EMS FDNY Help Fund Fact Sheet
As of August 2025

Mission: The EMS FDNY Help Fund is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. The funds that we raise are designated expressly for the Emergency Medical Technicians & Paramedics of the FDNY. Our mission is to ensure the security of our EMTs and Paramedics and their families in the event of death, injury, illness or hardship.

Since its inception, the Fund has been able to provide housing security, medical debt reduction, childcare, bereavement/funeral costs and confidential mental health counseling to hundreds of FDNY EMS members and their families.

- Founded in 2017 after FDNY EMT Yadira Arroyo's Line of Duty Death.
- EMTs and Paramedics began the fund by voluntarily donating $2/paycheck.
- Achieved Non-Profit Status in February 2019.
- Provides a safety net to 4,567 EMTs and Paramedics that serve as frontline medical care providers across NYC's five boroughs. We call them NYC's street doctors as vulnerable NYC populations often will not seek medical care until it is an emergency.

We have provided over $1.5M in program services, that included $900,000 of direct Assistance, to members of the FDNY EMS. We have paid for EMS burials, hospital copays, emergency housing, back rent to prevent eviction, back mortgage to prevent foreclosure, confidential counseling for PTSD due to job stresses (esp covid), meals during covid, etc.

In 2018 we helped Four EMTs or Paramedics, in 2019 we were able to help Ten.

- 2020 - we received 57 Applications for Financial Assistance.
- 2021 - we received 64 Applications for Financial Assistance - including 6 EMTs who lost everything to Hurricane Ida.
- 2022 - we received 88 Applications for Financial Assistance - three were deaths including the murder of Capt. Alison Russo.
- 2023 - we received 68 Applications for Financial Assistance and had one line of duty death.
- 2024 - we received 51 applications for Financial Assistance and provided burial for a homeless EMS lieutenant.

Confidential Mental Health Services

- In the summer of 2020, after three EMS FDNY suicides and additional deaths due to substance abuse, the fund partnered with the Trauma Recovery Network and National Institute for Psychotherapies to provide confidential mental health services during the pandemic.
- "The psychological toll of handling COVID-19 calls is just unbelievable," Gary Miller, a retired emergency services worker who serves on the fund's board, told the New York Post in September 2020.
- The Fund raises monies to provide confidential mental health care - to date we have provided over $100K in services.

Meals during the Initial Pandemic Surge

- At the height of the 2020 Pandemic, we partnered with Verizon to deliver over 25,000 meals from local NYC restaurants to FDNY EMTs and Paramedics working 16+ hour shifts often six days in a row.

We began as a self-funded $2/paycheck fund founded by EMS for EMS. We rely on donations large and small to continue our vital work. We partner whenever possible with those who have well-established expertise - Honor Emergency Fund, FDNY Family Assistance Unit, Operation Hope, Brave of Heart Fund, Trauma Recovery Network, National Institute for Psychotherapies and new confidential counseling partner Hands On Health Associates. Our Financials are available on Pro Publica.

EMS FDNY Help Fund Board of Directors

Kathleen Knuth, Chair
Kathleen Knuth is currently EMS Deputy Assistant Chief at the FDNY. Kathleen is also President of the FDNY Women's Benevolent Association.

Buffy Redsecker, **Vice Chair**
Buffy Redsecker is the President of the SunLight Time Foundation. She is a past board chair of the International League of Conservation Photographers. Playwright, Diver, Explorer, Historian, Cat Behaviorist and a supporter of the EMS FDNY Help Fund since early 2020. She has a degree in Ancient Military History from the Univ of Maryland. She lives downtown with her husband and their two cats.

John McGuire, Treasurer
John McGuire is a Paramedic Lieutenant at the Fire Department City of New York and a Paramedic at the Jericho Fire District.

Carl Gandalfo, Secretary
Carl Gandolfo is a Paramedic at the Fire Department City of New York. He is also Recording Secretary of The Uniformed EMTs, Paramedics & Fire Inspectors – F.D.N.Y. – Local 2507.

Manuel Ramos, Recording Treasurer
Manny Ramos is a retired lieutenant paramedic in the Fire Department City of New York.

Nadra Blelis, Recording Secretary
Nadra Blelis joined the Board on January 13, 2025. Nadra is currently EMS Deputy Chief at the FDNY.

David Cira, Director and Golf Chair
David Cira is the Captain of the EMS Training Academy, within the New York City Fire Department, Emergency Medical Services Operations. David is committed to advancing NYC EMS and was Chair of the 2023 EMS FDNY Help Fund Golf Fundraiser. He has since joined the Board of Directors and is leading the EMS FDNY Help Fund 2024 Golf Classic.

Khadijah Hall, Director
Khadijah Hall is an Emergency Medical Specialist-EMT of the Fire Department City of New York. She was awarded the Isaac Liberman Public Service Award at the 2018 Hundred Year Association of New York Public Service Awards.

James Hamilton, Director
Jaime Hamilton is an attorney specializing in e-discovery.

Pamela Holmes Saxton, Director

A native of New York, New York, Pamela Holmes-Saxton, is a Reverend at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York. Pamela graduated from Connecticut College with a Bachelor's in Government and American History; The Graduate School of Political Management (at George Washington University) with a Master's in Campaign Management and Princeton Theological Seminary with a Masters in Divinity.

Kim Hranicky, Director

Kim Hranicky is a dedicated professional with a background in marketing and international business, having earned a BBA in Marketing from Southern Methodist University (SMU) and a Master's degree from Thunderbird School of Global Management. With a decade-long career in computer software sales, Kim later took a hiatus to focus on raising her children while actively engaging in community service.
Driven by a passion for giving back, Kim is committed to raising awareness about the challenges faced by EMTs and driving positive change within the community.

Brendan McCormack, Director

Brendan McCormack is a 23-year veteran of the FDNY EMS - an EMT, a senior drill instructor at the FDNY EMS Academy, a member of the FDNY Ceremonial Unit and a CLI (Certified Lab Instructor) EMS Instructor.

Gary Miller, Director

Captain Gary Miller retired in July 2020 after 32 years of EMS service in the Fire Department City of New York.

Indre Saviciute, Director and Gala Chair

Indre Saviciute is a highly experienced business management consultant focused on providing operational, administrative, and strategic advisory services to start-ups and boutique companies. With over 15 years of leadership experience as a Chief Administrative Officer in the finance sector, she has successfully managed enterprise-level operations for two high-frequency trading companies in New York, Asia, and Europe.

Currently, Indre leads her consulting firm, TAIP LLC, where she delivers tailored solutions to help businesses achieve operational excellence and strategic growth.

Allison Shaughnessy, Director

Lt. Allison Shaugnessy started as an EMT in Manhattan, Medic in the Bronx in 2013. When promoted to Lt in 2019, she returned to the Bronx. She is currently stationed at the HazTac Battalion since 2021 and serves as an Executive Board Member in Local 3621 from 2022.

Danielle Gustafson, Executive Director

Danielle Gustafson supports the Fund with more than twenty years experience as a Digital Brand Experience and Marketing Leader and has pivoted from Financial Services to Not-for-Profit Leadership. She is known for serving as a trusted advisor and partner for all stakeholders - team contributors to C-Suite and Board.