



Tribal Governments Outreach Additional Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



Does Firstnet Have a Tribal Consultation Policy?

Yes. FirstNet is revising its policies regarding the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and FirstNet is drafting a separate policy for all other nation-to-nation consultations. The last is being developed with input from the FirstNet Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) Tribal Working Group (TWG).

How Do Tribes Request Cultural/Environmental Consultation?

Requests for NEPA/NHPA tribal consultation may be initiated by various means: in-person, telephonically, via email, or written letter. Contact either Genevieve Walker at genevieve.walker@firstnet.gov or +1 703 906 5637 or FirstNet Federal Preservation Officer (FPO) Andrew Bielakowski at andrew.bielakowski@firstnet.gov or +1 202 657 7982.

Additionally, once site-specific information is known, FirstNet will engage in government-to-government consultation with federally recognized tribes, Alaska Native villages, or Native Hawaiian Organizations (NHO), as required by NHPA.



What Coverage Is Expected for Tribal Land?

There are no specific coverage goals for tribal lands. Coverage is pursued—nationwide—where it is needed. For us to know where the FirstNet network is needed by public safety, we need to hear from public safety. The best way for tribal officials make their coverage needs known is to communicate these to their state's [single point of contact](#) (SPOC; firstnet.gov/consultation/spoc) and the [FirstNet tribal team](#) (firstnet.gov/consultation/tribes).



What Will Firstnet Cost?

We know it will be reasonable. It is impossible to know specifics until after the FirstNet contract is awarded to an industry partner, however, we know the cost of devices and services must be competitive with the commercial market. Since there is no mandate to subscribe, every FirstNet user must be earned. Moreover, since the network will not be taxpayer funded, it must provide compelling benefits at attractive pricing.



When Will Services Be Available?

We anticipate the FirstNet network being operational by 2019, but at this stage it is impossible to know definitively. Once FirstNet has announced the award of its contract, the two next steps will be simultaneous delivery of state plans, followed by each governor's consideration of these proposals. The decision governors must make is who will construct and maintain the in-state portion of the national network: the federal government, at no expense to the state (i.e. "opt-in") or the state government, at its expense (i.e. "opt-out"). In either case, the network will be built. In the latter instance, construction is likely to be delayed. This delay will result from vetting of states' counterproposals by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and National Telecommunications & Information Administration (NTIA).



What Are the Implications for Tribes That Cross State Borders If One State “Opts In” but Another “Opts Out”?

Minimal. We anticipate that tribes residing in multiple states, regardless of where they are headquartered, will be free to pick their provider based upon the best value offered by either an “opt-out” state or FirstNet.



Can Tribes Expect Any Tribal-Specific Funding or Grants for Devices?

At this time, FirstNet does not anticipate offering funding or grants. Other federal agencies with tribal emergency management, homeland security, or public safety responsibilities may support expenditures for FirstNet products and/or services within their programs.



Who Defines Public Safety Users or Users Groups?

This matter is only partially resolved. It may entail a two-fold determination: confirmation of the type of user and validation of the user’s rights to access the network. Types of users will fall into one of two groups: “traditional” (i.e. emergency medical services, fire services, or law enforcement) or “extended” first responders (e.g. Alaska dental health aide therapists (DHATs), facility guards, public health technicians, or public works responders, and so forth). Who will validate legitimate users—those authorized to purchase devices and access services—will be decided in discussions with FirstNet’s industry partner, following award of the contract.

How Will User Priority Work on Tribal Land?

User priority on or off tribal lands will only differ based on whether the responder is deemed to be a traditional or extended user (see above). Traditional public safety responders will receive the highest level of service.



Will Firstnet Build Towers On Tribal Land?

Yes, while adhering to NEPA/NHPA reviews and respecting the sovereignty of federally recognized tribes. Infrastructure buildout will be influenced by the public safety need, legislatively mandated rural buildout milestones, and existence of telecommunications infrastructure.

Three Things You Can Do.

- **Learn.** FirstNet is changing public safety communications—fast and in big ways.
- **Participate.** Governors need to know your tribe’s needs and opinions—especially now.
- **Share.** Talk about FirstNet: with colleagues, intertribal associations, Indian Country and others by contacting us at socialmedia@firstnet.gov to write a guest blog.

How Can I Stay Updated with Firstnet’s Latest Developments?

- For the latest news, read the FirstNet blog: <http://www.firstnet.gov/newsroom/blog>
- Follow FirstNet on Twitter @FirstNetGov
- For state single points of contact (SPOCs), refer to <http://firstnet.gov/consultation>
- For the Tribal Team, in FirstNet/FEMA regions I-VIII, contact Margaret Muhr at margaret.muhr@firstnet.gov or call/text +1 202 738 8344; in regions IX-X, contact Adam Geisler at adam.geisler@firstnet.gov or +1 202 631 1188; or Carl Rebstock, FirstNet’s national tribal government liaison, at carl.rebstock@firstnet.gov or +1 202 657 2777.
- To explore business prospects, visit <http://www.firstnet.gov/about/doing-business-firstnet>