

THE SPECIAL TASK FORCE ON VOLUNTEER RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

Final Report
December 2023



Honorable Philip Murphy
Governor of New Jersey

Honorable Nicholas Scutari
President of the Senate

Honorable Craig Coughlin
Speaker of the General Assembly

Dear Sirs:

The Special Task Force on Volunteer Retention and Recruitment is pleased to submit its report and recommendations pursuant to P.L.2017, JR-25. The enactment directed the task force to study and make recommendations for short-term and long-term strategies, incentives, and policies for the retention and recruitment of volunteer first responders to ensure the State's volunteer first responder ranks stabilize and grow in order to be able to adequately service the communities in this State. The enactment also required the task force to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the General Assembly.

Sincerely,

Joseph Hankins
Chairman

Membership

Joseph Hankins, Chair
Representative of the New Jersey State Firemen's Association

Senator Steven Oroho

Senator Vin Gopal

Assemblyman Joe Danielsen

Candace Gardner
Department of Health

Dana Johnson
Department of Health

Nicholas Pachnos
Volunteer First Responder

William Rafferty
Volunteer First Responder

George Heflich
Member of an All Volunteer Ambulance, First Aid and Rescue Squad

John Lane
Member of an All Volunteer Fire Company

Richard Mikutsky
Director of the Division of Fire Safety in the Department of Community Affairs

Staff to the Commission

Tara Howley
Principal Counsel, Office of Legislative Services

Amanda Holland
Principal Counsel, Office of Legislative Services

Task Force Process

The Special Task Force on Volunteer Retention and Recruitment was established by State law on January 16, 2018. The task force was established for the purpose of studying and making recommendations for short-term and long-term strategies, incentives, and policies for the retention and recruitment of volunteer first responders to ensure the State's volunteer first responder ranks stabilize and grow in order to be able to adequately service the communities in this State (See Appendix A-P.L.2017, JR-25).

Senator Oroho and Brett Conrads, Deputy Chief of Staff to Senator Oroho, were responsible for organizing the task force and the meetings of the task force. Appointed members convened on June 14, 2023 for the organizational meeting, at which time Joseph Hankins, representative of the New Jersey State Firemen's Association, was elected as chair of the task force.

The task force held meetings on the following dates: June 14, 2023, July 12, 2023, August 9, 2023, October 4, 2023, and December 6, 2023. During the meeting held on August 9, 2023, a representative from the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) virtually presented information regarding volunteer first responder recruitment and retention, including strategies used by other states for recruiting and retaining volunteers (See Appendix B).

This final report was approved and adopted by a majority vote of the appointed task force members who were present at the meeting on December 6, 2023.

Introduction

There is growing concern across the State that volunteer first responder organizations are unable to retain and recruit members, leading to a decline in the number of volunteer first responders. When fewer people volunteer, municipalities are forced to hire paid personnel at the expense of taxpayers. According to the United States Fire Administration (USFA), nearly 70 percent of all firefighters in the nation are volunteers. However, the number of volunteer firefighters in the nation has decreased from 897,750 in 1984 to 676,900 in 2020, according to USFA.¹

Volunteer first responders are crucial for maintaining the safety and well-being of our communities. Therefore, it is imperative to find solutions for recruiting and retaining volunteers while also maintaining the current standards for training and qualifications of volunteers. If the current standards for training or qualifications of volunteers are reduced, the safety of both the volunteers and the public would be significantly jeopardized, as volunteers may not be adequately prepared to respond during emergency situations. Ultimately, this would lead to compromised care to the public and an increased risk of harm to both the volunteers and the public.

As a result, it is imperative that any changes that are implemented to retain and recruit volunteer first responders be undertaken with a firm commitment to maintaining the highest standards of training, preparedness, and professionalism. The recommendations in this report are suggested to increase the recruitment and retention of volunteer first responders while also maintaining the current qualifications and rigorous training standards. Maintaining these standards is crucial for ensuring the continued safety and effectiveness of volunteer first responders who serve the communities in this State.

The recommendations set forth in this report may be implemented through legislation or administratively, with the exception of recommendation five, which is urging the Legislature to pass and Governor to sign current legislation and recommendation six, which is required to be implemented through legislation.

¹ <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/retention-and-recruitment-for-volunteer-emergency-services.pdf>

Findings and Recommendations

1. Volunteer Firefighter Training Requirements: The training required to be completed by volunteer firefighters should be provided in a condensed version in order for the training to be completed in fewer hours than currently required. In addition, a virtual, online option should be offered for certain required courses.

One of the impediments to recruiting and retaining volunteer firefighters is the number of hours that are required to complete the necessary training courses. By condensing the training for volunteer firefighters into fewer hours and offering an online option for certain required courses, the number of individuals who complete the training courses would likely increase, potentially increasing the number of volunteers.

2. County Vocational Schools and High Schools: County vocational schools and public high schools in this State should be required to implement a program to promote firefighting and emergency medical services.

By implementing a program promoting firefighting and emergency medical services in county vocational schools and public high schools, young people would receive information regarding becoming a volunteer firefighter or emergency medical services personnel, which may increase interest among young people in becoming a volunteer. If more young people become interested in volunteering, this may help recruit new volunteer firefighters and emergency medical services personnel.

3. College Credits: Public institutions of higher education should be required to provide college credits to certified volunteer first responders for time spent volunteering as a member of a squad or department.

In order to provide an incentive to volunteer as a first responder, public institutions of higher education in this State should provide college credits to certified volunteer first responders for time spent volunteering as a member of a squad or department. As volunteering is a significant time commitment, this benefit may help to recruit or retain volunteers.

