



Volunteer Fire Capacity (VFC) Grant Application

Applications must be received by September 10th, 2026. Questions can be directed to Olney Knight at Olney.Knight@ct.gov

Connecticut DEEP's Division of Forestry is currently accepting grant applications for the [2026 Volunteer Fire Capacity \(VFC\) Grant Program](#), in anticipation of funding from the USDA Forest Service. The objective of the program is to improve the capabilities and effectiveness of Connecticut's rural volunteer fire departments in protecting lives and property. This will be accomplished by organizing, training, and equipping local firefighters in rural areas.

Eligibility:

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

1. Applicants must be Fire Departments located in a town with a population of 10,000 or less, according to the 2020 census.
2. Eligible Fire Departments must be NIMS compliant to qualify.
3. Priority will be given to Fire Departments that have not received recent VFC funding. Priority will be given to projects that use at least 25% of funding for training (training for medical/rescue is not eligible).

Funding Requirements:

1. Funding is 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 are not eligible).
2. The grant program provides a cost-sharing rate of 50%, not to exceed \$4,000 per grant. This is a reimbursable payment. Fire Departments cover up-front costs for 100% of the grant project, and the Forestry Division will reimburse the Fire Department for 50% of those costs, up to \$4,000. For example, if the Department project is \$8,000 or more, the Division will reimburse \$4,000; if the Department project is \$2,000, the Division will reimburse \$1,000.
3. Fire Departments must confirm that the up-front cost funds are available before applying.

Application Deadline and Program Timing:

Applications must be received (**not postmarked**) by **Thursday, September 10th, 2026**. Mail applications to:

Olney Knight, Fire Control Officer, DEEP Division of Forestry,
At 23 Potter Rd, Hampton, CT 06247

Questions can be directed to Olney Knight at Olney.Knight@ct.gov

Applicants will be notified once the Forestry Division receives notification of financial commitment from the U.S.D.A. Forest Service and the Forestry Division approves subgrant awards.

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.

Any changes to the approved project(s) after a grant has been awarded must be requested in writing. A written approval or rejection will be provided to the requesting department in a timely fashion.

Projects must be completed by July 28th, 2027. All final reimbursement paperwork must be received by Wednesday, August 25th, 2027.

Matching Fund Requirements:

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

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

In-kind contribution matches include the 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 volunteer's skill level and/or the nature of the work being performed. Assistance provided by federal employees may not be claimed as match.

Payment Process:

The Fire Department must document all costs correctly before reimbursement is made. Fire Departments are reimbursed **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 the information included in the approved application.

Please Note:

We plan to announce a **Notification of Grant Awards in November**, pending agency approvals. Items cannot be purchased under this program until an official Notification from the Forestry Division has been received by the Fire Department.

2026 Volunteer Fire Capacity Grant Application

Fire Department/Company: _____

Organization Name: _____

Communities Served: _____

Federal Tax ID: _____

UEI #: _____ FDID: _____

NERISID: _____

FD's Mailing Address: _____

FD's Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Type of Organization: Municipal Private Other

Primary Grant Contact

Name: _____

E-Mail: _____

Phone (work/cell): _____

Fire Chief Information

Name: _____

E-Mail: _____

Phone (work/cell): _____

Town Contacts

Town CEO- First Selectman, Mayor, or Manager Name: _____

Email: _____

Does your fire department or town have a GIS layer that shows your department's jurisdictional boundary? Yes No

Who is the contact for that data layer?

Name: _____

Email: _____

Response Demographics

Does your fire department respond to all local fire calls? Yes No

Does your fire department take fire suppression action on all fires when called? Yes No

List the number of fire calls in calendar year 2025 (do not include ambulance or rescue calls):

Structure Fires: _____

Vegetation/Grass/Woods: _____

Vehicle Fires: _____

Other: _____

Does your department currently provide its members with wildland-specific PPE? Yes No

Population of Town according to the 2020 Federal Census: _____

Using Insurance Services Office (ISO) ratings, what is the predominant dwelling ISO rating class in your town: _____

Does your Department/Town have a written plan to improve the ISO rating? Yes No

Town 2025 Grand List: \$ _____

What percentage of your 2025 Fire Department budget was obtained from Town/Municipal/Fire District funds (taxes)? _____%

Will your department be able to complete the project by July 28th, 2027, and submit proof of paid expenses by August 25th, 2027? Yes No

Project Outline

Brief Project Overview: (Be as complete as possible in the space provided. Attach an additional page, if needed)

Project Budget

List planned expenditures or work activities (i.e., training, equipment). Provide specific prices and quantities for each item type (i.e., 10 pairs of Nomex pants at \$200 each, \$2,000 total). Attach a detailed list or vendor quote as needed.

For each expenditure, identify the portion of the cost to be funded by the grant and the portion that will be provided as match (i.e., Total = \$1,400, Grant Request = \$700, Match = \$700)

	Project Budget:						
	Expenditure/Item	Qty #	Item \$	Total \$		Grant Request \$	Other \$ (match)
	TOTAL						

Signature

I certify that all prior statements are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge, that matching funds are available, and that my Department is NIMS compliant.

Signature _____ Title _____

Name (please print) _____ Best Phone Number _____