



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

September 2015



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*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Letter from the SAFECOM, NCSWIC, and Governance Guide Working Group Chairs .....	ii
Executive Summary .....	iii
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1. Scope and Methodology.....	2
1.2. Characteristics of an Effective Governance Structure.....	3
2. Governance Landscape .....	4
2.1. Changes and Challenges in the Current Operating Environment.....	5
3. Governance Structure Authority .....	6
4. Governance Body Charter, Bylaws, and Memorandum of Agreement/Understanding .....	10
4.1. Create a Governance Body Charter/Bylaws.....	10
4.2. Develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)/Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).....	11
5. Overview of Governance Body Structures .....	12
5.1. Governance Body Models .....	12
5.2. Governance Body Organization .....	13
6. Key Elements of a Governance Body.....	15
6.1. Statewide/Territorial Governance Body: Fundamental Components.....	15
6.1.1. Key Statewide Points of Contact (SWIC, SPOC, and 911 Administrator) .....	15
6.1.2. Defining Governing Body Roles and Responsibilities.....	18
6.1.3. Structuring an Effective Membership Composition.....	20
6.1.4. Creating Relevant Subcommittees/Working Groups .....	24
6.1.5. Preserving Membership Continuity.....	26
6.1.6. Establishing Effective Meeting Mechanics .....	27
6.1.7. Coordinating with Related Governance Groups.....	28
6.2. Interstate, Intrastate, and Local Governance Bodies: Fundamental Components.....	29
6.2.1. Interstate (Multi-state, International).....	30
6.2.2. Intrastate/Local .....	32
7. Conclusion .....	36
8. References.....	37
9. Acronym List .....	42

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

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*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

**LETTER FROM THE SAFECOM, NCSWIC, AND GOVERNANCE GUIDE WORKING  
GROUP CHAIRS**

Governance is a critical component of successful interoperable emergency communication. The SAFECOM and National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC) members value effective governance, but recognize it as one of the greatest challenges that face emergency communications officials. There are many complexities behind establishing and maintaining effective governance bodies, especially in the constantly evolving communications landscape. For example, obtaining sufficient funding to support the efforts of the governance bodies or ensuring the governance bodies are forward looking to proactively shape impacts of technological advancements among the first responder community. The state of governance structures across the country greatly varies, creating the need for proven recommendations to assist jurisdictions to establish and mature their governance practices.

The *Governance Guide for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Emergency Communications Officials* (Governance Guide) is a tool for public safety professionals at all levels of government and disciplines to use in assessing, establishing, and sustaining effective emergency communications governance. Developed with direct input from a wide array of responders across the country, this tool comprehensively lays out governance challenges, best practices, and recommendations. While none of the information provided is intended to be restrictive or required, the broad approach allows emergency communications officials to specifically select and apply the recommendations that are most appropriate for each of their specific situation or challenge. The Governance Guide Working Group met between December 2014 and July 2015, and supported case studies with over 20 states, cities, and regions across the country to compile information on successful, repeatable models of governance that can be emulated in other states, localities, tribal nations, and territories. Thus, these best practices and recommendations are real-world solutions to real problems.

SAFECOM and NCSWIC intend for this document to be widely used to successfully assist and support emergency communications officials across the country implement effective governance in the years to come.



**Steve Proctor, SAFECOM Chair**



**Michael Varney, NCSWIC Chair**



**Charlie Sasser, Governance Guide Working Group Chair**

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

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*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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 2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials (Governance Guide) was developed to address Goal One in the NECP, governance and leadership. The Governance Guide serves as a comprehensive tool that provides recommendations and best practices for emergency communications 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 (or body) 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. Formalizing with 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 in planning, operations, funding, training and exercises, and equipment acquisition.

Through comprehensive stakeholder outreach and thorough research, the Governance Guide provides proven, repeatable models to improve statewide, territorial, intrastate, interstate, local, and tribal emergency communications governance. 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 emergency communications 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 represented diverse geographies, topographies, population, governance structure authorities, and methods of coordination across different communications capabilities.

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

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

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*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the emergency communications landscape has evolved into a complex and interdependent operating environment with the modernization and evolution of public safety communications networks and devices. The planning for and deployment of broadband and Next Generation 911 (NG911) networks that use Internet Protocol (IP)-based technology will transform how responders communicate and share information from incident initiation to completion by enabling the transmission of digital information, including voice, text, photo, and video, from the citizen to dispatcher (911) to first responder. While improvements in the quantity, quality, timeliness, and type of information available to responders can enhance information sharing and communications during operations, they can also overload or degrade the information if the flow is not secure and interoperable. With the convergence of communications capabilities, it is clear that communications interoperability cannot be solved by any one entity, but requires a partnership among response entities across all levels of government and functions to ensure the right information gets to the right people at the right time.

To prepare stakeholders for this communications evolution, the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) recently updated the 2008 National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP<sup>1</sup>) to account for new technologies and the current operating environment. The five goals in the [2014 NECP](#) aim to maximize the use of all communications capabilities available to responders, as well as ensure the security of the information. As such, the NECP emphasizes the need for enhancing and updating policies, governance structures, planning, and protocols that enable responders to operate and be interoperable under all circumstances. The NECP Goals 1 and 2 outline the Nation’s focus on enhancing governance and planning activities to establish and promote an all-inclusive approach to governance. Governance structures such as the Statewide Interoperability Governing Bodies (SIGBs), Statewide Interoperability Executive Committees (SIECs), and Statewide 911 Boards provide a foundation for public safety entities to collaborate, plan, and make decisions on strategies and operations that mutually support the investment, sustainment, and advancement of communications-related initiatives.

### 2014 NECP Goals

- Governance and Leadership
- Planning and Procedures
- Training and Exercises
- Operational Coordination
- Research and Development

The 2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials (Governance Guide) serves as a comprehensive guidance document that provides recommendations and best practices for state, local, tribal, and territorial emergency communications officials to establish, assess, and update governance structures that represent the emergency communications ecosystem, (e.g., Land Mobile Radio [LMR], broadband, 911/NG911, alerts and warnings). 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. The key benefits of the Governance Guide include:

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the NECP, refer to: <http://www.dhs.gov/necp>.

## *2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

- Provides insight into proven, repeatable models to improve statewide, intrastate, interstate, local, tribal, and territorial emergency communications governance structures.
- Illustrates real-world examples on expanding or updating governance structures and processes to effectively address the evolving emergency communications landscape.
- Educates policy makers and elected officials on the importance of an effective and collaborative governance structure to efficiently address emergency communications challenges.

### **1.1. Scope and Methodology**

The Governance Guide is intended to serve as a resource for all levels of government while recognizing that there is no “one size fits all” approach. It is a practitioner-driven tool, garnering support and participation from state, local, tribal, and territorial officials with emergency communications roles and responsibilities. The Governance Guide is developed in a manner that is applicable and useful to elected officials, policy makers, senior officials, middle management, emergency responders, and the public safety community to ensure that all levels within an organization understand the importance of a governing body. As such, a representative sampling of case studies were conducted to review and select real-world examples that can serve as best practices and repeatable models for establishing or reforming governance structures nationwide. With input from subject matter experts and stakeholders from across the country, the case study candidates were selected based on numerous factors. These factors included: geography (size, location, mountainous terrain vs. farmland), economic factors, governance structure authority method of coordination across different communications capabilities (LMR, broadband, 911), and population density (urban vs. rural).

Twenty case studies that included states, territories, cities, and tribal nations were conducted in order to understand the complex components that make governance structures successful or challenging. For each case study, the team interviewed various emergency communications officials and practitioners to ensure diverse perspectives on governance structures and to understand what makes a governance structure effective. The interviews centered around authority, impetus for establishment, evolution as the landscape changes, membership composition, organization and structure, measures of success, funding mechanisms, stakeholder engagement, examples of successful activities, future challenges and potential solutions, best practices, and characteristics of effective governance.

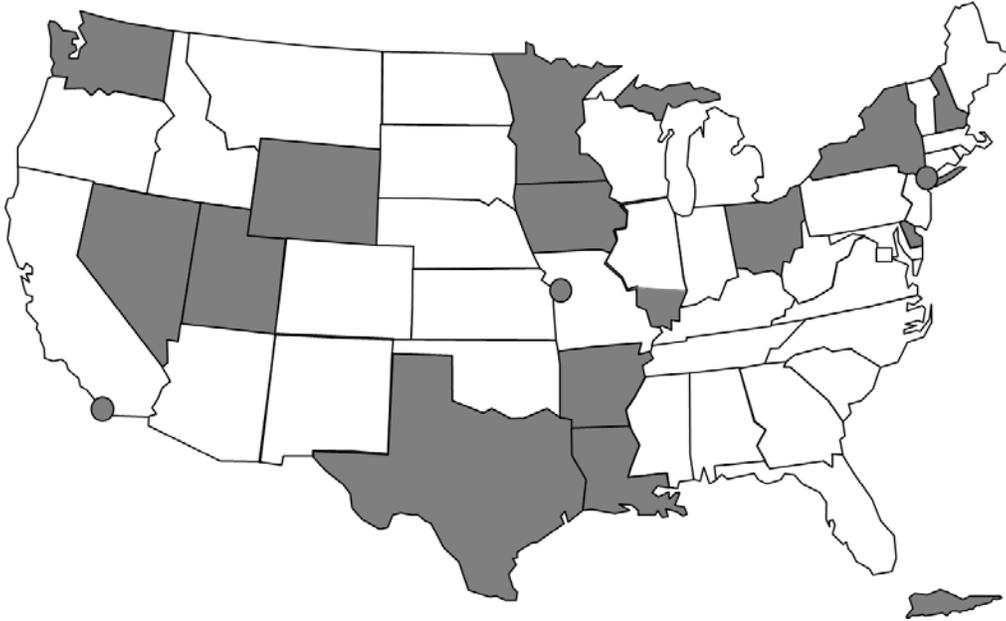
Each case study candidate exemplified unique attributes and characteristics and serves as repeatable models in other jurisdictions. Below are attributes of some of the selected case study candidates:

- Recent establishment of an independent agency that oversees LMR, broadband, and 911/NG911 activities.
- Home rule state with over 200 counties and Councils of Governments with a voluntary governance body that brings together stakeholders across the state to address interoperability challenges.
- Governance body that oversees communications capabilities across the entire emergency communications landscape—LMR, broadband, 911/NG911, and alerts and warnings.

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

- Successfully balances the needs of both metropolitan and rural areas by relying on regional boards for bottom-up governance.
- A regional governance structure that organically and successfully deployed a NG911 capability across the region while coordinating closely with the state governance body.

Figure 1 shows the case studies used for the development of the Governance Guide.



**Figure 1: Governance Guide Case Study Map**

## **1.2. Characteristics of an Effective Governance Structure**

Effective governance structures are designed to operate in a collaborative manner with input from stakeholders across multiple disciplines, emergency communications functions, levels of government, and nongovernmental entities. Such structures allow for greater understanding and evaluation of existing communications capabilities such as plans, procedures, and equipment; identification of communications gaps; and development and implementation of a coordinated vision and plan to address and prioritize resources, investments, and staffing.

The following characteristics, attributes, and activities are typical of effective governance structures:

- **Documented Authority:** Establish formally with either an Executive Order or Legislation.
- **Balanced Representation:** Align needs and priorities across various stakeholders that have a role in or are impacted by communications-related initiatives.
- **Properly-sized Membership:** Determine appropriately sized membership that maintains inclusiveness while permitting a quorum to be met regularly.
- **Accountability:** Determine whether stated roles, responsibilities, and membership requirements are met routinely.

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

- **Active Membership:** Provide multiple means to participate in meetings (i.e., in-person, videoconference, and teleconference) while advancing information sharing and transparency by disseminating meeting minutes to members.
- **Meeting Frequency:** Maintain consistent meeting cadence. Members should collectively determine where meetings will be held and include consistent or alternating meeting location to increase attendance and participation depending on the size of the state or jurisdiction and residency of members.
- **Scalable and Agile:** Able to respond to changes in the emergency communications landscape.
- **Rules of Engagement:** Manage internal and jurisdictional differences (e.g., “checking egos at the door” and working toward common, universally beneficial goals).
- **Transparent and Responsive:** Maintain an open and transparent forum to promote greater stakeholder buy-in.
- **Funding and Sustainment:** Identify sustainable funding for existing and future emergency communications priorities.
- **Oversight of Strategic Plan(s):** Oversee and align activities to communications interoperability strategic plans such as the Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP) and NECP.

The characteristics and attributes of an effective governance structure will vary, but successful examples include most—if not all—of the characteristics, attributes, and activities listed above.

## 2. GOVERNANCE LANDSCAPE

As outlined in the 2014 NECP, emergency communications governance is a top national priority. Per recommendations from partners in the public safety community, OEC included milestones in the NECP directing each state and territory to identify a central coordination point for interoperable emergency communications efforts, as well as establish and maintain a SIGB or SIEC.

