

# PSAP Director's Meeting Summary

Statewide 911 Strategic Plan | Summary Notes from Fall Forum, October 15, 2024

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On October 15<sup>th</sup>, BERK facilitated an in-person meeting with over 40 Directors and Coordinators from PSAPs across the state. Below are the key themes from the meeting, including a summary of discussions, report-outs, and direct transcriptions of individual reflections.

## Individual Reflections

The following key themes are derived from individual self-reflections on **what success for statewide 911 services will look like in the next decade**.

### Key Themes – Success in the next decade

- **Well-funded and Sustainable System.** Consistent funding and financial support from the state, with a focus on ensuring sufficient resources for technology and staffing, came up frequently.
- **Standardization and Consistent Service Delivery.** The need for equitable, standardized service across regions, especially in rural and small areas, was a frequent point.
- **Enhanced Technology and Interoperability.** Many comments highlighted the importance of integrated, advanced technology, interoperability between agencies, and automation to support dispatchers.
- **911 as a Valued and Honorable Career.** Promoting working in the 911 system as a desirable and respected career path with competitive pay and career growth was mentioned often, with an emphasis on improving the work environment.
- **Mental Health and Staff Well-being.** Supporting telecommunicators' mental health and ensuring a sustainable, positive work environment was a strong theme, with a focus on reducing burnout and turnover.
- **Supportive and Uplifting Culture.** Building a culture where telecommunicators lift each other up, encourage one another, and promote professional development. This includes creating positive, proactive workplaces that value teamwork and support.
- **Community and Legislative Support.** Building stronger relationships with the public, legislators, and user agencies was mentioned multiple times, focusing on gaining support and recognition for 911 services.

- **Public Awareness and Trust.** Educating the public and managing expectations around what 911 can provide, as well as building trust, was mentioned several times.
- **Adapting to Future Communication Needs.** There was consistent mention of adapting to future communication technologies and the need for the 911 system to stay current with societal shifts in how people communicate.
- **Clear Vision and Role of 911.** Ensuring that 911's purpose and role are clearly defined both within the 911 ecosystem and to the public appeared a few times, with a focus on strategic planning and leadership.

## Small Group Conversation

The Directors were split up into 6 groups and had conversations around the following three questions:

1. **How would you define the 'statewide 911 system' that will be addressed by this strategic plan? What entities or stakeholders should be included?**
2. **What are the most important priorities a statewide plan should focus on, and what should it leave out?**
3. **How can a statewide 911 strategic plan support your work?**

The takeaways are derived from the notes gathered during discussions within each group.

## Key Themes

### *Defining the 911 System*

- Technology, people, policies, infrastructure.
- Umbrella of statewide services and initiatives that revolves around PSAPs.
- The system includes all stages of a 911 call, from when it's placed to its conclusion.

### *Stakeholders to Include in the Strategic Planning Process*

- Primary and Secondary PSAPs
  - Telecommunicators, directors/managers, 911 IT staff
  - Out of state PSAPs (Idaho and Oregon)
  - Advisory Committee
- Field Responders
  - Law enforcement agencies, fire, EMS, and other first responders
  - User groups directly involved in 911 services
- General Public
  - Focus on special interest populations (BIPOC, non-native English speakers, tribes, homeless, intellectual/physical barriers)
- Vendors and Software
  - Software for making, receiving, dispatching emergency events
  - Telecom providers

- **Specialized Service Providers**
  - 211 and 988 services
- **Funding Streams**
  - Policy makers
  - Municipalities
  - Legislators
  - User agencies

#### *Most Important Priorities*

- **Define and Align 911 Services.** Establish a clear, consistent definition of who and what 911 is, establishing consistency around expectations and baseline level of service.
- **Technology Improvements.** Technology improvements that benefit and support all PSAPs and close gaps between PSAPs.
- **Interoperability.** Ensure interoperability to enhance resilience and improve communication between PSAPs. Consider rural and urban expectations, and support seamless technology integration statewide.
- **Sustainable Long-Term Funding.** Stable, realistic funding model.
- **Professional Development and Recognition.** Support telecommunicators' health, wellness and professional recognition. Look at integration and ways to lessen the burden of dispatchers. Establish staffing initiatives and recruitment that ensure 911 is seen as a career.
- **211 and 988 services.** Improve the integration of 211 and 988 services to reduce the burden on dispatchers and expand non-emergency resources statewide, ensuring 24/7 availability.
- **Public Education.** Enhance community understanding of 911 services through updated public messaging, recruitment, adapting to cultural and generational change. Ensure all community members, including underserved populations, have equitable access to 911 services.

#### *How the 911 Strategic Plan Can Support Directors of PSAPs*

- **Collective Voice, Vision, and Interoperability.** Establish common standards, driving interoperability, aligning stakeholders, and providing a unified framework for achieving long-term goals.
- **Secure Funding and Prioritize Spending.** The plan can help make the case for additional funding, drive adoption of new funding sources, and prioritize future spending.
- **Shared Resources and Standards.** There is a need for shared resources (first responder family resources, salary/CBA info), marketing resources and shared language for community education, lobbying, and internal education of the 911 community. The Plan can also drive statewide standards, reducing duplications and inefficiencies.