



Homeland
Security

Office of Grants and Training

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ICTAP Bulletin

Connecting First Responders, Keeping America Safe



The Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP) provides free technical assistance to enhance interoperable communications among Federal, State, and local emergency responders and public safety officials in cities and States that have received grants from the Office of Grants and Training (G&T) in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Preparedness Directorate.

March 2006

INFORMATION BULLETIN #205

TICP Validation Deadline Moved Forward

Information Bulletin #205 (IB #205), released March 23, 2006 by the G&T, announced new deadlines for submission of required plans. Grantees are now required to validate their Tactical Interoperable Communications Plans (TICPs) through a full-scale exercise (FSE) by September 30, 2006, rather than the previously scheduled deadline of May 1, 2007.

All TICPs must be submitted by May 1, 2006 per guidance provided in IB #205 and consequently approved by the TICP Review Board prior to the exercise. The planning, conduct, and evaluation of the exercise must also be consistent with the requirements of the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP). The TICP Review process is designed to validate TICPs, or make grantees aware of any deficiencies in their plans before the full-scale exercise.

March Highlights

- Validation of TICP through full-scale exercise deadline accelerated to September 30, 2006.
- TICP Conference scheduled for May 8-9, 2006.
- 20 TICP workshops held during March.

Tactical Interoperable Communications Conference

In an effort to accommodate the accelerated exercise time line, G&T will host a conference on May 8-9, 2006 in Washington, D.C. The conference will provide attendees with detailed information on the review process; guidance for planning, conducting, and evaluating the exercises; and a venue for scheduling each site's exercise. Participation is limited to one representative from the State Administrative Agency (SAA) and two representatives from each of the Urban Areas (UAs) or designated metropolitan areas (including the TICP Point of Contact, if applicable).

Communications Unit Leader (COML) Requirements

IB #205 also supplied detailed information regarding the Core Competencies specified for the COML position. The FY 2005 Homeland Security Grants Program requires grantees to designate and train a COML to support TICP execution; however, the COML training program is currently incomplete. In light of this, the training requirement for these positions is being waived at this time. All sites are still required to designate a COML for the TICP who will then complete

the certification when the training program is functional.

Technical Assistance

ICTAP will continue to provide TICP assistance on a first-come, first-served basis. In addition to providing help on writing the TICP, ICTAP personnel will assist sites in preparing for their FSE. ICTAP will demonstrate the most effective way to exercise the sites' TICPs.

"This group [ICTAP] gave the best technical assistance that I have had in the six years that I've been with the Homeland Security program. I really enjoyed working with them."

—Scott A. Rounds
Grant Program Manager, South Dakota

In addition to ICTAP's tactical plan support, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Exercise Division will provide direct support in designing, developing, and conducting the exercises. Requests for exercise support should be made by the SAA and submitted via e-mail to hseep@dhs.gov.

Please see the attached IB #205 for more information.

AUDIO GATEWAY HANDBOOK

In response to a request from the San Diego UA, ICTAP has created the Audio Gateway Handbook. The Handbook provides an overview of mobile gateway use, disparate radio coverage, best practices, and a comparison of products.

The basic function of an audio gateway is to connect disparate communications devices and allow users to communicate between any and all of those devices as needed. Gateways are essential to many of our ICTAP sites as they work towards better and more efficient means of interoperable communications.

To receive a copy of the Audio Gateway Handbook, please contact Ralph Barnett at ralph.barnett@associates.dhs.gov.

For more information on ICTAP, visit the program's Web page at:

www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/ta_ictap.htm

For general information, contact the Centralized Scheduling and Information Desk at (800) 368-6498 or e-mail askcsid@dhs.gov.