

The South Dakota Community Leader EMS Survey was administered in 2018 to determine leaders' understanding of EMS in their communities and consequently contribute to the conversation about South Dakota's EMS services.

OVERVIEW OF THOSE SURVEYED

- The survey gathered responses from community members, city and government officials, and business leaders across South Dakota
- 245 respondents were surveyed
 - 65% of respondents were from communities of 3,000 or less
 - 19% of respondents came from populations over 10,000
- 66% of respondents were elected city or township officials or local government employees

SURVEY FINDINGS



86% of respondents have an ambulance service based in their community, and of those:

- 50% stated ambulance services are predominantly staffed by volunteers
- 66% indicated ambulance services are primarily funded by patient fees
- 48% of respondents could not estimate the value of donated labor
- 37% estimated the value of donated labor was \$0-\$50,000
- 51% of respondents indicated that their community's ambulance services have challenges but are getting by
 - 24% considered ambulance services to be healthy
 - 19% considered ambulance services to be struggling
 - Services are struggling due to significant workforce, financial, or leadership issues
- 90% of respondents indicated that their community viewed the ambulance services as an essential service



CHALLENGES FACING LOCAL AMBULANCE SERVICES

The survey asked respondents to list the top three challenges facing their local ambulance services and what respondents would like the EMS program and Office of Rural Health to know about ambulance services and EMS in their community. The main challenges indicated include:

- **Staffing** was a top concern, with 58% of respondents citing staffing as a top challenge facing local ambulance services. Getting volunteers and keeping enough trained volunteers, as well as working with a volunteer crew that also has full-time jobs, were listed as key staffing concerns. A lack of volunteers and staff also causes concerns about the future sustainability of ambulance services.
- **Funding**, particularly lack of funding for equipment, wages and operating costs exceeding dwindling healthcare subsidies, insurance reimbursements, and collection rates.
- **Large distances and service areas** affect reliability, response time, and staffing of ambulance services.
- **Community perceptions and knowledge of EMS**, particularly public perception of costs and public expectation of response times. Respondents indicated that it would be helpful for the public to be provided more education and information around EMS.
- **Equipment and vehicles**, including aging vehicles and equipment.
- **Leadership and management challenges**
- **High call volume**

For more information, refer to:

<https://doh.sd.gov/diseases/chronic/heartdiseases/cardiareadycommunities.aspx>