

Arkansas Interoperable Communications Executive Committee Charter and Bylaws

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Section 1: Introduction

The State of Arkansas recognizes the vital need for emergency response organizations to communicate and share critical voice or data information with other jurisdictions in day-to-day operations, natural disasters, emergency response scenarios, and terrorist incidents. Failure to accomplish the mission in each situation can result in the loss of lives and property. The need for reliable interoperable communications applies to both public safety and public service organizations. The State of Arkansas is committed to cooperation in addressing the challenges facing public safety communications interoperability. As such, the State of Arkansas has established the Arkansas Interoperable Communications Executive Committee (AICEC) to oversee interoperable communications efforts throughout the state and to guide the Arkansas statewide public safety communications network referred to as the Arkansas Wireless Interoperability Network (AWIN). This document describes the purpose, authority, expected outcomes, scope, operating principles, membership, and management of the AICEC.

Section 2: Purpose & Authority

The Executive Committee is responsible for advising the Director of the Division of Emergency Management on the development and establishment of policy for use of the AWIN system. They also review and approve user requests, and coordinate interoperability efforts both intra- and inter-state. The AICEC is also responsible for the development and implementation of the Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP) for the State of Arkansas. The AICEC shall be assisted in executing its duties by establishing working groups and those working groups shall act as the primary advisors to the AICEC.

In performing its duties, the AICEC shall always be cognizant of the fact that AWIN exists to serve the public safety stakeholders of the State of Arkansas, and ultimately the people of the State of Arkansas. As such, the AICEC will:

- A. Maintain the sense of urgency that 9/11, past hurricanes, civil unrest, wildfires, and the Christmas 2020 bombing in Nashville, Tennessee have brought to the issue of communications interoperability.
- B. Ensure the issue of communications interoperability remains in front of elected officials as administrations change.
- C. Speak with a united voice when reporting externally.
- D. Ensure that the State of Arkansas takes a collaborative approach in dealing with issues regarding the operations, expansion, and/or management of the AWIN system.

Section 3: Responsibilities

The AICEC will provide strategic planning and direction concerning the

establishment, operation, and management of interoperable communications in the State of Arkansas. This includes, but is not limited to:

- A. The coordination of communications between systems in the state. Consider the impact on the citizens of the State of Arkansas when contemplating any changes that will affect the operations of the Arkansas Wireless Information Network.
- B. Prioritize the state's investment in communications systems; identify funding resources for the continued maintenance, support and necessary growth of land mobile radio (LMR) communications, AWIN and other emergency communications interoperability resources to include voice, data, video and broadband communications.
- C. The development of policies and procedures that work towards achieving interoperability solutions across disparate systems (native radio system, cell phone, satellite phone) in the short term.
- D. The development and implementation of any state strategic public safety communications plan.
- E. The concerns and views of state and local agencies responsible for emergency response and the provision of basic governmental services.
- F. Oversight of the Arkansas COMU program.

In executing these duties and responsibilities, the AICEC will operate in consideration of the following:

- First and foremost, the AICEC will facilitate interoperable communications between disparate public safety radio systems providing emergency response in the State of Arkansas.
- Consider the integrity of the Arkansas Wireless Information Network when reviewing applications from new users who request participation on the system. The AICEC will consider the specific needs of each application and the potential impact on the statewide system.
- Evaluate and communicate the impact on the citizens of the State of Arkansas when considering any changes to the LMR system that will affect the operations of the Arkansas Wireless Information Network.
- Maintain a balance between technology leadership and technology complacency.
- Evaluate the growth of the AWIN system to ensure that resources in any given area are adequate to meet the needs of the users and support future growth. Adequate is defined as a Grade of Service (GoS) of 1% or less.
- Maintain cybersecurity vigilance for all communications solutions related to interoperability.

Section 4: Vision and Mission Statements

Vision

Implement and maintain a resilient and reliable communications system for public safety that facilitates the seamless exchange of information.

Mission

Work with stakeholders to achieve the Arkansas interoperability vision by leveraging current and future technologies.

Section 5: Membership

The membership of the AICEC is made up of members of the public safety community and agencies that support public safety in Arkansas. The AICEC is to be reflective of all disciplines – law, fire, medical, emergency services – and jurisdictions – city, county, state, federal. Members are responsible for representing their discipline, organization or agency but will also consider the needs of the citizens of Arkansas and their partner public safety stakeholders in undertaking their roles as members of the Executive Committee.

