

EAST TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Homeland Security Advisory Committee

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This document clarifies the policies and procedures which will govern the East Texas Council of Government's (ETCOG) Homeland Security Advisory Committee (HSAC) to comply with the requirements of the Interagency Cooperation Contract between the Office of the Governor (OOG), State Administrative Agency (SAA) and ETCOG. This document shall become effective immediately, upon approval by the HSAC and the ETCOG Executive Committee, and shall remain in effect until it is rescinded or revised by the HSAC and ratified by the ETCOG Executive Committee.

SECTION I. MEMBERSHIP OF THE HSAC

The HSAC is a volunteer committee comprised of a multi-disciplinary representation and Subject Matter Experts (SME) from the 14 county ETCOG region. HSAC membership include but not limited to individuals from the following groups/disciplines:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Fire Service | 6. Regional Advisory Council |
| 2. Law Enforcement | 7. Disaster Response |
| 3. Emergency Medical Response | 8. Health Districts; and |
| 4. Regional Weather Service | 9. Emergency Management. |
| 5. Ambulance Service | 10. TxDOT |

All members must be a subject matter expert in a related field on the list. HSAC members may represent more than one field.

No more than twenty-four members shall be appointed to the HSAC for a two year term. Any current and/or past member may be re-appointed to serve unlimited terms. Recommendations may be made by Executive Committee members, Board Members, HSAC members, and/or ETCOG staff. Appointments shall be confirmed by the ETCOG Executive Committee.

SECTION II - OFFICERS OF THE HSAC AND THEIR DUTIES

A. Chair: Preside at all meetings of the HSAC, call regular/special meetings of the HSAC. Appoint temporary sub-committees to perform specific tasks related to HSAC business.

B. Vice-Chair: During the absence or incapacity of the Chair the Vice-Chair shall have all the duties, responsibilities, powers, and privileges of the Chair.

C. Term of Office. Term of office for all officers will be two years. Each officer must be an HSAC committee member. After the two year term the position will be open for nominations from the HSAC. Officers may be re-elected to serve unlimited terms. The proposed slate of officers shall be recommended by the ETCOG Executive Committee, to the ETCOG Executive Board, for confirmation after elections, at the biennial meeting for all advisory committees.

D. Vacancy. In the event of a vacancy for the position of any officer, the HSAC will recommend a replacement to the ETCOG Executive Committee no later than the next regular meeting following notification that such vacancy exists.

SECTION III - MEETINGS OF THE HSAC

A. Regular meetings to conduct business of the HSAC shall be called by the Chairperson or ETCOG staff. Notice shall be 5 business days in advance of all meetings.

B. A special meeting may be held at any reasonable time and place if called by the Committee Chairman, by agreement of 3 Committee members, or by ETCOG staff. At least one week notice (5 business days) shall be given of any special meeting.

C. The HSAC shall determine the time and place of its regularly scheduled meeting. Notice of all meetings shall be emailed to the members at least 5 business days in advance of when a meeting is to be held. Meetings may be held in person, by teleconferencing, by phone or conference call.

D. All members are expected to be present at each meeting. Any member who cannot be present at called HSAC meetings shall contact ETCOG at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting, stating their inability to be present and the reasons for same.

E. Any member who is absent from two consecutive HSAC meetings without notification to the ETCOG Staff, as determined by the HSAC Chairman, shall be considered to have resigned from membership in the HSAC, and shall be replaced at the discretion of the Chair, with the consent of the ETCOG Executive Committee.

F. ETCOG will maintain written and/or recorded documentation of all HSAC proceedings related to Homeland Security business.

G. ETCOG must maintain all scoring sheets, prioritization documents, minutes, grant applications, and other vital written records of meetings, in addition to, electronic, or other media related to the services and requirements identified in the Interagency Cooperation Contract, for a minimum of three years after the final payment under the terms of the contract.

SECTION IV - ACTIVITIES OF THE HSAC

Homeland Security Strategic planning, including but not limited to the following:

1. Identifying Homeland Security problems/concerns and regional hazards;
2. Determining the needs of the region;
3. Analyzing the existing Radio system and regional Critical Infrastructure and available resources; and
4. Establishing goals and priorities.

The HSAC will ensure that funding recommendations on grant applications are based upon:

- a. Any state strategies identified by SAA;
- b. Homeland Security priorities identified in ETCOG's Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA);
- c. The eligibility, reasonableness, and cost effectiveness of proposed projects; and
- d. Current COG policies and bylaws.

