



TOP 10 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



1. What is the First Responder Network Authority?

The First Responder Network Authority (“FirstNet”) is an independent authority established by Congress to deliver a nationwide broadband network dedicated to public safety (“Network”). The Network will strengthen public safety users’ communications capabilities, enabling them to respond more quickly and effectively to accidents, disasters, and emergencies.

FirstNet is led by a [Board composed of leaders and executives](#) from the public safety community; federal, state, and local governments; and the technology, finance, and wireless sectors. FirstNet has a staff of about 200 employees with expertise in public safety, telecommunications, customer service, technology, procurement, and other areas needed to develop the Network. The FirstNet organization is headquartered in Reston, VA, and has a technology center and lab in Boulder, CO.

2. What led to the creation of FirstNet?

The 9/11 terrorist attacks brought to the forefront the many communications challenges that first responders face during emergencies and disasters. These issues were captured in the *9/11 Commission Report*, which identified gaps in emergency communications and recommended a nationwide network for law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical personnel communications.

The public safety community united to fulfill the 9/11 Commission’s recommendation. Public safety organizations and associations advocated before Congress for a dedicated, reliable wireless network for first responders. Their advocacy efforts led to the passage of legislation in 2012 to create FirstNet to deploy the Network in all U.S. states and territories, including rural communities and tribal nations.



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info@firstnet.gov | www.firstnet.gov | 571-665-6100



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3. How has public safety been involved in the vision for the Network?

Public safety officials have worked closely with FirstNet since its inception in 2012 to ensure the Network will meet first responders' needs – today and in the future. FirstNet's outreach and consultation efforts have connected the organization to more than 1.8 million first responders and state public safety and technology executives across the country.

Specifically, FirstNet has consulted extensively with [state single points of contact \(SPOC\)](#) in each of the 50 U.S. states, 5 territories, and the District of Columbia, as well as local/municipal, tribal and federal public safety leaders. FirstNet also coordinates with public safety through the [Public Safety Advisory Committee \(PSAC\)](#), which provides guidance and subject matter expertise from a first responder perspective. FirstNet has worked closely with the PSAC and states to incorporate their feedback and ideas into key Network planning and development initiatives, such as the Request for Proposal (RFP).

Public safety leaders at the national, state and local levels continue to advocate for FirstNet and support deployment of the Network. Recently, key national-level associations that represent law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel approved resolutions in support of FirstNet, including the [International Association of Chiefs of Police \(IACP\)](#); the [International Association of Fire Chiefs \(IAFC\)](#) and the [National Association of State EMS Officials \(NASEMSO\)](#).



4. How was AT&T selected to build, operate, and maintain the Network?

FirstNet and the Department of Interior made the 25-year award based on the determination of the overall best value solution for FirstNet and public safety. The buildup to the award included a fair, competitive procurement process that began in January 2016 with [release of the Network RFP](#). Prior to the RFP's release, FirstNet released two sets of draft documents – one focusing on the potential business models being considered by FirstNet, and another addressing cybersecurity. FirstNet also held a number of industry days explaining the evaluation factors and objectives-based approach.

The procurement process followed the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and encouraged offerors to provide innovative solutions that could meet or exceed the needs of FirstNet and public safety. The procurement was not limited by any particular solution nor was it limited to any specific type of offeror. Instead, the procurement was open to all entities, whether traditional wireless companies or new entrants, provided their proposal could meet the RFP's statement of objectives. At every turn, FirstNet encouraged teaming with multiple entities for the prime offerors, resulting in a published teaming list of over 600 companies ready to stand up and support FirstNet.

AT&T was selected on a best value award that considered financial sustainability and was based on more than just a technically acceptable solution at the lowest cost. The evaluation of proposals assessed the offerors' ability to submit a cost-effective and innovative model, and to meet or exceed the 16 objectives and evaluation factors outlined in FirstNet's RFP. FirstNet assessed the overall value and risk of each proposal, and in the end, arrived at the best solution for public safety and FirstNet.





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5. Why is FirstNet using a private sector partnership to build and operate the Network?

FirstNet and AT&T are poised to modernize and improve public safety communications by leveraging private sector resources, infrastructure, and cost-saving synergies to deploy and operate the Network. This public-private model also helps keep costs down for American taxpayers. To do this, Congress used the sale of communications airwaves (or spectrum) to fund FirstNet's initial operations and help start network deployment; the \$7 billion FirstNet received in initial funding came from FCC spectrum auction revenue, not taxpayer funds.

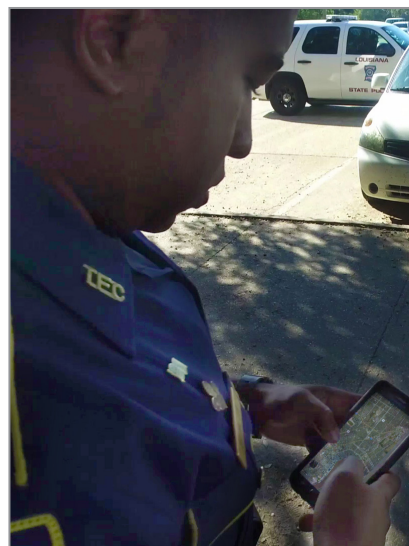
Further, if the federal government were to build, maintain and operate this Network, the estimated cost would be tens of billions of dollars over 25 years: [the Government Accountability Office has estimated](#) it could cost up to \$47 billion over 10 years to construct and operate the Network.

