



**Homeland
Security**

Border Interoperability Demonstration Project (BIDP) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is the purpose of BIDP?

The purpose of BIDP is to help States and localities explore innovative and effective models of interoperable emergency communications systems and approaches that seek to improve emergency communications along and across U.S. international borders. As a result of the project, selected border communities may benefit from improved interoperability and may serve as repeatable models for other border communities to achieve greater communications interoperability with domestic and international agencies.

2. What are demonstration projects in the context of BIDP?

Typical demonstration projects develop and test innovative approaches to solve problems or improve operations. Similarly, BIDP projects should propose innovative models of interoperable emergency communications systems and approaches to be tested through real-world implementation. The focus on lessons learned means projects that meet projected outcomes and those that do not can both yield valuable information. OEC will work with BIDP participants to document lessons learned, capture challenges and successes, and help share information across the emergency communications community.

Applicants should consider the broad range of activities that are necessary to develop, manage, operate, and maintain interoperable communications effectively, such as those noted in the Interoperability Continuum available at: <http://www.safecomprogram.gov>.

3. What legislation authorized funding for BIDP? How much funding is available?

The *Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act of 2009* (Pub. L. No. 110-329) provided \$30,000,000 in funding for BIDP to support demonstration projects that will improve interoperability along and across the border, and to provide technical assistance for selected projects. A minimum of six border communities (at least three on the U.S.-Canadian border and at least three on the U.S.-Mexican border) will be selected to participate in BIDP. It is anticipated that up to \$4,000,000 may be awarded for a selected project.

4. What are eligible activities for BIDP?

BIDP eligible activities are expected to include planning, training, exercises, and equipment purchase costs associated with the execution of plans proposed in BIDP applications.

5. What States are eligible to apply for BIDP funding?

The 17 States with international land and water boundaries that border Canada or Mexico are eligible to apply for BIDP funding as shown below:

States with International Land and Water Boundaries	
International Boundaries with Canada (13)	International Boundaries with Mexico (4)
Alaska - 1,538 miles	Arizona - 373 miles
Idaho - 45 miles	California - 140 miles
Maine - 611 miles	New Mexico - 180 miles
Michigan - 721 miles	Texas - 1,241 miles
Minnesota - 547 miles	
Montana - 545 miles	
New Hampshire - 58 miles	
New York - 445 miles	
North Dakota - 310 miles	
Ohio - 146 miles	
Pennsylvania - 42 miles	
Vermont - 90 miles	
Washington - 427 miles	

Sources: U.S.-Canada International Boundary Commission, International Boundary and Water Commission (U.S. Section), and Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, U.S. International Borders: Brief Facts (November 9, 2006) at: <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RS21729.pdf>.

6. BIDP funding is targeted to local and tribal governments and emergency response providers; however, States are the eligible applicants. How does this work?

Per authorizing legislation, eligible applicants for BIDP funding are the State Administrative Agencies (SAA) of U.S. States bordering Canada or Mexico. Eligible sub-recipients (including local and tribal governments and emergency response providers) may not directly apply for BIDP funding; the SAA is responsible for applying for the funding on behalf of the eligible sub-recipients.

BIDP applications and projects should be a collaborative effort between States and eligible sub-recipients. SAAs and sub-recipients are jointly responsible for developing the project concept, as well as ensuring project eligibility and alignment with the Statewide Communication Interoperability Plans (SCIP) and other emergency communications plans.

SAAs will be responsible for: Assembling and submitting the BIDP application; management and administration of BIDP grant funds; passing through all BIDP funding to the sub-recipients; grant reporting; and knowledge and information sharing.

Sub-recipients will be responsible for: Collaborating with all relevant partners and public safety agencies in the region to plan a proposed project; management and administration of BIDP funds; day-to-day management of the project (including proper financial management); grant reporting; and knowledge and information sharing.

7. Where can I find my State Administrative Agency (SAA)?

A list of designated State Administrative Agencies that can apply for DHS grants and administer DHS grant funds can be found at: http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/contact_state.htm.

8. What can I do to start preparing for BIDP?

Coordinate with potential project partners: BIDP is focused on innovative ways to improve interoperable emergency communications along and across the border. Projects will ideally include multiple levels of government and public safety disciplines, international partners, and the private sector, as appropriate. Through early coordination with potential partners, communities can develop project proposals that have broad stakeholder involvement and impact.

Coordinate with Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (SWIC), SCIP contacts, and Statewide Interoperability Governing Bodies: In addition to coordination with potential project partners, coordination with SWICs, SCIP contacts, and Statewide Interoperability Governing Bodies will provide insight into State plans and emergency communications needs. This coordination will allow communities to develop project proposals that address these needs and provide awareness to State-level entities of border communications issues.

Consider cross border communications gaps: An assessment of emergency communications along and across the border may yield valuable insight into current gaps and possible improvements. While projects that focus solely on interoperable emergency communications with domestic partners are eligible to receive funding, the intent of BIDP is to improve border-related interoperable emergency communications and include international participation.

Review internal processes for managing BIDP funding: By reviewing internal management and administrative processes, your agency can ensure it is able to address the administrative tasks required to submit a timely BIDP application, as well as demonstrate an ability to appropriately manage BIDP funding if awarded.

NOTE: OEC anticipates that the funding opportunity will be **competitive**. Therefore, OEC will not be able to assist prospective applicants with any aspect of their application or pre-application coordination. OEC intends to publish a comprehensive funding opportunity announcement and will provide FAQs and other supporting documents through <http://www.grants.gov>.

9. What technical assistance will OEC provide?

OEC will provide technical assistance for selected projects **after award**. Anticipated technical assistance includes service offerings in the OEC Technical Assistance Catalog available at: http://www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/library/interoperabilitybasics/1384_oectechnical.htm. In addition, OEC may provide customized technical assistance on a project-by-project basis such as workshops, webinars, training, and site visits.

Additional information will be posted on the OEC website (www.dhs.gov; keyword: OEC) and in a Funding Opportunity Announcement on www.grants.gov. Email any inquiries to BIDP@dhs.gov.