



Marion County

Fire Rescue and EMS Advisory Board

Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, May 20, 2026

**4:00 PM Marion County Fire Rescue, 2631
SE Third St., Ocala, FL 34471**

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Roll Call & Quorum Determination**
4. **Approval of Minutes**
 - 4.1. [Marion County Fire Rescue and EMS Advisory Board Minutes - February 18, 2026 - Motion](#)
5. **Department Updates**
 - 5.1. [Budget Update](#)
6. **Board Items**
 - 6.1. [Marion County Fire Rescue FY 25/26 Quarter 2 Report](#)
7. **Next Meeting Date: August 19, 2026 - 4 P.M.**
8. **Adjournment**



Marion County

Fire Rescue and EMS Advisory Board

Agenda Item

File No.: 2026-23031

Agenda Date: 5/20/2026

Agenda No.: 4.1.

SUBJECT:

Marion County Fire Rescue and EMS Advisory Board Minutes - February 18, 2026 - Motion

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

See attached.

**Marion County Fire Rescue and EMS Advisory Board
February 18, 2026 Minutes - DRAFT**

1. **Call to Order** – The Marion County Fire Rescue and EMS Advisory Board met in the Training Room at Marion County Fire Rescue Headquarters, 2631 SE Third Street, Ocala, FL 34471 on February 18, 2026. Pat Gabriel called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.
2. **Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Roll Call and Quorum Determination** – Roll call was taken, and a quorum was met.

Members Present:

Patricia Gabriel, Chair

Erin Jones, Healthcare Development Director, Ocala/Marion County Chamber and Economic Partnership

Alan Keesee, CEO, HCA Florida Ocala Hospital

Floyd Magwood

Erika Skula, President and CEO, AdventHealth Ocala

Clint Welborn, Fire Chief, Ocala Fire Rescue

Adam Woods

Dr. Frank Fraunfelter, Medical Director, Marion County Fire Rescue

Members Absent:

None

Others in Attendance:

James Banta, Fire Chief, Marion County Fire Rescue

Robert Graff, Deputy Chief of Operations, Marion County Fire Rescue

Chief Olmsted, Division Chief, Marion County Fire Rescue

Dr. Austin Reed, Assistant Medical Director, Marion County Fire Rescue

Barry Cannon, EMS Transport Manager, HCA Florida Ocala Hospital

Ashley Arbuckle, EMS Outreach Manager, HCA Florida Ocala Hospital

Wanda Bowlin, EMS Relations and Emergency Management Specialist, AdventHealth Ocala

Pam Doherty, Administrative Staff Assistant, Marion County Fire Rescue

4. **Approval of Minutes** – The August 20, 2025, Marion County Fire Rescue and EMS Advisory Board minutes were submitted for approval. Dr. Fraunfelter made a motion to approve the minutes, and Mr. Keesee seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 7-0.
5. **Marion County Fire Rescue Updates**

5.1 Chief Banta advised that the department is early in the budget process. Marion County Fire Rescue's main focus from a budget standpoint will be on the union contract with negotiations currently in progress. From a staffing standpoint outside of the first responders, there are pay reclassification changes and the possibility of adding a social worker to the Community Paramedicine Program. A 3-week Kelly day is being discussed with the firefighters, which would change from a 56-hour work week to a 48-hour work week. This has a significant cost, with the main cost driver being the additional 130 positions needed to accomplish this. The budget will be lean this year. Approximately seven fire departments in Florida have transitioned to the 24/72 schedule which is 24 hours on and 72 hours off. The new 24/72 schedule is being discussed to be offered to the EMS side since they are currently on the 3-week Kelly day schedule.

Chief Welborn asked whether the county is using the Kelly Day as a step toward transitioning to a 24/72 schedule. Chief Banta responded that the county has not committed to implementing a 24/72 schedule for firefighters. He noted that the estimated cost of transitioning to a 24/72 schedule is approximately \$20 million, and that figure does not include adding any additional apparatus on the road. The transition would take an estimated three to four years to fully implement. He also emphasized that negotiations remain fluid and are subject to change at each meeting.

Chief Graff stated that departments across the state are actively hiring, many offering higher pay and a 42-hour work schedule. He described the current environment as a competitive race focused on recruitment and retention. He noted that approximately 200 additional personnel would be required to move to a 24/72 schedule. He also mentioned that he does not believe there is sufficient data to justify increasing the budget by an additional estimated 25–30% to provide the same level of service currently being delivered. Chief Graff expressed concern that there is not enough data to determine whether a 42-hour schedule or a 48-hour schedule is more effective. He questioned whether employees working a 42-hour schedule would use the additional time for rest and relaxation as intended, or whether they would pursue secondary means of employment or operate personal businesses during that time. He also noted that the 48-hour schedule is currently available and supported by substantial data, with many departments already operating under that model.

5.2 Chief Graff reported that interfacility transports with the hospital are going well, with no major identified issues. He noted that existing COPCN (Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity) transport restrictions are in place to ensure all agencies maintain the ability to transport and discharge patients as needed. He added that both interfacility transports and bed delay situations are being managed effectively. The UHUs (Unit Hour Utilizations) are performing well and operating as expected.

Mr. Keesee stated that collaboration with MCFR has been excellent.

Wanda Bowlin, EMS Relations and Emergency Management Specialist for AdventHealth Ocala, shared that the hospital expects its new neonatal unit to be operational by the second quarter of this year. She also noted that six additional units are available to provide added support to MCFR as needed.

5.3 Chief Olmsted presented the 21-page PowerPoint overview of the 2025 Marion County Fire Rescue Master Plan and Strategic Plan to the Advisory Board. In addition, each board member received a binder containing the 316-page document, titled, “Community Risk Assessment: Standards of Cover” and the 46page document, titled, “2025 Marion County Fire Rescue Strategic Plan”.

Chief Graff explained that an internal team was formed in January 2025 to develop the master plan from the ground up. The process included comprehensive data analysis, development of capital replacement plans, resource distribution projections, and historical system performance analysis. The plan also incorporates a Community Risk Assessment, Standards of Cover, financial expenditure breakdown, and a historical overview of the department’s evolution and future direction. These documents are required components for fire department accreditation.

Chief Banta noted that the planning process began with a two-day session involving cross-sections of staff who provided input on departmental priorities. He explained that the prediction model for number of transports is based on how busy the trucks were and how many calls they were running. These numbers are mapped on a geographic information system (GIS) to identify

call density and service demand. As a result, high-performance (HP) units were relocated from inside the City of Ocala to areas outside the city to improve overall system coverage. This adjustment has significantly improved the availability of units within the municipality.

Chief Banta mentioned that changes were made to the types of calls to which the fire engines responded. These adjustments do not impact EMS operations but are intended to increase engine availability for higher-priority calls and potentially reduce the need for additional system resources over the next five years. Additionally, Engine 13 was placed into service at Orange Springs - Station 13 this past week to provide much-needed support to that area.

There was a brief discussion on recent high-profile events involving the fire department. Mr. Keesee advised that their focus is on supporting the fire department with ongoing cultural issues. Chief Banta advised that leadership is evaluating the department as a whole, making adjustments where necessary. The small issues are important and do matter.

Regarding the Dunnellon Fire, Chief Banta explained that MCFR fell into the assistance role with Dunnellon after the first 24 hours. Current efforts include additional air monitoring, flying overhead drones to monitor changes and clean up. The biggest challenge with the Dunnellon fire has been communication with the public. The cleanup plan involved removing up to 2 feet of soil under the burned railroad ties, hauling everything away, and conducting soil samples to make sure everything is clean. MCFR's focus was to prevent further spread of the fire. Chief Banta noted strong collaboration with Emergency Management and the City of Dunnellon.

6. Board Items

6.1 FY 24/25 Quarter 4 Report

Chief Graff reported that MCFR has added the Fire Rescue and EMS impact fee collection to the quarterly report with a summary of this information. This report will now satisfy the agreement between MCFR and the City of Ocala showing how funds collected are allocated.

6.2 FY 25/26 Quarter 1 Report

Chief Graff advised that updated Medicare rates will be reflected in the 2026 report. This quarter still reflected 2025 rates, as part of the reporting period remains in 2025. Mr. Keesee said impact fees are lower than anticipated. Chief Banta explained that significant revenue is not expected until the end of year, as it is collected at close-out, possibly as late as October.

Pat Gabriel and Erica Skula complimented the department on the Community Risk Assessment: Standards of Cover Plan and the 2025 Strategic Plan, recognizing the efforts related to the plans being developed internally.

Dr. Fraunfelter introduced Dr. Austin Reed, the new Assistant Medical Director, as they are working side by side on revising and updating protocols. Cardiac arrest survival data shows approximately 10-12% higher than state and national averages. The survival rate increase is partially contributed by the opening of two resuscitation centers in the community.

Mr. Keesee announced that HCA Florida Ocala Hospital has entered a major partnership with the flight crew of Air Methods, a national helicopter organization. This helicopter will fly patients into Marion County from nearby geographical areas. Barry Cannon, EMS Transport Manager, HCA Florida Ocala Hospital, stated that in January there were 1,265 active patient transports. Last year, HCA Florida Ocala Hospital completed 12,365 patient transports.

Erika Skula, President and CEO of AdventHealth Ocala, advised that her hospital recently received a comprehensive stroke accreditation. ECPR (Extracorporeal Cardiopulmonary

Resuscitation) and ECMO (Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation) services are progressing well, with ongoing training in coordination with local fire stations.

