2019 NCSWIC Annual Summary

The National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC) collaborated with a variety of programs, departments, and agencies from all levels of government to advance current and future initiatives affecting public safety emergency communications in the United States and its territories. With administrative backing from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), NCSWIC supported progress toward its strategic priorities through the NCSWIC Governance Committee and NSCWIC Planning, Training, and Exercise (PTE) Committee. NCSWIC also worked with committees associated with SAFECOM, such as the Funding and Sustainment Committee and Technology Policy Committee. Additionally, NCSWIC members supported several working groups and task forces comprised of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (SWIC), SAFECOM members, and other subject matter experts (SME) in the field. This document provides a snapshot of NCSWIC activities and products completed in coordination with its partners in 2019, as well as summaries of the bi-annual meetings held with SAFECOM. Final products and full meeting summaries are available on the NCSWIC website or by contacting the NCSWIC mailbox for electronic copies.

NCSWIC Goals and Objectives

In November 2019, the NCSWIC Executive Committee (EC), at the request of the NCSWIC Governance Committee, reviewed and approved updates to NCSWIC's Goals and Objectives:

NCSWIC Goals

1 Improve emergency communications and public safety communications interoperability throughout the Nation
2 Elevate SWICs as key leaders and advocates in states and territories for public safety communications
3 Execute National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) goals and objectives

NCSWIC Objectives

1 Develop and provide resources and tools to be used by SWICs and public safety communities to further interoperability efforts
2 Educate lawmakers, policymakers, and stakeholders on the importance of policies supporting public safety communications
3 Equip, educate, and support SWICs in their roles as public safety communications coordinators
4 Promote the sharing of experiences and expertise among the NCSWIC community
5 Establish new, or maintain existing, committees to address specific issues or tasks
6 Identify and execute short- and mid-range strategic initiatives detailed within the *NCSWIC Strategic Plan*
7 Ensure alignment of subsequent guidance documents (i.e. Interoperability Markers, Grant Guidance)

In 2019, SWICs provided significant input into the revision of the NECP. Endorsed by NCSWIC and SAFECOM, the updated NECP was released by CISA on September 25, 2019. The updated NECP addresses current gaps within emergency communications, reflects new and emerging technological advancements, and provides guidance to drive the Nation towards a common end-state of emergency communications. NCSWIC will incorporate NECP Success Indicators and Implementation Activities into its 2020 strategic planning and product development.

2019 Committee and Task Force Updates

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The NCSWIC Governance Committee developed and executed the first SWIC Academy on November 4, 2019, in Miami, Florida. Members of the Governance Committee helped institute a standard on-boarding process for new SWICs. In addition to the *SWIC Handbook,* developed in 2018, new SWICs are invited to participate in a half-day orientation to learn about NCSWIC, the role of the SWIC, and how CISA can help further emergency communications in their state or territory. The Governance Committee also began discussions on updating the *NCSWIC Charter,* streamlining the *NCSWIC Strategic Plan*, and developing a series of promotional videos on the SWIC position and NCSWIC.

NCSWIC GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Chair: Brad Stoddard **Vice Chair:** Karla Jurrens ✓ *2018 Annual Summary of Accomplishments* ✓ *2019 NCSWIC Strategic Plan* ✓ SWIC Academy

PLANNING, TRAINING, AND EXERCISE COMMITTEE

NCSWIC PTE COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Chair: Thomas Gonzalez **Vice Chair:** Sue Krogman ✓ COMM-X Portal ✓ *COMMVE Exercise (Scavenger Hunt Format)* package ✓ *Earthquake ESF-2 Tabletop Exercise Situation Manual* template

The PTE Committee developed the COMM-X Portal, a centralized website to share communications-specific training and exercise best practices, templates, and events. [1] Additionally, the PTE Committee developed two exercise templates, the *Communications Vehicle Exercise (COMMVE) - Scavenger Hunt Format* package and the *Earthquake Emergency Support Function #2 (ESF-2) Tabletop Exercise Situation Manual* template. The COMMVE Package is an exercise-in-a-box that includes five documents to assist jurisdictions with conducting training exercises. Additionally, the tabletop exercise template provides standardized communication-specific exercise information for the community to leverage when planning an exercise.

