



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Fiscal Year 2008

**MISSISSIPPI INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS
GRANT**

GUIDANCE AND APPLICATION KIT

July 2008



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Program Description

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2008, Congress appropriated \$20 million for a grant to the State of Mississippi for an interoperable communications system required in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. This formal grant guidance and application materials are provided for Mississippi to apply for funding.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Office of Emergency Communication will establish program and policy guidelines and ensure that this grant meets requirements specified under the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as amended, and the DHS Appropriations Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-161). To ensure consistency across interoperable communications grant programs, this grant will align with guidelines set forth in Title III of the Implementing the 9/11 Commission Recommendations Act of 2007. The Administrator of FEMA will administer the funds to Mississippi, pursuant to the authority given to it under Public Law 110-161.

A. PROGRAM FUNDING GOALS

This appropriation will assist the State of Mississippi in implementing an interoperable communications system, which is required in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Mississippi has an approved Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP), which outlines goals and objectives for enhancing interoperability statewide. The National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP), which is due to be delivered to Congress in July 2008, will provide recommendations for ensuring interoperable emergency communications nationwide. The NECP will provide recommendations regarding how the United States should: (1) support and promote the ability of emergency response providers and relevant government officials to continue to communicate in the event of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters; and (2) ensure, accelerate, and attain interoperable emergency communications nationwide. Consistent with these initiatives, this grant program is designed to ensure that the State's proposed project(s) in implementing an interoperable communications system align with the goals and objectives of the SCIP and the NECP, when complete. The Mississippi State Administrative Agency (SAA) will be provided a copy of the NECP, once it is delivered to Congress, in July 2008. Mississippi must align its grant activities with:

- The goals and objectives outlined in the Mississippi SCIP and NECP, when complete
- The "SAFECOM Recommended Federal Interoperable Communications Grant Guidance, FY 2008¹" which encourages applicants to consider all lanes of the Interoperability Continuum when applying for grant funding, including:

¹ FY 2008 SAFECOM Recommended Federal Interoperable Communications Grant Guidance can be found on the SAFECOM website at: http://www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/library/grant/1341_fy2008.htm

governance, standard operating procedures, technology, training and exercises, and usage

B. LIMITATION ON PROJECT SCOPE

Grant funding may not be used to supplant State of Mississippi or local funding.

Available Funding and Eligible Applicants

A. Available Funding

The State of Mississippi is appropriated \$20 million. The period of performance for this grant is 36 months. Extensions to the period of performance will be considered through formal requests to FEMA with specific justifications why an extension is required.

B. Eligible Applicants

The Governor of Mississippi has designated an SAA, which can apply for and administer these funds. The Mississippi SAA is the only agency eligible to apply. The SAA is responsible for the management and administration of all funds provided through this award and is accountable for all the deadlines, requirements, and limitations of this award. The SAA may obligate funds to eligible pass-through recipients, and is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the activity of these sub-recipients.

Program Requirements and Allowable Costs Guidance

This section provides detailed information about specific programmatic requirements for the appropriated \$20 million for the State of Mississippi.

A. General Program Requirements

The State of Mississippi SAA will be responsible for the administration of funds.

1. Grant funds. While there is no specific local or tribal government pass-through requirement associated with this program, the purpose of this grant is to implement interoperable communications throughout the State. Mississippi is therefore strongly encouraged to utilize these grant funds to address local, tribal, regional, as well as statewide gaps that have been identified in the SCIP and other interoperable communications planning documents.

2. Management and Administration (M&A) limits. A maximum of up to 3 percent of funds awarded may be retained by the SAA for management and administration (M&A) purposes associated with the award. Subgrantees are also allowed to retain up to 3 percent of funding passed through by the State for M&A purposes.

3. Cash-Match Requirements. The State of Mississippi is not required to provide cash or in-kind match for these funds. However, there is the potential for future grant programs to be impacted by cash match requirements as early as FY 2009. Accordingly, Mississippi 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.

B. Allowable Costs Guidance

The following pages outline global allowable costs guidance applicable for the State of Mississippi. As noted before, all allowable cost activities proposed must align to the State of Mississippi SCIP and the DHS NECP (when complete), as well as with the lanes of the Interoperability Continuum (i.e., governance, standard operating procedures, technology, training and exercises, usage).

1. Planning Activities. Mississippi may use funds for planning efforts that enable them to accomplish goals and objectives identified in their SCIP. Planning activities should help to prioritize needs, build capabilities, update preparedness strategies, allocate resources, and deliver preparedness programs across disciplines (e.g., law enforcement, fire, emergency medical service [EMS], public health, public works, and transportation) and levels of government.

2. Equipment Activities. Mississippi may use funds for equipment purchases. The allowable interoperable communications equipment categories and equipment

standards are listed on the web-based version of the Authorized Equipment List (AEL) on the Responder Knowledge Base (RKB), at <http://www.rkb.us>.

The select allowable equipment includes equipment from the following AEL categories:

- Explosive Device Mitigation and Remediation (Category 2)
- Information Technology (Category 4)
- Cyber-Security Enhancement Equipment (Category 5)
- Interoperable Communications Equipment (Category 6)
- Power Equipment (Category 10)
- CBRNE Reference Materials (Category 11)
- Terrorism Incident Prevention Equipment (Category 13)
- Physical Security Enhancement Equipment (Category 14)
- CBRNE Logistical Support Equipment (Category 19)
- Other Authorized Equipment (Category 21)

Interoperable communications equipment must meet all mandatory, regulatory and/or DHS-adopted standards to be eligible for purchase using these funds. The grantee should indicate whether the system or equipment being procured is Project 25 compliant and whether national interoperability channels or common channeling will be used. If State agencies and/or local governments have questions concerning the eligibility of equipment not specifically addressed in the AEL, they should contact their FEMA Headquarters Program Analyst at 1-800-368-6498 for clarification.

Use of Mississippi Interoperable Communications Grant funds to purchase Interoperable Communications Equipment (Category 6) must conform to SAFECOM's coordinated grant guidance which outlines standards and equipment information to enhance interoperable communications. In addition, Mississippi will be responsible for obtaining and maintaining all necessary certifications and licenses for the requested equipment. This guidance can be found at <http://www.safecomprogram.gov>. Additionally, the grantee is encouraged to coordinate with other State and local partners in integrating its interoperable communications plans and projects as outlined in its SCIP (submitted to DHS in December 2007 as part of the DHS/Department of Commerce's Public Safety Interoperable Communications [PSIC] Grant Program).

