

Kyle Plush Settlement Agreement

Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April 2021, the city of Cincinnati entered into a settlement agreement with the family of Kyle Plush. As a part of that settlement an expert team agreed upon by the city of Cincinnati and the Plush family were appointed. The independent expert team is Tracy Eldridge, ENP, of On Scene First, Mike Boucher, COML, of Falcon Public Safety Solutions and Tony Harrison, ENP, of The Public Safety Group. For the remainder of this document the expert team will be known as “the team.”

In May, the team began virtually meeting with Bill Vedra, director of the emergency communications center (ECC) to begin to understand the center’s current status. It was clear to the team that the city has taken, and continues to take, numerous steps in technology advancements, structure and personnel to change the functionality and culture of the ECC for the better. The team traveled to Cincinnati in late May to begin in-person meetings with the ECC’s administrative team.

In July, the team traveled to Cincinnati, and over multiple days, they met with ECC employees, and representatives of the local chapter of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and observed floor operations on various shifts. The team also met with members of the administrative staff.

In August, members of the team traveled back to the city to hold in-person meetings with representatives of Cincinnati Organized and Dedicated Employees (CODE) union, the supervisors union and any other employee who wanted to meet with the members of the team. Meetings were held over multiple days and at times that covered both shifts.

In early September, the team launched a 35-question survey. Many of the questions were used in the original Mission Critical Partners report issued in January 2019. So the team and the city can track responses over time. Ten new questions were added in 2021 to assess areas not previously assessed. The team also held several virtual office hours to allow past and present employees to talk to the team. This allowed personnel to confidentially sign up for meeting times. (*Note: The team had previously learned that some ECC staff members did not feel comfortable speaking to them with the knowledge of others.*)

The team found the following:

As a whole, the Cincinnati ECC has extremely passionate, dedicated employees. Over the past years, continuous changes have been made in the operation, structure and supervision of the ECC. The ECC has moved from being a civilian operation to a part of the police department, back to a civilian operation under police supervision and, finally, back to a civilian operation. During this time, numerous people directed the center. Many employees reported that they have seen more directors than they have years of service. The continuous change has led to feelings of mistrust and confusion, and been a contributing factor to many of the issues that have plagued the center for years. Another challenge the ECC has faced, is looming negativity in the public eye. It is vital that the city maintain a consistent structure for the ECC and support leadership that can conduct long-term projects and change for the better, as well as work toward positive public engagement.

The city has made significant strides in improving working conditions and technology, both at the primary site on Radcliff and the backup facility located at Spinney Field. Hardware replacement of the computer aided dispatch (CAD) servers has been completed and migrated to the new environment. A

failover exercise of the production CAD is planned for late October, when the Radcliff site system will fail and carry over to the Spinney Field location.

The city is working toward certification from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), an achievement that is 12–24 months away. CALEA accreditation is a complex process that many agencies strive to achieve.

The city has begun using PowerDMS, a policy management platform also used by agencies throughout the county. PowerDMS has proved an effective tool to assist in the implementation of policies and tracking their implementation.

The city is in the process of moving to a call-taking protocol system called Emergency Police Dispatching, provided by Priority Dispatch. The system should be in place in the spring or summer of 2022. This system will standardize call-taking and processing of 9-1-1 calls and potentially reduce the city's exposure to liability in the future. However, this system has been criticized by some as causing delays in gathering information. Some employees will resist the change, and difficulties in the implementation of scripted call processing will occur. The decision to purchase this system was made prior to the team's arrival.

The team requested recent exit interview documentation and concludes the main reasons employees leave their employment with the ECC are:

- Low morale (see more information on page 26),
- Lack of communication between the administration and the floor, and
- Lack of positive communication and support from administration.

Turnover and staffing remain critical problems in the ECC. In 2020, 17 employees left employment with the ECC: five resigned, three retired, five failed probation, three transferred to other city departments and one was fired. In 2021, 23 employees have left the ECC as of early September: four retired, two failed probation, four transferred to other city departments, 12 resigned, and one left for medical reasons. Although staffing any ECC is difficult, that should not be allowed to be an excuse for constant understaffing of the unit.

Morale remains a major issue in the center, so the ECC can't hire its way out of a staffing shortage. Until it addresses the core reasons why people are leaving, the ECC will never be able to hire enough people to become fully staffed.

The administration must move away from a task-and-results environment and toward a people-driven organization. Doing so will play a significant role in employee retention. In other centers, this has proved to improve morale and turn them around. The team was told numerous times that staffing, morale and mental health matters are the biggest issues.

The ECC operations staff reported that administrators are seldom on the floor. Employees express an interest in seeing the administrators on the floor more frequently during critical incidents and daily operations.

Employees noted that decisions are not being made in a timely manner. Many of the current administrators were hired from outside the city and when several started their employment it took

weeks or longer for them to meet many veteran employees. None of the current administrators have previous experience in their current roles. This has led to a tremendous amount of learning on the job. It appears to the team that the administrators who are dedicated to making the center better have been overwhelmed by other major projects, such as updates with technology, hiring new administrators, CALEA accretion, and the PPDS project, and they have become isolated from the daily operations. These are all very important projects; however, the hours devoted solely to these projects have contributed to issues in other areas.

If positive transformation is the goal, then the city must begin to put employees first. They must engage all employees in an open and honest dialogue. Many employees who have provided dedicated service to the city are actively looking for opportunities to leave the ECC. Many of these employees hold the keys to turning the center around, but they must be engaged, and their knowledge and passion must be reignited for the center to turn around.

The unions must begin to put short-term goals aside and work together to be part of the solution. Turning the center around won't be easy and will take time, but it is something the current employees and leadership are capable of doing.

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

1. The team recommends that the administration immediately shift focus from a statistics-driven organization to a people-driven environment. The primary focus of the administration has been on call-answering times, and accreditation and protocol implementation. Although these goals are important, they can not be accomplished without a highly motivated workforce.
2. The team recommends a review of minimum staffing numbers be conducted to maximize service to the city's residents and visitors while minimizing mandated overtime when possible.
3. The team recommends priority focus be placed on mental health. This includes, but is not limited to, the implementation of a standalone ECC Peer Support Program. Many employees of the ECC are struggling tremendously. If these employees don't get mental health resources in place sooner rather than later, with already low staffing will be detrimental to the city. Until an ECC peer support team can be established, the ECC should provide access to other teams that can assist.
4. The team recommends that a second operations manager be hired. One operations manager would be in charge of the day shift, while the other operations manager would be in charge of the night shift. This should allow for quicker decision-making when it comes to daily decisions affecting the shift.
5. The team recommends the ECC begin more formal training on new policies. This can include setting aside time when the employees can sign out of taking 9-1-1 calls and dispatching to read the policy and be trained during low call volume times. The training manager can discuss and train all emergency services dispatch supervisors (ESDS) on the new policies. Then the ESDS can provide the training to their people and be available to answer questions.
6. The team recommended the ECC begin to assess the most pressing training needs and immediately seek ways the expert team can assist them in meeting those needs.

7. Overtime in the ECC is an issue. The team recommends the city continue to meet with all stakeholders to determine the best path forward to meet the needs of all.
8. The team recommends use of such tools as caller location query (CLQ), a CAD feature, and implementation of additional location accuracy tools, RapidSOS Portal and what3words, that are not currently being used in the ECC, thorough initial training on new resources and refresher training on already implemented resources and address verification. Location is the most important aspect of handling an emergency call for service. The resources that are currently in place in the ECC are not being used to their full extent and capability.
9. The team recommends continuing education be provided on such topics as suicide intervention, behavior/personality, mental health and crisis intervention.
10. The team recommends review of the use of the 9-1-1 call/administrative call-only positions. The intention is to help with call answering times, but it is causing unnecessarily high stress for those who are locked into those positions for hours.

INCIDENT REVIEW

On April 10, 2018, Kyle Plush became trapped in his family's Honda Odyssey in the sophomore parking lot at Seven Hills School. Unable to reach his phone, Kyle verbally placed a 9-1-1 call using the Siri function on his phone at 1516 HRS. During the call, Kyle advised he is stuck in a van in the parking lot of Seven Hills. Kyle first advises that he is stuck and then says trapped. The call itself lasted approximately three minutes, then the call-taker had other people in the communications center listen to the call, and 7 minutes later a call was sent to dispatch at 1522 HRS. A 2 officer Cincinnati police unit was dispatched to an unknown trouble at 5471 Red Bank Rd. The dispatcher advised the unit the location was from Phase 2. The units were advised the car was possibly in the thrift store parking lot across from the school. In the narrative the nature of the call was described as a "female stuck in a van."

The CPD unit arrived on the scene at 1523 HRS.

Kyle placed his second call to 9-1-1 at 1534 HRS. In the recording of the call, Kyle could be heard saying "I can't hear what you are saying. Just send—quickly. Help. Help ..."

The call-taker treated the call as a silent call and initiated the use of her TTY. Prior to engaging the TTY feature, the call-taker muted her mic. Unbeknownst to the call-taker and many people in the industry, the use of the TTY lowers the volume of the caller by approximately 75%.

During the time the TTY is activated, Kyle says he is trapped in a gold Honda Odyssey van in the sophomore parking lot of Seven Hills. He states, "This is not a joke," twice and asks for officers to be sent. He says he is almost dead. The call is disconnected at 1537 HRS. No update to the current call is made about the existence of the second call. An attempt is made to enter an "advised-only" call in CAD, but no new call is entered into CAD. Technological issues at the backup center were causing the CAD to freeze and are cited as the reason why the second call was not entered into CAD.

Officers arrived at the school with the windows of their patrol vehicle rolled up and music on. The existing Axon Body Cam video did not show them enter the parking lot where Kyle's van was located. They did not exit their patrol car to check inside any van and after speaking to an off duty Hamilton

County Deputy assigned to a traffic detail at the school, cleared the call as "INV" with a CAD note of "nothing found". No request for additional location information was made by the CPD officers

Approximately 11 minutes after the CPD officers cleared, the Hamilton County Deputy on traffic detail called the ECC administrative phone number to obtain more information, as he was not clear on what Phase 2 location was and he wanted to make another pass through and check. He also indicated to the call-taker that he had a run in with a "female in a van," at approximately the same time the initial call came in and wondered if she was calling something in as a joke.

When Kyle did not return home at the usual time, his parents used their Life 360 app and determined he was still at the school. After a call to Kyle's coach reveals he never made it to tennis that day Kyle's father proceeded to the school to see if he was still there, and his mother stayed home to wait for him and make a call to report her son missing. Unfortunately, his father located Kyle deceased in the back of his minivan.

SETTLEMENT

On Aug. 12, 2019, the Plush family filed suit against the city of Cincinnati, the ECC personnel, and the officers who responded to the call.

On April 9, 2021, the Plush family and the city of Cincinnati settled the lawsuit. The settlement agreement called for a team of experts, consisting of Michael Boucher, Tracy Eldridge, and Tony Harrison, to support the function of the ECC in achieving the mutually agreed goals outlined in the agreement. This type of agreement is the first of its kind in the 9-1-1 industry.

A professional services contract was signed by the city on June 10, 2021, with the Public Safety Group LLC, as the company representing the three separate companies of the expert team. The team had already met with the ECC leadership team, the Plush family and legal representatives from both sides and agreed upon the following being the focus of the expert team.

The team should frame its assessments and recommendations on the topics listed below within the continuum of events that started with the actions or inactions that contributed to failing to locate Kyle Plush, as well as the subsequent actions taken by the city in response. The expert team should familiarize itself and review previous reports regarding ECC or Kyle Plush including, but not limited to, the Cincinnati Police Department Internal Investigation Section Report (Case No. 18046), Mission Critical Partners Report, documents filed with Cincinnati City Council (e.g., the ECC Action Plan and ECC Budget Presentation dated Feb. 16, 2021), and documents relating to the litigation that preceded the Amended Settlement Agreement.

Exhibit A to Amended Settlement Agreement Dated April 14, 2021

1. ECC Accreditation

- a. Obtain Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) accreditation from the Commission on the Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA)
- b. Maintain compliance with CALEA standards which reflect industry best practices

2. Pursue additional appropriate accreditations that would assist ECC in continuous improvement such as the accreditations offered through the International Academies and Emergency Dispatch (IAED)
3. **ECC Staffing**
 - a. Analyze ECC retention rate against the industry average and make recommendations to meet or exceed the industry average
 - b. Ensure hiring practices assist the ECC in remaining adequately staffed by meeting or exceeding personnel attrition
 - c. Develop, implement and maintain a plan to introduce mental health a wellness resources to help foster positive morale at the ECC
 - d. Review exit interviews to determine reasons for separation and make recommendations
4. **Mental Health, Wellness, and Morale**
 - a. Gather feedback from ECC staff on factors that affect the work environment and make recommendations
 - b. Assess the impact of the following on staff performance and make recommendations for continuous improvement: overtime; morale; absenteeism; accountability and discipline; scheduling; employee hiring and retention; mental health and wellness after critical incidents; technology; supervision and leadership; performance standards; and governance
5. **General Review of ECC Policies & Procedures**
 - a. Continue to update and review Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to provide for continuous improvement and incorporation of national standards and best practices including, but not limited to, quality assurance review of call taking
 - b. Assess Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) incident types and make recommendations
6. **Technology**
 - a. Assess the use of technology to achieve ECC goals and make recommendations
7. **General ECC Training**
 - a. Review training materials and methods for call-taking consistency with industry best practice
 - b. Assess efficiency of training on staff performance and make recommendations

8. General E9-1-1 Operator Performance

- a. Assess call-taker proficiency with gathering and documenting critical information in the CAD system and make recommendations.
- b. Assess call-taker proficiency in assigning an appropriate incident description and dispatch priority and make recommendations
- c. Meet or exceed national standards for event processing time by call-takers
- d. Assess call-taker proficiency with prompt dispatching of events, including when additional information is anticipated or being gathered

9. Hearing Disabled (TTY) Calls

- a. Assess ECC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for hearing disabled (TTY) calls and make recommendations
- b. Assess call-taker training with hearing disabled teletype (TTY) calls and make recommendations
- c. Assess call-taker proficiency with hearing disabled (TTY) calls and make recommendations.

