



RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

DIVISION OF FOREST ENVIRONMENT
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To: All Fire Chiefs

From: Bruce Payton, Deputy Chief
Jay Aron, Supervising Forester

Date: March 4, 2016

Subject: Volunteer Fire Assistance Grants

Once again The Division of Forest Environment is offering the Volunteer Fire Assistance Grants.

They are a 50/50 match.

Application period ends May 7, 2016.

Grants will be awarded May 25, 2016.

Projects have to be completed and final paperwork by August 1, 2017

Grants amounts will be up to \$1,500.

Any questions call Jay Aron at 539-2356

GRANT FUNDS AVAILABLE

Application Deadline is May 7, 2016

**Project must be completed and paper work submitted by
August 1, 2017**

VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSISTANCE (VFA) PROGRAM **GRANTS REQUEST REIMBURSEMENTS FOR PROJECTS UP TO \$1500**

The Division of Forest Environment, Department of Environmental Management, State of Rhode Island, in cooperation with the United States Forest Service, and the Rhode Island Forest Fire Advisory Committee are pleased to announce its cost share grants program for the 2016 year. The program is an integral part of the Volunteer Fire Assistance Program. Please note there is a limited time frame on this grant, if your department can not perform in this time frame, please do not diminish another department's chance. There is \$21,000 in available funds for this round of grants.

What is the purpose of the Volunteer Fire Assistance Program?

The purpose of the Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Program, formerly known as the Rural Community Fire Protection (RCFP) Program, is to provide Federal financial, technical and other assistance to State foresters and other appropriate officials to organize, train, and equip fire departments in rural areas and rural communities to prevent and suppress fires. A rural community is defined as having 10,000 or less population. This 10,000 population limit for participation in the VFA Program facilitates distribution of available VFA funding to the neediest fire departments.

How do I know if I am eligible?

Following are examples of eligibility requirements for use of VFA funding.

1. A single fire department serving a rural area or a rural community with a population of 10,000 or less is eligible (latest Census).
2. Area fire departments (fire districts, townships, 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. The VFA funding must be used to benefit the rural population.
3. A single county or town with a population over 10,000 that is served by two or more fire districts operating entirely within the bounds of the county or town may qualify as long as the service area of a given fire department includes a rural area or a rural community or the population of the fire department's jurisdiction is 10,000 or less. The VFA funding must be used for the rural area.
4. A single community with a population greater than 10,000 and having a single fire department with one or more fire stations may qualify. The fire department must have a service area that includes a rural area or community that does not exceed 10,000 populations. The VFA funding must be used only for the benefit of the rural population. Similarly a single community with a population greater than 10,000 that also provides fire protection to an adjoining rural community of 10,000 or less population by contract may also be eligible provided the VFA funding is used entirely to support the rural community.
5. A single community fire department serving a population greater than 10,000 and not providing protection to a rural area or to a rural community is not eligible for VFA financial assistance.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSISTANCE -2016 GRANT PROGRAM

1. For this grant the following items or functions will be eligible
 - a. Wild land personnel protective equipment
 - b. Pumps and other motorized equipment used in wildland suppression
 - c. Skid units
 - d. Class A foam used in wild land fire suppression.
 - e. Equipment for foam application
 - f. Hand or power tools used in wild land suppression
 - g. Wild land forest fire training
 - h. Dry hydrants if completed by July 30, 2017
2. The application deadline is: By 4:00 PM on May 7, 2016
3. Project request will be reimbursed at a 50/50 match up to the first \$3,000.00. Maximum amount of grant will be \$ 1,500.00
 - Examples: \$2000 project= \$ 1,000.00 match
 - \$3,000 total project= \$1,500 match
 - \$4,000 project= \$ 1,500 match
4. Application must include: a completed application form with budget information, and appropriate attachments. **Submit original and 3 copies** to:

Jay Aron, Supervising Forester
Department of Environmental Management, Division of Forest Environment
260 Arcadia Road
Hope Valley, Rhode Island 02832

If you have any questions, I may be reached at 539-2356 between the hours of 8:30 AM and 4:00 PM from Monday through Friday. My fax number is 539-1157.

