

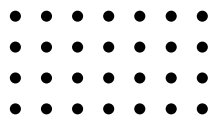
City  
of  
Milwaukee

DEPARTMENT OF  
**EMERGENCY  
COMMUNICATIONS**

2025

# Annual Report

Rebuilding with Purpose, Innovating for the Future



[CITY.MILWAUKEE.GOV/DEC](https://CITY.MILWAUKEE.GOV/DEC)



# Director's Message



## **Rebuilding Through Innovation. Elevating Service. Empowering People.**

2025 was a pivotal year for the Milwaukee Department of Emergency Communications. It marked the first full year of operations following the consolidation of police and fire communications into a unified emergency communications center serving the City of Milwaukee.

This transformation strengthened the City's ability to deliver faster, more coordinated emergency response. The Department focused on three priorities: strengthening our workforce, modernizing mission-critical systems, and improving operational performance.

Key advancements included continued implementation of the Universal Call Taker model, reducing internal transfers and improving coordination, and the deployment of the CommsCoach AI-assisted quality assurance platform to enhance training, coaching, and performance.

The Department exceeded nationally recognized call-answering benchmarks, ensuring the vast majority of 911 calls were answered within seconds, while continuing to build strong connections with the community through outreach and education.

This progress reflects the dedication of DEC professionals who serve Milwaukee with professionalism, compassion, and precision. Looking ahead, the Department will continue investing in its workforce, advancing technology, and preparing for Next Generation 9-1-1.

When someone calls 911, every second matters—and DEC stands ready to respond.

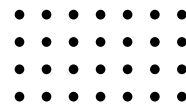


*Tony Bulno*

Director

Milwaukee Department of Emergency Communications

# The Department of Emergency Communications



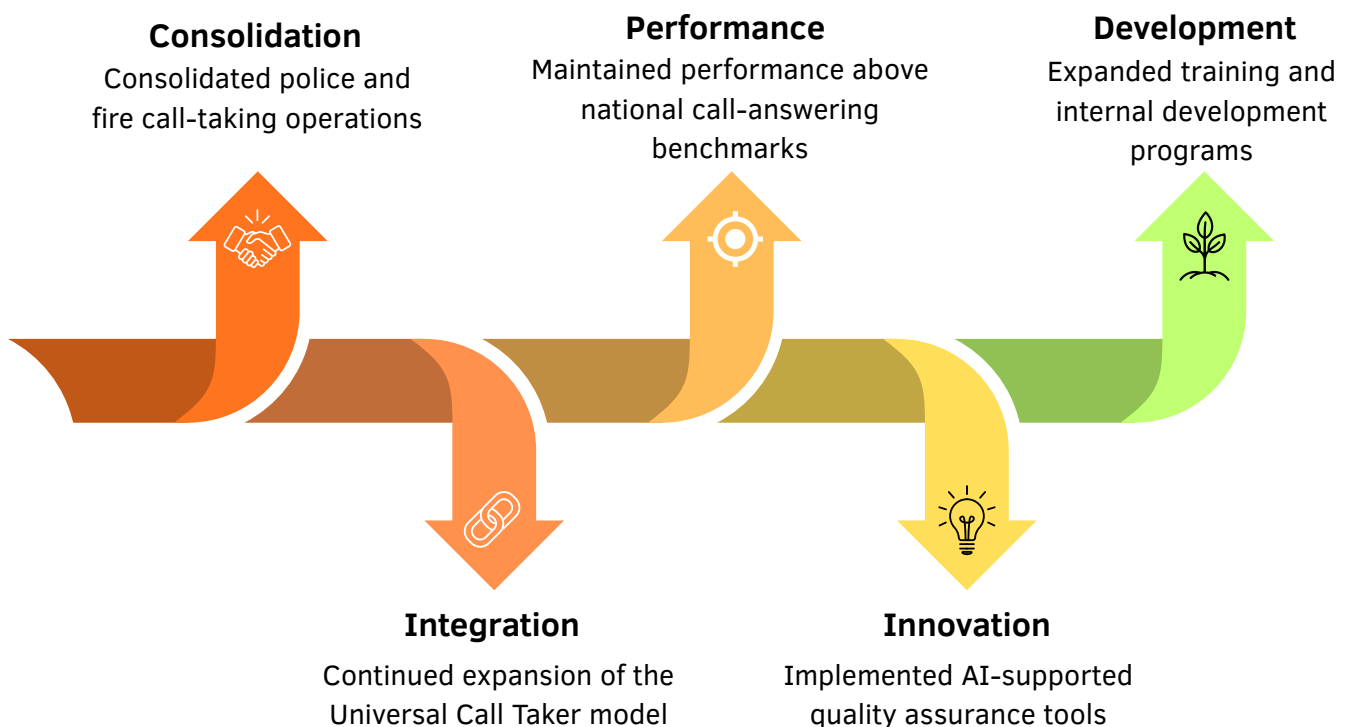
## Who We Are and How We Serve Milwaukee

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The Milwaukee Department of Emergency Communications (DEC) serves as the city's vital link between the community and emergency responders. Operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week, our department answers all 911 calls within the City of Milwaukee, manages critical emergency communications for the Milwaukee Police Department and Milwaukee Fire Department, and ensures rapid, coordinated responses during moments of crisis.

Throughout 2025, the Department advanced key initiatives that strengthened service delivery, enhanced operational performance, and supported continued growth and innovation across the organization. These efforts reflect a commitment to building a more unified, modern, and resilient emergency communications center.

