



STATE, LOCAL, AND TRIBAL COORDINATION

Working with State, Local, and Tribal Public Safety Partners to Strengthen Emergency Communications

Improving and enhancing emergency and interoperable communications is a national responsibility shared by federal, state, local, tribal, and private sector partners. The Department of Homeland Security's Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) leads the Nation's emergency and national security/emergency preparedness (NS/EP) communications efforts. OEC has developed a framework with public safety personnel and government officials to implement solutions that address operability, interoperability, and continuity of communications.

COORDINATION IS KEY

OEC works directly with the first responder community to identify the challenges emergency responders face daily. This information informs policies and programs, and builds stronger relationships with state and local agencies. These relationships are crucial to strategic efforts to improve emergency communications. OEC leads engagement with partners at all levels of government – federal, state, local, tribal and international—to improve public safety communications, national security, and emergency preparedness communications.

Per congressional mandate, OEC produced the updated 2014 National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP), the Nation's over-arching strategic plan for enhancing emergency communications capabilities and interoperability nationwide. In addition, OEC assists its state and local partners in the development of Statewide Communication Interoperability Plans (SCIPs), which help make improvements to emergency communications across the Nation by advancing interoperability in a structured way.

OEC'S REGIONAL COORDINATION BRANCH

OEC's Regional Coordination Branch supports building and improving emergency communications capabilities across all levels of government through trusted relationships, collaboration, technical assistance, and knowledge sharing. OEC Coordinators

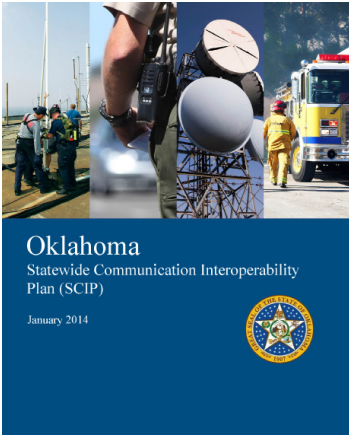
are positioned across the Nation as subject matter experts, assigned to enhance collaborative efforts within the stakeholder community for NS/EP and emergency communications operability and interoperability.

PRIORITY TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

To fulfill the responsibilities set forth in Executive Order 13618, OEC offers the Government Emergency Telecommunications Service, Wireless Priority Service, and Telecommunications Service Priority programs to state and local officials. These programs enhance call completion for select landline and wireless users by providing priority during abnormal call volume on the public switched telephone network. OEC currently offers these programs to over 700,000 users throughout the United States.

STATEWIDE COMMUNICATION INTEROPERABILITY PLANS

SCIPs are locally-driven, multi-disciplinary statewide strategic plans that provide strategic direction and alignment for those responsible for interoperable and emergency communications at the state, regional, local, and tribal levels. The SCIP also explains to leadership and elected officials the vision for interoperable and emergency communications and demonstrates funding needs.



SCIPs are developed to align emergency response agencies with the goals, objectives, and initiatives of the NECP. All 56 states and territories have an approved SCIP; OEC has conducted over 200 workshops with all 56 states and territories to support them in

updating their SCIPs to adapt to the current and near future interoperable and emergency communications environment.

STATEWIDE INTEROPERABILITY COORDINATORS (SWICs)

Based on recommendations from emergency responders, OEC included a milestone in the NECP that every state and territory must have a single point of contact for interoperable emergency communications. The SWIC is a full-time position dedicated to coordinating statewide emergency communications and improving the ability of states and territories to implement SCIPs and the NECP.

As the central interoperability coordination point for its state, the SWIC plays a critical role. The SWIC works with emergency response leaders across all levels of government to implement a statewide strategic vision for interoperability. As part of this effort, SWICs are responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the SCIPs through coordination and collaboration with the emergency response community. These individuals dedicate considerable time towards educating the public safety community on their SCIP and enhancing their statewide governance structures. The SWIC facilitates governance, training and exercise, and policy efforts to promote interoperability across emergency response disciplines. Currently, all 56 states and territories have a SWIC or SCIP point of contact. SWICs formally serve as members of the National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators

(NCSWIC), a national governance body established to assist its members with promoting the critical importance of interoperable communications and best practices. In this key role, SWICs contribute to the development of standard operating procedures; voice and data technologies; training, exercises, and outreach and education materials; and federal emergency communications policies, plans, and services. This coordinated effort greatly enhances response capabilities by developing collaborative interoperable communications strategies at all levels of government. OEC supports the SWICs through bi-annual in-person meetings, quarterly newsletters, working group facilitation, and periodic conference calls. These activities allow SWICs to share best practices, lessons learned, successes, and challenges, related to SCIP implementation.

OEC SUPPORT

OEC helps states and territories implement their SCIP by hosting annual SCIP Implementation Workshops. During the workshops, state and local representatives gather to discuss communications gaps and identify ways to implement SCIP initiatives. The workshops are hands-on, and focus on the specific needs and priorities of each state and territory.

OEC's Technical Assistance (TA) Program drives the NECP and SCIPs by providing states, urban areas, localities, and tribal communities with training, tools, and onsite assistance. These services, which are provided at no cost, include assistance with the planning, governance, operational, and technical aspects of developing and implementing interoperable communications initiatives.

In addition, OEC develops guidance documents and templates to support stakeholder efforts which have included: the Public Safety Communications Evolution Brochure, Project 25 Position Paper, and Broadband 101 Presentation.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please contact OEC@dhs.gov or visit www.dhs.gov/oec.