



## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

NATURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES  
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER  
NEW JERSEY FOREST FIRE SERVICE

MAIL CODE 501-04  
PO BOX 420

TRENTON, NJ 08625-0420  
TEL: # 609-292-2977 FAX: # 609-984-0378

PHILIP D. MURPHY  
*Governor*

SHEILA Y. OLIVER  
*Lt. Governor*

CATHERINE R. McCABE  
*Commissioner*

### Announcement for Funding Support Volunteer Fire Assistance

November 1, 2019

Dear Fire Company Officer,

The Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, makes funding available to rural volunteer fire companies. In all states across the country, this federal funding is passed through and administered by the state fire protection agency. In New Jersey, that is the NJ Forest Fire Service. The program was initially authorized in Title IV of P.L. 92-419; the rural development Act of 1972. Presently, the program is authorized under Section 10(b)3 of P.L. 95-313; the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978.

Because of state and federal guidelines, there have been a few changes to the application process and requirements that you, if having applied previously, may notice. Therefore, I am asking that you take the necessary and appropriate time to carefully examine your application before you submit it to us.

I have taken this opportunity, not only to encourage you to apply for these funds, but to also help to highlight and explain some of the changes that I think may be helpful to you in applying.

#### Application and Procedural Updates

1. All applications are considered a "Project Proposal". That means, that the application and all supporting documents must be approved by the state BEFORE you make a qualifying purchase. Further, it also means, that you will only be eligible to receive reimbursement for items that will be approved as part of the proposal.
2. Only one application may be submitted. The minimum request for funding should be no less than \$5,000 and the maximum request no more than \$10,000. In order a for fire company to receive \$5,000 minimum reimbursement, the fire company must spend at least \$10,000 for approved equipment.
3. The VFA grant is a 50/50 matching reimbursement grant. Local funds must be available for the initial purchase of all items if the grant award is approved. This means a fire company that receives a grant must purchase the equipment during a specified period of time prior to receiving any reimbursement. The State of New Jersey will reimburse up to 50% of the total project amount. See Attachment I, Section 2 for more detailed information about matching requirements.

4. Deadline for the application with the proposal of the project(s) is **January 10, 2020**, either by email or post marked for mail. Late submissions will not be accepted. See Attachment I, Section 4.
5. The applicant must be the entity that is paying the invoices. In some cases, this may be the municipality or fire district/Board of Commissioners. Please make this clear on the application. The entity that pays the invoices will receive the VFA grant reimbursement.
6. The application must include (1.) a Federal Tax ID number (2) an active DUNS number assigned by Dun & Bradstreet in the name of the applicant organization.
7. Applicants will provide a Primary and Secondary Contact for notifications by email.
8. Due to Federal Property Management Equipment Accountability requirements, award requests for single item of equipment with a value equal to or greater than \$5,000 or rolling stock (vehicles, ATV, UTV, trailers etc.) will NOT be considered.
9. All applicants seeking federal funding must certify that they are eligible to receive federal funds. This is done through completion and signature of the USDA Certification Regarding Debarment— see Attachment III— and be sure to complete and sign this form and return it with your application.
10. Each application will be evaluated and ranked for a grant award. Fire companies will be notified of their award or denial by email. Note: The criteria that will be used to evaluate and rank your application as provided in Attachment IV.

If your proposal is accepted, your fire company will be mailed a grant package for execution by your fire company or governing body. This grant package will include a grant agreement to be signed and a resolution authorizing your fire company to accept and match the grant award. Your fire company will have a 45-day deadline to return your grant package. This deadline will be indicated in your grant package. Your company will be given a 6-month period of time to purchase the approved equipment. **Failure to meet deadlines will result in disqualification.**

If you have any questions, please contact Russ Fenton at 609-984-3855 or by email [Russell.Fenton@dep.nj.gov](mailto:Russell.Fenton@dep.nj.gov)

**To submit your application by email, send to:**

[Russell.Fenton@dep.nj.gov](mailto:Russell.Fenton@dep.nj.gov)

**To submit your application by mail, send to:**

Attention: Russell Fenton  
NJDEP  
New Jersey Forest Fire Service  
P.O. Box 420, Mail Code 501-04  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0420

**All applications and proposals (Attachments II, III and IV) must be emailed or postmarked by January 10, 2020.**

Respectfully,

*Gregory S. McLaughlin*

Gregory McLaughlin  
State Forest Firewarden  
New Jersey Forest Fire Service  
PO Box 420 Mail Code 501-04  
Trenton, NJ 08625

