

Draft Assessment Handbook
for the National 9-1-1
Assessment Guidelines



June 2012



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The goals of the 9-1-1 Resource Center are to provide technical assistance and information to PSAPs and 9-1-1 authorities, and to monitor the progress of 9-1-1 authorities across the United States in implementing more advanced 9-1-1 systems based upon next generation networks and facilities. The purpose of the 9-1-1 Resource Center can be described in the following statement:

“The 9-1-1 Resource Center is THE FIRST place to go for 9-1-1 information and technical assistance.”

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1 INTRODUCTION

Many states are taking steps toward improving their statewide 9-1-1 systems and implementing technologies and operations that enable inter-jurisdictional communications. The development and maintenance of 9-1-1 has largely been a local issue, driven by the capabilities of local telephone companies to deliver various levels of service and the desires of local jurisdictions. As new technologies are integrated, states with strong state-level coordination are better able to make advancements in technology and operations; demonstrating that state-level 9-1-1 coordination and leadership has been and will continue to be paramount to the successful evolution of 9-1-1.

Statewide 9-1-1 system assessments can provide a method for state coordination agencies to gauge the status of state and local programs, and to identify strengths and weaknesses within the current system. Where they exist, state oversight entities can provide support for public safety answering points (PSAPs) and 9-1-1 authorities in many areas that are important to the advancement of 9-1-1 technologies. As 9-1-1 becomes more complicated and interconnected, coordination becomes more important to all entities that are part of public safety.

1.1 NATIONAL 9-1-1 ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

The National 911 Program's (Program) goal is to improve 9-1-1 systems across the country. The Program took the first step toward that goal when it undertook a project to bring together stakeholders to establish a comprehensive benchmark for State 9-1-1 authorities to measure the progress and status of their statewide 9-1-1 systems. The National 9-1-1 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 9-1-1 system assessments in an effort to help states improve their 9-1-1 systems. NAGWG is comprised of 9-1-1 professionals from local and state government, national associations, and industry experts.

The mission statement of NAGWG was to "Develop consensus guidelines that can be used statewide to determine the status of the 9-1-1 system within a state."

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

- **Consensus Guidelines** – A set of activities or functions developed by 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 9-1-1 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 9-1-1 service for all public and private entities within the state.
- **9-1-1 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.

NAGWG had considerable discussion on the variety of ways 9-1-1 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 9-1-1 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.

There are a total of 74 guidelines in eight categories. The categories and associated number of guidelines are outlined below.

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)

1.2 STATEWIDE 9-1-1 SYSTEM ASSESSMENTS

The guidelines provide uniform goals for the 9-1-1 community across the United States and territories, and will be used as benchmarks for statewide 9-1-1 system assessments conducted at the state operations level. An assessment will evaluate where a state's system currently stands, provide a path for enhancement, and provide an objective evaluation to help states leverage resources. States are not required to adopt the guidelines. Assessments will be conducted on a voluntary basis. The guidelines will continue to be updated as technology and the public safety communications environment changes.

It is important to note that peer evaluation is where much of the value lies in the assessment process. While a self-assessment may help states in some cases, it would not be as valuable as input from third-party industry peers who are not intimately involved in the state and have no vested interest in the assessment results.

This handbook is intended to be a tool for use throughout the assessment process. It lays out the procedures and processes from an assessment request to the final assessment report. As guidelines change, the assessment handbook will be adjusted to best serve the purpose of the guidelines. The assessment tools found in Appendix B should be used to facilitate the assessment process.

2 ASSESSMENT PROGRAM GUIDE

2.1 ASSESSMENT PREPARATION

2.1.1 Assessment Request

State coordination is necessary to establish the credibility of an assessment and to facilitate the necessary information gathering. Because of this, a request for an assessment should come from the state 9-1-1 authority. In the absence of a state 9-1-1 authority, the assessment request must come from an appropriate state authority or with the expressed written consent of an appropriate state authority. Requests must demonstrate that the assessment will be done in cooperation with the state 9-1-1 authority, where applicable. This coordination is important because the state 9-1-1 authority will need to coordinate 9-1-1 stakeholders throughout the state who will provide information that will become the basis of the assessment. Information from these 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 a memorandum of understanding that lays out the commitments required for a successful assessment.

The official assessment request must be e-mailed to the assessment coordinating agency.

2.1.1.1 Request Approval

The coordinating agency will approve a successful request within three weeks. A successful request will be submitted by an appropriate authority and be legitimate in nature. A request may be submitted by a National Emergency Number Association (NENA) and/or Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials, International (APCO) chapter, state coordinator/director, legislature research office, state board, 9-1-1 council or a local PSAP working with the State, and must have appropriate resources to complete the assessment. The requesting entity must have documentation from the state stating they will work with the requesting entity in providing data and 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 gathered. Additionally, the coordinating agency must have the time and availability to coordinate 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 with the state approximately three weeks after the request is submitted. During this meeting, the assessment coordinator will overview the assessment process and will walk the state through the steps of setting up the assessment. This initial meeting will be conducted over the phone and will take approximately four hours.

