



Special Announcement

Rural VFD Assistance Program (HB 2604)

Dear Volunteer Firefighters and Department Leaders,

We're excited to share a major update regarding the Rural VFD Assistance Program. The 89th Texas Legislature appropriated, and the governor approved, **\$192 million** in one-time funding to address unfunded grant requests in the program - *specifically those submitted on or before November 7, 2024*. An additional **\$44 million** over the next two years was also appropriated to help the program keep pace with ongoing demand.

This funding is more than ten times our current annual budget for grants and is the largest investment in the program's history. This will help get more fire trucks, protective gear, and life-saving equipment into the hands of departments across Texas.

For those qualifying unfunded requests, we plan to begin awarding fire trucks, with a maximum of one per department, and slip-on units this fall, with other grant categories to follow. Our goal is to have all eligible unfunded requests awarded by early 2026.

We've already started receiving calls from departments eager to learn more, and we understand the urgency. At the same time, we ask for your patience as we work through year-end obligations and prepare to expand administrative capacity, improve processes, and implement program changes this fall that are aimed at strengthening and sustaining the responsiveness of the program over the long term.

We're grateful to state leadership for recognizing the importance of fire protection. This funding sends a strong message that volunteer fire departments and the communities they serve matter.

We will keep you updated as we move forward. If you have any questions or need help, please feel free to contact our staff. Also, be sure to keep your department profile and W-9 current in FireConnect.

Thank you for everything you do for Texas.

Capacity Building Department
Texas A&M Forest Service