

FirstNet names eight recipients in \$26.8 million grant program to relocate 700 MHz narrowband systems

Urgent Communications By Donny Jackson

August 18, 2016

[FirstNet](#) today announced that eight public-safety entities will receive a total of \$26.8 million to fund the relocation of their narrowband systems to different 700 MHz frequencies, clearing the airwaves for FirstNet's nationwide public-safety broadband network that is scheduled to be built during the next several years.

More than half the money in the Band 14 Incumbent Spectrum Relocation Grant Program (Band 14 Program) will go to the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, which is slated to receive more than \$14 million. Most of remaining funds will go to the Virginia State Police (\$7.3 million), the Arkansas State Police (\$3.8 million) and the Massachusetts State Police (\$1.55 million).

Four other entities will receive a total of less than \$100,000 in much smaller grants: the Department of Defense in Honolulu County (Hawaii), Marshall Fire Department (Michigan), Stamford Fire Department (Connecticut), and Post Falls Police Department (Idaho).

All grant applications were subjected to a competitive review process, according to a FirstNet press release. Grant recipients can use the funds to pay for activities that will include "reprogramming, retuning, and reconfiguring equipment to ensure effective transition out of the Band 14 spectrum," the press release states.

Public-safety entities receiving the grants will have one year to relocate their narrowband systems, clearing the Band 14 spectrum for broadband use by FirstNet and its contractor, which officials hope to announce by Nov. 1 at the conclusion of the request for proposal (RFP) evaluation process.

"Public safety's needs are our top priority, and we are pleased to be working hand-in-hand with these Band 14 public-safety incumbents," FirstNet CEO Mike Poth said in a prepared statement. "The awarding of these grants will help to ensure a smooth transition for these entities, while at the same time making sure the spectrum is free and clear for the deployment

of public safety's nationwide wireless broadband network.”

The need to relocate these narrowband systems is a result of the LMR networks being built prior to the [FCC](#) changing the 700 MHz spectrum band plan in 2007. In that band-plan change, the amount of public-safety 700 MHz narrowband spectrum remained the same, but it was rearranged to establish a 10 MHz swath of contiguous spectrum that could be leveraged to support broadband services for public safety.

[Link to Article](#)

[Link to Urgent Communications News Articles](#)