Following the initial meeting, the State will begin to plan the on-site assessment logistics and establish a state briefing team that will be responsible for pulling together the state environment to be used as the basis of the assessment. The state should work with the state briefing team to determine what relevant documentation needs to be gathered and submitted.

Coordinating Agency → Schedule initial meeting with state

Coordinating Agency and State → Conduct initial meeting over the phone

Coordinating Agency and State → Enter into MOU

Coordinating Agency → Draft assessment schedule

State → Establish state team

State → Coordinate facilities and support requirements

State → Publicly announce assessment

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

2.1.2.1 Memorandum of Understanding

At the onset of the initial state meeting, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) will be agreed to between the assessment coordinator and the state that establishes the mutual understanding of and commitment to the data collection that must be performed prior to an assessment. Appendix B includes a sample MOU. This MOU will also establish assessment team compensation, which is provided by the state. The MOU 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 the key to having an efficient and effective assessment experience.

The assessment coordinator will explain what the state will need to prepare for the assessment, including on-site assessment logistics and a team to prepare and present a state environment briefing to the assessors. A communications plan will be established between the state contact person and the assessment coordinator. This communications plan will include details of communication between the state contact and the briefers within the state.

A sample assessment timeline can be found in Appendix E.

2.1.2.3 State Team

As a result of this first meeting, the schedule for the assessment process should be agreed upon and the state should have an understanding of what is expected of them and their team. The state should assign an assessment team within their state so they can prepare the current environment sections of each guideline within the assessment report tool. Completing the current state environment is a comprehensive, time-consuming process. States are expected to give complete and thorough information in these sections. Some states, depending on available resources, may want to consider third-party assistance to aide in gathering data and compiling the current environment. Each state will individually need to determine the appropriate measures to complete their assessment responsibilities. Members of the state team that participate in compiling the state environment should also be the ones that gather additional information for the briefing. These team members should plan to attend the assessment briefing and related activities.

States will determine what entities are appropriate to involve 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 a complete picture of the state is presented to the assessors. States are encouraged to gather input from local 9-1-1 jurisdictions and other entities involved in the delivery of 9-1-1 in the state. It is likely that information from these entities will be essential for compiling an accurate depiction of the current environment, which will result in an accurate and effective assessment.

The briefing team can and should represent entities outside of state representation that are involved in providing 9-1-1 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 should be included.

- State 9-1-1 Director
- NENA and APCO chapters
- Association of Counties
- Municipal League (cities/county lead)
- Tribal representation
- Public Utilities Commission (PUC) (funding mechanisms)
- State agency such as Attorney General, Chief Information Officer (CIO) with public safety components
- Chief Security Officer (CSO)
- Elected officials (staff members)
- PSAP community
- 9-1-1 authorities, boards, commissions
- 9-1-1 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
- Emergency medical services (EMS) entities representing the state
- Law enforcement entities representing the state
- Fire (including volunteer) entities representing the state
- Emergency Management entities representing the state
- Advocacy groups (special needs community)
- Non-public safety responders (public works, transportation, etc.)
- Military/defense representative
- National Parks
- State Geographic Information System (GIS) office
- Accrediting agency for training/certification
- Non-profit organizations that perform public education
- Schools (9-1-1 education)
- Alert organizations

2.1.2.4 Facilities and Support Requirements

Logistics for the meeting, supporting requirements, and pre-assessment preparations will be covered during the initial state meeting. The assessment coordinator will describe the activities that must be performed prior to the assessment, including finalizing the terms and conditions of the assessment, such as scheduling facilities for the assessment, coordinating lodging and meals for the assessors, and other assessment preparation as required.

Following the initial state meeting, the state 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 assessment. The most important support requirement is a facility for the assessment team to complete the assessment. The state must provide a meeting room large enough for the assessment team and the briefing participants. In addition to a meeting room, the assessors will need an additional space for breaks and on-site meals. A facility administrator must be provided to the assessment team to take care of anything needed during the assessment.

The assessment team also needs tools to complete an assessment including, but not limited to, the following:

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

See Appendix B for an assessment room layout tool.

In addition to the assessment preparation, the state is also responsible for planning a social event for the briefers, assessors, and assessment coordinator. This social event is to take place on the Monday of the first day of the assessment from approximately 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. It is highly encouraged that all members of the state briefing team attend. This event allows the state team to meet the assessors prior to the briefings. This will increase comfort levels, communications, and the effectiveness of the assessment.

2.1.2.5 Public Announcement

The state should make a public announcement to serve as notice to the public of the assessment. The state will use its internal procedures to dictate how and when the announcement is made (e.g., press release). A statewide 9-1-1 system assessment is an optimal time to ask for public comment. The state should announce the assessment and request comment from the public prior to the assessment. Any comments received should be included in the state environment, if applicable. The briefing participant user community listed in section 2.1.2.4 could be asked for written comments as a part of the public comment process.

