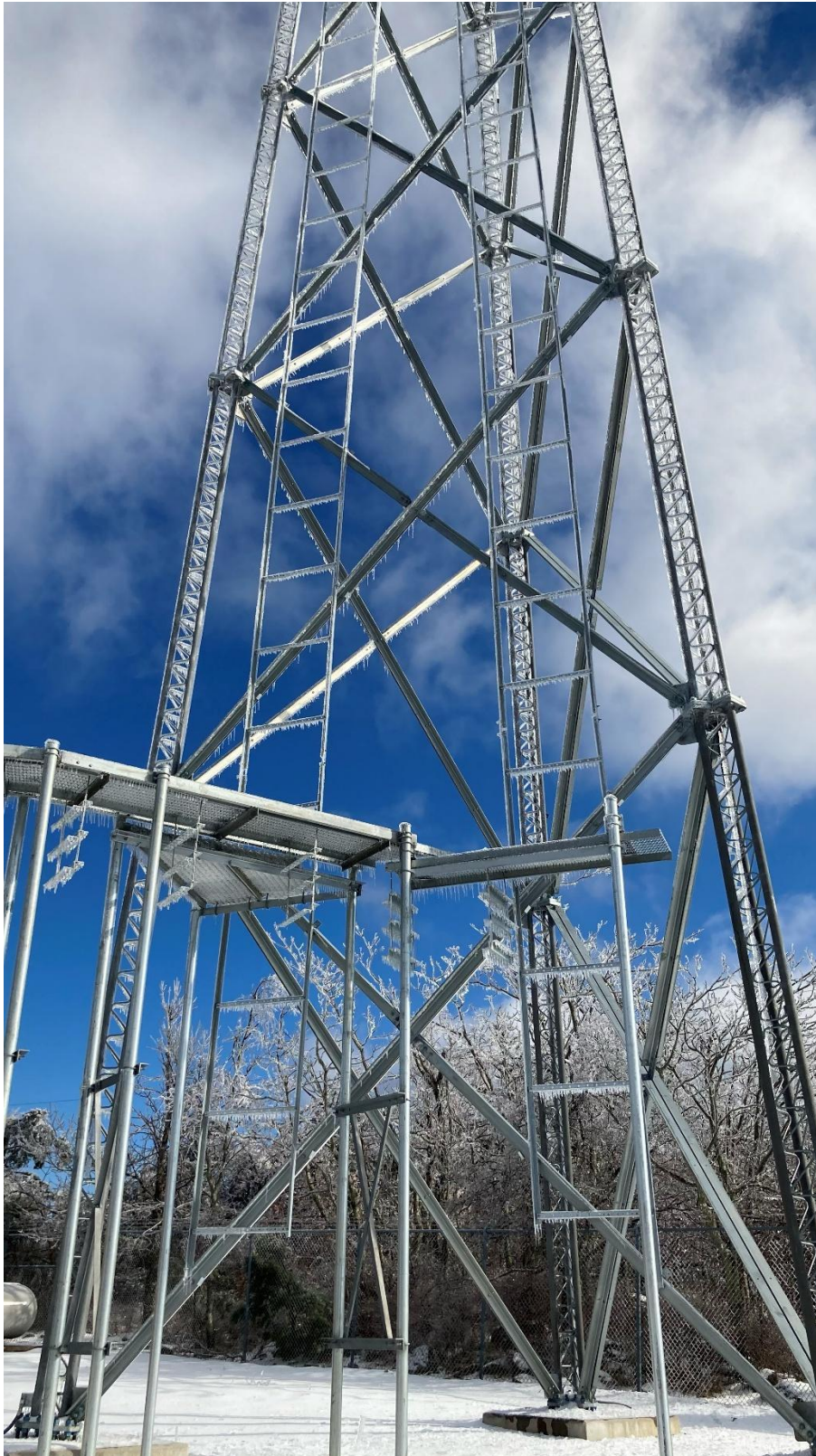


VIRGINIA SIEC REPORT: HB1820 - PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE

November XX, 2025 version 251102



SIEC Representation

- Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security
- Superintendent, Virginia State Police
- Director, Virginia Department of Fire Programs
- State Coordinator, Virginia Department of Emergency Management
- Director, Virginia Department of Health - Office of EMS
- Director, Virginia Department of Health - Office of Emergency Preparedness
- Adjutant General of the Department of Military Affairs
- Chief Information Officer, Virginia Information Technology Agency
- Commissioner, Virginia Department of Transportation
- State Forester, Department of Forestry
- SWIC (ex officio)
- Region 1 Regional Preparedness Advisory Committee – Interoperability (RPAC-I)
- Region 2 RPAC-I
- Region 3 RPAC-I
- Region 4 RPAC-I
- Region 5 RPAC-I
- Region 6 RPAC-I
- Region 7 RPAC-I
- Virginia Association of Counties
- Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police
- Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators
- Virginia Fire Chiefs Association
- Virginia Association of Government EMS Administrators
- Virginia NENA
- Virginia APCO
- Virginia Municipal League
- Virginia Local Government IT Executives
- Virginia Sheriff's Association
- Virginia State Firefighters Association
- Virginia Amateur Radio Emergency Services/RACES
- Virginia Professional Firefighters
- Virginia State Police Association
- Tribal governing councils
- State Council of Higher Education
- Virginia Military Advisory Council

November XX, 2025

TO: Marcus Anderson, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, and Stephen Cummings, Secretary of Finance

SUBJECT: Virginia SIEC Recommendations on “HB1820” – Public Safety Communications Infrastructure Funding

PREFACE:

This report is submitted pursuant to Chapter 77 of the 2025 Virginia Acts of Assembly (House Bill 1820), which directs the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, in conjunction with the Secretary of Finance, to evaluate the need for public safety communications infrastructure updates and hardware replacements and the cost of meeting such need. We submit this report to the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security and the Secretary of Finance through the Virginia Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC), meeting the bill’s requirement to consult with the SIEC.¹

In accordance with the Act and its required consultation with the Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC), this evaluation includes:

- A review of the current state of public safety communications infrastructure in the Commonwealth
- An assessment of whether updates to such infrastructure are needed to assist with redundancy and enhanced resiliency
- An estimation of the cost of attaining such updates
- An overview of the current availability of state, federal, and local funding sources, including grant and loan programs where updates to public safety communication infrastructure are an allowable use

This report presents the findings and recommendations, including possible funding options, as required.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Hall, Chair, Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC)

Gabe Elias, Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Problem: A Current Crisis with a \$100 Million Price Tag

Over 80 localities rely on unsupported or end-of-life radio systems, creating a statewide capital deficit exceeding **\$250 million**. These outdated and unsupported systems affect the ability of first responders to do their jobs effectively and efficiently. Over-reliance on unpredictable grants and increasing technological complexity have created an unsustainable situation. It is imperative that the Commonwealth and localities work together to create a dedicated funding stream to address this gap.

The Solution: Strategic Investment to Improve Public Safety Communications Infrastructure

Create a fund dedicated to public safety infrastructure, a **Strategic Investment Framework (SIF)**, to assist **localities into sustainable state or regional (multiple independent localities) infrastructure**. With a disciplined **\$10 million annual investment**, the SIF transitions localities to sustainable, modern, shared (state or multi-locality) systems and ends the cycle of unpredictable emergency requests.

An Accountable Investment Model

The SIF is not another grant program. It is a funding strategy with built-in safeguards to ensure all parties coordinate for maximum efficiency:

- **Provide Life-saving Infrastructure and Secure Interoperability:** Funding (state or federal pass through) buys a locality into a state or regional² (multi-locality) infrastructure system and supports strategic interoperability connections between systems.
- **Funds Strategic Planning:** Funds are available to utilize responsible consulting firms to assess plausible paths forward. Technical and financial viability studies will also be funded.

The Choice for Virginia

The SIF presents a clear choice: continue funding unpredictable, multimillion-dollar emergency requests, or make a strategic investment that reduces long-term risk and ensures first responders have access to critical communications systems. This framework provides the path to fiscal stability and public safety. **The Commonwealth consistently funds the *input* of emergencies (9-1-1); it is time to fund the *output* (radio infrastructure) to first responders in the field.**

INTRODUCTION

This report represents consultation with the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security for House Bill 1820 (2025) by the SIEC, representing localities, public safety associations, and state agencies. In light of reporting timelines and funding, data was gathered using previously executed surveys by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) and the SAFECOM Nationwide Survey (SNS), both from 2023.

