DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

DESCRIPTION

The Department of Emergency Communications (DEC) is a 24-hour operation that processes incoming emergency 911 and non-emergency calls for Police, Fire and EMS assistance. The department also operates a Teletype Terminal in compliance with the Virginia Criminal Information Network and the National Crime Information Center, and National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase frequency and efficacy of community outreach program through expanding the audience within the school system.
- Enhance public awareness of 911 functionality and technology to include text and video services.
- Obtain Accreditation through the Virginia Office of EMS for Emergency Medical Dispatch.
- Expand and increase situational awareness for both field responders and dispatchers.
- Improve and streamline business processes within the DEC as it relates to compliance, human resources, training, and professional standards.
- To increase the operational readiness profile by expanding tactical dispatch materials and training.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The FY26 budget for the Department of Emergency Communications totals $11,517,272, reflecting an increase of $1,001,316 or 9.5% from the previous year. The personnel component is $10,307,118, reflecting an increase of $811,486 or 8.5% from the previous year. This includes an increase in salaries and benefits.

ANNUAL FISCAL PLAN SUMMARY

Description	FY24 Actual	FY25 Original	FY26 Approved	Change 25-26
Personnel	$ 8,476,165	$ 9,495,632	$ 10,307,118	8.5%
Operation	223,804	1,011,824	1,192,274	17.8%
Capital	97,383	8,500	17,880	110.4%
Total	$ 8,797,352	$ 10,515,956	$ 11,517,272	9.5%
Personnel Complement*	91 *	91	91	-

**FY24 includes the transfer of (73) positions from the Emergency Communications Center, (14) positions from Wireless E-911 Unit, (1) Office Assistant IV from Police, and (3) positions from Information Technology.*

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

	FY24	FY25	FY26	Change 25-26
Workload Measures				
Total Incoming/Outgoing Calls	492,319	503,445	510,000	6,555
Average dispatch time for Priority calls(seconds)	118	142	120	(22)
Number of Priority 1 calls processed in 90 seconds or less	19,659	19,000	19,300	300

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS (CONTINUED)

The operating component is $1,192,274, reflecting an increase of $180,450 or 17.8% from the previous year. This increase covers E-911 maintenance service contracts, uniforms, and contractual increases. The capital component totals $17,880, reflecting an increase of $9,380 or 110.4% from the previous year. This increase covers replacement headsets and bases for answering 911 calls.

In FY24 the Emergency Communications Center became an independent department, this included the transfer of funding from the Wireless E-911 budget in the Special Revenue Fund to the General Fund. The County has collected this funding from the State 911 Services Board since FY00, which is based on $0.75 per month per cellular phone.

DEPARTMENTAL HIGHLIGHTS

AWARDS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A significant number of resources have been committed to focus on work/life balance and recruitment. The DEC has successfully coordinated and completed two Basic Communications Academies with one hundred percent passing rate. With each of these academies, the DEC has partnered with the Community College Workforce Alliance to complete an internship for new applicants and students taking the Emergency Telecommunicator Certification Course. The DEC Internship was honored to receive the National Association of Counties (NACo) Award.

Since its inception, the Department of Emergency Communications has prioritized investing in its personnel, with a strong focus on retention. In FY24, the DEC adopted a strategic and intentional approach to training and implemented a revamped staffing deployment model. These efforts have yielded significant results, with staffing levels increasing from 50% to over 88% and retention rates rising from 35% to 72%. This progress has also enabled the DEC to offer comprehensive and industry-specific training to its team, further strengthening its workforce and enhancing overall capabilities.

The DEC is dedicated to investing in training opportunities that equip its workforce with specialized skills. This year, the DEC hosted a Communications Training Officer course for 50% of the training officers in the Department. Personnel also attended industry specific training in topics regarding NexGen911 and technology advancements, HR

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Background Courses for hiring, DCJS General Instructor, Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies' Accreditation Manager, and Emergency Medical and Fire conferences.

The creation of the Tactical Dispatch Team in FY24, in partnership with Emergency Management and Henrico Sports and Entertainment Authority, reflects a proactive approach to public safety and event management. By supporting first responders and citizens, the team plays a crucial role in ensuring efficient communications and coordination during large-scale events. In 2024, the Tactical Dispatch Team supported 7 events spanning over 18 days and is anticipated to increase to more than 10 events over 20 days for the upcoming year. As a reflection of their dedication and the team's hard work, the Tactical Dispatch Team was awarded the NACo Award highlighting their commitment to enhancing public safety and supporting first responders.

Through continued partnerships, the DEC in collaboration with Henrico Police, Henrico Fire, and Henrico Mental Health implemented the Marcus Alert system at the beginning of FY25 in response to calls for service to provide the most appropriate assistance to behavioral health crises. In response to this initiative, 99% of the DEC staff have been trained in Crisis Intervention.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

The Emergency Communications Center offers a community awareness program to educate the public on the 911 communications system. Educational materials are available in brochures, PowerPoint presentations, or in-person to community groups and organizations. The 911 presentation navigates participants through the questions callers can expect to be asked by the dispatcher and what it is like to be a dispatcher. The presentation is suitable for all ages to ensure that all of Henrico's citizens feel knowledgeable and confident about the 911 system. Employees presented this material to multiple groups during FY25, including presentations and tours for the Citizens' Police Academy, the Senior Citizens' Police Academy, and elementary school classes. In FY25, the DEC acquired the 911edu+. This educational technology simulates dialing or texting 911 from a cell phone to the 911 Center.

Presentations to the community are offered as an informational resource to educate users of the 911 system on how to mobilize help quickly and efficiently in the event of a police, fire, or medical emergency. Initiatives such as this assist children who may know their address or phone number to prepare them to calmly provide information to assist in citizen and responder safety.