

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 906 Session of 2007

INTRODUCED BY LENTZ, MELIO, DeWEESE, SOLOBAY, ARGALL, BELFANTI, BENNINGHOFF, BIANCUCCI, BOYD, CALTAGIRONE, CARROLL, CAUSER, CIVERA, CONKLIN, CREIGHTON, CURRY, DALLY, DePASQUALE, FABRIZIO, FLECK, GALLOWAY, GEORGE, GERBER, GINGRICH, GRELL, GRUCELA, HARPER, HERSHEY, HESS, HICKERNELL, HORNAMAN, HUTCHINSON, KILLION, KING, KIRKLAND, KORTZ, KOTIK, KULA, LEACH, LEVDANSKY, MAHONEY, McCALL, McILHATTAN, MENSCH, MICOZZIE, MUNDY, MURT, MUSTIO, MYERS, NAILOR, M. O'BRIEN, PALLONE, PAYNE, PETRARCA, PETRONE, PHILLIPS, PICKETT, PYLE, RAMALEY, READSHAW, RUBLEY, SAINATO, SANTONI, SAYLOR, SCAVELLO, SHAPIRO, McILVAINE SMITH, R. STEVENSON, STURLA, SURRA, R. TAYLOR, VEREB, VULAKOVICH, WALKO, WANSACZ, WATERS, WOJNAROSKI, YOUNGBLOOD AND ADOLPH, MARCH 22, 2007

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, MARCH 22, 2007

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of July 31, 2003 (P.L.73, No.17), entitled "An  
2 act establishing a grant program for volunteer fire companies  
3 and volunteer ambulance services; and providing for grant  
4 funding," further providing for guidelines and procedures,  
5 for award of grants and for expiration of authority;  
6 providing for publication and notice, for special provisions;  
7 and repealing an obsolete act.

8 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
9 hereby enacts as follows:

10 Section 1. Section 302 of the act of July 31, 2003 (P.L.73,  
11 No.17), known as the Volunteer Fire Company and Volunteer  
12 Ambulance Service Grant Act, is repealed:

13 [Section 302. Guidelines and procedures.

14 The agency shall develop guidelines, procedures and all

1 applications necessary to implement the grant program. The  
2 agency shall submit the guidelines, procedures and applications  
3 to the Legislative Reference Bureau for publication in the  
4 Pennsylvania Code and Bulletin within 30 days of the effective  
5 date of this act.]

6 Section 2. The act is amended by adding a section to read:

7 Section 302.1. Publication and notice.

8 The agency shall publish notice of the grant program  
9 availability through the Legislative Reference Bureau for  
10 publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin within 30 days of the  
11 effective date of this section for the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

12 Section 3. Section 303 of the act, amended February 21, 2006  
13 (P.L.38, No.13), is amended to read:

14 Section 303. Award of grants.

15 (a) Authorization.--The agency is hereby authorized to make  
16 a grant award to each eligible volunteer fire company for the  
17 following:

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

22 (2) Repair of firefighting, ambulance or rescue  
23 equipment or purchase thereof.

24 (3) Debt reduction associated with paragraph (1) or (2).

25 (4) Training and certification of members.

26 (b) Limits.--

27 (1) Except as provided in paragraph (3), grants shall be  
28 not less than \$2,500 and not more than \$15,000 per volunteer  
29 fire company.

30 (2) Grants may be awarded on a pro rata basis if the

1 total dollar amount of approved applications exceeds the  
2 amount of funds appropriated by the General Assembly for this  
3 purpose.

4 (3) In a municipality where there are two or more  
5 volunteer fire companies and if two or more fire companies  
6 consolidated their use of equipment, firefighters and  
7 services [after July 1, 1998, each entity from which the  
8 consolidated entity was created will be eligible for a grant  
9 as though it had not consolidated.] within five years  
10 preceding the date of the current year application submission  
11 deadline, the consolidated entity shall be deemed eligible to  
12 receive a grant not to exceed the amount of the combined  
13 total for which the individual companies would have been  
14 eligible had they not consolidated.

15 (c) Time for filing application and department action.--

16 (1) The agency shall provide written instructions and  
17 guidelines for grants under this act to the fire chief and  
18 president of every volunteer fire company in this  
19 Commonwealth on or before [February 28, 2006] June 30, 2007.

20 (2) Volunteer fire companies seeking grants under this  
21 act shall submit completed applications to the agency on or  
22 before [April 30, 2006] August 30, 2007. The agency shall act  
23 to approve or disapprove the application by [June 30, 2006]  
24 October 30, 2007. Applications which have not been approved  
25 or disapproved by the agency by [June 30, 2006] October 30,  
26 2007, shall be deemed approved.

27 (d) Eligibility.--To receive grant funds under this act, a  
28 volunteer fire company shall have actively responded to one or  
29 more fire or rescue emergencies [since July 1, 2005,] during the  
30 previous calendar year and must [sign] have signed and be under

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

4 Section 4. Section 502 of the act is repealed:

5 [Section 502. Guidelines and procedures.

