



# Audit of the E911 Fund

## Office of the County Auditor

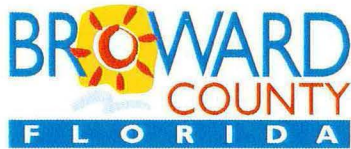
### Audit Report

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**Report No. 20-07**  
**November 21, 2019**



**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY AUDITOR**

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November 20, 2019

Honorable Mayor and Board of County Commissioners

Pursuant to our Annual Audit Plan, we have conducted an audit of the E911 Fund managed by the Office of Regional Emergency Services and Communications.

The objectives of our audit were to determine whether the E911 fund is being used appropriately, to determine whether E911 database system security is reasonable, and to determine whether the E911 database is updated timely.

We conclude that the E911 fund is being used appropriately. We conclude that the E911 database system security is reasonable. We conclude that the E911 database is updated timely. Opportunities for Improvement are included in the report.

We conducted this audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient and appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance provided by the Office of Regional Emergency Services and Communications throughout our audit process.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob Melton".

Bob Melton  
County Auditor

cc: Bertha Henry, County Administrator  
Andrew Meyers, County Attorney  
Kimm Campbell, Acting Assistant County Administrator  
Tracy Jackson, Director, Office of Regional Emergency Services and Communications

**Broward County Board of County Commissioners**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
Scope and Methodology .....	1
Overall Conclusion.....	2
Background.....	2
OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT .....	7
1. Monthly Telephone 911 Fees Should be Increased to Cover More of the Cost of Providing 911 Services and to Reduce the Subsidy from the General Fund.....	7
2. Management Should Implement Proactive Procedures to Detect Newly Built Properties Not Included in the 911 Database .....	9
Appendix A – NENA SURVEY RESULTS .....	10
Appendix B – 911 Coordinators Assoc. Letter .....	13

# INTRODUCTION

## Scope and Methodology

The Office of County Auditor conducts audits of Broward County's entities, programs, activities, and contractors to provide the Board of County Commissioners, Broward County's residents, County management, and other stakeholders unbiased, timely, and relevant information for use in promoting government accountability and stewardship and improving government operations.

We conducted an audit of the E911 Fund managed by the Office of Regional Emergency Services and Communications. Our objectives were to determine whether:

1. The E911 fund is being used appropriately.
2. The E911 database system security is reasonable.
3. The E911 address database is updated timely.
4. Any opportunities for improvement exist.

To determine whether the E911 fund is being used appropriately, we reviewed E911 Fund revenues, expenditures, transfers to the public-safety answering points (PSAPs) for call taker salaries, reserves, and County positions funded to administer the program.

To determine whether the E911 system security is reasonable, we reviewed E911 database access and security controls.

To determine whether the E911 address database is updated timely, we obtained a list of the properties built in Broward County during the period of January 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019 and reviewed a random sample of addresses.

We conducted this audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Our audit included such tests of records and other auditing procedures, as we considered necessary in the circumstances. The audit period was fiscal years 2018 and 2019 (through March 31, 2019). However, transactions, processes, and situations reviewed were not limited by the audit period.

## Overall Conclusion

We conclude that E911 Fund is being used appropriately. We conclude that the E911 database system security is reasonable. We conclude that the E911 database is updated timely. Opportunities for Improvement are included in the report.

## Background

### Regional 911 System



911 is the nationwide phone number that can be used to get help in a police, fire, or medical emergency. Over the years, as Broward County continued to grow, the need for a consolidated approach to local 911 became apparent, and effective October 1, 2014, the Broward County Commission, following years of planning and consultation with municipality stakeholders and first responder partners, launched a new Regional 911 system, as originally mandated by the voters in 2002.

Broward County, through the Office of Regional Emergency Services and Communications (ORESC), maintains governance and oversight of the Regional 911 system, to ensure transparency and accountability of service delivery.

