

Grand Forks Public Safety Answering Point Regional Dispatch Serving Grand Forks County and cities therein



2020

Annual Report

Becky Ault, Director

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Becky Ault, Director

Shannon LaHaise, Center Supervisor

Christy Senechal, Team Leader

Carly Luney, Team Leader

Nicole Weigel, Team Leader

Molly Marek, Team Leader

Amanda Scheving, Training Coordinator

Grant Peterson, Radio Systems Coordinator

Debbie Hoverson, Administrative Assistant

Directors Report

Background:

The Grand Forks Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) has become a regional asset for 911 and public safety services, working within the region and statewide to achieve reliable emergency communications for our citizens and our emergency responders.

The Grand Forks Public Safety Answering Point joined a Statewide Joint Powers Agreement working with all jurisdictions to plan for and implement initially Phase II wireless phone call location information services in 2005, and expanded into a shared ESINet for Next Generation Call Processing in today's environment. In 2017, we rolled out Text to 911 statewide, and we continue to make advancements in call delivery to citizens across the state by sharing infrastructure statewide to reduce cost and increase efficiencies.

The Grand Forks PSAP works aggressively with our responders to meet their communication needs to reach our citizens in the most efficient manner in crisis situations. We routinely meet with our responders to ensure we meet their needs to ensure they have timely information to respond to citizen needs. We continue to utilize technology to improve service delivery, and balance that with well trained staff and quality assurance reviews ensuring our team provides the best emergency communication services that our citizens deserve. Examples of this in 2020 include spinning up a backup answering point in the Emergency Operations Center – this site was to separate staff during COVID – at times we had asymptomatic exposed staff working in the EOC Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), and staff that were not exposed working in the Primary PSAP. This was to ensure we had enough staff to provide services. We have been quite aggressive in Continuity of Government Operations Planning and had no down time during the pandemic. The upgrades to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) communications will serve us well in the future – for backup dispatch communications, but also if the EOC is activated augmenting critical communication in the EOC to responders in the field. We upgraded our radio consoles in February just before the pandemic hit – and are on the Statewide Interoperable Radio Network (SIRN) core – this is the first step in a multi-step process to improve interoperable communications with our responders and PSAP's across the state.

Calls for service continues to Increase: 2020 brought our Calls for Service in at 94,847, our highest call volume ever. For comparison purposes, our overall calls for service 6 years ago in 2014 were 73,304. We are also noting that we have fewer overall administrative phone calls. In 2020, we processed 102,406 telephone calls. The total 911 calls remained consistent from 23,477 to 23,279; and the non-emergency decreased from 89,287 to 79,127. The drop can be contributed to a combination of reporting tools used by the agencies we serve such as online reporting, social media tools, and other self-initiated activity. We are attributing a portion of that to Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) since some of our call volume was from responders in the field for information. The city auto-attendant feature for the PBX phone system also vets calls for the Police Department 24 X 7 and the Sheriff's office after hours, which does help control call volumes.

Technology Complexity will continue to Evolve: It is very important to note that Emergency Services Communications is much broader than simply E-911. While dialing 911 most often initiates the emergency

response, the day-by-day, hour-by-hour communications between dispatchers and responders, the ongoing contact during an emergency, the location information, mapping software, text to 911, and numerous other components make it possible for local emergency services to arrive and deliver services in the shortest time possible. This will become increasingly complex as we continue to work with surrounding PSAP's and as our statewide system Next Generation 911 call delivery continues to develop. We continue working on another statewide project, SIRN, or Statewide interoperable Radio Network – which will provide exciting opportunities for further sharing resources, as well as improve interoperable communications for our responders. Our goal this coming year is to migrate Grand Forks City Police, Grand Forks Fire, UND PD, Altru EMS, and Grand Forks Sheriff's Office onto the new SIRN system – since the repeaters for the metro area will be in place first. Next year, we will be working with our state partners and as the rural tower areas are brought onto the core, we will work with our rural law enforcement, Fire Departments, and EMS to migrate to the new and improved system. More to come on that in the next year!

The progressive mission, vision, goals, and objectives of the Grand Forks Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) will allow for expansion of services and promote our Grand Forks 911 Authority Board's vision to provide quality emergency communication service to our Citizens and those that travel through.

