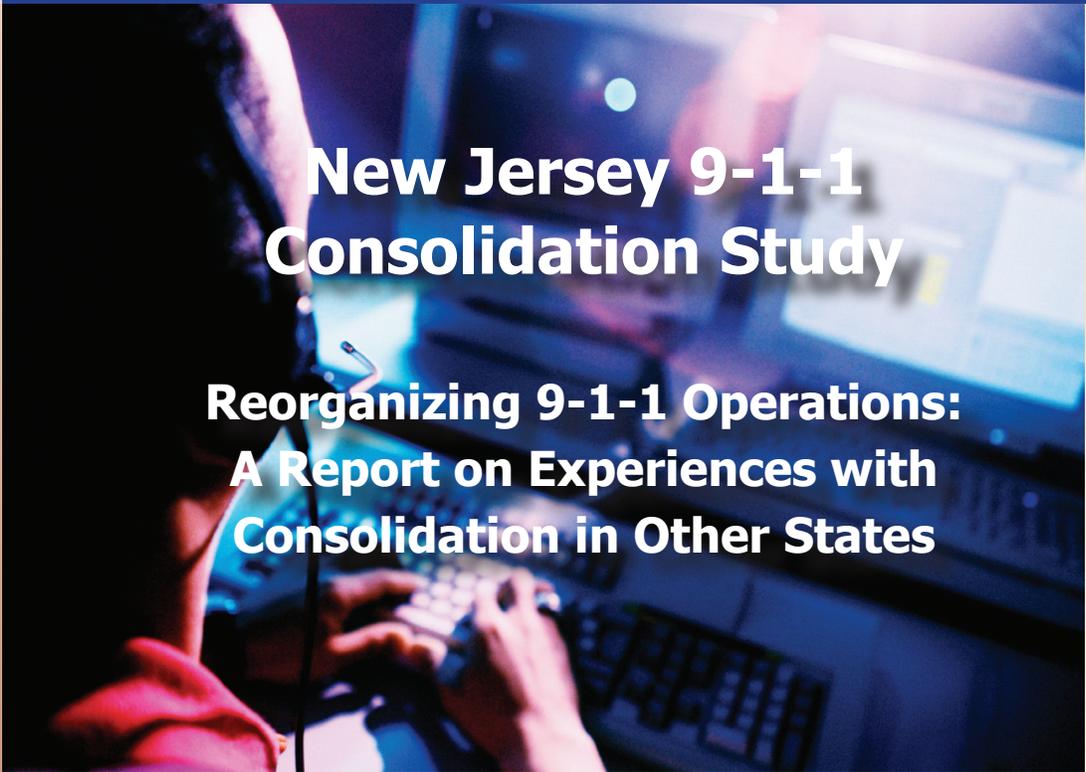




JOHN J. HELDRICH CENTER FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



New Jersey 9-1-1 Consolidation Study

Reorganizing 9-1-1 Operations: A Report on Experiences with Consolidation in Other States

Report prepared for the State of New Jersey
Office of Information Technology and the
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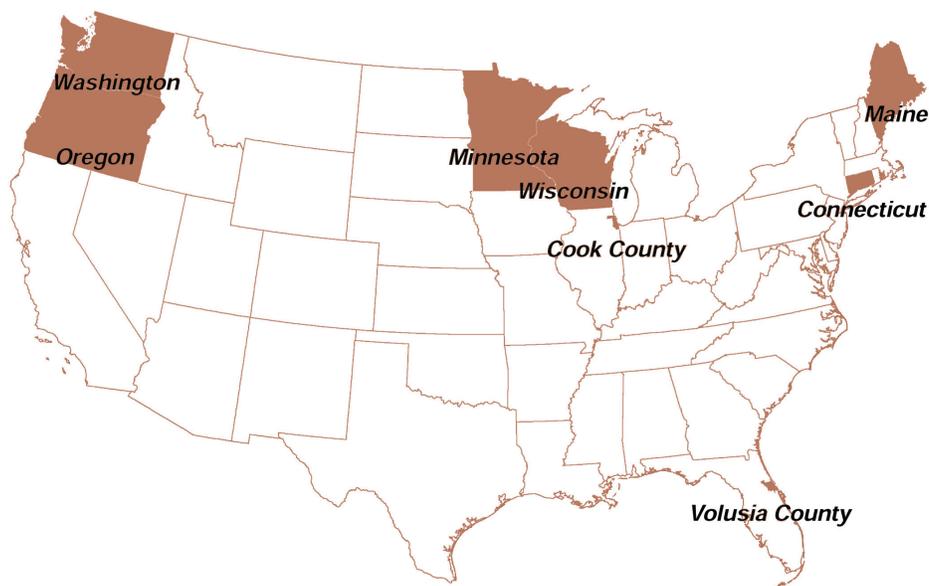
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INTRODUCTION

