QUESTIONS RECEIVED REGARDING RFA ROUND 2
STATEWIDE INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS GRANT

This document consists of questions timely received regarding this RFA. Questions have not been altered, except to provide clarity and anonymity to counties.

Question 1.   *County Q will request funding for AVL – Mobile Data, AES Encryption, and the addition of 2 trunking channels that were removed from our original contract of our radio system upgrade, radio consoles, and site monitoring. Are the suggested categories permissible?*

Answer 1.   Yes, these are permissible costs under the Round 2 Statewide Interoperable Communications Grant (SICG). Mobile data is permissible only if it is LMR based and not a recurring commercial service cost. Please refer to Part III – Grant Components, and Part IV – Authorized Program Expenditures, of the Round 2 SICG RFA. **Note:** RFA will be revised to clarify recurring commercial costs.

Question 2.   *What do you consider PSAP call taking equipment?*

Answer 2.   **PSAP Call taking equipment is <u>not</u> an eligible expense under Round 2 SICG. PSAPs will be addressed in future grants.** Examples of PSAP call taking equipment include telephones, PSAP computers, furniture, interfaces (hardware and software) for computer-aided dispatch (CAD) systems, call transfer equipment, 911 telecommunication systems, automatic call distributors. For more information, please refer to Part III – Grant Components, and Part IV – Authorized Program Expenditures, of the Round 2 SICG RFA.

Question 3.   *If a county is on analog conventional and wants to buy a base station that is P25 capable, does that satisfy grant terminology that states any equipment a county buys is P25 compatible?*

Answer 3.   The Round 2 SICG allows for the purchase of either analog or P25 (compliant or upgrade capable) equipment. While DHSES encourages counties to purchase P25 compliant equipment, the use of analog equipment may be appropriate, especially when purchased as part of an existing analog system. When purchasing P25 equipment, counties are reminded to verify the equipment has met the P25 Compliance Assessment Program (P25 CAP) or the vendor can demonstrate compliance. Encryption on P25 systems must be P25 standard based (e.g. AES). In accordance with the New York State SCIP, digital radios and systems must be P25 compliant. For more information on P25 please refer to *Technical Resources for Round 2 SICG* Document, located on our website at: http://www.dhses.ny.gov/oiec/grants/.

Question 4.   *As a County Government, we are required to seek out both "Indirect Costs" and "Fringe Benefit Costs" (on either salary or O.T expenses related to Training/Exercises) when applying for Federal and State funding assistance. In reviewing both the Permissible Costs and Non-Permissible Costs descriptions on page 8 of the RFA, it does not list either one of these items in either category.   On page 6 of the RFA it states, "Applications must include only those costs deemed permissible under the grant." Considering the amount of time and effort that will go into preparing an application, a concern is that the application could be rejected if a non-permissible cost is included in the budget proposal.*

Answer 4.   Salary, overtime and backfill expenses are not a permissible cost under the Round 2 Statewide Interoperable Communications Grant (SICG). However, employee incidental expenses associated with training and exercise, which are specific to project deployment of the proposed project and occur within the grant period, are considered eligible expenses. Please refer to Part III – Grant Components, and Part IV – Authorized Program Expenditures, of the Round 2 SICG RFA. This is a state grant. Questions regarding federal grant funding should be directed to your federal grant program representative.

Question 5. **_Regarding a budget submission; since the application has to contain both components of the RFA (Component "a" and Component "b") will the applicant be required to submit separate budget documents for each component?_**

Answer 5. Applicants should submit a single budget information form for both Components (a) and (b); classifying costs in accordance with their application / proposed project. Component (a) must be 80-97% of total requested funds and component (b) must be 3-20% of total requested funds. Please refer to Part III – Grant Components of Round 2 SICG RFA. **NOTE:** The RFA and Attachment 3 of the RFA will be modified to include Component identification, (a) or (b), on the _Budget Information Form._

Question 6. **_Question on pg. 12, on the cover page, section 1 - Reference to: Note: "all official correspondence will be mailed to the attention of this person" -- Does this include the person who will be executing the contract? I could sign this if it's just correspondence, but our County Executive must sign contracts for execution.   Please clarify if it's just correspondence to be mailed or does it include all signatory power?_**

Answer 6. The person signing the Application does not have to be the same person who is signatory for any potential award contract. We ask that the person signing the Round 2 SICG application be a contact person for any exchange of information between the Office of Interoperable and Emergency Communications and your county. Please follow your county's operational procedures when signing the application page.

Question 7. **_Question on pg. 8, section #2 - Salaries, OT and travel are not permissible if associated with existing/ongoing operations - but would OT (backfill) and travel be eligible for training or exercises related to grant purchased equipment/SOPs?_**

Answer 7. Please see the answer to Question 4.

Question 8. ***Question on pg. 8 section #2 - Is eligible equipment and services related to LMR only? We are looking at developing a fusion analysis center that will have various network inputs and we are looking for funding to perform a needs analysis and purchase equipment related to receiving data. This data would be analyzed into useful information/products/reports that would be relayed to the field (through various media - radio, MDT, web based CISM) to avoid sifting through useless information and perhaps preventing an event. Thus, this equipment would be "network components related to public safety communications" and "services relating to developing, designing and implementing I/O plans and network system development," but not direct radio (although the info could be relayed via radio)?***

Answer 8. A fusion analysis center is not a permissible cost. Projects must relate to Land Mobile Radio (LMR) systems or direct components of LMR system, such as backbone, microwave, gateways, infrastructure, towers, radios, etc. Please refer to Part III – Grant Components, and Part IV – Authorized Program Expenditures, of the Round 2 SICG RFA.

