



Chapter 7

FUNDING

The development of a comprehensive funding strategy for interoperable communications rests with the Illinois Terrorism Task Force in its role as the State Administrative Agency. The ITTF/SAA identifies grant opportunities, coordinates applications, receives and administers funds, and oversees the utilization of monies by grantees as part of its overarching funding strategy. Additionally, the ITTF/SAA calculates costs associated with the expansion/maintenance of interoperable communications in Illinois, allocates resources for project management, and leverages active projects via its partnerships with federal, state, and local governments and private and non-governmental organizations.

Funding Needs

Preliminary estimates of the costs associated with the expansion of interoperability in Illinois, the rollout of the SCIP, and implementation of the strategic initiatives suggest that over \$200 million will be needed to attain and maintain the programmatic goals and objectives of the plan. This estimate was calculated by officials during the development of Illinois' Enhancement Plan as part of the 2006 HGSP application process.

Funding Sources

With the \$25 million in state appropriations provided through the Illinois FIRST project, Illinois purchased mobile and portable voice radio communications equipment as well as dispatch console equipment/furniture and new logging recorders that accommodate and accentuate the capabilities of the new voice radio system. The State of Illinois has annually appropriated monies from its general revenue fund to support ongoing charges associated with the use of the system.

Through the initial work of the ITTF Communications Committee and the SIEC, Illinois established a set of core priorities, consistent with the goals and objectives of its SCIP, which was the focus of the PSIC grant investments approved for funding. The Illinois investments primarily focus on the following areas:

- Procurement of equipment for state and local government to expand Illinois' 700/800 MHz network.
- Development of local 700 MHz networks compatible with Illinois' network.
- Development of gateways to integrate existing communications systems with Illinois' 700/800 MHz network.

- Development of a local 700/800 MHz network within the Chicago/Cook County urban area.
- Development of new and/or expansion of existing Strategic Technology Reserves.

Sustainability

The long-term sustainability of Illinois' interoperable communications program lies in the commitment of the State of Illinois and its local partners. The Illinois interoperable platform that links state government to county and municipal agencies and statewide response teams is the foundation of Illinois' interoperable communications plan. The Illinois State Police entered into a long-term contractual agreement with Motorola to lease the system as its primary statewide voice communications system. Over \$25 million in state general revenue funding has already been committed to the development and implementation of this system. The state's leasing agreement stipulates that all statewide upgrades and maintenance of the system's infrastructure are the responsibility of Motorola. State and local agencies receiving the radios furnished by the ITTF have acknowledged their fiscal responsibility to pick up the monthly usage fees once their initial five years of service is completed. The same is true of local units of government receiving other interoperable communications assets from the ITTF, i.e., the statewide warning and alerting systems, incident scene management and interoperability equipment, and transportable interoperable communications suites.

The commitments for the state and/or local units of government to pick up the maintenance and ongoing operational costs of this equipment are already in place. State agencies and local units of government also provide staffing for the mobile unified command and transportable communications units, including cross-training of personnel to ensure the ready availability of backup teams all over the state which can be activated in the event of a long-term response.

Illinois' long-term approach builds on this effort to sustain the capabilities developed by leveraging other federal, state, and local government resources and partnerships with private and non-governmental organizations. The development and utilization of intra- and inter-state mutual aid agreements for fire, emergency medical services, law enforcement, emergency management, public works, and public health have enabled Illinois to develop shared response capabilities, decreasing the burden on any one jurisdiction.

Through private sector collaborations, Illinois has sought the development of innovative programs for sharing information and creating new partnerships that one day may support interoperable communications initiatives. The ITTF has developed a committee to research the latest in science and technology so Illinois invests its finite federal and state funding in systems that will provide effective and efficient options for response.

Illinois has aggressively pursued a shared commitment of resources to ensure statewide preparedness. Budget authorities acknowledge that indirect/in-kind support and assistance are impossible to calculate. Indirect support absorbed by state and local governments in Illinois include personnel salaries (including fringe benefits), maintenance, and operational costs, all of which serve to ensure the integrity of equipment, promote shared use of computer networks and organizational infrastructure, and balance costs for the commitment of personnel to participate in preparedness.

The State of Illinois will continue to request funding through state appropriations to support sustainment of the Illinois interoperability system. Additionally, the SIEC will work through its legislative contacts to explore the feasibility of a nominal user fee on, for example, telephone subscriber services which could be used to sustain and/or expand Illinois' interoperability platform, inclusive of equipment, operations, and training and exercises costs.

Funding for the Future

The identification of a dedicated state revenue stream to fund interoperability faces stiff competition from health care, education, and social services – all worthy causes with demonstrable needs. The SIEC will be required to work through its legislative contacts to gain support for funding that will allow Illinois to both maintain and expand its interoperable platform. While Illinois is wholly committed to providing the optimal interoperability environment for its public safety agencies, it recognizes its fiscal resources are limited, and innovative funding strategies must be developed to sustain and, more importantly, expand communications interoperability in Illinois in the future.