

# **Peer Assessment Team Handbook: A Guide for Peer Assessors Participating in the Statewide 911 System Assessment Process**



**Washington, DC**

**November 2017**

### **About the National 911 Program**

The mission of the National 911 Program is to provide Federal leadership in supporting and promoting optimal 911 services. It was created as a point of coordination for activities among 911 stakeholders and to provide information that can be used to improve the 911 system. We do that by developing a variety of tools and resources including tools that can be used to plan and implement Next Generation 911.

The National 911 Program is housed within the Office of Emergency Medical Services at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) – part of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT).

US Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave SE  
Washington, DC 20590  
NHTSA.National911@dot.gov

**DOCUMENT CHANGE HISTORY**

| Version | Publication Date | Description of Change  |
|---------|------------------|--|
| 0.1     | 10/05/2015       | Initial Draft  |
| 0.2     | 11/10/2016       | Edited Section 2.3.1   |
| 0.3     | 8/29/2017        | Edited Sections 1.2.4, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, and<br>'Team Instructions for Writing Report' |
| 0.4     | 11/14/2017       | Updated Handbook to Include New<br>Guidelines on NG911 Maturity Model              |
|         |                  |  |
|         |                  |  |
|         |                  |  |
|         |                  |  |
|         |                  |  |
|         |                  |  |
|         |                  |  |
|         |                  |  |

## Table of Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>1 INTRODUCTION .....</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| 1.1 NATIONAL 911 ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES .....  | 1         |
| 1.2 STATEWIDE 911 SYSTEM ASSESSMENTS .....  | 3         |
| 1.2.1 911 State Assessment Benefits and Outcomes .....  | 3         |
| 1.2.2 Planning .....  | 4         |
| 1.2.3 Report Writing .....  | 4         |
| 1.2.4 Attitude, Appearance, and Equipment .....   | 5         |
| 1.2.5 Expenses and Honoraria .....  | 5         |
| 1.2.6 Schedule and Activities .....   | 5         |
| <b>2 ASSESSMENT PROGRAM GUIDE .....</b>   | <b>7</b>  |
| 2.1 ASSESSMENT PREPARATION .....  | 7         |
| 2.1.1 Assessment Request .....  | 7         |
| 2.1.2 Initial State Meeting .....   | 8         |
| 2.1.3 State Prep Meeting .....  | 11        |
| 2.2 ON-SITE ASSESSMENT .....  | 15        |
| 2.2.1 Assessment Day One: Travel and Introductions .....  | 16        |
| 2.2.2 Assessment Day Two: On-Site Briefing .....  | 16        |
| 2.2.3 Assessment Day Three: Complete Briefing (if necessary), Report Writing, and Creating<br>Consensus .....                     | 17        |
| 2.2.4 Assessment Day Four: Consensus Completion, Report Compilation, Final Review,<br>Presentation, and After-Action Review ..... | 19        |
| 2.2.5 Assessment Day Five: Travel .....   | 20        |
| 2.3 POST ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES .....  | 20        |
| 2.3.1 Report Finalization Process and Post-Assessment Coordination .....  | 20        |
| <b>APPENDIX A: ASSESSOR TRAINING .....</b>  | <b>22</b> |
| TALKING POINTS: PEER ASSESSMENT TEAM BRIEFING BY ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR .....   | 23        |
| TEAM INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING REPORT .....  | 24        |
| <b>APPENDIX B: ASSESSMENT TOOLS .....</b>   | <b>26</b> |
| INITIAL STATE MEETING NOTES .....   | 27        |
| SAMPLE ASSESSMENT PROCESS SCHEDULE .....  | 30        |

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Many states are taking steps toward improving their statewide 911 systems and implementing technologies and operations that enable inter-jurisdictional communications and transmission of multimedia information. The operation and maintenance of 911 networks and systems has largely been a local issue, driven by the capabilities of local telephone companies to deliver various levels of service; and the desires and abilities of local jurisdictions to support emergency services. As new technologies are integrated into existing systems, states with strong state-level coordination are particularly well positioned to facilitate advancements in technology and operations. State-level 911 coordination and leadership has been demonstrated to be beneficial to the successful evolution of 911.

Statewide 911 system assessments can provide a method to gauge the status of state and local programs against an objective benchmark that was nationally developed; and to identify strengths and weaknesses within the current statewide 911 system. Once assessments are performed, state oversight entities can use the final assessment report as evidence for providing support to the public safety answering points (PSAPs) and 911 authorities within their statewide system, on many issues that are important to the advancement of 911 technologies.

This handbook provides background on how the 911 Assessment Guidelines were developed, what they represent for states and peer assessors, and the various considerations that will be helpful for peer assessors to understand before embarking on a state assessment.

## 1.1 NATIONAL 911 ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

The National 911 Program's (Program) goal is to provide federal leadership to support and promote optimal 911 services. The Program fulfills its mission by developing and distributing a variety of tools and resources for the nation's 911 stakeholders. As part of its role, the Program undertook a project to bring together stakeholders to establish a comprehensive benchmark for State 911 authorities to measure the status of the operational aspects of their statewide 911 systems. The National 911 Assessment Work Group (NAGWG) was formed by the National 911 Program and charged with developing consensus guidelines that can be used as the basis for statewide 911 system assessments. NAGWG was comprised of 911 professionals from local governments, state governments, national associations, and industry experts.

---

“To develop consensus guidelines that can be used statewide to determine the status of the 911 system within a state.”

— *The NAGWG Mission Statement*

---

To better convey this mission, the NAGWG developed the following definitions:

- **Consensus Guidelines:** A set of activities or functions developed by the NAGWG that are considered benchmarks or standards of excellence. When a guideline indicates a specific requirement or function, it does not imply that the function has to be performed by state government, just that it should be performed within the statewide 911 system and apply to the entire state.
- **State:** The geographic area that is a state or territory of the United States, or a tribal nation. A state, for the purpose of this document, includes the political subdivisions and the people of a state. When a guideline says that the state should do something, it does not imply that it should be done by state government, but rather that it should be done in the state, and apply to the entire state.
- **Statewide:** A term used to define functions that apply to the entire state in order to provide uniform 911 service for all public and private entities within the state.
- **911 System:** A group of entities, functions, and activities that provide the public with the necessary communications system to request help in an emergency. There may or may not be a single entity with control of the entire system. In either case, system coordination is critical.

In developing these definitions, the NAGWG had considerable discussion on the variety of ways 911 is implemented across the country. The guidelines represent high-level functions that should be accomplished within the state; however, the guidelines do not dictate *how* the function should be accomplished or who/what entity should accomplish it. The National 911 Assessment Guidelines (guidelines) were developed as a result of this project. The guidelines were released for public comment and were edited to reflect the needs and suggestions of the industry in 2011.

In 2017, the National 911 Program added a new guideline category titled Next Generation 911 (NG911) Maturity Model. The NG911 Maturity Model guidelines outline the items that a state should have implemented to enhance 911 system infrastructure. Examining these against a state's current infrastructure will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the 911 system. This category's guidelines are adapted from the NG911 Maturity Model, which was developed by the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Task Force on Optimal Public Safety Answering Point Architecture (TFOPA). Further information on TFOPA, including its charter, the final report, and the development of the NG911 Maturity Model can be found online at: [www.fcc.gov/about-fcc/advisory-committees/general/task-force-optimal-public-safety-answering-point](http://www.fcc.gov/about-fcc/advisory-committees/general/task-force-optimal-public-safety-answering-point)

Listed below are the nine categories of guidelines as well as the number of associated guidelines in each of the respective categories. There are 83 guidelines in total.