3. Training Activities. Mississippi may use funds to develop an interoperable communications training program. Training conducted should address a performance gap identified through the SCIP and any subgrantees' interoperable communications plan. Exercises should be used to provide the opportunity to demonstrate and validate interoperable communications skills learned in training, as well as to identify training gaps. Any training or exercise gaps should be identified in the grantee's After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) and addressed in their training cycle.

4. Exercise Activities. Mississippi may use funds to conduct emergency interoperable communications exercises. Exercises conducted with FEMA support must be managed and executed in accordance with the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation

Program (HSEEP). HSEEP Volumes I-III contain guidance for exercise design, development, conduct, evaluation and improvement planning. HSEEP Volume IV provides sample exercise materials and HSEEP Volume V: Prevention Exercises contains guidance and recommendations for designing, developing, conducting, and evaluating prevention-focused exercises. All volumes can be found at <http://hseep.dhs.gov>.

All exercises must be National Incident Management System (NIMS)-compliant. More information is available online at the NIMS Integration Center, <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/index.shtm>.

5. Personnel Activities. Mississippi may use up to 15 percent of funds for personnel hiring, overtime, and backfill expenses under this grant in order to perform allowable planning, training, exercise, and equipment acquisition activities.

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.

The following are definitions for the terms as used in this grant guidance:

- **Hiring** – State and local entities may use grant funding to cover the salary of newly hired personnel who are exclusively undertaking allowable activities as specified in this guidance. This may **not** include new personnel who are hired to fulfill any non-grant activities under any circumstances. Hiring will always result in a net increase of full-time employees (FTEs).
- **Overtime** – These expenses are limited to the additional costs which result from personnel working over and above 40 hours of weekly work time as a direct result of their performance of DHS-approved activities specified in this guidance. Overtime associated with any other activity is not eligible.
- **Backfill-related Overtime** – Also called “Overtime as Backfill,” these expenses are limited to overtime costs which result from personnel who are working overtime (as identified above) to perform the duties of other personnel who are temporarily assigned to DHS-approved activities outside their core responsibilities. These costs are calculated by subtracting the non-overtime compensation, including fringe benefits of the temporarily assigned personnel from the total costs (non-overtime and overtime compensation, including fringe benefits) paid to backfill the position.
- **Supplanting** – Replacing a currently State and/or locally budgeted position with one or more FTEs or contracted supported in whole or in part with Federal funds.

6. Construction and Renovation. Use of funds for construction and renovation is generally prohibited except as outlined below.

Mississippi may use funds for project construction and renovation not exceeding \$1,000,000, as deemed necessary. The following types of projects are considered to constitute construction or renovation, and must be submitted to FEMA for compliance review under Federal environmental planning and historic preservation (EHP) laws and requirements prior to initiation of the project:

- Construction of and renovation to guard facilities
- Renovation of and modifications, including the installation of security and communication equipment, to buildings and structures that are 50 years old or older
- Any other construction or renovation efforts that change or expand the footprint of a facility or structure, including security enhancements to improve perimeter security
- Physical security enhancements, including but not limited to:
 - Lighting
 - Fencing
 - Closed-circuit television systems
 - Motion detection systems
 - Barriers, doors, gates and related security enhancements

In addition, the erection of communications towers that are included in a jurisdiction's interoperable communications plan is allowed, subject to all applicable laws, regulations, and licensing provisions. Communication tower projects must be submitted to FEMA for EHP review.

In order to draw down funds for construction and renovation costs, the State of Mississippi must provide to FEMA:

- A description of the asset or facility, asset location, whether the infrastructure is publicly or privately owned, and the construction or renovation project
- Certification that a facility vulnerability assessment has been conducted
- An outline addressing how the construction or renovation project will address the identified vulnerabilities from the assessment
- Consequences of not implementing the construction or renovation project
- Any additional information requested by FEMA to ensure compliance with Federal environmental and historic preservation requirements.

The grantee should refer to FEMA's Information Bulletin #271, Environmental and Planning and Historic Preservation Requirements for Grants.

Appendix A. Mississippi Interoperable Communications Grant Application Kit

Overview

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2008, Congress appropriated \$20 million for a grant to the State of Mississippi for an interoperable communications system. This Application Kit is provided to Mississippi so it may request and receive these funds. The Administrator of FEMA will administer the funds for this grant, pursuant to the authority given under Public Law 110-161. The period of performance for this grant is 36 months. Extensions to the period of performance will be considered through formal requests to FEMA with specific justifications why an extension is required.

The Mississippi SAA must complete this Application Kit in order to receive this \$20 million grant. The Application Kit consists of Part A. the Mississippi Portfolio Narrative, to be completed by August 13, 2008 and Part B. the Mississippi Project Outline, to be submitted when the applicant identifies which projects will be put forth for requested funding. Additional information on the Part A and Part B templates can be found throughout this section and the templates can be found at the end of this Appendix.

Mississippi Portfolio Narrative

The purpose of the narrative is to provide a brief description of the statewide interoperable emergency communications priorities and initiatives that will be addressed with Mississippi Interoperable Communications Grant funds. The narrative must address the following:

- Describe how local stakeholders will be involved in the planning process for projects and how their needs will be addressed
- Describe the major goals of the overall project including an overview of funding (e.g. a build-out of regional systems)
- Describe, at a high level, how the State will achieve increased interoperability with this funding (e.g., how the funding will advance the state of interoperability for Mississippi as set forth in the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum)

Mississippi Project Outline

A Project Outline **must** be completed for each project or each phase of a larger project supported by funds. As mentioned above, this outline should be completed when the applicant identifies which projects will be put forth for requested funding. For each project, use the following descriptions to complete the Project Outline:

- **Mississippi Interoperable Communications Objective:** Briefly describe the project, its primary objective, and how it fills an interoperable emergency communications gap for the State or region. Describe the project problem, a proposed solution, and expected outcomes. Identify the agencies and jurisdictions involved and any Memoranda of Understanding or standard operating procedures developed for this project, if applicable. Proposed solutions should include a

description of any Planning, Equipment, Training, Exercise, Personnel, and Construction activities proposed.

