

Massachusetts State 911 Department August 2026 Newsletter



Issue 13

Volume 8

Heroes Behind the Headset

Ari Johnson

Westford Public Safety Communications



On Wednesday April 15, 2026, Dispatcher Ari Johnson from Westford Public Safety Communications received a call that a man had collapsed at a local softball field. The call escalated quickly when the caller reported that the patient had become unresponsive. Dispatcher Johnson quickly initiated EMD and instructed the caller to begin CPR. Dispatcher Johnson encouraged the caller to continue the compressions and deliver rescue breaths until the paramedics arrived. Dispatcher Johnson remained calm and kept this intense situation controlled. Dispatcher Johnson's excellent communication skills played a crucial role in delivering immediate help and aided in the positive outcome. We are proud to note that Ari is an Alumni of our 62nd Public Safety Communications Academy!

Job Well Done!

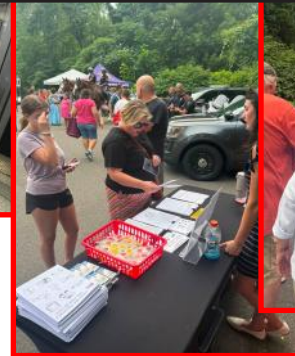
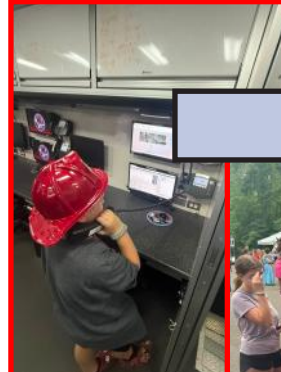
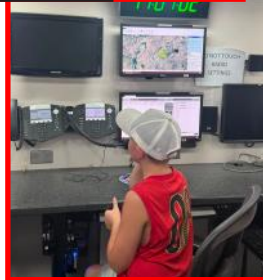
Updates from our Programs Division



Kingston, MA



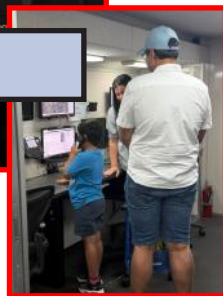
Chicopee, MA



Carver, MA



Burlington, MA



Somerville, MA



Updates from our Programs Division

The State 911 Department is Launching a Public Education Campaign

The Massachusetts State 911 Department has partnered with The Rendon Group and Dr. Mallika Marshall to develop a statewide public outreach and education campaign highlighting the lifesaving features of the Massachusetts 9-1-1 system.

This campaign will focus on increasing public awareness and understanding of Silent Call Procedure, Text-to-911 and the Massachusetts Equipment Distribution Program (MassEDP), with an emphasis on reaching and educating aging adults (Age 60+, Executive Order No. 642: Instituting Age—Friendly Practices) across the Commonwealth. These features provide ways for Massachusetts residents to access emergency assistance when making a traditional voice call to 9-1-1 may be difficult or impossible. Working with The Rendon Group and Dr. Mallika Marshall, the State 911 Department is developing clear, accessible messaging designed to reach residents throughout Massachusetts and provide them with information that could make a critical difference during an emergency.



Campaign Spokesperson, Dr. Mallika Marshall

COMING SOON

Knowing how to reach 9-1-1 and understanding the options available can save lives.

Jason Craig has joined our Training Team!

We are excited to welcome Jason Craig to our Training Team! Jason brings an impressive wealth of knowledge and experience, including 23 years in public safety. His extensive background and firsthand experience will provide a valuable and unique perspective.

Please join us in welcoming Jason to the State 911 Department team!



ATTENTION PSAPs: Test your e7digit Numbers!

Please be sure to regularly test your e7digit /2WAY line numbers in the NG911 equipment to make sure they are functioning properly and are available when needed. Routine testing is an important part of maintaining the reliability and functionality of your NG911 system. Testing these lines on a regular basis can help identify potential issues, connectivity problems, or other concerns before they impact emergency communications.



Thank You Kiley!

Our Summer Intern, Kiley Sullivan, is wrapping up her time with us, and we are so grateful for all she has contributed this Summer! She spent the first 2 weeks here taking the required courses, and becoming a certified telecommunicator. Kiley quickly became an integral part of our team. From attending National Night Out events to assisting with projects and day-to-day tasks in the office, she was always willing to lend a hand and take on every challenge with a great attitude. We will certainly miss having Kiley as part of the team, but we are excited to see what the future holds for her! We wish her the very best as she returns to Merrimack College for her senior year, where she will complete her degree in Criminal Justice.

Thank you, Kiley, for a wonderful Summer, and best of luck in your senior year!



Goodbye & Goodluck!

Updates from our Programs Division

Schedule Your Outreach!



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! 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**. The outreach request form can be found [HERE](#). Please send completed forms to Public Education Coordinator Erica Crawford at 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 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

Life Saving Features of the 9-1-1 System

The 9-1-1 system in Massachusetts has two life saving features for residents and visitors to the Commonwealth; the Silent Call Procedure and Text-to-911. If someone is trying to call 9-1-1 and is unable to speak for any reason, on their phone they can press 1– for police, 2– for fire, or 3 for an ambulance. As the dispatcher asks them questions they can select 4– for yes and 5– for no. The system also features Text-to-911. When someone is trying to reach emergency services, they are able to contact them by Texting 9-1-1. For Emergencies in Massachusetts Call or Text 911. Call if you can—Text if you can't. Public Education Materials on Silent Call Procedure and Text-to-911 are available on our website, under Information for the Public. If you would like to have the materials mailed to you, please contact Public Education Coordinator Erica Crawford at Erica.Crawford@mass.gov.

