



# Statewide Interoperability Planning Guidebook

March 2007



Homeland  
Security





## Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Purpose.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Statewide Interoperability Plan .....</b>	<b>3</b>
3.1	Background.....	3
3.2	Importance .....	4
3.3	Current Examples .....	4
3.4	Benefits of the SCIP Methodology .....	5
<b>4</b>	<b>2007 Grant Applications .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Explanation of the Statewide Plan Criteria.....</b>	<b>6</b>
5.1	Background and Preliminary Steps .....	7
5.2	Strategy .....	9
5.3	Methodology .....	11
5.4	Governance.....	12
5.5	Technology .....	14
5.6	Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).....	16
5.7	Training and Exercises .....	18
5.8	Usage.....	19
5.9	Funding .....	19
5.10	Implementation .....	20
<b>6</b>	<b>Statewide Interoperability Plan Outline .....</b>	<b>23</b>
	<b>Appendix A: Statewide Plan Criteria.....</b>	<b>44</b>
	<b>Appendix B: Interoperability Planning Activity Timeline .....</b>	<b>47</b>
	<b>Appendix C: Collaborative Statewide Planning Methodology .....</b>	<b>51</b>
	<b>Appendix D: Frequently Asked Questions for Statewide Plan Criteria .....</b>	<b>55</b>
	<b>Appendix E: Sample Training Matrix .....</b>	<b>61</b>



## 1 Purpose

The Office for Interoperability and Compatibility's (OIC) SAFECOM and Disaster Management (DM) programs published a set of criteria for statewide interoperability plans in the *Recommended Federal Grant Guidance for Emergency Response Communications and Interoperability Grants for Fiscal Year 2007*. These criteria were developed in support of Section I.C.5 of the 2006 Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP), which states that "by the end of 2007, each state<sup>1</sup> must develop and adopt a statewide communications interoperability plan." To assist this process and to ensure all states include the essential components of a statewide plan, the criteria addressing what should be included in these plans have been developed with input from local and state elected and appointed officials and emergency responders.

The purpose of this *Statewide Interoperability Planning Guidebook* is to provide the designated State Interoperability Coordinators or the appropriate authority from each of the states and territories with an explanation of the statewide plan criteria, a step-by-step guide for developing an interoperability plan, and a recommended layout for the statewide plans. Detailed explanations include common questions to consider, helpful hints in completing each section, and a list of the criteria each section addresses.

This guidebook will help communities not only satisfactorily respond to the statewide plan criteria, but also define an actionable path forward for states and their leaders.

## 2 Introduction

The lack of emergency response communications interoperability continues to affect incident response in communities across the Nation. In many cases, agencies are unable to communicate or share critical voice and data information with other jurisdictions or disciplines during natural disasters, emergency response scenarios, terrorist acts, and day-to-day operations. As described in the 2001 National Task Force on Interoperability Guide,<sup>2</sup> this inability is often due to:

- Incompatible and Aging Communications Equipment
- Limited and Fragmented Funding
- Limited and Fragmented Planning
- Lack of Coordination and Cooperation
- Limited and Fragmented Radio Spectrum

Interoperable emergency response communications enable agencies to exchange voice and/or data on demand, in real time, when needed, and when authorized. The SAFECOM and DM programs recognize that interoperability of emergency response equipment is essential to achieving communications interoperability. However, it is equally important that the procedures first responders use to respond to an incident and the training they receive are interoperable and compatible as well. Truly seamless communications interoperability will be achieved when any emergency response official can be deployed anywhere in the country, use his or her own radio to communicate with other responders, and use the compatible standard operating procedures (SOPs) he or she has been trained on in their respective jurisdiction.

---

<sup>1</sup> As defined in the Homeland Security Act of 2002, the term "state" means "any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and any possession of the United States."

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/html/cd\\_rom/tech\\_docs/pubs/WhycantwetalkNFTIGuide.pdf](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/html/cd_rom/tech_docs/pubs/WhycantwetalkNFTIGuide.pdf)





SAFECOM and DM recommend the use of the Communications Interoperability Continuum (Continuum) (Figure 1). The Continuum is designed to help the emergency response community and local, tribal, state, and Federal policy makers address critical elements for success as they plan and implement interoperability solutions. The Continuum depicts the core facets of interoperability according to the stated needs and challenges of the emergency response community. The elements of interoperability defined in the Continuum include governance, SOPs, technology, training and exercises, and usage. Because the elements of the Continuum are interdependent, progress in all aspects of interoperability is essential.<sup>3</sup>

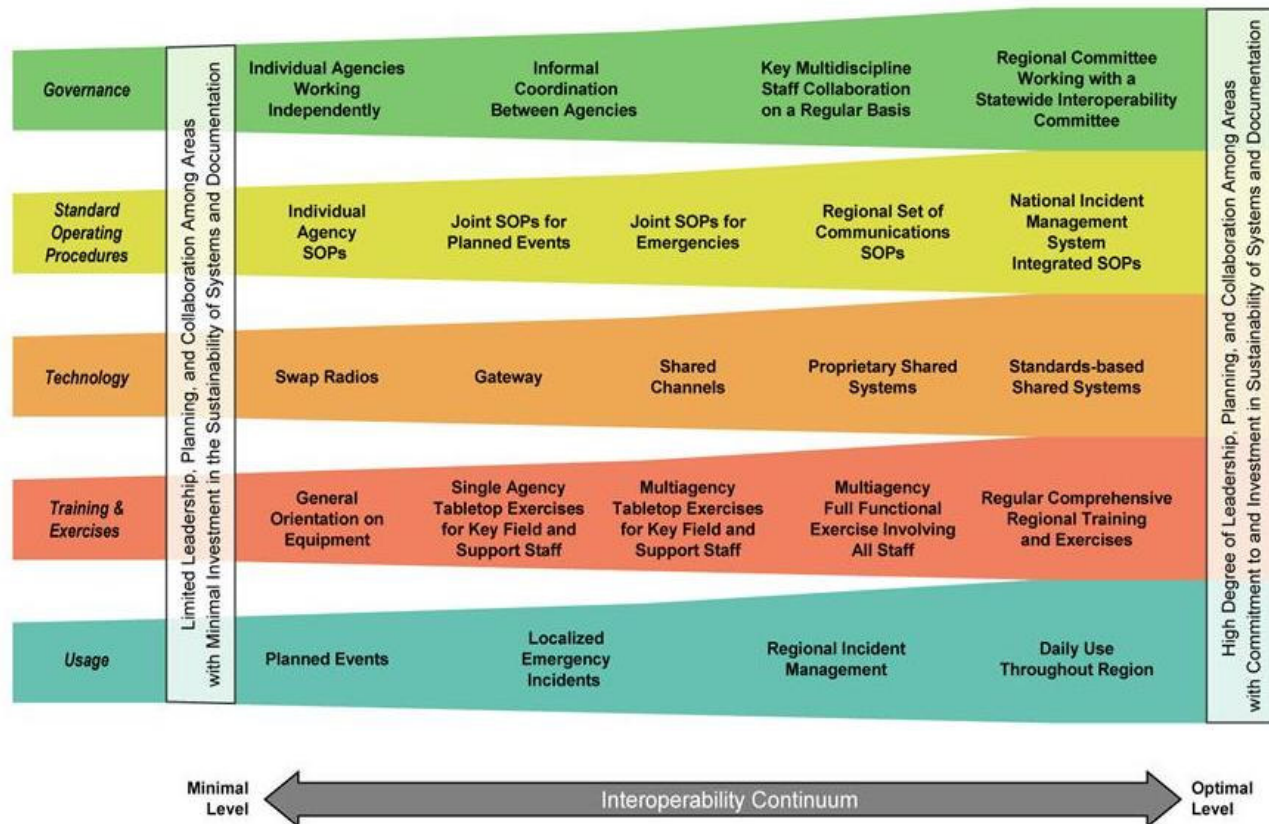


Figure 1 – Interoperability Continuum

**Governance** – Governance refers to establishing a shared vision and collaborative decision-making process that support interoperability efforts to improve communication, coordination, and cooperation across disciplines and jurisdictions. This vision is set and maintained by a group of individuals representing the broadest possible group of relevant organizations.

**Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** – SOPs are the formal written instructions for incident response that enable responders to act in a coordinated fashion across disciplines and jurisdictions.

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the Interoperability Continuum, visit the SAFECOM program's Web site at [www.safecomprogram.gov](http://www.safecomprogram.gov).



**Technology** – Technology is the networking infrastructure, equipment, and applications that emergency response disciplines use to exchange critical information when responding to incidents. This includes land mobile radios, the infrastructure that supports them, and other communications devices such as satellite phones.

**Training and Exercises** – Training is the instructional support designed to develop the knowledge and skills required to implement and operate a successful interoperability solution. This includes operating equipment and performing procedures correctly.

**Usage** – Usage refers to how often a community uses and engages in interoperable communications across disciplinary and jurisdictional lines. Unless emergency response agencies use interoperable equipment, SOPs, and training they will not be prepared to use them during more infrequent large-scale incidents.

It has become increasingly clear to the emergency response community that communications and interoperability will only be solved through collaboration. The solution requires a partnership among local, state, tribal, and Federal emergency response organizations. In addition, a truly effective and interoperable communications system requires a clear and compelling statewide strategy focused on increasing emergency response effectiveness and coordination across all related organizations and jurisdictions. To gain this type of required coordination, the statewide strategy must be driven by local emergency response organizations and officials.

### 3 Statewide Interoperability Plan

Statewide communications interoperability plans are a critical step in achieving communications interoperability not only within each state, but also across the country. A well-defined statewide plan identifies key long-term and short-term strategic initiatives for the state to improve communications interoperability. In addition, the statewide plan is a mechanism to align emergency responders at all levels in the state on a future vision for communications interoperability. Further, it serves as a roadmap for all agencies and jurisdictions in terms of the direction for moving forward and addressing communications interoperability issues at the local and regional level.

#### 3.1 Background

In 2004, SAFECOM partnered with the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Department of Justice to develop a strategic plan for improving statewide interoperable communications for Virginia. The locally-driven planning process included six regional focus group sessions and a final strategic planning session. The focus group sessions leveraged, clarified, and captured perspectives from numerous local emergency response representatives. The final strategic planning session resulted in recommendations for key initiatives as part of a statewide strategic plan for improving emergency response communications and interoperability. The result was a practitioner-driven statewide strategic plan for communications interoperability that immediately had support from the practitioner community for implementation. The plan reflected the most critical and focused set of initiatives for moving towards full interoperability.

Based on lessons learned from the Virginia planning process, SAFECOM released the Statewide Communications Interoperability Planning (SCIP) methodology, which outlines a step-by-step planning process for developing a statewide strategic plan built with practitioner input.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> This SCIP methodology is now available to all states on the SAFECOM Web site at [www.safecomprogram.gov](http://www.safecomprogram.gov). Appendix C includes further information on the phases in the SCIP methodology and alternative approaches.



The SAFECOM and DM programs recommend the use of a collaborative process to develop statewide plans. The SCIP methodology is one example of a collaborative process that can be used to develop these plans.

### 3.2 Importance

Creating a statewide interoperability plan involves an investment of both time and resources. However, the outcome of a consensus-based plan to improve interoperability within a state is a strategic building block for the local, regional, and national emergency response community. Each state's emergency response community must develop a recommended strategy for improving statewide communications and interoperability while leveraging the valuable information available through work completed in other states.

The SAFECOM approach:

- Is practitioner driven,
- Applies a comprehensive framework to communications and interoperability, and
- Employs a replicable structured process for implementing statewide interoperability plans.

Statewide plans should be updated periodically and should specifically explain how practitioners and local-level emergency responders will continue to be involved in the statewide interoperability planning process. Once the initial plan has been created, it is important to update the plan as tasks are completed and milestones are achieved, thus making the plan a "living document."

Interoperability strategic planning requires states to solicit expert opinions from stakeholders at the responder level on a realistic scope and timeframe for implementing the plan. It also requires states to consider their coordination with neighboring states. Moreover, existing equipment is generally allowed to serve out its useful life, but states should document the process that will be used to ensure that new purchases comply with the statewide plan. Training and usage are critical items for states to consider, as is a comprehensive funding strategy. States should provide policy makers the ability to track the progress and success of interoperability; this guidebook provides steps on how to accomplish these tasks.

### 3.3 Current Examples

In January 2005, SAFECOM released *Lessons Learned from the Commonwealth of Virginia: One Year Later*<sup>5</sup>. The document includes results of a sponsored study to test and validate the SCIP as a strategic planning model. Lessons learned from the Commonwealth of Virginia process have been included for consideration by future SCIP implementers; however, they may not apply to all states or regions equally. During Fiscal Year 2006, the Commonwealth of Virginia successfully created its third version of a statewide plan, the Fiscal Year 2007 Strategic Plan for Statewide Communications Interoperability.

In accordance with the congressional requirements in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, SAFECOM initiated two Regional Communications Interoperability Pilot (RCIP) projects in the State of Nevada and Commonwealth of Kentucky. The RCIP projects provided an opportunity to further test the SCIP methodology and resulted in recommendations for statewide communications interoperability plans.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.safecomprogram.gov/NR/rdonlyres/87CECA62-AF0F-4541-AE40-719E0BD35B77/0/VirginiaLessonsLearned.pdf>



### 3.4 Benefits of the SCIP Methodology

One of the main benefits of developing a statewide communications plan is that it provides direction and focus for the entire state, including all agencies and jurisdictions, on the main communications initiatives and objectives. Furthermore, using a collaborative process to develop the state plan gives agencies and jurisdictions an opportunity to be involved in shaping and defining the goals and objectives at the state level. This will improve the likelihood for success of statewide plans. Another benefit of the collaborative process is that, by allowing local and regional practitioners to participate in the statewide planning, there is a greater pool of expertise in the strategy formulation. This will increase the likelihood that the statewide plan will address a broader range of critical issues and will deliver the greatest impact to the emergency responders in the state. For example, including local and regional representatives in the planning discussions may help shift interoperability discussions from technology-centric to all critical success factors, with technology as one of the elements.

In addition, benefits of statewide collaboration include:

- There are solid and structured recommendations from the emergency response community on how to improve voice and data communications across the state.
- There is an enhanced sense of community among the statewide emergency response communications plan participants.
- There is a publicly-available path forward that can be shared with industry so that industry understands the major technical initiatives that the state is driving in support of its vision and interoperability goals.
- There is a shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved and the dependencies within and among initiatives.

