

**2005 Program Guidance
for the
Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program

February 2005**

This document provides a summary of the 2005 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program's priorities. It explains how to apply, what items can be requested, and how applications will be evaluated. Please read this program guidance carefully as well as the Final Rule, the program's Notice of Funds Availability and answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs). Each document should be reviewed as they provide detailed insight into the AFG. These documents will be posted on the website of the Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP), U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Together, these four documents will provide you with the information you need to complete the online application. The online application will be available at www.firegrantsupport.com or about March 7, 2005.



Prepared by the Office for Domestic Preparedness and the U.S. Fire Administration

PROGRAM GUIDANCE FOR THE 2005 ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT PROGRAM

The purpose of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program is to award one-year grants directly to fire departments and nonaffiliated emergency medical services (EMS) organizations of a State to enhance their abilities with respect to fire and fire-related hazards. Our primary goal is to provide assistance to meet fire departments' and nonaffiliated EMS organizations' firefighting and emergency response needs. This program seeks to support organizations that lack the tools and resources necessary to protect the health and safety of the public and their emergency response personnel with respect to fire and all other hazards they may face.

Applicants to the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program should be aware of a number of key national preparedness initiatives and priority focus areas. Applicants for Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) are encouraged to review closely the language in **Appendix A** in order to stay abreast of significant initiatives being highlighted by DHS and to be aware of the program requirements that will be associated with their grant, if they become a recipient of AFG financial assistance.

Of particular interest will be the requirements for FY2005 with respect to the National Incident Management System (NIMS), and the actions recipients of federal preparedness grants such as the "fire" grants, must carry out in order to support the goals that have been established nationally for the Nation's first responders. Requirements connected to interoperable communications are also included in the appendix for those interested in broad communications projects.

Also, Homeland Security Presidential Directive-8 (HSPD-8) directs the grant program office to assure that Federal resources are directed toward ensuring the Nation is prepared to prevent, respond, and recover from major events, especially the prevention and response to terrorists attacks. It is our belief that funding any fire departments through the AFG is consistent with HSPD-8 and will ensure that first-responders are prepared to respond to major events. As in prior years' programs, equipment and training for preparing for and responding to events that involve chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive devices (CBRNE) are eligible this year.

The authority of this program is derived from the Federal Fire Protection and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. §§ 2229 et seq.), as amended. In fiscal year 2005, Congress reauthorized the AFG and appropriated a total of \$650,000,000 to the Department of Homeland Security's Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) to carry out the activities of this Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program. Congress also authorized the use of up to five percent for administering the grant program. The appropriated funds are available until September 30, 2006.

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program for fiscal year 2005 generally mirrors previous years' programs with two significant changes. The first significant change is the allowance of nonaffiliated EMS organizations (i.e., non-fire based EMS organizations) as eligible applicants for as much as two (2) percent of the appropriated funds. The other change is the segregation of the Fire Prevention and Safety Grant (FP&S) program from the AFG. We will have a separate application period devoted solely to Fire Prevention and Safety. It is our intention to have this application period in the Fall of 2005 which would be open to fire departments as in the past. Please monitor the AFG website (www.firegrantsupport.com) for updated information on this program. Nonaffiliated EMS organizations will not be eligible for the FP&S program.

Eligible applicants for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program are limited to fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations of a State. A "State" is defined as the 50 States plus the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and Puerto Rico. A "fire department of a State" is defined as an agency or organization that has a formally recognized arrangement with a State, territory, local, or tribal authority (city, county, parish, fire district, township, town, or other governing body) to provide fire suppression to a population within a fixed geographical area. A "nonaffiliated EMS organization" is defined as a public or private nonprofit emergency medical services organization that provides direct emergency medical services to a specific geographic area but is not affiliated with a hospital and does not serve a geographic area in which DHS finds that emergency medical services are adequately provided by a fire department. In making the determination regarding "adequately provided," DHS will conclude that any nonaffiliated EMS organization would be eligible under this definition if the organization is providing direct emergency medical services at the time of application and is in good standing with the community, i.e., licensed and/or chartered to provide EMS services to the community. Included in this category of eligibility would be rescue squads that are adequately trained to provide emergency medical services to the community that they serve.

A municipality (such as a fire district) may submit an application on behalf of a fire or EMS organization when the organization lacks the legal status to do so, e.g., when the organization falls within the auspices of the municipality or district. When a municipality submits an application on behalf of an organization, the organization is precluded from submitting an additional application on its own. The Alaska Village Initiative, a nonprofit organization incorporated in the State of Alaska, shall also be considered eligible for purposes of receiving assistance under this program on behalf of Alaska Native villages. Each eligible applicant is limited to one application per program year.

For the purposes of this program, we consider that two or more separate fire departments or nonaffiliated EMS organizations that share facilities are tantamount to being one organization. This determination is designed to assist the grants program office in its fiscal oversight of the program by avoiding or eliminating duplication of

benefits. For example, it would not be cost beneficial to purchase two firefighting vehicles for two fire departments that share a facility to serve the same community when so many other communities need new apparatus. We believe that two or more organizations that share facilities should be able to satisfy all of their operational needs with one application. If two or more organizations that share facilities submit more than one application, we will deem all of the applications ineligible.

A fire department can apply for assistance for its emergency medical services (EMS) unit provided the unit falls organizationally under the auspices of the fire department. Fire departments may **NOT** apply for assistance as an “unaffiliated EMS organization” under the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program. Fire departments whose applications are submitted as a nonaffiliated EMS organization will have their application deemed ineligible. Likewise, a nonaffiliated EMS organization may **NOT** apply for assistance as a fire department. If a nonaffiliated EMS organization submits an application as a fire department, we will deem that application to be ineligible as well.

Non-Federal airport and/or port authority fire or EMS organizations are eligible only if they have 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. Airport or port authority fire and EMS organizations whose **sole** responsibility is suppression of fires or EMS response on the airport grounds or port facilities are not eligible for this grant program.

Fire departments that are Federal or contracted by the Federal government and are solely responsible under their formally recognized arrangement for suppression of fires on Federal installations or land are not eligible for this grant program. Fire stations that are not independent entities, but are rather part of, controlled by, or are under the day-to-day operational direction of a larger fire department or agency, are typically not eligible. Fire departments that are for-profit departments (i.e., do not have specific nonprofit status or are not municipally based) are not eligible to apply for assistance under this program. Also not eligible for this program are auxiliaries, fire service organizations or associations, and State/local agencies such as a forest service, fire marshals, hospitals, and training offices. Not eligible for EMS assistance as a nonaffiliated EMS organization are dive teams and urban search and rescue teams.

Automated Application and Tutorial for 2005

Again, this year’s application is automated and available online. The application will be accessible from the ODP website (www.firegrantsupport.com) and USFA website (www.usfa.fema.gov). We have designed the automated application with many built-in “help screens” and “drop-down menus” to assist you throughout the application process. The application can be saved and retrieved as many times as you need while you’re filling it out, right up to the deadline or submittal. ***Once you’ve submitted your application, however, you cannot change it.*** Another positive feature of the automated system is that it will not allow you to submit an incomplete application, i.e., the system

will alert you if you have not provided required information. Also, by submitting your application online, you will be automatically notified that we have received your application via e-mail.

A tutorial will be available on the Internet to help applicants use the online grant application and become familiar with the AFG program. This tutorial explains the AFG program and many of the application screens; it provides tips for navigating the application screens and summarizes the changes in the grant program that are new in fiscal year 2005. The tutorial also provides a review of the lessons learned from previous years under the grant program.

You may decide to hire or otherwise use a grant writer to assist you in the application process. This is allowable. However, you, as the applicant, are responsible for the information contained in your application. By submitting the application, you are certifying that all of the information contained therein is true and an accurate reflection of your organization. Therefore, please review all work produced by grant writers or other third parties on your behalf prior to submission. Applicants that falsify their applications or misrepresent their organizations in any material manner will have their applications deemed ineligible by the AFG program office and referred to the Office of Inspector General for further action, as appropriate.

Paper applications will be accepted but are discouraged. We are discouraging paper applications because of the inherent delays associated with processing a paper application. Also, if awarded, applicants who submit paper applications must continue to manage their grants via paper, including payment requests, requests for modifications, reporting, etc., whereas electronic applicants can do all of these functions online. Additionally, paper applications don't have the built-in help that is available to the online applicants. Finally, there is no built-in assurance that your paper application is complete when submitted. If you do not have access to the Internet, contact us directly (1-866-274-0960) to request a paper copy of the application via mail. ***We will not send the paper applications to you via overnight delivery, nor by fax or e-mail.***

The only legitimate paper application is the application that we send you – do not use any paper application that you did not receive directly from us. Do not print the screens from this year's online application and submit it. Do not use a previous year's application. Any paper application that is not in the correct format will be deemed ineligible.

We will begin accepting completed applications for the 2005 program on or about March 7, 2005 (monitor the ODP and USFA Web sites for up-to-date information on the application period). Completed applications must be submitted electronically or otherwise received by us on or before the close of business (5:00 p.m. EDT) on the last day of the application period, currently projected for April 8, 2005. Applications submitted by mail must be postmarked no later than four calendar days prior to the end of the application period. Assuming an April 8, 2005, end-date, we will not accept

applications postmarked after April 5, 2005, unless we receive them prior to the end of the application period. Applications not submitted electronically must be mailed to the USFA Grant Program Technical Assistance Center, 16825 South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, Maryland, 21727-8998. No late, incomplete, or faxed applications will be accepted. No electronically submitted applications other than those submitted online via the automated grant application system will be accepted. We will not be responsible for applications mailed to any address other than the address listed above.

Project Development

In 2005, we have continued our practice of allowing you to formulate a very comprehensive grant proposal. Depending on the program for which you apply, we are allowing your grant proposal to include a number of related “activities” to address all of your needs within a programmatic or functional area. This approach provides you with the opportunity to develop a more comprehensive grant project that addresses a broader range of your fire department’s needs. You may submit only ***one application per application period***, and your application is further limited to only ***one*** of the program areas listed below. Multiple applications submitted on behalf of any one applicant will all be deemed ineligible. Be advised that your application should include only activities that can be completed within the one-year grant period.

Please note: For the 2005 AFG program year, we will conduct a separate application period for the Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) program. While an application period has not yet been established, it is our intention to conduct the fire prevention application period in the Fall of 2005. Fire departments will be eligible to apply for the FP&S program as in the past. Nonaffiliated EMS organizations will not be eligible for FP&S. We suggest that all interested applicants monitor the AFG website (www.firegrantsupport.com) for updated information on this program.

Fire Departments

You can submit an application for either of this year’s two program areas, and you may include as many activities within that one program as necessary to meet your needs. You may submit only ***one application per application period***, and your application is further limited to only ***one*** of the program areas listed below. Multiple applications submitted on behalf of any one applicant will all be deemed ineligible. The programs and associated activities eligible in this year’s grant program are as follows:

1. Operations and Firefighter Safety Program. Eligible activities available for fire departments under this function are limited to training, equipment, personal protective equipment, wellness and fitness, and modifications to fire stations and facilities. Please note that requests for emergency medical services training and equipment are available under the appropriate activities in this program area, i.e., under training or equipment. Also, note that requests for equipment, personal protective equipment, and training to prepare for response to incidents involving CBRNE are

available under the appropriate activities in this program area. Applicants should strive to ensure that all projects applied for under the grant program are consistent with National standards and address interoperability.

