



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: Tuesday, April 7, 2026.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. Contact **Gage Harter** with any questions.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Chesterfield County

Program Title: Chesterfield County Public Schools (CCPS) and Chesterfield County Emergency Communications - Workforce Development 911 Emergency Dispatch

Program Category: Community and Economic Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Lisa High

Title: Chesterfield Co Public Schools Deputy Superintendent

Signature: 

Workforce Development 911 Emergency Dispatch
(Community and Economic Development Category)

Executive Summary:

Chesterfield County Public Schools (CCPS) and the Chesterfield County Emergency Communications Center (ECC) have launched a first-of-its-kind 911 Emergency Telecommunications CTE Training Program that directly addresses public safety workforce shortages while creating an accelerated career pathway for students. This two-semester, three-credit program integrates criminal justice instruction with academy-level emergency telecommunications training. Selected seniors serve as Emergency Telecommunicator Cadets, complete high-quality work-based learning experiences, and earn industry credentials including OSHA-10, First Aid/CPR, and Emergency Telecommunicator Certification (ETC). By embedding students within a functioning county emergency communications center, Chesterfield is building a sustainable talent pipeline for one of local government's most critical, high-demand roles. This innovative partnership strengthens emergency response capacity, reduces long-term recruitment costs, and prepares career-ready graduates for immediate public service employment. This model demonstrates how counties can proactively solve workforce shortages while investing in economic mobility and public safety resilience directly from their community.

Problem or need addressed by the program:

Across the nation, 911 emergency communications centers face severe staffing shortages, high turnover rates, and increasing call volumes. Telecommunicators serve as the first, and often most critical, point of contact during emergencies, responsible for gathering life-saving information, dispatching police, fire, and EMS units, and coordinating multi-agency response. Workforce instability in this profession directly affects response times, employee burnout, and public safety outcomes.

Chesterfield County, VA

Workforce Development 911 Emergency Dispatch
(Community and Economic Development Category)

Chesterfield County identified emergency telecommunications as a high-demand, hard-to-fill position essential to maintaining legally mandated public safety services. As a county government, Chesterfield is obligated to provide timely, professional emergency response coordination to more than 370,000 residents. Traditional recruitment methods were not sufficient to build a sustainable staffing pipeline. Rather than compete in an increasingly constrained labor market, county leadership partnered with CCPS CTE to cultivate local talent before graduation. This proactive model addresses two urgent needs simultaneously, stabilizing the county's emergency communications workforce and creating a high-wage, high-skill public safety career pathway for students

By integrating academy-level telecommunications training into the high school curriculum, the county is shifting from reactive hiring to strategic workforce development. This initiative ensures future telecommunicators are locally trained, credentialed, and invested in serving their own community. Chesterfield County's approach reflects national best practices in workforce alignment, linking education systems directly to critical government functions to ensure long-term operational sustainability.

Program Description:

Formal approval occurred in February 2025 through a formal memorandum of agreement between CCPS and the ECC. Student applications and scheduling processes took place in spring 2025, enabling program launch for the 2025-2026 school year. The structured two-semester model includes:

Semester 1: Criminal Justice (1 credit) at the Career and Technical Center

Semester 2: Emergency Telecommunications (1 credit)

Work-Based Learning: Emergency Medical Telecommunications (1 credit)

Chesterfield County, VA

Workforce Development 911 Emergency Dispatch
(Community and Economic Development Category)

Eligible seniors (age 18 by program completion) apply through a competitive selection process that includes a letter of intent, ECC staff evaluation, and background screening. Up to 20 students are selected annually as Emergency Telecommunicator Cadets. Cadets attend academy instruction on alternating school days while completing remaining coursework at their home high school. Training is delivered by a certified ECC Academy instructor using real-world dispatch protocols and systems.

Curriculum components include:

- Emergency call-taking and dispatch procedures
- Legal liability, confidentiality, and public safety ethics
- Multitasking in high-stress environments
- Crisis communication and stress management
- Police, fire, and EMS coordination protocols

Students earn nationally recognized credentials, including:

- OSHA-10
- First Aid/CPR
- Emergency Telecommunicator Certification (ETC)

The county provides training facilities, communications technology systems, professional uniforms, and academy-level instruction. CCPS provides transportation, curriculum alignment, instructional oversight, and funds an ECC Academy instructor stipend (approximately \$10,000 annually). By leveraging existing county infrastructure rather than constructing new facilities, the program achieves high impact with limited capital investment. Annual renewal of the agreement

Chesterfield County, VA

Workforce Development 911 Emergency Dispatch
(Community and Economic Development Category)

ensures sustainability and continuous program evaluation. This model integrates education, workforce development, and public safety operations into a single coordinated system, creating a direct, credentialed pathway from classroom to county employment.

Program Cost:

The 911 Emergency Telecommunications Program was implemented using a shared-services model that capitalizes on existing county infrastructure and school division personnel, significantly reducing start-up costs. Primary operating expenses are personnel-related. The first semester is delivered by an existing criminal justice teacher within the Career and Technical Center. The second semester is taught on-site at the county's ECC by a certified academy instructor. CCPS provides an instructional stipend for the ECC instructor (approximately \$10,000 annually, including associated payroll costs). Additional operational expenses include student credentialing assessments (Emergency Telecommunicator Certification), OSHA-10 and First Aid/CPR certifications, instructional materials, work-based learning coordination, student uniforms, and transportation to the county training facility.

