

DHS Office of Emergency Communications
Summary of FY 2016 DHS Preparedness Grant Programs

Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) Stakeholders:

In February 2016, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Preparedness Grants Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFO). The NOFOs are available at: <http://www.fema.gov/preparedness-non-disaster-grants>.

Application Due Dates:

- Emergency Management Performance Grant Program applications are due on **March 18, 2016**
- Remaining DHS Preparedness Grant Program applications are due on **April 25, 2016**

Below is a Summary of FY 2016 DHS Preparedness Grant Programs. OEC prepares this summary for stakeholders to assist in developing proposals that align with DHS funding priorities for emergency communications. Stakeholders are strongly encouraged to read this summary and the [SAFECOM Guidance on Emergency Communications Grants](#) before submitting emergency communications proposals for funding.

Please note that OEC is not the administrator for these grants. OEC prepared this summary as a courtesy to its stakeholders. Direct any questions on this summary to OEC at oecc@hq.dhs.gov. Questions on FEMA grant programs can be directed to FEMA's Centralized Scheduling and Information Desk by phone at (800) 368-6498 or by e-mail at askcsid@fema.gov, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. EST.

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I. FY 2016 DHS Preparedness Grant Funding Overview

Congressional Appropriations

On December 18, 2015, the [Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016](#) (Pub. L. No. 114-113) was signed into law. The law authorizes DHS grant funding at approximately \$2.3 billion, which is comparable to FY 2015 levels, for the following programs:

- Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP)
 - State Homeland Security Program (SHSP)
 - Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI)
 - Operation Stonegarden (OPSG)
- Tribal Homeland Security Grant Program (THSGP)
- Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP)
- Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG) Program
- Transit Security Grant Program (TSGP)
 - Intercity Passenger Rail (IPR) Program
 - Intercity Bus Security Grant Program (IBSGP)
- Port Security Grant Program (PSGP)
- Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG)

Key Changes

Below are the following congressional actions or key changes, as compared with previous appropriations:

- Controlled and prohibited equipment rules included in this year's NOFO following the direction of [Executive Order 13688](#) (Federal Support for Local Law Enforcement Acquisition)
- THSGP and HSGP allow for a wide range of [countering violent extremism](#) related activities and initiatives
- TSGP removed priority scoring groups and replaced them with three equal funding priority areas
- THSGP recipients are no longer required to spend at least 25 percent of funding on law enforcement terrorism prevention activities
- Funding levels for NSGP increased to \$20 million
- HSGP applicants may submit an unlimited number of projects within each investment, with a maximum number of 10 investments
- UASI added designated eligible urban area, with 29 in total
- DHS and OEC will coordinate to establish a process for a Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) to report data on any cybersecurity risks or incidents involving any information system or network used by emergency response providers

Important Dates

- February 16, 2016: NOFOs released within 60 days of appropriations enactment
- February – April 2016: Grant applications due within 80 days of NOFOs release
- September 2016: Award announcements made within 65 days of application submission

Program Summaries

Table 1 provides a summary of DHS Preparedness Grant Programs, including the allocated amounts, purpose, eligible applicants, eligible recipients/sub-recipients, and pass through requirements. In addition, the table highlights allowable costs related to emergency communications; however, this is not an all-inclusive list of eligible activities. Please refer to FEMA NOFOs for specific program information.

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Table 1. FY 2016 DHS Preparedness Grant Programs Summary Table

