

**VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY AND VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE SERVICE GRANT ACT**  
**Act of Jul. 31, 2003, P.L. 73, No. 17**

AN ACT

Establishing a grant program for volunteer fire companies and volunteer ambulance services;  
and providing for grant funding.

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

CHAPTER 1  
PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS

Section 101. Short title.

This act shall be known and may be cited as the Volunteer Fire Company and Volunteer Ambulance Service Grant Act.

Section 102. Definitions.

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

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

“Agency.” The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency.

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

“Commissioner.” The State Fire Commissioner.

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

“Grant program.” The Volunteer Fire Company Grant Program established in Chapter 3 or the Volunteer Ambulance Service Grant Program established in Chapter 5.

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

“Volunteer ambulance service.” Any nonprofit chartered corporation, association or organization located in this Commonwealth, which is licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Health and is not associated or affiliated with any hospital and which is regularly engaged in the provision of emergency medical services, including basic life support or advanced life support services and advanced life support squads as defined in 28 Pa. Code § 1005.1 (relating to general provisions). The term shall not include any corporation, association or organization that is primarily engaged in the operation of invalid coaches which are intended for the routine transport of persons who are convalescent or otherwise nonambulatory and do not ordinarily require emergency medical treatment while in transit. (Def. amended June 28, 2007, P.L.36, No.10)

“Volunteer fire company.” A nonprofit chartered corporation, association or organization located in this Commonwealth which provides fire protection or rescue services and which may offer other voluntary emergency within this Commonwealth. Voluntary emergency services provided by a volunteer fire company may include voluntary ambulance and voluntary rescue services.

“Volunteer rescue company.” A nonprofit chartered corporation, association or organization located in this Commonwealth that provides rescue services as part of the response to fires and/or vehicle accidents within this Commonwealth.

CHAPTER 3  
VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY GRANT PROGRAM

**Compiler’s Note:** See sections 8.1, 8.2 and 9 of Act 10 of 2007 in the appendix to this act for special provisions relating to payment of grants end performance review of program.  
Section 301. Establishment.

The Volunteer Fire Company 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 improve and enhance the capabilities of the volunteer fire company to provide firefighting, ambulance and rescue services.

Section 302. Guidelines and procedures. (302 repealed June 28, 2007, P.L.36, No.10)

Section 302.1. Publication and notice.

The agency shall publish notice of the grant program availability through the Legislative Reference Bureau for publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin:

- (1) within 30 days of the effective date of this section for the fiscal years beginning July 1, 2006, and July 1, 2007; and
  - (2) by August 8 for fiscal years beginning after June 30, 2008.
- (302.1 added June 28, 2007, P.L.36, No.10)

Section 303. Award of grants.

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

- (1) Construction and/or renovation of the fire company's facility and purchase or repair of fixtures and furnishings necessary to maintain or improve the capability of the company to provide fire, ambulance and rescue services.
- (2) Repair of firefighting, ambulance or rescue equipment or purchase thereof.
- (3) Debt reduction associated with paragraph (1) or (2)
- (4) Training and certification of members.

(b) Limits.—

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

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

(3) In a municipality where there are two or more volunteer fire companies and if two or more fire companies consolidated their use of equipment, firefighters and services within five years preceding the date of the current year application submission deadline, the consolidated entity shall be deemed eligible to receive a grant not to exceed the amount of the combined total for which the individual companies would have been eligible had they not consolidated.

(c) Time for filing application and department action.—

(1) Within 30 days of the effective date of this paragraph for the fiscal years beginning July 1, 2006, end July 1, 2007, and by September 1 of each year thereafter, the agency shall provide written instructions for grants under this act to the fire chief and president of every volunteer fire company in this Commonwealth.

(2) Within 45 days of the effective date of this paragraph for the fiscal years beginning July 1, 2006, and July 1, 2007, and by September 8 of each year thereafter, the agency shall provide applications to the fire chief and president of every volunteer fire company. The application for the fiscal years commencing July 1, 2006, and July 1, 2007, shall be a combined application. Volunteer fire companies seeking grants under this act shall submit completed applications to the agency. The application period shall remain open for 45 days each year. The agency shall act to approve or disapprove applications within 60 days of the application submission deadline each year. Applications which have not been approved or disapproved by the agency within 60 days after the close of the application period each year shall be deemed approved.

(d) Eligibility.—To receive grant funds under this act, a volunteer fire company shall have actively responded to one or more fire or rescue emergencies during the previous calendar year and must have signed and be under an agreement to actively participate in the Pennsylvania Fire Information Reporting System which is administered by the agency.

(303 amended June 28, 2007, P.L.36, No.10)

Section 304. Consolidation incentive.

If, after the effective date of this act, two or more volunteer fire companies consolidate their use of facilities, equipment, firefighters and services, the consolidated entity may, upon notification of the agency, be eligible for a reduction of the interest rate payable on any outstanding principal balance owed, as of the date of consolidation, by any or all of the consolidating companies to the Volunteer Companies Loan Fund for loans made under the act

of July 15, 1976 (P.L.1036, No.208), known as the Volunteer Fire Company, Ambulance Service and Rescue Squad Assistance Act. The reduction in the interest rate payable shall be from 2% to 1%. Upon receipt of such notification, the agency, in conjunction with the State Fire Commissioner, shall determine and verify that the consolidated entity is in fact a bona fide consolidated volunteer fire company. If the agency determines that the consolidated entity is a bona fide consolidated volunteer fire company, it shall reduce the interest rate payable on any outstanding principal balance owed to the Volunteer Companies Loan Fund for loans made under the Volunteer Fire Company, Ambulance Service and Rescue Squad Assistance Act for which the consolidating companies or the consolidated entity may be individually or jointly responsible. The agency may promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this section.

