

## Heroes Behind the Headset



### Andrew Gunther Boston EMS

On Wednesday November 12, 2025, at approximately 7:30AM, Dispatcher Andrew Gunther received a call from a distressed male caller who was on his 9<sup>th</sup> floor balcony stating that he wanted to end his life. Dispatcher Gunther was able to establish a rapport with the caller and kept him on the line until help arrived. The Boston Fire Department made contact with the caller in the apartment, and he was brought to safety. Dispatcher Gunther's calm demeanor and ability to connect with the caller in crisis while assessing the situation aided in the positive outcome in this tense situation.



### Andrew Shields Holbrook Regional Emergency Communications Center

On Sunday, December 28, 2025, at approximately 3:30PM, Dispatcher Andrew Shields received a call for a two- week- old infant who was not breathing. Dispatcher Shields immediately recognized the urgency of the situation and quickly initiated EMD, walking the mother through CPR. Less than a minute into CPR the baby could be heard crying on the call. Dispatcher Shields stayed on the phone with the parents until paramedics arrived on scene. These actions ultimately resulted in the infant's positive outcome. The confidence, swift actions and clear instructions provided by Dispatcher Shields resulted in the best outcome in this situation.



### Leah Fierimonte PSAP Operations, Division 1

On Friday, December 5, 2025, Dispatcher Leah Fierimonte received a call from a female reporting a road rage incident. The caller was stating that her vehicle had been hit and she was being followed and tailgated. She was unsure of her location, and scared. Dispatcher Fierimonte was able to locate the caller and assure her that help was on the way. Dispatcher Fierimonte quickly passed the information to the State Police, who advised that they had no units in the area and should transfer to Milton Police. Dispatcher Fierimonte confidently relayed the information from one department to the other and ultimately got help to the caller.

## Massachusetts, Making Every Effort to Ensure that 9-1-1 Calls Never Go Unanswered “Viiz”

A partnership has been formed amongst the State 911 Department, NextGen Communications, Inc. (currently D/B/A Comtech) and a professional call center called “Viiz”. Viiz communications is an emergency call center that provides a solution for Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) that delivers support and assistance necessary to navigate through challenging situations if a call route in Massachusetts fails the NG911 infrastructure for any reason. This failover solution will allow for 9-1-1 calls to be routed to a Viiz call center that is located within the United States.

Please scan the QR code below to see a job aid that will explain the process of how Viiz works if needed. We ask that you share the job aid with all of your 9-1-1 call center staff. Please also include this information with your COOP plan so that it is always available if needed.

For questions, please email [monna.wallace@mass.gov](mailto:monna.wallace@mass.gov)



### Community Outreach Events

Do you have an upcoming outreach event in your community? The State 911 Department and its Massachusetts Equipment Distribution Program (MassEDP) team would love to join forces with you! From National Night Out to your Local Citizens Academies, we want to join!

For more information or to schedule an outreach event, please contact State 911 Department Public Education Coordinator, Erica Crawford by Email at [Erica.Crawford@mass.gov](mailto:Erica.Crawford@mass.gov)



### Spotlight Your Dispatchers!

Do you have a dispatcher who has gone above and beyond? One that was able to save a life? We want to feature their story! Each month our newsletter highlights the work that telecommunicators do every day. We want to spotlight a job well done, and also recognize important events such as dispatcher retirements, or other major events. The newsletter also highlights our Lifesaver Award that is given to telecommunicators that successfully saved a life. If submitting for our lifesaver award, and Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) procedures are applicable, please include a recording with your submission.

**All submissions can be sent to Public Education Coordinator  
Erica Crawford at [Erica.Crawford@mass.gov](mailto:Erica.Crawford@mass.gov)**



# January



It piles up quick! The Department supports 194 PSAPs. Each PSAP is eligible to apply for multiple grants. The reimbursements add up quickly. As a result, unfortunately, the Department is unable to review draft reimbursements for PSAPs. The focus needs to be on reconciliation of reimbursement requests received. The Department does host monthly reimbursement workshops during which you can get questions answered.