- 7. **Next Quarterly Meeting Date** – The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 20, 2026, at 4:00 p.m. in the Training Room at Marion County Fire Rescue, 2631 SE Third Street, Ocala, FL 34471.
- 8. **Adjournment** – There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

Approved:

Pat Gabriel, Chairperson

Date



Marion County

Fire Rescue and EMS Advisory Board

Agenda Item

File No.: 2026-23034

Agenda Date: 5/20/2026

Agenda No.: 5.1.

SUBJECT:
Budget Update

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:
The Quarter 2 Budget Update will be presented by Chief Banta.



Marion County

Fire Rescue and EMS Advisory Board

Agenda Item

File No.: 2026-23035

Agenda Date: 5/20/2026

Agenda No.: 6.1.

SUBJECT:

Marion County Fire Rescue FY 25/26 Quarter 2 Report

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

Chief Kruger will discuss the FY 25/26 Quarter 2 Report.



MCFR Quarterly Report FY 2025–2026 Quarter 2

MARION COUNTY FIRE RESCUE



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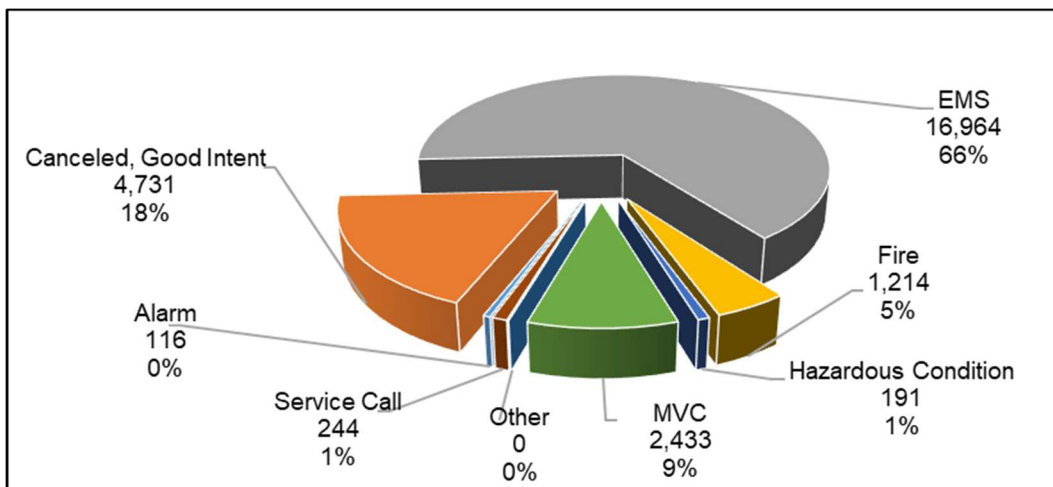


OPERATIONS

Service Demand

MCFR crews responded to 25,894 calls for service during this quarter—an increase of 8.14% over the same quarter during the prior fiscal year. The greatest demand for service was for emergency medical service (EMS) incidents, accounting for almost 66% of overall service demand. The following figure illustrates the percentages of service demand based upon the categories within the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS).

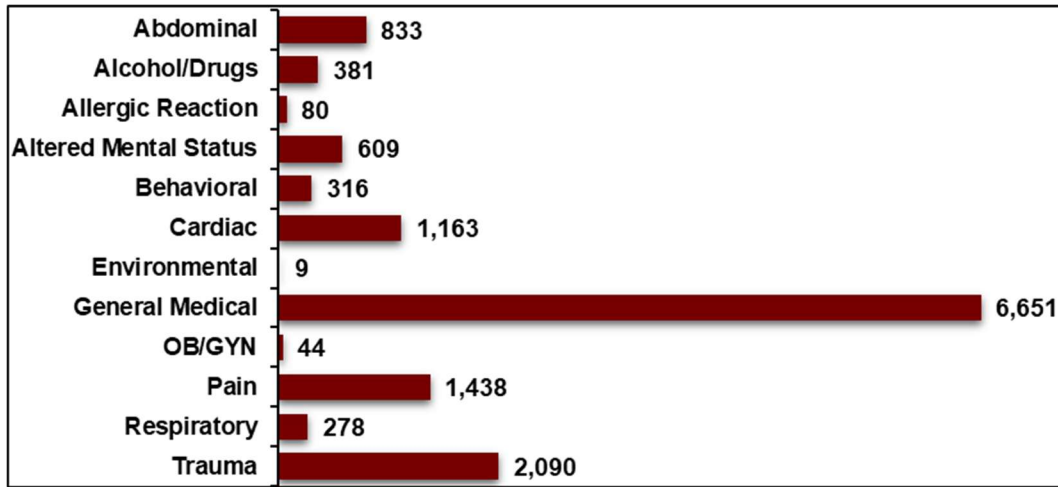
Figure 1 MCFR Service Demand by NFIRS Incident Type



For purposes of a more in-depth view of the patients that are classified within the broader categories of medical calls and inter-facility transfers, the focus is primarily on those being transported. The following figure illustrates the categories of primary impression (the paramedic’s determination of complaint based on gathering patient information and assessing the patient) for all patients transported within the quarter.

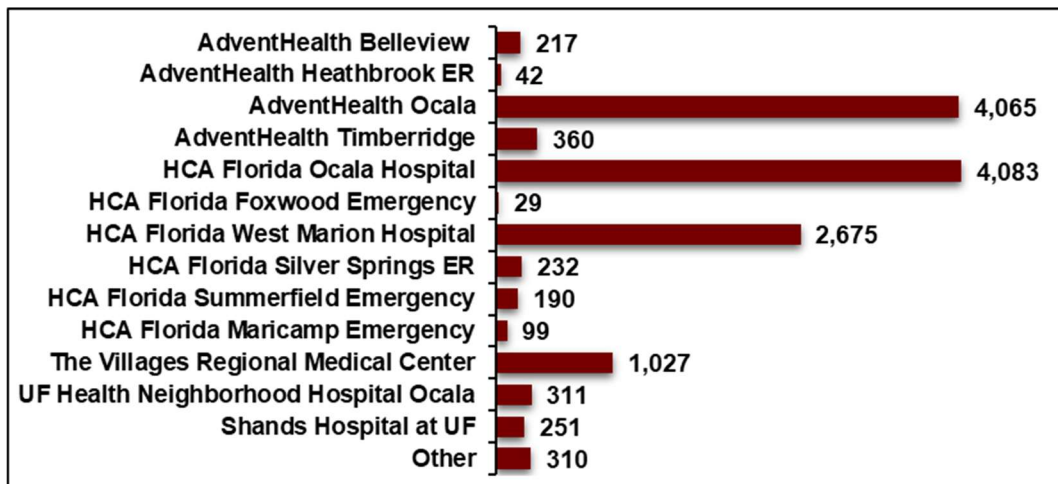


Figure 2 Patient Transports by Primary Impression



Marion County Fire Rescue works hand-in-hand with the local hospital organizations. The following figure illustrates the locations where patients were transported, with a combined total of 13,891 transports during the quarter.

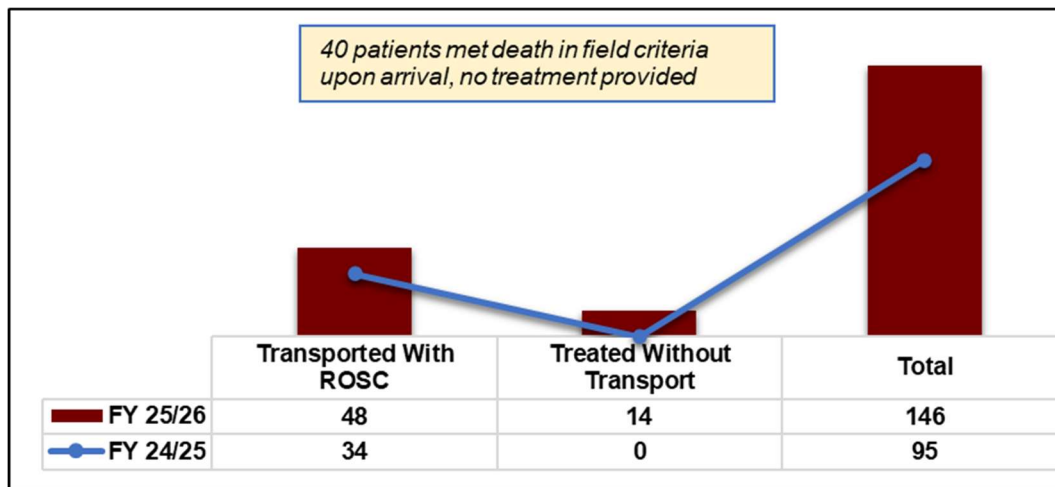
Figure 3 Patient Transports by Destination



One of the most significant goals for providing emergency medical services within the community is the ability to reduce illness and death wherever possible. The metric that illustrates this well is the ability to obtain return of spontaneous circulation (ROSC) in cardiac arrest patients. ROSC means that the patient’s heart began working at a level sufficient to produce a pulse.