## 2025 Highlights





# 2025 At a Glance



## Key Achievements of the Year

### **Universal Call Taker (UCT) Expansion & Workforce Strengthening**

The DEC advanced its operational model through expansion of the Universal Call Taker (UCT) program, completing Phase One in 2025 and transitioning police-only call takers into the universal role. This approach allows a single telecommunicator to manage calls from answer to dispatch, resulting in faster dispatch times, fewer internal transfers, and an improved caller experience. These efficiencies are especially important during medical emergencies, where seconds saved can directly impact survivability and outcomes in time-sensitive situations such as stroke or cardiac events.

### **Innovation Spotlight: CommsCoach AI by GovWorx**

In 2025, the DEC implemented CommsCoach, an AI-driven performance and coaching platform designed to enhance quality assurance, support employee training, and modernize the call-review process. As one of the first agencies in Wisconsin to introduce this technology, the DEC positioned itself as a forward-thinking leader committed to strengthening accuracy, consistency, and professional growth across call-taking and dispatch operations.

### **Advancements in Fire Dispatch Training & Cross-Agency Coordination**

The department expanded its fire dispatch training pipeline, strengthening operational readiness and deepening collaboration with the Milwaukee Fire Department. Through curriculum updates and consistent interagency engagement, the DEC improved response coordination and continued progress toward long-term enhancements within the Fire Protocol Enhancement Project.

### **Next Generation 9-1-1: Laying the Foundation**

The department also began preparations for Next Generation 9-1-1, the national transition to an IP-based emergency communications network that will enable improved location accuracy, multimedia communications, and more resilient public safety infrastructure.



# 2025 At a Glance



## Key Achievements of the Year Continued

### **Continued Excellence in NENA Call Answering Benchmarks**

The DEC exceeded national NENA call answering standards for another consecutive year, answering more than 96% of all 911 calls within 15 seconds. This accomplishment reflects the department's commitment to speed, reliability, and excellence in serving the community during critical moments.

### **Alignment with CALEA Accreditation Standards**

In 2025, the DEC strengthened internal consistency, transparency, and documentation practices to align more closely with national CALEA accreditation standards for Public Safety Communications. This included policy refinements, expanded quality-assurance practices, enhanced training documentation, and increased accountability measures. These steps lay the foundation for future accreditation efforts and reinforce the DEC's commitment to professionalism and best practices.

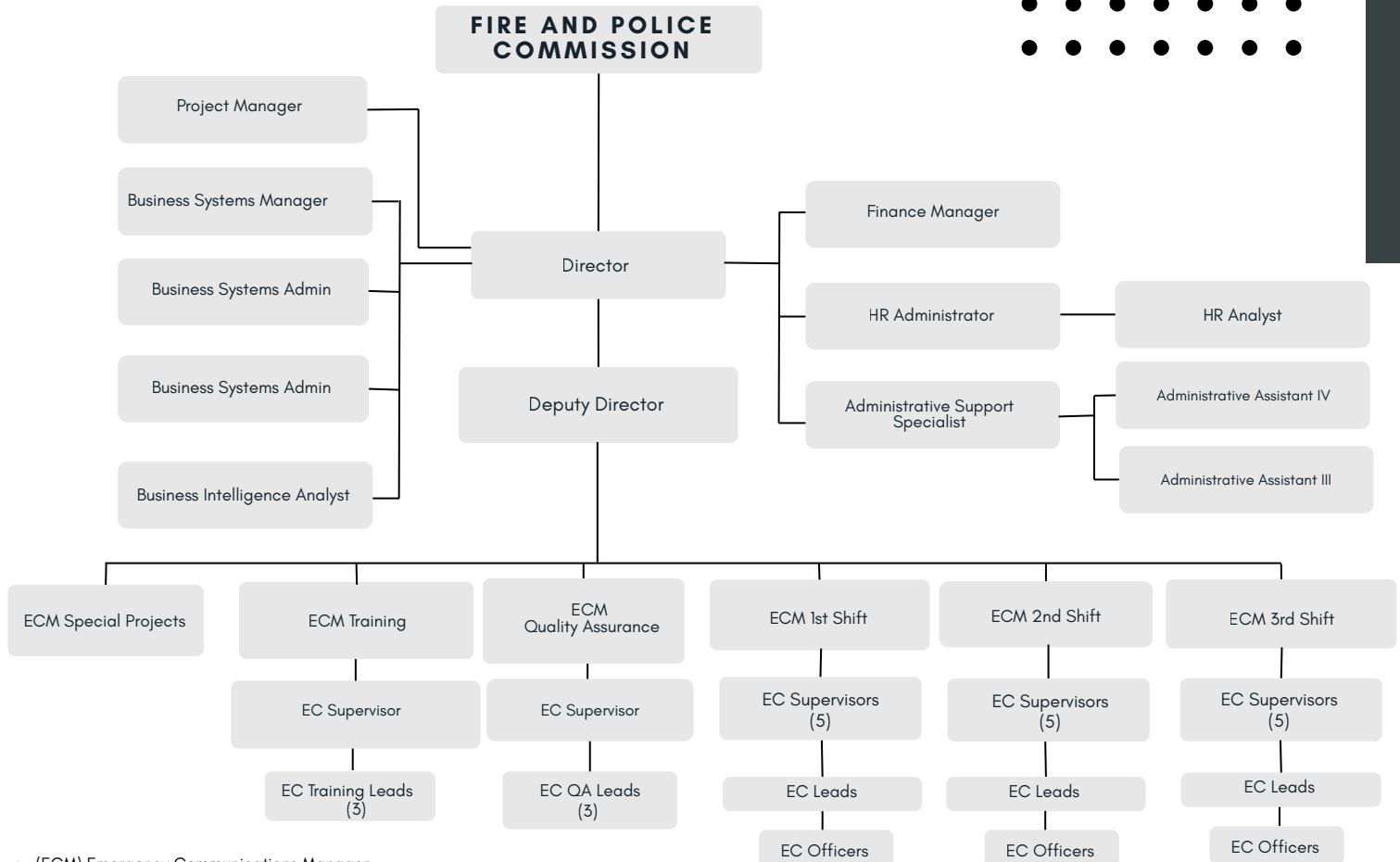
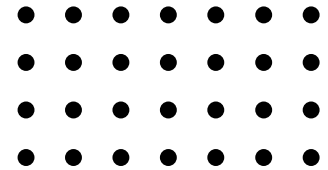
### **Expansion of Training, QA, and Leadership Development Programs**