2. Firefighting Vehicle Acquisition Program. Eligible apparatus available to fire departments under this program include, but are not limited to, pumpers, brush trucks, tankers/tenders, rescue vehicles, ambulances, quints, aerials, foam units, and fireboats. You may apply for only **one** vehicle per year. Previous AFG vehicle grant recipients are **not** eligible to receive a vehicle grant in subsequent grant years.

As stated above, this year you may submit one application for assistance in only one of these two program areas. Within your selected program area, you may develop a comprehensive program to address all of your needs by applying for as many of the eligible activities you determine are necessary. For example, if you determine that your needs are in the area of Operations and Firefighter Safety, you could apply for any one of the activities under that program, or any combination of activities, or all of the activities listed within that program. If you need a vehicle, you must apply under the Firefighting Vehicle Acquisition Program. You may not apply for a vehicle in any program area other than the Firefighting Vehicle Acquisition Program.

Nonaffiliated EMS Organizations

Nonaffiliated EMS organizations are eligible to apply for assistance during the 2005 program period. The nonaffiliated EMS portion of the AFG program will mirror that available to fire departments in that applicants will have the option to apply for assistance under either the EMS Operations and Safety Program or the EMS Vehicle Acquisition Program. The EMS operations and safety program provides you with a range of eligible activities for you to formulate a very comprehensive grant proposal that could very easily satisfy all of your operational needs. The EMS vehicle acquisition program allows you to apply for a vehicle to enhance your emergency response capabilities and may include operator training as necessary.

Be aware, you may submit only **one application per application period**, and your application is further limited to only **one** of the two program areas listed below. Multiple applications submitted on behalf of one applicant will all be deemed ineligible. Be advised that your application should include any only activities that can be completed within the one-year grant period. The programs and associated activities eligible in this year's grant program are as follows:

1. EMS Operations and Safety Program. Eligible activities available to nonaffiliated EMS organizations under this function are limited to EMS training, EMS equipment including personal protective equipment, wellness and fitness, and modifications to stations and facilities. Also, note that requests for equipment, personal protective equipment, and training to prepare for response to incidents involving CBRNE are available under the appropriate activities in this program area. Applicants should

strive to ensure that all projects applied for under the grant program are consistent with National standards and address interoperability.

2. EMS Vehicle Acquisition Program. Eligible apparatus available to nonaffiliated EMS organizations under this program include, but are not limited to ambulances, transport units and rescue squads. Small specialty access vehicles such as ATVs, snowmobiles, and gators are not considered vehicles; rather, they are considered “equipment” and should be applied for under the EMS equipment activity under the EMS Operations and Safety Program. You may apply for only **one** vehicle per year. Applications requesting more than one vehicle will be deemed ineligible.

Regional Projects

An applicant, whether a fire department or a nonaffiliated EMS organization, may act as a “host applicant” and apply for large-scale or regional projects on behalf of itself and any number of neighboring organizations. Examples of such projects would be county-wide communications system, county-wide standardization of breathing apparatus, or the purchase of a specialized vehicle such as a hazmat vehicle that will be used for a larger geographic area than the applicant’s first-due area. Generally, these types of projects are designed to address issues of interoperability within a jurisdiction. In order to apply for such a project, the applicant must be eligible, i.e., either a fire department or a nonaffiliated EMS organization (a county, county association, or a city could not apply for the project) and agree, if awarded, to be responsible for the all aspects of the grant, such as accountability for the assets and all reporting requirements.

In the application, the host organization should provide only its own characteristics, i.e., the population of its own first-due area, not the total population that will be affected by the project. The extent of the affect of the project should be elaborated on in the narrative. The applicant must also include in the narrative section of the application a list of each third-party organization that will benefit from the regional project if the project is approved. The third-party organizations, i.e., either fire departments or non-affiliated EMS organizations, which will be the beneficiaries of the project may also apply for funding under the AFG as long as these third-party organizations do not ask for the same items as the host applicant. In the example where a host applicant is applying for a county-wide communications project, a third-party organization that will receive some of the communications equipment can apply for other needs as long as they do not apply for duplicative communications equipment. Additionally, the host applicant can apply for other needs beyond the regional project.

When evaluating the benefits of any regional project, we will take into account the other partners that will be involved in the project, whether that is other fire departments and/or non-affiliated EMS organizations, or other public service organizations. We will also take into consideration the extent to which the non-fire/EMS partners will contribute to the overall costs of the regional project.

Application Procedure

Eligible applicants can apply for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program online via the established “e-grants” application process. The system will allow one authorized representative of an applicant to log in and create a username and password for the applicant. If you submitted an application in previous years, it is advised that you use the same username and password that you used for your previous applications. The selection of the authorized representative is at the discretion of each applicant. The information requested online is an electronic version of many Federal grant forms. The application includes general questions about your organization and your community, as well as questions regarding your proposed project.

DUNS Number

Effective October 1, 2003, all Federal grantees must obtain a DUNS number, (a unique nine-character identification number provided by the commercial company Dun & Bradstreet). The Federal government will use the DUNS number to better identify related organizations that are receiving funding under grants and cooperative agreements and to provide consistent name and address data for electronic grant applications. Additional information about DUNS numbers can be found on the Dun & Bradstreet Web site (<https://eupdate.dnb.com/requestoptions/government/ccrreg/>).

There is no charge to obtain a DUNS number, and it is the applicant's responsibility to obtain one. Applicants are encouraged to apply for a DUNS number well in advance of the application period because it may take 2 to 3 weeks or more to obtain the number online. It is recommended that applicants request a DUNS number as soon as possible by calling 1-866-705-5711. When completing the online application, there is a special data field for entering the DUNS number. If applying on paper, use the box entitled “Federal Identifier” on the SF 424, Application for Federal Assistance, to enter the DUNS number. Be advised that this number is required for all Federal grant applications, and there may not be any extensions granted for applicants who were unable to obtain their number prior to the end of the application period.

Application

As in previous years, you will be required to answer a series of questions designed to provide the FIRE Grants Program Office with general information about your organization and your community. The answers you provide to these questions may be used in the evaluation of your application. We will also use some of the information to determine whether your organization serves an urban, suburban, or rural community. We believe that characteristics such as population, water supply, land use, number of stations, number of inhabitable structures over four stories tall in your jurisdiction, and call volume are indicators of the type of community you serve. We will use these characteristics to determine what type of community you serve. However, we will also allow you to designate the type of community that you serve. The designation will be

displayed on the application once you have completed the Department Characteristics sections of the application.

For fire department applicants, we have established different funding priorities in some of the program or activity areas depending on the type of community you serve. These funding priorities are delineated in each program area below, if applicable. This community designation (i.e., urban, suburban, or rural) may affect the ranking of your application depending on the program area or activity for which you are applying. If your designation differs from our determination, you will be required to explain in the narrative section of the application why your designation is different than ours.

After you have completed the general questions, you will be asked a series of activity-specific questions relative to the program you selected and the activities for which you plan to apply. You will answer the questions for each of the activities that support your project.

Lastly, you will be required to provide a written narrative describing your planned project. The narrative portion of your application should provide the details of activities you propose to be funded, including budget details for each of your activities. It should describe the financial need of your organization and elaborate on the benefits your community and/or organization will gain from the expenditure of the grant funds, particularly noting the benefits that would be realized due to your department's responsibilities for protection of critical infrastructure. Finally, the narrative should explain the extent to which the grant would enhance your daily operations and/or how the grant will positively impact your ability to protect life and property.

We recommend that you type your narrative offline in any word processing software, such as Word, Word Perfect, Notepad, etc. Once your narrative is complete, you can copy it or "cut-and-paste" it from your word-processing document into the narrative block in the application. Space for the narrative is limited, so your narrative should not exceed five pages. Do **NOT** type your narrative entirely in capital letters.

Evaluation Process

We will rank all complete and eligible applications based on the substance of your application relative to the established program priorities for the type of community served. We determine this relationship from your answers to the activity-specific questions. If you apply for more than one activity in your selected program, each activity will be scored separately. Then your scores will be prorated based on the individual activities' funding level compared to the total requested funding in your application. For example, if you are applying under the Operations and Safety Program, and you are applying for \$9,000 in training and \$1,000 in equipment, the training portion of your proposal will represent 90 percent of your score and the equipment will represent 10 percent of your score. The number of activities included in your application will not provide any advantage or disadvantage with respect to its evaluation.

Applications that best address the grant program’s priorities (as outlined below) will score higher than those applications that are not directed toward the priorities. The applications that score the highest will be determined to be in the “competitive range.” A panel of at least three technical evaluation specialists will further evaluate the applications that are in the competitive range, i.e., the highest-ranked applications. These panelists will evaluate the application using your project narrative along with the answers to the general questions and the activity-specific questions.

When reviewing your application, the panelists will use your narrative and all the information in your application to determine the worthiness of your request for an award. During the panel review process, the panelists will provide a subjective but qualitative judgment on the merits of each request.

Applications that include requests equipment and/or training will be evaluated by the panelists relative to the critical infrastructure within the applicant’s area of first due response. Critical infrastructure includes any system or asset that if attacked or impacted by a hazardous event would result in catastrophic loss of life or catastrophic economic loss. Critical infrastructure also includes the following: Public water or power systems, major business centers, chemical facilities, nuclear power plants, major rail and highway bridges, petroleum and/or natural gas transmission pipelines or storage facilities, telecommunications facilities, or facilities that support large public gatherings such as sporting events or concerts. Panelists will be instructed to assess such infrastructure and the hazards confronting the community as explained in the narrative in order to begin their judgment of the benefits that will be realized from a grant to the applicant.

The panelists will evaluate and score: 1) the clarity of your proposed project including your project’s budget detail, 2) the financial need of your organization, 3) the benefits that would result should you be awarded the grant, and 4) the extent to which the grant would enhance your daily operations and/or how the grant will positively impact your ability to protect life and property. These four elements carry equal weight when factored into the panelists’ scores (i.e., one-fourth).

Each application will be judged on its own merits – not against other applications. The panelists will consider all expenses budgeted, including administrative and/or indirect costs, as part of their cost-benefit review. In addition, an applicant can demonstrate cost-benefit by describing, as applicable, how the grant award will do the following: 1) fit in with a regional approach, i.e., is consistent with current capabilities and requests of neighboring organizations or otherwise benefits other organizations in the region; 2) implement interoperability of equipment/technology with other organizations and local, State, and Federal first-responders; and/or, 3) allow the first responder organizations to respond to all hazards (all hazards include incidents involving seismic (earthquake), atmospheric (tornadoes, hurricanes), or technological (hazardous materials, nuclear, etc.) events, or incidents involving CBRNE, as well as fire prevention/suppression). The

panelists will review each application in its entirety and compare the application against established evaluation criteria, not against other applications.

Keep in mind that we will use your answers to the activity-specific questions when conducting our initial assessment. Your answers to these questions are the primary bases upon which we will determine whether your application warrants further evaluation. Applicants whose answers indicate that their project is consistent with our established priorities (as outlined below) will have a better chance of reaching the competitive range and the second level of review than those applicants whose projects do not reflect the established priorities. Applicants that falsify their applications or misrepresent their organizations in any material manner will have their applications deemed ineligible by the AFG program office and referred to the Office of Inspector General for further action as appropriate.

