

Arizona State Forestry



Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant (VFA)

ARIZONA FY2016 REQUEST FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS

Application Deadline:

Applications must be received electronically via email at:

Arizona State Forestry: Grants@azsf.gov

No Later than: November 18, 2015

PURPOSE

The Arizona State Forestry, with assistance from the USDA Forest Service, administers the Arizona Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Grant Program. This Program is authorized by the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1990, (Farm Bill) and provides financial assistance to train, organize, 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.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible organizations include Arizona fire departments that serve a rural area or rural community with a population of 10,000 or less (based on the most recent census.) Departments **must** have a current Intergovernmental Agreement with Arizona State Forestry before funds can be awarded.

AVAILABLE FUNDING

Total funding of approximately \$100,000 - \$150,000 is expected to be available for the purpose of improving fire protection and prevention capabilities of rural Arizona fire departments. These funds may be used for supplies and non-capital equipment, firefighter training, fire awareness and prevention efforts, and fire district organization.

Funds originate from the USDA Forest Service and are awarded and administered by Arizona State Forestry. For this grant program cycle, the maximum award to any single fire response organization is \$10,000. The maximum award for Organizing Statewide Training Programs is \$20,000. Local match (non-federal funds) is required on a 1:1 basis. (see Match section below)

NUMBER OF AWARDS

Multiple awards are anticipated, not to exceed \$10,000 per applicant firefighting organization. Awards will not exceed \$20,000 for Organizing Statewide Training Programs.

ELIGIBLE COSTS AND COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAWS AND REGULATIONS

This program provides subaward of federal funding and activities must be in compliance with all federal and state laws and regulations.

Sub recipients must comply with federal Cost Principles, Uniform Administrative Requirements, and Audit Requirements of federal grants. For State and Local Governments and other organizations this includes requirements contained in Code of Federal Regulations 2CFR200.

Additional regulations governing administration of Arizona State Forestry Awards include:

- Federal, state, and local laws, statutes, rules, and ordinances as applicable;
- Sub-award agreement – a signed agreement between Arizona State Forestry and the subrecipient; and
- Applicable federal or state program requirements.

COST-SHARE / MATCHING REQUIREMENTS

The applicant must match at least 50% of the total cost of the project from sources other than the federal government. For every dollar of grant funds provided, an additional dollar of non-federal investment must be expended on the project (1:1). Matching expenditures may take a number of forms, which include:

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- a. Actual funds expended: Funds from the fire department budget or donated by the community or other outside non-federal sources. (Funds originating from federal sources cannot be used as match)
- b. In-Kind expenses: Necessary costs incurred by another organization to support the VFA project.
- c. Contributed time for personnel and equipment: Donated labor and/or equipment necessary to complete the VFA project.

All reimbursable and matching expenses must be fully documented before payment is made by Arizona State Forestry. Rates utilized for valuing contributed resources must be specified and approved before a sub-grant agreement is executed.

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The program's primary intent is to support activities in preparation for the upcoming wildland fire season. Proposed projects should be ready for implementation upon award and should be substantially achievable by spring to summer of 2016. Grant funds are provided on a reimbursement basis after expenses are incurred, paid, and documented by the applicant organization. The maximum award period will be one year.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND DEADLINE

Applicants will complete the VFA Grant application (Parts A and B) outlined below and submit the forms to the Arizona State Forestry. The application materials are available on the Arizona State Forestry website at www.azsf.az.gov/grants/VFA , or by calling (602) 771-1410.

Applications are due electronically via email no later than **November 18, 2015.**

If the application cannot be transmitted electronically, please contact the Grants Manager at (602) 771-1410 or by email at grants@azsf.gov

APPLICATION FORMS:

All applicants will complete and submit a two part application. Part A includes information about the applicant organization, and Part B includes information about the specific project proposal(s). If funds are being requested for more than one project category, additional project applications (Part B) forms will be submitted for each category. The standard applications forms must be used.

The application forms are available as Microsoft Word formatted documents which are fill-in enabled. The forms are downloadable from the Arizona Forestry website at www.azsf.az.gov/grants/VFA , and will need to be saved to a local computer. If assistance is needed in obtaining the forms, please contact Arizona State Forestry at (602) 771-1410.

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Required application materials include:

- **Part A – Organization Information / Questionnaire**
 - One form is to be submitted per applicant organization.
 - This form includes information about the organization and who will be responsible for the grant implementation if awarded. It also includes information about the applicant organization's areas of coverage, firefighting responsibilities, and existing capacity.
 - Organizations only requesting funds for Organizing Statewide Training Programs (category #1) are required to complete only the **first** page of the Part A Organizational Information. The subsequent Questionnaire only pertains to firefighting organizations and will not be required for non-firefighting organizations.

