

FIRE DEPARTMENT SAFETY TESTING REIMBURSEMENT ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

page 1



PURPOSE

During the Fiscal Year 2026–2027 budget process, Cherokee County Council approved funding to establish the Fire Department Safety Testing and Physical Reimbursement Program. The purpose of this program is to assist Cherokee County's volunteer fire departments with the cost of annual firefighter safety testing, equipment testing, and firefighter physical examinations that support the safe operation of emergency response services throughout Cherokee County.

This reimbursement program was established in response to a funding request submitted by the Cherokee County Fire Chiefs Association identifying the financial challenges many departments face in completing annual testing and evaluations necessary to maintain firefighter safety and operational readiness. The Fire Chiefs Association identified annual testing of firefighting equipment and firefighter physical examinations as critical safety measures that may be deferred due to limited operating budgets.

The intent of this program is to improve firefighter safety, promote compliance with applicable testing standards, and assist departments in maintaining reliable emergency response equipment while reducing the financial burden associated with these required services.

Funding is provided on a reimbursement basis. Each eligible Cherokee County fire department may request reimbursement for approved expenses, up to the maximum amount authorized by Cherokee County Council for the applicable fiscal year, upon submission of a completed reimbursement request and the required supporting documentation.

ELIGIBLE DEPARTMENTS

The Fire Department Safety Testing and Physical Reimbursement Program is available to all Cherokee County fire departments that are recognized by Cherokee County as providing fire protection services within the County and that receive annual fire service funding through Cherokee County.

Eligible Fire Departments within the 2026-2027 Budget include:

- Macedonia Volunteer Fire Department
- Twin Rivers Volunteer Fire Department
- Grassy Pond Volunteer Fire Department
- Cherokee Creek Volunteer Fire Department
- Corinth Volunteer Fire Department
- Antioch Volunteer Fire Department
- CKC Volunteer Fire Department
- Goucher White Plains Volunteer Fire Department
- Blacksburg Volunteer Fire Department
- Gaffney City Fire Department
- Asbury Rehoboth Volunteer Fire Department
- Buffalo Volunteer Fire Department
- DMW Volunteer Fire Department

Each eligible fire department may request reimbursement for approved expenses incurred during the applicable fiscal year, up to the maximum reimbursement amount authorized by Cherokee County Council.

Reimbursement requests must be submitted by the Fire Chief or an authorized representative of the department and shall include all documentation required by Cherokee County to verify eligibility and the reimbursement amount requested.

Participation in this program does not guarantee reimbursement of all submitted expenses. Reimbursement is limited to:

- Eligible expenses as defined by this policy;
- Actual documented costs incurred by the department;
- Available appropriated funding; and
- The maximum reimbursement amount authorized by Cherokee County Council for each eligible fire department.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Cherokee County will reimburse eligible fire departments for actual costs incurred during the applicable fiscal year for firefighter safety testing, equipment testing, and firefighter physical examinations that support the safe operation and readiness of the department.

Eligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Annual Fire Ladder Testing
 - Inspection and certification of ground ladders in accordance with applicable industry standards.
- Annual Fire Hose Testing
 - Pressure testing, inspection, and certification of fire hose.
- Fire Apparatus Pump Testing
 - Annual pump performance testing and certification of fire engines, pumpers, and other apparatus requiring pump certification.
- Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Flow Testing
 - Annual inspection, testing, calibration, and certification of SCBA units.
- SCBA Cylinder Hydrostatic Testing
 - Hydrostatic testing, inspection, and certification of SCBA air cylinders as required by applicable standards.
- Firefighter Physical Examinations
 - Occupational medical examinations or annual physicals necessary to determine a firefighter's fitness for duty.
- Other Firefighter Safety Testing
 - Other testing, inspections, certifications, or evaluations directly related to firefighter safety or emergency response equipment, provided such expenses receive prior written approval from Cherokee County Administration before reimbursement is requested.

FIRE DEPARTMENT SAFETY TESTING REIMBURSEMENT ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

page 2



ELIGIBLE EXPENSES (CONT.)

Only actual costs incurred by the fire department and supported by paid invoices and required documentation are eligible for reimbursement.

Reimbursement is limited to the actual cost of eligible expenses, up to the maximum amount authorized by Cherokee County Council for each participating fire department during the applicable fiscal year. The Fire Chiefs Association identified these testing categories as the primary annual safety needs for county fire departments.

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

The following expenses are not eligible for reimbursement under this program:

- Fire apparatus purchases or repairs
- Equipment purchases
- Firefighter turnout gear or PPE
- Fuel
- Vehicle maintenance
- Salaries, wages, overtime, or benefits
- Training or travel expenses
- Office supplies or administrative expenses
- Insurance premiums
- Utilities
- Building maintenance or construction
- Any expense not directly related to eligible firefighter safety testing or physical examinations unless specifically approved in writing by Cherokee County Administration prior to submission

REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

Cherokee County shall administer the Fire Department Safety Testing and Physical Reimbursement Program on a reimbursement basis. Eligible fire departments shall be reimbursed only after eligible expenses have been incurred and the required documentation has been submitted and approved.

