

Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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1. New for FY2018

Equipment/Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The FY 2018 AFG NOFO contains some changes to definitions, descriptions, and priority categories. Changes to the FY 2018 AFG NOFO include:

- Under the equipment category, FEMA has updated the reasons for equipment purchases. The new descriptions are:
 - High priority - Obtain equipment to achieve minimum operational and deployment standards for existing missions
 - High priority - Replace unusable/unrepairable equipment to meet current standard
 - High priority - Replace non-compliant equipment to current standard
 - Medium priority - Obtain equipment for new mission

- Medium priority - Replace non-compliant equipment to current standard
- Low priority - Upgrade technology to current standard
- Under the PPE category, FEMA has updated the purchase reason for PPE/SCBA. The new descriptions are:
 - High priority - Replace unusable/unrepairable PPE to meet current standard
 - High priority - Increase supply for new hires and/or existing firefighters that do not have one set of turnout gear (PPE) or allocated seated positions (SCBA)
 - Medium priority - Replace noncompliant to current standard

Wellness and Fitness Micro Grants

- Priority categories for Wellness and Fitness requests have been updated
- Cancer Screening Programs that meet NFPA 1582 were added as a Priority 1 activity required for a Wellness and Fitness program.

Training

- Mass Casualty and HazMat Technician training have been updated from a Medium to High funding priority for urban, suburban, and rural departments under the Training Activity.
- Specialized training has been added as a medium priority, and includes training such as Crisis Intervention Training, to provide specialized training to firefighters, paramedics, emergency medical service workers, and other first responders to recognize individuals who have mental illness and how to properly intervene with individuals with mental illness, including strategies for verbal de-escalation of crisis.

2. Reminders for 2018

Applicants must now affirm all of the following in order to complete and submit an AFG application:

- The applicant organization should provide its own unique Dun & Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number in this application.
- The applicant organization, as required per 2 CFR § 25.205, is currently registered in the System for Award Management (SAM).
- The applicant organization has consulted the appropriate Funding Opportunity Announcement and that all requested activities are programmatically allowable, technically feasible and can be completed within the award's one year Period of Performance (POP).
- The applicant organization is aware that this application period is open Monday, September 24, 2018 from 8 AM EST and will close, Friday, October 26, EST; furthermore, the applicant organization is aware that once an application is submitted, even if the application period is still

open, a submitted application cannot be changed or released back to the applicant for modification.

- The applicant organization is aware that it is solely the applicant organization's responsibility to ensure that all activities funded by this award(s) comply with Federal environmental planning and historic preservation (EHP) regulations, laws, and Executive Orders as applicable. The EHP Screening Form designed to initiate and facilitate the EHP Review is available at http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1431970163011-80ce3cd907072a91295b1627c56d8fd2/gpd_ehp_screening_form_51815.pdf.
- The applicant organization is aware that it is ultimately responsible for the accuracy of all application information submitted. Regardless of the applicant's intent, the submission of information that is false or misleading may result in actions by FEMA that include, but are not limited to the submitted application not being considered for award, an existing award being locked pending investigation, or referral to the Office of the Inspector General.

Overmatch

- In the application narrative, an organization may indicate a voluntary pledge to commit additional financial support toward a project(s) cost, which is in addition to their required cost share obligation as detailed in the NOFO and required by law. FEMA will not account for this promised additional funding in the terms of the award. The award budget will not account for any voluntary committed cost sharing or overmatch.

Environmental and Historical Preservation:

- It is FEMA Policy that actions initiated and/or completed without fulfilling the specific documentation and procedural requirements of NEPA will not be considered for funding.
- AFG Activities that may require renovation or installation, (supporting Training, Equipment, PPE, or Wellness and Fitness), that would qualify as a modification to facility, and will require an EHP review; include but not limited to: air compressor/fill station/cascade system (Fixed) for filling SCBA; air quality systems; alarm/alerting systems; antennas; generators (fixed); sprinklers; vehicle exhaust systems (fixed) or washer/dryer/extractors.
- Please see FEMA's Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP) Screening Process. EHP Screening form and instructions are available at http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1431970163011-80ce3cd907072a91295b1627c56d8fd2/gpd_ehp_screening_form_51815.pdf
- The EHP Policy can be found at [Environmental Planning and Historical Preservation Policy](#)
- Recipients will be notified of their EHP responsibilities in the grant award package.

