



INTO THE STORM:
**Supporting Mission Critical
Communications in Times of Crisis**

FISCAL YEAR 2025 ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS

JULY 2026

Submitted to the United States Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
and the United States House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce



FirstNet Authority board member Chief Trisha Wolford, U.S. Representative Richard Hudson, and Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information Arielle Roth join North Carolina public safety leaders in launching a new FirstNet tower in Alamance County, North Carolina.



The FirstNet Authority was established in light of 9/11 to lead the creation of a dedicated nationwide broadband network using spectrum set aside for the public safety community (Band 14). Through a combination of government, commercial, and public safety partnerships, we are committed to delivering a network and supporting ecosystem of apps, devices, and capabilities that are innovative, reliable, accessible and secure. By modernizing public safety communications with our partners, we can help responders keep America safe — every day and in every emergency.

This Annual Report to Congress is issued pursuant to Section 6210 of Public Law 112-96 and reflects the operations, activities, financial condition, and accomplishments of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority)¹ for fiscal year 2025.²

¹ Public Law 112-96 established the FirstNet Authority as an independent authority within the United States Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).

² Fiscal year 2025 is the period from October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025.

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LETTER FROM BOARD CHAIR SHERIFF MICHAEL ADKINSON AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CEO MICHAEL A. CANNON

We are proud to report that fiscal year (FY) 2025 was a successful year at the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) as the nationwide public safety broadband network (NPSBN or FirstNet network) continued to grow and meet the communication needs of America's first responders.

The fiscal year began between the back-to-back hurricane landfalls of Helene and Milton which devastated the Southeastern United States. These storms highlighted the need for mission critical communications in times of crisis. Public safety in every state and community must plan for, and respond to, the unexpected—even the unlikely—so that when disaster strikes, those who answer the call are prepared to respond on a moment's notice.

The FirstNet Authority was born out of tragedy: created by Congress after communications failures during the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, with a mission to oversee the buildout of a nationwide public safety broadband network that fulfills the communications needs of our nation's first responders. Leveraging dedicated spectrum, we continue to strive to deliver a reliable high-performance communications network that is as dependable in mass emergencies as it is in the daily performance of public safety.

The FirstNet Authority is funded by fees collected through our contract with AT&T, and the program operates at no additional cost to U.S. taxpayers. By leveraging the infrastructure and efficiencies of the private sector with the FirstNet Authority's reinvestment of fees back into the network to enhance service for FirstNet users, we are delivering the benefit of the bargain for both public safety and American taxpayers.

In FY24, the FirstNet Authority Board approved an investment initiative to evolve and expand network coverage, deliver full 5G capabilities on the FirstNet network and increase mission-critical services for public safety across America. The FirstNet Authority held a series of Coverage Enhancement Workshops across the country where we gathered input from state and local public safety agencies that will help drive future investments and new infrastructure in those states.

In addition to developing new technologies and enhancing network services for tomorrow, the FirstNet Authority works directly with public safety. In FY25, the FirstNet Authority met with more than 47,000 stakeholders to discuss operational needs, network performance, and to help plan for major events to ensure smooth mission execution and a safe experience for the public. FirstNet Authority staff additionally joined preparations for two events where America will shine on the global stage: the 2026 FIFA World Cup soccer tournament hosted in 11 U.S. cities and the 250th anniversary of the United States Declaration of Independence celebrations.



As the FirstNet Authority moves forward, an important legislative issue requires congressional action. The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 included a sunset date of February 22, 2027. Congress has begun considering key reforms to FirstNet to set the program up for success for the next ten years, and we stand ready to work with Congress to get this over the finish line.

FirstNet is a network “for public safety, by public safety.” The FirstNet Authority will continue to ensure public safety has reliable, interoperable communications tools to save lives and protect communities, making good on the trust public safety places in us.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature of Michael Adkinson in black ink.

MICHAEL ADKINSON
Board Chair



A handwritten signature of Michael A. Cannon in black ink.

MICHAEL A. CANNON
Executive Director and CEO



The Redstone Arsenal Fire and Emergency Services team in Alabama uses FirstNet to ensure seamless communication during complex federal public safety operations. FirstNet tools, like push-to-talk and mapping services, allows them to easily work with their partners across the military base.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) is tasked by Congress to ensure the establishment and continuing operation, maintenance, and improvement of an interoperable nationwide public safety broadband network (“NPSBN” or “FirstNet” or the “network”). This report is issued pursuant to Section 6210 of Public Law 112-96 and reflects the operations, activities, financial condition, and accomplishments of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) for fiscal year 2025.

Created by the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (the Act), Congress allocated \$7 billion and 20 megahertz of dedicated wireless spectrum to establish the network. In 2017, following an open, transparent, and competitive procurement process, the FirstNet Authority awarded a 25-year contract to AT&T to build, operate, and maintain the network, creating a first-of-its-kind contract to support public safety. Shortly thereafter, in 2018, AT&T commenced deployment of FirstNet to bring network coverage, services, and capabilities to public safety. The initial nationwide network buildout was completed on time and on budget in 2023. The FirstNet Authority is now funded by fees collected through the contract, and the program operates at no additional cost to U.S. taxpayers.

Pursuant to the Act, the FirstNet Authority is led by a Board. When fully staffed, the Board is comprised of 15 members. Three are permanent members—the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Attorney General, and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget—and twelve are appointed by the Secretary of Commerce for their public safety, technical, network, and/or financial experience and expertise. The Board works to ensure that the FirstNet Authority and the network deliver for public safety.

Today, first responders throughout the country use FirstNet to help save lives and keep communities safe. Focused on the needs of public safety, the network includes a dedicated core that separates public safety traffic from non-public safety traffic. FirstNet provides one-of-a-kind, always-on priority and preemption, giving public safety users’ calls, texts, and data the “lights and sirens” treatment on the network. The network continues to evolve with new public safety functions and features. The nationwide buildout of Band 14—FirstNet’s dedicated public safety spectrum—provides additional coverage and capacity where public safety needs it the most.