Consolidation of 9-1-1 emergency communications is a politically charged issue full of opportunities and pitfalls for state policymakers. Typically, consolidation reduces the number of locally managed Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) by combining operations of several communications centers.¹ The process may also result in a reduction in the number of sites that dispatch police, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS) response units. If the process is handled well, it can lead to efficiencies and improved service for citizens. If not handled well, it can disrupt vital services and increase tensions among state and local authorities. As New Jersey leaders consider further consolidation of the 9-1-1 system, they should take into account the experience of other states.

This report is the result of the Heldrich Center's research on trends in consolidation. A central goal of this research is to throw light on different approaches to encouraging consolidation and lessons that may inform New Jersey's future strategy. Telephone interviews were conducted with officials in six states and two regions that have experience with consolidation of answering and dispatch points (See Map below). The states are Connecticut, Maine, Minnesota, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin.² The two regions are Cook County, Illinois and Volusia County, Florida. In addition, researchers reviewed state reports and public documents. The methodology is described in the appendix.

States and Regions Profiled in This Report



¹ A PSAP is a facility equipped and staffed to receive 9-1-1 emergency calls, according to the National Emergency Number Association, *NENA Master Glossary* (Arlington, VA, February 2005).

² Additionally, an interview was conducted with an official from Massachusetts. However, the state is not profiled in this report because there has been limited movement toward consolidation.

The Heldrich Center’s research yielded a range of findings on the experience of other states:

- States have tended to support local consolidation by providing financial incentives, setting standards, and providing technical assistance. There are few examples of state policies that require rather than encourage PSAPs to merge operations. In fact, none of the states in the study employs a direct mandate. Some states have played a limited or virtually no role in supporting local consolidation.
- The states and regions included in this study differ on many dimensions, but they share a common experience with consolidation of 9-1-1 services. State and regional officials cite the same barriers to consolidation and point to similar models of effective practices.
- Although states can play a role, consolidation is, in essence, a local process driven by local decision-makers. Local elected officials are likely to drive consolidation if they recognize the benefits. Governance and accountability are thorny issues that must be worked out locally.
- The results of consolidation are not well documented. Examples of cost savings are more commonly cited at the state level than at the local level. Estimates of cost savings related to personnel are particularly elusive. State and regional officials strongly believe that consolidation leads to improved service, although it is not clear how improved service is measured.

FEATURES OF STATE 9-1-1 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS

It is difficult to understand state consolidation initiatives without identifying the basic features of each state’s emergency communications system. The organizational structure of PSAPs varies among the study states (See Table 1). Most of the states have PSAPs that provide services for a county, municipality, or group of municipalities. **Connecticut**, which has no county-level government, is the exception. It has a combination of town-based PSAPs and regional centers that provide services for multiple towns. **Washington** has several regional PSAPs that cover more than one county. **Minnesota** has a multi-county PSAP that covers parts of North Dakota as well as Minnesota.

The six states in the study have similar funding mechanisms for 9-1-1 services (See Table 2). Most of the states have imposed a wire-line and wireless fee on telecommunications bills to support state-wide and local services. **Washington** has both a state and a county surcharge. **Wisconsin** currently has a county wire-line surcharge, although it is implementing a temporary state surcharge this year.