Excess Funds: The \$10,000 maximum is cumulative for any grant, regardless of the number of activities within the award, and will require no amendment; except when the use of excess funds (not to exceed \$10,000 cumulatively) is for any eligible activity that would normally require an EHP Review.

- Excess funds cannot be used to support Fire Prevention and Safety activities. The opportunity for excess funds is limited when the original uncompleted Scope of Work is changed via Amendment.
- Excess funds cannot be used for grant writer/preparer fees.
- Excess funds may only be used for allowable activities identified in the program guidance for that fiscal year's grant cycle.

Help FEMA Prevent Fraud, Waste and Abuse: If you have information about instances of fraud, waste, abuse or mismanagement involving FEMA programs or operations, you should contact the DHS OIG Hotline at 1-800-323-8603; by fax at 202-254-4297; or e-mail <https://www.oig.dhs.gov/hotline>. All procurement activity must be conducted in accordance with Federal Procurement Standards at 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.317 – 200.326

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA): Courtesy of the NFPA (and at no cost during the AFG Application period), relevant standards that should be referenced in your applications may be viewed at NFPA Free Access: <https://www.nfpa.org/freeaccess>

Eligible Applicant Category: State Fire Training Academies became an eligible applicant in 2013

EMS Category: Community Paramedics (EMT-Ps with Primary Care certification) was added in 2013

Standard for Ambulances: Ambulances must meet *NFPA 1917: Standard for Automotive Ambulances, Edition 2018* or *GSA Federal Standard KKK-A-1822F* <http://standards.globalspec.com/std/1588426/gsa-kkk-a-1822>

State Fire Training Academies: Eligible for all AFG vehicle acquisition.

System for Award Management (SAM). A valid SAM Registration is a requirement to apply for an AFG grant. The registration is free. AFG will not accept any application(s), make any award, process any payment request or consider any amendment until the applicant or recipient has complied with the requirements to provide a valid DUNS number and an active SAM registration with current information. The Banking information, EIN number, organization/entity name, address and DUNS number provided in your AFG application must match the information that you provided in SAM.gov. SAM will send notifications to the registered user via email 60, 30 and 15 days prior to expiration of the record. All grant applicants must have an active current SAM registration status at the time of application submission and throughout the duration of any Federal award. You can search for registered entities in SAM by typing the DUNS number or business name into the search box.

The link to access SAM.GOV is: [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#)

3. May I change or edit my application after it has been submitted?

Once you have submitted your application, you cannot change it. You will not be allowed to update your application to correct errors discovered after submission or to reflect changes in your organization's circumstances.

4. When is the 2018 AFG Operations and Safety application period?

Recipients may submit completed applications from Monday, September 24, 2018, 8 AM EST and will close, Friday, October 26, 2018 -- 5pm EST.

5. Where can I find a copy of the Environmental and Historical Preservation (EHP) review screening form?

The Environmental and Historical Preservation Guidance can be found at <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/85376> and The Environmental and Historical Preservation Screening Form can be found at, https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1501003650506-853eeedee8632ebd25408cd0241683c4/FEMA_Form_024-0-1_Final_Version_7-25-2018.pdf

6. Once the scope of work of an awarded project is finished and there are funds remaining, how much of these remaining funds can be spent without an amendment request approval?

The excess funds threshold is \$10,000. If the excess funds in this amount or less, the funding may be used to enhance the awarded activities and you will not be required to submit an amendment request for AFG Approval unless you want to use excess funds for another activity. For more details, please see Appendix C > VI. The Excess Funds section of the 2018 AFG NOFO

7. What is Management and Administration (M&A)?

Management and Administration **are** administrative expenses that are incurred during the administration of an AFG award.

