



## Audit of FirstNet Authority's Oversight of Service Availability for the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network

Audit Report OIG-26-015-A

April 9, 2026

➤ **What We Audited** | Our objective was to determine whether the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) is ensuring that the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN) is achieving service availability requirements.

➤ **Why This Matters** | The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, highlighted the communication challenges first responders face during emergencies. To address these challenges and improve coordination, the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 established FirstNet Authority within the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). The act requires FirstNet Authority to establish a communication network (NPSBN) dedicated to first responders. Public safety users rely on the NPSBN to communicate with other emergency responders, dispatchers, and the public to respond to incidents. Without consistent service availability, public safety users may not be able to communicate or obtain information quickly to make timely mission-critical decisions.

➤ **What We Found** | Overall, FirstNet Authority did not ensure that the NPSBN met service availability requirements. We found that FirstNet Authority did not adequately assess contractor performance to ensure that AT&T achieved service availability requirements. Specifically,

- FirstNet Authority's approach to measuring service availability fails to provide a comprehensive assessment, covering only a fraction of cell sites and of the NPSBN's approximately 3-million-square-mile coverage footprint.
- FirstNet Authority did not ensure that contractor-provided information was reliable and accurate and that contract requirements were met.
- FirstNet Authority did not verify that service availability requirements were met for the Pacific territories.

➤ **What We Recommend** | We made four recommendations to NTIA aimed at strengthening the assessment of service availability and improving oversight to ensure that contractor-provided information is accurate and reliable and that service availability contract requirements are met. NTIA concurred with our recommendations.