While the source of funds tends to be the same, states provide different types and levels of funding support to PSAPs. **Connecticut, Maine, and Oregon** pay for all or a high percentage of the basic call-taking equipment used by local PSAPs. By comparison, **Minnesota** and **Wisconsin** fund a much lower percentage. **Connecticut, Minnesota, Oregon, and Washington** provide operational assistance through grants or reimbursement to PSAPs. **Maine** and **Wisconsin** do not provide ongoing operational assistance to PSAPs.

Table 1. PSAP Organizational Structure by State

| State | Structure | Typical Parent Organization | Notable Features |
|--------------------|---|--|---|
| Connecticut | Town and city-based PSAPs with eight regional centers that provide services to groups of towns | Mostly local police departments; regional centers operated by independent agencies | No county-level government |
| Maine | County and municipal PSAPs | Mostly local police departments or county sheriff's offices | Strong tradition of local control |
| Minnesota | County and municipal PSAPs with several multi-county PSAPs | Mostly local police departments or county sheriff's offices | Inter-state PSAP that covers counties in Minnesota and North Dakota |
| Oregon | County and municipal PSAPs with a large number of centers that provide services to groups of cities | Mostly independent agencies or police departments | Strong tradition of local control |
| Washington | Mostly county PSAPs with some municipal PSAPs and several multi-county PSAPs | Mostly sheriff's offices with a large number of independent agencies | Strong county government |
| Wisconsin | Mostly county PSAPs with some municipal PSAPs | Mostly county sheriff's offices or police departments | Locally managed system with a limited state role |

Table 2. Key Features of State Funding by State

| State | State Surcharges | County Surcharges | Operational Assistance to PSAPs | State Support for Basic Equipment |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Connecticut | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Maine | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Minnesota | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Oregon | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Washington | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Wisconsin | | ✓ | | |

Notes: Wisconsin has a temporary state surcharge but not an ongoing one. The states indicated in the last column provide full (100%) support for basic 9-1-1 call-taking equipment to PSAPs. Other states may provide partial support.

State authority over local operations varies widely. Most of the states in the study have a central agency responsible for system coordination and oversight of revenues from the telecommunications surcharge. Some of the states have established detailed training and other standards for PSAPs. For example, **Connecticut** has set service

standards and extensive training requirements for communications personnel. Other states have few, if any, requirements. For example, **Minnesota** does not set any staffing, equipment, or training standards for PSAPs and conducts virtually no oversight of local operations.

FINDINGS

State roles in influencing local consolidation range from active to limited or nonexistent.

The six states in the study have adopted a variety of roles in influencing local consolidation of 9-1-1 services. Some states exert a strong leadership role, encouraging consolidation at the local level. When enhanced 9-1-1 was being implemented between 1993 and 1998, **Washington** launched an aggressive program to support consolidation of 9-1-1 services at the county level. As a result, there was a dramatic reduction in the number of answering and dispatch points, from 407 primary PSAPs in 1984 to only 59 in 2005. **Maine** has also taken a proactive stance toward streamlining local operations. In 2003, state legislation established the Public Utility Commission as the state's 9-1-1 oversight entity and authorized an administrative process leading to consolidation. Since then, the Commission has issued rules that are expected to reduce the number of PSAPs from 48 to 26 by 2007.

Other states play a neutral role, allowing local initiatives to unfold at their own pace. **Minnesota** has adopted a strictly hands-off approach toward local consolidation. The state sets virtually no standards for local operations and provides no active support for consolidation, despite the publication of a major report in 2004 calling for a more pronounced state role. Likewise, **Wisconsin** has played a mostly passive role, providing little financial or other impetus for the widespread consolidation that has occurred at the county level since the early 1990s.

