

TITLE IV - DISTRIBUTION OF RURAL COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION FUNDS

(R.C.F.P.)

A. Enabling Acts

Funds are distributed to fire departments under Title IV of the Rural Development Act of 1972, P.L. 92-419 as amended by the Food and Agricultural Act of 1977, P.L. 95-113.

B. Policy

The Forest Management Division will allocate and administer Rural Community Fire Protection grants to fire departments serving communities with populations of 10,000 or less. Funds, to the extent available, will be granted on a 50/50 matching basis for the purpose of training firepersons, organizing fire departments and/or the purchase of fire suppression equipment. The administration of the Rural Community Fire Protection program will conform to the guidelines, both program and financial, established by the U.S. Forest Service and the federal office of Management and Budget.

C. Explanation

The purpose of the program is to raise the fire protection capabilities of rural fire departments in providing adequate fire protection for their area of responsibility.

Annually, subsequently to budget approval by the federal legislature, funds are made available for disbursement to fire departments. Applications for these funds may be submitted at any time during the year--prior to December 15. Applications are prioritized by project and local need.

Project agreements are entered into with fire departments whose project receives highest priority. Upon completion of the project agreement, the fire department or local community may complete the project and request payment.

D. Procedure

1. Allocation

Rural fire departments or units of government in order to qualify under the Rural Community Fire Protection Act (RCFP) are defined as having a population of 10,000 or less. Several communities may jointly enter into a project agreement, with one or more units exceeding 10,000 population. However, the combined total must not average more than 10,000 per unit of government.

There are four steps in the allocation process:

- a. Rural communities seeking assistance must file an application with the district forest manager. Such applications must be submitted annually by March 1 to be considered.

b. Evaluation Procedure in Michigan

1. Unit of government priority

Each unit of government submitting an application will complete a priority rating, based on the priority guide on the reverse side of the application.

2. District priority rating

The district will prioritize each fire department, by county, using the total value established by the priority guide on the reverse side of the application submitted by the fire department(s).

The district will then prioritize all applications received on the district basis considering both point priority rating and local needs. Those in greatest need may be new departments, departments poorly equipped, or with a significant number of personnel who are untrained.

Both lists are to be forwarded through the region to the division by March 15.

c. Project Priority

An equipment priority list has been established and is to be used in determining priority ratings.

Because training is available to fire departments within the state, at little or no expense, and as organizational expenses of a new department are difficult to identify, the major emphasis in Michigan is on the purchase of equipment items.

Local departments in developing their requests should list their needs by priority.

d. Project Approval and Disbursement

All applications will be reviewed at the division office. District recommendations and priorities will be evaluated in establishing statewide priorities for disbursement of funds.

Fire departments whose applications have been approved will be notified by mail.

1. They will be requested to sign a Project Agreement form. The agreement indicates the dollar amount of federal participation and the specific item(s) the fire department intends to purchase.
2. Purchases are made following the submission of the Project Agreement.

2. Payment Process

After the fire department or local unit of government responsible for payment has received their items purchased under the Project Agreement, and after payment for the items has been made, copies of cancelled checks, itemized invoices, and serial numbers are to be submitted with Project Completion form to the division.

Payment of the federal share will be directed through the fire officer responsible for the area.

The responsible Division representative must sign the Project Completion form verifying:

1. that the check was delivered.
2. that the fire department does have the project items.
3. that the serial numbers are correct.
4. that all necessary paperwork has been completed (often a copy of the cancelled check is required).
5. that the red RCFP sticker with the state inventory number has been attached to all items valued at \$500 or more.

3. Accountability

The local unit of government should retain a copy of all documents required for the project for three (3) years.

The local unit of government must notify the Department of Natural Resources at the time of sale or disposal of an equipment item where the original value was \$500 or more.

The fire department must maintain all equipment in a reasonable manner until sale or disposal.

All records and equipment must be available for audit by personnel of the Department of Natural Resources or the federal government.

4. Inventory

All items valued at \$500 or more will receive a Department of Natural Resources identification number and be carried under the location code of the Forest Management Division field office responsible for the area in which the fire department is located.

An annual inspection will be made for each inventory item which has been purchased from RCFP funds, as is best accomplished in conjunction with the check of the federal excess property inventory.

The inventory procedure will include a visual inspection, serial number confirmation, and a condition rating.

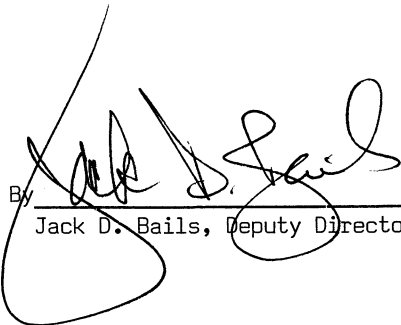
A copy of the project completion form is to be retained at each field office as a permanent property receipt.

5. Disposal

Inventory items with an original value of \$1,000 or less are the property of the local unit. The Forest Management Division must be notified at the time of sale or disposal. The fire officer responsible for the inventory item will prepare a Property Disposal Document (Form R-1704) to remove the item from inventory and notify the division office.

Inventory items with an original value in excess of \$1,000 are owned jointly by the local unit and the federal government. The percentage of federal ownership is the percentage of money that the federal government contributed to the original cost of the item. At disposal, if the sale value is \$100 or more, the federal government will be reimbursed a portion of the selling price based on the original percentage of ownership, unless the local unit reinvests the money in a like item. If the local unit reinvests this money, a percentage of federal ownership in the new item will need to be computed.

Notification must be made to the division upon loss or disposal of all RCFP inventory items.

Approved By  _____ DATE _____
Jack D. Bails, Deputy Director