



FirstNet[®]



Band 14 Incumbent Spectrum Relocation Grant Program

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. WHY DID FIRSTNET ESTABLISH THE BAND CLASS 14 INCUMBENT SPECTRUM RELOCATION GRANT PROGRAM?

The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (Pub. L. No. 112-96, Title VI, 126 Stat. 156 (codified at 47 U.S.C. §§ 1401 - 1457)) (the Act), mandated the creation of the nationwide public safety broadband network (NPSBN) for prioritized use by to public safety entities. As directed by the Act, FirstNet holds a single, nationwide license issued by the FCC to utilize frequencies 758.00 to 763.00 MHz and 788.00 to 793.00 MHz for the purposes of ensuring the development, deployment and operation of the NPSBN. This range of frequencies is often referred to as “Band 14.”

A number of public safety entities around the nation are still operating on the FirstNet-licensed Band 14 frequencies under previously issued FCC authorizations. These public safety entities (incumbents) will be required to relocate their communications operations from Band 14 to other frequencies allocated by the FCC to ensure unencumbered (clear – free of interference) spectrum, which is necessary for successful NPSBN development, deployment and operations. To facilitate the Band 14 spectrum clearance effort, FirstNet has established the Band 14 Incumbent Spectrum Relocation Grant Program. The principal purpose of this federal grant program is to facilitate this relocation, and enable these public safety entities to continue to operate their public safety communications systems on other frequencies allocated by the FCC.

2. HOW DO I APPLY?

Applications must be submitted electronically through www.grants.gov and must be received by the www.grants.gov online system no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on May 16, 2016. See the Federal Funding Opportunity (2016-NTIA-SRGP-01) at this link: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=282272>, for detailed information concerning submission dates and instructions for submitting applications.

3. WHO IS THE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR THIS GRANT?

State, county and municipal government public safety entities (and agencies thereof) that are currently FCC-licensed for and operating on Band 14 frequencies for the express purposes of public safety communications as of the posting date of this FFO on [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

4. WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE?

The anticipated period of performance will be July 29, 2016 to July 31, 2017. A no-cost extension may be considered based on need.

5. WHAT ARE THE FUNDING PRIORITIES UNDER THIS PROGRAM?

The Band 14 Incumbent Spectrum Relocation Grant program will support certain costs incurred by incumbents that are associated with retuning and reprogramming communications equipment currently operating on the Band 14 spectrum during a 12-month period of performance. Procurement of new communications equipment (e.g. radios, vehicle repeaters, fixed site repeaters, antenna combiners, etc.) by incumbents will be considered for funding only if the application clearly demonstrates that the retuning or reprogramming of existing equipment is not cost effective or cannot be achieved due to equipment obsolescence. Any determination that an incumbent's procurement of new communications equipment is appropriate may impact the grant amount that such applicant is eligible to receive under this program.

6. WHAT ACTIVITIES MUST GRANT RECIPIENTS COMPLETE BY THE END OF THE GRANT PERIOD?

Grant recipients must complete the following activities by the award end date:

- (1) Commit to the relocation of their public safety communications from Band 14 within the 12 month period of performance and develop a detailed project plan with key milestones in the relocation process to include a plan for the retuning, reprogramming or replacement of equipment within the approved budget.
- (2) Make progress towards and provide quarterly updates on the major milestones in the relocation process.
- (3) As part of the grant closeout report, provide a copy of the modified FCC license showing clearance from the Band 14 spectrum. This report is due 90 days following the final award end date.

7. MAY A RECIPIENT REQUEST AN EXTENSION OF TIME FOR THE GRANT PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE?

Yes, recipients may request a no-cost extension to the one-year period of performance. However, such requests may not occur until later in the grant period, after the second quarter, and must contain sufficient justification to warrant an extension, be recommended by the Federal Program Officer, and be approved by the Grants Officer. If approved, grantees will have more time but no additional funds, to complete performance.

8. WHAT ARE ALLOWABLE COSTS?

Allowable costs are those costs described in and consistent with the principles identified in 2 CFR Part 200 and as defined in the Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO). Allowable costs must be reasonable, allocable, necessary to the project, and conform to generally accepted accounting principles.

Allowable costs may include categories such as: (1) Personnel costs, including salaries, for staff directly working on relocation implementation and management activities such as project managers, grant administrators, financial analysts, radio equipment technicians, and accountants; (2) Fringe Benefit costs for those employees charging personnel costs to the grant program; (3) Mileage and per diem costs incurred by personnel to travel to access and/or transport equipment for retuning and reprogramming radio equipment; (4) Costs to develop or modify Band 14 relocation project plans; (5) Consultation/contractual costs to retune, reprogram or procure allowable communications equipment such as subscriber equipment, mobile radio equipment, and repeaters. (6) Standards-based interoperable

communications equipment that will facilitate the transition from the Band 14 spectrum to alternative radio spectrum allocated by the FCC. Procurement of new equipment will only be allowable if the applicant demonstrates, with validation by FirstNet, that retuning or reprogramming existing equipment is not cost effective or cannot be achieved due to equipment obsolescence. If new equipment is requested, the applicant must submit a cost analysis. New equipment funded under this grant must comply with APCO P25 standards. (7) Ancillary equipment used to facilitate the relocation and confirm capabilities is also allowable. (e.g., radio frequency and network test equipment including handheld spectrum analyzers, cable testers). (8) FirstNet will reimburse applicants for proposed indirect (F&A) costs in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414.

9. WHAT ARE UNALLOWABLE COSTS?

Funds awarded under the Band 14 Incumbent Spectrum Relocation Grant Program may not be used, at a minimum, for the following activities: (1) Pre-award costs incurred prior to the period of performance; (2) Construction or any activity that requires an environmental assessment or an environmental impact study, as determined by FirstNet, to include modification of radio towers; (3) Travel costs other than mileage and per diem costs incurred by personnel to travel to access and/or transport radio equipment for retuning and reprogramming; (4) Costs associated with the decommission of any system or equipment to include costs associated with the disposal or recycling of any equipment; (5) Legal services provided by outside/third-party organizations related to the spectrum relocation process; (6) Training costs related to grants management or the retune or replacement of equipment; (7) Any fees or costs associated with upgrading systems in preparation for the NPSBN; and (8) Any employee or contractor overtime charges, and fringe benefit costs associated with such overtime charges.

10. WHAT IS THE MINIMUM NON-FEDERAL MATCHING SHARE?

There is no non-federal matching requirement for this grant.

11. WHO CAN I CONTACT AT FIRSTNET IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

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