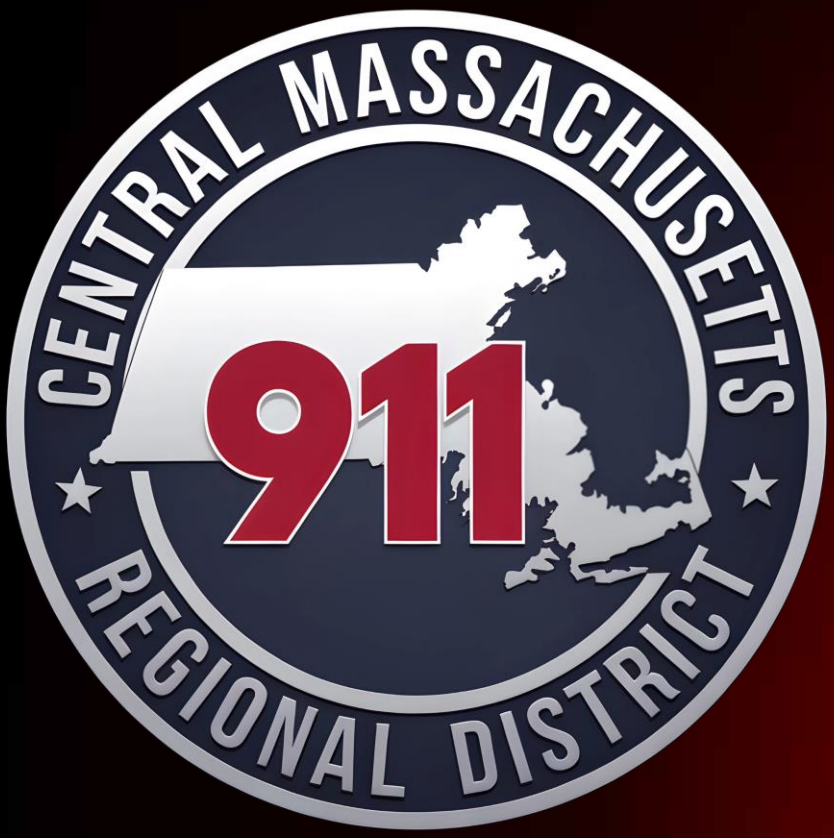


Strategic Plan

ACCURACY | SERVICE | READINESS | TEAMWORK | INTEGRITY | INNOVATION | RESILIENCE

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1.EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District Strategic Operations Plan (2025–2027) establishes a comprehensive framework for the continued development and modernization of regional emergency communications services across Central Massachusetts.

The establishment of the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District represents a major milestone in the evolution of public safety communications in the region. Following years of collaboration among municipal leaders, public safety agencies, and regional partners, the former Rutland Regional Emergency Communication Center transitioned in 2025 to a formal district governance model. This new structure provides a sustainable and scalable framework to support regional emergency communications services while ensuring that participating communities maintain representation in governance and operational decision-making.

The creation of the district reflects a growing recognition among municipalities that the operational and technological demands placed on modern public safety answering points (PSAPs) have increased significantly over the past decade. Emergency communications centers are now responsible for managing complex technology platforms, coordinating multi-agency emergency responses, integrating advanced data systems, and maintaining a highly trained workforce capable of handling life-critical incidents.

These responsibilities require substantial investment in technology, infrastructure, training, and personnel. For many municipalities, operating a stand-alone communications center is becoming increasingly difficult due to the rising costs associated with modern public safety systems. Regionalization offers a sustainable solution by allowing communities to share resources, leverage economies of scale, and improve operational coordination among emergency response agencies.

The Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District was established to address these challenges by providing a modern governance structure designed to support long-term operational sustainability, technological advancement, and regional collaboration.

The district currently provides emergency communications services to the founding member communities of Barre, Hubbardston, Oakham, Rutland, and Warren. However, the long-term vision for the district includes the expansion of regional services to additional municipalities, creating a larger and more resilient regional emergency communications network.

Over the next several years, the district will focus on several critical strategic initiatives that will define the future of emergency communications across the region.

One of the most significant initiatives is the planned expansion of the regional communications system to support additional municipalities. Several communities throughout Central Massachusetts have expressed interest in joining the district as they seek sustainable and cost-effective solutions for emergency communications services. Expansion of the district will strengthen regional interoperability, improve coordination during multi-jurisdictional incidents, and enhance the overall efficiency of public safety operations.

Another key initiative is the modernization of the district’s technology infrastructure. Modern emergency communications centers rely on sophisticated systems that allow dispatchers to coordinate complex emergency responses in real time. These systems include computer-aided dispatch platforms, geographic information systems, integrated data networks, and advanced radio communications infrastructure. The district is currently implementing a next-generation Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) platform designed to improve incident

management capabilities, enhance situational awareness for responders, and support the integration of emerging public safety technologies.

Technology modernization will also include upgrades to radio communications infrastructure, enhanced cybersecurity protections, and integration of advanced data systems designed to improve the flow of information between dispatchers and first responders.

A third major initiative outlined in this plan is the development of a new regional emergency communications headquarters facility. The current communications center was originally designed to support a smaller operational footprint and cannot accommodate the infrastructure, staffing levels, and technological capabilities required for an expanded regional communications system. As the district continues to grow, the development of a purpose-built facility will be essential to supporting modern emergency communications operations.

The new facility will be designed to incorporate redundant power and communications systems, enhanced cybersecurity protections, and operational redundancies that ensure continuity of operations during major emergencies or natural disasters. The facility will also include space for training, emergency operations coordination, and future regional expansion.

Workforce development is another central focus of this strategic plan. Public safety telecommunicators play a critical role in emergency response systems, serving as the first point of contact for individuals experiencing emergencies and coordinating the deployment of police, fire, and emergency medical services. Recruiting, training, and retaining skilled communications professionals has become increasingly challenging nationwide due to the specialized nature of the profession and the demanding operational environment.

To address these challenges, the district will continue to expand its training programs, develop leadership pipelines for supervisory personnel, and implement workforce wellness initiatives designed to support employee resilience and long-term career sustainability.

The district will also pursue national accreditation and professional certification through recognized public safety communications organizations. Accreditation programs such as those offered through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) and the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) establish nationally recognized standards for operational policies, training programs, and quality assurance practices. Achieving accreditation will demonstrate the district’s commitment to maintaining the highest levels of professionalism and operational excellence.

Financial sustainability is another key component of this strategic plan. The district will continue to pursue funding opportunities through the Massachusetts State 911 Department and other public safety grant programs to support technology investments, training programs, and infrastructure development. Regional cost-sharing among member communities will also provide a stable financial framework for long-term operations.

Ultimately, the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District Strategic Operations Plan provides a roadmap for the continued evolution of regional emergency communications in Central Massachusetts. By investing in modern technology, strengthening workforce capacity, expanding regional collaboration, and developing a resilient communications infrastructure, the district will continue to enhance public safety services for the communities it serves.

The successful implementation of this strategic plan will position the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District as a leading regional communications center in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and a model for collaborative emergency communications services nationwide.

CMR911 DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS 2026

Stephen Coleman
Town of Auburn

Andrew Golas
Town of Auburn

Maribel Larange
Town of Oakham
Secretary

Heather Butler
Town of Rutland
Chair

Robin Grimm
Town of Sturbridge

James Ferrera
Town of Warren

Melaine Jackson
Town of Barre

Peter Walker
Town of Hubbardston
Vice Chair

Justin Leduc
Town of Oxford

Jared Griggs
Town of Spencer

Austin Cyganiewicz
Town of Sutton

AGENCY PARTNERS

Auburn Police Department	Auburn Fire Department
Barre Police Department	Barre Fire Department
Charlton Police Department	Charlton Fire Department
Hubbardston Police Dept.	Hubbardston Fire Dept.
Oakham Police Department	Oakham Fire Deptartment
Oxford Police Dept.	Oxford Fire Department
Rutland Police Department	Rutland Fire Department

AGENCY PARTNERS

- Spencer Police Department
- Spencer Fire Department
- Sturbridge Police Department
- Sturbridge Fire Department
- Sutton Police Department
- Sutton Fire Department
- Warren Police Department
- Warren Fire Department

2. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

The Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District (CMR911D) represents a significant advancement in the regionalization of emergency communications services within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The district was formally established in 2025 following the successful transition from the Rutland Regional Emergency Communication Center (Rutland RECC) to a regional district governance model designed to ensure long-term operational sustainability, technological advancement, and collaborative public safety service delivery among participating municipalities.

Early Development of Regional Emergency Communications

Regional emergency communications services within Central Massachusetts began with the establishment of the Rutland Regional Emergency Communication Center, which was originally created to consolidate emergency dispatch services among several municipalities within Worcester County. The regional center was formed in recognition of the growing operational and technological challenges facing individual municipal public safety answering points (PSAPs).