CHAPTER 1: CURRENT STATE OF PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

This chapter provides a review of the current state of public safety communications infrastructure in the Commonwealth.

1.1 Overview of Existing Infrastructure

Public safety communications infrastructure in Virginia, specifically **land mobile radio (LMR) is a system of systems**, a hybrid collection of standalone and interconnected infrastructures. These critical life-safety networks fall into three primary categories: state-owned, regional, and single locality (including some single public safety agencies within a locality owning their own disparate systems).

The evolution of LMR systems from analog, isolated networks to modern, digital, computerized components and interconnected networks adds complexity and cost, even while it improves functionality. Serviceable life for key components now follows commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) IT timelines while increasing operational and support complexity. These previously isolated systems are **increasingly vulnerable to cyber-compromise and natural disasters**. When end-of-life (EOL) systems are so impacted, it can be very difficult to restore and repair.

Funding and sustainment levels vary from long-range capital planning, paired with robust maintenance and operations, to many localities which lack basic sustainment and have no ability to replace EOL components. This **report focuses specifically on those latter groups of “unsustainable localities.”**

1.2 Age and Condition of Current Systems

Many localities have collaborated to build regional systems, including Roanoke Valley, Lynchburg/Bedford area, Richmond capital area, Peninsula regional system, [upper middle peninsula], and the ORION regional overlay. Other strong collaboration between localities includes the National Capital Region, with robust interoperability governance and technical exchange. The Statewide Agencies Radio System (STARS) and many local and regional systems benefit from long-term maintenance and operations budgets, capital improvement cycles planned out many years, and governing/funding body (e.g. General Assembly, local Board of Supervisors, etc.) support.

Unfortunately, **many localities, particularly jurisdictions with smaller tax bases, are challenged just to keep aging systems running.** For the latter group, the trajectory is unsustainable. The **proposed SIF aims squarely at these groups.**

1.3 Current Capabilities and Limitations

Insufficient planning and funding is identified in both state and national surveys as a core cause of various limitations. With **over 80 localities reporting systems at or near end-of-life (EOL)**³, many struggle to maintain even basic capabilities, including locality-wide coverage footprint (ability to reach the system) and capacity (ability of the system to handle multiple public safety disciplines and events). This directly contradicts the number one priority of Virginia's Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP): sustainable lifecycle funding⁴.

These funding gaps create dangerous operational realities. Many localities report inadequate radio coverage, falling short of the "public safety grade" standards and putting responders at risk. This aging infrastructure is also highly vulnerable. A single storm or cyber event could damage critical EOL components that are difficult, if not impossible, to replace, leading to catastrophic failure.

Interoperability systems, tools, and processes allow users of communications systems to share information and communicate across boundaries. Such tools link the systems localities already have, but do not provide foundational coverage or capacity. Ultimately, a jurisdiction with a limited or failing communications system is inherently limited in its ability to interoperate, creating a weak link in the statewide public safety networks.

CHAPTER 2: NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR REDUNDANCY AND RESILIENCY

Updates to the public safety communications infrastructures serving Virginia localities are necessary to enhance redundancy and improve resiliency during incident response. This need is driven by the age and condition of current systems, as well as identified gaps in their capabilities.

2.1 Identified Gaps in Redundancy

Many localities struggle to build and maintain daily operational capability, much less redundant and resilient systems capable of operating through regional or statewide disasters and keeping the public and responders connected. Redundancy and resiliency are both required to ensure safe, reliable emergency communications. Often, this means leveraging technical redundancy to make systems and users more resilient to faults and failures.

