

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Office of Unified Communications

Muriel Bowser
Mayor



Heather McGaffin
Acting Director

March 10, 2023

Ms. Kathy Patterson
D.C. Auditor
717 14th Street, NW
Suite 900
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Patterson:

Thank you for providing a draft copy of the **Office of Unified Communications 9-1-1 Operations Division Audit and Process Improvement Recommendations Follow-up Report**, for updates made between May 2022 and September 2022.

Since the delivery of the second report in September 2022, we have made great strides to implement the recommendations; however, I simultaneously acknowledge there is still work to be done.

To date, 23 of the 30 (or 76% of the total) recommendations are complete. This was achieved through various methodologies and includes some of the following accomplishments:

- Revitalization of the OUC's Office of Professional Standards and Development (OPSD) (responsible for training and quality assurance and improvement) to include onboarding additional team members and aligning trainers, training materials, and the delivery of training modules with national standards and best practices;
- Hiring of additional supervisors to ensure each shift has a minimum of four supervisors; supervisors have independent focus areas of police dispatch, fire dispatch, and call taking;
- Creation of new training programs to address performance gaps;
- Procurement and impending implementation of a new national standards-based protocol system to streamline the processing of each call; and
- Integration of technology including a fourth monitor designated for mapping (LDT) and Genovation keypads for further ease of call transfers when appropriate.

We anticipate finalizing the remaining eight recommendations, on which partial progress has been made, by the end of the summer 2023. Of these eight, the one recommendation regarding the power shift will be fulfilled by increasing overall staffing numbers. While we agree with the recommendation's goal, we also have to acknowledge that since the initial audit report, our call volume has increased throughout the entire day, beyond the recommended hours of a power shift.

Therefore, we have made the decision to increase staffing on all of our shifts, which eliminates the need for a power shift.



I would like to note this audit has now spanned three directors, and therefore some of the responses to the original audit are no longer valid or applicable. For example, recommendation #3 under the technology-centric recommendations states, “assess and improve the integration of the scripted protocols into the call handling process.” The agency agrees with this recommendation and has been working toward implementation of a standards-based solution with final implementation expected by the end of calendar year 2023.

Each month since late summer 2022, OUC has tracked and published our progress towards addressing the audit findings on our website. That progress is updated monthly and can be found [here](#), and the March update is also available below. Our roadmap and progress were made available to the audit team from the beginning of their latest engagement in September 2022 through January 2023, when they last requested it.

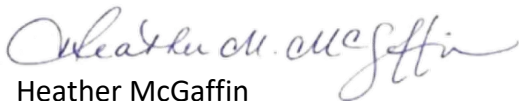
As you can see in the March 2023 Roadmap Update, we have made much more progress on many original recommendations than the five-month-old review attests to. For example:

- The September Follow-Up Report indicates we made partial progress on Supervision Recommendation #1 which states: “OUC to develop and assign a minimum of three (3) supervisors around the clock on the operations floor with assigned discipline focus on call-taking, MPD dispatch, and FEMS dispatch,” while our March Roadmap Update shows that we have completed this task by hiring five additional supervisors, which translates to a minimum of four supervisors on each of our four shifts. The supervisors are assigned to specific disciplines including call-taking, MPD dispatch, and fire dispatch.
- The September Follow-Up Report indicates we made partial progress on Supervision Recommendation #2 which states: “A fourth supervisor be added as an available resource intended to provide backup to the on-duty supervisors and for the performance of required administrative duties such as evaluations, QA reviews and follow-up, scheduling, and call outs,” while our March Roadmap Update shows that we have completed this task with the hiring of five additional supervisors.
- The September Follow-Up Report indicates we made partial progress on Culture Issue Recommendation #2 which states: “Include refresher or in-service training in call etiquette, professional tone,” while our March Roadmap Update shows this as complete, because we implemented call etiquette and customer service modules in all courses offered through OPSD.
- The September Follow-Up Report indicates we made minimal progress on Quality Assurance Recommendation #1 which states: “Improve documentation concerning the completion and follow-up of QA reviews with staff,” while our March Roadmap Update shows that we now use the NICE forms, as was recommended. With the implementation of the new protocol system, will come a more robust QA form that aligns with national standards and best practices.