FirstNet by the Numbers

FirstNet Response Operations: Today, the FirstNet network provides coverage for more than 2.99 million square miles. In FY25, the network triaged and deployed over 2,600 portable cell equipment and signal enhancement solutions for public safety during emergency situations.

Connections: There has been significant, continuing adoption of FirstNet by public safety. In FY25, there were approximately 30,600 subscribed public safety agencies and organizations, with more than 7.8 million device connections to the network.

Public Safety Engagement: In FY25, the FirstNet Authority conducted over 1,100 engagements reaching more than 47,000 public safety stakeholders across the 56 states and territories to gain insight and collect feedback regarding the network.

Applications: There are 185 public safety apps available in the FirstNet app catalog, vetted for security.

Devices: First responders can choose from over 1,200 FirstNet Ready® devices, which undergo a rigorous certification process, from regular commercial phones to specialized and ruggedized equipment for activities such as search and rescue.

Deployables: Recognizing that natural disasters and other events can cause cell towers to go offline, and emergencies can occur in remote areas, the FirstNet program has over 190 mobile broadband solutions in its nationwide deployable fleet available to requesting subscribing agencies at no additional cost. In FY 2025 alone over 2,600 temporary coverage solutions were triaged and deployed for public safety nationwide.

FY25 Notable Successes

In addition to the network operations, expansion, and features noted above, the FirstNet Authority had several other notable successes in FY25, including:

- **New Cell Sites:** In FY25, the FirstNet Authority oversaw the addition of new cell sites to the network. These purpose-built sites were an immediate demonstration of the Authority’s 10-year strategic reinvestment initiative announced the year before to expand, enhance, and evolve public safety’s broadband network.

- **Coverage Enhancement Workshops:** This year the FirstNet Authority launched a series of Coverage Enhancement Workshops to hear directly from public safety users where coverage improvements are most needed and why. Held in 35 states, with more planned for FY26, these workshops provided public safety with visibility and input into FirstNet Authority investment progress and new site builds.
- **5G Evolution:** We made important progress toward a dedicated 5G standalone core. Supported by the FirstNet Authority's reinvestments, achievements in network evolution included full priority and preemption on 5G AT&T commercial spectrum and development and testing of the 5G core.
- **Performance Oversight:** The FirstNet Authority continued to ensure the successful execution of the contract with AT&T to build, deploy, operate, and enhance the FirstNet network. We launched a new nationwide sampling program conducting on-the-ground assessments by FirstNet Authority staff evaluating contract and network performance.
- **Financial Sustainability:** The FirstNet Authority continues to effectively manage its finances to remain self-sustaining, as required by Congress.



During the Pioneer Fire in Washington, responders delivered FirstNet assets like Compact Rapid Deployables (CRDs) and miniCRDs by boat and helicopter.





In response to the Airport Fire in California, Orange County Fire Authority utilized artificial intelligence-enabled cameras, aerial intelligence, dual-SIM phones, deployable assets, and satellite backhaul, all underpinned by broadband connectivity.

INTO THE STORM: SUPPORTING MISSION CRITICAL COMMUNICATIONS IN TIMES OF CRISIS

FY25 began on October 1, 2024, a momentous time for public safety. Hurricane Helene had just battered the southeastern United States, causing widespread damage and loss of life. Two weeks later, before communities had a chance to recover, Hurricane Milton barreled in from the Gulf of America, cutting a swathe of destruction from the Florida coast to Appalachia. The one-two punch was devastating.

Public safety professionals across the United States perform vital and distinct missions to protect and serve their community—whether in law enforcement, fire services, emergency medical services, or the 9-1-1 centers that respond to calls for help, to local, regional, and state emergency management agencies that coordinate across jurisdictions to plan and coordinate effective response to a multitude of scenarios.

Nowhere is that more evident than when a natural disaster strikes.

Ready for the Challenge

When public safety agencies select FirstNet as their communications provider, they gain access to the dedicated Band 14 spectrum exclusively set aside by Congress for public safety use, in addition to all other bands of AT&T's nationwide network. The unique structure of the FirstNet network means that during high-traffic events, such as mass emergencies, public safety traffic gets priority and preemption of signal, analogous to the creation of a dedicated highway lane with "lights and sirens."

However, even the most hardened and resilient networks, which still must utilize physical infrastructure like towers and cables, are susceptible to interference or damage from wildfires, strong storms delivering hurricane-force winds and flooding, and damage to access routes preventing fast restoration.

During extreme weather events, public safety agencies request FirstNet deployables¹ to provide supplemental coverage. AT&T maintains a dedicated Response Operations Group (ROG) which works directly with local and state emergency preparedness and response before and during major events to provide access to a fleet of mobile communications solutions available at no cost to FirstNet subscribers. The AT&T ROG, which is led by a team of former first responders and receives input from FirstNet Authority liaisons, triages requests from subscribing agencies, pre-

stages and then moves assets according to urgency and need, and matches solutions to problems before, during, and after an event.

Deployables that link to FirstNet via satellite do not rely on commercial power and provide similar connectivity as a cell tower. The FirstNet program has over 190 mobile broadband solutions in its deployable fleet which includes vehicles with mobile cell sites called Satellite Cell on Light Trucks (SatCOLTs), flying Cell on Wheels (COWs) smaller compact rapid deployables (CRDs), and miniCRDs with better portability characteristics that can be set up in minutes and operated by just one person.

The FirstNet Authority continually invests in new solutions to keep the network at the cutting edge of mobility and quality of service. In FY25, the FirstNet Authority made significant progress in upgrading the complete deployable fleet from 4G/LTE to 5G technology, the gradual introduction of Low Earth Orbit (LEO) backhaul to enhance satellite coverage for users and preparing for direct-to-cellular device satellite communications.

