

WHAT DOES REGIONALIZATION REALLY MEAN?

Many questions have arisen regarding the 911 Coordinating Council's focus on regional collaboration in moving forward toward Next Generation 911 (Nex-Gen). The purpose of this document is to attempt to explain the vision of regional collaboration in regards to Nex-Gen and alleviate concerns that this is a movement towards mandatory consolidation of Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs).

Regionalization as envisioned by the 911 Coordinating Council might more properly be called regionalized equipment sharing. This would allow all of the existing PSAPs in the region to utilize shared equipment, thus greatly reducing the cost to each of the PSAPs for this equipment and for its ongoing technical support. The equipment would be housed in a location agreed to by the regional group of PSAPs and would be accessed by each of the individual PSAPs over the network. Rather than each individual PSAP having its own premise equipment, the premise equipment would be shared by all of the PSAPs within the region.

This type of regionalized equipment sharing will require extensive planning to be successful. The following items are examples of some of the planning components that will be required:

- Defining the geographic areas of the region
- Developing a governance structure for the region that gives all PSAPs within the region adequate representation and participation
- Shared maintenance cost funding
- Policy development for clear responsibility guidelines

This is by no means a comprehensive list, only a few suggestions of items that will need to be addressed. The extensive nature of the planning process for successful regionalized equipment sharing is the driving force behind the focus of grant funds towards such planning.

The vision of the 911 Coordinating Council is to make strategic use of the limited amount of 911 State Grant Funds to implement a statewide, standards based Nex-Gen network infrastructure and GIS database that can be used by any PSAP in Kansas to deliver 911 services in their communities. PSAPs that enter into regional partnerships may share 911 backroom and network equipment that accesses the statewide Nex-Gen system. Another potential option would be for PSAPs not part of a regional partnership to utilize 911 servers and switches located on the statewide Nex-Gen network. Decisions to physically consolidate PSAPs should always be a local level decision. . If local jurisdictions should decide to consolidate, the 911 Coordinating Council would support such a decision in any way that it could.