



## Chapter 5

# STRATEGY

SAFECOM defines interoperability as “the ability of emergency response agencies to communicate with one another effectively and efficiently during incident response to exchange voice and/or data with one another on demand, in real time, when needed, and as authorized.” While interoperability occurs on a daily basis in Illinois, the formal concept of interoperability demands a defined strategy that includes a far-reaching vision statement, a clearly articulated mission to achieve statewide interoperability, and the goals, objectives, and initiatives that will be used to accomplish interoperability. Illinois’ strategy, presented here, satisfies all these components.

### 5.1 Interoperability Vision

Interoperability success is defined at the lowest level by its users and is driven by a collaborative commitment by public safety responders to work together to make interoperability the standard, not the exception, for communications. While a utopian state of interoperability is the ultimate goal, Illinois’ strategy to achieve that state begins with its interoperability vision.

***OUR VISION . . . Illinois will conceptualize, create, foster, and leverage an interoperable environment in which all public safety responders - regardless of agency size or government/non-government affiliation - will possess the knowledge, technology, and resources to seamlessly communicate through and across disciplines while performing their official duties, thereby ensuring the citizens of Illinois an enhanced quality of life and a maximized degree of protection for their public peace, health, and safety through a coordinated response to emergencies, crimes, and disasters by Illinois’ public safety agencies.***

### 5.2 Mission

Illinois is wholly committed to achieving the highest level of statewide interoperability attainable for its emergency responders. By promoting input from all facets of the user community, Illinois can be assured its interoperable communications mission is focused on the needs of those who will benefit the most from an effective, cross disciplinary communications network: the public safety employees who work tirelessly to protect the people of Illinois from harm and ultimately, the people of Illinois who will be assured of a coordinated, cohesive response in their time of need.

***OUR MISSION . . . On behalf of the people of Illinois, the state's public safety agencies and officials will collaboratively work together to develop and implement interoperable communications networks, programs, and standards that will satisfy the operational, technical, and logistical needs of the user community and enable them to respond effectively to the needs of the people they serve while the State of Illinois will provide a cost-effective environment for interoperable communications that promotes open dialogue, welcomes suggestions and recommendations, and encourages participation in planning for the future of statewide interoperable communications in Illinois from and by any concerned citizen, government official, public safety agency, or non-governmental emergency services provider.***

**5.3 Goals and Objectives**

To accomplish its interoperable vision and mission, Illinois has adopted a set of goals crafted to guide the state's progression toward achieving full interoperability. These goals serve as a blueprint for the application of Illinois' SCIP, and the order of listing shown here parallels the SIEC working groups.

**GOVERNANCE**

**Goal 1**

Illinois' Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee will align working groups using the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum as a model.

**Objective 1.1**

The SIEC, in collaboration with the ITTF Communications Committee, will establish and staff from statewide membership working groups in Governance, Standard Operating Procedures, Technology, Training and Exercise, and Usage.

**Objective 1.2**

Membership of the working groups shall be a cross section of interested parties as outlined in direction or make-up and deliverables as dictated by the SIEC.

**Goal 2**

Illinois will assist counties as they populate the CASM tool with applicable interoperable communications systems, inventory resource assets, and identify technology gaps to ensure statewide interoperable communications capabilities.

**Objective 2.1**

CASM data will be evaluated as necessary by the SIEC and the ITTF Communications Committee which will assess the communications needs of public safety agencies, gauge patterns, and make recommendations for resource allocations.

**Objective 2.2**

By December 2010, the CASM tool will be adopted as the official data collection tool for interoperable communications assets by the SIEC and the ITTF Communications Committee.

**Goal 3**

Illinois will judiciously administer funds allocated for interoperable communications by adopting interoperability standards, to include a process for procuring non-standards based equipment when appropriate.

**Objective 3.1**

Illinois will identify, select, and prioritize investment justifications related to the expenditure of state and federal funding.

**Objective 3.2**

Illinois will maximize interoperability by enforcing adherence to interoperability standards when distributing funding to the state's public safety agencies.

**Objective 3.3**

Illinois, through the SIEC and the ITTF Communications Committee, will continue to prioritize the expenditure of state and federal funds to support interoperable communications throughout the state.

