



Citizens Survey

June 2006

In June 2006, Charlottesville/UVA/Albemarle County ECC completed a citizen survey to measure citizens who have used ECC's services attitudes and opinions on the Center's performance. The survey were created to gather information on overall agency performance, overall competence of agency personnel, communications officer's attitude and behavior towards citizens, and determining 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 between June 1st and July 1st, 2006. Surveys were sent out to 494 citizens. The surveys were mailed out to select citizens based on calls for service records. To ensure that citizens who received services from the variety of providers, citizens were chosen to receive a questionnaire based on the following method:

- * Gabe Elias with IT Staff counted all the Event Numbers for the year (2005.) 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 first incidents out of 500 calls for each agency.
- * For each agency list, the query pulled:
 - Event Number
 - create time
 - type
 - address + apartment number
 - caller address
 - caller name
 - caller phone

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-contact complainant (CAD spells it "complaintant") flag (IT filtered this and ONLY listed calls where the see complainant that was checked "YES")

The query pulled the first ## 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 random months of the year. Surveys were self-addressed and stamped for convenience of the citizens. Survey questionnaire included 7 specific questions and a rating scale.

The Center survey was returned by 71 citizens for a 14.37 % return rate.

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 14% and we would have liked for it to be higher for a more accurate reflection of citizen perceptions. Second, we acknowledge the length of time since the citizens made the calls to the 911 Center and the receipt of the survey may affect a person's response. Third, the time frame may have caused issues with survey respondents remembering how the call was handled by the Communications Officer. Fourth, the rating scheme may have been a bit confusing to some. The scoring used N/A for no response, 1 as the lowest, 3 was considered neutral, and 5 is the highest score. The survey categories may have been affected by an individual's self interpretation of what the numbers of each category represented.

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.

71%	scored "5"	HIGH
17%	scored "4"	
3%	scored "3"	
1%	scored "2"	
0%	scored "1"	LOW
9%	N/A	

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

63%	scored "5"	HIGH
18%	scored "4"	
7%	scored "3"	
3%	scored "2"	
0%	scored "1"	LOW
8%	N/A	

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

72%	scored "5"	HIGH
15%	scored "4"	
3%	scored "3"	
0%	scored "2"	
3%	scored "1"	LOW
8%	N/A	

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

66%	scored "5"	HIGH
16%	scored "4"	
6%	scored "3"	
3%	scored "2"	
1%	scored "1"	LOW
8%	N/A	

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

68%	scored "5"	HIGH
17%	scored "4"	
3%	scored "3"	
1%	scored "2"	
4%	scored "1"	LOW
7%	N/A	

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

69%	scored "5"	HIGH
13%	scored "4"	
1%	scored "3"	
4%	scored "2"	
6%	scored "1"	LOW
7%	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?

70%	scored "5"	HIGH
11%	scored "4"	
10%	scored "3"	
0%	scored "2"	
1%	scored "1"	LOW
7%	N/A	

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Findings and Interpretation of Results

Overall, the majority of citizens who have used ECC's services during the time period of January, 2005 and May, 2006 and responded to this survey are satisfied with their experiences associated with the E911 Center's performance. Seventy-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 82% of survey respondents were satisfied with their experience with 911 overall. In fact, over 63% of the respondents rated the Center the highest possible score (5) regarding the operator's promptness, knowledge level, professionalism, interest, understanding of their situation and lack of confusion on how the call was handled, overall.

While low scores were very minimal, the areas that may need the most improvement are conveying to callers that the Center understands the type of assistance they require and confusion about how their call will be handled. Four (4) percent scored a one (1) regarding understanding of call taker, and six (6) percent ranked a low score indicating that they felt confused as to how their calls would be handled.

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 and to set goals regarding ways the Center can clear up confusion about how the call will be handled, and regarding clarifying with callers exactly what services they need. Data from this survey will be used as a benchmark for future improvements. A follow up survey is planned to be conducted June, 2009 to determine whether the Center's efforts increase its effectiveness.

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