



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

# UNDERSTANDING AND DEVELOPING COMPETITIVE AFG AND SAFER GRANTS

March 29, 2026

# DISCLAIMER

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**This IAFF AFG/SAFER Grant presentation is designed to help IAFF Locals draft FEMA AFG and SAFER applications but does not replace or modify the FEMA AFG or SAFER NOFO or other FEMA documents. Refer to official FEMA resources for complete program information.**



# DURING THIS SESSION, YOU WILL LEARN:

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- The purpose of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program
- The purpose of the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program
- How to properly prepare for the grant application in advance of the application period
- How to read and comprehend the funding opportunity announcement
- How to properly complete the narrative and data portions of the grant application



# IAFF GRANT ASSISTANCE

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- The IAFF provides grant application/narrative reviews before and after grant submission.
- Having the review completed before grant submission is preferred; however, in some cases this is not possible due to conflicts with management or other issues.
- To request assistance, affiliate presidents or their appointed point of contact must provide a copy of the grant application or narratives.
- Local presidents must provide approval before any assistance can be provided.



THE IAFF IS  
HERE TO  
HELP YOU!

# AFG Offers Three Grant Programs

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Assistance to  
Firefighters Grants



Staffing for Adequate  
Fire & Emergency  
Response



Fire Prevention  
and Safety Grants





The primary goal of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) is to meet the firefighting and emergency response needs of fire departments and nonaffiliated emergency medical service organizations.

Purpose of the AFG





The purpose of SAFER is to provide funding directly to fire departments and volunteer fire fighter interest organizations to assist in increasing the number of fire fighters to help communities meet industry minimum standards and attain 24-hour staffing to provide adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards, and to fulfill traditional missions of fire departments.

Purpose of SAFER



# APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA DEVELOPMENT

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- Each year, FEMA convenes a panel of fire service professionals to develop funding priorities for the SAFER grant program.
- The panel makes recommendations about funding priorities as well as about developing criteria for awarding grants.
- The content of the NOFO reflects implementation of this Criteria Development Panel's (CDP) recommendations with respect to the priorities, direction, and criteria for awards.



# CRITERIA DEVELOPMENT PANEL

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- 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 Service Institute



# AFG PROGRAM APPLICATION PERIODS



**\$ 324,000,000**

**FY 2025 -**

**10% Reduction  
From FY23**



**\$ 291,600,000**

**FY 2025 -**



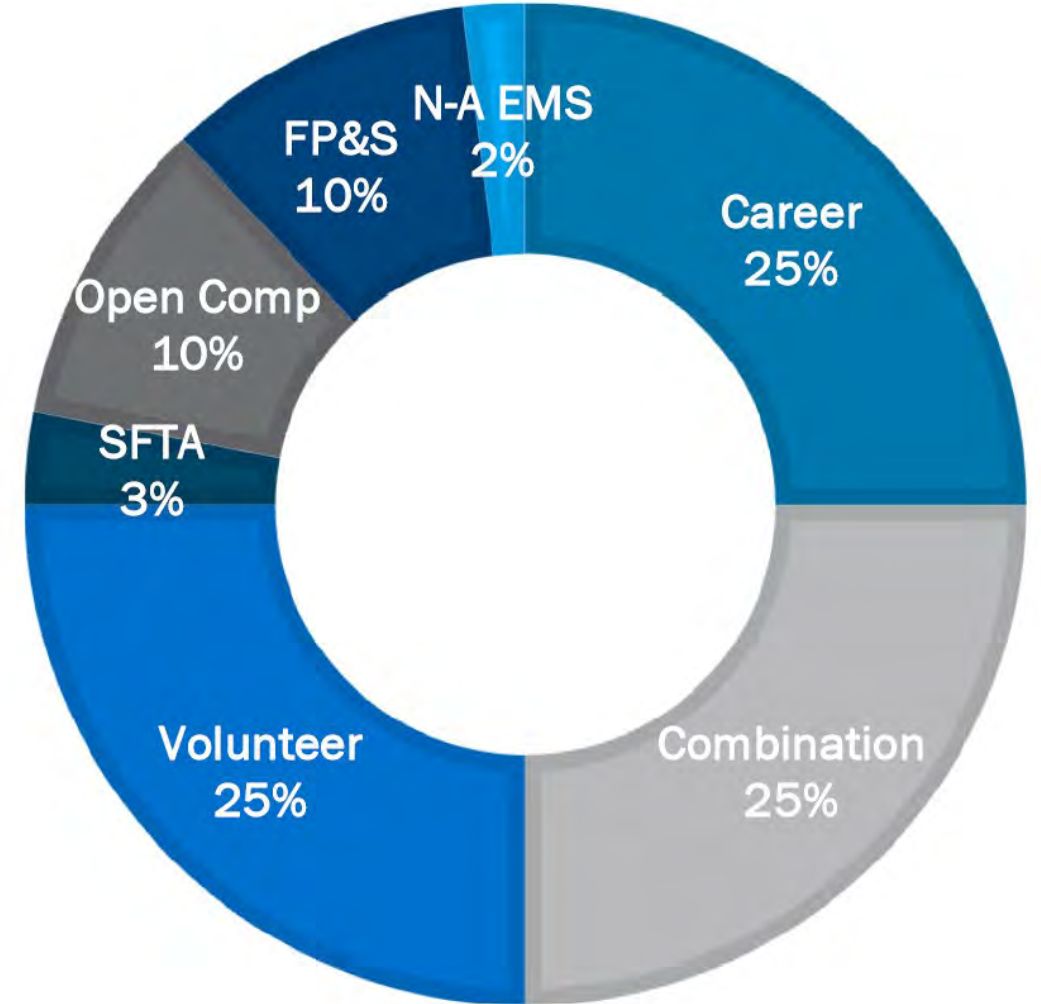
**\$ 32,400,00**

**FY 2025 -**



# AFG ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

- Career Fire Departments
- Combination Fire Departments
- Volunteer Fire Departments
- State Fire Training Academies (SFTA)
- Nonaffiliated Emergency Medical Service Organizations (N-A EMS)
- Open Competition (Open Comp)
- Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S)



# FY 2022 AFG APPLICATIONS

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**7,338**

Total applications  
submitted

**1,708**

Total AFG Awarded  
(82 Vehicles)

**23%**

Awarded

**Over \$2.4 billion in requests**



# FY 2023 AFG APPLICATIONS

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**7,962**

Total applications  
submitted

**1,634**

Total AFG Awarded  
(128 Vehicles)

**20.5%**

Awarded

**Over \$3.72 billion in requests**



# FY 2024 AFG APPLICATIONS

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**7,175**

Total applications  
submitted

**1,678**

Total AFG Awarded  
(62 Vehicles)

**23%**

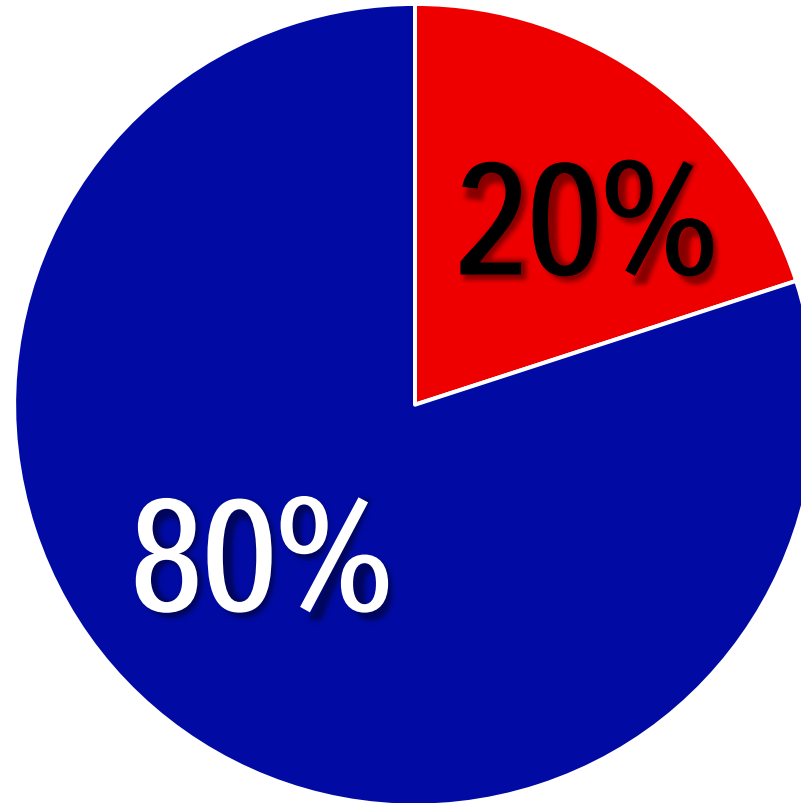
Awarded

**Over \$3.9 billion in requests**



# SAFER ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

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■ R&R ■ Hiring



# SAFER ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

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- A total of 10% of the funding appropriated for the SAFER Program awards is set aside for the recruitment and retention of volunteer fire fighters (15 U.S.C. § 2229a(a)(2)).
- A total of 10% of funding appropriated for the SAFER Program awards is set aside for grants awarded to all volunteer or majority volunteer departments for hiring of fire fighters (15 U.S.C. § 2229a(a)(1)(H))



# FY 2022 SAFER APPLICATIONS

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**1,586**

Total applications  
submitted

**178**

Total SAFER Awarded

86 - Hiring

92 - R&R

**11%**

Awarded

**Over \$2.8 billion in requests**



# FY 2023 SAFER APPLICATIONS

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**2,161**

Total applications  
submitted

**191**

Total SAFER Awarded

90 - Hiring

101 - R&R

**9%**

Awarded

**Over \$3.3 billion in requests**



# FY 2024 SAFER APPLICATIONS

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**1,339**

Total applications  
submitted

**207**

Total SAFER Awarded

142 – Hiring

65 - R&R

**15%**

Awarded

**Over \$1.5 billion in requests**



# HIRING A GRANT WRITER?



Lots of grant writers looking for your money.