- **Planning Activities:** Planning activities should help to prioritize needs, build capabilities, update preparedness strategies, allocate resources, and deliver preparedness programs across disciplines (e.g., law enforcement, fire, emergency medical service [EMS], public health, public works, and transportation) and levels of government.
- **Equipment Activities:** The allowable interoperable communications equipment categories and standards are listed on the Authorized Equipment List on the Responder Knowledge Base, at <http://www.rkb.us>. The select allowable equipment includes equipment from the following AEL categories:
 - Explosive Device Mitigation and Remediation (Category 2)
 - Information Technology (Category 4)
 - Cyber-Security Enhancement Equipment (Category 5)
 - Interoperable Communications Equipment (Category 6)
 - Power Equipment (Category 10)
 - CBRNE Reference Materials (Category 11)
 - Terrorism Incident Prevention Equipment (Category 13)
 - Physical Security Enhancement Equipment (Category 14)
 - CBRNE Logistical Support Equipment (Category 19)
 - Other Authorized Equipment (Category 21)

Interoperable communications equipment must meet all mandatory, regulatory and/or DHS-adopted standards to be eligible for purchase using these funds. The grantee should indicate whether the system or equipment being procured is Project 25 compliant and whether national interoperability channels or common channeling will be used. If State agencies and/or local governments have questions concerning the eligibility of equipment not specifically addressed in the AEL, they should contact their FEMA Headquarters Program Analyst at 1-800-368-6498 for clarification.

Use of Mississippi Interoperable Communications Grant funds to purchase Interoperable Communications Equipment (Category 6) must conform to SAFECOM's coordinated grant guidance which outlines standards and equipment information to enhance interoperable communications. In addition, Mississippi will be responsible for obtaining and maintaining all necessary certifications and licenses for the requested equipment. This guidance can be found at <http://www.safecomprogram.gov>. Additionally, the grantee is encouraged to coordinate with other State and local partners in integrating its interoperable communications plans and projects as

outlined in its SCIP (submitted to DHS in December 2007 as part of the DHS/Department of Commerce's Public Safety Interoperable Communications [PSIC] Grant Program).

- **Training Activities:** Mississippi may use funds to develop an interoperable communications training program. Training conducted should address a performance gap identified through the SCIP and any subgrantees' interoperable communications plan. Exercises should be used to provide the opportunity to demonstrate and validate interoperable communications skills learned in training, as well as to identify training gaps. Any training or exercise gaps should be identified in the grantee's After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) and addressed in their training cycle.
- **Exercise Activities:** Mississippi may use funds to conduct emergency interoperable communications exercises. Any training or exercise gaps should be identified in the grantee's AAR/IP and addressed in their training cycle. Exercises conducted with FEMA support must be managed and executed in accordance with the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP). HSEEP Volumes I-III contain guidance for exercise design, development, conduct, evaluation and improvement planning. HSEEP Volume IV provides sample exercise materials and HSEEP Volume V: Prevention Exercises contains guidance and recommendations for designing, developing, conducting, and evaluating prevention-focused exercises. All volumes can be found at <http://hseep.dhs.gov>.

All exercises must be National Incident Management System (NIMS)-compliant. More information is available online at the NIMS Integration Center, <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/index.shtm>.

- **Personnel Activities:** Mississippi may use up to 15 percent of funds for personnel hiring, overtime, and backfill expenses under this grant in order to perform allowable planning, training, exercise, and equipment acquisition activities.

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.

The following are definitions for the terms as used in this grant guidance:

- **Hiring** – State and local entities may use grant funding to cover the salary of newly hired personnel who are exclusively undertaking allowable activities as specified in this guidance. This may not

include new personnel who are hired to fulfill any non-grant activities under any circumstances. Hiring will always result in a net increase of full-time employees (FTEs).

- **Overtime** – These expenses are limited to the additional costs which result from personnel working over and above 40 hours of weekly work time as a direct result of their performance of DHS-approved activities specified in this guidance. Overtime associated with any other activity is not eligible.
 - **Backfill-related Overtime** – Also called “Overtime as Backfill,” these expenses are limited to overtime costs which result from personnel who are working overtime (as identified above) to perform the duties of other personnel who are temporarily assigned to DHS-approved activities outside their core responsibilities. These costs are calculated by subtracting the non-overtime compensation, including fringe benefits of the temporarily assigned personnel from the total costs (non-overtime and overtime compensation, including fringe benefits) paid to backfill the position.
 - **Supplanting** – Replacing a currently State and/or locally budgeted position with one or more FTEs or contracted supported in whole or in part with Federal funds.
- **Construction and Renovation:** Use of funds for construction and renovation is generally prohibited except as outlined below.

Mississippi may use funds for project construction and renovation not exceeding \$1,000,000, as deemed necessary. The following types of projects are considered to constitute construction or renovation, and must be submitted to FEMA for compliance review under Federal environmental planning and historic preservation (EHP) laws and requirements prior to initiation of the project:

- Construction of and renovation to guard facilities
- Renovation of and modifications, including the installation of security and communication equipment, to buildings and structures that are 50 years old or older
- Any other construction or renovation efforts that change or expand the footprint of a facility or structure, including security enhancements to improve perimeter security.
- Physical security enhancements, including but not limited to:
 - Lighting
 - Fencing
 - Closed-circuit television systems
 - Motion detection systems

- Barriers, doors, gates and related security enhancements

In addition, the erection of communications towers that are included in a jurisdiction's interoperable communications plan is allowed, subject to all applicable laws, regulations, and licensing provisions. Communication tower projects must be submitted to FEMA for EHP review.

In order to draw down funds for construction and renovation costs, the State of Mississippi must provide to FEMA:

- A description of the asset or facility, asset location, whether the infrastructure is publicly or privately owned, and the construction or renovation project
- Certification that a facility vulnerability assessment has been conducted
- An outline addressing how the construction or renovation project will address the identified vulnerabilities from the assessment
- Consequences of not implementing the construction or renovation project
- Any additional information requested by FEMA to ensure compliance with Federal environmental and historic preservation requirements.

