

2023 PROGRAM GUIDANCE
OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE COMMISSIONER
PENNSYLVANIA STATE FIRE ACADEMY
ACT 13 of 2012 UNCONVENTIONAL GAS WELL FUND
GRANT PROGRAM

THE 2023 GRANT APPLICATION PERIOD is September 20, 2023 through November 20, 2023.

Section 1. Introduction.

- a) The Pennsylvania State Fire Academy (PSFA) under the authority of the Office of the State Fire Commissioner (OSFC) and pursuant to Act 13 of 2012 manages the Unconventional Gas Well Fund Grant Program (Program) 58 Pa. C.S. § 2314(c.1)(5). The Program provides training, certification, and equipment grants to eligible applicants to improve and enhance the capabilities of emergency services throughout the counties where unconventional gas well drilling and production is occurring, and those counties that directly border these counties. The Program funds are intended for the development, delivery and sustainment of training and certification for fire companies, rescue companies, and emergency medical services, and the acquisition of specialized equipment for emergency responses relating to natural gas production from unconventional gas wells. Program funds may be used for projects that are determined to be eligible in accordance with this guidance, and Act 13 of 2012.
- b) Funding is provided in the form of a competitive grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Commonwealth) to eligible fire companies, rescue companies, and emergency medical services, for projects which, in the judgment of the PSFA, in consultation with the State Fire Commissioner, are in accordance with Act 13 of 2012, this Program Guidance, and meet all criteria as stated in the application.
- c) Grant funds may be used for the development, delivery and sustainment of training, certification, and the acquisition of specialized equipment for emergency responses relating to natural gas production from unconventional gas wells. Grant awards will not exceed \$ 4,000 for a single application and project. For a joint project that represents a single application with up to four (4) additional cooperating applicants [total of five (5)], the grant amount cannot exceed \$6,000 (up to an additional \$500 per each additional cooperating applicant). Only the eligible applicant submitting the application will be awarded the grant funds for the requested project that benefits each cooperating eligible applicant. The primary applicant is responsible to assure the funds are utilized appropriately according to the terms of the contract. Applicants may only appear/apply on one application whether as the primary or a cooperating applicant. Grant awards will be no less than \$2,000.
- d) Applicants should be aware that the Program expects to receive a large number of applications for the limited funds appropriated from the Act 13 of 2012 Unconventional Gas Well Fund. As such, every application may not be funded, and some grants may be awarded on a prorated basis for projects that are determined to be eligible per the rating system in **Section 6. Grant Award and Reporting Procedure**. The Program expenditures will be charged to funds appropriated to the Act 13 Unconventional Gas Well Fund.

Section 2. Definitions.

The following words and terms, when used in this guide, have the following meanings unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

Application – The Act 13 of 2012 Unconventional Gas Well Fund Grant Program Application.

Certification – Any national certification for fire, rescue and hazardous materials currently offered in the Commonwealth through the Voluntary Fire Fighter Certification program administered by the PSFA, that is applicable to unconventional gas well activities and well phases.

Eligible Applicant – A fire company, rescue company, or emergency medical service.

Emergency Medical Service (EMS) – A nonprofit chartered corporation, association or organization located in the 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 or advanced life support ambulance squad as defined in 28 Pa. Code § 1021.2 (relating to definitions). 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 non-ambulatory and who do not ordinarily require emergency medical treatment while in transit. It shall also not include EMS providers that only provide Quick Response Services (QRS). An EMS organization must have a licensure number from the Pennsylvania Department of Health. An EMS organization must also have a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) to apply for grant funds.

Equipment – Any specialized equipment or tools ordinarily used by a fire, rescue or emergency medical service in the performance of their duties at or for a response to an incident at an unconventional gas well site or related area.

Final Report – The report to be filed as provided in **Section 6. Grant Award and Reporting Procedures** of the Guidelines by the grant recipient detailing the expenditure of the grant funds.

Fire Company – A non-profit chartered corporation, association or organization located in the Commonwealth that provides fire protection services. A fire company must have a Fire Department Identification (FDID) number and be actively reporting to Pennsylvania Fire Information Reporting System (PennFIRS). A fire company must also have a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) to apply for grant funds.

Grant Recipient – Includes the eligible applicant and any joint eligible applicant(s), if applicable.

Joint Project – A cooperative agreement wherein any combination of no less than two (2) but no more than five (5) (includes the applicant and four (4) additional eligible applicants) separately chartered fire companies, rescue companies or emergency medical services agree to use all or any portion of their respective grant request to jointly complete any eligible project that qualifies under this Program. The Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) number for each eligible applicant must be included on the application. Fire companies, rescue companies and EMS companies that have been organized for the

purpose of training and/or emergency response primarily to bring members from several companies and are recognized by the municipality/county can jointly apply for eligible projects. An additional \$500.00 per eligible applicant may be awarded to the maximum grant award amount of \$4000.00 for joint projects. The maximum grant amount for any Joint Project is \$6,000.

