

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION AND NOTICE OF INTENT

SLIP-ON TANKERS

INTRODUCTION

This is a Request for Information (RFI) and a Notice of Intent (NOI) regarding a requirement for wildland firefighting slip-on tankers. All interested parties needing one or more wildland firefighting slip-on tankers are requested to reply to this announcement.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) provides funding and authorizes the Department of the Interior (DOI) to develop and implement a pilot program to provide local governments and Tribal Nations financial assistance to acquire slip-on tanker units to establish fleets of vehicles that can be quickly converted to be operated as fire engines.

This RFI and NOI is being issued by the DOI, Interior Business Center, Acquisition Services Directorate as the acquisition authority, on behalf of the DOI. The Government is finalizing a plan to award grants for slip-on tankers through a competitive process over the next few years to entities who meet the established criteria.

SCOPE

Seeking entities such as a county, municipality, city, town, township, local public authority, school district, special district, intrastate district, council of governments (regardless of whether the council of governments is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law), regional or interstate government entity, or agency or instrumentality of a local government; an Indian Tribe or authorized Tribal entity, or an Alaska Native Village or Alaska Regional Native Corporation; a rural community, unincorporated town or village, or other public entity; state recognized nonprofit volunteer fire departments, including range and forest protection associations, that provide fire protection and other emergency services in support of local governments or Tribes needing slip-on tankers to improve the wildland firefighting readiness for their area of protection.

To ensure funding for slip-on tankers is provided to the entities with the greatest need, **minimal qualification criteria** as described below will be established:

- **Population:** Location serviced must have a population of 25,000 or less. Populations will be confirmed utilizing data from the United States Census Bureau [Census.gov](https://www.census.gov). Any Populations that cannot be confirmed utilizing data from the United States Census Bureau must be confirmed by other official means.
- **Fire Response Needs:** Location must have wildland fire response needs. A location's need for wildland fire response will be confirmed using the FEMA National Risk Index [Map | National Risk Index \(fema.gov\)](https://www.fema.gov/national-risk-index) for “Wildfire” in the “Census Tract View”. Locations must be located in or be touching a Census Tract with a “Relatively Moderate” Wildfire Risk rating or higher when utilizing the “Census Tract View”.

- **Vehicles:** Grantee must have appropriate vehicles for slip-on tanker units. Vehicles must be able to be mounted with a slip-on tanker meeting the minimum specifications located on “Attachment 1- Slip-on Firefighting Unit- Minimum Specifications.

The three criteria identified above are planned for the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), however, feedback from the RFI and NOI may result in a change to the minimum criteria. It is important those entities that have a need for slip-on tankers respond with information for the Government’s consideration.

The Government released this RFI and NOI to obtain critical information from entities that need slip-on tankers for wildfire suppression. Once the feedback is obtained, the Government plans to utilize the feedback to finalize and release a NOFO.

The NOFO will identify the maximum amount of funding planned for FY24, the maximum amount planned per grant and the approach to applying for that funding. The Government is considering limiting each servicing entity to no more than 2 slip-on tankers. Additionally, for consolidated applications covering multiple locations / service areas, the Government is considering limiting the funding requested to \$2M per application.

It is important for the Government to understand if applications will cover multiple locations (consolidated application) or just one location. The importance of that is to not only ensure parity across applicants but to establish the ceiling amounts for each grant to be funded.

The responses received to this RFI and NOI will also be utilized to determine the number of grants that may be reserved for Indian Tribes or authorized Tribal entities (or in Alaska, Native Villages or Alaska Regional Native Corporations).

Approach Being Considered

The Government intends to utilize a two phased approach for the application process to reduce the administrative burden on applicants and to prioritize efficient processing of the grants.

Phase One will require minimal information from the applicant confirming they meet the minimum criteria as well as providing high level requirements on the quantity of slip-on tankers planned by location(s), the cost, and the identification of key information for prioritization.

Those applications that meet the minimum requirements will then be prioritized to determine which applicants move to Phase Two. The prioritization is for processing and does not indicate applicants not selected for Phase Two do not meet the requirements. Those not selected to move to Phase Two are encouraged to submit at the next open cycle.

