
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1062 Session of
2003

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VEON, WALKO, WANSACZ, WHEATLEY, J. WILLIAMS, WOJNAROSKI AND
YUDICHAK, APRIL 7, 2003

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS, APRIL 7, 2003

AN ACT

1 Establishing and funding grant programs for volunteer fire
2 companies, emergency service entities and water or vehicle
3 rescue squads and for shared municipal services; establishing
4 the Homeland Heroes Advisory Board and the Homeland Heroes
5 Grant Fund; and making an appropriation.

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19 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
20 hereby enacts as follows:
21 CHAPTER 1
22 PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS
23 Section 101. Short title.
24 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Homeland
25 Heroes Grant Act.
26 Section 102. Definitions.
27 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
28 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
29 context clearly indicates otherwise:

30 "Advanced life support services." The term shall have the

1 meaning given to it in the act of July 3, 1985 (P.L.164, No.45),
2 known as the Emergency Medical Services Act.

3 "Advisory board." The Homeland Heroes Advisory Board
4 established in Chapter 9.

5 "Agency." The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency.

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

9 "Commissioner." The State Fire Commissioner.

10 "Department." The Department of Community and Economic
11 Development of the Commonwealth.

12 "Eligible municipality." A city of the first class, second
13 class, second class A or third class, township of the first
14 class or second class, borough or incorporated town located in
15 this Commonwealth.

16 "Emergency service entity." Any nonprofit chartered
17 corporation, association or organization located in this
18 Commonwealth which is licensed by the Department of Health and
19 is not associated or affiliated with a hospital and which is
20 regularly engaged in the provision of emergency medical
21 services, including basic life support or advanced life support
22 services and the transportation of patients. The term does not
23 include any corporation, association or organization that is
24 primarily engaged in the operation of invalid coaches which are
25 intended for the routine transport of persons who are
26 convalescent or otherwise nonambulatory and do not ordinarily
27 require emergency medical treatment while in transit.

28 "Facility." A structure or portion thereof intended for the
29 purpose of storage or protection of firefighting apparatus,
30 ambulances and rescue vehicles and related equipment and gear.

1 The term does not include meeting halls, social halls, social
2 rooms, lounges or any other facility not directly related to
3 firefighting or the furnishing of emergency services.

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

6 "Fund." The Homeland Heroes Grant Fund established pursuant
7 to section 1101.

8 "Grant program." The Homeland Heroes Grant Program, and any
9 of its component parts, including the Volunteer Fire Company
10 Grant Program established under Chapter 3, the Emergency
11 Services Entities Grant Program established under Chapter 5 and
12 the Shared Municipal Services Grant Program established under
13 Chapter 7.

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

17 "Shared service agreement." Any agreement, by contract,
18 between two or more municipalities whereby the municipalities
19 involved cooperatively share one or more public services.

20 "Volunteer fire company." A nonprofit chartered corporation,
21 association or organization located in this Commonwealth which
22 provides fire protection or rescue services and which may offer
23 other voluntary emergency services within this Commonwealth,
24 including a water or vehicle rescue company. Voluntary emergency
25 services provided by a volunteer fire company may include
26 voluntary ambulance and voluntary rescue services.

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

1 CHAPTER 3

2 VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY GRANT PROGRAM

3 Section 301. Establishment.

4 The Volunteer Fire Company Grant Program is hereby
5 established and shall be administered by the advisory board in
6 consultation with the agency. Grants provided under this program
7 shall be used to continually improve and enhance the
8 capabilities of the volunteer fire company to provide
9 firefighting and emergency services.

10 Section 302. Guidelines and procedures.

11 The advisory board, in consultation with the agency, shall
12 develop guidelines, procedures and all applications necessary to
13 implement the grant program. The advisory board shall submit the
14 guidelines, procedures and applications to the Legislative
15 Reference Bureau for publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin
16 within 30 days after the effective date of this chapter.

17 Section 303. Award of grants.

18 (a) Authorization.--The advisory board is hereby authorized
19 to make grant awards to each eligible volunteer fire company to
20 be used for the following:

21 (1) Construction or renovation of the fire company's
22 facility and purchase or repair of fixtures, furnishings,
23 office equipment and support services necessary to maintain
24 or improve the capability of the company to provide
25 firefighting and emergency services.