Becky Ault, Director

The Grand Forks PSAP is dedicated to provide the highest quality service in your time of need, and we have set our Mission, values, and goals to demonstrate our commitment:

Mission:

“Deliver exceptional emergency communications to the public and first responders that help save lives and protect property.”

Values

Safety and service are the top priorities, and we are committed to preserve our vision by maintaining these core values that guide our work and decisions:

- **Integrity**
 - **Remain diligent in performance of occupational duties**
 - **Seek to maintain highest standard of personal practices and maintain the integrity of dispatch**
 - **Avoid any conduct that would put responders or public in harm’s way**
- **Leadership**
 - **Continually seek to maintain and improve professional knowledge, skill and competency**
- **Teamwork**
 - **Maintain honorable working relations with peers and all agencies we serve**
- **Stewardship**
 - **Endeavor to put the needs and safety of the public above our own professional ambitions**
 - **Continue to look for ways to improve performance and services**

Governance Overview

Under a Joint Powers Agreement, the Grand Forks Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), is governed by an Authority Board comprised of nine members representing the following:

- Member of the Grand Forks County Commission
- Member of the Grand Forks City Council
- Chief of Grand Forks Police Dept., or designee
- Chief of Grand Forks Fire Dept., or designee
- Chief of University of North Dakota Police Dept., or designee
- Grand Forks County Sheriff, or designee
- Citizen of Grand Forks County to be appointed by the Grand Forks County Commission
- Director of Altru Hospital Ambulance Services, or designee, who serves as a non-voting member
- PSAP Director, who serves as a non-voting member

The Authority Board is organized to direct the operations of the Grand Forks PSAP and fulfill the purpose contained in the Joint Powers Agreement for dispatch services in Grand Forks County.

2020 Authority Board Members

GFPD Chief Mark Nelson, President	UNDPD Chief Eric Plummer
GFFD Chief Gary Lorenz, Vice President	Sheriff Andrew Schneider
Danny Weigel, Grand Forks City Council	Cynthia Pic, Grand Forks Co. Commissioner
Tom Murphy, Member at Large	Tim Nesdahl, Altru Hospital Ambulance
Becky Ault, PSAP Director	

PSAP Organization

The Grand Forks Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) began operations in 1986, and now provides service as a combined dispatch center for multiple emergency response agencies in Grand Forks County. The population served is 70, 795 with square mile area of 1,436.

The service area include Grand Forks Police Dept., UND Police Dept. Grand Forks Sheriff's Office, 3 municipal police departments, Grand Forks Fire Department, 17 volunteer fire departments, 2 rural EMS providers and Altru Ambulance Services.

The Grand Forks PSAP serves as the primary communications network for citizens, as well as those that travel through, to obtain direct services for law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services county wide. We collaborate statewide to ensure needed emergency services are provided to our citizens. In addition, PSAP retains well trained and highly skilled Emergency Communication Team, which:

- Dispatch and protect over our LE, Fire, and EMS agencies
- Process and dispatch over 90,000 calls for service ranging from a barking dog to a robbery in progress; with an average yearly increase of 5-8%
- Central Point of coordination for all county emergency services

The PSAP Center works to build a team that is honest, responsible, accountable, ethical and driven to provide service to the community and safety to all we come in contact with.

Employment Activity

New Staff

Kelsey Delisle	March 2 nd , 2020	Dispatcher Trainee
Megan Alicia	November 9 th , 2020	Dispatcher Trainee
Alexandra Schafer	November 9 th , 2020	Dispatcher Trainee
Grant Peterson	September 8 th , 2020	Radio Systems Coordinator

Promotions

Molly Marek	October 8 th , 2020	Team Leader
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PSAP Personnel