The FirstNet program also serves "extended primary" users, subscribing entities that play critical roles in preserving and restoring public health, safety, and critical systems. While first responders and public safety agencies are always prioritized and stand in line behind no one, extended primary users like health and education systems, critical infrastructure operators, and debris removal and repair entities can receive priority service when uplifted by a subscribing public safety agency. While priority and preemption clears traffic for public safety, citizens' calls to 9-1-1 centers are never preempted.

FirstNet In Action

When Category 4 Hurricane Helene devastated the southeastern United States in late September 2024, it caused widespread impacts to infrastructure—from telecommunications to power to roadways—making network restoration a challenge. The ROG received 217 requests for some type of emergency support and 66 agencies were served by dedicated deployable assets. Some agencies leveraged customer-owned FirstNet mobile assets to rapidly re-establish connectivity in key areas. This unique capability enhanced public safety's command and control of their network. Additionally, the FirstNet network and associated solutions provided critical redundancy for

¹ For more information on FirstNet's deployable program visit: FirstNet.gov/Deployables

Tennessee's statewide radio communications and North Carolina's Emergency Services IP Network (ESInet).

While the Southeast was still recovering from Hurricane Helene, another storm threatened the State of Florida. At one point, the strongest Category 5 hurricane recorded in the Atlantic, Hurricane Milton, ultimately made landfall the evening of October 9 near Siesta Key as a Category 3 storm. The ROG received 48 requests for support from state and local public safety agencies. AT&T swiftly triaged and responded to these requests, deploying assets and equipment to ensure continuity of operations for agencies across Central Florida.

Natural disasters come in different forms across the country. In Douglas County, Nebraska, the state's most populous county, the sheriff's office switched the entire agency to FirstNet. That decision paid off when an F4 tornado tore through the community on April 17, 2025, damaging and destroying hundreds of homes. The sheriff's office used FirstNet to connect more than 80 mobile data computers, as well as the agency's smartphones and mobile computer-aided dispatch—all of which stayed operational during the storm. Despite the devastation, "FirstNet was the only service that did not experience disruptions during the spring tornado," said Sheriff Aaron W. Hanson.

FirstNet supported first responders in recovery efforts in Texas after devastating floods. During the early hours of July 4, 2025, heavy rainfall, rocky terrain, and coastal climate conditions contributed to rapid flooding along the Guadalupe River in Kerr County and the Texas Hill Country. River levels increased from less than 12 inches to over 34 feet, the highest recorded since 1997, resulting in 137 fatalities.

As search and recovery efforts continued in the days that followed the catastrophic flooding, federal, state, and local first responders leveraged the FirstNet network to provide critical voice and data connectivity. FirstNet proved critical for keeping data flowing and teams synchronized as they documented searches and maintained a common operating picture across responding agencies. The ROG received 24 requests for support and deployed 36 assets to the region, and AT&T implemented an innovative and unique solution to install a permanent site in Hunt County in record time to serve increased traffic in the region.

To Protect and Serve

Public safety must expect the unexpected and plan for the unplannable, there is no margin for error. FY25 saw tremendous—and tragic—disasters that demonstrate how public safety officials use FirstNet to be their best when things are at their worst.

Following the tragedy of 9/11, Congress created the FirstNet Authority to ensure the building of a network public safety can rely on for dedicated high-quality and dependable broadband service. The network was designed to be reliable for routine missions or major events that can threaten to overwhelm normal communications networks. Today, thousands of agencies across the nation rely on FirstNet, and the FirstNet Authority strives to reciprocate the commitment and dependability of these heroes.



FirstNet fleet assets like Compact Rapid Deployables provided connectivity for responders during the 2024 Los Angeles wildfires.



New FirstNet cell sites built across the country, such as this one in Swain County, North Carolina, provide expanded coverage and reliable communications for responders.

NETWORK INVESTMENTS AND TECHNOLOGY

The FirstNet Authority Roadmap remains the guiding framework for advancing public safety communications through ongoing innovation and investment into the network. Released in FY23, it set forth three key focus areas: creating a dependable network, empowering connected responders, and operationalizing advanced technologies. These priorities, informed by thousands of engagements with public safety, continued to steer the FirstNet Authority's innovation and investment activities in FY25, ensuring the FirstNet network evolves to meet the distinct operational needs of first responders nationwide.

During FY25, the FirstNet Authority leveraged stakeholder engagement initiatives to understand public safety's most pressing operational requirements.

These initiatives included:

- Conducting innovation trials to evaluate public safety-specific artificial intelligence use cases and temporary deployable coverage solutions in remote wilderness and rural geographies where public safety requires enhanced coverage.
- Engaging directly with the public safety community through Coverage Enhancement Workshops to share feedback on where coverage is most needed to inform the building of new sites and enhance network performance.
- Engaging with public safety to understand needs and gaps in mission-critical services (MCS) capabilities to refine network investments.
- Collaborating with public safety stakeholders through pre-planning, on-site engagement, and post-event reviews to identify operational needs and communication challenges to guide future network enhancements.

In FY25 the FirstNet Authority introduced new tools and capabilities to support investment decisions. The First Responder Impact Model (FRIM) is the FirstNet Authority's data-driven framework for evaluating and prioritizing network coverage enhancement investments. The FRIM combines quantitative data—such as geospatial mapping, performance metrics, and crowd-sourced data—with qualitative feedback collected from public safety stakeholders through the Coverage Enhancement Workshops. Through use of the FRIM, the FirstNet Authority applies a structured, data-driven approach to ensure that network investments deliver measurable improvements

in coverage, capacity, and operational support for first responders nationwide.

