

PROGRAM GUIDANCE
OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE COMMISSIONER
MUNICIPAL FIRE DEPARTMENT CAPITAL GRANT PROGRAM
The 2023 GRANT APPLICATION PERIOD is
APRIL 1, 2024 through MAY 15, 2024

The Office of the State Fire Commissioner (OSFC), pursuant to Act 104 of 2022 and 35 Pa. C.S. § 7385.1, manages the Municipal Fire Department Center Capital Grant Program (Program).

Section 1. Source of Funding.

The Program is funded through money transferred under 3 Pa. C.S. § 1113(a)(6).

Section 2. Eligible Recipients.

Eligible recipients of Program funds include Municipal Fire Departments and Combination Fire Departments recognized by OSFC.

When determining an applicant's eligibility as a Municipal Fire Department under the Program, OSFC will give great weight as to how firefighters of Municipal Fire Departments are paid by the municipality, as firefighters of Municipal Fire Departments are typically considered municipal employees who receive paychecks and corresponding tax statements issued by the municipality. Final determinations on eligibility will be made by the Fire Commissioner.

Section 3. Definitions.

A Municipal Fire Department or Combination Fire Department is a Fire Department that is established by a municipality and is part of the municipal government. Eligible departments must have at least two or more employees paid directly by the municipality and assigned to fire response operations as their primary job function. An independently chartered Fire Company or not for profit organization does not constitute a Municipal or Combination Fire Department.

Section 4. Eligible Projects.

Act 104 requires Program funds to be used for the following:

1. Establish or modernize facilities that house firefighting equipment, ambulances, or rescue vehicles.

2. Acquire or renovate existing structures to house firefighting equipment, ambulances, or rescue vehicles or for the construction or modernization of facilities.
3. Repair or purchase firefighting, ambulance, or rescue equipment as necessary to provide proper and adequate training.

When determining whether a project in a Program grant application conforms with the requirements of Act 104, OSFC will consider whether the project funds will be used to further one of the three purposes listed above, with the understanding that facilities are frequently used for multiple purposes. Applications seeking funds for multi-purpose facilities will not be automatically disqualified.

Section 5. Restrictions.

Capital grants administered under this section may not be used for:

1. Operating expenses.
2. Refinancing of renovated structures.
3. Refinancing the construction or modernization of facilities.
4. Apparatus equipment, communication equipment or accessory equipment.
5. Reduction of debt or other obligations issued prior to the effective date of Act 104 (November 3, 2022).

Section 6. Applications.

Program grant applications shall be open to organizations for forty-five (45) days each year. OSFC shall publish a notice of funding opportunity at least fifteen (15) days before the application period. OSFC shall process the applications and select the applications to be awarded within forty-five (45) days of the closing of the application period.

Applications shall be made in a web-based portal that is available free of charge to interested applicants.

Section 7. Amounts and criteria.

Capital grant amounts shall be distributed in an amount between \$25,000 to \$100,000. OSFC shall publish the range of grant award amounts annually.

Each Program grant application must include a project narrative and project budget. An Application Review Committee, consisting of OSFC grants staff along with two (2) members of the State Fire Advisory Board, will review the Program grant applications and recommend approval or denial to the Commissioner. The Application Review Committee will score the applications against the scoring rubric, attached as Exhibit A.

Section 8. Use.

Capital grants may be used in combination with Fire Company and Emergency Medical Services Grant funding to complete projects if approved by the Commissioner.

OSFC Capital Grant Scoring Rubric

Criteria	Exemplary (4 Points)	Adequate (3 Points)	Needs Improvement (2 Points)	Insufficient Evidence (1 Point)	Score	Comments
Demonstration of Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description is very clear, concise, and easy to understand. • Information and data is attached and clearly supports need. • Additional data or information completes a big picture explanation of the need for the project and grant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description depicts the need for the project well and language clearly describes current status. • Data or additional information supports narrative and shows clear need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description depicting the need is somewhat clear and minimally explains why funding is needed. • There is some data or information to support need in addition to anecdotal description of current status. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of need is hard to understand, verbose, or uses industry specific jargon. • It is not clear what is the specific need and no data or information is included to support justifying need. 		
Description of Project Including Intended Goals and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The description of the project is exceptionally clear and provides detailed information. • The goals of the grant are clearly stated. • Significant outcomes are significantly defined/described. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The description of the project is very clear with details descriptions of the work to be completed. • The goals of the grant are clearly stated. • Outcomes of moderate impact and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The description of the project is somewhat clear and include details. • The goals of the grant are addressed but not clearly stated. • Goals and desired outcomes are minimally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The description of the project is vague or unclear. • The goals of the grant are not addressed or clearly stated. • The goals do not align with the need stated. No outcomes are described. 		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The specific outcomes of each goal are stated clearly and are directly aligned to the described need. All goals and outcomes are measurable both qualitatively and quantitatively. 	<p>value are described.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is some specificity in measurable in outcomes for the project. 	<p>described and are somewhat aligned with the need described.</p>			
Alignment of Budget to Goals/Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear and strong alignment between the proposed budget to support achievement of goals and outcomes found in the description of the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A significant alignment between the proposed budget to support achievement of goals and outcomes found in the description of the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates an acceptable alignment between the proposed budget to support achievement of goals and outcomes in the description of the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little or no alignment between the proposed budget to support achievement of goals and outcomes found in the description of the project. 		
Monitoring and Evaluation Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exceptionally designed monitoring plan to ensure clear focus on goals and that the action plan is executed. Comprehensive systemic plan created and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A significant monitoring plan created to ensure a clear focus on goals and that the action plan is executed. Clear and strong plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An acceptable monitoring plan created to ensure a focus on goals and that the action plan is executed. Acceptable plan for evaluating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very limited or no monitoring to ensure a clear focus on goals and that the action plan is executed. Limited or weak plan for evaluating 		

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	executed for evaluating impact of project.	that will evaluate the impact of the project.	the impact of the project.	impact of the project.		