State of Indiana

Incident Command System (ICS) Communications Unit Program

Strategic Plan

Prepared by:

Name

Agency and/or Division *MM/DD/YYYY*

**Version #**

# Introduction

This strategic plan focuses on aligning the business needs of the State of Indiana with its ICS Communications Unit resources.

## Approach

This plan is the product of a strategic planning technical assistance project with Intergrated Public Safety Commission (IPSC) stakeholders facilitated by the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP) contractor support team. The contractor support team employed a planning methodology called Enterprise Strategic Planning. This metholod was used to guide participants through a series of problem-solving activities focused on developing an ICS Communications Unit program strategic plan.

Members of the contractor support team met with representatives from the state of Indiana on May 7, 2012 to complete this exercise.

An ICS Communications Unit program strategic plan is a document that clarifies where a business enterprise wants to go, and how it will get there. To do this most effectively, a strategic plan follows a certain structure that ensures coverage of the right topics in a way that builds a case for the envisioned future of the ICS Communications Unit program. The **“ICS Communications Unit Assessment and Development Matrix”** was used as the foundation to facilitate compilation of information for each section of the plan.[[1]](#footnote-2)

* **Strategic Context:** This section documents the factors—from the enterprise executive leadership, key external stakeholders, and environmental factors—that will inform and constrain what the enterprise expects to accomplish.
* **Strategic Intent:** This section identifies what the enterprise is to accomplish during the period covered by the plan. It includes:
  + *Mission –* a description of the enterprise’s business
  + *Vision* – a description of the end of the planning horizon
  + *Goals and Objectives* - specific, measurable, business-oriented accomplishments that collectively lead to the vision
  + *Guiding Principles* - statements of value that help the enterprise make decisions in fulfillment of the plan
* **Capability Gap Analysis:** This section identifies current and future capabilities necessary to fulfill the goals and objectives. The gap between current and future capabilities identifies what work the enterprise must do in order to achieve the vision.
* **Capability Improvement Plans:** This section describes, at a high level, the investments, projects, programs, and/or policies necessary to build or enable the future capabilities.

# Strategic Context

Strategic context establishes the foundation for a strategic plan by assessing and describing the Business Drivers and Environmental Trends relating to the ICS Commmunications Unit program based on established performance statements for seven primary elements.

* Governance
* Funding and Sustainability
* Training, Exercises, and Staffing
* Credentialing and Currency
* Standard Operating Procedures
* Usage
* Program Planning

Business drivers identify products, services, or capabilities demanded by customers, users, or stakeholders. Environmental Trends identify economic, demographic, legal, and other “external” factors that affect enterprise operations.

Performance statements relating to the elements, sub-elements, and components of ICS Communications Unit program development are based on the following scale:

* **Early Development -** Little or no activity in the element or sub-element
* **Moderate Development -** Some progress in the element or sub-element
* **Full Development -** Substantially complete progress in the element or sub-element
* **Advanced Development -** Efforts to sustain and assure continuous improvement of communications unit development into the future

Together, business drivers and environmental trends justify and form the basis for the vision, goals, and objectives identified in the plan. The details of this information including capability gap analysis was captured during the workshop using the **“ICS Communications Unit Assessment and Development Matrix”** and is included in this document as Appendix A.

# **Strategic Business Intent**

The Strategic Business Intent defines and outlines the organizational purpose of the ICS Communications Unit program as reflected in each section.

## Mission

The mission of the State of Indiana ICS Communications Unit program is to provide personnel trained in the roles and responsibilities of ICS Communications Unit positions for rapid deployment for incident-based communications.

## **Vision**

The vision of the State of Indiana ICS Communications Unit program is to facilitate effective and efficient emergency and disaster communications.