Investment

The FirstNet Authority's agreement with AT&T, established in 2017, generates fee income over the 25-year contract term to operate, maintain, and enhance the network in response to public safety's evolving needs. In accordance with the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012, the FirstNet Authority must reinvest these funds directly into the network, which is defined in the Act as comprising the "core network" and "radio access network" (RAN).

To ensure accountability and strategic alignment, the FirstNet Authority employs a rigorous investment process that governs the use of financial resources. All investments are aligned with the FirstNet Authority Roadmap, which identifies the strategic priorities for expanding and evolving the network beyond existing contractual commitments. The FirstNet Authority remains committed to being a responsible steward of its reinvestment resources and to maintaining transparency in how these funds are applied to strengthen and advance the network. This commitment is shown by the work of the FirstNet Authority to implement investments previously approved by the FirstNet Authority Board to evolve the FirstNet network, including:

- **Initial upgrades to enable 5G network capabilities (FY20-FY25)** – Evolving the network to support full 5G capabilities is a multi-year, multi-phased effort, beginning with initial upgrades to FirstNet's dedicated network core elements. This initial investment in upgrading the core was necessary for future investments the FirstNet Authority made toward evolving the network to full 5G capabilities and allows public safety to benefit from increases in throughput and reduced latency while the network evolves.
- **Expanding the fleet of FirstNet deployables to enhance network coverage and capacity for public safety during emergencies and events (FY20-FY25)** – FirstNet's growing fleet of more than 190 deployables support public safety communications at large pre-planned events, during major emergencies, and throughout responses to natural disasters.
- **Enhancing in-building coverage capabilities (FY22-FY25)** – This investment adds an important capability to provide enhanced coverage where public safety agencies operate, such as police headquarters, fire

stations, emergency communications centers, and other critical sites. This service enables more resilient in-building access to the network, including MCS and priority and preemption, to enhance Band 14 coverage where they operate.

- **Network Evolution to the next phase of FirstNet (FY24-FY25)** – The FirstNet Authority launched a major multi-year investment initiative to modernize and expand the Nation’s public safety broadband network, with implementation beginning in FY25. This initiative will advance FirstNet to full 5G capability, add thousands of new purpose-built sites, and enhance mission-critical services such as voice, video, data, and location. It will also upgrade deployable network assets with 5G and low-earth orbit (LEO) satellite connectivity, ensure priority and preemption across all AT&T 5G spectrum bands, and lay the groundwork for future technologies beyond 5G.

Evolving the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network to 5G

The FirstNet Authority has undertaken a comprehensive, multi-year effort to modernize the nation’s public safety broadband network by moving toward a dedicated 5G standalone core. Through major strategic investments, early core modernization work, and a focused commitment to public safety-specific 5G functions, the FirstNet Authority is laying the groundwork for next-generation services such as enhanced mission-critical voice, data, and video, as well as improved priority, preemption, and network resiliency.

A 5G standalone core (5GSA), as defined in the 3rd Generation Partnership Project (3GPP) standards, will unlock lower latency, inherent 5G network functions, richer mission-critical capabilities, and better performance compared to non-standalone architectures. FirstNet’s transition to a standalone core is in progress as part of a long-term evolution reflecting the FirstNet Authority’s mandate to keep public safety communications at the leading edge of broadband technology while ensuring priority, reliability, and security for responders.

AT&T made significant development progress in FY25 in efforts to deliver full 5G capabilities, including establishing priority and preemption on 5G AT&T commercial spectrum; upgrading deployables to operate on LEO satellite technology; enabling mission critical services with the 5G non-standalone core; and initiating development and integration testing for the 5G standalone core. These transformational efforts are a realization of FY24’s 10-year reinvestment strategy.

FirstNet’s transition to a full 5G network will deliver faster speeds, greater capacity, and improved service quality for users, while enabling new innovations in 5G public safety applications. During this transition, FirstNet’s 4G LTE and 5G Non-Standalone (5GNSA) network will remain fully functional and continue providing the dependable service public safety officials rely on.

Expanding the NPSBN Coverage Footprint

Following completion of the initial nationwide buildout of FirstNet in March 2023, the FirstNet Authority has been focused on expanding the “macro” network (the persistent, outdoor network) and extending coverage into indoor locations. In FY25, the FirstNet Authority accepted delivery of new sites equipped with both Band 14 and 5G New Radio capability as part of the larger reinvestment initiative into the FirstNet network.

To complement coverage in the macro network, public safety agencies also made use of FirstNet to extend the radio access network and bring Band 14 coverage indoors. Through this offering, 5,546 units of user equipment were provided to primary public safety agencies in FY25, providing up to approximately 85 million square feet of indoor coverage. The most frequent agency type requesting this indoor coverage extension has been police or law enforcement in both rural and non-rural areas.

Mission Critical Services

FirstNet mission critical services adhere to 3GPP wireless industry standards, as directed by our enabling legislation, to ensure high availability, reliability, and lower latency for first responders to communicate and coordinate more effectively. In FY25, FirstNet added functionalities for talk group management and user administration. Highlights of these updates include priority scanning and zone-based groups for talk groups and bulk permissions management and enhanced license assignment for user administration. Efforts were also undertaken to ensure mission critical push to talk platforms will work on the 5G standalone network once deployed. In FY25, significant progress was made developing interworking functionality on mission critical services platforms between FirstNet-certified devices and Land Mobile Radio Systems, with a full launch expected in 2026.

Application Ecosystem

In FY25, the FirstNet Authority continued to monitor the growth and health of the FirstNet app ecosystem. The FirstNet App Catalog only lists apps that have undergone rigorous vetting and approval process; it currently contains 185 FirstNet Verified apps for public safety. The apps certification process continues to evolve and be updated to incorporate scanning for new threats and concerns found in apps.

The FirstNet app ecosystem supports many areas of public safety operations, including critical infrastructure, dispatch, EMS, fire and rescue, wellness/safety, hazardous materials, and law enforcement.

