Emergency Response Outcomes Feasibility Study

Final Report

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Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

MissionCriticalPartners

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1 Background

The County of Milwaukee (County), Wisconsin, Office of Emergency Management (OEM) engaged Mission Critical Partners® (MCP) in 2025 to examine the strategies for regionalization among 11 public safety answering points (PSAPs) in the county. A twelfth PSAP—the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM)—was not part of the original study group. OEM leadership expressed a desire to improve emergency services and emergency communications systems and technology to elevate service to the greater Milwaukee region by finding efficiencies, improving collaboration, and streamlining staffing for all PSAP stakeholders. OEM stakeholders postulate that regional efforts could help all PSAPs reduce operational costs, improve staffing, reduce turnover; decrease response times, and ultimately provide all individuals in Milwaukee County with the same level of service regardless of where they live. This means their 911 calls are handled similarly, that all citizens have access to trained staff who can support life-saving initiatives like emergency medical dispatch (EMD) and telephone cardiopulmonary resuscitation (T-CPR) on first contact, and that technology and geographic information systems (GIS) support expedited emergency response.

Regionalization may take many forms, though it is most often seen as a physical relocation of one PSAP into another and frequently involves resignation of control from one entity to another. MCP understands that this singular view of regionalization may be emotionally charged and that it is easy to focus on what the agencies stand to lose over what they stand to gain; therefore, it is vitally important that we work to broaden the understanding of regionalization to include a multi-faceted approach independent of physical integration or loss of control.

Milwaukee County is the largest county in Wisconsin with a total population of approximately 928,000 residents—although the smallest by land area (241 square miles)—with the city of Milwaukee accounting for 577,222 of those residents[1]. The county has no unincorporated areas, consisting of 19 municipalities—a mix of cities and villages aside from the city of Milwaukee itself. Both cities and villages in the county operate under home rule authority, giving them significant autonomy over policy decisions and management of their services. As a result, every resident has direct access to municipal services.

Within the county were 11 primary PSAPs—three of which are consolidated centers that dispatch more than one jurisdiction (Table 1)—the UWM became the twelfth in September 2025. Most PSAPs—with the exception of the City of Milwaukee, County OEM-911, and Bayside Communications Center (BCC)—are divisions within a jurisdictional police department. Most are considered small based on size categories described in the National 911 Program's *Next Generation 911 Cost Estimate: A Report to Congress* (2018).[2]" At the time of this report, three of the 12 PSAPs served multiple municipalities, with plans in place for others to join together. The City of Milwaukee Department of Emergency Communications (DEC) covers 62% of the county population alone, while the smaller municipal or regional PSAPs cover the other 38%, with County OEM-911 and UWM's service areas overlapping these municipalities.

[1] https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/milwaukeecitywisconsin/POP010210
[2] National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), *Next Generation 911 Cost Estimate: A Report to Congress*, October 2018. https://www.911.gov/assets/Next_Generation_911_Cost_Estimate_Report_to_Congress_2018.pdf

Table 1: Milwaukee County PSAPs and Agencies Served

	Law Enforcement	Fire/EMS[3]	Number of Positions
Bayside Communications Center	• Bayside PD • Brown Deer PD • Fox Point PD • River Hills PD • Shorewood PD • Whitefish Bay PD • North Shore PD	• North Shore FD	• Primary: 4 • Backup: 4 • Training: 2
Cudahy Police Department	• Cudahy PD	• Cudahy FD	• Primary: 2 • Backup: 1 • Training: 0
Franklin Police Department	• Franklin PD	• Franklin FD	• Primary: 4 • Backup: 0 • Training: 0
Greendale Police Department	• Greendale PD • Hales Corner PD	• Greendale FD • Hales Corner FD	• Primary: 3 • Backup: 1 • Training: 0
Greenfield Police Department	• Greenfield PD	• Greenfield FD	• Primary: 4 • Backup: 1 • Training: 0
Oak Creek Police Department	• Oak Creek PD • South Milwaukee PD • St. Francis PD	• Oak Creek FD • South Milwaukee FD • St. Francis FD	• Primary: 6 • Backup: 0 • Training: 0
UWM Police Department	• UWM PD	• N/A	• Primary: 2 • Backup: 0 • Training: 0
Wauwatosa Police Department	• Wauwatosa PD	• Wauwatosa FD	• Primary: 2 • Backup: 1 • Training: 0
West Allis Police Department	• West Allis PD	• West Allis FD	• Primary: 5 • Backup: 2 • Training: 2

[3] Emergency medical services

	Law Enforcement	Fire/EMS[3]	Number of Positions
West Milwaukee Police Department	• West Milwaukee PD	• West Milwaukee FD	• Primary: 2 • Backup: 0 • Training: 0
City of Milwaukee	• Milwaukee PD	• Milwaukee FD	• Primary: 48 • Backup: 24 • Training: 4
Milwaukee County OEM-911	• Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office • Animal Control • Parks • Detention Center • Courts	• Airport Fire (planned for 2026)	• Primary: 10 • Backup: 8[4] • Training: 4

The 2019 Wisconsin Act 26 mandates that a single PSAP in each Wisconsin county shall be chosen as the "designated PSAP" and be solely eligible to receive competitive grants for training and equipment upgrades. The Act and grant program are designed to encourage consolidation of services and to build a unified digital Emergency Services Internet Protocol (IP) network (ESInet) across the state. Each county, through Act 26, establishes a "primary PSAP" responsible for directly applying for, receiving, and distributing grants within their county. The designation in Milwaukee County was made by majority votes of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Council, with BCC becoming the designated PSAP and sole recipient of all state grant funding to advance telecommunicator training, upgrade equipment and software, and consolidate some or all of the functions of two or more PSAPs.[5]

Home rule autonomy enables local responsiveness but has also led to a fragmented political landscape with diverse local policies and a duplication of efforts in public services like utilities and safety. This fragmentation is further reinforced by a historical dynamic of municipal competition that has made regional coordination challenging. A more detailed examination of the historical context that shaped this environment can be found in the Leadership and Planning section of this report. At the PSAP level, the individuality of each center means that emergency calls across the county are handled differently and residents may have access to different levels of service depending on where they live. Staffing challenges—including recruitment and retention difficulties—are compounded across multiple separate agencies, and technology systems vary in age and capability. Engagement with PSAPs, data collection, and analysis using national standards, benchmarks, and MCP's subject-matter expertise are ultimately aimed at identifying whether and how regionalization can provide equitable, high-quality emergency communications service across Milwaukee County.

[4] Located at the Sheriff's Office Training Center in Franklin.
[5] 2019 Wisconsin Act 26, relating to grants for Next Generation 911 and granting rule-making authority. https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2019/related/acts/26

2 Methodology

The MCP team assessed participating PSAPs across eight lenses to develop a holistic understanding of each agency, including their current environments, strengths, and opportunities for improvement. MCP benchmarked these findings against national standards, best practices, and its industry experience. Each lens provides a distinct perspective, highlighting opportunities for agencies to collaborate, share resources, and improve economies of scale and service delivery.

Findings from each lens are presented in the Current State Findings and Analysis section, where MCP outlines key insights and opportunities for improvement. These findings inform the Future State Visioning section, which evaluates the feasibility of regionalization and identifies opportunities for iterative change.

MCP's assessment framework examines the following eight dimensions:

1. Governance and Organizational Structure
2. Operations, Policies, and Procedures
3. Staffing and Workforce Management
4. Training, Quality Assurance, and Performance Management
5. Leadership and Planning
6. Technology and Systems in Use
7. Alternative First Response
8. Facilities

2.1 PSAP Engagement Efforts

MCP engaged with the PSAPs over a three-month period to build a working relationship and secure participation in the study. Outreach included multiple email attempts to PSAP management and police leadership, as well as in-person attendance at two monthly police and fire chiefs' meetings. Engagement efforts were well received by fire leadership, who routinely collaborate with neighboring agencies through an open-border response model. However, because fire leadership does not have direct authority over PSAP operations or personnel, they were unable to commit PSAP staff to data-gathering efforts.

MCP initially planned to conduct comprehensive onsite assessments across all PSAPs to fully understand each agency's perspectives, needs, strengths, and opportunities. Ultimately, two PSAPs—OEM-911 and Milwaukee DEC—fully participated in the study. UWM participated in listening sessions but did not provide data. Additionally, one PSAP met with MCP while considering participation and another contributed updated information to supplement publicly available data.

2.2 Data Collection

The key findings and joint opportunities presented in each section of this report are based on data collection, observation, listening sessions, and interviews. MCP relied on quantitative (hard numbers) and qualitative (opinions and anecdotal input) data from the participating PSAPs in the analysis and development of findings and recommendations.

MCP requested the following data from participating agencies:

- Anonymized personnel and staffing data
- Call and incident data
- Ancillary duties
- Detailed information on technology in use
- Organizational structure diagrams
- Roles, responsibilities, and job descriptions
- Compensation and benefits information
- Collective bargaining agreements
- Existing contracts, service level agreements (SLAs), and interlocal agreements
- PSAP and capital improvement budgets
- Cost-sharing formulas for contracting agencies
- Annual reports and strategic plans
- Past studies
- Quality assurance/quality improvement (QA/QI) program documentation and reports
- Training program details
- Sample policies and procedures
- Adopted national standards and agency accreditations

The project team held an introductory meeting on May 8, 2025. MCP began gathering data in August 2025 and was onsite for three days beginning August 12, 2025. City and County leadership committed to bi-weekly meetings throughout the project period and remained engaged with data collection efforts through October 2025.

Onsite Visit

MCP spent three days in Milwaukee and held 14 listening sessions with various stakeholder groups, including combined sessions with City and County leadership and with fire department stakeholders from several cities and villages within the county. The MCP team spent one full day at each participating PSAP in listening sessions with frontline staff, training and QA staff, and leadership teams. MCP participated in full facility tours at each location and directly observed workflows and operations on the operations floor with telecommunicators and Command Duty Officers (CDOs).

Benchmarking

Data, observations, listening sessions, and interviews informed MCP's analysis, which includes benchmarking PSAP information against national standards, best practices, and industry experience and knowledge. For quantitative data, MCP relied on established public safety and private industry metrics to evaluate the PSAPs. For qualitative data—where no established metrics exist—MCP applied its collective industry knowledge and best practices to create meaningful benchmarks for assessment.

- Standard – A measurable established by authority to assess quantity, weight, extent, value, or quality.[6]
- Best Practice – A research- and experience-backed procedure that produces optimal results and is suitable for widespread adoption.[7]
- Industry Experience – A minimum of 10 years of combined education, work experience, and specialization within the respective industry or market segment.

MCP clarifies throughout the report where findings are based on measurable, quantitative data and where findings rely on subjective evaluations. MCP's experience demonstrates that subjective assessments, when critically analyzed against established best practices, can be as meaningful as quantitative data. Together, both

[6] "Standard," Merriam-Webster, 2020. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/standard
[7] "Best Practice," Merriam-Webster, 2020. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/best%20practice

provide a clear picture of the PSAPs' current states and highlight priorities for addressing critical risks, whether that be through shared services opportunities or joint operations. The PSAPs and the analysis for each element are presented in alphabetical order and are not reflective of specific criteria.

2.3 Core Project Team

MCP had the privilege of collaborating with a dynamic and dedicated group of City and County stakeholders representing various tenures, roles, field assignments, and PSAP teams. The core project team included the Milwaukee DEC director, DEC deputy director, County OEM-911 director, County Emergency Management director, and County Emergency Management deputy director. These stakeholders contributed valuable insights throughout the project and provided critical support by coordinating meetings, participating in interviews, providing facility tours, and sharing the historical and current data necessary for MCP to assess each factor. Leadership was responsive to MCP's emails and requests throughout the project period, keeping data-collection efforts on track and comprehensive.

3 Current State Findings and Analysis

3.1 Governance and Organizational Structure

Key Findings

- Milwaukee County has 12 primary PSAPs, including three that have consolidated two or more jurisdictions; many are a division of a police department.
- PSAP organizational structures in smaller agencies are generally flat, with little opportunity for career advancement.
- Formal meetings exist for police chiefs and fire chiefs separately, but no interagency meetings include the PSAPs and all user agencies collectively.

The governance and organizational structure of a public or private enterprise are fundamental to organizational success and the ability to carry out its core mission. Governance in a PSAP environment exists to ensure that core services are delivered efficiently, effectively, and ethically, while also maintaining public trust and accountability. PSAP governance should establish clear roles and responsibilities, set policies and strategic priorities, manage risks, and serve as a conduit for a successful relationship between PSAP staff and field responders in the immediate jurisdiction and surrounding areas.

Organizational structures are designed to achieve strategic goals, increase efficiency, and enhance services for clients or constituents. However, structural variations emerge based on service type, organizational culture, size, and complexity. Historically, public safety has relied on a highly bureaucratic command-and-control model, which works well in focused areas with clear boundaries but becomes limited when services and responsibilities overlap or boundaries blur.

In today's public sector environment, organizations no longer operate in isolation and often work with multiple stakeholders to achieve shared goals, challenging traditional organizational structures. Additionally, today's workforce highly values transparent communication, knowledge sharing, and autonomy, further prompting organizations to modernize their structures and approaches.

An effective organizational structure should include defined roles and responsibilities, and qualified leadership aligned with the organization's broader goals and mission regardless of size or complexity. It should prioritize transparent communication, active participation, and accountability at all levels. Active governance is achieved through continuous and inclusive discourse that captures diverse perspectives, ensuring that stakeholder interests are thoughtfully considered and consistently reflected in policy.

3.1.1 Milwaukee DEC

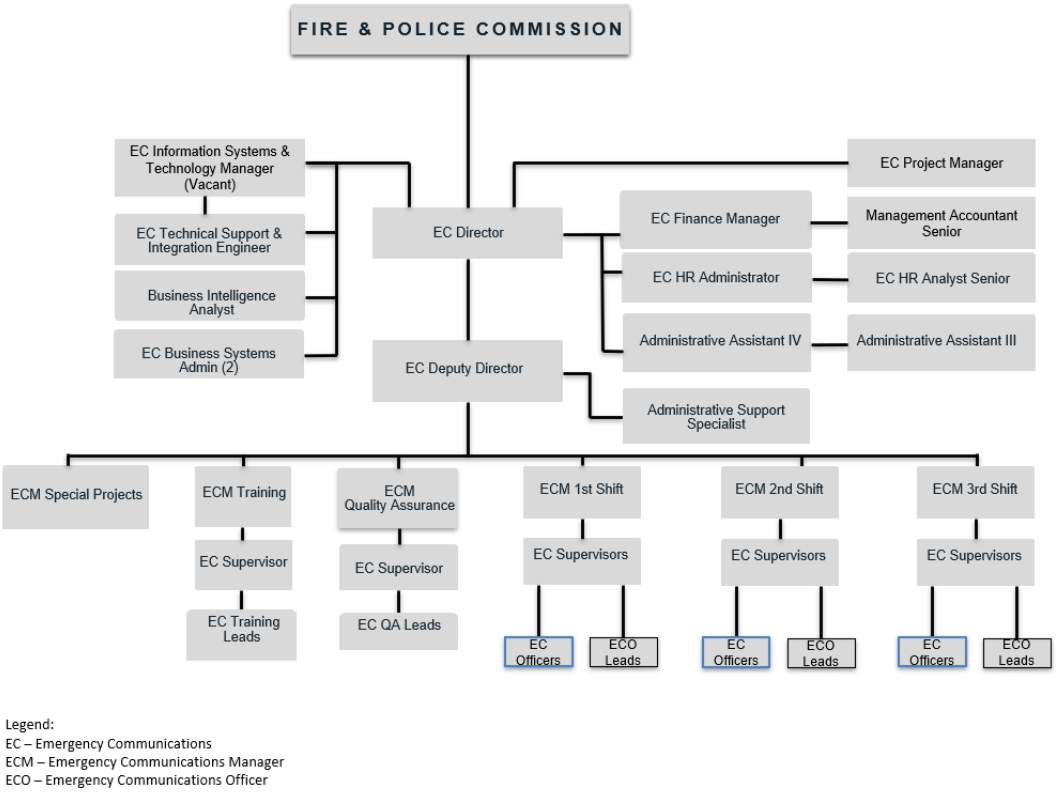

Figure 1: Milwaukee DEC Organizational Structure

Established in 2019 by the Common Council and later codified by City Ordinance Chapter 390 in October 2021, Milwaukee DEC was created with the specific intent of overseeing a unified police and fire communications model. In February 2025, the ideal was fully realized—the City of Milwaukee consolidated its police and fire call-taking and dispatch functions, unifying what had previously been separate PSAPs under police and fire leadership. This transition placed civilian management authority over both centers, including positional and managerial oversight, and created an opportunity for a complete departmental restructure. Civilian-led PSAPs offer distinct advantages over models led by sworn personnel—greater leadership stability, deeper industry expertise, stronger advocacy for PSAP needs, and increased perception of neutrality when dispatching for multiple agencies. For DEC, this shift positions the organization to better serve the broader public safety mission. Early evidence suggests the promise is taking shape.

The Fire and Police Commission (FPC) provides executive oversight and manages both hiring and policy decisions. The DEC director holds regular working meetings with the Mayor and Mayor's staff, and working meetings and public hearings with the FPC. The director also coordinates with the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) and Milwaukee Fire Department (MFD) and their respective chiefs and command staff and

communicates directly with Common Council members and their staff. The City Council has demonstrated financial support for new communications systems. The deputy director participates in informal lunch meetings with OEM-911 and other PSAP directors. DEC conducts regular tours of the dispatch center for council members and public advocacy groups.

DEC has an organizational structure with defined roles across training, information technology (IT), administration, operations management, supervision, and QA. DEC has clear job descriptions for operations staff from Emergency Communications Officer (ECO) 1 through 5 and ECO Lead, recently updated post-civilianization. The director conducts monthly cabinet meetings with the deputy director, followed by supervisor meetings. Managers meet monthly to discuss operational processes and work toward shift consistency. DEC has invested $60,000 in supervisor and manager training to align skills foundationally. MFD has undergone significant cultural change, with staff learning about the reasons for training and the liability of not having standard operating procedures (SOPs).

However, translating this into reality requires work at multiple levels. There is disparity in how job descriptions are understood and applied—supervisors reported clear role definitions while some frontline telecommunicators stated they lacked clarity and were assigned tasks ad hoc. This reflects the difficulty staff are experiencing in shifting from police or fire operations to integrated roles. Some frontline staff struggle with the loss of their MPD or MFD identity, though there is general eagerness for integration. A concern is that while skilled dispatchers can be hired, they will not remain if organizational culture does not support them.

Governance structures and processes have been established, and DEC should continue to implement tactics that support transparent, participatory decision-making. For example, MCP heard that staff appreciate the policy review committee but report it lacks a defined scope and productive decision-making frameworks, leaving staff unclear about how decisions are made and why. Similarly, Human Resources (HR) does not consistently communicate with supervisors on payroll matters or participate in key personnel processes. The director initiated a monthly newsletter and sends regular emails regarding organizational changes, demonstrating a commitment to transparency.

While DEC has career progression with clear separation and delineation of duties at each level, certifications and expectations do not clearly establish a path for expected training and advanced responsibility at each level, nor do they specify requirements for promotion to supervisor or beyond. There is no published promotional pathway staff can reference. Prior to civilianization, there was little structured leadership training or promotional development; this is now a focus of the director, who reported that several partners have been selected for a leadership development program that will transition into a formal DEC Leadership Academy. Prior to consolidation, promotion to supervisor did not require completion of any training or formal onboarding curriculum after promotion, and there was little guidance to support new leaders. MCP learned that DEC now provides structured supervisor onboarding training, and all supervisors are required to successfully complete the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) Center Manager Certification Program (CMCP) within 18 months of promotion, as well as maintain other certifications required for operations and/or training staff.

Creating functional alignment across former police and fire operations remains ongoing work—a typical challenge for organizations undergoing this level of change, yet one DEC must continue to address to fully realize the promise of civilianization.

3.1.2 OEM-911

The Milwaukee County Office 911 Division operates within the larger County OEM organizational structure. The organizational structure is led by the OEM director, who reports to the County Executive. 911 leadership endeavors to engage with external stakeholder PSAPs to build a foundation of regional governance and participates in interagency meetings and informal lunches with outside PSAP administrators. County OEM

leadership attend executive sessions with law enforcement and police chiefs, and city administrators to engage in interagency and regional information sharing. While there is some interaction with Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) staff, MCP learned that its expectations are not clearly and intentionally shared with OEM-911 staff who operationalize them.

