



National Continuity Programs Directorate
**Integrated Public Alert
and Warning System
(IPAWS)**

Fiscal Year 2013

Supplemental Guidance on Public Alert and Warning



FEMA

A Message to Stakeholders

On behalf of the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) Program Management Office (PMO), I am excited to present the *Fiscal Year 2013 Supplemental Guidance on Public Alert and Warning*. This document provides guidance on eligible public alert and warning activities and equipment standards for prospective grantees. The intent of this document is to promote consistency in policies across federal grant programs, and to ensure compatibility among federally-funded projects. This document will continue to evolve as new technologies emerge, and will support increased knowledge on the use of these new technologies.

The Integrated Public Alert and Warning System is designed to improve public safety through the rapid dissemination of emergency messages to as many people as possible over as many pathways as possible. To do this, IPAWS is planning to expand the traditional Emergency Alert System (EAS) to include technologies that are more modern. At the same time, FEMA is upgrading the alert and warning infrastructure so that no matter what the crisis, the public will receive lifesaving information.

The vision of IPAWS is to provide timely alerts and warnings to the American people in the preservation of life and protection of property. The IPAWS mission is to build and maintain an effective, reliable, integrated, flexible and comprehensive system that enables the American people to receive alert and warning information. IPAWS ensures the President can alert and warn the public under all conditions. IPAWS will provide public safety warning authorities the capabilities to alert and warn their respective communities of all hazards impacting public safety and well-being via multiple communications pathways.

I encourage our public safety partners to provide feedback on the *FY 2013 Supplemental Guidance on Public Alert and Warning* so we can continue to improve this important resource. Your input is appreciated and critical to our efforts to improve alert and warning capabilities nationwide. For questions, comments, or assistance in applying these recommended grant policies, please contact my office at ipaws@fema.dhs.gov.

Antwane V. Johnson
Director,
IPAWS Program Management Office

I. Introduction

IPAWS is a communications program of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that provides integrated services and capabilities to public safety authorities enabling them to alert and warn their respective communities via multiple communication methods. The IPAWS PMO, in coordination with stakeholders, will develop the annual *FY 2013 Supplemental Guidance on Public Alert and Warning*, which provides technical information, and program guidance for applicants applying for federal grant funding for alert and warning projects.

1.1 Purpose of the FY 2013 Public Alert and Warning Guidance

The purpose of the *FY 2013 Supplemental Guidance on Public Alert and Warning* is to provide guidance to grantees on:

- Public alert and warning activities that can be funded through federal grants
- Technical standards that facilitate interoperability
- Recommendations for planning, coordinating, and implementing alert and warning projects

The recommendations contained herein are developed to advance national public alert and warning system goals and objectives established in Executive Order 13407, Integrated Public Alert and Warning System¹ and to support emergency communication needs defined by each state in its respective Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP).

Funding from the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) and Tribal Homeland Security Grant Program (THSGP) can be utilized to enhance existing or establish new alert and warning programs. Other programs may exist for use; however, grantees are encouraged to contact the IPAWS PMO and FEMA Grants Office prior to initiating program activities and provide a point of contact for each program to which they can provide program guidance, tools, resources and updates. Please contact IPAWS PMO with this information at "ipaws@fema.dhs.gov".

1.2 How to Use this Document

Before allocating funds for alert and warning projects, the IPAWS PMO encourages grantees to:

- Read Executive Order 13407 for national program guidance and responsibilities
- Read your state's SCIP to understand its communication goals and priorities
- Coordinate alert and warning projects/proposals with Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (SWIC)² to ensure that projects align to the needs identified in the SCIP.

¹ E.O 13407 is available at: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2006/pdf/06-5829.pdf>

² To find your SWIC or SCIP Point of Contact, please email Office of Emergency Communication at oecc@dhs.gov, or oecc@hq.dhs.gov.

II. General Application Recommendations

Various federal agencies may administer grants funding public alert and warning. These grants are subject to various statutory and programmatic requirements. Grantees are encouraged to read grant guidance carefully to ensure the application meets all grant requirements.