Today, most states have a Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC), or point of contact for interoperability. SWICs have played an integral role in establishing and maintaining statewide governance systems and bringing together stakeholders from the broad spectrum of public safety communications. SIGBs and SIECs continue to serve as the primary steering groups for the SCIPs or

**Timeline of Governance-Related Activities**



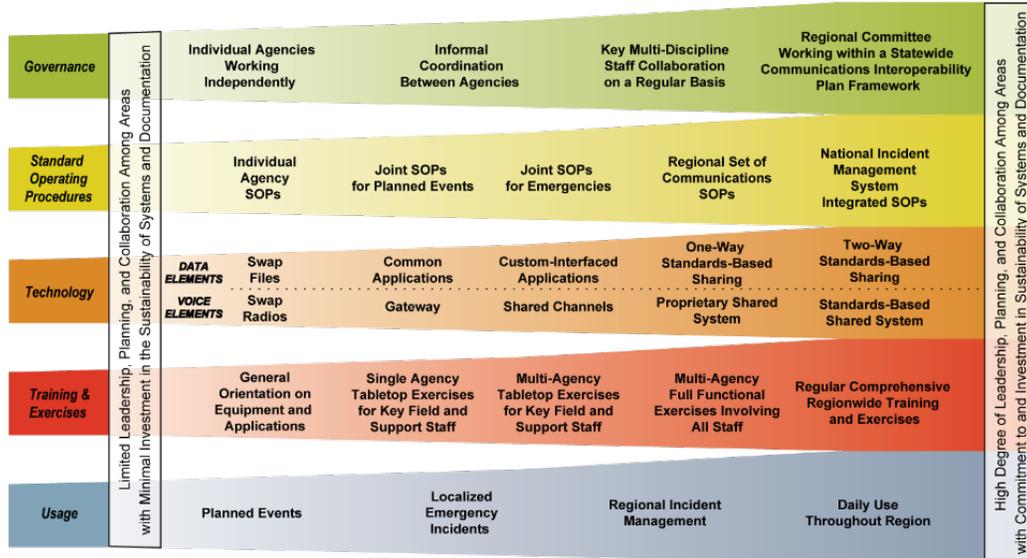
*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

supporting statewide interoperability strategy that seeks to improve emergency response communications across the state through enhanced data and voice communications interoperability. SCIPs provide a strategic direction and alignment for those responsible for interoperable and emergency communications at the state, regional, local, and tribal levels. SCIPs also highlight the vision for interoperable and emergency communications and demonstrate the need for funding to leadership and elected officials. As of 2007, all 56 states and territories had adopted a SCIP.

Further, per the enactment of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act in February 2012, the First Responders Network Authority (FirstNet) was established to ensure the development, deployment, and operation of the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN). Some states have established broadband working groups that serve as the governing body for public safety broadband, either as a component of or independent of the SIGB or SIEC. Additionally, most states have 911 Advisory Boards or Commissions that work with the 911 Administrator to plan and coordinate state and local 911 efforts.

**2.1. Changes and Challenges in the Current Operating Environment**

The current landscape in which emergency communications governance structures are required to operate is multi-faceted. Effective governance is designed to address all aspects, capabilities, and functions of emergency management and response at all levels of government. No matter the degree of advanced emergency communications capabilities, every jurisdiction is encouraged to establish some form of governance structure or body. In this multi-faceted emergency communications landscape, governance structures create the relationships, collaboration, and information sharing that is crucial to emergency responders and public safety officials. However, governance is just one aspect of the complex environment, as shown by Figure 2.



**Figure 2: SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum, refer to: [http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/interoperability\\_continuum\\_brochure\\_2.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/interoperability_continuum_brochure_2.pdf)

## *2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

Developed with practitioner input from SAFECOM members, the Interoperability Continuum is designed to assist emergency response agencies and policy makers to plan and implement interoperability solutions for data and voice communications. The five lanes of the continuum identify the critical success elements that must be addressed to achieve interoperability, while acknowledging the advancing accomplishments within each lane. These lanes are not limited to LMR communications planning; rather, they are important to consider when planning and implementing interoperability solutions for all public safety communications technologies. Governance structures should address all lanes of the continuum in representation, with committees, or via subject matter expertise. While achieving this will look differently across different jurisdictions, the basic tenets of representation and knowledge will be similar.

### **Technological Challenges**

A key challenge moving forward is the convergence of technologies impacting the flow of information. This convergence creates new challenges in information management, equipment interoperability, system design, cybersecurity, and funding. As such, it is critical that there is coordination between all emergency communications governance structures and other decision-making offices, bodies, and individuals that oversee this technology. This includes coordination between SWICs and FirstNet State Single Points of Contact (SPOCs), offices and individuals that oversee 911 and NG911 cybersecurity, and those responsible for issuing emergency alerts and warnings to the public. The state Chief Information Officer (CIO) or Information Technology (IT) office should also have a role in the governance body. This coordination will help address disconnects that commonly exist between the IT services provided by states and the public safety community as end-users. The dynamic nature of the emergency communications landscape requires frequent assessment of memberships, policies, and priorities to ensure they are positioned to address new challenges.

### **Funding Challenges**

Governance activities are not exempt from the financial constraints pressing the public safety and emergency communications communities. Governance-type activities, while serving as the foundation for other related activities, are often the first to be cut as public funds become more scarce. It is imperative that all jurisdictions collaborate and coordinate to maximize the impact of every dollar available and leverage shared resources, relationships, and all available funding sources<sup>3</sup> (e.g., identify unique funding sources). Diversification of funding sources for emergency communications activities will minimize overall financial impact should one or more funding source(s) decrease or diminish overtime. For example, in Louisiana the statewide governance structure was able to successfully demonstrate the value of the statewide LMR system to share resources, as well as identify a unique funding source (i.e., Riverboat Gaming Fund) to sustain funding for the statewide system.

## **3. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AUTHORITY**

A formalized governance structure is the foundation for improving emergency communication capabilities and is essential to the efficient utilization of communications assets. It also provides a unified approach across multiple jurisdictions, disciplines, and functions to foster informed decision-making in areas such as planning, operations, funding, training, exercises, and

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<sup>3</sup> For a complete list of the different funding sources available to various jurisdictions, please see [www.dhs.gov/safecom/](http://www.dhs.gov/safecom/).

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

equipment acquisition. Entities that may have encountered roadblocks when establishing an LMR-based governance structure are likely to encounter similar challenges when looking to formalize, update, or expand their governance structure to represent the emergency communications ecosystem (e.g., LMR, broadband, 911/NG911, alerts and warnings, cybersecurity). Independent, disparate disciplines or functional-based governance bodies may have difficulty yielding their authority in favor of a stronger statewide, regional, or multi-jurisdictional governing body that enhances collaboration and supports the future of the emergency communications operating environment.

A strong sponsorship and advocate at the highest possible level is critical when seeking to formalize the governance structure, regardless of the type of authority that is sought after. When gathering user requirements, a bottom-up approach should be leveraged to ensure specifications of the authority meet the needs of the public safety community it is designed to support. General guidelines of what should be included in the legal authority are listed below.

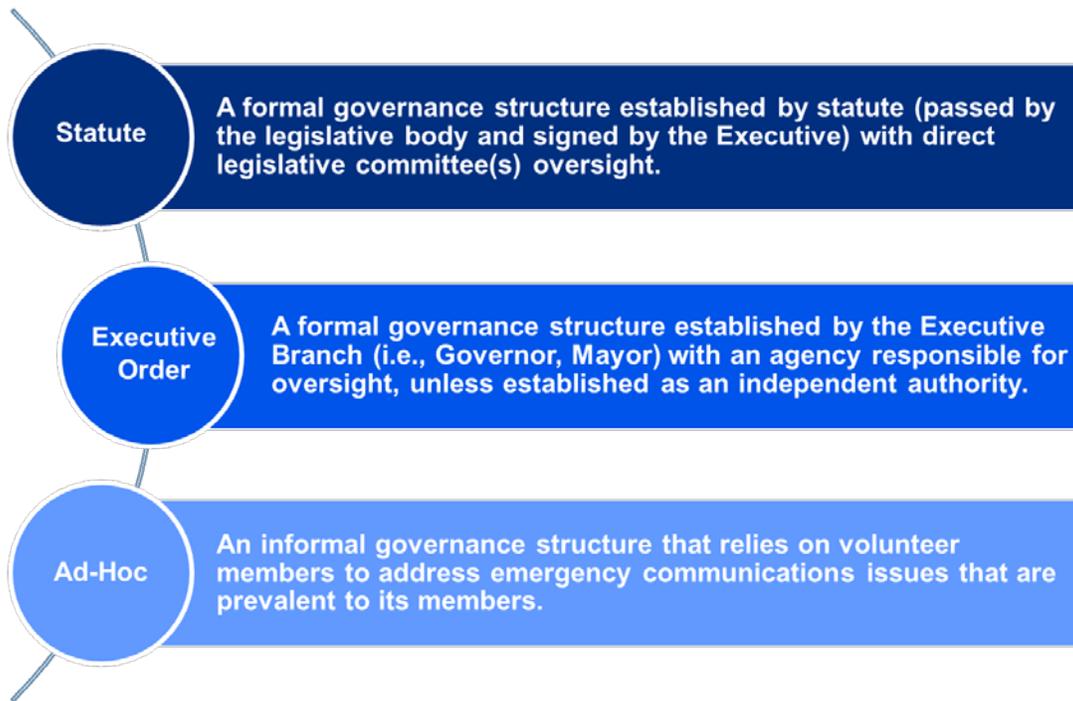
- **Name, Authority, and Purpose:** Solidifies the legal standing of the governing body and the purpose of its establishment. If applicable, indicate where the authority derives from (i.e., local, state, or federal statutes) and if it amends or supersedes any prior authorizations.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Defines what the governance body has the authority to oversee, including any rule-making authority, aligning activities to overarching interoperability strategies and plan (i.e., SCIP, NECP) and maintaining fiduciary and fiscal compliance.
- **Reporting Obligations:** Provides a mechanism for the governance body to formally and publicly notify the Executive and/or Legislative Branch on accomplishments, interoperability gaps, and future priorities to enhance public safety communications.
- **Organizational Alignment:** States if the governance body is established within an existing or new department or agency or if it has independent authority with direct access to the Governor or Mayor.
- **Guidelines for Subcommittee and/or Working Group:** Permits the governance body the flexibility to organize itself in a manner that enables it to meet its defined roles and responsibilities without enumerating the subcommittee or working group purview, structure, and membership composition.
- **Chairperson and Vice Chairperson:** Designates which representative will be presiding over the governance body to ensure accountability while providing a point(s) of contact that is available to provide any information needed regarding public safety communications and interoperability to senior government and elected officials.
- **Membership (Voting and Non-Voting):** Indicates voting, non-voting, and ex-officio members, or their designee, from each discipline, level of government, and function.
- **Term Limits:** Establishes term limits for the public, government agency officials, and legislative members. Note: elected officials that are governance body members should serve term limits consistent with their term in office.
- **Funding:** Specifies if there will be a designated source of funding to support costs related to the administration of the governance body (i.e., meeting support, staff to oversee the authority, financial resource to manage the books), if individuals will receive

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

compensation for serving as members (if applicable), or if members' expenses may be eligible for reimbursement from the governance body's funding source(s).

While the aforementioned examples are important to establish parameters the governance body is authorized to operate within, there also needs to be flexibility within the legal authority for specific details to be laid out in a charter or bylaws.

Through case study discussion sessions, practitioners identified benefits, shortcomings, and cascading effects associated with a governance body authority derived from ad-hoc, Executive Order, and statute. Figure 3 defines the three types of governance authorities addressed within this Guide in order of greatest to least authority as established upon by practitioners.



**Figure 3: Types of Governance Authority**

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

Table 1 identifies key findings from the discussion sessions and the type of authority that applies to each finding.

Key Findings	Ad-Hoc	Executive Order	Statute
Dependent on a Governor that understand and values public safety needs and interoperable communications issues		X	X
Likely to result in the executive staff and the Governor having greater awareness of the role of the governance body		X	X
Increases political and financial backing to advance public safety interoperability needs and priorities		X	X
Minimizes disagreements over the governance body's roles and responsibilities if clearly defined with stakeholder buy-in		X	X
Provides maximum authority with greatest degree of continuity and stability			X
Likely to be the most restrictive approach with any changes requiring the longest amount of time to implement, particularly in a short legislative cycle			X
Critical public safety communications issues subject to greater influence by industry groups and lobbyists in an attempt to influence decision-making		X	X
Expeditious way to legally address challenges caused by the diffusion of responsibilities across multiple governance bodies		X	
Most responsive to change as it allows the governance body to adjust as the operating landscape evolves	X	X	
May experience challenges funding large-scale communications initiatives if the governance body does not represent itself before the legislative body	X	X	
Allows the governance body to publish rules and policies in a responsive way	X	X	X
Avoids delays associated with an often lengthy and politicized legislative review and approval process	X	X	
Potential to change or disband each time there is a new Administration (e.g., Governor, Mayor, City Council)	X	X	
Highly dependent on volunteer members that have a vested interest to advance public safety interoperability	X		
Purview of the governance body may be limited to members' are of expertise with limited enforceability authority	X		
Potential to be the most disruptive form as key members change roles due to the voluntary-nature of membership	X		

**Table 1: Governance Authority Key Findings**

#### **4. GOVERNANCE BODY CHARTER, BYLAWS, AND MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT/UNDERSTANDING**

Governance groups require the means of maintaining order and operating in a manner that is ethical and within the parameters of their authority. Additionally, the group should define a common understanding of how business will be conducted, documented, and executed. This section identifies the benefits of organizational charters, a written set of bylaws, or a well-developed and approved memoranda of either agreement or understanding.

