

MEMORANDUM

Date: 18 July 2018
To: ARRL Board of Directors
From: Stephen Aberle, WA7PTM
Assistant State RACES Officer, Washington
Official Emergency Station, ARRL Western Washington Section
ARRL Life Member
Subject: Programs & Services Committee Report – ARES Strategic Plan

The purpose of this memorandum is to formally ask you to defer the approval of an ARES Strategic Plan at least until the January 2019 meeting of the ARRL Board of Directors. While a strategic plan is certainly necessary for the ARES, and I agree on its general direction, the current iteration of the document is lacking in many respects and is simply not ready for approval at this time without a significant quantity of revisions. There are a multitude of issues with this document, but these points are of greatest concern:

1. Major portions of the document read like an advertisement for the ARES rather than a true strategic plan for the organization.
2. Elements which one would expect in strategic plan are missing (i.e. Core Values, SWOT Analysis, Goals, SMART Objectives), and most of content in this document is superfluous.
3. Elements of a Strategic Plan and a Tactical Plan are munged together into a single document.
4. NIMS compliance is referenced, yet the “levels of training” detail (a section which actually belongs in a tactical plan) has resource typing numbering reversed from how Incident Command System staff would order communications resources in response to an incident.
5. References to the traditional amateur radio skills of DX and Radiosport are not core competencies within the ARES mission, and thus do not belong in an ARES document.

Please instruct the PSC to go back to the drawing board on the ARES Strategic Plan, and begin that process by creating true Vision and Mission Statements. The ARES Vision Statement could be as simple as:

“ARES, the nation's premier provider of capable amateur radio emergency and disaster communications volunteers, embraces a combination of traditional and emerging voice and digital data technologies to serve communities whenever emergency and disaster communications are needed.”

And the Mission Statement could be as concise as:

“The mission of the ARES is to utilize a cadre of trained and experienced radio operators to augment and support vital communications in a NIMS environment for local, state, tribal, and federal jurisdictions.”

Another thing I would urge the Board to do is to instruct the PSC to include more representation in the strategic and tactical planning processes by those with experience in the public safety sector, as that is obviously missing from the current iteration of the documentation.

Once the PSC has produced an acceptable and transparent Strategic Plan, only then should they begin the Tactical Plan (and that plan must include progress metrics). Please do not overlook the fact that both ARRL members (since they are paying the costs) and ARES members (since this affects them directly) must have a say in how program revisions are implemented. Otherwise they will vote with their feet, and both ARRL and ARES membership numbers will suffer. We cannot let that happen!