4. Incentives and Benefits: Volunteer first responders should be offered certain incentives and benefits for volunteering, including tuition assistance, college scholarships, student loan forgiveness, healthcare coverage, and retirement benefits.

In order to recruit and retain more volunteer first responders, incentives should be offered to volunteers who agree to serve for a certain minimum number of years. These incentives include: 1) providing tuition assistance to volunteer first responders towards the cost of attending a public institution of higher education in this State; 2) implementing a program to provide partial or full scholarships to volunteer first responders to attend a public institution of higher education in this State; and 3) implementing a program to provide student loan forgiveness to volunteer first responders. Finally, volunteer first responders should be offered certain benefits, including healthcare coverage and retirement benefits. As volunteering involves a significant time commitment, providing additional incentives and benefits may help recruit and retain volunteers.

5. Reimbursement From the “Emergency Medical Technician Training Fund:” The requirements to receive reimbursement from the “Emergency Medical Technician Training Fund” should be revised.

The Legislature is urged to pass and the Governor is urged to sign Senate Bill No. 2223 (1R), sponsored by Senator Oroho and Senator Madden and Assembly Bill No. 3772 (1R), sponsored by Assemblymen Mukherji and Stanley and Assemblywoman Jaffer. (See Appendix C).

These bills revise certain requirements concerning eligibility for reimbursement from the “Emergency Medical Technician Training Fund.” According to the bill statements, currently, any private agency, organization or entity which is certified by the Commissioner of Health to provide training and testing for volunteer ambulance, first aid and rescue squad personnel who are seeking certification or recertification as an emergency medical technician (EMT) may be reimbursed from the fund for any costs associated with the training and testing of volunteer EMTs that are not otherwise reimbursed. The bill statements also provide that volunteer ambulance, first aid and rescue squads are eligible for reimbursement from the fund if the squad does not receive any payment for the provision of emergency medical services, regardless of whether the individual EMTs on the squad are paid by the squad for their services.

According to the bill statements, the bills would revise these requirements to provide that any agency, organization, or entity may be eligible for reimbursement from the fund for the unreimbursed costs of training and certifying a volunteer EMT, regardless of whether the ambulance, first aid and rescue squad employing or utilizing the services of the volunteer EMT charges for the provision of basic life support services.

6. Tax Deduction or Credit: Volunteer first responders should receive a tax deduction or credit.

A taxpayer who is a volunteer first responder should be allowed a tax deduction or credit against the taxes otherwise due under the “New Jersey Gross Income Tax Act,” N.J.S.A.54A:1-1 et seq. This will provide an incentive to volunteer and help offset some of the costs associated with volunteering.

7. Establish Junior Firefighter Programs at Fire Academies: Younger teens should have the opportunity to receive age-appropriate firefighter training and to phase in to more advanced training once they turn 18.

By establishing Junior Firefighter Programs at Fire Academies throughout the State, minors could learn and serve alongside adults who are involved in more advanced training, which would foster comraderie and mentorship. These programs would generate interest in young talent to continue their training once they reach age 18.

8. Improve Educational Technology: Training methods should reflect the needs of modern recruits, who require flexibility and accessibility.

Many emergency services training courses do not include virtual reality simulations or online learning platforms, which would enhance and create a more realistic and flexible training experience. Modernizing training methods would entice recruits by permitting them to gain knowledge and experience through methods that would not require them to be present in a classroom during hours that may be inconvenient for potential recruits.

9. Establish a Permanent Public Awareness Campaign: The State should allocate funds to create a Statewide public awareness campaign concerning the need for volunteer first responders.

The State should direct and allocate monies to State agencies, such as the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety in the Department of Community Affairs, the Department of Health, the Department of Law and Public Safety, and the Department of State, to create a permanent public awareness campaign emphasizing the importance of volunteer first responders. The public awareness campaign should utilize media such as social media and local television, radio, and print advertisements, and be a strong presence at community events where potential recruits could meet first responders in person.

10. Partner and Collaborate With Community keystones: Local emergency services and public safety personnel should develop relationships and strengthen ties with schools, businesses, and community organizations.

Strengthening ties with K-12 schools, institutions of higher education, local businesses, and community organizations would increase the visibility of first responders in the community and would help cultivate interest in volunteering. Further, these relationships would help to raise additional funding and educational support for volunteer first responders because communities would better understand the importance of volunteer first responders. These collaborations would create a more comprehensive and sustainable support system for the volunteers.

11. Mentorship Programs: Fostering bonds between experienced volunteers and new recruits will increase retention rates.

Emergency services agencies and organizations should establish mentorship programs for all types of volunteer first responder personnel. Pairing experienced volunteer first responders with new recruits fosters comradery and an appreciation of the importance and legacy of the services provided. The mentor could provide the mentee with valuable guidance and support for on-the-job challenges, creating a sense of appreciation, understanding, and loyalty. These relationships may lead to a higher volunteer retention rate.

APPENDIX A

JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 25

A JOINT RESOLUTION establishing a task force to study and make recommendations concerning the stabilization and growth of volunteer first responders.

