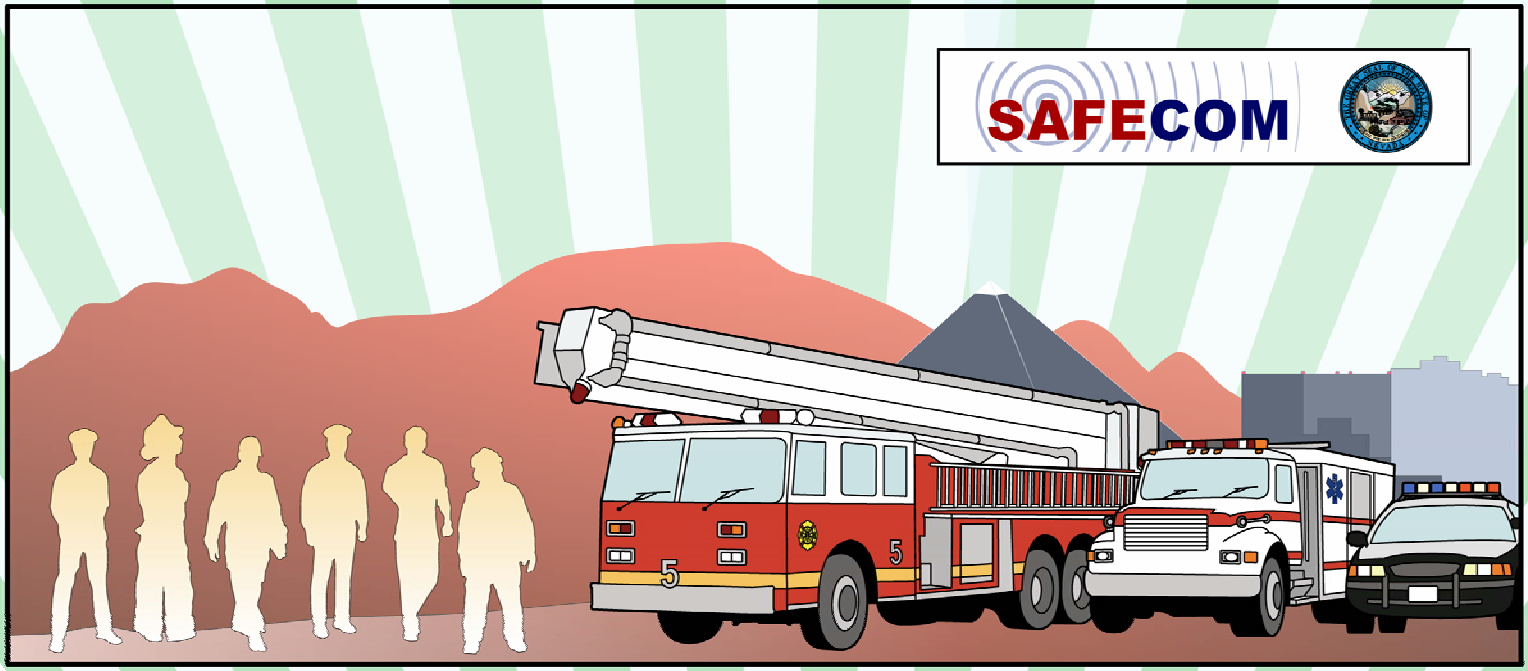
Enhancing Statewide Communications and Interoperability:

SAFECOM Recommendations on a Funding Strategy for the Commonwealth of Kentucky



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Introduction

SAFECOM, a communications program of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office for Interoperability and Compatibility (OIC), works with its federal partners to provide research, development, testing and evaluation, guidance, tools, and templates on communications-related issues to local, tribal, state, and federal public safety agencies. OIC is managed by the Science and Technology (S&T) Directorate.

