

FY 2023 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Fact Sheet

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant will award \$324 million to eligible applicants seeking to enhance their fire and medical response capabilities and protect the health and safety of emergency personnel and the public.

Overview

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) is one of three fire grant programs that constitute FEMA's focus on enhancing the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire and related hazards. Since fiscal year 2001, AFG has awarded approximately \$8.4 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. For FY 2023, AFG will award \$324 million to first-responder organizations that need support to improve their capability to respond to fires and emergencies of all types.

Purpose

AFG's purpose is to award grants directly to fire departments, nonaffiliated emergency medical service (EMS) organizations, State Fire Training Academies (SFTA), and non-federal airport and/or port authority fire or EMS organizations 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 AFG's priorities.

Funding

In FY 2023, the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2023, Pub. L. No. 117-328 appropriated a total of \$360 million to carry out the activities of AFG. However, 15 U.S.C. § 2229 requires that no less than 10% 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, \$36 million will be allocated to the FY 2023 Fire Prevention and Safety Program, which will have a separate funding notice and application period.

Also, funding for vehicles is limited to 25% of the total FY 2023 AFG appropriation. Not less than 3.5% of available grant funds shall fund emergency medical services provided by fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations.



FEMA

Eligibility

Eligible applicants for FY 2023 AFG include fire departments, nonaffiliated EMS organizations, SFTAs, and non-federal airport and/or port authority fire or EMS organizations 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

- **Fire department** is an agency or organization that has a formally recognized arrangement with a state, territory, or local government (city, county, parish, fire district, township, town, village, or other governing body) to provide fire suppression to a population on a first-due basis to a fixed geographical area.
- **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; and
 - Any other institution, association, or foundation providing medical, surgical, or psychiatric care and/or treatment for the sick or injured.
- **State Fire Training Academies** operate 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 and recognized by the National Fire Academy. The designated SFTA shall be the only agency/bureau/division, or entity within that state, territory, or the District of Columbia.
 - **Non-federal airport and/or port authority fire or EMS organizations** are eligible only if they have a formally recognized arrangement with the local jurisdiction to provide fire suppression or emergency medical services on a first-due basis outside the confines of the airport or port facilities. Airport or port authority fire and EMS organizations whose sole responsibility is suppression of fires or EMS response on the airport grounds or port facilities are not eligible for funding under the AFG Program.

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.

Program Highlights

Under the FY 2023 AFG Program, eligible organizations may submit the following applications:

Operations and Safety:

- Projects funded include professional training, wellness and fitness programs, equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE), and modifications to facilities.

Vehicle Acquisition:

- Eligible vehicles include but are not limited to pumper/engine, aerial, quint, brush truck, tanker/tender, rescue vehicle, and ambulance.

Regional Grants:

- Eligible Regional activities include vehicle acquisition, professional training, wellness and fitness projects, equipment and PPE.

SFTAs:

- SFTAs are eligible to apply for critically needed equipment, PPE and vehicles.

Application Process and Evaluation Criteria

AFG applications are reviewed through a multi-phase process. All applications are electronically pre-scored and ranked based on how well they align with the funding priorities outlined in the funding notice. The funding priorities and evaluation criteria are developed from the recommendations provided by the Criteria Development Panel composed of fire service professionals representing the major fire service organizations. The priorities differ for fire departments, nonaffiliated EMS organizations, and SFTAs.

The electronic pre-scoring process is based on program priorities and answers to activity-specific questions within the online application. Application Narratives are not reviewed during the pre-score process. The pre-score is half of the total application score.

Applications with the highest pre-score rankings are then scored competitively by no less than three members of a Peer Review Panel composed of fire service representatives recommended by the CDP. Peer reviewers assess each application's merits based on the narrative statements of the requested activity. Peer reviewers independently score each requested activity within the application using narrative evaluation criteria listed in the funding notice, discuss the merits and/or shortcomings of the application with their peers and document the findings. A consensus is not required. The panel score is half of the total application score.

Applications most consistent with the established AFG 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. FEMA will award grants based on this final ranking and the ability to meet statutorily required funding limitations outlined in the funding notice.

Program Coordination

The following entities were involved in developing the FY 2023 AFG guidance:

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

- FEMA
- 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 2023 AFG Program, please visit our web site at [Assistance to Firefighters Grants | FEMA.gov](#).

You may also contact the AFG 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.