10. Silent Calls

- a. Assess ECC SOPs for silent calls and make recommendations
- b. Assess call-taker training for silent calls and make recommendations
- c. Assess call-taker proficiency with silent calls and make recommendations

11. "Unknown Trouble" Calls

- a. Assess SOPs for "unknown trouble" calls and make recommendations
- b. Assess training for "unknown trouble" calls and make recommendations
- c. Assess call-taker, dispatcher and police officer response with respect to "unknown trouble" calls and make recommendations

12. Locating Callers

- a. Assess training of appropriate ECC staff and police officers on using technology to respond and/or locate callers and make recommendations

EXPERT TEAM

The expert team comprises Tracy Eldridge, ENP, of On Scene First, Mike Boucher, COML, of Falcon Public Safety Solutions and Tony Harrison, ENP, of The Public Safety Group. The three of them represent approximately 88 years of public safety experience in 9-1-1 communications, fire/EMS and law enforcement.

Tracy Eldridge, ENP, On Scene First LLC

After 25 years and counting in Public Safety, Tracy launched her own company, On Scene First, and podcast, *On Scene First with Tracy Eldridge*. The company and podcast focus on educating public safety professionals on must-have technology tools and mental health resources to help save lives on both sides of the call.

From dispatcher to chief dispatcher, Tracy spent many years serving her community in rural Massachusetts. Tracy still serves as a paid on-call firefighter/EMT for her local paid on-call fire department and is a lead instructor of its Fire/EMS Explorer post.

Tracy has earned designation as a NENA Emergency Number Professional (ENP).

She spent four years at RapidSOS, where she played a pivotal role in the delivery of device-based locations to 9-1-1 and field responders.

She is currently the co-chair of the NENA Acute Stress Standard working group and was on the committee to update the APCO Public Safety Incident Handling process.

She previously held positions as the Massachusetts NENA president and vice president, and served almost four years on the APCO Commercial Advisory Council.

With a passion for public speaking and mental health, Tracy has been recognized nationally for her efforts to train telecommunicators and bringing awareness to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and public safety through conference training sessions, webinars and keynote presentations.

In 2007, Tracy was named the Jeff Grossman Massachusetts Telecommunicator of the Year, and in 2020, she was named the NG911 Institute Industry Professional of the Year.

Mike Boucher, COML, Falcon Public Safety Solutions LLC

Mike is the founder and lead consultant of Falcon Public Safety Solutions. He has 29 years of public safety service and experience on both sides of the radio. Mike began his public safety career serving his community as a firefighter and EMT, where he worked his way through the ranks from probationary firefighter to fire chief, a position he currently holds, as well as serving as the emergency management director.

In the dispatch arena, he began his career as a telecommunicator for a regional 9-1-1 center that was the PSAP for 19 communities, serving 43 public safety departments, as well as providing coordinated emergency medical dispatch (CMED) to area hospitals. During this time, he also worked at an air medical helicopter program as a flight communicator.

The majority of Mike's telecommunicator career was in a medium-size PSAP, where he was a 9-1-1 telecommunicator, communications training officer (CTO), emergency operations center (EOC)

officer, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) coordinator, regional incident dispatch team coordinator, state regional communications unit leader and interoperability frequency coordinator. Mike retired from this agency in 2020 after 26 years of service, but continues to serve in his regional roles. He has been a/an:

- APCO member since 2006
- APCO Atlantic Chapter Membership Committee member and chair
- APCO Atlantic Conference Committee member (served as chair for the 2012 conference)
- APCO Atlantic Chapter By-Laws Committee member

He holds:

- APCO communications supervisor certification
- NCI communications training officer certification
- National Crime Information Center certification
- Connecticut telecommunicator certification
- FEMA All Hazards Communications Unit Leader (COML)

He has been trained in:

- NENA PSAP disaster mitigation
- Critical incident response for dispatchers
- National Missing and Exploited Children trainer

Tony Harrison, ENP, The Public Safety Group

Tony is the president of The Public Safety Group. He has more than 35 years of public safety communications experience. He holds a BA in criminal justice and an MA in political science, and is an Emergency Number Professional (ENP) and an APCO International life member. He has worked at multiple ECCs, dispatching police, fire and EMS.

Tony spent many years with the Oklahoma City Police Department's Communications Division and was the supervisor on duty during the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building.

He has been an active APCO and NENA member for many years and is a past president of the APCO Oklahoma Chapter. He has served on the following work groups, and committees for APCO International:

- Project 35 - Review on creation of national non-emergency number (3-1-1)
- Project 37 - Establish professional certification for public safety professionals
- Best Practices in 9-1-1 Task Force
- Homeland Security Task Force
- Operating Committee
- Procedures and Training Committee
- Law Enforcement Committee
- Homeland Security Committee
- Commercial Advisory Committee (served as chair)
- Commercial Advisory Council (served as chair)

He has published more than 15 professional articles in publications.

He was a commissioned deputy sheriff and member of the Canadian County Sheriff's Office reserve unit. He retired in 2011 as a captain and reserve commander after 22 years of service. He was awarded the department's Medal of Valor in 2011.

GENERAL REVIEW OF ECC POLICIES

The team has conducted an initial review of policies related to the incident and will continue to review policies moving forward. It is clear that the city has made extensive efforts to update policies and, when possible, review applicable industry standards. The team has communicated with the ECC's administrative team on occasions when a policy may conflict with another policy, something needs to be rectified or clarified or when unique 9-1-1 calls have come in and the team assistance was requested.

Currently, PowerDMS is used to keep track of policies. It's an efficient platform. When policies are updated, PowerDMS provides a tool to distribute the updated policies and for employees to read and acknowledge receipt of the policy. PowerDMS is also used to push out weekly staff notes. Administration is vigilant in pushing out weekly updates on technology updates, staffing updates, new hires, promotions and accolades. After reviewing several staff notes, it is clear the administration team is attempting to be transparent and thoughtful in the material it is sending to the team.

One problem that other agencies have experienced with PowerDMS—and we have seen evidence of it at the ECC—is people will just open the policies and sign that they have received the policy without reading or understanding it. In addition, written accolades are nice, but they should not replace face-to-face, positive conversations.

Recommendation: When policies are updated, the training manager should spend time with the ESDS to train them on the new policies. The ESDS should spend time with each employee reviewing the policies and answering questions. This will ensure the supervisors are clear on the intent of the policy, that they can answer any question employees have about the policy and that they can appropriately enforce policies, as needed.

The team has also observed that the number of new policies may be overwhelming to employees, who are unable to keep track of the new policies or understand what has changed. A feature of PowerDMS assists with identifying changes in SOPs, but it has been identified as a multistep process that is cumbersome and often avoided. This can lead to employees following outdated policies.

Feedback from the floor staff is they do not have sufficient input into policies that affect the unit's daily functioning. What we have learned is the ECC does have an SOP feedback group to gain input from stakeholders, which includes representation from all floor staff positions.

On Aug. 20, 2021, a new policy #5.11- ESDS Training and Skill Proficiency was issued. The five-page policy was discussed at length by the administrative staff and carefully considered. The purpose of the policy is related to the training, continuing education and skill proficiency of the ECC's supervisors. The policy sets out a training program for the ESDS, as well as continuing education requirements, which are vital. It encourages the ESDS to obtain vital training. One section of the policy requires the supervisors to maintain skill proficiency beginning Oct. 1, 2021, by working as an E9-1-1 operator/dispatcher for four hours a month. Several of the supervisors have not worked in

either position for many years. The policy does lay out a path for them to become proficient, but the policy is unclear in several areas, such as how or who will measure proficiency and what will happen if the supervisor does not gain proficiency.

The team believes this policy has added to the divide between supervisors and the administration. We understand the intent of the policy, but it is not meeting its intended goals. When enacting new policies, the administration must consider stakeholders and, whenever possible, gain their input and build a consensus.

UNIT STRUCTURE

The ECC is led by Director Bill Vedra who has spent several years in a variety of roles in emergency communications. Bill is committed to making the ECC the best it can be. Deputy Director Karli Piper joined the ECC in November 2018 as the training and quality assurance manager. She came to the center from Wisconsin with 13 years experience working in emergency communications in a variety of roles.

The ECC has four sections: operations, training & quality assurance, technology, and administration. The operations section is headed by Judi Gazaway, training & quality assurance by Nick Erskine, technology by Charles Young and personnel by Kelsey Braido. The team has found each of these senior managers to be extremely dedicated to the profession, the city and the ECC. It should be noted that each has been in their position for less than two years.

Operations, Judi Gazaway

Judi is a veteran of the ECC and has strong operational and historical knowledge of the center.

The operations section has two 12-hour shifts—7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 7 a.m.—and one and one power shift to ensure adequate staffing when the center has the highest call volume. from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

The operations section has an authorized strength of:

- 60 E911 Operators

- 60 E9-1-1 Operator/Dispatchers

- 6 customer relations representatives—police teletype

- 8 emergency services dispatch supervisors (ESDSs)

Training & Quality Assurance, Nick Erskine

Nick came to the ECC this year from Kentucky.

The training & quality assurance section has four ESDSs assigned to it to provide quality assurance, as well as a quality assurance clerk and a training person assigned to it. The training & quality assurance section is in charge of providing all new hire training and quality assurance of both 9-1-1 calls and police radio traffic.

Technology, Charles Young

Charles Young currently serves as the technology manager for the ECC. Charles and his staff of eight oversee the CAD and 9-1-1 call-handling systems used by the ECC, as well as the radio system used by numerous government agencies in and around Cincinnati.

Personnel , Kelsey Braido

Kelsey has worked for the city since 2018, starting out in central human resources before she moved to the ECC.

The section comprises the personnel manager, timekeeper, public information officer, human resources, budget and procurement personnel.

The section's responsibilities include managing the ECC's hiring activities, labor relations, drafting and revising standard operating procedures (SOPs), managing efforts to become CALEA accredited, managing the ECC's public information activities, and chairing the department's recruitment and outreach efforts.

Administration Overview

The general structure of the ECC meets industry practices and is generally conducive to appropriate supervision and management. However, over the past two years every position has had a fair amount of turnover. Each member of the administrative staff has less than two years in their current position and several less than one year. The newest member of the administrative staff is the training manager, who was hired this summer. Several of these positions have not existed prior to the transition to civilian operation in June 2018.

Leading a complex operation, such as the ECC, requires tremendous skills and abilities. The everyday task of managing the center is a full-time job. The current administrative staff has not only the responsibility of managing the center but the responsibility of concurrently managing extensive large projects in the past 24 months. This has made it very difficult for the staff to provide operations the attention it needs.

The team knows that most of the administrative personnel work excessive hours behind the scenes each week; however, being too far behind the scene is creating a divide and, at times, frustration with operations personnel. Interviews and anonymous survey results revealed the floor staff rarely see the administrative team, and many daily decisions are not being made and emails are not being answered.

When small issues are not addressed in the ECC, larger and more complex issues often arise. The team has observed this.

Recommendations

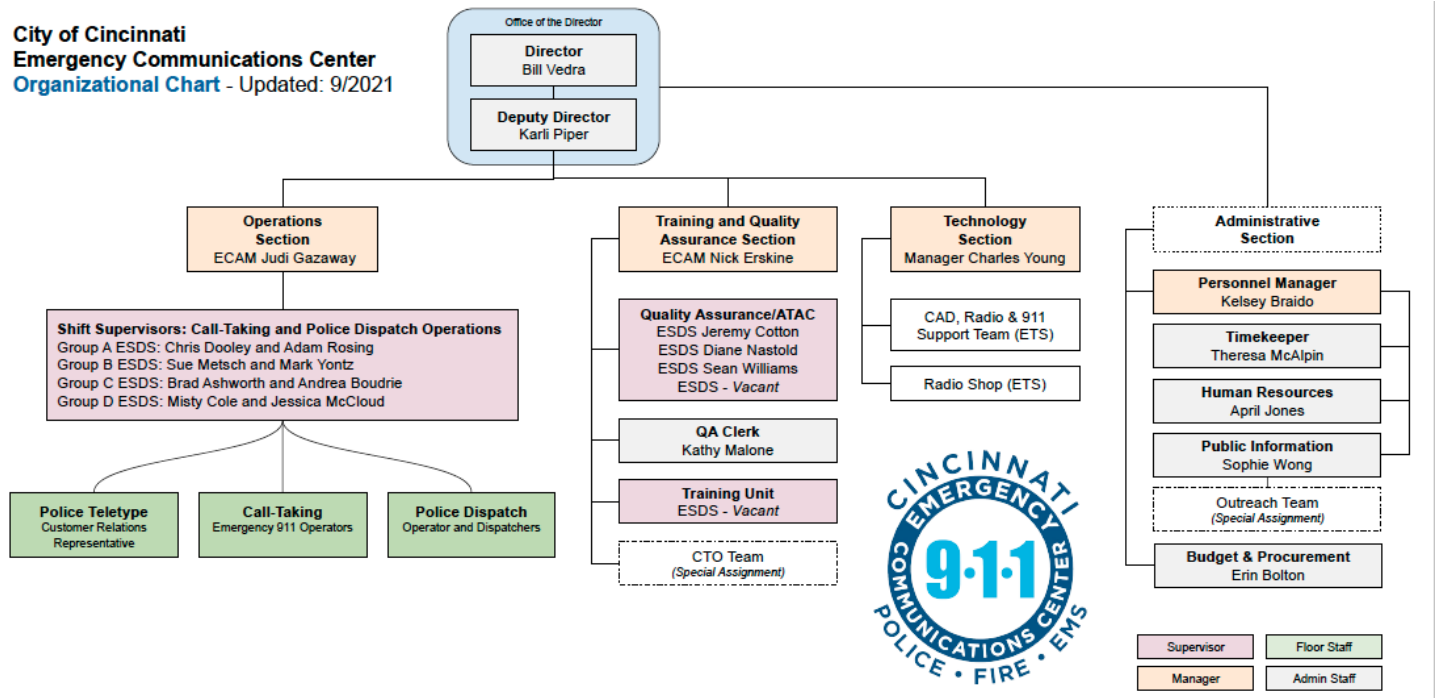
The administrative team should be more present on the floor, engage with the team in person and be more cognizant of the time that passes before requests are answered.

