

Department of Planning and Budget
2026 General Assembly Session
State Fiscal Impact Statement

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ORIGINAL

Bill Number: SB80

Patron: Mulchi

Bill Title: Virginia Fire Personnel and Equipment Grant Program; established, report.

Bill Summary: Establishes the Virginia Fire Personnel and Equipment Grant Program (the Program) for the purpose of awarding grants to localities to hire additional firefighters and to improve their firefighting and emergency medical services. The bill specifies that the Department of Fire Programs (the Department) shall administer the Program and two types of grants shall be made from the Program. The first shall provide grants to localities to increase the number of firefighters. Such grants shall be made for up to three years and shall be used by localities for programs to (i) hire new, additional full-time firefighters; (ii) convert part-time or volunteer firefighters to full-time firefighters; or (iii) recruit and retain volunteer firefighters. The second shall award grants to localities for improving firefighting and emergency medical services, including by acquiring firefighting and emergency medical services vehicles and equipment and modifying facilities. For both grants, the bill provides that funds shall not be used to supplant any funds currently provided by the Commonwealth or by the locality and shall be used to increase the total amount of funds available for the provision of firefighting or emergency medical services. The bill requires the Department to submit a report annually, beginning November 1, 2027, to the Governor and the General Assembly containing a list of grants, the amount of each approved grant, information on the performance assessment system that the bill directs the Department to create, an evaluation of each grant based on such system, and any other criteria deemed relevant by the Department.

Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes

Items Impacted: Items 405 and 406

Explanation: Two full-time positions and associated funding are required under Item 405 (Fire Training and Technical Support Services) to administer the proposed grant program, as well as funding for the grant distribution is required under Item 406 (Financial Assistance for Fire Services Programs).

Fiscal Summary: According to the Department of Fire Programs (DFP), two additional full-time equivalent positions and an ongoing appropriation of \$242,961 general fund is required to support the provisions of the bill. The first year estimated fiscal impact for personnel costs is prorated for 10 months to allow for recruitment and onboarding. An amount to be determined will also need to be appropriated for the purpose of grant distribution as proposed by the bill.

General Fund Expenditure Impact:

Agency	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029	FY2030	FY2031
DFP	\$202,468	\$242,961	\$242,961	\$242,961	\$242,961	\$242,961
TOTAL	\$202,468	\$242,961	\$242,961	\$242,961	\$242,961	\$242,961

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Position Impact:

<u>Agency</u>	<u>FY2026</u>	<u>FY2027</u>	<u>FY2028</u>	<u>FY2029</u>	<u>FY2030</u>	<u>FY2031</u>
DFP	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
TOTAL		2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0

Fiscal Analysis: According to DFP, two additional full-time grants administrators are required to administer the two proposed grants in this bill. Each position would have a base salary of \$75,000 plus fringe benefits and equipment costs for a total of \$121,480 per position. The first year (FY2027) fiscal impact estimate for the salary and fringe cost of the two additional personnel is prorated for 10 months to allow for recruitment and onboarding. The positions would have the responsibility of administering the two new grants, to include developing guidelines and criteria for grant awards, receiving and reviewing grant applications, managing grant distribution, ensuring grantees remain in compliance with reporting requirements, and developing and implementing a performance assessment system, as required by the bill. According to DFP, the agency currently employs two grants administrators that are responsible for managing five existing annual grants and one one-time grant. DFP anticipates that the two existing grants administrators would not be able to manage the additional workload of the two proposed grants in this bill.

It is unclear the amount of grant funding needed to sufficiently meet the provisions of the proposed grant program at this time. Although it is unclear as to the total amount of funds required to meet the goals of this proposal, DFP estimates that the average cost of a new fire engine is approximately \$1.0 million, while the cost of specialty equipment and apparatus range from \$2.0 to \$3.0 million each. In addition, DFP reports that there is not enough information available to accurately estimate the amount of funding needed by localities to support local fire department personnel costs, in accordance with the provisions of this bill.

Other: None.