



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

L. Brad Creasy  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Virginia Department of Fire Programs

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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**TO:** County Administrators, City and Town Managers

**FROM:** Brad Creasy, Executive Director

**SUBJECT:** Mandated Fire Incident Reporting as a Condition for Aid to Localities Payment

Timely and comprehensive fire and emergency response data provides the foundation for informed decision-making about community risk, impacting your local department chief up through your state senator. Virginia is changing its incident data reporting system and funding implications, to include a new grant opportunity for transition support, effective **July 1, 2026**.

### 1. National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS) Reporting

In 2025, the General Assembly directed the Virginia Fire Services Board to adopt a policy that would require localities to report emergency incidents to the [National Emergency Response Information System \(NERIS\)](#) as a condition to receive Aid to Localities funding. This new policy will take effect on **July 1, 2026**.

NERIS is a national fire incident reporting platform that replaced the legacy fire incident data platform, the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS), in January 2026. NERIS has a geospatial foundation, scalable cloud-based architecture, and flexible data scheme that provides first responders with improved data analytics, third party interoperability, and a modern user interface. Unlike the voluntary reporting scheme in NFIRS, reporting in NERIS is **mandatory**.

Many localities and fire departments already report incidents in NERIS, but a significant number do not. You can view onboarding status by department on the NERIS onboarding dashboard [here](#).

The policy adopted by the Virginia Fire Services Board in December of 2025 requires the Department of Fire Programs to provide a list of fire departments not reporting to NERIS each June and December. Localities will be provided with this report and *shall* not

distribute any Aid to Localities funds to departments that are not reporting. ***A locality that distributes funds to departments not reporting to NERIS will forfeit all funds.***

Example: ABC County is notified that Fire Departments 1 and 2 are reporting incident data, but Department 3 is not. ABC County can receive ATL funding and allocate it to Departments 1 and 2. However, if the county distributes funds to Department 3, ABC County will be responsible for reimbursing the ATL funds for the misappropriated amount or forfeiting the current year's disbursement.

If your locality or fire department has questions concerning NERIS, onboarding, or its use, please contact the NERIS HelpDesk.

## 2. VFSB Fire Incident Reporting Grant

The Virginia Fire Services Board also approved a new [Fire Incident Reporting Grant](#) that will open early on May 1, 2026 to assist departments.

This grant is available to assist localities with reporting to NERIS and has been updated to provide up to \$10,000 per fire department to:

- Upgrade or purchase reporting hardware, e.g., laptops
- The initial upgrade or purchase of reporting software
- Initial costs associated with internet connectivity
- Other uses as approved by the board

The Department of Fire Programs ***strongly encourages*** localities to ensure their fire departments are reporting incidents in NERIS by July 1, 2026. We are here to support this transition and do all we can to ensure no locality loses out on ATL funding.

Questions concerning NERIS, the revised Aid to Localities Grant that requires reporting as a condition to receive funds, or the Fire Incident Reporting Grant should be directed to [PIO@vdfp.virginia.gov](mailto:PIO@vdfp.virginia.gov) and will be answered by the appropriate staff member.

Respectfully,



L. Brad Creasy

CC: Keith Johnson, Chairman, Virginia Fire Services Board  
Theresa Hunter, Chief Administrative Officer, VDFP  
Sarah Kenny, Coordinator of Community Risk Reduction, VDFP  
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