

PALM BEACH COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Meeting Date:	August 19, 2025	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent	<input type="checkbox"/> Regular
		<input type="checkbox"/> Workshop	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing
Department:	Fire Rescue		

I. EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Motion and Title: Staff recommends motion to ratify:

- A) a FY 2024 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant (SAFER) application electronically submitted to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on July 1, 2025, requesting \$3,770,684 with 25% Fire Rescue match in year one (1) of \$509,552, a 25% match in year two (2) of \$509,552 and a 65% match in year three (3) of \$1,324,835 for a total of \$6,114,623 for a term of three (3) years from the date of the award. The grant will provide funding to add 18 new positions to staff a four (4) person engine at a new Fire Station 49; and
- B) the designation of the County Administrator, or designee, to act as the County’s representative for the purpose of electronically signing the FY 2024 SAFER grant application, including Assurances and Certifications via the DHS FEMA website.

**SUMMARY:** This grant application requests \$3,770,684 from DHS FEMA for the funding to add 18 new positions to staff a four (4) person engine at new Fire Station 49 located on the southwest corner of Lyons Road and Flavor Pict Road. The total project cost identified in the grant application is \$6,114,623 with a 25% Fire Rescue match in year one (1) of \$509,552, a 25% match in year two (2) of \$509,552 and a 65% match in year three (3) of \$1,324,835. If awarded, the grant will provide funding to staff a four (4) person engine at new Fire Station 49. These 18 positions would be eliminated at the end of the grant, and after a thorough evaluation the positions may be submitted as a supplemental request through the budget process prior to the expiration of the grant.


The Assurance and Certifications in the grant application include the following: “By signing this application, I certify that the organization will, to the extent practicable, seek, recruit, and hire members of racial and ethnic minority groups and women to increase their ranks within our organization.” This certification appears to be inconsistent with Presidential Executive Order 14173 (EO 14173) requiring a grant recipient to certify it does not operate any DEI programs. Based on EO 14173, Palm Beach County recently enacted an Ordinance to suspend its DEI programs. Should the grant be awarded to the County, the grant agreement would be brought back to the BCC for approval; and staff anticipates the updated grant agreement would reflect the most recent DHS Standard Terms and Conditions, from the DHS website, which applies to awards on or after April 18, 2025. These updated Terms and Conditions require grant recipients to certify they do not and will not operate DEI programs in violation of Federal anti-discrimination laws; and require recipients comply with Presidential Executive Orders related to grants. Due to the anticipated updated Terms and Conditions should the County be awarded the grant, and the impending grant submission deadline of July 3, 2025, County Administration recommended submittal of the application in reliance on the “to the extent practicable” provision of the certification that is in the application. **The required match for this grant is estimated to be \$2,343,939 over three (3) years, funded from the Fire Rescue MSTU contingency reserves. Countywide (SB)**

Background and Justification: continued on page 3.

Attachment:

1. FY 2024 SAFER Application and related documentation
2. Emergency Grant memo

Recommended by:  7/15/2025  
Assistant Fire Chief Date

Approved by:  7/15/2025  
Fire Rescue Administrator Date

Approved by:  8/1/2025  
Assistant County Administrator Date

II. FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

A. Five Year Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Fiscal Years	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Capital Expenditures					
Operating Costs		\$2,038,208	\$2,038,208	\$2,038,208	
External Revenues		(1,528,656)	(1,528,656)	(713,373)	
Program Income (County)					
In-Kind Match (County)					
NET FISCAL IMPACT		*\$509,552	*\$509,552	*\$1,324,835	
# ADDITIONAL FTE POSITIONS (Cumulative)		*18			

Is Item Included in Proposed Budget? Yes No X  
Does this item include the use of Federal Funds? Yes X No  
Does this item include the use of State Funds? Yes No X

Budget Account No.: Fund 1300 Dept 440 Unit TBD Rev Source

B. Recommended Sources of Funds/Summary of Fiscal Impact:

\* Should the grant be awarded a budget amendment will be brought to the Board for approval. The estimated funding source for the required match of \$2,343,939 will be from the Fire Rescue MSTU (Fund 1300) contingency reserves.

C. Departmental Fiscal Review: Lauren Magierowski

III. REVIEW COMMENTS

A. OFMB Fiscal and/or Contract Development and Control Comments:

Lisa Mante 7/22/2025  
OFMB VS 7/22  
ARP 7/22

Brenda Znachko 7/24/25  
Contract Development and Control  
2677-23-25

B. Legal Sufficiency

Russ Burr 7/24/25  
Assistant County Attorney

C. Other Department Review:

Department Director

(THIS SUMMARY IS NOT TO BE USED AS A BASIS FOR PAYMENT.)

## **Background and Justification (continued from page 1)**

**Background and Justification:** The FY 2024 SAFER Program is a competitive grant program designed to enhance the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire and fire-related hazards. The SAFER Program provides direct financial assistance to eligible fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations. This assistance is designed to increase the number of firefighters to help communities meet industry minimum standards, and attain 24-hour staffing. This allows for adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards, and to fulfill traditional missions of fire departments.

The SAFER Program requires submission of grant applications by electronic format in order to assure an efficient review and competitive scoring of all funding requests submitted under this program. The deadline for submission of this grant application to the grantor agency was 5:00 p.m. on July 3, 2025. Pursuant to Section 309.00 of the Palm Beach County Administrative Code, the Vice Mayor, in absence of the Mayor, approved this grant application, which now must be ratified by the BCC. The grant application includes certifications of compliance with required assurances and certifications, as stated in the application and related program guidance.



You have successfully submitted your application.



Submitted to FEMA

EMW-2024-FF-00591: Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant

COUNTY OF PALM BEACH

Period of performance

Federal resources awarded

Required non-federal resources

Federal resources disbursed to recipient \$0.00

Pending disbursements to recipient \$0.00

Balance of federal resources available \$0.00

My to do list

Description	Status	Date of status	Due date	Action
EMW-2024-FF-00591	Submitted to FEMA	07/01/2025	07/03/2025	Reopen application

Organization : COUNTY OF PALM BEACH

This information is current of SAM.gov as of: 05/04/2025

Registration summary

UEI-EFT	XL2DNFMPCR44
DUNS	078470481
Registration status	Active
Registration last update date	01/13/2025
Registration expiration date	
Has active exclusion?	No
Debt subject to offset?	N

Business Information

Doing business as name	
Physical address	301 N OLIVE AVE WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33401
Mailing address	301 N OLIVE AVE 2ND FLOOR WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33401

Financial reports

Report	Due date	Status	Date of status	Action
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Performance progress reports

Report	Due date	Status	Date of status	Action
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Closeout reports

Report	Due date	Status	Date of status	Action
Request for Information				
RFI number	Request date	Status	Date of status	Action

# Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant

Status: Pending AOR signature

Application ID: EMW-2024-FF-00591

OMB number: 1660-0054, Expiration date: 11/30/2022 [View burden statement](#)

System for Award Management (SAM.gov) profile

Please identify your organization to be associated with this application.  
All organization information in this section will come from the System for Award Management (SAM) profile for that organization.

COUNTY OF PALM BEACH

Information current from SAM.gov as of:	05/04/2025
UEI-EFT:	XL2DNFMPCR44
DUNS (includes DUNS+4):	078470481
Employer Identification Number (EIN):	596000785
Organization legal name:	COUNTY OF PALM BEACH
Organization (doing business as) name:	
Mailing address:	301 N OLIVE AVE 2ND FLOOR WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33401-4700
Physical address:	301 N OLIVE AVE WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33401-4703
Is your organization delinquent on any federal debt?	N
SAM.gov registration status:	Active as of 01/12/2025

☒ We have reviewed our bank account information on our SAM.gov profile to ensure it is up to date

Applicant information

Please provide the following additional information about the department or organization applying for this grant.

Applicant Name (i.e., fire department or organization name)	Palm Beach County Fire Rescue
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Main address of location impacted by this grant

Main address 1	405 Pike Rd
Main address 2	
City	West Palm Beach
State/territory	
Zip code	33411
Zip extension	3815

In what county/parish is your organization physically located? If you have more than one station, in what county/parish is your main station located? Palm Beach

Applicant characteristics

The SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) program intends to improve or restore local fire departments' staffing and deployment capabilities so they may more effectively respond to emergencies. With the restored or enhanced staffing, grantees should see a reduction in response times and an increase in the number of trained personnel assembled at the incident scene. Grant funds are available in two activities: Hiring Firefighters and Recruitment and

Retention of Volunteer Firefighters. Please review the Notice of Funding Opportunity for information on available program areas and for more information on the evaluation process and conditions of award.  
Please provide the following additional information about the applicant.

Applicant type

Fire Department/Fire District

What kind of organization do you represent?

All Paid/Career

Which activity are you applying for?

Hiring of Firefighters

Operating budget

What was your department's operating budget (e.g., personnel, maintenance of apparatus, equipment, facilities, utility costs, purchasing expendable items, etc.) related to fire-related programs and emergency response for the current (at time of application) fiscal year, as well as the previous three fiscal years?

Current Fiscal Year (i.e., 2021)

2025

Fiscal Year	Operating budget
2025	\$539,405,766.00
2024	\$478,307,510.00
2023	\$460,583,405.00
2022	\$409,181,731.00

What percentage of the declared operating budget is dedicated to personnel costs (salary, benefits, overtime costs, etc.)?

73

Does your department have any rainy day reserves, emergency funds, or capital outlay?

Yes

What is the total amount currently set aside?

17000000.00

Describe the planned purpose of this fund.

Palm Beach County Fire Rescue is a Municipal Service Taxing Unit, which is required to maintain its own reserves. FY 2025 contingency reserves are used for unanticipated expenditures outside the budget process, for any natural disasters such as hurricanes or floods. Although this seems like a large amount, this is only 3.15% of the operating budget.

What percentage of the declared operating budget is derived from the following	2025
Taxes	85.53
Bond issues	0
EMS billing	6.76
Grants	1.37
Donations	0.00
Fund drives	0.00
Fee for service	2.42
Other	3.92



What percentage of the declared operating budget is derived from the following	2025
Total	100 %

Please explain the "Other" portion of the declared operating budget.

The other Category is made up of Interest Earnings, Operating transfers in, and miscellaneous revenues such as sale of surplus fixed assets, firefighters supplemental compensation (FS633), and refund from prior year expenditures.

Describe your financial need to include descriptions of the following:

- income vs. expense breakdown of the current annual budget
- Budget shortfalls and the inability to address financial needs without federal assistance
- Actions taken to obtain funding elsewhere (i.e. state assistance programs or other grant programs)
- How your critical functions are affected without this funding

Palm Beach County Fire Rescue (PBCFR) is a Municipal Service Taxing Unit, which provides municipal type services to a specific area of the County with individual assessed values, millage rates, capital and reserves. Most municipal fire departments reserves are maintained within the municipal general fund and not within the fire department budget. A department of our size is required to have sufficient reserves to allow for unexpected expenditures created by natural disaster (hurricanes, floods, and pandemics). PBCFR has a salary and operating budget of \$539,405,766 for fiscal year 2025. Of those funds, approximately 73% is dedicated to personnel costs. These funds are also used to support a variety of fixed and discretionary expenses. Many of the remaining funds are allocated to non-discretionary items, including fuel, utilities, fleet maintenance, capital equipment and communications. Budget Breakdown: Salaries & Benefits = \$392,411,857 (72.75%) Training = \$2,694,735 (0.50%) IT Contractual & Professional Services = \$7,257,895 (1.34%) Communications, Facility-repair maintenance & utilities, and Rent = \$21,177,282 (3.93%) Property Appraiser & Tax Collector commissions and Indirect Costs = \$14,207,037 (2.63%) Supplies, medical, uniforms, safety equipment = \$20,918,320 (3.88%) Capital equipment & apparatus = \$63,738,640 (11.82%) Contingency Reserves = \$17,000,000 (3.15%) TOTAL FY2025 SALARY & OPERATING BUDGET = \$539,405,766 PBCFR funds come from the following sources: Taxes (85.53%), which provides funding based on the properties valuation; EMS Transport fees (6.76%); Fees for Service (2.42%), such as fire plans review and inspection fees; Grants (1.37%) and other miscellaneous revenues (3.92%). The Board of County Commissioners (BCC) has maintained the current millage rate for 16 consecutive years. If the department needs to maintain or raise the millage rate, it may require a supermajority vote by the BCC. If a supermajority vote is not received from the BCC, the department will have to make additional budget cuts to balance the budget. The Board has given no indication of a willingness to increase the current millage rate. The department has been playing catch up with its Capital Improvement Plan. There has been tremendous growth in the county over the last 15 years and the Impact fee revenue that Fire Rescue has received is not enough to offset the costs of the stations that are required to serve this new growth. Over the last 15 years, the department has collected a total of \$10.66 million in Impact fees. The average cost to build fire station is \$18-20 million. In 2024, the department opened two new stations, prior to that the last time the department opened up a new growth station was 2009. Population has increased 28% since then (from 760,578 in 2009 to 976,900 in 2024). An additional new fire station will be opening in the next year. There are still new growth stations that need to be built and many of our 51 stations are aging and in need of renovation or replacement. Construction costs have increased significantly. Costs have increased from \$405 per square feet in 2018, to \$920 per square feet in 2024, leaving a deficit of \$515 per square feet. Costs are expected to continue to increase into the future. This along with increasing fuel costs, inflation and uncertain economic times will put an additional strain on the department's current and future budgets.

Other funding sources

This fiscal year, are you receiving Federal funding from any other grant program for the same purpose for which you are applying for this grant? No


This fiscal year, are you receiving Federal funding from any other grant program regardless of purpose? Yes

Applicant and community trends

Please provide the following additional information about the applicant.

Injuries and fatalities	2024	2023	2022
What is the total number of fire-related civilian fatalities in your jurisdiction over the last three calendar years?	6	9	6
What is the total number of fire-related civilian injuries in your jurisdiction over the last three calendar years?	67	57	93
What is the total number of line of duty member fatalities in your jurisdiction over the last three calendar years?	0	0	0
What is the total number of line of duty member injuries in your jurisdiction over the last three calendar years?	3	4	4
What is the total number of members with self-inflicted fatalities over the last three years?	0	0	0

How many frontline vehicles does your organization have in each of the types or classes of vehicle listed below that respond to first alarm assignments in support of NFPA 1710/1720? You must include vehicles that are leased or on long-term loan as well as any vehicles that have been ordered or otherwise currently under contract for purchase or lease by your organization but not yet in your possession.



**Filled riding positions**

The number of filled riding positions must be equal or less than the number of frontline apparatus multiplied by the number of available riding positions.

Type or class of vehicles	Number of frontline apparatus	Number of available riding positions	Number of filled riding positions
Engines or pumpers (pumping capacity of 750 gallons per minute (GPM) or greater and water capacity of 300 gallons or more): pumper, pumper/tanker, rescue/pumper, foam pumper, CAFS pumper, type I, type II engine urban interface.	45	180	138
Ambulances for transport and/or emergency response.	55	220	164
Tankers or tenders (water capacity of 1,000 gallons or more).	4	8	4
Aerial apparatus: aerial ladder truck, telescoping, articulating, ladder towers, platform, tiller ladder truck, quint.	6	24	24
Brush/quick attack (pumping capacity of less than 750 GPM and water carrying capacity of at least 300 gallons): brush truck, patrol unit (pickup w/ skid unit), quick attack unit, mini-pumper, type III engine, type IV engine, type V engine, type VI engine, type VII engine.	19	38	0
Rescue vehicles: rescue squad, rescue (light, medium, heavy), technical rescue vehicle, hazardous materials unit.	2	8	4
Additional vehicles: EMS chase vehicle, air/light unit, rehab units, bomb unit, technical support (command, operational support/supply), hose tender, salvage truck, ARFF (aircraft rescue firefighting), command/mobile communications vehicle.	56	108	56

Is your department facing a new risk, expanding service to a new area, or experiencing an increased call volume?

Yes

Please explain how your department is facing a new risk, expanding service to a new area, or experiencing an increased call volume.

Palm Beach County (PBC) continues to experience a large amount of growth in residents, multi-story residences and businesses. Retirees continue to move to the County and the population continues to age. In the last ten years, the population of the County has grown by 15.2% and is expected to increase by another 9.5% by 2030 according to the University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research. The South Florida Business Journal reported that PBC is among the fastest-growing metros for senior citizens (7.1% increase). It was reported by the agency Discover the Palm Beaches that PBC experienced record-breaking tourism

again in 2023 (9.5 million visitors) a 2.5% increase from the previous year. As more and more people visit and move to PBC, the demand for homes, businesses and hotels continue to rise. Developers are building on every bit of available land in the County. The latest trend in South Florida is golf course conversion (building homes on golf courses that are no longer in use or profitable). This trend along with the increased growth and call volume increases the need for additional firefighters and facilities to serve these densely populated communities. Over the past 10 years, Palm Beach County Fire Rescue has experienced an average increase in call volume of 2-3% per year. In fiscal years 2021 and 2022, the department experienced a 5% or more increase in call volume. As our community continues to grow, we are in need of new fire stations. The growth of the community is increasing much faster than our ability to build and staff new stations (especially with construction delays caused by supply chain issues). In addition, our roadways are crowded and over capacity therefore increasing the time it takes to travel to our calls and increasing response times. This rapid expansion, ongoing development, changing landscape and demographic have created a more challenging environment for our firefighters, resulting in an increased risk of injury, exposure to hazards, and longer response times.

Community description

Please provide the following additional information about the community your organization serves.

Type of jurisdiction served	County
What type of community does your organization serve?	Suburban
What is the square mileage of your first due response zone/jurisdiction served?	1769
What percentage of your primary response area is protected by hydrants?	25

What percentage of your primary response area is for the following:	Percentage (must sum to 100%)
Agriculture, wildland, open space, or undeveloped properties	70
Commercial and industrial purposes	6
Residential purposes	24
Total	100

What is the permanent resident population of your first due response zone/jurisdiction served?	976900
Do you have a seasonal increase in population?	Yes
What is your seasonal increase in population (number of people)?	158876

Please describe your organization and/or community that you serve.	Palm Beach County is located in the southeast region of Florida, 60 miles north of Miami and 170 miles southeast of Orlando. Palm Beach County is the second-largest county in Florida by land area and is larger than the states of Rhode Island and Delaware. The County is 47 miles long (from north to south) and over 53 miles wide (east to west). Palm Beach County Fire Rescue (PBCFR) is an ISO Class 1 organization serving the unincorporated county and 19 municipalities. PBCFR covers 1,769 square miles and serves a population of 976,900 permanent residents and a transient, seasonal tourist population that swells to over 1.1 million with the arrival of the winter snowbirds. At first look, the county would appear to be urban in nature however the residentially populated areas within the county are clustered along the coastal region and along Lake Okeechobee, and these areas only account for 24% of land use. Palm Beach County is mainly suburban, but we have a few high-density urban areas that contain 688 structures that are more than three stories in height. We have only 6%
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of our land areas dedicated to commercial or industrial uses. The remaining 70% of the county land consists of undeveloped properties, farmlands and wild land, such as the Everglades conservation areas running between the coast and Lake Okeechobee. Only 25% of the total undeveloped areas are covered by hydrants leaving the remaining areas without hydrant coverage. Our climate is relatively hot and sunny most of the year with average temperatures ranging from 68-83 degrees Fahrenheit. We have an extremely dry season during the winter months with drought indices reaching into the 500s. Our summer months are subtropical with heavy rains (62 inch/year), occasional flooding hurricanes. Palm Beach County is a hot spot for retirees. The County has many retirement communities for people 55 and over, along with many assisted living facilities and nursing homes. The median age of Palm Beach County is 45 years old. 23% of the County's population is over 65 years of age. Many of the residents that are 65 or over live in a one-person household. In fiscal year 2024, PBCFR responded to 157,474 total emergency calls. PBCFR is a career department comprised of over 1,500 career firefighters, all of which are trained to the NFPA 1001 level of FF 1&2, with dual certification as EMT and/or Paramedics. PBCFR is 100% NIMS compliant with all current mandates and fully integrated with and reporting into NFIRS. PBCFR complies with NFPA 1500 standards and requires all firefighter and candidates to have NFPA 1582 baseline and annual physicals. We provide structural and wildland fire suppression, emergency medical services, ALS and BLS transport, hazmat materials mitigation, technical rescue, Special Operations, Aeromedical, Aircraft firefighting, 9-1-1 Dispatching, Fire Prevention, Public Education, Fire Inspections, Fire Investigation, Plans Review, Community Assistance and a Mobile Integrated Health program to both the unincorporated areas of Palm Beach County and the 19 municipalities that we serve. We conduct operations from 51 fire stations with a fleet of over 170 front line apparatus. PBCFR provides automatic aid, mutual aid, and dispatch services to 13 additional municipalities (all areas within Palm Beach County not directly served by PBCFR are recipients of either mutual or automatic aid). Additionally, we provide mutual aid to two adjacent counties (Broward and Martin Counties) and to the other three fire departments that are not in our Dispatch Center.