FUNDING AND SUSTAINMENT COMMITTEE

The Funding and Sustainment Committee published the *Emergency Communications Systems Value Analysis Guide* and developed associated marketing materials. The *Value Analysis Guide* assists public safety agencies in evaluating the cost effectiveness of emergency communications systems and equipment. To aid stakeholders, the *Guide* compiles recommendations, best practices, and considerations for reference during annual budget planning and cost estimation. To promote the *Guide*, the Committee developed an

FUNDING AND SUSTAINMENT COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS
NCSWIC Chair: Penny Rubow **NCSWIC Vice Chair:** Melissa Nazzaro ✓ *Value Analysis Guide* Appendix ✓ *Value Analysis Guide* Brochure ✓ *SAFECOM Guidance on Emergency Communications Grants*

accompanying brochure, which provides a summary of key considerations for elected officials and decision-makers. Additionally, the Committee began developing an update to the *2015 Funding Mechanisms for Public Safety Communications Guide*, which will assist public safety agencies in identifying strengths, challenges, and opportunities for common public safety funding mechanisms.

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[1] To request access to the COMM-X Portal, contact comm-xportal@hq.dhs.gov.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS
NCSWIC Chair: Joe Galvin (Jan. – Aug.)   Chris Maiers (Sept. – Dec.) ✓ *Ten Keys to Improving AWN* ✓ *P25 ISSI and CSSI Primer* ✓ *Best Practices for P25 ISSI and CSSI Implementation: Volume I* ✓ *NG911 Maturity State Self-Assessment Tool*

TECHNOLOGY POLICY COMMITTEE

The Technology Policy Committee continued to support land mobile radio (LMR) systems, promote broadband technology and deployment, and work with partners such as the Advanced Technology Group; the Federal Partnership for Interoperable Communications; the Next Generation 911 (NG911) Working Group; and the Identity, Credential, and Access Management (ICAM) Working Group to further the use and security of various technologies and frameworks within the emergency communications ecosystem (e.g., NG911, ICAM, cybersecurity). The Committee published two documents related to the Project 25 (P25) Inter-RF Subsystem Interface (ISSI) and Console Subsystem Interface (CSSI): the *P25 ISSI and CSSI Primer*, which highlights some of the user-driven activities to address opportunities and challenges in deployment of ISSI and CSSI; and the *Best Practices for P25 ISSI and CSSI Implementation: Volume I*, the first of two volumes outlining best practices and lessons learned while implementing ISSI and CSSI. Additionally, the Committee published the *Ten Keys to Improving Alerts, Warnings, & Notifications (AWN),* along with a review of its companion document, *Essentials of AWN* (publication expected early 2020).

NG911 Working Group: The NG911 Working Group focused on identifying and sharing best practices on management of geographic information system (GIS) data, developing executive summaries of vital NG911 documents to facilitate information sharing, and developing tools to help agencies identify transition steps for NG911. Members released the *NG911 Maturity State Self-Assessment Tool*, to help public safety answering point/emergency communications center administrators and oversight personnel evaluate a system's NG911 maturity state and understand the next steps necessary to continue deployment. This easy-to-use checklist establishes a common terminology and identifies key milestones to help 911 call centers understand the multi-year NG911 implementation process. The tool was developed with support from CISA and the National 911 Program and can be found on 911.gov. Working group members engaged with stakeholders at national conferences, such as the CISA Cybersecurity Summit, National Emergency Number Association Annual Conference and Expo, and the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials-International Annual Conference and Expo, to raise awareness about benefits of the tool.