2.1.3 State Prep Meeting

Coordinator → Schedule State prep meeting with State

Coordinator, State, and State Team → Conduct state prep meeting on-site

State and State Team → Prepare state environment

State Team → Prepare on-site briefing

Coordinator → Assign assessment team

Coordinator and Assessment Team → Conduct initial assessment call

Coordinator → Make assessment assignments

Coordinator → Distribute state environment to assessment team

Assessment Team → Review state environment

Coordinator and Assessment Team → Conduct final preparatory conference call

The assessment coordinator will schedule the prep meeting with the state to take place three weeks after the initial state meeting. The prep meeting will be scheduled for an entire day and will take place on-site at the state's facility. At this point in the process, the state should have assigned briefers for the assessment and those briefers should be in attendance at the state prep meeting. The guidelines will be reviewed with the state team and any questions will be clarified regarding the assessment process. The assessment coordinator will further explain the documentation the state needs to prepare prior to the assessment.

2.1.3.1 State Environment

In addition to the logistical planning for the assessment team and assessment facility, the state must prepare a briefing of the statewide 9-1-1 system's current environment for the assessors' review. After the state prep meeting, the state will begin to address the state environment fields of the guidelines matrix document. The state will have a 3-month time period to

complete the state environment portion of the document, which begins the day of the state prep meeting. No later than the end of the 3-month period, the state must submit the completed matrix document to the assessment coordinator.

The state environment fields of the guidelines matrix will serve as the basis for the assessments. It is the state’s discretion to determine how the state environment will be completed and who will complete it. Visits to each PSAP and public safety agencies within a state during an assessment would be time consuming and impractical. 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. This information compilation and state environment preparation involves a large time commitment from the state briefing team. The assessment covers a large array of topics and the state must provide information on all aspects of the guidelines prior to the assessment. It is critical to the success of the assessment that the state commits the time to prepare in advance. Those giving presentations during the on-site assessment must be involved in preparing the state environment. There should be communication between the assessment coordinator, the state representative, and the briefers throughout the assessment preparation period.

An assessment matrix, shown below, will be provided to states for completion. The National 9-1-1 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 demonstrate how the statewide 9-1-1 system performs against the guideline benchmark. The state should attach any supporting information and documentation, such as legislation or standards, which could be useful for the assessors.

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

Guideline: <i>The benchmark on which the statewide system is being assessed.</i>		
Guidance: <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. Qualitative explanation.</i>		
Guideline Cross-reference(s): <i>Other guidelines that have similarities to this particular guideline, if any.</i>		
Minimum Criteria	Advanced Criteria	Superior Criteria
<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>
Rationale: <i>This is the explanation of why the benchmark exists and is considered important.</i>		
Current Environment: <i>What is the status currently in state?</i>		
Reference Material: <i>List of reference material from the State that is applicable to this guideline.</i>		

2.1.3.2 On-Site Briefing

After the state submits the guidelines matrix to the assessment coordinator, briefers must 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. Six weeks is allotted for the completion of this task, from the time the state completes the state environment section of the matrix. The briefing materials must be completed prior to the on-site assessment.

The on-site briefing is the state's opportunity to overview the statewide 9-1-1 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 they may need to conduct a successful assessment.

Presentations should not re-state what is included in the state environment portion of the guidelines matrix. The on-site briefings should overview the contents of the state environment, but should also cover any background information and any other supporting documentation or new information that may not have been included in the current environment.

In general, the process should follow the order of the guidelines matrix, but the state should focus on making an impression on the assessors of what works and what does not work within the statewide 9-1-1 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 is not working?
- 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 9-1-1 authorities and other entities that are key to the delivery of 9-1-1 in the state so assessors have a well-rounded and accurate representation of the statewide 9-1-1 system.

2.1.3.3 Assessment Team Assignments

Statewide assessments are a collaborative effort between the state and the assessment coordinator. Following the state prep meeting, the assessment coordinator will finalize the schedule and select the team of subject matter experts from across the 9-1-1 industry trained in the evaluation process and the guidelines to conduct the assessments. See Appendix A for the training process.

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 have approximately one week to make the assessment team assignments.

The expertise of the subject matter experts on each assessment team should be tailored to the needs of each state. The assessment coordinator will determine the number and type of assessors needed for each assessment. Potential assessment team members include the following:

- PSAP Director
- 9-1-1 Authority Executive
- State Director
- Policy Analyst from a state environment
- 9-1-1 Technology Specialist
- General Interest person

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 assessment team, and while the state is preparing the state environment, the assessment coordinator will conduct the first conference call with the assigned 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 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 assessment team member will be assigned specific guideline categories in which 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 arenas. The 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 assessment team.