##### **4.1. Create a Governance Body Charter/Bylaws**

Whether a governance structure is established via ad-hoc, Executive Order, or statute, it is important to develop a charter or bylaw that builds upon the legal authority (e.g., Executive Order or statute) or sets the agreed upon authority (e.g., ad-hoc groups). Many aspects of charters and bylaws overlap, and the choice to employ one or the other is at the discretion of the governance body and its leadership. Charters or bylaws describe the reason the group exists, outline its authority (if applicable), establish accountability for members and the group, and identify ground rules for operation. The rules of conduct are intended to guide the governance group as they work together to address common goals and objectives that cross jurisdictions and disciplines. Clear decision-making and conflict resolution processes for the governance structure ensure the successful development and execution of strategic efforts when multiple agencies, disciplines, and jurisdictions are involved. Transparency in these processes helps build support for their outcomes. When creating a charter or bylaw, the governance group must agree upon key policies and procedures that determine how the group will operate. Charters and bylaws promote transparency by making the governance body's procedures and processes accessible to the communities it serves. Key elements of a charter include:

- **Introduction:** Provides an overview of the governance structure and outlines the sections within the charter.
- **Purpose:** Describes who established it, why it was established, and its mission, vision, goals, and objectives.
- **Authority:** Describes the governance structure's authority and funding sources.
- **Outcomes:** Describes the objectives of the governance structure in a manner that is quantifiable so effectiveness and progress can be measured.
- **Scope (Roles and Responsibilities):** Describes the scope of the governance body's responsibilities to include, but not limited to, level (i.e., command, tactical), discipline, function, communications type (i.e., data, voice, video, imagery) and usage.
- **Operating Principles:** Describes the ground rules for meetings and communications.
- **Membership:** Identifies the types of members and organizational structure. This should also include identifying alternate, advisory, and ad-hoc members.
- **Decision Making:** Outlines the decision making process and reporting for the governance body.
- **Logistics:** Describes meeting logistics including meeting frequency and meeting locations. Administrative responsibilities such as who develops meeting minutes, to whom and when they are distributed, and where they are archived should be addressed.

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

Creating a Charter for a Multi-Agency Communications Interoperability Committee (available in Section 8: References) provides a detailed methodology and process for developing a tailored charter for an emergency communications-related governance structure.

Key areas of a by-law include:

- **Authority:** Declares the legal language that gives the governance structure authority to oversee or advise on emergency communications and interoperability.
- **Purpose:** Describes why the governance structure was established and elaborates on the roles and responsibilities outlined in the authority.
- **Board Composition:** Identifies the governance structure membership, board chair/vice chair, duties of the elected and appointed officers and members, membership terms and termination process, election and appointment processes, and compensation.
- **Meetings:** Describes meeting frequency, quorum requirements, voting procedures, attendance requirements, and reasons and requirements for notification of special meetings.
- **Meeting Proceedings:** Specify if Robert's Rules of Order or other rules of order will prevail in board or working group proceedings.
- **Adoption, Review, and Amendments:** Describes the process to review, adopt, and amend the bylaws.
- **Committees of the Board:** Describes the process for the governance structure to establish subcommittees, working groups, or ad-hoc groups and identifies the subcommittees that may be established.

Please see Section 8: References for links to examples of different by-laws.

#### **4.2. Develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)/Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)**

Governance bodies bring together multiple disciplines and jurisdictions to address common goals and objectives to improve emergency communications. As such, an MOU/MOA helps stakeholders establish the partnerships and authority needed to achieve an effective governance structure for public safety operable and interoperable communications. An MOU/MOA is important because it defines the responsibilities of each party in an agreement, provides the scope and authority of the agreement, clarifies terms, and outlines compliance issues. An MOU/MOA becomes critical as governance bodies mature and take on responsibility of either managing a statewide shared system or a system-of-systems design to achieve operable and interoperable communications. An MOU/MOA also streamlines the process for applying and appropriating awarded grant funds. SAFECOM's guidance document A Writing Guide for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is available in Section 8: References. This tool provides a detailed methodology and process for developing an appropriate MOU for any statewide interoperable communications governance components.

## 5. OVERVIEW OF GOVERNANCE BODY STRUCTURES

The case study process reviewed governance body models for coordination across various types of governance structures. It is critical to examine different governance body models to determine the structure that best fit the needs of the state, local, tribal, or territorial government. The next two subsections provide examples of different governance body models.

### 5.1. Governance Body Models

As the emergency communications operating environment changes, the governance landscape that covers all emergency communications functions has evolved to include three main types of governance body models shown in Figure 4.

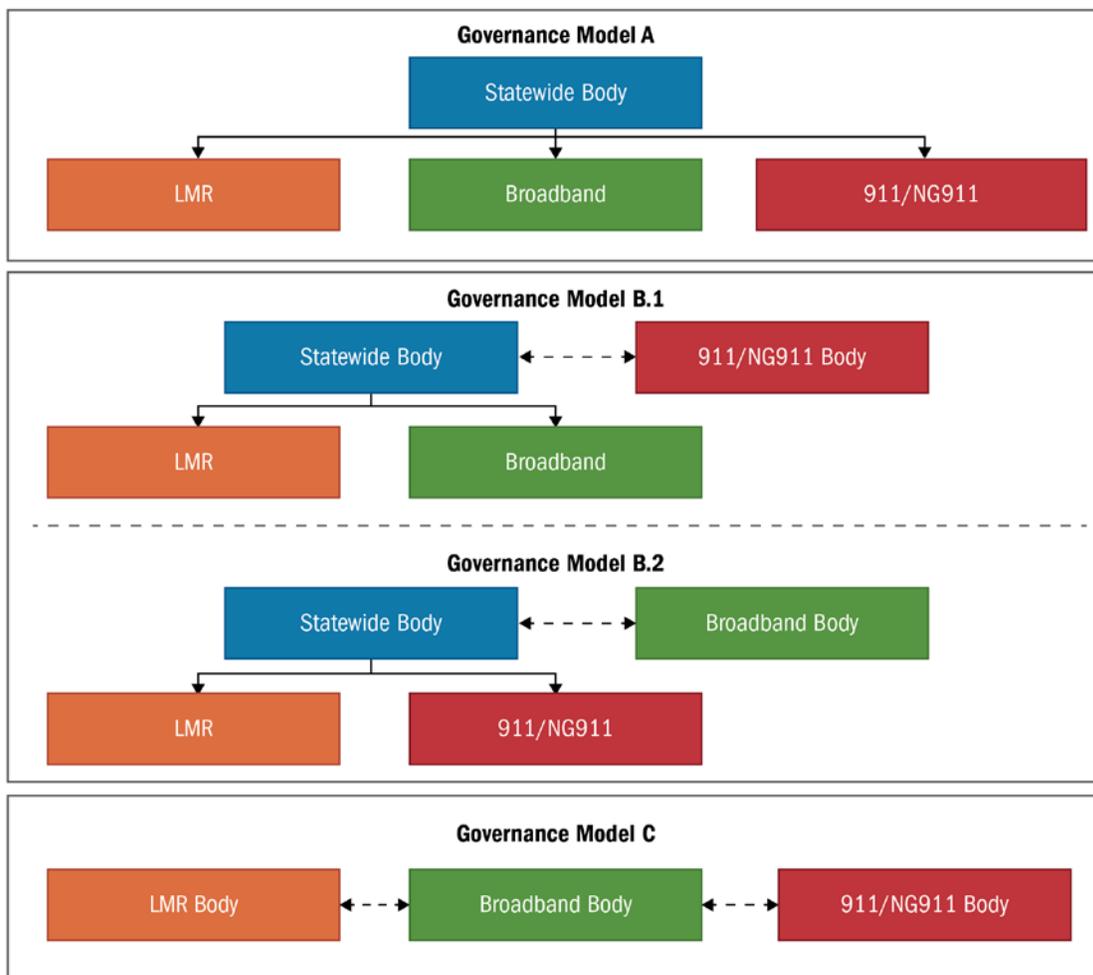


Figure 4: Governance Body Models

**Governance Model A:** This governance body model integrates all emergency communications capabilities into a single governance body or entity. This model enhances the governance body's ability to oversee and address tactical, operational, and strategic interoperability needs of the public safety community across all functions.

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

**Governance Model B.1:** LMR and broadband stakeholders are included under a single governance body or entity with formal coordination with a 911/NG911 Commission or Council. Under this model, 911/NG911 responsibilities at the state or local jurisdictional levels are established under the auspices of state law and directed by appointed commissioners. Entities that have implemented this model have achieved close coordination among the different emergency communications functions by ensuring members attend each other’s meetings or have overlapping membership without oversight of these functions residing under a single authority.

**Governance Model B.2:** Under this governance body model, LMR and 911 stakeholders are included under a single governance body or entity with formal coordination with the broadband stakeholders.

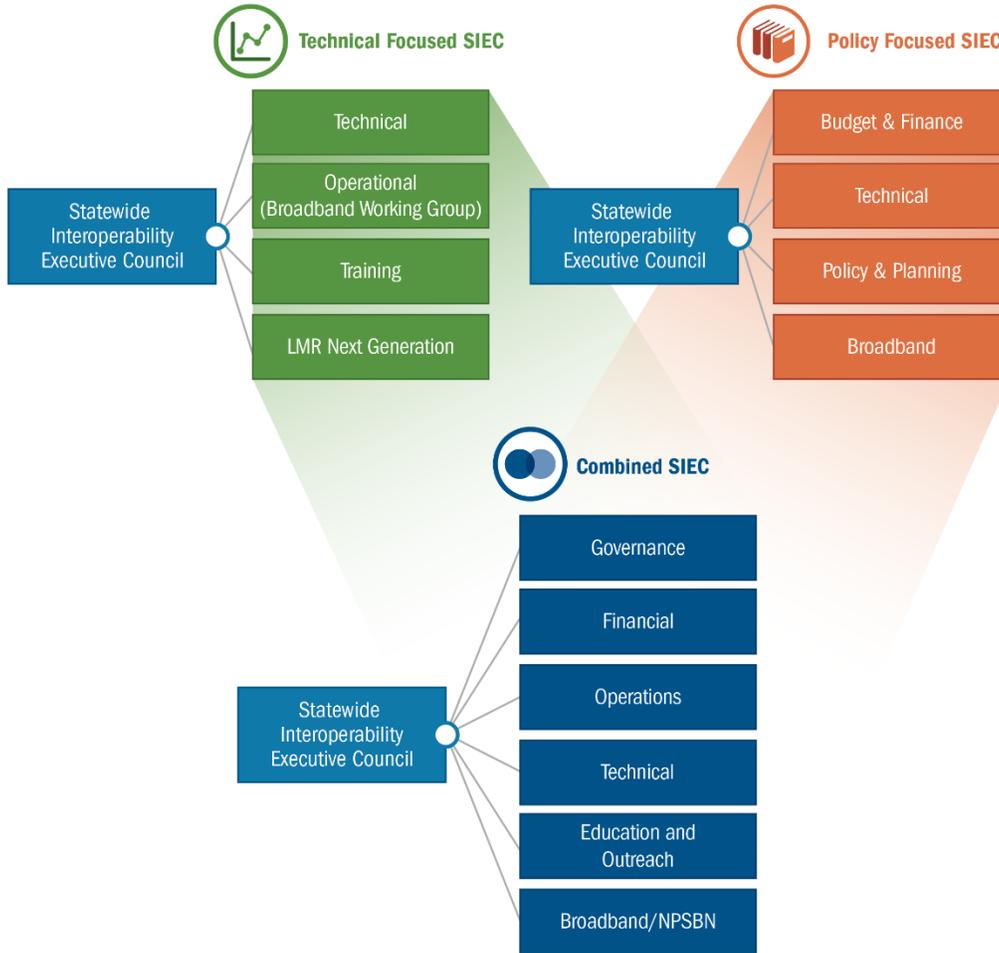
**Governance Model C:** In this governance model each function has a distinct governance body or entity but has demonstrated optimal level of coordination through information sharing and in some cases, overlapping membership. Case study findings indicate that this model is more common at a regional and local level.

Each model described above can function effectively if there is an established, formal level of coordination with adequate information sharing among the governance bodies. The modernization of communications and information systems and scarcity of funding has led to governance bodies integrating across multiple emergency communications functions for better situational awareness, operational coordination, and decision-making. States that currently leverage the “Governance Model A” approach reached this end state progressively, by engaging elected officials, where they previously originated either under the “Governance Model B” or “Governance Model C”. This is particularly prevalent in states that recognize the need to include 911/NG911 stakeholders in broadband planning to ensure information interoperability across the emergency communications ecosystem.

## **5.2. Governance Body Organization**

The membership and organization of an emergency communications governance structure are critical to its success. All emergency communications capabilities should be represented by an established governance structure, with representation or coordination between stakeholders representing LMR, broadband, 911, and alerts and warnings functions at all levels of government. Case studies show that inclusion of the SWIC as either an executive council voting member or non-voting participant is beneficial. Similarly, the SPOC for FirstNet or broadband should either chair or participate in any broadband planning or deployment-related committee within the governance structure. Balancing the needs of each discipline and level of government will necessitate the development and utilization of different committees and subcommittees. Figure 5 illustrates examples of three different approaches to subcommittee structures utilized by states.

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*



**Figure 5: SIEC or SIGB Subcommittee Models**

These committee structures function in a similar matter, with issues and concerns that fall within the scope of each committee being addressed at the committee level. The committees present subsequent recommendations to the executive council for approval and action. This structure helps ensure members are thinking strategically and technologically while making decisions.