Notable Gaps and Consequences

- **System Functionality Gaps:** Many responding localities report gaps in overall system functionality⁵

- With limited budgets and EOL systems, some localities are driven toward business-oriented infrastructure purchases which cost less but do not meet public safety standards.
- **Resilience Gaps:** Absent redundant and resilient systems, single points of failure are vulnerable to natural and human-created disaster and outages. Redundant systems cost additional money many localities do not have.
- **Technical Support Gaps:** Many localities indicate a need for additional technical support⁶
- **Coverage Gaps:** A majority of localities report gaps in radio coverage⁷
- **Interoperability Gaps:** Many responding localities report gaps in interoperability with public safety agencies outside their jurisdictions, despite a majority reporting⁸ access to COMLINC (Commonwealth's Link to Interoperable Communication), the state-funded interoperability network.⁹
- **Spectrum Limitations:** Shortfalls in available radio frequencies are also reported¹⁰
- **Funding Sufficiency:**
 - **Equipment Upgrades:** A majority report insufficient funding for equipment upgrades¹¹
 - **Lifecycle Costs:** Planning for updating systems must consider costs associated with long term network operation, software upgrade agreements, and security enhancements.
 - **Interoperability:** A majority report inadequate interoperability capital funding¹²
 - More than half report insufficient interoperability operating cost funding
 - One third to one half of rural public safety agencies report no funding for interoperability, including operating maintenance, and R&D.¹³
 - **Grant Reliance:** A majority utilize grants to fill funding gaps¹⁴
 - Inconsistent and unreliable source of funding
 - Hinders long-term planning
 - Generally unavailable for sustainment costs
 - Obtaining and coordinating grants regionally is time-consuming and administratively burdensome.
 - **Geographic Disparities:** Significant funding disparities exist between urban and rural local public safety agencies across all major infrastructure categories.
 - **Cybersecurity:** A majority of Virginia public safety organizations report inadequate cybersecurity funding¹⁵

- **Cybersecurity Vulnerabilities:**

- **Cybersecurity is no longer a theoretical risk.** In 2024 nationwide there was a 60% increase in attacks specifically targeting mission-critical technologies (radio, computer aided dispatch, public safety answering points), and nationwide, **24 successful cyberattacks rendered emergency communications systems completely unavailable.**¹⁶
- **Ransomware incidents against public safety radio systems** are increasing.¹⁷
- Mitigation costs are high. The STARS program, for example, spends \$400,000 annually on cybersecurity. One large regional system is spending \$320,000 on cybersecurity for land mobile radio alone.

2.2 Requirements for Enhanced Resiliency during Incident Response

Enhancing resiliency for Virginia public safety communications infrastructure **requires strategic and coordinated provision of envisioned funds to:**

- Improve and sustain foundational **coverage and capacity** in localities and regions reporting gaps
- Improve and sustain consistent, statewide, **seamless interoperability** between localities, regions, and state agencies
- **Address non-technical gaps**, including governance, training, policy/procedure, and exercising, aligned with the Interoperability Continuum.¹⁸

2.3 Proposed Infrastructure Updates and Hardware Replacements

Specific hardware and **system upgrades or replacements will vary widely** across the localities in need.

CHAPTER 3: COST ANALYSIS OF NECESSARY UPDATES

This chapter outlines the cost of attaining such necessary updates. Given the variety of resilience needs, a comprehensive and robust assessment of total cost is not currently possible. However, scale of cost can be estimated from current gaps and funding requests.

3.1 – 3.2 Estimated Costs for Infrastructure Upgrades and Hardware Replacements

Upgrading or replacing full systems (whether current or end of life) can range widely from under single millions of dollars to several tens of millions of dollars.

Many localities have requested Congressionally Designated Spending (CDS) over recent years, some awarded and some still in process. Virginia localities sought over **\$30 million in federal**

earmarks since FY2023 for radio system upgrades. These requests, which *are not for full system replacement costs*, indicate that even fractional costs range in the multiple millions of dollars per locality as currently designed. This demonstrates a **consistent, high-dollar demand that is currently being met in piecemeal, uncoordinated fashion**.

We do not have enough data available to fully assess the overall cost of addressing the gaps. However, a rough statistical review of representative projects (Appendix 3) broken into small, medium, and large and applied to 81 localities in need indicates **a cost of at least \$250 million**¹⁹ to move localities onto existing state or regional sustainable systems.

