

Grant Writing for the Fire & Rescue Services Participant Manual



**Grant Writing for the
Fire & Rescue Services**



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Goals

- Learn what to expect about the grant writing process
- Learn how to find grant opportunities
- Learn about the life cycle of a grant
- Learn about successful grant writing



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Objectives

- Demonstrate skills in grant research & planning
- Understand key grant elements
- Understand the importance and use of data
- Explain the grant process/cycle
- Review competitive narratives
- Explain the AFG, SAFER, FP&S grants and other funding opportunities



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Class Introductions

Please take a moment to tell the class...

- Who you are
- Where you're from
- Grant experience
- Grant successes
- What you hope to gain from the course



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How Much Money Do You Need to Run a Fire Department?

- Capital expenditures (facilities and apparatus)
- Maintenance and fuel for the apparatus
- Maintenance and utilities for facilities
- Equipment and tool maintenance, repair, and replacement
- Expendable supplies
- Insurance
- Training
- Public education
- Supplies and materials for fundraising
- Turnout gear and SCBA



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Where Does All This Come From?

- State and local government assistance
- Fundraising and donations
- Fee for service
- Insurance reimbursements
- **GRANTS !!!**



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What is a Grant?

- A grant is a quantity of money given by an individual, organization, or government for a specific purpose.
- Most grant programs have requirements for eligibility.
- In order to qualify, your grant proposal must match the intended purpose of the grant program.
- Reporting requirements vary with grant programs, but most will want to receive some form of report of how the funds were used by the grantee.



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Grants Are Beneficial

- Grants can be a beneficial source of funds for Emergency Services Organizations (ESOs) and can allow communities with limited resources to offer quality programs and services.
- It is important to remember that each grant application, process, and award is unique and that there are no guarantees.



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Why Departments Don't Apply

- They don't know about the grant programs
- Overwhelmed by processes (i.e. DUNS, SAM, FEMA GO, Application complexity).
- Frustrated over previous turndowns
- Delay between application and notice of award/turndown
- Lazy



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If You Learn Nothing Else

- You've got to have a plan...may not get a second chance...
- You can be successful if you follow the rules...
- In order to follow the rules, you have to read and know the rules...
- BAD data will doom you...
- The worst that you can be told is "NO"
- Politics don't play as much a role as you would think...who you know doesn't always count...



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WOW!

"Instead of being returned to the Treasury, the government ended last year with nearly **\$1 billion** in federal funds remaining in expired grant accounts¹⁵ and will end this fiscal year with \$687 billion that has been approved but not obligated to be spent."¹⁶

¹⁵ "GRANTS MANAGEMENT: Action Needed to Improve the Timeliness of Grant Closeouts by Federal Agencies" (GAO-12-360), U.S. Government Accountability Office, April 2012.
¹⁶ "Balances of Budget Authority: Budget of the U.S. Government Fiscal Year 2012," White House Office of Management and Budget, page 8, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BUDGET-2012-BALANCES/pdf/BUDGET-2012-BALANCES.pdf>.
Source: www.coburn.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?aid=6120963-d950-480e-84f8-1e542a65c30



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Where Do You Look For Grants?



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Grants... Where To Look

- **Local Foundations** – public library, local grant writers, elected officials → www.candid.org
- **Local Corporations** – CEO's, corporate staff
- **Fire Service Publications** → www.firegrantshelp.com
- **State** – state websites, state agencies, elected officials, state associations, state emergency management
- **Federal** – <https://www.grants.gov/>
<https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters>
- **Cooperative Fire Protection Assistance (CFPA)** – provides reimbursable 50/50 grants; administered by each state's Forestry service



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Federal Grants

- AFG** - Assistance to Firefighters Grant - often called the FIRE Act
- BJA** - Bureau for Justice Assistance
- DOE** - Department of Energy - TEPP/MERTT, others
- DOJ** - Department of Justice - COPS, HARP, TAC
- DOT** - SHRP II, HARP, Traffic Intervention, etc.
- EMPG** - Emergency Management Performance Grants
- FEPP** - Federal Excess Personal Property
- FP&S** - Fire Prevention and Safety
- HSGP** - Homeland Security Grant Program
- RFA** - Rural Fire Assistance Program
- SAFER** - Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response Grants
- Others** - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard, USDA, US DHHS, NIH, etc.



