



Homeland  
Security

Office of State and Local Government  
Coordination and Preparedness

FY 2005

# ICTAP Bulletin

## Connecting First Responders, Keeping America Safe

SLGCP Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP) provides on-site, comprehensive interoperability technical assistance to DHS grant recipients.



### July Highlights

The Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP) provides free technical assistance to enhance interoperable communications among local, State, and Federal emergency responders and public safety officials in cities and States that have received grants from the Department of Homeland Security, Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness

(SLGCP)

- **Buffalo**—Representatives have invited ICTAP to attend the “Are We Ready” Bi-National Disaster Preparedness Conference and the follow-up exercises on August 19 and 20.
- **Denver**—Approximately 70 percent of Denver’s TIC Plan has been completed. Additionally, they have received training on the CAS/CAM tool.
- **Detroit**—The ICTAP team has been invited to present at next month’s Michigan Homeland Security Workshop in Lansing on August 10.
- **St. Louis**—ICTAP will hold a 2-day workshop to assist in developing the St. Louis Urban Area (UA) TIC Plan, tentatively scheduled for September 26-27.
- **ICTAP documents communications equipment at 905 agencies**—Over the past 18 months, ICTAP has surveyed the communications equipment at public service agencies serving 14 UAs to create a clear picture of the current equipment situation.

## ICTAP Surveys Interoperable Communications Equipment for 905 Agencies

One of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS's) goals is to develop a baseline status of national interoperable communications. Before the Nation can achieve communications interoperability and before an individual Urban Area (UA) can begin to address solutions, a clear snapshot of the current state of communications equipment and solutions is necessary.

As of June 30, 2005, ICTAP has surveyed equipment in 456 law enforcement agencies, 320 fire departments, and 129 emergency medical services agencies. Agency radio communication systems capabilities range from a simplex, two channel, VHF conventional system, supporting fewer than 100 users, to complex, state-of-the-art, 800 MHz trunking systems supporting up to 25,000 users.

Interoperable communications equipment solutions include providing radio cache or establishing shared systems. Radio cache provides interoperability among agencies jointly responding to an incident by having on-scene responders from all agencies swap their incompatible radios

with those from a radio cache or store of radios. This allows all responders to use a common, compatible set of radios. ICTAP found that although many agencies have spare radios, less than one third of the agencies surveyed maintain a radio cache. Of the 905 agencies surveyed, fewer than 50 relied on gateway systems, which provide connections between two or more radio networks, allowing users on one network to communicate with users on other networks by connecting radio channels or voice paths via a gateway or console patch.

Almost all the agencies surveyed have some form of shared channels, common frequencies or channels that have been established and programmed into radios to provide interoperable communications among agencies. Over 100 of the 905 agencies surveyed utilized shared systems, which refers to the use of a single or common radio system infrastructure typically built upon trunking architecture to provide service to most agencies within a region.

### Data Collection

The ICTAP team collects data through face-to-face interviews and through questionnaires that capture subscriber unit types, system type, system infrastructure,

Gateway Information	
Gateway Name:	—
Gateway Location (if mobile, enter storage location):	—
Responsible Agency:	—
Gateway Point of Contact:	—
Point of Contact Phone:	—
If Mobile, Service Area (Available Area for Deployment):	—
Make of Gateway:	—
Model of Gateway:	—
Type (e.g. Fixed Site, Mobile, Console Patch):	—
Number of Networks:	—
Number of Active Ports or Radios:	—
Other Notes:	—

Sample page from questionnaire

frequencies being utilized, and talk group information. ICTAP also collects data through a Web-based tool developed by ICTAP known as the Communication Asset Survey and Modeling (CASM) Tool.



By May 1, 2006, ICTAP will have received data from 72 metropolitan areas representing all 50 States. While this data will not be as extensive as previous data, it will be adequate for inclusion into the DHS-mandated Tactical Interoperable Communications Plans (TICP) for creating a tabletop exercise geared for interoperable communications, and to assess each area's interoperable capability.

For additional information, please contact the SLGCP Centralized Scheduling and Information Desk :

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