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# Wisconsin Legislative Council

## ACT MEMO

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**2023 Wisconsin Act 221**  
[2023 Senate Bill 218]

**Grant Program for Public Safety  
Interoperable Communication  
System Upgrades**

### BACKGROUND

The Department of Military Affairs (DMA) is responsible for administering and overseeing the operation of the current and future statewide public safety interoperable communication systems. The Interoperability Council is attached to DMA and is responsible for advising and assisting DMA in administering and overseeing this communication system.

2021 Wisconsin Act 58 requires DMA to execute a contract for a replacement statewide public safety interoperable communication system. According to DMA, local public safety agencies may need to upgrade their radios to use the replacement communication system for daily use and dispatch.

### 2023 WISCONSIN ACT 221

2023 Wisconsin Act 221 creates a program that awards grants to local units of government for upgrades relating to the public safety interoperable communication system.<sup>1</sup> The grants are to be awarded to local units of government that have agencies and entities that participate in the communication system.<sup>2</sup> For the first four years of the grant program, DMA must award 70 percent of the grants to local units of government that have agencies or entities that are daily users of the communication system. The remaining 30 percent must be awarded to local units of government that are not daily users.

The grants must be awarded according to criteria established by DMA, which must, at a minimum, include the following:

- The local unit of government's governing body must submit a resolution or other written commitment indicating the local unit of government's intention to provide a 20 percent match of the total grant awarded from its own funds.
- If the local unit of government's agencies or entities are not daily users of the current communication system, but would like to be considered daily users for purposes of receiving grants, the local unit of government must submit a resolution or other written commitment indicating its intention to join the replacement communication system when it becomes available.
- The authorized uses for grant funding must include radios that are 700/800 MHz P25 Phase II-compliant and capable of operating on the replacement communication system.

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<sup>1</sup> A local unit of government may be a county, city, village, or town. [s. 323.02 (15), Stats.]

<sup>2</sup> Agencies and entities include public safety agencies, public works and transportation agencies, hospitals, and volunteer emergency services agencies. [s. 323.29 (2) (a), Stats.]

The act allows DMA to prioritize the grants to correspond with the timing of the installation of replacement infrastructure in the geographic area of the grant recipient.

The act also requires the Interoperability Council to advise DMA on the appropriate purposes and eligibility criteria for the grants.

**Effective date:** March 29, 2024

For a full history of the bill, visit the Legislature's [bill history page](#).

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