Volunteer Fire Assistance Program overview
The Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) program is funded by the U.S. Forest Service. The South Carolina Forestry Commission administers the VFA program in the Palmetto State, awarding varying amounts of financial assistance to rural/volunteer fire departments every year. The grants — based on a 50 percent match — are used by the volunteer fire departments to organize, train and equip themselves to prevent and suppress wildfires.

Eligibility criteria
The amount of the grants varies based on need, which is determined through a rigorous application and selection process. The VFA grant application is sent out each year in July and is due by the end of September. Each application is scored based on values that help the firefighting capability of both the fire department as well as the Forestry Commission. Some of these categories include population, years funded, annual budget and number of wildfires. Fire department staffing levels must consist of at least 75 percent volunteers in order to be eligible for funding.

Priority will be given to departments:
• Applying for the first time;
• Assisting the SCFC with Firewise® Communities;
• Purchasing VHF radios;
• Purchasing wildland PPE (Nomex shirts, Nomex pants, Nomex coveralls, etc.);
• Purchasing a skid unit for a brush truck;
• Installing dry hydrants.

How to apply
VFA grant application forms and related information can be found on the SCFC website at http://www.trees.sc.gov/vgrants.htm. If you do not have internet access, please contact the SCFC to request an application package by mail. When completing the application, all signatures should be in blue ink. Faxed applications will not be accepted. Mail the completed application to:

South Carolina Forestry Commission
VFA Grant Coordinator - Brad Bramlett
P.O. Box 21707
Columbia, SC 29221

Contact
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