A recent study suggests that the state role in local consolidation is a function of the state's leverage over local operations and funding.³ To the extent that a state controls operations through strict standards or provides a large percentage of funds available to local PSAPs, it is more likely to set the terms for consolidation. The Heldrich Center

research on the study states provides some evidence to support this observation. **Connecticut**, **Maine**, and **Washington**, all of which fund a high proportion of the basic call-taking equipment used by most PSAPs, have been among the most active states in encouraging consolidation. By comparison, **Minnesota**, which sets few operational standards, and **Wisconsin**, which provides limited funding to local PSAPs, have been far less active.

States that influence local consolidation tend to rely on financial incentives rather than mandates.

Among the six states in the study, financial incentives are the most commonly cited strategy to influence local consolidation. (See Table 3.) Even states that have considerable leverage over funding for local equipment or operations, like **Connecticut** and **Washington**, have favored use of "carrots" rather than "sticks."

To encourage consolidation, some states issue planning or study grants that allow local jurisdictions to examine the technical, fiscal, and other issues involved with combining operations. **Connecticut** distributes grants of \$20,000 to groups of three towns that are interested in sharing services or combining operations. If more than three towns are involved, a larger grant is available. Between 1993 and 1998, **Washington** issued initial grants to allow jurisdictions to plan for a consolidated operation. Those grants then became implementation grants when consolidation moved forward.

Another strategy is to provide a higher level of funding to regions that consolidate than to those that maintain existing operations. When **Washington** was implementing enhanced 9-1-1 service during the 1990s, it distributed state funding in two ways. If a county had more than one PSAP, it received a base grant that would cover the basic equipment and other costs necessary to add enhanced 9-1-1. If a county had consolidated

³ Minnesota Department of Public Safety, *PSAP Consolidation*, report to the Minnesota Legislature (Saint Paul, MN, February 2004).

Table 3. State Strategies to Support Consolidation

| State | Grants to Study or Plan Consolidation | Financial Incentives for PSAPs Serving a County, More than One County, or a Municipality of a Certain Size | State Standards that Encourage Larger Local Operations | Authority for County Surcharges to Fund 9-1-1 System | State Support Limited to PSAPs with a Minimum Call Volume | State Cost Savings Distributed to Consolidated PSAPs | Technical Assistance to PSAPs |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|-------------------------------|
| Connecticut | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |
| Maine | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Minnesota | | | | | | | |
| Oregon | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ |
| Washington | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Wisconsin | | | | ✓ | | | |

to form only one PSAP, it received the base grant as well as additional funding that could be used to acquire a Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system, renovate buildings, and repair radio systems. The incentive program also encouraged consolidation of both answering and dispatch services. More recently, the state has begun to promote regional consolidation involving more than one county.

Connecticut has pursued a similar strategy. Beginning in 1996, the state began to provide enhanced operational funding to regional centers that provide 9-1-1 services for groups of towns. The formula for annual grants rewards regional centers that provide services for a large population, experience a high call volume, and provide dispatch services for all emergency agencies (police, fire, and EMS). In addition, towns with 40,000 or more people receive a similar annual allocation. Towns with less than 40,000 people still receive basic call-taking equipment and a subsidy for training, but no other operational funding.

A different strategy is to encourage consolidation by allowing local jurisdictions to impose surcharges on telecommunications users and to collect revenues to support 9-1-1 services. In 1989, **Wisconsin** passed legislation granting authority to counties to assess a surcharge to pay for network, database, and other costs necessary to

provide 9-1-1 services. That action provided an indirect incentive for local consolidation because small PSAPs could reduce their costs by joining a larger county-based operation. More recently, the state authorized a temporary surcharge to pay for upgrades necessary to handle wireless calls and allowed only one PSAP per county to apply for funds generated by the surcharge.

