



Texas SWIC Office Focus Group 2019 Overview

July 17, 2019



Photo: Karla Jurrens

- Purpose of Focus Groups Reports
 - For regional representatives involved in public safety communications to discuss their plans and progress to improve communications in their region, using the SCIP as a tool to track progress
- Number of COGs / Tribes Reporting:
 - 18 of 24 COGs
 - 2 of 3 Tribes

Priority Goals/Initiatives

Initiative	Question	Responses
1.4 Utilize train-the-trainer course to certify new trainers	How many <u>basic training sessions</u> have been conducted in your COG / Tribe using the training template?	56
2.1 Hold at least one drill every year.	Approximately how many <u>agencies</u> in your COG/Tribe implemented the Exercise/drill included within the Basic Training package (or something similar)?	219
2.2 Hold at least one exercise biannually.	Approximately how many <u>exercises</u> (tabletop or in-person) were conducted in your COG / Tribe involving multiple jurisdictions?	129

Priority Goals/Initiatives

Initiative	Question	Responses
3.1 COGs and Tribes conduct annual regional Focus Group to identify and prioritize needs and plans for interoperability	How many Counties/Tribes were represented at the 2019 Focus Group meeting?	123
3.2 Explore utilization of local and Tribal resources with adjacent entities (e.g. towers, equipment, joint purchases)	Have any agencies in your COG/Tribe collaborated with other agencies or jurisdictions to share resources?	YES: 15 NO: 3
3.3 Identify all potential local, State, and Federal funding sources for training, maintenance, sustainment of existing and future communications infrastructure and capabilities, and subscriber equipment	Have additional sources of funding been identified other than DHS funding?	YES:11 NO: 6

Sharing Resources

- Extensive sharing of resources between the member agencies, **especially those that are providing their surplus equipment to smaller agencies that cannot afford the CapEx to get on the system. There is also collaborative sharing of fiber optic infrastructure** owned by several of the member agencies.
- Providing a **backup talk group on their system in the event our radio system is down** for any reason. A **local PD has also made available a cache of portable radios** to be able to deploy if resources come into our jurisdiction and are not compatible with our radio system.
- All 12 counties collaborate with jurisdictions in their area as well as with adjacent agencies.
- We have 14 counties, 99 cities, over 100 volunteer fire departments, and various other agencies in our region, who all collaborate on a daily basis. This includes sharing of equipment when needed.
- The County **deployed a COW and other assets as needed across the region**, and share other assets as requested (e.g., cache radios, programming equipment, IC staff).

Sharing Resources (cont.)

- **Agencies within the COG commonly share communications resources to support day-to-day operations and incident responses.**
 - The region is home to 5 mobile communications platforms which are available to any requesting jurisdiction, based on availability, within the region.
- **Using a TxDOT Tower**
- **The new system is being offered at no expense to state agencies** that fall within the footprint of the system.
- The Tribe purchased a consollette which was placed at the Border Patrol Communications Center to provide local agencies interoperability with each other including Border Patrol. **Seven mobile communications platforms are available and shared** across the entire region. **Homeland Security funded communications equipment is shared among first responders, emergency management, hospitals, and schools.**

Additional Sources of Funding

- Assistance to Firefighters Grants, LCRA
- A bond for upgrading the largest radio system in our region
- Stakeholder funding / Some state funding
- Received funding from TCEQ to assist with Local Emergency Planning Committee activities
- Home budgets, private grants
- Law enforcement agencies often seek Criminal Justice funding to support these systems
- Most training, maintenance, and sustainment is performed by local jurisdiction funding
- Trying to procure funds from HB442. There are now open discussions with Congressmen, Senators, as well as Washington contracts for interoperability communications
- City, County and State agencies are picking up the costs for electricity, tower rent, propane, backhaul, etc.
- Local contributions and 9-1-1 funding are used to offset the lack of funding from DHS
 - The region has also received Justice Assistance Grant funds for additional communications purchases.
 - Local funds are used in grant matches and outright purchases when no grant funds are available.
 - Insurance funds have been used to replace damaged equipment, which are upgraded when allowed, from Natural Incidents
- **Homeland Security Grant Funds.** Local entities are required to maintain all Homeland Security funded equipment. Infrastructure, i.e. towers, repeaters, equipment housing, is furnished by the local entities.

KEY Goals/Initiatives

Initiative	Question	Responses
4.4 Establish / maintain existing formal Regional Communications Focus Group to assist in developing and implementing regional plans for communications, including the RICP and annual Focus Group report	How many times did your Regional Communications Working Group meet in 2018?	33
5.1 Review and update local, Tribal, and regional mutual aid agreements, Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), asset inventories and point of contact lists	What is the approximate percentage of agencies in your region that have signed the MOU?	36% average of the 15 responses
7.1 Review, update biannually and/or as needed, and make RSOPs available to all local, Tribal, and mutual aid responders	Has your COG / Tribe updated RSOPs with the new template?	YES: 4 NO: 10

KEY Goals/Initiatives

Initiative	Question	Responses
10.1 Transition public safety radio systems to comply with P25 standards for statewide interoperability	Of the non-P25 agencies identified in 2017, have any begun or already completed the transition to P25?	YES: 11 NO: 1
13.1 Update capabilities and migration sections of the Regional Interoperable Communications Plan (RICP) and any other information requiring updates	Has your COG / Tribe updated your RICP?	YES: 6 NO: 9
14.1 Each region shall identify individuals to serve and train as Communications Unit (COMU) personnel	How many trained COMUs are in your COG / Tribe?	125
14.3 Promote regular roll calls on interoperability channels for LMR users	How many agencies in your COG / Tribe are doing regular roll calls on interoperability channels?	143

KEY Goals/Initiatives

Initiative	Question	Responses
15.1 Hold a demonstration session in conjunction with an existing regional public event to share deployable asset information with other agencies and the public	How many demonstration sessions ("Communications Equipment Rodeos") were held in your COG / Tribe in 2018?	14
15.2 Educate local, Tribal, and regional decision makers and elected officials on the importance of interoperable communications	Approximately how many meetings / activities were held in 2018 to educate local and Tribal members on the importance of interoperability?	68
16.1 Continue to provide public safety LTE awareness for the SEC and other Texas stakeholders	How many town halls or meetings were conducted in 2018 to provide public safety LTE awareness?	58