Over time, the complexity of operating modern emergency communications systems has increased significantly. Public safety communications centers must now manage sophisticated technology platforms including computer-aided dispatch systems, advanced radio networks, geographic information systems (GIS), real-time responder data integration, and Next Generation 911 capabilities. These technological requirements require substantial financial investment and specialized technical expertise.

In addition to technological demands, emergency communications centers must maintain highly trained personnel capable of managing life-critical incidents and coordinating emergency responses across multiple jurisdictions. The combination of rising technology costs, workforce challenges, and increasing call volumes has made it increasingly difficult for individual municipalities to independently operate modern emergency communications centers.

Regional communications systems provide a sustainable solution by allowing municipalities to pool resources, share infrastructure, and coordinate emergency response operations across jurisdictional boundaries.

Development of the District Governance Model

Recognizing the need for a more sustainable long-term structure, local municipal leadership began exploring the formation of a regional communications district in 2017. The concept was initially championed by former Rutland Town Administrator Margaret Nartowicz in collaboration with Executive Director Michael Moriarty.

The proposed district model sought to transition the existing regional communications center from an intermunicipal service arrangement to a formal regional public entity governed by participating municipalities. The district structure would provide several key advantages, including:

- formal governance representation for member communities
- long-term financial stability
- improved access to state and federal funding opportunities
- the ability to expand services to additional municipalities
- stronger regional coordination of public safety communications

While early discussions regarding district formation generated interest among participating communities, achieving consensus on governance structures and operational frameworks required additional time and collaboration among municipal stakeholders.

Renewed Regional Collaboration and District Formation

In 2024, the concept of district formation was revisited with renewed momentum. Under the leadership of Rutland Town Administrator Austin Cyganiewicz, Hubbardston Town Administrator Nathan Boudreau, Executive Director Michael Moriarty, and Deputy Director Elizabeth DeFosse, municipal leaders re-engaged in discussions regarding the long-term sustainability of regional emergency communications services.

These discussions involved extensive collaboration among municipal officials, public safety leadership, and district administrators to develop a governance model that would balance regional coordination with local representation.

As part of the evaluation process, the Collins Center for Public Management conducted a comprehensive feasibility study examining the operational, financial, and governance implications of transitioning to a district model. The study analyzed several factors, including:

- regional operational efficiencies
- long-term financial sustainability
- governance and oversight structures
- opportunities for future regional expansion
- alignment with statewide public safety communications initiatives

The findings of the Collins Center study strongly supported the establishment of a regional communications district and confirmed that the district governance model would provide improved service delivery and long-term operational stability.

Following this analysis and extensive intermunicipal collaboration, the communities of Barre, Hubbardston, Oakham, Rutland, and Warren unanimously approved the formation of the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District.

Establishment of the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District

The Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District was officially established in 2025 as a regional public entity responsible for governing and operating the Central Massachusetts Regional Emergency Communication Center.

The district governance structure provides equal representation for member municipalities and establishes a formal framework for decision-making, oversight, and operational coordination. Governance responsibilities are carried out through a Board of Directors and supporting committees responsible for administrative, operational, and financial oversight of district operations.

The district structure enables participating municipalities to collectively manage the region’s emergency communications infrastructure while ensuring that each community maintains a voice in strategic and operational decision-making.

Operational Role of the Central Massachusetts Regional Emergency Communication Center

The Central Massachusetts Regional Emergency Communication Center serves as the primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for member communities within the district. The communications center is responsible for receiving emergency and non-emergency calls for service and coordinating the dispatch of law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services.

Public safety telecommunicators at the center serve as the critical link between the public and emergency response agencies. Dispatch personnel are responsible for gathering information from callers, assessing incident priorities, coordinating response resources, and maintaining communication with responders during active incidents.

In addition to emergency call handling and dispatch operations, the communications center supports a wide range of public safety functions including:

- coordination of multi-agency emergency incidents
- regional interoperability among public safety agencies
- radio communications management
- incident documentation and reporting
- integration of emergency medical dispatch protocols
- coordination with state and regional emergency management agencies

As the district continues to grow and modernize, the communications center will remain the operational hub of the regional emergency communications system.

Positioning for Future Regional Growth

The formation of the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District positions the organization to support continued regional collaboration and expansion of emergency communications services throughout Central Massachusetts.

Many municipalities across the Commonwealth are facing similar challenges related to staffing shortages, technology costs, and infrastructure limitations within their local dispatch operations. Regional communications districts offer a sustainable model for addressing these challenges by providing shared services that enhance operational efficiency while maintaining strong local representation.

The district governance structure was intentionally designed to accommodate future regional growth, allowing additional communities to join the system as opportunities arise.

By establishing a modern governance framework, strengthening operational capacity, and investing in advanced communications technologies, the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District is positioned to serve as a regional leader in public safety communications for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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3. MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES



The Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District operates in a mission-critical, life-safety environment where seconds matter and decisions directly influence the outcome of emergency incidents. As the region's primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), the Central Massachusetts Regional Emergency Communication Center (CMRECC) serves as the critical link between the public and emergency response agencies.

The Mission, Vision, and Core Values of the District establish the foundation for organizational leadership, operational performance, and long-term strategic planning. These guiding principles ensure that every operational decision, investment, and policy initiative supports the district's fundamental responsibility to protect life, property, and responder safety.

Consistent with professional standards established by national public safety communications organizations, the district maintains a formal framework for defining and reviewing its Mission, Vision, Values, Goals, and Objectives. These statements are integrated into training programs, performance evaluation systems, and strategic planning initiatives to ensure alignment across all levels of the organization.

Organizational Mission

Standing at the front line of every crisis, the Central Massachusetts Regional Emergency Communication Center protects life and property by delivering time-sensitive information and coordinating the emergency resources that drive public safety response.

As the first point of contact for individuals experiencing emergencies, the communications center serves as the operational hub that connects citizens, first responders, and command staff during critical incidents. Dispatch personnel gather and evaluate essential information, prioritize emergency calls, and coordinate police, fire, and emergency medical services across the region.

Through professional call handling, rapid information exchange, and coordinated dispatch operations, the district ensures that help begins the moment the call is answered.

The district fulfills this mission by:

- delivering accurate and timely emergency communications
- coordinating emergency response resources across jurisdictions
- supporting responder safety through effective information management
- maintaining continuous 24-hour operational readiness
- integrating modern technology systems to enhance situational awareness

Every operational action within the communications center is guided by the central objective of protecting life, stabilizing emergencies, and supporting the success of field responders

Organizational Purpose

The purpose of the Central Massachusetts Regional Emergency Communication Center is to strengthen the entire emergency response system by ensuring that emergency communications are accurate, reliable, and coordinated from the moment an incident begins until it is resolved.

Dispatch personnel perform a critical operational role within the public safety system. Communications professionals serve as the first link in the chain of emergency response, responsible for collecting critical information, triaging emergency calls, deploying responders, and maintaining situational awareness throughout an incident.

The communications center supports public safety operations by:

- ensuring that emergency calls are processed rapidly and accurately
- providing responders with real-time operational intelligence
- coordinating multi-agency communication during complex incidents
- maintaining consistent communication with command staff and field units
- supporting large-scale operations such as structure fires, hazardous materials incidents, mass-casualty events, and major weather emergencies

By maintaining operational excellence in emergency communications, the district strengthens the ability of first responders to protect communities throughout the region.

Organizational Vision

The Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District envisions a future in which regional emergency communications are supported by a modern, resilient, and collaborative communications center capable of managing the most complex public safety challenges.

The district seeks to establish a communications center that sets the standard for professional excellence in emergency services through advanced technology, highly trained personnel, and strong regional partnerships.

This vision includes:

• a unified regional communications system serving multiple municipalities
• a purpose-built emergency communications headquarters designed for modern operations
• advanced dispatch technology supporting real-time data integration and responder awareness
• highly trained communications professionals recognized as essential members of the emergency response system
• regional coordination that strengthens public safety operations across municipal boundaries

Core Values

The values of the Central Massachusetts Regional Emergency Communication Center guide the behavior, decision-making, and operational culture of the organization. These values define the professional standards expected of all personnel and shape how the district serves both the public and its public safety partners.

Service
We serve the public with professionalism, empathy, and composure during their most critical moments. Emergency callers often reach out during the most stressful situations of their lives, and it is our responsibility to provide calm, clear, and compassionate assistance. Service to the community means ensuring that every caller receives immediate attention and that every request for emergency assistance is handled with urgency and professionalism.

Accuracy
Information is the foundation of emergency response. Dispatchers must gather and communicate precise information to responders in order to support safe and effective operations. The district is committed to maintaining the highest standards of accuracy in call processing, dispatch operations, and information management.

