

CAP Vision and Mission

CAP Officer Basic Course

Introduction

CAP's vision and mission statements explain why our organization exists, what we seek to accomplish, how we intend to accomplish those missions, and what we want to mean to our communities, states, and nation.

DEFINITIONS

CAP'S Vision Statement : "America's Air Force Auxiliary, Civil Air Patrol, building the nation's finest force of citizen volunteers-performing Missions for America." (3)

CAP'S Mission Statement : "To serve America by performing Homeland Security and humanitarian missions for communities, states, and nation; developing our country's youth; and educating our citizens on the importance of air and space power." (3)

CAP'S CORE Values: Integrity, Volunteer Service, Excellence, Respect (15)

CAP'S MOTTO: **Semper Vigilans** (3)

CAP'S Three Missions:

1. Aerospace Education
2. Cadet Programs
3. Emergency Services (2&3)

"A vision statement can be described in a number of ways; for instance: It is a vivid idealized description of a desired outcome that inspires, energizes and helps members of an organization create a mental picture of the target."(14) It could be a vision of a part of the organization, or the outcome of a project or goal. It is sometimes called a picture of the organization in the future; but it's so much more than that. A vision statement is your inspiration, the framework for all your strategic planning. It answers the question, "Where do we want to go?" CAP's vision is succinctly stated in the statement - performing Missions for America.

1. State the purpose of a vision and mission statement.

Some of the key components of a **vision statement** are to incorporate one's beliefs and value systems:

"It must meet the organization's objectives as well as community goals, given beliefs are a declaration of the organization's values, beliefs are a public, visible statement of the organization's anticipated outcomes, beliefs must be focused and practical, beliefs will guide the actions of all involved, beliefs reflect the knowledge, philosophy, and actions of all, beliefs are a key component of strategic planning." (4)

A mission statement tells members the fundamental purpose of the organization. It focuses on the present. It defines the customs and the control process. It informs members of the desired level of performance. After the organization has formulated its beliefs, it needs to

build on them to articulate the mission statement, which is a statement of purpose and function.

1. A mission statement draws on the organization's values and belief statements.
2. The mission statement must be oriented to the future and describe the organization as you hope it will be, as though it already exists.
3. The mission statement should concern itself with one common purpose.
4. The mission statement must be precise and specific to the organization and not generalized or generic.
5. The mission statement should be short, to the point and not in excess of two sentences. (4)

What is the difference between a vision and a mission statement? Think of these two words: VisionARY and MissionARY. We know what these two words mean. A visionary is someone who sees into the future - thinks about the possible. A missionary is someone who actually carries out the vision -they do the work.

2. Discuss CAP vision and mission statements in the context of their value systems.

What are these core values?

1. **Integrity** means soundness of and adherence to moral principles and character; uprightness; honesty.
2. **Volunteer Service** means one who volunteers himself/herself for a service of his own free will.
3. **Excellence** means the continuing effort to be the very best.
4. **Respect** means fairness and dignity and worthy of esteem.

These are CAP's Core Values and as concepts are expanded on and explained in more detail in CAP's core values lesson of this course. For this lesson, let's discuss how they underlie both CAP's mission and vision statements. (3) & (15)

What comes first in CAP? It has to be a belief or value system. For CAP, we have our Core Values briefly recited. It's from these values that we build our mission and vision statements. Let's look at CAP's mission statement to understand how our value system comes into play. What is the first line of our mission statement? "To serve America." That suggests *volunteer service*, one of our core values. This also ties in with CAP's vision statement where it says "...building the nation's finest force of citizen volunteers..." So, volunteerism, one of the core values, is volunteers dedicating their own time, efforts and skills to CAP's mission and vision.

CAP's mission statement additionally states: "To serve America by performing Homeland Security and humanitarian missions for our communities, states and nation..." Another tie-in with our vision statement of "performing Missions for America." All kinds of missions, too many to enumerate-from emergency services, disaster relief to blood transport and many others.

What is another value in CAP's core? *Integrity*. Members are asked to practice the highest standards of self-discipline. What is self-discipline? It's the correction or regulation of oneself for the sake of improvement. The tie in with CAP's vision statement is "...building the nation's finest force of citizen volunteers..." You can't be a fine force unless you have integrity - a high value standard that is beyond reproach or criticism.

Where does *excellence*, another of CAP's core values, come into play? Let's look at the CAP definition. It means "a continuous effort to be the very best, and to consistently improve its humanitarian services to America. From personal appearance to resource management, excellence must be the goal of all CAP members." CAP's vision statement is almost a restatement of this core value where it mentions: "To serve America by performing Homeland Security and humanitarian missions for our communities, states, and nation..." If you are going to serve these goals, it seems natural that you should do it in the best possible way, with excellence as our performance guide to fulfill this task.