State Technical Review

Following our preliminary determination of award (i.e., after the panel process is complete) but prior to award, we will involve the State's homeland security office in a technical review of any application that is seeking equipment and/or training for preparation for incidents involving CBRNE. In addition, we will seek the State's comment on the extent to which an communications equipment conforms with the State's interoperability requirements or plans. Each State will be asked to provide the AFG program office with a representative to carry out this technical review of applications from the State that include CBRNE-related and interoperable communications equipment requests and that have been rated as fundable by the peer review panelists. During the technical review, the State representative will attest to and certify that such requests are consistent with the State's homeland security strategies and that the requests do not duplicate assistance already provided or about to be provided. If a State representative determines that an application is either inconsistent with the State plan or duplicates the State's assistance, that portion of the AFG application will not be funded.

AFG Programs and Program Priorities

The program priorities are different for fire departments than for nonaffiliated EMS organizations. Please read this guidance document with that in mind and make sure that you are researching the appropriate sections for your organization.

Fire Department Priorities

Specific rating criteria and priorities for each of the grant categories are provided below following the descriptions of this year's eligible programs. The rating criteria, in conjunction with the program description, will provide you with an understanding of what information we are seeking about your proposed projects.

(1) Operations and Firefighter Safety Program

There are five different activities available for funding under this program area: training, equipment, personal protective equipment, wellness and fitness, and modifications to facilities. Please note that fire-based emergency medical services (EMS) training and equipment are available under the appropriate activity in this program area. Also note that requests for equipment and training to prepare for response to incidents involving CBRNE are available under the applicable equipment and training activities.

You may apply for as many of the activities within this program as you think are necessary in one application. There are no bonuses or penalties for applying for only one activity or for multiple activities. Whenever there are applicable standards, requests in this program should be consistent with National standards and have the intent and/or goal of solving applicable interoperability or compatibility problems. The Responder Knowledge Base (RKB), which can be accessed at <http://www.rkb.mipt.org/>, includes relevant information on first responder standards and allows “guest users” to answer any questions they may have on applicable standards. The applicant should describe in the narrative section how the purchase of equipment would facilitate solving interoperability or compatibility problems.

a) Training activities:

DHS may make grants for the purpose of training firefighting personnel. Examples of training activities include, but are not limited to, firefighter I and II certifications; first-responder EMS; driver/operator; fire officer; hazardous materials response; incident command; supervision and safety; CBRNE awareness, performance, planning and management; or train-the-trainer courses in any of these areas.

We believe that the most benefit is derived from training that is instructor-led, hands-on, and leads to a nationally sanctioned or State certification. Training requests that include Web-based home study or distance learning and the purchase of training materials, equipment, or props are a lower priority. Therefore, applications focused on national or State certification training, including train-the-trainer initiatives, will receive a higher competitive rating. Training that involves instructors where the students must demonstrate their grasp of knowledge of the training material via testing and is integral to a certification will receive a high competitive rating, but not to the extent of the trainings that would lead to national certification. Training that is instructor-led but does not lead to a certification, or any self-taught courses, are of low benefit, and therefore they will not be afforded a high priority.

We will rate more highly those proposed programs that benefit the highest percentage of applicable personnel within a fire department or those proposed programs that will be open to other departments in the region. Training that brings the department into statutory (or Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)) compliance or compliance with Federally mandated initiatives (such as knowledge and understanding of

the National Incident Management System and/or incident command systems) would provide the highest benefit relative to training that is not required, therefore receive the highest consideration. Training that brings a department into voluntary compliance with national standards will also receive a high competitive rating, but not as high as the training that brings a department into statutory compliance. Training that does not have statutory compliance or voluntary compliance with a national standard will receive a low competitive rating.

Due to the inherent differences between urban, suburban, and rural firefighting characteristics, we have developed different priorities in the training activity for departments that service these different types of communities. However, CBRNE awareness training has a high benefit and will receive the highest consideration regardless of the type of community served.

For departments serving rural communities, we believe that funding basic, operational-level firefighting, operational-level rescue, driver training, or first-responder EMS, EMT-B, and EMT-I, (i.e., training in basic firefighting or EMS duties) has greater benefit than funding officer training, or safety officer training. In rural communities, after basic training, there is a greater cost-benefit to officer training than for other specialized types of training such as mass casualty, hazmat, advance rescue and EMT, or inspector training for rural departments.

Conversely, for departments that are serving urban or suburban communities, we believe there is a higher benefit to be gained by funding specialized training, such as mass casualty, hazmat, advance rescue and EMS, or inspector training than the funding of officer training, safety officer training, or operations training, which in turn has a higher benefit than basic-, operational-, or awareness-level activities. Training designated to enhance multi-jurisdictional capabilities will be afforded a slightly higher rating.

Eligible uses of training funds include but are not limited to tuition, exam and course fees, certification and/or re-certification expenses, purchase of training curricula, training equipment (including trailers and simulators), training props, training services (such as instructors), attendance at formal training forums, etc. Tow vehicles or other means of transport may be eligible as a transportation expense under this activity if adequately justified in your grant proposal, but we will limit transportation expenses to \$6,000 per year per application. Compensation to volunteer firefighters for wages lost because of attending training under this program is an eligible expense if justified in your grant proposal. Overtime expenses paid to career firefighters to attend training, or overtime expenses paid to firefighters to cover for colleagues while the colleagues are in training, are eligible expenses if justified in your grant proposal. Even though compensation is an eligible expense, proposals that contain such compensation expenses may be less favorably scored than similar proposals without compensation expenses due to the cost-benefit element in the evaluation process.

Activities that are not eligible in this area include construction of facilities, such as classrooms, buildings, towers, etc. Modular training units that are not trailer-mounted are not eligible. Grant funds cannot be used for modular training units if the units are to be permanently fastened to the ground. No grant funding can go toward site preparation to accommodate any training activity, facility, or prop. The purchase or lease of real estate is also not eligible. Renovations to an existing facility that are necessary to accomplish training activities are allowable only if the renovations are minor in nature (i.e., limited to minor interior alterations costing less than \$10,000). Renovation expenses should be included in the budget as an “Other” line-item expense and clearly explained in the narrative.

ODP offers a variety of CBRNE training courses free of charge; visit the ODP website for details (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/coursecatalog.pdf) or call the ODP Helpline at 1-800-368-6498.

b) Equipment Acquisition:

DHS may make grants for acquiring additional equipment, including equipment for fire suppression, to enhance the safety or effectiveness of firefighting, rescue, and fire-based EMS functions. They may also make grants for equipment necessary for preparedness for response to CBRNE incidents.

The stated purpose of this grant program is to protect the health and safety of the public and firefighters from fire and fire-related hazards. As such, we believe that this grant program will achieve the greatest benefits by providing funds to fire departments purchasing basic firefighting equipment before any other non-firefighting equipment. Equipment that has a direct effect on firefighters’ health and safety will receive a high competitive rating over equipment that has no such effect. Equipment that promotes interoperability with neighboring jurisdictions may receive additional consideration in the cost-benefit assessment if the application makes it into the competitive range.

We believe this grant program will achieve the greatest benefits if we provide funds to fire departments purchasing basic firefighting, rescue, EMS, and CBRNE preparedness equipment that they have never owned prior to the grant or to replace used or obsolete firefighting equipment. Our second priority will be to fund departments that are seeking to expand into new mission areas, and therefore those departments will receive a lower competitive rating than departments seeking reserve equipment. Additionally, among departments that serve similar types of communities, those that have high call volumes will be afforded a higher competitive rating than those that have low call volumes.

The purchase of equipment that brings the department into statutory (or OSHA) compliance will provide the highest benefit and therefore will receive the highest consideration. The purchase of equipment that brings a department into voluntary compliance with national standards will also receive a high competitive rating, but it will

not be as high as for the training that brings a department into statutory compliance. Equipment that does not have an effect on statutory compliance or voluntary compliance with a national standard will receive a lower competitive rating.

Small boats (13 feet or less, without fixed fire pumps), jet-skis, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), and appropriate trailers may be considered under this activity if properly justified in the narrative section of the application. Other vehicles, as defined in the Interim Final Rule and published in the *Federal Register*, are not eligible under this activity but would be eligible under the Firefighting Vehicle Program.

Eligible expenses include those expenses necessary to acquire equipment, including communications and monitoring equipment. Compressor systems, cascade systems, or similar self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) refill systems are eligible expenditures in this area. Renovations to an existing facility to accommodate such equipment are allowable if justified in the narrative and if the renovation is minor in nature (i.e., limited to minor interior renovations costing less than \$10,000). Traffic signal preemption systems are eligible. The cost of shipping equipment purchased under this program is also an eligible expense but extended warranties are not eligible. We will limit funding for portable radios to the number of seated positions based on the applicant's firefighting vehicle fleet unless otherwise justified in the narrative.

Individual communications equipment (portable radios) and/or mobile communications equipment (including mobile repeaters) are eligible but cell phones are not eligible. We will only fund enough mobile radios to equip the vehicle inventory listed in the application. We will not fund mobile radios for personally owned vehicles with the exception of the chief fire officer's personal vehicle if adequately justified in the application. Mobile data systems are eligible. Integrated communications systems such as base stations, computer-aided dispatch, fixed-site repeaters, wireless and broadband mobile data systems, etc., are eligible under this activity. The purchase of any communications systems and/or equipment under this activity should have the intent and/or goal of solving your interoperability problems, as applicable. Note that each State will be provided with the opportunity to review requests for communications equipment, with respect to interoperability and the State's homeland security strategy. Any applicant seeking funding for equipment herein should provide details in the narrative section of the application regarding their local plan to enable interoperability for the jurisdiction.

Equipment used in response to CBRNE incidents is also eligible. Equipment exclusively designed for use in CBRNE incidents that is eligible this year includes special monitoring equipment (biological, radioactive, etc.) and CBRNE-related pharmaceuticals for first-responders, such as auto injectors. AFG program funds cannot be used to duplicate other funds for CBRNE preparedness that are available through other Federal programs.

This year, requests for emergency medical services (EMS) equipment are eligible in this activity. Eligible expenses for EMS equipment in this activity can include, but are

not limited to, defibrillators, basic and advanced life support equipment, universal precaution supplies (i.e., personal protective equipment), computers, and infectious disease control and decontamination systems.

Thermal imaging cameras are eligible, but the number of cameras that can be purchased with grant funds will be based on the size of the population served by the department applying for assistance. Departments that serve communities of less than 20,000 people can purchase one thermal imaging camera with grant funds if awarded a grant; departments serving communities between 20,000 and 50,000 can purchase two cameras with grant funds if awarded a grant; and departments serving communities of more than 50,000 people can purchase three cameras with grant funds if awarded a grant.

No grant funds can be used to construct facilities such as buildings, sheds, or towers to house communications equipment. Telephones and cell phones are not eligible. Bomb disposal equipment and robots are not eligible. Also not eligible in this program are vehicles, medications, disposable or otherwise expendable supplies (such as gloves, syringes, cervical collars, etc.). Personal protective equipment, including clothing for structural and wildland fire suppression, such as “turnout gear” or “bunker gear” (including boots, pants, coats, gloves, hoods, goggles, vests, helmets, coveralls, and fire shelters), SCBAs, spare cylinders, and personal alert safety systems, ***are not eligible under this activity***, however, they are eligible under the Personal Protective Equipment activity detailed below.

c) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Acquisition:

DHS may make grants for acquiring PPE required for active firefighting personnel by OSHA and other PPE for firefighting personnel.

