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U.S. Department of Homeland Security



**Homeland
Security**

Prepared for the State of Arizona

OEC/ICTAP

Office of Emergency Communications / Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program

OEC/ICTAP-AZ-GOVASSESS-001-R0

GOV-ASMT

July 2009

State of Arizona Communications Interoperability Governance Assessment Report

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1. Introduction

The State of Arizona, through the Arizona Government Information Technology Agency (GITA), requested technical assistance from the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Emergency Communications – Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (OEC-ICTAP), to assist with an assessment of the State's interoperable communications governance structure.

The Arizona Public Safety Communications Advisory Commission (PSCC) was established by the Arizona State Legislature under A.R.S. §41-3541 and §41-3542¹. The Commission was established within the Arizona Government Information Technology Agency (GITA). The PSCC is a collaborative advisory commission established to enhance interoperable communications capabilities statewide. This commission provides a forum for each jurisdiction to discuss public safety communications initiatives developed at the jurisdictional level, and helps ensure that individual projects have an opportunity to align with the Arizona Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP). Additionally, the PSCC provides a mechanism for coordinating public safety communication issues among local, state, federal, and other agencies operating within the State of Arizona.

In support of this technical assistance request, ICTAP and GITA personnel partnered to evaluate existing governance documents, to develop a draft PSCC Charter, and to discuss and provide observations and recommendations for updates. This report is the resulting summary of those observations and recommendations.

Interoperability and Governance

Communications interoperability is recognized as a major challenge in public safety's effective response to any incident, natural or man-made, that may impact communities throughout the United States. The lack of interoperability was noted as a major failure during many of our recent national disasters ranging from the terrorists' attacks of September 11, 2001 to Hurricane Katrina. Unfortunately, ensuring communications interoperability among first responders remains a challenge that many jurisdictions from local agencies to State governments still face today.

Interoperable communications is a complex issue that involves a myriad of factors that include but are not limited to governance, standard operating procedures, funding, technology, training and exercises, and usage. In consideration of these factors, it becomes apparent that establishing and managing effective interoperability can be a very difficult challenge.

¹ Statutory framework can be found at <http://www.azgita.gov/psic/about/law.htm>

A common thread that is noted among the efforts and publications focused on public safety interoperable communications is the need for a formalized and effective Governance structure.² The term “governance” is used to describe a decision-making structure. The United States Government Accounting Office reported that “the single greatest barrier to addressing the decades old problems of interoperable communications has been the lack of effective, collaborative interdisciplinary and intergovernmental planning”.³ An effective and common governance structure allows jurisdictions the ability to improve the policies, processes, and procedures of their interoperability projects by enhancing communication, coordination and cooperation. It assists in establishing guidelines and principals and reducing internal jurisdictional conflicts.⁴ In order to establish and sustain an acceptable level of interoperable communications which extends over multiple disciplines and all levels of local, county, regional and state public safety agencies, a governance structure must exist that allows for a unified approach to all aspects of interoperability. As noted in the National Emergency Communications Plan, due to the intricacies and complexities of public safety communications systems throughout the United States, formal governance structures and leadership are needed to manage these complex systems of people, organizations and technologies.⁵ It is important to note that interoperability governance structures should not be viewed as independent entities that stand separate from the public safety community and attempt to dictate solutions and direction for all to follow. Instead, effective governance structures provide the framework in which stakeholders from all levels of government, all public safety disciplines as well as recognized non-governmental agencies can collaborate and make decisions that represent a common objective of communications interoperability.⁶

² United States Department of Justice. Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Law Enforcement Tech Guide for Communications Interoperability, 2006, 64.

³ National Interoperability Baseline Survey, 15.

⁴ United States Department of Homeland Security. SAFECOM Program, Office for Interoperability and Compatibility. Interoperability Continuum - A tool for improving emergency response communications and interoperability, 2005, 1

⁵ United States Department of Homeland Security. Office of Emergency Communications. National Emergency Communications Plan, July, 2008, 9

⁶ Interoperability Continuum, 1

2. Arizona PSCC Charter Assessment Overview

To assist with the governance evaluation, GITA provided ICTAP with dozens of documents and agreements developed over the past several years related to the efforts of the PSCC and its predecessors. ICTAP assessed all of those documents in light of their original intent, and with an eye toward Arizona's evolving governance models.

In subsequent meetings with stakeholders, it became evident that Arizona was evolving from a government "ownership" model to a governance "collaboration" model. Stakeholders indicated a desire to be more open to incorporating inputs from each region of the State, and to fostering more local, tribal, and federal participation in the activities of the PSCC.

