FY 2014 and FY 2015 SAFER R&R Grant User Guide

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Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to help you effectively manage your Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Recruitment and Retention (R&R) grant. This guide explains how to complete required grant reports, request reimbursement, and comply with grant requirements. Anyone involved in administering this grant should read this guide.

If you have not already done so, please review the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and the Frequently Asked Questions for your grant award. These documents are available at http://www.fema.gov/staffing-adequate-fire-emergency-responseGrants-documents.

Please also review the *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* in the Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) at 2 C.F.R. Part 200. This is a set of mandatory requirements that apply to all federal awards to non-federal entities, including FY 2015 SAFER grants. This regulation (also commonly referred to as the "Super Circular" or "Omni Circular") is available at: http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=99467092f4efd4f51b40e8ab9ba52d04&mc=true&node=pt2.1.200&rgn=div5.

This user guide is for technical assistance purposes only, and does not represent the terms and conditions of your SAFER award. Please note that in case of any discrepancy, the terms of your award package, including the SAFER NOFO and 2 C.F.R. Part 200, are the terms and conditions that govern your SAFER award.

If you still have questions after reading the NOFO and this guide, you should first contact the Help Desk at 866-274-0960 or send an email to firegrants@fema.dhs.gov. If the Help Desk cannot answer your question, you will then be referred to a SAFER Program Office Point of Contact (POC). Please be ready to provide your grant number if you contact either the Help Desk or your SAFER POC.

This guide is arranged in chronological order. Please use the Table of Contents to find a topic.

Grant File

Pursuant to 2 C.F.R. Part 200, including 2 C.F.R. § 200.302 – Financial Management, and the Record Retention and Access requirements at 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.333 – 200.337, your department is required to maintain a file, notebook, or binder for this SAFER grant. The following documents should be kept in the file (as applicable):
- NOFO and FAQs;
- grant application;
- award document;
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for this grant;
- method of account for pay-per-call and stipend activity (Logbook);
- evidence of training accomplished with SAFER funding;
- documentation to support the salary and benefit costs requested for an R&R Coordinator, including a breakdown of benefits provided;
- invoices for all SAFER funded activities and equipment (PPE, Supplies, Marketing, etc.);
- grant writer contracts/invoices;
- documentation of other SAFER-funded activities;
- Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP) form and notice of approval;

- documentation of procurement practices or procedures;
- copies of bid or quote solicitations;
- copies of signed contracts
- indirect cost rate agreement, if applicable;
- documentation that medical physicals were given or certifications achieved; and
- paper copies of important communications regarding the grant.

Note that 2 C.F.R Part 200 includes several rules about how to properly use and document federal funds used for funding the salaries and fringe benefits of personnel. In particular, please read 2 C.F.R. §200.430 *Compensation—personal services* and 2 C.F.R. §200.431 *Compensation—fringe benefits.*

Your department must retain grant files and supporting documentation for three years after receipt of the official notification that the grant has been closed. See the Record Retention and Access requirements at 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.333 – 200.337.

Please note that FEMA can ask to review your grant file.

eGrant Application Portal Access

You may access your SAFER grant through the eGrant application portal link at http://www.fema.gov/eGrant-application-access. At the bottom of the webpage, select "Continue to the eGrant Application Portal."

Use your department's user ID and password to log into the eGrant system. Each department should have one user ID and password to access all Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) awards and applications. The user ID and password may need to be made available to several people at your department, including the Primary POC and designated alternates.

If you forgot your user ID and/or password, please follow the directions at:
https://edit.fema.gov/assistance-firefighters-grant-program-most-frequently-asked-questions

Please note that the eGrant system only supports Internet Explorer browsers 6.0 or higher. You will not be able to access the system using any other browser. To prevent issues, you should not have multiple windows open when accessing the eGrant system.

If at any time you experience an issue with the eGrant system or it does not appear to work as explained in this guide, please contact the Help Desk.

Award Package

Follow these steps to access your SAFER grant award package:

- Log into the eGrant application portal.
- On the "Status" screen, scroll down until you find your SAFER grant.
- Select "View Award Packages" from the drop-down menu in the "Action" column, and click "Go."

- You will arrive at the "Award Status" page, which provides links to "View Award Package" and "Print Award Package". The "Award Status" page also contains your SAFER grant number, award amount, and award notification date.
- Be sure to carefully read your entire Award Package as it contains valuable information pertaining to proper management of your grant. In particular, make sure to read the "negotiation comments" section, which may include special conditions or adjustments to your grant award.

Points of Contact

Profile POC
There is only one Profile Point of Contact (POC) for your department in the eGrants system. Updating the Profile POC on one grant will cause the Profile POC to be changed on all other department grants submitted under the same user ID. If you do not wish to do this, consider changing the Primary POC or one of the Alternate Contacts instead (see below). The Profile POC will receive automated e-mail messages from AFG, so this individual should be able to check and respond to messages frequently.

