



Alabama 9-1-1 Board’s Fifth Annual Training Report to the Legislature

FEBRUARY 1, 2024

Submitted on behalf of the Alabama 9-1-1 Board
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Introduction

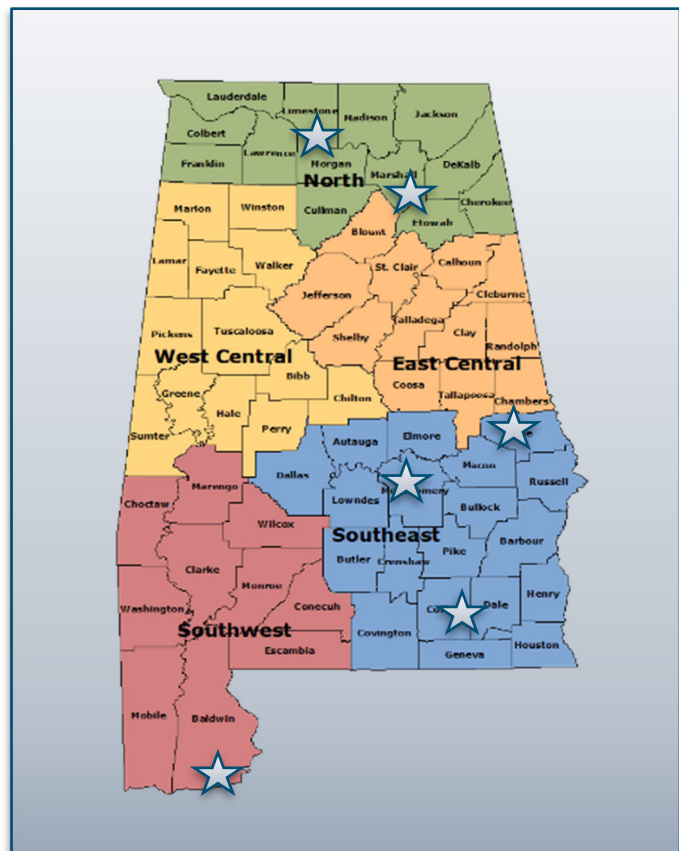
In 2012, the Alabama 9-1-1 Board was established, replacing the Commercial Mobile Radio Service Board with a 13-member board appointed by the Governor. The Board oversees a comprehensive 9-1-1 plan and manages the 9-1-1 Fund. Legislative amendments in 2019 authorized the Board's operation of the Alabama Next Generation Emergency Network (ANGEN), an advanced Next Generation 9-1-1 system. ANGEN enhances various 9-1-1 capabilities, including call statistics, improved call routing, expanded access, text-to-911, disaster recovery, and multimedia support. Successfully deployed in May 2021, the ANGEN system met schedule and cost expectations.

Legislative changes in 2022, i.e. Act 22-387, empowered the Board to establish certification requirements for public safety telecommunicators (PSTs) across the state's 106 primary Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs). The Board's Public Safety Telecommunicator Certification Program effectively meets the statutory requirements and is actively working towards a more streamlined and automated process.

Training Courses

The Board is committed to providing comprehensive training options for 9-1-1 personnel by offering diverse courses. These include traditional in-person classes, online modules, conference sessions, webinars, and virtual classroom experiences.

In 2023, the Board facilitated 118 hours of classroom-style, in-person training attended by 907 participants, resulting in 2,790 in-person training hours earned. In addition to the in-person hours, the Board also facilitated completion of 8,741 hours of online training. With the Board's investment of \$85,000 into a statewide platform for online training, this brings our total spent per hour to \$9.72. For those who chose to participate in the PST Training Reimbursement Program, the Board reimbursed \$26,983.70. The accomplishments of 2023 are commendable but plans for 2024 are set to elevate the standard to a greater level. Efforts are underway to expand in-person training opportunities across the state significantly. Collaborating with multiple training organizations, the Board will host sessions in various regions throughout the year. This strategic approach ensures accessibility for all, addressing challenges such as travel costs and staffing shortages



In Person Courses

that may hinder participation in traditional training settings. The Board is tailoring its 2024 training initiatives to meet each district's unique needs and financial constraints. A comparison between calendar years 2022 and 2023 reveals a notable 15% increase in training courses offered and hours delivered through the Board's learning management system.