PROGRAM GUIDELINES:

1. The certification form must be signed by an authorized representative of the Organization/ municipality.
2. Project requests will be reimbursed on a 50/50 match up to a maximum of \$1,500
3. Final selections will be made and fire departments will be notified by May 25, 2016

Project has to be completed by August 1, 2017

4. Funds will be sent when the project has been satisfactorily completed with final reports received and approved.
5. Final report to include: proof via invoices that equipment, products etc. were purchased? A cancelled check copied on both sides and/or an electronic copy, if volunteer hours or municipal hours were used proof via town payroll information or sign in sheets.
6. This grant will run until August 1, 2017, projects not completed by then will be terminated.
7. Technical assistance is available throughout the application process and the project from the Division of Forest Environment. Call Jay Aron Division of Forest Environment—539-2356

MATCHING FUNDS GUIDELINES:

- Match – 50 % of the total project up to \$ 3,000.00. Project request may be more than \$ 3,000.00 but will only be matched up to \$ 3000.00 for a maximum amount of reimbursement of \$1,500.00.

Example: If a project is for \$ 4,000.00 maximum amount of reimbursement will be \$1500.00.

If a project is for \$ 2000.00 maximum amount of reimbursement will be \$ 1000.00.

- Applicants may match grant funds with cash, in-kind contributions (volunteer labor, municipality/organization personnel and equipment) donations, and administrative costs directly related to the project.
- Volunteer labor may be estimated at \$20.25 per hour per person. (Per Independent Sector).
- All project expenses and matching fund/in-kind contributions (whether labor or donations or other must be fully and appropriately documented.) Instructions will be provided to successful candidates.

JUDGING CRITERIA:

- Applications will be evaluated by members of the Division of Forest Environment and the Rhode Island Forest Fire Advisory Committee.
- Project must demonstrate that it will be used in Wild land fire suppression. Application must be technically consistent and complete.

What exactly do I have to do to apply for this grant?

1. Be eligible as a qualifying community
2. Give us a one page narrative on what you need from the list of equipment and products we said would qualify this year.
3. Your Department is not limited to only one item, your limitation is the amount of cost share money we will award your Department.
4. Fill out a budget sheet requesting how much the total project is would be and how much you are requesting. Remember it's a 50/50 match up to \$1500.00.
5. Fill out the **Grant Application and Certification Form** (1 page, attached).
6. Fill out the **Grantee Checklist for Sub Grant Recipients** (2 pages, attached).
7. Have 3 copies plus the original to our office 260 Arcadia Road, Hope Valley, Rhode Island 02832 or 235 Promenade Street Suite 394, Providence, RI 02908 by 4 pm on Monday April 17, 2015.

VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSISTANCE (VFA) RHODE ISLAND - 2016

GRANT APPLICATION AND CERTIFICATION FORM

Name of applicant (community, group, organization), _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Contact Person _____ Tax ID _____

Eligible Project _____

Narrative – On one sheet of paper please:

1. Describe the project and how it meets the goals of wild land fire suppression in your community.
2. Describe how the project adheres to the guidelines.

BUDGET – On one sheet of paper please:

1. List the budget – supplies – labor – equipment

Total Grant Request: _____

Applicant Match: _____

Total Project Cost: _____

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I HAVE READ THE APPLICATION AND WILL ADHERE TO ALL RULES, REGULATIONS, GUIDELINES AND DEADLINES. I HAVE READ THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND WE DO QUALIFY TO APPLY FOR THIS GRANT.

I ALSO CERTIFY THAT I AM AUTHORIZED TO MAKE THE DECISION FOR
(Name of organization/municipality) _____

(Signature)

(Date)

Name and Title (Printed)

FINANCIAL CAPABILITY CHECKLIST

Fiscal Year: 2015

Adequate accounting systems and internal policies should meet the following criteria as outlined in the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Circulars which can be found on OMB's website at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_default

- (A) Accounting records should provide information needed to adequately identify the receipt of funds under each grant awarded and the expenditure of funds for each grant.
- (B) Entries in accounting records should refer to subsidiary records and/or documentation which support the entry and which can be readily located.
- (C) The accounting system should provide accurate and current financial reporting information.
- (D) The accounting system should be integrated with an adequate system of internal controls to safeguard the funds and assets covered, validate the accuracy and reliability of accounting data, promote operational efficiency, and ensure adherence to prescribed management policies.

