

Priority Dispatch.



ETC COURSE TRAINS NEW EMERGENCY DISPATCHERS, SECURES JOBS FOR FUTURE

For Immediate Release: 03/18/2024

El Paso County, Colorado: A staple course of the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch has made its way to Calhan High School in the Pikes Peak BOCES District. The Emergency Telecommunicator™ (ETC™) Course provides introductory training for a wide range of concepts and skills needed to successfully work in a public safety communications center.

With a shortage of dispatchers in almost every state in the US, this high school ETC Course comes at a critical time.

"I'd love to see ETC become a recruitment tool for agencies," said Bonni Stockman, the Instructor Program Coordinator for the IAED who is spearheading ETC efforts in high schools. "The goal is for students to have jobs waiting for them."

Connecting students to local agencies is crucial to the long-term success of these programs, by helping students see the industry in a more hands-on way and giving them insights to what a career in public safety might entail.

"This is a great entry point for 911," Stockman said. "It's also a great place to work for high school graduates due to hours that allow the pursuit of higher education while working, which is a win-win for both center and employee."

Salaries for Emergency Dispatchers vary across the nation, with Indeed.com reporting a median salary of about \$50,000, Salary.com reporting a median salary of about \$43,000, and ZipRecruiter.com reporting a median salary of about \$53,000 a year. Calhan's ETC Instructor reports Emergency Dispatcher salaries of around \$60,000 a year.

Calhan High School isn't the first school to adopt this pilot program. Schools around the US have had success with implementing ETC Courses. What sets El Paso County apart is help from El Paso-Teller E9-1-1 Authority in making connections between the school and communications centers, granting students better opportunities and higher job placement.

Stockman views what's happening with ETC in high schools not just as a potential recruiting tool, but as a cost-saving measure. "While there are things that can't be trained outside of the center, there are many that can. What could a center do with the additional time and money saved for each high school ETC graduate they hire?"

Some agencies have expressed worries that the age of these graduates might be a barrier to performing the rigorous work the job requires. Stockman says her experience is that anyone with the right mindset shouldn't be turned away.

"My advice to centers is to not forget this generation," Stockman said. "They can do this job as well as anyone."

For any parties interested in learning more about the IAED's ETC Course, a remote option is available at <https://courses.prioritydispatch.net/>. The ETC course gives interested parties all of the knowledge and tools necessary to enter the industry of emergency telecommunications.