

Welcome to the "State of 911" webinar series hosted by the NHTSA National 911 Program.

My name is Sherri, and I'll be the moderator for today's session. This webinar series is designed to provide useful information for the 911 stakeholder community about federal, state and local participation in the planning, design, and advancement of 911.

It includes real experiences from leaders utilizing these processes throughout the country. In today's session, we're going to hear about the National 911 Program's CAD interoperability project.

Along with these, the Washington DC Office of Unified Communications is going to share with us some information about their targeted recruitment and hiring techniques.

Today's webinar is being recorded and will be posted up on the 911.gov website.

For more information on National 911 Program webinars, access to archive recordings, or to learn more about the National 911 Program,

please visit 911.gov. For closed captioning, hover at the bottom of your Zoom screen for meeting controls.

Then click the CC button to start viewing the captioning. Feedback or questions about the webinar can be sent to nhtsa.national911@dot.gov.

The National 911 Program would like to make you aware that the documents and tools section of the 911.gov

website has been updated with new resources and improved access. 911 stakeholders are encouraged to submit links and documents that would be of use and interest

to your 911 colleagues. Including policy documents, plans, and reports across several topics, like governments, management, operations, post-crash care,

standards and best practices and any technical resources. You may access the web page under the resources dropdown menu

or simply scan the QR code in the bottom right-hand corner of this slide. Content can be submitted by clicking the online submission form on the top right side of the Docs & Tools page.

The National 911 Program would also like to invite you to visit the 911 Telecommunicator Tree of Life and share the name of a remarkable 911 telecommunicator who has inspired you.

Share your story at 911treeoflife.org to honor a special 911 telecommunicator who is making a difference in your community.

Please note that all participant's phone lines have been put in listen-only mode, and this webinar is being recorded.

To ask questions of our presenters, feel free to take one of two actions, using Zoom's Q&A feature located on the bottom of your screen in the meeting control

you can enter your question at any time during the presentation, and it will be entered into the queue. Hover your mouse button on the bottom of the page to access those meeting controls.

Or, if you would like to ask your question live, use the raise hand feature, and request your phone line to be unmuted, and

we will call upon you to ask your question. Everyone registered for this webinar will receive access to today's PowerPoint presentation and the webinar recording.

With that, I'm going to let Kate introduce our first topic and speakers with a pre-recorded message since she wasn't able to join us today.

Thank you for joining us for the "State of 911" webinar. CAD and interoperability and plans for how we can be more interoperable with our computer-aided dispatch is an important priority for the National 911 Program.

In order to really advance 911 across our nation and improve post-crash care, it's really critical.

that we are able to get the right help to the right place at the right time. And having interconnected systems of systems across our country is a vital component to the function of not only 911 but all of our first responders out in the field.

By collaborating with stakeholders and building resources, the NHTSA National 911 Program helps to move forward the conversation to improve the interoperability of these systems.

Interoperability of computer-aided dispatch is critical not only for our 911 systems but also for our emergency medical systems,

and being able to get that right care to the right place at the right time.

For that reason, the National 911 Program had pulled together industry leaders and stakeholders

for the Computer-aided Dispatch Interoperability Project, where we really assessed what is the current state of computer-aided dispatch in the United States.

And what are some strategies for us to successfully move forward to improve the interoperability and improve the function of our 911 systems across the country,

and really help all of those field first responders to improve their response as well. So, there were two documents that were generated by this project.

The first really talks about where the systems are right now. And then the second really talks about strategies for us to move forward.

The project brought together stakeholders from multiple 911 centers of varying sizes to really diversify the perspectives,

as well as partner agencies and industry partners, and through these stakeholder convenings and really pulling together such manner experts and stakeholders in the community, we were able to develop two really critical documents

that will help us move forward with interoperability systems of systems across the country. The first document that was produced in July of 2022 really talks about the current status of CAD interoperability.

The challenges of slow decision-making, lack of standards, data challenges from data sharing to data definitions, the politics involved within an agency within a 911 center, within multiple first responder agencies, and the politics between jurisdictions that are crossing agencies.

The specific requirements and workflow expectations are based on each individual agency's diversity of CAD that is used across the country.

And really just the challenge of having multiple first responder agencies with different priorities, even

in one 911 center.

And then how do you pay for not only the computer to dispatch systems but the ability for them to be interoperable with neighboring jurisdictions or within a single 911 center with your multiple agents?

So, there are some pretty significant challenges that we see right now with the current status of computer-aided dispatch in the country,

and then we have strategies based on these conversations for a path forward. Leadership, getting the right people together,

at the table and identifying the governance structure, funding, and technology requirements, data definitions, and how you're going to interface between multiple different systems, multiple different agencies, and multiple different jurisdictions.

What are your operational standard operating procedures? And really, who's going to be responsible for maintenance, cybersecurity,

and all the things around the edges, making sure that those key stakeholders are in the room. And that you're able to have those really important governance conversations is absolutely critical.

And then, really, where do we go as a community for these resources that give us examples of successful governance models, for these resources that give us examples of successful governance models, successful standard operating procedures,

data mapping and integration. How do we really pull together for the 911 community some examples of success?

So that we can improve moving forward, and then you're gonna have to have a whole bunch of multiple strategies to pull together the necessary components to have interoperable computer-aided dispatch.

How is the funding going to work? How are we going to get all the different technology to be interoperable and meet certain standards?

How are we going to make sure it's all cybersecure? How are we going to make sure that we have the right governing

bodies together, collaborating and making sure that the funding, the procurement, and the maintenance is all in sync?

