

# The Four-Step Planning Process in Public Affairs

Note: Before you begin the planning process, in-depth familiarity of 190-1 is essential. Go to the Forms and Publications section of [members.gocivilairpatrol.com](http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com). The direct link is: [http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/forms\\_publications\\_regulations/](http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/forms_publications_regulations/)

## Step 1 – Determine PA needs and opportunities

### Step 2 – Establish objectives

### Step 3 – Establish goals for each objective

### Step 4 – Determine effectiveness (evaluation)

## STEP 1

### Determine PA needs and opportunities (Situation Analysis)

Note: This section simply provides background information about your wing/squadron. In addition to the data cited in A & B, feel free to respond to the other questions by listing the items cited or using paragraph format. In order to provide a good overview, consult with your IC, director of cadet programs, air ops officer, wing commander, MIO, chief of staff, and others who can help you determine a solid response to each question. Then, for question F, list all of the things you are already doing to address these public awareness needs and opportunities, as well any plans you may have for the future.

Provide a brief overview of your wing from a PA perspective, i.e.,

- A. Cite how many squadrons and units are in the wing;
- B. State total number of cadet and senior members;
- C. List special events conducted each year such as SAREXs, tabletop exercises, wing conferences, O flights, change of command ceremonies, encampments, air shows, and training;
- D. Identify the wing's strengths, such as number of missions and saves, total flight hours, and number of members involved;
- E. Identify areas targeted for improvement, such as CI findings, no SAR eval write-ups, and increased external funding; and
- F. In consideration of this snapshot of your wing, list PA's initiatives currently being conducted and/or planned for the near future to gain public awareness and support for the wing through promotion and communication of significant missions, member accomplishments, special events, and other ways in which the wing, squadron, or unit stand out above the rest. (Suggestion: Solicit this information from the squadrons and units in the wing and then provide a short overview of what's happening now.)
- G. Can PA help address areas needing improvement, such as recruitment? If so, cite the initiatives PA implements and/or plans to implement in the future.
- H. What can be done in the coming year to improve your PA program, such as creating closer partnerships with emergency service providers and the Air Force to enhance local visibility, holding an annual PA summit consisting of key stakeholders to ensure all PA needs and opportunities are being met, or studying the National Public Awareness Plan to uncover viable goals and objectives that will complement the wing/squadron's PA plan.

## STEP 2

### Establish objectives

Note: C and D are pulled from 190-1 and may be used as the wing/squadron's objectives for the plan!

- A. List the objectives identified in the situation analysis provided above. i.e.,
- B. Encourage members to tell their friends about CAP (recruitment initiatives);
- C. Increase public awareness of CAP, its local, state and national missions, and its contributions to the nation; and
- D. Promote cooperation between CAP and other aviation organizations, the military, business, industry and civic groups.

### STEP 3

#### Establish goals for each objective

Note: 190-1 requires implementation of goals that target public awareness and networking. Feel free to use the goals provided below or to create your own. Ideas for implementing each goal are also provided. Suggested ways to evaluate the success of each goal are cited as well. These suggestions are provided to help you get started and are not intended to represent an exhaustive list of the innumerable combination of goals and implementation strategies you may already be using. You may, of course, use any or all of them that apply to you, but each wing/squadron should also list their own initiatives here. This section requires three things – at minimum a public awareness and networking goal, a list of projects and initiatives designed to achieve these goals and a statement regarding how you will evaluate each goal's success.

- A. For recruitment initiatives your goal(s) may target
  - 1. Contests to recruit new members (Sample goal: Host a “bring-a-friend” event that highlights CAP and all the benefits and opportunities for membership)
    - Ways to implement this goal may include:
      - a. Stage an open house for the event
      - b. Ensure all participants can readily recite CAP’s mission statement
      - c. Prepare information packets for visitors
      - d. Publicize the event in the local media
      - e. Invite a VIP speaker to attract interest in the event
    - Ways to evaluate success may include:
      - a. Fifteen members brought 20 guests and five became members
      - b. Event was promoted in the local paper and the VIP guest was interviewed by the local TV station
  - 2. Dissemination the *Volunteer* in the community. (Sample goal: Promote CAP in the local community through wide distribution of the *Civil Air Patrol Volunteer*)
    - Ways to implement this goal may include:
      - a. Distribute to appropriate target audiences, including members of the military, media, and elected officials
      - b. Distribute the magazine at high-traffic areas in the community
      - c. Collect magazines from members for recycling in the community
    - Ways to evaluate success may include:
      - a. Wing/squadron recycles 200 copies of each issue
      - b. Wing/squadron disseminated the magazine to key constituent audiences in the local community and, as a result, CAP is now more widely understood and appreciated as evidenced by a 5-percent increase in requests for assistance from these organizations.
      - c. The local media and editors of military publications contact the wing/squadron PAO for information when a SAR is being conducted or a disaster strikes
      - d. The wing/squadron has experienced a 10 percent increase in membership inquiries from the general public
  - 3. Participation at air shows and other events (Sample goal: Promote the benefits of CAP membership at events that attract patriotic citizens interested in aerospace)
    - Ways to implement this goal may include:
      - a. Set up a booth for dissemination of materials and meet/greet opportunities
      - b. Stage a special event, such as posting of colors
      - c. Publicize participation in the local community

