

FirstNet releases consultation package, plans to begin talks with states in July

Urgent Communications By Donny Jackson May 1, 2014

[FirstNet](#) yesterday released a consultation package that provides a checklist of items that states and territories should prepare prior to initiating official consultation proceedings with FirstNet, which could begin as early as July 1 for each jurisdiction.

In April, FirstNet delivered [proposed checklists to the state points of contact \(SPOCs\)](#) in the 56 states and territories impacted by FirstNet and sought additional input. That input was incorporated into the [consultation package](#), which includes a six-point “readiness checklist” that states and territories need to complete before initiating talks with FirstNet and eight “discussion topics” that FirstNet would like submitted.

“The release of the initial consultation package is an important next step in our coordination and planning work with the states, as well as implementing FirstNet’s program roadmap,” TJ Kennedy, FirstNet deputy general manager, said in prepared statement. “Each state plan will be developed through an iterative process, and this package will ensure a strong foundation as we begin consultations with each state and territory, so we can hit the ground running.”

FirstNet hopes to begin consultations with each state and territory between July 1 and Nov. 30, according to the consultation package. Much of FirstNet’s hiring during the past several months has been directed toward ensuring that the organization has the staff necessary to conduct effective consultations with states and territories.

“We are enthusiastic and prepared to begin in-person consultations with each state and territory,” Dave Buchanan, FirstNet’s director of state consultation, said in a prepared statement. “Through a highly collaborative process, we will engage each state and territory to understand and support the needs of their public safety communities, develop state plans, and deploy an operational broadband network.”

Last fall, FirstNet officials indicated that the organization would [work with each state and territory to devise a network plan designed to meet the first-responder needs in each jurisdiction](#)

“One thing I want to get across is that our view is that each one of these plans has to be a unique and jointly developed plan for each state,” then- [FirstNet](#) General Manager Bill D’Agostino said during a 2013 interview with

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. “That’s the key to the success, in our opinion, of adoption—the ability for the governors and the agencies in the states to say, ‘My team has worked with FirstNet, we have built this plan together, and we believe in it.’

“Otherwise ... I can say, ‘Hi, we’re from the federal government. We have a great plan—use it.’ And they’re going to toss me out. I want to build it from the bottom up, and I want to have it really jointly developed and cost it out. Then, I think we’ll have a high degree of success.”

FirstNet board member Craig Farrill echoed this sentiment.

“We want [officials for states and territories] to say, ‘This is my plan,’ before it goes to the governor, not ‘This is FirstNet’s plan,’” Farrill said last fall. “This is Colorado’s plan, this is D.C.’s plan, and this is Alaska’s plan—that’s ultimately where we have to get it. That’s when you know it becomes theirs—because they helped write it, they helped draft it and they own it—and then we’ll be successful.”

During the past three weeks, FirstNet has had significant executive-level personnel changes, with [D’Agostino’s resignation](#) and the hiring of [Ali Afrashteh as chief technology officer \(CTO\)](#)

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