During the regionalization process, eight Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) were consolidated into three locations, Coconut Creek, Pembroke Pines, and Sunrise. Each PSAP is staffed 24/7 with trained 911 call takers and dispatchers, who operate under common call taking and dispatch protocols on a common technology platform. Twenty-nine of Broward County's 31 municipalities participate in Regional 911 system. The City of Plantation and City of Coral Springs operate their own PSAPs.

### Regional 911 System Funding

911 is partially funded by monthly telephone fees: \$0.40 per month, for wireless, prepaid wireless and non-wireless (landline) service. Telephone service providers collect the 911 fee from subscribers, retain a one percent administrative fee, and remit the balance to the State of Florida.

The fees are deposited into the state's Emergency Communications Number E911 System Fund and disbursed to the 67 counties through monthly disbursements as required by Florida Statutes.

### Florida's Emergency Communications Number 911 System Fund Allocations

The E911 System Fund allocations are set by the State of Florida E911 Board. The current percent allocations are as follows:

#### Non-wireless E911 Fee Allocation Percentages

- ❖ 96% of the fee is distributed each month to counties for the purposes of providing 911 service based on the number of non-wireless subscribers in each county.
- ❖ 3% of the fee is used to provide assistance to rural counties for providing 911 service.
- ❖ 1% of the fee is retained by the E911 Board for administrative and operational purposes.

#### Wireless E911 Fee Allocation Percentages

- ❖ 76% of the fee is distributed each month to counties for the purposes of providing 911 service based on the number of wireless subscribers in each county.
- ❖ 20% of the fee is available for distribution to wireless service providers in response to sworn invoices for the actual costs incurred in providing 911 service.
- ❖ 3% of the fee is used to provide assistance to rural counties for providing 911 service.
- ❖ 1% of the fee is retained by the E911 Board for administrative and operational purposes.

#### Wireless Prepaid E911 Fee Allocation Percentages

- ❖ 61% of the fee is distributed each month to counties for the purposes of providing 911 service based on the number of sales in each county.
- ❖ 35% of the fee is available for state 911 grant distributions for all counties:
  - For the purpose of upgrading and replacing 911 systems;
  - For the purpose of developing and maintaining statewide 911 routing, geographic, and management information systems;
  - For the purpose of developing and maintaining next generation 911 services and equipment.
- ❖ 3% of the fee is used to provide assistance to rural counties for providing 911 service.
- ❖ 1% of the fee is retained by the E911 Board for administrative and operational purposes.

In accordance with Florida Statutes, the Board of County Commissioners in each county is established as the responsible fiscal agent. The funds collected and interest earned are appropriated for 911 purposes by the county commissioners for each county's 911 system and operations. Ultimate responsibility and authority within a county for the 911 system rests with the Board of County Commissioners.

The State of Florida does not have the authority to audit telephone service providers to ensure that the amount of 911 fees collected from subscribers matches the service provider's number of subscribers.

### 911 Fund Allowable Expenditures

The 911 fees received by the County from the state may be expended only on 911 related equipment and services: costs associated with county and local jurisdiction PSAPs; NG911 (Next Generation), E911 (Enhanced) or 911 systems; and to contract for 911 services. 911 services include the functions of database management, call taking, location verification, and call transfer. Department of Health certification, recertification, and training costs for 911 public safety telecommunications personnel are functions of 911 services. Up to 30% of any funds received from the State that are not expended at fiscal year-end may be carried forward for future capital expenses related to the 911 system.

### Office of Regional Emergency Services & Communications (ORESC)

The Regional 911 system is maintained by ORESC. The goals of the office include providing a flexible, robust, and technologically advanced 911 system; utilizing best practice processes; and fostering a collaborative environment among PSAPs. Twenty-nine of Broward's 31 municipalities participate in the Regional 911 System. The E911 Office and staff within ORESC supports and maintains all E911 Systems for the Regional 911 System, Coral Springs, and Plantation PSAPs.

### Broward County's E911 Fund

The E911 Fund accounts for the 911 fee allocations received from the State of Florida and the State authorized expenditures related to 911 equipment, services, and call takers. Exhibit 1 shows the funding and budgeted positions for the E911 Fund in fiscal year 2018. The \$5,214,750 for call takers partially funds this expense for the Regional 911 System and the independent PSAPs operated by the cities of Coral Springs and Plantation.