Readiness
Emergency communications centers must be prepared to manage a wide range of incidents, including structure fires, medical emergencies, active threats, hazardous materials incidents, weather emergencies, and large-scale disasters. Operational readiness requires continuous training, reliable technology systems, and disciplined operational procedures.

Teamwork
Public safety is a collaborative effort. Dispatchers work closely with police officers, firefighters, emergency medical personnel, municipal leadership, and regional partners. The communications center operates as part of a unified emergency response system in which coordination and cooperation are essential to operational success.

Integrity
Public trust is fundamental to emergency communications operations. The district upholds the highest ethical standards and maintains accountability for every decision made within the communications center. Integrity requires transparency, professionalism, and adherence to established policies and procedures.

Innovation
Public safety communications technology continues to evolve rapidly. The district is committed to pursuing technological improvements, modernized procedures, and innovative operational solutions that enhance the effectiveness of emergency response.

Resilience
Emergency communications personnel regularly manage stressful and traumatic situations. Maintaining composure and operational effectiveness during high-intensity incidents is essential. The district supports employee wellness and resilience to ensure that personnel can continue to perform their duties effectively in demanding circumstances.

Strategic Principles and Organizational Commitments

To ensure that the Mission, Vision, and Core Values translate into measurable operational outcomes, the district has established several guiding strategic principles.

Life Safety First
All operational decisions prioritize the protection of life, the safety of responders, and the stabilization of emergency incidents.

Operational Excellence
The district will maintain professional standards in training, policy development, and operational procedures consistent with national public safety communications best practices.

Regional Collaboration
The district will strengthen partnerships with law enforcement, fire departments, emergency medical services, municipal governments, and regional public safety organizations.

Continuous Improvement
Performance data, quality assurance programs, and operational reviews will be used to identify opportunities for improvement and guide strategic decision-making.

Workforce Investment
The district will continue to invest in the professional development, wellness, and long-term career growth of its communications professionals.

4.REGIONAL ENVIROMENT & NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Public safety communications systems across the United States are experiencing significant transformation driven by increasing operational complexity, workforce challenges, and the rapid advancement of emergency communications technology. These pressures are reshaping how municipalities provide 911 services and are driving a national trend toward regional emergency communications systems.

For many communities, the traditional model of operating a stand-alone municipal dispatch center is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain. Modern emergency communications operations require significant investment in technology infrastructure, staffing, training, cybersecurity, and operational redundancy. At the same time, public safety telecommunicators face demanding workloads and high levels of stress, contributing to recruitment and retention challenges nationwide.

These factors have accelerated the shift toward regional communications systems that allow municipalities to pool resources, share infrastructure, and coordinate emergency response across jurisdictional boundaries.

National Workforce Challenges in Emergency Communications

Emergency communications centers nationwide are experiencing a persistent staffing shortage. According to the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) Project RETAINS study, the emergency communications industry has struggled with staffing and retention challenges for more than two decades, prompting the creation of a national research initiative to identify the causes of workforce shortages and develop strategies for improving staffing levels.

Research conducted through the APCO Project RETAINS program found that the average annual turnover rate for public safety telecommunicators has historically exceeded that of many other public service professions, with studies identifying turnover rates around 17 percent nationally.

Several factors contribute to these workforce challenges, including:

- high operational stress and exposure to traumatic incidents
- demanding shift schedules and mandatory overtime
- extended training requirements for new personnel
- competition from other public safety and technology-related careers

Modern dispatch centers must also invest significant time and resources in training new personnel. In many agencies, preparing a new public safety telecommunicator can require hundreds of hours of training and mentorship, often requiring experienced personnel to step away from operational duties to serve as trainers. This dynamic can place additional strain on already limited staffing resources.

These workforce challenges have made it increasingly difficult for small municipal dispatch centers to maintain adequate staffing levels and provide continuous operational coverage.

Increasing Technological Demands

In addition to staffing challenges, the technological environment surrounding emergency communications has become significantly more complex.

Modern Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) must maintain and operate a wide range of advanced systems, including:

- computer-aided dispatch platforms
- geographic information systems (GIS)
- integrated radio communications networks
- emergency medical dispatch protocols
- cybersecurity protections
- real-time responder data systems

The nationwide transition to Next Generation 911 (NG911) technology is also reshaping emergency communications infrastructure. NG911 systems allow emergency callers to transmit text messages, and location data directly to communications centers, significantly expanding the information that dispatchers must process during emergency incidents. These technological advancements improve emergency response capabilities.

Regional communications centers are often better positioned to support these technologies because they can distribute infrastructure costs across multiple municipalities and maintain specialized technical expertise within a centralized organization.

Regionalization Trends in Massachusetts

Massachusetts has been a national leader in encouraging the regionalization of emergency communications services. The Massachusetts State 911 Department has actively promoted the development of Regional Emergency Communications Centers (RECCs) as a strategy to improve service quality and operational sustainability.

Through the State 911 grant program, the Commonwealth provides financial incentives and development grants to communities that establish regional dispatch centers. These programs support technology upgrades, infrastructure development, and operational costs associated with regional communications systems.

As a result of these efforts, several regional communications centers have been established across Massachusetts, serving multiple municipalities through centralized dispatch operations. These regional centers provide shared services for police, fire, and emergency medical communications while maintaining operational coordination among participating communities.

Regional communications centers also allow municipalities to focus resources on frontline emergency response services while ensuring that dispatch operations remain modern, professional, and fully staffed.

The Decline of Stand-Alone Dispatch Centers

Across the United States, many municipalities are reevaluating whether operating independent dispatch centers remains viable in the long term.

Several factors are contributing to the decline of stand-alone centers:

Rising Technology Costs

Maintaining modern dispatch technology including CAD systems, radio infrastructure, and NG911 capabilities requires significant financial investment that can be difficult for small municipalities to sustain independently.

Staffing and Training Challenges

Recruiting, training, and retaining dispatch personnel is increasingly difficult for small centers with limited staffing pools.

Operational Redundancy Requirements

Modern emergency communications standards emphasize system redundancy and continuity of operations. Stand-alone centers may struggle to maintain backup systems and redundant staffing.

Multi-Jurisdictional Emergency Response

Many emergency incidents now involve multiple agencies responding across jurisdictional boundaries. Regional communications centers improve coordination by managing multi-agency responses within a single operational environment.

These factors have led many municipalities to explore regional dispatch solutions that improve operational resilience and reduce long-term costs.

Why the Regional District Model Is the Future

The Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District was established in recognition of these evolving challenges and opportunities.

The district governance model provides a sustainable framework for regional collaboration while ensuring that participating communities maintain representation in operational and strategic decision-making.

Regional districts offer several key advantages:

- shared operational costs across multiple communities
- centralized technology infrastructure
- improved interoperability among police, fire, and EMS agencies
- expanded staffing resources and operational coverage
- stronger access to state and federal funding programs

Perhaps most importantly, regional communications centers provide a more resilient operational structure capable of managing large-scale emergencies and complex multi-agency incidents.

The Vision for an Eleven-Community Regional System

The Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District is positioned to support the continued expansion of regional emergency communications services across Central Massachusetts.

The district's long-term strategic vision includes the development of a regional communications network capable of serving up to eleven municipalities within the region.

An eleven-community regional communications system would provide:

- enhanced operational coordination across the region
- improved responder safety through shared communications infrastructure
- a larger professional workforce capable of maintaining continuous coverage
- increased financial sustainability through shared operational costs
- stronger eligibility for state and federal funding programs

By expanding the regional communications system, the district can strengthen emergency response capabilities while providing municipalities with a sustainable and modern dispatch solution.

As communities across the Commonwealth continue to evaluate the future of their emergency communications systems, regional collaboration through the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District provides a forward-looking model that enhances both public safety and operational efficiency.

The Cost of Not Regionalizing

While many municipalities historically operated their own public safety dispatch centers, the operational and financial realities of modern emergency communications have made this model increasingly difficult to sustain. Municipal leaders across the country are now confronting a critical question: whether maintaining an independent dispatch center remains feasible in the long term.

The challenges associated with operating a stand-alone Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) have become more pronounced in recent years due to rising technology costs, workforce shortages, and expanding operational requirements. These pressures place smaller municipal dispatch centers at significant risk of falling behind modern public safety communications standards.

For many communities, regional emergency communications systems provide a more sustainable and resilient alternative.

Rising Technology Costs

Modern emergency communications centers rely on highly specialized technology platforms that require continuous maintenance, upgrades, and technical support. These systems include computer-aided dispatch (CAD) platforms, integrated radio communications networks, geographic information systems (GIS), emergency medical dispatch protocols, and cybersecurity infrastructure.

In addition to these systems, the nationwide transition to Next Generation 911 (NG911) is introducing new capabilities that allow emergency callers to send text messages, images, video, and enhanced location data to communications centers. While these technologies significantly improve emergency response capabilities, they also require substantial infrastructure investment.