The grantee should refer to FEMA's Information Bulletin #271, Environmental and Planning and Historic Preservation Requirements for Grants.

Note: All projects involving construction, building renovation, or building modification are subject to environmental and historic preservation compliance requirements and must be reviewed and approved by FEMA prior to implementation. The grantee should refer to FEMA's Information Bulletin #271, Environmental and Planning and Historic Preservation Requirements for Grants.

- **Demonstration that Project is Separate and Unique.** Grantee must demonstrate that each project is a separate and unique component from already funded/budgeted activities (e.g., requested funding through the Homeland Security Grant Program, Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant Program, or Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program).² The State of Mississippi cannot supplant local, State, or Federal funds by using the \$20 million award for ongoing activities already budgeted, including operations and maintenance costs

² For example, the State of Mississippi may use its funding to support an existing statewide communications system; however, this funding must be a unique component of this system that does not receive funding from another federal grant program.

associated with salaries, benefits, and overtime for existing employees, sworn officers, grant writers and other staff who do not directly contribute to the implementation of the project.

- **Alignment with Goals, Objectives, and/or Initiatives of the SCIP and the NECP:** Identify how the project aligns to the goals, objectives, and/or initiatives identified in the SCIP and the NECP.
 - Alignment with the goals of the SCIP and the NECP.
 - Discuss how the grantee consulted with the SCIP point of contact and/or the Mississippi interoperability governing body to develop the application
 - Discuss communication needs defined in the SCIP related to risk
 - Summary of statewide strategy to address risk/needs identified in the SCIP and the migration plan for moving from the existing system to the new system
- **Alignment with Federal Emergency Management Plans, such as the FEMA Emergency Communications Plan, State of Mississippi Annex.** Identify how the project aligns to the Emergency Communications Plan, if applicable.
- **Governance:** Identify the governance structures in place that will support the development and implementation of the project. Explain how this objective will be communicated to the statewide interoperable emergency communications governance committee (e.g., Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee).
- **Performance Measure(s) and Basis of Evaluation:** Indicate the performance measure(s) that will be used to evaluate this project's impact and the basis for developing the measure(s).
- **Milestones:** Provide specific milestones for the project over the identified period of performance, including a description, start and end dates for each milestone; up to 10 milestones may be provided.
- **Challenges/Risks:** Identify any potential challenges or risks to implementing this project.
- **Budget:** This should include a budget for each project or phase of a larger project broken down by allowable cost category.

Project Budget # _____

	Federal Funds Requested
Planning	\$
Equipment	\$
Training	\$
Exercises	\$
Personnel	\$
Construction/Renovation	\$
Management & Administrative	\$
Total Project Budget	\$

- **Semi-Annual Activity:** For each 6 months of activity, briefly identify the milestone and expected outcome. *Note: The Expected Outcomes section should be completed as feasible. Actual progress data will be identified through input in the Grants Reporting Tool, as well as through programmatic monitoring.*

Note that all of the elements in the above descriptions must be addressed when completing the Project Outline.

Part A. Mississippi Portfolio Narrative

(Submit by August 13, 2008)

SAA Contact Name: _____

Describe how local stakeholders will be involved in the planning process for projects and how their needs will be addressed *(not to exceed 1 page):*

Describe the major goals of the overall project including an overview of funding (e.g. a build-out of regional systems) *(not to exceed 1 page):*

Describe, at a high level, how the State will achieve increased interoperability with this funding (e.g., how the funding will advance the state of interoperability for Mississippi as set forth in the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum) *(not to exceed 1 page):*

Part B. Mississippi Project Outline

(Submit when the applicant identifies which projects will be put forth for requested funding)

Description of Project #

SAA Contact Name: _____

Mississippi Interoperable Communications Objective <i>(not to exceed 1 page):</i>	
Demonstration that Project is Separate and Unique <i>(not to exceed 1 page):</i>	
Identify how the project aligns to the goals, objectives, and/or initiatives identified in the SCIP and the NECP <i>(not to exceed 1 page):</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with the goals of the SCIP and the NECP. • Discuss how the grantee consulted with the SCIP point of contact and/or the Mississippi interoperability governing body to develop the application • Discuss communication needs defined in the SCIP related to risk • Summary of statewide strategy to address risk/needs identified in the SCIP and the migration plan for moving from the existing system to the new system 	
Alignment with Federal Emergency Management Plans, such as Emergency Communications Plan, State of Mississippi Annex <i>(not to exceed 1 page):</i>	
Governance <i>(not to exceed 1 page):</i>	
Performance Measure(s) and Basis of Evaluation <i>(not to exceed 1 page):</i>	
Milestones <i>(not to exceed 1 page):</i>	
Challenges/Risks <i>(not to exceed 1 page):</i>	
Budget <i>(not to exceed 1 page):</i>	
Semi-Annual Activity <i>(not to exceed 1 page):</i>	
1st and 2nd Quarter Activity	Expected Outcome <i>(not to exceed 1 page):</i>
3rd and 4th Quarter Activity	Expected Outcome <i>(not to exceed 1 page):</i>

Appendix B. Mississippi Application Requirements

A. Eligible Applicants and Role of State Administrative Agencies.

The Governor of Mississippi is required to designate a State Administrative Agency (SAA) to apply for and administer the funds awarded.

B. Application Requirements

1. **Application via Grants Management System (GMS).** Eligible SAAs must apply for funding through GMS, accessible on the Internet at <https://grants.ojp.usdoj.gov/>.
2. **Application deadline.** Completed Applications must be submitted to GMS no later than **11:59 PM EDT, August 13, 2008.**
3. **Valid Central Contractor Registry (CCR) Registration.** The application process also involves an updated and current registration by the applicant. Eligible applicants must confirm CCR registration at <http://www.ccr.gov>, as well as apply for funding through GMS.
4. **On-line application.** The on-line application must be completed and submitted using GMS after CCR registration is confirmed. The on-line application includes the following required forms and submissions:
 - Application Kit
 - Standard Form 424, Application for Federal Assistance
 - Standard Form 424B Assurances
 - Standard Form LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
 - Standard Form 424A, Budget Information
 - Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters
 - Any additional Required Attachments

The program title listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) is "*Mississippi Interoperable Communications Grant Program.*" The CFDA number is **97.001**. When completing the on-line application, applicants should identify their submissions as new, non-construction applications.