**Exhibit 1 – Fiscal Year 2018 Funding and Budgeted Positions**

<b>E911 Fund</b>	<b>FY 2018</b>
E911 Fees	\$8,912,510
less Expenditures for Administration	2,636,876
less Expenditures for Call Taker Salaries	<u>5,214,750</u>
<b>Carry Forward to Reserves for Capital Projects</b>	<b><u>\$1,060,884</u></b>

<b>2018 Capital Projects Funded by Reserves</b>	<b><u>\$1,803,816</u></b>
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<b>Budgeted Positions</b>	<b>5</b>
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Source: Compiled by Office of County Auditor from data provided by Accounting Division and Office of Management and Budget

The above presentation does not include the General Fund expenditures for the Consolidated E911 Dispatch Section of the ORESC, including the administration of the Consolidated Communications Operator contract with BSO. The fiscal year 2018 budget for the Consolidated E911 Dispatch Section was \$43.9 million.

**Broward County’s E911 Capital Projects**

Since consolidation of the Regional 911 system in October 2014, Broward County has initiated many projects and system upgrades to improve the infrastructure and enhance the performance of public safety response in Broward County. Capital projects funded by the E911 Fund and completed in fiscal years 2018 and 2019, include the following:

- ❖ **Text to 911:** The scope of this project provides the ability for the County to accept and process text emergency response requests integrated with the existing call flow at each of the PSAPs. This project includes the installation of hardware, activation and configuration of text messaging routing, and phone carrier activation of text delivery for all PSAPs in Broward County.
- ❖ **Replicated Database:** The Replicated Database provides the ORESC with the ability to conduct on demand data analysis relative to key performance indicators and call handling inquiries.



- ❖ **Voice Recording System Refresh:** The scope of this project entails the refresh of all maintained and supported Voice Recording System hardware at all PSAPs in the County. The Voice Recording System is used to record 911 calls, non-911 calls, and radio talk groups.
- ❖ **Non-Regional VIPER Phone System Upgrade:** The scope of this project includes an upgrade of the VIPER 911 phone system hardware and software for the three Non-Regional PSAPs (Coral Springs, Plantation and the EOC) which are approaching hardware/software end of support lifecycle. The VIPER v5.1/Power 911 v6.1 upgrade is a prerequisite for the Text-to-911 project implementation.
- ❖ **Regional VIPER Phone System Upgrade:** The scope of this project provides our Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) operations with the most updated version of the client and core system software feature set available for our VIPER Phone System. The current software had been in place for over three years. In addition to updating the Regional PSAPs with the latest VIPER/Power 911 software platform, the VIPER v5.1/Power 911 v6.1 upgrade is a prerequisite for the Text\_to\_911 project implementation.

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Our audit disclosed certain policies, procedures and practices that could be improved. Our audit was neither designed nor intended to be a detailed study of every relevant system, procedure or transaction. Accordingly, the Opportunities for Improvement presented in this report may not be all-inclusive of areas where improvement may be needed.

## 1. Monthly Telephone 911 Fees Should be Increased to Cover More of the Cost of Providing 911 Services and to Reduce the Subsidy from the General Fund.

In FY 2018, the County's General Fund subsidized 911 Call Taker salaries by over \$11 million. Monthly telephone fees of \$0.40 per month per telephone that are collected by the State and allocated to Broward County are insufficient to cover the cost of 911 related equipment, services, and call-taker salaries. In fiscal year 2018, the County received approximately \$8.9 million in fee allocations from the State of Florida. As shown on Table 1, approximately \$5.2 million (58.5% of E911 fees allocated) was provided to the PSAPs for call taker salaries.