Authorized by Section 7304 of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-458) to address communication issues facing public safety, OIC, through SAFECOM, is conducting two Regional Communications and Interoperability Pilot (RCIP) projects in Nevada and Kentucky. The purpose of each RCIP project is to improve interoperable communications by developing models and tools that can be used nationwide and build upon the work SAFECOM has done with other states and localities.[1]

This report to the Kentucky Office of Homeland Security (KOHS) presents SAFECOM's suggested strategy to secure sustainable funding streams for Kentucky's communications and interoperability model. Information presented in this document is organized as follows:

- *Background:* Provides a brief overview of the Kentucky Regional Communications Interoperability Pilot (RCIP) project.
- *Recommendations for the Development of Kentucky's Funding Strategy:* Outlines a strategic approach for budgeting, managing, and identifying additional funding targeted for interoperable communications.
- *Available Funding Mechanisms:* Contains an overview of the potential funding mechanisms from local, state, and federal sources.

[1] For more information on the SAFECOM program, please visit www.safecomprogram.gov.

Background

Development of the Kentucky Statewide Strategic Plan

The Statewide Strategic Plan for Communications and Interoperability is the product of a series of regional focus group sessions and a strategic planning session held from September through December 2005 in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. During these gatherings, Kentucky's public safety practitioners shared experiences and visions for improving public safety communications and interoperability statewide. The plan relies on a locally driven strategy, in which the knowledge and needs of local responders are drawn on to build the appropriate initiatives for improved emergency response.

The strategy for achieving the goal includes three near-term initiatives and one long-term initiative—all of them interrelated, and all of them essential to success:

- Achieve close to 100 percent statewide coverage for voice and data communications networks of all first responders. Tasks include:
  - Determining baseline of statewide communications
  - Dramatically expanding coverage by improving and constructing infrastructure statewide
  - Establishing nearly 100 percent Enhanced 911 (E911) coverage statewide
- Implement existing statewide interoperability efforts. Tasks include:
  - Programming current statewide mutual aid channels into all public safety radios and educating the public safety community on using these channels
  - Fully applying the console-to-console bridge solution
  - Ensuring that all levels of first responders, first receivers, and chief executives adopt the National Incident Management System (NIMS)
  - Establishing a statewide, clear text standard that local and state public safety agencies will accept and implement
- Streamline 911 dispatch services. Tasks include:
  - Removing financial disincentives currently in place
  - Assisting in the merger of interested 911 dispatch centers
  - Creating a statewide model for delivering dispatch services
- Build a statewide public safety communications and interoperability system over the long term. Tasks include:
  - Designing and executing a technical approach for building a statewide communications system
  - Creating and executing a state-mandated communications and interoperability training program

The success of these initiatives and the Kentucky Statewide Plan for Communications and Interoperability relies on securing a consistent funding stream for communications and interoperability. In a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed with KOHS, SAFECOM agreed, among other things, to provide recommendations on the identification, management, and budgeting of additional funding targeted for communications and interoperability. This guidance document satisfies Kentucky's request for assistance in this area.

Current State of Funding in Kentucky

Funding for Primary Communications and Interoperability

KOHS plays a significant role in funding statewide communications and interoperability. KOHS receives a majority of its funds from the DHS Office of Grants and Training (G&T). Through a competitive grant application process, KOHS awards the funds it receives to sub-grantees. A significant amount of past KOHS interoperability funding was devoted to technology and equipment for "footprint" coverage and building towers. Because the focus has been on the procurement of new equipment, an ongoing challenge is securing funding for related needs such as developing standard operating procedures (SOP), conducting maintenance, or providing training on new equipment. While new communications systems at local agencies may receive KOHS funding for maintenance for up to 2 years, local agencies have the responsibility for maintaining their own systems after that period.[2]

Any awards of KOHS funding, involving data or voice communications equipment or projects, must be presented to the Kentucky Wireless Interoperability Executive Committee (KWIEC) for review and approval. Likewise, local agencies that plan to use state or federal funding for public safety communications system upgrades must be submitted to KWIEC for approval. Even if no state or federal funding is used, local agencies must submit their plans to upgrade public safety communications systems to the KWIEC for its review and recommendations.