*Can be very expensive – Around \$5,000*



Researching and writing grants is time consuming and requires some level of research and writing skills.



Much of the research needed is already familiar to department members, and comes in the form of department annual reports, strategic plans, NFIRS/NFORS data, CAD data, etc.



# HIRING A GRANT WRITER?



FEMA provides easy to use tutorials, handouts and self-rating sheets that enable someone who has never written a grant to gain an understanding of the process and successfully apply for and receive grant funding.



Often, the necessary skills exist elsewhere in your jurisdiction and can be borrowed to help guide you through the first application.



IAFF assistance. We are here to help!

***IAFF grant help is free!!***



# HOW DO I GET STARTED?

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IAFF affiliates cannot directly apply for most grants.

You can make decision-makers aware of the grant process.

Generate the support you need.

Ask to be part of the writing process and offer IAFF assistance in developing the application.

Many IAFF members are designated as the grant writer for their department and have full access to the application.

Others assist the department in developing the application and narratives.



# APPLICATION PROCESS

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- Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
- Application Period (~30 Days)
- Electronic Pre-Score
- Peer Panel Review
- Post Panel Review
- Awards



# PLANNING AND PREPARATION

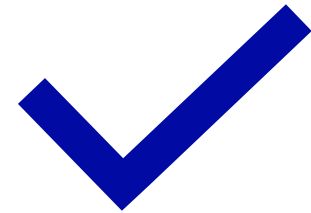
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Grants and application may need approval from fire chief, city manager, or council



Cost match required for AFG  
5-15%  
SAFER cost share



May have to be formally passed at council or other budget hearing



# PLANNING AND PREPARATION

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- **Gather all your data ahead of time.**
  - Call volume (NFIRS)
  - Population
  - Apparatus
  - Staffing levels
  - Training levels
  - FF and civilian injury/death data
  - Equipment inventory
  - Financial information



**DATA GATHERING**



# PLANNING AND PREPARATION

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- The program guidance format is known as the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).
- It contains the rules and tools for putting together a successful application.
- Funding priorities are **H**igh, **M**edium, or **L**ow.
- Your focus should be on items identified in the NOFO as **high priority!**



# PLANNING AND PREPARATION



Conduct a **risk assessment** to determine the needs of your organization (e.g., equipment, PPE, training, vehicles, regional projects, staffing needs).



Prioritize your needs to **match the high priorities** of the Grant Program.



Try to **focus on one or two high priority** projects for your application(s). Focus on a realistic project.



# RISK ANALYSIS/ASSESSMENT

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- Can be formal or informal
- Discussion or observations of your problems or needs
- Many times, it is just Labor and Management deciding what the largest problem that can be solved by a high priority solution through the AFG or SAFER program



# ELECTRONIC PRE-SCORE PROCESS

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- The application undergoes an electronic pre-scoring process based on established program priorities listed in the NOFO and on answers to activity-specific questions within the online application.
- Application Narrative Statements are not reviewed during the pre-score process.
- The pre-score is worth 50% of the total application score.

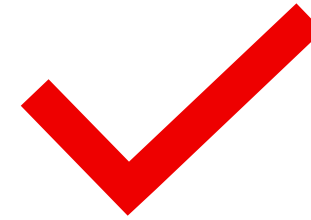


# ELECTRONIC PRE-SCORE PROCESS

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Computer will score all complete and eligible applications.



If application scores high enough it goes to peer review.



# ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT



# AFG APPLICATION TYPES

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- Operations and safety
  - Training, equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE), wellness/fitness, modifications to facilities
  - Micro grants
- Vehicles
- Regional operations and safety, and Regional vehicles
- Non-affiliated EMS
- State fire training academies



# OPS AND SAFETY - EQUIPMENT

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- **Basic equipment**
- Portable Radios – P25 compliant
- EMS/rescue
- Hand Tools



- **Avoid HazMat, specialized and investigation equipment.**



# MAJOR EQUIPMENT CHANGES

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Extrication Tools

Gas/Electric Tools

Mobile Radios

SCBA Compressors (except Regional)



# EQUIPMENT PRIORITIES

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- Equipment that has a direct effect on fire fighters' health and safety
- Equipment that is used frequently
- Age of equipment considered for replacement
- Equipment that operationally benefits other jurisdictions
- Equipment that brings the department into compliance with a national recommended standard



# NOFO EQUIPMENT PRIORITY EXAMPLE

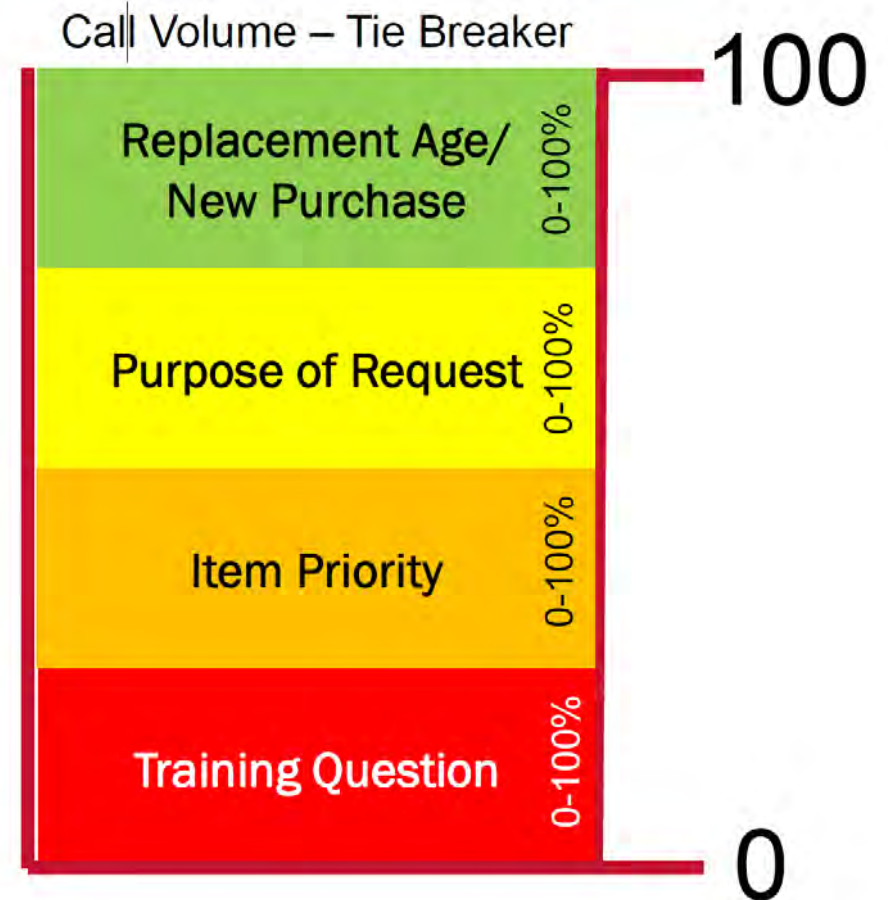
Priority	Age Category	Fire and Fire Regional	SFTA
<b>BASIC EQUIPMENT</b>			
<b>M H</b>	Intermediate	Air Compressor/Fill Station/Cascade System (Fixed or Mobile) for filling SCBA. Fire Department applicants: <b>M</b> Regional Applicants: <b>H</b>	Air Compressor/Fill Station/Cascade System (Fixed or Mobile) for filling SCBA - <b>H</b>
<b>H</b>	Long	Appliance(s)/Nozzle(s)	Appliance(s)/Nozzle(s)
<b>H</b>	Long	Basic Hand Tools (Structural/Wildland)	Basic Hand Tools (Structural/Wildland)
<b>M</b>	Intermediate	Electric/Gas Powered Saws/Tools	Electric/Gas Powered Saws/Tools - <b>H</b>
<b>M</b>	Short	Fit Tester	Fit Tester - <b>H</b>
<b>M H</b>	Long	Foam Eductors - <b>M</b> for Fire Department and Regional Applicants	Foam Eductors - <b>H</b>
<b>H</b>	Intermediate	Hose (Attack/Supply)	Hose (Attack/Supply)
<b>H</b>	Short	Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health (IDLH) Monitoring Equipment	IDLH Monitoring Equipment



# EQUIPMENT – PRE-SCORE CONSIDERATIONS

Applicants compete based on:

- Department/Organization Type
- Community Classification
- Item Type
- Points from 0-100 based on percentage from leader in each category



# EQUIPMENT – PURPOSE QUESTION

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H

- Obtain equipment needed but not currently owned or replace equipment that is broken and/or damaged beyond repair to achieve minimum operational and deployment standards for existing missions
- Replace non-compliant equipment to current standard



M

- Obtain equipment for new mission



L

- Upgrade technology to current standard



# OPS AND SAFETY - TRAINING QUESTION

FEMA GO Grants Organizations Grant/Subgrant ID FrAor LnAor

>> RIT Pack/Cylinder

Is your department trained in the proper use of the equipment being requested?	Yes
Are you requesting funding to be trained for these item(s)? (Funding for requested training should be requested as additional funding).	No
If you are not requesting training funds through this application, will you obtain training for this equipment through other sources?	Yes

Will the equipment being requested bring the organization into voluntary compliance with a national standard, e.g. compliance with NFPA, OSHA, etc? In your narrative statement, please explain how this equipment will bring the organization into voluntary compliance. Yes

Is your department trained in the proper use of the equipment being requested?	Yes
Are you requesting funding to be trained for these item(s)? (Funding for requested training should be requested as additional funding).	No
If you are not requesting training funds through this application, will you obtain training for this equipment through other sources?	Yes



# EQUIPMENT – OTHER ELIGIBLE COSTS

- Extended warranties and service agreements, when offered, are eligible on all items
- Request training for specific equipment (add training costs to Additional Funding section)
  - You must be trained, getting trained or requesting training.
- Installation, Freight Costs, and Taxes



# PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

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- PPE being replaced **must be 10 years old or older.**
- SCBA must be 10 years old or older **and** compliant with the 2007 Edition of NFPA® 1981 or **older.**
- PPE/SCBA that is damaged, unsafe or unrepairable is now eligible, regardless of age.



# PPE – NON-PPE EQUIPMENT

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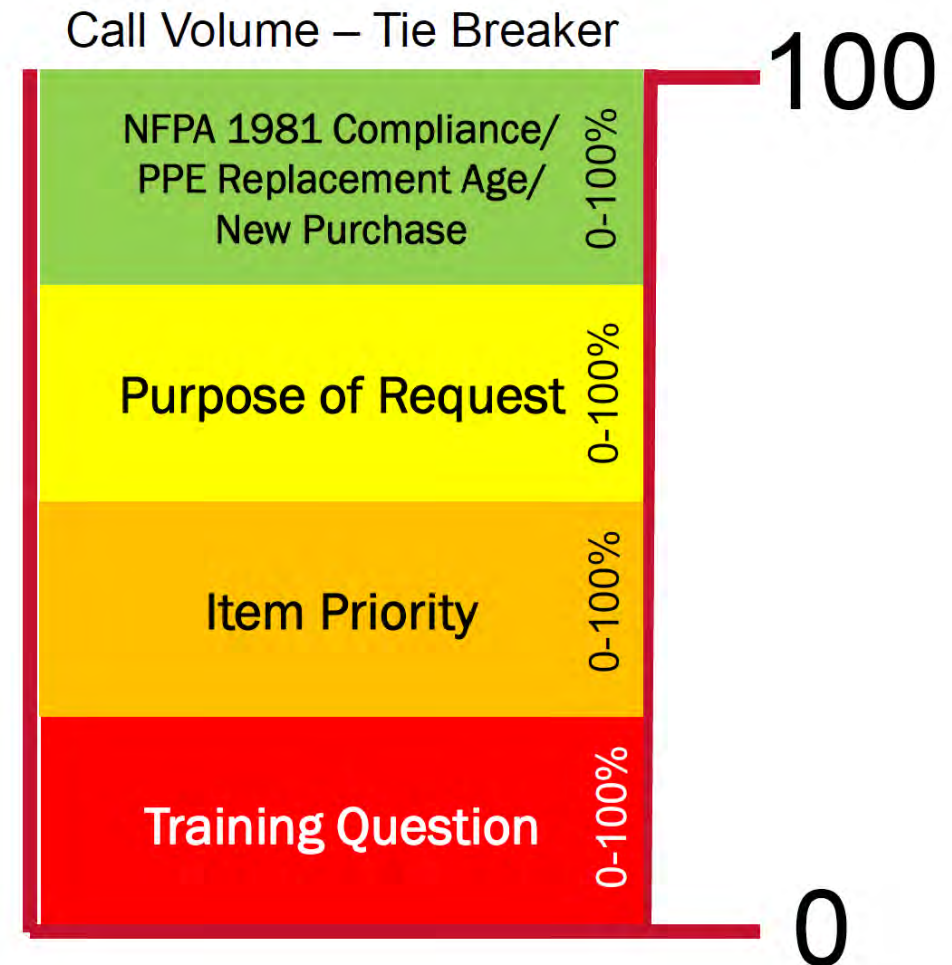
- If the item is to be worn, it is considered PPE; if an item is used or carried, it is considered Equipment
- Items below are the exception to this if requested in conjunction with PPE or SCBA:
  - Air-Refill/Cascade (with Regional Request)
  - PPE Washer/Dryer
  - RIT Pack



# PPE – PRE-SCORE CONSIDERATIONS

Applicants compete based on:

- Department/Organization Type
- Community Classification
- Item Type
- Points from 0-100 based on percentage from leader in each category



# PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT - PRIORITIES



- Increase supply for new hire/existing firefighters that do not have one set of turnout gear (PPE) or allocated seated position (SCBA); this includes replacing out of service PPE and SCBA
- Replace in-service/in-use/damaged/unsafe/unreparable PPE or SCBA to meet current standard
- Replace in-service/in-use/expired/noncompliant PPE or SCBA to current standard



- Replace PPE to upgrade technology to current standard



# PPE – PRIORITY CONSIDERATIONS

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- Applicants are required to provide the age of PPE being replaced
- Priority of the requested PPE is a factor
- Call volume can contribute to the justification for new risk
- Applicants with the oldest PPE and/or trying to bring the department into 100% NFPA compliance, or increase the percent of active members who will have compliant gear to 100%
- SCBA Integrated Thermal Imaging Cameras are ineligible as they are not yet NFPA compliant



# WELLNESS AND FITNESS PRIORITY I

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Must offer, or plan to offer, all five of the following Priority I activities:

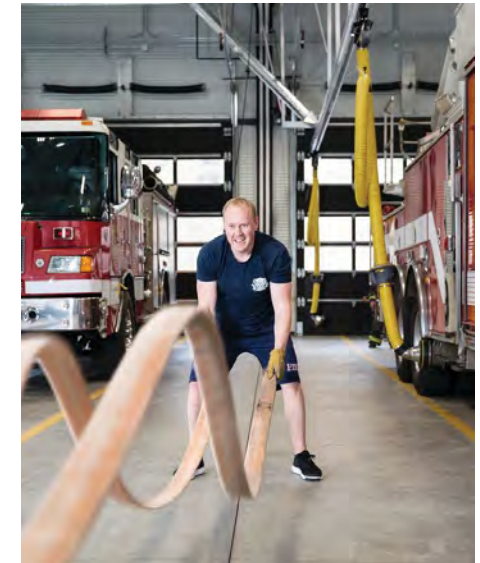
- Periodic health screenings
- Entry physical examinations
- Immunizations
- Behavioral health programs
- Cancer Screenings

Eligible for Micro Grant option.



# WELLNESS AND FITNESS PRIORITY II

- Candidate Physical Ability Evaluation (CPAT)
- Formal fitness and injury prevention program/equipment
- Injury/illness rehab program(s)
- IAFF or IAFC Peer Fitness Trainer programs
  - NFPA® 1583 compliant
- **Simultaneous requests for Priority I and II activities will be a lower priority than requests for the five Priority I activities.**



# WELLNESS AND FITNESS - INELIGIBLE ITEMS

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- Saunas (including infrared)
- Hyperbaric chambers
- Ice baths
- Purchase of medical equipment



# MODIFICATIONS TO FACILITIES

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- Program priorities **H**
  - Requests for direct source-capture exhaust systems, sprinkler and smoke/fire alarm systems
  - Stations with sleeping quarters and occupied 24/7
- Additional considerations
  - \$100,000 maximum per station



# MODIFICATIONS TO FACILITIES

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- No modification may involve changing the footprint or profile of a structure. Not a construction grant.
- New first-time installation of exhaust, sprinkler, carbon monoxide and/or smoke/fire detection systems are now listed as ***High Priority***
- Replacement or update/upgrade to existing systems is considered a lower priority



# TRAINING



Can include training instruction costs, training equipment costs and supplies, and costs to pay/backfill members to attend training.



Training projects must benefit the highest percentage of personnel within a fire department and be open to other departments in the region = ***High Priority***.



Training for PPE or equipment must be requested with PPE or equipment as additional funding.



# TRAINING PRIORITIES

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Instructor-led training programs



Training programs that will result in attendees receiving a national or state certification



Training that brings department into compliance with NFPA® or other national standards



Training projects that benefit the highest percentage of personnel within a fire department and are open to other departments in the region



Training priorities MAY change between:  
Urban  
Suburban  
Rural



# TRAINING

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## Some of the training projects that are eligible for AFG funding include:

- Firefighter I/II
- Fire officer
- Safety officer
- Fire instructor
- Any training with NFPA standard behind it. NFPA 3000 etc.
- RIT
- EVOC
- Tech/Vehicle Rescue training
- EMS



# IAFF PROGRAMS YOU CAN APPLY FOR:

- Peer Support Training
- Fire Ground Survival
- Fit 2 Thrive
- Responding to the Interface
- IAFF Resiliency



**F2T**



# TRAINING PROPS

- Training props and simulators are requested in the Equipment activity – now **MEDIUM** priority for fire departments/fire districts, including regional projects.
- Props Limited to \$50,000



# MICRO GRANTS

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- Grants of \$75,000 or less (Federal Share)
  - Overmatching is not allowed.
  - Only compete against other micro-grants
    - All five of the operations and safety activities are eligible.
      - Equipment
      - PPE
      - Training
      - Wellness and fitness Priority I only
      - Modifications to facilities

Those that score in the competitive range for panel review **may** receive additional consideration at panels, or post-panel review.



# VEHICLE PRIORITIES

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Replacing unsafe vehicles.

Replacing vehicles converted from vehicles not intended for the fire service.

Replacing older firefighting vehicles, the older the better. Open cab/jumpseats, etc.

Vehicles manufactured prior to 1992 (NFPA 1901)



# VEHICLE APPLICATIONS

- Vehicle applications are scored based on a variety of factors including, but not limited to:
  - Age of the vehicle being replaced
  - Existing fleet, including like vehicles
  - Open cab or converted
  - Call volume
  - Population
  - Mutual aid usage



# REGIONAL PROJECTS

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- A regional application is one in which multiple organizations serving more than one local jurisdiction benefit directly from the activities implemented with the grant funds
- Eligible projects:
- Operations and Safety
  - Training
  - Equipment
  - PPE
  - Wellness and Fitness
- Vehicle acquisition



# REGIONAL PROJECTS

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- An eligible department must act as the Host of a regional application:
- Host Department Type determines the set-aside category where funds will be awarded from
- All partners need to be listed in the application
- Include statistics of all partners
- Memorandum of Understanding required
- Regional purchases must be made from same vendor



# AFG FUNDING LIMITS

<b>Population of the jurisdiction served by the recipient</b>	<b>Maximum award in FY 2024</b>	<b>Statutory waiver available subject to extraordinary need?</b>
100,000 or fewer people	No more than \$1 million	None available
100,001 – 500,000 people	No more than \$2 million	None available
500,001 – 1,000,000 people	No more than \$3 million	None available
1,000,001 – 2,500,000 people	No more than \$3.2 million	Yes, but no more than \$6 million
More than 2,500,000 people	No more than \$3.2 million	Yes, but no more than \$9 million



# STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE FIRE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

# SAFER ACTIVITIES

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SAFER is composed of two activities.

## Hiring of Fire Fighters

Career, combination, and volunteer fire departments are eligible to apply (interest organizations cannot apply).

If you want to apply for both activities, you will need to submit two separate applications. Career departments cannot apply for R&R.

## Recruitment and Retention (R&R) of Volunteer Fire Fighters

Combination fire departments, volunteer fire departments, and national, state, local, or tribal organizations that represent the interests of volunteer fire fighters are eligible to apply.



# HIRING OF FIRE FIGHTERS ACTIVITY

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- Grants provide financial assistance to help fire departments hire **new, additional fire fighters or change the status** of part-time or paid-on-call firefighters to full-time fire fighters.
- The goal is to assist departments to improve staffing levels to ensure they have adequate personnel to respond and safely perform at incident scenes, providing protection from fire and fire-related hazards in their communities.



**The hiring of fire fighters activity provides three-year grants to assist fire departments by paying a percentage of the salaries and benefits of the SAFER-funded positions**

**There is a local cost share**

# FY24 Changes

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- Under Eligibility – Allowable Project Types
  - The Hiring Activity offers grants to support applications to hire new, additional firefighters.
- Under Eligibility – Unallowable Project Types
  - FEMA will not fund any projects, activities, or line items that are covered under a department's normal operating budget.
- Under Eligibility – Cost Sharing Requirement
  - Hiring Activity grant recipients are required to contribute non-federal funds as a cost share.



# FY24 Changes

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- Under Eligibility – Cost Share Description, Type and Restrictions

In the first and second years of the grant, the amount of federal funding may not exceed **75 percent** of the usual annual cost of a **first-year fire fighter** and in the third year of the grant, the amount of federal funding may not exceed **35 percent** of the usual annual cost of a **first-year fire fighter**.



# FY24 Changes

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- Under Eligibility – Required Information for Verifying Cost Share  
Applicants are required to certify that their annual budget for fire-related programs and emergency response has not been reduced below 80 percent of the applicant’s average funding level in the three years prior to the application date.
- Under Register in FEMA GO: FEMA GO will no longer support Internet Explorer
- Under Additional Information: Inclusion of Hazard-Resistant Building Codes.



# Cost Share

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- Year 1: FEMA will cover **75%** of the cost of a **first-year FF**
- Year 2: FEMA will cover **75%** of the cost of a **first-year FF**
- Year 3: FEMA will cover **35%** of the cost of a **first-year FF**
  
- FEMA will only reimburse for actual expended costs
- Step raises, or cost increases are not funded by FEMA.



# SAFER PRIORITIES

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FEMA prioritizes bringing non-compliant (NFPA<sup>®</sup> 1710 or 1720) departments into compliance in the most cost-effective manner.



Applications resulting in the largest percentage increases in compliance with NFPA<sup>®</sup> 1710 or 1720 receive higher consideration.



# SAFER 1710/1720 Focus:

- **NFPA 1710 Assembly Requirements** – Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Department (**Section 5.2.4.1 – Single-Family Dwelling Initial Full Alarm Assignment Capability**): This standard applies primarily to career fire departments and combination departments if the combination department chooses it.
- **NFPA 1720 Assembly Requirements** – Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments (**Section 4.3 – Staffing and Deployment**): This standard applies primarily to all-volunteer fire departments, but it may also apply to combination departments if the combination department does not choose to comply with the NFPA 1710 standard.



# PRIORITY FOR NFPA COMPLIANCE

Current (Pre-Award) 1710/1720 Compliance Priorities	
<b>H</b> Never or 0%	<b>M</b> Half of the time or 40-59%
<b>H</b> Rarely or 1-19%	<b>L</b> Very often or 60-79%
<b>M</b> Sometimes or 20-39%	<b>L</b> Most of the time or 80-100%

New (Post-Award) 1710/1720 Compliance Priorities	
<b>H</b> Always or 91-100%	<b>M</b> Half of the time or 40-59%
<b>H</b> Most of the time or 80-90%	<b>L</b> Sometimes or 20-39%
<b>M</b> Very often or 60-79%	<b>L</b> Rarely or 0-19%



# SAFER FAQs

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- What are **eligible** expenses in the hiring of fire fighters activity?
  - Only the salary and associated benefits (actual payroll expenses) are eligible.
  - Costs are reimbursable, if they are included as part of the standard package, available to all operational fire fighter positions, and contractually obligated.



# SAFER FAQs

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- What are some **ineligible** expenses in the hiring of fire fighters activity?
  - The salaries and benefits of full-time fire fighters who are employees at the time of grant award are ineligible to be funded under this grant unless they are facing lay-off.
  - Pre-application costs, such as grant writer fees, administrative costs (e.g., physicals/medical exams, background checks, etc.), and indirect costs associated with hiring of fire fighters.



# SAFER FAQs

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- What are some **ineligible** expenses in the hiring of fire fighters activity?
  - Costs to train and equip fire fighters (e.g., personal protective equipment (PPE)/turnout gear). However, the salaries and benefits of fire fighters hired with SAFER grant funding – while engaged in training – are eligible.
  - Overtime costs **except** overtime costs that are routinely paid as a part of the fire fighter’s regularly scheduled and contracted shift hours in order to comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).



# SAFER FAQs

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- What type of fire fighter positions will be funded?
  - Only full-time positions or to change the status of part-time or paid-on-call fire fighters to full-time fire fighters will be funded.
  - Full-time positions are those that are scheduled for at least 2,080 hours per year (e.g., 40 hours per week, 52 weeks per year).
  - All applicants must certify that the **primary assignment (more than 50 percent of time)** of all SAFER-funded positions will be on an operational fire suppression vehicle, regardless of collateral duties.





**SAFER is a  
Fire Staffing Grant,  
Not an EMS Staffing  
Grant.**



# SAFER FAQs

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- Can we apply to retain fire fighters facing layoff?
  - No. This year, this is not an option. All positions must be new positions, not on the payroll at the time of the application.



