

2014

ASSOCIATION OF STATE AND TERRITORIAL SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT OFFICIALS STRATEGIC PLAN



2014 ASTSWMO Strategic Plan
Adopted by the ASTSWMO Board of Directors, (October 28, 2014)
www.astswmo.org



ASTSWMO, providing pathways to our Nation's environmental stewardship since 1974

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ASTSWMO

2014 STRATEGIC PLAN

BACKGROUND

The Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials (ASTSWMO) is a non-profit environmental trade association representing the waste, materials management, restoration, clean-up and pollution prevention programs of the 50 States, five Territories and the District of Columbia (States).

ASTSWMO is governed by a 14-member Board of Directors (Board). The Board is made up of the Executive Officers of the Association (President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, and immediate Past-President) and one Board member from each of the ten (10) U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) Regions. The ASTSWMO Board has a fiduciary obligation to protect the financial position of the Association and ensure that the Association has sufficient resources to support its mission. The Board will develop a sustainable fiscal strategy that will encompass both short-term and long-term objectives.

Our Subcommittees and Task Force/Focus Groups, made up of technical/policy staff from the member State programs (member States), work on issues relating to Superfund, Brownfields, Corrective Action, Compliance and Enforcement, Recycling, Information Management, Beneficial Use, Underground and Leaking Underground Storage Tanks, and Federal Facilities. These groups promote national policies and technical guidance specific to environmental restoration, release prevention, environmentally sustainable practices, and waste and materials management.

ASTSWMO's primary functions are to enhance the State and Federal partnerships, promote effective State programs and provide member States technical assistance, training, and forums for information exchange. These allow States to develop their program capabilities and manage their programs in the most efficient and effective manner possible. An additional feature of ASTSWMO's non-profit approach is its relative objectivity. ASTSWMO represents the balanced interest of all State member programs, which necessitates consideration of all sides of any given issue. In addition, State members can gather their fellow State members' viewpoints through the Association and then incorporate those responses into their approaches to program implementation and strategy. This helps foster program consistencies across the States. All ASTSWMO activities performed by the Association and its member States are supportive of and consistent with our Strategic Plan.

The Association is committed to utilizing quality improvement tools to increase efficiencies, streamline efforts, promote effective leadership, and meet the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan. In doing so, ASTSWMO maintains and continues to achieve high performance.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ASTSWMO has developed a new strategic plan every three to five years and this 2014 Strategic Plan is ASTSWMO's fifth strategic plan. Since 2001, Strategic Plans have focused explicitly on actions to be undertaken by the Board and Subcommittees that will support the Association's mission. Priority goals, desired outcomes, and implementation mechanisms have varied over the years.

The 2014 Strategic Plan is organized around three main goals:

- I. Provide assistance to the membership;
- II. Enhance and cultivate partnerships; and
- III. Work towards a long-term sustainable organization.

ASTSWMO also revised the mission statement to affirm our commitment to State waste and cleanup programs. The new mission statement is:



ASTSWMO MISSION STATEMENT

To enhance and promote effective State and Territorial programs and to affect relevant national policies for waste and materials management, environmentally sustainable practices, and environmental restoration.

This mission statement recognizes that ASTSWMO has broadened its scope since it formed around solid waste issues in 1974. Our members now work on issues relating to remediation, restoration, sustainability and materials management.

The 2014 Strategic Plan does not prescribe specific actions to specific groups. Instead, it maintains a broader perspective to allow greater flexibility for the Board, Subcommittees, and Staff. Every July, the Board will approve work plans for itself and the Subcommittees to ensure that the work being done supports the Strategic Plan.

ASTSWMO must have both a clear communication plan and an up-to-date information management strategy to continue its reputation as a trusted source of relevant and timely information. This will involve attention to the types of information ASTSWMO must organize and distribute, the ways that information will be shared, and the development of feedback loops to gauge whether information is serving member needs.

Implementation of new technologies to facilitate information management and exchange will be critical to this area. States are interested in more information being available in more ways and in the use of electronic tools, such as webinars and online training, to aid information distribution.

To achieve our goals, ASTSWMO will continue to expand its role as a convener of dialogue, strengthen its national policy voice, and support initiatives and innovations relative to our mission. In the process, ASTSWMO will actively explore strategic partnerships where appropriate and will communicate effectively on complex issues in a manner that contributes to public understanding and facilitates transferability of program practices among States.

