



Wellness & Workforce Summit

February 18-19, 2026 | Phoenix, AZ

APCO International Summit Series





Welcome to: Reigniting Purpose

About Me: Welcome, I'm so glad you're here. My name is Amber Logan, and I've spent my career in public safety communications serving in roles across the spectrum: frontline telecommunicator, trainer, supervisor, and now in leadership supporting operations, training, and organizational development. Every position I've held has shaped how I see this profession and the people who make it work.

I'm passionate about building purpose-driven, empowered teams, teams that feel supported, valued, and recognized as the true first responders they are. My goal in this session is to help us reconnect with the "why" behind our work, explore how generational shifts are changing recruitment and retention, and share practical strategies that strengthen culture and inspire passion in our centers.

Goals of This Presentation

- Reignite a sense of purpose and pride within public safety communications
- Highlight generational shifts affecting recruitment and retention
- Provide practical, culture-driven strategies for building strong, motivated teams
- Reinforce the identity of telecommunicators as essential, frontline first responders
- Inspire leaders to cultivate environments where staff feel valued, supported, and connected to their "why"

Session begins shortly...





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Reigniting Purpose:
Inspiring Passion & Boosting Recruitment in Public Safety Communications

Presented by: Amber Logan



Session Objectives



Reignite a sense of purpose and pride



Understand generational differences in recruitment



Explore culture-driven retention strategies



Strengthen team identity and morale



Recognize telecommunicators as true first responders



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Based on NENA Pulse of 9-1-1 (2024), APCO Staffing & Retention Resources, and NICE 911 Workforce Insights

Staffing shortages remain widespread, with many ECCs struggling to maintain minimum staffing levels.

Burnout and emotional fatigue continue to rise, driven by call volume, trauma exposure, and mandatory overtime.

Tenure is declining, especially among new hires who often leave within the first 12–18 months.

Recruitment pipelines are shrinking, with fewer qualified applicants and longer hiring cycles.

Training demands are increasing, placing additional strain on already understaffed centers.

Workforce pressure is trending upward, with centers reporting higher stress and lower resilience year over year.

Current Staffing & Retention Pressures in 9-1-1

Top Reasons Telecommunicators Leave

Top Reasons Telecommunicators Leave the Profession

- **Burnout and emotional fatigue** from high-intensity call volume
- **Mandatory overtime** and lack of schedule flexibility
- **Compensation that doesn't match job stress**
- **Limited career growth or advancement pathways**
- **Toxic or unsupportive center culture**
- **Insufficient mental health support**
- **Lack of recognition or feeling undervalued**



What Centers Report They Need Most

More qualified applicants entering the hiring pipeline

Reduced time-to-hire and faster background processes

Improved retention of new hires

More trainers and training resources

Better mental health and wellness support

Modern technology to reduce workload and call handling strain

Leadership development for supervisors and CTOs



What New Hires Say They Want

Purpose-driven work with clear impact

Supportive, psychologically safe culture

Consistent feedback and coaching

Work-life balance and predictable scheduling

Opportunities for growth and advancement

Modern, intuitive technology

Recognition and appreciation



Shared Across All Generations

- Want to feel **valued**
- Want to feel **supported**
- Want to feel **safe**
- Want to feel **purposeful**

Generational Expectations in 9-1-1

Generational Expectations in Today's ECC Workforce

- **Boomers:** Loyalty, structure, clear hierarchy
 - **Gen X:** Independence, efficiency, minimal micromanagement
 - **Millennials:** Collaboration, purpose, flexibility, development
 - **Gen Z:** Psychological safety, transparency, meaningful work, tech-forward tools
- 

What's Working in High-Retention Centers

Protect purpose through storytelling and mission-focused culture

Invest in mentorship and structured onboarding

Prioritize mental health and normalize wellness conversations

Offer flexible scheduling where possible

Recognize staff frequently in meaningful, authentic ways

Develop supervisors intentionally — not accidentally

Communicate transparently about change, expectations, and decisions



Before we
begin...



Take a moment



Breathe



Set aside the noise of the day



And reconnect with *why* you're here





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OPENING QUESTION

When was the last time
you felt truly connected to
the purpose of this work?





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Video Clip: Simon Sinek – “Start With Why”



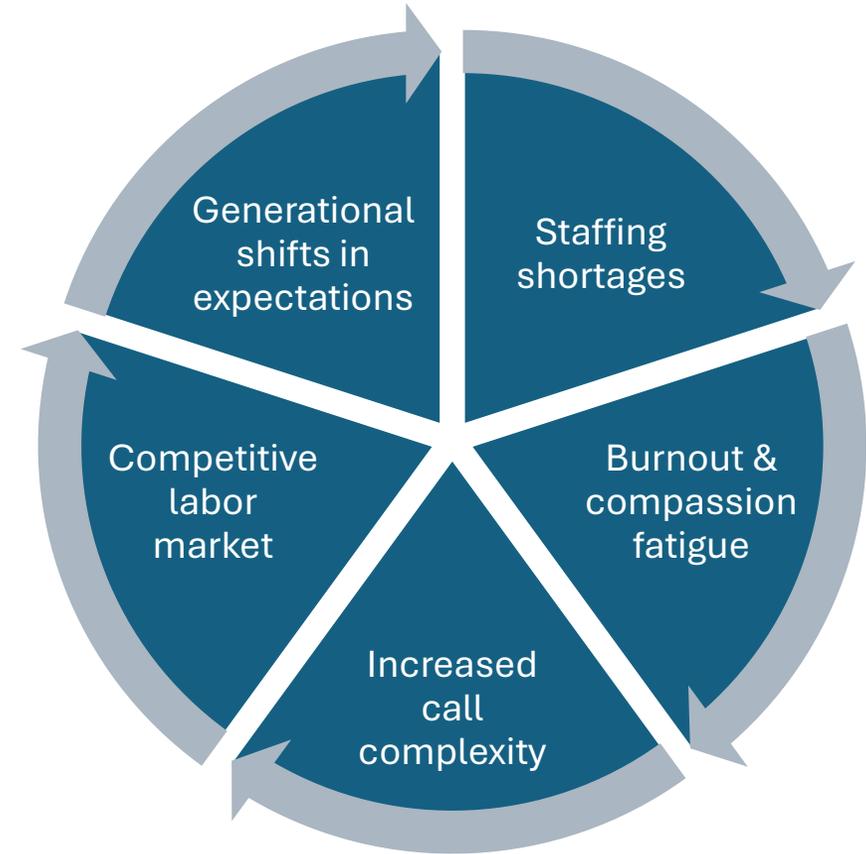


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WHY THIS TOPIC MATTERS NOW



The Purpose Crisis in Public Safety Communications

Emotional labor

Invisible heroism

Purpose erosion

Trauma exposure

Lack of closure



Reigniting Purpose



Purpose is the
anchor



Purpose drives
retention



Purpose feels
culture



Purpose attracts
the right candidates



The Science of Motivation

Autonomy

Mastery

Purpose



Storytelling as a culture tool

Stories
shape
identity

Stories
reinforce
meaning

Stories
inspire new
recruits



GROUP ACTIVITY

The Call That Changed Me

1. Pair up
2. Share a moment that reaffirmed your purpose (10 mins)
3. Volunteers share with the room?





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Recruitment Through Purpose

- Candidates want meaning
- Culture is your strongest recruitment tool
- Purpose-driven messaging attracts purpose-driven people
- Younger generations value impact & belonging



PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR CENTERS

Purpose Moments at shift start

Micro-recognition

Shadow-day programs

Story-based recruitment posts

Peer mentorship

Culture check-in





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Video Clip: Drew
Dudley – “Everyday
Leadership”
(TedTalk)





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Bringing it all together...

Purpose → Passion → Culture → Recruitment → Sustainability



Your Voice. Your Purpose. Your Impact.

**A Call to Action
for Every Center:**

Protect your
people

Protect your
culture

Protect your
purpose

Lead with
compassion

Mentor with
intention

Recognize the
work that saves
lives

Build the
environment you
wish you had
when you started





****You are the calm in someone's worst moment.**

Your voice saves lives.**



Let's Talk About It...



Your experiences



Your challenges



Your wins



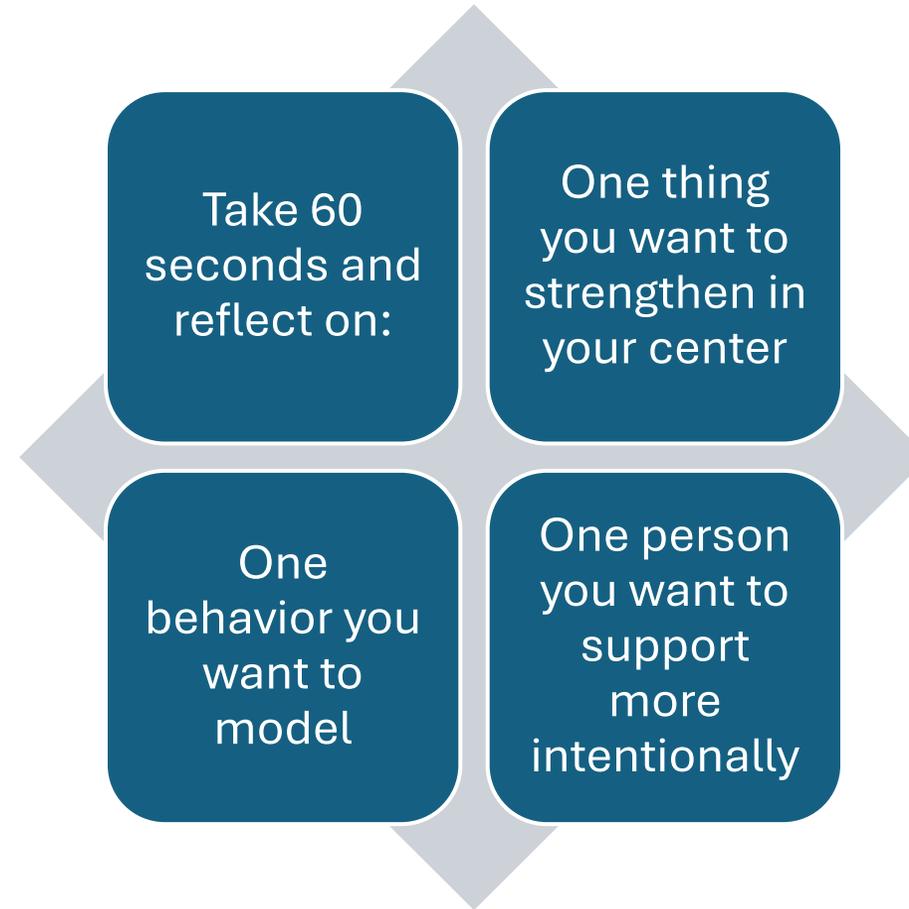
Your questions



Your ideas



Leadership Reflection



GROUP ACTIVITY

One Thing I Can Change:

1. Turn to someone near you
2. Share one thing you want to improve in your center (2 mins)
3. Share one action you can take in the next 7 days? (2 mins)
4. Volunteers share with the room?





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One conversation you will start

One recognition you will give

One process you will improve

One person you will mentor

One purpose-driven message you will reinforce

Monday Morning Action Plan..

Next week, commit to:



GROUP MICRO-ACTIVITY

Purpose Post-It

Write down one sentence that captures why you do this work.





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Q & A





Thank You for the Work You Do!

Amber Logan Public Safety Emergency Communications Leader

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“Purpose is the heartbeat of this profession — protect it, and your people will thrive.” ~ Anonymous

A decorative green heartbeat line is positioned at the bottom right of the slide, extending from the left edge and ending in a jagged, pulse-like shape.

REFERENCES (APA STYLE)

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NENA Pulse of 9-1-1 Survey (2024)

APCO Staffing & Retention Resources

NENA/Carbyne Pulse of 9-1-1 eBook (2024)

NICE 911 Staff Performance & Retention Study

A decorative green line graphic at the bottom right of the page, resembling a heartbeat or pulse line.