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N.Y. county approves \$4.7M EMS stabilization plan

Ulster County has approved a funding plan boosting ambulance services, offering targeted support, performance incentives and EMS oversight

May 22, 2025 11:29 AM

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Press Conference: Ulster County Unveils EMS Coordinated Coverage Plan



By Brian Hubert
Daily Freeman

KINGSTON, N.Y. — Ulster County emergency medical service agencies will receive \$4.7 million in county funding under a regional ambulance plan approved by County Executive Jen Metzger and the County Legislature.

Lawmakers voted unanimously to approve the EMS Stabilization and Enhancement Plan at Tuesday's Legislature meeting and Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger signed off on the plan on Wednesday.

Metzger's office said the plan will provide targeted financial support, performance-based incentives, and new oversight measures to strengthen EMS delivery in communities across the county.

Metzger's office said the plan will provide \$2 million to support existing EMS services in municipalities that meet performance standards and \$2.7 million to contract with Advanced Life Support anchor agencies utilizing the county's Municipal Ambulance Service Operating Certificate (Muni-Con), approved by the state Department of Health on May 15. Under the plan, the county will partner with local EMS agencies and municipalities to provide emergency response by entering into contracts with advanced life support providers and overseeing billing and EMS provider service, officials added.



Metzger's office added that this approach will help local governments streamline EMS contract administration with municipal staff while providing more efficient emergency services for residents.

Metzger's office said the \$2 million appropriation will provide financial assistance to municipalities with existing certificates with a goal of improving "response reliability and system performance."

Officials said they will
below this threshold v



ing for agencies

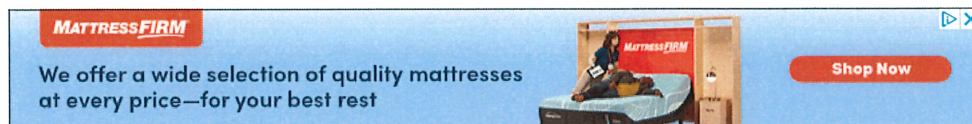
"This approach ensures communities can steadily build capacity while remaining eligible for support," Metzger's office said.

The funding may be used to improve staffing, enhance response times and invest in upgrades such as equipment, station expenses, transport vehicles and financial education for EMS providers, officials said.

The county will put \$2.7 million towards strengthening Advanced Life Support response across Ulster County through partnerships with “designated anchor agencies under the County’s Ambulance Service Operating Certificate, to ensure consistent, reliable coverage wherever service gaps or increased demand arise,” officials said. The model will include both readiness funding and performance-based incentives tied to response reliability standards, officials added.

New compliance measures will include eligibility criteria, financial disclosure requirements and performance-based funding mechanisms like Critical Response Incentive payments, Metzger’s office said.

“This plan is a result of a lot of hard work and negotiations and represents the most comprehensive path toward fully responsive EMS services in Ulster County,” Metzger said. “By investing in existing EMS providers, we can ensure faster response times, better-equipped agencies, and a stronger safety net for all residents.”



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Jason Kovacs, R-town-of- Ulster, who sponsored the resolution, said the approval of this plan represents a major
County and will allow
Ulster County has eve

nd funding initiative

“This is not just anoth
services,” Kovacs said during Tuesday’s meeting.

emergency medical

Kovacs said this plan comes after more than a year of listening to EMS providers, both volunteer and professional, along with municipal leaders across the towns and villages in the county. Lawmakers heard again and again about staffing shortages, coverage gaps, long response times, and financial fragility for too many local EMS agencies, he added.

"These are not abstract challenges; these are real-life problems with real-life consequences and they require real action," Kovacs said. "This legislation represents the culmination of long and at times challenging negotiations with a broad coalition of stakeholders."

"This plan is about action, about making sure that when someone calls for help, trained EMS providers arrive quickly and fully prepared," said Everett Erichsen, director of the Ulster County Department of Emergency Services, in an announcement after Tuesday's vote.

Gina Hansut, R-Lloyd, chair of the Law Enforcement and Public Safety Committee, said in a statement that what used to work for ambulance service is no longer sufficient. "Taking many factors into account for the framework of municipalities' needs, we can now better provide ALS and BLS services across our county," Hansut added. "I feel we will be a model for the state, and I'm proud of the work many have done to keep our residents safe and get them services in a more timely manner."

The county's Department of Emergency Services will oversee the implementation in collaboration with local EMS providers, municipalities and community partners.

Lawmakers also voted Tuesday without discussion to approve a contract with New Paltz Rescue Squad to provide supplemental EMS service in the town of Gardiner starting on June 1. Metzger announced the first-of-its-kind partnership between the county and New Paltz Rescue in March.

Metzger also unveiled EMS Stabilization and Enhancement Plan in March with a goal of helping fill the "gaps" in county emergency services coverage and moving Ulster County closer to a countywide network of regional EMS districts.

Metzger said at the time that while roughly 65% of the emergency services calls in Ulster County require an advanced life support response, more than half of the municipalities lack advanced life support services. Additionally, she said, over 30 agencies in the county respond to less than 70% of the basic life support service calls they receive. The situation is most acute in the southern portion of the county, she said.

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