

CONFERENCE AND EDUCATION ASSISTANCE GRANT POLICY



*Grant Awards to Provide Financial Assistance to Further the Education and
Training Needs of Virginia's Fire Services Personnel*

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FIRE PROGRAMS

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A) PURPOSE

In accordance with §38.2-401-F of the *Code of Virginia*, the Conference and Education Assistance Grant Program was established to provide additional financial assistance for professional development for member's of Virginia's fire services community. The Conference and Education Assistance Program shall be administered by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VD FP) under the guidance and direction of the Executive Director or the designee.

The purpose of the Conference and Education Assistance Grant Program is to provide needed financial support for training conferences and seminars sponsored by Virginia-based non-profit organizations that further the education of fire services personnel throughout the Commonwealth.

B) GENERAL OVERVIEW

Grant disbursements to eligible organizations for training opportunities of Virginia's fire services personnel are administered by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, VD FP, ("the Agency") from the Commonwealth's Fire Programs Fund as outlined in the *Code of Virginia* (§38.2-401) and consistent with recommendations by the Virginia Fire Services Board, VFSB, ("the Board") as set forth within this document. All grants for conference and education programs shall be approved by the Executive Director of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs or the designee.

C) PRECEDENTS OF LAW & DISCLAIMER

Disbursements from the Virginia Department of Fire Programs Conference and Education Assistance Grant Program will be made from the Fire Programs Fund (§38.2-401 of the *Code of Virginia* as amended) consistent with the policy set forth within this document.

Nothing contained within this document shall be construed to supersede the applicable laws and regulations of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Should such conflict or question arise, or appear to arise, the applicable law or regulation shall supersede and nullify any such questionable provision outline in this policy.

D) DEFINITION OF TERMS

CONFERENCE AND EDUCATION ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM – Administered by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, this program provides financial assistance to Virginia-based non-profit or governmental entity offering a conference or symposium targeted specifically for fire services providers and their respective agencies. Grant funds shall be used for the purposes of providing training to volunteer or career firefighting personnel and funding fire prevention and public safety education courses. The award of such monies is determined following a review of acceptable criteria and an establishment of need.

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FIRE PROGRAMS – The state agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia responsible for the administration of the Conference and Education Assistance Grant Program. Herein also referred to as "VD FP".

FISCAL PERIOD – The twelve (12) month period in which the Commonwealth of Virginia applies its approved budget for the benefit of the state and its citizens. This cycle begins on July 1 and terminates on June 30 of each calendar year.

GRANT PERIOD – A twelve (12) month time period coinciding with the Fiscal Period in which the awarded organization (or “grantee”) must expend any funds received from the Conference and Education Assistance Program. The expenditure of funds must be for the stated purpose and be within proper guidelines for which money was awarded.

E) GRANT APPLICATION

Any eligible organization may submit an application for the Conference and Education Assistance Grant Program by completing and filing the prescribed form as approved by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. Applications will be received and reviewed annually and shall be postmarked by July 1 each year for that fiscal year. A copy of the prescribed form can be found on the VDFP website at <http://www.vafire.com>.

The Virginia Department of Fire Programs Executive Director or the designee may call for applications at any time during the calendar year dependent upon the availability or increased funding for the Conference and Education Assistance Grant Program.

All applications, including attachments and supplemental documentation, become the property of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs and, upon determination of eligibility, become public information subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act and all other appropriate statutes. The determination of eligibility and that of any potential amount or other conditions shall be consistent solely with guidance and practices contained within this or any successor document.

Hard copies of grant applications should be sent directly to:

**Grants and Budget Manager
Virginia Department of Fire Programs
Attn: Conference and Education Grant Administration
1005 Technology Park Drive
Glen Allen, VA 23059-4500**

The filing of an otherwise completed grant application by an eligible entity in no way binds the Department of Fire Programs to disburse any Fire Programs Fund monies.

The determination of eligibility and that of any potential amount or other conditions shall be consistent solely with guidance and practices contained within this or any successor document.

F) ELIGIBILITY AND AWARD CRITERIA

The Executive Director of VDFP shall determine the amount of any financial awards as funds are available. The non-availability of funds may prevent the approval of any application for grant assistance.

Eligibility of applicants and the awarding of the Conference and Education Assistance Grant funds shall be based on the following criteria:

1. Legally recognized non-profit or governmental entities representing the local, regional, or statewide interests of the fire community shall be eligible.
2. Neither the applicant nor governing authority of the conference shall not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, political affiliation, or against otherwise qualified persons with disabilities.
3. It is strongly encouraged that the scheduled conference be held within the legally recognized boundaries of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Training programs outside Virginia may be approved on a limited basis when the needs are justified in the application.
4. The host organization may allow participants outside the Commonwealth to participate.
5. The content of the grant-funded training event must align with the mission and needs of Virginia's fire services community.