BE IT RESOLVED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. a. There is hereby created a task force to be known as the “Special Task Force on Volunteer Retention and Recruitment.” The task force shall study and make recommendations for short-term and long-term strategies, incentives, and policies for the retention and recruitment of volunteer first responders to ensure the State’s volunteer first responder ranks stabilize and grow in order to be able to adequately service the communities in this State. Specifically, the task force’s charge shall include, but not be limited to, the evaluation of incentives, training and recertification requirements, and the Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) for volunteer first responders.

b. The task force shall consist of 15 members as follows:

- (1) the Commissioner of Health or a designee, who shall serve ex-officio;
- (2) the Director of the Office of Emergency Medical Services in the Department of Health or a designee, who shall serve ex-officio;
- (3) the Director of the Division of Fire Safety in the Department of Community Affairs or a designee, who shall serve ex-officio;
- (4) a representative of the New Jersey State First Aid Council, appointed by the President of the Senate;
- (5) a representative of the New Jersey State Firemen’s Association who is a member of an all volunteer fire company, appointed by the President of the Senate;
- (6) a representative of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly;
- (7) a representative of the New Jersey Association of Counties, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly;
- (8) two public members who are volunteer first responders, appointed by the President of the Senate;
- (9) a public member who is a member of an all volunteer ambulance, first aid and rescue squad, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly;
- (10) a public member who is a member of an all volunteer fire company, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly;
- (11) two members of the Senate, who shall not be from the same political party, appointed by the President of the Senate; and
- (12) two members of the General Assembly, who shall not be from the same political party, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly.

c. All appointments to the task force shall be made within 90 days of the effective date of this act. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments. The task force shall select a chairperson from among the members. The chairperson shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the task force. The members of the task force shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed, within the limits of funds made available to the task force, for necessary travel expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

d. The chairperson shall call an initial meeting of the task force within 30 days of the appointment of its members and hold hearings at the times and in the places it may deem appropriate and necessary to fulfill its charge. The chairperson shall hold at least one public hearing in each of the north, central, and southern regions of the State to meet with local

volunteer first responders and solicit their input regarding recommendations for retaining and recruiting volunteers.

e. The task force shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as it may require and may be available to it for its purposes.

f. A report of the task force's findings and recommendations shall be submitted to the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the President of the Senate and Speaker of the General Assembly no later than 12 months following the date of the task force's initial meeting.

2. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately and shall expire upon submission of the task force's final report to the Governor and Legislature.

Approved January 16, 2018.

APPENDIX B



Volunteer First Responder Recruitment and Retention

New Jersey Special Task Force on Volunteer Retention and Recruitment

August 9, 2023

Agenda

- Overview of First Responders
- First Responder Workforce Trends and Outlook
- Volunteer-Specific Challenges
- State Strategies:
 - Benefits
 - Financial incentives
 - Licensure portability
 - Mental and physical wellness
- Closing





Overview of First Responders



Law Enforcement
Officers



Firefighters



Emergency Medical
Services Clinicians



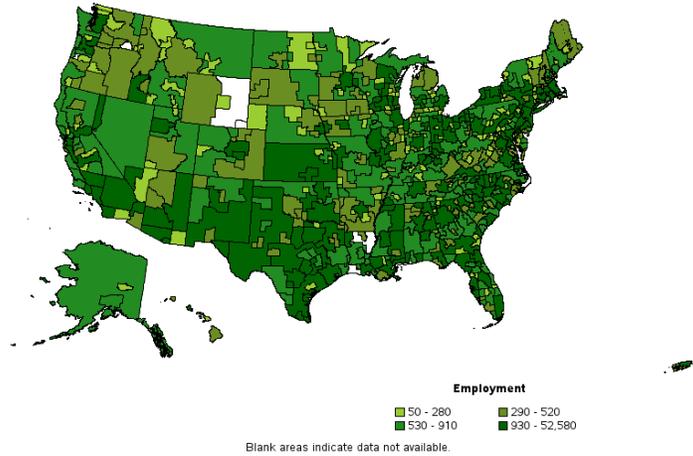
911
Telecommunicators

First Responder Workforce Trends and Outlook

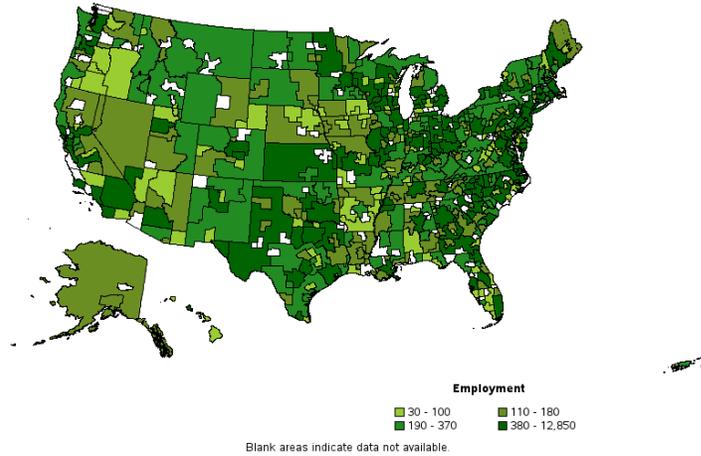
Employment of first responders to rise over next decade.

- EMS, firefighters, public safety communicators expected to grow with national average.
- Law enforcement slightly slower than average.
- Spectrum of volunteerism.

