

# City of Bristol Tennessee

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## **Bristol Fire Department Receives Grant Award**

The Bristol Tennessee Fire Department is pleased to announce an award of \$266,400 from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) under its Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program.

The highly competitive grant process requires a local match of 10% (\$29,600) of the total project cost of \$296,000. Fire Chief Bob Barnes said, “The grant award will allow the city to purchase needed radio communications equipment for meeting the most recent FCC mandate known as Project 25. Project 25 is an initiative that continues DHS’s drive toward a goal of complete interoperability among emergency services agencies.”

There are many key elements of Project 25 including a dedicated public safety radio frequency band spectrum in the 700-800 MHz frequency range. In addition, greater efficiency is to be achieved by what is known as “narrow-banding”, a requirement that radio systems must be efficient to within 12.5 kHz instead of the current 25 kHz. The greater efficiency allows more public safety channels to be accommodated within the dedicated frequency band spectrum. While local compliance with the FCC mandate is only in the planning stages, the fire department will be prepared for compliance by having Project 25 compatible communications equipment in place. The new equipment will be backward compatible or dual mode, which allows operational compatibility with both 25 kHz and 12.5 kHz systems.

All funds awarded through the AFG program are used to increase the effectiveness of firefighting and emergency response operations nationwide. Budget decreases to the AFG program in recent years have increased the competitiveness for awards and brought about a stiffening of eligibility requirements for a successful application. Barnes adds that the grant award, along with city funding, will be used to purchase a total of seventy-four Project 25 compatible radios through a competitive bidding process.

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