

Planning and Implementing the PSAP Training Fund

1. Concept of Program

5% of both wireline and wireless surcharge revenues would be made available in yearly grants to PSAPs to spend on approved 911 Dispatcher training activities.

The rules for appropriate expenditures would be established by the SETB. Appropriate expenditures would be those related to the training of 911 Dispatchers in PSAPs and would include backfill costs for dispatchers at authorized training classes.

A formula based on objective, publicly available factors related to 911 Dispatcher training needs would be used to control 90% of the fund allocations to the PSAPs. The remaining 10% would be reserved to fund special PSAP training needs based on competitive applications.

The grants would be made yearly at the beginning of the fiscal year. A year-end report would be made by each PSAP listing grant fund expenditures. See section 4 on the mechanism.

2. Purpose of Training Funds

It is proposed that funds be used for a variety of training purposes related to the training of 911 Dispatchers. The SETB would establish and publish applicable uses of training funds.

These include, but are not limited to:

- a. The purchase of training manuals, books, and training aids
- b. Tuition to approved training courses (including those taught by public or private entities)
- c. The salaries or costs of 911 Dispatcher Training Instructors while they are conducting approved courses
- d. Backfill of 911 Dispatchers to attend training
- e. other costs

3. How Funds are Allocated for Formula Grants

It is recommended that a formula be used to compute the amount of grant funds allocated to each PSAP in each fiscal year.

The formula should use fair, public, available, and relevant factors in the computation of grant award amounts.

The MCC have looked at a variety of factors including number of dispatchers, population covered by the PSAP (some regional PSAPs cover many towns), crime rate, fire incident rate, and 911 call volume – among others – to try to determine which are possible and practical.

We recommend a two-factor weighted approach at present:

Population Served and 911 Call Volume

These factors are recommended because:

- a. Population Served is a straightforward, standard indicator of the size of the PSAP and its staffing.
- b. 911 Call Volume (numbers collected by the 911 Vendor except for Boston who keep their own numbers) adds a surrogate adjustment factor for those PSAPs that have a proportionately greater workload (and thus staff to be trained) owing to either:
 - a large summer or visitor population (e.g., Cape PSAPs, Boston or Salem) or,
 - a large influx of commuters forming a large weekday population.
- c. UCR/NIBRS Crime stats and Fire Incident data, while highly relevant to the workload, are not thought to be collected or submitted by all jurisdictions.
- d. Number of persons who can dispatch involves a complex calculation that has many issues that make it difficult to use.

See the attached sample sheets showing the use of the 2-factor formula for 2004.

Other issues:

- i. It may be advisable to set a floor amount so that small PSAPs get a certain minimum amount each year.
- ii. If a floor amount is used, the amounts to larger PSAPs need to be adjusted accordingly especially if funds are limited.

4. Grant Management Recommendations

The goals of the grant management effort are simplicity, efficiency, and speed. It is proposed that:

- a. Formula grants be awarded in July of each year (in the first month of the fiscal year).
- b. A package would be sent to each PSAP. The package would include 4 parts:
 - i. A cover award letter with the amount of the award (1 page)
 - ii. A check in the amount of the award made out to the PSAP's governing entity (e.g., ABC Police Department)
 - iii. The rules governing the expenditure (about 2 pages)
 - iv. A form on which to report, at year's end, the expenditures (1 page). This reporting might be later accomplished by web form, should that approach be available.
- c. Grants would be subject to spot audit and grantee PSAPs would be instructed of this possibility.
- d. At the end of the fiscal year, PSAPs would fill out the PSAP Training Fund Expenditure Report Form and return to the SETB.