



DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

[Docket No. CISA-2026-0034]

Agency Information Collection Activities: **Evaluation of Emergency Communications Division Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program Training Program**

AGENCY: Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

ACTION: 60-Day Notice and request for comments; New collection (Request for a new OMB Control Number, **1670–NEW**)

SUMMARY: The Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO)/Program Analysis & Evaluation (PA&E) within Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency CISA submits the following Information Collection Request (ICR) to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and clearance in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

DATES: Comments are encouraged and will be accepted until *[INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]*.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments, identified by docket number Docket # CISA-2026-0034, by following the instructions below for submitting comment via the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Instructions: All comments received must include the agency name and docket number Docket # CISA-2026-0034. All comments received will be posted without change to <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information provided.

Docket: For access to the docket to read background documents or comments received, go to <http://www.regulations.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:. Yunsoo Park, 202-766-0098,

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-435), or the Evidence Act, promotes the use of evidence to inform decision-making and requires federal agencies to undertake activities toward this end. Specifically, the Evidence Act requires agencies to develop Learning Agendas and Annual Evaluation Plans.

CISA's Learning Agenda questions are documented in the DHS FY 2022-2026 Learning Agenda. In addition, its evaluations are included in the DHS Annual Evaluation Plans, indicating that the Department has recognized those evaluations as "significant." The evaluation of the Emergency Communications Division (ECD COMU) Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP) Training Program is one such significant evaluation and was included in the DHS FY 2023 Annual Evaluation Plan. CISA's Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO)/Program Analysis & Evaluation (PA&E) Division (and any contractors, as applicable) will be conducting this evaluation study.

Evaluation of Emergency Communications Division (ECD COMU) Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP) Training Program

For over fifteen years, ICTAP has trained people in seven core specialties to create a cadre of emergency communication professionals. The long-term goal of the communication training program is to prepare and support a population of responders to fill critical emergency communications response roles in federal, state, local, and tribal territory partner organizations. The intended result is a qualified group of credentialed responders that can enable continuity of communications during a catastrophic incident or event. Achieving this goal is dependent on whether the training participants continue

in the credentialing pipeline after attending the training to achieve higher levels of qualification for advanced emergency communication specific roles.

The purpose of the evaluation is to understand the extent to which the COMU ICTAP training program creates, maintains, and deploys a qualified group of credentialed responders. The following questions guide the current evaluation:

1. To what extent does the Communications Unit (COMU) training enable and support interested state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) stakeholders to officially qualify for and earn COMU credentials? Are there points of relative strength and weakness in the training and the credentialing pipeline, and how does this vary by credential?
2. To what extent do COMU training and program attendees apply delivered principles after receiving training to enhance interoperability or integrated, collaborative communications planning? What factors enable or impede application of the principles?
3. To what extent, and in what ways, does the COMU position-specific training contribute to enhanced interoperability and integrated collaborative communication planning in federal and SLTT partner organizations?

This is a new information collection. Information will be collected by CISA PA&E (and any contractors, as applicable) using surveys and interviews. The potential respondent universe for this study consists of all adults who took one or more emergency communications trainings through the ECD ICTAP program between 2007 and 2022. The burden for respondents will be minimized by restricting the survey and interview length, by conducting interviews at times convenient for respondents, and by not requiring record-keeping or written responses on the part of the respondents. The evaluation team will only request information required for the purposes of the evaluation.

Surveys. The online survey will be created and sent using Qualtrics, a survey software. The evaluation team will provide a link via email that participants can use to access and complete the survey using a tablet, smartphone, or laptop. Electronic submission will ensure the maximum response rate while also permitting respondents to complete the survey at a time of their own choosing.

The survey will ask questions on the following topics: (1) attainment of additional credentials after taking the initial training, (2) whether they are working in the field, (3) factors that hindered their ability to perform the role they trained for and/or attain additional credentials, and (4) factors that aided their ability to perform the role they trained for and/or attain additional credentials.

Interviews. The evaluation team will also conduct interviews with up to 100 participants who complete the online survey and agree to participate in the interview. The interviews will be conducted by telephone or via a web-based conference call platform, such as Microsoft Teams, at a time that is most convenient for participants

The interviews will collect in-depth information about: (1) whether trainees are working in the field they prepared for and how much the training prepared them for working in the field, (2) potential facilitators and barriers to attaining qualifications, (3) whether their training enhanced interoperability and integrated collaborative communication planning in their organization, (4) whether the training and credentialing process overall contributes to enhanced interoperability and integrated collaborative communication planning in federal and SLTT partner organizations. Some topics will intentionally be addressed in both the survey and interview, since the interviews will provide more depth and context for understanding the information collected in the surveys.

Without collecting this information, CISA will not meet the requirements of the Evidence Act to conduct program evaluations—particularly, this evaluation, which was included in the Department of Homeland Security FY 2023 Annual Evaluation Plan as a “significant”

evaluation. Without collecting this information, CISA stakeholders will not be able to understand the availability, readiness, and use of trainees for specific types of COMU roles and how they enrich communications planning in federal and SLTT partner organizations. Thus, we will not have the information needed to learn how CISA and DHS can update training products and services, recommend improvements to the National Incident Management System and Incident Command Systems architecture, and better assist partner organizations in prioritizing and addressing COMU gaps. Without collecting this information, we will not be able to assess how to best engage federal and SLTT partner organizations, as well as technical assistance providers, to improve plans that build and sustain capabilities to maintain readiness.

The Office of Management and Budget is particularly interested in comments which:

1. Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;
2. Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;
3. Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
4. Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submissions of responses.

ANALYSIS

AGENCY: Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

Title: Evaluation of Emergency Communications Division (ECD COMU Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP) Training Program

OMB Number: 1670-NEW

Frequency: ONCE

Affected Public: EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONALS WHO ATTENDED ICTAP TRAININGS BETWEEN 2007 AND 2022

Number of Respondents: 16,206

Estimated Time Per Respondent: 0.333 hours per survey; 0.875 hours per interview

Total Burden Hours: 5,456.17 hours

Total Annual Burden Cost: \$259,310.52

Total Annual Government Burden Cost: \$285,814.70

Winfield P Werntz,
Acting Chief Information Officer,
Department of Homeland Security,
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency.

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