

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

122nd General Assembly of Ohio

BILL: Am. Sub. S.B. 5 (with amendment LBO #1) **DATE:** September 10, 1997
STATUS: In House Finance and Appropriations **SPONSOR:** Sen. Howard
LOCAL IMPACT STATEMENT REQUIRED: Yes **Local cost was in the introduced version**
CONTENTS: Establishes State training and continuing education for emergency service telecommunicators

State Fiscal Highlights

| STATE FUND | FY 1998 | FY 1999 | FUTURE YEARS |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| General Revenue Fund | | | |
| Revenues | - 0 - | - 0 - | - 0 - |
| Expenditures | \$250,000 loss | \$250,000 loss | \$350,000 loss |
| Emergency Service Telecommunicator Training Fund | | | |
| Revenues | - 0 - | - 0 - | - 0 - |
| Expenditures | \$300,000 to \$400,000 increase | \$350,000 increase | \$350,000 increase |

- FY 1998 costs include development and implementation of the program in the first year.
- Costs in FY 1999 and subsequent years include training of new employees, continuing education and administration. Since the training program is voluntary, exact training costs, as determined by the demand for training, are difficult to project accurately.
- The bill appropriates \$250,000 in FY 1998 and \$250,000 in FY 1999 from the Emergency Service Telecommunicator Training Fund. However, the future funding source of these appropriations will consist of a transfer from the state's GRF.
- The bill does not include GRF appropriations. The Department of Education must petition the Controlling Board to transfer funds from Emergency 9-1-1 Training Fund to the Emergency Service Telecommunicator Training Fund.

Local Fiscal Highlights

- Since participation in the program is voluntary, there should be no direct fiscal effect on local governments.
- Local governments choosing to participate would incur the following costs as a result of the training: overtime and travel expenses. The training program, as currently envisioned, would involve minimal overnight travel expenses.



Detailed Fiscal Analysis

This bill establishes a standard training certification and continuing education program for emergency medical communicators. The standards for the initial training program and continuing education include the following:

- A minimum of 40 hours of instruction for new employees and 8 hours of instruction for continuing education, including training on: role of telecommunicator, effective communication skills, emergency service telecommunicator liability, telephone techniques, compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, addressing hysterical and suicidal callers, law enforcement terminology, emergency call processing guides for law enforcement, fire service, and emergency medical service, radio techniques, disaster planning, scene safety and officer survival

The training programs must be offered at least 8 times per year, usually at different board approved vocational education centers around the state as well as by the State Board of Education. The program will be voluntary. This being said, given the experiences of states that implemented similar volunteer programs, most local employers will decide to require this training for their employees.

Funding for the program will come from the newly established Emergency Service Telecommunicator Training Fund. Although monies for the Emergency Service Telecommunicator Fund will eventually come from a cash transfer from the General Revenue Fund account, the Department of Education must petition the Controlling Board in fiscal years 1998 and 1999 for the transfer of funds from ALI 911-430, Emergency 9-1-1 Training Fund, to the Emergency Service Telecommunicator Training Fund.

STATE FISCAL EFFECTS

Training Estimates

Currently in Ohio, there are 7,000 operators statewide with an annual turnover rate of 20%. Given the experiences of the three states that have implemented volunteer telecommunicator training programs, approximately 65 to 75 percent of dispatchers become certified. Based on estimates from the State Vocational Education Department, a 40-hour class with an average of 20 students would cost \$60 per hour, resulting in a potential \$110,000 to \$125,000 increase in expenditures.

The 8-hour continuing education program would be needed for half the employees every other year. As a result, in a given year 3,500 operators would need the continued training. Based on estimates from the State Vocational Education Department, an 8-hour class with an average of twenty students would cost \$60 per hour, resulting in a potential \$40,000 to \$50,000 annual increase in expenditures.

Adult education officials at the Department of Education estimate that the administrative costs for developing and implementing the E.M.S. telecommunicator standard are estimated to be \$200,000 the first year and \$150,000 per year thereafter. These estimates assume no significant increase in personnel in the emergency telecommunicator field or significant change in responsibility of the operators.

The E.M.S. telecommunicator funding is unique when compared to the other adult training programs (like Fire and Emergency Medical Technician) funded by the state at a rate of \$8 per hour per student under the Adult Education line item.

Currently most states have enacted or are considering legislation on the creation of an EMS telecommunicator standards. The three common methods of funding the training to meet these standards are through state appropriations (10 states), local appropriation (10 states) and through revenues generated from a telephone tax (8 states). While training periods vary from state to state, the average number of hours is 40, a standard currently used in Mississippi, North Dakota, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Three states currently have volunteer training programs: Idaho, Montana, and Utah.

LOCAL FISCAL EFFECTS

Though the training program is voluntary in nature, the program may essentially become a requirement for local departments. Once the program is implemented, the training would become the expected standard of care. Thus untrained telecommunicators could be considered substandard, therefore leaving local departments open to liability litigation. Representatives from the volunteer training states stated that this liability potential presented a great concern.

□ *LBO staff: Kerry Myford, Graduate Researcher*
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