2.1 Understand Federal Grant Requirements

Applicants must understand the general terms and conditions of Federal grants before submitting an application. Grantees are encouraged to read the federal grant guidance, funding opportunity announcement, and funding application thoroughly to understand:

- Program goals
- Eligibility requirements
- Application requirements (e.g., due dates and submission requirements)
- Grant requirements (e.g., reporting, financial, matching)
- Allowable costs and restrictions on allowable costs

Section IV of this document pertains to common grant requirements.

2.2 Coordinate with the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator

Applicants should coordinate public alert and warning investments with the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC), the Statewide Interoperability Governing Body (SIGB), and the appropriate public safety stakeholders. Grantees are encouraged to work with the SWIC and other government representatives to understand the current alert and warning capabilities, and to ensure that projects:

- Align to needs identified in the SCIPs and/or other communication plans or to gaps
- Do not duplicate current efforts
- Are compatible with existing equipment and systems
- Promote shared, standards-based systems

2.3 Consider Cross-Border Communications

Interoperability is an operational requirement that often transcends political boundaries. Grantees located adjacent or near international borders should consider developing projects that improve communications along and across international borders. Grantees should coordinate with Federal, State, and international partners operating along the border to ensure that grant-funded activities support, and do not hinder, current efforts to improve interoperability, and should leverage existing resources and relationships to improve communications along and across the border.

Additionally, grantees are reminded that federal funding may not be allocated to international entities (unless authorized by law), and placement of federally-funded equipment on international property may be subject to special terms and conditions.⁴ Applicants should work

FY 2013 Guidance on Public Alert and Warning

closely with their grant officer to ensure that proposed activities are allowable under the grant.

III. Eligible Activities

Based on their authorizing language and their administering agency's policies and priorities, federal grant programs funding public alert and warning may have different requirements. Grantees should review the funding opportunity announcement and related materials to ensure that proposed activities are allowable under the grant. The following section details eligible public alert and warning activities commonly funded by federal grants, based on the four common cost categories: Planning, Training, Exercises, and Equipment.

3.1 Planning

Planning activities help to identify and prioritize needs, define capabilities, update preparedness strategies, refine communication plans, allocate resources, and deliver preparedness programs across multiple disciplines and levels of government. The IPAWS PMO collaborated with public safety stakeholders and industry representatives to establish alert and warning standards and protocols in the development of an overall alert and warning architecture. The IPAWS PMO is establishing a technical reach back capability through training courses, websites and conferences to educate all stakeholders on best practices, standards, and protocols in alert and warning knowledge and capabilities. For additional information, please contact "ipaws@fema.dhs.gov".

Grant recipients are strongly encouraged to use grant funding for planning, which may include:

- **Personnel to assist with planning.** Under some federal grants, full or part-time staff may be hired to support public alert and warning planning activities .

In general, the use of federal grant funding to pay for staff regular time is considered personnel. Staff must perform activities that are associated with the grant and allowable under the program. For grants funding public alert and warning, this may include:

- Establishing or updating alert and warning plans
 - Conducting stakeholder outreach
 - Integrating alert and warning plans at State, territorial, tribal and local levels
 - Planning and participating in training and exercises
 - Systems and equipment planning

Section IV of this document pertains to common restrictions on federal grant funding.

- **Hiring of certain full or part-time staff and contractors or consultants.** Some federal grants allow grantees to hire full-time or part-time contractor staff or consultants to assist with planning activities that are directly related to the federally-funded project, including: project manager(s), subject matter expert(s), coordinator(s), and technical experts.

⁴ See your Grants Officer for more information on placement of equipment on international property or foreign land.