Attachments:



**New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection  
In Cooperation with USDA Forest Service**

**VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
Attachment I. 2020 Application Guidance**

**1. PROGRAM GOALS**

- Organize, train, and equip fire companies in unprotected rural areas and rural communities.
- Assist qualifying fire companies in saving lives and protecting property in unprotected or inadequately protected rural areas.
- Prevent or reduce loss of life, protect financial investments and enhance environmental quality to revitalize rural America.
- Increase the opportunity for rural fire companies to acquire Federal Excess Personal Property or Firefighter Property, training, and current information on techniques of fire prevention.

**2. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

- Volunteer Fire Assistance Grants are 50/50 matching reimbursement grants. Generally, federal funds will reimburse up to 50% of the cost to the fire company after approval and certification that items or services have been received and paid for by the fire company.
- In no case will an accepted application be funded more than 50% of the expenses incurred.
- The maximum grant request will be \$10,000 and the minimum request must be \$5,000. For a fire company to receive the \$5,000 minimum reimbursement, the fire company must spend at least \$10,000 for approved equipment.
- The applicant's matching contribution must be from sources other than federal grants.
- Local funding must be available for the purchase of all items if the application is approved
- Grants funds can be used to reimburse fire companies for conversion of Federal Excess Personal Property or Firefighter Property vehicles to water tenders, brush trucks, and equipment trucks. They can also be used to purchase firefighting equipment, personal protective equipment, communication equipment, water storage system/dry hydrant, training opportunities and fire prevention education activities.
- Fire companies may apply for funding of multiple projects or purchases.

- No awards will be permitted for any **single** piece of equipment or rolling stock (vehicles, ATVs, UTVs, trailers, etc.) with a cost of \$5,000 or more.
- Only purchases made after the applicant has been notified of the grant award will be eligible for reimbursement. Copies of paid invoices and copies of cancelled checks are required for proof of purchase and proof of payment.
- The applicant must be the entity that will pay the invoices. In some cases, this may be the municipality or fire district. The entity that pays the invoices will receive the VFA grant reimbursement.
- To be considered for funding, the application must include a **Federal Tax ID number, an active DUNS number (assigned by Dun & Bradstreet) in the name of the applicant organization, and the required signatures.**
- If your application/proposal is accepted, your fire company will be notified, and a grant package will be provided to you for execution by your company or governing body. The package will include a grant agreement to be signed and will require a resolution authorizing your fire company to accept and match the grant award.
- Your fire company will have a 45-day deadline to return your grant package. This deadline will be indicated in your package. Your company will be given a 6-month period of time to purchase the approved equipment. **Failure to meet deadlines will result in disqualification.**

### **3. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Fire companies serving a rural area or rural community with a population of 10,000 or less are eligible. See Attachment IV, question 3 for further details.

**All Volunteer Fire Assistance grants previously awarded must be closed by the application deadline of January 10, 2020.**

Other administrative considerations:

- While paid fire companies are not excluded from participation in the VFA Program, grants to qualifying fire companies having a membership comprised of **at least 80% volunteer firefighters are encouraged.**
- All qualifying communities and fire companies must comply with any specific criteria established by the New Jersey Forest Fire Service, consistent with requirements established by the USDA Forest Service.
- The community or fire company must have funding available to purchase all items required for the project, including the matching portion of the expenditures. Applicants may not derive their matching share from other sources of federal assistance.
- In some instances, the matching portion of the expenditures can be in the form of “in-kind” contributions. Examples of in-kind contributions would be volunteer labor for some projects; such as installation of dry fire hydrants or donation of services, such as the use of volunteer instructors to present a training course. In-kind contributions must be documented with project details
- VFA grants may be approved to fire training academies and rural fire companies, including those operated by federally recognized Indian tribes. Training recipients must come from fire companies that qualify for VFA funding. Federal VFA funding must be matched at least 50% by rural fire companies and training academies and must qualify for VFA funds.

Examples of eligible uses of VFA funding include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Multi-community/fire company projects such as mutual aid communications networks.
- Projects developing static water supplies, such as dry hydrants and cisterns.
- Conversion of Federal Excess Property Program (FEPP/FFP) vehicles to water tenders, engines, brush or equipment trucks.
- Fire prevention educational activities conducted by local fire companies.
- Purchase of communication equipment to assist in the dispatch of firefighters such as pagers and portables.
- Purchase of equipment that aids in the suppression of rural fires, such as portable pumps, hose, slip-on units, fold-a-tanks, etc.
- Purchase and maintenance of safety equipment, such as SCBA, protective clothing, and PASS devices.