With that progression in mind, ICTAP is pleased to provide the following summary of observations and recommendations for the PSCC Charter. Strengths in the current draft of the Charter are noted, as well as gaps that should be addressed, including a summary of the major gaps in each section. The draft Charter is included in the Appendix.

3. Charter Assessment

The assessment that follows is a summary of strengths and gaps noted in the current version of the draft Charter. The Appendix of this document is a version of the draft Charter that incorporates these recommendations where possible, and points out areas that still need to be addressed by the State. In the draft Charter, the following color-coding legend highlights the source of the text.

Legend:

Black = Arizona's existing text from previous documents that appears to fit well in this charter

Purple = Some sample text or "food for thought" text from other areas/documents

Blue = Arizona's existing text from previous documents that should be discussed further or considered for revision

Red = Missing text that needs to be developed

Strengths and gaps are noted in the following sub-sections.

3.1. Introduction

Strengths noted:

- The Vision, Mission, and Purpose sections can be developed directly from the existing language to provide strong and actionable statements.
- Solid authority for the PSCC was granted via legislation.
- The functions of the PSCC are clearly defined.

Gaps noted:

- Consider adding an Executive Summary section.
- The Vision, Mission, and Purpose statements need to be clearly distinguished from one another and re-focused away from governing a single statewide radio system.
- The charter does not include a documented commission scope. Clearly denote what the PSCC handles and what the PSCC does NOT handle.

- Specific commission outcomes are not fully defined.
- Consider expanding the Operating Principles to address in advance any possible collaboration or conflict resolution issues that could arise.
- The current language in the Introduction sections reflects pre-2008 organizational structure, and needs to be updated.

Governance Subcommittee members engaged in significant discussions at the subcommittee meeting held April 28, 2009 regarding the wording and intent of the introductory material for the draft charter. Many of these conversations remained open (i.e. did not result in firm wording or phrasing decisions) but did spark further productive discussions and highlighted important issues. Specific issues and recommendations for the introductory material are noted in the sub-sections that follow.

3.1.1 Mission

Consider the following phrasing for the Mission statement:

“The mission of the Public Safety Communications Advisory Commission (PSCC) is to enhance interoperable communications between local, county, state, tribal, and federal participants to effectively protect lives and property during multi-discipline and multi-jurisdictional incidents and events.”

3.1.2 Vision

Consider the following phrasing for the Vision statement:

“Arizona’s public safety personnel have access to quality interoperable communication assets, are adequately trained in those assets, and utilize the assets effectively in response to multi-disciplinary and multi-jurisdictional incidents and events.”

3.1.3 Purpose

Consider the following phrasing for the Purpose statement:

“The PSCC is a collaborative advisory commission established to advance interoperable communications capabilities statewide. This commission develops and supports the implementation of the Arizona Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP). The PSCC provides a mechanism for coordinating public safety communication issues among local, state, federal, and other agencies operating within the State of Arizona.”

3.1.4 Outcomes

Consider the following phrasing for the Outcomes section:

“The PSCC, through its efforts and those of the PSIC office, pursues the following desired outcomes:

- a. Baseline current interoperable communications capabilities statewide.
- b. Document best practices, policies, procedures, and protocols for communications interoperability and incorporate them into existing interoperability agreements.
- c. Capitalize on opportunities to share resources.
- d. Identify and recommend future technological solutions that will enhance Arizona’s interoperable communications capabilities.
- e. Recommend implementation of the strategic initiatives located in the Arizona SCIP.
- f. Support training key communications personnel (e.g., dispatchers, dispatch center supervisors, Communications Unit Leaders, technical communications support staff, field users, etc.) and ensure that training opportunities are available to public safety professionals statewide.”

3.1.5 Scope

There is no current wording provided for this section. The following questions need to be answered:

- What, specifically, is the domain of the PSCC? What, specifically, is NOT the domain of the PSCC?
- Does the PSCC deal only with interoperability issues, or operability issues as well?
- How does the PSCC engage on local only issues vs. regional issues vs. statewide issues?
- Does the PSCC deal only with land mobile radio issues, or also with other communications (e.g., data, etc.)?

3.1.6 Operating Principles

Consider the following phrasing for the Operating Principles section:

“The PSCC will:

- Use a collaborative approach
- Incorporate local and regional requirements and expectations
- Study and apply best practices

- Apply research and lessons learned from other states and regions
- Serve as a mechanism for individual agencies to raise issues, concerns, and/or recommendations to one another and to the State.
- Task working groups, as needed.
- [Others?]"

