

FirstNet extends deadline for proposals to May 31

Fierce Wireless Tech By Monica Allevan

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The First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) extended the deadline for bidders making proposals from May 13 to May 31, but it still expects to award a contract by Nov. 1.

It's the second time FirstNet has extended the deadline for entities to make proposals in response to the RFP that was issued in January. Earlier this year, FirstNet extended the deadline for capability statements from March 17 to March 31.

Capability statements, where potential bidders outline how they plan to meet all 16 of FirstNet's objectives, are not mandatory, but FirstNet officials strongly encourage potential bidders to submit them. Extending the deadline for capability statements led the organization to extend the deadline for final RFP proposals from April 29 to May 13, and now the deadline is May 31.

"Our decision to extend the deadline for final proposals was driven by both the volume and nature of the capability statements as well as requests for extensions we've received from interested parties," said FirstNet CEO Mike Poth in a press release. "We believe this date affords prospective offerors the opportunity to fine tune their proposals and finalize any teaming arrangements and/or subcontractors, and we remain on track to award by November 1."

FirstNet has been answering hundreds of questions related to the RFP from stakeholders interested in being part of the nation's first public safety-dedicated 700 MHz LTE network. Officials have described the RFP as an objectives-based one, where it's being more open-minded and asking industry experts for proposals rather than dictating every single detail.

Last month, Poth described the FirstNet situation as a unique partnership, noting that the 20 MHz of spectrum it will use is considered beachfront property and more valuable than the \$6.5 billion network contract itself.

Earlier this year, AT&T ([NYSE: T](#)) said it planned to aggressively pursue the FirstNet opportunity. Analysts have also pegged Verizon ([NYSE: VZ](#)) as a likely partner for FirstNet, while others like

[Rivada Networks](#)

have made it clear that they plan on being part of the process. Brian Carney, senior vice president in charge of corporate communications at Rivada, told

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after the RFP was released in January that the company likes its chances. Rivada's core technology, Dynamic Spectrum Arbitrage Tiered Priority Access (DSATPA), is designed to allow public safety to have priority access with instant (millisecond) pre-emption in the event of an emergency situation, guaranteeing first responders access to the bandwidth when they need it the most.

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