5. **Award Period of Performance.** The period of performance for this grant is 36 months. Extensions to the period of performance will be considered through formal requests to FEMA with specific justifications why an extension is required.
6. **DUNS number.** The applicant must provide a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number with its application. This number

may be provided in one of the attachment fields within GMS, and is a required field for CCR Registration. Organizations should verify that they have a DUNS number, or take the steps necessary to obtain one, as soon as possible. Applicants can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at (800) 333-0505.

7. **Single Point of Contact (SPOC) review.** Executive Order #12372 requires applicants from State and local units of government or other organizations providing services within a State to submit a copy of the application to the State SPOC, if one exists, and if this program has been selected for review by the State. Applicants must contact their State SPOC to determine if the program has been selected for State review. Executive Order #12372 can be referenced at <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/12372.html>.

8. **Standard financial requirements.**

8.1 -- Non-supplanting certification. Grant funds will be used to supplement existing funds, and will not replace (supplant) funds that have been appropriated for the same purpose. The applicant or grantee may be required to supply documentation certifying that a reduction in non-Federal resources occurred for reasons other than the receipt or expected receipt of Federal funds.

8.2 -- Assurances. Assurances forms (SF-424B and SF-424D) can be accessed at http://www07.grants.gov/agencies/approved_standard_forms.jsp. It is the responsibility of the recipient of the Federal funds to understand fully and comply with these requirements. Failure to comply may result in the withholding of funds, termination of the award or other sanctions. The applicant will be agreeing to these assurances upon the submission of the application.

8.3 -- Certifications regarding lobbying, debarment, suspension, other responsibility matters and the drug-free workplace requirement. This certification, which is a required component of the on-line application, commits the applicant to compliance with the certification requirements under 44 CFR part 17, *Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement)* and *Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants)*; 44 CFR part 18, *New Restrictions on Lobbying*. All of these can be referenced at http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_07/44cfrv1_07.html

9. **Administrative requirements.**

9.1 -- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). FEMA recognizes that much of the information submitted in the course of applying for funding under this program or provided in the course of its grant management activities may be considered law enforcement sensitive or otherwise important to national security interests. While this information under Federal control is subject to requests made pursuant to the

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5. U.S.C. §552, all determinations concerning the release of information of this nature are made on a case-by-case basis by the FEMA FOIA Office, and may likely fall within one or more of the available exemptions under the Act. The applicant is encouraged to consult its own State and local laws and regulations regarding the release of information, which should be considered when reporting sensitive matters in the grant application, needs assessment and strategic planning process. The grantee should be familiar with the regulations governing Sensitive Security Information (49 CFR Part 1520), as it may provide additional protection to certain classes of homeland security information.

9.2 -- Protected Critical Infrastructure Information (PCII). The PCII Program, established pursuant to the Critical Infrastructure Information Act of 2002 (CII Act), created a new framework, which enables State and local jurisdictions and members of the private sector voluntarily to submit sensitive information regarding critical infrastructure to DHS. The Act also provides statutory protection for voluntarily shared CII from public disclosure and civil litigation. If validated as PCII, these documents can only be shared with authorized users who agree to safeguard the information.

PCII accreditation is formal recognition that the covered government entity has the capacity and capability to receive and store PCII. DHS encourages all SAAs to pursue PCII accreditation to cover their state government and attending local government agencies. Accreditation activities include signing a MOA with DHS, appointing a PCII Officer, and implementing a self-inspection program. For additional information about PCII or the accreditation process, please contact the DHS PCII Program Office at pcii-info@dhs.gov.

9.3 -- Compliance with Federal civil rights laws and regulations. The grantee is required to comply with Federal civil rights laws and regulations. Specifically, the grantee is required to provide assurances as a condition for receipt of Federal funds that its programs and activities comply with the following:

- *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 42. U.S.C. 2000 et seq.* – no person on the grounds of race, color or national origin will be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination in any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.
- *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 U.S.C. 794* – no qualified individual with a disability in the United States, shall, by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance

- *Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, 20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.* – discrimination on the basis of sex is eliminated in any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.
- *The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, 20 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.* – no person in the United States shall be, on the basis of age, excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

The grantee must comply with all regulations, guidelines, and standards adopted under the above statutes.

9.4 -- Services to limited English proficient (LEP) persons. Recipients of FEMA financial assistance are required to comply with several Federal civil rights laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. These laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, natural origin, and sex in the delivery of services. National origin discrimination includes discrimination on the basis of limited English proficiency. To ensure compliance with Title VI, recipients are required to take reasonable steps to ensure that LEP persons have meaningful access to their programs. Meaningful access may entail providing language assistance services, including oral and written translation, where necessary. The grantee is encouraged to consider the need for language services for LEP persons served or encountered both in developing their proposals and budgets and in conducting their programs and activities. Reasonable costs associated with providing meaningful access for LEP individuals are considered allowable program costs. For additional information, see <http://www.lep.gov>.

9.5 -- Integrating individuals with disabilities into emergency planning. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in all aspects of emergency mitigation, planning, response, and recovery by entities receiving financial assistance from FEMA. In addition, Executive Order #13347, entitled "Individuals with Disabilities in Emergency Preparedness" signed in July 2004, requires the Federal Government to support safety and security for individuals with disabilities in situations involving disasters, including earthquakes, tornadoes, fires, floods, hurricanes, and acts of terrorism. Executive Order #13347 requires the federal government to, among other things, encourage consideration of the needs of individuals with disabilities served by State, local, and tribal governments in emergency preparedness planning.

FEMA has several resources available to assist emergency managers in planning and response efforts related to people with disabilities and to ensure compliance with Federal civil rights laws:

- **Guidelines for Accommodating Individuals with Disabilities in Disaster:** The Guidelines synthesize the array of existing accessibility requirements into a user friendly tool for use by response and recovery personnel in the field. The Guidelines are available at <http://www.fema.gov/oer/reference/>.
- **Disability and Emergency Preparedness Resource Center:** A web-based “Resource Center” that includes dozens of technical assistance materials to assist emergency managers in planning and response efforts related to people with disabilities. The “Resource Center” is available at <http://www.disabilitypreparedness.gov>.
- *Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS)* resource page on **Emergency Planning for Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs:** A true one-stop resource shop for planners at all levels of government, non-governmental organizations, and private sector entities, the resource page provides more than 250 documents, including lessons learned, plans, procedures, policies, and guidance, on how to include citizens with disabilities and other special needs in all phases of the emergency management cycle.