In FY25, new capabilities and enhancements were added to FirstNet-branded applications available through FirstNet Central, including tag-based search capability in the App Developer portal, enhanced status and outage alerts in the Network Status tool, request retry capability in the Uplift tool, and enhanced notifications and operational management in Identity, Credential, and Access Management (ICAM).

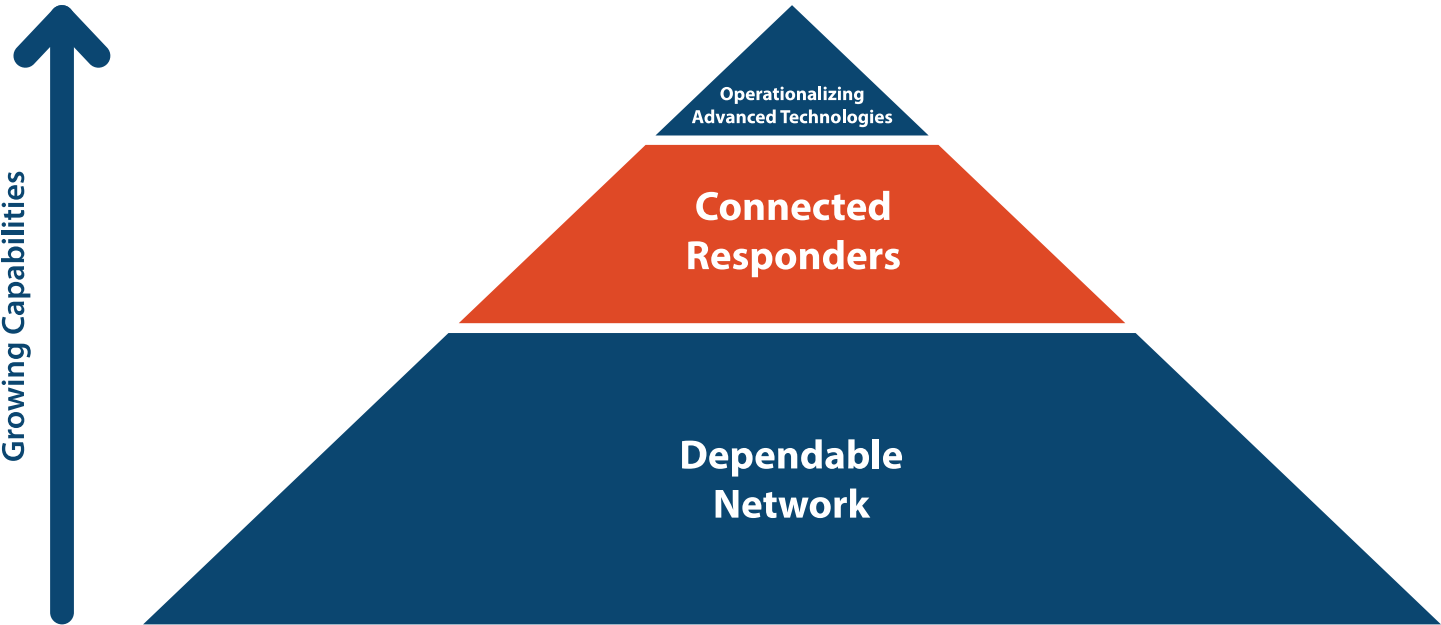
Device Ecosystem

The FirstNet device ecosystem includes smartphones, tablets, routers, modems, and wearables that use FirstNet network capabilities to meet first responders’ unique needs. From ruggedization features like impact resistance and being waterproof to built-in public safety features like Push-to-Talk, these devices are built to work for responders. The National Institute of Standards and Technology’s list of certified FirstNet Ready® (Band 14-enabled) devices, which are manufactured by a wide range of leading manufacturers, grew from over 865 in FY24 to 1,229 in FY25.

Cybersecurity

In alignment with the Act, the FirstNet Authority oversees the safety, security, and resilience of the network through its comprehensive cybersecurity oversight program. The program assesses contractual performance against hundreds of criteria throughout essential security domains, including threat management, vulnerability management, patch management, risk management, and physical security.

Figure 1: Roadmap Pyramid





The FirstNet Authority co-hosts 5x5: The Public Safety Innovation Summit with the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Public Safety Communications Research Division. This summit brings together leaders in public safety, academia, government, and industry to look at current and emerging public safety communications technologies.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The FirstNet Authority continued its robust engagement with public safety stakeholders in FY25, conducting more than 1,100 engagements and reaching upwards of 47,000 public safety stakeholders across the 56 states and territories, the federal government, and tribal jurisdictions. Through these engagements, public safety was briefed on FirstNet and its latest innovations, received support to operationalize FirstNet within their respective agencies, and gained access to new and enhanced FirstNet services, features, and capabilities based on their input. These engagements allow public safety to provide feedback and recommendations to influence network updates and investments in the future.

Network coverage was the most discussed topic during stakeholder engagements in FY25. Feedback on coverage included praise for the FirstNet Authority's continued investments in deployable assets and in-building coverage solutions, with an overall favorable view of network coverage. Public safety continued to identify ongoing coverage needs, as well as suggested enhancements to FirstNet products and services. The inputs provided during stakeholder engagements continuously inform the FirstNet Authority's investments, programs, and activities.

Coverage Enhancement Workshops

Stemming from FY24's 10-year strategic investment plan, in early FY25, the FirstNet Authority launched a series of Coverage Enhancement Workshops with public safety agencies to continue providing progress updates and seek input on where coverage improvements are most needed and why. The targeted feedback, along with network considerations, will ensure future coverage enhancements maximize resources and make the biggest impact on public safety operations.

The FirstNet Authority completed workshops in 35 states and territories with local, state, territory, tribal, and federal representatives and will continue the workshops in FY26. Input from public safety is essential, and the FirstNet Authority will continue Coverage Enhancement Workshops beyond the first series of engagements to ensure new areas of need are captured and public safety has visibility into the investment progress and new site builds.

