
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 137 Session of
2003

INTRODUCED BY SOLOBAY, BEBKO-JONES, BELARDI, BELFANTI, BROWNE,
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STURLA, TIGUE, WALKO, WILT, WRIGHT, SAYLOR, SCRIMENTI,
STABACK, TANGRETTI, TRAVAGLIO, WASHINGTON, WOJNAROSKI AND
YEWIC, FEBRUARY 6, 2003

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS, FEBRUARY 6, 2003

AN ACT

1 Establishing and funding a grant program for volunteer fire
2 companies, volunteer ambulance services, water and vehicle
3 rescue squads and municipal fire departments; and making
4 appropriations.

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17 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
18 hereby enacts as follows:

19 CHAPTER 1

20 PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS

21 Section 101. Short title.

22 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Fire and
23 Emergency Services Annual Grant Act.

24 Section 102. Definitions.

25 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
26 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
27 context clearly indicates otherwise:

28 "Advanced life support services." The term shall have the
29 meaning given to it in the act of July 3, 1985 (P.L.164, No.45),
30 known as the Emergency Medical Services Act.

1 "Agency." The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency.

2 "Basic life support services." The term shall have the
3 meaning given to it in the act of July 3, 1985 (P.L.164, No.45),
4 known as the Emergency Medical Services Act.

5 "Commissioner." The State Fire Commissioner.

6 "Facility." A structure or portion thereof intended for the
7 purpose of storage or protection of firefighting apparatus,
8 ambulances and rescue vehicles and related equipment and gear.
9 The term does not include meeting halls, social halls, social
10 rooms, lounges or any other facility not directly related to
11 firefighting or the furnishing of ambulance or rescue services.

12 "Fiscal year." One full year beginning on July 1 and ending
13 on June 30 of the next calendar year.

14 "Grant program." The Fire and Emergency Services Annual
15 Grant Program, and any of its component parts, including the
16 Annual Volunteer Fire Company Grant Program established under
17 Chapter 3, the Annual Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Services
18 Grant Program established under Chapter 5, and the Annual
19 Municipal Fire Department Grant Program established under
20 Chapter 7.

21 "Invalid coach." The term shall have the meaning given to it
22 in the act of July 3, 1985 (P.L.164, No.45), known as the
23 Emergency Medical Services Act.

24 "Municipal fire department." Any department of a
25 municipality consisting of firefighters or support staff who are
26 employees of the municipality and whose primary purpose is to
27 engage in fire protection, firefighting or necessary support
28 services in that municipality. This term does not include a
29 volunteer fire company that may employ one or more firefighters
30 or other personnel.

1 "Volunteer ambulance service." Any nonprofit chartered
2 corporation, association or organization located in this
3 Commonwealth which is licensed by the Department of Health and
4 is not associated or affiliated with a hospital and which is
5 regularly engaged in the provision of emergency medical
6 services, including basic life support or advanced life support
7 services and the transportation of patients. The term does not
8 include any corporation, association or organization that is
9 primarily engaged in the operation of invalid coaches which are
10 intended for the routine transport of persons who are
11 convalescent or otherwise nonambulatory and do not ordinarily
12 require emergency medical treatment while in transit.

13 "Volunteer fire company." A nonprofit chartered corporation,
14 association or organization located in this Commonwealth which
15 provides fire protection or rescue services and which may offer
16 other voluntary emergency services within this Commonwealth.
17 Voluntary emergency services provided by a volunteer fire
18 company may include voluntary ambulance and voluntary rescue
19 services.

20 "Water or vehicle rescue company." A nonprofit chartered
21 corporation, association or organization that provides rescue
22 services as part of the response to fires or accidents involving
23 vehicles or occurring in a body of water.

24 CHAPTER 3

25 ANNUAL VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY GRANT PROGRAM

26 Section 301. Establishment.

27 The Annual Volunteer Fire Company Grant Program is hereby
28 established and shall be administered by the agency in
29 consultation with the commissioner. Grants provided under this
30 program shall be used to continually improve and enhance the

1 capabilities of the volunteer fire company to provide
2 firefighting, ambulance and rescue services.

