

FY 2020 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program

The AFG Program will make \$319.5 million directly available to eligible applicants to enhance their response capabilities to, and more effectively protect the health and safety of the public and emergency response personnel from, fire and other related hazards.

Overview

The AFG Program is one of three grant programs that constitute the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) focus on enhancing the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire and related hazards. Since fiscal year (FY) 2001, the AFG Program has awarded approximately \$7.7 billion in grants to provide critically needed resources that equip and train emergency personnel to recognized standards, enhance operational efficiencies, foster interoperability, and support community resilience. The total amount appropriated for the FY 2020 AFG Program initiative is \$355 million. From this appropriation amount:

- The FY 2020 AFG Program will award \$319.5 million to an estimated 2,000 eligible first-responder organizations that need support to improve their capability to respond to fires and emergencies of all types, and
- The FY 2020 Fire Prevention & Safety (FP&S) Grant Program will award \$35.5 million to fire departments and non-profit organizations to support fire prevention and firefighter health and safety research and development (note that the FP&S Grant Program is a separate grant program and will have its own Notice of Funding Opportunity [NOFO] and application period).

Purpose

The purpose of the AFG Program is to award grants directly to fire departments, nonaffiliated EMS organizations, and SFTAs to enhance their ability to protect the health and safety of the public, as well as that of first-responder personnel. Using a competitive process that is informed by fire service subject matter experts, grants are awarded to eligible applicants whose applications best address the priorities of the AFG Program.

Funding

In FY 2020, the DHS Appropriations Act, 2020 (Pub. L. No. 116-93) appropriated a total of \$355 million to support the AFG Program. Under the AFG Program's authorizing statute, the Fire prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. § 2229), no less than 10 percent of the appropriated funds must support fire prevention and safety activities, which include assisting fire prevention programs and supporting firefighter health and safety research and



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development. Therefore, no less than \$35.5 million of the appropriation must be awarded for fire prevention and safety activities under the FP&S Program. The remaining \$319.5 million will be awarded in competitive grants to fire departments, non-affiliated EMS organizations, and SFTAs. Further, under the Fire prevention and Control Act, funding for vehicles is limited to 25 percent of the total FY 2020 AFG Program appropriation. Finally, no less than 3.5 percent of available grant funds shall fund emergency medical services provided by fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations, and no more than 3 percent of available grant funds shall be collectively awarded to all SFTA recipients. **Please refer to the FY 2020 AFG Program NOFO for additional information and guidance on these requirements.**

Eligibility

Eligible applicants for the FY 2020 AFG Program include fire departments, nonaffiliated EMS organizations, and SFTAs operating in any of the 50 states, as well as fire departments in the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico¹, or any federally recognized Indian tribe or tribal organization. The definitions of eligible applicants are below.

Definitions

- A *fire department* is an agency or organization that has a formally recognized arrangement with a state, territory, or local government (city, county, parish, fire district, township, town, village, or other governing body) to provide fire suppression on a first-due basis to a fixed geographical area.
- A *nonaffiliated EMS organization* is an agency or organization that is a public or private nonprofit emergency medical service entity providing medical transport that is not affiliated with a hospital and does not serve a geographic area in which emergency medical services are adequately provided by a fire department.

FEMA considers the following as hospitals under the AFG Program:

- Clinics
- Medical centers
- Medical college or university
- Infirmary
- Surgery centers
- Any other institution, association, or foundation providing medical, surgical, or psychiatric care and/or treatment for the sick or injured

¹ The District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are all defined as "States" in the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974.

- SFTAs operate in any of the 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Applicants must be designated either by legislation or by a Governor’s declaration as the sole fire service training agency within a state, territory, or the District of Columbia. The designated SFTA shall be the only agency/bureau/division, or entity within that state, territory, or the District of Columbia, eligible to apply.

Program Highlights

Under the FY 2020 AFG Program, eligible organizations may apply for grants under the following activities:

Operations and Safety

- Grant projects funded include professional training, wellness and fitness programs and equipment, personal protective equipment, modifications to facilities, and supplies that support firefighting and non-affiliated EMS operations and safety. Nr

Vehicle Acquisition: Fire Departments and Non-Affiliated EMS Organizations

- Eligible apparatuses include, but are not limited to, pumpers, aerials, quints, brush trucks, tankers/tenders, rescue vehicles, and ambulances.

Regional Grants

- Regional projects in which multiple organizations (fire and/or non-affiliated EMS organizations) serving more than one local jurisdiction would benefit directly from the activities requested with grant funds.

SFTAs

- SFTAs are eligible to apply for critically needed resources to protect the public, train emergency personnel, and foster interoperability and support community resilience.

Application Process and Evaluation Criteria

AFG Program applications are reviewed through a multi-phase process. All complete and eligible applications are electronically pre-scored and ranked based on the substance of the application, relative to the established funding priorities as published in the NOFO. Applications most consistent with the established AFG Program funding priorities score the highest and are determined to be in the “competitive range” and will undergo further evaluation by a peer review panel, comprised of representatives from the fire service and non-affiliated EMS organizations.

A minimum of three peer review panelists evaluate the applications using the Narrative Statement, answers to general questions, and answers to activity-specific questions. Under the AFG program, peer review panels consist of members of the nation’s fire service. Peer review panels do not include federal government employees. Each application is judged on its own merits against established criteria and is not compared to other applications.

The funding priorities differ for fire departments, non-affiliated EMS organizations, and SFTAs. The funding priorities and evaluation criteria are developed from recommendations provided by a criteria development panel, composed of fire service professionals representing the major fire service organizations.

Applications most consistent with the established AFG Program funding priorities that score the highest will undergo a Technical Review by the FEMA Program Office to assess the request with respect to costs, quantities, feasibility, eligibility, and recipient responsibility.

Program Coordination

The following entities were involved in developing the FY 2020 AFG Program guidance:

DHS

- FEMA
- U.S. Fire Administration

Major Fire Service Organizations

- International Association of Fire Chiefs
- International Association of Fire Fighters
- National Volunteer Fire Council
- National Fire Protection Association
- National Association of State Fire Marshals
- International Association of Arson Investigators
- International Society of Fire Service Instructors
- North American Fire Training Directors
- Congressional Fire Services Institute

AFG Program Resources

For additional information on the FY 2020 AFG Program, please visit our web site at:

<https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters/assistance-grants>.

You may also contact the AFG Program Help Desk at (866) 274-0960 or by e-mail at firegrants@fema.dhs.gov. The AFG Program Help Desk is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. ET.