# SAFER FAQs

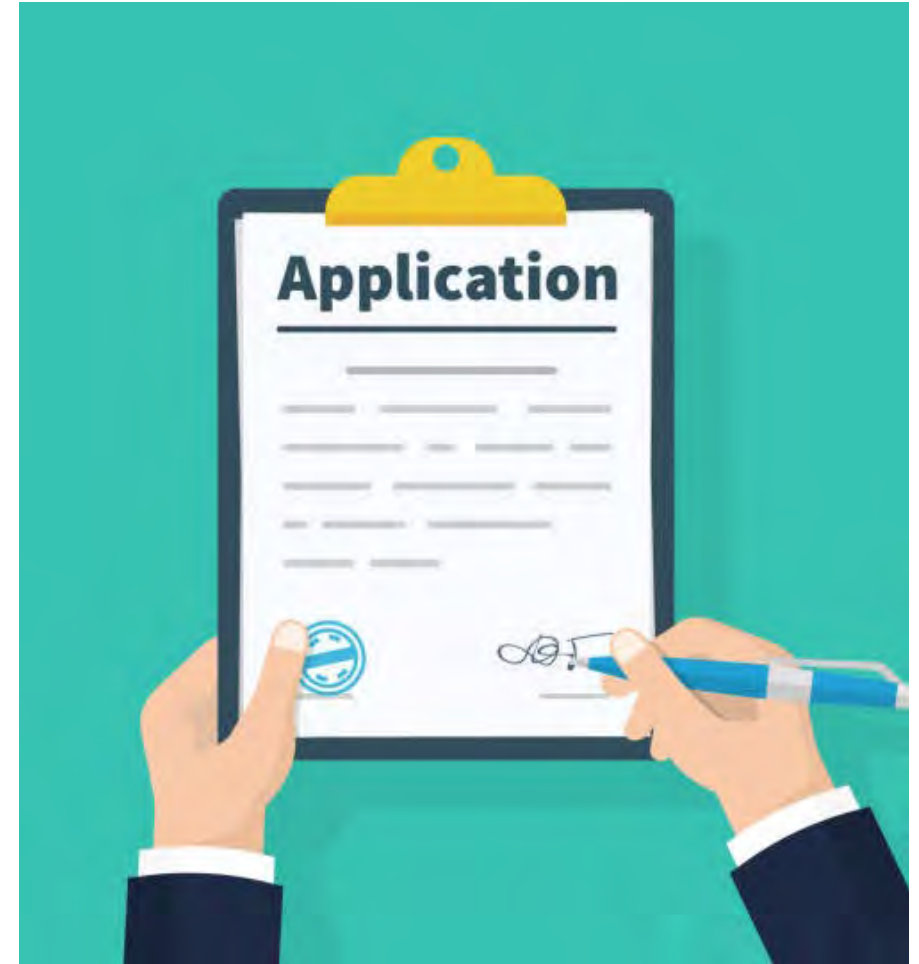
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- Not required to keep SAFER Personnel after 3-year POP.
- Must be new positions not on the payroll
- You have six months (180 days) post award to hire before POP starts.



# APPLICATION BASICS - AFG AND SAFER

- Applications are made up of several sections.
  - Statistical information
  - Request details
  - Narratives



# THE NARRATIVES

# AI/Plagiarism

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FEMA conducts reviews of a random sampling of applications to compare them for duplication including the narrative statements and statistical data. Therefore, all elements of the narrative statements must be specific and unique to the applying entity, and all statistical data must be accurate.

Applications with narrative statements that have substantial duplication of statements, sentences, or paragraphs to other submitted applications, and/or inaccurate data that may mislead reviewers may be disqualified. Discovery of falsification, fabrication, or plagiarism of other grant proposals will disqualify the application(s).



# THE NARRATIVES

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There are four scored narrative sections in the AFG or SAFER application:

- Financial need
- Project description
- Cost/benefit
- Statement of effect or Impact on Operations



The community description is not scored.



# NARRATIVE CONTENT

---

- Write it so your department's needs are clear.
  - Application will be read by fellow fire service peers, speak to them like you would a member of your crew.
- Relate only local information – not national statistics.
- Provide information that is unique to your community.
- Do not use brand names.
- Utilize friends or family to review narratives.
- Have an IAFF review.
- **Focus on the high priorities!**



# NARRATIVE CONTENT

---

- Mention that the grant is combined effort of management and labor. (Include IAFF local # and the city/town)
- Show that there is support on both sides of the aisle.

Based on the results of a risk assessment and comprehensive review of our department capability to accomplish the mission and protect our personnel, the Example Town Fire Department (ETFD) and Example Town Firefighters, IAFF Local XXXX are seeking funding that will greatly enhance the health and safety of our firefighters and any civilians who visit our stations. We request a total of \$xxx,xxx to replace our outdated and inadequate.....



# NARRATIVE CONTENT

---

XYZ Fire management and labor representatives from IAFF Local 1000 determined the requested positions will be best used to add a 3<sup>rd</sup> firefighter to Engine 3 at Fire Station Three, increasing the engine crew size to three firefighters, reducing overtime and provide more efficient fire and EMS responses. This assignment will bring Station Three compliant with NFPA 1710, bringing five firefighters (3 on the engine and 2 on the ambulance) arriving together at fires in their response district.



# NARRATIVE CONTENT

---

- Anytime you find yourself using more than, less than, steadily increasing, or any words that describe increases or decreases, **make sure you support your claim with concrete data and statistics.**
  - Don't say:
    - “We are responding to more calls than ever.”
  - Say:
    - “Over the last five years our call volume has increased 37% to 2,738 calls.”

Everyone applying for these grants is doing more with less.  
Stick to actual, relevant data that is 1-5 years old.



# NARRATIVE CONTENT



---

Remember that your peer fire fighters review the grants.

---

You do not need to spell out every aspect of operations or NFPA® standards to them.

---

Explain specifically what will be in compliance or change with the grant funding.

---



# NARRATIVE CONTENT

---

## Simply state:

- “A new vehicle would bring our department into compliance with NFPA® 1901.”

## Don't state:

- “A new engine with a 1,500-gallon pump and 750-gallon poly tank, along with four ladders and other equipment would bring our department into compliance with NFPA® 1901: Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus, Section 2.1.2.”



# NARRATIVE CONTENT

---

## Simply state:

- “Four fire fighters arriving within 4-minutes would bring our department into compliance with NFPA® 1710.”

## Don't state:

- “Four new personnel would bring our department into compliance with NFPA® 1710 5.2.4.1.1 which states, “The fire department’s fire suppression resources shall be deployed to provide for the arrival of an engine company within a 240-second travel time to 90 percent of the incidents as established in Chapter 4...”



# NARRATIVE CONTENT

---

**Maintain a smooth flow of information:**

Avoid jumping back and forth between subjects, items, and using confusing phrasing or unusual abbreviations;

The easier it is for the peer reviewers to read and follow along, the more likely the reviewers will understand and recognize your needs and score it accordingly;

Confusion in the minds of peer reviewers about messaging, financial need, project need, usage, benefits or outcomes may lead to reduced scoring.



# NFPA STANDARDS

- Do not overuse or over mention standards in your narratives
- If you are going to reference a standard, make sure you use the right one. Putting the wrong one in leads to confusion and questions whether you know what you are talking about and makes the reviewer score you lower.



# COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

---

- Sets the Tone for the Panelist's Review
  - Location, size and geography of coverage area
  - Department – stations, services, apparatus, call volume, etc.
  - What's happening – growth, decline, development, increasing alarms
  - Things that make your department/community unique



# CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

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- Critical infrastructure:
  - Schools and universities
  - Health care facilities
  - Chemical or manufacturing facilities – (hazmat?)
  - Transportation infrastructure – roads, bridges, ports, and rail
  - Large commercial or industrial sites
  - Power plants, water/sewer treatment, dams, etc.
  - If we ever have anything at that place – oh sh!t



# FINANCIAL NEED – AFG QUESTION

---

- One Narrative, 25% of your score (4,000 Characters)
- “Describe your financial need and how consistent it is with the intent of the AFG Program. Include details describing your organization's financial distress such as summarizing budget constraints, unsuccessful attempts to secure other funding, and proving the financial distress is out of your control.”



# FINANCIAL NEED – SAFER QUESTION

---

- One Narrative, 30% of your score (4,000 Characters)
- Describe your financial need to include descriptions of the following:
  - Income vs. expense breakdown of the current annual budget
  - Budget shortfalls and the inability to address financial needs without federal assistance
  - Actions taken to obtain funding elsewhere (i.e., state assistance programs or other grant programs)
  - How your critical functions are affected without this funding.



# FINANCIAL NEED

- Describe why you can't complete this project without the assistance of federal funds.
- Compare your income to expenses. Illustrate current funding deficiencies.
- Show other attempts you have made to fund department needs.
- Describe your community/agency budgets including:
  - Where money comes from
  - Where money goes



# FINANCIAL NEED

---

- Describe financial stressors.
  - Other capital projects
  - Unemployment rate
  - Loss of tax base
  - Non-tax paying entities
  - Snow/ice removal/storm clean up – deficit spending
  - COVID spending or revenue decreases (Should really be negligible now)
  - Anything putting a strain on your budget
- Budget increases are okay – need to explain



# FINANCIAL NEED

---



- Provide an overview of the jurisdiction's financial health over the prior 3-5 years.
  - Have there been major job losses or other factors that meant declining revenues?
  - Have there been personnel or programs reductions to other agencies or programs?



# FINANCIAL NEED

---

- What are the competing priorities in city hall?
  - Perhaps the water treatment plant needs significant work, or there is a new school bond that was floated?
- Have you put a levy increase on the ballot, and it failed?
- Did you ask your elected officials for increases?
- What other options have you explored for funding?



# FINANCIAL NEED

---

- Has your department had large expenditures which limited your ability to pay for the requested equipment?
  - Perhaps you recently added personnel, or are playing catch up after years of neglecting the capital budget because all funding was directed to keeping fire stations open...
- If you have shown budget increases for prior years, or have a large reserve, tell reviewers where funds are directed.
  - For example, station or apparatus replacement, pension obligation increases, etc.



# FINANCIAL NEED



## What are your sources of revenue?

- Funded by taxes, surcharges, property assessment, etc.?
- EMS fees/revenues maximized?

## What has your department done to control costs? Has the union offered concessions?

- If so, state, “**IAFF local ## has provided concessions...**”
- Have fire prevention or other staff been moved to front line positions to reduce overtime?



# FINANCIAL NEED

---

Provide an itemized budget breakdown in your narrative.

Only 5.7% of the Town's entire budget (\$73,345,041.43) is dedicated to the Fire Department, we are obviously considered a low priority among town departments. FIRE BUDGET \$4,210,884; Personnel and benefits: \$3,880,184 (92%); SUPPLIES (4%): Building Maintenance: \$20,000; Office Supplies: \$4,500; Education Materials: \$78,000; Ambulance Supplies: \$40,000; Natural Gas: \$15,000; Technology: \$15,000; PURCHASE OF SERVICES (4%): Telephone: \$12,000; Ambulance Billing: \$30,000; Vehicle Maintenance: \$75,000; Gas/Diesel: \$40,000; Other Expenses: \$1,200.



# FINANCIAL NEED

---

- Define and explain local terms.
- The reviewers will not be from your state and won't understand!
  - For example, explain what Proposition 2½ is or what tax levy limiting legislation allows...

All funds for municipal budgets are raised primarily through property tax assessments and through Local Aid provided by the State Government. We are restricted by a state-wide property tax initiative, known locally as Proposition 2 ½, that limits revenue collected from property tax increases to no more than 2 ½ percent of what was received in the previous year.



# FINANCIAL NEED

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Be as detailed as possible!



# FACTORS TO CONSIDER – REVIEWER GUIDANCE

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- Has the applicant provided a comprehensive overview of their organization's budget, including but not limited to describing sources of revenue/funding and expenses?
- Does the applicant clearly describe their financial distress?
- Does the applicant explain why they do not have the means to fund their project?
- Does the applicant include evidence of sacrifice due to budget constraints?



# PROJECT DESCRIPTION – AFG QUESTION

---

- One Narrative, 25% of your score (4,000 Characters)
- **“Project Description and Budget:** Clearly explain the organization's project objectives and the relationship to your organization's budget (e.g., personnel, equipment, contracts, etc.) and risk analysis by providing statistics to justify the needs. Describe the various activities to be implemented, including program priorities or facility modifications, to include details on how these are consistent with project objectives, your organization's mission and national, state, and/or local requirements. Provide details that link the proposed expenses to operations and safety, as well as to the completion of the project's goals.”



# PROJECT DESCRIPTION - AFG

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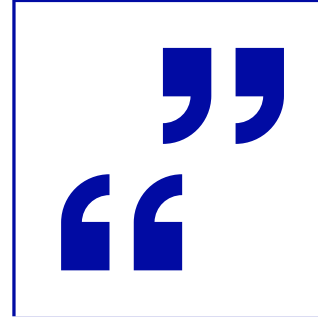


**Clearly identify all aspects of the project and project budget.**

Identify the problem, solution, and cost.

Describe how project aligns with program priorities.

Demonstrate that the project will be completed within the period of performance.



**It is best to put your request in front of the reviewer in the first paragraph.**



# PROJECT DESCRIPTION - AFG

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- State specifically what you are requesting:
  - The XYZ Fire Department is requesting \$32,000 to replace our 12-year-old, non-compliant, torn, and irreparable turnout gear.

The Rockland Fire Department and the Rockland Firefighters IAFF Local 1602 conducted an internal risk assessment and determined that we are in urgent need of replacing and obtaining essential EMS equipment. We are respectfully requesting \$180,182.92 to purchase 2 new power cots and 2 new power load systems for our 2 frontline ambulances. We currently have 2 stretchers and 1 power load system and one ambulance with firefighters as the load system. This ambulance will be retrofitted with a power load system. After a recent failure of one of our stretchers, the repair tech from the manufacturer informed us that our devices are no longer able to be repaired and will no longer be covered or even eligible for a service contract. They explained that the



# PROJECT DESCRIPTION - AFG

---

- Explain why you chose this particular item as your most pressing need. (Risk Assessment)
- State how often you use the requested equipment.
- Identify the standards that apply and how funding of your request will bring you into compliance?
- Identify method for determining cost.
  - Make sure its necessary and reasonable.



# PROJECT DESCRIPTION - AFG

---

- Provide details on the specific issues you are having with your equipment, training, or whatever you are requesting.
- **Just being old/out of compliance is not enough**, you must support your request with concrete details.
  - What are the costs of maintaining current equipment/apparatus?
  - Is equipment failing NFPA® or other certification testing?
  - Do other departments rely on you as a regional resource for the equipment?



# PROJECT DESCRIPTION - AFG

---

## Explain

Why do you need what you are requesting.

## Don't Just Say

"I need it because mine is old."

"FEMA/NFPA® says that I have to replace it at 10 years old."

"FEMA/NFPA® says my stuff is expired"

## Justify It!

"Its torn, tattered, broken, held together with duct tape and zip ties..."

Be detailed, draw a good picture.



# PROJECT DESCRIPTION - SAFER

---

- 30% of Your Score
- 4 Separate narratives (3,000 characters each)
  - Why does the department need the positions requested in this application?
  - How will the positions requested in this application be used within the department?



# PROJECT DESCRIPTION - SAFER

---

- What specific benefits will the requested positions provide to the department and community?
- Describe how funds awarded through this grant would enhance the department's ability to protect critical infrastructure within the primary response area?



# PROJECT DESCRIPTION - SAFER

---

- It is best to put your request in front of the reviewer in the first paragraph.
- State specifically what you are requesting:
  - “The XYZ Fire Department is requesting \$4,000,000 to hire 12 new fire fighters so that we can reopen a browned-out station...”



# PROJECT DESCRIPTION - SAFER



Explain why you chose this number of fire fighters.

How often does/will this station/engine/ladder respond?

What standards apply (1710 or 1720) and how will the funding of your request bring you into compliance with those standards?



# PROJECT DESCRIPTION - SAFER

---

- Provide details on the specific issues you are having with your current staffing.
  - Project based on risk analysis?
    - Accreditation or NFPA® 1710/1720?
  - Response times increasing?
  - Specific target hazards in these areas?
  - Specific incidents
  - Forced overtime





## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A lot of departments are asking for the same type of requests.

- What sets your grant apart?
- Tell a good story.
- Get personal with the reviewer, be specific about your problems.



# FACTORS TO CONSIDER – REVIEWER GUIDANCE

---

- Does the applicant demonstrate they understand the program priorities?
- Does the applicant produce evidence to support its requested needs?
- Does the applicant show evidence the project is based on risk analysis?
- Does the applicant clearly associate the completion of project goals to proposed expenses?
- Does the applicant show evidence they have conducted good market research, e.g., bids and specs ready to go?
- If requesting a vehicle, does the applicant clearly explain the specifics of the vehicle being purchased?



# COST BENEFIT – AFG QUESTION

---

- One Narrative, 15% of your score (4,000 characters)
- **“Cost Benefit:** Describe how you plan to address the operations and personal safety needs of your organization, including cost effectiveness and sharing assets. The Operations and Safety Cost Benefit statement should also include details about gaining the maximum benefits from grant funding by citing reasonable or required costs, such as specific overhead and administrative costs. The request should also be consistent with your organization's mission and identify how funding will benefit your organization and affected personnel.”



# COST BENEFIT – SAFER QUESTION

---

- One Narrative, 10% of your score (3,000 characters)
- “Describe the benefits (e.g., quantifying the anticipated savings and/or efficiencies) the department and community will realize if awarded the positions requested in this application”



# COST/BENEFIT

---

- Maximize benefits – minimize costs
- Advantages of project and value it brings
- Benefits tied to department mission
  - Fire fighter and public safety
  - Decreased property loss
  - Used frequently
  - Decreased overhead/administrative costs
  - Mutual aid benefits



# COST/BENEFIT



- Break down per capita:
  - Cost/resident/life of item or Cost/FF/resident
  - Provide some type of quantitative cost/benefit analysis

A cost benefit analysis reveals that with a population of 17,489, this project of \$94,150 will cost \$5.38 per person. If you include the 15 years of equipment life expectancy, the cost of the project is only \$0.39. We feel that this number represents an excellent cost benefit.

The entire federal cost of this request is \$3,960,569. With a population of 406,000 residents the cost per resident for each firefighter is only \$0.27 per year. We feel that 27 cents is a bargain and a great cost/benefit which will directly increase and improve fire suppression coverage.



