



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Senator Young Encourages Local Volunteer Fire Departments to Apply for Grant Assistance

CATHARINE YOUNG May 12, 2017

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ALBANY – Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I- 57th District) is encouraging local volunteer fire departments to apply for the Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Grant program currently being administered through the State Department of Environmental Conservation. The application deadline is May 31.

Departments that serve rural communities can apply for grant funding up to \$1,500 for the purchase of wildland firefighting equipment. The funds are administered as a 50/50 matching grant to assist rural fire companies with the purchase of portable backpack pumps, Nomex protective clothing, hand tools, hard hats, hoses, portable radios, dry hydrants and other equipment.

“Firefighters need to have proper protective clothing and equipment when they are battling fires, especially for wildland fires that can require personnel and equipment to travel into remote locations. Gear and apparel can cost upwards of \$10,000 and equipment often needs to be custom fit to maximize safety. Additional gear, such as portable radios and backpack pumps can push these costs even higher,” Senator Young said.

“Securing grant funding is often the best way to keep volunteer first responders safe, without bankrupting a department’s budget and imposing an added burden on the local property tax base. The DEC has about \$402,000 in matching grant funds that are available to assist rural departments, in areas such as those I represent. I strongly encourage local departments that are eligible to apply for this funding mechanism,” said Senator Young.

Grant funding is based on federal guidelines for use in fire districts serving a rural area or a rural community with a population of 10,000 or less. Applications are scored based on established rating criteria including: population, the I.S.O. Fire Prevention Insurance rating, the presence of Native American communities in the district and the date of the last VFA grant received.

Additional information, including eligibility criteria and application forms can be obtained at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/2364.html>. For further information, contact the DEC by emailing [vfagrant@dec.ny.gov](mailto:vfagrant@dec.ny.gov).

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