



**Department of
Commerce**

**FY2026
SMALL COUNTY
VOLUNTEER
FIRE DEPARTMENT
GRANT APPLICATION PACKET**

Ohio Department of Commerce
Division of State Fire Marshal



State Fire Marshal

Department of Commerce

com.ohio.gov

Mike DeWine, Governor Jim Tressel, Lt. Governor Sherry Maxfield, Director

December 4, 2025

Re: FY2026 Small County Volunteer Fire Department Grant

Dear Fire Chief or Executive Official,

The Ohio Department of Commerce, Division of State Fire Marshal, previously announced the opening of the FY2026 Small County Volunteer Fire Department (SCVFD) Grant Program, as authorized by the 136th General Assembly in House Bill 96. The SCVFD program has now been further amended by House Bill 184 to expand the categories of entities eligible to receive these grants, which will be further outlined in this packet.

The SCVFD Grant provides up to \$50,000 per eligible recipient to support the purchase of firefighting or rescue equipment, gear, or other costs associated with the provision of fire protection services. In alignment with the intent of the SCVFD Grant Program, volunteer fire departments may receive priority consideration during the award process, particularly when funding is limited. This grant is non-renewable and applies only to State Fiscal Year 2026, which ends on June 30, 2026.

We are writing to inform you that the application deadline has been extended to January 10, 2026. This extension is being provided to allow additional time for applicants to review and respond to recent updates made to the grant eligibility criteria and application requirements following the passage of House Bill 184, which amended certain provisions of the original grant program.

If your department has already submitted an application, you will receive an email with a request for additional information. This supplemental information request is intended to capture additional information now required under the revised program guidelines. Your original application will remain on file and will be evaluated in conjunction with the supplemental information you provide.

If you have not yet applied, we encourage you to review the updated FY2026 SCVFD Grant Application Packet and submit your completed application by the new deadline of January 10, 2026.

If you have any questions or require additional assistance, please contact the Grant Administrator, at (614) 752-7123 or email Commercegrants@Com.ohio.gov.

Complete information and forms can be found at: <https://com.ohio.gov/divisions-and-programs/state-fire-marshal/grants>.

Sincerely,

Sheryl Maxfield
Director, Ohio Department of Commerce

Kevin Reardon
State Fire Marshal

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FY2026 SCVFD DEPARTMENT GRANT OVERVIEW

I. PURPOSE

In accordance with House Bill 96, effective September 30, 2025, and House Bill 184, which amended House Bill 96, the Ohio Department of Commerce Division of State Fire Marshal (SFM) is pleased to announce the availability of \$8,000,000 in grant funding in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2026 for eligible recipients to fund 1) purchases of firefighting or rescue equipment or gear and/or 2) fire department¹ costs associated with the provision of fire protection services. “Eligible recipients” include, but are not limited to, volunteer and small fire departments AND local units of government responsible for the provision of fire protection services for small municipalities or small townships (i.e. - a small municipality or township that contracts with a “*Private Fire Company.*” See Section II.)

The maximum award for each recipient is \$50,000. This grant is non-renewable and applies only to SFY 2026.

II. ELIGIBILITY

A. In accordance with the eligibility requirements set forth by the 136th Ohio General Assembly in House Bill 96 and House Bill 184, to be eligible to receive a SCVFD grant, the applicant must be both:

1. **Located in a small county.** A “small county” is defined as follows:

a. A county with a population of 70,000 or less in accordance with the latest decennial census;

i. Counties with a population 70,000 or less in accordance with the latest decennial census (2020) are as follows:

1. Adams County – 27,477	19. Harrison County – 14,483	37. Noble County – 14,115
2. Ashland County – 52,447	20. Henry County – 27,662	38. Ottawa County – 40,364
3. Athens County – 62,431	21. Highland County – 43,317	39. Paulding County – 18,806
4. Auglaize County – 46,422	22. Hocking County – 28,050	40. Perry County – 35,408
5. Belmont County – 66,497	23. Holmes County – 44,223	41. Pickaway County – 58,539
6. Brown County – 43,676	24. Huron County – 58,565	42. Pike County – 27,088
7. Carroll County – 26,721	25. Jackson County – 32,653	43. Preble County – 40,999
8. Champaign County – 38,714	26. Jefferson County – 65,249	44. Putnam County – 34,451
9. Clinton County – 42,018	27. Knox County – 62,721	45. Sandusky County – 58,896
10. Coshocton County – 36,612	28. Lawrence County – 58,240	46. Seneca County – 55,069
11. Crawford County – 42,025	29. Logan County – 46,150	47. Shelby County – 48,230
12. Darke County – 51,881	30. Madison County – 43,824	48. Union County – 62,784
13. Defiance County – 38,286	31. Marion County – 65,359	49. Van Wert County – 28,931
14. Fayette County – 28,951	32. Meigs County – 22,210	50. Vinton County – 12,800
15. Fulton County – 42,713	33. Mercer County – 42,528	51. Washington County – 59,711
16. Gallia County – 29,220	34. Monroe County – 13,385	52. Williams County – 36,692
17. Guernsey County – 38,438	35. Morgan County – 13,802	53. Wyandot County – 21,900
18. Hardin County – 30,696	36. Morrow County – 34,950	

AND

¹ For purposes of this SCVFD Grant application packet, “fire department” hereafter means both a fire department and volunteer fire department unless otherwise specified.

