State of California

Natural Resources Agency

Memorandum

To: Fire Chiefs in California

Date: March 27, 2019

Telephone: (916) 653-7772

Website: www.fire.ca.gov

From: Joe Tyler
Deputy Director, Chief of Fire Protection
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

Subject: Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) – Fiscal Year 2019-20
Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment

CAL FIRE is soliciting applications from fire departments in rural areas and communities with a population of 10,000 or less, for awards under the Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Program of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978. The application can be found online at the CAL FIRE Cooperative Efforts section under the Fire Protection page, http://calfire.ca.gov/fire_protection/fire_protection_coop_efforts.php.

The funding level for California in Fiscal Year 2019-20 has not been determined at this time. However, historical funding levels for VFA are approximately $900,000.

In order to ensure timely consideration, completed applications must be submitted no later than **May 21, 2019** Applications must be submitted electronically to the CAL FIRE Grants e-mail inbox at CALFIRE.Grants@fire.ca.gov **and** by mail to the Sacramento CAL FIRE Headquarters:

CAL FIRE
Grants Management Unit
ATTN: Megan Esfandiary
P.O. Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

CAL FIRE anticipates completion of the application review process by August 2019.

Successful applicants must complete their approved project(s) using local funds between the Agreement Approval Date and June 30, 2020; then bill CAL FIRE within the award agreement period in order to receive the award. The award will not cover expenditures made prior to the date of final signature on the agreement or after June 30, 2020.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

As a result of the recommendation from the 2003 Blue Ribbon Report to the Governor of California, we are including a Grant Assurance section in the Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant Application package. By completing and signing the Grant Assurance, you are certifying that your wildland firefighters are fully equipped with appropriate, approved wildland fire response Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that meets National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1977 *Standard on Protective Clothing and Equipment for Wildland Fire Fighting,* and are trained to a proficient level in the use of the PPE[1].

> **"Firefighter safety must be of paramount concern. It is critical for the health and safety of Firefighters responding to Wildland/Urban Interface fires that they be properly equipped with the appropriate protective, safety, and communications equipment necessary to perform their duties."**
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> Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 7
> 2003 Blue Ribbon Report to the Governor of California.

CAL FIRE formally adopted new standards for Wildland Firefighting Protective Ensembles. All purchases of Wildland Firefighting Protective Ensemble for utilization by any personnel under the administrative control of CAL FIRE must meet these newly adopted specifications exceeding NFPA 1977 standards.

As an employer, you are responsible for providing personal protective clothing and equipment to your employees. Supervisors are responsible for enforcing clothing and equipment standards and informing employees concerning safety hazards. Supervisors are also responsible for seeing that their employees are properly trained in the purpose, use and maintenance of protective clothing and equipment. Each employee responding to or engaged in emergency services, such as structural, vehicle and related fire suppression activities, will use the appropriate safety clothing and equipment.

Departments not currently in compliance with the NFPA 1977 standard for wildland firefighter safety clothing and equipment will only be considered for awards which bring their department into compliance with this standard or, if applicable, the CAL FIRE Wildland Firefighting Hazard and Risk Assessment standard. This year's consideration for grant awards will place a higher priority for funding reimbursement of firefighter PPE purchases and associated training for those Departments not currently meeting the standard.

If you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please contact Megan Esfandiary at (916) 653-3649 or email Megan.Esfandiary@fire.ca.gov.

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[1] CAL FIRE formally adopted new wildland PPE specifications that exceed NFPA requirements, in accordance with CAL FIRE's Wildland Firefighting Hazard and Risk Assessment. All purchases of wildland PPE for utilization by any personnel under the administrative control of CAL FIRE must meet these newly adopted specifications. Those specifications may be obtained from your local CAL FIRE Unit Headquarters.