**Goal 4**

Illinois will work with the Chicago/Cook County UASI to ensure smooth integration of the statewide and UASI TICP to increase public safety agency collaboration and expand communications interoperability.

**Objective 4.1**

Illinois will meet the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) goals by establishing a completion schedule to ensure compliance with agencies receiving Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program (IECGP) funds.

**Objective 4.2**

The Office of the SWIC will work with the UASI to achieve NECP compliance by providing a TICP template to ensure alignment of the UASI TICP activities with statewide plans.

## **Goal 5**

Illinois, through education and outreach workshops, will provide a TICP template to county government to ensure local tactical plans are aligned with the statewide TICP and the SCIP.

### ***Objective 5.1***

Develop a county/region fill-in-the-blank TICP from the statewide TICP to ensure a smooth transition as incidents/events escalate from the local to a state- or federally-declared disaster.

### ***Objective 5.2***

Develop a standard for frequency of updates and methods for sharing any TICP changes, thereby ensuring compliance with the NECP goals for counties/regions.

## **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

### **Goal 6**

Illinois, through the SIEC, has established several methods for creating interoperability. The STARCOM 21 Oversight Committee will establish guidelines for granting permission for bridges, gateways, or patches to access the STARCOM 21 interoperability platform.

### ***Objective 6.1***

The STARCOM 21 Oversight Committee will develop standardized format/operational methods for applying for a bridge, gateway, or patch on STARCOM 21.

### **Goal 7**

Illinois, through the SIEC, will develop standard operating procedures for interoperable communications which will be incorporated into all state, regional and county tactical plans.

### ***Objective 7.1***

The standard operating procedures adopted by the SIEC shall be reviewed annually and revised, as necessary, to reflect operational or federally mandated changes.

### ***Objective 7.2***

The SIEC, through its working groups, membership associations, and other outreach methods, shall assist local units of government in developing SOPs consistent with statewide goals and initiatives.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Goal 8**

Illinois will research standards-based equipment to ensure public safety practitioners are aware of compliant equipment for procurement using federal and state funds.

**Objective 8.1**

The SIEC, in collaboration with the STARCOM 21 Oversight Committee, shall develop a list of pre-approved Project 25 standard compliant subscriber units which may be registered on STARCOM 21.

**Objective 8.2**

The SIEC, in collaboration with the STARCOM 21 Oversight Committee, will maintain membership on the Project 25 Standards Committee to remain abreast of the contemporary issues facing interoperability standards.

**Goal 9**

Illinois will develop, sustain, and enhance its Strategic Technology Reserves (STRs) to provide interoperable communications for both governmental and non-governmental entities.

**Objective 9.1**

Consistent with Objective 8.1, Illinois will maintain a list of equipment approved for purchase which meets the STR needs of the state.

**Objective 9.2**

Consistent with Objective 8.2, Illinois will remain abreast of Project 25 standards and any changes which need to be considered during the procurement of equipment to maximize the technology life cycle.

**Goal 10**

Illinois will support the development, expansion, and use of Project 25 systems which operate in or interoperate with 700/800 MHz bands via voice, data, and/or video signal.

**Objective 10.1**

Illinois will develop, sustain, and enhance Project 25 systems, technologies, resources, and standards which achieve meaningful and measurable improvements in the state of interoperability for public safety communications.

**Objective 10.2**

Illinois will seek to expand its use of the Illinois Interoperable Platform (a Project 25 network) in using an all hazards approach to support, expand, and maintain interoperable communications capabilities in areas at high risk for natural disasters and urban/metropolitan areas at high risk for terrorist activities.

## TRAINING AND EXERCISES

### Goal 11

Illinois will comply with national standards in the training of a cadre of communications personnel in the appropriate skills, knowledge, and abilities to maximize interoperable communications at all levels of government.

#### **Objective 11.1**

Illinois will refine the specifics of all positions in the national standards as to how they will apply in Illinois.

#### **Objective 11.2**

Illinois will develop a standardized process of certification or recognition of each title as well as testing procedures for those titles.

#### **Objective 11.3**

Illinois will identify, train, and ensure continued proficiency of the Communications Unit Leader (COML), Communications Coordinators (COMC), Communication Technicians (COMT), etc.; personnel and positions as the evolution of these titles are identified.

