Volunteer Fire Assistance Program
2026 Grant Rules

Iowa expects to receive our Fiscal Year **2026** Grant funds for the Volunteer Fire Assistance Program as authorized by the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978. Key objectives of the program are saving lives and protecting property in rural areas.

The Volunteer Fire Assistance Program will pay 50 percent of the cost (not to exceed a maximum of **$4,500**) to successful grant applicants, with the local agencies also paying 50 percent. Local fire department funds **must** be available when the application is made. Local match funds may **not** be from a federal funding source.

Please read the rules and requirements below carefully, as there are several new changes beginning this grant year.

Eligibility requirements per Federal Guidelines are:

1. Communities must have a population of 10,000 or less

2. Firefighting personnel is at least 80% volunteer

3. The fire department must be registered with the State Fire Marshal's office and must file all incident reports in a timely manner.

Application guidelines and requirements include:

1. Allocated funds may only be used for equipment identified in the application form. Special requests can be made (buildings and vehicles are not eligible) but will require a more detailed description of the request and need.
   Note: Structural specific equipment is NOT allowed.

2. Priority will be given to: (1) applications requesting Wildland PPE such as Nomex pants, shirts or coveralls, (2) applications requesting wildland specific tools or equipment such as bladder bags, swatters, drip torches, etc. (3) communities which have not received funds under this program in the previous funding period, (4) departments serving areas of greatest need, (5) departments who have engaged in wildland fire specific training, (6) departments whose response area includes state owned lands.

3. **NO INDIVIDUAL ITEM CAN BE $10,000 OR MORE.**

4. All applications **must** be signed by the Fire Chief **and** the head of the local government agency or the financial manager for the department (i.e., mayor, chairperson of the township trustees, chairperson of the benefited fire district or fire agency, or the financial officer).

5. The federal government changed the unique identifiers used for entities from DUNS Numbers to the Unique Entity ID (UEI). **You must provide your UEI number on the application**. If you do not already have a UEI#, register for one at sam.gov.

6. All applications **must submit a completed IRS Form W-9** confirming their Federal Tax ID #.
   a. *The address listed on the W-9* ***MUST*** *match the address of the UEI#. Awarded grant payments will be mailed to this address.*

7. No applications for less than $500 ($250 matching funds) will be approved.

8. Expenditures made between **October 1, 2025, and June 1, 2027**, will qualify. **Projects must be completed by June 1, 2027. All requests for reimbursement must be submitted by July 1, 2027.**

9. **The deadline to submit applications is November 2, 2026.**

10. **All applications for funds** must be made on the enclosed form titled USFS Federal Financial Assistance - Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Application 2026.
    a. *This form has been updated to be filled out and signed electronically as* ***applications will now be accepted via email only.***

Applications and IRS W-9 Forms are available at www.iowadnr.gov/fire or can be requested by sending an email to fire-program@dnr.iowa.gov.

Sincerely,
Jason Walker

DNR Forestry - Fire Program Supervisor
Enclosures

Send Completed Application Form and IRS W-9 Form by email to fire-program@dnr.iowa.gov

APPLICATION DEADLINE: November 2, 2026