

Modernize Your Phone System Without the Chaos

Five moves any public agency can follow to replace an aging phone system, keep life safety online, and stay compliant, without a months-long RFP.

This playbook distills how one rural county modernized voice across sites hours apart, with little cell service and a system at end of life. The same five plays work for any agency, large or small.

1

Procurement

Skip the RFP with cooperative contracts

- Confirm your agency is eligible to buy off a cooperative contract such as OMNIA Partners, NASPO ValuePoint, Sourcewell, or TIPS.
- Still run a real evaluation: define your needs and compare options side by side.
- Purchase through the contract. The competition already happened at the national level, so no RFP is required.

2

Teams voice

Voice-enable Microsoft Teams the right way

- Use an embedded dialer so staff get full voice inside Teams with no jump to G5 and no extra Microsoft phone-system licenses.
- Watch for hidden costs: per-user add-ons, a second admin console, and routing that fights your tenant.
- Confirm priorities like HIPAA-compliant faxing are built in before you commit.

3

Redundancy

Build a backup that does not share fate with the fiber

- Map your circuits. If every path runs through the same corridor, one event can take you fully offline.
- Add an independent backup such as satellite internet that does not depend on the fiber.
- Use SD-WAN so failover happens automatically and service stays connected, no hands required.

4

Life safety

Move elevators and alarms off dying analog lines

- Inventory every analog line still tied to elevators, fire alarms, and emergency phones.
- Carriers are retiring analog POTS service, and it tends to fail quietly, until an inspection.
- Move these onto a modern, compliant connection such as a POTS-in-a-box solution.

5

Compliance

Confirm E911 compliance before you buy

- Kari's Law: callers must be able to dial 911 directly, with no prefix.
- Ray Baum's Act: every 911 call must carry an exact, dispatchable location.
- Many legacy systems are out of compliance and do not know it. Audit before you buy.

■ BEFORE YOU START · A QUICK READINESS CHECKLIST

- ☐ **Cooperative eligibility confirmed.** You know which contract vehicle your agency can purchase through.
- ☐ **Current-state inventory done.** You have a list of sites, user counts, circuits, and every analog line still in service.
- ☐ **Redundancy gap identified.** You know whether your circuits share a single physical path.
- ☐ **Life-safety lines mapped.** Elevators, fire alarms, and emergency phones are accounted for.
- ☐ **E911 posture reviewed.** You have checked current compliance with Kari's Law and Ray Baum's Act.

■ HOW THE PLAYS COME TOGETHER

One coordinated project

Platform, Teams voice, redundancy, life safety, and compliance handled as a single effort, not five disconnected ones. When it is coordinated, the cutover can be as simple as a flip of a switch.

A partner who runs it with you

A supplier-neutral advisor matches you to the right solution and manages the process end to end, so your team is not left juggling vendors or doing the coordination work alone.

■ WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE AT THE FINISH

- ☐ Users on modern voice, working the same way everywhere.
- ☐ Redundancy that holds when a primary path goes down.
- ☐ Life safety and E911 covered and documented.
- ☐ Support that answers, and a plan every step of the way.



Want the full case study?

See exactly how Okanogan County ran this playbook, from a two-day outage to a modern, compliant system. Or talk to an expert about your own voice modernization.

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