## **Guiding Principles**

In fulfilling the mission and vision, the State of Indiana will consider the following guiding principles when implementing solutions to provide:

1. Personnel able to function in an ICS Communications Unit thus keeping the IC free to concentrate on the incident and the safety of the personnel and citizens of the requesting agency and/or State.
2. Personnel capable of rapid deployment to the scene of an incident.
3. Incident planning assistance and accountability from an incident-based communications center.
4. Assistance in establishing an incident communications center (ICC) in support of the primary communications center (i.e. PSAP, Watch-Desk, etc.).
5. A high level of service to the Incident Commander (IC) or any agency requesting ICS Communications Unit personnel and ensure the ICC is established and integrated with the primary communications center.
6. Accountability ensuring communications components of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) are maintained and incident documentation is properly completed and filed.

# Goals and Objectives[[2]](#footnote-3)

Goals are explicitly stated achievements or expectations stated in terms of the results to be achieved in the medium or long term. Goals should relate to the expectations and requirements of major stakeholders and should reflect the underlying reasons for running the business. Objectives are specific interim or ultimate time-based steps to be achieved in pursuit of specific goals. Objectives should be quantifiable, consistent, realistic, and achievable. During the workshop the following sub-elements were identified, prioritized, and targetd for development as the initial goals and objectives for this strategic plan. The details for the top three goals was captured during the workshop using the **“ICS Communications Unit Assessment and Development Matrix”** and is included in this document as Appendix A.

1. Policies, Practices, and Procedures (9)[[3]](#footnote-4)
2. Strategic Plan (8)
3. Program Communications Plan (6)
4. Sustainable Funding (4)
5. Decision-Making Structure (3)
6. Leadership (2)
7. Communication Technician (COMT) and Radio Operator (RADO) Training (2)
8. Agreements (1)
9. State Training Officer (STO) Integration (1)
10. Position Task Book (PTB) (0)

# **Conclusion**

This strategic plan aligns the goals, priorities, and expectation of the State of Indiana with the ICS Communications Unit program. The plan provides a forum to establish the direction and priorities of the organization, and lays out a clear path endorsed by the ICS Communications Unit program stakeholders.

The State of Indiana will use this strategic plan to improve ICS Communications Unit services and prepare for future ICS Communications Unit needs. This plan focuses on the business needs that help drive solutions, rather than solutions and technology driving the business. This plan was developed as a result of a workshop, in which the participants understood the business and communicated the business needs to ensure that the implementation of the ICS Communication Unit program and associated services support the State of Indiana.

Strategic planning benefits the the State of Indiana by identifying what the organization will accomplish in the near term, and establishes action items to complete these activities. Through the strategic planning process, stakeholders will have a clear purpose, plan, and justifications for their activities. The planning process fosters collaboration and provides a communications tool for use among stakeholders, funding entities, governance boards and even the public. This plan defines what and how the organization will move forward to help fulfill its mission.

Demands for ICS Communications Unit services will continue to grow as the State of Indiana develops operational and emergency request, deployment, and operational procedures and markets the value of utilizing the skills and abilities of the ICS Communications Unit personnel. It is the intent of this plan to help the State of Indiana manage that growth with an eye towards the future. Maintaining this plan will enable the State of Indiana to respond to new challenges as they arise while not overlooking the business drivers and environmental factors that impact establishing effective incident-based communications during emergencies and disasters.

