

**InSPIRE** 2026

# Mapping the Future: Building a Professional Public Safety GIS Pathway Together

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Hosted by the National Alliance for Public Safety GIS (NAPSG) Foundation

INNOVATION SUMMIT FOR PREPAREDNESS & RESILIENCE

# Facilitators



**Tony Spicci, GISP CGMP**

**Executive Director**

GIS Certification Institute



**Tari Martin, GISP**

**Chief Geospatial Information  
Officer**

NAPSG Foundation

# SESSION AGENDA

**01**

History / Real-World Problem

**02**

Approach

**03**

Draft Framework

**04**

Discussion

**05**

What's Next?

# 01

**History / Real-World Problem**

# Why are we doing this?

**Our organizations have increasingly heard the need for:**

- A learning pathway for Geospatial practitioners interested in supporting public safety.
- A pipeline of qualified applicants for public safety organizations.



# 02

## Our Approach

# Approach

Concept Development & Alignment

Discovery & Stakeholder Input  
(Focus Group + Survey)

Criteria & Framework Development

Review & Validation

Build-Out & Approval

Launch and Continuous Improvement



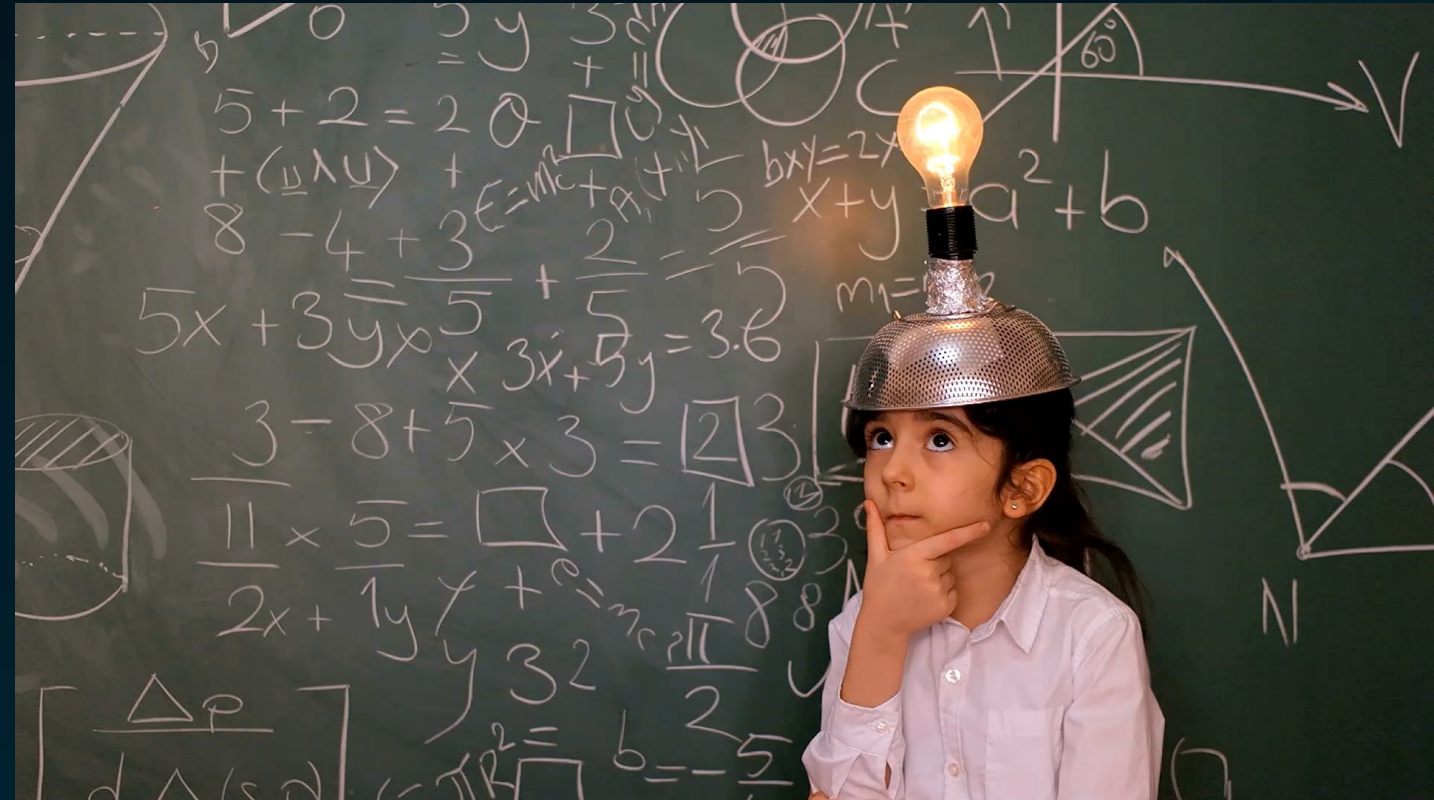
- Discovery & Stakeholder Input
- Criteria & Framework Development
- Review & Validation
- Build-Out & Approval
- Launch and Continuous Improvement

