



Ventura County Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE)  
Incident Responder Grant Program  
Application Form

Page 1

Minimum Grant Amount: \$5,000 - Maximum Grant Amount: \$500,000

Date: 03/26/2024

Amount of Request: \$543,478.92

Willing to accept partial grant: **Yes X** No

Multi Agency Application (please fill out Page 1 for each partner agency): X

Agency Name:

Ventura County Fire Protection District known as Ventura County Fire Department

Agency Contact:

Battalion Chief Gene Fong

Contact Title:

Battalion Chief Gene Fong

Agency Street Address:

165 Durley Avenue

City:

Camarillo

Zip Code:

93010

Telephone:

Email:

Agency Type:

Law Enforcement

**Fire X**

Municipal ☐

Other ☐

Explain: Ventura County Fire Department Jointly Operates Regional Ventura County Aviation Unit with Ventura County Sheriff Department

Jurisdictional Boundaries (mark all that apply):

Camarillo ☐

Fillmore ☐

Moorpark ☐

Ojai ☐

Oxnard ☐

Port Hueneme ☐

Santa Paula ☐

Simi Valley ☐

Thousand Oaks ☐

Ventura ☐

County of Ventura ☐

**Ventura County X**  
(countywide)

Other ☐

Explain: Regional Ventura County Aviation Unit available for all cities and unincorporated areas, County of Ventura for EMS. Law, and Fire missions



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Agency Name:

Ventura County Sheriff Department

Agency Contact:

Captain Brian Slominski

Contact Title:

Captain Brain Slominski

Agency Street Address:

375 Durley Avenue

City:

Camarillo

Zip Code:

93010

Telephone:

Email:

Agency Type:

**Law Enforcement X**

Fire ☐

Municipal ☐

Other ☐

Explain: Ventura County Sheriff Department, Sheriff James Fryhoff supports the proposal

Jurisdictional Boundaries (mark all that apply):

Camarillo ☐

Fillmore ☐

Moorpark ☐

Ojai ☐

Oxnard ☐

Port Hueneme ☐

Santa Paula ☐

Simi Valley ☐

Thousand Oaks ☐

Ventura ☐

County of Ventura ☐

**Ventura County X**  
**(countywide)**

Other ☐

Explain: Regional Ventura County Aviation Unit available for all cities and unincorporated areas, County of Ventura



Ventura County Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE)  
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Application Questionnaire

Page 2

Please answer the questions below with as much specificity as needed to fully answer the questions. If additional space is required, it is allowable to attach additional sheets to this application.

**1. What is your agency's role in responding to roadway incidents?**

See attached

**2. Please describe the problem that your agency has identified concerning roadway incident response within your jurisdiction that would be improved by grant funding for capital assets.**

See attached

**3. Please describe how grant funding would provide the solution that your agency is proposing to the problem identified above. Please include specific tasks, timelines, processes and possible collaboration with other agencies.**

See attached

**4. Please describe your agency's capability to carry out the proposed solution described above.**

See attached



Ventura County Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE)  
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Application Questionnaire

Page 3

Please answer the questions below with as much specificity as needed to fully answer the questions. If additional space is required it is allowable to attached additional sheets to this application.

**5. Please describe how other agencies might benefit from your agency's proposal.**

See attached

**6. Please describe in detail how grant funds are proposed to be expended. Include a draft budget and timeline for expenditures.**

See attached

**7. How will your agency measure the outcomes and impacts of that result from the capital asset funded with the Ventura County SAFE grant funds? If available, please share any evidence or research that supports your agency's proposal and expected outcomes.**

See attached

The representative below has read and agrees to the Ventura County SAFE guidelines and is authorized to submit grant applications and accept funds for the agency named above.