FY 2013 Guidance on Public Alert and Warning

- **Development, enhancement and alignment of public alert and warning plans.** Grant funds may be used to develop, enhance and align public alert and warning plans. Alert and warning plans include:

- Alert and warning or Emergency Alert System plans
- Emergency Alert System lifecycle planning
- Plans related to the procurement of alert and warning systems or equipment
- Planning for training and exercises

Developing and updating alert and warning plans requires input from stakeholders and public safety agencies. As a result, federal grants funding alert and warning activities often support:

- Conferences and workshops to receive input on plans
- Meeting expenses related to planning
- Public education and outreach on planning
- Travel and supplies related to planning

- **Establishment and/or enhancement of alert and warning governing bodies.** Grant funds may be used to establish or enhance interoperability between governing bodies. Statewide bodies often lead activities associated with planning, implementing, and managing interoperable emergency communications initiatives. Common eligible activities include:

- Developing a charter
- Outreach to local entities to expand involvement
- Meeting-related expenses
- Public education and outreach to increase participation in governing bodies
- Supplies for governing body meetings
- Travel to governing body meetings

- **Development and/or enhancement of alert and warning assessments and inventories.** Grantees are encouraged to allocate grant funding to planning activities involving the assessments of:

- Technology capabilities, including assessments and inventory of infrastructure and equipment
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- Training and exercises
- Development of cost maintenance models for equipment and usage

- **Planning for emerging technologies.** Grant funds may be used to plan for emerging technologies, such as broadband, wireless data networks, Internet Protocol (IP)-based mobile communications devices, and location-based services. This can include hardware, software, data, and operational policies and procedures supported by multi-purpose emergency service networks. Activities may include:

FY 2013 Guidance on Public Alert and Warning

- Development of SOPs related to new technology implementations
- Plans to comply with emerging technology network best practices
- Development of SOPs for coordination with other stakeholders
- Emerging technology systems contingency planning

3.2 Training

Recipients are encouraged to allocate federal grant funds to support alert and warning training, and training in projects that include the development of new SOPs or the purchase of new equipment. IPAWS PMO, in coordination with the FEMA Emergency Management Institute (EMI), is developing several training program offerings tailored from awareness to operational level needs for a variety of public safety disciplines. For additional information, please "ipaws@fema.dhs.gov". Grant funds may be used for the training activities listed below.

- **Personnel expenses.** Full-time or part-time staff may be hired to support training activities. This includes staff that will:
 - Assess training needs
 - Develop training curriculum
 - Train the trainers
 - Develop exercises to test training
 - Support training conferences

Section IV of this document pertains to common restrictions on federal grant funding.

- **Overtime.** Some federal grants permit the use of funds for overtime related to training. These expenses are limited to the additional costs that result from personnel working more than 40 hours per week as a direct result of their attendance at approved alert and warning training activities.
- **Backfill-related overtime.** Some federal grants allow funds for backfill related overtime. These expenses (if allowable) are limited to costs of personnel who work overtime to perform the duties of other personnel temporarily assigned to grant-funded activities (e.g., to attend approved, grant-funded alert and warning training). These costs are calculated by subtracting the non-overtime compensation, including fringe benefits of the temporarily assigned personnel from the total costs for backfilling the position. Grantees should ensure that grant funds can be used for overtime and should consult their grant officer to ensure that overtime costs are correctly calculated.
- **Hiring of certain full or part-time contractors or consultants.** Hiring full- or part-time contractor staff or consultants to assist with training activities directly related to the grant-funded project.
- **Development, delivery, attendance, and evaluation of training.** Grant funds may also be used to plan, attend, and conduct communications-specific training workshops or conferences to include costs related to planning, meeting space, other meeting costs, facilitation costs, travel, and training development. Communications-specific training should focus on:
 - Use of established operational protocols (i.e., common language)
 - National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Command System (ICS)

FY 2013 Guidance on Public Alert and Warning

- Use of advanced technology and interoperable equipment
- Use of relevant advanced data capabilities (voice, video, data, text)

Expense related to training. Many federal grants allow funds for expenses related to training, including:

- Training sessions, workshops, conferences
- Meeting expenses related to training
- Public education and outreach on training opportunities
- Supplies related to training (e.g., signs, badges, and other materials)
- Travel related to training

3.3 Exercises

Exercises should demonstrate and validate skills learned in training and should identify training gaps and gaps in capabilities. To the extent possible, exercises should include participants from multiple jurisdictions and agencies such as emergency management, emergency medical services, law enforcement, interoperability coordinators, public health officials, hospital officials, and other disciplines, as appropriate.