3.2. PSCC Organization

Strengths noted:

- The State has developed a very detailed and thorough organizational model.
- The role and function of the Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC) is clearly defined.

Gaps noted:

- A comprehensive list of stakeholders has not been identified.
- It might be beneficial to provide clarifying text defining the PSCC's organizational design and its place within the larger statewide structure.

3.3. Subcommittees vs. Workgroups

Gaps noted:

- Do all members of the organization understand the difference between subcommittees and workgroups? Are the pros/cons of each well understood?
- Are any further PSCC committees or subcommittees needed?
- Are any further SIEC committees or subcommittees needed? Is a standing administrative subcommittee needed, as was denoted by previous documentation?
- Could further committee/subcommittee roles be served by workgroups? The formation of work groups helps promote rapid and informal collaboration, and allows for ad hoc, task-specific formation and dissolution.
- Do committee/subcommittee/workgroup members need to be on the PSCC or SIEC?
- Can the PSCC or SIEC pull in non-commission subject matter experts as needed? If so, do they provide benefit at the PSCC, SIEC, and/or PSIC level?

3.4. Membership

Strengths noted:

- Membership is clearly denoted by State statute (though membership in the charter needs to be revised to reflect the 2008 transition of the PSCC to GITA).
- The statute denotes that each commissioner is appointed by the Governor, giving them strong positional authority and support.
- The section strives to equally represent all five emergency response regions.

Gaps noted:

- Term limits appear to be problematic (for example, some commissioners are serving beyond their term awaiting replacement; this can cause quorum and voting concerns).
- The statute does not allow for/define non-commissioner membership (for example, are non-voting members allowed? Are substitutes allowed? Etc.).
- No member roles/responsibilities are defined.
- There is a need to define local, regional, tribal, State, and Federal input mechanisms (i.e., how does information get up to the PSCC?).

3.5. Management

Strengths noted:

- Voting and quorum requirements are covered.

Gaps noted ⁷:

- Quorum requirements are so restrictive as to potentially inhibit progress.
- The approach does not address the rights of substitutes present on behalf of a commissioner.
- The approach does not address how to move forward if a quorum is not present (i.e. progress could stall for a significant period of time if commissioners do not universally attend all meetings).

⁷ Some of these other areas may be handled in state laws not analyzed within the scope of this assessment.

- The approach does not allow for emergency sessions or emergency votes.
- The approach does not address the issue of commissioners who have surpassed their term limits waiting for gubernatorial replacement.
- Voting requirements are too vague.
- The approach does not address the issue of absentee votes (via email? Written notice?).
- The approach does not address the issue of voting via designated representatives.

3.6. Logistics

Strengths noted:

- The section contains complete, solid information on meeting logistics (when, required meeting notices, decorum, frequency, etc.).

Gaps noted:

- The approach does not allow for action between meetings.
- The approach does not directly address electronic meeting notifications.
- The approach does not address any schedule for revisions or updates to the charter.
- The approach does not specifically address how meeting minutes will be handled or shared.

4. Next Steps

ICTAP recommends the following steps be taken:

1. Determine PSCC/Legislative intent for future governance efforts

Continue discussions with the PSCC and with key government entities (e.g., Governor, State Legislature, Attorney General's office, etc.) to determine how Arizona intends to strengthen its governance structure relative to public safety interoperable communications. Revise or redesign the draft PSCC charter to reflect that intent.

2. Update and finalize the draft PSCC Charter

When completed, distribute the charter to the appropriate stakeholders for comment, with a well-defined timeline for completion, and finalize the charter revisions based on comments received.

2. Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)

Identify existing, applicable MOUs related to interoperable communications or which could be expanded/alterred/enhanced to incorporate interoperable communications. Document missing MOUs or opportunities for future MOUs. Based on these MOUs, and with an eye to requirements of future MOUs, develop MOU templates.

Appendix - (Draft) PSCC Governance Charter



Public Safety Communications Advisory Commission (PSCC)
Governance Charter

DRAFT

Public Safety Communications Advisory Commission
(PSCC)
Governance Charter

Legend:

Black = Arizona's existing text from previous documents that appears to fit well in this charter

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Executive Summary

Purpose

[Complete with summary information]

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No tables at this time.

