

# PUBLIC SAFETY INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS GRANT PROGRAM

## NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT COMPLIANCE

### WHAT IS THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT?

As the first major U.S. environmental law, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 serves as the foundation for the United States' environmental policies. NEPA established a national policy for balancing the needs of present and future generations of Americans with the quality of the natural and physical environment. NEPA requires Federal agencies to incorporate environmental considerations into the planning and decision-making process while examining the potential environmental impacts of proposed actions and alternatives to lessen environmental effects.

*All actions that are implemented, funded, permitted or licensed by a Federal agency are subject to NEPA analysis as the decision to pursue and action is the trigger for NEPA*

### PSIC GRANT PROGRAM NEPA OVERVIEW

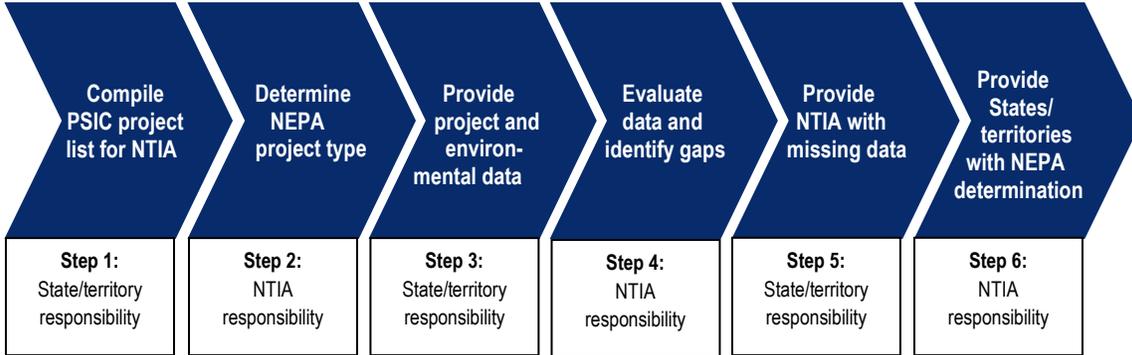
All programs that receive Federal funds must demonstrate compliance with NEPA to proceed with implementation. As the Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) Grant Program grant program uses Federal funding, grant recipients must comply with Federal environmental compliance requirements. The Department of Commerce National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) prepared a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) to evaluate potential impacts to the natural and human environment associated with PSIC-funded projects. The program funds a wide variety of projects designed to improve interoperable communications among public safety agencies. The PEA evaluated potential environmental impacts based on five major project types associated with improving interoperable communications, which are summarized below.

In addition to the PEA, NTIA issued a Final Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) in April 2009 identifying the types of projects that were likely to not have significant impact to the human or natural environment. Each State or territory project must now undergo a PSIC NEPA review to determine if the project is in compliance with the FONSI. NTIA will require additional environmental analyses, such as environmental assessments (EA), for any PSIC funded project that is not cleared for compliance under the FONSI.\*

PSIC Project Type	Description
<b>Transmission and Receiving Sites</b>	Transmission and Receiving Site projects include upgrades of existing or new construction and installation of communications towers, equipment shelters, generators and backup power systems, repeaters, gateways, voice over Internet Protocol, microwave backhauls, fiber optic cable, antennae, and access roads to sites. This may also include equipment and activities that are associated with channel assignments and shared and mutual aid channels. Coordinating antennae interference reviews is also part of this activity.
<b>Operations and Response Centers</b>	Operation and Response Center projects include construction, remodeling, or retrofitting of existing fixed-structure dispatch centers and first-responder facilities to take advantage of new communications infrastructure and increased responder capacity.
<b>Mobile / Portable Equipment</b>	Mobile / Portable Equipment projects include the acquisition, storage, and deployment of subscriber units and similar equipment, including mobile and handheld radios and satellite phones, radio caches, and battery packs.
<b>Mobile Infrastructure</b>	Mobile Infrastructure projects include acquisition, storage, and deployment of non-fixed infrastructure equipment and incident command equipment associated with transmitting and receiving communications including mobile command vehicles and trailers, cell-on-wheels, cell-on-light-truck, site-on-wheels equipment, portable towers and antennae, mobile gateways, mobile data terminals, and very small aperture terminals.
<b>Planning, Training, and Exercises</b>	Planning, Training, and Exercise projects include single- and multi-event activities, including both classroom- and field-based training and exercises, to prepare first responders and support personnel to use interoperable communications equipment in a coordinated and efficient manner.

\* The Final PEA and FONSI are available at [http://www.ntia.doc.gov/psic/NEPA\\_main.html](http://www.ntia.doc.gov/psic/NEPA_main.html)

## PSIC GRANT PROGRAM NEPA PROCESS



The PSIC NEPA Process includes a comprehensive review of each Investment and all associated projects. The PSIC NEPA team works with the State Administrative Agency (SAA), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Grant Programs Directorate (GPD) Program Analysts, and subgrantees to develop a comprehensive PSIC project list for each State and territory. The projects are reviewed by NTIA and assigned to the appropriate NEPA project type. The State or territory provides detailed project and environmental descriptions for each PSIC-funded project. These descriptions are analyzed to determine NEPA compliance needs. NTIA issues a NEPA compliance determination for each project once all project information has been reviewed.

### PSIC NEPA COMPLIANCE APPROVALS

The majority of the proposed PSIC-funded projects are covered under the PSIC FONSI and do not require further evaluation under NEPA. To date, more than 4,700 PSIC-funded projects have been identified from the 56 grantees. NTIA anticipates 99% of these projects are covered by the PSIC FONSI. As of September 30, 2010, more than 3,740 projects have received NEPA compliance approvals (81%) from NTIA with 24 States and territories receiving NEPA compliance for all of their PSIC projects. Most of the remaining grantees continue to provide project documentation for NEPA compliance processing.

### PSIC NEPA SUPPORT TEAM CONTACTS

All PSIC projects need to be evaluated for compliance with environmental, cultural, and historic preservation requirements for NEPA. Grantees are encouraged to work with PSIC NEPA support staff to ensure that NEPA compliance is attained.

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For additional PSIC NEPA information, please visit  
<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/psic/>

For PSIC Grant Program NEPA related questions, email [psic@dhs.gov](mailto:psic@dhs.gov)