

PSAP 911 Call Processing Program

A. Background

Massachusetts has been virtually alone among states its size in not providing significant 911 call processing support to PSAP's. Because of funding limitations (the unique and declining Massachusetts Directory Assistance surcharge) 911 telephone surcharge revenues have just been able to fund the Telephone Equipment Part of the 911 Program. Other states use 911 telephone surcharge revenues to fund both Telephone Equipment Part and the Call Processing Part of a complete 911 Program.

The 911 Telephone Equipment Part of the 911 Program includes the costs of 911 telephone network services, special circuits and dedicated switches; the costs of 911 ALI databases and their support elements; and the costs of telephone answering equipment to deliver a 911 call to the ear of a public safety dispatcher in a PSAP.

The 911 Call Processing Part of the 91 Program includes the costs of the personnel, training, computer and radio equipment, and support services required in the PSAP to answer a 911 call, to properly determine the nature and extent of emergency services required to service the call, to properly alert the required emergency services, and to effectively help callers perform pre-arrival tasks so important to reducing injuries and improving scene and caller safety.

Massachusetts raises about 7.5 million yearly from its (DA-only) 911 telephone surcharge whereas others states similar in size (Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Indiana, Tennessee and Washington) raise 30-50 million yearly to support all parts of their 911 programs.

Many PSAP's need operational support to enable them to provide the 911 call answering and call processing services required by their citizen callers. They do not have the equipment, staffing, training, or procedures necessary to most quickly and effectively answer and process 911 calls according to state and FCC requirements. In other states similar in size to Massachusetts the great majority of the funds raised from telephone line surcharges go directly to PSAP's to help pay some or all of the operational costs of 911 call processing so that citizens can get the prompt and efficient results they expect when calling 911.

B. Types of PSAP Equipment Required to Process 911 Calls

Equipment Needed to process 911 calls

C. Allowable 911 Call Processing Expenditures that Can be Cost Recovered

ALLOWABLE 9-1-1 SURCHARGE EXPENDITURES	DISALLOWED 9-1-1 SURCHARGE EXPENDITURES
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<p>Personnel Costs directly attributable to the delivery of 9-1-1 service (i.e.; directors, supervisors, dispatchers, call-takers, technical staff, support staff): Salaries MSAG Coordination Uniforms Fringe Benefits Addressing/Database EAP Note: If 9-1-1 staff serves dual functions (i.e.; a director who is also in charge of Emergency Management, a dispatcher who is also a police officer) then only those portions of personnel costs attributable to their 9-1-1 functions should be allowable.</p>	<p>Personnel Costs of law enforcement, fire, and EMS responders, emergency management staff, shared support or technical staff, except for portions of time directly functioning as 9-1-1 allowable staff.</p>
<p>Facility Costs of the dispatch center directly attributable to the delivery of 9-1-1 service: Capital improvements for construction, remodeling, or expansion of dispatch center Electrical/Heat/AC/Water Fire Suppression System Cleaning, Maintenance, Trash Removal Telephone Generator/UPS and Grounding Insurance Office Supplies Printing and copying Furniture Note: If a shared facility, only those portions of facility costs attributable to the 9-1-1 functions should be allowable.</p>	<p>Facility Costs of law enforcement, fire, EMS, emergency management, or other municipal facilities, except for that portion housing the 9-1-1 center or back up center, or leased to the 9-1-1 center for allowable training or meeting facilities. Capital costs and furnishing for facilities for which the primary purpose is other than 9-1-1 (i.e.; a conference room used primarily for the Town Council but occasionally leased/loaned to the 9-1-1 center for meetings).</p>
<p>Training and Memberships directly related to 9-1-1 service: On the job training Vendor provided training Conferences Travel and lodging as necessary Membership in associations (APCO, NENA, etc.) Coverage to allow training relief</p>	<p>Training for staff not involved directly in the delivery of 9-1-1 service, or for any staff for courses not directly attributable to 9-1-1 or dispatching services. Memberships for staff not involved directly in the delivery of 9-1-1 service, or for associations with a primary purpose other than public safety communications (i.e., police or fire chief associations, etc.)</p>
<p>Hardware, software, connectivity and peripherals directly attributable to the delivery of 9-1-1 service: Customer Premise Equipment Remote CPE Hardware/Modems Computer-Aided Dispatch Radio system (consoles, infrastructure, field equipment) CJIS costs for dispatch purposes Paging System, pagers and related costs Voice logging equipment Mobile Data Systems GIS/Mapping Systems/AVL Systems Fire Alarms/Security Systems Connectivity for any of the above Maintenance and service agreements of above Software licensing of the above Associated database costs</p>	<p>Hardware, software, connectivity and peripherals not attributable to the delivery of 9-1-1 service: Law Enforcement Record Management Systems Fire Records Management Systems EMS Records Management Systems Jail Records Management Systems CJIS costs for non-9-1-1 functions (e.g., Records Unit) Word processing, databases, etc. not directly attributable to 9-1-1 service GIS not directly related to the delivery of 9-1-1 service Court Information Systems Connectivity for any of the above Maintenance and service agreements for any of the above Software licensing for any of the above</p>
<p>Vehicle costs (staff vehicle, pool car, mileage reimbursement, fuel, etc.) directly attributable to the delivery of 9-1-1 service:</p>	<p>Vehicle costs (fleet vehicle, pool car, mileage reimbursement, etc.) for law enforcement, fire, or EMS responders, such as patrol cars, fire</p>

