

---

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

---

HOUSE BILL

No. 1899 Session of  
2001

---

INTRODUCED BY SOLOBAY, SCRIMENTI, BARRAR, BEBKO-JONES, BELARDI, BELFANTI, BLAUM, BROWNE, BUXTON, CALTAGIRONE, CAPPELLI, CASORIO, M. COHEN, CORRIGAN, COY, CURRY, DALLY, DERMODY, DIVEN, FEESE, FLEAGLE, GEORGE, GRUCELA, HALUSKA, HARHAI, HESS, HUTCHINSON, JOSEPHS, KELLER, LaGROTTA, LEH, LEVDANSKY, MACKERETH, MARKOSEK, CAWLEY, COLEMAN, COSTA, CREIGHTON, DALEY, DeLUCA, DeWEESE, EACHUS, FICHTER, FREEMAN, GORDNER, GRUITZA, HANNA, HERMAN, HORSEY, JAMES, KAISER, KIRKLAND, LAUGHLIN, LESCOVITZ, LUCYK, MANN, MAYERNIK, MELIO, MUNDY, PETRARCA, PISTELLA, ROBERTS, RUBLEY, SAINATO, SANTONI, SHANER, STEELMAN, T. STEVENSON, SURRA, TIGUE, TRICH, WALKO, WASHINGTON, WATSON, WILT, YUDICHAK, S. MILLER, PALLONE, PIPPY, READSHAW, ROSS, RUFFING, SAMUELSON, SCHRODER, STABACK, STETLER, STURLA, TANGRETTI, TRAVAGLIO, VEON, WANSACZ, WATERS, C. WILLIAMS, WOJNAROSKI, J. WILLIAMS AND THOMAS,  
SEPTEMBER 18, 2001

---

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY  
PREPAREDNESS, SEPTEMBER 18, 2001

---

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.

5 TABLE OF CONTENTS

6 Chapter 1. Preliminary Provisions

7 Section 101. Short title.

8 Section 102. Definitions.

9 Chapter 3. Annual Volunteer Fire Company Grant Program

10 Section 301. Establishment.

11 Section 302. Guidelines and procedures.

1 Section 303. Award of grants.  
2 Section 304. Consolidation.  
3 Chapter 5. Annual Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Services  
4 Grant Program  
5 Section 501. Establishment.  
6 Section 502. Guidelines and procedures.  
7 Section 503. Award of grants.  
8 Chapter 7. Annual Municipal Fire Department Grant Program  
9 Section 701. Establishment.  
10 Section 702. Guidelines and procedures.  
11 Section 703. Award of grants.  
12 Chapter 9. Grant Funding Provisions  
13 Section 901. Annual Volunteer Fire Company Grant Program.  
14 Section 902. Annual Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Services  
15 Grant Program.  
16 Section 903. Annual Municipal Fire Department Grant Program.  
17 Section 904. Agency funding.  
18 Chapter 11. Miscellaneous Provisions  
19 Section 1101. Effective date.

20 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
21 hereby enacts as follows:

22 CHAPTER 1

23 PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS

24 Section 101. Short title.

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

27 Section 2. Definitions.

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

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

4 "Agency." The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency.

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

8 "Commissioner." The State Fire Commissioner.

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

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

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

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

27 "Municipal fire department." Any department of a  
28 municipality consisting of firefighters or support staff who are  
29 employees of the municipality and whose primary purpose is to  
30 engage in fire protection, firefighting or necessary support

1 services in that municipality. This term does not include a  
2 volunteer fire company that may employ one or more firefighters  
3 or other personnel.

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

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

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

## 27 CHAPTER 3

### 28 ANNUAL VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY GRANT PROGRAM

#### 29 Section 301. Establishment.

30 The Annual Volunteer Fire Company Grant Program is hereby

1 established and shall be administered by the agency in  
2 consultation with the commissioner. Grants provided under this  
3 program shall be used to continually improve and enhance the  
4 capabilities of the volunteer fire company to provide  
5 firefighting, ambulance and rescue services.

6 Section 302. Guidelines and procedures.

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

13 Section 303. Award of grants.

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

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

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

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

28 (4) Reasonable costs associated with training or  
29 certification of members.

