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MARK HAIRE
Deputy Commissioner of Insurance

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE BULLETIN 2004-4

GUIDELINES FOR THE RURAL FIRE TRUCK ACQUISITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (RFTAAP) As amended July 14, 2023

OVERVIEW

The Mississippi Legislature in its 1995 and 1996 sessions appropriated a total of \$8.2 million to begin a new state program to assist counties in the purchasing of new fire trucks for rural fire protection purposes. This was enough to fund two Rounds of grants or two trucks for each county for up to \$50,000.00 per grant. At this time trucks suiting the need of rural departments could be purchased for approximately \$100,000.00. Since these initial two Rounds the Legislature has designated Rounds 3 – 6 for up to \$50,000.00 per grant and Rounds 7 – 11 for up to \$70,000.00 per grant to each county. Rounds 7 – 11 grants were increased due to the escalating cost of fire trucks. Subsequent appropriations have been made each legislative session since 1996 based on the number of applications on hand and the availability of funds. During subsequent sessions, Rounds 12 through 15 were designated with the grant funding increased to \$90,000.00 to once again help offset the rising cost of fire trucks.

The Rural Fire Truck Acquisition Assistance Program continues to provide an opportunity for each county to purchase new fire trucks meeting the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1901 series standard. All trucks purchased under this program must support structural fire attack and enhance Public Protection Classification reductions. Brush trucks, rescue, and EMS vehicles do not qualify for this grant program.

The county may designate any fire department responsible for furnishing rural fire protection services, including municipalities, to receive a truck from one of these provisions provided they have written contracts to serve unincorporated areas or an incorporated municipality with population of less than 2,500.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

SUBMISSION OF INITIAL APPLICATION

Counties wishing to submit applications for remaining eligible Rounds 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 Part I application form specific to the Round being applied for. **(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. All resolutions and minutes must make reference to the specific Round for which they are applying and the fire department receiving the truck.
5. In order for a fire service contract to be deemed valid it must be in force at the time of the submission and previously approved by the Commissioner of Insurance. The RFTAAP Committee reserves the right to require that contracts be updated at the time the application is considered for approval.

****ONLY COMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL BE REVIEWED BY THE RFTAAP COMMITTEE**

Grant applications should be mailed to:

Brad Smith, State Fire Coordinator
Mississippi Insurance Department
State Fire Marshal's Office
P.O. Box 79
Jackson, MS 39205-0079

PROCESSING OF GRANT APPLICATIONS

The following procedure will be used for processing grant applications:

1. The Mississippi Insurance Department, 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 I approval of the previous Round from the RFTAAP Committee before proceeding to the next available Round.
3. Following approval from the RFTAAP Committee, notification will be sent to each participating county.
4. Participating counties will have ninety (90) calendar days from the date of notification that the Part I application has been approved and funded to submit Part II applications documenting that advertisement for bids has taken place and that bids have been awarded OR a purchase order has been issued for a state contract purchase.
5. The RFTAAP Committee reserves the right to reassign funds after ninety (90) days should it determine that a county is not utilizing the awarded funds. In the case of any grant funds already distributed to escrow with a local government, this may include a demand to return the funds to the Division of Fire Services.
6. Amendments to applications prior to consideration by the RFTAAP Committee will be decided on a case by case basis.

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 RFTAAP Committee. Following review of each application, the President of the Board of Supervisors, the Mayor of the applying municipality (when applicable) will receive written approval of the grant application stating the amount of state funds assigned to the project, up to \$50,000.00 for Rounds 1 – 6, up to \$70,000.00 for Rounds 7 – 11, and up to \$90,000.00 for Rounds 12 through 15. 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 RFTAAP Committee to applying authorities outlining the steps needed to address the problem(s).

Applicants must be certain that all fire trucks purchased under this program meet the NFPA 1901 series standard (all required equipment included) prior to advertising for bids.

STAGE 2

When the grant applicant has advertised for bids and awarded a contract to a successful bidder or issued a purchase order for a state contract purchase, the grant applicant will submit a copy of the resolution awarding the bid or approving the purchase order and a copy of the truck specifications to the Division of Fire Services Development for review by the RFTAAP Committee. The specifications will be reviewed to verify that they conform to the NFPA 1901 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 complete a payment schedule of the annual matching fund payments, on a form to be provided, based on the actual purchase price of the fire truck.

Upon verification that: (a) the proposed payments meet matching fund requirements, (b) the specifications met the NFPA 1901 requirements, and (c) the fire department is an initial responding fire department in a rural area, a letter will be sent by the RFTAAP Committee confirming that all program requirements have been met. Additionally, grant funding shall then be transmitted to the local government entity, which shall hold the funds in an account separate from other funds of the local government, and which shall be held in escrow pending delivery and acceptance of the fire truck, and receipt of clearance from the Division of Fire Services as provided for in Stage 3 herein.

