

**CONFIRE**

STAFF REPORT

DATE: April 22, 2025

FROM: Nathan Cooke, Interim Director

BY: Damian Parsons, Finance/Administration Director
Erika Torres-Murilo, Staff Analyst II

TO: CONFIRE Administrative Committee

**SUBJECT: Accept and Receive Funding from the San Bernardino County
Inland Counties Emergency Medical Agency (ICEMA) for the
Emergency Communications Nurse System**

Recommendation

Accept and receive \$850,000 from the San Bernardino County Inland Counties Emergency Medical Services Agency (ICEMA) agreement for one-time monies, to partially fund the Emergency Communications Nurse System (ECNS).

Background Information

In an effort to meet the ICEMA Board of Directors (BOD) agenda deadline for the month of May, the Interim Director executed an agreement between CONFIRE and ICEMA on April 7, 2025, that provides a mechanism in which ICEMA will allocate \$850,000 of one-time monies for the CONFIRE ECNS program.

The agreement will be presented to the ICEMA BOD on May 20, 2025, for final approval and ratification.

On March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) was signed into law by the President. The law is intended to assist, but limited to, public health and economic impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The implementation of the ECNS program occurred December 21, 2020, through a contractual agreement with Regional Emergency Medical Services Agency (REMSA) to provide California licensed nurses who were Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) trained in LowCode to screen certain low acuity calls and direct them to appropriate treatment or transportation options.

As an accredited center for Emergency Medical Dispatch, Consolidated Fire Agencies (CONFIRE) can operate its Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) program to incorporate a nurse element. Utilizing nurses with CONFIRE's expanded dispatch capabilities

mitigates unnecessary ambulance transports and emergency room (ER) visits by providing immediate, professional nursing care to individuals in their homes or community settings and sometimes arrange for other modes of transportation to non-emergency medical facilities. This approach not only alleviates the strain on our emergency services but also ensures that patients receive timely and appropriate care in the most suitable environment.

The ARPA Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (CLFRF) has allowed CONFIRE to hire contract nurses and expand the program to provide 24-hour coverage, 7 days a week including additional staffing for peak periods of high call volume.

On February 8, 2022, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors and Fire Protection District entered into an agreement regarding the transfer of ARPA (CLFRF), which is being utilized by CONFIRE for ECNS expenditures. ARPA funding was anticipated to be exhausted in December 2024. CONFIRE requested additional ARPA funding from the County to secure funding for the program through December 2026 but was denied due to all ARPA funds being already earmarked for other projects.

ICEMA has subsequently agreed to provide one-time funding in the amount of \$850,000 from the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Trust Fund, to be used for the sole purpose of funding the ECNS program for a 6-month period, while long term funding agreements are being developed and finalized with the top-5 Payors. ICEMA will provide funding via (2) installments, each in the amount of \$425,000.

To receive funding, CONFIRE is required to provide a financial sustainment plan, monthly ECNS outcome data, describing the impact of ECNS on the overall EMS system and system obstacles that have an adverse effect on ECNS.

Fiscal Impact

Staff will accept and receive (2) installments of \$425,000, totaling \$850,000 that will be used for the sole purpose of funding the ECNS program for a 6-month period.