# Statewide Interoperability Coordinator Roles and Responsibilities
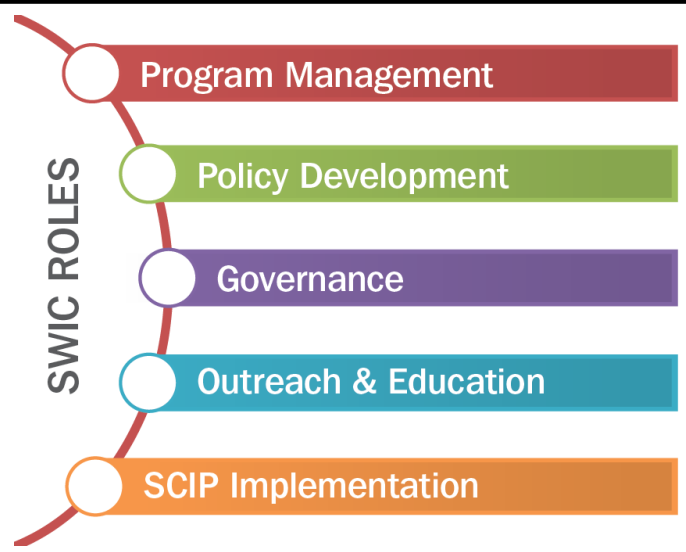
## Coordinating Statewide Emergency Communications

Based on recommendations from the public safety community, the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) included an objective in the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) requesting each state and territory to identify a central coordination point for interoperable emergency communications efforts. With full-time resources dedicated to coordinating statewide emergency communications, most States have chosen a Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) to fill this role.

Interoperability is the ability for emergency responders to communicate among jurisdictions, disciplines, and levels of government, using a variety of frequency bands as needed and as authorized. Emergency responders often find it difficult to communicate with their own agencies, let alone with agencies in neighboring states, counties, or cities. Thus, the SWIC is essential in promoting and advancing interoperability statewide by fulfilling roles enumerated below.

## THE VARIOUS ROLES OF THE SWIC

SWICs *assist with the implementation of the NECP and Statewide Communication Interoperability Plans (SCIPs).* SCIPs are locally-driven, multi-jurisdictional, and multi-disciplinary statewide plans created to provide strategic direction to those responsible for interoperable communications at the state, territorial, regional, local, and tribal levels. SWICs dedicate considerable time educating the public safety community on their SCIP.

**SWIC ROLES**
- Program Management
- Policy Development
- Governance
- Outreach & Education
- SCIP Implementation

SWICs also *assist with establishing a Statewide Interoperability Governing Body (SIGB)*, or other formalized, statewide governance systems. As SCIP implementation proceeds, SWICs coordinate closely with statewide governance entities by seeking guidance and recommendations from the joint efforts of governance members, state agencies, and regional entities. Statewide governance bodies provide a unified approach across disciplines and jurisdictions that support funding, informed and effective decision making, and communications interoperability.

SWICs *serve as members of the National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC)*, a national governance body established to assist state and territory interoperability coordinators with promoting the critical importance of interoperable communications and best practices within their states and nationally. In this key role, the SWIC contributes to the development of standard operating procedures; voice and data technologies; training, exercises, and outreach and education materials; and federal emergency communications policies, plans, and services. This coordinated effort greatly enhances response capabilities by developing collaborative interoperable communications strategies at all levels of government.

The SWIC's *role is also one of high-level program management* that may involve the following related to public safety communications interoperability: developing reports and briefings, coordinating projects, assembling working groups to develop recommendations and programmatic implementation, overseeing publications, working with legislators and Governor's offices on interoperable communications issues, and building relationships with others involved in state interoperability efforts.

# SWIC KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

## Program Management

- Oversee interoperability and communications projects in the state and provide regular updates to the Governor, legislatures, and other senior government executives
- Manage support for interoperable project implementation
- Oversee program management support, including staffing, contracting, budgeting, technical resources, and other administrative tasks
- Establish state and locality needs for federal Technical Assistance and coordinate accordingly with federal partners
- Promote efficiency and better program management of essential statewide, regional, and local systems
- Manage Communications Unit Leader and Communications Technician training program
- Provide input to DHS to insure that individual state needs are reflected in federal funding and policy directives

## Policy Development

- Provide direction, guidance, and assistance for public safety communications, and Long-Term Evolution (LTE)
- Assist in drafting and reviewing legislation and other Executive level documents pertaining to public safety communications
- Coordinate with the FirstNet State Point-of-Contact (SPOC) in planning for and deploying the National Public Safety Broadband Network and related activities
- Coordinate with the Statewide 9-1-1 Coordinator, or similar position(s), in planning for and implementing Next Generation 9-1-1 initiatives
- Ensure a comprehensive approach to public safety communications and cybersecurity across all mediums of technology
- Coordinate with ESF-2 planners for disaster planning

## Outreach and Education

- Oversee the maintenance of a database of stakeholders and resources across the state
- Liaise across different levels of government and all disciplines to build partnerships in order to bring people together to focus on common interests and needs
- Serve as the point of contact to the federal government and industry on statewide interoperable communications issues and in managing the use of federal frequency channels within the state by developing standard operating procedures
- Provide state governance entities with outreach and training support for the state's emergency responders
- Communicate information regularly with stakeholders to ensure transparency
- Attend and actively participate in national interoperability conferences and workshops and serve as member of organizations like NPSTC, APCO, and NENA
- Participate in the NCSWIC and committee(s) of interest

## SCIP Implementation

- Develop and establish goals, initiatives, and objectives, in consultation with the first responder community, consistent with national and state strategic plans pertaining to public safety interoperability
- Maintain and update the SCIP
- Assist in mapping the goals of the NECP into the SCIP where possible, based on needs of the state
- Develop and assess short- and long-term performance measures to show progress toward improved interoperability
- Conduct and maintain statewide communications capabilities assessments
- Complete yearly SCIP snapshot to show progress on achieving goals

## Governance

- Manage the establishment (i.e., ad-hoc, Executive Order, statute) and sustainment of a statewide governing body such as a SIGB or Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee, to include committees and working groups
- Advise the Governor, legislatures, and other appointed officials on statewide interoperability policy and funding matters on behalf of the public safety community
- Serve as a unbiased advocate/coordinator to enhance interoperability across spectrum of public safety communications
- Serve as an active member or advisor on all communications related governance bodies and work with public safety answering points and emergency managers in the state to ensure coordination, help identify synergies, and bridge communication gaps
- Coordinate closely with statewide governance bodies seeking guidance and recommendations from the joint efforts of governance members, state agencies, and regional entities
- Ensure voice of all state agencies are heard and recognized

| SWIC HISTORY | ACHIEVEMENTS | NEXT STEPS |
|---|---|---|
| • 2007 – OEC established by Congress<br>• 2008 – State SCIPs approved by OEC; OEC included objective in NECP for states to establish a POC for interoperable communications<br>• 2010 – OEC established NCSWIC and the RICs<br>• 2013 – Revised SCIP template and Guidebook published<br>• 2015 – SWIC Enhancement Act introduced in U.S. Senate | • SWICs helped complete 440+ initiatives to improve emergency communications interoperability, complying with the FCC narrowbanding regulations, developing and implementing SCIPs for all 56 states and territories, and contributing to data collection for NECP<br>• SWICs have improved training and exercise development | • Update SCIPs<br>• Identify new funding opportunities to support SWICs<br>• Develop a suite of products on the SWIC role<br>• Maintain and update NCSWIC Strategic Plan, as needed<br>• Further migration from land mobile radio (LMR) to broadband |