How are we going to make sure that what we are being sold actually meets the standards we're requiring of

those vendors? And how are we going to build on the success of others and learn from others, going forward, to really understand how we can tackle this really big challenge?

There are so many different vendors; there's so many different things. There are so many different vendors; there are so many different things out there.

So, what can we learn from other vendors? There's so many different things out there. So, what can we learn from other systems that have been very successful at doing very similar data integration and interoperability?

So, we have published now, as of this past summer, the document or screen, this document that really talks about strategies for success within your communications center, building a resource center,

trying to identify funding. Really getting all those key stakeholders and governance structures in place, knowing your strategic partners.

And then really encouraging the vendor community to meet standards and to have some consensus over what standards we're going to need.

Today's conversation will go into much more depth about this project, and I'm really excited for our speakers to really dive in and give you a feel for how this project can help your communications center, your communities,

as we all strive to build these interoperable systems of systems so that we're getting the right care to the right place at the right time, and we're protecting the safety of our field first responders.

As well as improving the workload balance for our telecommunicators and providing them with all the necessary tools and technologies to do their job well,

and well supported by what we're providing them. So, I'm really excited for our other speakers.

I'm sorry I wasn't able to be there live this time, but if you have any questions or concerns, you can always reach out to me at any time.

And I will hand it back to Jackie for our other speakers.

Thank you for joining us today. As you all know, in 911, one size, one solution doesn't fit everyone.

The goal behind our resource center is to build a library of resources based on the experiences and hard knock sometimes of those who have gone before and to help you find the best way to embark on your journey that fits your stakeholders and your situation.

So, we would like to stock that resource center with different examples of governance models, data sharing specific MOUs between government entities, operational SOPs, funding opportunities, and a list of contacts that are willing to share their lessons learned and their adventures to build CAD-to-CAD Interoperability.

We'd also like to put some examples of sample RFI and RFP languages in the Resource center.

And some policies and procedures and other materials of relevance to support you. Next, I'm going to introduce our next speaker, Michael Brewer, who's the deputy director at Jeffcom 911, who will take some time to explain his perspective on the importance of CAD-to-CAD interoperability and the positive outcomes they're experiencing there.

Michael?

Well, thank you, Jackie, for the introduction. I'm really glad to be able to support and share our experience at Jeffcom and using a CAD-to-CAD solution and be able to highlight some of the results we've seen in a quantifiable manner,

that may resonate with some of the audience. Before we proceed to the next slide, I do want to say that Jeffcom was not a participant in the study that was referenced in the previous Introduction to this webinar.

However, I believe our experience is very much in line with the, with the report's findings. And with that, please advance.

So, I'd like to kick this off with some language that I ripped from the NHTSA to report that the Mission Critical Partners team composed, and that was referenced just a moment ago and to keep this simple and without having to read every single bullet point on the slide, the findings were essentially this,

if we were able to leverage CAD interoperability, or I'm going to refer to it as a CAD-to-CAD solution in this presentation

to keep a vendor agnostic. We'll be able to improve services and advance the efficiency and accuracy of communications and, therefore, positively impact public safety as a whole.

Jeffcom has been using a CAD-to-CAD solution with South Metro Fire, South Metro Fire Rescue, which is near where we share a jurisdiction border with

since May of 2022, and so just over a year. What I can say is this,

the assessment is correct. All of those positive things. They check all the boxes here.

We've personally been able to achieve just about every one of these boxes and realize the positive gains.

Throughout a CAD-to-CAD solution. Please advance this slide.

You know, looking at all the various areas of improvement on the previous slide that really highlights different use cases for a CAD-to-CAD solution.

What we really are here to say is how Jeffcom is using the CAD-to-CAD. And I would say there is definitely a spectrum of how

CAD-to-CAD can be utilized and, depending on each individual agency's mission, interaction with regional partners, which currently or do not exist,

will influence how your CAD-to-CAD is utilized and which use cases will be realized. Situational awareness

information sharing and transferring out-of-jurisdiction colors are certainly valuable capabilities that a CAD-to-CAD solution offers.

For the most, but to get the most out of our use cases, we utilize our relationship with West Metro Fire Rescue,

which is a dispatch by Jeffcom and South Metro Fire Rescue, which is a shared jurisdictions boundary, and they already had an existing partnership that was leveraged

to go straight to the full capability of CAD-to-CAD. Where Jeffcom and West Metro are directly assigning resources based on location to the incident,

and or needed apparatus for a specific response. So, you can see in the box highlighted to the right what that workflow looks like for us.

So, you know, it starts off there where you get the call received by the agency, the dispatch's assets are based on the closest location to the incident or the needed apparatus to respond to that

based on the response plan of that agency within the jurisdiction. Once that call is received in the CAD, the assets are committed.

So, if, in this case, if it's South Metro receives the call, South Metro CAD makes the recommendation,

South Metro commits it. That call simultaneously populates at Jeffcom. And then Jeffcom, as the other agency, takes over the dispatch of our asset

to that singular call in the shared CAD.

Please advance.

So, here's what that looks like from an operational perspective. And first, let me please acknowledge our amazing GIS team at Jeffcom, who put this map together for me.

This map portrays Jefferson County and the large larger black outline to the left, and for reference, Jefferson County is 774 square miles.

The east side of the upper portion of our county adjoins Denver proper. The West Side of our county extends up into the Rocky Mountains, and nearly the entirety of the southern portion of our county is rural mountainous terrain.

