



## FY 2010 Staffing for Adequate Fire, Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program

### Overview

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Grant Programs Directorate is responsible for the implementation and administration of the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grants. SAFER grants provide financial assistance to help fire departments increase their cadre of frontline firefighters or to rehire firefighters that have been laid off, and to recruit and/or retain volunteer firefighters. The FY 2010 SAFER assists local fire departments with staffing and deployment capabilities so they may respond to emergencies whenever they occur, assuring their communities have adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards, and that their operations meet the standards established by NFPA and OSHA. The authority for the FY 2010 SAFER is derived from the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974, as amended (15 U.S.C. §2229a et seq.). The authority for waiving certain provisions of the SAFER Grant Program is derived from Section 605 of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2009 (P.L. 111-32). Cost sharing requirements were waived under Sec. 603 of Title VI of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 (P.L. 111-5).

*In Fiscal Year 2010, DHS will award approximately \$400 million financial assistance to help fire departments increase their cadre of frontline firefighters or to rehire firefighters that have been laid off.*

### Funding

In FY 2010, the total amount of funding distributed under this grant program will be approximately \$400 million. FY 2010 SAFER funds will be awarded to help fire departments increase their cadre of frontline firefighters or to rehire firefighters that have been laid off, and to recruit and/or retain volunteer firefighters.

### Eligibility

Eligible applicants for SAFER included volunteer and combination fire departments, career fire departments, and municipalities and fire districts. Volunteer and combination fire departments may apply for "Hiring of Firefighters" or "Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters" category. Career fire departments may only apply for funding in the "Hiring of Firefighters" category. Municipalities and fire districts may submit applications on behalf of fire departments lacking the legal status to do so, such as those under the auspices of the municipality or district. Organizations representing the interests of volunteer firefighters and individual fire departments (volunteer or combination) may apply for funding for regional projects.

### Allowable Costs

SAFER grants are comprised of two primary categories, "Hiring of Firefighters" (hiring new or rehiring laid-off firefighters) and "Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters". The highest priority under the "Hiring of Firefighters" category will be afforded to applications that are seeking to rehire firefighters who have been laid off. The primary focus for the "Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters" is the recruitment and/or retention of volunteer firefighters who are involved with, or trained in, the operations of firefighting and emergency response.

## Application Process and Evaluation Criteria

All complete and eligible applications are evaluated based on the substance of the application relative to the established SAFER Grant funding priorities. The answers to activity-specific questions as well as information under Department Characteristics provide the basis to determine the application's standing relative to stated priorities. The initial evaluation assesses how closely each application matches the program's established priorities. Applications most consistent with the SAFER Grant funding priorities score higher in the automated evaluation than those applications not aligned with the priorities. Applications scoring the highest are determined to be within the "competitive range" and undergo further evaluation through a peer review process. The initial scores are combined later with the scores of the applications after they receive peer review evaluations, with each score representing 50 percent of the total application score with respect to the final award determinations.

A panel of at least three peer review panelists performs the second phase of the applications' evaluations. These panelists evaluate the application using the narrative statement, along with the answers to the general questions and the activity-specific questions, to determine the worthiness of the request for an award. Each application is judged on its own merits against established criteria and is not compared to other applications. Applications that best address the grant funding priorities score higher than those that are inconsistent with the priorities.

All applications, whether for hiring of firefighters or recruitment/retention of volunteer firefighters will be evaluated by the peer reviewers in the following areas:

- 1) Clarity of the proposed project
- 2) Financial need
- 3) Impact the grant would have on daily operations if awarded