

FY2021 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program will make available \$414 million directly to fire departments, State Fire Training Academies, and nonaffiliated emergency medical services organizations to enhance their response capabilities and to more effectively protect the health and safety of the public and emergency response personnel from fire and other related hazards.

Overview

The FY 2021 AFG Program is one of three grant programs that constitute the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and (FEMA's focus on enhancing the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire and related hazards. Since FY 2001, the AFG Program has awarded approximately \$7.7 billion in grants to provide critically needed resources that equip and train emergency personnel to recognized standards, enhance operational efficiencies, foster interoperability, and support community resilience. The FY 2021 AFG Program will award another \$414 million to first-responder organizations that need support to improve their capability to respond to fires and emergencies of all types. The total amount appropriated for the FY 2021 AFG Program initiative is \$460 million. From this appropriation, \$46 million will be allocated to the FY 2021 Fire Prevention & Safety (FP&S) Grant Program, which will have a separate Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and application period.

Purpose

The purpose of the AFG Program is to award grants directly to fire departments, nonaffiliated Emergency Medical Services organizations, and State Fire Training Academies) to enhance their ability to protect the health and safety of the public, as well as that of first-responder personnel. Using a competitive process that is informed by fire service subject-matter experts, grants are awarded to applicants whose requests best address the priorities of the AFG Program.

Funding

The DHS Appropriations Act, 2021 (Pub. L. No. 116-260) and American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Pub. L. No. 117-2) appropriated \$460 million to carry out AFG Program activities. The statute that authorizes the AFG Program, 15



FEMA

U.S.C. § 2229, includes a requirement that no less than 10 percent of the appropriated funds support fire prevention and safety activities, which include assisting fire prevention programs and supporting firefighter health and safety research and development. Therefore, no less than \$46 million of the appropriation must be awarded for fire prevention and safety activities. As such, the FY 2021 AFG Program will award \$414 million in competitive grants to fire departments, non-affiliated EMS organizations, and SFTAs. Additionally, funding for vehicles is limited to 25 percent of the total FY 2021 AFG Program appropriation, and not less than 3.5 percent of available grant funds shall fund emergency medical services provided by fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants for the FY 2021 AFG Program include fire departments, nonaffiliated EMS organizations, and SFTAs operating in any of the 50 states, as well as fire departments in the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico¹, or any federally recognized Indian tribe or tribal organization.

Definitions

- A fire department is an agency or organization that has a formally recognized arrangement with a state, territory, local government (city, county, parish, fire district, township, town, village or other governing body), to provide fire suppression on a first-due basis to a fixed geographical area.
- A nonaffiliated EMS organization is an agency or organization that is a public or private nonprofit emergency medical service entity providing medical transport that is not affiliated with a hospital and does not serve a geographic area in which emergency medical services are adequately provided by a fire department.
 - FEMA considers the following as hospitals under the AFG Program:
 - Clinics
 - Medical centers
 - Medical college or university
 - Infirmary
 - Surgery centers
 - Any other institution, association, or foundation providing medical, surgical, or psychiatric care and/or treatment for the sick or injured
- An SFTA is an agency or organization operating in any of the 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Applicants must be designated either by legislation or by a Governor's declaration as the sole fire service training agency within a state, territory or the District of Columbia. The

¹ The District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are all defined as "States" in the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974

designated SFTA shall be the only agency/bureau/division, or entity within that state, territory or the District of Columbia.

Program Highlights

Under the FY 2021 AFG Program, eligible organizations may apply for grants under the following activities:

- Operations and Safety
 - Grant projects funded include professional training, wellness and fitness programs equipment; personal protective equipment; modifications to facilities; and supplies that support firefighting and non-affiliated EMS operations and safety.
- Vehicle Acquisition: Fire Departments and Non-Affiliated EMS Organizations
 - Eligible apparatuses include, but are not limited to: pumpers, aerials, quints, brush trucks, tankers/tenders, rescue vehicles, and ambulances.
- Regional Grants
 - Regional projects in which multiple organizations (fire and/or non-affiliated EMS organizations) serving more than one local jurisdiction would benefit directly from the activities requested with grant funds.
- SFTAs
 - SFTAs are eligible to apply for critically needed resources to protect the public, to train emergency personnel, and to foster interoperability and support community resilience.

Application Process and Evaluation Criteria

AFG Program applications are reviewed through a multi-phase process. All complete and eligible applications are electronically pre-scored and ranked based on the substance of the application, relative to the established funding priorities. Applications most consistent with the established AFG Program funding priorities score the highest and are determined to be in the “competitive range” and undergo further evaluation by a peer review panel, comprised of representatives from the fire service and non-affiliated EMS organizations.

A minimum of three peer review panelists evaluate the applications using the Narrative Statement, answers to general questions, and answers to activity-specific questions. Each application is judged on its own merits against established criteria and is not compared to other applications.

The funding priorities differ for fire departments, non-affiliated EMS organizations, and SFTAs. The funding priorities and evaluation criteria are developed from recommendations provided by a criteria development panel, composed of fire service professionals representing the major fire service organizations.

Applications most consistent with the established AFG Program funding priorities that score the highest will undergo a Technical Review by the FEMA Program Office to assess the request with respect to costs, quantities, feasibility, eligibility, and recipient responsibility.

Program Coordination

The following entities participated in developing the FY 2021 AFG Program guidance:

Department of Homeland Security

- FEMA
- U.S. Fire Administration

Major Fire Service Organizations

- International Association of Fire Chiefs
- International Association of Fire Fighters
- National Volunteer Fire Council
- National Fire Protection Association
- National Association of State Fire Marshals
- International Association of Arson Investigators
- International Society of Fire Service Instructors
- North American Fire Training Directors
- Congressional Fire Services Institute

AFG Program Resources

For additional information on the FY 2021 AFG Program, please visit our web site at <https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters/assistance-grants>.

You may also contact the AFG Program Help Desk at (866) 274-0960 or by e-mail at firegrants@fema.dhs.gov. The AFG Program Help Desk is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m. ET.