At the state level, governance bodies tend to function most efficiently with 50 percent or greater local representation, with the executive council comprised of more senior officials. The bottom up approach to establishing effective governance empowers the committee members to voice their specific concerns to the larger group and the leadership, making decisions truly beneficial to all levels of government. This approach also fosters genuine buy in among all emergency communications stakeholders and functions.

A common practice that spans the committee structures is bringing in subject matter experts to work with the committee members on particularly challenging, sensitive or controversial issues and decisions. At times, the differing needs of committee members are best balanced by a more impartial third party.

## *2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

The driving forces behind establishing governance and needs of the landscape differ from state to state, thus requiring not only these different committee structures, but also differing levels of coordination among the committees and between the committees and the executive council. Strong coordination between the executive council and even regular oversight of the committees is most effective for some governance structures; in most cases, it is recommended. In other cases, somewhat informal coordination or even ad hoc coordination between LMR, broadband, 911 and alerts and warnings committees can be effective and productive.

### **6. KEY ELEMENTS OF A GOVERNANCE BODY**

Governance groups that exist at multiple levels of government can be similar in design, membership, roles and responsibilities, and mechanics, but also contain some nuanced differences. General guidelines in Section 6.1 provide key characteristics for governance groups to address how to:

- Determine a governance body's purpose;
- Establish an effective, representative membership composition;
- Define the roles and responsibilities of SWICs, SPOCs, and 911 Administrators;
- Preserve institutional knowledge and group continuity; and
- Establish efficient governance meeting mechanics.

Most of these recommendations are relevant regardless of the size, location, or purpose of a governance group. Section 6.1 also provides a detailed list of recommended roles and responsibilities for governance groups, guidance on how to determine and establish subcommittees, and how to coordinate with related governance groups. Section 6.2 provides additional information relevant to interstate (multi-state), intrastate (multi-jurisdictional), and local governance group membership compositions and roles and responsibilities.

#### **6.1. Statewide/Territorial Governance Body: Fundamental Components**

Coordination and participation from relevant stakeholders is critical for any state, region or locality to improve interoperable, operable, and continuity of communications. A formalized statewide governance body (e.g., SIGB, SIEC) provides a unified approach across multiple disciplines and jurisdictions to address system implementation and upgrades, funding, and overall support for communications interoperability. Statewide governing bodies provide the framework in which stakeholders can collaborate and make decisions that reflect shared objectives. Rather than proposing a specific one size fits all statewide governance structure, this section provides recommendations for each state to consider when establishing and enhancing an effective statewide governing body.

##### **6.1.1. Key Statewide Points of Contact (SWIC, SPOC, and 911 Administrator)**

SWICs, SPOCs, and 911 Administrators are key partners in enhancing emergency communications governance efforts. These individuals are charged with ensuring that states progress toward enhanced emergency communications capabilities and interoperability through the use of necessary governance structures and communications technology. As communications

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

technology converges with the deployment of the NPSBN and Emergency Services Internet Protocol Networks (ESINets)<sup>4</sup>/ NG911, these individuals' roles are likely to overlap. As such, all three should work together to realize the full potential of current and future communications capabilities and systems. For example, if SWICs are responsible for interoperable communications, and SPOCs are responsible for coordinating FirstNet deployment plans for statewide broadband interoperability, both parties should leverage one another to identify efforts that overlap or complement each other. In some states, one individual is both the SWIC and SPOC. For other states, it is more effective when two different individuals hold the roles of SWIC and SPOC; that determination should be made at the state level with input from the governance body or bodies.

### **SWIC**

The SWIC's primary function is to plan and implement the statewide interoperability program, guided by initiatives outlined in the NECP and SCIP. Although a SWIC is not a mandated position, there are efforts to pass legislation to require states to identify a SWIC or to designate someone to execute the roles and responsibilities of a SWIC to apply for federal grants. As one small part of a complex governance matrix, the SWIC serves as a neutral, unbiased coordinator for interoperability issues within the state, including supporting the

establishment and maintenance of a statewide governing body. Stakeholders indicated that it is important for states with diverse communications systems and geography to include the SWIC on all communications related governance bodies to help identify synergies and bridge gaps between efforts. While the SWIC does not need to serve as a voting member on the governing body, it is important that the SWIC is granted adequate authority and autonomy. Elevating the SWIC position as close to the Governor (or similar tribal or territorial executive) as possible will serve to strengthen the statewide interoperability program through increased visibility and access to high level decision makers within state government. This will also build relationships by bringing together stakeholders across the broad spectrum of public safety communications. Ultimately, the SWIC builds trust across local, state, and federal stakeholders to enhance program efficiency and effectiveness. Specifically, SWIC roles and responsibilities include:

- SWICs:
- Act as the face of interoperable communications.
  - Coordinate with the Governor's office as often as possible to translate technical issues into policy.
  - Serve as statewide radio system project manager.
  - Ensure continuity and strive for longevity with the position.

- Collaborating with state agencies and officials, the Federal Government, bordering states, regional and local emergency response communities (including those designated as DHS Urban Area Security Initiative [UASI]), and tribal nations in long-term strategic planning.

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<sup>4</sup> An ESInet is a managed Internet Protocol network that is used for emergency services communications, and which can be shared by all public safety agencies. It provides the IP transport infrastructure upon which independent application platforms and core functional processes can be deployed, including, but not restricted to, those necessary for providing NG9-1-1 services. Page 75 in the *National Emergency Number Association's Master Glossary of 9-1-1 Terminology*, published July 29, 2014. Available online at [www.nena.org/resource/resmgr/Standards/NENA-ADM-000.18-2014\\_2014072.pdf](http://www.nena.org/resource/resmgr/Standards/NENA-ADM-000.18-2014_2014072.pdf).

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

- Providing a range of assistance to stakeholders in the development of projects, plans, policies, standards, priorities, and guidelines for interoperable communications.
- Communicating regularly with all interoperability stakeholders and partners to ensure transparency and information sharing.
- Coordinating SIEC/SIGB activities as needed to maximize integration and collaboration with other key governance bodies.
- Serving as the point of contact for the Federal Government and industry on issues concerning statewide interoperable communications.
- Seeking guidance, input, and recommendations from the SIEC/SIGB, regional and local governance entities, and state agencies on the SCIP.
- Driving the development, implementation, and regular update of the SCIP.

### **FirstNet SPOC**

mandates that state

Governors designate a SPOC for FirstNet , a position that complements SWIC responsibilities. SPOCs work with FirstNet in their respective state or territory to foster a two-way dialogue throughout planning for the NPSBN. During the initial consultation period, SPOCs assist FirstNet with requirements gathering from key stakeholders, a crucial component to developing a successful state deployment plan. As the consultation process continues, FirstNet will work closely with the SPOC to deliver a network deployment plan to the Governor that meets state needs. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) also relies on the SPOC as the point of contact for the State and Local Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP).<sup>6</sup> Specifically, SPOC roles and responsibilities include:

- Collaborating with state agencies and officials, the federal government, bordering states, regional and local emergency response community, and tribal nations for the creation of state plans.
- Soliciting feedback concerning public safety broadband needs and expectations.
- Playing an advisory role in developing state FirstNet opt-out or opt-in position.
- Ensuring alignment of the SCIP and FirstNet state plans.
- Providing statewide and regional governance groups with comprehensive updates and guidance on key FirstNet and SLIGP developments.
- Serving in an advisory role to governance groups on FirstNet efforts, Long-Term Evolution (LTE) technology, and implementation considerations such as cybersecurity.

### **911 Administrator**

The 911 Administrator supports the statewide implementation and maintenance of 911 services, identifying and recommending the minimum standards for emergency phone systems. The 911 Administrator position is not mandated and may not exist in all states because in many states the 911 function is managed at the local level. The 911 community (state and/or local level) is leading an effort to transition to IP-based technologies and shares a mutual interest with LMR

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<sup>5</sup> *The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012* (Public Law 112-96) created the First Responder Network Authority, as an independent authority within the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, to provide emergency responders with the first high-speed, nationwide network dedicated to public safety: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-112publ96/pdf/PLAW-112publ96.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> The State and Local Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP), administered by NTIA was established to fund state and territory efforts to plan for the nationwide public safety broadband network: [http://www.ntia.doc.gov/slignp/program\\_information](http://www.ntia.doc.gov/slignp/program_information).

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

and broadband governance groups to modernize systems. Despite the systemic differences in purpose, 911 Administrators should work closely with other emergency communications systems to coordinate efforts. Specifically, 911 Administrator roles and responsibilities include:

- Working with 911 governance bodies to ensure system functions are coordinated, comprehensive, and efficient.
- Serving as the primary point of contact for 911 initiatives, including NG911 planning and deployment.
- Liaising with other governance bodies on behalf of 911 governance bodies, Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), telecommunications industry, public safety and telephony associations, and other interested parties.
- Providing statewide and regional governance groups with comprehensive updates and guidance on 911 policies, funding, and operational and technical developments.
- Collaborating with state agencies and officials, the Federal Government, bordering states, regional and local emergency response community, and tribal nations on statewide ESINets.
- Aligning the SCIP, general 911 initiatives and the state NG911 strategic plan.

**6.1.2. Defining Governing Body Roles and Responsibilities**

Roles and responsibilities are usually outlined in the governance body’s legal authority and/or the charter/bylaw. It is vital that governance groups not only understand what is expected of them, but also what is (and is not) within their purview to oversee and influence. This Guide assembles an extensive list of roles and responsibilities, which is divided into two categories based on commonality per the case study findings. Roles and responsibilities that occurred most frequently are grouped below as “Common,” with less frequent described as “Unique.” These are further broken down into LMR (and general), Broadband, and 911.

Creating an effective list of roles and responsibilities for a governance group will require careful consideration of the particular group’s purpose and access to resources. As previously mentioned, no two jurisdictions will necessarily have the same effective list; this references the no one size fits all nature of the recommendations in this Guide. Most governance groups, by virtue of their own unique situation, may find that they require only some of the roles and responsibilities outlined in Table 2.

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

		Common	Unique
<b>LMR/General</b>	<b>Strategic Planning</b>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide strategic planning for the establishment, operation, and management of interoperable communications</li> <li>▶ Oversee the development and implementation of SCIP (or similar official state strategic communications plan)</li> </ul>	
	<b>Infrastructure/Technology</b>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Ensure adequate licensed spectrum is available to accommodate all emergency communications requirements</li> <li>▶ Identify and recommend technologies, network consolidation opportunities, and other resources that enhance interoperability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Participate in and/or influence the emergency communications system lifecycle planning and acquisition including developing requirements and reviewing proposal for Request for Proposals (RFPs) and Request for Quotations (RFQs)</li> </ul>
	<b>Coordination/Policy Development</b>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Determine public safety agencies and private entities to participate in the wireless communications network</li> <li>▶ Promote cooperation and coordination among state, federal, and local public safety agencies and other governance bodies</li> <li>▶ Develop or recommend relevant standards, policies, and procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Facilitate coordination of different emergency services and systems</li> <li>▶ Develop guidelines and standards with adjoining states and, where applicable, tribal nations</li> <li>▶ Establish and recommend training standards or requirements for personnel</li> </ul>
<b>Finance</b>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Promote efficient and effective use of resources</li> <li>▶ Participate in developing justification for grant funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Directly manage or oversee relevant authority responsible for grants or other financial assistance</li> <li>▶ Develop recommendations to the Governor for distribution of state and federal grant funds to regions and localities for communications interoperability investments</li> <li>▶ Develop a system lifecycle funding plan to obtain and maintain funding for system sustainment</li> </ul>	
<b>Education/Outreach/Reporting</b>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Educate and regularly update representatives from the Governor's Office, appropriate legislative committees, and the public regarding the state's interoperability work and recommendations</li> <li>▶ Conduct annual or quarterly assessments including an approach to measure progress for interoperability efforts</li> <li>▶ Advise the State 911 Coordinator or State 911 Program Office</li> <li>▶ Build relationships at the federal, state, and local levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide pertinent information to county, parish, and local 911 Directors (for states without a state-level 911 office)</li> </ul>	
<b>Broadband</b>	<b>Coordination/Policy Development</b>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Promote wireless broadband coordination among local, state, federal, and other agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Improve data and information sharing and coordination of multijurisdictional responses</li> </ul>
	<b>FirstNet</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Prepare for and conduct state and local planning for FirstNet Consultation to gather requirements from stakeholders for developing its deployment plan</li> <li>▶ Advise the Governor to opt-in or opt-out of FirstNet</li> </ul>		

**2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials**

		Common	Unique
<b>911/NG911</b>	<b>Coordination/Policy Development</b>		
	▶ Coordinate with providers, counties, and municipal governments offering 911 service and any other appropriate entity	▶ Develop or recommend standards for the operation of PSAPs	▶ Assist local entities in implementing 911 services ▶ Develop recommendations for PSAP enhancements (e.g., equipment upgrades, virtual/physical PSAP consolidation) ▶ Develop and establish regional bylaws related to 911 ▶ Develop legislation to establish a statewide 911/NG911 entity (for states without a state-level 911 office)
	<b>Strategic Planning</b>		
	▶ Develop and adopt a comprehensive 911/NG911 state plan		
	<b>Finance</b>		
	▶ Review information regarding associated 911 delivery costs ▶ Make recommendations on 911 related expenditures ▶ Manage and administer 911 related funds	▶ Manage collection of delinquent 911 service fees ▶ Oversee the usage of 911 funds by local jurisdictions	
<b>Education/Outreach/Reporting</b>			
▶ Make recommendations on operational governance for the implementation of unified statewide 911 emergency services ▶ Develop and submit annual reports on 911/NG911 progress	▶ Oversee and report on the implementation of laws governing PSAPs		

**Table 2: Governing Body Roles and Responsibilities**

**6.1.3. Structuring an Effective Membership Composition**

There is no strict framework, number of members, or hard-and-fast rule that can be described as a best practice for constructing the membership for an effective governance group. Instead, the particular character and makeup of a governance group should reflect the institutional culture, needs, and specific challenges of the population it represents. Depending on whether the state is deploying a single statewide system or coordinating a system of systems approach, governance architecture will differ, yet it is critical that membership is committed to a unified vision that benefits the public safety community, not individual members. A successful governance model relies heavily on the diversity of skills and background within its membership. Nevertheless, the model should try to limit voting/executive membership to a manageable number (case study participants consistently recommended between 15 and 20 individuals) that will permit effective collaboration and communications to achieve goals and objectives. Limiting the size of the group in this manner ensures adequate representation, while allowing the group to achieve quorum regularly and remain nimble to act quickly and effectively.

