



Alabama 9-1-1 Board's Fourth Annual Training Report to the Legislature

FEBRUARY 1, 2023

Submitted on behalf of the Alabama 9-1-1 Board
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February 1, 2023

The Honorable Nathaniel Ledbetter
Speaker of the House of Representatives
11 South Union Street
Suite 401 G
Montgomery, AL 36130-2950

Subject: Alabama 9-1-1 Board's Fourth Annual Training Report to the Legislature

Dear Speaker Ledbetter,

As the Executive Director for the Alabama 9-1-1 Board, I am pleased to present our fourth Annual Training Report to the Alabama Legislature. Pursuant to Section 11-98-4.1, Code of Alabama 1975, as amended, each year the "Executive Director of the statewide 911 Board shall prepare an annual report detailing the training provided and administered by the 911 Board for 911 dispatchers. The report shall be submitted to the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on February 1, 2020, and by February 1 each year thereafter." While it is the goal of the Alabama 9-1-1 Board to provide the Legislature with information about 9-1-1 as required by statute, it is also our goal to provide that information in a way that is useful to you as well as the citizens and visitors of Alabama.

The Alabama 9-1-1 Board continues to strive to ensure that the 9-1-1 services provided in Alabama are performed by competent, dedicated public safety employees. I hope that this report shows our commitment to that objective and that you are as proud as I am of our state's progress, willingness, and commitment to the effective training of 9-1-1 personnel. I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to thank you for your continuing support of 9-1-1 in our great state.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I invite any opportunity to educate and inform about all 9-1-1 initiatives and the progress we are making in our industry.

Sincerely,



Leah Missildine
Executive Director
Alabama 9-1-1 Board

Introduction

In 2012, the Alabama Legislature passed a law creating a statewide 9-1-1 Board that superseded the Commercial Mobile Radio Service Board, better known as the Wireless 9-1-1 Board at that time. The statewide 9-1-1 Board, or Alabama 9-1-1 Board (Board) as it is known today, is comprised of 13 members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Section 11-98-4.1 of the Code of Alabama 1975, as amended, mandated the Board to develop a statewide 9-1-1 plan and to administer the 9-1-1 Fund, inclusive of setting a single consumer surcharge for all types of telecommunications services, collecting that remittance from telecommunications service providers, and then distributing that revenue to local Emergency Communication Districts for the operation of their 9-1-1 centers based on their previously, locally set surcharge rates.

Additionally, since the Board's creation nearly 10 years ago, there have been two legislative changes that dramatically changed the requirements on the Board—1) Act 2019-70 and 2) Act 2022-387. Act 2019-70 required the Board to administer the deployment and operation of a statewide 9-1-1 voice and data system that utilizes emerging communication technologies which are capable of connecting to a 9-1-1 system and delivering 9-1-1 and emergency information to Districts; this system is known as the Alabama Next Generation Emergency Network (ANGEN). The initial buildout of ANGEN, a fully functional and standards compliant Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) system comprised of an interconnected and interoperable system known as an Emergency Services IP Network (ESInet) was completed in May 2021 with no significant overruns on schedule or costs. ANGEN operates as a “system of systems” and provides the framework for all 100+ Board-funded primary 9-1-1 centers or Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) to enable NG9-1-1 capabilities including, but not limited to:

- Never-before collected 9-1-1 call statistics (i.e. call answer times, number of transfers, service types of calls, call volume, etc.),
- Enhanced call-routing to the correct PSAP or 9-1-1 center,
- Increased access to 9-1-1 for communities that have previously experienced difficulty in communicating their emergency needs,
- Text-for-911 (inbound as well as outbound),
- Significantly improved disaster recovery options for centers dealing with natural or human-made disasters, and
- Multimedia messages, telematics, and the Internet of Things data like pictures and videos from callers, crash data from wrecked vehicles, alarms from wearable personal health monitors, activations of gunfire detection systems, etc.

Act 2022-387 authorized the Board to establish certification requirements and then deliver said requirements for public safety telecommunicators within the state's primary PSAPs. The Board's certification program is in full swing and has experienced great success in its first several months. More detail will be provided later in this report, as it pertains to the training provided by the Board; however, since Act 2022-387 took effect on July 1st approximately 55% of Alabama's 1,650+ Public Safety Telecommunicators (PSTs) have been certified in a 40-hour basic course comprised of minimum core competency topics, such as the Public Safety Team, Legal Concepts, Customer Service, Emergency Communications Technology, and Quality Assurance. Alabama is one of four other state's that mandated such training for PSTs last year.

While the Board is not responsible for the whole of emergency communications statewide (i.e. radio systems, mass notification systems, 9-8-8, etc.), the consolidated or centralized fiscal, technological, and certification approach has proven effective in the enhancement of 9-1-1 call delivery and service over the past decade.