1. Introduction

1.1 Mission Statement

The mission of the Public Safety Communications Advisory Commission (PSCC) is to enable real-time, interoperable communications between local, county, state, tribal, and federal participants to effectively protect lives and property during multi-agency, multi-discipline, and multi-jurisdictional events. [note: currently documented in the SCIP as the PSCC Vision]

1.2 Vision

Through leadership, professionalism and innovation, Arizona will serve as a national model of public safety communications excellence. No citizen's or responder's life should be endangered due to issues of spectrum, technology, funding, or governance.

1.3 Purpose

The PSCC is a collaborative advisory commission established to enhance interoperable communications capabilities statewide. This commission provides a forum for each jurisdiction to discuss public safety communications initiatives developed at the jurisdictional level, and helps ensure that individual projects have an opportunity to align with the Arizona Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP). Additionally, the PSCC provides a mechanism for coordinating public safety communication issues among local, state, federal, and other agencies operating within the State of Arizona.

1.4 Authority

The Arizona Public Safety Communications Advisory Commission (PSCC) was established by the Arizona State Legislature under A.R.S. §41-3541 and §41-3542.

The Arizona Public Safety Communications Advisory Commission is established within the Arizona Government Information Technology Agency (GITA).

1.5 Outcomes

The PSCC, through its efforts and those of the PSIC office, pursues the following desired outcomes:

- a. Baseline current interoperable communications capabilities statewide.
- b. Identify and recommend future technological solutions that will enhance Arizona's interoperable communications capabilities.
- c. Capitalize on opportunities to share resources.
- d. Recommend implementation of the strategic initiatives located in the Arizona SCIP.
- e. Task working groups, as needed.

- f. Document best practices, policies, procedures, and protocols for communications interoperability and incorporate them into existing interoperability agreements.
- g. Support training key communications personnel (e.g., dispatchers, dispatch center supervisors, Communications Unit Leaders, technical communications support staff, field users, etc.).
- h. Ensure that interoperable communications training opportunities are available to public safety professionals statewide.

1.6 Scope

[Insert text here - what does the PSCC handle and what does it NOT handle?]

1.7 Functions

The PSCC reflects a broad, multi-disciplinary community of public safety and emergency management agencies from across the state. The Commissioners shall make recommendations to the PSIC regarding:

- Development of a standards-based system that provides radio interoperability for all public safety agencies statewide.
- Promotion of the development and use of standards-based systems.
- Identification of priorities and essential tasks.
- Development of a timeline for project activities.
- Completion of a survey of existing and planned efforts statewide and benchmark against similar efforts nationally.
- Providing support for the SIEC.
- Establishment of committees and working groups as necessary.

1.8 Operating Principles

The PSCC will:

- Use a collaborative approach
- Incorporate local and regional requirements and expectations
- Study and apply best practices
- Apply research and lessons learned from other states and region
- Serve as a mechanism for individual agencies to raise issues, concerns, and/or recommendations to one another and to the State.

2. PSCC Organization

2.1 Associated Stakeholders

[Insert content here.]

2.2 Organizational Design

[Insert content here.]

2.2.1 PSCC

The commission shall annually submit a report of its activities and recommendations to the governor, the speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate on or before December 1 and shall provide a copy of the report to the secretary of state and the director of the Arizona state library, archives and public records.

2.2.2 PSIC

Among other tasking, the GITA Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) Office supports the PSCC and shall:

- Facilitate Commission meetings;
- Coordinate agendas;
- Prepare minutes;
- Document plans;
- Report activities; and
- Disseminate information to the membership and the public;
- Employ personnel as required with available monies;
- Enter into contracts to assess, design, construct and use public safety communications systems;
- Accept grants, fees and other monies for use by [the Department](#) and the Commission;
- Enter into agreements to carry out the purposes [of this Article](#);
- Request cooperation from any [state agency](#) for the purposes [of this Article](#);
- Submit a report annually of the Commissions activities and recommendations to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate on or before December 1;
- Provide a copy of the annual report to the Secretary of State and the Director of the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records; and
- Develop and maintain work plans which will outline areas of work to be performed and appropriate schedules under the guidance of the Commissioners.

2.2.3 SIEC

The Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC) is a sub-committee of the PSCC.

PSCC Commissioners, by majority vote, will appoint two members of the SIEC voting board who shall serve as co-chairman (hereinafter called SIEC co-chairs).

SIEC co-chairs will be responsible for selecting three additional members to their board, thereby making this a five-member voting board.

The SIEC co-chairs shall be responsible for selecting two representatives to be co-chairmen of any working groups (hereinafter called working group co-chairs), and the SIEC will be supported by these subordinate working groups as needed or directed.