## 4 2007 Grant Applications

According to Section I. B.5 of the 2007 Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP): Program Guidance and Application Kit, “in support of the Secretary’s goal for all States to implement interoperability capabilities by the end of 2008, the FY 2007 HSGP requires States to develop and adopt statewide communications interoperability plans by the end of calendar year (CY) 2007.” To assist the statewide planning process and to ensure all states include the essential components of a statewide plan, SAFECOM and DM developed criteria of what must be included in their statewide communications interoperability plans. The criteria were formulated with input from local and state elected and appointed officials and emergency responders.

OIC’s SAFECOM and DM programs recommend that states, through their governors, State Administrative Agency (SAA)<sup>6</sup>, other state and local policy makers, and local emergency responders, use a statewide strategic planning process that gathers the perspectives of all emergency response practitioners across the state. This practitioner-driven approach ensures that the plan will meet the needs of everyone involved. A plan developed with input from responders and officials will also increase the likelihood the plan is adopted and implemented.

The practitioner-driven statewide planning process provides an opportunity for partnerships among local, tribal, state, and Federal entities. Each has a critical role to play in the development of a

---

<sup>6</sup> Grant applications must be coordinated through each State Administrative Agency (SAS). The governor of the state has designated a SAA to apply for and administer the funds under this program. According to the ODP grant guidance, the SAA is the only agency eligible to apply for ODP funds. For more information, visit [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/grants\\_programs.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/grants_programs.htm).





strong locally-driven, statewide interoperability plan that has the best chance of success. The governor’s office, or its designee, should act as an umbrella organization playing a vital role in leadership, coordination, management, and support for the statewide planning process. Local jurisdictions play a different, but equally important, role in further developing the interoperability plan within their region. This includes identifying ways to build out their current systems to become interoperable with the neighboring jurisdictions, and providing significant input into the development of the statewide plan that builds on efforts already underway.

Ideally, each state will have an interdisciplinary policy committee, comprised of representatives from the governor’s office and key state and local agencies. If a state has already established an interdisciplinary, inter-jurisdictional communications interoperability committee with significant local representation, it is encouraged to use this existing governance structure. If not, it is encouraged to develop one. This committee would be responsible for developing and putting into practice the statewide plan.

The communications interoperability committee would likely include representatives from:

- Governor’s office
- State and local elected officials
- State and local emergency medical services
- State and local health officials
- State and local fire response services
- State and local law enforcement
- State and local emergency management
- State and local homeland security offices
- Tribal governments
- State and local transportation agencies
- Military organizations operating in the state (DoD, National Guard, etc.)
- Federal agencies that need to be interoperable with state and local emergency responders
- Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI)
- Critical infrastructure
- Other non-government organizations, such as the Red Cross and utility companies
- Other organizations with abilities and resources for prevention of or response and recovery from crises or disasters
- Regional planning committee chairpersons for 700 and 800 MHz

In keeping with the relevant state and local laws and regulations, some representatives may need to serve in an ex officio role.

## 5 Explanation of the Statewide Plan Criteria

To assist the process of developing a statewide communications interoperability plan and to ensure that all states include the essential components of a statewide plan, the SAFECOM and DM programs created a set of criteria. The criteria were formulated with input from local and state participants and are organized into ten categories:

1. Background and Preliminary Steps
2. Strategy
3. Methodology
4. Governance
5. Technology
6. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
7. Training and Exercises
8. Usage
9. Funding
10. Implementation



The criteria describe the critical information that should be included in a detailed and complex statewide communications plan. While the intention should be for every state’s statewide plan to address each and every criterion listed, it is understood that not all criteria will be satisfied in every statewide plan. In cases where criteria are not addressed, the statewide plan should address the issue and specifically call out the steps that will be taken to incorporate the necessary information into the plan in order to satisfy the criteria not met. It is expected that every statewide plan submitted will have a complete governance structure defined for its communications interoperability efforts.

These criteria will also help ensure uniformity and alignment in the structure of the statewide plans across the Nation. A detailed explanation of each of the statewide plan criteria is provided in the following sections.

### 5.1 Background and Preliminary Steps

The following statewide planning criteria describe the context and circumstances of the each state’s plan based on the current environment and the methodology used to develop the plan. These should include the agencies involved and the management of the statewide planning process.

1. Background and Preliminary Steps	
1.1	Provide an overview and background information on the state and its regions. Include geographic and demographic information.

Include an overview of the state and its regions in the statewide plan to set the context for the rest of the plan. The state overview should include a list of major cities and critical infrastructure as well as any major roadways and waterways. In addition to the geographical information, the overview should provide demographical information and a list of any major events that occur within the state regularly. Include common environmental threats such as hurricanes, earthquakes, or tornadoes.

1. Background and Preliminary Steps	
1.2	List all agencies and organizations that participated in developing the plan.

DHS recommends a collaborative approach to developing the statewide plan. A variety of relevant state and local agencies and organizations should be involved in the development process. Every agency materially involved in defining and developing the content of the statewide plan should be included in this list. Agencies that were not included in the scope of the statewide plan content should not be included in the list. The agencies should be listed according to the categories recommended for a communications interoperability community. If all categories are not represented, it is recommended that some form of justification be provided. A plan for obtaining input and feedback from missing agencies should also be incorporated into the statewide plan.

1. Background and Preliminary Steps	
1.3	Identify the point of contact. DHS expects that each state will have a full-time interoperability coordinator. The coordinator should not represent or be affiliated with any one particular agency and should not have to balance the coordinator duties with other responsibilities.

Because the responsibility of managing the statewide planning process is complex and time consuming, DHS recommends a single person be designated as the point of contact for the plan. This person will be responsible for managing the statewide planning and implementation process. Furthermore, it is recommended the state planning coordinator dedicate 100 percent of his or her



time to coordinating and managing the statewide planning process. It is recognized that this arrangement is not always possible. When a full-time statewide planning coordinator is not provided, the plan should specify if or when the state intends to establish a full-time statewide planning coordinator.

1. Background and Preliminary Steps	
1.4	Describe the communications and interoperability environment of the current emergency response effort.

Describing the current communications interoperability environment, often referred to as the “current state,” can be done by performing a capabilities assessment. DHS recommends performing a capabilities assessment either as a part of or prior to the statewide planning process. This will ensure everyone involved in the planning process has a shared understanding of the current situation and capabilities.

When documenting the current state, it is helpful to consider the five critical elements discussed in the Interoperability Continuum. Using the critical elements will assist in documenting a comprehensive and complete view of the current communications and interoperability environment. It is important to consider the predictable types of risks, hazards, and incidents that face not only the state’s emergency response agencies, but all the agencies involved in incident response.

The information from the capabilities assessment can be presented in the statewide plan using the elements of the Continuum for a framework. The capabilities assessment should also include, where appropriate, any interoperability information from the state homeland security strategic plan.

1. Background and Preliminary Steps	
1.5	Include a problem definition and possible solutions that address the challenges identified in achieving interoperability within the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum.

As states perform the capabilities assessment and document the current communications and interoperability environment, they should begin to identify opportunities for improvement in order to improve the current situation. In addition, during the collaborative planning process there will be discussions regarding current critical issues and problems. During the discussion, each of the five critical elements of the Interoperability Continuum should be addressed. The goal of the discussion is to ensure the planning community has a common understanding of the communications interoperability issues and challenges.

Once the entire planning community has agreed upon the priority issues, a problem definition should be created and presented in the statewide plan. A problem definition details the current issues, challenges, and major disconnects facing communications interoperability. It should provide specific examples illustrating how those issues, challenges, and disconnects negatively impact the emergency response community’s ability to perform their job. Depending on the complexity of these issues, it may be appropriate to focus on one or two specific issues and present them in the problem definition. The problem definition can then be used to develop the state’s vision statement.

1. Background and Preliminary Steps	
1.6	Identify any Tactical Interoperability Communications Plans (TICP) in the state.

The statewide plan should provide a list of any Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) regions or designated metropolitan areas. Included in the list, the statewide plan should also identify if the

UASI region or designated metropolitan area has created a TIC Plan. If no TIC Plan exists for either a UASI region or a designated metropolitan area, the statewide plan should provide an explanation as to why no plan has been created, and provide an anticipated timeline for its creation. This information should be presented in the State Overview section of the statewide plan, and can be presented as a simple list.

## 1. Background and Preliminary Steps

1.7	Set the scope and timeframe of the plan.
-----	--

Every statewide plan should specify the scope and timeframe of the plan. Because statewide plans are assumed to cover the entire geographical area of the state, the scope of the plan refers to the agencies addressed and the interoperability topics discussed. For example, it may be determined that the Department of Public Works is considered out of scope for the statewide plan. Timeframe refers to the period of time the plan is applicable. Statewide plans should cover at least one year; however, states will likely specify a longer timeframe. The specified timeframe should provide enough time to complete the critical initiatives identified in the statewide plan. The actual content of the plan does not need to be updated every year; however, states should perform an annual status check of the plan, and provide updates on progress against the strategic initiatives.

## 5.2 Strategy

The following statewide plan criteria are identified to assess statewide plans based on the description of the state’s communications and interoperability strategy.

### 2. Strategy

2.1	Describe the strategic vision, goals, and objectives for improving emergency response interagency wireless communications statewide, including how they connect with existing plans within the state.
-----	---

The vision is the desired future environment of communications and interoperability within the state. It should be developed and agreed upon by the entire communications planning committee during the statewide planning process. It should also specify a specific timeframe. The timeframe for the vision is not required to be the same as the timeframe for the statewide plan. The vision should be supported by a mission statement. The difference between the vision and the mission statement is that the vision specifies the desired communications environment and the mission statement specifies how that environment will be achieved.

The statewide plan goals and objectives section should list the goals and objectives for the state that directly support the vision and mission statement. Goals are milestones and accomplishments that move the state closer to the desired future environment. It is recommended the state identify four to six goals for the statewide plan. Objectives should be directly associated with a specific goal and serve to clarify its purpose. While the goal specifies what is going to be done, the objectives define why and to what end the goal will improve communications interoperability.

In many cases, agreements among agencies and/or jurisdictions for multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional incident response are already in place, either formally or informally. The statewide plan should identify and define how the vision, goals, and objectives are integrated with or support these types of agreements.





2. Strategy	
2.2	Provide a strategic plan for coordination with neighboring states. If applicable, include a plan for coordination with neighboring countries.

The statewide plan should clearly specify how emergency response agencies within the state will interact with neighboring states and, where applicable, neighboring country agencies during an incident requiring resources from multiple states and countries. In some cases, interoperability with agencies from neighboring countries is not applicable; however, in situations where formal agreements are required with neighboring countries, the statewide plan should identify how the U.S. State Department will be involved in the agreement process. When considering interoperability across state borders, it is helpful to consider the five critical elements of the Interoperability Continuum and how the emergency response agencies will interact on those levels. Types of agencies that are not included in the plan for interoperability across state borders should be identified as outside the scope of the plan and provide justification as to why they were deemed out of scope or a plan for integrating those types of agencies in the future.

In cases where a plan for coordination with neighboring states and countries does not exist, the statewide plan should provide a course of action that will begin to develop such a plan, and a timeframe in which it is expected to be completed.

2. Strategy	
2.3	Provide a strategic plan for addressing data interoperability in addition to voice interoperability.

Because voice communications is only one aspect of communications interoperability, the statewide plan should also address data sharing across agency lines and jurisdictional borders. This should include, but not be limited to, the management of assets during an incident, traffic information, geographical maps, and other situational awareness information. Such data should be made available in electronic format and in real time during incident response.

In situations where a complete data interoperability plan has not been identified, the statewide plan should provide the state’s strategy to begin the development of a data interoperability plan, and the timeframe in which it is expected to be developed and incorporated into the statewide plan.

2. Strategy	
2.4	Describe a strategy for addressing catastrophic loss of communication assets by developing redundancies in the communications interoperability plan.

During a major incident, such as a hurricane, earthquake, or terrorist attack, there is a risk that communications assets will become inoperable. For this reason, the statewide plan should provide a strategy for restoring communications when there is significant damage to the core infrastructure of the communications network. Each critical component in the communications network should be considered, and a backup strategy defined for the loss of that equipment. This type of strategy is often referred to as a disaster recovery plan.

2. Strategy	
2.5	Describe how the plan is, or will become, compliant with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the National Response Plan.



Statewide plans should be developed with an understanding of the National Incident Management System (NIMS)<sup>7</sup> and the National Response Plan (NRP)<sup>8</sup>. To the extent possible, statewide plans should incorporate the strategic goals and objectives of the NRP and the procedures described in NIMS. It is recommended that each goal listed also provide a reference back to either the NIMS or the NRP to show how the goal is directly linked to those efforts.

2. Strategy	
2.6	Describe a strategy for addressing communications interoperability with the safety and security elements of the major transit systems, intercity bus service providers, ports, and passenger rail operations within the state.

The statewide plan should provide a list of critical communication assets and procedures that are to be used during incident response to communicate with the agencies servicing such operations as major transit systems, intercity bus services, ports, and passenger rail operations.

2. Strategy	
2.7	Describe the process for periodic review and revision of the state plan.

Statewide communications plans should be reviewed and updated regularly. To that end, the statewide plan should describe the process that will be used to update the statewide plan and should assign responsibilities to ensure updates occur. This should include tracking progress against the strategic initiatives identified in the statewide plan, and listing the major accomplishments and milestones that have been achieved in support of the state’s vision, mission statement, and goals and objectives. DHS recommends that as statewide plans are updated, continual input at the local level from emergency response personnel and practitioners in the field be sought and incorporated.

### 5.3 Methodology

The following statewide plan criteria are identified to assess statewide plans based on the methodology used to develop the statewide plan and to manage the plan during implementation.

3. Methodology	
3.1	Describe the method by which multi-jurisdictional, multi-disciplinary input was provided from all regions of the state. For an example of a methodology that ensures input from all regions, see the Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan, or SCIP, methodology developed by SAFECOM.

Because local jurisdictions own and operate the majority of communication assets within the state, it is critical to develop a plan that has their support. Each statewide plan should describe the process used to gather and use local level input. The SCIP methodology may not meet the specific needs of every state and therefore may not be the methodology used to gather local input.

In situations where the statewide communications plan was not developed with multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary input, the plan must provide an explanation and justification. Further, the statewide plan should include a strategy for engaging the local members of the emergency response community and gathering their input for future revisions of the plan.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/index.shtm>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.dhs.gov/xprepresp/committees/editorial\\_0566.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/xprepresp/committees/editorial_0566.shtm)



3. Methodology	
3.2	Define the process for continuing to have local input and for building local support of the plan.

Because statewide plans should be updated regularly, they are required to specifically explain how elected and appointed officials and local emergency responders will continue to be involved in the statewide communications interoperability planning process. Once the initial plan has been created, it is important to update the plan as tasks are completed and milestones are achieved, thus making the plan a “living document.” The intent of this is to ensure the statewide planning process does not end with the publication of a statewide plan, but rather continues as it is improved and enhanced.