LLIS.gov is available to emergency response providers and homeland security officials from the local, state, and federal levels. To access the resource page, log onto <http://www.LLIS.gov> and click on *Emergency Planning for Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs* under *Featured Topics*. If you meet the eligibility requirements for accessing Lessons Learned Information Sharing, you can request membership by registering online.

9.6 -- Compliance with the National Energy Conservation Policy and Energy Policy Acts. In accordance with the FY 2008 DHS Appropriations Act, all FY 2008 grant funds must comply with the following two requirements:

- None of the funds made available through this Program shall be used in contravention of the Federal buildings performance and reporting requirements of Executive Order #13123, part 3 of title V of the National Energy Conservation Policy Act (42 USC 8251 et. Seq.), or subtitle A of title I of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (including the amendments made thereby).
- None of the funds made available shall be used in contravention of section 303 of the Energy Policy Act of 1992 (42 USC13212).

Appendix C. Award and Reporting Requirements

Prior to the transition to FEMA, the former Office of Grants and Training preparedness programs followed the Department of Justice's codified regulations, 28 CFR and the OGO Financial Management Guide. The former Office of Grants and Training is now within FEMA and all preparedness programs will follow FEMA's codified regulations, 44 CFR.

A. Grant Award and Obligation of Funds.

Upon approval of an application, the grant will be awarded to the grant recipient. The date that this is done is the "award date."

There are no pass-through requirements associated with this Program.

The period of performance for this grant is 36 months. Extensions to the period of performance will be considered through formal requests to FEMA with specific justifications why an extension is required

B. Post Award Instructions.

The following is provided as a guide for the administration of awards. Additional details and requirements may be provided to the grantee in conjunction with finalizing an award.

1. Review award and special conditions document. Notification of award approval is made by e-mail through the Grants Management System (GMS). Once an award has been approved, a notice is sent to the e-mail address of the individual who filed the application, as well as to the authorized grantee official. Follow the directions in the notification email and log into GMS to access the award documents. The authorized grantee official should carefully read the award and special condition documents. If you do not receive a notification e-mail, please contact your Program Analyst for your award number. Once you have the award number, contact the GMS Help Desk at (888) 549-9901, option 3 to obtain the username and password associated with the new award.

If you agree with the terms and conditions, the authorized grantee official should sign and date both the original and the copy of the award document page in Block 19 and initial the special conditions page(s). Retain a copy and fax the documents to (202) 786-9905 Attention: Control Desk or send the original signed documents to:

**U.S. Department of Homeland Security/FEMA
Grant Programs Directorate/Control Desk 4th Floor, TechWorld
500 C St., SW
Washington, DC 20472**

If you do not agree with the terms and conditions, contact the Program Analyst named in the award package.

2. Complete and return form SF1199A . The SF1199A Direct Deposit Sign-up Form is used to set up direct deposit for grant payments. The SF1199A form can be found at: <http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/administration.shtm>. This form should be sent to the address above.

NOTE: Please include your vendor number in Box C of the SF1199A form.

3 Access to payment systems. The grantee under this solicitation will use FEMA's online Payment and Reporting System (PARS) to request funds. The website to access PARS is <https://isource.fema.gov/sf269/execute/LogIn?sawContentMessage=true>. Questions regarding payments or how to access PARS should be directed to the FEMA Call Center at (866) 927-5646 or sent via e-mail to ask-OGO@dhs.gov.

4. Questions about your award? A reference sheet is provided containing frequently asked financial questions and answers. Questions regarding your grant should be directed to the FEMA Call Center at (866) 927-5646 or sent via e-mail to ask-OGO@dhs.gov.

Note: If you have any questions about GMS, need to establish a GMS account, or require technical assistance with accessing your award, contact the GMS Help Desk at (888) 549-9901.

C. Drawdown and Expenditure of Funds.

Following acceptance of the grant award and release of any special conditions withholding funds, the grantee can drawdown and expend grant funds through PARS.

Grant recipients should request funds based upon immediate disbursement requirements. Funds will not be paid in a lump sum, but rather disbursed over time as project costs are incurred or anticipated. Recipients should time their drawdown requests to ensure that Federal cash on hand is the minimum needed for disbursements to be made immediately or within a few days. The grantee may elect to draw down funds up to 120 days prior to expenditure/ disbursement. FEMA strongly encourages recipients to draw down funds as close to expenditure as possible to avoid accruing interest.

Funds received by the grantee must be placed in an interest-bearing account and are subject to the rules outlined in 44 CFR Part 13, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments and 2 CFR Part 215, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements (Including Sub-awards) with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals and other Non-profit Organizations (formerly OMB Circular A-110). These regulations further provide that

entities are required to promptly, but at least quarterly, remit interest earned on advances to:

**United States Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Payment Management Services
P.O. Box 6021
Rockville, MD 20852**

The grantee may keep interest earned, up to \$100 per fiscal year for administrative expenses. This maximum limit is not per award; it is inclusive of all interest earned on all Federal grant program funds received.

Although advance drawdown requests are permissible, the State grantee remains subject to the interest requirements of the Cash Management Improvement Act (CMIA) and its implementing regulations at 31 CFR Part 205. Interest under CMIA will accrue from the time Federal funds are credited to a State account until the time the State pays out the funds for program purposes.

D. Reporting Requirements.

Reporting requirements must be met throughout the life of the grant (refer to the program guidance and the special conditions found in the award package for a full explanation of these requirements.) Please note that PARS contains edits that will prevent access to funds if reporting requirements are not met on a timely basis.

