

# The States and FirstNet:

## *An Early Look from the State CIOs*

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The National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) has a strong interest in the planning and implementation of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet), our nation's effort to build a dedicated nationwide public safety broadband network that provides first responders with the modern communication tools they need to help save lives, solve crimes and keep our communities—and themselves—safe from harm.<sup>i</sup> Done correctly, NASCIO believes that FirstNet has the capacity to revolutionize public safety communications in this country.<sup>ii</sup>

FirstNet will be a herculean undertaking for all levels of government—perhaps the largest national infrastructure project since the interstate highway system. Perhaps equally daunting, our nation must identify a sustainable business and financial plan for the network that can be agreed upon by FirstNet and stakeholders at the state and local level. In addition, it will ultimately require technical support, infrastructure, data, and expertise from the private sector.

In an effort to support these efforts, NASCIO is contributing to the ongoing research surrounding the planning of the network, and facilitating collaboration among stakeholders. To that end, our organization polled the state and territorial CIOs on their states' activities in an effort to establish a baseline of how states are supporting the effort to date. This survey report contains the consolidated results of the responses NASCIO received from 44 states and territories between April and May, 2014, as well as reflections based on written comments and follow-up discussions with respondents.

### BACKGROUND

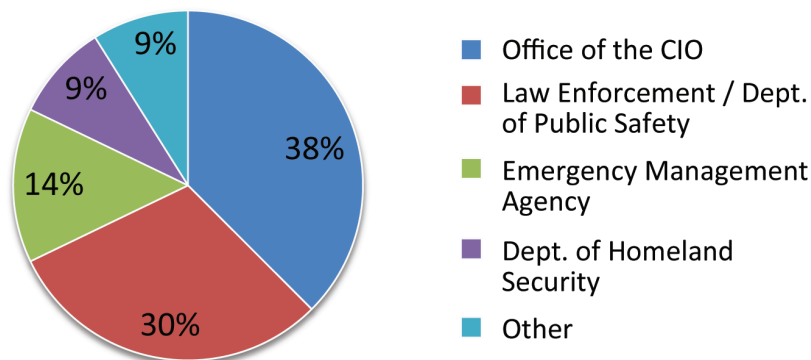
Supporting the technology and communications needs of public safety, homeland security and emergency management are among the core missions of many state CIOs. On a daily basis, our members and their staff support these missions through acquiring, building, operating and maintaining statewide public safety communications infrastructure and data systems.

With states now collaborating with FirstNet on building a nationwide public safety broadband network, this portfolio continues to grow for state CIOs.

*In 2012, NASCIO asked state CIOs about their role in the planning and deployment of FirstNet in their state, and 80 percent of CIOs responded that they were active members of the leadership team or personally leading the state's effort. 56 percent said they had statutory authority or jurisdiction for key elements of the state's public safety radio network, such as funding, towers and radio networks, or even full operation.*

State CIOs listed the planning and implementation of FirstNet as one of their top 10 policy priorities for the last two years.<sup>iii</sup>

### State Point of Contact for FirstNet



State CIOs and their agencies have been chosen by many governors to plan and deploy FirstNet in their states due to their expertise in large-scale IT infrastructure projects, the in-house expertise they bring to the project, and consistent results in planning and implementing sustainable business plans that ensure cost recovery over the long-term. As of our most recent review, 38 percent of the FirstNet State Point of Contacts (SPOC) consist of state CIOs or a member of their office. State CIO leadership in this field seems to be growing; we have been informed that additional states intend to move FirstNet leadership into the office of the CIO over the course of the year.

In the 2012 State CIO Survey, NASCIO asked state CIOs about their role in the planning and deployment of FirstNet in their state, and 80 percent of CIOs responded that they were active members of the leadership team or personally leading the state's effort. 56 percent said they had statutory authority or jurisdiction for key elements of the state's public safety radio network, such as funding, towers and radio networks, or even full operation.<sup>iv</sup>

