



**Charlottesville-UVA-Albemarle County
Emergency Communications Center
Strategic Plan
2023 - 2030**

Updated: January 2026

CONTENTS

- 1 Approvals and Revisions..... 3
- 2 Overview..... 4
- 3 Review of Purpose, Mission, Vision, and Values 5
 - 3.1 Purpose Statement 5
 - 3.2 Mission 5
 - 3.3 Vision..... 5
 - 3.4 Attributes & Values 6
- 4 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis..... 7
- 5 Goals 9
- 6 Objectives and Resources..... 10
- 7 Action Plan – What Gets the ECC to its Goals 11
- 8 Annual Commitments..... 12
- 9 Quarterly Updates 12
- 10 Priorities, Metrics, and Rhythms 13
- 11 Strategic Plan – One-page Updated January 2026..... 14

1 APPROVALS AND REVISIONS

January 2024 – Initial update for 2024.

April 2024 – Updated for Q2 goals and commitments

July/August 2024 – Updated for Q3 & Q4 goals and commitments

January 2025 – Initial goals and commitments for 2025

January 2026 – Initial goals and commitments for 2026

2 OVERVIEW

Charlottesville-UVA-Albemarle County (CUA) is home to a robust, regionally-consolidated emergency communications center (ECC) that is working to be at the forefront of public safety communications and preparedness services. In 2023, a seven-year Strategic Plan was adopted by the ECC's Management Board in support of their commitment to continual improvement, resulting in great strides being made in various aspects of the center's administration, operations, and service to its communities and field responders.

In January 2026, ECC Personnel met to review and update the strategic plan. A list of top Goals that were first identified in the Workforce Optimization Report (2022) was reviewed and often referenced during the planning workshop. From those discussions, quantifiable Objectives for the next three to five years were reviewed and updated. The key areas were developed into an Action Plan and a list of 2026 Commitments to accomplish the stated goals was identified.

The journey to achieving the longer-term—year 2030—vision of an ECC that is locally and nationally recognized for providing exceptional service, earning the trust of our communities and being the place that service-minded professionals can have a career requires achieving these key goals.

While some Commitments are new, many build upon or reinforce existing activities. The ECC is poised to improve upon the foundation already in place, and not only build—but also strengthen—its operations of tomorrow.

3 REVIEW OF PURPOSE, MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

3.1 PURPOSE STATEMENT

Everything the ECC does must be to create alignment to support its purpose. To discover a sustainable purpose, the following three questions were answered and aligned.

1. Why does the agency exist?
2. Why do we do what we do?
3. Why do we have passion?

The ECC's answers to all three questions are the same— because the health, wellness, and safety of our community relies on the emergency response and service of 9-1-1.

CUA ECC Purpose Statement:
Because the health, wellness, and safety of our community relies on the emergency response and service of 9-1-1.

3.2 MISSION

An organization's mission comes from the intersection of three circles:

1. What the organization is deeply *passionate* about
2. What it can be the *best in the world* at
3. What drives the economic or *resource engine*

Using these three questions as a guide creates clarity and alignment around the mission of the ECC.



Provide community safety and preparedness services through innovation and collaboration that continually earns community trust.

3.3 VISION

The vision of the ECC is intended to act as a powerful mechanism to stimulate progress. It is a clear, compelling statement that serves as a unifying focal point for effort, with a clear finish line so that the organization knows when it achieves the goal. To that end, unlike the traditional vision statement, it is measurable and achievable.

By 2030, the ECC will be locally and nationally recognized for providing exceptional service, continually earning the trust of our communities and being the place where service-minded professionals can have a career.

4 STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS (SWOT) ANALYSIS

SWOT is an acronym that stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

- Strengths describe the positive attributes internal to the ECC; these aspects are within the organization’s control.
- Weaknesses describe the negative factors that detract from the ECC’s value; these areas require enhancement and focus to be successful.
- Opportunities are external variables outside the ECC; these are positive factors from which the organization may benefit.
- Threats are external, negative factors beyond the ECC’s control.

Conducting a SWOT analysis as an initial part of the strategic planning process provides many advantages—the greatest of which is helping leaders of a public safety organization assess the varying operating aspects of the organization to focus its goals on strengths while averting tendencies related to the organization’s weaknesses.

As part of the initial strategic plan development, a series of SWOT exercises, data-gathering interviews, and focus groups with a diverse cross-section of ECC co-workers were conducted. In **2026**, leaders from each ECC Department met and reviewed past responses and completed an updated analysis.

[See table on next page.]



5 GOALS

Goals are key areas of emphasis that need to be focused on while trying to accomplish the vision for the ECC.

For 2025, these are **8 goals** that relate to the organization's focus areas included in the Workforce Optimization Report and discussed during the strategic planning workshop. They are defined on the one-page plan and are the specific items the ECC needs to keep in mind when trying to realize its vision. If the ECC is deviating too far from the mission, revisiting this goals list will help to bring the organization into better alignment:

1. Investing in purpose-built facility priorities
2. Achieving sustainable staffing for operational efficiencies with a focus on increased co-worker work-life culture and balance
3. Promoting coworker health and wellness
4. Focusing on organizational structure, systems, and communication that foster a just culture
5. Developing a qualified workforce through training and investing in professional development
6. Planning for funding sustainability
7. Building co-worker efficiency and confidence
8. Meeting dynamic community service expectations



6 OBJECTIVES AND RESOURCES

Quantifiable objectives describe where an organization plans to be within the next **three to five years**, with service metrics provided. The most successful objectives often appear to be highly aspirational rather than readily achievable based on where the organization is today; however, the focus of a one-page plan and the alignment it creates will help it achieve these objectives.

Based upon the strategic planning workshop, Figure 4 shows the objectives the ECC aspires to hit within the next three to five years, and the service metrics that will be applied.

The ECC’s one-page plan will create alignment to help it achieve these objectives. The objectives will be revisited annually for the following (rolling) three years, and the then-current information will be placed in the next CUA ECC one-page strategic plan (see Section 2.9).

Year-end	2029 Objectives
Facility	Funding identified, design initiated
Staffing	<5% Vacancy
Staffing	Leads dedicated 100%
Wellness	Resources meet needs
Culture	Revisit Survey
Training	PD meets KPIs
Training	QA/QI program developed
Funding	≥3 new \$ source
Efficiency	Tri-ACE Certified
Efficiency	≥2 Press events/year
Community	≥3 Regional EM training/exercise/yr
Community	Behavioral Health Pilot assessed
Community	PSSS RFP launched

Resources include the organization’s industry reach and the groups and partners that the organization will draw from in order to meet their objectives.

The ECC’s resources include responder agencies; community and business members; service organizations; city, county, and state governments; education institutions; vendors and suppliers; contract partners; and professional and standards development organizations.

7 ACTION PLAN – WHAT GETS THE ECC TO ITS GOALS

The action plan includes the key areas that must be honed-in on to accomplish the ECC's goals and objectives. These are the strategic moves with areas of focus here on people, technology, citizen satisfaction, and talent.

The ECC's action plan for the next three years (updated for 2026) includes the following strategies:

1. Facility:
 - A. Funding for ECC facility identified and design phase of the project initiated.
2. Staffing:
 - A. Maintain less than 5% vacancy
 - B. Lead Supervisors off console 100% of the time.
3. Wellness:
 - A. Provide mental health and wellness resources that meet the needs of all coworkers.
4. Culture:
 - A. Employee Engagement Survey revisited to gauge progress.
 - B. Be transparent and purposeful in creating a just culture for the ECC
5. Training:
 - A. Professional development meets, or exceeds, expectations according to KPIs developed.
 - B. QA/QI program developed
6. Funding:
 - A. At least three new scholarships, grants, or other funding sources are identified and implemented.
7. Efficiency and Confidence:
 - A. Tri-ACE Certification achieved.
 - B. Hold two press events annually.
8. Community Service:
 - A. Regional EM training/exercise schedule developed to include at least three per year.
 - B. Success of the Behavioral Health Liaison pilot program assessed.
 - C. Participation in community events re-established

The ECC will revisit these strategies annually for the following (rolling) three years to determine if they are still critical for success.

8 ANNUAL COMMITMENTS

Annual commitments flow under the same key strategic, long-term objectives. The workgroup commits to achieving annual commitments, each making incremental progress on the goals to help the ECC ultimately reach the three- to five-year objectives. Commitments are the primary focus areas for the upcoming year: creating them will help the ECC meet its critical numbers and therefore make progress toward the longer-term measurable objectives. Importantly, they are measured frequently (every three months), are specific to the ECC, and are aligned with all co-workers. Figure 5 shows the ECC’s 2026 commitments.

2026 Commitments	
<p>1. Facility: A. Work with ECC Management Board to determine next steps</p> <p>2. Staffing: A. Secure and maintain less than 10% vacancy B. Maintain Lead Supervisors off console</p> <p>3. Wellness: A. Recruit and onboard Wellness and Resiliency Coordinator B. Enhance Peer Support through policy updates and clinician sponsorship</p> <p>4. Culture: A. Assess current state through deployment of follow up Employee Engagement Survey B. Policy manual updated</p>	<p>5. Training: A. Recruit and onboard QA/QI Specialist B. Use QA data to drive focused and enhanced training C. Create learning catalog for all roles</p> <p>6. Funding: A. Apply for new scholarship and grant funding opportunities</p> <p>7. Efficiency and Confidence: A. Achieve ACE Certification in at least one of three dispatch protocols B. Utilize social media to highlight the lifesaving work of communications officers and improve recognition</p> <p>8. Community Service: A. Host at least one regional Emergency Management training exercise B. Launch the Behavioral Health Liaison pilot program C. Participate in four community education events</p>

9 QUARTERLY UPDATES

Every three months the entire leadership team meets to review progress on the annual commitments and prioritize the work to be done for the following quarter. Larger commitments will be broken down into smaller projects that can be completed in a quarter.

Successful projects are measurable and incorporated into regular reporting rhythms, so that they stay in clear view for the entire organization. For every project, an action plan with deadlines must be created (see Appendix B).

The ECC will take on the projects listed in Figure 6 during the first quarter of 2026. Projects for the subsequent quarters will be developed during scheduled quarterly planning sessions and completed quarterly. This approach will help the ECC gradually achieve its annual commitments and plan over time, making the seemingly insurmountable and forever languishing issues finally achievable. One person in the ECC is accountable for leading a team of co-workers that will work together, throughout each quarter, to complete the elements associated with each project.

The ECC will include a weekly opportunity to report on advancements of the quarterly actions, review progress, and redirect if required.

10 PRIORITIES, METRICS, AND RHYTHMS

When executing a perpetual multi-year plan, there are three important categories: priorities, metrics, and rhythms. These are crucial to moving in alignment with the plan.

- Priorities were established during the workshop and agreed-upon so that they can drive the objectives. If leadership believes everything must get done right now, then nothing will get done; therefore, articulating the ECC's top priorities for the year and the quarter, and a clear number one priority, are essential to maintaining focus.
- Metrics are vital to showing progression. They are not always numbers but are something measurable. It is important that data exist to provide regular insights and to show whether metrics are being met or not.
- Establishing daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual rhythms is essential for maintaining alignment and driving accountability. As appropriate, these rhythms will be employed to review and update the plan, as well as to communicate progress.

A benefit of these rhythms to the ECC is that information impacting direction becomes widely known quickly, which means that any issues and roadblocks can be addressed sooner. This allows the team to stay synchronized with ECC goals and objectives and improve resource sharing. Importantly for the co-worker who is accountable, it establishes the opportunity to provide input, raise identified roadblocks, and obtain a more expeditious response or resolution.

Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership team will meet prior to the end of the year (beginning of December) to confirm that the suggested content—priorities and metrics—for the upcoming year's plan is still relevant. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Measure success of plan through meeting goals and identified KPIs. • Once this is determined, and modifications made if needed, the one-page plan template will be updated with the content for the first quarter of the upcoming year and distributed.
Quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every quarter, the leadership team will meet (third week of the last month of the quarter) to affirm that projects have been achieved, make strategic adjustments to priorities and metrics if needed, and confirm that the suggested projects for the upcoming quarter are still relevant. Strike-through completed commitments as an active display of progress. • Once this is determined, and modifications made if needed, the one-page plan template will be updated with the content for the upcoming quarter and distributed. • Co-workers that have been identified as accountable for a project will complete an action plan and submit it to the team. Action plans are reviewed with the team on the next weekly leadership huddle.
Weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During either an existing weekly leadership or operations briefing (no more than 30 minutes long), co-workers will report on the progress of the project action plan, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Number one priority relating to the project – Roadblocks – Course corrections
Daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily communications have a tactical focus in moving the rock toward completion by the end of the quarter. • Set aside time on co-worker schedules to advance projects.

11 STRATEGIC PLAN – ONE-PAGE UPDATED JANUARY 2026

CORE VALUES	10-YEAR VISION	2028 OBJECTIVES	2026 COMMITMENTS																										
<p>Generous</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With each other, our time, our community <p>Open</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To learning and innovation, open-minded & inclusive <p>Leaders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At all levels and positions, fostering teamwork <p>Dedicated to Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the safety of community and responders <p>Efficient & Empathetic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With our communications, policies, and co-workers <p>Notable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worthy of celebrating <p style="text-align: center;">Be GOLDEN!</p> <p>Purpose Statement: <i>Why are we here?</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Vision</p> <p>By 2030, the ECC will be locally and nationally recognized for providing exceptional service, continually earning the trust of our communities, and being the place that service-minded professionals can have a career.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mission</p> <p>Provide community safety and preparedness services through innovation and collaboration that continually earns community trust.</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Goals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 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ACTIONS		ACCOUNTABILITY (Who/What/When)		
2026 GOALS		1st QUARTER 2026 PROJECTS		
Year-end	2026 Goals	2a	Calltaking academy and radio dispatch training	Nikki/Brock
Facility	Next steps identified	3a	Develop job description	Lily
Staffing	<10% vacancy maintained	3b	Review policies and develop draft	Berta
Staffing	Leads dedicated maintained	4b	Draft calltaking policy	Berta
Wellness	Onboard Wellness and Resiliency	5a	Conduct interviews	Brock/Berta
Wellness	Peer Support sponsored	6a	Identify grants	Brock
Culture	Employee Survey	7a	Re-establish DRC	Lily/Berta
Culture	Updated policies	8a	Training identified	Holden
Training	Onboard QA/QI	8b	Start taking calls	Berta
Training	Data driven			
Training	Learning Catalog			
Funding	Scholarship and grants			
Efficiency	+1 ACE Certification			
Efficiency	Social media recognition			
Community	≥1 Regional EM training/exercise			
Community	Behavioral Health Pilot launched			
Community	≥ 4 community events			