



State and Local Implementation Grant Program (1.0) Closeout Report

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State and Local Implementation Grant Program

United States Department of Commerce

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Program Summary & Key Accomplishments

The Department of Commerce (DOC) created the State and Local Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP) under the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (Act).¹ SLIGP provides resources that help regional, state, local, and tribal government entities plan for the nationwide public safety broadband network (NPSBN) being developed by the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority).

In 2013, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) awarded \$116.5 million in grants to 54 U.S. States and territories. This funding provided recipients with the resources to work with stakeholders to identify needs, gaps, and priorities for public safety wireless broadband. It also helped recipients prepare for consultation with the FirstNet Authority.

Across the four-and-a-half year period of performance, SLIGP recipients engaged over 350,000 stakeholders, facilitated over 2,700 governance and planning meetings, and distributed over 6 million outreach resources. SLIGP recipients provided employment to over 189 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions. Additionally, recipients conducted data collection activities that informed the FirstNet Authority of state- and territory-specific needs regarding the design and build-out of the NPSBN.

Through the Act, Congress prudently recognized that States would have a vested interest in the development of the NPSBN and authorized funding for States and territories to fully and collaboratively participate in the process. These SLIGP funded planning efforts allowed governors to make decisions in the best interest for their States and citizens on who should deploy the Radio Access Network and contributed to the success of the NPSBN.

Recipients reported that the grant awards allowed them to dedicate resources to necessary NPSBN planning efforts. Many recipients will continue these efforts, due to a follow-on round of grant awards called SLIGP 2.0, which was made possible by a reallocation of unspent funds from the original grant awards.

¹ Public Law 112-96, §§ 6301-02, 126 Stat. 156, 218-21 (2012).

Program Overview

The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (Act) directed the Department of Commerce (DOC) National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to establish, in consultation with the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority), “a grant program to make grants to States to assist State, regional, tribal, and local jurisdictions to identify, plan, and implement the most efficient and effective way for such jurisdictions to utilize and integrate the infrastructure, equipment, and other architecture associated with the nationwide public safety broadband network (NPSBN) to satisfy the wireless communications and data services needs of that jurisdiction, including with regards to coverage, siting, and other needs.”²



In 2013, NTIA created the State and Local Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP) as a formula-based, matching grant program that provides State and territories with the resources necessary to identify public safety wireless broadband needs, gaps, and priorities. NTIA established seven program priorities including governance, consultation and education and outreach. The program tracked recipients’ progress in achieving those priorities throughout the period of performance. In keeping with NTIA’s intent to align SLIGP and FirstNet Authority activities, SLIGP worked step-by-step with the FirstNet Authority throughout its consultation, request for proposal (RFP) development and review, and award process. NTIA designated funding to support programmatic activities in two phases to align with FirstNet Authority activities. Figure 1 provides an overview of the SLIGP timeline.

Phase I

Phase I of SLIGP spanned the entirety of the grant period (July 2013-February 2018). During this phase, grant recipients focused on activities related to governance, education, and outreach to stakeholders (state, local, tribal, and regional governments and public safety agencies). They also participated in the FirstNet Authority consultation process and identified potential users of the public safety broadband network. Phase I was funded during the initial grant award.

