



# STAFF REPORT

**Report To:** Board of Supervisors                      **Meeting Date:** October 1, 2020

**Staff Contact:** Sean Slamon

**Agenda Title:** For Possible Action: Discussion and possible action regarding the proposed acceptance of a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program grant award in the amount of \$3,613,711.86 to hire an additional nine firefighter / paramedics. (Sean Slamon, sslamon@carson.org)

Staff Summary: The SAFER Program grant provides funding for three years to hire additional firefighter / paramedics, providing 100% of the total cost of salary and benefits based on the salary and benefits for a first-year (entry level) firefighter / paramedic.

**Agenda Action:** Formal Action / Motion                      **Time Requested:** 30 minutes

**Proposed Motion**

I move to approve acceptance of the grant for the period of three years.

**Board's Strategic Goal**

Safety

**Previous Action**

On May 21, 2020 the Board of Supervisors approved the submittal of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) SAFER grant application for \$3,613,712 to hire nine firefighter / paramedics.

**Background/Issues & Analysis**

The SAFER Program was created to provide direct funding to fire departments to help them increase or maintain the number of trained "front line" firefighter / paramedics available in their communities. The goal of this grant is to enhance local fire departments' abilities to comply with nationally recommended standards related to staffing, response, and operational standards established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA 1710 and/or NFPA 1720). The SAFER Grant covers the entry level salary and benefits for a firefighter / paramedic; it does not cover merit and cost of living increases during the grant period. The City would still be required to fund salary and benefit increases in year two and three that are above the year-one baseline amounts. There is a consultant fee due in year one and operational costs for the life of the grant include training, yearly physicals, and personal protective equipment. A reduction in staffing levels established at the grant award are not allowed during the grant period without an approved economic hardship waiver. There is no obligation to keep the grant-funded employees after the three-year SAFER Program grant period.

In 2019, the Audit Committee recommended that the Carson City Fire Department apply for a SAFER Program grant for additional firefighter / paramedics and study the impacts of overtime reduction in the Fire Department. The Department estimates that the additional nine employees hired through the grant will save \$300,000 to \$400,000 in overtime costs per year. Additional benefits include improved emergency response efficiency as there will be more personnel responding to incidents.

**Applicable Statute, Code, Policy, Rule or Regulation**

NFPA 1710, 1720 Standards for effective and efficient organization and deployment of fire suppression operations, emergency medical operations, and special operations to protect citizens and the occupational safety and health of fire department employees.

**Financial Information**

**Is there a fiscal impact?** Yes

**If yes, account name/number:** If the Board of Supervisors approves acceptance of the SAFER Program grant award, the Grant Fund would house Expenses and Revenue of the program, with a transfer from the General Fund to Grant Fund to pay the City's obligation.

**Is it currently budgeted?** No

**Explanation of Fiscal Impact:** Once approved, a Grant Number will be assigned and staff will augment the budget for FY 2021 for the award, and include it in the FY 2022 and FY 2023 budgets. For three years, Carson City will receive a total of \$3,613,711.86 from the SAFER Program grant. Carson City's estimated three-year cost not covered by the grant will be \$491,719. Overtime savings is conservatively estimated to be \$900,000 over the three-year grant period. See attached, "SAFER Grant Funding" for annual estimates.

**Alternatives**

Do not authorize acceptance of the grant award.

**Attachments:**

[SAFER Award.pdf](#)

[EMW-2019-FF-00684 - Award Package.pdf](#)

[SAFER Grant Funding.pdf](#)

[FY 2019 SAFER Hiring Grant User Guide.pdf](#)

[FY 2019 SAFER NOFO - Updated 5.14.2020.pdf](#)

**Board Action Taken:**

Motion: _____	1) _____	Aye/Nay
	2) _____	_____
		_____
		_____
		_____

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Vote Recorded By)



## Congratulations on being selected to receive a FY 2019 SAFER Grant award!

Your SAFER Program Office Point of Contact (POC) will be Vanessa Hall, (202) 664-6445, [vanessa.hall@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:vanessa.hall@fema.dhs.gov).

The SAFER Program Office is responsible for the programmatic monitoring of this grant. They will be reviewing your payment requests, performance reports, amendment requests, and providing support throughout the grant's period of performance.

This e-mail and its attachments contain information that you need to know in order to be successful with this grant.

If you have not already done so, you will need to officially accept or reject the grant award within the FEMA Grants Outcomes ([FEMA GO](#)) system accessible at <https://go.fema.gov>. If no action is taken within thirty (30) days from the date of notification of award on 09/16/2020, the system will retract the award. If you need additional time to make a decision, please let your SAFER POC know.

Be sure to print and carefully read your Award Package, which is available in [FEMA GO](#). The Award Package may contain adjustments or special conditions that were added during the award process. To access the Award Package and the updated application, please refer to the *Award Package* section of the attached User Guide.

Please carefully read the attached User Guide as it contains important information to help you successfully manage your grant, including grant requirements, deadlines, and detailed instructions about how to submit reports and requests in [FEMA GO](#). In addition to your grant award and the FY 2019 SAFER Notice of Funding Opportunity (also attached), you should refer to the User Guide (attached) anytime you have questions about this grant. You should also share the User Guide with any personnel that will be involved in the grant management or that will be providing information (e.g., payroll personnel, human resources personnel, etc.) to you about the grant.

Under this grant, you have a 180-day recruitment period to fill the awarded SAFER positions. The recruitment period started on the date the application was approved for award and ends with the start date of the performance period; therefore, the 180-day recruitment period has already begun. You can find your grant period of performance (POP) in a number of places in [FEMA GO](#), including the Grant Landing Page. Please see the *Period of Performance* section of the User Guide for additional information.

If your department can hire the SAFER positions before the end of the 180-day recruitment period, you can start the POP early. In order to start the POP early you **must** submit an official amendment request to change the start date. **The amendment must be submitted in FEMA GO at least two weeks prior to the start of the original POP. Amendments submitted after the POP has begun will**

**not be approved.** Salary and benefit costs incurred during the 180-day recruitment period are eligible for reimbursement **only** if you submit an amendment to start your POP early. The period of performance cannot start later than 180 days after the award date.

During the grant period of performance, your department is required to incur no layoffs, fill all SAFER-funded positions, and maintain the operational staffing at the level that existed on the date of award indicated above as well as the number of awarded SAFER positions. This requirement is referred to as the “Staffing Maintenance Number.”

In order to determine your department’s staffing maintenance number, please complete and submit a “Pre-SAFER Roster.” The Pre-SAFER Roster must include the name and rank of all paid, full-time operational personnel that support the department’s NFPA 1710/NFPA 1720 compliance and who were employees at the time of award. If you have full-time equivalent (FTE) positions that support the department’s NFPA 1710/NFPA 1720 compliance, and are shared by more than one firefighter, the number of FTE positions will need to be clearly identified on the Pre-SAFER Roster as well. Each FTE position will be counted in your minimum required staffing level, not the number of firefighters who fill the FTE. Volunteer personnel and administrative personnel/civilians should not be included on the list.

An operational position is defined as a position with a primary assignment (more than 50 percent of time) on a fire suppression vehicle, regardless of collateral duties, in support of the department's NFPA 1710 or NFPA 1720 compliance. Additional information on how to complete the pre-SAFER roster can be found in the *Staffing Maintenance Number* section of the User Guide.

Please submit the “Pre-SAFER Roster” to your SAFER POC by e-mail no later than 09/30/2020. For your convenience, a roster template is attached as an example. You may use this template or one of your own, as long as all requested information is provided.

Please note that we will not be able to process quarterly performance reports or payment requests until the Pre-SAFER roster has been received and the Staffing Maintenance Number has been established.

Finally, please make sure to advise your SAFER POC in a timely manner if you encounter any issue that will prevent you from meeting the requirements of this grant. Please remember to include your grant number on all correspondence and e-mails.

Thank you for participating in the SAFER grant program and congratulations again on your award!

Thank you,

AFG Help Desk, Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program | Grant Programs Directorate | Resilience  
Help Desk: (866) 274-0960  
[firegrants@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:firegrants@fema.dhs.gov)

Federal Emergency Management Agency  
[fema.gov](http://fema.gov)



**FEMA**

# Award Letter

U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20472

Effective date: 09/11/2020

Mirjana Gavric  
CITY OF CARSON CITY  
201 N CARSON STREET 5 BETH HUCK CHIEF DEPUTY TREASURER  
CARSON CITY, NV 89701



EMW-2019-FF-00684

Dear Mirjana Gavric,

Congratulations on behalf of the Department of Homeland Security. Your application submitted for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant funding opportunity has been approved in the amount of \$3,613,711.86 in Federal funding.

FEMA has waived, in part or in full, one or more requirements for this grant award. See the Summary Award Memo for additional information about Economic Hardship Waivers.

Before you request and receive any of the Federal funds awarded to you, you must establish acceptance of the award through the FEMA Grants Outcomes (FEMA GO) system. By accepting this award, you acknowledge that the terms of the following documents are incorporated into the terms of your award:

- Summary Award Memo - included in this document
- Agreement Articles - included in this document
- Obligating Document - included in this document
- 2019 SAFER Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) - incorporated by reference

Please make sure you read, understand, and maintain a copy of these documents in your official file for this award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C Logan", with a horizontal line extending to the right and a small flourish at the end.

Christopher Logan  
Acting Assistant Administrator  
Grant Programs Directorate

# Summary Award Memo

**Program:** Fiscal Year 2019 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response

**Recipient:** CITY OF CARSON CITY

**DUNS number:** 073787152

**Award number:** EMW-2019-FF-00684

## Summary description of award

The purpose of the SAFER Grant Program is to provide funding directly 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. After careful consideration, FEMA has determined that the recipient's project or projects submitted as part of the recipient's application and detailed in the project narrative as well as the request details section of the application — including budget information — was consistent with the SAFER Grant Program's purpose and was worthy of award.

Except as otherwise approved as noted in this award, the information you provided in your application for FY2019 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) funding is incorporated into the terms and conditions of this award. This includes any documents submitted as part of the application.

## Approved Economic Hardship Waivers

### Position cost limit waiver

FEMA has waived the position cost limit requirement for this grant award. Costs are limited to the approved budget per position.

### Cost share waiver

FEMA has waived the cost share requirement for this grant award. You are not required to contribute non-Federal funds for this grant award. The recipient is responsible for any costs that exceed the Federal funding provided for this grant award.

### Minimum budget waiver

FEMA has waived the minimum budget requirement for this award.

### Non-supplanting waiver

FEMA has waived the non-supplanting requirement for this award. SAFER grant funds may be used to replace funds that would be available from State or local sources or from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

## Amount awarded

The amount of the award is detailed in the attached Obligating Document for Award.

The following are the total approved budgeted estimates for object classes for all funded firefighter positions for this award (including Federal share plus your cost share, if applicable, as applied to the estimated costs):

<b>Object Class</b>	<b>First Year</b>	<b>Second Year</b>	<b>Third Year</b>	<b>Total</b>
Personnel	\$635,090.40	\$635,090.40	\$635,090.40	\$1,905,271.20
Fringe benefits	\$569,480.22	\$569,480.22	\$569,480.22	\$1,708,440.66
Travel	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Equipment	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Supplies	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Contractual	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Construction	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Indirect charges	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Federal	\$1,204,570.62	\$1,204,570.62	\$1,204,570.62	\$3,613,711.86
Non-federal	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,204,570.62</b>	<b>\$1,204,570.62</b>	<b>\$1,204,570.62</b>	<b>\$3,613,711.86</b>
Program Income				\$0.00

## Approved scope of work

After review of your application, FEMA has approved the below scope of work. Justifications are provided for any differences between the scope of work in the original application and the approved scope of work under this award. You must submit scope or budget revision requests for FEMA's prior approval, via an amendment request, as appropriate per 2 C.F.R. § 200.308 and the FY2019 SAFER NOFO.

### Approved request details:

## Hiring of Firefighters



## Firefighter Position

### BENEFITS FUNDED

Annual Benefit Cost Health Insurance-28,683.04 Medicare-\$1040.48 Pension-\$29,480.38  
Workers Comp-\$4,071.68

NUMBER OF FIREFIGHTERS	ANNUAL SALARY PRICE	ANNUAL BENEFITS	TOTAL PER FIREFIGHTER
9	\$70,565.60	\$63,275.58	\$133,841.18
3 YEAR TOTAL			
\$3,613,711.86			

## **Agreement Articles**

**Program:** Fiscal Year 2019 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response

**Recipient:** CITY OF CARSON CITY

**DUNS number:** 073787152

**Award number:** EMW-2019-FF-00684

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**Article 1 Assurances, Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, Representations and Certifications**

DHS financial assistance recipients must complete either the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Standard Form 424B Assurances – Non-Construction Programs, or OMB Standard Form 424D Assurances – Construction Programs, as applicable. Certain assurances in these documents may not be applicable to your program, and the DHS financial assistance office (DHS FAO) may require applicants to certify additional assurances. Applicants are required to fill out the assurances applicable to their program as instructed by the awarding agency. Please contact the DHS FAO if you have any questions. DHS financial assistance recipients are required to follow the applicable provisions of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards located at Title 2, Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) Part 200, and adopted by DHS at 2 C.F.R. Part 3002.

**Article 2 DHS Specific Acknowledgements and Assurances**

All recipients, subrecipients, successors, transferees, and assignees must acknowledge and agree to comply with applicable provisions governing DHS access to records, accounts, documents, information, facilities, and staff. 1. Recipients must cooperate with any compliance reviews or compliance investigations conducted by DHS. 2. Recipients must give DHS access to, and the right to examine and copy, records, accounts, and other documents and sources of information related to the federal financial assistance award and permit access to facilities, personnel, and other individuals and information as may be necessary, as required by DHS regulations and other applicable laws or program guidance. 3. Recipients must submit timely, complete, and accurate reports to the appropriate DHS officials and maintain appropriate backup documentation to support the reports. 4. Recipients must comply with all other special reporting, data collection, and evaluation requirements, as prescribed by law or detailed in program guidance. 5. Recipients of federal financial assistance from DHS must complete the DHS Civil Rights Evaluation Tool within thirty (30) days of receipt of the Notice of Award or, for State Administering Agencies, thirty (30) days from receipt of the DHS Civil Rights Evaluation Tool from DHS or its awarding component agency. Recipients are required to provide this information once every two (2) years, not every time an award is made. After the initial submission for the first award under which this term applies, recipients are only required to submit updates every two years, not every time a grant is awarded. Recipients should submit the completed tool, including supporting materials to [CivilRightsEvaluation@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:CivilRightsEvaluation@hq.dhs.gov). This tool clarifies the civil rights obligations and related reporting requirements contained in the DHS Standard Terms and Conditions. Subrecipients are not required to complete and submit this tool to DHS. The evaluation tool can be found at <https://www.dhs.gov/publication/dhs-civil-rights-evaluation-tool>. 6. The DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties will consider, in its discretion, granting an extension if the recipient identifies steps and a timeline for completing the tool. Recipients should request extensions by emailing the request to [CivilRightsEvaluation@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:CivilRightsEvaluation@hq.dhs.gov) prior to expiration of the 30-day deadline.

**Article 3 Acknowledgement of Federal Funding from DHS**

Recipients must acknowledge their use of federal funding when issuing statements, press releases, requests for proposal, bid invitations, and other documents describing projects or programs funded in whole or in part with federal funds.

**Article 4 Activities Conducted Abroad**

Recipients must ensure that project activities carried on outside the United States are coordinated as necessary with appropriate government authorities and that appropriate licenses, permits, or approvals are obtained.

<b>Article 5</b>	<b>Age Discrimination Act of 1975</b>
<p>Recipients must comply with the requirements of the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Pub. L. No. 94-135 (1975) (codified as amended at Title 42, U.S. Code, § 6101 et seq.), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.</p>	
<b>Article 6</b>	<b>Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990</b>
<p>Recipients must comply with the requirements of Titles I, II, and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Pub. L. No. 101-336 (1990) (codified as amended at 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101-12213), which prohibits recipients from discriminating on the basis of disability in the operation of public entities, public and private transportation systems, places of public accommodation, and certain testing entities.</p>	
<b>Article 7</b>	<b>Best Practices for Collection and Use of Personally Identifiable Information (PII)</b>
<p>Recipients who collect PII are required to have a publicly available privacy policy that describes standards on the usage and maintenance of the PII they collect. DHS defines personally identifiable information (PII) as any information that permits the identity of an individual to be directly or indirectly inferred, including any information that is linked or linkable to that individual. Recipients may also find the DHS Privacy Impact Assessments: Privacy Guidance and Privacy Template as useful resources respectively.</p>	
<b>Article 8</b>	<b>Civil Rights Act of 1964 – Title VI</b>
<p>Recipients must comply with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (codified as amended at 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq.), which provides that no person in the United States will, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. DHS implementing regulations for the Act are found at 6 C.F.R. Part 21 and 44 C.F.R. Part 7.</p>	
<b>Article 9</b>	<b>Civil Rights Act of 1968</b>
<p>Recipients must comply with Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, Pub. L. No. 90-284, as amended through Pub. L. 113-4, which prohibits recipients from discriminating in the sale, rental, financing, and advertising of dwellings, or in the provision of services in connection therewith, on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, disability, familial status, and sex (see 42 U.S.C. § 3601 et seq.), as implemented by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development at 24 C.F.R. Part 100. The prohibition on disability discrimination includes the requirement that new multifamily housing with four or more dwelling units—i.e., the public and common use areas and individual apartment units (all units in buildings with elevators and ground-floor units in buildings without elevators)—be designed and constructed with certain accessible features. (See 24 C.F.R. Part 100, Subpart D.)</p>	
<b>Article 10</b>	<b>Copyright</b>
<p>Recipients must affix the applicable copyright notices of 17 U.S.C. §§ 401 or 402 and an acknowledgement of U.S. Government sponsorship (including the award number) to any work first produced under federal financial assistance awards.</p>	

<b>Article 11</b>	<b>Debarment and Suspension</b>	Recipients are subject to the non-procurement debarment and suspension regulations implementing Executive Orders (E.O.) 12549 and 12689, which are at 2 C.F.R. Part 180 as adopted by DHS at 2 C.F.R. Part 3000. These regulations restrict federal financial assistance awards, subawards, and contracts with certain parties that are debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in federal assistance programs or activities.
<b>Article 12</b>	<b>Drug-Free Workplace Regulations</b>	Recipients must comply with drug-free workplace requirements in Subpart B (or Subpart C, if the recipient is an individual) of 2 C.F.R. Part 3001, which adopts the Government-wide implementation (2 C.F.R. Part 182) of Sec. 5152-5158 of the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 (41 U.S.C. §§ 8101-8106).
<b>Article 13</b>	<b>Duplication of Benefits</b>	Any cost allocable to a particular federal financial assistance award provided for in 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart E may not be charged to other federal financial assistance awards to overcome fund deficiencies; to avoid restrictions imposed by federal statutes, regulations, or federal financial assistance award terms and conditions; or for other reasons. However, these prohibitions would not preclude recipients from shifting costs that are allowable under two or more awards in accordance with existing federal statutes, regulations, or the federal financial assistance award terms and conditions.
<b>Article 14</b>	<b>Education Amendments of 1972 (Equal Opportunity in Education Act) – Title IX</b>	Recipients must comply with the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Pub. L. No. 92-318 (1972) (codified as amended at 20 U.S.C. § 1681 et seq.), which provide that no person in the United States will, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. DHS implementing regulations are codified at 6 C.F.R. Part 17 and 44 C.F.R. Part 19.
<b>Article 15</b>	<b>Energy Policy and Conservation Act</b>	Recipients must comply with the requirements of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act, Pub. L. No. 94- 163 (1975) (codified as amended at 42 U.S.C. § 6201 et seq.), which contain policies relating to energy efficiency that are defined in the state energy conservation plan issued in compliance with this Act.
<b>Article 16</b>	<b>False Claims Act and Program Fraud Civil Remedies</b>	Recipients must comply with the requirements of the False Claims Act, 31 U.S.C. §§ 3729-3733, which prohibits the submission of false or fraudulent claims for payment to the federal government. (See 31 U.S.C. §§ 3801-3812, which details the administrative remedies for false claims and statements made.)
<b>Article 17</b>	<b>Federal Debt Status</b>	All recipients are required to be non-delinquent in their repayment of any federal debt. Examples of relevant debt include delinquent payroll and other taxes, audit disallowances, and benefit overpayments. (See OMB Circular A-129.)
<b>Article 18</b>	<b>Federal Leadership on Reducing Text Messaging while Driving</b>	Recipients are encouraged to adopt and enforce policies that ban text messaging while driving as described in E.O. 13513, including conducting initiatives described in Section 3(a) of the Order when on official government business or when performing any work for or on behalf of the federal government.

**Article 19 Fly America Act of 1974**

Recipients must comply with Preference for U.S. Flag Air Carriers (air carriers holding certificates under 49 U.S.C. § 41102) for international air transportation of people and property to the extent that such service is available, in accordance with the International Air Transportation Fair Competitive Practices Act of 1974, 49 U.S.C. § 40118, and the interpretative guidelines issued by the Comptroller General of the United States in the March 31, 1981, amendment to Comptroller General Decision B-138942.

**Article 20 Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990**

In accordance with Section 6 of the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990, 15 U.S.C. § 2225a, recipients must ensure that all conference, meeting, convention, or training space funded in whole or in part with federal funds complies with the fire prevention and control guidelines of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974, (codified as amended at 15 U.S.C. § 2225.)

**Article 21 Limited English Proficiency (Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI)**

Recipients must comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, (42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq.) prohibition against discrimination on the basis of national origin, which requires that recipients of federal financial assistance take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) to their programs and services. For additional assistance and information regarding language access obligations, please refer to the DHS Recipient Guidance: <https://www.dhs.gov/guidance-published-help-department-supported-organizations-provide-meaningful-access-people-limited> and additional resources on <http://www.lep.gov>.

**Article 22 Lobbying Prohibitions**

Recipients must comply with 31 U.S.C. § 1352, which provides that none of the funds provided under a federal financial assistance award may be expended by the recipient to pay any person to influence, or attempt to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with any federal action related to a federal award or contract, including any extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification.

**Article 23 National Environmental Policy Act**

Recipients must comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), Pub. L. No. 91-190 (1970) (codified as amended at 42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq.) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA, which require recipients to use all practicable means within their authority, and consistent with other essential considerations of national policy, to create and maintain conditions under which people and nature can exist in productive harmony and fulfill the social, economic, and other needs of present and future generations of Americans.

**Article 24 Nondiscrimination in Matters Pertaining to Faith-Based Organizations**

It is DHS policy to ensure the equal treatment of faith-based organizations in social service programs administered or supported by DHS or its component agencies, enabling those organizations to participate in providing important social services to beneficiaries. Recipients must comply with the equal treatment policies and requirements contained in 6 C.F.R. Part 19 and other applicable statutes, regulations, and guidance governing the participations of faith-based organizations in individual DHS programs.