NOTE: VFA funding is not authorized for purchase, construction or renovation of capital improvements such as fire stations or pressurized water systems. Loans are available through other federal sources for these purposes.

NOTE: Due to the Federal Property Management Equipment Accountability requirements, award requests for single pieces of equipment in excess of \$5,000 will not be considered.

#### **4. DEADLINES**

**January 10, 2020** is the deadline for proposals/applications (Attachments II, III and IV) by email or post mark for mail. Late submissions will not be accepted.

**For e-mail submission, send to:**  
Russell.Fenton@dep.nj.gov

**If submitting by mail, send to:**  
Attention: Russell Fenton  
New Jersey Forest Fire Service  
P. O. Box 420, Mail Code 501-04  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0420

#### **5. EXPECTATIONS**

All successful applicants will be responsible to adhere to the provisions of P.L. 95-313, Sec. 10(b) 3. The successful recipient of a grant must agree to assist the New Jersey Forest Fire Service, if possible, with emergency operations when requested to do so.

#### **6. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Each application will be awarded points based on the following:

- The proposed uses for the funds.
- The percentage of open (i.e. rural) land you are responsible for.
- The percentage of your department that is volunteer.
- The percentage of funds that are raised through fund drives and fund-raising activities.
- Your participation in an organized response plan, such as a county forest fire task force, or being included in a Forest Fire Service response plan.
- The length of time since your last Volunteer Fire Assistance grant award.

**VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**  
**Attachment II. 2020 Project Proposal and Application Form**  
 (All blanks must be filled in order to be eligible)

Municipality: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Fire Company Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Contact Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Organization That Will Pay the Invoices: \_\_\_\_\_

*(For example: Fire Company, Municipality or Board of Fire Commissioners.)*

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Federal ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_ \*DUNS Number: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Required Information: Identification numbers must be active and listed under the name of the applicant organization.*

Name of Organization Approving the Grant Project: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Examples: Fire Company Membership, Governing Body of Municipal Government, or Board of Fire Commissioners)*

Amount Requested: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Financial Officer: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Grant Executor: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Person authorized to sign the grant agreement on behalf of the organization. Examples: Fire Chief, Municipal Official or officer of the Board of Fire Commissioners)*

Resolution Certifier: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Person that will sign to certify that the resolution to accept and match the funding was passed. This person should be the one who handles paperwork for the applicant organization. Cannot be the Grant Executor)*

## VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM Attachment II. 2020 Project Proposal and Application Form

**Enter the proposed amount of expenditures into the category below. Estimates should be as accurate as possible.** No awards will be permitted for any **single** piece of equipment or rolling stock (vehicles, ATVs, UTVs, trailers, etc.) with a cost of \$5,000 or more.

\$	Wildland Personal Protective Gear	\$	Hose, Nozzles, Water Movement Systems
\$	Federal Excess Property Conversion	\$	Radios/Pagers
\$	Wildland Equipment	\$	Breathing Apparatus - SCBA
\$	Foam Unit	\$	Structural Turnout Gear
\$	Pumps	\$	Structural Equipment (Be specific)
\$	Water Storage System/Dry Hydrant	\$	Training (Be specific)
\$	<b>Other Miscellaneous Projects (Please describe below.)</b>		

**Please describe below how you plan to use the grant funds. Attach an additional page if needed.**

**VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**  
**Attachment III. 2020 Certification Regarding Debarment**

**SIGNATURE REQUIRED FOR VFA APPLICATION**

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

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**Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and  
Voluntary Exclusion - Lower Tier Covered Transactions**

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This certification is required by the regulations implementing Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension, 7 CFR part 3017, Section 3017.510, Participants' responsibilities. The regulations were published as Part IV of the January 30, 1989, Federal Register (pages 4722-4733). Copies of the regulations may be obtained by contacting the Department of Agriculture agency with which this transaction originated.

**(BEFORE COMPLETING CERTIFICATION, READ INSTRUCTIONS  
ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE)**

- (1) The prospective lower tier participant certifies, by submission of this proposal, that neither it nor its principals is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.
  
