

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT
EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO

DEFCON RAPID RESPONSE CALL TEAMS

BUILDING AN INTERNAL STRATEGIC AND
TARGETED APPROACH TO MEMBER
MOBILIZATION WHEN CONDUCTING
CAMPAIGNS

AUGUST 18, 2008
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BACKGROUND

Members of the DEFCON Steering Group met on August 15th and 16th in San Antonio, Texas for the purpose of discussing and designing an added feature to its RAPID RESPONSE TEAM. The Rapid Response Team, while originally intended to provide added capabilities to locals in organizing, worker education, and internal union building through training, has primarily focused on providing volunteers to assist with organizing and worker education events. The DEFCON Steering group felt strongly that it needed to have a more aggressive member mobilization component added to the Rapid Response Team to assist with vital campaigns being conducted on behalf of our DOD locals.

Attending the meeting were; Don Hale, DEFCON Steering Group Chair, Patty Viers, Vice Chair and DLA C-169 Caucus Chair, Virginia Hemingway, Communications Coordinator and DCMA C-170 Chair, Randy Donnelly, Army Caucus Chair, Brian Leonard, Marine Corp C-240 Caucus Chair, Leslie “Bubbha” Lawson, Navy Caucus Chair, Ray Cantu, DECA C-172 Caucus Chair, and Joe Gonzales, Depot Caucus Chair. The group was supported by FSED Labor Relations Specialist, Mark Gibson.

The need to establish such a capability is especially pressing given the imminent notification of Congress of DOD’s final rules on NSPS and the need for aggressive action and mobilization by AFGE members in their continued struggle to stop NSPS. While elements of the NSPS campaign were discussed, it was greatly accepted that finalizing the message and plans associated with the NSPS campaign have yet to be developed and that it would be premature of them to finalize the details of the specific campaign at that meeting.

In the development of campaign messages and actions, the group was comfortable with the existing process of working with AFGE’s leadership and national office staff in designing and building campaign specifics and objectives. The addition of Member Mobilization Call Teams to the Rapid Response Team does is not intended to change how these decisions are made, but rather how DEFCON could enhance member mobilizations.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN DEVELOPING THE DEFCON RAPID RESPONSE CALL TEAMS

The working group looked very closely at the types of activities that our DOD locals are known to use in member mobilizations. And recognizing that circumstances and situations in locals vary greatly in how mobilizations occur and the effectiveness of those efforts. The group was adamant that it was not their purpose, or intent, to build a mechanism that replaced or alienated effective member mobilization actions being taken by locals now.

They also examined where mobilization actions do not occur, or for varied reasons, are unsuccessful. An area of specific interest was where member mobilizations do not occur or are rarely attempted. As some of these members reside in key Congressional districts, the opportunity in not engaging these members in member mobilizations hamper AFGE’s overall ability to achieve the results sought for all its members and works against those locals that do actively and aggressively engage in member mobilizations.

Some of the considerations in designing a Rapid Response Call Teams were;

- Providing increased mobilization efforts in specific targeted or strategic areas such as Congressional Districts or states of key Congressional committee members;
- Being able to mobilize specific groups of employees within specific agencies;

- Ensure that the capability enhances a locals efforts while ensuring that in locals where mobilizations don't occur that those members voices and right to take action are provided;
- That the capability will not put a financial burden on the locals;
- That the program is monitored for effectiveness, and adjustable to allow for various campaign strategies and purposes that benefit AFGE. These may include contract negotiation campaigns, legislative and political interests, making members aware of localized organizing, worker education, and media events, and action calls to show solidarity.
- Create an outreach to members during non-duty hours and away from the workplace.
- Capability should be built internally and not reliant on outside providers of similar services.
- The member to member mobilization efforts must be built in such a fashion as its operation is available to any type of action of importance to AFGE. As such, it's capabilities should be available and beneficial to every aspect of AFGE's interests.

ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM

The DEFCON working group has decided to establish a pilot program to test the program and to use this test specifically geared towards the upcoming NSPS member mobilization. Steps will be established to ensure that review and analysis of results are accomplished and a comprehensive review, reporting of results, problems encountered, observations, and changes will be made as appropriate.

