



# **SAFER Grants Management 101**

## **Webinar for FY 2009/2010 Grantees**

### **Important Information and Updates**

**Sponsored by the Grant Programs Directorate, Assistance to Firefighters Grants Branch  
in partnership with the Training and Professional Development Branch**



# **FEMA**

**March 30, 2011**

# Submitting Questions

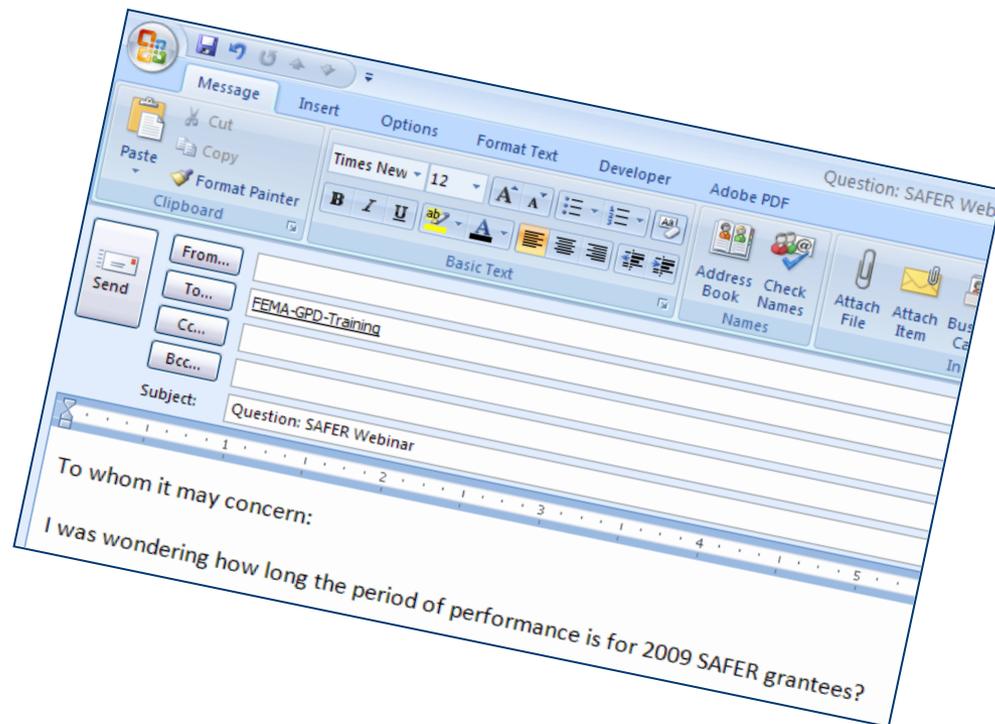
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Submit questions via the chat function on the left-hand side of your screen



2

Submit questions via email by contacting [FEMA-GPD-Training@fema.gov](mailto:FEMA-GPD-Training@fema.gov)



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Questions and answers from this webinar will be posted to the SAFER section of the AFG website (<http://www.fema.gov/firegrants>)

# Welcome

## **Cathie Patterson**

- **Branch Chief, Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG)**
- **Section Chief, AFG Fire Prevention and Safety Grants Program**

## **Melissa Evans**

- **Contractor Regional Fire Program Specialist for FEMA Region III**
  - Fire Program Specialist for SAFER and AFG
- **Prior AFG Grants Management Task Lead**
- **Prior Grants Specialist, COPS, Department of Justice**



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# Agenda

- **Overview of the SAFER Grant Program**
- **What's New in SAFER 2009 and SAFER 2010?**
- **Electronic Grants Management: A Quick Review**
- **Recruitment Period and Periods of Performance**
- **Reporting Requirements**
- **How to Submit a Performance Report and SF-425**
- **Payment Requests**
  - Hiring Firefighters Grantees
  - Recruitment and Retention Grantees
- **How to Submit a Payment Request**
- **Reasons for Payment Request Delays**
- **Hiring Awardees: Roster Collection Reminder**
- **Waiver of the Non-Supplanting Requirement**
- **Grantee Responsibilities**
- **Support for SAFER Grantees**
- **Question-and-Answer Session**

**Staffing for  
Adequate Fire and  
Emergency  
Response Grants  
(SAFER)**



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# Overview of the SAFER Grant Program

- **Purpose:** Provide financial assistance to help departments increase the number of frontline firefighters or to rehire firefighters that have been laid off.
- **Goal:** Assist fire departments with staffing and deployment capabilities so they may respond to emergencies and assure their communities have adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards.



