



# CALL QUEUEING

Call queueing is a technology that places inbound callers into one or more queues to ensure that queries are directed to the right person as smoothly and efficiently as possible. Traditionally, routing phone calls involves a process that queues and distributes incoming calls automatically to the next available call taker.

There are times where callers trying to connect with DC 911 will hear a message prompting them to remain on the line until their call is answered by a live call taker. The best course of action is to stay on the line and keep your place in the call queue. Hanging up and attempting to re-dial to be connected sooner will only result in callers losing their place in the queue.





# IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES

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Manpower Shortage

Low-acuity calls  
overwhelming the system

# IMPLEMENTING SOLUTIONS

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Strategic Recruitment

Call Diversion Programs



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Strategic Recruitment



# CHALLENGE

## Manpower Shortage

A study jointly conducted by the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED) and the National Association of State 911 Administrators (NASNA) reports that more than half of 911 centers in the U.S. are facing a genuine staffing emergency. Attracting, hiring and retaining telecommunicators continues to be a significant challenge for most communities and that is no different for DC 911.

# SOLUTION

## Strategic Recruitment

In 2023, the Office of Unified Communications completely transformed its recruitment strategy, implementing a new process, creating new pathways to employment, and introducing a hiring bonus in order to attract, hire, and retain qualified team members.





# #WEANSWERTHECALL

*Now Hiring*

TELECOMMUNICATIONS  
EQUIPMENT OPERATORS



\$2500 Hiring Bonus!



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Low-acuity calls  
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# IMPLEMENTING SOLUTIONS

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Call Diversion Programs





# CHALLENGE

Low-acuity calls  
overwhelming the system

The District has one of the highest per capital EMS call volume in the nation. Our high non-emergency call volume strains the District's resources for emergencies. Diverting low-acuity calls to more appropriate channels helps to alleviate the strain on those resources and reserves them for 911 callers who need immediate assistance from police, fire, and ems personnel.

# SOLUTION

Call Diversion Programs

The OUC has collaborated with a number of public safety partners and District government agencies to determine the best means through which to triage low-acuity calls. Since 2018, the OUC has developed three robust call diversion programs aimed at connecting callers with the most appropriate resources.



# RIGHT CARE, RIGHT NOW

launched February 2018

Callers to 911 with non-emergency injuries or illnesses are transferred to a nurse, either by the 911 center or by a FEMS first responder. The nurse asks the caller questions and assesses his or her symptoms and refers the caller to the most appropriate non-emergency medical care available.

# POLICE NON-EMERGENCY LINE

launched January 2019

Callers can dial 311 and press Option 1 to report police non-emergencies like noise complaints, vandalism, destruction of property, and any crimes that have happened in the past with no reported injuries. Once the call is processed with the operator, based on the findings, the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) will be dispatched to provide a response.

# MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY DISPATCH PROGRAM

launched June 2021

DC 911 call takers triage the initial 911 call for service and based on an established set of criteria, set and agreed upon in coordination with the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) and the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), based on patient needs, callers are transferred to the DBH Access Help Line where trained crisis intervention team members decide the best course of action.





# RIGHT CARE, RIGHT NOW

launched February 2018

The goals of the Right Care, Right Now program are to improve patients' health outcomes and preserve the DC Fire and EMS Department's resources for patients with life threatening injuries and illnesses.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

Callers to 911 with non-emergency injuries or illnesses are transferred to a nurse, either by the 911 center or by a FEMS first responder. The nurse asks the caller questions and assesses his or her symptoms and refers the caller to the most appropriate non-emergency medical care available.





# POLICE NON-EMERGENCY LINE

launched January 2019

In 2018, approximately 20 percent of the 1.5 million 911 calls the OUC received were for non-emergency incidents. To improve call taking efficiency, the agency developed a pathway for non-emergency calls using the current 311 call tree. Re-routing non-emergency call types from the 911 queue has helped to better prioritize emergency calls and preserve the 911 telephone line for life-threatening emergencies.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

Callers can dial 311 and press Option 1 to report police non-emergencies like noise complaints, vandalism, destruction of property, and any crimes that have happened in the past with no reported injuries. Once the call is processed with the operator, based on the findings, the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) will be dispatched to provide a response.





# MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY DISPATCH PROGRAM

launched June 2021

The Mental Health Emergency Dispatch program aims to shift 911 calls for emergency mental health services from an automatic police dispatch to a dispatch inclusive of a mental health crisis response. This initiative strengthens the clinical response to all crisis calls for mental health care to get people the best, most appropriate, treatment and support they need.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

DC 911 call takers triage the initial 911 call for service and based on an established set of criteria, set and agreed upon in coordination with the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) and the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), based on patient needs, callers are transferred to the DBH Access Help Line where trained crisis intervention team members decide the best course of action.



Q&A

Welcome

Feel free to ask the host and panelists questions

Hello! I am a test question. How are you?

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Cancel

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# QUESTIONS?

Utilize the Question & Answer function to submit your questions.



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# FEEDBACK FORM

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## Feedback

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