Call volume

Summary	2024	2023	2022
Fire - NFIRS Series 100	1402	1381	1453
Overpressure Rupture, Explosion, Overheat (No Fire) - NFIRS Series 200	43	54	61
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service Incident - NFIRS Series 300	117073	115608	113931
Hazardous Condition (No Fire) - NFIRS Series 400	1815	1707	1580
Service Call - NFIRS Series 500	7688	7450	8970
Good Intent Call - NFIRS Series 600	16891	16972	17360
False Alarm & Falls Call - NFIRS Series 700	8886	8436	7964
Severe Weather & Natural Disaster - NFIRS Series 800	13	39	17
Special Incident Type - NFIRS Series 900	111	145	222
Total	153922	151792	151558

Fire

How many responses per year by category? Enter whole numbers only. If you have no calls for any of the categories, enter 0.

How many responses per year per category?	2024	2023	2022
"Structure Fire" (Of the NFIRS Series 100 calls, NFIRS Codes 111-120)	507	472	448
"Vehicle Fire" (Of the NFIRS Series 100 calls, NFIRS Codes 130-138)	282	322	298
"Vegetation Fire" (Of the NFIRS Series 100 calls, NFIRS Codes 140-143)	333	287	346
Total	1122	1081	1092

What is the total acreage of all vegetation fires? Enter whole numbers only. If you have no vegetation fires, enter 0.

Total acreage per year	2024	2023	2022
Total acreage of all vegetation fires	804	141	530

Rescue and emergency medical service incidents

How many responses per year per category?	2024	2023	2022
"Motor Vehicle Accidents" (Of the NFIRS Series 300 calls, NFIRS Codes 322-324)	7149	7220	6830
"Extrications from Vehicles" (Of the NFIRS Series 300 calls, NFIRS Code 352)	23	26	33
"Rescues" (Of the NFIRS Series 300 calls, NFIRS Code 300, 351, 353-381)	1020	981	552
EMS-BLS Response Calls	553	137	514
EMS-ALS Response Calls	110663	112415	112838
EMS-BLS Scheduled Transports	0	0	0
EMS-ALS Scheduled Transports	0	0	0
Community Paramedic Response Calls	860	686	302
Total	120268	121465	121069

Mutual and automatic aid

How many responses per year by category? Enter whole numbers only. If you have no calls for any of the categories, enter 0.

How many responses per year per category?	2024	2023	2022
Amount of times the organization received Mutual Aid	0	0	0
Amount of times the organization received Automatic Aid	4996	5140	4902
Amount of times the organization provided Mutual Aid	170	196	126
Amount of times the organization provided Automatic Aid	2783	2689	2529
Of the Mutual and Automatic Aid responses, amount that were structure fires	250	221	240
Total	8199	8246	7797

You can add the positions you are requesting by using the add buttons below. Include all positions in a single item. Please answer all the questions for the overall Hiring activity as well as the required information for the requested positions.

Grand total: \$6,114,623.58

Program area: Hiring of firefighters

Activity: Hiring of Firefighters

\$6,114,623.58

Hiring of Firefighters activity questions

Staffing levels

SAFER intends to restore or improve local fire departments' staffing and deployment capabilities so they may more effectively respond to emergencies. With the enhanced staffing, a SAFER grant recipient's response time will be reduced sufficiently and an appropriate number of trained personnel will be assembled at the incident scene.

The following questions are designed to help us understand the staffing changes that have occurred in your department over the past several years and how the grant will assist in restoring or improving your staffing levels. The information provided must be a true and accurate depiction of your department on the timelines listed below.

For more information regarding these standards please see the Notice of Funding Opportunity or go to [www.nfpa.org/freeaccess](http://www.nfpa.org/freeaccess)

Select the item that best describes the NFPA standard your department is attempting to meet: 1710 - with aerial

What is the department's current (at the start of the application period) budgeted operational staffing level? Include all budgeted positions, even if they are not currently filled.

Current budgeted operational staffing level 1629

How many budgeted, but vacant operational positions does your department have at the start of the application period? 67

Please enter information about your organization's staffing levels in the table below .

Staffing levels	Total number of operational career personnel	Number of operational career officers	Number of NFPA support
Staffing levels at the start of the application period	1562	583	1547
Staffing levels at one year prior to the start of the application period	1473	544	1453
Staffing levels at two years prior to the start of the application period	1407	537	1394
If awarded this grant, what will the staffing levels be in your department?	1580	586	1565

Please provide details on the department's existing staffing model to include the number of shifts, number of positions per shift, chief level officer staffing per shift (i.e., Battalion Chief, District Chief, etc.), and contracted shift hours per week/pay period. If the contracted shift hours included FLSA overtime or Kelly Days, please be sure to include details.

PBCFR has 3 – 24 hour shifts. Minimum daily staffing is currently 349. Minimum daily staffing includes 10 Battalion Chiefs and 10 EMS Captains. District Chiefs are not included in the minimum staffing numbers. We have 9 of them that are on a Monday-Friday 40 hour work week with overtime for nights and weekend calls. Battalion Chiefs and below are on a 48 hour workweek with a Kelly day. We currently staff 4 personnel on an aerial, 3 personnel on an engine/suppression unit, 4 personnel on a stand-alone engine (with no other units in the station), 3 personnel on a rescue/ambulance unit, 1 person on a tender and cross staff our brush trucks with the suppression unit staff. We currently have 187 front line units in 51 fire stations.

Does your department utilize part-time or reserve paid firefighters?

No

Hiring of firefighters

Please provide the following additional information regarding your fire department.

Based on current staffing levels:

If your department utilizes overtime to fill positions to ensure you are meeting applicable NFPA staffing and deployment standards, you should remove the number of positions filled by overtime from your calculations.

How often does your department meet the NFPA assembly requirements as indicated in the table above for the department's first due response zone/jurisdiction served?

Never (0%)

What is the average actual staffing level on your first arriving engine company or vehicle capable of initiating suppression activities on the number of structure fires indicated in the department call volume section of your application?

3

Do you provide NFPA 1582 annual medical/physical exams?

Yes

If awarded the number of positions requested in this application:

How often do you anticipate that your department will meet the NFPA assembly requirements as indicated in the table above?

Half of the time (40 to 59%)

What will be the average actual staffing level on your first arriving engine company or vehicle capable of initiating suppression activities on the number of structure fires indicated in the department call volume section of your application?

3

Will you provide the new hires with NFPA 1582 entry-level physicals?

Yes

Will the personnel hired meet the minimum EMS training and certification as required by your Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ)?

Yes

Is it your department's intent to sustain the awarded positions after the completion of the period of performance?

Yes

Please provide a brief description on how the positions will be sustained.

It is the desire of PBCFR to sustain these positions through the regular budget process. Over the 3 year period, the positions will be brought in to the normal budgeting of the department and kept on staff. Sustainment of these positions has been incorporated into the department's long-term budgeting process. The Fire Rescue Administrator is committed to the sustainment plan.

Describe the department's step-by-step hiring process (application period, written test, physical, approval) and the timeline for each step.

PBCFR in conjunction with Palm Beach County Human Resources (PBC HR), facilitates the direction and management of the hiring process for PBCFR.

	<p>Applications are accepted over two days every year. Historically, the department receives approximately 800 applications per hiring process. Those who have submitted an Interest Card with PBCFR are notified by email two weeks prior to the opening of the application announcement. It takes, on average, three weeks for PBC HR to review the applications for completeness and to verify all qualifications. Candidates that meet the minimum requirements are eligible to move forward in the multi-level hiring process that begins with a two-part written test. The tests are then sent out to be graded, and those candidates who rank at or above the cut-off score are invited to participate in an in-person interview. Our hiring process consists of three highly trained officers who work vigorously, conducting all interviews within two weeks. The candidates are ranked according to their interview score, creating a list that will be utilized to fill the following year's recruit classes. A conditional offer of employment is given to each candidate subject to the successful completion of a medical physical and a criminal, employment, and driving background check. The candidates chosen to undergo the onboarding process will meet with PBC HR, PBCFR Exercise Physiologist, and be fitted for uniforms and bunker gear.</p>
How many recruits can be trained in one academy class?	40
How long after award will the department be able to start a recruit class?	<p>PBCFR will be able to start a recruit class about 2-4 months after the award depending on the time of year. PBCFR's hiring process is conducted thru PBC Human Resources Department. The hiring process consists of: the application process, a two-part written test, an in-person interview, a medical physical, a physical assessment, and a background check (criminal, employment, and driving). This entire process takes approximately 3 months.</p>
How often are your recruit classes held?	Our recruit classes are held quarterly or as needed.
Does the department need governing body approval to accept and implement the award?	Yes
Provide details on the timeline needed to accept the grant award.	<p>With previously awarded grants, the timeline has been approximately 60 days. Once the Department has been sent notification for grant funding award, the Fire Rescue Administrator contacts County Administration for authorization to move forward. The Board of County Commissioners accepts the award and at the same time approves a budget amendment to establish a budget for the grant. The Board of County Commissioners meet once or twice a month, which may result in a 60-day timeline for acceptance.</p>
Is your request for hiring firefighters based on a risk analysis, staffing needs analysis, or an Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating?	Yes
Describe how the analysis was conducted and the outcome of the analysis or ISO rating.	<p>PBCFR has an in-house Planning Section that evaluates call volume, response times, NFPA1710, unit availability, population, and safety risks. It was determined that a new fire station was needed in the area. Historical data was used to compare current staffing to the additional station staffing. The analysis indicated overall response time will be reduced by 4 min and unit availability will increase. Staffing the station with a 4 person engine would result in decreased time required to meet the 2 in 2 out standard, improve our NFPA1710 first arriving engine response from 0% within 4 min to 56%, and improve the full complement of 17 people on scene within 8 min from 0% to 40%. These improvements in response time translates into risk mitigation by minimizing the time a fire has to progress. Postponing fire engagement may result in further property damage, injuries, and</p>



Does your department currently have a policy in place to recruit and hire veterans?

Please provide a brief description of the policy in place.

potentially death. Having an additional fire suppression unit will improve our ISO deployment score.

Yes

In compliance with Florida Statute 295, PBC Human Resources Department has a policy in place to improve the recruitment and retention of veterans and qualifying family members. Qualifying individuals are to be given special consideration in the selection process and with regards to retention including being provided preference during times of layoffs.

Narrative statements

The narrative statements must provide all the information necessary for you to justify your needs and for FEMA to make an award decision. A panel of peer reviewers will perform the second phase of the applications' evaluations by using the narrative statements below to determine the worthiness of the request for an award.

Please ensure that your narrative clearly addresses each of the following evaluation criteria elements to the best of your ability with detailed but concise information. Provide only the information being requested for each element; if you provided information pertaining to the narrative elements elsewhere in the application you must still include it below. Failure to provide the information being requested may result in a lower score or the application not being funded.

Project description

Why does the department need the positions requested in this application?

Palm Beach County Fire Rescue (PBCFR) is requesting \$6,114,623 to hire 18 new firefighter positions to staff a 4 person ALS engine for a new fire station which will be completed at the end of 2025. The 18 new positions consisting of 4 new daily staff x 3 shifts x 1.5 (to allow for historical leave coverage) = 18 positions. PBCFR and the Professional Firefighters/Paramedics of PBC, IAFF, Local 2928, worked together to complete a risk assessment and determined the best way to improve the level of service in this area while providing firefighter safety and mental wellness was to build a new fire station and staff it with a 4 person engine. A formal, in-depth statistical analysis was conducted that evaluated the need and location for a new fire rescue station, call volume, response times, NFPA 1710 compliance, unit availability, population, and safety risks to firefighters and the community. Historical data was used to conduct comparisons between current staffing and the additional station staffing scenario. This area was once an Agriculture Reserve, over the last few years approvals have been given to develop the area with very little infrastructure in place. It was determined that a new fire station was needed in this location to provide service to a fast growing area that has extended response times. Impact fees generated from the new growth will only pay for a small portion of the cost to build the station. The new station will serve over 18 square miles and a population of over 10,000 in its first-due zone. The primary response zone of this new station will generate over 1,400 calls a year and growing. 80% of the calls have a response time over the department standard of 7:30; and 47% of the calls have a response time over 10 minutes. This new station and the staffing will provide more efficient fire and EMS responses and bring the area closer to being NFPA 1710 complaint. The overall response time to all calls in the primary response zone will be reduced on average by more than 4 minutes and unit availability in the area will increase. Staffing the station with a 4 person ALS Engine would result in a decrease in the time required to meet the 2 in 2 out standard within the first due zone and will improve our NFPA 1710 first arriving engine response from 0% within 4 minutes to 56%. The NFPA 1710 full complement response of 17 people on scene will improve from 0%

	<p>within 8 minutes to 40% in the first due zone. These improvements in response time translates into risk mitigation by minimizing the time a fire has to progress. Postponing fire engagement may result in further property damage, injuries, and potentially death. Having an additional fire suppression unit and increased staffing in this area will help improve or our ISO deployment score while experiencing tremendous growth.</p>
<p>How will the positions requested in this application be used within the department? (e.g., 4th on engine, open a new station, eliminate browned out stations, reduce overtime)?</p>	<p>Upon funding these 18 positions, PBCFR will be able to hire, train and staff a 4 person ALS engine at a new fire station that is scheduled to open at the end of 2025. This additional staffing is essential to meeting national safety standards and mitigating risk to the community through prompt response times and increased unit availability. This new station is in a new growth area that was once all farm land. There are few main thoroughfares and numerous gated communities. Over the next few years, the area will continue to develop. This new station will be located 4.8 miles northwest of Station 42 and 4.7 miles southwest of Station 47. The additional personnel will increase daily staffing by 4 people covering 3 different shifts and allowing for historical leave coverage for a total of 18 people (4 x 3 shifts x 1.5 coverage factor = 18 positions). Adding these additional people and an additional suppression unit to the area which will help our deployment and keep our Class 1 ISO rating with all the new growth throughout the County. This award will allow us to open a new station with the appropriate staffing without reducing staffing at our other fire stations. The benefits are increased safety for the community and our firefighters with more firefighters available to respond. This will equate to fewer injuries, fewer accidents, and will reduce job related stress. The benefit for the citizens is more apparatus coverage, and reduced response times which will improve the outcomes to the emergency calls. The benefits to the Department and taxpayers are an additional suppression unit and staffing to serve the community, a reduction in overtime cost, and the ability to maintain our budget and ensure that future projects are not cut or delayed due to budgeting issues.</p>
<p>What specific services will the requested positions provide to the fire department and community?</p>	<p>Funding the requested positions will significantly improve efficiencies of operation by allowing PBCFR to open a new station with the appropriate staffing without reducing staffing at any of our other fire stations. These positions will provide Structural Firefighting, Hazardous Materials Mitigation, Special Operations, and Emergency Medical Services to the community. The positions will also provide public education, car seat installation, blood pressure checks, and smoke alarm installation to the citizens within their zone. The additional staffing is essential to meeting national safety standards and mitigating risk to the community by reducing the overall response time to calls in this area and automatic aid areas in neighboring jurisdictions. It will also improve NFPA 1710 compliance and increasing unit availability in the area and free up additional units to respond to other incidents needing their specialized capabilities. The increased staffing will also provide a safer work environment for firefighters by reducing incidents in which crews may need to initiate search and rescue operations with fewer than 4 firefighters on scene (2 in 2 out standard).</p>
<p>Describe how funds awarded through this grant would enhance the department's ability to protect critical infrastructure within the primary response area.</p>	<p>PBCFR provides Structural Firefighting, Hazardous Materials Mitigation, Special Operations, Aircraft Firefighting, Aeromedical, Emergency Medical Services, and Emergency Transport to protect critical infrastructure such as: Scripps Research Institute, Max</p>

Planck Neuroscience Institute, 14 major hospitals, 245 Assisted Living Facilities and Nursing Homes, 9 correctional facilities, 2 major power plants, 5 wastewater facilities, 17 potable water treatment plants, 5 airports, 2 major highways systems, 4 major sugar mills/refinery, over 15 major Distribution Centers, over 350 schools, 5 colleges with numerous campuses, rail systems, hazardous substance chemical plants, sports stadiums, raceway, wildlife areas, Lake Okeechobee, Herbert Hoover Dike-levee, 45 miles of Atlantic Ocean coastline and beaches and 20 drawbridges across the Intracoastal or other waterway. Palm Beach County is a hot spot for tourism and snowbirds. PBCFR has automatic and mutual aid agreements with all of the Fire Departments within the County and 3 Fire Departments in surrounding counties. The personnel in this new fire rescue facility will protect over 18 square miles and a population of over 10,000. The area mainly consists of of single family homes built within the last 10 years with a median value of \$687,000. But there is also some commercial areas in the zone along with agricultural areas with very old homes or mobile homes on the properties. The median age of area is 62. The primary response zone of this new station generates over 1,400 calls a year. 80% of the calls have a response time over the department standard of 7:30. Staffing this new unit will reduce the overall response time to all calls in the primary response zone by more than 4 minutes and increase unit availability in the area. Staffing the station with a 4 person ALS Engine would result in a decrease in the time required to meet the 2 in 2 out standard within the first due zone and will improve our NFPA 1710 first arriving engine response from 0% within 4 minutes to 56%. The NFPA 1710 full complement response of 17 people on scene will improve from 0% within 8 minutes to 40% in the first due zone. These improvements in response time translates into risk mitigation by minimizing the time a fire has to progress. Postponing fire engagement may result in further property damage, injuries, and potentially death.

**Impact on daily operations**

Explain how the community and the current firefighters employed by the department are at risk without the positions requested in this application.

A few years ago in this area on a windy rainy day, a power pole came down on a single wide mobile home and caused a structure fire. It took the first in engine (with 3 people on it) 15 minute to arrive onscene. The second unit was a few minutes behind. The home was over 25% involved. After a primary search was conducted and the all clear given, both units were pulled out of the structure until more resources arrived. It took 12 more minutes before the next 2 engines arrived. By this time, the unit was fully involved and a complete loss. A family with very little economic means lost their home that day. If this station and unit were in service when this fire occurred, the engine (with 4 people) would have arrived within 4 minutes, this may have been the difference between the family losing their home or only having minor damage to it. Thank goodness no one was home at the time, but had someone been in the mobile home this may have been the difference between life and death. Without the funding for the requested positions, the new fire station will not be staffed with a 4 person engine and the zone will continue to be covered by suppression units responding from other zones. The first in suppression unit would most likely be Engine 42 which is staffed with 3 personnel. In order to meet the 2 in 2 out standard, Engine 42 would have to respond with an additional unit extending the response time of the initial fire attack. Station 42 runs almost 5,700 calls a year (approximately 16 calls a day) and transports over 2,600

patients a year. Due to the high call volume in Station 42's zone, the increasing call volume in the new station zone, congested roadways and increasingly long patient turnover times at the hospitals, unit availability would continue to decrease. If a structure fire occurred in this zone, the department would have an extremely difficult time getting a NFPA 1710 full complement response of 17 people on scene in a reasonable time frame. Not having adequate staffing to provide life savings services is a real threat to the safety of our firefighters. This can cause stress and fatigue and create a dangerous situation for our firefighters. That in turn can create a dangerous situation for the citizens of Palm Beach County. Delays in the arrival of sufficient personnel can put firefighters at risk. Fire crews are placed in difficult situations when they have to decide whether to attempt action with insufficient personnel or wait a little longer for additional personnel. Not having adequate staffing in a timely manner on a structure fire can put the lives of our firefighters in danger.

