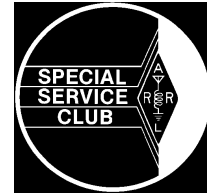




Nacogdoches Amateur Radio Club
167 County Road 2093
Nacogdoches, TX 75965



September 13, 2018

Re: Comments on Proposed ARRL ARES Strategic Plan

Dr. David Woolweaver K5RAV
Director, West Gulf Division
American Radio Relay League
via email k5rav@arrl.org

Dear Dr. Woolweaver:

The ARRL has proposed a new ARES Strategic Plan which they have asked for comments on. After careful consideration of this plan, the Nacogdoches Amateur Radio Club (NARC) offers the following comments:

1. **Transparency**: “ARRL consulted with experienced and talented resources from a broad cross-section of radio amateurs in the U.S. “ Who, specifically did the ARRL consult with on this matter?
2. **Qualified to assume any position?** In all previous Emergency Communications training programs offered through ARRL, it was stressed numerous times that ARES personnel were to provide communications services **only**. The new proposed ARES Strategic Plan specifically states (Page 6, paragraph 2) “... all participants receive the same training and, when deployed, would be qualified to assume any position they were assigned to. Therefore, changes have been made to resolve this issue...” ARRL appears to need reminding that ARES IS NOT and SHOULD NOT be trying to provide qualified personnel to assume any position they might be assigned to.
3. **Qualifications for Membership in ARES**: While formal training is certainly desirable, to “*REQUIRE*” certain training levels, especially the requirement

that all “*ARES LEADERS*” must attain Level 3 within one year will likely kill the ARES program in many areas. It needs to be remembered that ARES is an Amateur Radio program to provide communications resources to specific public service agencies. ARES should not be expected or promoted to compete with the agencies we serve. We have seen too many instances of served agencies trying to use ARES personnel as a direct extension of their own organization. ARES provides communications. Period.

4. **ARES members and Leaders**: The level of requirements put forth in this Strategic Plan will require many hours of study and training on the part of every member and especially the leaders. It should be remembered the source of these members and leaders are Amateur Radio operators, coming from all walks of life. Many are extremely busy raising a family and with their careers. Very few are going to be able or willing to devote the time and energy to ARES as envisioned by this Strategic Plan. Certainly if the Amateur Radio operator is retired, with their family grown, more time becomes available for programs such as this. This group of retirees however also has other demands on their new found leisure time: Grandkids, health issues, travel, and let’s not forget operating Amateur Radio. Providing emergency communications during an emergency is something many Amateur Radio operators are certainly willing to do, but it is not the primary reason for obtaining their license in the first place. To be successful, ARES must be able to tap into the local population of Amateur Radio operators. Putting the types of requirements proposed in this plan on ARES members and leadership will almost certainly decimate and likely completely kill the ARES program in many areas. A recommended solution to this problem is to make the ‘requirements’ a suggested goal, not a mandatory requirement with a specific time-line.
5. **One size does NOT fit all**: While many of the proposals put forth in the plan may be appropriate for some high population areas of the country, they can only make a difficult situation worse in other areas. If the Strategic Plan wants to give ARES groups a goal to strive for, wonderful. Some areas of the country may be able to follow the plan to the letter. But to ‘*require*’ all ARES groups to follow the plan will almost certainly mean the death of ARES in many areas.
6. **ARES is NOT the primary reason for the Amateur Radio service**: While some individuals would have us believe otherwise, arguably most individuals who obtain their Amateur Radio license, or who already have

their Amateur Radio license, do not consider ARES to be their primary interest. Amateur Radio covers an extremely broad array of interests, of which emergency communications represents just one facet. Most hams however have a strong sense of wanting to help their fellow man, and to be of service to their community when the need arises. We need to nurture this and not exclude them from assisting when assistance is needed. The requirements this plan places on ARES leadership is especially onerous. Trying to fill ARES leadership positions is very difficult now. This Strategic Plan will only make it much more difficult if not impossible to find volunteers in the future, but will almost certainly result in high numbers of our present ARES leadership not being qualified to remain in their positions when their first year is finished.

SUMMARY: Do not **require** the successful completion of FEMA or other national level training of any ARES personnel. In the alternative, offer recognition in the form of pins, patches, etc. to those ARES members who voluntarily choose to complete such training. Because all training has a short life unless regularly used and practiced, provide a mechanism that requires ARES members who do choose to complete such training to either participate in declared emergency activities or take refresher training periodically.

It is obvious that a lot of time and effort has gone into the preparation of this strategic plan, and certainly some parts of it have great merit. But other parts of the plan, specifically the mandated requirement of training for ARES Leaders, can well spell the death of ARES in many areas of the Country. We sincerely hope at a minimum this portion of the plan will be reconsidered.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our comments with you on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Nacogdoches Amateur Radio Club
Army Curtis - AE5P Secretary/Treasurer

cc:

Mr. John Robert Stratton N5AUS
Vice Director West Gulf Division
via email n5aus@n5aus.com

Mr. Jay Urish W5GM
Section Manager North Texas
via email w5gm@arrl.org

Mr. Jerry Goodson W5BFF
Section Emergency Coordinator NTX
via email sec@arrlntx.org

Ms. JoAnn Keith KA5AZK
District 8 Emergency Coordinator
via email ka5azk@arrl.net

Mr. John Chapman II KC5MIB
Emergency Coordinator Nacogdoches County
kc5mib@arrl.net