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# Overview (Cont'd.)

## Hiring Grants

1

### Rehiring Firefighters

To restore front-line staffing to prior levels

#### Activities

- Rehiring Laid-off Firefighters
- Retaining Firefighters Facing Layoffs
- Filling Attrited Positions

**Note:** Funds are provided to refill firefighter positions; the individuals filling the positions may or may not be new to the department.

2

### Hiring New Firefighters

To increase the number of front-line staffing

**Note:** Firefighter I certification required within 12 months of employment; Firefighter II certification required within 24 months

## Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighter Grants

To create a net increase in the number of trained, certified, and competent firefighters, or to retain current firefighters



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# What's New in SAFER 2009 and SAFER 2010?

- **Reduced period of performance in Hiring Grants (from 4 to 2 years)**
- **Allowed to submit for reimbursement of eligible expenses as needed (no longer limited to quarterly payment requests)**
- **Allowed to be reimbursed up to 100% of eligible expenses/payrolls paid (no longer a Federal cap per position; Federal/local match formula removed)**
- **Separated the payment requests and performance reports (formerly the payment request and performance report were combined)**
- **Compliance with reporting requirements needed throughout the period of performance; reports impact the processing of payment requests:**
  - Programmatic Quarterly Performance Reports
  - Semiannual Federal Financial Reports (SF-425)
  - Programmatic and Financial Closeout Report



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# Electronic Grants Management: A Quick Review

**You will manage your SAFER grant online from beginning to final closeout.**

- Go to <http://www.fema.gov/firegrants> (effective April 1)
- Log in to e-grant application by entering the username and password used for your SAFER application
- At the “Status” screen, you can:
  - Check the “Mail Center” for all new system-generated messages
  - View Award Package, Application, and 1199A Banking Information
  - Select “Manage Grant” to submit reports and to request payments and amendments
  - Maintain current SAFER points of contact information online (e-mail addresses and phone numbers)

**REMEMBER: When in doubt, contact the AFG Help Desk and ask to speak to your SAFER Program Specialist.**

- **Phone:** 1-866-274-0960
- **E-mail:** [firegrants@dhs.gov](mailto:firegrants@dhs.gov)



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# Recruitment Period and Periods of Performance

## 90-Day Recruitment Period

- All grantees receive a 90-day recruitment period during which they can begin to implement the awarded activities.
- Recruitment period starts on the date the application **is approved for award** and ends with the start date of the performance period.
- Grantees can request to waive the 90-day recruitment period. These requests are submitted online via an amendment request.

## Periods of Performance (POP) and Retention Commitment (referenced on the last page of award package)

- Rehiring Firefighters Grantees: 2-year POP
  - No requirement to retain SAFER-funded firefighters beyond the POP.
- Hiring Grant Recipients: 2-year POP
  - Commitment to retain the SAFER-funded firefighters for 1 year beyond the end of the grant's POP.
- Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Grantees: 1- to 4-year POPs



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# Reporting Requirements

## Programmatic Quarterly Performance Reports

- Reports must be submitted quarterly and are due within 30 days of the end of each grant quarter.
- Quarters are based on the grant's POP and not on the calendar or fiscal year.
- A report is required even if a grantee is not requesting funding for a particular quarter.

## Semiannual Federal Financial Reports (SF-425)

- Due dates are calendar based.
- Report forms become available on June 30 and December 30.
- Reports are delinquent if submitted after July 31 and January 31.

## Programmatic and Financial Closeout Report

- Final report reflecting the programmatic and financial activity of this award must be submitted within 90 days after the end of the grant award.

