

Why Integrate?

Integrated centers, once the exception, have become the norm for emergency communications across the United States. SCGI has studied this movement for over three decades, working closely with centers across the country. From this perspective, we have gleaned the following overview of a few of the compelling benefits of consolidation of smaller or bifurcated centers. This snapshot resulted from the study of 175 emergency communications centers through interviews, access to internal measurements and publicly available documents. Properly integrated centers are more effective, efficient, affordable and sustainable than single focus or bifurcated centers. The efficiencies are so stark that it is incumbent on decision makers who oppose consolidation to justify their position on grounds other than objective measurements and national standards.

Hiring

Integrated centers see lower turnover, shorter vacancies, and have larger applicant pools than bifurcated centers.

Type of Center	Turnover rates (2011-2017)	% of open positions (2011-2017)	# of applicants per posting cycle (2011-2017)
Bifurcated	27% / year	10 %	39
Integrated/Consolidated	18%/ year	6 %	189

Training

Bifurcated centers have different training results and spend less time on training than Integrated centers.

Type of Center	% of new hires who graduate from training (sign off) (2008-2016)	Average Length of time in training (2008-2016)	Hours/year of continual training (2008-2016)
Bifurcated	33%	8 weeks	5
Integrated/Consolidated	75%	12.5 weeks	24

Retention

Integrated centers see higher retention rates in two out of three categories than Bifurcated centers.

Type of Center	% of employees who stay 2.5 years (2008-2016)	% of those employees who stay 5 years (2008-2016)	% of those employees who stay more than 5 years (2008-2016)
Bifurcated	23%	75%	45%
Integrated/Consolidated	64%	78%	63%

Top three reasons for self-separation from comm-center (2010-2017)

Records of exit interviews reveal the top three reasons an employee chooses to leave the center.

Type of Center	Reason #1	Reason #2	Reason #3
Bifurcated	No Advancement	Stuck on a shift	Better Pay
Integrated/Consolidated	Keeping up with Tech	Moving (family member)	Retirement

QA Systematic Quality Assurance Programs

Data driven Quality Assurance programs are essential in all comm centers. The ability to build and use real data to improve quality for users and citizens is critical.

Type of Center	% of comm centers with QA programs (2008-2016)	% of comm centers that use QA data internally to improve Quality of Service (2008-2016)	% of comm centers that report improvement due to QA programs (2008-2016)
Bifurcated	22%	19%	15%
Integrated/Consolidated	93%	88%	88%

Supervisory Ratios

Supervisor to employee ratios are a key leading indicator of cost and quality. Lower supervisor ratios usually suggest that the supervisor is carrying out her duties while also dispatching. The industry standard recognizes the system-wide value of dedicated supervisory positions.

Type of Center	Supervisor/floor ratio	Full Time or Part Time Supervisors	Average Years as Supervisor
Bifurcated	1 Sup / 2 Floor	Part Time	2.6
Integrated/Consolidated	1 Sup / 6.5 Floor	Full Time	6.5

Opportunities and User Agency Influence on Outcomes (2001-2016)

The ability of Users to directly influence quality of service across the entire system is a hallmark of integrated centers. This measurement suggests greater user input about process, policy, and quality measures is available in an integrated center.

Type of Center	Average # of User Agencies Served	% of Users at Operational or Governance Committee Level	Average # of Board Meetings per year
Bifurcated	3	33%	3
Integrated/Consolidated	16	86%	11

Cost to Taxpayers (2001-2015)

While every emergency communications center has seen the cost of doing business rise in the past 20 years, driven largely by increased cost of mission-critical technology and total cost of compensation of increasingly professional staff, integrated centers see costs rise more slowly than bifurcated centers. Our research of overall costs, accounting for regional differences in cost of living, and factoring out inflation (in 2000 dollars) reveals a significant delta. Studies conducted from 2001-2015 have revealed the following:

Type of Center	% Increase in cost of units of work 2001-2005 (range)	% Increase in cost of units of work 2006-2010 (range)	% Increase in cost of units of work 2011-2015 (range)
Bifurcated	6.9—14.1	4.2—13.6	7.8—13.3
Integrated/Consolidated	3.1—4.6	0.0—6.1	0.0—6.0

The cost of service in integrated centers grows more slowly than in bifurcated centers. Generally, the larger integrated centers see lower increases year over year than smaller centers.