



TARGETED RESULTS

for emergency communications consolidation



An Expansion of Federal Engineering
L.R. Kimball
Combining Decades of LMR & PSAP Experience

Public safety emergency communications consolidation. Is it the right outcome for you?



Shrinking municipal budgets, decreasing tax revenues, increased service demands and economic uncertainties are creating a need to do more with less. These circumstances are coupled with demands for change and improvement of call delivery, data sharing, and radio interoperability. There is also a need to respond to disasters in a more unified and timely manner. These are a few of the reasons why more and more states are implementing statewide financial and legislative incentives that are requiring government officials and public safety leaders to ask tough questions about integrating emergency communications response services to meet these challenges.

A number of communities have witnessed significant short and long-term benefits resulting from consolidation. Examples include greater interoperability between neighboring public safety agencies and departments, faster response times, service improvements, safer and better protected communities and long-term cost savings that are especially attractive during today's fiscal crisis.

Consolidation is no walk in the park. Many agencies have launched unsuccessful consolidation initiatives. As a result, public safety and government officials approach consolidation with great skepticism and doubt.

At FE/Kimball, our goal is to help government officials and public safety leaders better understand when and why consolidation may be a viable approach for them. We will illustrate the proper consolidation process and explain its advantages and risks, ask tough questions that uncover vulnerabilities in a fragmented public

safety process and address some frequently asked questions. We will reveal if and when consolidation is practical. If approached with the right amount of knowledge, communications and planning, communities can realize substantial benefits because of a successful consolidation.

We hope you find this informative and, as always, we welcome your comments and input. E-mail us at info@lrkimball.com. You may also visit us at



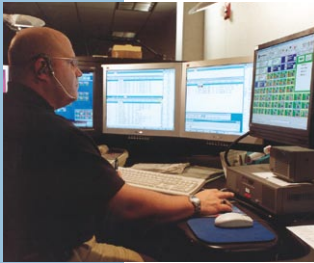
What is emergency communications consolidation?

Consolidation is defined as combining existing emergency communications services, systems or functions (9-1-1 call taking/police, fire, and emergency medical dispatching) provided by agencies within different jurisdictions (cities, towns, townships, counties, regions, or organizations) that provide services from a single location with common governance, management and technology models.

The risk of ineffective and expensive emergency communications is driving consolidation.

Numerous issues compel a community to consider consolidation. The most common are service and response time improvements, greater emergency response coordination, interoperability and cost savings. Communities often view consolidation as a method to address an improperly handled incident resulting from coordination failures. Other reasons for considering consolidation include:

- 1 A complex emergency communications response system that could impact access to critical services when minutes matter most.
- 2 Emergency communications centers with fewer employees are easily overwhelmed during large-scale incidents. In these situations, access to 9-1-1 and emergency dispatch response could be greatly impaired, which directly impacts the health, safety and property in our communities.
- 3 Smaller emergency communications centers and separate single-service agencies, such as separate police and fire centers in the same jurisdiction, could have a limited view of the “big picture” during large-scale incidents. This is especially dangerous when a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional response is required.
- 4 Multiple emergency communications centers incur redundant and expensive capital, administrative and operating costs for staff and technology. Emergency communications personnel are more effectively utilized in consolidated emergency communications centers.
- 5 Local government could face increased liability when smaller emergency communications centers cannot provide consistent service because of operational, technological and facility deficiencies.



The benefits of consolidation

Protecting our communities and the potential for significant cost savings

- Greater equity of service to our citizens
- Economies of scale relating to administrative, staffing, training and equipment costs
- Faster response times
- Reduced need to transfer 9-1-1 calls from agency to agency
- Greater first responder safety
- Improved exchange of information
- Separation of call taking and dispatching duties
- Better major incident management
- Increased interoperability/incident coordination
- Higher level of professionalism and training
- Increased situational awareness
- Implementing major improvement programs such as next generation 9-1-1 in a consolidated emergency communications center is more efficient and cost effective than doing so in multiple smaller emergency communications centers

Where does the potential for cost savings exist?

- More cost-effective use of staff
 - Small centers typically have higher costs per 9-1-1 call
- Economies of scale for operating and capital expenditures and technologies

More cost-effective, consistent and efficient service to our communities

The paramount benefit of consolidation is enhanced service to our communities, an invaluable advantage that should be at the foundation of every consolidation initiative. If this isn't a primary objective, the chances of a successful consolidation initiative decrease significantly. If your sole reason for consolidation is financial savings, you will likely fail.

Expertly managing a consolidation project

1

STEP ONE

Determine if consolidation is feasible and practical for your community.