For small municipal dispatch centers, the cost of maintaining these systems independently can be difficult to absorb. Regional communications centers distribute these costs across multiple municipalities, allowing communities to benefit from modern technology without bearing the full financial burden individually.

Staffing and Operational Coverage

Emergency communications centers must maintain continuous 24-hour staffing to ensure that emergency calls are answered and emergency responders can be dispatched without delay.

National industry standards and staffing models emphasize the importance of maintaining adequate staffing levels to manage call volume, coordinate multi-agency incidents, and ensure operational redundancy during major emergencies.

However, small dispatch centers often operate with minimal staffing levels, which can create operational challenges when employees are unavailable due to illness, vacation, training requirements, or unexpected emergencies.

According to research conducted through APCO Project RETAINS, emergency communications centers nationwide continue to experience persistent staffing shortages and high turnover rates. These workforce challenges are particularly difficult for small municipal centers that may have limited staffing pools from which to recruit and train new personnel.

Regional communications centers provide a larger staffing base that improves operational flexibility, reduces reliance on overtime, and ensures that dispatch operations can continue uninterrupted during staffing fluctuations.

Operational Redundancy and System Resilience

Modern public safety communications operations must maintain operational redundancy to ensure that emergency services remain available during system failures, natural disasters, or major incidents.

Redundancy includes backup power systems, redundant communications infrastructure, alternate dispatch capabilities, and contingency staffing plans.

Maintaining this level of operational resilience can be difficult for small municipal dispatch centers operating with limited resources. Regional communications centers are better positioned to maintain redundant systems and continuity-of-operations capabilities that ensure uninterrupted emergency communications services during major incidents.

Liability and Public Safety Risk

Emergency communications centers operate in a high-liability environment where operational errors or system failures can have significant consequences. Delayed call processing, communication failures, or staffing shortages can affect response times and potentially impact life-safety outcomes.

Municipalities operating small dispatch centers must ensure that their communications operations meet modern professional standards for training, staffing, and technology. Failure to maintain these standards may increase operational and legal risk for municipalities.

Regional communications centers provide a structured operational environment with standardized policies, professional training programs, and quality assurance systems designed to maintain consistent service delivery.

Financial Sustainability

Operating an independent dispatch center requires municipalities to maintain ongoing investments in staffing, technology infrastructure, facility maintenance, and training programs.

In many cases, the cost of maintaining these systems continues to rise faster than municipal budgets can support. Regional dispatch centers allow participating communities to share operational costs while benefiting from professional communications services supported by modern infrastructure.

Additionally, regional emergency communications centers are often better positioned to access state and federal grant funding programs designed to support regional public safety initiatives.

A Sustainable Path Forward

The challenges associated with operating stand-alone municipal dispatch centers have led many communities across Massachusetts and the United States to explore regional communications models.

Regional emergency communications districts offer a sustainable path forward by combining resources, strengthening operational capabilities, and ensuring that emergency communications services remain reliable, modern, and professionally managed.

By participating in a regional communications district, municipalities can enhance responder safety, improve emergency coordination, and ensure that their communities receive the highest level of emergency communications service possible.

The Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District was established to provide this regional solution—creating a modern communications system capable of supporting the growing public safety needs of the region for decades to come.

5.STRATEGIC GOALS (2025-2028)

The Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District has identified a series of strategic priorities that will guide the development and modernization of the regional emergency communications system over the next three years.

These priorities were developed through evaluation of operational trends, workforce challenges, technology requirements, and regional public safety needs. The goals outlined in this plan are designed to strengthen the district's ability to support emergency responders, maintain high-quality communications services, and ensure long-term sustainability for participating municipalities.

Each strategic goal reflects the district's mission to protect life and property through professional emergency communications while positioning the organization to support future regional growth.

The strategic goals for the 2025–2028 planning period focus on five core areas:

- regional service expansion
- technology modernization
- workforce development
- infrastructure investment
- professional standards and accreditation

Together, these goals establish a comprehensive roadmap for strengthening the region's emergency communications system and ensuring that the district remains prepared to meet the evolving demands of public safety operations.

These strategic goals have been modeled after the operational practices of existing regional 911 districts, including their use of proven technologies, established staffing models, and organizational structures currently in place within successful regional emergency communications centers.

Strategic Goal 1

Expand Regional Emergency Communications Services

The Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District will continue to pursue opportunities to expand the regional communications system to additional municipalities within Central Massachusetts.

Regional expansion strengthens the emergency response system by improving interoperability between agencies, consolidating communications infrastructure, and creating a larger professional workforce capable of supporting complex multi-agency incidents.

Over the next several years, the district will work collaboratively with municipal leaders, public safety agencies, and regional stakeholders to evaluate opportunities for additional communities to join the district.

Expansion efforts will include:

- conducting operational assessments for prospective member communities
- evaluating dispatch workload, staffing requirements, and call volume impacts
- coordinating technology integration for police, fire, and EMS systems
- assisting municipalities in evaluating regional dispatch service models
- ensuring that governance structures remain balanced and representative

The long-term vision for the district includes the development of a regional communications system capable of serving up to 11-22 municipalities, strengthening public safety coordination throughout the region.

Ongoing meetings have been going on with the following:

Southbridge – Millbury – Uxbridge – Douglas - Northbridge

Strategic Goal 2

Modernize Emergency Communications Technology

Modern public safety communications systems rely on advanced technology platforms capable of supporting complex emergency response operations.

The district will continue to invest in technology modernization initiatives that improve situational awareness, strengthen responder coordination, and enhance operational reliability.

Key technology initiatives include:

- implementation of a next-generation Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) platform
- enhanced GIS mapping integration for improved incident location accuracy
- expansion and modernization of radio communications infrastructure
- integration of responder data platforms and real-time information systems
- development of cybersecurity protections and redundant communications systems

These technology investments will allow dispatch personnel to manage incidents more effectively while ensuring that responders receive timely and accurate information during emergencies.

Some of the planned initiatives are:

Tri-Band Radios District-Wide (Multi-Year Phased Project)

The Tri-Band Radio Initiative is a multi-year, phased technology project designed to enhance interoperability, reliability, and operational efficiency across all public safety agencies served by the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District. This initiative involves gradually equipping police, fire, EMS, and command staff with tri-band portable and mobile radios capable of operating across multiple radio frequency bands (VHF, UHF, and 700/800 MHz)**.** By supporting multiple radio bands in a single device, these radios allow responders to communicate seamlessly with neighboring jurisdictions, regional task forces, and state agencies without requiring separate equipment or manual patching by dispatch.

Implementing tri-band radios district-wide significantly improves mutual aid coordination, disaster response capability, and cross-agency interoperability, particularly during large-scale incidents where multiple departments and communication systems must operate together. The project also reduces radio infrastructure limitations, improves coverage redundancy, and ensures that first responders can maintain communication regardless of the system being used by assisting agencies. Over time, this phased deployment will modernize the district's communications environment, improve responder safety, and support the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District's mission of providing reliable, resilient, and interoperable communications for all member communities**.**

Station Alerting District-Wide (Bryx911) – Multi-Year Implementation

The District-Wide Station Alerting Initiative involves the phased implementation of the Bryx911 station alerting system across all fire and EMS facilities served by the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District. Bryx911 is a modern, CAD-integrated alerting platform that automatically notifies firefighters and EMS personnel of incidents through multiple channels, including station speakers, visual alerting displays, mobile applications, and in-apparatus notifications. When a call is dispatched through the CAD system, Bryx911 instantly delivers the incident information, location details, and response assignments directly to the appropriate stations and responding personnel.

Deploying Bryx911 district-wide will significantly improve response times, accuracy of information, and responder readiness. The system reduces reliance on traditional radio-only dispatching by ensuring that critical incident information is delivered clearly and simultaneously through multiple alerting methods. This helps minimize missed transmissions, improves nighttime alerting with controlled lighting and audio levels, and ensures that firefighters and EMS personnel receive consistent and detailed incident information before responding. In addition, Bryx911 supports automatic turnout tracking, mapping integration, and mobile notifications**,** allowing responders to view call details, route mapping, and status updates while en route.

As this system is expanded across all participating communities, it will create a standardized alerting environment throughout the district, strengthening coordination during mutual aid incidents and large-scale emergencies. Ultimately, the Bryx911 station alerting system will enhance operational efficiency, improve firefighter and EMS safety, and support the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District's goal of delivering faster, clearer, and more reliable emergency communications to the communities it serves**.**

Tablets in All Cruisers and Apparatus – District-Wide Technology Initiative

The Tablets in Cruisers and Apparatus Initiative is a district-wide technology modernization effort that equips all police cruisers, fire apparatus, and EMS vehicles with ruggedized tablets integrated with the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District's public safety systems. These devices provide first responders with real-time access to critical information from the Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system**,** mapping tools, incident details, responder notes, and other operational data while en route to and operating at incidents.

