

BULLETIN 2003-4

Revised December 19, 2003

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

GUIDELINES FOR THE RURAL FIRE TRUCK
ACQUISITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM -
ROUND 6

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OVERVIEW

The Mississippi Legislature in its 1995 and 1996 sessions appropriated a total of \$8.2 million to assist counties in the purchasing of new fire trucks for rural fire protection purposes. In its 1997 session, the Legislature authorized a third round of fire truck grants. It has subsequently appropriated \$3.5 million for third round grants. During the 1999 legislative session, a fourth round was authorized, but funds were not appropriated. In the 2000 legislative session, \$2.85 million was appropriated to fund five applications in Round 3 and 52 applications on hand for Round 4. During the 2001 legislative session a Round 5 was designated and \$650,000 was appropriated to fund the unfunded applications in Round 3 and Round 4. No appropriations were made for the Round 5 authorization. During the 2002 legislative season an additional \$3.15 million was appropriated through a bond for the applications on hand for Round 5.

To date 376 applications have been reviewed and 374 have been approved. The Legislature has appropriated \$18.35 million to fund 367 of these applicants while 7 have been funded through the interest generated from the RFTAAP special Funds account. The 2003 session authorized a 6th Round and appropriated 4 million dollars for this new round, once again through a bond. Currently \$16,425,903.50 of the funds appropriated have been issued for 330 fire trucks resulting in every 3 Mississippians are being served by one or more of these fire trucks.

The Rural Fire Truck Acquisition Assistance Program continues to provide an opportunity for each county to purchase new fire trucks meeting National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1900 series standard. As in the previous five (5) rounds, grants will provide up to \$50,000 toward a new fire truck purchase, which must be matched with local funds.

The county may designate any fire department responsible for furnishing rural fire protection services, including municipalities, to receive a truck from one of these grants provided they have written contracts to serve unincorporated areas or have a population of less than 2,500. The Board of Supervisors may designate a municipality to receive a grant directly and to purchase fire trucks for use in providing rural fire protection under this program.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

SUBMISSION OF INITIAL APPLICATION

Counties wishing to submit applications for Round 6 may do so by mail. Applications that are complete, including all required documentation, will be logged on the date received. In order for a Part I application to be deemed complete, the following conditions must be met:

- 1) It must be submitted on an original Round 6 - Part I application form. (**no copies will be permitted**)
- 2) All required signatures must be on the form.
- 3) There must be no **omissions** of requested information.
- 4) Any supporting documents such as contracts and board resolutions or official minutes from counties and any participating municipalities, if applicable, **must be attached**. It is not necessary for board resolutions or minutes to be notarized, but they must be **copies of official documents**. A **resolution** must make reference to Round 6 of the Rural Fire Truck Acquisition Assistance Program.
- 5) In order for a fire service contract to be deemed valid, it must be in force at the time of submission and previously approved by the Commissioner of Insurance. The Rural Fire Truck Review Committee reserves the right to require that contracts be updated at the time the application is considered for approval.

Grant applications should be mailed to:

Mississippi Department of Insurance
Division of Fire Services Development
Larry Barr, State Fire Coordinator
PO Box 79
Jackson, Ms 39205-0079

PROCESSING OF GRANT APPLICATIONS

The following procedure will be used for processing grant applications:

- 1) The Department Of Insurance, Division of Fire Services Development will receive all applications and maintain a list of all complete applications.
- 2) **The county must have either completed all previous rounds, or at a minimum, received Part II approval from the Rural Fire Truck Review Committee.**
- 3) Following approval from the committee, notification will be sent to each participating county.

- 4) Participating counties will have ninety (90) calendar days from date of notification to submit Part II applications documenting that advertisement for bids has taken place and that bids have been awarded. The Rural Fire Truck Review Committee reserves the right to reassign grants after ninety (90) days should it determine that a county is not utilizing the awarded funds.
- 5) Amendments to applications prior to consideration in committee will be ruled on a case by case basis.

SUBMISSION OF REMAINING ROUNDS 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 APPLICATIONS

Any counties with remaining eligibility for Rounds 3, 4, or 5 must have submitted a corresponding Part I application and have received approval of that application from the Rural Fire Truck Review Committee. **Before proceeding to the next eligible Round, a Part II application must have been submitted and approved.**

All Part I applications for all rounds should be submitted no later than **DECEMBER 31, 2003**. Part I applications for Rounds 3, 4, 5, & 6, will be made on appropriate forms issued by the Division of Fire Services Development of the Department of Insurance.

