

The logo for the National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC). The letters 'NCSWIC' are displayed in a bold, sans-serif font. The 'N' is red, and the remaining letters 'CSWIC' are blue. To the right of the text is a circular icon consisting of three concentric circles with a small registered trademark symbol (®) to its upper right.

NCSWIC<sup>®</sup>

The full name of the organization, 'National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators', is written in a blue, sans-serif font. It is positioned on a light blue horizontal bar that spans the width of the page.

National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators

The title of the document, 'NCSWIC 2020 Strategic Plan & Implementation Guide', is centered on the page in a large, blue, sans-serif font. The text is arranged in five lines: 'NCSWIC 2020', 'STRATEGIC PLAN', '&', 'IMPLEMENTATION', and 'GUIDE'.

NCSWIC 2020  
STRATEGIC PLAN  
&  
IMPLEMENTATION  
GUIDE

## Our Vision

A Nation where public safety responders can effectively communicate

## Our Mission

NCSWIC, through the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC), promotes and implements strategies for achieving effective public safety communications by developing professional partnerships and collaborating with public safety agencies and policy makers

## Our 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 the goals and objectives outlined in the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP)

### Governance



**Promote** role of the SWIC  
**Convey** NCSWIC's mission, goals, and priorities  
**Improve** governance structures and processes

### Technology Policy



**Promote** use of technologies, resources, and processes  
**Support** land mobile radio (LMR) systems  
**Promote** broadband technology & deployment  
**Encourage** information sharing

### Planning, Training, and Exercise (PTE)

**Share** information on best practices for PTE  
**Promote** inclusion of communications in Incident Command Structure (ICS)



### Funding & Sustainment

**Identify** innovative ways to fund and sustain systems and activities  
**Disseminate** information on new funding sources



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## BACKGROUND

Established in 2010, the [National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators \(NCSWIC\)](#) is a Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) administered program supporting interoperability and Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (SWICs) by:

- Developing products and services to assist SWICs with leveraging relationships, professional knowledge, and experience with public safety partners
- Promoting the critical importance of emergency communications
- Enhancing the response capabilities of public safety responders

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### NCSWIC Vision and Mission

***Vision:** A Nation where public safety responders can effectively communicate.*

***Mission:** NCSWIC, through the SWIC, promotes and implements strategies for achieving effective public safety communications by developing professional partnerships and collaborating with public safety agencies and policy makers.*

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NCSWIC members work with public safety responders in their respective states, territories, and regions to create governance structures that promote and enhance public safety communications. This approach ensures multi-jurisdictional, cross-border, and cross-disciplinary coordination amongst public safety responders and policymakers.

## PURPOSE

The *NCSWIC Strategic Plan and Implementation Guide* is a stakeholder-driven, multi-jurisdictional, and multi-disciplinary plan to enhance interoperable and emergency communications. The plan is a critical mid-range (three-year) tool to help NCSWIC and its partners prioritize resources, strengthen governance, identify future investments, and address interoperability gaps. The plan is a living document, owned and managed by the NCSWIC Executive Committee (EC), that may be updated on an annual basis due to shifts in the emergency communications environment that change the work products or activities developed by NCSWIC.

The purpose of the plan is to:

- Provide strategic direction to NCSWIC to ensure work enhances and promotes emergency communications successes and challenges across the nation
- Identify specific initiatives and work products that align with the revised National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) and NCSWIC goals
- Ensure NCSWIC committees demonstrate progress toward meeting approved milestones for the strategies and initiatives outlined in the Appendix for successful implementation of NCSWIC goals



NCSWIC members assist with the development or enhancement of state and territorial governance structures to provide strategic guidance for public safety responders through their four standing committees and three task forces: Governance; Planning, Training, and Exercise (PTE); Funding and Sustainment; and, Technology Policy. NCSWIC also utilizes working groups and task forces to accomplish initiatives. NCSWIC partners and coordinates closely with [SAFECOM](#) across multiple program subgroups and engagements.