So, you see the call out in the red outline is the South Metro response area.

And what you can see where the border area with South Metro exists has essentially been dissolved, as far as the citizen is concerned.

Who really doesn't care what the side of the fire truck or ambulance says when they need help.

The mutually laid area displayed here in that red outline is approximately 50 square miles. But you can see in where the pink dots, all those individual pink dots in that area, each one of those represents response in the last year where CAD-to-CAD was utilized

to pull resources from the partner agency. In the call-out box at the bottom right of the map, the vast majority of these calls occur within one and a half miles of the and, again, with an outstanding GIS team that regularly speaks above my head in technical terms.

They determined that the average traverse distance is just under half a mile or point 3.8 miles.

And before I move on, I would also really like to stress as we're looking at this map, the CAD-to-CAD solution

is the enabler in these cases. And the success of the outcomes has much more to do with the working relationship between South Metro and West Metro,

and those already existed prior to a CAD-to-CAD, but by utilizing technology and leaning into technology and available technology at that,

we're able to increase and improve public safety responses.

So, please advance the slide.

I'd like to highlight some very specific numbers and look at a complete year's worth of data.

We were able to isolate and account for the following amount of shared incidents where a CAD-to-CAD was utilized both on Jeffcom's side as well as South Metro's.

So here we're looking at 670 incidents dispatched by South Metro within the one-year data set and another 100 another 564 incidents dispatched by Jeffcom totaling 1,234, and I couldn't have made that number up 1 2 3 4 if I had the imagination to do so.

Total the incidents from August of last year to August of this year. And then, for reference, the previous year without a CAD-to-CAD solution in place.

There were only 571 mutual aid incidents accounted for between the two agencies. So, we essentially

doubled the operational capacity and reduced response times to emergencies that occurred along our shared border.

The box on the bottom is focusing more, you know, from the operational side, but the work inside the communication center.

Just adding the capability to share and add comments has also had a significant impact on the efficiency of getting the right resources on scene as fast as possible.

And you can see we accounted for nearly 23,000 comments. Shared between the two agencies, or if you average that out, is about 18 and a half comments per incident on average, which is all information that previously would have either been passed on the radio,

had to be passed over the telephone, or in likely a lot of those cases, not passed at all.

Please advance.

And so this is an additional data set that South Metro staff generated at the end of 2022 to determine the CAD-to-CAD impact on their turnout times

for the six months that it was in place. And I love that they included the before and after pictures here.

What you can see is a reduction of 3 minutes in response to turnout times. That is an amazing enhancement

to, where little else was done other than implementing the CAD-to-CAD solutions and coming to an agreement

that we allowed each other to dispatch each other's assets along that border area.

Please advance.

So, you know, if that's looking at kind of the quantifiable numbers, then you start to turn to, you know, some of the challenges within the CAD-to-CAD

opportunity. The Standards and Governance, you know, was one of the challenges I often hear and was clearly articulated to Mission Critical Partners as they were developing some of the content for the NHTSA report,

is the challenge of the report. And I'm here to tell you today it does not have to be a challenge.

There are solutions that translate terminology, so every agency does not have to change to a singular terminology or even a methodology in their response plans.

And for heaven's sake, please, do not require every agency to update and operate on the same GIS mapping.

Displayed here is a simple example of highlighting the data exchange standard articulated by APCO and using a common MVA incident as an example,

that has very dissociated terminology that could disrupt the efficient flow of information by confusing the meaning and usage of terminology by different agencies.

So, how we're using at Jeffcom, our CAD-to-CAD solution, the terminology is translated in the hub by using the standard.

So, what we put into our CAD, what is generated goes through the translator and generates on the

other side to the agreed upon equivalent response.

So, no one has to change any terminology or response plans. And regarding control of information, each agency in our existing hub, which is now testing with a third agency and a fourth and fifth are in queue to follow

will control which agency will receive what information and how much of their information. It is really a situation where each agency in our CAD-to-CAD hub is empowered

and not subjugated to a majority rule situation. And finally, you know, as far as we're talking about location and sharing GIS,

the way that we're utilizing it is location is just using a simple Lat Long desk snaps

to the CAD-to-CAD. So, there is no requirement for shared GIS. And what I would, finally, say on Standards of Governance,

if you're working with a vendor for a CAD-to-CAD solution that is not working to provide these types of solutions and they're requiring greater Governance, or if you're agency partners are requiring greater Governance, I would urge you to seek other points of view and perspectives and who's using this because it doesn't have to be that way.

Please advance.

So that's all to say how we are currently using the CAD-to-CAD solution now.

But how is that going to expand? And so, we're already looking at additional use cases. So, we are actively working with the Colorado Department of Transportation, who has found their own use case

for utilizing data coming out of the CAD-to-CAD hub. So, what you see in the diagram, you have, you know, your agencies inputting and sharing information through the CAD-to-CAD hub,

but then you spoke information out of the hub. Into the Department of Transportation systems, either through their cat or directly into additional tertiary systems.

In this case, looking at the automated traffic management system So, then information is gonna be automatically pushed to the ATMS,

which then controls the signage on roadways.

So, through that solution, it makes the transfer of information into their systems faster, which ultimately, the goal is to make streets safer, leading to less accidents, less trauma, less deaths, less disruptions to the economy.

And all of those are very good reasons. And there are very few, if any, to really justify not utilizing this type of solution.

Please advance.

