



FEMA

Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant Program

Frequently Asked Questions

NARROWBANDING

Q1. Can Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) funds be used for narrowbanding expenses?

A1. Funds awarded under the PSIC Grant Program may be used for narrowbanding expenses; specifically funds may be used to purchase equipment that meets narrowbanding requirements, educate users about the requirements, conduct frequency coordination and analysis, and perform systems acceptance testing, among other activities. These expenditures must align with a State or territory's previously proposed and approved PSIC Investments and with the most recently approved Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP). In addition, a State or territory must show that it can accomplish this work between now and the end of the PSIC period of performance. PSIC funds cannot be used for the payment of Federal Communications Commission (FCC) licensing fees associated with narrowbanding requirements.

Q2. Is there PSIC funding available for local jurisdictions to meet narrowbanding requirements?

A2. No further PSIC awards are anticipated. The PSIC Grant Program is a one-time grant opportunity to enhance interoperable capabilities with respect to voice, data, and/or video signals and to encourage the use of innovative, cost-effective, and spectrum-efficient technology solutions. All awards were made on September 30, 2007.

Q3. Can a State or territory create a new Investment to cover meeting narrowbanding requirements?

A3. Under the PSIC Grant Program, a State or territory may not create a new Investment. The State or territory would have to fit the proposed narrowbanding- related expenditures within the context of one of the previously approved Investments. In addition, the proposed expenditures must align with a State or territory's approved SCIP. The State or territory could submit a scope modification request to revise the overall objective of an existing previously approved Investment to include the expanded scope; such modification would require approval by the program. Please contact the PSIC email account for more information or support related to submitting a scope modification request at PSIC@dhs.gov.



Q4. A State's subgrantees returned unexpended PSIC funds to the State Administrative Agency; can the State use the unexpended funds to meet narrowbanding requirements?

A4. Yes, the State can reprogram unexpended funds to meet narrowbanding requirements as long as the proposed expenditures align with a State or territory's approved SCIP. If such expenditures are not already accounted for in the State's existing Investments, the State could submit a budget and/or scope modification request to revise the overall objective of an existing previously approved Investment to include the expanded scope and revise the budget, as necessary. Such modification would require approval by the program. Please contact the PSIC email account for more information or support related to submitting a budget and/or scope modification request at PSIC@dhs.gov.

Q5. What is the deadline for meeting FCC narrowbanding requirements?

A5. According to FCC narrowbanding requirements, all licensees must complete narrowbanding to at least 12.5 kilohertz (kHz) by January 1, 2013. This means all public safety and industrial/business licensees in the 150-174 megahertz (MHz) (very high frequency (VHF)) and 421-512 MHz (ultra high frequency (UHF)) bands must migrate all existing Part 90 radio systems from 25 kHz (wideband) to at least 12.5 kHz (narrowband) channel bandwidth or a technology that achieves equivalent efficiency by that date. By the interim deadline of January 1, 2011, new and expanded VHF/UHF systems must comply with the 12.5 kHz standard; the FCC will not certify new equipment that includes a 25 kHz mode.

Q6. Is the payment of FCC licensing fees an allowable PSIC expense?

A6. The payment of FCC licensing fees (or any payment to a Federal agency) is not an allowable cost under the PSIC Grant Program.

Q7. Can a State or territory pay a third party vendor, consultant, or contractor to cover FCC licensing fees?

A7. Under the PSIC Grant Program, it is not an allowable cost to pay FCC licensing fees through a subgrantee, hired vendor, consultant, or contractor using PSIC grant funds. A third party operates under the same restrictions as the grantee.