Note that this section is similar in addressing criteria 1.7 and 2.7.

3. Methodology	
3.3	Describe how the TICPs were incorporated into the statewide plan.

UASI areas across the Nation were required to create and exercise TIC Plans over the course of 2006. These plans identify the procedures and processes that will be used during a significant incident within a UASI region. Statewide plans should address and incorporate those TIC Plans into their overall approach to ensure the state and UASI region are compatible and interoperable. Further, the statewide plan should address the TIC Plan scorecard and any deficiencies found in the TIC Plan for each UASI region.

3. Methodology	
3.4	Describe the strategy for implementing all components of the statewide plan.

Statewide plans should contain a section addressing key strategic initiatives that will improve communications interoperability within the state. Strategic initiatives should be based on specific goals and objectives. For example, a goal may be to establish a statewide wireless communications infrastructure for all emergency response agencies to use. The strategic initiatives may be to issue an RFP, award a contract for new equipment, and solicit implementation support. Those key initiatives should be supported by an implementation plan that outlines the tasks and milestones necessary to complete the initiative. The implementation strategy may range from the duration of the statewide plan to a short-term implementation plan describing the process to create and execute a more detailed implementation plan. The importance of the implementation strategy is to identify the immediate steps that need to be taken to set the statewide plan in action and establish momentum. At a minimum, states should provide a 90-day action plan that identifies tasks and assigns responsibility for the tasks to specific resources. All tasks should directly support the strategic initiatives identified in the statewide plan.

### 5.4 Governance

The statewide plan criteria are identified to evaluate statewide plans based on the governance structure established to oversee the statewide communications interoperability planning effort.

4. Governance	
4.1	Identify the executive or legislative authority for the governing body of the interoperability effort.



Governing bodies for communications interoperability efforts are essential to ensure that focus and direction is maintained as well as to provide guidance and assistance when efforts are slowed or stalled. DHS strongly recommends creating a governing body to serve as the state’s interoperability committee. Furthermore, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) strongly encourages the formation of a State Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC) or another equally effective state-level agency to administer 700 MHz interoperability channels in states where no such organization already exists.

Statewide plans should identify the governing body that is or will be overseeing the interoperability project and development of the statewide plan. In some cases, it may be appropriate to expand the SIEC to serve as the governing body. In addition, the statewide plan should reference the executive or legislative authority granted to that governing body. In cases where no legislative or executive authority has been granted to the governing body, the statewide plan should provide a strategy to establish executive or legislative authority for the governing body and a timeframe in which it is expected to be in place.

4. Governance	
4.2	Provide an overview of the governance structure that will oversee development and implementation of the plan. Illustrate how it is representative of all of the relevant emergency response disciplines and regions in the state.

As stated above, creation of a governing body for oversight is an essential part of the communications interoperability improvement process. Because of the criticality of the governing body, it is assumed that every state will have established some form of governing body for their communications interoperability program before 2008. Therefore, statewide plans should provide a detailed explanation of the state’s governance structure responsible for the management of the communications interoperability project and the development and implementation of the statewide plan. The governance structure should include multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary representatives from across the state to ensure the project and statewide plan are managed with the entire state’s input. This information can be presented in a graphical organizational chart supplemented by a list of names in the governance structure and the agency and jurisdiction they represent.

4. Governance	
4.3	Provide the charter for the governing body, and use the charter to state the principles, roles, responsibilities, and processes.

Once a governing body has been created, one of the first tasks the group will need to perform is creating a charter for themselves. A charter document will establish the roles and responsibilities of the members of the governing body as well as define the decision making process the group will use to make communications and interoperability decisions. In addition, the charter will establish the goals and objectives of the governing body. Because creating the governing body is considered one of the first steps in communications interoperability improvement, it is likely that the goals and objectives for the governing body will be created prior to the goals and objectives created during the statewide planning process. While the goals and objectives of the governing body and the statewide plan may vary, they should be sufficiently aligned to ensure the project will not be negatively affected by conflicting agendas. Therefore, it may be necessary for the governing body to periodically update their goals and objectives in the charter.





For assistance on creating a charter for a communications interoperability governing body, the SAFECOM and DM programs created the Creating a Charter for a Multi-Agency Communications Interoperability Committee document.<sup>9</sup>

4. Governance	
4.4	Identify the members of the governing body and any of its committees.

Often, this information will be included in the charter document for the governing body as well as the organization chart created to satisfy Statewide Plan Criterion 4.1. If a list of names in the governance structure for the state’s communications interoperability effort is not provided as a part of the organizational structure or the charter, the list should be included in an appropriate section of the statewide plan. The list should also identify members of the governance structure that have voting authority on issues and topics directly affecting the statewide plan and its strategic initiatives.

4. Governance	
4.5	Provide a meeting schedule for the governing body.

It is recommended that the governing body create a meeting schedule and publicize the schedule to the rest of the communications interoperability project participants. Governing bodies can determine how frequently meetings are required; however, in the early stages of a project it may be appropriate for the governing body to meet frequently to address any issues and roadblocks the planning effort may encounter. To meet this criteria the statewide plan should provide a meeting schedule for the governing body that covers at least the timeframe established for the statewide plan in the overview section of the document.

4. Governance	
4.6	Describe multi-jurisdictional, multi-disciplinary agreements needed for decision-making and for sharing resources.

In creating an overarching governance structure with representatives from across the state and multiple disciplines, it may be necessary to create formal agreements among the public and private agencies involved in the project. In cases where a formal Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been created, the statewide plan should provide information about the agreements. The statewide plan should include the agencies included in the agreement, the period of time the agreement is effective, a brief description of the agreement including resources and procedures, and the signatures included on the agreement.

In situations where formal agreements are not necessary, the statewide plan should explain why agreements were not needed, and if there are plans to establish formal agreements. If the state intends to establish agreements among agencies and jurisdictions, the statewide plan should provide a timeframe in which the agreements will be established.

### 5.5 Technology

The following statewide plan criteria are identified to evaluate statewide plans based on technology considerations as they pertain to communications interoperability.

<sup>9</sup> The document is available for download at [www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/library/interoperabilitybasics/1290\\_creatinga.htm](http://www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/library/interoperabilitybasics/1290_creatinga.htm).

## 5. Technology

5.1	Include a statewide capabilities assessment (or a plan for one) which includes, critical communications equipment and related interoperability issues. At a minimum this should include types of radio systems, data and incident management systems, the manufacturer, and frequency assignments for each major emergency responder organization within the state. Ultimately more detailed information will be required to complete the documentation of a migration strategy. States may use the Communications Asset Survey and Mapping (CASM) tool to conduct this assessment.
-----	---

As previously stated in Statewide Plan Criteria 1.4, a capabilities assessment of the current communications and interoperability environment is an important step in creating a statewide communications interoperability plan. As a part of that capabilities assessment, the technology used for communications in the state should be evaluated. The technology assessment should provide an inventory of the key data and communications systems operating within the state and the jurisdictions operating on those systems. When creating a list of the data and communications equipment for the state, every major jurisdiction within the state should be included.

The CASM tool tracks equipment already available and in use and depicts how it fits together.

There are two Web-based components – for collecting and displaying data.

For more information on the CASM tool and how it can be used in a state, contact [CASM-support@spawar.navy.mil](mailto:CASM-support@spawar.navy.mil).

The CASM<sup>10</sup> tool provided by the DHS Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP)<sup>11</sup> can be used to inventory the communications assets in the state. However, CASM data collection and display capabilities are limited to land mobile radio (LMR) voice interoperability. The CASM tool is a Web-based tool that agencies can use to store the interoperable communications equipment inventory and current radio communications infrastructure information. This collected data will reside in a secure database that only authorized participating agencies will be able to access.

## 5. Technology

5.2	Describe plans for continuing support of legacy systems, and developing interfaces among disparate systems, while migrating to newer technologies.
-----	--

Acquiring and implementing new technology is not always the best way to improve communications interoperability. Most agencies will be required to maintain existing systems while focusing on other areas of interoperability. In this scenario, it is necessary to define a strategy for the maintenance and management of the existing systems and how those systems will be incorporated into the new communications architecture being established across the entire state.

Statewide plans should identify all critical communication technologies operating in the state that are components of the statewide voice and data infrastructure. The statewide plan should identify the parties responsible for the operation of the systems and the creation of any interfaces to other existing or newly acquired systems.

In situations where a complete plan for the management of existing systems has not yet been defined, the statewide plan should include a strategy for the development of a plan and a timeframe in which it is expected to be complete.

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/CASM\\_trifold8Final.pdf](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/CASM_trifold8Final.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/ta\\_ictap.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/ta_ictap.htm)



5. Technology	
5.2.1	Describe the migration plan for moving from existing technologies to newly procured technologies.

Developing a statewide strategy for communications interoperability may require the procurement of new technologies. If new technologies are acquired and implemented within the state to replace existing technologies, a strategy will be required to migrate users from the existing system to the newly implemented system. The migration strategy should include information such as the user community that will migrate from one system to another, the timeframe over which the migration will occur, a “go live” date for the new system, a process for training users on the new system, and a shutoff date for the old system.

In situations where a migration strategy has not been defined, the statewide plan should identify a plan to develop a migration strategy and a timeframe in which it is expected to be complete.

5. Technology	
5.2.2	Describe the process that will be used to ensure that new purchases comply with the statewide plan, while generally allowing existing equipment to serve out its useful life.

Eventually, new voice and data equipment will be procured and implemented within the state to improve communications and interoperability. To ensure newly-procured equipment is aligned with the statewide plan, the plan should provide a process that ensures all new system procurements are directly aligned with the goals and objectives of the statewide plan.

In situations where a formal process for ensuring future procurements are aligned with the statewide plan has not been defined, the statewide plan should provide a strategy for developing the process, and a timeframe in which it is expected to be complete.

### 5.6 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

The following statewide plan criteria are identified to evaluate statewide plans based on the level in which SOPs are addressed.

6. Standard Operating Procedures	
6.1	Include an assessment of current local, regional, and state operating procedures which support interoperability.

Part of the previously mentioned capabilities assessment is to evaluate the existing SOPs in use within the state. This information should be included in the current state assessment section of the statewide plan. All operating procedures listed should include a description of the procedure, any agencies currently using it, scenarios in which the procedure is employed, and the frequency of its use. Additionally, the statewide plan should identify the means by which practitioners across the state can access the statewide SOPs.

In situations where there are no current SOPs in place, the statewide plan should identify this as part of the current state assessment. In addition, if a capabilities assessment has not been performed, the statewide plan should provide a strategy to perform a capabilities assessment and a timeframe in which it is expected to be complete.

## 6. Standard Operating Procedures

6.2	Define the process by which the state, regions, and localities will develop, manage, maintain, upgrade, and communicate standard operating procedures (SOPs), as appropriate.
-----	---

In addition to the existing SOPs, new and updated SOPs will be required as part of the communications interoperability improvement effort. Multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary groups should identify and incorporate best practices and lessons learned to document the most appropriate and effective procedures for all emergency responders involved. Further, new SOPs should be directly aligned with the procedures in the NIMS.

States should anticipate that most SOPs will be generated and used at the local level and therefore, the statewide plan should provide a process for locally-driven SOPs to receive state-level endorsement. Statewide plans should provide a process that will be used to identify or define new SOPs to facilitate cross-agency and cross-jurisdictional response. It should include a process for identifying and defining the new SOP and criteria for selecting those people. The statewide plan should also include details on how the state will update SOPs as necessary and publicize them to increase availability to the state emergency response community and increase the likelihood that they will be used by practitioners during incident response. In some cases, it may be appropriate to establish a control board responsible for the management of established SOPs, and making the final decisions on changes that need to be made. The control board should be representative of all disciplines and several jurisdictions within the state to ensure all practitioner needs are considered in SOPs.

In situations where a process has not been defined for the development and management of additional SOPs, the statewide plan should provide a strategy for developing the process and a timeframe in which it is expected to be complete.

## 6. Standard Operating Procedures

6.3	Identify the agencies included in the development of the SOPs, and the agencies expected to comply with the SOPs.
-----	---

Included in the assessment of current SOPs should be information on the agencies responsible for the development of the SOP, and the agencies that are expected to use it. This information can be included in the data presented to satisfy statewide plan criteria 6.1 or separately. However, this information should all be presented in the current state assessment section of the statewide plan.

In situations where there are no existing SOPs, the statewide plan should specify that there are no SOPs currently in place.

## 6. Standard Operating Procedures

6.4	Demonstrate how the SOPs are NIMS-compliant in terms of the Incident Command System (ICS) and preparedness.
-----	---

When identifying SOPs currently in place as part of the capabilities assessment, the statewide plan should identify how the existing SOPs comply with NIMS. In some cases, existing SOPs will not be NIMS-compliant. In this situation, the statewide plan should identify the SOPs that are not compliant with NIMS and define a strategy to update the SOPs to be NIMS-compliant.





### 5.7 Training and Exercises

The following statewide plan criteria are identified to evaluate statewide plans based on the level in which training and exercises are addressed.

7. Training and Exercises	
7.1	Define the process by which the state will develop, manage, maintain and upgrade, or coordinate as appropriate, a statewide training and exercises program.

If the state already has a training and exercises program for the entire state, the statewide plan should provide details on the program. If a training and exercises program does not exist, the statewide plan should provide details on the process that will be used to create and manage the program, ensuring that appropriate training and exercises are available to all practitioners across the state. The Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) provides additional information to consider when creating a training and exercises program.<sup>12</sup>

When evaluating local training for compliance with the statewide plan, it is important that training programs cover any and all communication devices a responder would use. The local courses should cover:

- The radios used on a regular basis, and the interoperability capability contained within
- Training should cover any other communication devices that are normally used and the interoperability capability of these devices, i.e., mobile radios, MDTs, etc.
- Training should also be required on other communications equipment that is available for interoperability and require a demonstration of the responders ability to set up the equipment

Statewide plans should include the following information for training and exercises offered as a part of the program:

- Course/Exercise Name
- Purpose of Course/Exercise
- Frequency Offered
- Agencies Included
- Instructors/Coordinators
- For Exercises – Methodology Used

In situations where a process has not been defined for creating and managing a statewide training and exercises program, the statewide plan should provide a strategy for developing the process, and a timeframe in which it is expected to be complete.

7. Training and Exercises	
7.2	Describe the process for offering and requiring training and exercises, as well as any certification that will be needed.

<sup>12</sup> Visit the HSEEP Web site at <https://hseep.dhs.gov/> for more details.