**Governance Committee**  
*The Governance Committee focuses on emergency communications governance, including governing processes and structures internal and external to NCSWIC, and supports new SWICs through education, training, and facilitating networking. This includes management of, and modification to, organizational documents. The Committee will update governance structures and processes to address the evolving operating environment, review NCSWIC initiatives, and identify best practices and lessons learned.*

**PTE Committee**  
*The PTE Committee concentrates on capturing best practices and streamlining information sharing for planning, training, exercise, and evaluation processes to enhance public safety communications operational readiness at all levels of government relevant to the SWIC community. The Committee also aims to coordinate closely with CISA on service offerings.*

**Funding and Sustainment Committee**  
*The Joint NCSWIC and SAFECOM Funding and Sustainment Committee concentrates on identifying innovative ways to fund and sustain emergency communications systems and activities (i.e., training, personnel) pertinent to stakeholders at the state, territorial, tribal, and local levels. The Committee also prepares and disseminates information on appropriations and new emergency communications funding sources.*

**Technology Policy Committee**  
*The Joint NCSWIC and SAFECOM Technology Policy Committee, and supporting working groups, promotes the use of technologies, resources, and processes related to emergency communications and interoperability. The Committee supports LMR systems, promotes broadband technology and deployment, encourages public safety information sharing, and works with all government partners to further the use and security of various tools, systems, and their accompanying policies within the Emergency Communications Ecosystem.*

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**Communications Section Task Force:** *The Joint NCSWIC and SAFECOM Communications Section Task Force (CSTF) addresses challenges associated with supporting information communications technology (ICT) within the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The CSTF continues to work towards developing a nationwide federated governance framework through the Incident Communications Advisory Council (ICAC), a focus group created to review and vet the CSTF’s recommendations for enhancing the functionality of NIMS.*

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**Project 25 Compliance Assessment Program Task Force:** *In coordination with SAFECOM, the Project 25 Compliance Assessment Program Task Force (P25 CAPTF) provides public safety community input into the Department of Homeland Security P25 CAP, which assesses compliance of communications equipment with the P25 Suite of Standards.*

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**Information Sharing Framework Task Force:** *In coordination with SAFECOM, the Information Sharing Framework Task Force (ISFTF) is comprised of information technology (IT) and public safety communications interoperability subject matter experts from public safety agencies across the country. The ISFTF will develop 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 shareable 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, and location. The intended audience for the ISF is SWICs; other state-level communications personnel working in LMR, broadband, 911, and state public alert, warning, and notification (AWN) systems; and those personnel who are in alignment 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.*

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Through the committees, NCSWIC expertise and recommendations have influenced policy, guidance, and future efforts, resulting in several key emergency communications initiatives, including development of:

- The [NECP](#), the Nation’s strategic plan to enhance emergency communications
- The [Emergency Communications Governance Guide for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials \(Governance Guide\)](#), which serves as a comprehensive tool providing recommendations and best practices for emergency communications officials at all levels of government. The Guide helps officials to establish, assess, and update governance structures that represent all emergency communications capabilities (LMR, broadband, 911/Next Generation 911 [NG911], AWN).

## NCSWIC’S LONG-TERM PRIORITIES

To address major changes affecting public safety communications and evolving priorities, NCSWIC has four standing committees and three task forces that have long-term goals developed for 2020 – 2023.

### GOVERNANCE PRIORITIES

**Strategic Priority 1:** Promote the SWIC Program to ensure all 56 states and territories have a dedicated SWIC as their emergency communications point of contact

**Strategic Priority 2:** Support the SWICs through development of trainings, sharing of best practices and lessons learned (i.e., managing emergency communications technology and policy issues; developing agreements across organizations/jurisdictions), and promotion of relationship building

**Strategic Priority 3:** Catalog, develop, and revise nationwide guidance to elevate, formalize, or establish statewide governance bodies

## PTE PRIORITIES

**Strategic Priority 4:** Develop materials to improve a SWIC's ability to assist in planning, training, and exercise activities in their state or territory

**Strategic Priority 5:** Advertise the committee and its products through collaboration with other NCSWIC and SAFECOM committees and public safety stakeholders

**Strategic Priority 6:** Integrate understanding of communications into emergency management curricula

**Strategic Priority 7:** Support repositioning of communications within ICS through updated PTE materials

## FUNDING AND SUSTAINMENT PRIORITIES

**Strategic Priority 8:** Identify methods to fund and support the life cycle of existing and future interoperable and emergency communications priorities

