

SENATE, No. 1566

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 222nd LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2026 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator CARMEN F. AMATO, JR.

District 9 (Ocean)

Senator ROBERT W. SINGER

District 30 (Monmouth and Ocean)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senators McKnight, Tiver, Singleton and Schepisi

SYNOPSIS

Establishes "Volunteer Fire Company Assistance Program" in DCA to support operations and sustainability of volunteer fire companies; appropriates \$10 million.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee with technical review.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 10/1/2026)

1 AN ACT concerning the operation and sustainability of volunteer
2 fire companies, supplementing P.L.1983, c.382 (C.52:27D-25a et
3 seq.), and making an appropriation.
4

5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:
7

8 1. P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this
9 bill) shall be known and may be cited as the “Volunteer Fire
10 Company Assistance Program Act.”
11

12 2. As used in P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
13 Legislature as this bill):

14 “Emergency equipment” means any item used for the purpose of
15 providing fire and life safety, including but not limited to, boots,
16 helmets, self-contained breathing apparatuses, fire hoses,
17 extrication tools, insurance, maintenance of and repairs to fire
18 apparatus and vehicles, utility costs for buildings, training, the cost
19 of hazardous materials units, and any other personal protective
20 equipment as determined by the director of the division.
21 “Emergency equipment” shall not include the purchase of any
22 vehicle or building.

23 “Fund” means the Volunteer Fire Company Assistance Program
24 Fund established pursuant to subsection a. of section 3 of
25 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

26 “Grant program” means the grant program developed and
27 administered by the director pursuant to subsection a. of section 3
28 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this
29 bill).
30

31 3. a. There is established in the division a special non-
32 lapsing fund to be known as the “Volunteer Fire Company
33 Assistance Program Fund,” which shall be annually credited with
34 money appropriated by the Legislature. The director of the division
35 shall develop and administer a grant program to annually distribute
36 moneys in the fund to volunteer fire companies in the form of
37 grants to support the ongoing operations and sustainability of
38 volunteer fire companies, including the purchasing of emergency
39 equipment.

40 b. To participate in the grant program, a volunteer fire
41 company shall submit an application to the division in a manner and
42 on such forms as determined by the director of the division. An
43 application shall include information detailing the volunteer fire
44 company’s proposed uses for the grant funding, including, but not
45 limited to:

46 (1) the amount of the grant award being sought;

47 (2) a specific description of any emergency equipment to be
48 purchased; and

1 (3) a description of how the grant award will be used to
2 maximize the ongoing operations and sustainability of the volunteer
3 fire department, including ensuring compliance with any applicable
4 State and federal laws and regulations.

5 c. The division shall review the applications submitted
6 pursuant to subsection b. of this section and shall award grant
7 funding to the applicants. The division shall establish an annual
8 maximum grant award amount to ensure that the maximum number
9 of program applicants receive a grant award, given available
10 funding.

11 d. In the event that a volunteer fire company receives a grant
12 award, the division shall notify the municipal governing body in
13 which the volunteer fire company is located of the award, including
14 information of the amount of the grant award and the volunteer fire
15 company's proposed uses for the grant award.

16
17 4. a. Within one year of receiving a grant award pursuant
18 to section 3 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature
19 as this bill), each participating volunteer fire company shall submit
20 a report to the division in a manner and on such forms as
21 determined by the director of the division, detailing:

22 (1) expenditure of grant funds under the grant program;

23 (2) specific emergency equipment and other items purchased
24 with the grant award intended for providing fire and life safety
25 services; and

26 (3) the impact, if determinable, that the grant award has had on
27 maximizing the ongoing operations and sustainability of volunteer
28 fire department.

29 b. The division shall compile the reports submitted pursuant to
30 subsection a. of this section for inclusion in a comparative profile of
31 the participating volunteer fire companies and shall post the profile
32 for public inspection on the division's Internet website in an easily
33 accessible location.

34 c. Within one year of posting the comparative profile required
35 pursuant to subsection b. of this section, the director of the division
36 shall submit a report to the Governor, and the Legislature pursuant
37 to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1). The report shall
38 contain information on the implementation of the grant program,
39 including: the total number of volunteer fire companies which
40 applied for grant funding pursuant to section 3 of
41 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill);
42 the average amount of grant awards which were disbursed to
43 volunteer fire companies; a summary of the types of emergency
44 equipment which were most frequently sought with grant awards;
45 and any recommendations that the director of the division deems
46 appropriate and necessary concerning the disbursement of funding
47 for volunteer fire departments.

1 5. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the
2 “Volunteer Fire Company Assistance Program Fund,” established
3 pursuant to section 3 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
4 Legislature as this bill), the sum of \$10,000,000 for the purpose of
5 supporting the ongoing operations and sustainability of volunteer
6 fire departments.

7
8 6. This act shall take effect 90 days following the date of
9 enactment, but the Director of the Division of Fire Safety, in
10 consultation with the Commissioner of Community Affairs, may
11 take any anticipatory action in advance of that date as may be
12 necessary to implement the provisions of this act.