3 Section 302. Guidelines and procedures.

4 The agency, in consultation with the commissioner, shall
5 develop guidelines, procedures and all applications necessary to
6 implement the annual grant program. The agency shall submit the
7 guidelines, procedures and applications to the Legislative
8 Reference Bureau for publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin
9 within 30 days after the effective date of this act.

10 Section 303. Award of grants.

11 (a) Authorization.--The agency is hereby authorized to make
12 annual grant awards to each eligible volunteer fire company, to
13 be used for the following:

14 (1) Construction or renovation of the fire company's
15 facility and purchase or repair of fixtures, furnishings,
16 office equipment and support services necessary to maintain
17 or improve the capability of the company to provide
18 firefighting, ambulance and rescue services.

19 (2) Purchase or repair of equipment used to provide
20 firefighting, ambulance or rescue services.

21 (3) Retirement or reduction of debt accumulated through
22 the construction or renovation of facilities, purchase or
23 repair of fixtures, furnishings, office equipment and support
24 services or the purchase or repair of equipment.

25 (4) Reasonable costs associated with training or
26 certification of members.

27 (b) Eligibility and limits.--

28 (1) To receive grant funds under this act, a volunteer
29 fire company shall have actively responded to one or more
30 fire or rescue emergencies since July 1, 2001, and must sign

1 an agreement to actively participate in the Pennsylvania Fire
2 Information Reporting System administered by the agency.

3 (2) No volunteer fire company shall be eligible for more
4 than one grant award per each fiscal year.

5 (3) All grant awards shall be equitable, except as
6 provided under section 304(a) and made upon a pro rata basis
7 if the total dollar amount of approved applications exceeds
8 the amount of funds allocated under section 901.

9 (c) Application.--

10 (1) The agency shall provide applications and a program
11 summary for grants under this act to the fire chief and
12 president of every volunteer fire company in this
13 Commonwealth on or before July 31 of each fiscal year. The
14 program summary shall include, but not be limited to:

15 (i) Limitations on the use of grants.

16 (ii) Eligibility criteria.

17 (iii) Amount of funding available for the current
18 fiscal year.

19 (iv) Number of grants awarded during the previous
20 fiscal year.

21 (v) Total amount of grants awarded during the
22 previous fiscal year.

23 (2) Volunteer fire companies seeking grants under this
24 act shall submit completed applications to the agency on or
25 before October 1 of each fiscal year.

26 (d) Agency action.--The agency shall act to approve or
27 disapprove the application by December 1 of each fiscal year.
28 Applications which have not been approved or disapproved by the
29 agency by December 1 shall be deemed approved.

30 Section 304. Consolidation.

1 (a) Financial incentives.--If, after the effective date of
2 this act, two or more volunteer fire companies consolidate their
3 use of facilities, equipment, firefighters and services, the
4 consolidated entity may, upon notification of the agency, be
5 eligible for:

6 (1) Reduction of the interest rate payable on any
7 outstanding principal balance owed, as of the date of
8 consolidation, by any or all of the consolidating companies
9 to the Volunteer Companies Loan Fund for loans made under the
10 act of July 15, 1976 (P.L.1036, No.208), known as the
11 Volunteer Fire Company, Ambulance Service and Rescue Squad
12 Assistance Act. The reduction in the interest rate payable
13 shall be from 2% to 1%. Upon receipt of such notification,
14 the agency, in conjunction with the State Fire Commissioner,
15 shall determine and verify that the consolidated entity is in
16 fact a bona fide consolidated volunteer fire company. If the
17 agency determines that the consolidated entity is a bona fide
18 consolidated volunteer fire company, it shall reduce the
19 interest rate payable on any outstanding principal balance
20 owed to the Volunteer Companies Loan Fund for loans made
21 under the Volunteer Fire Company, Ambulance Service and
22 Rescue Squad Assistance Act, for which the consolidating
23 companies or the consolidated entity may be individually or
24 jointly responsible.