No more than three percent (3%) of AFG Funds awarded may be used solely for management and administration with the AFG under any of the program areas (Vehicle Acquisition, Operations and Safety & Joint or Regional) listed above in accordance with 2 CFR Part 225, Cost Principles for state, local and Indian Tribal Governments (OMB Circular A-87) or 2 CFR Part 230, Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations (OMB Circular A-122), as applicable.

Applicants may apply for administrative costs if the costs are directly related to the implementation of the program for which they are applying. Administrative costs are identifiable costs directly associated with the implementation and management of the grant and cannot exceed three percent (3%) of the award. If you are requesting administrative expenses, you must list the costs under the "Other" category in the budget and explain the purpose for the administrative costs in your Project Narrative.

Administrative costs should be based on actual expenses only, not a percentage of the overall grant. Examples of eligible administrative costs include shipping, office supplies and computers and software associated with the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) reporting requirements.

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

8. Who do I contact to help FEMA prevent fraud, waste and abuse or mismanagement by an AFG recipient?

If you have information about instances of fraud, waste, abuse or mismanagement involving FEMA programs or operations, you should contact the DHS OIG Hotline at 1-800-323-8603; by fax at 202-254-4297; or e-mail.

<https://www.oig.dhs.gov/hotline>

9. Is reporting to the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) required to apply for and be awarded an AFG grant?

While NFIRS reporting is strongly encouraged for all fire departments (as defined by 15 USC § 2229(a)(7)), NFIRS reporting is not a requirement to apply for any AFG program, however fire departments that receive funding under this program must agree to provide information to the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) for the period covered by the assistance. If a recipient does not currently participate in the incident reporting system and does not have the capacity to report at the time of the award, that recipient must agree to provide information to the system for a twelve-month period commencing as soon as possible after they develop the capacity to report. Capacity to report to the NFIRS must be established prior to the termination of the one-year performance period. The recipient may be asked by FEMA to provide proof of compliance in reporting to NFIRS. Any recipient that stops reporting to NFIRS during their grant's period of performance is subject to having their award(s) modified or withdrawn.

AFG does not have NFIRS reporting requirements for nonaffiliated EMS organizations and State Fire Training Academies.

10. How do I access the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards to assist with filling out the 2018 AFG application if I am not a NFPA member?

Courtesy of the NFPA (and at no cost during the AFG Application period), relevant standards that should be referenced in your applications may be viewed at

<https://www.nfpa.org/freeaccess>

11. Can a State Fire Training Academy apply for an AFG grant?

Yes, the State Training Academies are eligible applicants to submit applications for an AFG grant. A State Fire Training Academy applicant may only apply for Equipment and PPE awards.

12. Are training props that support the delivery of training by State Fire Training Academies (SFTA) eligible under the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program?

FEMA recognizes the unique mission of State Fire Training Academies (SFTA) to deliver training to firefighters and Emergency Medical Services personnel throughout their state.

13. What are Community Paramedics and what is their role?

Community Paramedics are Paramedics with Primary Care certification. The

Community Paramedic (CP) is considered as a back-up emergency response unit when no actual emergency exist. They should be immediately available to respond to a scene, arrange appointments and transport patients to alternate destinations through established partnerships or direct field communication. Established alternative destinations should include walk-in clinics, mental health triage, social detox facilities, shelters and homeless services and in-home assistance services among others. They also schedule in-home evaluation of high-risk patients following hospital discharge. They are able to assess and report to the referring physicians using standard field tools including EKG, blood glucose, pulse oximetry, venous lactate, end-tidal carbon dioxide, along with the standard vital signs and optional blood draws along with the immediate availability of transport and treatment if needed.

A Community Paramedic Program should seek to establish a sustainable model for improving the use of existing EMS providers through scope of practice flexibility and coordination with other health providers. A Community Paramedic Program has the potential to: 1) Reduce health system expenditures 2) Become self-sustaining 3) Enhance public health and safety by meaningfully supporting the health and social welfare needs of the community.