As a part of the state’s training and exercises program, the statewide plan should identify the process that will be used to publicize and offer training to the appropriate members of the emergency response community within the state. Specifically, the statewide plan should identify how training courses and exercises will be marketed to the emergency response community and how those seeking information on training available to them can learn about the training program. Additionally, if the state intends to require training for anyone, the statewide plan should identify required training and specify a process for ensuring all who are required will be trained.

In situations where a process has not been identified for offering training and exercises, the statewide plan should include a strategy that defines a process and a timeframe in which it is expected to be complete.

7. Training and Exercises	
7.3	Explain how the process ensures that training is cross-disciplinary.

When defining the state’s training and exercises program, the statewide plan should include a description of how the training and exercises program is cross-disciplinary. In some scenarios, it may not be appropriate to provide the same training to all disciplines within the state. However, whenever possible, training and exercises require cross-disciplinary communications as part of the exercise.

In situations where a training and exercises program does not exist, this does not apply.

### 5.8 Usage

The following statewide plan criteria are identified to evaluate statewide plans based on the level in which usage is addressed.

8. Usage	
8.1	Describe the plan for ensuring regular usage of the relevant equipment and the SOPs needed to improve interoperability.

The usage element of the Interoperability Continuum focuses on the actual usage of equipment, technology, SOPs, and training and exercises in day-to-day operations to ensure proper usage during a large-scale incident. The statewide plan should provide an explanation of how the state intends to ensure interoperable equipment, SOPs, and training and exercises are implemented in the daily operations of practitioners. These steps should be mandatory for an agency to be in compliance with the statewide plan.

In situations where a plan has not been defined to promote usage of interoperable equipment, SOPs, and training and exercises, the statewide plan should include a strategy to develop one and provide a timeframe in which it is expected to be complete.

### 5.9 Funding

The following statewide plan criteria are identified to evaluate statewide plans based on the funding strategy identified.



9. Funding	
9.1	Identify committed sources of funding, or the process for identifying and securing short- and long-term funding

Statewide planning and communications interoperability projects require a significant amount of time and resources. To ensure efforts continue and maintain momentum, agencies require adequate funding to support the project. Statewide plans are required to identify funding that will support the efforts within the state to further develop their plans, and begin the process of implementing the strategic initiatives identified in the plan. If funding has not been identified to support the communications interoperability program, the statewide plan should identify the gap and provide a process for identifying a short-term funding strategy, including the people responsible for creating the funding strategy.

9. Funding	
9.2	Include a plan for the development of a comprehensive funding strategy. The plan should include a process for identifying ongoing funding sources, anticipated costs, and resources needed for project management and leveraging active projects.

In addition to the information provided to satisfy Statewide Plan criteria 9.1, the statewide plan should also provide a comprehensive funding strategy that includes a business case outlining anticipated costs and benefits of the program, and how the costs will be funded. Furthermore, the funding strategy should identify the resources required to fill the various positions in the organizational chart.

In situations where a detailed funding strategy has not been defined, the statewide plan should provide a process for identifying a comprehensive, long-term funding strategy, including the people responsible for creating the funding strategy.

### 5.10 Implementation

The following statewide plan criteria are identified to evaluate statewide plans based on the implementation strategy defined.

10. Implementation	
10.1	Describe the prioritized action plan with short- and long-term goals for achieving the objectives.

Statewide plans are required to define the key strategic initiatives the emergency response communications community will focus on for both the short and long term. Key initiatives should be prioritized as agreed upon by the governance committee. Each key initiative should be supported by action items and tasks that will begin the process of communications interoperability improvement and accomplish the desired goals and objectives stated in the statewide plan.

Every statewide plan submitted is expected to provide a list of initiatives and supporting action items for the timeframe specified.

10. Implementation	
10.2	Describe the performance measures that will allow policy makers to track the progress and success of initiatives.

It is critical to identify a method to measure success of the communications interoperability projects. This allows successes to be communicated and used to promote the statewide interoperability program. Additionally, the performance measures can be used to identify efforts that do not result in the desired outcomes, so that they can be reviewed and addressed appropriately. Statewide plans should provide criteria that will be used to measure the success of interoperability efforts and implementation of the statewide interoperability plan. Criteria will vary depending on the strategic initiatives identified in the plan. However, during the statewide planning process it is recommended that the planning community have a discussion on how it will be able to measure success. The statewide plan should also provide a schedule for periodic reviews of the initiatives to constantly track performance and progress.

If no performance measures have been identified, the statewide plan should provide a strategy for developing them, and specify a timeframe in which they are expected to be identified.

### 10. Implementation

10.3	Describe the plan for educating policy makers and practitioners on interoperability goals and initiatives.
------	--

Statewide plans should provide a strategy for communicating to and educating emergency responders and policy makers in the state on the interoperability goals and strategic initiatives identified in the statewide plan. A well-defined outreach plan will identify critical officials and emergency response personnel who will need to be kept aware of the statewide interoperability project and its goals and objectives. The plan will also define the method in which this information will be provided to these stakeholders regularly. In addition, the statewide plan should define outreach efforts to market the state’s communications interoperability program and expand the community of program participants.

In situations where a strategy for educating project participants and an outreach plan have not been defined, the statewide plan should provide a plan to define them, and specify a timeframe in which they are expected to be complete.

### 10. Implementation

10.4	Describe the roles and opportunities for involvement of all agencies in the implementation of the statewide plan.
------	---

Statewide plans should define the roles and responsibilities associated with the execution of the implementation plan. Tasks should have a specific role assigned them and each role should have a specific resource to which it is assigned. The implementation strategy for the statewide plan should provide ample opportunity for representatives from across the state and from multiple disciplines to become engaged and participate in implementation. In some cases it may not make sense for all agencies to be involved; however, as part of the communication strategy and outreach plan progress of the project should always be communicated to the entire emergency response community.

In situations where roles and opportunities for involvement have not been fully defined, the statewide plan should provide a strategy for defining them, and a timeframe in which they are expected to be defined.





10. Implementation	
10.5	Establish a plan for identifying, developing, and overseeing operational requirements, SOPs, training, technical solutions, and short- and long-term funding sources.

As the communications interoperability program and projects progress, new operational and technical requirements will be identified and opportunities to update SOPs, training, and exercises will present themselves. The statewide plan should provide a strategy to collect and manage this information to ensure requirements and opportunities for improvements are not lost. Typically, a single person or group of people will be tasked as the responsible party for soliciting and managing suggestions from program participants across the state. In addition, the statewide plan should define the process by which field-level emergency responders can submit feedback to the program, as well as a process to evaluate and address that feedback. States should define a response time for all input and feedback received so as to encourage participants to continually submit their ideas.

In situations where a process has not been defined for managing incoming feedback and input, the statewide plan should identify a strategy to develop the process and a timeframe in which it is expected to be complete.

10. Implementation	
10.6	Identify a POC responsible for implementing the plan.

As previously described, the statewide plan must identify a point of contact responsible for managing the creation and documentation of the statewide plan. In addition, the statewide plan should specify a point of contact responsible for managing the implementation of strategic initiatives and action items. It is recommended that a single point of contact be responsible for managing the plan and the implementation process. While it is not required for the coordinator to serve in this capacity full time, the designation of a full-time position is strongly recommended to ensure the functions of statewide plan coordination are performed and implementation of the plan receives sufficient time and attention.

10. Implementation	
10.7	Describe critical success factors for implementation of the plan.

Similar to identifying a method to measure success of the program, the statewide plan should identify critical success factors for implementation. Critical success factors are defined as milestones and accomplishments that must be achieved to improve communications interoperability in the state. Typically, the critical success factors will be the milestones and accomplishments associated with the top-priority strategic initiatives. Every statewide plan is required to define critical success factors for implementation.



## 6 Statewide Interoperability Plan Outline

To assist with the development of the required statewide strategic plans, SAFECOM and DM developed the following outline as a preferred layout for states to begin their work. Each section of the outline is described in detail, and where appropriate, key considerations and questions to ask are provided to ensure the appropriate amount of detail is provided in the plan.

### 1 Introduction

The Introduction serves as a general introduction to the statewide plan. It should introduce the state and provide a high level description of the factors driving the creation of the statewide plan.

### 2 Background

The Background section should describe the events leading up to the completion of the plan. Provide an overview of what has occurred so far in the planning process and what are some of the major accomplishments the state has realized along the way. Three important questions to address include:

1. Who are the key stakeholders driving the statewide planning initiative?
2. What has been done to give the effort momentum?
3. How will the state benefit from the creation of the statewide plan?

#### 2.1 State Overview

*Summary:*

Each statewide plan should include a section that provides background information on the state, its regions, and geographic and demographic information. Providing this information in the overview helps to establish an understanding of the state’s profile, and sets the context for the plan. The state overview is not specifically focused on interoperability issues, but rather provides an understanding of what the state “looks like” and how it is organized. The state overview should give the reader a good understanding of the state’s makeup and composition.

This information can be presented in paragraph form addressing the major characteristics of the state.

2.1 State Overview	
Questions to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the state’s population?</li> <li>• What is the state’s square mileage?</li> <li>• How many emergency response agencies serve the state population?</li> <li>• What is the state’s typical climate?</li> <li>• Are natural disasters typical in the state? If so, what type?</li> <li>• What is the state’s critical infrastructure?</li> <li>• What and where are the major roadways and waterways in the state?</li> </ul>



2.1 State Overview	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there major geographical features that affect emergency response services, such as mountains, lakes, deserts, or state parks?</li> <li>• Does the state border Canada or Mexico?</li> <li>• Are there recurring large events in the state such as parades, sporting events, or musical events? If so what are they, when and where do they occur, and what is the attendance?</li> <li>• What interoperability initiatives are underway and what accomplishments have been realized in the past?</li> </ul>
Suggested Exhibits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map of the state identifying counties with bordering states and countries</li> <li>• Map of the state with major highways, waterways, and major cities</li> <li>• Map of the state identifying regions</li> <li>• Tables of counties with jurisdictions within the county</li> <li>• Map showing areas covered by UASI or TIC plans</li> <li>• Map showing FCC 700/800 MHz regional planning areas in the state</li> <li>• Table showing any existing statewide or regional channels designated for interoperability use</li> <li>• Table showing any regional groups with planning or operational authority</li> <li>• Table listing all agencies with National Public Safety Planning Advisory Committee (NPSPAC) interoperability repeaters in operation and those with channels programmed into responder radios</li> </ul>
Criteria Addressed	1. Background and Preliminary Steps (1.1)

### 2.1.1 NIMS/Multi-Agency Coordination System (MCS) Incorporation

*Summary:*

This section should describe the use of National Incident Management System (NIMS) Chapter II, Command and Management concepts and principles, including ICS characteristics such as:

- Common terminology
- Modular organization
- Management by objectives
- Incident action planning
- Manageable span of control
- Pre-designated incident facilities
- Comprehensive resource management
- Integrated communications
- Transfer of command
- Unified command



- Personnel and resource accountability

In addition to NIMS, this section should describe the current use of any Multi-agency Coordination Systems (MCS) to coordinate and support emergency incident response and event management, i.e., develop and maintain connectivity capability between local incident command posts (ICPs), local 911 centers, local Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs), and state/territorial EOC. This should also include identification of any standardized or consistent terminology, including the establishment of plain language communications standards across the emergency response sector.

### 2.1.2 Regions/Jurisdictions

*Summary:*

This section should describe how the state agencies are organized. If the state is divided into regions or counties, the statewide plan should identify each region or county and the jurisdictions that are included in it. If regions or counties are not used, provide a list of all the separate jurisdictions in the state. The information in this section can be presented in a simple list of regions/jurisdictions. Keep in mind that the list of regions/jurisdictions will need to account for the entire state. Identify any regional agencies with planning or operational oversight or service delivery.

2.1.2 Regions/Jurisdictions	
Questions to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the state geographically organized? Cities, towns, counties, regions, other?</li> <li>• What are the regions, counties, and/or jurisdictions that together comprise the entire state?</li> <li>• What are the emergency response agencies included in each region, county, or jurisdiction?</li> </ul>
Criteria Addressed	1. Background and Preliminary Steps (1.1)

### 2.1.3 UASI Areas/TIC Plans

*Summary:*

This section should identify any state UASI regions or designated metropolitan areas within the state that currently have a TIC Plan. The information provided in this section should include the name of the UASI region or designated metropolitan area, the jurisdictions and agencies included in the UASI region or designated metropolitan area, the TIC Plan document title, the TIC Plan exercise completion date, and a point of contact name and e-mail address for the TIC Plan document.

2.1.3 UASI Areas/TIC Plans	
Questions to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there UASI regions included within the state?</li> <li>• Are there designated metropolitan areas within the state?</li> <li>• What are the jurisdictions and agencies included in each UASI region or designated metropolitan area?</li> <li>• Does a TIC Plan exist for the UASI region or designated metropolitan area and if so what is it called and who manages the document?</li> <li>• Has the UASI region or designated metropolitan area performed a TIC exercise and if so, when?</li> <li>• If the UASI region or designated metropolitan area has performed a TIC exercise, are the results documented and how may they be accessed?</li> </ul>
Criteria Addressed	1. Background and Preliminary Steps (1.6)

## 2.2 Participating Agencies and Points of Contact

### Summary:

This section should identify any agencies that actively participated in the development of the statewide communications interoperability plan. Active participation means the agency was directly involved in identifying and/or prioritizing the statewide plan strategic initiatives either during a strategic planning session or in some other form. In addition to the state and local emergency response agencies involved, this will include local government agencies, professional associations with ties to emergency response, and any other groups or professionals that comprised the statewide strategic planning group or participated in any up front focus group sessions. For each agency, provide a point of contact and POC e-mail and phone number. This section should also explain how this group of agencies represents the entire practitioner community across the state.

2.2 Participating Agencies and Points of Contact	
Questions to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the emergency service groups that actively participated in the statewide planning process, including professional, volunteer, and civilian entities?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What were the key elements of their input?</li> <li>2. Why was their input important?</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Were any interviews conducted to gather information for the statewide plan? If so, what agencies were interviewed?</li> <li>• Were any regional focus group sessions held to gather data for the statewide plan? If so, what agencies were represented at the sessions?</li> <li>• Was a group strategic planning session held? If so, what agencies were represented at the session?</li> </ul>



### 2.2 Participating Agencies and Points of Contact

Criteria Addressed	1. Background and Preliminary Steps (1.2)
--------------------	---

### 2.3 Statewide Plan Point of Contact

*Summary:*

The criteria for the statewide plan require that each state identify a dedicated point of contact that will act as the interoperability coordinator. This person may not be in charge of the entire state planning process, but should be responsible for managing the development and/or maintenance of the statewide plan.