**Table 1: In FY 2018 \$5.2 Million of E911 Fees Were Used for Call Taker Salary Expenditures**

E911 Fund	FY 2018	% of Total
Transferred to PSAPs for Call Taker Salary Expenditures	\$5,214,750	58.5%
E911 System Administration Expenditures	\$2,636,876	29.6%
FY 2018 Fees Used for Capital Project Expenditures	<u>\$1,060,884</u>	11.9%
E911 Fees	<u>\$8,912,510</u>	100%

Prepared by Office of County Auditor using data provided by the Accounting Division

As shown on Table 2, for fiscal year 2018, approximately \$13.3 million (71.8%) of call taker salary expense was funded by the County and the cities of Coral Springs and Plantation. Broward County's General Fund subsidized call taker salary expense by approximately \$11.7 million while the cities of Coral Springs and Plantation subsidized the remaining \$1.6 million in FY 2018.

**Table 2: In FY 2018 \$13.3 Million of Call Taker Salaries Were Funded by County and Cities**

911 Funded Agency	Call Taker Salary Expense Funded by 911 Telephone Fees	% of Total	Call Taker Salary Expense Funded by Agency	% of Total	Total Call Taker Salary Expense	% of Total
Coral Springs	\$225,233	13.3%	\$1,469,557	86.7%	\$1,694,790	100%
Plantation	218,077	67.6%	104,659	32.4%	322,736	100%
Regional System	4,771,440	29.0%	11,703,604	71.0%	16,475,044	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,214,750</b>	<b>28.2%</b>	<b>\$13,277,820</b>	<b>71.8%</b>	<b>\$18,492,570</b>	<b>100%</b>

Prepared by Office of County Auditor using data provided by the Agencies and Accounting Division

The 911 fee was enacted over 25 years ago at an amount of \$0.50 per month per device; however, this fee was reduced to \$0.40 in 2015. According to the National Emergency Number Association (NENA), the \$0.40 per month per telephone fee collected in the State of Florida is the third lowest in a national survey of 911 funding (See Appendix A). The NENA survey of 911 fees shows a median monthly fee was \$0.93 for wireless phones and \$1.00 for wired (landline) phones. An increase in the fee from \$0.40 to \$1.00 would provide approximately \$13.5 million to Broward County in additional funding based on 2018 fee allocations. An inadequate 911 fee requires the use of general funds obtained from property owners to subsidize E911 services and reduces the amount of general funds available for other programs and services.

The costs discussed above do not include the cost of dispatch services which is not currently an allowable E911 funded expense under Florida Statutes and represents an additional \$43.9 million from the General Fund for consolidated 911 dispatch services in FY 2018.

**We recommend** County Management work with the State Legislature to increase the \$0.40 per month per phone fee to cover the cost of 911 services.

**Management’s Response:** Agree. A reasonable increase in the 911 fee should be pursued through legislative actions that support existing 911 services costs in Broward County, and costs associated with the migration to Next Generation 911. As indicated in the Audit Report, Florida currently has one of the lowest 9-1-1 fees at \$0.40, particularly when compared to the southern states of Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, and Mississippi, which have rates between \$1.00 and \$1.75.

Additionally, the Florida 9-1-1 Coordinators Association has initiated a statewide campaign to gather support for a reasonable increase in the fee for the State of Florida. Management has shared the Florida 9-1-1 Coordinators Association's position statement regarding this issue. Attached is a copy of the letter sent in July 2019 by the Florida 9-1-1 Coordinators Association to Governor Desantis (See Appendix B).

## **2. Management Should Implement Proactive Procedures to Detect Newly Built Properties Not Included in the 911 Database**

One of 60 (2%) site addresses sampled from the Broward County Property Appraisers' list of properties newly built during the audit period was not included in the 911 address database. This site contained four building units, and management asserted that the building developers did not notify ORESC upon completion of construction. As a result, the ORESC would not have known this address existed unless the occupant(s) attempted to get home telephone service, since there is a secondary procedure where the telephone service provider notifies the ORESC of the installation of landline (wired) service. The 911 address database should be updated timely to reflect changes made by developers, cities, and community associations. Failure to include an address range in the 911 address database may delay emergency dispatch services.

**We recommend** management implement proactive procedures to periodically review new properties built in Broward County to ensure they are appropriately added to the 911 address database.

