

South Mississippi Housing Authority Transforms Customer Experience with NWN + Amazon Connect

Overview

The South Mississippi Housing Authority (SMHA), the largest housing authority in the state, serves residents across 18 offices and a 10,000-square-mile region. With thousands of calls coming in every day, their small two-person IT team struggled to keep up. Long hold times, full voicemail boxes, and daily customer complaints created a significant strain on both staff and residents seeking critical housing support.

SMHA partnered with NWN to modernize its communications with a cloud-based, AI-powered contact center built on Amazon Connect. The results were immediate, dramatic, and transformative for both staff and the community they serve.

The Challenge

Before partnering with NWN, SMHA relied on a legacy VoIP system that created more problems than it solved.

Key Pain Points

- **Thousands of inbound calls per day** with no automation or self-service
- **68%+ of inquiries were repetitive**, such as checking waiting list positions or caseworker information
- **Full voicemail boxes, long hold times, and frequent customer complaints**
- **No real-time metrics** – SMHA waited a full month for basic call reports
- **IT overload**: a two-person team fielded 150–200 calls per day
- **Outdated, rigid phone menus** that frustrated callers and were difficult to update
- **High telecom costs** without ROI or flexibility

The result was operational gridlock – time spent answering phones prevented staff from helping families with applications, certifications, and urgent housing needs.

The Solution

To address these challenges, NWN deployed a fully customized Amazon Connect contact center enhanced with an AI-powered virtual agent using Amazon Lex and Bedrock.

What NWN Delivered

- ✓ **Natural-language virtual agent** that understands spoken requests
- ✓ **Self-service lookup tools** for waiting list status, caseworker details, and property routing
- ✓ **Automated nightly data uploads** using S3 + DynamoDB
- ✓ **Advanced call routing**, including dial-by-name, departmental queues, and location-based transfers
- ✓ **Real-time dashboards** for complete call visibility
- ✓ **Rapid Deploy implementation** – fully built in ~6 weeks
- ✓ **On-site support and ongoing optimization** from NWN engineers

“Everything we asked for, the system did. And if we had an idea, NWN built it. It blew us away.”

– ANDREW JONES, SMHA.

The Results

Massive Call Reduction & AI Containment

- 68% of all inbound calls handled entirely by AI
- 1,000+ calls per day resolved without human interaction

Previously, SMHA's team was fielding up to 200 calls daily. That number is now down to 8.

"AI took thousands of calls a day off our plate. It gave us our time back."

— ANDREW JONES

Dramatically Improved Customer Experience

- Complaints dropped from multiple per day to just two total since launch
- Hold times decreased to just a few minutes
- Routing accuracy improved, eliminating misdirected calls

Significant Cost Savings

- 55% reduction in telephony costs for calling
- 30% total telecom cost reduction when including monitoring
- ROI expected in 12–18 months

"Even at zero cost savings, this system would still be worth it. It's that good."

— ANDREW JONES

Real-Time Insights & Operational Efficiency

- Full visibility into agent activity, queue size, missed calls, and call flows
- Ability to diagnose issues in minutes — not weeks
- New custom call history application built by NWN for 90 day tracking and callback coordination

Customer Impact

Empowered Staff & Mission Impact

Staff previously overwhelmed by phone traffic can now focus on assisting residents with applications, certifications, and landlord issues. Callers experience faster support, accurate routing, and consistent information thanks to the AI virtual agent and improved system design.

SMHA's team can now focus on what truly matters:

- Helping clients complete applications
- Supporting families with certifications, re-exams, and housing issues
- Speeding up placement on waiting lists
- Launching new innovations and housing programs

"NWN gave us the freedom to finally move the agency forward."

— ANDREW JONES

Why NWN

Partnership Differentiators

SMHA chose NWN due to its deep public-sector experience, rapid deployment capability, and highly responsive engineering team. NWN provided ongoing optimization, proactive enhancements, and fast issue resolution. The relationship continues to be one of SMHA's strongest vendor partnerships.

- **No cookie-cutter solutions** — fully customized to SMHA's needs
- **Engineers who "make AWS bend to their will"**
- **Lightning-fast support** — most tickets resolved in under 24 hours
- **Proactive improvement recommendations** even after go live
- **Exceptional on site launch support**

"One of the best vendor relationships I've ever had. I've never had an issue that wasn't solved within minutes."

— ANDREW JONES

Future Plans

The partnership between SMHA, NWN, and Amazon Connect showcases what's possible when public sector organizations embrace modern cloud communications. By eliminating manual workloads, improving customer experience, and enabling flexible AI-powered automation, SMHA is now better equipped to support thousands of Mississippi families with speed, accuracy, and compassion.

SMHA continues expanding its Amazon Connect environment with NWN, including new features like call history tracking, callback routing, and deeper CRM-style integration. Additional innovations are planned as the organization continues modernizing.

"Just do it. NWN is easy to work with, they know the product inside and out, and they'll build exactly what you need. This has been a game changer for us."

— ANDREW JONES, DIRECTOR OF IT, SOUTH MISSISSIPPI HOUSING AUTHORITY

Take the Next Step

Discover how our integrated solutions can modernize your operations for the AI era and deliver measurable results. Contact our team today to schedule a consultation.

[Learn more](#)