<b>Article 25</b>	<b>Non-supplanting Requirement</b>	Recipients receiving federal financial assistance awards made under programs that prohibit supplanting by law must ensure that federal funds do not replace (supplant) funds that have been budgeted for the same purpose through non-federal sources.
<b>Article 26</b>	<b>Notice of Funding Opportunity Requirements</b>	All the instructions, guidance, limitations, and other conditions set forth in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for this program are incorporated here by reference in the award terms and conditions. All recipients must comply with any such requirements set forth in the program NOFO.
<b>Article 27</b>	<b>Patents and Intellectual Property Rights</b>	Recipients are subject to the Bayh-Dole Act, 35 U.S.C. § 200 et seq, unless otherwise provided by law. Recipients are subject to the specific requirements governing the development, reporting, and disposition of rights to inventions and patents resulting from federal financial assistance awards located at 37 C.F.R. Part 401 and the standard patent rights clause located at 37 C.F.R. § 401.14.
<b>Article 28</b>	<b>Procurement of Recovered Materials</b>	States, political subdivisions of states, and their contractors must comply with Section 6002 of the Solid Waste Disposal Act, Pub. L. No. 89-272 (1965), (codified as amended by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, 42 U.S.C. § 6962.) The requirements of Section 6002 include procuring only items designated in guidelines of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at 40 C.F.R. Part 247 that contain the highest percentage of recovered materials practicable, consistent with maintaining a satisfactory level of competition.
<b>Article 29</b>	<b>Rehabilitation Act of 1973</b>	Recipients must comply with the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Pub. L. No. 93-112 (1973), (codified as amended at 29 U.S.C. § 794,) which provides that no otherwise qualified handicapped individuals in the United States will, solely by reason of the handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.
<b>Article 30</b>	<b>Reporting of Matters Related to Recipient Integrity and Performance</b>	If the total value of any currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from all federal awarding agencies exceeds \$10,000,000 for any period of time during the period of performance of this federal award, then the recipients must comply with the requirements set forth in the government-wide Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters located at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Appendix XII, the full text of which is incorporated here by reference in the award terms and conditions.
<b>Article 31</b>	<b>Reporting Subawards and Executive Compensation</b>	Recipients are required to comply with the requirements set forth in the government-wide award term on Reporting Subawards and Executive Compensation located at 2 C.F.R. Part 170, Appendix A, the full text of which is incorporated here by reference in the award terms and conditions.

**Article 32 SAFECOM**

Recipients receiving federal financial assistance awards made under programs that provide emergency communication equipment and its related activities must comply with the SAFECOM Guidance for Emergency Communication Grants, including provisions on technical standards that ensure and enhance interoperable communications.

**Article 33 Terrorist Financing**

Recipients must comply with E.O. 13224 and U.S. laws that prohibit transactions with, and the provisions of resources and support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism. Recipients are legally responsible to ensure compliance with the Order and laws.

**Article 34 Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA)**

Recipients must comply with the requirements of the government-wide financial assistance award term which implements Section 106(g) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA), codified as amended at 22 U.S.C. § 7104. The award term is located at 2 C.F.R. § 175.15, the full text of which is incorporated here by reference.

**Article 35 Universal Identifier and System of Award Management (SAM)**

Recipients are required to comply with the requirements set forth in the government-wide financial assistance award term regarding the System for Award Management and Universal Identifier Requirements located at 2 C.F.R. Part 25, Appendix A, the full text of which is incorporated here by reference.

**Article 36 USA Patriot Act of 2001**

Recipients must comply with requirements of Section 817 of the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001 (USA PATRIOT Act), Pub. L. No. 107-56, which amends 18 U.S.C. §§ 175-175c.

**Article 37 Use of DHS Seal, Logo and Flags**

Recipients must obtain permission from their DHS FAO prior to using the DHS seal(s), logos, crests or reproductions of flags or likenesses of DHS agency officials, including use of the United States Coast Guard seal, logo, crests or reproductions of flags or likenesses of Coast Guard officials.

**Article 38 Whistleblower Protection Act**

Recipients must comply with the statutory requirements for whistleblower protections (if applicable) at 10 U.S.C § 2409, 41 U.S.C. § 4712, and 10 U.S.C. § 2324, 41 U.S.C. §§ 4304 and 4310.

**Article 39 Acceptance of Post Award Changes**

In the event FEMA determines that changes are necessary to the award document after an award has been made, including changes to period of performance or terms and conditions, recipients will be notified of the changes in writing. Once notification has been made, any subsequent request for funds will indicate recipient acceptance of the changes to the award. Please call the FEMA/GMD Call Center at (866) 927-5646 or via e-mail to ASK-GMD@dhs.gov if you have any questions.

**Article 40 Prior Approval for Modification of Approved Budget**

Before making any change to the DHS/FEMA approved budget for this award, you must request prior written approval from DHS/FEMA where required by 2 C.F.R. § 200.308. DHS/FEMA is also utilizing its discretion to impose an additional restriction under 2 C.F.R. § 200.308(e) regarding the transfer of funds among direct cost categories, programs, functions, or activities. Therefore, for awards with an approved budget where the Federal share is greater than the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$250,000), you may not transfer funds among direct cost categories, programs, functions, or activities without prior written approval from DHS/FEMA where the cumulative amount of such transfers exceeds or is expected to exceed ten percent (10%) of the total budget DHS/FEMA last approved. You must report any deviations from your DHS/FEMA approved budget in the first Federal Financial Report (SF-425) you submit following any budget deviation, regardless of whether the budget deviation requires prior written approval.

**Article 41 Disposition of Equipment Acquired Under the Federal Award**

When original or replacement equipment acquired under this award by the recipient or its subrecipients is no longer needed for the original project or program or for other activities currently or previously supported by DHS/FEMA, you must request instructions from DHS/FEMA to make proper disposition of the equipment pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.313.

**Article 42 Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation**

DHS/FEMA funded activities that may require an EHP review are subject to FEMA's Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) review process. This review does not address all Federal, state, and local requirements. Acceptance of Federal funding requires recipient to comply with all Federal, state and local laws. Failure to obtain all appropriate federal, state and local environmental permits and clearances may jeopardize Federal funding. DHS/FEMA is required to consider the potential impacts to natural and cultural resources of all projects funded by DHS/FEMA grant funds, through its EHP Review process, as mandated by the National Environmental Policy Act; National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended; National Flood Insurance Program regulations; and, any other applicable laws and Executive Orders. To access the FEMA's Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP) screening form and instructions go to the DHS/FEMA website at: <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/90195>. In order to initiate EHP review of your project(s), you must complete all relevant sections of this form and submit it to the Grant Programs Directorate (GPD) along with all other pertinent project information. Failure to provide requisite information could result in delays in the release of grant funds. If ground disturbing activities occur during construction, applicant will monitor ground disturbance, and if any potential archeological resources are discovered, applicant will immediately cease work in that area and notify the pass-through entity, if applicable, and DHS/FEMA.

## Obligating document

<b>1. Agreement No.</b> EMW-2019-FF-00684	<b>2. Amendment No.</b> N/A	<b>3. Recipient No.</b> 886000189	<b>4. Type of Action</b> AWARD	<b>5. Control No.</b> WX02931N2020T		
<b>6. Recipient Name and Address</b> CITY OF CARSON CITY 201 N CARSON ST STE 5 CARSON CITY, NV 89701		<b>7. Issuing FEMA Office and Address</b> Grant Programs Directorate 500 C Street, S.W. Washington DC, 20528-7000 1-866-927-5646		<b>8. Payment Office and Address</b> FEMA, Financial Services Branch 500 C Street, S.W., Room 723 Washington DC, 20742		
<b>9. Name of Recipient Project Officer</b> Mirjana Gavric	<b>9a. Phone No.</b> 916-5993088	<b>10. Name of FEMA Project Coordinator</b> Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program		<b>10a. Phone No.</b> 1-866-274-0960		
<b>11. Effective Date of This Action</b> 09/11/2020	<b>12. Method of Payment</b> OTHER - FEMA GO	<b>13. Assistance Arrangement</b> COST SHARING	<b>14. Performance Period</b> 03/10/2021 to 03/09/2024 <b>Budget Period</b> 03/10/2021 to 03/09/2024			
<b>15. Description of Action a. (Indicate funding data for awards or financial changes)</b>						
<b>Program Name Abbreviation</b>	<b>Assistance Listings No.</b>	<b>Accounting Data(ACCS Code)</b>	<b>Prior Total Award</b>	<b>Amount Awarded This Action + or (-)</b>	<b>Current Total Award</b>	<b>Cumulative Non-Federal Commitment</b>
SAFER	97.083	2020-F9-GF01 - P431-xxxx-4101-D	\$0.00	\$3,613,711.86	\$3,613,711.86	\$0.00
Totals			\$0.00	\$3,613,711.86	\$3,613,711.86	\$0.00
<b>b. To describe changes other than funding data or financial changes, attach schedule and check here:</b> N/A						
<b><del>16. FOR NON-DISASTER PROGRAMS: RECIPIENT IS REQUIRED TO SIGN AND RETURN THREE (3) COPIES OF THIS DOCUMENT TO FEMA (See Block 7 for address)</del></b> This field is not applicable for digitally signed grant agreements						

<b>17. RECIPIENT SIGNATORY OFFICIAL (Name and Title)</b> Mirjana Gavric	<b>DATE</b> 09/22/2020
<b>18. FEMA SIGNATORY OFFICIAL (Name and Title)</b> Christopher Logan, Acting Assistant Administrator Grant Programs Directorate	<b>DATE</b> 09/11/2020

**SAFER Grant Funding: 9 Additional Firefighter/Paramedics**

Firefighter/Paramedic  
Position Number 236

FY20 Wage - 233/1	Hours	Step 233/1	Step 233/2	Step 233/3	Step 233/4
\$23,1268	2912	67,345.24	72,524.37	78,101.15	84,107.13
* Doesn't factor in potential yearly cost increase		<b>Total FY21 Salary</b>	<b>Total FY22 Salary</b>	<b>Total FY23 Salary</b>	<b>Total FY24 Salary</b>
<b>YEAR 1</b>	3%	69,365.60	74,700.10	80,444.18	86,630.34
<b>YEAR 2</b>	3%	71,446.57	76,941.10	82,857.51	89,229.25
<b>YEAR 3</b>	3%	73,589.96	79,249.34	85,343.24	91,906.13
<b>YEAR 4</b>	3%				94,663.31
FFA SUPPRESSION UNIFORM		1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00
GROUP INS-FF+FAM	7.5% Inc. Per Yr.	28,683.04	30,834.27	33,146.84	35,632.85
MEDICARE	1.50%	1,040.48	1,154.12	1,280.15	1,419.95
PERS PS ER PAID *	42.50%	29,480.38	32,699.97	36,270.88	40,231.91
WC - HEART AND LUNG *	1.65%	1,144.53	1,269.53	1,408.16	1,561.94
WORKERS COMP - FIRE *	Maximum	2,927.15	2,927.15	2,927.15	2,927.15
Total benefits		64,476	70,085	76,233	82,974
<b>Total Wages + Benefits</b>		<b>133,841</b>	<b>147,026</b>	<b>161,576</b>	<b>177,637</b>
	Additional Emp.	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>
<b>Total Cost 9 Additional Personnel per year</b>	9	<b>\$1,204,571</b>	<b>\$1,323,235</b>	<b>\$1,454,188</b>	<b>\$1,598,734</b>
<b>Additional Operational Costs:</b>		<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Total</b>
500330 Training	9 x \$ 700 ea.	\$6,300	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$12,300
500356 Employee Physicals	9 x \$ 500 ea.	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$13,500
500668 Personnel Protective EQ	9 x \$3,500 ea.	\$31,500	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$61,500
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$42,300</b>	<b>\$22,500</b>	<b>\$22,500</b>	<b>\$87,300</b>

Total Cost Based on 9 Additional Firefighters -Match Waived				Personnel	Operational Cost	Consultant Fee	Grand Total	Est OT Savings
SAFER Grant Funding	2021	YR1		\$1,204,571			\$1,204,571	
Carson City Obligation	2021	YR1		\$0	\$42,300	\$36,137	\$78,437	(\$300,000)
SAFER Grant Funding	2022	YR2		\$1,204,571			\$1,204,571	
Carson City Obligation	2022	YR2		\$118,665	\$22,500	\$0	\$141,165	(\$300,000)
SAFER Grant Funding	2023	YR3		\$1,204,571			\$1,204,571	
Carson City Obligation	2023	YR3		\$249,617	\$22,500	\$0	\$272,117	(\$300,000)
<b>9 Additional Staff: SAFER Grant 3 Year Funding</b>				<b>\$3,613,712</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$3,613,712</b>	
<b>9 Additional Staff: Carson City 3 Year Funding</b>				<b>\$368,282</b>	<b>\$87,300</b>	<b>\$36,137</b>	<b>\$491,719</b>	<b>(\$900,000)</b>
SAFER Grant Funding	2024	YEAR 4	0%	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Carson City Match	2024	YEAR 4	100%	\$1,598,734	\$22,500	\$0	\$1,621,234	(\$300,000)



# Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program

Fiscal Year 2019 SAFER—Hiring User Guide

August 2020

# FY 2019 SAFER Hiring Grant User Guide

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## Introduction

**\*\*\*The full User Guide is still in development and will be released soon, along with additional functions in the FEMA GO system. \*\*\***

The purpose of this guide is to help grant recipients begin to manage their Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Hiring 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 (FAQs) for your grant award. These documents are available at <https://www.fema.gov/staffing-adequate-fire-emergency-response-grants-documents>. The terms of the NOFO are incorporated into the terms and conditions of every grant award.

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 (“Uniform Rules”). The Uniform Rules are comprised of a set of mandatory requirements that apply to all federal awards to non-federal entities, including FY 2019 SAFER grants. The terms of the Uniform Guidance are incorporated into the terms and conditions of every grant award. 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 the Uniform Rules 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](mailto: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.

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;
- User Guide;
- grant application;
- award documents;
- advertisements for SAFER-funded positions;
- documentation of hiring practices or procedures;
- payroll records used to request reimbursement;
- 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. Please read 2 C.F.R. §200.430 *Compensation—personal services* and 2 C.F.R. §200.431 *Compensation—fringe benefits*.

With certain exceptions, the recipient organization must retain grant files and supporting documentation, including financial records, supporting documents, statistical records, and all other records, for three (3) years from the date of submission of the final expenditure report (SF-425). The only exceptions are the following: (a) If any litigation, claim, or audit is started before the expiration of the 3-year period, the records must be retained until all litigation, claims, or audit findings involving the records have been resolved and final action taken. (b) When the non-Federal entity is notified in writing by the Federal awarding agency, cognizant agency for audit, oversight agency for audit, cognizant agency for indirect costs, or pass-through entity to extend the retention period. (c) Records for real property and equipment acquired with Federal funds must be retained for 3 years after final disposition. (d) When records are transferred to or maintained by the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity, the 3-year retention requirement is not applicable to the non-Federal entity. (e) Records for program income transactions after the period of performance. In some cases, recipients must report program income after the period of performance. Where there is such a requirement, the retention period for the records pertaining to the earning of the program income starts from the end of the non-Federal entity's fiscal year in which the program income is earned. (f) Indirect cost rate proposals and cost allocations plans. This paragraph applies to the following types of documents and their supporting records: indirect cost rate computations or proposals, cost allocation plans, and any similar accounting computations of the rate at which a particular group of costs is chargeable (such as computer usage chargeback rates or composite fringe benefit rates). Federal regulations related to the Record Retention and Access requirements can be found in 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.333 – 200.337.18

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

## FEMA GO

You may access your SAFER grant through FEMA GO at <https://go.fema.gov/>. Resources on FEMA GO are available at <https://www.fema.gov/gmm-training-resources>.

### How do I register in FEMA GO?

Registration instructions can be found here: [https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/fema-go\\_user-registration-login\\_reference-guide.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/fema-go_user-registration-login_reference-guide.pdf). FY 2019 Award Recipients will need to register in the FEMA GO system to accept and manage FY 2019 grant awards.

### I have registered in FEMA GO, but I do not see my application/award. What do I do?

You must be assigned as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) or another team member role in FEMA GO in order to gain access to an application or any task for that application. There are two ways to be assigned a role:

- If you are the Electronic Business (e-Biz) point of contact (POC) in SAM.gov for your organization, you will be assigned the AOR role by entering the DUNS information after you have logged in to your FEMA GO account; or
- If you are not the e-Biz point of contact, you must ask the e-Biz POC to assign you a role.

**The eBiz POC on our System for Award Management (SAM.gov) account is not the POC for our grant. How do I become the AOR?**

There are two options:

- First option is to have the e-Biz POC register in FEMA GO. Once they have registered and been assigned the AOR role, they can then add other members to the organization.
- If the e-Biz POC is no longer with the organization or does not wish to be the e-Biz POC, you may need to update your SAM.gov account. The new e-Biz POC can now register in FEMA GO and will be assigned the AOR role for that organization.

## Award Package

Be sure to print and carefully read your Award Package, which is available in FEMA GO. The Award Package may contain adjustments or special conditions that were added to the grant award during the award process. You should also review the “Approved Request Details” section of your awarded application as Program Office notes may have been added during the technical review process.

## Points of Contact

FEMA GO updates organization information from SAM.gov nightly. The electronic business (e-Biz) person of contact (POC) is automatically associated with their organization within FEMA GO when the email address used in SAM.gov is the same as the email address used to register in FEMA GO. Once the e-Biz POC has been assigned the AOR role, they can add other members to the organization.

If the e-Biz POC (in SAM.gov) is no longer with the organization, you will need to update your SAM.gov account. The new e-Biz POC can then register in FEMA GO and will be assigned the AOR role for that organization.

If you are not the electronic business POC and simply wish to be added as a team member, then you can email the electronic business POC to request to be added to the organization in FEMA GO. If you do not know who your e-Biz POC is, you can search for them using your department’s DUNS number as shown in the snapshot below.

**+ Add Your Organization**

To add an organization, you must:

- Be the eBiz point of contact for your organization in [sam.gov](https://sam.gov)
- Enter your DUNS number below

You can use the [DUNS Number lookup tool](#) to find your DUNS number, or the [DUNS Request Service](#) to request a new DUNS Number.

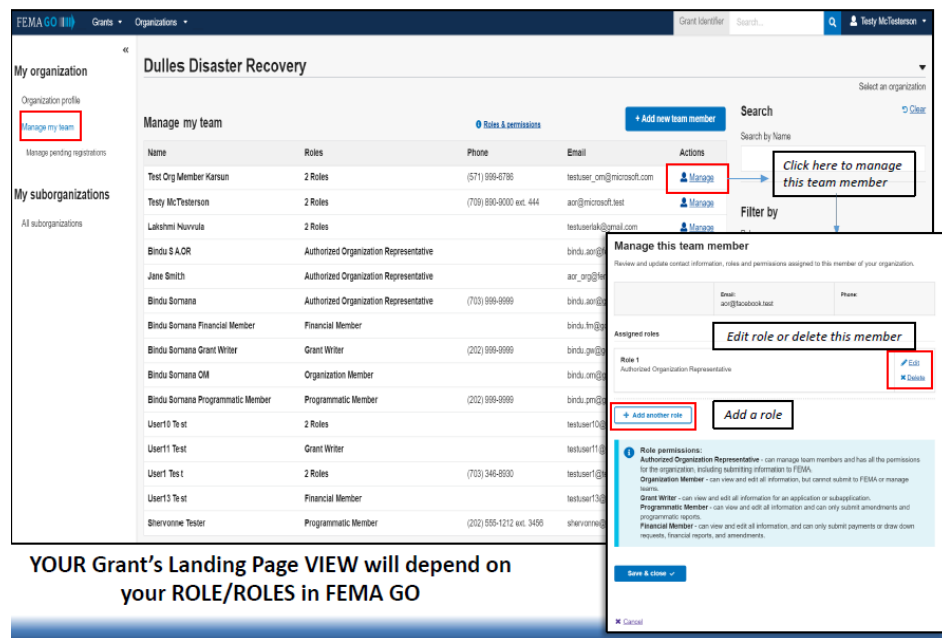
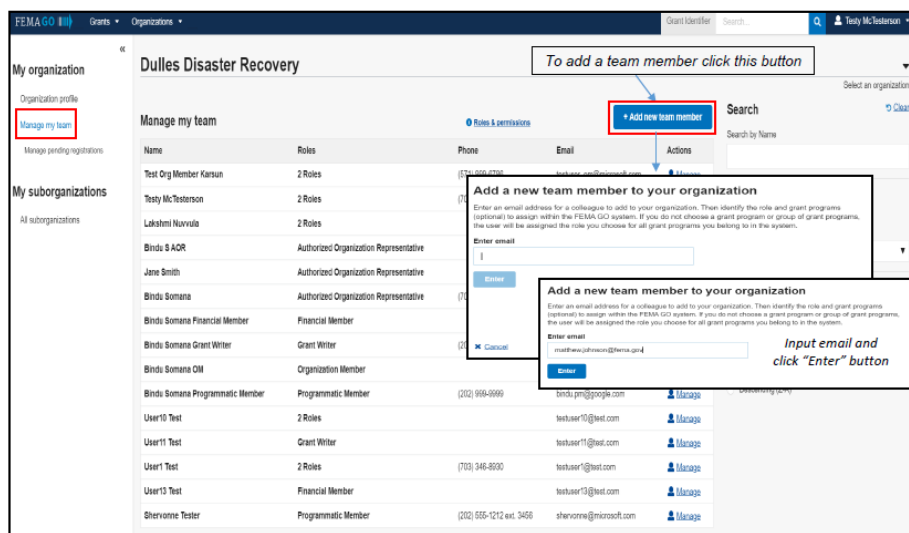
Enter your DUNS number

**Add**

There are five roles and associated permissions available in FEMA GO:

1. Authorized Organization Representative – can manage team members and has all the permissions for the organization, including submitting information to FEMA;
2. Organization Member – can view and edit all information, but cannot submit to FEMA or manage team members;
3. Grant Writer – can view and edit all information for an application or sub-application;
4. Programmatic Member – can view and edit all information but can only submit amendments and programmatic reports; and
5. Financial Member – can view and edit all information but can only submit payments or draw down requests, financial reports, and amendments.

The e-Biz POC’s grant landing page will allow you to add new members to your team as shown in the screenshots below:



**YOUR Grant’s Landing Page VIEW will depend on your ROLE/ROLES in FEMA GO**

## 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.gov is free and active for one year.

Update your SAM.gov registration at <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/>

If you need assistance with SAM.gov:

- Visit the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFGP) System for Award Management Resource Page at <https://www.fema.gov/rules-tools>
- Visit <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/> 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

## Data Universal Number System (DUNS)

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.

## Banking and Payment Information

In the FEMA GO system, your banking information is link to your organizations SAM.gov account. If you need to make changes to your banking information, please reference the information in the SAM.gov section above.

## Staffing Maintenance Number

During the grant period of performance, your department is required to fill all SAFER-funded positions and maintain operational staffing at the level that existed on the date of award (this is the date you received notification via FEMA GO) as well as the number of awarded SAFER positions. This requirement is referred to as the “staffing maintenance number.” The staffing maintenance number must be maintained for the entire period of performance, regardless of when all grant funds are depleted.

### Pre-SAFER Roster

In order to determine your department’s staffing maintenance number, your SAFER Program Office POC will request that you complete and submit a “Pre-SAFER Roster.” The Pre-SAFER Roster must include the name and rank of all paid, full-time operational personnel that support the department’s NFPA 1710/NFPA 1720 compliance and who were employees as of the date of award (this is the date you received notification via FEMA GO).

If your department has full-time equivalent (FTE) positions that support the department’s NFPA 1710/NFPA 1720 compliance, the number of FTE positions will need to be clearly identified on the Pre-SAFER roster as well. Each FTE will be counted in the staffing maintenance number.

