

# Funding Opportunities: Firefighting Gear and Equipment

Vermont's fire departments perform critical and dangerous work, often in a volunteer capacity. Below are funding opportunities for gear and equipment that we have identified to support their efforts. Another VLCT resource, [Funding Opportunities: Fire Station Construction](#), may interest you too.

Consult program-specific guidance for additional information. Links to other sites offered in this document are provided to assist municipalities: the inclusion of a link does not imply endorsement or approval of the linked site or product.

## Funding Opportunities

[PACIF Grants](#) – Municipalities that are members of VLCT PACIF can apply for turnout gear, SCBA equipment, EMS clothing, and other emergency services protective gear. These items are covered only one time per member. Repeat requests for the same type of emergency services protective gear are not eligible. These requests are limited to a maximum reimbursement of \$1,000, to give more members an opportunity to take advantage of the grant program.

[FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant \(AFG\)](#) – The AFG helps firefighters and other first responders obtain critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training, and other resources necessary for protecting the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards. Awards are up to \$1 million.

[USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program](#) – Provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas, which is defined as a community with a population up to 20,000. Examples of essential community facilities include health care facilities; public facilities; community support services; public safety services; educational service providers such as museums and libraries; private schools; utility services such as telemedicine or distance learning equipment; and local food

systems. Projects might receive a grant, loan, or grant/loan combination. We recommend discussing projects with [USDA staff](#) prior to applying.

[\*Firefighter Property Program\*](#) – The Firefighter Property Program (FFP) refers to one of the Department of Defense's (DoD) special programs where firefighters can get excess DoD property to be used for firefighting and emergency services. Certain property obtained from this program passes ownership after it has been in use for a specified period. This program is managed by the Forest Service with the cooperation of the state forestry agencies. Contact the State forester for information.

[\*Gary Sinise Foundation First Responder Grant\*](#) – Funds equipment and training for law enforcement, fire departments, and paramedic/EMS departments to ensure that first responders can perform their job optimally. Prioritizes volunteer, low, and underfunded departments. The website does not provide much information. Vermont municipalities have received these grants.

[\*Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation\*](#) – Supports first responder lifesaving equipment, including SCBA gear. Average funding range is \$15,000 to \$35,000. Funding requests over \$50,000 are denied. Matching funds are not required. Primarily funds projects within 60 miles of a Firehouse Subs restaurant (nearest are in New York and New Hampshire) but applications from rural and volunteer departments outside that range will be considered. A Vermont municipality was awarded one of these grants in 2022.

[\*Firefighters Charitable Foundation\*](#) – Provides funding for equipment, supplies, maintenance, repairs, and training for volunteer fire departments and law enforcement agencies. Areas of giving include automatic external defibrillators, fire department equipment program, community smoke detector program, and juvenile firesetter prevention and intervention program. The website does not provide much information. The foundation's newsletter has grant thank you letters from other states, so the foundation does provide grants outside of its home state of New York.

[\*State Farm Good Neighbor Citizenship Company Grant\*](#) – Provides grants in three focus areas: safety, community development, and education. Grants are directed toward automobile and roadway safety, home safety and fire prevention, disaster preparedness, disaster recovery, and personal financial safety and security. The application process begins with an online support request. This can lead to an invitation to apply.

[Local Government ARPA Allocation](#) – The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 established the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (CSLFRF, aka ARPA). Through this legislation, over \$200 million was allocated to Vermont municipalities for response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. These funds can address municipal needs and/or serve as a local match to State and Federal funding. Legislative bodies (Selectboards, City Councils, Village Trustees) have discretion and flexibility over how to spend their local ARPA funds. These funds can assist municipal projects and/or serve as a local match to State and Federal funding.

*Congressional Directed Spending Requests (Earmarks)* - Congressionally Directed Spending Requests (CDS), formerly known as *Earmarks*, are projects selected by Members of Congress for funding through the appropriations bill. The Senate and House have different rules for these requests. Projects benefit from advanced discussion with Congressional staff. If selected, funds pass through a federal agency with that agency's associated grant terms and conditions. Funds may not be available for 1-4 years based on agency capacity. Information is available on websites of [Senator Sanders](#), [Senator Welch](#), and [Representative Balint](#). The House and Senate have different rules for their members' requests. Projects are usually submitted in late February through mid-March annually.

## Where to Find Help

Municipalities are welcome to use VLCT's [Consult on Call](#) services to discuss potential funding sources for a project or for project development advice. Through Consult on Call, VLCT narrows funding opportunities to those most pertinent to a project, saving municipalities time and resources. We also provide coaching for project development and grant management.

Many municipalities lack capacity for grant writing and administration. VLCT published a resource, [Increasing Municipal Capacity for Grants](#), that offers ideas for assistance with grants.

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