Although incentives are a promising strategy, they are not necessarily sufficient to produce consolidation. For example, in **Connecticut**, a number of towns responded to the opportunity to obtain

Returning Cost Savings to PSAPs to Encourage Consolidation

An innovative strategy is to return cost savings to PSAPs to reinforce and encourage local consolidation. **Maine** may dedicate up to 25% of funds saved due to the reduction in the number of PSAPs to support interoperability among local systems that have consolidated. **Washington**, which has encouraged the creation of multi-county PSAPs, is allowing those regions to use state cost savings for a wide range of allowable purposes, including facilities and radio.

grants to study consolidation; however, little or no action resulted from the studies. Despite the institution of incentives for combined operations, there are nearly as many regional centers today as there were in 1996 when the legislation encouraging regionalization was passed.

There are only a few examples of state policies that require, rather than encourage, consolidation and those policies have led to mixed or uncertain results.

State policies that, in essence, force local consolidation are less commonly cited among the six states in this study. **Maine** is the only state that has adopted and continued to implement a directive approach to local consolidation. State legislation passed in 2003 authorized the Public Utilities Commission to proceed with a reduction in the number of PSAPs in the state. Through the rulemaking process, the Commission determined that, by October 2007, only 26 PSAPs would continue to receive state support for equipment and training. Any PSAP that answers, on average, less than 10 calls per day would have to consolidate with a larger operation. However, Maine's strategy stops short of a direct mandate. If a PSAP with a low volume of calls still wishes to remain as a stand-alone operation, it may continue in existence, provided it pays all of the state's costs for equipment and training.⁴

Oregon also has experimented with a directive policy toward consolidation. Unlike Maine, however, Oregon reversed course and adopted a less assertive policy stance. As the 9-1-1 system was being implemented, Oregon authorities initially adopted a hands-off approach. The state set minimum standards, including a requirement for 24/7 coverage of local operations, but generally let consolidation unfold in local jurisdictions. This

approach changed in 2001 when a new state law aimed at reducing the overall number of PSAPs required a plan identifying one PSAP per county. The enactment of this law led to a political backlash, especially from small PSAP operators and their local legislators. The upshot was that in 2003, the state legislature quietly dropped the requirement.

Local consolidation plays out because of local factors and local champions.

Although state policy can be influential, consolidation of 9-1-1 services ultimately occurs because local leaders support it as a way to reduce costs and improve service to citizens. The two regions in the study demonstrate the importance of local factors and local champions. In **Volusia County, Florida**, a consolidation initiative moved forward because three city managers, with a history of working together on a range of public issues, recognized that it would lead to better service and cost savings in the long term. They sold the initiative to their respective mayors and city councils as an investment in public safety and achieved results without any active state support or involvement. In **Cook County, Illinois**, a similar initiative moved forward with the strong support of the county board. County officials supported consolidation because they recognized the potential for cost savings that would result from sharing staffing and a facility among several state and local agencies.

Cook County has a unique cooperative agreement between the county agency that manages the PSAP, the sheriff's office, and the state police. The sheriff's office provides nearly 50 staff that answer 9-1-1 calls. The state police provide a facility — rent-free — to house the communications center for the PSAP. The county, in turn, purchased a CAD system that is used by the state police.

⁴ State of Maine, Public Utilities Commission, *Amendments to Standards for Establishing a Statewide Enhanced 9-1-1 System*, Docket Number 2005-23 (May 2005).

The experience of the six study states suggests that consolidation is primarily a local phenomenon. It is noteworthy that local consolidation occurs whether or not the state plays an active role. In **Minnesota**, where the state has taken a hands-off role, local consolidation has advanced in some regions, largely in response to cuts in local aid from the state and other budget pressures. Municipalities in **Wisconsin** embraced consolidation to afford new equipment required for enhanced 9-1-1 and to alleviate budget pressures. Even in **Maine**, where the state has taken a more directive approach, state officials recognize that consolidation ultimately is a local process. Although the state Public Utility Commission set an overall target for the number of PSAPs that would be supported with state funds, it did not mandate how consolidation would occur within or across counties. Those decisions were left to local officials.

The most significant barrier to consolidation is concern about governance and accountability.