Public Safety Advisory Committee

Consistent with its authorizing statute, the FirstNet Authority established a Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) in February 2013. The PSAC consists of members representing all disciplines of public safety, as well as local, state, territorial, and tribal governments. The PSAC also has at-large members and federal members. The PSAC's mission is to assist the FirstNet Authority in carrying out its duties and responsibilities.

In FY25, the PSAC conducted nearly 30 engagements, including business meetings, bi-monthly teleconferences, a tour of the Boulder FirstNet Lab, focus groups and interviews targeted at gathering feedback on potential investment topics and priorities, and monthly Tribal Advisory Group meetings.

These regular meetings enabled strong working relationships among PSAC members and the FirstNet Authority to discuss and address topics such as FirstNet adoption and use, disaster response and deployable use, and association engagement. Throughout the year, the PSAC carried out its statutory responsibility to assist the FirstNet Authority by contributing to key discussions, including considerations for Internet of Things-type technology in the 5G environment.

Additionally, the PSAC's Tribal Advisory Group was established to provide advice on Indian Country outreach, education, and inclusive engagement strategies. Federally recognized tribal jurisdictions span the country, and telecommunications capabilities are vitally important to first responders in these areas. Engaging with these nations and organizations is essential to FirstNet's success and the welfare of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities. In FY25, the FirstNet Authority continued its outreach with tribal communities with 193 engagements involving tribal participation.

Network Experience Engagement Program

The FirstNet Authority continues to offer the Network Experience Engagement Program (NEEP), which aids first responders in their planning for network coverage and capacity needs during large-scale events and incidents. Through pre-incident/event planning support, the FirstNet Authority's goal is to augment public safety's user experience with the FirstNet network before, during, and after an event or incident and ensure agencies receive the maximum benefit public safety broadband can offer to their operations.

In FY25, the FirstNet Authority provided dedicated NEEP support in advance of the FIFA 2025 Club World Cup and FIFA 2026 World Cup. This line of effort ensures a safe experience for soccer fans from around the world. Through participation in communications planning and governance committees, dedicated exercises, and targeted engagements, the FirstNet Authority team is working to ensure cities hosting matches and serving as base camps are adequately prepared from a communications perspective. The massive influx of visitors to these communities requires thorough planning for and anticipation of saturated cellular networks.

Supporting Federal Users of FirstNet

To support FirstNet’s federal user base, the FirstNet Authority’s Government Engagement team collaborates with federal agencies that have public safety, emergency management, or homeland security missions—such as the Department of War (DoW), Department of Justice (DOJ), and Department of Homeland Security (DHS)—to advance and support broadband technology planning and operations.

In FY25, the Government Engagement team continued to assist federal agencies with the implementation and operationalization of FirstNet, allowing them to take advantage of the network’s many communications capabilities, services, and tools. DoW (as a whole) is the nation’s largest federal agency, and DoW responders are stationed at bases to provide emergency medical, fire, and law enforcement services. In addition to serving their base community, DoW responders regularly provide mutual aid to assist local public safety agencies. With FirstNet, these federal users can communicate with ease as they move on and off base and seamlessly coordinate with local civilian first responders over the interoperable network.

5x5: The Public Safety Innovation Summit

In FY25, the FirstNet Authority again co-hosted “5x5: The Public Safety Innovation Summit” with our partners at the National Institute of Standards and Technology’s Public Safety Communications Research Division. Over three days in Bellevue, Washington, we brought together hundreds of public safety stakeholders to share insights into the challenges first responders face and innovative ways to provide communications solutions and help drive research and development forward for public safety, today and in the future.

5x5 included a lineup of influential public safety keynote speakers and collaborative, thought-provoking sessions focused on public safety communications and operations. The summit covered topics such as mission critical services, augmented reality, indoor mapping, the application of emerging technologies to public safety operations, and much more.



The Amherst Fire Department in Massachusetts uses FirstNet for their daily response, including push-to-talk capabilities.



The FirstNet Authority's pre-planning program helps public safety identify areas they may need coverage augmentation during large planned events, such as this Satellite Cell on Light Truck put on hot standby during Super Bowl LVIII in Las Vegas.



CONTRACT OVERSIGHT

One of the FirstNet Authority's primary responsibilities is to manage and ensure the successful execution of the contract with AT&T to build, deploy, and operate the FirstNet network. Signed in March 2017, this 25-year indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity (IDIQ) services contract was designed to ensure the FirstNet network meets the rigorous communication needs of the nation's first responders and continues to improve and evolve to meet their changing requirements over time.

Under the contract, AT&T must build, operate, maintain, and enhance the network for 25 years (2017-2042) while achieving public safety user adoption targets and maintaining a minimum number of public safety devices connected to the network. The contract also guarantees the FirstNet Authority's continued financial sustainability over the life of the contract through annual payments from AT&T to the FirstNet Authority, fulfilling Congress's vision that the FirstNet Authority be financially self-sustaining.