Follow these steps to update the information for the Profile POC:
- Log into the eGrant application portal.
- On the "Status" screen, select the "Edit Profile" link at the top right side of the screen.
- Update any of the following fields:
  - Personal Information (Title, First Name, Last Name)
  - Address (Street, City, State, Zip code)
  - Additional Address (Street, City, State, Zip code)
  - Contact (Organization, Business Phone, Home phone, Mobile Phone, Email)
  - Identity Confirmation Information (Date of Birth, Mother's Maiden Name)
- Click "Submit."
- You will receive a confirmation screen that your profile has been updated.
- If you would like to update the password associated with the user Id, you can click on "password" on the left side of the screen. After updating the password, click "Submit."
- To update the system with your changes, click on the "Authorized Applications" link on the upper left-hand side of the "Thank You" page, and then click on "Firefighter's Grants."

Primary POC and Alternate Contacts
While there is only one Profile POC for your department, you can assign different contacts to different AFG grants. In the SAFER application, your department was required to list a Primary POC and two Alternate Contacts.   The Primary POC must be an officer, member, or employee of your department that has the authority to make decisions on and to act upon this grant. Alternate Contacts must be familiar with the grant and must be able to answer any questions relative to the grant in the event that Primary Point of Contact is unavailable. All information (i.e., email address, phone number, etc.) must be specific to the contact person listed.

Follow these steps to change or update the Primary POC or Alternate Contacts:
- Log into the eGrant application portal.
- On the "Status" screen, scroll down until you find your SAFER grant.
- Select "Manage Grant" from the drop-down menu in the "Action" column, and click "Go."

- Click on "Update Alternate Contacts" on the menu bar on the left side of the screen.
- Click on "Create New Request."
- Use the text box to explain which contact you would like to replace or what contact information you would like to update. Be sure to follow the instructions listed on the screen and provide the name, title, primary and secondary phone numbers as well as the email address for the new contact person.
- At the bottom of the page, enter your password, check the box, and select "Save and Continue."
- Review your information and select "Submit Request."
- Once submitted, this request can take several weeks to process because it must be entered manually into the application by grants management staff. You can check to see if the change is made by looking at the application. To access the application, select "View Application" from the pull down menu in the "Action" column of the grant status page.

Please note that you will not be able to submit any payment requests, performance reports, or amendments while this revision request is pending.

Payment Request POC
You can list a unique POC in connection with each Payment Request (refer to that section below). This POC will not receive automated e-mails from eGrants.

Quarterly Performance Report POC
You can list a unique POC in connection with each Quarterly Performance Report (refer to that section below). This POC will not receive automated emails from eGrants.

Linking Another User within eGrants

As stated above, there is one Profile Point of Contact (POC) for your department. However, the Profile POC can grant other users permission to access a grant application or manage a grant. This allows each person to have an individual username and password.

Example: A Fire Chief may be the Profile POC for the department and the individual that is authorized to sign the application and reports. He can give his administrative assistant permission to access the grant. The administrative assistant would need to create a new account and password, and then request permission to link to the main account. After the Fire Chief grants access, the administrative assistant can re-enter the system, fill out the application or reports, and then sign out. The Fire Chief can then log in under his username and password in order to review the information and submit the application or report.

The new user should follow these steps to create a new account and link it to the main account:

- Start at the eGrant application portal and click on "New Non-PIV User".
- On the next page, complete all required fields, including:
    - Personal Information
    - Login Information
        - Remember to note your username
    - Address
    - Additional address (if necessary)
    - Contact(s)

- ▪ You must enter the organization information **exactly** how it appears in your grant application/award
  - o Identity Confirmation Information
- On the next page, create your personal password
- On the next page, select "Click Here to Request New Privileges"
- On the next page, select "Request Access" under "Fire Grants"
- You will land on the "Status" Page. Click on "check to see if someone has already started an application for your organization." If an application has been started, you can request access from the application owner or, if you feel that this person is not an appropriate representative of your organization, you should call the Help Desk at 1-866-274-0960.
- On the next page, search for your <u>organization, making sure to spell the name</u> exactly as it appears in your grant application/award. Click "Request Access" next to the organization you would like to be linked to.
  - o The eGrants system will send an e-mail to the Profile POC asking them to give you access. You will not have access to the application until the Profile POC officially grants you access.
- Next, the Profile POC should login to the main account using their username and password. On the "Status" page, they will need to find the grant and select "Grant/Revoke Access" from the dropdown in the "Action" column.
- They will land on the "Approve Users" page, which will have a list of the individuals that requested access to the grant application. They should select "Update" in the "Action" column next to the new user.
- The Profile POC should review the information on the next page and click either "approve" or "deny" and then "save and continue."
- If the Profile POC selected "approve," the new user will then have access to the application after logging into the eGrants system under their personal username and password.

eGrants Mail Center

The Profile POC will receive automated e-mails from the eGrants system. All system-generated e-mails are stored in the eGrants Mail Center. If you receive an e-mail directly from your SAFER Program Office POC, that e-mail will not be stored in the eGrants Mail Center.

After you log into eGrants, select "Mail Center" in the upper right corner of the "Status" page. You will arrive at the "New Messages" page. This page shows messages that have not yet been read. You can access messages that have been read by selecting "Old Messages" on the top left side of the screen. Next to the "Old Messages" link, you will find a "Sent Messages" link. The "Sent Messages" screen contains a record of all the e-mails that your department has sent to AFG staff through the eGrants system.

