

Proposal:

Countywide EMT BLS Transporting Service Model and Performance-Based EMS Staffing Grant

Bayfield County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) System Support Initiative

1. Purpose and Overview

Bayfield County continues to face increasing challenges in maintaining reliable Emergency Medical Services (EMS) staffing across its geographically large and predominantly rural service area. Local EMS agencies experience persistent staffing shortages, particularly during daytime hours, periods of call concurrency, and extended response times due to limited availability of qualified personnel.

To address these challenges while preserving the independence and identity of local EMS agencies, Bayfield County proposes a **dual-strategy EMS system support initiative** consisting of:

1. A **County BLS (Basic Life Support) Transporting Model**, and
2. A **Competitive EMS Staffing Grant Fund** for local agencies.

Together, these initiatives are designed to improve system reliability, reduce missed calls, enhance responder safety, and strengthen long-term EMS sustainability countywide.

2. Problem Statement

Bayfield County EMS agencies face: - Inconsistent staffing availability - Increasing reliance on mutual aid - Missed or delayed calls due to inability to assemble a legal crew

These challenges create risks to patient outcomes, responder safety, and public confidence in emergency services. A countywide, collaborative approach is required to stabilize EMS operations while maintaining community-based service delivery.

3. Problem Statement

3.1 Program Description

The Bayfield County EMS BLS Transport Service will operate as a supplemental resource to local EMS agencies. Utilizing scheduling software, local EMS agencies will maintain their own schedules and enter low/no coverage times into a shared countywide schedule. This visibility allows the county to position an ambulance in areas with coverage gaps. If Bayfield County EMS is paged for a call in that area and the volunteer agency cannot respond, Bayfield County EMS will respond, ensuring consistent service.

Bayfield County EMS will be scalable. Initially, it will consist of 1 staffed basic-level ambulance to be deployed across the county to fill gaps in EMS coverage. A staffed basic-level ambulance will be moved strategically to areas of the county to cover areas where there is inadequate volunteer staffing.

3.2 Dispatch and Response Protocol

1. **Primary Dispatch**

Dispatch will page the local EMS agency first for all EMS calls.

2. **County Supplemental Response**

If the local agency:

- Does not acknowledge the page, or
 - Indicates insufficient staffing to form a legal crew
- Dispatch will activate the County EMT Rapid Response Unit.

3. **On-Scene Integration**

County EMTs will respond to the station or scene as appropriate and integrate into the response under established protocols and medical direction.

3.3 Additional County EMS Function

The countywide EMS agency may be paged first before local EMS jurisdictions for a lift assist without injury. Additionally, Bayfield County EMS may create a community health program that checks on citizens recently discharged from the hospital or nursing home to ensure they are taking proper care of wounds and taking medicine as required.

4. Countywide EMS Operational Scheduling

Bayfield County will implement a **Joint Countywide EMS Availability Schedule**.

- Local EMS agencies will maintain their own internal schedules.
- Agencies will enter anticipated periods of **low or no staffing** into the shared countywide schedule.
- The County EMS team will use this information to proactively supplement coverage and reduce missed calls.

This approach enhances coordination while preserving local control.

5. Performance-Based EMS Staffing Grant

5.1 Purpose

Bayfield County will allocate **\$200,000 annually** to establish a **Competitive EMS Staffing Grant Fund** for local EMS agencies.

The fund is intended to: - Support direct staffing costs - Improve local staffing availability - Reduce missed EMS calls - Incentivize accountability and performance

5.2 Eligible Uses

Grant funds may be used **only for staffing-related expenses**, including: - Hourly wages for EMTs or paramedics - Overtime tied directly to staffing coverage - Paid-on-call or incentive pay - Recruitment or retention incentives related to staffing

Funds may **not** be used for equipment, vehicles, or non-staffing operational expenses.

5.3 Performance Standards

To be an eligible agency, agencies must:

- Demonstrate funds are used exclusively for staffing
- Clearly demonstrate reduction in missed calls annually.

- Participate in countywide data reporting on staffing and response performance

Agencies will be required to meet a staffing threshold to be eligible to apply for the grant. Agencies who have been approved but have fallen below the requirements may be required to submit corrective action plans or may lose future eligibility.

5.4 Application and Oversight

- Grants will be awarded through a competitive application process
- Applications will be reviewed by a County-designated review body
- Award decisions will consider staffing needs, performance history, service area, and clarity of staffing plans

Grant recipients will submit periodic reports documenting expenditures, staffing coverage, and performance metrics.

7. Total Annual Budget Summary

A comprehensive budget will include personnel costs for 10 EMTs, benefits, equipment, and operational expenses.

8. Evaluation and Reporting

Program performance will be evaluated based on response times, reduction in missed calls, and integration with local EMS agencies. Annual reports will be provided to the Bayfield County Board and EMS stakeholders.

9. Conclusion

The creation of Bayfield County EMS BLS Transport Service represents a proactive, collaborative approach to improving emergency medical care. By supplementing volunteer agencies and ensuring coverage during staffing gaps, Bayfield County can enhance reliability, protect public safety, and support the long-term sustainability of EMS services.