Capital expenditures were modest. The county provided dedicated training space within its Public Safety Training Center and access to dispatch technology systems. The school division funded supplemental training equipment. A county seeking to replicate this model would require access to a functioning communications center, certified instructional staff, transportation capacity, credentialing funds, and basic classroom equipment. The program demonstrates how intergovernmental collaboration can produce high-impact workforce outcomes with limited new financial investment.

Chesterfield County, VA

Workforce Development 911 Emergency Dispatch
(Community and Economic Development Category)

The 911 Emergency Telecommunications Program was intentionally designed to maximize impact while minimizing new capital investment by leveraging existing county and school division infrastructure.

Operating Costs:

During the first semester, instruction is delivered by an existing criminal justice teacher within the Career and Technical Center, resulting in no additional instructional staffing cost for that portion of the program. During the second semester, a certified ECC Academy instructor, an existing county employee, provides specialized telecommunications training. CCPS funds the instructional stipend for academy delivery at approximately \$36 per hour for 250 hours annually (approximately \$10,000 including FICA).

Additional operating costs include:

- Industry credentialing exam fees (Emergency Telecommunicator Certification)
- OSHA-10 and First Aid/CPR certifications
- Instructional materials and curriculum resources
- Student uniforms
- Work-based learning coordination
- Student transportation to the Eanes-Pittman Public Safety Training Center

Capital Costs: Capital expenditures were limited. The county provided training space within the existing public safety facility and donated access to operational equipment and communications systems. CCPS purchased classroom furniture, select training equipment, and instructional technology to support academy instruction.

Workforce Development 911 Emergency Dispatch
(Community and Economic Development Category)

Replication Considerations for Other Counties: A county seeking to replicate this model would need:

- Access to a functioning emergency communications center
- A certified telecommunications instructor
- Curriculum alignment support
- Credentialing and assessment funding
- Transportation logistics
- Basic classroom equipment and furnishings

By leveraging existing personnel, facilities, and intergovernmental partnerships, Chesterfield County created a high-impact, workforce-aligned program with relatively modest financial investment, demonstrating fiscal responsibility and strategic resource utilization.

Results/Success of the Program:

The inaugural cohort began in January 2026, and early implementation benchmarks demonstrate strong institutional impact and long-term workforce stabilization potential.

Immediate outcomes include:

- Formalized intergovernmental partnership agreement
- Dedicated training space within a functioning 911 center
- Defined credential pathway aligned to national standards
- Integrated transportation and operational logistics
- High student interest and selective admissions

Projected measurable outcomes beginning 2026–2027 include:

- Up to 20 credentialed cadets annually

Workforce Development 911 Emergency Dispatch
(Community and Economic Development Category)

- Increased pool of ETC certified applicants
- Reduced onboarding and academy training costs
- Shortened vacancy duration for ECC positions
- Improved retention rates through locally trained hires

By preparing students before graduation, the county reduces traditional recruitment expenses, accelerates readiness for employment, and strengthens institutional knowledge continuity.

Graduates enter the workforce already trained in county protocols, dispatch systems, and operational expectations. The impact is equally significant. Emergency telecommunications provides stable public employment with competitive wages and advancement opportunities, supporting long-term economic mobility for young adults.

From a public safety perspective, strengthening the telecommunicator workforce directly enhances response reliability and operational resilience. Stable staffing reduces burnout, improves morale, and ensures consistent service delivery to residents. Most importantly, this initiative builds community-connected public servants. Students trained through this program are not external recruits; they are local graduates prepared to serve their own neighbors during moments of crisis. Chesterfield County is transforming workforce development into a public safety strategy by creating a scalable solution that strengthens government operations while expanding opportunity for the next generation.

Worthiness of Award:

This program is nationally distinctive because it embeds high school students inside a functioning county emergency communications academy, an operational environment rarely

Workforce Development 911 Emergency Dispatch
(Community and Economic Development Category)

accessible at the secondary level. Unlike traditional CTE simulations, this initiative delivers academy-level instruction, industry certification preparation, and structured work-based learning within a live 911 center. It connects public education directly to a core government function, aligning workforce development with legally mandated public safety operations.

Key innovative elements include:

- Early credential attainment in a high-demand government profession
- Direct pipeline to county employment
- Leveraging existing public safety infrastructure to minimize capital cost
- Selective admissions ensuring candidate readiness and professionalism
- Intergovernmental collaboration as a workforce stabilization strategy

Few counties nationwide have formalized a structured, credit-bearing 911 dispatcher pathway for high school seniors. Chesterfield County's model is scalable, cost-efficient, and replicable, requiring leadership alignment rather than significant new infrastructure. By rethinking how local government cultivates talent, Chesterfield County has built a sustainable workforce engine that strengthens emergency response capacity, enhances economic mobility, and ensures operational continuity. This is more than a career pathway a public safety investment, an economic development strategy, and a model of forward-thinking county governance worthy of national recognition.

Supplemental Materials:

[Link](#) to Supplemental Materials