A second operations manager should be hired. One operations manager would be in charge of the day shift while the other operations manager would be in charge of the night shift. This should allow for quicker decision making for daily decisions affecting the shift, task completion, and communication

and interaction with the floor staff. Both managers must be aligned, sharing the vision and the mission of the ECC, and present a united front.

The team also recommends that more decision capabilities be pushed to the level of the operations manager and the ESDSs, such as giving the operations manager authority to assign and review completed evaluations, with lower level discipline to be handled by the ESDS.

**City of Cincinnati
Emergency Communications Center
Organizational Chart** - Updated: 9/2021



HIRING

Since the incident, the hiring process has been centralized under the command of the ECC. The team believes this should be continued and should assist in continuing to shorten the process of recruiting and hiring highly qualified applicants.

The hiring process is as follows:

Job posting	2 weeks
Application review	1 week
Skill-based assessment & online testing	1–2 weeks
Behavior-based testing	
Eligibility list goes to civil service board	dependent upon board
Interviews	1 week
Second interview/Observation	1 week
Reference checks	1 week
Contingent offer	
Background checks	up to 6 weeks
Final offer	

The current turnover rate is approximately 19%, which is slightly higher than industry standards of 17%, per APCO Project RETAINS (January 2009). The most recent report issued in January 2018 uses a different method in calculating retention. In this report it looked at retention rates by ECC size and found that only 51% of ECC's have 75% or greater retention which would equal a turnover rate of 25%. This would place The City of Cincinnati within range of turnover for other centers its size.

To maintain current staffing levels and increase staffing to optimal levels, it is important the ECC continues its diligent work in recruitment and hiring. The team believes if the ECC is to increase hiring and bring staffing levels closer to a fully staffed position, it should hold a minimum of three recruit classes per year. The ECC is currently planning for a third recruit class for 2021 starting in November with 10 people and currently are planning for three classes in 2022.

The current staffing levels as of October 14, 2021:

Position	Role	Authorized	Filled
Emergency 911 Operator	Call-Taking	60	44
Operator/Dispatcher	Call-Taking & Police Dispatching	60	42
ESDS	Shift Supervisor	9	7
ESDE	Shift Supervisor/QA	4	3

TRAINING

New-hire training involves six weeks of classroom instruction, followed by 12 weeks of hands-on guidance from a communications training officer (CTO).

Week 1 of the classroom instruction introduces the new hires to the ECC and begins to familiarize them with some of the department's policies and procedures. They also begin their basic telecommunicator training using the APCO (Association of Public Safety Communications Officials International) program.

Week 2 of the classroom instruction continues with vital policies and procedures. During the second week, new hires begin training on the WEST telephone system used by the ECC, policies, procedures, and geography and incident types.

Week 3 includes emergency medical dispatch (EMD) training, additional geography and training in the mapping system.

Week 4 provides vital training in the RAVE SMART 911, an emergency profile database and RapidSOS, an emergency response data platform. It also includes CAD simulations, which are vital to building the skills telecommunicators will need when they hit the floor in about two weeks.

The majority of week 5 is spent with the CAD system, learning its functions, how to operate in the system and beginning to build speed in using it, and integrating the call interrogation skills learned in previous weeks.

The final week of the classroom instruction is spent giving new hires additional time on the CAD and call simulations, with final exams.

Once an individual has completed the classroom portion of their training, they are assigned to a shift and a CTO. The CTO portion of the training is currently 12 weeks. The ECC uses the APCO CTO training program to certify its training officers. The APCO program fulfills the national, acceptable industry practices.

Training should not stop with new-hire training. Learning should never stop. EMD programs require each person to receive continuing education, and it is vital the ECC provide the highest quality training possible to its people. The expert team heard from a variety of people that they believed they lacked the training needed to perform the job. Employees expressed interest in receiving more training in suicide intervention, helping callers with a mental health crisis and other crises. Employees also expressed an interest in receiving additional training in stress management, how to handle critical incident stress and managing their health.

When SOPs are updated, they are traditionally pushed to the unit by the use of PowerDMS. PowerDMS is an effective tool in administering new policies. However, there are two notable challenges: 1) Numerous policy updates have been made recently, many with minimal identifiable changes; and 2) with so many changes, many employees have not read the new policies, but signed to acknowledge receipt, relying on others to alert them to any changes in the policy.

When a 9-1-1 emergency E911 operator becomes an operator/dispatcher, they complete two weeks of classroom training followed by on-the-job training under the supervision of a CTO.

Recommendation: When a new policy is issued, highlight the changes. The process to view changes to a particular policy in PowerDMS is cumbersome. Administration should find a solution for employees to quickly and efficiently identify changes.

Recommendation: The ECC should provide formal training in new policies. This can include allowing employees to sign out of taking 9-1-1 calls and dispatching during low call volume times in their shift and dedicating time to read the policy and be trained in it. The training manager can discuss and train all ESDSs on the new policies, and then ESDSs can provide the training to their people and be available to answer questions.

Supervisor Training

Supervisors historically have received little additional training when promoted, Normally, they have sat with another ESDS for a period of time to learn the ropes. The ECC recently created a new policy to help with employee development of the supervisors. This is a strong start, but a formal training program for supervisors should be added.

The expert team has offered to provide a wide range of training to the ECC at no additional cost to the ECC. This training can cover many of the topics discussed. The expert team recommended the ECC begin to assess the most pressing needs and immediately begin to look at scheduling training to address those areas.

CALEA/IAED

The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) was created in 1979. In 1995, CALEA began accrediting ECCs. Certification is a process of meeting standards established by CALEA. Becoming CALEA accredited is a complex and difficult process. The accreditation program provides communications centers an opportunity to voluntarily demonstrate that they meet an established set of 207 professional standards, which requires the communication center to have comprehensive policies and procedures. The process is complex and time consuming for ECC personnel and requires a strong commitment of money and time. Once the ECC enrolls in the Public Safety Communications Accreditation Program, it enters a period of self-assessment, when personnel will review its policies and work with a CALEA regional program manager to provide guidance. Once self-assessment has been completed, CALEA and the ECC schedule a time for CALEA assessors to visit the ECC and determine compliance. After the assessment, the Commission reviews the assessment and conducts public hearings regarding the ECC's compliance with the requirements. Finally, it makes the decision regarding whether to award accreditation, which is good for four years. The recertification process then starts again.

The International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED) develops and maintains protocols for emergency call-taking. The IAED is a standard-setting group for ECCs. The IAED protocols have been used around the world. It created some of the first medical protocols used in the industry and now provides protocols for fire and police (Police Priority Dispatch System or PPDS), as well. The standards and protocols that IAED creates are only available to be purchased through a licensing agreement with Priority Dispatch Corporation.

IAED licenses the use of the protocols to be sold through Priority Dispatch. According to IAED, the PPDS comprises 36 police protocols that address such situations as lost-and-found property, robbery and domestic violence. The Fire Priority Dispatch System is a protocol system designed to be used to process fire calls.

These protocols are designed to create standardized call-taking, taking into account the knowledge of IAED's industry experts and the data it has gained from research around the world.

IAED is one of the largest protocol providers in the market, but customers have criticised its protocols—especially the police protocols—for being too structured and time consuming. The PPDS system has changed and evolved over the years with improvements made to address customer complaints, but the system is slow to change.

The ECC is in the process of implementing the PPDS system and hopes to go live in the spring or summer of 2022. There is a concern with the current staffing that the implementation of the protocol system will add significant stress on the understaffed members of the unit. Training will take place over multiple days and will require significant overtime to complete. The PPDS system will be a major change in call handling for the existing E9-1-1 operators and could result in additional turnover.

The PPDS system, however, will provide a standardized method of calltaking, which can result in reduced liability exposure for the city. The standardized call-taking method, which is based on the extensive research of the IAED, should help eliminate mistakes made by E9-1-1 operators in address verification and information gathering.

A vital component of any protocol-driven process is the quality assurance (QA) process. QA during PPDS implementation will be vital. It must be performed in a manner to catch people doing it right and to provide constructive feedback to E91-1- operators. The QA process must be driven by objective facts in the call-taking process; QA administrators must be fully trained in the process before the floor employees, and QA must be uniform across all shifts. Both of these projects are important but the ECC staff needs to understand the impact PPDS will have on staff and call processing.

The ECC should continue its movement toward CALEA accreditation.

OVERTIME

Overtime is employed in every communications center across the country. In any communications center, there are going to be days or times when staffing is at a minimum. This can be due to pre-scheduled vacations, days off, family medical leave and other types of scheduled leave time. When the ECC is at its minimal staffing and people call in sick—or other unforeseen circumstance occurs—the ECC will need to fill a shift with employees working overtime. Optimally, the ECC will be able to cover the unexpected absenteeism with voluntary overtime. When no one is voluntarily available to fill a position to maintain sufficient staffing levels, mandatory overtime is required. It is important that every communications center limit the amount of mandatory overtime when possible. Mandatory overtime places extreme stress on workers. It interferes with a worker's ability to plan family activities and gain needed rest between 12-hour shifts. Excessive amounts of any overtime will lead to burnout and poor morale.

In 2020, the ECC implemented mandatory overtime 65 times. No person was mandated more than a few times.

In the first eight months of 2021, mandatory overtime has been used nearly a hundred times, and multiple people have been mandated five times or more.

A review of overtime data from September 2019 until July 2021 revealed that several employees worked more than 300 hours of overtime. The maximum overtime is over 360 hours. Between January and August, 60% of the 9-1-1 emergency call-takers have recorded overtime.

The primary cause of mandatory overtime is short staffing. The ECC's chronic short staffing does not allow a person to get approval for a day off to attend a child's event, attend a concert or take part in personal time away from the job. Although the city still approves vacation requests each year, when planned a significant time in advance, it has become very hard for a person to take a single day off. When a person is unable to take an extra day off, you see an increase in sick leave abuse, with employees using sick leave in place of personal time. Between Jan. 21, 2021, and Sept. 15, 2021, 7,896 hours of sick leave were used. This is on pace to exceed sick leave used in previous years.

Sick leave 2020	10,307 hours used
Sick leave 2019	10,805 hours used

Sick leave abuse and short staffing often go together and can be a very difficult cycle to break. Employees begin to justify in their mind calling in sick when they are able to work.

It is important to take a proactive process to minimize mandatory overtime. The city has taken a variety of steps to minimize the need for mandatory overtime. It has begun to pay double time to a person who voluntarily takes a shift that will prevent mandated overtime.

The city has authorized the hiring of part-time employees to fill positions, a strategy other cities have used successfully to limit overtime. A good option is to re-hire E9-1-1 operators or dispatchers who formerly worked in the center as part-timers. This limits the training required and can be very effective in attracting trained people to pick up a few shifts. The city should pay these part-time employees the same hourly wage as when they left. Often, cities opt to pay an entry-level, hourly wage, but attracting former employees to work part time in a high-stress job at odd hours is difficult if the pay is insufficient. The City is awaiting agreement with AFSCME on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) before moving forward.

The current policy to mandate overtime is based on seniority. Thus, the burden of mandatory overtime most often falls on a few, low-seniority E9-1-1 operators and occasional E9-1-1 operator/dispatchers. The city did request AFSCME consider a change that would more evenly distribute mandatory overtime to all employees, but that was denied.

Over the past several years, the ECC has taken a variety of steps to minimize the use of mandatory overtime inside the center. These strategies include combining police radio channels; eliminating certain tasks, such as callbacks; and moving dispatchers from working radios to answering 9-1-1 calls. Each of these actions creates other issues, such as radio channels being overloaded with calls and officers, limiting the ability of officers to reach dispatchers, and requiring officers to perform tasks they may not be fully prepared to perform, such as teletype inquiries.

The balancing act between the required task of answering the 9-1-1 calls of citizens, providing sufficient radio staffing and maintaining the long-term health of employees will always be a difficult task.

Recommendation: The team recommends the city continue to meet with all stakeholders to determine the best path forward to meet the needs of all.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

In 2015, APCO and NENA worked together to establish the APCO/NENA ANS 1.107.1.2015 Standard for the Establishment of a Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement Program for Public Safety Answering Points. *maintenance of a quality assurance and quality improvement program. Recommended minimum requirements for the evaluation and quality assurance of call processing are offered to ensure a consistent, effective, and efficient level of service.*

The ECC has a QA program in place. Currently, QA is performed by an ESDS assigned to each shift. In addition to their QA duties, they assist the shift supervisor with managing the floor.

