



# Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) Overview

## Introduction

Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) are critical infrastructure for emergency response, providing a centralized system for receiving and dispatching 911 calls. These facilities are part of a state-coordinated effort under the Nebraska Public Service Commission (PSC), which has overseen significant technological and operational advancements to ensure comprehensive coverage for the state's population.

## Brief History

PSAPs emerged to meet the need for a faster and more organized response to emergencies. By 2018, Nebraska took a significant step with LB993, which authorized the implementation of a Next Generation 911 (NG911) system. NG911 is a more advanced, internet-protocol-based infrastructure that supports not only voice calls but also multimedia communications like text messages, videos, and images. This modernization aimed to ensure faster and more accurate emergency response in both urban and rural areas. As of 2024, nearly all of Nebraska's 67 PSAPs have been integrated into the NG911 system, connecting state patrol communication centers and covering over 99% of the state's population and geography.

## Purpose & Functions

PSAPs serve four primary functions to assist people experiencing emergencies:

- Receive Emergency Communications
  - PSAPs handle 911 calls, including traditional voice calls and digital communications in the NG911 framework
- Dispatch Emergency Services
  - Operators coordinate with police, fire departments, and emergency medical services to ensure timely assistance
- Enhance Public Safety
  - By providing a unified system, PSAPs help reduce response times and improve outcomes in emergencies
- Support Interagency Collaboration
  - PSAPs facilitate communication among various agencies, particularly during large-scale or multi-jurisdictional incidents

**Example: Garfield County is located in central Nebraska and home to around 1,800 residents. A funding formula based on population and/or number of calls would not sufficiently fund PSAP infrastructure for Garfield County residents. A funding surcharge distributed statewide would ensure that every county resident enjoys a reliable connection to emergency services. Equitable funding would also benefit people traveling to and through all of Nebraska's underserved counties.**

# Public Safety

## Answering Points

### Key Features of Nebraska's System

- Geographic Information System (GIS) Integration
  - NG911 uses GIS data for precise location identification, ensuring calls are routed to the appropriate PSAP
- Digital Media Handling
  - Beyond voice, PSAPs now process text, video, and other media, broadening access for individuals with disabilities or in situations where speaking is not feasible
- Resilience and Redundancy
  - Nebraska's system includes safeguards to maintain service during technical failures, ensuring continuous operation

### Recommendations

- Fund Next Generation 911 (NG911) Completion
  - Finalize the integration of the last PSAP into the NG911 system for statewide coverage and continue enhancing multimedia and GIS integration
- Fund Training Improvements
  - Allocate resources for better training programs and consistent funding mechanisms for PSAPs
- Fund Technology Upgrades
  - Further develop digital capabilities to handle texts, videos, and photos efficiently in emergency responses
- Prioritize Rural Connectivity
  - Prioritize equitable service expansion to underserved rural areas
- Increase Public Engagement
  - Enhance public awareness and accessibility to emergency services through outreach and education

### LB576

- LB576 and its amendment AM1656 would allow the Public Service Commission to require a uniform wireless surcharge of up to \$.70 for all 93 counties