PURPOSE: This Checklist is to assist your organization in understanding the minimum requirements necessary to accept, manage, and spend Federal funds. If you have questions regarding any of the items in this checklist, please contact the Division of Forest Environment

INSTRUCTIONS

An organization representative will review and complete the form, certifying in the last section that they have read and understand items listed in this document. The completed form will be returned to the designated Division of Forest Environment Program Leader.

STANDARDS FOR FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

- 1. Responsible parties for my organization are familiar with the OMB Uniform Administrative Requirements (7 CFR 3016) and the Cost Principles (2 CFR 225), as they apply to Federal grants.
- 2. My organization understands that it must expend and account for award funds in accordance with Federal and State laws and procedures for expending and accounting for its own funds. Fiscal control and accounting procedures of the organization, as well as its subgrantees and cost-type contractors, must be sufficient to:
 - 1) Permit preparation of reports required by this part and the statutes authorizing the award, and
 - 2) Permit the tracing of funds to a level of expenditures adequate to establish that such funds have not been used in violation of the restrictions and prohibitions of applicable statutes.
- 3. Organization funds used for match are subject to the same requirements as Federal grant funds. Costs used for match must be allowable under the Cost Principles, recorded accurately, and not used to match any other Federal award.
- 4. Time distribution records are maintained for each employee that accurately reflects work performed for grant funded activities or used as match. These charges are recorded and maintained in accordance with the Cost Principles.
- 5. A negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) or cost allocation plan must be approved by the Division of Forest Environment and in effect in order for indirect costs to be allowable for reimbursement or match.
- 6. Funds specifically budgeted for one project or program may not be used to support another project or program without prior written approval of the awarding agency.

SUBGRANTS

- 7. My organization is aware that it is required to ensure that a subrecipient's financial system meets the standards described in the Uniform Administrative Requirements. Financial records must adequately identify the source and application of funds provided for Federally funded activities. Applicable OMB Cost Principles, agency program regulations, and the terms of grant and subgrant documents will be followed in determining the reasonableness, allowability, and allocability of costs. Accounting records must be supported by source documentation such as cancelled checks, paid bills, payrolls, time and attendance records, contract and subgrant award documents, etc.
- 8. My organization is aware that subrecipients must be monitored for financial operations (records, systems, and procedures), performance, and conformance to regulations.

9. My organization is aware that we must not award or permit any subsequent sub-award to any party that is debarred or suspended from participation in Federal assistance programs. The "Excluded Parties List" system for suspended or debarred subrecipients and contractors is at www.sam.gov.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

10. **Travel:** My organization has a written travel policy which is consistent for both internal travel and approved travel costs under the Federal award. If no policy exists, then my organization adheres to the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR). <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104790>
11. **Personnel:** My organization has written personnel policies and procedures that provide for reasonable and consistent treatment of personnel costs, such as fringe benefits and pension plans.
12. **Record Retention:** My organization retains all grant related records in accordance with the timeframes identified in the Uniform Administrative Requirements. In general, all grant related records must be maintained for 3 years from the date the final expenditure report is submitted.
13. **Procurement:** My organization has written procurement policies and procedures. The same policies and procedures are followed whether the procurements are with Federal grant funds or other non-Federal funds
14. **Audit:** My organization is aware of OMB A-133 Single Audit which requires audit of any entity that expends more than \$500,000 in federal funds in a fiscal year. My organization understands that their particular grant funded programs may not be audited, but any audit findings must be considered during a financial review.
15. **Debarment/Suspension:** My organization has internal policy to check the "Excluded Parties List" system for suspended or debarred sub-grantees and contractors, prior to award at <https://www.sam.gov/>.
16. **Civil Rights:** My organization has received and understands the USDA Forest Service brochure, "Complying with Civil Rights Requirements".

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that my organization has received this document and understands the financial management standards necessary to manage Federal awards and subawards. At any time in reviewing this document, in pre-award negotiations, during the post-award meeting, or at any time subsequent, if my organization has questions regarding the content presented in this checklist or related to the award, I understand that I may bring this to the attention of the Division of Forest Environment for clarification.

Completed by:

Title:

Print Name:

Date:

Organization Name:

- Providing information to the Forest Service on your outreach to participants in your programs and activities.

What does the Forest Service do to ensure compliance with nondiscrimination responsibilities?