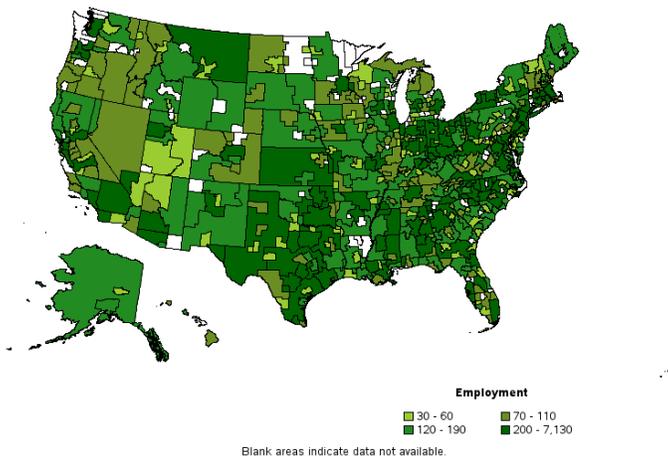
Employment of police and sheriff's patrol officers, by area, May 2022



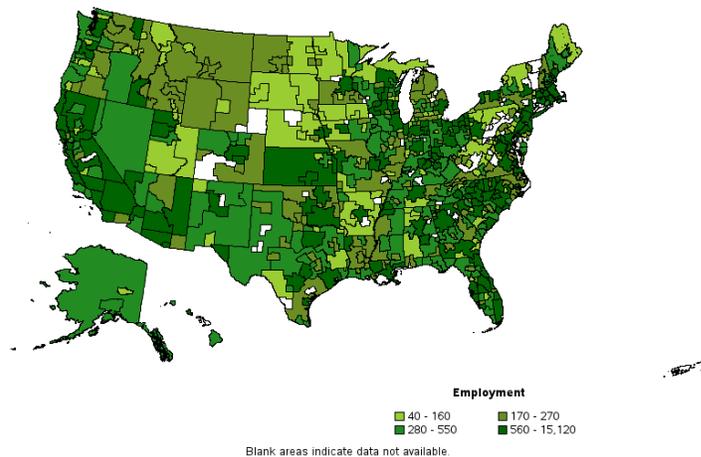
Employment of emergency medical technicians, by area, May 2022



Employment of public safety telecommunicators, by area, May 2022



Employment of firefighters, by area, May 2022



Challenges identified in [Retention and Recruitment for the Volunteer Emergency Services](#), U.S. Fire Administration (May 2023)

- Declining volunteerism
- Aging volunteer fire service
- Training demands
- Unmet expectations
- Work-life-volunteer balance
- Mission expansion into EMS
- Department image and culture
- Sustainable funding sources



Volunteer-Specific Challenges

Recruiting and Retaining Volunteer First Responders

Recommendations from [Retention and Recruitment for the Volunteer Emergency Services](#), U.S. Fire Administration (May 2023)

Recruitment Strategies

- Membership requirements
- Volunteer needs and motivators
- Finding prospective volunteers
- Personal invitations
- Providing sampling opportunities
- Effective onboarding
- Maintaining a positive image and culture
- Embracing diversity and inclusion

Retention Strategies

- Developing effective leadership
- Setting realistic expectations
- Health and safety considerations
- Training requirements
- Volunteer benefits and services
- Recognizing volunteers
- Mentor programs
- Family support

Strategies to Address First Responder Challenges

- Benefits
- Financial incentives
 - Education repayment
 - Training and certification reimbursement
 - Tax incentives
- Mental and physical health
- Licensure portability



Training or Certification Reimbursement



Alabama

- [HB 213](#) (2023): Provides tuition reimbursement for EMT or paramedic certification to individuals with a contract to provide three years of service to a volunteer rescue squad or fire department.



Tennessee

- [HB 155](#) (2023): Establishes a pay supplement for EMS personnel who complete in-service training.

Benefits for Volunteer First Responders



Maine

- [HB 1345](#) (2021): Provides \$500,000 one-time funding for the Maine Length of Service Award program for volunteer firefighters and EMS Personnel.



South Dakota

- [HB 1007](#) (2023): Adds EMS personnel to Class B public safety membership of the South Dakota Retirement system.



Utah

- [HB 289](#) (2022): Authorized volunteer EMS personnel to participate in the Public Employee's Benefit and Insurance Program.
- [HB 183](#) (2023): Authorizes coverage of certified or licensed emergency medical service personnel in the firefighter retirement systems.

Education Repayment & Grants



Minnesota

- [HB 4401](#) (2022): Proposed awarding grants of up to \$1,500 for students enrolled for at least 9 credits in a law enforcement associate degree program.



California

- [AB 2093](#) (2021): Proposed loan repayment program for law enforcement officers. Eligibility would have been contingent on service in underserved communities.



Wisconsin

- [AB 837](#) (2021): Would have created a police recruitment grant fund with awards of up to \$5,000 plus \$1,000 per year of prior service.



Delaware

- [SB 189](#) (2022): Increased tax credit for active members of volunteer fire, ambulance and rescue service companies from \$500 to \$1,000.



Oklahoma

- [SB 747](#) (2023): Increased tax credit for volunteer firefighters from \$200 to \$300 for basic firefighters and \$400 to \$600 for advanced firefighters.

