



## SOUTHWEST BORDER COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

In 2008, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) created the Southwest Border Communications Working Group (SWBCWG). The SWBCWG supports federal, state, local, and tribal (F/S/L/T) agency efforts in the Southwest Border Region—the States of Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas—to establish and maintain operable and interoperable public safety communications. This includes support of FirstNet and the envisioned National Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN). The SWBCWG aims to enhance the quality of public safety communications operability and interoperability while effectively and collaboratively identifying, documenting, and facilitating the sharing of scarce regional infrastructure resources, capabilities, and services. The SWBCWG's efforts help to ensure success in meeting end users' communications needs while improving coordination between U.S. departments and agencies at all levels of government, as well as cross-border Mexican governmental departments and agencies.

### WORKING GROUP PARTICIPANTS

SWBCWG participants include representatives from F/S/L/T agencies that rely on communications to support critical public safety and border security missions. Participants include stakeholders from various disciplines, including system managers, communications engineers and technicians, spectrum managers, emergency managers and planners, F/S/L/T law enforcement, and fire/Emergency Medical Services officials and practitioners.

### BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

The working group provides a forum for, and benefits from, the collective expertise and perspectives of all participants when addressing and discussing public safety communications operability and interoperability issues and engaging solution development. Participants meet in-person multiple times per year on a rotating location basis to share information on current activities and issues within the region. SWBCWG meetings include guest speakers, panel discussions, reports, guidance documents, presentations, and activities generated by the focus/specific issue groups and discussion topics identified

by participants. The SWBCWG also hosts a series of webinars that enable sharing and discussion of technical information, issues, best practices, and lessons learned regarding public safety operable and interoperable communications.

*The vision of the SWBCWG is to improve and support real-time operable and interoperable public safety communications throughout the Southwest Border Region.*

### ADDRESSING UNIQUE SOUTHWEST BORDER COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGES

The U.S.-Mexico international border region poses unique communications challenges to the public safety community. These challenges include, but are not limited to:

- Effectively utilizing the Cross Border Security Communications Network (CBSCN), a dedicated internet protocol microwave-based system connecting 10 pairs of U.S. and Mexican government communications centers;
- Maintaining up-to-date understanding of regulatory and international treaty issues

impacting spectrum use, allocation, and availability and agreements that impact public safety communications, including 800 megahertz (MHz) re-banding, 700 MHz narrowbanding, and broadband developments;

- Identifying cross border communications interference and resolution mechanisms;
- Establishing best practices and lessons learned for communications infrastructure and spectrum sharing/partnerships;
- Delineating operational communications challenges, including secure communications in a multi-jurisdictional response environment; and
- Articulating challenges along the Southwest Border related to the development and deployment of the NPSBN.

- Hosting a series of webinars and in-person meetings which focus on participant-identified topics, including those focused on technical, operational, or governance issues;
- Providing guidance and direction to resolve harmful radio interference and delivering information on the Bilateral Interference Resolution Process conducted jointly with Mexico;
- Providing regular updates and information to F/S/L/T agencies on the CBSCN to support the application/use processes;
- Identifying and documenting additional opportunities to utilize the CBSCN for cross border communications; and
- Sharing best practices and training opportunities such as the Texas Department of Public Safety’s broadband overview training.

## PARTICIPANT STATISTICS

The SWBCWG is a cross cutting, multidisciplinary public safety communications-oriented assemblage of participants that include the following\*:

Federal Departments and Agencies	253 participants from 14 federal agencies
State and Local Agencies	238 participants from 117 state and 139 local agencies
Tribal Nations and Organizations:	66 participants from 10 Tribal Nations and three organizations

\*Statistics current as of April 2017.

## KEY ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES

While SWBCWG participants continue to address gaps in operability and interoperability, much progress is being made in how U.S. agencies and entities communicate throughout the Southwest Border Region. SWBCWG activities in this area include:

- Facilitating relationships among F/S/L/T agencies to better support enhanced safety of border area public safety personnel through the use of cross-border interoperable communications and enhanced coordination with Mexico;

## RESOURCES

Several technical and informational resources are available on the Web Portal to support SWBCWG participant collaboration. These resources are periodically reviewed and updated to reflect changes in the working group or regional environment. Participants can access these resources on the secure SWBCWG Web Portal hosted on the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) at: <https://hsin.dhs.gov/ci/cs/swbcwg/Pages/default.aspx>.

To request access to the HSIN SWBCWG Web Portal, please email [SWBCWG@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:SWBCWG@hq.dhs.gov).



## SWBCWG Web Portal

### FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please contact [SWBCWG@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:SWBCWG@hq.dhs.gov) or visit [www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov) (Keyword OEC).