



Tribal Governments Outreach Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

WHAT IS THE FIRST RESPONDER NETWORK AUTHORITY (FIRSTNET)?

FirstNet was established by Congress to ensure that public safety has a nationwide broadband network (more simply, the FirstNet network). The FirstNet network is expected to be operational in late 2018, with full operational capability anticipated by 2022. FirstNet network subscribers—be they federal, tribal, state, municipal, individual, or private sector—will include paid and volunteer emergency medical services, fire services, and law enforcement among others. Subscriber rates will be competitive with commercial carriers, and individual agencies will choose whether or not to subscribe. This nationwide, secure, wireless broadband network will not be taxpayer funded.

HOW WILL FIRSTNET HELP MY TRIBE?

FirstNet is gearing up to make your community safer—and help protect those who risk their lives in service to others, who safeguard sacred sites, and who watch over our natural resources. FirstNet plans to achieve this by giving responders all across the country a means of communicating securely and reliably with one another. This communication will include vital data, such as photographs and video, real-time patient medical information, arrest records, floor plans, and maps. Improved spoken communications and data exchange will change how public safety functions.

WILL FIRSTNET CONSULT WITH MY TRIBE?

Yes, but Congress limited FirstNet's authority to consult directly with tribes. Nation-to-nation consultation between the federal government and tribal governments *is* being undertaken in full compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The act that established FirstNet, however, requires that planning for its nationwide network deployment occur in consultation with single points of contact (SPOCs) appointed by the governors in all 50 states, five territories, and the District of Columbia. SPOCs are responsible for coordinating with all public safety stakeholders within the boundaries of those jurisdictions, to include tribes.

HOW MUCH WILL FIRSTNET COST?

The cost of FirstNet devices and services will be competitive with commercial carriers. Since no public safety entity will be required to use FirstNet, it will be necessary to demonstrate value to earn customers. Exact pricing for services and devices can only be determined after FirstNet awards its contract to a private sector partner.



WILL MY TRIBE HAVE FIRSTNET WIRELESS COVERAGE?

Possibly...the likelihood increases with your tribe's participation in planning being coordinated at the state level. This planning identifies where first responders need broadband coverage and capacity. FirstNet staff are working with SPOCs—who should be working with you—to establish coverage objectives and priorities. Please do not delay in contacting FirstNet if you desire assistance. Although the act that Congress passed requires FirstNet to substantially cover rural America, the United States is a big country with many rural areas. Identifying and explaining your tribe's desired coverage is critical if FirstNet is to know your needs and understand their importance.

WILL FIRSTNET USE MY EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE?

Possibly...but the extent to which tribally owned infrastructure may be used will be determined after a private sector partner has been awarded the FirstNet contract. The act that established FirstNet does require leveraging existing infrastructure wherever economically feasible to reduce costs and expedite deployment. One factor influencing feasibility will be whether existing infrastructure complies with public safety grade standards. Those specifications are being refined.

ARE THERE BUSINESS POSSIBILITIES FOR PARTICIPATING IN FIRSTNET?

Yes. A nationwide broadband network dedicated to public safety is a multi-billion dollar venture demanding expertise in many NAICS (North American Industry Classification System) codes.

MUST MY TRIBE WAIVE ITS SOVEREIGNTY TO ACCESS THE NETWORK?

No. If, however, your tribe pursues contracting opportunities, businesses may insist on limited waivers of sovereign immunity. Conversely, should states be involved, you may demand that contract disputes be governed by the jurisdiction of federal courts, where appropriate.

WILL FIRSTNET ENHANCE MY CASINO'S SECURITY?

Yes, if FirstNet coverage exists and management chooses to subscribe and purchase devices.

WHERE CAN I FIND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE?

- For state single points of contact (SPOCs) see: <http://firstnet.gov/consultation>
- For the FirstNet Tribal Team contact Carl Rebstock, FirstNet's national tribal government liaison, at carl.rebstock@firstnet.gov or via his mobile phone at +1 202 657 2777
- To explore business prospects at <http://www.firstnet.gov/about/doing-business-firstnet>