By deploying tablets in all response vehicles, agencies will be able to receive instant call information, turn-by-turn navigation, pre-plan data, hydrant locations, building information, and situational updates directly from the dispatch center. This reduces reliance on lengthy radio transmissions and allows dispatchers to focus on coordinating resources and managing incident communications. Responders can quickly review incident details, access supplemental information, and update their status electronically, improving efficiency and accuracy in the field.

This initiative will also enhance interagency coordination and situational awareness**,** as all responding units will have access to the same real-time information regardless of the agency responding. During mutual aid or multi-agency incidents, responders will be able to view shared mapping, call notes, and operational updates, improving coordination and safety.

Overall, equipping all cruisers and apparatus with tablets will modernize field operations, improve communication between dispatch and responders, reduce radio congestion, and support the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District's commitment to providing faster, more informed, and technology-driven emergency response across all member communities**.**

Alice Virtual Receptionist – After-Hours Station Support

The Alice Virtual Receptionist Initiative introduces an AI-powered virtual receptionist system designed to support police, fire, and administrative facilities across the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District when stations transition to "dark" or unstaffed conditions after normal business hours. Many public safety buildings close their front desks overnight or during off-hours, which can create challenges for citizens seeking assistance at the station. The Alice system provides an interactive kiosk or video-based interface at station entrances that allows residents to communicate with a virtual receptionist capable of guiding them to the appropriate service or connecting them with the proper agency personnel.

Through voice interaction, touchscreen prompts, and integrated communication capabilities, Alice can assist visitors with common administrative needs such as directing them to online services, providing instructions for reporting non-emergency matters, initiating contact with on-duty personnel, or connecting them to dispatch if immediate assistance is required. If a situation is identified as urgent or potentially emergency-related, the system can automatically route the interaction to the 911 center or notify on-duty officers or responders.

Implementing Alice Virtual Receptionist technology will allow agencies to maintain public accessibility even when facilities are unstaffed, while reducing the need for dispatchers to handle administrative walk-in inquiries that are not emergency related. This ensures that 911 telecommunicators remain focused on emergency communications while still providing residents with a reliable method to obtain assistance or information after hours.

By standardizing this technology across district facilities, the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District will improve public service availability, operational efficiency, and resource allocation, ensuring that residents can still access help when stations are closed while maintaining the highest level of emergency communication readiness.

Prepared 911 – Non-Emergency AI Call Taking

The Prepared 911 Non-Emergency AI Call Taking Initiative is designed to modernize how non-emergency administrative calls are handled across the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District while allowing dispatchers to remain focused on their primary responsibility answering and managing emergency 9-1-1 calls. Regional 911 centers are designed and funded to serve as Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs**)** for emergency communications, not as administrative call centers for routine agency business lines. Industry standards and best practices in emergency communications consistently emphasize that time spent answering administrative or non-urgent calls can significantly reduce the availability of trained telecommunicators to answer true emergency calls, especially during high-volume periods. When dispatchers must process routine inquiries such as administrative questions, records requests, or general information calls, it can take valuable minutes and even hours of staffing time away from handling life-safety emergencies**.**

The Prepared 911 platform introduces an AI-powered non-emergency call handling system capable of answering business-line calls, gathering information from callers, and directing them to the appropriate service without requiring a dispatcher to answer every call. The system uses conversational AI to determine the nature of the caller's request and can provide automated guidance for common needs such as reporting minor incidents, obtaining general information, or directing callers to the correct municipal department. If at any point the system detects that the caller's situation may involve a safety concern or emergency, the call is immediately transferred to a live 911 call taker, ensuring that no emergency request is delayed.

While the introduction of AI-assisted call handling will represent a change for some residents who are accustomed to speaking directly with a dispatcher on agency business lines, it ultimately supports the core mission of the regional 911 center: protecting life and property by ensuring rapid access to emergency **services**. By allowing technology to handle routine administrative inquiries, dispatchers can remain focused on emergency call answering, radio coordination, and responder safety. This approach improves operational efficiency, reduces call wait times for emergencies, and ensures that highly trained telecommunicators are available when seconds truly matter.

As this system is implemented across the district, the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District will conduct public education to help residents understand when to use 9-1-1 versus non-emergency services, and how the new system works. Ultimately, the Prepared 911 Non-Emergency AI Call Taking initiative represents a forward-thinking solution that aligns with modern public safety communications practices, ensuring the district remains focused on its most critical responsibility providing fast, reliable emergency response coordination for the communities it serves**.**

Hexagon CAD System Transition – District-Wide Public Safety Platform

The Hexagon Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) Transition is a major technology modernization project that will replace the district's existing dispatch platform with the Hexagon OnCall CAD system, a next-generation public safety software platform used by regional emergency communication centers across the country. This transition will provide the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District with a modern, scalable dispatch system capable of supporting the growing number of agencies and communities served by the district.

The new Hexagon CAD platform will significantly improve how emergency calls are processed, resources are managed, and information is shared between dispatchers and first responders. The system integrates call-taking, incident management, mapping, unit tracking, mobile data, and records systems into a single platform, allowing dispatchers to more efficiently process calls and coordinate responses across police, fire, and EMS agencies. Responders in the field will also benefit from improved access to real-time incident information through mobile devices and in-vehicle technology, ensuring they have critical details while responding to emergencies.

A key advantage of the Hexagon system is its ability to enhance interoperability and regional coordination. As the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District continues to expand and integrate additional communities, the system will allow multiple agencies to operate within the same CAD environment while maintaining their individual operational structures. This supports better coordination during mutual aid incidents, large-scale emergencies, and multi-agency responses.

The transition to Hexagon CAD will occur through a carefully managed implementation process that includes system configuration, GIS mapping integration, training for dispatch personnel, and testing with all participating agencies. Once fully implemented, the system will improve dispatcher efficiency, reduce call processing times, enhance situational awareness for responders, and provide better reporting and data analytics capabilities.

Overall, the Hexagon CAD transition represents a critical investment in the district's future, ensuring that the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District has a modern, reliable, and fully integrated dispatch system capable of supporting current operations and future regional growth while continuing to provide high-quality emergency communication services to all member communities.

Strategic Goal 3

Strengthen Workforce Development and Professional Excellence

Public safety telecommunicators serve as the first link in the emergency response system and play a critical role in ensuring that emergency incidents are managed effectively.

Recruiting, training, and retaining highly skilled communications professionals is essential to maintaining reliable emergency communications services.

The district will pursue a workforce development strategy focused on professional training, leadership development, and employee wellness.

Key initiatives include:

- expanding recruitment efforts to address staffing shortages
- implementing structured dispatcher training and mentorship programs
- expanding Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) certification programs
- developing leadership training programs for supervisory personnel
- supporting employee wellness and resilience initiatives

By investing in workforce development, the district will ensure that communications personnel remain highly trained and prepared to manage the demanding operational environment of emergency communications.

To support the continued growth of the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District and ensure long-term operational efficiency, the district has developed a proposed organizational and staffing model based on best practices observed in established regional emergency communications centers**.** These centers have successfully implemented structured staffing models, clearly defined leadership roles, and modern technology frameworks that support high call volumes, multi-agency coordination, and expanding regional service areas. The following model outlines the proposed organizational structure for the district, including newly established positions and operational roles designed to strengthen supervision, improve service delivery, and ensure the district can effectively meet the increasing demands placed on a regional 911 communications center.

Also endorsed unanimously by the Districts Operations Board on December 08, 2025.

The Future CMRECC Operational Model

Building a Modern Regional Emergency Communications Center

The Central Massachusetts Regional Emergency Communications Center (CMRECC) is transitioning toward a modern, layered operational model designed to support the increasing demands placed on regional 9-1-1 centers. As emergency communications systems evolve and call volumes increase, regional centers must adopt staffing structures that separate responsibilities, provide clear leadership, and create specialized operational roles.

This model establishes a functional, scalable organizational structure that aligns with operational frameworks currently used in large regional Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) throughout Massachusetts and across the United States. These centers have demonstrated that specialized roles, defined leadership tiers, and dedicated operational positions significantly improve safety, service delivery, and operational efficiency.

Regionalization studies and PSAP operational guidance consistently identify improved staffing depth, standardized protocols, enhanced mutual aid coordination, and more professionalized dispatch services as key benefits of regional emergency communications centers.

The CMRECC future model builds on these proven principles to ensure the district can provide reliable, scalable, and high-performance emergency communications services for all participating municipalities.

A Layered Operational Structure

The future CMRECC model establishes a clear hierarchy of leadership, operational management, and specialized communications roles, ensuring that responsibilities are distributed appropriately and that personnel can focus on their core functions.

