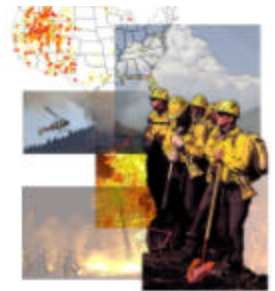


The National Fire Plan

Department of Interior

Rural Fire Assistance



The National Fire Plan - Overview

In August 2000, the President directed the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to develop a response to severe wildland fires, reduce fire impacts on rural communities, and assure sufficient firefighting capacity in the future.

Rural Fire Assistance Overview

The Department of Interior rural fire assistance program is a \$10,000,000 program to enhance the fire protection capabilities of rural fire districts. Safe and effective fire suppression in the wildland/urban interface demands close coordination between local, State, Tribal, and Federal firefighting resources. The program will conduct training, equipment purchase, and prevention activities, on a cost-shared basis. This is a new program that will enhance firefighter and public safety beginning in FY2001.

Criteria for Project Selection

In FY 2001, a "pilot year", the following criteria will determine suitable Rural Fire Assistance projects:

- Statewide agreement with the State Forester who maintains cooperative fire agreements with the Rural Fire Departments (RFD) and Volunteer Fire Departments (VFD) or a cooperative fire agreement with an Interior Bureau.
- Rural fire department serving a community of a population of 10,000 or less in the wildland/urban interface.
- Funding request is limited to training, equipment, and prevention activities.
- The rural fire department must have the capability to meet cost-share at a minimum of 10 %, which may include in-kind services.

In prioritizing fund allocation between Rural Fire Departments, agency evaluators will:

- Determine each department's frequency of responses to wildland/urban fire incidents in the local area. Evaluate these frequencies against other applicants.
- Evaluate the department's wildland fire prevention and education program needs relative to other applicants.
- Evaluate the department's training program needs relative to other applicants.
- Evaluate the community's and DOI's values to be protected, relative to other applicants.
- Evaluate the percentage of wildland/urban lands relative to other applicants.
- Determine the number of wildland fire engines in the department relative to the percentage of wildland/urban interface acres protected.

Program Administration

For FY 2001, the basis for funding distribution to the respective Bureaus will be the percentage of cooperative wildland fire agreements with communities under 10,000. To ensure consistency and compatibility with existing rural fire assistance programs Interior Bureaus will work with the State Foresters. A maximum allowable contribution from Department of the Interior per Rural Fire Department per year is established at \$20,000. The Contracts/Assistance Agreements Working Group has developed model assistance agreements for Rural and Volunteer Fire Departments. The current National Fire Plan web site link, <http://www.blm.gov/natacq/FIRE/contracting.html> may be used as the clearinghouse for assistance information for Rural and Volunteer Fire Departments. The dynamic web site will contain information on what departments are being assisted, the type of assistance provided and the Department of Interior Bureau that is providing the assistance. The Rural Fire Assistance Working Group will reconvene prior to FY2002 to develop a comprehensive administration plan, contingent upon selection of a different funding alternative for future years.

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