1. Financial Status Report (FSR) -- required quarterly. Obligations and expenditures must be reported on a quarterly basis through the FSR, which is due within 30 days of the end of each calendar quarter (e.g., for the quarter ending March 31, FSR is due no later than April 30). A report must be submitted for every quarter of the period of performance, including partial calendar quarters, as well as for periods where no grant activity occurs. Future awards and fund draw downs may be withheld if these reports are delinquent. The final FSR is due 90 days after the end date of the performance period.

FSRs **must be filed online** through the PARS.

Required submission: Financial Status Report (FSR) SF-269a (due quarterly).

2. Biannual Strategy Implementation Reports (BSIR) and Categorical Assistance Progress Report (CAPR). Following an award, the awardees will be responsible for providing updated obligation and expenditure information on a semi-annual basis. The applicable SAAs are responsible for completing and submitting the CAPR/BSIR reports. The BSIR submission will satisfy the narrative requirement of the CAPR. SAAs are still required to submit the CAPR with a statement in the narrative field that reads: See *BSIR*.

The BSIR and the CAPR are due within 30 days after the end of the reporting period (July 30 for the reporting period of January 1 through June 30; and January 30 for the reporting period of July 1 through December 31). Updated obligations and expenditure information must be provided with the BSIR to show progress made toward meeting strategic goals and objectives. Future awards and fund drawdowns may be withheld if these reports are delinquent.

CAPRs must be filed online through the internet at <http://grants.ojp.usdoj.gov>. Guidance and instructions can be found at <https://grants.ojp.usdoj.gov/gmsHelp/index.html>.

Required submission: BSIR and CAPR (due semi-annually).

3. Exercise Evaluation and Improvement. Exercises implemented with grant funds should be threat- and performance-based and should evaluate performance of critical prevention and response tasks required to respond to the exercise scenario. Guidance on conducting exercise evaluations and implementing improvement is defined in the *Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) Volume II: Exercise Evaluation and Improvement* located at <http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/administration.shtm>. Grant recipients must report on scheduled exercises and ensure that an After Action Report (AAR) and Improvement Plan (IP) are prepared for each exercise conducted with FEMA support (grant funds or direct support) and submitted to FEMA within 60 days following completion of the exercise.

The AAR documents the performance of exercise related tasks and makes recommendations for improvements. The IP outlines the actions that the exercising jurisdiction(s) plans to take to address recommendations contained in the AAR. Generally the IP, with at least initial action steps, should be included in the final AAR. FEMA is establishing a national database to facilitate the scheduling of exercises, the submission of the AAR/IPs and the tracking of IP implementation. Guidance on the development of AARs and IPs is provided in Volume II of the HSEEP manuals.

Required submissions: AARs and IPs (as applicable).

4. Financial and Compliance Audit Report. Recipients that expend \$500,000 or more of Federal funds during their fiscal year are required to submit an organization-wide financial and compliance audit report. The audit must be performed in accordance with the U.S. General Accountability Office, *Government Auditing Standards*, located at <http://www.gao.gov/govaud/ybk01.htm>, and *OMB Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations*, located at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a133/a133.html>. Audit reports are currently due to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse no later than nine months after the end of the recipient's fiscal year. In addition, the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Comptroller General of the United States shall have access to any books, documents,

and records of recipients of assistance for audit and examination purposes, provided that, in the opinion of the Secretary or the Comptroller, these documents are related to the receipt or use of such assistance. The grantee will also give the sponsoring agency or the Comptroller, through any authorized representative, access to, and the right to examine all records, books, papers or documents related to the grant.

The State shall require that sub-grantees comply with the audit requirements set forth in *OMB Circular A-133*. Recipients are responsible for ensuring that sub-recipient audit reports are received and for resolving any audit findings.

5. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act. While there are no State and Urban Area requirements in FY 2008, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 may affect State and Urban Area reporting requirements in future years. The Act requires the Federal government to create a publicly searchable online database of Federal grant recipients by January 1, 2008 with an expansion to include sub-grantee information by January 1, 2009.

6. National Preparedness Reporting Compliance. The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) requires that the Department collect and report performance information on all programs. For grant programs, the Applications and their associated milestones provide an important tool for assessing grant performance and complying with these national preparedness reporting requirements. FEMA will work with the grantee to develop tools and processes to support this requirement. FEMA anticipates using this information to inform future-year grant program funding decisions.

E. Monitoring.

Grant recipients will be monitored periodically by FEMA staff, both programmatically and financially, to ensure that the project goals, objectives, performance requirements, timelines, milestone completion, budgets and other related program criteria are being met. Monitoring will be accomplished through a combination of office-based reviews and on-site monitoring visits. Monitoring will involve the review and analysis of the financial, programmatic, performance and administrative activities relative to each program and will identify areas where technical assistance and other support may be needed.

The recipient is responsible for monitoring award activities, to include sub-awards, to provide reasonable assurance that the Federal award is administered in compliance with requirements. Responsibilities include the accounting of receipts and expenditures, cash management, maintaining of adequate financial records, and refunding expenditures disallowed by audits.

F. Grant Close-Out Process.

Within 90 days after the end of the award period, SAAs must submit a final FSR and final CAPR detailing all accomplishments throughout the project. After these reports

have been reviewed and approved by FEMA, a Grant Adjustment Notice (GAN) will be completed to close out the grant. The GAN will indicate the project as being closed, list any remaining funds that will be deobligated, and address the requirement of maintaining the grant records for three years from the date of the final FSR. After the financial information is received and approved by GPD, the grant will be identified as "Closed by the Grant Programs Directorate."

Required submissions: (1) final SF-269a, due 90 days from end of grant period; and (2) final CAPR, due 90 days from the end of the grant period.

Appendix D. Additional Resources

This Appendix describes several resources that may help the State of Mississippi in completing an application.

1. Centralized Scheduling & Information Desk (CSID) Help Line. The CSID is a non-emergency resource for use by emergency responders across the nation. CSID is a comprehensive coordination, management, information, and scheduling tool developed by DHS through FEMA for homeland security terrorism preparedness activities. The CSID provides general information on all FEMA Grant programs and information on the characteristics of CBRNE, agro-terrorism, defensive equipment, mitigation techniques, and available Federal assets and resources.

The CSID maintains a comprehensive database containing key personnel contact information for homeland security terrorism preparedness programs and events. These contacts include personnel at the Federal, State and local levels. The CSID can be contacted at (800) 368-6498 or askcsid@dhs.gov. CSID hours of operation are from 8:00 am–6:00 pm (EST), Monday-Friday.

