December 29th, 2022

Dear Forest Warden or Fire Chief,

I am pleased to announce the second round of 2022 Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) grant solicitation with funds provided by United States Department of Agriculture's Forest Service. **This year the total project cost is $5,000 (To be reimbursed up to half ($2,500)**. The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is soliciting applications for small grants from qualifying fire departments. Applications are due on or before January 13th, 2023.

Funding for this program is provided by the USDA Forest Service, Cooperative Fire Protection (CFP) and administered by the DCR Bureau of Forest Fire Control and Forestry. Non-profit rural call or volunteer fire departments that provide service primarily to a population of 10,000 or less are encouraged to apply. Fire departments must be made up of at least 80% call or volunteer firefighters, be recognized as a department under state law and be National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliant. CFP eligible proposed projects will be those within the categories of FIRE FIGHTER SAFETY, TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER, and RURAL FIRE DEFENSE. Your application must describe your project and how it relates to the above categories.

Successful applicants must first bear the full cost of the project. Funding is available on a 50% reimbursement basis only. Total reimbursement amount shall not exceed a **$2,500** value. Reimbursement is available for cash expenditures only, however the applicant’s share of the project may include either cash expenditures or in-kind services (donations, volunteer hours etc).

***To be considered for reimbursement, projects MUST NOT BEGIN until the town receives the award notification a signed standard contract for the grant that contains the VFA Grant start & end date as well as the Grant amount approved.***

***To apply visit:*** [**https://www.mass.gov/service-details/volunteer-fire-assistance-vfa-program**](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/volunteer-fire-assistance-vfa-program)

**or Email to: Alex.belote@mass.gov or mail to**

**Program Coordinator Alex Belote, DCR Bureau of Forest Fire Control, P.O. Box 66, South Carver, MA 02366**

**On or before: January 13th, 2023**

**2022 VFA GUIDELINES**

Dear Fire Chiefs, Town Fire Wardens, and Administrators,

In a collaborative effort between the U.S. Forest Service and Massachusetts DCR Bureau of Forest Fire Control and Forestry, we once again offer an opportunity for rural fire departments to apply competitive funding through the Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant (VFA). DCR strives to distribute these limited funds fairly and equitably throughout the eligible Call/Volunteer fire service in Massachusetts. Please follow these guidelines to ensure your application is processed correctly, completely and in a timely manner.

**FEDERAL GUIDELINES:**

 Requirements for Fire Department VFA eligibility:

* a population of less than 10,000
* be 80% or more call or volunteer
* be recognized as a fire department by the state
* be NIMS (National Incident Management System compliant [Incident Command, Multi-Agency Coordination and Public Information Systems]

**Selection and Funding Process:**

In selecting projects, the State Forester's office will:

* Provide funding for projects involving training, prevention, and equipment purchases.  Projects may be for firefighter safety, technology transfer and rural fire defense.  Medical and rescue purchases will not be eligible.
* Approve a cost-sharing rate of 50% not to exceed $2,500.00 per grant.  This is a reimbursable payment. The fire department funds 100% of the grant project and they will be reimbursed 50% of the approved award amount or up to $2,500.  For example:
	+ a 5,000 project will be reimbursed $2,500
	+ a $8,000 project will be reimbursed $2,500
	+ a $2,000 project will be reimbursed $1,000
* Determine that matching funds are available from the applicant.
* On a sliding scale, priority will be given to Departments who have not received recent VFA funding.

**Priority will be given to projects submitted during the first-round solicitation which ended on December 23rd, 2022.**

Priority will be given to projects where at least 25% of funding is used for training.

1. Expenditures by successful applicants cannot be made until **after the standard contract is signed by DCR, and the award notification has been made by the DCR.**

2. Project START dates along with instructions for submission of required final paperwork will be issued with award notification letter.

3. Payment Request for Reimbursement including invoices & proof of payment must be submitted by 6/30/2024.