14. What is the standard that an ambulance must meet and where can this standard be found?

The new standard that an ambulance must meet is NFPA 1917 or *GSA Federal Standard KKK-A-1822F*. The link for the NFPA standard is [NFPA 1917: Standard for Automotive Ambulances - NFPA.org](#) then go to *NFPA Standard 1917: Standard for Automotive Ambulances, Edition 2018*. The link for the GSA Federal Standard KKK-A-1822F is <http://standards.globalspec.com/std/1588426/gsa-kkk-a-1822>.

15. What is a Micro Grant?

Fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations have a voluntary funding limitation choice (within the application) for any AFG Operations & Safety program activity. Micro Grants are *not an additional funding opportunity* but applicants *may* receive additional consideration for an award.

The selection of the voluntary Micro Grant option (cumulative Federal participation of \$50,000), for eligible Operations and Safety activities, does not impact an applicant's request or federal participation under the Vehicle Acquisition or Regional programs. Applicants that select Micro Grants as a funding opportunity choice may receive additional consideration for award. Please see the section on Micro Grants, in the 2018 AFG NOFO.

16. When an AFG grant is accepted by the recipient, when does the period of performance for the award start?

Recipients are notified via email and through the AFG e-grants system of the award offer. The recipient shall notify the awarding agency of its intent to accept or decline the award. Recipients must accept their grant awards no later than 30 days from the award date.

Funds remain on hold (for a maximum of 90 days) until the recipient accepts or declines the award through official correspondence (e.g., written, electronic

signature, signed letter or fax) to the Grant Programs. The grant award date can be found in the award agreement within the Obligating Document for Award in section "14. - Performance Period".

17. How do I obtain a user ID and/or password to access the grant system if I don't have the username and password of the person who submitted a grant from our department in previous years?

Send a letter explaining why you need this information and if you also need to change the Primary Contact information. Please be aware changing the Primary Contact on one grant will cause the Primary Contact to be changed on all other department grants submitted under the same user ID. Contact changes may take up to two weeks to process. The letter must be on your fire department letterhead and signed by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ), that titled position having the authority to request such change(s) e.g. "Fire Chief" in an organization where the Fire Chief has such authority; or "President" in a nonaffiliated EMS organization where the President has such authority.

Fax a copy of the letter to the AFG Program Office. The number is 540-504-2884. After faxing the letter to the AFG Program Office, please mail the original letter to:

**DHS/FEMA/Grant Programs Directorate
Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program - 3rd Floor
400 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20472**

The following information must be included in the letter:

1. Grant number
2. Previous primary contact person's name
3. Explanation of why access to the grant is needed
4. New contact person's name
5. New contact person's mother's maiden name
6. New contact person's date of birth
7. New contact person's e-mail address
8. Two phone numbers for the new contact person

A mailed letter may take two weeks to process. However, soon after faxing the letter to the AFG Program Office, you will receive an e-mail telling you that the system has been updated and your name was placed on the grant as the main contact person. You will also receive an automated e-mail from EOPS@dhs.gov with your user ID and temporary password.

If you do not receive this automated e-mail from EOPS@dhs.gov within two days of faxing your request and receiving the e-mail telling you that your name was placed on the grant, you should look in your junk mail file. The electronic e-mails are sometimes filtered and sent directly to junk mail.

18. Where can the NFPA Codes that the AFG Program reference be found? As part of their commitment to enhance public safety, NFPA made its codes and standards

available online to the public for free. To access these codes, please visit:

<https://www.nfpa.org/freeaccess>

19. When must an applicant achieve the level of NIMS compliance if awarded a 2018 AFG grant? Any applicant that receives an FY 2018 AFG award must achieve the level of NIMS compliance required by the authority having command and control jurisdiction over the applicant's emergency service operations, prior to the end of the grant's period of performance. AFG applicants are not required to be in compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), either to apply for AFG funding or to receive an AFG award.