The Commonwealth Office of Technology (COT) is the lead agency for the Kentucky Emergency Warning System (KEWS), the microwave network that enables communications for those working in emergency management and public safety. KEWS supports radio communications for the Kentucky State Police, Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources, Division of Forestry, Kentucky Emergency Management (KyEM), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and Kentucky Vehicle Enforcement. COT's efforts helped get KEWS incorporated into the state budget.

Based on input from SAFECOM during the statewide planning process, Kentucky made the upgrade of 911 systems and call centers one of its highest priorities. Under a recently passed law, a 70-cent Commercial Mobile Radio Service (CMRS) tax on cell phones will fund 911 maintenance and upgrades. Eighty percent of the levy will go to local agencies for maintenance, and the state will take back 10 percent to create a grant fund to upgrade 911 centers and assist centers that want to merge.[3] Additionally, Kentucky has budgeted for full maintenance of the new statewide data system. This system will expand the use of mobile data computers on roads and highways across Kentucky. The legislature passed a law that enables any first responder to join the system without fees for maintenance or use of the system.[4]

[2] One exception is maintenance of the mobile system for which Kentucky has the lead responsibility.
[3] If the proposal passes, the next step will be determining how to obtain funding from prepaid carriers.
[4] At the time of this writing, it was unclear how the State Legislature voted on the budget proposal.

Funding for Back-up Communications

After receiving a $3.3 million grant from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)[5], the Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH) developed a secure back-up communications system for the Commonwealth's hospitals, local health departments, and several other health care organizations. The grant covers the purchase and installation of technology and equipment, one-time activation fees, and 46 months of satellite airtime service. The back-up system will be used when primary communications systems fail due to a natural or man-made disaster. DPH partnered with KOHS and KyEM—which assisted with the roll out of the system, with COT—to design the system and provide ongoing project management support. The Kentucky Hospital Association helped with procurement of this system.

The funding for the back-up communications system was expected to last 4 years. As of the time of this writing, the status of future funding, including ongoing satellite service, was unclear.

As Kentucky implements its Statewide Strategic Plan for Communications and Interoperability, there are a number of ways to move forward regarding funding. These approaches are explained in the following recommendations.

[5] The HRSA funding is part of the Bush Administration's National Bioterrorism Hospital Preparedness Program, aimed at increasing the ability of health care organizations to respond to terrorist incidents or other public health emergencies.

Recommendations for the Development of Kentucky's Funding Strategy

Create a Funding Working Group

To develop a comprehensive funding strategy for communications and interoperability, Kentucky should establish a subcommittee of KWIEC with regional representation.[6] Its role would be to aid the coordination of multiple jurisdictions and agencies so that funds are used help achieve common goals. This working group would allow Kentucky to coordinate funding initiatives while still managing other activities.

A charter should be developed to clarify the function of the KWIEC Funding Subcommittee. The charter would identify the mission, purpose, and role of the subcommittee. For example, the subcommittee may be responsible for identifying interoperable communications funding and keeping a running list of funding streams in Kentucky.

Estimate and Prioritize Needs

SAFECOM recommends that the KWIEC Funding Subcommittee develop cost estimates and prioritize the funding needs of localities and state agencies. The Kentucky Statewide Strategic Plan for Communications and Interoperability established a strategy for interoperable communications in Kentucky, which should inform the prioritization of funding needs.

SAFECOM suggests the following approach for prioritization of funding needs:

- Compare the needs to the Commonwealth's near- and long-term strategies (as documented in the Kentucky Statewide Strategic Plan for Communications and Interoperability).
- Determine whether addressing the needs is part of a sound acquisition plan.
- Determine whether addressing the needs builds upon the coordination and collaboration across disciplines and jurisdictions.
- Assess the available funding mechanisms.

Until a baseline capabilities assessment is completed and all of the communications and interoperability needs are identified, the gap between the funding needed and the funding available cannot be quantified. Conducting a baseline capabilities assessment will determine the extent to which Kentucky has outstanding funding needs.