The department delivered significant training across UCT operations, dispatching, EMD, QA, and leadership pathways. New leads were promoted, supervisors advanced through professional development, and staff benefited from structured coaching and performance expectations. These investments built a stronger, more capable workforce equipped to meet evolving public-safety needs.

### **Culture and Morale Improvements Across the Department**

The DEC continued rebuilding internal culture through recognition programs, enhanced communication efforts, staff appreciation initiatives, and events designed to support teamwork and belonging. The department reinforced its core values — **INTEGRITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, MOTIVATION, DEPENDABILITY, EXCELLENCE, and COURTESY** — to strengthen connection, pride, and purpose across all teams.

# Organizational Structure



- (ECM) Emergency Communications Manager
- (EC) Emergency Communications

## Mission

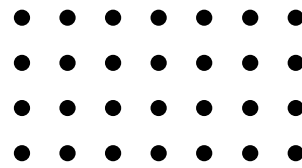
To serve our community as an essential link to vital resources with an unwavering commitment to excellence.

## Vision

As the lifeline of our community, the Milwaukee Department of Emergency Communications aspires to provide exceptional service, recognizing every second counts and every call matters.



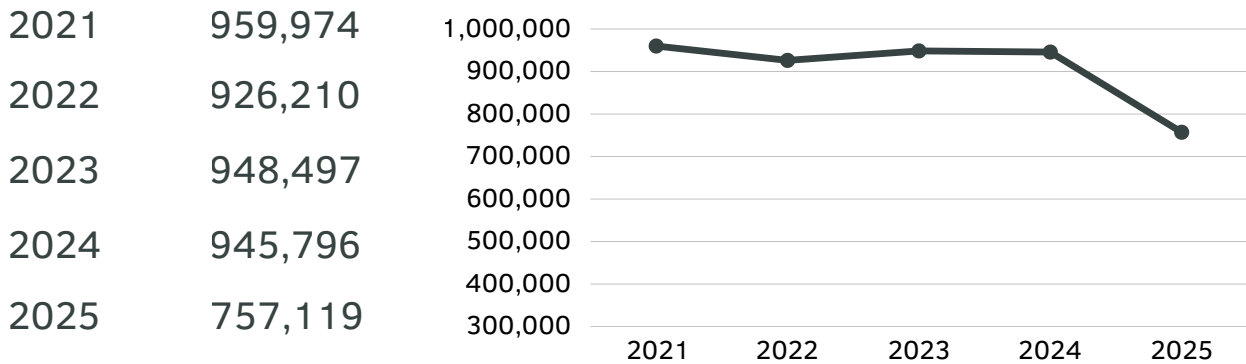
# Operational Performance



## 2025 Emergency Call Volume

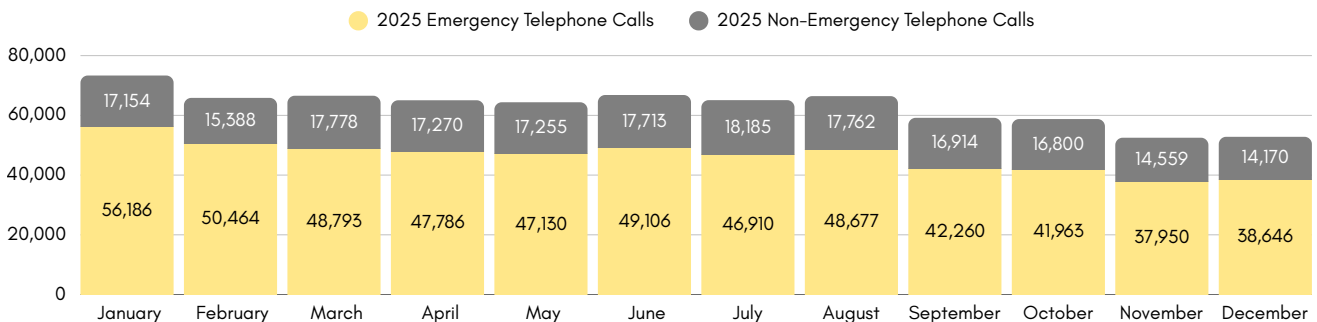
Year-over-year call volume comparisons reflect changes in both operational structure and measurement methodology. In 2025, the Department implemented the Universal Call Taker (UCT) model, which streamlined call handling and reduced duplicate call counts created by internal transfers. Calls were often transferred between telecommunicators—for example, when a police call taker transferred a call to a fire or medical call taker—and each transfer generated an additional telephone event in reporting systems. Under the UCT model, a single telecommunicator manages the call from answer through event creation, eliminating many internal transfers.

