

Article 87.

Volunteer Safety Workers Assistance.

**§ 58-87-1. Volunteer Fire Department Fund.**

(a) Fund. – The Volunteer Fire Department Fund is created as an interest-bearing, nonreverting fund in the Department to provide grants to volunteer fire departments to purchase equipment and make capital improvements. The State Fire Marshal shall administer the Fund. Up to one percent (1%) of the Fund may be used for additional staff and resources to administer the Fund in each fiscal year.

(a1) Grant Program. – An eligible fire department may apply to the State Fire Marshal for a grant under this section. In awarding grants under this section, the State Fire Marshal must, to the extent possible, select applicants from all parts of the State based upon need. The State Fire Marshal must award the grants on May 15, or on the first business day after May 15 if May 15 falls on a weekend or a holiday, of each year subject to the following limitations:

- (1) **(Expires June 30, 2025 – see note)** The size of a grant may not exceed forty thousand dollars (\$40,000).
- (2) Repealed by Session Laws 2021-178, s. 2, effective December 1, 2021.
- (2a) The applicant shall match the grant as follows:
  - a. Applicants receiving less than or equal to fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) per year from municipal and county funding are not required to match the grant funding.
  - b. Applicants receiving more than fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) but less than or equal to seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000) per year from municipal and county funding shall match one dollar (\$1.00) for each three dollars (\$3.00) of grant funds.
  - c. Applicants receiving more than seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000) per year from municipal and county funding shall match the grant on a dollar-for-dollar basis.
- (3) The grant may be used only for equipment purchases, payment of highway use taxes on those purchases, costs of putting property acquired from the Department of Defense through the Firefighter Property (FFP) and federal Excess Property (FEPP) programs in service, or capital expenditures necessary to provide fire protection services.
- (4) An applicant may receive no more than one grant per fiscal year.

(b) Eligible Fire Department. – A fire department is eligible for a grant under this section if it meets all of the conditions of this subsection. No fire department may be declared ineligible for a grant solely because it is classified as a municipal fire department. The required conditions are:

- (1) Repealed by Session Laws 2016-78, s. 2.1(a), effective June 30, 2016.
- (2) It consists entirely of volunteer members, with the exception that the unit may have paid members to fill the equivalent of eight full-time paid positions. For purposes of this subdivision, a "full-time paid position" is equivalent to 2,080 hours in a fiscal year.
- (3) It has been certified by the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

(c) Report. – The State Fire Marshal must submit a written report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on General Government and the Fiscal Research Division within 60 days after the grants have been made. This report must contain the following:

- (1) The amount of the grant and the name of the recipient.
- (2) The Fund balance at the beginning of the grant cycle.
- (3) Cash receipts through the previous grant cycle.

- (4) Cash disbursements through the previous grant cycle.
- (5) The Fund balance at the beginning and end of the previous grant cycle.
- (d) Repealed by Session Laws 2022-74, s. 30.1, effective July 1, 2022. (1987, c. 709, s. 1; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1062, ss. 6-9; 1989, c. 770, s. 30; 1995, c. 507, s. 7.21A(k); 1998-212, s. 25(a); 1999-319, s. 1; 2004-203, s. 5(c); 2006-196, s. 8; 2007-250, s. 3; 2013-360, s. 20.2(b); 2014-64, s. 4(a), (b); 2016-78, s. 2.1(a); 2021-178, s. 2; 2021-180, s. 37.7(d); 2022-74, s. 30.1; 2023-134, s. 30.2(a), (b); 2023-151, s. 11.46(a), (b).)