**Strategic Priority 9:** Inform decision makers, elected officials, and the general public on public safety communications systems and funding

**Strategic Priority 10:** Develop and disseminate information on appropriations and new funding sources available to the public safety community at all levels of government

## TECHNOLOGY POLICY PRIORITIES

**Strategic Priority 11:** Gather and draft lessons learned, best practices, policies, and plans supporting the effective development, integration, migration, and adoption of new technologies and interoperability solutions

**Strategic Priority 12:** Collaborate across organizations to consolidate and disseminate strategies to manage risk and increase resilience of public safety technologies, tools, and networks (e.g., incident response plans, recovery and resilience plans, continuity of operations plans, resiliency assessments)

**Strategic Priority 13:** Identify public safety technology and infrastructure capability gaps

**Strategic Priority 14:** Communicate emerging technology impacts to the public safety community

**Strategic Priority 15:** Guide standards-based LMR evolution, including spreading awareness and exploring options for T-Band relocation

**Strategic Priority 16:** Coordinate with the SAFECOM Governance Committee to identify and address legislative and regulatory issues associated with emerging technologies, capabilities, and risks

**Strategic Priority 17:** Identify, document, and develop work products that facilitate the transition to NG911, utilizing stakeholder feedback from multiple levels of government and associations (**NG911 Working Group**)

**Strategic Priority 18:** Promote education and support deployment of Identity, Credential, and Access Management (ICAM) policies and technologies (*ICAM Working Group*)

**Strategic Priority 19:** Provide a recommendation to comply with the Natural Resources Management Act through the Global Positioning System (GPS) Focus Group (*P25 User Needs Working Group [UNWG]*)

**Strategic Priority 20:** Engage a broad user community to recommend user needs to the P25 Steering Committee or the Federal Partnership for Interoperable Communication (FPIC) for further action (*P25 UNWG*)

**Strategic Priority 21:** Develop P25 education and outreach materials to expand knowledge on P25 features, interfaces, and standards (*P25 UNWG*)

### CSTF PRIORITIES

**Strategic Priority 22:** Promote and provide consistent recruitment, training, retention, and support for ICT personnel

**Strategic Priority 23:** Support the development of national standards for qualification, certification, and credentialing of ICT personnel

**Strategic Priority 24:** Update the ICT course curriculum, as needed

**Strategic Priority 25:** Establish new IT positions and functions

**Strategic Priority 26:** Provide clarification of existing position descriptions (e.g., Communication Unit Leader [COML], Communication Technician, Radio Operator) to include the all-hazards environment

**Strategic Priority 27:** Engage the ICT community to identify active participants and share related updates

**Strategic Priority 28:** Streamline the instructor requirements for ICT Train-the-Trainer

### P25 CAPTF PRIORITIES

**Strategic Priority 29:** Coordinate with the DHS Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) on the development of Inter-RF Subsystem Interface (ISSI) interoperability and compliance testing

**Strategic Priority 30:** Engage with the SAFECOM-NCSWIC P25 UNWG to develop interoperability and compliance testing requirements for new user needs requirements

**Strategic Priority 31:** Develop 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

### ISFTF PRIORITIES

**Strategic Priority 32:** Provide a customizable interoperability operational framework to identify and ensure alignment of people, processes, and technology prior to a major multi-agency, multi-jurisdiction event, that will:



- Inform a roadmap of actions taken by a public safety organization to have the optimal impact of solving interoperability issues/gaps via governance, acquisition guidance, and alignment with training, exercises, and grants
- Inform and provide a checklist and guidebook for emergency communications acquisition decisions for products and services ensuring such acquisitions are interoperable, secure, resilient, and allow for data management
- Inform state leadership of complexity and need for emergency communications interoperability across multiple networks/functions (e.g., LMR, broadband, NG911, computer-aided dispatch [CAD]/records management system [RMS], AWP)
- Aggregate all information-sharing best practices, guidance, and lessons learned documents into one operational framework

**Strategic Priority 33:** Develop a strategy to pilot a customization of the ISF for a use case in a simulated but real-world environment (e.g., outdoor lab), in alignment with a standards-based ICAM solution

**Strategic Priority 34:** Expand intended audience to include public safety IT personnel, such as IT Service Unit Leaders (ITSL), and communications personnel, such as the COML, providing a common playbook on which to base future implementation decisions