**Volume by Year**

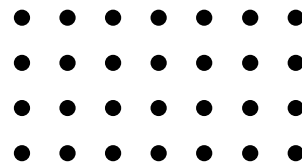


Note: 2025 call volume reflects unique calls handled under the Universal Call Taker model. Prior years counted internal call transfers as additional telephone events. Actual service demand remained consistent.

**Volume by Month**



# Operational Performance

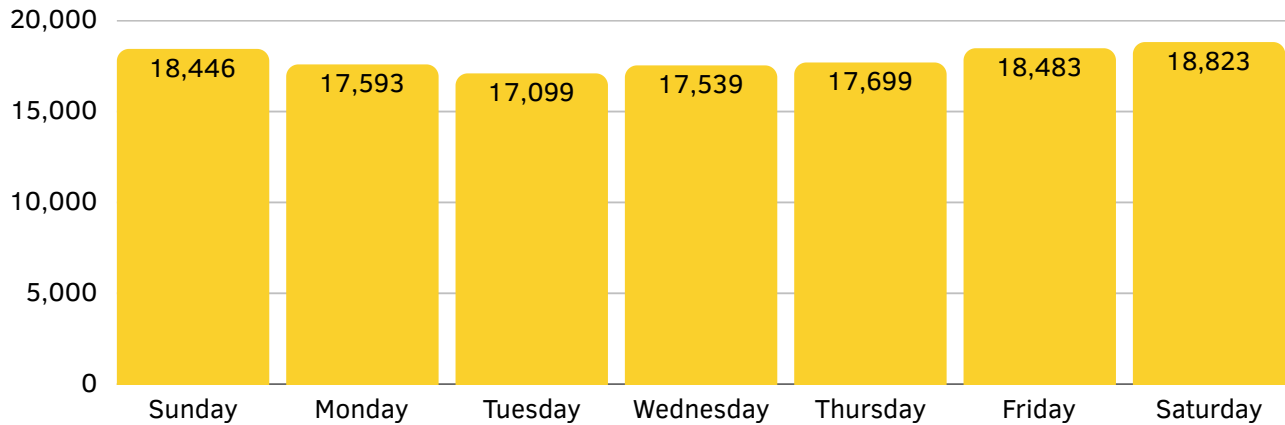


## Annual Emergency Call Volume

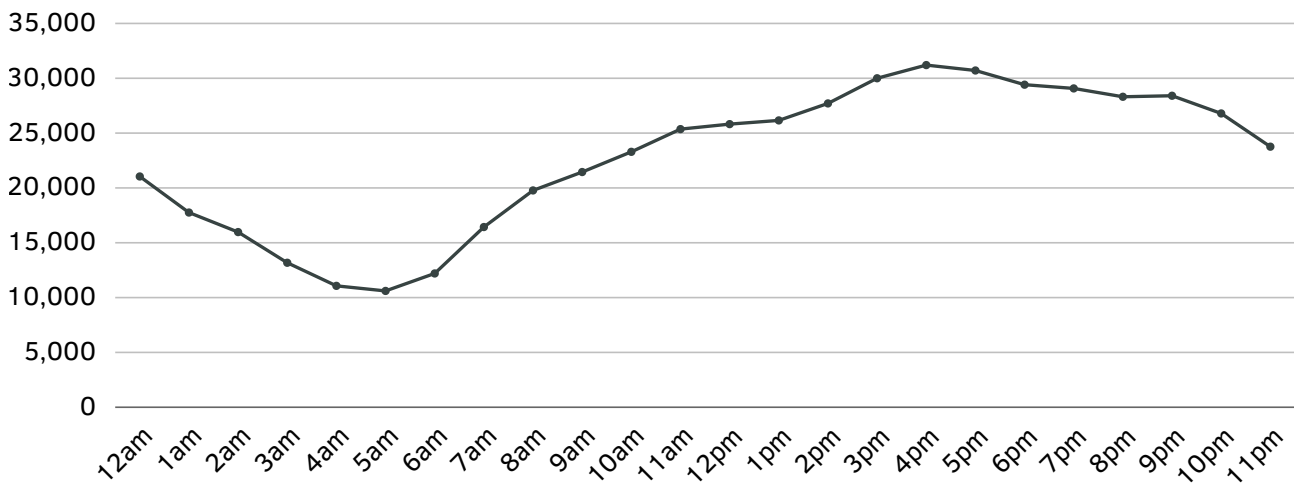
### Understanding the Trends

The data displayed reflects averaged emergency call volumes over the course of the year, rather than activity from one specific week. By averaging this data, the Department is able to identify consistent trends in call demand, including peak days of the week and the busiest times of day.