RURAL FIRE TRUCK GRANT PROCEDURE

STAGE 1

The Division of Fire Services Development will **acknowledge receipt of each application** and coordinate review of submitted materials among the members of the Rural Fire Truck Review Committee. Following review of each application, the President of the Board of Supervisors will receive written approval of the grant application stating the amount of state funds assigned to the project, up to \$50,000. A copy of this approval letter will be forwarded to the County Fire Coordinator. If the application does not conform to the program requirements, correspondence will be sent from the Review Committee to the President of the Board of Supervisors outlining the steps needed to address the problem(s).

Applicants must be certain that all fire trucks purchased under this program meet the NFPA 1900 series standard (all required equipment) prior to advertising for bids. Technical assistance is available from the State Fire Academy in preparing and evaluating fire truck specifications. (See Technical Assistance.)

STAGE 2

When the grant applicant has advertised for bids and awarded a contract to a successful bidder, the grant applicant will submit a copy of the resolution awarding the bid and a copy of the bid specifications to the Division of Fire Services Development for review by the Committee. Bid specifications will be reviewed to verify that they conform to the NFPA 1900 series standard. Any

fire truck that does not conform to these standards will be ineligible for receipt of grant funds from the Rural Fire Truck Acquisition Assistance Program.

Participating counties and designated municipalities purchasing fire trucks shall also submit a payment schedule including a breakdown of the annual matching fund payments, on a form to be provided, based on the actual purchase price of the fire apparatus.

Upon verification that: (a) the proposed payments meet matching fund requirements, (b) the specifications met the NFPA 1900 requirements, and (c) the fire department is an initial responding fire department in a rural area, a letter will be sent by the Review Committee confirming that all program requirements have been met.

STAGE 3

Once the truck has been received and the local government has determined that the truck meets its design requirements, a copy of the board minutes accepting the truck and authorizing payment, a copy of the vendor's invoice, and a copy of the results of the pump test by the Mississippi State Rating Bureau must be forwarded to the Division of Fire Services Development.* Upon receipt of these documents, the warrant will be issued within fifteen (15) working days.

The grant applicant is solely responsible for inspecting the fire truck when it is delivered to ensure that all applicable design and equipment requirements are met.

MATCHING FUNDS

Grant applicants must pledge to pay an amount at least equal to the amount for which they are requesting distribution up to \$50,000. The pledged monies may be derived from ad valorem tax or from any other monies available to the county or municipality. **State rebate funds may not be used as matching funds.**

The local matching funds each year must be equal to or not less than a proportional percentage of the amount for which the municipality or county is requesting funds. Repayment of indebtedness for trucks purchased under this program may not exceed five (5) years, except in instances where Capital Improvement Revolving Loans are obtained, in which case repayment may not exceed ten (10) years.

The Fire Truck Review Committee reserves the right to change or otherwise amend its procedures and guidelines as needed and to issue any additional requirements as may be necessary to implement fully the program.

ALLOCATION OF FIRE TRUCK GRANTS

The Board of Supervisors of each county is responsible for determining which fire departments will receive fire trucks purchased under this program. Although the primary use of trucks purchased under the Rural Fire Truck Acquisition Assistance Program is intended for rural fire fighting purposes, they may also be utilized by municipal or county departments within the corporate limits of municipalities.

MUNICIPAL PARTICIPATION

The Board of Supervisors of a county may apply on behalf of any municipality that has a written contract to serve as the primary fire service provider for the purpose of furnishing structural fire fighting services in any unincorporated area(s) adjacent to that municipality. Applicants for the Rural Fire Truck Acquisition Assistance Program are strongly advised to consult with the Mississippi State Rating Bureau to be certain the existing fire protection ratings are not adversely impacted by participation in this program.

*Prior to acceptance of the truck, a test on Class A pumpers will be witnessed by the Mississippi State Rating Bureau, with the expense being borne by the manufacturers.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The county or municipality receiving a grant under this program is responsible for determining, in consultation with the respective fire department, the design specifications of the fire truck to be purchased with grant funds. Any fire truck that is purchased under this program must meet the relevant NFPA 1900 series standard. Failure to comply will result in forfeiture of state funds.

For technical assistance concerning the information requested on the application or the procedure for filing, contact the State Fire Coordinator:

Division of Fire Services Development
Larry Barr
PO Box 79
Jackson, MS 39205-0079
(601) 359-1062 - FAX (601) 359-2474