

FY20 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program - Frequently Asked Questions

Table of Contents

New for FY 2020	3
Under Operations and Safety Activity:	3
Under Regional Applications:	3
Reminders for FY 2020	4
Web Address to Apply	4
Overmatch	4
Environmental and Historical Preservation.....	4
Excess Funds.....	5
Help FEMA Prevent Fraud, Waste and Abuse	5
National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)	5
Eligible Applicants	5
EMS Category	5
Standard for Ambulances.....	6
System for Award Management (SAM).....	6
Where can I find information on SAM.GOV?	6
May I change or edit my application after it has been submitted?	6
Where can I find a copy of the Environmental and Historical Preservation (EHP) review screening form?	6



FEMA

What is Management and Administration (M&A)?6

Is reporting to the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) required to apply for and be awarded an AFG Program grant?7

Are training props that support the delivery of training by State Fire Training Academies (SFTA) eligible under the AFG Program?7

What are Community Paramedics and what is their role?.....7

What is a Micro Grant?8

When an AFG Program award is accepted by the recipient, when does the period of performance start?8

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 our applications in the past?8

When must an applicant achieve the level of NIMS compliance if awarded an AFG Program grant? ..8

How do I sign up for the FEMA GO system?8

Where can I find AFG Program documents and other information?9

New for FY 2020

The fiscal year (FY) 2020 AFG Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) contains some changes to definitions, descriptions and priority categories. Changes to the FY 2020 AFG Program NOFO include:

- Under sections D – Application and Submission Information, E – Application Review Information, F – Federal Award Administration Information, G – DHS Awarding Agency Contact and Resource Information, and H – Additional Information:
 - Various grants management changes due to recent Office of Management and Budget (OMB) revisions to 2 C.F.R., particularly regarding the System for Award Management (SAM) registration, performance measures, procurement, closeout and termination.
- Under Federal Award Information:
 - Period of performance for AFG Program awards is 24 months.
- Under Supporting Definitions:
 - Paid on-call/stipend departments are added to the definition of Combination Fire Department.
- Under Application Tips:
 - Explanation of AFG Program approved seated riding positions was added.
- Under Training Activity:
 - Rental of Audio/Visual equipment was added as eligible activity.

Under Operations and Safety Activity:

- Radio over Internet Protocol communication equipment was added as a Medium Priority.
- Integrated thermal imaging cameras were added under ineligible list under personal protective equipment (PPE) category.
- Under Modifications to Facility Activity:
 - Intruder alerting systems were added as ineligible.

Under Regional Applications:

- Guidance requiring purchases from same vendor added.
- Under Environmental and Historical Preservation (EHP):
 - Updated process for EHP added.

- Under Award Administration Information (Appendix C):
 - Updated process for Economic Hardship Waiver added.
 - Excess Funds Restrictions specifies High Priority items as eligible under this option.
 - List of supporting documentation is added for advance and reimbursement payment requests.

Reminders for FY 2020

Web Address to Apply

The online FY 2020 AFG Program application is only available in the AFG Program's FEMA GO (FEMA Grants Outcomes) application portal at <https://go.fema.gov>.

APPLICANTS MUST COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING IN ORDER TO START, COMPLETE AND SUBMIT AN AFG PROGRAM APPLICATION:

The applicant organization must provide a valid Dun & Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number registered in SAM to apply in FEMA GO system. Instructions for obtaining a DUNS number can be found online at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html>.

The applicant organization must be currently registered and active SAM in order to apply. SAM is available from Grants.gov at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html>.

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 cost share obligation as detailed in the NOFO and required by law. FEMA will not account for this promised additional funding in the award budget.

Environmental and Historical Preservation

It is FEMA policy that actions initiated and/or completed without fulfilling the specific EHP requirements will not be considered for funding.

All Modifications to Facility activities will require an EHP review. Any renovation to the facilities and installation of the equipment under Training, Equipment, PPE, or Wellness and Fitness activities will require an EHP review, as well. Such activities include, but are not limited to, the installation of fixed air compressor/fill station/cascade system, air quality systems, fire/smoke/carbon monoxide alarm systems, sprinkler systems, fixed generators, fixed vehicle exhaust systems and washer/dryer/extractor installation.

Please see FEMA's EHP Screening Process. EHP Screening form and instructions are available at [EHP Screening Form](#). EHP policy guidance can be found at [Preparedness Grants EHP Compliance webpage](#). Recipients will be notified of their EHP responsibilities in the grant award package.

Excess Funds

After completing the awarded projects, some recipients may have unexpended funds remaining in their budget. These excess funds may result from any combination of under-budget acquisition activities or competitive procurement processes. The excess funds threshold is \$10,000. The funding may be used to enhance the awarded activities.

No amendment request is necessary unless you want to use excess funds for another funding activity or the item you intend to purchase will require an EHP review. For more details, please see Appendix C (V) Excess Funds section of the FY 2020 AFG NOFO.

