

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR FOR PUBLIC SAFETY AND JUSTICE**



Public Roundtable
on

Recent Operational Failures and Incidents at the Office of Unified Communications

Submitted Testimony of
Heather McGaffin
Director, Office of Unified Communications

Before the
Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
Council of the District of Columbia
The Honorable Brooke Pinto, Chairman

September 30, 2024
10:30 a.m.
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Room 500
Washington, D.C. 20004

Good morning, Chairperson Pinto, Committee members, staff, guests, and the viewing public. My name is Heather McGaffin, and I am the Director of the Office of Unified Communications (OUC). I appreciate this opportunity to come before you to provide updates on our performance, staffing, and progress.

I am going to begin by recognizing the nearly four hundred employees of the OUC and by stating again how fulfilling it is to lead this team. OUC is comprised of dedicated professionals charged with answering the call either on 311, 911, or in a support role for the two most used telephone numbers in the District of Columbia.

Data shows that the District handles more 911 calls per 1000 residents than any other state, and also that District residents overwhelmingly rely on cellular devices to call 911, with the District of Columbia topping the list of states that utilize 911 services the most at about 1,115 wireless calls to 911 per 1,000 residents annually. The District's 911 call center is one of the busiest in the country and we welcome this opportunity to discuss the strides we have made in handling this workload.

Accordingly, at this time, I invite you to turn your attention to the presentation I developed that outline these efforts.

Office of Unified Communications

September 27, 2024



*** GOVERNMENT OF THE
WE ARE WASHINGTON DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

Values Statement

The Office of Unified Communications (OUC)'s goal is to answer every call, ensure fast and accurate dispatches, and retain and support our growing team. To this end, we are strengthening hiring and retention, upgrading our technology, and expanding training.

