

Washington State Department of Natural Resources

Volunteer Fire Assistance

2023 Phase 3 Grant Program Requirements

Introduction

The **Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Phase 3** program is funded through the US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS) and WA DNR 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 3 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 **\$7,000**.
- Fire Districts/Fire Departments may only submit one application.
- **Match requirement** for all eligible projects within the Volunteer Fire Assistance Program there is a minimum 50% of overall project cost. But, DNR will reimburse the Fire District/Department up to 40% (\$2800) of the required match for the overall project cost of up to \$7,000. Thus, the District/Department will be responsible for 10% of the match and any project amount over the \$7000 award.

Application Submittal

- The application period opens February 1, 2023.
- Application is available on the DNR [Fire District Assistance](#) webpage.
- Applications must be received by DNR no later than February 28, 2023.
- Applications must be filled out completely, 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 contact Dan Boyle daniel.boyle@dnr.wa.gov
cell 360-480-0490

Grant Award and Term

- Grants are intended to be awarded to successful applicants by May 15, 2023.
- Projects must be completed and all reimbursement requests received by DNR no later than close of business May 30, 2024
- Extensions to the grant term may be allowed at the sole discretion of DNR.
- Properly documented project costs incurred after February 1, 2023 are eligible for reimbursement.
- Properly documented match incurred as part of the project and after February 1, 2023 is eligible.
- State funded portion (40%) up to \$2800.00 of the awarded grants will be distributed immediately after grant awards.
- VFA funded portion (50%) up to \$3500.00 of the awarded grants will be distributed upon project completion. District/Department will be required to submit the Phase 3 reimbursement form for final payment.

Eligibility

Fire District/Fire Department Eligibility

Fire districts/fire departments in Washington State that:

- Respond to wildland fire on private, state, or federal lands, 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)
 - grant funds must benefit the rural area or rural community
- District/Department has 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.

Project Eligibility

The following projects are eligible:

- Firefighter Property vehicle
- FEPP property vehicle
- DNR surplus vehicle
- District/Department owned vehicle

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.
- Project type
- Volunteer firefighter membership
- Fire district/fire department 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 eligible costs. 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 February 1, 2023 are eligible for reimbursement.
- **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 February 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.