This section should include the point of contact name and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number). It is important to note that DHS expects that each state will have a full-time interoperability coordinator. The coordinator should have the authority to perform his or her duties independent of any particular response entity or single agency. A funding source should be identified or developed to continue this position in the future.

### 2.3 Participating Agencies and Points of Contact

Questions to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who is responsible for the development and management of the statewide plan?</li> <li>Is the point of contact able to assume the role of full-time interoperability coordinator?</li> </ul>
Criteria Addressed	1. Background and Preliminary Steps (1.3)

### 2.4 Scope and Timeframe

*Summary:*

The statewide interoperability strategic plan should have a specific scope and timeframe. The scope should outline the boundaries of the strategy by clearly defining specific elements/initiatives that are included in the strategy as well as elements/initiatives that are not addressed. For example, it may be determined that this version of your statewide plan will focus specifically on the development of a governance structure and standard operating procedures and that technology and training are outside the scope of the plan. A rationale should be provided for key elements that are not addressed. This section should also include a high-level timeframe for completing milestone initiatives and any key assumptions relative to the scope or timeframe. Future grant applications may require that the plan is completed and operable.

### 2.4 Scope and Timeframe

Questions to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the scope of the statewide plan?</li> <li>What are the critical components of interoperability that the statewide plan will</li> </ul>
-----------------------	---



2.4 Scope and Timeframe	
	<p>focus on?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is considered to be out of scope and why?</li> <li>• What timeframes for strategic initiatives have been used in developing the statewide plan?</li> <li>• What is a reasonable time period in which the state can accomplish the strategic initiatives identified in the statewide plan?</li> </ul>
Criteria Addressed	1. Background and Preliminary Steps (1.7)

### 3 Methodology

*Summary:*

The methodology section should present the process used to develop the statewide plan. If a collaborative methodology was used, it should identify the participants involved and how their involvement was solicited. Further, the method used to collaborate across groups and participants to ensure their input was provided throughout the process should be explained as well. If TIC Plans were incorporated into the statewide plan, it should be described how you went about incorporating them. Since the statewide plans are required to be updated as progress is made, it should provide a summary of how to sustain participant involvement after the initial plan is completed.

SAFECOM and DM recommend that each state leverage the SCIP methodology to develop their statewide plans. The SCIP methodology describes a step-by-step process to develop a locally-driven statewide strategic plan to enhance communications interoperability. This methodology employs a collaborative, end-user-driven phased approach that includes establishing key relationships, project planning and identifying roles and responsibilities, and other key activities. It is critical that local and regional governments and agencies play an active role in developing the statewide plan. Active participation by local officials will help ensure that all relevant points of view and requirements are considered and that those impacted are aligned and in agreement on the strategy.

3. Methodology	
Questions to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was a collaborative methodology used to develop the statewide plan that involved both state and local agency representatives?</li> <li>• What process or approach was used to gather input for the statewide plan?</li> <li>• What process was used to align TIC Plans with the overall statewide plan?</li> <li>• How will participants stay involved moving forward?</li> </ul>
Criteria Addressed	3. Methodology (3.1, 3.2, 3.3)

## 4 Current Statewide Assessment

### Summary:

Understanding the current communications and interoperability environment at the statewide level is essential to knowing what change is really needed and how important that change is. This section should articulate, at a high level:

- Currently, how interoperable are agencies and jurisdictions in the state?
- What state interoperability initiatives are working well?
- What is not working well?

Having a clear picture of key successes and challenges will help to better inform those responsible for the development of statewide communications and interoperability strategic initiatives.

Conducting interviews is an effective and efficient way to capture important data from the emergency response communications community, first responders (i.e., law enforcement, fire, and EMS), and other key elected and appointed officials. It is also an effective way to build a complete and accurate picture of the current communications and interoperability environment. Onsite interviews can be costly and time consuming; however they are an excellent way to collect information. Interviews can be conducted using a variety of formats including:

- 1) Executive interviews where input can be specific to issues that may be tangible to other organizational areas
- 2) Functional interviews that can provide a day-to-day perspective and a deeper understanding of specific area issues
- 3) Surveys that can be used to access a wider range of participants and that are easy to customize and scale, but have a very low return rate
- 4) Facilitated workshops that include large and small groups at all levels.

4. Current State Assessment	
Questions to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How interoperable are agencies and jurisdictions?</li> <li>• What accomplishments have been made in communications interoperability?</li> <li>• What are the state's interoperability challenges?</li> <li>• What types of interoperability initiatives are currently underway?</li> <li>• Have any jurisdictions organized themselves into regions?</li> <li>• Is there cross-discipline coordination currently occurring, or is it in the planning process?</li> <li>• What is the status of 700 MHz regional planning in the state?</li> <li>• What is the status of 800 MHz rebanding?</li> <li>• What is the status of narrowbanding of frequencies below 512 MHz?</li> </ul>
Criteria Addressed	1. Background and Preliminary Steps (1.4)

## 4.1 Governance Structure

### Summary:

Governance can be defined as a set of organizational regulations and standards that provide strategic direction and ensure objectives are achieved, risks are managed, and resources are used responsibly. Since the statewide plan will affect multiple levels of government and varied emergency response organizations, it should be developed using a collaborative, bottom-up approach. To organize and manage this collaborative process, governance structures must be established.

Establishing a strong governance structure is clearly one of the most critical and challenging aspects to a successful multi-jurisdictional or multi-disciplinary strategic planning effort. Certain norms and principles must be in place to transform a new committee into a highly productive team with common goals. There must be clarity of purpose, openness, leadership, established roles and responsibilities, accessibility and a strong foundation for making decisions. There should be a formal process by which elected and appointed officials develop and formally adopt a charter, and funding should be provided to cover the expenses of those persons involved in developing and maintaining the governance structure.

The Homeland Security document entitled, *Creating a Charter for a Multi-Agency Communications Interoperability Committee: Template and Questions to Consider*<sup>13</sup> is a tool that can assist the stakeholder community in defining a charter for a new governance structure. It will guide the group through defining key elements of the charter.

4.1 Governance Structure	
Questions to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is a formal interoperability governance structure currently in place?</li> <li>• If so, does a charter exist for the group?</li> <li>• What are the goals and objectives for the governance structure?</li> <li>• Who currently serves on the governing body?</li> <li>• What is the group's executive or legislative authority?</li> <li>• Has the group defined operating principles and decision making procedures?</li> <li>• Does the group have a regular meeting schedule?</li> </ul>
Criteria Addressed	4. Governance (4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6)

## 4.2 Technology

### Summary:

Achieving interoperability is a complex process. Technology is just one piece of the puzzle. It has value only when it supports the needs of the emergency responders on the ground. However,

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/library/interoperabilitybasics/>

technology does not stand alone. It requires that all users be trained in its use and periodically tested.

The communications equipment assessment is an evaluation of all of the communications systems and equipment in place in the state or local region. This might include radio systems, backbone and infrastructure systems, data and incident management systems, operational environment, and various concerns and challenges. The technical assessment should consider the entire infrastructure of the state, including regional systems operating within the state. In addition to the actual hardware and software in place, the assessment should also include an evaluation of the spectrum being used, licenses, existing channel plans, and what channels are used for what purpose. The final plan must identify interoperable channels along with their designations. First responders must be aware of the additional interoperable channels that are in the radios they use daily and in their geographic area.

At a minimum, the technical assessment should provide enough data to allow a state or local region to identify existing interoperability channels and proceed with planning and implementation of initiatives that improve interoperability.

It is recommended that the communications equipment assessment be conducted by technical end user or contractor resources with expertise in private wireless systems or a technical background with state or regional knowledge of systems and equipment. The assessment should list of any local interoperability plans, including shared systems that provide interoperability.

4.2 Technology	
Questions to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What technology and equipment is used in the state today?</li> <li>• Are there any shared systems? If so, what type of systems and who is sharing them?</li> <li>• What, if any, shared infrastructure exists within the state?</li> <li>• What is the coverage area of systems operating in the state?</li> <li>• Who is responsible for the maintenance and service of the systems?</li> <li>• What frequencies are being used, and which is the most used?</li> <li>• Are there any areas without coverage?</li> <li>• What is the proportional distribution of frequency bands usage? How does it vary geographically and by responder discipline?</li> <li>• Would emergency response operations become more efficient or effective through the introduction of advanced technology?</li> </ul>
Criteria Addressed	5. Technology (5.1, 5.2, 5.2.1, 5.2.2)





### 4.3 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

*Summary:*

SOPs are a set of instructions or steps practitioners follow to complete a job safely, with no adverse impact on the environment and meeting regulatory compliance standards, in a way that maximizes operational and production requirements. They are formal written guidelines or instructions for incident response. SOPs typically have both operational and technical components and enable emergency responders to act in a coordinated fashion across disciplines in the event of an emergency. In addition, SOPs help to:

- Reduce the need to provide instructions by radio;
- Ensure positions and duties are addressed;
- Standardize operations among companies and departments;
- Reduce confusion;
- Designate responsibility for establishment of command and safety;
- Improve accountability of personnel;
- Keep unassigned units uncommitted and ready for future deployment or return to service.

SOPs should comply with the standards established in the National Incident Management System (NIMS), particularly components specific to communications. The Communications Unit falls under the Logistics Section in the ICS structure. SOPs should include the requirements and responsibilities of the Communications Unit Leader (COML) position, establishing an Incident Communications Center (ICC), and the Incident Communications Center Manager (INCM) position.

The SOPs should provide for de-confliction of interoperability resource use (channels or gateways) between multiple incidents in the same geographic region, through the use of a Communications Coordinator (COMC) position as appropriate.

SOPs should also include the use of ICS forms necessary for communications such as the Incident Radio Communications Plan (ICS205), Radio Requirements Worksheet (ICS216), and Radio Frequency Assignments Worksheet (ICS217).<sup>14</sup> Incident dispatchers are also frequently tasked with completing other ICS forms such as the Check-in List (ICS211), Demobilization Check-out (ICS221), and T-cards to track the status of resources.

Reference the NIMS Incident Command System (ICS) information for guidance on developing SOPs.<sup>15</sup>

Documentation of existing SOPs and creation of new SOPs is an essential part of the overall statewide plan. The SAFECOM and DM programs created a document entitled, "Writing Guide for Standard Operating Procedures". This tool provides detailed guidance on development SOPs.<sup>16</sup>

When documenting existing SOPs, you should provide the following information for each:

- SOP Name
- Purpose

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.nimsonline.com/directory.html>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/index.shtm>

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/library/interoperabilitybasics/1289\\_writingguide.htm](http://www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/library/interoperabilitybasics/1289_writingguide.htm)



- Scope
- Agencies and jurisdictions covered by SOP
- SOP training provided

**4.3 Standard Operating Procedures**

Questions to Consider

- What SOPs have already been developed that address interoperable communications in the state? SOPs may be at the local, regional, or state level.
- Have the SOPs been documented? If so, how are the documented SOPs made accessible to the emergency response community?
- What disciplines and jurisdictions are covered by existing SOPs?
- Who developed the existing SOPs and how long have they been in use?
- How is information regarding the existing SOPs delivered and what type of training is available to support implementation of the SOPs?
- Do existing SOP documents contain an approved binding authority on the components they cover?
- Are there mutual aid agreements, plans, and other MOUs/MOAs that address interoperable communications within the state?
- Were existing SOPs developed to ensure comprehensive representation from all disciplines, jurisdictions, and levels of government?
- How are SOPs tracked and enforced to ensure the procedures are being used in the field?
- What is the current process to ensure existing SOPs are updated or reviewed regularly or when significant changes occur?
- Are there items in existing SOPs that conflict or do not comply with current standards or statewide initiatives and that must be addressed?
- Do existing SOPs incorporate NIMS procedures?
- Is ICS training provided to the necessary personnel associated with communications?
- Do procedures contain provisions for the credentialing of communications personnel?
- Has the state established the necessary curriculum to ensure that a sufficient number of personnel throughout the state are qualified to serve as Communications Unit Leaders?
- Do SOPs include current listings of qualified personnel to staff Communications Unit functions? Is the listing in an appendix or annex of the document to permit updating without reissuing the entire document?<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> An example format for listing qualified Communications Unit personnel includes: name, agency, discipline, qualifications held, phone (24/7) and email.



4.3 Standard Operating Procedures	
Criteria Addressed	6. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) (6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4)

### 4.4 Training and Exercises Plan

*Summary:*

It is important to explain how training and exercises are being used to improve interoperability and compatibility without the use of new technology and equipment. The importance of training and exercises should be discussed with respect to preparing the emergency response community and making the equipment and procedures a part of how it does its job.

Information on the current training and exercises offered to the emergency response community should be included in the statewide plan.<sup>18</sup> This should include any form of training that is provided to the emergency response community not only focused on promoting interoperability but also focused on equipment training, operating procedure training, common language training, etc. Any regularly scheduled exercises held specifically to evaluate interoperable communications capabilities should be listed in this section as well. Exercises should test different levels of communications and display the ability to communicate among multiple agencies, multiple disciplines, and multiple jurisdictions. If the interoperable communications evaluation component is embedded as part of a larger-scale exercise, the statewide plan should identify the exercise and explain how the evaluations are performed and results distributed.

In addition to providing information regarding the existing training and exercises programs and courses that are available, this section should also discuss how the programs and courses promote interoperability across agencies and jurisdictions within the state. Further, the statewide plan should address whether or not the existing training and exercise satisfies the needs of the emergency practitioner community or if additional training and exercises is required to improve interoperability.

4.4 Training & Exercises Plan	
Questions to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the state have an existing formal training and exercises program?</li> <li>• What current training and exercises exist for the emergency response community and what methodology is used to deliver the training and exercises? (e.g., classroom training, on the job training, train the trainer programs, table top exercises, simulation exercises, etc.)</li> <li>• How often are the training courses and exercises delivered?</li> </ul>

<sup>18</sup> Training and exercises resource links: FEMA <http://training.fema.gov/>, the DHS Office of Grants and Training (G&T) <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/training.htm>, Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program <https://hseep.dhs.gov/>



4.4 Training & Exercises Plan	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is training and exercises information disseminated to the necessary audience?</li> <li>• Does the training and exercises integrate local, tribal, state, and Federal agencies?</li> <li>• Who delivers the training and exercise and where is it delivered?</li> <li>• Has a needs study been completed to determine what type of communications interoperability training is required for each discipline?</li> <li>• Has a minimum training standard been developed for all first responders including field units, telecommunicators and technicians? (<i>See example matrix in appendix</i>).</li> <li>• Is communication unit leader training offered? If so, does it address the core competencies identified by DHS?<sup>19</sup></li> <li>• How are training certifications tracked?</li> <li>• Are incentives offered to ensure compliance with training requirements? If so, what are they?</li> <li>• Do all exercises include interoperable communications objectives?</li> <li>• What process exists for evaluation exercise effectiveness and for providing feedback to participants regarding needed improvements?</li> </ul>
Criteria Addressed	7. Training and Exercises (7.1, 7.2, 7.3)

### 4.5 Usage

*Summary:*

Reference the usage lane of the Interoperability Continuum when creating this section. The purpose of this section is to accurately describe how often interoperable communications technologies and operating procedures are used by practitioners in the field. Consider the importance of ensuring that the technology, SOPs, governance, and training and exercises are used to promote and enhance interoperability.