Tax Incentives for Volunteer First Responders

Mental Health

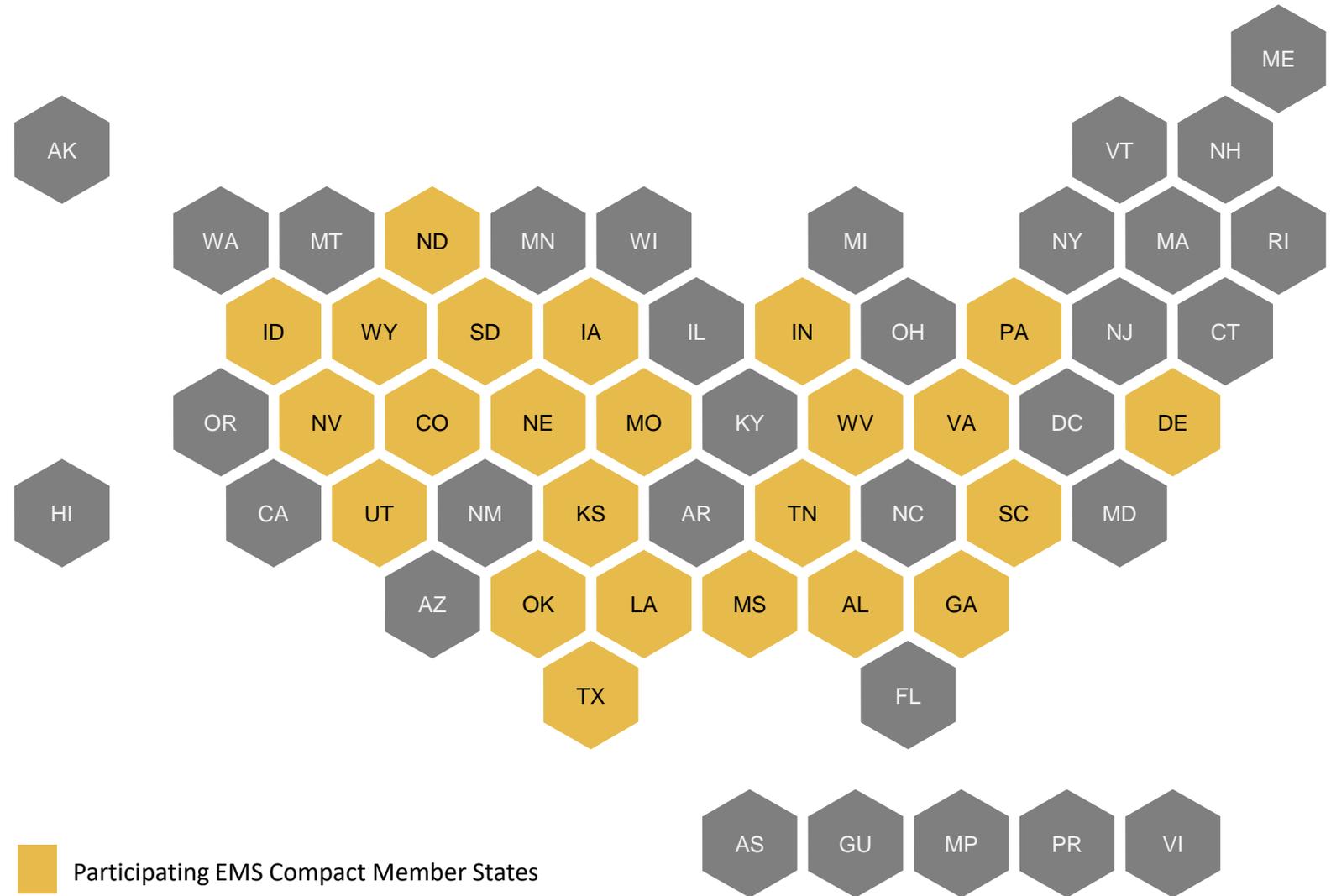
- **Indiana** ([SB 77](#), 2021) established peer support services and critical incident stress management services (CISM). All written or oral communications concerning the provision of peer support services and CISM services to a first responder are confidential and may not be disclosed without consent.
- **Minnesota** ([HB63](#), 2021) developed a psychotherapy program customized to address emotional trauma experienced by firefighters and to offer all firefighters up to five psychotherapy sessions per year, provided by mental health professionals.
- **New Hampshire** ([SB357](#), 2022) reestablished the commission to study incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder in first responders and ensured that mental health training is available for first responders, law enforcement, fire service, emergency medical service and corrections personnel.



Licensure Portability: EMS Interstate Licensure Compact

22 Member States

Interstate licensure compact allowing Privilege to Practice within participating states.



Additional NCSL Resources

- [Center for Results Driven Governing](#)
- [Occupational Licensing Database](#)
- [EMS Legislative Database](#)
- [911 Bill Tracking Database](#)
- [Policing Legislation Database](#)
- [State Actions to Address EMS Workforce Shortages Brief \(July 2022\)](#)
- [State and Federal Efforts to Elevate the 911 Workforce \(Sept. 2022\)](#)



Reach out anytime!



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APPENDIX C

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 2223

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 7, 2022

Sponsored by:

Senator STEVEN V. OROHO

District 24 (Morris, Sussex and Warren)

Senator FRED H. MADDEN, JR.

District 4 (Camden and Gloucester)

Co-Sponsored by:

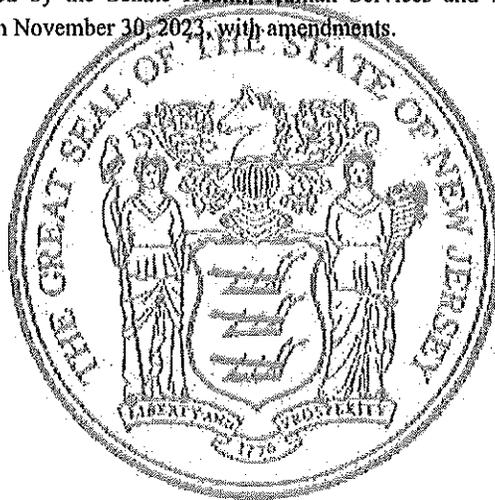
Senators Zwicker, Johnson and A.M.Bucco

SYNOPSIS

Revises certain requirements concerning eligibility for reimbursement from "Emergency Medical Technician Training Fund."