Fire Chief Dustin Gardner  
Agency Director (please Print)

Agency Director Signature and Date

Battalion Chief Gene Fong  
Agency Contact (if different)

Agency Contact Signature and Date

*Charles Cook* Det. 03  
3/26/24  
*Gene Fong* 3/26/24



## **1) What is your agency's role in responding to roadway incidents?**

The Ventura County Fire Protection District, also known as the Ventura County Fire Department responds to all-hazard incidents county wide. Its jurisdiction includes cities Port Hueneme, Camarillo, Ojai, Santa Paula, Moorpark, Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley and the unincorporated areas throughout the county. Ventura County Fire Protection District also has automatic aid agreements with the cities of Oxnard, Ventura, Fillmore, and Navy Base Ventura established through memorandums of agreements (MOUs). These MOUs ensure that the closest, most appropriate resource is dispatched to an incident regardless of the specific jurisdiction in which the incident occurs creating a truly regional response collaboration.

In addition to a robust land response by regional assets of engine, ladder truck, rescue ambulances, hazardous materials apparatus, watercraft, and technical rescue units, the Ventura County Fire Department (VCFD) runs a fleet of helicopters in collaboration with the Ventura County Sheriff's Office (VCSO) and is called the Ventura County Aviation Unit (VCAU). The regional Aviation Unit is the only first responder public entity supporting ALL fire departments, EMS agencies, and law enforcement in the County of Ventura including the Los Padres National Forest and adjacent Kern, Santa Barbara, and Los Angeles Counties.

The vast network of roadways throughout Ventura County requires an emergency response daily to a myriad of incidents. These incidents vary greatly in type, scale, and complexity; as an "all-risk" fire/rescue agency, the Ventura County Fire Protection District is charged with safely mitigating these incidents regardless of their nature. Vehicle traffic collisions; roadway medical emergencies; vehicle fires; vegetation fires, and hazmat releases impacting roadways are some of the many types of throughfare incidents to which we respond.

The VCFD is mission driven, and central to this mission are the protection of life, property, and environment. As all-risk stakeholders in public safety, the fire department operates under the premise that roadway incidents are inevitable. This all-risk perspective also causes us to confront the reality that roadway incidents are some of the most hazardous, both to responders and the public; hazards are present in both the emergency response as well as the on-scene operations. Consequently, we strive to acquire the best information, training, tools, and equipment to make our jobs safer and efficient, thereby yielding greater public safety, response, and maintaining the flow of the County's roadways free of hazards and obstructions.

If you consider the roadways as the arteries of our communities, the commuters are its lifeblood; safe and healthy communities require adequate response resources to keep this lifeblood flowing. While the number of roadway incidents the regional partners respond to averages over 5,000 annually, demanding substantial time and resources from each agency, safe and free-flowing roadways also play a pivotal role for first responders even for those emergency incidents that take place adjacent to the major throughfares of the County. On a 24/7 365-day basis, firefighters are called into neighborhoods, business districts, and the wildland urban interface

with the roadways the thoroughfare we use. Therefore, any piece of equipment which would support and enhance roadway safety and response during incidents is critical to the safe and efficient operations of a modern-day fire department.

**2) Please describe the problem that your agency has identified concerning roadway incident response within your jurisdiction that would be improved by grant funding for capital assets.**

According to the United States Census Bureau, Ventura County has seen consistent growth in the population over the last two decades. In addition to the 840,000 permanent residents, Ventura County receives a continuous flow of travelers that either participate in tourism or use the county as a thoroughfare for other destinations. The higher population density has a direct effect on traffic congestion and call volume, putting immense strain on emergency services. The strain on emergency services, specifically seen by VCFD, is reflected by a 34% increase in call volume over the last 10 years alone. To address the unprecedented strain on emergency services, VCFD recently acquired two Blackhawk helicopters with the purpose of reducing response/transport time, improving patient accessibility, and ultimately providing faster patient care.

VCAU helicopters are essential in the efforts to gain the best possible care for the public. Their aircraft are fully equipped and staffed with paramedic crews who provide the highest level of medical service and are capable of transporting patients anywhere in the county in only a fraction of the time it would take to transport them by ground ambulance.

