



U.S. Public Safety Broadband Network – FirstNet Developments Summer 2014

Background

In 2012, as part of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act, Congress and the White House allocated 20 MHz of radio spectrum and up to \$7 billion to fund the creation of a nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (PSBN). The PSBN is designed to satisfy a need, identified by the 9/11 Commission following terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, for the public safety community/first responders to have dedicated, interoperable communications capacity in the event of large-scale emergencies.

FirstNet is the governing, operating body at the federal level designed to manage and oversee the PSBN, which includes state-based participation from all U.S. States and Territories.

FirstNet and its Board of Directors have worked over the past two years to begin planning and implementation activities to organize the PSBN and assist state governments in the activities needed at a state-level to integrate into this new national network. This included initial hiring, the creation of a business plan, state consultations, numerous public meetings and workshops on a variety of topics, and grants to each state under the State and Local Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP), which provided \$2,005,869 to Alaska.

Current Events

In June of 2014, the National Association of Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) released a report based on surveys of 44 states and territories on how states are supporting the FirstNet effort so far. This report, which can be found at http://www.nascio.org/publications/documents/NASCIO_FirstNet_June2014_FINAL.pdf, indicates that 38% of states are using their state CIO as the Point of Contact (POC) for FirstNet, which 30% using their Law Enforcement or Department of Public Safety. The remainder of states use a combination of their Emergency Management Agency, the Department of Homeland Security, or other agencies. An important finding from NASCIO's study is the diversity among states (i.e. – no two states are the same). However, a majority of states report active efforts to create state governance models, and to organize state-based FirstNet efforts among key stakeholders. 78% of states are conducting FirstNet outreach and education activities, 52.3% report data collection to assist in their FirstNet efforts.

The late Spring of 2014 saw FirstNet aggressively begin outreach to each state's POC Contact to begin a state-by-state consultation process. This process includes initial assessments of State Readiness and a discussion between the State and FirstNet of several topics, including:

- The state's governance process;
- POCs for metropolitan, rural, and tribal jurisdictions;
- Eligible users of the PSBN within the state;
- Coverage;
- Public Safety Stakeholders in the state;



- Major state events that would have a significant impact on public safety; and
- State Specific Information the state's POC deems relevant and necessary for discussion and collaboration.

FirstNet's most recent Program Roadmap Update can be found in a presentation by FirstNet's Deputy General Manager TJ Kennedy made at the FirstNet Board meeting held in June 2014. A copy of that presentation can be found here:

<http://www.firstnet.gov/sites/default/files/Program%20Roadmap%20Update.pdf>.