Travel for meetings, training, conferences Travel for MSAG verification and testing Travel for 9-1-1 Public Education purposes	apparatus, ambulances, etc.
Professional Services Attorneys Consultants Insurance Architects Auditor	Professional Services not directly attributable to the delivery of 9-1-1 service.
Public Information/Education Expenses	Public Information not directly attributable to the delivery of 9-1-1 service.

D. Cost Recovery Procedures

The State should develop an explicit set of rules for PSAP 911 Call Processing Cost Recovery. These rules should be developed by the SETB and based on best practices used in other states as well as input from the PSAP and public safety community.

In general, an initial approach should be for a PSAP to make expenditures from its own budget, and then seek cost recovery through the telcom/911 surcharge fund process based on documented submissions that meet financial and 911 program standards. No costs should be recovered for expenditure categories not approved by the SETB.

The SETB needs to establish and publish yearly a list of approved expenditure categories that are explicit and unambiguous so that PSAP's may prepare budgets - and municipalities and agencies authorize those budgets - with reasonable certainty about which 911 Call Processing expenditures may later be submitted for cost recovery.

Expenditures may be subject to audit according to nationally approved standards.

E. Formulas for Fairly Distributing Equipment

Explicit and simple formulas make it easiest to administer the 911 Program with the least cost and the most participation by PSAP's. All surveyed states used formulas or published rates for the dispersal of 911 fund revenues to approved PSAP programs.

For Massachusetts, there are a variety of approaches to building formulas that meet the triple goals of furthering 911 public policy, minimizing administrative costs, and reducing conflict and uncertainty in the 911 Program.

1. Population-based formulas

Many states use population-based formulas to distribute funds to localities. In the case of PSAP's, the measure of population should be the population serviced. Thus if a PSAP serves three towns the population of all three towns together should be the population base for that PSAP.

A simple population-based approach should be to compute the population base of the PSAP and divide by the population of the state to get a percentage. That percentage should be multiplied by total amount allocated to the PSAP 911 Call Processing Program and that would be the maximum amount of funds that could be recovered by that PSAP in a time period.

Another approach, taken by example in the distribution of state funds in the recent EOPS Local Law Enforcement and Fire Equipment Grant Program, would be to group PSAP's in tiers by population category and assign maximum recovery amounts in each tier. As an example, Tier 1 might be PSAP's serving populations of from 1-4,999 population whereas Tier 7 (the largest tier) would be PSAP's serving populations over 500,000.

2. Call volume-based formulas

Another approach is to compute the recent (e.g., last year's) 911 call volume of a PSAP and calculate this as a percentage of the total 911 call volume in the state.

This approach, like all others, has good and less good effects. Busy PSAP's would be helped the most whereas less busy PSAP's would be helped less. On the downside, PSAP's that were successful in reducing the use of 911 for emergency purposes only would be dis-incented from these efforts. Because the SETB and the PSAP community has a strong interest

3. Hybrid formulas

4. Targeting needy PSAP's

F. What Equipment is Not Supported

G. Special Support for Regional PSAP's

H. Appendix: What Other States Support