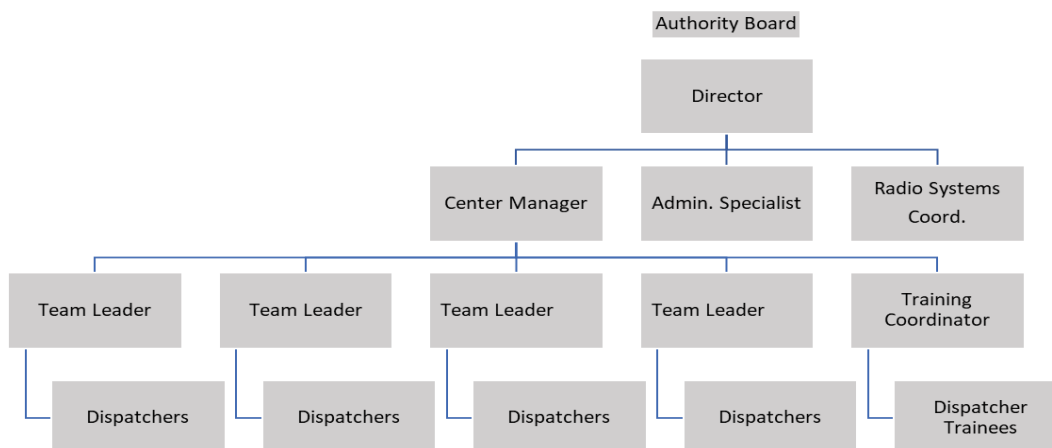
Maintaining staffing levels is a critical component of emergency dispatch operations and ensures services are readily provided to responders and citizens in need. The recruitment process for emergency dispatchers is more extensive than most classified positions. In addition to the standard vetting process involving online applications and interviews, mandatory skill-specific testing identify the relative applicants armed with the aptitude and skills for the pressure and tasks associated with the job.

Technology is leveraged for all aspects of the call-taking and dispatching functions to improve efficiency, situational awareness, communication, and safety. While leveraging the various technologies has improved work flows, Dispatchers are a vital asset, and necessary to coordinate emergency responses. Staffing analyses will be completed routinely to ensure adequate staffing according to NENA and APCO Standards.

Currently, the PSAP consists of the following positions when fully staffed:

Our Team Leaders and Training Coordinator also process calls on the floor:

- 1 Director
- 1 Administrative Specialist, Senior
- 1 Radio Systems Coordinator
- 1 PSAP Center Manager
- 4 Team Leaders
- 1 Training Coordinator
- 13 Dispatchers
- Part-time Dispatcher(s)



Hiring, Training and Quality Assurance

HIRING

The recruiting and hiring process for Dispatchers requires additional vetting to inform applicants of the challenging and rewarding position as an Emergency Dispatcher. While working with our Human Resource Dept., a new hiring process was developed that included improvements in several aspects of the process. These improvements included an informational packet for all applicants, as well as a new testing process for the specific skills and decision making skills necessary for the many roles and responsibilities of the position.

Training –APCO Fire GuideCards

The Grand Forks PSAP provides Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) instructions for all medical calls for service, and added the ability to provide the same consistency for fire calls.

As with the EMD, the same process proceeded for the Fire Cards as well. A Taskforce consisting PSAP, agencies served by PSAP worked with APCO to develop a guide-card system that provided a standard method for dispatchers to effectively evaluate the situation and also provide life saving instructions. The core component was to develop a set of protocols that allowed for timely deliverance of the necessary information in a minimal amount of time in effort to get the patient the help that is necessary, as quickly as possible.

Quality Assurance

Providing quality to callers and responders is at the forefront of all aspects of what we do in PSAP. To provide continuous feedback to staff and quality assurance, the Grand Forks PSAP teamed up with Moetivations to implement a quality assurance program utilizing national standards and best practices.

Moetivations has provided multiple aspects of quality assurance including consistent level of quality review of calls for service, coaching recommendations for improvement, and on-site training.