#### **Objective 11.4**

The SIEC, in collaboration with the ITTF Communications Committee, will work to ensure the Communications Unit Leader (COML), Communications Coordinators (COMC), Communication Technicians (COMT), etc., are firmly embedded in the ICS process.

### Goal 12

Illinois will work with the Chicago/Cook County UASI to demonstrate compliance with NECP Goal 1.

#### **Objective 12.1**

The Chicago/Cook County UASI will demonstrate interoperability between multiple agencies and disciplines within a one-hour timeframe as outlined in NECP Goal 1.

## USAGE

### Goal 13

Illinois will provide field liaison/administrative support related to interoperability issues to both governmental and non-governmental entities.

#### **Objective 13.1**

Illinois will provide assistance and guidance through the IEMA regional representatives as necessary.

### Goal 14

Illinois shall take a position of exceeding the NECP goals in all areas where practical.

### **Objective 14.1**

Illinois will develop methodologies for improving interoperability between the state and county TICPs to achieve the use of cross discipline and cross band interoperability on a daily basis.

## **5.4 Strategic Initiatives**

Illinois will realize its vision to bring the opportunity to participate in interoperable communications capabilities to every governmental and non-governmental public safety agency in the state. This will be achieved by focusing efforts on incremental strategic initiatives in coming years. These initiatives, listed in priority order, complement the goals and objectives outlined in Section 5.3 of this plan and follow the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum lanes adopted by Illinois' SIEC.

### **STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 1**

Illinois will fund, using federal, state, and local sources, the expansion of STARCOM 21, Illinois' statewide interoperable platform. STARCOM 21 is a Project 25 network which operates in 700/800 MHz bands and meets or exceeds NECP goals for interoperability. Priority will be given to those grant funding applications, selections, and awards which provide additional STARCOM 21 radios or comply with the Project 25 suite of standards, including two-way interoperability and system to system on or with STARCOM21. Highest priority will be given to applications which acquire equipment capable of interoperability with the statewide interoperability platform.

(SUPPORTS INTEROPERABILITY CONTINUUM: STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES, TECHNOLOGY, USAGE)

### **STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 2**

Illinois will develop a TICP template which provides for smooth transition to the state TICP for local units of government. To support the development of county/regional TICPs, Illinois, upon request, will provide training and outreach to public safety agencies to help leverage Illinois' compliance with NECP goals and objectives.

(SUPPORTS INTEROPERABILITY CONTINUUM: GOVERNANCE, TRAINING & EXERCISES)

### **STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 3**

Illinois will assist local, regional, and state governmental/non-governmental public safety agencies sustain or improve interoperability capabilities through FCC narrow banding transition by:

- Taking a leadership role in developing a transition protocol for the statewide implementation to avoid confusion among public safety disciplines, agencies, and jurisdictions
- Purchasing/renewing licenses
- Brokering partnerships between user communities and invested stakeholders
- Expand participatory training/exercise opportunities
- Develop and/or modify standard operating procedures
- Assist data input into the CASM tool

(SUPPORTS INTEROPERABILITY CONTINUUM: GOVERNANCE, STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES, TRAINING & EXERCISES)

#### **STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 4**

Illinois will develop, sustain, and enhance Strategic Technology Reserves capable of providing and/or re-establishing communications during a planned event or when critical infrastructure is damaged/destroyed pursuant to a major disaster or terrorist attack. The SIEC and the ITTF Communications Committee will make recommendations for the placement of STRs throughout the state. The STRs may include equipment such as Project 25 land mobile radio systems, cellular and satellite-enabled equipment, backup batteries, generators, fuel, computers, and appropriate resources for senior government officers, key emergency response officials, and state/local personnel. Memorandums of understanding will be established for the rapid delivery of current technologies. During emergency situations, training for personnel responsible for using the technologies and equipment will be provided on an as-needed basis for temporarily issued items.

