



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Applications now open for IDNR Volunteer Fire Assistance grants

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is accepting applications for Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) grants now through Feb. 16, 2026.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service VFA federal grant program provides matching funds to aid fire departments in the purchase of new equipment and helps fund training. Funding is passed through IDNR to local fire departments and fire training academies.

The VFA grant program reimburses 50% of the recipients' project costs up to \$10,000. Grant recipients must make the initial financial outlay for the projects before being reimbursed.

In 2025, the program awarded \$322,893 for 48 Illinois projects. The types of projects that have been funded under previous grants include radios, hoses, self-contained breathing apparatus, turn-out gear, wildland personal protective equipment, hand tools, chainsaws, backpack blowers, modifying federal excess vehicles and equipment, and other equipment.

Additional information about grant requirements and opportunities can be found on the IDNR [grants website](#) and the [Illinois Catalog of State Financial Assistance](#).

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About IDNR

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources is celebrating 100 years of conservation and service to the people of Illinois throughout 2025. The department was established July 1, 1925, as the Illinois Department of Conservation, bringing under one umbrella oversight of fish and game, forestry, public works, and lakes.

Today, IDNR's work encompasses management of about 400 sites across Illinois, including state parks and historic sites; wildlife, fisheries, forestry, and natural heritage; Lake Michigan water allocation and coastal management; conservation police; mines and minerals; oil and gas; issuance of licenses, permits, and numerous grants; the World Shooting and Recreational Complex in Sparta; and the Illinois State Museum. Visit <https://dnr.illinois.gov> for more information.