Emergency Communications Governance Guide for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials
Fact Sheet

OVERVIEW

In 2014, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) released the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) with the emphasis on enhancing decision-making, coordination, and planning for emergency communications through strong governance structures. The *Emergency Communications Governance Guide for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials* (Governance Guide) was developed to address Goal One (Governance and Leadership) in the NECP. The Governance Guide serves as a comprehensive tool that provides recommendations and best practices for public safety officials at all levels of government to establish, assess, and update governance structures that represent all emergency communications capabilities (Land Mobile Radio [LMR], broadband, 911/Next Generation 911 [NG911], alerts and warnings).

Governance is pivotal to operable and interoperable emergency communications. Robust governance establishes and maintains a central coordination point for efforts across the broad spectrum of public safety stakeholders, and can help to address challenges in a unified manner. A significant challenge the public safety community faces is the technological convergence of LMR, broadband, and 911/NG911 as it affects equipment interoperability, system and network sustainment, and upgrades and funding. The presence of an active, transparent, multi-disciplinary, and multi-functional governance body fosters relationships, collaboration, and information sharing to better balance fiscal, technological, and policy-driven public safety needs. Establishing articulated roles and responsibilities, balancing representation, and properly sizing such a structure using a bottom-up approach enables public safety officials to make informed decisions. Key benefits of the Governance Guide include:

- Illustrating proven, repeatable models to improve statewide, intrastate, interstate, local, tribal, and territorial emergency communications governance structures
- Promoting cohesive and representative governance structures to support collaboration and resource sharing
- Providing real-world examples on how to expand or update current governance structures, processes, and investments to effectively include all facets of the emergency communications landscape

Cohesive and representative governance structures will provide greater insight into existing emergency communications capabilities, identify gaps, and assess areas for coordination, resource sharing, and deployment.

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METHODOLOGY

A Governance Guide Working Group, comprised of SAFECOM and National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC) members, was established to leverage their subject matter expertise in governance. Over 20 case studies were conducted nationwide to illustrate current, real-world examples of various approaches and environments to successful or challenging governance structures that resulted in a collection of best practices for achieving more inclusive, high-functioning governance structures. These case study states, as shown in Figure 1, represented diverse geographies, topographies, population, governance structure authorities, and methods of coordination across different communications capabilities.
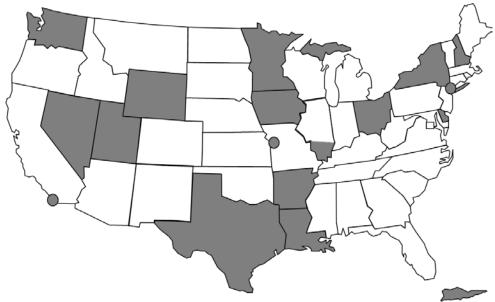

Figure 1: Governance Guide Case Study Map

As a tool, the Governance Guide assists with the development of a formal governance authority and provides guidance and examples to emergency communications officials. In the constantly evolving emergency communications landscape, the Governance Guide's best practices and recommendations, while not prescriptive or required, demonstrate innovative ways to improve current governance, establish new governance, and collaborate and coordinate across jurisdictions, functions, and capabilities to allow for better utilization and management of communications assets.

Please contact OEC@dhs.gov or visit http://www.dhs.gov/safecom/governance for further information about the Governance Guide.