



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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**At Dickson City Fire Department, Governor Shapiro and Fire
Commissioner Cook Highlight Investments in Fire Departments,
Thank First Responders After Lehigh Valley Hospital Fire**

Since taking office, the Shapiro Administration has awarded more than \$140 million through the Fire Company and Emergency Medical Services (FCEMS) Grant Program.

Governor Shapiro's 2026-27 proposed budget includes a new \$30 million competitive grant initiative, providing more resources to help fire companies upgrade equipment, repair fire stations, recruit more firefighters, and more.



Dickson City, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** and **Pennsylvania State Fire Commissioner Thomas Cook** visited the Dickson City Fire Department, also known as the Eagle Hose Company No. 1, to thank first responders for their heroic efforts to respond to the Lehigh Valley Hospital fire last week and to highlight how the Governor's [2026-27 proposed budget](#) continues to deliver for firefighters and first responders.

Pennsylvania's career and volunteer firefighters put themselves in harm's way to protect communities across the Commonwealth, and Governor Shapiro has been a strong advocate for increasing state support for fire departments. That's why, for the second year in a row, the Governor's [2026-27 proposed budget](#) includes a new **\$30 million** investment — nearly doubling annual funding for fire departments — in competitive grants.

These grants will provide critical financial support to both volunteer and career fire departments statewide by funding major equipment purchases, training, facility improvements, debt reduction, and other essential operational expenses — ensuring Pennsylvanians in every community are protected.

"Every single day, firefighters across Pennsylvania run towards danger to keep people safe from harm. We owe it to these Pennsylvania heroes to have their backs and stand by them," said **Governor Shapiro**. "While the Commonwealth already provides funding for fire companies, the current system doesn't allow departments to make major investments — these competitive grants would change that. Public safety is at the heart of our work as elected leaders, and when our communities are safe, we build a strong foundation for growth across Pennsylvania."

Governor Shapiro's proposed **\$30 million** competitive grant program builds on a **\$37 million** investment in the FY 2025-26 [Fire Company and Emergency Medical](#)

[Services \(FCEMS\) Program](#), which is awarding 2,510 grants to volunteer and career fire companies, emergency medical services, and rescue squads across the Commonwealth. The FCEMS Program, administered through the [Office of the State Fire Commissioner](#), provides annual, formula-based funding to eligible organizations, with grants up to \$20,000 for fire companies and up to \$15,000 for EMS companies.

“Our firefighters and EMS personnel answer the call every day, often under challenging conditions and with limited resources. This investment reflects the Shapiro Administration’s continued commitment to supporting the fire and EMS services that Pennsylvanians rely on in emergencies,” said **State Fire Commissioner Thomas Cook**. “Fire and EMS companies are facing increased call volumes, rising costs, and ongoing recruitment and retention challenges. These grants help ensure departments can maintain readiness, improve safety, and continue serving their communities effectively.”

While visiting the Dickson City Fire Department, **Governor Shapiro** also announced the department was awarded a **\$16,136.55 grant** through the [FCEMS Program](#).

The Dickson City Fire Department is a fully volunteer fire service with 60 members, operating one fire engine, one ladder truck, and one rescue truck. Last year, the department responded to over 300 calls, serving approximately 6,600 residents in the Borough of Dickson City.

After today’s announcement, under **Governor Shapiro’s** leadership, the department will have received **\$60,513** in FCEMS funding. Dickson City Fire Chief Richard Chowanec said the department plans to use this year’s funding to modernize their station, ensure proper vehicle maintenance, and purchase new equipment.

“We pulled off the impossible last week,” said **Chief Richard Chowanec**. “It’s vital to the fire service in the state of Pennsylvania to keep this funding coming.”

“As the mayor and as a firefighter, but more importantly, as a resident, this grant program is so important,” said **Dickson City Mayor Robert MacCallum, who is also a volunteer firefighter**. “This funding allows us to continue our operations and I hope to see enough support come out of Harrisburg to get this done.”

Across the Commonwealth, **Governor Shapiro** has made strengthening fire and emergency services a priority. Since February 2023, the Shapiro Administration has awarded more than **\$140 million** through the **FCEMS Grant Program** to volunteer and career fire companies, emergency medical services, and rescue squads throughout Pennsylvania to support training, equipment, facilities, and operations.

“What happened at Lehigh Valley Hospital in Dickson City last week reinforces why consistent, annual funding for Fire Company and EMS grants matters,” said **Senator Marty Flynn**. “Prepared departments save lives, and the safe evacuation of nearly 80 patients underscores the importance of having trained personnel, reliable equipment, and adequate resources in place before an emergency occurs. This budget recognizes

that reality and makes a clear commitment to supporting the first responders our communities depend on.”

“These investments are about making sure our local fire & EMS have the tools, training, and support they need to keep doing that lifesaving work, today, tomorrow, and for years to come. And quite frankly, funding for fire and EMS should never be up for debate. Public safety is not a partisan issue,” said **Representative Bridget Kosierowski**. “That’s why I am urging my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to come together, put politics aside, and work with the Governor to get this proposal passed because our firefighters, EMS providers, healthcare workers, and communities are counting on us.”

Governor Shapiro’s proposed investments build on a strong foundation of support already delivered for first responders:

- In the **2024-25** and **2025-26 budgets**, the Governor invested **\$37.5 million** in grants to **more than 2,500 local fire and EMS departments**, supporting equipment, training, facility upgrades, and operational costs. Since taking office, the Shapiro Administration has awarded over **\$140 million** in FCEMS grants.
- In his first budget, the Governor secured an increase to the 911 surcharge from \$1.65 to \$1.95 — strengthening critical emergency funding for all 61 emergency call centers across the Commonwealth and strengthening emergency services in all 67 counties.
- In October 2024, the Governor [signed legislation](#) expanding worker’s compensation to include post-traumatic stress injuries for Pennsylvania’s first responders. The [law](#) took effect in October 2025.

The Shapiro Administration remains focused on delivering for Pennsylvania’s first responders — ensuring firefighters have the tools, training, and support they need to protect their neighbors and communities, today and into the future.

Watch the Governor’s full budget address to a joint session of the House and Senate [here](#) and read the Governor’s full remarks as prepared for delivery [here](#).

Read the Governor’s 2026-27 proposed budget in brief [here](#).

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