One of the stated purposes of this grant program is to protect the health and safety of the public and of firefighters. To achieve this goal and maximize the benefit to the firefighting community, we believe that we must fund those applicants needing to provide PPE to a high percentage of their personnel. Accordingly, we will give the highest competitive rating in this category to fire departments where a large percentage of their active firefighting staff does not have any PPE. We will also give a high competitive rating to departments that wish to purchase enough PPE to equip 100 percent of their active firefighting staff, or 100 percent of their on-duty staff, as appropriate. We will also give a high competitive rating to departments that are purchasing the equipment for the first time as opposed to departments replacing obsolete or substandard equipment (e.g., equipment that does not meet current NFPA and OSHA standards), or purchasing equipment for a new mission. For those departments that are replacing obsolete or substandard equipment, the condition of the equipment to be replaced will be factored into the score with a higher priority given to replacing equipment that is damaged, torn, and/or contaminated.

Due to safety benefits afforded firefighters, for applications that include a request for personal alert safety system (PASS) devices, we will only consider funding applications that are requesting equipment that meets current national standards, i.e., integrated and/or automatic or auto-on PASS. Finally, the number of fire response calls that your department makes in a year will be considered with the higher priority going to departments with higher call volumes, while applications from departments with low call volumes will be afforded lower competitive ratings. The call volume of rural departments will be compared only to other rural departments, suburban departments will be compared only to other suburban departments, and urban departments will be compared only to other urban departments.

Eligible PPE includes clothing for structural and/or wildland fire suppression, such as “turnout gear” or “bunker gear” (including boots, pants, coats, gloves, hoods, goggles, vests, helmets, coveralls, and fire shelters), SCBAs, spare cylinders, and PASS. We will limit funding for SCBAs to the number of seated positions based on the applicant’s firefighting vehicle fleet unless otherwise justified in the narrative. Each SCBA request will be limited to one spare cylinder unless adequately justified. Protective clothing for response to hazardous materials incidents and other specialized incidents is also eligible under this activity. Protective clothing that is designed for EMS activities or for response to CBRNE incidents are also eligible in this activity. Eligible PPE for CBRNE incidents includes SCBAs that have been certified for use in CBRN atmospheres and PPE that is nationally certified for use in CBRNE incidents. It is not necessary for every SCBA request to be CBRN-certified. We will fund CBRN-certified SCBA if such a request is adequately justified in the narrative and directly related to the State’s homeland security plan. Eligible PPE for EMS activities includes PPE ensembles (coats and trousers) that afford universal precautions against exposure to infectious diseases, etc.

The purchase of three-quarter length rubber boots is an ineligible expenditure under this activity since it precludes the effective use of the eligible PPE cited above. Uniforms (formal/parade or station/duty) or uniform items (hats, badges, etc.) are also ineligible expenditures under this activity. Personal communications equipment such as radios and pagers are not eligible under this activity but are eligible under the Equipment Acquisition activity.

d) Wellness and Fitness Activities:

DHS may make grants for the purpose of establishing or expanding wellness and fitness initiatives for firefighting personnel.

We believe that to have an effective wellness/fitness program, fire departments must offer periodic health screenings, entry physical examinations, and an immunization program. Accordingly, applicants for grants in this category must currently offer or plan to offer with grant funds ***all three benefits*** to receive consideration and funding for any other initiatives in this activity. After entry-level physicals, annual physicals, and

immunizations, high priority is given to formal fitness and injury prevention programs. Lower priority is given to stress management, injury/illness rehabilitation, and employee assistance.

We believe the greatest benefit will be realized by supporting new wellness and fitness programs, and therefore, we will accord higher competitive ratings to those applicants lacking wellness/fitness programs over those applicants that already employ a wellness/fitness program. Finally, since participation is critical to achieving any benefits from a wellness or fitness program, we will give higher competitive ratings to departments whose wellness and fitness programs mandate or provide incentives for participation.

Eligible expenditures in a wellness and fitness activity for firefighting personnel may include the procurement of medical services to ensure that the firefighting personnel are physically able to carry out their duties (but the purchase of medical equipment is not eligible under this category). Eligible expenditures to carry out wellness and fitness activities may include costs for personnel, physicals, physical fitness equipment (including shipping), supplies, or other related contract services (e.g., health-care consultants, trainers, and nutritionists) directly associated with the implementation of the proposed activity. Examples of eligible incentives would be T-shirts or hats of nominal value, vouchers to local businesses (movies, restaurants, etc.) or time-off.

Transportation expenses and fitness club memberships for the firefighters or their families are not eligible under the wellness and fitness activity. Cash incentives are not eligible. Other expenses that are not eligible in this area include construction of facilities to house a fitness program, such as exercise or fitness rooms, showers, etc. The purchase of real estate is also not eligible. Minor renovations to an existing facility are allowable if justified in the narrative and if the renovations are only minor in nature (i.e., limited to minor interior alterations costing less than \$10,000). Renovation expenses should be included in the budget as an “Other” line-item expense and explained in the narrative.

e) Modifications to Fire Stations and Facilities:

DHS may make grants to modify fire stations, fire training facilities, and other facilities to protect the health and safety of firefighting personnel. Please note that activities that involve modifications to facilities are subject to all applicable environmental and historic preservation requirements. Applicants seeking assistance to modify their facilities may undergo additional screening in order for their application to be considered for award. Specifically, DHS is required to ascertain to what degree the proposed modifications to fire stations and/or facilities might affect an applicant’s structures relative to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and National Flood Insurance Program regulations. DHS must assess the affect, if any, and approve the project prior to any project implementation. No project can proceed – except for planning – prior to formal DHS approval. Noncompliance with this provision (i.e.,

proceeding with a project, other than planning, prior to formal approval) may jeopardize an applicant's award and/or subsequent funding.

The stated purpose of this grant program is to protect the health and safety of the public and firefighters. As such, eligible projects under this activity are those in which the activities specifically have a direct effect on the health and safety of firefighters. Therefore, eligible measures under this activity are limited but focused on promoting fire safety and life safety in fire stations and facilities. We believe that each of the eligible measures, if incorporated, would make any facility safer for firefighters.

Measures eligible for funding in this area are the installation of sprinkler systems, installation of vehicle exhaust extraction systems, the installation of smoke and/or fire alarm notification systems, and the installation of emergency facility generators. We will **NOT** fund any other requests for modifications than the initiatives listed herein. Any vehicle exhaust extraction system obtained should be either extensive enough to extract all toxic vapors and particulates emitted from internal combustion engines and meet all applicable Federal, State, and local standards or part of a larger comprehensive system that does. Some exhaust extraction systems may meet standards for removal of certain carcinogens, but not others; therefore, it may be necessary to utilize more than one system to fully protect your firefighters.

The grant funds are to be used to retrofit existing structures that do not have the eligible safety features or to upgrade facilities whose features are dated. The funds may not be used to supplement new construction. Many of these modifications may require environmental review, which may delay an award.

We believe that more benefit would be derived from modifying fire stations than would be realized by modifying fire-training facilities or other fire department facilities. Requests involving facilities that would be open for broad usage and have a high occupancy capacity would receive a higher competitive rating than those involving facilities that have limited use and/or low occupancy capacity. The frequency of use would also have a bearing on the benefits to be derived from grant funds. The frequency and duration of a facility's occupancy have a direct relationship to the benefits to be realized from funding in this activity. As such, facilities that are occupied or otherwise in use 24-hours-per-day, 7-days-per-week will receive a higher competitive rating than facilities used on an irregular or part-time basis.

We will not fund any other requests for modifications than the initiatives listed herein (specifically, vehicle exhaust extraction systems, smoke/fire alarm systems, sprinkler systems, or emergency generators). There are no monetary limits on the individual initiatives under this activity whether it is a vehicle exhaust system, a sprinkler system, or a smoke/fire alarm system, but no applicant can request more than \$100,000 in the modifications per fire station under their authority. Multiple stations are eligible in this activity up to the Federal share limit.

(2) Firefighting Vehicle Acquisition Program

DHS may make grants for acquiring new firefighting vehicles, used fire apparatus, or refurbished apparatus. The funds may also be used to refurbish a vehicle the department currently owns. New vehicles purchased with AFG program funds must be compliant with current NFPA 1901 or 1906 standards. Used apparatus must be compliant with NFPA 1901 or 1906 standards for the year the vehicle was manufactured. Refurbished apparatus must meet NFPA 1912 standards. Applicants may apply for only one vehicle per year under this program. Applicants that have been awarded vehicle grants from the AFG program in previous years are not eligible for a vehicle award in this program year.

Due to the inherent differences between urban, suburban, and rural firefighting conventions, we have developed different priorities in the vehicle program for departments that service different types of communities. The following chart delineates our priorities in this program area for each type of community. Due to the competitive nature of this program and the imposed limits of funding available for this program, it is unlikely that we would fund many vehicles that are not listed as a Priority One.

Vehicle Program Priorities for Fire Departments			
Priority	Urban Communities	Suburban Communities	Rural Communities
One	Pumper Aerial Quint (Aerial < 76') Quint (Aerial 76' or >) Fire Boat Rescue	Pumper Aerial Quint (Aerial < 76') Quint (Aerial 76' or >) Fire Boat Brush/Attack	Pumper Brush/Attack Tanker/Tender Quint (Aerial < 76')
Two	Command Hazmat Light/Air Rehab	Command Hazmat Rescue Tanker/Tender	Hazmat Rescue Light/Air Aerial Fire Boat Quint (Aerial 76' or >)
Three	Foam Truck ARFFV Brush/Attack Tanker/Tender Ambulance	Foam Truck ARFFV Rehab Light/Air Ambulance	Foam Truck ARFFV Rehab Command Ambulance

Regardless of the type of community served, we believe that there is more benefit to be realized by funding fire departments that own few or no vehicles of the type they are seeking than there would be by providing vehicle funding to a department with numerous vehicles of that same type. When we assess the number of vehicles a department has within a particular class, we will include all vehicles with similar functions. For example, we consider the following to be classified in the “pumper” category: pumpers, engines, pumper/tankers, rescue-pumpers, quints (with aerials less than 76 feet in length), and urban interface vehicles such as Type I, II or III.

We will give a higher competitive rating in the apparatus category to fire departments that own few or no firefighting vehicles relative to other departments serving similar types of communities. We will also give higher competitive ratings to departments that have an aged fleet of firefighting vehicles, and to those with old, high-mileage vehicles. We will also provide a higher competitive rating to departments that respond to a significant number of incidents relative to other departments servicing similar communities. Finally, due to the inherent benefits to be realized in departments that utilize a comprehensive driver-training program, we will provide a slight competitive advantage to requests where the applicant has a comprehensive driver-training program or one that is seeking driver-training with their vehicle request.

No competitive advantage has been assigned to the purchase of standard model commercial vehicles versus custom vehicles, or the purchase of used vehicles versus new vehicles in the preliminary evaluation of applications. It has been our experience that depending on the type and size of department, the technical evaluation panelists often prefer low-cost vehicles when evaluating the cost-benefit section of the project narratives. Panelists may be provided with guidance for use in their evaluation of the reasonableness of vehicle costs. We also reserve the right to impose funding limits on requests for vehicles whose costs we deem excessive or otherwise not in the best interest of the program.

Eligible expenses under this program would include the cost of the vehicle and associated equipment necessary to conform to applicable national standards (NFPA 1901 or 1906). New, used, or refurbished vehicles are eligible; however, any used or refurbished vehicles must conform to the national standards that were in effect the year the vehicle was manufactured. An allowance for transportation to inspect a vehicle under consideration or during a vehicle’s production would be eligible if reasonable and justified in the grant proposal. Also eligible would be the additional costs associated with the purchase and installation of a vehicle-mounted exhaust filtration system for any vehicle purchased with grant funds. Additionally, operator training may be eligible for any vehicle award if justified in the narrative.

As stated above, previous vehicle recipients are ineligible for a vehicle award in this program year. Applicants will not be allowed to modify the scope of work of a vehicle award, i.e., change the type of vehicle requested after award. Vehicles contracted for or otherwise purchased prior to the end of the established application period are not

eligible for funding. Aircraft, bulldozers, and construction-related equipment are also not eligible.

Nonaffiliated EMS Organization Priorities

DHS may make grants for the purpose of enhancing the provision of emergency medical services for nonaffiliated EMS organizations. Funding for these organizations is limited to no more than two (2) percent of the appropriated amount. We believe that it is more cost-effective to enhance or expand an existing emergency medical service organization by providing training and/or equipment than it would be to create a new service. As such, communities that do not currently offer emergency medical services but are turning to this grant program to initiate such a service will receive the lowest competitive rating because we do not believe there is sufficient benefit to be derived from such an investment in communities that do not currently support such a service.

Specific rating criteria and priorities for each of the grant categories are provided below following the descriptions of this year's eligible programs. The rating criteria, in conjunction with the program description, will provide you with an understanding of what information we are seeking about your proposed projects.

(1) EMS Operations and Safety Program

There are five different activities available for funding under this program area: EMS training, EMS equipment (including personal protective equipment), wellness and fitness, and modifications to facilities. Please note that requests for equipment and training to prepare for response to incidents involving CBRNE are available under the applicable equipment and training activities. Applicants should strive to ensure that all projects applied for under the grant program are consistent with National standards and address interoperability.

If you opt to apply under the EMS Operations and Safety Program area, you may request assistance under as many of the activities as you wish. There are no bonuses or penalties for applying for only one activity or for multiple activities.

a) EMS Training Activity:

We believe that the most benefit would be realized by upgrading a service that currently meets a basic life support capacity to a higher level of life support. Therefore, we will afford a higher competitive rating to nonaffiliated EMS organizations that are planning on going from first responder to EMT-B level. Since training is a pre-requisite to the effective use of EMS equipment, organizations whose request is more focused on the training activities will receive a higher competitive rating than organizations whose request is more focused on equipment. Our second priority is to elevate emergency responders' capabilities from EMT-B to EMT-I or higher.

Eligible uses of training funds include but are not limited to tuition, exam and course fees, certification and/or re-certification expenses, purchase of training curricula, training equipment (including trailers and simulators), training props, training services (such as instructors), attendance at formal training forums or conferences that provide continuing-education credits, etc. Tow vehicles or other means of transport may be eligible as a transportation expense under this activity if adequately justified in your grant proposal, but we will limit transportation expenses to \$6,000 per year per application. Compensation to volunteer emergency responders for wages lost because of attending training under this program is an eligible expense if reasonable and justified in your grant proposal. Overtime expenses paid to emergency responders in order for them to attend training, or overtime expenses paid to emergency responders to cover for colleagues while the colleagues are in training, are eligible expenses if reasonable and justified in your grant proposal. Even though compensation is an eligible expense, proposals that contain such compensation expenses may be less favorably scored than similar proposals without compensation expenses due to the cost-benefit element in the evaluation process.

Activities that are not eligible in this area include construction of facilities, such as classrooms, buildings, towers, etc. Modular training units that are not trailer-mounted are not eligible. Grant funds cannot be used for modular training units if the units are to be permanently fastened to the ground. No grant funding can go toward site-preparation to accommodate any training activity, facility, or prop. The purchase or leasing of real estate is also not eligible. Renovations to an existing facility that are necessary to accomplish training activities are allowable if the renovations are minor in nature (i.e., limited to minor interior alterations costing less than \$10,000). Renovation expenses should be included in the budget as an “Other” line-item expense and clearly explained in the narrative.

ODP offers a variety of CBRNE training courses free of charge; visit the ODP website for details (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/coursecatalog.pdf) or call the ODP Helpline at 1-800-368-6498.

b) EMS Equipment Acquisition:

Since training is a pre-requisite to the effective use of EMS equipment, organizations whose request is more focused on the training activities will receive a higher competitive rating than organizations whose request is more focused on equipment. Organizations who are requesting equipment to the EMT-B level and are requesting the basic support equipment will receive a higher priority. Our second priority is requests seeking assistance to purchase equipment to support advanced level EMS services. Items that are eligible but a lower priority include tents, shelters, generators, lights, and heating and cooling units.

Eligible expenses for equipment acquisition in this program could include basic and advanced life support equipment to support EMT-B through EMT-P with higher priority given to organizations requesting equipment to support service at the EMT-B

level. Examples of eligible items available under this section include but are not limited to the following items: BLS/ALS equipment, rescue tools, small specialty access vehicles (ATVs, rescue boats under 13 feet, gators, snow mobiles, etc.), communications equipment (mobile and portable radios), and hazmat and decontamination equipment. Other items include computers, AEDs, and infectious disease control and decontamination systems. Protective clothing is NOT eligible under this equipment category; rather it is available under the personal protective equipment acquisition activity below.

Individual communications equipment (portable radios) and/or mobile communications equipment (including mobile repeaters) are eligible but cell phones are not eligible. We will only fund enough mobile radios to equip the vehicle inventory listed in the application. We will not fund mobile radios for personally owned vehicles under EMS. Mobile data systems are eligible. Integrated communications systems such as base stations, computer-aided dispatch, fixed-site repeaters, wireless and broadband mobile data systems, etc., are eligible under this activity. The purchase of any communications systems and/or equipment under this activity should have the intent and/or goal of solving your interoperability problems, as applicable. Note that each State will be provided with the opportunity to review requests for communications equipment, with respect to interoperability and the State's homeland security strategy. Any applicant seeking funding for equipment herein should provide details in the narrative section of the application regarding their local plan to enable interoperability for the jurisdiction.

The purchase of SCBA may also be eligible if the organization has a formally adopted standard operating procedure that requires SCBA availability. If you are applying for funding SCBA, we may require you to submit documentation to support the eligibility of SCBA thereof.

Any equipment requested under this section, particularly decontamination and hazmat equipment are fundable to the level of your training, i.e., we will not fund level-A equipment for organizations that are only trained to the hazmat operation level unless the application also includes a request for training compatible with the equipment request. Not eligible in this program are vehicles (such as ambulances), equipment used for firefighting purposes, medications, disposable or otherwise expendable supplies (such as gloves, syringes, cervical collars, etc.), body armor, uniforms, and construction such as communications towers or facilities. Any equipment requested under this section, particularly decontamination and hazmat suits are fundable to the level of your training, i.e., we will not fund level-A suits for organizations that are only trained to the hazmat operation level.

c) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Acquisition:

DHS may make grants for acquiring PPE required for active EMS first-responder personnel by OSHA and other PPE for EMS personnel.

One of the stated purposes of this grant program is to protect the health and safety of the public and of first-responders. To achieve this goal and maximize the benefit to the EMS community, we believe that we must fund those applicants needing to provide PPE to a high percentage of their personnel. Accordingly, we will give the highest competitive rating in this category to organizations where a large percentage of their active EMS staff does not have adequate PPE. We will also give a high competitive rating to organizations that wish to purchase enough PPE to equip 100 percent of their active EMS staff, or 100 percent of their on-duty staff, as appropriate. We will also give a high competitive rating to organizations that are purchasing the PPE for the first time as opposed to organizations replacing obsolete or substandard equipment (e.g., equipment that does not meet current NFPA and OSHA standards), or purchasing equipment for a new mission. For those organizations that are replacing obsolete or substandard equipment, the condition of the equipment to be replaced will be factored into the score with a higher priority given to replacing equipment that is damaged, torn, and/or contaminated.

The number of EMS response calls that your organization makes in a year will be considered with the higher priority going to organizations with higher call volumes, while applications from organizations with low call volumes will be afforded lower competitive ratings. We will not provide any advantage or disadvantage for different types of communities, i.e., urban communities, suburban communities, or rural communities with respect to call volume.

Examples of eligible clothing would be EMS turnout gear, non-disposable universal precautionary supplies (i.e., medical PPE), extrication jumpsuits, helmets, gloves, and boots. Protective clothing must meet national standards or local EMS protocols.

Any equipment requested under this section, particularly decontamination and hazmat suits are fundable to the level of your training, i.e., we will not fund level-A suits for organizations that are only trained to the hazmat operation level unless the application also includes a request for training compatible with the equipment request. Uniforms (formal/parade or station/duty) or uniform items (hats, badges, etc.) are not eligible expenditures under this activity. Also not eligible are PPE such as body armor, wildland firefighting gear, and firefighting turnout gear. Personal communications equipment such as radios and pagers are not eligible under this activity but are eligible under the Equipment Acquisition activity.

d) Wellness and Fitness Activities:

DHS may make grants for the purpose of establishing or expanding wellness and fitness initiatives for emergency medical service personnel.

We believe that to have an effective wellness/fitness program, nonaffiliated EMS organizations must offer periodic health screenings, entry physical examinations, and an

immunization program. Accordingly, applicants for grants in this category must currently offer or plan to offer with grant funds ***all three benefits*** to receive consideration and funding for any other initiatives in this activity. After entry-level physicals, annual physicals, and immunizations, high priority is given to formal fitness and injury prevention programs. Lower priority is given to stress management, injury/illness rehabilitation, and employee assistance.

We believe the greatest benefit will be realized by supporting new wellness and fitness programs, and therefore, we will accord higher competitive ratings to those applicants lacking wellness/fitness programs over those applicants that already employ a wellness/fitness program. Finally, since participation is critical to achieving any benefits from a wellness or fitness program, we will give higher competitive ratings to organizations whose wellness and fitness programs are offered to all responders and/or provides incentives for participation.

Eligible expenditures in a wellness and fitness activity for EMS personnel may include the procurement of medical services to ensure that the EMS personnel are physically able to carry out their duties (but the purchase of medical equipment is not eligible under this category). Eligible expenditures to carry out wellness and fitness activities may include costs for personnel, physicals, physical fitness equipment (including shipping), supplies, or other related contract services (e.g., health-care consultants, trainers, and nutritionists) directly associated with the implementation of the proposed activity. Examples of eligible incentives for participation in a wellness and fitness program would be T-shirts or hats of nominal value, vouchers to local businesses (movies, restaurants, etc.), or time-off awards.