People



Training

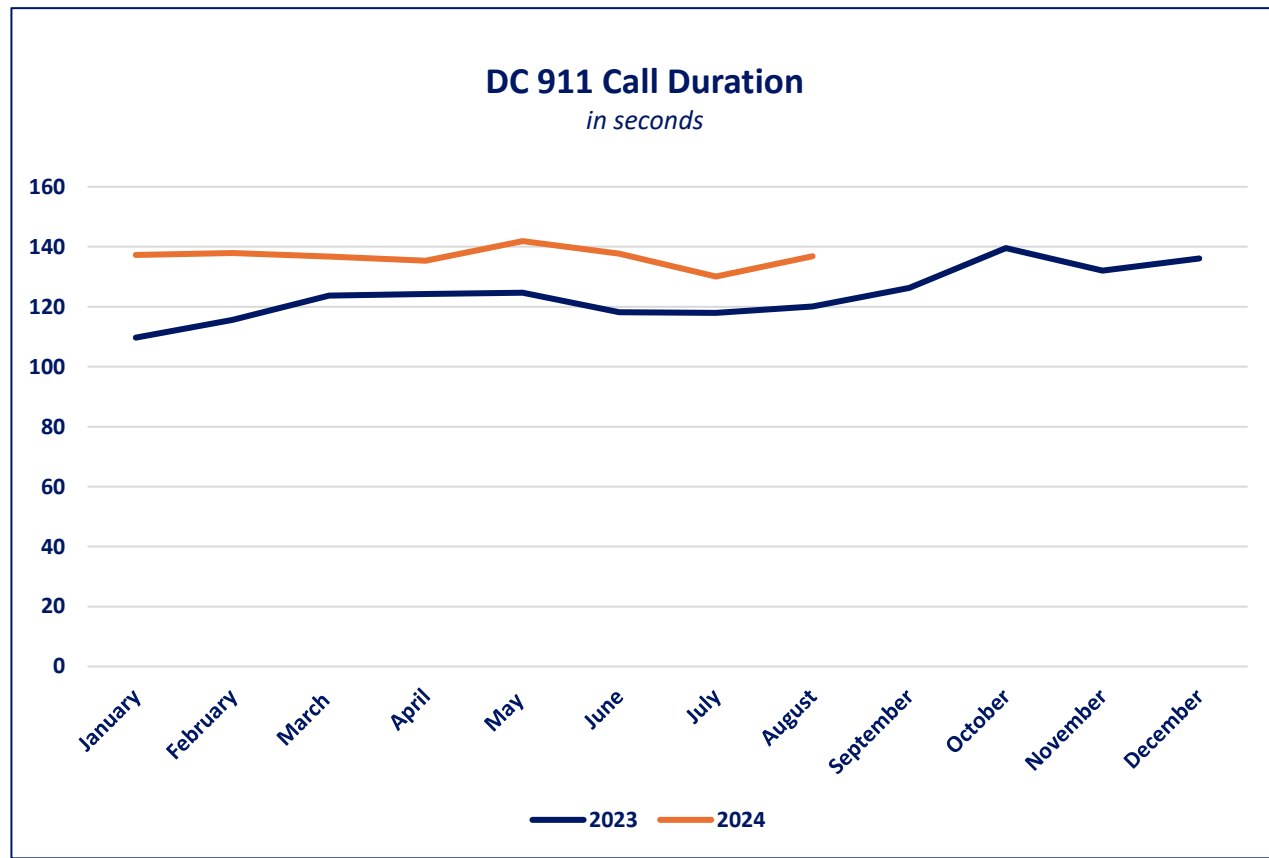
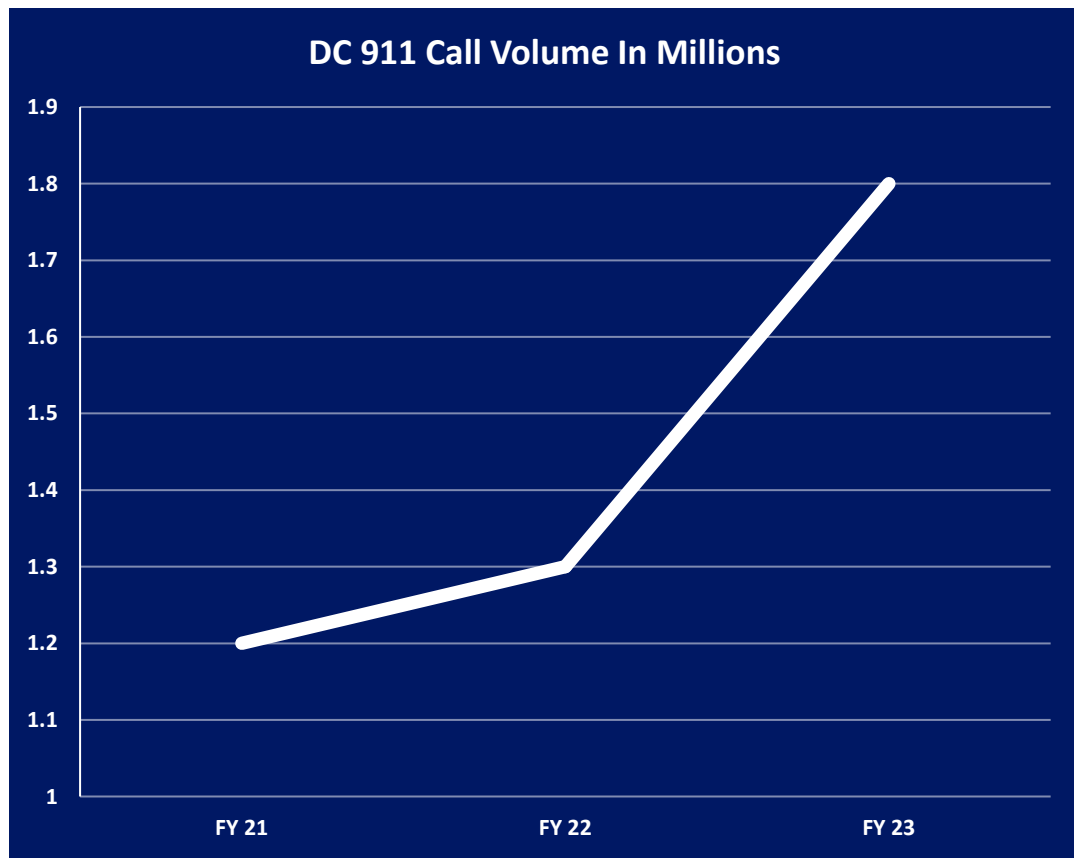