It is snow joke! The end of the fiscal year is fast approaching. Don't wait until June to dig out your reimbursements and rush to close the fiscal year. Prepare and file your reimbursements today and sail into the summer months.



Not covered! PSAPs are reminded that personnel expenses incurred while attending a conference are **not** covered under the 911 grant programs. The Training Grant supports conference registration fees only for conferences noted in the guidelines. The Support and Incentive Grant does not support any cost associated with conference attendance.



Grab a mug and join us for our monthly reimbursement workshop session. All sessions are held virtually on the third Wednesday of the month beginning at 11:00 am. Sign up today for our next session (February 18<sup>th</sup>) by emailing [911DeptGrants@mass.gov](mailto:911DeptGrants@mass.gov).

## New MassGIS Address Edit Form

MassGIS has updated their Address Edit Form used to notify MassGIS of address change.

MassGIS' webpage containing the link to the new form can be found here: [How does MassGIS learn about new addresses? | Mass.gov](#)

Once you've navigated to the webpage, click fill out this form (see the image below) under the heading **Fill out an online form**

### 1) Notify MassGIS by email

Send updates about each new, changed, or retired address via email to

[Notify911Address@mass.gov](mailto:Notify911Address@mass.gov). You can help ensure new addresses are added to the NextGen 9-1-1 system as quickly as possible by providing additional information that MassGIS staff could use in identifying a new address's location. Helpful information includes:

1. A description of location such as nearest cross streets.
2. If the new address(es) are part of a subdivision, especially if there are new streets, attaching a plan or other site map to the email.

Note that if your city or town already has an addressing workflow with a standard new/changed address notification form, then adding us to the distribution list for that form is the easiest option and we will follow up with any questions.

### 2) Fill out an online form

[Fill out this form](#), which will be familiar to staff that have previously provided updates to Verizon for the Master Street Address Guide on a paper form. Any available scans of site plans or other mapping can also be attached to address updates submitted via this online form.

For a quick link directly to the form follow this link [Next Generation 9-1-1 Address Edit Form | Mass.gov](#) .

For questions regarding filling out the form or about reporting address change generally, please contact MassGIS at [Notify911Address@mass.gov](mailto:Notify911Address@mass.gov) .





**A Message from Field Service Advisor:**  
**Chris Murphy**

As we begin a new year the Massachusetts Equipment Distribution Program (MassEDP) continues to stay busy providing accessible telephone equipment to Massachusetts residents. Looking back over the last year, the pattern continues to be a migration from traditional landline telephones to the Apple iPhone that we now offer as part of MassEDP. The accessibility features and applications designed and developed specifically for people with disabilities combined with the demand for cell phone equipment by communities that may be underserved by traditional landline equipment options make the iPhone a very popular part of the program.

Recently, myself and several other Field Service Advisors from MassEDP attended an accessibility event in Boston co-hosted by Apple and Verizon. We were able to learn many new capabilities of the iPhone. One of these features is a personal voice that allows users to create a virtual speech pattern of their own voice, which can later be used with various text to speech features to make their phone speak in their own voice. For example, if someone was losing their ability to speak, they could create this voice pattern and save it to the phone. Then later, they use the text to speech function to read a bedtime story to their child in their own voice.

Another feature that is new addresses one of the most common apprehensions that new iPhone users have; the fact that smartphones have so many features that it can be overwhelming. iPhone offers a feature called assistive access, which greatly simplifies the user interface. Each person can decide which applications they want available to them, and in assistive access mode, only those apps are displayed and accessible. For instance, some users only want to use the phone, message, camera and email features. In this mode, these apps would be displayed in much larger, more accessible icons. In this mode, users can also choose to limit contacts; who the user is able to contact, as well as who can contact the user.

As Apple continues to innovate their iPhone and the accessibility features that come built in, the value of an iPhone as a communication tool will continue to grow, and MassEDP will be at the forefront of providing this equipment to residents in need.

