

Tribal Participation in the State and Urban Area Homeland Security Strategy

In July the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued the “State and Urban Area Homeland Security Strategy Guidance on Aligning Strategies with the National Preparedness Goal”. An online version of this document can be found on the National Congress of American Indians website www.ncai.org within the Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness section. The purpose of this Guidance Strategy is to help State and Urban Areas make revisions to their Homeland Security Strategies that will align with the National Preparedness Goal. The following is a synopsis of the sections within the Guidance Strategy and how they pertain to tribal participation within State and Urban Area Homeland Security Strategies.

The undertaking of the following initiatives, as outlined for States and Urban Areas, are necessary to ensure proper incident management and emergency response involvement throughout the different levels of intergovernmental cooperation and collaboration with tribal response offices. This willingness to work with tribes to ensure public safety is only half the solution. In addition to mutual aid agreements and collaboration, state and urban areas need to understand the resistance that tribes have been facing in their attempts to secure federal funding for homeland security and emergency response. As long as the funding formula that DHS uses involves tribes appealing to states and even local governments to receive their funding the cooperation between federal, state, tribal, and local emergency response offices will be incomplete. States need to recognize that tribal and state cooperation is the best option for ensuring public safety. Otherwise the failed integration that exists now will continue to place the public in harms way.

The *State and Urban Area Homeland Security Strategy Guidance on Aligning Strategies with the National Preparedness Goal* outlines a strategy for implementing various initiatives that state and urban area emergency response offices need to update in order to fulfill federal guidelines displayed in the National Preparedness Goal (NPG) and participate in the funding process with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The framework being put into place by DHS to achieve the expectations outlined in the NPG creates a system-based approach to improve national preparedness. The four mission areas in the NPG are Prevention, Protection, Response, and Recovery. DHS requires states and urban areas to address these four mission areas as they improve and develop their Emergency Operation Plans to correspond with the National Preparedness System (NPS). By addressing Prevention, Protection, Response, and Recovery, state and urban area emergency response offices can develop a standard plan that will be unique enough to meet their community’s standards while at the same time fulfilling the objectives of the NPG.

Regional Approaches

Under the NPS state and urban areas can better implement mutual aid agreements, inter-organizational linkages, information sharing, and collaboration with contiguous state,

local, and tribal emergency response offices by beginning a regional collaboration of these emergency response offices' resources.

National Incident Management System (NIMS) and National Response Plan (NRP)

The mandatory compliance with NIMS by the DHS for any emergency management department receiving DHS funding will be done to ensure that NIMS is incorporated into their state, local, and tribal emergency operations plans. NIMS is being used as a resource to promote interoperability and compatibility among Federal, State, Local, and Tribal emergency response offices. The plan that will provide the structure and mechanisms to coordinate evolving or potential incidents is the NRP. Again, like the NIMS, NRP will be used as a system to incorporate Federal, State, Local, and Tribal emergency response efforts, resources, and strategies.

Interim National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP)

The Interim NIPP outlines the involvement DHS will have in working with State, Tribal, and Local governments to produce a risk management framework that will better protect the nation's citizens and infrastructure. Again DHS calls upon State, Local, and Tribal emergency response offices to come together in a cooperative relationship to create and manage a critical infrastructure protection program to protect Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources (CI/KR).

Information Sharing and Collaboration Capabilities

According to NIMS information sharing and gathering is one of the most important characteristic of proper incident management. Intelligence collection, analysis, disseminating, and sharing between State, Local, and Tribal emergency response offices is considered effective "intelligence/information fusion". The *Information Sharing and Collaboration Priority* section of the NPG has made intelligence/information fusion one of its top components to develop. DHS will need to ensure that with the creation of intelligence/information fusion "centers" State, Local, and Tribal emergency response offices are equipped with the proper resources to allow for inter-agency interfacing.

Interoperable Communications Capabilities

Interoperable communications between all governments and all emergency response departments needs to be an ability that all these groups can share. In the end critical decisions and information exchanging can not be a problem when lives are at stake. The *Interoperability Continuum* outlines five components, governance, standard operating procedures, technology, training and exercise, and usage of equipment, which all need to be addressed to succeed in interoperable communications. State, Local, and Tribal emergency operation plans should be developed to address how each of these areas will be covered in the integration of their emergency response departments.

Chemical/Biological/Radiological/Nuclear/Explosive (CBRNE) Response/Decontamination Capabilities

States and Urban Areas are again recommended to institute regional collaboration with other governments' emergency response offices to strength information sharing and other collaboration capabilities.

Medical Surge and Mass Prophylaxis Capabilities

In emergencies that involve immediate medical attention, the necessity for interoperability amongst, Federal, State, Local, and Tribal governments and response agencies is great. The ability of medical centers to treat large numbers of patients or distribute large quantities of vaccines is something that all agencies must depend upon. This is why resource sharing i.e. capabilities, accommodations, and capacities of medical centers is crucial to incident management and response.