1. Statutory and Regulatory Environment (27)
2. Governance (7)
3. Functional and Operational Planning (9)
4. Standards (6)
5. Security and Continuity of Operations (7)

6. Human Resources/Planning (8)
7. Evaluation (5)
8. Public Education (5)
9. NG911 Maturity Model (9).

## 1.2 STATEWIDE 911 SYSTEM ASSESSMENTS

The guidelines provide uniform assessment indicators for the 911 community across the United States and territories, and will be used as benchmarks to assess the operational components of a statewide 911 system. An assessment will evaluate the current status of a state's system, provide a path for enhancement, and provide an objective evaluation by peers and subject matter experts to help states leverage resources. Assessments will be conducted on a voluntary basis, at the request of the state, by an independent team of peers (The Peer Assessment Team). The guidelines will continue to be updated as technology and the public safety communications environment change.

It is important to note that the value of the assessment process lies largely in its use of peer evaluation. While a self-assessment may help states in some cases, it would not be as valuable as input from peers who are not intimately involved in the state and have no vested interest in the assessment results, or have any interest in "selling" any products or services to the state. Members of the Peer Assessment Team are drawn from the 911 community, and have experience and expertise that is shared during the assessment process, as examples and processes are shared by team members.

By this assessment, it is important to understand, states are not compared against each other, only against the guidelines. Each state has different enabling legislation and administrative rules; therefore, states are not ranked.

The resulting Assessment Report is developed by consensus of the Peer Assessment Team. **NHTSA is not involved in the recommendations** but serves as a facilitator only. Neither NHTSA nor the State Assessment Team approve the report prior to its submission.

This handbook is intended to be a tool for use by the assessors throughout the assessment process. It lays out the procedures and processes from the initial assessment request to the final assessment report. As guidelines change, the assessment handbook will be updated to best serve the purpose of the guidelines.

### 1.2.1 911 State Assessment Benefits and Outcomes

- Provides comprehensive appraisal of statewide 911 system across diverse set of topics
- Provides an objective assessment at the national level using a benchmark developed by the 911 community
- Conducted by a group of experienced 911 peers and leaders within their domain of expertise, who are also developing NG911 networks and systems
- Identifies strengths and weaknesses within the current 911 system, providing a "roadmap" for improvement
- Generated by a neutral, non-profit third-party, the report can confirm/validate the needs of the statewide 911 system

- Performed onsite, providing an opportunity for state representatives and stakeholders to exchange information and ideas with the assessment team
- Results can be used to benchmark the state's 911 system and measure future progress.

### **1.2.2 Planning**

The assessment process spans 10 months' time from beginning to end. The State Assessment Coordinator from the National 911 Program Office develops the Peer Assessment Team between months 3 and 6, or 1-2 month(s) prior to the state assessment.

The Peer Assessment team is composed of subject matter experts from across the 911 industry, who are trained in the evaluation process and the guidelines to conduct the assessments.

Potential Peer Assessment Team members include the following:

- PSAP Director
- 911 Authority Executive
- State Director
- Policy Analyst from a state environment
- 911 Technology Specialist
- General Interest Person.

The Peer Assessment Team should plan for a 3-day on-site assessment process with one day on either side for travel if needed.

### **1.2.3 Report Writing**

A highlight of the State Assessment program is the State Assessment Team's final report. For this effort, we have developed a nominal group process for report completion. Each Peer Assessment Team member will be assigned a specific guideline category in which to lead the assessment. That member assures all the right questions are asked during the briefings and takes the information gathered during the process and includes the team's thoughts in writing.

While only one person takes the lead in each category, it is likely their expertise will be needed in other guideline areas. The assessment and related recommendations will be a consensus product of the entire Peer Assessment Team. Therefore, the entire team will review each of the 8 guideline categories and corresponding recommendations

Much of the report is contained in a template. The team must develop a one-two page executive summary, and then determine the states and recommendations. The administrative consultant has most of the boilerplate of the report completed. There are laptops for each of the team members (you may bring your own) and a desktop for the administrative consultant. Team members use laptops to draft their sections, then the administrative consultant takes your memory stick, enters the sections into the template, and makes edits.

The report is usually completed by the third day of the assessment. Thursday is spent mostly on making group edits to the final report, line-by-line until all team members have reached a consensus on the final report.



### 1.2.4 Attitude, Appearance, and Equipment

Often the briefing process takes place in a public forum, and the way we sit, ask questions, and our body-English are often observed and interpreted by many from the local 911 community. We must display the image that we are a part of the solution, and are working for their state to help them improve their program. Please be careful not to ask condemning questions, show disinterestedness by the way you sit, or show disbelief by your facial expressions. Also, avoid being overly critical and solving problems in front of the state assessment group and public. Resist the temptation to lecture or instruct during the briefing. The final report will give the team an opportunity to offer instructive criticism and suggestions.

During the public briefing process, our dress is business attire. However, once we sequester to write the report, the attire is casual. This is hard work, so dress comfortably. Shorts, jeans, and workout gear are all appropriate. The reading is, again, business attire.

Peer Assessors will need to bring their own laptop. If an assessor does not have a laptop, the Assessment Coordinator should be notified as soon as possible so arrangements may be made for one. Other necessary supplies should be provided by the state. High speed copying machines, a fax machine, and telephones in the meeting room will be available for your use. **If you need access to your e-mail, you should bring your own device.**

### 1.2.5 Expenses and Honoraria

Each team member receives \$200 per day, and \$150 for travel days in honoraria. This will be sent by the state within 30 days following the assessment.

Travel and hotel cost may be paid up front by state. Every attempt is made to limit your out-of-pocket expenses. The state generally purchases your tickets and covers hotel cost under a blanket purchase order. Save your receipts and keep track of mileage to and from airports. Prior to your departure, the state will describe reimbursement process and have you complete any necessary forms.

Lunch is provided to the team on Tuesday through Thursday. Leaving the review facility takes up valuable time, which cannot be recovered. Other meals are often provided by the state. Wednesday night is traditionally a pizza working session as the team is usually working late to finalize the report. *Please report any dietary restrictions as soon possible.*

### 1.2.6 Schedule and Activities

Assessments almost always occur Tuesday through Thursday, with Monday and Friday reserved for travel. We must gather at 7:30 AM on Tuesday and cannot depart until the final reading and after-action review is complete on Thursday at 6:00 PM. Team members can schedule their flights for after 7:30 PM (given travel time to the airport). **Please do not schedule flights to conflict with final review on Thursday.**

The process is very time intensive. We rarely have time to leave the hotel. Please do not schedule visits with colleagues during the assessment. Take that time either before we start on Tuesday or after the final review and after-action on Thursday.

The state will generally schedule a social on Monday to establish rapport prior to briefing. Appendix B provides a sample detailed state assessment schedule.

## 2 ASSESSMENT PROGRAM GUIDE

### 2.1 ASSESSMENT PREPARATION

There are several key teams and individuals to whom this handbook refers that need to be clearly defined. Below are the descriptions of the key players in the assessment process.