All three pages in the Mail Center contain a "Compose Message" link. You may use this feature to send the SAFER Program Office staff a message about your grant. If you do so, please make sure you specify the number of your SAFER grant in the message. Your message will be forwarded to your SAFER Program Office POC. You may also contact your POC directly by telephone or e-mail, if you already have their contact information.

If you are the Profile POC and you are not receiving automated e-mails from the eGrants system, please follow the instructions at: http://www.fema.gov/assistance-firefighters-grant-program-most-frequently-asked-questions. To prevent blocked e-mails, you can update your computer's browser security settings

to receive email from firegrants@fema.dhs.gov, afg@fema.dhs.gov, and EOPS@fema.dhs.gov. Please note, however, that email addresses with a ".ci" extension may not accept system-generated emails.

SAM.gov Registration

System for Award Management (SAM) is an official government registration system that is required for all recipients of federal funding. Registration with SAM is free and active for one year.

FEMA will not process any payment requests, revision requests, or amendments if you do not have an active SAM registration or if there is a mismatch between the information in SAM, the information in your application, and the information on your 1199A Direct Deposit Form. The following information must match:

- Organization's name
- Address
- DUNS (Data Universal Numbering System) number
- EIN (Employer Identification Number)
- Banking information (type of account, routing number, and account number)

If the above information changes during the course of this grant, you will need to:

- Update your SAM registration at www.sam.gov
- Update your 1199A Direct Deposit Form (see instructions below)
- Update your application
  - To update your application please contact 866-927-5646 to be directed to a Grant Management Specialist.

If you need assistance with SAM:

- Visit the AFG System for Award Management Resource Page at: http://www.fema.gov/rules-tools/system-award-management
- Visit www.sam.gov and click on the "Help" link
- Contact the Federal Support Desk at https://www.fsd.gov
- Call (866) 606-8220 (toll-free) to speak with a representative

If you need assistance with DUNs, call 1-866-705-5711 or visit http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform. Your organization should use one DUNs number for all FEMA applications and grants.

1199A Direct Deposit Form

In order to receive grant funds, you must complete an 1199A Direct Deposit Form. There is one form for all AFG grants and you may list only one bank account on the form. The form is stored in eGrants. You may need to consult with your department's financial office or treasurer to complete the form.

Please remember that the information you provide on the form _must_ match the information you entered in SAM.gov (see above).

Follow these steps to _submit your first_ 1199A Direct Deposit Form:

- Log into the eGrant application portal.
- On the "Status" screen, find your first AFG grant, select "Update SF-1199a" from the drop-down menu in the "Action" column, and click "Go."
- After completing the form, click "Save and Continue" and then select "Submit."

- Select "Print SF-1199a," and bring a copy of the form to your department's bank.
- The "Person Entitled to Payment" will need to sign the form and your bank will need to complete Section 3 (bottom portion).
- Once the form is complete, please fax it to Jennifer Herndon at 301-998-8699 or send it by e-mail attachment to jennifer.herndon@associates.fema.dhs.gov. You should keep the original form in your grant file.
    - o Please allow 7 business days for the form to be processed. If you have any questions, you can contact Jennifer Herndon (at 301-998-8653), the Help Desk (at 866-274-0960), or your Grants Management Specialist (at 866-927-5646).

Follow these steps to *view* the department's 1199A Direct Deposit Form (after it has been submitted):
- Log into the eGrant application portal.
- On the "Status" screen, find your department's *first* AFG grant award.
- Select "View 1199A" from the drop-down menu in the "Action" column, and click "Go."
- You will arrive at the "Direct Deposit Sign-up Form" page. This page will show a list of all the AFG grants associated with your 1199A Direct Deposit Form. You will also see the 1199A Direct Deposit form in the "read only" view.

Follow these steps to *update* the form 1199A Direct Deposit Form:
- Log into the eGrant application portal.
- On the "Status" screen, find your recently-awarded SAFER grant, select "Update SF-1199a" from the drop-down menu in the "Action" column, and click "Go."
    - o If that feature is not available, check the drop-down menu to your first award from AFG. If you do not find an "Update SF-1199a" link there, please contact Jennifer Herndon and request that the form be released to you for correction. She may be reached at Jennifer.Herndon@associates.fema.dhs.gov or 301 998-8653. You may also contact your Grants Management Specialist at 866-927-5646.
- Update the 1199A Direct Deposit Form in eGrants once you are able to access it through the "Update SF-1199a" feature.
- After completing the form, click "Save and Continue" and then select "Submit."
- If you receive a confirmation message, no further action required. However, if you are directed to "Print SF-1199a," you will need to print a copy of the form and bring it to your department's bank. The "Person Entitled to Payment" will need to sign the form and your bank will need to complete Section 3 (bottom portion). Once the form is complete, please fax it to Jennifer Herndon at 301-998-8699 or send it by e-mail attachment to Jennifer.Hernson@associates.fema.dhs.gov. You should keep the original form in your grant file.
- Please allow 7 business days for the form to be processed. If you have any questions, you can contact Jennifer Herndon (at 301-998-8653), the Help Desk (at 866-274-0960), or your Grants Management Specialist (at 866-927-5646).

Remember, if you made any corrections to your 1199A Direct Deposit Form, you will have to make the corresponding changes to your SAM.gov registration.

