

**National Credit Union Administration**  
**Policy on Sponsoring National Communications System Programs**  
**January 13, 2003**

The *National Communications System (NCS)* was established in 1963 to provide priority communications support to critical government functions during emergencies. The NCS has developed a number of priority telecommunication services that are also available to private sector entities through sponsorship by an NCS member department or agency. The events of September 11, 2001 put a new focus on the importance of these programs to the nation and to the financial sector.

Currently, there are two NCS programs available to critical private sector financial service entities through sponsorship of their regulated Federal agency. The two programs are:

- **Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS).** GETS provides emergency access and priority processing for voice communications services during times of crisis; and
- **Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP).** The TSP program was developed to ensure priority treatment for the nation's most important telecommunication data circuits. TSP authorizes and requires service vendors to provision and restore TSP-assigned services before non-TSP services.

The *Financial and Banking Information Infrastructure Committee (FBIIIC)*, a standing committee of the President's Critical Infrastructure Protection Board, has been charged with the responsibility of coordinating federal and state financial regulatory efforts to improve the reliability and security of the U.S. financial system. Members of FBIIIC include representatives of the financial regulatory community, including the *National Credit Union Administration*.

The FBIIIC has developed policies on the sponsorship of priority telecommunications access for private sector entities through the NCS. The two goals of the policies are:

- to make financial organizations aware of NCS programs; and
- to provide consistent guidance regarding qualification criteria and the appropriate process for organizations that want to gain access to the programs.

Not all financial institutions will qualify for sponsorship in these programs. To qualify for GETS and/or TSP sponsorship, financial organizations, service providers and related organizations must support the performance of *National Security and Emergency Preparedness (NS/EP)* functions necessary to maintain the national economic posture. The FBIIIC agencies view maintenance of the national economic posture as the minimization of systemic disruption to the financial system directly related to the operation of critical financial markets and related essential services and systems.

There are five broad categories that serve as guidelines for determining who may qualify as a GETS user:

- National Security Leadership;
- National Security Posture and U.S. Population Attack Warning;
- Public Health, Safety, and Maintenance of Law and Order;
- Public Welfare and Maintenance of National Economic Posture; and
- Disaster Recovery.

TSP sponsorship requires that participants support critical payment systems or key securities and derivatives markets. FBIIC agencies will also sponsor circuits owned or leased by an organization that does not meet either of these two sponsorship criteria if a disruption of those circuits could seriously affect operations that support the maintenance of the national economic posture.

### **NCUA Application Process**

The detailed FBIIC policies and application forms related to these two programs are located at the following web addresses:

NCS Website	<a href="http://www.ncs.gov">www.ncs.gov</a>
NCS GETS Website	<a href="http://gets.ncs.gov">http://gets.ncs.gov</a>
FBIIC GETS Policy	<a href="http://www.fbiic.gov/gets.htm">www.fbiic.gov/gets.htm</a>
FBIIC GETS Application	<a href="http://www.fbiic.gov/getssponsorship.pdf">www.fbiic.gov/getssponsorship.pdf</a>
NCS TSP Website	<a href="http://tsp.ncs.gov">http://tsp.ncs.gov</a>
FBIIC TSP Policy	<a href="http://www.fbiic.gov/policies/TSP_policy.htm">www.fbiic.gov/policies/TSP_policy.htm</a>
NCS TSP Application	<a href="http://tsp.ncs.gov/tsp_docs/SF315.pdf">tsp.ncs.gov/tsp_docs/SF315.pdf</a>

If a credit union or related organization meets the qualification criteria as set forth in these FBIIC policies and wants to participate in the GETS and/or TSP program, applications should be submitted to the following address:

Neil R. McNamara  
Deputy Chief Information Officer  
National Credit Union Administration  
1775 Duke Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314-3428

For further information, please contact Neil McNamara at 703.518.6447 or by e-mail at [mcnamara@ncua.gov](mailto:mcnamara@ncua.gov).

/S/  
J. Leonard Skiles  
Executive Director