <https://wildlandfirelearningportal.net/>.

NOTE: Course development and delivery by non-federal agencies may or may not be coordinated by a Geographic Area Training Representative. In this case there needs to be a sponsoring agency that would agree to coordinate the course development and delivery (a courtesy call should be made to the GATR).

Discussion and questions for the GATR or other sponsor agency contact should include:

- Determine if there is a need and/or resources to sponsor this proposed course.
- Sponsor agency agreement.
- Funding agreement for course development, instructor preparation, logistics, production of course materials, and actual course delivery.
- Hosting unit arrangements and responsibilities.
- Timeline from course proposal to date for initial test course delivery.

The potential provider is responsible for coordinating and obtaining a hosting agency or GATR.

STEP 5: PREPARE FOR TEST COURSE DELIVERY

Coordinate with the GATR/sponsor agency contact and the designated LCL/POC:

- Schedule an initial test course delivery date with GATR/sponsor agency contact. The GATR/sponsor agency contact must submit a written request to the LCL/POC for an evaluation

team at least four (4) months prior to that initial test course date. The LCL/POC will assemble the evaluation team.

- Provide a complete set of approved course materials to the LCL/POC and the GATR/sponsor agency contact at least 30 days prior to the initial test course start date.
- The LCL/POC will assemble an evaluation team. Travel costs reimbursement for the evaluation team is the responsibility of the sponsoring agency or organization.

STEP 6: DELIVER TEST COURSE(S) FOR EVALUATION

Be prepared to work with the NWCG evaluation team during the test course delivery:

- Be available to meet with the evaluation team prior to the start of the course.
- Participate in daily review meetings with the evaluation team.
- Be available to meet with the evaluation team at the conclusion of the course.
- In addition to an initial alpha test course, past providers have generally required one or more follow-up beta courses prior to receiving NWCG approval.

Evaluation Team

If/when a potential provider is approved for a live test, the evaluation team will consist of 2 or 3 individuals, with a team leader appointed. All members of the evaluation team must have strong involvement in training at the geographic area or national level. The evaluators must have previously attended or helped deliver the course in question and must have instructor experience at the 300 level or higher in the NWCG curriculum. The LC will select the evaluation team members. Funding for the evaluation team travel expenses will be the responsibility of the requesting agency.

Evaluation Format

Courses will be evaluated relative to the NWCG leadership curriculum intent, instructor requirements, instructional design guidelines, and all content objectives or topic areas as outlined in the course instructional design criteria. The LC has developed an evaluation form that addresses these topics (see links below). The format to summarize the evaluation team observations will be as follows:

Deficiencies and Suggestions: The final written evaluation shall focus on the areas in need of improvement (termed deficiencies) as observed by the evaluation team. These will be agreed upon by the evaluation team. Observations from the evaluation team will provide specific details and examples of the key areas in need of improvement. There should also be suggestions that are shared with the prospective provider cadre to help insure improvement.

Summary and Recommendation: The final written evaluation should give specific recommendations to the sponsoring unit or agency. If the provider is approved, it should be stated clearly how the agency(s) should proceed in using the prospective provider. If the provider is not approved, it shall provide feedback to the prospective provider regarding deficiencies should be stated how the agency(s) could continue to work with the prospective provider in the future to achieve an approved course, or if they should discontinue working with the prospective provider. The LC may permit failed providers to re-apply or re-test in some circumstances.

The LC evaluation team will evaluate the program and render one of the following decisions:

- Program and provider approved as is.
- Program and provider approved, with recommended changes.
- Program and provider approved conditional upon some mandatory changes being made.

- Program and/or provider is denied, with recommendations for future improvement and for potential future evaluation.

Approved

If the course content, materials, and lead instructor are approved, notification will be given by the LC through a letter to the provider and to the GATR or sponsoring agency contact. The provider will then be added to the list of Approved Providers, and specific lead instructors identified if applicable. If approval was given under condition of some mandatory changes, the revised material will need to be reviewed and approved by the evaluation team prior to the provider being added to the list of Approved Providers.

Denied

If program and/or provider are denied approval, the LC evaluation team may recommend actions or changes to provide a pathway to certification. In all cases of denial, certification cannot be obtained without demonstration of capability through another live test.

- If another test is pursued by the potential provider, the process described above should be followed again.
- In the event of a second live test course, the provider will be responsible for the travel costs for the evaluation team.
- Failure to certify after two live attempts will terminate the process and the LC will not be obligated to consider future applications.
 - [L-380 Evaluation Form](#)
 - [L-381 Evaluation Form](#)
 - [L-480 Evaluation Form](#)
 - [L-481 Evaluation Form](#)
 - [L-580 Evaluation Form](#)

If the course content, materials, and lead instructor are approved, notification will be given by the LC through a letter to the prospective provider and to the GATR/sponsor agency contact. The prospective provider will then be added to the list of Approved Providers identifying the specific lead instructor(s) that must be utilized for any future delivery of the course.

CURRENTLY APPROVED PROVIDERS CERTIFYING NEW LEAD INSTRUCTORS

In lieu of a formal evaluation team conducting on-site evaluations for each new lead instructor, current lead instructors for currently approved providers of L-380, L-381, L-480, and L-481 course packages must complete and submit the [New Lead Instructor Certification Checklist](#) to the LC in order to certify a new lead instructor. This form requires that the new lead instructor has taught as cadre member of previous course deliveries, has functioned as a lead instructor trainee, and can produce supporting documentation. An alternative lead instructor certification process can be utilized by a provider, but the process must first be approved by the LCL. Whichever process is used, the provider must receive notice of instructor certification from the LC prior to using the instructor in a lead capacity.

When functioning in a lead instructor role, all federal employees must function within the ethical guidelines set forth by the employing agency. Potential to operate as a lead instructor may be limited by agency policy. See below for links to appropriate policy.

- USDA (USFS) Guidance, <https://www.ethics.usda.gov/index.htm>
- DOI (USFW, NPS, BLM, BIA) guidance, <https://www.doi.gov/ethics>

COURSE AUDITS AND MAINTENANCE

The LC maintains the prerogative to audit and evaluate any given course or instructor for the purpose of assessing quality of instruction.

LCLs may establish a regular auditing schedule of course deliveries with each provider.

If a significant amount of time has passed since a provider's previous delivery, the LCL may conduct a formal course evaluation to ensure quality control. The same is true for a lead instructor, who may need to repeat the [New Lead Instructor Certification Checklist](#), or approved alternate process, to regain lead instructor credentials.

Formal course evaluations will follow the guidelines in [Step 6](#) of the formal course evaluation process and outcome. If an evaluation results in a denial of certification, then the provider will be removed from the approved provider list.