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2. An “eligible recipient” as follows:

- a. Volunteer Fire Department-
 - i. A fire department, organized under section 505.37, 505.371, 505.375 or 737.21 of the Revised Code, wherein at least one-half of the firefighters are “volunteer firefighters;”
 - ii. For purposes of this grant application, a “volunteer firefighter” is a volunteer firefighter/EMT (including “paid-on-call”) who is not eligible to pay into the Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund.
- b. Fire Department-
 - i. Must be organized by a township or municipal corporation under R.C. §§505.37, or 737.21;
 - ii. Must serve one or more small municipal corporations or small townships (population of less than 25,000 permanent residents); AND
 - iii. The small municipal corporation and/or small townships (population of less than 25,000 permanent residents) that are being served by the fire department must sign the grant application.
- c. Joint Fire District comprised of fire departments that primarily serve small municipalities or small townships-
 - i. Must be organized under R.C. §§505.371 or 505.375;
 - ii. Must primarily serve small municipal corporations and/ or small townships (population of less than 25,000 permanent residents).
- d. Local unit of government responsible for such fire departments- A township or municipal corporation providing fire protection services that is responsible for one of the following-
 - i. A volunteer fire department under R.C. §§ 505.37, or 737.21 in which at least one-half of the firefighters are volunteer firefighters; OR
 - ii. A fire department under R.C. §§ 505.37 or 737.21 that serves small municipalities or small townships (population of less than 25,000 permanent residents); OR
 - iii. A portion of a joint fire district comprised of volunteer departments that primarily serves small municipalities or small townships (population of less than 25,000 permanent residents).
- e. Local unit of government responsible for the provision of fire protection services for small municipalities or small townships-
 - i. Small municipalities or small townships (population of less than 25,000 permanent residents) contracting with a private fire company² or another unit of local government for fire protection services. Local governments that operate their own Fire

² A private fire company is not an eligible recipient for an SCVFD grant; however, any qualifying local government contracting with a private fire company may receive an SCVFD grant. Equipment purchased with grant funds may be used by a private fire company as a part of its contracted services.

FY2026 SCVFD DEPARTMENT GRANT OVERVIEW

Department are not included in this category.

- B. **Exclusions-** In accordance with the above criteria set forth by the General Assembly in House Bill 184, the following entities are not eligible for a SCVFD grant:
1. Private fire companies: **HOWEVER**, any qualifying local government contracting with a private fire company is an eligible recipient and may receive a grant. Equipment purchased with grant funds may be used by a private fire company as a part of its contracted services.
 2. Applicants located in counties with a population above 70,000 in accordance with the latest decennial census
 3. Applicants that serve multiple counties wherein the county in which the fire department is located has a population of more than 70,000
- C. **Matching Funds-** This grant DOES NOT require matching funds to qualify.

III. USE OF SCVFD GRANT FUNDS

- A. Acceptable uses of grant funding include, **but are not limited to**, the following:
1. Firefighting equipment
 - a. Firefighting tools such as saws, generators, hose, and hand tools
 2. Firefighting gear
 - a. Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) gear
 - b. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - c. Thermal Imaging Cameras to assist in firefighting
 3. Rescue equipment
 - a. Extrication tools
 - b. Thermal Imaging Cameras for rescue use
 - c. Portable lighting
 - d. Generators
 4. Rescue gear
 - a. Helmets
 - b. Ropes
 - c. Rescue PPE
 - d. AEDS (Automated External Defibrillators)
 - e. Oxygen tanks and regulators
 5. Fire department costs associated with the provision of fire protection services.
 - a. Minor Repairs/improvements to firehouse structures
 - i. Any such repairs or improvements must be completed by May 20, 2026.
 - ii. A "minor repair or improvement" is a repair or improvement to a structure, the total cost of which, is less than \$50,000.
 - b. Upgrades to firehouse equipment/fixtures
 - c. Training, continuing education, excluding off site lodging for such training
 - d. Technological upgrades for firehouse use such as computer software, printers, faxes, office equipment, etc.
 - e. Uniforms and fire station wear
 - f. Fire Prevention Materials
 - g. Retention and Recruitment costs such as advertising, background checks,

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physical exams or volunteer incentives

