

**FirstNet holds 'kick-off' consultation to bring federal agencies into the fold**

Fierce Wireless Tech By Monica Allevan

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The First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) formally launched the federal consultation process with a kick-off meeting in Washington, D.C., last week, with more than a dozen federal departments and agencies in attendance.

"The federal kick-off meeting was an important next step in our consultation and planning for the network," said Chris Algieri, FirstNet federal outreach branch chief in a [blog post](#). "The main objectives of the meeting were to enhance federal agencies' understanding of FirstNet's consultation process and to discuss future outreach and engagement between FirstNet and its federal partners."

The organization is mandated to consult with federal, state, tribal and local public safety entities on the development of the nation's first nationwide public safety broadband network (NPSBN). FirstNet has held consultation meetings in 11 states and territories so far, with more scheduled for 2015.

FirstNet Acting Executive Director TJ Kennedy encouraged the federal agencies to be active in the effort so FirstNet can better understand their missions and wireless broadband needs.

FirstNet will schedule one-one-one meetings with the agencies in the coming months to begin discussing their needs and requirements for the network, Algieri said.

It's worth noting that local agencies are not mandated to subscribe to the NPSBN, but the success of the network relies on their cooperation. Department of Homeland Security Under Secretary for the National Protection and Programs Directorate and FirstNet Board member Suzanne Spaulding opened the meeting by discussing the unique opportunity that FirstNet provides the public safety community, noting that "although we have a mandate to build the network, there is no requirement for you to subscribe" to it, according to the blog

The FirstNet organization has undergone significant change in the past year, including the hiring of more than 80 employees. In its fiscal year 2014, FirstNet participated in nearly 100 events across the country designed to connect with firefighters, law enforcement officials, emergency medical providers and public safety officials.

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