- 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 FY 2020 AFG Program NOFO.
- Excess funds are limited to the purchase of High Priority AFG Program items only.
- The opportunity for excess funds is limited when the original uncompleted Scope of Work is changed via an Amendment.

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 Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General Hotline at 1-800-323-8603; by fax at 202-254-4297; or online at <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)

Relevant standards that should be referenced in your applications may be viewed at no cost during the AFG Program application period at [NFPA Free Access](#).

Eligible Applicants

Fire Departments, Nonaffiliated Emergency Medical Service Organizations, and State Fire Training Academies.

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 2019 or GSA Federal Standard KKK-A-1822 <http://standards.globalspec.com/std/1588426/gsa-kkk-a-1822>.

System for Award Management (SAM)

Applicant registration in SAM is free. All applicants **must be registered and active** in order to apply online. Step-by-step instructions for registering with SAM can be found at

<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html>.

Please remember that SAM registration is only active for one year and must be renewed annually.

Existing SAM.gov account holders should check their account to make sure it is **active**. SAM registration should be completed at the very beginning of the application period and renewed annually to avoid being **inactive**.

DHS may not make a federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time DHS is ready to make a federal award, DHS may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and make a federal award to another applicant.

Where can I find information on SAM.GOV?

Step-by-step instructions for registering with SAM can be found at

<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html>.

Please remember that SAM registration is only active for one year and must be renewed annually.

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

You will be able to review or edit the entire application **prior** to submission. However, if you would like to edit or change your application after submission, you will have to withdraw the application from consideration of award to edit. Then, the application must be resubmitted to FEMA to be considered for an award.

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

EHP Guidance can be found at the <https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/preparedness-grants-ehp-compliance>, and the EHP Screening Form can be found at https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/fema_form-024-0-1_2017.pdf.

What is Management and Administration (M&A)?

M&A costs are administrative expenses that are incurred during the administration of an AFG Program award. Applicants may apply for M&A costs if the costs are directly related to the implementation of the program for which they are applying. M&A costs are identifiable costs directly associated with the implementation and management of

the grant and cannot exceed 3% of the award. If you are requesting M&A 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. All M&A costs must be in accordance with 2 C.F.R. Part 225, Cost Principles for state, local and Indian Tribal Governments (OMB Circular A-87) or 2 C.F.R. Part 230, Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations (OMB Circular A-122), as applicable.

M&A 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 reporting requirements. Grant funds may not be used for insurance, Internet service provider fees, or any similar monthly service fees.

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

NFIRS reporting is strongly encouraged for all fire departments (as defined by 15 USC § 2229(a)(7)), but is not a requirement to apply for AFG Program funds. However fire departments that receive funding under this program must agree to provide information to NFIRS for the period covered by the assistance. If a recipient does not currently participate in NFIRS 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 the length of the grant period of performance commencing as soon as possible after they develop the capacity to report. Capacity to report to NFIRS must be established prior to the termination of the 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. NFIRS reporting requirements do not apply to nonaffiliated EMS organizations and SFTAs.

Are training props that support the delivery of training by State Fire Training Academies (SFTA) eligible under the AFG Program?

FEMA recognizes the unique mission of SFTAs to deliver training to firefighters and Emergency Medical Services personnel throughout their state. SFTAs are allowed to request firefighting equipment items, PPEs and vehicles, including props and items in support of training activities.

What are Community Paramedics and what is their role?

Community Paramedics are paramedics with Primary Care certification. The Community Paramedic is considered as a back-up emergency response unit and 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. These paramedics also schedule in-home evaluation of high-risk patients following hospital discharge. The paramedics can 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; and, 3) enhance public health and safety by meaningfully supporting the health and social welfare needs of the community.

What is a Micro Grant?

Fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations have a voluntary funding limitation choice (within the application) for any AFG Program Operations and 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 no more than \$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 FY 2020 AFG NOFO.

When an AFG Program award is accepted by the recipient, when does the period of performance start?

Recipients are notified via email and through the FEMA GO 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. The grant award date can be found in the award agreement within the Obligating Document for Award in section "14. - Performance Period".

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 our applications in the past?

To create a new account, register an organization, or add a user to an organization, follow the instructions in the [FEMA GO User Registration Guide](#). Applications are only being accepted through FEMA GO. This is the system of record for FEMA AFG Program grants. An account must be created for each user and assigned to the organization by the Authorized Organization Representative.

When must an applicant achieve the level of NIMS compliance if awarded an AFG Program grant?

Any applicant that receives an AFG Program award must achieve the level of National Incident Management System (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 Program applicants are not required to be in compliance with NIMS either to apply for or receive AFG Program funding.

How do I sign up for the FEMA GO system?

Information on how to sign up as a FEMA GO user can be found at <https://go.fema.gov> and in the FEMA GO User Registration Guide.

Where can I find AFG Program documents and other information?

You can find AFG Program documents and additional information on the [Assistance to Firefighters Grant Webpage](#).