Prior to planning, analyze the organizational structure of the emergency communications centers that may participate. Study and examine your current operations, service, staffing structures, technology and equipment, and complete a high-level facility assessment. This process enables decision makers to determine requirements, cost and critical issues to be addressed during consolidation. This step is typically the basis for deciding whether or not to consolidate and who should participate.

2

STEP TWO

Rationalize consolidation and secure commitments to proceed.

Once you determine that consolidation is a practical option and you are aware of the requirements, cost and service implications, secure buy-in from the appropriate stakeholders. It's important to get the right people to the table—they may not get their way, but they must have their say. Once you decide to move forward, detailed planning should begin by researching potential funding sources to implement a consolidated emergency communications center.

3

STEP THREE

Begin the planning process.

During the planning stages, all management, operational, technology and facility requirements must be addressed in considerable detail. Few consolidation projects actually reach this stage because of political/institutional resistance to change. The next logical steps are planning, developing and executing funding; establishing a governance plan; and identifying system, technology, and facility requirements for the new organization. Staffing design and human resource strategies need to be developed as well.

4

STEP FOUR

Implement, implement, implement.

As you implement your plan, it is absolutely critical to always maintain consensus and support. Continue to educate leaders and employ a dedicated project manager that plans all project requirements, coordinates assignments, tracks schedules, communicates with stakeholders, monitors budgets and resolves issues to keep the project on schedule.

5

STEP FIVE

Transition into the consolidated emergency communications center.

Coordination is essential during planning and transition to the consolidated operation. You should consider hiring a consultant who specializes in consolidation, because exceptional project oversight and coordination of effort is required. Vendor management, training, staffing adjustments, system procurements, facility upgrades or new construction, testing, and migration to live operation are components that require oversight and coordination.

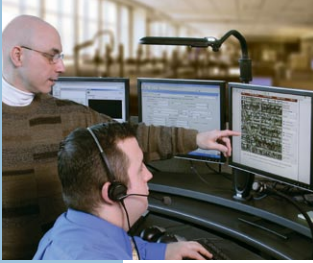
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STEP SIX

Go live.

Implementing full operations at the new consolidated center, also known as “going live,” is a major achievement for all participants. Like any other major change, fine tuning will be required. The new organization will need to grow and improve constantly to remain optimally effective and efficient.

Consolidation questions from the local government community



How do you know if consolidation is a good option for your community?
Here are some questions that we are frequently asked.

Q: Is my jurisdiction a good candidate for consolidation?

A: Consolidation should be approached on a case-by-case basis and only after the completion of a comprehensive feasibility study. The size of the emergency communications centers or the population in your jurisdiction is not a significant factor. Here are some guiding principles:

- Does your county, jurisdiction or region have multiple emergency communications centers? Do they typically interact with each other?
- Have government officials or emergency communications managers ever expressed an interest in consolidating?
- Is there a history of intergovernmental cooperation or shared services among or within jurisdictions serving or adjoining your region?
- Is coordination challenging among first responders being served by multiple communication centers?
- Has your jurisdiction experienced an incident where uncoordinated efforts played a part in delayed response time or a poor outcome?
- Are there multiple emergency communications centers within or among jurisdictions that are operationally and technologically deficient and struggling to provide services?

If many of these principles apply, consolidation may be right for you.

Q: I am advocating for consolidation in my community. As I seek stakeholder support, what are some of the things I should stay aware of that could potentially impact my success?

A: If involved agencies are not committed or open to consider the potential benefits of consolidation and the objectives are not clearly defined, your chances of success will decline. At the same time, realize that it's impossible to be all things to all agencies. Don't over promise!

- Political will is a crucial element of a successful consolidation effort.
- Engage a full-time project manager or consultant dedicated solely to the effort.
- Although cost savings should not be your sole objective, look for hurdles that could postpone your ability to realize savings, such as avoiding staff reductions or the need to build a new facility or purchase a technology system if it's not already available.
- And finally, failure to communicate and define clear objectives will increase the likelihood of process breakdown.

Q: Does a consolidation always result in cost savings?

A: Consolidation does not always lead to huge cost savings, especially in the short-term. It is possible that consolidation may require a significant capital investment in new technologies and facilities for start-up. If the emergency communications centers considering consolidation are all properly staffed, well-equipped and situated in excellent facilities, the potential for cost savings will be great. However, this is rarely the case. The potential cost savings for consolidation are typically realized in reduced operating costs in the long-term and the result of economies of scale in staffing, technology and facilities. Likely cost savings should be determined as part of a detailed feasibility study conducted by an outside, independent organization. This organization should be experienced with cost and benefit assessments that consider all influencing factors. They should compare conditions at your current communication centers with what they expect at the consolidated center. This will help you best satisfy planning requirements for service, technologies and facilities.