“Our legislature always wants data on what other States are doing and we are always looking to learn from our sister agencies. ASTSWMO gives us ready access to the other States.”

Strategic Plan Survey Response

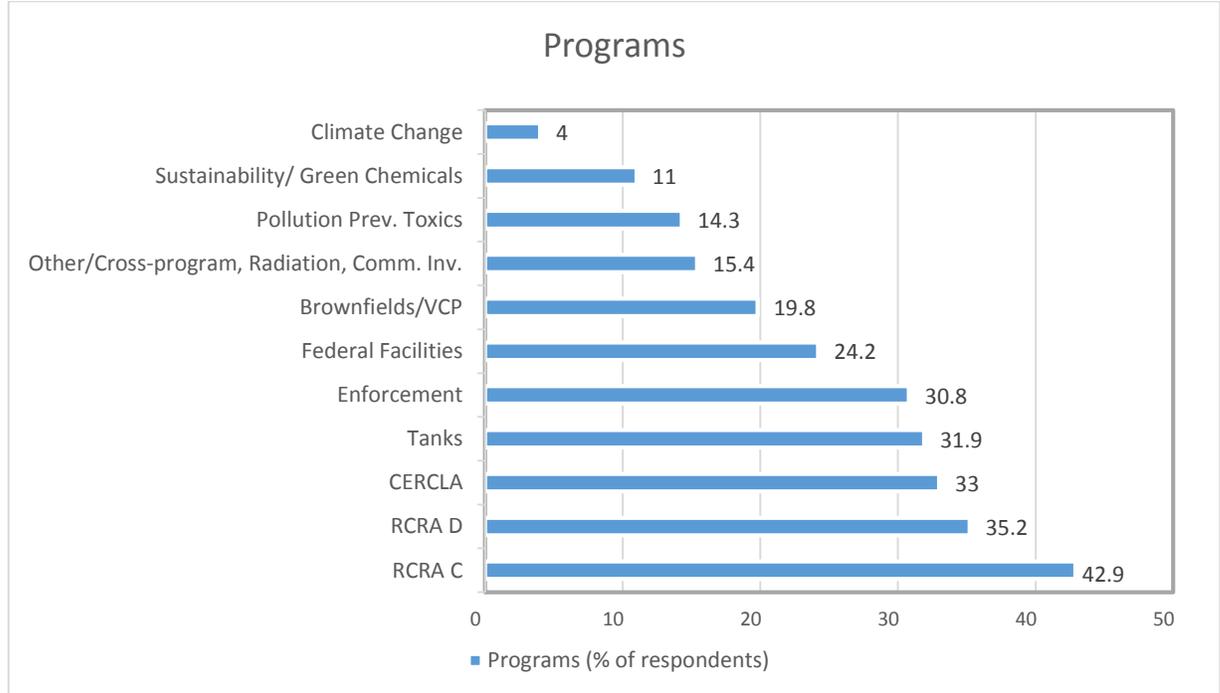
PREPARING FOR THE 2014 STRATEGIC PLAN

In October 2012, the Board voted to initiate a new strategic planning effort and, to do so, created an ad hoc Strategic Planning Workgroup (SP Workgroup) to lead the process. The SP Workgroup began by updating the survey used to collect information for the 2009 Strategic Plan. After revisions, the Board approved the new survey, which was opened for member feedback in May 2013.

Initial Survey Results

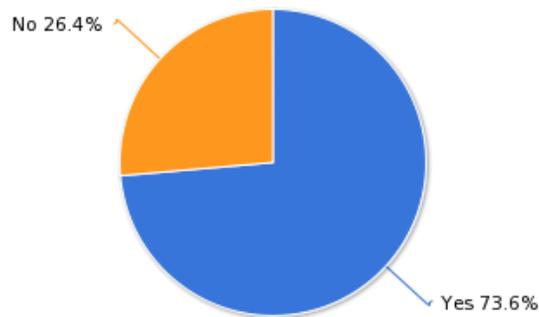
Ninety-one members responded to the survey. They came from 50 State agencies in 43 States and all program areas. However, only 14 voting members responded, and less than 50% of all respondents had served on any ASTSWMO group. The feedback was largely positive, and the positive feedback was even stronger from respondents who had served on an ASTSWMO group. As evidence, nearly 62% of respondents indicated the value their State gains from ASTSWMO membership is great enough that their State would support a membership fee increase and 89.8% indicated the level of service they receive from the Association is good or very good. Respondents extolled the most useful benefits of membership: State-State access and communication, State-EPA access and communication, in-person meetings, distribution of information, ASTSWMO products, and having input into the federal legislative and rulemaking processes.

