



April 2017

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS TRIBAL GOVERNANCE PROFILE FACT SHEET

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) is reaching out to tribal leaders to establish and build collaborative relationships to better understand the current emergency communications landscape in tribal communities. To better support the community, OEC must understand how the tribe's customs and current governance structure impacts decision-making, management, and resource allocation. Governance is pivotal to establishing and maintaining operable and interoperable emergency communications. Robust governance creates a central coordination point for efforts across the broad spectrum of emergency communications stakeholders, and can help to address challenges in a unified manner. A key initiative of OEC is to build an understanding of current tribal emergency communications operations, resources, and interoperable emergency challenges, and to identify opportunities to help tribes assess and improve their communications interoperability capabilities. OEC will document each participating Tribal Nation's information in a profile to assist in this process. The discussions and profile development effort will support DHS efforts to support the unique emergency communications needs of tribes.

BENEFITS TO TRIBAL NATIONS

Participation in this effort supports tribes in the development of a comprehensive profile of their current emergency communications capabilities, activities, relationships, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. This profile is key to planning and implementing holistic communications interoperability which leads to increased public safety for all citizens. This profile will also support the Department's efforts to identify and support tribal emergency communications interoperability efforts through technical assistance, grants, and facilitation of relationships amongst all governments. Participating tribes have found the completed document—which averages 14-16 pages—to be a useful tool when communicating their current tribal emergency management capabilities and challenges to tribal leadership, as well as the surrounding state and local public safety partners.

BACKGROUND

OEC leads national security/emergency preparedness efforts across federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial (F/S/L/T/T) and private sector partners to improve and enhance emergency and interoperable communications. OEC coordinated with public safety personnel and government officials to develop and implement a framework of policies and programs to address operability, interoperability, and continuity of communications at all levels of government, including Tribal Nations.

1 <https://www.dhs.gov/publication/2014-national-emergency-communications-plan>

2 <https://www.dhs.gov/office-emergency-communications>

In 2014, OEC released the *National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP)*¹ to enhance emergency communications decision-making, coordination, and planning through governance structures. OEC next released the *Emergency Communications Governance Guide for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials (Governance Guide)*² to address NECP Goal One (Governance and Leadership). The Governance Guide provides recommendations and best practices for public safety officials to establish, assess, and update governance structures that represent all emergency communications capabilities—Land Mobile Radio (LMR), broadband, 911/Next Generation 911 (NG911), and alerts and warnings.

The Governance Guide:

- Illustrates proven, repeatable models to improve statewide, intrastate, interstate, local, tribal, and territorial emergency communications governance structures;
- Promotes cohesive and representative governance structures to support collaboration and resource sharing; and
- Provides real-world examples for expanding or updating current governance structures, processes, and investments to effectively include all facets of the emergency communications landscape.

TRIBAL COMMUNICATIONS GOVERNANCE PROFILE METHODOLOGY

OEC will conduct discussions with Tribal Nation representatives who are authorized to speak of the tribe's emergency communications capabilities, support activities, emergency management planning, governance structure, and decision making processes.

OEC collects the following information during conversations with tribal representatives:

- Background information (history, land/terrain, population, language(s), economics/business systems)
- Governance landscape and requirements to establish/implement/improve tribal governance structure;
- Tribal agencies;
- Response capabilities;
- Partnership information (F/S/L/T/T);
- Technical capabilities (equipment, standard operating procedures [SOPs], memorandums of agreement [MOAs]/memorandums of understanding [MOUs], training, communications governance, and infrastructure);
- Key milestones/achievements;
- Funding sources and previous state and federal assistance;
- Methods for adopting new technology;
- Emergency management activities and gaps/opportunities;
- OEC Technical Assistance requirements; and
- Best practices for tribal emergency communications.

The governance summary that OEC will develop with tribal input will serve as a tool to assist the tribe and OEC with:

- Having a mutual understanding of the tribe's emergency communications capabilities, activities, and challenges;
- Identifying opportunities for improvement and support to enhance tribal emergency communications interoperability through technical assistance and grants; and
- Developing/refining a formal communications governance structure.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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