- **Coordinating Agency:** The National 911 Program is the agency through which the Peer Assessment Team and the State Assessment Team will coordinate efforts to accomplish all necessary tasks to perform an assessment and deliver the final assessment report.
- **Peer Assessment Team:** This team is made up of subject matter experts from state and/or local 911 systems that are not being assessed. The team members represent a wide variety of expertise and experience in the 911 community. The Peer Assessment Team evaluates the state's self-evaluation documents, and at the request of the state, conducts the onsite components of the assessment. All activities are directed toward the completion of the final assessment report. See page 4 for makeup of Peer Assessment Team.

---

*The Peer Assessment Team is charged with using a state's self-assessment input to carry out their own evaluation of the state's 911 program aspects*

---

- **Assessment Coordinator:** This is the main point of contact within the Coordinating Agency.
- **State Assessment Team:** This team is comprised of the various representatives within the state being assessed. The State Assessment Team will lead and direct the various members of the State Briefing Team and work with the Peer Assessment Team. These team members are selected by the state being assessed.
  - **State Briefing Team:** This is a team of experts from across all areas needed to establish the current environment for the multiple guidelines included in the assessment. These team members could be the same as the State Assessment Team members or additional people may be selected to present the briefings.
- **State Contact Person:** This individual is the main point of contact for communication and coordination on the State Assessment Team.

#### 2.1.1 Assessment Request

A state 911 assessment begins with a request from that state. This ensures state coordination and commitment, and is necessary to establish the credibility of an assessment and to facilitate information gathering. A request for an assessment should come from the state 911 authority. The request should clearly indicate the state's specific goals for the assessment as well as the intended audience for the final report (e.g., will it be shared with the general public or kept internal to state government). In the absence of a state 911 authority, the assessment request must come from an appropriate state authority (examples are provided below in section 2.1.1.1)

or with the written consent of an appropriate state authority. Requests must demonstrate that the assessment will be done in cooperation with the state 911 authority, where applicable. This coordination is critical because the state 911 authority will need to coordinate all stakeholders throughout the state who provide information as input to the assessment. Information from all stakeholders is needed in order to complete an assessment. If the coordinating agency finds that the request is appropriate, the request will be approved and the state and coordinating agency will enter into an agreement that lays out the commitments required for a successful assessment.

The official assessment request must be e-mailed to the assessment coordinating agency at [NHTSA.National911@dot.gov](mailto:NHTSA.National911@dot.gov) or provided to the Assessment Coordinator in a manner agreed upon by the Assessment Coordinator and the State Contact Person.

### 2.1.1.1 Request Approval

The coordinating agency will approve a successful request within four weeks. A request is deemed “successful” if it is submitted by an appropriate authority and is legitimate in its requests. A request may be submitted by a state board; 911 council; or another governing/coordinating body. The request must indicate that the state has appropriate resources to complete the assessment and the requesting entity must have documentation from the state asserting that they will assist in providing all necessary data. The request must also show the coordinating agency that the current state environment sections of each guideline can be completed and the appropriate materials for the assessment are assembled. Additionally, the coordinating agency must have the time, resources, and availability to organize an assessment at the time of the request. Once a request is approved, the coordinating agency will assign an agency representative to act as the Assessment Coordinator for the respective assessment.

### 2.1.2 Initial State Meeting

The Assessment Coordinator will schedule the initial meeting/conference call with the state approximately as soon as possible, after the request is submitted. During this meeting/call, the Assessment Coordinator will give an overview of the assessment process and will walk the state representative through the steps of setting up and completing the assessment. The state representative will discuss what the state hopes to achieve through the assessment and the intended audience for the assessment report. This initial meeting will be conducted over the phone and will take approximately two hours.

Following the initial meeting/call, the state will begin to plan the on-site assessment logistics and provide direction to the State Assessment Team to conduct the initial self-evaluation of the state environment to be used as the basis of the assessment. The State Assessment Team will need to determine what relevant documentation

#### Initial State Meeting

**Coordinating Agency** → Schedule initial meeting with state

**Coordinating Agency and State** → Conduct initial meeting over the phone

**Coordinating Agency and State** → Enter into agreement

**Coordinating Agency** → Draft assessment schedule

**State** → Establish State Assessment Team

**State Assessment Team** → Coordinate facilities and support requirements

**State Assessment Team** → Publicly announce assessment

needs to be gathered and submitted. Specifics of what will be covered in the initial meeting are detailed in Appendix B – Initial State Meeting Notes.

### 2.1.2.1 Agreement

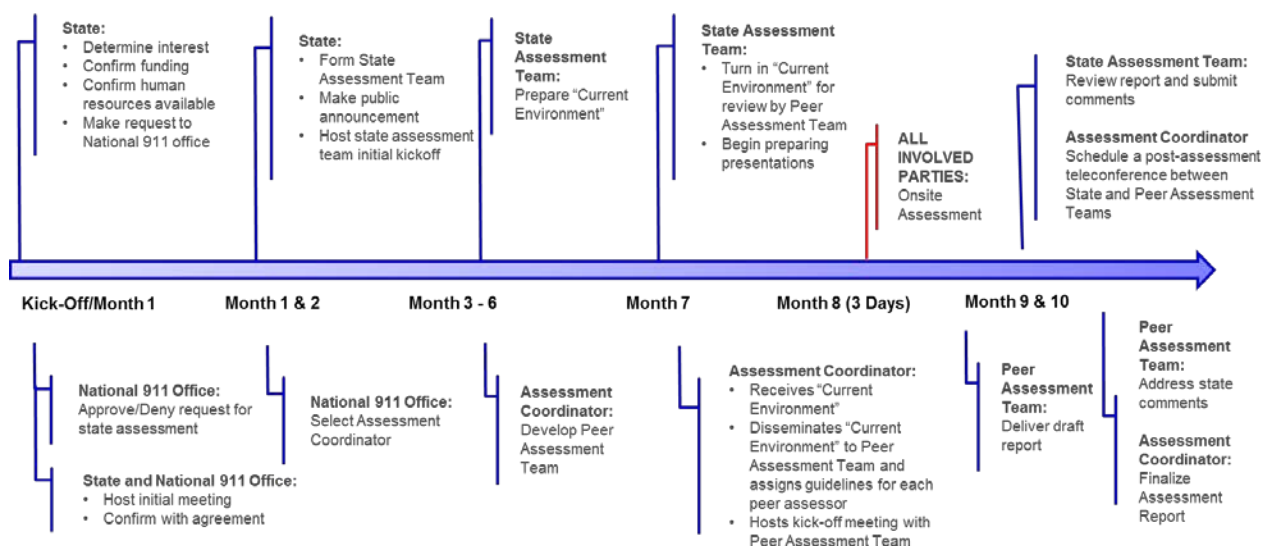
At the onset of the initial state meeting, an agreement can be signed by the Assessment Coordinator and the state that establishes a mutual understanding and commitment to the data collection, which must be performed prior to an assessment. This agreement also establishes the parameters for compensation of the peer assessment team, which is provided by the state. The agreement and all specifics therein will be determined on a state-by-state basis as each state has unique rules and processes.

### 2.1.2.2 Assessment Schedule

During the initial state meeting, the Assessment Coordinator will draft a schedule for the pre-assessment activities and the on-site assessment. A timely schedule is essential for an efficient and effective assessment experience.