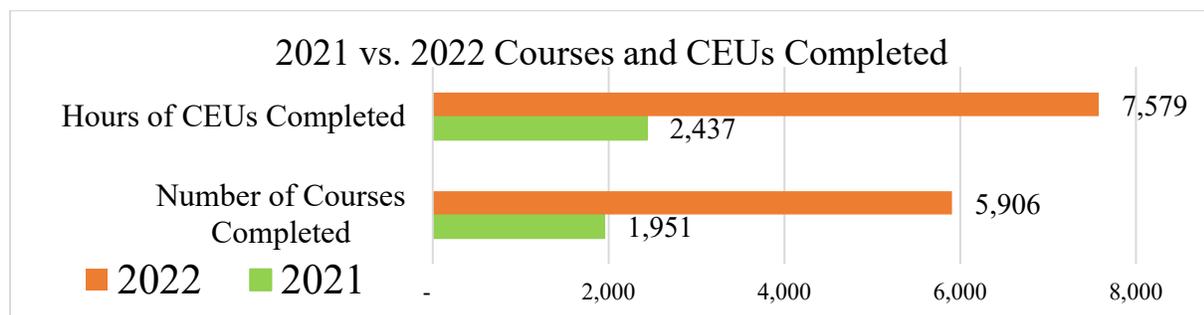
In-person Courses

In-person courses are developed by industry experts with years of experience working in their respective communications agencies on a daily basis and designed to meet the needs of 9-1-1 professionals, at every stage of their career regardless of tenure and position, and delivered by instructors that are experienced 9-1-1 veterans focused on supporting and developing the individual 9-1-1 professional. Curriculum is updated on a continuous basis to reflect the ever-changing realities of 9-1-1 that span the breadth and depth of 9-1-1 technology and Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) operations. Board staff, in partnership with our contracted vendors, were able to deliver 230 hours of classroom-style, in-person training across all 9-1-1 Training Regions, as shown in the map to the right.



Virtual, Self-paced Training Courses

Initially, the Board’s focus was in-person training because this type of training provides a dedicated environment with less distractions, hands-on learning, onsite technical support, and student accountability. However, the staff of the Alabama 9-1-1 Board was forced to shift its focus to virtually accessible training and procure an adequate learning management system in 2021 to deliver ongoing training due to staffing shortages, pandemic-related restrictions, lack of travel budgets in local Districts, etc. Comparing our initial enrollment year, CY2021, to our second enrollment year, CY2022, shows a 200% increase in training courses and hours delivered through the Board’s learning management system.

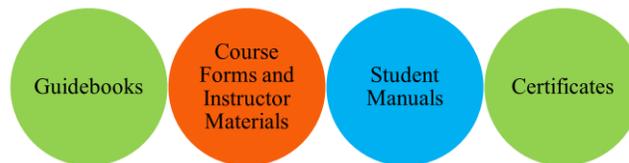


Additionally, Board staff conducted 40 one-hour webinars on current events that specifically impact those working in our 9-1-1 centers statewide. Topics cover technology news and updates, programs facilitated by the Board, training and funding opportunities, introductions to other stakeholder groups, current events, etc. These are recorded live and then posted in a library for 9-1-1 personnel to access at their convenience.

Alabama Emergency Medical Dispatch Program

In partnership with the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) Office of EMS, the Board developed voluntary statewide emergency medical dispatch (EMD) protocols in March 2018. The Board identified the need for a quality, affordable EMD program for all of Alabama’s PSAPs that provide life-sustaining or lifesaving prearrival instruction to those in need by allowing the call taker to quickly narrow down the caller’s type of medical or trauma situations before help arrives on scene. Having programs like this implemented in agencies when a global pandemic, catastrophic weather event, or other routine emergencies occur is absolutely essential to saving the lives of the citizens and visitors of Alabama as well as protecting the vital personnel that provide care during a public safety response.

The ALEMD program has saved the participating agencies tens of thousands of dollars by offering the following for no cost to the agency:



In the past 48 months, we have grown the ALEMD program by:

	EMD Courses Offered	Instructors	Practitioners
2019	40	72	237
2020	41	16	201
2021	36	7	112
2022	47	9	226

Alabama Public Safety Telecommunicator Certification Program (ALPST-1)

Last, but certainly not least--as previously mentioned, Act 2022-387 was passed last year authorizing the Board to establish certification requirements and then deliver said requirements for Public Safety Telecommunicators (PSTs) within the state’s primary PSAPs. Once passed, the Board began the administrative rules process to establish the program and its requirements alongside a complex data collection from the 100+ primary PSAPs across Alabama. The ALPST-1 Certification Program was officially launched on January 3, 2023. In its first four weeks, we have recorded the first-ever statewide roster of Alabama’s 1,650 or so PSTs and certified 917 with plans to have the remaining PSTs enrolled by July 2, 2023, and certified by December 29, 2023. Beginning in the month of February, non-certified PSTs will have the option to voluntarily enroll in a Board-approved and funded PST course or take the ALPST-1

Competency Exam or have their in-house training program approved according to the nationally recognized Recommended Minimum Training Guidelines for Telecommunicators. Furthermore, and in addition to the three previously taught courses by Board staff, the Board is coordinating with PSAPs across Alabama to offer four more certification courses in as many months.

Summary

As the mandates on the Alabama 9-1-1 Board have changed in the past decade, our primary objectives have endured. Our commitment to administering the 9-1-1 Fund with fiscal responsibility and effectiveness, deploying technology that meets the needs of the public we serve, and educating as well as advocating for our 9-1-1 stakeholders continues to improve the level of service provided to those that interact with 9-1-1.

A comprehensive list of all training administered and facilitated by the Alabama 9-1-1 Board is available upon request from Leah Missildine, Executive Director, via email leah@al911board.com or phone 334-440-7911.