

Review of State Laws/Regulations Citing EMS as an Essential Service

State	Citation	Summary	Notes
Alabama	SB 183 2022	Relating to emergency medical services; to make findings and declarations that emergency medical services are essential public services performed for a public purpose.	Does not require EMS to be provided or funded by local jurisdictions.
Connecticut	Conn. Gen. Stat. §19a-181b 2024	“Each municipality shall establish a local emergency medical services plan. Such plan shall include the written agreements or contracts developed between the municipality, its emergency medical service organizations and the public safety answering point, as defined in section 28-25, that covers the municipality.”	Does not require EMS to be provided or funded by local jurisdictions.
District of Columbia	D.C. Code §7-2341.01 2009	Declares emergency medical services as “essential to the health or life” of a person who is ill, injured, wounded or otherwise incapacitated.	Does not require EMS to be provided or funded by local jurisdictions.
Hawaii	HI Rev Stat § 46-196 2024	Requires that counties determine the levels of emergency medical services that shall be implemented throughout the county; provided that the county shall provide no fewer than twenty-one ground ambulance units.	Requires EMS to be provided or funded by counties. The county may contract to provide emergency medical services, including emergency aeromedical services, or any necessary component of the county system.

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Indiana	Ind. Code §16-31-1-2 2021	<p>Declares the provision of emergency medical service is an essential purpose of the political subdivisions of the state.</p>	<p>Does not require EMS to be provided or funded by local jurisdictions.</p>
Iowa	SF 615 2021	<p>Allows counties to adopt a resolution declaring emergency medical services to be an essential service.</p> <p>Allows a county board of supervisors to offer voter approval the authority to impose local option income surtax or an ad valorem property tax not to exceed 75 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value.</p>	<p>Essential service designation optional, based on local election, funding levels determined by a vote of county residents.</p>
Louisiana	La. Rev. Stat. §40 2015	<p>Allows the use of local revenues to enhance the delivery of emergency ambulance services through the use of certified public expenditures, intergovernmental transfers or other financing mechanisms.</p>	<p>Does not require EMS to be provided or funded by local jurisdictions.</p>

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Maine	SJR 13 2025	<p>Recognizes EMS is essential to a "well-functioning health system." Rural emergency medical services are an important priority, and the legislative council will create an interim committee to assess current and future EMS plans, identify EMS deserts, review state EMS funding as well as coordinate with each county and local health department to determine specific EMS needs in the area.</p>	<p>Does not require EMS to be provided or funded by local jurisdictions.</p>
Nebraska	Neb. Rev. Stat. §38-1203 2020	<p>Declares EMS is an essential health care service that can be the difference between life and death or permanent disability to those persons in Nebraska making use of such services in an emergency.</p>	<p>Does not require EMS to be provided or funded by local jurisdictions.</p>
Nevada	Nev. Rev. Stat. §450B.015 2023	<p>Declares that prompt and efficient emergency medical care and transportation is necessary for the health and safety of the people of Nevada, and that minimum standards for such care and all persons providing it must be established.</p>	<p>Does not require EMS to be provided or funded by local jurisdictions.</p>

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New Hampshire	SB 133 2025	Declares that ambulance service providers are essential providers for purposes of emergency management at state and local levels.	Does not require EMS to be provided or funded by local jurisdictions.
North Carolina	§ 143-507	EMS is organized at the county level throughout the state and requires each county to ensure that EMS is provided to its citizens.	<p>Requires EMS to be provided or funded by local jurisdictions.</p> <p><i>“Each county shall ensure that emergency medical services are provided to its citizens. Nothing in this Article affects the power of local governments to finance ambulance operations or to support rescue squads. Nothing in this Article shall be construed to allow infringement on the private practice of medicine or the lawful operation of health care facilities. (1973, c. 208, s. 11; 2001-220, s. 1.)”</i></p>
Oregon	Or. Rev. Stat. §682 2025	Declares that EMS is considered an important function of counties, cities and rural fire protection districts in the state. Requires each county to develop a plan for the coordination of ambulance services and establish one or more ambulance service areas for the effective and efficient provision of ambulance services.	Does not require EMS to be provided or funded by local jurisdictions.

