
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 796 Session of
2019

INTRODUCED BY MUTH AND COLLETT, JULY 9, 2019

REFERRED TO VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS,
JULY 9, 2019

AN ACT

1 Amending Title 35 (Health and Safety) of the Pennsylvania
2 Consolidated Statutes, in Commonwealth services, further
3 providing for assistance to volunteer fire companies,
4 ambulance service and rescue squads.

5 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
6 hereby enacts as follows:

7 Section 1. Section 7364(a)(1), (2), (3), (5), (6) and (7)
8 and (b) of Title 35 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes
9 are amended and the section is amended by adding a subsection to
10 read:

11 § 7364. Assistance to volunteer fire companies, ambulance
12 service and rescue squads.

13 (a) General rule.--The office is authorized, upon
14 application of any volunteer fire company, volunteer ambulance
15 service or volunteer rescue squad, to make loans for the
16 following purposes:

17 (1) Establishing or modernizing facilities that house
18 firefighting equipment, ambulance or rescue vehicles. The
19 amount of a loan for establishing or modernizing facilities

1 made to any one volunteer fire company, ambulance service or
2 rescue squad shall not exceed 50% of the total cost of the
3 facilities or modernization or [~~\$400,000~~] \$440,000, whichever
4 is less, and a notarized financial statement filed under
5 subsection (c) shall show that the applicant has available
6 20% of the total cost of the facilities in unobligated funds.
7 Proceeds of the loan shall be used only for purposes of
8 structure or land acquisition or renovation or construction
9 and shall not be used for payment of fees for design,
10 planning, preparation of applications or any other cost not
11 directly attributable to structure or land acquisition or
12 renovation or construction.

13 (2) Purchasing firefighting apparatus, ambulances or
14 rescue vehicles. The amount of a loan made for purchasing
15 firefighting apparatus to any one volunteer fire company
16 shall not exceed [~~\$200,000~~] \$220,000 for any single
17 firefighting apparatus equipment or utility or special
18 service vehicle or heavy duty rescue vehicle as defined by
19 regulation or guideline, or 50% of the total cost of the
20 equipment or vehicle, whichever is less, except for loans for
21 aerial apparatus as defined by regulation or guideline, which
22 shall not exceed [~~\$300,000~~] \$330,000. The amount of a loan
23 made to any one volunteer fire company, ambulance service or
24 rescue squad for any ambulance or light duty rescue vehicle
25 as defined by regulation or guideline shall not exceed
26 [~~\$100,000~~] \$110,000 and for a watercraft rescue vehicle shall
27 not exceed [~~\$30,000~~] \$33,000 or 50% of the cost of the
28 ambulance or rescue vehicle, whichever is less, and a
29 notarized financial statement filed under subsection (c)
30 shall show that the applicant has available 20% of the total

1 cost of the vehicle in unobligated funds.

2 (3) Purchasing protective, accessory or communication
3 equipment. No volunteer fire company, ambulance service or
4 rescue squad shall receive a loan for protective, accessory
5 or communicative equipment more than once in any five-year
6 period. Each volunteer fire company, ambulance service or
7 rescue squad may apply for a loan for a mobile and portable
8 radio unit for each existing serviceable apparatus equipment,
9 ambulance or rescue vehicle. Radio equipment obtained through
10 loans under this subchapter shall be equipped with a
11 frequency or frequencies licensed by the Federal
12 Communications Commission for firefighting or emergency
13 response purposes. A notarized financial statement shall be
14 filed and loans under this subchapter for the purchase of
15 protective, accessory or communicative equipment shall not
16 exceed ~~[\$20,000]~~ \$22,000.

17 * * *

18 (5) Repair or rehabilitation of apparatus equipment.
19 Where it has been determined that existing apparatus
20 equipment no longer meets the standards of the National Fire
21 Protection Association and the repair or rehabilitation of
22 such equipment will bring it in compliance with National Fire
23 Protection Association standards, loans for the repair or
24 rehabilitation for a single apparatus equipment shall be for
25 at least ~~[\$2,000]~~ \$2,200 but shall not exceed the lesser of
26 ~~[\$70,000]~~ \$77,000 or 80% of the total cost of repair or
27 rehabilitation.

28 (6) Purchasing of used firefighting apparatus,
29 equipment, used ambulances, used rescue vehicles, used
30 communications equipment, used accessory equipment or used

1 protective equipment, except that the used vehicles and
2 equipment shall meet the National Fire Protection Association
3 (NFPA) standards and loans for the purchase of a used single
4 apparatus equipment shall not exceed [~~\$120,000~~] \$132,000 or
5 80% of the total cost of the equipment, whichever is less.

6 (7) Purchasing Pennsylvania Fire Information Reporting
7 System (PennFIRS) hardware and software. A volunteer fire
8 company shall be eligible to apply one time only for a loan
9 of not more than [~~\$4,000~~] \$4,400 or 75% of the cost of such
10 acquisition, whichever is less, and with a term not exceeding
11 five years for the purpose of acquiring the hardware and
12 software necessary to participate in the Pennsylvania Fire
13 Information Reporting System. The office shall develop, at
14 its discretion, such procedures and forms as it may deem
15 necessary to facilitate loans for PennFIRS hardware and
16 software. The loans shall be secured as required by law.

17 * * *

18 (b) Loans.--Loans made by the office in the amount of
19 [~~\$30,000~~] \$33,000 or less shall be for a period of not more than
20 ten years. Loans in excess of [~~\$30,000~~] \$33,000 but not in
21 excess of [~~\$100,000~~] \$110,000 shall be for a period of not more
22 than 15 years. The payback period of any loan in excess of
23 [~~\$100,000~~] \$110,000, except a loan for establishing or
24 modernizing facilities, shall not exceed 20 years. The payback
25 period for any loan in excess of [~~\$200,000~~] \$220,000 for
26 establishing or modernizing facilities shall not exceed 20
27 years. Loans shall be subject to the payment of interest at 2%
28 per year and shall be subject to such security as shall be
29 determined by the commissioner. The total amount of interest
30 earned by the investment or reinvestment of all or any part of

1 the principal of any loan shall be returned to the office and
2 transferred to the Volunteer Companies Loan Fund and shall not
3 be credited as payment of principal or interest on the loan.
4 Except as provided in subsection (a)(5) and (7), the minimum
5 amount of any loan shall be [~~\$10,000~~] \$11,000.

6 (b.1) Inflation adjustment.--Beginning one year after the
7 effective date of this section, and annually thereafter, all
8 limits for the amount of a loan under this section shall
9 increase at the rate of inflation as outlined in the Consumer
10 Price Index for All Urban Consumers in the Northeast Region for
11 the most recent 12-month period for which the figures have been
12 reported by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of
13 Labor Statistics. If the rate of inflation does not increase,
14 all loan limits shall remain the same as they were for the
15 previous year. The office shall transmit notice of loan limit
16 increases to the Legislative Reference Bureau for publication in
17 the Pennsylvania Bulletin.

18 * * *

19 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.