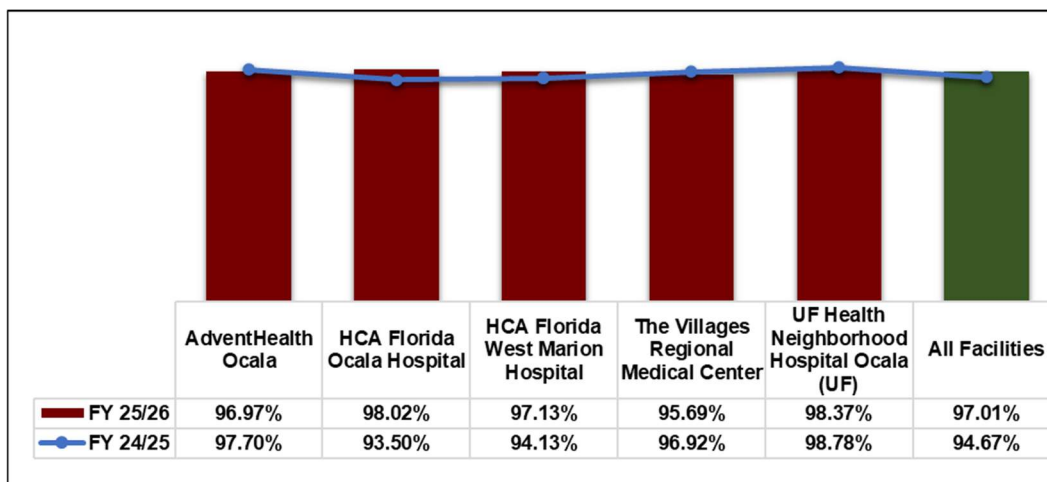
Figure 4 Cardiac Arrest



Hospital Interface

The ability for Marion County Fire Rescue units to be available to respond to additional calls for service is impacted by the time spent at the receiving hospital. Working with the local hospitals, the first performance measure illustrated below is the transfer of patient care to hospital staff within 30 minutes of transport unit arrival at the hospital—with a target of 30 minutes or less for 90% of patients. Data first started becoming available for UF Health Neighborhood Hospital in mid-July 2024 when the facility opened.

Figure 5 Transfer of Care Less Than 30 Minutes

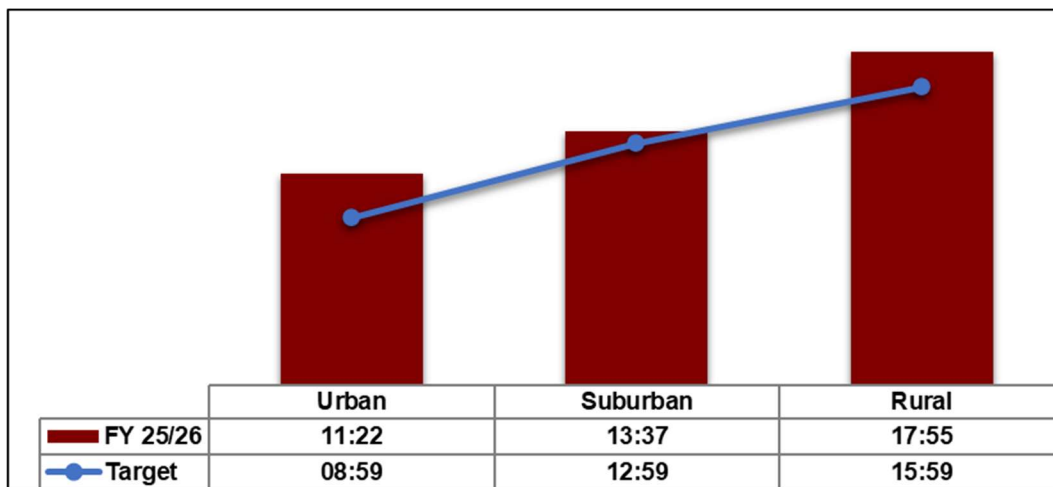




Response Time Performance

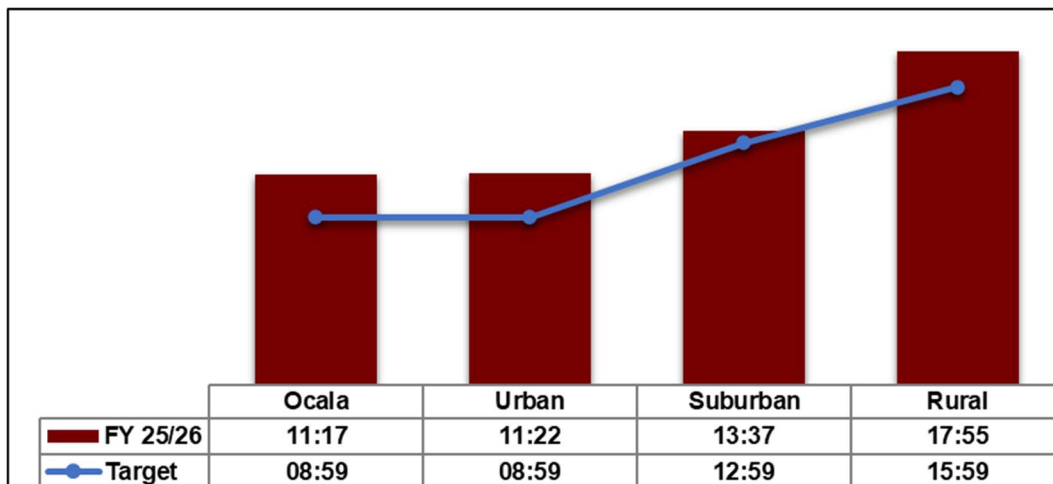
The ability to decrease damage and injury from incidents of all types is impacted by the time it takes for units to arrive. Generally, this is best calculated using only those incidents that were emergency response (lights and sirens). Performance is categorized by population density and the City of Ocala. Urban population density is greater than 1,000 persons per square mile, suburban is 500 to 1,000 persons per square mile and rural is less than 500 persons per square mile. The following figure illustrates the performance for the current quarter based on population density.

Figure 6 First Arriving Unit



For medical incidents, the first arriving unit may be a transport unit or a non-transport unit, but both are staffed by paramedics and are able to provide lifesaving care. However, the ability to transport the patient to a receiving facility so that they can receive definitive treatment is the second goal. The following figure illustrates the performance for the current quarter based on population density.

Figure 7 First Arriving Transport

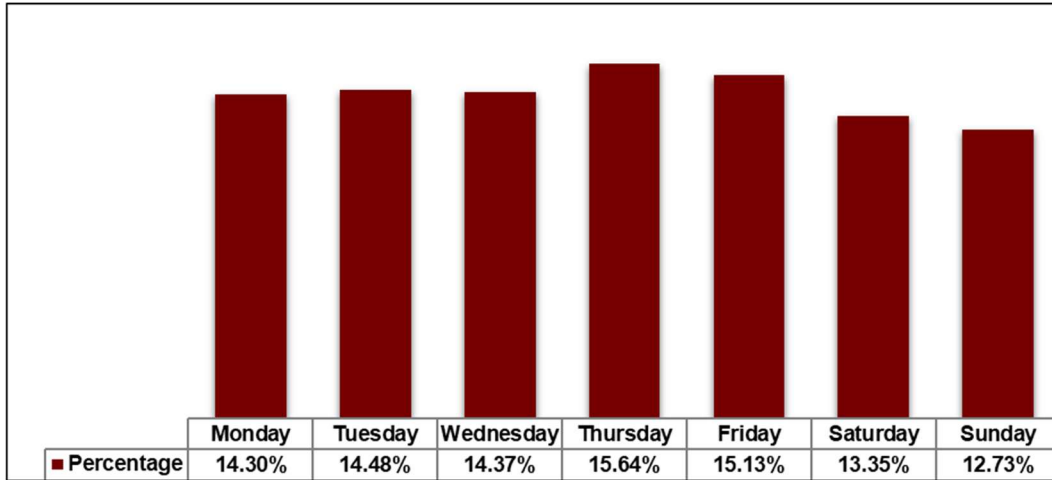




Temporal Analysis of Service Demand

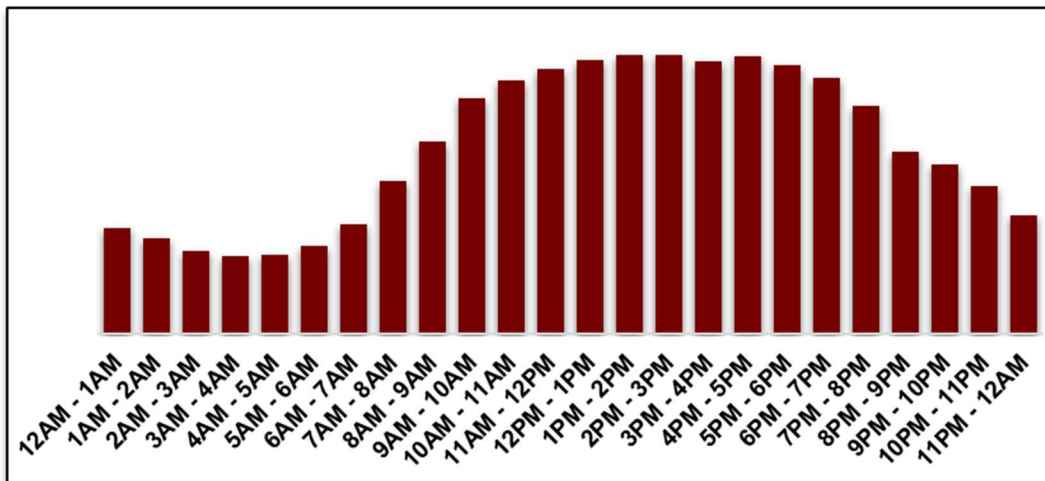
Another component in understanding the nature of service demand is the day of the week and the time of day that calls occur. For this quarter, the following figure illustrates the demand based on the day of week with the lowest demand on Sundays and the highest demand on Thursdays.