Question 9. ***Related to Component A which discusses improving regional interoperable communications (and is specific to LMR. But, pg. 3 - the program vision states, "upgrade, expand, consolidated or replace existing communications systems...." Is this ONLY for LMR?   Under pg. 8, there are eligible costs of "services relating to developing, designing and implement interoperability plans and network system development," which is not specific to LMR. We had a project in mind of performing an analysis on what it would take for our county to be able to back up surrounding counties 9-1-1 centers. It would include the CAD back-up (not solely LMR). Would this qualify?***

Answer 9. The described project is not eligible under Round 2 SICG. Projects related to 911 centers and PSAP consolidations and improvements will be addressed in future

grants. Please refer to Part III – Grant Components, and Part IV – Authorized Program Expenditures, of the Round 2 SICG RFA.

Question 10. *We are interested in applying for the Round 2 Statewide Interoperable Communication Grant. Does there have to be a radio component with this grant or can you apply for a multi-county regional management system (RMS). Our RMS will benefit multiple counties, local governments and state agencies to interoperate and communicate in a real time fashion to respond to emergency situations. Is a multi-jurisdictional regional management system a permissible project? The regional management system is an interoperability communication system through the computer data base that would act as a unified records management and information sharing system. Does the radio system have to be included as a necessary component of the grant?*

Answer 10. RMS would not be considered an eligible project. Projects must relate to Land Mobile Radio (LMR) systems or direct components of LMR system, such as backbone, microwave, gateways, infrastructure, towers, radios, etc. Please refer to Part III – Grant Components and Part IV – Authorized Program Expenditures of the Round 2 SICG RFA.

Question 11. *County X has a radio system which does not meet the needs of the Public Safety entities within County X. County X develops a plan to build a new system which will provide the Police, Fire, EMS and Municipal services with a radio system which ties everyone together on a county-owned system. Once this system is in place it will allow for a connection, on the same platform with a neighboring county and a large city in another county. County X has the support of the municipalities in the county. County X has a work plan from a vendor, who indicates a cost of over $6 million. Can County X, if approved for this funding, utilize the funds to implement specific sections of the overall project?*

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Answer 11.   Yes. The county can implement larger projects in phases and apply grant awards to implement phase(s) of the overall project, provided award funds are applied for permissible expense categories and within the grant period. While the overall large project may exceed Round 2 SICG maximum award, the County X's application cannot exceed $6 million and must contain components (a) and (b).

Question 12.   The County Z Department of Emergency Management, in support of a Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO), would like to inquire as to the applicability of the Statewide Interoperable Communications Grant Program to advance our mission of creating and maintaining an electronic medical records infrastructure?

Answer 12.   The described project is not eligible under this RFA. Projects must relate to Land Mobile Radio (LMR) systems or direct components of LMR system; such as backbone, microwave, gateways, infrastructure, towers, and radios. Please refer to Part III – Grant Components, and Part IV – Authorized Program Expenditures, of the Round 2 SICG RFA.

Question 13.   As part of our project we wish to upgrade the county emergency communications infrastructure to support voice, high speed data, video and large file transfer capability within the county and to outside partners and stakeholders. As part of this we propose to connect the 911 center and operations to the backup site/EOC and other county departments to include Health, Highway, Social Services, Sheriff and others to include improved connection to the New York State Police, neighboring 911 communications centers and EOC's as well as to improve communications and data sharing capability across other county agencies, schools, municipalities, tribal agencies and other non-government agencies such as a private utility company and the water authority to name a few. The current phone and data networks do no adequately support the addition of voice, video and data services across partners. We propose to expand our use of video conferencing to

communicate pre-crisis planning, meetings and communications as well as during response to crisis events. Sharing large files such as images, floor plans or videos before and during management of crisis events is a proposed outcome, improving emergency response communication and information sharing. To do this we need to overhaul our current phone and data networks to support the new required platform and capability across the county. Does this activity sound in line with the intent and purpose of the program?

Answer 13.   Broadband, commercial cellular services, telephone, and non-LMR IT networks are non-permissible expenses. Proposals must contain only permissible costs and relate to Land Mobile Radio (LMR) systems or direct components of LMR system, such as backbone, microwave, gateways, infrastructure, towers, radios, etc. Please refer to Part III – Grant Components and Part IV – Authorized Program Expenditures of the Round 2 SICG RFA.

***Question 14**.   Relating to Question 13, above: if this is in line with the program objectives is the request for infrastructure development (as above) limited to Component (b) 3%-20% of the LMR Equipment, Infrastructure and Technology or can the technology parts of this request be considered as elements under Component (a) 80%-97% of the total request?*

Answer 14.   For each application, 80-97% of the total funding in the application must be dedicated to Component (a) - Improve interoperable communications through developing, expanding or consolidating large-scale, regionally-focused LMR systems for public safety use among two or more counties supporting multi-jurisdictional and multi-discipline, including State agencies. The remaining 3% to 20% of overall cost of the project must be dedicated to Component (b) Improve governance structure, develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), strengthen training and exercise programs to promote efficient interregional communications, interoperability, cooperation and overall first

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responder readiness. Please refer to Part III of Round 2 SICG RFA for Component information.