Technology



Trends in 911

DC's 911 center has seen a significant surge in call volume and longer call durations, reflecting increased demand on 911 services.



Full Staffing by the Numbers



Supervisors Per Shift:

24/7: 4 Watch and Assistant Watch Commanders

911 Call Takers

Monday-Saturday

Day Shift: 22 Operators

Night Shift: 17 Operators

Sunday

6 am – 2pm: 12 Operators

2 pm – 10 pm: 15 Operators

10 pm – 6am: 12 Operators



Police

24/7: 12 Dispatchers



Fire & EMS

24/7: 6 Dispatchers

Current Staffing Levels



Call Takers:

- **83 (full time)**
- **24 vacancies**
4 offers extended

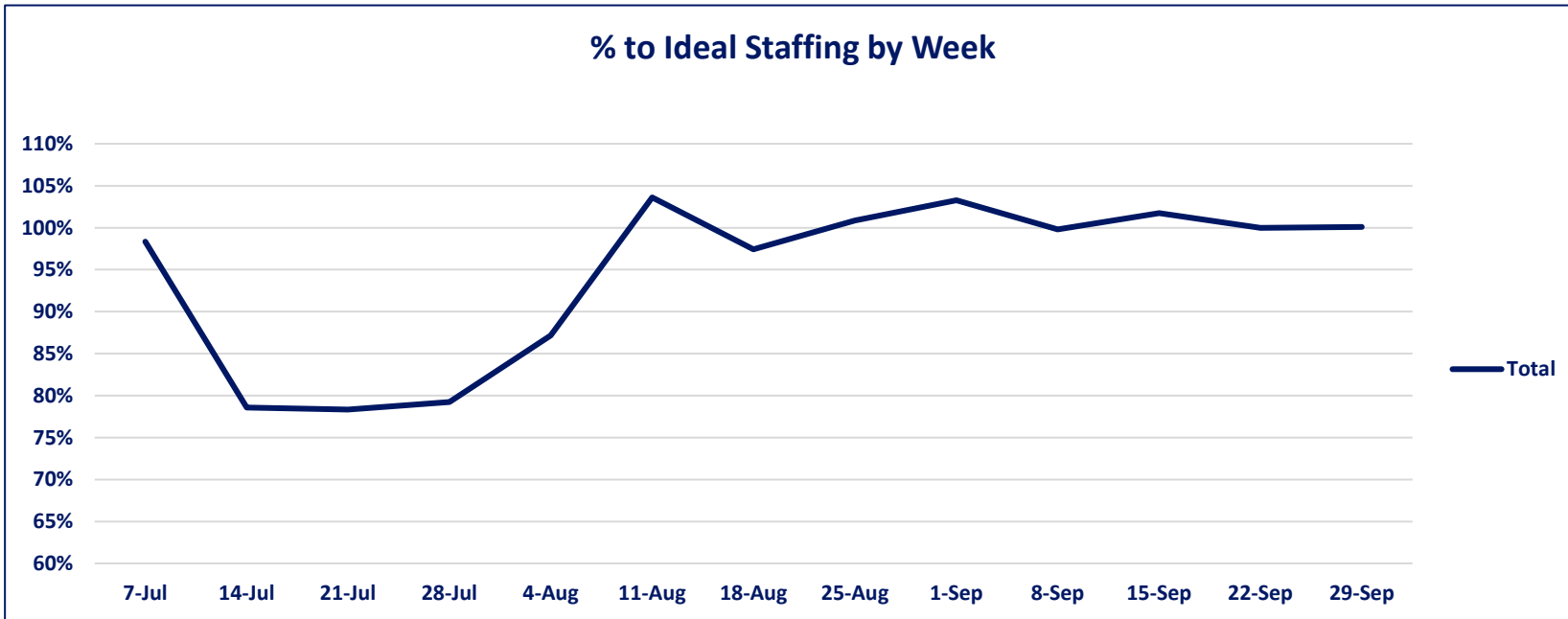


Dispatchers:

- **91 (full time)**
- **3 (part time)**
- **18 vacancies**
(14 police, 4 fire & ems)

Full Staffing by the Numbers

The weekly average of proximity to staffing goals



The average staffing level in August was **100.3%** of our staffing goal, up from 81.3% in July.



Full Staffing by the Numbers



Additional Staff:

27 call takers and 5 FEMS dispatchers completed training



Incentives:

\$800 attendance bonus & \$2500 hiring bonus



Accountability:

Unscheduled leave review performed



Wellness:

Full-time wellness coordinator onboarded



Incentives are Working



In August 2024, OUC introduced an attendance incentive of \$800 each month for 911 personnel who showed up to all their scheduled shifts.

30 Days Before the Incentive:

⚙️ The average staffing level was 84% of our goal

30 Days After the Incentive:

⚙️ The average staffing level was 102% of our goal

⚙️ 94 employees attended 100% of their scheduled shifts and received the bonus

September Staffing by the Numbers



29 of 54 shifts met our minimum staffing goal

1 employee away from our staffing goal- **6** shifts

2-4 employees away from our staffing goal- **13** shifts

5-9 employees away from our staffing goal- **3** shifts

10+ employees away from our staffing goal- **3** shifts

Call Performance (September 2024)



70,486

Total 911 Calls



60,246 calls answered
85.76% of total calls

54,965 calls answered in
20 seconds or less
77.98% of total calls

Average answer time: **13.76 seconds**

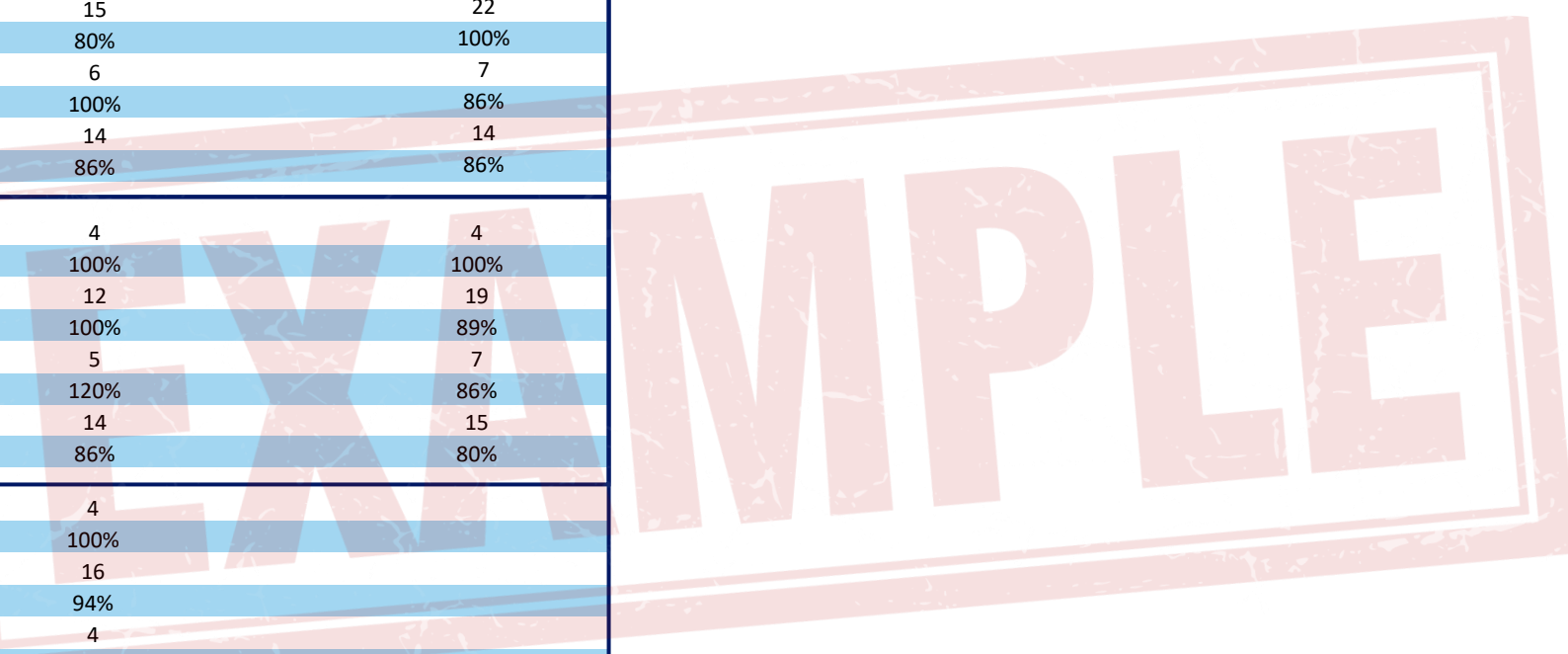
New Staffing Data on 911 Dashboard

911 Staffing Summary

Latest Date: 12/31/2023

Shift Type	31-Dec-23	30-Dec-23
Day Supervisor	4	4
Supervisor Percentage from Ideal	100%	100%
Call Takers	15	22
Call Takers Percentage from Ideal Level	80%	100%
FEMS Dispatch	6	7
FEMS Percentage from Ideal Level	100%	86%