The Forest Service will conduct reviews of your programs and activities on a periodic basis to ensure they comply with Civil Rights laws. The Forest Service is your partner in providing equal opportunity to the public. For more information, please contact your local Forest Service office.

What Federal Civil Rights laws must you follow to ensure compliance?

U.S. Code	Statute	Prohibits Discrimination on the Basis of:
(42 USC 2000d-2000c)	Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964	Race, Color, or National Origin
(20 USC 1681-1686)	Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972	Sex (in educational programs and activities)
(42 USC 6101 et seq)	Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended	Age
(29 USC 794)	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended	Disability



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410, or for Forest Service issues please call, toll free, (866) 632-9992 (Voice). TDD users can contact USDA through local relay or the Federal Relay at (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (relay voice users). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

FS-850

May 2006



United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Grants and Agreements

Complying with Civil Rights Requirements

Your Responsibilities as a Partner with the USDA Forest Service



“Simple justice requires that public funds, to which all taxpayers of all races contribute, not be spent in any fashion which encourages, entrenches, subsidizes, or results in racial discrimination.”

— President John F. Kennedy, in his 1963 message calling for the enactment of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act

Who is required to comply with Federal Civil Rights laws?

If you receive Federal funds or assistance from the Forest Service such as a grant or agreement, by law you must provide equal opportunity for all people to participate in the programs and activities you offer. For example, you should not deny or exclude anyone from programs, services, aids or benefits. Also, you must not retaliate in any manner against a person who files a complaint or opposes any unlawful or discriminatory practice. The back of this brochure shows Federal Civil Rights Laws that apply.

This brochure provides a basic overview of your responsibilities for ensuring nondiscrimination in the delivery of your programs and activities to the public on bases covered by federal law. These bases include race, color, national origin, sex (in educational programs or activities), age, and disability.

What are some types of Federal funding and assistance?

- Federal monies given by grants, sub-grants, cooperative agreements, challenge cost-share agreements, cost-reimbursable agreements, or loans
- Training presented by a Federal agency
- Loan/temporary assignment of Federal personnel (e.g., a Forest Service employee instructing a course at a local university)
- Loan or use of Federal property at below market value

Are you a recipient of Federal funding and assistance?

You are a "recipient" if, through a partnership with the Forest Service, you receive Federal funding or assistance (either directly or through another recipient) to conduct a program you offer to the public.

Recipients include:

- Any individual receiving Federal funding or assistance
- A State or local government
- American Indian or Alaska Native individual, Tribe, corporation, or organization
- Any public or private agency, institution, or organization (e.g., university, college, or non-profit)

What are your responsibilities for complying with Federal Civil Rights laws?

As a partner with the Forest Service, your responsibilities for complying with Federal Civil Rights laws include, but are not limited to:

- Signing an assurance certifying that you will comply with Civil Rights laws. If you have sub-recipients, obtain a signed assurance from them. An example of a sub-recipient is a local community organization receiving a sub-grant from a state forestry agency.
- Displaying the "And Justice for All" U.S. Department of Agriculture poster (AD-475C) in your public reception areas or other areas visible to the public. Contact your Forest Service office to obtain copies.
- Including the following statement about nondiscrimination and how to file a complaint in your publications and outreach materials:

"In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)"

To file a complaint of discrimination: write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-1V, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington,

D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

If the publications or materials are too small to permit the use of the full statement, at a minimum include the following statement, in print size no smaller than the text: "This institution is an equal opportunity provider."

Including in any of your publications and outreach materials related to a grant or agreement project, a statement of affiliation with the Forest Service, e.g., "This publication made possible through a grant from the USDA Forest Service." OR "This research was conducted in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service." OR "This research was funded by a grant from the USDA Forest Service."

- Providing program information in alternative formats for people with disabilities and in alternative languages for people with limited English proficiency, as appropriate to your customer base.
- Identifying a person to be responsible for ensuring your program is in compliance with Civil Rights requirements.
- Reviewing all your policies, procedures, and practices to ensure that they do not limit participation on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex (in educational programs and activities).
- Evaluating the accessibility of your programs and facilities. If they are not now accessible, develop a transition plan for making them accessible and then carry out the plan as appropriate.
- Ensuring that your staff understands their Civil Rights responsibilities including their role in the USDA complaint process.
- Providing outreach to a wide variety of communities to ensure diversity if you advertise or market your program.