And so aside from them, we also have, just like every, every participant in this webinar today, that works in a communications center,

you know you have additional challenges. You just, through shared jurisdictional borders and how calls come in. So, looking at just some simple data over the course of a year,

we received over 32,000 incidents entered into our CAD for outside jurisdiction agencies that then had to be transferred.

And then thinking of the total volume of just the time our staff was on hold to transfer those calls, let alone the time that the entirety of those incidents reflected here on this slide, 460, nearly 461 hours spent. You know, that's the equivalent of a full-time employee working full-time. Forty hours a week for 12 weeks.

That is solely dedicated to working on these cross-jurisdictional incidents. And then, you know, if you look at very specific partners in our area, you know, 4,300 calls go to Colorado State Patrol.

Another 38 over 38,000 incidents that require that occurred on a highway. And then you're looking at nearly 16,000 calls where our shared border with Denver

requires a transfer of information. Without them being on a CAD-to-CAD hub with us, right, this is just added delays

and reduced service to the citizens and ultimately the customer experience for the reporting party that's calling in has to be on hold, has been transferred over, and you know, just as a simple use case, but there is through the spectrum of use cases a lot that could be achieved in all of these calls through a CAD-to-CAD solution.

Please advance. So, if we have all these great use cases and really a need where we're at in emergency communications today.

Why are there barriers? And it's really confusing because just looking at this slide, without having to read every statement on here, the first bullet, Department Homeland

Security, you have certainly the backing of NHTSA. US Department of Transportation have all made these statements either through reports or on their website today that could be googled and found.

And then you also have a line stating reviews by NTIA, Department of Justice, FCC.

Right, you essentially have the whole government that says CAD-to-CAD CAD interoperability is a good thing.

And then, on the bottom, I've included the Integrated Justice Information System Institute, who was a participant

in the study conducted by NHTSA and is included in their findings included in that report. But if you look at all of their members right, that's the for-profit community.

That is our vendors. And if you look closely at the list, most of them are CAD vendors.

So, you have to ask if everybody that's included on this slide says, hey, CAD-to-CAD is a good thing.

Why is this not advancing?

Oh, please advance.

And so there are barriers, and those barriers include, certainly, money. Lack of technical expertise, staffing capacity, whether that's internal or external,

such as depending on the city or county IT professionals do the work, when they themselves may be understaffed, or they aren't experts in our systems, and then on top of that, they have other priorities with the demand signal coming from elected officials in many cases, whether that's through a city council, a mayor, county commissioners, etc.

Vendor Apathy. And then, ultimately, political will. So, you know, through our journey and CAD-to-CAD at Jeffcom,

you have depending on who our desired partner is, one of these may be a gap, or all of them may be a gap.

So, my challenge to anybody listening today would be to identify what your gaps are with your priority desired partners and the CAD-to-CAD solution.

Identify who the pertinent stakeholders are that can bridge that gap. And then generate an engagement plan,

so that you can bridge that gap.

Advance, please. And if we're talking simply funding, like if you go through that cycle of all those potential barriers, and it really just comes down to money.

There are other opportunities, and I would start looking at out-of-the-box solutions for those opportunities. So first, I'll say, you know, once you get the first partner on board,

right, in your region, and you're able to share the positive outcomes that are coming with that. Fear of missing out is real.

That incentivizes other agencies to get on your CAD-to-CAD hub. Currently, you know certainly, the West Metro dispatch Jeffcom and our South Metro partners are utilizing that CAD-to-CAD solution to a very high effectiveness.

And so now we currently have adjoining partners in Douglas County and then soon to be Weld County and Larmor County for also getting on our cut, on our CAD-to-CAD hub.

But if we're looking at, you know, funding mechanisms specifically, you know there are available grants, so you looked at that previous slide, right, US Department of Transportation is said,

and they have said for years CAD interoperability is important. Okay, so what are they offering to support that? And they do have a couple of grants that look very promising.

So, there is the Safer Streets for All, and then there's also a SMART grant. Now, the Safer Streets for All grant

in full disclosure, I tried very much to apply for that in this last cycle, but unfortunately, it was just too late.

I was notified of the opportunity too late, and it closed out before I could achieve a full submission for that package.

Primarily because it wasn't just Jeffcom because it's a CAD-to-CAD solution,

you have multiple partners. It requires multiple partners to make an application for the grant, and being able to herd all those cats in a very short amount of time, I just wasn't able to achieve that.

However, just going through that process and gathering the required information from the various sources such as, you know, census tract data, US Department of Transportation Equitable Transportation Community data, and utilizing the NHTSA Fatality Analysis reporting system.

And being able to gather that information just further empowered our use cases and how we are able to articulate to external stakeholders why this is important.

And as long as you're, you know, moving towards a target, the target itself may change, but you're getting progress, and other opportunities will reveal themselves.

And in this case, just through that stakeholder engagement and NHTSA Department of Transportation and local authorities.

Another opportunity was brought to our attention, which is the Statewide Traffic Records Advisory Committee. And so even this week, we should have, we basically have a sponsor on this committee,

and we will have submitted information to get this process initiated for adding other partners and being able to help fund and incentivize other partners in our regional area to get them on the CAD-to-CAD hub because this entity values the data that's going to be extracted out of that hub.

So. You know, finally, I guess I would say. Identify who your stakeholders are.

Be persistent. And that just because the

challenges are there. everybody and most of your stakeholders were all in this to improve public safety, and if we keep that at the forefront of how we message the need for a CAD-to-CAD solution,

I think we'll eventually get there, but it takes persistence. And I think, you know, we're all public servants, and we are all trying to do the right thing for ultimately improving public safety.