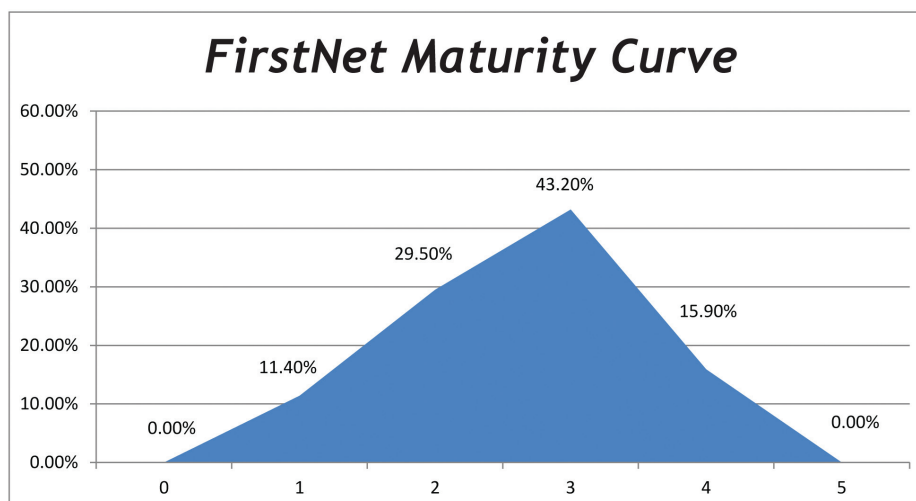
### HOW MATURE ARE THE STATES?

NASCIO sought to understand how "mature" states are in planning efforts and set a baseline on how far states have progressed. To this end, NASCIO created a simple maturity scale to attempt to illustrate states' progress to date. Assuming that most FirstNet planning activity builds upon the maturity of the last, NASCIO asked respondents to choose areas they felt were fully matured in their state—not simply in the development phase.

The scale rates from a 'zero,' where no planning or organization is in place, to a full planning maturity of '5,' representing a Governor signed plan.

With that in mind, respondents were asked to complete the sentence, “Our state has...” with the following options:

- 0 - No planning or organization in place.
- 1 - Applied for and received the State and Local Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP) grant.
- 2 - Developed a governance model, as well as the means to support FirstNet planning and outreach activities.
- 3 - Organized its activities with other key stakeholders in the state, and potentially with other states.
- 4 - Collected baseline data on operations, assets and user baselines that will be crucial for our state plan.
- 5 - Drafted a final state plan.



NASCIO was pleased to find that over 70 percent of respondents fell in categories 2 or 3. At this point in the process, it is expected that most states would have a governance model in place and be turning towards actively engaging in planning and outreach with key stakeholders.

We were surprised to find that a significant number of respondents stated they have already collected the necessary data on operations, assets and user baselines necessary for their state plans as this is an element of the second round of State and Local Government Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP), which has not yet been awarded nor outlined. Some respondents elaborated that the states have collected data on infrastructure and public safety baseline needs on an ongoing basis for some time—often for other means. Others mentioned that as part of their planning process, they identified existing databases that provided much of the necessary information.

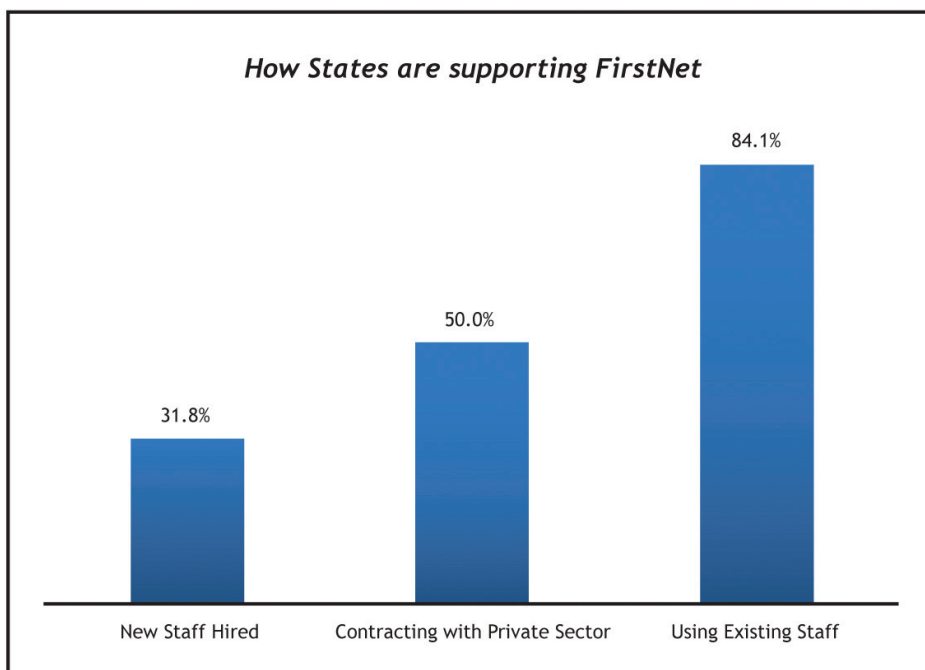
*...while almost 85 percent of states were utilizing existing staff to some degree, one-third of states are hiring new staff, and half are contracting with the private sector to support FirstNet activities.*