Program (Amount) Purpose	Eligible Applicants	Allocation Method and Eligible Recipients	Pass Through and Eligible Sub-Recipients	Emergency Communications-Related Priorities and Allowable Costs
HSGP/SHSP (\$402,000,000): Supports the implementation of capability targets established during THIRA process and assessed in SPR	State Administrative Agency (SAA) of states/territories	Formula-based: Amounts for each state/territory are listed in the NOFO	SAA must pass through 80% to local units of government	Priorities: Building/sustaining core capabilities; operational communications; cybersecurity enhancements; law enforcement/terrorism prevention Personnel Planning/Organizational: SWIC position, governance activities, communications plans, standard operating procedures, assessments Training and Exercises: Related to emergency communications, special events Equipment: Related to interoperable communications Maintenance and Sustainment: Upgrades, user fees, warranties Construction and Renovation: Communication towers
HSGP/UASI (\$580,000,000): Addresses the risks and needs of high-threat, high-density Urban Areas based on capability targets identified during THIRA process	SAA on behalf of eligible UASIs	Formula-based: Eligible jurisdictions and amounts are listed in the NOFO	SAA must pass through 80% to local units of government in the designated UASI	Training and Exercises: Related to emergency communications, special events Equipment: Related to interoperable communications Maintenance and Sustainment: Upgrades, user fees, warranties Construction and Renovation: Communication towers
HSGP/OPSG (\$55,000,000): Promotes coordination among all levels of government and local law enforcement agencies working to secure U.S. borders	SAA on behalf of selected OPSG grantee	Competitive: States eligible to apply are listed in the NOFO	SAA must pass through 100% to selected local units of government	Costs to increase security along the border: Personnel; coordination among jurisdictions, disciplines, various levels of governments (e.g., travel, per diem); operational costs (e.g., overtime, backfill); some equipment/maintenance costs
THSGP (\$10,000,000): Supports the building, sustainment and delivery of Core Capabilities to enable Tribes to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks and other hazards	Federally-recognized Tribes	Competitive: Select Federally-recognized Tribes may receive funding following a competitive peer review process	Funds are allocated directly to Federally-recognized Tribes	Priorities: THIRA development; building/sustaining core capabilities; governance integration; cybersecurity enhancements; law enforcement/terrorism prevention Personnel: 50% cap Planning/Organizational: Continuity of operations; tracking/inventorying assets Equipment: Related to interoperable communications, emergency supplies Maintenance and Sustainment: Upgrades, user fees, warranties Construction and Renovation: Communication towers
NSGP (\$20,000,000): Provides funding support for target hardening activities to nonprofit organizations that are at high risk of terrorist attack and located within one of the UASI-eligible Areas	SAA on behalf of nonprofit organizations within eligible UASIs	Competitive: Select nonprofit organizations may receive funding following a competitive review process	SAA must obligate 100% to selected nonprofit organizations	Priorities: Building core capabilities; operational communications; cybersecurity; THIRA-based developments; governance integration; coordination of resources Training: Security-related training courses and programs only Equipment: Physical security and inspection/screening systems only Construction and Renovation: With restrictions
EMPG Program (\$350,100,000): Provides funding to states/territories to assist state, local, territorial, and tribal governments in preparing for all hazards	SAA or Emergency Management Agency (EMA); Grantee must belong to EMAC	Formula-based: Amounts for each state/territory are listed in the NOFO; 50% match is required	100% of the award is designated to the state-level EMA	Priorities: Building core capabilities; security and redundancy for critical communications; cybersecurity; THIRA-based investments Planning: Developing/updating SCIP, TICP, THIRA, SPR Personnel: Salary, overtime, backfill Training and Exercises: Multi-year program Equipment: Related to interoperable communications Maintenance and Sustainment: Upgrades, user fees, warranties Construction and Renovation: Communication towers

