

IPAWS—Modernizing the Public Alert and Warning System

In 2004, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approached Booz Allen Hamilton to assist in improving public alert and warning systems in conjunction with the Federal Communications Commission, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and other federal, public, and private partners.

Strengthening Our Emergency Response Systems

FEMA envisioned a public emergency notification system that supported a balance of personnel, infrastructure, transmission platforms, languages, and technologies to effectively alert and warn the American people in times of war, terrorist attack, natural disaster, or other hazards to public safety and well-being. Booz Allen Hamilton, a leading strategy and technology firm, understood the urgency and importance of the project and sprang into action.

Over the years, the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) has continued to evolve and is now composed of national-level “all-hazard” warning system and support elements that provide one message over as many media as possible to people with special needs and in multiple languages.

In support of the program’s evolving capabilities, our architecture and design Mission Engineering® (ME) professionals began performing capability analysis

and developing mission process recommendations along with documenting operational and technical requirements. Leveraging proven Booz Allen methodologies, we performed the Community Analysis and Operational Analysis phases of ME to complete a system-level concept of operations (CONOPS) document and related systems engineering artifacts. Next, our practitioners implemented the Systems Analysis phase to create system-level requirements specification documents for six individual projects, each with specific mission and technological challenges. These projects were XM Satellite Radio, Broadband Global Area Network, Emergency Alert System, Geo-Targeted Alerting System, National Digital Emergency Alert System (DEAS), and State DEAS.

Helping FEMA and Citizens Prepare to be Ready for What’s Next

Booz Allen’s ME professionals continue to work with DHS, FEMA, and other partners to modernize the entire IPAWS “system of systems.” The Booz Allen-developed, system-level CONOPS, IPAWS community model, and multi-dimensional process decompositions, which document the mission-focused requirements of key stakeholders, have all been used to prepare for hearings before the Senate Appropriations Committee and meetings with the Vice President’s Office. To date, multiple projects, systems, and tools are actively leveraging the results

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of our ME work on the IPAWS program, demonstrating the reusability and depth of the ME process. Booz Allen is also integrating the ME methodology into the DHS system development life cycle and using it as the unifying framework for all system engineering documentation for the program.

“The IPAWS program perfectly exemplifies how we continue to mature our expertise and apply it to newer areas like systems engineering and integration,” said Carolyn Winters, IPAWS program ME engagement lead.

Whether you’re managing today’s issues or looking beyond the horizon, count on us to help you be ready for what’s next.

About Booz Allen

Booz Allen Hamilton has been at the forefront of strategy and technology consulting for 95 years. Providing a broad range of services in strategy, operations, organization and change, information technology, systems engineering, and program management, Booz Allen is committed to delivering results that endure.

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