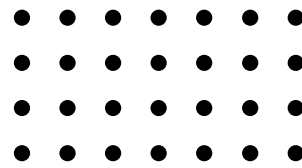
### Weekly Distribution of Emergency Calls



### 24-Hour Distribution of Emergency Calls



# Operational Performance



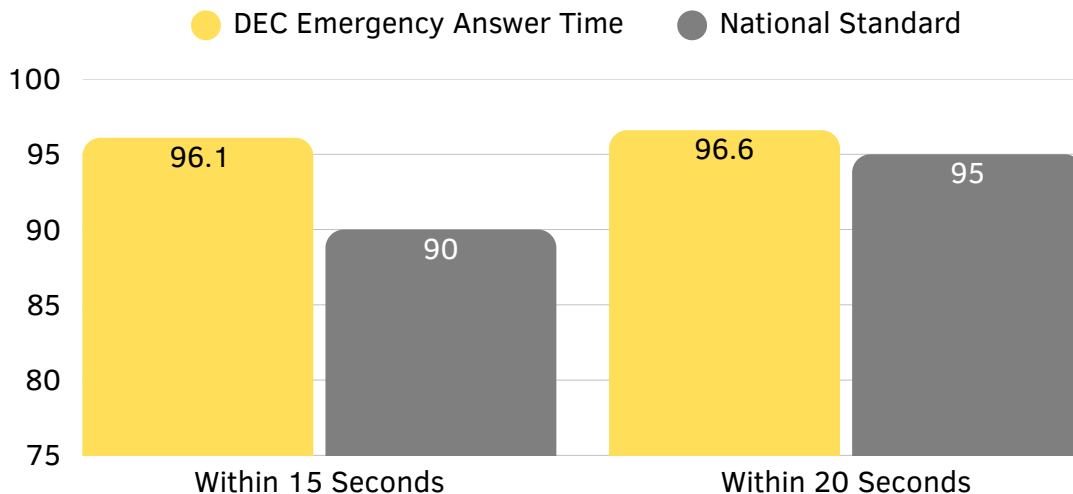
## National Standard Call Answer Time Performance

In 2025, the Milwaukee Department of Emergency Communications exceeded national call-answering standards. During the year, 96.1% of 911 calls were answered within 15 seconds, and 96.6% were answered within 20 seconds.

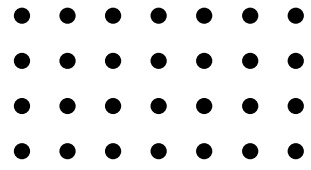
National public safety organizations establish benchmarks for how quickly 911 calls should be answered to ensure reliable access to emergency services. The National Emergency Number Association (NENA) and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommend that 90% of 911 calls be answered within 15 seconds, with a goal of 95% answered within 20 seconds.

For the community, these numbers represent more than performance metrics. They reflect the department's ability to ensure that when someone in Milwaukee calls 911 during an emergency, their call is answered quickly and efficiently. Rapid call answering allows trained call takers to immediately gather critical information and coordinate police, fire, or medical response.

Reliable 911 call answering also supports community fire protection systems and can positively influence property insurance ratings for residents and businesses, demonstrating the department's commitment to timely and dependable emergency communications service.