The reimbursement process shall be as follows:

1. Eligible Expense Incurred

The fire department shall procure and pay for eligible firefighter safety testing, equipment testing, or firefighter physical examinations.

2. Submission of Reimbursement Request

The fire department shall submit a completed Fire Department Safety Testing & Physical Reimbursement Request Form to Cherokee County Administration.

Requests may be submitted periodically throughout the fiscal year as eligible expenses are incurred.

3. Required Documentation

Each reimbursement request shall include:

- A completed reimbursement request form.
- Itemized vendor invoice(s) identifying the services performed.
- Proof of payment for the submitted invoice(s), such as a cancelled check, receipt, or other acceptable payment documentation.
- Any additional documentation requested by Cherokee County to verify eligibility.

4. Administrative Review

Cherokee County Administration and Cherokee County Finance shall review each request to determine whether the submitted expenses are eligible under this policy and that sufficient documentation has been provided.

Administration may request additional information or documentation prior to approving a reimbursement request.

5. Finance Review and Payment

Upon approval by Administration, the reimbursement request shall be forwarded to the Cherokee County Finance Department for processing.

Reimbursement shall be issued in accordance with the County's normal accounts payable procedures.

6. Funding Limitation

Reimbursements shall be limited to actual eligible expenses incurred during the applicable fiscal year and shall not exceed the maximum reimbursement amount authorized by Cherokee County Council for each eligible fire department.

7. Incomplete Requests

Reimbursement requests that are incomplete or lack sufficient supporting documentation may be returned to the requesting fire department for correction prior to processing.

8. Record Retention

Fire departments shall maintain records supporting reimbursement requests in accordance with applicable record retention requirements. Cherokee County reserves the right to review or audit reimbursement requests and supporting documentation to verify compliance with this policy.

Submission of a reimbursement request does not guarantee payment. Reimbursement is contingent upon verification that the requested expenses are eligible under this policy, supported by adequate documentation, and within the funding appropriated by Cherokee County Council.

FIRE DEPARTMENT SAFETY TESTING REIMBURSEMENT ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

page 3



DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

Reimbursement requests may be submitted throughout the fiscal year as eligible expenses are incurred.

To be eligible for reimbursement, all requests must be received by Cherokee County Administration no later than June 1st ahead of the close of the applicable fiscal year, unless otherwise authorized in writing by the County Administrator or designee.

Only expenses incurred during the applicable fiscal year are eligible for reimbursement under this program.

Requests received after the submission deadline may be denied unless an extension has been approved by Cherokee County Administration due to extenuating circumstances.

Reimbursement requests are subject to available appropriated funding and compliance with all requirements of this policy.

Fire departments are encouraged to submit reimbursement requests periodically throughout the fiscal year rather than waiting until the end of the fiscal year. This allows Cherokee County to process reimbursements in a timely manner and assists in monitoring available program funding.

MAXIMUM REIMBURSEMENT

Cherokee County Council has authorized a maximum reimbursement of Twelve Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$12,500.00) per eligible fire department during the applicable fiscal year.

Reimbursement shall be limited to the actual documented costs incurred by the fire department for eligible expenses as defined in this policy and shall not exceed the maximum reimbursement amount authorized by Cherokee County Council.

The maximum reimbursement is cumulative for the fiscal year. Fire departments may submit multiple reimbursement requests throughout the fiscal year; however, the combined total of all approved reimbursements shall not exceed \$12,500.00.

Once a fire department has reached the maximum reimbursement amount for the fiscal year, no additional reimbursement requests will be approved unless additional funding is specifically authorized by Cherokee County Council.

Unused reimbursement balances do not carry forward to future fiscal years and may not be transferred or assigned to another fire department.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed as creating an entitlement to funding beyond the amount appropriated by Cherokee County Council. All reimbursements are subject to available appropriated funds and compliance with the requirements of this policy.

AUDIT RIGHTS

Cherokee County reserves the right to review, verify, and audit any reimbursement request submitted under the Fire Department Safety Testing and Physical Reimbursement Program to ensure compliance with this policy and the intent of the funding approved by Cherokee County Council.

Each participating fire department shall maintain all records supporting reimbursement requests, including invoices, receipts, proof of payment, testing reports, certifications, and any other supporting documentation, for a minimum of three (3) years following the date of reimbursement, or for any longer period required by applicable law or grant requirements. Upon request, fire departments shall make such records available to Cherokee County Administration, the Cherokee County Finance Department, the County's independent auditors, or other authorized governmental representatives for inspection or review.

If an audit or review determines that reimbursement was issued for ineligible expenses, unsupported expenses, duplicate reimbursements, or expenses that do not comply with this policy, Cherokee County reserves the right to require repayment of improperly reimbursed funds or to offset such amounts against future reimbursements, to the extent permitted by law. Failure to maintain adequate documentation or cooperate with an audit or review may result in the denial of current or future reimbursement requests.