



NEW MEXICO EMNRD FORESTRY DIVISION

Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant Fact Sheet

FY25 Distribution

Forestry Division State Forester and US Forest Service endeavors to:

- Organize, train, and equip fire departments in unprotected rural areas and rural communities.
- Assist qualifying fire departments in saving lives and protecting property in unprotected or inadequately protected rural areas.
- Prevent or reduce loss of life, protect financial investments, and enhance environmental quality to revitalize rural America.

Funding Agency

The United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USDA FS) Southwest Region 3 provides this grant through New Mexico Energy Minerals and Natural Resources – Forestry Division that funds equipment and training grants through the Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Grant. This grant provides volunteer fire departments financial, technical, and related assistance to organize, train and equip local firefighters for the protection of rural areas and communities of 10,000 persons or less. These grants require applicants meet the eligibility criterion and pass a competitive and technical review of equipment and supply requests.

Eligibility Criteria

- Provides service **primarily** to a community or city with a population of less than 10,000.(Latest census).
- Is recognized as a fire department by the laws of the State.
- Firefighting personnel is 80 percent or more volunteer.
- The community share (10% match) of the financial assistance must be available at the time of application. Applicants may not derive the match from other sources of Federal assistance.
 - Maximum per grant award will be \$20,000.00 for equipment/PPE/training.
 - A Wildland Coordinator position grant maximum is \$24,999.00.
 - The Wildland Coordinator position **may** be awarded for 2 years.
 - Cost of \$4,999 or less for a single item.
 - Wildland boots or footwear is not allowed.
- **Starting in 2024 (FY25) Vendor Quotes are required for all equipment and supply requests.**
- Applicants meeting the identified Eligibility Criteria listed above are encouraged to apply.

VFA GRANT CONTACT INFORMATION

For grant policy or procedural questions, contact Gabriel Cordova, VFA Coordinator by telephone at 505-629-2041 or Email:gabrielf.cordova@emnrn.nm.gov.

VFA GRANT APPLICATIONS

Applications available from your Forestry Division District Office Fire Management Officer or on-line at: <https://www.emnrn.nm.gov/sfd/requests-for-proposals-and-grants/>.

IMPORTANT DATES

- ***Application Period: August 19, 2024 – September 27, 2024 (40-day application period).**
*Request for Applications (RFA) will be published in the Albuquerque Journal Sunday, August 18, 2024.
- Peer Reviews: October 2024 (Projected review dates.)
- Award Notification: November/ December 2024
- Denial Reconsideration Period and Equipment Substitution Request: December 2024
- Notice To Proceed: January 2025
- Purchase Period: February - November 2025
- *Extensions will no longer be available due to extending the deadline from December to April. Wildland Coordinator Contracts expire December 31, 2025
- Reimbursement Requests Deadline for PPE/Equipment Grants: April 30, 2026.

FY23 VFA GRANT AWARDS

Springer Fire Department	\$19,477.71
Lincoln County Fire Admin	\$8,352.80
Lincoln Volunteer Fire Department	\$12,595.50
Pinos Altos Fire Department	\$16,730.48
Broadview Fire Department	\$4,726.11
Countyline Fire Department	\$3,539.96
Curry County Administration	\$19,978.00
Field Fire Department	\$11,674.37
Pleasant Hill Fire Department	\$6,243.32
Ranchovale Fire Department	\$5,212.96
Valencia County Tomer Adelino Fire Department	\$18,000.00
Folsom Fire Department	\$19,989.52
Bosque Farms Fire Department	\$17,445.00
Arabela Volunteer Fire Department	\$10,926.05
Bonito Fire Department	\$17,988.30
16 Springs Volunteer Fire Department	\$14,463.61
High Rolls Volunteer Fire Department	\$20,000.00
Agua Fria Volunteer Fire Department	\$6,007.05
Eldorado Volunteer Fire Department	\$6,007.05
Galisteo Volunteer Fire Department	\$7,271.75
La Cienega Volunteer Fire Department	\$6,007.05
Madrid Volunteer Fire Department	\$6,007.05
Caballo Fire Department	\$20,000.00
County Of Sierra Fire Admin	\$18,595.71
Red River Fire Department	\$11,637.27
Taos Ski Valley Fire Department	\$20,000.00
City Of Rio Communities Fire Department	\$18,900.00
Buena Vista Fire Department	\$19,960.00
Chet Fire Department	\$19,960.00
Golondrinas Volunteer Fire Department	\$19,200.00
Guadalupe Fire Department	\$19,960.00
Ledoux Fire Department	\$19,960.00
Rainville Fire Department	\$20,000.00
Sierra Bonita Rincon Volunteer Fire Department	\$20,000.00
Watrous Fire Department	\$19,960.00
Mora County Fire Department	\$24,999.00
City Of Rio Communities Fire Department	\$24,999.00
Colfax County Admin	\$24,999.00
Rio Arriba County Admin	\$25,000.00
Taos Ski Valley Fire Department	\$24,999.00
	\$632,772.62