The recommendation in the APCO/NENA standard is that an agency review at least 2% of all calls for service. With Cincinnati's call volume—over 300,000 calls in 2020—this is a significant number of reviews—more than 6,000 reviews annually.

A 2018 Mission Critical Partners report made a recommendation to the Cincinnati ECC as part of the initial Plush incident and agency review to add four additional quality assurance evaluators (QAE). These positions will ensure quality assurance can get the necessary time and dedicated attention it needs.

The ECC has the addition of four Senior Emergency 911 Operator positions in process that will be primarily tasked with quality assurance reviews of call-taking. This is a new job classification designed specifically to assist with quality assurance of call-taking and is a promotional opportunity for existing 911 operators.

The city is currently waiting for HR to create a civil service exam to test for the positions by fall/winter 2021. These positions will be a welcome addition because some of the supervisors have found it challenging to provide the attention to the QA that is needed on top of their daily supervisory duties.

For a QA program to be successful the QAEs must be properly trained and maintain proficient skills, which should include calibration of evaluations. Periodically, all QAEs should evaluate the same call and see if the evaluation is sufficient. In addition, the evaluations should be objective vs. subjective.

Recommendation: the team will continue to evaluate the QA program currently in place. While evaluating the quality assurance program, which includes, but is not limited to listening to calls and comparing the call to the QA form, there is an opportunity for the team to observe and evaluate the accuracy of call-taking, active listening, accurate log entry and adherence to policy.

TECHNOLOGY

The ECC has gone to great expense and effort to obtain the technology needed to answer and process 9-1-1 calls. The ECC has made significant progress in making the center state of art. During the past few years, major renovations have been made to the backup center, as well as the primary center. The servers that host the CAD have been upgraded, and the ECC is currently using the Intrado Viper *version 5.1* along with Intrado Power 911 *version 6.4.0.340* for their 9-1-1 call taking system and CentralSquare Enterprise CAD *version 5.8.39.12* (formerly TriTech) for their computer aided dispatch system, both are major vendors in the industry.

Rave Smart911

In late 2018, the city implemented Smart911 and Smart911 Facilities to assist in call processing. The ECC is diligent in getting the word out about the implementation.

Smart911

“A third-party application designed to allow the public to enter and provide personal information into a safety profile, which is housed within the Smart911 system.”

Smart911 Facility

“This function of the Rave Smart911 system is designed to provide organizations the free opportunity to register information they would like shared with PSAPs and first responders.”

Use of Rave Smart911 tools

During the team's initial visits, the monitor that housed the Smart911 technology sat to the left, a bit behind the E9-1-1 operator. This location was not ideal. It did not allow for ease of use in the call-taking process. Administration recognized this was not the best placement for this monitor and worked with IT to have it moved in front of the call-taker.

During observation and interviews, the team concluded the Smart911 interface is not being used to the best of its capability. Location of the monitor was the initial reason it was not being used. The fact that it is not integrated into the CAD also plays a role in its disuse. Smart911 is a valuable tool, but it is limited because people must sign up for the service. Currently, approximately 30,000 people in the city have signed up for the service. The ECC is continuing its public education efforts about this free service. One of the service benefits is that people from outside the city or state who may have signed up for the service will receive the benefits of the service anytime they are in the city.

LOCATION ACCURACY

Location is the most important aspect of processing emergency calls for service. Without a dispatchable location, it is impossible to get help to the citizens of Cincinnati who are in need. ECC administration has made notable strides in advancing location technology and training; however, as with many emergency communication centers nationwide, a lot of work remains.

Since the first 9-1-1 call was placed from a wireless device in 1997, location accuracy has been a challenge for 9-1-1 calls from wireless devices. Phase 1 location technology offers the ability to deliver a phone number and a cellular tower location to the ECC. The telecommunicator relied on the caller to provide the location of their emergency. In the early 2000s, selective routing based on location and additional location information, such as latitude and longitude by way of satellite GPS or cellular tower triangulation, started to make its way across the U.S. But determining the location of a 9-1-1 caller from a wireless device was still proving to be a challenge.

In mid 2018, RapidSOS partnered with Apple and, subsequently, Google to deliver device-based hybrid location information to ECCs across the nation. In addition, the company created and offered—at no charge—a secure, web-based solution to allow telecommunicators nationwide to retrieve device-based location from enabled wireless devices. It is unfortunate that not every device has the capability of delivering this location information to the RapidSOS Emergency Response Data Platform, but the majority do.

In addition to network-based phase 1 and phase 2 location information, that is available through the Intrado Power 911 Phone system, the ECC has access to device-based location from the RapidSOS Emergency Response Data Platform via three different solutions CentralSquare CAD, Smart911 and the RapidSOS Portal.

- CentralSquare CAD

- Once the phone number associated with the 911 call has been ported into the CAD from the phone system, there is a single query made to the RapidSOS Emergency Response Data Platform. If a device based location is available, it is identified by a location tab changing color. The call-taker can then import that location into the CAD for dispatch. This solution does not currently provide the ability to receive additional data, such as medical information, name, home address, emergency contacts, that may have been sent to the platform.
 - A separate feature from the RapidSOS feature, CentralSquare includes a caller location query (CLQ) function that allows a dispatcher with only a phone number to send a query to a cellular device in the form of a text message. When the caller clicks the hyperlink in the text message, a map with their location is displayed and at the same time the device's x and y GPS coordinates are sent to the CAD, where the dispatcher can access the updated location information.
 - Smart911 queries the RapidSOS Emergency Response Data platform by the phone number associated with the 9-1-1 call.
 - The only additional data Smart911 is able to receive is Uber information if the caller has used the Uber app to generate the 9-1-1 call.
- RapidSOS Portal (Free web browser, not currently being used)
 - The jurisdiction view feature of the portal allows location and additional data to be automatically delivered at the time of the 9-1-1 call.
 - Often, location information is on the screen prior to the 9-1-1 call arriving at the E9-1-1 operator's console.
 - The RapidSOS Portal has several benefits not currently available through the CentralSquare CAD and Smart911 integration. Additional benefits may include, but is not limited to:
 - Updated, real-time location for calls in motion; the location is delivered to the RapidSOS platform every few seconds and is delivered to the portal the same.
 - Street view with location pin capabilities;
 - Potential call-back phone number and location information for 911 area code calls: As described in the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) PS Docket No. 08-51 FCC 15-43, 9-1-1 calls will be delivered from a non-service-initialized device. Because this type of device is defined as not having a service plan, no phone number can be displayed and is identifiable to the ECC with an automated number information (ANI) starting with a 911 area code. Also listed in the FCC document are other reasons for which a call may be delivered with a 911 area code when the device is actually fully serviced with a phone number assigned. The RapidSOS Portal is the only technology available to date that may identify the phone number and other valuable data from a fully serviced device that is displaying a 911 area code.

- The name of the wireless caller, medical information, home address, emergency contacts, license plate number, vehicle description and more;
- On occasion, the RapidSOS location has been available in the ECC's emergency response data platform, but Smart911 was not available in the CAD.
 - Director Vedra is aware of the problem and has been working with CentralSquare to identify the reason.
- what3words integration
 - The what3words interface is fast and simple and allows you to convert three-word addresses to coordinates and vice versa. It features a powerful AutoSuggest function, which can validate user input and limit it to certain geographic areas. It offers a variety of libraries, including Java, JavaScript, Swift, Python, Node.js, PHP and more to make the application programming interface easy to integrate.
 - While what3words is integrated into the RapidSOS Portal, the what3words solution is its own separate stand alone location accuracy tool. Access to the public safety access tool would be beneficial to the ECC. See what3words section below.

As of this report, The RapidSOS Portal is not currently being used on the floor.

Recommendation: The ECC should give all call-takers and dispatchers access to the RapidSOS portal. The team will be working with the administration to ensure location technology is put to the best use in the ECC.

What3words

The general description of the what3words has been detailed in the previous section. It should be noted that the public safety access tool is free and consists of the follow:

- Once the ECC has reached out to what3words and has been identified as a public safety agency they will receive access to a “find me” link. This link can be sent out to the phone where location is needed.
- The benefit to this link being sent to a caller, is it is agnostic of a 911 call, since emergency calls come in on the 10 digit business line without location this feature has been helpful in locating callers that did not make a 911 call. (note: WHP1, WPH2 and RapidSOS locations are only available when the device calls 911)
- While similar to Central Square CLQ, there is an added benefit when it comes to field responders. Use of the what3words portal allows the field responder to enter the 3 words that are provided to effectively navigate via map to the person in need.

Location technology implementation is only a part of the puzzle. To adequately locate a 9-1-1 caller the call-taker must also be trained appropriately and use the technology as directed.

Recommended: Because there are aspects of obtaining and conveying location information to responders that are in need of attention, one of the first priorities will be to identify all policies and procedures related to location information. Then the ECC must create an aggressive timeline to roll out technological advancements that are not currently in place; to update, combine and reconcile contradicting policies; and to ensure that all call-takers know how to properly validate location information and how to determine the proper call type to accompany the type of location that is being presented.

SAVER APP

The police department created an in-house solution called SAVER for its mobile data terminals (MDT) to assist responding officers with addresses and caller locations. The application provides mapping of the dispatched street line address, the cellular phase 2 location and the RapidSOS location when available. Each of these layers provides additional intelligence regarding where the caller device is located in relation to the addressed property location. Additionally, mapping data is available on state and city cameras, along with the Shot Spotter system. The system provides the officer a tremendous amount of information at their fingertips, including the address they were dispatched to, as well as the phase 2 location of the caller and the RapidSOS location of the caller because these can differ significantly. SAVER can provide significant assistance to officers who are attempting to locate callers. It is vital that Cincinnati police continue its efforts in providing sufficient training to officers about this life-saving technology. The team was provided a short document about SAVER, but no additional training information was provided.

Not long after Kyle's tragic death, many news outlets reported that the 9-1-1 dispatchers did not relay the cell phone coordinates to the responding officers. The act of relaying actual GPS coordinates to responding units is not the standard operating procedure when dispatching an emergency call for service. The standard is to provide a dispatchable address. A dispatchable address includes, but is not limited to, a civic address, such as the address that was given during the Plush call (i.e., 5471 Red Bank Rd.), as well as any other identifiable information that will assist responding personnel in locating the reporting party, such as the secondary information that was also relayed in this call (i.e., Seven Hills parking lot, across from the school, possibly in the thrift store parking lot).

It is also important to clarify that the majority of 9-1-1 calls arrive at the ECC today with GPS coordinates, and on most, not all occasions a reverse geocoded address, and have for quite some time. Currently, if the telecommunicator was to give a responding Cincinnati police officer an actual GPS coordinates for a caller's location, the officers would not have the means of entering such a number into a searchable field in their vehicle. In addition, for safety reasons it is not practical for an officer to be typing while driving.

NONRESPONSIVE/SILENT CALLS/TTY

President George W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities act on July 26, 1990. The ADA requires all 9-1-1 centers to provide direct, equal access to their services for people with disabilities who use teletypewriters (TTYs) or telecommunications devices for the deaf (TDDs). The law requires that 9-1-1 telecommunicators be trained in the processing and handling of TTY calls. The law requires the city to provide direct access to emergency services for people using TTYs. Equal access means the ECC must provide TTY users equal access to 9-1-1, which has generally meant that the service provided to a TTY user and a voice caller be equal in the terms of:

- Response time;
- Response quality;
- Hours of operation; and
- All other features offered.

The ECC does provide equal access to TTY callers and has an extensive policy for the handling of TTY calls: ECC SOP 2.11, along with policy 2.11, which addresses the use of the TTY. Multiple training documents, as well as call guides, provide information and training regarding the handling of TTY calls. The team observed that the 9-1-1 call-takers are very diligent in the use of the TTY during both silent and nonresponsive calls, as required by the ECC’s policy.

The chart below shows the number of TTY activations for each month of 2021:

May	2,266
June	2,263
July	2,594
August	2,716

The call-takers have been trained via the training document for call type 911CALL - 911 Call, that “While TTY mode is engaged, call volume to the call-taker decreases by 75% limiting the ability to hear all sounds on the line It is important that the operators be well trained in this function and know that their ability to hear any attempt to communicate with them may be lost while the TTY is in use.” The ECC learned of this feature after the Kyle Plush call and it is not something generally known by centers across the United States. Call-takers should be vigilant to employ active listening techniques when they challenge a call using the TTY Baudot tones. Further, they must appropriately close out the TTY function when there is no indication that TTY functions are needed. Per the same training guide, the appropriate time to wait to determine if there is a TTY need is approximately 10 seconds. Properly disengaging the TTY function will ensure the volume is returned to normal. If there is any indication the call-taker may have missed something, they should immediately review the recording and/or notify a supervisor for assistance.

Recommendation: a review of the use of the TTY during unresponsive calls should be conducted by the ECC. The ECC should review activating the TTY only in silent calls to prevent the possibility of missing information given by callers during nonresponsive calls while the TTY is activated. The team will assist the ECC in reviewing the calls with a TTY activation, and any related policy and training.

E9-1-1 OPERATOR OVERVIEW

The ECC is staffed by a group of dedicated E9-1-1 operators who receive extensive classroom and on-the-job training. The on-the-job training is with a communications training officer (CTO). CTO-based on-the-job training is the standard of training used throughout the country. During the past several months, the expert team has spent hours observing the call-taking process on both shifts, has conducted interviews with both current and former 9-1-1 call-takers and listened to numerous 9-1-1 calls from the city of Cincinnati. In 2020 more than 245,000 9-1-1 calls were answered by the ECC. In every month, more than 90% of those calls were answered within 10 seconds. In addition to the 9-1-1 calls, 231,000 non-9-1-1 calls were answered.