Figure 1 below includes a general timeline that can be used to guide the activities needed for a successful assessment.

**Figure 1: General Timeline for State Assessment**



### 2.1.2.3 State Assessment Team

During this first meeting, the assessment schedule will be agreed upon and the state should have an understanding of expectations. After the first meeting, the state assigns a State Assessment Team so they can prepare the current environment description for each guideline within the assessment report tool. Each state will individually need to determine the appropriate measures and timeframe to complete their assessment responsibilities. Members of the State Assessment Team that participate in compiling the information for the current environment should also be involved in gathering additional information for the briefing. These team members should plan to attend the assessment briefing and related activities.

States will determine what organizations or offices (e.g., state 911 offices, stakeholder groups) should be involved in the assessment and will coordinate their involvement. It is critical that the state choose appropriate persons to prepare and present information during the assessment. A broad range of expertise from state briefers is important to ensure that a complete picture of the state is presented to the assessors. There is often active dialogue, and many clarifying questions are asked by the Peer Assessment Team members as part of the briefing process. States are encouraged to gather input from local 911 jurisdictions and other entities involved in the delivery of 911 to be included in their self-assessment. An accurate depiction of the current environment will result in an accurate and effective assessment.

The state briefing team can and should represent entities outside of state agencies that are involved in providing 911 services throughout the statewide system. Presenters could include a state legislator to describe new or unique statutes or a PSAP manager to discuss coordination between the state and PSAPs. The following list contains potential participants from the user community; it is not meant to suggest that all of these entities should be included:

- State 911 Director
- NENA and APCO chapters
- Association of Counties
- Municipal League (cities/county lead)
- Tribal representation
- Public Utilities Commission (PUC) (funding mechanisms)
- State agency authorities such as the Attorney General or Chief Information Officer (CIO) with public safety components
- Chief Security Officer (CSO)
- Elected officials (staff members)
- PSAP community
- 911 authorities, boards, commissions
- 911 system service providers
- Originating service providers within the state, wireless providers, local exchange carriers (LECs)
- State/regional attorneys that work for public entities
- State comptroller
- Civil Service or collective bargaining organizations
- State emergency medical services (EMS) entities
- State law enforcement entities
- State fire (including volunteer) entities
- State emergency management entities
- Advocacy groups (special needs communities)
- Non-public safety responders (public works, transportation, etc.)
- Military/defense representatives
- National Parks representatives
- State Geographic Information System (GIS) office
- Accrediting agencies for training and certification
- Non-profit organizations that perform public education
- Schools (911 education)
- Alert organizations

#### *2.1.2.4 Facilities and Support Requirements*

The on-site assessment will take place over one working week. Logistics for the meeting, requirements for conducting the on-site assessment, and pre-assessment preparations will be covered during the initial state meeting. Following the initial state meeting, the State

Assessment Team will begin to coordinate the on-site assessment logistics. Several support requirements are needed to perform an assessment and are vital to an efficient and successful process. The most important support requirement is a facility for the Peer Assessment Team. The state must provide a meeting room large enough for the Peer Assessment Team and the briefing participants. The State should designate a facility administrator who can help the Peer Assessment Team take care of anything needed during the assessment.

The Peer Assessment Team will have access to resources, including but not limited to:

- Internet access
- Tables and chairs
- Projector and screen
- Printer and paper
- Teleconferencing equipment
- Extra cables and extension cords.

#### *2.1.2.5 Public Announcement*

It is recommended that the state make an announcement to notify stakeholders of the assessment. The state will use its internal procedures to dictate how and when the announcement is made (e.g., press release, e-mail announcement to constituents). The state should announce the assessment and request comment from stakeholders prior to the assessment. Any comments received should be included in the state environment, if applicable.

#### *2.1.3 State Prep Meeting*

The Assessment Coordinator will schedule the prep meeting with the state to take place approximately three weeks after the initial state meeting. If the state has made assignments for briefing the Peer Assessment Team, it is recommended that these individuals participate in this prep meeting. The guidelines will be reviewed with the State Assessment Team and any questions will be clarified regarding the assessment process. The Assessment Coordinator will further explain the documentation the state needs to prepare for the assessment.

##### *2.1.3.1 State Environment*

In addition to the logistical planning for the Peer Assessment Team and assessment facility, the state must prepare a briefing of the statewide 911 system's current environment for the assessors' review. This current environment is analogous to

#### **State Prep**

**Assessment Coordinator** → Schedule State prep meeting with State

**Assessment Coordinator and State Assessment Team** → Conduct state prep meeting

**State Assessment Team** → Prepare state environment descriptions

**State Assessment Team** → Prepare on-site briefing

**Assessment Coordinator** → Assign Peer Assessment Team

**Assessment Coordinator and Peer Assessment Team** → Conduct initial assessment call

**Assessment Coordinator** → Make assessment assignments

**Assessment Coordinator** → Distribute state environment to Peer Assessment Team

**Peer Assessment Team** → Review state environment

**Coordinator and Peer Assessment Team** → Conduct final preparatory conference call

a self-assessment. After the state prep meeting, the state will begin to address the state environment section of the guidelines matrix document.

The time period to complete the state environment portion of the document begins the day of the state prep meeting. The amount of time for completion should be agreed upon by the Assessment Coordinator and the State Contact Person. The state must submit the completed matrix document to the Assessment Coordinator at the end of this period, in advance of the on-site assessment.

The state’s current environment will serve as the basis for the assessment. It is the state’s responsibility to determine how the state environment descriptions will be completed and who will complete them. As a result, the state is responsible for compiling all information relevant to the assessment from these agencies and providing a comprehensive briefing on guideline topics. The assessment covers a large array of topics and the state must provide information on all aspects of the guidelines prior to the assessment. In order to have a successful assessment, it is critical that the state commit a sufficient amount of advanced preparation time. It is highly recommended that those persons giving presentations during the on-site assessment be involved in preparing the state environment, so any questions posed by the Peer Assessment Team can be answered. There should be communication between the Assessment Coordinator, the state representative, and the briefers throughout the assessment preparation period. The amount of time necessary to fully prepare for an assessment will vary by state due to the various circumstances within an individual state.

An assessment matrix, shown below, will be provided to states for completion. The 83 National 911 Assessment Guidelines are the basis of the matrix. Each guideline includes a “Current Environment” field for the state to input their specific information. States should provide their self-assessment of how the statewide 911 system performs when compared with the criteria contained in the guideline benchmark. The state should attach any supporting information and documentation, such as legislation or standards, which could be useful for the assessors in validating the self-assessment done by the state.

The figure below provides an example of the assessment matrix for the state briefing.

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Guideline:</b> <i>The benchmark on which the statewide system is being assessed.</i>   |   |   |
| <b>Guidance:</b> <i>Information that gives further direction to states to understand and achieve the benchmark (including references to other standards and documents). This is the how one would go about assessing the system against the benchmark. It is a qualitative explanation.</i> |   |   |
| <b>Guideline Cross-reference(s):</b> <i>Other guidelines that have similarities to this particular guideline, if any.</i>   |   |   |
| <b>Minimum Criteria</b>   | <b>Advanced Criteria</b>  | <b>Superior Criteria</b>  |
| <i>This is the minimum level expected of the statewide system to meet the recommended guideline (the benchmark).</i>  | <i>This is an advanced level criterion that denotes the statewide system exceeds the minimum criterion.</i> | <i>This is the highest level criterion that denotes the statewide system exceeds the advanced criterion. This is the model to which states should strive.</i> |
| <b>Rationale:</b> <i>This is the explanation of why the benchmark exists and is considered important.</i>   |   |   |



**Current Environment:** *What is the status currently in state?*

**Reference Material:** *List of reference material from the state that is applicable to this guideline.*

### 2.1.3.2 On-Site Briefing

After the state submits the guidelines matrix to the Assessment Coordinator, briefers must individually prepare their presentations for the on-site portion of the assessment. The length and depth of this preparation will vary by state and briefing topic. The time allotted for the completion of this task begins when the state completes the state environment section of the matrix, or may be developed as the state completes the current environment. The briefing materials must be completed prior to the on-site assessment.