26 (2) Purchase or repair of equipment used to provide
27 firefighting and emergency services.

28 (3) Retirement or reduction of debt accumulated through
29 the construction or renovation of facilities, purchase or
30 repair of fixtures, furnishings, office equipment and support

1 services or the purchase or repair of equipment.

2 (4) Reasonable costs associated with training or
3 certification of members.

4 (5) Any expenditures that, as determined by the advisory
5 board, enhance or improve the delivery of firefighting and
6 emergency services.

7 (b) Eligibility and limits.--

8 (1) To receive grant funds under this chapter, a
9 volunteer fire company shall have actively responded to one
10 or more fire or rescue emergencies since July 1, 2002, and
11 must sign an agreement to actively participate in the
12 Pennsylvania Fire Information Reporting System administered
13 by the agency.

14 (2) All grant awards shall be determined by the advisory
15 board on a competitive basis.

16 (c) Application.--

17 (1) The advisory board shall provide applications and a
18 program summary for grants under this chapter to the fire
19 chief and president of every volunteer fire company in this
20 Commonwealth on or before July 31 of each fiscal year. The
21 program summary shall include, but not be limited to:

22 (i) Limitations on the use of grants.

23 (ii) Eligibility criteria.

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

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

29 (d) Advisory board action.--The advisory board shall act to
30 approve or disapprove the application by December 1 of each

1 fiscal year. Applications which have not been approved or
2 disapproved by the advisory board by December 1 shall be deemed
3 approved.

4 Section 304. Consolidation.

5 If, after the effective date of this chapter, two or more
6 volunteer fire companies consolidate their use of facilities,
7 equipment, firefighters and services, the consolidated entity
8 may, upon notification of the agency, be 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 commissioner, shall
18 determine and verify that the consolidated entity is in fact
19 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

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

3 CHAPTER 5

4 EMERGENCY SERVICES ENTITIES GRANT PROGRAM

5 Section 501. Establishment.

6 The Emergency Services Entities Grant Program is hereby
7 established and shall be administered by the advisory board.
8 Grants provided under this program shall be used to continually
9 improve and enhance the capabilities of emergency service
10 entities to provide ambulance, emergency medical, basic and
11 advanced life support and general rescue services.

12 Section 502. Guidelines and procedures.

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

19 Section 503. Award of grants.

20 (a) Authorization.--The advisory board is hereby authorized
21 to make grant awards to each eligible emergency service entity
22 and water or vehicle rescue company for the following:

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

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

30 (3) Retirement or reduction of debt accumulated through

1 the construction or renovation of facilities, purchase or
2 repair of fixtures, furnishings, office equipment and support
3 services or the purchase or repair of equipment.

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

6 (5) Any expenditures that, as determined by the advisory
7 board, enhance or improve the delivery of emergency services.

8 (b) Eligibility and limits.--

9 (1) To receive grant funds under this chapter, an
10 emergency service entity or a water or vehicle rescue company
11 shall have actively responded to one or more emergency
12 medical situations or water or vehicle rescue emergencies
13 since July 1, 2002.

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

17 (3) All grant awards shall be determined by the advisory
18 board on a competitive basis.

19 (c) Application.--

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

26 (i) Limitations on the use of grants.

27 (ii) Eligibility criteria.

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

30 (2) Emergency service entities and water or vehicle

1 rescue companies seeking grants under this chapter shall
2 submit completed applications to the advisory board on or
3 before October 1 of each fiscal year.

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

8 CHAPTER 7

9 SHARED MUNICIPAL SERVICES GRANT PROGRAM

10 Section 701. Establishment.

11 The Shared Municipal Services Grant Program is hereby
12 established and shall be administered by the advisory board.
13 Grants provided under this program shall be used to improve and
14 enhance the quality and reduce the cost of municipal services by
15 providing financial assistance for the sharing of services.

