

Charlottesville-UVA-Albemarle County Emergency Communications Center



Citizens Survey

December, 2009

In January 2010, Charlottesville/UVA/Albemarle County ECC completed an annual citizen survey designed to measure citizen satisfaction with the service that they received from the 911 Center. The survey was created to gather information on overall agency performance, overall competency of agency personnel, communications officer's attitude and behavior towards citizens, and to identify concerns while gathering recommendations and suggestions for improvement.

Summary of Method

The questionnaire was developed by Tom Hanson and Deborah Wade. The survey was conducted for timeframe of July 1st and December 15, 2009. 500 citizens received surveys that were self-addressed and stamped for the convenience of the citizens. The surveys were mailed out to select citizens based on calls for service records. To ensure that the surveys covered all public safety providers, citizen participants were chosen based on the following method:

- Gabe Elias with IT Staff counted all the Event Numbers for the timeframe July, 2009 to December 15, 2009. Then, he counted all the “Event Numbers” for Albemarle County Police, Charlottesville Police, University of VA Police, Albemarle County Fire, Charlottesville Fire with University Fire, and the Rescue Squads for the year.
- Gabe divided the agency counts by the total to get the percentages.
- The percentages were multiplied by 500.
- The query criteria used pulled the last 647 incidents out of the calls for each agency.
 - AF- .043% - pulled 28 calls for service- sent 22
 - APD- .3568% - pulled 231 calls for service-sent 178
 - CF- .0230% - pulled 14 calls for service- sent 14
 - CP- .3254% - pulled 211 calls for service- sent 163
 - RS- .0893% - pulled 58 calls for service- sent 58
 - UVA- .1622% - pulled 105 calls for service- sent 65

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- For each agency list, the query pulled:
 - -Event Number
 - -create time
 - -type
 - -address + apartment number
 - -caller address
 - -caller name

- -caller phone
 - -contact complainant flag (IT filtered this and ONLY listed calls where the see complainant was checked "YES")

The query pulled the last ## calls which matched the criteria.

Any surveys that were returned due to address issues were sent out one more time. The criteria used for collecting mailing address for the returned survey was to replace it with the same type responder call from the listed timeframe.

Survey questionnaire included 7 specific questions and a rating scale.

The Center survey was returned by 98 citizens for a 19.6 % return rate compared to 63 citizens for a 12.6 % return rate in 2008 and 99 returned by citizens for a 19.8 % return rate in 2007.

Survey Design Challenges

As with all surveying techniques, there are challenges in the design that should be acknowledged. First, while the return rate for mail in surveys are not as high as other methods, it is acknowledged that the return rate was only 19.6% and we would have liked for it to be higher for a more accurate reflection of citizen perceptions. Second, even though we pulled more recent calls for service to cut down on the length of time between the citizen making the call to the 9-1-1 Center and the receipt of the survey it may still affect a person's response. The time frame may have caused issues with survey respondents remembering how the call was handled by the Communications Officer. Third, the rating scheme may have been a bit confusing to some. The scoring used N/A for no applicable, 1 was unable to remember, 2 as the lowest, 3 was considered neutral, 4 was somewhat satisfied, and 5 was considered the highest score. The survey categories may have been affected by an individual's self interpretation of what the numbers of each category represented. The fourth challenge is that some citizens rated the

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responders not the communications officer even though we put messages with each survey to explain their purpose.

Nevertheless, the comments that citizens put on the surveys leads us to believe that they understood the rating scheme to the level that is adequate for useful feedback and interpretation.

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Results

The 911 Center received the following percentages for each question:

Question 1: Rate the promptness with which your call was answered.

86 %	scored "5"	HIGH
13 %	scored "4"	
1 %	scored "3"	
0 %	scored "2"	LOW
0 %	scored "1"	UNABLE TO RATE
0 %	N/A	

Question 2: Rate the knowledge demonstrated by the Communications Officer.

81 %	scored "5"	HIGH
17 %	scored "4"	
1 %	scored "3"	
0 %	scored "2"	LOW
1 %	scored "1"	UNABLE TO RATE
0 %	N/A	

Question 3: The 911 operator responded in a tactful, courteous and professional manner.

86 %	scored "5"	HIGH
9 %	scored "4"	
3 %	scored "3"	
0 %	scored "2"	LOW
2 %	scored "1"	UNABLE TO RATE
0 %	N/A	

Question 4: Rate the interest and desire to help demonstrated by the Communications Officer.

82 %	scored "5"	HIGH
15 %	scored "4"	
2 %	scored "3"	
0 %	scored "2"	LOW
1 %	scored "1"	UNABLE TO RATE
0 %	N/A	

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Question 5: The operator understood the type of assistance I required.

83 %	scored "5"	HIGH
12 %	scored "4"	
3 %	scored "3"	
0 %	scored "2"	LOW
2 %	scored "1"	UNABLE TO RATE
0 %	N/A	

Question 6: I experienced no confusion about how my call would be handled.

83 %	scored "5"	HIGH
13 %	scored "4"	
2 %	scored "3"	
1 %	scored "2"	LOW
1 %	scored "1"	UNABLE TO RATE
0 %	N/A	

Question 7: On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest possible score, how would you rate your experience with 911?

81 %	scored "5"	HIGH
16 %	scored "4"	
1 %	scored "3"	
1 %	scored "2"	LOW
1 %	scored "1"	UNABLE TO RATE
0 %	N/A	

Findings and Interpretation of Results

Overall, the majority of citizens who have used ECC's services during the time period of July 1st, and December 15th, 2009 that responded to this survey are satisfied with their experiences associated with the E911 Center's performance. Eighty-one percent of respondents gave the Center the very highest possible score regarding their experience with the center. If one interprets the combined answers of 5 and 4 as high scores on this survey scale, we find that ninety-seven percent of survey respondents were satisfied with their experience with 911 overall. In fact, over eighty-one percent of the respondents rated the Center the highest possible score (5)

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regarding the operator's promptness, knowledge level, professionalism, interest, understanding of their situation and lack of confusion on how the call was handled, overall.

The areas that needed the most improvement from last year's survey were conveying to callers that the Center is interested and has the desire to help and leaving the caller with confusion about how their call will be handled. If the lowest scores of two and three are combined the survey totals show that 5.5 % of all citizens in 2007, 3.7% percent in 2008 and 2% in 2009 gave the Center the lowest scores regarding the interest and desire to help shown by the call taker. The survey also showed that 4.04 % in 2007 and 1.59 % in 2008 and 3% in 2009 rated the Center the lowest score possible indicating that they felt confused as to how their calls would be handled. This would support the statement that the Center continues to show marked improvement in the category of interest shown by the communications officers, but shows an increase in the confusion level experienced by callers on how their calls would be handled from 2008 to 2009.

While low scores were very minimal, the survey identified three areas that may need the most improvement. Three (3) percent scored the Center a two or three in:

- The call takers responding in a tactful, courteous and professional manner;
- The interest and desire to help shown by the call taker;
- Their overall experience with the Center.

Next Steps

The results of this survey will be shared with the Communications Officers, so they can see what areas the respondents to the survey were most satisfied with and the levels of dissatisfaction. Monthly shift meetings will be used to formulate ideas, to set goals, and present training on ways the Center can improve the low scores categories listed above. Data from this survey will be used as a benchmark for future improvements. A follow up survey is planned to be conducted December, 2010 to determine whether the Center's efforts increase its effectiveness.