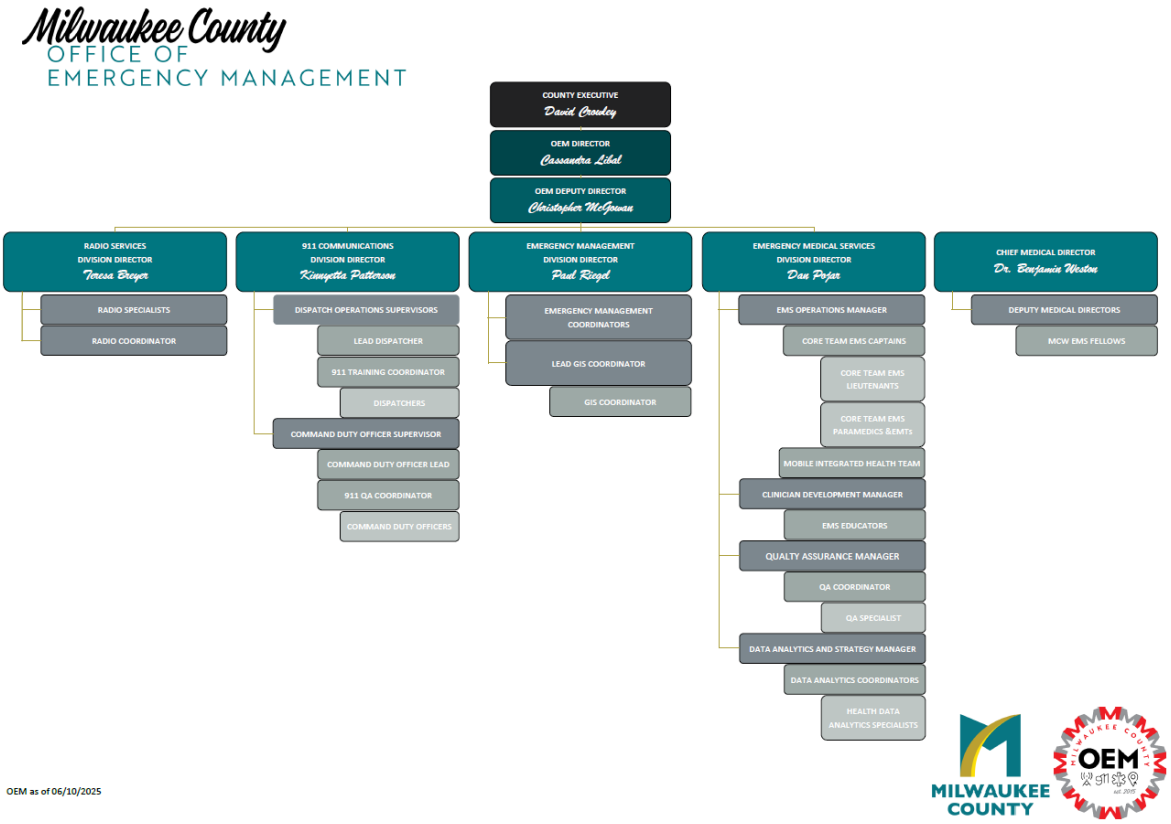

Figure 2: OEM-911 Organizational Structure

Internal governance is supported by senior leadership meetings with 911 staff. MCP found that the majority of OEM-911's governance and information flow is informal—leadership, particularly the director, communicate directly with staff to share information and gain insight for decision-making. However, this approach is dependent on individual leadership style and staff's ability to participate; third shift reported barriers to engagement resulting from their scheduled work time. Staff expressed that informal relationships work, but formal bureaucracy creates friction.

Job descriptions exist for operations supervisors, training and QA staff, and dispatchers/call takers. While the job descriptions have a consistent format, they are not regularly updated—some date to 2013 while others are from 2023 or 2025. As such, some roles are clearly defined while others may not reflect current operational expectations or requirements for advancement. When asked about job descriptions, staff reported that everyone knows their roles and indicated a supportive relationship among staff, but some were not aware job descriptions existed or where to find them—reinforcing the informal communication system in place. OEM-911 is unique in that it includes the CDO team in addition to typical 911 operational and administrative roles. CDO operates as its own arm of the department, with specialized roles supported by job descriptions, supervision, and training.

OEM-911 has no formalized leadership training or clear promotional pathways. Discussions around career growth occur during annual reviews of goals, but otherwise no specific training is available to prepare individuals for promotion or the responsibilities that come with it. No clear path exists through different job roles to develop a career ladder that would promote retention. Staff state that they feel supported by leadership, but express uncertainty about how to advance or what is required for promotion.

OEM-911 should identify how to translate its effective informal systems into formalized governance and leadership development that can sustain performance across all shifts and personnel transitions. While relationships and direct communication from leadership have created a supportive environment, formalizing job descriptions, promotional pathways, decision-making frameworks, and leadership training would create consistency, improve transparency, and better support staff development and retention.

3.1.3 Regional Insights

MCP was unable to directly verify information about the governance and organizational structures of non-participating PSAPs; information about these agencies was gathered from publicly available documents and insights from our onsite visit.

The majority of those PSAPs are led by law enforcement agencies, though some have civilian leadership, such as a director or PSAP manager, who report to sworn personnel. PSAP organizational structures in smaller agencies are generally flat, with little opportunity for career advancement, though the existence of layers within dispatch divisions suggests advancement opportunities may exist in some agencies. PSAPs that are embedded with law enforcement can be challenging because the needs of field responders often take priority over PSAP needs.

Across the industry, there is a broad shift toward independent PSAPs with civilian directors. Independent PSAPs are generally vertical in structure, with more internal support and career growth opportunities (Figure 3).

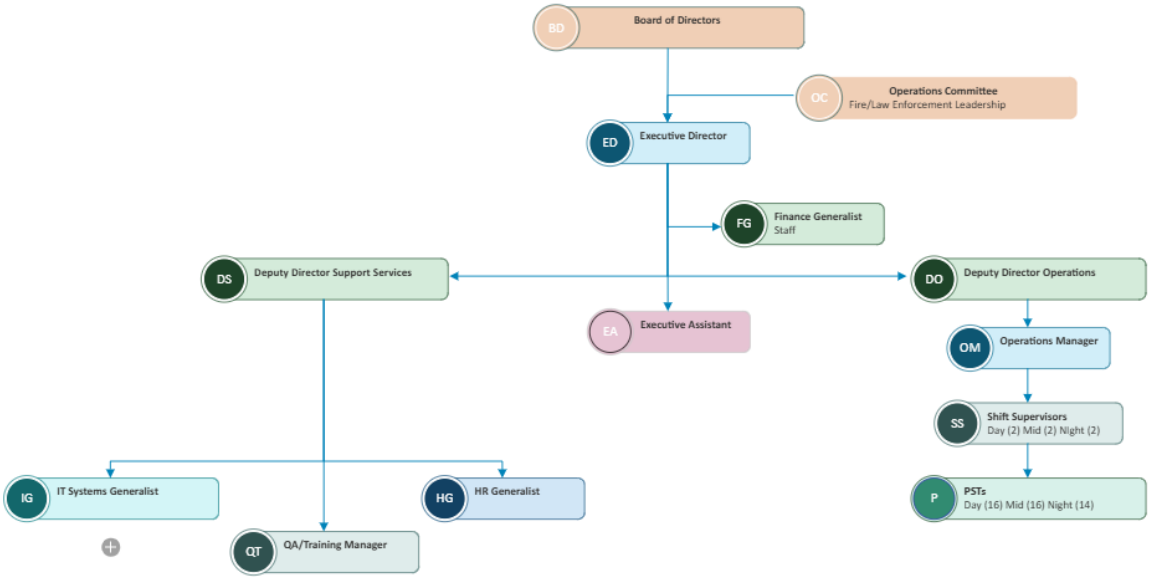

Figure 3: Example Organizational Chart in a Civilian-Led PSAP

Independent PSAPs can offer additional benefits, such as leadership continuity and deep industry knowledge and subject-matter expertise. Within independent PSAPs, leadership may be well positioned to advocate for the needs of the communications center, and there can be an increased perception of objectivity when dispatching for multiple agencies, rather than a single discipline making decisions for others.

Job descriptions across PSAPs in the county do not adequately reflect the modern telecommunicator's role. Today's public safety telecommunicator is responsible for a host of technologies, information, and situational awareness far different from the past. This gap between job descriptions and actual responsibilities creates challenges: low training success rates, difficulty holding staff accountable to performance standards, excessive workload from mission creep resulting in burnout, scope creep due to unclear expectations, and overlapping duties that create inefficiency. PSAPs with deeper organizational ladders typically have formalized promotional requirements through well-written job descriptions or promotional policies and offer leadership training through emergency communications-focused platforms like the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) International or NENA, demonstrating that this gap can be addressed. Advancement opportunities (dispatcher, communications training officer [CTO], lead, supervisor), and post-promotion leadership training are available through industry-specific classes and county leadership training programs in multiple PSAPs.

PSAPs in the county interact through formal intergovernmental meetings including police chief, fire chief, and intercounty council meetings with municipal leaders, but no formal unified PSAP leadership meetings exist. The non-participating PSAPs appear to have a strong responsibility to their community and a desire to follow the elements of strong governance within their respective jurisdictions. Based on small-scale consolidation that has occurred or is planned in the county, the effort to set strategic priorities, manage risk, and build successful relationships with nearby neighbors must certainly exist. This demonstrates that the municipalities around the city and county are open to the idea that the success of their community is related to interaction with surrounding communities and the fiscal savings and improved service delivery that shared services bring.

Historically, law enforcement agencies in Milwaukee County have operated in silos, rarely collaborating with each other or with fire departments within their jurisdiction. This lack of interaction is visible even at the academy level—the police and fire academies are separated within the same building with no interaction between disciplines. While these agencies cooperate at the operational level through joint exercises or resource sharing such as drone and K9 units, this siloing is evident at the executive level.

The existing structure of law enforcement leadership over PSAPs affects fire departments and is thought to limit their voice in decision-making and resource allocation. Indeed, the cultural divide between law enforcement and fire services is a barrier to governance alignment. Fire leadership describes feeling excluded from PSAP budget and technology decisions and has expressed interest in greater collaboration. Law enforcement leadership has expressed concerns about regionalization that have contributed to maintaining current governance structures. This divide has prevented the emergence of a unified governance approach.

The regional governance context may be shaped by historical factors. Following World War II, the City of Milwaukee engaged in aggressive annexation that prompted the 1955 "Oak Creek Law," allowing rural towns to incorporate and create an "iron ring" around the city, defensively blocking its growth. This institutionalized competition among 19 municipalities created a zero-sum mentality where growth or regionalization is viewed as a fixed resource—for one community to gain, another must lose. Governance is strained when working with the City or County, possibly resulting from the long-standing environment of competition and animosity from annexation efforts and an aversion to large governing entities.

There is opportunity to engage PSAPs and user agencies in formal meetings to encourage mutual understanding of each other's roles, similar to the monthly meetings between OEM-911 and MCSO. MCP recommends establishing a countywide public safety committee to provide agencies at all levels with a platform for input and to enhance transparency for both field responders and PSAPs.

3.2 PSAP Operations, Policies, and Procedures

Key Findings

- Only five PSAPs serve as primary answering points, meaning wireless emergency calls in nearly half of the county involve transfers, and by association, delays.
- PSAPs with fewer than three supervisors are likely unable to provide 24/7 supervision as recommended by National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1225, *Standard for Emergency Services Communications*.
- Shared guidelines for frequently performed processes could benefit all PSAPs through improved communication, information sharing, and situational awareness.

Organizational structure defines roles, responsibilities, decision-making authority, and accountability relationships within an organization. Policies and procedures complement this structure by providing guidance and clarity on processes, ensuring efficient operations. Together, structure, operations, policies, procedures, and workflows form the foundation for a PSAP's core services and directly impact organizational risk exposure. In analyzing PSAP operations, roles and responsibilities are examined at a micro level, considering both the human aspects of positions and individual workloads, including the number of interactions each employee has, whether on the operations floor or over the radio.

The goal of efficient operations is to optimize each employee's time and abilities, balancing active duties with necessary downtime to meet professional standards set by organizations such as APCO, NENA, NFPA, and the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA®). Operational configurations, such as a horizontal structure where staff have distinct roles as call takers or dispatchers, tend to be more efficient, have lower error rates, and achieve higher training completion rates.

Well-defined policies, procedures, and protocols establish a framework that guides employees in their tasks. These policies should be easily accessible, regularly reviewed, and updated to align employee actions with policy objectives, thus minimizing risks to individuals and the organization.

3.2.1 Milwaukee DEC

Milwaukee DEC falls into the category of a large to mega-sized PSAP as defined in the 2018 Report to Congress. The PSAP in total has 24 call-taking-only positions and 28 positions equipped with both dispatching and call-taking functionality. Prior to the restructuring, MPD telecommunicators were the primary PSAP for all 911 calls made within the city limits. Calls were transferred to MFD (secondary PSAP) for fire and medical processing. While this structure still exists, a shift is underway to train and implement universal call takers who can process all 911 calls and create the computer-aided dispatch (CAD) event for both fire and police dispatchers.

MCP supports the transition to a primary/secondary PSAP workflow, which reduces call transfers, enables trained call takers to address multi-disciplinary concerns, and promote consistent information sharing with field responders. The use of universal call takers as part of career progression also supports retention and helps address staffing shortages by allowing personnel to assist with call taking more quickly than fully cross-trained telecommunicators. Staff report that the model has already improved shift coverage.

DEC telecommunicators are assigned to police dispatch, fire dispatch, or call taking functions, without the requirement to regularly dispatch and call take simultaneously. Police dispatchers each cover one zone in the city and handle the talkgroup associated with that zone only and are responsible for 10 to 30 units at a time, depending on time of day, though they may occasionally be responsible for up to 50. The 10 to 30-unit range

per dispatcher is manageable and aligns with MCP experience. While MCP does not recommend 50 units per dispatcher as a regular practice, it may be acceptable when a portion of the 50 are administrative or non-responsive units (detectives, administrative staff, or other units that primarily listen and do not regularly engage with dispatchers). MPD incidents are dispatched using incident priorities to support decision-making and unit assignment or reassignment in addition to geographic zone coverage.

Fire telecommunicators handle the fire incident volume as needed and are assigned by function, not zone, with one dispatcher who handles all initial dispatches and a second dispatcher who handles all incident radio traffic after the initial dispatch. This results in the possibility that the secondary fire dispatcher is responsible for multiple incidents on multiple talkgroups. MCP recommends that DEC consider shifting dispatch responsibilities from initial dispatch to a model where the dispatcher handles all dispatch related radio traffic (e.g., en route, on scene, clear, etc.), supported by a tactical dispatcher assigned to a working incident and to meet NFPA standards. This may require reallocating fire telecommunicators who originally worked as fire call takers or adding staff to cover this responsibility. It is unclear if fire incidents are assigned a priority in addition to response plans, but MCP learned that fire agencies in the entire county operate a borderless system and frequently support each other both geographically and operationally. This is likely supported by a triage system to aid the fire dispatcher's response decisions.

Call takers are designated as emergency or non-emergency, with some call takers able to answer only certain types of calls (police or fire), though this is intermediary as DEC continues to train and fully implement the universal call taking (UCT) model. Similarly, dispatchers and supervisors are currently either police or fire, with the goal of everyone being cross-trained. DEC statistics show that 911 calls are answered within 15 seconds 96.9% of the time, exceeding industry standards.[8]

Like dispatch role assignment, supervisors have a fire or police focus that stems from the prior organizational structure; as the agency progresses through its transition, MCP recommends continuing this practice to provide specific subject-matter expertise; a clear, knowledgeable contact for responders to engage with; and a specialized career path for employees interested in promotion. Operations managers support four to five supervisors; these employees are primarily administrative middle managers. DEC schedules two supervisors per shift who are not assigned to work the operations floor and serve primarily in an oversight capacity. These supervisors are supported by lead dispatchers who work a position and help manage the span of control by acting as a first line of support to the approximately 14 telecommunicators on duty at one time.

DEC uses third-party protocols for EMS call processing and internally developed, with input from public safety chiefs and executives, procedures for police and fire call processing. EMD certifications are through the Priority Dispatch System. DEC uses a robust CAD system for current reporting and has key performance indicator (KPI) tracking mechanisms in place. DEC leadership uses these tools to develop reports for City oversight committees and the DEC annual report. Once DEC transitions to the statewide ESInet, it will have greater connectivity benefits and expanded standardized reporting capabilities.

Administrative, personnel, training, and QA policies have been recently updated (2025), covering topics including professional expectations, building security, grievance processes, awards, and leave usage. However, some staff think that the current policies are too vague or contain conflicting information and expressed a desire for clear accountability measures.

MCP recommends that DEC's policy committee formalize routine ongoing meetings and work to write, update, seek approval for, and publish policies that are reviewed annually for accuracy and by staff for awareness and understanding. Further, MCP recommends developing interagency policies among user agencies and PSAPs,

[8] NENA/NPFA standards reflect 90% answered within 15 seconds and 95% answered within 20 seconds

as well as across the region's PSAPs to promote countywide best practices, improve consistency, and strengthen relationships.

DEC supervisor and management staff demonstrated passion for employee health and wellness and showed measurable pride for the work being done, including a peer-support team in the planning stage. DEC's wellness initiatives include a City-level employee assistance program (EAP), a contract with a wellness group that brings therapy dogs to operations, and quiet rooms inside the DEC. These efforts are notable—DEC maintains its own contract with First Responders Psychological Services (FRPS), providing employees with unlimited, unrestricted counseling sessions at no cost for difficult calls, officer-involved deaths, or floor-initiated requests. The 2022 *NENA Standard to Protect the Wellbeing of 9-1-1 Professionals* identifies this type of programming as a recommended practice that can produce significant improvements in morale, performance, and financial health.[9] DEC's early focus—particularly given the agency's transitional state—demonstrates a commitment to employee wellness and sets a precedent for prioritizing staff wellbeing alongside operational demands.

3.2.2 OEM-911

OEM-911 is a medium-sized communications center[10] that serves dual missions—the 911 call taking and dispatch side handles traditional emergency call taking and dispatch functions, and the CDO side serves as a specialized medical liaison for medical transport units and hospitals. Each team operates somewhat independently—they have specialized staff, supervision, policies, and training—and staff from each team are not cross-trained to work outside of their assigned role or job classification. At the time of MCP's visit, OEM-911 had 10 consoles, eight assigned to 911 operations and two to CDOs. In 2026, OEM will move into a new facility and will increase the size of its PSAP. The new facility will house a minimum of 26 consoles and have space for up to 50, greatly increasing its capacity for dispatch services.

OEM-911 is one of seven primary PSAPs for wireless 911 calls made outside the city. It takes incoming wireless 911 calls for Wauwatosa, West Allis, Greenfield, Cudahy, Hales Corners/Greendale, and West Milwaukee. Incoming calls are transferred to the appropriate jurisdiction for further call processing and dispatch at the municipal PSAP as appropriate (see Appendix A). OEM-911 dispatches for MCSO and parks officers and has been contracted to provide dispatch services for the Milwaukee Mitchell Airport Fire Department. OEM-911's cross-trained staff are assigned specific call-taking or dispatch roles but may perform both functions simultaneously. Supervisors work a position with time off the operations floor for administrative functions when staffing permits; working a position may limit their availability for situational awareness, support, or other supervisory functions. Telecommunicators value their operational teamwork, stating that everyone knows and understands their role in the operational environment and, during surges, the team seamlessly works the incident and performs necessary functions. This is a benefit of an operational environment where the space supports awareness and direct communication.

Call takers are EMD trained and in the process of training on emergency fire dispatch (EFD) protocols in anticipation of their new role with the airport. Law enforcement call processing is directed by a mix of 911 department policy, call-taking training, and MCSO information needs but mostly is based in trained knowledge and experience. In MCP's experience, agencies that use formal call-taking protocols, whether through a company or internally developed, demonstrate more consistent information gathering, documentation, call assessment, and caller instructions based on specific details, as there is less room for interpretation and more ability to triage and assess through a measurable lens. Indeed, law enforcement field responders noted differences in the information gathered by experienced versus newer employees. Statistics provided by OEM-

[9] https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.nena.org/resource/resmgr/standards/nena-sta-002.2-2022_wellbein.pdf
[10] https://www.911.gov/assets/Next_Generation_911_Cost_Estimate_Report_to_Congress_2018.pdf

911 show it is routinely answering 911 calls within 15 seconds 97.81% of the time, surpassing the industry standard.[11]

OEM-911 dispatch positions handle law enforcement over five zones with up to nine units, and on certain shifts, a second dispatch position serves as a law enforcement back up. “Position 10” is a high-volume business-hours radio position that handles multiple talkgroups including adult and juvenile court deputies, civil process squads, and district attorney investigation units and can have up to 50 units at a given time. All dispatch positions provide backup call-taking functions, with the primary law enforcement dispatcher performing this function in extreme surge capacity only. If there are multiple simultaneous incidents, secondary channels are available for units to use, and a regional channel may be used for larger multi-jurisdictional incidents. These are assigned as needed or may be supported by the supervisor on duty.

Two CDOs are assigned to each shift along with a CDO supervisor who works primarily business hours and provides oversight to the entire CDO team of seven full-time and 10 hourly employees. CDOs serve as countywide liaisons between hospitals, medical providers, and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) in the field, including all municipal and city medical responders. The team’s specialized functions include:

- Operating paramedic-specific communications equipment including designated radios and the ParaBase system (similar to CAD), records management systems (RMSs), and internal forms and documentation
- Paging and notifying receiving hospital staff of incoming patients, including patient reports from the field, potential disaster situations, and weather events
- Receiving and relaying medical information to/from hospitals
- Calling medical control physicians for online medical direction
- Tracking bed availability at hospitals throughout the region
- Documenting STEMI, Stroke, Trauma, STAT, and Level 1 and 2 Trauma information for the CARES system
- Providing CPR to callers in jurisdiction that do not provide T-CPR
    - In some cases, medical calls made from wireless devices may come into OEM-911 and are transferred to another municipality due to the caller’s location and response jurisdiction; however, if telecommunicators at that jurisdiction are not capable of providing T-CPR, the call must be transferred to CDO (or other EMD trained-OEM-911 telecommunicator) to provide this life-saving need. This practice inherently involves delays from seconds to minutes that are vital for patient survivability.

