

Workgroup to Study Implementation of an Expanded 3-1-1 Nonemergency System

Meeting Minutes
9/25/2025

Roll Call

Voting Members Present: Sara Elalamy (Secretary Designee), Senator Cheryl Kagan, Senator Paul Corderman, Delegate, Delegate Lesley Lopez, Jack Markey, Renee Stainrod, Cecilia Warren, Lorenzo Cropper, Christina Cornwell, Barry Scheitlin, Karen Saymansky, Delegate Tiffany Alston, Charlynn Flaherty, Chris Thompson, and Kevin Kinnally.

Others Present: David Propert, Donavan Ham, Matthew Jeweler, Julie Losh, Darius Leftwich, Dartanion Williams, William Kidwell, and Abril Hunter.

Summary

Senator Cheryl C. Kagan convened the September meeting of the Maryland 3-1-1 Statewide Workgroup by reiterating the shared goal of making Maryland the first state in the nation to offer 3-1-1 services to all residents, travelers, and workers. She emphasized that this effort aims to improve access to government information, reduce the burden on emergency systems, and ensure equitable service delivery across the state.

Sara Elalamy from the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) noted that a draft of the workgroup's report had been circulated and revised, expressing her eagerness to review feedback and incorporate new suggestions. The discussion focused on several key recommendations: establishing a statewide 3-1-1 oversight board hosted by Maryland 2-1-1 with technical oversight from DoIT, launching an AI chatbot pilot program as part of a phased rollout, and adopting a standardized statewide taxonomy. The workgroup members engaged in detailed, solution-oriented discussions that covered governance, cost considerations, implementation phases, marketing, and data governance.

Subgroups reports

Senator Kagan welcomed attendees from state agencies, local governments, and partner organizations, including representatives from MDEM, MACo, county emergency services

departments, DoIT, Gartner, and the Department of Legislative Services. She also recognized Sara Elalamy for managing the workgroup's logistics and coordination.

- **Technology Standards Subcommittee Update:** Jack Markey, Chair of the Technology Standards subgroup, reported that the workgroup has met and is in good standing.
- **Marketing and Outreach Subcommittee Update:** Sen. Cheryl C. Kagan, leading the marketing subgroup, reported that the subcommittee did not meet due to the pending design of the 3-1-1 system.
- **Governance and Feasibility Subcommittee Update:** Sen. Paul Corderman, Chair of the Governance and Feasibility subcommittee, reported that the subcommittee has provided preliminary recommendations that are reflected in the current draft report.

Report Review and Recommendations

Sara Elalamy proposed reviewing the draft report section by section, focusing on substantive feedback rather than editorial issues. Senator Kagan reminded the group that the final report due November 1st will be submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly to summarize the group's findings and recommendations.

Initial recommendations include:

1. Establishing a Statewide 3-1-1 Oversight Board, hosted by Maryland 2-1-1 with DoIT providing technical oversight.
2. Implementing a phased rollout, beginning with an AI chatbot pilot program in four counties (two with existing 3-1-1 systems and two without).
3. Developing a statewide taxonomy to ensure consistency and interoperability.

Rationale and Pilot Design

Senator Kagan outlined three primary reasons for pursuing a statewide 3-1-1 system:

- To reduce the overwhelming number of non-emergency calls received by 9-1-1 centers,
- To promote equitable access to government services, particularly for individuals with language or technology barriers, and

- To leverage artificial intelligence as a cost-effective solution that minimizes new hiring and infrastructure needs.

The first phase, a chatbot pilot managed by Maryland Information Network with DoIT support, will test functionality and scalability. There was active debate on the pilot's ideal duration.

The second phase would introduce an AI voice bot to complement the chatbot, expanding accessibility for residents who prefer phone-based communication. Natalie Evans Harris recommended combining reporting from both phases into one comprehensive document that captures statewide insights and lessons learned.

By Phase Three, the group anticipates a statewide rollout, rather than a regional one. Senator Kagan emphasized that a statewide approach ensures equitable access “all boats rise” and avoids confusion among residents.

Oversight and Governance

A recurring theme throughout the discussion was the importance of an effective oversight board modeled after entities such as the 9-1-1 Board or the Council on Open Data. The board would include legislators, administration officials, and key stakeholders responsible for data governance, fiscal accountability, and strategic guidance.

Dartanion Swift-Williams (Baltimore City) highlighted the need to define which service requests will be included in the early phases and recommended creating a community of practice for counties to share best practices on website management. Several participants raised concerns about smaller counties' ability to keep websites updated due to staffing and resource constraints. Natalie Evans Harris proposed starting with counties that already maintain current sites and offering support to others during future phases.

Technology, Data, and Security

Participants stressed the importance of integrating cybersecurity and data ownership safeguards into the system from the start. Jack Markey raised questions about the security of AI-enabled interfaces. Natalie Evans Harris confirmed that cybersecurity requirements would be embedded in the RFP process, and Elise Bellick added that the state must retain ownership of all data,

including call recordings and chat logs. DoIT's data use agreement template already provides such protections and can be adapted for county use.

GIS capabilities were also discussed as essential for ensuring accurate routing, especially along jurisdictional boundaries. The bot will be designed to provide at least a fallback option such as a relevant phone number or link when location accuracy is limited.

Communication, Marketing, and Equity

The group emphasized that marketing and public education will be vital to 3-1-1's success. Senator Kagan shared insights from other jurisdictions showing that multilingual, 24/7 awareness campaigns significantly increase utilization. Kevin Kinnally (MACo) cautioned that messaging must clearly distinguish between 3-1-1 and 9-1-1, since what may seem non-urgent to one person could still warrant emergency attention.

Senator Kagan also highlighted the bot's language-switching capability, noting that it can seamlessly move from English to Spanish and direct users to critical resources such as domestic violence shelters without requiring website navigation.

Next steps

- DoIT/ DLS teams will revise the draft report, circulate it one week before the October 16 meeting.
- The final report will be submitted to the Governor's Office by November 1, 2025.

Meeting minutes drafted by: Sara Elalamy - DoIT

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