Grant applications that will be reviewed and prioritized by the HSAC include, but are not limited to the following funding sources through the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP):

- State Homeland Security Program-(SHSP);
- Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Activities-(LETPA)

SECTION V - GRANT APPLICATION REVIEW AND SCORING

A. Project Scoring Criteria

The HSAC will review each application. Each application will be scored by the following criteria of risk assessment:

1. Is the project & need identified (Low, 1 to High 10)
2. Is the jurisdiction at high risk if project is not funded (Low, 1 to High 10)
3. Can the jurisdiction sustain the project (Low, 1 to High 10)
4. Is the quantity requested in line with the amount of staff & apparatus (Low, 1 to High 10)
5. Is the quote in line with the average vendor pricing (Low, 1 to High 10)
6. Was the required paperwork submitted (Low, 1 to High 10)
7. Is the project a high priority for jurisdiction or region (Low, 1 to High 10)
8. Is this project beneficial on a regional level (Low, 1 to High 10)

Per OOG requirements, applicants will receive a 5 point deduction on their score if they have been placed on vendor hold during the last two grant years and/or when an applicant has been on vendor hold for longer than 30 days. (-5 points each/ -10 points total)

ETCOG staff will tabulate all applicant scores and create a prioritization list ranking each application from highest to lowest score. HSAC members will assign a final scores for all applications, signed and dated by the HSAC chairman on the approved scoring document. The approved definitions of key factors will be used to evaluate each application submitted for review. Any relevant guidance received for the current application cycle will be provided to the HSAC prior to its initiation of the scoring process.

A representative from each applicant organization shall attend the prioritization meeting either in person or by phone. Each applicant will be given five minutes for their presentation. After each presentation, questions may be asked by HSAC members and answered by the applicant. Failure of an applicant agency to attend the HSAC Prioritization Hearing will deem the application ineligible for HSAC review and prioritization, which will result in a score of "0" with no recommendation for funding.

B. Project Scoring Process

Once the HSAC risk assesses all of the applications for approval, they will be recommended as a project to the ETCOG Executive Committee for approval and then entered into the EGRANTS website for approval from the OOG. All applicant agencies must be located within Anderson, Camp, Cherokee, Gregg, Harrison, Henderson, Marion, Panola, Rains, Rusk, Smith, Upshur, Van Zandt or Wood counties; the 14-county ETCOG region.

The ETCOG Executive Committee will review all Homeland Security priority rankings, recommended by the HSAC, and approve submission of final rankings to the OOG.

C. Continuation Projects

A continuation application may lose points if the previous year's monitoring reports indicate non-compliance with certified assurances, failure to complete program progress reports, failure to submit required financial reports, failure to comply with quality and assurance recommendations, if they were placed on vendor hold within the last 2 years, or at the discretion of the HSAC.

D. Tiebreaker Procedure

Should any two or more applicants receive the identical number of total points, during prioritization process, the tie shall be resolved as follows: The highest score and the lowest score of each applicant shall be removed, and the applicant with the highest remaining score shall be ranked ahead of the other(s). This process shall continue until all ties have been resolved. Should any two or more applicants have identical scores, resulting in a tie which cannot be resolved in the manner stated above, that tie shall be resolved by majority vote of all eligible scoring members of the Committee who originally participated in the scoring of that group of applications.

E. Appeal Procedure

Any applicant who wishes to appeal the ranking given to any application may appear before the Executive Committee at the same regularly scheduled meeting at which the HSAC rankings will be presented for approval. The appealing applicant may give a brief presentation of 5 minutes to present his or her appeal. The decision of the Executive Committee shall be final.

Applicants wishing to appeal must submit written notification of intent to appeal, signed by the applicant's authorized official, to ETCOG's Director of Public Safety and the sitting HSAC Chair at least 48-hours before the ETCOG Executive Committee's next scheduled meeting where the HSAC priority list of applications recommended for funding will be approved.

F. Notification of Funding Recommendations

Following approval by the Executive Committee of the HSAC Priority Rankings, ETCOG staff shall notify all grant applicants, within ten (10) business days that their application was either Recommended or Not Recommended for Funding.

Notifications will be sent via email and posted on the ETCOG website and shall include the following statement:

“Pursuant to the provisions of the Texas Administrative Code, after the HSAC reviews and prioritizes the grant applications, and the COG’s governing body approves the priority listing, the COG submits the written priority listing and the grant applications to the OOG. Based upon the COG’s priority listing, the OOG will verify the eligibility, reasonableness and cost-effectiveness of the proposed project, and the availability of funding, and will render final funding decisions on these grant applications. The COG will notify grantees of any changes in the funding recommendations.”

G. Notification of Homeland Security Grant Awards

ETCOG staff shall contact each grantee by email, informing the grantee of a grant award within forty-eight (48) hours after the COG receives notice that the grant is awarded to the grantee by the OOG. The OOG will notify grantees by e-mail that a grant is awarded, or that a grant application has been denied funding.

