

## *Heroes Behind the Headset*

### Holbrook Regional Emergency Communications Center

#### Sophia Zervos



On Monday, February 9, 2026, around 5:30 PM Holbrook Regional Emergency Communications Center Dispatcher Sophia Zervos answered a call from a father reporting that his 4-year-old daughter was not breathing. Dispatcher Zervos quickly began providing CPR instructions to the caller. After a few minutes, the child could be heard crying over the phone as paramedics arrived on scene. Dispatcher Zervos' quick thinking and excellent communication skills played a crucial role in delivering immediate help. Without Dispatcher Zervos' decisive actions, the outcome could have been far more serious.

### Holbrook Regional Emergency Communications Center

#### Kylee Smith



On Saturday, February 7, 2026, Holbrook Regional Emergency Communications Center Dispatcher Kylee Smith answered a call from a father reporting that his 3-year-old child was not breathing. Dispatcher Smith quickly realized the gravity of the situation and began providing EMD instructions to the caller, instructing the parents how to deliver CPR to the child. After a few minutes, the child could be heard crying over the phone, and paramedics arrived on scene. Dispatcher Smith's quick thinking and excellent communication skills played a crucial role in delivering immediate help. Job well done Dispatcher Smith!

## Not If – But When.

### Is your Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) all that it should be? Have you practiced it?

When emergencies strike, the public depends on one service above all others— 9-1-1. Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) are the lifeline between communities and emergency responders. But what happens if the PSAP itself is impacted by a disaster, cyber incident, power outage, or other operational disruption? This is where a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) becomes essential.

PSAPs operate in an environment where downtime is not an option. Every second matters when someone calls for help. Without a clear continuity strategy, disruptions can lead to delays, confusion, or service interruptions during the exact moment communities need assistance most.

**Applications for Support and Incentive Grants must include an E-mailed copy of a PSAP’s COOP. The COOP must be included each year, and also should be emailed to the Department’s Systems Director Shahri Moin at [Shahri.Moin@mass.gov](mailto:Shahri.Moin@mass.gov).**

#### **An effective COOP helps PSAPs:**

- Maintain uninterrupted 9-1-1 services during emergencies.
- Protect personnel, facilities, and critical technology.
- Establish backup communications and alternate locations.
- Ensure leadership succession and clear decision-making.
- Coordinate with partner agencies and regional resources.
- Recover quickly after an incident.

Many PSAPs recognize the importance of continuity planning, but building and maintaining a COOP can feel overwhelming. Where do you start? What elements are required? How do you test the plan to ensure it works?

To help answer these questions and more, the State 911 Department is offering two, 2-hour virtual “COOP” workshops designed specifically for 9-1-1 professionals.

Wednesday, April 15, 2026 10:am -12:00pm.

Tuesday, April 21, 2026 1:00pm-3:00pm.

Seats are limited for these interactive workshops and we encourage PSAP directors, supervisors, emergency managers, and technical staff to register.

Register today by visiting our website at [www.mass.gov/e911](http://www.mass.gov/e911) and go to our training schedule for an application to hold your spot. For questions about registering for the workshops, email [911trainiing@mass.gov](mailto:911trainiing@mass.gov). For other questions please reach out to Monna Wallace at [Monna.wallace@mass.gov](mailto:Monna.wallace@mass.gov).

## Congratulations to Springfield Emergency Communications Center for submitting the FIRST FY26 Compliance Form!

The FY2026 Annual Certification of Compliance Form is now available on our website at [www.mass.gov/e911](http://www.mass.gov/e911) under "Information for Call Centers" -> "FY2026 Annual Certification of Compliance Forms."

**The Form is due on or before July 31, 2026.** As soon as your PSAP has completed all of the compliance requirements, please submit your form.

Please contact [Monna.Wallace@mass.gov](mailto:Monna.Wallace@mass.gov) if you have questions or concerns.