- The September Follow-Up Report indicates we made partial progress on Quality Assurance Recommendation #2 which states “Provide timely feedback to staff through OPSD. Industry best practice requires that QA reviews are completed within a few days of the call occurring, whenever possible, and that feedback be provided to the call-taker as soon as possible thereafter,” while our March Roadmap Update shows this is in progress and that new team members were added to the QA team so now feedback is being offered in person within the five days as recommended by national standards. As mentioned above, we have also updated the forms and will have even more robust forms coming by the end of calendar year 2023 with the implementation of the PowerPhone Total Response protocol system.
- The September Follow-Up Report indicates that we made partial progress on Quality Assurance Recommendation #5 which states: “Use the quality assurance data to identify training and process gaps and trends throughout the center” and “Use this data to create a quality improvement program that addresses additional training, policy changes, and support for consistent improvement in call-taker performance,” while our March Roadmap Update shows we have completed this task with the move of the Quality Assurance team from operations back to the Office of Professional Standards and Development in June 2022, so the Quality Assurance team could directly collaborate with the training team to complete the 911 training cycle as intended . A quality improvement program was developed. Additionally, a program was developed for those employees who are not responding to remedial training, which allows them to partake in a developed 40-hour one-on-one course with a member of the OPSD team. After that course, progress is monitored, and appropriate action is taken.

I want to thank you and your team for your time, and we look forward to continuing our progress and success in answering the call for the residents of and visitors to the nation’s capital. Please let me know if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Heather McGaffin

Acting Director

cc: Lindsay Appiah, Acting Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice
Betsy Cavendish, Mayor’s Office of Legal Counsel
Lindsey Parker, Assistant City Administrator and Chief Technology Officer

March 2023 Roadmap Update:

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Office of Unified Communications

Muriel Bowser
 Mayor



Heather McGaffin
 Acting Director

OUC Roadmap (March 2023 Update)

	#	Recommendation	#	Actions	Progress	Current Status
Technology- Centric	R1	Evaluate and reduce the number of event types and associated priorities	R1.1	Work to reduce the police call types with MPD taskforce	In progress with new protocol implementation	OUC and MPD conducted the working session to reduce the call types and realign call types for dispatch and TRU.
			R1.2	Work to reduce the fire call types with the FEMS liaison	In Progress	New call types are being loaded into the test bed for operational testing, training, and launch.
	R2	Streamline the call entry data formatting in the CAD system	R2.1	Streamline CAD data	In progress and will be complete with new protocol implementation	Migrating to new protocol system which will help to streamline the call entry formatting in CAD.
	R3	Assess and improve the integration of the scripted protocols into the call handling process	R3.1	Work to ensure the protocols are being used by all call takers as prescribed to ensure the right information is received in dispatch each time.	In progress and will be complete with new protocol implementation	Migrating to new protocol system which will help to streamline the call entry formatting in CAD.
	R4	Train staff on use of Location Determining Technologies (LDT) followed by alert supervision and QA to monitor use	R4.1	Train staff to use LDT	Complete	Call Takers demonstrate this monthly to OUC 911 Supervisors and Managers.
			R4.2	Ensure supervisors are super users and understand how it works	Complete	Completed training in February 2022.
			R4.3	Have QA team conduct spot checks to ensure its use	Ongoing	QA team and Transcription team review LDT screens against address input to ensure compliance on all calls that go through the QA process.
	R5	Configure the work screen landscape of	R5.1	Order a fourth monitor for each call taking position	Complete	Added monitors to all call taker positions.

