



## 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 the 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, programs, and builds stronger relationships with State and local agencies. These relationships are crucial to strategic efforts to improve emergency communications. OEC's Partnerships Branch 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. As required by Congress, OEC produces the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP), the Nation's first strategic plan designed to increase interoperability. In addition, OEC assists its State and Local partners in the development of Statewide Communication Interoperability Plans (SCIPs), which have helped make improvements to emergency communications across the Nation by advancing interoperability in a structured way.

#### OEC'S REGIONAL COORDINATION PROGRAM

OEC's Regional Coordination Program promotes intergovernmental partnerships and educates stakeholder communities about OEC's programs and services. OEC Regional Coordinators enhance relationships and knowledge sharing between Federal, State, Local, and Tribal agencies in order to build and

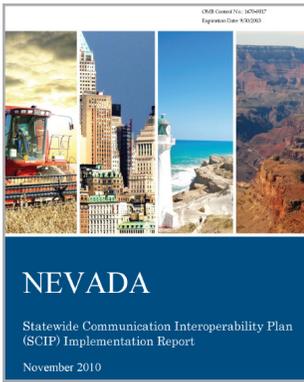
improve emergency communications capabilities across regions. Located throughout the country, the Regional Coordinators are able to directly foster working relationships with members of the public safety community. The Communications Liaisons support a similar mission, but focus on Federal disaster response and the recovery of commercial communications infrastructure.

#### PRIORITY TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

To fulfill the responsibilities set forth in Executive Order 13618, OEC offers the Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS), Wireless Priority Service (WPS), and Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) 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 a half of a million users throughout the United States.

#### STATEWIDE COMMUNICATION INTEROPERABILITY PLANS (SCIPs)

SCIPs are locally-driven, multi-jurisdictional, and multi-disciplinary strategic plans to enhance emergency communications within the States that outline and define the current and future vision for communications interoperability. In addition,



SCIPs are developed to align emergency response agencies with the goals, objectives, and initiatives of the NECP. As of April 2008, all 56 States and territories had an approved SCIP, and jurisdictions continually update their plans to keep them current. Since 2009,

OEC conducted over 200 workshops reaching all 56 States and territories to support them in updating their SCIPs to address the current and near future interoperable and emergency communications environment.

## STATEWIDE INTEROPERABILITY COORDINATORS

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. With a full-time resource dedicated to coordinating statewide emergency communications, States and territories significantly improve progress in implementing SCIPs and the NECP.



As the central coordination point for their State's interoperability effort, the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) plays a critical role. SWICs are responsible for the

implementation 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 also plays a crucial role in the facilitation of governance, training and exercise, and policy efforts to further interoperability across all disciplines of emergency responders.

Currently, all 56 States and territories have a SWIC or SCIP point of contact.

In 2010, the SWICs organized to form the National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC). OEC supports semi-annual NCSWIC meetings for the SWICs to share best practices, lessons learned, successes and challenges related to SCIP implementation.

## OEC SUPPORT

OEC supports States and territories in the implementation of 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 SCIP Implementation Workshops are hands-on, and focus on the specific needs and priorities of each State and territory.



OEC's Technical Assistance 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 instruction and 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, A Practical Guide to Narrowbanding, and Regional Intrastate Governance Guide.

### FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please contact [OEC@dhs.gov](mailto:OEC@dhs.gov) or visit [www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov) (keyword OEC).