The policy analyst will work with the State 9-1-1 Director to assess the Statutory and Regulatory Environment category. Two assessors are assigned to this category as some guidelines have a governance focus.

The State 9-1-1 Director will lead the Governance category. The PSAP Director will lead the Public Education and Human Resources and Training categories; the 9-1-1 Authority Executive will lead the Evaluation and Functional and Operational Planning categories. The 9-1-1 Technology Specialist will lead the Standards and Security and Continuity of Operations categories.

Category	Assessor(s)
Statutory and Regulatory Environment	Policy Analyst, State 9-1-1 Director
Governance	State 9-1-1 Director
Evaluation	9-1-1 Authority Executive
Public Education	PSAP Director
Human Resources and Training	PSAP Director
Functional and Operational Planning	9-1-1 Authority Executive
Standards	9-1-1 Technology Specialist
Security and Continuity of Operations	9-1-1 Technology Specialist

2.1.3.6 Distribution and Review of State Environment Document

While the assessment team is preparing their schedules for the assessment, the state continues preparing the state environment for the guidelines. Once the state completes this task, the document is sent to the assessment coordinator who then distributes it to the assessment team members. The 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 assessment team is responsible for preparing for the assessment by reviewing the guidelines and their associated state environments. There will be a second assessment team conference call four weeks after the state submits the state environment document to the assessment coordinator. Assessors should utilize the four weeks as a preparation period. During the second conference call, the 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, it is imperative that assessment team members and the supporting 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 time keeper, will give introductions for each agenda item, and will keep the assessment in scope and on time. Additionally, the assessment coordinator will arrange for an administrative consultant to attend the assessment and be responsible for compiling the report and preparing it for final delivery.

The assessment team will use the National 9-1-1 Assessment Guidelines, found in Appendix C, to conduct each assessment. The assessment team will receive a printed set of documentation (including, but not limited to, the handbook, state self-assessment, briefer presentations, etc.) prior to the assessment. The length of time for the assessment will be based on the schedule agreed to between the state and the assessment coordinator during the preliminary conference. Details of an assessment week follow. A typical agenda may be found in Appendix B.

Assessment team members 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.

2.2.1 Assessment Day One: Travel and Introductions

The assessment week will begin on a Monday, which is the predetermined travel day. The assessment team should arrive in the early afternoon. The first official activity will be a pre-assessment meeting with the assessment team and the coordinating representative on Monday afternoon. This meeting should begin at 3:30 p.m. local time and last approximately one hour.

Following the pre-meeting, the assessment team and state team will have the opportunity to meet and mingle prior to the formal assessment. During this time, introductions will be made and a general overview of the state will be presented by the state director. The assessment coordinator will allot one hour for this introduction and state overview. This meeting should conclude by 5:30 p.m. local time and is immediately followed by a social event planned by the

Day One	
Coordinator and Assessment Team	→ Travel to state
Coordinator and Assessment Team	→ Conduct pre-assessment meeting
Coordinator, Assessment Team, and State Team	→ Introductions and general overview of state
Coordinator, Assessment Team, and State Team	→ Social Event

state. The social event may include dinner. This event is intended to allow the state team and assessment team to further introduce themselves, ask questions, and establish a comfort level with one another prior to the on-site briefing session.

2.2.2 Assessment Day Two: On-site Briefing

Day Two	
State Team	→ Present briefing to assessment team
Assessment Team	→ Ask questions
Assessment Team	→ Sequestered to conduct assessment

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 overview the statewide 9-1-1 system and highlight points and issues that the state deems necessary and appropriate for the purposes of the assessment. The purpose of the briefing is to provide assessors with the information they need to conduct a successful assessment, not for the user community to take the

opportunity to push agendas unrelated to the assessment.

The state briefing presentations are paramount 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 conditions in the state. Please see section 2.1.3.2 of this document for instruction on the contents of the presentations.

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 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.

Assessment report writing may begin after the briefings if time allows. This would be a short writing session from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. local time, following a short dinner.

2.2.3 Assessment Day Three: Report Writing and Consensus

On Wednesday, the 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 9-1-1 system against the National 9-1-1 Assessment Guidelines.

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 assessment team.

Day Three	
Assessment Team	→ Write assessment
Administrative Consultant	→ Compile assessment report
Coordinator	→ Keep assessment on time and on track
Coordinator	→ Facilitate consensus among 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 9-1-1 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 guidelines only, not any other state. Each state is unique and the 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.

The table below provides an example of the assessment matrix.

Guideline: <i>The benchmark on which the statewide system is being assessed.</i>		
Guidance: <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. Qualitative explanation.</i>		
Guideline Cross-reference(s): <i>Other guidelines that have similarities to this particular guideline, if any.</i>		
Minimum Criteria	Advanced Criteria	Superior Criteria
<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>
Rationale: <i>This is the explanation of why the benchmark exists and is considered important.</i>		
Current Environment: <i>What is the status currently in state?</i>		
Reference Material: <i>List of reference material from the State that is applicable to this guideline.</i>		
Ranking: <i>Criteria level that the state meets.</i>		
Assessor Recommendations: <i>What can be done for “improvement”?</i>		
Assessor Notes/Comments: <i>Additional remarks from the assessors.</i>		

All assessment tasks described in this section need to be completed within the set time limit. This can be extremely challenging for the assessment team.