25 (2) A grant award equal to the total amount each
26 volunteer fire company from which the consolidated entity was
27 created would have been eligible to receive as though it had
28 not consolidated, for a period of five years after the date
29 of consolidation.

30 (b) Regulatory authority.--The agency may promulgate such

1 rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the
2 provisions of this section.

3 CHAPTER 5

4 ANNUAL VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE AND RESCUE SERVICES GRANT PROGRAM

5 Section 501. Establishment.

6 The Annual Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Services Grant
7 Program is hereby established and shall be administered by the
8 agency. Grants provided under this program shall be used to
9 continually improve and enhance the capabilities of the
10 volunteer ambulance and rescue services to provide ambulance,
11 emergency medical, basic and advanced life support and general
12 rescue services.

13 Section 502. Guidelines and procedures.

14 The agency shall develop guidelines, procedures and all
15 applications necessary to implement the annual grant program.
16 The agency shall submit the guidelines, procedures and
17 applications to the Legislative Reference Bureau for publication
18 in the Pennsylvania Bulletin within 30 days after the effective
19 date of this act.

20 Section 503. Award of grants.

21 (a) Authorization.--The agency is hereby authorized to make
22 annual grant awards to each eligible volunteer ambulance service
23 and water or vehicle rescue company for the following:

24 (1) Construction or renovation of the volunteer
25 ambulance service's facilities and purchase or repair of
26 fixtures, furnishings, office equipment and support services
27 necessary to maintain or improve the capability of the
28 ambulance service to provide ambulance, emergency medical,
29 basic and advanced life support and general rescue services.

30 (2) Purchase or repair of ambulance or rescue equipment.

1 (3) Retirement or reduction of debt accumulated through
2 the construction or renovation of facilities, purchase or
3 repair of fixtures, furnishings, office equipment and support
4 services or the purchase or repair of equipment.

5 (4) Reasonable costs associated with training and
6 certification of members.

7 (b) Eligibility and limits.--

8 (1) To receive grant funds under this act, a volunteer
9 ambulance service or a water or vehicle rescue company shall
10 have actively responded to one or more emergency medical
11 situations or water or vehicle rescue emergencies since July
12 1, 2003.

13 (2) No volunteer ambulance service or water or vehicle
14 rescue company shall be eligible for more than one grant
15 award per each fiscal year.

16 (3) All grant awards shall be equitable and made upon a
17 pro rata basis if the total dollar amount of approved
18 applications exceeds the amount of funds allocated under
19 section 902.

20 (c) Application.--

21 (1) The agency shall provide applications and a program
22 summary for grants under this act to the fire chief and
23 president of every volunteer ambulance service and water or
24 vehicle rescue company in this Commonwealth on or before July
25 31 of each fiscal year. The program summary shall include,
26 but not be limited to:

27 (i) Limitations on the use of grants.

28 (ii) Eligibility criteria.

29 (iii) Amount of funding available for the current
30 fiscal year.

(iv) Number of grants awarded during the previous fiscal year.

(v) Total amount of grants awarded during the previous fiscal year.

(2) Volunteer ambulance services and water or vehicle rescue companies seeking grants under this act shall submit completed applications to the agency on or before October 1 of each fiscal year.

(d) Agency action.--The agency shall act to approve or disapprove the application by December 1 of each fiscal year. Applications which have not been approved or disapproved by the agency by December 1 shall be deemed approved.

CHAPTER 7

ANNUAL MUNICIPAL FIRE DEPARTMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Section 701. Establishment.

The Annual Municipal Fire Department Grant Program is hereby established and shall be administered by the agency in consultation with the commissioner. Grants provided under this program shall be used to continually improve and enhance the capabilities of the municipal fire departments to provide firefighting and fire protection services.

Section 702. Guidelines and procedures.

The agency, in consultation with the commissioner, shall develop guidelines, procedures and all applications necessary to implement the annual grant program. The agency shall submit the guidelines, procedures and applications to the Legislative Reference Bureau for publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin within 30 days after the effective date of this act.

Section 703. Award of grants.

