

Please SAVE the EMS Workforce

Request

Please urge your Senate and House lawmakers to take action to support the hiring, training, and retention of Paramedics and EMTs, and ensure that the EMS workforce is accurately counted. Specifically, we ask Congress to:

- **Expand the Hospital Preparedness Program, authorized by the Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Act, to include \$50 million to fund an EMS Preparedness and Response Workforce Shortage Program.** This program would support a well-trained and adequate EMS workforce particularly in underserved areas, and support our nation's capacity to surge during disasters and public health emergencies. Funds from this grant program would support recruitment, retention, and training of EMS personnel including tuition and associated expenses for paramedic and EMT training courses; expenses for required continuing education courses; and costs related to licensure and certification.
- **Include EMS in existing federal grants that support apprenticeship programs.** We ask lawmakers to make EMS eligible for federal grants offered through the Department of Labor and other agencies in order to promote apprenticeship programs for EMTs and paramedics. Apprenticeship programs have historically been used to spur workforce development or expansion in sectors of the economy that need workers. EMS agencies and fire departments struggling to recruit and retain EMS personnel would benefit from access to federal grants to support apprenticeship programs for Paramedics and EMTs. Currently there are no federal grant programs to support EMS apprenticeships.
- **Support the EMS Counts Act of 2023** which will soon be introduced with bipartisan support in the Senate by Sen. Bob Casey (D-PA) and in the House by Rep. Susan Wild (D-PA). This legislation will require the Secretary of Labor to revise the Standard Occupational Classification System by dividing the general occupational category of Firefighter into four sub-categories. Specifically, the bill directs the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to revise the broad description under the occupational series "33-2011 16 Firefighters" of the 2018 Standard Occupational Classification System of the BLS to include the following new occupations: (1) Firefighters. (2) Firefighter/EMTs. (3) Firefighter/Paramedics. (4) Firefighters, All Other. These changes will address the chronic miscounting of EMS personnel by allowing firefighters to identify themselves as cross-trained EMS practitioners.
- **Hold congressional hearings on the EMS workforce crisis.** We ask Congress to hold hearings on the EMS workforce crisis so that legislators and federal agencies with jurisdiction over EMS can better understand the causes for the exodus of the EMS workforce from the profession and the impact that it is having on communities across the country.

Background

Insufficient reimbursement for EMS care and lack of federal investment in EMS are long-term problems that have been building for decades. The additional burdens placed on EMS systems and personnel during the pandemic exacerbated the challenge, pushing many EMS systems in our country to the breaking point. Most communities are facing crisis-level shortages of EMS personnel, and many communities have seen EMS agencies close altogether, removing this critical community lifeline. The shortage of EMS personnel threatens to undermine our emergency 9-1-1 response infrastructure.

The [2022 Ambulance Employee Workforce Turnover Study by the American Ambulance Association \(AAA\) and Newton 360](#) – the most sweeping survey of its kind involving nearly 20,000 employees working at 258 EMS organizations – found that overall turnover among Paramedics and EMTs ranges from 20-30% percent annually. The exodus of EMS personnel from the profession is happening faster than they can be replaced, compromising our ability to respond to healthcare emergencies, especially in rural and medically underserved parts of the country.

Also in 2022, [a national survey on EMS workforce engagement and satisfaction](#) found that 9% of respondents had plans to leave the profession within the year, and 18% planned to leave within 3 years. Another 18% planned to be gone within 6 years. In total, 45% of EMS respondents plan on leaving the profession within 6 years. When asked why they planned to leave, 47% of respondents said for better pay and benefits. 77% of EMTs make under \$40,000 a year; 68% of paramedics make between \$42,000 and \$80,000 a year. 62% of EMTs work more than one job, while 58% of paramedics do. And, 50% of respondents said they were leaving for a better work-life balance, a response that highlights the strain that so many EMS practitioners have been under due to workforce shortages, long hours, and the demands of their jobs.

The report accompanying the FY2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act included the following language recognizing the need for ASPR to prioritize addressing the EMS workforce shortage:

EMS Preparedness and Response Workforce Shortage Program. — The Committee recognizes that our Nation is facing a crippling EMS workforce shortage which threatens public health and jeopardizes our ability to respond to healthcare emergencies on a timely basis. ASPR should prioritize ensuring a well-trained and adequate ground ambulance services workforce in underserved, rural, and Tribal areas and/or addressing health disparities related to accessing prehospital ground ambulance healthcare services, including critical care transport.

We call on Congress to please take these actions to save our nation's EMS workforce.

Please contact NAEMT's Government Relations Director, Kim Champi Krenik, at 202.365.8342 or Kim.Krenik@naemt.org for more information on specific ways you can help address the EMS workforce shortage. To co-sponsor the EMS Counts Act, please contact Rory Daly in Senator Casey's office at rory_daly@casey.senate.gov or Yann Schinazi in Representative Wild's office at yann.schinazi@mail.house.gov.