# Concept Development & Alignment

## NAPSG + GISCI + Esri Canada

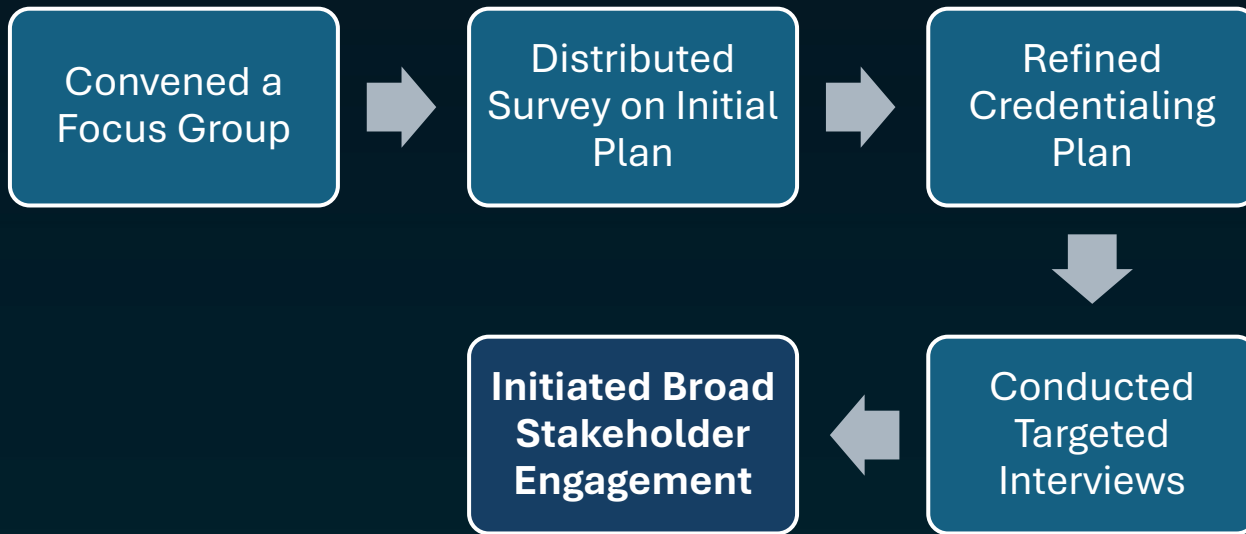
Develop a plan to create credential(s) for “geospatial first responders”

- Support a learning/training pathway
- Aid in identifying GIS practitioners with relevant skills/experience