## OTHER KEY FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

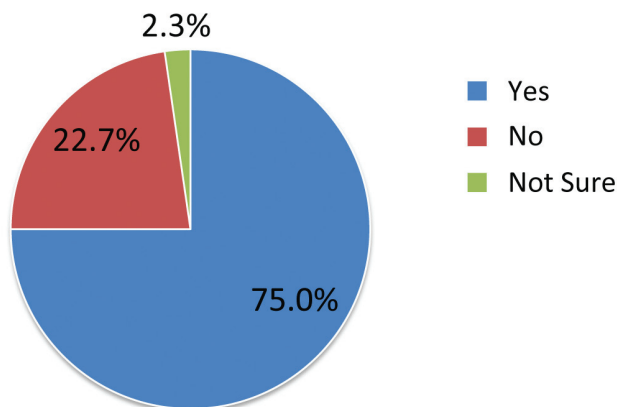
### *“How is your state supporting FirstNet activities?”*

A commonly asked question among NASCIO members was how various states are supporting their FirstNet activities. We asked states this question, allowing respondents to select any mixture of “utilizing existing staff,” “hiring new staff,” and “contracting with the private sector.”

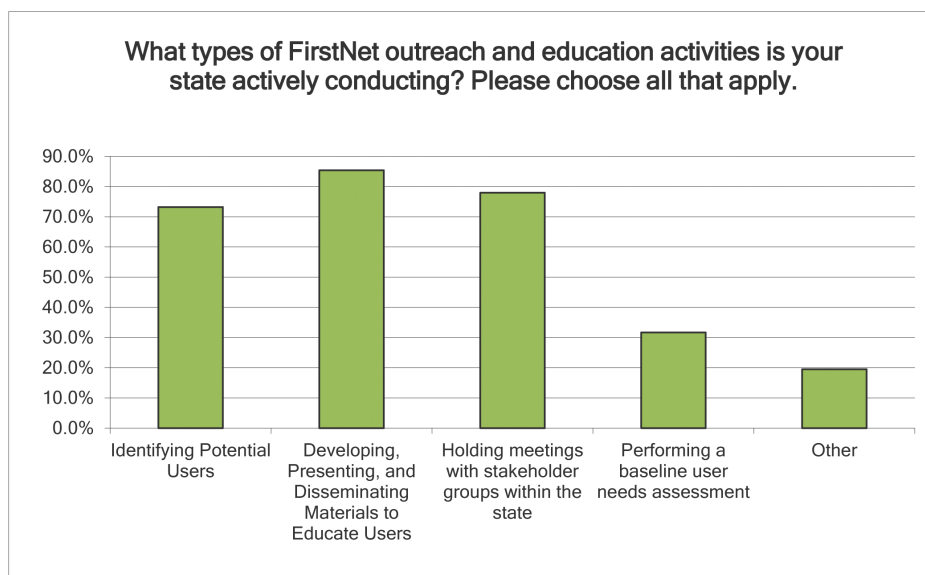
We found that virtually all states were utilizing a mixture of two or even all three options. Our survey found that while almost 85 percent of states were using existing staff to some degree, almost one-third of states have hired new staff, and half are contracting with the private sector to support FirstNet activities.