Ways to evaluate success may include:

- a. More than 20 applications for membership were completed
- b. More than 50 people are interested in finding out more information about CAP
- c. The events attracted a photo/cutline in the local paper and a 10-second sound bite on the evening news

B. For public awareness your goal(s) may target

1. Proactive media relations (Sample goal: Attract widespread, ongoing print and broadcast media coverage through proactive media relations tactics)

Ways to implement this goal may include:

- a. Establish a relationship with local media on a first-name basis
- b. Look for good story ideas and provide them to the media on an ongoing basis
- c. Look for local, regional and national opportunities to offer a reprint of stories associated with your wing or squadron in the *Volunteer*

Ways to evaluate success may include:

- a. As a result of enhanced media relations, the wing/squadron's publicity increased from three to five stories
- b. The wing/squadron pitched story ideas to the media that resulted in coverage of two members' accomplishments and one special event
- c. A feature that appeared in the *Volunteer* also ran in *Flying* magazine and in the online version of the *New York Times*.

2. Promotion of significant news worthy events (Sample goal: Develop and implement local media strategies designed to garner maximum publicity)

Ways to implement this goal may include:

- a. For emergency and disaster relief missions, include FEMA, Red Cross and other emergency service providers in news release dissemination; don't forget online news sources
- b. For member and wing/squadron accomplishments, in addition to news release dissemination to the media, add posting of this information on the wing/squadron Web site, running it in the wing/squadron newsletter, sending it to CAP News Online and/or the *Volunteer* and identifying publications that target audiences pertaining to the topic at hand (such as aerospace education, airplanes or veterans)
- c. For special events, publicize the information in local calendars, on marquees, on radio and TV talk shows, in military communications venues and the *Volunteer*, as appropriate

Ways to evaluate success may include: Citing the increased publicity resulting from enhanced media and promotions strategies

3. Promotion and communication of news and achievements (Sample goal: Establish a communications program that embraces the latest trends and technology)

Ways to implement this goal may include use of the following tools:

- a. Web site
- b. Listserv
- c. Newsletter
- d. Multimedia materials
- e. Social media

Ways to evaluate success may include: Citing the number of hits on the Web site, visitors to the listserv, response to the newsletter as evidenced in a reader survey, and multimedia and social media feedback

4. Promotion of national compelling message (Sample goal: Use the compelling message on all news releases and internal correspondence)

Ways to implement this goal may include: Using the message on all communications vehicles cited in goal 3, as well as banners, posters, ads, etc.

Ways to evaluate success may include: Enhanced understanding and appreciation of CAP's brand as evidenced by constituent audience response to promotional and communications pieces

C. For networking initiatives your goal(s) may target civic and community groups, the military, and schools (Sample goals: Partner with local Volunteer and Information Center to do community service projects OR have a representative of the wing or squadron speak at least three times annually at school or civic events.)

Ways to implement this goal may include:

1. Establish a Speaker's Bureau
2. Coordinate participation in three civic or community projects each fiscal year

Ways to evaluate success may include: Citing the number of civic and community service projects and the results of each interaction

#### **Step 4**

#### **Determine effectiveness (evaluation)**

Note: Refer to the "ways to evaluate success" statement(s) for each goal. On a quarterly basis, evaluate what is actually occurring, noting what is working well and what you can do better in the future. This will serve as an important guide for creating your plan for next year!

#### **National Public Awareness Plan**

CAP's National Public Awareness Plan contains a treasure chest of goals and implementation strategies that should not be overlooked in writing your plan. To view the plan, go to [members.gocivilairpatrol.com](http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com) and visit the Public Awareness Plan page at: [http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/cap\\_national\\_hq/public\\_affairs/cap\\_public\\_awareness\\_plan/](http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/cap_national_hq/public_affairs/cap_public_awareness_plan/)

Here's some sample goals from the plan:

- Maximize exposure through grassroots visibility and tenacious public relations efforts by successfully placing at least one article in local print or online media each quarter, securing local TV coverage at least once per year and speaking at local community-based gatherings at least three times per year.
- Boost visibility within local communities by actively partnering with Points of Light Foundation.
- Employ a Memorandum of Understanding with the local weather channel to provide aerial images and ride-along opportunities as appropriate in exchange for on-air credit.
- Increase name and brand recognition by providing car/van wraps for CAP vehicles.
- Strengthen awareness among military members by meeting with the PAO of local military base(s) and arranging a meeting between the wing commander and base commander at least once a year.
- Purposefully foster relationships with local groups who have a natural affinity for patriotism, civic duty, aerospace education, leadership development and service to community.
- Use current members and donors to reach potential members and/or donors in their circle of influence.
- Partner with military services to specifically promote CAP to retiring or resigning servicemen and women.
- Develop a welcome system used when active members move to a new city or state.
- Consistently administer exit surveys to aid in better understanding reasons for decreasing retention rates.