A. The membership of the AICEC is as follows:

- Governor’s designee
- Director of the Department of Finance and Administration or designee
- Director of the Division of Information Systems or designee
- Director of the Arkansas State Police or designee
- Director of the Arkansas Division of Emergency Management or designee
- Director of the Arkansas Department of Corrections or designee;
- Director of the Arkansas Department of Health or designee;
- President of the County Judges Association or designee;
- President of the Arkansas Emergency Management Association or designee
- Adjutant General of the Arkansas National Guard or designee
- Representative from the Arkansas Sheriff’s Association or designee
- Representative from the Arkansas Chiefs of Police Association or designee
- Representative from the Arkansas Municipal League;
- Representative from the Arkansas Fire Chief’s Association or designee
- Chairman of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission or designee
- Arkansas Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) or designee

- Chair of the Arkansas Communications Unit Working Group or designee
 - Executive Director of the Arkansas 911 Board, or designee
- B. Term of Office for members is two years. Members may be re-appointed by their discipline or organization.
- C. The Executive Committee may add additional members as agreed upon by a majority vote of the Executive Committee. These members may come from local, state or federal agencies, service providers, or other organizations that may have expertise in a given area under consideration by the committee.
- D. Members of the public, including representatives from the vendor community, may attend meetings. These meeting attendees may comment, but may not vote on issues before the Committee.
- E. The AICEC may periodically invite subject matter experts to advise on a specific topic.
- F. If a member is unable to attend a committee meeting they may submit a proxy vote to the AWIN Staff or one of the other committee members.

Section 6: Operating Principles

The AICEC's Operating Principles are contained in the AICEC By-Laws.

- A. All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with provisions and requirements of all laws and regulations of the State of Arkansas and all AICEC by-laws.
- B. Each member should:
- Consider the unique needs of public safety stakeholders throughout the state of Arkansas;
 - Recognize and respect stakeholder concerns;
 - Address those concerns that could negatively impact Arkansas' communications interoperability capabilities;
 - Think interdisciplinary;
 - Ensure all strategic initiatives support established future goals and strategies;
 - Identify issues within the Executive Committee's control and apply resources to address those matters;
 - Maintain focus on areas that are within the Executive Committee's control;
 - Ensure strategies, system designs and spending plans are coordinated with the overall statewide interoperability goals and objectives;
 - Seek to balance infrastructure and subscriber needs;
 - Exercise the AICEC's responsibility for managing communications interoperability, making sure it does not rest on any single individual, agency, or technology;

- Promote a collaborative approach in dealing with issues;
 - Ensure alignment with other interoperability systems;
 - Speak with one voice when reporting externally;
 - Ensure the issue of communications interoperability is brought to the attention of elected politicians, particularly as administrations change;
 - Focus on achieving voice and data interoperability solutions across disparate systems;
 - Incorporate security concerns when planning future communications solutions;
 - Avoid use of acronyms and codes to eliminate confusion or misunderstandings.
- C. Executive Committee establishes the following positions to ensure the efficient management of operations:
- Chair
 - Serve one-year term, and may be re-elected.
 - Preside over all regular and, if required, special AICEC meetings.
 - Ensure coordination of AICEC meetings, including establishing the time and location.
 - a. Develop and distribute an agenda one week in advance of meetings.
 - b. Develop and provide read-ahead material a week in advance of meetings.
 - Vice-Chair
 - Serve one-year term, and may be re-elected.
 - Preside over AICEC meetings in the absence of the Chair.
- D. To ensure greater success, all Executive Committee members will be expected to:
- Prepare for and attend scheduled meetings;
 - Engage in open and honest communications;
 - Provide an accurate representation of their respective agencies;
 - Support consensus decisions and seek endorsement from their respective agencies.
- E. The Division of Emergency Management will provide the AICEC with administrative staffing needs. This Division will perform at a minimum the following tasks:
- Provide members notice of upcoming meetings;
 - Oversee preparation of meeting agendas;
 - Ensure meeting agendas and read ahead materials are distributed
 - Record meeting minutes;
 - Disseminate meeting minutes to each member in a timely manner;

Section 7: Decision Making

All members of the Arkansas Interoperable Communications Executive Committee have equal rights, privileges and responsibilities. The basic principles for decision making are:

- Questions before the AICEC will be fully discussed prior to a vote.
- The pending question will be clearly stated prior to calling for a motion.
- A quorum of at least 30% of the members of the AICEC must be present in order to call for a vote. Members attending virtually and proxy votes are allowed for establishing a quorum.
- The AICEC works towards consensus based decision making.
- Each member has one vote. If the voting member is unable to attend, they may vote by proxy.
- A simple majority of the quorum decides the question.
- Silence gives consent. Those who do not vote allow the decision to be made by those who do vote.
- The chair should always remain impartial. In the event of a tie, the chair casts the deciding vote.