Table 3 cites some examples of common and unique departments, agencies, and other organizations found among LMR, broadband, and 911 governance groups. This list is not exhaustive, and it does not identify specific ranges of knowledge, skills, or abilities that should

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

be included. Subject matter expertise specific to the state, locality, or region should always be considered as part of the membership. In some cases, owners and operators of communications critical infrastructure, private industry, or large employers may be a beneficial addition to the governance group to provide supplemental communications capabilities, leverage an existing emergency alert system, or other emergency response actions. However, it is important to recognize the perception of conflicts of interest with such members. Stakeholders suggest that these perceptions could be mitigated and private sector and/or commercial interests and expertise be included in the governance process by having them participate in a non-voting capacity, requiring non-disclosure agreements/non-compete agreements, or ensuring private sector members do not hold leadership positions. Governance groups should align the governing body's roles and responsibilities with its membership composition by taking into consideration the individual's authority, field operational experience, training and education, technical expertise, and familiarity with the subject matter.

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

	Representatives	LMR <sup>[1]</sup>	BBD <sup>[2]</sup>	911 <sup>[3]</sup>	Notes
<b>Local</b>	<b>Common</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Local representatives on statewide LMR, broadband, and 911/NG911 governing bodies provide a critical perspective to needs and solutions for communications interoperability and operability because almost all emergencies start as local incidents and response</li> <li>▶ Local representation should include representatives from all public safety disciplines (e.g., police, fire, EMS)</li> </ul>
	City Representative or Elected Official	X		X	
	County Representative or Elected Official	X		X	
	Local Emergency Management Agency	X			
	Local Police Department/Sheriff's Office	X	X	X	
	Local Fire Department	X	X	X	
	Local EMS	X	X	X	
	Local Utilities	X			
	<b>Unique</b>				
	Local law enforcement communications center manager	X			
Local industry (e.g., Livestock Board)	X				
<b>State/Territory</b>	<b>Common</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ As technologies converge and become IP-based, it is becoming more important to include the CIO or similar role in governing bodies because in most states the CIO is responsible for the network infrastructure and cybersecurity</li> <li>▶ Elected officials represented on governing bodies enable the key decision makers to understand emergency communications priorities and issues, empowers them to be a champion for emergency communications, and fosters relationships between lawmakers and the governance body</li> <li>▶ Education agencies have been included in several governing bodies for several reasons including campus law enforcement officers that need to coordinate with state and local law enforcement and extensive network infrastructure that can be used by LMR and broadband networks</li> <li>▶ Department of Forestry in some states is responsible for public safety, firefighting, and other emergency services on state-operated lands and should be represented in some capacity in the governing body, where applicable, to ensure their response capabilities and needs are considered</li> <li>▶ State Administrative Agency (SAA) is important to include in a governing body because the SAA is responsible for administering federal grants that impact emergency communications including LMR, broadband, and 911/NG911</li> </ul>
	Chief Information Officer	X	X		
	Emergency Management Agency/Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management	X			
	Department of Corrections	X			
	Department of Public Health and Social Services/Health and Human Services	X	X	X	
	Department of Transportation/Highways	X	X		
	General Assembly	X			
	National Guard/Adjutant General	X	X		
	Public Utilities Commission	X	X	X	
	State Police/State Highway Patrol	X	X	X	
	State Fire Association	X	X		
	State EMS Association	X			
	Statewide Interoperability Coordinator	X	X	X	
	State Administrative Agency	X	X	X	
<b>Unique</b>					
Elected Officials	X	X			

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

Representatives		LMR <sup>[1]</sup>	BBD <sup>[2]</sup>	911 <sup>[3]</sup>	Notes
	Department of Education/Education Commission	X	X		
	Department of Forestry or Forestry Commission	X	X		
	State Law Enforcement Communications Center Manager	X			
Federal	<b>Common</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Federal representation is important because federal authorities engage in law enforcement and public safety activities with state and local agencies on a daily basis and provide resources when state and local capabilities are overwhelmed</li> <li>▶ FirstNet may be helpful in assuring that close coordination and collaboration occurs between states and FirstNet as the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network is developed</li> </ul>
	U.S. Department of Homeland Security	X	X		
	Federal Communications Commission/Regional Planning Committee	X	X		
	<b>Unique</b>				
	First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet)		X		
Tribal	<b>Common</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Many tribes are considered sovereign nations that would benefit from interoperable communications with state and local entities as public safety from native and non-native agencies interact daily</li> </ul>
	Tribal Nation/Agency	X	X	X	
	<b>Unique</b>				
	Inter-Tribal Council	X	X		
International	<b>Common</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ International representation in state and territory governing bodies that border other national boundaries to coordinate cross-border issues (e.g., frequency, de-confliction, interoperability, standard operating procedures, training) because incidents do not recognize borders</li> <li>▶ Members could serve as advisors, technical experts, or simply inform efforts as non-voting members</li> </ul>
	International Public Safety Department	X			
	Public safety entities (e.g., law, fire, EMS)	X			
	<b>Unique</b>				
Non-Government	<b>Common</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ American Red Cross and other volunteer groups may play a key role in disaster response and recovery operations that may make them candidates for representation on a statewide governing body to ensure that their resources can achieve interoperable communications when needed and as authorized</li> </ul>
	American Red Cross	X			
	Volunteer groups (e.g., amateur radio)	X			
	Public Safety Association groups and organizations (e.g., APCO, NENA)	X	X	X	
	<b>Unique</b>				

<sup>1</sup> LMR = SIEC or SIGBs (primary focus on Land Mobile Radio issues)

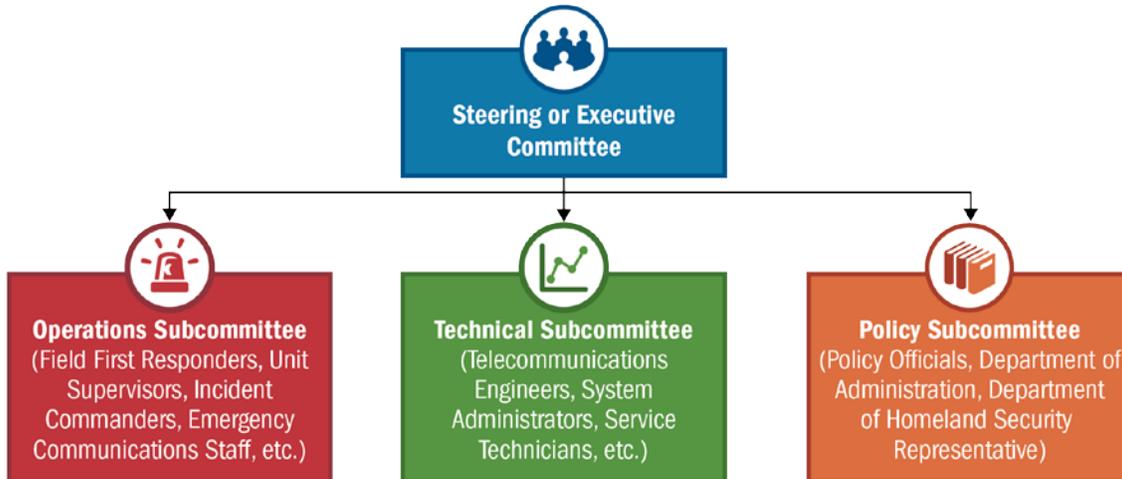
<sup>2</sup> BBD = Broadband Communications (primary focus on the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network planning and deployment)

<sup>3</sup> 911 = 911 Emergency Services (primary focus on Next Generation 911 issues and implementation)

**Table 3: Membership Characteristics of Emergency Communications Governing Bodies**

#### 6.1.4. Creating Relevant Subcommittees/Working Groups

Including all the necessary stakeholders as voting members of an emergency communications governance structure may create a large governing body that would be difficult to manage. A solution to ensuring inclusiveness is to establish groups under the overarching governance body focused on specific topics, as depicted in Figure 6.



**Figure 6: Governance Body Structure with Subcommittees**

These subcommittees/working groups create a forum to bring in a variety of subject matter experts to address issues, contribute constructive input, and participate in planning and decision-making. In many states, standing subcommittees meet regularly to address ongoing issues or projects. However, some states establish subcommittees when needed for a specific project or issue with an expected beginning and end date. In many instances, subcommittees do not restrict membership size, allowing the subcommittees to expand and contract as necessary to meet its purpose. Most states find this approach to be flexible and conducive to bringing as-needed subject matter experts into discussions to make timely decisions and actions. Many states establish subcommittees that align to the Interoperability Continuum lanes,<sup>7</sup> which helps identify and implement interoperability solutions. The following are examples of subcommittees:

- **Operations Subcommittee:** Focuses on determining requirements for and application of operable and interoperable communications capabilities (voice, data, and/or video) to support response efforts. The committee may develop standard operating procedures, training materials, field operating guides, etc. Membership may be comprised of end-users, state, local, and tribal public safety agencies, the SWIC, the SPOC, and the 911 Administrator.
- **Technical Subcommittee:** Focuses on current and future emergency communications technologies to meet users' communications needs. The committee may research and advise the executive committee on technical issues and solutions, cybersecurity risks and mitigation, and protocols for standards. Membership may be comprised of end-users,

<sup>7</sup> The Interoperability Continuum consists of five lanes including governance, standard operating procedures, technology, training and exercises, and usage. More information about the Interoperability Continuum can be found here: [http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/interoperability\\_continuum\\_brochure\\_2.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/interoperability_continuum_brochure_2.pdf)

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

state, local, and tribal public safety agencies, regional representatives, technical SMEs, industry partners, the SWIC, the SPOC, and the 911 Administrator.

- **Policy and Planning Subcommittee:** Focuses on policy recommendations such as MOUs and administrative processes, especially to elected officials, and long-term planning for the successful implementation of interoperable emergency communications systems within the state. This subcommittee may address related legislative and government affairs concerns. Membership may be comprised of state, local, and tribal public safety entities, regional representatives, elected officials, the SWIC, the SPOC, the 911 Administrator, and leaders with authority in the emergency communications ecosystem.
- **Budget and Finance Subcommittee:** Advises the executive committee on all matters related to funding security for emergency communications interoperability, including grants, user fees, bond issues, and reimbursements. Membership may be comprised of procurement specialists, budget planners or officers, grants specialists, state, local, and tribal public safety agencies, and regional representatives.

The following are examples of subcommittees that may be established to focus on priority topic areas or functions for the governance group. These subcommittees may be established temporarily to address an issue or be designated as a standing subcommittee.

- **Broadband Subcommittee or Working Group:** If a statewide broadband governance group does not exist separate from the SIEC, many states choose to create a broadband subcommittee or working group to focus on the planning and implementation of the NPSBN in the state. This type of working group, in conjunction with FirstNet and NTIA, should aim to coordinate statewide efforts, including the decision to opt-in or opt-out of FirstNet. Subcommittee membership may be comprised of the SPOC, state, local, and tribal public safety agencies, State CIO, the SWIC, and the 911 Administrator.
- **911/NG911 Subcommittee:** Some states create standing 911 subcommittees, which recommend best practices and industry standards to the SIEC or other governing board regarding PSAP interoperability, continuity of communications, and enhancements. The subcommittee may also coordinate an NG911 state plan, which includes the migration to and utilization of a statewide NG911 system. This subcommittee may be comprised of the 911 Administrator, PSAPs, state, local, and tribal public safety agencies, and industry partners, when applicable.
- **Ad-hoc Working Groups:** Ad-hoc working groups focus on specific topics or issues for a set amount of time or until designated goals are reached. Ad-hoc committee membership will depend on the focus of the ad-hoc group. Most governance groups benefit from the inclusion of non-voting stakeholders and subject matter experts on such working groups.

Texas Interoperable Communications Coalition (TxICC) Strategic Advisory Groups (SAGs)

TxICC relies on ad-hoc SAGs, which are appointed by the SWIC as needed. The SWIC sends out a Call for Membership to the TxICC membership at large, along with certain expectations regarding time commitments and objectives. Ad-hoc subcommittees like Texas' SAGs provide governance groups with an efficient mechanism for enhancing governance, particularly in focus areas that require in-depth discussions (for example, developing Field Operations Guides, cache radio training, updating Interoperability Channel Plan).

