



City of Roanoke E-911 Center

Memorandum



To: Sonya Roman, Department Manager
CC: E911 Staff
From: Joshua Mason, Training Coordinator
Date: 8/14/2020
Re: 2019 Community Involvement Annual Report

The Community Involvement Annual Report gives the 911 Center an opportunity to survey outside factors in our community that may impact our Department and Public Safety services delivery in general. This report also serves to highlight attended events and track interaction with the citizens of Roanoke.

Summary of Events:

Program or event type	Number Conducted	Number of people contacted	Feedback Received
Career / Job Fairs	2	260	
911 Tours	1	38	
APCO Conference Presentation	2	150	
Community Meetings	14	316	
Kid's Square Children's Museum	5	166	
Missing Person's Day	1	30	

Habitat For Humanity	4	55	
Leadership College	1	16	
Rescue Mission	2	186	
Prepareathon	1	56	
Neighborhood Cleanup	1	4	
Southeast Halloween Event	1	150	

Our CIT members try to thoroughly educate our citizens about our department, technology and processes during presentations. Due to this fact most follow up questions relate to call volume, staffing/scheduling and location reliability. Any questions are immediately addressed during the event to ensure our citizens understanding of the topic. The only exception to this is if a citizen voices a complaint related to our department.

Community Education

We are committed to educating the citizens of Roanoke to ensure understanding of our public safety system and how to best access and use this service. Like most communities we continue to see an increase in cellular phone calls for our services and we have found that the vast majority have misconceptions of how this technology works. Since implementing services such as Text-to-911 in 2016, the department has seen a consistent increase in the number of citizens contacting the department by this method. It is important for the department to continue contact with citizens to ensure their understanding of the benefits and challenges of this technology and other equipment and technologies we utilize. The department also utilized social media as a means of community education by posting information during high priority events such as storms, staff achievements, job openings, and highlighting community involvement efforts.

The members of the 911 center and/or the 8 members of the Community Involvement Team participated in a total of 34 events (an increase of 70 percent compared to 2018), making contact with approximately 1447 people (an increase of 56 percent compared to 2018). Our goal for 2019 was to attend 35 or more events. These numbers indicate that we barely missed this goal. Factors impacting participation in events were:

- Schedule of events
- Imbalance of distribution of team members on working shifts.

These factors contributed to a decline in community involvement events attended this year. The team's goal for 2020 will be to continue to focus on community meetings, volunteer opportunities, and social media enhancement to engage with the citizens of Roanoke by attending at least 35 events.

Social Media

The 911 center launched a department Facebook page in March of 2015. In 2018, we had approximately over 2,500 likes. By the end of 2019 we had added nearly 600 additional likes. We have utilized the page to push out general information to our citizens, during severe weather events and to share special events such as progress on the new center, staff achievements, and other activities related to the center. Much of the increase in followers is contributed to high quality content and strategic posting days and times.

We include a statement on our Facebook page advising citizens not to use Facebook as a means of reporting an emergency to the department. We will continue to work closely with the City of Roanoke office of Citizen Engagement to enhance and improve our social media exposure.

Our use of social media in 2019 led to higher post engagement than any previous year. Our average post reached nearly 7,000 people and helped to keep them informed, in real-time, of job fairs, special projects, etc. we were involved in. This increase in post engagement has shown that our use of social media can be as effective as more traditional community involvement functions.

Recruitment Events

We will continue to work with our Human Resources Department to expand our departments' efforts to attend both local and regional recruitment opportunities. Our team members who attend these recruitment events will continue to receive specialized training in this area.

Translation Services

The Hispanic population in the City of Roanoke increased to 5.5 percent as of the Decennial Census Count, April 1, 2010. The E-911 center utilizes Voiance to assist us with interpretation on a multitude of languages. In 2019, we had a total of 692 calls requiring an interpreter. 638 of those calls were for Spanish translation, representing 92 percent of requests. This percentage is unchanged from 2018. There was a 55 percent increase in total number of calls requiring a translator (682 v. 445). In 2018 we had a total of 445 calls requiring an interpreter. 409 of those calls were for Spanish translation for a total of 92 percent of requests.

We had translation requests for a total of 16 different languages in 2019 (14 in 2018). The second highest demand of translation services was Vietnamese with 13 calls or just under 1.9 percent of total calls. These numbers reflect that our total number of calls has increased. The numbers reflect calls requiring Spanish interpreters increased by 229 calls compared to 2018. However, the percentage of calls requiring translations services for Spanish did not change.

It should also be noted that the use of translation services is useful to track multi-cultural requests for service but does not accurately reflect the true composition or percentage of callers. Some of the requests for service may be from other cultures. However, the caller or a relative of the caller may communicate well enough in English to not require translation services through a language service. It should also be noted that foreign language speaking families living in the City of Roanoke may have school aged children who are bilingual and can translate for family members.

We will continue to work with the City's Neighborhood Services and Human Resources department to increase our exposure to the Hispanic and other diverse communities.

Summation

Our department saw a contraction in our Community Involvement efforts during this year for a variety of reasons. Though our team members are highly committed to reaching out to our diverse community, we will look at new and different ways to engage the community to increase recruitment efforts and educate citizens about our department and its responsibilities, challenges, accomplishments and technologies used. In spite of the decrease in Community Involvement events, the Community Involvement Team continues to be successful at its core function of raising

community awareness as it relates to our department, public safety and the City as a whole. Furthermore, our increased use of social media has put us contact with a demographic that is largely representative of the City's makeup.