(a) Authorization.--The agency is hereby authorized to make

1 annual grant awards to each eligible municipal fire department
2 to be used for the following:

3 (1) Construction or renovation of municipal fire
4 department facilities and purchase or repair of fixtures,
5 furnishings, office equipment and support services necessary
6 to maintain or improve the capability of the company to
7 provide firefighting, ambulance and rescue services.

8 (2) Purchase or repair of equipment used to provide
9 firefighting, ambulance or rescue services.

10 (3) Retirement or reduction of debt accumulated through
11 the construction or renovation of facilities, purchase or
12 repair of fixtures, furnishings, office equipment and support
13 services or the purchase or repair of equipment.

14 (4) Reasonable costs associated with training or
15 certification of members.

16 (b) Eligibility and limits.--

17 (1) To receive grant funds under this act, a municipal
18 fire department shall have actively responded to one or more
19 fire or rescue emergencies since July 1, 2003.

20 (2) No municipal fire department shall be eligible for
21 more than one grant award per each fiscal year.

22 (3) All grant awards shall be equitable and made upon a
23 pro rata basis if the total dollar amount of approved
24 applications exceeds the amount of funds allocated in section
25 903.

26 (c) Application.--

27 (1) The agency shall provide applications and a program
28 summary for grants under this act to the chief of every
29 municipal fire department in this Commonwealth on or before
30 July 31 of each fiscal year. The program summary shall

1 include, but not be limited to:

2 (i) Limitations on the use of grants.

3 (ii) Eligibility criteria.

4 (iii) Amount of funding available for the current
5 fiscal year.

6 (iv) Number of grants awarded during the previous
7 fiscal year.

8 (v) Total amount of grants awarded during the
9 previous fiscal year.

10 (2) Municipal fire departments seeking grants under this
11 act shall submit completed applications to the agency on or
12 before October 1 of each fiscal year.

13 (d) Agency action.--The agency shall act to approve or
14 disapprove the application by December 1 of each fiscal year.
15 Applications which have not been approved or disapproved by the
16 agency by December 1 shall be deemed approved.

17 CHAPTER 9

18 GRANT FUNDING PROVISIONS

19 Section 901. Annual Volunteer Fire Company Grant Program.

20 The sum of \$37,000,000, or as much thereof as may be
21 necessary, is hereby appropriated to the Pennsylvania Emergency
22 Management Agency for the current fiscal year for the purpose of
23 making grants to eligible volunteer fire companies under Chapter
24 3. The General Assembly shall annually include in the
25 appropriation to the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency in
26 the General Appropriation Act an appropriation from the General
27 Fund in an amount sufficient to make grants pursuant to Chapter
28 3.

29 Section 902. Annual Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Services
30 Grant Program.

1 The sum of \$5,000,000, or as much thereof as may be
2 necessary, is hereby appropriated to the Pennsylvania Emergency
3 Management Agency for the current fiscal year for the purpose of
4 making grants to eligible volunteer ambulance services and water
5 or vehicle rescue companies under Chapter 5. The General
6 Assembly shall annually include in the appropriation to the
7 Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency in the General
8 Appropriation Act an appropriation from the General Fund in an
9 amount sufficient to make grants under Chapter 5.

10 Section 903. Annual Municipal Fire Department Grant Program.

11 The sum of \$3,000,000, or as much thereof as may be
12 necessary, is hereby appropriated to the Pennsylvania Emergency
13 Management Agency for the current fiscal year for the purpose of
14 making grants to eligible volunteer fire companies under Chapter
15 7. The General Assembly shall annually include in the
16 appropriation to the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency in
17 the General Appropriation Act an appropriation from the General
18 Fund in an amount sufficient to make grants under Chapter 7.

19 Section 904. Agency funding.

20 The sum of \$100,000, or as much thereof as may be necessary,
21 is hereby appropriated to the Pennsylvania Emergency Management
22 Agency for the current fiscal year for expenses or costs
23 incurred by the agency for the administration of the grant
24 programs authorized under Chapters 3, 5 and 7.

25 CHAPTER 11

26 MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

27 Section 1101. Effective date.

28 This act shall take effect July 1, 2003, or immediately,
29 whichever is later.