Survey respondents and the programs they work in:



The survey also requested feedback on ways ASTSWMO could improve its service, and a significant number of responses indicated the Association should work harder to reach and engage more people at each member agency, especially those not yet in managerial positions.

Seventy-three percent of respondents had been to a meeting in the past three years; those that had not pointed to three reasons: travel restrictions, lack of management support, and co-workers going instead. Because of travel restrictions and decreased funding for in-person meetings, ASTSWMO has implemented use of web meetings and trainings.



Attended an ASTSWMO meeting in the past three years

The survey asked what effect online only (no in-person) meetings would have on respondents' participation. Though 88.5% said it would not increase or have no effect on their ability to participate and 70.9% said it would not increase or would have no effect on their willingness to participate, respondents added comments emphasizing the importance of in-person meetings for "strengthening the accountability of Task Force and Focus Group members" and allowing for "complete interaction." Additionally, they said, online meetings "make the possibility of interruption greater" and are difficult to make time for but would enable those who cannot travel to attend.

Respondents reported that ASTSWMO.org (website), position papers, survey reports, fact sheets, and symposia/conferences are the top five most useful products, listed in descending order. They also reported that symposia/conferences, website, trainings, position papers, and survey reports are the top five most helpful products, listed in descending order. Suggestions for improving resources largely focused on more online alternatives for those who cannot attend in-person meetings, upgrading the ASTSWMO website, and broader and cross-programmatic distribution of information.

The survey asked about directing supplemental enforcement penalties (SEPs) to ASTSWMO and splitting meeting travel costs with States in an effort to address ASTSWMO's funding needs, both of which received a majority response of "I don't know." For example, when asked if the respondent's State would be willing to fund their travel to the 2014 Mid-Year Meeting, only 16.7% said yes while 55.6% did not know. In an effort to determine the value of the Mid-Year Meeting format, the survey

Seventy-eight percent of respondents indicated that the mission statement (changed in 2009) was appropriate and relevant. However, as stated in the Executive Summary, the mission statement was changed since ASTSWMO has broadened its scope since it was formed in 1974. The top five most effective opportunities to help ASTSWMO achieve its mission are, in descending order:

1. Participation on groups
2. Attending the Annual and Mid-Year Meetings
3. Reviewing or providing comments on federal agency documents
4. Attending ASTSWMO-sponsored conferences
5. ASTSWMO guidance documents and resource publications

The Board reviewed the results of their survey at their July 2013 meeting and decided to ask for further feedback from Task Forces/Focus Groups, State voting members, and alumni. Utilizing *“Good to Great and the Social Sectors”*¹ by Jim Collins, which discusses the differences between successful and unsuccessful public sector businesses, the Board issued questions about how ASTSWMO can endeavor to be the best possible organization in service of its membership. The Board reviewed this feedback in October 2013, in an effort to better synthesize a plan from the vast amount of information.

Responses gathered affirmed that while members believe ASTSWMO is already a successful organization, the activities that make it the most valuable are those that provide interaction with other members and federal partners, then seeing those interactions result in meaningful change.

One respondent said, “We believe ASTSWMO is already great based on the respect the organization receives from EPA... this is shown by how much EPA reaches out to ASTSWMO for input into their rules and initiatives, and their willingness to attend meetings and share their comments with the membership.”

Evidence of the Association’s success includes full participation on groups, meaningful and timely work products, and continued cooperative agreement support, among others. Improved communication within the Association and with partners was a significant theme, as were engaging non-manager State employees and subject matter experts alike, working towards consensus (even when not achieving full consensus), cross-programmatic and cross-media opportunities, lauding State achievement and innovation, promoting membership but setting high standards for group

¹ Jim Collins, *Good to Great: The Social Sectors* (Harper Business, November 2005)

participation, engaging and influencing federal partners, mentorship, and finding ways to work through financial constraints while continuing to pursue funding opportunities.

