

# *What is* **FIRSTNETME**



## What is FirstNetME?

**FirstNetME** is a statewide program to prepare Maine for the design, deployment and operation of the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN), the nation's first dedicated high-speed wireless broadband network for public safety. Built on a single reliable and interoperable platform, the network will provide first responders with mission-critical, high-speed data services (location information, images, video, and maps) to supplement the voice capabilities of land mobile radio (LMR) networks. Utilizing the most advanced long term evolution (LTE) wireless technology as well as existing infrastructure when possible, the network will support faster, better-coordinated emergency response across local jurisdictions; state, territory and tribal lines; and US borders.

### FirstNet

The project to build and maintain a dedicated public safety network is the charge of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet), an independent organization within the US Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). Created by the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012, FirstNet's mission fulfills a recommendation of the 911 Commission to establish a nationwide network that resolves communications challenges faced by emergency responders.<sup>1</sup>

With an authorized budget of \$7 billion, FirstNet will build and maintain the core broadband network plus the radio access network (RAN)<sup>2</sup> of each state that opts to participate in the federal program, realizing costs through sales of radio spectrum, subscriber fees, and fees from excess network capacity leases. States that opt out of the program must seek FirstNet approval to build their own RAN, paying for network construction, access to the core, and ongoing maintenance. Following an estimated 10-year buildout, the network will potentially connect over 5 million public safety users nationwide. Although use of the network will be voluntary, FirstNet plans to offer subscriptions at a compelling, competitive cost, establishing the network as self-sustaining.

To launch the program, FirstNet has awarded \$135 million in funding to states through the State and Local Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP). These initial grants are to be used to determine state network coverage and user requirements, and to develop a state network plan based on these requirements. During this stage, FirstNet collaborates with each to create a plan that ensures the state proposed network meets national public safety standards, and submits the final plan to the state governor for the pivotal opt-in opt-out decision. Once planning is completed nationwide, FirstNet will move forward with implementation (expected by mid-2018).

### FirstNet in Maine, or FirstNetME

In Maine, a FirstNetME team has formed under the leadership of Lisa Leahy, FirstNet State Point of Contact for Maine and Associate Executive Director of the ConnectME Authority,<sup>3</sup> to develop and implement the Maine RAN network plan. With \$1.04 million in initial SLIGP funding, the team is working with the Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and the Maine Interoperable Communications Committee (MICC), the designated governance body.

### SLIGP tasks:

- Conduct an outreach program that informs Maine first responders and other public safety stakeholders on the FirstNet initiative, and gathers information on their specific communications challenges, coverage needs and user requirements
- Hold initial state consultation with FirstNet, MICC members and key stakeholders (20 May 2015)
- Conduct team and MICC meetings

- Meet and discuss network needs and commonalities with public safety stakeholders in other New England states and Canadian border communities
- Inventory potential broadband assets in Maine, identifying broadband availability and required coverage areas; hardening, security and resiliency requirements; and priority and secondary users
- Continue FirstNet consultations and MICC and regional meetings
- Develop a RAN network plan for Maine in collaboration with FirstNet and the MICC
- Present the network plan to Governor Paul LePage for the opt-in, opt-out decision

### Public Safety Users in Maine

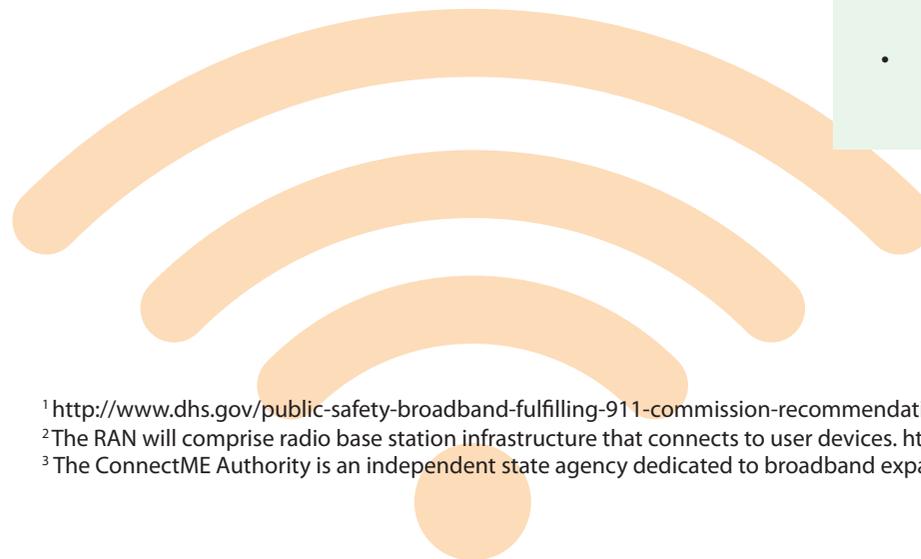
The potential user community in Maine is large, widespread and diverse:

- Law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services, E911
- State, county, regional and tribal government agencies
- Coast Guard, National Guard and FEMA
- Hospitals, LifeFlight, ambulatory contracted services
- Utilities, towing and busing services
- Volunteer fire and emergency medical services
- Red Cross, Salvation Army and other private organizations

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.dhs.gov/public-safety-broadband-fulfilling-911-commission-recommendation>

<sup>2</sup> The RAN will comprise radio base station infrastructure that connects to user devices. <http://firstnet.gov/network>

<sup>3</sup> The ConnectME Authority is an independent state agency dedicated to broadband expansion in Maine. <http://www.maine.gov/connectme/>



Public Safety Needs	The FirstNet Solution	The Benefits of FirstNet
Reliable data communications for daily and mission-critical use	One interoperable broadband network dedicated to public safety rather than multiple separate and incompatible networks	Priority and preemption. Improved communications for coordinated response and life-saving services
Access to mobile broadband, data, databases, and applications	Public-safety-grade mobile devices (tablets, laptops, phones, wearable tech) providing LTE wireless broadband connection	Shared data, images, video, for better situational awareness; maps and plans, and medical and police records realtime
Infrastructure redundancy	Ample cell site power backup and hardening; rapid rerouting	Communications without interruption at all times and during extreme conditions
Rural and wilderness coverage	Use of satellite and self-organizing-network (SON) options outside of satellite coverage	No gaps in coverage for 95% of the US land mass
Best voice communications technology available	Use of existing land mobile radio (LMR) network assets for the foreseeable future	Best service at reduced development cost
Best data communications technology available	Use of existing broadband infrastructure assets	Best service at reduced development cost

### **To First Responders and Other Public Safety Stakeholders:**

Contact us with your questions and feedback on this vitally important initiative in Maine. We need to know more about the communications technologies you use and the challenges you face daily and in emergency situations. This information will be key to developing a state network plan that meets the needs of first responders in Maine.

### **Contact the FirstNetME team:**

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