FY24 VFA SUCCESS STORY



Cochiti Volunteer Fire Department

The Cochiti Fire Department (CFD) is a primarily volunteer municipal fire department, located in northeastern Sandoval County. Comprised of three fire stations and 30 volunteer firefighters and EMTs. Cochiti Fire Department services a distinct landscape, and unique communities.

A response area spanning 181 square miles, provides a diverse landscape and unique challenges, from high plains grazing lands, and piñon juniper, to the Rio Grande River valley bosque, into the higher elevations of ponderosa pine

and mixed conifer. The Cochiti Fire Department coordinates and responds to seven different jurisdictional landowners including, tribal lands, a BLM managed national monument and an Army Corps of Engineers Lake recreational area.

The VFA grant has been instrumental in creating a successful system by increasing out capacity within our region. This grant has helped the Cochiti Fire Department's Bearhead Fire Crew by providing much needed personal protective equipment, shelters, weather monitoring equipment, equipment handles, and fire hose. This equipment has helped us build capability by allowing us to provide for safety, not only to our firefighters, but to our communities and landscapes that we protect. The increasing effectiveness that this equipment has given the Cochiti Fire Department has also helped our surrounding communities and partners by allowing us to lend a helping hand in an emergency.



Cochiti Lake Fire Volunteer Department's Bearhead Hand Crew Module on a recent preseason training hike.

The objectives of the 2012 Sandoval County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) are:

- To educate residents regarding wildfire risk and shared responsibility.
- To reduce fuel loading around our homes, infrastructure, communities, and forests.
- To decrease structural ignitability of our homes, business, and buildings.
- To manage forested areas to promote forest health and foster resilience.



EMNRD NEW MEXICO FORESTRY DIVISION VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSISTANCE GRANT for **Wildland Fire Coordinator**

This Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant is available to county and municipal fire departments who *qualify. A reimbursable grant up to \$24,999.00, invoiceable every calendar quarter and will augment salary for wildland fire coordinator position. An Invoice and Project Tracking Excel Workbook will be provided to assist and guide the coordinator. *See the attached FY25 VFA Grant Fact Sheet for qualifying criteria.

This position is responsible for implementation of county wildland fire management activities with federal, state and local government agencies, having responsibility for wildland fire management. This effort will require coordination efforts with county/municipal/tribal fire departments and community organizations, federal, state and local government agencies having responsibility for wildland fire management, including the appropriate inter-agency dispatch center.

EXAMPLES OF WORK TO BE PERFORMED

- **use or create Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)** to develop fire protection policies and ordinances that will meet the objectives of the CWPP. Participate in wildland/urban interface assessment planning and assist in coordinating projects in communities at risk as defined within the county and in coordination with Energy Minerals and Natural Resources Department – Forestry Division and other federal, state and local government agencies and the public.
- **work with county fire chief and volunteer department chiefs** to develop policies, guidelines, regulations and ordinances, pertaining to wildfire fire management and prevention, county-wide and within volunteer department response areas;
- **make recommendations** to the fire chief's various performance- based ideas and settings for the proper and efficient operations of the office as it pertains to wildfire protection, planning or other aspects of wildfire operations;
- **serve as liaison** to the Forestry Division in the event of a wildland fire within the county; this includes education, training, recovery and response;
- **coordinate wildland fire management activities** and participate in wildland/urban interface assessment planning and assist in coordinating projects in communities at risk as identified in the CWPP with the Forestry Division and other federal, state and local government agencies and the public.
- **participate in the New Mexico Resource Mobilization Plan** coordinating group's annual meeting. Create a red card system for county fire fighters and departments in conjunction with the Incident Qualification System.