### **6.1.5. Preserving Membership Continuity**

To adapt to the evolving emergency communications landscape, many governance groups infuse new members into their leadership to prevent stagnation, encourage innovation, and promote active participation. While organizational inflexibility may adversely affect the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, continuity is vital in emergency communications governance. To balance new membership, it is important to retain institutional knowledge during governance membership transitions or reorganizations. Individuals with detailed knowledge of the governance group activities and priorities should ideally remain involved to manage risk. The following recommendations help preserve membership continuity and institutional knowledge.

#### **Term Limits**

Term limits should not be set for governance group members, except for elected officials or members of politically appointed committees. Membership continuity is important because identifying and implementing interoperable capabilities and solutions are typically long-term projects. Governance group members build strong working relationships that could be negatively impacted when new members are introduced and new members require time to onboard and build relationships with existing members. As long as governance group members are fulfilling their obligations as representatives and remain members in good standing, their productivity and experience will help maintain a strong governance group, making term limits unnecessary.

#### **Adding or Removing Members**

One common emergency communications governance hurdle is the need to add or remove members. Changing circumstances such as new technology, reorganization of entities, and end of appointment periods may necessitate additional stakeholder involvement; therefore, governance bodies should establish a system for adding new members well in advance of the need to do so. Just as a need may arise to add new members, a need may also arise to remove members due to a lack of involvement, conflict of interest, or a violation of ethics rules. To minimize these instances, governance groups should establish written expectations and ethics rules for members. Additionally, groups should create a formal removal process for members who fail to meet set standards.

#### **Succession Planning**

One of the key tools for driving successful turnover is the development and implementation of a transition plan. This type of plan should clearly articulate the expectations and responsibilities of members in promoting and advancing the goals and objectives of the governance body. An important factor in succession planning for emergency communications governance bodies is that the planning will likely have to be done within the agency that is represented on the governance body, not by the governance body itself.

#### **Membership Alternates**

If voting members of governance groups are unable to make a meeting, allowing them to designate alternates improves the likelihood of achieving quorum, ensuring all important stakeholder groups are represented, and enabling members to vote and pass policies in a timely

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

fashion. If this method is employed, however, it will not be beneficial unless the selected alternate is knowledgeable on the issues and has the authority to make decisions and/or vote.

**Revamping Existing Governance Groups**

The reorganization or creation of a new governance group often results in the loss of two things that positively contribute to the governance process—institutional knowledge and established professional relationships. To minimize the negative effects of changing an existing governance process, it is critical to transition experienced members from the previous governance structure into the new structure. It is also essential to highlight progress that has been made by the previously established group and use its accomplishments as the foundation on which to build a new governance group. It is vital that it be apparent that the new governance group is not a new concept but a continuation of the work towards interoperability.

Utah Statewide Governance Structure

Utah Communication Agency Network's (UCAN) successful implementation of a statewide 800 Megahertz (MHz) system made the Utah State Legislature realize the need for a broader approach to public safety communications to address the convergence of communications technology. Therefore in 2013, legislation passed that revamped UCAN by combining all public safety radio efforts including LMR, broadband, and 911/NG911, and renaming UCAN to the Utah Communications Authority (UCA). The staff that supported UCAN remained to help successfully establish UCA and bring together the necessary stakeholders. The UCA Board has 25 members that includes seven state agencies, 17 local agencies, and a tribal representative. This created a diverse board representative of all jurisdictions and public safety disciplines.

**6.1.6. Establishing Effective Meeting Mechanics**

As defined in Section 1.2, meeting mechanics play an important role in ensuring meeting participation and sharing of meeting outcomes. In addition to using and abiding to Robert's Rules of Order<sup>8</sup>, stakeholders identified two components of meeting mechanics—Meeting Accessibility and Meeting Minutes—that support an effective governance body.

**Meeting Accessibility**

Depending on the number, location, and schedules of the individuals involved, meeting on a regular basis and obtaining quorum can be difficult. An effective governance group sets its meeting schedule to best fit the needs and desires of its members (monthly, quarterly, etc.). The following are recommendations to consider:

- Whenever possible, provide alternative methods to attend meetings including audio dial in, video teleconference, and webinars. While in-person interaction is better for fostering strong business and personal relationships, the convenience of remote access to the meeting increases participation from governance group members.
- The chair should provide the date and time of all meetings a year in advance. Ideally, the chair should send electronic meeting requests to all members. Electronic requests not only improve the likelihood of member participation, but also act as a tool to coordinate documents before the meeting, inform the chair of the likely attendance, and adjust the schedule when necessary.

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<sup>8</sup> For additional information on Robert's Rules of Order, refer to: <http://www.robertsrules.org/>.

## *2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

- Consider rotating the meeting location throughout the state to increase accessibility for members and other stakeholders. If meetings rotate throughout the state, members can share the travel time and stakeholders from across the state receive more opportunities to participate.

### **Meeting Minutes**

Recording governance group meeting minutes serves several purposes that assist the governance process. Meeting minutes:

- Inform members who were not present at a meeting about the business discussed, motions made, and vote results.
- Serve as a record of what occurred at a meeting.
- Promote transparency with the general public which can result in valuable feedback to the governance group.
- Improve stakeholder engagement and governance group legitimacy by improving transparency.
- Serve as an action tracker to promote the completion of any identified tasks or projects.

Note taking should be assigned to an individual in the governing body (i.e., administrative assistant for the governing body) who uses an agreed upon template to capture discussion topics, key outcomes, and action items with associated responsible parties. The outcomes and action items should be easily readable and digestible by membership. Highlighting this information is beneficial so members are clear on what next steps should be completed after each meeting.

### **6.1.7. Coordinating with Related Governance Groups**

Governance groups exist at all levels of government that are focused on different aspects of emergency communications. These divergent governance groups should understand what other groups are working on and remain in constant communication through numerous channels, including the SWIC, SPOC, and 911 Administrator. Coordination between governance groups leads to:

- Avoidance of duplicative or conflicting efforts;
- Avoidance of the omission of related stakeholders or efforts;
- Development of an understanding of how related and connected systems are managed/designed; and
- Cohesion towards a unified goal.

Governance groups that lack coordination face various challenges, including competing for funding and disagreeing on policy. This limited coordination results from a lack of trust and frequent misunderstanding over initiatives and resources. The following are strategies to consider for fostering coordination between related governance groups:

- **Include a representative from other governance groups** to secure adequate representation and facilitate information sharing, thus promoting cohesive action and synergy around shared goals. Even participation in an awareness capacity, for example,

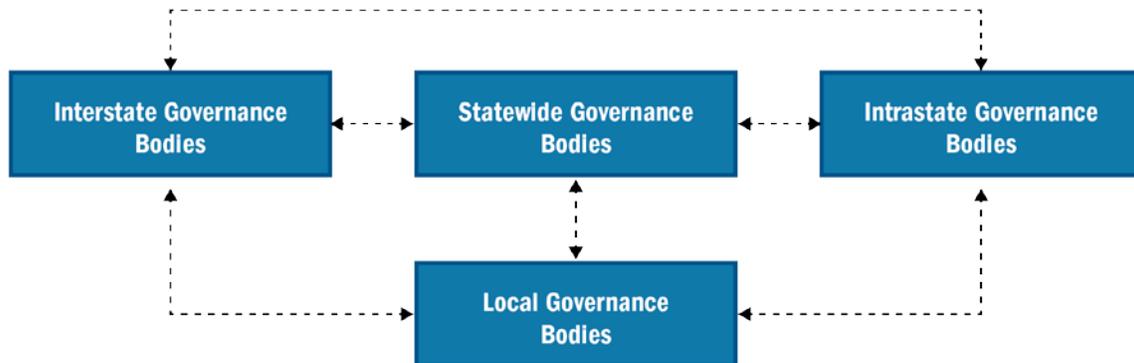
*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

non-voting members, will provide educational opportunities and increase the potential for collaboration.

- **Send a representative to brief other governance groups** to provide updates on substantive actions or issues, promoting communications, collaboration and shared resources.
- **Have governance group representatives brief the same individual**, who will serve as a central point of contact and clearinghouse for related information. The individual must exhibit authority over the groups to address acts of omission or duplication found when ineffective coordination and competition exist. In many cases this would be the SWIC or the SPOC.

**6.2. Interstate, Intrastate, and Local Governance Bodies: Fundamental Components**

The key characteristics described in the previous section are relevant to all governance groups regardless of the size, location, or function. The following sections describe the nuanced differences that should be considered for interstate, intrastate, and local governance groups. While much of the information in Section 6.1 still applies, stakeholders contributing to this Guide considered select factors essential for establishing effective interstate, intrastate, and local governance groups. Interstate refers to communications among agencies from different jurisdictions and across state lines. Some governance bodies also address communications across international lines. Intrastate refers to communications among agencies from different jurisdictions generally within the same state. Figure 7 demonstrates that all types of multijurisdictional governance bodies should coordinate with each other as needed and appropriate.



**Figure 7: Coordination Among Statewide, Interstate, Intrastate, and Local Governance Bodies**

Key factors for interstate, intrastate, and local governance bodies are:

- Establishing a legal authority through resolution, law, joint powers agreements, or MOU to provide the governance group with legal backing and support from senior leaders and elected officials.
- Identifying a neutral administrative agent to provide operational support including, but not limited to, meeting coordination, financial and grants management, and acquisition and procurement of equipment to maximize economies of scale.
- Developing a shared strategic plan with agreed upon activities, dedicated resources, and timelines to help the governance group reach its end goal(s).

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

- Diversifying membership composition (e.g., representatives from multiple disciplines and communications functions) to provide different perspectives for operational, technical, and policy solutions to enhance decision making.
- Ensuring members have decision-making authority and policymakers and operational personnel are well versed in the mutual aid process.
- Developing and maintaining an inventory of available resources prior to disasters to better identify communications gaps and shape future investments.
- Fostering communications during the entire disaster lifecycle while increasing capacity by identifying and bringing in specialized support teams and resources during large-scale events.

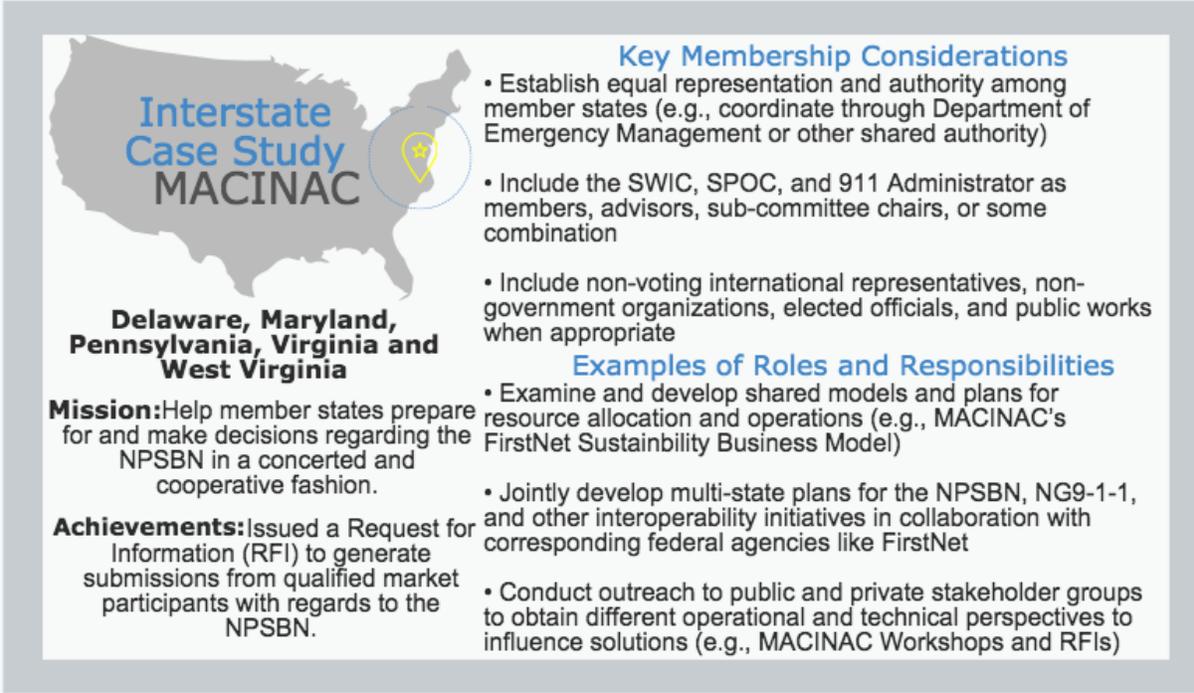
**6.2.1. Interstate (Multi-state, International)**

In times of emergency, insufficient coordination among states prevents interoperability and thus the ability to gain access to essential support or resources. Establishing robust multi-state governance structures is critical to enhancing relationships, cooperation, and planning for incidents that impact multiple states. An increasing number of states have developed or are developing guidelines and standards to support interoperability with adjoining states and provinces. Below are two examples of such interstate governance groups.