If selected to move to Phase Two, the applicant will be required to submit a full application package.

The Government anticipates having two grant award cycles per year with up to 25 grants awarded in each cycle for a total of 50 grants per fiscal year. The first cycle is anticipated to begin with applications due in October/November 2023 and awards occurring in March 2024. The second cycle is anticipated to begin with applications due in February/March 2024 and awards in July 2024. This cycle approach is expected to be utilized over the next several years to distribute all funding allocated to this project.

The Government may further allocate the grant awards for each cycle based on the category of applications. Categories may include applications covering multiple locations (consolidated application) OR one location OR Indian Tribes or authorized Tribal entities (or in Alaska, Native Villages or Alaska Regional Native Corporations).

For example: Of 25 grants that may be awarded in a cycle, 10 may be reserved for applications submitted for multiple locations (consolidated application), 10 for applications submitted for one location and 5 for applications submitted for Indian Tribes or authorized Tribal entities (or in Alaska, Native Villages or Alaska Regional Native Corporations). In this example scenario, the Wildfire Risk Index Score and Equitable Geographical Distribution would only be used to prioritize applications that fall into the same category.

For prioritization of applications, the following criteria, listed in descending order of importance will be used:

- Wildfire Risk:** Locations with a higher Wildfire Risk Index Score compared to other requests. A location’s Wildfire Risk Index Score is available on the FEMA National Risk Index. The Census Tract View will be used for scoring. See Map | National Risk Index (fema.gov). For the prioritization of applications submitted for multiple locations (consolidated application), the Government plans to use the average Wildfire Risk Index Score for all the locations included on the application.
- Equitable Geographical Distribution:** It is the Government’s desire that the slip-on tankers obtained through these grants be geographically distributed as equitably as possible. It is not the desire of the Government that the majority of the slip-on tankers obtained through these grants reside in one or a few States. As such, the Government may use the State in which an applicant’s location resides in addition to its Wildfire Risk Index Score for the purpose of prioritization. For example, if location “A” was selected to move to Phase Two and location “B” has the next highest Wildfire Risk Index Score but is located in the same State as “A”, the Government may prioritize moving to Phase Two with the next highest Wildfire Risk Index Score that resides in a different State. See below example.

Location	State	Wildfire Risk Index Score	Order of Prioritization
A	XX	98.8	1
B	XX	97.4	4
C	XY	96.8	2
D	XZ	95.3	3
E	XX	93.1	5

Full process example: When the NOFO is published, applicants can submit their streamlined Phase One application and will be evaluated to determine which applicants move to Phase Two. In this example scenario, 65 applications are submitted and 55 meet the minimum criteria. Of the 55, the Wildfire Risk Index Score and Equitable Geographical Distribution will be used to prioritize which 25 will advance to phase two (highest risk first). Additionally, this prioritization may occur for the different categories identified above. For those applicants that do not proceed to Phase Two, the application can be submitted again in the next cycle. Any applicant can submit during each NOFO; however, priority will be given to those locations that have not received a grant under this program.

Administrative costs for all recipients are limited to not more than 10% of the grant value.

In summary – for the two phased approach, there are minimum qualifications to establish eligibility and those applications meeting the qualification will be prioritized for processing. Additional parameters such as limiting a location to two slip-on tankers and consolidated applications to a maximum of \$2M are anticipated.

RFI OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this RFI and NOI is to gather comments and overall feedback on the scope and approach of this effort from interested parties that have a need for slip-on tankers. The information gathered will be used for acquisition planning. The RFI and NOI are for information and planning purposes only. It is not a commitment by the Government and responses to this inquiry cannot be accepted by the Government to form a binding grant. An announcement for applications is not a part of this RFI and NOI and no grants will be awarded from this announcement. No reimbursement will be made for any costs associated with providing information in response to this announcement and any follow-up information requests.

HOW TO RESPOND

Responses are due no later than 09 October 2023, 9:00 AM Eastern Time. Interested parties are advised to email their responses directly to Chelsea Whitten at aqd_owf_fa@ibc.doi.gov. The Government will acknowledge receipt of your response.

