

**American Ambulance Association \* Congressional Fire Services Institute \* International Association of Fire Chiefs \* International Association of Fire Fighters \* National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians \* National Association of Towns and Townships \* National Fire Protection Association \* National Rural Health Association \* National Volunteer Fire Council**

May 1, 2024

The Honorable Patty Murray, Chair  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole, Chair  
House Appropriations Committee  
H-307, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins, Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-146, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
1036 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Murray, Ranking Member Collins, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

On behalf of the American Ambulance Association, Congressional Fire Services Institute, International Association of Fire Chiefs, International Association of Fire Fighters, National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians, National Association of Towns and Townships, National Fire Protection Association, National Rural Health Association, National Volunteer Fire Council, we are respectfully requesting your support to include \$32 million in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) Appropriations bill for the Rural EMS Training and Equipment Assistance (REMSTEA) grant program, also known as SIREN grant program.

EMS operations across the country are at a defining moment. Many EMS agencies continue to face crisis-level challenges in recruiting and retaining personnel. Exponential cost increases for medical supplies, equipment, fuel, and medications continue to stretch our EMS agencies resources to the limit and especially in our rural, frontier and hard to reach areas that have a limited resource base.

Coupled with declines in primary care and hospital service availability, greater distances between healthcare facilities, low reimbursement rates, and the ongoing opioid and fentanyl crisis, these circumstances have created a perfect storm of financial challenges for rural EMS agencies.

The need has never been greater for the SIREN grant program. These funds are administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and are focused on ensuring rural areas have access to the EMS services essential to every community. This grant program is supported by a multitude of national EMS and Fire organizations.

Since the inception of the program in 2018, more than 100 awards ranging from \$92,000 to \$200,000 have been made to rural communities. The funds have been used to maintain, improve, or expand the level of emergency medical care provided to the residents of those communities. Additional awards are expected in calendar year 2024.

Again, we respectfully request \$32 million for SIREN/REMSTEA grants in the FY2025 LHHS bill to provide much-needed resources to already strained rural EMS agencies working to provide life-saving medical care to critically ill and injured patients in their communities.

Thank you for your strong support. We are standing by to provide any additional information or assistance you may need.

Respectfully,

American Ambulance Association  
Congressional Fire Services Institute  
International Association of Fire Chiefs  
International Association of Fire Fighters  
National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians  
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