



## **Emergency Communications Center Operations Transform911 Convening, March 3, 2022**

**During this convening session, workgroup chairs presented details of the following recommendations:**

1. Ensure ECCs are independent agencies and not subordinate to peer agencies (fire, police, and EMS)
2. Ensure governing authorities and boards that control emergency communications centers are representative of the community they serve
3. Require ECCs to offer all advanced services, including text-to-911 and enhanced location data, required by the i3 standards – particularly for people with disabilities and people whose first language is not English
4. Formally recognize emergency communication professionals as public safety responders at the local, state, and federal levels
5. Ensure state statutes require communication interoperability among fire, police, EMS, and alternative responders
6. Develop a credentialing process for technology vendors to apply and demonstrate compliance with all American National Standards Institute standards
7. Legislate a national minimum training standard for emergency communication professionals

**This document contains anonymous feedback from session attendees on the given questions following this presentation, conducted through the Mentimeter website. We suggest citing this document as “Public feedback during Transform911’s Alternative First Responders workgroup convening session on March 2, 2022.”**

**For additional information or inquiries, visit [transform911.org](https://transform911.org), email us at [transform911@uchicago.edu](mailto:transform911@uchicago.edu), or follow us on Twitter @T911HealthLab.**

# ECCs should be independent and not subordinate to peer agencies (police, fire, and EMS). What are your reactions to this?

Given fragmentation, how do you achieve this nationwide?  
Could it be implemented federally, or is local action needed?

Completely agree

I think this is key and we need other public safety and first responder agencies to see how this is in their benefit too

Agree 100%

Absolutely agree. This is very important to autonomy and quality 911 service to our communities.

Would be useful and help centralize systems but will be difficult to manage with large number of jurisdictions and organizations in EMS regions.

Agreed, although I think this will get a lot of opposition from local law enforcement agencies.

a lot of regional centers are independent that seems to work ok in larger areas

Agree, but police leaders are highly politicized positions. Will they support this? Is it possible to communicate to them that this might be in their best interest? I assume they will push back.

# ECCs should be independent and not subordinate to peer agencies (police, fire, and EMS). What are your reactions to this?

Leaders would need to understand where the funding comes from and what cost sharing formula is equitable for all. Otherwise, totally support.

Will require an extremely large legislative effort on a municipal and statewide effort to make that happen.

Agreed. Getting local and county governments to agree and getting all of the governance, to include MOUs and MOAs, will be the most difficult.

Agreed but it will be a battle to make happen.

Critical to overall success of ECCs

YES! The struggle over territory is interesting. Having said that, Seattle Fire runs their own dispatch and staffs w/firefighters on 'light duty'. (Assume they pay firefighter style wages too.)

Agree, but politics will be hard to overcome.

I agree, to a point. They should respond to incidents with the appropriate agency response, which is difficult when every ECC is associated with an agency.

Agree! What would be the opposition to this? Who needs to be allied to advance practice nationally?

# ECCs should be independent and not subordinate to peer agencies (police, fire, and EMS). What are your reactions to this?

having a national group with regional groups that eccs can participate in. shared training and resources could really help smaller eccs.

Support, would suggest you/we need to communicate via the mainstream media and other means (social media) successes of being independent....wouldn't hurt if hollywood took on a story or two.

I agree 100%! That said, I believe most people (including myself) believe 911/ECCs are directly connected at the hip to police. I have believed they are conflicted (as highly connected to police) and as a result are biased in their dispatch wording.

Defining 911 call taking from dispatching may be helpful. While dispatch customers may need/desire some involvement, they should not directly influence the 911 process.

challenge could be getting support from fire, police, ems as agencies are pulled apart. there could be political challenges with different leadership. laws/regs to ensure commitment to coordination.

A law enforcement agency would never think to tell a Fire or EMS agency how to perform their jobs ~ however they both prefer some oversight to 911 and dispatching functions

The public does not understand how ECCs work, who funds them, who has political control, and so on. This is a big deal because a lot of people won't call 911 because they believe they are police, and such a call might well end up in a wrongful death.

This feels like a major undertaking, but possible if you start regional or with a state-based approach

Yes, discretion allows for more independence in tailoring responses to calls.



# ECCs should be independent and not subordinate to peer agencies (police, fire, and EMS). What are your reactions to this?

Strong will and assertiveness (at your own peril) needs to pursue this. We were once a division of the Telecom Division in GSA. It is not a department reporting to the Co. Executive. The governance is shared with all risk pub safety entities

The other thing is people don't trust that when calling 911 they can remain anonymous because they believe information goes straight to police... and puts that person at risk from retribution (e.g. by offender learning their identity).

Very much appreciate inclusion of behavioral health calls, particularly to have discretion to send alternative responders and not feel pressured to use a police response to every call

Funding - most small PSAP's are not line-itemed in the Operations Budget. That isn't easy as it sounds.

I think ECC autonomy is important, especially as communities strive to reduce funding to police agencies for what seems to be a clear over-policing policy. Cuts to police budgets should not ever reach ECCs.

getting public support from communities that take less advantage of 911 (wealthier neighborhoods) may not support shifting resources to a separate agency. How do we get these folks on board with decisions/plans/ideas and getting voting support?

how do we engage with philanthropy to get funding focused on these kinds of movements?

Agree. We should already be doing this.

# Ensure state statute requires communication interoperability among fire, police, EMS and alternative responders. What are your reactions to this?

I can't believe this isn't currently required across the board

If State's mandate, then they need to fund it

ENGAGE Homeland Security!!!!...sorry I jumped to federal.

This is an important recommendation as ECCs are often caught trying to effectively communicate regarding a single event to multiple responders.

I'm surprised they're not!

Agree. We should already be doing this.

I would say it needs to not only be state statutes, I think we need federal standardization.

Agree. In Florida, this task is assigned to the County Sheriffs.

who is setting the standards for 'what is alternative response'. there are lots of different possibilities, are there best practices at local, state, federal level?

# Ensure state statute requires communication interoperability among fire, police, EMS and alternative responders. What are your reactions to this?

Yes, great idea! The National 9-1-1 Office has model legislation templates that provide a head start on this.

What's the role--should there be--for the federal government here too? It seems that the federal government should require this of states and states require it of the local/regional ECCs

Agree ~ as we discuss efficiencies and economy of scale this is important as infrastructure cost are very high.

What concerns me most is the data - for whichever agency ends up serving the 911 call. Eg. if I call 911 and the call gets diverted to police, fire, rescue etc. I should still be able to understand the call and disposition of the subject-persons.

This ties in so well to the technology recommendations - efficiency, effectiveness, and equity demand this. It should be a political and moral imperative.

It is needed. However, P25 protocols have been around for over 25 years and have not resulted in true land mobile radio (LMR) interoperability. States need to statutorily support ESINet if they do not already.

New systems of 988 and civilian mobile crisis response units make requirements guess-work, at this point.

This is even more important as we start to think about 988 rollout this summer

Looking at PSAP data this past year, I've observed some de facto standards based on commercial products/platforms, but this still doesn't provide interoperability. There needs to be one standard.



# Ensure state statute requires communication interoperability among fire, police, EMS and alternative responders. What are your reactions to this?

if separating agencies, how do we ensure that we don't create gaps in support or service or create a scenario where both sides are not taking responsibility for specific requests for help

We should definitely consolidate ECCs to help reduce the overall cost burden of any one to adopt tech like NG911 more quickly and uniformly.

This is critical to large scale community emergencies. Rarely can a single agency or discipline respond alone. Mutual aid and complex response agency algorithms require the ability to communicate across plat forms.

Broader Q: Have you considered a rec to consolidate ECCs? That feels like step 1 for achieving all of this.

Interoperability statutes are toothless if no one holds the equipment and technology providers accountable to meeting them

seems like we need to ensure (nationally or at least regionally) data standardization and system alignment before we can talk about interoperability. what if there are holdouts in a region that can't/won't work within a new process

Protecting our communities and our first responders often is predicated by the ability to communicate effectively simultaneously. This is a critical component of that mission.

This is important to help ensure and promote accountability

YES! Efforts could be made to ensure governmental grants require this as an element. Independent and detailed analysis of this topic should be required.



# Ensure state statute requires communication interoperability among fire, police, EMS and alternative responders. What are your reactions to this?

seems like there's a disconnect between voters (those most likely to vote) and those most likely to take advantage of 911. how do we get both sides working together.

Yes people with lived experience from those groups—especially those who do not call 911.