# APPENDIX A: Results of the ICS COMMUNICATIONS UNIT ASSESSMENT captured May 7, 2012

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Elements | Sub-Elements | Early Development | Moderate Development | Full Development | Advanced Development | High Degree of Leadership, Planning, and Collaboration |
| Governance | Leadership |  |  | Training;  SWIC/SAA;  2 executive sponsors;  SIEC advisory to  IPSC statute |  |
| Decision-making Structure |  | White paper;  Awareness;  Buy-in;  Pieces and parts need to be bridged together |  |  |
| Agreements |  |  | District agreements to share resources but not widely known | State list exists, can put in IDHS database but not being done uniformly;  State mutual aid agreement that exists for intra/inter state mutual aid (framework to make agreements, responsibilities fall to locals);  Vanderburgh example |
| Strategic Planning |  | ICS COMU Planning Workshop 5/9/12;  Coordination of multiple ideas. | Plan in place for COMLs;  All-Hazard IMT Plan a couple of pages |  |
| SWIC Integration |  |  | SAA/IMT/SWIC share responsibility for COMU positions and not well defined;  IDHS has responsibility for COML certification/recognition;  IPSC has responsibility for training | Fully engaged in NCSWIC |
| STO Integration |  | STO under IDHS;  Support for COMU is minimal |  |  |
| Funding | Operational | Deployments reimbursed by various entities, local to federal;  All budgets very tight |  | Fighting for funds with every other program; No specific funding source | Statewide system training/basic communications for dispatchers just not specific for COMU;  Each district gets training funds each year for training/execise combined |
| Sustainability | X |  |  | Possible HSEEP funding |
| Training, Exercises, & Staffing | Initial Training |  | Sending 2 staff to TtT in July | Aware of training opportunities | Pre-requistes are clearly defined under IMT for COML;  Intend to follow for any other positions as developed |
| Recurrent Training |  | COML recertification process exists in IMT but has not had to be used;  On line classes, exercises, so many hours of training, etc;  Intend to duplicate; Procedure is online |  |  |
| Exercises | District 2 no comm; Involved in exercises  No statewide mechanism to share AARs state and districts;  District 6 rogue leaders not follow exercise plans;  Distric 7 same as 6;  See better because of Henryville;  State agencies working to participate |  | Not a part of every exercise to some degree;  This year exercises are accommodating a good COML experience (real world events) communications rodeo, tornado alley – task force exercise, Henryville;  District exercises (district 10 includes COML in staff meetings to understand realistic expectations);  Burned on exercises and deployments and see value;  Put out Comm Plan before they left | HSEEP compliant;  State AARs;  Have people now that understand communications evaluating communications;  Exercises posted on NEXUS (HSEEP) but do not know who looks at it;  IPSC training calendar |
| COML |  | 64 people through COML training (9 qualfied, 3 in pipe line);  IDHS goal task to have a COML in every district then every county or every other county |  |  |
| COMT |  | 10 people through COMT training (none qualified);  No qualification process;  Would like to use same process as COML but haven’t discussed with IDHS;  IDHS may need to clean up COML process first (very convoluted);  Class scheduled July/Aug |  |  |
| INCM | X |  |  |  |
| RADO | X |  |  |  |
| Instructor |  | 2 existing COML instructors; 2 in the pipe scheduled for July; | Intend to have in state cadre of 1 in each district (IDHS) |  |
| Other Positions (TERT/IDT) | District 2 – recognized need but haven’t made progress | District 7 – 14 dispatchers cross trained in other dispatch centers;  Trying to including as line item in district budget to continue training and keeping skills current;  basic 16 hours, 4 hours for currency;  3 for each county in district 7 (24 counties) |  |  |
| Credentialing &  Currency | PTB |  | Defined in IMT |  |  |
| Currency |  | Defined in IMT but has not had to used yet |  |  |
| SOPs | Policies, Procedure & Practice | How to track and account for requests/deployments | COML training, qualitifcaiton, currency |  |  |
| Usage | Requests | Based on relationships and informal requests;  IMAP deployed COML at state level for Henryville but no coordination between the two;  Hit or miss |  |  |  |
| Deployment | All lot of sef deployments | WEBEOC (technology choke point trying to get new users on is a challenge in district 10) |  |  |
| Integration | Unless personnel can work their way into command structure they don’t know you are there | District 10 learning from AARs and getting COMLs invited to planning meetings;  ICS instructors introducing concepts into 300 classes;  Take advantage of COMU overview training OEC is developing |  |  |
| User Defined | User Defined |  |  |  |  |
| Communications Unit Program  Planning | Program Plan | X |  |  |  |
| Communications Plan | Forum for identifying and communicating program information |  |  |  |
| Risk Mgt Plan | X |  |  |  |
| Challenges | Bureacuracy of the qualification process  Completing task books (what is metric for success)  Differentiating and recognizing difference between day to day and disaster communications as 2 different skill sets  Defining selection process to manage potential COMU training application approval  Defining what to do between incident start and ICC being set up, who has what authorities  Home rule state  Dual authorities between IDHS and IPSC  Making people understand the difference between the pipeline (technology) and work flow (business processes)  People understanding technology expectations/limitations  Educating and developing policies to define distribution and use of communications equipment  Providing adequate response | | | | |
| Failures | Lack of reality of failures  Failed to get a process that helps those that want to get their COML certification  Failued to adequately fund the development of ICS communications unit personnel skills and processes  Failed to engage front line dispatchers  Lack of SOPs (templates and recommend content) – naming conventions, emergency field communications protocols, mobilization, demobilization, cache radio templates, transition from dispatch center to ICC, site trunking, initial interagency 205 form (this is where we start before COML gets on scene that wil work across multiple incidents, equipment distribution and use, and authority to distribute) | | | | |