Transportation expenses and fitness club memberships for EMS personnel or their families are not eligible under the wellness and fitness activity. Cash incentives are not eligible. Other expenses that are not eligible in this area include construction of facilities to house a fitness program, such as exercise or fitness rooms, showers, etc. The purchase of real estate is also not eligible. Minor renovations to an existing facility are allowable if justified in the narrative and if the renovations are only minor in nature (i.e., limited to minor interior alterations costing less than \$10,000). Renovation expenses should be included in the budget as an “Other” line-item expense and explained in the narrative.

e) Modifications to EMS Stations and Facilities:

DHS may make grants to modify EMS stations, EMS training facilities, and/or other facilities to protect the health and safety of emergency medical service personnel. Please note that activities that involve modifications to facilities are subject to all applicable environmental and historic preservation requirements. Applicants seeking assistance to modify their facilities may undergo additional screening in order for their application to be considered for award. Specifically, DHS is required to ascertain to what degree the proposed modifications to fire stations and/or facilities might affect an applicant’s structures relative to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and

National Flood Insurance Program regulations. DHS must assess the affect, if any, and approve the project prior to any project implementation. No project can proceed – except for planning – prior to formal DHS approval. Noncompliance with this provision (i.e., proceeding with a project, other than planning, prior to formal approval) may jeopardize an applicant’s award and/or subsequent funding.

The stated purpose of this grant program is to protect the health and safety of the public and our nation’s first responders. As such, eligible projects under this activity are those in which the activities specifically have a direct effect on the health and safety of first responders. Therefore, eligible measures under this activity are limited but focused on promoting safety and life safety in EMS stations and facilities. We believe that each of the eligible measures, if incorporated, would make any facility safer for first responders.

Measures that are eligible for funding are the installation of sprinkler systems, vehicle exhaust extraction systems, smoke and/or fire alarm notification systems, and emergency facility generators. We will **NOT** fund any other requests for modifications than the initiatives listed herein. Any vehicle exhaust extraction system obtained should be either extensive enough to extract all toxic vapors and particulates emitted from internal combustion engines and meet all applicable Federal, State, and local standards or part of a larger comprehensive system that does. Some exhaust extraction systems may meet standards for removal of certain carcinogens, but not others; therefore, it may be necessary to utilize more than one system to fully protect your firefighters.

The grant funds are to be used to retrofit existing structures that do not have the eligible safety features or to upgrade facilities whose features are dated. The funds may not to be used to supplement new construction. Many of these modifications may require environmental and/or historic review, which may delay an award.

We believe that more benefit would be derived from modifying an EMS station than would be realized by modifying an EMS-training facility or other EMS facility. Requests involving facilities that would be open for broad usage and have a high occupancy capacity would receive a higher competitive rating than those involving facilities that have limited use and/or low occupancy capacity. The frequency of use would also have a bearing on the benefits to be derived from grant funds. The frequency and duration of a facility’s occupancy have a direct relationship to the benefits to be realized from funding in this activity. As such, facilities that are occupied or otherwise in use 24-hours-per-day, 7-days-per-week will receive a higher competitive rating than facilities used on an irregular or part-time basis.

We will not fund any other requests for modifications than the initiatives listed herein (specifically, vehicle exhaust extraction systems, smoke/fire alarm systems, sprinkler systems, or emergency generators). There are no monetary limits on the individual initiatives under this activity whether it is a vehicle exhaust system, a sprinkler system, or a smoke/fire alarm system, but no applicant can request more than \$100,000 in

the modifications per station under their authority. Multiple stations are eligible in this activity up to the Federal share limit.

(2) EMS Vehicle Acquisition Program

DHS may make grants for acquiring new, used or refurbished EMS vehicles. The funds may also be used to refurbish a vehicle the organization currently owns. New vehicles purchased with AFG program funds must be compliant with current GSA KKK-A-1822E standards. Used apparatus must be compliant with Federal or industry standards for the year the vehicle was manufactured. Refurbished apparatus must also meet applicable standards. Applicants may apply for only one vehicle per year under this program.

Due to the inherent benefits of an ambulance or any transport vehicle to an EMS service provider, we deem these types of vehicles to be our highest priority. Due to the costs associated with obtaining and outfitting non-transport rescue vehicles, we believe non-transport rescue vehicles should have a lower competitive rating than transport vehicles. Vehicles that have a very narrow function, such as aircraft, boats, and all-terrain vehicles, will receive the lowest competitive rating. Due to the very limited funding for EMS vehicle awards, we anticipate that this program will be very competitive. As such, it is unlikely that we would fund any vehicles that are not listed as a “Priority One” this year. The following chart delineates our priorities in this program area for each type of community.

EMS Vehicle Priorities

Priority One	Priority Two	Priority Three
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambulance or transport unit to support EMT-B needs and functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First responder non-transport vehicles • Special operations vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helicopters/planes • Command vehicles • Rescue boats (over 13 feet in length) • Hovercraft • Other special access vehicles

While there are many inherent differences between urban, suburban, and rural communities, we have not differentiated priorities in this year's EMS vehicle program for different types of communities.

Along with the priorities illustrated above, we believe that there is more benefit to be realized by funding applicants that own few or no vehicles of the type they are seeking than there would be by providing vehicle funding to an organization with numerous vehicles of that same type. When we assess the number of vehicles an organization has within a particular class, we will include all vehicles with similar functions. For example, we would include transport vehicles the same as ambulances. We will also give higher competitive ratings to applicants that have an aged fleet of emergency vehicles, and to those with old, high-mileage vehicles. We will also provide a higher competitive rating to applicants that respond to a significant number of incidents relative to other organizations servicing similar communities.

No competitive advantage has been assigned to the purchase of standard model commercial vehicles versus custom vehicles, or the purchase of used vehicles versus new vehicles in the preliminary evaluation of applications. It has been our experience that depending on the type and size of applicant, the technical evaluation panelists often prefer low-cost vehicles when evaluating the cost-benefit section of the project narratives. Panelists may be provided with guidance for use in their evaluation of the reasonableness of vehicle costs. We also reserve the right to impose funding limits on requests for vehicles whose costs we deem excessive or otherwise not in the best interest of the program.

Eligible expenses under this program would include ONLY the cost of the vehicle. We will NOT provide funding for associated equipment. New, used, or refurbished vehicles are eligible; however, any used or refurbished vehicles must conform to the national standards that were in effect the year the vehicle was manufactured. An allowance for transportation to inspect a vehicle under consideration or during a vehicle's production would be eligible if reasonable and justified in the grant proposal. Additionally, operator training may be eligible for any vehicle award if justified in the narrative.

Applicants will not be allowed to modify the scope of work of a vehicle award, i.e., change the type of vehicle requested after award. Vehicles contracted for or otherwise purchased prior to the end of the established application period are not eligible for funding.

Other Eligible Costs

(1) ***Administrative Costs:*** Administrative costs are allowable under any of the program areas listed above in accordance with OMB Circular A-87 or OMB Circular A-122, as applicable. (For more information about Circulars, go to www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars.) 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. If you are requesting administrative expenses, you must list the costs under the "Other" category in the budget and explain what the costs are for in your project narrative. The administrative costs should be based on actual expenses, not a percentage of the overall grant. We will reimburse actual expenses only. Examples of eligible administrative costs would be shipping, office supplies, computers associated with the NFIRS reporting requirements, etc. Grant funds may not be used for product warranties, insurance, internet service provider fees, or any similar monthly service fees. The cost of a grant writer (if specifically listed on your application), is eligible and can be charged to the grant as administrative costs in accordance with the provisions outlined below [see (7) below]. We will assess the reasonableness of the administrative costs requested in each application and determine if it is reasonable and in the best interest of the program.

(2) **Indirect Costs:** If you have an approved indirect cost rate, you may charge indirect costs to the grant. If you are charging indirect costs to the grant, you must submit the documentation that supports the indirect cost rate to us for review and approval prior to submitting any claims for indirect costs. The appropriate documentation for an approved indirect rate is an indirect cost rate agreement. We will allow the rate to be applied as long as it is consistent with its established terms. For example, some indirect cost rates may not apply to capital procurements; in these cases, indirect cost rates would not apply for a grant for equipment or a vehicle.

Indirect costs are those that have been incurred for common or joint objectives and cannot be readily identified with a particular final cost objective. A cost may not be allocated to an award as an indirect cost if any other cost incurred for the same purpose, in like circumstances, has been assigned to an award as a direct cost. Typical examples of indirect cost for many non-profit organizations may include depreciation or use allowances on buildings and equipment, the costs of operating and maintaining facilities, general administration, and other general expenses, such as the salaries and expenses of executive officers, personnel administration, and accounting.

Indirect costs shall be classified within two broad categories: "Facilities" and "Administration." "Facilities" is defined as depreciation and use allowances on buildings, equipment and capital improvement, interest on debt associated with certain buildings, equipment and capital improvements, and operations and maintenance expenses. "Administration" is defined as general administration and general expenses such as the director's office, accounting, personnel, library expenses and all other types of expenditures not specifically chargeable to the grant.

(3) **Audit Costs:** Some grantees with large awards may be required to undergo an audit in accordance with OMB Circular A-133. Specifically, recipients of Federal funding that spend in excess of \$500,000 of Federal funds in a year must undergo

an audit. (For more information about the Circulars, go to www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars.) The costs incurred for such an audit would be an eligible expenditure if included in the proposal's budget. You may wish to consider including anticipated costs of such an audit if you are applying for a significant level of funding. We will allow you to charge a prorated share of the costs of the single audit to the grant. For example, if you received \$100,000 from the AFG program and \$400,000 from the Forestry Service, we will allow you to charge one-fifth of the audit costs to the AFG program grant. We do not require any other audits; therefore, you cannot charge any other audit expenses to the grant.

(4) **Renovation Costs:** Renovations to an existing facility are allowable only if minor in nature (i.e., limited to minor interior alterations costing less than \$10,000). To be eligible, renovations must be essential to the successful completion of the grant's scope of work. Construction costs are not eligible under the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program nor are costs for the purchase of real estate. Construction includes major alterations to a building and/or changes to the profile or footprint of the structure. Enhancements to existing structures such as the installation of apparatus-bay ventilation systems and retrofitting fire stations with sprinkler systems are eligible for application under the Modifications to Fire Stations and Facilities Activity.

(5) **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. However, 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 by us. We will consider requests for reimbursement for pre-award costs on a case-by-case basis.

(6) **Pre-application Costs:** Expenses, obligations, commitments, or contracts incurred or entered into prior to the application deadline are *not* eligible to be included as a grant expense with the exception of grant preparation costs [see (7) below].

(7) **Grant Writer Fees:** Fees for grant writers may be included as a pre-award or pre-application expenditure. But fees payable on a contingency basis are not an eligible expense that can be charged to the grant. For grant writers' fees to be eligible as a pre-award expenditure, the fees must be specifically identified and listed in the application and the fees must have been paid prior to any contact with grants management staff or award, i.e., paid within 30 days of the end of the application period. Applicants may be required to provide documentation to support these pre-award expenditures. The hiring of a grant writer or use of any other third parties in the preparation of the application does not eliminate the applicant's responsibilities for assuring that the information contained in the application is true and correct. Applicants that falsify their applications or misrepresent their organizations in any material manner will have their applications deemed ineligible by the AFG program office and referred to the Office of Inspector General for further action as appropriate.

(8) **Pre-payments:** A grantee may not use grant funds to prepay for products or services in advance of delivery of the products or the rendering of services. A down payment for the purchase of vehicle is allowable if required in the purchase contract, but we will only allow up to 25 percent of the Federal share to be drawn for this purpose. The purchase of any vehicle's chassis would not be considered a down payment, therefore, eligible. See the AFG program's Interim Final Rule for more details on this limitation.

