

For Immediate Release:
November 10, 2022

Contact: Lisa Ryan, Tammori Petty
(609) 292-6055

Philip D. Murphy
Governor



PRESS RELEASE

Sheila Y. Oliver
Lt. Governor & Commissioner

**DCA Awards \$10 Million in American Rescue Plan
Firefighter Grants to 293 Fire Departments in New Jersey**
*Grants Will Ensure Firefighters Have Proper Fire Protection, Cleaning, and
Sanitization Equipment*

TRENTON, NJ – The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) today announced the award of \$10 million in American Rescue Plan Firefighter Grants to local and regional fire departments across New Jersey to ensure firefighters have proper protective, cleaning, and sanitization equipment during this time of heightened community need. The grants were awarded to 293 fire departments after a competitive application process.

“Equipping our firefighters with the proper gear is crucial to allowing them to safely and successfully do their jobs,” **said Governor Murphy**. “The health and safety of our essential workers is of the utmost importance to this Administration. I am grateful to DCA for recognizing these departments’ needs and awarding funding to provide this equipment.”

“Having appropriate gear, clothing, and equipment is critical for firefighters’ physical and mental health, particularly for those who serve in fire departments with limited operating budgets and large numbers of volunteers,” **said Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver, who serves as DCA Commissioner**. “For this reason, DCA is proud to help fire departments pay for these important resources so firefighters can safely and effectively serve the people in their communities.”

Fire departments will use the grant funding to help cover costs associated with the purchases of:

- Protective clothing (turnout clothing ensembles, pants, garments, helmets, hoods, gloves, footwear, etc.);
- Cleaning and advanced cleaning equipment;
- Oxygen equipment;
- Personal protective equipment (PPE); and
- Other fire/virus protection equipment as determined to be appropriate by DCA’s Division of Local Government Services.

A full list of the recipients, including grant award, is posted at <https://www.nj.gov/dca/dlgs/programs/arpffg.shtml> on the DCA website.

“Since the beginning of the pandemic, firefighters have had to think about viruses in addition to the fire hazards they face during emergency responses,” **said Division of Local Government Services Director Jacquelyn Suárez.** “These grants will help provide them with the high-quality personal protective equipment and protective clothing ensembles they now need, in addition to helmets, gloves, and boots.”

“The heightened anxiety felt by first responders like firefighters during the pandemic is well-documented,” **said State Fire Marshal and Division of Fire Safety Director Richard Mikutsky.** “Being outfitted with safe gear and clothing helps lessen this stress so that firefighters can better concentrate on the tasks at hand when responding to an emergency call.”

“Firefighters' constant exposure to deadly toxins and carcinogens has made cancer a leading cause of firefighter fatalities,” **said Eddie Donnelly, president of the New Jersey State Firefighters Mutual Benevolent Association.** “The NJ FMBA applauds the Murphy/Oliver Administration for working with us to provide funding for important gear replacement and cleaning initiatives.”

Ensuring that firefighters are properly protected against the combined threats of the COVID-19 virus and the strain of emergency fire requests is vital given the current stress on communities confronting the pandemic.

To qualify for grant funding, each eligible applicant had to describe the intended use of the funding, list the key personnel and/or outside consultant that will be managing the grant funds and purchase of equipment, and submit a governing body resolution acknowledging and approving any grant application and the proposed plan to use funds for the purchase of approved items.

Grant applications were reviewed based on the following criteria:

- Scope of fire department need as demonstrated by equipment need, number of service calls, number of active firefighters, and population of service area.
- Impact of COVID-19 on the fire department as demonstrated by the impact of the virus on the firehouse and its personnel and the local impact of COVID-19 as it relates to fire department activities and response.
- Level of commitment to protecting firefighters as demonstrated by the local match to the grant funding and other grants for protective equipment or other firefighting projects.

All local and regional fire departments in New Jersey were eligible to apply.

The American Rescue Plan Firefighter Grants are reimbursement-based. There is no advance payment or drawdown of grant funds. Eligible costs are reimbursed to the fire department when it submits evidence of payment of qualifying expenses to DCA.

The Division of Local Government Services serves as an advocate for local government interests and provides technical and financial assistance in budgeting, financial reporting, joint services, purchasing, and management issues. They are responsible for the financial integrity of all local government units and review and approve all municipal, county, and fire district budgets. They also review many local government financial actions and govern and guide the conduct of local government officials.

DCA offers a wide range of programs and services, including local government management and finance, affordable housing production, fire safety, building safety, community planning and development, disaster recovery and mitigation, and information privacy.

For more information about DCA, visit <https://nj.gov/dca/> or follow the Department on social media:



###