- B. Unacceptable uses of grant funding include, but are not limited to the following:
1. Apparatus purchases
 - a. Common Types of Fire Apparatus:
 - Pumper/Engine, Ladder Truck, Tanker/Tender, Rescue Truck, Brush Truck, Command Vehicle
 2. Property (land) purchases
 3. Construction that does not constitute a minor repair or minor improvement (See Section III(A)(5)(a).)
 4. Fire department related salaries & benefits
 5. Political subdivision administrative costs/salaries for providing FD support
 6. Operational bills including, but not limited to:
 - a. Taxes
 - b. payment of debts
 - c. rent or mortgage payments
 - d. insurance
 - e. utilities
 - f. memberships
 - g. travel
 - h. conference fees
 - i. groceries
 - j. workers comp fees
 - k. lobbying & litigation fees/assessments/damage payments, etc.
 7. Off-site lodging costs for travel to training
 8. Fuel costs associated with fire and EMS apparatus
 9. Website hosting and cloud storage
 10. Costs associated with hosting an event
- C. Use of Multiple State Fire Marshal Grants Toward a Single Asset
1. If an applicant is awarded funding under the FY2026 SCVFD Grant Program and also qualifies for and receives funding from another grant administered by the Ohio Department of Commerce, Division of State Fire Marshal during the same fiscal year, the applicant may, with prior written approval from the State Fire Marshal, combine such funds to acquire a single asset or complete a single project, provided that:
 - a. The asset or project is an eligible use under both grant programs;
 - b. The combined funding does not exceed the total cost of the asset or project;
 - c. The applicant clearly identifies the funding sources and amounts in the application materials and final reporting for each grant;
 - d. The applicant submits documentation demonstrating how the combined funds will be used in compliance with all applicable terms and conditions of each grant program.
 2. This provision is intended to support the acquisition of higher-value equipment or projects that may not be fully fundable under a single grant award.

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IV. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By applying for the SCVFD grant, the eligible recipient hereby acknowledges and agrees to the following:

- A. All sections of the application must be filled out completely, and the required documentation must be submitted with the application. Grant applications must be emailed no later than January 10, 2026. See Section V. for “When and Where to Apply.” Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered for an SCVFD grant.
- B. The maximum amount of an SCVFD grant award to each eligible recipient shall be \$50,000 in accordance with House Bill 96 and 184. (Eligible recipients may also apply for other grants including equipment and training grants, during FY2026.)
- C. Acquisition of goods and/or services shall be evaluated per application at the State Fire Marshal’s discretion and is subject to the availability of funds.
- D. The fire chief or executive official/designee shall certify that the grant application is true and accurate.
- E. All applicants must be in compliance with R.C. §3737.24 (Reporting Fire Incidents). The applicant/associated fire department should confirm fire incident compliance by logging into <https://sfmtengage.com.ohio.gov/> and hovering over “Incidents”, choose “Incident Summary Report-PDF” or “Incident Summary-Grid”, then select the to and from date and click “Generate Report” at the bottom right of the report. If there are discrepancies or assistance is needed, contact the Fire Prevention Bureau at (614) 752-7115.

Applicants must be compliant with R.C. Chapter 146, Volunteer Firefighters’ Dependents Fund (VFDF). In accordance with the Revised Code Chapter 146, each political subdivision or fire district having a fire department employing volunteer firefighters is a member of the volunteer firefighter dependents fund and shall pay premiums into the fund as required. All applicants are cross referenced with the VFDF database. If applicant/associated fire department is uncertain of their compliance, contact the Grants Administrator at (614) 752-7123 or commercegrants@com.ohio.gov for verification or, if needed, instructions on how to become compliant.

- F. The applicant agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and fire service standards.
- G. Applicants must sign and return the SCVFD Grant Agreement, provided with the award notification, before any funds will be disbursed. Failure to return a signed Grant Agreement within 14 calendar days of receipt will be deemed by the State Fire Marshal as a declination of the grant award.

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- H. Grant recipients shall not purchase equipment or enter into service agreements until the recipient signs and returns a Grant Agreement to the Grants Administrator. Any requests for variances or extensions shall be submitted in writing and receive prior approval from the State Fire Marshal.
- I. The grant recipient shall maintain auditable records of all charges pertaining to this grant for a period of three years after receipt of a “Close Out” letter pursuant to Section VIII of this document and, upon request, records relating to items or services purchased with grant monies must be made available for inspection by a representative of the SFM. Because the grant involves public funds, the grant recipient must comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Any tangible items purchased with SCVFD grant funds shall be made available for inspection by a representative of SFM, upon request.
- J. The SFM reserves the right to audit any recipient at any time until three years after the recipient receives a close out letter. See Section VIII.
- K. Misuse of funds, failure to comply with reporting requirements, or fraudulent activity may result in:
 - 1. Full or partial repayment of funds.
 - 2. Disqualification from future state funding opportunities.
 - 3. Referral for legal action, if warranted.
- L. Repayment of Funds
 - 1. Any unexpended grant funds shall be returned to the State Fire Marshal as soon as it is determined that such funds will not be used for the approved purpose, but in no event later than June 1, 2026.
 - 2. Funds spent outside the scope of the approved purchase or project or without proper documentation are subject to full recovery.

