



## **Information Fact Sheet:**

### ***Commerce Office of Inspector General Will Audit 25 State Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grants***

#### **The Grant Program**

- The Digital Television Transition and Public Safety Act of 2005 authorized the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), in consultation with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), to establish and implement the public safety interoperable communications (PSIC) grant program. The purpose of the grant program is to enhance the planning, acquisition, deployment, training, and management of public safety communications equipment, software, and systems. Projects must enhance the ability of public safety agencies to communicate with each other, especially during disasters. To date, approved grant projects have ranged from handheld radios to antenna towers. Additional details about the PSIC grant program are available at [www.ntia.doc.gov/psic](http://www.ntia.doc.gov/psic).
- NTIA coordinated the interoperable communications grant program through a Memorandum of Understanding with DHS. A total of \$968,385,000 was awarded to 50 states, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on September 30, 2007.
- The program has an 80 percent pass-through requirement to local, tribal, and nonprofit public safety organizations and requires the recipient provide from nonfederal sources at least 20 percent of the costs of acquiring and deploying the interoperable communications system. The grants last 3 years, from October 1, 2007, to September 30, 2010.
- States and territories received the grant money through their state administrative agency. However, they may not be aware that funding for these projects is from the U.S. Department of Commerce and that grant funds are subject to oversight and audit by the U.S. Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General.

#### **The Audits**

- Amendments to the original act added two statutory requirements for audits by the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Commerce: (1) an annual assessment of the management of the NTIA interoperable communications grant program with a report to Congress in each of the next 4 years; and (2) financial audits of a representative sample of a minimum of 25 grants before September 30, 2011.
- These audits will determine compliance with federal cost principles and the terms and conditions of the grant. The U.S. Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General staff will begin conducting audits onsite at the state administrative agencies beginning October 1, 2008.
- State agencies may not be accustomed to being audited during the grant period, since DHS usually audits at the end of grant periods.
- By auditing during the grant's performance period, states will have the opportunity to make changes or improvements in the use of funds before the end of the program.

**For more information, contact John Bunting, Denver regional inspector general for audits, at 303-312-7650.**