



May 12, 2021

**Clackamas County Board of Commissioners
Policy Position
SB 425-A: Related to 911 Provider Classifications**

Clackamas County Supports SB 425-A: The Board of County Commissioners supports reclassifying telecommunication professionals responding to 911 calls as first responders.

911 call takers support residents in crisis and experience similar emotional trauma to medical, fire, and law enforcement officers. While it's true 911 call takers are not running into burning buildings or arresting criminals, 911 call takers are often the last person that someone talks to before they die, while dispatching police, fire and EMS services to assist on-scene. These professionals hear the front end of every emergency, but are often not provided with the end of the story, unless it ends tragically and is reported in the news media.

It is not uncommon for call takers to guide parents on how to deliver their new baby or provide life-saving CPR instructions to bystanders who have never been trained on how to save a life, all while an ambulance is rushing to the scene. 911 call takers listen to unfolding domestic violence, hear shootings and work tirelessly to calm down angry residents threatening to harm others while police are being dispatched, and yet they are classified by both state and federal authorities as clerical in their job description.

In Clackamas County, 911 professionals responded to 283,161 calls in 2020. That translates into 775 calls per day. It often takes 18 to 24 months to fully train a new 911 professional, and the stress and demand of the role often leads to burnout and high employee turnover. Appropriate classification will not only help in recognizing the important public safety service nature of this role during recruitment, it will lead to providing the right resources including wellness and mental health services to support dedicated public servants who make 911 telecommunications their long-term career.

We urge a "YES" vote on SB 425-A.

Please contact Chris Lyons at clyons@clackamas.us for more information.