2.2.3.2 Assessment Consensus

The assessment and related recommendations will be a consensus product of the entire assessment team. Therefore, the entire team will review each guideline’s assessment and recommendation. The assessment coordinator will facilitate consensus to ensure that all assessors have input on every guideline and agree to the final recommendation for each. The consensus process will begin immediately following the writing portion and will last about eight hours. Generally, the consensus session will be held from 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. local time on the Wednesday of the assessment. For planning purposes, the consensus process will likely take the most time. It is important that the assessment team keep this in mind and plan their schedules accordingly. A working dinner will be provided to the assessment team on day three.

2.2.4 Assessment Day Four: Consensus Completion, Report Compilation and Final Review

Day Four

Assessment Team → Prepare introduction and executive summary

Administrative Consultant → Prepare assessment report components for delivery

Assessment Team → Prepare assessment presentation

Thursday, day four of the assessment, will continue the consensus process, as this generally is the longest part of the assessment. Following the consensus process, the 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 or 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 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 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 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.

2.2.5 Assessment Day Five: Presentation and Travel

2.2.5.1 Assessment Presentation

The one-hour assessment presentation to the state will begin at 8:00 a.m. Friday morning. 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 assessment team will present a short PowerPoint that highlights the assessment and keeps excess commentary to a minimum. After the assessment team presents the priorities, each

assessor will be given an opportunity to provide personal commentary. The state and its constituents will leave after the presentation.

Day Five

Assessment Team → Present assessment to State and deliver assessment report

Assessment Team and Assessment Coordinator → Conduct after action session

2.2.5.2 After Action Review

The presentation is followed by an after action review. The assessment team and assessment coordinator will have a final meeting to share feedback about the assessment and the assessment process in general. This after action meeting will be conducted from approximately 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. local time.

2.2.5.3 Travel

Following the after action review, assessors will travel home.

2.3 POST ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

2.3.1 Report Finalization Process

Following the assessment, the state will have three weeks to review the assessment for inaccuracies that could impact the assessment results. In turn, the assessment team has one week 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 assessment team, the report is finalized. The assessment coordinator will have one week to coordinate the inclusion of any final edits based on the assessment team final review.

State → Review assessment report and submit comments to Assessment Coordinator

Assessment Team → Address State comments

Assessment Coordinator → Finalize assessment report

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 assessment team. The finished assessment is a product of the 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.

APPENDIX A: ASSESSOR TRAINING

During the early stages of the assessment program, assessors will be extensively trained on the assessment process. Assessor training will be an on-going process; ever-evolving to meet the needs of current and future assessors.

Assessors must be trained to look for and communicate constructive criticism. Training should be standardized so that each assessment is run in the same manner regardless of the make-up of the 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 and assembling each assessment team along with coordinating their travel and accommodations. Assessment teams will be made up of a combination of subject matter experts in the 9-1-1 industry and could include, a PSAP Director, a 9-1-1 Authority Executive, a State Director, a Policy Analyst, a 9-1-1 Technology Specialist and a General Interest person from the industry.

Assessors should have knowledge in one or several of the category subject areas, they should have sat 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 skills, interpersonal skills and writing skills and should have a reputation of working constructively in a group setting.

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

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

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

Moving forward, any new assessment team needs 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.

APPENDIX B: ASSESSMENT TOOLS

The assessment tools may be found on the following pages.

STATE CHECKLIST FOR ASSESSOR BRIEFING

STATE ACTIVITY CHECKLIST		FILE #	DATE
STATE _____			
TYPE of ASSESSMENT _____			
DATE SUBMITTED _____	DATE ASSESSMENT _____		
DATE PRESITE _____	DATE REPORT RECEIVED _____		
REGL ASSESSMENT REPRESENTATIVE _____			
PROGRAMMATIC ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR _____			
	OFFICIAL REQUEST SUBMITTED TO COORDINATING AGENCY		
	INITIAL STATE MEETING - COORDINATE with ASSESSMENT REPRESENTATIVE PRE-SITE DATE & PLACE		
	COORDINATE FACILITIES AND MEALS FOR ASSESSMENT		
	PARTICIPATE IN STATE PREP MEETING		
	TRAVEL & PAYMENT for ALL ASSESSMENT TEAM MEMBERS ARRANGED		
	PRESENTERS SCHEDULED - Instructions re: purpose of presentation, length, content, need for written materials		
	SUBMIT STATE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT TO COORDINATING AGENCY		
	Site, logistics, travel, information		
	Agenda/schedule		
	Information on and status re: all guideline categories		
	PREPARE STATE BRIEFING		
	EQUIPMENT and MATERIALS/SUPPLIES (see support requirements handout)		
	REFRESHMENTS for team during presentations & deliberations		
	STAFF ON-SITE during presentations and available at other times		
	Assist coordinating agency with meeting facilitation		
	STAFF ON-SITE for social event		
	Provide logistical/administrative support		
	REVIEW REPORT for APPROPRIATE ACTION		
	DISTRIBUTE REPORT		
	PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD		

