

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

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## Jefferson Township Volunteer Ambulance Association Relief Association Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2023

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April 2024



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General

Timothy L. DeFoor • Auditor General



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**TIMOTHY L. DEFOOR  
AUDITOR GENERAL**

Mr. Daniel Corallo, President  
Jefferson Township Volunteer Ambulance  
Association Relief Association  
Lackawanna County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Jefferson Township Volunteer Ambulance Association Relief Association (relief association) for the period January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2023. The audit was conducted pursuant to authority derived from Article VIII, Section 10 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; Section 403 of The Fiscal Code, 72 P.S. § 403; and the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act ("VFRA Act"), see 35 Pa.C.S. § 7418.

The objectives of the audit were:

1. To determine if the relief association took appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior audit report.
2. To determine if the relief association complied with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures as they relate to the receipt of state aid and the expenditure of relief association funds.

Our audit was limited to the areas related to the objectives identified above and was not, nor was it required to be, conducted in accordance with Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

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 association 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 objectives. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions.

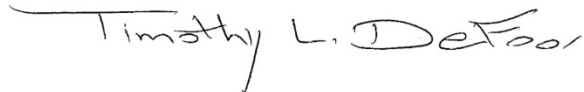
We were not able to obtain an independent confirmation of the cash balance directly from the financial institution. Therefore, while the relief association provided copies of bank statements that indicated that, as of December 31, 2023, the relief association had a cash balance of \$50,214, we were not able to verify this cash balance.

Based on our audit procedures, we conclude that, except for the effects, if any, of the matter described in the preceding paragraph, for the period January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2023:

- The relief association took appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior audit report.
- The relief association, in all significant respects, complied with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures as they relate to the receipt of state aid and the expenditure of relief association funds, except as noted in the finding listed below and discussed later in this report.

Finding – Insufficient Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage

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.



Timothy L. DeFoor  
Auditor General  
March 26, 2024

## CONTENTS

|  | <u>Page</u> |
|--|-------------|
| Background .....   | 1           |
| Status of Prior Finding .....                                | 4           |
| Finding and Recommendation:                                  |             |
| Finding – Insufficient Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage ..... | 5           |
| Report Distribution List .....                               | 6           |

## BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Article VIII, Section 10 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Section 403 of The Fiscal Code<sup>1</sup>, and the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act<sup>2</sup> ("VFRA Act"), 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<sup>3</sup> (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 EMS personnel and to encourage individuals to participate in volunteer fire service.

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> 72 P.S. § 403 (as last amended by Act 44 of 2017).

<sup>2</sup> 35 Pa.C.S. § 7411 *et seq.* See specifically, 35 Pa.C.S. § 7418 (amended by Act 91 of 2020).

<sup>3</sup> 53 P.S. § 895.701 *et seq.* (Act 205 of 1984, as amended by Act 119 of 1990).

## BACKGROUND – (Continued)

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

| <u>Municipality</u> | <u>County</u> | <u>2020</u> | <u>2021</u> | <u>2022</u> | <u>2023</u> |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Jefferson Township  | Lackawanna    | \$6,653     | \$5,883     | \$8,177     | \$8,432     |

Based on the relief association's records, its total cash as of December 31, 2023, was \$50,214, as illustrated below:

|      |                  |
|------|------------------|
| Cash | <u>\$ 50,214</u> |
|------|------------------|

Based on the relief association's records, its total expenditures for the period January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2023, were \$15,499, as noted below. The accuracy of these expenditures was evaluated as part of the Department's audit to conclude on the relief association's compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures as they relate to the receipt of state aid and the expenditure of relief association funds.<sup>4</sup> **The scope of the Department's audit does not include the issuance of an opinion on the accuracy of these amounts.**

### Expenditures:

#### Benefit Services:

|                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Insurance premiums | <u>\$ 10,889</u> |
|--------------------|------------------|

#### Fire Services:

|                     |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Equipment purchased | \$ 1,752        |
| Training expenses   | <u>175</u>      |
| Total Fire Services | <u>\$ 1,927</u> |

#### Administrative Services:

|                               |                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Bond premiums                 | \$ 2,088        |
| Other administrative expenses | <u>595</u>      |
| Total Administrative Services | <u>\$ 2,683</u> |

|                    |                         |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Total Expenditures | <u><u>\$ 15,499</u></u> |
|--------------------|-------------------------|

<sup>4</sup> Accuracy was evaluated for a selection of transactions based on dollar amount, category, and/or random selection.

## **BACKGROUND – (Continued)**

The volunteer ambulance relief association and the affiliated ambulance association are separate, legal entities. The relief association is affiliated with the following emergency service organization:

Jefferson Township Volunteer Ambulance Association

JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE ASSOCIATION  
RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The relief association has complied with the prior audit finding and recommendation, as follows:

- Undocumented Expenditures

By receiving reimbursement of \$2,995 from the affiliated ambulance association for the undocumented expenditures that were made in the prior audit period.



JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE ASSOCIATION  
RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

**Finding – Insufficient Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage**

Condition: The relief association did not maintain a Surety (Fidelity) bond in a sufficient amount to cover the relief association's authorized disbursing officer. The relief association's Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage amount was \$50,000; however, as of December 31, 2023, the relief association's cash assets totaled \$50,214.

Criteria: Section 7415(c)(4) of the VFRA Act states, in part, that:

. . . the disbursing officer, whether designated treasurer, comptroller, financial secretary or otherwise, shall be bonded by corporate surety for faithful performance of duty. The amount of the bond shall be at least as great as the maximum cash balance in current funds of the association at any time during the fiscal year, and the premium on the bond shall be a proper charge against the funds of the association.

Cause: Relief association officials failed to monitor the relief association's cash balance to ensure the Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on the relief association's authorized disbursing officer was in compliance with the VFRA Act provisions. Relief association officials indicated that an unrecorded deposit of funds caused the balance to exceed the bond coverage.

Effect: As a result of the authorized disbursing officer of the relief association being insufficiently bonded, the relief association's cash assets were not adequately safeguarded.

Recommendation: We recommend that the relief association officials ensure that its Surety (Fidelity) bond sufficiently covers the relief association's authorized disbursing officer, as required by the VFRA Act. This requirement may be accomplished by increasing the Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on the relief association's authorized disbursing officer to an amount greater than the expected maximum balance of the relief association's cash assets, or by decreasing the relief association's cash assets to an amount anticipated to remain below the policy coverage amount. In addition, relief association officials should monitor the relief association's cash balance to ensure that unexpected events affecting the relief association's current funds do not again result in insufficient Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on the relief association's authorized disbursing officer. For further guidance, please refer to the Auditor General's publication, MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS.

Management's Response: Relief association management agreed with the finding as presented at the audit exit conference and indicated they will take action to comply with the recommendation.

Auditor's Conclusion: Compliance will be subject to verification through our next audit.

JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE ASSOCIATION  
RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

**The Honorable Joshua D. Shapiro**  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Jefferson Township Volunteer Ambulance Association Relief Association Governing Body:

**Mr. Daniel Corallo**  
President

**Mr. Robert O'Hara**  
Vice President

**Ms. Rachel Lydon**  
Secretary

**Ms. Lisa Corallo**  
Treasurer

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

**Ms. Coleen Watt**  
Secretary  
Jefferson Township

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at [www.PaAuditor.gov](http://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](mailto:news@PaAuditor.gov).