- (2) Where the prospective lower tier participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

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Organization Name

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PR/Award Number or Project Name

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Name(s) and Title(s) of Authorized Representative(s)

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Signature(s)

Date

**Certification Instructions**

1. By signing and submitting this form, the prospective lower tier participant is providing the certification set out on the reverse side in accordance with these instructions.
2. The certification in this clause is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was entered into. If it is later determined that the prospective lower tier participant knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.
3. The prospective lower tier participant shall provide immediate written notice to the person to which this proposal is submitted if at any time the prospective lower tier participant learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.
4. The terms "covered transaction," "debarred," "suspended," "ineligible," "lower tier covered transaction," "participant," "person," "primary covered transaction," "principal," "proposal," and "voluntarily excluded," as used in this clause, have the meanings set out in the Definitions and Coverage sections of rules implementing Executive Order 12549. You may contact the person to which this proposal is submitted for assistance in obtaining a copy of those regulations.
5. The prospective lower tier participant agrees by submitting this form that, should the proposed covered transaction be entered into, it shall not knowingly enter into any lower tier covered transaction with a person who is debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this covered transaction, unless authorized by the department or agency with which this transaction originated.
6. The prospective lower tier participant further agrees by submitting this form that it will include this clause titled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion - Lower Tier Covered Transaction," without modification, in all lower tier covered transaction and in all solicitations for lower tier covered transactions.
7. A participant in a covered transaction may rely upon a certification of a prospective participant in a lower tier covered transaction that is not debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from the covered transaction, unless it knows that the certification is erroneous. A participant may decide the method and frequency by which it determines the eligibility of its principals. Each participant may, but is not required to, check the Nonprocurement List.
8. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishment of a system of records in order to render in good faith the certification required by this clause. The knowledge and information of a participant is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.
9. Except for transactions authorized under paragraph 5 of these instructions, if a participant in a covered transaction knowingly enters into a lower tier covered transaction with a person who is suspended, debarred, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.

# VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

## Attachment IV. Evaluation Criteria and Ranking Worksheet

### 2020 Volunteer Fire Assistance Funding

1. Name of Fire Company \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

• County \_\_\_\_\_

• Municipality \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Amount of Award Requested: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Please select the choice that represents the eligibility of your fire company for this grant award:

NOTE: A single community fire department serving a population greater than 10,000 AND NOT providing protection to a rural areas or rural community is NOT ELIGIBLE for VFA financial assistance.

A.    B.    C.    D.

- A. A single fire department serving a rural area or a rural community with a population of 10,000 or less is eligible (using the latest Census data).
- B. 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.
- C. A single county or town with a population over 10,000 which 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.
- D. 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 a population of 10,000. 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 by contract to an adjoining rural community of 10,000 or less in population may also be eligible provided the VFA funding is used entirely to support the rural community.

4. What percentage of your response area is open space?

50% or greater       Less than 50%

**5. What is the annual number of responses to wildland fires? The answer should not include mulch fires.**

**6. Excluding EMS calls, what is the average number of alarms/calls for service for your fire company each year?**

**7. What percentage of your fire company are volunteers?**

- 100% Volunteers     80% or greater are Volunteers     Less than 80% are Volunteers

**8. What percentage of your annual budget is derived from fund-raising and annual donations?**

- 75%+     51-75%     26-50%     0-25%

**9. Is your fire company funded through a Fire District/Board of Fire Commissioners?**

- Yes     No

**10. Does your Department participate in an established wildland fire defense plan in cooperation with the New Jersey Forest Fire Service?**

- Yes     No

**If yes, explain below. Please check all that apply**

- Community Wildfire Protection Plan     FEPP of FPP Cooperative Agreement  
 Firewise USA Community     Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 County Wildland Task Force/Strike Force

**11. In what calendar year(s) did your fire company last receive Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant funding?**

- 2019     2018     2017     2016     2015     Prior to 2015     Have never received funds

**SIGNATURES**

As the designated representative of the organization listed above, I am submitting this proposal for funding. The matching portion of this grant request will not be derived from other sources of federal assistance, and purchases and in-kind contributions will be completed within the Work Period outlined in the Grant Agreement. I certify that, based on my personal knowledge, the information provided is accurate and true.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Fire Company Representative Submitting Application)*

As the official representative of the government entity that supports this fire company, I hereby authorize the proposal submitted for this Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Signature when submitting on behalf of Municipality or Board of Fire Commissioners. This signature is required when an entity other than the fire department/fire company is funding the project.)*