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DHS Grant Programs

- Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFG)
- Fire Prevention & Safety Grant Program (FP&S)
- Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER)
- Others
 - Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG)
 - Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP)



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State Grants

- CDP - Community Development Program – used to be known as the "Budget Digest"
- RCFP – Rural Community Fire Protection
- Training grants
- Block grants
- Targeted Enforcement Grants
- Federally delegated grant programs – responsibility for how federal dollars are spent is passed off to the State



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Local Grants

- Many grants limit themselves to serve a specific geographic area or population(s).
- May require that an employee of a company or entity "nominate" your organization for a grant.
- May be limited to specific things at specific times – "Restricted Giving"
- May limit the number(s) of times you can apply or be awarded



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Private Grant Sources

- Corporations
- FM Global
- State Farm
- Lots of others...
- Foundations
- Leary Foundation
- Firefighters Support Foundation
- Kaiser Permanente
- Trusts
- Other



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You'd be Surprised What's Available

The Firefighter's Charitable Foundation:

- Offers "mini-grants" - \$300 to \$1,000
- Application is web based and simple
- They do "homework" on you – they check your facts
- All they ask is to be kept up-to-date on your organization and what you use the money(ies) for...no biggie



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Where Do You Begin?



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50,000 Foot View...

- What do you want to apply for?
- More importantly, what do you need?
- Can you justify that need?
- Does your need match the priorities for a grant program?
- How will you show that justification?
- Have you formulated a grant plan?
- Is everyone in your organization on board with that plan?



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Anatomy of a Grant

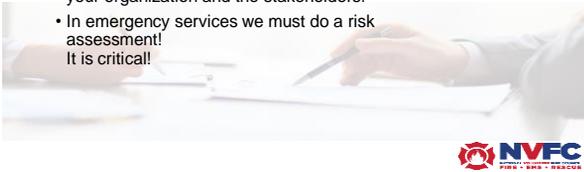
- > What is the problem?
- > What is your solution?
- > How much will it cost?
- > Why do you need "our" money?
- > How will it address the problem?



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Planning

- Rule number one in grant writing is that you don't ask for a grant without first completing a comprehensive planning process that involves your organization and the stakeholders!
- In emergency services we must do a risk assessment!
It is critical!



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Plan Development Questions



- What programs are strong and already have regular funding to keep them strong and productive?
- What opportunities are available within the grant world?
- What are our vulnerabilities?
- What are our needs?
- What does the **Risk Assessment** indicate?



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Getting Started



- Does your organization have a "Mission Statement"?
- Does your organization have a "Strategic Plan"?
- Is everyone on the same page?
- What does your "public profile" look like?
 - If the Grantor researches your organization via social media or the web, will the information they find be consistent with what you put in your application?
- Have a plan with a timeline

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Risk Assessment



- Informal assessments include a manual study of fire loss, burn injuries, or life loss over a period of time, and the causative factors for each occurrence
- A formal risk assessment consists of employing software or recognized analysis to assess risk trends
- Utilize strategic planning

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What Are Your Greatest Risks?



- Personal safety
- Community at risk
- Aged and obsolete equipment

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Grant Writing Is A Team Sport !!!

- One person cannot be expected to do all the research and all the writing that is required
- Your team should include:
 - Operational expertise
 - Financial understanding
 - Writing skills



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Do We Need A Grant Writer?