Concern about governance is the most commonly cited barrier to consolidation. As one official put it, “Governance is the big nut to crack.” Nearly every state and regional official interviewed as part of this study observed that local police and public safety officials tend to resist consolidation because they fear losing control of their local operations and staff. Public safety officials share their concerns with local elected officials, who may think twice about embracing any change.

Although control or “turf” is the main issue, public safety officials also oppose consolidation on other grounds. They argue that it will result in loss of local knowledge among emergency communicators and in loss of a police presence in the local station, which is needed to monitor prisoners and provide services at night.

Another barrier is concern about accountability. According to those interviewed, local elected officials often recognize the benefits of con-

solidation, but have concerns about maintaining accountability for emergency communications and response. Before they approve any consolidation initiative, they must be comfortable that their policy priorities and the needs of their communities will be taken into account.

The recipe for success in local consolidation tends to be the same in most states and regions in the study.

State and local officials cite similar factors that lead to success in local consolidation. A key factor is the strength of local leadership. As mentioned earlier, successful initiatives require the full support, and, in many cases, the initiative of local elected officials, who clearly recognize the benefits of combined operations.

Another factor is adoption of an effective model for governance and accountability. A common strategy is to establish a new way of overseeing and managing 9-1-1 operations that ensures representation from all of the jurisdictions affected by consolida-

Volusia County, Florida

When New Smyrna Beach, Port Orange, and Edgewater decided to consolidate operations, they established an intergovernmental structure. The governing body consists of the mayors of the three cities. They meet monthly to decide on budget and policy matters. The Executive Committee is comprised of the three city managers. Each manager has a role on the Executive Committee — Port Orange is the administrative agent, New Smyrna Beach handles addressing and geographical information systems issues, and Edgewater coordinates the technical committees. The PSAP administrator is a communications professional who is hired by, and reports to, the governing board. Police and fire officials sit on advisory committees that report to the administrator.

tion. Typically, there is a governing board that includes either the local elected officials themselves or significant representatives. The board is charged with making policy and overseeing the budget of the combined operation. The board also appoints a director, who heads an intergovernmental agency that operates the PSAP. In some cases, an operational board is established to provide advice or input to the director and his/her staff. An example of how this works is shown in the sidebar on page 7.

Nearly every state official interviewed as part of this study cited shared oversight and management of PSAP operations as a feature of successful consolidation at the local level. However, this model is not without potential glitches. It may be difficult to achieve a balance in representation among large and small jurisdictions on a governing board. Turnover of administrators can be problematic, especially in the early years of newly established intergovernmental agencies. Still another issue is that, just as local jurisdictions join combined centers, they also may pull out if management and budget issues are not handled to their satisfaction.

Evidence of cost savings achieved through consolidation is mostly anecdotal and is particularly difficult to pinpoint at the local level.

There are few formal studies of cost savings achieved through consolidation, according to the state and local officials interviewed as part of this study. However, several officials pointed to examples of concrete budget savings at the state level. **Maine** is likely to reduce expenditures because consolidation will result in a sharp reduction in the number of PSAPs that receive state support. Estimated cost savings were originally expected to be nearly \$1 million per year.⁵ **Washington** also experienced cost savings as a result of a recent

program to encourage regional consolidation that combines operations in multiple counties. The creation of two regional, multi-county centers has led to savings of more than \$1 million in state funds over three years. The accompanying sidebar provides several examples of cost savings.

Examples of Cost Savings

Cook County conducted an estimate of cost savings based on what stand-alone facilities would cost (just facilities, not staff) and estimated the savings to be \$5-7 million for the next eight to nine years. Volusia County saved \$1 million on the acquisition of new software for use by three cities. A small PSAP in Maine saved \$70,000 after consolidation because of personnel reductions.

Determination of cost savings at the local level is more difficult. According to several state officials, local officials may not be able to determine current costs for the 9-1-1 system because expenditures are divided among the budgets of several agencies. Cost savings due to personnel are particularly difficult to ascertain. In **Maine**, small PSAPs have claimed that local savings are not likely to occur because staff not only answer emergency calls, but also perform other functions. If the PSAP closes, staff are still needed to carry out those other functions.⁶ In **Volusia County, Florida**, consolidation has actually led to an increase in the number of staff as the three cities have focused on improving service rather than cutting costs.

