

1 Introduced by Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs

2 Date:

3 Subject: Internal security and public safety; emergency management;
4 miscellaneous amendments

5 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to establish the
6 Ready Response Grant Program and authorize the Division of Emergency
7 Management to administer the Program for purposes of sourcing, storing, and
8 distributing shelf-stable foods and bottled water during emergencies. This bill
9 also proposes to establish the Technical Rescue Grant Program to assist rescue
10 agencies with the improvement of operational readiness and investment in
11 specialized equipment. This bill also proposes to amend various statutes to
12 require disability inclusion in all levels of emergency response planning for the
13 State, municipal corporations, and educational corporations. This bill also
14 proposes to require the fire chief of a municipal fire department to serve as the
15 town forest fire warden for the municipality or municipalities served by the
16 department. This bill also proposes to extend funding for the Department of
17 Public Safety to procure and install equipment for the purpose of building out a
18 computer-aided dispatch system for public safety communications. This bill
19 also proposes to appropriate monies to support the creation of State emergency
20 and all-hazards response and preparedness materials in multiple languages,
21 support the operation of the Urban Search and Rescue Team, award grants

1 from the Ready Response Grant Program and Technical Rescue Grant
2 Program, and support current operations and programming of the Vermont
3 Access Network.

4 An act relating to emergency management

5 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

6 * * * Ready Response Grant Program * * *

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

8 § 52. READY RESPONSE GRANT PROGRAM

9 (a) As used in this section, “ready response” means the provision of short-
10 term food and bottled water resources, including logistical support and
11 transportation, to individuals in Vermont who do not have adequate access to
12 food and water at agreed upon times when the Division of Emergency
13 Management seeks resource assistance from a grantee or responds to an all-
14 hazard event or state of emergency.

15 (b) There is created the Ready Response Grant Program to be managed and
16 administered by the Division of Emergency Management. The Division shall
17 award an annual grant to an eligible food bank to source, store, and distribute
18 shelf-stable, ready-to-eat foods and bottled water at times and in types and
19 quantities per a written memorandum of agreement with the Division.

1 (c) The grant shall be in an amount sufficient to compensate the grantee for
2 all costs incurred to procure and stage food and water in agreed upon quantities
3 and locations, the costs of cycling the food and water at agreed upon intervals,
4 the value of distribution center storage capacity, the value of operational
5 capacity to stage materials in anticipation of need, and the costs of distribution
6 whenever the Division seeks resource assistance from the grantee or responds
7 to an all-hazard event or state of emergency. For purposes of this subsection,
8 the “value of operational capacity” includes leased storage space, delivery
9 vehicles, drivers, warehouse selectors, and other operational costs.

10 (d) Food and water supplies subject to a grant and under the grantee’s
11 control shall be rotated and replenished according to established industry
12 guidelines and best practices. Rotated food and water shall be redistributed in
13 an equitable manner by the grantee through Vermont’s charitable food system
14 to Vermont nonprofit organizations qualifying under 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3) that
15 provide food to individuals in Vermont.

16 (e) To the extent that the Division requests services from the grantee that
17 are not covered by the Grant Program, a separate agreement shall be reached
18 between the Division and the grantee.

19 * * * Technical Rescue Grant Program * * *

20 Sec. 2. 20 V.S.A. § 53 is added to read:

21 § 53. TECHNICAL RESCUE GRANT PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

21 (c) Compensation and reimbursement.

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

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

11 (d) Eligibility. Fire departments, emergency medical service agencies, and
12 technical rescue agencies operating within Vermont shall be eligible for
13 Program grants. Grant applicants shall demonstrate their use, planned use, or
14 need for technical rescue operations within their service area. All grant
15 applicants shall submit their application on a form adopted by the Department.

16 The Department shall prioritize grant awards for applicants that:

17 (1) maintain a memorandum of understanding with the Division of
18 Emergency Management for swiftwater rescue; or

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

1 (e) Grant award limitations. The maximum award to any applicant in a
2 given fiscal year shall be not more than \$5,000.00. The Program shall not
3 award more than \$25,000.00 in total grants in a given fiscal year.

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

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

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

20 * * * Disability Inclusion in Emergency Planning * * *

21 Sec. 3. 20 V.S.A. § 3a is amended to read:

1 § 3a. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION; DUTIES; BUDGET

2 (a) In addition to other duties required by law, the Division of Emergency
3 Management shall:

4 * * *

5 (2) Assist the State Emergency Response Commission, the local
6 emergency planning committees, the regional emergency management
7 committees, and the municipally established local organizations referred to in
8 section 6 of this title ~~in~~ with:

9 (A) carrying out their designated emergency functions, including
10 developing, implementing, and coordinating emergency plans;

11 (B) designation of Access and Functional Needs Coordinators;

12 (C) completion of disability-led training programs and inclusive
13 training exercises; and

14 (D) proper execution of after-action reviews to address accessibility
15 gaps.