**Management's Response:** Partially Agree. Management agrees that it is important for new addresses be added to the 911 address database. However, Management maintains that there is currently a multi-step check process in place to ensure that no land line telephone service will be activated until the telephone service provider verifies that the address is in the 911 database. Therefore, prior to telephone land line service being established at an address, verification is done by the telephone service provider or by the County's E911 Office to have the new address information verified in the 911 database.

Notwithstanding, the County E911 Office is implementing a periodic review process utilizing reports from the Property Appraiser's Office to enhance and improve the existing address update processes.

# Appendix A – NENA SURVEY RESULTS

## Range of 9-1-1 User Fees

Exact Amounts May be Adjusted Locally  
As of May 2019

State	Wireline	Wireless	VoIP
<b>Alabama</b>	\$1.75	\$1.75 \$1.75 Prepaid	\$1.75
<b>Alaska</b>	\$0.00 - \$2.00	\$0.00 - \$2.00	
<b>Arizona</b>	\$0.20	\$0.20 .80% of Sale – Prepaid	\$0.20
<b>Arkansas</b>	5% - 12% of Tariff Rate	\$0.65 \$0.65 Point of Sale – Prepaid	\$0.65
<b>California</b>	Three-fourths of 1%	Three-fourths of 1%	Three-fourths of 1%
<b>Colorado</b>	\$0.45 - \$1.75 (max)	\$0.45 - \$1.75 (max) 1.4\$ of Sales - Prepaid	\$0.45 - \$1.75 (max)
<b>Connecticut</b>	\$0.57	\$0.57 \$0.57 Point of Sale – Prepaid	\$0.57
<b>Delaware</b>	\$0.60	\$0.60 \$0.60 Prepaid	\$0.60
<b>District of Columbia</b>	\$0.76 Wireline \$0.62 Centrex \$4.96 PBX Trunk	\$0.76 2.0% Point of Sale – Prepaid	\$0.76
<b>Florida</b>	\$0.40 (max)	\$0.40 \$0.40 Prepaid	\$0.40
<b>Georgia</b>	\$1.50	\$1.50 \$1.50 Prepaid	\$1.50
<b>Hawaii</b>	\$0.27	\$0.66	\$0.66
<b>Idaho</b>	\$1.00 - \$1.25 (max)	\$1.00 - \$1.25 (max) 2.5% of Sale – Prepaid	\$1.00 - \$1.25 (max)
<b>Illinois</b>	\$1.50 \$5.00 City of Chicago	\$1.50 \$5.00 City of Chicago 9.0% of Sale City of Chicago – Prepaid 3% of Retail Sale – Prepaid	\$1.50 \$5.00 City of Chicago
<b>Indiana</b>	\$1.00	\$1.00 \$1.00 Point of Sale – Prepaid	\$1.00
<b>Iowa</b>	\$1.00 (max)	\$1.00 \$0.51 Point of Sale – Prepaid	\$1.00
<b>Kansas</b>	\$0.53	\$0.53 1.06% of Retail Sale – Prepaid	\$0.53
<b>Kentucky</b>	\$0.32 - \$4.00	\$0.70 \$0.93 Point of Sale – Prepaid	\$0.32 - \$4.00

