



### **Message from State Fire Commissioner Bruce Trego:**

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, our office has remained open to provide the necessary resources we know that you, our fire service and EMS personnel, need to fulfill your critical public safety role in the Commonwealth. This work has taken many forms, including the administration of the one-time COVID-19 Crisis Fire, Rescue and EMS Grant Program.

Because the Program is funded exclusively by the federal CARES Act, federal guidance and requirements surrounding the administration and eligible uses of CARES Act funds were updated several times. Unfortunately, these changes were out of our control and caused significant confusion and frustration not only for you, but also for OSFC staff who take tremendous pride in their work to support first responders in Pennsylvania.

Please take the time to thoroughly review and understand the most recent guidance our office has received. Applicants should expect to receive grant agreements from our office over the next several weeks.

Lastly, I want to thank you for your patience during this process, and your dedication to your lifesaving mission throughout the pandemic.

### **OSFC COVID-19 Crisis Fire, Rescue and EMS Grant \*\*October 2, 2020 Update on Eligible Expenditures\*\***

The following information regarding the eligible projects and services is being provided to assist eligible subrecipients with determining how the COVID-19 Crisis Fire, Rescue and EMS Grant funds may be spent according to the State and Federal guidance. Due to the most recent Federal Guidelines ([Updated September 2, 2020](#)), the following expenditures for the COVID-19 Fire, Rescue and EMS Grant are eligible where applicable:

#### **Non-Profit Volunteer Fire, Rescue or EMS Companies ONLY:**

- Program funds may be used to supplement operational expenses incurred by the lack of opportunities for fund raising and the inability to create revenue due to compliance with measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
  - A Fire, Rescue or EMS company must be able to demonstrate, if requested, that
    - a) its financial hardships are due to COVID-19, and
    - b) that the purpose/use of the grant will be to help offset those losses.
      - Example: If a volunteer fire, rescue or EMS company held fundraisers in the past to pay their annual operating expenses, but were prevented from holding those fundraisers due to COVID-19 restrictions, they can use grant funds from this program to cover those expenses. The United States Treasury's Office of Inspector General, the United States Government Accountability Office, Single Audit Act auditors and other may seek to audit CARES ACT funds to determine that COVID-19 is the basis for the harm to be remediated by the grant.

- Documentation and maintenance of the records of proceeds from past fundraisers and the loss of such during the COVID-19 pandemic (March 6 to December 30, 2020) will be the responsibility of each grant subrecipient.
- The subrecipient will be required to include the documentation with its Final Report.
- **This revenue replacement allowance is for non-profit fire, rescue and EMS companies only.**
- The funds will need to be spent according to one or more of the following categories:
  - Operational Expenses – such as but not limited to:
    - Utilities
    - Insurance
    - Apparatus Repairs/Fuel
    - Personal Protective Equipment
    - Lost Revenues due to Pandemic Restrictions (see above)
  - Expenses for cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting of equipment and property or other expenses incurred to prevent the spread of communicable illnesses.
- Program funds must be utilized for eligible expenses initiated on or after March 6, 2020 and completed on or before December 30, 2020 to be considered as eligible for this grant program.

**Career/Combination Fire, Rescue or EMS Companies – Paid Members ONLY:**

- Program funds may be used to reimburse for the cost of paid members' salaries and their overtime from March 6, 2020 to December 30, 2020, to the extent they qualify as public safety employees pursuant to federal guidance (see the September 2, 2020 updated U.S. Treasury guidance at <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/cares/state-and-local-governments> for more information).
  - **This salary and overtime allowance does not include the provision of any payment to members of volunteer fire, rescue or EMS companies.**
- Career/Combination Fire, Rescue or EMS Companies may also use Program funds as follows:
  - Operational Expenses – such as but not limited to:
    - Utilities
    - Insurance
    - Apparatus Repairs/Fuel
    - Personal Protective Equipment
  - Expenses for cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting of equipment and property or other expenses incurred to prevent the spread of communicable illnesses.
- Program funds must be utilized for eligible expenses initiated on or after March 6, 2020 and completed on or before December 30, 2020 to be considered as eligible for this grant program.