Review Acquisition Plans

The KWIEC will continue to review all communications-related acquisition plans to gain an understanding of the current and planned acquisition projects across the state. The

[6] Before the funding working group is established, Kentucky should establish a single permanent office that is focused on communications and interoperability—instead of having full-time public safety practitioners take on additional, interoperability-related responsibilities.

review will allow KWIEC to better support localities and regions in identifying appropriate funding mechanisms that meet their needs. Specifically, the KWIEC Funding Subcommittee should review acquisition plans for the following purposes:

- Identifying common goals across agencies
- Determining shareable resources
- Revealing opportunities for combined purchasing (for example, buying wholesale or negotiating discounted prices)[7]

Identify Available Funding Mechanisms

An array of funding sources for communications and interoperability efforts is available at different levels of government. It should be noted when considering federal funding that it is often limited, constrained, and requested by many competing sources. In addition, not all financing methods are appropriate to all public safety agencies. Consequently, public safety agencies should not only identify available and qualified funding sources for their projects, but should also consider the level of effort required to win funding from the chosen sources. Success is more likely if efforts are focused on the most appropriate funding mechanisms for the state's wireless communication needs.

The KWIEC Funding Subcommittee should develop a reference that outlines the best resources for local communications and interoperability funding.

Establish Valuable Partnerships

SAFECOM suggests the KWIEC Funding Subcommittee explore partnerships with private, local, state, and federal entities to leverage resources and maximize cost savings. The purpose of multi-jurisdictional partnerships and public-private partnerships is to reduce the resources needed to fund interoperability and help build political and public support. Such partnerships could increase the state's ability to leverage the capabilities assessment data. The data can be used to identify and raise awareness about opportunities for multi-jurisdictional, multi-agency, and public-private partnerships across Kentucky. Further, the results of partnership efforts may include sharing infrastructure and equipment, making cooperative purchases, and engaging in joint grant applications.

Essential actions toward this aim include:

- Identifying existing partnerships and formal agreements for sharing resources within Kentucky in order to document templates, lessons learned, and best practices
- Developing inter-local agreements or Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) templates with policies and procedures for how to fund these agreements and to ensure each party understands its rights and obligations
- Communicating with federal agencies operating in Kentucky to see if potential partnerships exist

[7] Although many items purchased with KOHS funding are available on a state price contract (i.e., for pre-negotiated rates), bulk ordering is not currently an option in Kentucky.

- Identifying criteria that are often important to successful partnerships such as mutual benefits and shared decision making

Consider Laws and Limitations

The working group should consider the laws and limitations concerning capital projects, the legislature's biennial budget process, the prevailing political climate, and the overall difficulty of pursuing specific funding mechanisms. These factors affect the availability and accessibility of funding mechanisms. As other priorities for funding at the state or local level arise, education of public officials will be important to ensure appropriate investment levels for public safety interoperability projects.

Establish a Process for Distributing Funds to Local Communities and State Entities

Kentucky's competitive grant application process will be used to allocate grants for public safety communications and interoperability. Before any funds are allocated, the KWIEC Funding Subcommittee should develop grant guidance to outline Kentucky's communications and interoperability funding priorities. The KWIEC Funding Subcommittee may also:

- Publish guidelines that provide specific communications and interoperability information relevant to the grant application process

- Recommend to Kentucky the communications and interoperability priorities and determine the criteria by which communications and interoperability funding is allocated

Incorporate Continuous Improvement into the Funding Strategy

Because funding needs and funding availability may shift, SAFECOM recommends that the KWIEC Funding Subcommittee maintain flexibility with the funding strategy. This funding strategy should be revised regularly to increase its effectiveness.

Available Funding Mechanisms

A comprehensive funding strategy combines funding mechanisms from local and state sources as well as federal programs. The information below, including examples and links, provides an overview of the local, state, and federal funding mechanisms available for communications and interoperability efforts. This information reflects some of the examples identified through SAFECOM's research and experiences; however, it should not be considered an exhaustive list.