The city has used the standard of answering 90% of its calls within 10 seconds. It should be noted that in 2018 the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) changed the call-answering standard to: 90% of all calls should be answered in 15 seconds, in 2020 NENA updated its policy regarding the same. In August 2021 the state of Ohio approved a change to its standard to mirror the national standard. It is admirable that the city strives to provide a higher level of service to its citizens.

The Cincinnati ECC is a major city 9-1-1 center with unique challenges that many smaller cities don't have. One of those challenges is call volume and the number of critical calls each E9-1-1 operator will process each year. The E9-1-1 operator performs a valiant job that is extremely difficult under the best of circumstances. In the past 18 months, all of the ECC's employees have been placed under tremendous stress.

The team has observed that call-takers could benefit from additional training both in the classroom and continuing education during their career. We recommend continuing education in such basic call-taking topics as address verification, pertinent information gathering, documentation, suicide intervention, mental health and the telecommunicator, How to better understand the personalities they work with, and crisis intervention.

In our observations, we have noted that issues remain with regard to the proper verification of addresses by E9-1-1 operators. Those issues include, only having the caller state the address once, not repeating the location given, not verifying the jurisdiction and not using existing technology, such as the CAD Map, Smart911 or RapidSOS, to verify the location. This is not sufficient to verify location. Dual address verification and documentation is an important function. It has been determined that many of E9-1-1 operators are not effectively verifying location.

The current policies regarding address verification are well written to the minimum location verification standards, however, since it has been determined that issues exist with location verification, the team would like to see additional location verification techniques added to the policy as well as additional training provided.

In many large communications centers, E9-1-1 operators become very efficient in gathering information quickly and efficiently and then moving on to the next 9-1-1 call waiting to be answered. This requires tremendous skill. call-takers must make sure they obtain the needed information for that call and, in a variety of in-progress calls, keep the caller on the line—provided it is safe to do so. For one call in which a caller reported that seven people were on the corner arguing and threatening people with guns, the E9-1-1 operator spent 1 minute and 20 seconds on the call before disconnecting. We believe that more time could have been spent obtaining additional information from this caller. The team does not know what the workload inside the center was at the time of the call or if other 9-1-1 calls were waiting to be answered.

DISPATCHER OVERVIEW

The ECC has 60 operator/dispatcher positions that are currently filled by the E9-1-1 operators. Once selected to become an operator/dispatcher they attend classroom instruction, followed by CTO-based on-the-job training. The team observed many of the operator/dispatchers during our time on the operations floor. The ECC has many veteran, dedicated dispatchers who perform their job as best they can. Dispatching in a large city can present many challenges. The job can be very fast paced and stressful. The team observed the dispatchers to be dedicated to providing the police department the highest level of service possible.

The biggest obstacle observed was the combining of channels, which can place a large number of field units on one channel. This can overwhelm the radio, making it difficult for the dispatcher to keep up with unit requests and, possibly, delay an officer's transmission.

A notable challenge for the E9-1-1 operator/dispatcher is not knowing the outcome of calls. Most often, the officer will clear with a disposition code and nothing further. They will either clear out the call themselves or share the disposition code with the dispatcher. Nonetheless, there is no outcome. The dispatcher may never know about a possible location issue. If an "UNK" is dispatched and the officer clears with "INV" and does not communicate with the dispatcher, the dispatcher will never know the officers were not in the right location, and therefore, further information cannot be relayed. When multiple calls are received about the same situation—or even a single call—if the dispatcher does not know the outcome, they may not be able to ascertain needed information for situational awareness when additional calls come in. In many busy departments, officers are trained in the importance of brevity on the radio—which is important—they should be encouraged to type more information in the call notes when clearing calls.

Recommendation: When possible officers provide more information on the disposition of calls by radio or enter on their mobile computers.

MORALE

ECCs across the country face many challenges, including a high-stress work environment that must be staffed 24/7/365. The Cincinnati ECC takes more 25,000 calls every month. These calls include minor crimes, abuse of 9-1-1, and the most serious and horrifying calls a person can imagine. Being a 9-1-1 operator or operator/dispatcher is a challenge, and it is paramount that all stakeholders recognize the difficulty of this job and the toll it takes upon the few who can perform the job. It is imperative that all leaders in positions of influence, including the mayor, police chief, fire chief and other elected officials, recognize the value of the people who answer the call to serve in the ECC each day.

Morale in communications centers across the country is low, but that should not be allowed to be an excuse or reason why a less-than-favorable effort is applied. Many communications centers across the country have high morale and function at a very high level.

It is no secret that the current status of morale inside the Cincinnati ECC is low. Many of those the team interviewed agreed that morale is the lowest it has been in years.

Administration must understand that perception is key. Despite working diligently to make positive change, administrators must understand that if significant matters are not addressed it will be extremely challenging to obtain buy-in from the floor employees. Unfortunately, at this time there is an undercurrent of an us-versus-them mentality. This is not just apparent between administration and the floor staff, but also between the supervisors and 9-1-1 operators and operator/dispatchers.

This team has spent many hours interviewing both current and previous employees of the ECC. Interviews were conducted in person and by Zoom calls. In addition, an anonymous survey was distributed. Although we received only 35 responses, we gained insight into areas that are contributing to low morale.

It is clear to the team that the Cincinnati ECC has an extremely knowledgeable and passionate team of professionals—from the director to the newest operators. We have spent time talking to new employees, as well as many veteran employees. The administration has a sense that some of their core team members are disengaged. They are correct.

Over the past couple of years, some supervisors and long-time employees have become disengaged for a variety of reasons. One employee told us that they have heard that the administration wants all of the old-timers out.

Several veteran employees don't feel they are valued by the organization. They say that when they attempt to provide input during meetings they are shut down and their input is discounted, which has led them to stop providing input during meetings. Then they are addressed about not speaking during meetings.

On the operations floor, staffing has been cited as one of the major issues when it comes to morale. The center has been short staffed for many years, and although the administration is trying diligently to test, higher, train and release new employees to the floor as soon as possible, it seems as though they cannot get ahead. The number of new hires is being canceled out by the number of staff leaving.

In July, when more than 29,000 calls were answered by the ECC, the number of calls answered in less than 10 seconds was 89.32. In June when 29,354 calls were answered, 88.90% of calls were answered in less than 10 seconds. These have been the only two months during the year in which the call-answering time was less than 90%. During the summer the administration raised back minimum staffing levels to the normal level. The staffing level had been reduced to give the staff relief. As a result, the amount of overtime and the number of times people were mandated for coverage increased significantly. The increase in use of mandated overtime has a direct impact on the ability to get a day off to attend a child's event, a family event or just to enjoy an extra day off. When people are unable to get a day off, the normal result is an increase in sick leave use. The ECC leadership has the difficult task of balancing staffing levels to meet the obligation to the citizens of Cincinnati to answer 9-1-1 calls in a timely fashion and balance the needs of its employees. It is important that the administration begins to take a people-driven leadership approach to the center.

During our time in the center we were told many times by call-takers and dispatchers that they do not see various administrators on the floor. Several of the newly hired administrators were not introduced to supervisors on the floor or to call-takers and dispatchers. This led to a feeling of separation between the floor and the administrators.

The team was told that often it takes weeks or months to get answers from administrators about simple daily tasks, such as delays in evaluations and changes in days off. These little things are

indicative of the larger issue inside the center: The administration has been working extremely hard to address the many issues that confront the center—staffing, accreditation, protocols, call-answering times and many others. Many of the administrative staff routinely work 12-hour days attempting to implement these many changes, but in their diligent work to get these important changes made, they have lost their focus on what is most important: putting the people first.

Starting in October 2021, administration is in the process of rolling out monthly, voluntary, paid group meetings. According to Director Vedra, the purpose of these meetings is to have a round table discussion and not an agenda-led, administration-talks-at-the-staff environment. We believe this to be a great first step in opening up the lines of communications. The ECC is currently working diligently in a long process in improving morale while simultaneously increasing the level of service to the citizens of Cincinnati. These are complex and difficult issues that ECC's across the country struggle with.

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

Mental health is often overlooked in the 9-1-1 profession, and it has only been in recent years that attention has been given to mental health in the 9-1-1 occupation. In 2012, Michelle Lilly, PhD, published a study, “Duty-Related Trauma Exposure in 911 Telecommunicators: Considering the Risk for Post-Traumatic Stress.” At the time of the study, the data revealed that the rate of PTSD in telecommunicators—those who have enough symptoms that they would most likely achieve a PTSD diagnosis if they were clinically assessed—is in the range of 18–24%. Today, that number is higher. Dr. Lilly has shared that a not-yet-published study she is working on puts the rate of PTSD in telecommunicators close to 29%.

Those who don't perform the duties of a telecommunicator think that because the E9-1-1 operator is not physically on location at the incident that they are not affected by the trauma. That is not the case at all. The telecommunicator witnesses an intense range of emotions while handling the call. The telecommunicator often visualizes in their head the scenario that is verbally playing out on the call. On many occasions, these sights and sounds become a haunting nuisance that interrupt everyday life. They may experience intrusive thoughts throughout the day and waking nightmares when they should be sleeping.

Several aspects of the work done by emergency communications personnel contribute to a decline in mental health. In addition to the intrusive sights and sounds telecommunicators experience, they may have a fight-or-flight response hundreds of times a day. When the body goes into a fight-or-flight response, many physiological changes in the body take place, including the release of several stress hormones. Prolonged exposure to excessive amounts of stress hormones can have negative effects on one's health.

The Cincinnati ECC staff is not exempt from the mental health challenges seen in most centers today. In fact, given the history of the department structure, the excessive number of changes in administration, low staffing numbers, at times aggressive leadership personalities and behavior, critical call types, negative publicity and the Kyle Plush lawsuit, this ECC puts this team at higher risk for mental health decline than most centers.

A mental health check-in was made during all interviews and conversations, and it is clear, the ECC employees are struggling. This was made clear via conversation and the survey (see results on page

32). Many of the employees who have left have done so because of mental health issues, and many more are considering separating from service.

Public Employee Assistance Program (PEAP)

The team is pleased to hear the city of Cincinnati uses a Public Employee Assistance Program (PEAP). PEAP is a confidential counseling service that is free to use for the employee and their immediate family members. Each employee receives 24 sessions each year, which may be used by family members, too. At first glance the PEAP program offers great resources, the team will obtain feedback from the staff on the reality of it being used. While it is not possible to know who uses the program we will attempt to seek general thoughts on the program.

This program addresses many issues the telecommunicators face, including:

- Stress;
- Relationship challenges;
- Trauma;
- Grief; and
- Substance abuse.

PEAP appointments accommodate both daytime and evening hours, which is beneficial for ECC employees who are on a shift work schedule. The offices are located away from other city offices to add a layer of anonymity. At no time will the respective city department receive any information on a city employee who seeks their professional services.

The program's qualified therapists are credentialed at a master's degree or higher level. One service now being offered is eye movement desensitization reprocessing (EMDR). EMDR treatment is an evidence-based treatment that plays an instrumental role in recovery from trauma and challenging experiences. By separating the emotional charge from the event(s), EMDR allows the person who is suffering to start to regain control of intrusive thoughts, feelings and emotions, especially regarding future similar events.

Although this is a great program to have in place, it is not being used to the best of its capability. Not all employees are aware of the program itself or the variety of treatments offered, especially EMDR. They expressed concern about the program's confidentiality. In addition, it is commonplace for employees not to want to seek help. A stigma is associated with seeking help, and it is paramount that the administration work as a team to dispel any stigma or other concerns that may be preventing staff members from seeking help.

Peer Support Program

Various conversations have been held regarding the implementation of a peer support program. At the time of this report there does not appear to be much movement in this area. Upon speaking to several different staff members, there seem to be several options being looked at, but no clear path to provide this team the help they desperately need. It is our understanding that there was acceptance under the police peer support; however, further investigation reveals there are places the ECC staff will not be able to fit into.

Recommendation: The administration should create and support a standalone ECC Peer Support Program. This needs to be moved to the priority list.

A new resource for peer support in the 9-1-1 industry has recently been published:

- NENA Peer Support Team Development, Implementation, and Oversight
 - https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.nena.org/resource/resmgr/standards/nena-inf-044.1-2021_peer_sup.pdf

Pet Therapy Program

Initial conversations with the leadership team identified the implementation of a Pet Therapy Program, as discussed in staff notes “ECC-SN-2021-02-19” where it references ECC SOP 1.260; The staff notes indicated that ECAM Gazaway would have it set up to accept the first visit in March 2021. It was cited that a COVID uptick was the reason the first visit did not take place until July 2021 and then another visit did not take place until October 2021. This program is something the staff is looking forward to and could help to improve morale, however, lack of communication in the delay and then inconsistency in the timing of the visits, creates a false sense of hope for the program to exist.

Recommendation: Be consistent with monthly pet therapy visits. If for any reason there should be a delay or cancellation for a visit, communication to the staff is warranted.

Cordico Wellness app

Source: ECC-SN-2021-07-23

“The Cincinnati Police Department has partnered with the Cordico Wellness app to provide a 100% confidential, 24/7 resource available in the palm of your hand for all ECC and CPD staff and their families. The Cordico Wellness app includes videos, articles and self-assessment tools created specifically for high-stress occupations. The app not only provides on-demand content, but also offers resources to quickly connect you with a trained CPD peer support member, CPD chaplains and local therapists. This app can help you and your family members with day-to-day mental health and wellness, or it can be utilized in times of a crisis.”