With this partnership approach, FirstNet and AT&T do not need any additional federal funding to build and operate the Network – it is a fully-funded, self-sustaining Network. In return, America's first responders get services far above and beyond what they have today over a first-class broadband network dedicated to their communications needs.

6. What are the key terms this public-private partnership?

Congress intended for the Network to be built and operated as a public-private partnership that brings together the best of the private sector– including commercial best practices, infrastructure, and resources – with FirstNet's public safety expertise. This approach will lead to a fully-funded, self-sustaining Network that will serve public safety for years to come. This business model is built upon the efficient use of resources, infrastructure, cost-saving synergies, and incentives, including:

- FirstNet provides 20 MHz of spectrum and \$6.5 billion in initial funding to the partnership; and in return AT&T will deploy and operate a nationwide high-speed broadband network for public safety over 25 years.
- AT&T will spend about \$40 billion over the life of the contract to build, operate, deploy, and maintain the Network, and together with FirstNet will help to ensure the Network evolves with the needs of public safety and advances in technology.
- AT&T can use FirstNet's spectrum when it is not being used by public safety for other, commercial purposes. The company will prioritize first responders over any other commercial users on the Network.
- FirstNet will oversee this contract to ensure it delivers innovation, technology and customer care to public safety through various mechanisms, including subscriber adoption targets, milestone buildouts, disincentive fees and other mechanisms outlined in the contract.





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7. What will the FirstNet Network provide first responders that they don't have today?

Today, in emergencies and at large events, heavy public use can lead to wireless communications networks becoming overloaded and inaccessible. In those instances, public safety users are treated the same as any other commercial or enterprise user, and communications can be limited due to congestion and capacity issues.

With the FirstNet Network, public safety will get a dedicated 'fast lane' that provides highly secure communications every day and for every emergency. It will deliver specialized features to public safety that are not available on wireless networks today – such as priority access, more network capacity, and a resilient, hardened connection.

The Network will deliver more than just a public safety grade wireless connection – it also will create devices and apps ecosystems that will connect first responders to innovative, life-saving technologies.



8. How will the Network benefit first responders and help them do their jobs better?

The FirstNet Network will help improve response times for public safety and personal security for our responders from coast-to-coast and in every territory in both rural and urban areas, leading to safer and more secure communities. FirstNet will also enable advanced border communications for public safety entities.

The Network will provide first responders with innovation and robust capacity so they can take advantage of advanced technologies, tools and services during emergencies, such as:

- Applications that allow first responders to reliably share videos, text messages, photos and other information during incidents in near real-time;
- Advanced capabilities, like camera-equipped connected drones and robots, to deliver images of wildfires, floods or other events;
- Improved location services to help with mapping capabilities during rescue and recovery operations; and
- Wearables that could relay biometric data of a patient to the hospital or alert when a fire fighter is in distress.

Network technology will also be tested and validated through the [FirstNet Innovation and Test Lab](#), located in Boulder, CO, so first responders will have the public safety grade, proven tools they need in disasters and emergencies.



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9. Now that an RFP awardee has been selected, what are the key next steps for the Network?

FirstNet and AT&T are focused on building the core network and delivering State Plans. The FirstNet team will develop and deliver an individualized [State Plan to each of the 50 states, 5 territories, and District of Columbia](#) detailing the proposed network deployment in their jurisdictions. As the law stipulates, once a governor receives his or her State Plan, each state governor will have 90 days to either:

- **Opt in:** If a state opts in or takes no action on the State Plan within 90 days of receiving it, FirstNet will issue a task order to begin deployment of the Radio Access Network (RAN) portion of the FirstNet network in the state at no cost to the state. States do not have to wait the full 90 days to make an opt in decision; they can opt in at any point after receiving their State Plans. The opt in path is a low-risk option that will support faster delivery of services to the state's public safety community and help create an interoperable, highly secure, sustainable nationwide network for public safety. The earlier a state opts in, the sooner work can begin.
- **Opt out:** If the state elects not to participate in the FirstNet RAN deployment, it must provide notice to FirstNet within 90 days of receiving the State Plan, and within 180 days of such notice, it must develop and complete an RFP. And, following that, it must submit an alternative plan to the FCC for the construction, maintenance, operation and improvement of the RAN in the state. The RAN must be interoperable with the nationwide Network. Before the state's RAN deployment can begin, the FCC must approve the alternative plan and, if approved, the state must then apply to the NTIA to enter into a spectrum capacity lease with FirstNet. Opt out states will assume all technical, operational and financial risks and responsibilities related to building their own RAN for the next 25 years.

10. What is the timetable for delivering draft and final State Plans?

FirstNet is prioritizing the development of State Plans. In order to deliver on the promise of releasing draft State Plans to the governors, FirstNet is targeting a release date in the summer of 2017. This will enable FirstNet and AT&T to engage with stakeholders on the draft State Plans. FirstNet expects to deliver the final State Plans simultaneously to each Governor through an online portal as soon as fall 2017. Once the State Plans are delivered to the Governors, the 90-day review and decision period starts (as specified in the legislation that created FirstNet). To learn more about the State Plans process, please see the following tutorial on key considerations for the [State Plan](#).



Learn more:

Stay up-to-date on FirstNet activities and the building and deployment of FirstNet at www.firstnet.gov. Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).



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