According to those interviewed, consolidation may not lead to efficiencies in the short term; rather, it may help local jurisdictions avoid costs in the long term. A consolidated operation with a substantial budget is likely to be able to afford better equipment and technology than a cluster

⁵ State of Maine, Public Utilities Commission, Docket Number 2005-23 (February 2005). These estimates may change when PSAPs submit their final plans by July 2006.

⁶ State of Maine, Public Utilities Commission, Docket Number 2005-23 (February 2005).

of smaller PSAPs. For example, when the three cities in **Volusia County, Florida** combined operations, they were able to save about \$1 million as a result of a joint acquisition of needed software.

Consolidation can lead to improved services for citizens.

Nearly every state and local official interviewed as part of this study cited improved service as a benefit of consolidation. Not one official cited an example of deterioration in the quality of emergency communications and response following consolidation. Both of the regions in the study indicated that the level of service had, in fact, risen as a result of consolidation. In **Cook County, Illinois**, establishing a county-level operation ensured there are more trained personnel on hand to answer calls. According to a local official, the three-city operation in **Volusia County, Florida** performed well during the three major hurricanes that hit that region in 2004.

Improved service is likely to result from consolidation for several reasons. In a combined operation, there are more qualified personnel on hand who focus on handling emergency calls because they do not perform unrelated duties. Staff are likely to share knowledge, experience, and best practices more effectively than they can in a smaller center. And staff are likely to have better opportunities for training because there is a pool of substitutes or replacements.

These advantages may lead to improvements in public safety. When two PSAPs on either side of the border between **Minnesota** and North Dakota formed an interstate PSAP, they created a consolidated operation capable of answering calls and dispatching units with a single radio system. These changes improved their capacity to share information and respond to crimes, police chases, and other incidents that crossed state and county lines.

LESSONS AND ADVICE BASED ON TRENDS IN OTHER STATES

Although the states and regions included in this study have many differences, they share a common experience with consolidation of 9-1-1 services. Many cite the same barriers, such as resistance from public safety officials to a potential loss of control under consolidation. They also point to similar features of successful consolidation initiatives, especially establishment of shared oversight and management of combined operations.

As New Jersey policymakers consider options to encourage further consolidation, they should take into account the following lessons that emerge from the experience of other states:

- Consolidation of 9-1-1 services has potential benefits for citizens and public agencies. State and regional officials strongly believe that it can lead to improved services and, ultimately, public safety. However, much of the evidence is based on perception rather than systematic evaluation. In addition, many officials believe that combining operations is likely to generate efficiencies in the long term, even though they admit that direct cost savings due to consolidation are not well documented and are difficult to quantify.
- Ultimately, consolidation is a local process driven by local decision-makers. As one state official commented, “You cannot force a marriage.” Local elected officials and public safety officials must recognize the benefits of combined operations and decide how consolidation will unfold.
- Although local leaders must determine the course of consolidation, state authorities can influence the process. The optimal state role is to create an environment conducive to local consolidation and then let local authorities work out the details. Common state strategies include setting standards, issuing financial incentives, and providing technical assistance to local authorities.

- If incentives are employed, they should take the form of ongoing support for consolidated operations. Grants to study consolidation at the local level are useful, but ongoing support may be more important.
- There are few examples of states that set a minimum threshold for funding PSAPs. Maine's threshold is based on call volume. Only PSAPs that answer an average of 10 calls per day or more will receive state support. Connecticut's threshold is based on population. Although every town receives state support for equipment and training, only towns with a population of 40,000 or more receive an annual allocation. Another state official suggests setting a minimum threshold for a PSAP through an analysis of "vulnerability" in case of a major incident. In other words, the appropriate size of a PSAP should be determined based on how many staff are needed at any time to handle a major event.
- Consolidation initiatives require time and advance planning. State and regional officials cite the need for advance planning so that local jurisdictions can work out complicated issues related to management, personnel, and operations. Some states have found that PSAPs needed more time than expected to establish combined centers.

APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

Background and Purpose

As part of the Office of Information Technology E-9-1-1 study, the Heldrich Center conducted research on trends among states that have pursued consolidation of answering and dispatch points. A central goal of this research was to identify different approaches to encouraging regional consolidation, barriers to consolidation that have emerged in other states, and key findings or lessons that may inform New Jersey’s strategy.

Selection Criteria

The key criterion for selection of states was experience with consolidation or regionalization of answering and dispatch points. To inform the selection, we developed and reviewed additional criteria that included:

- Number of PSAPs,
- Local organizational structure of PSAPs (county, municipality, or mixed), and

- Demographic and geographic factors (such as population size, density, and seasonal population shifts).

Proposed selection of regions was based on published studies on E-9-1-1 consolidation and informed opinions of experts at national associations.

Proposed Selections

The Heldrich Center focused its efforts on seven states and two regions. The table below describes the choices and reasons for selection. Nearly all of the states contacted have taken steps to mandate or encourage regional consolidation of E-9-1-1 systems. In addition, like New Jersey, each of the states has a central agency responsible for planning and administering the E-9-1-1 system. Two of the states—Connecticut and Massachusetts—are located in the northeast and have demographic and geographic factors that are similar to New Jersey.

| State | Reason for Selection |
|----------------------|---|
| Connecticut | Connecticut has issued grants to stimulate local consolidation. In addition, Connecticut is a northeastern state with a high population density, a major transportation corridor, and seasonal fluctuations in population. However, Connecticut does not have a county structure of government. |
| Maine | Maine has conducted an in-depth study of consolidation and is likely to provide many lessons based on recent experience. Like New Jersey, Maine has a strong tradition of local control of services. |
| Massachusetts | Massachusetts has limited experience with consolidation of PSAPs. However, it has many similarities with New Jersey. It has a large number of PSAPs, a similar local PSAP structure, and a high population density. It also has a coastal region with seasonal fluctuations in population. |
| Minnesota | Minnesota has conducted one of the most comprehensive studies of consolidation and can provide many lessons on the use of incentives and other issues. |
| Oregon | Oregon has experience with mandated consolidation of PSAPs and can provide insight into the effectiveness of different state approaches. |
| Washington | Washington has instituted policies to encourage consolidation of PSAPs and can provide recent lessons. |
| Wisconsin | Wisconsin has taken steps to encourage regional coordination of 9-1-1 services. |

The Heldrich Center also contacted two regions that have experience with consolidation. Those regions are **Volusia County, Florida** and **Cook County, Illinois**.

Areas of Inquiry

The Heldrich Center developed a protocol to be used when researchers contacted states and regions. The questions were tailored to the state or region based on background research.

Below is a list of topics that were included in the protocol:

- Impetus and goals for consolidation (number of PSAPs, efficiency, technology enhancements);
- Targets of consolidation (answering points, dispatch points, both);
- Strategy for consolidation (mandates, incentives, other);

- Specific thresholds for state funding/support (minimum size of PSAP, minimum call volume);
- Factors supporting local consolidation (where it has occurred);
- Barriers to local consolidation;
- Impact of consolidation (cost savings, service, and response time);
- Lessons learned from experience with consolidation

Telephone interviews were conducted with state and regional 9-1-1 coordinators. They include: George Pohorilak, Connecticut; Ken Parker, Volusia County, Florida; Morrie Farbman, Cook County, Illinois; Albert Gervenack, Maine; Paul Fahey, Massachusetts;⁷ Jim Beutelspacher, Minnesota; Ken Keim, Oregon; Bob Oenning, Washington; and Jeff Richter and Rich McMaster, Wisconsin.

⁷ Information about Massachusetts is not included in this report since there has been little movement toward consolidation.



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