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## **Rural Education Program Overview**

Licensed EMS Agencies, career, volunteer or blended, are experiencing shortages of certified EMS personnel. Tuition fees and other associated program costs for both basic and advanced certification programs continue to increase. Recruiting and retaining personnel within the EMS profession is becoming increasingly challenging, this impact has far reaching implications and requires a lean forward approach to offset both direct and indirect associated cost.

Authorized through the PA Department of Health, Bureau of EMS, PA Act 93 of 2020 identifies funding streams for rural, community-based, EMS agencies. The Eastern PA EMS Council has implemented an EMS tuition assistance program for qualifying rural EMS agencies. This program will be made available, with defined requirements and standards, to all PA Department of Health licensed EMS agencies operating in good standing within the geographical boundaries of the Eastern PA EMS Council region identified as rural, as defined by authorized census models.

The tuition assistance program will provide licensed EMS agencies, the allowable costs up to, but not to exceed, costs identified for new EMS students enrolled in an initial PA Department of Health accredited BLS certification program to include, cognitive examination fees not to exceed two attempts at the basic level. The acquisition of durable equipment, training supplies, and workbooks provided for each certification program provides for an optimal learning experience for each student while enrolled in one of our accredited certification programs.

The Rural EMS program will be maintained and coordinated by the Eastern PA EMS Council. It is understood, funding will fluctuate and may not be available due to circumstances beyond our control. EMS agencies and accredited Educational Institutes will enter a partnership with the Eastern PA EMS Council to support eligible EMS agencies and student candidates. Rural programs will operate on the EMS Councils fiscal calendar. All request for assistance are reviewed for both program accuracy, compliance, and needs of a specific geographical area.

The Eastern PA EMS Council strives to provide optimal customer service to our constituents and welcomes your comments and questions. For additional information on our Rural Education program, please contact John G. Kloss at 610-820-9212 EXT 7 or [john@easternemscouncil.org](mailto:john@easternemscouncil.org)

***Serving the Counties of Berks · Carbon · Lehigh · Monroe · Northampton · Schuylkill***

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