



National States Geographic Information Council

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The Fifty States Initiative started in 2005 as a partnership between the [National States Geographic Information Council](#) (NSGIC) and the [Federal Geographic Data Committee](#) (FGDC). It was designed to bring all public and private stakeholders together in statewide GIS coordination bodies that help to form effective partnerships and lasting relationships.

The initiative is now managed by the FGDC which issues Cooperative Agreement Program (CAP) "grants" each year that enable the states to improve their coordination mechanisms. For information on the "grants" and a listing of grants that have been issued, please [click here](#). Starting in 2006, Category 3 "grants" supported this initiative. In 2010 Category 4 "grants" were added to focus continued development on business plans.

There is a critical need to coordinate GIS activities on a statewide basis to eliminate waste and improve efficiency in government. Agencies at all levels of government need to coordinate with other stakeholders to keep from duplicating the development of geographic data and systems at taxpayers' expense. Those stakeholders include non-profit organizations, academia, business and utilities. The "right" solutions will vary state-by-state and they are created through the development of effective strategic and business plans.

There are thousands of government agencies carrying out the day-to-day tasks of reducing crime, enhancing public health and safety, containing costs, managing growth, improving accountability, and protecting the environment. Nearly all of them rely on geographic information systems (GIS) technology to make decisions that directly affect citizens and determine our quality of life.

If you're a government executive or elected official, **become a Champion for GIS coordination**. Contact your [State GIS Coordinator](#) to find out what you can do to get involved. You could be saving more than just taxpayers' money! The following items need to be addressed in each state and its political subdivisions. For more detailed information click on the links provided.

- [Strategic and business plans](#)
- A full-time paid [GIS coordinator](#) and staff
- [Clearly defined authority](#) and responsibility for coordination
- A relationship with the [chief information officer](#)
- A [political or executive champion](#) is involved in coordination
- A [tie into national programs](#)
- An [inter-governmental working environment](#) free of "turf wars"
- [Sustainable funding](#) mechanisms
- [Contracting authority](#) and cost sharing mechanisms
- Statewide coordination efforts that can be a [conduit for federal initiatives](#)

Click [here](#) to access templates and other materials that will help you develop sound Strategic and Business Plans. You will be taken to another web page at the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC).

Click here to access the original [Fifty States Initiative Action Plan](#) that was developed as part of the Future Directions Initiative by the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC)

[Click here](#) to access more detailed information on the Fifty States Initiative