V. WHEN AND WHERE TO APPLY

The FY 2026 SCVFD grant application period is October 19, 2025 to January 10, 2026. Applications must be received by the Grants Administrator by January 10, 2026, 11:59 PM.

The fillable FY2026 SCVFD Grant Application is available online on the SFM’s website at <https://com.ohio.gov/divisions-and-programs/state-fire-marshal/grants>.

If you are unable to submit the form via the above website, please contact the Grants Administrator at the following email: Commercegrants@com.ohio.gov.

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VI. AFTER GRANT FUNDS ARE RECEIVED

If awarded a grant, after receipt of funding, the grant recipient must provide the following to the SFM by May 20, 2026:

A. EQUIPMENT OR GEAR PURCHASES

1. Grant recipient shall, after purchasing the equipment, submit paid invoice(s) to the SFM with proof of payments for all purchases made with grant funding in accordance with Recipient's application.
2. Final Budget Report
3. A reconciliation of estimated vs. actual costs
4. Explanation of any variances
5. Serial number(s) of equipment individually valued at over \$15,000.

B. MINOR FIREHOUSE STRUCTURE REPAIRS/IMPROVEMENT

1. Grant recipient shall, after purchasing the equipment, submit paid invoice(s) to the SFM with proof of payments for all purchases made or services acquired with grant funding in accordance with Recipient's application.
2. Final Budget Report
3. A reconciliation of estimated vs. actual costs
4. Explanation of any variances
5. Final contractor invoices
6. Any other inspection/permit close out documentation

C. OTHER SERVICE TYPE ACQUISITIONS

1. All grant recipients shall submit to SFM copies of all paid invoices by May 20, 2026.
 - a. The paid invoices shall be scanned and emailed to the Grants Administrator at commercegrants@com.ohio.gov.
 - b. If recipient paid for training with grant funding, proof that training was provided, including indications of the number of persons trained and dates of training.

VIII. GRANT CLOSEOUT PROCESS

A. Final Reporting and Closeout-

1. All recipients must submit a Final Program Report, as prescribed by the State Fire Marshal, by June 15, 2026, summarizing:
 - a. Equipment or services acquired.
 - b. Training completed.
 - c. Community impact and outcomes achieved.
2. The Final Program Report document will be available at <https://com.ohio.gov/divisions-and-programs/state-fire-marshal/grants>.
 - a. The SFM will issue closeout correspondence upon acceptance of the final report and verification of compliance.
3. Extensions may be requested in writing by emailing the Grants Administrator at Commercegrants@Com.ohio.gov.
 - a. Extensions shall only be granted in the State Fire Marshal's discretion and for good cause shown.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING FY2026 SCVFD GRANT APPLICATION

All equipment and/or apparatus purchased under the provisions of FY2026 SCVFD Grant must meet the applicable requirements of the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) standards, most current edition, where such standards apply.

Please read the entire application and follow the instructions for each of the following items. If you have questions, please contact the Grants Administrator, at (614) 752-7123 CommerceGrants@Com.ohio.gov.

LINE BY LINE INSTRUCTIONS

Line #:

1. Indicate which eligibility criteria from the drop-down box under section II. Eligibility is applicable to your organization.
2. Fire Department Identification Number (FDID #): Enter the five (5) digit number used to identify the department on the state fire incident report forms. Enter the name of the government entity by which the fire department is organized.
3. Population as of the latest decennial census (2020) See Section I(A) of the Grant Overview.
4. Enter the population of the area for which the applicant provides primary fire protection. Include territory under contract if primary fire protection is provided. Do not include territory where you only respond under a mutual aid agreement to provide supplemental protection. This figure should be determined by an established government agency.
5. Square miles protected: Enter the total square miles of the area for which your department provides primary fire protection. Include territory under contract if primary fire protection is provided. Do not include territory where you respond under mutual aid agreement to provide supplemental protection. This figure should be as accurate as possible.
6. Number of full-time paid firefighters: In Ohio, full-time paid firefighters are members of the Police and Firemen's Pension Fund.
7. Number of firefighters who are part time or paid per call: Enter the number of firefighters who are not full-time but do receive some form of monetary compensation.
8. Number of firefighters who are not paid: Enter the number of firefighters who do not receive compensation.
9. Fire departments that have not submitted their fire incident reports to the State Fire Marshal for the previous calendar year, as required by the Ohio Revised Code and the Ohio Fire Code will not be considered for grant funds.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING FY2026 SCVFD GRANT APPLICATION

Reportable fires are defined as: Any unfriendly, hostile fire that comes to the attention of any agency keeping fire records. Included are fires that may be discovered in progress or discovered after extinguishment.