ASSESSMENT ROOM LAYOUT

	Hearing Room - Set Up	Hearing Room – Food & Beverage	Workroom - Set Up	Workroom – Food & Beverage
Monday	Hollow U for 13 (five on each side, three at bottom); space for screen and LCD projector* on cart at open end of U; perimeter seating for 10	none	conference table for 10, skirted 6' table for computer/printer; skirted 6' table for materials	none
Tuesday	Hollow U for 13 (five on each side, three at bottom); space for screen and LCD projector* on cart at open end of U; perimeter seating for 10	continental breakfast/coffee service for 10-15 (depends on number of state staff in constant attendance); refresh coffee at morning break, refresh room at lunch break; afternoon snack and sodas for 10-15	conference table for 10, skirted 6' table for computer/printer; skirted 6' table for materials	Noon - lunch 6:00 pm-dinner
Wednesday	Hollow U for 13 (five on each side, three at bottom); space for screen and LCD projector* on cart at open end of U; perimeter seating for 10	continental breakfast/coffee service for 10-15 (depends on number of state staff in constant attendance); refresh coffee at morning break, refresh room at lunch break; afternoon snack and sodas for 10-15	conference table for 10, skirted 6' table for computer/printer; skirted 6' table for materials	Noon - lunch 6:00 pm-dinner
Thursday	Hollow U for 13 (five on each side, three at bottom); space for screen and LCD projector* on cart at open end of U; perimeter seating for 10	continental breakfast/coffee service for 10-15 (depends on number of state staff in constant attendance); refresh coffee at morning break, refresh room at lunch break; afternoon snack and sodas for 10-15	conference table for 10, skirted 6' table for computer/printer; skirted 6' table for materials	Noon - lunch 6:00 pm-dinner

	Hearing Room - Set Up	Hearing Room – Food & Beverage	Workroom - Set Up	Workroom – Food & Beverage
Friday	Hollow U for 13 (five on each side, three at bottom); space for screen and LCD projector* on cart at open end of U; perimeter seating for 10	continental breakfast/coffee service for 10-15 (depends on number of state staff in constant attendance); refresh coffee at morning break	conference table for 10, skirted 6' table for computer/printer; skirted 6' table for materials	None
<p>* If state has its own LCD projector, funds can be saved by using it; ask if hotel allows outside AV and order only LCD setup package (card, cords, screen)</p>				

INITIAL STATE MEETING NOTES

This initial state meeting will be conducted over the phone and will take approximately four 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 9-1-1 system. This is the state's report to use.
 - This is a joint effort between the state 9-1-1 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 9-1-1 Assessment Program.
- Give overview of assessment process.
 - The statewide 9-1-1 system is measured against the National 9-1-1 Assessment Guidelines. The guidelines were developed using a consensus process by the National 9-1-1 Assessment Workgroup made up of 9-1-1 stakeholders.
 - The guidelines are not government standards.
 - The assessment team will be comprised of subject matter experts that are hand-selected for the purposes of your state's assessment.
 - The assessment team evaluates the following eight areas:
 - Statutory and Regulatory
 - Governance
 - Functional and Operational Planning
 - Standards
 - Security and Continuity of Operations
 - Human Resources and Training
 - Evaluation
 - Public Education
 - The 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 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 9-1-1 system using the National 9-1-1 Assessment Guidelines and give recommendations for each guideline, where appropriate. The assessment team determines the achieved criteria 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 assessment team will present highlights of the draft report to the State 9-1-1 authority representatives, briefing participants and guests. **THIS PRESENTATION IS NOT A DISCUSSION.**
- Following the assessment, the state will have three weeks to review the assessment for inaccuracies that could impact the assessment results. In turn, the assessment team has one week to edit recommendations and assessments that were based on inaccuracies.
- The report will become a public document. The coordinating agency will make every effort to contact a state 9-1-1 authority prior to mailing the final report to a public requester.
- You must go into this process recognizing that this report is a constructive assessment and it must be used appropriately.
- Review MOU 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 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 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 9-1-1 system to the assessors both with a written presentation and an oral presentation at the on-site assessment.
 - The state team should include representation from any entity that is key to the provision of 9-1-1 service in the state.
 - The requesting state is responsible for preparing a current environment for the assessment team, outlining 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. A guidelines matrix will be provided for the state to complete.