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee on November 30, 2023, with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 11/30/2023)

1 AN ACT concerning the "Emergency Medical Technician Training
2 Fund" and amending P.L.1992, c.143.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. Section 4 of P.L.1992, c.143 (C.26:2K-57) is amended to read
8 as follows:

9 4. a. The commissioner, in accordance with recommendations
10 adopted by the council, and within the limits of those monies in the
11 fund, shall annually reimburse any private agency, organization ^{1,} or
12 entity which is certified by the commissioner to provide training and
13 testing for volunteer ambulance, first aid and rescue squad personnel
14 who are seeking certification or recertification as a volunteer
15 emergency medical [technician-ambulance, or EMT-A, or emergency
16 medical technician-defibrillation, or EMT-D, certification or
17 recertification, or an entity which provides an educational program in
18 the administration of epinephrine auto-injector devices that is
19 approved by the commissioner pursuant to P.L.2003, c.1 (C.26:2K-
20 47.1 et al.), and] technician, ¹ [as well as the costs for EMT continuing
21 education classes for volunteer emergency medical technicians.]¹ for
22 which costs that ¹agency, organization, or¹ entity is not otherwise
23 reimbursed. An ¹agency, organization, or¹ entity that provides
24 training and testing to volunteer emergency medical technicians and
25 volunteer emergency medical technician candidates shall be eligible
26 for reimbursement from the fund regardless of whether the ¹[entity]
27 ambulance, first aid and rescue squad employing or utilizing the
28 services of the volunteer emergency medical technician¹ receives any
29 payment or reimbursement for providing emergency medical services.
30 The priority for reimbursement from the fund to an agency,
31 organization ^{1,} or entity for training and testing of volunteer
32 ambulance, first aid and rescue squad personnel shall be in the
33 following order: [EMT-A certification, EMT-A recertification, EMT-
34 D certification, EMT-D recertification and certification to administer
35 epinephrine auto-injector devices pursuant to P.L.2003, c.1 (C.26:2K-
36 47.1 et al.)] initial emergency medical technician certification ¹[;]
37 and¹ emergency medical technician refresher recertification classes,
38 including Core A, B, and C classes ¹[; and emergency medical
39 technician elective continuing education classes]¹.

40 b. All reimbursements from the fund shall be promptly paid upon
41 receipt of a qualifying application for reimbursement, which payment
42 shall be made to the agency, organization ^{1,} or entity that provided
43 training to the volunteer emergency medical technician.

44 c. (1) The head of each ambulance, first aid and rescue squad
45 shall notify the Department of Health whenever an individual who

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Senate SHH committee amendments adopted November 30, 2023.

1 received initial emergency medical technician training from [the
2 squad, for which training the squad] an agency, organization, or entity
3 that received reimbursement from the fund for providing the initial
4 emergency medical technician training to that individual, ceases to
5 serve as a volunteer emergency medical technician within a given
6 three-year certification period. Subject to the provisions of
7 subsection d. of this section, the determination as to whether an
8 emergency medical technician is a volunteer shall be at the discretion
9 of the head of the ambulance, first aid and rescue squad employing or
10 utilizing the services of the emergency medical technician; provided
11 that an emergency medical technician who otherwise meets the
12 requirements of subsection d. of this section shall not be determined to
13 not be a volunteer emergency medical technician solely on the basis
14 that, in addition to serving as a volunteer emergency medical
15 technician, the emergency medical technician works one or more shifts
16 with an ambulance, first aid and rescue squad for which shift the
17 emergency medical technician receives compensation in the form of an
18 hourly wage, salary, or other form of financial remuneration.

19 (2) The commissioner [may] shall establish a process to seek
20 reimbursement, from an emergency medical technician who ceases to
21 be a volunteer, for monies paid out of the fund in connection with that
22 emergency medical technician's training, testing, certification, or
23 recertification [, or elective continuing education classes] , as
24 appropriate, in connection with the initial three-year certification
25 period in which the emergency medical technician ceased to be a
26 volunteer.

27 d. As used in this section, "volunteer emergency medical
28 technician" means an emergency medical technician who provides
29 basic life support services without receiving compensation in the form
30 of an hourly wage, a salary, or any other form of financial
31 remuneration provided for or in connection with the provision of basic
32 life support services.

33 (cf: P.L.2003, c.1, s.9)

34

35 2. The Commissioner of Health shall adopt rules and
36 regulations, pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act,"
37 P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), as shall be necessary to
38 implement the provisions of this act.

39

40 3. This act shall take effect 180 days after the date of
41 enactment.

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR
CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 2223

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: NOVEMBER 30, 2023

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 2223.

As amended by the committee, this bill revises the requirements to receive reimbursement from the "Emergency Medical Technician Training Fund."

Currently, any private agency, organization, or entity which is certified by the Commissioner of Health to provide training and testing for volunteer ambulance, first aid and rescue squad personnel who are seeking certification or recertification as an emergency medical technician (EMT) may be reimbursed from the fund for any costs associated with the training and testing of volunteer EMTs that are not otherwise reimbursed. Volunteer ambulance, first aid and rescue squads are eligible for reimbursement from the fund if the squad does not receive any payment for the provision of emergency medical services, regardless of whether the individual EMTs on the squad are paid by the squad for their services.

The amended bill would revise these requirements to provide that any agency, organization, or entity may be eligible for reimbursement from the fund for the unreimbursed costs of training and certifying a volunteer EMT, regardless of whether the ambulance, first aid and rescue squad employing or utilizing the services of the volunteer EMT charges for the provision of basic life support services. The priority for reimbursement from the fund would be: initial EMT training and certification classes; EMT refresher recertification classes, including Core A, B, and C classes.

The bill requires that all reimbursements from the fund be promptly paid upon receipt of a qualifying application for reimbursement, which payment is to be made to the agency, organization, or entity that provided training to the volunteer emergency medical technician.

As amended, the bill provides that the head of each ambulance, first aid and rescue squad will be required to notify the Department of Health whenever an individual who received initial EMT training from

an agency, organization, or entity that received reimbursement from the fund for providing the initial EMT training to that individual, ceases to serve as a volunteer EMT within a given three-year certification period.