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<p>Pennsylvania</p>	<p>35 Pa. C.S. § 8102(1) 2009</p>	<p>Declares EMS as an “essential public service and frequently the health care safety net for many Commonwealth residents. It is in the public interest to assure that there are high quality and coordinated emergency and urgent medical services readily available to the residents of this commonwealth.”</p>	<p>Does not require EMS to be provided or funded by local jurisdictions.</p> <p>Municipalities are responsible for ensuring EMS is provided - including appropriate financial and administrative assistance – but there is no specific funding requirements except for an optional limited EMS tax that can be enacted. See, 53 C.S. §66553 (Second Class Township Code)</p>
<p>South Carolina</p>	<p>HB 4601 2022</p>	<p>Designates ambulances services, an important component of EMS, as essential within the state and requires that each county governing body ensures that at least one licensed ambulance service is operating within the county.</p>	<p>Requires counties to ensure EMS is provided in the county.</p> <p><i>“(2) Each county governing body in this State shall ensure that at least one licensed ambulance service is available within the county. This may be provided as a county service, but also may be accomplished through other means including, but not limited to:...”</i></p>

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<p>South Dakota</p>	<p>HCR 6007 2025</p>	<p>The Legislature recognizes the vital, lifesaving care provided by emergency medical services personnel, and supports efforts to prioritize emergency medical service as an essential public service.</p>	<p>Does not require EMS to be provided or funded by local jurisdictions.</p>
<p>Tennessee</p>	<p>SB 1597 2021</p>	<p>Ambulance service is hereby designated as an essential service in the state of Tennessee.</p>	<p>Requires EMS to be provided or funded by local jurisdictions.</p> <p><i>“(a) Ambulance service is hereby designated as an essential service in the state of Tennessee. (b) All county governing bodies are authorized and directed to make provisions to ensure that at least one (1) licensed ambulance service is available within their county. This may be provided as a county service, but can also be accomplished through other means, including, but not limited to: providing a license or franchise to a private company; contracting with a public, private, or nonprofit entity for the service; entering into an interlocal agreement with one (1) or more local governments; or entering into an agreement with a hospital or other healthcare facility. A county is not required to appropriate county revenues for ambulance service if the service can be provided by any other means.”</i></p>

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Utah	SB 209 2025	Deems 911 ambulance services as essential services. Defines "training center" as a designated person chosen by the bureau of EMS to provide EMS clinician training, including both initial licensure and continuing education. This also establishes the Emergency Medical Services Critical Needs Account under the General Funds, which houses critical need grant funds.	Does not require EMS to be provided or funded by local jurisdictions.
Vermont	Vt. Stat. Ann. tit. 18 § 901 2025	The General Assembly finds that emergency medical services provided by an ambulance service are essential services.	Does not require EMS to be provided or funded by local jurisdictions.
Virginia	Va. Code §12-5-31 2025	“Designated emergency response agency means an EMS agency recognized by an ordinance or a resolution of the governing body of any county, city or town as an integral part of the official public safety program of the county, city or town with a responsibility for providing emergency medical response.”	Does not require EMS to be provided or funded by local jurisdictions.

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West Virginia	W. Va. Code § 7-15-4 2025	<p>Declares "that the safe and efficient operation of life-saving and life-preserving emergency medical service to meet the needs of citizens of this state is a matter of general public interest and concern; to ensure the provision of adequate emergency medical services within this state for the protection of the public health, safety and welfare, it is imperative that minimum standards for emergency medical service personnel be established and enforced by the state."</p>	<p>Requires EMS to be provided or funded by local jurisdictions.</p> <p><i>"Duty of county commissions to provide emergency ambulance service</i></p> <p><i>"the county commission shall cause emergency ambulance service to be made available to all the residents of the county where such service is not otherwise available: Provided, however, That the duty imposed upon county commissions by this article shall not be construed in such manner as to impose a duty to cause such emergency ambulance service to be provided unless the commission shall make an affirmative determination that there are funds available therefor by the inclusion of a projected expenditure for such purpose in the current levy estimate, and in the event that such county commission shall make such determination the commission shall not be under a duty to cause such service to be provided beyond a level commensurate with the amount of funds actually available for such purpose."</i></p>

Additional References:

State Policies Defining EMS as Essential

<https://www.ncsl.org/health/state-policies-defining-ems-as-essential>

Emergency Medical Services Legislation Database

<https://www.ncsl.org/health/emergency-medical-services-legislation-database>

Governing Magazine: Of Course EMS Is an Essential Service. States Need to Make That Official.

<https://www.governing.com/policy/of-course-ems-is-an-essential-service-states-need-to-make-that-official>

Backing the First Responders: Recent Bills Empower EMS Systems

<https://www.ncsl.org/state-legislatures-news/details/backing-the-first-responders-recent-bills-empower-ems-systems>