STAFFORD Virginia

#7

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Agenda Item

Meeting Date:	March 3, 2015
Title:	Authorize the County Administrator to Apply for the 2014 Staffing For Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant
Department:	Fire and Rescue
Staff Contact:	Mark Lockhart, Chief
Board Committee/ Other BACC:	Public Safety Committee
Staff Recommendation:	Approval
Budget Impact:	See background report
Time Sensitivity:	See background report

ATTACHMENTS:

1.	Background	2.	Proposed Resolution R15-37
2.	SAFER Grant Informational Materials		

	Consent Agenda		**Other Business**		**Unfinished Business**
	Discussion		**Presentation**		**Work Session**
X	**New Business**		**Public Hearing**		**Add-On**

REVIEW:

X	County Administrator	
X	County Attorney	
X	Finance and Budget	

DISTRICT:	N/A

Attachment 1
R15-37

BACKGROUND REPORT

Stafford County is faced with the challenge of maintaining an appropriate level of fire suppression and emergency medical services, and meeting response time standards, as are numerous communities across the nation. Population growth, an increase in business and decreasing volunteerism in the Fire and Rescue Department (Department), all contribute to the need for additional career staff.

Extensive work went into the creation of a Public Safety staffing plan, which calls for the addition of more than 50 positions in the Fire and Rescue Department over the next few years. Currently, funding is limited. The Public Safety Committee requested that the County's Fire and EMS Chief research the County's eligibility for a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant, available through the US Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The SAFER Grant program was created to provide funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter organizations in order to help them increase the number of trained, "front-line" firefighters available in their communities. The County is eligible to apply and the Grant application period runs from February 9, 2015 through March 6, 2015.

The goal of the SAFER Grant is to enhance the local fire department's abilities to comply with staffing, response and operational standards established by the National Fire Protection Association and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Specifically, SAFER funds area designed to assist local fire departments in increasing staffing and deployment capabilities, in order to respond to emergencies whenever they may occur. As a result of enhanced staffing, response times should be sufficiently reduced, and an appropriate number of personnel should be assembled at the incident scene. Ultimately, a faster, safer, and more efficient incident scene response will be established, and communities will have more protection from fire and fire-related hazards. The positions requested for the SAFER Grant all flow directly from the Public Safety Staffing Plan.

In Option 1, the Board may wish to consider requesting grant funding to hire 16 full-time career firefighters. These 16 firefighters would be used to provide minimum staffing on the four career-staffed engines, and to assist in covering service gaps in volunteer units when needed. Salary and benefits would be $1,150,000 annually for a total of $2,300,000 for the 24-month Grant period. The costs associated with recruit training and equipment would be absorbed within the Department's operating budget.

In Option 2, the Board may wish to consider requesting grant funding to hire 21 firefighters to provide minimum staffing on four career-staffed engines, to assist in covering service gaps in volunteer units when needed, and to provide daytime staffing coverage for Engine 10/Potomac Hills. Salary and benefits would be $1,500,000 annually for a total of $3,000,000 for the 24-month Grant period. The costs associated with recruit training and equipment would be absorbed within the Department's operating budget.

In Option 3, the Board may wish to consider requesting grant funding to hire 32 firefighters to provide minimum staffing on the four career-staffed engines, to staff a fifth full-time suppression engine and provide daytime staffing for another engine when possible. Salary and benefits would be $2,300,000 annually for a total of $4,600,000 for the 24-month Grant period. The costs associated with recruit training and equipment would be absorbed within the Department operating's budget.

The exact fiscal impact would vary depending on the option selected by the Board, and would first impact the County's FY2018 budget (partial year). At the conclusion of the 24-month Grant period, the salaries and benefits associated with the continued employment of the Grant funded staff would become the responsibility of the County. There is a change in the SAFER Program from the 2011 Grant. There is no longer a requirement for the County to maintain those grant-funded positions after the completion of the performance period. Retention is preferred by FEMA, but is not required.

Attachment 2 contains the SAFER Grant information packet that was presented to the Public Safety Committee on January 20, 2015. It contains a memo from Chief Lockhart and Chief Financial Officer Maria Perrotte; two e-mails received from a SAFER Program Specialist, answering questions concerning the number of positions and the retention of the grant-funded positions; and the SAFER Grant Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA). As noted in both the memo and the FOA, the SAFER Grant has three hierarchical priorities for funding the hiring of firefighters: 1) re-hiring of laid-off firefighters; 2) retention of firefighters who are facing imminent lay-off or filling of vacant positions (through attrition), which have not been filled due to economic circumstances; and 3) hiring of new firefighters (found on page 5 of Funding Opportunity Announcement in Attachment 2).

The County's request would be a Priority 3 request. As stated in each of the aforementioned options, the firefighters hired would be used to ensure a minimum crew configuration of four firefighters on each career-staffed engine. Though not required by the SAFER program, minimum four-person staffing is preferred for enhanced or restored staffing levels in SAFER Grant recipients (see page 6 of Funding Opportunity Announcement – Section C – Program Objectives in Attachment 2) and we believe this enhances the County's chance of being awarded the Grant.

The application was discussed at the Board's February 24, 2015 Public Safety Committee meeting, and its recommendation for Option 1 was given to the Board at its meeting the same day. At its meeting on February 24, 2015, the Board voted to defer a vote on the SAFER Grant to its March 3, 2015 meeting, so that additional information could be provided.

Question #1 – Debt Service

The projected increases in revenue and debt service (in millions of dollars) per the CIP are as follows:

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Change in Revenue	$5.3	$5.4	$5.6	$5.7	$5.8
Change in Debt Service	$2.8	$2.0	$0.4	$1.4	$1.8

Question #2 – Staffing Allocation

Option 1 provides for the hiring of 16 firefighters. Under the terms and guidance of the Grant documents, staff believes the greatest chance for a successful application is to allocate twelve of these positions to ensure minimum staffing of four firefighters on each of the four career-staffed engines on all three shifts (the additional four positions would be used to cover leave, Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) associated leave, light duty, and supplemental staffing). This would meet the intended objective of the Grant program. At the end of the Grant period (two years), staff believes that an additional engine would need to be staffed full-time due to call volume and response times. At that point, the Grant-funded positions would be reallocated to the new assignment (currently planned for Station 10-Potomac Hills).

Option 2 provides for the hiring of 21 firefighters. Twelve positions would be allocated to the minimum four-firefighter staffing required on the four career engines. Five positions would be allocated to weekday, daytime staffing of Engine 10 at Potomac Hills, and four positions would be used to cover leave, FMLA associated leave, light duty, and supplemental staffing. At the end of the Grant period (two years), staff believes that the five daytime staffing positions should be converted to 24/7 staffing at Potomac Hills. Seven of the twelve minimum staffing positions would be re-allocated to Potomac Hills to provide for cross-staffing of the engine, heavy rescue squad, and the ladder truck. Should the ALS project be funded in the FY16 budget to maintain the quick response vehicle at Station 5 – Brooke, those nine remaining grant positions could then be allocated to Station 5 for cross-staffing of the engine, heavy rescue squad, and tanker. At the end of the two-year Grant period, Option 2 essentially provides the County with the opportunity to place two career-staffed paramedic engine companies in service in areas that are currently under-served.

Question #3 – Marine Corps Base (MCB) Quantico

MCB Quantico (Base) provides a significant amount of mutual aid to the 610/Route 1/I-95 response areas, largely due to a lack of County-staffed resources and high call volume in the north end of the County. At the Board's February 24, 2015 meeting, it was noted that there is conflicting information about the Base's position on providing aid to the County. The Base's Fire and Rescue Department staff have indicated their willingness and desire to provide aid to the County, as it provides them with experience and work that they would not otherwise receive (on Base) in terms of call volume.

The Base Commander, Col. Maxwell, stated that he is supportive of providing aid to the County, as have previous Base commanders. In meetings with other members of Base staff, questions were raised about the specific areas that the Base's Fire and Rescue responds, as well as the number of monthly/annual calls. After making adjustments to their response areas, staff continues to monitor the numbers. In a recent conversation with the Base's Fire and Rescue Chief, he indicated that the Base's Fire and Rescue Department is once again being questioned about the amount of aid being provided to the County.

If the Board authorizes the submission of the SAFER Grant application, and if the County is awarded the Grant, the Board will be asked to consider accepting the Grant, budgeting and appropriating the funds, and increasing the number of authorized positions for the Department. The County would have 30 days from date of notification to accept or decline the Grant.

Staff recommends approval of proposed Resolution R15-37, which authorizes the County Administrator to submit an application for the SAFER Grant.

Stafford County
Fire and Rescue Department

Memo

Date: January 16, 2015

To: Public Safety Committee

Through: Anthony Romanello
County Administrator

From: Mark Lockhart, NRP
County Fire and EMS Chief

Maria Perrotte
Chief Financial Officer

Subject: Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Information

At the request of Supervisor Bohmke, the Fire and Rescue Department, in concert with Finance and the County Attorney's Office have reviewed the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) (see Attachment C) for the FY2014 SAFER Grant Program. This memo provides an overview of the program and answers to commonly asked questions about SAFER and illustrates lessons learned from the County's previous SAFER Grants.

Program Overview

The SAFER Grant Program purpose is to provide funding to fire departments and organizations representing the interests of volunteer firefighters to assist them in maintaining and increasing the number of firefighters to help departments meet minimum standards and attain 24-hour staffing to protect their communities. SAFER began in 2003 and is administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Grants Program Directorate. It is a discretionary, competitive process funded at $340,000,000 for this grant cycle and FEMA anticipates making 300 awards of grant funds for the FY2014 cycle.

SAFER has two categories for funding: 1) hiring of firefighters and 2) recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Under the hiring of firefighters category, there are three hierarchical priorities: 1) rehiring of laid-off firefighters, 2) retention of firefighters who are facing imminent

layoff or filling of vacant positions (through attrition) which have not been filled due to economic circumstances and 3) the hiring of new firefighters. Program priorities are further discussed in Appendix A of the FOA (page 29 – Attachment C). Stafford County has received two previous SAFER Grants - in 2011 for hiring of firefighters and in 2008 for recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.

What will the grant cover?
Eligible costs covered by the SAFER grant include salary and benefits (actual payroll expenses) including initial training (recruit academy) and costs for overtime included in the base salary and/or to meet Fair Labor Standards Act guidelines during the performance period (24 months). Firefighters hired with SAFER grant funds must be hired after the SAFER grant award date and more than 50% of their duties must be fire suppression (including riding a fire suppression apparatus). Grant funds cannot be used for any members hired prior to the SAFER grant award date, for funding promotions, uniforms, physicals, or overtime except as noted above. The list of Eligible Costs/Restrictions on Costs is listed in Appendix B on page 37 of the FOA (Attachment C).

What is the Performance Period?
The period of performance for hiring firefighters under the grant is twenty-four months which begins immediately following a default 180-day recruitment period for hiring firefighters.

What financial commitment is required of the County following the Performance Period?
FEMA's intent is for the SAFER funded positions to be maintained past the Performance Period but there is no financial commitment beyond the performance period listed in the grant document. In speaking with the Grants Help Desk on January 12, we were told that there is no requirement for those grant funded positions to be continued past the Performance Period. This was confirmed to us by Julia Barron, Fire Program Specialist, Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program, FEMA via phone and email (see attachment A) on January 13. This is a change to the program from the FY2010 SAFER Grant received by the County.

Benefits to the SAFER Grant?
1) Funding for additional firefighters to enhance our daily staffing level. This will allow us to move forward in our efforts to meet National Fire Protection Association Standards 1710/1720 regarding initial firefighting force on structure fires and enhance our overall staffing in the department to better address the needs of the community.
2) Moves the County a step forward in the Public Safety Staffing Plan for emergency operations/response.

Drawbacks to the SAFER Grant?
1) The funding period is only two years and the County would need to assume financial responsibility for the requested positions at the end of the period in order to maintain the staffing level or reduce the number of positions through attrition or termination.

2) We must maintain our pre-award level of staffing and will not be allowed to lay off or reduce the size of our operational force during the performance period. If vacancies occur during the performance period, we must backfill those positions within 180 days unless we seek an extension from the Grants Program Directorate.

When is the application period open?
The application period for the FY2014 Grant Program opens on February 9, 2015 at 8:00 am EST and it closes on March 6, 2015 at 5:00 pm EST.

When will the grant be awarded?
The grants are awarded over a four month period that begins June 1, 2015 and ends on September 30, 2015. Awards are typically announced on a weekly basis via the grant program website. If awarded a grant, the County would have 30 days from the award notification date to accept or decline the grant.

How many positions can be requested/How much money could we receive?
The FOA does not provide any information regarding limits on positions or funding that could be requested. That being said, as mentioned earlier FY2014 contains $340,000,000 for the SAFER Grant Program and FEMA anticipates making approximately 300 awards. SAFER Grant records from past grant cycles for hiring indicates grant awards have ranged from three hundred thousand dollars to millions of dollars. Fairfax County currently has a SAFER grant for $3.1 million for hiring firefighters. There is no requirement for a local match on funding.