The on-site briefing is the state's opportunity to provide the Peer Assessment Team with an overview of the statewide 911 system and highlight points and issues that the state deems necessary and appropriate for the purposes of the assessment. The briefings are designed to provide assessors with additional information needed to conduct a successful assessment and to provide an opportunity for interactive dialogue, to clarify the information provided, and include any pertinent information.

Presentations should not just re-state what is included in the state environment portion of the guidelines matrix. The on-site briefings are an overview of the state environment and should cover any background information, other supporting documentation, as well as any information that may not have been included in the current environment matrix.

In general, the process should follow the order of the guidelines matrix. The state should focus on making an impression on the assessors of what the strengths and challenges within their statewide 911 system. Some questions to consider while developing the on-site briefing material include the following:

- Is the state doing something new, unique, or different?
- Is there a guideline the state meets at a certain level, but does not feel needs to change?
- What specific circumstances have provided particular challenges?
- What is the state proud of?
- Did assessors ask for more information on a topic prior to the briefing?

The state should consider the briefing topics and select the most appropriate presenters for each. States are encouraged to include representatives of local 911 authorities and other entities that are key to the delivery of 911 in the state so assessors have a well-rounded and accurate representation of the statewide 911 system.

### 2.1.3.3 Peer Assessment Team Assignments

Statewide assessments are a collaborative effort between the State Assessment Team and the Assessment Coordinator/Peer Assessment Team. Following the state prep meeting, the Assessment Coordinator will finalize the schedule and select a team of subject matter experts

from across the 911 industry who are trained in the evaluation process and the guidelines to conduct the assessments. See Appendix A for the training process.

Peer Assessment Team assignments will be made based on availability, expertise, and proximity to the state in which the assessment is being conducted. The Assessment Coordinator will determine the number and type of assessors needed for each assessment. Potential Peer Assessment Team members include the following:

- PSAP Directors
- 911 Authority Executives
- State Directors
- Policy analysts from a state environment
- 911 technology specialists
- General interest person(s).

These positions are suggested to promote diverse areas of expertise in order to conduct a well-rounded assessment.

#### *2.1.3.4 Initial Assessment Conference Call*

Once the Assessment Coordinator has established the Peer Assessment Team, and while the state is preparing the state environment, the Assessment Coordinator will conduct the first conference call with the assigned Peer Assessment Team. During this initial call, the Assessment Coordinator will overview the assessment schedule and logistics. This call will result in a finalized schedule that will provide the Peer Assessment Team with the appropriate information to make their travel arrangements and commit to performing the assessment on the scheduled dates.

#### *2.1.3.5 Assessment Assignments*

Each Peer Assessment Team member will be assigned specific guideline categories in which they are to lead the assessment. While only one person takes the lead in each category, it is likely that their expertise will be needed in other guidelines areas as well. The Peer Assessment Team will need to work together to ensure that everyone's expertise is utilized and applied where necessary.

Based on expertise, assignments for guidelines are suggested below. These scenarios will differ based on the make-up of each Peer Assessment Team.

| Category                              | Assessor(s)                        |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Statutory and Regulatory Environment  | Policy Analyst, State 911 Director |
| Governance                            | State 911 Director                 |
| Evaluation                            | 911 Authority Executive            |
| Public Education                      | PSAP Director                      |
| Human Resources and Training          | PSAP Director                      |
| Functional and Operational Planning   | 911 Authority Executive            |
| Standards                             | 911 Technology Specialist          |
| Security and Continuity of Operations | 911 Technology Specialist          |
| NG911 Maturity Model                  | Policy Analyst, State 911 Director |

*2.1.3.6 Distribution and Review of State Environment Document*

While the Peer Assessment Team is preparing their schedules for the assessment, the state continues preparing the state environment information for the guidelines. Once the state completes this task, the document is sent to the Assessment Coordinator who then distributes it to the Peer Assessment Team members. The Peer Assessment Team members are required to review the guidelines and, most importantly, the state environment section that the state prepared. The assessors must understand not only the guidelines but the state’s self-assessment against those guidelines prior to the start of the assessment. It is important to recognize the time commitment required for assessments.

*2.1.3.7 Final Assessor Preparatory Conference Call*

The Peer Assessment Team is responsible for preparing for the assessment by reviewing the guidelines and their associated state environments. There will be a second Peer Assessment Team conference call after the state submits the state environment document to the Assessment Coordinator. Assessors should utilize the time between conference calls as a preparation period. During the second conference call, the Peer Assessment Team reviews the guidelines together and clarifies any questions assessors may have in advance regarding the assessment. This call can vary in length depending on the assessors and complexity of the state environment.

**2.2 ON-SITE ASSESSMENT**

Given the short amount of time allotted for on-site assessments (three days plus two travel days for a total of one week), it is imperative that Peer Assessment Team members and the supporting State Assessment Team understand and strictly adhere to their respective roles and responsibilities. The Assessment Coordinator will attend all days and be charged with ensuring that the assessment runs smoothly and efficiently. The Assessment Coordinator will act as the “master of ceremonies” and will keep time, give introductions for each agenda item, and keep the assessment in scope. Additionally, the Assessment Coordinator will arrange for an

administrative consultant to attend the assessment. The administrative consultant will be responsible for providing administrative assistance to the Peer Assessment Team, compiling the report, and preparing it for final delivery.

The Peer Assessment Team will use the National 911 Assessment Guidelines to conduct each assessment. The Peer Assessment Team will receive a printed set of documentation (including, but not limited to, this handbook, state self-assessment of current environment, overview presentations, etc.) prior to the assessment. The length of time for the assessment briefings during the assessment week will be based on the schedule agreed to between the state and the Assessment Coordinator during the preliminary conference. A sample agenda may be found in Appendix B.

### **2.2.1 Assessment Day One: Travel and Introductions**

The assessment week will begin on a Monday, which is the predetermined travel day. The Peer Assessment Team should plan to arrive in the afternoon.

The Peer Assessment Team and State Assessment Team will have the opportunity to meet and mingle prior to the formal assessment. An informal social event is intended to allow the State Assessment Team and Peer Assessment Team to introduce themselves, ask questions, and establish a comfort level with one another prior to the on-site briefing session. The assessment process can be intimidating, and providing an opportunity for informal socializing can be key in reducing anxiety, and facilitating open communication among all participants. Open communication is key to completing an assessment report that is relevant, and includes all pertinent information.

| <b>Day One</b>  |
|---|
| <b>Coordinator and Peer Assessment Team</b><br>→ Travel to state                    |
| <b>Coordinator, Peer Assessment Team, and State Team</b><br>→ Informal Social Event |

### **2.2.2 Assessment Day Two: On-Site Briefing**

To begin the assessment process, the state will coordinate an on-site briefing for the assessors from predetermined agency representatives to supplement the information provided in the state environment portion of the guidelines matrix. The on-site briefing is the state's opportunity to provide an overview of the statewide 911 system and highlight points and issues that the state deems necessary and appropriate for the purposes of the assessment.