This section should describe any steps that have been taken or policies put in place to encourage emergency responders to adopt and utilize interoperable technologies, SOPs, training, and exercises.

<sup>19</sup> [http://mmrs.fema.gov/PublicDocs/2006-03-22\\_COML\\_core\\_Compencies.pdf](http://mmrs.fema.gov/PublicDocs/2006-03-22_COML_core_Compencies.pdf)

Formal or informal agreements must be in place to make cross-jurisdictional activities legal and eligible for funding reimbursement as well as to protect first responders from possible litigation should an incident occur. Samples of MOU agreements or other formal documents should be available to support the plan. Many states have EOCs that provide support to locals and these systems should be included in the usage area. Describe how to activate them and what number to use to enable responders to be available to support other jurisdictions.

4.5 Usage	
Questions to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is interoperability promoted daily at the local, regional, tribal, and state level?</li> <li>• How is interoperability used for incidents and events at the local, regional, tribal, and state levels? How often does this occur?</li> <li>• How often are interoperable communications capabilities used for localized emergency incidents? Identify procedures for escalation and for obtaining outside support assistance.</li> <li>• How often are interoperable communications capabilities used for regional incident management? Identify procedures for escalation and for obtaining outside support assistance.</li> <li>• Are there mutual aid agreements in place for specific occasions? (e.g., major events, sporting events, etc.). If so, what agencies and jurisdictions are included in those mutual aid agreements?</li> <li>• How is interoperability used for disasters or other significant events requiring support from regional, state, or national assets?</li> </ul>
Criteria Addressed	8. Usage (8.1)

## 5 Strategy

### 5.1 Interoperability Vision

*Summary:*

This section should clearly articulate the statewide vision or the future state of communications interoperability. The vision statement should differentiate how the environment will be different/better tomorrow than it is today and should include a specific time period for accomplishment.

SAFECOM defines interoperability as the ability of emergency response agencies to communicate with one another effectively and efficiently during incident response: to exchange voice and/or data with one another on demand, in real time, when needed, and as authorized.





The foundation for interoperability, however, is basic communications within emergency response agencies, or more simply, “operability.” An agency’s first priority must be to provide emergency responders with functioning, mission-critical communications systems. As jurisdictions build new systems or upgrade existing ones, another priority is the provision of reliable and interoperable communications across disciplines, jurisdictions, and levels of government.

The most distinguishing feature of the vision statement is that it is values-based. It should define the envisioned work environment for local elected and appointed leaders along with first responders. The vision integrates the emergency response community’s core values into the work statement, and clearly presents to the rest of the world the future state of communications and interoperability.

A compelling vision statement should include the following characteristics:

- Provides the local officials and the responder community with a clear, inspiring picture of what communications and interoperability looks like when performed in its desired state.
- Describes how the delivery of critical services is enhanced and the benefits to the citizens.
- Demonstrates to users what interoperability looks like when the ideal relationships statewide are realized.
- Describes a state of emergency services that are being delivered in the way that first responders believe they should be.

5.1 Interoperability Vision	
Questions to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the state’s most critical issues facing the emergency response community with regards to communications interoperability? Be sure to consider each critical component of the Interoperability Continuum when identifying critical issues.</li> <li>• Does the vision statement address the state’s most critical communications interoperability issues?</li> <li>• Does the vision statement provide the stakeholders with a clear, inspiring picture of what communications and interoperability look like when multiple agencies respond well to emergencies together?</li> <li>• Does the vision statement provide stakeholders with a clear picture of the ideal relationship with the state’s citizens?</li> <li>• Does the vision statement clearly portray the delivery of emergency services in the way that stakeholders believe they should be?</li> <li>• What are the current critical issues with regards to communications interoperability facing the state and emergency responders?</li> <li>• Does the vision statement address the current critical issues with regards to communications interoperability in the state?</li> </ul>
Criteria Addressed	1. Background and Preliminary Steps (1.5)



5.1 Interoperability Vision	
	2. Strategy (2.1)

### 5.2 Mission

Summary:

This section should clearly articulate the emergency response community’s mission to achieve effective communications and interoperability at the statewide level. The mission should state how the state, as a whole, intends to operate and where its focus will be to ultimately achieve the vision statement. The mission should also specify, at a high level, what the state will do to deliver the vision.

5.2 Mission	
Questions to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the mission statement clearly specify what the state will do to support and deliver the vision in the timeframe specified?</li> <li>• Does the mission statement address the state’s critical communications interoperability issues?</li> <li>• Does the mission statement precisely inform the emergency response community about what the group’s intended work is?</li> <li>• Does the mission statement tell the emergency response community exactly whom it is serving?</li> <li>• Does the mission statement clarify the exact nature of the services to be provided?</li> <li>• Does the mission statement clarify key distinctions about how the group will go about providing the service?</li> </ul>
Criteria Addressed	2. Strategy (2.1)

### 5.3 Goals and Objectives

Summary:

Setting statewide interoperability goals and objectives builds on the previous steps of defining the vision and mission. Goals should specify the accomplishments to be achieved if the vision is to become real. Typically, goals and objectives are relatively near term with respect to the vision statement. For example, if the vision statement specifies 30 years in the future as the timeframe by which the vision will be realized, then the goals and objectives should specify what will be done over the next 1-2 years to support that vision. Target objectives are clearer statements of the activities required to achieve the goals, starting from the current state. Keep in mind that goals are intangible, while objectives are tangible.



5.3 Goals and Objectives	
Questions to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the specific accomplishments the state will achieve to improve communications interoperability?</li> <li>• Do the goals and objectives directly support both the vision and the mission statement?</li> <li>• Are the goals and objectives achievable in the timeframe specified?</li> <li>• Have the lanes of the interoperability continuum been considered when identifying the goals and objectives to ensure all of the critical components of interoperability have been addressed?</li> </ul>
Criteria Addressed	2. Strategy (2.1)

### 5.4 Strategic Initiatives

Summary:

Strategic initiatives are the set of activities that must be accomplished to achieve the vision. A strategic initiative should be actionable, measurable, and achievable within the agreed upon timeframe. Explain how the state will coordinate with adjoining state(s) and any formal or informal agreements made with them.

As strategic initiatives are developed, it is important to keep all five elements of the Interoperability Continuum in mind to ensure each initiative is completely and effectively addressed. Some recommended categories for the strategic initiatives include: geographic coordination, data and voice interoperability, communication back-up and redundancy, system planning, migration planning, and procurement.

In addition to the critical components of the Interoperability Continuum, reference the statewide plan criteria for additional considerations. The statewide plan criteria specify the criteria addressed by an ideal statewide plan. The more criteria addressed in a statewide plan, the more comprehensive and interoperability focused it is.

5.4 Strategic Initiatives	
Questions to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the top priority strategic initiatives the state will be focused on over the timeframe specified in the statewide plan?</li> <li>• What are the specific initiatives that the state will undertake in support of the vision, mission statement, and goals and objectives?</li> <li>• Have all critical components of the Interoperability Continuum been considered when identifying the strategic initiatives?</li> <li>• Have the statewide plan criteria listed below been addressed?</li> </ul>

5.4 Strategic Initiatives	
Criteria Addressed	2. Strategy (2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6) 3. Methodology (3.3) 5. Technology (5.2, 5.2.1, 5.2.2) 7. Training and Exercises (7.1, 7.2, 7.3) 8. Usage (8.1)

### **5.5 National Incident Management System (NIMS) Compliance**

*Summary:*

This section should describe how the statewide plan promotes and complies with NIMS procedures, specifically ICS. Any components of the plan that were specifically included to address NIMS considerations or indirectly promote and support NIMS should be recognized here. Typically, some form of NIMS training would be incorporated into the training and exercises plan. Further, NIMS should be integrated into the SOP development process.

5.5 National Incident Management Response System (NIMS) Compliance	
Questions to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the statewide plan promote and support NIMS? If so, how?</li> <li>• What is the current level of NIMS compliance at all levels within the state?</li> <li>• What are the NIMS requirements for the local jurisdiction?</li> <li>• What support and leadership will the state provide to tribal and local entities?</li> </ul>
Criteria Addressed	2. Strategy (2.5)

### **5.6 Review and Update Process**

*Summary:*

In most cases, a variety of stakeholders will participate in the development of the statewide plan. As the current environment assessment and strategic initiatives evolve, it is important to have a process in place to manage the changes and updates that occur along the way. Developing and documenting a collaborative process for reviewing and updating the statewide plan will help ensure transparency in the update process and ensure that participants are aware of and agree with any updates.

This section should describe the process the state will use to periodically review and update the statewide plan. It is preferable that plans are reviewed and updated with local and regional level input.

5.6 Review and Update Process	
Questions to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What process will be used to continually review and update the statewide plan?</li> <li>• Who is responsible for the review and update process?</li> <li>• What is the review cycle schedule?</li> <li>• How will local and regional representatives be involved in the review cycle?</li> <li>• What approvals will be required to update the document to ensure changes are agreed upon by all stakeholders?</li> <li>• How will the statewide plan and any updates to it be communicated to the emergency response community?</li> </ul>
Criteria Addressed	2. Strategy (2.7)

## 6 Implementation

### Summary:

The implementation strategy for the statewide plan should address the who, what, when, where, and how for executing the strategic initiatives. These instructions should articulate, in a usable level of detail, short- and long-term goals for implementation, key roles and responsibilities, performance measures, critical success factors, plans for educating policy makers and practitioners, and plans for overseeing operational requirements, SOPs, training, funding, and technical solutions.

Important questions include:

- Who is going to be the statewide coordinator, and what are the job tasks and expectations of the community involved in the planning and implementation of the plan? Who is going to pay for this office and what level of government will be providing support and funding to the coordinator (and funding)? Who is going to be on the statewide planning committee and how are they selected and replaced?
- What is the timeline and expectation of the planning group for developing and implementing a plan?
- Where will the meetings, training, and assessments occur (e.g., mid-state or rotated throughout the state)?
- When do activities begin? When is interoperability expected statewide? When will the plan be complete and trained?
- How will statewide interoperability be achieved?





6. Implementation	
Questions to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who is responsible for implementation of the statewide plan?</li> <li>• What is the implementation plan?</li> <li>• Are short- and long-term goals clearly articulated?</li> <li>• Has someone been assigned responsibility for each of the strategic initiatives identified in the statewide plan? If so, have they been made aware they are responsible for that initiative?</li> <li>• Are there roles and responsibilities associated with both the short- and long-term goals?</li> <li>• What are the critical success factors and performance measures for the statewide plan and who will monitor them?</li> <li>• How will communications about the statewide plan and its implementation be distributed to the state’s emergency response community?</li> <li>• How will local level practitioners be involved in the implementation process?</li> </ul>
Criteria Addressed	<p>3. Methodology (3.4)</p> <p>10. Implementation (10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 10.5, 10.6, 10.7)</p>

## 7 Funding

### Summary:

Many local agencies will not be able to participate in planning and execution of the plan without funding. Many are short of staff and do not have a dedicated communications person who understands enough about technology to explain it to the elected and appointed officials needed to assist in providing funding.

Federal or state resources involved in the statewide effort, including all levels and disciplines, will provide the needed support for smaller local and volunteer agencies. The funding must cover planning, training, equipment, and support to be useful in overcoming interoperability challenges. The statewide plan should explain how these resources would be used inclusively for the whole emergency response communications community. It should identify who will provide funding, a plan to secure funding, and how to sustain the funding to support the statewide plan and its mission and goals.



7. Funding	
Questions to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has funding been identified and/or allocated to support implementation activities and the strategic initiatives?</li> <li>• Is short-term funding through a different source than the projected long-term funding?</li> <li>• Are planned costs outlined?</li> <li>• How are funding sources identified?</li> <li>• Have any grant applications been submitted?</li> <li>• Is funding identified for communications equipment purchases and continued maintenance, upgrades, and operations?</li> <li>• Has consideration been given to providing funds and reimbursements during emergency situations?</li> <li>• What is the source of funding for the statewide coordinator for both now and in the future?</li> <li>• How will travel expenses for the committee be handled?</li> <li>• Is there a continuing funding process to cover expenses for training and evaluation?</li> </ul>
Criteria Addressed	9. Funding (9.1, 9.2)

## 8 Close

This section of the statewide plan should summarize the entire plan and address any outstanding issues that may exist. Contact information may be re-iterated here as well as the timeframe for periodic reviews and updates.



## Appendix A: Statewide Plan Criteria

The following is a complete list of the state plan criteria as documented in the FY 2007 SAFECOM Grant Guidance<sup>20</sup> document.

1. Background and Preliminary Steps	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1.1. Provide an overview and background information on the state and its regions. Include geographic and demographic information.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1.2. List all agencies and organizations that participated in developing the plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1.3. Identify the point of contact. DHS expects that each state will have a full-time interoperability coordinator. The coordinator should not represent or be affiliated with any one particular agency and should not have to balance the coordinator duties with other responsibilities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1.4. Describe the communications and interoperability environment of the current emergency response effort.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1.5. Include a problem definition and possible solutions that address the challenges identified in achieving interoperability within the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1.6. Identify any Tactical Interoperability Communications Plans (TICPs) in the state.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1.7. Set the scope and timeframe of the plan.
2. Strategy	
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.1. Describe the strategic vision, goals, and objectives for improving emergency response interagency wireless communications statewide, including how they connect with existing plans within the state.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.2. Provide a strategic plan for coordination with neighboring states. If applicable, include a plan for coordination with neighboring countries.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.3. Provide a strategic plan for addressing data interoperability in addition to voice interoperability.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.4. Describe a strategy for addressing catastrophic loss of communication assets by developing redundancies in the communications interoperability plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.5. Describe how the plan is, or will become, compliant with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the National Response Plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.6. Describe a strategy for addressing communications interoperability with the safety and security elements of the major transit systems, intercity bus service providers, ports, and passenger rail operations within the state.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.7. Describe the process for periodic review and revision of the state plan.
3. Methodology	
<input type="checkbox"/>	3.1. Describe the method by which multi-jurisdictional, multi-disciplinary input was provided from all regions of the state. For an example of a methodology that ensures input from all regions, see the Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan, or SCIP, methodology developed by SAFECOM.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3.2. Define the process for continuing to have local input and for building local support of the plan.