- **Part B – Specific Project Proposal(s)**
 - One form is to be submitted for each specific proposal.
 - Applicant organizations may submit multiple project proposals and be awarded funding for multiple projects. (The maximum total award to any single firefighting organization is \$10,000 per year from this program. The maximum award for Organizing Statewide Training Programs is \$20,000.)
 - Each proposal will be identified with one of the eight project categories listed below. Individual proposals may not include items or activities from multiple categories. If funding is being requested from more than one category, separate Specific Project Proposals will need to be submitted for each category.

PROJECT CATEGORIES

- **Organizing Statewide Training Programs** – Limited grant funding is available to support organizing statewide training programs that provide firefighter training to multiple Arizona rural fire departments in more than one focus area or at more than one competency level. This includes programs such as fire academies that provide multiple classes at varying qualification levels. Priority is given to wildland fire training that meets National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) standards provided to firefighters from rural Arizona fire departments. The maximum award for Organizing Statewide Training programs is \$20,000.
- **Wildland Training for Department Personnel** – Grant funding is available for the tuition and travel costs for RFD personnel to attend wildland fire training opportunities. This may include training through the state fire school, wildfire academies, community colleges, local intra- or inter-department training opportunities, out-of-state specialized classes, and other opportunities. Priority is given to advanced level training (200 level or above) and National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) classes. Funds may also be used for purchase of training equipment or aids – including projectors, simulators, slide/video programs, training tools and manuals, program development by outside sources, and other similar activities.

(Examples of non-qualifying projects include: Emergency Medical Technician training and salary related costs for trainees - such as backfill or overtime costs.)
- **Wildland Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** – Grant funding is available for Nomex clothing, hard hats, gloves, goggles, fire shelters, and line gear. (Wildland boots cannot be funded). All requests for wildland PPE require that Fire Shelters receive the highest priority if the department does not currently have shelters. Priority will also be given to those proposals requesting COMPLETE sets of wildland gear (fire shelter, Nomex shirt and pants, hard hat, and gloves.)

- **Wildland Fire Awareness and Prevention Efforts** – Grant funding is available to support community fire awareness and prevention activities including fire prevention signage (roadside, at fire station, community locations), paid advertisements, brochures, public service announcements, and purchase of Smokey Bear materials for distribution. (Note: Smokey Bear materials must be given away to the public free of charge.)
- **Wildland Equipment and Water Handling** – Grant funding is available for fire line tools (Pulaski's, shovels, flappers, etc.) and water handling equipment (pumps, hoses, drop tanks, etc.). It is also available for renovation of equipment acquired through any recognized source for the purpose of fire protection.

(Examples of non-qualifying projects include: Purchase of fire trucks or other capital equipment valued at over \$5,000 per unit, building or other construction, paramedic/EMT equipment, fire hydrant construction, land purchases, routine vehicle maintenance (tune-ups, tires, etc), department identification patches, t-shirts, or promotional items.)
- **Radio Communications (P25 Compliant)** – Grant funding is available for purchase of P25 compliant radio equipment and accessories only. (See "Radio Equipment - P25 Compliance" information below).
- **Fire Department Organization and Planning** - Grant funding is available for costs to form an organized fire district under ARS, Title 48. Funds may also be available for planning costs to support risk assessments or hazard mitigation planning.

(Examples of non-qualifying projects include: Furniture, telephone, personnel, postage, uniforms, badges, stationery or insurance costs)
- **Structural Firefighting Equipment** – Grant funding is available for items such as pikes, venting saws, generators, exhaust fans, and any other equipment that is used primarily for structural firefighting.

SELECTION PROCESS

Funds are awarded through a competitive application process. Grant applications are received, reviewed, scored, and ranked by representatives of the Arizona Forestry and partner organizations with expertise in Arizona fire response activities.

Evaluation will be based on how well the individual applications meet the defined criteria, objectives, and priorities in this request. Funding available for each category may be limited and some project categories may be prioritized based on statewide needs. Final recommendations and approval of awards will be made by the Arizona State Forester. Each applicant will be notified by mail or Email of the final status of their grant application. Additional information and instructions will be given to the selected applicants.

NOTIFICATION: Announcements are anticipated by **January 2016**.

Applicants will be notified of funding recommendations after decisions are finalized. Upon grant award, formal agreements will be executed between the Arizona State Forestry and each recipient organization. No funds will be reimbursed for expenses incurred prior to execution of the formal agreements.

