



## **Fiscal Year 2008 Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program (IECGP) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

### **What is the purpose of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program (IECGP)?**

IECGP provides funding to improve interoperable emergency communications capabilities across States, Territories, local units of government, and tribal communities and supports the implementation of the Statewide Communication Interoperability Plans (SCIP). IECGP funds will help ensure that the goals and initiatives of the SCIPs are carried out and that the SCIPs are aligned with the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP). In FY 2008, IECGP has two priority groups: 1) Leadership and Governance; 2) Common Planning and Operational Protocols, and Emergency Responder Skills and Capabilities.

- **Establishment of formal interoperable emergency communications governance structures**

Governing bodies for interoperable emergency communications efforts are essential to ensure coordinated and consistent planning, implementation, and resource allocation for emergency communications solutions. States and Territories should establish interoperability committees that include multi-jurisdictional, multi-disciplinary, and intergovernmental representation in order to effectively manage interoperable emergency communications efforts statewide.

- **Establishment of common planning and operational protocols**

Common planning and operational protocols provide emergency responders with the procedures necessary to guide agency interaction and the use of emergency communications solutions. Grantees should continue strategic and tactical emergency communications planning efforts (e.g., SCIPs and Tactical Interoperable Communications Plans [TICP]) and are expected to establish common operational protocols through activities such as the development of standard operating procedures (SOP), consistent use of interoperability channels, plain language protocols, common channel naming, and others. SOPs should be National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Command System (ICS) compliant.

- **Enhancement of emergency responder skills and capabilities through training and exercises**

Many public safety agencies do not conduct regular training or exercises to ensure that emergency responders have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to operate emergency communications solutions or follow procedures, potentially resulting in ineffective performance during an actual emergency, as reported in recent assessments including the National Communications Capabilities Report. Interoperable emergency communications-specific training and exercises that are Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) compliant on technology solutions and operational protocols should be offered and conducted on a regular basis.

**How can SCIPs and IECGP applications be aligned to the NECP if the NECP is not yet available?**

Identified gaps from the analysis of SCIPs have been used to shape the development of the goals and objectives of the NECP, which is due to be delivered to Congress in July 2008. Further, the goals and objectives identified in the formation of the NECP have driven the development of FY 2008 IECGP funding goals. By proposing projects that align with FY 2008 IECGP funding goals and the State or Territory's respective SCIP, grantees should meet NECP compliance requirements for FY 2008. Future year grant programs may include additional requirements for grantees to demonstrate compliance with the NECP.

**How much IECGP funding is available?**

For FY 2008, \$48,575,000 in funding is available to States and Territories.

**What are the allowable costs for IECGP for FY 2008?**

For FY 2008, there are four allowable costs categories: planning, training, exercise, and personnel (including management and administrative costs). *Equipment acquisition is not an allowable cost category for IECGP in FY 2008.* The grant guidance outlines the allowable activities within each of the four categories.

**Can IECGP funds be used to train on equipment?**

Grantees may only use funds to train on interoperable communications equipment that has already been purchased and/or is currently in use.

**How much in FY 2008 IECGP funds are allowable towards Management and Administrative costs?**

A maximum of up to three percent (3 percent) of FY 2008 IECGP funds awarded may be retained by the State for management and administrative purposes associated with the award. Sub-grantees may also use a maximum of up to three percent (3 percent) of the FY 2008 IECGP funds for management and administrative purposes associated with the award.

**Can IECGP funds be used to hire public safety personnel?**

IECGP funds may be used for personnel hiring, overtime, and backfill expenses in order to perform allowable planning, training, and exercise activities. However, IECGP funds may not

be used to support the hiring of any personnel for the purposes of fulfilling traditional public safety duties or to supplant traditional public safety positions and responsibilities. For example, a local, uniformed, law enforcement patrol officer cannot be hired using grant dollars to perform regular local law enforcement patrol duties.

### **How are the IECGP funds allocated?**

Per the “Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007,” all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico will receive a minimum of 0.50 percent of the total funds allocated. Four Territories (American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands) will receive a minimum allocation of 0.08 percent of the total funds allocated. The remainder of the funds will be based upon a risk methodology.

### **What variables were considered as part of the risk methodology analysis?**

This formula is the product of three variables: threat, vulnerability and consequence. Vulnerability and consequence variables are an all-hazards construction in that they account for the relative severity of the effects of a disaster, regardless of the type of disaster considered. These variables also incorporate such factors as the population of an area, its economic output, the presence of nationally critical infrastructure, and national security concerns. The threat variable is based exclusively on terrorism threats.