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		<p>applications to bring the LDT solutions forefront in process and visibility.</p> <p>Do not allow other applications to pop up in front of the maps and other LDTs displayed on Screen</p>				
Operations	R6	Reduce improvising and adlibbing by adhering to the scripted questions in the CBD call processing standard	R6.1	<p>Back to Basics training was conducted by OPSD for all TEOs.</p> <p>Continue quarterly training in some capacity.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Migrating to new protocol system which will help to streamline the call processing of each call.</p> <p>QA Team is reviewing calls and providing feedback.</p>
	R7	Ensure the complete acquisition and entering of all caller/reporting party information	R7.1	The QA team will need to focus on this as a metric for call taking	Complete	QA team reviews a percentage of calls each week and provides feedback within five (5) days. Added two new employees to the QA team.
	R8	<p>Verify address information as defined in OUC policy. Adapt policy to adapt immediate confirmation of location if an exact match is found between caller reported location and LDT map pinpointing of location.</p> <p>This will save time in gathering information.</p>	R8.1	Develop a policy to verify address using LDT similar to how it is verified using ALI	In progress	There is a policy in place for address verification that is not specific to LDT.
	R9	Require the use of LDTs to locate a caller that cannot immediately state a precise location of an incident, and in situations where the	R9.1	Develop a policy that directs TEOs to use the address being provided by the LDT information if an exact address cannot be verified by the caller.	Complete	QA team and Transcription team review LDT screens against address input to ensure compliance on all calls that go through the QA process.

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		caller does not know the address of an incident.				
	R10	Require apartment numbers to be collected and entered in CAD in the appropriate field and format for dispatch to responders.	R10.1	Train all new and experienced TEOs to use the same format for entering Apartment #s. Conduct QA checks on addresses to ensure this is happening	Complete	Training completed and QA team reviews during quality assurance reviews.
	R11	Monitor and encourage a method(s) for selecting the correct Chief Complaint (call type).	R11.1	Continued training for all TEOs on the correct Chief Complaint code	Ongoing	Migrating to new protocol system which will allow for the correct chief complaint to be automatically chosen based on how the questions are answered by the caller.
	R12	Improve customer service through QA review and follow up and requiring training and in-service (ongoing education) that addresses tone, inflection, and professional presentation.	R12.1	Review and follow up with Q2 reviews from transcription monthly	Ongoing	New members have been added to the QA team and customer service courses have been added to the catalog of courses being offered.
Dispatch	R13	Addition of an automated dispatch function to the CAD system and the FEMS dispatch process to meet the 60 second notification to units	R13.1	Review the possibility of this with FEMS	In progress	Working through technical concerns

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Supervision	R14	OUC develop and assign a minimum of three (3) supervisors around the clock on the operations floor with assigned discipline focus on call-taking, MPD dispatch, and FEMS dispatch	R14.1	Identify tenured employees who can act in an assist role on each shift when supervisors are out	Complete	Each shift now has a minimum of four supervisors.
	R15	A fourth supervisor be added as an available resource intended to provide backup to the on-duty supervisors and for the performance of required administrative duties such as evaluations, QA reviews and follow-up, scheduling and call outs.	R15.1	Hire a fourth supervisor for each shift.	Complete	Each shift now has a minimum of four supervisors.
Translation Services	R16	Determine if there are additional applications that would augment or replace this service	R16.1	Certified bilingual call takers and dispatchers	Complete	The translation service vendor provided a dedicated line to OUC with priority.
	R17	Investigate how translation processes are called upon to ensure maximum efficiencies and reduce call processing times through automation	R17.1	Ensure ease of ability to transfer calls	Complete	Genovation keypads were installed at each workstation for ease of transferring calls to the Language Line.

