

TOP 5

Funding Tips from our Experts

Fire stations are essential infrastructure, yet funding them rarely comes from a single source. Many communities face the same challenge: balancing urgent facility needs with limited local budgets. The good news is that a range of state, federal, philanthropic, and partnership opportunities can help bridge the gap. Understanding where to look and how to combine funding sources can turn a stalled idea into a funded, buildable project.

To help you get started, here are five funding paths communities are using to turn fire station plans into reality:

1



Leverage Bonds and Local Tax Revenue

Most fire station projects begin with local funding, but municipal bonds or tax revenue alone do not always cover the full cost. Many communities successfully close funding gaps by combining local dollars with grants or alternative funding sources.

While managing multiple funding streams can add coordination, a blended funding approach is often the most practical way to keep projects moving forward without overburdening local taxpayers.

2



Explore State Funding Opportunities

Some states offer funding programs that can support fire station facilities, equipment, or emergency services improvements. Availability varies, but opportunities are often broader than expected.

A few examples:

- South Dakota has funded fire station projects through [Community Development Block Grants](#), and many states provide funding specifically for gear and equipment.
- Iowa's [Local Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services Grant Program](#) supports fire and EMS needs statewide.

TIP:

Contact your Governor's office, state department of public safety, and state economic development agencies to identify all available funding programs.





Pursue Federal Funding Programs

Several federal programs may support fire station construction or improvements, particularly in rural communities.

- USDA Rural Development – Community Facilities Program: Supports construction, expansion, or improvement of essential community facilities.
- USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG): Administered through rural electric or broadband cooperatives, offering favorable loan terms below market rates.
- Some members of Congress sponsor fire station projects through annual appropriations requests. Nebraska has seen Senator Fischer support fire station funding in the past year
- FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grants: Historically funded equipment and improvements (availability varies by year).

TIP:

Start by contacting your congressional district office. Constituent services staff can help identify funding opportunities aligned with your project.



Engage Philanthropic and Community Foundations

Private and regional foundations can provide supplemental funding, particularly for equipment or community-focused public safety initiatives.

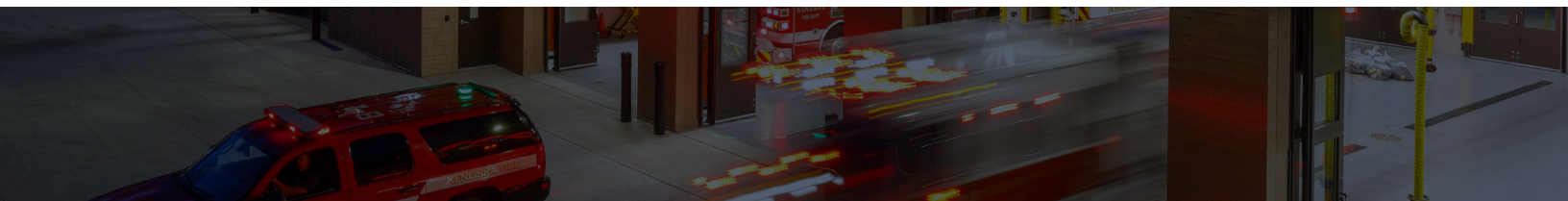
Organizations such as the Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation primarily fund equipment, but local community foundations or private donors may support broader public safety investments depending on regional priorities.



Evaluate Joint-Use Facility Opportunities

Combining services within a shared public safety facility, such as fire, EMS, police, or public health, can unlock additional funding sources and improve long-term operational efficiency.

Joint-use facilities often qualify for funding programs that single-purpose buildings may not, expanding available financial options.



For additional information, visit sehinc.com/fire-stations.

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