***“Is your state actively conducting FirstNet outreach and education activities at this time?”***

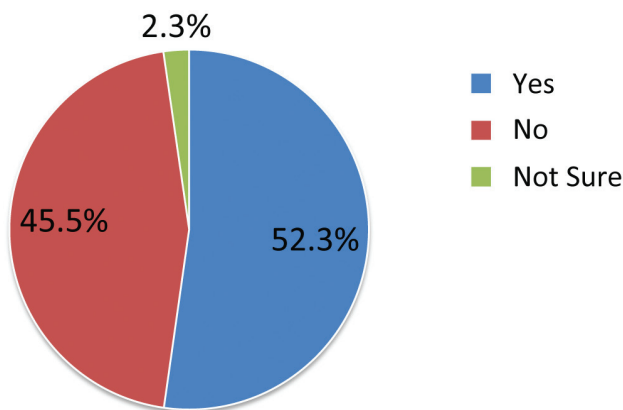


NASCIO was surprised to find that almost a quarter of respondents stated that their states are not actively conducting FirstNet outreach and education activities. Some of those who are not actively engaged in outreach stated that they were waiting on funds, planning, or material from FirstNet before conducting extensive education activities, while others stated that the outreach had ceased for the time being as they waited on additional collaboration with FirstNet. In a separate line of questioning, NASCIO found that more than 80 percent of survey respondents stated they were actively “Developing, Presenting, and Disseminating Materials to Educate Users,” while 78 percent responded they are “Holding meetings with stakeholder groups within the state.” This dichotomy, along with some feedback from respondents, leads us to presume that a number of states are developing materials or providing ad hoc education without ongoing formal outreach activities.



*NASCIO found that more than half the respondents felt they were already collecting the data necessary for planning the nationwide public safety broadband network in their state.*

*“Is your state already collecting data that you plan to utilize in your FirstNet planning?”*



NASCIO found that more than half the respondents felt they were already collecting the data necessary for planning the nationwide public safety broadband network in their state. Comments provided by respondents showed diverse and highly varied maturity levels when it came to data available throughout the various states.

Some of these state-driven initiatives were quite mature. For instance, the states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin have been working in concert to collect common data with an eye toward regional collaboration. These states have a history of working together in emergency situations due to their relationship during disasters as part of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region V.

Ohio CIO Stuart Davis created a template for states to create a profile of their existing Land Mobile Radio System (LMRS), which provides mission critical voice communication to first responders and their public sector support community, and other assets that could be important to building a nationwide public safety broadband network (see appendix). Beyond simply looking at tower and fiber assets, the template looks at networking and connectivity, ongoing funding and staff, user base, planned investments, state population, land mass, major urban centers, county jurisdictions, and other key technological elements.

Ohio provided this template to the other states, which are now in the process of gathering or have completed this initial data gathering activity. By comparing needs, systems, assets, and infrastructure data, the SPOCs will be able to identify commonalities in their assets. Over time, this could spark a regional conversation that may lead to a clear business case—or, for that matter, significant concerns. Ultimately, it should inform both state and FirstNet investment and deployment in the region.



By the survey data above, it is clear other states have been pro-active in collecting and organizing similar data sets. With FirstNet yet to outline what data it is interested in receiving from the states, pre-existing databases and early data collection activities could require secondary efforts or a reorganization of existing data by the states or FirstNet down the line. However, bringing outside collaborative data to discussions with FirstNet may be a powerful tool for both states and FirstNet when those discussions begin.

### GETTING TO YES: CONSIDERATIONS FOR FIRSTNET AND THE STATES

State governments are beginning to build the internal capacity and stakeholder networks that will be required to successfully identify the needs of first responders, collect data necessary for FirstNet planning, and make decisions as to whether to serve as a partner or leaders in the deployment of a public safety broadband network in conjunction with their federal counterparts.

It became quite clear from our survey data, written comments, and follow-up discussions with state CIOs that there is significant diversity in both approaches and depth of effort that exist at the state level. From governance, to outreach, to data collection: states are typically not taking “cookie cutter” approaches to FirstNet. We are seeing some states that are highly proactive with stakeholder outreach and data collection, as well as those that are working in stride with FirstNet and less likely to move beyond the outlined scope of activities. Based on comments and conversations with the states, this diversity does not reflect a particular viewpoint towards FirstNet, but rather different strategies for planning the network and engagement with their federal counterparts.