# COST/BENEFIT

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- How does the cost of request compare to other options that are available?
- What features does your current equipment lack (12 lead transmission, buddy breathers, etc.)?
- Is the equipment no longer supported?
- How much have you spent on maintenance or repairs of requested equipment?



# COST/BENEFIT



Have there been injuries from substandard equipment, training, or lack of fitness/wellness programs or from lack of staffing?



What are the costs of the injuries?



What are the consequences of not funding this request?

What are the risks to citizens?



# COST/BENEFIT

---



Will regional partners expand the cost benefit of the request?  
- Mutual aid?



State whether your elected officials have provided approval to accept award and provide matching funds.



# COST/BENEFIT

---

- If you discuss ISO savings in your narratives, give numbers, actually talk to insurance companies.
- Just saying that your community will save money on their insurance does not justify it.



# FACTORS TO CONSIDER – REVIEWER GUIDANCE

---

- Does the applicant fully explain all aspects of the request?
- Does the applicant give evidence that funds are directly tied to operations and safety?
- Does the applicant include information on sharing some or all of the assets with neighboring jurisdictions?
- Does the applicant show evidence that they have conducted good market research so as not to request more funds than needed?



# STATEMENT OF EFFECT – AFG QUESTION

---

- One Narrative, 25% of your score (4,000 characters)
- **“Statement of Effect on Operations:** Explain how this funding request will enhance the organization's overall effectiveness. Describe how the grant award will improve daily operations and reduce the organization's risk(s) including how frequently the requested item(s) will be used and in what capacity. Indicate how the requested item(s) will help the community and increase the organization's ability to save additional lives and property. Jurisdictions that demonstrate their commitment and proactive posture to reducing fire risk, by explaining their code enforcement (to include Wildland Urban Interface code enforcement) and mitigation strategies (including whether or not the jurisdiction has a FEMA-approved mitigation strategy) may receive stronger consideration under this criterion.”



# STATEMENT OF EFFECT – AFG

---

- Improve operations
- Increase department viability
- Reduce risk
- Use and frequency of use
- Impact on fire fighter and public safety
- Impact on property conservation
- Other daily benefits
- Effects on your daily operations



# STATEMENT OF EFFECT – AFG

---

- What can't you do now that you could do with the requested equipment or training?
- Is current equipment out of service and preventing you from responding or being as effective as you could be?



# STATEMENT OF EFFECT – AFG

---

- Have you had instances where the lack of equipment or training resulted in further damage or injuries to fire fighters, civilians, or property?
  - For instance, lack of a tanker/water supply resulted in loss of structure.
  - Back injuries from lifting that a power stretcher would prevent.
  - Old thermal imagers led to loss of life.



# STATEMENT OF EFFECT – AFG

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- Are there similar programs or equipment in place in other jurisdictions that has resulted in positive effects in fire ground operations?
- How many fire fighters or civilians are at risk if the program is not implemented?
- Will the requested equipment make you interoperable?
- Lastly, thank the reviewers for their time attending the peer review.



# IMPACT ON DAILY OPERATIONS – SAFER QUESTIONS

---

- 30% of your score
- 2 Separate narratives (3,000 characters each)
  - Explain how the community and the current firefighters employed by the department are at risk without the positions requested in this application.
  - How will that risk be reduced if awarded?



# IMPACT ON DAILY OPERATIONS - SAFER

---

- Explain the effects on your daily operations.
  - Improve operations
  - Increase department viability
  - Reduce risk
  - Use and frequency of use
  - Impact on fire fighter and public safety
  - Impact on property conservation
  - Other daily benefits



# IMPACT ON DAILY OPERATIONS - SAFER

---

What can't you do now that you could do with the requested personnel?

---

Is the lack of sufficient personnel preventing you from responding or being as effective as you could be?

---

Explain why the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> FF on the engine/ladder is important, what will you be able to do?



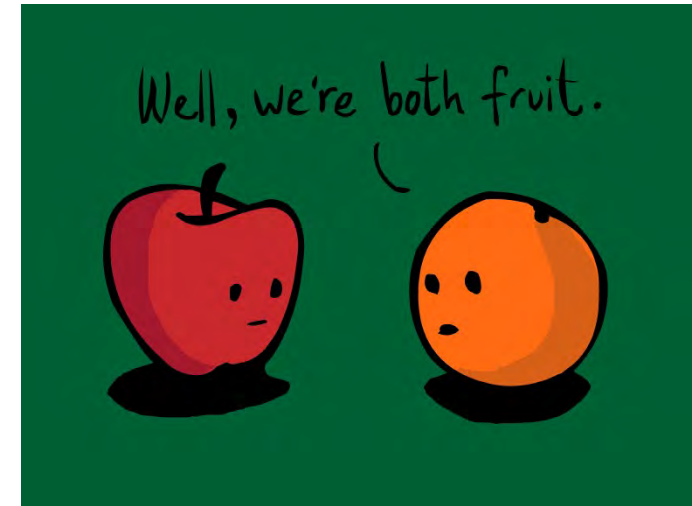
# IMPACT ON DAILY OPERATIONS - SAFER

- Have you had instances where the lack of personnel resulted in further damage or injuries to fire fighters, civilians, or property?
  - Closed engine or ladder company
  - Increased response time
  - Fatal fire



# IMPACT ON DAILY OPERATIONS

- How do you compare to similar sized jurisdictions?
- How many fire fighters or civilians are at risk if the program is not implemented?



# FACTORS TO CONSIDER – REVIEWER GUIDANCE

---

- Does the applicant demonstrate a high benefit for the cost incurred and maximize the level of funding going directly into the delivery of the project?
- Are the costs reasonable for the target population that will be reached?
- Does the applicant provide justification for the budget items related to the project cost?
- Does the applicant include sufficient details to understand their organization's most common risk?
- Does the applicant explain how the project is directly tied to increasing fire fighter safety and to protecting life and property?



# FACTORS TO CONSIDER – REVIEWER GUIDANCE

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- Does the applicant include daily benefits?
- Does the applicant include details on mitigation strategies to reduce fire risk?
- If requesting a vehicle:
  - Has the applicant identified the vehicle(s) being replaced as not manufactured for emergency services, and/or that the vehicle being replaced is not compliant with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1901 or NFPA 1906?
  - Has the applicant explained how the acquisition of the vehicle(s) will positively impact operations per NFPA 1710 and/or NFPA 1720?



# IAFF SAFE STAFFING TOOLKIT

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- The IAFF created a detailed tool kit that explains a lot of talking points for your staffing needs.
- Available on the IAFF Website
- Lots of great information but make sure you relate it your department
- Reviewers want your information not national statistics or studies



# NIST STUDY



Why 4 Fire Fighters Per Company Matters:

- ✓ **FIRES GET PUT OUT FASTER**
- ✓ **QUICKER SEARCH & RESCUE**
- ✓ **FEWER FIRE FIGHTER INJURIES**
- ✓ **MORE LIVES & PROPERTY SAVED**

Safe staffing isn't a luxury. It's the difference between

**LIFE AND DEATH.**



**Key Findings:** NIST's live-burn study was conducted in a realistic two-story home and measured the performance of different crew sizes across 22 critical fireground tasks.

The study showed four-person crews were able to:

- **Complete essential tasks 30% faster** than two-person crews
- **Complete essential tasks 25% faster** than three-person crews
- **Begin fire suppression efforts 15% faster** than two-person crews
- **Perform search and rescue 30% faster** than two-person crews



# SELF EVALUATION SHEETS

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- The FEMA **Self Evaluation Sheets** are designed to help you understand the four narrative questions.
- They will also help you to understand what the panelist are asked to look for in your answer.
- You can see the actual scoring criteria used by the panelist.
- Can be found on the FEMA AFG website.



# SCORING - SELF EVALUATION SHEETS - AFG

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## 2. Project Description

This statement should clearly explain the applicant's organization's project's description and budget. This includes providing local statistics to justify the needs of your department and a detailed plan for how your department will implement the proposed project. Further, please describe what you are requesting funding for, including budget descriptions of the major budget items, i.e., personnel, equipment, contracts, etc.

- Does the applicant demonstrate they understand the stated program priorities?
- Does the applicant produce evidence to support its requested needs?
- Does the applicant show evidence the project is based on risk analysis?
- Does the applicant clearly associate the completion of project goals to proposed expenses?
- Does the applicant show evidence that they have conducted good market research, e.g., bids and specs ready to go?



# SCORING - SELF EVALUATION SHEETS

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**Strongly Agree:** The applicant clearly identifies all aspects of the project and budget. Project goals are evident, articulated, and directly tied to the applicant's mission. The itemized budget items are proven necessary, directly relate to the risk assessment, and are not excessive. The project(s) are clearly and coherently aligned with Medium and/or High AFG Program priorities.

**Agree:** The applicant's project is sufficiently explained. Budget items and risk analysis are sufficiently described, but the relationship between the risk analysis, the mission, and the proposed project needs strengthening. The project(s) are sufficiently aligned with Medium and/or High AFG Program priorities.

**Neither Agree nor Disagree:** Some project goals are discussed, but it is unclear how some of the project's elements address the organization's needs or mission. A budget and a risk analysis are addressed but lack sufficient information regarding how it will benefit the organization. The project(s) align with some Medium and/or High AFG Program priorities but lack clarity on implementation and/or functionality.



