

TRAVIS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT No. 2

PFLUGERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

203 E. PECAN STREET

PFLUGERVILLE, TEXAS 78660

(512) 251-2801



TRAVIS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 2

PFLUGERVILLE, TEXAS

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

DISPATCH OPTIMIZATION AND FEASIBILITY STUDY

FEBRUARY 25, 2021

DUE DATE FOR RESPONSES

4:00 pm March 12, 2021

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Notice of Request for Proposal

202102

for

A comprehensive review of the cost, performance efficiency, and optimization of its current dispatch services for fire and EMS response.

February 25, 2021

1.0 Purpose

Travis County Emergency Services District No. 2 (TCESD2) seeks a Contractor to conduct a comprehensive review of the cost, performance efficiency, and optimization of its current dispatch services for fire and EMS response. These services are currently provided by the Austin Fire Department (AFD) and Austin Travis County Emergency Medical Services (ATCEMS). The review should include an evaluation of cost, dispatch performance, resource utilization on responses, user experience and feedback on dispatch needs, performance, and service. The review should include recommendations on options and associated cost for alternative dispatch services to improve performance and efficiency.

2.0 Background

TCESD2, also referred to as the Pflugerville Fire Department, and “The District”, has a great responsibility in providing fire suppression, fire prevention, first response, and emergency medical transport service to an area covering approximately 75 square miles with over approximately 134,000 residents. Staff and equipment working out of five fire stations are ready 24 hours a day. Staff and equipment include four engine companies, one ladder company, five ALS MICU capable transport ambulances, a command team consisting of a battalion chief and an accountability officer, and a safety officer and emergency medical service field trainer for a total of 32 minimum staffed positions each day.

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Approximately fourteen years ago the District began contracting with the City of Austin (AFD) for dispatch services related to fire and medical first response. In 2017 the District began providing EMS transport services and contracted with the City of Austin (ATCEMS) for ambulance dispatch services.

The District is financially constrained by a 10-cent legislative cap on property taxes.

In 2019, the Texas State Legislature passed senate bill 2 which limits property tax increases to 3.5% per year. This combined with a projected population growth of approximately 27.6% in Travis County over the next decade creates the necessity to identify opportunities to improve cost, efficacy, efficiency, and equity of emergency services in every facet.

EMS System

The District began providing EMS transport services in 2017 after the previous provider, ATCEMS, was unable to meet the demand. District ambulances are dispatched by ATCEMS and automatic aid is also provided on occasions where all Districts ambulances are committed to other incidents. The current emergency medical services provided by the District are:

- EMS Transport (ALS Ambulance Provider/EMS Dispatching)
- BLS First Response
- EMS Continuing Education and Initial Certification Training to include quality management
- Medical Direction/ Physician Services

In CY2020 the District handled:

Total Incidents: 10,945

Responses: 12,241

Fire Incidents: 2,408, 22% of total

EMS Incidents: 7514, 69% of total

Patient Transports: 5,251

Currently, AFD dispatches District fire apparatus to fire related incidents. ATCEMS dispatches District ambulances for emergency medical response. While the two dispatching agencies utilize a shared computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system and a shared voice-radio

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system, two separate systems are in place at the end user level. The mobile data computer located in the ambulances is configured differently from the mobile data terminal that is in the fire apparatus. This results in a shift commander and other supervisor not being able to see the totality of fire/EMS activity in the District from one information source. Additionally, dispatching protocols between AFD and ATCEMS and assignment matrices are not integrated. An end user group for dispatching services and/or computer aided dispatch systems does not exist, and no formal, trackable, transparent system is in place to address problems, concerns, or requests.

The District essentially has two different dispatch services with payment structures that are different and that vary significantly for similar services.

Dispatching for the City of Austin and Travis County Public Safety Departments are all housed within the Combined Transportation and Emergency Communications Center (CTECC). Austin Police Department and Travis County Sheriff's Office are Primary Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) while Austin - Travis County EMS and Austin Fire are Secondary PSAPs. All agencies utilize the Central Square INFORM CAD System v5.8.17 but are unique agencies within the same CAD system. The City of Pflugerville is a PSAP for 9-1-1 calls in City Limits. 9-1-1 calls for fire and EMS in the City Limits are transferred to AFD and EMS respectively.

ATCEMS utilizes DECCAN LiveMUM (Move up Module) in the dispatch center to reposition ambulances in real time based on historical call volume geography. ATCEMS is an Accredited Center of Excellence (ACE) through the National Academy of Emergency Dispatch (NAED). The District has experienced little to no benefit as a result of these systems, as it believed they are designed with the City of Austin only in mind.