### Schedule Your Summer Outreach!

If you have National Night Out, or other community events that could include the Mobile PSAP, please fill out our Outreach Form found on our website! At these events, our team distributes life saving information on the Silent Call Procedure, as well as Text-to-911. We also have representatives from our Massachusetts Equipment Distribution Program offering information on the adaptive telephones available through that program to residents of the Commonwealth! Attendees also get a glimpse of what it looks like on the other end of a 9-1-1 call! The outreach request form can be found [HERE](#). Please send completed forms to Public Education Coordinator Erica Crawford at [erica.crawford@mass.gov](mailto:erica.crawford@mass.gov). Our summer calendar fills up quickly, you don't want to miss out!

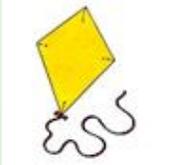
**Please Note: The Mobile PSAP will be deployed for FIFA from June 1, 2026 - July 15, 2026 and will not be available to attend other events during that time. Our team is still available to attend your events and provide your communities with information and resources on Text-to-911, the Silent Call Procedure as well as MassEDP.**



### 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)**



Flying by with a training opportunity.... Applications will be out soon for the FY 2027 PSAP Leadership Scholarship program. All certified telecommunicators from primary PSAPs, Regional PSAPs and Regional Emergency Communications Centers meeting program guidelines are encouraged to apply. Please visit our website at [mass.gov/e911](http://mass.gov/e911) to apply. Applications will be posted shortly.



The close of the fiscal year (June 30) is fast approaching. Do your part to ensure that you receive your "pot of gold" by filing FY 2026 grant reimbursements requests timely. Grant guidelines require submission within 30 days from when the costs were incurred. Please be sure all submissions include the proper documentation to avoid reductions or returns. Unsure of what is needed? Attend the next virtual reimbursement workshop on Wednesday, April 15, 2026. Email [911DeptGrants@mass.gov](mailto:911DeptGrants@mass.gov) to register.



Marching on....The FY 2027 Support and Incentive, Training, Emergency Medical Dispatch, and Wireless State Police Grant Guidelines and Applications have been released and are available on the Department's website ([www.mass.gov/911](http://www.mass.gov/911)). Need assistance with the application process? Attend the next virtual application workshop on April 27, 2026. Email [911DeptGrants@mass.gov](mailto:911DeptGrants@mass.gov) to register. All applicants seeking a July 1 start date should ensure submission and approval of its annual certificate of compliance and ensure applications are submitted timely so as to allow sufficient time for the application process as noted in the grant guidelines.

## New UPS Units Installed

Soon Comtech will begin replacing the UPS units at all PSAPs. Similar to Preventive Maintenance, your call traffic will be moved to your alternate and restored once the work is complete. For planning purposes PSAPs will be given about a week's notice of the event. Depending on size and complexity of each PSAP this work will take a minimum of 2 hours. Once you receive the install date for your PSAP, feel free to contact the designated Comtech technician for anticipated duration of the work for your PSAP.



## Emojis with SMS session (Text-To-911)



PSAPs should expect to see and plan for receiving emojis with a Short Message Service (SMS). SMS was originally designed in the 1980s to fit into the "spare" space of cellular signaling channels. Because bandwidth was extremely limited, it relied on a very lean encoding standard. The Text Control Center (TCC) had been stripping these characters off before sending the SMS to the 911 system.

An emoji like 🇺🇸 is assigned a code in Unicode. That number is far too large to fit into a 7-bit "slot." To send that 🇺🇸 the SMS must switch to UCS-2 encoding, which uses 16 bits per character. Because it is using more "bits" per letter, the 160-character limit of a standard text drops to 70 characters. This is why a single emoji can suddenly make a long text message split into two separate parts. [Click here to see an index of all unicode characters.](#)



Firefox and Windows recognizes the unicode string and displays the icons. PSAPs are not able to respond with emojis. The emojis will be shown on the workstation but are not available in decision station.

## 911 Telecommunicators: Are You Up To Speed On MLTS?

A significant percentage of 9-1-1 calls from businesses, K-12 schools, college and hospital campuses, residential health care facilities, medical offices, and hotels are transmitted by Multi-Line Telephone Systems (MLTS). Facilities serviced by MLTS tend to be more physically complex than private residences (often consisting of multiple buildings with multiple floors and/or coming from entities with multiple locations). So, the transmission of precise location information with MLTS calls is essential for quick and efficient dispatch of first responders.

