



## State Farm® and the NVFC Increase Fire Department Readiness and Community Safety through \$1.5 Million Grant Program

State Farm and the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) annually team up to support local fire departments and increase community preparedness through the Good Neighbor Firefighter Safety Program. In 2025, a total of \$1.5 million was awarded in the form of \$10,000 grants to 150 volunteer fire departments across the U.S. These grants were used to purchase needed equipment that enables firefighters to more safely and effectively respond to emergencies.

The majority of fire departments in the U.S. are staffed by volunteers, but many of these departments struggle to find funding for essential equipment and resources. The Good Neighbor Firefighter Safety Program launched in 2024 with \$1 million in grants to help local fire departments increase safety and efficiency and better serve their communities. Due to the clear need for this funding, State Farm increased its commitment to \$1.5 million in 2025. State Farm also provided the first 2,000 applicants with one-year [NVFC memberships](#) to give them access to additional support, training, and resources.

The grants are making a huge difference in local communities. For instance, the Thomas Walker Volunteer Fire Department in Ewing, VA, was able to secure essential equipment that enhanced the safety of their firefighters, improved communication, and strengthened their emergency response. “We are grateful for this investment, which directly supports our mission to provide safe, effective, and dependable service to the community we proudly serve,” said Chief John Cheek.

See a breakdown of the 2025 grants [here](#). Read on to learn about the impact of these grants as well as information about the 2026 Good Neighbor Firefighter Safety Program.

### Replacing Outdated Gear

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is critical for firefighter safety, but the cost forces many volunteer fire departments to make do with outdated, insufficient gear. This was true of the Wood River (NE) Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department, which relied on gear that had lost its protective integrity. The department used the grant to purchase three new sets of turnout gear to improve firefighter safety and effectiveness. Thanks to the new gear, firefighters were able to act swiftly during a recent home fire to rescue the occupant and extinguish the fire, preventing further injury and damage.

“Issuing new gear to firefighters conducting interior operations is essential to ensuring their safety and protecting their long-term health by reducing exposure to contaminants and chemicals. Newer gear also elevates the professionalism of the department and potentially aids retention and recruitment efforts,” said department secretary Lindsey Nielsen.



Martinsburg (MO) Fire Protection District was among the recipients who purchased new gear with the grant.

The firefighters at Fredonia (AZ) Fire Department are better protected thanks to the new gear they got with the grant. “The men and women are now more prepared to do the job that they volunteer for,” said Town Clerk Tracy Stumpf. “They no longer have ill-fitting, worn-out gear that allows them to be in danger of burns when fighting a fire.” In addition, the support shown to the firefighters led to three more volunteers joining the department and has increased the volunteers’ pride. “It has shown the department they are important to the community,” Stumpf said.

### **Improved Operations**

The Village of New Haven (IL) Fire Department secured portable radios, flashlights, and a 4-gas monitor to improve operations. “This equipment significantly improved firefighter communication, accountability, scene visibility, and air monitoring capabilities,” said Village Clerk Brittany Warren. “All items are now in active service and have enhanced operational efficiency, reduced safety risks, and strengthened protection for firefighters and the community during emergency responses.”



The Village of New Haven (IL) Fire Department secured equipment to improve operations thanks to the grant.

The gear and equipment that the Paradise Valley Fire Department (Emigrant, MT) was able to obtain helped increase firefighter safety, standardize PPE, and strengthen communications. The equipment has already been used during recent structure fire, vehicle accident, and wildland fire responses. “Firefighters reported increased visibility, confidence, and reduced fatigue, while improved radio programming ensured clear communications and faster coordination on scene,” said Captain Mike Wright. “These upgrades directly improved responder safety and effectiveness during real emergency incidents in Paradise Valley.”