- Much of what is required for most grant programs can be written by someone in your department.
- Grant writers can help you apply and write your grant (for a fee).
- Some grants will allow you to budget the cost of a grant writer into the cost of the grant.
- Do your homework!
 - Check the references before hiring a grant writer
 - Ask to see some of prior applications



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Research

- Program guidance and overall funding priorities - get to know them intimately! Read and reread!
- Gather technical information
- Data collection (legwork)
- Demographics
- Details are important
- Quotes/cost
- Authority...
- Matching funds (secured)



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Data

- Incident reporting (NFIRS)
- Department budget
 - You'll need details on sources of income and categories of expenses
- Local population data
- Fire loss statistics
- Changes in community demographics
- Membership records
- Fire injury/death reports

Data will be used to measure department risk

Bad data will doom you



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Data

- U. S. Census
- Regional Intergovernmental Council (RIGC)
- Tax department
- School system(s) – free/reduced lunch numbers, median income, school age population(s) etc.
- State/County government

- Must be "clean"
- Must be verifiable – cite the source
- Better to be realistic and not anecdotal
- Government based sources are much better than private source(s)
- Check for conflicts with other published reports and/of data sources
- Be prepared to explain discrepancies....



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Federal Grants



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Before You Begin

- If you are applying for federal grant funding, you must complete three critical registration processes:
 - Acquire a DUNS number
 - Register with SAM
 - Register with FEMA GO



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DUNS Number

- The Dun & Bradstreet D-U-N-S Number is a unique nine-digit identifier for businesses.
- D-U-N-S, which stands for Data Universal Numbering System, is used to maintain up-to-date and timely information on more than 330 million global businesses.
- The D-U-N-S Number is used around the world to identify and access information on businesses.



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Unique Entity Identifier

- **By April of 2022**, the federal government will stop using the DUNS number to uniquely identify entities. At that point, entities doing business with the federal government will use a Unique Entity Identifier (SAM) created in SAM.gov. They will no longer have to go to a third-party website to obtain their identifier.



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Who is SAM and Why Do I Care?

- The System for Award Management (SAM) is an official website of the U.S. government.
- You use SAM to do business with the U.S. government.
- You must have an ACTIVE registration in SAM to be receive any federal grant award.
- SAM registration must be renewed/updated annually.

www.sam.gov



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What is a CAGE Code?

- A Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) Code is obtained by completing a System For Award Management Registration (SAM) and necessary to receive any type of payment from the federal government.
- The CAGE Code is a unique identifier assigned to suppliers to various government or defense agencies, as well as to government agencies themselves and various organizations. CAGE Codes provide a standardized method of identifying a given facility at a specific location.



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SAM and Your Unique Entity ID

Odenton Volunteer Fire Co Inc

DUNS Unique Entity ID:
067253856

SAM Unique Entity ID:
CKU4XLUFJ0N4

CAGE/CAGE:
627A1

Purpose of Registration:
Federal Assistance Awards

Address:
1425 Annapolis RD
Odenton, MD 21113-1012 USA



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FEMA Grants Modernization Program

The Grants Management Modernization (GMM) Program, is a FEMA-wide initiative that began in 2015 to modernize and consolidate existing FEMA grants management systems and business processes into one single IT Platform and one common grants management life cycle to better support the agency's mission.



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What is FEMA GO?

FEMA Grants Outcomes (FEMA GO) is the new grants management system that will support FEMA grants programs. The system allows users to apply, track, and manage all disaster and non-disaster grants. It also improves oversight and monitoring.



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Transition to FEMA GO

- FY 2019 AFG, SAFER, FP&S grants and beyond grant applications and grant administration will only be accepted and managed in FEMA GO.
- AFG, SAFER, FP&S grants for FY 2018 grants and prior grants will continue to be managed in the FEMA eGrant portal.



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Registration in FEMA GO



The screenshot shows the FEMA GO login interface. On the left, there is a 'Log in' section with fields for 'Email' and 'Password', a 'Log in' button, and a 'Create an account' button. A link for 'Forgot password?' is also present. On the right, there is a 'FEMA employees' section with a 'Log in with your PIV card' button and a graphic of a PIV card.



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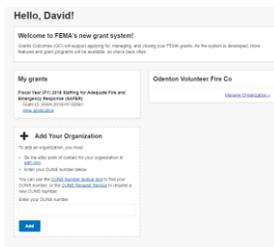
Who Can Register in FEMA GO?

- Any department member may request an account in FEMA GO.
- The eBiz Point of Contact (designated in SAM) must establish an account in FEMA GO. You must use the same email address as used in SAM.
- The eBiz POC must designate the user as an "Authorized Organization Representative (AOR)".
- User accounts are NOT to be shared.



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FEMA GO Dashboard



The screenshot shows the FEMA GO dashboard for a user named David. It includes a 'Hello, David!' greeting, a 'Welcome to FEMA's new grant system!' message, and a 'My grants' section listing a grant for 'Okechobee Volunteer Fire Co'. There is also an 'Add Your Organization' section with instructions on how to add a new organization.



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Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program



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Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program

The primary goal of the **Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG)** is to help fire departments and nonaffiliated emergency medical services organizations meet their firefighting and emergency response needs to more effectively protect the health and safety of the public and their emergency response personnel with respect to fire and all other hazards.



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Eligibility

Fire Departments

An agency or organization that has a formally recognized arrangement with a State, territory, local, or tribal authority i.e. city, town, county, parish, fire district, township, or other governing body to provide fire suppression on a first due basis to a fixed geographical area. Fire departments may be comprised of members who are all volunteer, all career, or a combination of volunteers and career.



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Eligibility

Nonaffiliated EMS Organizations

A public or private nonprofit emergency medical service organization that provides direct EMS to a specific geographic area on a first-due basis, but is not affiliated with a hospital and does not serve a geographic area where EMS services are adequately provided by a fire department.



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AFG Funding Allocations



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AFG Funding Allocations



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AFG Program Areas

- Operations and Safety
- Regional Projects
- Vehicle Acquisition



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AFG – Operations and Safety



Equipment
If you carry it or use it, it's equipment. Personal Protective Equipment
If you wear it, it's PPE.

Training Wellness & Fitness Modifications to Facilities

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Ops and Safety “Projects”

- You may apply for more than one ops and safety area
- Each area of operations and safety is considered a “project”
- Each project is scored independently based on the merits of the program priorities
- Be cautious when including medium or low priority items. They reduce the overall score of the project



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AFG – Equipment

- Firefighting equipment (hose, nozzles, tools, etc.)
- Thermal imaging cameras / air monitoring equipment
- Communications (radios, pagers, tablets, MDT's)
- EMS equipment (cardiac monitors, AED's, power stretchers, cardiac compression devices, etc.)
- Rescue/extrication equipment
- Air compressors / cascade systems
- PPE washer/extractor / dryer
- RIT packs, gear bags and flashlights
- Training simulators/props



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AFG – Equipment Age and Priority

Priority	Age Category	Fire and Fire Regional	SFTA
■	Long	Appliance(s)/Nozzle(s) Foam Educators	Appliance(s)/Nozzle(s) Foam Educators
■	Long	Basic Hand Tools (Structural/Wildland)	Basic Hand Tools (Structural/Wildland)
■	Intermediate	Electric/Gas Powered Saws/Tools	Electric/Gas Powered Saws/Tools
■	Short	Fit Tester	Fit Tester
■	Intermediate	Generator – Portable	Generator – Portable
■	Intermediate	Ropes, Harnesses, Carabiners, Pulleys, etc.	Ropes, Harnesses, Carabiners, Pulleys, etc.
■	Short	Simulators - ■	Simulators - ■
■	Short	Thermal Imaging Camera (Must be NFPA 1801 compliant)	Thermal Imaging Camera (Must be NFPA 1801 compliant)



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AFG – Personal Protective Equipment

- Turnout gear (one set only)
- SCBA
- Personal safety/rescue bailout systems
- EMS turnout gear
- Wildland/forestry turnout gear
- In order to PPE/SCBA be considered "obsolete", it must be a minimum of two NFPA cycles and 10 years of age or older.
- SCBA's awarded per seated riding positions
- APPLICANTS MUST COMPLETE THE SCBA & PPE INVENTORY FORM
- How many of your members / positions WILL HAVE compliant PPE or SCBA?
 - Goal should be 100%



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AFG – Personal Protective Equipment

- Reasons for purchase
 - New hires or personnel without PPE (HIGH Priority)
 - Replace unusable/unrepairable PPE (HIGH priority)
 - Replace non-compliant to current standard (HIGH priority)
- Will purchase bring department into 100% compliance?
- Are personnel trained to use the PPE?

Scoring will be given according to the above priorities



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AFG – Training

- Highest priority is given to hands-on, instructor-led training that leads to national/state certification requirements.
- Training projects that benefit the highest percentage of personnel within a fire department and are open to other departments in the region = High Priority
- Training applications can include requests to fund training instruction costs, and costs to pay / backfill members to attend training.
- Equipment (including props) or PPE used exclusively for training must be requested under the equipment or PPE project area
- Training for PPE or equipment must be requested with PPE or equipment under additional funding



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AFG – Wellness and Fitness

Fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations must offer, or plan to offer, all five of the following Priority 1 activities:

- Initial medical examinations
- Job related immunizations
- Annual medical and fitness evaluations
- Behavioral health program
- Cancer screening program



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AFG – Modifications to Facilities

- **Program Priorities (H)**
 - Requests for direct source-capture exhaust systems, sprinkler, carbon monoxide alarms, and smoke/fire alarm systems
 - Stations with sleeping quarters and occupied 24/7 will receive higher consideration
- **Additional Considerations**
 - Age of the building—older buildings receive higher priority for funding
 - \$100,000.00 maximum per station

Note: Grants will NOT be provided to modify buildings constructed **after** 2003



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AFG – Micro Grants

- Grants of **\$50,000** or less (Federal Share)
 - Overmatching Not Allowed
 - Eligibility:
 - Fire departments and non-affiliated EMS agencies
 - The following operations and safety activities are eligible
 - Equipment
 - PPE
 - Training
 - Health and Wellness
- Those that score in the competitive range for panel review may receive additional consideration at panels, or post-panel review



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Regional Applications

- A regional application is one in which multiple organizations serving more than one local jurisdiction benefit directly from the activities implemented with the grant funds.
- Eligible projects:
 - Operations and safety: training, equipment, personal protective equipment, wellness & fitness
 - Vehicle acquisition
- An eligible department must act as host
 - All partners listed in application
 - Include stats of all involved
 - Community and department type of host used
 - MOU requirement
- Participants may include any other AFG eligible organization including non-affiliated EMS
 - Application will be held to the criteria for the host applicant



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Vehicle Priorities

- Unsafe vehicles
- Replacing vehicles that have been converted from vehicles not intended for the fire service
 - Highest priority to tankers and brush units
- Replacing firefighting vehicles that were purchased prior to the 2002



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Vehicle Applications

- Vehicle applications will consider a variety of factors including, but not limited to:
 - Age of the vehicle being requested to be replaced
 - Existing fleet, including like vehicles
 - Safety factors of the current vehicle (open cab or converted)
 - Call volume
 - Population
- Applicant must have (or are requesting funding for) a vehicle operators training program (NFPA 1002 or equivalent) to be eligible



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Fire Apparatus Priorities

Eligible Vehicle Activities for Fire Department, and SFTA include but are not limited to:			
Priority	Urban Communities	Suburban Communities	Rural Communities
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aerial • Ambulance • Pumper • Rescue Vehicle Light, Medium, or Heavy • Non-Transport EMS (Community Paramedic/Healthcare) • Quint • Brush Type III or larger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aerial • Ambulance • Pumper • Tanker/Tender • Rescue Vehicle Light, Medium or Heavy • Non-Transport EMS (Community Paramedic/Healthcare) • Quint • Brush 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aerial • Ambulance • Brush/Attack • Pumper • Tanker/Tender • Non-Transport EMS (Community Paramedic/Healthcare) • Quint



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The Dreaded Narrative



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Narrative Tips

- Your peers will be reading your narrative, so make sure your need is clear
- Utilize local information only
- Provide information to the reviewer that they will not know
- Provide details about how your folks will be trained. You must move in the direction of 100% compliance with NFPA 1001.
- Have multiple people read and proofread your document
- Be careful with templates or "borrowed" applications



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The AFG Narratives



- Community/agency description
- Financial need
- Project description and budget
- Cost/benefit
- Statement of effect on daily operations



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Community/Agency Description

- Sets the tone for the panelist's review
- Briefly describe your community and agency
- When describing your organization and the community you serve, consider the following:
 - **History** includes trends, frequency, severity
 - **Current** includes financial, core mission, political
 - **Future** includes possibilities, probabilities, certainties
- Discuss things that make your department/community unique
- Identify critical infrastructure protected
- *This section is NOT scored but paints a picture for the peer reviewer.*



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Financial Need

- You must show a clear need!
- Why do you need the money from DHS?
- Describe your income compared to your expense to show your current funding shortfalls
- Explain your other attempts to fund needs
- Explain financial and community trends or changes as they relate to funding



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Project Description and Budget

- Clearly identify all aspects of the project and budget
 - Problem, solution and cost
 - Describe how project aligns with program priorities
 - Demonstrate that project will be completed within 1 year period of performance.
- Describe risk assessment
- Identify method for determining cost
 - Necessary and reasonable
- Tie the project goals to your department's mission



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Cost-Benefit

- Explain what benefits you will realize in return for the funds
- Frequency of use vs. cost
- Increased efficiency of operation
- Most economical fix/cure for the problem
- Consequences of not receiving award/funding
- Danger to health and safety of firefighters



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Statement of Effect on Operations

- How will this grant improve firefighter safety?
- Detail the frequency of use/utilization
- Describe how you will measure results
- Make sure your method is clearly measurable
- This area needs clear verbiage to score well



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Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response (SAFER)



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What is SAFER?

The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program provides funding to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations to assist in increasing the number of firefighters to help communities meet industry minimum standards and attain 24-hour staffing to provide adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards, and to fulfill traditional missions of fire departments.

SAFER NOFO



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SAFER Purpose

- Improve the ability of fire departments to “assemble a sufficient number of firefighters” at a structure fire in compliance with the applicable sections of NFPA 1710 or 1720.
- Assist fire departments in reaching “four-person staffing” on the first due suppression unit for structure fires as listed in OSHA 1910.134g. (OSHA 2 in 2 out)



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SAFER

Eligible Activities

1. Hiring of firefighters
2. Recruitment & retention of volunteer firefighters



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Hiring Activity

- Career departments
- Combination departments
- Volunteer departments



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Recruitment & Retention

Purpose

- The purpose of these grants is to assist fire departments with the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters who are involved with or trained in the operations of firefighting and emergency response.
- The grants are intended to create a net increase in the number of trained, certified, and competent firefighters capable of safely responding to emergencies within the recipient's response area.

SAFER NOFO



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Recruitment & Retention

Priorities

- The highest priority is to assist departments experiencing a high rate of turnover and with staffing levels significantly below the ideal staffing level required to comply with NFPA 1710 or 1720
- Organizations that currently have the lowest recruitment and retention rates are given a higher consideration for funding

SAFER NOFO



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SAFER R&R Eligibility

- Volunteer departments
- Combination departments
- State and local organizations with an interest in volunteer firefighters



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SAFER Match/Limits

- There is **NO MATCH** for the recruitment and retention grants!
- 10% of funding is set aside for hiring of firefighters in volunteer or mostly volunteer departments
- 10% of the funding is set aside for recruitment and retention activities



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SAFER – Measures for Success

- It's about having a recruitment and retention program
- Its not just about throwing money at the problem and hope that solves it
 - Have a plan
 - Assign/hire a program coordinator
 - Have measurable results



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Fire Prevention & Safety Grant



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Fire Prevention & Safety Grant



The purpose of the FP&S Grant Program is to enhance the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire and fire-related hazards by assisting fire prevention programs and supporting firefighter health and safety research and development.