Questions may be submitted prior to the due date by email to aqd_owf_fa@ibc.doi.gov with the title “Slip-On Tankers” in the subject line. Please note, all responses are for informational purposes only, and interested parties responding to this RFI and NOI are not bound by the information in their responses.

All interested parties shall include the following in their responses. **For convenience, it is preferred that interested parties respond utilizing the Excel template found with this notice.**

Q1: Name of Interested Party

Q2: Type of Interested Party

Q3: City

Q4: State

Q5: Primary POC

Q6: Email Address

Q7: Phone Number

Q8: Is your entity registered in Sam.gov? (All grant recipients must have an active listing in Sam.gov)

Q9: The government anticipates that some entities may want to submit their own application as well as some entities may join together and submit one consolidated application. The individual application referenced is when one entity applies for consideration for their individual needs for their specific area of support. The consolidated application is when one entity applies with their requirements and in addition includes those requirements from other entities at other locations. For consolidated applications, all locations must meet the minimum requirements. Consolidation of requests could have benefits in reduced administrative workload for entities and potentially cost savings for bulk ordering. Which of the following approach would you most likely take?

- a. Submit an application for just your entity.
- b. Submit an application for you and include other entities.
- c. Include your requirements in an application submitted by another entity.
- d. Other (please explain on Q12)

Q10: If you selected b above, please list the total number of locations and provide additional information on other entities on the following tab(s). How many total locations are you including under your entity?

Q11: If you selected c above, what other entity would you most likely partner with to have your requirements in their application?

Q12: If you selected d above please explain

Q13: The Government may limit each entity to 2 slip-on tankers to ensure as many locations needing tankers receive them. Do you think the Government should limit each location and if so, what would the limit be?

Q14: The Government may limit the maximum value of each grant to be processed to ensure wide disbursement of funding. The Government is considering limiting each consolidated grant amount at \$2M. What amount do you think the limit should be?

Q15: When establishing the prioritization criteria that will be used to identify which applicants will be considered in each cycle, are there additional parameters not stated that the Government should use that will ensure those with the greatest need receive the slip-on tankers first?

Q16: Is the population you service 25,000 or less?

Q17: Is the population you service verifiable through the United States Census Bureau Census.gov?

Q18: If "No" to question 17, what source do you use for your population data?

Q19: Is the location you service located in or touching a Census Tract with a "Relatively Moderate" Wildfire Risk rating or higher when utilizing the "Census Tract View" of the FEMA National Risk Index Map | National Risk Index (fema.gov)?

Q20: What is your Wildfire Risk score?

Q21: Does your entity possess vehicles able to be mounted with a slip-on tanker meeting the minimum specifications located on “Attachment 1- Slip-on Firefighting Unit- Minimum Specifications”?

Q22: If “No” to question 21, when would you have vehicles available?

Q23: What vehicle types (make/model) do you plan to utilize for the slip-on tankers?

Q24: If you do not meet the basic minimum criteria, what adjustment could be made so that you meet the criteria?

Q25: Do you have slip-on Tankers now?

Q26: If “Yes”, how many?

Q27: If “Yes”, are new ones from this program to replace existing or increase capacity?

Q28: What need would a slip-on tanker(s) under this program provide for your organization?

Q29: Do you recommend any adjustments to the specifications required for the Slip-on Tankers?

Q30: If “Yes” to question 29, what adjustments would you recommend?

Q31: Do you have a source identified where you would procure your slip-on tanker?

Q32: If yes, what is the current estimated lead time in months for delivery after ordered?

Q33: In months, how long do you think it would take from effective date of the grant to have your slip-on tanker ordered, delivered, and serviceable?

Q34: What other information do you think the Government should consider before releasing the first NOFO?

Q35: How many Slip-on Tankers does your organization plan to request through this grant in the following calendar years:

2024:

2025:

2026:

2027:

2028:

2029:

2030:

All interested parties that responded above with “b. Submit an application for you and include other entities” to Q9 shall include the following in their response for each additional entity they intend to include in their application.

