



911 Call Answering & Public Safety Dispatching Recommendation Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is being recommended?

Based on an extensive analysis, it is recommended that Worthington join the Northwest Regional Emergency Communications Center for 911 call taking and public safety dispatching services. The Northwest Center is operated by the City of Dublin and provides these services for Dublin, Hilliard, Upper Arlington, Norwich Township and Washington Township. The recommendation relates to 911 call answering and dispatching services. Worthington police, medics and firefighters will still be the ones responding to emergencies.

2. Why is this recommended?

This recommendation provides for enhanced services for the community. The enhanced services include the following benefits:

- reduced time for emergency help to arrive for people who call 911 from their cell phones
- enhanced training for communication technicians who stay on the line with the caller while a separate technician dispatches emergency help
- resources for Worthington to stay current with advances in 911 technology and operations
- greater capacity to manage large-scale emergency events
- more exposure and training for low frequency, but high risk events

A detailed analysis has been conducted which led to this recommendation. A report on the analysis and the recommendation is available on the City's website at www.worthington.org/911

3. What extra training is provided by the Northwest Center?

The communications technicians in the Worthington Center are highly trained, however given the scale of operation and resources available in the Northwest Center, the Northwest Center has a more robust training program. Newly hired communications technicians go through extensive training. Worthington provides a 12-week training program for newly hired individuals. The Northwest Center provides 22-30 weeks of training for new hires. Northwest also has a more robust, ongoing professional training program for communication technicians. Their training program is certified through the Association of Public Safety

Communications Officials (APCO) and they have eight APCO-certified Communications Training Officers that are also Advanced Fire Dispatch and Emergency Medical Dispatch certified instructors on staff. This means they can provide training in the Center by certified trainers and they have the capability to provide live, scenario-based training in the center. This scenario-based training is especially beneficial for low-frequency events such as structure fires or active aggressor events. In our Worthington Center, we must search for courses offered by outside jurisdictions and send individuals out to another location for training. This becomes difficult due to the low number of personnel available to cover the shifts for those employees away at training.

4. What technology does the Northwest Center have that isn't available in the Worthington Center?

As with training, the Worthington Center utilizes technology, however the Northwest Center is able to utilize it to a much greater extent and they are able to implement new technology much quicker. The technology utilized in this service area is constantly expanding. Listed here are a few examples regarding technology available at Northwest that is not available in Worthington.

- Northwest has a direct software connection between alarm companies and the computer aided dispatching system. This means the communications technicians have information immediately available in the computer system to be able to share with responders as opposed to waiting for a phone call from the alarm company.
- Northwest has more robust computerized mapping to enable police, firefighters, and paramedics to more quickly access information about the emergency location.
- Northwest has more advanced cell phone location technology that can more accurately identify the location of an emergency when a person at the emergency site has a cell phone.
- Northwest is in the process of implementing a program that provides for information sharing by the computer aided dispatching (CAD) systems with other communications centers in the region. This CAD to CAD information sharing shortens the response time involved when resources from multiple jurisdictions are responding to the same emergency. Worthington and Columbus regularly assist each other with fire and emergency medical response and this CAD to CAD connection will enable communication technicians in the Northwest Center to view in their system the available Columbus resources and to notify Columbus or other jurisdictions via the computer system.
- Northwest is also in the process of implementing Smart 911 which allows members of the public to enter unique information for their home or business location and make this information available for first responders prior to their arrival. Examples of this include the presence of special needs individuals, oxygen stored on site, and language or hearing constraints.

5. What will happen to the people who work in the Worthington Center?

The recommendation to move to the Northwest Center is in no way a reflection on the existing staff in the Worthington Communications Center. Worthington has many talented and dedicated employees that currently work and have previously worked in this Center. They strive every day to provide a high level of professional service to the community and in support of our police and fire/EMS personnel. Given that this is the lowest fulltime staffing level the City has experienced in recent memory, this is the time to implement the recommendation and impact the fewest fulltime staff members. Two new administrative support positions are recommended, which are opportunities for affected staff members. Some staff members are discussing possible plans for retirement, thus may not be looking for long-term fulltime positions. Given the high turnover in this industry and the resulting heavy demand for public safety communications technicians, opportunities with other agencies are expected to be available. The City of Worthington will work with each individual in the Worthington Center to develop resources both internally and externally for job placement opportunities, including contacting other jurisdictions regarding communication technician vacancies. All current fulltime Communication Technician will be eligible to apply for fulltime employment with the Northwest Center and be a part of the hiring process open only to Worthington fulltime Communication Technicians.

6. Who is making this recommendation?

Last fall, the City Manager asked a team comprised of Police Chief Jerry Strait, Fire Chief John Bailot, Assistant Fire Chief Mark Zambito, Assistant City Manager Robyn Stewart, Personnel Director Lori Trego and Finance Director Scott Bartter to complete the analysis regarding the option of joining the Northwest Center. All members of the analysis team have been fully engaged in directing and conducting the analysis and they have shaped this recommendation. The Police Chief, Fire Chief, Assistant City Manager and other members of the analysis team will be available at public meetings so residents can engage directly with them on this issue.

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