Before the January 2014 Strategic Planning Board Meeting, the SP Workgroup reviewed the sorted feedback as well as the plans of other organizations. The SP Workgroup also revisited the benefits and disadvantages of the 2009 Strategic Plan. After this thorough review, the SP Workgroup decided a strategic plan that did not dictate specific tasks but, instead, provided broader goals without detailing actions and timelines was the best approach for the Association.

The Board also concluded the following from the survey responses:

- The people who want to participate as part of the Association's Task Forces, Focus Groups, Workgroups, Subcommittees, and the Board of Directors tend to be people who have participated on these groups before.
- More outreach to voting members is needed.
- The Association must enhance communications to all members.
- Member participation on groups is the primary means by which the Association achieves its mission.

At the January 2014 Board Meeting, the SP Workgroup made their recommendation and the Board forged a new plan based on the feedback provided by the membership. This plan represents the culmination of a series of efforts undertaken by a small Strategic Planning Workgroup, the Board of Directors, and the broader membership aimed at identifying future key themes and emerging issues and priority opportunities.

2014 ASTSWMO STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The following goals provide actions to implement the 2014 Strategic Plan. The actions under each goal are examples and may not include all the actions that ASTSWMO will complete.

GOAL 1: PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO MEMBERSHIP

- A. ASTSWMO will provide proactive leadership in the analysis and development of federal and State waste and land restoration policy.
- B. ASTSWMO will represent State interests to interests various national and congressional forums.
- C. ASTSWMO will develop work products that support State programs.
- D. ASTSWMO will cultivate cross-programmatic coordination.
- E. ASTSWMO will promote collaboration among States, federal agencies and other partners.

The Association exists to serve its membership and champion their programs and expertise. In order to best serve the membership, ASTSWMO provides proactive leadership in waste and remediation policy, and in the analysis and development of federal and State policy. The Association convenes subject matter experts from State programs to produce position papers, review and comment on federal rule proposals, provide legislative input, identify emerging issues, and contribute to position letters.

GOAL 2: ENHANCE AND CULTIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

- A. ASTSWMO will maintain and enhance partnerships with U.S. EPA and Department of Defense (DoD).
- B. ASTSWMO will coordinate efforts and maintain and enhance current partnerships.
- C. ASTSWMO will invest in new partnerships.

ASTSWMO is committed to open, honest, and frequent communication with U.S. EPA. As stated in its draft 2014-2018 EPA Strategic Plan, "Good government, as well as the reality of scarcer resources, requires that U.S. EPA work in concert with our partners to improve coordination, promote innovation, and maximize efficiencies to ensure our continued success. As we work together, our relationships must continue to be based on integrity, trust, and shared accountability to make the most effective use of our respective bodies of knowledge, our existing authorities, our resources, and our talents." The Association concurs that the best path forward for environmental protection is the path taken together and looks forward to consulting, collaborating, and cooperating accountably with U.S. EPA and other partners to strengthen State environmental programs.

GOAL 3: LONG-TERM SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION

- A. ASTSWMO will develop a sound and sustainable fiscal strategy.
- B. ASTSWMO will ensure that Subcommittees and Task Forces/Focus Groups are relevant and supported by Association resources.
- C. ASTSWMO will utilize Information and Communication Technologies to meet its goals.
- D. ASTSWMO will maintain and enrich a knowledgeable, engaged membership.
- E. ASTSWMO will promote itself through effective branding and marketing.

As Ryan Benefield, ASTSWMO President for 2013 - 2014, stated in his official President's Letter, "The significant reduction in federal grant support has limited the Association's ability to fund member travel and hold training conferences, specifically in the Hazardous Waste, Materials Management, and Federal Facilities program areas. The Board of Directors continues to work to create a sustainable fiscal strategy to guide the Association, including reducing staff and operational overhead, when possible; exploring alternative funding opportunities; and ensuring that ASTSWMO work products, meetings, and conferences provide the highest value to our members." The Board is committed to creating a financial road map that will allow ASTSWMO to continue to meet member needs while securing the Association's financial future.