3.3 Long-term Maintenance and Operational Cost Considerations

Long-term maintenance and operational costs are critical considerations for the sustained functionality and security of public safety communications infrastructure. Key areas include:

- **System Maintenance and Support:** Public safety radio systems and equipment are expensive to procure and maintain and must operate with a high degree of reliability on a 24/7 basis.
- **Personnel Costs:** Whether contracted or locally hired, maintaining a radio system requires consistent attention to technical/system components and remote sites. Convergence of technology requires additional skillsets, including cyber, information technology, and radio frequency systems, making support staff hiring and retention more expensive.
- **Licenses and Frequencies:** Frequency management is generally not a daily task, but can involve dealing with complicated technical issues, including RF interference, FCC process management, and technical coordination.
- **Radio Tower Site Maintenance and Utilities:** Maintaining access to and operation of radio tower sites, fiber optics, and microwave networks can be very time consuming. Staffing and budgets must include costs for site security and safety, access/right-of-way maintenance, grounds keeping and grounds-keeping. Towers, cables, antennas, and other components require preventative and corrective maintenance.
- **Training:** Although not directly quantified as a cost, training for personnel on new systems and cybersecurity protocols is an implicit long-term operational need.
- **Insurance:** Robust infrastructure requires appropriate insurance coverage against physical damage and cyber incidents, adding to operational costs.
- **Inconsistent funding and lifecycle cost consideration:** The reliance on competitive, non-recurring grants to fill funding gaps can hinder long-term planning and create financial instability for these ongoing operational and maintenance needs. Notable funding disparities exist between urban and rural local public safety agencies across all major infrastructure categories, with rural organizations more likely to lack funding for critical needs, including operational maintenance and cybersecurity.

CHAPTER 4: AVAILABILITY OF STATE FUNDING SOURCES

This chapter details the current availability of state funding sources, including grant and loan programs where updates to public safety communication infrastructure are an allowable use.

4.1 Review of Existing State Grant Programs

- **Virginia 9-1-1 Services Board (“the Board”) (911SB) Grants:** Collection and distribution of funds from Virginia wireless (pre- and post-paid) bills is defined in Virginia Code § 56-484.17. These funds are available for specific priorities, rarely including radio infrastructure.
- **State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP):** Administered by VDEM, SHSP is a federal grant program that provides funds to prepare for, prevent, and respond to acts of terrorism and other hazards⁷. This program has faced regular declines in funding and is not being offered in FY25 as a competitive local grant.
- **Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) Grants:** DCJS does not generally fund public safety communications infrastructure. An exception for FY2023 was the Law Enforcement Equipment Grant, funded by one-time ARPA money²⁰.
- **Virginia Department of Health (VDH) Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) Rescue Squad Assistance Fund (RSAF):** This program does not generally fund infrastructure. Radio subscribers and individual equipment are often requested and sometimes funded, but not in amounts sufficient for addressing Virginia’s gaps. Data compiled by OEMS supports this²¹.
 - FY2015 through FY2025 – Radio Subscribers (portable, mobile, pager)
 - Requested: \$4,507, 052
 - Awarded: \$899,130 (~20%)
 - FY2015 through FY2025 – Radio infrastructure-related
 - Requested: \$850,587
 - Awarded: \$202,740 (~24%)

4.2 Review of State Loan Programs

- **Virginia Resources Authority (VRA):** The Virginia Resources Authority is a significant source of financing for general infrastructure projects across the Commonwealth.
- **Private Financing:** Many localities may choose to look at local funding resources, such as local banks or VML or VACO Finance.

4.3 Other Potential State Funding Mechanisms

No other existing programs were identified during creation of this report. The 2023 SAFECOM report does indicate underutilized funding streams as shown below in Figure 2.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

The Unavoidable Conclusion—Virginia's Funding Model is Broken

The evaluation conducted for HB 1820 leads to a single, unavoidable conclusion: The Commonwealth's current approach to funding public safety communications infrastructure is inadequate, unsustainable, and creates risk. The following findings underscore the urgent need for a new strategy.

- **Widespread Unsupported Systems:** Over half of Virginia's localities are relying on radio systems that are at or near their end-of-life (EOL).
- **A \$250 Million+ Capital Deficit:** Based on known needs and costs, the minimum capital investment required to modernize these at-risk systems exceeds \$250 million.
- **Unacceptable Risk:** Aging, brittle infrastructure, lacking in foundational capability and interoperability puts the public and first responders at risk due to unreliable communications.
- **Inadequate and Fractured Funding:** No single state grant, loan, or other funding stream exists to address this deficit. Where funds are available, they are insufficient for the scale of the problem.

