

# Overview of the EMS Grant Program

Prepared for the Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee  
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## Background

During the 2007-08 interim, the Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Committee conducted a study of emergency medical services in Montana. The committee approved several bill drafts as a result of the Senate Joint Resolution 5 study, including a bill to create a grant program for EMS providers.

Some stakeholders had suggested a grant program could help pay for the "costs of readiness" associated with operating an EMS program. They noted that an EMS provider must have trained personnel and costly vehicles and equipment, no matter how many emergency calls it answers each year.

The 2009 Legislature established the grant program through House Bill 85. The bill originally called for the program to be placed in the Department of Public Health and Human Services, which operates the EMS and Trauma Services Section. However, the bill was amended to place the program under the Department of Transportation. The program is funded with \$1 million each year from the nonrestricted highway account, which is made up of penalties for highway-related violations.

## Eligible EMS Providers and Grant Activities

Under HB 85, an EMS provider may apply for grant funding if the provider:

- has been in operation at least 12 months;
- bills for its services at a level at least equivalent to the Medicare billing level;
- is staffed primarily by volunteer EMTs; and
- provides a 10% match for any grant funds received.

An EMS provider may apply for a grant for buying or leasing ambulances or emergency response vehicles or for buying equipment (other than routine medical supplies) used for training, communications, or providing medical care to a patient.

The bill defines a volunteer EMT as someone who provides emergency medical care on the days and times chosen by the individual and for an EMS provider that is not:

- a private business or public agency that employs the person on a regular basis with a regular, hourly wage; or
- a private ambulance company, unless the person is providing the care without compensation and outside of his or her regular work schedule.