Working groups will be led by two co-chairs who will be responsible for reporting all information and business relative to their working group to the SIEC voting board at the SIEC quarterly meetings.

SIEC voting board shall meet quarterly or as determined by the committee. (See Article VIII – PSCC Meetings.)

All SIEC meetings will be conducted in an open meeting in accordance with A.R.S. §38-431. Any products created by the working groups shall be reviewed by the SIEC in an open meeting before the SIEC voting board.

SIEC co-chairs are tasked with the additional responsibilities of, but not limited to:

- Assigning and monitoring the work and workflow within the working groups;
- Continued communications between the SIEC voting board and working group co-chairs;
- Projects or research as assigned by the PSCC;
- Making presentations on behalf of the SIEC at the quarterly PSCC meetings; and
- Advising the PSCC support office of their meeting agenda prior to SIEC quarterly meetings.

2.2.4 Subcommittees

[Insert content here - are any further subcommittees needed?]

2.2.5 Working groups

[Insert content here - beneficial to avoid having to contend with public meeting laws.]

2.3 Membership

The Public Safety Communications Commissioners shall consist of the GITA Director or the GITA Director's designee, and fourteen advisory members appointed by the Governor under A.R.S. §38-211. (*Title 38 – Public Officers and Employees; Chapter 2 – Qualification and Tenure; Article 2 - Nomination and Confirmation of Appointive Officers*)

The Governor shall make the appointments so the existing five emergency response regions in the state are as equally represented on the advisory commission as possible.

[Commissioners shall serve three-year terms](#)

[Any additional members besides the Commissioners themselves? Non-voting members?]

2.3.1 Member roles & responsibilities

[Insert text here.]

2.3.2 Input mechanisms

[Insert text here - need to carefully document how information can reach the PSCC from the local, regional, state, and federal agencies.]

2.4 Management

[Insert text here.]

2.4.1 Quorum

Eight Commissioners [consider half plus one of all currently appointed commissioners] present at any meeting shall constitute a quorum.

[Consider language allowing for the Chair to call an Emergency Session between regular meetings if a quorum is not achieved and a decision is time-critical. This session would involve a vote by simple majority of attending Commissioners (allows business to move forward but gives a Commissioner a “second bite at the apple” if they miss a key meeting).]

2.4.2 Voting

Each Commissioner has one vote. A quorum is required for a vote to take place. All votes, including the minority position, shall be reported in the minutes.

Voting shall be conducted *viva voce* (by the voice) as a yea or nay. If the result of a vote is unclear to the Chairman, he/she shall request the vote then be taken by “roll call.”

[Absentee votes (via email, written notice, etc.)?]

[Voting via designated representative?]

3. Logistics

3.1 Meetings

The PSCC shall meet quarterly or as determined by the PSCC Chairman. Generally, the PSCC meets on the 4th Tuesday of the first month of the quarter (schedule is subject to change based on requirements and opportunities).

All meetings of the PSCC shall be conducted in accordance with A.R.S. §38-431. (Title 38- Public Officers and Employees; Chapter 3 - Conduct of Office)

PSCC support office shall be responsible for posting notice of meetings in the lobby of the State Capitol, Executive Tower, 1700 West Washington, Phoenix, Arizona, 85007 at least twenty-four (24) hours before each meeting.

PSCC support office shall forward a Notice of Public Meeting with agenda details to all Commissioners prior to the meeting date.

All Commissioners shall observe meeting decorum. The most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order may be used as a guide to appropriate protocol.

Any sub-committees or working groups of the PSCC shall meet quarterly or as determined by the sub-committee or working group Chairman or co-chair(s).

3.2 Order of Business

- Roll call
- Approval of the minutes of the preceding meeting
- Reports
- Old and unfinished business
- New business
- Adjournment

3.3 Document Updates & Revisions

[Insert text here.]

Appendix A Associated Documents, Agreements, & Statutes

[Insert links to any referenced or relevant documents, agreements, & statutes here.]

Appendix B Glossary/Definitions

AIRS	Arizona Interagency Radio System, formerly referred to as the Interagency Radio System (IARS) or as the Arizona Emergency Radio System (AERS)
ARS	Arizona Revised Statute
DPS	Department of Public Safety
GITA	Government Information Technology Agency
MOU	Memoranda of Understanding
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PSCC	Public Safety Communications Advisory Commission
PSIC	Public Safety Interoperable Communications Office
PSP	Policies, Standards, and Procedures
SCIP	Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan
SIEC	Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee