



April 2, 2020

The Honorable Peter Gaynor
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
500 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Administrator Gaynor:

On March 27, President Trump signed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (P.L. 116-136). This legislation included \$100 million for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program to support “the purchase of personal protective equipment and related supplies, including reimbursements.” We urge you to move expeditiously to open the application period for this special appropriation, so that fire departments can apply for necessary financial support to help them during this pandemic.

America’s firefighters and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel are on the front lines responding to COVID-19, the illness caused by the 2019 novel Coronavirus. Fire departments provide lifesaving emergency medical response to their communities and are in constant contact with COVID-19 patients. Fire and EMS personnel need N95 masks and other personal protective equipment to avoid becoming infected, as well as sanitizing agents to clean their ambulances, apparatus and stations. In addition, firefighters are becoming ill and are being quarantined due to exposure to COVID-19 patients, causing departments to incur overtime and backfill costs to meet staffing demands. Unfortunately, as fire departments spend more to combat the pandemic, local county and city budgets are getting squeezed due to the closure of non-essential businesses and “shelter-in-place” rules to reduce the community spread of COVID-19.

In this time of national crisis, the AFG and SAFER grant programs are the only programs guaranteed to provide direct funding to local fire departments. Disbursing these funds is critical to ensuring the health, safety, and efficiency of America’s fire and EMS departments. Given these facts, we ask that you act expeditiously to:

- Open the application period for the \$100 million for the COVID-19 response provided in P.L. 116-136.
- Open the FY 2020 AFG application period.
- Award the FY 2019 AFG funds.
- Open the application periods for the FY 2019 and FY 2020 SAFER grant awards.

We thank you for your support for the nation's fire and emergency service and look forward to working with you in this time of crisis.

Sincerely,

International Association of Fire Chiefs
International Association of Fire Fighters
Congressional Fire Services Institute
National Fire Protection Association
National Volunteer Fire Council