Mass media campaign. #TheMoreYouKnow

Our city had community listening sessions for diverse groups.

# How might we educate the public on avenues available for support when they do not have a critical law enforcement, fire or medical need?

Mass public education initiatives.

Mass media campaign. #TheMoreYouKnow

Create advisory board to include community members

Tik Toks; Billboards; ads on multiple language radio stations; schools!! Kids tell their parents

social media. Infographics.

Social media campaigns

go where people get their public service information, on billboards, signs outside govt offices, on the side of police cars and other/all govt vehicles

This one is hard. It's really just an issue of ongoing community outreach and communication: neighborhood associations, community meetings, civic groups, etc. A lot of ignorance in this area!

You would likely need a paid campaign to promote alternatives and a dedicated "face" of the movement.

# How might we educate the public on avenues available for support when they do not have a critical law enforcement, fire or medical need?

Kids in school. They school their friends and parents.

"if you don't know, now you know"

Info needs to be localized (to what's available in the community) so outreach also needs to be localized: ads in local papers, booths at local events, school programs, etc.

This must be a region-wide effort of educating the public about 911/988/311/211/511 etc. using social media, quick animated videos, competitions for creative campaigns - e.g. contest to develop the best video teaching about issue.

Tough question. Would have to have social media traction for people to inform each other.

first: making those services widely known as safe! so many stories of people avoiding calling for help because people don't feel safe.

[https://www.boredpanda.com/hospital-urgent-emergency-care-billboards-baycare/?utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=organic&utm\\_campaign=organicFunny](https://www.boredpanda.com/hospital-urgent-emergency-care-billboards-baycare/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=organicFunny), viral, social media

Introduce it in K-12 curriculum

We can educate the public by simply inviting them into ECC's to see what goes on behind the seen. Take them thru the steps of a call down to the end of the call. Or even local markets have a booth setup in the area. Also, visit the different schools



# How might we educate the public on avenues available for support when they do not have a critical law enforcement, fire or medical need?

Re-introduce 911 and clearly define our mission. Identify what an emergency truly is. And how to get less emergency help.

911 staff accompany Chief executives at Board Meetings, Councils, etc

The rollout of 988 is a great opportunity to clarify when 911 should be used

Help define what constitutes an emergency: Is someone in danger? Is a crime currently happening? If not, maybe call someone else

Definitely develop school curriculum so teachers can spend a little time teaching most kids in our communities the difference between all the numbers.

Redirect callers not reporting emergencies to other resources.

put in public school health class content

Can ECCs transfer non-emergency calls to 311, etc.?

finding community advocates who have used services and are willing to share their stories directly at community events (tabling at existing events, small group sessions at libraries/other public spaces where the communities in need are already going

# How might we educate the public on avenues available for support when they do not have a critical law enforcement, fire or medical need?

Encourage hiring from local communities that the ECC serves

<https://www.fcc.gov/sites/default/files/988-fact-sheet.pdf>

Call 988 today. In many areas the calls are routed to suicide prevention or other health crisis hotlines... even if not fully adopted officially 988 does work (in many areas).

Go where young people are with a public information campaign -- Instagram, Tik Tok, Snapchat, etc

Adults are far more likely to call 911 when something is non-emergent than children.

Develop personal connections between frequent callers and service providers, who can help support long-term needs

In addition to discussing the process of how we should educate folks on using 911, how do we as a group define what is a critical law enforcement, fire, or a medical need? Curious to hear thoughts about what "critical" means and how we define it.

Very very few people know what 988 is, including first responders.

Encourage online or alternate reporting of non emergency incidents. Often community members would prefer a quick online report.

# How might we educate the public on avenues available for support when they do not have a critical law enforcement, fire or medical need?

Many people call 911 for issues that could be better handled through another service, but don't know where else to go.

When can neighbors help neighbors, do we need to expand good samaritan laws?

making phone numbers to non-911 resources more available and accessible. sometimes even finding a non-emergency number for the local PD can be difficult, let alone additional resources.

Definition offering: Emergency - Known or suspected imminent threat to life  
Critical - Known or suspected imminent threat to property

education about using mobile phones vs. land lines. how does that work?

Create opportunities for 911 professionals to provide in-service in-person in communities - get to know your 911 professional

has there been any thought about universal identifiers/open location codes? sometimes finding a person can be an issue if they're not sure where they are.