Section 8: Meetings and Logistics

The AICEC will meet monthly, currently on the 1st Thursday of the Month at 1: 30 p.m. Date and time for AICEC meetings may be changed if necessary by order of the Chairman, with prompt notification to the membership.

- A. The AICEC will meet at facilities provided by the Arkansas State Police, the Arkansas Division of Emergency Management, and other appropriate facilities, based on the needs of the members and the agenda.

Section 9: AICEC and Working Groups

The AICEC may designate working groups as necessary to address issues facing interoperable communications within and surrounding the State of Arkansas. These working groups can be designated as standing or ad hoc. Current standing working groups are:

- A. **Communications Unit Working Group (COMUWG).** The COMUWG is made up of emergency response personnel who have completed at least one level of Communications Unit training. These individuals are responsible for oversight of the state's Communications Unit program. The COMUWG advises the AICEC on talkgroup requirements and communications planning.
- B. **Policy Working Group.** The Policy Working Group works closely with the Statewide Interoperable Coordinator to review existing policies and develop new policies that affect AWIN or interoperable communications in the State of Arkansas. The Policy Working Group is also responsible for updates to the AICEC Charter and By-laws.
- C. **Technology Working Group.** The Technology Working Group is established to advise the AICEC on advancements in communications technology.

Section 10: Charter and Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP) Amendments

Changes to the Charter and the Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan must be approved by the AICEC according to voting procedures established in Section 7.

Section 11: Glossary

AICEC – Arkansas Interoperable Communications Executive Committee The AICEC was established in 2008 and is responsible for oversight of interoperable public safety communications for the State of

Arkansas.

Arkansas COMU – Arkansas Communications Unit

COMU is a program that provides public safety personnel with a plan of action to facilitate and coordinate initiatives, procedures, and scheduled activities that enable the Communications Unit to operate efficiently and effectively within the Incident Command System.

AWIN – Arkansas Wireless Information Network

AWIN is a 700/800 MHz shared statewide LMR system for the state of Arkansas. It is a multi-disciplinary, multi-jurisdictional radio system.

AWIN infrastructure

The composite hardware, software, network resources and services and the physical structures and facilities (e.g., buildings, roads, and power supplies) required for the existence, operation and management of AWIN.

Full-time users

Subscribers of AWIN that use the system for their primary communications needs.

Interoperable communications

The systems, devices, procedures, and governance that enable interoperability.

Interoperability

The ability to communicate, as needed, on demand, and as authorized at all levels of government and across all Public Safety disciplines.

LMR – Land Mobile Radio

A wireless communications system intended for use by terrestrial users in vehicles (mobiles) or on foot (portables). Examples are two way radios in vehicles. Such systems are used by emergency first responder organizations such as police, fire, and ambulance services, public works organizations, dispatched services such as taxis, or companies with large vehicle fleets or numerous field staff. Such a system can be independent, but often can be connected to other fixed systems such as other LMR systems, the public switched telephone network (PSTN) or cellular networks.

Part-time users

Subscribers to AWIN that use AWIN for secondary or interoperable communications. These users have local radio systems for their primary communications.

SCIP – Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan

Statewide Communication Interoperability Plans (SCIPs) are locally-driven, multi-jurisdictional, and multi-disciplinary statewide plans to enhance emergency communications. The SCIP creates a single resource

for all stakeholders and a unified approach for enhancing interoperable communications for public safety and officials at all levels of government. SCIPs define the current and future direction for interoperable and emergency communications within a state or territory.

SWIC – Statewide Interoperability Coordinator

The SWIC works with emergency response leaders across all levels of government to implement a statewide strategic vision for interoperability. As part of this effort, SWICs are responsible for the implementation of the Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP), which establishes a vision for interoperability in the state.

Section 12: Charter Change Control

Type of Change	Date of Change	Author
Original Document	03/2007	P.Rubow
Update meeting information and membership list	06/2014	P.Rubow
Updates to Purpose and Scope, Responsibilities, Membership, Operating Principals; add Working Groups and technical corrections.	01/2017	B.Sedita
Updates to Purpose and Scope, Responsibilities, Decision Making,	03/2017	P.Rubow
Updates to all Sections to eliminate references to the Department of Information Systems and add references to the Division of Emergency Management. Updates to all sections to eliminate references to the AICC and Command and Control	09/2021	P.Rubow