Applicant should confirm fire incident reporting compliance by logging into <https://sfmenage.com.ohio.gov/> and hovering over "Incidents", choose "Incident Summary Report-PDF" or "Incident Summary-Grid", then select the to and from date and click "Generate Report" at the bottom right of the report. If there are discrepancies or assistance is needed, contact the Fire Prevention Bureau at (614) 752-7115.

10. If applicable, applicants must be compliant with R.C. Chapter 146, Volunteer Firefighters' Dependents Fund (VFDF). In accordance with the Revised Code Chapter 146, each political subdivision or fire district having a fire department employing volunteer firefighters is a member of the volunteer firefighter dependents fund and shall pay premiums into the fund as required. Non-compliant fire departments will be disqualified from receiving grants from the State Fire Marshal's office until compliant. All applicants are cross referenced with the VFDF database. If applicant/associated fire department is uncertain of their compliance, contact the Grants Administrator at (614) 752-7123 or commercegrants@com.ohio.gov for verification or, if needed, instructions on how to become compliant.
11. Enter name, daytime telephone number, and email of person who is available to contact for additional questions regarding your grant application. This individual should be someone who checks their email daily and can respond within 48 hours.
12. Total operating budget for calendar year 2024: Total operating budget includes money provided from taxes and fire protection contracts, as well as from fund raising and donations used for operating expenses. Do not include capital expenses for new trucks, buildings, or EMS budgets.
13. Total number of fires: For primary fire protection area only, provide the total number of fire incidents/calls/responses requiring a fire incident report for calendar year 2024. All applications are cross referenced with the Ohio Fire Incident Reporting Management System (OFIRMS).
14. Enter the Federal Tax Identification number: Example: This number usually starts with the number "31" and will look something like this "31-1234567". Contact the financial officer listed on question 16 to obtain this number. A Federal Tax Id number is required to receive a grant.
15. Enter Ohio Supplier Number. *Need help finding your Ohio Supplier Number? Click here:*
[Access Supplier Portal](#)
16. Project justification- Describe your need and/or issue the proposed purchase/acquisition would address. How will the requested equipment, service, or repair/improvement enhance your department's ability to provide fire or rescue services? Include a description of the specific operational or safety issue grant funded purchases will address.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING FY2026 SCVFD GRANT APPLICATION

17. Community Impact- Describe the community your department serves. Include population size, geographic area, and any high-risk or underserved populations. How will this project improve safety, response time, or service delivery for your community?
18. Sustainability- Describe how your department will maintain the equipment, gear, or improvements funded by this grant. Are there any ongoing costs associated with this project? If so, how will they be funded?
19. Local Support- Upload or attach any letters of support from local officials or community partners.
20. Operating Budget- Provide a brief narrative explaining your budget. Are there any other funding sources (e.g., donations, other grants) being used for this project
21. Enter Name, address, daytime telephone number with area code and title of the financial officer of the grant recipient. The grant award will be sent to the financial officer for the grant recipient.
22. Attestation: Application must be certified by the chief of the fire department to affirm the information is true and accurate.

*****Please retain a copy for your records*****

FY2026 SCVFD GRANT APPLICATION

The fillable FY2026 SCVFD Grant Application is available online on the SFM's website at <https://com.ohio.gov/divisions-and-programs/state-fire-marshal/grants>

The application must be answered completely to be considered for grant funds and submitted online no later than January 10, 2026, to be considered.

1. You are applying as a:
 - Volunteer Fire Department
 - Fire Department
 - Joint Fire District comprised of fire departments that primarily serve small municipalities or small townships
 - Local unit of government responsible for a volunteer fire department, fire department, or joint fire district
 - Local unit of government responsible for the provision of fire protection services for small municipalities or small townships (i.e. contracts with private fire company)

2. Fire Department Identification Number (FDID #): ___ ___ - ___ ___ ___ (Example: 99-999)

Fire Department Name: _____

Authorizing Government Entity(s): _____

3. County in which applicant is located: _____

County population as of the latest decennial census (2020) See Section I(A) of the Grant Overview: _____

4. Total population protected: _____

Source of population figure: _____

5. Square miles protected: _____

Source of population figure: _____

6. Number of full time paid firefighters associated with the eligible recipient: _____

7. Number of firefighters that are part time or paid per call: _____

8. Number of unpaid firefighters associated with the eligible recipient: _____

FY2026 SCVFD GRANT APPLICATION

9. In accordance with the Ohio Revised Code Section 3737.24, has the fire department reported fire incidents to the State Fire Marshal for the entire calendar year 2024? For clarification, see Instructions #9.

Yes No

10. If applicable, is your fire department in compliance with the VFDF in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code Chapter 146? For clarification, see Instructions #8.