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION TASK FORCE

The Communications Section Task Force (CSTF) continued to work towards developing a nationwide federated governance model to promote and provide consistent recruitment, training, retention, and support for all-hazards incidents. The Task Force also made strides in supporting the development of national standards for qualification, certification, and credentialing of communications personnel; updating training courses and curriculum; clarifying existing position descriptions (e.g., Communication Unit Leader, Communication Technician, Radio Operator) to include the all-hazards environment; and establishing new information technology (IT) positions, including the Information Technology Service Unit Leader (ITSL) position. The ITSL trainings kicked off in 2019 and will continue in 2020.

In addition, the Incident Communications Advisory Council (ICAC) convened three times and completed the vetting of CSTF's recommendation for a National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Command Structure (ICS) refresh. The ICAC developed and shared its recommendation to unify communications and IT within NIMS ICS with the CSTF. The ICAC and the CSTF began collecting letters of support in the summer of 2019 to submit to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Integration Center (NIC) with the NIMS ICS Recommendation package. The NIMS ICS Recommendation is expected to be presented to FEMA NIC in 2020.

INFORMATION SHARING FRAMEWORK TASK FORCE

Established in April 2019 in conjunction with SAFECOM, the Information Sharing Framework Task Force (ISFTF) is comprised of IT and public safety communications interoperability SMEs from public safety agencies across the country. The ISFTF is developing an Information Sharing Framework (ISF) to ensure effectiveness of new products and technologies as agencies transition to mobile and fully interconnected environments. Making data interoperable and into information which can be shared is a requirement that spans beyond traditional boundaries. In addition, first

responders should be able to discover, access, and consume any relevant information on a need-to-know basis, regardless of jurisdiction, affiliation, or location. The intended audience for the ISF are SWICs and other state-level communications personnel working in LMR, broadband, 9-1-1, and state public AWN systems in alignment with or directly involved in acquisition, management, and oversight of public safety emergency communications. The overarching goal of the ISF is to support transition to a common information exchange approach that a public safety community can adopt and use efficiently to make its emergency communications ecosystem interoperable.

PROJECT 25 COMPLIANCE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM TASK FORCE

The P25 Compliance Assessment Program Task Force (CAPTF) transitioned from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) Compliance Assessment Program to CISA. Looking toward 2020, the Task Force will coordinate with DHS S&T on ISSI/CSSI compliance and interoperability testing, developing a recommendation for a minimum set of standards for Mission Critical Push-to-Talk and Interworking Functions for action by the P25 Steering Committee and P25 manufacturers, and engaging with the P25 User Needs Working Group to develop interoperability and compliance testing for new user needs requirements.

In-Person Meetings

April 2019 Joint SAFECOM-NCSWIC Meetings

On April 24, 2019, NCSWIC and SAFECOM met jointly in Pittsburgh, PA. Members heard from presenters on a variety of topics, including updates on the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System; NCSWIC and SAFECOM's role in cybersecurity; and the newly established ISFTF. Following the presentations, individual committees and working groups met to review proposed content for publication, receive applicable updates, discuss the status of current work products and priorities, and determine future goals.

On April 25, 2019, NCSWIC members met separately to provide input to the NCSWIC State Interoperability Markers Program and brainstorm agenda topics for the launch of the SWIC Academy. Additional topics addressed included the need for increased participation and the transition of the National Protection and Programs Directorate to CISA. Presentations were given on the Pennsylvania Statewide Radio Network (STARNet); the movement from siloed 9-1-1 systems to more interoperable networks, including the use of GIS; and FirstNet implementation and the development of additional capabilities. CISA briefed members on the 2019 NECP revision, highlighting the importance of SWIC feedback in the update process, and the recent accomplishments by the Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP). Additional updates were provided on current NCSWIC activities and table discussions were used to refine the Academy agenda. NCSWIC EC members then convened to review and approve 2019 work products and discuss future strategic planning, new proposed working groups, and the meeting calendar.

November 2019 Joint SAFECOM-NCSWIC Meetings

On November 4, 2019, the NCSWIC EC convened in Miami, FL, to review 2019 committee progress and discuss future strategic planning. Updates to the NCSWIC goals and objectives were proposed and approved. The group discussed implementation of the NECP's goals and NCSWIC's relationship with SAFECOM.

