



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

**FISCAL YEAR 2013**

**HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM**

**SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCE:  
SAFECOM GUIDANCE ON EMERGENCY  
COMMUNICATIONS GRANTS OVERVIEW**



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Recipients (including sub-recipients) that are using FY 2013 grant funds to support emergency communications activities should comply with the *FY 2013 SAFECOM Guidance for Emergency Communication Grants (SAFECOM Guidance)*, including provisions on technical standards that ensure and enhance interoperable communications, unless otherwise noted in this program's grant guidance.<sup>1</sup>

SAFECOM is a public safety-driven communications program managed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC), in consultation with the Office for Interoperability and Compatibility (OIC). SAFECOM works to build partnerships among all levels of government, linking the strategic planning and implementation needs of the emergency response community with Federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) governments, to improve emergency response through more effective and efficient interoperable wireless communications. Together, DHS, its Federal agency partners, and the SAFECOM Executive Committee and Emergency Response Council shape emergency communications policy and standards to ensure projects comply with the goals and objectives established in the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP), are compatible, interoperable, and most importantly, meet the needs of end-users.

OEC, in coordination with Federal agency partners and State and local stakeholders, develops the annual *SAFECOM Guidance* which provides general program guidance and technical information for applicants applying for Federal grant funding for emergency communications projects.

The goal of the *SAFECOM Guidance* is to provide SLTT stakeholders with Federal policies and guidance when planning emergency communications projects or purchasing emergency communications equipment. These policies help to ensure that Federally-funded projects:

- Are coordinated with the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC)<sup>2</sup> to ensure projects:
  - Align with needs in Statewide Communications Interoperability Plans (SCIP) and/or SCIP Implementation Report<sup>3</sup>
  - Address needs in NECP Goal Assessments
- Comply with recommendations and technical requirements in the FY 2013 SAFECOM Guidance to ensure Federally-funded investments are compatible and interoperable

Through compliance to the *SAFECOM Guidance*, FEMA can ensure that projects adhere to Federal policies, standards, and best practices that support and advance national emergency communication goals and objectives established in the NECP,<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Grant requirements, including technical standards vary among Federal grant programs (especially grants funding research and testing). Applicants should review each program's grant guidance carefully to ensure that specific standards, terms, and conditions under the grant are met.

<sup>2</sup> To find your SWIC or SCIP Point of Contact, please email OEC at [oeq@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:oeq@hq.dhs.gov).

<sup>3</sup> See Pub. L. No. 110-53, Section 301 at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-110publ53/content-detail.html>.

<sup>4</sup> NECP is available at: [http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/national\\_emergency\\_communications\\_plan.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/national_emergency_communications_plan.pdf).

meet critical needs defined in SCIP<sup>5</sup> and NECP Goal Assessments,<sup>6</sup> and help to improve emergency communications nationwide.

The *FY 2013 SAFECOM Guidance* provides a list of emergency communication priorities. In FY 2013, SLTT recipients are strongly encouraged to target grant funding toward the following priorities:

- Priority 1: Leadership and Governance
- Priority 2: Statewide Planning for Emergency Communications
- Priority 3: Emergency Communications Training and Exercises
- Priority 4: Other Integral Emergency Communications Activities
- Priority 5: Standards-Based Equipment<sup>7</sup>

Recipients are strongly encouraged to coordinate with the SWIC and with other state and local partners to ensure compatibility among existing and planned emergency communications systems and equipment, and consistency with the SCIP. Recipients should submit a letter of support from the SWIC for emergency communications projects as part of their application.

Recipients funding emergency communications equipment should consult the FY 2013 SAFECOM Guidance to comply with technical standards that ensure interoperability. Recipients seeking to fund broadband-related expenditures should also consult FEMA Information Bulletin #386 Clarification on Use of DHS/FEMA Public Safety Grant Funds for Broadband-Related Expenditures and Investments.<sup>8</sup> Recipients should be aware that projects that will operate in the 700 MHz public safety broadband spectrum may be subject to additional Federal review prior to approval and/or implementation.<sup>9</sup>

The full *SAFECOM Guidance* may be found at <http://www.safecomprogram.gov/default.aspx>. Specific questions regarding SAFECOM requirements should be directed to OEC at [OEC@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:OEC@hq.dhs.gov).

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<sup>5</sup> For information on SCIPs, see the OEC website at: [http://www.dhs.gov/files/programs/gc\\_1225902750156.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/files/programs/gc_1225902750156.shtm)

<sup>6</sup> For NECP Goal Assessments, please contact your SWIC for your State.

<sup>7</sup> Technical standards and requirements vary among Federal grant programs (especially grants funding research and testing). Applicants should review each program's grant guidance to ensure that specific standards, terms, and conditions **under** the grant are met.

<sup>8</sup> FEMA Information Bulletin #386 is available at: <http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=6104>.

<sup>9</sup> DHS has published additional guidance for grantees investing in broadband, see Information Bulletin No. 386, "Clarification on Use of DHS/FEMA Public Safety Grant Funds for Broadband-Related Expenditures and Investments" at: <http://www.fema.gov/grants/grant-programs-directorate-information-bulletins#1>.