



APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 3, 2019.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: _____

Program Title: _____

Program Category: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Title: _____

Department: _____

Telephone: _____ Website: _____

Email: _____

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____



Richmond County Department of Emergency Services

6674 Richmond Rd. Warsaw, VA 22572-1000

Program Overview

In 2017, Richmond County Department of Emergency Services implemented an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) course and a companion Auxiliary Program in an effort to overcome a shortage of EMS personnel in our rural community. This program allows members the opportunity to become certified as an EMT-Basic and gain the knowledge and experience needed to continue into the career of emergency medicine. In the past few years the need for certified Emergency Medical Technicians has grown at an astounding rate and that need will only continue to grow as our population ages. This program provides an EMT certification course, per guidelines established by the Virginia Department of Emergency Medical Services (VaOEMS). The Auxiliary Program allows members to spend time riding with our staff to gain crucial experience in an EMS setting according to their own schedule/availability. Our Junior membership for those age 16-17, offers an opportunity for these members to experience emergency medical services while still in high school and gain insight into a career in EMS.

Prior to this program, there was not an affordable EMT course in close proximity to our County. The local community college, which had been offering a course nearby, no longer offered the course at the local campus. Taking into account the income level of the community, we opted to offer our course at a lower cost than that of the community



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college course. The County was not looking for monetary profit from the course but simply to cover the costs incurred.

In addition to other benefits, the Auxiliary members are offered first chance of employment when the opportunity arises. The benefits to this are two-fold, the member receives priority in the hiring process and the county has a pool of potential hires without the expense and time normally associated with a hiring process. As an auxiliary member, providers agree to commit a minimum of 24 hours of service to the organization per month. This time can be spent training on the ambulance or serving at community functions. Most of our auxiliary members currently give more than 24 hours a month.

We have offered two EMT certification classes. A total of 18 students have completed the course. The second class, which ended in late April, ended with 7 students who are awaiting testing for final certification, but are anticipated to do well. Our first class ended with 11 students completing the EMT course requirements. Of those 11, 8 have received their EMT certification from the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) and the VaOEMS. Three students have not yet completed the testing process. This course and the Auxiliary Program have allowed 4 of the 8 certified EMT's to gain employment, either full-time or part-time, with this organization. Many of the students from both classes are members of the auxiliary program and are gaining valuable "seat time", hands-on training



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while serving on an ambulance in a true 911 setting. The members are providing real time emergency medical care to the residents of the community while under the watchful eye of more seasoned career personnel. Once they are released to provide care as a lead EMT, they are able to fill empty shifts for our department and assist in community events. This time applies toward their monthly time/shift requirements. Several of these students are planning on continuing their education in EMS to gain higher certification levels.

The Problem Faced by our Locality

As with many rural communities, we have seen a shift in Emergency Medical Services from volunteer based to career based. Many factors have contributed to this including a decline in volunteerism to staff local rescue squads as well as an increase in the cost and time commitments needed to gain and maintain EMT certifications. Richmond County made the change from a volunteer-based EMS system to a career system in 2010, to better serve the needs of the community. The surrounding counties soon followed suit and have made the change to either a fully staffed career department or a dual department offering both career and volunteer EMT's. As the need for certified EMS career personnel increased, the number of certified personnel available to fill these positions decreased. The rural communities, by nature, have smaller populations from which to draw certified providers and are often at a



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disadvantage in competing with larger localities that are able to offer attractive wage and benefit packages.

Additionally, there was a shortage of EMT certification courses offered in our community. Our local community college stopped offering EMS classes at our local campus and instead moved them to another campus approximately an hour away. This benefited the college as it moved the classes closer to more populated areas but definitely left our community at a loss for EMS education options that were affordable and in close proximity.

An increase in the need for certified personnel, the shortage of certified personnel available and fewer educational opportunities for training new certified personnel left Richmond County searching for alternative ways to fill the void.

How our Program Fulfilled the Award Criteria

Richmond County Department of Emergency Services Auxiliary Program was born out of a need to increase the pool of eligible EMS providers within our community but also encourage them to stay with our organization and serve the community they live in. This program had to offer an educational opportunity that would fulfill all the requirements for certification as an EMT, as set forth by the VaOEMS. It had to be affordable to our residents and work outside of the normal Monday thru Friday, 9-5 hours so that potential students could still work a regular job.