The Core Policy Disconnect: Funding the Call, Not the Response

The fundamental issue is a policy disconnect. The Commonwealth provides funds the **intake** of emergency requests through the 9-1-1 systems. However, Virginia provides no consistent, dedicated funding for the critical **output** of those emergencies: the land mobile radio networks that dispatch and guide first responders in the field. This leaves Virginia's less-resourced localities unable to keep pace with rising costs and technology, forcing them to make impossible choices between core services and life-safety communications.

The Unsustainable Reliance on Piecemeal Grants

The strong reliance on grants and other one-time funds is incompatible with the long-term planning and high capital costs of radio infrastructure. This piecemeal approach actively works against strategic regional partnerships and fails to account for mandatory, long-term sustainment costs. The grants administered by state agencies were never designed or capitalized to build or replace entire radio systems.

The Compounding Pressures of Technology and Security

Modern public safety communications systems are increasingly converged with information technology. While this brings new capabilities, it also shortens replacement cycles and drives up

the frequency of reinvestment. Furthermore, building more resilient and interconnected networks increases the cyber-attack surface, requiring additional, unfunded investments in cybersecurity to protect them.

These findings demonstrate that resilient, secure, and seamlessly interoperable emergency communications cannot be achieved with insufficient or siloed funding. The problem, though daunting, can be solved through the coordinated improvements in funding and collaboration outlined in the following recommendations.

CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS AND POSSIBLE FUNDING OPTIONS

This section presents recommendations, including possible funding options, based on the evaluation's findings, as required by HB 1820.

By focusing first on expanding regional and state partnerships and building resilience through interoperability, limited available and envisioned funding can be put to most efficient use and stop the tide of unstructured emergency requests for funding.

6.1 Prioritized Recommendations: A Strategy for a Sustainable Future

SHARED SYSTEM STRATEGIC INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK:

Establish a Strategic Investment Framework (SIF) as the single, disciplined channel for all state funding requests. The SIF functions as a capital offset grant, where state funds cover the one-time cost for a locality to join a sustainable shared system. In exchange, the locality makes a binding 10-year commitment to fully fund its own operational and upgrade expenses.

This framework is built on a foundation of accountability and strategic alignment, not just technology. Key features include:

- **Fiscal Safeguards:** The SIF de-risks projects by funding upfront technical and financial analysis.
- **Mandatory Interoperability:** Investments are used to break down existing communication silos and ensure systems can communicate seamlessly across jurisdictions.

Focusing investments on shared systems aligns with the Commonwealth's strategy, outlined in the SCIP²², to maximize resources and expand coverage. When a locality joins an established network like STARS or a regional system, it gains immediate access to support, maintenance, and governance. The benefits are mutual: the new locality gets a modern, resilient system, while existing members gain expanded coverage and new interoperability partners. The joining and joined **entities must demonstrate their ability to sustain** recurring costs and future upgrades on their own.

SEED THE SIF AND SEEK SUSTAINMENT IMMEDIATELY:

We recommend a minimum annual investment of **\$10 million** to launch the Strategic Investment Framework.

This amount is a pragmatic minimum, not an arbitrary figure. Previous funding proposals of \$3-5 million were insufficient, a fact confirmed by real-world costs: transitioning a single locality to the state's STARS system costs between **\$1.5 and \$3 million**²³. A budget smaller than \$10 million would not be sufficient to make a meaningful impact.

The recommended budget is sized to successfully fund two or more full locality transitions per cycle, in addition to the upfront de-risking analysis and critical interoperability. The STARS team indicates 12-14 months to onboard a new locality, and initial capacity to handle two new localities per year, with expected increase in pace/capacity over time.

No local capital match is required, as the locality's binding **10-year commitment to all future operational and upgrade costs** serves as their significant long-term contribution. We urge the General Assembly and the Administration to identify a sustainable funding source to support this framework.

ALIGN AND COORDINATE GRANTS

To end the current piecemeal approach to funding, we recommend additional coordination of state-administered grants for public safety communications infrastructure through the SWIC and SIEC as designed in Virginia Code § 2.2-221.6.