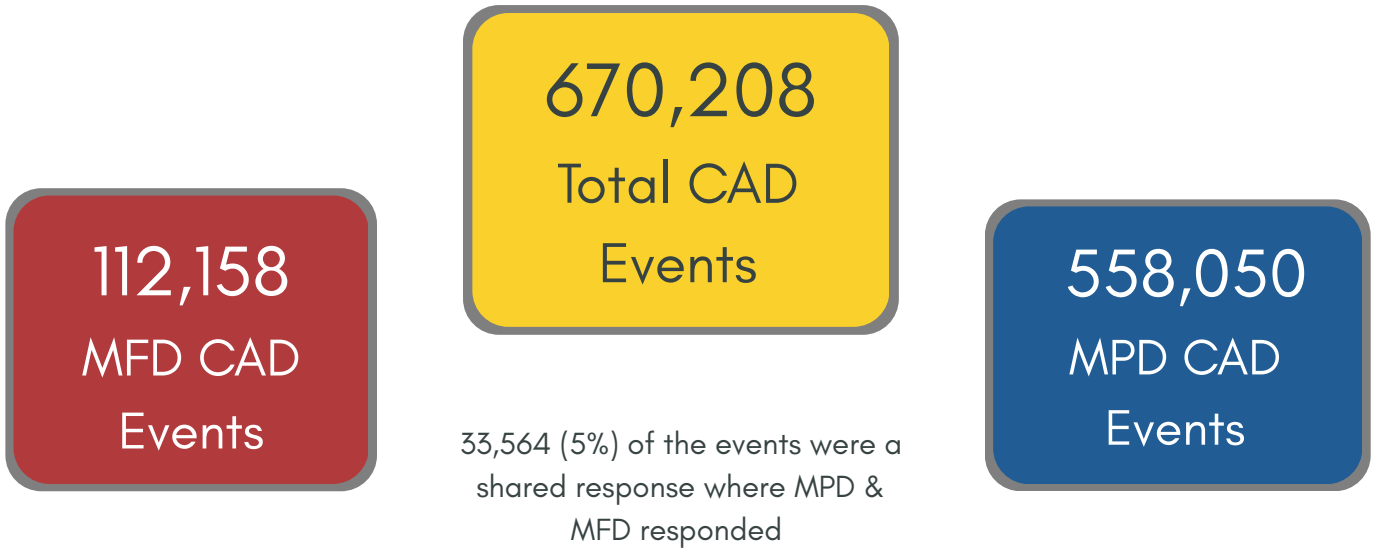


# Operational Performance

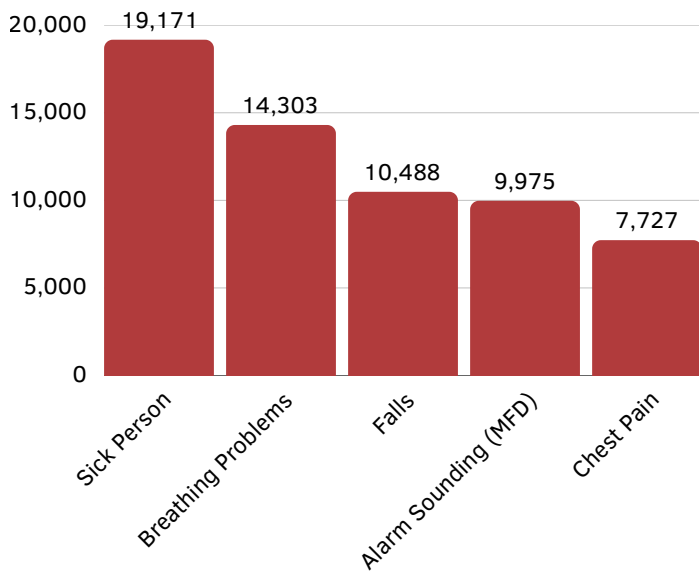


## Calls for Service

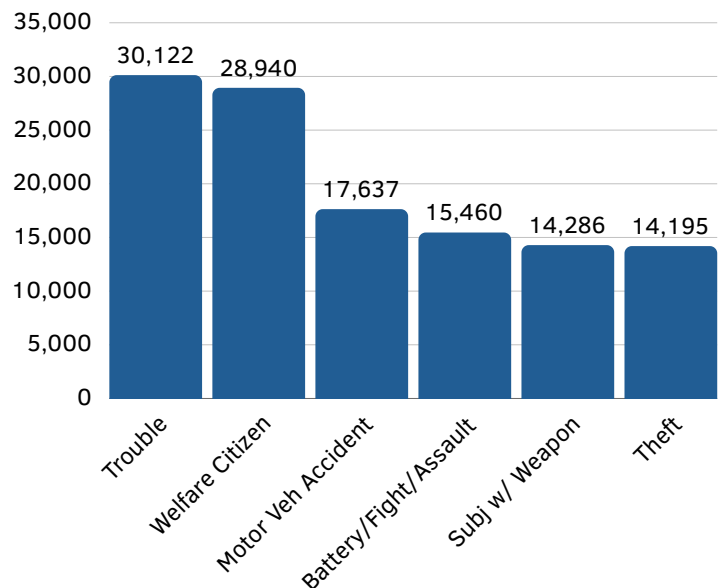
In 2025, 670,208 Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) Calls for Service were entered into the system, demonstrating the scale of incidents managed and coordinated through the Department's operations.



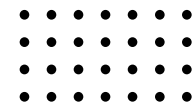
Most Frequently Generated MFD Event Types



Most Frequently Generated MPD Event Types



# Workforce Composition



Our workforce is the foundation of everything we do. The Department of Emergency Communications is made up of individuals with a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, and skill sets, all united by a shared commitment to public service. This variety strengthens our ability to respond effectively, communicate clearly, and serve the diverse needs of the community we support

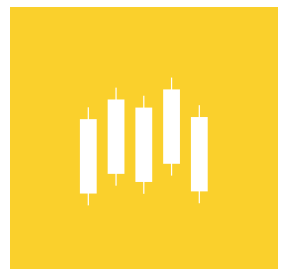


## Total Workforce Overview

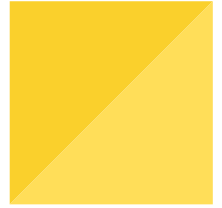
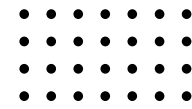
	Authorized	Filled	Vacant
Administrative	15	13	2
Operations	225	176	49
<b>Total</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>51</b>

## Operations Overview

	Authorized	Filled	Vacant
Managers	6	5	1
Supervisors	17	16	1
Leads	19	15	4
ECO	183	140	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>49</b>

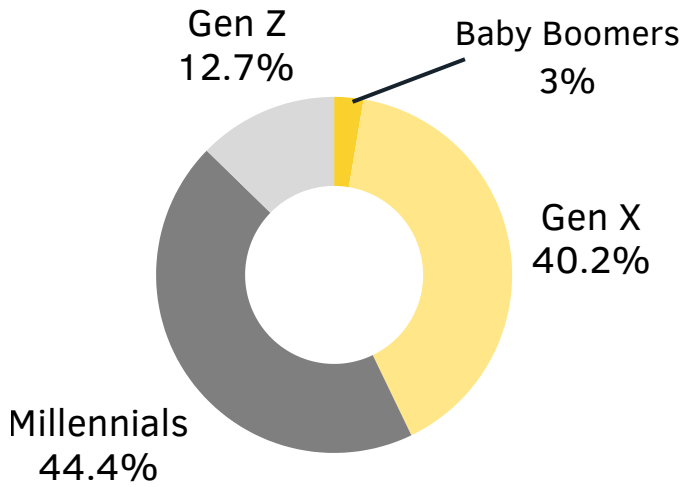


# Workforce Composition

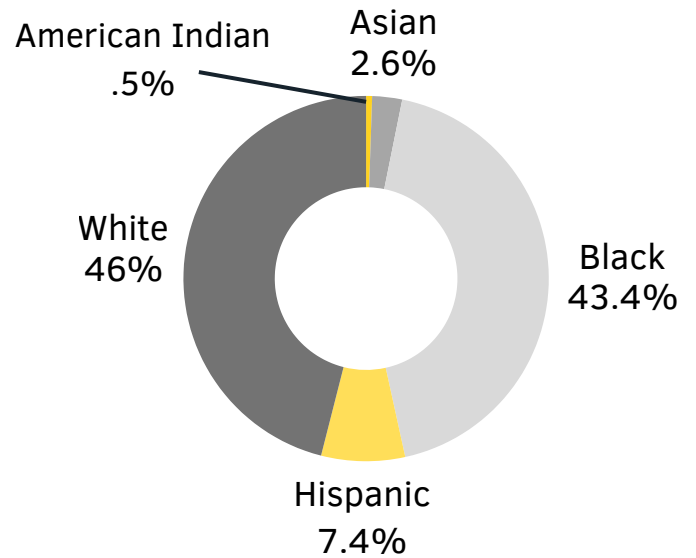


Workforce data for 2025 reflects the composition of the Department across gender, race, and age categories, along with the total number of employee exits during the calendar year. These figures provide a clear view of the individuals who make up the Department of Emergency Communications and the overall structure of our workforce.