30 (b) Eligibility and limits.--

1           (1) To receive grant funds under this act, a volunteer  
2 fire company shall have actively responded to one or more  
3 fire or rescue emergencies since July 1, 2001, and must sign  
4 an agreement to actively participate in the Pennsylvania Fire  
5 Information Reporting System administered by the agency.

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

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

12       (c) Application.--

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

18               (i) Limitations on the use of grants.

19               (ii) Eligibility criteria.

20               (iii) Amount of funding available for the current  
21 fiscal year.

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

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

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

29       (d) Agency action.--The agency shall act to approve or  
30 disapprove the application by December 1 of each fiscal year.

1 Applications which have not been approved or disapproved by the  
2 agency by December 1 shall be deemed approved.

3 Section 304. Consolidation.

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

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

28 (2) A grant award equal to the total amount each  
29 volunteer fire company from which the consolidated entity was  
30 created would have been eligible to receive as though it had

not consolidated, for a period of five years after the date of consolidation.

(b) Regulatory authority.--The agency may promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this section.

## CHAPTER 5

### ANNUAL VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE AND RESCUE SERVICES GRANT PROGRAM

#### Section 501. Establishment.

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

#### Section 502. Guidelines and procedures.

The agency 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 503. Award of grants.

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

- (1) Construction or renovation of the volunteer ambulance service's facilities and purchase or repair of fixtures, furnishings, office equipment and support services necessary to maintain or improve the capability of the



1 ambulance service to provide ambulance, emergency medical,  
2 basic and advanced life support and general rescue services.

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

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

8 (4) Reasonable costs associated with training and  
9 certification of members.

10 (b) Eligibility and limits.--

11 (1) To receive grant funds under this act, a volunteer  
12 ambulance service or a water or vehicle rescue company shall  
13 have actively responded to one or more emergency medical  
14 situations or water or vehicle rescue emergencies since July  
15 1, 2001.

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

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

23 (c) Application.--

24 (1) The agency shall provide applications and a program  
25 summary for grants under this act to the fire chief and  
26 president of every volunteer ambulance service and water or  
27 vehicle rescue company in this Commonwealth on or before July  
28 31 of each fiscal year. The program summary shall include,  
29 but not be limited to:

30 (i) Limitations on the use of grants.

1 (ii) Eligibility criteria.

2 (iii) Amount of funding available for the current  
3 fiscal year.

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

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

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

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

16 CHAPTER 7

17 ANNUAL MUNICIPAL FIRE DEPARTMENT GRANT PROGRAM

18 Section 701. Establishment.

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

25 Section 702. Guidelines and procedures.

26 The agency, in consultation with the commissioner, shall  
27 develop guidelines, procedures and all applications necessary to  
28 implement the annual grant program. The agency shall submit the  
29 guidelines, procedures and applications to the Legislative  
30 Reference Bureau for publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin

1 within 30 days after the effective date of this act.

2 Section 703. Award of grants.

3 (a) Authorization.--The agency is hereby authorized to make  
4 annual grant awards to each eligible municipal fire department  
5 to be used for the following:

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

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

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

17 (4) Reasonable costs associated with training or  
18 certification of members.

19 (b) Eligibility and limits.--

20 (1) To receive grant funds under this act, a municipal  
21 fire department shall have actively responded to one or more  
22 fire or rescue emergencies since July 1, 2001.

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

25 (3) All grant awards shall be equitable and made upon a  
26 pro rata basis if the total dollar amount of approved  
27 applications exceeds the amount of funds allocated in section  
28 903.

29 (c) Application.--

30 (1) The agency shall provide applications and a program

summary for grants under this act to the chief of every municipal fire department in this Commonwealth on or before July 31 of each fiscal year. The program summary shall include, but not be limited to:

(i) Limitations on the use of grants.

(ii) Eligibility criteria.

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

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

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

(2) Municipal fire departments 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 9

### GRANT FUNDING PROVISIONS

Section 901. Annual Volunteer Fire Company Grant Program.

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

1 3.

2 Section 902. Annual Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Services  
3 Grant Program.

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

13 Section 903. Annual Municipal Fire Department Grant Program.

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

22 Section 904. Agency funding.

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

28 CHAPTER 11

29 MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

30 Section 1101. Effective date.

1       This act shall take effect July 1, 2001, or immediately,  
2   whichever is later.