The state briefing presentations are essential to the assessment process. It is important that the assessors gain all of the information necessary from this section in order to perform the assessment properly. The final product of the assessment is the assessment report and the briefing portion is the only time the assessors will be able to ask questions and gain an understanding of specific circumstances in the state. Please see section 2.1.3.2 of this document for instruction on the contents of the presentations.

| <b>Day Two</b>  |
|---|
| <b>State Assessment Team</b> → Present briefing to Peer Assessment Team |
| <b>Peer Assessment Team</b> → Ask questions                             |

The briefing portion of the assessment will take place from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. local time on Tuesday. After each briefing, the Peer Assessment Team will have the opportunity to ask the presenters any questions for clarification. Briefing activities require a large time commitment from the presenters, who must commit to being at the assessment for their scheduled presentation and are expected to stay for the entire briefing period.

### **2.2.3 Assessment Day Three: Complete Briefing (if necessary), Report Writing, and Creating Consensus**

The morning of day three can be used to provide additional briefings by the state. If the State Assessment Team does not need additional time after Tuesday's presentations to complete their presentations to the Peer Assessment Team, then the Peer Assessment Team can begin their assessment preparation on Wednesday morning.

On Wednesday, the Peer Assessment Team will be sequestered with an administrative consultant and the Assessment Coordinator to begin writing. Assessors will use the state environment portion of the guidelines matrix, their notes from the on-site briefing presentations, and any documentation provided by the state to assess the statewide 911 system against the National 911 Assessment Guidelines and complete their portion of the written assessment report. The report will then be compiled.

The longest, most intense writing session will occur between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. local time. A working lunch will be provided to the Peer Assessment Team.

#### **2.2.3.1 Assessment Matrix**

Assessors will use the assessment matrix to record their assessment and related recommendations for each guideline. The assessment matrix will have the individual guidelines, the current environment provided by the state, and additional fields for the assessor's recommendations and notes/comments. Assessors will determine what criteria the statewide 911 system achieves for each guideline based on the state's current environment and the on-site briefings.

Assessors will include recommendations, where necessary and applicable, on ways that the state could improve its performance for the respective guideline. Assessors can also include notes and comments, as necessary to explain their reasoning and thought process for the assessment.

The state will be evaluated against the national guidelines only, not any other state. Each state is unique and the Peer Assessment Team will make recommendations that are appropriate for each state and their particular structure. States may have similar issues, but each state will be assessed and given unique recommendations for improvement.

#### **Day Three**

**Peer Assessment Team** → Write assessment

**Administrative Consultant** → Compile assessment report

**Coordinator** → Keep assessment on time and on track

**Coordinator** → Facilitate consensus among Peer Assessment Team

The table below provides an example of the assessment matrix, as shown above in the discussion of the current environment of each guideline.

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Guideline:</b> <i>The benchmark on which the statewide system is being assessed.</i>   |   |   |
| <b>Guidance:</b> <i>Information that gives further direction to states to understand and achieve the benchmark (including references to other standards and documents). This is the how one would go about assessing the system against the benchmark. It is a qualitative explanation.</i> |   |   |
| <b>Guideline Cross-reference(s):</b> <i>Other guidelines that have similarities to this particular guideline, if any.</i>   |   |   |
| <b>Minimum Criteria</b>   | <b>Advanced Criteria</b>  | <b>Superior Criteria</b>  |
| <i>This is the minimum level expected of the statewide system to meet the recommended guideline (the benchmark).</i>  | <i>This is an advanced level criterion that denotes the statewide system exceeds the minimum criterion.</i> | <i>This is the highest level criterion that denotes the statewide system exceeds the advanced criterion. This is the model to which states should strive.</i> |
| <b>Rationale:</b> <i>This is the explanation of why the benchmark exists and is considered important.</i>   |   |   |
| <b>Current Environment:</b> <i>What is the status currently in state?</i>   |   |   |
| <b>Reference Material:</b> <i>List of reference material from the state that is applicable to this guideline.</i>   |   |   |
| <b>Ranking:</b> <i>Criteria level that the state meets.</i>   |   |   |
| <b>Assessor Recommendations:</b> <i>What can be done for improvement?</i>   |   |   |
| <b>Assessor Notes/Comments:</b> <i>Additional remarks from the assessors.</i>   |   |   |

All assessment tasks described in this section need to be completed within the set time limit. Keep in mind that these time limits can be extremely challenging for the Peer Assessment Team.

### 2.2.3.2 Assessment Consensus

The assessment and related recommendations will be a consensus product of the entire Peer Assessment Team. Therefore, the entire team will review each the assessments and recommendations made for each group of guidelines. The Assessment Coordinator will facilitate consensus to ensure that all assessors have input on every group of guidelines and come to general agreement on the final recommendations for each. The consensus process will begin immediately following the writing portion. Generally, the consensus session will be held Wednesday afternoon/evening of the assessment. For planning purposes, the consensus process will likely take the most time. It is important that the Peer Assessment Team members keep this in mind and plan their schedules accordingly. A working dinner will be provided to the Peer Assessment Team on day three.

### **2.2.4 Assessment Day Four: Consensus Completion, Report Compilation, Final Review, Presentation, and After-Action Review**

Thursday, day four of the assessment, will continue the consensus process, as this is generally the longest part of the assessment. Following the consensus process, the Peer Assessment Team will need to compose an executive summary and introduction for the assessment report.

#### **2.2.4.1 Executive Summary and Introduction**

In addition to individual recommendations, assessors are responsible for writing an executive summary and introduction to be included in the assessment report. The executive summary is the most important part of the assessment and is intended to be a one- to two-page summation of the most important aspects of the assessment. The executive summary should function as a stand-alone document that summarizes the process and provides highlights of the individual state assessment. The executive summary should contain the most important points and top recommendations. This will help the state to efficiently share the highlights of the report with state officials. The introduction provides background to the reader about the state and frames the assessment recommendations.

For each assessment, the Assessment Coordinator will provide a template for the executive summary and introduction in advance of the last day of the assessment.

To construct the executive summary, the Peer Assessment Team will agree on a few priority recommendations that should be highlighted for the state. Specific guidelines that fall under the identified subject matter should be grouped for discussion and included in the executive summary. Priority subjects may include but are not limited to the following:

- Funding
- Coordination
- Authority
- Training.

#### **2.2.4.2 Assessment Presentation Preparation**

After the preparation of the executive summary, the Peer Assessment Team will prepare a PowerPoint presentation that highlights the state's strengths and presents the high priority recommendations. The read-out will be the final presentation of the assessment to the state. The high priority guidelines and recommendations will not only be in the executive summary, but also will be presented to the state and interested parties at the conclusion of the assessment. The PowerPoint will be presented during the formal assessment presentation.