(SUPPORTS INTEROPERABILITY CONTINUUM: GOVERNANCE, STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES, TECHNOLOGY, TRAINING & EXERCISES, USAGE)

#### **STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 5**

Illinois will promote the use of EMnet terminals in all public safety agencies and dispatch centers to enhance interoperable communications and provide a command and control tool for the first responder community. EMnet will be used in a variety of circumstances that will afford public safety institutions the ability to receive and send information to all users on the system. The SIEC and the ITTF Communications Committee will develop SOPs for EMnet's use as the primary mechanism to disseminate emergency communications information across disciplines and jurisdictions through the State of Illinois.

(SUPPORTS INTEROPERABILITY CONTINUUM: STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES, TECHNOLOGY, USAGE)

#### **STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 6**

Illinois will conduct annual, full-scale statewide exercises to validate the SCIP, and the statewide TICP. Representation will include a local, state, federal, and multi-discipline presence. The essence of the exercise will validate first responder capabilities (including knowledge of standard operating procedures, familiarity with equipment, and usage techniques). Using the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum, Illinois will self assess its progress to show improved interoperability. After action reviews will be used to show compliance with NECP goals and assess strengths and weaknesses. Improvement plans will be established to address any identified weaknesses.

(SUPPORTS INTEROPERABILITY CONTINUUM: GOVERNANCE, STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES, TECHNOLOGY, TRAINING & EXERCISES, USAGE)

#### **STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 7**

Illinois will develop a series of interoperable communications programs, (i.e., COML, COMT, COMC, etc.), to enhance and sustain professional radio standards within the interoperable communications field. These programs will be promoted throughout Illinois' first responder community and will be embedded in the ICS process through the SIEC and ITTF Communications Committee membership/representation. These programs will recognize individuals who successfully complete the required training curriculum at both the entry and advanced levels.

(SUPPORTS INTEROPERABILITY CONTINUUM: STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES, TECHNOLOGY, TRAINING & EXERCISES)

### **STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 8**

Illinois will actively promote the use of all state interoperability assets for daily operations not just for command and control. These assets include, but are not limited to, EMnet terminals, STARCOM 21 platform, interoperable frequencies/talk groups/channels, ITECs suites, unified command posts, and NIMS policies and forms.

(SUPPORTS INTEROPERABILITY CONTINUUM: GOVERNANCE, STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES, TECHNOLOGY, TRAINING & EXERCISES, USAGE)

### **STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 9**

Illinois will work with contiguous states to incorporate Project 25 standards for interoperability and to promote interstate collaboration during mutual aid responses. Other considerations include standardized equipment, integration of common interoperable frequencies and talk groups in communications equipment, mutual aid agreement templates, and standard response protocols.

(SUPPORTS INTEROPERABILITY CONTINUUM: GOVERNANCE, STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES, TECHNOLOGY, TRAINING & EXERCISES, USAGE)

### **STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 10**

Illinois will work with the Chicago/Cook County UASI to achieve the seamless integration of preparedness, response, and communications standards between the entities. The primary focus will be the development and implementation of coordinated exercises, use of the statewide interoperable platform increasing interoperability and standard operating procedures.

(SUPPORTS INTEROPERABILITY CONTINUUM: GOVERNANCE, STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES, TECHNOLOGY, TRAINING & EXERCISES, USAGE)

## **5.5 National Incident Management System (NIMS) Compliance**

Mindful of Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 and Illinois Gubernatorial Executive Order Number 12, Illinois programmatically adopted the National Incident Management System, or NIMS, as the standard for emergency planning, unified command and response to emergencies and disasters by all state agencies.

By virtue of the gubernatorial mandate for NIMS usage within the State of Illinois, NIMS is an inherent part of the disaster response planning process. Its tenets are ingrained in response protocols, mutual aid pacts, and training exercises used by Illinois public safety agencies. Conversely, Illinois' interoperability communications plan embraces those same tenets and ascribes to NIMS' criterion for the use of the Incident Command Structure (ICS), forms, and communications standards.

#### **5.6 Review and Update Process**

Responsibility for updating Illinois' SCIP rests with the Illinois Emergency Management Agency through the Office of the SWIC. After-action debriefings will include an assessment of the SCIP's applicability to the event, and suggestions for inclusions or changes to the plan will become a standard feature of all after-action reports. The SIEC will exercise sole authority for approving all modifications to the plan.