A SAFER Grant could fund a phase or a portion of a phase of the proposed Public Safety Staffing Plan. Based on the parameters of the SAFER Grant Program, there are two potentially viable options for a grant request: 1) hire 15 firefighters and utilize them to ensure that we have four-person engine crews on all four career staffed fire apparatus each day (SAFER Grant guidance indicates that while not required, it is preferred that all frontline fire apparatus in SAFER Grant departments have four-person crews) and 2) hire 15 firefighters to place an additional career staffed fire suppression apparatus in service daily. This particular unit could also be used for coverage when Engine 1 (Falmouth) or Engine 2 (Stafford) are not staffed.

How much would a grant-funded position cost?
Based on our calculation of a new hire coming in as a Fire-Rescue Recruit (and already a paramedic) and then advancing to Technician I at 12 months and remaining there for 12 months (24-month performance period), the total cost of salary and benefits per person for the grant period is $105,102. Our calculations show that at the end of the Performance Period, the annual salary and benefits for a grant-funded position at worst case would be $75,475 (assumes paramedic differential and family insurance coverage). In addition to the salary and benefits cost, there is $14,500 in on-boarding costs that includes the hiring assessment center, physical, uniforms, protective gear, and the recruit training academy). The on-boarding costs are handled through Fire and Rescue's operational budget and are ineligible for grant funding per the FOA.

When would the budgetary impact occur?
For purposes of discussion, if we were notified of the grant award on June 1 and initiated a hiring process immediately, the recruit academy would begin in early December, triggering the beginning of the Performance Period. The recruit academy is six months in duration and that would place the recruits actually in the field in early June of 2016. The Performance Period would end in late November 2017. The budgetary impact of the grant funded salaries would then be felt for seven months of FY2018 and completely beginning in FY2019.

Is the County able to modify or change its number of grant funded positions after the award of the grant?
During the last SAFER Grant, the County had applied for fourteen positions and after the grant was awarded decided to only accept seven positions. This resulted in the grant application having to be re-scored and the County ultimately succeeded in obtaining the reduced number. Julia Barron from FEMA advised us that we could reduce the number of positions following the grant award and ask that our application be re-scored but that could potentially put our request out of the fundable range for the grant. It would be handled on a case-by-case basis but FEMA encourages applicants to be realistic in the position/funding request (Attachment B – email from Julia Barron).

How will the County receive the grant funds?
FEMA handles grant funds through the e-Grants system and direct deposit. We must submit a request for advance/reimbursement for funds and that is done quarterly. As we have received two previous SAFER Grants, we are already established in the system.

When must a decision be made?
In order to submit the grant application in advance of the deadline, a decision by the Board of Supervisors is preferred at the February 17th meeting to allow plenty of time to complete the application and submit it in advance of the March 6th deadline. At the very latest, a decision would have to be made at the March 3rd meeting in order to submit the application on time.

What lessons were learned from the two previous grants that can be applied to this application?
1) Transparency – Fire and Rescue has compiled this information at the request of Supervisor Bohmke and while we have taken steps to assemble information needed for the grant application, we have not begun the application process and will not until we receive Board of Supervisors approval unless otherwise directed. If the committee or the board wish to review the application prior to submission, we will make that happen.
2) Communication – We have worked diligently with Finance and the County Attorney's Office in assembling this information and in communicating it to you. In addition, we have sought input and answers from the Grant Program Directorate as well as other SAFER Grant recipients. We will, of course, maintain open communication with the Public Safety Committee and the Board of Supervisors during this process and moving forward.

3) Frankness – This is a complex grant program and while we have done our best due diligence, there undoubtedly may be questions for which we do not have answers. We will tell you when we don't know the answer and we will find it for you in an expeditious manner and report back as quickly as possible.

This memo and the attachments are intended to provide you with an overview of the SAFER Grant Program and to answer some commonly asked questions. A copy of the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) and the email from Julia Barron are attached for your reference and review. We would be happy to answer any questions or obtain any additional information you may need.

Attachment A – Email from Julia Barron on January 13, 2015
Attachment B – Email from Julia Barron on January 14, 2015
Attachment C – SAFER Funding Opportunity Announcement

From: Barron, Julia [mailto:julia.barron@fema.dhs.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2015 2:56 PM
To: Mark Lockhart
Subject: RE: SAFER Grant

Hi Mark,

That is no responsibility to maintain positions after the period of performance, only during the period of performance. I am referring to numbers 2 and 3:

2. Grantees under the Hiring of Firefighters category who lay off any operational personnel during the two-year period of performance will be considered in default of their grant and the award will be terminated. Grantees may be required to return the federal funds disbursed under the grant award.
3. Grantees under the Hiring of Firefighters category must agree to maintain operational staffing at the level that existed at the time of award and must also retain all SAFER-funded positions throughout the grant's full two year period of performance unless the grantee has been afforded a waiver of this requirement. At the time of award, grantees under the Hiring of Firefighters category must submit a current (pre-SAFER) roster listing paid operational/firefighting personnel in support of NFPA 1710 or NFPA 1720, who are in full-time or job share positions. The program office will work with a grantee to establish the correct staffing maintenance number which combines the number of pre-SAFER and SAFER-funded operational positions. Once this is established, grantees must agree to maintain this number throughout the two year period of performance by taking active and timely steps to fill any vacancies.

Thanks,

Julia Barron
Fire Program Specialist, SAFER
Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program
DHS/FEMA/Grant Programs Directorate
800 K Street NW, Room 5009
Washington, DC 20472
(202) 786-0929 desk
(202) 674-4652 bb

From: Mark Lockhart [mailto:mlockhart@staffordcountyva.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2015 2:50 PM
To: Barron, Julia
Subject: RE: SAFER Grant

Julia – can you tell me which part of appendix c would address that concern. I reviewed it and did not see the issue mentioned? ML

From: Barron, Julia [mailto:julia.barron@fema.dhs.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2015 2:46 PM
To: Mark Lockhart
Subject: RE: SAFER Grant

Hi Mark:

Yes, that is correct. Please see appendix c (page 46) of the funding opportunity announcement for a list of the grantee responsibilities.

Thank you,

Julia Barron

From: Mark Lockhart [mailto:mlockhart@staffordcountyva.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2015 2:34 PM
To: Barron, Julia
Subject: SAFER Grant

Julia – thank you very much for your time on the phone today regarding the SAFER Grant Program. To confirm our conversation, the SAFER Grant Program no longer requires the locality to financially cover any time past the performance period. Any firefighters hired under the SAFER Grant must be maintained for the duration of the performance period and their continued employment after that time is up to the locality. Accepting the grant in no way obligates the locality to maintain those grant funded positions beyond the performance period.

If I misunderstood, please correct me. Thank you for your time and understanding.

Mark Lockhart, NRP
County Fire and EMS Chief
Stafford County Fire and Rescue Department
1225 Courthouse Road
P.O. Box 339
Stafford, VA 22555-0339

540-658-7200 (office)

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From: Barron, Julia [mailto:julia.barron@fema.dhs.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, January 14, 2015 10:49 AM
To: Mark Lockhart
Subject: RE: Grants Question

Hi Mark:

As you know, the application is scored both electronically and by a panel of reviewers. The application is evaluated based on the numbers you request and report in your application. So, you could ask the application to be rescored based on revised numbers, but doing so could put you out of the fundable range. These types of requests are handled on a case-by-case basis after the award is made. So, I encourage you to propose a realistic number of positions in your application and if something comes up after the award (if you are awarded), then we will work with you at that time.

I hope that answers your question. Please let me know if you have additional questions.

Thanks,

Julia Barron
Fire Program Specialist, SAFER
Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program
DHS/FEMA/Grant Programs Directorate
800 K Street NW, Room 5009
Washington, DC 20472
(202) 786-0929 desk
(202) 674-4652 bb

From: Mark Lockhart [mailto:mlockhart@staffordcountyva.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, January 14, 2015 9:46 AM
To: Barron, Julia
Subject: Grants Question

Julia – one more question for you regarding the SAFER Grant. On our FY2010 Grant, we applied for 14 positions and after being awarded a grant, the decision was made here to only accept 7 positions which was approved by the AFG Office after we asked for the application to be re-scored.

The question is would the County be able to reduce the number of positions accepted after the grant award? Obviously, we would want to only request what we need in the grant application but if we do that and something would happen to cause us to reduce the request after the award, would we be allowed to do that?

Many thanks for your help! ML

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US Department of Homeland Security
Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)

STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE FIRE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE (SAFER)

Overview Information

Issued By

US Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Grant Programs Directorate (GPD), Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFG)

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number

97.083

CFDA Title

Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER)

Funding Opportunity Announcement Title

Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER)

Authorizing Authority for Program

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

Appropriation Authority for Program

Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2014 (Pub. L. No. 113-76)

Opportunity ID Number

DHS-14-GPD-083-000-99

Key Dates and Time

Application Start Date:	February 9, 2015 at 8:00 AM EST
Application Submission Deadline:	March 6, 2015 at 5:00 PM EST
Anticipated Funding Selection Date:	N/A
Anticipated Award Date:	No later than September 30, 2015

Other Key Dates

Projected Award Start Date(s):	June 1, 2015
Projected Award End Date(s):	September 30, 2015

Intergovernmental Review

Pursuant to Executive Order 12372, an intergovernmental review may be required by applicable State law or regulation. Applicants must contact their State's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to find out about and comply with the State's process under Executive Order 12372. Name and addresses of the SPOCs are maintained at the Office of Management and Budget's home page at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc to ensure currency.

Application Submission Extension

Is an extension to the application submission deadline permitted? ☐ Yes ☒ No

FOA Executive Summary

Funding Category

☐ New ☒ Continuation ☐ One-time

Date of Origin for Program

November 24, 2003

Funding Opportunity Category

☒ Discretionary ☐ Mandatory ☒ Competitive ☐ Non-competitive ☐ Sole Source

Application Process

DHS makes all funding opportunities available through the common electronic "storefront" Grants.gov, accessible on the Internet at http://www.grants.gov. If you experience difficulties accessing information or have any questions, please call the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at (800) 518-4726.

The FY 2014 SAFER Grant application is accessible through the e-Grants system at https://portal.fema.gov. A link to the application will also be available via the US Fire Administration's (USFA) Website at http://www.usfa.fema.gov during the application period.

For additional details, please Section IX of this FOA, *How to Apply*.

Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to apply directly to FEMA under this solicitation:

☒ Fire Departments

☒ National, state, local, or tribal organizations that represent the interests of volunteer firefighters

For additional information, please see Section III of this FOA, Eligibility Information.

Type of Funding Instrument

☒ Grant ☐ Cooperative Agreement

Cost Share or Match

☐ Cost Share ☐ Cost Match ☐ Voluntary ☒ None

Maintenance of Effort

☐ Yes ☒ No

Management and Administration

Management and Administration costs are activities directly related to implementing the award. Administrative costs up to three percent of the awarded amount are allowable under the SAFER

Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters category only. Please refer to Section IV of this FOA, *Funding Restrictions,* for additional details.

Indirect Cost

Indirect costs are NOT allowable under the Hiring of Firefighters category. However, national, state, local, or tribal volunteer firefighter interest organizations may be reimbursed for indirect costs under the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters category only if they have an approved indirect cost rate agreement with their cognizant federal agency. A copy of the approved rate (a fully executed, agreement negotiated with the applicant's cognizant federal agency) is required at the time of application.

Please refer to Section IV of this FOA, *Funding Restrictions,* for additional details.

Full Funding Opportunity Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Overview

The SAFER Grant Program provides funding directly to fire departments and national, state, local, or tribal organizations representing the interests of volunteer firefighters to assist them in increasing the number of firefighters to help fire departments meet industry minimum standards and attain 24-hour staffing to protect communities from fire and fire related hazards, and to fulfill traditional missions of fire departments.

The SAFER Grant Program is comprised of two categories:

- **Hiring of Firefighters**
  - Including subcategories for rehiring, retention, attrition, and new hires
  - Career, combination, and volunteer fire departments are eligible to apply
- **Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters**
  - Combination fire departments, volunteer fire departments, and national, state, local, or tribal organizations that represent the interests of volunteer firefighters are eligible to apply

The content of this FOA reflects DHS's implementation of Section 34 of the *Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974*, as amended by Section 565 of the *Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2014* (Pub. L. No. 113-76). Under this authority, the Secretary of Homeland Security has granted waivers for the following requirements for the FY 2014 SAFER Grant Program:

- **Cost Share**: SAFER Grantees are not required to contribute a cost share towards the cost of hiring firefighters under this program.
- **Salary limits per firefighter:** SAFER Grant funds may be used to fund the full cost of hiring a firefighter under this program.
- **Maintenance of Effort**: Applicants are not required to demonstrate that their annual budget for fire-related programs and emergency response has not been reduced below 80% of the average funding level in the three years prior to November 24, 2003.
- **Supplanting requirement:** Grants may be used for the purpose of retaining firefighters currently employed who are facing imminent layoffs or for the rehiring of laid off firefighters.
- **Period of performance:** For Hiring of Firefighters category grants, the period of performance has been reduced to two years.

B. Program Priorities

Hiring of Firefighters Category

- First priority: Rehiring laid off firefighters
- Second priority: Retention of firefighters who face imminent layoff or filling positions vacated through attrition but not filled due to economic circumstances

- Third priority: Hiring new firefighters

Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Category

- The highest priority is to assist departments experiencing a high rate of turnover and with staffing levels significantly below the ideal staffing level required to comply with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards 1710 or 1720.

C. Program Objectives

The goal of the SAFER Grant Program is to assist local fire departments with staffing and deployment capabilities in order to respond to emergencies, and assure that communities have adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards.

SAFER intends to improve or restore local fire departments' staffing and deployment capabilities so they may more effectively and safely respond to emergencies. With enhanced or restored staffing levels, grantees should see a reduction in response times and an increase in the number of trained personnel assembled at the incident scene.

While not required for a SAFER Grant, it is preferable that the enhanced or restored staffing levels of all SAFER Grantees should ensure all first-arriving apparatus are staffed with a minimum of four qualified personnel (to meet NFPA standards) who are capable of initiating the suppression response. Ultimately, SAFER Grantees should achieve more efficient responses and safer incident scenes thereby ensuring communities have improved protection from fire and fire-related hazards.

The FY 2014 SAFER Grant plays an important role in the implementation of the National Preparedness System by supporting the building, sustainment, and delivery of core capabilities essential to achieving the National Preparedness Goal (NPG) of a secure and resilient nation. Delivering core capabilities requires the combined effort of the whole community, rather than the exclusive effort of any single organization or level of government.

The FY 2014 SAFER Grant's allowable costs support efforts to build and sustain core capabilities across the Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery mission areas. Examples of tangible outcomes for FY 2014 SAFER include building and sustaining core capabilities, such as Public and Private Services and Resources, and Public Health and Medical Services.

For additional details, please refer to the *National Preparedness Goal, First Edition, September 2011* at http://www.fema.gov/pdf/prepared/npg.pdf.

II. Funding Information

A. Award Amounts, Important Dates, and Extensions

Available Funding for the FOA:	$340,000,000
Projected Number of Awards:	300

Projected Award Start Date: 06/01/2015
Projected Award End Date: 09/30/2015

Funding Parameters
The appropriated funds are to be administered as indicated below. Specific funding parameters are the outcome of recommendations from the Criteria Development (CD) process or as required by the *Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974, as amended.*

- 10 percent of the funding appropriated for FY 2014 SAFER Awards is set aside for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters (15 USC § 2229a(a)(2))
- No more than 33 percent of the total amount allocated for the recruitment and retention of volunteers can be awarded to national, state, local, or tribal organizations that represent the interests of volunteer firefighters (CD)
- 10 percent is set aside for grants awarded to volunteer or majority volunteer departments for hiring of firefighters.
    - A majority volunteer fire department is made up of more than 50 percent of personnel who do not receive financial compensation for their services, other than life, health, and worker's compensation insurance, or a nominal stipend payment, including certain paid-on-call personnel. It may be necessary to go out of rank order to select a sufficient number of applications in order to meet the 10 percent requirement. (15 USC § 2229a(a)(1)(H))
- If less than 10 percent of the funds available for the hiring of firefighters are awarded to volunteer and majority volunteer fire departments, the remaining funds must be transferred to provide grants for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters (15 USC § 2229a(a)(1)(H))

For additional details, see Appendix A, Program Priorities.

Period of Performance
Hiring of Firefighters Category

- The period of performance will be 24 months for all grants awarded under this category.
- A default 180-day recruitment period begins when an application is approved for award under this category.
- The two year period of performance automatically starts after the 180-day recruitment period, regardless of whether the grantee has successfully hired the requested firefighters.
- If a grantee is able to rehire or hire SAFER-funded firefighters during the 180-day recruitment period, the period of performance may begin at that time. For grantees awarded retention positions, the period of performance can begin immediately. However, in both cases, grantees must submit an amendment requesting that the period of performance start before the end of the 180-day recruitment period.
- The period of performance cannot be started later than 180 days after the award date.

Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Category

- The period of performance will be between 12 and 48 months for all grants awarded under this category.
- A default 90-day recruitment period begins when the application is approved for award. This period allows each grantee time to gather resources, initiate processes, and to finalize contracts needed to implement SAFER Grant activities before the start of the period of performance in order to maximize the availability of the funding.
    - Grantees can seek reimbursement for grant-related costs incurred during the recruitment period as long as these costs are in the approved budget and scope of work. Grantees should be aware that incurring costs during the recruitment period will reduce the amount of grant funds available for the period of performance. Payment for these costs may be requested when the period of performance begins.
- If a grantee is able to begin their recruitment or retention activities during the 90-day recruitment period, the period of performance may begin at that time. However grantees must submit an amendment requesting that the period of performance start before the end of the 90-day recruitment period.
- The period of performance cannot be started later than 90 days after the recruitment period.

Extensions to the Period of Performance

An extension to the period of performance for this program is allowed. Extensions to the period of performance may be granted when, due to circumstances beyond the control of the grantee, activities associated with the award cannot be completed within the stated performance period. For details on the requirements for requesting an extension to the period of performance, please refer to Section VI(C)(ix)(1) *Extensions*.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligibility Criteria

Table 1 identifies, in general, eligible entities that can apply for FY 2014 SAFER Funding within each category.

Table 1: Eligible Entities

Entity	Volunteer Fire Departments	Combination Fire Departments	Career Fire Departments	National, state, local, or tribal volunteer firefighter interest organizations
Hiring of Firefighters Category	✓	✓	✓	
Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Category	✓	✓		✓

- Volunteer fire departments and combination fire departments may apply for funding under both the Hiring of Firefighters category and the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters category. Separate applications must be completed for each category. Applicants are limited to one application per category, per application period. If an applicant submits two applications for the same category during a single application period, both applications will be disqualified.
- Career fire departments may apply for funding only under the Hiring of Firefighters category. Applicants are limited to one application per application period. If an applicant submits two applications, both applications will be disqualified.
    - Municipalities and fire districts may submit applications on behalf of fire departments lacking the legal status to do so, such as those under the support of the municipality or district. The municipality or fire district may submit only one application for hiring per application period for each eligible fire department within the municipality or fire district.
- National, state, local, or tribal organizations representing the interests of volunteer firefighters and individual fire departments (volunteer or combination) may only apply for funding under the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters category. Applicants are limited to one application per application period. If an applicant submits two applications, both applications will be disqualified.

i. Other Eligibility Requirements

The following entity types are NOT eligible to apply under this announcement:

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

IV. Funding Restrictions

A. Restrictions on Use of Award Funds

Federal funds made available through this award may only be used for the purpose set forth in this award and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Award funds may not be used for matching funds for any other federal grants/cooperative agreements, lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal Government or any other government entity. Failure to adhere to the award conditions will cause the grantee to be considered in default of the grant agreement, and may require the return of all federal funds disbursed under the grant.

Federal employees are prohibited from serving in any capacity (paid or unpaid) on the development of any proposal submitted under this program.

i. Pre-award Costs

Pre-award costs are NOT allowed except for grant writer fees under the SAFER Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters category, see the full FOA, Section IX(D)(iv). Grant Writer Fees (Recruitment and Retention category Only).

ii. Direct Costs

Management and Administration

Management and Administration costs are activities directly related to implementing the award. Administrative costs up to three percent of the awarded amount are allowable under the SAFER Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters category only.

Administrative costs are identifiable costs directly associated with the implementation and management of the grant. Administrative costs should be based on actual expenses only, not a percentage of the overall grant; each expense must be specific and detailed.

Examples of eligible administrative costs include shipping, office supplies, and computers and software associated with the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) reporting requirements.

Grant funds may not be used for insurance, Internet service provider fees, or any similar service fees.

Planning

Planning related costs are NOT allowed under this program.

Training

For details regarding the training related costs allowed under this program, see Appendix B. Eligible Costs/Restrictions on Cost.

Exercises

Exercise related costs are NOT allowed under this program.

Equipment

For details regarding the equipment costs allowed under this program, see Appendix B. Eligible Costs/Restrictions on Cost.

Travel

For details regarding the travel costs allowed under this program, see Appendix B. Eligible Costs/Restrictions on Cost.

Construction and Renovation

For details regarding construction and renovation costs allowed under this program, see Appendix B. Eligible Costs/Restrictions on Cost.

Operational Overtime

For details regarding overtime costs allowed under this program, see Appendix B. Eligible Costs/Restrictions on Cost.

iii. Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are NOT allowable under the Hiring of Firefighters category. However, national, state, local, or tribal volunteer firefighter interest organizations may be reimbursed for indirect costs under the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters category only if they have an approved indirect cost rate agreement with FEMA or their cognizant federal agency. A copy of the approved rate (a fully executed, agreement negotiated with the applicant's cognizant federal agency) is required at the time of application.

iv. Other Cost Requirements

Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) Compliance

As a Federal agency, FEMA is required to consider the effects of its actions on the environment and/or historic properties to ensure that all activities and programs funded by the agency, including grants-funded projects, comply with Federal EHP regulations, laws and Executive Orders as applicable. Grantees and sub-grantees proposing projects that have the potential to impact the environment, including but not limited to construction of communication towers, modification or renovation of existing buildings, structures and facilities, or new construction including replacement of facilities, must participate in the FEMA EHP review process. The EHP review process involves the submission of a detailed project description that explains the goals and objectives of the proposed project along with supporting documentation so that FEMA may determine whether the proposed project has the potential to impact environmental resources and/or historic properties. In some cases, FEMA is also required to consult with other regulatory agencies and the public in order to complete the review process. The EHP review process must be completed before funds are released to carry out the proposed project. It is FEMA's policy to *not* fund projects that have been initiated or completed before any required EHP review has been conducted. Grantees are encouraged to submit EHP Screening Forms as soon as possible to ensure that adequate time is allowed for the EHP review. The GPD EHP Screening Form can be accessed at http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/90195.

EHP Policy Guidance can be found in FP 108-023-1, *Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Policy Guidance*, at http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/85376, and FEMA Environmental Planning and Historical Preservation Policy 108.024.4, dated December 18, 2013, at http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1388411752234-6ddb79121951a68e9ba036d2569aa488/18Dec13-NoNEPAReview.pdf.

Excess Funds

Due to successful competitive bid processes, some grantees have funds remaining after the completion of their obligations. Grantees that complete the approved scope of work and still have grant funds available may request to use the remaining funds provided that

the grantee has met all grant requirements during the initial period of performance and the use of the funds is consistent with the original scope of work. This shall be done through the amendment request process.

V. Application Review Information and Selection Process

A. Application Review Information

All complete and eligible applications are evaluated relative to SAFER Grant funding priorities (see information on the funding priorities in the full FOA, Section I. Funding Opportunity Description, B. Program Priorities and Appendix A: Program Priorities).

In the application, fire departments applying for SAFER Grants will be asked general questions about their organization and community, as well as questions specific to the proposed project. National, state, local, or tribal organizations that represent the interests of volunteer firefighters will be asked a number of general questions regarding their organizations and a series of activity-specific questions relative to the recruitment and retention projects they propose and the activities selected. Answers to activity-specific questions as well as information submitted throughout the application will determine an applicant's standing relative to SAFER Grant funding priorities. Applications most consistent with the SAFER Grant funding priorities score higher in the automated evaluation. Automated evaluation scores represent 50 percent of the total application score.

A panel of at least three Peer Review Panelists performs the second phase of an application's evaluation. These panelists evaluate the application using the Narrative Statement, answers to the general questions, and answers to the activity-specific questions. Each application is evaluated on its own merits against established criteria and is not compared to other applications. The peer review evaluation score represents 50 percent of the total application score.

i. Narrative Statement

The Narrative Statement of the application must provide specific details about the activity for which applicants are seeking funding, including budget details. The applicant must explain how the proposed activity is related to the hiring or recruitment and retention program.

In applications for Recruitment and Retention, applicants must also provide details regarding how volunteers will qualify for the incentives (who is eligible for initiatives funded under the grant and discuss any prerequisites). For example, an organization might withhold paying nominal stipends until members participate in a minimum number of operational activities.

Applicants should save their work often as the electronic application includes a time-out feature. If no-save activity is detected for a period of time, the application will time-out

and all information that is not saved could be lost. Therefore, it is recommended that applicants type the Narrative Statement information offline using a word processing program, such as MS Word, Word Perfect, Notepad, etc., to avoid losing any information.

Once the Narrative Statement is complete, applicants can then cut-and-paste the text into the appropriate sections within the Narrative Statement section of the online application.

Please note the Narrative Statement blocks do not allow for formatting. Do not type your narrative using only capital letters. Additionally, do not include tables, special fonts (e.g., quotation marks, bullets, etc.), or graphs.

Space for the Narrative Statement is limited. Once you save the Narrative Statement to the online application, log-out and then log back in to the application to verify that the information was successfully saved.

B. Application Selection Process

Peer Review Panelists will evaluate and score each category based on the following narrative elements within each category:

i. Hiring of Firefighters Category

The Narrative Statement for applications requesting funding in this category must include Elements 1 through 4. Each element will be evaluated independently by a Peer Review Panelist. The relative weight of each element in the determination of the grant award is listed below.

1) Project Description (30%)
   a) Describe why the department needs the positions requested in this application.
   b) Describe how the positions requested in this application will be used within the department (e.g., fourth on engine, open a new station, eliminate browned out stations, reduce overtime [provide additional details as to how this will occur], etc.).
   c) Describe the specific benefits that the positions requested in this application will provide to the fire department and community.
   d) Describe how the awarding of this grant would enhance the department's ability to protect critical infrastructure.
2) Impact on Daily Operations (30%)
   a) Explain how the community and the current firefighters employed by the department are at risk without the positions requested in this application.
   b) Explain how that risk will be reduced if the applicant is awarded the positions requested in this application.
   c) Discuss the impact the positions requested in this application will have on the department's NFPA compliance.
3) Financial Need (30%)

a) Provide detail about the department's operating budget, including a high-level breakdown of the budget.
b) Describe the department's inability to address financial needs without federal assistance.
c) Discuss other actions the department has taken to meet its staffing needs (e.g., state assistance programs, other grant programs, etc.).

4) Cost Benefit (10%)
a) Describe the benefits (e.g., anticipated savings, efficiencies) the department and community will realize if awarded the positions requested in this application.

ii. Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Category (Fire Departments)
The Narrative Statement for applications requesting funding in this category must include Elements 1 through 4. Each element will be evaluated independently by a Peer Review Panelist. The relative weight of the evaluation criteria in the determination of the grant award is listed below:

1) Project Description (30%):
a) Describe the recruitment and/or retention problems or issues identified by the department.
b) Describe the recruitment and/or retention plan to address the identified problems or issues.
c) Explain how the items or activities requested in this application will help address the identified problems or issues.
d) Describe how the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters and/or retention of current volunteer firefighters will impact the department's operational needs or capabilities.
e) Describe the specific benefits the new volunteer firefighters and/or retention of current volunteer firefighters will provide for the fire departments and community.
f) If your grant will have a regional impact, identify the activities that are part of the regional request and explain which activities are exclusive to the host applicant, if applicable.

2) Impact on Daily Operations (30%):
a) Describe how the community and current volunteer firefighters in the department are at risk without the items or activities requested in this application.
b) Explain how the risk will be reduced if awarded the items or activities requested in this application.
c) Explain the impact the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters and/or the retention of current volunteer firefighters will have on the department's NFPA compliance, if awarded.

3) Financial Need (30%)
a) Provide detail about the department's operating budget, including a high-level breakdown of the expenditures for day-to-day activities.

b) Describe the department's budget shortfalls and the inability to address financial needs without federal assistance.
c) Describe other actions the department has taken to meet its staffing needs (e.g., state assistance programs, other grant programs, etc.).

4) Cost Benefit (10%)
a) Describe the benefits (e.g., anticipated savings, efficiencies, etc.) the department and community will realize if awarded the items or activities requested in this application.

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

The Narrative Statement for applications requesting funding in this category must include Elements 1 through 4. Each element will be evaluated independently by a Peer Review Panelist. The relative weight of the evaluation criteria in the determination of the grant award is listed below:

1) Project Description (30%):
a) Describe the recruitment and/or retention problems or issues identified by the fire departments participating in this application.
b) Describe your organization's recruitment and/or retention plan to address the problems or issues identified by the fire departments participating in this application.
c) Describe how the items or activities requested in this application will help address the identified problems or issues.
d) Describe how the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters and/or retention of current volunteer firefighters will impact the operational needs or capabilities of the fire departments participating in this application.
e) Describe the specific benefits the new volunteer firefighters and/or retention of current volunteer firefighters will provide for the fire departments participating in this application and their respective communities.
f) Briefly describe the organization's procurement practices and the timelines to complete the activities requested in this application.

2) Impact on Daily Operations (30%):
a) Describe how the fire departments participating in this application and their current volunteer firefighters and communities are at risk without the items or activities requested in this application.
b) Explain how that risk will be reduced if awarded the items or activities requested in this application.
c) Describe the impact that the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters and/or the retention of current volunteer firefighters will have on the NFPA compliance of the fire departments participating in this application, if awarded.

3) Financial Need (30%)

a) Provide detail about the organization's operating budget, including a high-level breakdown of the expenditures for day-to-day activities.
b) Describe the organization's budget shortfalls and the inability to address financial needs without federal assistance.
c) Describe other actions the organization has taken to meet the staffing needs of the fire departments participating in this application (e.g., state assistance programs, other grant programs, etc.).

4) Cost Benefit (10%)
   a) Describe the benefits (e.g., anticipated savings, efficiencies, etc.) the fire departments participating in this application and their communities will realize if awarded the items or activities requested in this application.

C. Post Panel Review

After the panel review, the Program Office will conduct an additional and final review to assess the request with respect to costs, quantities, feasibility, eligibility, and grantee responsibility prior to recommending any application for award. The applicant's prior AFG, SAFER, and FP&S Grant(s) management performance will also be taken into consideration when making recommendations for award. Each application that scores high under the automated evaluation and peer review process will be deemed in the fundable range. Applications that are in the fundable range will undergo both a Technical Review by a subject matter specialist as well as a Program Office review prior to being recommended for award. All final funding determinations will be made by the Assistant Administrator of the Grant Programs Directorate.

VI. Post-Selection and Pre-Award Guidelines

A. Notice of Award

Upon approval of an application, the award will be made in the form of a grant. The "award date" is the date the approval of award is entered in the e-Grant system. Notification of award approval is made through the e-Grant system by automatic e-mail to the primary point of contact listed in the initial application. Follow the directions in the notification to accept the award.

Grantees must either accept or decline their award no later than 30 days from the award notification date.

Turndown Procedure

SAFER Grants are competitive. Not all applications will be successful, but all unsuccessful applicants will receive a decision letter from FEMA that briefly describes the shortcomings and weaknesses of the application. These aspects are articulated by the technical evaluation process. Due to the historically high number of turndowns for these grants, detailed debriefs for all applicants will not be possible, and will not be offered.

B. Administrative and Federal Financial Requirements

All successful applicants for all DHS Grant and cooperative agreements are required to comply with DHS Standard Administrative Terms and Conditions, which are enumerated in the DHS Chief Financial Officer Financial Management Policy Manual and are available online at

http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Proposed%20FY%2014%20Standard%20TC%202013-12-04.pdf.

i. Payment

DHS/FEMA uses the Direct Deposit/Electronic Funds Transfer (DD/EFT) method of payment to recipients. To enroll in the DD/EFT, the recipient must complete a Standard Form 1199A, Direct Deposit Form.

FEMA utilizes the e-Grants System for the full lifecycle of the grant. Please access the system by visiting https://portal.fema.gov/famsVuWeb/home.

Grantees should not expend funds or request a drawdown until all special conditions listed on the grant award document have been met and the award is approved for payment in the e-Grants system. Grant recipients should maintain procedures to minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds and the disbursement of those funds (see 31 CFR Part 205). If the grant recipient does not follow procedures, it will be required to be on a reimbursement for costs incurred method.

Although advance drawdown requests are permissible, grantees remain subject to the interest requirements of the Cash Management Improvement Act (CMIA) and its implementing regulations at 31 CFR Part 205. Interest under CMIA will accrue from the time federal funds are credited to a grantee's account until the time the grantee pays out the funds for program purposes. FEMA strongly encourages recipients to draw down funds as close to disbursement or expenditure as possible to avoid accruing interest.

NOTE: Funds will not be automatically transferred upon issuance of the grant. Grantees must submit a request for advance/reimbursement through the e-Grants system in order for the funds to be transferred to the grantee's account.

C. Reporting Requirements

Awardees are required to submit various financial and programmatic reports as a condition of their award acceptance. Future awards and fund drawdowns may be withheld if these reports are delinquent.

Any reports or documents prepared as a result of this grant shall be in compliance with federal "plain English" policies, directives, etc.

i. **Financial and Compliance Audit Report:**

For audits of fiscal years beginning on or after December 26, 2014, recipients that expend $750,000 or more from all federal funding sources during their fiscal year are required to submit an organization-wide financial and compliance audit report. The audit must be performed in accordance with the requirements of GAO's Government Auditing Standards, located at http://www.gao.gov/govaud/ybk01.htm, and the requirements of Subpart F of 2 CFR Part 200, located at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=55e12eead565605b4d529d82d276105c&node=2:1.1.2.1.1.6&rgn=div6.

For audits of fiscal years beginning prior to December 26, 2014, recipients that expend $500,000 or more from all federal funding sources during their fiscal year are required to submit an organization-wide financial and compliance audit report. The audit must be performed in accordance with GAO's Government Auditing Standards, located at http://www.gao.gov/govaud/ybk01.htm, and OMB Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations, located at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a133_compliance_supplement_2012. Audit reports are currently due to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse no later than nine months after the end of the recipient's fiscal year.

ii. **Financial and Program Reporting Periods and Due Dates**

Refer to the next two sections.

iii. **Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act**

This act refers to reporting requirements under the *Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA)* (Public Law 109-282), as amended by Section 6202(a) of the *Government Funding Transparency Act of 2008* (Public Law 110-252). As defined by the OMB, all new federal awards of $25,000 or more as of October 1, 2010, are subject to FFATA reporting requirements. Federal awards include not only prime awards for grantees, cooperators, and contractors but also awards to sub-recipients. More information can be found at http://www.usaspending.gov/news.

iv. **Federal Financial Report (FFR)**

SAFER Grant recipients are required to submit semi-annual Federal Financial Reports (FFRs, SF-425). FFRs, to be submitted using the online e-Grant system, will be due semi-annually based on the calendar year beginning with the period after the award is made. Grant recipients are required to submit an FFR throughout the entire period of performance of the grant. Reports are due no later than July 30 for the period January 1-June 30, and no later than January 30 for the period July 1-December 31.

Future awards and fund drawdowns may be withheld if these reports are delinquent, demonstrate lack of progress, or are insufficient in detail.

vii. Program Performance Reporting Requirements

SAFER Grant recipients are responsible for completing and submitting a programmatic Performance Report using the e-Grants system on a quarterly basis. The programmatic Performance Report is due within 30 days of the end of each of the grant's quarters. The first quarter will end three months after the grant's award date and every three months after, if applicable.

viii. Monitoring

Grant award recipients will be monitored programmatically and financially on an annual and as needed basis by FEMA staff to ensure that the activities and project goals, objectives, performance requirements, timelines, milestone completion, budgets, and other related program criteria are being met.

Monitoring may be accomplished through either a desk-based review or onsite monitoring visits, or both. Monitoring will involve the review and analysis of the financial, programmatic, performance, compliance and administrative processes, policies, activities, and other attributes of each federal assistance award, and will identify areas where technical assistance, corrective actions, and other support may be needed.

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

ix. Close Out

Within 90 days after the end of the period of performance, grantees must submit a final FFR and final progress report detailing all accomplishments and a qualitative summary of the impact of those accomplishments throughout the period of performance. Grantees must submit these reports within the closeout module in the e-Grants system.

As part of the final report, grantees may also need to submit the Tangible Personal Property Report (SF-428), available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/grants/approved_forms/sf-428.pdf, to provide an inventory of all tangible personal property acquired using SAFER Grant funds.

An inventory of all construction projects that used funds from this program must be reported using the Real Property Status Report (Standard Form SF 429) available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/grants/approved_forms/sf-429.pdf.

After these reports have been reviewed and approved by FEMA, a close-out notice will be completed to close out the grant. The grantee is responsible for returning any funds that have been drawn down, but remain as unliquidated on grantee financial records.

1. Extensions

Extensions to the initial period of performance identified in the award will be considered only through formal, written requests to FEMA with specific and compelling justifications as to why an extension is required. All extension requests must address the following:

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

Awardees must submit all proposed extension requests to DHS/FEMA for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the end of the period of performance.

VII. DHS/FEMA Contact Information

This section describes several resources that may help applicants in completing a FEMA Grant Application. These points of contact are also available for successful applicants who may require assistance during execution of their award.

A. For Program Questions

i. SAFER Help Desk

The SAFER Help Desk is available to SAFER Applicants and award recipients. The Help Desk can provide assistance with navigation through the automated application, as well as provide programmatic assistance with respect to questions of eligibility. When necessary, grantees will be directed to a federal point of contact who can answer specific

programmatic questions or concerns. The Help Desk can be contacted at (866) 274-0960 or via e-mail at firegrants@dhs.gov. The Help Desk hours of operation during the application period are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (EST), Monday through Friday.

Additional guidance and information can be obtained by visiting http://www.fema.gov/firegrants/.

ii. **FEMA Regional Fire Program Specialists**

Each of the FEMA regions has specialists that can assist applicants with the application process and provide pre- and post-award assistance. For more information, visit http://www.fema.gov/about/contact/regions.shtm or http://www.fema.gov/fire-grant-contact-information.

B. For Financial and Administrative Questions

i. **Grant Programs Directorate (GPD)**

FEMA's GPD Grant Operations Division Business Office provides pre- and post-award administration, financial support and technical assistance, such as for password resets and registration requests, and questions regarding Form 1199A. Additional guidance and information can be obtained by contacting the FEMA Call Center at (866) 927-5646 or via e-mail to ASK-GMD@dhs.gov.

C. For e-Grant System Questions

For technical assistance with the e-Grant system, please contact the Help Desk. The Help Desk can be contacted at (866) 274-0960 or by e-mail at firegrants@dhs.gov.

D. For Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) Questions

All inquiries and communications about GPD projects or the EHP review process, including the submittal of EHP review materials, should be sent to gpdehpinfo@fema.gov.

For information on FEMA's EHP Requirements, applicants should refer to FP 108-023-1, *Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Policy Guidance*, at http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/85376, and FEMA Environmental Planning and Historical Preservation Policy 108.024.4, dated December 18, 2013, at http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1388411752234-6ddb79121951a68e9ba036d2569aa488/18Dec13-NoNEPAReview.pdf.

E. Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

If you have information about instances of fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement involving FEMA programs or operations, you should contact the DHS OIG Hotline at (800) 323-8603; by fax at (202) 254-4297; or e-mail DHSOIGHOTLINE@dhs.gov.

VIII. Other Critical Information

A. National Incident Management System (NIMS) Implementation

Prior to allocation of any federal preparedness awards in FY 2014, grantees must ensure and maintain adoption and implementation of NIMS.

Emergency management and incident response activities require carefully managed resources (personnel, teams, facilities, equipment, and/or supplies) to meet incident needs. Utilization of the standardized resource management concepts such as typing, inventorying, and cataloging promote a strong national mutual aid capability needed to support delivery of core capabilities. Additional information on resource management and national Tier I NIMS Resource Types can be found at http://www.fema.gov/resource-management.

NOTE: FEMA's current policy does *not* require SAFER Applicants to be in compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) either to apply for SAFER Funding or to successfully receive an SAFER Award. Any department that receives a FY 2014 SAFER Award must achieve the necessary NIMS compliance level prior to the end of the grant's period of performance.

FEMA has developed the NIMS Guideline for Credentialing of Personnel to describe national credentialing standards and to provide written guidance regarding the use of those standards. This guideline describes credentialing and typing processes, and identifies tools which Federal Emergency Response Officials (FEROs) and emergency managers at all levels of government may use both routinely and to facilitate multijurisdictional coordinated responses.

The Guideline and the NIMS Guide 0002 can be found at the NIMS Resource Center at the following URLs:

- The Guideline: http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/ResourceMngmnt.shtm#item3
- The NIMS Guide: 0002 http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/ng_0002.pdf
- For more information on NIMS, visit http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims
- All questions can be directed via e-mail to FEMA-NIMS@dhs.gov or via telephone at (202) 646-3850.

Although state, local, tribal, and private sector partners—including nongovernmental organizations—are not required to credential their personnel in accordance with these guidelines. FEMA strongly encourages them to do so in order to leverage the federal investment in the Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) 201 infrastructure and to facilitate interoperability for personnel deployed outside their home jurisdiction. Additional information can be found at http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/nims_alert_cred_guideline.pdf.

B. Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards

SAFER Grantees are required to follow all applicable federal regulations, including regulations governing administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements for federal awards which are in place on the date in which a grant is awarded by FEMA to the grantee.

On December 26, 2013, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) promulgated the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards that establish a new, uniform set of mandatory requirements for federal awards to non-federal entities. OMB codified this final guidance (also commonly referred to as the "Super Circular" or "Omni Circular") on December 26, 2013 at 2 CFR Part 200. This final guidance will supersede existing federal regulations governing FEMA grants for future awards which include, but are not limited to, the Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments at 44 CFR Part 13, the Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments at 2 CFR Part 225, and Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations at OMB Circular A-133.

OMB has directed the Department of Homeland Security to adopt these new requirements at 2 CFR Part 200 no later than December 26, 2014. Any grant awards made after DHS's adoption of the regulations at 2 CFR Part 200 will be required to follow the new regulations. FEMA anticipates that all FY 2014 SAFER Awards will be made after the adoption of the new regulations. Except as otherwise noted, awards made by FEMA prior to that date – including grants made in previous fiscal years – will continue to apply the existing requirements which include, but are not limited to, 44 CFR Part 13 and 2 CFR Part 225. FEMA will provide additional information to SAFER Stakeholders and Applicants upon adoption of the new regulations.

IX. How to Apply

Applying for an award under this program is a multi-step process and requires time to complete. To ensure that an application is submitted on time, applicants are advised to start the required steps well in advance of their submission. **Applicants should allow at least 15 business days (three weeks) to complete the application steps listed below.** Failure of an applicant to comply with any of the required steps before the deadline for submitting their application will automatically disqualify their application from funding.

A. Obtain a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number

The applicant must provide a DUNS number with their application. This number is a required field for all subsequent steps in the application submission. The DUNS number provided in your application must match the DUNS number associated with your SAM registration. Applicants should verify they have a DUNS number or take the steps necessary to obtain one.

Applicants can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling DUNS Number Request Line at (866) 705-5711. FEMA *cannot* assist applicants with questions related to obtaining a current DUNS number.

B. Obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN)

FEMA requires both the EIN and a DUNS number prior to the issuance of a funding award; both are also required to register with SAM (see below). The EIN base for an organization is the IRS Tax ID number and for individuals, it is their social security number. Organizations and individuals submitting their applications must correctly identify the EIN from the DUNS since both are 9-digit numbers. If these numbers are not correctly identified in the application, this may result in a delay in the issuance of the funding award and/or incorrect payment to a grantee organization.

Organization applicants applying for an EIN should plan on a minimum of two full weeks to obtain an EIN.

If you need assistance registering an EIN, please go to http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&-Self-Employed/Apply-for-an-Employer-Identification-Number-(EIN)-Online. FEMA *cannot* assist applicants with questions related to obtaining a current EIN.

C. Register with the System for Award Management (SAM)

SAM registration is required to receive a SAFER Grant award. The applicant may register or update its SAM registration at http://www.sam.gov. SAM registration is only active for one year and must be renewed annually.

Per 2 CFR § 25.205, FEMA may not make an award to an entity until the entity has complied with the requirements to provide a valid DUNS number and maintain an active SAM registration with current information.

Payments and amendments are also contingent on the information provided in SAM, so it is imperative that the information in the application is correct, current, and matches the information in SAM.gov. Please ensure that your organization's name, address, DUNS number, and EIN are up to date in SAM, and that the DUNS number used in SAM is the same one used to apply for all other FEMA awards.

SAM registration is a multi-step process including validating your EIN with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to obtain a Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) code. The CAGE code is only valid for one year after issuance and must be current at the time of application. If you need assistance registering with SAM, please go to https://www.fsd.gov/ or call 866-606-8220. FEMA *cannot* assist applicants with questions related to obtaining a current CAGE code.

D. Submit the Application in e-Grants System

i. General Information

The FY 2014 SAFER Grant application is available through the e-Grants system at https://portal.fema.gov. Links to the application may also be found on the US Fire Administration's (USFA) Website at http://www.usfa.fema.gov and the grants.gov Website at http://www.grants.gov.

The automated e-Grant application was designed with many built-in help screens and drop-down menus to assist with the application process.

The e-Grant online application system ONLY supports Internet Explorer (IE) browsers, Version 6 or higher.

- Do not use any other browsers than IE when entering your information.
- Do not have multiple browsers ("windows") open when entering your information, even if you are using IE.

There are several known problems entering application information using non-IE browsers, or having multiple browsers open, including but not limited to:

- System failure to recognize correct information
- System failure to capture and retain correct information
- System functions like "cut and paste" being disabled
- System resources like Help screens or drop down menus being unavailable

There is no appeal process for inaccurate or incomplete information retained by the system due to improper or multiple browser usage by the applicant. Prior to submission and up to the application deadline, the online application can be saved, retrieved, and edited as required.

IMPORTANT: Once you have submitted your application, you cannot change it. You will not be allowed to update your application for any reason(s). Your primary point-of-contact will automatically be notified via e-mail once your application is received.

ii. How to Apply

Eligible applicants may only apply for SAFER Funding online via the e-Grants application at https://portal.fema.gov. The system will allow an authorized representative to login and create a username and password, if needed.

- User Name/Password: If you have submitted any Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG, SAFER, FP&S, SCG) applications in a previous grant cycle, then you must continue to use the same username, password, and DUNS number for every FY2014 application. If you have forgotten your password

or your primary point(s) of contact have changed, please visit https://edit.fema.gov/frequently-asked-questions-0 for instructions on how to update and correct your organization's information.

Applicants will need to completely fill out the following forms as part of the online e-Grants application:

- Standard Form 424, Application for Federal Assistance
- Standard Form 424A, Budget Information (Non-construction)
- Standard Form 424B, Standard Assurances (Non-construction)
- Standard Form LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if the grantee has engaged or intends to engage in lobbying activities)
- FEMA Form 20-16C, Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements, available at http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=2628

The program title listed in the CFDA is "Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER)." The CFDA number is 97.083.

To be considered eligible for funding, all applications must be completed and submitted electronically by 5:00 p.m. (EDT) on (March 6, 2015).

Only applications submitted via e-Grants will receive an e-mail confirmation. Applicants should print a copy of their submitted application as well as the submission confirmation for their records upon receiving verification that their application has been successfully submitted. Incomplete applications or applications submitted via any other electronic means, including e-mail or fax, will be considered ineligible.

Applicant tools and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are posted at http://www.fema.gov/firegrants.

If you need assistance during the application process, contact the Help Desk at (866) 274 0960 or via e-mail at firegrants@dhs.gov.

iii. Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD) and/or Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS)

The TDD/FIRS Number available for this announcement is (800) 462-7585. The automated application is designed with help screens and drop-down lists to assist the applicant throughout the process. Applicants can save and retrieve their work and for updates and revisions through the end of the application period; however, after an application has been completed and submitted, no changes can be made.

The automated system does not allow an applicant to submit an incomplete application. The system alerts the applicant when required information has not been entered. By submitting an application online, the applicant will automatically receive an e-mail confirmation that the application was successfully submitted.

The online system will allow a single authorized representative of an eligible organization to log on and create a user name and password. The selection of the authorized representative is at the discretion of each applicant. Applicants should record their user name and password for future access to their application.

iv. Grant Writer Fees (Recruitment and Retention Category Only)

Applicants under the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters category are allowed to hire and reimburse a grant writer to assist in the application process. Applicants are responsible for ensuring the information contained in their submitted application is a true and accurate reflection of their organization and represents the scope of work being proposed. Applicants are required to review all work produced by grant writers, or other third parties on their behalf, prior to submission of their application. Applications that falsely represent their organization or the proposal in any manner will have their application be considered ineligible by the Program Office and referred to the Office of Inspector General for further action, as appropriate.

Grant writer fees payable on a contingency basis are not an eligible expense. For grant writer fees to be eligible as a pre-award expenditure, the fees must be specifically identified and listed in the Request Details section of the application. The SAFER Program will only authorize reimbursements for application preparation, not administration, up to but not more than $1,500. SAFER Applicants are also reminded, for grant writer fees to be eligible for reimbursement under this program, that applicants must procure their grant writer services in a manner that is consistent with the Federal Grant Procurement Standards located at 2 CFR § 200.317 through 2 CFR § 200.326.

In addition, the fees must have been paid prior to any contact with grants management staff or an award (e.g., paid within 30 days of the end of the application period). Applicants shall be required to provide documentation to support these pre-award expenditures. A copy of the cancelled check and bank statement shall be provided upon request. Failure to provide the requested documentation may result in the grant writer fee being deemed ineligible and the grant reduced accordingly.

NOTE: SAFER requires that all grant writer or preparer information must be entered into the Overview section of the SAFER Application, whether that person, entity or agent is compensated or not.

Appendices

Appendix A: Program Priorities

Criteria Development Process

Each year, FEMA convenes a panel of fire service professionals to develop funding priorities for the SAFER Grant program. The panel makes recommendations about funding priorities as well as developing criteria for awarding grants.

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

- International Association of Fire Chiefs
- 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 content of this SAFER FOA reflects implementation of the criteria development panel's recommendations with respect to the priorities, direction, and criteria for awards. Based on the recommendations, funding priority is given to applications that effectively address the evaluation elements as outlined.

Program Priorities Description

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

There are separate evaluation criteria for the following categories:

- Hiring of Firefighters category (including rehiring, retention, attrition, and new hires)
- Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters category – Fire Departments
- Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters category - National, State, Local, or Tribal Volunteer Firefighter Interest Organizations

I. Hiring of Firefighters Category

Grants awarded under the Hiring of Firefighters category enable combination and career fire departments to improve or restore staffing levels to attain a more effective level of response and a safer incident scene. Grants are awarded directly to volunteer, combination, and career fire departments to help fire departments increase their cadre of frontline firefighters. Funding under these subcategories provides fire departments with funds to pay firefighter salaries and benefits (exclusive of overtime).

A. Meeting the National Standards

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

Applicants will be asked general questions about the NFPA standard they are attempting to meet as well as their current ability to meet that standard (without including the use of overtime). Applicants will also be asked 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 consideration than applications resulting in smaller percentage increases in compliance.

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

NFPA 1710 Assembly Requirements: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Department (Section 5.2.4.2 – Initial Full Alarm Assignment Capability)

This standard applies primarily to all-career fire departments and combination departments if the combination department chooses it.

NFPA 1720 Assembly Requirements: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments (Section 4.3 – Staffing and Deployment)

This standard applies primarily to all-volunteer fire departments, but it may also apply to combination departments if the combination department does not choose to comply with the NFPA 1710 standard. The tables below identify the priority levels for current and new compliance with the NFPA 1710/1720 standard.

Current 1710/1720 Compliance Priorities	
H Never or 0%	M Half 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 80-99%

New 1710/1720 Compliance Priorities	
H Always or 100%	M Half 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 1-19%

Need More Information?
For more information about these two standards, visit http://www.nfpa.org/saferactgrant. For more information on the standards, contact NFPA at (800) 344-3555 or e-mail questions to stds_admin@nfpa.org.

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

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

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

D. Automatic and Mutual Aid

Automatic and Mutual Aid
H Fire departments that have formal automatic and/or mutual aid agreements, and applicants that based requests on a staffing needs assessment, also receive higher consideration.

E. Training Requirements

Minimum Emergency Medical Services (EMS) certification
H Applicants will receive higher consideration if the personnel funded under the grant will meet the minimum EMS certification requirements prescribed by the locality or state having jurisdiction.

II. Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Category – Fire Departments

The purpose of these grants is to assist fire departments with the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters who are involved with or trained in the operations of firefighting and emergency response. The grants are intended to create a net increase in the number of trained, certified, and competent firefighters capable of safely responding to emergencies within the grantee's response area. For this reason, projects that are comprehensive in nature and based on a clear needs assessment, implementation plan, and evaluation plan will receive higher consideration.

A. Meeting Staffing Standards

The goal under this SAFER category is to assist departments experiencing a high rate of turnover and that have staffing levels significantly below the ideal staffing level required to comply with NFPA standards 1710 or 1720 (for details, see section 1(c) *Meeting National Standards*). Departments who currently have the lowest recruitment and retention rates are given a higher consideration for funding.

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 Volunteers	
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. Recruitment/Retention Plan

It is critical to have a plan for recruitment and/or retention activities. Applications requesting funding for recruitment and/or retention programs should be based on formal plans. Applicants must summarize the departments' recruitment and/or retention plans in the Narrative Statement and explain how the projects/activities will fulfill the plans and meet organizational goals.

R&R Priorities	
H Applicants that will perform a periodic evaluation of the program's impact will receive higher consideration	H Applicants who currently have a coordinator and marketing plan in place will receive higher consideration
M Applicants that will request grant funding for a coordinator's position and marketing plan	

D. Call Volume and Population Served

Department call volume and population served are both factors in the initial evaluation. Departments responding to a higher number of incidents and departments who protect a larger jurisdiction receive higher consideration.

E. Firefighter Health Measures

Applicants who indicate the newly recruited firefighters will undergo an entry-level physical and receive immunizations, who indicate they will provide annual medical exams, and 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-compliant physicals

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

Worker's Compensation/Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D)	
H Applicants who currently provide worker's compensation/accidental death and dismemberment insurance receive higher consideration	M Applicants who plan to supply worker's compensation/accidental death and dismemberment insurance with grant funds

F. Training Requirements

Timeliness of Training
H Applicants will receive higher consideration if they will train the newly recruited firefighters to meet the minimum fire and EMS certification requirements prescribed by the locality or state within 24 months of appointment to the department.

Training and Certification	
H FF II/EMT	M FF I
H FF II	L First Responder
M FF I/EMT	

G. Regional Requests

Requests for recruitment or retention that have a regional impact (i.e., an impact beyond the immediate boundaries of the applicant's first-due area) will receive higher consideration.

An eligible applicant, which can include a fire department, may act as a "host applicant" and apply for support of both a regional initiative and its own department's internal needs on one application.

In order to apply for a regional project, the host fire department must agree, if awarded, to be responsible for all aspects of the grant. This includes, but is not limited to, accountability for the assets and all reporting requirements. Regional host applicants and participating partner agencies must execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or equivalent document, signed by all parties participating in the award, prior to submitting an application under the Regional Program activities. The agreement should specify the individual and mutual responsibilities of the participating partners, the participant's level of involvement in the project(s), and the proposed distribution of all grant funded assets. Successful Regional applicants shall provide a copy of the signed MOU at the time of award. Any entity named in the application as benefiting from the award shall be a party the MOU or equivalent document.

In completing the Request Details and Narrative Statement sections of the application, the applicant must include a list of participating third-party organizations that will benefit from the regional project if the project is approved. The third-party organizations that will benefit from the recruitment and retention project may also apply for funding under SAFER as long as the third-party organizations do not apply for a project that could conflict with or duplicate the host applicant's project. Applicants must also certify that they will ensure the fire departments participating in this application have not received grants for similar items/activities.

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

III. Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Category – National, State, Local, or Tribal Volunteer Firefighter Interest Organizations

The purpose of these grants is to assist national, state, local, or tribal organizations that represent the interests of volunteer firefighters with the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters who are involved with or trained in the operations of firefighting and emergency response. The grants are intended to create an aggregate increase in the number of trained, certified, and competent firefighters capable of safely responding to emergencies on behalf of the fire departments being represented. For this reason, projects that are comprehensive in nature and based on a clear needs assessment, implementation plan, and evaluation plan will receive higher consideration.

In completing the Request Details and Narrative Statement sections of the application, the applicant must include data that approximates the characteristics of the entire region and/or all fire departments affected by the grant. If awarded, grantees 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.

A. Meeting Staffing Standards

The goal under this SAFER category is to assist departments experiencing a high rate of turnover that have staffing levels significantly below the ideal staffing level required to comply with NFPA standards 1710 or 1720 (for details, see Section 1c. Meeting National Standards).

Organizations that currently have the lowest recruitment and retention rates among the entire region and/or all fire departments benefiting from the grant funds are given a higher consideration for funding.

B. Volunteer Membership

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 that have a significant number of volunteer firefighters, receive higher consideration.

Percentage of Volunteers	
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. Recruitment/Retention Plan

It is critical to have a plan for recruitment and retention activities. Applications requesting funding for recruitment or retention programs should be based on formal plans. Applicants must summarize the organization's recruitment and retention plans in the Narrative Statement and explain how the projects/activities applied will fulfill the plans and meet organizational goals.

R&R Priorities	
H Applicants that will perform a periodic evaluation of the program's impact	H Applicants who currently have a coordinator and marketing plan in place
M Applicants that will request grant funding for a coordinator's position and marketing plan	

Appendix B: Eligible Costs/Restrictions on Cost

The Peer Review Panelists consider all budgeted expenses as part of the cost-benefit determination and may recommend appropriate adjustments. Regardless of the eligibility of any costs requested or the panelists' determination, FEMA reserves the right to reduce any requests for funding, in whole or in part, that it deems excessive or otherwise contrary to the best interests of the program.

Hiring of Firefighters Category – Eligible Costs

- Salary and associated benefits (actual payroll expenses) for the positions funded under the SAFER Grant are eligible.
- Only firefighters hired or rehired after the SAFER Grant award date (except if awarded under the retention activity) are eligible for grant funding. Firefighters hired after the SAFER Grant award date are considered new hires.
- 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. However, recognizing many departments have shifts exceeding a 40-hour workweek, FEMA also will consider funding the job-sharing of a full-time position if the grantee has sufficient justification. A job-share position is a full-time position occupied by more than one person.
    - **Example**: A department may hire two part-time staff persons at 28 hours each to fulfill the scheduled work hours of one 56-hour shift position.
- Salaries and benefits of firefighters hired under SAFER Funding while they are engaged in training are eligible.
- Costs for overtime that fire departments routinely pay as a part of the base salary or the firefighter's regularly scheduled and contracted shift hours in order to comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) are eligible.
- Volunteer and mostly volunteer fire departments may hire individuals to fill officer-level positions (e.g., chief, fire inspector, training officer, safety officer, etc.).
- SAFER Grant funds will only pay for operational positions whose primary assignment (more than 50 percent of duties) is fire suppression, which includes staffing a fire suppression vehicle, regardless of collateral duties.
- Eligible positions for funding under the Rehiring or Attrition activities must have been laid off or vacated two years prior to the start of the application period (February 9, 2015)
- Firefighters who have been issued a formal layoff notice, which includes a specific date for the layoff action, prior to the start of the application period, and those who face imminent layoff – within 120 days of the close of the application period – are eligible for SAFER Funding under the Retention activity. Since the application period closes on (March 6, 2015), the layoffs must become effective on or before (July 4, 2015).

Hiring of Firefighters Category – Eligible Costs

- Any layoff action not executed in accordance with the terms of the official layoff notice or which does not meet the above requirements may not qualify for funding in the rehiring of laid off firefighters or retention categories. Applicants that do not meet these parameters must apply under the Attrition or New Hire activity.
- Eligible positions under the Retention category must be employees of the department at the time of application.
    - Fire departments that are looking to retain contract firefighters should apply under the Attrition category.
    - If a retention position becomes vacant after award, departments must fill the vacancy with a new hire in order to maintain the operational staffing level.

Hiring of Firefighters Category – Ineligible Costs

- The salaries and benefits of firefighters who are current employees or were hired prior to the award date (except under the retention activity) are ineligible.
- The SAFER Grant may not be used to fund promotions (e.g., pay a current member a higher salary by placing them in a new SAFER-funded position). If a department chooses to promote a current member, SAFER Grant funding may be used to fund the vacated firefighter position.
- Pre-application costs, such as grant writer fees, administrative costs, and indirect costs associated with hiring or rehiring firefighters are ineligible.
- Costs to train and equip firefighters are ineligible (this does not include the salaries and benefits of firefighters hired under SAFER Funding while they are engaged in training).
- Uniforms and physicals are ineligible.
- Overtime costs are ineligible (except as noted in "eligible costs" above).

Recruitment and Retention Category – Eligible Costs

Overview

Applicants must correlate the activities for which funding is being requested and the identified recruitment or retention problems or issues being addressed. FEMA will not fund activities if an applicant has not provided sufficient information detailing how an activity being funded will enhance recruitment and retention.

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.

Departments may want to consult their jurisdiction to understand the full legal and financial implications involved with implementing or sustaining programs that offer benefits or financial awards to firefighters (such as stipends, Length of Service Award Program [LOSAP], etc.).

All funded activities under Recruitment and Retention must be governed by formally adopted Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Minimally, these SOPs should specify who qualifies for each of the incentives, specific requirements for earning the incentives, and the disposition of the awarded incentives if an individual fails to fulfill the stipulations.

FEMA will not fund any activities that are covered under a department's normal operating budget. Federal funding should not be used to supplant an existing activity or program. Retroactive payments or recognition for services rendered prior to the grant award are ineligible (with the exception of grant writer fees discussed in Section IX(d)(iv)).

Examples of initiatives that may receive funding include, but are not limited to:

- Nominal stipends for firefighters where the primary duty is an operational assignment (fire suppression) regardless of collateral duties.
- Insurance packages such as Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D), disability, health, dental, life, etc.
- Reimbursement to members while attending required basic training (e.g., compensation for lost wages, mileage, lodging, per diem). Note that costs for mileage, lodging, and per diem will only be reimbursed at the Federal Government rate.
- Marketing costs to recruit new volunteer members
- Station internet access
- Computers in common areas
- LED/electronic signs (note: 75 percent of usage must be dedicated to Recruitment and Retention activities – additional restrictions apply; see the full FOA, Section IV. Funding Restrictions, A. Restrictions on Use of Award Funds, iv. Other Cost Requirements, Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation [EHP] Compliance)
- One set of station duty uniforms for each new recruit only (pants, shirts, hats, and boots)
- Non-uniform clothing (t-shirts, jackets, or pullovers) as part of an award program only
- Station modifications (e.g., converting space into bunkroom - restrictions apply; see the full FOA, Section IV. Funding Restrictions, A. Restrictions on Use of Award Funds, iv. Other Cost Requirements, Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation [EHP] Compliance)
- Salary and benefit costs for a recruitment and retention coordinator. Salary and benefit costs should be

based on reliable market research (see earnings information published by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics). Information on how the associated costs were determined should be provided in the Request Details portion of the application.

