

# Dispatch Equity and Feasibility Study



## Case Study

### The Client

Travis County Emergency Services District #2,  
Pflugerville, TX

### The Project

Analysis of dispatching services provided by Austin Fire Department and Austin-Travis County EMS Department and analysis of alternative dispatching services.

## The Opportunity

While performing analysis of the dispatching services provided by the City of Austin Fire Department (AFD) and Austin-Travis County EMS (ATCEMS), Public Consulting Group (PCG) consultants interviewed leadership from the Travis County Emergency Services District #2 (TCESD-2). During the interview, district leaders expressed that over the course of their relationship with AFD and ATCEMS, they encountered multiple challenges from both an administrative and operational perspective from each department. District leaders indicated that they have made repeated attempts to address their concerns with department leaders, but the departments were either unwilling or unable to accommodate the districts requests due to the city's internal policies, procedures, and business practices. PCG's discussions with district leadership lead to the district issuing a request for proposal (RFP) which PCG responded to and was awarded the contract.

## The Solution

PCG performed a thorough analysis of the interlocal agreements (ILA) between TCESD-2, AFD, and ATCEMS. Even though both ILA's originated from the City of Austin, both were completely different documents from the standpoint of language, terms, and conditions. What they did have in common was neither document provided a formula for how the department determined shared costs for providing dispatch services.

AFD charged all 11 TCESD's \$26.40/per call no matter the call volume of the ESD. Until 2017, ATCEMS was the only

advanced life support (ALS) ambulance transport service in Travis County. Since TCESD-2 experienced significant delays in response from ATCEMS, along with other administrative and operational challenges, the district felt it was in the best interest of its residents to begin providing ALS ambulance response and transport. TCESD-2 contracted with ATCEMS to provide dispatching services for which ATCEMS charges the district \$20,000 per ALS ambulance, whether the unit responds to 300 incidents or 3,000 incidents per year. It is this lack of a transparent formula from either agency coupled with several performance issues, both operationally and administratively, that the district has opted to explore other dispatch service options.


## The Result

PCG provided TCESD-2 with a final report that included a thorough analysis of the current ILA's which identified several key issues:

- ✔ Lack of a formula for how each department determined costs for providing services based on industry standard formulas.
- ✔ Absence of performance criteria consistent with nationally recognized standards and/or industry best practices.
- ✔ Need for accountability if either AFD or ATCEMS fail to meet internally set performance standards for call answering, call processing, or dispatching of district resources.

PCG examined seven different options for district leadership to consider with strengths and challenges for each of these options provided in our final report. To date, PCG has provided our clients with final reports that include findings and recommendations but have done so in a manner that allows our clients to choose what they believe is the best option. However, PCG took the unprecedented step of recommending the district seek to contract with Georgetown, TX, PD as its first best option and Pflugerville, TX, PD as a "Plan-B" option. District leadership have reviewed the final report and stated that PCG provided clear and concise recommendations and that our final report exceeded their expectations with the thoroughness of our report. PCG has continued our work with TCESD-2 through several projects including a strategic and master plan, cost of services study, and assistance with CAAS accreditation.

**Our experts are ready to partner with your department to offer proven practical solutions to address the diverse emergency service needs in your growing community.**

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