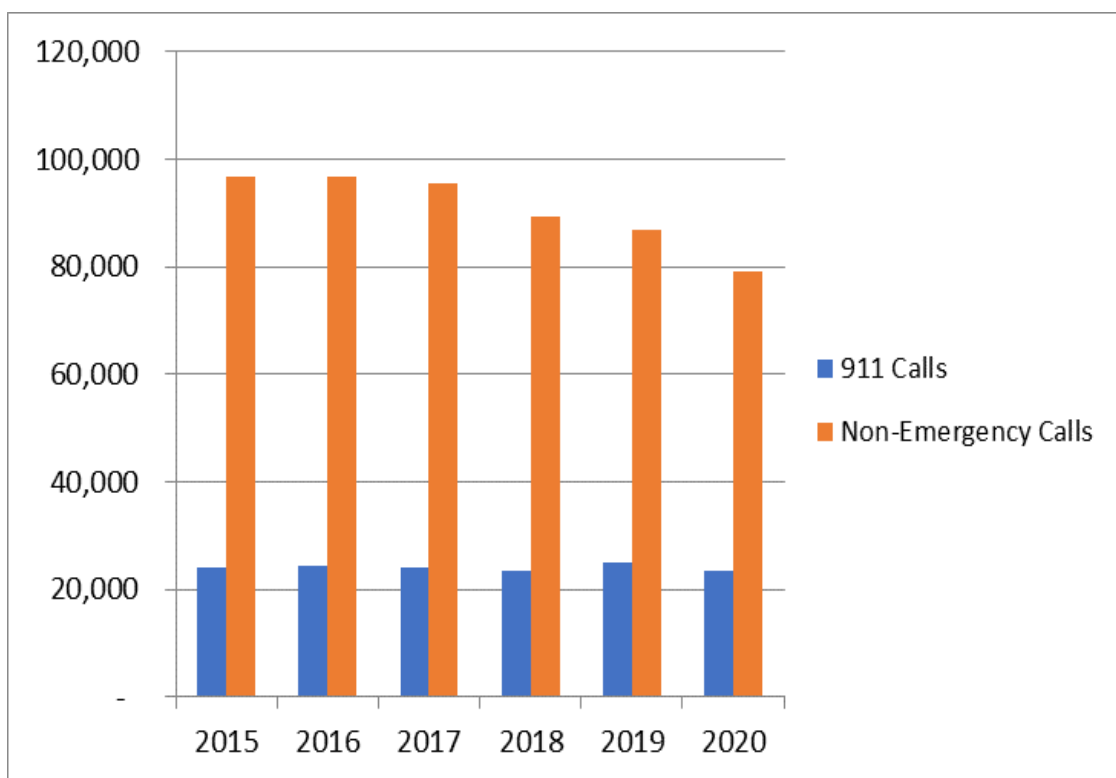
Since the implementation, the overall performance of staff has seen a marked improvement, with positive feedback from staff.

2020 Operations Review

Calls Received

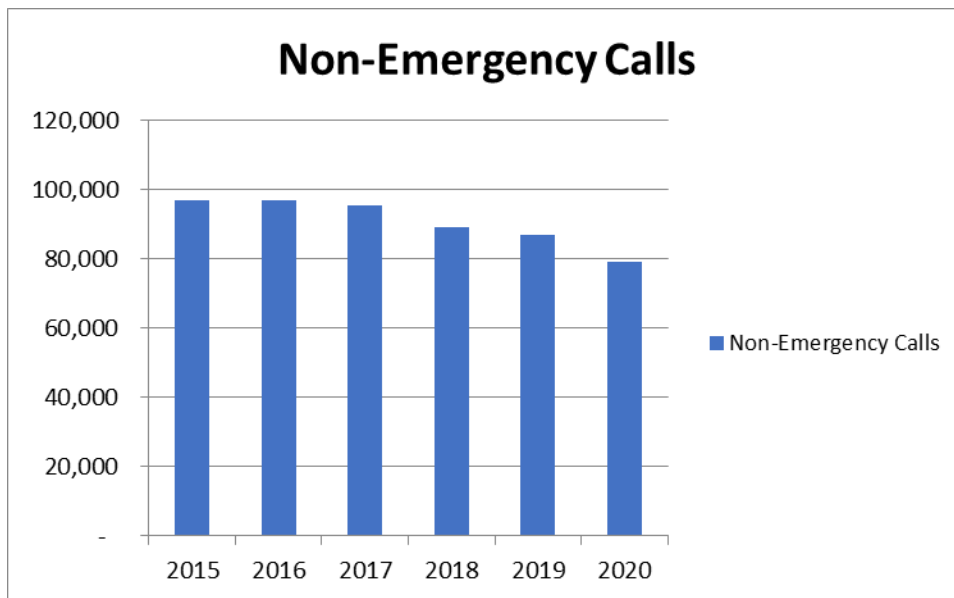
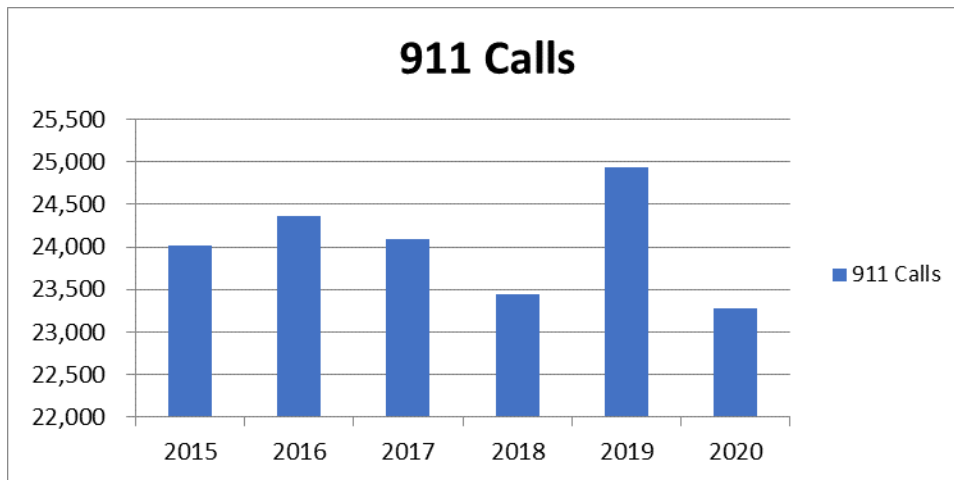
Grand Forks Public Safety Answering Point receives both emergency and non-emergency telephone calls for police, fire, and ambulance requests as well as calls from citizens requesting information and other agency requests.