OSFC – Office of the State Fire Commissioner.

PennFIRS – The Pennsylvania Fire Information Reporting System.

PSFA – The Pennsylvania State Fire Academy.

Program – The PSFA/OSFC Act 13 of 2012 Unconventional Gas Well Fund Grant Program.

Rescue Company – A nonprofit chartered corporation, association or organization located within the Commonwealth that provides rescue services as part of the response to fires, rescues, and other emergencies within the Commonwealth. A rescue company must have a Fire Department Identification (FDID) number and be actively reporting to Pennsylvania Fire Information Reporting System (PennFIRS). A rescue company must also have a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) to apply for grant funds.

Training – Classes and required educational materials related to Unconventional Gas Wells conducted to further the knowledge and/or skills of fire companies, rescue companies, or emergency medical services.

Section 3. Eligibility.

Training, Certification, or Equipment Grant:

- a) Eligible applicants. Any fire company, rescue company, or emergency medical service as defined in Section 2. To receive grant funds an eligible applicant must have actively responded to at least 10 fires, rescue emergencies, hazardous materials incidents, or emergency medical incidents during the previous calendar year, and is officially recognized by the appropriate municipality/county within the permitted Unconventional Gas Well Fund counties or those counties that directly border permitted counties. The fire company and/or rescue company shall also agree to participate in the reporting of information (incidents) using the Pennsylvania Fire Information Reporting System (PennFIRS). EMS companies are not required to report to PennFIRS. Applicants must not fall under the provisions listed in **Section 8. Special Provisions**.
- b) Eligible projects. Eligible projects must include development, delivery or sustainment of training, certification, or the acquisition of specialized equipment for emergency responses relating to natural gas production from unconventional gas wells. Eligible projects include:
 1. *Training*. Any classes and required educational materials related to Unconventional Gas Wells conducted to further the knowledge and/or skills of fire companies, rescue companies, or emergency medical services. Acceptable training such as, but not limited to, the examples below.
 - a. Confined Space Rescue

- b. Rope Rescue
 - c. Trench Rescue
 - d. Vehicle Rescue
 - e. Rural Water Supply
 - f. Hazardous Materials Awareness Level
 - g. Hazardous Materials Operations Level
 - h. Hazardous Materials Technician Level
 - i. Hazardous Materials Incident Commander
2. *Certification of members.* Any national certification for fire, rescue and hazardous materials currently offered in the Commonwealth through the Voluntary Fire Fighter Certification program administered by the PSFA, that is related to natural gas production from unconventional gas wells. Certification levels that are acceptable are defined below. This list will continue to be revised as relevant levels are added or removed.
- a. Fire Fighter I
 - b. Fire Fighter II
 - c. Confined Space Rescue
 - d. Rope Rescue
 - e. Trench Rescue
 - f. Vehicle Rescue
 - g. Rural Water Supply
 - h. Hazardous Materials Awareness Level
 - i. Hazardous Materials Operations Level
 - j. Hazardous Materials Technician Level
 - k. Hazardous Materials Incident Commander
3. *Purchase of specialized firefighting, emergency medical, rescue and air monitoring equipment used at or related to an unconventional gas well pad incident.* Specialized equipment as described in this section and purchased with these grant funds requires appropriate and relevant training. Proper training helps ensure safe and effective operation and use of this equipment. Training will be provided at no cost to the grant recipient by the PSFA or the grant recipient can obtain training from another qualified source, to include the vendor who provided the equipment. Grant recipients shall make arrangements with the PSFA to hold the training class(es) if they elect to utilize the PSFA for the training. If the PSFA determines that training is not required, the applicant may still request training. Approved equipment items are any portable, specialized, and or consumable equipment typically used by emergency service or gas/oil industry personnel at or near an unconventional gas well that may be approved for the grant include but not limited to:

- a. Any specialized firefighting equipment or air monitoring equipment typically used by emergency services or gas/oil industry personnel at or near an unconventional gas well.
- b. Confined space rescue equipment.
- c. Rope rescue equipment.
- d. Trench rescue equipment.
- e. Foam, foam application, foam generating equipment.
- f. Any other specialized equipment associated with responses to unconventional gas wells.

Section 4. Program Requirements and Instructions.