| Successes | Getting legs under us as far as SIEC is concerned – stood up and has committee assignments  Recognizing ICS Communications exists and what the needs are, why it is important  Sending 2 additional people to become trainers which will translate into more COML trainings  Recent district tornado alley exercise where communications was evaluated will help highlight issues of communications  COML as it currently stands has made a difference in state, district, and local knowledge and relationships. There is increased understanding of what is needed to make it better at all levels and has elimated finger pointing.  Better awareness of communications and disasters  Learning that not anyone can sit behind console and account for everything  Better dispatcher awareness that there is a difference between day to day and disaster response  More aware that technology is not always there  IDHS disaster communications meetings of state agency reps every 2 weeks  Henryville demonstrated we can overcome communications obstacles  Trained and qualified COMLS  Trained COMTs  AUXCOMM TA  District TICP and SCIP  Recognizie importance of COMU planning by conducting COMUPLAN workshop TA  Goal 2 - 83 reported out of 92 counties  Used grant money to build out CASM database  Regional interoperability working group with IN, KY (Louiseville) | | | | |
| Lessons Learned | Take the time to plan  Improve outreach and education  We need marketing  IN legislature developed funding stream for IPSC rather than a haphazard grant process for building statewide radio system  Proven that we can adapt and overcome (Henryville) | | | | |
| GAPS | User training and understanding (does well with day to day but when there is an exception there is a problem)  Need to emphasize usage  Don’t understand technology capabilities and benefits  Bridge between IDHS and IPSC does not exist  Lack of a strategic plan  How do we make Incident Command understand the importance of the early initiation and utilization of the communications unit  Educating user community  User involvement and solicitation of feedback  Utilization of capabilities and resources for planning and feedback  Constructive involvement of STO  Operational and sustainable funding  Those that receive training and those that complete taskbooks  Awareness of PTB sign off opportunities and process  Quantity of PTB sign off opportunities  Limitied time for SWIC and other personnel to accomplish tasks  Presence and involvement difference between state communication activity at state exercises and district exercises  Authority for determining how and who should be COMU staff what is the forum and the selection process  COML trained personnel beyond the district level to include other state departments (DOH, etc)  How are state agencies worked into district response plans  Lack of a database of qualified COMU personnel accessible by those that need it  Lack of SOPs  Lack of buy-in and enforcement  Lack of usage of COMU staff  Lack of a COMU Plans specifically a program communications plan and program risk management plan  Engaging executive leadership (elevate to the level it needs to be) | | | | |
| Capabilities | Staff experience and education  NPSPAC  CASM  MIRS (2)  EMAC  COML SOP  SWIC - even though other duties assigned  Willing and cooperative SIEC group  Statewide radio system  Backup communications resources (state and local assets, sat phones, etc)  Exisitng governance structure (SIEC)  District TCIPs  Up to date SCIP  Ability to put resources on-line  HSIN  NIIX  Social Media  RECCWG – listing of surrounding state resources and contact information  Regional interoperability working group with IN, KY (Louiseville)  Central United States Earthquake Consortium  Fire and law enforcement training (radio communications module)  40 hr state dispatcher training course  54 hr course for PST1 through APCO course | | | | |  |
| GOALS | | | | | |  |
| Goal 1:  Policies, Practices, and Procedures | **Goal:** Establish written policies, practices, and procedures guiding interagency emergency and disaster communications.  **Associated Element/Sub-Element:** SOPS - Policies, Practices, and Procedures  **Current/Future Level of Development:** Early - Advanced  **Objectives:**   * + Develop written statewide comprehensive operational and performance SOPs for interagency communications   + Develop SOPs in accordance with any existing federal guidelines   + Build buy-in at the local, district, and state levels   + Implement SOPs in a timely manner   **Actions:**   * + SIEC Chairman task the usage committee with identifying and writing SOPs   + Develop process for validation of recommended SOPs   + Communicate and seek feedback from District Communications Working Group through the Program Communications Plan   + Submit SOPs to SIEC and IPSC for review and approval | | | | |  |
| Goal 2:  Strategic Plan | **Goal:** Establish an ICS Communications Unit program strategic plan for the State of Indiana.  **Associated Element/Sub-Element:** Governance - Strategic Plan  **Current/Future Level of Development:** Early - Advanced  **Objectives:**   * + Create a comprehensive ICS Communications Unit program strategic plan addressing the elements and sub-elements in the ICS Communications Unit Program Assessment and Development Matrix   + Build buy-in at the local, district, and state levels   + Implement strategic plan in a timely manner   **Actions:**   * + SIEC Chairman task the planning committee with drafting the strategic plan   + Communicate and seek feedback from District Communications Working Group through the program Communications Plan   + Submit strategic plan to SIEC and IPSC for review and approval | | | | |  |
| Goal 3: | **Goal:** Establish an ICS Communications Unit program communications plan.  **Associated Element/Sub-Element:** Planning - Communications Plan  **Current/Future Level of Development:** Early - Advanced  **Objectives:**   * Develop a comprehensive statewide ICS Communications Unit program communications plan with input from the decision-making structure * Effectively keep users and stakeholders informed, involved, and up-to-date throughout the evolution of the Communications Unit program   **Actions:**   * + SIEC Chairman task the outreach committee with drafting the program communications plan   + Identify who you need to communicate with, what they need communicated to them, in what detail, and how often. (who, what, how, contact frequency)   + Working with IPSC define responsibilities for executing the communications plan   + Report activities to IPSC | | | | |  |

# APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY OF COMMON TERMS

AAR – After Action Report

APCO – Association of Public Safety Communications Officials

AUXCOMM – Auxiliary Communications Workshop

CAD – Computer Aided Dispatch

CASM – Communications Asset & Mapping Tool

COMC – Communications Coordinator

COML – Communications Unit Leader

COMT – Communications Technician

EMA – Emergency Management Agency

EMAC – Emergency Management Assistance Compact

ESF2 – Emergency Support Function (Communications)

HSIN – Homeland Security Information Network

IC – Incident Commander

ICS – Incident Command System

ICTAP - Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program

IECGP – Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program

INCM – Incident Communications Center Manager

NCSWIC – National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators

NIIX – National Interoperability Information eXchange

NIMS – National Incident Management System

NPSPAC – National Public Safety Planning Advisory Committee

OEC – Office of Emergency Communications

PSIC – Public Safety Interoperable Communications

PTB – Position Task Book

RADO – Radio Operator

RECCWG – Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group

SAA – State Administrative Agency

SIEC – Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (Council)

SIGB – Statewide Interoperability Governing Board

STO – State Training Office (Officer)

SWIC – Statewide Interoperability Coordinator

TA - Technical Assistance

TICP – Tactical Interoperability Communications Plan

TtT – Train the Trainer

UASI – Urban Areas Security Initiative

1. The “ICS Communications Unit Assessment and Development Matrix” tool includes a primer that identifies performance statements for meeting each element and sub-element. The complete matrix was provided to all workshop participants on a CD for future reference and strategic plan maintenance. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Each of these goals and objectives needs to be elaborated upon so an external reader can more readily understand them. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. The numerical value included in the parathesis indicates the number of votes the element received as part of the prioritization activity that resulted in this initial priority order. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)