In 2020, Grand Forks PSAP processed 102,406 telephone calls. The total 911 calls remained consistent from 23,477 to 23,279; and the non-emergency decreased from 89,287 to 79,127. The drop can be contributed to a combination of reporting tools used by the agencies we serve such as online reporting, social media tools, and other self-initiated activity.

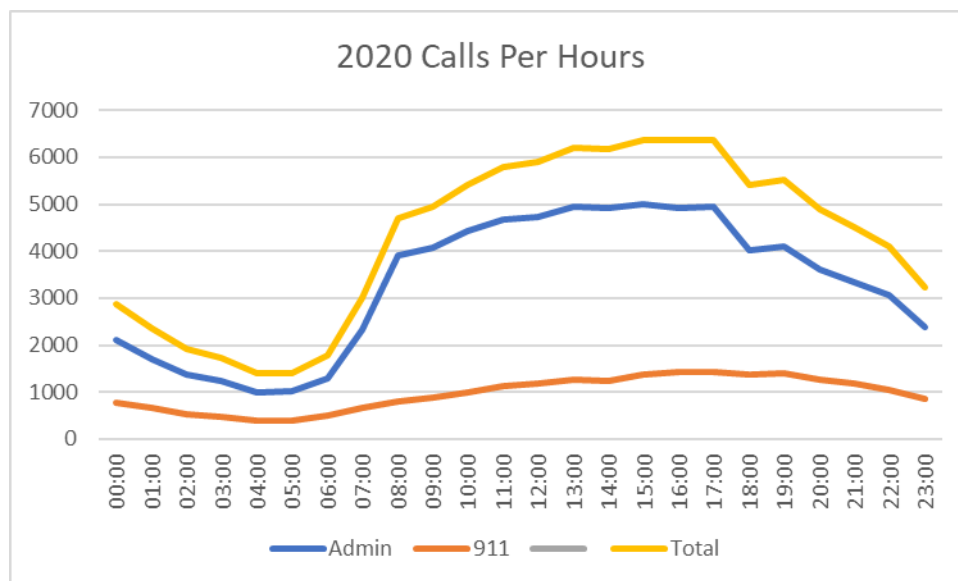


Total Calls 911 vs. Non-Emergency

Employees of the Grand Forks PSAP processed 102,406 calls. Of that total, 23,279 were through 911, and on non-emergency lines 79,127 were received.



