OVERVIEW

Public safety organizations rely on complex and often expensive systems to carry out their missions. Planning for procuring and maintaining technologies is a critical component of achieving operability, interoperability, and continuity of communications, particularly since many emergency response agencies are shifting to advanced technologies while maintaining legacy and backup systems. Lifecycle planning requires public safety organizations at all levels of government to collaboratively and regularly assess needs, hazards, risks, and threats in the current environment and through the expected technology evolution. However, according to the SAFECOM Nationwide Survey (SNS), 25% of public safety organizations have no planning processes or plans in place. Of the 75% of organizations that have a process in place, only 7% review their strategic plan after system upgrades and events that test capabilities. This document provides an overview of existing gaps in lifecycle planning for emergency communications, describes NECP support for lifecycle planning objectives, identifies actions public safety organizations can take to improve their lifecycle planning, and provides links to lifecycle planning resources.

PLANNING GAPS IDENTIFIED BY THE SNS

The 2018 SNS was a data collection initiative that helped inform the NECP's goals, objectives, and success indicators. Below are some of the strategic planning findings.

One third of public safety emergency communications systems are over 10 years old

57% of public safety organizations, on average, anticipate upgrading an emergency communications system within 5 years

Over 75% of public safety organizations have no or insufficient funding for emergency communications capital investments or network system upgrades

THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The *National Emergency Communications Plan* (NECP) is the Nation's comprehensive strategic plan to strengthen and enhance emergency communications capabilities nationwide. The NECP includes several objectives and success indicators designed to assist public safety organizations with enhacing their lifecycle planning processes. In addition, The NECP highlights the importance of the *Emergency Communications System Lifecycle Planning Guide* (Lifecycle Guide), which is designed to help practitioners plan for and deploy public safety communications. The Lifecycle Guide serves as a tool for agencies interested in building, maintaining, and operating an emergency communications system through decommission and replacement, emphasizing pre-planning activities to secure funding for the entire life of the system. The NECP and the Lifecycle Guide offer recommendations on how to improve lifecycle planning and ultimately inform agency funding decisions for emergency communications.

RELATED NECP SUCCESS INDICATORS

- **Governance bodies coordinate with elected officials to champion public safety communications priorities and lifecycle planning among decision makers**
  When there is formal coordination with or representation from elected officials in public safety communications governance bodies, it enables those making fiscal decisions to better understand priorities, take informed action, and advocate for resources. Formal collaboration gives elected officials and other decision makers greater access to and understanding of strategic plans and priorities, allowing them to contribute to solutions and support for key priorities and challenges at state, local, tribal, and territorial levels.

- **Public safety organizations develop and use lifecycle plans to inform agency funding decisions and implement new technologies while maintaining necessary legacy and backup systems**
  Successful lifecycle plans follow the lifecycle planning model and include input from project planners, decision makers, and other stakeholders. Lifecycle plans should consolidate assessments performed to determine need for equipment or system sustainment and upgrade; and should be reviewed and updated regularly.

- **Public safety organizations and governing bodies identify sustainable funding mechanisms to support the lifecycle planning model**
  Public safety officials must work together to identify and secure viable funding sources to maintain and upgrade communications systems, and sustain core communications capabilities, in order to ensure operability and interoperability. *Funding Public Safety Communications Systems* details examples of alternatives to grant funds.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS LIFECYCLE PLANNING GUIDE

The Lifecycle Guide describes the lifecycle planning model and provides strategies for funding purchases, maintenance, and systems upgrades.
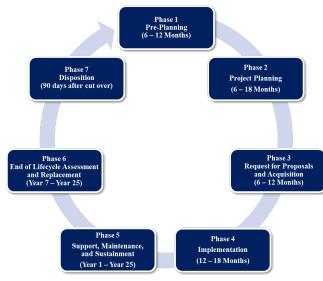
Pre-Planning: Inform and secure the decision to replace, upgrade, maintain, dispose of, and/or acquire a new system.

Project Planning: Formalize the project team; identify operational and technical requirements for system replacement and upgrade; and develop the project plan.

Request for Proposals and Acquisitions: Select the appropriate procurement vehicle and procure systems and components.

Implementation: Develop an implementation plan; install new systems; test; train users; and transition from legacy to new communications systems.

Support, Maintenance, and Sustainment: Inventory and maintain equipment; manage budget; and assess and communicate needs.

End of Lifecycle Assessment and Replacement: Determine when to replace systems or components with solutions to best fit operational and technical needs.

Disposition: Determine options and dispose of legacy systems or components.

Phase 1
Pre-Planning
(6 – 12 Months)

Phase 2
Project Planning
(6 – 18 Months)

Phase 3
Request for Proposals
and Acquisition
(6 – 12 Months)

Phase 4
Implementation
(12 – 18 Months)

Phase 5
Support, Maintenance,
and Sustainment
(Year 1 – Year 25)

Phase 6
End of Lifecycle Assessment
and Replacement
(Year 7 – Year 25)

Phase 7
Disposition
(90 days after cut over)

RESOURCES

- National Emergency Communications Plan
- Emergmcy Communications Systems Lifecyle Planning Guide
- Lifecycle Planning Tool

- Emergency Communications System Lifecycle Planning Guide Compendium: Best Practices, Considerations and Recommended Checklist
- Funding Public Safety Communications Systems