Each task order (TO) under the 25-year contract serves a distinct purpose aligned with the FirstNet Authority's mission to provide a reliable, secure, and interoperable broadband network for public safety. In this context, a TO is defined by a discrete scope of work, deliverables, timelines, and funding mechanisms under the broader contract framework. The FirstNet Authority has issued 13 task orders under the IDIQ contract:

Three Completed Task Orders

- Task Order 1 (TO1) required the development of a secure platform (the state plan portal) that delivered individual state plans to the states, territories, and the District of Columbia. (Completed March 2024)
- Task Order 2 (TO2) required development of the individual state plans in consultation with state officials and approved by the state's governor, a key aspect of the FirstNet Authority's focus on fostering a partnership with public safety and local authorities. (Completed March 2018)
- Task Order 5 (TO5) supported initial build-out of equipment and connectivity for the FirstNet Boulder Lab, located in the FirstNet Authority's office in Boulder, Colorado. (Completed September 2023)

Ten Active Task Orders

- Task Order 3 (TO3) requires AT&T to deploy, operate, and maintain the network's core and all its functions, and provide for the development of device and application ecosystems for the network.
- Task Order 4 (TO4) requires AT&T to deploy the network's Band 14 coverage nationwide (including the territories) consistent with the individual state plans, constructing the Radio Access Network, and the provision of 72 transportable cellular assets dedicated solely to FirstNet and access to at least 300 more among AT&T's commercial fleet.
- Task Order 6 (TO6) requires AT&T to expand the FirstNet deployable solution acquired through TO4 with more transportable assets and to create new quality assurance performance standards.
- Task Order 7 (TO7) requires AT&T to upgrade the network so public safety experiences the throughput benefits of 5G maintaining overall user experience, facilitating a smooth transition to 5G by leveraging some of the existing 4G network systems.
- Task Order 8 (TO8) requires AT&T to provide feasibility assessments to help the FirstNet Authority understand how evolving technologies, features, and functionality might be used to help first responders better support incidence response.
- Task Order 9 (TO9) requires AT&T to extend NPSBN Band 14 coverage indoors to public safety facilities and enables agency-deployed RAN extension services to include Band 14 support, MCS capabilities support, monitoring and reporting, forward and reverse logistics, and customer care.
- Task Order 10 (TO10) requires AT&T to further evolve the Boulder FirstNet Lab and enables public safety interaction with emerging technologies.
- Task Order 11 (TO11) focuses on upgrading to a 5G Standalone "Next Gen" core, enhancing Mission Critical Services, and expanding FirstNet core-integrated applications.
- Coverage Enhancement (CE) Task Orders are smaller, sprint-based efforts that address specific coverage gaps. These are not formally numbered as TO12 or TO13 but are critical to the network's adaptability and



When it comes to building a network for public safety, input from public safety is essential. Insights gathered from responders are shaping future tower builds across the country.

responsiveness to public safety needs. One CE requires AT&T to perform an assessment of FirstNet-provided coverage “areas of interest” and the other CE requires AT&T to develop an analysis of deployment solutions required to meet these coverage areas of interest.

Network Deployment, Operation, and Maintenance

Under the contract, AT&T is required to deploy, operate, and maintain the FirstNet network. The FirstNet network is a 3GPP standards-based, interoperable, reliable, and forward-looking nationwide broadband network that is redefining how the nation’s public safety community communicates. With all states and territories opting into the FirstNet network deployment, the FirstNet Authority has established a single, interoperable nationwide network as required by Congress, which the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) confirmed in FY23 through its renewal of the FirstNet Authority’s Band 14 license.

At the end of FY25, the initial contractually required five-year network deployment was validated 100 percent complete by AT&T meeting all required contract buildout milestones, including nationwide rural and non-rural coverage requirements; state-level adoption targets continue to be met. Additionally, satisfactory progress continues on the transformational network evolution set forth by TO11 and the two CEs, both awarded in FY24, which will take the network to 5G and beyond enhancing service capabilities for public safety.

Measures for Success

The FirstNet Authority has developed and continuously strives to improve rigorous management and administrative processes used since the execution of the IDIQ contract to evaluate contract performance and deliverables. These are used to track network-related contractual activities to include the incorporation of additional on-site surveillance, contractor operational reviews, and the newly established Nationwide Sampling Program (NSP). The NSP provides “boots on the ground” oversight through targeted visits. Within the reporting period, oversight reviews were completed in California, Florida, Georgia, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Oversight objectives include activities such as coverage verification, drive testing, new site build assessment, physical site hardening inspections, and deployable assessments, in addition to evaluating customer service evaluation and stakeholder feedback.

Additionally, the FirstNet Authority works with the Department of Commerce’s Office of Inspector General to identify potential improvements in NPSBN performance and collaboratively implement solutions. As a result of these efforts, the FirstNet Authority can minimize and mitigate risks while continuing to improve the network. The FirstNet Authority continued to utilize and improve upon these measures in FY25, including the enhancement and automation of key contract oversight processes and workflows. These improvements helped the FirstNet Authority be more efficient and streamlined and enabled further insight into the progress of the FirstNet network.

An example of the FirstNet Authority’s dedication to contract and performance oversight was the Spring 2025 dispatching of a comprehensive team of FirstNet Authority staff to conduct multiple stakeholder visits in Florida, North Carolina, and Tennessee with public safety professionals impacted by Hurricane Helene. During these visits, the team visited the path of the hurricanes to perform drive testing to independently verify coverage, conduct cyber-security assessments, and discuss network resilience and FirstNet response in the aftermath of the hurricane, with the goal of ensuring operational resilience and service reliability in the future.



The Baltimore City Sheriff's Office switched to FirstNet after an underground fire cut power and disabled radio communications. Today, deputies rely on their FirstNet devices for field reporting, prisoner transports, and daily operations.

STATUTORY AUTHORIZATION

Under the Act, without Congressional action the FirstNet Authority is scheduled to terminate in February 2027. The Act directed the GAO to submit a report to Congress on what actions Congress should take regarding this sunset provision. In February 2022, the GAO published the report, supporting Congressional action to reauthorize FirstNet to ensure network continuity and prevent significant disruption to first responders.

In April 2026, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 7386, the First Responder Network Authority Reauthorization Act of 2026. The bill addresses lessons learned over the past 14 years to include governance reforms, increased oversight,

and continued authorization through September 2037 so that the nationwide public safety broadband network remains available for public safety.

In 2023, the FCC renewed the FirstNet Authority’s license for the Band 14 spectrum, confirming that the FirstNet Authority complied with its duties and responsibilities under its enabling statute. The FCC license renewal for a ten-year period is contingent upon the reauthorization of the FirstNet Authority by February 22, 2027.