This action does not require moving grant programs from their home state agencies like VDH, VDEM or DCJS. Instead, after initial in-agency evaluation, before award, grants should be shared with the SIEC for comment and review for compliance with the SCIP. In addition to validation and coordination advice for the granting agency, this provides the SIEC with a broader picture of need to inform its work on the SIF.

Example Costs: Joining STARS

STARS, the Statewide Agencies Radio System, serves over 22 state agencies and a growing list of localities.

Benefits of Joining STARS:

- **Statewide coverage**
- **Enhanced interoperability**
- **Robust support and maintenance**
- **Long term capital planning**
- **Future equipment included in OpEx**

Costs of Joining STARS:

- **Initial join: \$1.5-\$3 million**
- **\$1,700 per radio annually**
- **Current Localities:**
- **Buchanan, Cumberland, Wise**

FIGURE 1 - STARS JOIN COSTS PROVIDED AS EXAMPLE OF SHARED SYSTEM ADVANTAGES AND COST STRUCTURE

INVEST IN READINESS: PEOPLE, PLANS, AND TRAINING

A modern radio system is only as effective as the people who use it and the plans that guide them. Therefore, this strategy requires a parallel investment in the non-technical elements of interoperability—governance, standard operating procedures (SOPs), training, and exercises.

The Strategic Investment Framework (SIF) is designed to support this readiness in two ways:

- **Built-in Benefits of Shared Systems:** When a locality joins a regional or state system it is not just buying technology; it is "buying into" an established ecosystem.
- **Strategic Use of Program Funds:** To further enhance statewide readiness, the SIF program should allow for the strategic use of funds to support targeted, high-impact readiness initiatives aligning with both the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP)²⁴ and Virginia's SCIP²⁵.

6.2 Funding Options and Strategies

While the specific funding mechanism—whether the General Fund or a dedicated Special Fund—is a decision for the General Assembly, we note that Virginia has a successful precedent for funding critical public safety services.

Ultimately, regardless of the source, we recommend that all allocations for this purpose be coordinated through the SWIC/SIEC framework to ensure they are applied strategically and effectively.

CONCLUSION

We are grateful to the General Assembly for highlighting the problem of under-resourced public safety communications infrastructure in Virginia. Data, plus the experience of both the Legislative and Executive Branches of Virginia Government, **point to a problem worthy of more than attention, but of resources.** Many Virginia localities simply cannot keep up with the demands of critical, robust, public safety communications systems, yet **we all need every locality to be able to communicate.**

This report outlines a deliberate strategy to move Virginia's public safety communications from a position of recurring liability to one of sustainable strength. By strategically investing in shared systems, we can reduce long-term risk need for future emergency appropriations, and provide our first responders with the reliable communications they deserve. We urge your support for this critical investment.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: SAFECOM Nationwide Survey (SNS) 2023 OEMS Analysis (attached)

Appendix 2: VDEM 2023 PSAP Radio System Survey summary report and presentation (attached)

Appendix 3: List of key state and federal funding grants awarded to or requested by Virginia localities in recent years:

- Augusta County requested \$5,935,000 for a P25 UHF Simulcast Radio System for the Staunton/Augusta/Waynesboro (SAW) region in FY2025¹.
- Dickenson County requested \$1,822,000 for P25-compliant interoperable radios/repeaters with AES encryption in FY2025¹.
- New River Valley Emergency Communications Regional Authority (NRVECRA) requested \$4,706,000 for a P25 700/800MHz Public Safety Radio System in FY2025¹.
- Prince Edward County requested \$1,695,000 for a P25 Phase 2 UHF Simulcast Radio System in FY2025¹.
- Wise County Sheriff's Office was awarded \$4,500,000 for a multi-jurisdictional migration to P25-compliant interoperable radios and repeaters in FY2024¹.
- Tazewell was awarded \$3,761,000 for migration to P25-compliant interoperable radios and repeaters with AES encryption in FY2024¹.
- City of Galax was awarded \$3,000,000 to upgrade its regional Public Safety Communications Equipment System in FY2024¹.
- Craig County requested \$2,625,000 in FY2023 to upgrade radios and antennas in vehicles¹.
- Craig County received \$1,000,000 in FY2024 to replace antiquated communications equipment and increase coverage from 70% to 95%⁷.
- Craig County received \$1,958,000 in FY2025 to continue radio system upgrades¹.
- Bath County received \$2,000,000 to support system replacement with a regional, interoperable system including Highland County¹.
- Bath and Highland Counties both received \$396,000 in FY2025 to support continued radio system upgrades and replacements¹.
- City of Petersburg received \$3,203,026 to upgrade its radio system in FY2024¹.
- In FY2023, DCJS awarded \$1,281,395 in one-time ARPA funding for public safety communications infrastructure (part of a larger overall allotment that included non-infrastructure items)¹.