Training Officer Stephen Krajewski of the Stonewall (MS) Volunteer Fire Department reported that the new thermal imaging camera (TIC) the department bought with the grant improves search and rescue efficiency by locating victims and hot spots faster, reducing fire suppression time by up to 30%. In addition, the battery-powered ventilation fan provides quicker smoke removal and improves visibility and air quality for firefighters and victims. “During a recent structure fire, the TIC helped crews quickly locate the fire and hot spots, while the fan improved smoke clearance, making the scene safer. Firefighters report faster response and increased efficiency, and the community feels safer knowing we have this lifesaving equipment,” Krajewski said.

### **Faster Response Times**

The Nichols (WI) Rural Fire Department (NRFD) was able to replace their old, worn-out hose as well as add 300 feet to their large-diameter hose inventory thanks to the grant. Without this funding, it would have taken them several years to acquire this quantity of hose. “The grant had immediate impact,” said grant writer Kelly Seitz. “Data collection revealed 10-15% of district homes are over 500 feet from the

road, exposing a critical gap in fire suppression capability. The new hose eliminates the need to wait 15+ minutes for mutual aid, allowing NRFD to establish relay pumping within minutes.”



The Nichols (WI) Rural Fire Department used the grant to obtain new hose.

For the Valentine (NE) Volunteer Fire Department, the \$10,000 grant represented about 15% of their overall yearly budget and tripled their budget for radio equipment. The new pagers and radios they were able to buy had an immediate impact on their response capabilities. When the department was paged for a structure fire about eight miles outside of the town, the first due truck was fully staffed and out the door in under five minutes from the page. In addition, the first truck used the new radios to tell the other firefighters about a better route for the incoming trucks and hose lines. “These two elements helped the firefighters to save the house, and the family was able to get their irreplaceable family treasures out safely,” Temple said.

### **Increased Preparedness**

The Firefighters at Martinsburg (MO) Area Fire Protection District previously had to borrow gear in order to train, which made it difficult to get the training they needed. Within a month of receiving the new gear purchased with the grant, firefighters were able to add 42 hours of fire and medical training. They are now equipped and ready to do all on-scene assigned tasks more safely.



The grant helped Carsonville (MN) Fire & Rescue increase firefighter safety and preparedness.

The two wall-mounted gear dryers that Carsonville (MN) Fire & Rescue obtained with the grant drastically cut down on the time firefighters are out of service while their gear is being cleaned. Previously, once washed, the gear took about 40 hours to dry. That meant responders were forced to either not clean their gear, which poses serious health and safety risks, or not be able to respond for days. The new dryers cut the drying time down to four hours for each set of turnout gear. “Allowing us to wash and dry our gear in 90% less time makes us ready faster than we have ever been [so we are] ready to respond to the next call for help,” said Chief Chris Ayers.

### **Reduced Hazards on Roadways**

Responders are frequently called to roadway emergencies, where they are in danger of getting struck by passing motorists. The South Bristol (ME) Volunteer Fire Department used the grant to purchase orange cones, reflective safety vests, barricades, and scene lighting to better protect responders from this danger.

“The grant funds significantly improved our ability to operate safely and efficiently at roadway incidents,” said Fire Chief Allen Spinney. “New traffic control and visibility equipment has enhanced scene management, allowing us to establish safer work zones more quickly and be clearly seen by motorists.” Spinney also noted the effect that the new equipment has had on members. “A major success of this equipment purchase has been improved firefighter confidence and professionalism. Proper, modern gear has made members feel safer and better prepared at roadway incidents.”



South Bristol (ME) is better prepared for roadway response with the equipment purchased through the grant.

### **More Efficient Rescues**

The Butte (SD) Volunteer Fire Department obtained specialty tools and training to prepare their responders to engage in life saving rescue situations. With the extraction challenges that newer vehicles pose, it is critical that responders have the proper tools and training for vehicle rescues. “After purchasing these tools, our department was able to participate in two extrication training classes already this year, resulting in members getting valuable training and becoming familiar with the tools and techniques needed to engage in real life rescue operations,” said Assistant Chief Jim Davis.