So, why not give it a try? Please advance.

So.

Alright. Oh, sorry. Go ahead.

I'll just say that was our Jeffcom experience, and I hope you heard something that is helpful to you and for your journey.

To achieve CAD-to-CAD interoperability.

Thank you, Michael. That's what I was gonna say: thank you. We appreciate the info.

And so, as a reminder to everyone, we are now ready to start our Q&A for this first portion.

Just as a reminder, you can either enter your question into the Q&A feature on Zoom, or you can raise your hand.

And so our first question asks, "With this level of interoperability, curious how Jeffcom is dealing with things like pre-amps that require additional coordination.

So, for any additional coordination, it's really just utilizing the comments feature within CAD, where we can append

information and then also, just utilizing the mutual radio and channels as well.

Okay, thanks. The next question is, my apologies if this was already mentioned, is the hub between the disparate CAD systems operating using the NENA EIDO standard with Open Architecture, or is it proprietary to a specific vendor?

So, the hub that we're using is a specific vendor hub. We're utilizing the Central Square Unified solution.

Okay. Alright. And then our next question is asking, "The call and staff hour figures that you've

included,

does that include duplicative reports, or are they actually unique incidents?"

Those are actually unique incidents. So, one of the beauty, the beautiful things about being a regional center like we have is we don't do the, we don't control, RMS systems that it goes, falls back on the individual agencies.

And our primary focus is only CAD and dispatching those incidents out.

Okay, perfect. Thank you. And so, then the next question is, "Can the link to these grants be shared?"

So, I believe in the slide where you listed some of the grants, they are asking if you can share the link for those grants.

Yeah, certainly, I think we could, but they will come up on a simple if you just place DOT's

Safer Streets for All or SMART grant that will generate a link to their website and full instructions on how to complete their applications with their deadlines are supplemental information, supplemental links, etc.

Okay, thank you, and we have another question asking "Is the hub supporting only fire incidents, or does it also include EMS and law enforcement?"

So, as this is being utilized now, currently EMS and fire incidents. The law, you know law brings its own challenges with jurisdiction borders and what is authorized and not.

And that's what we're very much looking forward to bringing some of these additional partners on board.

So, it'll probably be used kind of in that lower spectrum that I discussed. So, it'll probably be used kind of in that lower spectrum that I discussed of in that lower spectrum that I discussed of more informational sharing and that I discussed of more informational sharing and situation awareness and transferring of more informational sharing and situation awareness and transferring of calls and comments.

But probably not utilization of dispatching each other's resources, or at least not yet.

Alright, perfect. Well, Michael, I wanna thank you again. I do know that we have several questions

that have come in that we did not have time to answer. So, let me reassure everyone we will get your questions to Michael, and he can provide responses that will then be posted with the recording

of today's webinar.

And now I have the distinct pleasure of being able to introduce Heather McGaffin. Heather is the director of DC OUC.

And she is here today to share some staffing strategies with us. She began her public safety career as a teenage volunteer for EMT, and she has over 20 years of public and private sector experience,

and I had the honor of working with Heather during her time as a consultant, where she worked on projects related to restructuring, training, development, and implementation

for Next Generation 911. And as I mentioned, she is now the director at DC OUC.

So, with that. Heather, take it away.

Thanks. Thank you so much. Hey, everybody. And thanks for spending a little bit of your afternoon with us.

This is always such a great webinar, and I highly encourage you to carve out the time every time that it comes up.

And, Michael, I learned so much. Somebody will be sending you some emails because I have some questions.

But thank you. You know, one of the things that we talk about a lot in 911 is how we really need to uplift and highlight the people who are really doing the job

each and every day. And so there are so many tools out there now that didn't previously exist.

But when I was appointed to my role here in Washington DC in February of this year. One of the things that we were really struggling with was recruiting

top-notch candidates to fill the seats of call-takers and dispatchers. And so, one of the things that I was getting pressed on that I'm continuing to get pressed on is how are we gonna do this differently?

And so, we really had to think outside of the box. So, the challenge was the human resource challenge. The challenge of just getting people in the door and getting them committed and making them feel like they were part of something bigger than themselves and then keeping them right because it's not just about getting them in the door or getting them to apply.

But it's really about how quickly we're offering them that job and starting those paychecks.

And so, you know, a joint study by the International Academy and NASNA. Shows that more than half, more than half, so over 3,901 centers, are facing this genuine stopping emergency.

And so, I took a play out of the Metropolitan Police Department's book. They have something called Prospect Day.

And their Prospect Day looks a little bit different than ours, but I thought, hey, if they can push for something, so can we because we're public safety, too.

You could go to the next one. So, what we did was we came up with a more strategic approach to recruit and retain.

And one of the things that we really, really were finding is that we had a lot of barriers in the way, but they were barriers that, if we just had conversations, we could easily knock down.

So here in Washington, DC, probably most, like most centers, we do not have our own hiring authority.

We do follow the rules of the district's personnel manual on hiring, and we also follow the rules,

you know, under the mayor's orders. And so, one of the things I learned was that here, just like a lot of other places, is that even though we're considered public safety, even though that's where our,

our agency falls in that cluster. Our deputy mayor is the deputy mayor for public safety. We're not maybe treated the same way as fire and police, and I'm telling you, we are changing the game here on that.

And I think the one thing, if you take nothing else away, change the game here on that. And I'm telling you, we are changing the game here on that.

