

1 Sec. 1. 20 V.S.A. § 52 is added to read:

2 § 52. TECHNICAL RESCUE MICROGRANT PROGRAM

3 (a) Creation of Program. There is created a Technical Rescue Microgrant
4 Program to assist Vermont fire departments, emergency medical services
5 agencies, and technical rescue agencies with the improvement of operational
6 readiness and investment in specialized equipment, personal protective gear,
7 and training. The Program shall be administered by the Department of Public
8 Safety.

9 (b) Working Group. The Technical Rescue Grant Working Group is
10 established to review applications and recommend awards to the
11 Commissioner of Public Safety. The Working Group shall be composed of the
12 following members:

13 (1) the Manager of the Vermont Urban Search and Rescue Team, who
14 shall be Chair;

15 (2) one member of the Senate Committee on Government Operations,
16 appointed by the Committee on Committees;

17 (3) one member of the House Committee on Government Operations
18 and Military Affairs, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

19 (4) a representative of a fire department, appointed by the Commissioner
20 of Public Safety; and

1 (5) a representative of an emergency medical services agency, appointed
2 by the Commissioner of Health.

3 (c) Compensation and reimbursement.

4 (1) For attendance at meetings during adjournment of the General
5 Assembly, a legislative member of the Working Group shall be entitled to per
6 diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 23.
7 These payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the General
8 Assembly.

9 (2) Other members of the Working Group whose participation is not
10 supported through their employment or association shall receive per diem
11 compensation pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1010 and reimbursement of travel
12 expenses. A per diem authorized by this subsection shall be paid from the
13 budget of the Department of Public Safety.

14 (d) Eligibility. Fire departments, emergency medical service agencies, and
15 technical rescue agencies operating within Vermont shall be eligible for
16 Program grants. Grant applicants shall demonstrate their use, planned use, or
17 need for technical rescue operations within their service area. All grant
18 applicants shall submit their application on a form adopted by the Department.
19 The Department shall prioritize grant awards for applicants that:

20 (1) maintain a memorandum of understanding with Vermont Emergency
21 Management for swiftwater rescue; or

1 (2) function as regional technical rescue teams providing services in
2 multiple jurisdictions.

3 (e) Grant award limitations. The maximum award to any applicant in a
4 given fiscal year shall be not more than \$5,000.00. The Program shall not
5 award more than \$100,000.00 in total grants in a given fiscal year.

6 (f) Application review and scoring. The Department shall adopt
7 procedures governing application submission, forms, review, scoring, and
8 recommendation of awards. The procedures for application scoring shall
9 include alignment with the Program priorities in subsection (b) of this section,
10 operational need, geographic service area, feasibility of the proposed project,
11 cost-effectiveness, and sustainability of the applicant's services.

12 (g) Grant recipient reporting; Department report. Each grant recipient shall
13 submit to the Department a final expenditure report, proof of purchase or
14 training completion, and a narrative description of how the grant improved the
15 recipient's technical rescue capacity. Annually on or before November 15, the
16 Department shall submit a written report to the House Committee on
17 Government Operations and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on
18 Government Operations summarizing grant awards, outcomes, and Program
19 recommendations.

20 (h) Rulemaking. The Department may adopt rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A.
21 chapter 25 as needed to implement this section.

1 Sec. 2. APPROPRIATION

2 The sum of \$25,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the
3 Department of Public Safety in fiscal year 2027 for the purpose of awarding
4 grants from the Technical Rescue Microgrant Program.

5 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

6 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.