Executive Leadership

The Executive Director and Deputy Director provide strategic direction, policy development, financial oversight, and intergovernmental coordination for the district.

Mid-Level Operational Leadership

A group of specialized service chiefs and managers oversee core operational functions, including:

- Operations
- Logistics and technology systems
- Training and professional development
- Quality assurance and accreditation compliance
- Administrative and support services

This leadership layer ensures that operational responsibilities are distributed among subject-matter experts rather than concentrated on a small number of personnel, improving accountability and organizational performance.

Shift Leadership

Emergency Communications Supervisors provide real-time operational command of the dispatch floor, ensuring policy compliance, supporting staff during critical incidents, and coordinating large-scale or multi-agency responses.

Operational Specialists

The operational workforce is structured into specialized communications roles:

- Police Communications Specialists
- Fire Communications Specialists
- 9-1-1 Call Takers

This separation of responsibilities allows each position to focus on a specific operational task, eliminating split attention during critical emergencies.

Dramatically Improved Operational Safety

Historically, smaller dispatch centers often relied on single-dispatcher or multi-role positions, where one person simultaneously handled call-taking, dispatching, radio communications, and incident documentation.

While functional in low-volume environments, this model introduces significant operational risks as call volumes and incident complexity increase.

The future CMRECC model eliminates this risk by implementing specialized operational positions, ensuring that:

- Call takers focus entirely on gathering emergency information.
- Police dispatchers maintain officer safety and situational awareness.
- Fire dispatchers coordinate apparatus and EMS operations.

In larger PSAP environments, separating call-taking and dispatching functions improves communication flow and reduces the risk of errors during emergency incidents.

This model ensures that personnel are never forced to divide attention during life-critical events.

Faster, More Accurate Dispatching

A specialized dispatch structure significantly improves the speed and accuracy of emergency response coordination.

With dedicated operational roles:

- Radio traffic is monitored continuously.
- CAD documentation is completed in real time.
- Call information is immediately transmitted to responders.
- Dispatchers remain focused on responder safety and tactical coordination.

The result is a measurable reduction in dispatch delays, radio errors, and misrouted incidents, while improving overall incident management.

Regional dispatch studies have shown that consolidated and specialized communications centers provide more efficient resource allocation, improved mutual aid coordination, and more effective emergency response management.

High-Quality 9-1-1 Call Taking and Emergency Medical Dispatch

Emergency call taking requires complete focus. The new model allows call takers to concentrate fully on:

- Gathering accurate incident information
- Providing life-saving emergency medical instructions
- Maintaining caller control during chaotic emergencies
- Documenting critical information for responding units

Removing radio and dispatch responsibilities from call takers ensures that life-saving instructions such as CPR guidance are never interrupted by radio traffic or dispatch duties.

This significantly improves the quality and consistency of emergency medical dispatch performance.

True Operational Supervision

The model also restores a critical operational element often missing in smaller centers: true supervisory oversight.

Emergency Communications Supervisors will be able to focus on:

- Monitoring active incidents
- Ensuring radio discipline and procedural compliance
- Providing immediate coaching and operational guidance
- Coordinating major incidents and mutual aid operations
- Supporting dispatch personnel during high-stress events

This ensures that supervisors are leading operations rather than functioning as additional dispatchers, strengthening command presence on the dispatch floor.

Training and Professional Development

A dedicated Training Service Chief and Communications Training Officers (CTOs) create a structured training environment where:

- New hires complete standardized training programs
- Skills are reinforced through structured mentorship
- Weaknesses are identified early
- Specialized operational training is delivered consistently

Training standardization significantly improves employee competency and reduces trainee attrition.

Continuous Quality Assurance and Accreditation

The addition of a Quality Assurance Manager ensures the center maintains a continuous improvement model by:

- Conducting routine call reviews
- Monitoring EMD compliance
- Identifying operational trends
- Aligning operations with national standards

These processes are essential for agencies pursuing CALEA and APCO accreditation, which represent the highest standards in public safety communications.

Technology Reliability and System Management

Modern regional centers rely heavily on advanced communications technology including:

- Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD)
- Radio infrastructure
- emergency alerting systems
- integrated data services

A Logistics Service Chief provides centralized oversight of these systems, ensuring that equipment failures, technology upgrades, and infrastructure projects are managed proactively.

This prevents technology issues from disrupting dispatch operations and supports the continued modernization of the center.

Administrative and Organizational Efficiency

The addition of support services staff allows leadership to focus on operational priorities while administrative responsibilities such as records management, compliance documentation, and project coordination are handled efficiently.

This improves organizational transparency, accountability, and overall professionalism.

Creating a Long-Term Career in Emergency Communications

One of the most important outcomes of the future CMRECC model is the transformation of emergency communications from a job into a long-term professional career path.

Traditional dispatch centers often offered limited advancement opportunities beyond a single dispatcher position. The new model introduces multiple career pathways including:

- Communications Specialist
- Communications Supervisor
- Training Officer
- Quality Assurance Manager
- Service Chief positions
- Executive leadership roles

Regional PSAP governance models commonly create expanded career opportunities by adding supervisory, training, quality assurance, and technical positions within the organization.

This structure allows employees to develop specialized expertise, advance professionally, and remain within the organization throughout their careers.

A Proven Model Used Across Massachusetts

The CMRECC operational framework mirrors staffing structures already in use at several successful regional emergency communications centers across Massachusetts.

These centers have demonstrated that a layered leadership structure, specialized operational roles, and dedicated training and quality assurance programs are essential for agencies handling multi-community emergency communications operations.

Regionalization studies repeatedly conclude that such centers provide:

- More consistent emergency response
- Greater operational efficiency
- Improved mutual aid coordination
- Stronger training and professional standards
- Increased resilience during high call volumes or large incidents.

A Scalable Model for the Future

As the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District continues to grow, the future CMRECC model ensures the organization can scale its operations while maintaining high standards of service.

By implementing a structured leadership hierarchy, specialized operational roles, and dedicated training and quality programs, the center will be positioned to deliver safe, efficient, and professional emergency communications services for decades to come.

All Positions:

Executive Director
"Leads the district's strategic direction, partnerships, and overall operational success."

The Executive Director serves as the chief executive officer of the Central Mass Regional 911 District and is responsible for the overall leadership, administration, and strategic advancement of the district. This includes operational oversight, long-range planning, intergovernmental coordination, financial stewardship, regulatory compliance, and organizational development.

Deputy Director
"Drives daily operations and major projects, ensuring the center runs smoothly and efficiently."

The Deputy Director serves as the second-in-command of the Central Mass Regional 911 District and oversees the center's daily operational performance, major technical initiatives, and internal coordination. This role ensures that all divisions—Police Dispatch, Fire/EMS Dispatch, Call Taking, QA, Technology, and Support Services—function efficiently and consistently. The Deputy Director acts as the operational integrator, bridging high-level strategy with real-world execution

Operations Service Chief
"Oversees operational workflows, staffing, and service delivery across all disciplines."

The Operations Service Chief is responsible for the direct oversight, coordination, and optimization of all frontline communications operations at the Central Mass Regional 911 District. This role ensures that call taking, police dispatch, fire/EMS dispatch, and day-to-day service delivery consistently meet district expectations, industry standards, and community needs. The Operations Service Chief serves as the primary operational manager for supervisory staff and acts as the bridge between strategic leadership and floor-level execution.

Support Services Coordinator
"Manages administrative systems, records, and internal processes that keep the center organized and compliant."

The Support Services Coordinator plays a critical role in maintaining the administrative, documentation, compliance, and organizational infrastructure that enables CMRECC to function efficiently. This position supports leadership, staff, and member communities by managing records, systems, scheduling tools, documentation platforms, and internal workflows. The Coordinator ensures the district remains compliant with operational standards, maintains accurate records, and supports the smooth delivery of dispatch operations through strong administrative oversight.

Logistics Service Chief
"Ensures the center has the equipment, technology, and infrastructure needed for uninterrupted operations."

The Logistics Service Chief is responsible for managing the technology, equipment, facilities, and operational infrastructure that support CMRECC's 24/7 mission. This role ensures that all mission-critical systems—including radio networks, CAD hardware, consoles, 911 equipment, networking, and facilities—remain reliable, secure, and fully functional. The Logistics Service Chief acts as the operational technology leader, bridging the needs of dispatch operations with vendor support, technical project management, and long-term infrastructure planning.

Training Service Chief
"Develops and manages all training programs to maintain certification, competency, and professional growth."

The Training Service Chief is responsible for designing, implementing, and overseeing the comprehensive training framework that ensures CMRECC employees are fully prepared, properly certified, and continuously developing in accordance with state requirements and industry best practices. This includes new-hire academies, CTO programs, continuing education, remedial coaching, and professional development initiatives. The Training Service Chief works closely with operational leadership to ensure training aligns directly with center needs, operational standards, and district expectations.