MPD Dispatch	14	14
MPD Percentage from Ideal Level	86%	86%
Night Supervisor	4	4
Supervisor Percentage from Ideal	100%	100%
Call Takers	12	19
Call Takers Percentage from Ideal Level	100%	89%
FEMS Dispatch	5	7
FEMS Percentage from Ideal Level	120%	86%
MPD Dispatch	14	15
MPD Percentage from Ideal Level	86%	80%
Swing Supervisor	4	
Supervisor Percentage from Ideal	100%	
Call Takers	16	
Call Takers Percentage from Ideal Level	94%	
FEMS Dispatch	4	
FEMS Percentage from Ideal Level	150%	
MPD Dispatch	15	
MPD Percentage from Ideal Level	80%	

Updated dashboard data will provide more insight into staffing by day and by role.



Becoming a 911 Call Taker

Step 1:

Application

Applicant applies via careers.dc.gov.



Step 2:

CritiCall Test and Interview

Qualified applicants are invited to attend a Prospect Day to take CritiCall test and complete an interview.



Step 3:

Suitability

Those who have passed the CritiCall test and interview are then required to complete an interview with a psychiatrist, pass a drug test, and pass a background check.



Step 4:

Official Offer

Begin orientation and initial training.

Prospect Day Statistics (June 2024)

Invited to Prospect Day:

348

Attended:

197

Passed CritiCall:

121

Passed Interview:

101

Passed Suitability:

19

Offers Extended:

9

A New Class of 911 Call Takers

In October 2024, OUC will officially release 31 trainees to fully support 911 operations. These professionals have completed their training and have been assigned to shifts.



911 Call Takers



Fire Dispatchers



MPD Dispatchers



Cross Training the 911 Operations Staff

In FY 2025, all 911 professionals will be cross-trained as both call takers and dispatchers.

This will give OUC more flexibility in staffing and scheduling, ensuring better coverage, adaptability, and efficiency.