<sup>20</sup> The entire FY 2007 SAFECOM Grant Guidance document can be downloaded at <http://www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/grant/default.htm>.



<input type="checkbox"/>	3.3. Describe how the TICPs were incorporated into the statewide plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3.4. Describe the strategy for implementing all components of the statewide plan.
<b>4. Governance</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.1. Identify the executive or legislative authority for the governing body of the interoperability effort.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.2. Provide an overview of the governance structure that will oversee development and implementation of the plan. Illustrate how it is representative of all of the relevant emergency response disciplines and regions in the state.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.3. Provide the charter for the governing body, and use the charter to state the principles, roles, responsibilities, and processes.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.4. Identify the members of the governing body and any of its committees.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.5. Provide a meeting schedule for the governing body.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.6. Describe multi-jurisdictional, multi-disciplinary agreements needed for decision making and for sharing resources.
<b>5. Technology</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	5.1. Include a statewide capabilities assessment (or a plan for one) which includes, critical communications equipment and related interoperability issues. At a minimum this should include types of radio systems, data and incident management systems, the manufacturer, and frequency assignments for each major emergency responder organization within the state. Ultimately more detailed information will be required to complete the documentation of a migration strategy. States may use the Communications Asset Survey and Mapping (CASM) tool to conduct this assessment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	5.2. Describe plans for continuing support of legacy systems, and developing interfaces among disparate systems, while migrating to newer technologies.
<input type="checkbox"/>	5.2.1. Describe the migration plan for moving from existing technologies to newly procured technologies.
<input type="checkbox"/>	5.2.2. Describe the process that will be used to ensure that new purchases comply with the statewide plan, while generally allowing existing equipment to serve out its useful life.
<b>6. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	6.1. Include an assessment of current local, regional, and state operating procedures which support interoperability.
<input type="checkbox"/>	6.2. Define the process by which the state, regions, and localities will develop, manage, maintain, upgrade, and communicate standard operating procedures (SOPs), as appropriate.
<input type="checkbox"/>	6.3. Identify the agencies included in the development of the SOPs, and the agencies expected to comply with the SOPs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	6.4. Demonstrate how the SOPs are NIMS-compliant in terms of the Incident Command System (ICS) and preparedness.
<b>7. Training and Exercises</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	7.1. Define the process by which the state will develop, manage, maintain, and upgrade, or coordinate as appropriate, a statewide training and exercise program.
<input type="checkbox"/>	7.2. Describe the process for offering and requiring training and exercises, as well as any certification that will be needed.



<input type="checkbox"/>	7.3. Explain how the process ensures that training is cross-disciplinary.
<b>8. Usage</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	8.1. Describe the plan for ensuring regular usage of the relevant equipment and the SOPs needed to improve interoperability.
<b>9. Funding</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	9.1. Identify committed sources of funding, or the process for identifying and securing short- and long-term funding.
<input type="checkbox"/>	9.2. Include a plan for the development of a comprehensive funding strategy. The plan should include a process for identifying ongoing funding sources, anticipated costs, and resources needed for project management and leveraging active projects.
<b>10. Implementation</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	10.1. Describe the prioritized action plan with short- and long-term goals for achieving the objectives.
<input type="checkbox"/>	10.2. Describe the performance measures that will allow policy makers to track the progress and success of initiatives.
<input type="checkbox"/>	10.3. Describe the plan for educating policy makers and practitioners on interoperability goals and initiatives.
<input type="checkbox"/>	10.4. Describe the roles and opportunities for involvement of all agencies in the implementation of the statewide plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	10.5. Establish a plan for identifying, developing, and overseeing operational requirements, SOPs, training, technical solutions, and short- and long-term funding sources.
<input type="checkbox"/>	10.6. Identify a POC responsible for implementing the plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	10.7. Describe critical success factors for implementation of the plan.



## Appendix B: Interoperability Planning Activity Timeline

The information outlined in this appendix details recommended key action items that correspond to the statewide planning criteria. The time periods associated with each phase are recommendations only. In some cases, more time for any individual phase may be required. Where appropriate, a list of related tools and guidance is provided for each phase of the process. SAFECOM and DM recommend using the SCIP Methodology to enhance this process and involve local and regional emergency response practitioners.

Phase – (Timeframe)	Key Action Items	Statewide Plan Criteria	Related SAFECOM Tools and Guidance
<b>Phase I:</b> <i>Month 1</i>	<p><b>Establish Governance Structure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify organizational design of governance structure with roles and responsibilities (e.g., Executive Committee, Steering Committee, Working Groups, etc.)</li> <li>Begin efforts to establish executive or legislative authority of the governing body and communicate/publicize the authority throughout the state</li> <li>Identify state and local representatives to be included in the governance structure (i.e., staff to fill positions on the organization chart)</li> <li>Develop a charter (i.e., committee rules, shared goals and objectives) through a collaborative process with maximum membership from the governing bodies</li> <li>Establish necessary inter-agency/cross jurisdictional agreements</li> <li>Communicate the upcoming process and schedule with all relevant stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<p>Governance: 4.1 – 4.6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating a Charter for a Multi-Agency Communications Interoperability Committee</li> <li>General Guidance and Recommendations for Interoperability-Related Governance</li> <li>Writing Guide for a Memorandum of Understanding</li> </ul>





Phase – (Timeframe)	Key Action Items	Statewide Plan Criteria	Related SAFECOM Tools and Guidance
<p><b>Phase II:</b></p> <p><i>Month 2</i></p>	<p><b>Capabilities Assessment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and engage appropriate stakeholders from across the state</li> <li>If possible, form a working group with appropriate membership (subset of governance committee) to carry out the assessment task</li> <li>Define the capabilities assessment process</li> <li>Define the scope of the capabilities assessment. What capabilities information does the state need to gather?</li> <li>Select a mechanism or template for capturing the assessment data</li> <li>Manage outreach and support to stakeholders encouraging their participation</li> <li>Note: A detailed technical assessment may not be necessary prior to the state strategic planning process. However, adequate cross discipline and local representation in the governance structure will help ensure all communications systems and systems under development are considered when thinking about a state plan.</li> </ul>	<p>Background and Preliminary Steps: 1.4 – 1.6</p> <p>Technology: 5.1</p> <p>Standard Operating Procedures: 6.1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statewide Communications Interoperability Planning (SCIP) Methodology – Phase II Gather Information</li> <li>Procurement Guide for Interoperability Projects – Section II</li> </ul>



Phase – (Timeframe)	Key Action Items	Statewide Plan Criteria	Related SAFECOM Tools and Guidance
<p><b>Phase III:</b></p> <p><i>Months 2-4</i></p>	<p><b>Develop Strategic Plan:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify necessary regional strategic working group sessions and define schedule for meetings</li> <li>• Conduct regional strategic working group sessions</li> <li>• Compile regional working group data and prepare statewide strategic planning session</li> <li>• Conduct statewide strategic planning session</li> <li>• Achieve a consensus on the current state description</li> <li>• Define a long-term vision for interoperability in the state</li> <li>• Identify key strategic initiatives for improving statewide interoperability</li> <li>• Develop a concrete implementation plan to address:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Migration plans</li> <li>○ Continuity of operations as new technologies are acquired</li> <li>○ NIMS Compliance</li> <li>○ Back-up plans</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Background and Preliminary Steps: 1.7</p> <p>Strategy: 2.1 – 2.6</p> <p>Methodology: 3.4</p> <p>Technology: 5.2, 5.2.1, 5.2.2</p> <p>Standard Operating Procedures: 6.2 – 6.4</p> <p>Training and Exercises: 7.1 – 7.3</p> <p>Usage: 8.1</p> <p>Funding: 9.1, 9.2</p> <p>Implementation: 10.1 – 10.7</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide Communications Interoperability Planning (SCIP) Methodology</li> <li>• NIMS publication <a href="http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/nims_doc_full.pdf">http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/nims_doc_full.pdf</a> and <a href="http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/index.shtml">http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/index.shtml</a></li> </ul>



Phase – (Timeframe)	Key Action Items	Statewide Plan Criteria	Related SAFECOM Tools and Guidance
<b>Phase IV:</b> <i>Months 3-6</i>	<b>Document Strategic Plan:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Compile data from Strategic Planning Session into statewide plan document</li><li>• Circulate document among strategic planning session attendees and other stakeholders for review and comments</li><li>• Approve the statewide plan document as appropriate.</li></ul>	Background and Preliminary Steps: 1.1 – 1.3  Methodology: 3.1 – 3.3	SCIP Methodology

## Appendix C: Collaborative Statewide Planning Methodology

The SAFECOM and DM programs recommend the use of a collaborative process to develop the statewide plan. The SCIP methodology is one example of a collaborative process that can be used to develop the statewide plan. However, recognizing that the SCIP methodology requires considerable time and resources, the following alternative approaches can be employed to achieve similar desired outcomes. In the table below, each phase of the SCIP methodology is listed with its alternate methodology and corresponding benefits and limitations.

SAFECOM and DM encourage states to use the entire SCIP methodology for statewide communications strategic planning.

SCIP Phase	Alternate Approach	Details	Benefits	Limitations
<b>Phase I:</b> Establish Key Relationships and Funding  <i>And</i> <b>Phase II:</b> Gather Information	Use state resources	Instead of enlisting the help of a third party to perform the up front phases of the SCIP methodology (Establish Key Relationships & Gather Information), solicit the help of existing state resources. These resources will have a head start on developing the appropriate key relationships and gathering the required information through their day-to-day activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expedites the up front information gathering process</li> <li>Reduces the amount of time necessary for new third party resources to develop new relationships with key contacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If and when third party resources are brought in, associations will still need to be established between the resources and the key state contacts</li> <li>Third party resources are not present for the entire process from beginning to end</li> </ul>

SCIP Phase	Alternate Approach	Details	Benefits	Limitations
<b>Phase V:</b> Recruit Focus Group Participants and Meeting Preparation	Localities or regions identify meeting participants	The state planning coordinator could communicate to localities or regions that they will need to identify participants who will represent their locale or region at the statewide planning focus group meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delegates responsibility of identifying focus group participants to the locales and/or regions</li> <li>Engages local and regional participants early in the statewide planning process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State representatives are not reaching out to and working with local and regional resources as well as they should be</li> <li>Limits the direct outreach of the state</li> <li>Locales or regions may not select the best resources to participate in the planning process</li> </ul>
<b>Phase VI:</b> Conduct Focus Group Interviews	Reduce the number of focus group meetings	Rather than facilitating several regional focus group sessions across the state with smaller groups, the state could facilitate 1 – 2 focus group sessions for local and regional participants to provide their input for the statewide plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduces the time and funding necessary to conduct several focus group interviews across the entire state</li> <li>Provides local and regional participants a chance to engage each other and hear perspectives from across the state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More travel required for the local and regional participants</li> <li>Smaller jurisdictions may not attend due to lack of funds for participants or lack of available resources</li> <li>Inhibits the ability of gathering issues and concerns from all locales and/or regions within the state</li> </ul>

SCIP Phase	Alternate Approach	Details	Benefits	Limitations
<b>Phase VI:</b> Conduct Focus Group Interviews	Hold one-day focus group meeting	Conduct a one-day focus group meeting with participants representing all localities and/or regions from across the state immediately prior to a strategic planning session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduces the time and funding necessary to conduct several focus group interviews across the entire state</li> <li>• Provides local and regional participants a chance to engage each other and hear perspectives from across the state</li> <li>• Information from the focus group session is immediately presented to the strategic planning community</li> <li>• Reduced travel costs for participants of both the focus group session and the strategic planning session</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smaller jurisdictions may not attend due to lack of funds for traveling participants or lack of available resources</li> <li>• Statewide planning resources have limited if any local and/or regional contact due to no regional focus group meetings</li> <li>• Localities/regions may feel less engaged in the process and less inclined to become involved</li> <li>• Reduced chance to gather the issues and concerns from all locales and/or regions within the state</li> <li>• Facilitator needs to make arrangements to make sure that all regions get equal airtime and voice in the process</li> </ul>
<b>Phase VI:</b> Conduct Focus Group Interviews	Online collection of focus group data	Collect local and regional focus group data via online surveys and other online data collection mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduces time and funding necessary to conduct several focus group interviews across the entire state</li> <li>• Increased transparency of data across all regions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No face-to-face engagement or relationship building time between state and local resources</li> <li>• Online surveys are often ignored and response rate is limited</li> <li>• Does not ensure issues and concerns of all localities and/or regions are included in the conversation</li> <li>• Not everyone will have access to the Internet to respond to the survey</li> </ul>



SCIP Phase	Alternate Approach	Details	Benefits	Limitations
<b>Phase VIII:</b> Prepare and Conduct Strategic Planning Session	Present draft strategic plan based on focus group interview data at the strategic planning session	Rather than using the strategic planning session to build the strategic plan from the bottom up, present a draft strategic plan that has been created based on the data gathered during the focus group sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a starting point for discussions in the strategic planning session</li> <li>• Allows the entire group to view the layout and design of the state plan and provide comments and recommendations for update</li> <li>• May reduce the time needed to finalize the strategic plan document</li> <li>• Allows more time in the strategic planning session to focus on strategic initiatives and implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants may feel the strategic plan has already been created and their input is not valued or needed</li> <li>• Risk that the participants who developed the draft plan may be reluctant to change what they have spent so much time creating</li> </ul>



## Appendix D: Frequently Asked Questions for Statewide Plan Criteria

### General

***Q: Why are plans referred to as “Statewide plans” and not “state plans”? Is there a difference?***

A: Plans are referred to as statewide plans because they should incorporate the perspectives and support of all stakeholders from across the state. Although the Governor’s Office acts as an umbrella organization for the effort, statewide plans should employ a “bottom up,” as opposed to a state-driven “top down,” effort. Because local emergency responders are the ones who will be most affected by the Statewide Plan, it is critical to develop a plan that meets their needs most effectively and receives their support.

***Q: What benefits are states and their local communities expected to get out of this process?***

A: The process of creating a consensus-based statewide interoperability plan involves an investment of time and resources. Benefits to states include gaining the perspectives and support of many different stakeholders at the state and local level to create a strategy that is both attainable and sustainable. The process of developing a statewide plan will help local governments and the states determine a prioritized set of initiatives that will lead to coordinated improvements in statewide interoperability and that will guide the investment of resources for a maximum return on investment.