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Culture Issues	R18	Implementing recommendations cited for improving supervision, training, and QA, and thereby improve culture	R18.1	Expand the training and development of supervisors specifically in leadership and soft skills	Ongoing	All supervisors will be required to take the CMCP Course. Additionally, all new supervisors will partake in a developed 40 hour course that incorporates City government requirements, managing 911 centers, and an 8-hour emotional intelligence course.
			R18.2	Include refresher or in-service training in call etiquette, professional tone	Complete	Call etiquette and customer service modules are now a part of all courses offered through OPSD.
			R18.3	Enforce OPSD policy for returning completed QA reviews and for follow-up to ensure the behavior is not repeated	Complete	New team members were added to QA team to ensure more feedback is returned within the five (5) days. The QA team was relocated back to the OPSD office for collaboration in closing the loop of the training cycle. Trends are recognized and shared with training.
Quality Assurance	R19	Improve documentation concerning the completion and follow-up of QA reviews with staff	R19.1	Work to upgrade NICE QA forms and process	In progress and will be complete with new protocol implementation	PowerPhone has a quality assurance module that has been procured and will be used to complete quality assurance reviews. In the meantime, the QA team is using the forms different and meet regularly to discuss how they're scoring and providing feedback.

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R20	Provide timely feedback to staff through OPSD. Industry best practice requires that QA reviews are completed within a few days of the call occurring, whenever possible, and that feedback be provided to the call-taker as soon as possible thereafter.	R20.1	Work to upgrade feedback forms and conduct all feedback within five (5) days of the calls	In progress and will be complete with new protocol implementation	New team members were added to QA team to ensure more feedback is returned within the five (5) days.
R21	Track corrective behavior outcomes including compliance to protocols and customer service. Ensure any training, action plans, or required coaching is discussed and documented, along with a set time for follow-up and conclusion	R21.1	Develop a training tracking database with a jacket for each employee	Complete	We have launched PowerDMS
R22	Evaluate and document the results of remediation training efforts	R22.1	Create a database for training initiatives for individuals	Complete	PowerDMS has been procured and is integrated.
R23	Use the quality assurance data to identify training and process gaps and trends throughout the center.	R23.1	QA report to include trends for the agency and each individual shift. QA & Training meeting monthly to identify the trends and develop training	Complete	The QA team was relocated back to the OPSD office for collaboration in closing the loop of the training cycle.

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	R24	Use this data to create a quality improvement program that addresses additional training, policy changes, and support for consistent improvement in call-taker performance.	R24.1	Using national standards, develop a program that addresses quality improvement	Complete	Quality Improvement program has been developed and an individualized remedial training program occurs when necessary. Those employees who are not responding to remedial training partake in a developed 40-hour one-on-one course with a member of the OPSD team. After that course, progress is monitored and appropriate action is taken.
Staffing	R25	Schedule staffing of call-taking positions according to predictable spikes in call volume over a 24-hour period	R25.1	Develop a policy for minimum staffing numbers for days and night shifts. Review quarterly upcoming events/holidays/expected increases using the ECATS program	Complete	ECaTS predictive staffing program is used to determined scheduling needs. Managers are responsible to get staffing numbers from the shift supervisors one week ahead of schedule to ensure accurate staffing.
	R26	Review the daily break schedule of the MPD dispatchers with a view to maximize staff availability.	R26.1	Ensure and enforce standardized police dispatch numbers that are needed daily	Complete	Break schedules are adequate and in accordance with CBA.
	R27	Consider consolidating the back-up dispatcher role to support multiple (two or more) channels rather than a one-to-one assignment.	R27.1	Review increasing channels on MPD dispatch to assist with the volume of traffic	Ongoing	Discussions on feasibility are occurring with MPD.

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	R28	Maintain staffing levels as outlined in Table 15 that includes consideration and staff count to address known and projected turnover as detailed	R28.1	Review audit staffing numbers to ensure there are minimum staffing levels for the center	Ongoing	Recruitment is ongoing with entry level training courses starting every few months. 8 new TEOs started on 2/27/2023
GIS	R29	GIS team continues with their current business processes.	R29.1	Continue with practice	Complete	Continuing with practice
	R30	Continue regular in-depth analysis of the GIS, ALI, and MSAG data to ensure synchronization.	R30.1	Continue with practice	Complete	Continuing with practice