



American Rescue Plan Firefighter Grant Guidelines

Fiscal Year 2022

**State of New Jersey
Philip D. Murphy, Governor**

**Department of Community Affairs
Lt. Governor Sheila Y. Oliver, Commissioner**

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The American Rescue Plan Firefighter Grant (“Firefighter Grant”) is a competitive grant that supports local and regional fire department firefighters by ensuring that they have proper fire protection, cleaning, and sanitization equipment. Ensuring that firefighters are properly protected against the combined threats of the COVID-19 virus and the strain of emergency fire requests is vital given the current stress on communities confronting the pandemic. Access to funding to purchase the appropriate gear, clothing, and equipment is critical for mental and physical health, particularly for those fire departments with limited operating budgets and large numbers of volunteers. Assisting local and regional fire departments in purchasing gear, clothing, and equipment helps address these equity considerations, meeting the needs of communities that have been placed under substantial stress throughout the pandemic. The Firefighter Grant will allocate funds to allow departments to make these needed purchases.

Firefighter Grant funds will be allocated to each grant recipient to help cover costs associated with the purchases of:

- Protective clothing (turnout clothing ensembles, pants, garments, helmets, hoods, gloves, footwear, etc.)
- Cleaning and Advanced Cleaning equipment
- Oxygen equipment;
- PPE; and
- Other fire/virus protection equipment as determined to be appropriate by the Division of Local Government Services (“DLGS”).

The grant review process will prioritize departments with a demonstrated need. Departments that evidence a heightened systemic strain due to COVID-19, and those with existing underserved populations and/or unmet firefighting needs, will be prioritized. All costs must be articulated in the grant budget proposal and approved by DLGS.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

All local and regional fire departments in New Jersey are eligible to apply.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To qualify for Firefighter Grant funding, each eligible applicant must:

- Describe the intended use of grant funding for the purchase of fire gear, clothing, and/or equipment.
- List the key personnel and/or outside consultant that will be managing the grant funds and purchase of equipment.
- Submit a governing body resolution acknowledging and approving any grant application and the proposed plan to use funds for the purchase of approved items.

FUNDING AVAILABLE

Governor Murphy has appropriated \$10 million from the American Rescue Plan State Fiscal Recovery Funds to support the purchase of firefighter equipment during this time of heightened community need. The Division of Local Government Services within the Department of Community Affairs will administer the Grant awards, which may be adjusted or capped based upon applications submitted. A recommended maximum award of \$75,000 shall govern; however, awards in excess of the cap may be authorized if warranted and depending upon program demand. Funding duplication is not permitted and cannot supplant allocated funding from other sources. Priority will be given to departments demonstrating the greatest need.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants must submit applications utilizing the NJDCA SAGE Portal (see requirements below). Each application submitted to DLGS shall include a description of the intended use of grant funding for the purchase of specific gear, clothing, and/or equipment; demonstrate the applicant's

capacity to obtain the necessary items; and list key personnel that will be managing the grant funds, including a grant coordinator, administrator, or other primary contact.

The following forms must be submitted with the American Rescue Plan Firefighter Grant:

- a. Grant Application
- b. Governing Body Resolution
- c. Department Narrative Detailing Need
- d. Detailed Proposed Project Budget
- e. Certification Regarding Debarment and Suspension - Schedule G
- f. Certification Regarding Lobbying - Schedule H

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- a. The maximum grant amount request shall be \$75,000. Fire Departments requesting amounts in excess of \$75,000 shall identify and justify the excess amount in the narrative section of the application.
- b. Applicants are required to submit the following information:
 1. Number of fire calls for calendar years 2020, 2021 and 2022 (through May).
**(As reported in the NFIRS – if used)
 2. Number of “Active” firefighters for calendar years 2020, 2021 and 2022 (through May).
 3. Population Served.
 4. Evidence of a heightened systemic strain due to COVID-19, existence of serving underserved populations, and/or unmet firefighting needs.
 5. Local Match (if no local match, describe why).

**Note: For volunteer fire companies, do not include “Exempt” members.

NJDCA SAGE PORTAL

All applications must be submitted through the NJDCA SAGE Portal located at:
<https://dcasage.intelligrants.com/portal.asp>.

For municipal and volunteer fire departments, applications are to be filed through your municipality.

For regional or independent fire departments, the stand-alone agency or fire district must be registered in SAGE and set up an “Agency Profile.” The SAGE Agency User Manual can be located at: <https://www.nj.gov/dca/dlgs/programs/arpffg.shtml>.