16 Section 702. Guidelines and procedures.

17 The advisory board, in consultation with the department,
18 shall promulgate the rules, regulations, guidelines, procedures
19 and all applications necessary to implement the grant program.
20 The advisory board shall submit the rules, regulations,
21 guidelines, procedures and applications to the Legislative
22 Reference Bureau for publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin
23 within 90 days of the effective date of this chapter.

24 Section 703. Award of grants.

25 (a) Authorization.--The advisory board is hereby authorized
26 to make grant awards to an eligible municipality for the purpose
27 of providing financial assistance for implementing a shared
28 service agreement. Nothing in this chapter shall prevent an
29 eligible municipality from using funds from a grant program
30 award for a shared service agreement for volunteer fire company

1 or emergency service entity.

2 (b) Limits.--No more than one grant award shall be provided
3 for each shared service agreement. However, nothing in this
4 chapter shall prevent any municipality from receiving the direct
5 benefit of more than one grant award, provided that municipality
6 has entered into more than one shared service agreement.

7 (c) Time for filing application and advisory board action.--
8 The advisory board shall make available applications for grants
9 under this chapter to be submitted on a rolling basis throughout
10 the fiscal year.

11 CHAPTER 9

12 HOMELAND HEROES ADVISORY BOARD

13 Section 901. Establishment.

14 (a) Establishment.--There is hereby established within the
15 agency a Homeland Heroes Advisory Board.

16 (b) Composition.--The advisory board shall be composed of
17 the following:

18 (1) One member appointed by the Majority Leader of the
19 Senate.

20 (2) One member appointed by the Minority Leader of the
21 Senate.

22 (3) One member appointed by the Majority Leader of the
23 House of Representatives.

24 (4) One member appointed by the Minority Leader of the
25 House of Representatives.

26 (5) A representative of the Pennsylvania Emergency
27 Management Agency.

28 (6) The State Fire Commissioner.

29 (7) A representative of the Pennsylvania Fire and
30 Emergency Services Institute.

(c) Qualifications.--Each member must:

(1) be employed or engaged in business in this Commonwealth; or

(2) if retired, be a resident of this Commonwealth.

(d) Chairperson.--The commissioner shall serve as the chairperson of the commission.

(e) Meetings.--The advisory board shall meet at least biannually or more frequently as deemed necessary by the chairperson.

(f) Quorum.--A majority of the members of the advisory board constitutes a quorum. The advisory board shall keep a record of proceedings and of resolutions, rules and regulations.

(g) Agency assistance.--The agency shall assist the advisory board by providing office space, personnel and other administrative support necessary for the administration of this act.

Section 902. Powers and duties of advisory board.

The advisory board has the following powers and duties to:

(1) Promulgate in consultation with the agency regulations to carry out the provisions of this act. Initial regulations under this paragraph shall be submitted to the Legislative Reference Bureau for publication within 60 days of the effective date of this section. Regulations under this paragraph are exempt from the act of June 25, 1982 (P.L.633, No.181), known as the Regulatory Review Act.

(2) Award grants based on the criteria set forth in this act.

(3) To consult with the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency to annually determine the amount of money to be apportioned to each grant program under this act.

CHAPTER 11

GRANT FUNDING PROVISIONS

Section 1101. Homeland Heroes Grant Fund.

(a) Establishment.--There is established in the State Treasury a restricted receipt account to be known as the Homeland Heroes Grant Fund which shall be an interest-bearing, restricted revenue account in which shall be deposited such money as is appropriated, granted or donated to the advisory board or the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency for grants under this act.

(b) Use of fund.--Money deposited in the fund and interest earned on the money shall be used solely for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this act. No more than \$25,000,000 of the fund may be used annually for carrying out the provisions of this act. The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, in consultation with the advisory board, shall annually determine the amount of money to be apportioned to each grant program under this act.

(c) Administration of act.--To offset the cost of administering this act, the advisory board may retain \$100,000 of the total amount used annually.

(d) Audit of fund.--The Department of the Auditor General shall, at least once every two years, make a complete examination of the fund to verify appropriations, receipts, expenditures and the application of grant moneys awarded from the fund. The expense incurred in making such audit shall be certified to the fund by the Auditor General and shall be paid from the general appropriation to the Homeland Heroes Grant Fund.

Section 1102. Appropriation.