A member of the ECC recently used the app after a traumatic incident. The person who responded did attempt to assist but advised the person the app was not meant for the ECC. ECC administrators need to confirm if the app is available to their personnel and confirm with Coridco Wellness.

GUARDIAN TRACKING (GT)

In October 2019 the ECC implemented and started Guardian Tracking. GT is used to track many aspects of the ECC’s employee duties. It is gaining traction in the public safety space as a leader of positive and negative incident tracking.

The team was pleased to see GT being used in the ECC. For the most part, the software is being used to the best of its ability. There is one specific area that is in need of improvement. See below.

Benefits:

- It is a one-stop documentation repository for all good, bad or indifferent matters for the employees in the ECC.
- It can be used to document a significant work event, including injured/fatally injured responders; the death of a child; and large-scale events, such as a riot or active assailant

incident. Documenting such events allows a flag to be set as a reminder to check in before mental health issues arise.

- It can be used to flag when an employee is receiving more coaching sessions than deemed appropriate. This allows administration to see that resources are needed.
- All documented data can be found in one place and can be used for filling out the employee evaluation. This allows for consistent scoring on the evaluation.
- This is beneficial because it is impossible for a supervisor to keep track of every coaching conversation for all of their subordinates. In addition, it helps if someone is moved under a new supervisor.
 - There is also a feature that allows the subordinate to provide additional commentary for coaching.

Recommendation:

- It is a proven, effective early warning system for potential mental health issues; however, this feature is not being used to the best of its ability. It is recommended the administration Identify critical call types that should be flagged, then train supervisors on how, when and why to use this feature.
- Director Vedra has been monitoring the coaching-to-recognition ratio. It is recommended that Dir. Vedra or designee continue to monitor the ratio to ensure that an employee is not receiving only negative notations in their record.

UNKNOWN TROUBLE CALLS

The team has begun an initial review of the use of the UNK type code or unknown trouble used by the city. The ECC incident training manual states,

“Unknown trouble is exactly that—a situation where the problem is not known. One example of an unknown trouble incident would be a complainant with a heavy accent or who cannot speak English. We know they called for service, but don’t know what they want. The UNK incident type would be used to enter this incident.

“Any details available from the call must be included in the text, background noises, hysteria on the part of the caller, etc., Could be helpful information. Officers responding to this call are entering a potentially hazardous situation. It is critical to provide any and all information available.”

The UNK call is a priority 2 call.

The UNK call type is being used hundreds of times a month during the review of the call sampling; several could have been entered into CAD as another call type.

The team requested and reviewed a sampling of unknown call types to determine how they are being processed, if they are being processed properly and if there are areas that can be improved on. 9-1-1 recordings, the CAD entry and the body cam footage of the CPD response were reviewed for each of the sample calls.

- E9-1-1 operators are not always asking pertinent questions when possible, resulting in a UNK call type.
 - On occasions, when the pertinent information was obtained, it was not being entered into the CAD to be passed on to the field responder. For example, a group of 7+ people were in some type of altercation. There was yelling and mention of a firearm and threats to shoot someone, Also mentioned: Someone was trying to leave in a vehicle; however, no vehicle description was obtained and, therefore, not relayed to the responding units.
 - A woman is heard anxiously asking for her keys. A man can be heard saying something to her, and the call disconnects. The E9-1-1 operator failed to put the information regarding the “male being heard.”

As for the police response, although it was observed that most officers were vigilant in checking the area they were dispatched to, it was clear that due to the large number of unknown trouble calls that CPD responds to, it has become difficult for them to remain vigilant on each call. In other calls it appears officers are doing the minimum necessary to respond to the call, clear it and move on to the next call. In one incident a caller was requesting a person to get out of her car and a location was given along a long roadway, the responding officers drove to the area activated their body cameras for 1 minute and 40 seconds, verbally stated the car was gone on arrival and deactivated their body cameras, but they were shown on the call according to the CAD for 11 minutes. It is unknown what these officers did during the call. Did they continue to look for the caller, did they forget to clear the call, or were they performing other duties?

The team will perform monthly reviews of a larger sampling of calls.

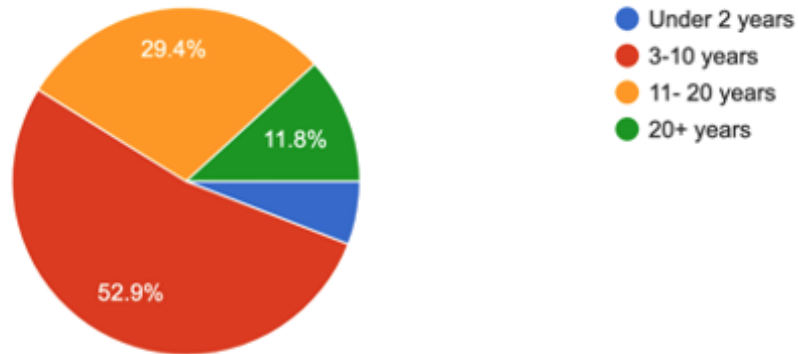
SURVEY RESULTS

An anonymous and volunteer survey was sent to the ECC staff to gauge thoughts on certain areas. This next section addresses the survey questions and results that we delivered to the current ECC staff. The survey was sent out on two occasions, and 34 ECC employees out of 117 responded. In addition to the selectable choices, ECC staff were able to add free-form text. We have added those additional responses and responses from current and past employee interviews and observations. Although a less than majority of employees participated in the survey we still believe the results are valuable.

SURVEY RESULTS

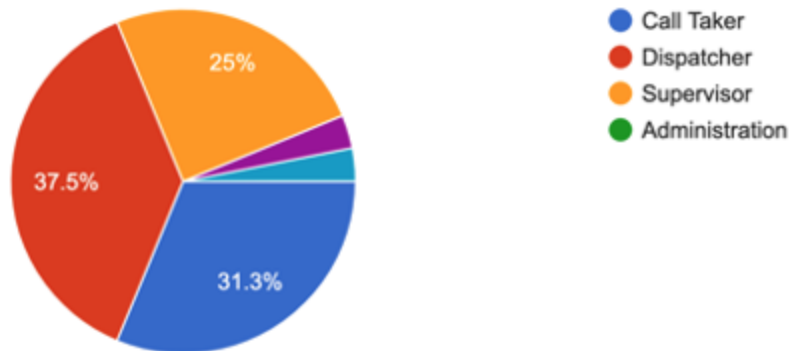
How many years have you been working for the Cincinnati ECC?

34 responses



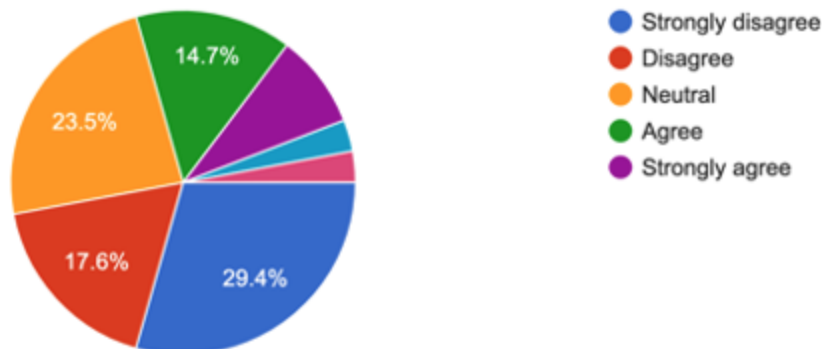
What is your role in the ECC

32 responses

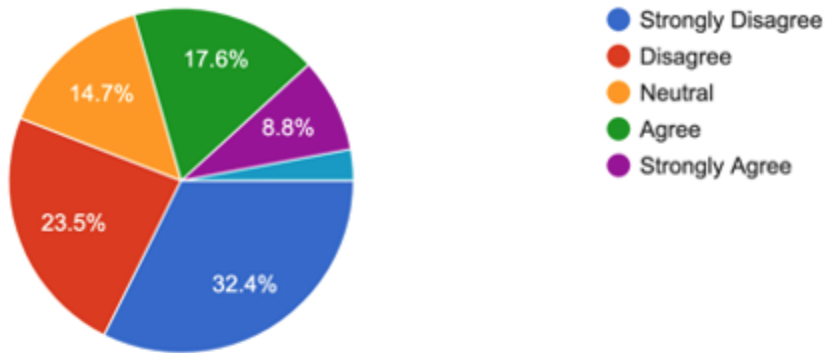


Cincinnati ECC leadership does a good job communicating information about changes that may affect employees.

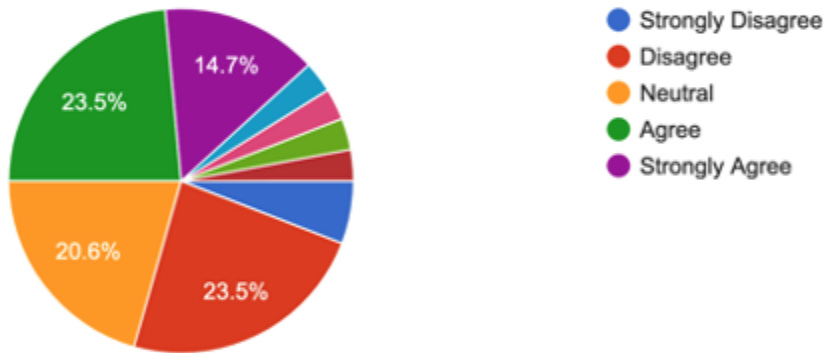
34 responses



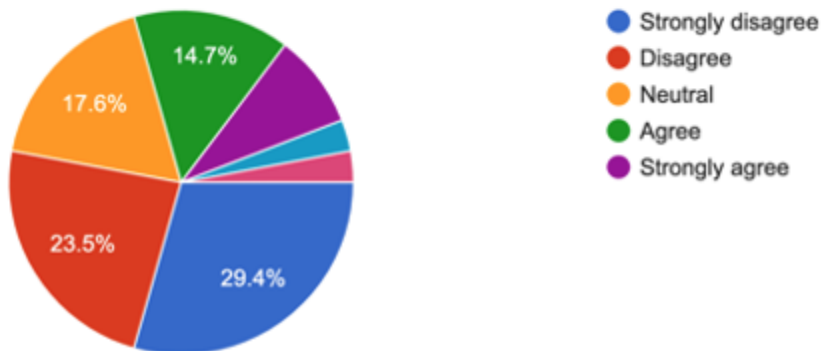
The Cincinnati ECC leadership team communicates a clear sense of direction
 34 responses



Floor supervisors communicate consistently with ECC staff.
 34 responses

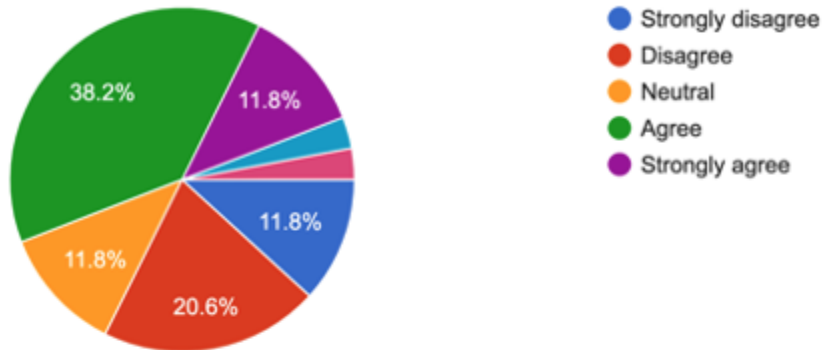


The department celebrates achievements and acknowledges the professional accomplishments of you and your co-workers.
 34 responses



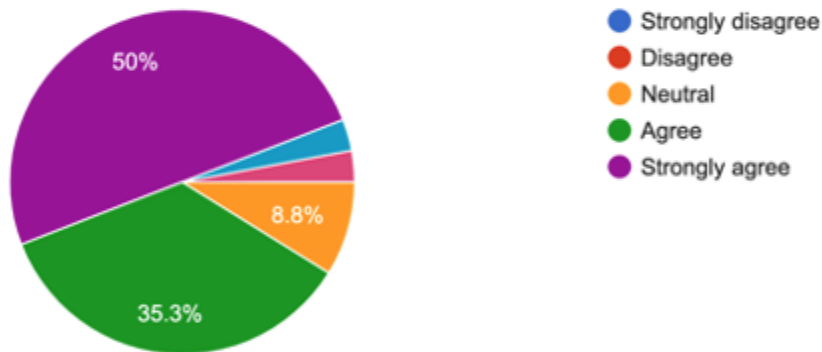
My physical work space is ergonomically comfortable.