Technology & 22 Step Plan Update

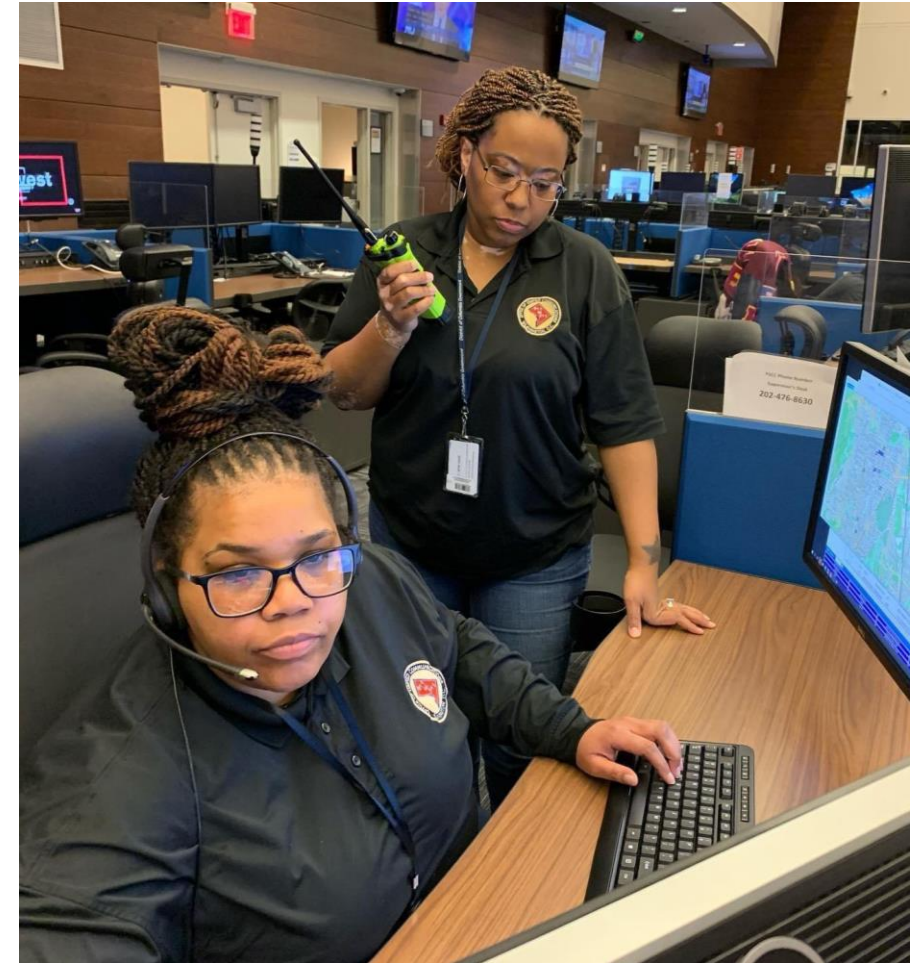
Completed:

- ⚙️ Improved change notification process and protocol
- ⚙️ Reassignment of two personnel from OCTO to assist OUC
- ⚙️ Onboarding of 5.5 additional OUC IT personnel

In Progress:

- ⚙️ Hardware updates for all systems
- ⚙️ FEMS and OUC working group

Website: <https://bit.ly/22StepActionPlanUpdate>



911 Diversion Programs (September 2024)



District Department
of Transportation
(DDOT)



Telephone Reporting
Unit



DC Department of
Public Works
(DPW)



Nurse Triage Line



DC Department of Behavioral Health
(DBH)

Spread the Word

At times, DC 911 might experience a spike in call volume. **If you ever call DC 911 and hear the queue message - please don't hang up!** Remain on the line and keep your place in the queue.

MAKE THE RIGHT CALL

<p>CALL 911</p> <p> Crimes in Progress</p> <p> Medical Emergencies</p> <p> Fire, Smoke, or Smell of Gas</p>	<p>CALL 311</p> <p> City Services and Information</p> <p> Noise Complaints</p> <p> Unoccupied Vehicle Related Incidents</p> <p> Vandalism, Destruction, and Property Damage</p>
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For more information, visit ouc.dc.gov.

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MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR