



Wellness & Workforce Summit

February 18-19, 2026 | Phoenix, AZ

APCO International Summit Series

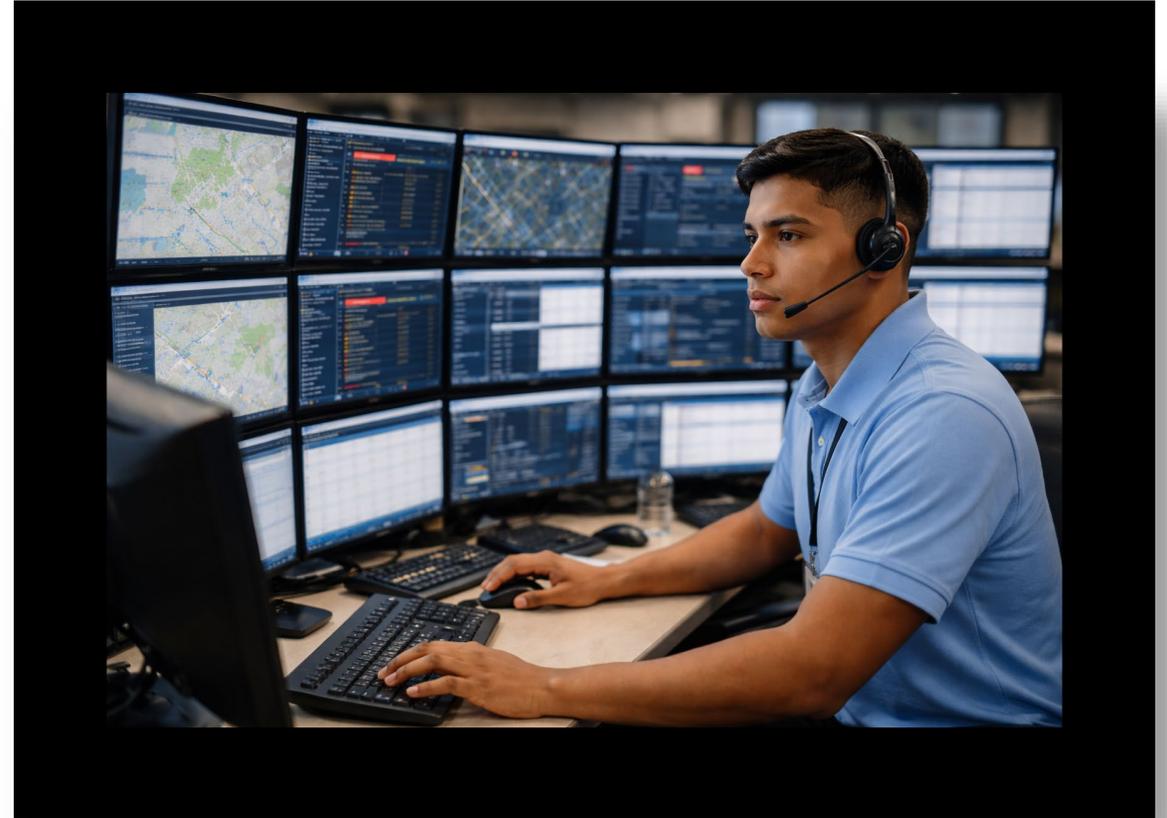


From Candidate Through Career

Reimagining the 9-1-1 Workforce with the Help of Responsible AI

Scott MacDonald

CEO / Co-Founder GovWorx



You're Already Doing Hard Work

70%

Active Recruitment

Programs and dedicated
personnel

98%

Professional Training

Academies, CTOs, classrooms

60%

QA/QI Functions

Ongoing review and evaluation
evaluation

55%

Wellness Initiatives

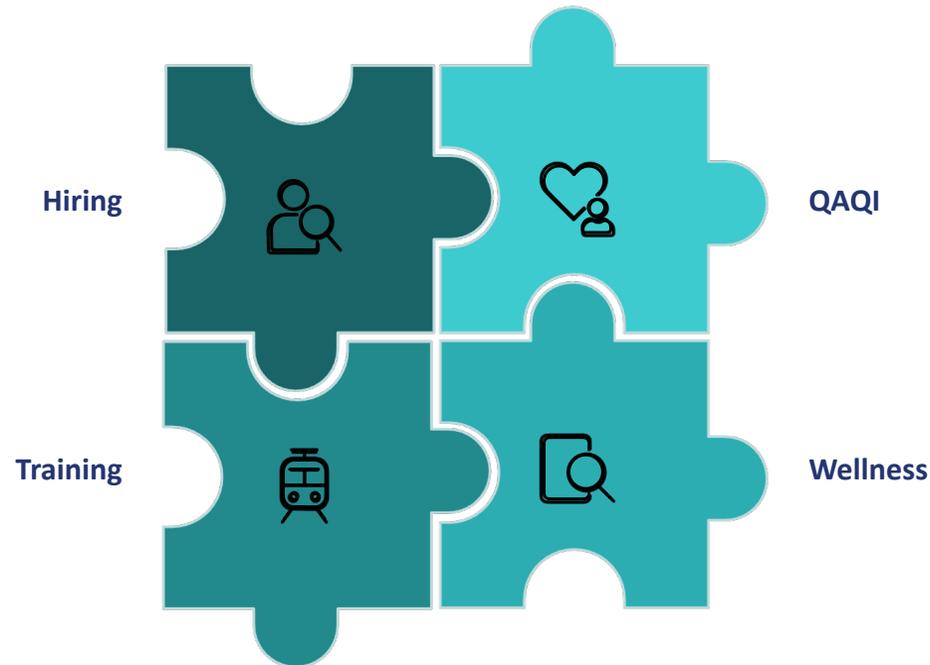
Peer support, therapy dogs, CI
CI debriefing

This represents major, commendable investment. So why does the workforce still feel brittle?

Social Media surveys of Emergency Communications Staff



The Real Problem: Fragmentation



- Hiring is treated like an HR Function
- Training is treated like an onboarding Function
- QA/QI is treated like a compliance discipline
- Wellness is treated like a separate program

Success is not “program availability,” it’s the day-to-day day-to-day operational design that reduces chronic strain. chronic strain.

The individual is forced to bridge these gaps alone. That's how careers become fragile and people leave.



How Fragmentation Shows Up

Competency Drift

Pre-hire testing doesn't connect to individual training plans. Training teams inherit avoidable variation with no data about the individuals or their strengths / areas of need

Delayed Feedback

QA disconnected from coaching means feedback arrives late. Late feedback feels like judgment. Early and continuous feedback feels like development.

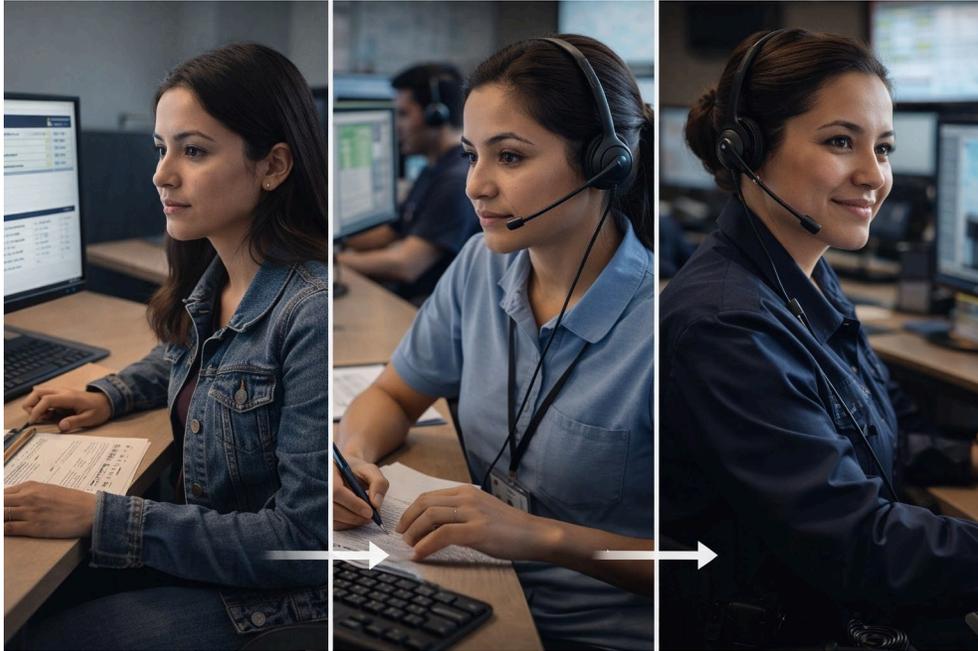
Reactive Wellness

Wellness becomes after-the-fact recovery, not operational design. A program instead of a principle.

Overwhelmed Leaders

Trainers burn out. Supervisors become inconsistent. Good staff leave because they can't see a future for themselves.





The Research Is Clear

Workforce science shows that **complementary practices reinforce each other**. Performance and retention outcomes are driven by systems of practices, not isolated interventions.

Person-job fit is strongly related to job attitudes and turnover intentions. Alignment between role demands and individual capabilities is a core retention lever.



Learning From Mission-Critical Professions



Military ASVAB

Assess to align, then train to improve. Classification tool that reduces **preventable mismatch** and target personal growth.



Air Traffic Control

Structured screening, staged training, **calibrated instruction**. Engineered pathway with continuous evaluation.



Aviation

Performance-oriented standards with observable behaviors. Training designed to meet explicit standards with **targeted skill enhancement**.



Telecommunicator: A Portfolio of Competencies



We need to stop treating telecommunications as one as one **monolithic skill**. Each task draws on different different strengths and competencies.

While they may have to do all...we have to know know where each fits better

The Core Question

If each task requires different strengths, why hire and train as if one person will excel equally across everything?

Some candidates might be exceptional at six six areas and need work in two. Others have have three natural strengths and a couple risk risk areas. Without early identification, training training becomes guesswork under real calls calls with real consequences.



Air Traffic Control: The Cautionary Tale

Structured Screening

ATSA measures decision-making, spatial awareness, multitasking, working memory

Staged Training

Classroom, simulation, on-the-job training with certified instructors

System Strain

30%+ failure rates in 2024 despite screening and standards

The Lesson

A system can have competency testing and standards but still produce high failure if failure if **targeted training, instructor development, calibration, and culture** are not engineered.

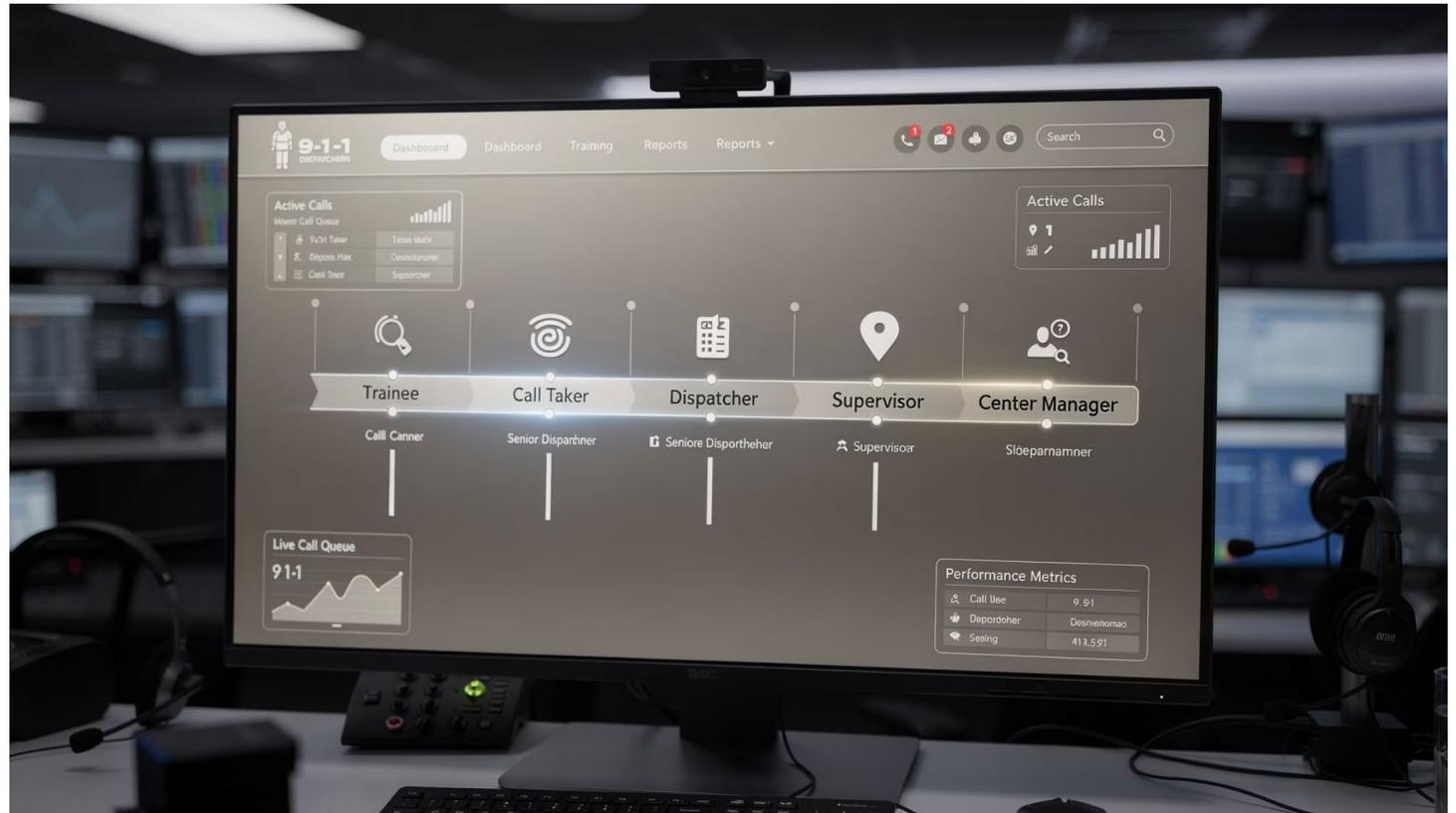


The Military's Longitudinal Training Record

The Plan Follows the Person

Service members carry a training file into every new assignment. The system doesn't "forget" what was learned, where gaps exist, or what development is required.

Digital records include master training plans and individual training plans, along with ASVAB results to always remember where extra guidance may be needed



What High-Reliability Organizations Do

01

Define Competencies

Identify clear competencies and observable behaviors

02

Assess Aptitude

Guide placement and development, not just exclude

03

Track Progress

Longitudinal record that follows the person person

04

Train Instructors (Coach the Coach)

Develop trainers and supervisors as formal capability

05

Evaluate Continuously with Balanced Feedback

Improve wellness and morale reliability through feedback loops with Transparency and bias-free evaluations



The Telecommunicator Competency Passport



A Longitudinal Development Record Record

Follows individuals across their entire career:
career:

- Application and testing
- Academy or classroom training
- CTO and on-shift development
- QA and coaching cycles
- Progression into specialized roles

This is not an HR file. It's a professional
development file.



What Goes in the Passport

Competency Framework

Standardized across roles and stages with emphasis on those that are inherent

Performance Standards

Role-specific, observable observable behaviors, human-guided with automated assistance

Evidence Artifacts

Scenario outcomes, objective event evaluations, qualified behaviors

Development Plans Plans

Microlearning assignments, assignments, targeted practice

Recognition Markers

Strength reinforcement, progress milestones – readiness for next

Privacy Controls

Strict governance - not to show “where they are bad” – aggregate to a training plan

Test and Assess Using Same Measuring Stick Across the Career



70%

Direct managers account for at least 70% of the variance in team engagement (Gallup)

Most Critical Competency? Supervisors: The Cultural Transmission Layer

Why This Matters

The supervisor is not merely an oversee-er. They are:

- The keeper of fairness and standards
- The driver of psychological safety
- The determiner of whether coaching feels developmental or punitive
- The keeper of the culture

Promoting excellent dispatchers without assessing **coaching competency** is like making a great pilot a training captain **without ever knowing if they can teach.**





The Culture Trap: Scarcity Thinking

"I didn't have that when I was new ...why do they get it now?"

This statement signals scarcity identity, status protection, and hazing logic. These logics. These cultures predictably harm training throughput, morale, retention, and retention, and psychological safety.



Developing Supervisors as a Competency



Selection

Based on leadership **competencies**, not just console excellence



Simulation Training

Practice difficult conversations and coaching scenarios and evaluate like you would QA



Calibration

Standardize evaluations and coaching standards



Recertification

Continuous development and accountability – continuous assessments



Where Responsible AI Helps – The Digital Passport

AI as the Continuity Layer

Use AI where humans are structurally disadvantaged- you have not time now:

- **Thread:** Knowledge of competencies
- **Scale:** Too many calls, too much variation
- **Consistency:** Trainer and supervisor variance
- **Speed:** Feedback loops too slow
- **Pattern Recognition:** Cross-month trends invisible to humans
- **Administrative Burden:** Documentation overload



AI-Enabled Support Across the Career



Implementation Roadmap



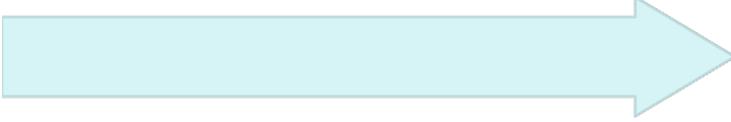
Phase 1: Connect the Language Language (0-90 days)

Choose competency framework, map map pre-hire assessments to training training milestones, establish minimum minimum viable calibration, identify 3-5 3-5 high-frequency failure points



Phase 2: Build the Record (3-6 months)

Implement Competency Passport, connect CTO observations with QA findings, launch supervisor coaching simulations, establish governance



Phase 3: Scale Responsibly (6-12 months)

Expand passports to on-shift development, use microlearning for top top gaps, train supervisors as formal capability, integrate wellness operationally- into feedback...into real real time guidance...into passport concerns

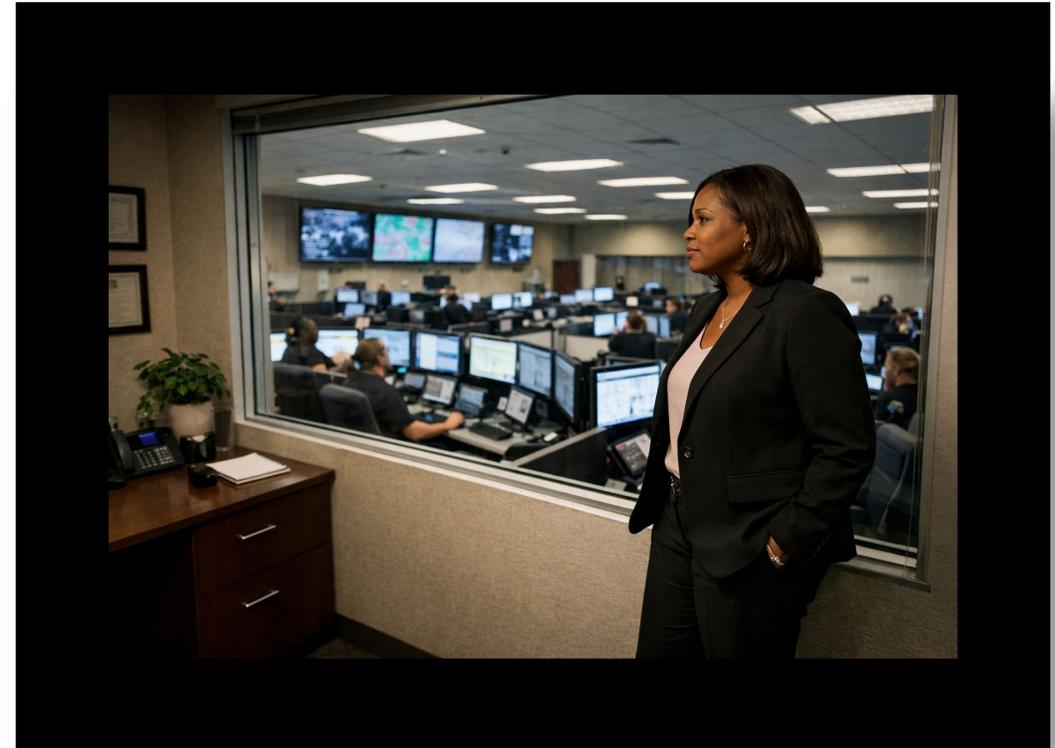


The Question Every Leader Leader Should Ask

"At which points in the journey do people drop off, and what support was missing immediately beforehand?"

The future of staffing isn't filling seats faster. It's supporting humans **through** the **through** the career. We can stop building silos and start building systems. systems.

That's how experience stays in the room.





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