In addition to traditional training formats, the Board conducted 40 webinars in 2023, focusing on timely topics relevant to 9-1-1 center personnel statewide. These webinars cover a range of subjects, including technological advancements, updates on Board initiatives, funding opportunities, and introductions to key stakeholder groups. Recordings of these sessions are archived in a dedicated library, providing 9-1-1 personnel with convenient access to valuable resources at their own pace.

The Board is dedicated to ensuring all of Alabama's 9-1-1 personnel are equipped with the knowledge and skills to serve their communities and all stakeholders with the highest standard of care.

Alabama Emergency Medical Dispatch Program

Following the establishment of the Alabama Emergency Medical Dispatch (ALEMD) program in 2018, the Board has diligently worked towards offering this program to agencies statewide at no charge. In 2023, 54 ALEMD courses were delivered, instructing 153 students.

More importantly, a comprehensive review has been initiated as the program has approached its fifth anniversary. This review encompasses three main areas: guide cards/guidebooks, policies, and training materials. Throughout 2023, numerous meetings were conducted across the state, inviting ALEMD practitioners and instructors to provide input and recommendations for enhancing the program's effectiveness in serving PSTs who utilize ALEMD. Nearly half of Alabama's PSAPs utilize the ALEMD program. Consolidating the feedback gathered from these meetings, the Board staff has commenced the development of a digital version of the guide cards, prioritizing usability and readability. A meeting with the EMS director and the Department of Public Health is forthcoming to finalize modifications and additions to the guide cards. The Board expects to unveil the new digital version and redesigned guide cards during its annual User Conference in April 2024. In addition, the Board is in the process of assembling a team of existing instructors from various locations across the state to assist in revising the policies and training materials. Board staff aims to have these updates finalized by the end of summer 2024.

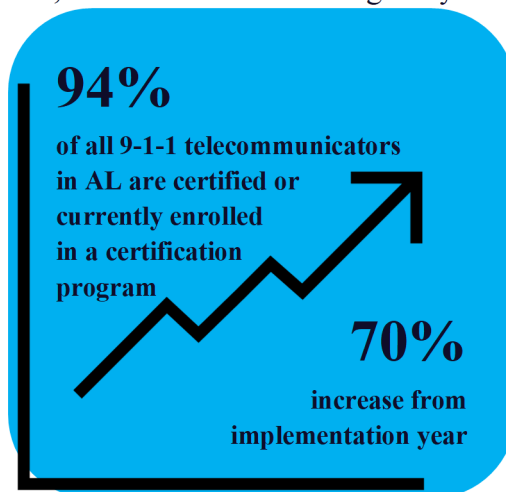
Alabama Public Safety Telecommunicator Certification Program (ALPST-1)

Following the guidelines outlined in Act 22-387, the Board took action to ensure that all Public Safety Telecommunicators (PSTs) in Alabama obtained certification through the state Board's Program. Data on PSTs within the 106 primary PSAPs was collected, and a comprehensive master database was established to identify those needing to complete the competency exam or enroll in the 40-hour Public Safety Telecommunicator course. Subsequently, each Emergency Communication District (ECD) was contacted to provide guidance on achieving compliance within their respective districts.

A year ago, just over half of Alabama's 1,650+ PSTs had completed the mandated 40-hour Public Safety Telecommunicator course. Presently, the Board has achieved an 85% completion rate, with a 94% compliance rate when factoring in ongoing enrollments and training. This increase indicates compliance numbers rose by approximately 70% last year. The mandate stipulates a minimum 60% certification rate for each ECD, a threshold that's been greatly surpassed, with numbers continuing to rise.

