

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

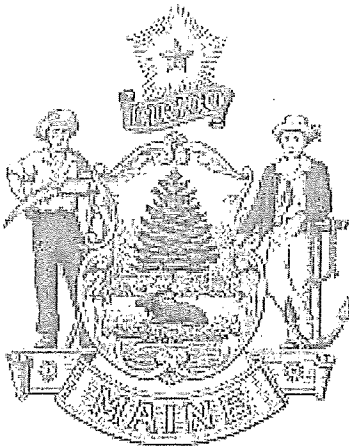
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Maine Emergency Management
Agency

**Emergency Notification
System — Deaf
Community**



Project Scope

What is the Problem/Opportunity Statement?

To develop an emergency alert notification system to protect the safety of deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals within Maine, based on MRSA § 7101-§5, which reads: "Homeland security and emergency alerts: The Legislature further finds that seamless, integrated, robust and redundant means of communication, including, but not limited to, voice and alphanumeric pagers, landline telephones, wireless telephones, text radio and wireless email, create a robust communication system that enables rapid contact with first responders, ensures emergency alert notification to all affected persons in the State, including at risk populations such as the hearing or visually impaired, and enhances homeland security."

This system will be in addition to the existing services currently provided to State of Maine citizens i.e. E911, EAS, weather radios and individual requests for notifications. This system will specifically be designed to provide text messaging to cell phone, email, and pagers.

What are the Goals & Objectives?

The project goals and objectives are to provide a mechanism (or application) that will provide text emergency notifications and alerts to telecommunications devices (pages/cell phones). Currently, individuals may be requesting notifications on their own from publicly offered services (NOAA, MTA), however, there is no one single portal that provides Maine's deaf and hard-of-hearing community this service. With the legislated Telecommunications Equipment Program, a program to provide communications equipment through the Division of Deafness to deaf and hard-of-hearing persons, this project will provide the mechanism used to deliver the notifications.

The team will identify the notification/alert types to be delivered through this mechanism and the agency/organization that is responsible for initiating the message.

What is the cost?

The cost for Phase I application development/implementation and project services are as follows:

Application Development costs: \$15,000 [to be paid for by MEMA]

Project Management costs: Absorbed by MEMA [approximately \$5,000]

Ongoing support/maintenance: \$65.00/month [will be billed to MEMA]

Project Team participation (meetings-research-review-template design-training): \$12,000 [approximate value of agency salary fees]

Project Team

The project team consists of the following State agencies as well as private organizations:

AGENCY	Project Role
BIS	Project Management
BIS	Application Development
BIS	Application Support
MEMA	Project Management/Systems Testing
MEMA	Subject Matter Experts/Training Committee/Project Team
DOL – Division of Deafness	Project Sponsor/Notification Design
DOT	Project Team
DPS	Project Team
Maine Center on Deafness	Project Team/TEP Management
AlphaOne	Project Team
DOL – Rehab	Project Team

Project Summary

The project began with a fact finding meeting at the end of May 2004. Since the original meeting, the entire project team has met on several occasions.

In order to facilitate the teams and move rapidly forward, two teams were created; a business team and a technical team. Both teams meet periodically, but seldom together.

The Business Team is responsible for making decisions based on the functionality of the systems based on the approved project scope and for ensuring that this system will work in conjunction with the devices distributed by the TEP Program. The Business Team is also responsible for approval of the language used for the notifications, classification of the notifications, and development of training materials.

The Technical Team is responsible for establishing a system that will work across state government agencies to provide appropriate notifications to the community. The Bureau of Information Services is the lead technical agency, building the system to manage all communications out to those registered. BIS is also responsible for ensuring the integrity, quality, and security of the system so other state agencies can access the system to initiate predefined notifications to the deaf community.

Several state agencies have become critical partners in participating in the project and will be part of the initial pilot; MEMA, Department of Public Safety, and DOT. The expectation is that National Weather Service notices and Amber Alerts will be part of the pilot as well. In the future, the plan is to include Maine Turnpike Authority and the Bureau of Health.

The following communications will be sent to registered individuals as a text message to their email account, pager, or cell phone:

Department of Public Safety	Public Information, Road Closures, Amber Alerts and EAS Advisories
Maine Emergency Management Agency	Homeland Security, EAS Advisories, Public Information, and Emergency Information
Department of Transportation	Road Closures and Advisories
National Weather Service	Amber Alerts, Weather EAS Advisories, Weather Watches, and Weather Warnings

The project is currently on track:

- a prototype has been developed and is currently being tested, which will go on for a few more weeks.
- final design of agency templates are being created for input into the system templates.
- Sub team has been formed to analyze and create a training program for the users. A training packet is in its final developmental stage.

The system testing is almost complete. The testing will include a small percentage of the population for customer acceptance testing.

The success of this project relies on the partnerships of several state agencies as well as the individual organizations that work directly with the deaf community.