OEM-911 policies exist in a manual and in standalone form and on multiple platforms. 911 leadership is actively working to find a single platform and move policies to one document management system. Though no formal cadence exists, policies are reviewed and updated several times a year, usually when an error is noted. Staff expressed a desire for uniform policies for all staff, from hourly employees and telecommunicators to CDOs and leadership. MCP recognizes that this may be unattainable due to the significant differences among these groups. To mitigate frustration, 911 leadership should consider adjusting the practice of requiring CDOs and telecommunicators to review documents and train on material that is unrelated to their operational focus, and work to provide clarity when policy differences exist between telecommunicators and CDOs.

[11] NENA/NPFA Standards reflect 90% answered in under 15 seconds and 95% answered in under 20 seconds

OEM-911 independently carries several countywide responsibilities that distinguish it from other PSAPs in the region, including sole authority to activate tornado sirens and sole Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) certification to issue wireless emergency alerts to cell phones for public notifications such as active shooter incidents, evacuations, and other high-profile events.

Staff also noted that changes in elected leadership impact the 911 operational policies and procedures and that policy changes by newly elected sheriffs may impose operational burdens on OEM-911, including added training demands, staffing strain, and procedural delays, as their policies must be updated to align with the new sheriff's changes. MCP was told the County may have a document management solution available for this purpose.

When a difficult incident occurs, OEM-911 staff can take advantage of the EAP provided by the County or utilize MCSO's (SO) peer support team. MCP heard that 911 staff are not generally invited to debriefs, though they can fill out a form for access to the County's Crisis Assessment Response Team (CART) if they want to take advantage of that resource.

3.2.3 Regional Insights

Table 2: PSAP Operations Data

Staffing	911 Call Volume (2024)	Admin Call Volume (2024)	Calls for Service (2024)	Total Transfers Inbound	Total Transfers Outbound	Number of Primary Workstations	EMD Provided	Minimum Staffing per Shift
Bayside Communications Center *Population: 4,299*								
2 Director/Admin 2 Supervisors 16 TCs[12]	19,323	52,200	PD: 76,241 FD: 13,077	~700	~600	4	Yes	
Cudahy *Population: 17,390*								
1 Lead 10 TCs (FT[13] & PT[14])			PD: 19,547 FD: 3,047	~3,700	~2,400	2		Day: 3 Mid: 3 Night: 1
Franklin *Population: 35,045*								

[12] Telecommunicators
[13] Full-time
[14] Part-time

Staffing	911 Call Volume (2024)	Admin Call Volume (2024)	Calls for Service (2024)	Total Transfers Inbound	Total Transfers Outbound	Number of Primary Workstations	EMD Provided	Minimum Staffing per Shift
1 Supervisors 2 TC Lead 12 TCs			PD: 28,761 FD: 5,812	~500	~200	4		
Greendale *Population: 14,299*								
11 TCs (FT & PT)	4,796	60,147	242,432	~2,000	~1,500	3		
Greenfield *Population: 36,360*								
	~12,000	~100,000		~5,700	~4,800	4		
Oak Creek* ***Total Population: 66,951*** *Oak Creek Population: 37,593 | St. Francis Population: 9,523 | South Milwaukee Population: 19,835*								
1 Manager 3 Supervisors 25 TCs	22,404	122,988	PD: 52,894 FD: 10,272	~1,700	~400	8	Yes	Day: 5 Mid: 5 Night: 4
Wauwatosa *Population: 46,177*								
1 Manager 1 Supervisors 12 TCs (FT & PT)	69,272		PD: 39,476 FD: 10,465	~7,700	~7100	2	Yes	
West Allis *Population: 57,952*								
3 Managers 6 Supervisors 17 TCs (FT & PT)			PD: 50,251 FD: 11,638	~2,700	~1,400	5	Yes	

Staffing	911 Call Volume (2024)	Admin Call Volume (2024)	Calls for Service (2024)	Total Transfers Inbound	Total Transfers Outbound	Number of Primary Workstations	EMD Provided	Minimum Staffing per Shift
West Milwaukee *Population: 4,096*								
				~1,000	~1,000	2		
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee *Population: ~26,000*								
1 Lead 3 TCs						2		1
Milwaukee DEC* *Population: 577,222*								
17 Supervisors 183 TCs	708,067	240,279	PD: 519,176 FD: 128,748	~23,000	~4,400	43	Yes	Fluctuates
OEM-911* *Population: 939,489 (inclusive)*								
3 Supervisors 1 Lead 31 TCs (FT & PT)	70,633	252,637		~64,000	~38,000	12	Yes	Day/Mid: 6-7 Night:4-5:

** Information obtained from or verified by the PSAP*

The 12 PSAPs range significantly in size and operational capacity, from two primary workstations to 43 primary workstations, and from three dispatchers and a lead to 183 telecommunicators and approximately 30 managerial and support staff. This variation creates operational and service delivery differences across the county. MCP did not find standard processes for the assignment of call-taking and dispatch functions across PSAPs. In the smallest PSAPs, simultaneous call-taking and dispatch is unavoidable and may not create service concerns due to volume.

The size and scope of each PSAP determine factors such as 24/7 supervision and the number of talkgroups for which each employee is responsible. In smaller PSAPs, telecommunicators are usually cross-trained for call-taking and dispatching, often doing both simultaneously or handling multiple radio channels at the same time, and supervisors typically work a radio or phone position in addition to their supervisory duties. MCP concludes that PSAPs with fewer than three supervisors are likely unable to provide 24/7 supervision as recommended by NFPA 1225; West Allis is an exception with six supervisors.

Only five of the 12 PSAPs utilize EMD protocols; the remaining seven transfer calls to OEM-911 for EMD call processing and lifesaving instructions. Similarly, only five PSAPs serve as primary PSAPs, meaning wireless emergency calls in nearly half of the county involve transfer delays. EMD calls and highway calls are often transferred more than once—for example, OEM-911 receives a call and transfers it to a local PSAP for jurisdictional handling; the PSAP establishes that the call requires CPR instructions, then transfers the call back to OEM-911. In 2024, OEM-911 received 64,385 transfers and transferred 37,572 calls to other PSAPs.

Every transfer involves more than pressing a button. "Warm handoffs" require the call taker to stay on the line, provide a verbal summary, confirm the secondary PSAP has accepted the call, and document the action in CAD. Research published in *Prehospital Emergency Care* (Moeller et al., 2023) found a median transfer duration of 41 seconds and a 90th percentile of approximately 86 seconds. Transfers also result in the loss of call information data (e.g., automatic number identification/automatic location identification [ANI/ALI]), requiring subsequent call takers to repeat questions the caller has already answered. These delays frustrate callers, add workload to stressed staff, and affect the ability to meet performance standards, such as NENA and NFPA call-answering standards.

In fragmented environments, service levels vary among jurisdictions—even those sharing borders. Differences in protocols, training standards, response priorities, and technology create inconsistency in how community members experience 911. A caller reporting the same emergency from two different locations may receive different scripts, response times, and follow-up actions. This inconsistency erodes public trust, complicates mutual-aid coordination, and exposes agencies to liability if outcomes differ based solely on jurisdictional boundaries.

Limited information on call-answering performance standards across the non-participating PSAPs was available for BCC only, which reports answering 911 calls within 15 seconds 99% of the time, exceeding the industry standard. Information about Oak Creek indicated that it does not track industry standards for call-answering times. MCP was not able to gain a full picture of transfers, utilization, or adherence to call-answering standards in most of the non-participating PSAPs.

MCP found no evidence of shared policies, protocols, or procedures among PSAPs—even those that work together regularly or perform similar processes. Stakeholders expressed that they do not have a strong understanding of the rationale behind other agencies' procedures, reinforcing silos and creating barriers to collaboration at the dispatch level. For example, OEM-911 and MCSO respond to calls on freeways, but these calls may come into any PSAP with freeways in their jurisdiction. Policies related to freeway call handling and information sharing should be a collaborative effort so that anyone who requests help on a freeway receives the same level of call processing and service. A regional policy development process could address this gap by bringing PSAPs together to establish shared guidelines and build mutual understanding of operational

decisions—improving communication, information sharing, and situational awareness.

Most PSAPs likely have access to an EAP through their municipalities. Smaller PSAPs and those within police department structures rarely have PSAP-specific peer support programs. OEM-911 relies on MCSO's peer support program, and DEC is developing one. MCSO recently conducted an incident debrief with West Allis (whose dispatchers attended) that included clinicians—demonstrating appetite for cross-agency support. MCP recommends creating an interagency peer support program to provide countywide mental health and wellness support to all PSAPs.

3.3 Staffing and Workforce Management

Key Findings

- NFPA 1225 establishes that there shall be a minimum of two qualified telecommunicators on duty and present in the communications center at all times.[15] It appears that all PSAPs meet this standard.

Staffing is a critical component of any operation, as the ability to carry out an organization's mission is contingent upon having the appropriate number of personnel to support its workload. In emergency communications, proper staffing is not optional but a requirement to fulfill the civic responsibility of the public sector organization.

Often, when PSAPs develop staffing plans, they do not fully account for the time staff are away from the console or from work due to annual leave, sick leave, or other benefits offered by the agency or required by law. Failure to account for additional staffing needed to cover leave often results in high overtime usage, even in agencies that appear fully staffed. Not properly accounting for meal breaks and utilization contributes to staff burnout, negatively impacts retention and leave usage, and can erode morale.

MCP uses a variety of tools and methodologies to forecast staffing, including the NENA staffing tool, Erlang C calculations, and utilization and availability analyses. Combined with MCP's subject-matter expertise in emergency communications operations, these tools provide baseline and optimal staffing estimates. Analyses assume routine operational conditions and do not account for major incidents that significantly impact capacity. Staffing projections depend on accurate and complete data; without it, models must rely on assumptions.

3.3.1 Milwaukee DEC

DEC is authorized for 184 full-time employees (FTEs), including both operations and administrative staff, part-time telecommunicators are not authorized. In December 2024, DEC employed 104 telecommunicators and 17 dedicated supervisors, reflecting an overall staffing shortage of approximately 35%.[16]

In 2024, DEC hired 52 FTEs and achieved an exceptionally high training success rate, with 50 new hires becoming fully functioning telecommunicators. As a result, approximately half of the telecommunicator workforce consists of newly trained staff. Supervisor retention remains strong at 94% over a two-year period,

[15] National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). (2022). *NFPA 1225: Standard for Emergency Services Communications*. https://www.nfpa.org/product/nfpa-1225-standard/p1225code

[16] It is unclear how many of the authorized FTE are operations versus administrative

while telecommunicator retention is 77%—above commonly cited industry benchmarks of approximately 70%—and appears stable in 2025.

DEC utilizes a hybrid staffing approach, applying a coverage-based model of dispatch positions and a volume-based model for call-taking, which is well suited to a center of its size and workload. The center staffs seven law enforcement dispatch positions plus two relief positions and two fire dispatch positions. Call taking positions fluctuate throughout the day based on demand.

To assess staffing, MCP evaluated utilization true staff availability using average leave time (386 hours per employee annually, based on 2024 data), along with scheduled breaks and meals. DEC provides 90 minutes of break and meal time per shift, which supports employee wellness in a high-volume environment and may help reduce burnout. This structure results in an estimated utilization rate of 79%, including a small buffer for ancillary tasks. MCP typically recommends utilization below 90%, with a target range of 80% to 85% for high-volume centers; DEC's current models align well with these best practices.

Table 3: DEC Telecommunicator True Availability

Calculation of Availability Per Telecommunicator	
2080.00	Total hours for one full time employee
386.00	Average Leave (Total Hours)
1694.00	**Net Work Hours**

DEC's true availability is estimated at 1330.50 hours per employee annually, based on an 8-hour shift, 90 minutes of break time, a two-minute buffer per hour, and average leave usage of 386 hours per person per year.

Statistically, it takes approximately six telecommunicators to staff one position 24/7/365. Based on DEC's data, MCP calculated a requirement of 6.4 FTEs per position, or approximately two FTEs per position per 8-hour shift.

MCP does not typically recommend incorporating turnover into baseline staffing calculations unless an agency experiences consistently high turnover over multiple years. Establishing and working toward an optimal staffing level can, in itself, help improve retention.

Table 4: Number of FTEs to Staff a Single Position at DEC

FTEs for Coverage Positions		
24-hour coverage		
A	1	Total number of console positions to be covered
B	24	Number of hours per day that need to be covered
C	7	Number of days per week that need to be covered
D	52	Number of weeks per year that need to be covered
E	8736	Total Hours needing coverage (A x B x C x D)
Telecommunicator Availability:		
F	1330.50	True Availability per Telecommunicator
FTEs Needed:		
G	6.6	FTE base estimate (FTE) = E / F
H	22.1%	Turnover Rate
I	8.0	FTEs required to accommodate attrition

FTEs for Coverage Positions		
8-hour coverage		
A	1	Total number of console positions to be covered
B	8	Number of hours per day that need to be covered
C	7	Number of days per week that need to be covered
D	52	Number of weeks per year that need to be covered
E	2912	Total Hours needing coverage (A x B x C x D)
Telecommunicator Availability:		
F	1330.50	True Availability per Telecommunicator
FTEs Needed:		
G	2.2	FTE base estimate (FTE) = E / F
H	22.1%	Turnover Rate
I	2.7	FTEs required to accommodate attrition

DEC reported handling 504,978 emergency calls, 235,409 non-emergency calls, 515,237 law enforcement incidents, and 130,046 fire/EMS incidents in 2024.

MCP understands that DEC currently staffs one dispatch position for each of the seven law enforcement districts, plus two relief positions, and two fire dispatch positions. Call-taking positions vary by time of day and operational demand. Two supervisors are assigned per shift but are not included in the operational staffing configuration.

MCP does not recommend changes to the current law enforcement dispatch model. However, an increase to the fire dispatch model is recommended. Based on incident volume and MCP's experience, a single fire/EMS dispatcher can effectively manage (dispatch) multiple simultaneous events when operating from one position. MCP recommends a fire dispatch model consisting of one fire/EMS dispatcher supported by two to three tactical dispatch positions. The fire/EMS dispatcher is responsible for call processing and coordinating response-related radio traffic (e.g., en route, on scene, clear), while dedicated tactical dispatchers manage on-scene and fireground communications. This approach aligns with NFPA 1225 guidance.

Table 5: Incident Volumes (2024)

	Law Enforcement Incidents	Incidents per Hour	Fire/EMS Incidents	Incidents per Hour
Day	110,825	40	32,447	11
Afternoon	220,966	76	53,549	18
Overnight	183,446	63	44,050	15
Total	515,237	59	130,046	15

Call-taking staffing needs were evaluated using hourly emergency and non-emergency call data and processing times provided by DEC, analyzed using the Erlang C queueing model (Appendix B). MCP assessed both peak and low-volume months and recommends a minimum of eight call takers on day and afternoon shifts, with the ability to reduce to six overnight. DEC may also utilize relief positions to supplement call-taking when available and should consider implementing power shifts to address midday demand (e.g., one to two FTEs between 10:00 a.m. and midnight).

When determining optimal call-taking staff, it is important to consider efficiencies gained by a call taker handling both emergency and administrative (10-digit) lines. Because there is no established industry standard for answering administrative lines, these calls can queue longer than emergency lines.

Based on statistical analysis and MCP's experience, DEC should budget for approximately 134 to 142 telecommunicators to support dispatch and call-taking operations. This estimate excludes operations supervisors.

Table 6: DEC Staffing Levels

	Current	Recommended	Number of FTEs (Recommended)	Current Authorized FTE Level
Law Dispatcher	Day shift: 7 Mid-shift: 7 Night shift: 7	Day shift: 7 Mid-shift: 7 Night shift: 7	45	
Fire/EMS Dispatcher	Day shift: 2 Mid-shift: 2 Night shift: 2	Day shift: 3 – 4 Mid-shift: 3 – 4 Night shift: 3 – 4	20 – 26	
Call Takers	Day shift: Varies Mid-shift: Varies Night shift: Varies	Day shift: 9 Mid-shift: 9 Night shift: 6 Power shift: 1 – 2	56 – 58	
Relief Dispatchers	Day shift: 2 Mid-shift: 2 Night shift: 2	Day shift: 2 Mid-shift: 2 Night shift: 2	13	
		Total FTEs	134 – 142 FTE (Telecommunicators only)	183 FTE Telecommunicators

Based on available data and our industry experience, MCP does not identify any necessary changes to DEC's current staffing.

3.3.2 OEM-911

In 2024, OEM-911 budgeted for 27 full-time and 16 part-time telecommunicators; actual staffing was 16 full-time and 13 part-time, excluding working supervisors. OEM-911 also reported hiring nine employees during this period. This reflects a staffing gap of more than 30%. Additionally, a significant portion of staff were in training and not yet able to work independently or cover overtime, increasing the burden on fully trained personnel to manage operations, support training, and fill staffing gaps. As a result, OEM-911 relies heavily on part-time staff to maintain coverage.

OEM-911 provides two ten-minute breaks during an 8- or 10-hour shift, though staff may forgo them. Factoring this, along with an estimated three minutes per hour for ancillary duties or post-call recovery, MCP calculated a utilization rate of 91%, which exceeds the commonly recommended benchmark of 85% for employee wellness and productivity. MCP encourages a staffing model that allows telecommunicators to consistently take breaks away from the console and provides time for recovery and administrative tasks, as reducing utilization can help mitigate burnout and morale challenges.

Staffing concerns were consistently noted during stakeholder engagement. Over a three-year period, authorized full-time positions decreased from 31 in fiscal year (FY) 2022 to 27 in FY 2024, potentially reflecting challenges in filling vacancies. During the same period, authorized part-time positions increased from 14 to 16. Stakeholders reported that OEM-911 frequently loses staff to other PSAPs in the region, where compensation is more competitive. At the time of this assessment, OEM-911's starting pay was approximately $23 per hour, compared to a regional range of $30 to $35 per hour. Combined with an average turnover rate of 27%, these factors contribute to ongoing vacancies, elevated workload, increased overtime, and the extension of shifts from eight to ten hours. Turnover—often driven by compensation—creates a cycle in which staffing shortages persist despite ongoing hiring and training efforts.

Based on MCP's analysis, OEM-011 should budget a minimum of six FTEs to staff one position 24/7 or approximately two FTEs to per position per 8- or 10-hour shift. Table 7 shows the recommended staffing allocation as calculated and the current staffing levels. MCP's recommendations assume that OEM-911 will continue to staff the dispatch positions as designed today—without incident data and response times, we are unable to validate the configuration and workload.

Table 7: Number of FTEs to Staff a Single Position at OEM-911

FTEs for Coverage Positions		
24-hour coverage		
A	1	Total number of console positions to be covered
B	24	Number of hours per day that need to be covered
C	7	Number of days per week that need to be covered
D	52	Number of weeks per year that need to be covered
E	8736	Total Hours needing coverage (A x B x C x D)
Telecommunicator Availability:		
F	1620.34	True Availability per Telecommunicator
FTEs Needed:		
G	5.4	FTE base estimate (FTE) = E / F
H	27.6%	Turnover Rate
I	6.9	FTEs required to accommodate attrition

FTEs for Coverage Positions		
8-hour coverage		
A	1	Total number of console positions to be covered
B	8	Number of hours per day that need to be covered
C	7	Number of days per week that need to be covered
D	52	Number of weeks per year that need to be covered
E	2912	Total Hours needing coverage (A x B x C x D)
Telecommunicator Availability:		
F	1620.34	True Availability per Telecommunicator
FTEs Needed:		
G	1.8	FTE base estimate (FTE) = E / F
H	27.6%	Turnover Rate
I	2.3	FTEs required to accommodate attrition

FTEs for Coverage Positions		
10-hour coverage		
A	1	Total number of console positions to be covered
B	10	Number of hours per day that need to be covered
C	7	Number of days per week that need to be covered
D	52	Number of weeks per year that need to be covered
E	3640	Total Hours needing coverage (A x B x C x D)
Telecommunicator Availability:		
F	1620.34	True Availability per Telecommunicator
FTEs Needed:		
G	2.2	FTE base estimate (FTE) = E / F
H	27.6%	Turnover Rate
I	2.9	FTEs required to accommodate attrition

The recommended number of call takers is based on hourly call volume and processing times provided by OEM-911, analyzed using the Erlang C queueing model (Appendix C). Based on the evaluation of both peak and low-volume months for emergency and administrative calls, MCP recommends increasing call-taking staff to three positions during day and mid-shifts, and two positions on the night shift. This staffing level will support both emergency and non-emergency call demand while aligning with NENA call-answering time standards.

Table 8: OEM-911 Staffing Levels

	Current	Recommended	Number of FTEs (Recommended)	Current Authorized FTE Level
Position 1 (Dispatch)	Day shift: 1 Mid-shift: 1 Night shift: 1	Day shift: 1 Mid-shift: 1 Night shift: 1	6	
Position 2 (Dispatch)	Day shift: 1 Mid-shift: 1 Night shift: 1	Day shift: 1 Mid-shift: 1 Night shift: 1	6	
Position 10 (Dispatch—daytime only)	Day shift: 1 Mid-shift: 1 Night shift: 0	Day shift: 1 Mid-shift: 1 Night shift: 0	4	
Position 3 (Dispatch-Teletype)	Day shift: 1 Mid-shift: 1 Night shift: 0	Day shift: 1 Mid-shift: 1 Night shift: 0	4	
Position 9 (Administrative Call Taker, Text-to-911)	Day shift: 1 Mid-shift: 1 Night shift: 1	Day shift: 1 Mid-shift: 1 Night shift: 1	6	
Position 4 (911 Call Taker)	Day shift: 1 Mid-shift: 1 Night shift: 1	Day shift: 1 Mid-shift: 1 Night shift: 1	6	
Call Taker (new recommended position)		Day shift: 1 Mid-shift: 1 Night shift: 0	4	
		Total FTEs	36 (recommended)	27 FTE 16 PT (current)

The previous table excludes supervisor coverage, as staffing dedicated supervisory positions would require additional FTEs beyond the recommendations shown. OEM-911 supervisors are currently assigned to operational positions. While transitioning supervisors out of the operational configuration could provide benefits—such as increased oversight, improved decision-making capacity, and dedicated time for administrative functions)—MCP recognizes the fiscal constraints associated with recommending staffing levels approximately 30% above current authorized levels.