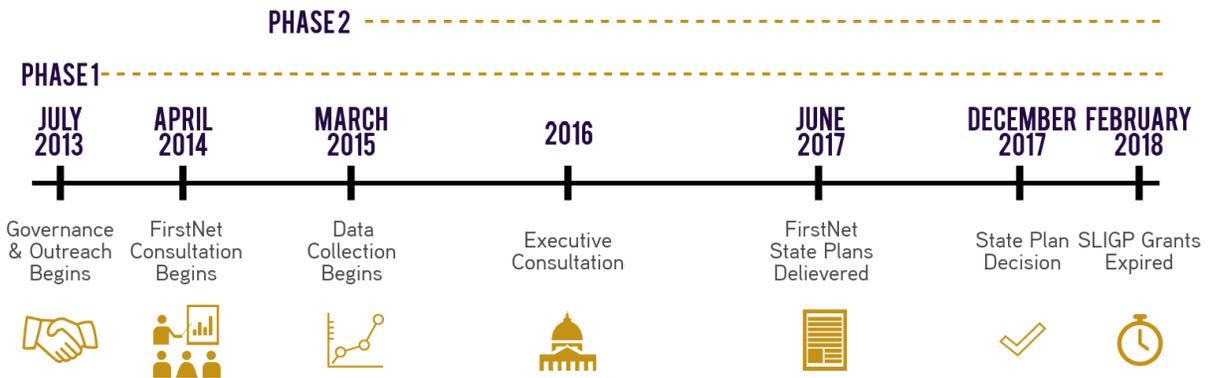
Phase II

At the time of the initial grant award, 50% of Federal funds were held under a Special Award Condition (SAC) for Phase II activities. This second funding phase reserved funds for data collection activities as well as the continuation of all Phase I activities. The FirstNet Authority

² Public Law 112-96, §§ 6301-02, 126 Stat. 156, 218-21 (2012).

used initial consultation activities with States as well as its early market research for the future comprehensive NPSBN acquisition to inform the eventual requested data collection activities.

Figure 1: SLIGP Timeline



Applications and Awards

On February 6, 2013, NTIA released the Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) notice for SLIGP, with an application deadline of March 19, 2013. Following an extensive review – including eligibility, peer/technical, and programmatic reviews, in accordance with the FFO – NTIA recommended applications for award from May 2013 through August 2013. Due to budget sequestration, total Federal funds awarded were \$3.35 million less than the initial stated funding levels (equivalent to an allocation reduction of approximately 2.34% for each recipient). Using a formula that accounted for population and landmass, NTIA awarded \$116.5 million to 54 U.S. States and territories, in amounts ranging from \$500,000 to just under \$6 million and required most recipients to contribute matching funds at a rate of 20%. Of the initial 56 eligible applicants, one territory did not apply and another State opted to not execute its award.

Post-Award Program Evolution

Initially, NTIA designed SLIGP to have a period of performance of three years. However, when the FirstNet Authority updated its timeline for award of the comprehensive NPSBN acquisition, NTIA chose to provide continuous planning support by extending SLIGP awards for an additional 18 months. Phase II began in March 2015 and concluded on February 28, 2018.

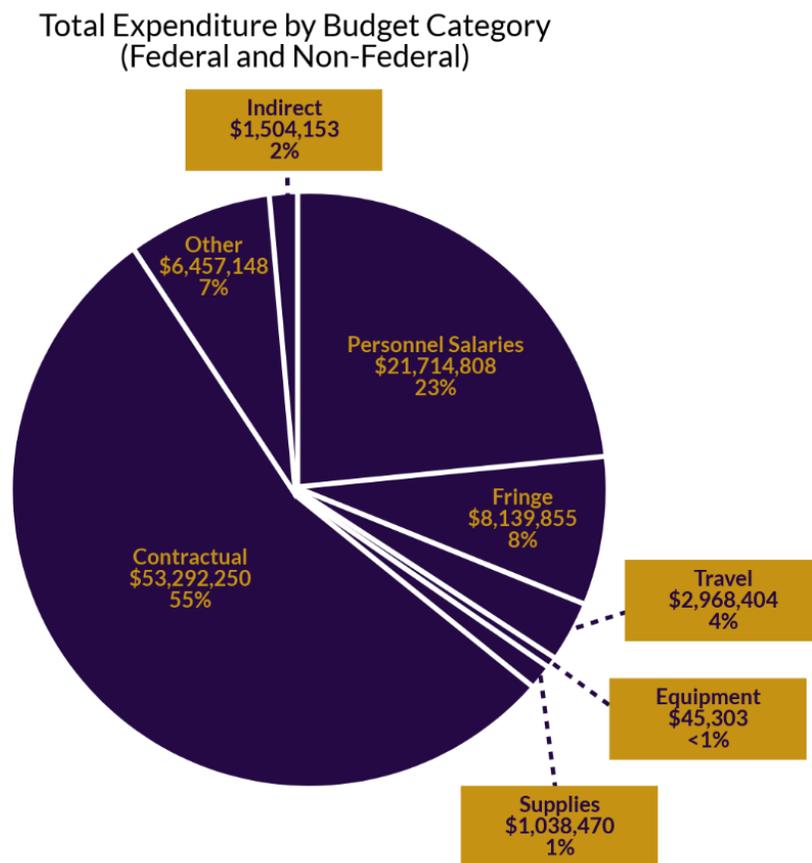
In June 2016, NTIA determined that SLIGP recipients were spending grant funds at rates lower than anticipated. Projecting that up to 40% of the total award amount would remain unspent at the end of the period of performance, NTIA worked to identify unexpended monies. Twenty-two recipients voluntarily deobligated a total of \$18.4 million from their SLIGP grants in 2017. The deobligated funds formed the basis for a follow-on round of grants - SLIGP 2.0 - to support

