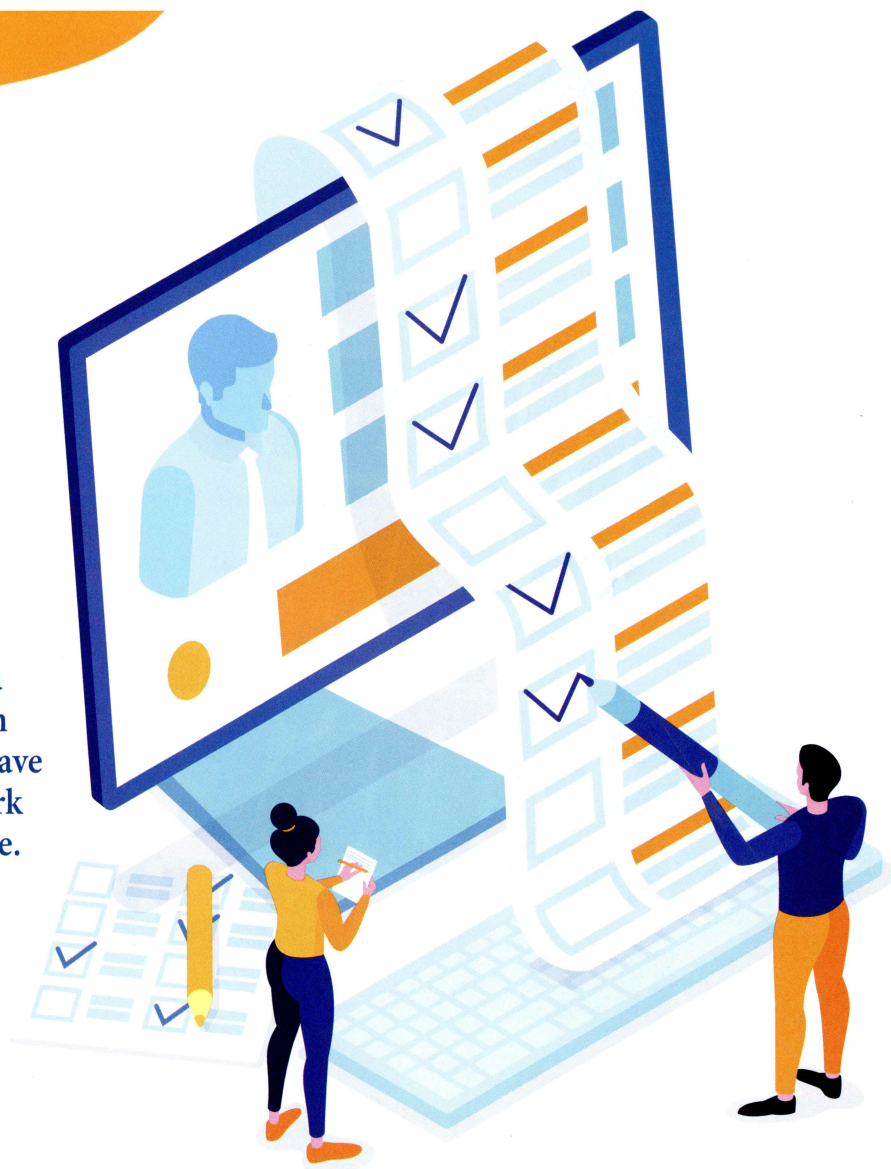


Based on these responses, it would be safe to say that a majority of ECCs in the United States have employees who work more than full-time.



17.9% report working for ECCs in or near their primary workplace, and many say they are helping another agency with a staffing or budget issue.

ARE WE GETTING SOMETHING ELSE OUT OF THIS?

It could be easy to attribute the prevalence of second jobs in emergency telecommunications to lack of pay, a desire for extra spending money or the need to escape into something different, but is there more going on here? Is it possible that people who work in this profession have similar traits or values that would make them more likely to take on a second job? Among respondents, 93.5% say they enjoy working and 92.6% state they believe it is their purpose or higher calling to serve others. Asked if they believe dispatchers have any common personality traits the most prevalent answers were “type A personalities”

and a willingness or desire to help. A combination of these traits and values may lead to someone being more work oriented.

IMPACTS ON HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Only about 19% of respondents believe their second job has a positive impact on their health and wellness. A total of 40% believe it has no impact, and 41% believe it has a negative impact. Unsurprisingly, all respondents who claimed fitness-related second jobs also noted a positive impact on health and wellness. Telecommunicators who hold jobs at gyms or are professional athletes seemingly can generate income, work on their personal health and relieve stress simultaneously. When considering the sometimes-stressful sedentary environment of the ECC, it makes sense that fitness employment would provide an element of balance.

CONCLUSIONS

It seems a majority of ECCs employ full-time telecommunicators who have secondary employment. Our respondents average a work week of 59.23 hours with the largest motivator for secondary employment being additional income. Telecommunicators seem to prefer holding second jobs outside the realm of public safety. A large majority of telecommunicators with second jobs seem to share values and traits that may make them more prone to working long hours. Working longer hours has an impact on health and wellness, but a few job types seem to make that a positive impact. ●

Chelsi Halstead works as a Telecommunicator and CTO for Morgan County (Indiana) Public Safety Dispatch and as a part-time Telecommunicator for Mooresville Police Department.