Period of Performance

Your department has a period of 90 days after the date your application was approved for award to gather resources, initiate processes, and to finalize contracts needed to implement SAFER Grant

activities. This is known as the "recruitment period." Your grant period of performance (POP) starts after the recruitment period ends. You can find your grant POP in a number of places in the eGrant system, including in the Award Package and on the SAFER Payment Request(s) screen.

If your department is able to begin your recruitment or retention activities before the end of the 90 day recruitment period, you can start the POP early. Contact your SAFER Program Office POC to discuss this option. Your contact will direct you to submit an amendment request in eGrants to change the start date (refer to the amendment section). Starting the performance period early will allow you to submit a payment request in the eGrants system before the 90-day recruitment period ends. Grant related costs incurred during the 90-day recruitment period are eligible for reimbursement only if you submit an amendment to start your POP early.

You cannot submit a request to delay the start of the period of performance, regardless of when the SAFER grant activities begin.

In some cases, you may be allowed to extend your POP. Extensions to the POP are <u>not</u> guaranteed and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Extensions to the POP will only be granted when, due to circumstances beyond your department's control, you cannot complete the grant activities within the original performance period. POP extensions are not automatic if you have excess grant funds. A POP extension request must address the following:

- Grant program, fiscal year, and award number;
- Reason for delay – this must include details of the legal, policy, or operational challenges being experienced that prevent the final outlay of awarded funds by the applicable deadline;
- Current status of the activity/activities;
- Approved period of performance termination date and new project completion date;
- Amount of funds drawn down to date;
- Remaining available funds, both federal and non-federal;
- Budget outlining how remaining federal and non-federal funds will be expended;
- Plan for completion including milestones and timeframes for achieving each milestone and the position/person responsible for implementing the plan for completion;
- Certification that the activity/activities will be completed within the extended period of performance without any modification to the original Statement of Work approved by FEMA; and
- Potential impacts if FEMA does not approve the extension request or approves the request for a shorter period of time than requested.

You should contact your SAFER Program Office POC to discuss the POP extension (also refer to the "amendment" section of this guide). Extension requests should be submitted as close to the end of the POP as possible (but no more than 60 days prior to the end of the POP). Prior to submitting the extension request the grant must be current on payment requests and required reporting (refer to applicable sections of this guide).

Note that you do not have to request an extension if you only need to complete reports or request payment after your end date. You will have an automatic 90-day window after the end of your grant to request final reimbursement for eligible grant related expenses incurred during the POP.

Payment Requests

You will need to submit a payment request through the eGrants system in order to receive SAFER grant funds. In some cases, you may need to send invoices or other documentation to your SAFER Program Office POC before a payment request will be approved (see below for more information).

<u>When can you submit a payment request?</u>
You may submit a payment request after the POP has started (refer to the Period of Performance section above).

You will not be able to submit a payment request if:
- You have a pending amendment, payment request, or revision request in the eGrants system;
- You have SF-425 Federal Financial Report(s) that have not been submitted;
- You have Quarterly Performance Report(s) that have not been submitted;
- You do not have an approved 1199A Direct Deposit Form (see 1199A Direct Deposit Form section);
- Your banking information has changed (see 1199A Direct Deposit Form section); or
- You have one or more overdue AFG closeout reports (see Closeout section).

If you have any outstanding reports due, you will see red text on the "SAFER Payment Request(s)" screen directing you to submit the reports. The payment request module will be available immediately after the overdue reports are submitted.

<u>How frequently should you submit a payment request?</u>
You may submit for reimbursement of eligible expenses as often as needed but at least quarterly. Failure to request funds in a timely manner creates the appearance that there is no immediate need for funds.

You should request funds for immediate needs, or for costs that have already been paid or incurred. You may also submit a payment request for funds up to 30 days in advance (but not for costs incurred after the end of the POP). If you do this, you will need to use the comments section of the request to explain how the amounts were determined. If you receive payment in advance, you may not keep it in your bank more than 30 days.

As noted above, you can only submit one payment request at a time. You will need to wait for one payment to be approved before you can submit the next request.

<u>What expenses are eligible for reimbursement?</u>
You should request payment for actual expenses incurred during the time period of the payment request. Only the specific budgeted items shown in the Request Details section of the grant award are eligible for SAFER reimbursement. You may also request funds for activities that were approved under a scope of work amendment, if applicable (see the section on Amendments below). Therefore, please make sure you review the grant award and any amendments prior to submitting payment requests as you will only receive payment for approved activities and items. If you need additional guidance, please refer to the list of eligible costs in Appendix B of the Funding Opportunity Announcement (beginning on page 35).

Please note that you can only be reimbursed for eligible, grant related costs incurred during your period of performance (between the period of performance start date and the period of performance end

date). This means you must **receive** whatever you purchased within the period of performance, whether it be equipment, supplies, or services. For example, if you purchased advertising, the ads must run before the end of the period of performance. If you paid for ads that will run after the period of performance ends, you can only charge the prorated amount to the grant. Costs incurred during the 90-day recruitment period can only be reimbursed if you submit an amendment to start your period of performance early (refer to the Amendments section below).

What documentation must be submitted with the payment request?
Before approving your payment request, your SAFER Program Office POC may contact you by email and request that you provide documentation to support your payment request.

If you were awarded funds for the purchase of turn-out gear/ Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and/or physicals, you will need to send the following documentation (preferably by email attachment) as soon as each applicable payment request is submitted:

- A signed letter, on your department's letterhead, that includes the following information:
    o Name of each new volunteer that is receiving grant-funded turn-out gear and/or physicals in the payment request;
    o Date that each new volunteer joined the department;
    o A statement certifying that each new volunteer received an NFPA 1582-compliant physical; and
    o A statement certifying that each new volunteer met the minimum training requirements in your jurisdiction (or will meet them prior to the end of the grant).
- Invoices and proof of payment for the PPE purchased with grant funds; and
- Invoices and proof of payment for NFPA 1582 physicals.

Please remember that only newly-recruited volunteers are eligible to receive grant-funded turn-out gear and physicals. SAFER defines "new recruits" as firefighters that join after the department is notified of the grant award (the date of your award notification e-mail in the e-grants mail center). Turn-out gear must be OHSA-required and NFPA-compliant. Your SAFER Program Office POC will review the documentation you submit and may limit the amount that can be reimbursed under the grant. Please refer to page 35 and 36 of the NOFO for more information about the requirements for physicals and PPE.

Follow these steps to submit a payment request:
- Log into the eGrant application portal.
- On the "Status" screen, find your SAFER grant.
- Select "Manage Grant" from the drop-down menu in the "Action" column, and click "Go."
- You will arrive at the SAFER Payment Request(s) screen. You can also arrive at this page by selecting the "Payment Request(s)" link on the left side of the screen.
- Select the "Create New Payment Request" at the bottom of the page.
- You will arrive at the "SAFER Request for Funds" screen.
- Note that you cannot change the beginning date of the request. If this is your first request, the date will be auto-populated with the first day of the POP. In all future requests, it will be auto-populated with the day that follows the end date of the previous payment request.
- Scroll down until you see the "Create/Modify" button next to the Point of Contact (POC) section. Select the link, complete the fields marked with an asterisk (*), and click "Save and Continue."

- o Enter information for the individual responsible for submitting payment requests at your department or entity. FEMA will contact this individual if there are questions regarding the payment request. No system generated email is sent to this address. This section of the Payment Request must be saved each time before the payment request can be submitted.
- You will be redirected to the "SAFER Request for Funds" page. Notice that the status column next to the Point of Contact field now reads "Complete."
- Next, select "Create/Modify" next to the "Recruitment & Retention (R & R)" section. You will land on the "Recruitment & Retention Funds Request" page.
  - o Enter the total amount of the request in the box "What is the federal share amount you are requesting?" Enter whole dollar amounts only, no commas or decimals, or dollar signs.
  - o Select the "Reimbursement" or the "Advance Drawdown" radio-button. Remember an advance is only for an expenditure that will be made within 30 days and should be explained in the text box.
  - o In the comments section, enter a detailed breakdown of the amount requested for each applicable awarded/approved budget line item, by item name, as shown in the Request Details section of the approved grant award. For example, $3,500 printing brochures; $1,200 coordinator's salary and benefits for 3 months; $643 mailing costs for brochures; $1,085 for awards presented at end of year. Be sure the items listed total the amount placed in the box for the request. When you have finished the itemized list, select "Save and Continue" at the bottom of the page.
- You will be redirected to the "SAFER Request for Funds" page. The status column next to the "Point of Contact" field and the "Recruitment & Retention (R & R)" field should now show "Complete." The amount requested should be auto-populated.
- Enter the end date of the request. This must be the last day the expenses being included in this request were incurred. This field must be completed with a date after the beginning date and before the end of the period of performance.
- Enter your password, check the box, and select "Save and Continue."
- Verify that the information you entered is correct. If you need to make changes, select the "Go Back" button. Otherwise, select the "Submit Payment Request" button at the bottom of the page. Once you do so, you will see: "Congratulations, you have successfully submitted your funds request to FEMA." If you like, you can select the "Print Request for Funds" button. Then, select the "Return to Payments" button at the bottom of the page.
- You will land on the "SAFER Payment Request(s)" page. The status of the payment should now read "pending."
- You will receive notifications in the Mail Center if your payment has been released for correction, approved, or denied.
  - o If the payment is "released," the request has been reviewed and returned to you for correction. The Primary POC and/or the payment request POC will be contacted by email with instructions for how to correct and resubmit the request.

Quarterly Performance Reports

Quarterly Performance Reports are a monitoring tool used by the SAFER Program Office to ensure you are meeting the goals of the grant. The report provides the SAFER Program Office with a snap shot of how the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters and/or the retention of current volunteer firefighters are impacting your department's identified operational needs or capabilities.

The quarter begins on the first day of the period of performance (or 90 days after the date of award). Each quarter lasts 90 days and the report is due within 30 days of the end of the quarter. Please note that you will not be able to request payment until you have submitted outstanding performance reports.