CARRYING OUT THE STRATEGIC PLAN

ASTSWMO is committed to carrying out the mission, strategic directions, and actions identified in its 2014 Strategic Plan. As in previous Strategic Plans, ASTSWMO will track its progress by reporting on the key focus areas at quarterly Board meetings and through periodic updates to the membership. ASTSWMO will review all current and planned work products and activities to ensure that the vision in this plan is achieved through its work.

ASTSWMO will use this plan to make decisions about priority national policy issues and the activities it undertakes to support the needs of our members.

As ASTSWMO looks to the future, we will stay at the forefront of protecting human health and the environment. We will also strive to be *the place* our members and partners turn to when it comes to finding solutions.

STRATEGIC PLAN TASKS

How will ASTSWMO achieve its goals? The actions and tasks outlined below each goal state what can be done and used to achieve the three goals. The actions and tasks are examples and may not include all the actions and tasks that ASTSWMO will complete.

GOAL 1: Provide Assistance to Membership

Categories of membership development activities around which specific work tasks will be developed are presented below.

- A. ASTSWMO will provide proactive leadership in the analysis and development of federal and State waste, materials management and land restoration policy through:
 - 1. Identification of emerging issues
 - 2. Position papers and letters
 - 3. Review and comment on federal rule proposals
 - 4. Review and comment on legislation

- B. ASTSWMO will represent State interest to various national and congressional forums through:
 - 1. Congressional testimony
 - 2. National policy forums
 - 3. Responding to information requests

- C. ASTSWMO will develop work products that support State programs through:
 - 1. Review and comment on appropriate federal draft guidance documents
 - 2. Training for States
 - 3. Survey reports
 - 4. Core reports, which provide data on the costs of operating and maintaining State programs (RCRA C, Tanks, etc...)
 - 5. Research papers
 - 6. Symposia
 - 7. Issue-specific web pages
Webinars

- D. ASTSWMO will cultivate cross programmatic coordination through:
 - 1. The Program Steering Committee
 - 2. Joint sessions at Annual and Mid-Year Meetings
 - 3. Joint Symposia
 - 4. Ad Hoc groups
 - 5. EPA Project Officer/ASTSWMO staff coordination

- E. ASTSWMO will promote collaboration among States, federal agencies and other partners through:
 1. Annual/Mid-Year Meetings
 2. Federally-sponsored workgroups
 3. ASTSWMO staff attending U.S. EPA and State regional meetings
 4. Subcommittee meetings with U.S. EPA and others
 5. Peer Match Program
 6. Informational requests
 7. Conference calls
 8. Webinars

Goal 2: Enhance and Cultivate Partnerships

Categories of partnership development activities around which specific work tasks will be developed are presented below.

- A. ASTSWMO will maintain and enhance partnerships with U.S. EPA and DoD through:
 1. Calls and meetings
 2. Proactive outreach on issues and emerging issues
 3. Leveraging and coordinating resources
 4. Pre-release review of Association documents
 5. Working to ensure early and meaningful communication
 6. Developing supports letters

- B. ASTSWMO will coordinate efforts and maintain and enhance current partnerships with:
 1. Environmental Council of the States (ECOS)
 2. National and Regional Environmental Associations
 3. Private Sector Partners
 4. Federal, State and Local Governments

- C. ASTSWMO will invest in new partnerships:
 1. Identify potential partnerships
 2. Ensure partnerships align with our mission
 3. Participate as appropriate at partner meetings
 4. Develop MOUs and MOAs when appropriate

Goal 3: Long-Term Sustainable Organization

Categories of activities to enhance the long-term sustainability of the Association around which specific work tasks will be developed are presented below.