This analysis pertains to telecommunicator staffing only. Assessing the full workload of CDOs is more complex, as their activities are not captured in systems as consistently as telecommunicator tasks. However, the number of FTEs required to staff a position is not role-specific and can be applied to CDO staffing. To maintain two CDOs on duty 24/7/365, OEM-911 would require a minimum of 12 FTEs, with slight variations depending on leave usage.

3.3.3 Regional Insights

NFPA 1225 establishes that there shall be a minimum of two qualified telecommunicators on duty and present in the communications center at all times.[17] It appears that all PSAPs meet this standard.

Milwaukee County's population declined by 4% from 2014 and 2023.[18] Long-term projections indicate a continuation of stability or mild decline. While population is not a direct predictor of 911 call volume, PSAPs in the region are unlikely to face staffing pressures driven by population growth in the near term—a consideration that impacts staffing, service provision and budget planning in higher-growth regions where demand-driven staffing increases are a more immediate concern

Due to the lack of data from non-participating PSAPs, MCP cannot offer an analysis of staffing levels throughout the county. Appendix D depicts staffing and workload information gathered through our research[19] and provides a rough estimation of the number of calls or incidents handled per hour. This estimate assumes that calls and incidents are dispersed evenly throughout the day, which is neither realistic nor accurate in a 911 environment. The table also shows the number of positions (consoles) each PSAP has, which does not indicate the number of positions the PSAP staffs, though the general rule of thumb is that it takes six FTEs to cover one position 24/7/365.

[17] National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). (2022). *NFPA 1225: Standard for Emergency Services Communications*. https://www.nfpa.org/product/nfpa-1225-standard/p1225code
[18] https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-counties-total.html
[19] Information listed for PSAPs marked with an asterisk were gathered through data or listening sessions, or verified by the PSAP via email.

3.4 Training, Quality Assurance, and Performance Management

Key Findings

- OEM-911 operates an APCO certified training program, a distinction held by fewer than 100 public safety communications centers nationally.
- Milwaukee DEC has a large training and QA complement with job descriptions, expectations, and other documentation that supports the training environment.
- All PSAPs in the county comply with State mandates that telecommunicators are CPR-certified and use an evidence-based protocol to provide CPR instructions or to transfer callers to another party to administer CPR.

PSAP training and best practices may look different for individual agencies depending on their size and operations. In all PSAPs, it is important to provide new hires with the information, tools, and resources that will allow them to be successful in their new position. Basic elements should include learning materials that provide PSAP- and telecommunicator-specific information in a standard manner so that all trainees receive consistent information. Basic learning materials should also include documentation that provides clear expectations; a fair, objective assessment of the trainee's performance by a certified trainer; and regular check-ins to connect with the trainee's needs and progress. These elements create a foundation for continued learning after release and help create a culture where employees want to work. Training should extend beyond initial release. Many certification programs require continuing education, and providing ongoing learning opportunities helps keep staff engaged and motivated. PSAPs can also leverage training opportunities through partner agencies, using field experience to further enhance communications center knowledge.

Performance management is "an ongoing, continuous process of communicating and clarifying job responsibilities, priorities, performance expectations, and development planning that optimize an individual's performance and aligns with organizational strategic goals."[20] As described, this process should encompass training and educational opportunities as well as QA and improvement initiatives that help staff develop and grow at each level of their career.

Standardized training and processes let individuals know what to expect when calling 911, whether they are calling from Milwaukee or Whitefish Bay. Consistency and education promote trust and support from both the community and field responders. Minimum training requirements for a PSAP are defined in several national standards, such as the *APCO Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators*.

3.4.1 Milwaukee DEC

Training

DEC's training program has a solid foundation built from police and fire training programs that existed prior to the February 2025 restructuring. The standardized, phased training program begins with a 10-week classroom phase that includes UCT training (which was not present before the merger) and EMD certification. Following the classroom phase, trainees complete six weeks of on-the-job training (OJT) under CTO oversight. Trainees

[20] University of Kansas Human Resources. What is Performance Management? https://humanresources.ku.edu/performance-management#:~:text=What%20is%20Performance%20Management%3F,aligns%20with%20organizational%20strategic%20goals

then work as call takers for at least one year before seeking promotion to a dispatcher; if promotion is granted, the telecommunicator begins OJT dispatcher training in their chosen discipline. Trainees must meet benchmarks and pass written and practical skills assessments throughout each phase. Fire and police call taking do not include certifications and instead rely on internally developed guides.

DEC is in the process of modernizing the fire training curriculum to align it with current training standards and with the structured and defined processes seen in law enforcement. Staff noted that the APCO Public Safety Telecommunicator 40-hour class should be required within an employee's first year to address this gap. DEC reported a trainee success rate exceeding 90%.

The training team consists of five staff—a training manager and training supervisor who hold APCO training and instructor certifications, along with temporary training leads who instruct the classroom phase. A larger number of CTOs provide OJT on the operations floor. While the manager and supervisor positions have job descriptions that establish qualifications and expectations, the training leads and OJT trainers operate under written expectations without formal job descriptions or defined knowledge, skills, and abilities to guide selection. The administrative training team selects individuals for these roles based on interest, skills, and supervisor recommendations, and provides in-house training aligned with APCO trainer standards; however, formal APCO CTO certification is not required. MCP recommends that all personnel involved in training and training documentation obtain formal certification to align with industry standards and best practices.

Formal certification supports consistent training delivery and documentation standards as well as requirements for accreditation, if DEC pursues it. CTO certifications also involve recertification requirements that refresh skills and maintain professional development—a commitment to learning and growth that models these values to trainees and the organization. DEC should continue developing job descriptions and expectations and establish a policy for trainer selection that formalizes the processes already in place for CTO selection, trainee phase progression, and dispatch training completion or reassignment to the call taker position.

Beyond job descriptions and expectations, DEC maintains training documentation that supports the training environment, including checklists, knowledge checks, a training manual, and training policies. These documents follow national training standards; classroom training uses written tests with benchmarks, practical exercises, and checklists. Daily observation reports (DORs) are used throughout training and are coupled with standard evaluation guidelines; the training manager tracks DORs and monitors compliance with DEC's documentation expectations. DEC is actively updating the training manual using NENA and APCO standards, which is appropriate for a newly restructured agency, incorporating elements from previously independent police and fire training processes alongside new competencies like UCT. This update is important for DEC's transition and cross-training efforts for dispatchers.

Development of the training manual and other training documents will support cross-training and instill DEC's performance expectations as tenured staff expand their roles. However, staff reported that a perceived division between fire and police dispatchers persists, with gaps in the training standards and processes that originated from the separate MPD and MFD operations. Staff noted differences in training approaches across disciplines. Fire dispatch training was described as more informal, with knowledge often shared verbally and supported by less standardized documentation, while police dispatch training was viewed as more structured and process driven. These differences are also reflected in how updates are communicated, with discipline-specific information primarily shared within respective groups.

MCP recommends that DEC leadership and administrators take steps to ensure updates are consistently shared across all staff and create opportunities for greater collaboration between fire- and police-focused dispatchers. Establishing a sit-along program would support knowledge sharing, reinforce cross-training efforts, and help build relationships and camaraderie. Over time, these efforts can help reduce silos and foster a more unified DEC identity.

Continuing education is beginning to take shape in the restructured environment. DEC reported a desire for continuing education to be both reactive and proactive, with a set cadence of topics that allow the department to stay current with evolving practices and prevent issues before they occur. This scheduled continuing education should include the currently required 24 hours for EMD as well as other monthly training or other training as assigned. Reactive continuing education will depend on the QA program and the existing relationship between QA and training administration. DEC demonstrates a progressive approach by approving industry certifications such as APCO's Registered Public-Safety Leader (RPL) and funding attendance at outside training programs. DEC also supports continuing education through a department newsletter, including addressing areas where staff struggle; weekly EMD cards with incentives; a $1,500 benefit for tuition reimbursement beyond DEC professional development; and an open stance toward training opportunities. These elements demonstrate DEC's commitment to training and building upon the platforms already in place.

Soft-skills training, such as change management, liability, difficult conversations, culture, and continuing leadership development, may be especially beneficial to DEC as it continues to mature in its new form. These additions make for a more adaptable workforce and can help prepare staff for future promotional opportunities.

Quality Assurance

DEC's QA program is transitioning from police- and fire-specific review processes that existed before the integration and had contracted EMD review through Priority Dispatch Corporation's Quality Performance Review Program (QPR). DEC is considering procuring an artificial intelligence (AI) QA solution to support this work. MCP understands that DEC's QA is focused on medical and police calls primarily, as staff reported that the fire standards and performance expectations are not formalized in a manner that creates a baseline for QA reviews and accountability.

DEC's dedicated QA team includes a manager, a supervisor, and three QA leads. An updated QA policy is thorough and covers programmatic elements including the program purpose and objectives, types of reviews, how they are conducted and scored, and what actions might be taken as a result. The policy speaks to strengths-based feedback, recommending that quarterly reviews focus on an employee's success when performance is generally positive—an approach that reflects a transformation of the culture regarding QA, which can often be seen as a corrective process instead of an affirming process.

DEC's current processes mirror the industry trend toward comprehensive QA that expands the focus from call-taking only to include radio and CAD performance; this is defined in DEC policy. One hour of radio traffic is reviewed monthly for each dispatch employee while QPR reviews approximately 47 medical calls per week. Trainees begin receiving QA reviews during OJT. Early QA conducted in training mitigates the creation of bad habits and reinforces the training environment. Targeted QA is conducted for critical or major incidents.

Current processes do not meet the 2% review threshold found in professional standards and best practices. Implementation of the QPR and possible procurement of AI-assisted QA will help to increase the percentage of reviewed calls to the recommended 2% standard and help expedite communication of QA reviews in a timely and efficient manner.

DEC's complaint review process is clearly documented in policy and addresses complaints that originate from various entities, including the FPC, outside agencies, partner agencies (MFD/MPD), City of Milwaukee elected officials, and individuals. The policy establishes procedures for complaint reviews initiated on both formal and informal bases, specifies that applicable evidence will be reviewed (including telephone calls, radio traffic, CAD chronology, and related documentation), and requires that reviews be documented via department memorandum with findings submitted to the director or deputy director. Currently, DEC does not track the number of complaints received or the outcome categorization of those complaints (performance-related, technology-related, policy failure-related, or lack of complainant knowledge). Implementing complaint tracking

and outcome categorization would support continuous improvement efforts and help identify gaps in processes, training, or policy that may be creating concerns from the field.

DEC's awards program strengthens the QA process and recognizes achievements and dedication. The program includes monthly, quarterly, and annual recognition. A review panel comprised of representatives from all shifts and disciplines reviews nominations and decides if the award is warranted; the management team, deputy director, and director may be involved depending on the award. Awards include:

- *Call Taker and Dispatcher of the Month*
- *Call Taker and Dispatcher of the Year*
- *CPR Save Award*
- *Service Spotlight Award*
- *Stork Award*
- *Meritorious Service Award*
- *Supervisor of the Year Award*
- *Incident of the Year Group Award*
- *Trainer of the Year Award*
- *Director's Award for Distinguished Service*

MCP learned that the training and QA teams work closely together. The teams held individual meetings together with each fire dispatcher to discuss the integration process with police dispatch to dispel misinformation and help with unease about the future. MCP heard that the fire dispatchers, due to a lack of written policies and procedures, had a mentality of "that's the way we've always done it" and were struggling with the regionalization. The consolidation experience highlighted gaps in change management and soft skills support during organizational transitions. MCP recommends adding change management and soft skills development to DEC's continuing education process. NENA, APCO, and other organizations offer classes in these areas that address communication, leadership during transitions, and cultural integration—areas that would support staff through future organizational changes and strengthen DECs ability to respond to evolving operational needs.

3.4.2 OEM-911

Training

OEM-911 maintains an APCO certified training program—Agency Training Program Accreditation (ATPA)—a distinction held by fewer than 100 PSAPs nationally. The program consists of a four-week classroom phase followed by four to six weeks of OJT per phase (total of seven months for all phases), with trainees completing APCO's Public Safety Telecommunicator class near the end of their training. This certification reflects OEM-911's commitment to meeting American National Standards (ANS) and demonstrates that its curriculum, training materials, and supporting documentation align with APCO requirements. OEM-911 maintains a high trainee success rate, averaging 85% between 2022 and 2024.

OEM-911’s staff include a training coordinator, who manages and oversees the program, and 911 telecommunicators who receive formal APCO CTO training after their first year of employment. This universal

CTO training means that every telecommunicator who may deliver training has received instruction in learning styles, documentation, communication, and legally defensible feedback—creating a foundation for consistent training delivery across the organization. While this practice establishes a baseline competency, it also means that trainer selection is not voluntary; all staff who meet the one-year threshold become trainers. OEM-911 strives to pair trainees with seasoned trainers and only assigns a new CTO to a trainee when staffing levels require. Focused assignment helps to mitigate the risk of trainees being assigned CTOs who lack the aptitude or disposition for effective training, though it does not address the broader concern that a universal CTO requirement does not account for broad suitability or interest in the training role. MCP recommends identifying individuals based on interest and a combination of dispatch skills and interpersonal strengths, as not all employees may have the personality or skillset suited to training roles. That said, the universal CTO training requirement creates organizational consistency in how all trainers utilize training documentation and assessment tools, and how they provide feedback grounded in training standards.

Training documentation is robust and the consistent use of these tools across all training staff provides legally defensible documentation that supports its ATPA certification. OEM-911 training documentation includes:

- DORs and standard evaluation guidelines built from the APCO model
- A trainee tracking sheet to identify day-to-day progression
- Clearly defined benchmarks for various training phases with quantifiable expectations such as the degree of independence expected or success rate thresholds
- A trainee evaluation form that allows trainees to assess their own performance, supporting meaningful conversations between trainers and trainees about what success looks like
- A training curriculum document that outlines all training topics and expectations across the full program on a weekly basis
- The Probationary Employee Notification document, which establishes trainee expectations and accountability

CDOs training occurs entirely on-the-job and is overseen by the training coordinator and the CDO supervisor; CDOs must hold an EMT certification upon hire. CDO training documentation includes clearly defined tasks, duties, and responsibilities that provide trainees with the information needed to understand the position. Ongoing training is handled by the EMS division, as CDOs receive the same training as field paramedics.

All OEM-911 staff receive continuing education through a third-party online solution, APCO continuing dispatch education, attendance at outside training events, and applied suicide intervention skills training.

Quality Assurance

OEM-911's approach to QA was developed using the APCO/NENA standard coupled with traditional EMS continuous quality improvement (CQI) models. While typical 911 QA is designed to evaluate an individual's performance against established protocols, EMS CQI is a comprehensive review process that looks at the performance of the full system and its stakeholders; it relies on cross-functional teams working toward patient-centered outcomes. To this end, OEM-911's QA looks at the call taker's individual performance measured against EMD call-taking standards, and law enforcement call processing is measured against the guidelines provided in the APCO/NENA standard. This QA approach also looks at all systematic elements including CDO performance and information as well as field outcomes to help make holistic improvements. MCP expects that the QA process for fire calls will be similar to EMD, once EFD is implemented.

QA is administered by a team of four individuals who are part of the OEM EMS Division and not directly within the 911 chain of command. The team includes individuals with dispatch and EMS field experience with a mix of

911-focused QA experience; one individual is responsible for the 911 QA workload, while the others perform the EMS CQI activities. Each telecommunicator receives three to four non-EMS call reviews per month; however, 100% of cardiac-related calls (arrests, stroke, STEMI) are reviewed to meet guidelines from the American Heart Association (AHA) high-performance T-CPR program, and four to six calls per month are reviewed for each of the EMS partners as part of the CQI focus. Staff expressed interest in reviewing 100% of the trauma calls. 911 QA programmatic elements are documented in a 2024 updated policy memo including selection standards and review procedures (timeline expectations, dispute process, and score tracking). MCP understands that OEM's QA program has earned the Gold Standard from the AHA's Mission: Lifeline for both STEMI and stroke calls—evidence of strong CQI processes and outcomes on the EMS side that can be tailored for 911.

OEM QA holds face-to-face meetings with staff monthly. To meet best practices, such as those recommended by Priority Dispatch Systems and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), OEM-911 should consider aligning these meetings with QA score timelines—for example, calls with extremely high or extremely low scores should be discussed with the employee within 48 hours, while routine calls with acceptable performance may be addressed less frequently. MCP recommends the monthly meetings focus on trends and serve as a space for open communication between the reviewer and the employee being reviewed, helping develop shared understanding of the system, expectations, and contextual factors that may impact performance.

Complaints are tracked by the EMS Division and may originate from agency requests, unmet KPIs during system review, or outside agency complaint investigations. Complaints and targeted review requests are sent to the CQI committee, a QA team member, or other designated source. The source of the issue, complainant, and reason for the issue are tracked, and complaints are responded to within 48 hours. Information is contained in a database accessible to multiple stakeholder groups including 911, the medical director, hospitals, and field responders. This data collection and accessibility go beyond typical QA systems, where data is often siloed within the PSAP. Transparency and cross-functional access support the system-level improvement focus inherent in the CQI model. Other statistical reports are provided to 911 employees, supervisors, and the director, and discussed in monthly CQI meetings with broad stakeholders.

3.4.3 Regional Insights

The Wisconsin Department of Justice requires training on the Transaction Information Management of Enforcement (TIME) system for PSAPs that perform law enforcement functions. Beginning May 2021, CPR training is required by Wisconsin State Statute § 256.35 and directs all Wisconsin PSAPs to ensure their dispatchers are CPR-certified and use an evidence-based protocol to provide CPR instructions or transfer callers to another party to administer CPR; the "other party" must also comply with training and education requirements for CPR and protocol use. This statute also directs all PSAPs to conduct ongoing QA on all CPR calls. PSAPs that receive state grant funding may also be required to meet additional training and certification requirements related to EMD, though MCP was unable to verify if these differ from the May 2021 CPR mandates. To maintain eligibility, grant-funded PSAPS must also establish and implement a basic training program that provides at least 40 hours of training to a telecommunicator by utilizing a commercially available or a self-developed training program. Telecommunicators are prohibited from handling emergency calls without supervision prior to completing this training. Training topics must include:

- Service area geography, population, and demographic served
- Incident Command System (ICS), National Incident Management System (NIMS), interoperable communications plans, and emergency operations plans.
- Procedures for accurately processing and relaying caller information in accordance with established PSAP procedures

- Obtaining complete caller information, call classification and prioritization, and identifying responder and/or citizen safety concerns
- Emergency services terminology
- Clear communication, in written and oral form related to public requests for emergency assistance
- Emergency alerting procedures
- Technology, computer applications, databases, and systems used in daily operations

MCP found the following information about the non-participating PSAPs' training through publicly available information:

- Oak Creek training is 90 days of OJT.[21]
- Wauwatosa
  - 4- to 6-month training duration.[22]
  - Dedicated training funds from the police department budget and grant funding support offsite and virtual training opportunities.
  - In 2024, telecommunicators attended leadership, mental wellness, peer support, crisis intervention, and crisis negotiation training, and were included in scenario-based exercises with field units.[23]
- The Greendale Communications Bureau received 129 hours of training in areas such as crisis management, emergency response, crisis intervention, and attendance at their CAD vendor's users conference.[24]
- Franklin communications personnel received 209 hours of continuing education.[25]
- Cudahy
  - Training is at least 12 weeks of OJT.[26]
  - Training is funded through the police department budget.[27]
- The UWM dispatch center participates in cross-training exercises with other agencies (e.g. active shooter, mass casualty incidents) and attends training classes with other agencies to get differing perspectives.
- BCC (Milwaukee County designated PSAP, only grant-funded and grant-eligible PSAP)
  - ATPA, demonstrating alignment with 911 standards and best practices.[28,29]

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[21] Oak Creek Police Department 2024 Annual Report
[22] Wauwatosa Police Department 2024 Annual Report
[23] Wauwatosa Police Department 2024 Annual Report
[24] Village of Greendale Police Department 2024 Annual Report
[25] Franklin Police Department 2024 Annual Report
[26] Cudahy Police Department 2024 Annual Report
[27] Ibid.
[28] Bayside-Cudahy PSAP Financial Proposal
[29] Bayside Communications Center Receives APCO Agency Training Program Certification - APCO International

- Uses IAED EMD protocols (as required by State statue for grant-funding).
- Reported a 2025 goal to serve as a regional training hub for all Milwaukee County PSAPs and provide professional certifications to the entire region.

Training processes vary from PSAP to PSAP within the county, from certified training programs[30] with a mix of classroom and OJT to PSAPs with OJT only. Three PSAPs in the county are accredited (or planning to be), offering a recognized model for others as they look to develop or improve their own programs. Accredited training programs benefit communities by promoting consistent, professional call handling, improving dispatcher decision-making during critical incidents, reinforcing adherence to best practices, and reducing liability while improving outcomes for callers and responders.