**REMEMBER: Reporting Compliance = Timely Payment Processing**



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# How to Submit a Performance Report and SF-425

## At “Status” screen, under “Action Column”:

- Select “Manage Grant”
- Select “Reports” on left-hand side of screen
- Select “Performance Report” OR “SF-425”
- Create the report
- Submit report

## After Submission:

- A SAFER Program Specialist will acknowledge receipt of your performance reports and will contact you if there are any questions.
- Your SF-425 will be reviewed by FEMA’s Grant Administration and Assistance Division, and a member of their staff will contact you with any questions.



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# Payment Requests: Hiring Firefighters Grantees

- Payment requests cannot be submitted online until the beginning of the period of performance.
- The “Payment Request” screen is separate from the “Quarterly Reporting” screen.
- You may request reimbursement of eligible expenses as needed.
  - Activity during the 90-day recruitment period is eligible for reimbursement.
  - You may request reimbursement for up to 100% of actual eligible payrolls paid during the reporting period.
  - There is no cap on the amount of each payment request as long as the amount corresponds to actual payrolls paid to SAFER firefighters.
- You should file the supporting documentation for each submitted payment request (payroll records paid, copies of paid insurance invoices, etc.) in your grant file so that it can be provided if requested.

**REMEMBER: Your assigned SAFER Program Specialist will review your payment requests and contact you with any questions.**



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# Payment Requests: Hiring Firefighters Grantees (Cont'd.)

**Reimbursement for Salaries** (defined as all amounts **paid to** the firefighters)

- Submit on the basis of payrolls already paid.
- Different shift schedules are eligible.
- Seek reimbursement for pay based on the SAFER firefighter's (FFS) regularly scheduled and contracted shift hours. The Fair Labor Standards Act may require payment at the time and one half rate for some of these hours during some pay periods. These costs are eligible for reimbursement.
- FFS must be considered employees for salaries and benefits to be reimbursed for the time they attend academy training.
- Certification pay is usually part of the salary but is considered a “benefit” for the purpose of payment requests.

**REMEMBER: Payments for any hours worked in addition to the regularly scheduled shift are NOT ELIGIBLE for reimbursement.**



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# Payment Requests: Hiring Firefighters Grantees (Cont'd.)

**Reimbursement for Benefits** (defined as all amounts paid **on behalf** of the firefighter)

- Submit on the basis of payrolls already paid.
- Examples of eligible benefits:
  - Workers compensation, life insurance, retirement, health and medical insurance, social security, Medicare, pension plans, certification pay, etc.
- Extra benefits, like holiday pay, should be noted in the “Comments” area of the payment requests.

**REMEMBER: Please review the online SAFER Guidance and Application Kit that details eligible and ineligible expenses.**



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# Payment Requests: Recruitment and Retention Grantees

- Payment requests cannot be submitted online until the beginning of the period of performance.
- The “Payment Request” screen is separate from the “Quarterly Reporting” screen.
- You may submit for reimbursement of eligible expenses as needed.
  - Activity during the 90-day recruitment period is eligible for reimbursement.
  - There is no cap on the amount of each payment request.
- You will be reimbursed only for eligible activities as specified in your application’s “Request Details” Section and “Narrative Statement” or as approved in a grant amendment request.
- You should file the supporting documentation for each submitted payment request (copies of paid insurance invoices, etc.) in your grant file so that it can be provided if requested.

**REMEMBER: Please review the online SAFER Guidance and Application Kit that details eligible and ineligible expenses.**



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# Payment Requests: How to Submit a Payment Request

## At “Status” screen, under the “e-grant Action” column

- Select “Manage Grant”
- Select “Payments” on left-hand side of screen
- Create the payment request
- Submit the payment request

A SAFER Team member will send an e-mail to acknowledge the receipt, as well as the disposition, of all submitted payment requests, amendment requests (if applicable), and performance reports.

All payment processing messages are stored online via the Mail Center.