It is recognized that in establishing this program, that significant areas of coordination and steps in establishing the program must be accomplished. It is the intent of DEFCON to try and have the call teams in place by the NSPS Conference to be held in Las Vegas, September 10-12, 2008 or no later than the date that Congress is provided notice of the final rules for NSPS.

DESIGN COMPONENTS AND OBJECTIVES

Establish three or more time zone considerate RAPID RESPONSE CALL TEAMS.

Each team will be hosted by a local that has established a strong member mobilization program and is willing to oversee the actions of the Call Team.

Locals should have, or be in the process of, establishing Retiree Programs within their locals.

Each Call Team will be assigned and receive oversight from a DEFCON Steering Group member.

The call teams at the time of this report that will be established are;

Local 1148, DLA-Columbus with oversight provided by Patty Viers (Eastern Time Zone)

Local 2142 and 1035, Corpus Christi Army Depot with oversight provided by Joe Gonzales (Central Time Zone)

Local 1035, DECA, San Antonio, with oversight provided by Ray Cantu (Central Time Zone)

Local 1546, DDJC, DLA, Stockton, CA with oversight provided by John Santry (Mountain/Pacific Time Zone)

Each Call Team will have a Call Team Leader identified. This person will be responsible for reporting, scheduling Caller training and campaign briefings with the DEFCON Steering Group advisor as well as providing Team members with call lists and materials.

Call team members will be identified and the DEFCON Steering Group Advisor will ensure that necessary documentation is provided by each team member and submitted to Headquarters for the purposes of ensuring timely compensation is made.

Call team members should be provided skills based training as well as campaign specific briefings on a routine basis.

Call team members will be provided either pre-paid cell phones or pre-paid calling cards for use in making calls.

Call team members will be required to complete action reports of their results.

Call team members will be compensated at a rate of \$10.00 per hour.

REPORTING RESULTS

While determining what information is important to track with respect to any specific campaign will occur in the campaign design phase, some basic information will remain consistent in reporting. This will include;

- the name and phone number of the member contacted,
- if personal contact was made,
- if the member agreed to take action,
- when materials were mailed to the member,
- time spent making calls.

ACTIVATING THE CALL TEAMS

The decision on when to activate call teams will be determinate on several factors that would be appropriately addressed in the campaign design phase. It is anticipated that some lead time will be needed to activate a team but this time could be kept to a minimum given advance notification that a campaign is being developed and call teams should get prepared to engage in member to member mobilizations.

For example, as part of a METRO, a decision is made to hold a Town Hall meeting to discuss pending matters facing federal employees and the relationship that upcoming elections may have on the outcome of those matters. Once a decision is made that Call Teams would be activated to make calls prior to the events, advance notice and approximate dates would be provided to the Call Team leader who would make sure that the teams members are available and postured to conduct the calls.

Once the final schedule is established, and a decision as to when the most opportune time to have calls made is determined, the Call Team Leader would be so advised and Call Team action would initiate at that time.

In such a circumstance, other outreach methods such as leafleting and local media advertizing the event help reach potential members, while the member to member outreach directly links the member to the activity.

Another decision that will have to be made in the campaign design phase is the time the Call Teams have to make calls. If for example, calls need to be generated and provide for a specific action to be taken, delivery of materials to the member and any pre-determined date an action is to be decided will have to be clearly understood by the Callers.

REQUIRED STAFF ACTIONS NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH CALL TEAMS:

Provide each Team Member with a AFGE Time Card and have each complete a W4.

Provide Finance and Personnel with a list of Call Team members.

Develop and conduct a basic Telephone Call training for members of the Call Team.

Prepare call script for callers (campaign specific)

Develop call protocols such as what a caller should do when connected to voice mail or actions to update member information.

Prepare materials to be mailed to callers who respond to the mobilization. Suggest action to be a “postage paid” postcard that member can sign and address and stick in the mail. (campaign specific)

Determine dates for “CALL PERIOD”. (campaign specific)

Identify target areas and request list of members with home phone numbers. (campaign specific)

Notice advising locals of the program and the need for the locals to ensure that member profile information is current and updated in MyLocal.