

BULLETIN 2005-5

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MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

GUIDELINES FOR THE SUPPLEMENTAL RURAL
FIRE TRUCK ACQUISITION ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM

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ACQUISITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

OVERVIEW

During the Third Extraordinary Session of 2004, the Mississippi Legislature past a new legislation creating the Supplemental Rural Fire Truck Acquisition Assistance Program (SRFTAAP). Initial appropriations totaled \$10 million funded by a bond. The purpose of this new program was to expedite the purchase of a new NFPA 1901 Chapter 5-8 apparatus in counties that were awaiting a new Round to be designated by the Legislature in the regular RFTAAP grant program (Section 17-23-1 of the MS Code of 1972 as Amended). The legislature currently has designated a total of seven Rounds. Therefore a county that had applied for this 7th Round could advance to this new SRFTAAP program and apply for one more apparatus prior to the designation of an 8th Round.

When the 7th Round was designated in the RFTAAP program, the state's match increased from \$50,000 to \$70,000. However, in this SRFTAAP program the additional apparatus grant available will only be for up to a \$50,000.

The SRFTAAP also includes a provision for a county to receive up to a 10% match of funds from this program. These funds would be used to pay for the county's match requirement for any other grants they may obtain from any other source other than RFTAAP to acquire a fire apparatus.

For example, assuming the county received a grant through the FEMA Fire Act for a fire apparatus at a 95 – 5% match, where the 5% would be the county's share. The county could apply through SRFTAAP and request the 5%. The maximum dollar amount available under this SRFTAAP Provision is limited to \$20,000. Since the FEMA Fire Act Grant program was initiated in 2001, Mississippi fire departments have received 99 fire trucks.

In the 2005 Legislature Session, this new Supplemental Program was amended both in the amount of appropriations and eligibility for participation. Of the \$10 million originally appropriated through a bond, \$5.74 million was re-appropriated to the regular RFTAAP program leaving \$4.26 million in the SRFTAAP.

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 have a population of less than 2,500.

PROVISIONS OF PROGRAM

The Supplemental Rural Fire Truck Acquisition Assistance Program (SRFTAAP) provides funds to counties who wish to purchase fire apparatus that meet the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards for Fire Department Apparatus 1901, chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8, for providing rural fire protection. The request for these grant funds are made available through two separate provisions under this program.

Provision A

Under Provision A, a county may apply for up to \$50,000 towards the purchase of a fire apparatus meeting the NFPA 1901 standards mentioned previously. The county must match the state funds requested with local funds just as in the regular RFTAAP program.

Provision B

Under Provision B, a county which has acquired grants for fire apparatus through any program other than the RFTAAP may submit an application under this provision for up to 10% of the funds required to supplement said grant, not to exceed \$20,000.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

SUBMISSION OF INITIAL APPLICATION

Provision A & B

Counties wishing to submit applications to acquire a fire truck under Provision A must have exhausted all existing Rounds available to them in the Regular RFTAAP program.

Counties wishing to apply for matching funds of up to 10% under Provision B of the program may proceed directly with the application process. To qualify for this provision, the apparatus being purchased must meet the NFPA 1901 Standards, chapters 5, 6, 7, or 8, and must provide primary service to the rural area of the county. Municipalities with population of 2,500 or less are considered rural under the SRFTAAP program.

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 application designated as a Part I for the specific provision as described above. (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 the specific provision being requested; Provision A or Provision B.
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.
6. All fire departments utilizing apparatus purchased using either of these provisions must be current in the state reporting requirements established by the Commissioner of Insurance.

ONLY COMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL BE REVIEWED BY THE RFTAAP REVIEW COMMITTEE.

Grant applications should be mailed to:
 Larry Barr, State Fire Coordinator
 Mississippi Department of Insurance
 P.O. Box 79
 Jackson, MS 39205

PROCESSING OF GRANT APPLICATIONS

The following procedure will be used for processing grant applications. Each provision of the SRFTAAP program will be addressed separately.

Provision A

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 available to them in the RFTAAP program or, at a minimum, received Part II approval of the last Round available 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 that the Part I application has been approved 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.

Provision B

1. The Department of Insurance, Division of Fire Services Development will receive all applications and maintain a list of all complete applications.
2. A county applying for a grant under Provision B may apply for more than one apparatus. However, each request must be made on a separate application.
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 that the Part I application has been approved to submit Part II applications documenting that advertisement for bids has taken place and that bids have been awarded.**
5. Amendments to applications prior to consideration in committee will be ruled on a case by case basis.

SUPPLEMENTAL RURAL FIRE TRUCK GRANT PROCEDURE

STAGE 1

Provision A & B

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 1901 series standard (all required equipment) prior to advertising for bids.

STAGE 2

Provision A & B

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 1901 series standard. Any fire truck that does not conform to these standards will be ineligible for receipt of grant funds from the Supplemental Rural Fire Truck Acquisition Assistance Program.

Provision A

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 apparatus.

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 and current with all reporting requirements along with a current contract, a letter will be sent by the Review Committee confirming that all program requirements have been met.

Provision B

Participating counties purchasing fire trucks utilizing funds from Provision B shall provide adequate documentation that the apparatus is paid in full.

1. Apparatus purchased utilizing funds from this provision must be titled to the county. However, the apparatus must be stationed in the department awarded the original grant for which the county requesting the matching funds of up to 10% of the total cost of the apparatus but not to exceed \$20,000.

Upon verification that: (a) the specifications met the NFPA 1901 requirements and (b) the fire department is an initial responding fire department in a rural area and current with all reporting requirements along with a current contract, a letter will be sent by the Review Committee confirming that all program requirements have been met.

STAGE 3

Provision A & B

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, a warrant will be issued within fifteen (15) working days for the approved state funds.

*****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

Provision A

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 3, 4, 5, & 6 and \$70,000 on Round 7. 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.

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

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 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 purchased under provisions of this program. Although the primary use of trucks purchased under the Supplemental 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

Provision A

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 under Provision A of this program. Municipalities having a population of 2,500 or less are classified as rural under these guidelines and, in such case, the apparatus can be utilized as the primary apparatus for that municipality. Applicants for the Supplemental 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 1901 series standard. Only apparatus defined in chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 qualify for this program. 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