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Program (Amount) Purpose	Eligible Applicants	Eligible Recipients Allocation Method	Pass Through and Eligible Sub-Recipients	Emergency Communications-Related Allowable Costs
TSGP (\$87,000,000): Provides funding to eligible owners and operators of transit systems to protect critical surface transportation infrastructure and the traveling public from acts of terrorism, major disasters, and other emergencies	Select Transit Agencies	Competitive: Eligible transit agencies are determined based on daily unlinked passenger trips (ridership) and transit systems that serve historically eligible UASIs	Funds are awarded directly to selected transit agencies	Priorities: Governance integration; cybersecurity enhancements Planning: Regional communications enhancement Equipment: Related to interoperable communications Maintenance and Sustainment: Upgrades, user fees, warranties Construction and Renovation: Communication towers
IPR-Amtrak (\$10,000,000): Provides funding to Amtrak to create a sustainable, risk-based effort to protect critical surface transportation infrastructure and the traveling public from acts of terrorism, major disasters, and other emergencies within the Amtrak rail system	National Passenger Railroad Corporation (Amtrak)	Cooperative Agreement between FEMA and Amtrak: All funds are awarded to Amtrak	Funds are awarded to Amtrak; funds are transferred to Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration for disbursement	Priorities: Building core capabilities; cybersecurity enhancements; governance integration Planning: Security plans; protocols; education; outreach Training and Exercises: Crew communication and coordination; emergency preparedness drills and exercises Equipment: Related to interoperable communications Maintenance and Sustainment: Upgrades, user fees, warranties Construction and Renovation: Communication towers
IBSGP (\$3,000,000): Provides funding to owners and operators of intercity bus systems to protect critical surface transportation infrastructure and the traveling public from acts of terrorism and to increase the resilience of transit infrastructure	Owners and operators of fixed route intercity and charter buses that serve UASIs	Competitive: Eligible applicants must complete a vulnerability assessment and develop a security plan	Funds are awarded directly to selected operators	Priorities: Building/sustaining core capabilities; governance integration; cybersecurity enhancements Training and Exercises: Planning; workshops; overtime; backfill; travel Equipment: Facility security; vehicle/drive security
PSGP (\$100,000,000): Provides funding for transportation infrastructure and operational security activities to implement Area Maritime Transportation Security Plans and facility security plans among port authorities, facility operators, and state/local agencies	Port authorities, facility operators, and state/local government agencies	Competitive: Port areas will be selected for funding through a competitive review process	Funds are awarded directly to selected ports; Recipients must provide at least 25% match	Priorities: Enhancing Maritime Domain Awareness, IED and CBRNE Prevention, Protection, Response and Supporting Recovery Capabilities; cybersecurity; port resilience and recovery Equipment: Interoperable communications for Maritime Domain Awareness Maintenance and Sustainment: Upgrades, user fees, warranties Construction and Renovation: Communication towers; Port Security Emergency Communications Center
AFG (\$690,000,000): Enhances safety of the public and firefighters by assisting fire prevention programs and supporting firefighter health and safety research	State, local, tribal; fire departments; universities; public health; non-profits	Competitive: 5% match is required	Funds are awarded directly to selected recipients	Fire Prevention & Safety Activities: Education; national, state, and regional programs and studies; equipment; training materials Research & Development Activities: Technology and product development; database systems; preliminary studies

II. SAFECOM Guidance Recommendations for Grantees

As a condition to receiving DHS Preparedness Grants, grantees using funds for emergency communications projects must comply with the [SAFECOM Guidance on Emergency Communications Grants](#) (*SAFECOM Guidance*). New for FY 2016, DHS has outlined specific requirements for DHS/FEMA recipients in Appendix D – Compliance Requirements for DHS Grants. *SAFECOM Guidance* provides guidance to grantees on:

- Recommendations for planning, coordinating, and implementing emergency communications projects
- Emergency communications activities that can be funded through federal grants
- Overview of emergency communications systems and capabilities
- Technical standards that facilitate interoperability

Before applying for federal funding, *SAFECOM Guidance* encourages grantees to review the [2014 National Emergency Communications Plan](#) to understand national strategies, as well as their state or territory's *Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan* (SCIP) to ensure that proposals support statewide plans. Additionally, stakeholders should coordinate with state-level emergency communications leaders and governance bodies to ensure that proposals are compatible and interoperable with other projects.

Emergency Communications Priorities

SAFECOM Guidance identifies five investment priorities for emergency communications that grantees should target funding toward:

- **Priority 1: Invest in emergency communications governance and leadership structures.** Strong governance and leadership are critical for assessing needs, conducting statewide planning, coordinating investments, ensuring projects support statewide plans, maintaining and improving communications systems, and planning for future communications improvements.
- **Priority 2: Conduct statewide planning for emergency communications.** Planning activities include updates to statewide plans, incorporating the capabilities and needs of all emergency communications systems and the whole community.
- **Priority 3: Invest in emergency communications training and exercises.** Training and exercises should occur across all levels of government and with other entities to address gaps identified in response and recovery operations.
- **Priority 4: Conduct activities that enhance operational coordination.** Operational coordination activities include updating inventories of communications assets and sharing information within their state or territory, as well as with neighboring states most likely to request support during emergencies or events.
- **Priority 5: Invest in standards-based technology and equipment.** Equipment that is compliant to applicable standards enables interoperability across public safety agencies and other entities.

