



FirstNet Management Adopts Business Plan More Details Emerge on SLIGP Grants to States and Regional Outreach A Connected Nation Policy Brief August 21, 2013

On August 13, 2013, the First Responder Network Authority ([FirstNet](#)) held its sixth Board of Directors [meeting](#). This meeting was notable because the FirstNet Board of Directors adopted an operating business plan for the Public Safety Broadband Network (PSBN), and released summary details of the plan to the public. During its August meeting, the FirstNet board also: released details on the current status of grants to all states that will assist in state-based planning for integration into the PSBN; gave an update on FirstNet's regionally-based outreach to state, local, and Tribal governments; and gave an update on FirstNet's efforts to incorporate seven public safety network grants through the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP).

Fiscal Year 2014 First Responder Network Authority Business Plan

On August 13, 2013, the FirstNet Board adopted a [business plan and \\$194 million budget](#) for Fiscal Year 2014. This plan is a key element to the future success of the PSBN's development. It had originally been planned for release in April 2013, and while a lengthy draft of the business plan was circulating among FirstNet Board members as early as April, the business plan was not ready for adoption at that time.

The FY2014 business plan adopted allocates:

- \$9.4 million for Network Partners to provide operational capability and financial sustainability;
- \$54.6 million for the PSBN Core Network to create the technical foundation for interoperability. This includes an accelerated development of standards and design of the network core in conjunction with BTOP grantees;
- \$19.9 million for State Network Plans to create the foundation for public safety and local government relationships. This includes a priority on outreach and data collection from state, local, and Tribal governments that will support state planning activity;
- \$34.1 million for State Consultation;
- \$1.7 million for Early Mover Projects to obtain market, technical, and operational insights. This is to ensure full coordination with BTOP grantees to promote effective integration and implementation;
- \$11.3 million for Deployable Systems to test & integrate coverage and recovery capabilities, which should best leverage capabilities, innovative technologies, and research;
- \$3.3 million for Wireless Devices to stimulate the ecosystem for Public Safety use and applications; and
- \$59.7 million for building the foundation upon which FirstNet and the PSBN will operate by establishing FirstNet's core staffing team, controls, and procedures to support public safety.

Further and deeper details on the operating budget and business plan were not released at the August board meeting but are expected at a later date in 2013.

State and Local Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP)

The [SLIGP program](#) is designed to support planning, consultation, and outreach capabilities at a state/territory level in order to ensure each state and territory has the resources necessary to participate in the PSBN.



SLIGP grants, which will total \$118.15 million, will be allocated in a two-phase process, with the first tranche of funds just now being released in Phase I. In Phase I, state-based grantees may use grant funding (which includes a 20% non-federal match requirement) to establish a governance structure to consult with FirstNet, develop procedures to facilitate local and Tribal representation in state/FirstNet interactions; conduct stakeholder outreach and education; identify public safety end-users of the PSBN; develop legal agreements for sharing relevant infrastructure; planning for local/Tribal stakeholder involvement in SLIGP Phase I; and to update or create a statewide communications interoperability plan to include public safety broadband initiatives.

As of its August board meeting, FirstNet has awarded the first five grants to states (Connecticut, Colorado, New York, Delaware, and Ohio) in the amount of \$13.1 million. At the meeting, FirstNet's staff indicated that grant awards would continue throughout August and likely into September of 2013.

Phase II of the SLIGP grants will include data collection of data elements that can be used by FirstNet, and FirstNet is currently assessing the data elements it believes is necessary for Phase II to begin.

State, Local, Tribal and Territorial Outreach

Throughout May and June of 2013, FirstNet board members and staff conducted six regional consultation meetings with state, local, Tribal, and territorial governments. At the August meeting, Board member Jeff Johnson provided the Board with a [summary](#) of those meetings, feedback obtained at the meetings, and gave future outreach recommendations.

Future outreach activities include update to members of the US Congress, individual state & territory visits, further federal and Tribal outreach, the data collection process that will occur in SLIGP Phase II, and recommendation of ten regional service centers (that mirror Federal Emergency Management Agency regions) that will be staffed by outreach team members and handle consultation & outreach needs on an on-going basis.

BTOP PSBN Project Negotiations and Transition

Several BTOP grants have funded the construction of local public safety broadband networks using the D block. For these BTOP grantees to operate these networks, they need to obtain a license from FirstNet – and ultimately these “BTOP first mover” networks will need to be integrated into the FirstNet network.

At the August Board meeting, Board member Susan Swenson provided information on the negotiation of spectrum lease arrangements with these BTOP grantees. Swenson gave, with grantee participants, an update on successful negotiations with the [Los Angeles Regional Interoperable Communications System](#) (LA-RICS) in California; a spectrum lease agreement with the New Mexico Department of Information Technology; and recommended continuing negotiations with the Bay RICS project in the San Francisco Bay Area and with the State of Mississippi.

Swenson also notified the Board that FirstNet is concluding or suspending negotiations without an agreement with three BTOP public safety grantees: the Adams County Communications Center in Colorado, the City of Charlotte in North Carolina, and the New Jersey Department of Treasury. At this point, Swenson indicated that FirstNet and the grantees are not able to resolve outstanding issues that would prevent those projects from integrating sufficiently into the PSBN, and thus FirstNet cannot complete a spectrum lease agreement. There remains opportunity for continued efforts to allow those BTOP projects to continue toward PSBN integration.

For more information about FirstNet, please contact Connected Nation at policy@connectednation.org.