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Richmond County Department of Emergency Services worked closely with the County leadership and the Board of Supervisors to determine a cost-effective budget for the course offering. County leaders assisted in securing and updating a training venue to be used for this course at no cost to the Department. Additionally, we partnered with other localities to share needed equipment and instructors. This also served to reduce costs needed to initiate this program. These same localities agreed to work with our students to provide some of the required clinical ride time/patient contact time with their agencies.

How This Program was Carried Out

In order to offer an Emergency Medical Technician course, the department had to follow all educational criteria as set forth by the VaOEMS. Once the course was approved by the VaOEMS, the course was advertised thru informational flyers and on social media.

The guidelines for the auxiliary program were developed by our emergency services staff. The program requires a minimal time commitment (24 hours) each month to serve the Department for a minimum of 2 years. In exchange for the time commitment, the member receives free uniforms, free continuing education, and liability insurance coverage in addition to 911 ride along time and employment eligibility.

The EMT class is offered over four months. Existing department employees as well as employees of other localities were used to assist in instruction of skills. Upon successful completion of the course, each student was allowed to test with the VaOEMS as well as the NREMT for both state and national certification as an EMT. Once the student has successfully achieved their EMT certification, those that



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Those who choose to join the auxiliary program can begin the preceptor process with our department. This process allows the newly certified EMT to ride along with more seasoned EMS providers to gain proficiency in their skills and provide care to patients in a safe and nurturing environment before they are released to perform these skills on their own. At that point, the members have become accustomed to our organization and the way we deliver our services. They are familiar with our staff and we have had a chance to familiarize ourselves with the auxiliary member. This allows our organization and the auxiliary member an insight into how well he/she will fit with our organization as they become eligible for full or part time employment based on availability. Richmond County executives have set an expectation of a yearly EMT class offering as long as there is a need.

Financing and Staffing

The costs associated with this program have been minimal to both the County and the auxiliary member. Some minor costs were incurred in upgrading the course venue however, this venue is now utilized by other organizations when the EMT class is not in session. The current tuition for an EMT course offered through the local community college is approximately \$2200.00. Another private institution, in Virginia, offers an EMT certification course at a cost of \$1800.00. Richmond County has charged a tuition of \$500.00 for the same course. This covers the cost of the student's book/learning materials, class shirt, and the state psychomotor testing fee. No additional costs were incurred for staffing. The department training officer serves as the course coordinator and primary instructor. Her schedule is flexible and she is able to coordinate her work week accordingly when class is in session. On-duty EMS staff were utilized for skills instruction as needed. Some minimal expenses were incurred for training



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supplies needed however most of the necessary training equipment was already on hand or was borrowed from nearby localities.

Program Results

Richmond County Department of Emergency Services has recently completed the 2nd successful EMT certification course. This class has produced, to date, 9 nationally registered & state certified EMT's. There are an additional 6 students that are in the testing process at this time and are expected to obtain certification within the next month. Our auxiliary program currently has 8 members in various stages of membership from just starting the preception process to working as a released provider in our community. Four former auxiliary members have already moved into paid positions with our organization. These providers were hired from within with no time or money invested in advertising, interviews, etc. Our organization was already familiar with these providers, as they were with us, so there was no question as to whether they would be a fit with our organization. While the numbers may not be large, 9 new providers to our county, and more to come, is a huge accomplishment. Not only have we given the opportunity for employment to some that otherwise would not have had the opportunity but we have also created a pool of employees for our county to draw from that otherwise would not have been there.



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Summary

The increased need for career EMS providers in rural areas that include Richmond County, left a shortage in the number of providers available for hire. Unable to compete with the larger municipalities for employees to come to rural areas, Richmond County decided to offer our own EMT certification course and a corresponding auxiliary program to retain these newly certified providers in our County.

We have successfully certified, trained, and subsequently hired several new employees within our organization at virtually no cost to the County. Additionally, we now have a pool of trained providers to assist in staffing ambulances and community events, as needed, that will be eligible for hire as the need arises.