



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

April 17, 2020

P. Shannon Wolfe

TO: All Maryland Volunteer Fire Departments

ATTN: Officers / Grant Coordinator

SUBJECT: 2020 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, funding equipment, 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 2020 grant application period, the Maryland Forest Service will be distributing funds from the 2020 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 2020 grant application period closes on **July 15, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.**

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).
- Complete VFA guide can be viewed at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/partners/vfa/help/guide.htm>.
- Grants will not be approved for medical, rescue, or hazmat equipment; capital construction projects; or vehicle purchase.

Some examples of acceptable grant projects:

- Wildland personal protective equipment, such as nomex coveralls (not turn out gear)
- Funding equipment and rehab of Federal Excess Property (FEPP & FFP) or fire department fire equipment
- Funding equipment of brush units, such as skid units, portable pumps, small diameter fire hose (1 3/4" 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 equipment needs

*****NOTE Grant Timeline for 2020*****

Please complete the Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Grant Application to apply. Applications may be submitted by email (preferred), fax, or mail. Applications must be received by email or in the Maryland Forest Service wildfire programs coordinators office at Cedarville State Forest no later than **July 15, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.** 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, 2018. If your grant application is approved for funding; invoices or purchase orders and copies of checks showing payment must be dated between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020. All documentation to receive reimbursement must be submitted by January 15, 2021.

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

Departments awarded a grant for the purchase of a single item of equipment with a value equal to or greater than \$5,000 will be required to submit a VFA Equipment Inventory Form that includes the year, make, model, and serial number of the equipment purchased. 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.

*****NOTE Department of Natural Resources Requirement *****

Each Department that receives a VFA grant will have to sign a Memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) - Forest Service. This MOU will have to be signed by the Volunteer Fire Department and then by the State Forester of the DNR Forest Service, before grant payments can start to be processed.

If you have any questions with the application process, please feel free to contact me at 301-331-6432.

Respectfully,

/s/ P. Shannon Wolfe

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Enclosures: Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant Application

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