Figure 8 Service Demand by Day of Week



The following figure illustrates the service demand by time of day. As illustrated, the trend for service demand coincides with the movement of the population throughout the day. As the activity of the population increases, so does the demand for service.

Figure 9 Service Demand by Time of Day





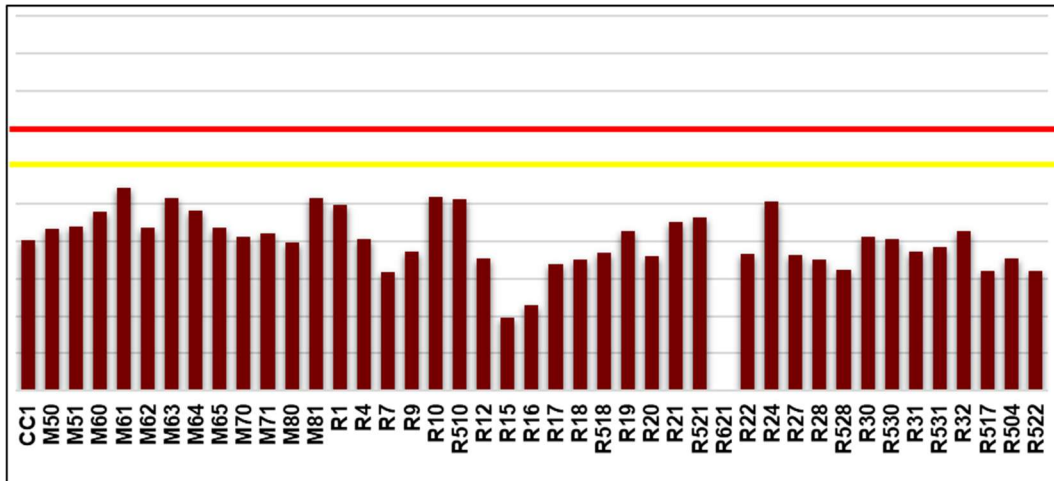
Workload and Concurrency

Workload is a measurement of the percentage of hours spent assigned to incidents, relative to the hours in service. Marion County Fire Rescue has adopted the following benchmarks as it relates to unit hour utilization.

Unit Hour Utilization	Reference
0.30 or Less	Unit has an acceptable workload.
0.31 to 0.34 (Yellow Line)	Unit has an increased workload.
0.35 or Greater (Red Line)	Unit has a concerning workload.

While non-transport units are active with incident responses, none of them reach an increased workload. In contrast, the majority of transport units spend many more hours assigned to incidents. The following figure illustrates the workload for the transport units for the current quarter.

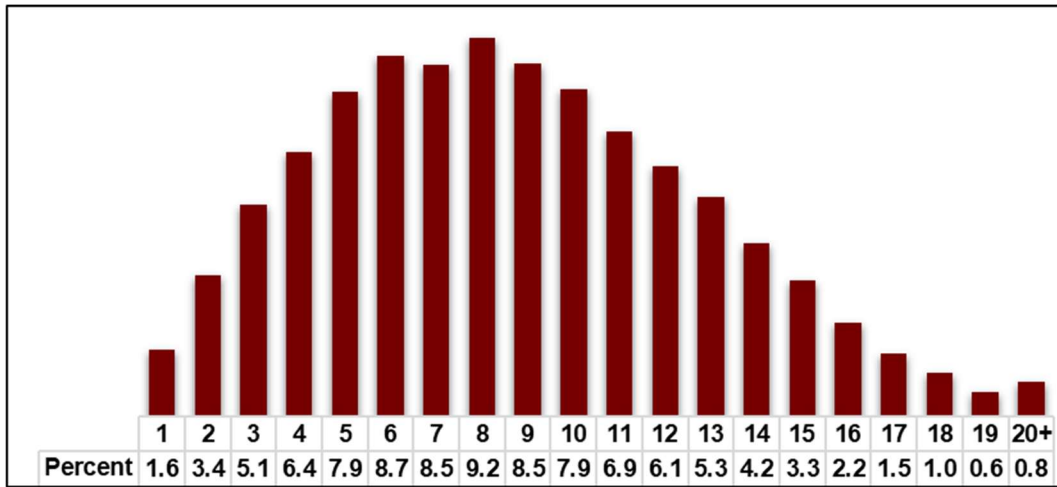
Figure 10 Unit Hour Utilization





The department’s ability to respond to calls may be impacted by the number of incidents occurring simultaneously. This measure is referred to as call concurrency and is illustrated in the following figure. As concurrency increases, there are fewer units available to respond to additional calls for service.

Figure 11 Concurrent Incidents



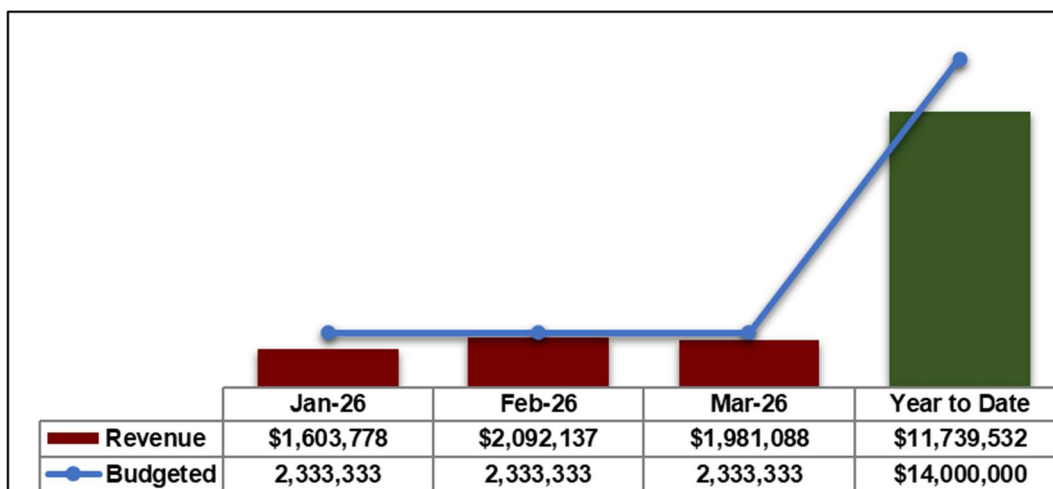


AMBULANCE BILLING

Charts

Marion County Fire Rescue transport units (equipment and staffing) are primarily funded within the general fund of Marion County. This budget each year presumes an estimated amount of revenue that will be received through billing for transported patients. As illustrated in the following figure, the total revenues for the second quarter bring year-to-date total revenues \$2,260,468 lower than the budgeted amount for the fiscal year.

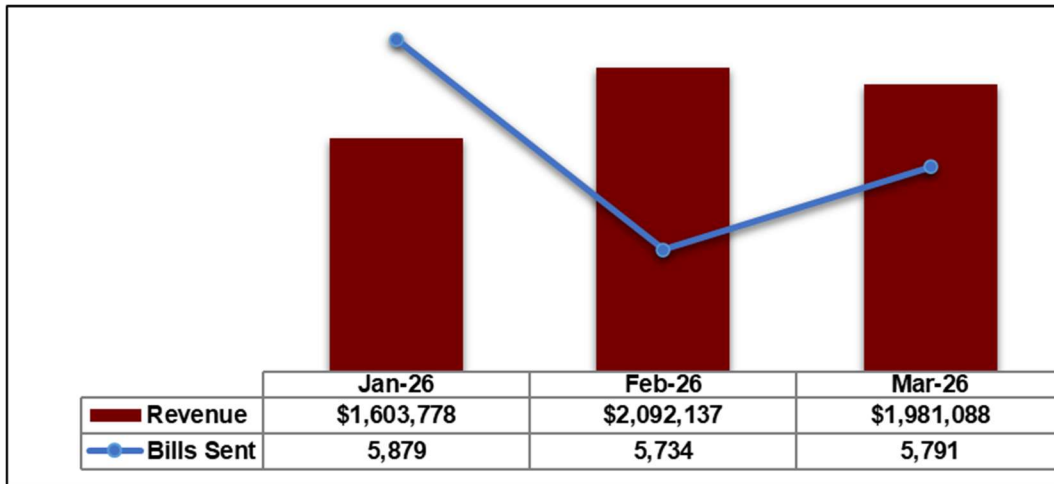
Figure 12 Revenues



Marion County Fire Rescue Billing staff works with many insurance companies, Medicaid, Medicare, Veterans Administration and others as well as directly billing the patient. This often results in more than one bill sent for each transport until full payment is received, as illustrated in the following figure.

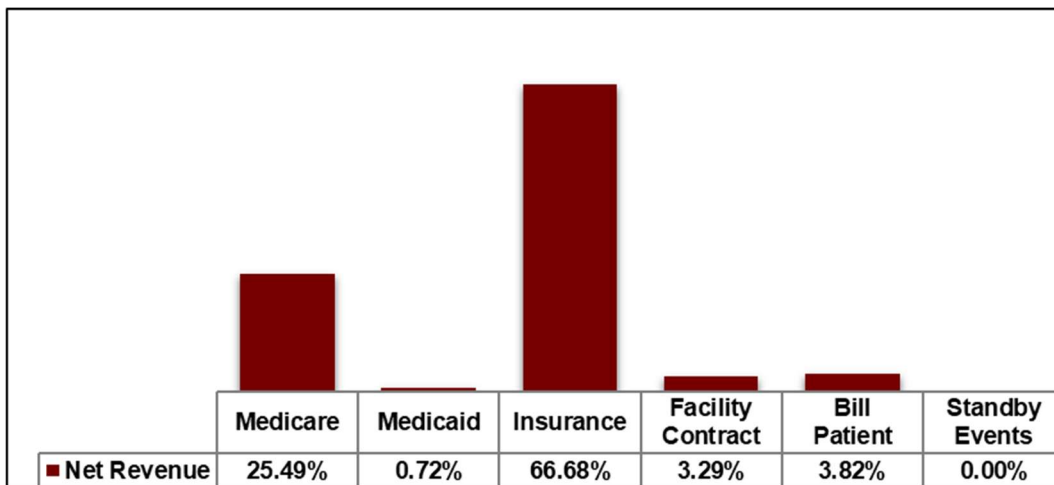


Figure 13 Revenue Received / Bills Sent



The following figure illustrates the various sources of revenue that account for the total received during the quarter.

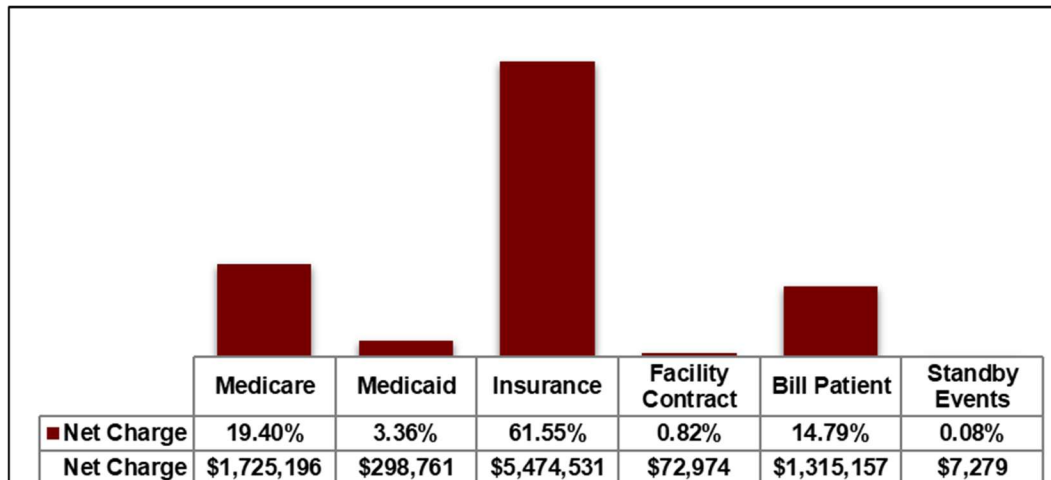
Figure 14 Revenue by Payor Type





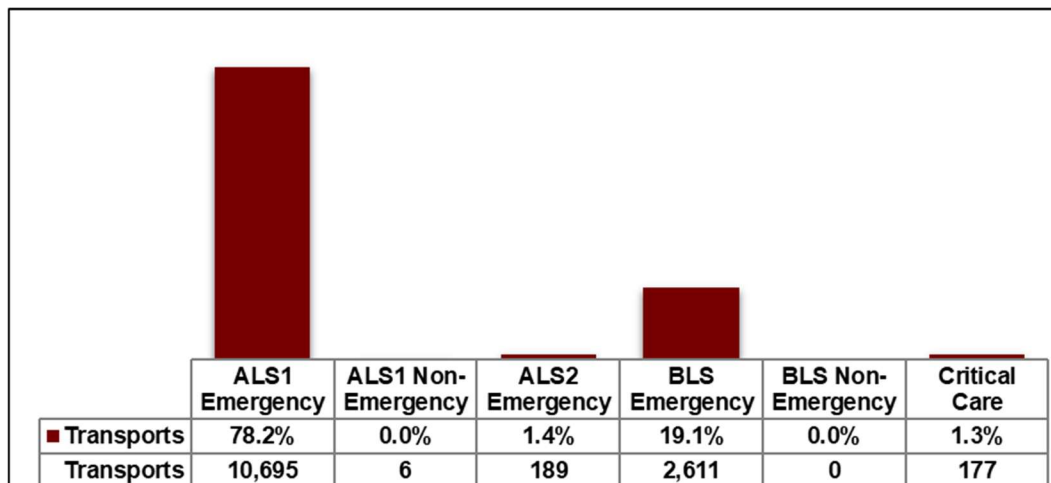
The following figure illustrates the various sources of charges that account for the total bills sent during the quarter.

Figure 15 Charges by Payor Type



Within guidelines set by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), patient bills are categorized into specific levels of service—advanced life support (ALS), basic life support (BLS) and critical care. This is illustrated below for those patients billed during the quarter.

Figure 16 Transports by Level of Care





To fully understand the overall charges/revenue, the above service levels are combined with the rates below. Marion County Fire Rescue performs an annual ambulance rate survey and provides a recommendation as to whether to propose a rate change. Medicare and Medicaid rates are set by CMS without any input from transport agencies.

Figure 17 Current Ambulance Rates

Level of Care	Marion County 12/20/2022 to Present	Medicare 2026	Medicaid 8/1/2013 to Present
BLS Non-Emergency	\$550.00	\$281.31	\$136.00
BLS Emergency	\$600.00	\$450.10	\$136.00
ALS1 Non-Emergency	\$650.00	\$337.57	\$190.00
ALS1 Emergency	\$700.00	\$534.49	\$190.00
ALS2 Emergency	\$850.00	\$773.61	\$250.00
SCT (Critical Care)	\$1,125.00	\$914.26	\$295.00
Standard Mileage	\$12.50	\$9.33	\$3.00
SCT Mileage	\$13.75	\$7.63	\$3.00
Notes: Medicare only pays 80% of listed rate. Medicaid only pays mileage for out-of-county transports.			

The final analysis considers each of the preceding data points and provides a view of the actual net revenue received based on the gross charges submitted. The following figure illustrates the average collection rate for Marion County Fire Rescue.

Figure 18 Marion County Ambulance Collection Rate

Analysis Date	Analysis Range	Amount Billed	Amount Collected	Collection Rate
3/04/2026	09/01/2024–08/31/2025	\$32,069,391	\$25,770,438	80.36%
3/04/2026	10/01/2024–09/30/2025	\$32,181,460	\$25,663,087	79.74%
4/02/2026	11/01/2024–10/31/2025	\$32,389,379	\$25,620,193	79.10%
Overall Average				79.73%
Analysis is based on revenue received specifically for the same patients billed and excludes other revenues received during the analysis range.				



FIRE AND EMS IMPACT FEES

What Are Fire and EMS Impact Fees?

Impact fees are one-time charges imposed on new development to fund capital infrastructure needed to support growth. Marion County adopted Fire and EMS Impact Fees (Ordinance 2025-17) to ensure new development contributes fairly to the cost of fire stations, emergency vehicles, medical equipment, and other growth-related capital assets. These fees are collected at the time a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) is issued and are placed in separate trust funds for Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services.

- Fire Protection Impact Fees are imposed in unincorporated areas and certain municipalities (Belleview, Dunnellon, Reddick, McIntosh).
- EMS Impact Fees are imposed countywide, including within incorporated areas such as the City of Ocala.
- Collected fees cannot be used for operations or maintenance.

Fees may be used for:

- Land acquisition
- Fire/EMS stations and facilities
- Emergency vehicles and apparatus
- Capital equipment
- Previously approved capital projects (if they meet statutory criteria)

Quarterly reporting is required by ordinance and through the interlocal agreement with the City of Ocala.



Figure 19 EMS Impact Fee Summary

Description	Amount
Total EMS Impact Fees Collected This Quarter	\$31,899 (Residential); \$23.76 (Commercial)
Cumulative Total EMS Impact Fees Collected (YTD)	\$44,435.76
EMS Impact Fee Expenditures This Quarter	\$0
Unexpended EMS Impact Fee Fund Balance	\$0 (Budgeted fund balance is \$0 since fund was not budgeted.) Fund balance for actuals is \$44,435.76
Notes: <i>Information is not available yet.</i>	

Recent Use of EMS Fees:

- No expenditures to date

Figure 20 Fire Impact Fee Summary

Description	Amount
Total Fire Impact Fees Collected This Quarter	\$103,968 (Residential); \$77.04 (Commercial)
Cumulative Total Fire Impact Fees Collected (YTD)	\$137,461.04
Fire Impact Fee Expenditures This Quarter	\$0
Unexpended Fire Impact Fee Fund Balance	\$0 (Budgeted fund balance is \$0 since fund was not budgeted.) Fund balance for actuals is \$137,461.04
Notes: <i>Information is not available yet.</i>	

Recent Use of Fire Fees:

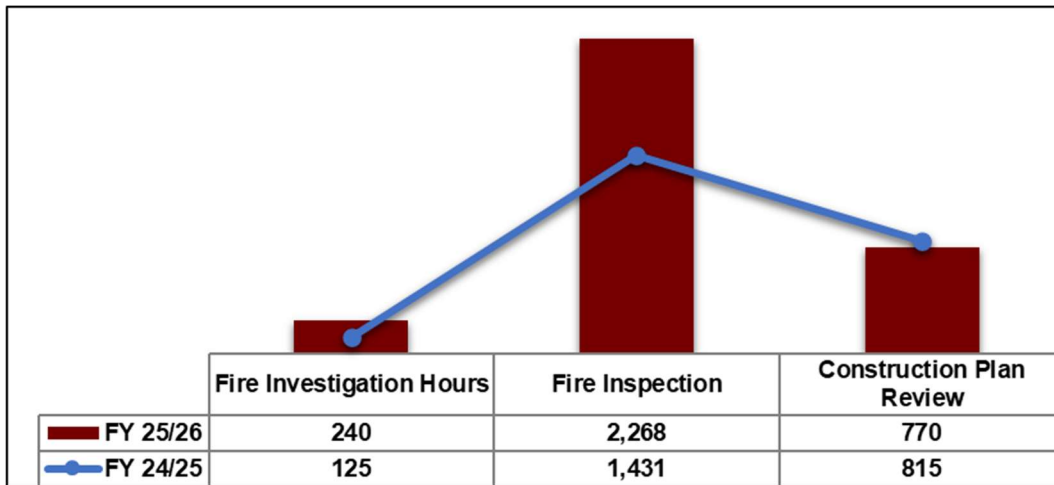
- No expenditures to date



FIRE PREVENTION

Charts

Figure 21 Fire Prevention Activity



Development

The Marion County Fire Rescue (MCFR) Fire Prevention team continues to work with our community partners by managing the sustained increase in construction projects. Many projects are underway which involve a considerable amount of staff time to review plans and perform inspections in the interest of public safety.



