



Washington State Department of Natural Resources

WA HB1168 / Volunteer Fire Assistance

2024 Phase 2 Grant Program Requirements

Introduction

The **Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA)** program is funded through the US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS) and WA HB1168 funds. The objective of the VFA program is to improve the capacity and capability of rural and volunteer fire protection districts that protect rural communities and play a substantial cooperative role in the suppression of wildland fires within or near federally managed lands.

The Phase 2 Grant Program is available to all Washington State Fire Districts/Fire Departments that meet the eligibility requirements listed below.

Available Funding

- The maximum grant award per Fire District/Fire Department is **\$18,000**.
- Fire Districts/Fire Departments may only submit **one** application.
- **Match requirement** for all eligible projects within the Volunteer Fire Assistance Program is **10% of project cost**.

Application Submittal

- The application period opens **November 1, 2023** and must be received by DNR no later than close of business **December 15, 2023**.
- Application information is available on the DNR [Fire District Assistance](#) webpage.
- Applications must be completely filled out, signed by an authorized Fire District/Fire Department representative, and submitted in word or pdf format by one of the following methods:
 - Email: fepp_assist@dnr.wa.gov, or
 - If alternate options for submitting applications are needed, please email Dan Boyle @ daniel.boyle@dnr.wa.gov or call (360) 480-0490.

Grant Award and Term

- Grant funding is expected to be awarded to successful applicants by January 31, 2024.
- Projects must be completed, and all reimbursement requests received by DNR **no later** than close of business **May 30, 2025** (*Exceptions may be granted in certain cases involving the conversion of equipment acquired through the Firefighter Property program (see Firefighter Property Conversion/Refurbishment under Project Eligibility below).*)
- Extensions to the grant term **may** be allowed at the sole discretion of DNR, upon review.
- Properly documented project costs incurred **after** November 1, 2023 are eligible for reimbursement.
- Properly documented match incurred as part of the project and **after** November 1, 2023 are eligible.

Eligibility

Fire District/Fire Department Eligibility

Fire Districts/Fire Departments in Washington State that:

- Respond to Wildland Fire on private, state, or federal lands as part of suppression efforts, and
- Provide service to:
 - a rural area or a rural community with a population of 10,000 or less, or
 - a community with a population greater than 10,000 that includes service to a rural community of 10,000 or less (funding must be used to benefit the rural community)
- District/Department that have a 70% volunteer firefighter membership or greater. *(As an example, for a Fire District with a total of 30 firefighters (counting both paid and volunteer), 21 must be volunteers.)*
- **DNR has sole authority in determining eligibility to include but not limited to, if a District/Department is out of compliance from any prior grants.**

Project Eligibility

The following projects are eligible:

- **Firefighter Property Conversion/Refurbishment** – Includes funding for transport, conversion and/or refurbishment of vehicles obtained through the Firefighter Property Program in support of wildfire suppression. *(Note: The Firefighter Property program requires equipment to be in-service within one year of acquisition. Applicants awarded funding for Firefighter Property conversions must still meet the one-year in-service requirement of the Firefighter Property program (i.e. the May 30, 2025 grant deadline does not supersede or extend Firefighter Property in-service date requirements).*
- **Non-Firefighter Property Conversion/Refurbishment** – Includes funding for purchase, conversion and/or refurbishment of vehicles to be utilized in support of wildfire suppression.
- **Fire Equipment** – Equipment suitable for or in direct support of wildland fire use. Includes portable pumps, water tanks (e.g. porta tanks), chainsaws. Also includes generators (e.g. backup power at fire stations).
- **Communications** – Includes the development of single or multi district communications systems, radios (vehicle and hand held), base stations, repeaters, and pagers.
- **Training** – Includes the development and implementation of programs designed for training in grass or wildland fire suppression, including instructors, facility rental and materials.
- **Fire Prevention** – Includes the development and implementation of fire prevention education programs, including Firewise workshops or prevention planning, including GIS planning projects.
- **Dry Hydrant** – Includes planning, construction and operational use of a dry hydrant system.

Ineligible Projects

The following are **not** eligible for funding:

- Major expenditures such as building construction
- Land acquisition or building repairs
- Rural Emergency Medical Service programs
- Water line construction and hydrants
- Structural fire engines, ladder trucks, and interior structure specific PPE
- Wellness programs

Prioritization

DNR will consider the following when prioritizing grant applications for funding. Additional criteria may also be utilized:

- Fire District/Fire Department protection includes communities within priority areas identified in the Statewide Forest Action Plan
- Mutual aid response agreements with DNR or federal agencies
- Past DNR grant awards. Recipients of a Phase 2 or Operations grant last year may apply, but will only be considered for funding after all other applicants have been funded.
- Project type
- Volunteer firefighter membership

- Fire District/Fire Department Wildland Fire Operating budget
 - *Defined as budgeted allocations for wildland and structural firefighting. EMS services, other grant dollars, capital outlays and construction should not be included.*
- Wildland fire response call volume
 - *Does not include structural, medical, or rescue*

Other Requirements

- **Reimbursable grant** – the Fire District/Fire Department must apply to DNR for reimbursement of Federal VFA funds, which are outlined in award letters. Requests for reimbursement must be submitted on DNR approved forms and include supporting documentation providing evidence of incurred costs, Fire District/Fire Department payment of costs and required match contribution. All properly documented project costs incurred **after** October 1, 2023 are eligible for reimbursement. Fire District/Fire Departments must provide DNR all invoices prior to or in conjunction with the reimbursement form.
- **Eligible match** may be actual cash, donated materials or in-kind labor. All matching funds require documentation and required match must be included with any grant reimbursement request. Only match incurred as part of the project **after** November 1, 2023 is eligible. In-kind labor documentation must include laborer's name, dates and hours of work, and type of work performed. Donation documentation must identify what is donated, value of donation, name of donor and be signed by the donor. *(Other federal grant funding is not eligible for meeting this grant's required match.)*
- **In-kind labor rate** is \$25 per hour.
- **Project modifications** must have **prior written** approval by DNR, and in no case will DNR approve additional funding to complete the project.
- **Unused grant funds** cannot be transferred to other non-funded projects, agencies, or departments.