



October 23, 2020

Dear Volunteer Fire Department:

The Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) program provides assistance in training, supplies, equipment purchases, and prevention activities on a cost share basis. The Volunteer Fire Assistance program is available from the USDA Forest Service through the State of Alaska, Division of Forestry. The VFA program may be used for both wildland and structure protection needs. The assistance is provided to increase firefighter safety, improve the firefighting capabilities of rural volunteer fire departments, and enhance protection in the urban-wildland interface.

The amount available to apply for is capped at \$5,000. The 2021 Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant Program application period will be open from November 1, 2020 – January 31, 2021.

Basic Volunteer Fire Assistance Criteria

Serve a population of 10,000 or less

Be registered with the Alaska Division of Fire & Life Safety at the time the application is submitted

Be NIMS Compliant

Be in compliance with past VFA awards

Provide documentation of a minimum of 10% matching funds with application

VFA applications will only be accepted through the State of Alaska, Division of Forestry's Online Line Application System (OLAS) <https://dnr.alaska.gov/olas/>.

If, as a fire department, you have already registered equipment in OLAS, use the same username and password to access the 2021 VFA Grant Application. If you are new to using OLAS, please register. To register, chose 'Register Now!' on menu bar at top of page. Have your department's Fire Department Identification (FDID) number on hand as it is needed to complete the registration process. If you do not know the department's FDID number, it can be found here (second column):

https://dps.alaska.gov/getmedia/975a0c29-f57b-4f15-bdde-96829f6c5f97/2020FDDirectory8_17_20.pdf

Volunteer Fire Departments (VFDs) will also need to know their State of Alaska (SOA) vendor number to apply. Also be sure your VFD is set up to receive funds electronically from the State of Alaska. Please refer to the 2021 VFA Grant Manual on how to obtain and/or find your SOA vendor number. Electronic payment agreement information can also be found in the 2021 VFA Grant Manual The 2021 VFA Grant manual can be found online within VFA OLAS and on this web page:

<http://forestry.alaska.gov/fire/vfa>

Once you have registered in OLAS, log in, and go to the menu bar at the top of the page and click 'Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant Program', from there you will be able to apply, view and/or print and sign and upload all relevant documents. While there, review the 2021 VFA Grant Manual which includes all VFA criteria as well as the instructions in this letter.

When submitting your 2021 application in OLAS, be sure to enter the correct SOA vendor number, as awards are issued electronically. Not knowing or entering an incorrect SOA Vendor number and/or not having an EFT agreement in place will cause significant delays in receiving any awarded VFA funding. Paper checks will no longer be mailed.

If received, a Volunteer Fire Assistance grant is an award of Federal financial assistance (CFDA # 10.664) and is subject to the OMB guidance in subparts A through F of 2 CFR Part 200 as adopted and supplemented by USDA in 2 CFR Part 400. Adoption by USDA of the OMB guidance in 2 CFR 400 gives regulatory effect to the OMB guidance in 2 CFR 200 where full text may be found. Electronic copies of the CFRs can be obtained at the following internet site: www.ecfr.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kato Howard".

Kato Howard
Acting Fire Staff Officer