While we mentioned the data collection efforts of FEMA Region V—an example of a more pro-active approach—other interstate regional collaborations exist, such as the Mid-Atlantic Consortium for Interoperable Nationwide Advanced Communications (MACINAC) Initiative, which includes the states of Delaware, Maryland, and West Virginia and the Commonwealths of Pennsylvania and Virginia.<sup>v</sup> MACINAC has often engaged with FirstNet as a multi-state region—providing formal comments and even putting out a regional RFI to the public. As with the states in FEMA Region V, MACINAC hopes to identify a business case, cost savings, and more robust and seamless operation across the region. Eleven western states (commonly referred to as the “Western States Alliance”) are also sharing information, and the state of Hawaii has been seeking common ground with several U.S. territories in the Pacific.

We expect that many of the states and regional efforts that are already collecting data they intend to utilize in their FirstNet planning may need to gather additional data once FirstNet outlines its specific information requests in the second round of SLIGP grants. That said, NASCIO believes it’s an asset to those states who have previously collected data to be able to bring some of it to the table early in the process—and it will likely inform FirstNet’s ultimate approach.

NASCIO believes the majority of states are making progress in planning for FirstNet, although there is still a significant distribution in the maturity and preparation of states to both work with FirstNet and move forward with the network. From comments we received from respondents, it was clear that

states are taking a range of approaches in everything from outreach to governance. Some states are focused intensely on becoming organized and raising awareness internally, while others are focusing on interstate and regional solutions. NASCIO believes this means FirstNet will need to be flexible in its work with the states. Ultimately, states have various expectations when it comes to participation in the planning of the network, as well as expectations of what the final product looks like. There will need to be significant discussion and negotiation before a final shared vision exists.

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<sup>i</sup> More information about FirstNet available at [www.firstnet.gov/about](http://www.firstnet.gov/about).

<sup>ii</sup> For NASCIO's advocacy position regarding FirstNet, see FirstNet: Collaborating to Build a Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network.

[http://www.nascio.org/advocacy/dcFlyIn/FirstNet\\_2014\\_one-pager.pdf](http://www.nascio.org/advocacy/dcFlyIn/FirstNet_2014_one-pager.pdf)

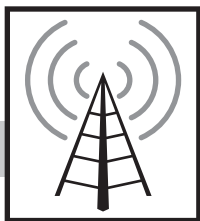
<sup>iii</sup> See State CIO Top Ten Policy and Technology Priorities for 2014. Available at [www.nascio.org/publications](http://www.nascio.org/publications).

<sup>iv</sup> "2012 State CIO Survey - Advancing the C4 Agenda. October 2012. p 26. Available at [www.nascio.org/publications](http://www.nascio.org/publications).

<sup>v</sup> More information on the MACINAC Initiative available at [www.macinac.org](http://www.macinac.org).



## APPENDIX - OHIO OFFICE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY LMRS PROFILES TEMPLATE



### LMRS PROFILE

State:   
Date:

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

Population Size  
Major Urban Centers  
Square miles  
Number of Counties  
LMRS Coverage %

#### Response


#### INFRASTRUCTURE

System 700/800  
Voice/Data  
Platform  
CAD Services  
Number of Towers owned- Bonded/GRF  
Number of Towers leased  
Network Operations Center - outsourced  
Network Operations Center - state run  
Number of radios/IDs on system  
Types of radios supported  
Percentage by user base


#### NETWORKING/CONNECTIVITY

Networking to the towers - Fiber  
Networking to the towers - T1  
Networking to the towers - Microwave  
Networking to the towers - Point to Point  
Backhaul


**FUNDING/INVESTMENT**

Investment to date	
Future investments for LMRS	
Operating costs	
Funding approach	
Rated/Fee based service	
Budgetary line item	

**STAFFING**

Number of operational support staff	
Number of administrative support staff	
Collective years experience with LMRS	

**USER BASE**

State users	
Local users	
Federal users	
Utilities	
Others	

**FUTURE INVESTMENTS**

Next Generation 911, etc.	
CAD upgrades	

**PERIPHERAL TECHNOLOGIES BEING USED**

Spatial	
Terrain	
Road centerline	
Site specific address	