States and territories as the FirstNet Authority and its partner begin implementing the NPSBN.³ After the grant closeout period concluded on May 29, 2018, NTIA reviewed closeout reports and deobligated an additional \$23.4 million in unexpended funds. NTIA will reobligate all deobligated funds – totaling \$41.8 million – to SLIGP 2.0.

Program Financials

NTIA awarded \$116.5 million in Federal funds for SLIGP in 2013. As of the closeout period's conclusion, SLIGP recipients reported expenditures of \$74.7 million in Federal funds and \$21.4 million in matching funds (totaling \$96.1 million).⁴

Figure 2: Total Expenditure by Budget Category (Federal and Non-Federal)



SLIGP recipients expended their budgets across eight categories: personnel salaries, personnel fringe expenses, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, other, and indirect costs. All

³ We note that in 2017, NTIA supplemented one award to the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) in the amount of \$80,000, which will be offset from their SLIGP 2.0 award.

⁴ As of August 2018, all grants have been recommended for programmatic closure. As the NIST Grants Office completes the official closing of the grants and cost verifications, there may be adjustments to total amounts.

recipients were allowed to expend up to 10% over approved budget amounts in each category, except for indirect costs.

Recipients spent over half their budgets (55%) on contractual costs (see Figure 2). Personnel salaries (23%) and fringe expenses (8%) represented the next highest costs. The lowest levels of expenditure were on equipment and supplies, at 0.05% and 1%, respectively.

Program Metrics

As part of its programmatic monitoring efforts, NTIA required award recipients to submit quarterly program performance reports (PPRs). The PPRs included both quantitative data related to key metrics and narrative highlights of recipients' activities. Additionally, the PPRs included information on staffing, subcontracts, and funds expended cumulatively, across budget categories.

SLIGP recipients reported engaging 358,385 stakeholders, sending 2,477 individuals to broadband conferences, conducting 2,764 governance meetings, and distributing 6,184,628 education and outreach materials. In addition, all recipients participated in at least one Phase II data collection activity. Grant funds supported 360 individuals (full and part-time), representing a total of 189.3 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, and executed 221 contracts and 26 subrecipient agreements.



Program Activities

In support of NTIA program priorities, grant award recipients conducted activities under the following categories: stakeholder engagement, governance, education and outreach, and data collection. Recipients also used SLIGP funds to develop processes for reviewing the State Plans, which were individualized proposed build-out plans for the NPSBN provided by the FirstNet Authority. This review was part of each State and territory's opt-in/opt-out decision process. Below are some highlights for each activity area.

Stakeholder Engagement

SLIGP recipients engaged stakeholders through a variety of activities, including conference presentations, in-person and virtual meetings, and regional listening sessions.

California's outreach plan targeted local responders across the State with town hall meetings, road shows, and videos available on YouTube.



Washington used a multi-prong approach through stakeholder, technical, and operational workshops to engage a wide swath of the State’s First Responder community. Local and tribal responder agencies and governments were included in these interoperability discussions and workshops that were aimed at improving emergency communications.



Governance

NTIA required each grant recipient to create or expand an existing governance structure to better consult with the FirstNet Authority. Recipients provided updates on the NPSBN planning process, discussed State Plan review processes, and developed policies for public safety broadband in their jurisdictions at governing body meetings.

Minnesota leveraged its regional governance model to engage stakeholders across its seven regions, by expanding existing governance meetings to include FirstNet initiatives. These meetings occur every month at the state and regional levels.



