

# Case Study

## Multi-Modal Transit System Improves Safety with Direct to Dispatch Texting Solution

### Client

### Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA)

GCRTA is an extensive, multi-modal transit system serving communities throughout Cuyahoga County in northeast Ohio. The organization strives to provide safe, reliable, clean, and courteous public transportation for between 150,000-200,000 riders each weekday, and approximately 40 million riders annually. In a typical year, GCRTA customers travel more than 220 million passenger miles aboard its carriers. The GCRTA Transit Police department staffs approximately 155 employees between its Central Dispatch Center, Detective Bureau, Homeland Security, and K9 team. Central to their mission is the protection of the riding public, employees, and property through the prevention of crime and terrorism.

Challenge	CBTS solution	Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GCRTA needed a method for riders to report non-emergency situations and suspicious or criminal activities discreetly to Transit Police dispatch.</li> <li>Riders wanted to interact with GCRTA dispatch staff directly yet anonymously to ensure personal safety.</li> <li>Riders wanted a system beyond the 911 emergency service, with a texting option when they did not feel safe reporting a situation on a voice call.</li> <li>The service needed to be operational without internet connectivity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CBTS built a custom solution for riders to text GCRTA's 575-EYES phone number, connecting them directly and discreetly with Transit Police dispatch.</li> <li>The solution allows riders to attach photos and videos easily to their texts to give the dispatch team more detailed information.</li> <li>CBTS installed artificial intelligence to evaluate the intent of each text message and prioritize responses based on threat levels.</li> <li>GCRTA personnel access user statistics via a live dashboard and generate reports for ongoing analysis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With the CBTS SMS texting solution in place, riders send notifications consistently to GCRTA dispatch personnel.</li> <li>GCRTA receives multiple tips daily regarding disturbances, harassment, fraudulent ticket sales, suspicious bags, and other potential threats.</li> <li>GCRTA has improved their ability to respond quickly and appropriately to situations as they arise throughout the transit system, ensuring rider safety and building public confidence in the organization.</li> </ul>

## Challenge

GCRTA registered their 575-EYES phone number with an application provider with the goal of improving communications with its riders. The app, however, proved problematic because of its dependence on a strong internet signal to function properly.

Additionally, GCRTA required customization of any proposed communications service to allow for categorizing incident types to align with their Spillman Police Reporting Software.

The Transit Police Dispatch Center runs 24/7/365, and the team is responsible for executing several activities when incidents occur. Thus, streamlining the text process was a project priority.

## CBTS solution

Once GCRTA decided to port their registered phone number to CBTS for a new SMS texting solution, CBTS engineers went to work building a custom solution to meet all rider and employee needs.

First, CBTS used a Homeland Security grant obtained by GCRTA to procure and activate chat licenses needed for implementation and use by dispatch personnel. Next, CBTS added artificial intelligence with the goal of reducing text response times by creating automated responses for non-threatening situations. The final step for CBTS was to add a live dashboard for designated employees to access user statistics and generate reports for ongoing analysis and system improvements.

CBTS then trained transit police dispatchers to become agents and administrators of the solution. With the assistance of approximately 35 GCRTA employee volunteers, CBTS led a beta test where volunteers were asked to create live text sessions with the Transit Police Dispatch Center describing situations they had or could observe as a customer in GCRTA's buses, trains, or transit stations. These sessions became a part of the Transit Police dispatcher training preparing for the team for launch. The GCRTA marketing team then rolled out an aggressive campaign to help riders understand how to use the new texting solution to improve public safety and to assure them about its privacy.

## Results

Since introducing the "575-EYES, See Something Text Something" system to the public on July 1, 2018, GCRTA has reported several areas of improvement, including a steady increase in text traffic while significantly reducing dispatch response time.

The GCRTA program continues to grow as riders and staff become more familiar and confident in the system. With their ability to respond quickly and appropriately to situations as they arise across the transit system, GCRTA has improved rider safety and public confidence in the organization.

Customers recently surveyed rated the overall experience 9 of 10, response time an 8 of 10, and usefulness for RTA riders and employees a 10 of 10.