State	Wireline	Wireless	VoIP
<b>Louisiana</b>	\$0.38 - \$1.25 Residential \$0.99 - \$6.00 Business	\$0.85 - \$1.25 4% of Retail Sale – Prepaid	\$0.38 - \$1.25
<b>Maine</b>	\$0.45	\$0.45 \$0.45 Point of Sale -Prepaid	\$0.45
<b>Maryland</b>	\$1.00	\$1.00 \$0.60 of Retail Sale – Prepaid	\$1.00
<b>Massachusetts</b>	\$1.00	\$1.00 \$1.00 Prepaid	\$1.00
<b>Michigan</b>	\$0.25 State Fee \$0.00 - \$3.00 by County	\$0.25 State Fee \$0.00 - \$3.00 by County 5% of Retail Sale – Prepaid	\$0.20 State Fee \$0.00 - \$3.00 by County
<b>Minnesota</b>	\$0.95	\$0.95 \$0.95 of Retail Sale - Prepaid	\$0.95
<b>Mississippi</b>	\$1.05 Res \$2.05 Commercial	\$1.00 \$1.00 Prepaid	\$1.00
<b>Missouri</b>	Unfunded (19 Counties) 2% - 15% of Base Rate (45 Counties) 1/8% - 1% of Sales Tax (51 Counties)	None	
<b>Montana</b>	\$1.00	\$1.00 \$1.00 Prepaid	\$1.00
<b>Nebraska</b>	\$0.50 - \$1.00	\$0.45 - \$0.70 1.1% of Retail Sale – Prepaid	
<b>Nevada</b>	Varies by Jurisdiction – property tax and/or surcharge	Must be equal to wireline surcharge	
<b>New Hampshire</b>	\$0.75	\$0.75 \$0.75 of Retail Sale – Prepaid	\$0.75
<b>New Jersey</b>	\$0.90	\$0.90	\$0.90
<b>New Mexico</b>	\$0.51	\$0.51 1.38% of Retail Sale – Prepaid	\$0.51
<b>New York</b>	\$0.35 - \$1.00	\$1.20 - \$1.50	\$0.35
<b>North Carolina</b>	\$0.65	\$0.65 \$0.65 Point of Sale - Prepaid	\$0.65
<b>North Dakota</b>	\$1.50 - \$2.00 (max)	\$1.50 - \$2.00 (max) 2.5% Point of Sale – Prepaid	\$1.50 - \$2.00 (max)
<b>Ohio</b>	\$0.50 (max) Legally limited to a few Counties, no general surcharge	\$0.25 0.5% Point of Sale – Prepaid	
<b>Oklahoma</b>	3% – 15% of Base Rate	\$0.75 (approx. - 61 Counties) \$0.75 Point of Sale - Prepaid	\$0.50
<b>Oregon</b>	\$0.75	\$0.75 \$0.75 Point of Sale – Prepaid	\$0.75
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	\$1.65	\$1.65	\$1.65

State	Wireline	Wireless	VoIP
		\$1.65 Point of Sale -Prepaid	
<b>Rhode Island</b>	\$1.00	\$1.26 2.5% Point of Sale – Prepaid	\$1.26
<b>South Carolina</b>	\$0.45 - \$1.00	\$0.62 \$0.62 Prepaid	\$0.45 - \$1.00
<b>South Dakota</b>	\$1.25	\$1.25 2% Point of Sale- Prepaid	\$1.25
<b>Tennessee</b>	\$1.16	\$1.16 \$1.16 Point of Sale – Prepaid	\$1.16
<b>Texas</b>	\$0.50 State Program Fees Vary – District	\$0.50 State Program 2% of Sales – Prepaid	\$0.50 State Program Fees Vary - District
<b>Utah</b>	\$0.71 Local Fee plus \$0.09 State Fee	\$0.71 Local Fee plus \$0.09 State Fee 1.78% Point of Sale – Prepaid	\$0.71 Local Fee plus \$0.09 State Fee
<b>Vermont</b>	Universal Service Funding	Universal Service Funding 2% Point of Sale – Prepaid	
<b>Virginia</b>	\$0.75	\$0.75 \$0.50 Prepaid	\$0.75
<b>Washington</b>	\$0.25 Statewide \$0.70 by Counties	\$0.25 Statewide \$0.70 by Counties \$0.25 Statewide – Prepaid \$0.70 by Counties – Prepaid	\$0.25 Statewide \$0.70 by Counties
<b>West Virginia</b>	\$0.98 - \$6.40 by County	\$3.00 6% Point of Sale – Prepaid	\$0.98 - \$6.40 by County
<b>Wisconsin</b>	\$0.16 - \$0.43 (max)	None	
<b>Wyoming</b>	\$0.25 - \$0.75	\$0.25 - \$0.75 1.5% Point of Sale – Prepaid	\$0.25 - \$0.75

Source: National Emergency Number Association (NENA)

# Appendix B – 911 Coordinators Assoc. Letter



Florida 9-1-1 Coordinators Association, Inc.  
3825 Tigers Bay Rd, Suite 161  
Daytona Beach, FL 32124

July 31, 2019

Office of Governor Ron DeSantis  
State of Florida  
The Capitol  
400 S. Monroe St.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Re: The Value of Increasing the 9-1-1 Fee in the State of Florida

The Honorable Governor Ron DeSantis,

The Florida 9-1-1 Coordinators Association is seeking your support in increasing the \$0.40 9-1-1 fee in the State of Florida.