OTHER INFORMATION

PAYMENT OF FUNDS: Grant funds may only be used for reimbursement of actual costs, and payment will be made only after expenses are incurred, documented, and reported by the subrecipient organization. Up to 10% of the total award may be withheld until all deliverables, reports, and documentation is completed and approved. No funds will be reimbursed for expenses incurred prior to execution of a formal written agreement between Arizona State Forestry and the applicant organization.

PROCUREMENT REQUIREMENTS: All procurement activities shall be in compliance with Uniform Administrative Requirements applicable to the sub-recipient organization. For State and Local Governments and other organizations this includes requirements contained in Code of Federal Regulations 2CFR200. All Sub-grantees are responsible for developing, documenting, and adhering to their own established procurement activities that include both administrative and accounting controls. Costs for some commonly purchased items will be limited. See the VFA Grant Funding Limitations on the following page.

CAPITAL EQUIPMENT PURCHASES: Equipment or supply purchases with a unit value of \$5,000 or more cannot be funded, or partially funded, under this grant program.

MAINTENANCE / INVENTORY REQUIREMENTS: All larger value and theft sensitive items (such as audiovisual equipment, GPS and radio equipment, SCBA, etc.) are required to be appropriately labeled and tracked by the recipient fire department. Arizona State Forestry will conduct periodic inventory and follow-up on these items to assure continued and appropriate use.

RADIO EQUIPMENT – P25 COMPLIANCE: The primary purpose of radio funding is to assist departments with two-way radio communications which will meet the EIA/TIA 102A standards for interoperability for public safety agencies (APCO Project 25 Compliant) and specifically will be used to communicate with Arizona State Forestry and other Federal, State and Local Firefighting agencies on wildland/urban interface fires.

Two-way radio communication equipment purchased must meet or exceed the APCO Project 25 Standards (EIA/TIA102A). Radio equipment will need to operate in the VHF Spectrum of 136Mhz. to 174Mhz. and be fully P25 compliant. Local two-way radio communications dealers and distributors can assist with information about manufacturers that currently produce P 25 compliant two-way radio equipment and or radio equipment that meets this requirement. Arizona State Forestry can provide additional information if requested.

TRAVEL EXPENDITURES: Reimbursement of all travel expenditures for training or other purposes must be consistent with established organization or state written travel policies. Policy must be specified and approved before a sub-grant agreement is executed.

VFA Grant Funding Limitations

Overall program funding is limited. Arizona State Forestry has established maximum allowable reimbursement amounts for common items. The following list identifies wildland fire equipment and protective gear that are commonly requested for funding support. Fire departments may be reimbursed up to 50% of documented costs for approved items - not to exceed the maximum reimbursement amount listed below.

All items must be identified in the original grant proposal and approved by Arizona State Forestry. All expenses must be incurred for items purchased and received during the term of the formal grant award.

Wildland Gear and Protective Equipment		
Item	Typical Cost (up to) Including Tax	Maximum Reimbursement @ 50%
Fire Shelter	440.00	220.00
Training Shelter	170.00	85.00
Wildland Fire Pants	190.00	95.00
Wildland Fire Shirt	140.00	70.00
Neck Shrouds	34.00	17.00
Chaps	170.00	85.00
Safety Goggles	20.00	10.00
Firefighter Work Gloves	30.00	15.00
Headlamps	60.00	30.00
Firefighter Tents	200.00	100.00
Handheld GPS	400.00	200.00
Wildland Helmets	60.00	30.00
Personal Flashlights	40.00	20.00

Proposals may be approved at partial funding levels and additional limitations may be specified by Arizona State Forestry at the time of award.

QUESTIONS:

Questions about the application process or program may be directed to:

Grants Program Manager
Arizona State Forestry
1110 West Washington, Suite 100
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
grants@azsf.gov
(602) 771-1410

Or:

David Geyer
Arizona State Fire Management Officer
Arizona State Forestry
1110 West Washington, Suite 100
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
DavidGeyer@azsf.gov
(602) 339-3015

Arizona State Forestry District offices may also be contacted for program information, assistance with developing Intergovernmental Agreements, and for local coordination of wildland fire resource needs:

ARIZONA STATE FORESTRY DISTRICT OFFICES		
Office Locations (Arizona Counties)	District Forester	Contact Information
<i>Phoenix Office</i> - Gila, La Paz, Maricopa, Yavapai, Yuma Counties	<i>Russ Shumate (Acting)</i>	928-778-9567 russshumate@azsf.gov
<i>Flagstaff Office</i> - Apache, Coconino, Mohave, Navajo Counties	<i>Aaron Green</i>	928-774-1425 aarongreen@azsf.gov
<i>Tucson Office</i> - Cochise, Graham, Greenlee, Pinal, Pima, Santa Cruz Counties	<i>Gene Beaudoin</i>	520-628-5480 genebeaudoin@azsf.gov