Local and State Funding Mechanisms

Local and state governments use a variety of funding mechanisms to support the development, deployment, maintenance, and upgrade of public safety wireless communication systems. While researching local and state funding mechanisms, planners should consider the potentially restrictive factors that may limit funding availability. For example, funds derived from local and state budget appropriations are affected by the funding available within a budget year. Because government budgets are reviewed annually or biannually, the amount of funding available for communications and interoperability projects often fluctuates based on this cycle. Funding mechanisms that are derived from debt, such as the sale of bonds, can be constrained by the debt limits of the government.

When developing a funding strategy, a review of local and state funding mechanisms will help planners determine the most appropriate ones. Typical funding mechanisms within most local and state budgets are described in the sections that follow. Examples of how specific localities or states used each funding mechanism, as well as links to more information, are provided for reference.

Local and State Budget Appropriations

Direct appropriation from the local or state government funds is one of the most prevalent funding mechanisms available at the local and state level. Public safety agencies should adjust their strategy based on the duration of the budget process. An accelerated approach is necessary in localities and states operating on an annual budget cycle in which the budget provides appropriations for one fiscal year.

In June 2005, the State of Kansas began a project to integrate communications among emergency responders in a 17-county area of southeastern Kansas. Financed by one-time Homeland Security grants and the redirection of state transportation funds, the $16 million project will help local governments build towers to link communication systems from different counties and the state government. The Kansas Department of Transportation will lease the towers to private communications companies to cover a portion of the state's bill for providing tower space. The money will be funneled back into new communications equipment purchases by county agencies. For more information, please see: http://www.ksdot.org/offtransInfo/News05/ground_breaking.asp.

911 and Enhanced 911 Surcharges

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requires the organizations in charge of 911 systems to meet standards and perform possible upgrades. 911 and E911 surcharges are typically used to pay for a jurisdiction's 911 systems and FCC-required upgrades. However, once the system upgrades are paid for, the states could potentially use the tax revenue to fund wireless communication networks. Currently, 13 states have specifically designated money from this revenue stream for the expanded maintenance of their current wireless systems.

The State of Arizona levied a tax of 37 cents per month for each activated wire and wireless service account for the purpose of financing emergency telecommunication services. For more information, visit: http://www.911.state.az.us/.

Targeted Taxes

Many states collect revenue through targeted taxes. Examples include motor vehicle-related taxes and targeted sales taxes that establish special revenue funding streams. If public safety agencies want to pursue the creation of a new targeted tax, they must determine whether the political climate will allow the establishment of a new targeted tax. Alternatively, it may be possible to redirect the revenue from an existing tax. On the other hand, the political climate and state residents' opinions may react more favorably toward targeted taxes directed at non-residents, such as hotel taxes and car rental taxes.

An example of an attempt to use targeted taxes occurred when the Florida State Legislature passed a bill to allow a municipality that maintains an independent 800 MHz radio system to draw $12.50 from each motor vehicle violation to offset system operations and maintenance costs. However, the bill was vetoed in June 2002, with opponents citing unclear language that could encourage municipalities to create and maintain independent radio systems.

Local and State Bonds

Various opportunities for funding exist through the issuance of bonds. Revenue bonds are the primary example discussed in this section because they are applicable to communications systems used to achieve interoperability.

Revenue bonds are a type of municipal bond. The principal and interest secured by revenues from user charges is combined with the proceeds of the bond issue. This type of bond is ideal for wireless systems supported by subscription fees and is generally not tied to borrowing limits or voter approval. Some bonds are dependent on legal limits set on debt levels or the ability of the state or locality to incur debt. Most state and local governments face constitutional and statutory limits on the amount of debt they can incur for capital projects. When considering bonds as a potential funding source, it is important to check local, state, and federal laws for restrictions.

The Governor of Nebraska signed a bill in April 2002 that allows the state to issue bonds for the build-out of a statewide radio communications system. The law also initiated the creation of a telecommunications board, composed of public safety and government users, to assess the financial development of the system.

Usage Fees

Although most of a communications system may be funded with a large grant or bond, some systems incorporate usage fees into their funding mechanisms. As the name suggests, usage fees are typically based on a proportional measurement of usage or subscriber fees.