Monthly Average Received Per Hour of the Day

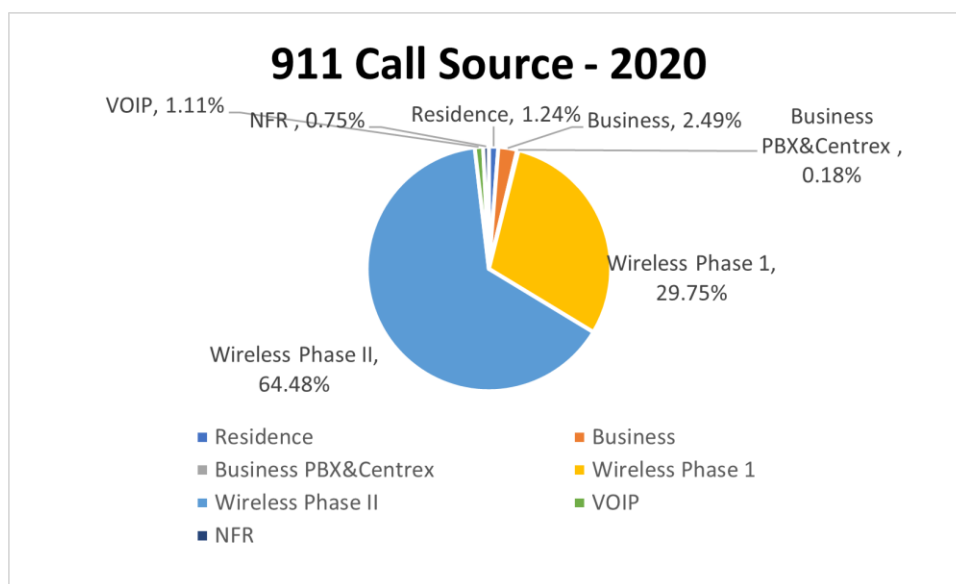


Grand Forks PSAP processes calls 24 hours per day. During certain times, however, a greater number of incoming calls can be anticipated. This information is used to maintain sufficient staffing levels throughout the 24 hour period. For a number of years, the peak time has consistently been shown to land between the hours of 3:00-5:00PM. As can be seen above, this remains the peak time, but it has widened to a larger time span, requiring more staff to process and dispatching incoming calls for service.

Scheduled events typically create more calls for service, which can increase minimum staffing. Unplanned events such as severe weather or large fires can sometimes create an overwhelming amount of 911 calls for staff; during these events supervisors make an effort to call additional personnel in to assist.

911 Call Source

As technology advances, the ability for citizens to contact the Grand Forks PSAP via 911 changes as well. A growing number of incoming calls is through wireless phones. Statistically, 94% of the 911 calls received were from cells phones.

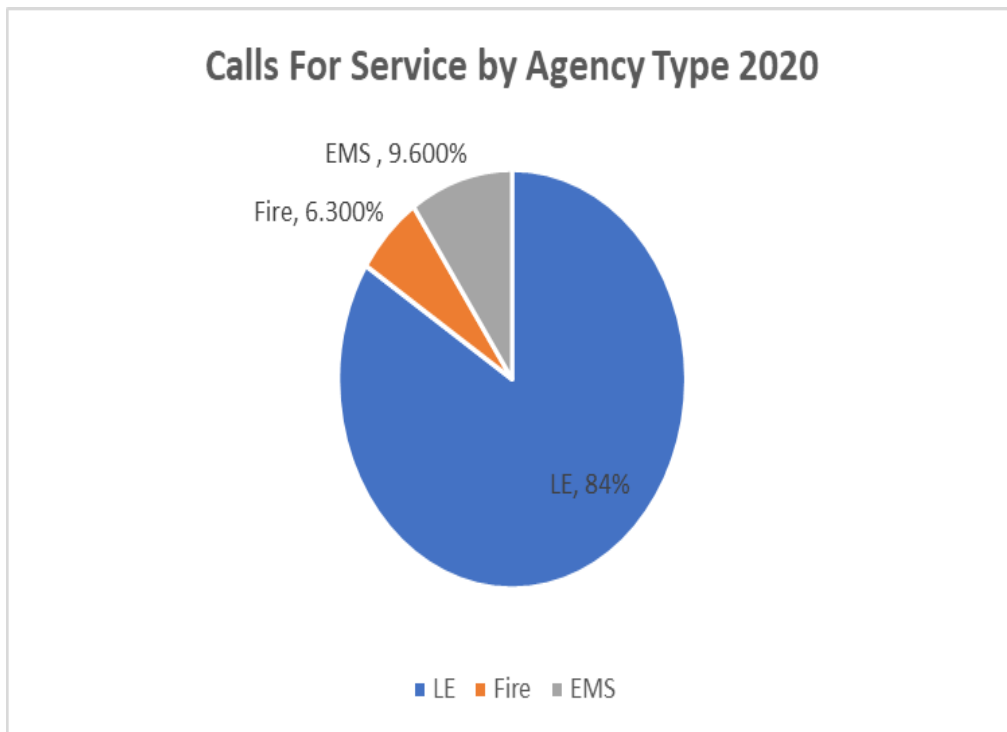


Other incoming 911 calls were received from various sources:

- Business lines – 2.49%
- Residence – 1.24%
- Voice over internet (VOIP) – 1.1%
- Source/No Record Found (NRF) – .75%
- Business Private Branch Exchange (PBX) and Centers – .18%

Calls for Service – LE, Fire, EMS

Not everyone telephone call or radio transmission results in a call for service for responders. Those that require response by Law Enforcement, Fire, or EMS are entered into the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system and responders are dispatched. The following data depicts the number of responses per discipline.



