



Fire Department Federal Grant Administered by the SC Forestry Commission  
**2016 VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSISTANCE (VFA) GRANT**  
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The South Carolina Forestry Commission (SCFC) is now accepting applications for the **Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA)/National Fire Plan (NFP) Grant**. Application deadline is **October 15, 2016**.

The intent of the VFA/NFP grant is to help rural volunteer fire departments meet the *Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) challenge in South Carolina*. Through financial assistance in purchasing wildland firefighting equipment and making necessary training available, rural volunteer fire departments can more effectively and safely assist the SCFC in handling wildland fires that threaten the rural developments and communities they serve. **Fire department staffing levels must consist of at least 75% volunteers, in order to be eligible for funding.**

Establishing new working relationships and improving existing partnerships between the SCFC and rural fire departments is critical in meeting the needs of communities in the WUI. The SCFC conducts community assessments, presents Firewise workshops, and develops Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) with assistance from local fire departments in an effort to increase awareness for WUI communities at risk from wildland fires. With implementation of Firewise principles, firefighters have a greater chance of saving more homes in the WUI.

**PLEASE NOTE: NOT ALL FIRE DEPARTMENTS APPLYING WILL RECEIVE GRANT FUNDS. PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO THOSE:**

- Applying for the first time
- Assisting SCFC with Firewise Communities, Community Wildfire Protection Plans, etc.
- Purchasing VHF radios
- Purchasing wildland PPE (Nomex shirts, Nomex pants, Nomex coveralls, etc.)
- Purchasing a skid (slip-in) unit for a brush truck
- Installing dry hydrants

**GRANTS WILL BE AWARDED AT A MINIMUM OF \$1,000. APPLICANTS WILL BE GIVEN CONSIDERATION ONLY IF THE FEDERAL EXCESS PROPERTY ASSIGNED TO THEM IS IN COMPLIANCE WITH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS. DEPARTMENTS NOT IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE FEDERAL EXCESS PROPERTY PROGRAM WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED FOR FUNDING.**

**This year's grant allotment has been reduced from the amount we received last year. It will be very competitive this year. Fire departments need to be very frugal in their selection of items. I will be looking very closely at the selected items, and may make suggested changes on a case by case basis. This will allow federal dollars to be utilized by more departments!**

VFA Grant application forms and related information can be found on the SCFC website at <http://www.trees.sc.gov/fgrants.htm>. If you do not have internet access, please contact us at (803) 896-8810, and we will mail you a complete application package. When completing the application, all signatures should be in **blue** ink.

## 2016 VFA GRANT APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Deadline: **October 15, 2016**

Mail Application To:

South Carolina Forestry Commission  
VFA Grant Coordinator- Brad Bramlett  
P.O. Box 21707  
Columbia, SC 29221-1707

### FAXES AND SCANS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED!

- The fire department must consist of at least **75%** volunteer firefighters, to be eligible.
- Previously, VFA grants allowed fire departments to apply for both structural and wildland firefighting items. **However, the present focus is on wildland firefighting. REQUESTS FOR STRUCTURAL FIREFIGHTING ITEMS WILL BE A VERY LOW PRIORITY!**
- Fire departments must serve a rural community with a population of 10,000 or less. However, those serving a population greater than 10,000 **may** qualify if the service area includes additional stations responsible for wildland fires in the more rural area of service. These fires must be documented as requested on the application. One must show how each station's response/service area is broken down. The VFA Grant primarily focuses on **volunteer departments that are rural**. **VFA is targeted toward small, rural volunteer departments that do not have a large budget.** This grant enables small departments to purchase wildland firefighting equipment that they might not otherwise be able to afford.
- Grant Type: 50/50 reimbursable matching program. For example, if a fire department receives a \$1,200 grant, they must have receipts totaling \$2,400. **No single item can be more than \$10,000.** Note: If purchasing a skid unit and the entire cost is over \$10,000, ask the company to give you an itemized bill showing the breakdown of the cost (ex. - individual cost of tank, pump, hose, etc.)
- Grants will be awarded for a minimum of \$1,000, AND up to \$5,000.
- You may apply for any amount that your fire department can match; however, no single application will be reimbursed for more than \$5,000. Items purchased, and records of purchases, are subject to review by federal and state authorities. All records and paperwork must be kept for 3 years (from the date on the reimbursement check). **YOU MUST KEEP A COPY OF YOUR REQUEST BECAUSE YOUR PURCHASES MUST MATCH YOUR REQUEST, OTHERWISE YOUR DEPARTMENT WILL NOT BE REIMBURSED.**
- **Purchases will be allowed from April 1, 2016 through April 15, 2017. Do not send copies of invoices with this application.** You will be notified by December 31, 2016 if your application is funded. At that time, you will be notified of where to send receipts and other required documentation.
- The fire department must be in compliance with NIMS in regards to required training and currency to apply for VFA grants.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) must be renewed every 3 years and maintained by the SCFC before a fire department can receive funds. If you have a question regarding the validity of your department's MOU, please contact us at (803) 896-8810.

- Time (at a rate of \$23.07 per hour) and expenses the fire department incurs for refurbishing a federal excess truck (i.e., creating a brush truck) can be used as matching funds. See Roscommon website <http://www.roscommonequipmentcenter.com/> for additional information and tips on refurbishing wildland firefighting equipment.
- Time spent attending Wildland Fire Training within the same time period (April 2016 through April 2017), must be documented and can be credited at the rate of \$23.07 per hour toward the fire department's matching funds. Note: Only specific classes qualify. See accompanying requirements.
- Time spent installing and/or maintaining dry hydrants, within the same time period (April 2016 through April 2017), must be documented and can be credited at the rate of \$23.07 per hour toward the fire department's matching funds.
- Fire departments participating in the Federal Excess Property Program (FEPP) are required to be in compliance with FEPP requirements by having all federal excess equipment maintained and in use. In addition to the required MOU, the SCFC may request updated Equipment Loan Agreement and Certificate of Liability Insurance forms, prior to awarding a grant.

Without complete documentation, your request will not be considered. You must keep a copy of your application and request, as your purchases must match the original request.

Again, the following application forms and related information can be found on the SCFC website at <http://www.trees.sc.gov/fgrants.htm>.

Checklist of **REQUIRED** Documents (minimum of 4 total) for VFA Grant Application Package:

- \_\_\_\_ VFA Form 1: Completed Grant Application/Checklist
- \_\_\_\_ VFA Form 2: List of WUI Communities Protected
- \_\_\_\_ VFA Form 3: List of Equipment/Items Requested
- \_\_\_\_ W-9 Form: Request for Taxpayer ID Number and Certification

Appendix (Additional Resources):

- Appendix A: Eligible Items for VFA Grants
- Appendix B: Type 6 Engine (Brush Truck) Specs – Suggested Requirements
- Appendix C: List of Vendors for Wildland Firefighting Equipment and Supplies
- Appendix D: Fire Service Mutual Aid Frequencies
- Appendix E and F: VFA Time Sheet Instructions and Time Sheet
- Completed, sample VFA Application



**DEADLINE: October 15, 2016**

**(It is highly recommended that you mail your application using Certified Mail/Return Receipt): If I don't get it, I can't review it!**



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