

# Maine scraps \$32 million contract

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The state of Maine has decided to scrap a \$32 million contract to upgrade the statewide emergency 9-1-1 system to next generation 9-1-1. The awarded contract to FairPoint Communications was overturned due to improper scoring requirements following an award protest from two bidders, Oxford Networks and Intrado.

The state's current 9-1-1 environment, provided by FairPoint, can only administer a limited number of data to customer premise equipment (CPE) installed within each public safety answering point (PSAP). Customer name and home address associated with a wireless number are not delivered with a wireless call. The state is looking to upgrade to an Internet-based, secure IP network infrastructure that can receive emergency notifications from different feeds in real time, including text messages from mobile devices as well as other notification services. The state had an initial deadline of August 2013, but may have to go to the drawing board again.

Maine has not made a formalized decision on whether a new [request for proposals \(RFP\)](#) will be issued. Due to the state's pressing need to implement NG911, it is likely that a rebid will take place in the near future.

## Analyst's Take

Challenges to multimillion dollar procurements occur more frequently than one would assume. It is important for agencies to promote procurement practices that ensure a fair and open bidding process. Agencies should take the extra time to develop clear and concise requirements to avoid having to redo solicitations in entirety; they should also provide adequate deadlines that can be met by bidding participants. This is especially true for major statewide projects that have a specified deadline. Rehashing the entire procurement process costs states and localities a significant amount of time and money that could be used for drafting and implementing other needed projects. Maine's proposed NG9-1-1 project has taken more than 15 months, and still no contract award has been finalized.

Lastly, vendors should always familiarize themselves with protest rules and regulations in case bidding procedures are challenged, as well as learn how to appeal an award protest.