



# FirstNet for Tribal Leadership

The First Responder Network Authority, or FirstNet Authority, was established by Congress to ensure the building, deployment, and operation of a nationwide public safety broadband network (NPSBN). Championed by the public safety community for years, this dedicated network became a reality after the lessons of September 11, 2001, reinforced the urgent need for interoperable, reliable emergency communications.

First responders throughout the country use the FirstNet network, built through a public-private partnership with AT&T, to help them save lives and keep communities safe. The public safety network covers nearly 3 million square miles and serves first responders in all states, U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia. The FirstNet Authority, an independent federal authority within the U.S. Department of Commerce, works hand-in-hand with local, state, federal, and tribal public safety agencies to ensure the network meets their needs.

The FirstNet Authority's Tribal Consultation Policy helps the agency honor tribal sovereignty through productive communications, consideration, and engagement with tribal governments surrounding the deployment of the FirstNet network.

## **Tribal area coverage: connecting responders in rural America and tribal nations**

FirstNet's wireless broadband network (i.e., cellphone network) is dedicated to public safety. That means the network is designed for traditional public safety like law enforcement, fire service, EMS, 9-1-1/telecommunicators, and emergency managers, as well as those who support emergency response like tribal leadership, health care, schools, public works, and casino security.

The FirstNet Authority's enabling legislation made coverage buildout in rural areas a priority. Since 2018, FirstNet's wireless coverage expanded by more than 64% on tribal lands. During the initial five-

## The Tribal Advisory Group

The Tribal Advisory Group (TAG) is an integral part of the FirstNet Authority's Public Safety Advisory Committee. This group of public safety organizations provides direct feedback to the FirstNet Authority and advises on network planning and implementation. The TAG includes volunteer delegates from associations with diverse geographic and disciplinary interests in tribal public safety. The TAG, which meets monthly, specifically provides feedback on Indian Country outreach, education, and inclusive engagement strategies. The intent is to inform and involve federally recognized tribes regarding their use of the FirstNet network.

Meet your TAG representatives at **FirstNet.gov/TAG**.



year buildout of the network, which ended in 2023, more than 560 new cell towers serving tribal nations launched on FirstNet. This extended the reach of cellular coverage for public safety — and the broader community when the network is not in use by first responders.

The FirstNet Authority continues to focus coverage enhancement and investment decisions on tribal, territorial, and rural communities. In 2024, the FirstNet Authority approved \$2 billion to continue to grow and expand FirstNet wireless coverage where public safety needs it. The FirstNet Authority also looks for alternative methods to increase coverage. For example, in-building and deployable coverage solutions improve connectivity in the office and on the road.

## Enhancing public safety's readiness and response

Built for public safety by public safety, FirstNet provides reliable, dedicated and highly secure communication for first responders and those who support emergency response, including tribal leadership. The network gives public safety reliable communications for daily operations, natural disaster response, and during major incidents and events.

### Dedicated public safety spectrum

The FirstNet Authority's enabling legislation set aside Band 14 spectrum for the NPSBN. This high-quality, nationwide spectrum can be cleared and locked for public safety's use. During emergencies or large events when cellular networks experience congestion, FirstNet has always-on priority and preemption so public safety can still communicate.

### Support for daily operations, emergencies, and planned events

FirstNet provides reliable communications to public safety for daily operations, natural disaster response, and during major incidents and events — and the FirstNet Authority

team is available to help tribal nations incorporate the network into their plans. Public safety, whether they are FirstNet subscribers or not, can reach out to the Public Safety Advisor in the nearest state or territory, or directly to the FirstNet Authority's Tribal Liaison at [FirstNet.gov/advisor](https://firstnet.gov/advisor). Connect with the FirstNet Authority to learn about FirstNet in your community, get help with pre-planning for public safety incidents and events, conduct a post incident/event review, or set up a workshop. Learn more about these programs at [FirstNet.gov/assistance](https://firstnet.gov/assistance).

### Response Operations Group and deployables

AT&T's Response Operations Group (ROG) and the FirstNet Authority's Public Safety Advocacy team are available to support FirstNet subscribers during operations that need additional coverage solutions. Through the ROG, FirstNet subscribers have 24x7x365 access to a dedicated fleet of FirstNet deployable assets, such as portable cell towers, free of charge. These deployable assets and network enhancements provide FirstNet connectivity when and where it is needed. This includes emergencies and planned events in remote areas, such as search and rescue missions, Pow Wows, concerts, or wildfire responses. Staff from the FirstNet Authority can help tribes understand the deployable program, conduct broadband needs assessments, and interface with AT&T as needed.

### FirstNet Central

FirstNet Central gives local control to subscribed agencies through an online suite of resources and allows them to have visibility into network status. Agencies can maintain their command and control over the network with access to coverage maps, tower location and status, including outage updates in the event of a network disruption. FirstNet Central also gives users the ability to uplift the priority level of users, request deployable network support, and manage their account.

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## Additional Resources:

- For use cases and testimonials, visit [FirstNet.gov/FirstNetinAction](https://firstnet.gov/FirstNetinAction).
- For more info about how the FirstNet Authority serves Tribal Communities, including the Tribal Consultation Policy, visit [FirstNet.gov/Tribal](https://firstnet.gov/Tribal).
- Learn about FirstNet products and services on [FirstNet.com](https://firstnet.com).

