



Fact Sheet on Today's Public Safety Broadband Awards

Administration investments in broadband are transforming how the country approaches our most important national priorities, including education, health care, and public safety.

Today, the Department of Commerce and Department of Agriculture announced **roughly \$1.8 billion in Recovery Act broadband awards** – awards that will directly connect thousands of schools, libraries, hospitals, and health clinics to ultra-high speed service. As part of this round, the Department of Commerce for the first time directly **targeted the long-standing need for wireless public safety broadband networks**. They awarded approximately **\$220 million for the construction of five networks**.

These awards will increase interoperability, and improve first responders' response times, communications at the scene of emergencies and reliable access to real-time data. **Ultimately, these investments will make American communities safer.**

Today's Public Safety Awards

- **Charlotte** received a \$16.7 million award to **build a network in the city and surrounding communities in Mecklenburg County**. The project will ultimately bring over 11,000 users onto an interoperable 700 MHz broadband network and provide situational awareness, streaming video, computer-aided dispatching, and data sharing capabilities.
- **New Mexico** received a \$38.7 million award to **build a network in Albuquerque and Santa Fe**. The project will enable streaming of critical patient data from paramedics to hospitals, field access to criminal information databases, and online access to building blueprints to help serve the approximately 600,000 area residents.
- **Motorola** received a \$50.6 million award to **build a network in greater San Francisco Bay area**. The project will deploy 200 public safety sites supporting almost 50,000 public safety users and a regional population of approximately 2.5 million households with public safety file transfer, virtual command center, geolocation information, and video service.



- **Mississippi** received a \$70 million award to **build a network throughout the state**. The project will build 75 new towers to improve public safety communication for State and local first responders.
- **New Jersey** received a \$39.6 million award to **build a network in the northern part of the state**. The region includes over half of New Jersey's first responders and covers a population of 4.5 million. More than 160 law enforcement agencies and 200 fire departments will use the network.

All five of these networks will be **cutting-edge 4G networks**, and **meet the FCC's standards for nationwide interoperability**. These projects constitute a critical set of demonstration projects. They represent a head start on President Obama's plan to reform spectrum policy and spearhead the Administration's commitment to support the development of a nationwide, interoperable public safety wireless broadband network.

The Benefits of a Public Safety Broadband Network

These networks will allow the public safety community to significantly increase its use of technology. Today, most public safety entities use existing commercial networks for their data needs. Wireless broadband networks built with the needs of public safety in mind, by contrast, are **more reliable, more robust, and more functional**.

These networks will give first responders access to new applications and capabilities. Some potential applications cited by the public safety officials include:

- **Streaming real-time video** to police and fire stations, mobile command centers, and even squad cars and fire trucks to better respond to and monitor emergency situations
- **Uploading medical images, accident scene video, and vital signs** from ambulances and helicopters to hospitals to speed up diagnoses and improve care
- **Downloading floor plans** of burning buildings before arriving at the scene of a fire
- **Deploying first responders more efficiently**, improving response times to accident and crime scenes where seconds matter
- **Communicating and sharing data seamlessly** amongst first responders from relevant cooperating jurisdictions, **thus directly tackling a problem identified in the 9/11 Report**



In the near term, these investments will finally bring applications Americans have long been able to access on their everyday cell phones and PDAs – video and geolocation, for example – to public safety.

In the long term, these investments will unleash **innovation in public safety**, allowing the same sort of transformational progress for first responders that consumers have seen in the last few years.

BTOP and Public Safety

- One of the statutory purposes of the Department of Commerce’s Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) is to improve access to, and use of, broadband service by public safety agencies.
- Many BTOP-funded projects will benefit public safety by connecting public safety entities, such as police stations and fire departments, to broadband; enabling Next Generation 911 capabilities; and providing resiliency and redundancy to existing wireline public safety communications.
- BTOP was able to fund applications for 700 MHz public safety interoperable wireless broadband networks after the Federal Communications Commission authorized early deployment of such networks by a limited number of entities in May 2010.
- Although some entities filed 700 MHz BTOP applications in March 2010 along with waiver requests, all entities obtaining FCC authorization were invited to apply for BTOP funding during a limited re-opening of the application window from June 1-July 1, 2010. Applications filed pursuant to this opportunity are in the final stages of evaluation and the final BTOP awards will be announced in September.