Quality Assurance Manager
"Monitors and evaluates call-handling performance to ensure accuracy, consistency, and compliance with standards."

The Quality Assurance (QA) Manager is responsible for evaluating, measuring, and improving the performance of all CMRECC call takers and dispatchers. This role ensures that 911 call handling, police dispatching, fire/EMS dispatching, and EMD performance meet or exceed established standards set by the State 911 Department, APCO/NENA best practices, NFPA requirements, CALEA standards, and district expectations. The QA Manager provides data-driven feedback, identifies trends, and collaborates with Training and Operations leadership to strengthen center-wide performance and accountability.

Administrative Assistant
"Provides essential administrative support to keep the district's operations coordinated and efficient."

The Administrative Assistant is responsible for supporting the day-to-day administrative, clerical, and organizational needs of the Central Mass Regional 911 District. This role ensures that leadership, supervisors, and frontline staff have the resources, documentation, and coordination required to maintain a smooth, efficient, and professional operation. The Administrative Assistant acts as a central point of communication and administrative organization for the district, supporting internal processes, public interactions, and operational workflows.

Emergency Communications Supervisors
"Lead shift operations, support staff, and maintain performance and service quality in real time."

The Emergency Communications Supervisor is responsible for overseeing all aspects of shift operations within the Central Mass Regional 911 District. Supervisors provide real-time leadership, guidance, and decision-making to ensure that 911 call taking, police dispatching, and fire/EMS communications are carried out safely, accurately, and efficiently. They serve as the first level of operational management, supporting staff, enforcing standards, addressing performance concerns, and ensuring the continuous delivery of high-quality public safety communications services.

Police Communications Specialists
"Dispatch police resources and manage law-enforcement communications with precision and situational awareness."

Fire Communications Specialists
"Coordinate fire and EMS response, ensuring rapid, accurate communication during emergencies."

9-1-1 Call Takers
"Answer emergency calls, texts & video gather critical information, and initiate the appropriate response."

APCO Retains Study

Central Massachusetts RECC - Guidelines to Defining and Staffing the Dispatch Position

Guidelines to Defining and Staffing the Dispatch Position

There is no equation or formula to estimate the most appropriate ratio of dispatcher to unit, dispatcher to number of channels or number of units per channel. The RETAINS 2018 study addresses several factors affecting dispatcher ability to serve units assigned to a dispatch position. When trying to discern the differences in workloads by center size, agency type, even time frame of individual dispatch shifts, it is important to closely review the non-radio responsibilities of individual positions.

ECCs offer a range of public services. These include essential emergency services, such as law enforcement, EMS, and fire, as well as a host of supplementary non-emergency services (e.g., animal control, public utilities assistance, and weather notifications). Some ECCs provide both calltaking and dispatch for their services, while others only provide dispatch. PST workload levels result from the combination of how many units, channels, and frequencies are monitored. These, in turn, are highly dependent upon factors such as call, incident volume, dispatcher experience, and total staffing.

Virtually all ECCs provide both calltaking and dispatch services for law enforcement (97%), fire (88.3%) and EMS (81.2%). Most ECCs also provide administrative calltaking and dispatch (92.9%), and many also provide calltaking and dispatch for animal control (75.7%) and after hours calls (62.1%).

Survey findings from the RETAINS 2018 study underscore the differences between dispatcher work requirements in centers of different sizes and settings. Specialization is a very important consideration because PSTs covering a variety of disciplines are likely to experience greater job complexity. In terms of specialization, small ECCs (Fewer than 15 employees) have a rate of specialization of 13.87 percent, medium ECCs (15-49 Employees) specialize at a rate of 10.61 percent, and large ECCs (50 or more employees) average a rate of 42.96 percent.

One difference that presents itself here is that small ECCs have seemingly increased their rates of specialization since the last report. In 2017, 40.1 percent of ECCs report that their dispatch positions cover only one discipline at a time, such as law enforcement or fire, meaning that close to 60.0 percent of ECCs—a sizeable majority—have their dispatch positions handle multiple disciplines at a time. Here, too, there are significant differences between ECCs of different sizes.

Nearly all large ECCs (91.7%) report that their dispatch positions only focus on one discipline at a time. A majority of medium ECCs report this to be the case (55.5%), although less than a quarter of small ECCs indicate this to be true. Indeed, in small ECCs, fully 76.0 percent of dispatch positions are working with multiple disciplines at one time compared to 44.5 percent of medium ECCs and just 8.3 percent of large ECCs. These findings echo those of the 2009 report, where 71.0 percent of large ECCs, 47.0 percent of medium ECCs, and 17.0 percent of small ECCs had their dispatch positions handle only one discipline at a time.

It is clear from the data that there is a strong positive relationship between increasing ECC size and increasing rates of specialization. Given the data on the quantity of disciplines covered by ECCs and the divergent rates of specialization within ECCs of different sizes, it is important to examine the quantity of units that PSTs handle at a given time to determine the average workload for the dispatch position.

There are statistically significant differences between the average workloads of the dispatch position across ECCs of different sizes. PSTs at large ECCs handle a higher proportion of both law enforcement units and fire units at once, averaging 26 and 14, respectively. PSTs in medium ECCs average 16 law enforcement units and 11 fire units at once, and PSTs in small ECCs average just 8 law enforcement units and 5 fire units at once.

ECC size is not significantly related to the number of primary or secondary radio channels managed.

Medium ECC (15-49 employees)	Data From Retains 2018 Report
Number of Primary Radio Channels per PST	3
Number of Secondary Radio Channels per PST	3
Average number of Law Enforcement Units monitored per PST	16
Average number of Fire / EMS Units monitored per PST	11

Dispatcher workload reported by ECC Directors of Medium ECCS	2009	2018
Average law enforcement units a dispatcher handles at one time	28	16
Average fire/EMS units a dispatcher handles at one time	25	11
Number of primary radio channels a dispatcher is responsible for	3	3
Number of secondary radio channels a dispatcher is responsible for	5	3

Proposed Staffing

Staffing Considerations for a 12-Hour Shift Configuration
Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District

Overview
This report outlines the staffing structure necessary to support a 12-hour shift configuration in a consolidated Emergency Communications Center (ECC). The model ensures continuous 24/7 operations, compliance with national standards, and the flexibility required to accommodate personnel breaks, scheduled leave, and turnover.

Shift Structure and Squad Organization
Under the 12-hour shift model, operations are supported by four squads. Two squads are assigned to day shifts (0700–1900), and two are assigned to night shifts (1900–0700). Each squad rotates its days off in a staggered pattern, ensuring that coverage remains uninterrupted throughout the week.

To guarantee that at least two telecommunicators are present on duty at all times and to accommodate a 60-minute meal/break period per employee, a minimum of three positions must be staffed on each shift. This accounts for workload coverage during rest periods and ensures continuous operational readiness.

Staffing Levels and Leave Considerations
When factoring in scheduled leave, it is prudent to plan for at least one employee to be out each day.
To maintain coverage for ten operational roles—including one supervisory position—while allowing for leave and break periods, a staffing complement of approximately **40 full-time equivalents (FTEs)** is required. This figure represents the minimum needed to ensure full coverage across all shifts and functions.

This estimate may need to be adjusted upward to account for turnover, onboarding, and training gaps. Vacancies or absences beyond planned leave can be addressed through the use of part-time employees or by assigning overtime to full-time staff.

Cross-Training and Role Flexibility
In a consolidated environment, all telecommunicators are cross-trained to handle multiple functions, including call-taking and dispatching for police, fire, and EMS services. This flexibility enhances staffing resilience and supports operational efficiency.

Supervisory Staffing
The model assumes that shift supervisors, excluding the ECC director, will participate in minimum staffing counts and may serve in an operational role when required. Although not considered best practice in high-volume ECCs, this structure is appropriate for centers with moderate call volume, such as those in the Spencer stakeholder group.

In accordance with NFPA 1225, Section 15.3.4, supervisory coverage is required when more than two telecommunicators are on duty. The annex to this section permits supervisors to perform operational duties in addition to their oversight responsibilities. Under this framework, four working supervisors one per squad—are necessary to maintain continuity of leadership. In the absence of a supervisor, a designated team lead may assume supervisory duties.

Minimum Staffing Requirement
Per NFPA 1225, Section 15.3.1, at least two qualified telecommunicators must be physically present and on duty at all times within the ECC. The proposed staffing model complies with this standard by ensuring that coverage is never reduced below this threshold, even during periods of leave or breaks.

Overtime Implications
Twelve-hour shift schedules inherently alternate between 36-hour and 48-hour workweeks. This results in built-in overtime every other week. While this can contribute to staffing efficiency, it also requires careful management of employee fatigue and payroll costs.