Equipment like the thermal imaging camera secured by the Long Branch Fire Department (Williston, SC) help improve department rescue capabilities.

According to Assistant Chief Matthew Franks of Double Churches Volunteer Fire Department (Carnesville, GA), the rescue equipment, batteries, and scene lighting obtained with the grant improves reliability, decreases response times, and enhances operational readiness and firefighter safety. Soon after receiving the equipment, it was called into action to rescue two victims of vehicle entrapments. “Scene lighting and a battery-powered reciprocating saw were essential in extricating a patient in critical condition. The instant startup of battery-powered tools eliminated delays associated with gas powered generators, allowing firefighters to rapidly transfer the patient to EMS and likely saving their life,” Franks said.

### **Improved Patient Care**

The Whitesboro (TX) Fire Department was saving up to purchase two stair chairs for use in medical emergencies, a goal that was accomplished thanks to the grant. With the new chairs, crews are able to move patients down stairways and through tight spaces more easily, with less risk for injury to either the responders or the patient.

“The availability of these two stair chairs to our crews has made a world of difference,” said Captain Josh Velten. “They are back savers for our crews as they allow for easier lifting and rolling where in the past there would have been a lot of manual lifting involved.” He notes that shortly after putting the chairs in service, the department got a medical aid call to a second-floor apartment. Previously, removing the patient would have required six personnel, but with the chair, a crew of two was able to easily and safely support and move the patient down the stairway.

### **Enhanced Communications**

Communication is critical in any emergency response, so the Creston (NC) Volunteer Fire Department used the grant to obtain electronic pagers and radios for their volunteer members. These additions will increase member response times to emergencies; allow for proper communications to, on, and during scene operations; and enhance firefighter safety. The impact on the department was evident immediately.

According to Chief Thomas Aycock, “We received early snow and ice within our mountainous district that resulted in three working vehicle accidents almost simultaneously. The new pagers and radios enabled a quick and organized response from our firefighters and related equipment. Additionally, our department responded to a residential structure fire on December 6. The use of our new pagers resulted in a very adequate personnel response and quick extinguishment of the kitchen fire, saving the structure.”



The Goreville (IL) Fire Department also bought radio equipment with the grant.

### **Get Ready for the 2026 Good Neighbor Firefighter Safety Program**

In 2026, State Farm will provide an additional \$1.5 million in grants through the Good Neighbor Firefighter Safety Program. Eligible volunteer fire departments can apply for a \$10,000 grant to purchase equipment that will make a difference in their department and community.

The application period will be open from Monday, May 4 at noon Eastern to Thursday, May 7 at noon Eastern. Departments can get ready now by reading the criteria, application guidance, eligible items list, and frequently asked questions found at [www.nvfc.org/statefarm](http://www.nvfc.org/statefarm).

### **About State Farm**

For over 100 years, the mission of State Farm has been to help people manage the risks of everyday life, recover from the unexpected and realize their dreams. State Farm and its affiliates are the largest providers of [auto](#) and [home](#) insurance combined in the United States. Its more than 19,200 agent offices and 65,000 employees serve over 96 million policies and accounts – including auto, fire, [life](#), [health](#), commercial policies and [financial services](#) accounts. [Commercial auto insurance](#), along with coverage for [renters](#), [business owners](#), [boats](#) and [motorcycles](#), is also available. State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company is the parent of the State Farm family of companies. State Farm is ranked No. 36 on the 2025 Fortune 500 list of largest companies. For more information, please visit <http://www.statefarm.com>.

**About the NVFC**

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) is the leading nonprofit membership association representing the interests of the volunteer fire and emergency medical services. The NVFC unites and supports volunteer and combination fire and EMS organizations through education, advocacy, leadership development, and collaboration. Guided by professionalism and innovation, we provide the tools and resources needed to protect communities, advance responder health and safety, and prepare leaders for the future. Learn more and join at [www.nvfc.org](http://www.nvfc.org).