

Volunteer Fire Assistance Matching Grant Program formerly RCFP

The Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) program (formerly Rural Community Fire Protection) was founded in 1975. Each year, the Indiana Division of Forestry receives federal VFA funds that are then allocated to rural and volunteer fire departments. The program's goal is to provide financial assistance to organize, train and equip fire departments in rural areas and communities to prevent and suppress fires.

The VFA program defines a rural fire department as a recognized fire protection organization providing primary fire protection to a specific rural area or rural community. A rural community may be unincorporated, or it may be an incorporated city, town, or other entity having a population of 10,000 or less. A city having a population of over 10,000 may qualify for VFA funding if the fire department also protects a separate rural area or community. In the case of a community department with a population greater than 10,000 that also protects a separate rural area or community, the VFA funds may only be used to protect the rural entity.

Some examples of qualifying projects include but are not limited to: fire prevention/education materials, training equipment and supplies, water handling equipment, organization (new departments only), communications equipment (pagers, radios), dry hydrants, class "A" foam technology, and safety gear (PASS alarms, SCBAs, turn-out gear). The grant monies cannot be utilized for truck chassis, capital improvements to a fire station or EMS equipment or supplies. The application deadline is March 1 of each grant year. Departments are given two years to complete their projects. This program is one of the most cost-efficient financial assistance programs with nearly all funds going to local fire protection agencies.

For more information on the Volunteer Fire Assistance Program contact Mark T. Huter at (765) 792-4654 or mhuter@dnr.IN.gov.