



HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES

STATE OF MICHIGAN

Appropriations Requests for Legislatively Directed Spending Items

1. The sponsoring representative's first name:
Gina
2. The sponsoring representative's last name:
Johnsen
3. The cosponsoring representatives' names. All cosponsors must be listed. If none, please type 'n/a.' A signed letter from the sponsor approving the co-sponsorship and a signed letter from the member wishing to co-sponsor are required. Attach letters at question #9 below.
n/a
4. Name of the entity that the spending item is intended for:
Ionia County
5. Physical address of the entity that the spending item is intended for:
101 West Main St, Ionia, MI 48846
6. If there is not a specific recipient, the intended location of the project or activity:
n/a
7. Name of the representative and the district number where the legislatively directed spending item is located:
Gina Johnsen, 78th House District
8. Purpose of the legislatively directed spending item. Please include how it provides a public benefit and why it is an appropriate use of taxpayer funding. Please also demonstrate that the item does not violate Article IV, S 30 of the Michigan Constitution.
The purpose of this proposed legislatively directed spending item is to enhance emergency communication infrastructure across Ionia County by improving coverage and reliability of the Michigan Public Safety Communications System (MPSCS) 800 MHz radio network. Currently, all public safety agencies in the County—including police, fire, and EMS—have transitioned to the MPSCS system. However, the County's existing configuration of three standalone towers is insufficient to provide full radio coverage across its geographically diverse terrain, particularly in low-lying areas and along rivers.

Each corner of the County currently experiences poor signal strength, creating gaps in communication that compromise emergency response efforts.

To address this, the County proposes the construction of four additional towers—one in each corner—to fill existing coverage gaps and enable simulcast functionality across the system. These upgrades will not only improve local reliability and safety but will also benefit surrounding counties, many of which share similar coverage challenges near the Ionia County line. In addition, the County seeks to replace and upgrade law enforcement radios to include encryption capabilities necessary to comply with LEIN/CJIS data security standards. These improvements will also enhance fire paging systems by increasing signal reach and reliability across rural and hard-to-access areas.

This investment will significantly improve real-time communication among public safety agencies, reduce response times, and increase safety for both emergency responders and the citizens they serve. It will also improve interagency coordination across jurisdictional boundaries, a vital need in multi-county emergencies.

This proposed legislatively directed spending item would be an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars, as it supports core governmental functions—namely, public safety communications and emergency response. The project is entirely public in nature and will be implemented by Ionia County, a local unit of government. No private individuals or entities will derive financial benefit from this appropriation. Accordingly, this spending item fully complies with Article IV, Section 30 of the Michigan Constitution, which prohibits the appropriation of public funds for private purposes. All expenditures will directly support critical public safety infrastructure, thereby serving a legitimate governmental interest and delivering meaningful, measurable public benefit.

9. Attach documents here if needed:

Attachments added to the end of this file.

10. The amount of state funding requested for the legislatively directed spending item.

18000000

11. Has the legislatively directed spending item previously received any of the following types of funding? Check all that apply.

["Federal"]

12. Please select one of the following groups that describes the entity requesting the legislatively directed spending item:

Local unit government

13. For a non-profit organization, has the organization been operating within Michigan for the preceding 36 months?

Not applicable

14. For a non-profit organization, has the entity had a physical office within Michigan for the preceding 12 months?

Not applicable

15. For a non-profit organization, does the organization have a board of directors?

Not applicable

16. For a non-profit organization, list all the active members on the organization's board of directors and any other officers. If this question is not applicable, please type 'n/a.'

n/a

17. "I certify that neither the sponsoring representative nor the sponsoring representative's staff or immediate family has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in the legislatively directed spending item."

Yes, this is correct

18. Anticipated start and end dates for the legislatively directed spending item:

2025-2026

19. "I hereby certify that all information provided in this request is true and accurate."

Yes



IONIA COUNTY CENTRAL DISPATCH

545 Apple Tree Dr
Ionia Michigan 48846
Admin: (616) 522-0911

Director: Lance Langdon

To: Gina Johnson, Michigan Representative, District 78
Date: April 23, 2025
From: Lance Langdon, ENP
Reference: State Funding Request 2025

Representative Johnson,

I am renewing my request for funding assistance again this year, to allow us to upgrade the law enforcement MPSCS radio equipment to meet new encryption requirements, improve the radio coverage for the first responders of Ionia County, as well as our neighboring counties, Clinton, Eaton, Barry, Kent, Montcalm and Gratiot.

Ionia County Law Enforcement has been on the MPSCS 800 MHz radio system for many years. Last year with the help of ARPA funds we were able to move our fourteen fire departments to the 800-system, updating some tower equipment, purchasing portable, mobile radios and 800 MHz pagers. The total cost for the project was \$1,004,270.48. Without the availability of the ARPA funding, we would never have been able to move all fourteen fire departments to the 800 system.

While the MPSCS 800 MHz system is a great improvement over our very old and failing VHF radio system, there are still large gaps in coverage around the county. The poor coverage areas are primarily located in each corner of the county and are generally tied to the topography of the county, with its long recesses running along the rivers across the county. We currently run the radio system off three individual tower sites within the county. The addition of four additional towers and designing them to be in a simulcast configuration allows responders to scan (listen to different talk groups) that they cannot do now if their radio is accessing the radio system from a different tower site. A simulcast system transmits and receives radio communications at all towers at the same time. Without simulcast, only radios that are connected to the same tower can hear each other.

The current cost of tower sites for the system is approximately 4 million dollars based on a quote from 2 years ago, radios for the police departments (five County agencies plus MSP), adding simulcast abilities to the towers sites, brings the cost to over 18 million dollars. It is important to repeat what I said at the start of this letter; our neighboring counties would also greatly benefit with improved coverage for the responders in their jurisdictions. With the high costs of tower sites, some of our neighbors have added a tower to improve their coverage. Adding four towers to our system would have a great impact on the signal strength improving coverage and increasing first responders' safety and the safety of our communities.

We are not a large county and have limited funds that could not even start to attempt to make this type of improvement, as several of the large counties in the state have been able to do. Our only hope is that we can receive special funding opportunities from the state or federal government.

I want to stress that I am aware of the large price tag for this project, but to do the project correctly, it would be to add the additional 4 towers to our system. But in looking at the "what if?" with estimates on the cost breakdown; one tower, simulcasted and radios for Law Enforcement 7-8 million dollars. The tower would be situated in the southeast corner of the county to cover some major holes in the Portland area. If we were able to get 4 million more a second tower could be added, but I would need to work on a new coverage study to determine which of the other corners of the county would provide the best bang for our buck in additional coverage. Ultimately, we need four sites but if you were able to only get one and the equipment needed, it would still be very valuable to our county and neighbors near the new sites.

Thank you for your efforts in trying to assist us with funding, we very much appreciate it and hope you have success.