Figure 22 Project Update

Project	Status
World Equestrian Center (WEC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final inspections are complete and the grand opening of the Equestrian Event Center occurred in February 2026. The four-story venue provides conference and meeting spaces for large events. Several new retail buildings are under construction along SW 80th Avenue, bringing many new options to the area. Site work and grading have begun on the new sports complex. This area will have many outdoor fields for soccer, volleyball, baseball, and other sports. Additional buildings such as a restaurant and an assembly hall are expected to begin construction soon.
Tractor Supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final inspections for a new Tractor Supply in Silver Springs Shores are expected within the next few weeks. Plans have been approved for additional Tractor Supply locations in West Marion County and along State Road 200.
Grocery Stores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Groundbreaking on a new Neighborhood Walmart in the Villages is expected soon. Construction is underway for a new Walmart Supercenter in Marion Oaks. Construction is underway for a new Publix in Marion Oaks.
Marion County Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire inspections are underway for Station 11 at the Florida State Fire College. Positive progress is being made on the new station with occupancy expected towards the end of the year. The Freedom Library expansion and remodel are complete, increasing space for the community.
Marion County School Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspections continue at the South Marion High School in Marion Oaks with expected opening in August 2026. Plans have been approved, and construction will begin soon on the replacement middle school in Silver Spring Shores.
Summer Pointe Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction continues at this site, with final inspections underway on some units. Once complete, this project will provide over 500 residential units in the community.
Retail Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans have been approved for a new Home Depot along State Road 200. Plans have been submitted for a new Target location near On Top of the World (OTOW).
Margaritaville North RV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The facility will house a large recreational vehicle (RV) park with associated support facilities. Additionally, the location will have a water park open to the public to include several dining and entertainment options.
Warehouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction continues off SW Highway 484 which will be home to an industrial warehouse complex. The project will have several storage buildings ranging from 50,000 to 150,000 square feet. Construction has begun on a new 300,000 square foot warehouse on SE 58th Avenue.



Fire Inspections

Fire inspectors have been working to complete several large projects during this quarter, adding more options for Marion County. The Equestrian Manor at the World Equestrian Center (WEC) is a four-story event venue which will support conference space and meeting opportunities. Additionally, the expansion of the Freedom Library increased the building size and modernized the existing interior spaces. This new community building will serve the needs of the citizens in the area. An increase in growth and commercial construction continues over a wide variety of projects. Several buildings are underway bringing new retail, storage, and residential space to the community. Fire Prevention has experienced over a 50% increase in inspection requests over this time last year.

Fire Investigations

The Fire Prevention Division continues to support the Operations Division with a dedicated local fire investigator program. A member of the Fire Prevention Division is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to assist with fire investigation origin and cause determination. Fire Prevention works closely with many different partners to complete investigations including the Bureau of Fire Arson and Explosive Investigation (BFAEI), the State Attorney, and other law enforcement agencies.

The Fire Prevention Division was requested to investigate 38 fires in the second quarter of FY 2025-2026. Fire investigators dedicated more than 240 staff hours to on-scene fire investigations, follow-ups, report writing, and quality assurance reviews. Each fire report is reviewed by a peer supervisor to ensure the quality of work meets NFPA standards.

Accidental fires remain the leading cause of structure fires in the community. Fire investigators identified several fires as electrical in origin, often starting in storage sheds or garage areas. Common contributing factors include unpermitted electrical work, overloaded circuits, and prolonged charging of lithium-ion batteries. Fire investigators will work with the public education section to develop community messages for prevention.

Additionally, the Fire Prevention Division has placed a vehicle in service for complex or prolonged investigations. An existing vehicle has been outfitted with extensive investigation supplies and decontamination equipment for use as needed on complex scenes. The vehicle will respond upon request and is designed to support on-scene investigative needs. This project has been a long-term goal of the fire investigative unit and is now in service to the community.



Staffing Update

The Fire Prevention Division continues to cross-train staff members to meet the needs of our community. Cross-training allows Prevention staff to accommodate requests for plans review, fire inspections, fire investigations, and public education. During this quarter, one of the fire investigator trainees completed training and is now responding to calls as the lead investigator. Additionally, another fire investigator trainee is expected to begin training in April. Cross-training allows flexibility in staffing and helps meet the needs of the citizens.

Annual Inspection Program

The Fire Prevention Division continues to conduct an annual fire inspection program. Performing annual fire inspections allows fire inspectors the opportunity to meet with business owners to assist them in identifying and correcting any deficiencies. This proactive program is intended to provide fire safety guidance and positive public relations. The annual inspection program is assigned to one inspector who is assisted by other inspectors, as time allows. For the second quarter of FY 2025-2026, fire inspectors completed nearly 1,000 annual inspections. The annual inspections resulted in several re-inspections, during which fire inspectors are assisting the business owners in correcting items and coming into compliance with the fire code. The efforts of this program increase safety awareness, reduce risk, and provide benefits to public education.

Community Risk Reduction/Public Education

Marion County Community Risk Reduction (CRR) continues to partner with our community to provide educational programs. Fire Prevention participated in the annual Marion County Tax Collector Car Show providing community education. Sparky the Fire Dog and other Fire Prevention members were present. The event was attended by hundreds of residents who received fire safety and prevention information. Several Fire Prevention team members participated in this event to make it successful and engaging for our citizens.



PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS

Marion County Public Safety Communications (PSC) is a dual-Accredited Center of Excellence (ACE) and accredited by the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED) in call processing of Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) and Emergency Fire Dispatch (EFD). As a dual ACE, PSC is required to maintain or exceed a high level of service and compliance with protocols. The IAED ACE accreditation covers the call-taking aspect of the communications center using compliance to protocols as the primary focus.

PSC is also accredited by the Florida Telecommunications Accreditation Commission (FLA-TAC) which is a division of the Florida Police Accreditation Coalition (FLA-PAC). This is a policy driven accreditation which covers all aspects of the communications center ranging from administrative topics, to training and dispatch protocols. The accreditation has over 110 standards.

PSC is approved through the Florida Department of Health (DOH) to instruct the state required 911 Public Safety Telecommunicator (PST) training program. As an approved training center through the DOH, PSC routinely hosts other agency's Emergency Telecommunicators (ETCs) for this training. This training program is a minimum of 232 hours covering various topics of emergency medical, fire, and police dispatch and call processing.

Marion County, Florida currently operates a 7-RF-site, 12-channel, trunked simulcast ASTRO 25 (P25) system. The existing infrastructure has served the County well for many years but as the area has grown, the needs of the public service providers have also increased. The goal of this ASTRO 25 expansion project is to enhance the coverage performance of the radio system from countywide mobile radio coverage to countywide portable radio coverage. The addition of three (3) new simulcast sub-sites coupled with the conversion of the existing Dunnellon Water Tower site from a standalone Astro site repeater (ASR) to a simulcast radio frequency (RF) subsite will provide the county with 95% portable outside radio coverage countywide.

Marion County is purchasing three hundred seventy-eight (378) APX NEXT XE devices for Marion County Fire Rescue. APX NEXT XE devices are a next-generation P25 platform, purpose-built for first responders to access and act on information while maintaining their focus in critical situations. With natural and accessible touch interface, best-in-class audio optimized for high-noise environments, and extended coverage through broadband connectivity, APX NEXT XE devices deliver actionable intelligence to the point of engagement for personnel to stay connected and in control wherever the mission takes them. In addition, APX NEXT XE devices deliver all of this in a form factor designed for extreme environments.

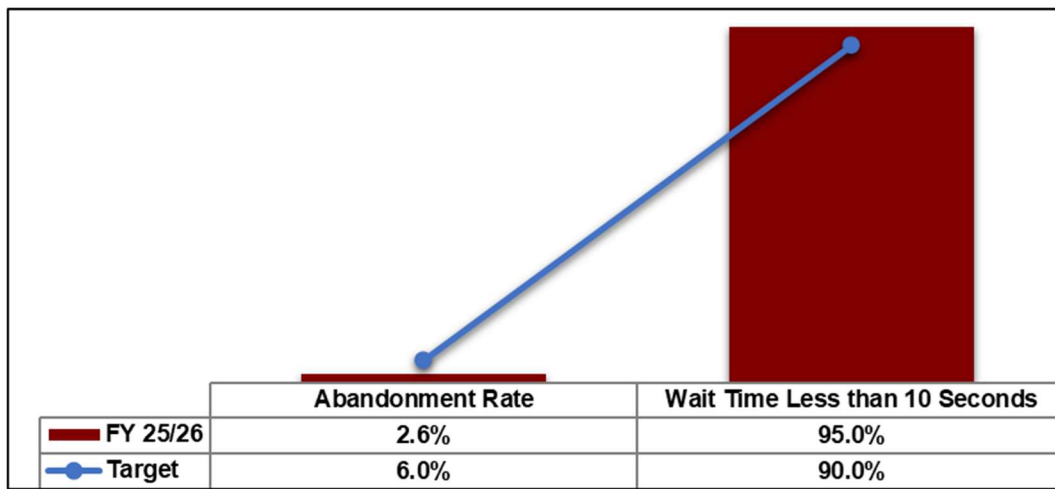


Charts

The following figure illustrates two key performance measures for the answering of 911 calls by the public safety answering point (PSAP) at PSC.