How will that risk be reduced if awarded?

The risk to our current firefighters and our citizens will be reduced if we are awarded this grant to hire additional firefighters to staff a 4 person ALS engine at a new fire station. This unit will be able to respond to both fire calls and medical calls and significantly reduce the total response time to the citizens (from an average of 10 ½ minutes to under 6 ½ minutes). The dangers realized by not having enough fire stations and adequate staff to provide life savings services is a real threat to the safety of our citizens and firefighters. The grant award would allow us to reduce the response time received by the citizens in this area by having a station closer to their calls and making the units in the surrounding stations more available to serve their citizens. It is currently taking over 12 minutes to get 4 firefighters on scene to a structure fire in this area, having this additional unit would decrease the time required to meet the 2 in 2 out standard within the first due zone and will significantly improve our NFPA 1710 first arriving engine response and our NFPA 1710 full complement response of 17 people (from 0% to 40%). These improvements in response time translates into risk mitigation by minimizing the time a fire has to progress. Postponing fire engagement may result in further property damage, injuries, and potentially death. If awarded the SAFER grant will reduce stress, firefighter fatigue, and response times to the citizens and ensure our firefighters are more fresh to serve the citizens of Palm Beach County.

**Cost benefit**

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.

The federal funding request of \$6,114,623 over 3 years is \$2,038,208 a year. If that cost is divided up only by the 10,445 citizens that will be directly impacted by this new fire station staffing that is \$95 a year divided by 18 new firefighter positions which is \$10.84 per firefighter a year. That is not a lot of money to have 911 response times reduced by over 4 minutes. The new station will indirectly impact all of the citizens of PBCFR's service area (976,900). If this cost is divided up among all of the citizens, that is \$2.09 per citizen divided by 18 new firefighters is \$0.12 each. This new station and staffing will increase fire protection significantly in the first due zone by reducing the overall response time to all calls by more than 4 minutes and increase the unit availability. It will allow for a quicker arrival of the first due suppression unit and improve the NFPA 1710 standard of first arriving engine within 4 minutes from 0% to 56%. Having 4 people on the engine will decrease the time required to establish the OSHA mandate of 2 in 2 out for

search and rescue operations. It will also allow for a faster assembly of an initial first alarm assignment to manage the fire scene by improving the NFPA 1710 standard of 17 people on scene within 8 minutes from 0% to 40%. This enables the fire to be put out faster. The expected improvements in response time will make a significant impact on reducing civilian fire deaths, reducing firefighter injuries, creating a safer work environment and reducing property loss. The cost of housing in South Florida has increased tremendously, it is nearly impossible to find affordable or workforce housing. If another family with little economic means suffers the same fate as the family that lost their mobile home a few years ago in this area, that could have devastating consequences and could even lead to homelessness. PBCFR has tried to provide the safest equipment and working conditions possible to the extent that sound fiduciary responsibility will allow. We have been struggling, as have many fire departments, to maintain those levels, but in a large department such as ours, the scale of every project creates an enormous financial expense, no matter how critical that need is. The granting of this request affords cost benefit to our department and to our citizens by negating the need for additional tax increases. Cost benefit is also afforded to our citizens by staffing the response vehicles with enough firefighters and emergency personnel to be able to address any and all scenarios that may occur during each call. The loss of a life because of not meeting the required staffing levels for any station that we are responsible for, is not acceptable in any scenario and should not be a consideration anywhere. If even one life is saved by this project, the cost benefit to that saved resident is immeasurable.

Additional information

If you have any additional information you would like to include about the department and/or this application in general, please provide below.

Thank you for allowing us to apply for this grant. If the funding is awarded, it will directly impact over 10,000 people who reside within this station zone and as a result, it will also indirectly impact the lives of millions of people who live, visit and travel through Palm Beach County.

Position

Position: New, Additional Firefighter(s) \$6,114,623.58

What benefits are included in the annual benefits amount? You must provide details on the dollar amounts or percentages for each benefit being provided (health costs (family, employee only, employee plus one), dental, vision, FICA, life insurance, retirement/pension, etc.). Note: Failure to provide this information may results in reductions to the requested amounts.

FICA - 6.2%; FICA Med - 1.45%; Retirement (FRS) - 34.0%; Health Insurance - \$16,123/annually; Uniform Allowance - \$400/annually

How many full-time firefighter positions are you requesting? "Full-time" is considered 2,080 hours or more worked per year.

Number of firefighters

18

What are the usual annual costs of a first-year firefighter? Annual costs include the base salary (exclusive of non-FLSA overtime) and the standard benefits package (including the average health cost, dental, vision, FICA, life insurance, retirement/pension, etc.) offered by the fire department. To get the "average" health care costs, average the annual cost

among various health insurance plans offered (i.e., self only, family, etc). Do not use figures that assume all employees will select self or family coverage.

Annual Salary	Annual Benefits	Total per firefighter
\$68,274.46	\$44,959.31	\$113,233.77
YEARLY TOTAL	\$2,038,207.86	
3 YEAR TOTAL	\$6,114,623.58	

## Grant request summary

The table below summarizes the number of items and total cost within each activity you have requested funding for. This table will update as you change the items within your grant request details.

### Grant request summary

Category	Number of sub-categories	Total cost
New, Additional Firefighter(s)	1	\$6,114,623.58
Total	1	\$6,114,623.58

Is your proposed project limited to one or more of the [following activities](#) : Planning and development of policies or processes. Management, administrative, or personnel actions. Classroom-based training. Acquisition of mobile and portable equipment (not involving installation) on or in a building.

Yes

## Budget summary

### Budget summary

Object class categories	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Personnel	\$1,228,940.28	\$1,228,940.28	\$1,228,940.28	\$3,686,820.84
Fringe benefits	\$809,267.58	\$809,267.58	\$809,267.58	\$2,427,802.74
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
Total direct charges	\$2,038,207.86	\$2,038,207.86	\$2,038,207.86	\$6,114,623.58
Indirect charges	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$2,038,207.86	\$2,038,207.86	\$2,038,207.86	\$6,114,623.58
Program income				\$0.00
Non-federal resources				
Applicant				\$2,343,939.05

Object class categories	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
State				\$0.00
Local				\$0.00
Other sources				\$0.00
Remarks				
Total Federal and Non-federal resources				
Federal resources	\$1,528,655.89	\$1,528,655.89	\$713,372.75	\$3,770,684.53
Non-federal resources	\$509,551.97	\$509,551.97	\$1,324,835.11	\$2,343,939.05
TOTAL	\$2,038,207.86	\$2,038,207.86	\$2,038,207.86	\$6,114,623.58

Contact information

Did any individual or organization assist 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?

No

Secondary point of contact

Please provide a secondary point of contact for this grant.

The Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) who submits the application will be identified as the primary point of contact for the grant. Please provide one secondary point of contact for this grant below. The secondary contact can be members of the fire department or organizations applying for the grant that will see the grant through completion, are familiar with the grant application, and have the authority to make decisions on and to act upon this grant application. The secondary point of contact can also be an individual who assisted with the development, preparation, or review of the application.

<b>Patrick J Kennedy</b> Fire Rescue Administrator  <a href="mailto:pkennedy@pbccgov.org">pkennedy@pbccgov.org</a>	<b>Primary phone</b> 5616167000 Work  <b>Fax</b>	<b>Additional phones</b> 5616167027 Work
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# Submit application

## Assurance and certifications



### Instructions

These assurances and certifications include requirements attached to all federal grants, including the right of the Federal Government to review the grant activity. You should read over this material to become aware of the requirements. The assurances and certifications must be read, signed, and electronically submitted as a part of the application. The lobbying form may not be applicable.

OMB number: 4040-0007, Expiration date: 02/28/2025 [View burden statement](#)

## SF-424B: Assurances - Non-Construction Programs

OMB Number: 4040-0007  
Expiration Date: 02/28/2025

Certain of these assurances may not be applicable to your project or program. If you have any questions, please contact the awarding agency. Further, certain Federal awarding agencies may require applicants to certify to additional assurances. If such is the case, you will be notified.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I certify that the applicant:

1. Has the legal authority to apply for Federal assistance and the institutional, managerial and financial capability (including funds sufficient to pay the non-Federal share of project cost) to ensure proper planning, management and completion of the project described in this application.
2. Will give the awarding agency, the Comptroller General of the United States and, if appropriate, the State, through any authorized representative, access to and the right to examine all records, books, papers, or documents related to the award; and will establish a proper accounting system in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards or agency directives.
3. Will establish safeguards to prohibit employees from using their positions for a purpose that constitutes or presents the appearance of personal or organizational conflict of interest, or personal gain.
4. Will initiate and complete the work within the applicable time frame after receipt of approval of the awarding agency.
5. Will comply with the Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970 (42 U.S.C. 4728-4763) relating to prescribed standards for merit systems for programs funded under one of the 19 statutes or regulations specified in Appendix A of OPM's Standards for a Merit System of Personnel Administration (5 C.F.R. 900, Subpart F).
6. Will comply with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination. These include but are not limited to: (a) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-352) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin; (b) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended (20 U.S.C.1681-1683, and 1685-1686), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex; (c) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 794), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicaps; (d) the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (42 U.S.C. 6101-6107), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; (e) the Drug Abuse Office and Treatment Act of



1972 (P.L. 92-255), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of drug abuse; (f) the Comprehensive Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-616), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of alcohol abuse or alcoholism; (g) 523 and 527 of the Public Health Service Act of 1912 (42 U.S.C. 290 dd-3 and 290 ee- 3), as amended, relating to confidentiality of alcohol and drug abuse patient records; (h) Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination in the sale, rental or financing of housing; any other nondiscrimination provisions in the specific statute(s) under which application for Federal assistance is being made; and, (j) the requirements of any other nondiscrimination statute(s) which may apply to the application.

7. Will comply, or has already complied, with the requirements of Titles II and III of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-646) which provide for fair and equitable treatment of persons displaced or whose property is acquired as a result of Federal or federally-assisted programs. These requirements apply to all interests in real property acquired for project purposes regardless of Federal participation in purchases.
8. Will comply, as applicable, with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. 1501-1508 and 7324-7328) which limit the political activities of employees whose principal employment activities are funded in whole or in part with Federal funds.
9. Will comply, as applicable, with the provisions of the Davis-Bacon Act (40 U.S.C. 276a to 276a-7), the Copeland Act (40 U.S.C. 276c and 18 U.S.C. 874), and the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. 327-333), regarding labor standards for federally-assisted construction subagreements.
10. Will comply, if applicable, with flood insurance purchase requirements of Section 102(a) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-234) which requires recipients in a special flood hazard area to participate in the program and to purchase flood insurance if the total cost of insurable construction and acquisition is \$10,000 or more.
11. Will comply with environmental standards which may be prescribed pursuant to the following: (a) institution of environmental quality control measures under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (P.L. 91-190) and Executive Order (EO) 11514; (b) notification of violating facilities pursuant to EO 11738; (c) protection of wetlands pursuant to EO 11990; (d) evaluation of flood hazards in floodplains in accordance with EO 11988; (e) assurance of project consistency with the approved State management program developed under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.); (f) conformity of Federal actions to State (Clean Air) Implementation Plans under Section 176(c) of the Clean Air Act of 1955, as amended (42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.); (g) protection of underground sources of drinking water under the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, as amended (P.L. 93-523); and, (h) protection of endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (P.L. 93-205).
12. Will comply with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (16 U.S.C. 1271 et seq.) related to protecting components or potential components of the national wild and scenic rivers system.
13. Will assist the awarding agency in assuring compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470), EO 11593 (identification and protection of historic properties), and the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 469a-1 et seq.).
14. Will comply with P.L. 93-348 regarding the protection of human subjects involved in research, development, and related activities supported by this award of assistance.
15. Will comply with the Laboratory Animal Welfare Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-544, as amended, 7 U.S.C. 2131 et seq.) pertaining to the care, handling, and treatment of warm blooded animals held for research, teaching, or other activities supported by this award of assistance.
16. Will comply with the Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act (42 U.S.C. 4801 et seq.) which prohibits the use of lead-based paint in construction or rehabilitation of residence structures.

- 17. Will cause to be performed the required financial and compliance audits in accordance with the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 and OMB Circular No. A-133, "Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations."
- 18. Will comply with all applicable requirements of all other Federal laws, executive orders, regulations, and policies governing this program.

Lauren Maglierowski, am hereby providing my signature for this application as of 06/18/2025.



**Signature accepted**  
Your signature for this assurance has been accepted.

**Certifications regarding lobbying**

OMB Number: 4040-0013  
Expiration Date: 02/28/2025

**Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements**

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

- 1. No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.
- 2. If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting 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 this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.
- 3. The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

**Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance**

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting 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 this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Mr. Lauren Magierowski, am hereby providing my signature for this application as of 06/18/2025.



**Signature accepted**

Your signature for this assurance has been accepted.

OMB number: 4040-0013, Expiration date: 02/28/2025 [View burden statement](#)

**SF-LLL: Disclosure of Lobbying Activities**

OMB Number: 4040-0013  
Expiration Date: 02/28/2025

Complete only if the applicant is required to do so by 44 C.F.R. part 18. Generally disclosure is required when applying for a grant of more than \$100,000 and if any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting 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 this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions. Further, the recipient shall file a disclosure form at the end of each calendar quarter in which there occurs any event described in 44 C.F.R. § 18.110(c) that requires disclosure or that materially affects the accuracy of the information contained in any disclosure form previously filed by the applicant.

The applicant is not currently required to submit the SF-LLL.

Mr. Lauren Magierowski, am hereby providing my signature for this application as of 06/18/2025.



**Signature accepted**

Your signature for this assurance has been accepted.

**Notice of funding opportunity**

I certify that the applicant organization has consulted the appropriate Notice of Funding Opportunity and that all requested activities are programmatically allowable, technically feasible, and can be completed within the award's Period of Performance (POP).

Mr. Lauren Magierowski, am hereby providing my signature for this application as of 06/18/2025.



**Signature accepted**

Your signature for this assurance has been accepted.

## Equal Opportunity Hiring

By signing this application, I certify that the organization will, to the extent practicable, seek, recruit, and hire members of racial and ethnic minority groups and women to increase their ranks within our organization.

By signing this application, I certify that, if awarded under the Hiring of Firefighters Activity, the organization assures a policy will be put into place, or is currently in place, ensuring that positions filled under this grant are not discriminated against, or prohibited from, engaging in volunteer firefighting activities in another jurisdiction during off-duty hours.

Mr. L. Lauren Magierowski, am hereby providing my signature for this application as of 06/16/2025.



**Signature accepted**

Your signature for this assurance has been accepted.

## Accuracy of application

I certify that I represent the organization applying for this grant and have reviewed and confirmed the accuracy of all application information submitted. Regardless of intent, the submission of information that is false or misleading may result in actions by FEMA that include, but are not limited to: the submitted application not being considered for award, enforcement actions taken against an existing award pending investigation or review, or referral to the DHS Office of Inspector General.

Mr. L. Lauren Magierowski, am hereby providing my signature for this application as of 06/18/2025.



**Signature accepted**

Your signature for this assurance has been accepted.

## Authorized Organizational Representative for the grant

By signing this application, I certify that I understand that inputting my password below signifies that I am the identified Authorized Organization Representative for this grant. Further, I understand that this electronic signature shall bind the organization as if the application were physically signed and filed.

Mr. L. Lauren Magierowski, am hereby providing my signature for this application as of 06/18/2025.



**Signature accepted**

Your signature for this assurance has been accepted.

## Authorization to submit application on behalf of applicant organization

Mr. L. Lauren Magierowski, am hereby providing my signature for this application as of 06/18/2025.

By signing this application, I certify that I am either an employee or official of the applicant organization and am authorized to submit this application on behalf of my organization; or, if I am not an employee or official of the applicant organization, I certify that the applicant organization is aware I am submitting this application on its behalf, that I have written authorization from the applicant organization to submit this application on their behalf, and that I have provided contact information for an employee or official of the applicant organization in addition to my contact information.

☒ I, Lauren Magierowski, am hereby providing my signature for this application as of 06/18/2025.



**Signature accepted**

Your signature for this assurance has been accepted.

**Confirm AOR contact information**

Please confirm or update your contact information.

Email	First name	Last Name
Imagierowski@pbcgov.org	Lauren	Magierowski
Area code	Phone number	Extension
561	6167021	
561	6167000	



**Edit your contact info**

[Edit your contact info](#)

☒ I certify that my contact information is accurate

**Sign and submit**

☒ By checking this box, I, Lauren Magierowski, am hereby providing my signature for this application as of 06/18/2025 2:36 pm.

Submit

[Return to edit application](#)

**The Department of Homeland Security (DHS)**

**Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**

**Fiscal Year 2024 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER)  
Grant Program**

Fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, and other criminal or noncriminal misconduct related to this program may be reported to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) Hotline. The toll-free numbers to call are 1 (800) 323-8603 and TTY 1 (844) 889-4357.

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1. Basic Information

A. Agency Name	Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Resilience/Grant Programs Directorate (GPD)
B. NOFO Title	Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant
C. Announcement Type	Initial
D. Funding Opportunity Number	DHS-24-GPD-083-00-99
E. Assistance Listing Number	97.083
F. Expected Total Funding	\$324,000,000
G. Anticipated Number of Awards	300 awards
H. Expected Award Range	N/A
I. Projected Application Start Date	05/23/2025 9:00 a.m. Eastern Time (ET)
J. Projected Application End Date	07/03/2025 5:00 p.m. ET
K. Anticipated Funding Selection Date	No later than 08/18/2025
L. Anticipated Award Date	Beginning on approximately Aug 18, 2025, and continuing thereafter until all FY 2024 SAFER Program grant awards are issued (but no later than September 30, 2025).
M. Projected Period of Performance Start Date	N/A <sup>1</sup>
N. Projected Period of Performance End Date	N/A

<sup>1</sup> FEMA funds SAFER Program awards on a rolling basis; as such, the date the FEMA Assistant Administrator for the Grant Programs Directorate signs the obligating document dictates the unique Period of Performance start and end dates for each award.

O. Executive Summary	<p>The Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program (hereafter referred to as the SAFER Program) is one of three grant programs that constitute the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) focus on enhancing the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire and fire-related hazards. The SAFER Program provides 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. Since 2005, the SAFER Program has awarded approximately \$5.8 billion in grant funding to provide critically needed resources to hire new, additional firefighters (or to change the status of part-time or paid-on-call firefighters to full-time firefighters), as well as recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Information about success stories for this program can be found at <a href="#">Assistance to Firefighters Grants Program   FEMA.gov</a>.</p>
P. Agency Contact	<p><b>a. SAFER Program Office Contact</b></p> <p>The SAFER Program Help Desk provides technical assistance to applicants for the online completion and submission of applications into FEMA Grants Outcomes (FEMA GO), answers questions concerning applicant eligibility, recipient responsibilities, and helps in the programmatic administration of awards. The SAFER Program Help Desk can be contacted at (866) 274-0960 or by email at <a href="mailto:FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov">FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov</a>. Normal hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. ET.</p> <p>Guidance documents such as application tutorials, Self-Evaluation Guides, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are also provided to further explain the current SAFER Program, assist with the online grant application, and highlight lessons learned and changes for FY 2024. For more details, please visit the <a href="#">SAFER Program website</a>.</p> <p><b>b. FEMA Grants News</b></p> <p>This channel provides general information on all FEMA grant programs and maintains a comprehensive database containing key personnel contact information at the federal, state, and local levels. FEMA Grants News Team is reachable at <a href="mailto:fema-grants-news@fema.dhs.gov">fema-grants-news@fema.dhs.gov</a> or (800) 368-6498, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET.</p> <p><b>c. Grant Programs Directorate (GPD) Award Administration Division</b></p>

	<p>GPD’s Award Administration Division (AAD) provides support regarding financial matters and budgetary technical assistance. AAD can be contacted at <a href="mailto:ASK-GMD@fema.dhs.gov">ASK-GMD@fema.dhs.gov</a>.</p> <p><b>d. FEMA Regional Offices</b> Assistance to Firefighters Grants Regional Contacts also may provide fiscal support, including pre- and post-award administration and technical assistance. Assistance to Firefighters Grants Regional Office contacts are available at <a href="#">Assistance to Firefighters Grants Regional Contacts   FEMA.gov</a>.</p> <p><b>e. Civil Rights</b> The FEMA Office of Civil Rights is responsible for ensuring compliance with and enforcement of federal civil rights obligations in connection with programs and services conducted by FEMA. They are reachable at <a href="mailto:FEMA-CivilRightsOffice@fema.dhs.gov">FEMA-CivilRightsOffice@fema.dhs.gov</a>.</p> <p><b>f. Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation</b> The FEMA Office of Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (OEHP) provides guidance and information about the EHP review process to FEMA programs and recipients and subrecipients. Send any inquiries regarding compliance for FEMA grant projects under this NOFO to FEMA-OEHP-<a href="mailto:NOFOQuestions@fema.dhs.gov">NOFOQuestions@fema.dhs.gov</a>.</p> <p><b>g. Payment and Reporting System</b> Payments are requested through FEMA GO. The Direct Deposit/Electronic Funds Transfer (DD/EFT) method of payment is used for recipients. For any questions about the system, contact the Customer Service Center at (866) 927-5646 or <a href="mailto:ask-GMD@fema.dhs.gov">ask-GMD@fema.dhs.gov</a>.</p> <p><b>h. FEMA GO</b> For technical assistance with the FEMA GO system, please contact the FEMA GO Helpdesk at <a href="mailto:femago@fema.dhs.gov">femago@fema.dhs.gov</a> or (877) 585-3242, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. ET.</p>
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**2. Eligibility**

<b>A. Eligible Entities/Entity Types</b>	<p>Only the following entities or entity types are eligible to apply.</p> <p><b>a. Applicants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fire departments; and</li><li>• National, regional, state, local, tribal, and nonprofit interest organizations representing the interests of volunteer</li></ul>
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	<p>firefighters are eligible to receive a SAFER Program award under the R&amp;R Activity.</p> <p>See <u>Section A of Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities</u> for additional information on ineligible applications and organizations.</p> <p><b>b. <i>Subapplicants</i></b> Subapplicants and subawards are not allowed.</p>
<b>B. Project Type Eligibility</b>	<p><b>Applicants and recipients should actively coordinate and collaborate with their local and state authorities to help ensure and prioritize the commitment of future non-federal investments in order to sustain staffing capabilities once an award’s period of performance ends.</b></p> <p><b>a. <i>Allowable Project Types</i></b></p> <p>1. Hiring Activity</p> <p>The Hiring Activity offers grants to support applications to hire new, additional firefighters (or to change the status of part-time or paid-on-call firefighters to full-time firefighters). National, regional, state, local, Tribal Nation, and nonprofit interest organizations representing the interests of volunteer firefighters are not eligible to receive a SAFER Program award under the Hiring Activity.</p> <p>2. R&amp;R Activity</p> <p>The R&amp;R Activity offers grants to support applications 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. Career fire departments are not eligible to apply for funding under the R&amp;R Activity.</p> <p>Each activity has its own application and eligibility requirements, as further outlined in <u>Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities</u> of this NOFO.</p> <p><b>b. <i>Unallowable Project Types</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Under the R&amp;R Activity, applications that request a Staffing Needs Assessment or Risk Assessment project are precluded from applying for additional R&amp;R- related activities.</li><li>• 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.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Applicants may not use award funds for matching funds for any other federal grants or cooperative agreements, for lobbying, or for intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings.</li><li>• Applicants may not use federal funds to sue the Federal Government or any other government entity.</li></ul>
C. Requirements for Personnel, Partners, and Other Parties	<p>An application submitted by an otherwise eligible non-federal entity (i.e., the applicant) may be deemed ineligible when the person that submitted the application is not: <b>1) a current employee, personnel, official, staff, or leadership of the non-federal entity; and 2) duly authorized to apply for an award on behalf of the non-federal entity at the time of application.</b></p> <p>Further, the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) must be a duly authorized current employee, personnel, official, staff, or leadership of the recipient and <b>provide an email address unique to the recipient at the time of application and upon any change in assignment during the period of performance. Consultants or contractors of the recipient are not permitted to be the AOR of the recipient.</b></p> <p>Information on ineligible applications and organizations is in <u>Appendix B</u> of this NOFO.</p>
D. Maximum Number of Applications	The maximum number of applications that can be submitted is one application per activity.
E. Additional Restrictions	<p><b>a. <i>Period of Performance Restrictions</i></b></p> <p><b>1. Hiring Activity</b></p> <p>The period of performance for applications funded under the Hiring Activity will be 36 months.</p> <p>A default 180-day recruitment period begins when FEMA approves an application for an award under this activity.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>If a recipient can hire all SAFER Program-funded firefighters during the 180-day recruitment period, the period of performance may begin at that time. 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.</p>

	<p><b>2. R&amp;R Activity</b></p> <p>The period of performance for applications funded under the R&amp;R Activity will be 12, 24, 36, or 48 months.</p> <p>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 Program activities before the start of the period of performance to maximize the funding’s availability. However, the recipient can only expend funds within the period of performance.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>If a recipient can begin its recruitment or retention activities during the 90-day recruitment period, the period of performance may begin at that time. 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.</p> <p>Extensions to the period of performance are allowed for R&amp;R Activity grants only. For additional information on period of performance extensions, please refer to Section 10.A.</p> <p><b>b. National Incident Management System (NIMS) Implementation</b></p> <p>SAFER Program applicants are not required to comply with NIMS to apply for SAFER Program funding or to receive a SAFER Program award. Any applicant who receives an FY 2024 SAFER Program award must achieve the level of <u>NIMS compliance</u> 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.</p>
<p><b>F. References for Eligibility Factors within the NOFO</b></p>	<p>Please see the following references provided below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <u>Subsection 7.A. Threshold Criteria</u></li><li>2. <u>Subsection 7.B. Application Criteria</u></li><li>3. <u>Subsection 7.C. Financial Integrity Criteria</u></li><li>4. <u>Subsection 7.D. Supplemental Financial Integrity Criteria and Review</u></li><li>5. <u>Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities</u></li></ol>

<b>G. Cost Sharing Requirement</b>	<p>For Hiring Activity grants, recipients are required to contribute non-federal funds as a cost share.</p> <p>For R&amp;R Activity grants, there is no cost share requirement.</p>
<b>H. Cost Share Description, Type and Restrictions</b>	<p>For Hiring Activity grants, recipients are required to contribute 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.</p> <p>In the first and second years of the grant, the amount of federal funding may not exceed 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 the amount of federal funding may not exceed 35 percent of the usual annual cost of a first-year firefighter in that department.</p> <p>The “usual annual cost” includes a firefighter’s base salary (excluding non-FLSA overtime) and standard benefits package (including the average annual cost of health, dental, and vision insurance; FICA; life insurance; retirement and/or pension contributions; etc.) offered by the fire department to first-year firefighters.</p> <p>FEMA does not require recipients to demonstrate availability of cost share funds at the time of application. However, before FEMA issues an award it may contact potential awardees to determine whether the recipient possesses the necessary non-federal funding.</p> <p>For R&amp;R Activity grants, there is no cost share requirement.</p>
<b>I. Cost Sharing Calculation Example</b>	<p>Assuming that the usual annual cost of a first-year firefighter in a department at the time of the grant application is \$120,000 per year and the department actually incurred \$100,000 per year in each year of the grant, the following cost share requirements and position cost limits would apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Cost Share Requirement: The grant recipient is required to contribute \$25,000 in Year 1; \$25,000 in Year 2; and \$65,000 in Year 3.</li><li>2. Position Cost Limit: The amount of federal funding cannot exceed \$90,000 in Year 1; \$90,000 in Year 2; and \$42,000 in Year 3.</li></ol>
<b>J. Required information for verifying Cost Share</b>	<p><b>a. <i>Minimum Budget Requirement</i></b></p>

	In accordance with <u>15 U.S.C. § 2229a(c)(2)</u> , in order to be eligible for SAFER Program funding, applicants are required to certify that their annual budget for fire-related programs and emergency response has not been reduced below 80 percent of the applicant’s average funding level in the three years prior to the application date.
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**3. Program Description**

**A. Background, Program Purpose, and Program History**  
The Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program (hereafter referred to as the SAFER Program) is one of three grant programs that constitute the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) focus on enhancing the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire and fire-related hazards. The SAFER Program provides 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 fire protection from fire and fire-related hazards, and to fulfill traditional missions of fire departments. Since 2005, the SAFER Program has awarded approximately \$5.8 billion in grant funding to provide critically needed resources to hire new, additional firefighters (or to change the status of part-time or paid-on-call firefighters to full-time firefighters), as well as recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Information about success stories for this program can be found at Assistance to Firefighters Grants Program | FEMA.gov.

The SAFER Program is part of a comprehensive set of measures authorized by Congress and implemented by DHS. In awarding grants, the FEMA Administrator is required to consider:

- The findings and recommendations of the Technical Evaluation Panel;
- The degree to which an award will reduce deaths, injuries, and property damage by reducing the risks associated with fire-related and other hazards;
- The extent of an applicant’s need for a SAFER Program grant and the need to protect the United States as a whole; and
- The number of calls requesting or requiring a firefighting or emergency medical response received by an applicant.

**B. Goals, Objectives, and Priorities**

Goal: To enhance local fire departments’ abilities to comply with staffing, response and operational standards established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA 1710 or NFPA 1720<sup>2</sup>).

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<sup>2</sup> NFPA 1710 and 1720 are lapsing in 2026 and will be consolidated under the proposed NFPA 1750. FEMA is working with the NFPA Standards Council to evaluate deployment of fire suppression operations. No decisions have been made and FEMA will issue additional guidance when more information becomes available. While the goal of the grant is to increase compliance with NFPA 1710 or 1720, 24-hour staffing is not a requirement of the SAFER Program.



**Objectives:** The objectives of the SAFER Program are to are to provide funding to communities so they may:

- Increase the number of firefighters to meet industry minimum standards;
- Increase the number of trained personnel assembled at the incident scene;
- Attain 24-hour staffing to improve deployment capabilities; and
- Fulfill traditional missions of fire departments (respond to emergencies and provide adequate fire protection from fire and fire-related hazards).

**Priorities:** Information on program priorities and objectives for the FY 2024 SAFER Program can be found in Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities of this NOFO.

**C. Program Rationale**

The SAFER Program represents part of a comprehensive set of measures authorized by Congress and implemented by DHS. Among the six DHS Missions noted in the Department of Homeland Security's Strategic Plan, the SAFER Program supports Mission Five: Build a Resilient Nation and Respond to Incidents. By increasing the number of trained firefighters, the SAFER Program improves deployment capabilities to respond to emergencies and provide adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards. The SAFER Program also aims to support objectives outlined under Mission Five in the Strategic Plan including:

- Objective 5.1: Coordinate Federal Response to Incidents
- Objective 5.2: Strengthen National Resilience
- Objective 5.4: Enhance Training and Readiness of First Responders

Through these objectives, FEMA creates a 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. We invite all our stakeholders and partners to join us in building a more prepared and resilient nation.

**D. Federal Assistance Type Grant**

**E. Performance Measures and Targets**

The grant recipient is required to collect data to allow FEMA to measure performance of the awarded grant in support of the SAFER Program metrics, which are tied to the programmatic objectives and priorities. To measure performance, FEMA may request information throughout the period of performance. In its final performance report submitted at closeout, the recipient must submit sufficient information to demonstrate it has met the performance goal as stated in its award. FEMA will measure the recipient’s performance of the grant by comparing the number of items, supplies, projects, and activities needed and requested in its application with the number of items, supplies, projects, and activities acquired and delivered by the end of the period of performance using the following programmatic metrics:

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

The target for these measures is the number of firefighters hired and the structural fire responses that complied with NFPA 1710 structural response standards. The measure will be assessed by how the addition of new firefighters has resulted in a percentage increase in compliance with the relevant section of the NFPA standards.

#### **F. Program-Specific Unallowable Costs**

Construction costs are not allowable under the SAFER Program. Construction includes major alterations to a building that changes the profile or footprint of the structure.

Modifications to facilities described in Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities are not considered construction costs for purposes of general award cost categorization and may be eligible. However, modifications to facilities activities might be considered “construction” for purposes of procurement or environmental protection and historic preservation purposes.

#### **G. General Funding Requirements**

Costs charged to federal awards (including federal and non-federal cost share funds) must comply with applicable statutes, rules and regulations, policies, this NOFO, and the terms and conditions of the federal award. This includes, among other requirements, that costs must be incurred, and products and services must be delivered within the budget period. 2 C.F.R. § 200.403(h).

Recipients may not use federal funds or any cost share funds for the following activities:

1. Matching or cost sharing requirements for other federal grants and cooperative agreements (see 2 C.F.R. § 200.306).
2. Lobbying or other prohibited activities under 18 U.S.C. § 1913 or 2 C.F.R. § 200.450.
3. Prosecuting claims against the federal government or any other government entity (see 2 C.F.R. § 200.435).

#### **H. Indirect Costs (Facilities and Administrative Costs)**

Indirect costs are allowed for recipients and subrecipients.

Indirect costs (IDC) are costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective and not readily assignable to specific cost objectives without disproportionate effort. Indirect costs are allowable only under R&R Activity for this program as described in 2 C.F.R. Part 200, including 2 C.F.R. § 200.414. Applicants with a current negotiated IDC rate agreement who desire to charge indirect costs to a federal award must provide a copy of their

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IDC rate agreement with their applications. Not all applicants are required to have a current negotiated IDC rate agreement. Applicants that are not required to have a negotiated IDC rate agreement, but are required to develop an IDC rate proposal, must provide a copy of their proposal with their applications. Applicants without a current negotiated IDC rate agreement (including a provisional rate) and wish to charge the de minimis rate must reach out via email to [FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov) for further instructions. Applicants who wish to use a cost allocation plan in lieu of an IDC rate proposal must also reach out via email to [FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov) for further instructions. As it relates to the IDC for subrecipients, a recipient must follow the requirements of 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.332 and 200.414 in approving the IDC rate for subawards.

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

M&A costs are allowed under the R&R Activity only. M&A costs are not eligible under the Hiring Activity.

No more than 3% of the federal share of SAFER Program funds awarded may be expended by the recipient for M&A for purposes associated with the SAFER Program award. M&A activities are those directly related to the management and administration of the SAFER award funds, such as financial management and monitoring. M&A expenses should be based only on actual expenses or known contractual costs; requests that are simple percentages of the award or estimates, without supporting justification or adequate documentation will not be allowed or considered for reimbursement. Salaries and fringe benefits for personnel directly supporting the grant are not required to be included in the M&A budget line item.

M&A are not overhead costs but are necessary direct costs incurred in direct support of the federal award or as a consequence of it, such as travel, meeting-related expenses, and salaries of full/part-time staff in direct support of the program. As such, M&A costs can be itemized in financial reports.

#### **J. Pre-Award Costs**

The following pre-award costs are allowable:

1. Fees for grant writers.

Generally, grant funds cannot be used to pay for products and services contracted for or obligated prior to the effective date of the award.

See [Appendix C – Award Administration Information](#) for further information regarding grant writer fees and [Section 10.B. Other Information](#) for general procurement under grants requirements.

#### **K. Beneficiary Eligibility**

To be an eligible beneficiary, there are no program requirements. This NOFO and any subsequent federal awards create no rights or causes of action for any beneficiary.

#### **L. Participant Eligibility**

To be an eligible participant, there are no program requirements. This NOFO and any subsequent federal awards create no rights or causes of action for any participant.

**M. Authorizing Authority**

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

**N. Appropriation Authority**

*Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2024*, Pub. L. No. 118-47, Title III, Protection, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Financial Assistance (2024 DHS Appropriations Act).

**O. Budget Period**

There will be only a single budget period with the same start and end dates as the period of performance.

**P. Prohibition on Covered Equipment or Services**

Recipients, subrecipients, and their contractors or subcontractors must comply with the prohibitions set forth in Section 889 of the *John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019*, which restricts the purchase of covered telecommunications and surveillance equipment and services. Please see 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.216, 200.327, 200.471, and Appendix II to 2 C.F.R. Part 200, and FEMA Policy #405-143-1 - Prohibitions on Expending FEMA Award Funds for Covered Telecommunications Equipment or Services for more information.

**4. Application Contents and Format****A. Pre-Application, Letter of Intent, and Whitepapers**

Pre-applications, letters of intent, and whitepapers are not required to be eligible to apply.

**B. Application Content and Format**

Applications are processed through the FEMA GO system. To access the system, go to <https://go.fema.gov/>. Additional application and program guidance documents are available at the SAFER Program website. Applicants will be prompted to submit the standard application information and any program-specific information required as described in Sections 4.C. Application Components and 4.D. Program-Specific Required Documents and Information of this NOFO. The Standard Forms (SF) may be accessed in the Forms tab at Forms | Grants.gov. Applicants should review these forms before applying to ensure they have all the information required.

After submitting the final 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. Applicants using slow internet connections, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before FEMA GO receives your application.

For additional application submission requirements, including program-specific requirements, please refer to the Section 4.C. Application Components of this NOFO.

**C. Application Components**

The following forms or information are required to be submitted via FEMA GO. The Standard Forms (SF) are also available at [Forms | Grants.gov](#).

- SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance
- Grants.gov Lobbying Form, Certification Regarding Lobbying
- SF-424A, Budget Information (Non-Construction)
- SF-424B, Standard Assurances (Non-Construction)
- SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

#### **D. Program-Specific Required Documents and Information**

For program-specific updates and information, please see the [Appendix A – FY 2024 SAFER Program Updates](#), [Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities](#), and [Appendix C – Award Administration Information](#).

#### **E. Post-Application Requirements for Successful Applicants**

Applicants likely to be funded may receive a request for additional information by email prior to award. Applicants must respond to the request to move forward with the grant review process.

### **5. Submission Requirements and Deadlines**

#### **A. Address to Request Application Package**

Applications are processed through the FEMA GO system. To access the system, go to [FEMA GO](#).

Steps Required to Apply for An Award Under This Program and Submit an Application:

To apply for an award under this program, all applicants must:

- a. Apply for, update, or verify their Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number and Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service;
- b. In the application, provide an UEI number;
- c. Have an account with [login.gov](#);
- d. Register for, update, or verify their SAM account and ensure the account is active before submitting the application;
- e. Register in FEMA GO, add the organization to the system, and establish the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR). The organization's electronic business point of contact (eBiz POC) from the SAM registration may need to be involved in this step. For step-by-step instructions, see the [FEMA GO Startup Guide](#);
- f. Submit the complete application in FEMA GO; and
- g. Always maintain an active SAM registration with current information when the applicant has an active federal award or an application under consideration by a federal awarding agency. As part of this, applicants must also provide information on an applicant's immediate and highest-level owner and subsidiaries, as well as on all predecessors that have been awarded federal contracts or federal financial assistance within the last three years, if applicable.

Per 2 C.F.R. § 25.110, if an applicant is experiencing exigent circumstances that prevents it from obtaining a UEI number and completing SAM registration prior to receiving a federal award, the applicant must notify FEMA as soon as possible. Contact [fema-grants-news@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:fema-grants-news@fema.dhs.gov) and provide the details of the exigent circumstances.

#### How to Register to Apply:

##### General Instructions:

Registering and applying for an award under this program is a multi-step process and requires time to complete. Below are instructions for registering to apply for FEMA funds. Read the instructions carefully and prepare the requested information before beginning the registration process. Gathering the required information before starting the process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

**The registration process can take up to four weeks to complete.** To ensure an application meets the deadline, applicants are advised to start the required steps well in advance of their submission.

Organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, Employer Identification Number (EIN), and an active System for Award Management (SAM) registration.

##### Obtain a UEI Number:

All entities applying for funding, including renewal funding, must have a UEI number. Applicants must enter the UEI number in the applicable data entry field on the SF-424 form. For more detailed instructions for obtaining a UEI number, refer to [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov).

##### Obtain Employer Identification Number:

In addition to having a UEI number, all entities applying for funding must provide an Employer Identification Number (EIN). The EIN can be obtained from the IRS by visiting <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online>.

##### Create a login.gov account:

Applicants must have a login.gov account to register with SAM or update their SAM registration. Applicants can create a login.gov account at: [https://secure.login.gov/sign\\_up/enter\\_email?request\\_id=34f19fa8-14a2-438c-8323-a62b99571fd](https://secure.login.gov/sign_up/enter_email?request_id=34f19fa8-14a2-438c-8323-a62b99571fd).

Applicants only must create a login.gov account once. For existing SAM users, use the same email address for both login.gov and SAM.gov so that the two accounts can be linked.

For more information on the login.gov requirements for SAM registration, refer to <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/pages/public/loginFAQ.jsf>.

##### Register with SAM:

In addition to having a UEI number, all organizations must register with SAM. Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through FEMA GO. SAM registration must be renewed annually and must remain active throughout the entire grant life cycle.<sup>3</sup>

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to: [Register with SAM](#).

Register in FEMA GO, Add the Organization to the System, and Establish the AOR:

Applicants must register in FEMA GO and add their organization to the system. The organization's electronic business point of contact (eBiz POC) from the SAM registration may need to be involved in this step. For step-by-step instructions, see [FEMA GO Startup Guide](#).

Note: FEMA GO will support only the most recent major release of the following browsers: Google Chrome; Mozilla Firefox; Apple Safari; and Microsoft Edge.

Applicants using tablet type devices or other browsers may encounter issues with using FEMA GO.

Submitting the Final Application:

Applicants will be prompted to submit the standard application information and any program-specific information required. Standard Forms (SF) may be accessed at [Forms | Grants.gov](#). Applicants should review these forms before applying to ensure they are providing all required information.

After submitting the final application, FEMA GO will provide either an error message, or an email to the submitting AOR confirming the transmission was successfully received.

**B. Application Deadline**

07/03/2025 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time

**C. Pre-Application Requirements Deadline**

Not applicable.

**D. Post-Application Requirements Deadline**

Not applicable.

**E. Effects of Missing the Deadline**

All applications must be completed in FEMA GO by the application deadline. FEMA GO automatically records proof of timely submission and generates an electronic date/time stamp when FEMA GO successfully receives an application. The submitting AOR will receive via email the official date and time stamp and a FEMA GO tracking number to serve as proof of timely submission prior to the application deadline.

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<sup>3</sup> Per 2 C.F.R. § 25.200, , applicants must also provide the applicant's immediate and highest-level owner, subsidiaries, and predecessors that have been awarded federal contracts or federal financial assistance within the past three years, if applicable.

**Applicants experiencing system-related issues have until 3:00 p.m. ET on the date applications are due to notify FEMA.** No new system-related issues will be addressed after this deadline. Applications not received by the application submission deadline will not be accepted.

#### **6. Intergovernmental Review**

##### **A. Requirement Description and State Single Point of Contact**

An intergovernmental review is not required.

#### **7. Application Review Information**

##### **A. Threshold Criteria**

FEMA conducts reviews of a random sampling of applications to compare them for duplication including the narrative statements and statistical data. Therefore, all elements of the narrative statements must be specific and unique to the applying entity, and all statistical data must be accurate. Applications with narrative statements that have substantial duplication of statements, sentences, or paragraphs to other submitted applications, or inaccurate data that may mislead reviewers may be disqualified. Discovery of falsification, fabrication, or plagiarism of other grant proposals will disqualify the application(s).

Note: FEMA evaluates each application on its merit, veracity, and accuracy to ascertain how the narrative statement(s) outlined within the application depicts the applicant's and their community's uniqueness, their particular risks, and how selecting them over a similarly situated applicant advances the objectives of the SAFER program 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. At any time during application review process, including the technical review stage, FEMA may request additional documentation from applicants, including but not limited to:

- Copies of official or certified documents demonstrating the claimed financial need;
- Copies of the applicant's needs assessment report, survey, or any documented other efforts undertaken to identify the applicant's unique project objectives;
- Copies of the risk analysis conducted to ascertain how said project will address the applicant's unique needs in alignment with their mission and SAFER Program grant purpose;
- Additional information or evidence detailing the applicant's particular risks; and
- Any other information deemed necessary to adequately weigh the applicant's assistance request for funding under this discretionary-competitive grant program. No applicant is guaranteed funding.

##### **B. Application Criteria**

Funding priorities and programmatic criteria for evaluating SAFER Program applications are established by FEMA based on the recommendations from the Criteria Development Panel (CDP). Each year, FEMA convenes a panel of fire service professionals to develop funding priorities for the SAFER Program. The panel makes recommendations about funding priorities as well as developing criteria for awarding grants.

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

- International Association of Fire Chiefs

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

The CDP is charged with making recommendations to FEMA regarding the creation or modification of previously established funding priorities as well as developing criteria for awarding grants. The content of this NOFO reflects implementation of the CDP's recommendations with respect to the priorities, direction, and criteria for awards.

FEMA will rank all complete and submitted applications based on how well they align with the program priorities for the activity. Answers to the application's activity specific questions provide information used to determine each application's ranking relative to the stated program priorities.

The Narrative Statements of the application must provide specific details about the activity for which applicants seek funding, including budget details. The weighted evaluation criteria used by the peer reviewers in the determination of the grant award, as described below, make up the elements of the narrative statement score.

#### C. Financial Integrity Criteria

Before making an award, FEMA is required to review OMB-designated databases for applicants' eligibility and financial integrity information. This is required by the *Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019* (Pub. L. No. 116-117, § 2 (2020)), 41 U.S.C. § 2313, and the "Do Not Pay Initiative" (31 U.S.C. 3354). For more details, please see 2 C.F.R. § 200.206.

Thus, the Financial Integrity Criteria may include the following risk-based considerations of the applicant:

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

#### D. Supplemental Financial Integrity Criteria and Review

Before making an award expected to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (currently a total federal share of \$250,000) over the period of performance:

1. FEMA is required by 41 U.S.C. § 2313 to review or consider certain information found in SAM.gov. For details, please see 2 C.F.R. § 200.206(a)(2).
2. An applicant may review and comment on any information in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov.

3. Before making decisions in the risk review required by 2 C.F.R. § 200.206, FEMA will consider any comments by the applicant.

#### E. Reviewers and Reviewer Selection

A panel of peer reviewers is comprised of fire service representatives recommended by the Criteria Development Panel. Peer reviewers are subject matter experts recommended by the nine major fire service organizations. In their role as Special Government Employees, peer reviewers must certify and observe Federal Conflict of Interests rules.

#### F. Merit Review Process

SAFER Program applications are reviewed through a multi-phase process. All applications are electronically pre-scored and ranked based on how well they align with the funding priorities outlined in this NOFO.

Applications with the highest pre-score rankings per activity are then scored competitively by no less than three members of a Peer Review Panel.

Applications will also be evaluated through a series of internal FEMA review processes for completeness, adherence to programmatic guidelines, technical feasibility, costs/quantities, and anticipated effectiveness of the proposed project(s). Below is the process by which applications will be reviewed:

##### 1. Pre-Scoring Process

The application undergoes an electronic pre-scoring process based on established program priorities listed in Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities and answers to activity-specific questions within the online application. Application Narratives are not reviewed during the pre-score process. “Request Details” and “Budget” information should comply with program guidance and statutory funding limitations. The pre-score is 50% of the total application score under the Hiring Activity, and 30% of the total application score under the R&R Activity.

##### 2. Peer Review Panel Process

Applications with the highest rankings from the pre-scoring process will undergo a Peer Review Panel process. A panel of peer reviewers is comprised of fire service representatives recommended by the CDP. Peer reviewers will assess the merits of each application based on the narrative statement on the requested activity. The evaluation elements listed in the “Narrative Evaluation Criteria” below will be used to calculate the narrative’s score for each activity requested. Panelists will independently score each requested activity within the application, discuss the merits and shortcomings of the application with their peers, and document the findings. A consensus is not required. The panel score is 50% of the total application score under the Hiring Activity, and 70% of the total application score under the R&R Activity.

Peer Review Panelists will evaluate and score each activity based on the following narrative elements within each activity.

**a. Hiring Activity**

The panel score is 50% of the total application score.

## 1. Project Description (30%):

- Why does the department need the positions requested in this application?
- 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)?
- What unique and specific services will the requested positions provide to the fire department and community?
- How will 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%):

- How are the community and the current firefighters employed by the department at risk without the positions requested in this application?
- How will that risk be unequivocally reduced if awarded?

## 3. Financial Need (30%):

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

## 4. Cost Benefit (10%):

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

**b. R&R Activity (Fire Departments)**

The panel score is 70% of the total application score.

## 1. Project Description (30%):

- Describe the unique problems and issues the department is experiencing in recruiting new volunteer firefighters.

- Describe the problems and issues the department is experiencing in retaining current members.
- Describe the precise implementation plan, including the goals, objectives, methods, specific steps, and timelines to directly address the identified problems or issues.
- Describe the current marketing plan already in place, or the marketing program to be put in place with or without grant funds.
- Describe how the program will be uniquely evaluated for its impact on identified recruitment and retention problems and issues. Describe how the overall effectiveness of the grant will be measured.
- Describe the unique and specific services the new volunteer firefighters, retention of current volunteer firefighters, or both, will provide for the fire department(s) and community.
- If the grant request will have a regional impact, discuss how the regional partners will benefit and which activities they will benefit from.
- If the grant request includes executive or management positions, define the purpose of all requested positions and personnel expenditures.

## 2. Impact on Daily Operations (30%):

- Describe with particularity and discreteness how the community and current volunteer firefighters in the department are at risk without the items or activities requested in this application.
- Describe how that risk will be unequivocally reduced if awarded funding.
- Explain the definitive impact the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters, the retention of current volunteer firefighters, or both, will have on the department's NFPA compliance.

## 3. Financial Need (30%):

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

## 4. Cost Benefit (10%):

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

**c. *R&R Activity (National, state, local, or federally recognized tribal volunteer firefighters interest organizations)***

The panel score is 70% of the total application score.

**1. Project Description (30%):**

- Describe the problems and issues the fire departments that the organization will be reaching with this grant are experiencing in recruiting new volunteer firefighters.
- Describe the problems and issues the same departments are experiencing in retaining current members.
- Describe the organization's implementation plan, including the goals, objectives, methods, specific steps, and timelines to directly address the problems or issues identified.
- Describe the current marketing plan already in place, or the marketing program to be put in place with or without grant funds.
- 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.
- Describe the specific services the new volunteer firefighters, retention of current volunteer firefighters, or both, will provide for the fire departments participating in this application and their respective communities.
- Describe the organization's procurement practices and the timelines outlining the chronological steps to complete the activities requested.

**2. Impact on Daily Operations (30%):**

- 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.
- Explain how that risk will be reduced if awarded funding.
- Describe the impact that the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters, the retention of current volunteer firefighters, or both, will have on the NFPA compliance of the fire departments participating in this application.

**3. Financial Need (30%):**

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

#### 4. Cost Benefit (10%):

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

The Narrative Statement blocks do not allow for formatting. Do not type the Narrative Statements using only capital letters. Additionally, do not include tables, special characters, or fonts (e.g., quotation marks, bullets), or graphs. Space for the Narrative Statement is limited. While each element must have a minimum of 200 characters, the maximum number of characters varies based on the questions being asked.

#### G. Final Selection

##### a. *Technical Evaluation Process (TEP)*

The highest-ranking applications from both activities will be considered within the fundable range. Applications that are in the fundable range will undergo both a Technical Review by a subject-matter expert as well as a FEMA Program Office review before being recommended for award. The FEMA Program Office will assess the request with respect to costs, quantities, feasibility, eligibility, and recipient responsibility prior to recommending any application for award.

During the TEP information in Appendix B - Programmatic Information and Priorities is used to make final corrections to any request not meeting program eligibility requirements. This is not a scored phase of the application process. Requests may be recommended for partial funding or disqualification based on findings made during this assessment.

### **8. Award Notices**

#### A. Notice of Award

The Authorized Organization Representative should carefully read the federal award package before accepting the federal award. The federal award package includes instructions on administering the federal award as well as terms and conditions for the award.

By applying, applicants agree to comply with the prerequisites stated in this NOFO and the material terms and conditions of the federal award, should they receive an award.

FEMA will provide the federal award package to the applicant electronically via FEMA GO. Award packages include an Award Letter, Summary Award Memo, Agreement Articles, and Obligating Document. An award package notification email is sent via the grant application system to the submitting AOR.

Recipients must accept their awards no later than 30 days from the award date. Recipients shall notify FEMA of their intent to accept the award and proceed with work via the FEMA GO system.

Funds will remain on hold until the recipient accepts the award via FEMA GO and all other conditions of the award have been satisfied, or until the award is otherwise rescinded. Failure to accept a grant award within the specified timeframe may result in a loss of funds.

During the review process for a SAFER Program 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 funded by FEMA. The recipient is under no obligation to start, modify, or complete any activities requested but not funded by the award. The award package will identify any differences under the approved scope of work section.

**B. Pass-Through Requirements**

Standard pass-through requirements in 2 C.F.R. Part 200 apply.

**C. Note Regarding Pre-Award Costs**

Even if pre-award costs are allowed, beginning performance is at the applicant or sub-applicant's own risk.

**D. Obligation of Funds**

Grant funds are obligated upon the offer of grant award in the FEMA GO system. Recipients must accept their awards no later than 30 days from the award date. Acceptance of the award is confirmation of the obligation. The recipient shall notify FEMA of its intent to accept and proceed with work under the award through the FEMA GO system.

Funds will remain on hold until the recipient accepts the award through the FEMA GO system and all other conditions of the award have been satisfied or until the award is otherwise rescinded. Failure to accept a grant award within the specified timeframe may result in a loss of funds. Recipients may request additional time to accept the award if needed.

**E. Notification to Unsuccessful Applicants**

FEMA GO will provide all applicants who do not receive a FY 2024 SAFER Program award with a turndown notification after September 30, 2025.

**9. Post-Award Requirements and Administration**

**A. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

In addition to the requirements of this section, FEMA may place specific terms and conditions on an individual award in accordance with 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

**B. DHS Standard Terms and Conditions**

A recipient of a federal award under this funding opportunity is required to comply with DHS Standard Terms and Conditions in effect at the time the award is issued. The DHS Standard Terms and Conditions are available [online](#). For continuation awards, the terms and conditions for the initial federal award will apply unless otherwise specified in the terms and conditions of the continuation award. The specific version of the DHS Standard Terms and Conditions applicable to the federal award will be in the federal award package. NOTE: Although not a requirement in

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the DHS Standard Terms and Conditions, as a best practice entities receiving funds through this program should ensure that cybersecurity is integrated into the design, development, operation, and maintenance of investments that impact information technology (IT) and/ or operational technology (OT) systems.

**a. Ensuring the Protection of Civil Rights**

As the Nation works towards achieving the National Preparedness Goal, it is important to continue to protect the civil rights of individuals. Recipients and subrecipients must carry out their programs and activities, including those related to the building, sustaining and delivering of core capabilities, in a manner that respects and ensures the protection of civil rights for protected populations.

The DHS Standard Terms and Conditions include a fuller list of the civil rights provisions that apply to recipients. They can be found in the DHS Standard Terms and Conditions. Additional information on civil rights provisions is available at <https://www.fema.gov/about/offices/equal-rights/civil-rights>.

**C. Financial Reporting Requirements**

1. Recipients must report obligations and expenditures through a federal financial report. The Federal Financial Report (FFR) form, also known as Standard Form 425 (SF-425), is available online at: SF-425 OMB #4040-0014.
2. Recipients must submit the FFR semi-annually throughout the period of performance (POP) as detailed below:
  - No later than July 30 (for the period Jan. 1 – June 30)
  - No later than January 30 (for the period July 1 – Dec. 31)
3. The final FFR is due within 120 calendar days after the end of the POP.
4. FEMA may withhold future federal awards and cash payments if the recipient does not submit timely financial reports, or the financial reports submitted demonstrate lack of progress or provide insufficient detail.

**D. Programmatic Performance Reporting Requirements**

1. A Performance Report must be submitted semi-annually throughout the POP.
2. A Performance Report must include:
  - A brief narrative of overall project(s) status;
  - A summary of project expenditures; and
  - A description of any potential issues that may affect project completion.
3. The Progress Report must be submitted through FEMA GO.
4. Performance Report Due Dates
  - No later than July 30 (for the period Jan. 1 – June 30)
  - No later than January 30 (for the period July 1 – Dec. 31)

**E. Closeout Reporting Requirements**

Within 120 days after the end of the period of performance, or after an amendment has been issued to close out a federal award, recipients must submit the following:

1. The final request for payment, if applicable.
2. The final FFR.



3. The final progress report detailing all accomplishments. The recipient must include with the final progress report an inventory of all construction projects.
4. A qualitative narrative summary of the impact of those accomplishments throughout the period of performance.
5. Other documents required by this NOFO, terms and conditions of the federal award, or other DHS Component guidance.

After FEMA approves these reports, it will issue a closeout notice. The notice will indicate the period of performance as closed, list any remaining funds to be de-obligated, and address the record maintenance requirement. Unless a longer period applies, such as due to an audit or litigation, for equipment or real property used beyond the period of performance, or due to other circumstances outlined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.334, this maintenance requirement is three years from the date of the final FFR.

Also, pass-through entities are responsible for closing out those subawards as described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.344; subrecipients are still required to submit closeout materials within 90 calendar days of the subaward period of performance end date. When a subrecipient completes all closeout requirements, pass-through entities must promptly complete all closeout actions in time for the recipient to submit all necessary documentation and information to FEMA during the closeout of their prime award. The recipient is responsible for returning any balances of unobligated or unliquidated funds that have been drawn down that are not authorized to be retained per 2 C.F.R. § 200.344(e).

#### Administrative Closeout

Administrative closeout is a mechanism for FEMA to unilaterally execute closeout of an award. FEMA will use available award information in lieu of final recipient reports, per 2 C.F.R. § 200.344(h)-(i). It is an activity of last resort, and if FEMA administratively closes an award, this may negatively impact a recipient's ability to obtain future funding.

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

Before entering into a federal award, the applicant must notify FEMA if it knows that the applicant or any of the principals (as defined at 2 C.F.R. § 180.995) for the federal award:

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

This requirement is fully described in 2 C.F.R. § 180.335.

Additionally, 2 C.F.R. § 180.350 requires recipients to provide immediate notice to FEMA at any time after entering a federal award if:

1. The recipient learns that either it failed to earlier disclose information as required by 2 C.F.R. § 180.335;
2. Due to changed circumstances, the applicant or any of the principals for the federal award now meet the criteria at 2 C.F.R. § 180.335 listed above.

**G. Reporting of Matters Related to Recipient Integrity and Performance**

Appendix XII to 2 C.F.R. Part 200 states the terms and conditions for recipient integrity and performance matters used for this funding opportunity.

If the total value of all active federal grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts for a recipient exceeds \$10,000,000 at any time during the period of performance:

1. The recipient must maintain the currency of information reported in SAM.gov about civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings described in paragraph 2 of Appendix XII;
2. The required reporting frequency is described in paragraph 4 of Appendix XII.

**H. Single Audit Report**

A recipient expending \$1,000,000 or more in federal awards (as defined by 2 C.F.R. § 200.1) during its fiscal year must undergo an audit. This may be either a single audit complying with 2 C.F.R. § 200.514 or a program-specific audit complying with 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.501 and 200.507. Audits must follow 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart F, 2 C.F.R. § 200.501, and the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards.

**I. Monitoring and Oversight**

Per 2 C.F.R. § 200.337, DHS and its authorized representatives have the right of access to any records of the recipient or subrecipient pertinent to a federal award to perform audits, site visits, and any other official use. The right also includes timely and reasonable access to the recipient's or subrecipient's personnel for the purpose of interview and discussion related to such documents or the federal award in general.

Pursuant to this right and per 2 C.F.R. § 200.329, DHS may conduct desk reviews and make site visits to review and evaluate project accomplishments and management control systems as well as provide any required technical assistance. Recipients and subrecipients must respond in a timely and accurate manner to DHS requests for information relating to a federal award.

FEMA staff will periodically monitor recipients to ensure that administrative processes, policies and procedures, budgets, and other related award criteria are meeting federal Government-wide and FEMA regulations. Aside from reviewing quarterly financial and programmatic reports, FEMA may also conduct enhanced monitoring through either a desk-based review, an onsite monitoring visit, or both. Enhanced monitoring will involve the review and analysis of the financial 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, or other support.

Financial and programmatic monitoring are complementary processes within FEMA's overarching monitoring strategy that function together to ensure effective grants management, accountability, and transparency; validate progress against grant and program goals; and safeguard federal funds against fraud, waste, and abuse. Financial monitoring primarily focuses

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on statutory and regulatory compliance with administrative grant requirements, while programmatic monitoring seeks to validate and assist in grant progress, targeting issues that may be hindering achievement of project goals and ensuring compliance with the purpose of the grant and grant program. Both monitoring processes are similar in that they feature initial reviews of all open awards, and additional, in-depth monitoring of grants requiring additional attention.

In terms of overall award management, recipient and subrecipient responsibilities include, but are not limited to: accounting of receipts and expenditures, cash management, maintaining adequate financial records, reporting and refunding expenditures disallowed by audits, monitoring if acting as a pass-through entity, or other assessments and reviews, and ensuring overall compliance with the terms and conditions of the award or subaward, as applicable, including the terms of 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

#### **J. Program Evaluation**

Federal agencies are required to structure NOFOs that incorporate program evaluation activities from the outset of their program design and implementation to meaningfully document and measure their progress towards meeting agency priority goal(s) and program outcomes. OMB Memorandum M-21-27, Evidence-Based Policymaking: Learning Agendas and Annual Evaluation Plans, implementing Title I of the *Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018*, Pub. L. No. 115-435 (2019) (Evidence Act), urges federal awarding agencies to use program evaluation as a critical tool to learn, improve delivery, and elevate program service and delivery across the program lifecycle. Evaluation means “an assessment using systematic data collection and analysis of one or more programs, policies, and organizations intended to assess their effectiveness and efficiency.” Evidence Act, § 101 (codified at 5 U.S.C. § 311).

As such, recipients and subrecipients are required to participate in a Program Office (PO) or a DHS Component-led evaluation, if selected. This may be carried out by a third-party on behalf of the PO or the DHS Component. Such an evaluation may involve information collections including but not limited to, records of the recipients; surveys, interviews, or discussions with individuals who benefit from the federal award, program operating personnel, and award recipients; and site visits or other observation of recipient activities, as specified in a DHS Component or PO-approved evaluation plan. More details about evaluation requirements may be provided in the federal award, if available at that time, or following the award as evaluation requirements are finalized. Evaluation costs incurred during the period of performance are allowable costs (either as direct or indirect) in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.413. Recipients and subrecipients are also encouraged, but not required, to participate in any additional evaluations after the period of performance ends, although any costs incurred to participate in such evaluations are not allowable and may not be charged to the federal award.

#### **K. Additional Performance Reporting Requirements**

Not Applicable.

### **10. Other Information**

#### **A. Period of Performance Extension**

Extensions to the period of performance are allowed for R&R Activity grants only.

Recipients should consult with their FEMA point of contact for requirements related to a performance period extension.

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Extension requests will be granted only due to compelling legal, policy, or operational challenges. Extension requests will only be considered for the following reasons:

1. Contractual commitments by the recipient or subrecipient with vendors that prevent completion of the project, including delivery of equipment or services, within the existing period of performance;
2. The project must undergo a complex environmental review that cannot be completed within the existing period of performance;
3. Projects are long-term by design, and therefore acceleration would compromise core programmatic goals; or
4. Where other special or extenuating circumstances exist.

Recipients should submit all proposed extension requests to FEMA for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the end of the period of performance to allow sufficient processing time. Extensions are typically granted for no more than a six-month period.

All extension requests must address the following:

1. The grant program, fiscal year, and award number;
2. The reason for delay – including details of the legal, policy, or operational challenges that prevent final outlay of awarded funds by the deadline;
3. Status of the activity or activities;
4. Approved period of performance termination date and requested extension;
5. Amount of funds drawn down to date;
6. Remaining available funds, both federal and non-federal, if applicable;
7. A budget outlining how remaining federal and non-federal funds will be expended;
8. A plan for completion, including milestones and timeframes for achieving each milestone and the individual responsible for completing the plan;
9. Certification that the activity or activities will be completed within the extended period of performance without any modification to the original statement of work, as described in the original statement of work and as approved by FEMA.

## **B. Other Information**

### **a. *Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) Compliance***

FEMA is required to consider effects of its actions on the environment and historic properties to ensure that activities, grants, and programs funded by FEMA, comply with federal EHP laws, Executive Orders, regulations, and policies.

Recipients and subrecipients proposing projects with the potential to impact the environment or cultural resources, such as the modification or renovation of existing buildings, structures, and facilities, new construction, or replacement of buildings, structures, and facilities, must participate in the FEMA EHP review process. This includes conducting early engagement to help identify EHP resources, such as threatened or endangered species, or historic properties; submitting a detailed project description with supporting documentation to determine whether the proposed project has the potential to impact EHP resources; and, identifying mitigation measures or alternative courses of action that may lessen impacts to those resources.

FEMA is sometimes required to consult with other regulatory agencies and the public to complete the review process. Federal law requires EHP review to be completed before federal funds are released to carry out proposed projects. FEMA may not be able to fund projects that are not in compliance with applicable EHP laws, Executive Orders, regulations, and policies. FEMA may recommend mitigation measures or alternative courses of action to lessen impacts to EHP resources and bring the project into EHP compliance.

EHP guidance is found at Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation. The site contains links to documents identifying agency EHP responsibilities and program requirements, such as implementation of the *National Environmental Policy Act* and other EHP laws, regulations, and Executive Orders. DHS and FEMA EHP policy is also found in the EHP Directive & Instruction.

All FEMA actions, including grants, must comply with National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) criteria or any more restrictive federal, state, or local floodplain management standards or building code (44 C.F.R. § 9.11(d)(6)). For actions located within or that may affect a floodplain or wetland, the following alternatives must be considered: a) no action; b) alternative locations; and c) alternative actions, including alternative actions that use natural features or nature-based solutions. Where possible, natural features and nature-based solutions shall be used. If not practicable as an alternative on their own, natural features and nature-based solutions may be incorporated into actions as minimization measures.

The GPD EHP screening form is located at [https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema\\_ehp-screening\\_form\\_ff-207-fy-21-100\\_5-26-2021.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_ehp-screening_form_ff-207-fy-21-100_5-26-2021.pdf). SAFER Program applications that involve the installation of supplies/equipment not specifically excluded from a FEMA EHP review, per the GPD Programmatic Environmental Assessment, such as ground-disturbing activities, or modification/renovation of existing buildings or structures, will require an EHP review. Some equipment will require an EHP review as well. Such activities include, but are not limited to:

- Building renovations such as removal of a wall or installation of electrical or waterlines;
- Training/exercises in natural settings such as rope or swift water;
- Installing LED signs; and
- Any scope of work that involves ground disturbances.

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

- Planning and development of policies or processes;
- Management, administrative, or personnel actions;
- Classroom-based training;
- Acquisition of mobile and portable equipment (not involving installation) on or in a building that does not require a storage area to be constructed; and
- Purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

#### **b. Procurement Integrity**

When purchasing under a FEMA award, recipients and subrecipients must comply with the federal procurement standards in 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.317 – 200.327. To assist with determining whether an action is a procurement or instead a subaward, please consult 2 C.F.R. § 200.331.

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For detailed guidance on the federal procurement standards, recipients and subrecipients should refer to various materials issued by FEMA's Procurement Disaster Assistance Team (PDAT). These resources, including an upcoming trainings schedule can be found on the PDAT Website: <https://www.fema.gov/grants/procurement>.

Under 2 C.F.R. § 200.317, when procuring property and services under a federal award, states (including territories) and Indian tribes, must follow the same policies and procedures they use for procurements from their non-federal funds; additionally, states and Indian tribes must now follow 2 C.F.R. § 200.321 regarding socioeconomic steps, 200.322 regarding domestic preferences for Procurements and 2 C.F.R. § 200.327 regarding required contract provisions. States, but not Indian tribes, must also follow 200.323 regarding procurement of recovered materials.

Local government and nonprofit recipients or subrecipients must have and use their own documented procurement procedures that reflect applicable state, local, Tribal Nation, and territorial (SLTT) laws and regulations, provided that the procurements conform to applicable federal law and the standards identified in 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

#### 1. Important Changes to Procurement Standards in 2 C.F.R. Part 200

On April 22, 2024, OMB updated various parts of Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations, among them the procurement standards. These revisions apply to all FEMA awards with a federal award date or disaster declaration date on or after October 1, 2024, unless specified otherwise. The changes include updates to the federal procurement standards, which govern how FEMA award recipients and subrecipients must purchase under a FEMA award.

More information on OMB's revisions to the federal procurement standards can be found in Purchasing Under a FEMA Award: 2024 OMB Revisions Fact Sheet.

#### 2. Competition and Conflicts of Interest

2 C.F.R. § 200.319(b), applicable to local government and nonprofit recipients or subrecipients, requires that contractors that develop or draft specifications, requirements statements of work, or invitations for bids or requests for proposals must be excluded from competing for such procurements. FEMA considers these actions to be an organizational conflict of interest and interprets this restriction as applying to contractors that help a recipient or subrecipient 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 those former employees worked on such activities while they were employees of the recipient or subrecipient.

Under this prohibition, unless the recipient or subrecipient solicits for and awards a contract covering both development and execution of specifications (or similar elements as described above), and this contract was procured in compliance with 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.317 – 200.327, federal funds cannot be used to pay a contractor to carry out the work if that contractor also worked on the development of those 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.

In addition to organizational conflicts of interest, situations considered to be restrictive of competition include, but are not limited to:

- Placing unreasonable requirements on firms 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;
- Specifying only a “brand name” product instead of allowing “an equal” product to be offered and describing the performance or other relevant requirements of the procurement; and
- Any arbitrary action in the procurement process.

Under 2 C.F.R. § 200.318(c)(1), local government and nonprofit recipients or subrecipients 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 that 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 recipient or subrecipient may neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors or parties to subcontracts. However, the recipient or subrecipient may set standards for situations in which the financial interest is not substantial, or the gift is an unsolicited item of nominal value. The recipient’s or subrecipient’s standards of conduct must provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations of such standards by officers, employees, or agents.

Under 2 C.F.R. 200.318(c)(2), if the local government and nonprofit recipient or subrecipient has a parent, affiliate, or subsidiary organization that is not a SLTT government, the recipient or subrecipient must also maintain written standards of conduct covering organizational conflicts of interest. Organizational conflict of interest means that because of a relationship with a parent company, affiliate, or subsidiary organization, the recipient or subrecipient is unable or appears to be unable to be impartial in conducting a procurement action involving a related organization. The recipient or subrecipient must disclose in writing any potential conflicts of interest to FEMA or the pass-through entity in accordance with applicable FEMA policy.

### 3. Supply Schedules and Purchasing Programs

Generally, a recipient or subrecipient may seek to procure goods or services from a federal supply schedule, state supply schedule, or group purchasing agreement.

Information about GSA programs for states, Indian tribes, and local governments, and their instrumentalities, can be found at [Help for state, local, and tribal governments to make MAS buys | GSA](#) and <https://www.gsa.gov/buying-selling/purchasing-programs/gsa-schedules/schedule-buyers/state-and-local-governments>.

If a non-federal entity other than a state seeks to use a state supply schedule, cooperative purchasing program, or other similar type of arrangement, FEMA recommends the recipient discuss the procurement plans with its FEMA Preparedness Officer or Fire Program Specialist.

#### 4. Procurement Documentation

Per 2 C.F.R. § 200.318(i), local government and nonprofit recipients or subrecipients are required to maintain and retain records sufficient to detail the history of procurement covering at least the rationale for the procurement method, selection of contract type, contractor selection or rejection, and the basis for the contract price. States and Indian tribes are reminded that in order for any cost to be allowable, it must be adequately documented per 2 C.F.R. § 200.403(g).

Examples of the types of documents that would cover this information include but are not limited to:

- Solicitation documentation, such as requests for quotes, invitations for bids, or requests for proposals;
- Responses to solicitations, such as quotes, bids, or proposals;
- Pre-solicitation independent cost estimates and post-solicitation cost/price analyses on file for review by federal personnel, if applicable;
- Contract documents and amendments, including required contract provisions; and
- Other documents required by federal regulations applicable at the time a grant is awarded to a recipient.
- Additional information on required procurement records can be found on pages 24-26 of the PDAT Field Manual.

#### c. *Financial Assistance Programs for Infrastructure*

##### 1. Build America, Buy America Act

Recipients and subrecipients must comply with FEMA's implementation requirements of the *Build America, Buy America Act (BABAA)*, which was enacted as part of the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act §§ 70901-70927*, Pub. L. No. 117-58 (2021); and *Executive Order 14005, Ensuring the Future is Made in All of America by All of America's Workers*. See also 2 C.F.R. Part 184, Buy America Preferences for Infrastructure Projects.

None of the funds provided under this program may be used for a project for infrastructure unless the iron and steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in that infrastructure are produced in the United States.

The Buy America preference only applies to articles, materials, and supplies that are consumed in, incorporated into, or affixed to an infrastructure project. As such, it does not apply to tools, equipment, and supplies, such as temporary scaffolding, brought to the construction site and removed at or before the completion of the infrastructure project. Nor does a Buy America preference apply to equipment and furnishings, such as movable chairs, desks, and portable computer equipment, that are used at or within the finished infrastructure project but are not an integral part of the structure or permanently affixed to the infrastructure project.



To see whether a particular FEMA federal financial assistance program is considered an infrastructure program and thus required to implement FEMA's Build America, Buy America requirements, please see [Programs and Definitions: \*Build America, Buy America Act\* | FEMA.gov](#).

## 2. Waivers

When necessary, recipients (and subrecipients through their pass-through entity) may apply for, and FEMA may grant, a waiver from these requirements.

A waiver of the domestic content procurement preference may be granted by the agency awarding official if FEMA determines that:

- Applying the domestic content procurement preference would be inconsistent with the public interest, or
- The types of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials are not produced in the United States in sufficient and reasonably available quantities or of a satisfactory quality, or
- The inclusion of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials produced in the United States will increase the cost of the overall project by more than 25%.

The process for requesting a waiver from the Buy America preference requirements can be found on FEMA's website at: ["Buy America" Preference in FEMA Financial Assistance Programs for Infrastructure | FEMA.gov](#).

## 3. Definitions

For definitions of the key terms of the Build America, Buy America Act, please visit [Programs and Definitions: \*Build America, Buy America Act\* | FEMA.gov](#).

### **d. *Mandatory Disclosures***

The non-federal entity or applicant for a federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award. ([2 C.F.R. § 200.113](#))

### **e. *Termination Provisions***

FEMA may terminate a federal award in whole or in part for one of the following reasons. FEMA and the recipient must still comply with closeout requirements at [2 C.F.R. §§ 200.344-200.345](#) even if an award is terminated in whole or in part. To the extent that subawards are permitted under this NOFO, pass-through entities should refer to 2 C.F.R. § 200.340 for additional information on termination regarding subawards. Either party will provide written notice of intent to terminate to the other party no less than 30 days prior to the effective date of the termination.

## 1. Noncompliance

If a recipient fails to comply with the terms and conditions of a federal award, FEMA may terminate the award in whole or in part. Any action to terminate based on noncompliance will follow the requirements of 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.341-200.342.

## 2. With the Consent of the Recipient

FEMA may also terminate an award in whole or in part with the consent of the recipient, in which case the parties must agree upon the termination conditions, including the effective date, and in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated.

## 3. Notification by the Recipient

The recipient may terminate the award, in whole or in part, by sending written notification to FEMA setting forth the reasons for such termination, the effective date, and in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated. In the case of partial termination, FEMA may determine that a partially terminated award will not accomplish the purpose of the federal award, so FEMA may terminate the award in its entirety. If that occurs, FEMA will follow the requirements of 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.341-200.342 in deciding to fully terminate the award.

## 4. Change in Program Goals or Agency Priorities

Pursuant to the terms and conditions of the award and to the extent authorized by law, FEMA may terminate the award if it no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities.

### ***f. Disability Integration***

Pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, recipients of FEMA financial assistance must ensure that their programs and activities do not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities.

### ***g. Record Retention***

#### 1. Record Retention Period

Financial records, supporting documents, statistical records, and all other non-federal entity records pertinent to a federal award generally must be maintained for at least three years from the date the final FFR is submitted. *See* 2 C.F.R. § 200.334. Further, if the recipient does not submit a final FFR and the award is administratively closed, FEMA uses the date of administrative closeout as the start of the general record retention period.

The record retention period **may be longer than three years or have a different start date** in certain cases.

#### 2. Types of Records to Retain

FEMA requires that recipients and subrecipients maintain the following documentation for federally funded purchases:

- Specifications
- Solicitations
- Competitive quotes or proposals

- Basis for selection decisions
- Purchase orders
- Contracts
- Invoices
- Canceled checks

#### ***h. Actions to Address Noncompliance***

Non-federal entities receiving financial assistance funding from FEMA are required to comply with requirements in the terms and conditions of their awards or subawards, including the terms set forth in applicable federal statutes, regulations, NOFOs, and policies. Throughout the award lifecycle or even after an award has been closed, FEMA or the pass-through entity may discover potential or actual noncompliance on the part of a recipient or subrecipient.

In the case of any potential or actual noncompliance, FEMA may place special conditions on an award per 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.208 and 200.339. FEMA may place a hold on funds until the matter is corrected, or additional information is provided per 2 C.F.R. § 200.339, or it may do both. Similar remedies for noncompliance with certain federal civil rights laws are authorized pursuant to 44 C.F.R. Parts 7 and 19 or other applicable regulations.

If the noncompliance is not able to be corrected by imposing additional conditions or the recipient or subrecipient refuses to correct the matter, FEMA may take other remedies allowed under 2 C.F.R. § 200.339.

#### ***i. Audits***

FEMA grant recipients are subject to audit oversight from multiple entities including the DHS OIG, the GAO, the pass-through entity, or independent auditing firms for single audits, and may cover activities and costs incurred under the award. Auditing agencies such as the DHS OIG, the GAO, and the pass-through entity (if applicable), and FEMA in its oversight capacity, must have access to records pertaining to the FEMA award.

#### ***j. Hazard-Resistant Building Codes***

Hazard-resistant building codes are a foundational element of a more resilient nation, safeguarding communities, and lives against natural disasters, with an estimated \$11:1 return on investment. The adoption, enforcement and application of modern building codes mitigates community vulnerabilities, reduces disaster recovery costs, and strengthens nationwide capability. FEMA is working to promote and support building codes in all areas of its work. In the interest of building a stronger, more resilient nation, FEMA encourages all grant recipients and subrecipients to meet current published editions of relevant consensus-based building codes, specifications, and standards, and to exceed them where feasible.

### **11. Appendix A – FY 2024 SAFER Program Updates**

Appendix A contains a brief list of changes between FY 2023 and FY 2024 to the SAFER Program. The FY 2024 SAFER Program NOFO contains some changes to definitions, descriptions, and priority categories. Changes include:

- Under Eligibility – Allowable Project Types
  - The Hiring Activity offers grants to support applications to hire new, additional

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firefighters

- Under Eligibility – Unallowable Project Types
  - FEMA will not fund any projects, activities, or line items that are covered under a department's normal operating budget
- Under Eligibility – Cost Sharing Requirement
  - Hiring Activity grant recipients are required to contribute non-federal funds as a cost share
- Under Eligibility – Cost Share Description, Type and Restrictions
  - In the first and second years of the grant, the amount of federal funding may not exceed 75 percent of the usual annual cost of a first-year firefighter and in the third year of the grant, the amount of federal funding may not exceed 35 percent of the usual annual cost of a first-year firefighter
- Under Eligibility – Required information for verifying Cost Share
  - Applicants are required to certify that their annual budget for fire-related programs and emergency response has not been reduced below 80 percent of the applicant's average funding level in the three years prior to the application date
- Under Register in FEMA GO:
  - FEMA GO will no longer support Internet Explorer.
- Under Additional Information
  - Inclusion of Hazard-Resistant Building Codes.
- Under R&R Activity – Eligible Costs
  - New Member Costs – eligible physical exam costs for new members include: initial medical exams; annual physicals; job-related immunizations; behavioral health; and Cancer Screening Programs to meet NFPA 1582.
  - Wellness and Fitness for Existing Members – eligible subcategories of physical exams for existing members
  - Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to provide behavioral health training for coping with fire service duties.
- Under Other Information
  - Extensions to the period of performance are allowed for R&R Activity grants only
- 

## **12. Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities**

Appendix B contains details on SAFER Program information and priorities. Reviewing this information may help applicants make their application(s) more competitive.

### **A. Ineligible Applications and Organizations**

Volunteer and combination fire departments may apply for funding under both the Hiring Activity and the R&R Activity; 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.

If two or more of the following entities have different funding streams, personnel rosters, and EINs but share the same facilities, FEMA considers them as being separate organizations for the purposes of FY 2024 SAFER Program eligibility:

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- Fire departments; and
- National, state, local, federally recognized Tribal Nation, and nonprofit interest organizations.

However, if two or more organizations share facilities and each applies for the same activity (e.g., Hiring of Firefighters), FEMA reserves the right to review and compare all those program area applications to determine eligibility and review for potential overlap to avoid duplication of benefits.

Additionally, federal employees are prohibited from serving in any capacity (paid or unpaid) on the development of any application submitted under this program.

Examples of ineligible applications and organizations include:

- For-profit organizations, federal agencies, and individuals;
- Fire departments that are a Federal Government entity, or contracted by the federal government, and are solely responsible under a formally recognized agreement for suppression of fires on federal installations or land;
- Fire departments that are not independent entities but are part of, controlled by, or under the day-to-day operational command and control of a larger department, agency or AHJ;
  - However, if a fire department is the same legal entity as a municipality or other governmental organization, and otherwise meets the eligibility criteria, that municipality or other governmental organization may apply on behalf of that fire department if the application clearly states that the fire department is considered part of the same legal entity.
- State or local agencies, or subsets of any governmental entities, or any authorities that do not meet the requirements as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 2229a(a)(1)(A) and (a)(2);
- Ambulance services, emergency medical service organizations, rescue squads, auxiliaries, dive teams, and urban search and rescue teams; and,
- 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.
- Eligible applicants may submit only one application for each eligible activity (Hiring Activity and R&R Activity); all submissions of duplicate applications may be disqualified.
- If an applicant submits two or more applications for the same activity, both applications may be disqualified.
  - This is different from when where an entity is applying on behalf of other organizations that are agencies or instrumentalities of the applicant (e.g., multiple fire departments under the same county, city, borough, parish, or other municipality). In that situation, the applicant may request similar or the same costs if the application clearly states which costs (including quantities) are for which agency/instrumentality. This is permissible even if that entity submits multiple applications across regional versus direct applications.

## B. Supporting Definitions for this NOFO

**Attrition** is 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)** is that person or office charged with enforcing the NFPA codes (Per NFPA101-2015 Edition: Life Safety Code).

**Automatic Aid** is a plan developed between two or more fire departments for immediate joint response on first alarms (Per NFPA 1710 – 2020 edition and NFPA 1720 – 2020).

**Benefits**, as defined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.431, means the regular compensation paid to employees during periods of authorized absences from the job, e.g., vacation leave, sick leave, military leave. Benefits may include employer contributions or expenses for social security, employee insurance, workmen's compensation, and pension plan costs, and the like, whether treated as indirect costs or as direct costs, and are also eligible and shall be distributed to 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.

**Career Fire Department**, as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 2229, means a fire department that has an all-paid force of firefighting personnel other than paid-on-call firefighters.

**Combination Fire Department**, as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 2229, means a fire department that has paid firefighting personnel and volunteer firefighting personnel. FEMA considers a fire department with firefighting personnel paid a stipend, regardless of the amount, on a per event basis, or paid on-call, to be a combination fire department. This includes non-fire emergency medical service personnel of the department.

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

**Fire Department** is an agency or organization that has a formally recognized arrangement with a state, territory, local government, or Tribal Nation 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** is 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 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.

**Initial Full Alarm Assignment** is the personnel, equipment, and resources ordinarily dispatched upon notification of a structural fire.

**Majority Career** departments are considered majority career if more than 50% of the active firefighting membership is salaried staff.

**Majority Volunteer** departments are considered majority volunteer if more than 50% of the active firefighting membership is NOT compensated for service other than a nominal stipend and insurance.

**Mutual Aid** is a written intergovernmental agreement between agencies or jurisdictions stating that they will assist one another on request by furnishing personnel, equipment, or expertise in a specified manner (NFPA 1710 Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments, 2020 edition; and NFPA 1720 Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments, 2020 Edition).

**National, State, Local, or Federally Recognized Tribal Organizations that Represent the Interests of Volunteer Firefighters** are organizations that support or represent the interests of firefighters in front of legislative bodies at the local, state, tribal, or federal level. Such organizations include, but are not limited to, state or local firefighter or fire chiefs' associations, and 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** is a volunteer that joins the department with the intent to serve as a firefighter, after the recipient is notified of the grant award (the date of the award notification email in the FEMA GO mail center).

**Nominal Stipend** is a stipend that does not exceed 20% 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% 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% 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 U.S. 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% 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 *Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)* minimum wage and overtime provisions.

**Operational Budget** is the funding supporting fire-related programs or emergency response activities (e.g., salaries, maintenance, equipment, apparatus).

**Operational Position** is a position with a primary assignment (more than 50% 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** is defined as 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 composed 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 composed 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** is 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 position that must be accounted for in the staffing information provided in the application.

**Primary First Due** is a geographic area surrounding a fire station in which a company from that station is projected to be first to arrive on the scene of an incident.

**Salary** is 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. The salary structure should be documented in writing by the employer. Note: 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 FLSA are eligible salary costs under the Hiring Activity.

**State** is defined as 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** is 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** is to replace or take place of funds that would otherwise be available from state or local sources, or the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

**Tuition Assistance** is only eligible for reimbursement of undergraduate and graduate studies, vocational/technical training, certification, and job training programs for the member of the department and not a spouse nor a dependent.

**Volunteer Fire Department**, as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 2229, means a fire department that has an all-volunteer force of firefighting personnel.

### C. Application Tips



The following information may be useful when preparing a competitive application:

- 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>.
- For the most competitive applications, select those local need(s) that most closely align with one or more SAFER Program funding priorities.
- Applications differ based on the applicant type. For example, the Hiring Activity application will be different from the fire department application for the R&R Activity; the R&R application will be different for a fire department than an interest organization. Be sure to select the appropriate applicant type when applying.
- When filling out the online application, applicants are required to provide basic demographic information regarding their organization and the community served and must provide detailed information regarding the items or activities for which they are seeking funding.
- If awarded, the application request(s) may be modified 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 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.

#### **D. Funding Limitation**

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

- A total of 10% of the funding appropriated for FY 2024 SAFER Program awards is set aside for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters (15 U.S.C. § 2229a(a)(2)).
  - No more than 33% 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).
- A total of 10% of funding appropriated for FY 2024 SAFER Program 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 one that more than half its personnel 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), to meet this 10% statutory set aside, the SAFER Program Office may be required to fund an application that 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% of the funds available for the hiring of firefighters to volunteer and majority volunteer fire departments, it must transfer the remaining

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funds to provide grants for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters (15 U.S.C. § 2229a(a)(1)(H)).

E. Funding Priorities

a. *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 Program 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, Section 5.2.3.1 – Engine Companies, 3.3.53 Rapid Intervention Crew). This standard applies primarily to 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, Section 4.6 Initial Firefighting Operations). 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.

F. Hiring Activity Overview

Grants awarded under the Hiring Activity enable volunteer, combination, and career fire departments to improve or restore staffing levels to attain a more effective level of response and a safer incident scene. FEMA awards Hiring Activity grants directly to volunteer, combination, and career fire departments to help fire departments increase their cadre of frontline firefighters by providing financial assistance to hire new, additional firefighters (**New Hire**).

**All the following are considerations in pre-scoring and peer review determinations: High (H), Medium (M), Low (L)**

**a. Compliance with NFPA Standards**

The tables below identify the priority levels for current and new compliance with the NFPA 1710/1720 standards discussed in Appendix B Section E. Funding Priorities of this NOFO.

Current (Pre-Award) 1710/1720 Compliance Priorities	
H Never or 0%	M Half of the time or 40-59%
H Rarely or 1-19%	L Very often or 60-79%
M Sometimes or 20-39%	L Most of the time or 80-100%

New (Post-Award) 1710/1720 Compliance Priorities	
H Always or 91-100%	M Half of the time or 40-59%
H Most of the time or 80-90%	L Sometimes or 20-39%
M Very often or 60-79%	L Rarely or 0-19%

**b. 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 that protect a larger jurisdiction will receive higher consideration than those departments responding to fewer incidents and protecting smaller jurisdictions.

**c. Firefighter Health Measures**

The health and well-being of firefighters is of paramount importance. Therefore, applicants who indicate newly hired 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 1580 Chapter 13, Occupational Medical: Evaluations (NFPA 1582).

Applicants should note that FEMA is working with the NFPA Technical Committee on Fire Service Occupational Safety and Health to evaluate whether the NFPA 1582 standard complies with applicable federal civil rights laws. No decisions have been made and FEMA will issue additional guidance when more information becomes available.

Entry-Level Medical Exams	
H NFPA 1582-compliant physicals	M Non-NFPA 1582-compliant physicals

Annual Medical Exams	
H NFPA 1582-compliant physicals	M Non-NFPA 1582-compliant physicals

**d. 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 AHJ.

**G. R&R Activity – Fire Departments Overview**

Grants awarded under this R&R Activity are to fire departments to assist 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.

All the following are considerations in pre-scoring and peer review determinations. Program priorities are listed as: **High (H), Medium (M), Low (L)**

**a. Compliance with NFPA 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 standard 1710 or 1720 as discussed in Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities, Funding Priorities of this NOFO.

**b. 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 Volunteer Firefighters	
H 91-100%	M 41-50%
H 81-91%	M 31-40%
H 71-80%	L 21-30%
H 61-70%	L 11-20%
M 51-60%	L 1-10%

**c. Call Volume**

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

**d. 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 1580, Chapter 13, Occupational Medical: Evaluations (NFPA 1582). 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	
H NFPA 1582-compliant physicals	M Non-NFPA 1582-compliant physicals

Annual Medical Exams	
H NFPA 1582-compliant physicals	M Non-NFPA 1582-compliant physicals

**e. Firefighter Training and Certification Requirements**

Firefighter	
H Both Firefighter (FF) II/Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)	M FF I
H FF II	L First Responder
M Both FF I/EMT	

**f. R&R Coordinator/Program Manager/Grant Administrator**

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

**g. Regional Requests**

Applications that will have a direct regional or local benefit beyond the immediate boundaries of the applicant’s first-due area will receive higher consideration.

A regional request is an opportunity for an eligible R&R Activity organization to act as a host and apply for funding on behalf of itself and any number of other participating R&R Activity eligible organizations. Regional activities should achieve cost effectiveness, support regional efficiency and resilience, and have a direct regional or local benefit to more than one local jurisdiction (county, parish, town, township, city, or village). Direct regional or local benefit means that other eligible organizations will receive a portion of the grant-awarded funds, will receive items purchased with the grant funds, or share an item purchased with grant funds.

The community identification characteristic, the organizational status of the applicant, and the permanent resident population should be entered for the host entity, regardless of the composition of the participating partners.

Regional populations served are the aggregate of the geographically fixed areas of the host and participating partner organizations.

Neither the regional host nor any participating partner is prevented from also applying on behalf of their own organization for any SAFER Program Activity. However, it cannot be for the same item.

In completing the application, the host applicant must include a list of all participating organizations, including a point of contact and phone number for each organization that will directly benefit from the regional project if they receive the grant. The organizations that will

benefit from the R&R Activity may also apply for funding under the SAFER Program if the organizations do not apply for a project or activity that could conflict with or duplicate the host applicant's project. Applicants must also certify that they will ensure the organizations participating in this application have not received grants for similar items/activities.

To apply for a regional project, the host organization must agree, if awarded, to be responsible for all aspects of the grant. This includes, but is not limited to, cost share, accountability for the assets, and all reporting requirements in the regional application.

All participants of a regional application must be compliant with SAFER Program requirements, including being current with past grants, closeouts, and other reporting requirements. Upon notification by the SAFER Program Office, the host agency shall not distribute grant-funded assets or provide grant-funded contractual services to non-compliant partner organizations. The host and the delinquent partners will be notified by the SAFER Program Office of their specific deficiency.

Regional host applicants and participating partner agencies must execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), or equivalent document signed by the host and all participating organizations participating in the award. The MOU must specify the individual and mutual responsibilities of the host and participating partners, the host's and participants' level of involvement in the project(s), the participating partners' EINs, and the proposed distribution of all grant-funded assets or contracted services. Any entity named in the application as benefiting from the award must be an eligible SAFER Program organization and must be a party to the MOU or equivalent document. **Copies of the MOU or equivalent document should be submitted as an attachment in the application.**

#### **H. R&R Activity – National, State, Local, Territorial, or Federally Recognized Tribal Nation**

##### **Volunteer Firefighter Interest Organizations (Interest Organizations) Overview**

Grants awarded under this R&R Activity are to applicants who identify as an Interest Organization. These 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 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% of the total application score.

All the following are considerations in pre-scoring and peer review determinations. Program priorities are listed as: **High (H), Medium (M), Low (L)**

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**a. Compliance with NFPA Standards**

The highest priority 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 as discussed in Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities, Funding Priorities of this NOFO. Interest Organizations that currently have the lowest recruitment and retention rates among the entire region and all fire departments benefitting from the grant funds receive higher consideration for funding.

**b. R&R Coordinator/Program Manager/Grant Administrator**

R&R Coordinator	
H	Applicants who currently have a coordinator, program manager, or grant administrator in place
M	Applicants who request grant funding for a coordinator, program manager, or grant administrator’s position
L	Applicants who do not have, nor are not requesting, a coordinator, program manager, or grant administrator

**c. Needs Assessment**

Needs Assessment	
H	Applicants with projects based on a needs assessment
L	Applicants with projects that are not based on a needs assessment

**d. Fire Service Partnerships**

Fire Service Partnerships	
H	Applicants who have, or will establish, fire service partnerships as part of this project
L	Applicants who will not have, nor establish, fire service partnerships as part of this project

**I. Eligible and Ineligible Costs and Requirements**

Regardless of the eligibility of any costs requested or the results of the review of the application conducted in accordance with Section 7 Application Review Information of this NOFO, FEMA reserves the right to approve the activities requested in an application in whole or in part.

Hiring Activity – Eligible Costs and Requirements
<b>Eligible Costs:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Salary and associated benefits (actual payroll expenses) for the positions funded under the SAFER Program grant are eligible. Costs are reimbursable if they are included as part of the standard package, available to all operational firefighter positions, contractually obligated, and reimbursed via payroll. Refer also to the definitions in <u>Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities, Supporting Definitions</u> for this NOFO or this NOFO.</li></ul>

Hiring Activity – Eligible Costs and Requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Compensation for a firefighter’s normal, contracted work schedule is reimbursable, but overtime costs are not eligible for reimbursement by the SAFER Program 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, to comply with FLSA, are eligible. For more information on FLSA, please visit the <a href="#">U.S. Department of Labor</a>.</li><li>• Salaries and benefits of firefighters hired with SAFER Program funding while they are engaged in initial recruit training are eligible.</li></ul> <p><b>Eligibility Requirements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Only firefighters hired (<b>New Hire category</b>) after the SAFER Program grant offer of award are eligible for grant funding.</li><li>• 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.</li><li>• SAFER Program grant funds will only pay for operational positions, whose primary assignment (more than half the time) is on a fire suppression vehicle, regardless of collateral duties.</li><li>• 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.</li><li>• Funds received under the SAFER Program must not be used to replace funds that would be available from state or local sources, or from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, but shall be used to increase the amount of funding that would, in the absence of Federal funds received, be made available from state or local sources, or funds supplied by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.</li></ul>

Hiring Activity - Ineligible Costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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.</li><li>• Job-sharing positions (e.g., utilizing more than one person to fill a full-time SAFER Program-funded position) are ineligible.</li><li>• The SAFER Program 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 Program-funded position).</li><li>• 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.</li><li>• Costs to train and equip firefighters (e.g., PPE/Turnout Gear) are ineligible (this does not include the salaries and benefits of firefighters hired under the SAFER Program while they are engaged in training).</li><li>• Costs for additional benefits such as uniform allowances, education stipends, meal allowance, etc., that are not contractually obligated, included as part of the standard benefits package for all employees, and reimbursed via payroll are ineligible.</li></ul>



- Costs of annual physicals/medical exams are ineligible.
- Overtime costs (including overtime for holdovers, extra shifts, to attend training, etc.) are ineligible (except as noted in “eligible costs” above).
- M&A costs.
- Indirect costs.

<b>R&amp;R Activity – Eligibility Requirements</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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.</li><li>• 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.</li><li>• SAFER Program grant funds may only be used for volunteer firefighters who are involved with, or trained in, the operations of firefighting and emergency response.</li><li>• FEMA recommends that departments consult their 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]/Retirement Program).</li><li>• All grant-related purchases and activities must be incurred, received, and completed within the period of performance. The period of coverage 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 prorated costs to be charged to the grant for training courses that begin during the period of performance but end after the period of performance ends.</li><li>• All funded activities under the R&amp;R Activity 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 before or after being awarded.</li><li>• Funds received under the SAFER Program must not be used to replace funds that would be available from state or local sources, or from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, but shall be used to increase the amount of funding that would, in the absence of Federal funds received, be made available from state or local sources, or funds supplied by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.</li></ul>

### R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: High Priority

- Costs to support a staffing needs assessment identifying the operational staff and support 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 R&R 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); and,
  - 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% of usage must be dedicated to R&R activities. Allowable costs may be limited to reasonable amounts as determined by FEMA. Additional restrictions apply (for details see Section 10.B.a. Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) Compliance of this NOFO).
  - **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 may include:
  - Entry-level physical exam for each new recruit;
  - Annual physicals for newly recruited members<sup>4</sup>; and
  - Station duty uniforms.
- Wellness and Fitness for Existing Members. Wellness and Fitness costs of an annual exam may include:
  - Physical exams;
  - Job-related immunization;
  - Periodic Physical Exam/Health Screening;
  - Behavioral health; and
  - Cancer Screening Program to meet NFPA 1582.
    - All grant-funded physicals (except those for explorers/cadets) must meet NFPA 1582 standards (Chapter 9, Occupational Medical Evaluation).
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to provide behavioral health training for coping with fire service duties.
- New recruit basic training that is not covered under a department's normal operating budget, and as required by the AHJ to meet minimum firefighter certification (e.g., cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), First Responder, EMT, FF1, FF2).

<sup>4</sup> 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>.

**R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: High Priority**

- Reimbursement to members for lost wages, mileage and transportation costs, lodging costs, and per diem while attending required basic training is 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.
- Leadership or 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 and transportation costs, lodging costs and per diem 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 (CEU) 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 and transportation costs, lodging costs, and 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 and specific to an accredited university or trade school program.
  - Courses are not limited to firefighter training or education.
  - Only tuition payments for classes offered and taken during the period of performance are allowable.
  - Computers for individual students are not eligible for funding.
  - Payments for student loans are not eligible for funding.
  - Recipients must provide internal policies that explain how funding is administered.
  - Allowable costs may be limited to reasonable amounts, as determined by FEMA.
- PPE/Turnout Gear.
  - PPE may only be funded for new firefighters that join the department 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 Program funding must be utilized by adequately trained staff.
  - Funds are available to acquire Occupational Safety and Health Administration-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/freeaccess>.
  - Only actual costs for PPE are allowed.