SECTION VI - CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

A. To avoid conflict of interest, members of the ETCOG governing body, HSAC members and ETCOG staff members must abstain from voting on any application during the prioritization process if they are, within the third degree by consanguinity or within the second degree by affinity:

1. Employed by the applicant agency and works for the unit or division that would administer the grant, if awarded; or
2. Serves on any board that oversees the unit/division administering the grant if awarded; or
3. Owns or controls any interest in a business entity or other non-governmental organization that benefits, directly or indirectly, from activities with the applicant agency; or
4. Receives funds from the applicant as a result of the grant; uses or receives a substantial amount of tangible goods, services, or funds from the applicant agency.

B. At the beginning of each prioritization meeting, the HSAC Chair shall request members to clearly identify any possible conflict of interest when scoring applications.

1. Members will clearly state their abstention from voting on certain applications they do not score due to a conflict of interest.
2. It shall be written in the minutes that the Members “ABSTAIN” from voting on the project that causes the conflict of interest.
3. The tabulation of scores for an application is based on the number of members eligible to vote.

SECTION VII - COMPLIANCE WITH ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

A. All policies, rules, and regulations set forth in this document are in compliance with the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 1, Part 1, Chapter 3, and the state and federal statutes, rules and regulations adopted by reference in TAC. The above can be viewed on the Internet at: <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/tac/index.shtml>.

B. The TAC applies to all applications for funding and grants submitted to the OOG. Subchapter A covers the general provisions for grant funding. Subchapter B addresses general eligibility and budget rules for grant funding. Subchapter C outlines specific eligibility and budget rules applicable to various funding sources available to the OOG; these rules are in addition to all other general rules in this chapter. Subchapter D provides rules detailing the conditions the OOG may place on grants. Subchapter E sets out the rules related to administering grants. Subchapter F specifies rules regarding program monitoring and audits. Grant applicants are encouraged to be familiar with all these rules prior to submitting an application to the OOG.

SECTION VIII - GRANT APPLICATION WORKSHOPS

A. At the beginning of each new Homeland Security grant cycle ETCOG will hold one or more Grant Application Workshops, which shall be scheduled by the ETCOG staff and is open to anyone who wishes to attend. Workshop dates/times shall be sent via e-mail, regular mail, fax, and/or telephone message to every potential applicant who has requested such notification.

B. At each workshop, ETCOG staff will provide current grantees, potential grantees, and other requestors with a sample the scoring instrument and criteria to be used during the grant prioritization process, all available information about grant application forms, application deadlines, and any other relevant information or materials.

C. **MANDATORY ATTENDANCE:** Attendance is mandatory each year for all current and new applicant agencies/jurisdictions. At least one person per agency/jurisdiction must attend the current year's grant workshop presented by ETCOG. Attending a grant application workshop conducted outside of the ETCOG region does not substitute for the required attendance for the applicants applying in the ETCOG region.

D. If attendance at the regularly scheduled workshops is not possible for an applicant, the applicant must contact the ETCOG Public Safety Director in advance of the workshop date, to make other arrangements.

E. **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:** New applicants will be provided technical assistance as time permits. ETCOG staff will answer questions for both current grantees and new applicants via telephone consultation and email as much as practical. OOG staff will provide technical assistance on the operation of the interactive, web based application.

F. **DEADLINES:** Application submission deadlines will be set by the OOG and all applications will be submitted directly to the OOG electronically, via the eGrants website at <https://egrants.governor.state.tx.us/>.

ETCOG will notify by e-mail all potential applicants who have requested grant information, of the OOG deadlines established for the various funding sources. Such notification will be made within forty-eight (48) hours of ETCOG being notified by OOG of the deadlines, and/or within forty-eight (48) hours of ETCOG's receipt of the request from the potential grant applicant.

SECTION IX - FUNDING GUIDELINES

A. GENERAL APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY.

To be eligible for funding through ETCOG the applicant agency must be an ETCOG unit of local government response agency (Police or Fire Department) within the ETCOG region.

Eligibility requirements for the Homeland Security Grant Program are set by the OOG/SAA. Please refer to the eGrants website at the following link to review applicant eligibility requirements - <https://egrants.gov.texas.gov>.

Prior to August 1st of the award year, all applicant counties MUST meet these eligibility requirements:

1. Must maintain 90% completion of Computerized Criminal History dispositions (CCH) for both Adult and Juvenile cases.
2. Register all Grant funded equipment into Texas Regional Response Network (TRRN).
3. Must maintain all Emergency Operations plans to intermediate level.
4. Must Provide A-133 Audit reporting and Certification information
5. Certify NIMS training per agency and
6. Active Unique Entity ID (UEI) number registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) website.

B. FUNDING DETERMINATIONS.

1. The ETCOG Executive Committee meets on the first Thursday of every month except for July and
2. The HSAC and the ETCOG Executive Committee will submit the HSAC's priority list recommendations to the OOG for each funding source.
3. The OOG does not have an appeals process for grant applicants. All funding decisions are final and made at the sole discretion of the Governor's Office.

Homeland Security Committee Policies and Procedures History:

Adopted by the HSAC – Approved by the Executive Committee –