Volunteer personnel, administrative personnel/civilians, and part-time/paid-on-call/stipend personnel (who receive a nominal stipend) do not need to be included on the list.

An operational position is defined as a position with a primary assignment (more than 50 percent of time) on a fire suppression vehicle, regardless of collateral duties, in support of the department's NFPA

1710 or NFPA 1720 compliance. For example, your department may employ an inspector that is qualified as a firefighter but his or her primary assignment is to conduct inspections. In this example, the inspector could respond to a large fire if called upon, but that is not their primary duty. In terms of the SAFER grant award, that position would be considered administrative and not operational. In order for this position to be eligible under SAFER grant award regulations, the primary assignment for this individual must be on a fire suppression vehicle more than 50 percent of the time; the remaining hours not on a fire suppression could be used to conduct inspections.

The Pre-SAFER Roster also requests information about vacancies that occurred after the date of the grant award. Using the appropriate columns, please report the date an individual left the department and the reason for their departure.

After you submit the Pre-SAFER Roster, your SAFER Program Office POC will review it and confirm the staffing maintenance number with you. You will not be able to request payment or complete quarterly performance reports until your staffing maintenance number is established.

#### Vacancies

Once the staffing maintenance number is established, you are required to maintain that staffing level throughout the period of performance by taking active and timely steps to fill any positions vacated through attrition, resignation, or termination. You should contact your SAFER Program Office POC if you are not able to fill the vacant positions, or if you are experiencing lengthy hiring delays.

#### Waiver of the Staffing Maintenance Level Number

If you are unable (due to documentable economic hardship) to fill non-SAFER firefighting positions that are vacated through attrition (e.g., resignation, retirement, etc.), you may submit a request for a waiver of the staffing maintenance level requirement. An approved waiver of the staffing maintenance level would decrease the staffing maintenance level number by the number of positions that you are unable to fill. You would then be required to maintain the revised staffing maintenance level number for the duration of the grant award's period of performance. In order to qualify for this waiver, a documentable economic hardship must affect the *entire public safety sector* in your jurisdiction, not solely the fire department. **Waivers will not be granted for SAFER-funded positions.**

Contact your SAFER Program Office POC to discuss the waiver and to receive the complete waiver instructions. Be prepared to include, at minimum, the following information within the waiver request:

- The number of positions that have been vacated since being awarded the SAFER grant award;
- The circumstances under which the position(s) were vacated and the date the vacancies occurred;
- A description of why the department is unable to fill the vacancies;
- An explanation of how the change in staffing will affect your department's ability to meet NFPA 1710 or 1720; and
- A statement, on letterhead, from the local governing body affirming that the inability to fill vacant positions extends to the entire public safety sector in the jurisdiction, not just the fire department.

**Important:** If you fail to maintain the required staffing maintenance level, your SAFER grant award may be placed in a default status and potentially terminated. In addition, you may lose the remaining balance of federal funding awarded under this grant award or be asked to pay back funds that have been drawn down. Layoffs of any operational firefighting personnel (both SAFER and non-SAFER) during the period of performance are not permitted.

If you have questions about completing the Pre-SAFER Roster, the waiver of the staffing maintenance level, or about the staffing maintenance level number in general, please contact your SAFER Program Office POC.

## Period of Performance

Your department has a 180-day period after the date your application was approved for award to fill the awarded SAFER positions. This 180-day period is known as the “Recruitment Period.” Your grant award’s period of performance (POP) starts after the recruitment period ends and lasts for a total of three years. You can find your grant award’s POP in several places in the FEMA GO system.

If your department is able to hire all awarded SAFER positions before the end of the 180-day recruitment period, you can start the POP early. You must contact your SAFER Program Office POC as soon as the hiring decisions are made to discuss this option. Your SAFER Program Office POC will direct you to submit an amendment request in FEMA GO to change the start date (refer to the amendment section of this document). **Amendments to start the POP early must be submitted in FEMA GO at least two weeks prior to the start date of the original POP. Amendments submitted once the POP starts will not be approved.** Salary and benefit costs incurred during the 180-day recruitment period are eligible for reimbursement **only** if you submit an amendment to start your POP early.

If your department did not hire the firefighters within the 180-day recruitment period, there will be no change to the POP start date. You cannot submit a request to delay the start of the period of performance, regardless of when the SAFER positions are hired.

Extensions to the period of performance are not permitted for FY 2019 SAFER Hiring Grant Program awards.

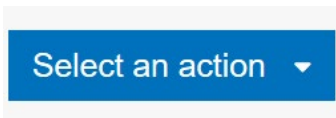
Please note that an extension to the period of performance is unnecessary if you only need to complete final reports or request a final payment after your grant award’s period of performance end date. You will have an automatic period of 90-days after the end of your grant award’s POP to request final reimbursement of eligible grant-related expenses incurred during the POP.

## SAFER Personnel Roster

The SAFER Personnel Roster is a list of the individuals hired to fill the awarded SAFER positions. This list is stored in FEMA GO and will be available after the period of performance starts. Only the personnel hired under the SAFER grant must be listed on the SAFER Personnel Roster. Do not enter employees hired prior to award, employees who were on the department’s payroll at time of award, employees hired under another SAFER grant, employees hired using departmental or other budgeted funding, or employees hired using local grants.

### Steps to create the SAFER Personnel Roster:

1. Log into the FEMA GO system by following this link: <https://go.fema.gov/>
2. Navigate to your FY 2019 SAFER Hiring award and click the “Manage Grant” button.
3. On the left-hand side there is a menu titled “Grant Summary”, under this menu, click the “Payments” option.
4. Scroll past the grant’s summary until you arrive at a blue “Select an Action” box (example below):



5. Click the drop-down arrow in that blue box to select the “Request a Payment” action.
6. You will see the payment request instructions and then a button that says “Add Employee”; please click that button.
7. A pop-up box such as the one below will appear:

### Add employee

Employee name (First and Last) Position ID

You must enter an employee name

---

**Employment dates**

Start date as a full time firefighter (MM/DD/YYYY)

This employee is no longer funded under this grant

Annual salary	Annual benefits	Total annual compensation
<input type="text" value="\$0"/>	<input type="text" value="\$0"/>	<input type="text" value="\$0.00"/>

**Additional information**

8. Complete the information requested and select “Add New Position” under the Position ID field.
9. **Please note:**
  - The start date should be the date the firefighter joined the department but is not necessarily the first day of the period of performance.
  - In the “Annual Salary” and “Annual Benefits” fields, please enter the actual annual amounts currently contracted to each SAFER-funded position, regardless of the total amounts included in the grant award application.
    - The total annual salary is the amount paid directly to the firefighter. This amount may include certification pay or incentive pay in the annual salary amount.
    - The total annual benefits are the contracted benefits paid by the department on the firefighter’s behalf (such as workers compensation, retirement, insurance, etc.).
    - Any time there is a change to the annual salary or benefits amounts, you must update the SAFER Personnel Roster accordingly throughout the period of performance.
10. After you complete the required fields for the first position, select the “Confirm” button at the bottom of the screen and continue to add new employees until the total awarded SAFER-funded positions are filled.



### Removing or Replacing SAFER Positions

If a SAFER-funded position leaves the department or is moved to the department's local payroll budget, you must first "remove" the employee from the SAFER Personnel Roster before adding their replacement to the roster. To remove an employee from the SAFER Personnel Roster in FEMA GO, you must edit the position by checking the box that indicates "This employee is no longer funded under this grant" and then complete the box titled "End date as a grant funded full time firefighter (MM/DD/YY)" as shown in the box below.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Add employee". It has several sections:

- Employee name (First and Last):** A text input field with "First One" entered.
- Position ID:** A dropdown menu with "Add new position" selected.
- Employment dates:**
  - Start date as a full time firefighter (MM/DD/YYYY):** A date input field with "09/01/2019" entered.
  - End date as a grant funded full time firefighter (MM/DD/YYYY):** An empty date input field.
- Checkboxes:** A checked checkbox labeled "This employee is no longer funded under this grant".
- Compensation:** Three input fields at the bottom: "Annual salary" (\$0.00), "Annual benefits" (\$0.00), and "Total annual compensation" (\$0.00).

Please **do not** remove a firefighter from the SAFER Personnel Roster until you are ready to immediately replace them with another firefighter (one that is hired after the date of grant award). You will not be able to request reimbursement for any time that a SAFER position is vacant. Please note that vacancies generate a balance of unused grant funds which will be de-obligated by FEMA at the end of the POP.

The SAFER Personnel Roster must be updated any time there are changes to the annual salary and/or benefit amounts, or when a firefighter is removed or replaced from the SAFER grant award.

### Job-shared Positions

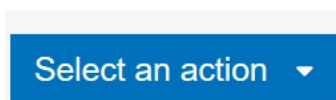
Job-shared positions (i.e., utilizing more than one person to fill a full-time SAFER-funded position) is not eligible.

## Payment Requests

In order to receive funding from your SAFER grant award, you must submit a payment request in FEMA GO.

Follow these steps to submit a payment request:

1. Log in to the FEMA GO system.
2. Navigate to your FY 2019 SAFER Hiring award and click the "Manage Grant" button.
3. On the left-hand side there is a menu titled "Grant Summary" and you should click the "Payments" option.
4. Scroll past the grant's summary until you arrive at a blue "Select an Action" box like the one below:



5. Click the drop-down arrow in that blue box to select the "Request a Payment" action.

6. Complete the SAFER Personnel Roster, if not already completed (refer to that section above).
7. Please 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 period of performance. You should enter an end date by updating the "To" field.
  - The first payment request should only include time worked after the period of performance started. Only costs incurred during the period of performance are allowable. You may need to prorate the first payroll period if the SAFER personnel were hired before the period of performance started.
  - **Please note**, you must end the payment request on the last day of your department's payroll period (last day worked). The only exception to this rule is the last day of the grant year, where the system will force you to end a reimbursement on that date. *For example, if your grant's period of performance begins on 3/11/2020 and ends on 3/10/2020, the last day of your grant year is March 10<sup>th</sup> and you MUST end a reimbursement on that day of each grant year (3/10/2021, 3/10/2022, and 3/10/2023). In this case, you may need to pro-rate the last payroll period so that only time worked in the applicable year is charged to the correct year of the grant.*
8. In the box titled "Provide any additional supporting narrative or documents", you should enter the following:
  - The number of payroll periods included in the reimbursement;
  - The frequency of your department's payroll periods (weekly, biweekly, bimonthly, monthly, or some other timeframe);
  - The start and end dates for each payroll period included in the reimbursement.
  - *For example: "This reimbursement includes 3 biweekly payroll periods. 3/11/2020 – 3/24/2020, 3/25/2020 – 4/7/2020, and 4/8/2020 – 4/21/2020."*
9. Enter the eligible salary and benefit costs incurred for each of the SAFER-funded positions during the timeframe of the payroll period(s) included in the payment request.
10. If the costs incurred included any special pay above the base salary and benefits rates (i.e. FLSA overtime, certification pay, holiday pay, etc.), select the "YES" radial button. If no special pay was included, select the "NO" radial button.
11. If you selected "Yes" indicating that special pay was incurred and will be charged to the SAFER grant award, you must outline the type of special pay, the number of hours worked in special pay status, and the amount incurred of special pay that the respective firefighter earned during this reimbursement period.
12. Complete the eligible salary and benefit cost sections for each SAFER position filled during this reimbursement period.
13. Attachments are optional, but you may upload any supporting payroll documents directly to the system by utilizing the "Attachments" feature embedded into the payment request.
14. Once you have completed the payment request, select the checkbox certifying that you are authorized to request payment (if applicable), enter your password, and select the "Submit" button as shown below:

**Attachments (optional)**

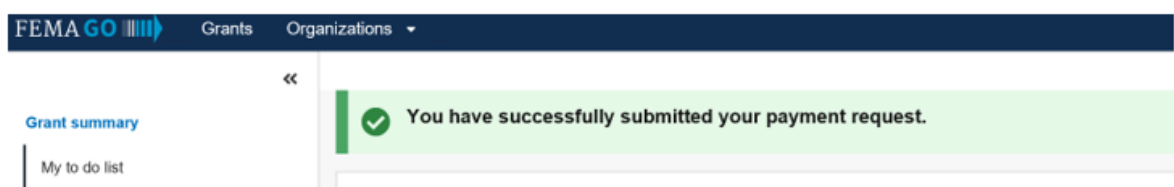
Maximum File Size: 25MB

Accepted File Types: .pdf, .doc, .docx, .xls, .xlsx, .jpg

[Upload from your computer](#)

Filename	Date uploaded	Description
<p><b>Information</b> Your payment may be delayed if your organization's <a href="#">SAM.gov</a> information is not up-to-date.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I, F/Aor L/Aor, certify that I am authorized to request payment, and I am hereby providing my signature to acknowledge that the payment request information is accurate and is consistent with my articles of agreement, to the best of my knowledge.</p> <p>Please enter your password</p> <input type="password" value="****"/> <p><a href="#">Submit</a></p>		

15. Once you have submitted the reimbursement request, your page will load with the message shown below:



Payments will not be approved if:

- You do not have an established staffing maintenance number;
- You have one or more overdue AFGP closeout reports (see Closeout section); or
- There are issues with the information submitted in the payment.

If your payment has been released back to you, please review the comments provided by the Program Office and make the necessary updates prior to resubmission. If you need additional assistance, please contact the Help Desk or your SAFER POC.

#### When can you submit a payment request?

You may submit a payment request after the POP has started (refer to the Period of Performance section above).

#### How frequently should you submit a payment request?

You may submit a payment request for reimbursement of eligible expenses as often as necessary, but you must submit payment requests at least quarterly. Failure to request funds in a timely manner creates the appearance that there is no immediate need for federal funding. Please review all Agreement Articles within your Award Package for more information and for instruction regarding any special conditions impacting the frequency or documentation for payments may have been added.

You should request funding for immediate needs, or for salary and benefit costs that have already been paid or incurred. You may submit a payment request for funding up to 30 days in advance, if necessary (but only for costs incurred during the POP). If you request an advance of federal funds, you will need to use the "Comments" section of the payment request to explain how the amounts were determined and to provide a justification for the advance. If your advance for federal funding request is approved, all

funding must be drawn down and expended according to the grant award package within 30 days upon receipt.

You can only submit one payment request at a time. You will need to wait for the most recent payment request to be approved before you can submit the next payment request.

#### What period of time should be covered by the payment request?

You may only submit payment requests for reimbursement of full payroll periods; no partial payroll periods may be submitted for reimbursement except at the beginning and end of a grant year. Submitting a payment request with only full payroll periods will reduce the number of calculations included and the possibility of error. The total amount of grant funding requested must match your department's payroll records for the dates of the respective payroll period(s) included within the payment request.

If for some reason your department elects to drawdown less than the actual pay for the firefighters over the timeframe of the request, you will need to notify your SAFER Program Office POC. You should use the comments section of the payment request to explain why you are not requesting actual amounts. You must also note the actual pay and benefit amounts in the comment section for each firefighter.

## Eligible Expenses

#### What expenses are eligible for reimbursement?

You may only request payment for actual payroll expenses, including salary and benefits. Please reference 2 C.F.R. §200.430 Compensation—personal services and 2 C.F.R. §200.431 Compensation—fringe benefits.

**The only costs eligible for reimbursement are the salary and benefit costs incurred during your period of performance (between the period of performance start date and the period of performance end date).** Costs incurred during the 180-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), and if the amendment is approved.

Only full-time firefighter positions will be funded by the SAFER grant award. FEMA defines full-time positions as those scheduled for at least 2,080 hours per year (e.g., 40 hours per week, 52 weeks per year). Job-sharing positions (i.e., utilizing more than one person to fill a full-time SAFER-funded position) is not eligible.

All SAFER-funded positions must be **assigned** to an operational fire suppression vehicle more than 50 percent of the time, regardless of collateral duties.

Only full-time firefighters hired after the grant was awarded are eligible for reimbursement by the SAFER grant award. Your department may also seek reimbursement for salary and benefits incurred while new SAFER firefighters are in training, if they are employed full-time.

Compensation for a firefighter's normal, contracted work schedule is reimbursable, but overtime costs are not eligible for reimbursement by the SAFER grant award (including overtime for holdovers, extra shifts, to attend training, etc.). Only costs for overtime that the fire department routinely pays as a part of the base salary or a firefighter's regularly scheduled and contracted shift hours, in order to comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), are eligible.

If a SAFER firefighter is out on leave for any reason and you use another SAFER firefighter to fill their position, you will not be able to request reimbursement for any incurred overtime costs.

If your department pays all firefighters an additional amount, or a different pay rate, for working on holidays or for achieving certain certifications or education levels, the incurred costs are eligible for reimbursement, but they must be noted in each applicable “Comments” section of the respective position in the payment request.

If firefighters are occasionally paid a higher rate of pay for working at a higher rank (i.e. a firefighter works as a driver for several shifts), that cost is eligible for reimbursement, but must be noted in each applicable payment request.

Costs incurred for uniform allowances are also eligible for reimbursement if your department is contractually obligated to provide them, or if they are included as part of the standard benefits package for all employees. Uniform allowances must be a payroll expense to be eligible for reimbursement by the SAFER grant award. If the firefighters are required to produce receipts for purchasing the uniforms in order to receive the allowance, those costs are not reimbursable, but if the firefighters receive the funds via payroll, regardless of whether they purchase uniforms, those costs are reimbursable by the SAFER grant award.

If one of the SAFER firefighters is injured and your department’s policy for all firefighters is to pay the difference between the disability pay and the firefighter’s normal salary, that amount is eligible for reimbursement by the SAFER grant award. The same principle applies to firefighters who may be deployed on military assignment. If your department pays a part of the deployed firefighter’s salary while he or she is deployed, and it is your department’s policy to do this for all firefighters, that pay is eligible for reimbursement by the SAFER grant award. If either one of these situations occur, please provide an explanation in the “Comments” section of the applicable payment request. You may also be asked to submit a copy of your department’s corresponding policy and/or Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) as documentation.

If the SAFER firefighters receive additional pay not included in their annual salary or benefits totals, an explanation must be provided in the “Comments” section of the applicable payment request for those costs to be charged to the SAFER grant award.

#### How does SAFER define salary and benefits?

In general, amounts paid directly to firefighters should be classified as salary and benefits are costs incurred on behalf of the firefighters. See 2 C.F.R. §200.430 *Compensation—personal services* and 2 C.F.R. §200.431 *Compensation—fringe benefits*.

Benefits are also defined as follows in the FY 2019 Notice of Funding Opportunity:

- Includes regular compensation paid to employees during periods of authorized absences from the job, *e.g.*, vacation leave, sick leave, military leave. These costs are absorbed by all organization activities in proportion to the relative amount of time or effort actually devoted to each. Employer contributions or expenses for social security, employee insurance, workmen’s compensation, pension plan costs, and the like, whether treated as indirect costs or as direct costs, are also eligible and shall be distributed to particular awards and other activities in a manner consistent with the pattern of benefits accruing to the

individuals or group of employees whose salaries and wages are chargeable. Please also reference 2 C.F.R. § 200.431 Compensation—fringe benefits.

If your department does not use actual costs incurred to report benefits, you should provide your SAFER Program Office POC with a description of the method of calculation to be included in your permanent grant file.

## Quarterly Performance Reports

**\*\*\*The Quarterly Performance Reports are not yet available in FEMA GO\*\*\***

Quarterly Performance Reports are a monitoring tool used by the SAFER Program Office to ensure you are meeting the staffing maintenance level requirement. The report provides the SAFER Program Office with a snapshot of how the SAFER-funded positions are helping your department meet the applicable NFPA assembly compliance standards.

Since the period of performance is three years, you will be required to submit a total of 12 performance reports for each SAFER grant award. The first quarter will begin on the first day of the period of performance (or 180 days after the date of award). Each quarter lasts 90 days, and the associated quarterly performance report is due no later than 30 days after the end of the quarter per 2 C.F.R. §200.328 *Monitoring and Reporting Program Performance*. You may not submit any new payment requests until all overdue performance reports are submitted (if applicable).

**\*\*\*The Quarterly Performance Reports are not yet available for FY 2019 SAFER grant awards. The below information is pulled from the FY 2017 Quarterly Performance Reports, which will likely be similar for FY 2019. \*\*\***

Performance Report Question	Helpful Tips
Number of SAFER-funded positions from grant	This field is auto-filled with the number of positions you were awarded. You do not have to answer this question.
*1. How many of the SAFER-funded positions awarded under this grant are being filled with career (full-time or job-share) firefighters at the end of the quarter being covered in this report? Note: Your answer to this question should not exceed the number of positions awarded under this SAFER grant. If your positions are job-shared, answer this question in terms of <i>full-time positions</i> , not people. If a SAFER position is vacant as of the end of the quarter, decrease your answer accordingly. This number should not include firefighters hired with other SAFER grants.	Your answer to this question should not exceed the number of positions awarded under this SAFER grant. If your positions are job-shared, answer this question in terms of <i>full-time positions</i> , not people. If a SAFER position is vacant as of the end of the quarter, decrease your answer accordingly. This number should not include firefighters hired with other SAFER grants.
*2. Are any of the SAFER-funded positions reported above veterans? If yes, please indicate the number of SAFER-funded veterans hired to date under this grant.	Answer “Yes” or “No” and indicate the number of veterans hired to date under this grant.

<p>*3. What was the TOTAL operational staffing level at the end of the quarter being covered in this report? Note: Your answer should include all operational personnel, including the SAFER-funded positions. Add any operational personnel that were hired since the start of the grant. Job-shared positions count only as one regardless of the number of personnel filling the position.</p>	<p>Your answer should include all operational personnel, including the SAFER positions. When answering this question, you should refer back to the pre-SAFER roster you submitted at the start of the grant. Add any additional operational personnel that were added since the start of the grant. Job-shared positions count only as one regardless the number of personnel filling the position.</p>
<p>* 4. Of the total operational staffing level indicated in question 3, how many paid, full-time or job-share operational/frontline personnel are assigned to field or response apparatus that directly support the department's NFPA 1710 or 1720 compliance as indicated in the grant application? Note: When answering this question, you may want to refer back to the pre-SAFER roster you submitted at the start of the grant. Your answer to this question will be compared to your established Staffing Maintenance Number. Your answer should include the SAFER personnel, even if they are still in a training academy. Job-shared positions count only as one regardless the number of personnel filling the position.</p>	<p>Your answer to this question will be compared to your established Staffing Maintenance Number. If you are meeting the established number, you must provide details in question 5. Job-shared positions count only as one regardless the number of personnel filling the position.</p>
<p>* 5. Please describe any changes staffing level changes such as vacancies, military deployments, reductions in staffing levels, etc., in the SAFER-funded and non-SAFER (pre-SAFER) staffing levels during this reporting period.</p> <p>If the department has not filled all the SAFER-funded positions awarded under this grant, please provide details on the steps being taken and a timeline to fill the position(s).</p> <p>If the department is experiencing vacancies (both SAFER and non-SAFER) please provide details on the progress in filling any vacancies previously reported and the additional vacancies currently being reported.</p>	<p>If all the SAFER firefighters have not been hired, explain when that will occur. If operational personnel left the department during the quarter, provide the vacancy dates, the reason they left, and a timeline for filling the vacancies.</p> <p>Please also provide a brief explanation if your department has hired additional, non-SAFER operational personnel.</p>
<p>*6. I certify that no lay-offs have occurred during the period covered by this request</p>	<p>Answer either "No lay-offs have occurred" or "Lay-offs have occurred"</p>
<p>*7. How many actual structure fires, as reported to NFIRS, did the department respond to during the quarter being covered in this report?</p>	<p>Answer the number you reported to the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS)</p>

<p>*8. Of the structure fires indicated in question 7, how many did the department respond to in compliance with NFPA 1710 or 1720 standards?</p>	<p>Your answer should correspond to the response time and assembly standards outlined in NFPA 1710 Section 5.2.4.2 and NFPA 1720 Section 4.3</p>
<p>*9. Has the SAFER program improved the department's compliance with the assembly and deployment standards in NFPA 1710, Section 5.2.4.1 or 1720, Section 4.3?</p>	<p>Answer "Yes" or "No".</p>
<p>*10. Please provide details on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the SAFER-funded firefighters are being utilized by your department to improve NFPA standard compliance (this should be discussed in the first quarter in which the SAFER firefighters were hired, and in any subsequent quarters during which their responsibilities or assignment was changed);</li> <li>• What improvements you have seen in your department's operational capabilities, e.g., what is your average response time now as compared to before SAFER; how many firefighters are you able to assemble on a structure fire now as compared to before SAFER? How does this compare to your goals for the SAFER grant?</li> <li>• If applicable, obstacles you are facing in your attempts to improve NFPA compliance, including the steps you are taking to overcome them.</li> <li>• If you have experienced any success stories that you feel can be attributed to the increased staffing provided by SAFER, please feel free to include those, too.</li> </ul>	
<p>*11. Does the department need additional technical assistance from FEMA or foresee any obstacles in executing the grant within the period of performance?</p> <p>*If yes, provide details on the technical assistance needs and explain any obstacles being encountered.</p>	<p>Answer "Yes" or "No".</p> <p>Examples of obstacles include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inability to fill some or all SAFER-funded positions within the first two quarters of the period of performance;</li> <li>• Inability to retain SAFER-funded positions and/or minimum pre-SAFER staffing levels due to attrition;</li> <li>• The local governing body's decision that they will not help retain the SAFER funded position(s).</li> </ul> <p>You can use this text box to communicate any issue that you are experiencing with this grant.</p>



## NFPA 1710 and 1720

The SAFER Grant Program has been established to address the following staffing and deployment sections of:

- NFPA 1710, Section 5.2.4.1 – 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.

The above listed NFPA standards may be reviewed at <http://www.nfpa.org/freeaccess>

## SF-425 Federal Financial Report

**\*\*\*This report is not yet available in FEMA GO\*\*\***

The SF-425 Federal Financial Report (SF-425) is required of all recipients of federal funding. This semi-annual report is based on a calendar year structure, and your grant award's assigned reporting schedule will be aligned with the period after the award is made. Grant award recipients are required to submit all semi-annual SF-425 reports throughout the entire period of performance of the SAFER grant award. All overdue SF-425 reports must be submitted before a new payment request may be submitted (if applicable).

The SF-425 semi-annual reporting period and due dates are:

- January 1 – June 30; due by July 31
- July 1 – December 31; due by January 31

For instructions on how to complete the SF-425, please visit: <http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/28389?id=6314> or contact your Grant Management Specialist.

Below are some additional tips that may help you complete the SF-425 which must be submitted twice a year regardless of whether any grant funds have been drawn:

- The report is cumulative and based on the total Federal grant funds received since the start of the award's period of performance through the end of the applicable reporting period, which will be as of June 30 or December 31.
- Question 7 Basis of Accounting: Select the department's basis of accounting (cash or accrual). You may need to consult with your jurisdiction's finance department, treasurer, bookkeeper or accountant to answer this question.
- Question 10(a) Cash Receipts: The total amount of funds drawn since the start of the award's period of performance through the end of the current reporting period (June 30 or December 31) will be prepopulated here.
- Question 10(b) Cash Disbursements: Enter the amount of SAFER grant funds that you *spent* from the amount that you drew down which is reported in 10(a) above. This should cover all grant expenses since the start of the period of performance through the end of the current reporting period. You may have withdrawn funds from your SAFER grant, but you did not spend the entire amount by the end of the current reporting period. 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 cutoff dates, do not include those funds in the total.

- Question 10(c) Cash on Hand: After you enter the amount for 10(b), the difference between what you drew down and what you spent will appear here as your Cash on Hand.
  - Question 10(d) Total Federal Funds Authorized: This amount will be prepopulated.
  - Question 10(e) Federal Share of Expenditures: Enter the amount of Federal fund expenditures. The answer to this question is often the same as the amount you entered in 10(b). However, if you spent your own funds on expenses for which you expect to be reimbursed through the grant, that amount should be added to the amount reported on 10b and entered here.
  - Question 10(f) Federal Share of Unliquidated Obligations: Subtract the number in 10(e) from the number in 10(d) and put the result in 10(f).
  - Question 10(i) Total Recipient Share Required: The amount of the cost share required by the grant will be pre-populated. You do not need to enter an amount for this question.
  - Question 10(j) Recipient Share of Expenditures: Enter the total amount of actual cash disbursements or outlays paid toward meeting the recipient share since the start of the award's period of performance through the end of the current reporting period.
  - Questions 10(l), (m), and (n) Program Income: Since there is no program income under this grant, you can leave these fields completed with \$0.
  - Question 12 Remarks: 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

\*\*\*Only amendments to start the period of performance early are available in FEMA GO\*\*\*

An amendment request must be submitted in FEMA GO in order to request the following grant actions:

- Request to start the period of performance early; or
- Request a waiver of the staffing maintenance level number.

If you are interested in any of the above amendment requests, contact your SAFER Program Office POC to receive further instruction. Your SAFER Program Office POC will provide you with the criteria that you will 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. The final step is to submit the amendment request within FEMA GO. Only requests that have been approved by the SAFER Program Office in FEMA GO are allowable.

## Closeout

\*\*\*The closeout function is not yet available in FEMA GO\*\*\*

You will have a period of 90 days after the POP ends to closeout your SAFER grant award. This 90-day time period (or the Liquidation Period) is setup automatically for you to submit any outstanding reports and request final payment for eligible costs incurred during the period of performance. Any additional expenses incurred within the immediate 90 days after the conclusion of the period of performance are ineligible for reimbursement by the SAFER grant award.

Once the period of performance for your SAFER grant award has concluded, you will also be required to submit a closeout report. The closeout report will be submitted and processed through FEMA GO.

**The Department of Homeland Security (DHS)  
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)  
FY 2019 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER)**

**NOTE:** If you are going to apply for this funding opportunity and have **not** obtained a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and/or **are not** currently registered in the System for Award Management (SAM), please take immediate action to obtain a DUNS Number, if applicable, and then to register immediately in SAM. It may take four weeks or more after you submit your SAM registration before your registration is active in SAM, then an additional 24 hours for Grants.gov to recognize your information. Information on obtaining a DUNS number and registering in SAM is available from Grants.gov at: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html>. Detailed information regarding DUNS and SAM is also provided in [Section D of this NOFO](#), subsection, Content and Form of Application Submission.

**A. Program Description**

**Issued By**

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Grant Programs Directorate (GPD)

**Assistance Listings (formerly Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number)**

97.083

**Assistance Listings Title**

Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER)

**Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Title**

Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER)

**NOFO Number**

DHS-19-GPD-083-000-99

**Authorizing Authority for Program**

Section 34 of the *Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974* (Pub. L. No. 93-498, as amended) (15 U.S.C. § 2229a)

**Appropriation Authority for Program**

*Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2019* (Pub. L. No. 116-6)

**Program Type**

New

## Program Overview, Objectives, and Priorities

### *Overview*

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program is one of three grant programs that comprise the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) focus on enhancing the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire and fire-related hazards. The SAFER program accomplishes this by providing funding directly 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. The SAFER program represents one part of a comprehensive set of measures authorized by Congress and implemented by DHS. Among the five basic homeland security missions noted in the DHS Quadrennial Homeland Security Review, the SAFER Program supports the goal to Strengthen National Preparedness and Resilience. In awarding these grants, the Administrator of FEMA is required to consider:

- The findings and recommendations of the Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP);
- The degree to which an award will reduce deaths, injuries, and property damage by reducing the risks associated with fire related and other hazards; and
- The extent of an applicant's need for a SAFER grant and the need to protect the United States as a whole.

SAFER offers grants to support projects in two areas:

- **Hiring of Firefighters Activity** is to hire new, additional firefighters to improve staffing levels or changing the status of part-time or paid-on-call firefighters to full-time firefighters.
- **Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity** 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 [2018-2022 FEMA Strategic Plan](#) creates a shared vision for the field of emergency management and sets an ambitious, yet achievable, path forward to unify and further professionalize emergency management across the country. The SAFER Program supports FEMA's goal of *Readying the Nation for Catastrophic Disasters*. We invite all of our stakeholders and partners to also adopt these priorities and join us in building a stronger Agency and a more prepared and resilient Nation.

## ***Objectives***

The objectives of the SAFER grant program are to assist local fire departments with staffing and deployment capabilities to respond to emergencies and assure that communities have adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards. Local fire departments accomplish this by improving staffing and deployment capabilities, so they may more effectively and safely respond to emergencies. With enhanced staffing levels, recipients should experience a reduction in response times and an increase in the number of trained personnel assembled at the incident scene.

## ***Priorities***

Each activity has specific priorities and objectives. For additional details, please see [Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities, Section IV. Funding Priorities.](#)

## **Performance Metrics**

Performance metrics for the program are as follows:

- Percent of “majority career” SAFER recipients’ structural fire responses that complied with NFPA 1710 structural response standards.
- Percent of “majority volunteer” SAFER recipients’ structural fire responses that complied with NFPA 1720 structural response standards.
- Percent of SAFER hiring recipients who reported and provided evidence that the grant funding increased compliance with NFPA 1710 or 1720 assembly and deployment standards.

## **B. Federal Award Information**

### **Award amounts, important dates, and extensions**

**Available funding for the NOFO:** *\$350,000,000*

**Projected number of Awards:** *300*

**Period of performance:** *12-48 Months*

- **Hiring of Firefighters Activity:** The period of performance will be 36 months for all grants awarded under the Hiring of Firefighters Activity.
- **Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity:** The period of performance will be between 12 and 48 months for all grants awarded under the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity.

**Projected period of performance start date(s):** *July 1, 2020*

**Projected period of performance end date(s):** *June 30, 2021-June 30, 2024*

**Funding instrument:** *Grant*

**Extensions:** Extensions to the period of performance under the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity generally are not allowable. FEMA will consider extension requests to the period of performance under the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity only in extenuating circumstances (such as those fire departments whose operations were significantly impacted due to presidentially declared disasters). Extensions to the period of performance under the Hiring Activity are not allowable.

**C. Eligibility Information**

**Eligible Applicants**

Under the FY 2019 SAFER Grant Program, eligible applicants are limited to those entities described below within each activity:

- **Hiring of Firefighters Activity**  
Volunteer, combination, and career fire departments operating in any of the 50 states, as well as fire departments in the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico,<sup>1</sup> or any federally recognized Indian tribe or tribal organization are eligible to apply for funding. National, state, local, or federally recognized tribal organizations representing the interests of volunteer firefighters are not eligible to receive a SAFER Grant Award under the Hiring of Firefighters Activity.
- **Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity**  
Volunteer and combination fire departments operating in any of the 50 states, as well as fire departments in the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico,<sup>2</sup> or any federally recognized Indian tribe or tribal organization are eligible applications. Additionally, national, state, local, territorial, or federally recognized tribal organizations representing the interests of volunteer firefighters are eligible to apply for funding under this Activity. Career fire departments are not eligible to receive a SAFER Grant Award under the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity.

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<sup>1</sup> The District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are all defined as “States” in the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974. *See* 15 U.S.C. § 2203(10).

<sup>2</sup> The District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are all defined as “States” in the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974. *See* 15 U.S.C. § 2203(10).

Volunteer fire departments and combination fire departments may apply for funding under both activities; however, departments must complete separate applications for each activity. Applicants are limited to one application per activity, per application period. If an applicant submits two applications for the same activity during a single application period, FEMA will disqualify both applications.

Municipalities and fire districts may submit applications on behalf of fire departments lacking the legal status to do so, such as those under the support of the municipality or district. The municipality or fire district may submit only one application under the Hiring of Firefighters Activity per application period for each eligible fire department within the municipality or fire district.

The following entities are **NOT** eligible to apply under this announcement:

- Federal fire departments and fire departments under contract to the Federal Government whose sole responsibility is the suppression of fires on federal installations or lands;
- For-profit fire departments and organizations (*e.g.*, fire departments that do not have specific nonprofit status or that are not municipally based);
- Ambulance services, emergency medical service organizations, rescue squads, auxiliaries, dive teams, and urban search and rescue teams;
- Non-federal airport or port authority fire departments whose sole responsibility is the suppression of fires on the airport grounds or port facilities, unless the airport/port fire department has a formally recognized arrangement with the local jurisdiction to provide fire suppression on a first-due basis outside the confines of the airport or port facilities;
- Fire stations that are part of, controlled by, or under the day-to-day operational direction of a larger fire department or agency, or that are not otherwise independent; and
- State and local agencies, such as forest service, fire marshals, emergency management offices, hospitals, and training offices.

Each activity has its own application and eligibility requirements, as outlined in [Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities, Section IV. Funding Priorities.](#)

## **Eligibility Criteria**

### **Minimum Budget Requirement**

At the time of application, both SAFER Hiring of Firefighters Activity and Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity grant applicants are required to certify their annual budget for fire-related programs and emergency response must not have been reduced below 80 percent of the applicant's average funding level in the three years prior to the date it applies for the grant. *See* 15 U.S.C. § 2229a(c)(2).



Applicants experiencing economic hardship may apply for a waiver of this requirement. Please see [Appendix C: Award Administration Information](#).

## **Other Eligibility Criteria**

### ***National Incident Management System (NIMS) Implementation***

SAFER Grant Program applicants are not required to be in compliance with the [National Incident Management System](#) (NIMS) to apply for funding under this NOFO or to be awarded a grant under this NOFO. However, any applicant that receives an FY 2019 SAFER Grant Program award must achieve the level of NIMS compliance required by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) over the applicant's emergency service operations (e.g., a local government), prior to the end of the grant's period of performance.

### **Maintenance of Effort (MOE)**

There is no MOE requirement for the FY 2019 SAFER grant program.

### **Cost Share or Match**

- **Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity**

Recipients of SAFER Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity grants are not required to contribute a Cost Share or Match (non-federal funds).

- **Hiring of Firefighters Activity**

Recipients of SAFER Hiring of Firefighters Activity grants are required to contribute non-federal funds subject to a Position Cost Limit and a Cost Share, as described below.

All recipients should ensure that they are thoroughly familiar with FEMA's cost sharing requirements identified below, as well as the appropriate cost principles as identified at 2 C.F.R. § 200.101(b)(1).

FEMA does not require the recipient to have the cost share at the time of application. However, before FEMA awards a grant, it may contact potential awardees to determine whether the recipient has the funding in hand or if the recipient has a viable plan to obtain the funding necessary to fulfill the cost-sharing requirement.

### **Position Cost Limit (Waiver Available)**

The amount of federal funding provided to a recipient under the SAFER Hiring of Firefighters Activity for hiring a new firefighter in any fiscal year may not exceed:

- In the first and second years of the grant, 75 percent of the usual annual cost of a first-year firefighter in that department at the time the grant application was submitted; and
- In the third year of the grant, 35 percent of the usual annual cost of a first-year firefighter in that department at the time the grant application was submitted.

“Usual annual costs” includes the base salary (excluding non-FLSA overtime) and the standard benefits package (including the **average** health cost, dental, vision, FICA, life insurance, retirement/pension, etc.) offered by fire departments to first-year (i.e., entry-level) firefighters. Please refer to [Appendix B: Programmatic Information and Priorities](#) regarding eligible and ineligible costs for SAFER Hiring of Firefighter Activity grants.

FEMA’s new grant application portal, FEMA Grants Outcomes (FEMA GO) may be accessed at <https://go.fema.gov>. FEMA GO automatically calculates the Position Cost Limit in the Budget section of the application.

### **Cost Share (Waiver Available)**

Under the SAFER Hiring of Firefighters Activity, grant recipients are required to contribute a Cost Share toward the actual cost of hiring firefighters under this program. The Federal portion of the costs of hiring firefighters under this grant may not exceed:

- 75 percent of the actual costs incurred in each of the first and second years of the grant; and
- 35 percent of the actual costs incurred in the third year of the grant.

Therefore, the recipient is required to contribute at least the following in non-Federal funds:

- 25 percent of the actual costs incurred in each of the first and second years of the grant; and
- 65 percent of the actual costs incurred in the third year of the grant.

A Cost Share of non-federal cash is the only allowable recipient contribution. Grant recipients can apply to waive this requirement.

### **Example: Position Cost Limit and Cost Share**

The Position Cost Limit and Cost Share work together, depending on amount expended, to limit the federal share. For example:

Suppose the applicant submits a SAFER Hiring of Firefighter Activity grant application for one new firefighter. At the time that application is submitted, the usual annual cost of a first-year firefighter in that department is \$100,000. No matter what the department ends up paying the firefighter (for example, even if the department ends up paying the new hire \$110,000), the Position Cost Limit, will cap the federal funding to:

- Year 1 = \$75,000
- Year 2 = \$75,000
- Year 3 = \$35,000.

But, suppose the grant is awarded and the department accrues actual costs that are different from the usual annual cost of a first-year firefighter in the department. If the following actual costs during the term of the grant are:

- Year 1 = \$80,000
- Year 2 = \$95,000
- Year 3 = \$110,000.

Then the Cost Share will further limit the federal contribution, unless this requirement is waived. In other words, the federal portion can neither be more than the Position Cost Limit *nor* be more than the Cost Share, and applicants must assess both restrictions to determine where and whether the caps apply. In this example, the federal portion will be:

- Year 1
  - If the Cost Share requirement is not waived
    - Federal funds will be limited to \$60,000, or 75 percent of actual costs incurred (\$80,000)
  - If the Cost Share requirement is waived
    - Federal funds will cover no more than \$75,000, or 75 percent of the usual cost of a firefighter at the time of application (\$100,000)
- Year 2
  - If the Cost Share requirement is not waived
    - Federal funds will be limited to \$71,250, or 75 percent of actual costs incurred (\$95,000)
  - If the Cost Share requirement is waived
    - Federal funds will cover no more than \$75,000, or 75 percent of the usual cost of a firefighter at the time of application (\$100,000)
- Year 3
  - If the Cost Share requirement is not waived
    - Federal funds will be limited to \$35,000 due to the Position Cost Limit of 35 percent of the usual cost of a firefighter at the time of application (\$100,000).
  - If the Cost Share requirement is waived
    - Federal funds will cover no more than \$35,000, or 35 percent of the usual cost of a firefighter at the time of application (\$100,000).

### **Economic Hardship Waivers**

The Administrator of FEMA may waive or reduce the Cost Share, Position Cost Limit, Minimum Budget, or Supplanting requirements in cases of demonstrated economic hardship. Please see [Appendix C: Award Administration Information](#).

**D. Application and Submission Information**

***Key Dates and Times***

<b>Date posted to Grants.gov:</b>	<i>April 7, 2020</i>
<b>Application start date:</b>	<i>April 13, 2020 at 8 a.m. Eastern Time</i>
<b>Application submission deadline:</b>	<i>May 15, 2020 at 5 p.m. Eastern Time</i>
<b>Anticipated funding selection date:</b>	<i>June 1, 2020</i>
<b>Anticipated award date:</b>	<i>July 1, 2020</i>

In general, DHS/FEMA will not review applications received after the deadline or consider them for funding. However, DHS/FEMA may extend the application deadline on request for any applicant who can demonstrate good cause exists to justify extending the deadline. Good cause for an extension may include technical problems outside of the applicant’s control that prevent submission of the application by the deadline or other exigent or emergency circumstances. If applicants experience technical issues, they must notify the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program’s (AFGP) Help Desk as soon as possible. The AFGP Help Desk can be reached at 1-866-274-0960 or by sending an e-mail to [firegrants@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:firegrants@fema.dhs.gov). The AFGP Help Desk is open Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Eastern Time.

***Other Key Dates***

<b>Event</b>	<b>Suggested Deadline for Completion</b>
Obtaining DUNS Number	Four weeks before actual submission deadline
Obtaining a valid EIN	Eight weeks before actual submission deadline
Updating SAM registration	Four weeks before actual submission deadline
Submitting complete application in FEMA GO	One week before actual submission deadline

**Address to Request Application Package**

The online FY 2019 SAFER application is available through the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program’s FEMA GO (FEMA Grants Outcomes) application portal, at <https://go.fema.gov>. There are several ways to access application information:

- AFGP website (<http://www.fema.gov/firegrants>)
- Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>)
- U.S. Fire Administration (<http://www.usfa.fema.gov>)

Hard copies of the application are not available. However, the Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD) and/or Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) number available for this Notice is (800) 462-7585.

FEMA will process applications through FEMA GO. Application tutorials and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) explain the current SAFER grant program, assist

with the online grant application, and highlight lessons learned and changes for FY 2019. For more details, please visit the AFGP website at <http://www.fema.gov/firegrants>.

### **Content and Form of Application Submission**

DHS makes all funding opportunities available on the internet, accessible at <http://www.grants.gov>. If applicants experience difficulties accessing information or have any questions, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at (800) 518-4726.

The Grants.gov website will direct applicants to FEMA GO, at <https://go.fema.gov>, which contains the online SAFER application. The online SAFER application incorporates all required forms.

FEMA GO will allow the applicant's authorized representative(s) to log in and create their own account. This account is specific to the authorized user and must not be shared with other personnel. The FEMA GO account is separate from any previous accounts created in the eGrants system. Applicants can save, retrieve, update, and revise their work through the end of the application period. The automated system does not allow applicants to submit incomplete applications. The system alerts applicants when required information has not been entered. Prior to final submission, an online application may be saved, retrieved, or edited, up to the application deadline.

**Technological Note:** FEMA GO is compatible with Internet Explorer (version 11 or higher), Firefox (version 73 or higher), or Chrome (version 80 or higher). Users who attempt to use tablet type devices or other browsers may encounter issues with using FEMA GO.

### **NO APPLICATION WILL BE RELEASED BACK TO THE APPLICANT AFTER FINAL SUBMISSION**

After an application has been completed and submitted, no changes can be made. There is no appeal process for inaccurate or incomplete information retained by the system due to improper or multiple browser usage by applicants.

### **Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)**

*All applicants for this award must:*

- 1. Be registered and active in SAM in order to apply;*
- 2. Provide a valid DUNS number in its application; and*
- 3. Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active federal award or an application or plan under consideration by DHS FEMA.*

DHS/FEMA may not make a federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time DHS/FEMA is ready to make a federal

award, DHS/FEMA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and use that determination as a basis for making the federal award to another applicant.

### **Electronic Delivery**

DHS is participating in the Grants.gov initiative that provides the grant communities with a single site to find grant funding opportunities. Before applying for a DHS Grant, applicants must have a Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number and must be registered and active in SAM.

### **DUNS**

Instructions for obtaining a DUNS number can be found here:

<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html>.

### **System for Award Management (SAM)**

Applicant registration in SAM is free. All applicants must be registered and active in order to apply online. Step-by-step instructions for registering with SAM can be found here: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html>. Please remember that SAM registration is only active for one year and must be renewed annually.

Existing SAM.GOV account holders should check their account to make sure it is “ACTIVE.” SAM registration should be completed at the very beginning of the application period and should be renewed annually to avoid being “INACTIVE.” *Please allow plenty of time before the grant application submission deadline to obtain a DUNS number and then to register in SAM. It may be four weeks or more after an applicant submits the SAM registration before the registration is active in SAM, and then may be an additional 24 hours before Grants.gov and FEMA GO to recognize the information.*

FEMA may not make an award to an entity until the entity has complied with the requirements to provide a valid DUNS number and maintain an active SAM registration with current information. If the applicant is noncompliant with this requirement at the time FEMA is ready to make a federal award offer, then FEMA may determine the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and may use that determination as a basis for making the federal award to another applicant.

**IMPORTANT:** Applicants must complete the SAM registration process. It is imperative that the information applicants provide is correct and current. Please ensure that your organization’s name, address, DUNS number, and [Employer Identification Number, or EIN](#), are up to date in SAM and that the DUNS number used in SAM is the same one used to apply for all other FEMA awards. Payment under any FEMA award is contingent on the recipient’s having a current SAM registration.

## **Help with SAM**

The SAM quick start guide for new recipient registration and SAM video tutorial for new applicants are tools created by the General Services Administration (GSA) to assist those registering with SAM. If applicants have questions or concerns about a SAM registration, please contact the Federal Support Desk at <https://www.fsd.gov/fsd-gov/home.do> or call toll free (866) 606-8220.

## **How to Get a Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) Code**

To get a CAGE code, applicants must first register with SAM, which is a requirement for doing business with the Federal Government. Applicants will receive a CAGE code as part of the SAM validation process, and as soon as the registration is active, applicants may view the CAGE code online by logging in to their SAM accounts.

## **Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission**

All applications must be received by Friday, May 15, 2020 at 5:00 PM Eastern Time. FEMA GO automatically records proof of timely submission and the system generates an electronic date/time stamp when FEMA GO successfully receives the application. The individual with the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) role that submitted the application will also receive the official date/time stamp and a FEMA GO tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission on the date and time that FEMA GO received the application. Applications received by FEMA GO after the established due date for applications will not be considered for funding.

Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before FEMA GO receives your application. FEMA GO will provide either an error message or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the AOR that submitted the application. The FEMA GO Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Do not do this – it may cause your application to fail to be submitted and consequently not be considered for funding. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

## **Intergovernmental Review**

An intergovernmental review may be required. Applicants must contact their State's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to comply with the State's process under Executive Order 12372. (See <https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/12372.html>; <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/SPOC-February-2019.pdf>)

## **Funding Restrictions**

Applicants may only use the Federal funds made available through this program for the purpose(s) set forth in the award package and this use must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Applicants may not use award funds for matching funds for any other federal grants/cooperative agreements, lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, applicants may not use federal funds to sue the Federal Government or any other government entity. Failure to adhere to the

award conditions will cause the recipient to be considered in default of the grant agreement and may require the return of all federal funds disbursed under the grant.

Applicants may submit only one application per eligible activity. Any applicant that submits more than one application per activity will have *all* applications within that activity deemed ineligible.

For more information on restrictions on use of funds, please see [Appendix B: Programmatic Information and Priorities](#).

**Construction or Remodeling/Renovation Costs.** Construction costs are not eligible under the SAFER grant program. Construction includes major alterations to a building that changes the profile or footprint of the structure. To support eligible awarded activities under the SAFER Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity, remodeling/renovations to an existing facility are limited to minor interior alterations costing less than \$10,000 and should be requested under Modification to Facilities. **IMPORTANT:** Some of these activities may require an Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP) review; certain costs associated with an EHP Review are eligible for reimbursement.

#### **Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP)**

As a federal agency, DHS/FEMA is required to consider the effects of its actions on the environment and historic properties to ensure that all activities and programs funded by the agency, including grants-funded projects, comply with Federal EHP regulations, laws and Executive Orders as applicable.

Recipients proposing projects that have the potential to impact the environment, including but not limited to modification or renovation of existing buildings, structures, and facilities, must participate in the FEMA EHP Review process. The EHP Review process involves the submission of a screening form that includes a detailed project description that explains the goals and objectives of the proposed project along with supporting documentation so that FEMA may determine whether the proposed project has the potential to impact environmental resources and/or historic properties. In some cases, FEMA must also consult with other regulatory agencies and the public to complete the review process. The EHP Review process must be completed before funds are released to carry out the proposed project. FEMA will not fund projects that are initiated without the required EHP Review. Applicants will be notified via email if an EHP Review is required and will be provided instructions on how to comply.

Additionally, all recipients are required to comply with FEMA EHP Policy Guidance. This EHP Policy Guidance is located in FEMA Policy (FP) 108-023-1, [Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Policy Guidance](#).

SAFER projects that involve installation of equipment not specifically excluded from a FEMA EHP Review per the GPD Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA); ground-disturbing activities; or modification/renovation of existing buildings or



structures must undergo FEMA EHP Review. No facilities modification project can proceed, with the exception of project planning, prior to formal FEMA approval. Recipients may request funds for activities that do not require EHP Review.

The following activities would not require submission of the FEMA EHP Screening Form:

- Planning and development of policies or processes;
- Management, administrative or personnel actions;
- Classroom-based training; and
- Acquisition of mobile and portable equipment (not involving installation) on or in a building.

### **Indirect Facilities & Administrative (F&A) Costs**

Indirect F&A costs are those costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective. These costs are not readily assignable to the costs objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. Indirect costs are allowable under the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity, as described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.414. With the exception of recipients who have never received a negotiated indirect cost rate as described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), recipients must have an approved indirect cost rate agreement with their cognizant federal agency to charge indirect costs to this award. A copy of the approved rate (a fully executed, agreement negotiated with the applicant's cognizant federal agency) is required at the time of application and must be provided to FEMA before indirect costs are charged to the award. Applicants must submit copies of the indirect cost rate agreements, along with the SAFER application number, electronically to [FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov).

FEMA will evaluate indirect costs as part of the application for federal funds and these costs must be included as a line item in the Request Details section of the application, so FEMA can determine if they are allowable, if they are reasonable, or if they disproportionately impact an application's cost benefit.

### **Management and Administration (M&A) Costs**

M&A expenses are not operational costs but are necessary costs incurred in direct support of the grant or as a consequence of it. As such, these costs can be itemized in financial reports. Applicants should base M&A expenses only on actual expenses or known contractual costs; requests that are simple percentages of the award without supporting justification will not be allowed or considered for reimbursement. Salaries and fringe benefits for personnel directly supporting the grant should not be included in the M&A budget line item.

No more than 3 percent of the federal share of SAFER Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity funds may be expended by the recipient for M&A purposes associated with the SAFER award. M&A costs are not eligible under the Hiring of Firefighters Activity.

### **Pre-award Costs**

Only costs incurred during the period of performance are allowable. However, recipients under the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity may request reimbursement for grant writer fees (*see [Appendix C: Award Administration Information, Section II. Grant Writer/Preparation Fees](#); see also [Appendix B: Programmatic Information and Priorities, Section V. Eligible and Ineligible Costs](#)*).

### **E. Application Review Information**

Each year, FEMA convenes a panel of fire service professionals to develop funding priorities for the SAFER grant program. The panel makes recommendations about funding priorities as well as about developing criteria for awarding grants. The content of this NOFO reflects implementation of this Criteria Development Panel's (CDP) recommendations with respect to the priorities, direction, and criteria for awards.

The **nine major fire service organizations** represented on the CDP are:

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

#### **1. Application Evaluation Criteria**

Additionally, prior to making a federal award, DHS/FEMA is required by 31 U.S.C. § 3321 note, 41 U.S.C. § 2313, and 2 C.F.R. § 200.205 to review information available through any OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information. Therefore, application evaluation criteria may include the following risk-based considerations of the applicant:

- Financial stability;
- Quality of management systems and ability to meet management standards;
- History of performance in managing federal award;
- Reports and findings from audits; and
- Ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.

All investments selected for recommendation will also undergo an additional risk review conducted by the DHS/FEMA Grants Management Specialist to evaluate the risk for noncompliance in carrying out the federal award. Using their subject matter expertise, the questions the DHS/FEMA Grants Management Specialist may assess include, but are not limited to:

- Is the applicant on any exclusion lists as identified in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov)?
- If the applicant has received federal funding in the past, has the applicant performed all audits required by the Single Audit requirements under 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart F?
- Has the applicant provided sufficient budget information and justification as required by the NOFO?
- Are the costs proposed by the applicant in the budget information and justification allowable and reasonable based on the criteria set forth in this Manual and the applicable appendix, NOFO, and regulations?
- Is the budget representative of the total cost of performance of the projects?
- If indirect costs are included, has the applicant provided an approved Indirect Cost Rate agreement?
- Is the applicant delinquent on any federal debt?
- Has the applicant had substandard performance in a prior award?
- Is the applicant on the Do Not Pay List?

Based on the outcome of this review, DHS/FEMA may determine that it will not make an award to an applicant that poses a risk of noncompliance. DHS/FEMA may also determine that it will make an award to an at-risk applicant, subject to additional terms and conditions as described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.207.

## **2. Supplemental Financial Integrity Review**

Prior to making a federal award where the anticipated federal share of a federal award will be greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, currently \$250,000 (see Section 805 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018, Pub. L. No. 115-91, OMB Memorandum M-18-18 at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/M-18-18.pdf>; see also [FEMA GPD Information Bulletin No. 434, Increases and Changes to the Micro-Purchase and Simplified Acquisition Thresholds](#)):

- DHS/FEMA is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through the System for Award Management (SAM), which is currently the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIS) and is also accessible through the SAM website.
- An applicant, at its option, may review information in FAPIS and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency previously entered.
- DHS/FEMA will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in FAPIS, when making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.205.

### 3. Review and Selection Process

FEMA competitively scores and reviews all applications submitted under this NOFO a through the multi-phase process outlined below:

#### a. Pre-scoring

FEMA evaluates all complete and eligible applications relative to the SAFER Grant Program funding priorities (*see* information on the funding priorities in [Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities, Section IV. Funding Priorities](#)). This review is accomplished through pre-scoring and the peer review panel process. General and activity-specific information submitted in the application will determine an applicant’s initial standing relative to SAFER grant funding priorities. Applications most consistent with the SAFER grant funding priorities score higher in the automated pre-score evaluation. The pre-score represents 50 percent of the total application score under the Hiring of Firefighters Activity. The pre-score represents 30 percent of the total application score under the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity. Application Narrative Statements are not reviewed during pre-score.

#### b. Peer Review Panel

A panel of at least three peer reviewers performs the second phase of an application’s evaluation. The panel is composed of fire service representatives recommended by the national organizations from the CDP. These panelists evaluate the application using the Narrative Statement, answers to the general questions, and answers to the activity-specific questions provided in the application. Further, peer reviewers will review the Request Details section of the application including descriptions of each line item requested in the application. The panelists evaluate each application on its own merits against established criteria and not compared to other applications. The peer review panel score represents 50 percent of the total application score. Panelists use the [Narrative Evaluation Criteria](#) listed on pages 18-21 of this NOFO to score each Narrative Statement.

### 4. Narrative Evaluation Criteria

The Narrative Statements must provide specific details about the activity for which the applicants seek funding, including budget details. Applicants must explain how the proposed activity(ies) relate to the Hiring of Firefighters Activity or the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity. FEMA reviews and compares applications for duplication. Therefore, all elements of the Narrative Statements must be original.

In applications for the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity, applicants must provide details regarding how volunteers will qualify for the incentives (*i.e.*, who will be eligible for initiatives funded under the grant and discuss any prerequisites). For example, an organization might withhold paying nominal

stipends until members participate in a minimum number of operational activities. This type of information needs to be in the Narrative Statement.

Panelists will evaluate and score each activity based on the following narrative elements within each activity:

**i. Hiring of Firefighters Activity**

The Narrative Statement for applications requesting Hiring of Firefighters Activity funding must include all four elements. The panelists will evaluate each element independently. Each element's relative weight in the determination of the grant award is listed below:

**1) Project Description (30 percent):**

- a) Why does the department need the positions requested in this application?
- b) How will the positions requested in this application be used within the department (*e.g.*, fourth firefighter on engine, open a new station, eliminate browned out stations, reduce overtime)?
- c) What specific services will the requested positions provide to the fire department and community?
- d) Describe how funds awarded through this grant enhance the department's ability to protect critical infrastructure within the primary response area?

**2) Impact on Daily Operations (30 percent):**

- a) Explain how the community and the current firefighters employed by the department are at risk without the positions requested in this application.
- b) How will that risk will be reduced if awarded?

**3) Financial Need (30 percent):**

- a) Provide an income versus expenses breakdown of the current annual budget.
- b) Describe the department's budget shortfalls and inability to address financial needs without federal assistance.
- c) What other actions has the department taken to obtain funding elsewhere (*e.g.* state assistance programs, other grant programs)?
- d) Discuss how the critical functions of the department are affected without this funding.

**4) Cost Benefit (10 percent):**

Describe the benefits (*e.g.*, quantifying the anticipated savings and/or efficiencies) the department and community will realize if awarded the positions requested in this application.

**ii. Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity (Fire Departments)**

The Narrative Statement for applications requesting this funding must include all four elements. The panelists will evaluate each element independently. Each

element's relative weight in the determination of the grant award is listed below. The peer review evaluation score represents 70 percent of the total application score.

**1) Project Description (30 percent):**

- a) Describe the problems and issues the department is experiencing in recruiting new volunteer firefighters.
- b) What are the problems and issues the department is experiencing in retaining current members?
- c) Describe the implementation plan, including the goals, objectives, methods, specific steps, and timelines to directly address the identified problems or issues.
- d) Describe the current marketing plan already in place or the marketing program to be put in place with grant funds.
- e) Describe how the program will be evaluated for its impact on identified recruitment and retention problems and issues. How will the overall effectiveness of the grant will be measured?
- f) Describe the specific services the new volunteer firefighters and/or retention of current volunteer firefighters will provide for the fire department(s) and community.
- g) If the grant request will have a regional impact, discuss how the regional partners will benefit and which activities they will benefit from.

**2) Impact on Daily Operations (30 percent):**

- a) Describe how the community and current volunteer firefighters in the department are at risk without the items or activities requested in this application.
- b) How will the risk be reduced if awarded?
- c) Explain the impact the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters and/or the retention of current volunteer firefighters will have on the department's NFPA compliance.

**3) Financial Need (30 percent):**

- a) Provide an income versus expenses breakdown of the department's current annual budget.
- b) Describe the department's budget shortfalls and its inability to address financial needs without federal assistance.
- c) What other actions has the department taken to obtain funding elsewhere (e.g., state assistance programs, other grant programs)? How have similar projects have been funded in the past?
- d) Discuss how the critical functions of the department are affected without this funding.

**4) Cost Benefit (10 percent):**

Describe the benefits (e.g., quantifying the anticipated savings and/or efficiencies) the department and community will realize if awarded the items or activities requested in this application.

**iii. Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity (national, state, local, or federally recognized tribal volunteer firefighters interest organizations)**

The Narrative Statement for applications requesting this funding must include all four elements. The panelists will evaluate each element independently. Each element's relative weight in the determination of the grant award is listed below. The peer review evaluation score represents 70 percent of the total application score.

**1) Project Description (30 percent):**

- a) Describe the problems and issues the fire departments that the organization will be reaching with this grant are experiencing in recruiting new volunteer firefighters.
- b) What are the problems and issues the same departments are experiencing in retaining current members?
- c) Describe the organization's implementation plan, including the goals, objectives, methods, specific steps, and timelines to directly address the problems or issues identified.
- d) Describe the current marketing plan already in place, or the marketing program to be put in place with grant funds.
- e) Describe how the program will be evaluated for its impact on the identified recruitment and retention problems and issues of the fire departments participating in this grant. Describe how the overall effectiveness of the grant will be measured.
- f) Describe the specific services the new volunteer firefighters and/or retention of current volunteer firefighters will provide for the fire departments participating in this application and their respective communities.
- g) Describe the organization's procurement practices and the timelines outlining the chronological steps to complete the activities requested in this application.

**2) Impact on Daily Operations (30 percent):**

- a) Describe how the fire departments participating in this application and their current volunteer firefighters and communities are at risk without the items or activities requested in this application.
- b) How will that risk be reduced if awarded?
- c) Describe the impact that the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters and/or the retention of current volunteer firefighters will have on the NFPA compliance of the fire departments participating in this application.

**3) Financial Need (30 percent):**

- a) Provide an income versus expenses breakdown of the current annual budget.
- b) Describe the organization’s budget shortfalls and the inability to address the financial needs without federal assistance.
- c) Discuss how the critical functions of the organization are affected without this funding.
- d) What other actions has the organization taken to obtain funding elsewhere (e.g. state assistance programs, other grant programs)? How have similar projects have been funded in the past?

**4) Cost Benefit (10 percent):**

Describe the benefits (e.g., quantifying the anticipated savings and/or efficiencies) the fire departments participating in this application and their communities will realize if awarded the items or activities requested in this application.

**5. Technical Evaluation Process (TEP)**

FEMA will deem the highest ranked applications from both activities to be in the fundable range. The SAFER Program Office will then perform a Technical Review of applications that are in the fundable range prior to recommending awards. The SAFER Program Office will assess the requests with respect to costs, quantities, feasibility, eligibility, and recipient responsibility prior to recommending any application for an award. Further, the SAFER Program Office will conduct an historical review of award declinations. FY 2018 SAFER Award Recipients who declined an award offer, will be prevented from receiving an FY 2019 SAFER grant.

Once the review process is complete, FEMA will determine each application’s cumulative score and create a final ranking of applications. FEMA will award grants based on this final ranking and the possible recipients’ abilities to meet the statutorily required funding limitations outlined in [Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities, Section III. Funding Limitations](#).

**F. Federal Award Administration Information**

**Notice of Award**

Once FEMA has approved and recorded an award in the system, FEMA GO sends an award package to the grant official authorized by the recipient. FEMA GO will provide the award package and email notification. The authorized grant official should follow the directions in the notification to accept the award documents. The authorized grant official should read the award package carefully for instructions on administering the grant, to determine whether there has been an adjustment to the award, and to become familiar with the terms, conditions and responsibilities of federal award recipients.

The offered award will remain on hold and be available for a maximum of 30 days until the recipient either accepts or declines the award via FEMA GO online or unless FEMA



grants additional time to accept the award. The recipient should follow the directions in the notification to confirm acceptance of the award.

Failure to accept the grant award within 30 days of an offer of award may result in a loss of funds. Recipients may request additional time to accept the award if needed.

### **Differences Between Application Request and Award**

During the review process for a SAFER award, FEMA may have modified the application request(s). These modifications will be identified in the award package provided upon the offer of an award.

If the awarded activities, scope of work, or requested dollar amount(s) do not match the application as submitted, the recipient shall only be responsible for completing the activities actually funded by FEMA. The recipient is under no obligation to start, modify, or complete any activities requested by but not funded by the award. The award package will identify any differences under the Approved scope of work section.

### **Turndown Notifications**

FEMA GO will provide all applicants who do not receive an FY 2019 SAFER award with a turndown notification.

The notification email will briefly describe why FEMA did not recommend the application for funding. Due to the historical volume of applications and turndowns, detailed debriefs for each applicant are not possible.

### **Period of Performance Guidance**

#### **i. Hiring of Firefighters Activity**

- The period of performance is 36 months for all grants awarded under this activity.
- A default 180-day recruitment period begins when FEMA approves an application for an award under this activity.
- The 36-month period of performance automatically starts after the 180-day recruitment period, regardless of whether the recipient has successfully hired the requested firefighters. The period of performance cannot start later than 180 days after the award date.
- If a recipient is able to hire SAFER-funded firefighters during the 180-day recruitment period, the period of performance may begin at that time. However, in these instances, recipients must submit an amendment requesting that the period of performance start before the end of the 180-day recruitment period if they wish to begin the period early.
- Extensions to the period of performance are not permitted.

#### **ii. Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity**

- The period of performance is between 12 and 48 months for all grants awarded under this activity.

- A default 90-day recruitment period begins when FEMA approves the application for award. This period allows each recipient time to gather resources, initiate processes, and finalize contracts needed to implement SAFER grant activities before the start of the period of performance in order to maximize the funding's availability. However, the recipient can only expend funds within the period of performance.
- If a recipient is able to begin its recruitment or retention activities during the 90-day recruitment period, the period of performance may begin at that time. However, in these instances recipients must submit an amendment requesting that the period of performance start before the end of the 90-day recruitment period if they wish to begin the period early.
- The period of performance automatically starts after the 90-day recruitment period ends, regardless of whether the recipient has begun implementing its grant award. The period of performance cannot start later than 90 days after the award date.

FEMA will consider extension requests to the period of performance under the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity only in extenuating circumstances (such as those fire departments whose operations were significantly impacted due to presidentially declared disasters).

### **Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

#### **DHS Standard Administrative Terms and Conditions**

All successful applicants for all DHS/FEMA grant and cooperative agreements are required to comply with DHS Standard Terms and Conditions, which are available online at <https://www.dhs.gov/publication/fy15-dhs-standard-terms-and-conditions>.

The applicable DHS Standard Terms and Conditions will be those in effect at the time DHS/FEMA originally made the award.

Before accepting the award, the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) should carefully read the award package for instructions on administering the grant award and the terms and conditions associated with responsibilities under federal awards. Recipients must accept all conditions in this NOFO as well as any Special Terms and Conditions in the Notice of Award to receive an award under this program. By submitting an application, applicants are deemed to have accepted all of the conditions in this NOFO as well.

#### **Financial and Programmatic Reporting**

Recipients are required to submit various financial and programmatic reports as a condition of their award acceptances. FEMA may withhold future awards and funds drawdown if these reports are delinquent.

## **Federal Financial Reporting Requirements**

### **Federal Financial Reports (SF-425)**

Recipients of SAFER grants awarded on or after Oct. 1, 2009, are required to submit semi-annual Federal Financial Reports (FFR) (SF-425) using FEMA GO online. These reports are based on the calendar year, and recipients must begin to submit reports in the period following the beginning of their period of performance. Recipients must submit FFRs throughout the entire period of performance of the grant. Reports are due no later than:

- **July 30** (for period Jan. 1 – June 30)
- **Jan. 30** (for period July 1 – Dec. 31)
- Within 90 days after the end of the Period of Performance (regardless of when the period ends)

The Federal Financial Reporting Form (FFR) and corresponding instructions are available at

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/post-award-reporting-forms.html#sortby=1>.

### **Financial and Compliance Audit Report**

Recipients that expend \$750,000 or more from all federal funding sources during the non-federal entity's fiscal year must submit an organization-wide financial and compliance audit report. The audit must be performed in accordance with the requirements of the Government Accountability Office's (GAO) Government Auditing Standards, located at <http://www.gao.gov/govaud/ybk01.htm>, and the requirements of Subpart F of 2 C.F.R. Part 200, currently in effect at the time the award is made, currently located at <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=876f827f6fae2c4bce610e9427a6d229&node=sp2.1.200.f&rgn=div6>.

## **Program Performance Reporting Requirements**

### **Quarterly Performance Reports**

SAFER grant recipients are responsible for submitting quarterly programmatic performance reports through FEMA GO. The programmatic performance report is due every three months, beginning three months after the start of the grant's period of performance, until the end of the period of performance.

The Performance Report should include the following:

- A brief narrative of overall project(s) status
- A summary of project expenditures
- A description of any potential issues that may affect project completion
- Other information specific to the Activities awarded.

## **Close Out Reporting Requirements**

Within 90 days after the end of the period of performance, recipients must submit a final FFR (SF-425) and a final performance report (both within the closeout module in FEMA GO) detailing all accomplishments and a qualitative summary of the impact of those accomplishments throughout the period of performance.

After FEMA reviews and approves these reports, FEMA will complete a close-out notice to close out the grant. The notice will indicate the period of performance as closed, list any remaining funds that will be deobligated, and address the requirement for recipients to maintain the grant records for a minimum of three years from the date of the final FFR (SF-425).

The recipient is responsible for returning any funds that have been drawn down but remain unliquidated on recipient financial records.

Information on how to return funds to FEMA is available at <http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/31261?id=7080>.

### **Administrative Closeout**

Administrative closeout is a unilateral mechanism for FEMA to move forward with closeout of a grant award using available grant award information in lieu of final reports from the recipient. It is a last resort and recipients should always submit their final reports instead of relying on this mechanism. This mechanism can also require FEMA to make cash or cost adjustments and ineligible cost determinations based on the information it has, which may result in identifying a debt owed to FEMA by the recipient.

FEMA may use the administrative closeout process when a recipient is not responsive to FEMA's reasonable efforts to collect required reports needed to complete the standard closeout process. FEMA will make three written attempts to collect required reports before initiating administrative closeout.

If FEMA administratively closes an award where no final FFR has been submitted, FEMA uses that administrative closeout date in lieu of the final FFR submission date as the start of the three-year record retention period under 2 C.F.R. § 200.333.

In addition, if an award is administratively closed, FEMA may decide to impose remedies for noncompliance per 2 C.F.R. § 200.338, consider this information in reviewing future award applications, or apply special conditions to existing or future awards.

### **Disclosing Information per 2 C.F.R. § 180.335**

This reporting requirement pertains to disclosing information related to government-wide suspension and debarment requirements. Before a recipient enters into a grant award with FEMA, the recipient must notify FEMA if it knows if it or any of the recipient's principals under the award fall under one or more of the four criteria listed at 2 C.F.R. § 180.335:

- Are presently excluded or disqualified;
- Have been convicted within the preceding three years of any of the offenses listed in 2 C.F.R. § 180.800(a) or had a civil judgment rendered against it or any of the recipient's principals for one of those offenses within that time period;
- Are presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (federal, state or local) with commission of any of the offenses listed in 2 C.F.R. § 180.800(a); or
- Have had one or more public transactions (federal, state, or local) terminated within the preceding three years for cause or default.

At any time after accepting the award, if the recipient learns that it or any of its principals falls under one or more of the criteria listed at 2 C.F.R. § 180.335, the recipient must provide immediate written notice to FEMA in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 180.350.

### **Monitoring**

FEMA staff will periodically monitor recipients, both programmatically and financially, to ensure that the project goals, objectives, performance requirements, timelines, milestone completion, budgets and other related program criteria are being met.

FEMA may accomplish this monitoring through either desk-based reviews, onsite monitoring visits, or both. Monitoring will involve the review and analysis of the financial, programmatic, performance, compliance and administrative processes, policies, activities, and other attributes of each federal assistance award, and it will identify areas where the recipient may need technical assistance, corrective actions and/or other support.

The recipient is responsible for monitoring all sub-award activities to ensure compliance with federal and state laws, regulations, and guidance. Responsibilities include the accounting of receipts and expenditures, cash management, maintaining of adequate financial records, reporting and refunding expenditures disallowed by audits, monitoring, or other assessments and reviews.

## **G. DHS Awarding Agency Contact Information and Resource Information**

Resources are available to:

- Guide applicants in completing SAFER Grant Applications; and
- Assist grant recipients with the programmatic and financial administration of an award.

### **SAFER Help Desk**

The SAFER Help Desk provides technical assistance to applicants for the online completion and submission of applications into FEMA GO, answers questions concerning applicant eligibility and recipient responsibilities, and offers assistance in the programmatic administration of award. The Help Desk can be contacted at (866) 274-

0960 or by email at [FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov). Regular hours of operation are from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

### **FEMA GO System Information**

For technical assistance with FEMA GOs, please contact the Enterprise Service Desk at (877) 611-4700. Regular hours of operation are also from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday.

## **H. Additional Information**

### **Extensions to the Grant Period of Performance**

#### **Hiring of Firefighters Activity Grants**

Extensions to the period of performance are not permitted.

#### **Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity Grants**

Extensions to the period of performance are generally not permitted, except in extenuating circumstances (such as those fire departments whose operations were significantly impacted due to presidentially declared disasters). **Approval is not guaranteed.**

FEMA will only consider extensions to the initial period of performance identified in the award through formal requests via FEMA GO. Requests must contain a specific and compelling justification as to why an extension is required.

All extension requests must contain:

1. Grant Program, Fiscal Year, and award number;
2. Justification for the extension—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;
3. Current status of the activity/activities;
4. Approved period of performance termination date and new project completion date;
5. Amount of funds drawn down to date;
6. Remaining available funds, both federal and non-federal;
7. Budget outlining how remaining federal and non-federal funds will be expended;
8. Plan for completion, including milestones and timeframes for achieving each milestone and the position/person responsible for implementing the plan for completion; and
9. 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.

### **Requirements for Extension Consideration**

To be eligible for consideration, recipients must submit extension requests via FEMA GO. Recipients may submit requests between 120 and 60 days prior to the end of the award's period of performance.

In accordance with FEMA policy, FEMA reviews extensions on a case-by-case basis and typically grants them for no more than a six-month period. FEMA will grant extension requests only due to compelling legal, policy, or operational challenges. The review process can take up to 30 days or longer. Applicants should factor this review period in to the timing of when to submit a request for an extension.

## **Appendix A: FY 2019 SAFER Program Updates**

*Appendix A contains detailed information on changes to SAFER between FY 2018 and FY 2019*

### **I. New for FY 2019**

- A log book for the purchase and issuance of gift cards is now required. The log book should include name of recipient, date, amount of card, reason for issuance and signature of recipient. Gift cards should be issued to operational firefighters who have completed the minimum firefighter training required by the authority having jurisdiction.
- Job Sharing to fill SAFER-funded positions is no longer eligible.
- Staffing Maintenance Numbers are determined based on budgeted operational positions at the time of application plus the number of SAFER-funded positions.
- FY 2019 Applications will be submitted in FEMA GO.



## Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities

*Appendix B contains more detailed information on SAFER Program Information and Priorities. Reviewing this information may help applicants make their application(s) more competitive.*

### I. Application Instructions/Notes

Once the application has been submitted, it cannot be changed. There is *no appeal process* for inaccurate or incomplete information retained by the system due to improper or multiple browser usage by the applicant.

The Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) that submitted the application will receive an automatic FEMA GO notification email once the system receives the application.

#### Application Notes

- For the most competitive application, select those local need(s) that most closely align with the highest SAFER Grant Program priority(ies).
- When filling out the online application, applicants are required to provide basic demographic information regarding their department and the community served, but applicants must provide detailed information regarding the items or activities for which they are seeking funding.
- If awarded, FEMA may modify the application request(s) during the award review process; if the awarded activities, Scope of Work, or amount(s) do not match the application as submitted, the grant recipient shall only be responsible for completing the activities actually funded. The grant recipient is under no obligation to start, modify, or complete any activities requested but not funded by this award. Please review the Award Package.

### II. Supporting Definitions for this NOFO

**Attrition:** A gradual reduction in work force without laying off personnel, e.g., when workers resign or retire and are not replaced.

**Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ):** (Per NFPA101-2015 Edition: Life Safety Code) is that person or office charged with enforcing the Life Safety Code.

**Automatic Aid:** Per NFPA 1710, 3.3.2.1 - 2010 edition and NFPA 1720 - 2009 is a plan developed between two or more fire departments for immediate joint response on first alarms.

**Benefits:** Includes regular compensation paid to employees during periods of authorized absences from the job, e.g., vacation leave, sick leave, military leave. These costs are absorbed by all organization activities in proportion to the relative amount of time or effort actually devoted to each. Employer contributions or expenses for social security, employee insurance, workmen's compensation, pension plan costs, and the like, whether treated as indirect costs or as direct costs, are also eligible and shall be distributed to

particular awards and other activities in a manner consistent with the pattern of benefits accruing to the individuals or group of employees whose salaries and wages are chargeable. Please also reference 2 C.F.R. § 200.431 Compensation—fringe benefits.

**Career Fire Department:** A fire department that has an all-paid force of firefighting personnel other than paid-on-call firefighters (fire departments that provide reimbursement on a paid-on-call basis are considered to be a combination fire department for the purposes of this program).

**Combination Fire Department:** A fire department that has paid firefighting personnel and volunteer firefighting personnel. At minimum, a combination fire department must have at least one active firefighter who receives financial compensation for services (including paid-on-call) and at least one active firefighter who does not receive financial compensation for services, other than life, health, and workers' compensation insurance.

**Emergency Medical Services Organization:** A public or private organization that provides direct emergency medical services, including medical transport.

**Fire Department:** An agency or organization that has a formally recognized arrangement with a state, territory, local government, or tribal authority (city, county, parish, fire district, township, town, village or other governing body) to provide fire suppression on a first-due basis to a fixed geographical area. Fire departments may be comprised of members who are volunteer, career or a combination of volunteer and career.

**Firefighter:** An individual having the legal authority and responsibility to engage in fire suppression; employed by a fire department of a municipality, county, fire district or state, engaged in the prevention, control and extinguishing of fires; and/or responding to emergency situations in which life, property or the environment is at risk. This individual must be trained in fire suppression, but may also be trained in emergency medical care, hazardous materials awareness, rescue techniques and any other related duties provided by the fire department.

**Formal Layoff Notice:** Any layoff notice should align with the local rules and regulations that govern civil service employment in the jurisdiction. In order to be reasonable to employees, and to provide employees facing layoff actions a clear understanding of the impending action, any notice of layoff should be in writing and delivered to a specific employee affected by the action. The notice should identify a specific date employment will cease or specific event that would trigger the termination of employment. The notice should be delivered or otherwise presented directly to the affected employee in advance of the layoff action in accordance with the civil service provisions or union agreement in force in the jurisdiction taking action, *e.g.*, 60 days prior to the effective date of the layoff action. The notice should specify whether the action is permanent or temporary, as well as provide the anticipated schedule of layoffs. For the purposes of the SAFER Program, a notice that is not executed within the specified terms will be considered void unless an additional notice is provided within 14 days of the

original action date.

**Initial Full Alarm Assignment:** Personnel, equipment, and resources ordinarily dispatched upon notification of a structural fire.

**Majority Career:** A department is considered majority career if 50 percent or more of the active firefighting membership is salaried staff.

**Majority Volunteer:** A department is considered majority volunteer if more than 50 percent of the active firefighting membership is NOT compensated for service other than a nominal stipend and/or insurance.

**Mutual Aid:** Per NFPA 1710 and NFPA 1720, 3.3.2.2 – 2020 editions, a reciprocal assistance by emergency services under a written plan among AHJs that is part of communication center’s dispatch protocol.

**National, State, Local, or Federally Recognized Tribal Organizations that Represent the Interests of Volunteer Firefighters:** Organizations that support or represent the interests of firefighters in front of legislative bodies at the local, state, tribal and federal level. Such organizations include, but are not limited to, state or local firefighter and/or fire chiefs’ associations, volunteer firefighter relief organizations, and associations. FEMA shall make the final determination as to whether an applicant is an appropriate volunteer firefighter interest group.

**New Recruit:** A new recruit is a firefighter that has joined after the department is notified of the grant award (the date of the award notification email in the FEMA GO mail center).

**Nominal Stipend:** A stipend is nominal if it does not exceed 20 percent of what the fire department would otherwise pay to hire a full-time firefighter to perform the services for which the stipend is provided. Whether a stipend falls above or below the 20 percent threshold may be determined in one of two ways. Departments that maintain paid full-time firefighters on their payrolls may compare the stipend to the salary they pay a full-time firefighter who performs similar services to determine whether the stipend is more or less than 20 percent of that salary. Departments that do not maintain full time firefighters on their payrolls may make the determination based on a comparison to the salary paid to a full-time firefighter in a neighboring jurisdiction, elsewhere in the state or ultimately the nation, and may also utilize data from the United States Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics. A nominal stipend may also include reimbursements to volunteer firefighters for approximate out-of- pocket expenses they incur.

If a stipend paid exceeds 20 percent of the prevailing wage calculated as described above, then the firefighter receiving compensation would not qualify as a volunteer and is considered an employee who may be covered by the FLSA minimum wage and overtime provisions.

**Operational Budget:** The budget supporting fire-related programs and/or emergency response activities (e.g., salaries, maintenance, equipment, apparatus).

**Operational Position:** A position with a primary assignment (more than 50 percent of time) on a fire suppression vehicle, regardless of collateral duties, in support of the department's NFPA 1710 or NFPA 1720 compliance.

**Paid-on-Call:** Firefighters who are paid a stipend for each event to which they respond. Paid-on-call firefighters may be considered paid firefighters or volunteer firefighters, depending on whether the stipend they receive is a nominal stipend. For the purposes of this SAFER Program, a department whose membership is comprised of all volunteer firefighters, including any paid-on-call firefighters who receive only a nominal stipend, will be considered a volunteer fire department. Also, for the purposes of this SAFER Program, a department whose membership is comprised of any paid-on-call firefighters who receive more than a nominal stipend will be considered a combination fire department. Also refer to the definition of a nominal stipend.

**Part-Time Firefighter:** A firefighter who works less than 40 hours per week. When more than one part-time firefighter shares a position that results in work in excess of 40 hours per week, FEMA considers that shared assignment to be a Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) position that must be accounted for in the staffing information provided in the application.

**Salary:** A fixed payment made by an employer to an employee to compensate for a regular work schedule. Typically, the payment is made on a monthly, biweekly, or weekly basis but often expressed as an annual sum. *See also* 2 C.F.R. § 200.430 compensation—personal services. The salary structure should be documented in writing by the employer. Only costs for overtime that an employer routinely pays as a part of a firefighter's regularly scheduled and contracted shift hours to comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) are eligible salary costs under the Hiring of Firefighters Activity.

**State:** Any of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

**Staffing and Deployment:** The minimum staffing requirements to ensure a sufficient number of members are available to operate safely and effectively as defined in NFPA 1710 and 1720.

**Supplanting:** Replace or take place of funds that would otherwise be available from State or local sources, or the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

**Volunteer Fire Department:** A fire department that has an all-volunteer force of firefighting personnel. For a fire department to have an all-volunteer force, no member may receive financial compensation (in the form of salary or wages) for their services other than life and health insurance, workers' compensation insurance, and/or a nominal

stipend per call. FEMA considers a department to be majority volunteer if more than 50 percent of its membership is made up of personnel who do not receive financial compensation for services.

### III. Funding Limitations

Specific funding parameters are either required by law or are the outcome of recommendations from the Criteria Development Panel (CDP). Each requirement is identified below, followed by the source of the requirement which is noted in parentheses:

- 10 percent of the funding appropriated for FY 2019 SAFER awards is set aside for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. (15 U.S.C. § 2229a(a)(2)).
  - No more than 33 percent of the total amount allocated for the recruitment and retention of volunteers can be awarded to national, state, local, territorial, or federally recognized tribal organizations that represent the interests of volunteer firefighters. (CDP)
- Ten percent of the funding appropriated for FY 2019 SAFER awards is set aside for grants awarded to all volunteer or majority volunteer departments for hiring of firefighters. (15 U.S.C. § 2229a(a)(1)(H))
  - A majority volunteer fire department is made up of more than 50 percent of personnel who do not receive financial compensation for their services, other than life, health, and worker's compensation insurance, or a nominal stipend payment, including certain paid-on-call personnel. Although applications are normally awarded based on total score (high to low), in order to meet this 10 percent statutory set aside the SAFER Program Office may be required to fund an application which meets the criteria for the set aside instead of a higher-scoring application that does not meet the set aside criteria. (15 U.S.C. § 2229a(a)(1)(H))
  - If FEMA awards less than 10 percent of the funds available for the hiring of firefighters to volunteer and majority volunteer fire departments, it must transfer the remaining funds to provide grants for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. (15 U.S.C. § 2229a(a)(1)(H))

### IV. Funding Priorities

#### Program Priorities Description

This section summarizes the program priorities used to determine grant awards. Program priorities are listed as High **H**, Medium **M**, or Low **L**. Within each identified program priority, all proposed activities have an equal value.

There are separate evaluation criteria for the following applications:

- Hiring of Firefighters
- Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters – Fire Departments
- Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters – National, State, Local,

## Territorial, or Federally Recognized Tribal Volunteer Firefighter Interest Organizations

### A. Hiring of Firefighters Activity

Grants awarded under the Hiring of Firefighters Activity enable volunteer, combination, and career fire departments to improve staffing levels to attain a more effective level of response and a safer incident scene. FEMA awards grants directly to volunteer, combination and career fire departments to help fire departments increase their cadre of frontline firefighters. Hiring of Firefighter grants provide fire departments with funds to pay new firefighter salaries and benefits (exclusive of overtime). Automated (pre-score) evaluation scores represent 50 percent of the total application score.

#### 1. Meeting the National Standards

FEMA prioritizes bringing non-compliant (NFPA 1710 or 1720) departments into compliance in the most cost-effective manner.

FEMA will ask applicants general questions about the NFPA standard they are attempting to meet as well as their current ability to meet that standard (without the use of overtime). FEMA will also ask applicants to indicate what their ability will be to meet that same standard if awarded grant funds.

Having additional firefighters on staff should improve a local fire department's ability to comply with the staffing, response, and operational standards that enhance community and firefighter safety.

Applications resulting in the largest percentage increases in compliance with the relevant section of NFPA 1710 (for career departments) or 1720 (for volunteer departments) receive higher pre-scores than applications resulting in smaller percentage increases in compliance.

**Note:** SAFER grants focus only on the Deployment or Staffing and Deployment sections of these two standards, respectively.

- NFPA 1710 Assembly Requirements: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Department (Section 5.2.4.1 – Single-Family Dwelling Initial Full Alarm Assignment Capability). This standard applies primarily to all-career fire departments and combination departments if the combination department chooses it.
- NFPA 1720 Assembly Requirements: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire

Departments (Section 4.3 – Staffing and Deployment). This standard applies primarily to all-volunteer fire departments, but it may also apply to combination departments if the combination department does not choose to comply with the NFPA 1710 standard.

- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) – “FREE ACCESS”: As part of its commitment to enhancing public safety and supporting the emergency responder, the NFPA makes its codes and standards available online for free. Please visit <http://www.nfpa.org/freeaccess>.

The tables below identify the priority levels for current and new compliance with the NFPA 1710/1720 standard.

Current (Pre-Award) 1710/1720 Compliance Priorities	
<b>H</b> Never or 0 percent	<b>M</b> Half the time or 40-59 percent
<b>H</b> Rarely or 1-19 percent	<b>L</b> Very often or 60-79 percent
<b>M</b> Sometimes or 20-39 percent	<b>L</b> Most of the time or 80-99 percent

New (Post-Award) 1710/1720 Compliance Priorities	
<b>H</b> Always or 100 percent	<b>M</b> Half the time or 40-59 percent
<b>H</b> Most of the time or 80-90 percent	<b>L</b> Sometimes or 20-39 percent
<b>M</b> Very often or 60-79 percent	<b>L</b> Rarely or 019 percent

## 2. Call Volume and Population Served

Department call volume and population served are both factors in the initial application evaluation. Departments responding to a higher number of incidents and departments who protect a larger jurisdiction will receive higher consideration than those departments responding to fewer incidents and protecting smaller jurisdictions.

## 3. Firefighter Health Measures

The health and well-being of firefighters is of paramount importance. Therefore, applicants who indicate newly recruited firefighters will undergo an entry-level physical and receive immunizations and who indicate they will provide annual medical exams receive higher consideration than applicants who do not specify that these benefits will be provided. To qualify for this higher consideration, the physicals must be consistent with those required under NFPA 1582 Chapter 6, Medical Evaluations of Candidates 6.1 and Chapter 9, Essential Job Tasks — Specific Evaluation of Medical Conditions in Members.

**4. Training Requirements**

Applicants will receive higher pre-scores if the personnel funded under the grant will meet the minimum EMS training and certification requirements prescribed by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ).

**B. Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity – Fire Departments**

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. The following identifies the elements that the applications will be evaluated on during the pre-scoring process. Automated (pre-score) evaluation scores represent 30 percent of the total application score.

**1. Meeting Staffing Standards**

The highest priority is to assist departments experiencing a high rate of turnover and that have staffing levels significantly below the ideal staffing level required to comply with NFPA standards 1710 or 1720 (for details, see [section A.1. Meeting the National Standards](#)).

**2. Volunteer Membership**

Departments or organizations with the highest percentage of volunteers should benefit the most from the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Therefore, applicants whose membership is comprised of mostly volunteer members, or have a significant number of volunteer firefighters, receive higher consideration.

Percentage of Volunteers	
<b>H</b> 91-100 percent	<b>M</b> 41-50 percent
<b>H</b> 81-91 percent	<b>M</b> 31-40 percent
<b>H</b> 71-80 percent	<b>L</b> 21-30 percent
<b>H</b> 61-70 percent	<b>L</b> 11-20 percent
<b>M</b> 51-60 percent	<b>L</b> 1-10 percent

**3. Call Volume**

Department call volume is a factor in the initial evaluation. Departments responding to a higher number of incidents receive higher consideration.

**4. Firefighter Health Measures**

Applicants who indicate the newly recruited firefighters will undergo an entry-level physical and receive immunizations and who indicate they will provide



annual medical exams receive higher consideration. To qualify for this higher consideration, the physicals must be consistent with those required under NFPA 1582 Chapter 6, Medical Evaluations of Candidates 6.1 and Chapter 9, Essential Job Tasks — Specific Evaluation of Medical Conditions in Members. Applicants who provide worker’s compensation/Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D) benefits to their members receive higher consideration than applicants who do not specify these benefits will be provided.

Entry-Level Medical Exams	
<b>H</b> NFPA 1582-compliant physicals	<b>M</b> Non-NFPA-compliant physicals

<b>H</b> NFPA 1582-compliant physicals	<b>M</b> Non-NFPA-compliant physicals
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**5. Firefighter Training and Certification Requirements**

<b>H</b> Both FF II/EMT	<b>M</b> FF I
<b>H</b> FF II	<b>L</b> First Responder
<b>M</b> Both FF I/EMT	

**6. Recruitment and Retention (R&R) Coordinator/Program Manager**

<b>H</b> Applicants who currently have a coordinator or program manager in place	<b>L</b> Applicants who do not have, or are not requesting, a coordinator/program manager
<b>M</b> Applicants who will request grant funding for a coordinator or program manager’s position	

**7. Regional Requests**

Requests for recruitment or retention that will have a direct regional or local benefit beyond the immediate boundaries of the applicant’s first-due area will receive higher consideration. Direct benefit means that other fire departments will

receive a portion of the grant awarded funds or the other departments will receive items purchased with the grant funds.

An eligible applicant, which can include a fire department, may act as a “host applicant” and apply for support of both a regional initiative and its own department’s internal needs on one application. To apply for a regional project, the host fire department must agree, if awarded, to be responsible for all aspects of the grant. This includes, but is not limited to, accountability for the assets and all reporting requirements.

Regional host applicants and participating fire departments must execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or equivalent document, signed by all parties participating in the award, **prior** to submitting an application under the Regional Program activities. The agreement should specify the individual and mutual responsibilities of the participating partners, the participant’s level of involvement in the project(s), the participating partners’ EIN numbers, and the proposed distribution of all grant-funded assets or contracted services. Successful regional applicants shall provide a copy of the signed MOU at the time of award. Any entity named in the application as benefiting from the award shall be a party to the MOU or equivalent document.

In completing the application, the applicant must include a list of all participating fire departments, including a point of contact and phone number for each department that will directly benefit from the regional project if they receive the grant. The fire departments that will benefit from the recruitment and retention project may also apply for funding under SAFER as long as the departments do not apply for a project that could conflict with or duplicate the host applicant’s project. Applicants must also certify that they will ensure the fire departments participating in this application have not received grants for similar items/activities.

All participants of a Regional application must be compliant with SAFER requirements, including being an eligible entity, and being current with past grants, closeouts, and other reporting requirements. The host shall not distribute grant-funded assets or provide grant-funded contractual services to non-compliant partner organizations.

Note: Only applications submitted under the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity qualify for regional project requests. Regional projects are not eligible under the Hiring of Firefighters Activity.

**C. Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity – National, State, Local, Territorial, or Federally Recognized Tribal Volunteer Firefighter Interest Organizations**

The purpose of these grants is to assist national, state, local, or federally recognized tribal organizations that represent the interests of volunteer firefighters 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 an aggregate increase in the number of trained, certified and competent

firefighters capable of safely responding to emergencies on behalf of the fire departments being represented. For this reason, projects that are comprehensive in nature and based on a clear needs assessment, implementation plan, evaluation plan, and have, or will establish, fire service partnerships will receive higher consideration.

In completing the application, the applicant must include data that approximates the characteristics of the entire region and/or all fire departments affected by the grant. If awarded, recipients may be required to provide documentation of each fire department’s consent to participate in the application. Applicants must also certify that they will ensure the fire departments participating in this application have not received grants for similar items/activities. The following identifies the elements that the applications will be evaluated on during the pre-scoring process. Automated (pre-score) evaluation scores represent 30 percent of the total application score.

**1. Meeting Staffing Standards**

The goal under this SAFER activity is to assist departments experiencing a high rate of turnover that have staffing levels significantly below the ideal staffing level required to comply with NFPA standards 1710 or 1720 (for details, see [section A.1. Meeting the National Standards](#)). Organizations that currently have the lowest recruitment and retention rates among the entire region and/or all fire departments benefiting from the grant funds receive higher consideration for funding.

**2. Recruitment and Retention (R&R) Coordinator/Program Manager**

R&R Coordinator	
<b>H</b> Applicants who currently have a coordinator or program manager in place	<b>L</b> Applicants who do not have, or are not requesting, a coordinator or program manager
<b>M</b> Applicants who will request grant funding for a coordinator or program manager’s position	

**3. Needs Assessment**

Needs Assessment	
<b>H</b> Applicants with projects based on a needs assessment	<b>L</b> Applicants with projects that are not based on a needs assessment

#### 4. Fire Service Partnerships

<b>H</b> Applicants who have, or will establish, fire service partnerships as part of this project	<b>L</b> Applicants who will not have, or establish, fire service partnerships as part of this project
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#### V. Eligible and Ineligible Costs

Regardless of the eligibility of any costs requested or the results of the review of the application conducted in accordance with Section E of this NOFO, FEMA reserves the right to approve the activities requested in an application in whole or in part.

- Funds may only be used to hire new, additional firefighters or changing the status of part-time or paid-on-call firefighters to full-time firefighters and shall not be used to supplant funds.
- SAFER grant funds must be used to increase the amount of funds that would, in the absence of federal funds received under this grant, be made available from state or local sources, or in the case of Indian tribal governments, from funds provided by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Recipients may apply for a waiver of this restriction on supplanting.
- Salary and associated benefits (actual payroll expenses) for the positions funded under the SAFER grant are eligible. Costs are reimbursable if they are included as part of the standard package, available to all operational firefighter positions, and contractually obligated. Refer also to the definitions in [Section II](#) of this Appendix.
- Only full-time positions are eligible for funding. A full-time position is one position that is funded for at least 2,080 hours per year, e.g., 40 hours per week, 52 weeks per year.
- Salaries and benefits of firefighters hired under SAFER funding while they are engaged in initial recruit training are eligible.
- Costs for overtime that fire departments routinely pay as a part of the firefighter's regularly scheduled and contracted shift hours to comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) are eligible.
- SAFER grant funds will only pay for operational positions whose primary assignment (more than 50 percent of time) is on a fire suppression vehicle, regardless of collateral duties.
- Volunteer and mostly volunteer fire departments may also hire individuals to fill officer-level positions (e.g., chief, fire inspector, training officer, safety officer) in addition to their primary operational assignment.

### Hiring of Firefighters Activity – Ineligible Costs

- The salaries and benefits of full-time firefighters who are employees at the time of grant award are ineligible to be funded under this grant.
- The SAFER grant may not be used to fund promotions (e.g., to pay a current member a higher salary by placing him/her in a new SAFER-funded position).
- Pre-application costs, such as grant writer fees, administrative costs (e.g., physicals/medical exams, background checks, etc.), and indirect costs associated with hiring firefighters are ineligible.
- Costs to train and equip firefighters (e.g., Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)/Turnout Gear) are ineligible (this does not include the salaries and benefits of firefighters hired under SAFER while they are engaged in training).
- Costs for uniform allowances that are not contractually obligated, included as part of the standard benefits package for all employees, or reimbursed via payroll are ineligible.
- Costs of annual physicals/medical exams are ineligible
- Overtime costs are ineligible (except as noted in “eligible costs” above).
- Management and Administrative (M&A) costs.

### Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity – Eligible Costs

#### Overview

Applicants must correlate the activities for which funding is requested and the identified recruitment or retention problems or issues to be addressed. FEMA will not fund a budget line item if an applicant does not provide sufficient information detailing how it will enhance recruitment and retention. Allowable costs may be limited to reasonable amounts, as determined by FEMA.

Applicants who propose to focus on retention of volunteers will receive equal consideration as applicants focusing on recruitment of volunteers. A focus on retention may include providing incentives for volunteer firefighter members to continue service in a fire department.

SAFER grant funds may only be used for volunteer firefighters who are involved with, or trained in, the operations of firefighting and emergency response.

FEMA recommends that departments consult their Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) or the department’s legal counsel to understand the full legal and financial implications involved with implementing or sustaining programs that offer benefits or financial awards to firefighters (e.g., stipends, Length of Service Award Program [LOSAP]).

All grant-related purchases and activities must be incurred, received, and completed within the period of performance. The period of coverage and/or service delivery on all contracts, and agreements may not begin prior to or extend beyond the period of performance of the grant. FEMA may, permit pro-rated costs to be charged to the grant for training courses which begin during the period of performance, but end after the period of performance ends.

All funded activities under Recruitment and Retention 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. FEMA may ask for copies of SOPs prior to, or after being awarded.

## Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity – Eligible Costs

FEMA will not fund any projects, activities, or line items that are covered under a department's normal operating budget. Federal funding may not be used to supplant (*i.e.*, replace) an existing activity or program.

Applicants should use the Request Details portion of the grant application to provide detailed information on how each proposed cost was determined or calculated. As much as possible, costs should be based on reliable market research (for example, earnings information is published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).

Applications for funding in the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity could include projects requiring up to four years to complete (with proper justification).

## Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity – Eligible High Priority Costs

### High Priority

- Costs to support a staffing needs assessment identifying the operational staff that are required to carry out fire department responsibilities safely and effectively (*e.g.*, supplies for data collection, contractors or personnel to collect and analyze data, software programs, etc.).
  - NOTE: If a staffing needs assessment is requested and the application is selected for funding, the staffing needs assessment will be the only activity that will be funded.
- Costs to support a Recruitment and/or Retention Coordinator, a Program Manager, and/or a Grant Administrator (including reasonable salary, fringe benefits, contract support, supplies, travel, etc.).
  - NOTE: Computers for these positions are low priority items.
- Marketing Program to recruit new volunteer firefighters, such as:
  - Media advertising (*e.g.*, television, radio, social media)
  - Print advertising (*e.g.*, newspapers, billboards, signs, banners, brochures, flyers)
  - LED/electronic sign (NOTE: This is a high priority item only when included as part of a comprehensive marketing program. Only one LED/electronic sign is allowed per applicant and 75 percent of usage must be dedicated to Recruitment and Retention activities – additional restrictions apply; [see Section D: Application and Submission Information - Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation \[EHP\]](#)).
  - NOTE: If requesting funds to recruit new members, a marketing plan must be in place or the application must show a marketing plan will be implemented either with grant funds (requested as a line item) or that the applicant will implement a marketing plan using existing department resources. New Member Costs - Only one entry-level physical per new recruit. Physicals for existing members are not eligible. All grant-funded physicals (except those for explorers) must meet NFPA 1582 standards (Chapter 6, Medical Evaluations of Candidates 6.1 and Chapter 9, Essential Job Tasks — Specific Evaluation of Medical Conditions in Members). The cost of physicals should be based on local physician or health center prices. Detailed information on implementing NFPA 1582 physicals can be found at <https://www.fstaresearch.org/roadmap>.
  - NOTE: Annual physicals are eligible if the applicant is also requesting grant funds for NFPA 1582 entry-level physicals for new recruits. Annual Physicals are only eligible

## Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity – Eligible High Priority Costs

for the same new recruits; physicals or annual exams for any other member are not eligible.

- New recruit basic training that is not covered under a department’s normal operating budget and as required by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) to meet minimum firefighter certification (*e.g.*, CPR, First Responder, EMT, Firefighter 1, Firefighter 2).
  - Reimbursement to members for lost wages, mileage/transportation, lodging, and/or per diem while attending required basic training are also eligible. Note that costs for mileage/transportation, lodging, and per diem must comply with the department’s written travel policies and procedures. If policies are not established, costs will only be reimbursed at the Federal Government rate.
- Leadership/career development training when used as a retention incentive that is not covered under a department’s normal operating budget.
  - Reimbursement to members for lost wages, mileage/transportation, lodging and/or meals while attending leadership/career development training or conferences are also eligible.
  - NOTE: Costs for mileage/transportation, lodging and meals must comply with the department’s written travel policies and procedures. If policies are not established, costs will only be reimbursed at the Federal Government rate.
  - Courses must provide Continuing Education Units (CEUs) or certificates of completion to be eligible.
- Instructor/train-the-trainer training that is not covered under a department’s normal operating budget.
  - Reimbursement to members for lost wages, mileage/transportation, lodging, and/or per diem while attending instructor/train-the-trainer training are also eligible.
  - NOTE: Costs for mileage/transportation, lodging, and per diem must comply with the department’s written travel policies and procedures. If policies are not established, costs will only be reimbursed at the Federal Government rate.
- Tuition assistance for higher education (including books, lab fees and student fees).
  - Coursework or certifications in this category should be more advanced than what departments typically fund for required minimum-staffing requirements.
  - Courses are not limited to firefighter training or education.
  - Computers for individual students are not eligible for funding.
  - Payments for student loans are not eligible for funding.
  - Only tuition payments for classes offered and taken during the period of performance are allowable.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)/Turnout Gear.
  - PPE may only be funded for new firefighters that are recruited after the date of grant award, that successfully pass an NFPA 1582 compliant physical, and that are certified as “fit for duty.” PPE purchased with SAFER grant funding must be utilized by adequately trained staff.
  - Funds are available to acquire OSHA-required and NFPA-compliant PPE for firefighting personnel. In addition, PPE must meet any national or state standards and increase firefighter safety. Failure to meet these requirements may result in ineligibility for PPE funding. Copies of NFPA standards may be reviewed at <http://www.nfpa.org/>.



### Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity – Eligible High Priority Costs

- Only actual costs for PPE are allowed and will be paid on a reimbursable basis. Allowable costs may be limited to reasonable amounts, as determined by FEMA.
- To receive reimbursement, recipients must provide the following documentation to support the purchase of PPE:
  - Invoices/proof of payment for PPE.
  - Proof that the firefighter(s) have passed an NFPA 1582 compliant physical and are certified as “fit for duty.”
- Eligible PPE Expenditures:
  - One set of PPE for structural or wildland firefighting per new recruit.
  - SAFER considers a complete set of structural PPE to be comprised of one SCBA mask/face piece, one pair of pants, one coat, one helmet, two hoods, one pair of boots, two pairs of gloves, one pair of suspenders, and one pair of goggles. In those jurisdictions where additional PPE, like Personal Safety/Rescue Bailout Systems are statutorily required, SAFER will consider all statutorily required items to be part of a complete PPE set.
  - SAFER considers a complete set of wildland PPE to be comprised of: one pair of pants, one coat, one jumpsuit, one helmet, one pair of boots, one pair of gloves, one pair of suspenders, one pair of goggles, one fire shelter, one web gear, one backpack, and one canteen/hydration system.
  - American National Standards Institute (ANSI)-approved retro-reflective highway apparel.

### Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity – Eligible Medium Priority Costs

#### Medium Priority

- Nominal stipends for volunteer firefighters who are involved with, or trained in, the operations of firefighting and emergency response (*e.g.*, Pay-per-Call, Points Based System, etc.). Stipends may only be provided for participation in operational (firefighting) activities, such as duty shifts, operational training and/or responding to incidents.
  - Food vouchers may be used for nominal stipends if the Narrative supports their use as an effective recruitment and retention tool for the department. However, food vouchers must be issued through formally adopted standard operating procedures. Award recipients must maintain records of all food vouchers including: firefighter name, amount, date received, and signature of the receiving firefighter.
  - Gift Cards may not be used for nominal stipends. For information on gift cards, see Low Priority— Awards/incentives below.
- Costs to support explorer, cadet, and mentoring programs, such as:
  - One set of station duty uniforms (SAFER considers one set of station duty uniform as one pair of pants, one shirt, one hat, and one pair of boots) for newly recruited cadets/explorers.
  - Training (Non-Immediate Danger to Life and Health or IDLH).
  - One set of structural or wildland PPE, for newly recruited cadets/explorers as defined above, with the following two exceptions: 1) SCBA mask/face pieces are not eligible because PPE for explorers/cadets may not be used in an IDLH atmosphere, and 2) physicals for explorers/cadets are not required to meet NFPA 1582.
  - One introductory physical exam per newly recruited explorer/cadet.

### Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity – Eligible Medium Priority Costs

- Length of Service Award Programs (LOSAP) or Retirement Program:
  - New LOSAP or Retirement Programs (meaning the department has never had a LOSAP or Retirement Program).
  - Increasing existing LOSAP or Retirement Program coverage to include newly recruited members (FEMA will only fund the increase portion of the program).
  - Note: FEMA will not fund LOSAP or Retirement Programs which were previously funded by a SAFER Grant and were subsequently stopped.
- Insurance packages (e.g., Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D), workers compensation, disability, health, dental, life).
- Exercise equipment and gym memberships limited to no more than \$10,000 (total per grant award).

### Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity – Eligible Low Priority Costs

#### Low Priority

- New Member Costs - One set of station duty uniforms for each new recruit only (SAFER considers one set of station duty uniform as one pair of pants, one shirt, one hat, and one pair of boots) per the departments uniform policy.
  - NOTE: Class A (i.e., Dress Uniforms) are not an allowable cost under the SAFER Grant Program.
- Costs for advanced training not currently covered under the department's operating budget (e.g., extrication training, specialized equipment training, swift water rescue, etc.). Advanced training requests are only eligible for members who have already met the minimum firefighter certifications required by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) and must closely correlate to the applicant's recruitment and/or retention goals.
  - Reimbursement to members for lost wages, mileage/transportation, lodging, and/or per diem while attending advanced training are also eligible.
  - NOTE: Costs for mileage/transportation, lodging, and per diem must comply with the department's written travel policies and procedures. If policies are not established, costs will only be reimbursed at the Federal Government rate.
- Single computer or printer for Recruitment and/or Retention Coordinator, Program Manager, and/or Grant Administrator.
- Awards/Incentive program for participation in operational (firefighting) activities, such as operational training and/or responding to incidents (e.g., length of service plaques, gift cards for top responders, non-uniform clothing).
  - Non-uniform clothing (limited to shirts, jackets, or pullovers) as part of an award program only.
  - Gift Cards: A log book for the purchase and issuance of gift cards is required. The log book should include name of recipient, date, amount of card, reason for issuance and signature of recipient. Gift cards should be issued to operational firefighters who have completed the minimum firefighter training required by the authority having jurisdiction.
- LED/electronic sign when it is not included as part of a comprehensive marketing program.
- Fire service association membership fees.
- Projector and/or screen to support classroom training.
- Payments for housing or rent for volunteers at or near the fire station.

### Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity – Eligible Low Priority Costs

- Other costs associated with new recruits (background checks, aptitude tests, etc.)
- Station Modifications/Remodeling/Renovation of Existing Facilities.
  - Remodeling/renovations to an existing facility are allowable (e.g., converting space into bunkroom). The renovations must be minor interior alterations not to exceed \$10,000 (total per grant award).
  - Remodeling/renovations may not change the footprint or profile of the building.
  - Any request for modifications to facilities may require Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP) review (see [Section D: Application and Submission Information - Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation \[EHP\]](#)). Recipients are encouraged to have completed as many steps as possible for a successful EHP Review in support of their proposal for funding (the steps include: coordination with their State Historic Preservation Office to identify potential historic preservation issues and to discuss the potential for project effects; compliance with all state and EHP laws and requirements).
  - Written approval must be provided by FEMA prior to the use of any SAFER Funds for remodeling or renovation. If awarded funds for remodeling or renovation, recipients may be required to submit evidence of approved zoning ordinances, architectural plans, any other locally required planning permits and a notice of interest.

### Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity – Eligible Non-Prioritized Costs

#### Non-prioritized Costs

- Management and Administrative (M&A) costs up to three percent of the total awarded amount in accordance with 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. Management and Administrative costs must be identifiable and directly related to the implementation and management of the SAFER grant program. Salaries and fringe benefits for personnel directly supporting the grant are not required to be included in the M&A budget line item.
- Indirect costs for national, state, local, or federally recognized tribal volunteer firefighter interest organizations that are expended pursuant to [Section D: Application and Submission Information – Indirect Costs](#). Recipients must have an approved indirect cost rate agreement with their cognizant federal agency.
- Up to \$1,500 in grant writer fees for application preparation, but not grant administration. The fee must have been paid within 30 days of the end of the application period and prior to any contact with SAFER Program Office staff or an Offer of Award (see [Appendix C: Award Administration Information, Section I. Grant Writer/Preparation Fees](#)).
- Audit costs proportional to the total SAFER grant award. Recipients of multiple federal funding sources can only charge a pro rata share of the audit cost(s) to the SAFER Award.

### Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity – Ineligible Costs

- Salary and benefits for firefighters.
- Retroactive payments or recognition for operational services rendered prior to the grant award are ineligible.
- Costs incurred outside of the period of performance except for grant writer fees; see [Appendix C: Award Administration Information, Section I. Grant Writer/Preparation Fees](#)

## Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity – Ineligible Costs

- Fire suppression equipment.
- Vehicles.
- Fire simulators, fire evolution or fire training props (*e.g.*, burn trailers, forcible entry, rescue/smoke maze, flashover simulators).
- Sirens, warning lights for fire department or private vehicles, or other outdoor warning devices.
- Communication equipment including cell phones, pagers, portable radios or Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems.
- Video cameras/recording equipment.
- Retroactive payments or recognition for non-operational activities (including payments, gift cards, recruitment bonuses or stipends for recruiting firefighters).
- Payments for travel to, or participation in leisure or social activities such as theater tickets, entertainment tickets, and trips (*e.g.*, professional sporting events).
- Costs associated with award banquets, such as food, photographers, refreshments, entertainment, or rental facilities. Reimbursement for actual awards (*e.g.*, plaques and trophies) is eligible.
- Costs for food or refreshments that are not part of a conference or training hosted by the grant recipient (food vouchers can be requested as a nominal stipend but must be provided only under formally adopted standard operating procedure (SOP)).
- Costs for training currently covered under the department’s operating budget (*e.g.*, tuition or instructor fees for department-mandated, basic-level training).
- Services at a member’s personal residence (*e.g.*, internet access, plowing of driveways)
- Furniture (except for newly converted bunkrooms), televisions, fixtures, appliances (*e.g.*, refrigerators) and entertainment equipment.
- “Giveaways,” such as pencils, pens, t-shirts, cups, mugs or balloons, for recruitment events.
- Fees for courses and training that are available free of charge on the internet or at state/local training facilities (*e.g.*, NIMS 100, 700, 800).
- Costs for fuel. Costs for travel to training or other eligible activities are reimbursed through mileage rates.
- Annual medical exams for existing members.
- Payments for student loans.
- Mileage reimbursement for responding to incidents or periodic operational training at the fire house (mileage reimbursement is allowed for other types of training as explained under eligible costs).
- Station internet access/user fees and equipment to install internet (such as routers).
- Continued funding of an existing (or previously funded through the SAFER Grant Program) Length of Service Award Programs (LOSAP) or Retirement Program.
- Computers in common areas or individual computers for training/education.
- Copiers/printers.
- Incentives for career firefighters within the recipient’s fire department.
- Additional ineligible costs for Explorer/Cadet/Mentoring Programs:
  - Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA), including mask/face piece
  - Anything involving the IDLH atmosphere
  - Any activities precluded by the authority having jurisdiction

## Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity – Ineligible Costs

- Ineligible PPE expenditures:
  - Three-quarter length rubber boots
  - Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBAs) (not including SCBA masks/face pieces)
  - PASS Devices
  - Spare cylinders
  - Bomb disposal suits
  - PPE for hazardous materials and other specialized incidents
  - More than one set of PPE per newly recruited member (within the period of performance)
  - PPE for existing members
- This list of ineligible costs is not exhaustive.

## **Appendix C: Award Administration Information**

*Appendix C contains detailed information on SAFER Award Administration. Reviewing this information may help grant recipients in the programmatic and financial administration of their award(s).*

### **Help FEMA Prevent Fraud, Waste, and Abuse**

If applicants or recipients have information about instances of fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement involving FEMA programs or operations, they should contact the DHS OIG Hotline at (800) 323-8603, by fax at (202) 254-4297, or email [DHSOIGHOTLINE@dhs.gov](mailto:DHSOIGHOTLINE@dhs.gov)

### **I. Economic Hardship Waivers of Cost Share, Minimum Budget, and Supplanting Requirements for the SAFER Grant Program**

*In cases of demonstrated economic hardship, and upon the request of the recipient, the Administrator may waive or reduce a SAFER cost share, position cost limit, minimum budget, or supplanting requirement for certain recipients (15 U.S.C. § 2229a(d)(1)). As required by statute, the Administrator of FEMA established guidelines for determining what constitutes economic hardship. These guidelines are published in [Information Bulletin No. 427, Economic Hardship Waivers: AFG Grant Program, FP&S Grant Program, and SAFER Grant Program](#) and available online at <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/158776>.*

SAFER applicants for FY 2019 must indicate at the time of application for the grant whether they are requesting a waiver and whether they want FEMA to waive the cost share requirement, the position cost limit requirement, the minimum budget requirement, the supplanting requirement, or any combination of these requirements.