During the mid- to late-1990s, several cities and counties collaborated with the Nevada Department of Transportation, and agreed as a cooperative effort to replace or expand their existing radio communication systems. As a result, these entities signed an inter-local agreement that provided for the development of a regional trunked radio communications system, known as the Washoe County Regional Communications System (WCRCS). An agency joining the WCRCS subsequent to the adoption of this agreement is responsible for paying its pro rata share of the one-time construction costs for the radio frequency and microwave backbone. This share will be based on the proportionate number of radios of the joining agency as a percentage of the total number of radios in use by all agencies participating in the WCRCS. In addition, the ongoing operations, maintenance, repair, and capital outlay costs for the radio frequency and microwave backbone are shared equitably by the participating agencies. In this system, two of the participant cities also agreed to provide, operate, and fund the operation of the dispatch center and backup dispatch center.

The Southern Nevada Area Communications Council (SNACC) system used federal funding from the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI)[8] to add infrastructure to the existing system. The City of Las Vegas was the recipient of the 2003 U.S. Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grant program award to add radios to the system. The COPS grant provided for 75 percent of the cost of the subscriber unit and 75 percent of the cost of the SNACC system buy-in. The system user is responsible for the balance of the cost of the radio and buy-in. The current operating fee is $185/per radio per year; it provides for the yearly operating fee of having a radio on the system. This fee supports the operating budget for salaries and services. This does not include parts, warranty, or maintenance. The end user is responsible for the purchase and maintenance of the subscriber units. The buy-in concept is comparable to “buying shares” because users are the owners of the system. The formula to calculate the cost of additional users joining the SNACC system is: 1/number of units in the system times the equity or value of the system equals the proportional cost for users. The benefit of this funding structure is that SNACC does not have to request additional funding from the users or spend funding from the system’s capital account.

Trust Funds

Certain states established trust funds to finance their interoperability purchases for equipment, training, and infrastructure. The greatest challenge for many of these efforts lies not with the effort to establish the trust fund, but in drafting a set of regulations for the administration of the funds.

Colorado created a trust fund for administering discretionary distributions of public safety communications funds and repayment of them by state and local governments. The

[8] For more information, please see the summary on DHS funding in the section on federal funding mechanisms.

primary intent of such distributions are for the acquisition and maintenance of statewide public safety communications systems for use by departments including, but not limited to, the Colorado Departments of Public Safety, Transportation, Natural Resources, and Corrections. For more information, please see: http://www.colorado.gov/dtr/pubsaf.htm.

Certificate of Participation (COP)

As an alternative to issuing bonds based on the state's credit, certificates of participation (COP) allow localities to raise funds through private investors. Because COPs are typically tax-exempt, they attract a larger base of investors. COPs function similarly to a home mortgage—a bank acts as a broker between the vendor and the government authority to secure the funding for the certificate from the investment community. Jurisdictions that use this funding mechanism often form public authorities or new governmental entities that can invite a private firm or vendor to negotiate the lease or purchase of radio equipment.

COPs are used by local public safety agencies within the City of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, the City and County of San Francisco, and Maricopa County, Arizona. In these cases, the COPs cover the operations and maintenance costs for the communications systems and provide funding for upgrades to allow the local systems to become interoperable with larger, surrounding systems.

Public/Private Partnerships

Public/private partnerships provide alternative funding approaches such as private ownership of a statewide system with state and local agency sharing arrangements. In exchange for providing the services specified in the system contract, a system vendor can be given an advance payment as well as the ongoing proceeds from a registration surcharge. This revenue stream to the system vendor provides for the system infrastructure (towers, antennas, system equipment, system maintenance, radio consoles for dispatch) as well as for communications service. The contract also provides for cost sharing between the state and the vendor by co-locating the conveyed towers and third-party system subscribers.

The partnership is reinforced through the daily operational needs of the system. The vendor can provide operational management through a contract with the state. The state CIO's office, the system vendor, and a users advisory committee can work together to help provide cost savings and manage the expense of operating the statewide system.