**All applicants are to ensure that their SAGE Agency information contains up-to-date information including all email contacts of personnel responsible for administering the grant.

NJSTART E-PROCUREMENT SYSTEM

Applicants who do not have a NJ State-issued Vendor ID number are required to register in the NJSTART E-Procurement system located at: <https://www.njstart.gov/bso/> and provide banking information for electronic receipt of grant funds. For assistance please contact:
njstartagency.support@treas.nj.gov.

**The NJ State-issued Vendor ID number is required to be on your SAGE Agency Profile.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

DLGS must be in receipt of one electronic copy of the completed application in SAGE by 5:00 P.M. EST on August 13, 2022 for the applicant(s) to be eligible for grant funding.

Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding. Applications not submitted on or before 5:00 P.M. on August 13, 2022 will be rejected.

GRANT REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

DLGS will evaluate all applications. Grant applications will be ranked by community and financial need, feasibility, local unit match commitment, and scope of impact. DLGS will review grant applications and notify applicants of grant awards on or about October 1, 2022.

Grant application decisions are final and not subject to appeal.

APPLICATION SCORING CRITERIA

Applications will be scored based on the following criteria, on a scale of 100 points:

1. Scope of Department Need (50).
 - a. Demonstrated need for equipment.
 - b. Number of service calls.
 - c. Number of active firefighters.
 - d. Population of service area.
2. COVID-19 Impact on Department/Area (40).
 - a. Unique impacts of the virus on the firehouse and/or its personnel.
 - b. Local impact of COVID-19 as it relates to fire department activities/response.
3. Demonstration of Applicant Commitment to Protecting Firefighters (10).
 - a. Local match.
 - b. Other grants for this purpose or other firefighting projects.

Bonus Points: (10)

Applicants may be awarded up to 10 additional bonus points by uploading copies of their Service Call Summary Reports extracted from their National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) for years 2020, 2021 and 2022 (through May) with your grant application.

- Funds will be awarded to grantees only if they are in good standing and in compliance with all program, statutory, and regulatory requirements.
- Recipients must use funds awarded to support costs associated with the authorized project eligibility requirements.

GRANT FUNDING PROCESS

All awards are subject to the continuing availability of appropriated funds.

Upon completion of grant review and award notification, DLGS will enter into an agreement with applicants approved for funding. The grant agreement execution process is also administered in NJDCA SAGE. Following execution of the agreement, the grantee can seek reimbursement of eligible costs, provided that all award conditions have been satisfied.

Grantees shall maintain and retain accounting and other grant-related records and information for the duration of the project funded by the grant, as required by applicable state and local laws and regulations, for no less than two (2) calendar years.

Such records shall be subject to examination, audit, and inspection by DLGS and/or any other federal, state, or local agency that has jurisdictional authority.

DLGS reserves the right to rescind or reclaim funds, withhold future grant funding, and/or disqualify a grantee from participating in future grant awards if any condition of the grant program is unmet, including if grant funds received by the grantee are not properly accounted for, or if the grantee fails to meet reporting or certification requirements.

Following execution of the agreement, the grantee is permitted to move funds between authorized categories within these guidelines for eligible items without requesting prior approval from the DLGS.

REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

Firefighter Grants are reimbursement-based. There will be no advance payment or drawdown of grant funds. Eligible costs are reimbursed to the grantee upon submission of evidence of payment by the grantee.

Requests for payment must be made through the NJDCA SAGE portal by submitting a Financial Status Report (FSR), Expense Report, Payment Voucher, and Final Project Progress Report. The recipient must also attach copies of fully executed purchase orders and copies of cancelled checks (both sides) documenting the expenditure of funds for which reimbursement is sought. Requests for reimbursement can be submitted at any time but must be not less than once every six months.

Funding for reimbursement requests received more than two (2) months after the close of the fiscal year during which the costs were incurred cannot be guaranteed.

Payment will be made via electronic transfer of funds to the account and financial institution identified by the grantee in NJDCA SAGE.

GRANT CLOSEOUT PROCESS

At the conclusion of the approved project period, which may coincide with the date upon which the grantee requests final payment, the recipients must submit a final report documenting that all administrative responsibilities and activities required under the grant agreement have been satisfactorily completed.

ASSISTANCE

Applicants may contact Laurie Ann Doyle at (609) 292-4132 to discuss program and project needs up to submission of the application. Questions may also be submitted via e-mail to arpffg@dca.nj.gov.