



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

PALOMA AGUIRRE
First District

JOEL ANDERSON
Second District

TERRA LAWSON-REMER
Third District

MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE
Fourth District

JIM DESMOND
Fifth District

DATE: December 09, 2025

05

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

**AUTHORIZATION TO ACCEPT GRANT FUNDS AND ESTABLISH
APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE EXPANSION OF THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL
SERVICES CORPS PROGRAM IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

OVERVIEW

In 2008, the statewide Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Corps was launched to provide an innovative Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) job training program for traditionally underserved Transitional Age Youth (TAY), ages 18-26, that prioritizes individuals who have been impacted by the child welfare services and/or juvenile justice systems. EMS Corps participants are provided more than double the minimum educational hours, receive monthly stipends, have access to support services, and participate in ride-alongs, as they prepare to become fully employed in the EMS, allied health, or advance to become professional firefighters.

Due to the success of EMS Corps, in 2023 the California Employment Development Department (EDD) authorized an expansion of the program from one to 11 counties, and San Diego County received \$1,270,000 in grant funds in 2024 for 60 students. San Diego County Fire (County Fire) launched the first of three cohorts in July of 2025 for the 5-month long EMS Corps program, which operates through contracts with Southwestern College as the training institution, SBCS for services, and agreements with private ambulance providers to support the program and provide possible employment opportunities.

On July 28, 2025, County Fire submitted a grant proposal to the San Diego Workforce Partnership's *EMS-Fire Pilot Pathways Initiative Participant & Program Support*, to secure funding to initiate a fourth EMS Corps cohort in North County through a partnership with Palomar College. On November 13, 2025, the proposal was approved and awarded \$500,000 in grant funds to support a fourth cohort of 20 students in 2026.

Today's recommended actions include approval to accept grant funds in the amount of \$500,000 for the period of January 1, 2026, through September 30, 2026, from the San Diego Workforce Partnership to support a fourth cohort of EMS Corps Program students and establish appropriations of \$500,000 in County Fire.

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RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

1. Authorize the acceptance of \$500,000 in grant funds from the San Diego Workforce Partnership for the period of January 01, 2026 through September 30, 2026, to support the San Diego Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Corps program in San Diego County, and authorize the Director of San Diego County Fire, or designee, to execute all grant documents and agreements, including any annual extensions, amendments and/or revision thereto that do not materially impact or alter services or funding levels.
2. Establish appropriations of \$500,000 in County Fire, Services & Supplies, for the EMS Corps program based on a one-time grant from the San Diego Workforce Partnership. **(4 VOTES)**

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Corps program is focused on providing training opportunities to Transitional Age Youth from historically underserved communities. This includes focusing outreach to young people who are or have been impacted by the child welfare and/or juvenile justice systems. The program focuses on geographic communities that are most underrepresented in the EMS workforce, and seeks to reduce barriers to entry, and increases success for Transitional Age Youth interested in full-time employment within the EMS and healthcare fields.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The proposed action to expand the EMS Corps program in San Diego County supports just and equitable access to County services and resource allocation in underserved communities. EMS Corps focuses on Transitional Age Youth who are, or have been, involved in the child welfare and/or juvenile justice systems, which are historically underserved communities.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for this request are not included in the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Operational Plan for San Diego County Fire. If approved, this request will result in costs and revenue of \$250,000 in Fiscal Year 2025-26 and costs and revenue of \$250,000 in Fiscal Year 2026-27. The funding source is a grant from the San Diego Workforce Partnership. There are no match requirements for this grant. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

The San Diego County Fire Protection District Fire Advisory Board met on November 17, 2025 and voted unanimously, with all members present, to support the of expansion of EMS Corps to inland North County.

