

OKLAHOMA WILDLAND FIRE NOTES

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A QUICK LOOK AT OKLAHOMA OPERATIONAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS

What are operational grants?

Operational grants are authorized by Governor Mary Fallin and funded by the Oklahoma Legislature. They are provided to rural fire departments each year by Oklahoma Forestry Services, a division of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food & Forestry. These grants are available to fire departments in communities with populations less than 10,000 that depend either fully or partially on volunteer firefighters. The grant dollars can be used for purchasing items such as firefighting equipment, insurance premiums, equipment maintenance and personal protective equipment.

How do departments become eligible for an operational grant?

1. On or before April 30th of each year, Rural Fire Coordinators in each area collect the following information to determine a fire department's eligibility to receive an operational grant:
 - The name, address and contact information for the rural fire department;
 - The rural fire department's OFIRS reporting number and a statement that the previous year's fire runs were reported to the State Fire Marshall's Office (unless exempt pursuant to OAC 35:20-3-8);
 - Proof of a public listing of an emergency telephone number or statement indicating the department is part of a 911 system;
 - Proof of Worker's Compensation Insurance on each of the department's firefighters;
 - Proof of liability insurance for each department vehicle acquired from the OFS;
 - A statement indicating the department has formally adopted NIMS and is actively participating in NIMS training and compliance activities; and
 - A statement verifying compliance with all other applicable state and federal laws.
2. After considering the needs of the departments, Rural Fire Coordinators prepare a certified list of eligible rural fire departments. In making the determination of need, Rural Fire Coordinators shall only permit operational grants for purposes permitted by 19 O.S. § 901.56(F) and (G) and shall not permit any department to receive an operational grant merely for the purpose of accumulation nor any other unauthorized purpose.

How does a department receive this grant?

1. The certified list of rural fire departments is submitted to Oklahoma Forestry Services by the Rural Fire Coordinators no later than June 30th of each year. OFS verifies that each certified department is considered a legal entity by the state of Oklahoma and eligible to receive funds. If there are issues with a department's legal status, OFS and your Rural Fire Coordinator will contact the department and assist it to be in compliance with statute.
2. Once funding is available (typically in July/August), Oklahoma Forestry Services will process an electronic fund transfer directly to the department. Each department receives a letter from OFS outlining the amount of funding, when to expect the transfer and guidelines in the use and tracking of expenditures to ensure departments comply with state law.

Questions?

Contact Oklahoma Forestry Services staff, listed at left,
or contact your local Rural Fire Coordinator.

www.forestry.ok.gov



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