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

12 Section 5. The act is amended by adding a section to read:

13 Section 502.1. Publication and notice.

14 The agency shall publish notice of the grant program  
15 availability through the Legislative Reference Bureau for  
16 publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin within 30 days of the  
17 effective date of this section for the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

18 Section 6. Sections 503 and 901 of the act, amended February  
19 21, 2006 (P.L.38, No.13), are amended to read:

20 Section 503. Award of grants.

21 (a) Authorization.--The agency is hereby authorized to make  
22 a grant award to each eligible volunteer ambulance service for  
23 the following:

24 (1) Construction and/or renovation of the volunteer  
25 ambulance service's facility 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 life support and advanced life support services.

30 (2) Repair of ambulance equipment or purchase thereof.

1 (3) Debt reduction associated with paragraph (1) or (2).

2 (4) Training and certification of members.

3 (b) Limits.--

4 (1) Grants shall be not less than \$2,500 and not more  
5 than \$10,000 per volunteer ambulance service.

6 (2) Grants may be awarded on a pro rata basis if the  
7 total dollar amount of approved applications exceeds the  
8 amount of funds appropriated by the General Assembly for this  
9 purpose.

10 (3) If two or more volunteer ambulance services  
11 consolidated their use of equipment, personnel and services  
12 [after July 1, 1998, each entity from which the consolidated  
13 entity was created will be eligible for a grant as though it  
14 had not consolidated.] within five years preceding the date  
15 of the current year application submission deadline, the  
16 consolidated entity shall be deemed eligible to receive a  
17 grant not to exceed the amount of the combined total for  
18 which the individual companies would have been eligible had  
19 they not consolidated.

20 (c) Time for filing application and department action.--

21 [(1) The agency shall provide written instructions and  
22 guidelines for grants under this act to the president of  
23 every volunteer ambulance service in this Commonwealth on or  
24 before February 28, 2006.

25 (2) Volunteer ambulance services seeking grants under  
26 this chapter shall submit completed applications to the  
27 agency on or before April 30, 2006. The agency shall act to  
28 approve or disapprove the application by June 30, 2006.  
29 Applications which have not been approved or disapproved by  
30 the agency by June 30, 2006, shall be deemed approved.]

1           (1.1) The agency shall provide written instructions for  
2 grants under this act to the president of every volunteer  
3 ambulance service in this Commonwealth within 30 days of the  
4 effective date of this paragraph.

5           (2.1) The agency shall provide applications to volunteer  
6 ambulance services within 60 days of the effective date of  
7 this paragraph. Volunteer ambulance services seeking grants  
8 under this chapter shall submit completed applications to the  
9 agency on or before August 30, 2007. The agency shall act to  
10 approve or disapprove the application within 60 days of the  
11 application submission deadline. Applications which have not  
12 been approved or disapproved by the agency within 60 days of  
13 the application submission deadline shall be deemed approved.

14 Section 901. Expiration of authority.

15       The authority of the agency to award grants under Chapters 3  
16 and 5 shall expire June 30, [2007] 2008.

17       Section 7. The act is amended by adding a section to read:

18 Section 901.1. Special provisions.

19       (a) Claim.--An applicant for a grant under this act who  
20 failed to return a signed agreement for the preceding year shall  
21 not be permitted to apply for a grant in the current year,  
22 unless the applicant has provided the commissioner with a  
23 reasonable written explanation as to why it did not claim its  
24 grant.

25       (b) Delinquency.--An applicant for a grant under this act  
26 who is delinquent in loan payments to the Pennsylvania Volunteer  
27 Loan Assistance Program existing under the act of November 13,  
28 1995 (P.L.604, No.61), known as the State Fire Commissioner Act,  
29 shall agree to use its grant funds to pay any arrears to the  
30 Commonwealth or it will not be qualified to receive a grant. Any

1 organization agreeing to this arrangement who fails to make the  
2 payment to the Commonwealth shall be disqualified from applying  
3 to the grant program for a period of three years.

4 (c) Demonstration.--An applicant for a grant under this act  
5 must demonstrate that it complied with all terms of its grant  
6 agreement in the previous year regarding the use of the grant  
7 money it received in previous years or it shall not be eligible  
8 to receive a grant in the current year.

9 (d) Approval.--An applicant shall not be approved for a  
10 grant to be used for purposes other than those stated in section  
11 303(a) or 503(a).

12 Section 8. Repeals are as follows:

13 (1) The General Assembly declares that the act repealed  
14 under paragraph (2) is obsolete.

15 (2) The act of June 22, 2000 (P.L.477, No.66), known as  
16 the Volunteer Fire Company and Volunteer Ambulance Service  
17 Grant Act, is repealed.

18 Section 9. The addition of section 901.1(a) of the act shall  
19 apply to grants for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2007.

20 Section 10. This act shall take effect immediately.