**Mid-Atlantic Consortium for Interoperable Nationwide Advanced Communications**

The Mid-Atlantic Consortium for Interoperable Nationwide Advanced Communications (MACINAC) is a multi-state, regional approach to deployment and operation of the Mid-Atlantic portion of the NPSBN. The governance group developed a charter and bylaws that outlines membership and roles and responsibilities. The SWIC and SPOC from each of the five member states serve on the MACINAC to coordinate activities, adopt common approaches, and simplify the consultation process. The MACINAC leverages annual broadband workshops and release of requests for information to obtain input from federal and commercial entities as the member states determine how to prepare for the implementation of the NPSBN. Current and past MACINAC projects and efforts include regional meetings with FirstNet, the development of a regional sustainability business model for integration with FirstNet state plans, and outreach to public and private stakeholder groups for input on Mid-Atlantic public safety broadband efforts. At the 2015 MACINAC Public Safety Broadband Workshop, SWICs and SPOCs held an hour-long regional round table discussion on MACINAC activities in addition to working group sessions on next steps and initiatives. The MACINAC efforts are funded through FEMA preparedness grants, and a project team from the All Hazards Consortium and several private contractors administratively support the MACINAC.

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*



**Interstate Case Study  
MACINAC**

**Delaware, Maryland,  
Pennsylvania, Virginia and  
West Virginia**

**Mission:** Help member states prepare for and make decisions regarding the NPSBN in a concerted and cooperative fashion.

**Achievements:** Issued a Request for Information (RFI) to generate submissions from qualified market participants with regards to the NPSBN.

**Key Membership Considerations**

- Establish equal representation and authority among member states (e.g., coordinate through Department of Emergency Management or other shared authority)
- Include the SWIC, SPOC, and 911 Administrator as members, advisors, sub-committee chairs, or some combination
- Include non-voting international representatives, non-government organizations, elected officials, and public works when appropriate

**Examples of Roles and Responsibilities**

- Examine and develop shared models and plans for resource allocation and operations (e.g., MACINAC's FirstNet Sustainability Business Model)
- Jointly develop multi-state plans for the NPSBN, NG9-1-1, and other interoperability initiatives in collaboration with corresponding federal agencies like FirstNet
- Conduct outreach to public and private stakeholder groups to obtain different operational and technical perspectives to influence solutions (e.g., MACINAC Workshops and RFIs)

### **Northeast Cross-Border Interoperability Group**

SWICs and first responders from Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont formed a regional working group, the Northeast Cross-Border Interoperability Group (NCBIG), to facilitate progress toward common goals, promote uniformity where possible, and eliminate duplication of efforts. Localized efforts to address communications issues with Canada impacted interoperable communications among U.S. agencies on the U.S. side. As a result, these states established a regional working group to limit the different formal and informal interoperability solutions that were implemented at the local, regional, or statewide level based on the unique environment and communications challenges. NCBIG is not formally established by resolution or law and does not have a charter; however, it is a real world example of an ad-hoc group that was created to jointly address a regional interoperability gap. For example, NCBIG addressed the difficulty with frequency coordination and licensing resulting from Line A<sup>9</sup> restrictions that hamper the ability to establish effective communications during incidents or events in close proximity to the United States/Canadian border. NCBIG works closely with Canada to address these issues and cross-border incidents and network consolidation through the Canada – United States (CANUS) Communications Interoperability Working Group (CIWG). Participating members understand the need and value for increased coordination due to licensure and channel use issues within the region and across international borders. Through the NCBIG, members, especially those in rural areas with limited funding, successfully leverage collective influence to address resource issues and push for commonality with international and Federal authorities such as Industry Canada and the Federal Communications Commission Regional Planning Councils.

<sup>9</sup> Issues that require additional Canadian frequency coordination if the area is within a designated distance from the Canadian-U.S. border.

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

**6.2.2. Intrastate/Local**

Intrastate and local governing bodies generally focus on tactical interoperability to demonstrate response level emergency communications for planned and unplanned events. Examples of functions performed by intrastate and local groups include developing procedures, conducting training and train-the-trainer programs, designing and implementing exercises and drills, managing communications working/talk groups, documenting regional shared systems and shared channels, and procuring and deploying portable communications equipment. When standing up multi-jurisdictional governing bodies, having a neutral/objective entity with the ability to provide administrative support is recommended as individual jurisdictions may not have the capacity or funds to provide such services. Having representation at the state governance body is also recommended to ensure local and/or regional body concerns and accomplishments are represented and addressed at the statewide level.

**New York City Interagency Communications Committee**

In 2002, New York City established the New York City Interagency Communications Committee (NYC ICC) as a result of communications shortfalls from the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. The NYC Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and the NYC Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) chair the regional group. Other members include police and fire departments in the region, port and transportation authority, and other state and federal government agencies. The NYC ICC has successfully convened disparate agencies, consisting of over 100 members, to work toward a common goal, where membership is wide-ranging and equal, with no one agency having more importance than another.

The NYC ICC recommends, tests, and implements communications solutions to enhance region-wide interoperability. The region has sustained numerous disasters impacting millions of residents and billions in economic damages requiring multi-jurisdictional response. Examples of disasters include terrorist attacks, aircraft and ferry crashes, crane collapses, blackouts, and many storms including Hurricane Sandy. To better respond to all-hazard disasters, its members meet regularly to develop strategic and tactical plans that are adopted by member jurisdictions, participate in multi-jurisdictional training and exercises, and centrally coordinate funding-related investment decisions. Additionally, the NYC ICC provides technical guidance in the usage and deployment of interoperable communications assets as defined in tactical plans.

**Upper Peninsula 911 Authority**

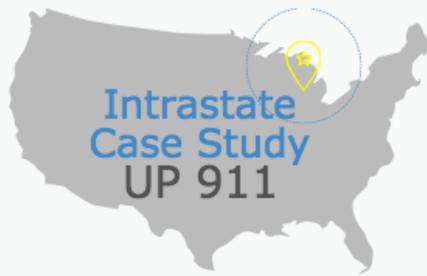
The Upper Peninsula 911 Authority (UPA) in Michigan is an example of a governance group that formed organically by using an existing legal authority to deploy NG911 virtual consolidation. The UPA is responsible for coordinating and providing a variety of services such as 911 emergency calls and service dispatching across the region. The UPA used an existing authority, Urban Cooperation Agreement Act, to pass a common resolution within each of the 15 member counties. The Upper Peninsula Commission for Area Progress (UPCAP) was identified as a single, neutral administrative agent that serves on behalf of the UPA member counties, particularly as each of the county commissioners had a working relationship with the authority. UPCAP's role includes providing meeting coordination, staff to oversee the authority, financial resources to manage the books, and coordinate audits. UPCAP also provided the legal authority to seek grants and sign contracts to own equipment. This was viewed as critical for the authority

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

to own most of the equipment and oversee the maintenance contracts that would be shared among all of the 15 counties. What has led to the group's success in deploying NG911 in the Upper Peninsula and having a high-functioning governance body is mainly due to the diverse nature of its members that represent a wide array of policy and operational background and expertise. UPA representatives include 911 directors, county commissioners, county administrators, and emergency managers.

Benefits of the UPA Governance Structure

- Increase financial stability and local control of the 911 system.
- Increase coordination by sharing dispatch services throughout the region to provide redundancy.
- Promote economies of scale by offering the ability to negotiate a standard price for the member counties.
- Adopt 911/NG911-related open standards to promote interoperability with other systems.
- Develop model contracts and county 911 plans to save legal services and staff costs and improving consistency and effectiveness.
- Develop protocols to improved efficiency and effectiveness of dispatch services.
- Serve as one representative group and a single 911 policymaking voice for the Upper Peninsula.



**Upper Peninsula,  
Michigan**

**Mission:** coordinating and providing a variety of services to the participating municipalities with respect to 911 emergency call answering and service dispatching within the Upper Peninsula of Michigan

**Achievements:** Successfully designed, funded, and deployed an NG911 ready network.

**Key Membership Considerations**

- Ensure equity across participating entities through equal representation of memberships' senior officials
- Include state representative (e.g., SWIC, 911 Administrator, SPOC) to share pertinent information that can impact state efforts and rotate an elected member on the statewide governance structure
- Diversify membership base to include technical and operational experts with different perspectives to enhance solutions

**Examples of Roles and Responsibilities**

- Maintain regular communication with other counties and the state regarding operations and user needs
- Develop a business or sustainability model that is effective for all member entities and a plan (e.g., identified authority, issued RFP) to execute the purpose of the governance group
- Determine potential funding methods for the region to implement solutions (e.g., UPCAP/UPA applied for grants)

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

**San Diego-Imperial County Radio Communications System**

The San Diego-Imperial County Radio Communications System (RCS) is a partnership that serves public safety agencies in the City and County of San Diego and suburban Imperial County. Following a series of informal emergency communications officials' conversations, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors authorized a "Participating Agency Agreement" (PAA). The PAA authorized the RCS Board to administer the system and enabled local departments and agencies to join through equity or subscription for services. RCS focuses on insufficient spectrum availability, unmet interoperability requirements, and the need to modernize public safety communications capability to gain both voice and data communications.

RCS played an important role in incident stabilization and lifesaving efforts

In 2001, 13 public safety agencies, consisting of 250 law enforcement officers and 100 fire and emergency medical services personnel, responded to back-to-back school shootings. RCS provided smooth and seamless interoperability, which allowed them to quickly gain situational awareness, develop a common operating picture, prepare and execute an incident action plan, and facilitate rescues. The RCS Board ensured channel assignments and programming were in place to support a major emergency and first responders were well trained and proficient in using the resources. San Diego Sheriff's officials said, "We believe the RCS was our most important tool in making sure the injured were found and attended to quickly."

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*



The graphic features a map of the United States with a lightbulb icon over the San Diego region. The text 'Local Case Study RCS' is prominently displayed in blue and black.

**Local Case Study  
RCS**

**City of San Diego, San Diego County, and Imperial County**

**Mission:** Provide users with seamless communication with their own and other public safety/service agencies in the San Diego area.

**Achievements:** Delivers voice and data communications to 217 agencies and 15 emergency communications centers over a 9,000 square mile area that includes 185 miles of our national border with Mexico.

**Key Membership Considerations**

- Allow agencies to join as equity partners or as customers
- Include Chief or Department Head-level members from fire, law enforcement, and public service leaders
- Allow members to also represent peer agencies

**Examples of Roles and Responsibilities**

- Maintain day-to-day operations of the system
- Jointly draft and individually ratify an equal Participating Agency Agreement (PAA), which outlines the basic standards of the partnership relationship
- Develop a system lifecycle funding model to sustain the network (e.g., RCS established a per user model)

Interstate, intrastate, and local governance bodies are critical components of the governance landscape because they provide a means for jurisdictions facing similar communications challenges to jointly identify and implement effective and efficient solutions. These governance bodies also provide an avenue for state representatives such as SWICs and SPOCs and governance bodies to better understand and include local and region-specific communications issues and capabilities into statewide interoperability strategic plans, policies, and procedures.

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

## **7. CONCLUSION**

No two emergency incidents are exactly the same. When responding to incidents, different emergency response agencies bring their own unique set of communications capabilities and protocols. Given the continuing evolution of emergency communications capabilities, everything and everyone is becoming more interdependent due to the convergence of technology. As such, public safety must coordinate efforts to achieve operable, interoperable, and reliable communications across jurisdictions and disciplines utilizing the new communications capabilities and avoiding stove-piped systems.

Collaboration and participation from relevant emergency response stakeholders is essential for any state, region, tribal nation, territory, or locality to improve and ensure future interoperable communications. A formalized governance system provides a unified approach across multiple disciplines, jurisdictions, and functions to allow for understanding and evaluation of existing communications capabilities, identification of gaps, and development and implementation of a coordinated plan to address and prioritize gaps, re-align resources, investments, and staffing. Governance and coordination provide the framework for stakeholders to collaborate and make decisions that reflect shared objectives.

The recommendations in this Guide help identify important considerations to further define the membership, responsibilities, and decision-making procedures for a communications interoperability governance system. These recommendations are designed to be modified according to the unique needs and circumstances of a particular state, territory, region, or locality, as there is no one size fits all approach to emergency communications governance. Ongoing review and adjustment of the governance approach, system, and process are necessary as the emergency communications landscape continues to evolve.

Successful planning, implementation, and execution of a governance structure requires dedicated time and resources. While this investment may appear daunting, it will deliver solutions that benefit the public safety community and ultimately citizens of this Nation. The Governance Guide, developed with and for use by emergency communications officials, offers the guidance needed to successfully establish and sustain state, local, tribal, territorial, interstate, intrastate, and local governance structures.

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

## **8. REFERENCES**

### [First Responder Network Authority \(FirstNet\)](#)

FirstNet is an independent authority within the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). FirstNet is responsible for building, operating, and maintaining the first high-speed, nationwide wireless broadband network dedicated to public safety.

<http://www.firstnet.gov/>

### [FirstNet Consultation and Single Points of Contact \(SPOCs\)](#)

The FirstNet Consultation website highlights state and local consultation planning topics and provides an updated list of SPOCs. Each State or territory designated a SPOC to engage FirstNet and serve as the coordinator of the State and Local Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP) funds.

<http://firstnet.gov/consultation>

### [Creating a Charter for a Multi-Agency Communications Interoperability Committee](#)

This tool provides guidance for developing charter documents for multi-agency communications interoperability committees. The document provides a recommended charter structure with suggested headings for each section, and each section poses questions to consider when writing content for a charter. Sample paragraphs are included for reference.

<http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Creating%20a%20Charter%20for%20a%20Multi-Agency%20Communication%20Interoperability%20Committee.pdf>

### [Interoperability Planning for Wireless Broadband](#)

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) created this document to help Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (SWICs) plan for wireless broadband use in emergency communications. It provides an overview of broadband technology, guidance on interoperability planning for broadband, best practices from waiver jurisdictions, and regional governance considerations. Although targeted toward SWICs, the topics are relevant to all public safety stakeholders.

