

*Office of the Chief Information  
Officer*  
**U.S. Department of Homeland  
Security**  
Washington, DC 20528



**Homeland  
Security**

April 29, 2014

The Honorable Jeh Johnson  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20428

Dear Secretary Johnson,

The Homeland Security Information Network's Advisory Committee (HSINAC) met April 10-11, 2014 to provide advice and recommendations to the DHS Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) with respect to the HSIN program. We respectfully request your consideration and recognition of the recommendations provided below.

The HSIN Advisory Committee (HSINAC) commends the HSIN Program Management Office (HSIN PMO) for assembling a highly competent, dedicated and well-focused team that has worked assiduously to effect a smooth transition from HSIN Legacy to HSIN R3 and managing the risk inherent in this migration. As a committee, we have seen multiple improvements to the network in user access and functionality.

The deployment of Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) Release 3 (R3) is a seminal event in the evolution of the Department's commitment to information sharing and collaboration between federal, state, and local, tribal, territorial, private sector and international partners engaged in the homeland security mission. HSIN R3 represents a quantum leap in technology over the existing HSIN Legacy system that will provide users with access to a wide range of information sources, collaborative opportunities and analytical capabilities far beyond those previously available and beyond what many realize is even technologically feasible. HSIN R3 is not merely an improvement of an existing system; it is a completely new concept on how information can and should be shared.

HSIN experienced a "turnaround" year in 2013, successfully migrating more than 40,000 users, 145 communities of interest and a terabyte of data to the HSIN Release 3 (R3) platform, while playing a mission critical role in several, national, highly visible events and incidents including

the 2013 Super Bowl, the Boston Marathon Bombing response and Hurricane Sandy response and recovery efforts. The program also consolidated seven, disparate DHS portals with HSIN R3 creating significant operations and maintenance cost savings. During the response to the Boston Marathon Bombing incident, HSIN was used for continuous, secure, web-conferencing in support of operational collaboration of more than 20 State Fusion Centers from Maine to California and more than 400 law enforcement professionals, including intelligence officials across jurisdictions nationwide. During Super Bowl XLVII, HSIN was used to coordinate more than 500 law enforcement and US military personnel to ensure safety and security of more than 110,000 attendees. As a result of this success, HSIN won two (2) major program management awards in 2013, including the GCN Outstanding IT Achievement in Government and GITEC Project Management Excellence award.

Today, over 25,000 homeland security professionals from across Federal, State, Local, Territorial, Tribal, International and Private Sectors use HSIN R3 as their front door to a trusted, secure network for sensitive but unclassified information sharing. On average, about 1000 operators log on to HSIN every day, and on average, 1000 new users are registering access every month since summer, 2013. HSIN Connect is being used to host four hundred (400) distinct meetings per month, saving thousands of users' time and thousands of dollars in travel costs. HSIN has reduced its outstanding help desk tickets by over 40% and maintained an "up time" of over 99% mission hours for the past six (6) months. Features such as secure web conferencing, Geospatial Information Systems (GIS) mapping, instant messaging, and alerts and notifications are just a few of the enhanced features in HSIN R3. At the end of 2013, the HSIN program management office announced a combined team of veteran and new Mission Advocates to better serve HSIN users across geographic and jurisdictional mission areas.

In full cognizance of the Department's fiscal constraints, the HSINAC urges the Secretary to afford the HSIN PMO all necessary resources. We also recognize that adoption of HSIN R3 by the user community will take time due to the platform's sophistication. We therefore urge that the Secretary and the HSIN Executive Steering Committee (ESC) take a long-term view of the program's efficacy and not measure program success by the mere number of users enrolled during and immediately following the transition period. Instead, the committee recommends the HSIN PMO adopt appropriate qualitative as well as quantitative measurements to evaluate HSIN R3 implementation.

The HSINAC respectfully submits the following recommendations at this crucial time for HSIN R3:

- I. The HSINAC feels very strongly that program outreach is critical to ensure the success HSIN.

**Recommendation 1.** All available resources should be utilized to share success stories with internal and non-DHS advocates. The Outreach and Communications budgets should be augmented to increase program effectiveness. The committee also agrees that a Tribal specific Community of Interest (COI) should be created and a Tribal Mission Advocate should be assigned.

II. The HSINAC identified the importance of HSIN Federation and Portal Consolidation.

**Recommendation 2.** As the Department's and OMB's designated target platform for information sharing portal consolidations, HSIN should continue to federate with other agencies and consolidate within DHS. Unclassified information-sharing platforms within DHS and its components should be directed to consolidate on HSIN or pursue single sign-on capabilities with HSIN. Federation or integration with Emergency Management software applications is also critical for continued success.

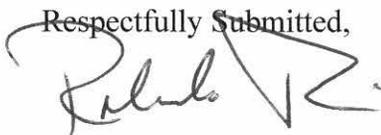
III. The HSIN program should focus on the development of tools and features for the platform.

**Recommendation 3.** The ever-changing landscape of communications requires the funding and development of new tools and features for the HSIN platform. The following initiatives should be accelerated.

1. The development of a mobile application or the improvement of HSIN functionality for mobile devices is critical for today's communication platforms.
2. HSIN Connect is a key piece of the success of HSIN. Failure of HSIN Connect during a major incident is catastrophic to user trust and missions. HSIN must receive support to increase capacity for HSIN Connect and implement a system of monitoring capacity for HSIN Connect usage.
3. HSIN must continue work on a global search capability within HSIN and across its partner information-sharing systems.

We very much appreciate the emphasis you have placed on obtaining input into HSIN development from Federal, state and local partners, and hope these recommendations help further the Department's progress toward that goal. The HSIN AC respectfully requests your recognition of these recommendations and your support for them.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rolando Rivero', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Rolando Rivero  
Chair, HSIN Advisory Committee