



State of New Hampshire

DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY
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November 4, 2021

The Honorable Karen Umberger, Chairman
 Fiscal Committee of the General Court
 State House
 Concord, New Hampshire 03301

His Excellency, Governor Christopher T. Sununu
 and the Honorable Council
 State House
 Concord, New Hampshire 03301

REQUESTED ACTION

1. Pursuant to RSA 14:30-a, VI, authorize the Department of Safety, Division of Fire Standards and Training and Emergency Medical Services, to accept and expend \$2,738,541 of American Rescue Plan Act of 2021(ARPA), State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (FRF), for the purpose of improving New Hampshire’s First Responder Recruitment and Training by adding personnel, training, and facility improvements at the Raymond S. Burton Fire and EMS Facility in Bethlehem, NH. This is an allowable use of ARP FRF funds under Section 602 (c)(1)(A) to respond to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts. Effective upon Fiscal Committee and Governor and Council approval through June 30, 2023. Funding Source: **100% Federal Funds.**
2. Pursuant to RSA 124:15, and contingent upon the approval of requested action #1, authorize the Department of Safety, Division of Fire Standards and Training and Emergency Medical Services to establish one full time temporary Program Specialist III position to oversee fire and EMS recruitment and retention efforts throughout the State. Effective upon Fiscal Committee and Governor and Council approval through June 30, 2023. Funding Source: **100% Federal Funds.**

Funds are to be budgeted in SFY2022 in the following account:

02-23-23-2370-24XX0000¹ – Department of Safety, Division of FSTEMS – ARP Funds

<u>Class</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>SFY 2022 Current Adjusted Authorized</u>	<u>Requested Action</u>	<u>SFY 2022 Revised Adjusted Authorized</u>
000-400338	Federal Funds	(\$0.00)	(\$2,738,541.00)	(\$2,738,541.00)
	TOTAL REVENUE	(\$0.00)	(\$2,738,541.00)	(\$2,738,541.00)
020-500200	Current Expenses	\$0.00	\$147,625.00	\$147,625.00

¹ All direct program costs will be accounted for using activity 00FRF602PH2303A and all administrative and indirect costs will be accounted for using activity 00FRF602PH2303Z. Accounting classifications may be subject to technical changes at the discretion of the Department of Administrative Services’ Division of Accounting Services.

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030-500331	Equipment	\$0.00	\$666,600.00	\$666,600.00
037-500173	Technology-Hardware	\$0.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
039-500188	Telecommunications	\$0.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
040-501587	Indirect Costs	\$0.00	\$162,755.00	\$162,755.00
041-500801	Audit Fund Set Aside	\$0.00	\$1,915.00	\$1,915.00
050-500109	Personal Service Temporary	\$0.00	\$45,450.00	\$45,450.00
057-500531	Books, Per & Subscriptions	\$0.00	\$15,150.00	\$15,150.00
059-500117	Salary Temporary Employees	\$0.00	\$77,875.00	\$77,875.00
060-500601	Benefits	\$0.00	\$50,021.00	\$50,021.00
070-500704	In State Travel	\$0.00	\$16,150.00	\$16,150.00
103-500737	Contracts for Op Services	\$0.00	\$1,547,500.00	\$1,547,500.00
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$0.00	(\$2,738,541.00)	(\$2,738,541.00)

EXPLANATION

These funds will be used to improve first responder recruitment and retention efforts statewide. Fire and EMS departments across the state are facing challenges in recruiting new members to their departments. There is no centralized collection of data on the recruitment problem for fire and EMS services throughout New Hampshire, however, service leaders routinely report a decline in potential candidates in the hiring process. On call and volunteer department leaders report increased difficulty in recruiting members as well. This is consistent with a national poll showing almost 70% of rural EMS providers report having difficulty in recruiting volunteers to adequately meet staffing needs. A Washington Post-Kaiser Family Foundation poll found that approximately 29% of health-care workers have considered leaving the profession due to burnout and trauma, and 60% stating that stress from the pandemic has harmed their mental health.