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BACKGROUND

San Diego County Fire (County Fire) includes oversight of the San Diego County Fire Protection District (SDCFPD) and provides administrative support to the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Office. SDCFPD, through their cooperative fire protection partner CAL FIRE, staffs 22 fire stations with around-the-clock paramedic-level first responder, and ambulance service throughout the district's Ambulance Service Area (ASA). The County EMS Office also serves as the Local Emergency Medical Services Agency (LEMSA), as designated by Board Policy K-12. The LEMSAs provide regional leadership and regulatory oversight to ensure the EMS Delivery System in our entire region provides safe, effective, and equitable outcomes to all residents. The County EMS Office also provides credentialing services for all applicable EMS workers in San Diego County, as well as review and approvals of all EMS Training Programs.

The EMS workforce continues to experience a strain in staffing from the COVID-19 pandemic, with many workers leaving the EMS field for other careers. In addition, there remain significant barriers of entry into the EMS field for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, such as prerequisite training requirements, the high cost of purchasing supplies and equipment, and a full-time commitment to education that reduces the ability to work and support families while completing coursework and clinical ride-along hours.

EMS Corps Grant and Local Implementation

In 2023, The California Employment Development Department (EDD) made available nearly \$24 million in grant funding for the expansion of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Corps program to 10 additional counties in California. EMS Corps is an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) job training program for Transitional Age Youth (TAY) from underserved communities, including many that have been impacted by child welfare services and/or the juvenile justice systems. Specific to EMS Corps, the TAY population is defined as young people between the ages of 18-26, some of whom may experience several challenges on their path to adulthood. EMS Corps is a nationally recognized training model, which has proven to be extremely successful in other jurisdictions towards assisting enrolled TAY students to complete EMT training, and become employed in a full-time capacity with emergency medical service providers, firefighting, or other vocations in the healthcare field.

On December 27, 2023, County Fire submitted a grant application to EDD to establish a pilot EMS Corps program in San Diego County. On February 14, 2024, the proposal was approved for \$1,270,000, which on July 16, 2024 (5), the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) authorized County Fire to accept the grant funds for the period of August 30, 2024 through January 31, 2027, to plan and implement a pilot EMS Corps program in San Diego County, and authorize the Director of San Diego County Fire, or designee, to execute all grant documents and agreements.

The San Diego EMS Corps program encompasses the following critical components:

- A contract with Southwestern College to be the EMT training institution that uses an immersive hands-on 5-month long EMS Corps specific EMT curriculum to three cohorts of 20 students each while students receive college credit.

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- A competitively procured contract with SBCS to serve as the program's wraparound service provider with a range of key supports, which include:
 - On campus lunches two days per week
 - Assistance with registering for financial aid and social services
 - Academic assistance
 - Individual and group therapy sessions
 - Transportation assistance
 - Purchasing one-time program expenses
 - Career preparedness skills
- Memorandums of Agreements (MOAs) with Falck Mobile Health Corp, American Medical Response (AMR), and Premier Ambulance, three of the region's largest private ambulance agencies in San Diego County to assist with ride-alongs, mentorships, and potential job placement.

On June 18, 2025, the San Diego Workforce Partnership released the *EMS-Fire Pilot Pathways Initiative Participant & Program Support* Request for Proposal (RFP), which sought to fund project proposals that strengthen the public safety workforce pipeline through strategic investments in training providers, wraparound services, and employer partnerships. On July 28, 2025, County Fire, with support letters provided by Palomar College, North County Fire Protection District, Escondido Fire Department, and AMR, submitted a grant proposal to the San Diego Workforce Partnership's RFP to secure funding to complete a fourth EMS Corps cohort in North County, through a partnership with Palomar College, which will serve as the EMT training institution. On November 13, 2025, the proposal was approved, and will be granted \$500,000, which will support 20 students in 2026.

Today's action requests approval to accept grant funds in the amount of \$500,000 for the period of January 1, 2026, through September 30, 2026, from the San Diego Workforce Partnership, to support a fourth cohort of EMS Corps Program students and establish appropriations of \$500,000 in Fiscal Year 2025-26.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed actions support both the Empower and Equity Initiatives of the County of San Diego's (County) 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, by investing in our local workforce and dismantling barriers to expanding opportunities in traditionally underserved communities.

Respectfully submitted,



Andrew Strong for

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EBONY N. SHELTON
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)
N/A