16 * * *

17 Sec. 4. 20 V.S.A. § 6 is amended to read:

18 § 6. LOCAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR EMERGENCY
19 MANAGEMENT

20 * * *

1 (c)(1) Each local organization shall develop and maintain an all-hazards
2 emergency management plan in accordance with the State Emergency
3 Management Plan and guidance set forth by the Division of Emergency
4 Management. An all-hazards emergency management plan adopted pursuant
5 to this subsection shall utilize an access and functional needs framework.
6 Local organizations shall ensure that the plan applies the “Communication,
7 Medical needs, Independence, Supervision, and Transportation” framework to
8 identify needs, provide accommodations, and operationalize support.

9 (2) The Division shall amend the local emergency plan template and any
10 best management practices or guidance the Division issues to municipalities to
11 address the need for the siting of local and regional emergency shelters in a
12 manner that allows access by those in need during an all-hazards event,
13 including access by individuals with diverse functional needs. The Division
14 shall evaluate universal access standards as a component of the plan, practices,
15 and guidance concerning the siting of local and regional emergency shelters.

16 (3) The Division shall advise municipalities that when a shelter is sited
17 under a local emergency plan, the municipality should work with the Agency
18 of Human Services, the American Red Cross, disability-led organizations, and
19 community-based emergency or charitable food providers, to assess the facility
20 and the facility’s potential operations, including the characteristics of the
21 surrounding area during an all-hazards event, multiple routes of travel and

1 possible hazards that could prevent access to the shelter, and the need for
2 immediate and sustained access to food and water for individuals using the
3 shelter.

4 (4) The Division, in coordination with the Agency of Human Services
5 and disability-led organizations, shall advise municipalities, upon completion
6 of a local emergency management plan, on how to conduct training and
7 exercises pertaining to sheltering.

8 (d) Regional emergency management committees shall be established by
9 the Division of Emergency Management.

10 * * *

11 (3) A regional emergency management committee shall consist of
12 voting and nonvoting members.

13 * * *

14 (5) Committees shall develop and maintain a regional plan, consistent
15 with guidance provided by the Division of Emergency Management in
16 coordination with regional planning commissions, that describes regional
17 coordination and regionally available resources. A regional plan adopted
18 pursuant to this subdivision shall utilize an access and functional needs
19 framework. Committees shall ensure that the plan applies the
20 “Communication, Medical needs, Independence, Supervision, and

1 Transportation” framework to identify needs, provide accommodations, and
2 operationalize support.

3 Sec. 5. 20 V.S.A. § 32 is amended to read:

4 § 32. LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEES; CREATION;
5 DUTIES

6 * * *

7 (b) All local emergency planning committees shall include representatives
8 from the following: fire departments; local and regional emergency medical
9 services; local, county, and State law enforcement; other entities providing first
10 responders or emergency management personnel; organizations serving
11 vulnerable populations; media; transportation; regional planning commissions;
12 hospitals; industry; the Vermont National Guard; the Department of Health’s
13 district office; and an animal rescue organization, and may include any other
14 interested public or private individual or organization. Where the local
15 emergency planning committee represents more than one region of the State,
16 the Commission shall appoint representatives that are geographically diverse.

17 (c) A local emergency planning committee shall perform all the following
18 duties:

19 (1) Carry out all the requirements of a committee pursuant to EPCRA,
20 including preparing a local emergency planning committee plan. The plan
21 shall be coordinated with the State emergency management plan and may be

1 expanded to address all-hazards identified in the State emergency management
2 plan. A local emergency planning committee shall coordinate with disability-
3 led organizations throughout all phases of emergency management planning.

4 At a minimum, the local emergency planning committee plan shall include the
5 following:

6 * * *

7 Sec. 6. 20 V.S.A. § 51 is amended to read:

8 § 51. DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT; ALL-HAZARD
9 AND WEATHER ALERT SYSTEMS FOR MUNICIPAL
10 CORPORATIONS

11 (a) Upon request of a municipal corporation, the Division of Emergency
12 Management shall assist the municipal corporation with access to the
13 following:

14 (1) a statewide river observation and modeling system that details
15 current river level observations and models river flood outlooks; and

16 (2) a statewide enhanced weather forecasting and alert system that:

17 (A) predicts local and regional conditions using advanced modeling;

18 and

19 (B) issues real-time warnings for potentially dangerous weather
20 through multiple communication channels.

