# COVID Relief Grants for Volunteer Fire Departments

The State of Alabama will offer grants in an amount up to $10,320 for Volunteer Fire Departments that meet eligibility requirements. Total approved disbursements will be awarded to eligible applicants. The Alabama Volunteer Fire Department Grants are to support Volunteer Fire Departments that have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The application process for this grant program is being administered by the Alabama Department of Finance.

The application period for the Alabama Volunteer Fire Department Grant Program will be open from noon March 7, 2022 through noon March 25, 2022.

COVID-19 Recovery Grant Program Website: https://alabama.submittable.com/submit

For questions, please contact the Coronavirus Recovery Funds Office at (334) 353-2749 or submissions@finance.alabama.gov. Please include "Volunteer Fire Department Grant Program" in the subject line of the email.

## Frequently Asked Questions

## General

- **What is the Alabama Volunteer Fire Department Grant Program?**

  *This program is an initiative of Governor Kay Ivey and the Alabama Legislature to provide support to Alabama's Volunteer Fire Departments that have been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. U.S. Treasury guidance allows the State to use American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars for qualified expenditures. Therefore, the State of Alabama will offer grants in an amount up to $10,320 for providers that meet eligibility requirements. More information about the grant application process and eligibility requirements is included in the responses to "Frequently Asked Questions" below and on the Alabama Fiscal Recovery Fund website at* https://frf.alabama.gov/.

- **Where did the funding come from?**

  *The Alabama Legislature appropriated $136,796,346 from Alabama's ARPA State Fiscal Recovery Revenue Replacement Fund. $10 million of these funds will be distributed to Alabama's Volunteer Fire Departments as grants up to $10,320.*

- **Is there any cost to me associated with the grant?**

  *No.*

- **What is the timeline of the application?**

  *Monday, March 7, 2022 – Friday, March 25, 2022*

  *Starting at noon on March 7, 2022, Volunteer Fire Departments may submit an application through the Department of Finance's Submittable Online Portal. The application period closes at noon on Friday, March 25, 2022.*

  *Please note that, if your VFD participated in any Alabama CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund programs, you will be able to use those credentials to log into the VFD portal.*

- **What is the deadline to complete the application?**

  *On Friday, March 25, 2022 at noon.*

- **How many providers will receive the funds?**

  *Grants will be awarded to a predetermined list of eligible Volunteer Fire Departments across the State of Alabama.*

- **What type of Expenses are not permissible uses of this grant award?**

  *This grant award is to be utilized to support the provision of police, fire, and public safety services. The Funds may not be used for the following*:

  - *To offset a reduction in net tax revenue;*
  - *For deposit into pension funds;*
  - *For debt service or replenishing financial reserves;*
  - *For satisfaction of settlements or judgments;*
  - *Or, any project or use that conflicts or contravenes the purpose of the American Rescue Plan Act*

- **How will I be notified about the status of my application?**

  *To find out the status of your application, please log into your online portal.*

- **Is there a way for me to know that my application was successfully submitted?**

  *You will receive an email confirmation letting you know your application has been submitted. You may also log into your online portal.*

- **Who can I contact to follow up with my application?**

  *Please log into your online portal to find the status of your application.*

## Eligibility

- **Are there eligibility requirements?**

  *Yes, the Volunteer Fire Department must verify that it was operational as of March 11, 2021 and continues to be operational as of the date of the application.*

- **Are Volunteer Fire Departments that are located out of the State of Alabama eligible to apply?**

  *No.*

- ***Can I apply more than once for the same Volunteer Fire Department location?***

  *No. Each VFD can only apply for and receive one grant award through this program.*

## Application Process

- **What information do I need to have to complete my application?**

  *You will need contact information for the Volunteer Fire Department, including the VFD's EIN, copy of an updated W-9, a copy of a voided check or bank memo, and any other supporting documentation that may be deemed necessary for award.*

- **Will I have the option to save my application to make any changes and submit later or will I be required to complete the application in one setting?**

  *You may save your application and come back to it at a later date (prior to application deadline) using your online portal credentials.*

- **Can the application be changed after it has been submitted?**

  *No. Once the application has been submitted, you will not be able to make any changes.*

- **Can I resubmit my application if I fail to submit supporting documentation with my application?**

  *Only one application per VFD will be accepted. If you omit information, your VFD may be contacted as the application is processed and allowed to submit supporting documentation as required for the program.*

- **Can I submit my application via regular mail or email?**

  *No. Currently, the program is only accepting applications through Submittable Online Portal.*

- **If I received notice that my application needs more information, how long do I have to correct it?**

  *Once correspondence is sent to correct an application for more information, the form will be open for edit and the applicant has 48 hours to complete the required updates. If the application has not been updated at that time, the application will be reviewed as is and may not be eligible for payment.*

## Payment Information

- **How will I receive my funds (by check or direct deposit)?**

  *Grant funds will be disbursed by direct deposit using the bank information provided on the application. To help ensure that payments are properly distributed, bank information submitted with an application will be subject to review prior to the distribution of funds. To avoid delays in the disbursement of grant funds, applicants must provide bank account information for a depository account with a valid bank routing number. Please verify with your bank that this information is correct before submitting the application. We will not accept banking information for a prepaid debit card or similar payment medium. (Please note, although these verification measures may slow down the disbursement of grant funds, they are necessary to ensure that your organization is the one receiving any grant funds awarded and that an application has not been submitted on your behalf without your knowledge.) If the bank information provided with the application has previously been designated as fraudulent, the grant application will be denied.*

- **Will these funds be issued to me as a loan or a grant?**

  *A grant.*

- **Do I have to repay these funds?**

  *No, unless it is determined the information contained within the application was false, fraudulent, or materially misleading or if it is determined that the funds were utilized for an impermissible use.*

- **How much can I apply for?**

  *Each eligible volunteer fire department may apply for a grant award of up to $10,320.*

- **Do I need to document or report how I use the funds I receive?**

  *Yes, you should document the use of the grant funds and retain that documentation for the purpose of possible future federal, state, or other audits.*

## Account Registration

- **Will I have to create an account/profile in order to complete the application?**

  *Yes. To apply, please go through the Online Portal.*

## Technical Troubleshooting

- **Who can I contact if I have any technical difficulties with the application process or if I'm unable to log into my account?**

*For Application Customer Support, please contact:*
***Submittable***
*Monday-Friday 10-6pm (CST)*
Submittable Help