

### FirstNet takes critical step in preparation for state, territory meetings

Fierce Mobile Government By Dibya Sarkar May 7, 2014

The group spearheading the creation of a high-speed, nationwide wireless broadband network for public safety agencies last week took an important step in the planning and coordination work with the states.

The [First Responder Network Authority](#), or FirstNet, on April 30 sent out what it calls an "initial consultation package" ( [pdf](#) ) to officials in all the 50 states and six territories. The package is basically a checklist of items that state officials need to complete and return in preparation for initial meetings with FirstNet. The group listed the consultations as an important milestone in a strategic roadmap ( [pdf](#) ) released in March.

FirstNet – which is charged with building, operating and maintaining an estimated \$7 billion network – said these initial meetings are designed as working sessions to share ideas, provide updates, discuss details of the overall initiative, and begin the process of collecting every state's requirements toward the development of state plans. These meetings are expected to take place between July 1 and Nov. 30.

To prepare for them, states officials must complete a readiness checklist, such as providing a list of proposed attendees for the meeting, proposed dates for the initial consultation, and an outreach plan, among other things.

They must also provide an update of relevant activities and issues for their state. Among recommended discussion topics, FirstNet asked how states plan to identify potential users for the public safety network, what discussions have they had about coverage requirements, and do they have a list of major events like state fairs or motorcycle rallies that could have an impact on public safety.

FirstNet, which is an independent authority within the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration, was created in early 2012 with the mission to create an interoperable communications platform for emergency responders. According to the group, many emergency personnel have difficulty communicating with one another because they rely on a patchwork of more than 10,000 incompatible and often proprietary land mobile radio networks.

Proceeds from spectrum auctions that the Federal Communications Commission has slated for mid-2015 are expected to pay for the high-speed public safety network.

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