## CHAPTER 5 VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE SERVICE GRANT PROGRAM

### Section 501. Establishment.

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

Section 502. Guidelines and procedures. (502 repealed June 28, 2007, P.L.36, No.10)

### Section 502.1. Publication and notice.

The agency shall publish notice of the grant program availability through the Legislative Reference Bureau for publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin:

- (1) within 30 days of the effective date of this section for the fiscal years beginning July 1, 2006, and July 1, 2007; and
  - (2) by August 8 for fiscal years beginning after June 30, 2008.
- (502.1 added June 28, 2007, P.L.36, No.10)

### Section 503. Award of grants.

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

- (1) Construction and/or renovation of the volunteer ambulance service's facility and purchase or repair of fixtures, furnishings, office equipment and support services necessary to maintain or improve the capability of the ambulance service to provide ambulance, emergency medical, basic life support and advanced life support services.
- (2) Repair of ambulance equipment or purchase thereof.
- (3) Debt reduction associated with paragraph (1) or (2)
- (4) Training and certification of members.

#### (b) Limits.---

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

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

(3) If two or more volunteer ambulance services consolidated their use of equipment, personnel and services within five years preceding the date of the current year application submission deadline, the consolidated entity shall be deemed eligible to receive a grant not to exceed the amount of the combined total for which the individual companies would have been eligible had they not consolidated.

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

(1) Within 30 days of the effective date of this paragraph for the fiscal years commencing July 1, 2006, and July 1, 2007, and by September 1 of each year thereafter, the agency shall provide written instructions for grants under this act to the president of every volunteer ambulance service in this Commonwealth.

(2) Within 45 days of the effective date of this paragraph for the fiscal years commencing July 1, 2006, and July 1, 2007, and by September 8 of each year, the agency shall provide applications to the president of every volunteer ambulance service. The application for the fiscal years commencing July 1, 2006, and July 1, 2007, shall be a combined application. Volunteer ambulance services seeking grants under this act shall

submit completed applications to the agency. The application period shall remain open for 45 days each year. The agency shall act to approve or disapprove applications within 60 days of the application submission deadline each year. Applications which have not been approved or disapproved by the agency within 60 days after the close of the application period each year shall be deemed approved. (503 amended June 28, 2007, Pt., No.10)

## CHAPTER 7 GRANT FUNDING PROVISIONS

### Section 701. Volunteer Fire Company Grant Program.

The sum of \$22,000,000 of the amount appropriated to the agency for volunteer company grants under section 225 of the act of March 20, 2003 (P.L.463, No.1A), known as the General Appropriation Act of 2003, shall be expended for the purpose of making grants to eligible volunteer fire companies pursuant to Chapter 3.

Section 702. Volunteer Ambulance Service Grant Program. The sum of \$3,000,000 of the amount appropriated to the agency for volunteer company grants under section 225 of the act of March 20, 2003 (P.L.463, No.1A), known as the General Appropriation Act of 2003, shall be expended for the purpose of making grants to eligible volunteer ambulance companies pursuant to Chapter 5.

### Section 703. Allocation of appropriated funds.

(a) Prohibition.—No moneys from the appropriation for volunteer company grants shall be used for expenses or costs incurred by the agency for the administration of the grant programs authorized under Chapters 3 end 5.

(b) Grant allocation.—Unless otherwise expressly stated, moneys appropriated to the agency for purposes of volunteer company grants shall be allocated as follows:

(1) 88% of the amount appropriated shall be used for making grants to eligible volunteer fire companies under Chapter 3.

(2) 12% of the amount appropriated shall be used for making grants to eligible volunteer ambulance companies under Chapter 5.

(703 amended July 15, 2004, P.L.712, No.80)

## CHAPTER 9 MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

### Section 901. Expiration of authority.

The authority of the agency to award grants under Chapters 3 end 5 shall expire June 30, 2012.

(901 amended June 28, 2007, P.L.36, No.10)

### Section 901.1. Special provisions.

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

(b) Delinquency—An applicant for a grant under this act who is delinquent in loan payments to the Pennsylvania Volunteer Loan Assistance Program established under the act of July 15, 1976 (P.L.1036, No.208), known as the Volunteer Fire Company, Ambulance Service and Rescue Squad Assistance Act, shall agree to use its grant funds to pay any arrears to the Commonwealth or it will not be qualified to receive a grant. Any organization agreeing to this arrangement who fails to make the payment to the Commonwealth shall be disqualified from applying to the grant program for a period of three years.

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

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

(901.1 added June 28, 2007, P.L.36, No.10)

Section 902. "Declaration". (902 deleted by amendment July 15, 2004, P.L.712, No.80.)

Section 903. Effective date.

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

## APPENDIX

### ----- Supplementary Provisions of Amendatory Statutes -----

#### **2007, JUNE 28, P.L.36, NO.10**

Section 8.1. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 1720— C(c) of the act of April 9, 1929 (D.L.343, No.176), known as The Fiscal Code, moneys appropriated to the Volunteer Fire Company Grant Program by section 1720—C(c) of The Fiscal Code shall be utilized for payment of grants under Chapters 3 and 5.

**Compiler's Note:** Act 10 amended, added or repealed sections 102, 302, 302.1, 503, 502, 502.1, 503, 901 and 901.1 of Act 17

Section 8.2. For the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2006, payments of grants shall commence on or after December 14, 2007. For the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2007, payments of grants shall commence on or after January 15, 2008.

Section 9. The Legislative Budget and Finance Committee shall conduct a performance review of the program authorized by this act and shall submit its evaluation of and recommendations regarding the program to the General Assembly no later than February 28, 2012.