MARCH 5, 2026

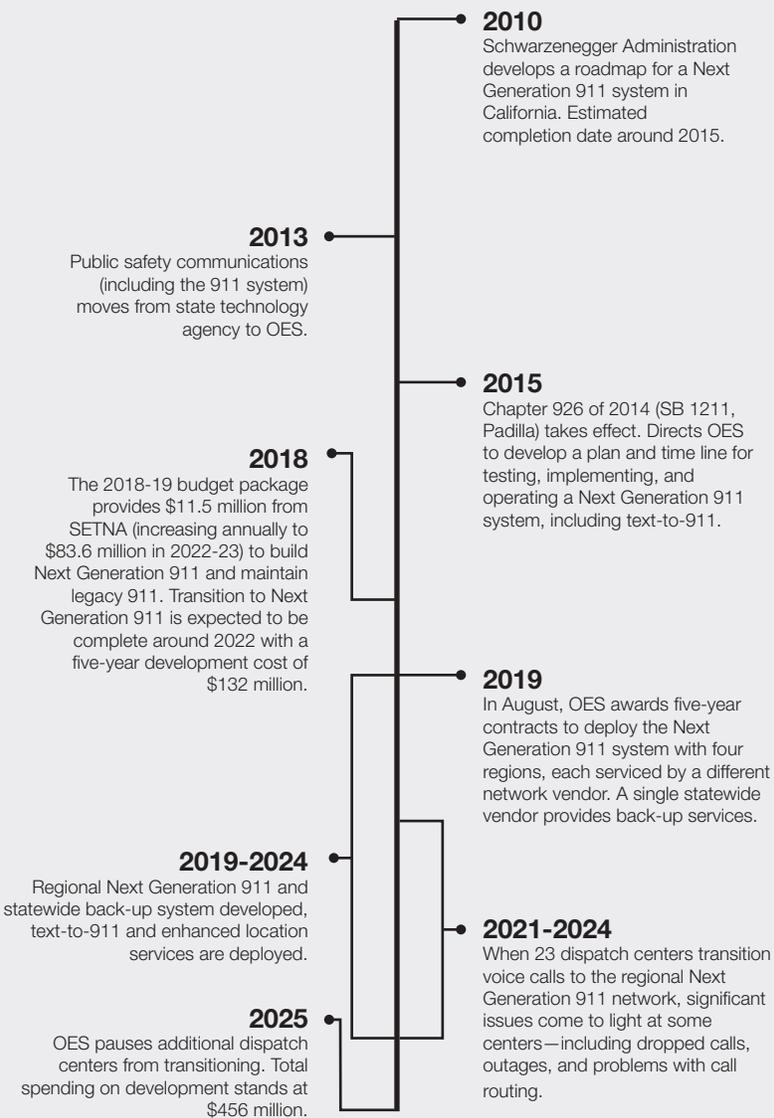# Office of Emergency Services: Next Generation 911 System

What Is Next Generation 911?

■ **Uses Internet Protocol (IP)-Based Technology**

— Allows 911 data to be sent from one computer to another over the Internet.

■ **Has Several Advantages Over Legacy 911**

— Multimedia emergency 911 communications (voice, video, photos, and text).

— Improved location data.

— Automatically re-routes 911 calls to other dispatch centers, which can help with high call volumes during natural disasters, large emergencies, or major events.

■ **Consists of Four Major Components**

— *Network*—A Next Generation 911 network delivers emergency communications over an IP-based emergency services network. These networks are specifically designated for use by public safety agencies.

— *Core Services*—Next Generation 911 core services include the software and databases needed to route emergency communications on the network.

— *Geographic Information Systems*—These systems provide location data used to direct emergency communications to appropriate dispatch centers and help first responders locate those in need of assistance.

— *Call Handling Equipment*—This equipment enables a dispatch center to receive, process, and dispatch IP-based emergency communications.

Project and Cost History: 2010 to 2025

Next Generation 911: Time Line of Major Milestones

2010
Schwarzenegger Administration develops a roadmap for a Next Generation 911 system in California. Estimated completion date around 2015.

2013
Public safety communications (including the 911 system) moves from state technology agency to OES.

2015
Chapter 926 of 2014 (SB 1211, Padilla) takes effect. Directs OES to develop a plan and time line for testing, implementing, and operating a Next Generation 911 system, including text-to-911.

2018
The 2018-19 budget package provides $11.5 million from SETNA (increasing annually to $83.6 million in 2022-23) to build Next Generation 911 and maintain legacy 911. Transition to Next Generation 911 is expected to be complete around 2022 with a five-year development cost of $132 million.

2019
In August, OES awards five-year contracts to deploy the Next Generation 911 system with four regions, each serviced by a different network vendor. A single statewide vendor provides back-up services.

2019-2024
Regional Next Generation 911 and statewide back-up system developed, text-to-911 and enhanced location services are deployed.

2021-2024
When 23 dispatch centers transition voice calls to the regional Next Generation 911 network, significant issues come to light at some centers—including dropped calls, outages, and problems with call routing.

2025
OES pauses additional dispatch centers from transitioning. Total spending on development stands at $456 million.

OES = Office of Emergency Services and SETNA = State Emergency Telephone Number Account.

LAO

Challenges and a New Direction

- **OES Pauses Project and Identifies Key Difficulties With Regional Approach**

  - Dispatch centers did not have a clear support process when it was necessary to report a trouble ticket.

  - Complexities of the network and interdependencies between the service providers created failure points.

  - The regional approach created a situation where both the technical and operational design were significantly adjusted from industry-standard practices, introducing fragility and risk.

  - Call handling procedures in the hybrid legacy/Next Generation 911 configuration generated additional work for some dispatch center staff.

- **OES Begins Moving Rapidly Towards Major Changes to Next Generation 911 System**

  - In November 2025, OES announces its intention to switch from the regional approach (with four vendors and a statewide backup) to a statewide approach (one primary network and a backup).

  - In February 2026, OES releases a three-phase implementation plan for this new approach:

    - Execute an interim contract in the coming weeks and move dispatch centers currently using regional networks for voice calls to the current statewide back-up provider. Focus on deployment in Los Angeles (ahead of Olympics) and on 20 or so other dispatch centers in most urgent need. Execute a long-term statewide contract by fall 2026.

    - Plan for and migrate all state dispatch centers to the new long-term statewide system in late 2026.

    - Decommission legacy 911 by end of 2030.

LAO Findings

- Project is overdue and budget needs are unclear. OES has not provided the Legislature with a cost estimate.

- Changes proposed by OES may be entirely appropriate, but changes always come with trade-offs.

- Changes of this magnitude to a critical public safety system are best accomplished under close oversight, which has been lacking.

- Key questions have not been answered or have not been sufficiently answered, including:

  - What, exactly, is the nature and scope of the problems with the regional system?

  - Will the transition to a statewide approach solve them?

  - What other options were considered?

  - How do these options compare?

  - How do these options comply with state privacy and security regulations and laws?

  - Is there sufficient oversight—both of this specific project, and of the state's overall 911 system going forward?

- 911 will continue to evolve even after the legacy 911 system has been decommissioned and the state's dispatch centers are all using Next Generation 911.

LAO Recommendations

- Pause the transition to the statewide approach until OES provides information answering key questions by the May Revision.

  - In particular, direct OES to provide an analysis of options and trade-offs.

- If OES cannot do so, prohibit OES from implementing the statewide approach until an independent, technical, third-party evaluation is completed.

- Require quarterly fiscal reports and monthly progress reports to the Legislature.

- Consider governance options and oversight for the long term.