



Fire Management Handbook
Policy 817

Rural Fire Capacity Program

Guidance documents promulgated by the department are not new laws. They represent an interpretation of existing law, except as authorized by Idaho Code or incorporated into a contract.

Agency Contact

Chief, Bureau of Fire Management

Purpose

Congress has recognized that fire protection in rural communities is generally lacking or inadequate. To improve this situation, Congress authorized the Rural Fire Capacity (RFC) program, formerly known as the Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) program. This is a cooperative program between Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) and USDA Forest Service, State and Private Forestry, which provides financial and technical assistance to organize, train, and equip local forces for fire protection and suppression.

Applicability

Applies to IDL and Association Fire Wardens and Assistant Fire Wardens.

1. Associated Policies

- A. System for Award Management (SAM) Web Portal
- B. Fire Service Organization Defense Logistics Agency Purchases, FMH 841

2. Exception Authorization

Exceptions to this policy may be granted by the Chief, Bureau Fire Management, or State Forester.

3. Definitions

None

4. Policy

State Foresters are designated as the administrators of the program through a cooperative agreement with the USDA Forest Service, State and Private Forestry. In Idaho, Fire Wardens are designated as the IDL contact with the local community Fire Service Organizations (FSO) and Rangeland Fire Protection Associations (RFPA).

5. Procedures

A. Project Applications

RFC applications will be submitted on a **Rural Fire Capacity Grant Application, Attachment 1**, to IDL or Timber Protective Association (TPA) Fire Wardens. Fire Wardens must assure the application meets the requirements of the program. Only those meeting requirements will qualify for financial assistance.

To provide a stable framework for program users, the following timetable will be used:

1. April 1:

- a. Program opens for applications.
- b. Applications and instructions mailed to Idaho's FSOs and RFPAs.
- c. Applications are submitted by FSOs and RFPAs to IDL and TPA Fire Wardens for review.
- d. After review, applications are emailed to the IDL Bureau of Fire Management (Fire Bureau). Originals are kept at the A/D/A office until the retention period has been met.

2. June/July:

- a. Applications are prioritized by IDL in collaboration with representatives from Idaho's fire community.
- b. Successful and unsuccessful applicants are notified of grant funding status by the Fire Bureau.

B. Eligibility Requirements

Fire Wardens should carefully review each application and make sure the application complies with the following requirements before forwarding to the Fire Bureau for consideration.

1. Each applicant/recipient of a federal grant is required to have an active Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number and maintain current registration through the System for Award Management (SAM) portal. Information can be found at SAM.gov.
2. Each applicant/recipient of the RFC grant is required to have completed all reports to the State Fire Marshall's office through the NFIRS system.
3. IDL RFC Assistance will not be available to an FSO or RFPA applicant who is not a participant in the County Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) process for their county. In addition, all requests for RFC assistance listed on the application should be identified in the applicant county's CWPP or periodic update/addendum. Any new FSO or RFPA will have a maximum

of five years from their inception to become a participant in the CWPP process for their county.

4. A single FSO or RFPA serving a rural area or a rural community with a population of 10,000 or less is eligible (latest Census).
5. FSOs or RFPAs (fire districts, townships, etc.) may serve an aggregate population of greater than 10,000 as long as the service area of the FSO or RFPA includes a rural area or a rural community having a population of 10,000 or less. The RFC funding must be used to benefit the rural population.
6. A single county or town with a population over 10,000 that is served by two or more FSOs or RFPAs operating entirely within the bounds of the county or town may qualify as long as the service area of a given FSO or RFPA includes a rural area, or a rural community, or the population of the FSO or RFPA's jurisdiction is 10,000 or less. The RFC funding must be used for the rural area.
7. A single community with a population greater than 10,000 and having a single FSO or RFPA with one or more fire stations may qualify. The FSO or RFPA must have a service area that includes a rural area or community that does not exceed 10,000 population. The RFC funding must be used only for the benefit of the rural population. Similarly, a single community with a population greater than 10,000 that also provides fire protection to an adjoining rural community of 10,000 or less population by contract may also be eligible provided the RFC funding is used entirely to support the rural community.
8. A single community FSO or RFPA serving a population greater than 10,000, and not providing protection to a rural area or to a rural community, is **not eligible** for RFC financial assistance.
9. While paid FSOs or RFPAs are not excluded from participation in the RFC program, targeting of grants to qualifying FSOs or RFPAs having a membership comprised at least 80 percent volunteer firefighters is encouraged.
10. The FSO or RFPAs share (match) of the financial assistance must be available at the time of application. Match must be "hard" (cash) match; non-reimbursable out-of-pocket expenses where the subrecipient is responsible for payment. Applicants may not derive their share from other sources of federal government assistance. Note: FSOs/RFPAs must be able to provide a hard (cash) match of at least ten percent of grant funds being requested.
11. Application must be completed **in full** and **signed** by the FSO's Fire Chief or RFPA's Chairman in order to be considered.
12. When developing the RFC Grant Application, contact the nearest IDL Forest Protective District or TPA Fire Warden for assistance with obtaining pricing quotes for items available through the Coeur d'Alene Interagency Fire Cache.
13. When it is possible to order items through the Coeur d'Alene Interagency Fire Cache, but the FSO or RFPA elects not to do so, only **equivalent or lower priced PPE and equipment will be considered for reimbursement**. Any expenditure over and above this pricing **will not** be reimbursed.
14. Wildland firefighting boots **will not** be funded.

