

**Volunteer Fire Assistance Program (VFA)  
Award Application Processing  
Procedures and Timetable  
FY 2017-18**

1. The application with assurances is posted online. Here is the link:  
[http://calfire.ca.gov/fire\\_protection/fire\\_protection\\_coop\\_efforts.php](http://calfire.ca.gov/fire_protection/fire_protection_coop_efforts.php)
2. Fire departments are instructed to submit their grant application to the CAL FIRE Grants Management Unit at the Sacramento Headquarters through e-mail and postal mail by May 22, 2017.
3. Applications will be considered for awards of \$500 minimum and a maximum of \$20,000. However, the \$20,000 maximum may be adjusted depending on the number of applications received, the total value of all applications, the nature of the applications and the actual funding received. Every effort will be made to make awards in the total dollar amount requested. **Successful applicants must complete their approved project(s) using local funds between the approval date on the Agreement and June 30, 2018** and then bill CAL FIRE within the award agreement time frames in order to receive the award. **Expenditures made prior to Agreement Approval date or after June 30, 2018 will not be covered by the award.**
4. The Grants Management Unit will send an electronic version of completed award applications to the VFA Regional Coordinators once received and logged by **June 6, 2017**.
5. The VFA Regional Coordinators will then distribute the electronic version of the completed award applications to Unit Chiefs (or designees) in their region.
6. The Unit Chief (or designee) will print out the award applications then review and prioritize for departments within the Operational Unit boundaries. Prioritize applications by county rather than Operational Unit-wide.
7. The Unit Chief (or designee) must clearly note and initial the priority on the top right hand corner of the application's first page.
8. The Unit Chief (or designee) must ensure that the dollar amounts are reasonable and realistic for items requested.
9. The Unit Chief (or designee) must check for compliance of requests and ensure that ineligible items are not included in the grant request. Any ineligible items are to be lined out and the total amount requested adjusted to reflect the change.
10. Following Operational Unit review, the applications should be mailed to the Region VFA Coordinator. The VFA Coordinators are Joy Tucker for the Northern Region and Dean Veik for the Southern Region. All applications should be considered. Those having difficulty qualifying should be marked with '5' and included in the transmittal of applications.
11. The Operational Unit review and the Region VFA Coordinator review should be completed by **July 17, 2017**. Region VFA Coordinators will bring reviewed applications to

Headquarters to meet with Grants Management staff and jointly review each region's recommendations consistent with the identified priorities and available funds. Any necessary adjustments will be made after consulting with the respective Region VFA Coordinators. Megan Esfandiary will provide staff coordination for the project.

### **ELIGIBILITY FOR VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSISTANCE AWARD**

(Please identify on the application which eligibility requirement the department fits)

1. A single fire department serving a rural area or a rural community with a population of 10,000 or less is eligible (latest Census).
2. Area fire departments (fire districts, townships, etc.) may serve an aggregate population of greater than 10,000 as long as the service area of the fire department includes a rural area or a rural community having a population of 10,000 or less. The VFA funding must be used to benefit the rural population.
3. A single county or town with a population over 10,000 which is served by two or more fire districts operating entirely within the bounds of the county or town may qualify as long as the service area of a given fire department includes a rural area or a rural community or the population of the fire department's jurisdiction is 10,000 or less. The VFA funding must be used for the rural area.
4. A single community with a population greater than 10,000 and having a single fire department with one or more fire stations may qualify. The fire department must have a service area that includes a rural area or community that does not exceed 10,000 population. The VFA funding must be used only for the benefit of the rural population. Similarly a single community with a population greater than 10,000 which also provides fire protection to an adjoining rural community of 10,000 or less population by contract, may also be eligible provided the VFA funding is used entirely to support the rural community.

A single community fire department serving a population greater than 10,000 and not providing protection to a rural area or to a rural community is not eligible for VFA financial assistance.

When prioritizing the projects, bear in mind that award money is to be used to organize, train, and equip fire departments to prevent and suppress fires. The categories for award funds include:

- Fire District formation
- Improve wildland and structure fire training
- Upgrade personal safety equipment
- Create or improve fire prevention programs
- Use federal excess property to add to fire protection equipment

Legislation does not allow funding for HAZMAT, extrication and/or medical aid equipment.

## Timetable

March – May 22, 2017	Applications being completed by rural fire departments and submitted to the Sacramento Headquarters for logging.
July 1, 2017	Funds become available, pending receipt of the award letter from the U.S. Forest Service and passage of the state budget.
June 6, 2017	Sacramento Headquarters e-mails applications to Region VFA Coordinators to electronically distribute to Operational Units.
June 6, 2017 – July 17, 2017	Completed applications undergoing Operational Unit review and priority setting. Region VFA Coordinator reviews all applications for completeness, signatures, Operational Unit priority, sign-off, etc.; assigns region priority.
August 3, 2017 –	Recommendations reviewed jointly by Region and Sacramento, and final selections made.
August 7, 2017 – August 31, 2017	Regions, areas, and Operational Units notified of grant awards. Sacramento Headquarters notifies successful applicants of results by direct mail and email. Successful applicants provided with instructions, agreement forms and sample resolution by Sacramento Headquarters.
August 2017 – December 1, 2017	Recipients complete agreements and forward to Sacramento Headquarters for processing.
<b>July 2017 – June 2018</b>	<b>Rural departments complete projects using local funds and bill Sacramento Headquarters when project completed. Sacramento headquarters reviews and approves bill and processes invoice for payment of grant funds.</b>

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September 1, 2018 **Last day for rural departments to bill CAL FIRE for award.**

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Dates are subject to change

The timetable has been prepared to minimize haste, disruption, and confusion at the Operational Unit, area, and region level. In order for us to remain responsive to the dozens of deserving rural fire departments, every effort must be made to stay on schedule.