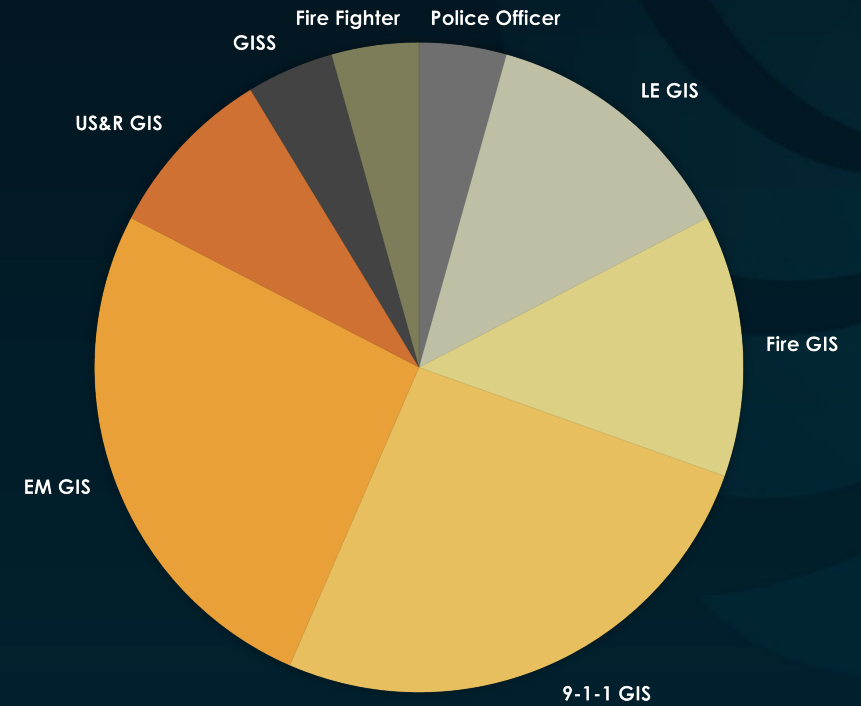


# Discovery & Stakeholder Input

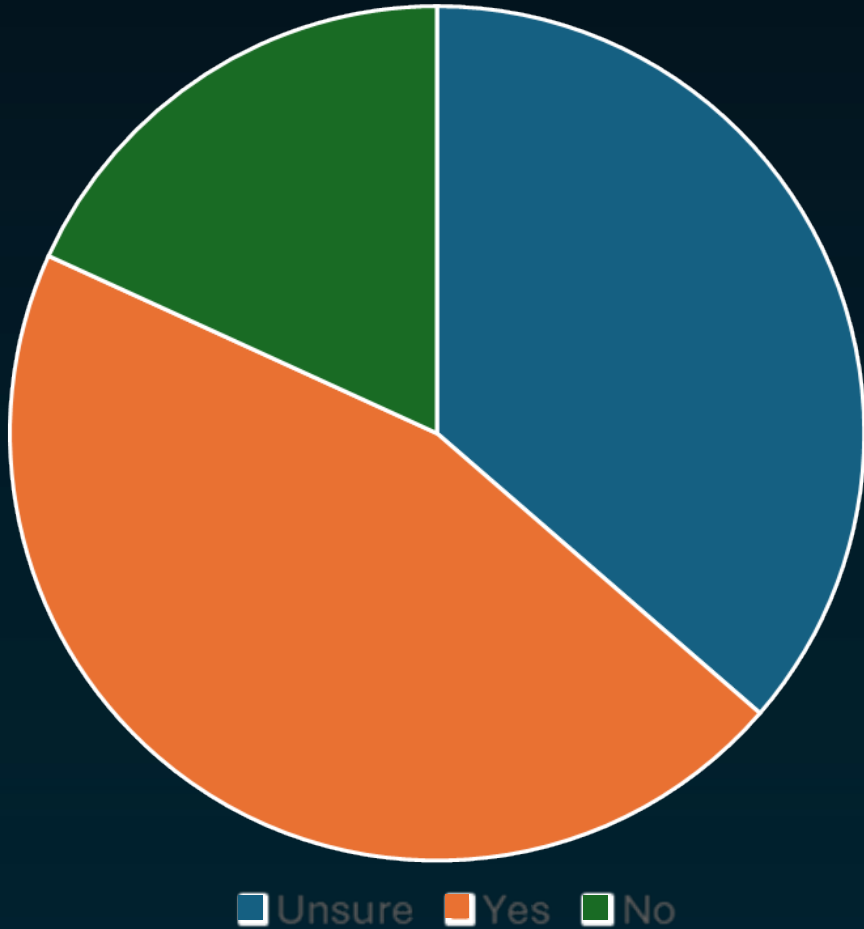
- Concept Development & Alignment
- **Discovery & Stakeholder Input**
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SURVEY PARTICIPANTS