34 responses



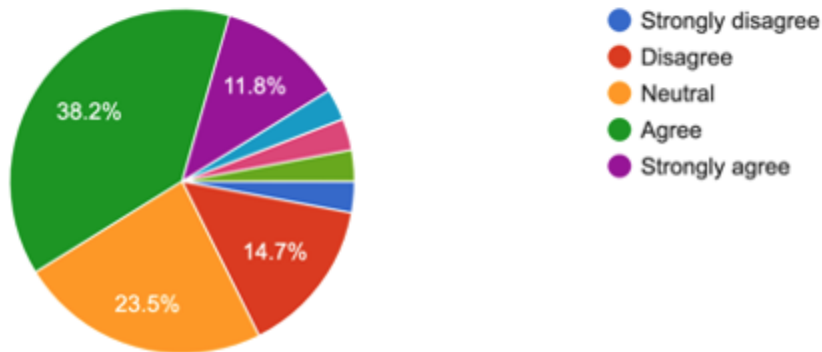
ECC employees on my shift cooperate to get the work done

34 responses



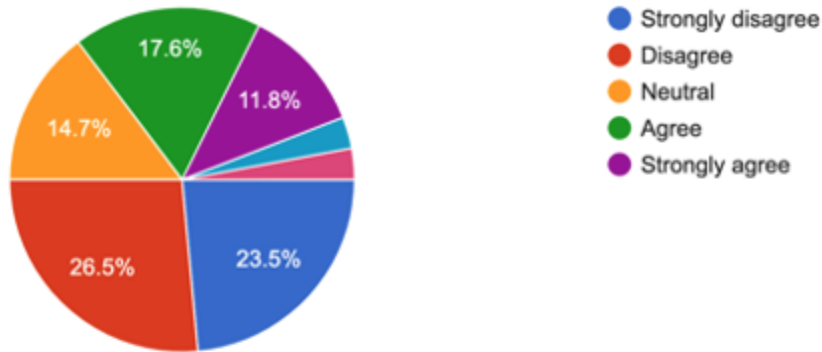
I feel supported by floor supervisors when handling a challenging / difficult call.

34 responses



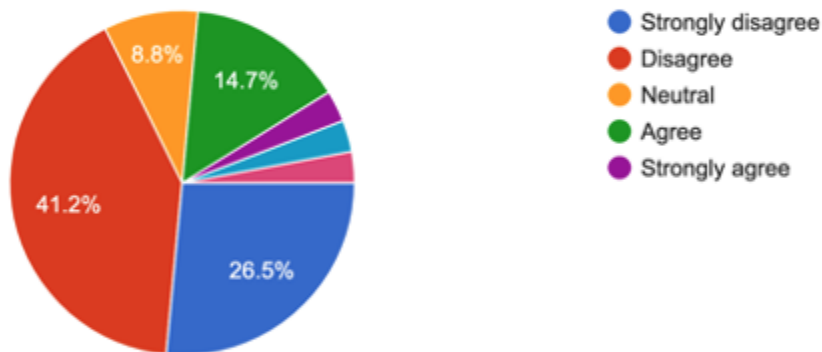
I feel comfortable bringing suggestions to the leadership team.

34 responses



ECC Employees are treated with fairness, not favoritism.

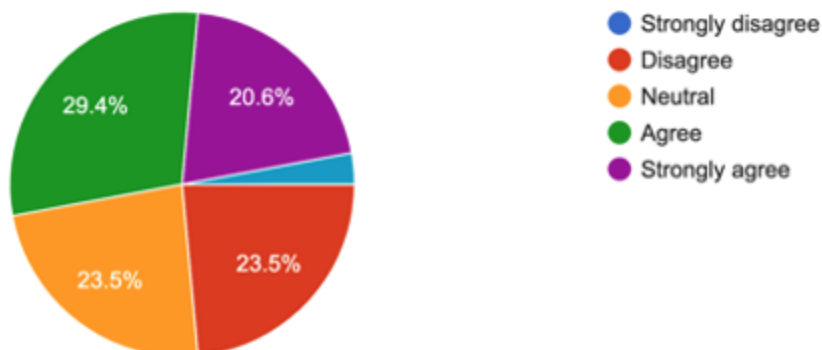
34 responses



Technology

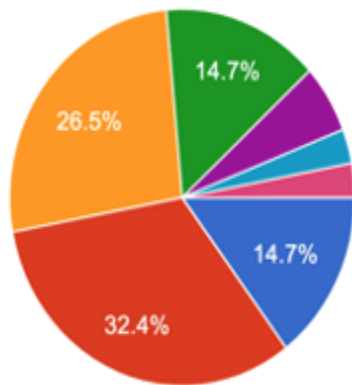
Current and appropriate tools are provided to effectively process calls for service.

34 responses



Adequate training is provided when new technology is provided.

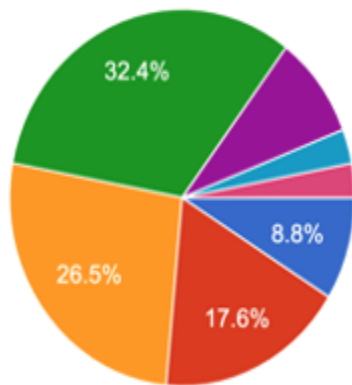
34 responses



- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- adequate is an accurate adjective - but adequate should never be the bar - training should be provided that offers...
- We receive all the training we need on customizable equipment that is purpo...

When a technological issue is reported, it is resolved in a timely manner

34 responses

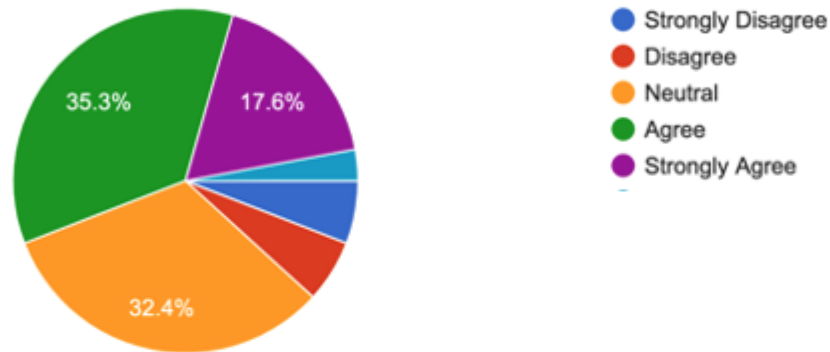


- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Policy and Procedure

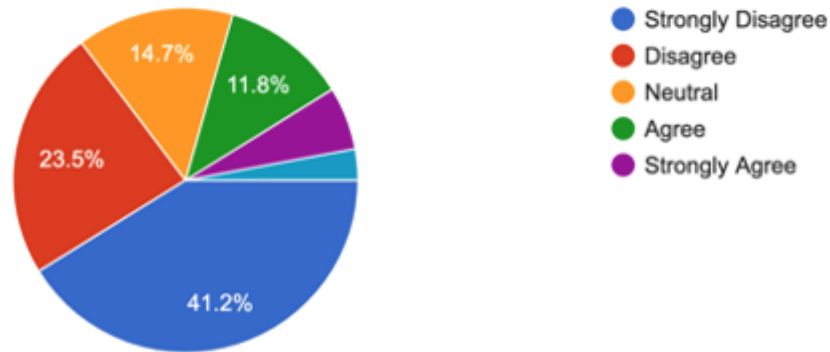
PowerDMS is an effective tool to store and maintain current policy and procedures.

34 responses



ECC employees are able to participate in deciding how work gets done.

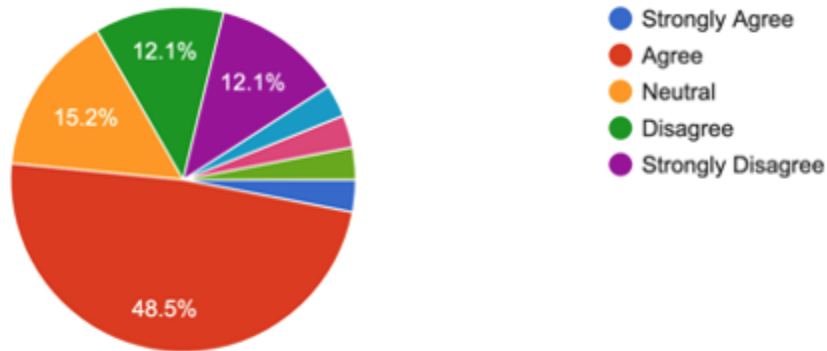
34 responses



Initial and Continuing Education Training

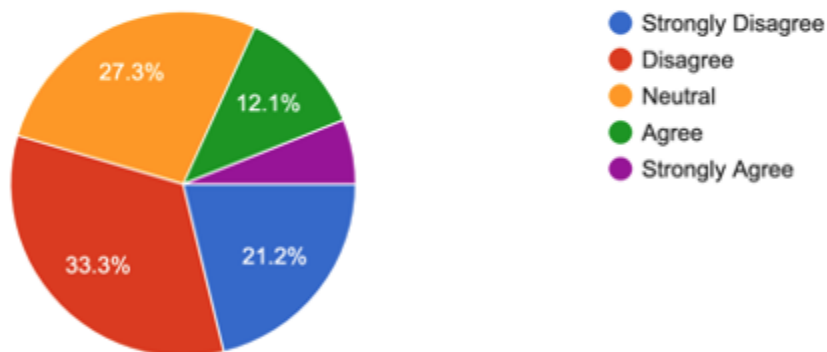
My initial training program prepared me to effectively perform my duties.

33 responses



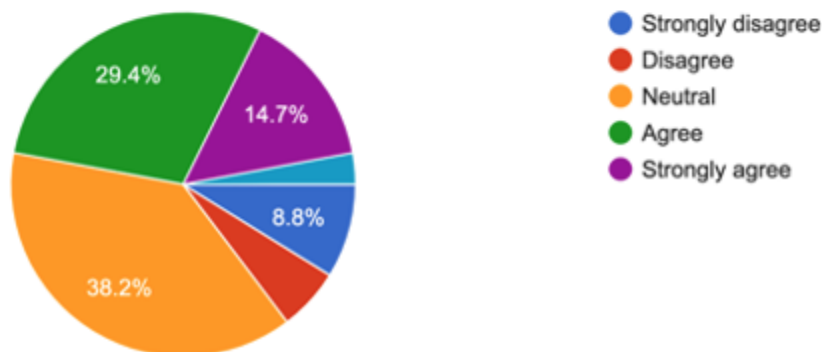
The ECC staff receives ample opportunity for continuing education training,

33 responses



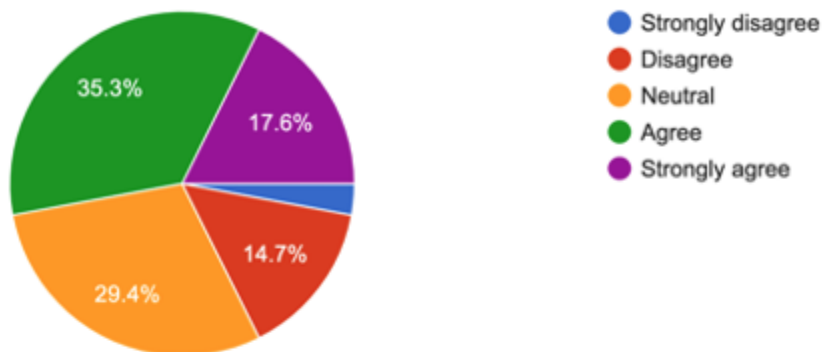
QA/ QI is done in a timely manner

34 responses



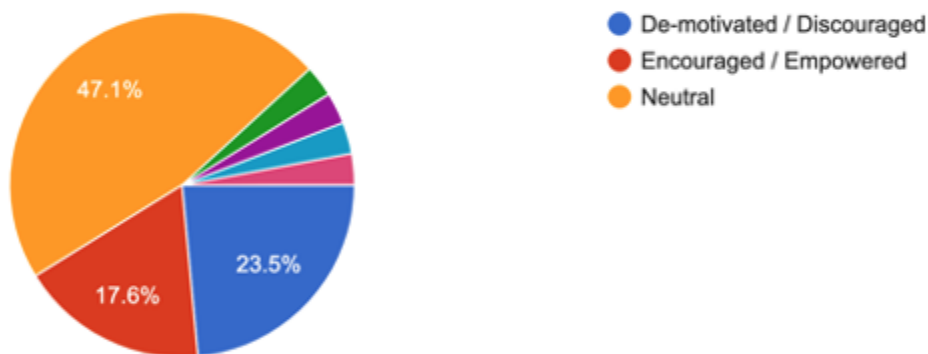
QA/ QI is generally fact based, (ie. you did, you did not) versus opinion based (ie. I think, I feel)

34 responses



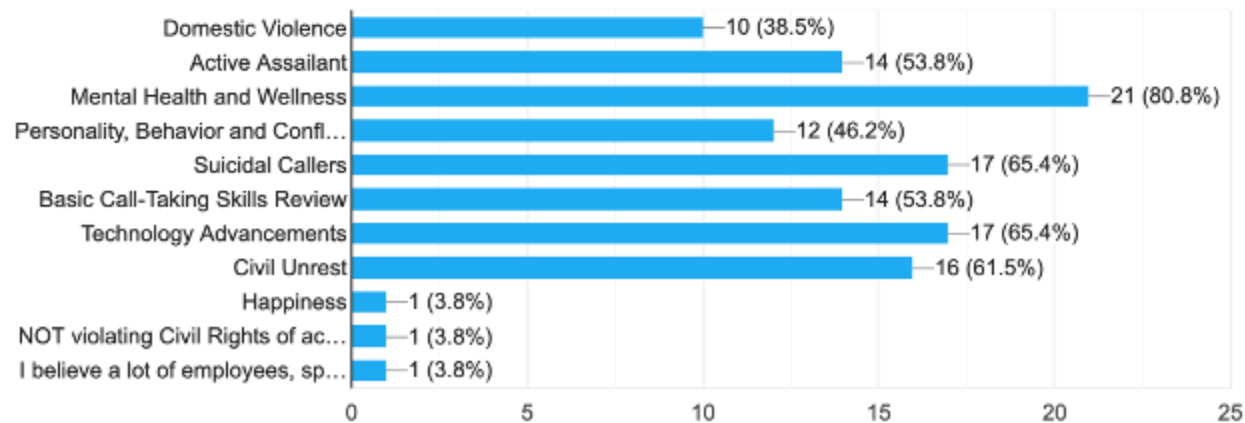
After a QA / QI feedback review I generally feel:

34 responses



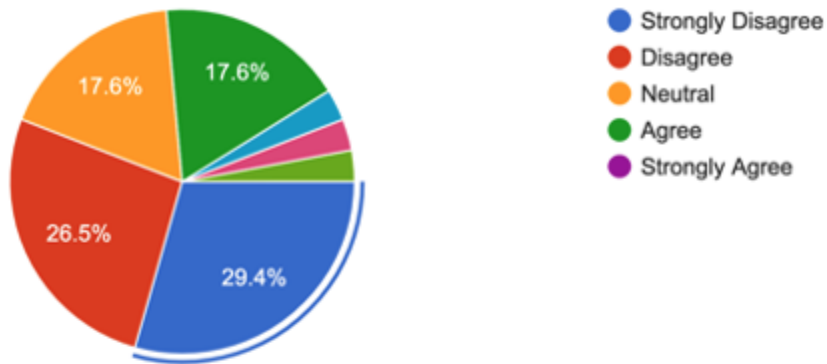
I would like to see training on the following, (Check all that apply)

26 responses



Leadership focuses on problem solving versus finding fault.