3.0 Definitions

3.1 Demand, or Peak Load, ambulances: Ambulances that are scheduled to be in service during peak or demand hours of a day.

3.2 Accredited Center of Excellence (ACE): Accredited centers share common goals to improve public care and maximize the efficiency of 9-1-1 systems; and the National Academy of Emergency Dispatch (NAED), through its College of Fellows, established a high standard of excellence for emergency dispatch, providing the tools to achieve the standard at both the dispatcher level through certification, and at the communications center level through the ACE program.

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3.3 Advanced Life Support (ALS): A certification designed for professional healthcare providers who participate in the assessment and management of critical patients, including those working in in-hospital, pre-hospital, and out-of-hospital medical facilities.

3.4 Basic Life Support (BLS): A type of care that first-responders, healthcare providers and public safety professionals provide to anyone who is experiencing cardiac arrest, respiratory distress or an obstructed airway.

3.5 Central Square INFORM CAD System v5.8.17: Central Square is a public safety centered software vendor specializing in Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and 911 Telephony. INFORM is the advanced Computer Aided Dispatch software used for call-taking, dispatch and coordinating multi-agency response.

3.6 District definition of Equity: We see health equity as an outcome whereby you cannot tell the difference in health or life expectancy by race, and also as a process whereby we explicitly value people of color and low-income communities to achieve positive outcomes. Source: Adapted from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation definition of "health equity," 2017.

3.7 Combined Transportation and Emergency Communications Center (CTECC): A secured site with restricted access, the facility and its operation are a partnership between the City of Austin (EMS, Fire, Police, Transportation and Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management), Travis County, Texas Department of Transportation, and Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority. The building hosts the following public safety and transportation systems: 911, Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD), Fire and EMS Records Management System, Intelligent Transportation System, Region Radio System, and paratransit dispatch for Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

3.8 DECCAN LiveMUM (Move up Module): Deccan is a software vendor providing public safety with a suite of options for deployment. MUM being one of their products is real-time operational module that provides emergency dispatchers with instant, optimal move-up recommendations while helping them monitor live coverage.

3.9 Insurance Services Office (ISO) ratings: Ratings that are meant to score a fire department's performance against its organization's standards to determine property insurance costs.

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3.10 National Academy of Emergency Dispatch (NAED): An academy within the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED). The IAED is a nonprofit standard-setting organization promoting safe and effective emergency dispatch services worldwide. Comprising three allied Academies for medical, fire, and police dispatching, the IAED supports first responder-related research, unified protocol application, legislation for emergency call center regulation, and strengthening the emergency dispatch community through education, certification, and accreditation.

4.0 Dispatch & Emergency Response Evaluation

4.1 The Contractor shall utilize evidence-based recommendations as well as U.S. and international industry standards, such as the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1221 and NFPA 1710, and the center for public safety excellence (CPSE) to evaluate the current dispatch policies and procedures.

4.2 The Contractor shall evaluate the number and percentage of emergency responses that meet established time standards for that type of response. Evaluating these metrics will help determine consistency across the District when accounting for demographics and zip codes.

4.4 The Contractor shall evaluate the EMS dispatch system using applicable CPSE and NFPA standards.

4.5 The Contractor shall evaluate the AFD dispatch system using applicable CPSE and NFPA standards.

4.6 Contractor shall evaluate and provide recommendations to enhance the cost, efficiency, and effectiveness of dispatching District fire and EMS apparatus.

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 Given the growth of the District's call volume, the Contractor shall provide evidence-based recommendations for fire and EMS dispatching services for the next 5 years. This should be in the form of a strategy recommendation.

5.2 Following the evaluations, the Contractor shall research other fire and EMS dispatch services in the region and provide recommendations to the District to improve dispatch operations.

5.6 The Contractor shall research technology trends in public safety dispatch technologies and make recommendations to the District for/of public safety dispatch technology improvements. The recommendations shall include the cost to implement the recommendation.

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5.7 The Contractor shall provide evidence or standards-based recommendations for matching response time with call acuity.

5.7 In developing these recommendations, the Contractor shall include the impact of automatic aid expansion into adjacent counties and cities.

5.8 In developing these recommendations, the Contractor shall include the impact of the state mandated 3.5% maximum annual property tax increase.

Responses must include one paper copy and one electronic copy.

Proposals must be received no later than 4:00 p.m., Friday, March 12, 2021, addressed to the attention of:

Victor Gonzalez
Director of Logistics
Travis County ESD No.2
203 E. Pecan Street
Pflugerville, Texas 78660
Email: vgonzalez@pflugervillefire.org
Phone: 512-251-2801

Email copies will not be accepted! Questions related to this *RFP* may be submitted in writing to Victor Gonzalez, as noted above.