

# Fiscal Year 2021 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program - Frequently Asked Questions

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**FEMA**

## New for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021

The FY 2021 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) contains changes to definitions, descriptions, and priority categories from FY 2020. Changes to the FY 2021 AFG Program NOFO include:

- Under the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Activity:
  - Inclusion of pre-scoring emphasis for this Activity to ensure replacing out-of-service and non-compliant PPE is of high priority
  - The following PPE priorities and definitions have been updated:
    - Increase supply for **new hire/existing firefighters** that do not have one set of turnout gear (PPE) or allocated seated position (self-contained breathing apparatus [SCBA]); this includes replacing **out-of-service** PPE and SCBA as High Priority
    - Replace **in-service/in-use/damaged/unsafe/unrepairable** PPE or SCBA to meet current standard as High Priority
    - Replace **in-service/in-use/expired/noncompliant** PPE or SCBA to current standard as High Priority
    - Upgrade technology to current standard as Low Priority
- Additional considerations for PPE and SCBA:
  - The applicant's call volume has a lesser impact on scoring and therefore the final funding decision
- Under the Equipment Activity, the following priorities and definitions have been updated:
  - Obtain equipment to achieve minimum operational and deployment standards for existing missions as High Priority
  - Replace non-compliant equipment to current standard as High Priority
  - Obtain equipment for new mission as Medium Priority
  - Upgrade technology to current standard as Low Priority
- Under Supporting Definitions:
  - Paid on-call/stipend departments are added to the definition of Combination Fire Department
  - Firefighting personnel definition is added
- Under Modifications to Facility Activity:
  - New first-time installation of exhaust, sprinkler, carbon monoxide and/or smoke/fire detection systems are now listed as High Priority, while replacement or update/upgrade to existing systems is considered Low Priority
- Under Equipment Activity List:
  - Respirator decontamination system is added as Medium Priority

- Under Additions to the Application:
  - Question about frequency of live fire training is added for statistical purposes only
  - Question about self-inflicted fatalities within the department is added for statistical purposes only
  - Question regarding quantity of equipped advanced life support response vehicles (transport and non-transport) is added
- Under Allocations and Restrictions of Available Grant Funds by Organization Type:
  - Outlined the funding available for Micro Grants applications
- Under Application Tips:
  - Recommendation to consider non-Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) gear purchase

## Web Address to Apply

The online FY 2021 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 the System for Award Management (SAM to apply in FEMA GO. 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 in SAM in order to apply. Further, the applicant must stay active in SAM for the entirety of the application period, otherwise they may not be selected for an award. SAM registration is available at Grants.gov: <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 Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP)

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 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.

The EHP Screening form and instructions are available at [EHP Screening Form](#). EHP policy guidance can be found at the [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 the recipient wants to use excess funds for another funding activity or the item the recipient intends to purchase will require an EHP review. For more details, please see Appendix C (V) Excess Funds in the FY 2021 AFG Program 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 an amendment
- Excess funds cannot be used for grant writer/preparer fees
- Excess funds may only be used for allowable activities identified in the FY 2021 AFG Program NOFO
- Excess funds are limited to the purchase of High Priority AFG Program items only

## Help FEMA Prevent Fraud, Waste and Abuse

If you have information about instances of fraud, waste, abuse or mismanagement involving FEMA programs or operations, 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

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

## Standard for Ambulances

Ambulances must meet NFPA 1917: Standard for Automotive Ambulances, Edition 2019 or General Services Administration 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.

FEMA may not make a federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements, including being active in SAM for the entirety of the application period. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time FEMA is ready to make a federal award, FEMA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and make a federal award to another applicant.

## 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 EHP review screening form?

EHP Guidance can be found at <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/documents/fema\\_ehp-screening\\_form\\_ff-207-fy-21-100\\_5-26-2021.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_ehp-screening_form_ff-207-fy-21-100_5-26-2021.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 (NFIRS) reporting requirements. Grant funds may not be used for insurance, Internet service provider fees, or any similar monthly service fees.

## Is reporting to the 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 emergency medical service (EMS) organizations and State Fire Training Academies (SFTAs).

## **Are training props that support the delivery of training by SFTAs eligible under the AFG Program?**

FEMA recognizes the unique mission of SFTAs to deliver training to firefighters and EMS personnel throughout their state. SFTAs are allowed to request firefighting equipment items, PPE, 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 2021 AFG Program NOFO.

## **When does the AFG Program 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 FEMA GO system if I do not have the user ID 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.

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](#).

## **When must an applicant achieve the level of National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliance if awarded an AFG Program grant?**

Any applicant that receives an AFG Program 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 Program applicants are not required to be in compliance with NIMS either to apply for or receive AFG Program funding.

## **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](#).