- Physicals for new recruits only. All grant-funded physicals must meet NFPA 1582 standards (Chapter 6, Medical Evaluations of Candidates 6.1 and Chapter 9, Essential Job Tasks — Specific Evaluation of Medical Conditions in Members). The cost of physicals should be based on local physician or health center prices.
- Explorer, cadet, and mentoring programs (see page 43 for specific eligible costs)
- Staffing needs assessment
- Administrative costs up to three percent of the total awarded amount in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. Applicants may apply for administrative costs if the costs are directly related to the implementation of the program for which they are applying. Administrative costs are identifiable costs directly associated with the implementation and management of the grant and cannot exceed three percent of the award.
- Tuition assistance for higher education (including college tuition and not limited to firefighter training or education) and professional certifications (Note: coursework or certifications in this category should be more advanced than what the department typically funds for required minimum-staffing requirements)
- Books and lab fees for higher education or professional certification (not including computers)
- Costs for training not currently covered under the department's operating budget. Training requests must be detailed in the Request Details and Narrative Statement sections of the application and must closely correlate to the applicant's recruitment and/or retention goals.
- Awards program for participation in operational activities, like operational training and/or responding to incidents (e.g., length of service plaques, gift cards, non-uniform clothing)
- New Length of Service Award Programs (LOSAP)
- Mileage reimbursement for operational activities (NOTE: mileage will only be reimbursed at the Federal Government rate)
- Applications for funding in the Recruitment and Retention category could include activities requiring up to four years to complete (with proper justification)
- Indirect costs for national, state, local, or tribal volunteer firefighter interest organizations that have a federally approved indirect cost rate agreement
- Exercise equipment and gym memberships limited to no more than $10,000 (total per grant award).
- Grant writer fees (see the full FOA, Section IX. How to Apply, D. Submit the Application in e-Grants System, iv. Grant Writer Fees (Recruitment and Retention Category Only)

Personal Protective Equipment

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) may be funded for newly recruited firefighters (after they have successfully passed an NFPA 1582 compliant physical), but PPE for other types of members or existing members is not eligible.

Funds are available to acquire OSHA-required and NFPA-compliant PPE for firefighting personnel. Only actual costs for PPE are allowed and will be paid on a reimbursable basis. Allowable costs may be limited to reasonable amounts, as determined by FEMA.

Grantees are required to provide documentation to support the purchase of PPE (proof that the firefighter(s) have undergone an NFPA 1582 compliant physical and are certified as "fit for duty"). PPE purchased with SAFER Grant funding must be utilized by adequately trained staff. In addition to these requirements, 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.

- Eligible PPE Expenditures:
  - One set of PPE for structural or wildland firefighting per new recruit.
    - SAFER considers a complete set of structural PPE to be comprised of one SCBA mask/face piece, one pair of pants, one coat, one helmet, one hood, one pair of boots, one pair of gloves, and one pair of suspenders. In those jurisdictions where additional PPE, like Personal Safety/Rescue Bailout Systems are statutorily required, SAFER will consider all statutorily required items to be part of a complete PPE set.
    - SAFER considers a complete set of wildland PPE to be comprised of: one set of boots, one set of coveralls (or pants, coat, and suspenders), one pair of gloves, one hood, one set of goggles, one helmet, and one fire shelter).
  - American National Standards Institute (ANSI)-approved retro-reflective highway apparel
- Ineligible PPE Expenditures:
  - Three-quarter length rubber boots
  - Self-Contained breathing Apparatus (SCBAs) (not including SCBA masks/face pieces)
  - PASS Devices
  - Spare cylinders
  - Bomb disposal suits
  - PPE for hazardous materials and other specialized incidents
  - More than one set of PPE per member

Construction/Remodeling/Renovation of Existing Facilities

- Project construction using SAFER Funds may not exceed $10,000.

Recruitment and Retention Category – Eligible Costs

- Remodeling/renovations to an existing facility are allowable. The renovations must be minor interior alterations not to exceed $10,000 (total per grant award).
- Eligible applicants must provide a cost breakdown in the Request Details section of the application. The costs must be justified in the Narrative Statement section as well.
- Remodeling/renovations may not change the footprint or profile of the building.
- Any request for modifications to facilities may require Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP) review (see the full FOA, Section IV. Funding Restrictions, A. Restrictions on Use of Award Funds, iv. Other Cost Requirements, Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) Compliance). Grantees are encouraged to have completed as many steps as possible for a successful EHP review in support of their proposal for funding (i.e., coordination with their State Historic Preservation Office to identify potential historic preservation issues and to discuss the potential for project effects; compliance with all state and EHP laws and requirements).
- Written approval must be provided by FEMA prior to the use of any SAFER Funds for construction or renovation. If awarded funds for construction, grantees may be required to submit evidence of approved zoning ordinances, architectural plans, any other locally required planning permits, and a notice of interest.

Explorer/Cadet Programs

Eligible items include but are not limited to:

- One set of station duty uniforms (pants, shirts, hats, and boots) per explorer/cadet
- Training (Non-Immediate Danger to Life and Health or IDLH)
- One set of structural or wildland PPE (as defined above but not including an SCBA mask/face piece because PPE for explorers or cadets may not be used in an IDLH atmosphere)
- Insurance
- Coordinator's position
- Workers compensation insurance
- Transportation costs
- Medical exams

Items that are NOT eligible include the following:

- SCBA including mask/face piece
- Anything involving the IDLH atmosphere
- Vehicles
- Warning lights for private vehicles

- Any activities precluded by the authority having jurisdiction
- Radios, cell phones, or pagers

Audit Costs
Certain recipients of federal funding must comply with the Single Audit Acts Amendments of 1996 (31 USC §§ 7501-7507); 31 USC §§ 503, 1111; Executive Order 8248; Executive Order 11541; and the federal regulations applicable at the time a grant is awarded to a grantee. Reasonable costs incurred for such an audit are an eligible expenditure and should be included in the applicant's proposed budget. For more information about OMB Circulars, please visit www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars.

Audit costs are considered administrative expenditures and may be treated as a direct cost or an allocated indirect cost, as determined in accordance with the provisions of applicable OMB cost principles circulars or other applicable cost principles or regulations.

If the AFG Grantee is the recipient of *multiple* federal funding sources then *only* a pro rata share of the audit cost(s) may be chargeable to their SAFER Award.

Example: Total Audit Costs of $1,000.00:
During their fiscal year, an organization expends $150,000 from a SAFER Award and $600,000 from other federal sources for a total of $750,000.

The SAFER pro rata share is ($150,000/$750,000 = 1/5 or 20 percent), of the $1,000 total audit costs; so only $200 (20 percent of $1,000) would be an eligible audit cost that can be charged to the SAFER Award.

SAFER does *not* require any other audits; therefore, you cannot charge any audit expenses that are not directly related to an audit required by either OMB Circular A-133 or Subpart F of 2 CFR Part 200.

Pre-award Costs
Generally, grantees cannot use grant funds to pay for products and services contracted for or purchased prior to the effective date of the grant award.

- Fees for grant writers may be included as a pre-award expenditure. Fees payable on a contingency basis are not an eligible expense (see full FOA, Section IX. How to Apply, D. Submit the Application in e-Grants System, iv. Grant Writer Fees (Recruitment and Retention Category Only)
    - The only costs or acquisitions that may be considered for pre-award are those costs obligated after an application's submission but prior to an offer of award.
    - An applicant must notify FEMA in writing and in advance of their intent to spend local funds that will be requested as a pre-award expense. This notification shall be sent via e-mail to the SAFER Help Desk (FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov), so the request may be reviewed and entered into their e-Grants application file.
    - A grantee may only request pre-award costs after an offer of award has been made, via a Scope of Work Amendment to the SAFER Program Office, using the online e-Grants management system.
    - All pre-award costs will be decided on a case-by-case basis. Pre-award costs are only

Recruitment and Retention Category – Eligible Costs

permitted with the written approval of FEMA.

- Expenses incurred after the application deadline, but prior to award, may be eligible for reimbursement if the expenses were justified, unavoidable, consistent with the grant's scope of work, and specifically approved in writing by FEMA (Scope of Work Amendment) after an offer of award has been made and accepted. Pre-award purchases made for the purpose of convenience, to obtain more favorable pricing, or to replace equipment that is still operational are not considered to be unavoidable and will not be considered for reimbursement.
- Final approval will be given after all invoices and related procurement documents have been reviewed by FEMA to ensure the obligation occurred after the application submission, but prior to an offer of award, and is justified, unavoidable, and consistent with the grant's scope of work.

Recruitment and Retention Category – Ineligible Costs

- Salary and benefits for firefighters
- Costs incurred prior to award except for grant writer fees; see full FOA, Section IX. How to Apply, D. Submit the Application in e-Grants System, iv. Grant Writer Fees (Recruitment and Retention Category Only)
- Vehicles
- Fire suppression equipment or vehicles
- Fire simulators, fire evolution, or fire training props (e.g., burn trailers, forcible entry, rescue/smoke maze, flashover simulators, etc.),
- Sirens or other outdoor warning devices
- Communication equipment including cell phones, pagers, portable radios, or Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems
- Cash payments for non-operational activities
- Payments for travel to or participation in leisure activities such as theatre tickets, entertainment tickets, and trips (professional sporting events, etc.)
- Costs associated with award banquets, such as food, refreshments, entertainment, or rental facilities. Reimbursement for actual awards (e.g., plaques and trophies) is eligible.
- Costs for food or refreshments
- Costs for training currently covered under the department's operating budget, such as tuition or instructor fees for department-mandated, basic-level training, etc.

Recruitment and Retention Category – Ineligible Costs
• Services at a member's personal residence (e.g., internet access, plowing of driveways) • Furniture (except for newly converted bunkrooms), televisions, fixtures, appliances (e.g., refrigerators), and entertainment equipment • "Giveaways," such as pencils, pens, t-shirts, cups, mugs, or balloons, for recruitment events • Fees for courses and training that are available free of charge on the internet or at a state/local training facilities (e.g., NIMS 100, 700, 800) • Costs for fuel • Annual medical exams (not including NFPA 1582 physicals for new recruits)

Appendix C: Grantee Responsibilities

SAFER Award Recipients (grantees) must agree to the following:

1. Grantees must perform all tasks (scope of work) as outlined in the grantee's application approved by FEMA within the period of performance, comply with the terms of this FOA, comply with all the terms and conditions of their grant award, including any special conditions in accordance with the articles of agreement, and comply with all applicable Federal statutory and regulatory requirements. Grantees that do not fulfill their obligations under their SAFER Grant will be considered in default and may be required to return the federal funds disbursed under the grant award.

2. Grantees under the Hiring of Firefighters category who lay off any operational personnel during the two-year period of performance will be considered in default of their grant and the award will be terminated. Grantees may be required to return the federal funds disbursed under the grant award.

3. Grantees under the Hiring of Firefighters category must agree to maintain operational staffing at the level that existed at the time of award and must also retain all SAFER-funded positions throughout the grant's full two year period of performance unless the grantee has been afforded a waiver of this requirement. At the time of award, grantees under the Hiring of Firefighters category must submit a current (pre-SAFER) roster listing paid operational/firefighting personnel in support of NFPA 1710 or NFPA 1720, who are in full-time or job share positions. The program office will work with a grantee to establish the correct staffing maintenance number which combines the number of pre-SAFER and SAFER-funded operational positions. Once this is established, grantees must agree to maintain this number throughout the two year period of performance by taking active and timely steps to fill any vacancies.

   Grantees who are unable (due to documentable economic hardship) to backfill non-SAFER operational positions that are vacated through attrition (e.g., resignation, retirement) after award may petition FEMA for a waiver of staffing maintenance requirements. An approved waiver allows a grantee to decrease and reestablish the staffing maintenance number agreed to at the time of award by the number of positions that a grantee is unable to fill. In order to qualify for this waiver, the economic hardship must affect the entire public safety sector in a grantee's jurisdiction, not only the fire department. *Waivers will not be granted for SAFER-funded positions. Grantees who fail to maintain this level of staffing risk losing the federal funds awarded under this grant.*

4. Since the goal of the SAFER Grant Program is to enhance incident scene safety, grantees must certify that the primary assignment (more than 50 percent of duties) of all SAFER-funded firefighters will be an operational assignment (fire suppression) regardless of collateral duties, which includes staffing a fire suppression vehicle.

