

Office of Homeland Security

FY 2023 Operating/Program Review Responses Summary

STAFFING

- The Office continues to experience employee retention challenges. In FY 2022 the Office lost 26 employees to attrition, compared to 24 in FY 2021. In FY 2022 92.3% of all employee separations were driven by resignations.
- In FY 202, the Office continues on-line entrance examination and virtual Targeted Selection Interview processes for Public Safety Emergency Call Taker I/II and Public Safety Emergency Dispatcher I/II. This practice continues to be successful in increasing the number of applicants moving through the application and testing process.
- The FY 2023 retention pay qualification criteria for Emergency Call Takers and Dispatchers, and implementation were reported as being “in the final approval and implementation stages” as of November 2022. A total of \$340,000 was allocated for retention pay for the Public Safety Emergency Call Taker I/II/III and Public Safety Emergency Dispatcher I/II/III, and Public Safety Emergency Shift Supervisor classes of work.
- The Office continues to experience significant employee recruitment challenges. In FY 2023, as of October 27, 2022, the Office reported 26% Public Safety Emergency Call Taker vacancy rate and 19% Public Safety Emergency Dispatcher vacancy rate.
- The Office has established an agency-level Recruitment and Hiring Committee.
- Once hired, Public Safety Emergency Call Taker requires 6 months of training and Public Safety Emergency Dispatcher needs 9-12 months of training before reaching proficiency levels to perform their assigned duties and responsibilities.
- The Office notes that “*as additional 9-1-1 technology and capabilities become available and expanded services become available, maintaining and expanding 9-1-1 staffing must be closely monitored and identified as a public safety priority*”. Therefore, for example, the implementation of the Next Generation 9-1-1 and diversion of behavioral health-related calls for service to a qualified vendor, should be accompanied by the staffing increases necessary to execute such initiatives.
- At the Office’s request, the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) is expected to hire a third party to conduct an agency-wide classification study, which will cover all Office of Homeland Security Personnel. Note that the current status of the classification study and anticipated completion date have not been identified by the Office in their responses.

WORKLOAD DEMANDS & PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

- Various workload data and information are provided in the Office’s responses to *the FY 2023 Operating/Program Review Questions No. 10-14*.
- The Office reports that the Maryland 9-1-1 Board requires that the 9-1-1 Trust Funds are used to support 9-1-1 functions only, and annual audit ensures that this condition is met. The Office did not specify how much was collected in FY 2022 and how the 9-1-1 Trust Funds were used in FY 2022.

- The Office continues to work with ADT to address alarm notifications (ASAP Program), which could divert up to fifty percent of the alarm calls once address verification and alarm registration confirmation hurdles are resolved. The Office reports that ADT *“ADT has begun renewed efforts to resolve the internal registration confirmation issues”*. No information on what percentage of calls is currently being diverted through the ASAP program has been provided.
- In April 2020, the Office implemented a soft-launch of the Computer Aided Dispatch system module to provide On-Line Non-emergency Service Requests. This module allows citizens and residents to access the application via the County website and submit non-emergency service requests. The Office reports that nearly 7,000 non-emergency dispatch requests have been fulfilled through this program in CY 2022 at the time of the reporting. Incident types available for this program are: disturbance, flooding inside, fraud, lost property, parking complaint, stuck elevator, suspicious person, theft (or attempt), traffic hazard, update an existing report, vandalism. Requests for service can be filed at 911.mypgc.us.
- The Non-Emergency Dispatch Phone Number (301-352-1200) operated by the Public Safety Communications has processed 88,549 between January 1 and October 1, 2022. The use of this dedicated line for non-emergency calls enables a more efficient processing of the emergency calls for service.
- The 9-1-1 Call Center’s Mental Health Call Diversion initiative was launched as a pilot on October 11, 2022. The 9-1-1 Center can play a critical role in strengthening the County’s Crisis Response by identifying calls for service with behavioral health component and diverting qualifying calls away from law enforcement or emergency medical services into the appropriate behavioral health resources (hospitals with behavioral health beds, Mobile Crisis Response Teams, crisis stabilization centers, etc.). The Office is working to finalize various aspect of the pilot project into *“a unified public safety process”*. As the project grows, additional 9-1-1 staffing will be required as the call triage process will lengthen the time it takes to process calls. This project is a joint effort and involves the Health Department, a contractor secured by the Health Department, iMind, the Police Department, the Fire/EMS Department, the DCAO for Public Safety, and other leaders.
- During the FY 2023 Budget Review it was reported that: *“The County’s Next Generation 9-1-1 Network (NG911) was deployed in April 2021 and it was the first NG911 network launched in the State. The primary focus of NG911 in FY 2022 was on interconnectedness with the neighboring jurisdictions. The next steps, which are subject to the development of industry standards and wireless carrier system enhancements, will be the ability to receive and process multimedia information and routing calls based on enhanced caller location information”*. The Office reports that all currently available NG911 standards have been successfully implemented in FY 2022, and the Office continues to work with state and regional partners on regional planning efforts. The Prince George’s County Office of Homeland Security Public Safety Communications was awarded Thomas J. O’Reilly Innovation Award from the Integrated Justice Information Systems (IJIS) Institute for being the first public safety agency in the United States to deploy i3 location-based call routing for all 9-1-1 calls as a part of the NG911 i3 Location Based Call Routing Project.
- According to the Office, as the State continues to move forward with NG911 implementation, the County needs to prepare for the impact. The Office notes that *“the primary initial impact associated with the transition to NG911 will involve staffing and the need for equipment enhancements”*. The

information available through NG911 will make call processing more complex and more 9-1-1 personnel will be needed. In addition, there will be a need for evaluation of the classifications of 9-1-1, dispatch, training, management and technical staff who support 9-1-1 dispatch and equipment (this is anticipated to be included in the OHRM classification study).

- NG911 enhances the County’s ability to receive and process 9-1-1 calls with improved speed and accuracy through:
 - Enhanced caller (handset) location
 - A more resilient/redundant IP-based call delivery network
 - Greater interoperability between neighboring 9-1-1 centers
 - Reducing the number of transfers
 - Increasing ability to share caller location data between centers
 - Future functionality will bring the ability to receive multimedia (video and pictures), real-time text messaging, and an ability to receive sensor data such as On-Star crash notifications directly over the network.
- The Technical Services Section of the Public Safety Communications is comprised of:
 - The CAD/RMS section, which handles public safety information technology including CAD, RMS, and the Unified Digital Evidence Management system;
 - The Radio section, which handles public safety telecommunications systems including the County’s 7/800 MHz public safety radio network; and
 - The Audio/Subpoena section, which handles the production of evidence and management of the agency’s logging recorders.
- The Technical Services Workload demands for CY 2021 are presented in response to the to the *FY 2023 Operating/Program Review Question No. 19-C* and staffing levels are outlined in response to *Question No. 19-F*.
- The FY 2023 Approved Budget includes an increase in funding to support maintenance costs of the gun range (\$1,450,800). The gun range will be used by the Police Department, Office of the Sheriff, Department of Corrections, MNCPP Police Department, Fire Marshalls, and possibly by municipal police departments and possibly other entities. The Office reported that *“given the highly technical function of the facility and the use by a variety of public safety agencies, and the possible use of the gun range by the State, Federal and Municipal entities, it was recognized that a technology-driven public safety entity needed to provide overall stewardship.”* Based on the Office’s responses, the maintenance contract is anticipated to be finalized for FY 2024.