15. Fire Shelters – These grant funds will not cover a personal shelter for every member of the applicant’s FSO or RFPA. IDL will only consider shelters for the number of seats on wildland fire apparatus.
16. Communications Equipment –All radios purchased must be narrow band and specified as such on the vendor quote. Radios purchased must be compliant with the applicant county’s radio plan.
17. Training – There are several state agencies responsible for training of personnel. Applicant should pursue these avenues before applying for funding through this grant by contacting the local IDL, TPA, Bureau of Land Management, or US Forest Service office.
18. Project Request – Provide a detailed description of how this request will improve the response capability within the designated service area for which the applicant’s FSO or RFPA is first and foremost responsible.

C. Project Payments

Once the project is completed, the grant recipient **must sign and return a copy of the Award Agreement Letter**, along with the following:

1. A completed Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification, W-9.
2. Itemized receipts.
3. Proof of payment.
4. A completed USDA Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion - Lower Tier Covered Transactions, AD-1048.
5. A printout of the UEI number with expiration date.

The required forms are enclosed with the Award Agreement Letter to the successful applicant. **Reimbursement will not be processed without these documents.**


Fire Wardens ordering items on behalf of the FSOs and RFPAs will follow the process outlined in Fire Service Organization Defense Logistics Agency Purchases, FMH 841. **The grant recipient must include paid invoices and proof of payment for purchases in the reimbursement package** submitted to the IDL or TPA Fire Warden, following the same process as with any other vendor. Proof of payment documentation can be a bank statement showing the cleared check or credit card payment or an invoice showing the total due is zero.

When submitting the request for reimbursement, the recipient must submit documents demonstrating the ten percent hard (cash) match expenditure in order to be reimbursed the full amount of the grant award.

All requests for reimbursement must be submitted to the Fire Wardens by February 28 following the date of award.

Fire Wardens will check all reimbursement documents for accuracy and completeness and will submit the request via email for reimbursement to the Bureau of Fire Management for payment.

APPLICATION DUE NO LATER THAN JUNE 1

	IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LANDS RURAL FIRE CAPACITY GRANT APPLICATION	Available electronically on the web at: www.idl.idaho.gov
Name of Fire Service Organization (FSO) or Rangeland Fire Protection Association (RFPA):		Date:
Active UEI Number (from SAM)		FDID #
Mailing Address:		Phone:
City:	State: ID ZIP:	County:
Name and Title of Person Making Application:	E-mail Address:	
Types of Apparatus Used		
Population of Service Area:	Number of Seats on Wildland Apparatus:	Number of Firefighters in FSO or RFPA: Volunteer: Paid (if any): Total:
Attach a detailed description of project.		Description attached? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Attach an itemized estimate and/or vendor quote for all equipment and/or services. Check with your local IDL Area/District/Assn.		Estimate/Quote Attached? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

CATEGORIES	GRANT FUNDS 90%	HARD MATCH 10% Required	TOTAL
Category 1 – Organization of New FSO or RFPA <i>Building, land, and/or maintenance will not be funded.</i>			
Category 2 – Firefighter Training <i>List audio visual equipment in Category 5 – All Other Equipment.</i>			
Category 3 – Personal Protective Equipment <i>Please Note: Wildland firefighting boots will not be funded.</i>			
Category 4 – Radio and Communications Equipment			
Category 5 – All Other Equipment			
TOTAL GRANT REQUEST	\$		
TOTAL COST OF PROJECT	Grant Funds + Match =	\$	

Is this project/need identified in your County Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) or annual CWPP project priority update?
*New FSOs and RFPAs have a maximum of five years from their inception to become a participant in the CWPP process for their County.
 Contact your County Emergency Management Coordinator or Local Emergency Planning Committee for current CWPP.*

New FSO or RFPA? Yes ___ No ___ If yes, year established: _____ In CWPP or Update? Yes ___ No ___

Is your FSO or RFPA located in a high, medium, or low risk area as identified in your County Wildfire Protection Plan?
 High ___ Medium ___ Low ___

Fire occurrences *three-year average*: _____ Will this project result in reduced insurance ratings? Yes ___ No ___

Did you report fire incidents to the State Fire Marshal? Yes ___ No ___

For RFPAs only, did you report fire incidents to IDL? Yes ___ No ___

List community(ies) assisted by this project. _____

Has applicant applied for and/or received grant funds for specific project(s) listed above from any other federal, state, or private agency? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, list agency name and dollar amount: Agency Name: _____ Amount _____

Please return this application to your local Idaho Department of Lands Fire Protective District/Area or Timber Protective Association Office no later than **June 1**. Office location information available at www.idl.idaho.gov.

APPLICATION DUE NO LATER THAN JUNE 1

By initialing each line and signing this application, I acknowledge the following:

____ I have reviewed this application in its entirety and the answers are accurate to the best of my knowledge.

____ I have attached a detailed description and price quotes for the funds being requested.

____ The application must be physically at the local IDL office by close of business on June 1. Postmarks do not qualify.

____ I understand that I cannot put in for items to be reimbursed unless the order date is after the date on the award letter.

____ The RFC grant is reimbursable. This means the FSO must pay the entire invoice for items purchased before submitting paperwork for reimbursement. Federal guidelines prohibit payment to the FSO without proof of FSO expending funds on awarded items.

____ I understand the deadline to order from the Cache is December 15.

____ I understand the deadline for reimbursement is February 28.

____ If there is a change in chief, all criteria and deadlines remain in place.

Name of Fire Chief or Chairman:	
Signature of Fire Chief or Chairman: <i>Application will not be considered unless signed by Fire Chief/Chairman.</i>	