

PSAP Consolidation/ Regionalization Benefits

Southeast Region 911 Dispatch Feasibility Study

When considering consolidation, local agencies and jurisdictions must carefully review the feasibility of full or partial consolidation, and whether or not consolidation is in the best interest of their service area. While GeoComm, the consultant hired for the Southeast study, has no pre-conceived notions regarding the feasibility of consolidation, it is recognized there are potential benefits when consolidating or regionalizing Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs). The most significant potential benefits include enhanced public safety through the PSAPs ability to share resources, coordinate responses, increase interoperability, and the possibility of more effective and efficient service by eliminating duplicate costs.

The extent of these benefits will vary depending on the consolidation model selected (e.g. full consolidation of 911 and dispatch, communications systems and related technology, partial consolidation, co-location, or a hybrid solution), the existing conditions present within the community, the political environment, and communities' standards and expectations for public safety services.

Other possible benefits that may be realized when consolidating or regionalizing PSAPs include:

- Service Level Improvements
 - Reduction or elimination of the transfer of 911 calls between PSAPs may provide quicker call processing and dispatch times, resulting in faster response times for field personnel and lowering the potential for human or technology errors.
- Improved Communication
 - Sharing of physical space may enhance communications between call takers, law enforcement, fire, and EMS dispatchers. This improved communications may result in field personnel receiving information more quickly and accurately which is particularly important in multi-jurisdictional or major emergency incidents.
 - A regional PSAP may increase effective resource management during large-scale incidents, natural disasters, and multi-jurisdiction/multi-agency incidents from a single point of control rather than fragmenting control among multiple PSAPs.
- Potential for Cost Savings
 - Long-term cost efficiencies may be realized from eliminating duplicate and expensive technology such as Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD), Record Management Systems (RMS), 911 answering equipment, radio consoles, logging recorders, etc.
 - Using one set of technology and systems in a consolidated environment may also allow for reduced costs associated with procurement, connectivity and maintenance.
 - Operational improvements may occur from more efficient use of staff including dispatchers, police officers, and fire fighters.



- Standardized Training
 - The State will be issuing new training requirements for all dispatchers, such as EMD (Emergency Medical Dispatch), and subsequent recertification training annually. A single training program for PSAP staff increases regional consistency and ensures staff members receive training to the same high and consistent standards.

As the public safety industry moves towards Next Generation 911, agencies will continue to examine the use of inter-agency shared facilities, networks and applications, technologies, staffing, and more in an effort to provide their communities with the latest technologies while considering costs savings for these services. Regionalization or some form of consolidation may result in a lower cost for these solutions compared to each community paying 100% of these costs.

Agencies considering consolidation or regionalization must carefully review the feasibility of consolidation, options for consolidation, actual benefits, costs savings and implications, and identify any potential obstacles as a result of consolidation to determine if any model of consolidation is in the public's best interest. GeoComm will present their findings and recommendations for the southeast region and looks forward to your input during public hearings planned for June of this year.