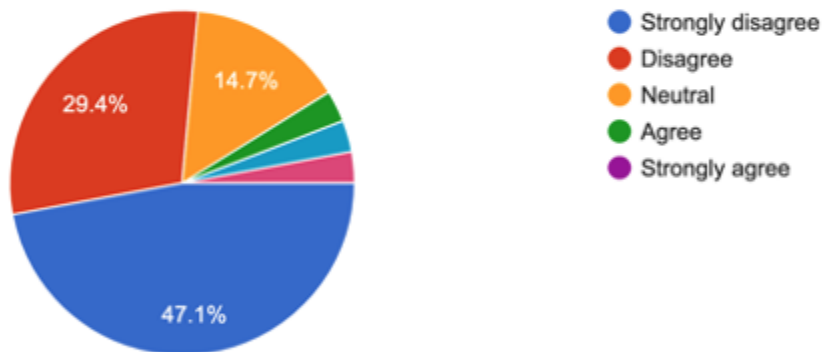
34 responses



Mental Health and Wellness

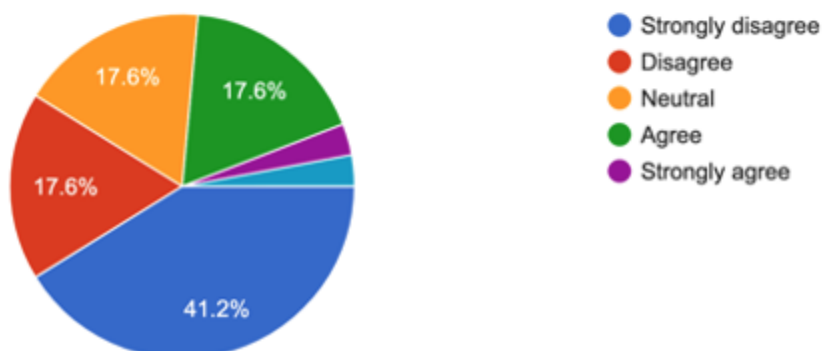
Mental health and wellness is a priority at the Cincinnati ECC.

34 responses



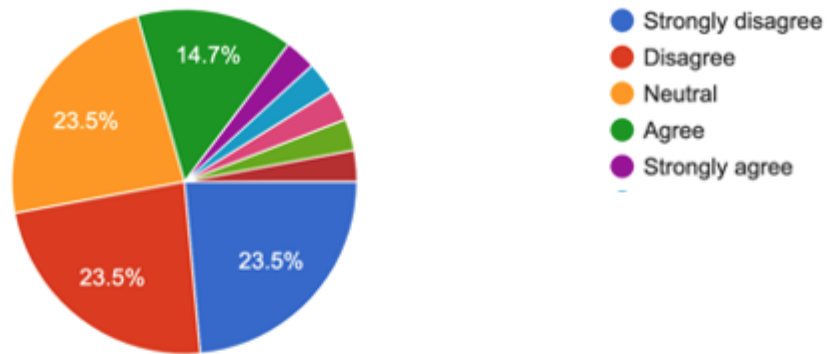
Leadership checks in on the well being of the staff after challenging / difficult calls.

34 responses



The ECC has adequate resources available if I am having a mental health crisis.

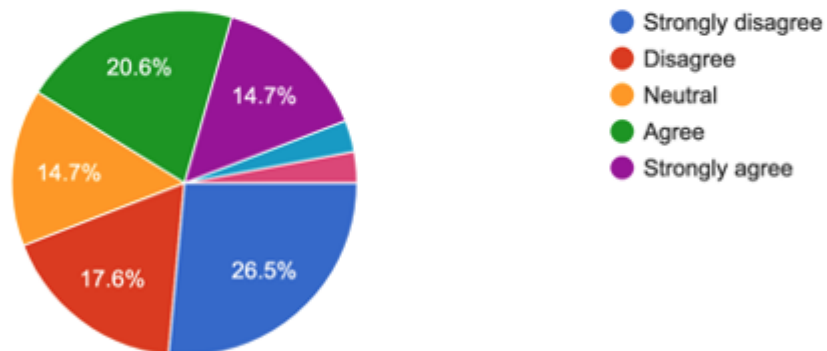
34 responses



Job Satisfaction

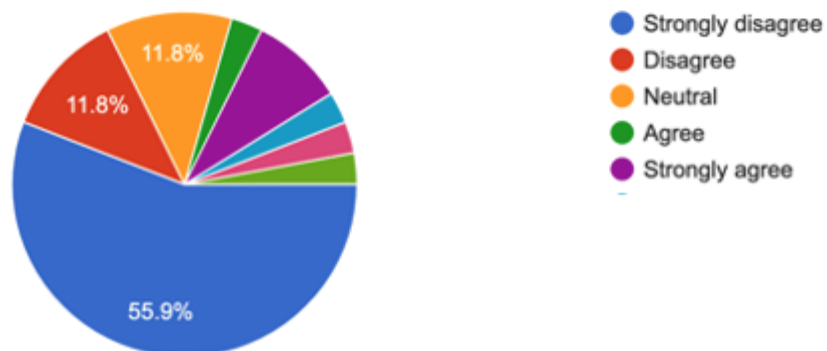
I feel secure in my position at the Cincinnati ECC

34 responses



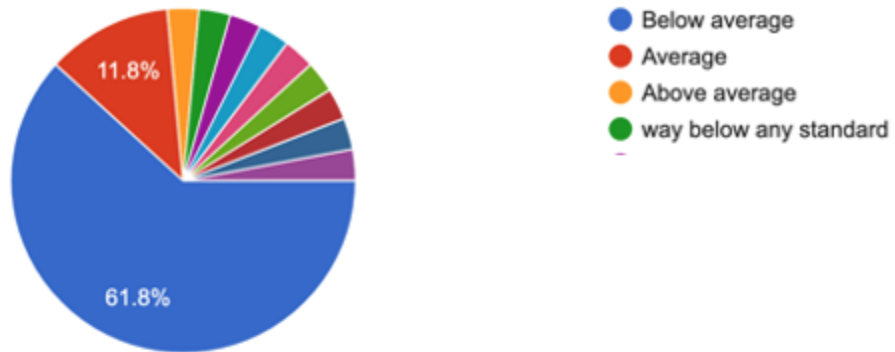
I am able to take time off when needed.

34 responses



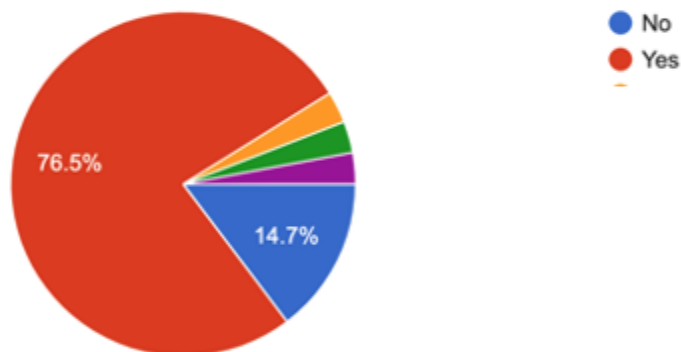
The moral of the Cincinnati is

34 responses



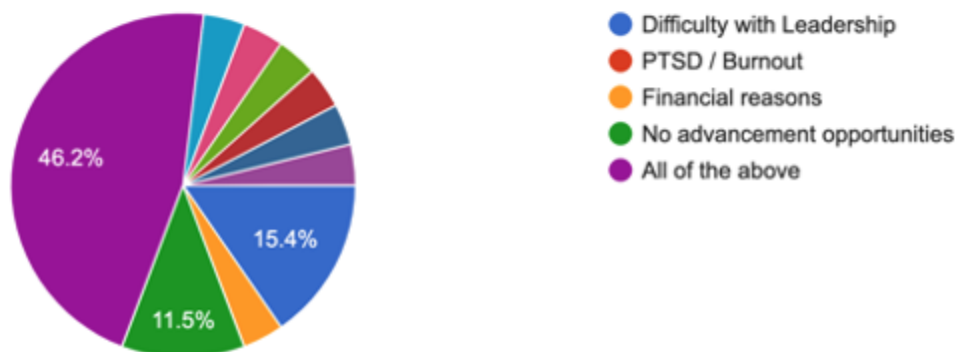
Have you recently considered leaving the Cincinnati ECC

34 responses



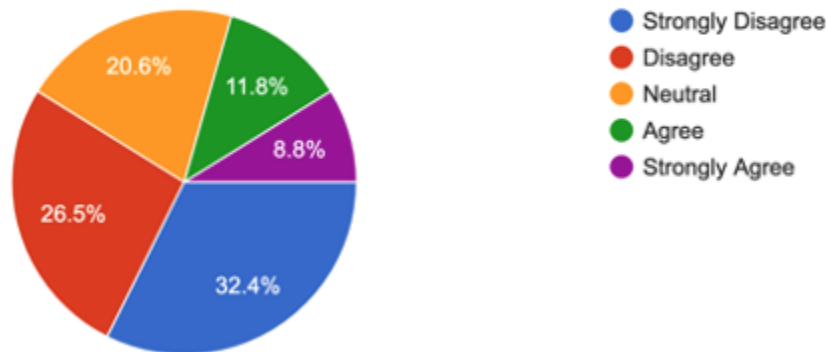
If you have recently considered leaving please identify the reason why.

26 responses



Overall, I am satisfied at the Cincinnati ECC

34 responses



Report Recommendations

1. When policies are updated, the training manager should spend time with the ESDS to train them on the new policies. The ESDS should spend time with each employee reviewing the policies and answering questions. This will ensure the supervisors are clear on the intent of the policy, that they can answer any question employees have about the policy and that they can appropriately enforce policies, as needed.
2. When a new policy is issued, highlight the changes. The process to view changes to a particular policy in PowerDMS is cumbersome. Administration should find a solution for employees to quickly and efficiently identify changes.
3. The ECC should provide formal training in new policies. This can include allowing employees to sign out of taking 9-1-1 calls and dispatching during low call volume times in their shift and dedicating time to read the policy and be trained in it. The training manager can discuss and train all ESDSs on the new policies, and then ESDSs can provide the training to their people and be available to answer questions.
4. The administrative team should be more present on the floor, engage with the floor staff in person and be more cognizant of the time that passes before requests are answered.
5. A second operations manager should be hired. One operations manager would be in charge of the day shift while the other operations manager would be in charge of the night shift.

6. Decision capabilities are pushed to the level of the operations manager and the ESDSs, such as giving the operations manager authority to assign and review completed evaluations, with lower level discipline to be handled by the ESDS.
7. The team recommends the city continue to meet with all stakeholders about overtime issues to determine the best path forward to meet the needs of all .
8. We recommend that the team and the ECC meet to review and update address verification policies and training. The team will be working with the administration to ensure location technology is put to the best use in the ECC.
9. Because there are aspects of obtaining and conveying location information to responders that are in need of attention, one of the first priorities will be to identify all policies and procedures related to location information. Then the ECC must create an aggressive timeline to roll out technological advancements that are not currently in place; to update, combine and reconcile contradicting policies; and to ensure that all call-takers know how to properly validate location information and how to determine the proper call type to accompany the type of location that is being presented.
10. We recommend a review of the use of the TTY during unresponsive calls should be conducted by the ECC. The ECC should review activating the TTY only in silent calls to prevent the possibility of missing information given by callers during nonresponsive calls while the TTY is activated. The team will assist the ECC in reviewing the calls with a TTY activation, and any related policy and training.
11. We recommend continuing education in such basic call-taking topics as address verification, pertinent information gathering, documentation, suicide intervention, mental health and the telecommunicator, How to better understand the personalities the work with, and crisis intervention.
12. We recommend that when possible officers provide more information on the disposition of calls by radio or enter on their mobile computers.
13. The administration should create and support a standalone ECC Peer Support Program.

14. It is recommended the administration identify critical call types that could cause trauma to staff that should be flagged in Guardian tracking and how to support and recognize staff as needed.

15. It is recommended that continued monitoring of the coaching-to-recognition ratio be done in Guardian tracking to monitor the ratio to ensure that an employee is not receiving only negative notations in their record.

16. Be consistent with monthly pet therapy visits. If for any reason there should be a delay or cancellation for a visit, communication to the staff is warranted.