## Age Distribution



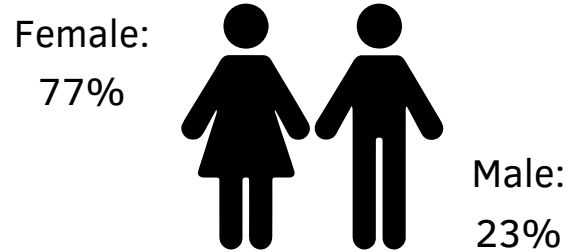
## Demographic Identity



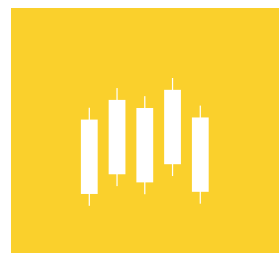
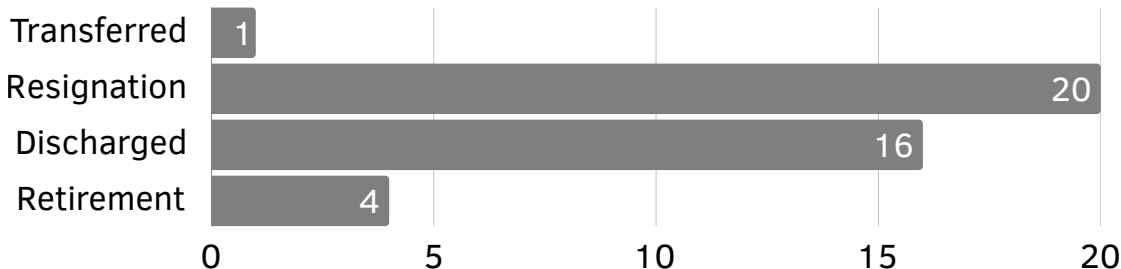
## Residency Status



## Gender Distribution



## Personnel Transitions



# Budget & Fiscal Stewardship

The Department of Emergency Communications' 2026 Proposed Budget totals \$27,171,944, representing a modest increase of \$77,360 (0.3%) over the 2025 Adopted Budget.

Total authorized positions and full-time equivalents (FTEs) decrease slightly by 0.4%, with a corresponding modest reduction in salary and benefit expenditures. Operating expenditures increase by 24.2% to support critical investments in technology modernization, infrastructure improvements, and system enhancements.

Overall, the 2026 Proposed Budget demonstrates prudent fiscal management, maintaining current service levels while strategically investing in operational reliability and long-term sustainability.

	2025 Adopted Budget	2026 Proposed Budget	Amount Change	Percent Change
FTEs – O&M	231.36	230.36	-1.00	-0.4%
FTEs - Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0%
<b>FTEs - Total</b>	<b>231.36</b>	<b>230.36</b>	<b>-1.00</b>	<b>-0.4%</b>
Total Positions Authorized	242	241	-1	-0.4%

Salaries & Wages	\$17,600,332	\$17,390,996	-\$209,336	-1.2%
Fringe Benefits	7,920,150	7,825,948	-94,202	-1.2%
Operating Expenditures	1,574,102	1,955,000	380,898	24.2%
Equipment	0	0	0	-
Special Funds	0	0	0	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$27,094,584</b>	<b>\$27,171,944</b>	<b>\$77,360</b>	<b>0.3%</b>

# Training and Professional Development

## Building Skills, Confidence, and Career Pathways

Training and professional development remain foundational to the Milwaukee Department of Emergency Communications' ability to deliver consistent, high-quality service. In 2025, DEC focused on strengthening core competencies, expanding cross-training opportunities, and reinforcing structured pathways for career growth.

### Universal Call Taker (UCT) Training

DEC completed Phase One of the Universal Call Taker (UCT) initiative, ensuring that all existing police-only call takers were given the opportunity to cross-train into the universal role. Over the course of 2025, 51 police call takers successfully completed the UCT program across eight separate training sessions.

Training significantly increased operational flexibility, strengthened service continuity across disciplines, and supported long-term workforce sustainability.

### Leadership Development & Mentorship

DEC invested in leadership development at multiple levels, including new lead telecommunicators, supervisors, and emerging leaders. Structured mentorship, targeted training, and increased on-floor support helped develop confident leaders equipped to guide teams and support daily operations.



# Community Outreach

The Milwaukee Department of Emergency Communications extends its impact beyond call-taking through meaningful community engagement and partnership.

In 2025, DEC members supported youth and families through our Adopt-A-School partnership with Benjamin Franklin and collaborated with organizations including Sojourner Family Peace Center, MADACC, YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee, Milwaukee Public Schools, Boys & Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee, Milwaukee Rescue Mission, Pathfinders, and Autism United of Wisconsin. Through these partnerships, DEC participated in more than 30 outreach events, directly engaging with over 1,300 community members through tours, presentations, youth education, and public events.