Missouri used its State Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC), a multi-disciplinary group, to ensure broad participation from the State’s technical and first responder practitioner communities. The SIEC supported education and outreach efforts, in addition to preparing the State to make recommendations about local control and any responsibilities that might be pushed to the state or local level resulting from FirstNet build-out.



Education and Outreach

Education and outreach was a key component of SLIGP, and many recipients chose multi-pronged strategies to conduct related activities – distributing hard-copy materials at events, sending newsletters, developing websites, executing social media campaigns on Facebook and Twitter, and producing videos.

Tennessee developed a website that used a “global scorecard” to engage local, state, and federal stakeholders to complete education and training courses to prepare for the nationwide implementation of the FirstNet broadband network.



Texas created a strong online presence through its website txlte.com, an e-learning portal focused on public safety broadband; a Twitter account; and multiple YouTube informational videos. This online presence kept geographically dispersed stakeholders aware of the latest NPSBN developments. It also reinforced education and user engagement by serving as an information source after in-person meetings.



Data Collection

All award recipients participated in some form of data collection during Phase II of the grant period. The FirstNet Authority requested data in five areas:

- **Coverage:** Identify desired coverage within the State or territory and proposed build-out phases.
- **Users and Operational Areas:** Gather information on the eligible user base and their respective operational areas.
- **Capacity Planning:** Estimate current data usage today from typical users with indicators of potential growth.
- **Current Providers/Procurement:** Identify current service providers and plans, procurement vehicles, and barriers to adoption.
- **State Plan Decision Process:** Document the final State Plan review process prior to submission to the Governor and any potential barriers/issues the FirstNet Authority should be aware of.

Idaho conducted its data collection activities in two phases. The first phase included a robust data collection effort, conducted by Idaho FirstNet planners, with consulting assistance. The second phase involved a local consultant conducting an "Idaho Listening Tour", to gather input from first responders across the State, as well as to inform them of the impending launch of FirstNet services.



Using primarily electronic surveys, direct outreach, and regional workshops, Michigan collected extensive data on users and operational areas. The State submitted its analysis to the FirstNet Authority in September 2015, and followed up with a supplemental report in September 2016. Its data reflected input from an estimated 29% of first responders within the State and was representative of all public safety disciplines, as well as urban and rural departments.



Best Practices and Lessons Learned

As part of the SLIGP closeout process, NTIA requested that recipients compile lessons learned from the grant program. Three themes emerged: the value of outreach and stakeholder engagement, the significance of governance structures, and the importance of dedicating SLIGP-funded staff to NPSBN planning.

Recipients prioritized outreach and stakeholder engagement throughout the grant program. Many recipients reported that developing a strategy to engage entities in their jurisdiction was key to SLIGP's success. Additionally, they highlighted that engagement should not be one-time, but, rather, continuous and focused on building and maintaining relationships. Recipients found that a strategy of habitual engagement ensured that local and state stakeholders were engaged

in a timely fashion, particularly during the data collection and State Plan review periods. Many recipients also felt that their engagement efforts fostered trust between FirstNet and local entities, a key factor in ensuring early adoption in many jurisdictions.

Recipients found that having governance structures with diverse memberships across first responder communities fostered a robust understanding of public safety broadband needs in their jurisdictions. Governance committee members also functioned as subject matter experts during the State Plan review and provided key overarching direction to SLIGP. Recipients reported that by engaging these committees early and often, they remained prepared for the review and approval of State Plans.

Finally, recipients discussed the importance of dedicating staff to driving NPSBN planning efforts within their States and territories. Since the NPSBN will impact many entities, having the ability to centralize efforts, with dedicated staff, under one program allowed recipients to develop a coordinated effort within the State.

“Without the SLIGP grant, our state would not have had the resources to contribute to this initiative. “

SLIGP Program Impacts

NTIA requested that recipients respond to questions about the impact and usefulness of SLIGP in their closeout reports. NTIA designed these questions to assess the program’s value to recipients and inform future program design.

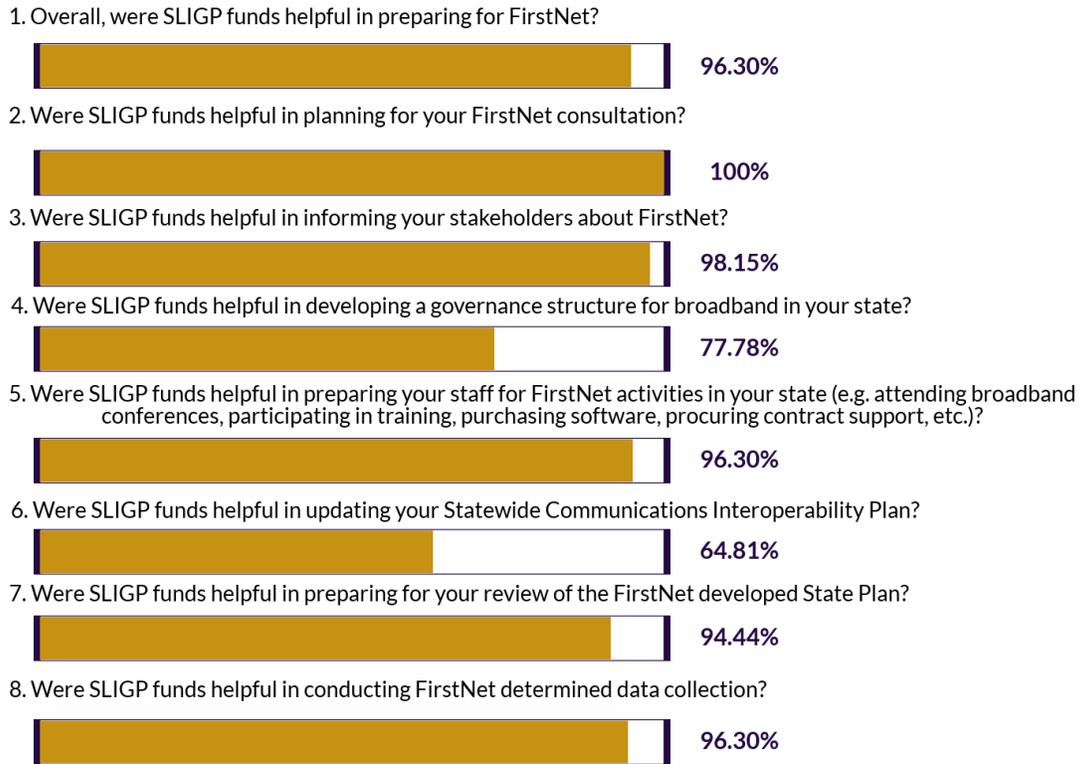
A significant majority of recipients (96%) indicated in their responses that SLIGP funds proved useful in preparing for FirstNet. Likewise, all recipients agreed or strongly agreed that SLIGP funds were helpful in planning for the FirstNet Authority consultation.

The majority of recipients found that SLIGP funds were useful for developing governance structures for broadband in their States or territories (78%) or for updating their Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP) (65%). Of those recipients who did not find the funding useful, most cited ‘funding existing structures with other sources’ as their reason for disagreeing with this question. Likewise, recipients that did not use SLIGP funds to update the SCIP noted that SCIP updates were funded by another federal program within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Recipients reported agreeing or strongly agreeing with all other questions about the usefulness of SLIGP funds at rates of over 90% (Figure 3). Recipients indicated that comprehensive funding of education and outreach, including numerous meetings with counties and tribes, and out-of-state events and conferences attended by staff and other stakeholders, was one of the best uses of the money.

Figure 3: Percent of Recipients Agreeing with the Question

Percent of Recipients Agreeing with the Question



“[The] state is grateful for the opportunity to work with the First Responder Network Authority on data collection in order to represent our first responder community and have that information become part of the package sent to the vendor. The SLIGP-funded staff was able to concentrate on this allowable activity and ensure that the data represented the state as a whole.”

Summary

NTIA provided grant funding from 2013 to early 2018 that States, territories, and the District of Columbia found useful for their FirstNet planning efforts across all levels of government and public safety disciplines. SLIGP-funded planning efforts provided governors with the information and planning necessary to make decisions about who should deploy the Radio Access Network and contributed to the success of the NPSBN.