



VOLUNTEER FIRE CAPACITY (VFC)  
FUNDS AVAILABLE

**Application deadline: RECEIVED BY FRIDAY, August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

The Connecticut Division of Forestry is currently accepting grant applications for the 2024 Volunteer Fire Capacity (VFC) Grant Program, in anticipation of funding from the USDA Forest Service. The objective of the program is to improve the capability and effectiveness of Connecticut's rural volunteer fire departments to protect lives and property. This will be accomplished through organizing, training, and equipping local firefighters for fire protection in rural areas, including towns of 10,000 persons or less.

**Eligibility:**

Below are the eligibility criteria for application to the VFC program. The Forestry Division will select qualifying projects, using a modified point system. In selecting projects the Forestry Division will consider:

1. A fire department located in a town with a population of 10,000, or less, according to the 2020 census.
2. Provide funding for projects that involve training, prevention and equipment purchases. Projects may be for prevention, control or suppression of fire (medical, rescue and non-fire purchases will not be eligible).
3. Approve a cost-sharing rate of 50% not to exceed \$2,500 per grant. This is a reimbursable payment. This means the fire department spends 100% of the grant project and the Forestry Division will reimburse the fire department 50% up to \$2,500. For example, the Department project is \$5,000 or more the Division will reimburse \$2,500, if the Department project is \$2,000 the Division will reimburse \$1,000.
4. Confirm that matching funds are available from the Department.
5. On a sliding scale, priority will be given to Departments who have not received recent VFC funding. Priority will be given to projects where at least 25% of funding is used for training( except training for medical /rescue is not eligible).
6. Eligible Departments must be NIMS compliant to qualify.

**Application Deadline and Program Timing**

1. Applications must be returned (NOT POSTMARKED BY) to the Forestry Division **FRIDAY, August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024**. Mail applications to:

Olney Knight  
23 Potter Rd  
Hampton, CT 06247

Questions can be directed to Olney Knight at [Olney.Knight@ct.gov](mailto:Olney.Knight@ct.gov) or 860-543-9616

2. Applicants will be notified after the Forestry Division receives notification from the U.S. Forest Service of Financial Commitment; we anticipate this commitment by September 1, 2024.

3. **Expenditures by successful applicants CANNOT BE MADE UNTIL AFTER the notification of grant award by the Forestry Division.** Any purchases made prior to the grant award are ineligible for the VFC program.
4. Any changes to the approved project(s), after a grant has been awarded, must be requested in writing to the Fire Supervisor for review. A written response of approval or rejection will be made in a timely fashion to the requesting department.
5. **Projects must be completed by July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025. All final reimbursement paperwork MUST BE RECEIVED BY WEDNESDAY, August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025.**

### **Matching Fund Requirements**

This is a cost-share grant. The Forestry Division and the Department share the total cost of the project. Funds are awarded on a 50/50 matching basis. The Department must match the amount awarded by providing at least 50 percent of the total project cost. The Department's share of the match must be in either cash or in-kind services. The Department's share cannot come from a federal source, and the grant cannot be used as a match for any other federal cost-share project.

*Cash purchase matches* are direct, out-of-pocket expenditures for eligible project activities that are supported by paid invoices, cancelled checks, and signed receipts.

*In-kind contribution matches* includes use of existing supplies, third party donations of supplies or equipment, professional services at the professional rate, or time spent by employees or volunteers on eligible project activities. Volunteer hours may be applied to the project at rates appropriate to the skill level of the volunteer and/or the nature of the work being performed. Assistance provided by federal employees may not be claimed.

### **Payment Process**

The Department must document all costs correctly before reimbursement is made. Departments are paid on a reimbursement basis **after** the project is completed. *Unapproved grant expenses*, those not in the original approved application or those that don't have written approval from the Forestry Division during the grant process **will not be paid**. Purchases and/or projects must match what was included in the application that was approved.

### **Please Note:**

We plan to make Notification of Grant Awards by **September 13, 2024**. Items cannot be purchased under this program until Notification has been received from the Forestry Division.



