

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



**ITEM: 3.1
(ID # 23765)**

MEETING DATE:
Tuesday, December 12, 2023

FROM : SUPERVISOR KEVIN JEFFRIES AND SUPERVISOR KAREN SPIEGEL :

SUBJECT: SUPERVISOR KEVIN JEFFRIES AND SUPERVISOR KAREN SPIEGEL:
Paramedic Staffing Shortage. [\$0]

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Executive Office to work with CALFIRE to identify and implement solutions to expedite the filling of Firefighter II / Paramedics vacancies in the Riverside County Fire Department.
2. Direct the Executive Office to evaluate potential options to fill paramedic vacancies in the Fire Department and return to the Board's Ad Hoc Committee on Fire and Emergency Medical Services with recommendations within 60 days.

ACTION:Policy


Supervisor Kevin Jeffries, Chair

12/7/2023

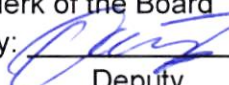

Supervisor Karen Spiegel, Supervisor 2nd District

12/7/2023

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

On motion of Supervisor Gutierrez, seconded by Supervisor Perez and duly carried by unanimous vote, IT WAS ORDERED that the above matter is approved as recommended.

Ayes: Jeffries, Spiegel, Washington, Perez and Gutierrez
Nays: None
Absent: None
Date: December 12, 2023
xc: BOS- District 1, BOS- District 2, E.O., Fire

Kimberly A. Rector
Clerk of the Board
By: 
Deputy

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BACKGROUND:

The Riverside County Fire Department is an integrated, cooperative, regional fire protection system that provides fire, emergency management services (EMS), technical rescue and hazardous materials response to residents in the unincorporated area of Riverside County, eighteen partner cities and one community services district. The County of Riverside contracts for emergency response with the State of California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE), to serve as the Riverside County Fire Department through a cooperative agreement. This regional system is integral to providing a high level of public safety service to residents, visitors and businesses of Riverside County.

The "Firefighter II / Paramedic" classification serves a critical role in our County Fire Department. Those individuals serving in these positions are first responders in every sense and provide Advance Life Support (ALS) at the scene of an emergency. The approved County Fire Department budget and CALFIRE labor cooperative agreement includes 305 Fire Fighter II/Paramedic positions, of which 123 (40%) are currently vacant. While we have had notable success in increasing our overall Fire Department staffing in recent years, through significant budgetary investments made by the Board of Supervisors and the efforts of our Fire Department/CAL FIRE leadership, the Firefighter II / Paramedic position remains a difficult one to fill.

To attempt to close the gap, the County has taken the extraordinary step of establishing a partnership between the Housing and Workforce Solutions' Workforce Development team and the Fire Department to set up a paramedic training program, through which graduates receive their National Registry paramedic certificate. The first class of 19 students graduated in October 2023, and none of those students have been hired by CALFIRE as of now (some have been hired by our ambulance service provider). This is due, primarily, to the additional minimum qualifications of CALFIRE, including previous fire-fighting experience, which exceed those of other public agencies.

The high number of vacancies in this classification has been an operational challenge, as it puts a tremendous burden on our Fire Fighter II / Paramedics (and their families) that consistently work overtime to cover shifts, and which can also result in certain fire engines not being appropriately staffed with paramedics. Fire engines without paramedics can only provide Basic Life Support, an unacceptable degradation of our first response system. More must be done to solve this challenge.

If passed, this item would direct the County Executive Office to work with CALFIRE to streamline the onboarding of Fire Fighter II/Paramedics, evaluate options to boost staffing in this area, and return to the Board's Ad Hoc Committee on Fire and Emergency Medical Services

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with recommendations within 60 days.

Impact on Residents and Businesses

The ability to have first responders who can provide Advance Life Support at the scene of an emergency is critical to provide for public safety of our residents and provide relief to our firefighters.