Reasonableness of a Request

The panelists will review all of the applications in the competitive range and judge each application on its own merits. The panelists will consider all expenses budgeted, including administrative and indirect, as part of the cost-benefit determination and may recommend appropriate adjustments. Regardless of the eligibility of any costs requested, we reserve the right to reduce any requests for assistance, in whole or in part, that we deem to be excessive or otherwise contrary to the best interests of this program.

Applications that include requests for CBRNE equipment and/or training will be evaluated by the panelists relative to the critical infrastructure that the applicant protects. Critical infrastructure includes any system or asset that if attacked would result in catastrophic loss of life or catastrophic economic loss. Critical infrastructure also includes the following: Public water or power systems, major business centers, chemical facilities, nuclear power plants, major rail and highway bridges, petroleum and/or natural gas transmission pipelines or storage facilities, telecommunications facilities, or facilities that support large public gatherings such as sporting events or concerts.

Applicants that falsify their applications or misrepresent their organizations in any material manner will have their applications deemed ineligible by the AFG program office and referred to the Office of Inspector General for further action as appropriate.

Award Procedure

Awards will be made on a competitive basis using rank order as the primary basis of our decision, regardless of program. But, there are some exceptions to this process. We are also limited in the amount of funds that can be awarded for vehicles, i.e., we cannot award grants for vehicles in excess of 25 percent of the total available funding. Once we reach that limit, it would then be necessary for us to deviate from rank order with respect to the remaining vehicle requests.

Throughout the process, career organizations will be competing against other career organizations for up to 45 percent of the available funding. Volunteer and combination organizations will compete among each other for at least 55 percent of the available funding. Historically, less than 10 percent of the applications we receive for AFG program funding are from career organizations. Therefore, the funding levels may not reach the 45 percent ceiling for career organizations.

To fulfill our obligations under the law, we may also make funding decisions using the size and character of the community a organization serves (urban, suburban, or rural), the type of organization (career, combination, or volunteer), and the geographic location of the organization. In these instances where we are making decisions based on geographic location, we will use States as the basic geographic unit. Geographic location of an applicant will be used primarily as a final discriminator, e.g., in cases where applicants have similar qualifications, we may use the geographic location of the applicants to maximize the diversity of the awardees.

Fire departments that have received funding under the AFG program in previous years are eligible to apply for funding in the current year. However, due to our responsibilities under this program to assure adequate distribution of awards among certain types of organizations (career, combination and volunteer) and certain types of communities (urban, suburban or rural) as well as a equitable geographic distribution, we reserve the right to fund or not to fund previous recipients of grants under this program in order for us to fulfill these responsibilities. We may also take into account an applicant's performance on prior grants when making funding decisions on current applications.

As stated earlier, each application will be evaluated based on the answers to the activity-specific questions. The applications that best address the program's established priorities would be deemed to be in the "competitive range" and subject to a second level of review. This second level of review is conducted via a panel of technical reviewers who will assess the applications' merits with respect to the detail provided in the narrative on the activity, the applicant's financial need, and the purported benefit to be derived from the cost. The panel evaluators will independently score each application, discuss the merits and shortcomings of the application, and reconcile any major discrepancies, if necessary. A consensus is not required.

Once every application in the competitive range has been paneled, the applications are ranked according to the average score awarded by the panel. The ranking will be summarized in a Technical Report prepared by the AFG program office. The AFG program office will then make award recommendations to the Grants Management Branch of the Financial and Acquisition Management Division at FEMA. The Grants Management Branch will then contact the applicant to discuss and/or negotiate the content of the application before making the final award decision.

We will select a sufficient number of awardees from this one application period to obligate all of the funding available this year. Awards will be announced over several months as the decisions are made. Awards will not be made in any specified order, i.e., not by State, or by program, or any other characteristic.

Grantees' Responsibilities

Recipients (Grantees) must agree to:

(1) Perform the tasks (scope of work) as outlined in the grantee's application and approved by the AFG program office in accordance with the articles of agreement.

(2) Share in the costs of the projects funded under this grant program. Fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations that serve populations of less than 20,000 must agree to match the Federal grant funds with an amount of non-Federal funds equal to five (5) percent of the total project cost. Fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations serving areas with a population between 20,000 and 50,000, inclusive, must match the Federal grant funds with an amount of non-Federal funds equal to ten (10) percent of the total project cost. Fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations that serve populations of over 50,000 must match the Federal grant funds with an amount on non-Federal funds equal to twenty (20) percent of the total project costs. All non-Federal funds must be in cash, i.e., in-kind contributions are not eligible. No waivers of this requirement will be granted except for applicants located in Insular Areas as provided for in 48 U.S.C. § 1469a.

The grantee is not required to have the cash match in hand at the time of application nor at the time of award. But, before a grant is awarded, we will assure that you either have the funding in hand or that you have a viable plan to obtain the funding necessary to fulfill the matching requirement.

(3) Maintain operating expenditures for the one-year grant period in the areas funded by this grant activity at a level equal to or greater than the average of their operating expenditures in the two years proceeding the year in which this assistance is received. This program is meant to supplement rather than replace an organization's funding.

(4) Retain grant files and supporting documentation for three years after the conclusion and closeout of the grant.

(5) Ensure that all procurement actions are conducted in a manner that provides, to the maximum extent possible, open and free competition. In doing so, you must follow your established procurement processes when purchasing vehicles, equipment, and/or services with the grant funds. If the grantee has no established procedures, you should obtain at least two quotes/bids for the items you are procuring and document in your grant files the process used.

(6) Report to us the progress made on the performance you have made on your grant after six months. At grant closeout, you need to report how the grant funding was used and the benefits realized from the award in a final report. An accounting of the funds must also be included.

(7) Make grant files, books, and records available if requested for inspection to ensure compliance with any requirement of the grant program.

(8) Agree to provide information, through established reporting channels, to the U.S. Fire Administration's national fire incident reporting system (NFIRS) for the period covered by the assistance if the grantee is a fire department. Nonaffiliated EMS organizations do not have to comply with the NFIRS reporting requirement. If fire department grantees does not currently participate in the incident reporting system and does not have the capacity to report at the time of the award, that grantee must agree to provide information to the NFIRS system for a twelve-month period commencing as soon as they develop the capacity to report. We expect non-reporting grantees to pursue the capacity to report as immediately after notification of award and for these non-reporting grantees to be actively reporting to NFIRS within the approved period of performance. AFG program grantees from previous years will not be allowed to closeout their grants until they demonstrate that they are complying with this requirement. Failure to closeout your previous years' grants may affect the consideration of future awards.

(9) Follow the audit requirements of OMB Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-profit Organizations, which calls for grantees who expend \$500,000 or more in Federal funds in a year (from all Federal sources), must have a single audit performed in accordance with the Circular. (For more information about the Circulars, go to www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars.)

(10) Comply with Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5 (HSPD-5). Starting October 1, 2004, HSPD-5 requires that all recipients of Federal preparedness funding – including recipients of Federal grants and contracts – adopt the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as a condition for receipt of the Federal funds. Recipients of FY2005 AFG funds must comply with this directive (see appendix A). AFG recipients will be considered in compliance with this NIMS requirement if the grantee has an operational knowledge of the Incident Command System (ICS) and an understanding of NIMS' principles and policies. Organizations that have already been trained in ICS do not need re-training if the previous training was consistent with DHS standards. In order for us to document compliance, grantees will be required to certify their recognition of NIMS/ICS as part of their grant closeout process.

DHS offers ICS and NIMS training for those organizations that have not implemented the Incident Command System or those that are unfamiliar with the principles and policies of NIMS. For example, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offers ICS training from introductory courses to advanced ICS training. For more information regarding ICS and NIMS training, visit the NIMS website at www.fema.gov/nims. For more information about ICS training, you could contact DHS's Centralized Scheduling and Information Desk (CSID) at 1-800-368-6498, or visit the website of DHS's Emergency Management Institute (EMI) and the National Fire Academy (NFA) at www.usfa.fema.gov. Your State emergency management training office may also be a source of information in this regard.

Excess Funds

Occasionally, due to successful competitive bid processes, some grantees have funds remaining after the completion of their obligations outlined above. Fire department grantees that complete the approved scope of work prior to the end of the performance period and still have grant funds available have three options for the use of the excess funds:

(1) Grantees may unilaterally use as much as \$5,000 to continue or expand the activities for which they received the award. For example, if a grantee received an award for personal protective equipment, the grantee may use up to \$5,000 of the excess funds to purchase more personal protective equipment without seeking our approval.

(2) Grantees may use excess funds to create or expand a fire prevention program. Grantees will need to seek and obtain approval from the AFG program office to use excess funds for this purpose. Excess funds in excess of \$5,000 must be used for fire prevention or option number three (3) below.

(3) Grantees may return excess funds to the AFG program office. To exercise this option, a grantee must closeout their award and state in the final performance report that the remaining funds are not necessary for the fulfillment of the grant obligations. The grantee must also indicate that they understand the funds would be deobligated and unavailable for future expenses. The deobligation of the excess funds will affect the Federal portion of the grant and the amount of the grantee's match.

Nonaffiliated EMS organizations that have excess funds may use only options one and three above (i.e., nonaffiliated EMS organizations may spend up to \$5,000 to expand the scope of their award or return the excess funds to us) as they are not eligible to expend grant funds for fire prevention activities.

Any uses of excess funds would have to be disclosed as part of your reports, i.e., mid-term performance report and/or final closeout.

APPENDIX A

NATIONAL INITIATIVES

This section provides background information on key national preparedness initiatives and priority focus areas. Applicants for Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) are encouraged to review closely the language in these sections in order to stay abreast of significant initiatives being highlighted by DHS and to be aware of the program requirements that will be associated with their grant, if they become a recipient of AFG financial assistance.

A. National Incident Management System (NIMS)

Issued on March 1, 2004, NIMS is a nationwide approach for federal, state, territorial, tribal, and local governments to work effectively and efficiently together to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity.

On September 8, 2004, Secretary Ridge issued a letter to governors outlining the requirements for implementing the NIMS in FY05. The NIMS Integration Center (NIC) is working with federal departments and agencies to ensure that they develop a plan to adopt NIMS and that all FY05 federal preparedness assistance program documents begin the process of addressing state, territorial, tribal, and local NIMS implementation.

Implementation of and compliance with NIMS is critical to ensuring full and robust preparedness across our nation. Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 5 established ambitious deadlines for NIMS adoption and implementation. FY05 is a start up year for NIMS implementation and full compliance with the NIMS is not required for an applicant to receive FY05 grant funds. Since FY05 is a critical year for initial NIMS adoption, awardees should start now by prioritizing FY05 preparedness assistance (in accordance with the eligibility and allowable uses of the grant) to facilitate its implementation.

NIMS Compliance Activities to be Accomplished by FY2005 AFG Grant Recipients

States and Territories

- Incorporate NIMS into existing training programs and exercises;
- Ensure that federal preparedness funding supports state, local and tribal NIMS implementation;
- Incorporate NIMS into Emergency Operations Plans;
- Promote intrastate mutual aid agreements;
- Coordinate and provide NIMS technical assistance to local entities; and
- Institutionalize the use of the Incident Command System.

State, Territorial, Local and Tribal Jurisdictions

Complete the NIMS Awareness Course: “National Incident Management System (NIMS), An Introduction” IS 700. This independent study course developed by the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) explains the purpose, principles, key components and benefits of NIMS. The course is available on the EMI web page at: <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is700.asp>.