Q1: Name of Interested Party

Q2: Type of Interested Party

Q3: City

Q4: State

Q5: Is the population you service 25,000 or less?

Q6: Is the population you service verifiable through the United States Census Bureau Census.gov?

Q7: If “No” to question 6, what source do you use for your population data?

Q8: Is the location you service located in or touching a Census Tract with a “Relatively Moderate” Wildfire Risk rating or higher when utilizing the “Census Tract View” of the FEMA National Risk Index Map | National Risk Index (fema.gov)?

Q9: What is your Wildfire Risk rating?

Q10: Does your entity possess vehicles able to be mounted with a slip-on tanker meeting the minimum specifications located on “Attachment 1- Slip-on Firefighting Unit- Minimum Specifications”?

Q11: If “No” to question 10, when would you have vehicles available?

Q12: What vehicle types (make/model) do you plan to utilize for the slip-on tankers?

Q13: If you do not meet the basic minimum criteria, what adjustment could be made so that you meet the criteria?

Q14: Do you have slip-on Tankers now?

Q15: If “Yes”, how many?

Q16: If “Yes”, are new ones from this program to replace existing or increase capacity?

Q17: What need would a slip-on tanker(s) under this program provide for your organization?

Q18: How many Slip-on Tankers does your organization plan to request through this grant in the following calendar years:

2024:

2025:

2026:

2027:

2028:

2029:

2030:

Attachment 1- Slip-on Firefighting Unit- Minimum Specifications

The following specifications are for a complete slip-on firefighting unit. The entire slip-on unit shall be mounted on a rectangular platform that is integrated with the water storage tank that can accommodate forklift blades or has integral lifting points. The slip-on unit shall have minimum dimensions of 78 inches long by 48 inches wide (± 0.25 inches). The fully loaded weight of the completed unit shall not exceed the gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of the host chassis.

All fasteners and adjustable plumbing brackets used shall be stainless steel. All tubing shall use metal fittings, rated to 500 pounds per square inch and requiring no special tools. No underside nuts or bolts shall be used. Non-slit corrugated loom shall cover all water lines.

The electrical function of the slip-on unit shall be wired to operate only when the master switch is ON.

Pump Motor – Minimum 18 HP output.

- The pump shall be driven by a four-cycle Gas powered auxiliary air-cooled 4- cycle California Air Resources Board (CARB) compliant electric start engine with backup recoil starter, fixed mounted on the rear and integrated on the slip-on unit.
- The pump motor exhaust shall include a US Forest Service (USFS) qualified spark arrestor.
- The pump motor shall include a fuel tank with a two-gallon (minimum) capacity, increasing commensurate to tank water capacity.
- The pump unit shall be equipped with a low-pressure shutdown switch set at manufacturer's recommended safe pressure.

- The pump motor shall be equipped with low oil protection.
- All serviceable items such as air filters, oil filters, drains, and fuel pumps shall be accessible for routine maintenance without tools.
- There shall be custom fabricated polished aluminum tread plate safety shield(s) to prevent damage or injury if the potential exists for loose clothing, hands, or foreign objects to enter any other moving parts of the auxiliary pump.
- The pump motor shall carry a three-year (minimum) warranty.

Pump - The pump shall be capable of delivering the minimum performance requirements from the tank, and at a 5-foot lift through 24 feet of 1½-inch suction hose and a suction strainer. The pump shall be capable of achieving the same minimum performance criteria when water supply is from the water tank through the tank to the pump valve.

Pump Certification - The pump, when dry, shall be capable of taking suction and discharging water in compliance with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1900 (previously 1906). The pump shall be tested at the manufacturer's facility. The conditions of the pump test shall be as outlined and in accordance with current NFPA 1901 (previously 1906).

The pump shall deliver the percentage of rated capacities at pressures indicated: 100% of rated capacities at 150 PSI (1000KPA) net pump pressure.