SAFER Hiring of Firefighters Activity grant recipients may apply for one, two, three, or all four of the available waivers.

SAFER Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity grant applicants may only apply to waive or reduce the minimum budget requirement.

Applicants must indicate their interest in applying for a hardship waiver within the application via FEMA GO online and must attach the waiver request to their applications.

### **II. Grant Writer/Preparation Fees (Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity Only)**

Applicants under the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity may hire and reimburse a grant writer to assist in the application process.

Fees for grant writers may be included as a pre-award expenditure, but payment of the grant writer fees cannot be contingent on the applicant receiving an award. For grant writer fees to be eligible as a pre-award expenditure, applicants must specifically identify and list the fees in the Request Details section of the application. FEMA will only

consider reimbursements for application preparation, but not administration, up to but not more than \$1,500. Pursuant to 2 C.F.R. Part 180, recipients may not use federal grant funds to reimburse any entity, including a grant writer or preparer, if that entity is presently suspended or debarred by the Federal Government from receiving funding under federally funded grants or contracts. Recipients must verify that the contractor is not suspended or debarred from participating in specified federal procurement or non-procurement transactions pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 180.300. FEMA recommends recipients use SAM.gov to conduct this verification.

Additionally, regardless of whether the recipient requests grant writer fees, Federal funds and funds applied toward the award's cost share cannot be used to pay a grant writer to provide post-award services unless a single contract covering both pre- and post-award services was awarded to the grant writer and procured in compliance with 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.317-326.

***By submitting an application, applicants certify that all of the information contained therein is true and an accurate reflection of the organization. Regardless of the applicant's intent, the submission of information that is false or misleading may result in actions by FEMA that include but are not limited to: not considering the submitted application for award, temporarily withholding funding under the existing award pending investigation, or referring the matter to the Office of the Inspector General.***

Prior to submitting the application, please review all work produced by grant writers or other third parties for accuracy. In addition, the fees must have been paid within 30 days of the end of the application period and prior to any contact with SAFER Program Office staff or an offer of award. The applicant must provide the following documentation upon request:

- A copy of the grant writer's contract for services
- A copy of the invoice or purchase order
- A copy of the canceled check (front and back) and bank statement

Applicants will be required to provide documentation to support these pre-award expenditures. Failure to provide the requested documentation may result in the grant writer fee being deemed ineligible and the grant reduced accordingly.

**NOTE:** FEMA requires that all applicants identify any individual or organization that assisted with the development, preparation, or review of the application to include drafting or writing the narrative and budget, whether that person, entity, or agent is compensated or not and whether the assistance took place prior to submitting the application.

### **III. Maintenance and Sustainment for SAFER Programs**

The use of FEMA preparedness grant funds, to include the SAFER Program, for the costs of repairs or replacement, as well as maintenance contracts, warranties, and user fees may be allowable.

The intent of eligible Maintenance and Sustainment activities is to provide direct support to the critical capabilities developed using FEMA and other DHS grants and support activities. Routine upkeep and the supplies, expendables, or one-time use items that support routine upkeep (e.g. gasoline, tire replacement, routine oil changes, monthly inspections, or grounds and facility maintenance) are the responsibility of the recipient and may not be funded with SAFER funding.

Generally, when purchasing a maintenance agreement, service contract, or extended warranty for systems or equipment, the period of coverage provided under such a plan may not extend beyond the period of performance of the grant with which the agreement, warranty, or contract is purchased.

However, only if the maintenance contract or extended warranty is purchased incidental to the original purchase of the system or equipment, recipients may procure maintenance or warranty coverage which exceeds the period of performance, as explained in FEMA Policy 205-402-125-1, available at [http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1915-25045-9444/gpd\\_maintenance\\_policy.pdf](http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1915-25045-9444/gpd_maintenance_policy.pdf).

The duration of an extended warranty purchased incidental to the original purchase of the equipment may exceed the period performance as long as the coverage purchased is consistent with that which is typically provided for, or available through, these types of agreements, warranties, or contracts. When purchasing a stand-alone warranty or extending an existing maintenance contract on an already-owned piece of equipment or system, coverage purchased may not exceed the period of performance of the award used to purchase the maintenance agreement or warranty. As with warranties and maintenance agreements, this policy extends to licenses and user fees as well.

Even if purchased incidental to the original purchase of the equipment, the duration of an extended maintenance agreement or warranty must also be reasonable for the type of equipment or system being purchased. For example, if a vendor offers a 10-year extended warranty incidental to the purchase of a piece of equipment, but the useful life of that equipment being purchased is five years, the purchase of a 10-year extended warranty would not be a reasonable cost and may not be charged to the grant.

### **IV. Taxes, Fees, Levies and Assessments**

Taxes, fees, levies, or assessments that the recipient is legally required to pay and is directly related to any eligible SAFER program acquisition activity may be charged to a SAFER award pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.470. These charges shall be identified and enumerated in the application's Narrative and the Request Details section of the



acquisition activity. Any avoidable and unreasonable costs that result from the action or inaction of a recipient (or recipient's agent), or that prevent that recipient from enjoying any lawful exemption, waiver, or reduction of any tax, fee, levy, or assessment directly related to any eligible SAFER Program acquisition activity, are not chargeable to any SAFER Award.

**Example:** Government entities and Public Safety Agencies are exempt from some Federal Communications Commission (FCC) fees, but only if the eligible organization submits an exemption or waiver request to the FCC.

Government entities are not required to pay FCC regulatory fees. Non-profit entities (exempt under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code) also may be exempt. The FCC requires that any entity claiming exempt status submit or have on file with the FCC a valid IRS Determination Letter documenting its nonprofit status or certification from a governmental authority attesting to its exempt status. For more information, please visit <http://www.fcc.gov/>.

## V. Procurement Integrity

Through audits conducted by DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) and FEMA grant monitoring, findings have shown that some FEMA recipients have not adhered fully to 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. Noncompliance with the federal procurement rules may result in FEMA imposing specific award conditions as described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.207 or pursuing other remedies for noncompliance under 2 C.F.R. § 200.338.

The below highlights the federal procurement requirements for FEMA recipients when procuring goods and services with federal grant funds. DHS/FEMA will include a review of recipients' procurement practices as part of the normal monitoring activities. **All procurement activity must be conducted in compliance with federal procurement standards at 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.317 – 200.326.**<sup>3</sup> Select requirements under these standards are listed below, but recipients must comply with all requirements, even if they are not listed below.

**States:** Under 2 C.F.R. § 200.317, when procuring property and services under a federal award, **states** must follow the same policies and procedures they use for procurements from their non-federal funds; additionally, states must follow 2 C.F.R. § 200.322

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<sup>3</sup> However, the simplified acquisition threshold laid out under the relevant regulations has increased to \$250,000. See Section 805 of the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008*, Pub. L. 115-41; Office of Mgmt. & Budget, M-18-18: Mem. for Chief Fin. Officers & Heads of Small Exec. Agencies (June 20, 2018), at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/M-18-18.pdf>; Grants Programs Directorate, Information Bulletin No. 434: Increases and Changes to the Micro-Purchase and Simplified Acquisition Thresholds (Aug. 28, 2018), at [https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1535477410796-10abe5c8fc5bb73f170e3025c6fbfc6a/IB\\_Changes\\_to\\_the\\_Micro\\_Purch\\_and\\_Simp\\_Acquisition\\_Thresholds\\_signed\\_508.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1535477410796-10abe5c8fc5bb73f170e3025c6fbfc6a/IB_Changes_to_the_Micro_Purch_and_Simp_Acquisition_Thresholds_signed_508.pdf).

regarding the procurement of recovered materials and 2 C.F.R. § 200.326 regarding required contract provisions.

**Non-federal entities other than states: All other non-federal entities, such as tribes,** must use their own documented procurement procedures, which reflect applicable state, local, territorial 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. These federal standards include but are not limited to providing for full and open competition consistent with the standards of 2 C.F.R. § 200.319.

### **Competition and Conflicts of Interest**

Under 2 C.F.R. § 200.319(a)'s requirements for all non-federal entities other than states, 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 these procurements. **FEMA considers these situations to be organizational conflicts of interest and interprets this restriction as applying to contractors that help a recipient develop its grant application, project plans, or project budget. This prohibition also applies to the use of former employees to manage the grant or carry out a contract when the former employees worked on these activities while they were employees of the non-federal entity.**

Under this prohibition, unless the non-federal entity solicits for and awards a contract covering both development and execution of specifications (or similar elements as described above), and it procured this contract in compliance with 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.317 – 200.326, federal funds and funds applied to the award's cost share cannot be used to pay a contractor to carry out the work if that contractor also worked on the development of these specifications. This rule applies to all contracts funded with federal grant funds, including pre-award costs such as grant writer fees as well as post-award costs such as grant management fees. For more information on grant writer and grant management costs, *see* [Appendix C – Award Administration information, Section II. Grant Writer/Preparation Fees.](#)

Additionally, 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.
- Any arbitrary action in the procurement process.

Pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.319(b), non-federal entities other than states must conduct procurements in a manner that prohibits the use of statutorily or administratively imposed state, local, territorial or tribal geographical preferences in the evaluation of bids or proposals except in those cases where applicable federal statutes expressly mandate or encourage geographic preference. Nothing in this section preempts state licensing laws. When contracting for architectural and engineering services, geographic location may be a selection criterion provided application of this criterion leaves an appropriate number of qualified firms, given the nature and size of the project, to compete for the contract.

Pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.318(c)(1), non-federal entities other than states are required to maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of their 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 conflicts 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 when officers, employees, or agents of the non-federal entity violate these standards.

If the recipient or subrecipient (other than states) has a parent, affiliate, or subsidiary organization that is not a state, local government, or Indian tribe, the non-federal entity must also maintain written standards of conduct covering organizational conflicts of interest. In this context, organizational conflict of interest means that because of a relationship with a parent company, affiliate, or subsidiary organization, the non-federal entity is unable to be or appears unable to be impartial in conducting a procurement action involving a related organization. The non-federal entity must disclose in writing any potential conflicts of interest to FEMA or to the pass-through entity in accordance with applicable FEMA policy.

### **Supply Schedules**

Generally, a non-federal entity may seek to procure goods or services from a federal supply schedule, state supply schedule, or group purchasing agreement. State and local governments may procure goods and services from a General Services Administration (GSA) schedule. Information about GSA programs for state and local governments can be found at <https://www.gsa.gov/resources-for/programs-for-state-and-local-governments>. For local governments that purchase off a GSA schedule, this act will satisfy the federal requirements for full and open competition provided that the recipient

local government follows the GSA ordering procedures; however, local governments will still need to follow the other rules under 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.317 – 200.326, such as contract cost and price (§ 200.323) and solicitation of minority, women-owned, or small businesses (§ 200.321).

For non-federal entities other than states, such as tribes, that want to procure goods or services from a state supply schedule, cooperative purchasing program or other similar program, in order for such procurements by to be permissible, the following must be true:

- The procurement of the original contract or purchasing schedule and its use by the recipient complies with state and local laws, regulations and written procurement procedures.
- The state or other entity that originally procured the original contract or purchasing schedule entered into the contract or schedule with the express purpose of making it available to the recipient and other similar types of entities.
- The contract or purchasing schedule specifically allows for such use, and the work to be performed for the non-federal entity falls within the scope of work under the contract as to type, amount and geography.
- The procurement of the original contract or purchasing schedule complied with all of the procurement standards applicable to a non-federal entity other than states under 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.317 – 200.326.
- With respect to the use of a purchasing schedule, the recipient must follow ordering procedures that adhere to state and local laws and regulations and to the minimum requirements of full and open competition under 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

If a non-federal entity other than a state seeks to use such a state supply schedule, cooperative purchasing program, or other similar type of arrangement, FEMA recommends that the recipient first discuss the procurement plans with the FEMA Grant Programs Directorate.

### **Documentation**

Non-federal entities are required to maintain and retain the following documentation for federally funded or cost-match purchases:

- Backup documentation, such as bids and quotes.
- Cost/price analyses on file for review by federal personnel, if applicable.
- Specifications
- Solicitations
- Competitive quotes or proposals
- Basis for selection decisions
- Purchase orders
- Contracts
- Invoices
- Cancelled checks
- Other documents required by federal regulations applicable at the time a grant is

awarded to a recipient.

Non-federal entities must keep detailed records of all transactions involving the grant. FEMA may at any time request copies of purchasing documentation along with copies of cancelled checks for verification. See, e.g., 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.318(i), 200.333, 200.336.

Non-federal entities who fail to document fully all purchases will find their expenditures questioned and subsequently disallowed.

Pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.313(a)(2), recipients may not encumber equipment procured with SAFER funding without FEMA or pass-through entity approval.

## **VI. Payments and Amendments**

### **Payments**

SAFER payment/drawdown requests are generated using FEMA GO and are governed by applicable federal regulations, including 2 C.F.R. § 200.305.

Recipients should not expend funds or request drawdowns until all special conditions listed on the grant award document are met and FEMA has approved the request for payment in FEMA GO.

Recipients should draw down funds based upon immediate disbursement requirements; however, FEMA strongly encourages recipients to draw down funds as close to disbursement or expenditure as possible to avoid accruing interest.

### **Advances**

Recipients shall be paid in advance, provided they maintain or demonstrate the willingness and ability to maintain procedures to minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of the funds and their disbursement by the recipient, and financial management systems that meet the standards for fund control and accountability as established in 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

Although advance drawdown requests are permissible, recipients remain subject to applicable federal law in effect at the time the grant is awarded. Governing interest requirements include the Uniform Administrative Requirements Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200 and the Cash Management Improvement Act (CMIA) and its implementing regulations at 31 C.F.R. Part 205. Interest under CMIA will accrue from the time federal funds are credited to a recipient's account until the time the recipient pays out the funds for program purposes.

Recipients must follow applicable federal regulations governing interest earned on payment advances in effect at the time a grant is awarded to the recipient, including 2 C.F.R. § 200.305.

## **Reimbursement**

Reimbursement of the recipient is the preferred method of payment under the grant award when the 2 C.F.R. § 200.305(b)(1)-(2) requirements to be paid in advance cannot be met. *See* 2 C.F.R. § 200.305(b)(3). In accordance with U.S. Department of Treasury regulations at 31 C.F.R. Part 205, if applicable, recipients must maintain procedures to minimize the time elapsing between the transfer and the disbursement of these funds.

## **Program Income, Rebates, and Other Revenue**

Recipients must disburse program income, rebates, refunds, contract settlements, audit recoveries and interest earned on such funds before requesting additional cash payments, in accordance with applicable federal regulations at 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

The reduction of federal financial participation via rebates/refunds *may* generate excess funds for the recipient, if the recipient had already obligated its cost-share match based upon the original award figures.

If the recipient had *already* obligated its original cost share *prior* to the rebate, then the recipient *may* have minimum excess funds equal to the difference between the original cost share and the rebate adjusted cost share.

## **Payment Requests During Closeout**

For the 90 days following the end of the period of performance, during an award's closeout reconciliation, recipients may only submit reimbursement payment requests.

Reimbursement payment requests can only be for obligations that were obligated and received within the award's active period of performance. Reimbursement requests must contain clear and specific information certifying that the liquidation of federal funds will be reimbursement for an obligation properly incurred and received during the active period of performance. FEMA also may request documentation supporting the reimbursement for review.

## **Amendments**

FEMA may approve SAFER award amendments on a case-by-case basis for the following reasons:

- Extension of the period of performance to complete the scope of work under the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity only in extenuating circumstances (such as those fire departments whose operations were significantly impacted due to presidentially declared disasters).
- Changes to the activity, mission, and retroactive approval (to pre-award) under Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity. Amendments to the scope of work are not allowable within the first year of award nor within the final 3 months of the grant's period of performance.
- Closeout issues and some excess funds requests under both the Hiring of Firefighters Activity and Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity

- Staffing Maintenance Level Waivers under the Hiring of Firefighters Activity
- Budget changes (adding funds to award/non-closeout deobligation\* of funds) under both the Hiring of Firefighters Activity and Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity
- Other changes to the awarded grant may also require specific amendments. Please contact your assigned Program Analyst for assistance in determining if an amendment is required.

FEMA will only consider amendments submitted via FEMA GO online. These requests must contain specific and compelling justifications for the requested change. FEMA strongly encourages recipients to expend grant funds in a timely manner, to be consistent with SAFER Grant Program's goals and objectives.

**NOTE:** A recipient may deobligate (*i.e.*, return) unused funds (*i.e.*, those remaining funds previously drawn down via payment request and/or remaining award funding that was never requested) to DHS/FEMA prior to the end of an award's period of performance or during closeout. To exercise this option prior to closeout, a recipient must submit an amendment via FEMA GO and state in its amendment that the unliquidated funds (funds to be returned) are not necessary for the fulfillment or success of the grant's obligations or mission. The recipient must also indicate that it understands that the returned funds will be de-obligated and unavailable for any future award expenses.

De-obligation of funds will decrease the federal portion of the grant and the amount of the recipient's cost share obligation. FEMA will confirm de-obligation amendments with all points of contact; after confirmation of the recipient's intent to de-obligate, FEMA will hold the approved de-obligation request for 14 calendar days as a period for recipient reconsideration before processing the de-obligation request.

### **Post-Award Recipient Responsibilities**

Once awarded, recipients under the Hiring of Firefighters Activity must submit a pre-SAFER roster listing paid operational/firefighting personnel, in support of NFPA 1710 or NFPA 1720, who are employees at time of application. FEMA compares the pre-SAFER roster to names submitted for SAFER-funded positions, to ensure that the SAFER-funded firefighters are new employees. Vacant operational positions (funded in the department's budget and which when filled will support NFPA 1710 or 1720 compliance) will be indicated on the pre-SAFER roster and are included in the overall operational staffing. FEMA must include vacant positions as described above to ensure the non-supplanting requirement is met.

The SAFER Program Office will work with recipients to establish the correct staffing maintenance numbers, which combine the number of pre-SAFER (filled and vacant positions) and SAFER-funded operational positions. Once this is established, recipients must agree to maintain this number throughout the period of performance by taking active and timely steps to fill any vacancies.

Recipients under the Hiring of Firefighters Activity who lay off any operational

personnel during the three-year period of performance will be considered in default of their grant and the award will be terminated. In those situations, recipients may be required to return the federal funds disbursed under the grant award.

Recipients who are unable, due to documentable economic hardship, to backfill non-SAFER operational positions vacated through attrition (*e.g.*, resignation, retirement) after receiving an award may petition FEMA to waive the staffing maintenance requirements. Approved waivers allow recipients to decrease and reestablish the staffing maintenance numbers agreed to at the time of award by the number of positions that recipients are unable to fill. To qualify for this waiver, the economic hardship must affect the entire public safety sector in a recipient's jurisdiction, not just the fire department. FEMA will not grant waivers for SAFER-funded positions. Recipients who fail to maintain the required level of staffing risk losing federal funds awarded under this grant.

Since the SAFER program seeks to enhance incident scene safety, recipients must agree to make the primary assignments (more than 50 percent of time) of all SAFER-funded firefighters on an operational fire suppression vehicle, regardless of their collateral duties.

Recipients must agree to retain grant files and supporting documentation in a manner consistent with 2 C.F.R. § 200.333 – for a minimum of three years after submission of the closeout report (*see* below), and in some cases longer pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.333.

FEMA may require access to any pertinent books, documents, papers or records belonging to a recipient. The DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) or the Comptroller General of the United States may also require access to a recipient's books and records.

The required documentation for federally funded purchases should include specifications, solicitations, competitive quotes or proposals, basis for selection decisions, purchase orders or contracts, invoices and canceled checks. Recipients who fail to document purchases may find their expenditures will be questioned and disallowed.

Recipients must agree to provide periodic performance reports to FEMA. In all years of the grant's period of performance, for both the Hiring of Firefighters and the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activities, recipients must submit quarterly performance reports as well as a final performance report at grant closeout. Payments are requested online using the automated system and payments are based on actual expenses incurred during the period covered by the payment request. Quarterly performance reporting is required regardless of whether or when a recipient requested funding.

Recipients must agree that, notwithstanding any provision of other laws, firefighters hired under these grants will not be discriminated against or be prohibited from engaging in volunteer firefighting activities in another jurisdiction during off-duty hours. FEMA strongly encourages applicants, to the extent practicable, to seek, recruit and hire military veterans to increase their ranks within their departments.





**FEMA**

**Grant Programs Directorate Information Bulletin  
No. 450  
May 14, 2020**

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** All Eligible FY 2019 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant Applicants

**FROM:** Bridget Bean  
Assistant Administrator  
Grant Programs Directorate

**SUBJECT:** **Modifications to the Fiscal Year 2019 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity**

**I. Purpose**

This Information Bulletin (IB) modifies the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program application and submission requirements contained in the FY 2019 SAFER Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) released on April 7, 2020. FEMA acknowledges that fire departments across the nation are facing significantly increased call volumes due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency, which is straining municipal budgets and existing first responder personnel across the country. In response, FEMA is waiving the cost share, position cost limit, supplanting, and minimum budget requirements for the FY 2019 SAFER Grant Program, as well as extending the application deadline until May 27, 2020 at 5 p.m. ET.

Waiving the above requirements will allow economically impacted fire departments, many of which have not been able to maintain funding at the statutorily required levels, to apply for and receive FY 2019 SAFER funding. The extension of the application deadline will provide applicants additional time to submit applications that account for the waived requirements.

Applicants no longer need to request an economic hardship waiver within the online application. No further action is needed by applicants at this time. The waiver of these provisions and the adjustments to the requested amount will be handled by the SAFER Program Office during their technical review of the applications.

**II. Applicability**

This IB applies to FY 2019 SAFER applicants.

### **III. Guidance**

- A. The terms of the original FY 2019 SAFER NOFO released on April 7, 2020 required recipients under the Hiring of Firefighters Activity to contribute non-federal funds subject to a position cost limit (salary cap) and a cost share, as discussed on pages 6-8 of the FY 2019 SAFER NOFO, which can be found on the FEMA [website](#). As directed by this Information Bulletin, these requirements are waived for the FY 2019 SAFER program. Note that recipients under the FY 2019 SAFER Hiring of Firefighters Activity must use SAFER funds to hire new, additional firefighters and the costs to hire those firefighters are limited to the usual annual costs of a first-year (i.e., entry-level) firefighter.
- B. The terms of the original FY 2019 SAFER NOFO required recipients of SAFER grants to meet a minimum budget requirement, as discussed on page 5 of the FY 2019 SAFER NOFO, and required that recipients may not use SAFER funds to supplant or replace funds that would otherwise be available from state or local sources or the Bureau of Indian Affairs, as defined on page 33 of the FY 2019 SAFER NOFO. As directed by this Information Bulletin, these requirements are waived for the FY 2019 SAFER program.
- C. The application submission deadline for the FY 2019 SAFER NOFO is extended to May 27, 2020.

### **IV. Questions**

Any questions regarding this IB may be directed to your SAFER Preparedness Officer (PO) or the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Help Desk at [firegrants@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:firegrants@fema.dhs.gov) or (866) 274-0960, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. ET.