

Office of Emergency Communications Releases 2012 Safecom Grant Guidance (3/5/12)

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) released Safecom Guidance on Emergency Communications Grants (Safecom Guidance) for fiscal year (FY) 2012.

The document, updated annually, provides guidance for state, local, tribal and territorial grantees on eligible activities and equipment standards to federal grants that fund emergency communications projects. This year's guidance has been restructured to serve as a more useful reference manual in planning emergency communications projects, identifying available grant funding and offering additional resources to consider before applying.

As in previous years, OEC coordinated with state and local stakeholders and federal agency partners to develop recommended emergency communications priorities, technical standards, resources for finding grant funding and grant management best practices.

New this year, the document includes a list of emergency communications priorities. Grantees are strongly encouraged to target grant funding toward the following priorities:

Priority 1: Leadership and Governance

Priority 2: Statewide Planning for Emergency Communications

Priority 3: Emergency Communications Training and Exercises

Priority 4: Other Integral Emergency Communications Activities

Priority 5: Standards-Based Equipment

Priority 6: Planning for Investments in Broadband and Other Advanced Technologies

Understanding that grantees are operating in a constrained fiscal environment, OEC encourages state and local grantees to coordinate with their state administrative agency (SAA) to share emergency communications proposals, and to identify new and unexpended funding for emergency communications priorities.

Further, grantees should coordinate projects with their statewide interoperability coordinator to ensure projects support their statewide interoperability plan and comply with the interoperability standards outlined in the Safecom Guidance. Lastly, grantees should work with other eligible entities to partner on projects that enhance regional interoperability, promote asset sharing and reduce duplication in funding.

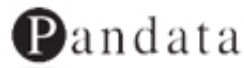
The full Safecom Guidance can be found [here](#). Specific questions regarding the guidance should be directed to the OEC at OEC@hq.dhs.gov.

In the press release OEC also drew attention to two additional documents released by DHS in February. The first document is a memo regarding the expenditure of certain DHS/FEMA grant funding.

DHS will be implementing a number of measures to provide grantees with additional flexibility to accelerate the expenditure of remaining Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant funds for FY 2007 – 2011. As explained in the memo, DHS will allow additional flexibility in the reprogramming of unexpended FEMA grant funds from those fiscal years, potentially to include support for emergency communications priorities such as statewide interoperability coordinators, narrowbanding and activities to address gaps in statewide interoperability plans, and nationwide emergency communications plan (NECP) Goal 2 compliance and performance reports.

The memo also provides information on expanded use of funds for maintenance and operations, personnel and equipment. Emergency communications stakeholders are encouraged to review the memo carefully to understand the requirements associated with the reprioritization of funds, as well as for alignment to the National Preparedness Goal.

The second document is the FY 2013 National Preparedness Grant Program Vision Document. The document outlines a significant shift in homeland security funding methods and priorities, including the streamlining of existing programs into a single grant program – the National Preparedness Grant Program – beginning in FY 2013. While many elements of the vision must be approved by Congress to be implemented, the document provides a preview of upcoming debates over the future of national-level grants policy.



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