Abandonment rate describes those instances where the call is not answered within the PSC PSAP, either being transferred to another PSAP or the call disconnects prior to PSC having the ability to answer. The target for this measure is 6% or less and correlates directly with the second target measure of answering at least 90% of 911 calls in 10 seconds or less.

Figure 23 PSC Performance Benchmarks



The following figure illustrates the total incoming and outgoing call volume for PSC.

Emergency Inbound represents the number of 911 calls that are routed to the PSAP at PSC.

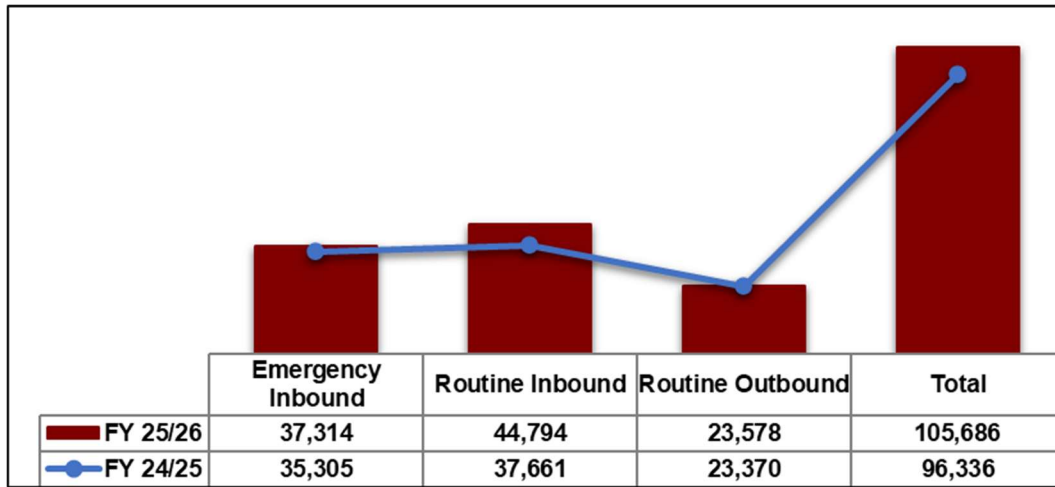
Routine Inbound represents the number of phone calls received by PSC on the non-emergency lines. These lines are used for calls from alarm companies, medical facilities, hospitals, other public safety/service agencies, MCFR personnel and the public to speak with PSC ETCs.

Routine Outbound represents the number of phone calls that originate from within the PSAP. These calls include call-backs to 911 disconnects, local agencies, calls to MCFR personnel, etc.

Total represents all three categories combined. This total is one of the key factors used to show the call volume workload of PSC ETCs.



Figure 24 PSC Phone Calls

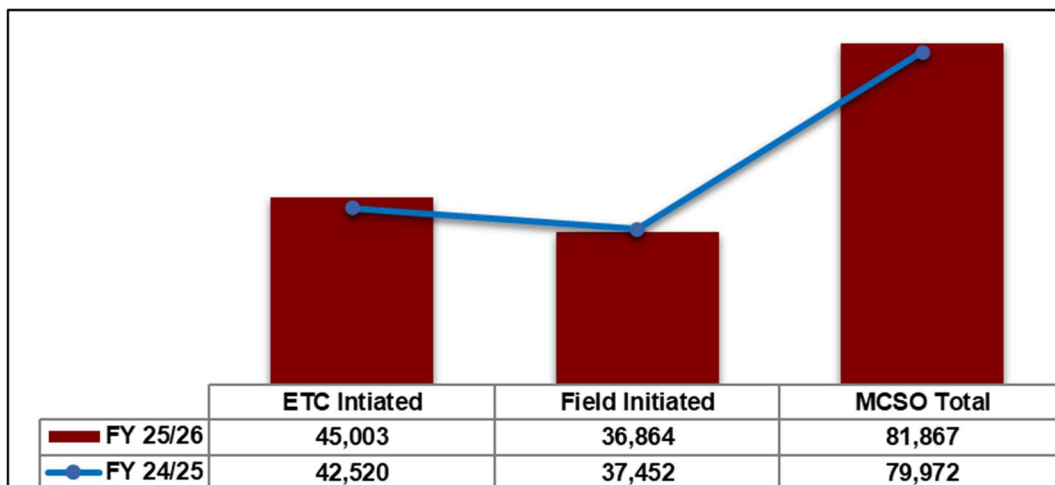


Calls for service (CFS) which are law enforcement related are grouped into two categories; ETC Initiated and Field Initiated and is illustrated in the following figure, along with the total calls for the Marion County Sheriff's Office (MCSO).

ETC Initiated calls for service are those calls that are created in the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system and were processed by an ETC.

Field Initiated law calls for service are those that are created as a result of an action by a Sheriff's Deputy. These are calls such as a traffic stop or any other call for service that is initiated by the deputy and not originating from within the PSAP.

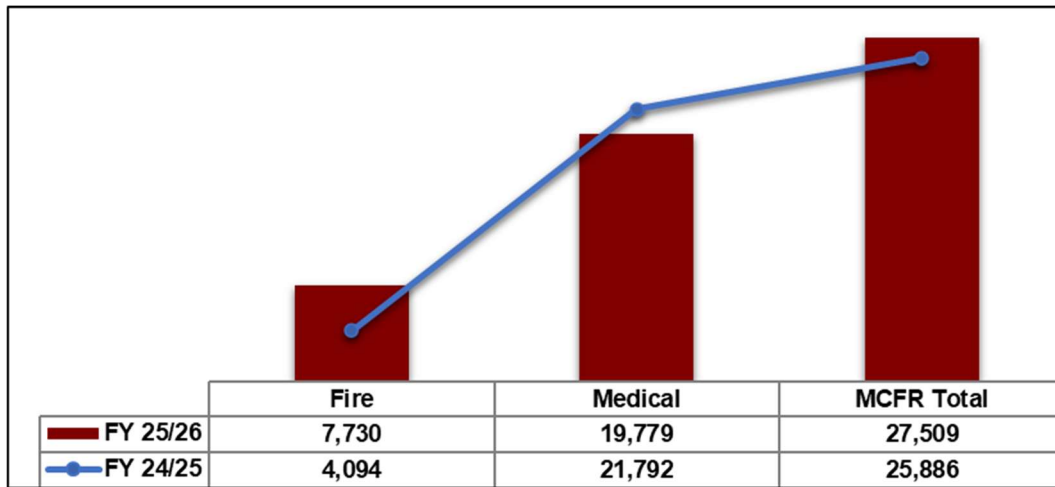
Figure 25 PSC Law Calls for Service





MCFR calls for service are broken down into two types, Fire and Medical. These are the call types within CAD and organized using the call priority, rather than the nature/problem and are illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 26 MCFR Calls for Service

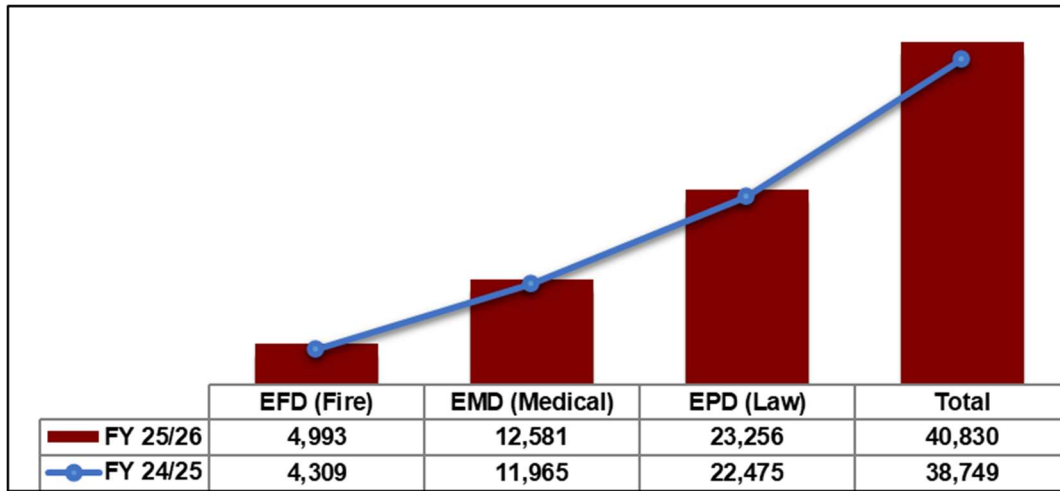


PSC utilizes ProQA software to aid in the call processing, which assists the ETC in collecting vital information for first responders and to aid in providing critical life safety and lifesaving instructions while not delaying the dispatch of first responders. This process also assists in prioritizing calls for service based upon the information gathered. For example, a caller who has fallen, is not injured, and only needs help up off the floor will be prioritized lower than someone experiencing chest pain and difficulty breathing.