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, where applicable, by the Mississippi State Rating Bureau must be forwarded to the Division of Fire Services. Upon receipt of these documents, a letter of clearance to expend the escrowed grant funds shall be issued from the Division of Fire Services granting authority to the local government for expenditure of the grant funds. If the fire truck is deemed unacceptable or the local government does not accept the truck and authorize payment, then the escrowed grant funds will be returned to the Division of Fire Services within fifteen (15) working days of a demand therefor.

*****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 on Rounds 1 – 6, up to \$70,000.00 on Rounds 7-11, and up to \$90,000.00 on Rounds 12 through 15. The pledged monies may be derived from ad valorem tax or from any other monies available to the county or municipality, excluding State Rebate Funds.

*****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 county or municipality 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.

*****Lease purchases are not allowed and the title of the new truck cannot be used as collateral for securing a loan under this program.**

The RFTAAP 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 fully implement 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 purchases under this program. Although the primary use of trucks purchased under this program is intended for rural fire fighting purposes, they may also be utilized by municipalities 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. In addition, the Board of Supervisors, through resolution, may allow a municipality to apply directly in cases where the municipality meets the previously mentioned requirements and will be responsible for payment and ownership of the truck. 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.

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 1901 series standard. Failure to comply will result in forfeiture of state funds or the requirement to reimburse the Division of Fire Services for any grant money awarded.

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

Brad Smith, State Fire Coordinator
Mississippi Insurance Department
State Fire Marshal's Office
P.O. Box 79
Jackson, MS 39205-0079
Phone: 601-359-1062
brad.smith@mid.ms.gov

EFFECTIVE DATE:

This Bulletin shall replace the previous Bulletins, 95-7, 97-4, 99-5, 2001-1, 2003-4, 2004-1, and 2004-4, as amended, and shall be effective on and after July 14, 2023.



MIKE CHANEY
COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE and
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

ROUND XX

**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE
DIVISION OF FIRE SERVICES DEVELOPMENT
RURAL FIRE TRUCK ACQUISITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM APPLICATION**

**PART II - SECTION V (Step 1)
REQUEST FOR PAYMENT**

County _____

Purchaser _____

Address _____

Preparer's Name _____

Title/Organization Affiliation

Daytime Phone Number

Please submit the following documentation:

- A. A copy of the purchase order issued for the apparatus.**
- B. A letter from the vendor confirming the purchase and specifying the estimated delivery date.**

Upon receipt of both of the above stated documents at the office of the Division of Fire Services Development, a warrant will be issued within fifteen working days for the amount previously approved by the Rural Fire Truck Review Committee.

The undersigned Chief Executive Officer, Fire Chief, and Fire Coordinator of the herein named Purchasing Organization do hereby affirm that any funds delivered to the Organization by virtue of this RFTAAP Application shall be retained and used only for its intended purpose in connection with the purchase of the apparatus at issue herein. If the apparatus is not purchased for any reason, including but not limited to the apparatus being deemed unacceptable or the local government's refusal to accept the truck and authorize payment, then the funds provided by virtue of this application shall be returned to the Mississippi Department of Insurance, Division of Fire Services within fifteen (15) working days of a demand therefor. It is further understood that the Purchasing Organization shall hold the funds in an account separate from other funds of the local government, and that such funds will be held in escrow pending delivery and acceptance of the fire truck, and receipt of final clearance from the Division of Fire Services.

Understood and Agreed to by the undersigned, on this the _____ day of _____, 20____.

Chief Executive Officer

Fire Chief

Fire Coordinator

ROUND XX

**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE
DIVISION OF FIRE SERVICES DEVELOPMENT
RURAL FIRE TRUCK ACQUISITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM APPLICATION**

**PART II - SECTION V (Step 2)
PROOF OF RECEIPT**

County _____

Purchaser _____

Address _____

Preparer's Name _____

Title/Organization Affiliation

Daytime Phone Number

Please submit the following documentation within ten days of delivery of the truck:

- A. A copy of the results of the Mississippi State Rating Bureau pump acceptance test performed on your new fire truck.**
- B. A copy of the billing invoice from the manufacturer requesting payment in full of the new fire truck.**
- C. A copy of the board minutes accepting new fire truck and authorizing payment or a copy of the Receiving Report.**

***Upon receipt of these documents, a letter of clearance to expend the escrowed grant funds shall be issued from the Division of Fire Services granting authority to the local government for expenditure of the grant funds. The "letter of clearance" must be received by the purchasing organization prior to their expenditure of funds held in escrow.**