Great news! The Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program was retained and continued by the 84th Texas Legislature. Beginning Sept. 1, 2015, the annual grant budget for the program increases to $24.3 million (previously $12.8 million).

Texas A&M Forest Service will implement the following changes to the Rural VFD Assistance Program (HB 2604) effective Sept. 1, 2015:

**TRAINING TUITION**

Cost-share assistance for Training Tuition has increased. The new reimbursement rate is 100 percent of the actual cost of tuition not to exceed $125 per day up to a maximum of $625 per trainee per school. The **ANNUAL MAXIMUM** for Training Tuition grant assistance per department is $12,500.

**TRAINING AIDS**

A new program element identified as Training Aids has been created. The new program element absorbs the former training library and training equipment program elements, but also provides a pathway for acquiring rescue mannequins, smoke machines, practice fire shelters, equipment simulation devices, computers (one per award) and other items to enhance training experiences. Cost-share assistance for the Training Aids program element is set at 100 percent of the actual cost not to exceed $8,000. Grant recipients are encouraged to share training resources locally/regionally to benefit the greatest number of trainees. All outstanding requests for training libraries will be transferred to the Training Aids category.

**DoD FIREFIGHTER PROPERTY PROGRAM (FFP) — SLIP-ON UNITS**

As a pilot project, a new program element has been established to aid departments in the conversion of certain Department of Defense Firefighter Property. Departments that receive a 2.5-ton cargo, 5-ton cargo or a tractor style DoD FFP truck on or after Sept. 1, 2015 may be eligible for a slip-on unit grant to assist in converting the truck into a fire apparatus. The FFP Slip-On Unit program element reimbursement rate is set at 100 percent of the actual cost not to exceed $20,000 in grant assistance (with or without CAFS). Receiving fire departments are responsible for other conversion costs required to bring the unit into service, which will serve as the department’s in-kind contribution.

To apply, please submit:

- Application for Fire Department Assistance – Federal Property (Form TFS-FO-450)
- Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification (Form W-9)
  - Required only for those applicants requesting a slip-on unit.

To learn more about the DoD FFP, visit texasfd.com/FirefighterPropertyProgram

**SLIP-ON UNITS**

Cost-share assistance for slip-on units has increased. The new reimbursement rate is 90 percent of the actual cost not to exceed $20,000 in grant assistance. For CAFS equipped slip-on units, the maximum grant assistance per unit is $38,000.

**DRY HYDRANTS**

Cost-share assistance for the Dry Hydrant program element has increased. The new reimbursement rate is 100 percent of the actual cost of components not to exceed $1,200 per installation with a maximum of $8,400 in grant assistance.