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FP&S Supports Two Activities

- **Fire Prevention and Safety Activity:** The FP&S Activity is designed to reach high-risk target groups and mitigate the incidence of death, injuries, and property damage caused by fire and fire-related hazards.
- **Firefighter Safety Research and Development (R&D) Activity:** The R&D Activity is aimed at improving firefighter safety, health, or wellness through research and development that reduces firefighter fatalities and injuries.



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Fire Prevention and Safety

- The allocation for Fire Prevention & Safety is no less than 10% of the AFG appropriation
- Any organization that has experience in fire prevention activities or that conducts research in fire safety activities is eligible to apply for this grant opportunity
- 5% match



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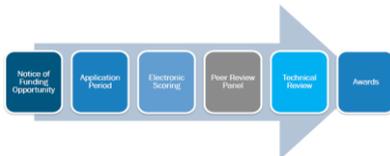
FP&S Examples

- Public safety programs/education
- Code enforcement/awareness
- Arson awareness/prevention
- Juvenile fire setter programs/awareness
- Sprinkler awareness
- Smoke alarm awareness/distribution
- Burn prevention



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Application and Award Process



All three FEMA fire grant programs (AFG, SAFER, and FP&S) use the same application and award process.



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Electronic Pre-Scoring

- The answers to many questions in your application have values assigned to them
- The answers that most closely align with the program's priorities will score the highest
- Only the applications that score high in the electronic scoring move forward to the peer panel review process
- Pre-score is worth 50% of the total application score



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Peer Panel Review Process

- Peers are nominated by each of the nine major fire service organizations
- Peers are assigned to review "like" organizations
 - Career representatives will review career department applications. Volunteers to review volunteer applications. Etc.
 - Goal is to truly have each application reviewed by someone who is from a similar department
- Each application is scored based on:
 - Project description
 - Cost benefit
 - Financial need
 - Effect on daily operations



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Application Scoring

- Each project in your application will be scored on its own merits, provided it meets the funding priorities set by the AFG's Criteria Development Group
- When reviewed, 50% of your final score will be from the electronic prescore, and 50% will be from an average of the peer review panelists' scores



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Technical Review Process

- Applications coming from the peer review process and within the funding range will go through technical review
 - Technical review conducted by FEMA AFG program staff
 - Verify application information (e.g., vehicle fleet)
 - Remove ineligible items
 - Reduce cost/quantities as necessary
 - Recommend for final approval/award



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Managing the Grant

Recordkeeping – have a file

- Can be a notebook or file system
- Must be maintained for three years after grant closes

- Grant File**
- NOFO and other announcements
 - Grant application
 - Award document
 - SOP's developed to manage the grant
 - Documentation for all funded activities (include invoices, training certificates)
 - Copies of bid or quote solicitations
 - Copies of communications regarding the grant
 - Copies of quarterly reports and SF-425's



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Managing the Grant

- Reporting requirements
 - Semi-Annual SF-425
 - Required financial report
 - Provides record of award value and portion spent
 - Quarterly report
 - Used as a monitoring tool to ensure that you are meeting the goals of the grant
 - Should have measurement systems in place to quantify your goals/objectives (i.e. # of volunteers recruited)
 - Close-out report
 - Must be submitted within 90 days of the end of performance period



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Managing the Grant

- Maintain communication with your grant specialist
 - They read your reports
 - They are there to help you
- Financial disbursements
- Have a sound purchasing policy (reference 2 CFR 200)
- Keep your SAM registration current (annual update)
- Single audit (formerly A133) required for grants in excess of \$750,000



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Procurement Integrity

Through audits conducted by DHS OIG and FEMA grant monitoring, findings have shown that some SAFER recipients have not fully adhered to the proper procurement requirements when spending grant funds. Anything less than full compliance with federal procurement policies jeopardizes the integrity of the grant as well as the grant program and could result in the termination of the grant or the recovery of grant funds from the recipient.