MCP recommends expanding shared training opportunities so all PSAPs have access to standardized resources that improve alignment across the county. This approach aligns with BCC's 2025 goal of using PSAP grant funding to benefit all agencies and would help establish a consistent baseline of knowledge for new telecommunicators, including call-taking and dispatch fundamentals and countywide geographic awareness.

Enhanced training and knowledge sharing can also strengthen interagency relationships and service delivery. Feedback from listening sessions indicated that differences in procedures and limited cross-jurisdictional familiarity can create operational challenges. Joint training initiatives can help address these gaps by improving understanding of systems, workflows, and regional coordination.

MCP also recommends developing joint policies and procedures to support consistency across agencies and reinforce shared operational standards. Additional regional training efforts—such as a collaborative training academy leveraging instructors from multiple PSAPs—could further enhance local knowledge, resource awareness, and interagency coordination.

QA information for non-participating PSAPs was not publicly available; however, MCP assumes that PSAPs using formal protocol systems, such as from the IAED, follow associated QA processes.

[30] APCO International Project 33 Training Program Certification » Home

3.5 Leadership and Planning

Key Findings

- As a newly formed entity, core planning elements at Milwaukee DEC are in early phases of development and initiation.
- Grant funding is available only to BCC, making it responsible for leading initiatives that support the State's goals for regional efficiency.
- Relationships among some PSAP leadership groups present challenges to collaboratively manage change and advancing a regional public safety system.

An organization's leadership is essential to fulfilling its mission, setting strategic goals, and inspiring individuals and stakeholders to contribute effectively. Effective leadership drives continuous improvement and advances PSAP initiatives and performance. In this context, leadership is less about style and more about the capacity to influence within political spheres, build strong relationships, and strategically assemble and engage a team to maximize performance and impact.

Planning is a critical function of organizational leadership, enabling leaders to set clear goals and timelines, align teams, track progress, and prepare for both expected and unforeseen events without disrupting the mission. While distinct from planning, change management is closely related and provides a structured approach to communication and transition, helping organizations implement planned initiatives.

Leadership:

- Drives continuous improvement
- Advances initiatives and performance
- Builds strong relationships
- Influences decision-makers
- Sets clear goals and timelines
- Plans for and communicates change

3.5.1 Milwaukee DEC

Milwaukee DEC has established a strong leadership team to guide its transition to a combined, independent communications center. The executive team brings both national experience and deep institutional knowledge of the City and region, supported by long-standing professional relationships at the local and national levels. This combination positions leadership to effectively navigate the political landscape while aligning operations with industry best practices. MCP noted strong reported support from the FPC and Common Council, which is critical as DEC continues to build its organizational foundation and strengthen external partnerships.

DEC has also been intentional in engaging external stakeholders and the public throughout its transition to build relationships and strengthen its identity. The center promotes transparency through tours for City leaders and community members and encourages staff participation in outreach events to increase awareness of emergency communications. Internally, DEC is investing in leadership development and support, resulting in initiatives such as the policy review committee. Efforts like the annual awards ceremony further reinforce staff recognition and help align organizational values with performance.

As a newly formed entity, key planning elements—including continuity of operations, strategic planning, and succession planning—are still in early stages. The leadership team faces the complex task of advancing operational and cultural changes, strengthening intergovernmental relationships, and continuing to develop policies and support structures aligned with the new organizational vision. Staff noted some misalignment between documented policies and day-to-day practices, indicating a need for greater clarity and consistency. Continued focus on strategic planning and participatory management can help address these gaps, improve alignment, and strengthen organizational cohesion.

Change management is especially important during this transition. The director has taken a measured, strategic approach to implementing changes, recognizing the importance of pacing initiatives to avoid overwhelming the organization. Feedback from staff suggests that this iterative approach is appropriate, as some leaders continue to adapt to ongoing changes.

While DEC does not have a formally documented change management plan, MCP observed a clear awareness of key change principles and efforts to integrate them into operations. Regular meetings—monthly cabinet meetings with executive leadership and separate meetings for middle management—provide structured opportunities for communication, alignment, and discussion of both successes and challenges.

Further alignment at the executive level around the purpose and interconnectedness of meetings and internal committees could strengthen organizational cohesion. Clearly communicating how these efforts support broader goals may enhance staff understanding and reinforce a systems-based, mission-driven culture as the organization continues to mature.

Staff expressed appreciation for inclusive forums and opportunities for input; however, some noted that meetings do not always result in actionable outcomes and that feedback is not consistently reflected in decisions. While participatory leadership does not require all input to be adopted, increasing transparency around decision-making processes may strengthen trust and understanding. Providing greater insight into how decisions are made can reinforce confidence that input is considered thoughtfully and support leadership development across the organization.

DEC is well funded but faces structural constraints that limit how effectively resources can be translated into operational capability. While funding is available, the ability to deploy it is hindered by approval processes for internal reallocation and staffing adjustments, as well as complex purchasing and contract amendment procedures that slow responsiveness to operational needs.

Strategic investments in supervisor and manager development ($50,000 to $60,000) and annual training ($1,500 per employee) help to address identified skill gaps; however, broader priorities remain constrained by these administrative barriers. As a result, leadership's ability to plan for and meet current and future needs is limited not by funding availability, but by the processes required to access and deploy those resources.

Streamlining these processes would enhance leadership's ability to more effectively translate available funding into operational capability.

3.5.2 OEM-911

OEM-911's leadership and planning efforts are shaped by County structures and supplemented by the 911 director's targeted initiatives to tailor messaging and priorities for the communications center. MCP heard that County processes are often relationship-driven rather than system-driven, meaning the ability to advance initiatives can depend on established relationships and familiarity with organizational dynamics.

OEM-911 leadership has demonstrated a strong commitment to building professional relationships both within the County and with external partners; however, challenges remain. Stakeholders noted that the civilianization of the 911 function and its separation from MCSO have affected communication and coordination, contributing to a perceived disconnect between field expectations and the information available to telecommunicators. These dynamics appear influenced, in part, by longstanding relationship challenges.

Feedback from listening sessions suggests that strengthening alignment between dispatch and field personnel remains an opportunity. While engagement varied, there is a need to reinforce a shared understanding of the role of 911 within the broader public safety system. County leadership has taken steps to address this through

increased meeting cadence and new connection points aimed at improving communication, mutual understanding, and awareness of differing procedures and policies.

OEM-911 and County leadership are also working to strengthen relationships across public safety agencies. Informal engagement efforts, such as regular meetings and monthly peer gatherings among PSAP representatives, have created opportunities for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and joint problem-solving. These efforts have shown progress in shifting interactions toward a more collaborative and solution-oriented approach. MCP recognizes the value of these initiatives in addressing longstanding barriers and building trust over time.

Despite these efforts, historical context continues to influence OEM-911's ability to navigate the broader political and operational landscape, particularly when initiatives require coordination with external agencies. Strong interagency relationships remain critical to advancing countywide efforts, including the administration and support of systems such as the Wisconsin Public Safety Network (WiPSN), which provides interoperable communications for public safety agencies across the region.

OEM leadership's ability to execute countywide initiatives that support strategic goals and overall public safety is influenced by external relationships. MCP recommends continuing both formal and informal efforts to strengthen these relationships and enhance leadership influence, aligning with County priorities such as MCSO's mission to "enhance the relationship between community and law enforcement partners"[31] and OEM's goal to "increase partnerships"[32].

Internally, OEM and 911 leaders are viewed as positive and participatory, with several notable accomplishments, including:

- Construction of a new facility, anticipated for completion in Q1 2026
- Onboarding of Airport Fire Department dispatch services
- Initiation of a countywide feasibility study to assess service efficiency

MCP also heard that progress has been made in increasing County leadership's understanding and support of 911 operations, which had previously been limited when the division was within MCSO. Most staff described leadership as inclusive and participatory, though perceptions vary by shift.

MCP understands that 911 leadership has developed a mission and vision and recognizes this as an important step. To build on this effort, MCP recommends engaging staff in refining the mission, vision, and values. Staff indicated the current mission is lengthy and difficult to recall; a collaborative process to streamline it and define shared values could strengthen buy-in and reinforce participatory management. This effort could also inform the development of a division-level strategic plan to complement the County's broader strategic plan and better connect day-to-day actions with long-term goals.

Formalizing OEM's change management process should be a priority. The pace and volume of ongoing initiatives require a structured approach to support staff—particularly those who may be more hesitant to adapt to change. While staff reported that leadership communicates openly and transparently, an effective change management framework should clearly articulate the purpose of each change, provide targeted leadership support, and include a defined roadmap with communication strategies, training, timelines, and tools to support implementation. Incorporating feedback mechanisms is also critical to identify gaps and measure progress.

[31] Milwaukee County 2026 Adopted Operating Budget
[32] Office of Emergency Management 2023-2027 Strategic Plan

MCP observed that many leadership initiatives are driven by individual efforts rather than embedded organizational structures. Staff noted that professional development opportunities often depend on available personnel, individual initiative, and leadership perspective. For example, the 911 director described a leadership-focused development approach that emphasizes critical thinking and adaptability over strictly technical skills. MCP supports continuing this approach, as it can have a meaningful impact on organizational culture. In an environment where compensation may be less competitive, fostering strong leadership development and intrinsic engagement can be especially valuable.

OEM-911 maintains a basic continuity of operations (COOP) plan, and the transition to a new facility will allow the current center to serve as a backup site. MCP recommends reviewing and updating the COOP and disaster recovery (DR) plans to ensure alignment with the current operating environment and industry best practices, such as those outlined in NENA-INF-017.3-2018[33], *NENA Communications Center/PSAP Disaster and Contingency Plans Model Recommendation*. MCP also understands that coordination with other PSAPs on COOP planning and testing is limited; strengthening this collaboration would enhance overall system resilience and support regional public safety operations.

The County maintains a structured financial planning process that includes OEM and a dedicated subset for 911, outlining goals and initiatives for the upcoming fiscal year. While OEM reports some limitations in influencing its budget due to competing County priorities, the division generally receives funding to support key initiatives.

3.5.3 Regional Insights

Leadership and planning capacity across the PSAPs is difficult to fully assess without direct engagement. As such, MCP's analysis is informed in part by the level of participation in this study. Varying levels of engagement reflect a complex political landscape, where the ability and willingness to build relationships and navigate interagency dynamics plays a key role in advancing planning efforts.

MCP understands that several non-participating PSAPs have established strong regional relationships, as evidenced by past and planned PSAP consolidations. However, without direct input, MCP cannot fully evaluate these agencies' approaches to leadership, planning, or relationship-building within their respective jurisdictions.

Interagency relationships at both the public safety and municipal leadership levels can influence the ability to coordinate effectively, particularly during large-scale or multi-jurisdictional events. Legislative changes, including 2019 Wisconsin Act 26, introduced new dynamics through the single PSAP designation process, which has contributed to increased competition among agencies. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted longstanding forums for collaboration.

Historically, PSAP leadership participated in regular interagency meetings that supported relationship-building and coordination. More recently, informal monthly gatherings among PSAP leaders have reemerged, providing opportunities for dialogue, knowledge sharing, and peer connection. Participants have noted the value of these interactions, particularly given limited prior familiarity despite overlapping operations and shared responsibilities.

[33] https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.nena.org/resource/resmgr/standards/nena-inf-017.3-2018_disaster.pdf

MCP recognizes and commends these efforts and recommends formalizing them into a countywide PSAP Directors Meeting. Expanding participation to include all PSAP leadership would further strengthen relationships, support information sharing, and promote collaboration on regional initiatives.

Funding for PSAPs within the County is multi-layered, with agencies receiving support from their municipalities and, in some cases, additional grant funding. Certain initiatives—such as the Wisconsin Interoperable System for Communications (WISCOM) and the Organization of Affiliated Secure Interoperable RF Subsystems (OASIS) radio projects—are funded at the state or County level, while training grants are allocated only to the designated primary PSAP under Wisconsin Act 26. This designation, typically assigned to the highest-volume PSAP, was determined through an alternative process in Milwaukee County, resulting in BCC serving as the primary PSAP.

As the designated primary PSAP, BCC has direct access to state grant funding, which influences how funds are distributed across the county. In 2024, BCC received more than $600,000 in grant funding and engaged with other PSAPs to identify opportunities for collaboration. However, because most 911 funding decisions occur at the municipal level, PSAP leadership may have limited influence over broader funding priorities. Opportunities exist to strengthen coordination through shared investments, such as joint technology purchases or collaborative COOP and DR planning, which can improve efficiency and support economies of scale.

MCP identified a range of strategic planning practices across the county, from formal plans to more informal goal setting within annual reports. While municipalities and field responder agencies generally maintain formal strategic plans, most PSAPs do not have standalone plans and instead align with their parent agency or municipal strategy. For example, BCC aligns its goals with City priorities and its Act 26 role, emphasizing collaboration, training, and technology improvements.

The absence of dedicated strategic plans for many PSAPs represents a gap in long-term planning and coordination across the county's 911 ecosystem. At the same time, it presents an opportunity for agencies to collaboratively develop forward-looking strategies that enhance systemwide resilience and public safety outcomes.

Robust change management is critical to advancing public safety. While MCP could not directly assess internal processes at non-participating PSAPs, the integration of systems such as WISCOM and OASIS reflects a broader shift from standalone operations to interconnected, regional service delivery. As public safety evolves toward greater data sharing and coordinated workflows, structured change management helps ensure these transitions improve outcomes rather than create operational friction. Prioritizing integrated change strategies can support staff, align organizational cultures, and strengthen long-term accountability across agencies.

Continuity of operations planning across Milwaukee County varies. A 2023 Cudahy presentation indicated that Oak Creek, St. Francis, and Greenfield utilized BCC as a backup center (with Oak Creek and St. Francis having since consolidated). COOP and DR plans for other PSAPs are less clear. MCP also learned of a recent radio system disruption that highlighted gaps in redundancy, as agencies without backup routers temporarily lost radio functionality.

Additional indicators—such as potential consolidations driven by funding constraints—suggest broader sustainability challenges across some PSAPs. These factors underscore the importance of coordinated, countywide contingency planning. MCP recommends developing a 911-specific COOP strategy that includes all PSAPs, leverages shared infrastructure, and explores cost-sharing opportunities to ensure continuity of critical systems and services across the county.

3.6 Technology and Systems in Use

Key Findings

- A countywide CAD system would streamline information sharing, decrease response times, and reduce manual workload on telecommunicators across the county.
- When all PSAPs connect to the statewide ESInet, transfers between PSAPs will be simplified and location accuracy will be improved.
- Opportunities to maximize economies of scale to save money and improve services exist across mission-critical technology platforms.

The technology used by a PSAP—and by extension, all public safety—is a vital backbone to organizational efficiency. Public safety dispatch operations are heavily dependent on IT infrastructure, computer systems, associated infrastructure/networks, and multiple applications. Mission-critical systems include 911 call-handling equipment (CHE), CAD, RMS, mobile data, radio dispatch consoles, GIS databases, mapping, and data/voice logging recorders. This IT infrastructure is critical to the daily public safety mission and provides interoperability with other PSAPs and field responders. MCP's technology assessment aims to understand if Milwaukee County PSAPs use technologies that contribute to operational efficiency, do not inhibit productivity in the PSAP or field, and are kept current. Well-defined SLAs support vendor responsiveness and improve planning, procurement, and implementation practices to meet both internal and collaborative operational needs. Given the complexity of public safety systems—spanning state-provided services, county infrastructure, and locally procured systems—strong IT support is essential. This includes expertise in public safety systems, data governance, and system management, as well as the capacity to provide reliable 24/7 support to maintain operational readiness.

The following information examines technology systems for the region; information for non-participating PSAPs cannot be verified. As UWM is addressed separately in Section 4, the statements within this section are not applicable.

3.6.1 Computer-Aided Dispatch Systems

Two CAD systems are in use across the county: the City operates an on-premises Hexagon I/CAD system (version 9.4), while other PSAPs use ProPhoenix CAD (OEM-911 version 2024). Although most agencies use ProPhoenix, implementations were independently selected and are not standardized.

This fragmented environment complicates backup dispatching and creates data silos during large-scale incidents, limiting the ability to maintain a unified operational picture without manual coordination. A third-party interface (CentralSquare) enables CAD-to-CAD connectivity; however, it requires manual action by dispatchers to share information and maintain situational awareness. This dependency introduces inefficiencies and potential failure points, particularly during high-demand incidents when dispatchers are managing multiple responsibilities. Additionally, system monitoring is limited, and outages may not be immediately apparent—responders often become aware of issues only when information sharing fails.

These challenges more significantly impact fire/EMS operations than law enforcement. Fire departments frequently operate in a borderless, mutual-aid environment, requiring real-time information sharing across jurisdictions. The current CAD structure does not fully support this level of coordination. A countywide CAD solution could improve interoperability by enabling controlled information sharing during multi-jurisdictional incidents while maintaining appropriate data boundaries during routine operations.

MCP also identified law enforcement challenges related to freeway incidents, where inconsistent location entry between systems can lead to confusion and delayed response, particularly on divided highways.

3.6.2 Record Management Systems

At least two RMSs are used countywide—county responders rely on ProPhoenix RMS, while City police and fire use CentralSquare. MCP was unable to determine if other RMSs may be used by other agencies.

Beyond CAD-related operations, the lack of system interoperability at the RMS level creates significant post-incident burdens. Staff must manually compile reporting and data for transparency purposes due to a lack of system integration.

3.6.3 Geographic Information Systems

Differences in the underlying GIS environment further contribute to CAD challenges. The City and County rely on separate GIS data sources for mapping and unit recommendations, with BCC using state-provided Next Generation 911 (NG911) GIS layers and the City maintaining its own system. It is also unclear whether smaller municipal PSAPs are using the same standardized dataset.

Unit recommendations were described as inconsistent, depending on the GIS system in use. For example, while fire incident unit recommendations follow the same lineup countywide, each CAD may recommend those unit types from different stations, creating delays when requesting resources. The Milwaukee County Land Information Office (MCLIO) manages GIS data for the county through its open data portal, offering comprehensive basemap and cadastral data. The City of Milwaukee maintains a separate GIS system through the Map Milwaukee Portal, including MPD data and various public safety layers.

Fire representatives indicated that a countywide CAD system with a shared GIS layer for unit recommendations would reduce response confusion and delays. A unified system would allow initial call takers to enter incident details—such as location, type, and caller information—making that information immediately accessible to other call takers and dispatchers. This would enable EMD and dispatching to occur concurrently rather than sequentially.

This opportunity is timely, as Milwaukee DEC has expressed interest in replacing its CAD system in the near future. MCP recommends that County OEM evaluate a countywide CAD procurement, including Milwaukee DEC, to establish a single system, develop a unified geodatabase for unit recommendations, and support resource sharing and standardized policies across agencies.

3.6.4 Call-Handling Equipment/ESInet

911 call delivery is managed through originating service providers (OSPs) and Next Generation Core Services (NGCS), with ESInet providers contracted by the State. As of this report, seven of the county's 12 PSAPs are connected to the statewide ESInet: BCC, OEM-911, Greenfield, Greendale, Franklin, Oak Creek, and UWM. The remaining PSAPs are working toward connectivity; however, confirmed timelines are limited, with Milwaukee DEC expecting to go live in July 2026.

MCP was unable to fully verify CHE across all PSAPs, though at least three platforms are in use: Solacom Guardian (Milwaukee DEC), Intrado VIPER (UWM), and Motorola VESTA (OEM-911). Additional systems may exist among non-participating PSAPs.

Limited visibility into infrastructure and transition presents a coordination challenge. Without a comprehensive understanding of ESInet connectivity and CHE platforms, the County cannot fully assess interoperability gaps or effectively plan for unified operations.

PSAPs connected to the ESInet can access standardized reporting through the ECaTS database, including call answer times and other KPI metrics. PSAPs not yet connected do not report data in a consistent manner, limiting the County's ability to evaluate systemwide performance and support data-driven decision-making.

As ESInet connectivity expands, inter-PSAP call transfers will improve and location accuracy will increase. However, maintaining multiple CHE platforms will continue to create inefficiencies and additional costs. A countywide approach to CHE—such as shared procurement—could reduce expenses, improve data continuity during transfers, and enhance functionality, including text-to-911 interoperability.

3.6.5 Land Mobile Radio

The State maintains WISCOM, a statewide very high frequency (VHF) Project 25 (P25) digital trunked radio system available for interoperability among public safety agencies. While WISCOM serves as a backbone for statewide communication during major disasters and large-scale incidents, most agencies retain their local or regional systems for daily operations and use WISCOM only when interoperability with outside agencies is required.

Milwaukee County recognized the limitations of relying solely on WISCOM for regional operations and partnered with Waukesha County to establish OASIS—a P25 digital, simulcast, trunked, 800-megahertz (MHz) public safety radio system. OASIS was fully operational in 2018 and provides mission-critical communications for 89 organizations. In 2024, OASIS transitioned into WiPSN, a Motorola-managed system that maintains local control while offering statewide network capabilities. WiPSN is available to any county, municipality, or agency in Wisconsin, positioning the Milwaukee County/Waukesha County regional investment as a foundation that other jurisdictions can build upon.

The City of Milwaukee operates a separate Harris OpenSky radio system, managed by MPD. While the City was offered the opportunity to join OASIS, it elected to build and maintain its own system. As a result, the City operates on a different system than surrounding agencies, making it the only Harris-based radio system in a region otherwise using Motorola solutions.

Operating on a separate radio system creates operational friction. When agencies use incompatible equipment, direct communication is not possible without bridging devices or patching. In Milwaukee County, dispatchers must patch MFD talkgroups into WiPSN for fire and EMS incidents as City and County fire departments frequently provide mutual aid across jurisdictional lines. Some MFD talkgroups are permanently patched into WiPSN, while others connect on demand. Law enforcement does not experience this issue to the same extent—MPD typically patches into the regional channel only when a pursuit leaves the city limits or moves onto the freeway.