- A. ASTSWMO will develop a predictable and sustainable fiscal strategy by:
 - 1. Approving a fiscally responsible budget every year
 - 2. Continuing to reduce costs when and where appropriate
 - 3. Receiving supplemental environmental project (SEP) money from State settlements for training costs
 - 4. Implementing sponsorships
 - 5. Continuing to proactively work with U.S. EPA on the Cooperative Agreements
 - 6. Continuing to evaluate State fees and adjusting them as appropriate
 - 7. Leveraging resources (joint training) with other organizations
 - 8. Exploring the development of nontraditional memberships
 - 9. Exploring 501(c)(3) advantages

- B. ASTSWMO will ensure that Subcommittees and Task Forces/Focus Groups are relevant and supported by Association resources by:
 - 1. Developing an efficient work product-based organizational structure
 - 2. Periodically reviewing the ASTSWMO *Members in Action* policy
 - 3. Periodically conducting analysis of the Association's structure
 - 4. Identifying and devoting resources to emerging issues, as appropriate

- C. ASTSWMO will utilize Information and Communication Technologies to meet its goals by:
 - 1. Developing topical-based list serves
 - 2. Periodic Website updates and upgrades
 - 3. Utilizing Social Media
 - 4. Utilizing supplemental video conferencing to preserve face-to-face interaction
 - 5. Explore subject matter contact list
 - 6. Increasing Association visibility through technology

- D. ASTSWMO will maintain and enrich a knowledgeable, engaged membership through:
 - 1. Exploring the development of mentoring programs
 - 2. Utilization of Alumni (retired members)
 - 3. Developing a new member orientation program
 - 4. Exploring alternative ways for member participation
 - 5. Succession planning
 - 6. Recruit new members
 - 7. Outreach to voting members
 - 8. Utilize interns

- E. ASTSWMO will promote itself through effective branding and marketing through:
 - 1. Media outreach
 - 2. Consistent messaging
 - 3. Developing a marketing plan that may include:
 - a. "ASTSWMO 101" brochure
 - b. Develop a QR box barcode to be used on meeting materials and links to the ASTSWMO's website
 - c. Evaluate and adapt as appropriate aspects of other organizations' marketing plans
 - 4. Representation at outside meetings/events through:
 - a. Tabletop exhibits
 - b. Meet and greets
 - 5. Develop a new slogan or tag line
 - 6. Develop new ASTSWMO logo for 40th Anniversary year
 - 7. Outreach to voting members
 - 8. Explore ensuring brand loyalty

Appendix A Plan Involvement

ASTSWMO offers their thanks to the following people who participated in the development of the 2014 Strategic Plan:

2014 ASTSWMO Strategic Plan Workgroup

Paul Connor, Region 3 Board Member
Allison Goldberg, Information Staff
Karen Hale, Program & Information Exchange Subcommittee Chair
Bruce Oertel, Region 5 Board Member
Dania Rodriguez, Executive Director
Joe Schieffelin, Region 8 Board Member
Ed Thamke, Past-President (2012-2013)
April Webb, Region 4 Board Member

Strategic Plan Facilitators

We would also like to thank Ed Thamke (MT), ASTSWMO Past-President (2012-2013), and Laura Bishard, retired (Colorado-ASTSWMO Alumni), for facilitating the January 28 - 30, 2014 Strategic Planning Session in New Orleans, LA.

2013 – 2014 ASTSWMO Board of Directors, Subcommittee Chairs and Staff

President, Ryan Benefield (AR)
Vice-President, Mike Forbeck (PA)
Secretary-Treasurer, Nancy Marker (DE)
Past-President, Jeffery Steers (VA)
Region 1 Board Member, George Desch (VT)
Region 2 Board Member, Ken Kloo (NJ)
Region 3 Board Member, Paul Connor (DC)
Region 4 Board Member, April Webb (KY)
Region 5 Board Member, Bruce Oertel (IN)
Region 6 Board Member, Jon Roberts (OK)
Region 7 Board Member, Dave Haldeman (NE)
Region 8 Board Member, Joe Schieffelin (CO)
Region 9 Board Member, Dave Emme (NV)
Region 10 Board Member, Wendy Wiles (OR)

Bonnie Buthker, Federal Facilities
Mark de Bie, Materials Management
Karen Hale, Program & Information
Tammie Hynum, Hazardous Waste
Jennifer Roberts, CERCLA & Brownfields
Chuck Schwer, Tanks
Dania Rodriguez, Executive Director
Kerry Callahan, Senior Program Mgr.
Charles Reyes, Senior Program Mgr.
Sam Puffenbarger, Program Mgr.
Barbara Hall, Office Administrator
Molly Lowney, IT Specialist

Appendix B ASTSWMO Organizational Chart