#### **Day Four**

**Peer Assessment Team** → Prepare introduction and executive summary

**Administrative Consultant** → Prepare assessment report components for delivery

**Peer Assessment Team** → Prepare assessment presentation

**Peer Assessment Team** → Present assessment to state and deliver assessment report

**Peer Assessment Team and Assessment**

**Coordinator** → Conduct after action session

### 2.2.4.3 Assessment Presentation

The one-hour assessment presentation to the state will be delivered on Thursday afternoon. The state has the authority to determine who may attend this session, unless otherwise bound by laws of the state. This presentation is the final step in the assessment process. The Peer Assessment Team will present a short PowerPoint that highlights the assessment and keeps excess commentary to a minimum. After the Peer Assessment Team presents the priorities, each assessor will be given an opportunity to provide personal commentary. The state and its constituents can leave after the presentation.

### 2.2.4.4 After-Action Review

The presentation is followed by an after-action review. The Peer Assessment Team and Assessment Coordinator will have a meeting to share feedback about the assessment and the assessment process in general.

### 2.2.5 Assessment Day Five: Travel

On the fifth day (Friday), the coordinator and the assessors will travel home.

**Day Five**  
**Coordinator and Peer Assessment Team** → Travel back

## 2.3 POST ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

### 2.3.1 Report Finalization Process and Post-Assessment Coordination

Following the assessment, the state will have three to four weeks to review the assessment for inaccuracies that could impact the assessment results.

After the state has reviewed the report and come up with a list of comments (if any), the Assessment Coordinator will schedule a one-hour teleconference to include the Peer Assessment Team, the Assessment Coordinator, and the state representatives. During this meeting, the state and Peer Assessment Team will go over any comments or questions that may have come up during the state's review of the report. During this meeting, the two groups will decide on a path forward that is acceptable to all parties. More meetings may be deemed necessary in order to finalize the report.

**Report Finalization Process**

**State** → Review assessment report and submit comments to Assessment Coordinator

**Assessment Coordinator** → Schedule a post-assessment teleconference with state and Peer Assessment Team

**Peer Assessment Team** → Address state comments

**Assessment Coordinator** → Finalize assessment report

After the post-assessment teleconference, the Peer Assessment Team has one to two weeks to review the state comments; edit recommendations and assessments, if necessary, based on inaccuracies; and prepare the final assessment report. After the state reviews the assessment and any inaccuracies have been resolved by the Peer Assessment Team, the report is finalized. The Assessment Coordinator will have one to



two weeks to coordinate the inclusion of any final edits based on the Peer Assessment Team final review.

The written comments that are received from the state and follow-up responses from the Peer Assessment Team can be added into the report if it is the state's preference. If there are any additional actions or addendums to the report that the state feels would be helpful in making the document useful for their needs, they should contact the Assessment Coordinator with these requests or to dialogue about their concerns. The assessment team is committed to making this process helpful and useful to the state.

Once the report is finalized by the Assessment Coordinator, the report is turned over to and owned by the state, not the coordinating agency, or the Peer Assessment Team. The finished assessment is a product of the Peer Assessment Team members and is not endorsed or approved by the coordinating agency. The coordinating agency will retain copies of the assessments for research and data purposes. The coordinating agency will not release the assessment without the express consent of the state. Any results used for research will only be released on an aggregate basis across states and regions. Individual state assessment results will not be published or released during research activities.

After the final report has been completed, the Coordinating Agency will continue to work with the State Assessment Team to develop and execute a plan for the utilization of the contents of the written assessment report. The State Assessment Team's initial goals, including what the state hopes to achieve through the assessment and the intended audience for the assessment report, will be reviewed. The Coordinating Agency will also provide support to the State Assessment Team in order to help them use the written assessment report as evidence for providing support to the PSAPs and 911 authorities within the statewide system on issues that are important to the advancement of 911.

## APPENDIX A: ASSESSOR TRAINING

Assessor training is an on-going process; ever-evolving to meet the needs of current and future assessors.

Assessors will be trained to communicate positive, constructive feedback to the state. Training should be standardized so that each assessment is run in the same manner, regardless of the make-up of the Peer Assessment Team. Training should also allow for improvements from lessons learned in previous assessments.

Once there is a pool of experienced assessors, a limit of two new trainee assessors can be with the team for on-the job training from seasoned assessors.

The Assessment Coordinator is charged with recruiting potential assessors, assembling each Peer Assessment Team, and coordinating information related to their travel and accommodations. Peer Assessment Teams will be made up of a combination of subject matter experts in the 911 industry and could include, a PSAP Director, a 911 Authority Executive, a State Director, a Policy Analyst, a 911 Technology Specialist, and a General Interest person from the industry.

Assessors should have knowledge in one or several of the category subject areas; optimally, they should have participated in on at least one other assessment as a trainee and they should have an understanding of the consensus process. The assessors that are recruited should have good communication, interpersonal, and writing skills. Assessors should have a demonstrated history of working constructively in a group setting.

The Assessment Coordinator will consider the size and environment of a state in order to select assessors who can most effectively assess that state based on their own backgrounds.

Assessors will be given web-based training on the following:

- The role of an assessor and what is expected of an assessor
- Content of the guidelines
- The Assessment Handbook
- Things to look for during data gathering
- How to prepare the report using the assessment matrix.

Moving forward, the Peer Assessment Team should have at least three members who have already performed an assessment. It would be difficult and time-consuming to perform an assessment with more than two new assessors per team.

## **TALKING POINTS: PEER ASSESSMENT TEAM BRIEFING BY ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR**

Welcome all members. Recognize taking time out of their busy schedules to join this worthwhile project.

- Reinforce that this is not an assessment done by the coordinating agency, but rather will be done solely by the Peer Assessment Team. The coordinating agency will not take part in making recommendations or assessing the state.
- The assessment report will be a consensus report of the Peer Assessment Team.

### Review the Process

- Listen to State Assessment Team for 1-1.5 days – State Assessment Team is selected by the State 911 Authority, or whoever is facilitating the assessment from the state.
- The process is based on comparison of the 911 activities within the state (current environment) with the National 911 Assessment Guidelines criteria and recommendations on how the state can achieve the superior criteria, if the state has not already met superior.
- During the briefing process, gather information. Do not discuss strengths or weaknesses of various components. That will be left for the assessment report.
- After the briefing process, the Peer Assessment Team will be sequestered in order to write the assessment report.
- Be constructive. Highlight strengths.
- The process will become clear as we proceed.
- The coordinating agency representative will let you know when you are behind schedule.

## TEAM INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING REPORT

- Use the assessment matrix to assess the statewide 911 system against the criteria for each guideline.
- Make recommendations for improvement to the statewide 911 system that would move the state toward achieving the superior criteria.
- Include notes and comments, as necessary, to explain your reasoning and thought process for your assessment or recommendation. While writing the report, keep in mind the state's initial goals for this assessment and report.
- Each Peer Assessment Team member will assess and make recommendations for their assigned guidelines.
- Each Peer Assessment Team member will present the highlights of the statewide 911 system status, their assessment and recommendations for each guideline to the entire Peer Assessment Team, to gain consensus and additional recommendations from other team members.
- The assessment report is a consensus document, so the prose must represent the entire Peer Assessment Team.
- Turn in completed guidelines when you complete the matrix for each guidelines category. The administrative team member will let you know if you are behind schedule.
- Review and edit your initial assessments and recommendations as you write them, then the Peer Assessment Team will edit them all together.
- Select one Peer Assessment Team member to compile the introduction. This will usually be whoever finishes their assigned guidelines first.
- The team will decide on priority recommendations that will be highlighted in an executive summary. Follow the provided template to draft the executive summary and introduction.
- Each assessor will provide a short biography to the administrative team member to include in the assessment report.
- Decide who will present the draft report highlights to the state. Compose an assessment presentation.