And I think the one thing, if you take nothing else, show them that we are equal to those positions and that our challenges are really the same.

So, we looked at a more strategic approach. We are now offering a hiring bonus, and the big thing that I'm going to talk about today is our OUC, Prospect Day.

Next slide.

So, our previous process was this. You would apply through DCHR. They would hold their applications until the job announcement closed.

That was typically 30 days, and then at the end of 30 days, we got everybody's applications.

We would go through them, and then we would invite folks to take the CritiCall test. Then we would give them the PHQ or the Patient Health Questionnaire, and that's really more mental health and to make sure that you can do the job, or you could do the job with reasonable accommodations,

and then we would bring you in front for an interview, and then we would give you a conditional offer after we had interviewed everybody.

It was a very pragmatic approach, but there were certain steps, and you could only go to Step 2 once Step 1 was done.

And then, after the conditional offer, we were doing backgrounds and suitability. And then we were onboarding you.

And so, we'd have a hundred people start in the application process. But usually, when people are looking for jobs, is

because they needed a job, and they were then finding other places to work. One of the things about us here in Washington DC is within about a 50-mile radius

of our city, there are about 20 other 911 centers. And so, you know, people who really want to be 911 call takers and dispatchers probably aren't just applying at your center. They're applying all over the place.

And really, if you only have to work, you know, three or four days a week, you probably don't mind driving probably about an hour to get to your position.

So, we have a lot of competition in our area. And so, what was happening was we'd have about 100 people apply, and we were losing people and then by the end when it was time to actually onboard

we only had about ten people. And so, the level of effort and the level of stress that it was causing all of us,

from our recruiter to, the, you know, to the people doing the background checks to our trainers is like, okay, guys, we're gonna bring in a class of 20, and they're like, okay guys, we're gonna bring in a class of 20, and they get material and everything set for 20, and they'd get material and everything set for 20, and then ten people would show up and

then maybe by the end of the first week, we still had seven because people didn't really realize that it was ship work, and then it was all of this other stuff.

We just had to really change the game, and that process was taking us six months, but in actuality, it sometimes was more like nine months.

So, we got rid of a lot of stuff in the middle, and we are now keeping this job open continuously.

Every 15 days, they are sending us over applications. We are then inviting those people who apply to Prospect Day.

Prospect Day is every single month, whether we have positions open or we don't, because it's not just about getting positions filled.

It's about building a pipeline. So that when you do have positions become open, whether that's through promotion or people leaving or finding other things.

You've got this group of people that you can kind of call and say, hey, did you were you still interested in this job, and now you've already kind of done all of this stuff and now it's much easier to bring them in.

And so they do the application, they come to Prospect Day, and then when they leave Prospect Day, they already have the link to their PHQ.

It's not long after that that we can offer them a conditional offer when we have positions available. We do some additional screening, and we're onboarding differently.

We're onboarding people now when they're ready, and we have a position that they can fill even if that means they don't start, even if that means they don't start formalized training for a couple of weeks or even a couple of weeks or even a couple of weeks or even a couple of weeks or even a couple of months.

And we're able to bring my training for a couple of weeks or even a couple of months. And we're able to bring them in, and they're able to do kind of like some ancillary duties that really help us.

Answering those emergency lines, doing their independent study courses because we do make them take like ICS and some other things like that.

And so, let's get into the nitty-gritty of what Prospect Day is here. The Telecommunicator Prospect Day, really,

like I said, it is held monthly. The first one was held on May 11th. We had 190 people show up, and when I tell you, the vibe in our center that day was really amazing.

It really was. We have shirts. They're red, they have our big logo on the front, on the back.

It says, "We Answer the Call, Can You?" and everybody who participates in Prospect Day has those on. So, if people have questions,

then they can certainly come in, and they know exactly who to find. So it's also a really good piece, our folks that work here wear them out sometimes, and it's a, it's a talking piece, right?

It gets a conversation started. So while they're here for prospect date, and we do it kind of in groups, and we do it from about 8 o'clock in the morning to about 7 o'clock at night.

So that allows people to come in, you know, based so that they're not having to miss work because that was really the other thing too.

We were losing people because we were asking them to come in so many different times. Like, who wants to take off

from their current job that they have to come by applying for this job, you know, because It's hard, and you know childcare is hard, and so we're trying to take all of that into perspective.

So when they come into us on Prospect Day they come in, they take their credit call pre-deployment and assessment.

And then, they participate in on-the-spot interviews if they pass. So they come in, they take their interview, or they take their credit call.

If they pass, then they're getting a ticket to the next session. They're touring our center.

They're talking to people who actually are doing this job. And I think that is the part that probably has been a big game changer is that they're talking to people, and when I say that they're talking to people, it's not like, oh my gosh, this is the best job,

you'd love it here. It's like you're gonna miss the holidays. You're gonna miss

you know, you could potentially miss your child's first soccer goal, or this that, it is night work

You know, we do work in seniority. So when you come in, you're not going to just work Monday through Friday.

You're going to be probably, you know, working shift work. You're going to be working every other weekend.

You might get put on the night shift. And so we're really having those real conversations.

And people, the feedback has been phenomenal because people really appreciate that because it's not me as the director or one of our division chiefs telling you how wonderful and rosy it is.

It is real people giving you the real skinny of what's happening in our center day in and day out.