Conclusion

A well-designed 12-hour shift configuration—supported by four squads, a staff of 40 FTEs, cross-trained telecommunicators, and operationally capable supervisors—can meet the 24/7 staffing requirements of a regional ECC. This model balances operational demands, personnel well-being, and regulatory compliance, making it a viable solution for the Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District.

Staffing Tool Documentation

To ensure the District maintains appropriate staffing levels to support the consolidation of eleven communities into the Charlton facility, workforce projections were developed using the National Emergency Number Association Communications Center Staffing Tool. This nationally recognized analytical model is specifically designed for public safety answering points (PSAPs) and emergency communications centers to determine appropriate staffing levels based on operational workload. The tool evaluates multiple operational variables including historical call volume, average call processing time, dispatch workload, administrative responsibilities, shift configuration, relief factors for leave and training, and supervisory coverage. By applying these data-driven inputs, the model produces a recommended staffing level necessary to ensure continuous operations, maintain acceptable call-answering performance standards, and provide adequate staffing redundancy for training, quality assurance, and operational support functions. The results generated from the NENA Communications Center Staffing Tool were used to estimate the workforce required to operate the consolidated regional communications center when all eleven communities are integrated into the Charlton facility, ensuring the District maintains a staffing model consistent with nationally recognized best practices for emergency communications operations.

Strategic Goal 4

Develop a Modern Regional Emergency Communications Facility

As the district continues to expand its regional role, the development of a purpose-built communications facility will be essential to supporting future operations.

The current communications center was not originally designed to support the scale of operations envisioned for a regional communications district.

The district will pursue the planning and development of a new regional emergency communications headquarters designed to support modern public safety communications operations.

Planning efforts will focus on creating a facility that includes:

- a modern dispatch operations floor designed for expanded staffing
- redundant power and communications infrastructure
- advanced cybersecurity protections
- dedicated training and conference facilities
- scalable space to support future regional growth

The new communications headquarters will serve as the operational hub of the regional communications network and will support the district's long-term mission of providing reliable emergency communications services to the region.

The acquisition, renovation, technology infrastructure, and associated project costs for the facility will be pursued through funding opportunities available under the Massachusetts State 911 Department Regional Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), Regional Secondary PSAP, and Regional Emergency Communications Center Development Grant Program. This program is specifically designed to support the establishment, expansion, and modernization of regional emergency communications centers throughout the Commonwealth. The District intends to finance the purchase of the facility through a municipal bond and will subsequently apply to the State 911 Department for reimbursement of eligible costs through the grant program, including the bonding assessment component permitted under the program. Eligible expenses may include facility acquisition, structural renovations, dispatch infrastructure build-out, technology systems, radio and network redundancy, and other critical components required to operate a modern regional communications center. Through this approach, the District can responsibly finance the project while leveraging state grant funding to offset the long-term capital costs associated with establishing a fully capable regional PSAP facility.

Strategic Goal 5

Achieve Professional Accreditation and Strengthen Organizational Standards

The Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District is committed to maintaining the highest professional standards in emergency communications operations.

Over the next several years, the district will pursue accreditation and professional certification through nationally recognized public safety communications organizations.

These efforts will include:

- preparing the organization for CALEA Public Safety Communications Accreditation
- aligning training programs with APCO Project 33 standards
- strengthening quality assurance and performance measurement programs
- maintaining compliance with CJIS and public safety data security standards

Achieving accreditation will demonstrate the district's commitment to professional excellence, transparency, and continuous improvement.

Accreditation also provides an external validation of operational practices and ensures that the communications center meets nationally recognized standards for emergency communications operations.

To support the District's commitment to professional standards, compliance, and continuous improvement, the district will implement PowerDMS as its centralized policy, accreditation, and document management system. PowerDMS will be utilized to manage policies, proofs of compliance, and documentation required to obtain and maintain accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). The platform will allow the district to track applicable CALEA standards, maintain required documentation, manage policy distribution and acknowledgment by employees, and conduct internal reviews to ensure ongoing compliance with accreditation requirements.

In conjunction with PowerDMS, the District will implement PowerReady to manage employee training, certification tracking, and professional development. Together, PowerDMS and PowerReady will support the district's pursuit of accreditation under Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO International) Project 33 Training Program Certification, ensuring that training standards, documentation, and certification records meet nationally recognized public safety communications training benchmarks.

To further strengthen quality assurance and operational performance, the District's Quality Assurance Manager will utilize Prepared QA Platform, which provides AI-assisted call review, evaluation tools, and performance analytics to improve call-taking and dispatch quality. Additionally, the Support Services Coordinator will play a critical role in maintaining regulatory and operational compliance throughout the year, including oversight of **Massachusetts Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) requirements and **Massachusetts State 911 Department compliance standards. This coordinated technology and staffing approach will ensure the district maintains accreditation standards, strengthens operational accountability, and promotes a culture of continuous improvement across all communications operations.

Strategic Goal 6

Strengthen Regional Public Safety Partnerships

The effectiveness of emergency communications operations depends on strong partnerships with public safety agencies, municipal leaders, and regional organizations.

The district will continue to strengthen relationships with police departments, fire departments, emergency medical services agencies, and regional emergency management organizations.

Partnership initiatives will include:

- regular coordination meetings with public safety leadership
- joint training and operational exercises
- collaborative development of dispatch protocols and procedures
- support for regional emergency management planning

These partnerships ensure that the communications center remains closely aligned with the operational needs of the agencies it supports.

Strategic Goal 7

Ensure Financial Sustainability and Responsible Growth

Long-term financial stability is essential to maintaining reliable emergency communications services.

The district will continue to develop financial strategies that support sustainable growth while ensuring responsible stewardship of public resources.

Financial initiatives will include:

- pursuing state and federal grant funding opportunities
- maintaining equitable cost-sharing models among member communities
- developing long-term capital investment plans
- coordinating regional technology investments

These strategies will ensure that the district remains financially sustainable while continuing to invest in modern communications technology and infrastructure.

To further support financial accountability, operational efficiency, and transparency, the District will implement several modern administrative management systems. Payroll and personnel financial management will be administered through Harpers Payroll Services, while the District's accounting, budgeting, and financial reporting functions will be managed using VADAR Accounting Software, a platform widely used by municipalities across Massachusetts for governmental financial management and compliance. In addition, the District will utilize Monday.com to manage internal projects, operational initiatives, and strategic planning efforts. Monday.com will also be used to provide live operational dashboards that promote transparency and accountability by displaying the District's current fiscal budget status, project implementation timelines, key performance indicators (KPI) standards, operational statistics, and other critical metrics.

Below is an estimated financial model outlining the projected costs associated with merging the eleven participating communities into the Charlton facility. This model accounts for staffing expansion, future technology initiatives, facility acquisition and renovation costs, and other operational expenses necessary to support a regional emergency communications center of this scale. The model also incorporates estimated allocations from the Massachusetts State 911 Department Support and Incentive Grant Program, which provides funding to regional PSAPs based on participation levels and operational benchmarks. By comparing projected operational costs with anticipated grant revenue and shared regional efficiencies, the analysis will also illustrate the potential long-term cost savings to each participating community once the District becomes fully operational with all eleven municipalities integrated into the regional communications system.

Strategic Roadmap (2025–2028)

The Central Massachusetts Regional 911 District Strategic Roadmap provides a high-level overview of the major initiatives that will guide the district's development over the next three years. This roadmap aligns the district's operational priorities with the long-term strategic goals outlined in this plan.

The roadmap illustrates the phased implementation of key initiatives including regional expansion, technology modernization, workforce development, facility planning, and accreditation preparation. By organizing these initiatives across a multi-year timeline, the district can coordinate investments, manage operational changes, and maintain continuity of service while implementing major improvements to the regional emergency communications system.

Strategic Implementation Timeline

Strategic Initiative	2025	2026-27	2028
District Governance Transition	Implementation of district governance structure and operational policies	Continued governance development and committee operations	Fully matured district governance and operational oversight
Regional Expansion	Engagement with prospective member communities	Onboarding of additional municipalities	Fully operational regional system serving up to 11 communities
CAD System Modernization	Configuration and deployment planning for Hexagon CAD	Full system implementation and operational integration	Continued enhancement and optimization
Radio Communications Infrastructure	Upgrade and alignment of regional radio systems	Continued infrastructure improvements and interoperability expansion	Long-term maintenance and optimization
Workforce Development	Recruitment initiatives and training program expansion	Supervisor leadership development and workforce growth	Stable regional workforce supporting expanded operations
Regional Headquarters Development	Site evaluation and planning for new facility	Architectural design and funding strategy	Initial development and construction planning
Accreditation and Professional Standards	Policy alignment with APCO and CALEA standards	Preparation for accreditation review	Accreditation readiness and formal application

This strategic roadmap provides a structured approach to implementing the initiatives outlined in this plan while ensuring that operational continuity and service reliability remain the district's highest priorities.