***Q: What are the national goals towards which states are supposed to develop their statewide plans?***

A: The U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s mission is mitigation of threats, vulnerabilities, and consequences that stem from acts of terrorism and natural disasters. It views this responsibility and commitment as shared with local, tribal, state and Federal governments, as well as the private sector. The Federal Government has established national goals that are intended to strengthen preparedness in the United States and to guide how local, tribal, state and Federal governments invest DHS’ and their own resources in order to achieve the greatest return on investment for our Nation’s homeland security. The goals are based on risk-based priorities. Statewide plans support a number of these national goals, including the National Preparedness Goal, the National Incident Management System (NIMS), and the National Response Plan.

The National Preparedness Goal identifies “Strengthen Interoperable Communications” as a priority goal. (See page 13, section 3.2.2 of the National Preparedness Goal at [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/InterimNationalPreparednessGoal\\_03-31-05\\_1.pdf](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/InterimNationalPreparednessGoal_03-31-05_1.pdf).)

“Interoperable Communications” is also number 18 on the Target Capabilities List on page 7 of the same document. Interoperable Communications is explained more fully in the Target Capabilities List: Version 1.1, pages 17-21 at [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/TCL1\\_1.pdf](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/TCL1_1.pdf).

***Q: How much detail is required for the statewide plan in response to the criteria?***

A: The amount of detail you include may vary according to the subject matter. In general, include as much detail as possible for each section and criteria element to better guide interoperability planning efforts across your state and with your state partners. The statewide plans generated



out of this effort should include meaningful initiatives, goals, and performance measures that can be leveraged across the state to guide the allocation of funds for interoperability.

**Q: Will the Federal Government provide guidance for completing statewide plans?**

A: The DHS SAFECOM program has supported the National Governors Association (NGA) along with the National Public Safety Telecommunications Committee (NPSTC) in conducting a Statewide Planning Workshop scheduled for March 2007. Teams from all 50 states, U.S. Territories and Washington, D.C. will convene to work on their statewide plans with technical assistance provided by NGA and SAFECOM.

A number of tools, such as the Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan, version 2.0 (SCIP 2.0), the *Statewide Interoperability Planning Guidebook*, as well as a template, will be available on the SAFECOM Web site (<http://www.safecomprogram.gov>) as of March 2007. Additional technical assistance may be provided by the Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP) at DHS.

**Q: How does someone from my state sign-up for the Statewide Planning Workshop?**

A: The Workshop is by invitation only through the Governor's office for your state. If you would like to make your interest in attending known, contact your Governor's office.

**Q: Will a template be provided for statewide plans?**

A: A *Statewide Interoperability Planning Guidebook* will be released in March 2007 and posted on the SAFECOM Web site (<http://www.safecomprogram.gov>). The *Guidebook* provides explanations of the criteria and guidance on how to write the Plan as well as a recommended outline for states to apply to their statewide plans. Additionally, a template based on the recommended outline is being developed and will be provided on the SAFECOM Web site.

**Q: Will SAFECOM set up an e-mail distribution list to send out the Statewide Interoperability Planning Guidebook?**

A: No. An electronic version of the *Statewide Interoperability Planning Guidebook* will be available on the SAFECOM Web site at <http://www.safecomprogram.gov> in March 2007. The *Guidebook* will also be made available to statewide planning teams at the NGA and NPSTC Statewide Planning Workshop in March 2007.

**Q: How is DHS going to use the statewide plans it receives?**

A: DHS will assess the plans for strengths and weaknesses and provide feedback to states.

**Q: Will DHS provide a way for states to ask questions and receive answers on statewide plans and the criteria?**

A: A repository of information on statewide planning, the criteria, and Frequently Asked Questions will be established on the SAFECOM Web site at <http://www.safecomprogram.gov>. To send a question and receive an answer, please send an e-mail to [SandT.OICstatewideplanning@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:SandT.OICstatewideplanning@hq.dhs.gov).

**Q: My state is in the early stages of planning for interoperability. What should we do first?**

A: SAFECOM recognizes that states are in various stages of planning for interoperability and suggests using a phased-in approach to planning to implement the plan over time. The first step SAFECOM recommends is setting up an appropriate governance structure. The *Statewide Interoperability Planning Guidebook* provides additional information on steps to take.



## Background and Preliminary Steps

***Q: My state does not have a full-time Interoperability Coordinator and we do not have plans to create such a position. Does this mean that my state will be ineligible for DHS funding?***

A: To be eligible for funding, DHS requires states to have submitted completed statewide plans by December 31, 2007. SAFECOM has found that having an Interoperability Coordinator is a critical success factor for states implementing their plan on a timely basis. If your state does not have a full-time Interoperability Coordinator, you should include your plans for creating the position. Alternatively, if your state does not intend to plan for a Coordinator, explain what position within the state has been charged with the responsibility to implement interoperability efforts and how they will staff implementation of its statewide interoperability plan.

***Q: Will the Federal Government provide funding for the position of full-time Interoperability Coordinator?***

A: States may use 15% of 2007 State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) grant funds to support a Statewide Interoperability Coordinator. Refer to SHSP section C.6 Personnel (page 46), and Chapter III, Section E.6 Personnel (page 36) for guidance. [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/fy07\\_hsgp\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/fy07_hsgp_guidance.pdf)

## Strategy

***Q: What if neighboring states (or countries) are not prepared to enter into an interoperability plan with our state?***

A: The statewide plan should include your approach for developing interoperable communications plans to coordinate with neighboring states or countries at their current state of readiness. In cases where a plan for coordination with neighboring states and, where applicable, countries, does not exist, the state plan should provide a course of action to begin to develop such a plan and a timeframe for the plan.

***Q: The criteria indicate that statewide plans should include a strategy for data interoperability as well as voice. What if our system does not include data?***

A: The statewide plan should include your plans for incorporating data in the future. If your state system does not currently include data, you should describe how you plan to develop data interoperability efforts in the future and the timeframe for this effort.

***Q: How often will states have to submit statewide plans?***

A: States will need to submit statewide plans to DHS at least every three years.

## Methodology

***Q: Is using the Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP) methodology a requirement?***

A: Use of the SCIP methodology (SCIP 2.0) is not a requirement but is recommended as a tool for including local, multi-jurisdictional, multi-disciplinary input, and building local support for the plan. The criteria identify those inputs as necessary for development of a comprehensive statewide plan. Because the local emergency responders are the ones who will be most affected by the statewide plan, it is critical to develop a plan that meets their needs most effectively and



has their support. The SCIP methodology 2.0 is available for download at [www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFE/COM/tools/scip/default.htm](http://www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFE/COM/tools/scip/default.htm).

### Governance

***Q: My state does not have a formal governance body. Does DHS require one to receive DHS funding?***

A: SAFECOM has found that statewide interoperability planning and implementation are best achieved with the oversight of a formal governance body. Establishing a formal governance body should be the first step that states take in developing their statewide plans. A governance body is important for a number of reasons, among which is that it helps officials at the local and state levels identify who should be involved and how decisions among these stakeholders will be made. A detailed methodology for establishing a governance structure is contained in the Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan methodology version 2.0, available as of March 2007 on the SAFECOM Web site at <http://www.safecomprogram.gov>.

If your state does not currently have a governance body, you should describe a strategy for creating one, the timeframe in which it will be completed, and how you will manage the interoperability effort in the interim.

### Technology

***Q: Is using the CASM tool a requirement? If so, how do we access it?***

A: No. At minimum, you must collect the type of radio system, data and incident management systems, the manufacturer, and frequency assignments for each major emergency responder organization within the state. Ultimately more detailed information will be required to complete the documentation of a migration strategy.

Some states may chose to use CASM. The CASM tool is available through the Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP) at DHS. Once the CASM process is established for the state, access to the system will be provided through accounts managed by your State Local Administrative Manager (LAM). The processes for use of CASM in statewide planning and for the position of State LAM are being defined. Information on these processes will be forthcoming.

For more information on CASM, please send an email to [CASM-support@spawar.navy.mil](mailto:CASM-support@spawar.navy.mil).

***Q: My state is focused on achieving basic operability in local jurisdictions rather than on introducing newer technologies. Does this mean that I cannot meet these criteria in my statewide plan?***

A: DHS realizes that some states are focused on achieving operability across local jurisdictions more than managing technology refreshment. However, the desired result or goal for requiring the statewide plans is to ensure that states have an approach for how they will achieve interoperability. All agencies inevitably adopt new technologies over time and this strategic plan will guide them in maintaining communications interoperability over time. You should describe a detailed approach for how your state will manage technology lifecycles that affect interoperability.



## Standard Operating Procedures

***Q: Do we need to develop SOPs before we complete the statewide plan?***

A: Having SOPs in place prior to completion of the statewide plan would be ideal. If your state has not developed SOPs, describe a process for how the SOPs will be developed, managed, maintained, upgraded, trained, exercised and communicated, as well as which agencies will be involved. Describe how you will ensure NIMS compliance in terms of the Incident Command System (ICS) and preparedness.

## Training and Exercises

***Q: Will training and exercises be needed in order to complete the statewide plan?***

A: No. Training and exercises are not needed to develop a statewide plan that meets the criteria.

***Q: Will DHS provide funding for training and exercises?***

A: State Homeland Security Program grant funds may be used to fund training and exercises.

## Usage

***Q: How can I meet the criteria for usage in my statewide plan?***

A: The statewide plan should describe a process or a strategy for achieving regular usage on a statewide basis in the future that includes the timeframe in which this criterion will be met.

## Funding

***Q: Will leaving some sections of the statewide plan incomplete hurt our chances for receiving DHS funding?***

A: If there are sections of the plan that you cannot address, give the reason why and describe how and when it will be completed.

***Q: Will the Federal Government provide any funding for completing statewide plans?***

A: There are no Federal grants specifically targeted for completing the statewide plans. State Homeland Security Program grant funds may be used for this purpose.

***Q: What is the rationale for requiring statewide plans given the limited resources available to support this effort?***

A: Statewide planning will help states create a strategy for achieving interoperability that is comprehensive and best meets the needs of stakeholders across the state. The plans will help states to develop a prioritized list of initiatives to guide investment of precious resources that maximizes return on investment. The statewide plans will also help DHS identify national priorities and where to allocate Federal resources to communities and states.

***Q: Will DHS help identify sources of Federal funding that may be available to states?***

A: A list of many, though not all, of the Federal grant programs for states is listed on the SAFECOM Web site at <http://www.safecomprogram.gov>. See Grants and Funding.

***Q: Will SAFECOM provide information on how states around the country have achieved a comprehensive funding strategy?***

A: Funding strategies and information are contained on the SAFECOM Web site under Grants and Funding at <http://www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/library/grant/>. It includes reports on





*Funding Strategies* and *Funding Strategies Best Practices*, among others, developed from experiences with states around the country. In particular, it includes reports on the funding strategies pursued by Nevada and Kentucky during the Regional Communications Interoperability Pilots (RCIPs) that SAFECOM conducted with them.

## Implementation

***Q: How do performance measures differ from critical success factors?***

A: Performance measures are usually quantifiable elements that can be used to track the ongoing performance of interoperable communications initiatives. Examples might include rates of response, percentage of downtime, number of responders or agencies trained, results of formal surveys, exercise evaluations, rates of adoption of model procedures, growth in shared systems, percentage of agencies participating with governing bodies, etc. Critical success factors are often qualitative elements or milestones which are necessary for the project or initiative to be successful. Examples might include the creation of a joint dispatch center, upgrades to standardized technology, or the presence of a governance body.

***Q: Will states be required to implement statewide plans as soon as they are completed?***

A: Statewide plans should adopt a phased-in approach to implementation that identifies milestones and deadlines over time. DHS recognizes that states are at very different stages of the planning process. Some plans may need to be refined and others will be ready for immediate implementation. States will receive suggestions on the strengths and weaknesses of their plan from a peer review panel at DHS. After taking those comments into consideration, states should be ready to begin implementation of their plans.

## Review and Evaluation of Plans

***Q: Will the quality of the plan dictate whether it receives DHS funding?***

A: To receive DHS funding, states must submit completed statewide plans that address the statewide planning criteria. DHS will offer comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the plans to states.



## Appendix E: Sample Training Matrix

The Training Matrix was developed as a tool to assist agencies in determining training needs. In addition, it will assist with preparing training programs and budgets.

The Matrix is divided into competency levels: Awareness, Operations, Technician, and Command. The left axis lists courses from the G&T training catalog or the National Incident Management System (NIMS) curriculum for the various competency levels. The course title, provider, and course length in hours are provided along with notations such as “Internet” or “SS” (self study) to indicate material that is offered in modes other than a normal classroom setting.

The top axis lists first responder disciplines, specialty teams, and other disciplines such as Public Works, Health Care, and Government Officials who are likely to be involved in a major incident. A total of 20 disciplines are listed. Under each discipline either an “E” or “S” designates courses that are appropriate for the respective discipline. “E” represents essential training courses that first responders should receive as a priority. “S” designates suggested training courses that will add to the safety of the responders and provide skills to be more efficient in a potential all hazard incident.

State Training Matrix Example	Law Enforcement Personnel	Law Enforcement Command Officers	Firefighters	Company Officers	Command Officers	Emergency Medical Technicians	Paramedics	EMS Command Staff	Emergency Management Officials	Government Officials	Emergency Response Telecommunicators	Public Health	Health Care	Public Works	SWAT	Forensics Teams	Regional Security Teams	Hazardous Device Teams	Haz-Mat Teams	USAR Teams
<b>Technician:</b>																				
<b>WMD Tactical Operations</b> - <b>Technician**</b> LSU - 40 Hrs.															E		E	E		
<b>Command:</b>																				
<b>WMD: Threat and Risk Assessment**</b> TEEX - 24		E		S	E				E	E				E	E		E	E	E	E
<b>ICS - 100</b> Self Study - 2 Hrs.	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E						
<b>ICS for Law Enforcement</b> - 16 Hrs.	E	E																		
<b>ICS - 200</b> - 12 Hrs.			E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E						
<b>ICS - 300</b> - 27 Hrs.			E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E						
<b>ICS - 400</b> - 22 Hrs.	S	E		E	E	S	E	E	E	S		E	E	E						
<b>ICS - 401</b> - 4 Hrs.		S		S	E			S	E	S		S	S							
<b>ICS for Executives</b> - 2 Hrs.		S		S	E			E	E	E		S	S							
<b>NIMS</b> - 1 Hr.	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E						
<b>CEMS</b> - 1 Hr.	E	E	S	S	S	S	E	E	E	E	S	E	E	E						

**E= Essential class**
**S= Suggested class**