R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: High Priority	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Allowable costs may be limited to reasonable amounts, as determined by FEMA.</li><li>▪ To receive payment, recipients must provide the following documentation to support the purchase of PPE:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Invoices/proof of payment (e.g., canceled checks, bank statements, electronic funds transfers) for PPE.</li><li>▪ Proof that the firefighter(s) have passed an NFPA 1582-compliant physical and are certified as “fit for duty.”</li></ul></li><li>▪ Eligible PPE Expenditures:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Only one set of PPE for structural and wildland firefighting per each new recruit.</li><li>▪ The SAFER Program considers a complete set of structural PPE to be comprised of one self-contained breathing apparatus (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, the SAFER Program will consider all statutorily required items to be part of a complete PPE set.</li><li>▪ The SAFER Program 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.</li></ul></li><li>• Traditional therapies and preventative care facilitated by a licensed mental health or physical healthcare provider.</li><li>• LOSAP or Retirement Program:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ New LOSAP or Retirement Programs (meaning the department has never had a LOSAP or Retirement Program).</li><li>▪ Increasing existing LOSAP or Retirement Program coverage to include newly recruited members (FEMA will only fund the increase portion of the program).</li></ul><p><b>Note:</b> FEMA will not fund LOSAP or Retirement Programs that were previously funded by a SAFER Program grant.</p></li></ul>	

R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: Medium Priority	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nominal stipends, as defined under <u>Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities, Supporting Definitions for this NOFO</u> in this NOFO 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, or responding to incidents.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ 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 SOPs.</li><li>○ Award recipients must maintain records of all food vouchers including firefighter name, amount, date received, and signature of the receiving firefighter.</li><li>○ Gift cards may not be used for nominal stipends. For information on gift cards, see Low Priority – Awards/Incentives below.</li><li>○ Only actual costs for stipends are allowed.</li></ul></li></ul>	

**R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: Medium Priority**

- Allowable costs may be limited to reasonable amounts as determined by FEMA.
- Costs to support explorer/cadet, and mentoring programs, such as:
  - Only one set of station duty uniforms (the SAFER Program considers one set of station duty uniform as one pair of pants, one shirt, one hat, and one pair of boots) for each newly recruited cadet/explorer per the department's documented uniform policy.
  - Training (Non-Immediate Danger to Life and Health [IDLH]).
  - One set of structural or wildland PPE as defined above for each new cadet/explorer that joins the department after the date of grant award, 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 each newly recruited explorer/cadet.
- Insurance packages (e.g., AD&D, workers compensation, disability, health, dental, life).
- Exercise equipment is limited to no more than \$10,000 total per grant award.
- Wellness programs (e.g., group fitness led by health instructors that come to the department).

**R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: Low Priority**

- New Member Costs. Only one set of station duty uniforms (the SAFER Program considers one set of station duty uniforms as one pair of pants, one shirt, one hat, and one pair of boots) for new firefighters that join the department after the date of grant award, per the department's documented uniform policy.
  - **Note:** Class A or B uniforms (e.g., Dress Uniforms) and badges are not allowable costs under the SAFER Program.
- American National Standards Institute-approved retro-reflective highway apparel.
- PPE gear bags.
- 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 AHJ and must closely correlate to the applicant's recruitment and retention goals.
  - Reimbursement to members for lost wages, mileage and transportation costs, lodging costs, and per diem while attending advanced training are also eligible.
  - **Note:** Costs for mileage and transportation costs, lodging costs, 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.
- Two computers (including monitor, keyboard, mouse) and printer for grant-appointed R&R Coordinator, Program Manager, and/or Grant Administrator.
- Awards or Incentive program for participation in operational (firefighting) activities, such as operational training or responding to incidents (e.g., length of service plaques, gift cards for top responders, non-uniform clothing).

**R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: Low Priority**

- Non-uniform clothing (limited to a shirt, a jacket, or a pullover) as part of an award program only.
  - **Note:** Class A or B uniforms (e.g., Dress Uniforms) and badges are not allowable costs under the SAFER Program.
- Gift Cards: a logbook for the purchase and issuance of gift cards is required. The logbook 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 AHJ.
- LED/electronic sign when it is not included as part of a comprehensive marketing program.
- Fire service association membership fees.
- Projector or screen to support classroom training.
- Payments for housing or rent for volunteers at or near the fire station.
- 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) and must correlate to the identified recruitment or retention problems or issues being addressed with the grant. 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 EHP review (for details see Section 10.B.a. Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) Compliance of this NOFO). Recipients are encouraged to have completed as many steps as possible for a successful EHP Review in support of their proposal for funding, including coordination with their State Historic Preservation Office to identify potential historic preservation issues and to discuss the potential for project effects, and compliance with all state and EHP laws and requirements. Preservation Office to identify potential historic preservation issues and to discuss the potential for project effects, and compliance with all state and EHP laws and requirements.
  - Written approval must be provided by FEMA before using any SAFER Program 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.

**R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: Non-Prioritized Costs**

- M&A costs up to 3% 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. M&A costs must be identifiable and directly related to the implementation and management of the SAFER Program grant. Salaries and fringe benefits for personnel directly supporting the grant are not required to be included in the M&A budget line item.

#### **R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: Non-Prioritized Costs**

- Indirect costs for national, state, local, or federally recognized Tribal Nation volunteer firefighter interest organizations that are expended pursuant to Section 3.H. Indirect Costs (Facilities and Administrative Costs).
- Up to \$1,500 in grant writer fees for application preparation, but not grant administration. The fee must have been paid between 90 days before the publication date of this NOFO and up to 30 days of the end of the application period and prior to any contact with SAFER Program Office staff or an Offer of Award. For details see Appendix C – Award Administration Information, Grant Writer/Preparation Fees.
- Audit costs proportional to the total SAFER Program award. Recipients of multiple federal funding sources can only charge a pro rata share of the audit cost(s) to the SAFER Program award, and they must be incurred during the period of performance.

#### **R&R Activity – Ineligible Costs**

**This list is not exhaustive:**

- Salary and benefits for firefighters.
- Retroactive payments or recognition for operational services rendered prior to the grant award.
- Costs incurred (including the delivery of goods or services) outside of the period of performance except for grant writer fees; see Appendix C – Award Administration Information, Grant Writer/Preparation Fees.
- Fire suppression equipment.
- Vehicles.
- Fire simulators, fire evolution, or fire training props (e.g., burn trailers, forcible entry, rescue/smoke maze, flashover simulators).
- Supplies, expendables, or “onetime” use items such as foam, fuel/propane, breaching materials (e.g., wood or sheetrock).
- Sirens, warning lights for fire department or private vehicles, or other outdoor warning devices.
- Communication equipment and monthly expenses including cell phones, pagers, portable radios, or Computer- Aided Dispatch systems.
- Video cameras/recording equipment.
- Photographs/photographer unless part of a marketing contract for recruitment of new members.
- Intruder alerting systems and deployment notification systems.
- 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.

**R&R Activity – Ineligible Costs**

- 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 SOPs).
- Costs for training currently covered under the department's operating budget (e.g., tuition or instructor fees for department-mandated, basic-level training).
- Tuition assistance for family members of the volunteer.
- 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" for recruitment events, such as stickers, pencils, pens, t-shirts, cups, mugs, or balloons.
- 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.
- Gym Memberships.
- 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 Program) 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.
- Ineligible explorer/cadet/mentoring program expenditures:
  - SCBAs, including masks/face pieces.
  - Anything involving the IDLH atmosphere.
  - Any activities precluded by the AHJ.
- Ineligible PPE expenditures:
  - Three-quarter length rubber boots.
  - 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 structural or wildland PPE per newly recruited member (within the period of performance).
- PPE for existing members, R&R Coordinator, Program Manager, and/or Grant Administrator.



### **13. Appendix C – Award Administration Information**

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

#### **A. 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 [HOTLINE@oig.dhs.gov](mailto:HOTLINE@oig.dhs.gov).

#### **B. Grant Writer/Preparation Fees**

Fees for grant writers may be included as a pre-award expenditure. For grant writer fees to be eligible as a pre-award expenditure, the services must be competitively sourced, specifically identified, and listed within the “Grant Request Details” section of the application and must satisfy the requirements under 2 C.F.R. § 200.458. FEMA will only consider reimbursements for application preparation, not administration, up to \$1,500 per annum. The allowability of grant writer fees as a pre-award expenditure must be paid between the 90 days before the publication date of this NOFO and up to 30 calendar days after the application period closes. For the grant writer fees held either on retainer or subscription basis to be an eligible pre-award cost, the claimed retainer or subscription must have been competitively secured, and the costs are limited to the start of the appropriation period for the underlying award and meet the requirements under 2 C.F.R. § 200.458. Fees payable on a contingency basis are not an eligible expense.

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.

***Prior to submission of the application, please review all work produced by grant writers or other third parties for accuracy. By submitting the application, applicants are certifying all information contained therein is true and an accurate reflection of the organization, and that regardless of the applicant’s intent, the submission of information that is false or misleading may result in actions by FEMA. These actions include but are not limited to the submitted application not being considered for award, temporary withholding of funding under the existing award pending investigation, or referral to the DHS OIG.***

The following documentation shall be provided to FEMA upon request:

1. A copy of the grant writer’s contract for services;
2. A copy of the invoice or purchase order;
3. A copy of the canceled check (front and back); and
4. Evidence that the services were competitively procured.

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 the following as “Application Participants” in the “Contact Information” section of the application:** 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 before submitting the application.

### **C. Maintenance and Sustainment**

The use of FEMA preparedness grant funds 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 Program 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.

The duration of an extended warranty purchased incidental to the original purchase of the equipment may exceed the period of performance if 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.

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

Taxes, fees, levies, or assessments that the recipient is legally required to pay and are directly related to any eligible SAFER Program acquisition activity may be charged to a SAFER Program award pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.470. These charges shall be identified and enumerated in the SAFER Program application narrative, as well as the “Grant 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 Program award.

Example: Governmental 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. Nonprofit entities (exempt under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code) may also be exempt. The FCC requires that any entity claiming exempt status submit, or have on file with the FCC, a valid Internal Revenue Service 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>.*

#### E. Excess Funds

After completing the initial project(s) proposed in the recipient's application, some recipients may have unexpended funds remaining in their budget. These excess funds may result from any combination of under-budget acquisition activities or competitive procurement processes.

These excess funds may be utilized to address an organization's local needs or to mitigate identified capability gaps. FEMA expects excess funds to be obligated concurrent with an award's period of performance to address a known or critical need. An amendment request must be submitted to document the expenditure of excess funds. As a reminder, all costs must be incurred, and all goods and services must be delivered or completed within the period of performance to be allowable.

#### F. Payments and Amendments

FEMA uses the Direct Deposit/Electronic Funds Transfer method of payment to recipients.

SAFER Program payment/drawdown requests are generated using FEMA GO. SAFER Program payment/drawdown requests from state or local government entities will be governed by applicable federal regulations in effect at the time a grant is awarded to the recipient and may be either advances or reimbursements. Recipients should not expend funds until all special conditions listed on the grant award document have been met, including completion of EHP review, and the request for payment in FEMA GO has been approved. 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.

Non-federal entities should keep detailed records of all transactions involving the grant. FEMA may at any time, request copies of any relevant documentation and records, including purchasing documentation along with copies of cancelled checks for verification. See, e.g., 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.318(i), 200.334, 200.337.

**a. *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 funds and disbursement by the recipient (not to exceed 30 days), and the financial management systems that meet the standards for fund control and accountability as established in 2 C.F.R. Part 200. The recipient shall include all applicable source documentation such as invoice(s), purchase orders, contracts, etc., to support the costs associated with the advance SAFER Program payment/drawdown requests. EHP review requirements must be met prior to advanced payments.

Although advance drawdown requests are permissible, recipients remain subject to applicable federal laws in effect at the time a grant is awarded to the recipient.

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. For the rate to use in calculating interest, please visit Treasury Current Value rate at [https://www.fiscal.treasury.gov/fsreports/rpt/cvfr/cvfr\\_home.htm](https://www.fiscal.treasury.gov/fsreports/rpt/cvfr/cvfr_home.htm).

**b. *Reimbursement***

Payment by reimbursement is the preferred method when the requirements to be paid in advance, pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.305, cannot be met. In accordance with U.S. Department of Treasury regulations at 31 C.F.R. Part 205, if applicable, the recipient shall maintain procedures to minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds and the disbursement of said funds. As a prerequisite of SAFER Program approval for reimbursement requests, recipients shall submit all applicable source documentation, such as payroll records, timecards, contracts, invoices, purchase orders, proof of payment (e.g., canceled checks, bank statements, electronic funds transfers) to support the costs associated with each payment/drawdown request.

**c. *Rebates***

Recipients shall disburse program income, rebates, refunds, contract settlements, audit recoveries, and interest earned on such funds before requesting additional cash payments, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.305. The reduction of federal financial participation via rebates/refunds may generate excess funds for the recipient if the recipient previously obligated their Cost Share match based upon the original award figures. If the recipient previously obligated their original Cost Share prior to the rebate, then the recipient may have minimum excess funds equal to the difference between the original Cost Share less the rebate-adjusted Cost Share.

**d. *Payment Requests During Closeout***

A recipient may only submit reimbursement payment requests up to 120 calendar days after the expiration of the period of performance, during an award's closeout reconciliation per 2 C.F.R. § 200.344. Reimbursement payments are the only eligible type of requests to be submitted after a grant's period of performance has expired. The expenditure must have been obligated and received during the period of performance of the award. The recipient's request should contain

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clear and specific information certifying that the liquidation of federal funds is reimbursement for an obligation properly incurred during the active period of performance. FEMA may request documentation supporting the reimbursement for review at any time.

#### **e. Amendments**

FEMA may approve SAFER Program 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 R&R Activity;
- Changes to the activity, mission, retroactive approval (pre-award), closeout issues, and some excess funds requests;
- Budget changes (adding funds to award/non-closeout deobligation of funds); and
- Change of key personnel.

FEMA will only consider amendments submitted via FEMA GO. These requests must contain specific and compelling justifications for the requested change. Amendments or changes to the scope of work may require additional EHP review. FEMA strongly encourages recipients to expend grant funds in a timely manner to be consistent with SAFER Program goals and objectives.

*Note: A recipient may deobligate or return unused funds (i.e., those remaining funds previously drawn down via payment request or remaining award funding that was never requested) to FEMA prior to the end of an award's period of performance. To exercise this option, a recipient must submit an amendment via FEMA GO and state in the amendment that the unliquidated funds (e.g., the funds to be returned) are not necessary for the fulfillment or success of the grant's obligations or mission. The recipient must also indicate in the amendment that it understands that the returned funds will be deobligated and unavailable for any future award expenses. Deobligation of funds will decrease the federal portion of the grant and the amount of the recipient's cost share obligation. FEMA will confirm deobligation amendments with all points of contact; after confirmation of the recipient's intent to deobligate, FEMA will hold the approved deobligation request for 14 calendar days as a period for recipient reconsideration before FEMA processes the deobligation request.*

#### **G. Disposition of Grant-Funded Equipment**

A recipient must use, manage, and dispose of SAFER Program-funded equipment in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. § 200.313. Except for state governments, when original or replacement equipment acquired under a SAFER Program award is no longer needed for the original project, program, or other activities currently or previously supported by a federal awarding agency, the recipient must request disposition instructions from FEMA. FEMA strongly recommends contacting the SAFER Help Desk before disposing of SAFER Program-funded equipment.

#### **H. Post-Award Recipient Responsibilities**

Once awarded, recipients under the Hiring Activity must submit a pre-SAFER Program roster listing paid operational/firefighting personnel, in support of NFPA 1710 or NFPA 1720, who are employees at time of award. FEMA compares the pre-SAFER Program roster to names submitted for SAFER Program-funded positions to ensure that the SAFER Program-funded firefighters are new employees.

The SAFER Program Office will work with recipients to establish the correct staffing maintenance numbers, which combine the number of pre-SAFER Program and SAFER Program-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 Activity who lay off any operational personnel during the 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 Program 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 Program-funded positions. Recipients who fail to maintain the required level of staffing risk losing federal funds awarded under this grant.

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.

**Fire Rescue**

Chief Patrick J. Kennedy  
 405 Pike Road  
 West Palm Beach, FL 33411  
 (561) 616-7000  
 www.pbc.gov



**Palm Beach County  
 Board of County  
 Commissioners**

Maria G. Marino, Mayor  
 Sara Baxter, Vice Mayor  
 Gregg K. Weiss  
 Joel G. Flores  
 Marci Woodward  
 Maria Sachs  
 Bobby Powell Jr.

**Interim County Administrator**

Todd J. Boniarron

*"An Equal Opportunity Employer"*

Official Electronic Letterhead

**TO:** Honorable Maria G. Marino, Mayor  
 and Board of County Commissioners

**FROM:** Patrick J. Kennedy, Fire Rescue Administrator  
 Palm Beach County Fire Rescue

**DATE:** July 1, 2025

**RE:** **FY 2024 FEMA SAFER Staffing for Adequate Fire and  
 Emergency Response Grant**

Pursuant to Section 309.00 of the Palm Beach County Administrative Code and PPM#CW-F-003, your signature is required for Fire Rescue's grant application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS) FY 2024 SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) Grant Program (grant application attached). The application is due to DHS no later than July 3, 2025 and the required method for grant submission is electronically through the DHS website. The grant's program guidelines are also attached for your review.

As part of your authorization on this grant application, Fire Rescue is requesting that you designate the County Administrator or designee (Fire Rescue Administrator or Fire Rescue Finance Director), to act as the County's representative for the purpose of electronically signing the grant application on-line.

Palm Beach County Fire Rescue is requesting \$3,770,684 FEMA grant funding with a 25% Fire Rescue match in year 1 of \$509,552, a 25% match in year 2 of \$509,552 and a 65% match in year 3 of \$1,324,835 for a total of \$6,114,623. This grant will provide funding to staff a 4-person engine at new Fire Station 44, located on the southwest corner of Lyons Road and Flavor Pict Ext. Staff will submit this item for ratification on the Board's August 19, 2025 County Commission Agenda.

Please note that the Assurance and Certifications in the grant application include the following: "By signing this application, I certify that the organization will, to the extent practicable, seek, recruit, and hire members of racial and ethnic minority groups and women to increase their ranks within our organization." Staff has requested guidance from FEMA since this certification appears to be inconsistent with Presidential Executive Order 14173 (EO 14173) requiring a grant recipient to certify that it does not operate any DEI programs. Based on EO 14173, Palm Beach County recently enacted an Ordinance to suspend its DEI programs. To date, staff has not received any clarification or guidance from FEMA. However, should the grant be awarded to the County, the grant agreement would be brought back to the BCC for approval; and staff anticipates that the grant agreement would reflect the most recent DHS Standard Terms and Conditions, from the DHS website, that apply to awards on or after April 18, 2025. These updated Terms and Conditions require grant recipients to certify that they do not and will not operate DEI programs in violation of Federal anti-



discrimination laws; and require that recipients comply with Presidential Executive Orders related to grants. Due to the anticipated updated Terms and Conditions should the County be awarded the grant, and the impending grant submission deadline of July 3, 2025, County Administration recommends submittal of the application in reliance on the "to the extent practicable" provision of the certification that is in the application.

Reviewed by: *[Signature]* 7/01/25 07-01-25  
County Attorney Date OFMB Date

Approved by: *[Signature]* 7-01-25  
Maria G. Marino, Mayor Date

Pursuant to Section 309.00 of the Palm Beach County Administrative Code, and in accordance with the above designation by the Mayor, I hereby designate Chief Patrick J. Kennedy, Fire Rescue Administrator or Lauren Magierowski, Fire Rescue Finance Director to electronically sign and submit, on-line via the DHS website, the attached application for the FY 2024 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant Program.

Approved by: *[Signature]* 7/1/25  
Todd J. Bonlarron, Interim County Administrator Date