# Discovery & Stakeholder Input



## Is there a need for a Public Safety GIS Credential?

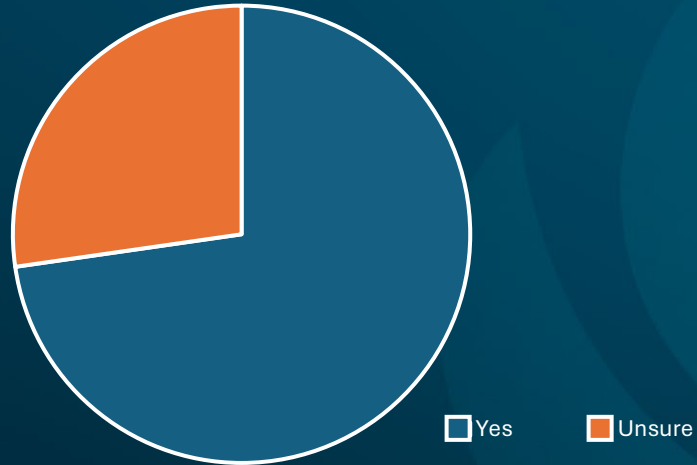
Overall, respondents were divided, with some seeing a Geospatial First Responder Certificate as a valuable way to:

- standardize skills,
- fill knowledge gaps, and
- validate expertise in public safety GIS.

Others questioned its necessity due to:

- existing certifications,
- potential redundancy with FEMA NQS,
- cost concerns, and
- the risk of adding to certification overload.

## Would a certificate/credential be helpful to support a learning pathway/hiring pool?



## What skillsets should be targeted?

Skills identified fell into 3 broad categories:

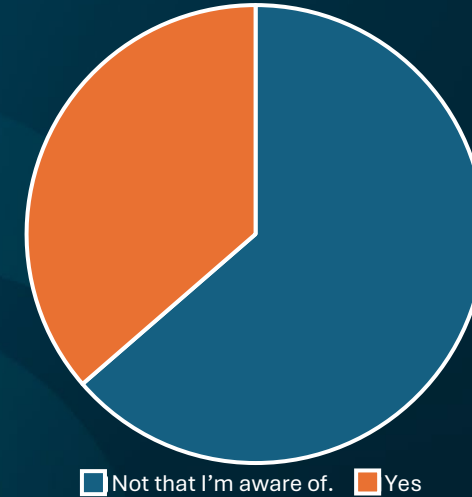
- Public Safety Discipline-Specific
- General GIS Skills
- Public Safety Mapping

## Are there existing courses/learning opportunities that should be included?

Training identified fell into 3 broad categories:

- GIS-related associations for Emergency Management
- Vendor companies that support GIS-based emergency service software
- Academic institutions that provide GIS-specific certifications/diplomas

## Are there other credentials/certifications that this may be duplicating or conflicting?



- Potential Duplicates
  - GISP
  - Emergency Number Professional (ENP) Certification
  - Esri Certificates
  - FEMA NQS & taskbooks for All Hazard GIS positions (there are three levels currently)
  - NWCG GISS
  - Fire Data Analyst credential
- Potential Compliments
  - International Association of Crime Analysts
  - CEM

# 03

**DRAFT FRAMEWORK**

# Criteria & Framework Development

## Public Safety GIS Certification

**Objective:** Establish a process to prove that an experienced GIS professional possesses the practical expertise, judgment, and best-practice knowledge needed to deliver reliable, timely, and mission-critical geospatial support in public safety operations

- Designed for GIS professionals who have a **minimum of two years of professional experience** working in a public safety GIS environment
- It is not an entry-level credential, a replacement for the GISP, or a training course; nor does it certify organizations or tools
- Would support two pathways:

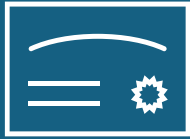


Certificate – GISCI  
Geospatial Emergency  
Response Certificate



Credential – GISP  
First Responder

*\*Proposed Names*



Certificate – GISCI  
Geospatial Emergency  
Response Certificate

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### Geospatial Emergency Response Certificate

- Awarded upon meeting training and deployment requirements
- Open to non-GISPs



Credential – GISP  
First Responder

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### GISP First Responder

- Requires:
  - Active GISP
  - Completion of certificate
- Functions as a specialization, not a separate certification

## Criteria & Framework Development

### Public Safety GIS Certification

Seeks to identify **minimum skills, training, and experience** across the following categories:



# Proposed Governance Structure

## Governing Structure (In Development)

1. Oversight (Strategic Governance)
2. Program Governance (Policy + Standards)
3. Program Management (Operational Governance)
4. Certification & Credentialing
5. Training & Provider
6. Deployment Verification (If Required)
7. Appeals & Ethics



# 04

## Discussion

# Breakout or Interactive Discussion

## Question 1

What are your thoughts on a GISP PS certification/credential? Pros and Cons?