The Department hosts monthly online educational MLTS Workshops wherein we present information about our MLTS Regulations and encourage discussions. If you have not yet participated in a workshop, or would like a refresher, you are invited to do so. Link to upcoming workshops can be found on our website:

[View E9-1-1 upcoming classes | Mass.gov](#)



# Joining a Regional Emergency Communications Center is a Win-Win for Everyone

## STAFF

- Career growth potential
- Improved staffing and scheduling models
- Additional staff development and training opportunities

## AGENCY

- Streamlined call handling processes
- Additional grant access that would allow for major projects (CAD, radio) to be applied for

## COMMUNITY

- Streamlined call handling

## MUNICIPALITY

- Cost savings
- Improved staffing models

Looking for more information? If your department is considering branching out into a regional dispatch center but are unsure of where to start, contact Peter Kinnas at [Peter.S.Kinnas@mass.gov](mailto:Peter.S.Kinnas@mass.gov) or (508)821-7213. Our team is ready to meet with you, discuss all possibilities, and provide guidance as you explore your options.



MASSACHUSETTS STATE 911 DEPARTMENT  
PSAP OPERATIONS - DIVISION 1  
31 MAPLE STREET, MILFORD, MA

# We're Hiring!

*Lead the Future of 911 in Massachusetts*

## DIRECTOR OF PSAP OPERATIONS - DIVISION 1

### KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Supervise and evaluate staff
- Maintain liaisons with local, state, and federal agencies
- Enhance collaboration and resolve issues.
- Develop and enforce policies
- Design and implement training
- Guide transition of POD-01 to regional dispatch



### POSITION OVERVIEW:

**The Director of PSAP Operations - Division 1 will oversee and manage 911 call-taking operations and lead the transition in becoming a RECC.**

### BENEFITS

- Generous State Benefit Package
- 75% Paid Health Insurance
- Optional Vision/Dental Plans
- State Retirement Pension
- Paid Time Off
- Holiday Pay

**Salary: \$100,839 - \$155,529**

SCAN OR FOLLOW THE LINK TO [APPLY](#)



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[tinyurl.com/Director-POD1](https://tinyurl.com/Director-POD1)



## A Message from Field Service Advisor: Margeurite Szczawinski

I recently had the privilege of meeting Bill, who is 97 years old, after receiving a call from his daughter Loraine. When she called, she was sad and very concerned as her Dad was having difficulty seeing to dial his landline and could no longer see the buttons on his flip phone to communicate with his family. Bill also wears hearing aids and was not able to hear his family on his phone. I assured Lorraine that I would meet her at his residence the next day and evaluate him to see if he would benefit from the iPhone we provide through the Massachusetts Equipment Distribution Program (MassEDP). When I arrived Bill was very sad as his sight recently worsened and he was feeling depressed and disconnected. During the appointment I showed him how Siri worked in hope of cheering him up. I assured him that using this feature would allow him to use the iPhone to communicate with his friends and family again and he smiled!

Bill and Loraine created a wish list of what Bill would like the cell phone to do along with his list of contacts. When they went to get the service switched over from his flip phone to the new iPhone, somehow they lost the set up we did when we reset the phone. Loraine called me back to tell me what happened and I offered to go back to him and reset the features we had set up for him. Loraine said no, it's ok, my Grandson will go over and help my Dad. Next thing I saw was that an appointment with Bill was on my calendar. I called Loraine back asking what had happened. Loraine said "Marguerite I have to tell you something, he does not want anyone but you fixing his phone. You gave him hope back and he was just so happy. So, please come back and reset his phone." Once I got to his home I put his contacts back in, we reactivated "Siri", locked the phone on speaker, and locked the volume on high so he did not need to do any manual adjustments. Then he made a few calls to Loraine to answer the phone and hang up all through Siri. He said he really felt like he had renewed hope because of our wonderful program.

Bill was beyond thrilled that we could offer him this wonderful device to reconnect him to his family. Both Bill and Lorraine were so happy that MassEDP could meet Bill's needs at 97. Connecting with MassEDP gives our clients a sense of security, and gives them hope once again.