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ENDNOTES review all “*ibid*” for correct reference roots prior to final

¹ House Bill 2025, as approved 3/18/25, Virginia General Assembly 2025 General Session.

<https://lis.virginia.gov/bill-details/20251/HB1820/text/CHAP0077>

² We use “regional” to mean two or more independent Virginia localities. For example, two counties and an independent city would be a regional system. However, two volunteer fire departments and a law enforcement agency within a single locality would not be regional. Additionally, the incorporation of towns into their governing county would not be regional.

³ VDEM 2023 Survey Report, slide 4

⁴ Virginia SCIP, Emphasis 1, page 7 - <https://www.pshs.virginia.gov/homeland-security/interoperability> (accessed 10/6/2025)

⁵ VDEM 2023 Survey Report, slide 5

⁶ *Ibid.*, slide 8

⁷ *Ibid.*, slide 8

⁸ *Ibid.*, slides 6-7

⁹ COMLINC is a state-supported and state-funded network of gateway devices which can “patch” various radio resources together. The current technology supporting COMLINC is nearing end of life. The VSP Communications Division and Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) are currently engaged in requirements gathering to address performance and reliability limitations of the current technology.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, slide 8

¹¹ SNS 2023, Virginia Analysis, slide 13 (“National-Level Results Summary, pg. 13”)

¹² *Ibid.*, slide 14 (“National-Level Results Summary, pg. 14”)

¹³ *Ibid.*, slide 12 (Governance Q8-10 question)

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, slide 17 (Governance Q11 question)

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, slide 15 - Note: For national-level statistics, “don’t know” are excluded, resulting in 68% versus 51% for VA-specific Cybersecurity *capital investment only* (Slide 11), which includes “Don’t know.”

¹⁶ *Persistent disruptive cyber activity impacting U.S. public safety mission-critical services*, A joint report by the Public Safety Threat Alliance and the Multi-State Information Sharing & Analysis Center; , pages 2-3

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, page 4

¹⁸ This guidance is consistent with the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum, a method for understanding and working toward emergency communications growth and progress. <https://www.cisa.gov/resources-tools/resources/interoperability-continuum> (accessed 10/6/2025)

¹⁹ Of the ten projects listed, two (20%) were between \$1-2M (small), five (50%) between \$2-4M (medium), and three (30%) above \$4M (large). Applied across 81 localities at midpoints of ranges (1.5M, 3M, 5M) we get **\$267,300,000**, with a weighted average of 3.3M/locality. We think this is high based on a) regionality of some listed projects, b) very limited sample set, and c) imprecise measurement of capital allocation to infrastructure function. We *do* think a maximum of \$3M/project makes sense in the context of the SIF capital outlay defined elsewhere in this report.

²⁰ A staff review of the ARPA one-time funding identified \$1.3 million for infrastructure out of a total of \$3.2 million in communications. However, these were small awards for *components* of infrastructure. DCJS does not fund radio infrastructure systems

²¹ Summary report provided by VDH OEMS, manually estimated for infrastructure components

²² Virginia SCIP, Emphasis 8, page 11 - <https://www.pshs.virginia.gov/homeland-security/interoperability> (accessed 10/6/2025)

²³ Draft Minutes, SIEC HB1820 Subcommittee Meeting, https://www.pshs.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/secretary-of-public-safety-and-homeland-security/pdf/draft1.SIEC_1820Sub_Minutes.2025Aug20.pdf (accessed 10/12/2025)

²⁴ <https://www.cisa.gov/national-emergency-communications-plan> (accessed 10/6/2025)

²⁵ Virginia SCIP - <https://www.pshs.virginia.gov/homeland-security/interoperability> (accessed 10/6/2025)