TYPICAL ASSESSMENT AGENDA

**National 9-1-1 Assessment
Typical Agenda**

Monday	Date, Year	TRAVEL DAY & BEGIN ASSESSMENT
3:30-4:30	Pre-assessment meeting	
4:30-5:30	Introductions by Coordinating Agency, State Office, Assessors and State Overview	
	I. Geographic/Demographic Overview of State	
	II. General Overview of 9-1-1 System in State	
5:30-8:00	Social Event for State, Coordinating Agency, and Assessors	

Tuesday	Date, Year	
8:00-12:00	Statewide 9-1-1 System Briefing, State 9-1-1 Office	

AGENDA ITEMS I and II MUST OCCUR IN ORDER. DISCUSSION OF PARTICULAR CATEGORIES MAY TAKE PLACE IN THE ORDER THAT IS CONVENIENT FOR THE STATE.

	III. Comprehensive Presentation of Guideline Categories	
	A. Statutory and Regulatory	
	B. Governance	
	C. Functional and Operational Planning	
12:00-1:00	Working Luncheon	
1:00-5:00	D. Standards	
	E. Security and Continuity of Operations	
	F. Human Resources and Training	
	G. Evaluation	
	H. Public Education	
5:00 – 6:00	Debriefing Meeting with State Director	
7:00-10:00	Begin Assessment Team Executive Session (discussion of briefings)	

Wednesday	Date, Year	
8:00-12:00	Assessment Team Executive Session continues (begin writing process)	
12:00-12:30	Working Luncheon	
12:30-3:00	Assessment Team Executive Session continues	
3:00-10:00	Consensus Session - Discussion and Formulation of Recommendations	
	Assessment team sequestered during this session.	

Thursday Date, Year

8:00-12:00 Executive Session continued, Consensus Session, Compile Draft Report
(Executive Summary, Introduction)
12:00-1:00 Team Working Luncheon
1:00-3:00 Executive Session continued, Consensus Session, Compile Draft Report
(Executive Summary, Introduction)
3:00-6:00 Compile Presentation to the State

Friday Date, Year

8:00-9:00 Presentation to the State, Present Assessment Highlights, Issue Draft Report
9:00-12:00 Assessors After Action Meeting

TRAVEL HOME

TALKING POINTS: 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 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 assessment team

Review the Process

- Listen to state team for 1.5 days – State team is selected by the State 9-1-1 Authority or whoever is facilitating the assessment from the state.
- The process is based on comparison of the 9-1-1 activities within the state (current environment) with the National 9-1-1 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 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 9-1-1 system against the criteria for each guideline.
- Make recommendations for improvement to the statewide 9-1-1 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.
- Each assessment team member will assess and make recommendations for their assigned guidelines.
- Each assessment team member will present the highlights of the statewide 9-1-1 system status, their assessment and recommendation for each guideline to the entire 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 assessment team.
- Turn in completed guidelines when you complete the matrix for each guidelines category.
- The administrative team member will let you know when you are behind schedule.
- Review and edit your initial assessments and recommendations as you write them, then the assessment team will edit them all together.
- Select one 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 8:00 AM on Friday.

SAMPLE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN COORDINATING AGENCY AND STATE

WHEREAS, **[Coordinating Agency]** and **[State entity requesting assessment]** have a mutual understanding of the level of communication and preparation needed for an effective and efficient assessment of the statewide 9-1-1 system; and

WHEREAS, the parties have agreed that it is imperative to work together in an organized and timely manner; and

WHEREAS, the parties have agreed to enter into a collaborative agreement in which **[Coordinating Agency]** and **[State entity requesting assessment]** will perform the roles and responsibilities established herein; and

WHEREAS, the parties herein desire to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding setting forth the roles and responsibilities to be performed.

I) History of Relationship

- **[Coordinating Agency]** facilitates statewide 9-1-1 system assessments that are conducted by teams of subject matter experts using the National 9-1-1 Assessment Guidelines
- **[State entity requesting assessment]** submitted a request to the **[Coordinating Agency]** for a statewide 9-1-1 system assessment on **[Date of request]**
- **[Coordinating Agency]** determined that it was an appropriate request for a statewide 9-1-1 system assessment

II) Roles and Responsibilities

NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby agreed by and between the parties as follows:

- **[State entity requesting assessment]** commits to conducting the robust data collection necessary prior to the assessment in order facilitate a thorough assessment of the statewide 9-1-1 system. This includes,
 - Engaging necessary parties
 - Completing the current environment portion of the assessment matrix, to be provided by **[Coordinating agency]**
- **[State entity requesting assessment]** will arrange for a facility to hold the on-site assessment. This includes, but is not limited to, the following support requirements:
 - Internet access
 - Tables and chairs
 - Projector
 - Screen
 - Printer w/ paper
 - Teleconferencing equipment
 - Extra cables and extension cords
- **[State entity requesting assessment]** will pay an honorarium to the assessment team for their time at the on-site assessment at level of \$XX per day.