For Emergencies in Massachusetts:

CALL or TEXT 911

Call if you can – Text if you can't.



Source: MA State 911 Department and the
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

www.mass.gov/e911

The Silent Call Procedure

If you need to call 9-1-1 and you are unable to speak
for any reason, once the call is answered:

Press

#1

If you need police



#2

If you need fire



#3

If you need an ambulance



If the 9-1-1 dispatcher asks
questions, press

#4

For YES ✓

#5

For NO ✗

Source: MA State 911 Department and the
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

www.mass.gov/e911



Now that your final Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 grant reimbursements has been submitted, take a few minutes to savor the flavors of Summer!

Onto FY 2027! Here are some things to keep in mind when filing your FY 2027 grants:

- ◇ Approval of the PSAP/RECC's annual certificate of compliance is required prior to award under the Fiscal Year 2027 Training, EMD and Support and Incentive Grant.
- ◇ Mass GIS compliance must be documented prior to award under the fiscal year 2027 Training, EMD and Support and Incentive Grants. Please be sure to print the entire list so as to validate the date of the approval;
- ◇ Be sure the contractor authorized signatory form is properly completed and all information appears on the printed copy.



Should you have any questions, please email Cindy Reynolds at 911DeptGrants@mass.gov or contact her at 508-821-7299. If you are new to our grants, we highly recommend attendance at the grant application workshop, held virtually the third Monday of every month beginning at 11:00 am.



We want to hear from you! The Department is working to identify requirements for a “portal” in which PSAPs/RECCs can submit applications and reimbursements. If available, would you use the portal? What capabilities would you like to see in a portal? How could it be utilized to make the process more efficient? We are interested in determining if this is something our PSAP community is interested in and how best to develop it in support of identified needs. Please email Deputy Executive Director Norm Fournier at Norm.Fournier@mass.gov or Karen Robitaille at Karen.Robitaille@mass.gov or call 508-821-7221 with your thoughts and feedback.

Regional PSAP Spotlight– South Shore RECC



Since opening in 2012, the South Shore Regional Emergency Communications Center (SSRECC) has operated as one of Massachusetts' first fully regionalized 9-1-1, police, fire, and EMS communications centers, serving the communities of Cohasset, Hingham, Hull, and Norwell.

In Fiscal Year 2025, the four communities generated more than 76,000 documented police, fire, and EMS incidents. During calendar year 2025, SSRECC personnel answered more than 14,000 emergency 9-1-1 calls and 43,000 administrative calls, while also managing continuous radio communications and maintaining an average 9-1-1 answering time of approximately 3.5 seconds.

The most important resource at South Shore RECC is its people. The center is staffed by 25 dedicated telecommunicators whose professionalism and performance have earned statewide and national recognition. In 2022, SSRECC personnel received the MA State 911 Department and MCSA Team of the Year Award for their response to the Hingham Apple Store incident. In 2026, APCO recognized one of their Operations Supervisors as Supervisor of the Year and named South Shore RECC its Team of the Year for the center's performance during the February 2026 blizzard, when sustained call volume and severe weather conditions tested personnel and systems alike.

Even the most advanced technology has limits. Systems can display data, recommend responses, and organize information, but it is the telecommunicator who must make the split-second decisions that no software can fully automate. In addition to NG911 South Shore RECC employs technologies such as RapidSOS, What3Words, Zello Work, First Due, I Am Responding, Breakroom, and PowerTime. Structured call-taking protocols help ensure that critical, potentially life-saving information is gathered quickly, accurately, and consistently. The center is also preparing for the future through the implementation of Octave OnCall, a next-generation regional computer-aided dispatch platform designed to improve information sharing, coordination, and operational efficiency across all four communities.





A Message from Customer Service Representative: **Al Gomes**

As a Customer Service Representative, I am often the first point of contact for an individual interested in becoming a client of MassEDP. Whether I am mailing an application, scheduling a home visit, answering questions, or assisting with the next steps in the process, I am one of the voices representing the program and helping clients access the services we provide.

One of the rewarding aspects of this role is the opportunity to work with people from all walks of life. From families seeking equipment for their children to individuals who are over 100 years old, and everyone in between. Each client has unique needs, and the equipment provided through MassEDP can make a meaningful difference in their independence, safety, and quality of life.

The communication devices we provide give clients something that many of us take for granted, reliable access to their families, caregivers, medical providers, and, most importantly, 9-1-1 in an emergency. Our iPhones are equipped with applications and features designed to meet the specific needs of each client. Our Field Service Advisors work with clients to set up their devices, explain the available features, and ensure they feel comfortable and confident using their new equipment.

MassEDP also offers a variety of specialized landline telephones designed to accommodate individual disabilities, including large-button phones, amplified phones, and other adaptive devices. These phones provide clients with independence and the ability to communicate with loved ones, schedule appointments, and stay connected to the services and people they rely on.

Every interaction with a client is an opportunity to make a difference. Whether I am answering a simple question, or connecting them with the equipment that will allow them to communicate more independently, I am proud to play a part in a program that improves the safety, independence, and quality of life of our clients.