Calls for service that are processed by the Ocala Police Department (OPD) PSAP, or that originate as Field Initiated MCSO calls for service are not processed through ProQA by PSC. This, along with duplicate calls for service, unit initiated calls for service, etc. contributes to the variance between total calls for service and total calls processed through ProQA as illustrated in the following figure.



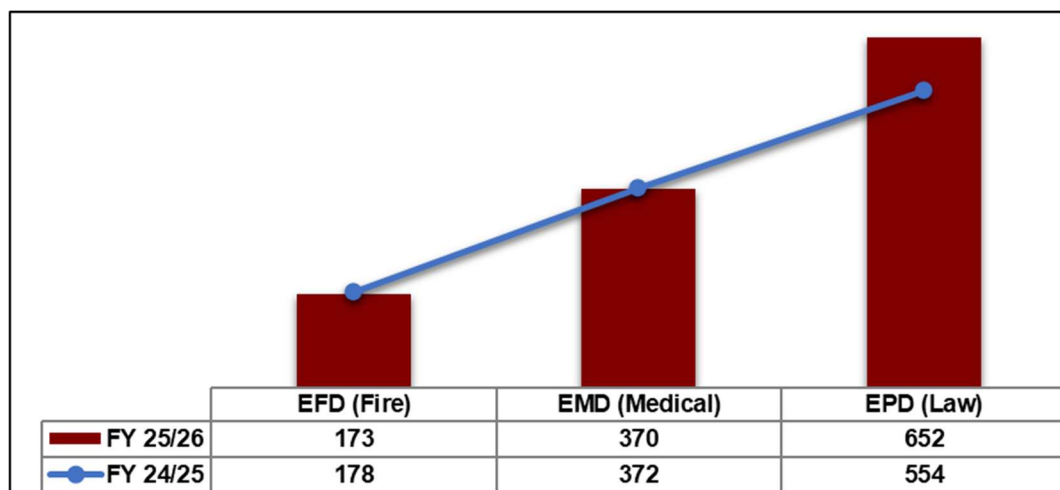
Figure 27 PSC ProQA (Priority Dispatch)



As an ACE, PSC is required to conduct a random review of calls for service processed through ProQA for EMD, EFD and EPD (emergency police dispatch). The percentage of calls reviewed for each discipline is determined by the IAED based upon total call volume for the preceding year. This ensures that PSC maintains or exceeds accreditation standards. These calls are selected randomly by the software program which is used for the review process.

The PSC Quality Assurance Unit also conducts focused, non-random reviews for various reasons. This can include, but is not limited to complaints received, disciplinary reasons, inquiries by other agencies or field personnel, and requests by PSC ETCs for educational purposes. The numbers are reflective of a reprioritization of our efforts during the quarter. The following figure illustrates the calls that were reviewed during the quarter.

Figure 28 PSC Quality Assurance Reviews

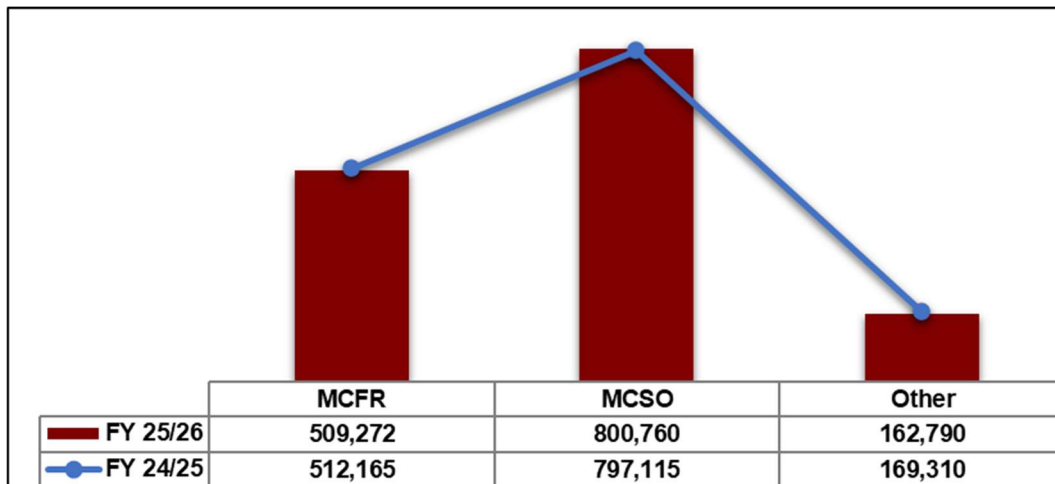




The Marion County 800 MHz Radio System is countywide and used by Marion County Fire Rescue (MCFR), Marion County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO), Belleview Police Department (BPD), Dunnellon Police Department (DPD), Marion County general government agencies, and interoperability partners, which are internal and external.

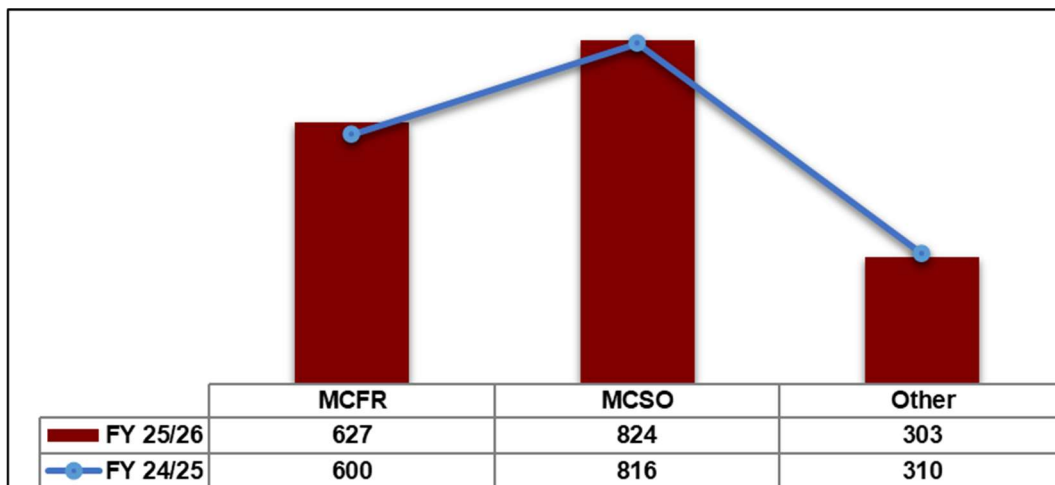
The following figure illustrates the push to talk by talk group each time the radio system is accessed. The talk groups are broken down by MCFR, MCSO, which includes BPD, DPD, Marion County Jail and the Courthouse. The “Other” category includes Marion County general government agencies.

Figure 29 PSC Push to Talk Count (By Talkgroup)



The Marion County 800 MHz Radio Systems show the total time the radio system is used to voice communicate over the talk groups on the radio system as illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 30 PSC Push to Talk Hours (By Talkgroup)





MCFR MASTER PLAN AND STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATES

Marion County Fire Rescue has completed a comprehensive Master Plan and Strategic Plan to guide the department's operations, growth, and resource management over the next decade. The Master Plan provides a data-driven assessment of staffing, facilities, apparatus, service demand, and future station needs, ensuring alignment with NFPA standards and community growth trends. The Strategic Plan translates these findings into clear organizational goals and measurable objectives focused on operational readiness, workforce development, community risk reduction, and fiscal sustainability. Together, these plans provide a unified roadmap that strengthens accountability, prioritizes investments, and ensures MCFR continues to deliver exceptional fire and EMS service to the residents of Marion County.



Figure 31 Strategic Plan Updates

	Goals and Objectives Completed	Date
1.1.4	Further refine the deferral process to enhance flexibility in overtime assignments while maintaining adequate staffing levels.	FY24-25 Q4
1.1.5	Review the impact of voluntary overtime on the overall mandate process and explore potential refinements to optimize coverage.	FY24-25 Q4
1.3.1	Assess the implementation of a six-week Kelly Day rotation at 18 months, evaluating its effectiveness in providing scheduled time off and reducing fatigue.	FY24-25 Q4
1.3.2	Explore a transition to a three-week Kelly Day cycle at 36 months, analyzing its potential impact on work-life balance and workload distribution.	FY24-25 Q4
2.1.1	Finalize the annual evaluation process and self-evaluation process ensuring a fair, thoughtful consideration of the employee's efforts throughout the year.	FY24-25 Q4
2.2.1	Enhance and expand our Medal Day ceremony. Foster participation and improve the ceremony itself.	FY24-25 Q4
2.3.1	Display the mission, vision, and core values on all station and office TV's.	FY24-25 Q4
2.5.1	Utilize modalities such as all-hands meetings, staff notes, and information boards to disseminate information.	FY24-25 Q4
2.7.1	Create and support mentorship opportunities at every level of the department.	FY24-25 Q4
7.2.1	Utilize Rescue Personnel for Event Staffing: Consider using extra personnel assigned to rescue units to staff dedicated event trucks.	FY24-25 Q4
7.2.2	Explore Private Agency Partnerships: Investigate the possibility of partnering with private agencies to provide coverage for special events.	FY24-25 Q4
9.2.1	Establish a standardized station design with a two-phase approach to accommodate both urban and rural station layouts.	FY24-25 Q4
	<u>Notes:</u>	