- The draft report will be completed and ready for the assessment presentation no later than 3:00 PM on Thursday.

## **APPENDIX B: ASSESSMENT TOOLS**

The assessment tools may be found on the following pages.

## INITIAL STATE MEETING NOTES

This initial state meeting will be conducted over the phone and will take approximately two hours.

- Thank state for their participation.
  - The goal of this program is to offer a tool for your state to use in improving its statewide 911 system. This is the state's report to use.
  - Ask the state what it hopes to get out of this assessment and who it intends to distribute the report to.
  - This is a joint effort between the state 911 authority, the coordinating agency, and the private sector. This is an excellent example of Federal, State, and private sector cooperation.
- Give history of the National 911 Assessment Program.
- Give overview of assessment process.
  - The statewide 911 system is measured against the National 911 Assessment Guidelines. The guidelines were developed using a consensus process by the National 911 Assessment Workgroup made up of 911 stakeholders.
  - The guidelines are not government standards.
  - The Peer Assessment Team will be comprised of subject matter experts that are hand-selected for the purposes of your state's assessment.
  - The Peer Assessment Team evaluates the following nine areas:
    - Statutory and Regulatory Environment
    - Governance
    - Functional and Operational Planning
    - Standards
    - Security and Continuity of Operations
    - Human Resources and Training
    - Evaluation
    - Public Education
    - NG911 Maturity Model.
  - The Peer Assessment Team does not create a report card, nor do they compare one state to another; they only compare your state to the guidelines.
  - This is a consensus report of the Peer Assessment Team. **The coordinating agency is not involved in the recommendations.** The coordinating agency is a

facilitator for the process only. The coordinating agency's job is to see that the report is completed by the established deadline.

- The report will analyze the state's 911 system using the National 911 Assessment Guidelines and give recommendations for each group of guidelines, where appropriate. The Peer Assessment Team determines the criteria achieved by the state for each guideline based on what is learned at the briefing, and makes recommendations on how the state could reach the next criteria level.
  - The entire process will take five days, including travel for the assessors. A representative of the Peer Assessment Team will present highlights of the draft report to the State 911 authority representatives, briefing participants and guests. **THIS PRESENTATION IS NOT A DISCUSSION.**
  - Following the assessment, the state will have three to four weeks to review the assessment for inaccuracies that could impact the assessment results. In turn, the Peer Assessment Team has one to two weeks to edit recommendations and assessments that were based on inaccuracies.
  - You must go into this process recognizing that this report is a constructive assessment and it must be used appropriately.
- Review agreement and agree to terms
    - Discuss the logistics that the state will be responsible for planning and providing.
    - Preliminary Logistics to be agreed to during this meeting.
      - Schedule
      - Who will administer the logistics?
      - Administrative Support
      - Time commitment for pre-assessment briefing
      - Discuss working Social Event (cash bar, ambiance, purpose, etc.)
    - The cost for providing the team for an assessment will be determined and agreed to prior to the assessment. This money is used to provide for the cost of travel, per diem (lodging and meals), administrative support and honoraria for the Peer Assessment Team members. This value represents the cost associated with the team and the administrative support for the assessment. Additional cost may include travel and lodging of state briefing participants, as required. This money is not to be used to fund the travel of coordinating agency representatives or other Federal Government partners. They must travel under their own travel funds.
    - Travel (airfare, rental cars, POV miles, etc.) and hotel costs (base room rate and taxes only) will be paid for up-front by the state, wherever possible. Meals should be covered for Peer Assessment Team members, including travel days and



meals while producing the final report. An honorarium will be calculated prior to the assessment, to include travel days. Administrative support is needed.

- Walk the state through the steps of preparing for the assessment.
  - Stress the large time commitment required leading up to and during the assessment week.
  - The state will need to convene a team that will tell the story of the statewide 911 system to the assessors, both with a written presentation and an oral presentation at the on-site assessment.
  - The State Assessment Team should include representation from any entity that is key to the provision of 911 service in the state.
  - The requesting state is responsible for preparing a current environment for the Peer Assessment Team. The current environment will outline the accomplishments that have been achieved for each guideline, as well as barriers to implementation of superior criteria, if the state does not already meet superior standard. A guidelines matrix will be provided for the state to complete.

## SAMPLE ASSESSMENT PROCESS SCHEDULE

### *Detailed Schedule and Logistics of On-Site Assessment*

Monday – Friday

Monday: Evening Networking Event @ 6:00 – 7:00 PM

- Logistics:
  - Select a location, either in hotel or nearby, for an informal gathering
    - If you select a nearby restaurant, the Peer assessment team can purchase their own beverages and will be on their own for dinner (which they could purchase in the chosen restaurant).
    - If you decide to host the gathering in a reserved room in the hotel, please have a cash bar available. In this instance, you can provide dinner for those who attend, but please keep in mind that you will still have to reimburse those who are not able to attend for dinner.

Tuesday: State Assessment Team Presentations to Peer Assessment Team

- Logistics:
  - In the hotel, please reserve 1 conference room, large enough to hold both teams and any additional guests the state would like to invite.
  - You may set up the room in any format that will be most fitting for the State Assessment Team to present.
  - 12:00 – Schedule lunch with State Assessment Team and Peer Assessment Team.
  - Afternoon: Continue with presentations on state's self-evaluation.

Wednesday: ½ Day State Assessment Team Presentation (If necessary)/ ½ Day Peer Assessment Team Assessment Prep

- Logistics:
  - In order to make the day-to-day meetings transition easily, please reserve the same conference room in the hotel for all days of the assessment (Tuesday – Thursday).
  - If the State Assessment Team does not need additional time after Tuesday's presentations to finalize their presentation to the Peer Assessment Team, then the Peer Assessment Team will begin their assessment preparation on Wednesday morning.
  - Lunch: If the 911 coordinator would like to have lunch with the Peer Assessment Team, please make plans to either have a catered lunch at the hotel, or to go to a nearby restaurant.
    - The purpose of having lunch with the Peer Assessment Team is to provide all parties the opportunity for any last-minute clarification or answer any last-minute questions before the Peer Assessment Team writes their report.
    - The Peer Assessment Team can also be responsible for their own lunch and they will include their food purchase in their expense report for reimbursement at the end of the trip.

- The Peer Assessment Team will need access to the conference room late into Wednesday night, to finish writing the report.

Thursday: ½ Day Peer Assessment Team Briefing Preparation/ Mid-Afternoon Peer Assessment Team presentations to State Assessment Team

- Logistics:
  - Please ensure the same conference room is available early Thursday morning through 6:00 PM on Thursday.
  - If desired, the State can invite others (e.g. PSAP managers) to attend the presentations so the Peer Assessment Team briefs the PSAP managers, along with the State Assessment Team, on their assessment.
  - We will let you know if the Peer Assessment Team or NHTSA would like to include anyone in the list of invitees for the report read-out.

Friday: Travel Day for Peer Assessment Team

- Logistics:

The Peer Assessment Team will be using Friday to travel back to their home towns.

