

FirstNet Bids Are In, Now the Evaluations Begin

Wireless Week By Diana Goovaerts

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Open since January, FirstNet's [Request for Proposals \(RFP\)](#) for the buildout of a nationwide network for first responders closed yesterday afternoon.

Representatives for FirstNet declined to say how many bids were received or who submitted those bids, but said FirstNet was "excited to have met this major RFP milestone." FirstNet said it will now enter the evaluation stage of the proposal process.

According to the RFP, a multi-phase assessment will take place. Proposals will initially be evaluated based on their capability statements and completeness to determine whether they meet the pass/fail criteria set by the government. Those that pass will then be assessed on their ability to sustain the annual payments to FirstNet for the life of the contract and their ability to provide coverage across the 56 states and territories – including rural areas – covered by the RFP.

Final evaluation of the proposals will be based on five factors: Business Management, Coverage and Capacity, Products and Architecture, Past Performance, and a Value Proposition Assessment.

By weight, FirstNet said Business Management will be more important than Coverage and Capacity, while Products and Architecture will be on par with Coverage and Capacity. All three of those categories combined will be more important than the Value Proposition Assessment. Past Performance will be the least important measure.

The RFP said the contract will be awarded to "the responsible Offeror whose offer, in conforming to this RFP, provides the overall best value to the Government, when all evaluation factors are considered."

In a Tuesday [blog post](#) , FirstNet CEO Mike Poth said a contract may be awarded as soon as November.

“Our pace has been and will continue to be swift,” Poth wrote. “Our timeline reflects the needs of public safety – they have long been demanding a public safety broadband network and it is overdue. FirstNet’s mission is to provide public safety the best possible network at the best value as soon as possible.”

Though a list of bidders was not released, rumors and analyst have sought to predict the most likely candidate for the buildout.

Back in October, New York City-based independent investment banking advisory firm [Evercore ISI placed its bets on Verizon](#)

In April, T-Mobile CTO Neville Ray said it was [“doubtful”](#); the Un-carrier would be a “significant player” in the FirstNet bidding due to timing issues and competing spectrum and network commitments.

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