The State of Florida public/private partnership for the Statewide Law Enforcement Radio System has a unique funding strategy. Florida paid a private vendor a $40 million advance for services in the contract. The vendor also receives the ongoing proceeds from a motor vehicle and vessel registration surcharge (approximately $13-17 million annually), less certain stipulated expenses incurred by the state. For more information, see: http://eits.myflorida.com/slers/.

Federal Funding Mechanisms

When reviewing the applicability of the potential federal grants available for public safety wireless communications, local and state representatives should speak with their assigned preparedness officer. The preparedness officer, assigned from the DHS Office

for Grants and Training, will have the most current information on federal funding opportunities.

While SAFECOM does not provide grants, it developed the Grant Guidance Document (see http://www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/grant/default.htm) to try to coordinate the manner in which funding is allocated and to maximize the prospects for communications and interoperability. This document outlines grant eligibility and the purposes for which grants can be used and provides guidelines for putting a wireless communication system into effect. It is important to note that the SAFECOM grant guidance is periodically reviewed and updated.

System planners can research potential federal funding sources first by using the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) (http://12.46.245.173/cfda/cfda.html). Using this tool, system planners can explore federal funding sources such as grants, loans, equipment, technical assistance, direct payments, insurance, advisory services, counseling, and training.

Some of the most often used federal funding resources for communications and interoperability efforts are summarized in the sections that follow. For additional private and federal organizations offering non-financial support, see Appendix A.

Department of Homeland Security

A cornerstone of the DHS philosophy is its commitment to partner closely with other federal agencies, state and local governments, first responders, and law enforcement entities to ensure the security of the United States. Its Web site explains how DHS and local governments can work together: http://www.dhs.gov/ .

Programs within DHS that provide funding are outlined below.

DHS Office for Grants and Training

G&T is the primary office responsible for providing training, funds for the purchase of equipment, support for the planning and execution of exercises, technical assistance, and other support to assist states and local jurisdictions to prevent, plan for, and respond to acts of terrorism.

Programs within G&T with specific funding objectives are outlined below.

Homeland Security Grant Program

The Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) integrates the following: State Homeland Security Program (SHSP), UASI, Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program (LETPP), Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS), and Citizen Corps Program (CCP).

The HSGP Program Guidance and Application Kit streamline the efforts of states and urban areas in obtaining resources critical to building and sustaining capabilities to achieve the interim National Preparedness Goal and executing state and urban area homeland security strategies. Specifically, the HSGP provides funding for planning, organization, equipment, training, exercises, and management and administration to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of

Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Territories. A complete description of the program and a list of current and past HSBP grants can be found at: http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/grants_programs.htm#fy2006hsgp.

U.S. Fire Administration Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program

The purpose of this program is to award one-year grants directly to fire departments of a state to enhance their abilities with respect to fire and fire-related hazards (http://www.usfa.fema.gov/grants/afgp/).

Programs within DHS that provide equipment include those outlined below.

Commercial Equipment Distribution Assistance Program (CEDAP)

Although it does not directly provide funding, this program, managed by G&T, transfers technology systems and devices directly to local agencies, targeting law enforcement agencies. CEDAP provides interoperable communications equipment such as the Radio Interoperable System (RIOS) and the Incident Commander's Radio Interface (ICRI).

Preposition Equipment Program (PEP)

Another program that does not directly supply funding is PEP. Launched by G&T, it helps meet the needs of jurisdictions to be fully equipped and to provide an adequate, sustained response to a major terrorist incident. PEP consists of standardized, pre-positioned equipment sets in select geographic areas that permit rapid deployment to states and localities whose jurisdictions have become the target of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) terrorism (http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/ta.htm).

Department of Justice (DOJ)

DOJ offers funding opportunities to conduct research, support law enforcement activities in state and local jurisdictions, provide training and technical assistance, and to apply programs that improve the criminal justice system. For more detailed information, please see: http://www.usdoj.gov/.

Programs within DOJ that provide funding are outlined below.

Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program

The Edward Byrne Memorial JAG program allows states and local governments to support a broad range of activities to prevent and control crime and to improve the criminal justice system. JAG replaces the Byrne Formula and Local Law Enforcement Block Grant programs with a single funding mechanism that simplifies the administration process for grantees (http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/jag.html).

Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Interoperable Communications Technology Program

COPS administers this grant program. It provides equipment funding to law enforcement agencies to enhance multi-jurisdictional public safety interoperable communications and information sharing across the Nation. In 2005, COPS awarded $92.7 million in grants to 26 jurisdictions to support interoperable communications. Through an MOA with DOJ designed to ensure coordination between the programs,

Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP) technical assistance is available to COPS grantees (http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/).

Department of Commerce (DOC)

Within DOC, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) works to spur innovation, encourage competition, create jobs, and provide consumers with more choices and better quality telecommunications products and services at lower prices (http://www.ntia.doc.gov/).

A program within NTIA that provides funding is outlined below.

Technology Opportunities Program (TOP)

TOP provides grants for model projects that demonstrate innovative uses of network technology (http://www.ntia.doc.gov/top/).

Summary and Conclusion

In short, SAFECOM recommends that Kentucky create a subcommittee of KWIEC to develop and maintain a comprehensive funding strategy. Such an approach could include the following steps:

- Establish a KWIEC Funding Subcommittee that will:
    - Estimate and prioritize needs
    - Review acquisition plans
    - Identify available funding mechanisms
    - Establish valuable partnerships
    - Consider laws and limitations
    - Establish a process for distributing funds to local communities and state entities
    - Incorporate continuous improvement into the funding strategy

Kentucky should apply a diversified approach that incorporates multiple funding mechanisms from local, state, and federal sources. This report highlighted several examples of localities and states using various funding mechanisms. As the KWIEC Funding Subcommittee develops the statewide funding strategy and plan, it should remember Kentucky's unique circumstances.

Appendix A: Additional Private and Federal Organizations Offering Support

This appendix outlines additional private and federal organizations that can provide funding and other resources for public safety communications.

Association of Public Safety Communications Officials-International, Inc. (APCO)

APCO is a not-for-profit professional organization dedicated to the enhancement of public safety communications (http://www.apcointl.org/).

Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

DHS Office for Grants and Training (G&T)

Homeland Security Preparedness Technical Assistance (TA) Program

The TA program provides direct assistance to state and local jurisdictions to improve their ability to prevent, respond to, and recover from threats or acts of terrorism involving chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive (CBRNE) weapons. TA provides a process to help resolve problems or create innovative approaches. All TA services are available to eligible recipients at no charge. TA programs in place or currently under development within G&T include the Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP).

Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program

This technical assistance program is designed to enhance interoperable communications between local, state, and federal emergency responders and public safety officials; it is associated with G&T's Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) grant program. The goal of ICTAP is to enable local public safety agencies to communicate as they prevent or respond to a Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) attack. ICTAP also leverages and works with other local, state, and federal interoperability efforts whenever possible to enhance the overall capacity for agencies and individuals to communicate with one another.

Department of Justice (DOJ)

Office of Justice Programs (OJP) Information Technology Initiatives

The OJP Information Technology Initiatives Web site offers access to timely and useful insight on the information-sharing process, initiatives, and technological developments. While OJP is not a funding source, the funding section of this site provides information on both federal and private funding sources, examples of innovative funding ideas, and tips on researching funding legislation (http://www.it.ojp.gov/).

National Institute of Justice (NIJ)

NIJ is the research and development agency of DOJ and is solely dedicated to researching crime control and justice issues. The most recent solicitations issued by NIJ may be found at: http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/.

Justice Technology Information Network (JUSTNET)

JUSTNET, the official Web site for the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center system, lists many grants and funding sources in a virtual library. It also contains various publications on communications and interoperability issues (http://www.nlectc.org/).

Office of National Drug Control Policy, Counter-drug Technology Assessment Center (CTAC) Technology Transfer Program

The CTAC Technology Transfer program assists state and local law enforcement agencies in obtaining the necessary equipment and training for counter-drug deployments and operations (http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/ctac/index.html).