
FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

October 16, 2020



Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

IOWA 911 COMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL MEETING — OCTOBER 2020

Meeting. The Iowa 911 Communications Council met virtually on October 8, 2020.

911 Program Financial Reports and Program Update. Blake DeRouchey, 911 Program Manager and State Administrator at the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEMD), provided the Council with the following updates on the 911 Program and its current financial standing.

Wireline Migration Update. As of October 8, 2020, 24 Iowa Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) have successfully completed the wireline migration process that merges the existing wireline 911 network with the Next Generation 911 (NG911) network to produce a single 911 system. The merging process was implemented by 2018 Iowa Acts, [House File 2254](#) (911 Emergency Telephone Act), which required elimination of the wireline network and the creation of a shared service environment that the HSEMD would operate and maintain, with the benefit of automatic call rerouting in the case of an outage or maintenance. Specifically, the Act required the HSEMD to establish a virtual consolidation plan that would merge the legacy wireline 911 network with the NG911 network to allow Iowa PSAPs to share emergency communication services. The network merging commenced in spring 2020.

At the September 2020 meeting, Mr. DeRouchey provided an update on the wireline migration issues discussed at the previous Council meeting. In September 2020, it was brought to the Council's attention that a small percentage of wireline calls were coming in with no Automatic Location Identification (ALI) information. This problem stems from some local providers of telecommunications services not provisioning their data accurately in the new statewide ALI database. When this happens, the call will default route to the Department of Public Safety in Johnston rather than the local PSAP. As a result of these issues, the wireline migration was placed in a holding pattern for the remainder of September 2020. Mr. DeRouchey noted that after a three-week pause, as of October 5, 2020, scheduling and conducting migrations has resumed. A meeting with various telco participants and the Iowa Communications Alliance was also held in September 2020, and Mr. DeRouchey stated that since the migration pause earlier in the month, over 100,000 additional records have been added to the wireline migration process to assist in providing more efficient call routing.

GIS Grants Update. In the first funding period of FY 2021 (July 2020 to January 2021), 26 counties have received Geographic Information System (GIS) funding for a total of \$216,000. In September 2020, 12 counties were granted funding for a total of \$96,000. Funding is contingent on verification that the applicant possesses 98.0% match rates with GIS and 98.0% match rates with ALI.

911 Council Travel, Public Education, and Training Fund. Mr. DeRouchey stated that as of October 8, 2020, the Council has approved a total of \$12,100 to be distributed from the 911 Council Travel, Public Education, and Training Fund. Approximately \$100,000 is allocated toward the Fund annually. The remaining Fund balance totals \$87,100. Approximately \$40,000 in already-granted training funds were returned to the Council due to the cancellations of numerous trainings as a result of the implications of COVID-19.

Presentation: 911 Strategic Plan. In August 2019, the State of Iowa took part in the National 911 Office Peer Assessment Program. The nationwide program consisted of a self-evaluation based on 98 different criteria points to provide feedback on the diverse aspects of the 911 system. The self-evaluation

assessment evaluated 83 guidelines and awarded each guideline with one of four categories of “does not meet,” “minimum criteria,” “advanced criteria,” and “superior criteria” as a rating. In response to the individual ratings and the assessment as a whole, the State has created the 911 Strategic Plan for calendar years 2021 to 2025. The Strategic Plan, acting as a roadmap for the 911 Program to utilize time and resources to focus on specific areas of its work over the next five years, will look at the guidelines of which Iowa fell into the “does not meet” or “minimum criteria” rating, placing each of these ratings in the following five focus area categories:

- Legislative & Administrative
- Systems and Security
- 911 Program
- Education & Outreach (External/Public)
- Facilities and Operations

A working group will be created for each category and will consist of subject matter experts who will create goals and benchmarks on each concern. Goals include providing guidance and/or materials to assist the existing 911 Program to meet or exceed lower rated guidelines. A draft plan will be posted on the HSEMD website once finalized, and a public comment period will be available through December 1. The final plan is expected to be published in January 2021.

Zetron Mission Critical Communications Solutions Contract Update. Lynne Warren, Zetron Project Manager, discussed Zetron’s work in updating the 113 existing PSAPs in delivering the NG911 solution to enhance public safety services across the State. The HSEMD awarded Zetron an NG911 contract in December 2017 for shared 911 call handling equipment. Zetron also provides a call-taking system that offers computer-aided design (CAD), 911 mapping, and emergency medical dispatch software in implementing NG911 protocols and systems. Ms. Warren stated that since September 2020, Department of Public Safety (DPS) communication centers located in Des Moines, Storm Lake, and Cedar Rapids have all successfully completed their migration to Comtech statewide automatic location identification (ALI) and wireline services. The Jones County Emergency Medical Dispatch Department successfully deployed software in August 2020 and was scheduled to migrate to Comtech statewide ALI and wireline services on October 14, 2020.

Statewide Interoperable Communications System (SWIC) Board Update. Chris Maiers, SWIC Coordinator, provided an update on the Board’s activities, stating that the Board is continuing to work with counties across the State to update existing PSAP equipment to improve emergency communication technology despite recent weather challenges. Virtual training continues to be offered and thus far has had good attendance levels and positive feedback.

Next Meeting. The next Council meeting will be held on November 12, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. It remains to be determined whether the meeting will be held telephonically or in person.

LSA Staff Contact: Christin Mechler (515.250.0458) christin.mechler@legis.iowa.gov

Doc ID 1151583