Yes No

11. Enter the name, daytime telephone number and email address of a person we may contact for questions about this application. This individual should be someone who checks their email daily and can respond within 48 hours.

Name of Contact Title

Daytime/Cell Telephone Email Address

12. Provide the total operating budget during calendar year 2024, including both public and private sources of income. Total operating budget includes money provided from taxes and fire protection contracts, as well as from fund raising and donations used for operating expenses. Do not include capital expenses for new trucks, buildings, or EMS budgets.

Total 2024 Operating Budget: _____

13. For primary protection area, enter the total number of fire incidents/calls/responses requiring a fire incident report in the following categories for the calendar year 2024:

_____ Structure _____ Vehicle _____ Wildland

14. Fire Department/Joint Fire District: Enter the **eligible recipient's** Federal Taxpayer Identification number.

_____ - _____ (i.e. 31-1234567).

15. Ohio Supplier Number _____

Need help finding your Ohio Supplier Number? Click here:

[Access Supplier Portal](#)

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16. Project justification- Describe your need and/or issue the proposed purchase/acquisition would address. How will the requested equipment, service, or repair/improvement enhance your department's ability to provide fire or rescue services? Include a description of the specific operational or safety issue grant funded purchases will address.

Attach additional pages if needed.

17. Community Impact- Describe the community your department serves. Include population size, geographic area, and any high-risk or underserved populations. How will this project improve safety, response time, or service delivery for your community?

Attach additional pages if needed.

18. Sustainability- Describe how your department will maintain the equipment, gear, or improvements funded by this grant.

Attach additional pages if needed.

Are there any ongoing costs associated with this project? If so, how will they be funded?

Attach additional pages if needed.

19. Local Support- Upload or attach any letters of support from local officials or community partners.

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20. Operating Budget- Provide a brief narrative explaining your budget.

Attach additional pages if needed.

Are there any other funding sources (e.g., donations, other grants) being used for this project?

Yes No

If yes, please describe:

21. Enter the name, title, address, and daytime telephone number of the eligible recipient's financial officer (i.e. township clerk, fiscal officer, finance director, treasurer, etc.). This is not the fire chief.

Name of Financial Officer

Title

Address

City

State

Zip

Daytime Telephone

Enter the mailing address associated with your Ohio Pays account. [Click here to check:](#)

[Access Supplier Portal](#)

(Applicant Signature Next Page)

FY2026 SCVFD GRANT APPLICATION

22. Applicant Attestation

I certify that the information contained in this application is true, complete, and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I further affirm that the eligible recipient intends to complete the proposed project if awarded funding through the FY2026 Small County Volunteer Fire Department Grant Program.

I understand that falsification or misrepresentation of any information in this application may result in disqualification from the grant program, repayment of funds, or other penalties as permitted by law.

Applicant – Eligible Recipient

Signature: _____

Name (Printed): _____

Title: FD Chief or Chief Executive

Date Signed: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____, **OHIO** **ZIP:** _____

Daytime Telephone: _____

EMAIL: _____

FY2026 SCVFD GRANT APPLICATION SCORING CRITERIA

Grant Scoring Criteria:

Based on the scoring system outlined below established by the State Fire Marshal, each eligible recipient will accumulate points based on specific information contained in its grant application. Applicants with the highest scores that meet eligibility requirements will be awarded grants based upon the availability of funds. In the event of a scoring tie or limited funding amongst applicants, the State Fire Marshal may consider additional factors such as the extent of volunteer participation in an applicant, and geographic service considerations or demonstrated financial need of an applicant.

Each application will be reviewed to determine eligibility in accordance with the parameters set forth in this application. Thereafter each application will be scored. The scoring system generated for this grant cycle is calculated based upon the following:

Criteria	Description
Population Protected	Population of the area for which the applicant provides primary fire protection
Fire Area Protected	Total square miles of the area for which your department provides primary fire protection
Number of fire Incidents/calls/responses	Total number of fire incidents/calls/responses requiring a fire incident report for calendar year 2024
Project Justification	Clear explanation of need and benefit
Budget Clarity	Budget is detailed and reasonable
Documentation Completeness	All required documents submitted
Impact	Project improves fire/rescue services
Sustainability	Maintenance plan is clear and feasible
Local Support	Letters of support provided
Operating Budget	Budgetary need of fire department

1. Population Protected: Population of the area for which the applicant provides primary fire protection.
2. Fire Area Protected: Total square miles of the area for which your department provides primary fire protection.
3. Number of Fire Incidents: Total number of fire incidents/calls/responses requiring a fire incident report for calendar year 2024.
4. Project Justification: The applicant clearly explains the need for the requested funding and how it will address a specific operational or safety issue.
 - A compelling explanation of the problem or safety gap.
 - How the requested purchase or project will improve service delivery, safety, or response capability.
 - Alignment with the department’s mission and community needs.

