



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary

May 21, 2019

Shannon Wolfe, Wildfire Programs Coordinator
Maryland Forest Service
10201 Bee Oak Road
Brandywine, Maryland 20613

TO: All Maryland Volunteer Fire Departments

ATTN: Officers / Grant Coordinator

SUBJECT: 2019 Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant Application Package

The Volunteer Fire Assistance Program is authorized in Section 10(b)3 of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (PL 95-313, as amended by the Forest Stewardship Act of 1990 (PL 101-624)). This program authorizes expenditure of federal funding to prevent and suppress rural fires and enhancing protection capabilities by assisting rural communities with training, equipping, and organizing fire departments. Grant applications for funding should be focused to address wildland fire and wildland urban interface issues and needs for communities at risk from wildfire.

During the 2019 grant application period, the Maryland Forest Service will be distributing funds from the 2019 Federal fiscal year. A Department may submit one VFA grant application for a maximum grant award of \$3,000 with \$6,000 in qualifying expenses. Funds will be distributed on a 50% reimbursable basis for actual cost incurred by the Department up to the grant award amount. Applications will only be accepted from a volunteer fire department. The 2019 grant application period closes on **July 15, 2019**.

Key qualifying guidelines are:

- A single Fire Department serving a rural area or a rural community with a population of 10,000 or less is eligible (latest Census).
- Area Fire Departments (fire districts, first due area, etc.) may serve an aggregate population of greater than 10,000 as long as the service area of the fire department includes a rural area or a rural community having a population of 10,000 or less.
- Federal funds will reimburse up to 50 percent of the cost to the fire department after approval and certification that items have been received and paid for by the department (50/50 match grant).
- Grants will not be approved for medical, rescue, or hazmat equipment; capital construction projects; or vehicle purchase.



Projects narrative should describe how the equipment will be used for wildland fire fighting. Some examples of acceptable grant projects:

- Wildland personal protective equipment, such as wildland nomex pants, shirts, coveralls, boots, and hard hats. (not turn out gear)
- Equipping and rehab of Federal Excess Property (FEPP & FFP) or fire department fire equipment
- Equipping of brush units, such as skid units, portable pumps, small diameter fire hose (1 ¾" or less), hand tools, chain saws (not rescue saws), etc
- Communications equipment, such as mobile or portable radios and pagers
- Off road Utility type vehicle (UTV) for wildland fire use
- Dry Hydrants kits and installations
- Other wildland fire equipping needs

Grant Timeline for 2019

Applications may be submitted by email (preferred), fax, or mail. Applications must be received by email or in the Maryland Forest Service office no later than **July 15, 2019** or your application will not be accepted for consideration. The Fire Department Federal Identification number and the daytime telephone number of your grant coordinator must be completed on the application. Notification of grant awards approved to Departments will be distributed by September 30, 2019. If your grant application is approved for funding; invoices or purchase orders and copies of checks showing payment must be dated between January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2019. All documentation to receive reimbursement must be submitted by January 15, 2020.

Federal Requirements for purchase of single item costing >\$5,000

Grant awards for the purchase of a single item of equipment with a purchase cost \geq \$5,000 will be required to complete a VFA Equipment Inventory Form. Inventory items are accountable federal property until the fair market value depreciates below \$5,000. Equipment is subject to inspection upon request of the Maryland Forest Service or USDA Forest Service.

Departments will be required to sign a MOU

A grant MOU will be sent with all awards for signature. Reimbursement payments cannot be processed without a signed MOU.

If you have any questions with the application process, please feel free to contact your local Fire Manager or myself at 301-579-6551.

Respectfully,

/s/P. Shannon Wolfe

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