As amended, the bill provides the head of the ambulance, first aid and rescue squad employing or utilizing the services of the EMT with the discretion to determine whether the EMT is a volunteer, provided that the EMT, who would otherwise meet the definition of a "volunteer EMT" under the bill, is not disqualified as a volunteer solely on the basis of working one or more shifts with an ambulance, first aid and rescue squad, for which shift the EMT received compensation.

A "volunteer EMT" is defined under the bill to mean an EMT who provides basic life support services without receiving any compensation, such as an hourly wage or a salary.

As amended, the bill requires the Commissioner of Health to establish a process to seek reimbursement from EMTs that cease to be volunteers for monies paid out of the fund in connection with the EMT's training, testing, certification, recertification, as appropriate, for that initial three-year certification period.

As amended and reported by the committee, Senate Bill No. 2223 is identical to Assembly Bill No. 3772, which was also amended and reported by the committee on this date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments revise the bill to clarify that an agency, organization, or entity that provides training and testing to a volunteer emergency medical technicians (EMTs) or EMT candidates is eligible to receive reimbursement from the "Emergency Medical Technician Training Fund" (fund), even if the volunteer EMT is employed or utilized by a paid ambulance, first aid and rescue squad.

The committee amendments revise the bill to clarify that the head of each ambulance, first aid and rescue squad will notify the Department of Health whenever an individual who received initial EMT training, which training was provided by an agency, organization, or entity that was reimbursed by the fund, ceases to be a volunteer EMT.

The committee amendments require the Commissioner of Health (commissioner) to establish a process to seek reimbursement from an EMT, who ceases to be a volunteer, for monies paid out of the fund in connection with EMT's initial three-year certification period. As introduced, the bill did not expressly require the commissioner to establish a process to seek reimbursement and did not connect this process to a specific certification period.

The committee amendments provide the head of an ambulance, first aid and rescue squad with the discretion to determine whether an EMT is a volunteer, provided that an EMT is not disqualified as a

volunteer solely on the basis of working one or more shifts in which the EMT received compensation.

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The committee amendments make various technical changes addressing punctuation issues and harmonizing terminology used in the bill.

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 3772

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 2, 2022

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman RAJ MUKHERJI

District 33 (Hudson)

Assemblyman STERLEY S. STANLEY

District 18 (Middlesex)

Assemblywoman SADAF F. JAFFER

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

Co-Sponsored by:

**Assemblywomen Speight, Jimenez, McCarthy Patrick, Assemblymen
Space, Wirths and Assemblywoman Mosquera**

SYNOPSIS

Revises certain requirements concerning eligibility for reimbursement from
"Emergency Medical Technician Training Fund."

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens
Committee on November 30, 2023, with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/26/2023)

1 AN ACT concerning the "Emergency Medical Technician Training
2 Fund" and amending P.L.1992, c.143.

3

4 BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. Section 4 of P.L.1992, c.143 (C.26:2K-57) is amended to read
8 as follows:

9 4. a. The commissioner, in accordance with recommendations
10 adopted by the council, and within the limits of those monies in the
11 fund, shall annually reimburse any private agency, organization ¹,¹ or
12 entity which is certified by the commissioner to provide training and
13 testing for volunteer ambulance, first aid and rescue squad personnel
14 who are seeking certification or recertification as a volunteer
15 emergency medical [technician-ambulance, or EMT-A, or emergency
16 medical technician-defibrillation, or EMT-D, certification or
17 recertification, or an entity which provides an educational program in
18 the administration of epinephrine auto-injector devices that is
19 approved by the commissioner pursuant to P.L.2003, c.1 (C.26:2K-
20 47.1 et al.), and] technician, ¹[as well as the costs for EMT continuing
21 education classes for volunteer emergency medical technicians,]¹ for
22 which costs that ¹agency, organization, or¹ entity is not otherwise
23 reimbursed. An ¹agency, organization, or¹ entity that provides
24 training and testing to volunteer emergency medical technicians and
25 volunteer emergency medical technician candidates shall be eligible
26 for reimbursement from the fund regardless of whether the ¹[entity]
27 ambulance, first aid and rescue squad employing or utilizing the
28 services of the volunteer emergency medical technician¹ receives any
29 payment or reimbursement for providing emergency medical services.
30 The priority for reimbursement from the fund to an agency,
31 organization ¹,¹ or entity for training and testing of volunteer
32 ambulance, first aid and rescue squad personnel shall be in the
33 following order: [EMT-A certification, EMT-A recertification, EMT-
34 D certification, EMT-D recertification and certification to administer
35 epinephrine auto-injector devices pursuant to P.L.2003, c.1 (C.26:2K-
36 47.1 et al.)] initial emergency medical technician certification ¹[;]
37 and¹ emergency medical technician refresher recertification classes,
38 including Core A, B, and C classes ¹[; and emergency medical
39 technician elective continuing education classes]¹ .

40 b. All reimbursements from the fund shall be promptly paid upon
41 receipt of a qualifying application for reimbursement, which payment
42 shall be made to the agency, organization ¹,¹ or entity that provided
43 training to the volunteer emergency medical technician.

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Senate SHH committee amendments adopted November 30, 2023.