5 Year Calls for Service Totals

Over the past 5 years, responses to calls for service has increased at a steady rate for all disciplines, as can be seen below.

Agency	Dec-16	Dec-17	Dec-18	Dec-19	Dec-20
Grand Forks Police Dept.	46,307	46,887	49,147	47,262	50,955
Grand Forks Sheriff's Office	12,498	17,605	19,232	18,095	19,965
UND Police Dept.	7,080	7,021	8,419	9,728	7,854
Emerado Police Dept.	539	562	510	371	326
Larimore Police Dept.	-	-	-	-	-
Northwood Police Dept.	116	160	225	535	446
Thompson Police Dept.	365	389	356	229	186
Altru Ambulance	8,400	8,607	8,521	8,817	8,678
Larimore Ambulance	227	247	257	231	270
Northwood Ambulance	187	165	149	178	196
Grand Forks AFB	9	6	5	4	11
Emerado Fire Dept.	94	118	114	77	97
Fordville Fire Dept.	3	2	1	1	10
Grand Forks Fire Dept.	5,131	5,239	5,170	5,660	5,226
Hatton Fire Dept.	2	1	5	3	1
Inkster Fire Dept.	4	14	8	6	14
Gilby Fire Dept.	24	35	29	26	36
Michigan Ambulance	-	-	-	-	-
Larimore Fire Dept.	88	151	178	157	171
Manvel Fire Dept.	66	86	69	46	82
Northwood Fire Dept.	76	78	74	92	100
Oslo Fire Dept.	-	-	2	1	1
GF Airport Fire Dept.	52	52	49	58	24
Reynolds Fire Dept.	14	29	29	11	34
Thompson Fire Dept.	136	113	142	109	148
Niagara Fire Dept.	20	18	19	14	16
Dahlen Fire Dept.	-	-	2	1	-
Aneta Fire Dept.	-	1	3	2	-
Aneta Quick Respose	-	1	1	-	-
Michigan Fire Dept.	-	-	4	-	-
TOTAL	81,438	87,587	92,720	91,714	94,847

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Law Enforcement Responses

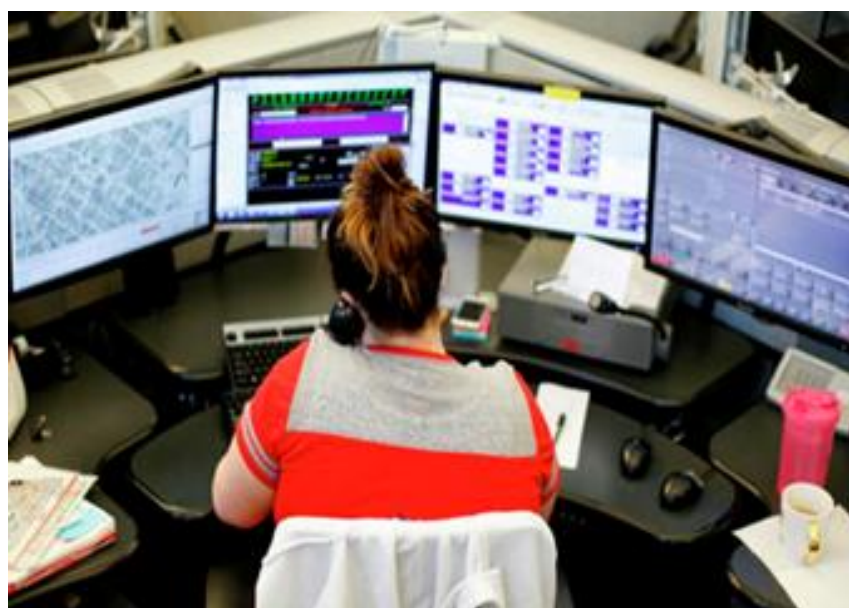
Agency Calls For Service 2020 - Law Enforcement														
Law Enforcement Agency	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	PERCENT
Grand Forks Police Dept.	4,011	4,293	4,744	4,412	4,461	4,208	4,385	4,153	4,273	4,178	3,860	3,977	50,955	53.723%
Grand Forks Sheriff's Office	1,672	1,607	1,846	1,465	1,774	1,725	1,794	1,608	1,690	1,488	1,776	1,520	19,965	21.050%
UND Police Dept.	918	818	599	410	602	674	495	709	689	646	723	571	7,854	8.281%
Emerado Police Dept.	33	26	31	13	13	39	40	39	23	35	17	17	326	0.344%
Northwood Police Dept.	83	35	19	24	32	16	26	44	57	29	41	40	446	0.470%
Thompson Police Dept.	10	16	22	5	14	14	14	29	15	18	17	12	186	0.196%
TOTALS	6,727	6,795	7,261	6,329	6,896	6,676	6,754	6,582	6,747	6,394	6,434	6,137	79,732	84%