The IPAWS PMO will provide assistance with developing, designing and conducting exercises in compliance with Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) methodology. The purpose of the IPAWS PMO exercise support is to test equipment, training, policies, and procedures. These exercises also provide valuable hands-on experience for personnel performing alert and warning missions, and assist decision-makers in integrating the missions in their daily operations.

Additionally, Federal funds may be used for the following alert and warning exercise activities:

- **Personnel Expenses.** Full-time or part-time staff may be hired to support exercises. This includes staff that will:
 - Assess needs
 - Plan and conduct exercises in compliance with NIMS and HSEEP
 - Lead HSEEP After Action Conference and prepare after action reports

Section IV of this document pertains to common restrictions on federal grant funding for emergency communications personnel.

- **Overtime.** Some federal grants permit the use of funds for overtime related to training. These expenses are limited to the additional costs that result from personnel working more than 40 hours per week as a direct result of their attendance at approved alert and warning training activities.
- **Backfill-related Overtime.** Some federal grants allow funds for backfill related overtime. These expenses (if allowable) are limited to costs of personnel who work overtime to perform the duties of other personnel temporarily assigned to grant-funded activities. These costs are calculated by subtracting the non-overtime compensation, including fringe benefits of the temporarily assigned personnel from the total costs for backfilling the position. Grantees should ensure that grant funds can be used for

FY 2013 Guidance on Public Alert and Warning

overtime and should consult their grant officer to ensure that overtime costs are calculated correctly.

- **Hiring of certain full-time or part-time contractors or consultants.** Hiring full or part time contractor staff or consultants to assist with training activities that are directly related to the grant-funded project.
- **Design, development, execution, and evaluation of exercises.** Grant funds may be used to design, develop, conduct, and evaluate interoperable emergency communications exercises, including tabletop and fully functional exercise formats. Exercise activities should focus on:
 - Using new or established operational protocols
 - Designing and executing exercises of the new alert and warning equipment
 - Designing and executing regional (multi-state, multi-urban area) exercises
 - Designing and executing HSEEP compliance exercises
 - Designing and executing NIMS-compliant training and exercises
 - Using emerging technology systems, equipment, or testing SOPs
- **Expenses related to exercises.** Many federal grants allow funds to be used for expenses related to exercises, including:
 - Meeting expenses related to planning or conducting exercises
 - Public education and outreach related to exercises
 - Travel and supplies related to exercises

Additional Requirements for Exercise Activities

- **All federally-funded exercises must be managed and executed in accordance with HSEEP.** The HSEEP Library provides guidance for exercise design, development, conduct, and evaluation of exercises, as well as sample exercise materials. HSEEP Volume V: Prevention Exercises provides recommendations for designing, developing, conducting, and evaluating prevention-focused exercises. The HSEEP Library can be found at: <https://hseep.dhs.gov>.
- **All federally-funded exercises must be NIMS-compliant.** On February 28, 2003, the President issued Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5), Management of Domestic Incidents, which requires all federal departments and agencies to adopt NIMS and to use it in their individual incident management programs and activities, including all preparedness grants. Grantees should review the NIMS requirements on the following site: <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/index.shtm> and ensure that all federally-funded training and exercise activities are NIMS-compliant.

3.4 Equipment

Alert and warning equipment and solutions are developed, produced, and distributed by various vendors. The IPAWS PMO does not endorse any specific vendors or any specific piece of equipment. The IPAWS PMO will make available equipment test results on any alert and warning equipment tested at our laboratories to assist public safety entities in making procurement decisions. Equipment and test results are available at www.rkb.us

FY 2013 Guidance on Public Alert and Warning

Responder Knowledge Base (RKB). Many federal grants require grantees to submit system lifecycle plans for equipment purchased with grant funds.