The reliance on patches introduces complexity and potential points of failure. Patches require coordination, consume channel capacity, and add a layer of technology that must function correctly during high-stress incidents.

More broadly, incompatible radio systems can delay communication during critical incidents, require responders or dispatchers to manage multiple systems simultaneously, and create gaps in situational awareness when information must be relayed rather than heard directly.

Redundancy also varies across the network. Some agencies have two radio routers, which protect them from loss of service if one fails. Smaller centers may have only one router and limited options if problems arise—a vulnerability that could be mitigated through shared infrastructure or consolidated operations.

PSAPs operating on the same radio system share inherent advantages: direct communication without patches, shared talkgroups for coordinated response, simplified mutual aid, and consistent equipment and training across agencies. The County, through OEM, can recommend, advise, and provide resources to help municipalities examine their radio system elements and assess their ability to coordinate with the OASIS/WiPSN network. Where gaps exist, agencies should evaluate whether their current infrastructure supports interoperability with

this functioning regional system or whether investment in compatible equipment would improve coordination and reduce operational friction.

3.7 Alternative First Response

Key Alternative Response Findings

- Alternative response tools can reduce telecommunicator workload and allow PSAPs to focus resources on high-acuity calls.
- Effective implementation of alternative response tools requires integration with existing CAD and CHE systems, clear protocols, and education for both staff and the public.
- Gaps in staff awareness about existing alternative first response tools and resources limit their effectiveness and adoption.

Alternative first response tools and practices are technical, operational, and policy-driven approaches that deliver the most appropriate response to a person in need while improving operational efficiency and decreasing risk to public safety personnel and citizens. While alternative response is often associated with co-response or behavioral health teams, many solutions are implemented at the call intake point to streamline incident reporting and reduce telecommunicator workload, allowing them to spend more time with high-acuity calls.

When considering these solutions, leaders should understand their community's needs and appetite for change. Not all communities desire non-traditional response teams such as social workers or peer responders, and acceptance of AI for public safety call handling remains mixed. Other alternative response tools, however, are more mainstream and widely adopted. Technology-enabled solutions such as drones as first responder and real-time crime centers can augment traditional response by providing faster situational awareness and supporting decision-making without replacing sworn or credentialed personnel. These questions can help organizations assess which tools meet their needs:

- Are calls entering the PSAP that could be managed outside of the traditional 911 or 10-digit line workflow?
- What solutions can help manage calls that may or may not require dispatch but involve repetitive or standard information that does not require human contact to process?
- What resources can help manage calls that require a response but not necessarily traditional services?

3.7.1 Regional Insights

Online Reporting

Both the City and County offer online reporting tools for motor vehicle accidents involving property damage only and other non-emergency incidents. MCP learned that these tools are available at other agencies in the county as well. There is, however, confusion among telecommunicators and field responders about how online reports are used and which incidents can or should be reported through this method. Some online reporting tools send information via email to the responsible department, while others directly create a CAD incident requiring telecommunicator intervention.

This gap in understanding among staff—and likely among the public—limits the tools' effectiveness. Online reporting can reduce call volume and telecommunicator workload, but only when staff know how the tools

functions and can confidently direct callers to use them appropriately. Improved education for both responders and the community about when and how to use online reporting can increase adoption and maximize operational benefit.

Behavioral Health Response

Milwaukee City and County residents have access to a range of non-traditional response resources for behavioral health needs. These services, provided by both public and non-governmental organizations, operate independently and in collaboration with public safety responders. Individuals can access 24/7 telephone support through the Milwaukee Crisis Line and 988, as well as in-person response through the Crisis Assessment Response Team (CART). While online sources indicate CART operates 24/7, some responders described more limited availability during listening sessions, suggesting a potential gap in awareness that may affect utilization.

As a large metropolitan area, Milwaukee County also benefits from specialized services addressing homelessness, trauma response, and youth behavioral health. As these resources become more integrated into the public safety system, coordination with 911 will be increasingly important to ensure telecommunicators are aware of available options and can appropriately direct or connect callers to services.

Coordination between 911 and 988 is an emerging area of focus. Although MCP was unable to confirm the current level of integration in Milwaukee County, establishing formal agreements, transfer protocols, and a shared understanding of roles will be important as 988 continues to expand and call volumes increase.

Nurse Triage Lines

Nurse triage programs embed registered nurses in or connect them to PSAPs to manage low-acuity medical calls—situations where the caller's issue does not require an ambulance or emergency department visit. Telecommunicators use scripted protocols to identify calls appropriate for transfer to a nurse, who then provides medical advice, arranges transportation to primary or urgent care centers, or schedules telehealth appointments. Programs in Washington D.C., Louisville, and other jurisdictions have demonstrated measurable results: reductions in ambulance dispatches, fewer unnecessary emergency department visits, and high patient satisfaction.

Nurse triage is not currently used in Milwaukee County. Given the City's higher call volume, nurse triage may be a particularly relevant opportunity—either as a standalone program or as a shared resource across the county. Additionally, OEM-911's CDO team could potentially serve in this capacity if job descriptions were expanded to include credentials beyond EMT certification. This would leverage existing staff while providing a pathway for low-acuity callers to receive appropriate care without dispatching emergency resources.

Automated Secure Alarm Protocol

The Automated Secure Alarm Protocol (ASAP) enables alarm signals to be transmitted electronically from monitoring centers directly to PSAPs, eliminating the need for manual phone calls. This reduces telecommunicator workload, shortens processing times, and minimizes transcription errors. ASAP is particularly effective in addressing false alarms, which account for a significant share of call volume in many jurisdictions.

MCP is not aware of ASAP implementation in Milwaukee County PSAPs. For agencies considering this tool, implementation requires coordination with alarm monitoring companies and CAD integration to receive and process electronic signals.

AI Tools

AI tools for public safety communications are rapidly evolving. Current applications include handling non-emergency and administrative calls through conversational AI, assisting telecommunicators with triage and detection of critical incidents, providing real-time translation or transcription without accessing a separate language service, and automatically routing callers based on geofenced high-volume areas.

Acceptance of AI in public safety settings remains mixed. Some communities and agencies are cautious about removing human contact from emergency interactions, while others see AI as a force multiplier for overburdened call centers. MCP understands that participating and non-participating PSAPs are watching this trend and considering how AI tools might fit their environment. Agencies exploring AI should evaluate how these tools integrate with existing workflows, what oversight mechanisms are needed, and how to communicate changes to the public.

Drones as First Responder

Drone as First Responder (DFR) programs deploy unmanned aircraft to emergency scenes immediately upon receiving a 911 call. Drones can arrive ahead of ground units and provide real-time aerial video to responders, telecommunicators, or a real-time crime center (RTCC). This enhances situational awareness prior to arrival—offering visibility into scene conditions, suspect movement, crowd size, and potential hazards—enabling responders to make more informed and safer decisions. Both Milwaukee City and County responders have DFR programs in place; MPD's DFR program is currently integrated with the CAD system.

DFR programs have expanded significantly in recent years. Some agencies report that drones arrive on scene within 60 to 90 seconds of dispatch and that a portion of calls can be cleared by drone alone without sending a ground unit. This is particularly valuable for low-priority calls—such as reports of a suspicious person who has left the area or an obstructed roadway that has been cleared—where drone verification can free officers for higher-priority incidents.

For DFR to be effective, integration with 911 and CAD systems is critical. Telecommunicators or remote pilots need to receive call information in real time to launch drones to the correct location. Agencies considering DFR should also address Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulatory requirements, community privacy concerns, and how drone operations will be staffed and supervised.

Real-Time Crime Centers

An RTCC is a centralized technology hub that aggregates live data feeds—video surveillance, license plate readers, gunshot detection, CAD data, and other sources—to provide actionable intelligence to officers and investigators. RTCC personnel monitor incoming information, identify relevant data, and relay it to responding units during active incidents.

RTCCs vary in how they relate to 911 operations. Some are co-located with or closely connected to PSAPs, allowing analysts to monitor live 911 calls, review nearby camera feeds as incidents unfold, and push information to officers before they arrive. Others operate independently with limited connection to 911 dispatch. RTCCs that maintain a collaborative relationship with 911—through shared access to CAD data, clear protocols for information flow, and defined roles—are better positioned to support coordinated response and avoid duplication of effort during high-stress incidents.

MPD has a Fusion Center, but its relationship with Milwaukee DEC was not explored in the scope of this work.

3.8 Facilities

Key Facilities Findings

- Limited facility space in most PSAPs constrains their ability to support the State's goal of regionalization and future growth.
- OEM's new facility, scheduled for 2026 occupancy, offers significant expansion capacity with room for 50 consoles—positioning it as a potential regional asset.
- Telecommunicator wellness features are frequently limited in PSAPs that occupy space within buildings designed for other functions.

Modern public safety dispatch operations should be housed in public-safety-grade facilities designed to withstand adverse conditions—whether natural, technological, or human-induced. These facilities are the backbone of emergency response, and their resilience directly affects community safety and wellbeing. Such facilities must include adequate operational space, robust physical security measures, hardened structural components, redundant systems, and COOP/DR planning to support sustained functionality. PSAPs and the agencies they support are exposed to a wide range of hazards, and leaders must be prepared to maintain operations under all emergency conditions.

MCP considers three pillars to be pivotal in a PSAP facility design: structural design and integrity, cybersecurity, and telecommunicator wellness.

Each pillar is distinct yet interdependent and represents a critical dimension of operational readiness. When fully addressed, these pillars form an integrated framework that supports continuous operations under the most challenging conditions. Agencies that meet all three pillars are well-positioned to support organizational growth, population changes, emerging trends, technological advancement, and disaster-related risks for the next 10 to 20 years.

Industry and emergency management guidance reinforces the critical importance of public safety communications centers and the need for resilient facility design. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) designates mission-critical public safety facilities as critical infrastructure (CI), defined as:

> *"… systems and assets, whether physical or virtual, so vital to the United States that the incapacity or destruction of such systems would have a debilitating impact on security, national economic security, national public health or safety, or any combination of those matters."*[34]

NFPA 1225 addresses the first pillar: structural design and integrity. Chapters 12 through 14 provide primary industry standards specifying requirements for PSAPs, including communications and signal wiring and emergency response facilities. These chapters cover hazard exposure, construction, climate control, fire protection, power, lighting, and lightning protection.

The second pillar, cybersecurity, has become an increasingly critical component of facility resiliency as technology has advanced. Purpose-built public safety facilities are heavy users of mission-critical technologies and enterprise-level IT systems. These systems, along with supporting infrastructure such as heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC), generators, and building automation systems (BASs), are increasingly

[34] Presidential Policy Directive – Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience. Presidential Policy Directive/PPD-21. The White House. February 12, 2013. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/02/12/presidential-policy-directive-critical-infrastructure-security-and-resil

vulnerable to cyber threats. Current trends in facility design emphasize not only enhanced physical security but also strengthened cybersecurity protections.

The third pillar, telecommunicator health and wellness, focuses on facility design that prioritizes workforce wellness and can significantly improve recruitment and retention. Effective wellness-focused design includes the following:

- Architectural design — Proximity of operations room to food preparation areas, filtered water, and restrooms
- Windows — Access to natural light, particularly north-facing windows, to support circadian rhythm regulation
- Mechanical systems — High-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration, controlled ventilation, and touchless fixtures to reduce illness transmission
- Healthy areas — Dedicated areas for stress reduction, lactation, fitness, and access to outdoor green spaces
- Furniture — Ergonomic 24/7 chairs, sit/stand desks, and antibacterial surfaces to reduce injury and fatigue
- Sight and sound — Design features that reduce eyestrain and stress through acoustics, lighting, and smart technology
- Extra mile — Companion animals, which have been shown to reduce stress and improve morale, where appropriate and supported by facility design

Facilities designed with these pillars in mind are not only operationally resilient today but also adaptable to future technological advancements, demographic shifts, and evolving threat environments.

3.8.1 Milwaukee DEC

Milwaukee DEC operates on one floor of a 126,000-square-foot facility that opened in 2001; a significant expansion completed in 2009 allowed the police and fire communications departments to co-locate in their current location. The facility includes administrative offices, meeting rooms, training rooms, and an operations training room equipped with CAD—supporting ongoing staff development without requiring off-site coordination.

DEC's location on a higher floor alleviates many security concerns associated with ground-level PSAP operations, and lobby security is provided by 24/7 patrol presence. Construction documentation indicates that DEC uses raised flooring to accommodate cabling, which allows for flexible technology upgrades and reduces the need for major renovation as systems evolve.

The building has an elevator and ample space between and at consoles to accommodate a wheelchair. In December 2024, DEC invited the DHS Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to conduct a Protected Critical Infrastructure Information (PCII) Program audit. No significant gaps were identified; DEC is actively addressing potential vulnerabilities and access recommendations cited in the analysis.

Console workstations appear to meet current NFPA 1225 standards based on their size and apparent heat, cooling, and ergonomic features. The operations floor is split into two areas—a holdover from when police and fire dispatch operated under separate leadership—which may present supervisory or communication considerations as operations become more unified. While room for expansion exists, it may require renovation; since consoles are not being used at maximum capacity, DEC naturally has growth opportunities to accommodate increased staffing or regionalization.

Milwaukee DEC demonstrates a commitment to telecommunicator wellness through thoughtful facility design. The operations floor features floor-to-ceiling windows that provide ample natural light, supporting circadian rhythm regulation for shift workers. Staff have access to a fully equipped break room, an outside patio, and a quiet room that doubles as a mother's room. The facility is well-maintained with no air quality issues observed.

3.8.2 OEM-911

OEM-911 currently operates from a dated larger County facility, occupying a portion of one floor. The operations floor has ten consoles that are smaller in size and predate updated NFPA 1225 console standards. Office space is limited, and the facility has one small room that serves as both a training and meeting space. The facility includes a quiet room with a lock. While the space has good natural light and benefits from the security of the larger County building, Americans with Disability Act (ADA) accessibility is challenging; ramps are in place where stairs exist, but the overall layout is tight.

The County is constructing a new 32,000 square foot facility in Wauwatosa, scheduled for occupancy in April 2026. The facility will house all OEM divisions, including OEM-911 as well as the Medical Examiner's office and State crime lab.

The operations floor will have 26 active consoles with capacity for 50—representing a significant expansion from current operations. The facility is designed with modern telecommunicator wellness features, including a mother's room, quiet room, and outdoor deck. MCP anticipates that the new facility will meet current building codes and industry standards, including redundant power, uninterruptible power supply (UPS) systems, generators, networking, and other mission-critical infrastructure required for a modern 911 center.

Figure 4: New County OEM Facility

OEM-911 plans to maintain a fully functional backup site at the MCSO training center, equipped with eight consoles and configured as a warm site for activation if the primary facility becomes inoperable. Staff expressed enthusiasm about transitioning to the new facility.

3.8.3 Regional Insights

Console counts among non-participating PSAPs range from two to eight workstations, with several agencies providing dispatch services for multiple jurisdictions. Most are believed to be located within municipal police department facilities rather than purpose-built communications centers.

Without direct assessment, MCP cannot evaluate facility design, structural integrity, cybersecurity posture, or telecommunicator wellness features. It is also unclear whether these facilities meet NFPA 1225 standards, provide adequate system redundancy, or support future growth.

PSAPs located within police facilities may benefit from existing structural and cybersecurity measures; however, they may not fully address PSAP-specific needs—particularly those related to telecommunicator wellness. Features such as natural light, dedicated break and quiet spaces, ergonomic design, and outdoor access are often limited in shared-use environments. Alternative models, including dedicated communications centers, shared regional facilities, or consolidated operations, may better support compliance with modern standards and enhance long-term operational resilience.

4 University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

During our listening sessions, MCP became aware of the UWM dispatch center and law enforcement operations. At the time of the onsite visit, UWM was not yet a primary PSAP but was pursuing this designation, with an anticipated transition in September 2025. As a primary PSAP, UWM assumes responsibility for 911 calls within a limited geographic area (approximately two to three square blocks), shifting initial call handling from Milwaukee DEC to UWM. The agency will also connect to the statewide ESInet upon transition.

UWM operates within the state university system, where each campus maintains its own police chief overseeing dispatch and law enforcement functions. The UWM dispatch team consists of four telecommunicators, each working independently across four 12-hour shifts, with one serving as lead and supporting administrative functions. Staffing gaps due to leave or call-outs are supplemented by sworn personnel, reflecting a collaborative relationship between civilian and sworn staff.

UWM maintains positive working relationships with neighboring PSAPs, including BCC and DEC, receiving and providing mutual support as needed. However, UWM uses a university-specific CAD system that is not integrated with other county systems, and no CAD-to-CAD interface is in place. This limits information sharing and coordination, particularly with agencies they routinely support. UWM leadership expressed interest in a shared CAD environment but identified budget constraints and limited regional coordination as barriers.

Despite its size, UWM demonstrates strong adaptability and initiative. The agency is updating its radio systems, revising SOPs to align with primary PSAP responsibilities, and considering implementation of a QA program. Leadership is engaged in regional and state-level collaboration efforts and has shown willingness to participate in broader interagency initiatives.

MCP recognizes that the university environment operates under distinct regulatory requirements and service expectations, which may limit certain regionalization opportunities. As a “high-touch” service environment, UWM places a strong emphasis on customer service for students and families, reflecting expectations that may differ from those of larger municipal agencies.

5 Future State Visioning

To this point, this report has examined the current state of PSAPs within Milwaukee County based on available information. The goal of the current state assessment is to identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities in the current model to answer these questions:

Is regionalization feasible among the 12 Milwaukee County PSAPs?

Is regionalization recommended?

To MCP's knowledge, at least two other studies have been conducted since 2015, but others may exist. Today, three PSAPs have proceeded with consolidation (Table 1), with additional mergers under consideration or actively being implemented. In a recent 2023 proposal[35] in which the city of Cudahy proposed consolidation into the BCC, they used three fundamental questions to justify their decision:

Does it have the potential to save money?

Does it have the potential to provide an equal to or better service level?

Is it a sustainable solution over the long term?

These insightful questions capture the core considerations that drive regionalization or consolidation nationally; the answers that result most often are "yes" to the first two, as reducing the number of physical PSAPs will reduce technology and operating costs across the nation and potentially for the PSAPs within Milwaukee County. Consolidation or regionalization (in some form) has been shown to improve operational efficiency, reduce transfer delays, and provide more consistent service regardless of one's jurisdiction. Appendix E reflects outcome data and lessons learned on a national scale that speak to regionalization benefits.

Is it a sustainable solution over the long term? It is more complex. Sustainability of a consolidated model depends on more than financial and operational elements. Long-term success depends on strong relationships, trust, willingness, and a collective mission focus that transcends geographic or political boundaries. Ultimately, initiatives face significant impediments when stakeholders prioritize local control and legacy interests over the strategic opportunities inherent in a regionalized approach. Without viewing public safety as an integrated, systemic responsibility, organizations risk creating a new framework with embedded dysfunction, leading to retention issues and deep-seated cultural challenges. The Bayside-Cudahy proposal succinctly captures this concept (Appendices F and G).

Is regionalization feasible among the 12 Milwaukee County PSAPs?

Based on local, state, and national evidence, and on various models of consolidation or regionalization that will be addressed in subsequent sections, MCP found that yes, regionalization in some form is absolutely feasible. This finding mirrors those in the other consolidation studies carried out over the last ten years.

Is regionalization recommended?

This question must be answered by first identifying that consolidation or regionalization may take multiple forms—policy and operations based, technology and shared systems based, and physical. Further, these efforts may occur organically or inorganically**.** A reduction in primary PSAPs is recommended and will provide the benefits proposed in this study and others. This recommendation aligns with consolidation efforts supported by

[35] Bayside-Cudahy PSAP Financial Proposal

the State and reflects a broader trend in 911 across the nation. No predetermined design exists for how Milwaukee County should get there; the following sections present a menu of regionalization options that can be considered and worked toward based on budget, political will, and stakeholder readiness.

MCP recognizes that the City of Milwaukee must remain independent due to its size, population served, and call and incident volumes. Milwaukee DEC serves approximately 62% of the county's 928,000 residents; the remaining 10 PSAPs (excluding UWM) serve 38%. At this time, a merger between Milwaukee DEC and other municipalities or OEM-911 is not reasonable—no entity exists that can support both the City and other PSAP staff or workload. This dual-structured model, with a large city PSAP and a separate regional or multi-jurisdictional PSAP, exists in many areas nationwide; examples include the City of Seattle and King County, Washington; the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County, Minnesota; the City of Salt Lake and Salt Lake Valley, Utah; and the City of Columbus and Franklin County, Ohio.

As Figure 5 illustrates, the modern 911 emergency communications center (ECC) operates at the hub of an expanding ecosystem—connecting community voice and data incidents to responders, partner agencies, and an array of public safety systems. Regionalization efforts may occur at any point along this continuum—from shared technology platforms and data systems to coordinated policies and procedures, to unified command and control operations. Understanding this ecosystem helps clarify that regionalization is not binary; opportunities for collaboration and integration exist across the entire framework.

