# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

# Relief Association, Active Department, Elkins Park Fire Company, Cheltenham Township, Pennsylvania

## Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

For the Period

January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2015

June 2016

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General

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EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Morton Levy, President
Relief Association, Active Department, Elkins Park Fire Company,
Cheltenham Township, Pennsylvania
Montgomery County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Relief Association, Active Department, Elkins Park Fire Company, Cheltenham Township, Pennsylvania (relief association) pursuant to authority derived from Article VIII, Section 10 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Section 403 of The Fiscal Code, Act of April 9, 1929, (P.L. 343, No. 176), and mandated by the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act, as consolidated by the Act of November 23, 2010 (P.L. 1181, No. 118), at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7411 *et seq.*, for the period January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2015.

The objective of the audit was to determine if the relief association received state aid and expended state aid and accumulated relief funds in compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures. Our audit was limited to the areas related to the objective identified above.

Relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the relief association's administration of state aid and accumulated relief funds complies with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures, including the safeguarding of assets. Relief association officers are responsible for complying with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures. It is our responsibility to perform procedures to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objective. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions.

We were not able to obtain independent confirmations of a portion of cash and a portion of investment balances directly from the financial institutions. Therefore, while the relief association provided bank and investment statements that indicated that, as of December 31, 2015, the relief association had a cash balance of $205,422 and an investment balance with a fair value of $510,530, we were not able to verify portions of those cash and investment balances.

We were also not able to obtain copies of canceled or imaged checks from the relief association. While the relief association provided bank statements, the relief association failed to provide copies of canceled or imaged checks. Without copies of canceled or imaged checks, we were not able to determine whether two relief association officers authorized and signed the checks as required by Act 118.

Based on our audit procedures, we conclude that, except for the effects, if any, of the matters described in the preceding paragraphs, for the period January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2015, the relief association, in all significant respects, received state aid and expended state aid and accumulated relief funds in compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures,

The supplementary financial information contained in this report is presented for purposes of additional disclosure and analysis. We performed only limited procedures on the supplementary financial information and, accordingly, express no form of assurance on it.

The contents of this report were discussed with the management of the relief association and, where appropriate, their response has been included in the report. We would like to thank the relief association officials for the cooperation extended to us during the conduct of the audit.

June 20, 2016

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
Auditor General

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## BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Article VIII, Section 10 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Section 403 of The Fiscal Code, Act of April 9, 1929, (P.L. 343, No. 176), and the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act, as consolidated by the Act of November 23, 2010, (P.L. 1181, No. 118), at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7411 *et seq.*, the Department of the Auditor General's duty is to audit the accounts and records of every volunteer firefighters' relief association to determine that funds received under the Foreign Fire Insurance Tax Distribution Law, Act of December 18, 1984, (P.L. 1005, No. 205), as amended, 53 P.S. § 895.701 *et seq.* (commonly referred to as Act 205), are properly expended.

The relief association is a charitable organization that was formed primarily to afford financial protection to volunteer firefighters and to encourage individuals to participate in volunteer fire service.

Act 118 governs the overall operation of volunteer firefighters' relief associations. The relief association's bylaws define the specific operational procedures by which the relief association conducts business. To fulfill its primary purpose, Act 118 authorizes specific types of expenditures and prescribes appropriate volunteer firefighters' relief association investment options. Within the parameters established by Act 118, it is the responsibility of the relief association to choose investments in a proper and prudent manner.

Volunteer firefighters' relief associations receive public tax monies, and the association officers therefore have a responsibility to the public to conduct the association's financial affairs in a businesslike manner and to maintain sufficient financial records to support the propriety of all association transactions. Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are also responsible for ensuring that the association operates in accordance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures.

Act 205 sets forth the computation of the Foreign Fire Insurance Tax Distribution paid to each applicable municipality throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The amount of the distribution is based upon the population of each municipality and the market value of real estate within the municipality. Upon receipt of this distribution, the municipality must allocate the funds to the volunteer firefighters' relief association of the fire service organization or fire service organizations that is or are recognized as providing the service to the municipality.

## BACKGROUND – (Continued)

The relief association was allocated state aid from the following municipality:

| Municipality | County | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cheltenham Township | Montgomery | $57,620 | $54,251 | $51,006 |

The volunteer firefighters' relief association and the affiliated fire service organization are separate, legal entities. The relief association is affiliated with the following fire service organization:

Elkins Park Fire Company

RELIEF ASSOCIATION, ACTIVE DEPARTMENT, ELKINS PARK FIRE COMPANY,
CHELTENHAM TOWNSHIP, PENNSYLVANIA
SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION
CASH AND INVESTMENT BALANCES
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2015

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Cash | $ | 205,422 |
| Fair Value of Investment Balance | | 510,530 |
| Total Cash and Investments | $ | 715,952 |

RELIEF ASSOCIATION, ACTIVE DEPARTMENT, ELKINS PARK FIRE COMPANY,
CHELTENHAM TOWNSHIP, PENNSYLVANIA
SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION
SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES
FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2013 TO DECEMBER 31, 2015

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Expenditures: | | |
| Benefit Services: | | |
| Insurance premiums | $ | 165,175 |
| Death benefits | | 6,761 |
| Total Benefit Services | $ | 171,936 |
| Fire Services: | | |
| Equipment purchased | $ | 2,448 |
| Equipment maintenance | | 1,503 |
| Training expenses | | 12,514 |
| Total Fire Services | $ | 16,465 |
| Administrative Services: | | |
| Officer compensation | $ | 900 |
| Other administrative expenses | | 472 |
| Bond premiums | | 839 |
| Total Administrative Services | $ | 2,211 |
| Total Investments Purchased | $ | 160,000 |
| Total Expenditures | $ | 350,612 |

RELIEF ASSOCIATION, ACTIVE DEPARTMENT, ELKINS PARK FIRE COMPANY,
CHELTENHAM TOWNSHIP, PENNSYLVANIA
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

**The Honorable Tom W. Wolf**
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Relief Association, Active Department, Elkins Park Fire Company, Cheltenham Township, Pennsylvania Governing Body:

**Mr. Morton Levy**
President

**Mr. William Loeffel**
Vice President

**Mr. Darren Harrison**
Secretary

**Mr. Thomas Robinson**
Treasurer

**Mr. Charles Obrecht**
Chairman of Finance

A report was also distributed to the following municipality, which allocated foreign fire insurance tax monies to this relief association:

**Mr. Bryan T. Havir**
Secretary
Cheltenham Township

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at www.PaAuditor.gov. Media questions about the report can be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 229 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: news@PaAuditor.gov.