The 9-1-1 fee was enacted over 25 years ago at an amount of \$0.50 per month per device accessing 9-1-1 services. In 2015, then Governor Scott reduced the 9-1-1 fee from \$0.50 to \$0.40 as part of a \$226M annual tax cut for Floridians. This led to an immediate fund deficit issue for every 9-1-1 center and County 9-1-1 Coordinator in the State of Florida.

25 years ago cellular telephones were just emerging; in 9-1-1 centers there was no digital mapping; no text-to-9-1-1; no routers, switches, gateways, or servers; no software; no virus protection; logging recorders used tapes; the 9-1-1 answering equipment was mechanical, not software driven.

The fee is intended to fund items such as 9-1-1 Operator salaries; 9-1-1 Operator training and certifications; 9-1-1 telephone systems and maintenance; 9-1-1 circuits; digital mapping; 9-1-1 call recording; hearing impaired equipment; backup power systems; time synchronization equipment; location repositories; 9-1-1 center security; 9-1-1 center and equipment environmental integrity; NG9-1-1 network services (IP networks).

In many Florida counties, 9-1-1 services are supplemented with millions of local tax dollars. As an example, in FY18, Orange County supplemented 9-1-1 services with \$13,766,651, or 70% of the total cost of 9-1-1 services. An increase of the 9-1-1 fee to just \$0.80 would save Orange County \$5.8M annually.

All across the U.S., 9-1-1 centers are transitioning to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) services with the implementation of IP call routing and regional mapping. With a fee of \$0.40 in Florida, there is limited possibility of establishing and maintaining NG9-1-1 services in the state.



Today, with a smartphone, you can take a still photo or a video and send it via email, text or even post it to the web, but you cannot send either to 9-1-1. When you are in Starbucks and check your smartphone for the location of a gas station, your smartphone uses Wi-Fi to identify your location, delivers the civic address, and provides you with the route. Today's 9-1-1 technology cannot provide that level of accuracy as cell towers and satellites provide a general area based on very widely set FCC standards. NG-9-1-1 includes better location accuracy. This increased accuracy will not be free.

HB441 mandates the development of a plan no later than 1 February 2020, to allow the transfer of voice, text, image, video, caller ID, and caller location during a 9-1-1 call. Transferring large volumes of data, live streaming video for example, requires an IP network. The cost of new public safety IP networks throughout the State of Florida will be expensive to create and more importantly, to maintain.

An Emergency Services IP Network (ESInet) would create a single, closed, virtual 9-1-1 network for Florida that would allow emergency traffic (voice, text, pictures, and video) to traverse the entire state. This emerging public safety technology will cost more than the current legacy networks which have been in place since the '60's and will meet the requirements of HB441.

During Hurricane Michael in October 2018, some 9-1-1 centers in the Florida panhandle could not receive or transfer 9-1-1 traffic. If they were on an ESInet, the traffic could have been automatically re-routed to a designated 9-1-1 center, anywhere in the state.

Every year, 110 million people visit Florida as well as thousands of out of state college students, and millions do not contribute to 9-1-1 services which is predominantly funded with local tax dollars.

Florida currently has the third lowest 9-1-1 fee in the country. The 9-1-1 fee in Georgia is \$1.50 and \$1.75 in Alabama. Raising the 9-1-1 fee to just \$0.80 would bring Florida to a greater degree of parity with other states and reduce the amount of local tax dollars used to support 9-1-1 services while providing the 226 9-1-1 centers in the state with the necessary funds to transition to the next generation of 9-1-1 services.

**Where 9-1-1 Fee Revenues Leave Off...Local Tax Dollars Begin**



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