

# Panel Two: Narrowbanding Funding and Budgetary Issues

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# Narrowband Funding Challenges

States and localities have expressed concerns when determining how to fund narrowbanding transition including:

- Replacing old communications equipment (e.g., radios, pagers)
- Re-licensing wideband channels to narrowband operation
- Applying for new licenses for additional narrowband channels
- Reprogramming equipment

The cost of narrowbanding will vary

- Licensees with older communications systems may experience substantial costs for narrowbanding conversion if existing equipment must be replaced to meet new standards
- Public safety agencies should consider requesting Federal grant funds for narrowbanding expenses over the next two years in order to meet the transition deadline

# Coordination Efforts

## Federal Coordination

- The Emergency Communications Preparedness Center (ECPC), an interagency coordinating body, has encouraged its members to be aware of the Federal Communications Committee's (FCC) narrowbanding requirements and to include narrowbanding activities as an allowable cost for emergency communications support programs
  - The ECPC Grants Focus Group (GFG) included narrowbanding requirements in common guidance for Federal financial assistance programs that fund emergency communications for use by Federal grant administrators
  - The common guidance further provides sample language that can be used by Federal grant administrators when developing grant guidance for applications
- Within the ECPC GFG, FCC representatives have provided presentations to educate ECPC members on narrowbanding issues and solutions

## Licensee and Grantee Coordination

- DHS develops the annual *SAFECOM Guidance on Emergency Communications Grants* which provides technical information and program guidance for applicants applying for Federal grant funding for emergency communications projects
  - The guidance provides recommendations to licensees and grantees on implementing narrowbanding activities and funding in the General Application Recommendations
  - The document is available at <http://www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/grant/default.htm>



# Grants Funding Narrowband Efforts

## Department of Commerce

- Unexpended funds from the Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) Grant Program may be used for narrowbanding projects
  - Funds cannot be used for the payment of FCC licensing fees associated with narrowbanding requirements. Direct any questions to [PSIC@dhs.gov](mailto:PSIC@dhs.gov)

## Department of Homeland Security

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) preparedness grants may fund narrowband activities including costs for planning, assessments, training, exercises, and equipment purchase
  - The Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program (IECGP) provides funding for narrowband planning, training, exercises, and equipment purchase
  - Grantees should ask FEMA Program Analysts whether unexpended funds may be reallocated to narrowbanding activities. Visit <http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/index.shtm> for more information



# Current Examples of Narrowband Support

Examples of DHS Preparedness funding used for the narrowband projects include:

- Hiring a subject matter expert responsible for ensuring all radio channels are transitioned to narrowband operations
- Conducting a migration study through an intensive evaluation of the impact of the FCC narrowbanding mandate, collecting data, developing regional and statewide plans and strategies to address this issue, and determining how to maintain current interoperability during transition
- Conducting frequency coordination and licensing activities for any new channels needed
- Reprogramming or replacing equipment (e.g., transmitter combiners) to operate sites in narrowband mode
- Purchasing narrowband pagers for fire departments across the State and purchasing narrowband Project 25 radios for first responders
- Creating standard operating procedures, enhancing the Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan (TICP) and Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP), and developing life cycle or backup plans to include narrowband transition
- Populating the Communications Asset and Survey Mapping tool with new frequencies
- Conducting Communications Unit Leader and Communications Unit Technician training
- Establishing a central State fund to assist localities in purchasing narrowband compliant equipment and ensuring compliance with the narrowband mandate



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# Narrowbanding References

FCC Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau Web Site

- <http://www.fcc.gov/narrowbanding>

DHS Web Sites

- FEMA Preparedness Grants: <http://www.fema.gov/grants>
- SAFECOM Guidance: <http://www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/grant/default.htm>

Other Resources

- International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and International Municipal Signal Association (IMSA): FCC NARROWBANDING MANDATE: A Public Safety Guide for Compliance: <http://www.imsasafety.org/PDFs/Narrowbanding%20V2%20R2.pdf>