**Strategic Priority 35:** Work with the Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP) to develop Technical Assistance (TA) offerings based on customization of ISF

## ACTION PLAN

Based on recommendations from its members and committees, the NCSWIC EC will formally adopt the *Strategic Plan* and use this document as a tool to help the NCSWIC prioritize resources, strengthen governance, address interoperability gaps, and educate and inform local and state elected officials and stakeholders. The NCSWIC EC plans to use its bi-monthly conference calls and bi-annual full membership meetings to work closely with the committees on assigned specific goals and initiatives. As a result, regular reporting to the NCSWIC EC by committee chairs and vice chairs on their identified goals and initiatives is anticipated throughout the year to ensure success.

Each year, the NCSWIC EC will work with each of the four committees to manage the implementation of the *Strategic Plan* and its associated strategic goals and initiatives found in Appendix A. The NCSWIC committee chairs and vice chairs will work with committee members to measure the progress made towards achieving the initiatives identified in Appendix A. Each committee will monitor the progress being made in achieving stated initiatives and corresponding timelines. The committee chairs and vice chairs will be responsible for a semi-annual review of the identified measures of success. On an annual basis, the NCSWIC EC will conduct a review of the plan and update Appendix A to ensure it is up to date and aligned with the changing internal and external interoperable and emergency communications environment.

## Appendix: 2020 NCSWIC Implementation Guide

NCSWIC's *Implementation Guide* describes the process by which NCSWIC will use the *Strategic Plan* to execute specific initiatives aimed at furthering the program's vision and mission in the coming year. The *Implementation Guide* outlines committee-specific products and activities to accomplish the strategic priorities described in the *Strategic Plan*.

### Governance Committee

Work Product	Timeline	Purpose	Long-Term Strategic Priority
<i>NCSWIC Videos</i>	Q1 – Q4	Develop suite of videos for internal and external promotion of NCSWIC, the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) position, and statewide governance	Strategic Priorities 1, 2, 3
<i>NCSWIC Fact Sheet</i>	Q1	Promote NCSWIC to further encourage collaboration and coordination amongst SWICs	Strategic Priority 1
<i>Launch SWIC Yearbook and Mentorship Program</i>	Q1-Q2	Develop virtual database of SWIC contact information, areas of expertise, and background information to provide a mechanism for the members to collaborate and share best practices and lessons learned	Strategic Priorities 1, 2
<i>Statewide Governance Examples</i>	Q3-Q4	Gather and package examples of various statewide governance models, including sample executive orders and legislation	Strategic Priority 3

### Planning, Training, and Exercise Committee

Work Product	Timeline	Purpose	Long-Term Strategic Priority
<i>SWIC-to-State Training Officer (STO) Interface Guide</i>	Q1–Q3	Guide the development of a functional relationship between SWICs and STOs to ensure the realization of communications functions in state- and territory-wide trainings	Strategic Priority 4
<i>Product Outreach Commercials</i>	Q2–Q4	Advocate for the use of the Committee's products. Encourage SWICs to join the Committee by demonstrating its workstream	Strategic Priority 5

### Funding and Sustainment Committee (Joint)

Work Product	Timeline	Purpose	Long-Term Strategic Priority
<i>Value Analysis Guide Blog and Elevator Speech</i>	Q1	Develop quick-reference materials for the Value Analysis Guide and Value Analysis Guide Brochure	Strategic Priority 8
<i>Funding Life Cycle Planning Guide Appendix: Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP)</i>	Q1–Q2	Develop appendix that shows COOP best practices, models, and checklists that should be considered during lifecycle planning	Strategic Priority 8
<i>2015 Funding Mechanisms Guide Update</i>	Q1	Update <i>Funding Mechanisms Guide</i>	Strategic Priority 10