What would make this valuable to the field?

## Responses

Pros	Cons
Gives employers confidence in candidate	Difficulty. Breadth of tasks contained in public safety GIS
Standardization for mutual aid	Harder to hire/keep employees
Standard certification	Recurring cost
Standardization recognition is always a pro	Not all PS GIS Roles are equal
Maintaining relevant skills and certifications is useful to all parties involved	Not having it even if qualified - are you penalized later
	Credential overlaod
	It it too broad?
	Define "public safety." Is this just an "activation-ready" list? Who will/can use it? How is it recognized?

# Breakout or Interactive Discussion

## Question 2

Are you currently working through, or have you worked through, a position task book for a GIS or other position? Would something similar be a valid approach? Why or why not?

Benefits	Concerns
Ensures you know the skills you need to know	Hard to validate PTBs for small teams
Builds integrity and trust	Requires bigger staff/cadre/network of people that can sign off tasks. Difficult for smaller organizations.
Standardizes things (each state has a different PTB)	Who is qualified to sign off?
Peer-reviewed positions	Beauracracy
Re-cert can act as refresher for things you don't do everyday	
[Do not use, but] could be helpful	
Having a list of task requirements is useful	

# Breakout or Interactive Discussion

## Question 3

Upon reviewing the skillsets, is this a valid approach? (handout)

What would you take out/add?

### Valid Approach

Covers majority of things/skills needed (good baseline)

### Concerns

Can't be strict to enforce they know everything

Missing: Technical knowledge on required hardware & functions

Change language to "Ability to apply" LiDAR, etc.

Too extensive, not everyone's role encompasses these requirements

It seems to broad Admin skills seem beyond the scope of this certificate

# Breakout or Interactive Discussion

## Question 4

Should deployment be required or optional for capturing experience? Anything else that should be required?

### Suggestions/Concerns

Activations, but also planned events -> These can lead to activations

Experience over "Deployment," but Yes

Organizations may not allow employees to deploy

Loose definition

"Support operational mission" should count

Capstone Project

Tight wording. "Deployment" excludes relevant experience

Deployment isn't fully inclusive of non-able-bodied people. Some people cannot deploy

Remove Deployment wording. LE Wording: Detail, Posting.

Define Activation

"Deployment" maybe not be required of all positions

Multiple Avenues to fit real-world subsets of GIS Support: Capstone, Deployment, Specific event support, Activation, Public Safety -user testimonial

# Breakout or Interactive Discussion

## Question 5

How should training be counted? Hours? Competency-based? Specific courses?

### Suggestions/Concerns

Pre Req - NIMS + ICS 100, 200, 300, 400, 700, and 800

Can there be room for current employer to determine some of the courses?

Do people have timer for training? Can activations/practical experience count as training?

What counts as training?

Training: Re-occurring training requirement; Evolving need for competency testing

Maintenance of training requirements on top of real-world experience

Real-world experience

Being part of a LEPC (6+ meetings a year)

Maybe training in open areas: natural disasters, terrorism, transportation, etc. Allow for wiggle room depending on the role/area of jurisdiction.

# Breakout or Interactive Discussion

## Question 6

What organizations should be included on an advisory board?

NAPSG Foundation  
International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)  
International Association of Police Chiefs (IAPC)  
International Association of Law Enforcement Analysts (IALEA)  
Geospatial Professionals Network (GPN)  
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)  
State EOCs  
Fusion Centers  
State Training Coordinators  
International Association of Crime Analysts (IACA)  
Association of State Flood Plain Managers (ASFPM)  
State Emergency GIS Response Groups (Example TX EGRT)  
Law Enforcement Agencies  
Public Works

05

**What's Next?**

# Stay Involved!



## We need you!

- Participate in focus groups to provide feedback as we develop the criteria and verification process for the GISCI Geospatial Emergency Response Certificate and the GISP First Responder Credential.
- Request that your organization be part of the Advisory Board.
- Complete surveys from time to time to weigh in on developments.

