



# Strategic Planning for State and Local Public Safety Organizations

## Emergency Communications by the Numbers



### OVERVIEW

The [National Emergency Communications Plan \(NECP\)](#) is the nation’s strategic roadmap for public safety organizations to align interoperability goals with specific actionable steps and defined mechanisms to measure achievements. The planning process allows organizations to be proactive by prioritizing existing needs and identifying future investments to optimize interoperable communications. Effective strategic planning focuses on the strategic direction and alignment of all emergency communications-related technology (voice and data) within an organization or jurisdiction as well as the broader community of stakeholders.

At the state level, the Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP) is the document that defines the strategic direction for interoperable and emergency communications within a state or territory. It helps states and territories focus efforts and resources on investments necessary to achieve emergency communications operability, interoperability, and continuity. In fact, the Department of Homeland Security emergency communications grants programs<sup>1</sup> require applicants to demonstrate how their request correlates to the vision in the SCIP. Other federal grant programs strongly encourage organizations to review their state or territory’s SCIP to ensure their proposals support statewide plans. Each state’s Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) provides a single point of coordination for interoperable communications that assists with development and implementation of a SCIP, as well as assures alignment with the goals and objectives in the NECP.

Strategic plans need to be periodically updated to ensure their priorities align with the current environment. However, according to the [SAFECOM Nationwide Survey \(SNS\)](#)<sup>2</sup>, few organizations update their strategic plans on a regular basis. This document reviews SNS data on the gaps in strategic planning and the benefits of coordinating with the state government on emergency communications planning efforts. This document also provides recommended actions in the NECP that public safety organizations can take to improve their planning process, along with a list of planning resources.



Only **6.6 percent** of organizations update their strategic plans with their state government annually, after system upgrades, or after events that test organizational capabilities

### BENEFITS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

The SNS data shows that organizations that work with their state government to review their strategic plans annually, after systems upgrades, or after events that tested organizational capabilities are more likely to report better outcomes in their funding and investments for emergency communications. These organizations are:



Up to **59 percent** more likely to have sufficient funding for network systems and equipment investment, upgrade, and maintenance



Up to **90 percent** more likely to have sufficient funding for interoperability solutions



**19 percent** more likely to secure appropriated funding and **17 percent** more likely to secure grant funding



Up to **42 percent** less likely to rely upon mission critical communications systems that are more than 10 years old

<sup>1</sup> There are more than 80 federal assistance programs for emergency communications sponsored by 8 [federal department and agencies](#)

<sup>2</sup> The SNS is a nationwide data collection effort to obtain actionable and critical data that drives our nation’s emergency communication policies, programs, and funding. The survey is conducted every five years. Its findings are reported in the National Communications Baseline Assessment (NCBA) and reflected in the NECP

Data from the SNS also shows that public safety organizations that regularly coordinate with state governments on strategic planning efforts are likely to report improvements in operability, interoperability, and continuity for emergency communications. These organizations report that their strategic planning process is:



**24 percent more likely** to address their needs for operability in day-to-day situations, and **24 percent more likely** to address their operability needs in out-of-the-ordinary situations



**34 percent more likely** to address their needs for interoperability in day-to-day situations, and **30 percent more likely** to address their interoperability needs in out-of-the-ordinary situations



**28 percent more likely** to address their needs for continuity in day-to-day situations, and **47 percent more likely** to address their continuity needs in out-of-the-ordinary situations

## STRATEGIC PLANNING IN THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The Governance and Leadership (Goal 1) and Planning and Procedures (Goal 2) goals in the NECP include the following recommend actions designed to assist public safety organizations with improving their strategic planning process to support their emergency communications capabilities.

### Goal 1: Governance and Leadership

- ✓ States and territories create or revise policy and plans to formalize and fund emergency communications governance bodies, such as Statewide Interoperability Governing Bodies
- ✓ Governance bodies identify and include missing or underrepresented in formal governance structures, when developing strategic and operational plans and policies, during training and exercises

### Goal 2: Planning and Procedures

- ✓ Use strategic implementation plans to measure progress against NECP objectives and any additional state or territory objectives, and update plans annually
- ✓ Develop and use lifecycle plans to inform agency funding decisions and implement new technologies while maintaining necessary legacy and backup systems<sup>3</sup>
- ✓ Work with state agencies to evaluate emergency communications threats, hazards, and needs in formal capability reporting mechanisms<sup>4</sup>

## RESOURCES FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

- [Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program \(ICTAP\) Service Offerings Guide](#)
- [National Emergency Communications Plan](#)
- [SAFECOM Nationwide Survey](#)
- [SAFECOM Funding Resources](#)
- [List of Federal Financial Assistance Programs Funding Emergency Communications](#)
- [Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan \(SCIP\) Overview Guide](#)

For more information on the SNS or NECP, contact [necp@cisa.dhs.gov](mailto:necp@cisa.dhs.gov).

<sup>3</sup> Lifecycle planning is the process of designing, implementing, supporting, and maintaining a land mobile radio or mobile data-based public safety communications system. It enables practitioners to better forecast long-term funding requirements and helps to set the framework for establishing and maintaining a public safety system. See the [Lifecycle Planning Fact Sheet](#) for more information.

<sup>4</sup> Public safety organizations should assess needs, hazards, risks, and threats collaboratively and regularly with consideration of short- and long-term technology evolution to help determine system needs and requirements as part of the lifecycle planning process.