The pump manufacturer shall certify that the pump can deliver the following minimum capacities as measured at the pump head:

50 GPM at 100 psi net pump pressure
30 GPM at 150 psi net pump pressure
200 psi shutoff pressure

The pump shall have a self-adjusting mechanical pump seal.

Foam System- Optional selection by ordering entity.

Plumbing- All plumbing components shall be fabricated from stainless steel or brass and high-pressure flexible hose where appropriate. All plumbing components shall be designed to allow easy disassembly of components for repairs and maintenance. Full-flow quarter turn ball valves shall be used throughout. All visible quarter turn ball valves shall be in the closed position when the valve handle is perpendicular to the run of the pipe and in the open position when the handle is parallel to the run of the pipe. Any blind valves shall be labeled "open" and "closed." All controls shall be accessible from the ground without climbing onto the utility, platform, or pickup bed.

Valve labeling - Each valve shall be labeled as to its function immediately adjacent to the valve control. The valves shall be labeled in accordance with the US Forest Service valve numbering system in common use with off-road firefighting agencies. A placard with an identification key shall be affixed at the rear of the apparatus.

- Suction Side -

- a manual hand diaphragm primer. The primer shall be equipped with an internal or external check valve. The primer valve shall be labeled #6. The primer shall develop 17 inches of HG vacuum, prime and pump water from a 10-foot lift in 30 seconds (maximum) and pump water from a 17-foot lift.
- Overboard Suction supply through a minimum 2-inch NH Valve (labeled #8).
- A Y strainer shall be installed prior to the pump to strain water from both overboard suction and tank. The strainer shall have a screw-off cap to allow access and easy cleaning of the filter element in the field.
- Tank to Pump line shall be 2-inch (minimum) with valve labeled #1.
- two (2), eight-foot x 2-inch sections of not collapsible, clear PVC suction hose with appropriate female fittings to attach to Overboard suction and male fittings to attach to foot valve.
- one (1), two-inch foot valve barrel strainer with appropriated fitting to attach to the suction hose.
- Discharge Side–
 - The pump to tank line shall be 1- inch (minimum). The pump to tank line shall include a check valve prior to a quarter turn shut off (labeled #2). A 1/8-inch pump cooler line shall be installed and plumbed around the pump to tank valve and into the tank fill tower. The cooler line shall include a shut off valve (labeled #17).
 - One (1) 1.5-inch NH rear discharge valve (labeled #3) with chrome cap and aircraft cable retainer shall be installed.
 - One (1) booster hose reel with 1-inch net positive suction head (NPSH) outlet, and capacity for 100 feet of 1-inch inside diameter REELTEX® hose, shall be provided and mounted on the tank module. The reel shall be installed in a fashion that allows unobstructed hose deployment on both the driver and passenger side of the vehicle. Chrome outriggers, spools and roller assemblies shall be installed on both sides of the reel (driver and passenger sides). A one inch (minimum) flexible line shall be plumbed from the discharge plumbing manifold to the hose reel, the line shall be equipped with quarter turn shut off valve (labeled #4) to turn off water supply in the event the supply line or hose on the reel is damaged. The water supply inlet shall be equipped with a 90-degree swivel joint. The reel shall be provided with a 12- volt electric rewind and brake.
 - A check valve(s) shall be installed on each discharge.
 - A placard shall be installed on the slip-on unit with detailed pump operation steps/instructions.
- Winterization
 - The pump shall have a drain (labeled #11) at the bottom of the volute that will fully drain the pump.
 - All plumbing shall be capable of being drained for winterization by opening all valves.
 - The tank shall be capable of being drained with gravity (through the tank to pump and suction valves) or retaining the tank water when the plumbing is drained.
 - A placard shall be installed on the slip-on unit with detailed steps/instructions for proper winterization.

Printed Materials for the Pump -

One set of printed operation, service, and parts manuals shall be provided. Each manual shall be presented with a table of contents. Manuals shall contain the following:

- Operating instructions, descriptions, specifications, and ratings for the chassis, installed components, and auxiliary systems.
- Warnings and cautions pertaining to the operation and maintenance of the fire apparatus and firefighting systems.
- Charts, tables, checklists, and illustrations relating to lubrication, cleaning, troubleshooting, diagnostics, and inspections.
- Instructions regarding the frequency and procedure for recommended maintenance.
- Maintenance instructions for the repair and replacement of installed components.
- Parts listing with descriptions and illustrations for identification.