Formally recognize the NIMS and adopt NIMS principles and policies. States, territories, tribes and local entities should establish legislation, executive orders, resolutions, or ordinances to formally adopt the NIMS. Go to <http://www.fema.gov/nims> and see NIMS Resources for examples.

Determine which NIMS requirements already have been met. Clearly state, territorial, tribal, and local entities have already implemented many of the concepts and protocols identified in the NIMS. However, as gaps in compliance with the NIMS are identified, states, territories, tribes and local entities should use existing initiatives, such as the Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) Homeland Security Grant Programs, to develop strategies for addressing those gaps.

Develop a strategy and timeframe for full NIMS implementation. States, territories, tribes, and local entities are encouraged to achieve full NIMS implementation during FY 2005. To the extent that full implementation is not possible during FY 2005, federal preparedness assistance must be leveraged to complete NIMS implementation by FY 2006. By FY 2007, federal preparedness assistance will be conditioned by full compliance with the NIMS. States should work with tribal and local governments to develop a strategy for statewide compliance with the NIMS.

Institutionalize the use of the Incident Command System (ICS). All federal, state, territory, tribal and local jurisdictions are required to adopt ICS in order to be compliant with the NIMS. See NIMS and the Incident Command System at <http://www.fema.gov/nims> under NIMS Resources.

FY 2006 and FY 2007 Requirements

In order to receive FY 2006 preparedness funding, applicants will need to certify as part of their FY 2006 grant applications that they have met the FY 2005 NIMS requirements. The NIC web page, <http://www.fema.gov/nims>, is updated regularly with NIMS information and implementation guidance

B. HSPD-8: National Preparedness

HSPD-8 establishes policies to strengthen the preparedness of the United States to prevent and respond to threatened or actual domestic terrorist attacks, major disasters,

and other emergencies by requiring a National Preparedness Goal, establishing mechanisms for improved delivery of federal preparedness assistance to state and local governments, and outlining actions to strengthen preparedness capabilities of federal, state, and local entities. Statewide all-hazards preparedness strategies should be consistent with the National Preparedness Goal, assess the most effective ways to enhance preparedness, address areas facing higher risk especially to terrorism, and address local government concerns and Citizen Corps efforts.

The National Preparedness Goal aims for federal, state, local, and tribal entities to achieve and sustain nationally accepted risk based target levels of capability for prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery for major events, especially terrorism. The target levels of capability are based upon National Planning Scenarios, a Universal Task list (UTL), and a Target Capabilities List. These tools are being developed with input from the homeland security community at all levels and will continue to be updated over time. States should take steps in FY05 to review and incorporate these tools in their preparedness efforts in preparation for full implementation of HSPD-8 in FY06.

The National Planning Scenarios illustrate the scope and magnitude of major, catastrophic events for which the nation needs to be prepared. They include 12 terrorist attacks (including chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, explosive, and cyber), two natural disasters, and pandemic influenza. The scenarios provide the detail in terms of casualties, property damage, and economic losses needed to project capability requirements for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. Summaries of the National Planning Scenarios are available on the ODP Secure Portal located at <https://odp.esportals.com>. The National Planning Scenarios will be made available as soon as they are finalized.

The UTL defines the essential tasks that need to be performed from the incident scene to the national level for major events illustrated by the National Planning Scenarios. Federal, state, local, and tribal entities select the appropriate tasks that apply to their assigned missions. The UTL also includes information on operating conditions and standards needed to develop quantifiable performance measures for planning, equipment, training, and exercises. The UTL is available on the ODP Secure Portal located at <https://odp.esportals.com>.

The Target Capabilities List identifies the capabilities needed to perform the tasks identified in the UTL for the major events illustrated by the National Planning Scenarios. A capability consists of properly planned, organized, equipped, trained, and exercised personnel needed to perform a task. The Target Capabilities List will include tiers to account for reasonable differences in capability levels among entities based on population density, critical infrastructure, and other risk factors. Entities are preparedness organizations established by levels of government with participation from the private and nonprofit sector, as described in NIMS. The Target Capabilities List will also include performance metrics. The Target Capabilities List will be available on the ODP Secure Portal located at <https://odp.esportals.com> in January 2005.

ODP will develop detailed National Planning Guidance (due by March 31, 2005) in coordination with federal, state, local, and tribal entities that describes the National Preparedness Goal, the target levels of capability, and how to apply them in the development and update of preparedness assessments and strategies. The current variety of assessments, surveys, and data calls will be realigned over time to support the Goal. As necessary, Federal regulatory requirements will be modified to support the National Preparedness Goal, to the extent permitted by law. ODP will provide information about changes in preparedness assessments and strategies in upcoming information bulletins and various forums.

C. National Response Plan (NRP)

The NRP is an all-discipline, all-hazards plan released publicly in January 2005 that establishes a single, comprehensive framework for the management of domestic incidents. It provides the structure and mechanisms for the coordination of federal support to state, local, and tribal incident managers and for exercising direct federal authorities and responsibilities. The NRP assists in the important homeland security mission of preventing terrorist attacks within the United States; reducing the vulnerability to all natural and manmade hazards; and minimizing the damage and assisting in the recovery from any type of incident that occurs.

As part of the NRP implementation, state, territorial, local, and tribal governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are requested to:

- Utilize established incident reporting protocols to notify local and regional JTTFs and the Homeland Security Operations Center (HSOC), as appropriate
- Coordinate with the HSOC regarding procedures for establishing connectivity for domestic incident management purposes. Local government procedures should be coordinated with the respective state government and/or EMA
- Modify existing incident management and EOPs within 120 days (or no later than the next major plan maintenance cycle) to ensure proper alignment with NRP coordinating structures, processes, and protocols.

D. Public Safety Communications and Interoperability Guidance

In May 2004, ODP adopted language about grant guidance developed by SAFECOM in an effort to ensure interoperability through the various layers of federal, state, and local government. (See ODP Information Bulletin #113). SAFECOM developed this general grant criteria in concert with representatives of the public safety community in an effort to coordinate the way in which funding is allocated and to maximize the prospects for interoperable communications.

The intent of the SAFECOM grant guidance is to ensure that the communications equipment being procured will lead to improved multi-disciplinary and/or multi-jurisdictional interoperable public safety communications. The grant guidance provides a

list of questions to be answered in order to demonstrate how the applicants proposed project would enhance interoperability. The guidance also encourages that, where appropriate, applicants purchase equipment that meets standards that have been developed and adopted by the public safety communications community—American National Standards Institute (ANSI)/TIA/EIAA-102 Phase 1 (Project 25) suite of standards. This recommendation is intended for government-owned or -leased land mobile public safety radio equipment, and its purpose is to make sure that such equipment or systems are capable of interoperating with other public safety land mobile equipment or systems. It is not intended to apply to commercial services that offer other types of interoperability solutions and does not exclude any application if it demonstrates that the system or equipment being proposed will lead to enhanced interoperability. The grant guidance does not propose to preclude funding of non-Project 25 equipment when there are compelling reasons for using other solutions. Absent these compelling reasons, ODP intends that Project 25 equipment will be preferred for digital systems to which the standard applies.

The SAFECOM interoperable communications guidance addresses the following issues:

- Criteria
 - Personnel Involved with Public Safety Communications Interoperability
 - Lifecycle of Public Safety Communications Projects
 - Common Public Safety Communications Goals
 - Common Criteria for All Grant Applicants
 - Standards
 - Governance

- Criteria for Public Safety Communications Equipment Grants
 - Building, Upgrading, Enhancing, Replacing and Maintaining Public Safety Communications Systems and Equipment

- Supplemental Criteria for Public Safety Equipment Grants
 - Planning for Public Safety Communication Systems
 - Training Public Safety Staff on Issues Related to Emergency Response Communications
 - Managing Public Safety Communications Projects
 - Generic Examples of Linking Disparate Public Safety Communications Systems

The SAFECOM grant guidance materials are available in their entirety on the SAFECOM website (<http://www.safecomprogram.gov>) in the electronic library. They can also be accessed through ODP Information Bulletin #113, posted on the ODP website at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/bulletins.htm>.

Drawing Links Between AFG and Other SLGCP Programs

In an effort to streamline and better coordinate funding to the states and territories, DHS established the Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness (SLGCP), which is tasked with preparing the nation for acts of terrorism. SLGCP manages a national program to enhance the capacity of state and local agencies to respond to incidents of terrorism, particularly those involving chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive incidents, as well as natural disasters, through coordinated training, exercises, equipment acquisition, and technical assistance.

SLGCP is charged with coordinating the implementation of HSPD-8, which establishes national policies to prevent and respond to threatened or actual domestic terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies by creating a national domestic all-hazards preparedness goal; providing mechanisms for improved delivery of Federal preparedness assistance to State and local governments; and outlining actions to strengthen the preparedness capabilities of Federal, State, and local entities.

DHS has responded to numerous requests from state and local homeland security officials by creating in SLGCP a one-stop shop for homeland security grant funding. Through the Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP), SLGCP distributes grants states and local homeland security stakeholders through a number of assistance programs:

- **Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program:** The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program helps local fire departments purchase firefighting equipment, fund firefighter health and safety programs, enhance emergency medical services programs, and conduct fire education and prevention programs.
- **Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP):** provide funding for planning, equipment, training, exercises, and program management and administration for emergency prevention, preparedness, and response personnel in support of efforts to implement State and Urban Area Homeland Security Strategies. In FY 2005, six programs were combined into a single application kit and set of program guidelines under the HSGP:
 - *State Homeland Security Program (SHSP):* Provides financial assistance directly to each of the states and territories to prevent, respond to, and recover from acts of terrorism. SHSP supports the implementation of the State Homeland Security Strategy to address the identified planning, equipment, training, and exercise needs.
 - *Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI):* Addresses the unique equipment, training, planning and exercise needs of large high threat urban areas.
 - *Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program:* Provides law enforcement communities with funds to support prevention activities such as: information

sharing to preempt terrorist attacks; target hardening to reduce vulnerability of selected high value targets; recognition and mapping of potential or developing threats; counterterrorism and security planning; interoperable communications; and, interdiction of terrorists before they can execute a threat or intervention activities that prevent terrorists from executing a threat.

- *Citizen Corps Program:* DHS grassroots initiative that encourages citizens to play a role in hometown security through personal preparedness. Citizen Corps provides local opportunities to channel citizen action through preparedness, training, and volunteer service opportunities coordinated by over 1,200 local Citizen Corps Councils nationwide.
- *Emergency Management Performance Grants:* Supports comprehensive emergency management at the state and local levels and encourages the improvement of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery capabilities for all hazards.
- *Metropolitan Medical Response System:* Provides funding to 124 designated jurisdictions to write plans, develop training, purchase equipment and pharmaceuticals, and conduct exercises related to catastrophic incidents. The program enhances local capability to respond to all-hazard mass casualty events.
- **Transportation and Interoperability Grants:** These grants provide funding to enhance security at port and transit facilities, as well as interoperability communication.
- **Information Technology and Evaluation Program:** Competitive program intended to foster and evaluate uses of existing, “state-of-the-market” information technology that will demonstrate how to remove barriers and improve information sharing and integration.
- **Competitive Training Grants Program:** Provides funding for training initiatives to further ODP’s mission of preparing the nation in the event of a terrorist incident.