Funds will be used to develop a statewide dashboard tracking first responder workforce data elements and the overall ability of departments to respond to and handle emergencies. This data will be evaluated and utilized by a new full-time temporary Statewide Recruitment Coordinator (Program Specialist III) working collaboratively with fire and EMS leaders to develop community specific plans to improve recruitment and retention.

Facility and equipment investments at the Raymond S. Burton Fire and EMS Facility in Bethlehem, NH will allow the Division to expand training options to Fire Departments in the North Country. A new three bay, heated garage will be constructed to securely house a new fire pumper apparatus and new equipment and training simulators to ensure effective and safe fire instruction. The garage will include a decontamination area with showers and an area where all contaminated personal protective clothing can be cleaned and stored, to adequately separate it from the classroom building. A second classroom will be built within unfinished space in the existing facility allowing increased usage and simultaneous scheduling of courses across multiple disciplines. Funds will be used to complete necessary upgrades to the existing electrical system, water and sewer, replacement of the HVAC system, as well as general site work necessary to support the proper environment for learning and maintain student health and safety.

Funds will also be used to increase the number of emergency medical responder training courses to add additional EMS licensees, primarily in rural parts of the state. The goal is to reduce the percentage of fire departments that do not currently hold an EMS license at any level from the current rates of 53% in Coos

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County, 48% in Sullivan County, 29% in Carroll County and 34% in Cheshire County. Increasing the number of existing responders that are trained to assist in a medical emergency on scene and during transport, will help to improve patient outcomes.

This is an allowable use of ARP FRF funds under Section 602 (c)(1)(A) to respond to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts. In accepting ARP FRF funds, the Department agrees to work collaboratively with the Governor's Office for Emergency Relief and Recovery to ensure accurate and timely reporting to U.S. Department of Treasury on the use of the funds.

Funds are to be budgeted as follows:

- Class 020 – Current Expense: Supplies for training, such as personal protective clothing, tools and hoses
- Class 030 – Equipment: To purchase fire and EMS training equipment such as training manikins portable radios and ventilation saws (\$66,000) and a fire pumper (\$600,000)
- Class 037 – Technology-Hardware: To purchase laptop and scanner for recruitment and retention staff
- Class 039 – Telecommunications: Represents costs for cell phones used recruitment and retention
- Class 040 – Indirect Costs: Represents the indirect cost associated amount for this request at 8.5%
- Class 041 – Audit Fund Set-Aside: Represents the audit fund set-aside associated amount for this request
- Class 050 – Personal Service Temporary: Instructional cost to provide approximately (4) Emergency Medical Responder education courses per year to approximately 500 students
- Class 057 – Books, Per & Subscriptions: Cost to purchase student text books for training programs
- Class 059 – Salary Temporary Employees: Used to pay wages new full-time position
- Class 060 – Benefits: To pay associated benefits for new full-time position and instructional cost
- Class 070 – Employee Training: To cover costs for training and recruitment and retention program
- Class 103 – Contracts for Operational Services: To cover costs associated contracted services as needed build out training facility improvements for the Bethlehem training facility.

The following information is provided in accordance with the comptroller's instructional memorandum dated September 21, 1981.

- 1) *List of personnel involved* One (1) full time temporary Program Specialist III (LG 23). The proposed funding for these positions ends December 31, 2024.
- 2) *Nature, Need, and Duration*: These positions are needed to assist New Hampshire's fire and EMS departments with a statewide recruitment and retention effort.
- 3) *Relationship to existing agency programs*: All fire and EMS first responder agencies are struggling to recruit and retain staff which would be trained through the Division.
- 4) *Has a similar program been requested of the legislature and denied?* No.
- 5) *Why wasn't funding included in the agency's budget request?* These funds were recently awarded and unanticipated at the time the budget was created.
- 6) *Can portions of the grant funds be utilized?* All grant funds can only be used for the eligible work described above.

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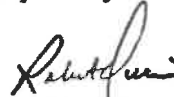
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- 7) *Estimate the funds required to continue this position:* Funds for these positions are estimated at \$321,997 for the duration of the grant through December 31, 2024.

In the event that Federal Funds become no longer available, General Funds will not be requested to support this program.

Respectfully Submitted,



Robert L. Quinn
Commissioner of Safety