5. Grantees must retain grant files and supporting documentation for three years after receipt of the official notification that the grant has been closed. FEMA may require access to any pertinent books, documents, papers, or records belonging to a grant recipient. The DHS Office of Inspector General or the Comptroller General of the United States may also require access to a grantee's books and records.

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

6. Grantees must provide periodic performance reports to FEMA. In all years of the grant's period of performance, for both the Hiring of Firefighters and the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Categories, grantees must submit quarterly performance reports as well as a final performance report at grant closeout. Payments are requested online using the automated system and payments are based on actual expenses incurred during the period covered by the payment request. Quarterly performance reporting is required even if the grantee has not requested funding within the quarter.

   At the end of the grant's period of performance, all grantees are required to produce a final report on how the grant funding was used and the benefits realized from the award. Grantees must submit a final financial report and a final performance report (e.g., closeout report) within 90 days after the end of the period of performance. After these reports have been reviewed and approved by FEMA, grantees are given an official notice that the closeout has been accepted and completed. Any remaining grant funds are de-obligated. The grantee is responsible for returning any funds that have been drawn down but remain unspent.

7. Administer the grant in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards found at 2 CFR Part 200.

8. Follow the audit requirements of OMB Circular A-133 or 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F (as applicable) which require a non-federal entity that expends $500,000 or more in federal funds during its fiscal year for fiscal years beginning prior to December 26, 2014 and $750,000 or more in federal funds during its fiscal year for fiscal years beginning on or after December 26, 2014 to have a single or program-specific audit conducted for that year (for more information, see Section VI(C)(i) of this FOA and 2 CFR Part 200).

9. Notwithstanding any provision of other laws, firefighters hired under these grants shall not be discriminated against, or be prohibited from, engaging in volunteer firefighting activities in another jurisdiction during off-duty hours.

10. Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5 requires that, beginning October 1, 2005, all recipients of federal preparedness funds (including recipients of federal grants and contracts) adopt the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as a condition for the receipt of the federal funds.

    Recipients of FY 2014 SAFER Grants will be considered to be in compliance with the NIMS requirement if the grantee:

    a) Has an operational knowledge of the Incident Command System (ICS)
    b) Has an understanding of NIMS' principles and policies

c) Agrees to adopt and/or comply with all directives, ordinances, rules, orders, edicts, etc., passed down by the local or state authorities with respect to incident management.

Responders who have already been trained in ICS do not need retraining if their previous training is consistent with DHS standards. In order for us to document compliance, grantees will be required to certify their compliance with the NIMS/ICS requirements as part of their grant closeout process. Grantees may contact their State Emergency Preparedness Officer or State Fire Marshal for local NIMS compliance requirements.

11. To the extent possible, grantees should seek, recruit, and appoint women and members of racial and ethnic minority groups to increase their ranks within the applicant's department (see eligibility requirements).

12. FEMA strongly encourages applicants, to the extent practicable, to seek, recruit, and hire military veterans to increase their ranks within their departments. In FY 2014, all SAFER Applicants who have a policy in place addressing their intent to implement strategies to recruit military veterans will receive higher consideration.

13. Equipment Marking: Awardees must use, manage, and dispose of any equipment purchased with SAFER Grant funds in a manner that is consistent with the requirements of 2 CFR § 200.313. Awardees may consider marking equipment in the manner of "purchased with funds provided by the US Department of Homeland Security" to facilitate their own audit processes, as well as federal audits and monitoring visits, which may result from receiving federal funding.

14. Grantees may use their own procurement procedures, which reflect applicable state and local laws and regulations, provided their procurements conform to the Federal Grant Procurement Standards located at 2 CFR § 200.317 through 2 CFR § 200.326.

    Grantees who fail to adhere to their own procurement policy, or otherwise fail to fully comply with the federal laws and standards regarding purchases involving federal funds, may be subject to questioning and subsequently disallowed costs.

    Through audits conducted by the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General (OIG) and the AFG Program Office grant monitoring, findings have shown that some AFG Recipients have not fully adhered to the proper procurement requirements when spending grant funds. Anything less than full compliance with federal procurement policies jeopardizes the integrity of the grant as well as the grant program. Below, we highlight the federal procurement requirements for fire department, State Fire Training Academy, and nonaffiliated EMS organization grantees when procuring goods and services with federal grant funds. DHS will include a review of grantees' procurement practices as part of the normal monitoring activities. All procurement activity must be conducted in accordance with applicable Federal regulations in effect at the time a grant is awarded to a grantee.

    Competition: All procurement transactions shall be conducted in the following manner:

- Provides open and free competition
- Promotes competition and ensures advantageous pricing

NOTE: In addition to following applicable federal regulations in effect at the time a grant is awarded to a grantee, grantees must also follow their own written procurement procedures as well as all applicable state and local laws and regulations.

NOTE: AFG will consider acquisitions by a grantee who has formally adopted internal or governing polices and authorizes acquisitions through prequalified lists of persons, firms, or products which are used in acquiring goods and services, e.g., Government Services Administration (GSA) schedule or co-operative or group purchasing, as having satisfied AFG Program requirements for competition, so long as those prequalified lists are current and include qualified sources to ensure maximum open and free competition. Also, the grantee must not preclude potential bidders from qualifying during the solicitation period. AFG will consider existing previously bid or state contracts ("tag along" contracts) to satisfy federal requirements for competition so long as they also confirm to the applicable federal procurement regulations in effect at the time the grant is awarded.

NOTE: Grantees who fail to adhere to their own procurement policy, or otherwise fail to fully and openly compete any procurement involving federal funds, may find that their expenditures questioned and subsequently disallowed.

NOTE: To the greatest extent possible, the AFG Program recommends that the use of federal grant funds be used for the purchase of goods and services manufactured, assembled, and distributed in the United States.

NOTE: Grantees must provide FEMA with written notification of their intent to utilize a non-competitive procurement process for the acquisition of AFG-funded products or services. Examples of non-competitive procurements include, but are not limited to, the use of sole source procurements and specifying products or services by brand name.

Documentation

At a minimum, grantees are required to maintain and retain the following:

- Backup documentation, such as bids and quotes;
- Cost/price analyses on file for review by federal personnel; and
- Other documents required by federal regulations applicable at the time a grant is awarded to a grantee.

The required documentation for federally funded purchases should include the following:

- Specifications
- Solicitations
- Competitive quotes or proposals

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

NOTE: Grantees who fail to fully document their purchases may find their expenditures questioned and subsequently disallowed.

Specifications: When creating your bid specifications, and prior to being sent to the prospective bidders, you should ensure the following:

- Bids and specifications are not proprietary to any one product or manufacturer.
- Applicable federal regulations in place at the time a grant is awarded are followed.
- In-state or local geographical preferences are not imposed in the evaluation of bids or proposals.
- Product information is obtained from vendors in order to be more informed about the items they plan to purchase.
- Specifications obtained from vendors for any solicitation with federal grant funds are not used if the specifications would be found to be restrictive.

NOTE: Vendors and manufacturers may provide product and technical information to grantees for consideration. The applicants may use this information during the grantees' product evaluation and drafting of solicitation specifications. However, vendors and manufacturers that develop or draft specifications, requirements, statements of work, and invitations for bids or requests for proposals must be excluded from competing for such procurements.

Grantees may not use the vehicle(s) being awarded as collateral for any type of financial loan(s). Any grantee activity that encumbers or clouds the title of an awarded vehicle may result in actions:

- By FEMA or other federal agencies to modify or revoke the award
- That may include federal actions to claim or seize awarded vehicle
- Debarment and Suspension.*

** Executive Orders 12549 and 12689 provide protection from fraud, waste, and abuse by debarring or suspending those persons deemed irresponsible in their dealings with the Federal Government.*

Personal and Organizational Conflicts of Interest
The grantee must adhere to standards of conduct and avoid conflicts of interest when procuring goods or services with federal grant funds in accordance with applicable federal regulations in effect at the time a grant is awarded to a grantee.

The grantee must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the performance of its employees engaged in the selection, award and administration of contracts. No

employee, officer, or agent must participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by a federal award if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest. Such a conflict of interest would arise when the employee, officer, or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for a contract. The officers, employees, and agents of the non-federal entity must neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors or parties to subcontracts. However, non-federal entities may set standards for situations in which the financial interest is not substantial or the gift is an unsolicited item of nominal value. The standards of conduct must provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations of such standards by officers, employees, or agents of the grantee.

NOTE: For the purposes of this program, FEMA considers volunteers of an organization and grant writers to be employees, officers, and/or agents of the grantee. As such, no volunteer or member of an organization or anyone involved in the application for funding can participate in, or benefit from, the procurement if federal funds are involved.

Grantees that purchase items with grant funds from vendors who employ any of their volunteers/members will have to document how they avoided a *Conflict of Interests* during the procurement process (i.e., specific details regarding how the members/volunteers removed themselves or how they were prevented from participating in the process). Grantees may be required to provide this documentation upon request. Grantees who fail to fully document their purchases may find their expenditures questioned and subsequently disallowed. Remember that FEMA reserves the right to request and review any and all bids/spec prior to purchase. Grantees may be subject to an audit after award.

Appendix D: Glossary

The following definitions apply to SAFER Grants.

Attrition: A gradual reduction in work force without firing of personnel, as when workers resign or retire and are not replaced.

Automatic-aid: An agreement whereby fire departments are dispatched simultaneously on the initial alarm or where fire departments participate in closest-unit response dispatching.

Benefits: Includes regular compensation paid to employees during periods of authorized absences from the job, such as vacation leave, sick leave, military leave, etc.

These costs are absorbed by all organization activities in proportion to the relative amount of time or effort actually devoted to each. Employer contributions or expenses for social security, employee insurance, workmen's compensation, pension plan costs, and the like, whether treated as indirect costs or as direct costs, shall be distributed to particular awards and other activities in a manner consistent with the pattern of benefits accruing to the individuals or group of employees whose salaries and wages are chargeable. Overtime expenses, other than those meeting FLSA requirements, are *not* eligible as benefits costs.

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

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

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

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

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

Formal Layoff Notice: Any layoff notice should align with the local rules and regulations that govern civil service employment in the jurisdiction. In order to be reasonable to employees, and to provide employees facing layoff actions a clear understanding of the impending action, any notice of layoff should be in writing and delivered to a specific employee affected by the action. The notice should identify a specific date employment will cease or specific event that would trigger the termination of employment.

The notice should be delivered or otherwise presented directly to the affected employee in advance of the layoff action in accordance with the civil service provisions or union agreement in force in the jurisdiction taking action, e.g., 60 days prior to the effective date of the layoff action. The notice should specify whether the action is permanent or temporary as well as provide the anticipated schedule of layoffs. For the purposes of the SAFER Program, a notice that is not executed within the specified terms will be considered void unless an additional notice is provided within 14 days of the original action date.

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

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

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

Mutual-aid: An agreement whereby assisting fire departments are dispatched into another fire department's jurisdiction only when the first-arriving unit on a scene calls for assistance, or when specially requested by dispatch.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Volunteer Fire Department: A fire department that has an all-volunteer force of firefighting personnel. For a fire department to have an all-volunteer force, no member may receive financial compensation (in the form of salary or wages) for their services other than life and health insurance, workers' compensation insurance, and/or a nominal stipend per call. FEMA considers a department to be majority volunteer if more than 50 percent of its membership is made up of personnel who do not receive financial compensation for services.

R15-37

PROPOSED

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF STAFFORD
STAFFORD, VIRGINIA

RESOLUTION

At a regular meeting of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors (the Board) held in the Board Chambers, George L. Gordon, Jr., Government Center, Stafford, Virginia, on the 3rd day of March, 2015:

MEMBERS: VOTE:
Gary F. Snellings, Chairman
Laura A. Sellers, Vice Chairman
Meg Bohmke
Jack R. Cavalier
Paul V. Milde III
Cord A. Sterling
Robert "Bob" Thomas, Jr

On motion of , seconded by , which carried by a vote of , the following was adopted:

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO APPLY FOR THE 2014 STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE FIRE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE (SAFER) GRANT

WHEREAS, the Board identified public safety as one of the County's top priorities; and

WHEREAS, at the request of the Board's Public Safety Committee, the County's Fire and EMS Chief determined that the Fire and Rescue Department (Department) is eligible to apply for a SAFER Grant to hire additional career firefighters; and

WHEREAS, the Public Safety Committee carefully considered the recommendations of the Department; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds that applying for the SAFER Grant promotes the health, safety, and welfare of the County and its citizens;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Stafford County Board of Supervisors on this the 3rd day of March, 2015, that it be and hereby does authorize the County Administrator to apply, and execute a letter of support on behalf of the Board of Supervisors, for the 2014 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant in an amount not to exceed $_____, to provide salary and benefits for ___ career firefighters for the 24-month Grant period.

AJR:ML:jm