1 c. (1) The head of each ambulance, first aid and rescue squad
2 shall notify the Department of Health whenever an individual who
3 received initial emergency medical technician training from ¹[the
4 squad, for which training the squad] an agency, organization, or entity
5 that ¹received reimbursement from the fund ¹for providing the initial
6 emergency medical technician training to that individual ¹, ceases to
7 serve as a volunteer emergency medical technician within a given
8 three-year certification period. ¹Subject to the provisions of
9 subsection d. of this section, the determination as to whether an
10 emergency medical technician is a volunteer shall be at the discretion
11 of the head of the ambulance, first aid and rescue squad employing or
12 utilizing the services of the emergency medical technician; provided
13 that an emergency medical technician who otherwise meets the
14 requirements of subsection d. of this section shall not be determined to
15 not be a volunteer emergency medical technician solely on the basis
16 that, in addition to serving as a volunteer emergency medical
17 technician, the emergency medical technician works one or more shifts
18 with an ambulance, first aid and rescue squad for which shift the
19 emergency medical technician receives compensation in the form of an
20 hourly wage, salary, or other form of financial remuneration. ¹

21 (2) The commissioner ¹[may] shall ¹establish a process to seek
22 reimbursement, from an emergency medical technician who ceases to
23 be a volunteer, for monies paid out of the fund in connection with that
24 emergency medical technician's training, testing, certification, ¹or
25 recertification ¹[, or elective continuing education classes] ¹, as
26 appropriate, in connection with the ¹initial ¹three-year certification
27 period in which the emergency medical technician ceased to be a
28 volunteer.

29 d. As used in this section, "volunteer emergency medical
30 technician" means an emergency medical technician who provides
31 basic life support services without receiving compensation in the form
32 of an hourly wage, a salary, or any other form of financial
33 remuneration provided for or in connection with the provision of basic
34 life support services.

35 (cf: P.L.2003, c.1, s.9)

36

37 2. The Commissioner of Health shall adopt rules and
38 regulations, pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act,"
39 P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), as shall be necessary to
40 implement the provisions of this act.

41

42 3. This act shall take effect 180 days after the date of
43 enactment.

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR
CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 3772

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: NOVEMBER 30, 2023

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 3772 .

As amended by the committee, this bill revises the requirements to receive reimbursement from the "Emergency Medical Technician Training Fund."

Currently, any private agency, organization, or entity which is certified by the Commissioner of Health to provide training and testing for volunteer ambulance, first aid and rescue squad personnel who are seeking certification or recertification as an emergency medical technician (EMT) may be reimbursed from the fund for any costs associated with the training and testing of volunteer EMTs that are not otherwise reimbursed. Volunteer ambulance, first aid and rescue squads are eligible for reimbursement from the fund if the squad does not receive any payment for the provision of emergency medical services, regardless of whether the individual EMTs on the squad are paid by the squad for their services.

The amended bill would revise these requirements to provide that any agency, organization, or entity may be eligible for reimbursement from the fund for the unreimbursed costs of training and certifying a volunteer EMT, regardless of whether the ambulance, first aid and rescue squad employing or utilizing the services of the volunteer EMT charges for the provision of basic life support services. The priority for reimbursement from the fund would be: initial EMT training and certification classes; EMT refresher recertification classes, including Core A, B, and C classes.

The bill requires that all reimbursements from the fund be promptly paid upon receipt of a qualifying application for reimbursement, which payment is to be made to the agency, organization, or entity that provided training to the volunteer emergency medical technician.

As amended, the bill provides that the head of each ambulance, first aid and rescue squad will be required to notify the Department of Health whenever an individual who received initial EMT training from

an agency, organization, or entity that received reimbursement from the fund for providing the initial EMT training to that individual, ceases to serve as a volunteer EMT within a given three-year certification period.

As amended, the bill provides the head of the ambulance, first aid and rescue squad employing or utilizing the services of the EMT with the discretion to determine whether the EMT is a volunteer, provided that the EMT, who would otherwise meet the definition of a "volunteer EMT" under the bill, is not disqualified as a volunteer solely on the basis of working one or more shifts with an ambulance, first aid and rescue squad, for which shift the EMT received compensation.

A "volunteer EMT" is defined under the bill to mean an EMT who provides basic life support services without receiving any compensation, such as an hourly wage or a salary.

As amended, the bill requires the Commissioner of Health to establish a process to seek reimbursement from EMTs that cease to be volunteers for monies paid out of the fund in connection with the EMT's training, testing, certification, recertification, as appropriate, for that initial three-year certification period.

As amended and reported by the committee, Assembly Bill No. 3772 is identical to Senate Bill No. 2223, which was also amended and reported by the committee on this date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments revise the bill to clarify that an agency, organization, or entity that provides training and testing to a volunteer emergency medical technicians (EMTs) or EMT candidates is eligible to receive reimbursement from the "Emergency Medical Technician Training Fund" (fund), even if the volunteer EMT is employed or utilized by a paid ambulance, first aid and rescue squad.

The committee amendments revise the bill to clarify that the head of each ambulance, first aid and rescue squad will notify the Department of Health whenever an individual who received initial EMT training, which training was provided by an agency, organization, or entity that was reimbursed by the fund, ceases to be a volunteer EMT.

The committee amendments require the Commissioner of Health (commissioner) to establish a process to seek reimbursement from an EMT, who ceases to be a volunteer, for monies paid out of the fund in connection with EMT's initial three-year certification period. As introduced, the bill did not expressly require the commissioner to establish a process to seek reimbursement and did not connect this process to a specific certification period.

The committee amendments provide the head of an ambulance, first aid and rescue squad with the discretion to determine whether an EMT is a volunteer, provided that an EMT is not disqualified as a

volunteer solely on the basis of working one or more shifts in which the EMT received compensation.

The committee amendments revise the bill to remove references to EMT elective continuing education classes, which are no longer covered by the fund.

The committee amendments make various technical changes addressing punctuation issues and harmonizing terminology used in the bill.