### **Who is eligible to apply for IECGP funds?**

The State Administrative Agency (SAA) of the 56 States and Territories may apply for IECGP funding.

### **Where can I find the information about my SAA?**

To find the SAA for your State, please link to the following website:  
<http://www.dhs.gov/xgovt/grants/index.shtm>.

### **Can local public safety agencies apply directly to FEMA for these funds?**

No, local agencies cannot apply for or receive grant funds directly; however, local agencies can apply through and receive funding from the SAA through the pass-through process.

### **What is the pass-through requirement?**

No later than 45 days after receiving grant funds, each State (including Puerto Rico) receiving grant funds is required to pass through not less than 80 percent of the total award amount. A pass-through recipient must be a public safety agency that is a State, local, or tribal government entity whose sole or principal purpose is to protect safety of life, health, or property. Per the “Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007,” the Territories (with the exception of Puerto Rico) and the District of Columbia have no pass-through requirement. However, they are expected to take into account the needs of local communities prior to making funding decisions.

### **Can the State expend funds on behalf of local entities?**

Yes, the State may retain some of the allocation of grant funds for expenditures made by the State on behalf of local or tribal units of government. This may occur only with the written consent of the local or tribal unit of government, with the written consent specifying the amount of funds to be retained and the intended use of funds.

### **Does IECGP have a match requirement?**

No, grantees are not required to provide cash or in-kind match for FY 2008. However, there is a potential for future grant programs to be impacted by cash match requirements as early as FY 2009. Accordingly, grantees should anticipate and plan for future homeland security programs to require cash or in-kind matches at cost-share levels comparable to other FEMA-administered grant programs.

### **Is software-based training an allowable cost under IECGP?**

Yes. For example, the procurement of software packages that support emergency communications training and exercise activities is an allowable expense for FY 2008.

### **How is IECGP related to the Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) Grant Program?**

IECGP and the PSIC Grant Program are both aimed to improve interoperable emergency communications. However, while PSIC provided substantial funding for infrastructure and equipment acquisitions and upgrades, the IECGP funding priorities for FY 2008 will focus on key interoperability issues beyond infrastructure and equipment. These planning, training, and exercise activities are critical for ensuring that the Nation has the necessary capabilities to communicate during emergencies. Grantees must follow all applicable reporting and post-award requirements and ensure that the grant funds of differing grant programs are kept separate. This diligent reporting will help ensure that the specific interoperable communications goals for each unique grant program are being met.

### **Can IECGP funds be used to support an existing interoperable communications project?**

No. Supplanting requirements for IECGP are consistent with those for all other federal grants as it relates to projects with ongoing or existing budgets and funding. IECGP funds may be used to support, for example, a regional governance structure; however, this funding must support a unique component of the structure that does not already receive existing Federal, State, or local funding.

### **What are the key IECGP deadlines?**

The dates below represent key milestones associated with IECGP:

- June 20, 2008: IECGP Grant Guidance and Application Kit released.
- July 21, 2008: Deadline for States and Territories to submit applications.
- September 30, 2008: Grants funds are awarded no later than this date.

### **How will IECGP applications be submitted?**

Applications will be submitted via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). SAAs should follow instructions listed in Appendix B (*FY 2008 IECGP Application Requirements*) of the IECGP Kit. Applications must also include the IECGP Application Template (located at [www.fema.gov/grants](http://www.fema.gov/grants) and referenced as an example in Appendix A of the IECGP Kit).

### **When will the IECGP funds be released to the grantees?**

Submitted IECGP applications will undergo a joint Office of Emergency Communications and FEMA Grant Programs Directorate review process to ensure that all applications are compliant with program requirements to assess effectiveness of proposed investments before the funds are awarded. Funds are expected to be awarded by September 30, 2008.

### **What is the period of performance for IECGP?**

The period of performance is 24 months.

### **What if I have additional questions?**

For more information on IECGP, please contact the Centralized Scheduling and Information Desk (CSID) at 1-800-368-6498 or [askcsid@dhs.gov](mailto:askcsid@dhs.gov). IECGP updates will be posted at [www.fema.gov/grants](http://www.fema.gov/grants). Media and Congressional offices should contact FEMA at (202) 626-4600.