FY2026 SCVFD GRANT APPLICATION SCORING CRITERIA

- ❖ Strong applications will describe:
 - The current limitations or risks.
 - How the new equipment, service, or improvement will enhance safety, response time, or service delivery.
- 5. Budget Clarity : The proposed budget for the purchase/acquisition is well-documented, realistic, and clearly shows how grant funds will be used.
 - Itemized cost estimates or vendor quotes.
 - Clear breakdown of expenses.
 - Identification of matching funds or other funding sources (if applicable).
 - Budget aligns with the project description and scope.
 - ❖ Strong applications will:
 - Include a clear breakdown of costs.
 - Avoid vague or lump-sum requests.
 - Demonstrate fiscal responsibility.
- 6. Documentation Completeness: All application instructions and required supporting documents are submitted and organized according to the instructions.
 - All required attachments are included (e.g., specs, photos, proposals, permits, insurance, etc.).
 - Documents are clear, legible, and relevant.
 - Application is complete and follows the correct format.
 - Depending on the type of request, this may include:
 - Equipment/Gear: Spec sheets, vendor quotes, maintenance plans, photos of current equipment.
 - Minor Firehouse Repair/Improvements: Project proposals, contractor estimates, site photos, floor plans, permits, insurance.
 - Training/Services: Contracts, MOUs, planned training rosters, service timelines.
 - ❖ Tips for Applicants:
 - Label attachments clearly (e.g., “Quote – SCBA Gear.pdf”).
 - Avoid submitting incomplete or placeholder documents.
 - Ensure all uploaded files are readable and final (not drafts unless explicitly allowed).
- 7. Impact: The proposed project or purchase will have a meaningful and measurable impact on the department’s ability to provide fire or rescue services.
 - The number of personnel or community members who will benefit.
 - Improvement in safety, efficiency, or response time.
 - Long-term value or enhancement to department operations.
 - Community benefits that will be achieved.
- 8. Sustainability: The applicant demonstrates a clear and feasible plan for maintaining the equipment, gear, or improvements funded by the grant.

FY2026 SCVFD GRANT APPLICATION SCORING CRITERIA

- Explanation of how the department will ensure the longevity and upkeep of the purchased items or completed improvements.
 - Identification of responsible personnel or systems in place for maintenance.
 - Description of any existing maintenance schedules, warranties, or service agreements.
 - Consideration of future costs and how they will be covered.
 - ❖ Strong applications will:
 - Provide a realistic and detailed maintenance plan.
 - Demonstrate the department's capacity to care for and sustain the investment.
 - Address how the department will avoid future gaps in service or equipment failure.
9. Local Support: The applicant provides evidence of community or governmental support for the proposed project.
- Letters of support from local elected officials, township trustees, county commissioners, or community partners.
 - Statements of collaboration or shared benefit with other local agencies.
 - Community fundraising efforts or endorsements (if applicable).
 - ❖ Strong applications will:
 - Include multiple letters of support that are specific to the project.
 - Demonstrate alignment with local priorities or community needs.
 - Show that the department has engaged stakeholders in the planning process.
10. Operating Budget: The applicant's financial need is clearly demonstrated through the department's operating budget.
- Total operating budget for the most recent calendar year.
 - Breakdown of revenue sources (e.g., tax levies, contracts, donations).
 - Explanation of how limited financial resources impact the department's ability to provide services.
 - ❖ Strong applications will:
 - Clearly show that the department operates with limited resources.
 - Provide context for how the requested funding will fill a critical gap.
 - Align the budget narrative with the project's urgency and necessity.

For copies of the portions of House Bill 96 and/or 184 of the 136th General Assembly that create this Grant program, Chapter 146 of the Revised Code (Volunteer Firefighters Dependent's Fund), and the sections of Ohio law regulating the reporting of fires to the SFM, please go to the following website: <http://www.com.ohio.gov/fire/> or contact the Grant Administrator, at (614) 752-7123 or commercegrants@com.state.oh.us

FY2026 SCVFD Grant Program – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. *Who is eligible to apply for the SCVFD Grant?*

Eligible applicants must be:

A. Located in a county with a population of 70,000 or less, based on the 2020 U.S. Census.

B. An “Eligible Recipient” which includes the following:

- i. Volunteer Fire Departments
- ii. Fire Departments
- iii. Joint Fire Districts comprised of fire departments that primarily serve small municipalities or small townships (population of less than 25,000 permanent residents)
- iv. Local units of government responsible for such fire departments
- v. Local units of government responsible for the provision of fire protection services (i.e. contracts with private fire company) for small municipalities or small townships (population of less than 25,000 permanent residents)

2. *Can a township or municipality apply on behalf of a fire department?*

Yes, local units of government responsible for a qualifying fire department may apply on its behalf. However, the fire department must meet the eligibility criteria, and the application must be signed by the fire chief or executive official.