In the year 2023, the Ventura County Aviation Unit recorded 1,254 flights, averaging 3.4 flights a day, further displaying how pertinent they are to emergency services. All these flights could not be made possible if it weren't for maintaining flight readiness through refueling tank trucks, commonly called "fuel tenders" or "jet tenders." Often, multiple flight missions are necessary to mitigate an incident. Flights back to Camarillo Airport just to refuel leaving the incident scene, takes away the helicopter from providing vital support to an incident, whether flying multiple critical patients to the appropriate regional hospitals in Ventura, Santa Barbara, or Los Angeles Counties or making multiple water drops on a fast-moving brush fire protecting roadway infrastructure or trapped motorists surrounded by the inferno.

**3) Please describe how grant funding would provide the solution that your agency is proposing to the problem identified above. Please include specific tasks, timelines, processes and possible collaboration with other agencies.**

As evidenced above, the size and age of the current jet/fuel tenders at the regional Ventura County Aviation Unit are prohibitive for safely operating on all the roadway systems and travel to the more than 40 designated helispots/heliports in the County. Also, the lack of the industry standard single point fueling option does not allow our members to safely fuel helicopters and other mutual aid aircraft. Both of which increase traffic congestion and/or roads being shut down due to delays in refueling because at most our helicopters can only operate for 2 hours of flight time before refueling. Fortunately, a relatively simple solution exists with the purchase of a smaller, lighter, dual cab fuel tender that is equipped with the single point fueling option. The size and weight of the new fuel tender would allow members of our department to safely drive on the road, off road to a dirt lot set up impromptu for a landing zone (LZ), and safely refuel at our designated helispots or heliports.



**4) Please describe your agency's capability to carry out the proposed solution described above.**

VCFD is the jurisdiction having authority for all risk emergency services throughout the county and has a long and successful history of purchasing, outfitting, and maintaining emergency apparatus and equipment. If awarded the grant, whether it be partial or in full, VCFD will hold the sole responsibility for acquiring the proposed fuel tender. Fire Department Fleet Managers at the Apparatus Maintenance Unit take great pride in keeping equipment maintained and properly serviced for safe and efficient use. The fleet managers have already completed Research and Development (R&D) by identifying vendors and obtaining bid specifications to streamline the process if awarded the proposal.

Once out in the field, updated fuel tender training and information will be distributed by VCFD Training Division to aviation personnel creating global awareness. Additionally, the fuel tender will be housed at the VCAU at Camarillo Airport where VC Fire Department and VC Sheriff's Office personnel will be present to oversee safe operations and perform routine training.

If VCFD procures the fuel tender, it will be properly outfitted to meet Fire Department standards and at our expense for emergency operations through the fire departments Communication, Fabrication, and Maintenance Shops. It should be noted grant guidelines and County of Ventura procurement policies will be strictly adhered to. VCFD performs a fiscal year internal audit annually in conjunction with the Ventura County Office of the Auditor-Controller as required by California Government Code Section 26883.

**5) Please describe how other agencies might benefit from your agency's proposal.**

As previously mentioned, the Ventura County Aviation Unit is a joint venture between the Ventura County Fire Protection District and the Ventura County Sheriff's Office. However, ALL public safety agencies (EMS, Law, and Fire) in the County of Ventura benefit from this unit, making this proposal truly regional to the County of Ventura and all areas contained within. Our helicopters are the only public agency emergency aviation assets in Ventura County. The unit provides rescue, medivac, firefighting, and law enforcement aircraft to any public service agency that has a need in Ventura County all requiring refueling.

As stated earlier, the ability to have a more maneuverable fuel tender that conforms to the FAA (Federal Aviation Association) and industry standards for refueling would help with traffic congestion, road closures, personnel safety, and most importantly answering to the emergency and public safety needs to the citizens who travel the County's roadways.

**6) Please describe in detail how grant funds are proposed to be expended. Include a draft budget and timeline for expenditures.**

Ventura County Fire Department has successfully completed the vendor pricing process for the proposed Helitender (fuel tender) which has allowed for the vehicle to be purchased immediately upon grant approval. Through Sourcewell, a cooperative buying agreement entity, the fire department obtained a 24% discount on the total price of the vehicle. In the case of partial funding, VCFD can reallocate funds of up to \$300,000 for cost sharing towards the vehicle making this project proposal scalable, with any remaining balance after a grant award the fire department share. The requested total is solely intended for the purchase and delivery of the vehicle and will not be used for administration and maintenance.