G) GRANT REVIEW

Beginning with the FY2020 funding year, the Executive Director shall appoint a review panel to analyze the applications. The review panel will consist of command staff members to include the Deputy Director along with the Budget and Grants Manager. At the discretion of the Executive Director, a Virginia Fire Services Board member shall be appointed should there be a need for a substitute. Applications will be evaluated for accuracy, eligibility and its impact on the Commonwealth of Virginia. VDFP's command staff will provide funding recommendations to the Executive Director. Final funding levels will be made by the Executive Director based on the analysis provided.

H) GRANT AWARD ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

The grant recipient or host organization shall publicly acknowledge Virginia Department of Fire Programs as a funding source during the scheduled conference and other activities supported through the Conference and Education Grant Program. Acknowledgement must be made when issuing statements, advertisements, press releases, online notices and other documents describing the training funded in whole or in part with VDFP funds. The Conference and Education Assistance Grant Program shall be administered through the Grants Section at VDFP.

I) DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

Disbursements from the Conference and Education Assistance Grant Program shall be made following the application to and approval by VDFP Executive Director or the designee. Each applicant must demonstrate the substantial benefit to Virginia's fire and emergency services community and sufficiently outline the use of grant monies.

VDFP shall reserve the right to determine the method and amount of financial assistance disbursement on a case-by-case basis. Examples of acceptable methods include electronic transfer and check writing.

1. **CONCEPT OF OPERATION AND FUND USE** – Monies from the Conference and Education Assistance Grant Program shall be used to enhance the educational and practical instruction available to Virginia’s fire services personnel. In so doing, funds may be applied towards identified training costs to improve the delivery of material and overall quality of instruction. These training conferences and educational seminars must reinforce the modern needs of Virginia’s fire services inclusive of health and safety instruction.
2. **ACCEPTABLE USES OF MONIES** - Include, but are not limited to, instructor fees, reservation fees, honorariums, renting multimedia supplies and equipment beyond services that VDFP may already provide, production of presentation materials, technical assistance and instructors travel expenses. The use of money towards non-learning or recreational activities is acceptable on a limited basis. The use of grant funds to provide light refreshments, such as snacks and non-alcoholic beverages, may be acceptable when it has been determined that such items would materially enhance the training event.

J) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the conference, the grant assistance recipient shall submit a detailed written report to the Executive Director of VDFP summarizing the training and how the funds were utilized. The total number of verifiable attendees and a complete list of training courses offered shall be included in the documents provided. The recipient may also use this occasion to comment on the administration of the Conference and Education Assistance Grant Program. All written remarks may be used by VDFP for quality assurance and quality improvement purposes.

Additionally, within 30-calendar days after the conclusion of the grant term, all unexpended funds – including any interest accrual remaining – shall be returned to VDFP.

1. **Return of Unexpended Funds by Check:** Funds being returned to the Agency via a check:
 - Must be made payable to the *Treasurer of Virginia*, and
 - Forwarded to the attention of the Agency at the address specified in [H] above. (Funds are **NOT** to be sent directly to the Treasurer’s Office or any other State agency.)
2. **Direct Deposit:** Funds may also be returned to the Agency via electronic transfer as may be provided for within the contractual agreement among parties.

K) FUND MISUSE

Should any audit reveal inappropriate or questionable expenditures, the Conference and Education Grant recipient shall submit a written explanation to the Executive Director of VDFP within fifteen (15) days of notification and be subject to an investigation of improper use. Any entity believed to have provided false, misleading, or improper information will be subject to a review by VDFP and possibly other authorities. The Office of the Attorney General will be consulted regarding these matters as necessary.

If any financial assistance recipient is deemed to have misused any monies, in whole or in part, of the Conference and Education Assistance Grant Program, such funds shall be re-paid to VDFP within 30 days from the date of determination of misuse. Said organization shall then be ineligible to receive VDFP supplemental financial assistance for a period of up to five (5) years from the date of the original award. The deliberate and/or malicious misuse of monies from the Conference and Education Assistance Grant Program will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement authorities for review.

L) BURDEN OF PROOF & LIABILITY TO AUDIT

It is the responsibility of the jurisdiction to maintain all necessary fiscal records. Such records are subject to audit by this Agency or its assignees, for a period of not less than five (5) years following the date of the last transfer of award moneys to the grant recipient.

CERTIFICATION:

The undersigned Executive Director of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs adopts the foregoing policy as of March 31, 2019. As such, this revised policy supersedes all prior adopted versions of this Policy.



Michael T. Reilly Executive Director Virginia Department of Fire Programs