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# Payment Requests: Reasons for Payment Request Delays

**REMEMBER:** You will not be able to create a payment request if...

1. There is a pending e-grant action already in the system. For example, you submitted an amendment request that is still pending.
2. Your quarterly performance and/or the SF-425 report submissions are late.
3. Your online banking information is not fully processed, or you recently submitted updates to your banking information.
4. You already have submitted a payment request that has not yet completed processing.



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# Payment Requests: Summary of Requirements

- **Reimbursement**
  - Grantee should periodically draw down funds throughout Period of Performance
- **Funds disbursed as costs incurred**
  - Limit cash on hand
- **Interest earned is due quarterly**
  - May keep interest amounts up to \$100 per year for administrative expenses



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# Hiring Awardees: Roster Collection Reminder

## SAFER Roster

- You will complete a SAFER roster online with the names of the SAFER-funded firefighters on submitted payment requests.

## Pre-SAFER Roster

- You will be contacted by the SAFER Team and given instructions for submitting your department's Pre-SAFER roster.
  - **FY 2009 Grantees:** Prior to submitting your second payment request, you must submit a copy of your operational personnel roster in effect at the time of application. Make certain the roster submitted is consistent with the statistics shown in the “Applicant Characteristics 1” section of your application. Any differences should be explained in your payment requests and shared with your SAFER Program Specialist.
  - **FY 2010 Grantees:** Prior to submitting your second payment request, you must submit a copy of your operational personnel roster in effect at the time of award.



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# Hiring Awardees: Roster Collection Reminder (Cont'd.)

## Changes to the Staffing Levels

- Fully explain the changes in your next performance report.
- Notify your assigned SAFER Program Specialist.

Roster 09-10 Pre-SAFER\_Template.xls [Compatibility Mode] - Microsoft Excel

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1	Department Name:										
2											
3	SAFER Award Number:										
4											
5	Last Name	First Name	Rank	Last 4 of SSN	Ops/ Admin	Left Dept (Y/N)	Date Left	Reason	Rehire n (Y/N)	Retain (Y/N)	
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# Waiver of the Non-Supplanting Requirement

- Please maintain the SAFER-funded positions as well as the number of positions declared at **time of application (2009 grantees)** or **time of award (2010 grantee)**.
- If you lose any SAFER firefighters during the period of performance, you must take active and timely steps fill the vacated position(s).
- If you are experiencing any staffing level reductions, please contact your SAFER point of contact.
- Under limited circumstances, DHS may consider accepting waivers for departments facing documentable economic hardship; each department is reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- Positions must have been lost through normal attrition.
- Grantee is unable to fill the vacant positions due to documentable economic hardship.
- Economic hardship affects the entire public safety sector.

**REMEMBER: NO FIREFIGHTER LAYOFFS ARE PERMITTED DURING THE PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE.**



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# Grantee Responsibilities

- Perform grant activities.
- Ensure the SAFER-funded firefighters complete the training requirements.
- Do not lay off any firefighters.
- Hiring New Firefighter Awardees—Remember the commitment to retain the positions for one year after the end of the period of performance.
- Retain grant files and supporting documentation.
- Provide programmatic and financial reporting.
- Follow the audit requirements of OMB A-133 and NIMS requirements.
- Firefighters hired under these grants shall not be discriminated against, or be prohibited from, engaging in volunteer firefighting activities in another jurisdiction during off-duty hours.
- To the extent possible, grantees should seek, recruit, and appoint members of racial and ethnic minority groups and women to increase their ranks within departments.



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# Grantee Responsibilities: Required Record-keeping

**As a Federal grantee, you are responsible for saving and filing all documents and information related to your Federal grant for 3 years after your grant is officially closed.**

- Store grant records in a secure location, such as a locked file cabinet in a locked office.
- Examples of records to save and file include:
  - All award documents, e.g., award agreement, application.
  - Supporting documentation for all grant submissions, including all payment requests, performance report submissions, amendment requests, etc.
  - Receipts for all grant-related expenditures.
  - Correspondence and e-mail messages.
  - Source documentation such as cancelled checks, payrolls and time and attendance records for all grant-related expenditures and their SAFER Hiring Roster. To guard against improper payments all award recipients must comply with 2 CFR Cost Principles and cost provisions contained in the Terms and Conditions of the award.
  - Accounting records which identify the source and application of funds. The grantee's expenditures must be properly documented, allowable, reasonable, allocable and obligated within the period of performance.



