

ODOT Funding Package Resource Library

Wireless Program

The State Radio System is a public safety grade radio system that provides critical, life-saving communications for ODOT, Oregon State Police (OSP), and many other counties, cities, fire departments, and law enforcement agencies. Statewide, 85 public safety agencies rely on some aspect of the state radio system.

ODOT's Wireless Communications Section (WCS) operates and maintains the state radio system, which provides OSP troopers and ODOT maintenance workers and incident responders with reliable communication services. The system is how personnel relay messages to dispatch centers around the state.

System Management & Cost Sharing

ODOT and OSP co-own the state radio system. Ongoing collaboration, coordination, and communication are critical to our collective success in maintaining a functional and modern radio system.

Since system consolidation occurred, ODOT and OSP have worked together to secure funding for the operations and maintenance of the state radio system. Although all assets and staff reside within ODOT, WCS makes no distinction between the two agencies in the operations and maintenance of the two disparate radio systems. ODOT and OSP share in the funding WCS with 65% funded by ODOT and 35% funded by OSP. This allocation is based on each agency's share of the radios deployed under the State Radio Project.

State Radio Project

Through the State Radio Project (2011 – 2017), Oregon invested over \$229 million to repair or replace the deteriorating state radio network. The radio project replaced infrastructure, deployed radios, and fulfilled federal requirements to transition to narrowband operations. Below is a breakdown of the state's investment under the project:

- 5,500+ radios deployed
- 213 of 227 communications sites were installed with microwave, conventional or trunked repeaters
- 161 communications sites improved
- 101 power system upgrades
- 45 new communications towers erected
- Fulfilled 42 partnership obligations
- 29 new shelters placed

- Interoperable communications between trunked system and 6 counties via ISSI connections
- Fulfilled FCC narrowband obligation

Funding

WCS receives 100% of its funding for operations and maintenance through ODOT's biennial maintenance limitation. For the 23-25 biennium, WCS's budgetary appropriation is \$24,118,651 for operations and maintenance with an additional \$9,987,689 for capital improvements. The two budget limitations are viewed by ODOT WCS and OSP as the standard limitation from one biennium to the next.

Mobile Portable Replacement

The state radio system inventory of mobile and portable radios (5,929 first generation Harris Radios) deployed during the State Radio Project, have reached the end of their service life. We estimate replacement to cost \$44.1 million. Due to wear and tear, OSP needed to replace their portable radios before ODOT could secure matching funds. In 2024, the Emergency Board granted OSP \$3 million to initiate this work.

Impacts of Inflation

The total project cost to replace the entire fleet of radios was estimated at \$40,780,000 in late 2023 and from the latest estimate has increased to \$44,136,113. This is mainly due to a price increase implemented by the Harris Corporation.

Program Needs

WCS has been able to purchase a small portion of the radios out of its biennial limitation, but the need is too great to complete the project without additional funding.

ODOT, OSP, and Oregon's public safety community continues to use mobile and portable radio communications as the most reliable means of tactical communications. In their Oregon buildout, FirstNet (AT&T), the nationwide public safety broadband network, and other broadband public safety service providers such as Verizon (Verizon Frontline) and T-Mobile (T-Priority), did not implement the same level of resiliency as the State Radio Project constructed sites, and responders relying on commercial broadband have experienced outages during recent weather-related events. The investment in site resiliency made by Oregon under the State Radio Project has proven to be a worthy one as communications at ODOT owned/controlled sites has been reliable during recent weather events.