FEMA Grant Requirements

As noted in compliance with Appendix D of the *SAFECOM Guidance*, FEMA requires grantees to complete the following:

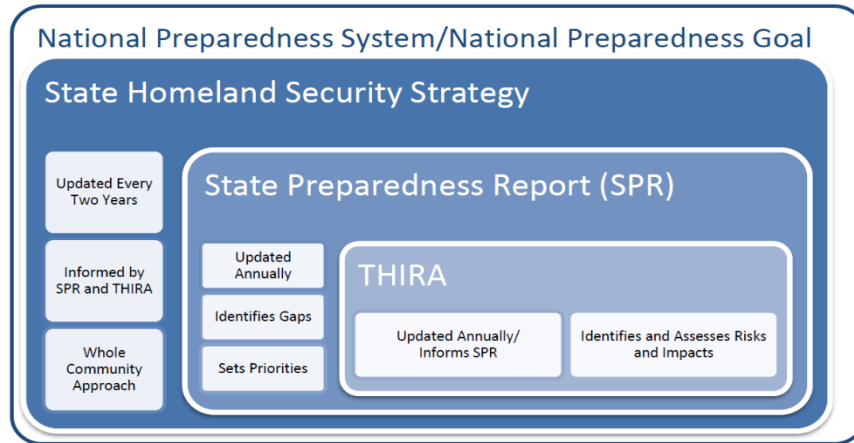


Figure 1. National Preparedness System Overview

- **Implement the [National Preparedness System](#) to improve response capabilities and achieve the [National Preparedness Goal](#).** To support this process, FEMA targets grant funding toward 31 identified [Core Capabilities](#) that address the greatest risks to the Nation. It is important for OEC stakeholders to understand this process, as proposals for grant funding are required to address gaps identified in FEMA plans and build core capabilities across the [whole community](#).
- **Participate in the [Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment \(THIRA\)](#) process to ensure that emergency communications needs are represented and prioritized for funding.** Grantees are required to develop and maintain a THIRA. To complete the THIRA, states are required to engage the whole community, leverage current assessments (e.g., SCIP Annual Snapshot, NECP Goal Assessments, After-Action Reports) and empirical data to define gaps and needs, and set capability targets for core capabilities.
- **Develop the annual [State Preparedness Report \(SPR\)](#), which identifies current shortfalls in capabilities and helps states prioritize activities.** The THIRA informs the SPR. Together, the THIRA and SPR inform the State and Urban Area Homeland Security Strategies, which are updated every two years, and drives State and Urban Area preparedness planning. This process ensures that needs are continually assessed and addressed, so that each state and the Nation can adequately respond to threats and hazards.
- **Participate in the [Senior Advisory Committee \(SAC\)](#).** FEMA requires grantees to establish or re-establish their SAC to integrate governance structures to assess needs, coordinate investments, and target funding where it is needed most. Under HSGP, Statewide Interoperability Coordinators are named as required members of the SAC, and FEMA recommends that representatives from Statewide Interoperability Governing Bodies be included in the SAC to ensure emergency communications interests are represented and considered for funding.

Grants Management Best Practices

OEC recommends the following best practices for grantees developing emergency communications proposals. For additional best practices during all phases of the grants cycle—Pre-Award, Award, Post-Award, and Closeout—refer to *SAFECOM Guidance*, Section 6.

- Read the NOFO for program-specific information, eligibility requirements, and application instructions
- Review and understand the *National Emergency Communications Plan*, SCIP, and other applicable plans
- Coordinate with state-level governance and leadership (e.g., SAC) to document needs, align projects to plans, and identify funding options
- Work with SAA to include proposed projects in state preparedness plans (e.g., SPR) and to secure funding
- Review grant requirements included in the NOFO (e.g., National Incident Management System implementation, *SAFECOM Guidance* compliance, matching funds)
- Consult the federal granting agency, spectrum authority (i.e., Federal Communications Commission or FirstNet), and *SAFECOM Guidance* when developing projects
- Align projects to federal and state-level plans (e.g., SPR), assessments (e.g., THIRA), and initiatives
- Include coordination efforts with the whole community in applications
- Identify staff to manage financial reporting and programmatic compliance requirements
- Develop project and budget milestones to ensure timely completion
- Identify performance measures and metrics that will help demonstrate impact
- Consider potential impacts of Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation requirements on timelines
- Ensure proper mechanisms are in place to avoid commingling and supplanting of funds
- Evaluate the ability of sub-grantees to manage federal funding
- Consider how the project will be sustained after grant funding has ended

OEC stakeholders who are not the official grantees for DHS Preparedness Grants are encouraged to work with eligible recipients and engage further in the DHS grant process. OEC strongly encourages stakeholders to continue to assess and address emergency communications needs and to engage in planning across the whole community.