

Case Study

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When Every Call Counts: Emergency Surge Support for Government Contact Centers

Summary

Emergencies do not schedule themselves. When a disaster is declared or a crisis hits, government call volume can go from normal to overwhelming in days, and every unanswered call is a person who needs help. Standing up a qualified contact center team at that speed is one of the hardest problems in BPO: agents must be recruited, screened, security-adjudicated, trained on complex program rules, and put in front of the public fast, and the people calling are often at the worst moment of their lives, which means quality cannot be the price of speed.

Two government programs put Mpathic to exactly that test. In the first, Mpathic served as a subcontractor to the prime on a federal disaster response agency's outsourced contact center program, providing surge staffing and operations for disaster assistance activations sustained over years. In the second, Mpathic served as a subcontractor to a global systems integrator supporting a state department of labor overwhelmed by pandemic unemployment assistance claims, a mobilization compressed into five days.

The programs needed:

- Hundreds of qualified agents recruited, screened, and trained within days of activation
- Full security adjudication, including background screening and fingerprinting, completed before any agent took a live call
- A remote, secure workforce model that could scale on demand and operate 24/7/365
- Bilingual capacity to serve Spanish-speaking callers equitably
- Composure and empathy on the line with citizens in crisis, at sustained high volume

Mpathic Solution

Federal disaster response: sustained surge at national scale

The federal program operated at national scale, with capacity requirements of up to 175,000 production hours per week, scalable to 210,000, during major disaster events. Mpathic agents performed registration intake and helpline functions, serving as direct points of contact for disaster survivors registering for federal assistance, answering questions about existing registrations, and providing referrals to secondary support organizations. Registration intake calls averaged 18 to 23 minutes of scripted interview and data entry into the agency's national registration system of record; helpline calls ran 10 to 12 minutes. The work demanded accuracy, professionalism, tact, and empathy, sustained through high-volume surge conditions.

Speed of mobilization was the core of the value. Following a disaster declaration, hundreds of agents could need onboarding within days. Mpathic's pipeline covered the full sequence: pre-screening candidates against the agency's eligibility criteria, coordinating security documentation and fingerprinting, and scheduling the agency's required training so that every agent was fully adjudicated and trained before taking a single live call. Over the course of the contract, Mpathic onboarded more than 200 agents, every one a U.S. citizen who cleared the full federal security process.

The operating model held up under sustained load. Agents worked remotely from private, secure workspaces meeting minimum connectivity requirements, and agency-issued credentials required for all access. Mpathic maintained a supervisor-to-agent ratio of no more than 1 to 30, with supervisors running pre-shift briefings, quality monitoring, and real-time coaching, and operated with extended coverage hours (until 2AM for one task) to match the agency's mission needs. At percentage of scheduled agents in every shift interval were fully bilingual in English and Spanish, fluent in speaking, reading, and writing. Retention was supported by consistent communication with deployed agents, clear performance feedback, prompt and accurate payroll, and an employment model in which every agent was a Mpathic employee rather than third-party labor. Mpathic also consulted on several reporting and training workflows for the program, helping operators and managers get up to speed faster and keep their focus on

the citizens reaching out for help.

State pandemic response: 400 agents, five days

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a state department of labor faced a flood of unemployment assistance claims through its telephone claims center. As a subcontractor to a global systems integrator, Mpathic onboarded more than 400 personnel and had them engaging customers within five business days, a mobilization few providers of any size could match. Volume stayed extreme for the duration: claimants whose income had stopped, whose patience had run out, and whose claims often required careful handling across multiple systems. Mpathic agents worked the queue with the same screening, training, and supervision discipline as a standing operation, and it showed in the numbers.

Project Outcome and Success Metrics

On the state program, over the course of the engagement, Mpathic achieved:

- 1.4 million calls processed, averaging 6,500 per day
- First call resolution of 92 percent
- Transfer rate reduced from 60 percent to 6 percent, with erroneous transfers held below 2 percent
- Agent productivity of 70 percent, while other suppliers on the program averaged 50 percent
- Hundreds of threat calls handled with zero negative outcomes

On the federal program, Mpathic sustained:

- Service quality above 90 percent against an 85 percent SLA
- Over 92 percent of shift hours spent on live contacts
- More than 80 agents at peak, averaging over 60 during hurricane season
- Agent turnover below 5 percent
- Recognition from the prime contractor as its most prompt and thorough subcontractor for agent training and invoice management, and its preferred delivery partner for surge activations

Surge can exposed a BPO provider's real machinery: recruiting pipelines, screening and

adjudication logistics, training design, payroll accuracy, and frontline management. Mpathic's merit-based hiring model, which selected on character, aptitude, and experience, made this speed possible without a quality trade-off. The same approach that filled 400 seats in five days also kept turnover under 5 percent when the surge stretched into years, and it is why both a federal prime and a global systems integrator kept returning to the same subcontractor when the stakes were highest. The federal engagement continues today.



Led by empathy. Magnified by technology.

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A Mpathic case study in federal emergency management and state workforce services.

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The operating model held up under sustained load. Agents worked remotely from private, secure workspaces meeting minimum connectivity requirements, with no personal devices connected to government systems and agency-issued credentials required for all access. Mpathic maintained a supervisor-to-agent ratio of no more than 1 to 30, with supervisors running pre-shift briefings, quality monitoring, and real-time coaching, and operated 24/7/365 to match the agency's round-the-clock mission. At least 25 percent of scheduled agents in every shift interval were fully bilingual in English and Spanish, fluent in speaking, reading, and writing. Retention was supported by consistent communication with deployed agents, clear performance feedback, prompt and accurate payroll, and an employment model in which every agent was a Mpathic employee rather than third-party labor. Mpathic also consulted on several reporting and training workflows for the program, helping operators and managers get up to speed faster and keep their focus on the citizens reaching out for help.

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