Alert and warning grant funds should focus on the activities listed below:

- **Design, implementation, enhancement, replacement, and maintenance of alert and warning systems and equipment.** Grant funds may be used to design, conduct, enhance and maintain alert and warning systems. Equipment activities should focus on:
 - Purchase of alert and warning equipment⁵
 - Development of alert and warning system lifecycle plans
 - Migration to approved open architecture and interoperable emerging technology systems
 - Leveraging existing and emerging technologies
 - Project management costs associated with equipment and systems
 - Procurement of technical assistance services for management, implementation, and maintenance of alert and warning systems and equipment

- **Plan, procure, and deploy emerging technology systems.** Grant funds may be used to plan, procure, and deploy emerging technology systems, networks, telephony, and data sharing capabilities based on open standards and systems. Activities should focus on:
 - Upgrading systems to take advantage of advanced data capabilities

Additional Requirements for Equipment Purchases

Federal grant funds for equipment often carry additional requirements which may include:

- **Compliance with federal procurement requirements.** As a condition of funding, recipients agree to comply with federal procurement requirements. Grantees are required to have written procurement policies in place, are encouraged to follow the same policies and procedures it uses for procurement from its non-federal funds, and should include clauses required by the federal government. The following are key procurement tenets when using federal funds:
 - Procurement transactions should be conducted to ensure open and free competition
 - Grantees/subgrantees should avoid non-competitive practices (e.g., contractors that developed the specifications for a project should be excluded from bidding); and,

⁵ For a list of alert and warning equipment typically allowed see the list of equipment on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Authorized Equipment List (AEL) on the Responder Knowledge Base (RKB) website at <https://www.rkb.us/mel.cfm?subtypeid=549>.

FY 2013 Guidance on Public Alert and Warning

- Grantees/subgrantees may not supplant, or replace, non-federal funds that are already budgeted or funded for a project
- **Development of alert and warning system lifecycle plans.** System lifecycle planning is needed to ensure long-term sustainability of alert and warning systems and infrastructure. Grantees should develop a system lifecycle plan for any system, and are often required to submit system lifecycle plans for equipment purchased with federal grant funds. Grant funds often support the development of system lifecycle plans.
- **Leveraging existing systems and adopting new technologies.** Grantees are encouraged to leverage existing and emerging technologies to expand and integrate alert and warning capabilities.
- **Coordination with SWIC and with public safety partners.** Grantees are strongly encouraged to coordinate with the SWIC and other public safety partners to ensure compatibility among existing and planned alert and warning systems and equipment.

IV. Common Requirements and Restrictions on Federal Grant Funds

Grantees should be aware of common requirements and restrictions on federal grant funding.

- Grantees must ensure that federal funds are used for purposes that were proposed and approved, and must have financial systems in place to properly manage grant funds. In addition, grantees cannot commingle federal sources of funding and each award must be accounted for separately. The accounting systems of all grantees and sub-grantees must ensure that federal funds are not commingled with funds from other awards or Federal agencies.
- Grant funds may not be used to meet matching requirements of any other federal award in the current or prior period. If matching funds are required under a grant, matching funds must be:
 - Allowable under the program
 - Associated with the federally-funded investment
 - Applied only to one Federal grant program
 - Contributed from non-federal sources
 - Treated as part of the grant budget
 - Documented the same way as federal funds (in a formal accounting system)
- In general, the use of Federal grant funding to pay for staff regular time is considered personnel. Staff must perform activities allowable under the grant. Most federal grants require applicants to identify sustainable sources of funding and work to integrate new staff into budgets in future years to maintain these capabilities. Grantees should develop a plan to sustain grant-funded positions to ensure maintenance of critical communications personnel, in the event that federal funds are not available to support the position.

FY 2013 Guidance on Public Alert and Warning

- Lastly, grant funds cannot supplant (or replace) funds previously funded or budgeted for the same purpose. Most federal grants funding emergency communications restrict grantees from hiring personnel to fulfill traditional public safety duties or to supplant traditional public safety positions and responsibilities.

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