2. Grant Programs Directorate (GPD). FEMA GPD will provide fiscal support, including pre- and post-award administration and technical assistance, to the grant programs included in this solicitation.

For financial and administrative guidance, all state and local government grant recipients should refer to 44 CFR Part 13, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and local Governments. Institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other non-profit organizations should refer to 2 CFR Part 215 for the applicable uniform administrative requirements.

Additional guidance and information can be obtained by contacting the FEMA Call Center at (866) 927-5646 or via e-mail to ask-OGO@dhs.gov.

3. GSA's Cooperative Purchasing Program. The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) offers two efficient and effective procurement programs for State and local governments to purchase products and services to fulfill homeland security and other technology needs. The GSA Schedules (also referred to as the Multiple Award Schedules and the Federal Supply Schedules) are long-term, indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity, government-wide contracts with commercial firms of all sizes.

- Cooperative Purchasing Program
Section 211 of the E-Government Act of 2002, authorized GSA sales of Schedule 70 IT products and services to State and local Governments through the introduction of Cooperative Purchasing. The Cooperative Purchasing program allows State and local

governments to purchase from Schedule 70 (the Information Technology Schedule) and the Consolidated Schedule (containing IT Special Item Numbers) **only**. Cooperative Purchasing is authorized by Federal law and was enacted when Section 211 of the E-Government Act of 2002 amended the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act.

Under this program, State and local governments have access to over 3,500 GSA Schedule contractors who have voluntarily modified their contracts to participate in the Cooperative Purchasing program. The U.S. General Services Administration provides a definition of State and local governments as well as other vital information under the frequently asked questions section on its website at <http://www.gsa.gov/cooperativepurchasing>.

- **Disaster Recovery Purchasing Program**
GSA plays a critical role in providing disaster recovery products and services to Federal agencies. Now State and Local Governments can also benefit from the speed and savings of the GSA Federal Supply Schedules. Section 833 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (Public Law 109-364) amends 40 U.S.C. 502 to authorize the GSA to provide State and Local governments the use of ALL Federal Supply Schedules of the GSA for purchase of products and services to be used to *facilitate recovery from a major disaster declared by the President under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act or to facilitate **recovery** from terrorism or nuclear, biological, chemical, or radiological attack.*

In the aftermath of emergency events, State or local governments' systems may be disrupted. Thus, use of Federal Supply schedule contracts prior to these events to acquire products or services to be used to facilitate recovery is authorized. State or local governments will be responsible for ensuring that purchased products or services are to be used to facilitate recovery.

GSA provides additional information on the Disaster Recovery Purchasing Program website at <http://www.gsa.gov/disasterrecovery>.

State and local governments can find a list of eligible contractors on GSA's website, <http://www.gsa.elibrary.gsa.gov>, denoted with a  or  symbol.

Assistance is available from GSA on the Cooperative Purchasing and Disaster Purchasing Program at the local and national levels. For assistance at the local level, visit <http://www.gsa.gov> to find the POC in your area. For assistance at the national level, contact Tricia Reed at patricia.reed@gsa.gov, (571) 259-9921. More information is available at <http://www.gsa.gov/cooperativepurchasing> and <http://www.gsa.gov/disasterrecovery>.

4. Exercise Direct Support. FEMA has engaged multiple contractors with significant experience in designing, conducting, and evaluating exercises to provide support to Regions, States, and local jurisdictions in accordance with State Homeland Security Strategies and the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP). Contract support is available to conduct a Training and Exercise (T&E) Plan Workshop to develop a Multi-year T&E Plan and build or enhance the capacity of jurisdictions to design, develop, conduct, and evaluate effective exercises.

In FY 2008, support for planning and conduct of exercises has shifted in strategy from a State-focused approach, organized by National Preparedness Directorate Headquarters, to a regional (multi-State) approach, organized by the FEMA Regions, to more effectively integrate national, regional, territorial, tribal, State, and local preparedness exercises. At this time, the Regional Exercise Support Program will provide support for one discussion-based exercise (i.e., seminar, workshop or tabletop) and five operations-based (i.e. drills, functional exercises, full scale exercises) exercises within each of the 10 FEMA Regions. The Regional Exercise Support Program support is not limited to new exercise initiatives and can be applied to ongoing exercises to maintain continuity of existing planning schedules. State requests for support will be considered, however priority will be given to exercise initiatives that support collaboration within a Region.

Additional guidance on the Regional Exercise Support Program to include the application process, as well as information on the HSEEP, is available on the HSEEP website, <http://hseep.dhs.gov>.

5. Homeland Security Preparedness Technical Assistance Program. The Homeland Security Preparedness Technical Assistance Program (HSPTAP) provides technical assistance on a first-come, first-served basis (and subject to the availability of funding) to eligible organizations to enhance their capacity and preparedness to respond to CBRNE terrorist incidents. In addition to the risk assessment assistance already being provided, FEMA also offers a variety of other technical assistance programs.

More information can be found at <http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/>.

6. Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS) System. LLIS is a national, online, secure website that houses a collection of peer-validated lessons learned, best practices, AARs from exercises and actual incidents, and other relevant homeland security documents. LLIS facilitates improved preparedness nationwide by providing response professionals with access to a wealth of validated front-line expertise on effective planning, training, equipping, and operational practices for homeland security.

The LLIS website also includes a national directory of responders and homeland security officials, as well as an updated list of homeland security exercises, events, and conferences. Additionally, LLIS includes online collaboration tools, including secure email and message boards, where users can exchange information. LLIS uses strong encryption and active site monitoring to protect all information housed on the system. The LLIS website is <https://www.llis.gov>.

7. Information Sharing Systems. FEMA encourages the State of Mississippi, regional, local, and Tribal entities using funding in support of information sharing and intelligence fusion and analysis centers to leverage available Federal information sharing systems, including Law Enforcement Online (LEO) and the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN). For additional information on LEO, contact the LEO Program Office at leoprogramoffice@leo.gov or 202-324-8833. For additional information on HSIN and available technical assistance, contact the HSIN Help Desk at (703) 674-3003.