Fire and EMS Responses

Agency Calls For Service 2020 - Fire/EMS														
Fire/EMS Agency	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	PERCENT
Altru Ambulance	826	761	621	601	645	692	731	718	754	763	794	772	8,678	9.149%
Larimore Ambulance	34	22	21	18	31	27	18	19	23	17	25	15	270	0.285%
Northwood Ambulance	11	15	10	15	9	11	9	27	23	20	26	20	196	0.207%
Grand Forks AFB	-	2	2	-	-	1	-	2	1	-	-	3	11	0.012%
Emerado Fire Dept.	9	9	1	11	6	6	7	7	10	15	7	9	97	0.102%
Fordville Fire Dept.	-	-	-	2	2	-	2	-	2	1	1	-	10	0.011%
Grand Forks Fire Dept.	491	407	404	344	400	437	456	449	463	468	483	424	5,226	5.510%
Hatton Fire Dept.	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.001%
Inkster Fire Dept.	-	2	2	3	3	-	-	1	-	2	1	-	14	0.015%
Gilby Fire Dept.	3	3	2	3	6	1	2	1	2	2	6	5	36	0.038%
Michigan Ambulance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.000%
Larimore Fire Dept.	23	18	15	13	17	21	11	11	14	11	11	6	171	0.180%
Marvel Fire Dept.	7	13	3	5	9	8	2	5	3	10	11	6	82	0.086%
Northwood Fire Dept.	7	8	7	8	7	5	4	10	9	10	14	11	100	0.105%
Oslo Fire Dept.	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.001%
GF Airport Fire Dept.	2	3	1	2	2	4	3	3	1	2	1	-	24	0.025%
Reynolds Fire Dept.	1	-	4	1	1	4	3	2	2	8	5	3	34	0.036%
Thompson Fire Dept.	13	13	10	10	19	12	12	6	10	12	18	13	148	0.156%
Niagara Fire Dept.	-	-	1	1	2	4	1	1	-	-	3	3	16	0.017%
Dahlen Fire Dept.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.000%
Aneta Fire Dept.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.000%
Aneta Quick Response	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.000%
Michigan Fire Dept.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.000%
TOTAL	1,427	1,276	1,104	1,037	1,161	1,233	1,261	1,262	1,317	1,341	1,406	1,290	15,115	15.936%

In closing, the Grand Forks Public Safety Answering Point continues to get busier with increased call volumes and expectations of citizens and responders due to technology advances.

We are committed to meeting Today's Public Safety Information Needs and Planning for Tomorrow's Challenges!



Grand Forks Public Safety Answering Point Contact Information:

122 South 5th St, Grand Forks, ND 58201

24-hour Non-Emergency Number: 701-746-2542

- Becky Ault, Director

bault@grandforksgov.com

701-787-8042

- Shannon LaHaise, Center Supervisor

slahaise@grandforksgov.com

701-787-8040

- Debbie Hoverson, Administrative Specialist, Senior

dhoverson@grandforksgov.com

701-787-8039

Grand Forks Public Safety Answering Point Weblink:

<http://www.grandforksgov.com/government/city-departments/public-safety-answering-point-psap-808>

Additional Weblinks:

National Emergency Number Association (NENA) Standards – Web Link:

<https://www.nena.org/page/Standards>

NDCC 57-40.6-10 <http://www.legis.nd.gov/cencode/t57c40-6.pdf>