FINANCIAL CONDITION

In FY25, the FirstNet Authority continued its strong financial stewardship delivering continued expansion of FirstNet and the buildout of Band 14. Throughout FY25, funds were used to support our ongoing operations and execution of our strategic vision, which yielded network expansion and enhancements of the NPSBN. We incurred operating expenses during FY25 for mission support and mission program activities necessary to meet our statutory mandates. As of September 30, 2025, we had a cash balance of \$682 million. The FirstNet Authority’s audited FY25 Financial Report, including Independent Auditors’ Report, will be posted on the FirstNet Authority website at [FirstNet.gov/reports](https://www.firstnet.gov/reports).

The FirstNet Authority’s financial condition as of September 30, 2025, is reported reflecting the expectation of reauthorization beyond February 2027.

Collections Data

The FirstNet Authority receives fee payments from AT&T for access to 20 MHz of Band 14 dedicated public safety spectrum per the terms of the 25-year NPSBN contract. These payments from AT&T enable the FirstNet Authority to achieve the permanent self-funding mandate of our Act. As payments are received from AT&T, they are recognized as a contract liability and amortized on a straight-line basis over the applicable fiscal year. As of September 30, 2025, the FirstNet Authority received \$420 million from AT&T as the FY25 payment due under the contract, to fund FY25 operations.

Changes in Assets, Liabilities, and Net Position

The FirstNet Authority had \$6.3 billion in total assets as of September 30, 2025, compared to \$6.4 billion for FY24. Total liabilities decreased by \$225 million substantially due to a decrease in accruals for contractual Task Orders for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the NPSBN and a reduction in contract liability in accordance with the revenue recognition schedule for the FirstNet Authority’s agreement with AT&T (Payments received from AT&T for access to Band 14 spectrum are initially recorded as a contract liability (deferred revenue) and subsequently amortized into revenue as performance obligations are satisfied over time.)

(\$ in Thousands)

As of September 30:	FY 2025	FY 2024 (Audited)
Changes in Net Position		
Total Assets	\$ 6,306,830	\$ 6,369,956
Total Liabilities	\$ 108,480	\$ 333,258
Net Position	\$ 6,198,350	\$ 6,036,698



During the St. Thomas Carnival, the U.S. Virgin Islands' public safety community enlisted support from the First Responder Network Authority's Network Engagement Experience Program to prepare for the annual event. This pre-event guidance helped address communication and coordination challenges during the large-scale event and laid the groundwork for future emergency preparedness in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

CONCLUSION

Fiscal Year 2025 was an extremely productive year for FirstNet.

The FirstNet Authority continued to oversee a network that is growing in coverage, in services, and in connections. Through network investments, AT&T dedicated 1,000 new cell sites to enhance capacity for FirstNet users nationwide and the network continued the evolution to high-speed 5G services and beyond.

To guide FirstNet's future, the FirstNet Authority conducted Coverage Enhancement Workshops in 35 states and territories to hear firsthand from public safety how and where FirstNet can be even better so this input can be utilized in ongoing network investments. Additionally, FirstNet continued to increase the number of public safety subscriber connections and enhanced the coverage areas for those first responders utilizing the network.

FirstNet exists because of the tireless work of public safety. Following the tragedy of 9/11, the public safety community united in asking for a 21st Century communications network that was dependable, versatile, cutting-edge, and their own. Congress responded and created the FirstNet Authority to build and maintain — for today and tomorrow — a dedicated network for public safety with the input of public safety.

The FirstNet Authority assesses our performance using many criteria and metrics: coverage areas, speed, signal strength, connections, and more. But the performance measure that matters most is the judgment of those first responders that use FirstNet to help keep Americans safe every day, rain or shine. Providing a dedicated network that earns and keeps the trust of public safety is the sole focus of the FirstNet Authority.

APPENDIX A: FY25 FIRSTNET AUTHORITY BOARD



MICHAEL A. ADKINSON (ACTING CHAIR)
Sheriff, Walton County Sheriff's Office, Florida



DAMON DARSEY
Medical Director, Mississippi Department of Public Safety
CEO, Paladin Emergency Services Consulting



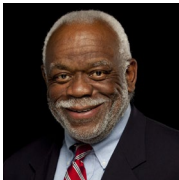
ALEXANDRA FERNÁNDEZ NAVARRO
Associate Member, Puerto Rico Public Service Regulatory Board



ERIK GAULL
Emergency Manager, First Responder, Technology Consultant



SEAN MCDEVITT
Partner, Arthur D. Little



WARREN MICKENS
Former Vice President of Wholesale Operations, CenturyLink/Qwest



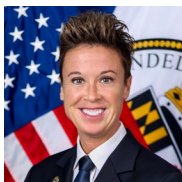
JOCELYN MOORE
Independent Director, DraftKings



JEFFREY B. NORMAN
Chief, Milwaukee Police Department, Wisconsin



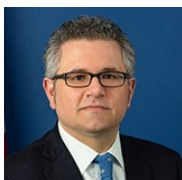
RASHEID SCARLETT
Founder and CEO, NetAesthetics



TRISHA WOLFORD
Fire Chief, Anne Arundel County Fire Department, Maryland



RUSSELL VOUGHT
Director of the Office of Management and Budget



MARK CALABRIA (DESIGNEE)
U.S. Chief Statistician/OMB



KRISTI NOEM
Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security



BILLY BOB BROWN, JR. (DESIGNEE)
**Executive Assistant Director, Emergency Communications,
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency**



PAM BONDI
U.S. Attorney General, Department of Justice



HUGH T. CLEMENTS, JR. (DESIGNEE)
Director, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services



First Responder Network Authority

info@FirstNet.gov | FirstNet.gov



@firstnetgov