Follow these steps to submit a performance reports:
- Log into the eGrant application portal.
- On the "Status" screen, find your SAFER grant.
- Select "Manage Grant" from the drop-down menu in the "Action" column, and click "Go."
- You will arrive at the SAFER Payment Request(s) screen.
- Click on the "Report(s)" link on the left side of the screen.
- You will arrive at the "SAFER SF-425 Semi-Annual Reports & Quarterly Performance Reports" screen.
- Click on the "Quarterly Performance Report(s)" link.
- You will arrive at the "Quarterly Performance Report(s)" screen. If you have a report that is due, you will see it listed on the page, along with a record of the reports you have previously submitted.
- To complete a report, click on the "Update" link in the "Action" column.
- You will arrive at the "Point of Contact" screen. Complete the required fields (those marked with an asterisk). Click "Save and Continue." If you have previously provided this information, you can simply check it for accuracy and select "Save and Continue." This section must be reviewed for accuracy and saved each time you submit a quarterly performance report.
- You will arrive at the "Recruitment & Retention (R & R) Performance Report" screen. Complete the required fields (those marked with an asterisk). Your answers to the questions should be accurate as of the end date of the quarter. Please refer to the table below for help with specific report questions. Check the "Completed" box and click "Save and Continue." Do not mark the completed box until you are ready to submit the report.
- You will arrive back at the "Quarterly Performance Report(s)" landing page. Notice that the "Status" column of the report is now "SUBMITTED." The "Action" column now allows you to "View" the report you submitted, but you will not be able to edit the information. If you made a mistake and would like to edit the report, you can contact your SAFER Program Office POC and request that the report be released back to you for correction.

Performance Report Question	Helpful Tips
1. How many operational volunteer firefighters have joined your department, as a result of this SAFER grant, during the quarter covered in this report?	Your answer should reflect the cumulative total of NEW operational firefighters that have joined your department during the quarter being reported. If you have new recruits who are not yet qualified to participate in firefighting activities but are in training, those individuals may be counted in this number.
2. How many operational volunteer firefighters have joined your department, as a result of this SAFER grant, since the date of award? (Note: please provide the net number; if a SAFER	Your answer should a net number for your department.

recruited firefighter (that was reported previously) left the department during the quarter being covered in this report, please deduct them from this number).	If members joined and were previously counted in the answer to Question 1 but are no longer volunteering as operational firefighters, this number should not include them. This question measures the net increase in NEW operational volunteer (all but fully paid) firefighters that have joined the department since the <u>grant was awarded</u>.
3. What is the total active operational staffing level (SAFER and non-SAFER members) as of the end of the quarter covered in this report?	Your answer should be a net number of ALL operational volunteer firefighters in your department.
4. Did the department meet the recruitment and/or retention goals for the quarter covered in this request? 4a. If no, please provide details on what items/activities were not met and describe the plan to ensure the goals are met next quarter	Answer "Yes" or "No". If you answered "No", explain which goals were not met, why they were not met, and what changes your department will make to reach the goals.
5. Please provide a status report on the awarded/approved grant items/activities to date and the impact they are having on the department's recruitment and/or retention plan to address the problems/issues identified in the grant application narrative. The report should discuss the following points: • The department's recruitment and/or retention plan and goals; and • Which grant awarded/approved items/activities have been put into place to date to help the department reach their goals? • Which grant items/activities are working, and in what way? Are there grant items/activities that are not working? • If any firefighters (SAFER and non-SAFER) have left the department during this quarter please provide the number that left and their reasons for leaving the department; and • What goals do you plan to accomplish next quarter?	As much as possible, please address each awarded grant activity. For example: This quarter our goal was to hire a coordinator to oversee this grant. In late October, we posted the job announcement for the position. In December, we interviewed 10 individuals for the position and offered the job to Jane Smith on December 15. Next quarter, Jane Smith will develop SOPs and begin working on the marketing campaign. We have not yet implemented the tuition reimbursement program. We hope to have this program up and running by the fall term.

6. Please describe the impact that the awarded/approved grant items/activities, as well as the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters and/or the retention of current volunteer firefighters, are having on the department's operational needs and/or capabilities. The report should discuss the following points: • How the SAFER-recruited volunteer firefighter(s) are being utilized in the fire department and community; and • What benefits the new volunteer firefighters and/or retention of current volunteer firefighters providing for the fire department and community? • How the department's response capabilities have changed since the award of the SAFER grant, if applicable, e.g., improvements the department is making in meeting NFPA 1710 or 1720 compliance.	For example: This quarter, the newly-recruited firefighters are already made a positive impact to our department and the community. Two new recruits have started training by taking the Firefighter 1 class. When they are not in training, the new recruits are assisting at the station and at the fire scene. Their assistance has relieved the workload for other firefighters and has led to a safer incident scene. In addition, three new recruits have graduated Firefighter 1 and have already contributed to an increase in NFPA compliance. Unfortunately, attrition has outpaced the new recruits and we still struggle to meet Section 4.3 of NFPA 1720 during the day-time hours. Our goal is to update our marketing materials to focus on recruiting members for the day-time hours next quarter.
7. Has the department's average response times improved as a result of this SAFER grant? 7a. Please explain.	Answer "Yes" or "No". Compare your response times before the SAFER grant to your average response times now. How does this compare to your goals for the SAFER grant?
8. Has the average number of volunteer firefighters that respond to emergencies improved as a result of this SAFER grant? 8a. Please explain.	Answer "Yes" or "No". Compare the number of volunteers that responded to emergencies prior to the SAFER grant to the number that assemble now. How does this compare to your goals for the SAFER grant?
9. Does the department foresee any obstacles in executing the grant within the period of performance? 9a. If yes, please explain:	Answer "Yes" or "No". Examples of obstacles include, but are not limited to: • Delays to procurement; • Inability to recruit new volunteer firefighters; • Lower than expected response to grant awarded activities.

	You can use this text box to communicate any issue that you are experiencing with this grant.

Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP)

If your SAFER grant project has the potential to impact the environment, including but not limited to, installation of LED/electronic signs, modification or renovation of existing buildings, structures and facilities, you must participate in an Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) review. Please refer to the NOFO for more information. If you are unsure whether your project requires EHP, do not start any work and contact your SAFER Program Office POC. It is FEMA's policy to not fund projects that have been initiated or completed before any required EHP review has been conducted.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

All activities funded by this grant must be governed by formally adopted Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Minimally, these SOPs should specify who qualifies for each of the incentives, specific requirements for earning the incentives, and the disposition of the awarded incentives if an individual fails to fulfill the stipulations. You do not need to send a copy of your SOPs to the SAFER Program Office. However, you may be asked to provide them, so you should keep a copy of the SOPs in the grant file.

Procurement

If you procure property or services under your SAFER grant, you must have a written procurement policy in place. You do not need to send a copy of your procurement policy to the SAFER Program Office. However, you should maintain procurement documents in your grant file in case they are requested during monitoring.

Select requirements under these standards are listed below. The recipient must comply with all requirements of these standards, even if they are not listed below.

All procurement activity must be conducted in accordance with Federal Procurement Standards at 2 C.F.R. § 200.317 – 200.326. If you are a State government, you must comply with the terms of 2 C.F.R. § 200.317. All other grant recipients must use their own documented procurement procedures which reflect applicable State, local, and tribal laws and regulations, provided that the procurements conform to applicable federal law and the standards identified in 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

According to 2 C.F.R. § 200.318(c)(1), the recipient (other than States) is required to maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts. No employee, officer, or agent may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by a federal award if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest. Such a conflict of interest would arise when the employee, officer or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for a contract. The officers, employees, and agents of the non-federal entity may neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from

contractors or parties to subcontracts. However, non-federal entities may set standards for situations in which the financial interest is not substantial or the gift is an unsolicited item of nominal value. The standards of conduct must provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations of such standards by officers, employees, or agents of the non-federal entity.

The procurement standards include, but are not limited to, providing for full and open competition consistent with the standards of 2 C.F.R. § 200.319. The procurement standards also require you to have written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of the employees engaged in the selection, award and administration of contracts.

Among the requirements of 2 C.F.R. § 200.319, in order to ensure objective contractor performance and eliminate unfair competitive advantage, contractors that develop or draft specifications, requirements, statements of work, or invitations for bids or requests for proposals must be excluded from competing for such procurements. Some of the situations considered to be restrictive of competition include but are not limited to:

- Placing unreasonable requirements on firms in order for them to qualify to do business;
- Requiring unnecessary experience and excessive bonding;
- Noncompetitive pricing practices between firms or between affiliated companies;
- Noncompetitive contracts to consultants that are on retainer contracts;
- Organizational conflicts of interest;
- Specifying only a "brand name" product instead of allowing "an equal" product to be offered and describing the performance or other relevant requirements of the procurement; and
- Any arbitrary action in the procurement process.

If you use a contractor under a SAFER grant, you must verify that the contractor is not suspended or debarred from participating in specified federal procurement or non-procurement transactions pursuant to 2 CFR § 180.300. You may search for any suspensions or debarments at www.SAM.gov.

We highly recommend that you do not enter into any contracts prior to the start date of the grant period of performance. Only costs incurred between the period of performance start and end dates are allowable for reimbursement.

NFPA 1710 and 1720

SAFER addresses the staffing and deployment sections of:

- NFPA 1710, Section 5.2.4. (Single-Family Dwelling Initial Full Alarm Assignment Capability), which primarily applies to all-career fire departments and at the combination department's election; and
- NFPA 1720 Section 4.3 (Staffing and Deployment), which primarily applies to all volunteer fire departments and combination departments that do not elect to comply with NFPA 1710.

You may reference these NFPA standards at www.nfpa.org.

SF-425 Federal Financial Report

The SF-425 Federal Financial Report is required of all recipients of federal funding. The report covers a semi-annual period based on the calendar year beginning with the period after the award is made. Grant recipients are required to submit an SF-425 throughout the entire period of performance of the grant. You must complete all due SF-425 reports before you can submit a request for funds (a payment request).