[http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/interoperability\\_planning\\_wireless\\_broadband\\_web\\_111711.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/interoperability_planning_wireless_broadband_web_111711.pdf)

### [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) Writing Guide](#)

This SAFECOM tool provides guidance for developing MOUs and is designed to help communities interested in establishing formal agreements to address multi-organization coordination and communications. The document is laid out in a recommended MOU structure with suggested headings for each section, and each section poses questions to consider during content development.

<http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Writing%20Guide%20for%20a%20Memorandum%20of%20Understanding.pdf>

## *2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

### [National Association of 911 Administrators \(NASNA\) Contacts](#)

The 911 Administrator manages the state or territory's 911 functions as determined by state legislation. The official title and role of this position may vary by state or territory. NASNA provides an updated list of 911 Administrators, along with contact information.

<http://www.nasna911.org/state-911-contacts>

### [2014 National Emergency Communications Plan NECP](#)

OEC published the original [2008 NECP](#) to accelerate improvements for public safety communications nationwide. In 2014, OEC updated the document in coordination with federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, and private sector stakeholders to reflect the changing emergency communications ecosystem. OEC centered the NECP on five goals that provide continuity with the first national plan and align with the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum.

2014 NECP:

[http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2014%20National%20Emergency%20Communications%20Plan\\_October%2029%202014.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2014%20National%20Emergency%20Communications%20Plan_October%2029%202014.pdf)

2008 NECP:

[http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/national\\_emergency\\_communications\\_plan.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/national_emergency_communications_plan.pdf)

### [Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\) Grant Circulars](#)

OMB provides numerous grant resources on the OMB Grants Management website, including information on grants circulars, related forms and policies, and useful grant links.

[https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants\\_default/](https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_default/)

### [OEC Technical Assistance Program](#)

The OEC Technical Assistance (TA) program serves all 56 states and territories and provides direct support to state, local, and tribal emergency responders and government officials through the development and delivery of training, tools, and onsite assistance to advance public safety interoperable communications capabilities. OEC recently updated the TA catalog with offerings specifically focused on the NPSBN and NG911 in addition to LMR.

<http://www.dhs.gov/office-emergency-communications-technical-assistance-program>

### [Regional Interoperable Communications Plan \(RICP\) Template](#)

This OEC RICP template assists states with regional strategic planning efforts by documenting strategies for achieving communications operability and interoperability.

[http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/RICP\\_Template%20Final.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/RICP_Template%20Final.pdf)

### [SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum](#)

The Interoperability Continuum is designed to assist emergency response agencies and policy makers to plan and implement interoperability solutions for data and voice communications.

This tool identifies five critical success elements that must be addressed to achieve a sophisticated interoperability solution: governance, standard operating procedures (SOPs), technology, training and exercises, and usage of interoperable communications. Emergency response agencies at the federal, state, local, and tribal level can use the Interoperability Continuum to track progress in strengthening interoperable communications.

[http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/interoperability\\_continuum\\_brochure\\_2.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/interoperability_continuum_brochure_2.pdf)

## *2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

### [SAFECOM Guidance on Emergency Communications Grants](#)

The 2015 SAFECOM grants guide provides current information on emergency communications policies, eligible costs, best practices, and technical standards for state, local, tribal, and territorial grantees investing federal funds in emergency communications projects. Best practices cover LMR, NG911, public safety broadband, and alerts and warnings.

<http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/FINAL%20FY%202015%20SAFECOM%20Guidance%20V2%20040815%20508C.pdf>

### [National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators](#)

Established in July 2010, the NCSWIC assists state and territory interoperability coordinators with promoting the critical importance of interoperable communications and the sharing of best practices to ensure the highest level of interoperable communications across the nation.

<http://www.dhs.gov/safecom/NCSWIC>

### [Statewide Communications Interoperability Planning \(SCIP\) Guide](#)

This document presents information about the role, system, and operations of statewide governing bodies that are charged with improving communications interoperability across a state.

[https://transition.fcc.gov/pshs/docs/clearinghouse/GovernanceandSCIPImplementationGuide\\_FINAL\\_12\\_19\\_08.pdf](https://transition.fcc.gov/pshs/docs/clearinghouse/GovernanceandSCIPImplementationGuide_FINAL_12_19_08.pdf)

### [Standard Operating Procedures \(SOP\) Writing Guide](#)

This SAFECOM guide assists communities that want to establish formal written guidelines or instructions for incident response. Each section poses questions to consider when writing content for standard operating procedures. Sample paragraphs are included for reference.

<http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Writing%20Guide%20for%20Standard%20Operating%20Procedures.pdf>

### [The National 911 Program](#)

The Program's mission is to provide federal leadership and coordination in supporting and promoting optimal 911 services. The National 911 Program, in coordinating the efforts of states, technology providers, public safety officials, 911 professionals and other groups, seeks to ensure a smooth, reliable and cost-effective transition to a 911 system that takes advantage of new communications technologies to enhance public safety nationwide.

<http://www.911.gov/>

### [The National 911 Program NG911 Standards and Identification Review](#)

This living document reviews and promotes common standards, rules, and guidelines for PSAPs as they transition from legacy 911 to NG911. The contents were vetted by the standards development organizations mentioned within the document to assess the status of specific standards.

<http://www.911.gov/pdf/NG911-Standards-Identification-and-Analysis-March2015.pdf>

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

**Highlighted Inter-State Bodies**

[Mid-Atlantic Consortium for Interoperable Nationwide Advanced Communications \(MACINAC\)](#)

MACINAC is a multi-state, regional approach to deployment and operation of the Mid-Atlantic portion of the NPSBN. The SWIC and SPOC from each of the five member states serve on the MACINAC to coordinate activities, adopt common approaches, and simplify the consultation process.

<http://www.macinac.org/>

Northeast Cross-Border Interoperability Group

SWICs and first responders from Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont formed this regional working group to facilitate progress toward common goals, promote uniformity where possible, and eliminate duplication of efforts.

**Highlighted Intrastate/Local Bodies**

[New York City Interagency Communications Committee](#)

In 2002, New York City established NYC ICC as a result of communications shortfalls from the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. The NYC ICC recommends, tests, and implements communications solutions to enhance region-wide interoperability.

[http://oec-support.lafayettegroup.org/sub/cd/GuidanceDocs/documents/NYC%20Governance%20case%20study\\_2011.pdf](http://oec-support.lafayettegroup.org/sub/cd/GuidanceDocs/documents/NYC%20Governance%20case%20study_2011.pdf)

[Upper Peninsula 911 Authority](#)

Michigan’s UPA is an example of a governance group that formed organically by using an existing legal authority to deploy NG911 virtual consolidation. UPA is responsible for coordinating and providing a variety of services such as 911 emergency calls and service dispatching across the region.

[http://www.upcap.org/programs\\_services/911.html](http://www.upcap.org/programs_services/911.html)

[San Diego-Imperial County Radio Communications System](#)

The San Diego-Imperial County RCS is a partnership that serves public safety agencies in the City and counties of San Diego and suburban Imperial County.

<https://www.rcs800mhz.org/web/>

Case Study Candidate	Governance Body Bylaws or Charter Link
Arkansas	<a href="http://www.awin.arkansas.gov/resources/Documents/AiccCharter.pdf">http://www.awin.arkansas.gov/resources/Documents/AiccCharter.pdf</a>
Louisiana	<a href="http://gohsep.la.gov/Portals/0/Documents/LWIN/PoliciesPlans/10ByLawsFINAL120908.pdf">http://gohsep.la.gov/Portals/0/Documents/LWIN/PoliciesPlans/10ByLawsFINAL120908.pdf</a>
Minnesota	<a href="https://dps.mn.gov/entity/srb/governance/Pages/bylaws.aspx">https://dps.mn.gov/entity/srb/governance/Pages/bylaws.aspx</a>
New York	<a href="http://www.dhSES.ny.gov/oiec/siec/documents/SIEC-Bylaws-Adopted-Dec-14.pdf">http://www.dhSES.ny.gov/oiec/siec/documents/SIEC-Bylaws-Adopted-Dec-14.pdf</a>
Ohio	<a href="http://siec.ohio.gov/Portals/0/pdf/SIECBylaws2013.pdf">http://siec.ohio.gov/Portals/0/pdf/SIECBylaws2013.pdf</a>
Texas	<a href="https://casnextgen.com/pslib/index.php/webview?docid=159">https://casnextgen.com/pslib/index.php/webview?docid=159</a>
Utah	<a href="http://www.uca911.org/images/docs/BYLAWS_OF_UCA_approved_October_28_2014.pdf">http://www.uca911.org/images/docs/BYLAWS_OF_UCA_approved_October_28_2014.pdf</a>
Washington	State E911 Advisory Committee: <a href="http://mil.wa.gov/uploads/pdf/e911/advisory_committee_bylaws_april_2011.pdf">http://mil.wa.gov/uploads/pdf/e911/advisory_committee_bylaws_april_2011.pdf</a> State Emergency Communications Committee:

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

<b>Case Study Candidate</b>	<b>Governance Body Bylaws or Charter Link</b>
	<a href="http://mil.wa.gov/uploads/pdf/EAS%20state%20plan/secc%20bylaws.pdf">http://mil.wa.gov/uploads/pdf/EAS%20state%20plan/secc%20bylaws.pdf</a> SIEC: <a href="https://ocio-website-files.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/SIEC%20Bylaws%20with%20Amendments%20V2%205.docx">https://ocio-website-files.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/SIEC%20Bylaws%20with%20Amendments%20V2%205.docx</a>
Wyoming	<a href="http://pscc.wyoming.gov/c_rules.aspx">http://pscc.wyoming.gov/c_rules.aspx</a>

<b>Case Study Candidate</b>	<b>Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC) or Equivalent Governance Body Link</b>
Arkansas	<a href="http://www.awin.arkansas.gov/resources/Pages/default.aspx">http://www.awin.arkansas.gov/resources/Pages/default.aspx</a>
Delaware	<a href="http://delnet.delaware.gov/siec.shtml">http://delnet.delaware.gov/siec.shtml</a>
Iowa	<a href="https://isicsb.iowa.gov/">https://isicsb.iowa.gov/</a>
Louisiana	<a href="http://www.gohsep.la.gov/interop.aspx">http://www.gohsep.la.gov/interop.aspx</a>
Minnesota	<a href="https://dps.mn.gov/entity/srb/Pages/default.aspx">https://dps.mn.gov/entity/srb/Pages/default.aspx</a>
Nevada	<a href="http://dem.nv.gov/homeland_security/Nevada_Public_Safety_Communications_Committee_(NPSCC)/">http://dem.nv.gov/homeland_security/Nevada_Public_Safety_Communications_Committee_(NPSCC)/</a>
New York	<a href="http://www.dhSES.ny.gov/oiec/">http://www.dhSES.ny.gov/oiec/</a>
Ohio	<a href="http://siec.ohio.gov/">http://siec.ohio.gov/</a>
Texas	<a href="http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/LawEnforcementSupport/communications/interop/txicc/index.htm">http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/LawEnforcementSupport/communications/interop/txicc/index.htm</a>
Upper Peninsula, Michigan	<a href="http://www.upcap.org/programs_services/911.html">http://www.upcap.org/programs_services/911.html</a>
U.S. Virgin Islands	<a href="http://www.vitema.gov/about/divisions/index.html">http://www.vitema.gov/about/divisions/index.html</a>
Utah	<a href="http://www.uca911.org/">http://www.uca911.org/</a>
Washington	<a href="https://ocio.wa.gov/about-ocio/siec-state-interopability-executive-committee">https://ocio.wa.gov/about-ocio/siec-state-interopability-executive-committee</a>
Wyoming	<a href="http://pscc.wyoming.gov/index.aspx">http://pscc.wyoming.gov/index.aspx</a>

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

**9. ACRONYM LIST**

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Definition</b>
CIO	Chief Information Officer
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DoITT	Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications
ESINets	Emergency Services Internet Protocol Networks
FirstNet	First Responders Network Authority
IP	Internet Protocol
IT	Information Technology
LMR	Land Mobile Radio
MACINAC	Mid-Atlantic Consortium for Interoperable Nationwide Advanced Communications
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCBIG	Northeast Cross-Border Interoperability Group
NCSWIC	National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators
NECP	National Emergency Communications Plan
NG911	Next Generation 911
NPSBN	Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network
NTIA	National Telecommunications and Information Administration
NYC ICC	New York City Interagency Communications Committee
OEC	Office of Emergency Communications
OEM	Office of Emergency Management
PSAP	Public Safety Answering Points
RCS	Radio Communications System
RFP	Request for Proposal
RFQ	Request for Quotation
SAA	State Administrative Agency
SAG	Strategic Advisory Group
SCIP	Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan
SIEC	Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee
SIGB	Statewide Interoperability Governing Bodies

*2015 Emergency Communications Governance Guide for  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*

SLIGP	State and Local Implementation Grant Program
SPOC	Single Points of Contact
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SWIC	Statewide Interoperability Coordinator
TxICC	Texas Interoperable Communications Coalition
UASI	Urban Area Security Initiative
UCA	Utah Communications Authority
UCAN	Utah Communication Agency Network
UPA	Upper Peninsula 911 Authority
UPCAP	Upper Peninsula Commission for Area Progress