### Technology Policy Committee (Joint)

Work Product	Timeline	Purpose	Long-Term Strategic Priority
<i>Best Practices for Project 25 (P25) Inter-RF Subsystem Interface (ISSI) and Console Subsystem Interface (CSSI) Implementation: Volume II</i>	Q1–Q2	Address stakeholder engagement, technology, policies, and life cycle management	Strategic Priority 11
<i>Toolkit: Emergency Communication Dependencies on Non-Agency Infrastructure and Services</i>	Q1–Q2	Capture best practices and lessons learned in a suite of documents targeting procuring and incorporating dependencies on non-agency infrastructure and data services	Strategic Priority 12
<i>Best Practices for Addressing Evolving Radio Frequency (RF) Interference Challenges</i>	Q3–Q4	Outline best practices for understanding, preventing, or mitigating RF interference with evolving technology and frequency landscapes	Strategic Priority 12
<i>Overview of Public Safety Messaging Impacts on Interoperability</i>	Q1–Q2	Highlight recommendations from Texas Public Safety position paper and address additional issues associated with public safety messaging	Strategic Priority 14
<i>Resources for Deployment of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)</i>	Q3–Q4	Gather resources to help public safety understand the challenges, limitations, and opportunities for deploying UAS and storing/utilizing data collected from UAS	Strategic Priorities 14
<i>Identity, Credential, and Access Management (ICAM) Value Proposition Suite (ICAM WG)</i>	Q1	Compile case studies on ICAM deployment to highlight benefits of ICAM	Strategic Priorities 14 & 18
<i>Global Positioning System (GPS) Working Group (UNWG)</i>	Q1	Establish the GPS Focus Group to develop best practices and provide a recommendation for location services to comply with the Natural Resources Management Act	Strategic Priority 19
<i>Cyber Risks to Next Generation 911 (NG911) White Paper (Update) (NG911 WG)</i>	Q1–Q2	Update and promote <i>Cyber Risks to NG911 White Paper</i>	Strategic Priority 17
<i>Geographic Information System (GIS) Best Practices White Paper (NG911 WG)</i>	Q3	Provide best practices on management of GIS data (e.g. reconciliation between GIS data and Master Street Address Guides, provisioning of Location Validation Function and Emergency Call Routing Function, reconciliation between GIS and United States Postal Service data)	Strategic Priority 17

### Communications Section Task Force (Joint)

Work Product	Purpose	Long-Term Strategic Priority
<i>Information Communications Technology (ICT) Outreach Plan</i>	Develop an outreach plan to engage the ICT community and disseminate updates	Strategic Priorities 27 & 28

### Project 25 Compliance Assessment Task Force (Joint)

Work Product	Purpose	Long-Term Strategic Priority
<i>Coordinate with DHS Science &amp; Technology Directorate (S&amp;T) on ISSI Interoperability and Compliance Testing</i>	Provide user input on the DHS S&T's interoperability and compliance testing for ISSI	N/A

### Information Sharing Framework Task Force (Joint)

Work Product	Purpose	Long-Term Strategic Priority
<i>Information Sharing Framework (ISF) Revision 2.0</i>	Develop final specification of ISF structure, example of ISF customization via National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC) use case; further develop Appendices A (Baseline Technological Assessment), B (Use Cases), and C (Regulatory, Legal, Contractual, and Financial Considerations); assess existing data exchange/information sharing documents for synergies including NG911 Standards Compendium, <a href="http://project-interoperability.github.io/">http://project-interoperability.github.io/</a> used for NG911 Cost Study, and Information Sharing Assessment Tool (ISAT)	Strategic Priority 32
<i>ISF Final</i>	Release final version of ISF document after review by greater SAFECOM and NCSWIC stakeholder group—including input from members regarding ISF structure	Strategic Priority 32
<i>ISF Customization Pilot Statement of Work (SOW) and Test Plan</i>	Develop strategy to pilot a customization of the ISF for a use case in a simulated but real-world environment (e.g., outdoor lab); include alignment with a standards-based ICAM solution	Strategic Priority 33
<i>ISF Industry Request for Information (RFI)</i>	Engage or partner with industry to develop ISF platform	Strategic Priority 32
<i>SAFECOM Guidance on Emergency Communications Grants for Fiscal Year 2021 submission for Appendix B – Technology and Equipment Standards and Resources</i>	Help SAFECOM grant applicants with data exchange and information sharing solution evaluation	Strategic Priority 32
<i>ICTAP Technical Assistance (TA) for ISF Customization</i>	Help public safety apply ISF to their specific jurisdiction, use case, inter-organization data exchange, and information sharing	Strategic Priority 35