The following requirements apply to the Program:

- a) All grant applications must be submitted using the online web-based application process provided by the PSFA.
- b) The PSFA/OSFC reserves the right to:
 - 1. Request additional information regarding eligibility;
 - 2. Request additional information regarding proposed use of funds;
 - 3. Require explanation or revision of the applicant's project budget; and
 - 4. Require clarification of the applicant's project narrative.
- c) Incomplete applications will be rejected. An applicant shall follow the instructions for completing the online application. Specific information is required as indicated on the online application. Applications that do not contain the required information will be considered incomplete.
- d) The Project Narrative shall provide a detailed and comprehensive description of the project and must include:
 - 1. Description of the project;
 - a. Training Requests. Specify the training course(s) being requested and include how many individuals will be receiving the training and if the training is for a new capability within the department or company.
 - b. Certification Requests. Specify what certification level is being requested, how many people will be certified, and how many people are currently certified at this level.
 - c. Equipment Requests. Itemize all equipment being purchased and detail if the equipment meets NFPA standards or another industry recognized standard. Also include if the equipment being purchased is to replace current equipment, add to the existing compliment, or if the equipment has never been owned. If the equipment is replacing current equipment or adding to the existing compliment, include the age of the current equipment.

2. Benefits to be realized from the project; and
3. Grant funds to be expended on the project.

Section 5. Application Submission and Approval Procedures.

- a) The PSFA/OSFC will post information on the OSFC's website (www.osfc.pa.gov) detailing the grant application process for eligible applicants as defined in **Section 2. Definitions**.
 1. The PSFA will provide an online Web based process to gather applicant information and verify project eligibility. The OSFC will post on its website (www.osfc.pa.gov) information regarding the grant program guidelines, and the availability of the online applicant information/project eligibility verification process.
 2. Please contact the PSFA at 717-247-3747 with questions about the application and/or project eligibility. Information will also be available on the OSFC's website.
- b) An eligible applicant, as defined in **Section 2. Definitions**, seeking a grant under this Program shall submit a completed online grant application to the PSFA. The application period will begin **September 20, 2023**.
- c) The application submission deadline for completed applications will be **no later than 4:00 PM on November 20, 2023**.
- d) Following receipt of the application the PSFA may request additional information. This information may be provided through the online Web-based process or in writing.
- e) The PSFA shall approve or disapprove the application within 60 calendar days of the application submission deadline, or **January 19, 2024**.

Section 6. Grant Award and Reporting Procedures.

- a) Grant award determinations:
 1. Grants shall not exceed \$4,000, except Joint Projects, which shall not exceed \$6,000. Grant awards shall be no less than \$2,000.
 2. Distribution of grant funds will be based on a rating system. The rating system will consider the number of grant applications received, and the total amount of funds requested by all applicants. A point system will be used to determine which applicants will receive grant awards. Award factor points include but are not limited to:
 - a. Requested by a single applicant: one point awarded, joint project with two or more applicants, one additional point awarded per additional applicant (up to maximum of 5 points).

- b. Applicants located within a county where unconventional gas well production is occurring pursuant to Act 13 of 2012: two points awarded. Applicants located in a county that directly borders a county permitted under Act 13 of 2012: one point awarded.
 - c. Applicants that are responsible for responding to gas well related incidents in compliance with a mutual aid agreement: one point awarded. Applicants that are responsible for responding to gas well related incidents as jurisdictionally obligated first due responders: two points awarded.
 - d. Further, each application will be subjectively reviewed by employees of the PSFA and applications will receive additional points based on the requested purchase(s). These points will range from 0-3 points, with projects deemed to be of greater necessity receiving more points. Projects which fill an existing resource vacancy of need are given higher priority over replacement or enhancement projects.
- b) Grant award notifications will be made by email.
 - c) At the time grant recipients are notified of the award, and in the same manner, they will be presented with a grant agreement. This grant agreement will contain the details of the grant, including name of recipient, amount of award, vendor, project description, and terms of the agreement. In the case of fire or rescue company grant recipients, they must agree to participate in PennFIRS as stipulated in **Section 3. Eligibility**.
 - d) The grant agreement must be signed by two appropriate representatives of the eligible applicant or municipality authorized to bind the grant recipient to the terms of the grant agreement and returned to the PSFA for execution by the Commonwealth before grant funds can be released. The first of the two appropriate representatives must be the Chief, Deputy Chief, President, or Vice President. The second of the two appropriate representatives must be the Secretary or Treasurer.
 - e) The applicant's original signed grant agreement shall be received by the PSFA no later than, **March 22, 2024**. This will allow agreements to be processed and funds distributed in a timely fashion, so funds can be spent, and all reporting deadlines can be adhered to. Failure to submit grant agreements by **March 22, 2024**, may result in departments not being awarded approved funds by the close of the grant cycle on **June 24, 2024**, and thereby the departments may be unable to process final reports. Extensions for submission of final reports will not be approved for departments who fail to submit signed grant agreements by **March 22, 2024**.
 - f) The grant recipient will maintain complete and accurate records with respect to the approved project(s). The applicant must provide PSFA with access to project records, including all quotes, invoices of material and services, and other relative data and records, as well as the right to inspect all project work. The grant recipient must furnish upon request of PSFA all data, reports, quotes, documents and other information relevant to the approved project(s).

