

GRANTS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINTS

The Joint Committee on Finance allocated \$6.7 million for the creation of a state-hosted emergency service IP network (ESInet) in the 2017-19 state biennial budget. This statewide digital network is the most cost-effective solution to aide Wisconsin in transitioning from the obsolete analog hardware and software used today to the Next Generation 911 (NG911) digital system currently being used around the country.

Modernizing Wisconsin's 911 system has been a priority for local governments, Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), law enforcement, and the telecommunications industry since the 2009-11 state biennial budget. A comprehensive 911 policy and funding reform package was sidetracked in 2009, with the 911 funding source originally intended for 911 modernization and PSAP upgrades renamed the Police and Fire Protection Fee (PFPP) and diverted to the shared revenue program. Since 2009, attempts to redirect the fee to fund overdue 911 upgrades and modernization have been unsuccessful until the actions taken by the Joint Committee on Finance, the Legislature, and the Governor in the 2017-19 budget.

In June 2018, a Request for Information (RFI) was released by the State of Wisconsin. The purpose of the RFI was to gather information from suppliers to identify solutions for building and managing the ESInet. Ultimately the information collected through the RFI aided in the creation of the Request for Proposal (RFP) issued in July 2018. The purpose of the RFP is to provide all interested parties with the appropriate information enabling them to submit a proposal for consultation services in the creation, operation, and maintenance of a statewide ESInet. Ultimately, 911 Authority, LLC was selected by the Department of Military Affairs.

Once the ESInet is operational, PSAPs will require new NG911 capable equipment to connect to the digital system. Currently, a very limited number of PSAPs have the necessary equipment to connect immediately. The majority of PSAPs will need to spend an estimated \$250,000 to upgrade their equipment as well as ongoing funds to keep the Next Generation capable equipment maintained. Unfortunately, at a time when counties are asked to provide more with less support from the state, many PSAPs will not have the necessary funds to purchase NG911 equipment.

CURRENT STATUS: The state is in the process of development and creation of a statewide ESInet, the digital backbone for an upgraded NG911 capable system in Wisconsin. Current 911 equipment and services are at the end of their life cycle and are

becoming cost prohibitive to maintain. PSAPs across the state will need NG911-capable equipment to connect to the ESInet once operational.

REQUESTED ACTION:

- Provide \$7 million in each year of the biennium, ongoing, for a competitive grant program to support Wisconsin PSAPs in purchasing NG911 equipment and for continued maintenance and upgrades for the equipment.
- Divert the \$7 million annually from the PFPF fund while ensuring county Shared Revenue payments are not impacted.
- Allocate the development of criteria for the grant program to the 911 subcommittee, created in the 2017-19 budget. Require the Department of Military Affairs to promulgate rules based on recommendations of the 911 subcommittee.

TALKING POINTS:

- The Joint Committee on Finance allocated \$6.7 million for the creation of an ESInet in the 2017-19 Wisconsin State Budget.
- A limited number of PSAPs currently have the NG911 equipment needed to connect to the ESInet.
- PSAPs will need financial support from the state in order to purchase the NG911 equipment necessary to upgrade from the current analog equipment to digital equipment.
- A stakeholder coalition including WCA, League of Wisconsin Municipalities, Wisconsin State Telecommunications Association, Badger State Sheriffs' Association, Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association, Wisconsin APCO, Wisconsin NENA, and Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association are working together to obtain the \$7 million annually for PSAP equipment upgrades and maintenance.

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