Q: What are some examples of centers that have already consolidated?

A: There are many centers that have already consolidated. Here are some examples:

Allegheny County, PA	Monroe County, NY
Arlington County, VA	Nashville, TN
Champagne County, IL	Onondaga County, NY
Chicago, IL	San Francisco, CA
City of Newport News, VA	Santa Cruz County, CA
Fairfax County, VA	Virginia Beach, VA
Hartford, CO	Washington County, OR

FE/Kimball has helped more than 20 counties, cities and townships around the nation assess whether consolidation is the right approach for them. For those that have chosen to proceed, FE/Kimball has been actively involved in supporting planning, implementation and transition activities associated with the consolidation effort.

A 360° approach to consolidation with FE/Kimball

360

FE/Kimball offers a 360° approach to consolidation that revolves around our clients' true needs. It is based on a full-circle, holistic approach to every aspect of emergency communications. Working with FE/Kimball for consolidation studies, planning and implementation means more than access to the expertise we've gained from expertly managing more than 20 consolidation efforts across the country. Our clients benefit from our experience in all aspects of emergency communications – an in-depth understanding of operations, advanced technologies and systems, facilities and funding sources you'll need to consider during a consolidation effort. FE/Kimball provides a total solution, a complete understanding of the emergency communications process and a single point of contact throughout the entire consolidation process. We bring the right resources from our diverse organization to deliver the highest possible value.

Success metrics for consolidation

Once you decide to consolidate, make sure you have all of these components in place to achieve success. Use the FE/Kimball consolidation checklist as a guide.

- ☒ A reason and a purpose
- ☒ A solid governance approach (includes policies, authority and control)
- ☒ Funding sources (cost per call and capita, phone lines and overall assessed value)
- ☒ Service offerings and levels (call taking, call dispatch or both)
- ☒ A solid staffing plan (training, benefits, quantity, functions, compensation)
- ☒ A facility (renovated or new building or back-up facility)
- ☒ An equipment roadmap (buy new or upgrade existing)

Learn More

To learn more about consolidation
 and whether it is right for you visit
www.lrkimball.com/consolidation.
 Phone us at 866.375.6812
 Email info@lrkimball.com.

Year	Client	Project Description	Agencies Involved	Did They Consolidate?
2008	Bergen County, NJ	Feasibility study	25 primary / 37 secondary agencies	To be determined
2008	Brevard County, FL	Feasibility study	11 agencies	To be determined
2008	City of Alexandria, VA	Feasibility study	2 agencies	Planning to consolidate
2008	Palm Beach Gardens, FL	Feasibility study	3 agencies	To be determined
2008	Plainsboro, NJ	Feasibility study	10 agencies	To be determined
2008	Sumner County, TN	Feasibility study	8 primary / 2 secondary agencies	To be determined
2007	Atlantic County, NJ	Feasibility study and implementation plan	19 agencies	Planning to consolidate
2007	Charleston County, SC	Feasibility study and transition plan	10 agencies	Planning to consolidate
2007	City of St. Louis, MO	Feasibility study	Police, fire, EMS and the Emergency Management Agency (CEMA)	Planning to consolidate
2007	Columbia County, FL	Assessment	4 agencies	Planning to consolidate
2007	Linn County, IA	Feasibility study	3 agencies	No
2007	Morris County, NJ	Feasibility study, transition plan, conceptual facility design approach and site assessment	39 municipalities	Planning to consolidate
2007	Township of Hopewell, NJ	Feasibility study	4 agencies / 3 agencies	To be determined
2006	Androscoggin County, ME	Assessment	4 agencies	Partial consolidation
2006	Bath Township, OH	Assessment	City and 3 townships	No
2006	Niagara County, NY	Implementation and design	5 agencies	Partial consolidation
2006	Ouachita Parish, LA	Analysis	3 fire departments, 1 sheriff's office and 6 police departments, 911 call center	No
2005	York County, ME	Feasibility study – Phase 2	11 agencies	Yes
2004	City of Memphis / Shelby Co, TN	Facility co-location	City / county	To be determined
2004	York County, ME	Feasibility study – Phase I	13 dispatch centers	No
2003	Allegheny County, PA	Feasibility study and implementation plan	76 agencies	Yes
2003	Cumberland County, ME	Planning	15 agencies	Partial consolidation
2003	Delaware County, OH	Planning	City / county	To be determined
2003	District of Columbia	Planning, architectural and telecommunications design	3 agencies	Yes
2003	Weirton, WV	Analysis	3 agencies	Unknown