The reporting period and due dates are:
- January 1 – June 30; due by July 31
- July 1 – December 31; due by January 31

Follow these steps to submit the SF-425:
- Log into the eGrant application portal.
- On the "Status" screen, find your SAFER grant.
- Select "Manage Grant" from the drop-down menu in the "Action" column, and click "Go."
- You will arrive at the SAFER Payment Request(s) screen.
- Click on the "Report(s)" link on the left side of the screen.
- You will arrive at the "SAFER SF-425 Semi-Annual Reports & Quarterly Performance Reports" screen.
- Click on the link to "SF-425 Semi-annual Report(s)."
- You will arrive at a page with a link to the SF-425 reports that are due. Click on the date of the report to begin working on the form. Start with the report that is due first.
- Complete the required fields (those marked with an asterisk). Click "Save and Continue."
- You will arrive at a page showing your completed SF-425 in "read-only" view. Review the answers you just entered.
    - If you need to make a correction, you can click the browser return button, or click the "Report(s)" link on the left side of the screen.
    - Once the report is submitted, it cannot be returned to you for correction. If you inadvertently submitted an incorrect report, please contact 866-927-5646 to be directed to a Grant Management Specialist.
- Enter your password, check the box, and select "Save and Continue."
- You will be re-directed to the "SAFER SF-425 Semi-Annual Reports & Quarterly Performance Reports" landing page. If you would like to print the report you just submitted or submit additional federal financial reports, click the "SF-425 Semi-annual Report(s)" link. Then, click on the report you are interested in printing or submitting.

For instructions on how to complete the SF-425, please visit: http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/28389?id=6314 or call 866-927-5646 to be directed to a Grant Management Specialist.

Below are some additional tips that may help you complete the SF-425:
- The report is cumulative and based on the total Federal grant funds received as of June 30 or December 31 of the applicable period.
- Question 7: Select the organization's basis of accounting (cash or accrual). You may need to consult with your jurisdiction's finance organization, treasurer, bookkeeper or accountant to answer this question.
- Question 10(b): Enter the amount of SAFER grant funds that you *spent* from the amount that you drew down during the period covered by the report. You may have withdrawn funds from

your SAFER grant, but you did not spend the entire amount. If you have drawn funds as they were expended, the answer to this question will be the amount of grant funds drawn down. If you submitted a payment request before June 30 or December 31 but did not receive the funds in your bank until after one of those dates, do not include those funds in the total.

- Question 10(e): Since there is no cost share or match required by this grant, the answer to this question should be the same amount that you entered in 10(b).
- Question 10(f): Subtract the number in 10(e) from the number in 10(d) and put the result in 10(f).
- Questions 10(i) and 10(j): Since there is no cost share or match required by this grant, the answer should be 0 for both of these questions.
- Questions 10(l), (m), and (n): Since there is no program income under this grant, you can leave these fields completed with $0.
- Question 12: If you have any additional information, enter it here.
- Note: If this is your first federal financial report due for this grant and you have not drawn down any grant funds, enter 0 in response to questions 10(b), 10(e), 10(i) and 10(j). In Box 10(f) enter the same number as is displayed in 10(d) (total amount awarded).

Amendments

You will need to submit an amendment in eGrants in order to:
- Request to start the period of performance early;
- Request to extend the period of performance;
- Request changes to the approved Scope of Work; or
- Request changes to budget.

If you are interested in any of the above amendments, contact your SAFER Program Office POC by e-mail to receive instructions. Remember that you can contact your SAFER Program Office POC through the eGrants Mail Center. Your SAFER Program Office POC will respond with the criteria that you need to include in your amendment request and may ask that you send a draft of the request to them by e-mail for review. After your draft request is reviewed by the SAFER Program Office POC, you can submit the amendment request formally through eGrants.

Follow these steps to submit an amendment in eGrants:
- Log into the eGrant application portal.
- On the "Status" screen, find your SAFER grant.
- Select "Manage Grant" from the drop-down menu in the "Action" column, and click "Go."
- Click the "Grant Amendment(s)" link on the left side of the screen.
- Click "Create New Request."
- When the text box opens, type in your request, following the instructions you received from your SAFER Program Office POC.
    - o Remember to provide an exact date if you are requesting to change the period of performance (an exact new start date or exact new end date).
- At the bottom of the page, enter your password, check the box, and select "Save and Continue."
- Review your amendment request and select "Submit Amendment Request."
- You can monitor the status of your amendment request on the "Grant Amendment(s)" page.

Closeout

You have 90 days after the POP ends to closeout your grant. You cannot incur additional expenses during this period of time, but you can submit outstanding reports and request final payment.

You are also required to submit a closeout report. The SAFER closeout report is submitted and processed through eGrants. When the closeout module becomes available, the Primary POC will receive an e-mail notification through eGrants, so please make sure to keep the contact information for that person up to date. You can also sign up to receive e-mail alerts from AFG at http://www.fema.gov/e-mail-alert-archive.

Follow these steps to access the closeout module in eGrants:
- Log into the eGrant application portal.
- On the "Status" screen, find your SAFER grant.
- Select "Grant Closeout" from the drop-down menu in the "Action" column, and click "Go."
- If the "Grant Closeout" option is not available, the closeout report for that grant is not available.

After you close your grant, you will receive a formal closeout letter. Since FEMA processes thousands of closeout reports, it may take some time for you to receive the letter.

If you drew down FEMA funds and you need to return them at the end of the grant, you will need to complete the "FEMA Return of Funds Form." The form and instructions are available at: http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/31261?id=7080

As mentioned above, your SAFER payment request will not be processed until you submit all available AFG closeout reports.

If you have questions about the closeout report, please visit the AFG Closeout Report Tutorial at: http://www.fema.gov/rules-tools/closeout-report-tutorial-closeout-report-sections. You can also contact the Help Desk at 866-274-0960 or send an email to firegrants@fema.dhs.gov.