And so we're talking about stress. We're talking about the real deal when they're coming in, and that's really hard to do

sometimes, especially when you're at job fairs. So. They come in, they take the CritiCall, they do the on-the-spot interviews, they tour our facility, and then if you know they've made it through all that, and they're still interested, and we feel like they would be a good fit, then we are giving them links to start their background and to start their health stop if we have positions

open, if not, then we tell them, hey, like we're just building the pipeline.

And then, we put them on a ranked list. And so when we do have positions, you know, they would be our next call on the list.

But keeping the job open continuously and having these Prospect Days have really, really helped us. Next slide.

And so, how have they helped us? They have accelerated the hiring process by 50%. In we've done this since May, so May, June, July, August, and September, we've had five.

So, in five Prospect Days, we screened 460 applicants. We have hired 40, so that number doesn't change as much, but now we're not really losing people to the things that we were previously losing them to.

I'll be really honest with you: a lot of the things that we're losing them to are happening, like in the, in the background pieces.

You know, we're not losing people because they found other jobs because, really, in our region, we

now, we had the longest, and now we have the quickest hiring timeline. So we've had we've onboarded 35 trainees.

We had 11 start in July, and then we have 24 starting next Monday or the Monday after next.

And so what this also allows us to do is we are really like in the newer part of this, but what it's allowing us to do is we're building a better year-long timeline for our agency.

So, for training, we're building a better year-long timeline for when can we make upgrades to things?

When can we push out, you know, CTO training? When can we push out continuing education for our employees who when they're training or when they're being CTOs

won't necessarily have the time to train for themselves. And so this is really helping just the holistic approach to how we're doing everything here.

And I'm a very systematic person, and so by doing this, we've not just changed the game and how we're hiring, but we're changing the game and how our center holistically is operating.

So, if you wanna go to the next slide. I'm also really proud of the national reach that we had.

So this past

This past Prospect Day, the one that we had in September, and I know I told you we haven't at the last the last Thursday of every month, but because of school starting and some other things,

we shifted August to be in September, but at the end of this month, we'll be back on our regular schedule.

And then we'll shift it again for Thanksgiving. You know, so we make those changes, but we kind of know when we're having them.

But our last prospect, which was last Thursday, Boston PD came down, and they watched us.

And so I would offer that to you. We are happy to have you come and shadow us. And then that way, you can kind of see what we're doing and how it all works.

And then, on the 7th of October, our, some of our staff are actually going to Boston

to help them run their very first Prospect Day. And so I'm super proud of that because we have one recruiter that didn't change.

Unfortunately, we don't have a second person, you know, in that role, but we have one recruiter, but what we do is we use our personnel here.

So, like our supervisors, our senior call takers and dispatchers, we're using them to be on the interview panels because really they're the people that are going to be invested in these trainees, and also nobody knows the job better than that.

I did this job, absolutely, but I was not a call taker in Washington DC, wasn't a call taker,

I was a call taker in a much smaller location than Washington, DC. So, my experience as a call-taker

is not with the experience that the folks coming in are gonna have, and so it was really important for us to allow the people that are doing the job to interview the people

who is potentially gonna do the job. It also helps to strengthen our team internally because we're putting a lot of trust in and responsibility.

And then the first day when somebody walks in and says, hey, I'm here to do this job.

Like, their supervisors already know them or their senior staff that already know him, and now we're kind of building like a bond like I'm going to invest in this person because I was part of the reason that they're where they are today as a new hire.

The other thing that we're doing is we're using our training team and our IT team.

So we're really lucky here that we have an IT team that's always present on the floor.

And we have a couple of them who are helping and are on standby for the Prospect Day.

So if computers go down and internet connectivity, you know, we have somebody right there dedicated to this day just so we don't get in our own way of making this successful.

And so I would always just say if you are in the DC area and you want to come visit us when we're doing a Prospect Day last Thursday of every month.

Just let us know. You know, we'll give you our email, or you can go to our website, and we'd love to have you, you know, and we'd love to help you in any way that we can because really we're all in this together.

Also, the next slide. The other thing that we're really doing here is we really reached out to our partners.

And so, what do you mean by that? We. We don't have a physical requirement here at OUC to be a call taker, but our partners at MPD, which is the Metropolitan Police Department and DC Fire and EMS, do.

And so, when folks show up to their Prospect Days, and they don't pass the physical part, those agencies are now giving us all of their candidates.

Like these candidates are good candidates, but for whatever reason, you know, they didn't make it through the physical aspect.

If you want to take a look at them or reach out, please go ahead and do that. And we've had a couple of successful hires using that

pathway, and then we also have partnered with the Department of Employment Services. And here in the city, we have the Marion Barry Summer Youth Employment Program, which employs high school kids who can come in and get jobs for the summer.

We have several people who came to us in that program. In fact, our graphic designer, who put together this entire website,

or this presentation and our entire website came to us from the youth employment program when she was a student in DC, and now she's such an amazing asset to our organization, and so you know, having those kinds of connections.

We've also partnered with DC Public Schools. And have started the OUC Junior Academy.

And our Junior Academy is, what we'll, I'll kind of talk a little bit about you next with next because this isn't a major lift, but it's really been impactful.

So, our Junior Academy had our first cohort in the spring and then this.

In about next week, actually, we'll start our second cohort. And this is geared toward high school kids, and they come in for five weeks, and they're given an overview of 911 and 311 communication, and they learn how they can better help to serve their communities.

These students, upon graduation from high school, also have kind of a leg up, and they can apply for the position here at OUC.

So, on the next slide, I'll go ahead and talk about the different things that we do each week.