Respect, another of CAP's core values is defined this way: "CAP members come from all walks of life. Therefore, it is extremely important that members treat each other with fairness and dignity, and work together as a team. To do other wise would seriously impair CAP's capability to accomplish the mission." Again this ties back to CAP's vision statement "...building the finest force of citizen volunteers." It could not happen unless all members work together, which implies we need to respect each other to complete the mission. (2)

3. Describe how vision and mission statements are unifying to an organization.

While it is nice for an organization's headquarters to have a mission and vision it does not matter if the local units are off doing their own thing. Middle management/regional offices can not effectively allocate resources, provide needed support if they don't have the same goals as the national or local organizations. Different chapters or levels of the organization can not support each other if they are all doing something different. To understand how the vision and mission statements are unifying to CAP, we will see how the mission and vision statements are supported by the day to day missions that CAP's members perform. Remember our mission is to:

1. To serve America,
2. Perform Homeland Security missions and humanitarian missions for our communities, states and nation,
3. Develop our country's youth,
4. Educate our citizens on the importance of air and space. (3)

CAP squadrons and flights are in every state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, plus on US. Military bases in Japan and Germany. So, CAP's physical presence is all over the U.S., in a U.S. territory, and in two countries where there is a large American presence. Thus, CAP is serving America.

Aircrews from your wing perform Homeland Security missions for our communities; states and nation through aerial reconnaissance or communication capabilities for border security; assistance in a collective response effort such as damage assessment; search and rescue; evacuations; and other tasks.

The local cadet squadron develops our country's youth by CAP's Cadet Program and Aerospace Education Programs, which instill America's youth with goals, objectives and

understanding in leadership and Aerospace education to comprehend more about flight and America's objectives and methods in space exploration. It also supports Emergency Services and disaster relief by contributing trained members to ground teams, mission bases, and other activities.

AEOs educate our citizens on the importance of air and space power by programs such as the Aerospace Education Excellence (AEX), rocketry and orientation flight programs for cadets in powered and glider aircraft, the aerospace education programs for seniors such as the Yeager, and the Scott Crossfield and Brewer Award programs educate our adult members.

The Aerospace Education Member (AEM) program for teachers from kindergarten through twelfth grade promotes aerospace education in schools using CAP educational products and resources through the Aerospace Education external program.

Both the Aerospace Education internal and external programs further educate both cadets and seniors in the ongoing programs and roles that America plays on a global basis in aviation and aerospace: too include new aircraft, new modalities of space exploration, and competence in conjunction with others to understand our world and the universe we live in.

CAP's vision statement summarizes CAP's mission statement but goes further. It looks over the horizon, to the future and answers the question, "where are we going?" It tells us who we are: "America's Air Force Auxiliary, Civil Air Patrol. Whose uniform do we wear? A modified Air Force uniform including the corporate uniform distinguishing CAP as a component of the U.S. Air Force.

Building the finest force of citizen volunteers summarizes what CAP volunteers do for their home towns, communities, states and America. We are well represented in our thousands of members across the land, doing daily missions for America. Thus, the day to day missions we undertake are consistent with CAP's vision of performing tasks that support our patriotic status as volunteers in service to America. Mission and vision statements give CAP its current and future roadmap.

Lesson Summary and Closure

In wrapping up, we need to know first the purpose of a vision and mission statement. To do this let's look at strategies of organizations. All strategic planning is concerned with at least one of three questions:

1. What do we do?
2. For whom do we do it?
3. How do we excel? (12)

Every organization, CAP included, needs to know where it stands, then determine where it wants to go and the method it will use to get there. The resulting statements or document is called the plan or the vision statement, which is how CAP arrived at "Missions for America" as its best summation of purpose.

This is the distillation the U.S. Congress has codified as the role CAP will perform. And, it is a reflection of CAP's mission statement. In detail, the Congress has stated the purposes of the corporation (the Civil Air Patrol) are as follows:

1. Encourage and aid citizens of the United States in contributing their efforts, services and resources in developing aviation and in monitoring air supremacy,
2. Encourage and develop by example the voluntary contribution of private citizens to the public welfare.
3. To provide aviation education and training especially to its senior and cadet members.
4. To encourage and foster civil aviation in local communities; and
5. To provide an organization of private citizens with adequate facilities to assist in meeting local and national emergencies.
6. To assist the Department of the Air Force in fulfilling its non-combat programs and missions. (10)

All of these roles are further included in the core values of CAP. Its core values define its mission statement and its vision statement. Volunteers with integrity that respect each other and strive for excellence in everything that they do exemplify the best of the Civil Air Patrol. It is under the shield of these values and goals that CAP members will perform to their best ability.

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