



FirstNet®



Tribal Outreach Guidance

Our nation's 567 federally recognized tribes span 34 states. In addition, 88 Native Hawaiian organizations are registered with the U.S. Department of the Interior. Many tribes possess significant telecommunications capabilities that are economically and politically important to their people and nearby non-tribal communities. Engaging with these nations and organizations is essential to FirstNet's success and the welfare of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian (AI/AN/NH) communities.

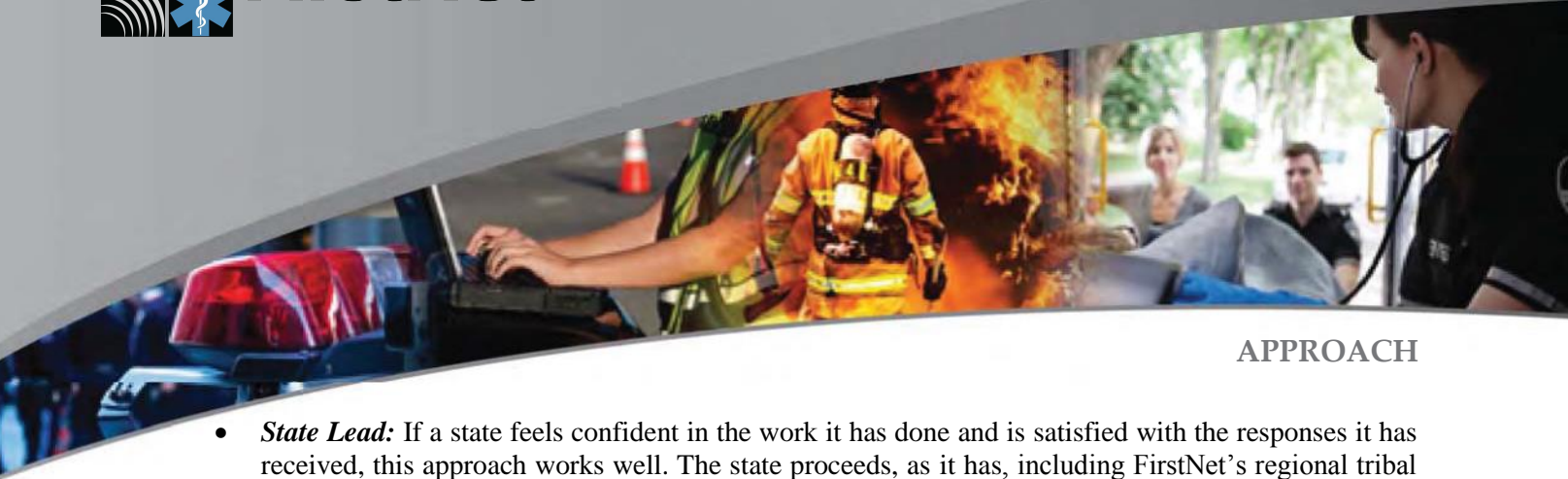
Working with tribal governments can be challenging, however. Their remoteness, the limited availability of public safety data, overlapping law enforcement and political jurisdictions, and historically frayed relationships complicate the foundational work asked of state single points of contact (SPOCs). For mutual assistance to be effective—in keeping with the spirit of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet)—we must work together in a coordinated manner, thoughtfully, and respectfully.

Trusted relationships are the key to success. To support SPOCs, FirstNet has two regional tribal government liaisons who assist with information sharing and relationship building. SPOCs are encouraged to reach out to these individuals for help opening doors into Indian Country.

RECOMMENDED OUTREACH PRACTICES

We recommend the considerations below when conducting outreach to tribes:

- **Connect with the Right People:** Use the FirstNet Tribal Team or spend some time simply learning about a tribe as you pursue introductions to the right individuals with whom to meet.
- **Visit the Tribe:** Meeting in person on a tribe's land is a great way to build relationships.
- **Take a Flexible Approach:** Be adaptable in how you approach tribal nations. No two are alike, and varying access to technology can make it difficult to reach tribal members via phone or email.
- **Spend Time Getting to Know One Another:** Do not immediately start with business when you first meet. Take time to become acquainted.
- **Be Willing to Listen:** Approach tribes respectfully, as you would any organization with which you are unfamiliar and whose culture you must understand. Do not cite your ancestry as a way to relate.
- **Understand Tribal Differences:** Tribes within the same geographical area can be vastly different. Do not assume the same approach will work among multiple tribes.
- **Avoid Assumptions:** Assuming who is a member of a tribe and who is not will get you into trouble.
- **Formalize Engagement:** Ensure the right decision-makers are present and have appropriate meeting support (e.g. note-takers) when coordinating or consulting.



APPROACH

- **State Lead:** If a state feels confident in the work it has done and is satisfied with the responses it has received, this approach works well. The state proceeds, as it has, including FirstNet's regional tribal government liaison as needed.
- **Tribal Lead:** If the state is not confident in the outreach it has conducted, or it would like to improve outreach, then a tribal lead may be a better approach. In this scenario, FirstNet works with the state's tribal advisor, inter-tribal organizations, and/or FirstNet regional staff to obtain contacts with the tribes in a state. FirstNet staff will share communications with the state team and make every effort to introduce the state staff to tribal leadership.
- **Regional Breakouts:** The state may feel confident in joint outreach with FirstNet if multi-tribe gatherings would be a better solution. In this case, the state coordinates regional meetings and the FirstNet region and tribal staff attend.

GENERAL QUESTIONS FOR EACH STATE ABOUT TRIBES

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| • What outreach has been done with the tribes in your state? | • Do tribal members call their land a reservation, pueblo, Rancheria, or do they not have designated land? |
| • How many of the tribes are participating and involved in FirstNet consultation? | • What is their land base? |
| • What are the biggest questions or concerns voiced by the tribes in your state? | • How is tribal leadership structured? |
| • Does the state, or do any of the tribes, want a specific tribal outreach session conducted? | • What are their economic enterprises? |
| • What is the political climate between the state(s) and tribe(s)? | • What are their priorities for public safety? |
| • Does the state's governor have a senior tribal advisor? | • Do they have their own emergency medical services, police or fire departments? If so, do they provide public safety services to neighboring jurisdictions off-reservation? If not, who provides public safety services? |
| • Is there a state communications governing board with a tribal delegate? | • What kind of relationships do they have with neighboring jurisdictions? |
| • Do tribal members live on the reservation? | • Do they have an emergency/risk manager? |

For additional information in FirstNet regions I-VIII, please contact Margaret Gutierrez at margaret.gutierrez@firstnet.gov or, in regions IX-X, Adam Geisler at adam.geisler@firstnet.gov.