

**Michelle Lujan Grisham**, Governor  
**Sarah Cottrell Propst**, Cabinet Secretary  
**Todd E. Leahy, JD, PhD**, Deputy Cabinet Secretary  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**The New Mexico Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Program offers  
\$1 million in grant funding to support rural fire departments  
protecting communities & reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire**  
*Applications accepted August 22 through September 30*

**SANTA FE, NM** – The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) Forestry Division is accepting applications for the annual [Volunteer Fire Assistance \(VFA\) Grant program](#). Beginning today, rural fire departments that support populations of 10,000 people or less can apply for the funding, which can be used to help reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, protect firefighters, and save communities.

In 2022, a total of 24 rural fire departments received more than \$358,000 through the VFA program. This year there will be more than \$900,000 available through the grants, which are provided via flow-through funds from the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USDA FS). The focus is to strengthen local government’s organizational capability to respond to wildland fires by equipping rural fire departments with the tools, education, and equipment they need.

“We never want to experience another fire season like 2022 and the VFA grants are essential for rural fire departments to get the equipment and coordination staff they need to be prepared,” said EMNRD Cabinet Secretary Sarah Cottrell Propst. “These fire departments are our first line of defense to stop a catastrophic wildfire from destroying communities and causing loss of life. They need our support and the VFA grant gives them that.”

Lincoln County Fire and Emergency Services successfully used its 2021 VFA grant funds to support seven volunteer fire districts and 13 fire stations that serve an area of 4,830 square miles.

"The VFA Grant has helped the Lincoln County volunteer fire departments immensely," said JP Kenmore, Lincoln County Fire, and Emergency Services. "The funds give us the ability to purchase personal protective equipment, tools, radios, and GPS technology that is pivotal in keeping our personnel safe on a wildfire."

To qualify, each VFA recipient, or a local government representing multiple fire departments, must serve rural communities with populations of 10,000 or less and provide a cost-share of 10 percent using state or local funds.

The deadline to apply for the VFA Grant is September 30, 2022. Applications can be downloaded on the [Forestry Division website](#). For more information, contact Program Coordinator Robert Brown at [Robert.Brown@state.nm.us](mailto:Robert.Brown@state.nm.us), or call (505) 476-3348. Additional assistance is also available through your local [Forestry Division District office](#).

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