

USFA Reauthorization Further Advances 50 Years of Fire Service to Nation

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WASHINGTON -- Early this month, President Biden signed a bill reauthorizing the United States Fire Administration (USFA) through September 30, 2028. For 50 years, USFA has been working for a fire safe America.

The USFA works with federal, state, local, tribal and territorial partners and nongovernmental stakeholders to improve public safety. This includes collecting and analyzing data, administering national fire and emergency medical service programs, increasing public awareness about fire safety, reducing community risks and delivering specialized training through the National Fire Academy. The USFA, the fire prevention and control arm of FEMA, was established in 1974 when Congress passed the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act. Since its inception, the USFA has helped to reduce the occurrence of fire and the number of fire deaths and make our nation's communities and residents safer.

“Across the country – and around the world – our communities are experiencing the devastating effects of fire on our most vulnerable populations,” stated Dr. Lori Moore-Merrell, U.S. Fire Administrator. “We are also seeing intensified wildfires that are no longer limited to the west coast or the forests. It is the mission of the USFA to ensure that firefighters are prepared to prevent or respond to fire whenever and wherever it occurs and that individuals understand the fire threat and take actions to make themselves savable.”

While residential fires are of major concern, so are extreme weather-driven wildfires in suburban communities and fires in wildland urban interface locations. They are becoming more frequent and more destructive in more places. The fire that devastated the Hawaiian island of Maui last summer was the deadliest our country has faced in over 100 years.

This May, the USFA held its first-ever World Fire Congress in Washington D.C. The inaugural event brought together fire service leaders representing 56 countries, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the



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Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. This meeting was critical to sharing best practices and wildfire strategies strengthening all participants ability to respond.

In October 2024, the USFA will host its annual signature event – the U.S. Fire Administrator’s Summit on Fire Prevention and Control – assembling the leaders of national fire service organizations to discuss fire problems across the country along with the challenges facing America’s fire service while collaborating on solutions. This is the U.S. Fire Administrator’s exclusive event that provides access to national fire service leaders and members of the federal government along with a virtual audience of over 4,000 additional fire service professionals. Sharing challenges and best practices better informs fire services to help reduce the devastation caused by fires.

These collaborations strengthen our partnerships and demonstrate our continuing commitment to address the universal issues affecting all firefighters and heighten our readiness as we head into peak wildfire season.

Support to our Nation’s Fire Fighters

With a focus in 2024 on the Year of Resilience, FEMA is increasing efforts to enhance response capabilities at all levels. In January, FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell announced the opening of the latest application period for the [Fiscal Year 2023 Assistance to Firefighters Grant \(AFG\) program](#), which awards \$324 million to enhance the safety of the public and firefighters nationwide against fire-related deaths and hazards. Since fiscal year 2001, the AFG has awarded approximately \$8.4 billion in grants to provide critically needed resources to help keep firefighters and the public safe from fires and fire-related hazards. The Fire Prevention and Safety Grants are part of the AFG and support projects that enhance the safety of the public and firefighters from fire and related hazards.

The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant program was created to provide funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations to help them increase or maintain the number of trained, "front line" firefighters available in their communities.

As we look to the future, USFA’s reauthorization, and the reauthorization of the AFG and SAFER grants, give us the opportunity to continue our steadfast and ever-growing commitment to keeping America fire safe.



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