The DEC also participated in citywide events such as the Milwaukee Fire Department's 150th Anniversary Celebration and 6 National Night Out events, engaging with more than 500 community members through direct connection, public education, and conversations about appropriate 911 usage. These interactions strengthened relationships and reinforced public understanding of the critical role emergency communications plays in community safety.

Through expanded social media engagement, public education initiatives, and innovation highlighted during the CommsCoach press event, DEC continues to enhance transparency, collaboration, and public trust.



Sojourner Holiday Event



Benjamin Franklin Adopt-A -School



Sojourner Holiday Event



Benjamin Franklin Adopt-A -School



MFD Cadets Shadow for a Day



Toy Drive Donations for The Joy House



Partnership with MAADAC



Donations for The Joy House



Celebrating Telecommunicator Week 2025



DEC Collected Donations for MAADAC



Community Outreach Table

# Looking Ahead

## Closing: 2026 and Beyond

The year ahead represents a vital step forward for the Department of Emergency Communications. As we continue building a modern, resilient, and highly professional emergency communications center for the City of Milwaukee, our focus is clear. Following the successful consolidation of police and fire communications, 2026 marks our shift from establishing a foundation to advancing it. We will do this by strengthening our workforce, refining our operational model, and investing in the next generation of public safety infrastructure.

## Empowering Our Workforce

Our people are the center of every success. We are expanding the Universal Call Taker model to ensure our team is flexible, highly skilled, and prepared to support both police and fire operations seamlessly. Simultaneously, we are investing in leadership development and structured mentoring. Our goal is to equip supervisors and managers not just to manage operations, but to coach and support the professionals serving on the front lines of emergency response.



# Looking Ahead

## **Innovation and Mission-Critical Systems**

Technology will play a defining role in the coming year. We are enhancing our CAD environment and leveraging data analytics to improve response outcomes. By integrating tools such as AI-assisted quality assurance and training with advanced call analysis, we will maintain the highest standards of service even in high-stress situations. These initiatives are bolstered by our new internal IT unit, which provides the dedicated oversight needed to manage mission-critical systems and plan for the transition to NG911.

## **Professional Standards and Accountability**

We remain committed to national best practices through rigorous policy development and accreditation readiness. These efforts ensure accountability and consistency across the board. Our operational goals are measurable: exceed national call answer benchmarks, reduce processing times, and stabilize staffing to reduce overtime while maintaining constant readiness.

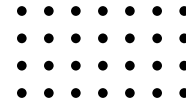
## **A Vision for Milwaukee**

These initiatives represent the continued evolution of the Department of Emergency Communications into a premier public safety agency. Our work is ambitious, but it is also an opportunity. With a dedicated team, the support of our partners, and a clear vision, we are building a communications center that is prepared for the challenges of tomorrow and deeply committed to the community we serve.

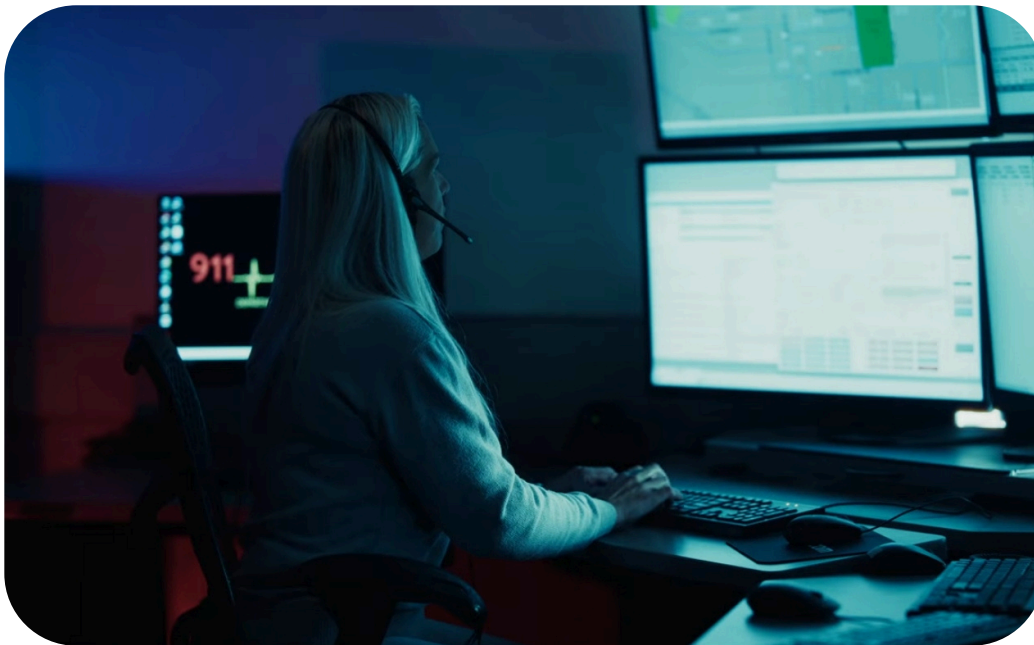




DEPARTMENT OF  
**EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS**



Every second counts.  
Every call matters!



911 Milwaukee



911\_milwaukee



Milwaukee Department of  
Emergency Communications

## 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Director Tony Bueno

Prepared by:  
Department of Emergency Communications  
Jennifer Guetchidjian, Training Supervisor

### FOR MORE INFORMATION



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<https://city.milwaukee.gov/DEC>



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