- **[State entity requesting assessment]** will pay expenses for the assessment team during the on-site assessment.
- **[Coordinating Agency]** will provide a team of qualified subject matter experts to conduct the on-site assessment.

III) Timeline

- A pre-assessment conference **[call/meeting]** will take place on **[Date]**.
- A timeline and schedule will be established and agreed to at the pre-assessment conference.

We, the undersigned have read and agree with this MOU.

By _____

By _____

Date _____

Date _____

APPENDIX C: ASSESSMENT REPORT TOOL

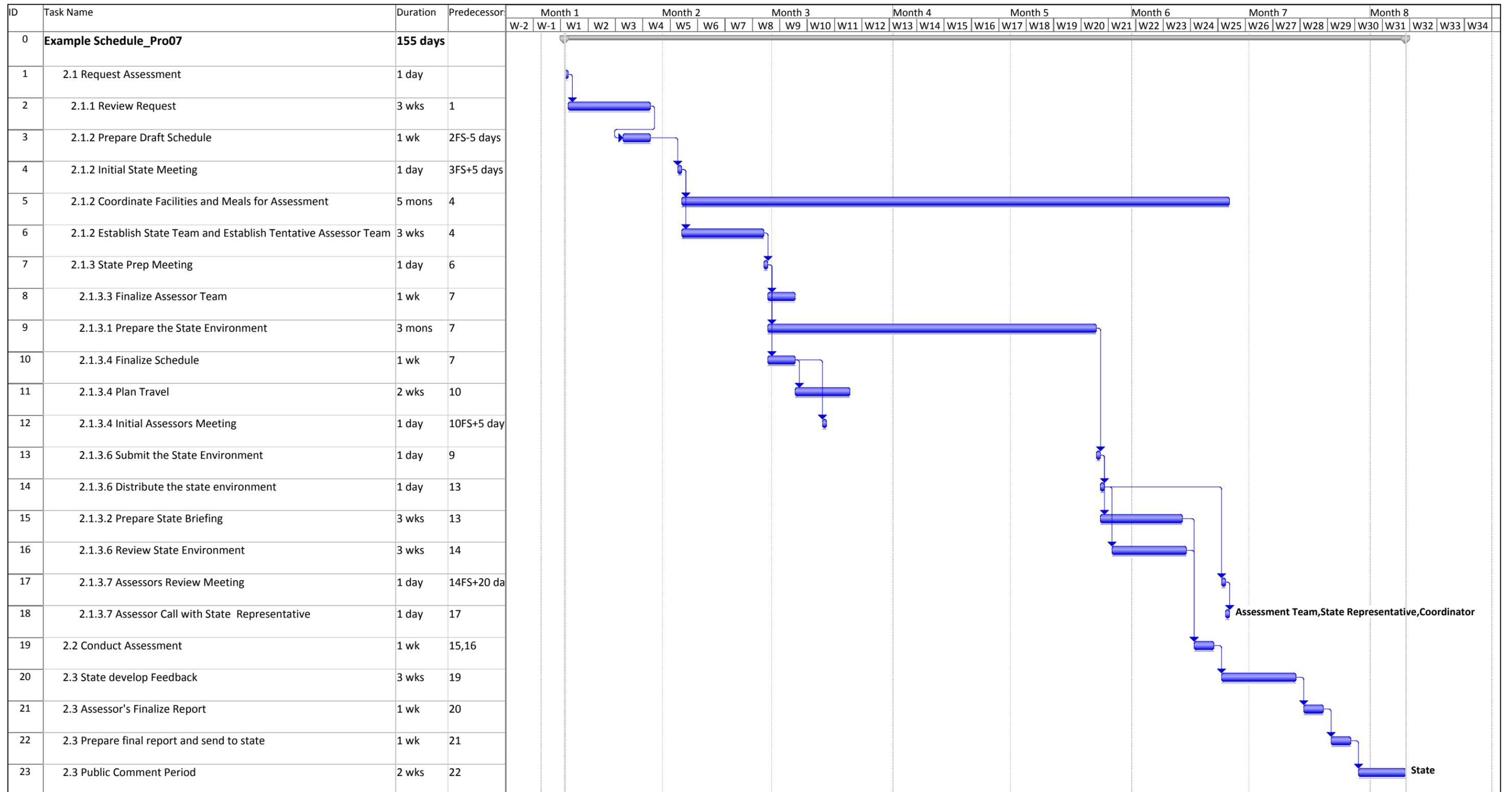
The Assessment Report Tool may be found as an attachment to this document.

APPENDIX D: ASSESSMENT ASSIGNMENT SHEET

The Assessment Assignment Sheet may be found as an attachment to this document.

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE ASSESSMENT PROCESS SCHEDULE

A Sample Assessment Process Schedule may be found on the following page.



Project: Example Schedule_Pro07

Task		Milestone		Project Summary		External Milestone		Progress	
Split		Summary		External Tasks		Deadline			

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