**Total Requested: \$543,478.92**

QTY	DESCRIPTION	LIST PRICE	DISCOUNT	PRICE EACH	FET	SALES TAX	DELIVERY	SUBTOTAL	TOTAL
1	FREIGHTLINER 114SD* HELITENDER	\$ 711,024.89	24.00%	\$ 540,378.92	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,100.00	\$ 543,478.92	\$ 543,478.92
				\$ -				\$ -	\$ -
	LICENSING FEE (IF QUOTED)			\$ -				\$ -	\$ -
	ON-SITE TRAINING (IF QUOTED)			\$ -				\$ -	\$ -
ABOVE PRICING DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY SALES TAX. IF SALES TAX IS APPLICABLE IT WILL BE ADDED AT TIME OF INVOICE.									
<b>GRAND TOTAL:</b>									<b>\$ 543,478.92</b>

As for the timeline, there would be no delay in ordering the Helitender (fuel tender) because all preliminary documentation has been completed and ready for a purchase order agreement to be issued and executed. Once the order is submitted, it will take one year for the vehicle to be fully built and shipped. When the Helitender (fuel tender) is delivered to VCFD Fleet Managers, it will take up to 3 months to completely outfit for service in the field and a routine maintenance schedule will be calendared. Total grant implementation will take 1 year and 3 months and the remaining time to be utilized for closeout reporting.

**Milestones:**

- 1. Vendor Quote: Completed**
- 2. Purchase Order Contract Issued: 0-1 Months**
- 3. Manufacture Vehicle: 12 Months**
- 4. VCFD Outfits Vehicle: 3 Months**
- 5. Fully implemented in 1 year and 3 months.**
- 6. Complete closeout reporting with VCTC**

**7) How will your agency measure the outcomes and impacts of that result from the capital asset funded with the Ventura County SAFE grant funds? If available, please share any evidence or research that supports your agency's proposal and expected outcomes.**

The regional collaboration between VCFD and VCSO whom operate the VCAU can measure the impact of the acquisition of a new fuel tender by reducing the time the aircraft is on the ground for refueling by possessing the ability to bring a new technologically advanced fuel tender to an incident scene or helispot/heliport. The single point fueling option that the new fuel tender would possess allows refueling while the aircraft is still running, which reduces the time that the aircraft is on the ground. Whether the aircraft is transporting critically injured patients from an emergency scene to a trauma center or combating a fast-moving brush fire, having the ability to keep the helicopter running during refueling saves valuable time. Also, the versatility of driving a fuel tender to a temporary unimproved impromptu land zone or designated heliport closer to the incident scene would prevent the helicopter from flying back to home quarters all the way to Camarillo Airport is a severe time lost supporting an incident.

In most emergency situations time is critical. Having this new fuel tender would afford us the opportunity to save time and adhere to what is referred to as the Golden Hour for treatment of medical patients. Essentially, the outcome of a person's health from the time of initial care to transportation to the nearest appropriate hospital for the associated ailment is time critical that this occurs within one hour of injuries for the best final survivability of the patient. VCFD Custodian of Record Division currently tracks all incident matrices for specific times of all responding equipment including the helicopters, locations, response times, call type, and resource usage. This is completed not only for the local jurisdiction but for FEMA's National Fire Information Reporting System which collects all data related to VCFD incidents including EMS, injuries, fatalities, fires, traffic collisions, hazard materials releases, flooding, ocean rescue, and technical rescues.

The life expectancy of a new technologically advanced fuel tender is over 20 years impacting the all first responder agencies for the long term. In raw economics, \$534,478 divided by 840,000 citizens of the Ventura County population served is 63 cents per citizen for 1 year. If you divide the .63 cents per citizen by the 20 year life span of a new tender that equates to a mere 3 cents per year for each citizen served.