3. *Do volunteer departments get priority?*

Yes. While all eligible applicants are considered and scored based on the published criteria, volunteer fire departments may receive priority consideration during the award process, particularly in cases where funding is limited or when applications are otherwise equally scored. This aligns with the legislative intent and purpose of the SCVFD Grant Program, which was established to support departments that rely heavily on volunteer personnel and often operate with limited resources.

4. *What is the maximum grant award?*

Each eligible department may receive up to \$50,000. The grant is non-renewable and applies only to State Fiscal Year 2026.

5. *What can the grant funds be used for?*

Eligible uses include, but are not limited to:

- Firefighting and rescue equipment
- Minor Firehouse repairs or improvements
- Training and continuing education (excluding off-site lodging)
- Recruitment and retention efforts
- Technology upgrades, PPE, EMS vehicles, and more
 - *See full list in Section III of Overview.*

6. *What are ineligible uses of funds?*

Funds cannot be used for:

- Salaries or benefits

FY2026 SCVFD Grant Program – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

- Operational bills (e.g., utilities, insurance, rent)
- Travel, lodging, or conference fees
- Fuel, groceries, or website/cloud hosting
- Political subdivision administrative costs
- Property purchases or major construction projects

7. *Can departments combine this grant with other State Fire Marshal grants?*

Yes. If a department receives another grant from the State Fire Marshal during FY2026, they may combine funds to purchase a single, higher-value asset—with prior written approval and proper documentation.

8. *Are matching funds required?*

No. Matching funds are not required, but applicants may disclose other funding sources if applicable.

9. *What documentation is required with the application?*

Depending on the project type, applicants must submit:

- Vendor quotes or estimates
- Budget breakdowns
- Maintenance plans
- Photos, specs, or blueprints
- Draft contracts or MOUs (for services)

10. *When is the application due?*

Applications must be submitted online or via email by 11:59 PM on January 10, 2026.

11. *What should I include in the Project Justification section?*

Applicants should clearly describe the operational or safety issues their department is facing and explain how the requested funding will address that issue. Strong responses will identify current limitations, describe the proposed solution, and explain how it aligns with the department's mission and community needs.

12. *How should I describe Community Impact?*

Applicants should explain how the proposed project or purchase will benefit the community they serve. This includes describing the population and geographic area served, improvements to safety or response time, and any long-term benefits to department operations or public safety.

13. *Do I need to submit letters of support?*

Letters of support are not required but are strongly encouraged. They can demonstrate local support from elected officials, community partners, or other stakeholders. Applicants may also describe local support in the application narrative.

FY2026 SCVFD Grant Program – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

14. *What makes a strong application?*

Strong applications:

- Clearly explain the need for funding and expected outcomes
- Provide a detailed and realistic budget
- Include all required documentation
 - If you have supporting documentation (e.g., quotes, photos, letters of support), please email them to: CommerceGrants@com.ohio.gov.
 - Include the following in your email subject line:
[Your Department Name] – [FDID Number] – FY2026 SCVFD Supporting Documentation
- Demonstrate community impact and sustainability
- Include letters or statements of local support

15. *When will awards be announced?*

Award and non-award letters will be sent in January 2026 and/or February 2026. Funding will be disbursed after the Grant Agreement is signed and returned.

16. *What are the reporting requirements after receiving funds?*

By May 20, 2026, recipients must submit:

- Paid invoices
- Final budget report
- Serial numbers (for high-value items)
- Proof of project completion
- A Final Program Report is due by June 15, 2026, unless an extension is granted for delayed acquisitions.
 - *Any extensions or variances requested shall be submitted in writing and evaluated at the State Fire Marshal's discretion.*

17. *Where do I send my unused funds?*

If you are not going to spend all of the grant funds awarded, please contact the Grants Administrator as soon as possible for instructions.

☎ (614) 752-7123

✉ CommerceGrants@com.state.oh.us

18. *How do I update my mailing address?*

Click here: [Access Supplier Portal](#)

19. *Who can I contact with questions?*

Grants Administrator at (614) 752-7123 or CommerceGrants@com.state.oh.us

FY2026 SCVFD Grant Program – Key Dates & Deadlines

- **October 19, 2025** – Application period opens
- **January 10, 2026 (11:59 PM)** – Application submission deadline
- **January 2026 to February 2026** – Award and non-award notifications issued
- **Within 14 calendar days of award receipt** – Signed Grant Agreement due (non-return = declination)
- **May 20, 2026** – Deadline to:
 - Complete minor firehouse repairs/improvements
 - Submit all paid invoices
 - Submit Final Program Report and documentation
 - Submit serial numbers for equipment > \$15,000
 - Submit proof of training (if applicable)
- **June 1, 2026** – Deadline to return any unexpended grant funds
- **June 15, 2026** – Final Program Report due