



# SOUTH CAROLINA WIRELESS 9-1-1 PROGRAM

## STATEWIDE TRANSITION TO NG9-1-1

### **Introduction – South Carolina Wireless 9-1-1 Program**

The Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office (RFA) is responsible for managing the South Carolina Wireless 9-1-1 Program. Historically, the program's primary purpose consisted of managing the state wireless 9-1-1 fund and processing monetary distributions to the fifty recognized PSAP jurisdictions. Under this model, each local PSAP manages its equipment and service needs independently and receives reimbursement for a percentage (currently set at 80%) of those expenditures from the fund. Revenues for the wireless fund are generated by the 9-1-1 surcharge (currently set at \$0.62) applied to each wireless phone in the state.

### **Issue**

The current technology utilized by 9-1-1 centers across the state is reaching end of life as the national standard for providing these services is changing to NextGeneration (NG9-1-1), which consists of communication through broadband-enabled IP networks known as ESI-nets. This technology also utilizes additional core services including enhanced diversity in call routing, improved backup capabilities, increased accuracy of call location information, and expanded means of communication including text, image, and video data.

In 2016, with direction from the local jurisdictions, RFA hired a consultant and developed a strategic plan for the future of the state's 9-1-1 services. A brief summary of this plan includes the following goals and objectives for the wireless 9-1-1 program:

1. Update the program's statutory language to facilitate statewide transition to NG9-1-1
2. Establish subcommittees within the South Carolina 9-1-1 Advisory Committee to assist the program in facilitating the success of this transition
3. Manage the acquisition, implementation, and maintenance of a statewide ESI-net with core NG services
4. Ensure the PSAPs have the ability to share in these services, although participation is not mandatory at this time

### **Progress to Date**

David Morrison, S.C. Wireless 9-1-1 Program Manager, has been working with other RFA personnel as well as the Advisory Committee to implement these strategic plan objectives. The following updates reflect progress to date as well as anticipated action steps:

#### *Action Items*

- Statutory language has been amended via H.3586 (June 2019), which allows RFA to utilize a portion of the state wireless fund on behalf of local jurisdictions to implement NG9-1-1 technology
- Four subcommittees (fiscal, training, legislative, and GIS) have been established and continue to work with David to facilitate the transition
- A Request for Proposals (RFP) has been published via the state's procurement office to acquire the new technology, and the review process for these proposals should begin in early September
  - The state is seeking to acquire a vendor to design, implement, and maintain all services for NG9-1-1, including ESI-net infrastructure and core services
  - The state is authorized to contract with this vendor for a maximum of ten years



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- Implementation is expected to begin in early 2020, with a staggered approach to phasing PSAPs in to the system gradually over three to five years
- PSAPs who already have an ESInet and/or some of the core services would consider joining the state system once their current contracts reach end of life

### **Funding the Transition**

RFA, in conjunction with the fiscal subcommittee, maintains a fiscal model for the wireless 9-1-1 fund to ensure adequate financial resources to accommodate this transition. Each year, the fiscal model is updated to include the most current information available and projects total costs for the next ten years. Under the current model, RFA anticipates the Advisory Committee will need to recommend to the RFA Board a two-cent increase for the wireless surcharge in 2021 from \$0.62 to \$0.64 and a reduction of the current PSAP cost reimbursement percentage from 80% to 70% in 2022 and again in 2025 to 60%. These changes, along with a federal grant recently awarded to RFA in the amount of \$2.33 million, should ensure adequate funding to support 9-1-1 services for the entire state for the next ten years and beyond.