Controls/Gauges/Lights-

Any connection to the chassis shall be provided with easy access to simplify and accommodate removal of the unit. A brushed stainless steel control panel shall be provided and located rear-facing. The panel shall be appropriately sized with the controls positioned in a methodical, user-friendly format. The panel shall have an extended top to assist in weather protection and to house the panel light. The Control Panel shall be equipped with

- a switch for plumbing area lighting,
- a Liquid filled 2.5-inch (minimum) freeze protected 0-300 psi pressure gauge,
- an hour meter,
- ignition start/stop switch,
- Twist type throttle control,
- choke, low pressure shut down switch, and
- primer controls (if electric). Manual primer controls may be located elsewhere in an easily accessible location.
- The plumbing area **and** controls shall be equipped with weatherproof LED lighting.

The Tank shall be equipped with a sight gauge to view the level of water.

Each valve shall be labeled as to its function immediately adjacent to the valve control. The valves shall be labeled in accordance with the US Forest Service valve numbering system in common use with off-road firefighting agencies. A placard with an identification key shall be affixed at the rear of the apparatus.

Water Tank

Water Tank design to maximize water carrying capability while limiting negative effect on chassis center of gravity and stability.

- The water tank shall be constructed from ½ (minimum) Polypropylene and have a capacity minimum capacity of 100 Gallons and maximum capacity of 850 Gallons. This material shall be non-corrosive stress relieved thermoplastic, be black in color and U.V. stabilized for maximum protection.
- The tank assembly shall be provided with provisions for securely attaching to a pickup bed with accessible hardware for easy removal using a hoist or forklift.
- The tank assembly shall have a lifetime warranty to cover defects in workmanship and materials for the service life of the vehicle.
- The tank shall be designed to be completely independent of the platform structure.

- All joints and seams shall be nitrogen- welded inside and out.
- All exposed edges on the tank and fill tower shall be rounded off to a ¼- inch radius.
- The tank shall have a manual fill tower (labeled WATER) with debris strainer, located on the top at the rear. The fill tower cap shall be provided with a hinged cover with hinges placed on the cab side. The fill tower shall be constructed of same material as the rest of the tank and shall have a minimum dimension of 6 inches by 6 inches outer perimeter.
- The water tank shall be vented.
- The tank construction shall meet all baffling requirements of NFPA 1900 (previously NFPA 1906), latest edition.
- The tank shall be equipped with an internal piping that terminates ½ inches from the bottom of a sump. The sump shall have a 1.5-inch outlet on the bottom for cleanout and draining.
- The tank shall be equipped with an anti-cavitation device.
- The tank assembly shall include integrated storage for 200 feet of 1-inch synthetic hose, and the compartment or tray shall allow the hose to be pre-connected to the #3 discharge.

Electrical System -

1 – Qwik-connector (or equivalent) for the 12volt battery to skid unit connection. 4’ of 4-gauge (red) and 4’ of 4 - gauge (black) battery cables along with male and female connectors are supplied by the manufacturer.

Slip on Unit Warranties

The polypropylene water tank that is specified to be supplied with this slip-on unit shall be warranted by the water tank manufacturer for a “lifetime” period from the date that the slip- on is put into service. The manufacturer shall repair, at no cost to the purchaser, any problems caused by defective materials and/or workmanship. The warranty shall cover the reasonable costs of removing the water tank from the apparatus and reinstalling it after the completion of the covered warranty repairs.

All other materials and workmanship herein specified, including all equipment furnished, shall be guaranteed for a period of ten years after the acceptance date of the apparatus, unless otherwise noted, with the exception of any normal maintenance services or adjustments which shall be required.

Under this warranty, the apparatus manufacturer shall be responsible for the costs of repairs to the apparatus that have been caused by defective workmanship or materials during this period.