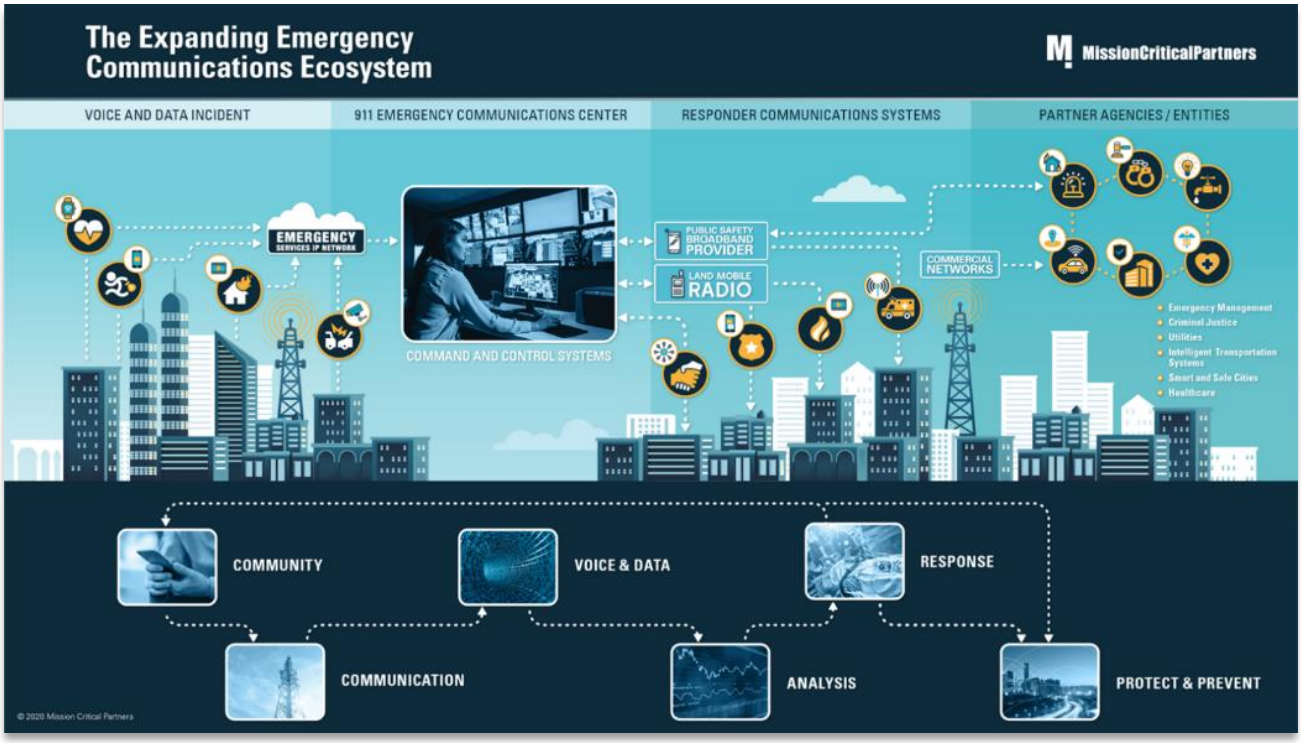


Figure 5: The Expanding Emergency Communications Ecosystem

5.1 Case for Change

Public safety communications are the foundational layer of emergency response—yet across much of the country, PSAP operations remain fragmented, under-resourced, and unevenly equipped to meet modern challenges. Multiple centers within the same county or region duplicate technology, facilities, and staff functions while struggling individually with turnover, funding constraints, and compliance requirements. This structural fragmentation drives inefficiency and risk: higher costs, inconsistent service, and reduced resilience.

The argument for consolidation is not ideological; it is empirical. Across dozens of state and local studies, the data shows consistent patterns: redundant systems and staffing inflate operational costs by 10% to 25% annually; training disparities, uneven QA/QI, and staffing shortages degrade service reliability; fragmentation weakens cybersecurity, continuity, and public accountability; and shared systems and governance reduce costs, improve performance, and increase resilience. These findings appear in MCP's Model for Advancing Public Safety® (MAPS®) analyses, the South Dakota PSAP Efficiency Study (2025), KPMG's Virginia Use Cases (2023), and the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston's research on PSAP cost structures (Kodrzycki & Cools, 2013). The pattern is consistent across geography and governance models—consolidation simplifies workflows, strengthens reliability, and reduces failure points.

Operational Efficiencies

System integration creates measurable performance and productivity gains. Running several small PSAPs in parallel means taxpayers fund multiple sets of fixed costs for what is, functionally, a single regional service. Even when jurisdictions collaborate informally, costs remain fragmented: separate telephony trunks, CAD licenses, power systems, and facility leases. Capital expenses such as backup generators, UPS systems, and redundant circuits are duplicated many times over. The result is a network of underutilized infrastructure and staff—expensive to maintain and difficult to scale. Meanwhile, technology vendors charge more per seat to smaller agencies, further widening the cost gap compared to regional centers.

Consolidation and regionalization generate savings by removing redundant systems and pooling resources. Single shared facilities replace multiple small PSAPs, reducing fixed building and utility costs. Shared CAD, NG911, and logging systems eliminate duplicate maintenance contracts. Unified management structures streamline supervision and reduce administrative overhead. Common training, human resources (HR), and procurement functions lower support costs and improve consistency.

Table 9: Case Studies and Outcome of Consolidation or Regionalization

Operational Area	Typical Outcome of Consolidation/Regionalization	Supporting Data
Call Handling	60–90 seconds faster through elimination of transfers	JeffCom 911 (CO), APCO PSC 2025
CAD-to-CAD Integration	3–4 minutes faster dispatch coordination	JeffCom 911; MCP benchmarking
QA/QI Consistency	15%–25% higher training completion and accuracy	MCP MAPS® data, South Dakota Study

Operational Area	Typical Outcome of Consolidation/Regionalization	Supporting Data
Facility Optimization	20%–40% reduction in capital duplication	South Dakota Study, Wisconsin County Model
Shared Technology	10%–25% operating expense savings and improved uptime	Virginia Use Cases (KPMG, 2023)
COOP/Disaster Recovery	Achieved “five nines” uptime with shared redundancy	NENA, CISA 2022 guidance

Workforce Benefits

Workforce transformation is both a driver and a result of consolidation. When redundancies are removed, staffing can be optimized rather than reduced. Fewer positions are wasted covering overlapping shifts, while more personnel can be scheduled to match true call volume and peak periods. Supervisory structures become clearer, and cross-training allows staff to manage multiple disciplines.

Key outcomes include:

- Elimination of single-employee shifts, providing continuous coverage and teamwork
- Reduction in turnover (10% to 20%) through better career paths and standardized training
- Improved morale and retention by civilianizing roles and creating defined advancement ladders
- Expanded recruiting base through regional employment structures and unified HR policies
- Professionalization of the 911 workforce with uniform training, QA, and leadership development

This creates a healthier, more balanced workforce—fewer solo shifts, less burnout, and better workload distribution. Freed budget capacity can be redirected into retention incentives, professional development, and technology investments that further improve working conditions. When telecommunicators are supported by consistent structure and clear expectations, performance and pride both increase.

Fiscal Implications

The financial return on investment is quantifiable and enduring. Hard data from numerous studies and MCP projects demonstrate significant cost savings from consolidation:

- The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston (Kodrzycki & Cools, 2013) found that cost per 911 call decreases steadily as PSAP size increases, due to shared staffing and infrastructure.
- The South Dakota PSAP Efficiency Study (2025) projected 20% to 40% capital cost savings and 10% to 25% operational cost savings through regionalization.
- MCP case studies, including the Wisconsin County-to-County Consolidation (2024), report annual operating expense reductions of $400,000 to $900,000 and long-term capital savings exceeding $1 million.

These savings derive primarily from avoided duplication—one data center instead of four, one CAD instead of three, one generator instead of five. In aggregate, they translate to millions of dollars in taxpayer value over the

lifecycle of a regional communications system. Consolidation and regionalization transform fixed local expenses into shared regional investments—yielding measurable cost savings while improving quality.

System Performance and Resilience

Integrated systems perform better under both normal and crisis conditions. Beyond fiscal savings, eliminating duplication strengthens the operational fabric of the system:

- Faster call processing and dispatch through shared CAD and NG911 cores
- Unified radio networks supporting cross-discipline coordination and interoperability
- Consistent service delivery across jurisdictional boundaries
- Redundant failover capacity for uninterrupted 911 access during outages or disasters
- Stronger cybersecurity posture through centralized network management
- Improved reliability through centralized maintenance and fewer single points of failure
- Better resource utilization and workload balancing across the region
- Simplified governance that accelerates decision-making and procurement

Performance gains are not theoretical—consolidated systems routinely outperform fragmented networks in NENA call-answer metrics, uptime percentages, and training completion rates. The public receives a higher performing, more resilient system for the same or lower cost.

Addressing Consolidation and Regionalization

Consolidation or regionalization, delivered through three tiers—policy, technology, and physical—achieve the same strategic outcome: fewer systems, fewer redundancies, and greater value per taxpayer dollar. By eliminating duplicate costs, jurisdictions can reinvest savings directly into people, technology, and community resilience. The following sections outline this tiered approach that can be adapted to Milwaukee County's budget, political will, and stakeholder readiness.

5.2 Organic Regionalization

Consolidation, or regionalization, can occur through:

- Inorganic Regionalization – Driven by external forces, such as state mandates (e.g., Illinois and Ohio), often without funding or local input.
- Organic Regionalization – Evolves voluntarily through cooperative efforts to improve emergency response services, as seen in Nebraska[36] and Broward County, Florida[37]. Mandates do not exist In Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, that would force inorganic consolidation, offering the opportunity for an organic, collaborative approach to regionalization.

[36] Nebraska Public Service Commission, PSAP Regionalization Map, August 2019. https://psc.nebraska.gov/sites/default/files/doc/PSAP_Regionalization_0.pdf
[37] Broward County Office of Regional Communications and Technology, Regional 911. https://www.broward.org/911/Pages/Regional911.aspx

The National Association of State 911 Administrators (NASNA) defines regionalization as:

> *"… two or more communities (or organizations, or agencies) that join together in a formal, mutually-beneficial working relationship to optimize services provided to the customers of their communities (or organizations, or agencies)."*[38]

NASNA further explains:

> *"There is more than one way to regionalize, as evidenced by how existing regional 911 systems differ from one another. For example, some have consolidated multiple Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) into a few regional PSAPs serving a large geographic area. Others have a single regional PSAP serving a large geographic area. Still, others have regionalized virtually by sharing the 911 infrastructure and technology without consolidating PSAPs or creating a large regional call center."*[39]

A 2010 federal study conducted by the Communications Security, Reliability, and Interoperability Council (CSRIC)[40] identified five core values of regionalization. These values remain relevant today, and present areas for Milwaukee County to enhance efficiency and improve public safety services:

- **Shared Resources** – These include policies, operations, and any other opportunities to collaborate on support services (e.g., IT, GIS, administration, HR).
- **Elimination of Duplicate Costs** – Regionalization helps to reduce or eliminate duplicate costs related to administration, operations, technologies, and facilities.
- **Coordinated Responses** – Coordinated responses address joint responses, including automatic and mutual aid and other shared responses *that would be coordinated from the same ECC*. Examples include multi-jurisdictional responses to grass fires, pursuits, and mass casualty incidents, all of which require a coordinated response.
- **Greater Interoperability** – Regionalization expands interoperability, enabling the sharing of mission-critical equipment and technologies (e.g., CAD, radio).
- **Effective and Efficient Service** – Efficiencies will often occur, and service levels improve when regionalization is properly executed. Call transfers are often reduced, and situational awareness is

[38] NASNA - 911 Regionalization - Tools and Information (nasna911.org)
[39] Ibid.
[40] WORKING GROUP 1A (fcc.gov)

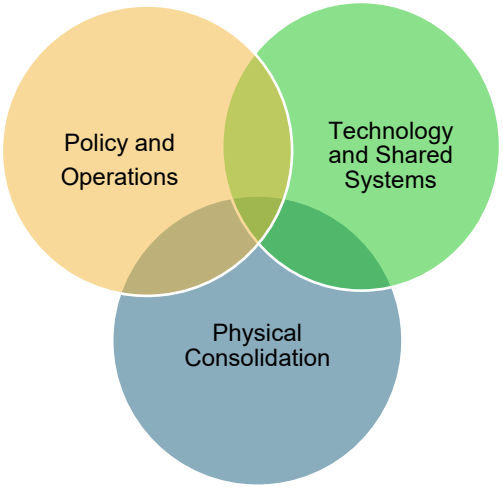
improved through regionalization. There are often improvements that can be made in all functional areas of an ECC (operations, personnel and workforce, training, performance management, leadership and planning, technology, facilities, and organizational structure).

A key to organic regionalization is recognizing the efficiencies to be gained and then working to establish shared and common practices. As an example, Milwaukee County fire departments provide a real-life application of this work—they realize the benefits of collaboration outweigh any perceived negative impacts and have taken measures to organically regionalize their services.

The following sections outline a tiered approach to organic regionalization of the Milwaukee County PSAPs; three interrelated elements of organic regionalization are offered to deliver significant operational efficiencies among PSAPs:

- Policy and Operations
- Technology and Shared Systems
- Physical (facility-based)

These elements are interrelated and can be executed sequentially or concurrently. As more initiatives are deployed within each element, the benefits will be realized exponentially.



5.3 Policy and Operations-Based Regionalization

Although differences may exist in PSAPs to address local needs, the job of individuals performing call-taking and dispatching functions and the core elements necessary to support their mission-critical work is similar throughout Milwaukee County. Industry standards and best practices exist for emergency telecommunicators nationwide, which speaks to the similarities in core tasks and functions that exist in public safety telecommunications work more broadly. MCP identifies three elements of policy and operations-based regionalization: operations, support, and workforce. Policy and operations-based regionalization efforts are not costly and mostly involve sharing human capital for support initiatives such as QA, pooling resources to deliver training to a larger group, or salary costs incurred when working together to develop operational policies and procedures for all PSAPs.

Support

Support services focus on tasks that are outside of the primary operation of answering emergency calls and dispatching field responders but can affect optimal PSAP service delivery; examples include technology support (e.g., general IT, GIS, and radio systems), performance management, and staff for training, administrative work, or facility needs. PSAPs may face challenges implementing support services due to the availability of human resources and of staff to implement a quality assurance program, manage GIS data, or the oversight of IT by someone who understands the complexity of the region's mission-critical systems and how they interrelate with each other and the state. Shared support services opportunities include the following:

- Shared IT and GIS support personnel to align performance and security with statewide systems
- Collaborative QA processes and reporting KPIs

Operations

Operations-focused initiatives involve aligning policies, procedures, protocols, workflows, and planning activities to enable the countywide PSAP system to function with consistency and equity. MCP identified opportunities to establish uniform, standards-based policies and procedures for functions and geographic areas served by multiple PSAPs—call-taking protocols may be a particularly effective focus. Protocols provide structure to standardize a caller's experience, regardless of where they live or who answers their call. Call processing and dispatch performance can then be objectively assessed through a holistic QA program aligned with national standards and best practices.

Promoting standardized processes and engaging in collective training, regardless of service discipline, may help to establish better service and improve partnerships. Streamlining the call-handling process by reducing transfers, delays, and possible disconnects benefits employees and citizens alike. Establishing uniform protocols may provide the following opportunities:

- Improved service level consistency and standards of care throughout the county (e.g., citizen and responder safety, pre-arrival instructions)
- Reduced errors and risk exposure
- Decreased trainee washout rates
- Objective measurement of uniform call-processing procedures
- Smoother transitions when working with multiple centers and/or departments
- Improved information gathering and sharing

Formal planning for communications centers encompasses strategic planning (with short- and long-term financial considerations), change management, and continuity of operations. Countywide planning and template development have the potential to benefit multiple agencies by:

- Improving coordinated responses through COOPs for common operating areas involving overlapping jurisdictions and mutual aid
- Closing or narrowing the gap for PSAPs that do not currently have COOPs

Workforce

Workforce regionalization encompasses shared resources and processes for recruiting, hiring, staffing, and training. While some elements—such as shared staffing pools for weather events or geographic barriers—may not apply to Milwaukee County, others are directly relevant. Uniform recruitment and hiring practices, for example, can improve retention and reduce onboarding costs; reducing pay disparity across PSAPs could also deter turnover driven by interagency competition.

Shared peer support services can provide ECC-specific mental health and wellness resources that most individual PSAPs—particularly smaller ones or those within police department structures—cannot sustain on their own. A regional peer support team distributes the cost of training, clinical oversight, and program administration across agencies while expanding the pool of trained peers available to any telecommunicator in the county

Training regionalization is already underway—BCC's designation as the County's primary PSAP includes grant funding specifically intended to support training across all Milwaukee County PSAPs. However, this goal is not yet being realized broadly. Advancing training regionalization through a more centralized, collaborative approach would:

- Reduce cost impacts on individual PSAPs through shared staff and combined resources (e.g., shared classes)
- Reduce duplication of training efforts
- Improve telecommunicator performance during multi-agency events

5.3.1 Policy and Operations-Based Regionalization Recommendations

Policy and operations-based regionalization efforts depend upon relationships and the willingness to recognize the realities of regional interdependence and focus on win-win solutions. These recommendations are about bringing stakeholders together to find solutions to problems that all organizations face. Milwaukee County PSAPs are beginning to build this foundation. Starting with near-term opportunities can establish the trust and collaboration needed for more complex regionalization.

Recommendations	Outcomes
Create an interagency peer support program	• Provides countywide mental health and wellness support for all staff, regardless of PSAP affiliation • Improves retention by demonstrating the value of telecommunicators • Distributes responsibility for program creation across multiple stakeholders
Develop interagency policy between PSAP(s) and with user agencies	• Promotes countywide best practices • Provides uniformity for similar processes and user agencies, improving consistency • Fosters mutual understanding and alignment among agencies
Develop shared KPIs and expectations for QA	• Supports countywide call processing standardization initiatives and a regional training program • Promotes uniformity in feedback content and consistency in review frequency • Streamlines communication to frontline staff by consolidating operational, field, and administrator feedback into a single team
Increase shared training opportunities	• Level-sets knowledge across PSAPs • Expands availability of professional development opportunities for PSAP staff • Establishes a shared culture and set of expectations • Builds relationships among participants • Demonstrates efficient use of state grant funding

Recommendations	Outcomes
Incorporate more role-play and scenario-based training for high-impact/low-frequency events	• Provides more familiarity with topics that may not be frequently encountered by one PSAP using the knowledge and experience of partner PSAPs • Encourages collaboration with field responders • Improves awareness of officer safety tactics

5.4 Technology and Shared Systems Regionalization

Public safety dispatch operations are heavily dependent on IT infrastructure, computer systems, and multiple applications. As established in Section 5.1 Case for Change, duplicate systems and fragmented infrastructure inflate operational costs by 10% to 25% annually while weakening interoperability and cybersecurity. Technology and shared systems-based regionalization addresses these issues without requiring the organizational restructuring that physical consolidation demands—making it an accessible path forward for organizations that are not ready or willing to consolidate fully.

Technology and shared systems-based regionalization involves sharing existing technology and IT infrastructure, coordinating technology purchases or upgrades, and planning systems as a whole rather than in silos. The goal is to leverage existing technologies where applicable and incorporate new systems into the overall communications landscape. The public safety communications ecosystem is becoming increasingly complex and interconnected—technology, people, and processes together form a "system of systems" essential for interoperability and emergency communications continuity. When PSAPs plan technology independently, this system fragments; when they plan together, they create a cohesive infrastructure that benefits all.

Cloud technologies and hosted software eliminate the need for in-house servers and the associated building space, utility expense, and IT maintenance and support. Shared procurement can yield 15% to 30% discounts on CAD, NG911, and QA systems through volume contracting, while consolidated vendor contracts reduce administrative burden and improve negotiating leverage.

Milwaukee County already engages in technology regionalization through the WiPSN radio network, with the exception of the City of Milwaukee.

Opportunities exist to expand technology regionalization by procuring a new CAD system for the entire region or through improved CAD-to-CAD integration and shared logging recorder systems. These efforts would improve regional interoperability, allow PSAPs to share incident details, streamline mutual aid, and reduce call transfer delays. Procuring a shared CHE system adds layers of failover and redundancy to enhance operations. Technology regionalization can pave the way to physical regionalization while reducing risk, improving emergency response, and improving economies of scale.

Sharing technologies and systems may require governance agreements, COOPs/strategic plans, or structures not currently in place. These agreements should clearly identify cost-sharing formulas for purchasing, maintaining, and replacing systems over their lifecycle. Without shared platforms, neighboring PSAPs using different CAD systems or call-handling platforms require custom interfaces or manual coordination when incidents cross boundaries—these integration gaps create latency and increase the risk of misrouted calls or delayed responses. Even basic maintenance—patching, backups, and cybersecurity compliance—must be repeated across every independent site when systems are not shared.

5.4.1 Technology and Shared Systems-Based Regionalization Recommendations

Technology and systems-based regionalization requires foundational relationships *and* clarity on available financial resources. These recommendations involve shared investments—in procurement, infrastructure, and ongoing maintenance—that demand cost-sharing agreements and committed funding sources. The County and/or BCC may be well positioned to anchor these efforts.