To open the joint session on November 5, 2019, NCSWIC and SAFECOM members heard a keynote address from Matthew Travis, CISA Deputy Director, who stressed the importance of the members' guidance in achieving CISA's mission. Participants heard updates on the

Prior to the biannual NCSWIC meeting, the NCSWIC Governance Committee hosted the first SWIC Academy on Monday, November 4, 2019 (Figure 1). The Academy is designed to welcome new SWICs, provide them with background on NCSWIC and the SWIC position, review available CISA resources, and share best practices and lessons learned from veteran SWICs. During the full NCSWIC meeting, Brad Stoddard, Michigan SWIC and NCSWIC Governance Committee Chair, and other Academy participants shared feedback on the benefits of the Academy's smaller group sessions and the variety of resources shared among SWICs. Participants also appreciated learning how the SWIC position and its support structure differs in each state. Feedback from the first Academy will be incorporated into future sessions.

ICAC's efforts to close gaps within NIMS ICS and the need to promote communications elements within the NIMS ICS structure through the creation of a new IT Unit as well as the need for members to support the proposed changes. The First Responder Network Authority and AT&T presented on current and future FirstNet products and services, interoperability with all cellular systems, and potential interference concerns. Representatives from CISA and the National Governors Association discussed publicly-available resources regarding cybersecurity governance. CISA outlined its current performance management projects, including in-depth information on the status of the NCSWIC State Interoperability Markers and Incident Performance Measures. Members also received an update on ongoing Shared Communications Systems and Infrastructure (SCSI) approach. Representatives from Ohio and North Carolina reviewed how advances in broadband capabilities have led to integration challenges with statewide networks. Presenters addressed 5G capabilities, benefits, uses, potential applications for public safety, and a timeline of projected deployment. Members also participated in a working session devoted to revising the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum, received a progress update on the ICAM pilots in Austin and Chattanooga, listened to updates on ISFTF efforts toward developing an ISF, and heard from a panel of experts on preparing Emergency Management Assistance Compact Mission Readiness Package Models prior to major hurricanes.

On November 6, 2019, the full NCSWIC membership convened. The members were thanked for their continuing commitment to advancing NCSWIC's collective priorities, with specific mention given to the newly launched SWIC Academy and COMM-X Portal. A use case review focused on the communications interoperability challenges addressed during the 2019 World Scout Jamboree. ICTAP provided an update on the restructured field force, the new strategic Technical Assistance process, and updates to the Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan process. Committees shared proposed 2020 work products, and the NCSWIC Governance Committee shared the new NCSWIC goals and objectives as approved by the EC.

Figure 1: New SWICs participate in the first SWIC Academy

2019 NCSWIC Elections

In accordance with the *NCSWIC Charter*, Regional Interoperability Council Chairs serve as EC members for two-year terms. In September 2019, an election for the odd-numbered regions was held. The results of the election are as follows:

- Region I: Steven Mallory, Maine (*primary*); Melissa Nazzaro, Massachusetts (*alternate*)
- Region III: Mark Wrightstone, Pennsylvania (*primary*); Tom Crabbs, Virginia (*alternate*)
- Region V: Brad Stoddard, Michigan (*primary*); Sally Fay, Indiana (*alternate*)
- Region VII: Chris Maiers, Iowa (*primary*); Sue Krogman, Nebraska (*alternate*)
- Region IX: Jeremy Knoll, Arizona (*primary*); Everett Kaneshige, Hawaii (*alternate*)

In November 2019, NCSWIC members held an election for the NCSWIC Chair position. John Miller, New Jersey, who had been acting Chair following the previous Chair's departure, was formally elected NCSWIC Chair for a two-year term. John's election created a vacancy in the Vice Chair position. As such, the NCSWIC EC met immediately following the close of the in-person meeting to conduct a special election to fill the vacancy. Brad Stoddard, Michigan, was elected the NCSWIC Vice Chair for the remainder of the term.