



**RE AN OPEN LETTER REGARDING THE EMS 911 AMBULANCE SERVICES RFP**

**DATE November 13, 2017**

**FROM Rebecca Gebhart, Interim Director**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca Gebhart', is written over the printed name.

As you know, on Friday, October 27, the EMS Agency posted its RFP for 911 Ambulance Services. I write to respond to questions raised about the EMS RFP that refer to statements I have made about the process, and to clarify some of the points raised in initial reactions to the RFP itself. Keep in mind that the RFP is a lengthy document that describes and defines a complex system. It should be read and considered carefully.

As with any County competitive procurement of this magnitude, bidder concerns must be raised through a formal bidder's conference, and will be answered in writing by the Agency. These written answers are the final word on questions or issues raised by bidders, and no other writing, statement, or impression made or given by a County agency, employee, or agent will be binding on the County as to the RFP. Because participation in the bidder's conference is mandatory, and presents the only opportunity for bidders to directly seek clarification about the process or requirements of the RFP, we urge all parties who may be interested in bidding to submit a Letter of Intent and to attend at least one of the two bidders' conferences. Prospective bidders who do not do so will not be allowed to advance bids. This is standard County procurement practice, and is included in the California EMS Authority's requirements for a competitive procurement process. Compliance with the EMS Authority's guidelines is necessary to preserve the County's Exclusive Operating Area (EOA).

As HCSA has stated publicly, we released an RFP specifically permitting bidders to present a public-private partnership model. The RFP contains language permitting various partnership configurations that are designed to allow entities that ordinarily would not have the experience necessary to operate a system of the size and geographic variation of Alameda County's EOA to competently and competitively participate in the procurement.

With respect to correspondence received since the RFP's release, I have several comments. First, there have been suggestions that the RFP's prohibition on subcontracting of 911 Ambulance Services – the core service to be provided under an eventual contract – was a "County level decision." This is not accurate. The state EMS Authority has repeatedly informed the County that it will not approve a contractor-subcontractor model for Alameda County. In fact, they have expressly advised that the Alameda EMS Agency should not look to the Contra

Costa model for guidance. In light of this clear position, the EMS Agency had no choice but to prohibit subcontracting of essential 911 Ambulance Services.

Second, correspondence has suggested that the RFP requires each partner in a joint bid to have 5 years of experience in providing ALS ambulance services in a jurisdiction of 800,000 or more. This also is not accurate. The requirement is only that the 5 identified Key Personnel (who may be hired) have that experience. The requirement is that the *entities* need only have 5 years of experience in Prehospital ALS Emergency medical Services which are defined as “Prehospital medical care provided to patients at the Paramedic level.” This requirement was written to allow non-emergency ambulance providers to participate despite not having any experience in 911 ambulance transport services. Coupled with the Key Personnel requirement, these minimum qualifications significantly enlarge the pool of potential bidders, while ensuring that they system is operated competently, safely, and efficiently.

Finally, and perhaps most critically, at least one stakeholder has asked the Board of Supervisors to intervene in the RFP process. This request is inappropriate as it is inconsistent with County practice and runs afoul of public contracting requirements. It is also inconsistent with the EMS Authority’s consistent direction that the procurement be competitive and fair, with no collusion or pre-selection, and no influence of entities with an interest in the outcome. Also of concern is the possibility that a stakeholder interested in participating in the bidding process may be disqualified by trying to direct the nature of the RFP process. The procurement process is designed to minimize any risk of allegations of conflict of interest.

As always, I thank you for your interest.