Recommendations	Outcomes
Create a technology procurement taskforce	• Enables all stakeholders to provide input into the future of a new CAD system • Improves integration with existing applications before deployment of a new system • Maximizes economies of scale
Procure countywide CAD and CHE systems	• Permits easier resource sharing • Integrates call data across agencies • Improves location awareness and consistent resource deployment
Develop and implement common statistical and reporting capabilities	• Allows for better reporting • Provides access to previously inaccessible information to be used during short- and long-term strategic planning
Complete ESInet connectivity	• Enables seamless call transfers between PSAPs without loss of caller data (ANI/ALI) • Allows calls to be rerouted automatically if a PSAP experiences an outage or high volume • Provides network-level redundancy and failover capacity • Strengthens COOP capabilities—if one PSAP goes down, calls route to another on the network
Engage in countywide strategic planning for the 911 ecosystem	• Enables cost-sharing for the implementation of initiatives agreed upon in the strategic plan • Enhances public safety
Develop a joint COOP/DR plan that aligns with technological systems	• Leverages countywide resources to support continuity of operations • Offers cost-sharing opportunities by utilizing existing infrastructure • Promotes 911-related systems continuity

5.5 Physical (Facilities-Based) Regionalization

The primary goal of physical (facilities-based) regionalization is improving emergency response outcomes. BCC, Greendale, and Oak Creek PSAPs—and the agencies with whom they merged—clearly understand the benefit of physical consolidation and its impact on operational and fiscal efficiency. A reduction of physical PSAPs within Milwaukee County will reduce or eliminate call transfers, eliminate workforce competition among PSAPs, and improve interoperability between entities who are already working together in the field. Maintaining the current operational configuration or co-locating enables the PSAPs and dispatch centers to avoid the challenges associated with merging operations and HR practices with those of another PSAP but may not be in the best interest of the community they serve whose calls are delayed by the transfer process or who may have to wait for a response because the responder is dispatched by another entity.

A common argument in favor of maintaining the status quo for communications centers is that personnel possess detailed knowledge of their jurisdictions' geography and are familiar with the field responders they support. This familiarity is critical for effective coordination and decision-making during emergencies. Additionally, the proximity of call takers and dispatchers within localized communications centers facilitates information flow between the public and field responders, contributing to efficient incident management. However, while beneficial, maintaining the current decentralized PSAP and dispatch center configuration presents significant challenges. Transferring emergency calls from PSAPs to one or more dispatch centers introduces delays that can slow dispatching and critically impact incident outcomes (Appendix H). Furthermore, decentralized systems can limit interagency communication due to a lack of robust mechanisms for real-time information sharing, resulting in fragmented and uncoordinated responses. This structure also complicates mutual-aid coordination, making interjurisdictional collaboration more difficult and less efficient during critical incidents. Additionally, the decentralized model fosters information silos that restrict the sharing of vital data across jurisdictions, reducing situational awareness and hindering effective decision-making during emergencies.

The new County OEM building will have 50 available positions, more than the existing number of primary positions in all ten PSAPs in the County (except for Milwaukee DEC and UWM). This facility offers space for interested parties to co-locate in the same facility, or to use this facility as a backup site that can be tested live periodically. Other options for physical regionalization may be considered, with the goal of reducing the number of PSAPs in the county—for example, BCC could use its primary PSAP designation to secure grant funding for a new location that can house other county PSAPs, or other mergers between neighboring county PSAPs could continue. Growth will be limited by the number of positions in PSAPs.

Co-location offers an intermediate step between the status quo and full consolidation. In a co-location model, multiple PSAPs operate within the same facility while retaining separate organizational identities, command structures, and—in some cases—technology systems. Co-located agencies share facility costs such as rent, utilities, and building maintenance, while proximity improves coordination, simplifies mutual aid, and allows agencies to serve as immediate backup for one another during high-volume periods or system failures. Co-location also creates a natural path toward deeper integration; agencies working side-by-side often find opportunities to share training, policies, and eventually technology that would not have emerged while operating from separate buildings. Unlike full consolidation, co-location allows agencies to maintain operational independence while realizing many of the benefits of regionalization.

Regardless of the final structure that physical regionalization may take, the goal remains the same—fewer PSAPs, reduced call transfers, improved interoperability, and better emergency response outcomes for Milwaukee County residents.

5.5.1 Physical Regionalization Recommendations

Physical regionalization requires political will and long-term commitment from leadership and a transformational vision for the future of Milwaukee County's PSAP environment. These recommendations involve significant organizational change, including decisions about facility use, workforce integration, and governance.

Recommendations	Outcomes
Reduce the number of PSAPs through co-location	• Eliminates cost duplications • Decreases the number of points of infiltration for cybersecurity risks • Eliminates call workflows that inherently include miscommunication or delays
Reduce the number of PSAPs through further consolidation	• Eliminates workforce competition between PSAPs • Decreases the number of points of infiltration for cybersecurity risks • Provides zero-minute response to most fire and EMS calls for service

6 Synopsis

Regardless of the model pursued, successful regionalization requires foundational elements such as strong relationships, trust, shared purpose, and a willingness to collaborate beyond jurisdictional boundaries. It also depends on governance structures that support shared decision-making and cost-sharing, along with financial transparency to understand available resources.

In Milwaukee County, these elements are still developing. Historical factors—including jurisdictional boundaries, decades-old annexation and incorporation disputes, and longstanding operational norms—have contributed to siloed environments where collaboration is not routine. While fire service agencies frequently operate across boundaries, through established mutual aid practices, similar levels of coordination have not consistently extended to law enforcement or PSAP operations.

These challenges are not insurmountable but will require deliberate effort. Progress will depend on sustained relationship-building, trust development, and leadership commitment across agencies. Financial considerations may also influence future efforts; however, MCP was unable to fully assess these factors due to limited participation and available data. At present, formal governance mechanisms to support countywide regionalization—such as intergovernmental agreements or shared oversight structures—are limited.

While full countywide regionalization may not be feasible in the near term, there are meaningful opportunities to strengthen collaboration. Continued engagement can support cost-sharing, improve understanding of operational practices, and build a more consistent foundation of knowledge and skills across agencies. These efforts can enhance service delivery and system resilience, regardless of whether formal regionalization is ultimately pursued.

Appendix A: 2024 OEM-911 Transfer Totals

2024 TRANSFER REPORT	YTD TOTALS	
	Received From	Transferred To
Municipality 2024		
Bayside Comm	2,562	2,522
Bayside	63	2,045
Brown Deer	799	165
Cudahy	3,406	2,602
Fox Point	52	41
Franklin	753	297
Glendale	492	94
Greendale	2,438	1,740
Greenfield	5,994	5,309
Hales Corners	416	920
Milwaukee	27,007	6,462
Oak Creek	1,918	663
River Hills	266	1
Shorewood	292	54
South Milwaukee	4,123	3,001
St Francis	336	215
Wauwatosa	7,559	7,002
West Allis	4,155	3,059
West Milwaukee	1,156	1,184
Whitefish Bay	598	23
Language Line	0	173
TOTALS (OEM Milwaukee Co.)	**64,385**	**37,572**

Appendix B: Milwaukee DEC Erlang C Data

Busiest Month — 911 Calls (90/15) — July 2024

Reporting Period	**60**	minutes
Average Handling Time(s)	**152**	seconds
Required Service Level	**90.0%**	
Target Answer Time	**15**	seconds

Hour	Incoming Calls	Telecommunicators Needed
0:00	91	**7**
1:00	75	**6**
2:00	68	**6**
3:00	56	**5**
4:00	45	**5**
5:00	44	**5**
6:00	49	**5**
7:00	60	**6**
8:00	72	**6**
9:00	80	**7**
10:00	92	**7**
11:00	102	**8**
12:00	112	**8**
13:00	106	**8**
14:00	108	**8**
15:00	107	**8**
16:00	115	**9**
17:00	113	**8**
18:00	119	**9**
19:00	118	**9**
20:00	112	**8**
21:00	124	**9**
22:00	119	**9**
23:00	111	**8**

Busiest Month — 911 Calls (95/20) —July 2024

Reporting Period	**60**	minutes
Average Handling Time(s)	**152**	seconds
Required Service Level	**95.0%**	
Target Answer Time	**20**	seconds

Hour	Incoming Calls	Telecommunicators Needed
0:00	91	**8**
1:00	75	**7**
2:00	68	**7**
3:00	56	**6**
4:00	45	**5**
5:00	44	**5**
6:00	49	**5**
7:00	60	**6**
8:00	72	**7**
9:00	80	**7**
10:00	92	**8**
11:00	102	**9**
12:00	112	**9**
13:00	106	**9**
14:00	108	**9**
15:00	107	**9**
16:00	115	**9**
17:00	113	**9**
18:00	119	**9**
19:00	118	**9**
20:00	112	**9**
21:00	124	**10**
22:00	119	**9**
23:00	111	**9**

Busiest Month — Admin Calls —July 2024

Reporting Period	**60**	minutes
Average Handling Time(s)	**117**	seconds
Required Service Level	**80.0%**	
Target Answer Time	**20**	seconds

Hour	Incoming Calls	Telecommunicators Needed
0:00	23	2
1:00	18	2
2:00	16	2
3:00	13	2
4:00	11	2
5:00	10	2
6:00	15	2
7:00	25	2
8:00	32	3
9:00	37	3
10:00	40	3
11:00	42	3
12:00	41	3
13:00	40	3
14:00	39	3
15:00	43	3
16:00	42	3
17:00	43	3
18:00	40	3
19:00	39	3
20:00	39	3
21:00	40	3
22:00	39	3
23:00	29	3

Busiest Month — 911 and Admin Calls[41] — July 2024

Reporting Period	**60**	minutes
Average Handling Time(s)	**152**	seconds
Required Service Level	**90.0%**	
Target Answer Time	**15**	seconds

Hour	Incoming Calls	Telecommunicators Needed
0:00	114	9
1:00	93	7
2:00	84	7
3:00	69	6
4:00	56	5
5:00	54	5
6:00	63	6
7:00	85	7
8:00	103	8
9:00	117	9
10:00	131	9
11:00	144	10
12:00	153	11
13:00	146	10
14:00	147	10
15:00	150	10
16:00	157	11
17:00	156	11
18:00	159	11
19:00	156	11
20:00	151	10
21:00	163	11
22:00	158	11
23:00	140	10

[41] The telecommunicators need assume that all calls are answered in under 15 seconds, which is not necessary for the administrative call load. Further, efficiencies are seen when one call taker is responsible for emergency and non-emergency call-taking, reducing the total number of telecommunicators.

Appendix C: OEM-911 Erlang C Data

Busiest Month — 911 Calls (90/15) — August 2024		
Reporting Period	**60**	minutes
Average Handling Time(s)	**74**	seconds
Required Service Level	**90.0%**	
Target Answer Time	**15**	seconds

Hour	Incoming Calls	Telecommunicators Needed
0:00	5	1
1:00	4	1
2:00	4	1
3:00	3	1
4:00	2	1
5:00	3	1
6:00	4	1
7:00	6	2
8:00	8	2
9:00	10	2
10:00	11	2
11:00	12	2
12:00	14	2
13:00	14	2
14:00	15	2
15:00	15	2
16:00	15	2
17:00	13	2
18:00	12	2
19:00	12	2
20:00	12	2
21:00	10	2
22:00	7	2
23:00	7	2

Busiest Month — 911 Calls (95/20) — August 2024

Reporting Period	**60**	minutes
Average Handling Time(s)	**74**	seconds
Required Service Level	**95.0%**	
Target Answer Time	**20**	seconds

Hour	Incoming Calls	Telecommunicators Needed
0:00	5	2
1:00	4	2
2:00	4	2
3:00	3	1
4:00	2	1
5:00	3	1
6:00	4	2
7:00	6	2
8:00	8	2
9:00	10	2
10:00	11	2
11:00	12	2
12:00	14	2
13:00	14	2
14:00	15	2
15:00	15	2
16:00	15	2
17:00	13	2
18:00	12	2
19:00	12	2
20:00	12	2
21:00	10	2
22:00	7	2
23:00	7	2

Busiest Month – Admin Calls — August 2024

Reporting Period	**60**	minutes
Average Handling Time(s)	**82**	seconds
Required Service Level	**85.0%**	
Target Answer Time	**20**	seconds

Hour	Incoming Calls	Telecommunicators Needed
0:00	8	1
1:00	7	1
2:00	7	1
3:00	6	1
4:00	5	1
5:00	5	1
6:00	6	1
7:00	10	2
8:00	20	2
9:00	20	2
10:00	19	2
11:00	20	2
12:00	21	2
13:00	22	2
14:00	21	2
15:00	22	2
16:00	19	2
17:00	19	2
18:00	17	2
19:00	14	2
20:00	14	2
21:00	13	2
22:00	13	2
23:00	11	2

Busiest Month — 911 and Admin Calls

Reporting Period	**60**	minutes
Average Handling Time(s)	**82**	seconds
Required Service Level	**90.0%**	
Target Answer Time	**15**	seconds

Hour	Incoming Calls	Telecommunicators Needed
0:00	13	2
1:00	11	2
2:00	10	2
3:00	9	2
4:00	8	2
5:00	8	2
6:00	10	2
7:00	16	2
8:00	27	3
9:00	30	3
10:00	30	3
11:00	31	3
12:00	35	3
13:00	36	3
14:00	37	3
15:00	37	3
16:00	34	3
17:00	32	3
18:00	29	3
19:00	26	3
20:00	26	3
21:00	23	2
22:00	20	2
23:00	19	2

Appendix D: PSAP Workload and Staffing Data

PSAP	Staffing	911 Call Volume (2024)	Radio/Incident Volume (2024) By FD/PD if possible	Admin Call Volume (2024)	Calls for Service (2024)	# of Primary Workstations	Minimum staffing per shift
BCC	2 Director/Admin 2 Supervisors 16 TCs	19,323	89,318 (calls dispatched)	52,200	PD: 76,241 FD: 13,077	4	
Per Hour Average		2	10	6	PD: 9 FD: 1		
Cudahy	1 Lead 10 TCs (FT & PT)				PD: 19,547 FD: 3,047	2	Day: 3 Mid: 3 Night: 1
Per Hour Average					PD: 2 FD: 0.3		
Franklin	1 Supervisors 2 TC Lead 12 TCs				PD: 28,761 FD: 5,812	4	
Per Hour Average					PD: 3 FD: 0.6		
Greendale	11 TCs (FT & PT)	4,796	242,432	60,147		3	

PSAP	Staffing	911 Call Volume (2024)	Radio/Incident Volume (2024) By FD/PD if possible	Admin Call Volume (2024)	Calls for Service (2024)	# of Primary Workstations	Minimum staffing per shift
Per Hour Average		1	28	7			
Greenfield		~12,000		~100,000		4	
Per Hour Average		1		11			
Oak Creek*	1 Manager 3 Supervisors 25 TCs	22,404	816,888	122,988	PD: 52,894 FD: 10,272	8	Day: 5 Mid: 5 Night: 4
Per Hour Average		3	93	14	PD: 6 FD: 1		
Wauwatosa	1 Manager 1 Supervisors 12 TCs (FT & PT)	69,272			PD: 39,476 FD: 10,465	2	
Per Hour Average		8			PD: 5 FD: 1		
West Allis	3 Managers 6 Supervisors 17 TCs (FT & PT)				PD: 50,251 FD: 11,638	5	
Per Hour Average					PD: 6 FD: 1		

PSAP	Staffing	911 Call Volume (2024)	Radio/Incident Volume (2024) By FD/PD if possible	Admin Call Volume (2024)	Calls for Service (2024)	# of Primary Workstations	Minimum staffing per shift
West Milwaukee						2	
Per Hour Average							
UWM*	1 Lead 3 TCs					2	1
Per Hour Average							
Milwaukee DEC*	183 TCs	708,067	PD: 519,176 FD: 128,748	240,279	614,902	43	Fluctuates
Per Hour Average		81	PD: 59 FD: 15	27	70		
OEM-911*	1 Director 3 Supervisors 1 Lead 31 TCs (FT & PT))	70,633		252,637		12	Day/Mid: 6-7 Night:4-5
Per Hour Average		8		29			

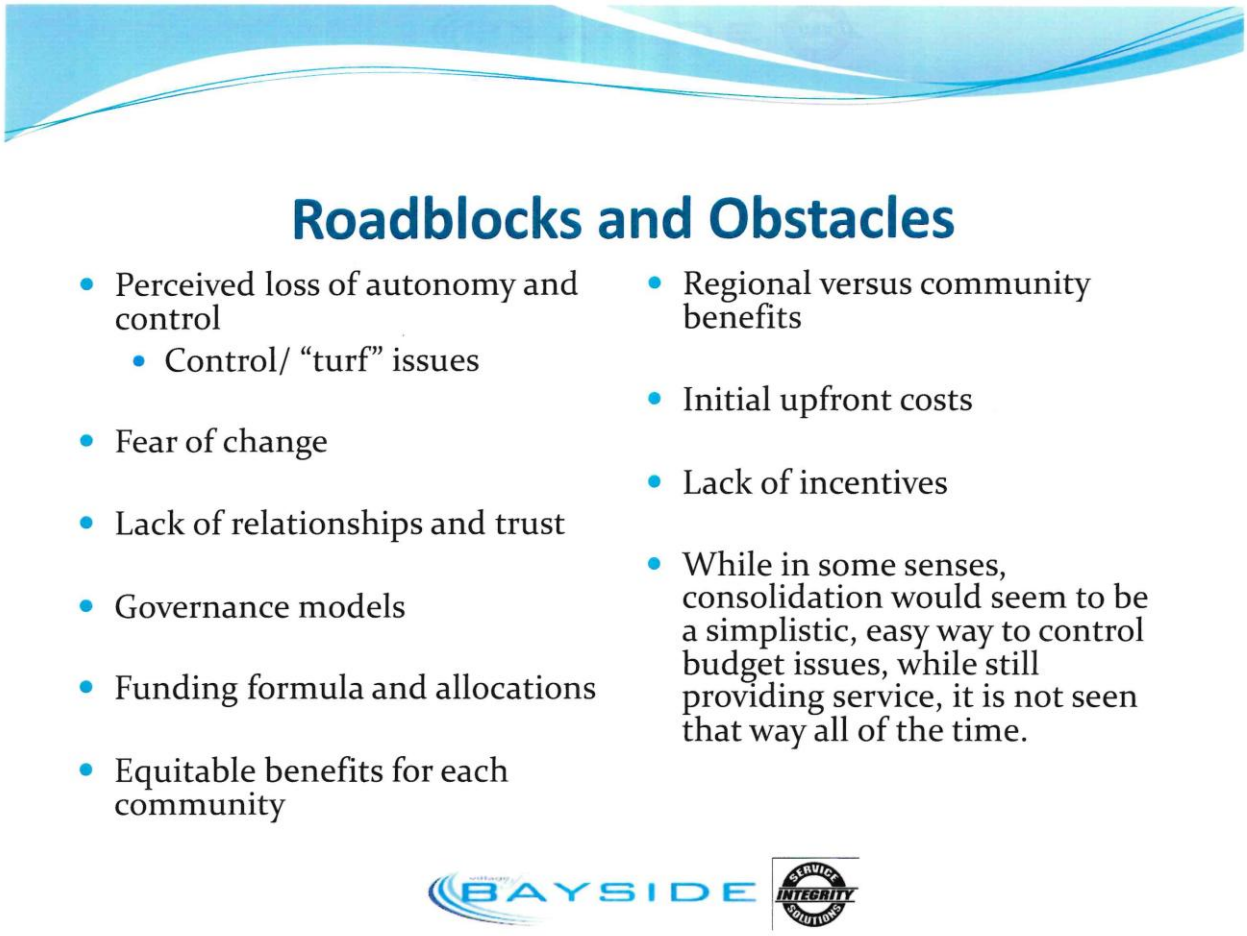
Appendix E: Evidence Summaries and Lessons Learned from Regionalization Efforts

The following summaries reflect authoritative data or lessons learned from national organizations and municipal PSAP regionalizations across the United States.

Source / Organization	Title / Year	Key Findings / Relevance
APCO	PSAP Consolidation Case Review (2021)	Documented 10% – 25% operational and technology cost savings and improved coordination following consolidation.
DHS OEC	Metropolitan Consolidation Guidebook (2021)	Found that phased implementation models achieved 85% operational stability within 18 months and improved staff acceptance.
IAED	Urban Response Performance Report (2020)	Correlated consolidated PSAPs with faster response times and improved call accuracy in high-density environments.
IAED	Workforce Resilience Study (2021)	Reported a 22% reduction in turnover and higher employee satisfaction after PSAP integration.
NENA	Managing Multiple PSAPs Framework (2020)	Identified average call-transfer delays of 25–40 seconds and recommended unified governance for efficiency and accountability.
NENA	NG911 Interoperability Framework (2022)	Highlighted the role of unified CAD and telephony systems in enabling full NG911 readiness and data interoperability.
Austin, TX	Consolidation Feasibility Report (2019)	Identified 17% technology lifecycle cost reduction and stronger cross-departmental collaboration post-consolidation.
Charlotte–Mecklenburg, NC	Governance Realignment Case (2019)	Reduced administrative overhead by 14% and established unified reporting through a single PSAP governance structure.
Denver, CO	Operational Performance Review (2020)	Reported 25% faster call-to-dispatch times and improved situational awareness across multi-discipline incidents.
Louisville, KY	Joint Emergency Communications Center Case Study (2018)	Achieved 27% reduction in transfer times and eliminated redundant call handling after merging police and fire/EMS PSAPs.

Appendix F: Roadblocks and Obstacles to Consolidation/Regionalization

This information was captured from the Bayside-Cudahy Consolidation Proposal (2023)[42]



[42] https://cms9files1.revize.com/cudahywi/BCC-CUD%20PSAP%20Proposal%202023.pdf

Appendix G: Necessities for Successful Consolidation Regionalization

This information was captured from the Bayside-Cudahy Consolidation Proposal (2023)[43]

[43] Ibid.

Appendix H: Single-Stage and Two-Stage Call Handling Workflow