So during week one, we bring them in, we introduce ourselves, we have a tour, and we show them how. No one works because a lot of people don't know how 911 works.

And then we pair them up with somebody, and they sit chair side with call takers and dispatchers, and we also run 311 here.

So, they also sit with 311 customer service representatives on the second week they get to visit our first district.

They get to meet with the police chief. They get to learn all about the things that NPD does, and they talk about, you know, how communications impact the work that they do.

And they just are, you know, getting to meet people and having discussions with officers. During week 3

they do the mock CritiCall, and they do a Q&A with the Office of Professional Standards and Development, which is our division that runs training and quality assurance.

We also bring in, during that time we bring in some of our, maybe like our younger employees.

To kind of talk about, like, what their journey has been so much so far and how they kind of got started here.

And it kind of helps to build a mentorship or a partnership with our community. Week 4, they get to visit the fire EMS department at one of our local engines. The fire chief comes, they could slide down the fire pole, they get to meet dogs, they get to meet them, and they kind of get to see, you know what fire EMS is all about, and we don't do that

because we want them to go be firefighters or police officers. We do that because we want to show the strong relationship that we have and how dependent

they are on what we're doing here at OUC. And then, through the fifth week, they get to come in, they get to have a round table discussion with me and my senior leadership. We talk, and then we invite their families to come, and we present them with the certificate, and we have cake.

And it's just a lot of fun. And then we also, at that time, I also invite them in.

Because I think it's really important to not just make these connections but to keep these connections. So, next slide.

The first cohort had ten students from 9 high schools. Somebody did apply to be a TEO, and everybody passed the month CritiCall pre-employment exam, which was really cool. And then, like I said, we have 25 students starting this year,

or yeah, starting this year. The one thing I will say, and I kind of just mentioned this, is don't just make the connection but keep the connection, and that's for everything.

So even when we're building our pipeline, we're going to be reaching out to the people in our pipeline.

Having conversations, hey, are you still interested? If they want to come and do a sit-along, we're allowing that.

And the thing that I told the students from the cohort was this. Hey, you know what?

On Friday night, if you decide, like, I don't really have anything to do, instead of maybe going out and doing something that might land you in trouble.

Instead of maybe going out and doing something that might land you in trouble, come hang out with us on a Friday night, you in trouble, come hang out with us on a Friday night. You're gonna hear everything.

You're gonna kind of really be, and that really helps to build mentorship too because I think a lot of times what happens, especially when you live in a city, kids have a lot of choices.

They have a lot of things to do. Kids have a lot of choices. They have a lot of things to do.

And really, if you live in a small town too, because I was a teenager in a small town, you have a lot of things to do, and they're the things that are either going to allow you to get that job that you always wanted when you were a kid, or they're going to be the things that you do that.

Get you kicked out during the pre-employment background phase. And so if we create these safe spaces, you know, like police officers do with ride-alongs or

fire departments do when they're inviting you in as a 16-year-old kid to be a volunteer.

If we start changing that game and making that happen in our 911 centers. We're gonna get more attention to who we are and what we do, but we're going to be building stronger community connections that are really going to sustain us through the hard times.

They're going to sustain us through the slumps in staffing. They're going to sustain us through the negative press because people who aren't directly involved have an insight into what we're doing.

And we become that vital part of the community that we know that we are and we know that we've always been, but the community is going to see us in a different,

in a different light in a different way. So I know that we're, you know, coming up on time, and I'm happy to answer any questions, and I'm happy to share my email.

But you know, just really think about how you're doing things and don't be afraid to take some chances because I'm going to tell you on that first one on May 11th afterward, cause I'm gonna tell you on that first one on May 11th afterward we sat down and we're like, Alright, some things went really well today and some things didn't and we changed it, and I don't even know still that

it's perfected, but I'm gonna tell you Prospect Day last week looked a heck of lots more than it may have looked in May, but it remains fruitful, and we're gonna keep making changes, and we're gonna keep improving, and so we have a really large social media presence.

So follow us, like us, join us. You know, we're really excited to keep the conversation going with you about some things that you can do.

And we'd love to hear about what you're doing. Cause we still have some other things to change out.

Thank you so much. Heather. That was a lot of great information, and I really appreciate you joining

us today.

So I know, as you mentioned, we are a little bit out of time, but we do have several questions that have come in, and I want to ask you one of them, Heather and then we'll just email you the rest of them.

This question is, how do you handle confidentiality issues with incoming calls? You know, when you have them sitting along.

Yeah, so we have a general council here, and we've kind of worked through that, and they do sign agreements.

When we're working with DC public schools and a lot of this and so, you know, there is like an understanding there and so, you know, there is like an understanding there.

And so we're not kind of, we're not doing this in a vacuum. And so we're not kind of, we're not doing this in a vacuum.

And so one of the things that I would say is it looks different for everybody. So just kind of reach out to your partners and talk about how that looks for you because it's, I'm going to tell you, looks very different for us here in Washington, DC, than it probably does for somebody else.

Alright, thank you,

and I want once again to thank both Heather and Michael for their presentations today. We appreciate it, and as I mentioned, we will follow up with both of you.

To get you questions so that you can answer them. This concludes today's webinar, and we appreciate everyone's participation.

As a reminder, an archived version of the webinar will be available on 911.gov soon.

Our next webinar is scheduled for Tuesday, November 14th, and we hope that everyone will be able to join us.

And with that, I want to thank everyone and have a great rest of your Tuesday.