- g) The grant recipient shall, upon completion of the project, but no later than **June 24, 2024**, file a Final Report with the PSFA in a manner and form prescribed by the PSFA. The final report form must be submitted electronically through the grant application website. Supporting documentation cannot be uploaded with the electronic final report. All supporting documentation shall be kept by the grant recipient for a period of seven (7) years from the date that it receives its final 2023 Program grant fund disbursement from the Commonwealth for audit purposes. Supporting documentation will include either paid invoices from a vendor with a zero balance or invoices and cancelled checks for the fundable projects completed and paid for during the grant cycle **September 20, 2023 through June 24, 2024**. Supporting documentation shall also include training and certification records such as rosters of personnel completing the training and/or certification. Training records shall also be maintained for training provided for specialized equipment purchased with grant funds.
- h) Any grant funds not used by the grant recipient for the project shall be returned to the PSFA prior to, or with the filing of the Final Report. Payment should be in the form of a check made payable to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Failure to file a Final Report will be grounds for the PSFA to seek the return of all grant funds awarded and remove the grant recipient from eligibility for future grants for a period of not less than two years.
- i) The PSFA will randomly audit approximately 25% of all grant recipients each year. These audits may be completed on-site or via electronic communication. Grant recipients will be given notice of audits to be conducted on-site to allow personnel to be available with appropriate documents. Companies being audited via hard copy documentation will be provided details by e-mail, which will include the deadline for hard copy documentation submission and the required documents to be submitted to the PSFA.

Section 7. Program Limitations.

- a) A grant recipient may not make or authorize changes to an approved project without first obtaining consent of the PSFA by submitting an online project modification request available at the grant application website and receiving written confirmation approving that amendment. Approved project modification requests will require an amendment to the grant agreement. All project modification requests must be submitted to the PSFA by **April 22, 2024** to be considered for approval.
- b) Grant recipient agrees that noncompliance with the conditions of the grant agreement shall be grounds for the recapture of funds provided to the grant recipient. If the grant recipient fails to refund the unused grant funds, the Commonwealth, in addition to any rights or remedies it may have at law or in equity, reserves the right to offset the amount due against any existing or future sums of money owed the grant recipient by any Commonwealth agency or department.
- c) The PSFA, or its duly authorized representative, shall have access to the records of the grant recipient for the purpose of auditing financial transactions, determination of compliance with grant terms, and an evaluation of project performance.
- d) The grant recipient agrees to retain all certification, equipment, and/or training costs supporting records and documentation for a period of seven (7) years from the date that it receives its final 2023 Program grant fund disbursement from the Commonwealth.

Section 8. Special Provisions.

- a) Any applicant that is delinquent in loan payments to the Pennsylvania Volunteer Loan Assistance Program, or who is not compliant with the OSFC Fire Company and Emergency Medical Service Grant Program is not eligible to apply for an Act 13 grant pursuant to this Program.
- b) An applicant for a grant pursuant to this Program must have complied with all terms and conditions of any previously awarded Program grant agreement and applicable guidance. Failure to comply will disqualify an applicant from receiving a grant in the current year.
- c) An applicant for a grant pursuant to this Program who has failed to return a signed grant agreement for any previous grant year may not be permitted to apply for a grant in the current grant year.
- d) A Fire Company or Rescue Company that is not actively reporting to the Pennsylvania Fire Information Reporting System (PennFIRS) is not eligible to receive Act 13 grant funds.
- e) Any equipment purchased with grant funds that has a service life can be transferred, but not sold, to another eligible applicant in an Unconventional Gas Well Fund county via an appropriate agreement which states that the equipment is transferred from one eligible applicant to another, and identifies the equipment being transferred. Copies of the agreement should be retained for audit purposes. Such a transfer meets the intent of the Program by allowing approved equipment to be used to improve and enhance the capabilities of eligible applicants throughout the Commonwealth.
- f) Should an eligible applicant no longer be officially recognized by the local government, it shall be ineligible to receive a grant under the Program. If an applicant loses their recognition after receiving grant funds, they may be required to return such funds.
- g) Any organization who knowingly submits fraudulent information will be disqualified from the Act 13 grant program for a period of 2 years.

Section 9. Contact Information.

All applicant inquiries should be directed to:

Pennsylvania State Fire Academy
1150 Riverside Drive
Lewistown, PA 17044
Phone: 717-247-3747
Email: RA-EMACT13GRANT@pa.gov