All procurement activity must be conducted in accordance with Federal Procurement Standards at 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.317 – 200.326.



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Procurement Guidelines

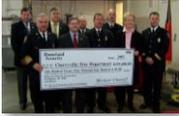
- All procurement activity must be conducted in accordance with Federal Procurement Standards at 2 CFR & 200.317 - 200.326
- You must have a written procurement policy in place
- You must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and actions regarding selection, award, and administration of contracts
- You must provide full and open competition



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Public Relations

- Be sure the media helps you let your community know about your success!
- Get your elected officials involved in the announcement!



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Summary...the Home Stretch



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Summary Tips

- Acquire internal approval/clearance (match)
- Know the program guidance and grant priorities
- Keep partnerships and coalitions in mind
- A confused peer reviewer will say no or score low
- Grants always have deadlines, start early
- Utilize outside reviewers/editors of your work
- DHS is looking for "bang for their bucks"
- Do not utilize too many adjectives
- Write in present tense
- Have a beginning, a middle, and an end
- Utilize persuasive writing



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Summary Tips *Continued*

- Be sure details are sufficient
- Make sure your grant shows reasonableness
- Identify your target audience
- Be able to show how you will share your asset if awarded and maximize the benefit
- Clearly show your need
- Be able to describe how you have sought avenues of funding... exhausting all avenues
- Be able to tie the request for funding to your requested project



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Summary Tips *Continued*

- Avoid jargon and fire service lingo
- Think outside the box
- Be the only application that stands out
- Do not be redundant
- True needs are easy to verbalize
- Don't depend on your ego, seek advice
- Risk assessment is critical
- Reread the program guidance over and over
- Do not over embellish
- Utilize standards/OSHA/SOG's



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Successful Narratives

1. Follow the rules
2. Start early and document early
3. Identify needs, know the priorities
4. Budget clearly defined
5. Your project needs to meet the grant intent
6. Utilize help menus & resources (Q & A)
7. Transfer your concepts/ideas into your keyboard
8. Match/cost share - be sure you have approval
9. Do not procrastinate
10. Complete the entire application



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DHS Top NO Movers

1. Competition
2. Did not request assistance in the area of greatest need for their department or organization that matched the AFG program priorities
3. Failed to focus on program priorities
4. Request was for a new mission area
5. Failed to review the application for accuracy



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Application Tools

- NOFO
- Get ready guides
- Application checklist
- Self evaluation sheets
- Frequently asked questions



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Self Evaluation Sheets

- The self evaluation sheet is designed to help you understand the four narrative questions
- It will also help you to understand what the panelist are asked to look for in your answer
- Lastly, it will allow you to see the actual scoring criteria used by the panelist



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AFG Help

AFG Help Desk

Phone: 866-274-0960 (Help Desk)

Email: firegrants@fema.dhs.gov

FEMA GO Technical Assistance

Phone: 877-611-4700

Email: femago@fema.dhs.gov

FEMA Regional Offices

- Each FEMA region has Fire Program Specialists who can assist with application information
- Reference www.fema.gov/firegrants



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Program Credit/References

- National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC)
- US Department of Homeland Security
- US Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program
- National Fire Protection Association
- "Grant Writing for Dummies" by Dr. Beverly A. Browning
- "Value-Centered Ethics" by Dr. Charles Kerns
- www.firegrantsupport.com
- The Idea Bank, 800-621-1136, Santa Barbara, CA
www.theideabank.com
- Personal notes, various grant workshops



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Questions?



National Volunteer Fire Council
1-888-ASK NVFC (275-6832)
nvfcoffice@nvfc.org

www.nvfc.org



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