While the law requires the completion of the PST 40-hour board-approved course, the Board refunds expenses incurred for course registration and materials, in addition to fees required to maintain certification annually through other organizations. Districts are required to submit a reimbursement request to receive their funds. While this benefit is available to all primary PSAPs, only those opting for reimbursement receive refunds for their course expenses.

Act 22-387 also introduced a data collection effort that the Board had yet to undertake. While the manual process of gathering PST and PSAP information has proven effective, it has been labor-intensive for the Board staff. A new digital database has been developed since welcoming an Education and Outreach Specialist in November. This new repository for training records, certification data, PST data, ECD, and PSAP information will be crucial in sustaining the Education and Outreach Department's efforts. Attendees of our User Conference can expect a preview of the new database and its functionalities in April.



2024's 3rd Annual User Conference

The Board is excited to announce its third annual User Conference, scheduled for April 8-12, 2024. After two years in Montgomery, the Board decided to relocate its conference venue to Birmingham to engage a broader audience within the state. This year, the Board has set a comprehensive agenda featuring a week of educational sessions tailored to benefit every employee involved in Alabama's 9-1-1 system. The Board will offer over 30 hours of in-person courses throughout the conference, with dedicated tracks designed for frontline personnel, supervisors, administrative staff, GIS professionals, and directors. The Board staff has gone to great lengths to plan and deliver an enriching and informative experience for its PSTs and other 9-1-1 personnel largely funded through sponsor donations. A wide range of training sessions will be available, and below are a few examples of the classes being offered:

- Suicide Prevention and 988
- Quality Assurance for the Front-Line Employee
- Quality Assurance Program Creation for 9-1-1 Leadership
- CPR Course
- 9-1-1 Funding Dynamics for 9-1-1 Leadership
- Legal Navigation for 9-1-1 Leadership

- Strategies for Fully Utilizing Tools Available to You as a Telecommunicator
- Alabama EMD Program Update

The Board has secured speakers from the 9-1-1 Institute, KultureCity, Birmingham Crisis Center, ALGO, and many others.

Outreach

Our Outreach initiative emphasizes the importance of engaging with all 106 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), ensuring that the Board establishes one-on-one connections with supervisors, directors, administrative staff, and frontline telecommunicators. Highlighting the importance of frontline feedback, Board staff actively seeks input regarding preferred training and identified areas for enhancing the skills of 9-1-1 dispatchers based on their specific requests and needs. This feedback has been carefully compiled to formulate a comprehensive curriculum that aligns with the Board's objectives. In addition to addressing training needs, our strategy involves forging partnerships with organizations like National Emergency Number Association (NENA), Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO), the 9-1-1 Training Institute, Alabama Association of 9-1-1 Districts (AAND), and others. To ensure accessibility, the Board has secured diverse locations across the state, facilitating the delivery of these courses to individuals across all regions.

In July, the Board onboarded a new Education and Outreach Program Manager, who conducted site visits to 14 PSAPs in 2023 and initiated contact with all 106 PSAPs via email or phone. The outreach component of the Education and Outreach Program continues to be a primary focus in 2024. Central to this endeavor is enhancing the visibility of the 9-1-1 Board within the statewide 9-1-1 community and among frontline personnel who handle emergency calls daily. Regular visits to PSAPs and personal introductions to every call taker have been prioritized to ensure direct engagement. Education and Outreach employees aim to familiarize stakeholders with the Board's functions and demonstrate how the Board can facilitate and enhance daily operations by fostering connections among PSAPs with similar characteristics and leveraging collective insights to address challenges effectively.

Summary

Over the last decade, the directives governing the Alabama 9-1-1 Board have undergone alterations, yet our core goals remain steadfast. Board staff remain dedicated to managing the 9-1-1 Fund with financial prudence and efficacy, implementing cutting-edge technology tailored to the demands of our community, and enhancing service standards through education and advocacy for our stakeholders. Our unwavering commitment continues to elevate the quality of assistance to individuals engaging with the 9-1-1 system.

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.