*For a complete list of Wildland Fire Coordinator tasks see attached Job Description.

The FY24 Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant Request for Applications begins on Monday August 21, 2023 develop and implement countywide standards for wildland and structural firefighting training to make fire fighters aware of safety issues and improve their performance;

For grant policy or procedural questions, contact Gabriel Cordova, VFA Coordinator by telephone at 505-629-2041 or Email: gabrielf.cordova@emnrd.nm.gov.

New Mexico Forestry Division VFA Wildland Coordinator Success Story

Sandoval County – Cochiti Pueblo – Cochiti Lake Volunteer Fire Department

The Cochiti Fire Department was the recipient of the VFA Wildland Coordinator Grant, and it was implemented in 2023. Firefighter Captain Dominick Ortiz was assigned to the position of CFD Wildland Coordinator. Prior to the creation of this position Captain Ortiz was the lead wildland firefighter and fire operations captain. Captain Ortiz is a qualified Engine Boss, Heavy Equipment Boss, and Intermediate Faller. The CFD Wildland Coordinators focus has been to reduce wildland fire risk within the community, advance firefighter education, and the promotion of multi-agency coordination and cooperation. Wildland Coordinator Ortiz is uniquely qualified for his position given his many years of experience and strong ties to both the local community and our regional partners.

In 2023, the Cochiti Wildfire Risk Reduction plan was implemented. The intent of this plan was to educate the public on safe practices during seasonal agricultural burns, provide firefighter training, and promote multi-agency cooperation. This program was deemed successful resulting in over 200 acres of agricultural fields safely and successfully treated for the growing season. In addition, 20+ firefighters and farmers received hands on training in a controlled environment. The success of this plan lays with the implementation of the CFD Wildland Coordinator. Cochiti firefighters participated in approximately 1500 hours of collective training in the 2023 season. This training was held not just in our stations but at different locations throughout the state.



Cochiti VFD Bearhead Hand Crew assisting on an agricultural burn on Cochiti Pueblo.



Cochiti VFD firefighters facilitating an After Action review (AAR) after assisting on Cochiti Pueblo's ag burn.

Wildland Coordinator Ortiz, organized training for 25 new wildland firefighters from across our region. Through cooperation with individuals from Sandoval County and Town of Bernalillo, came the creation of a standard annual wildland firefighter refresher. This was delivered to career firefighters and volunteer firefighters throughout each department, providing continuity of training and cooperation across multiple jurisdictions. These efforts were continued and valued during all operations.

Wildland coordinator Ortiz has also coordinated Cochiti Fire Department resource responses to 15 different RMP requests and multiple mutual aid requests.

NM Forestry Division offers free Wildland Fire Suppression Trainings coordinated by the local Forestry Division District Office. Offered annually, September through May, courses such as the RT-130 Annual Wildland Firefighter Safety Refresher, Basic Wildland Fire Fighting (S-130/S-190/L-180), S-211 Pump Operations and many of the other NWCG courses. These courses are funded by Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Grants and provide professional qualified instructors and course materials.

Send us pictures of your VFA Grant purchases along with your fire departments success stories. Contact: VFA Coordinator Gabriel Cordova Gabrielf.Cordova@EMNRD.NM.GOV.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, and reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

Program information may be made available in languages other than English.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, and American Sign Language) should contact the responsible State or local Agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, which can be obtained online at <https://www.ocio.usda.gov/document/ad-3027>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture,
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights,
1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

(2) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture,
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights,
1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

"This institution is an equal opportunity provider."