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# Grantee Responsibilities: Procurement Integrity

- **Know your organization's hiring and procurement policies and procedures.**
  - Print out and keep on file written documentation of firefighter hiring policies and procurement policies.
  - If such policies and procedures do not exist, contact your SAFER Program Specialist for assistance.



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# Support for SAFER Grantees

- **A SAFER Program Specialist is assigned to each grantee; this is your main contact for any questions.**
  - Your assigned SAFER Specialist will contact you after you are awarded the grant.
  - Your SAFER Specialist will review and approve all of your payment requests and performance reports.
  
- **SAFER Program Specialists and other AFG Program staff can discuss the details of your award only with the individuals listed in your grant as official Points of Contact (POCs) for the department.** You may have up to four different POCs listed (1 primary, 2 alternates, and 1 in the payment request section)

**REMEMBER: When in doubt, contact the AFG Help Desk and ask to speak to your SAFER Program Specialist.**

- **Phone: 1-866-274-0960**
- **E-mail: [firegrants@dhs.gov](mailto:firegrants@dhs.gov)**



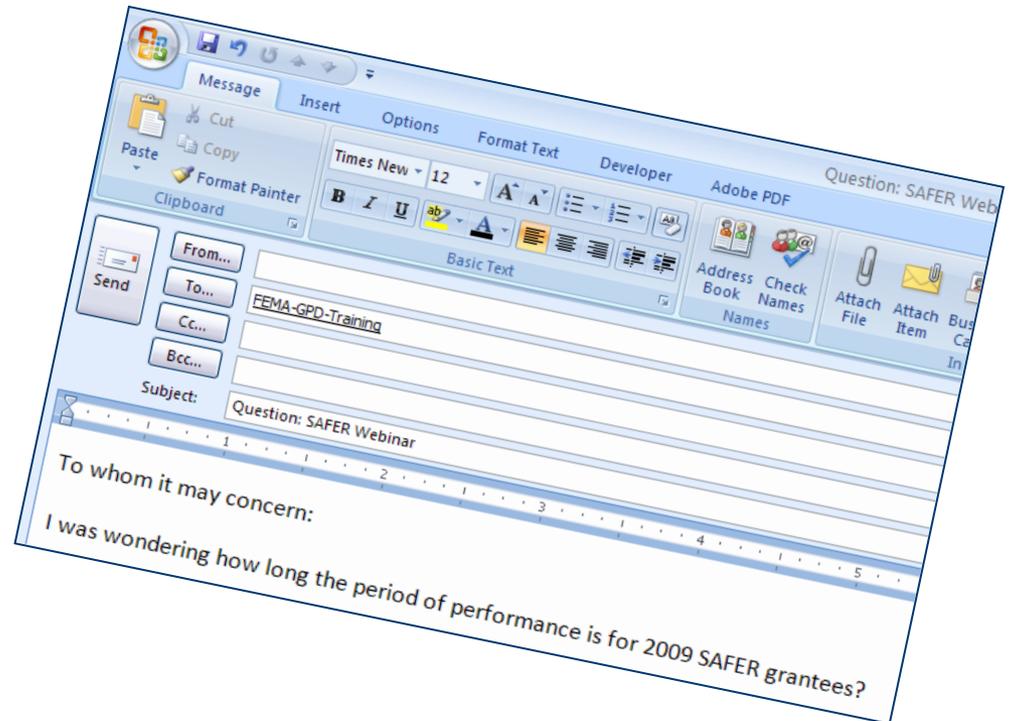
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# Question-and-Answer Session

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# Question-and-Answer Session



**Questions and answers from this webinar and a copy of the presentation will be posted in the SAFER section of the AFG Website.**



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**Thank you for your participation.**



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