# SCORING - SELF EVALUATION SHEETS

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Disagree: The applicant includes little detail about the project and how it relates to the organization's mission or needs. The information regarding the budget and risk analysis, and how those factors will benefit the organization, is insufficient or non-existent. The alignment of the project(s) to AFG Program priorities is unclear, confusing, and/or incomplete.

Strongly Disagree: The applicant does not identify their budget, needs, mission, or risk assessment, and/or how the project will complement the organization. The project(s) do not coherently align to any AFG Program priorities.



# SCORING – SELF EVALUATION SHEETS - SAFER

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## **(1) Project Description**

In order to receive the highest rating related to Project Description, you must clearly discuss all of the following points:

- Why does the department need the positions requested in this application?
- How will the positions requested in this application be used within the department (e.g. fourth firefighter on engine, open a new station, eliminate browned out stations, reduce overtime).
- What specific benefits will the requested positions provide to the fire department and community?
- Describe how funds awarded through this grant would enhance the department's ability to protect critical infrastructure within the primary response area.



# SCORING – SELF EVALUATION SHEETS

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## **Option: Strongly Agree**

**Definition/Standard:** The applicant clearly explains why the department needs the positions requested in the application. There is a clear explanation of how the positions will be used, as well as the specific benefits they would provide to the community and fire department. The applicant provides a clear description of how these positions would enhance the department's ability to protect critical infrastructure. I have a clear understanding of the project description.

## **Option: Agree**

**Definition/Standard:** The applicant adequately explains why the department needs the positions requested in the application. There is an adequate explanation of how the positions would be used, and the specific benefits they would provide to the community and fire department. The applicant provides adequate information on how these positions would enhance the department's ability to protect critical infrastructure. I have an understanding of most elements of the project description, but a greater level of detail on some aspects would have been helpful.



# SCORING – SELF EVALUATION SHEETS

## **Option: Neither Agree nor Disagree**

**Definition/Standard:** The applicant provides some explanation on why the department needs the positions requested in the application, but details and justification are lacking. There is some explanation of how the positions would be used, as well as the benefits they would provide to the community and fire department, but it is not absolutely clear. The applicant provides some information on how these positions would enhance the department's ability to protect critical infrastructure, but the information lacks the level of detail needed. The project description is moderately described, but more detail on most of the elements would have been helpful.

## **Option: Disagree**

**Definition/Standard:** The applicant provides minimal detail and explanation on why the department needs the positions requested in the application. There is minimal explanation of how the positions would be used and the benefits they would provide to the community and fire department. There is minimal explanation on how these positions would enhance the department's ability to protect critical infrastructure. I don't have a clear understanding of why the positions are needed and the benefits that would be realized through the addition of these positions; I am unclear as to what the project intends to accomplish.

## **Option: Strongly Disagree**

**Definition/Standard:** The applicant provides no detail and explanation on why the department needs the positions requested in the application. There is no explanation of how the positions would be used or the benefits they would provide to the fire department and the community. There is no indication that the positions would enhance the department's ability to protect critical infrastructure; I do not understand what the project proposes to accomplish.



# AFG NARRATIVE EXAMPLES

# EXAMPLE 1

## Project Description

**The XYZFD is seeking funding to purchase an Air SCBA Filler. The one we have currently will fill two bottles at a time and is approximately 16 years old. The XYZFD would like to purchase the most recent model to ensure we are being as efficient as possible.**

## Cost/Benefit

**XYZ City has a nearly 50% poverty rate. Having only about \$300,000.00 budgeted each fiscal year toward daily operations such as fleet and fleet management, equipment, training, PPE, etc., the XYZFD consistently seeks grant funding to fill the gaps in purchasing much needed equipment. Funding such as is provided through the AFG is crucial to our Fire Department being able to get the equipment we so desperately need.**

## Statement of Effect

**The purchase of the Air filler will enable the XYZFD to have more bottles filled and ready for operation. Additionally, if one unit is down or inoperable, the station(s) will have a backup unit. Having a backup unit will help ensure there is no interruption in service to the citizens of XYZ City and also that our firefighters are fully equipped with what they need to provide lifesaving services.**



# EXAMPLE 2

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Describe your financial need and how consistent it is with the intent of the AFG Program. Include details describing your organization's financial distress such as summarizing budget constraints, unsuccessful attempts to secure other funding, and proving the financial distress is out of your control.

**Our budget constraints are due to a State tax revenue cap. Our city is mostly residential and does not receive a large amount of commercial sales tax or additional revenue funding. We are also challenged with rising cost of everything from capital equipment items to daily operational supplies. This leaves little room to purchase additional specialized equipment.**



# EXAMPLE 3

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**Township Fire Department's 2023 budget will be \$627,400 less than our budget was last year due to a drastic cut in our capital outlay, and our operational costs continue to rise. With large expenditures into operating costs, such as building maintenance, apparatus repairs, fire equipment & supplies this accounts for 27% for our remaining budget (This should be changed to reflect the percentage of the total budget not what is left). We have had to cut 96% of our capital outlay to keeping staffing levels current. Of the 2023 budget over 76% of it is spent on wages and vehicle/building maintenance.**



# EXAMPLE 4

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**Many of those listed items have been in the fire service longer than the most senior man in our firehouses. Our hand tools have been refinished, sanded, and sharpened so many times that they are past salvation. Every nozzle leaks. Appliances need to be beaten into submission, so they are somewhat efficient. If we can actually get our saws started in the first few pulls, the saws just bog down as soon as they enter any type of wood. The ventilation fans are dragged from the trucks because the wheels no longer spin freely and then move minimal air due to their condition. The city, its civil servants, and the residents deserve better, but we cannot afford this much needed equipment without FEMA's assistance.**



# EXAMPLE 5

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## Project Description

**The ABCFD is seeking to purchase full sets of turn-out gear for our firefighters. Currently, the turnout gear we have is expired according to NFPA 1851 Standards of use (have had gear for approximately 15 years). Additionally, each firefighter only has 1 full set of gear, therefore they are sometimes forced to use gear that is still wet from a previous fire if another call comes in before their gear has time to dry.**



# EXAMPLE 6

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## Statement of Effect

**Funding to purchase this needed PPE for our firefighters will not only help lift moral of our fire officers, but will also help them provide a better service to our citizens. When the firefighter knows that the gear they are wearing is adequate, they feel better protected in perilous and volatile environments where conditions can change in seconds. They can now have confidence when entering into these volatile conditions, and be more focused on the task at hand, which is saving lives and minimize risk to property and lives of the citizens they are serving.**



# EXAMPLE 7

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## **Financial need:**

**The financial distress for our town is out of the hands of the Town Fire/Rescue Department. The Town Board of Selectmen has consistently neglected to appropriate necessary funds for much needed capital purchases.**

**Let me put this cost benefit in terms that a peer reviewer will understand.....**

**weather conditions experience in the service area. For the 2024 budget year, funding has came up short by ##% of the original proposed budget.**



# EXAMPLE 8

**the financial need for the department is simple. we are a small rural village, that while seeing growth, has not seen an increase in incoming funds to be able to afford standard equipment. As you can see from our budget numbers we operate on no money a year. the only reason we have four working airpacks and compliant fire gear for most of the members is because of the limited ARPA money the village received. We are tailor made for this program, and the values it was built on. We don't look for fancy items, bells or whistles, just standard complaint gear to be able to accomplish the mission we currently have. While it is true the village pays us ten dollars a call, most members use that money back on the department. I spent thirty-two dollars of my own money the day i am writing this on fasteners to keep our forty plus year old nozzles from rattling around in the compartment on the truck they sit in. I'm even writing this grant on a computer i bought myself for the firehouse because we didn't have a functional one anymore. In short we can not afford to buy something like an airpack out of our own pockets, and the village as much as they try to help can not afford them either. The only other program in Illinois we have access to for a grant is thru the fire marshal and it is capped so low that we can not get but two airpacks if we are awarded, which is hard as normally they have one million dollars to give out across the entire state.**



# EXAMPLE 9

The ABC Fire Department is seeking to purchase new personal protection equipment for each of its 24 firefighters. The total cost of this purchase is currently estimated at \$95,496.00. This includes 24 ea.- LION Legend Helmet, Retract Goggles, Quick Clean, Black. 48 ea. Quest FF Hood, 21" Long, Nomex Blend, 2-Ply, NFPA Compliant. 48 ea. Firecraft Glove, Phoenix Leather, NFPA, Gauntlet, Sz: L. 24 ea. LION Super Deluxe Coat, RT7100 Khaki Armor AP, D9, Sz:40X32R. 24 ea. LION Super Deluxe Pant, Khaki Armor AP, D9 Sz: 40R. 24 ea. LION Suspender, Traditional H-Back, 42" (Reg).

Cost/Benefit

The cost benefit of this award is enormous to the City of ABC Fire Department. Obtaining new PPE for all of the department at once affords the department to budget a portion of the total cost of replacement over time. Since this equipment has a shelf life of 10 years, this allows departments with little budget leeway the opportunity to prepare for across-the-board replacement at a specific date. The current PPE equipment being used by the department has varying expiration dates. Additionally, some of this equipment is in fair to poor condition. Newly upgraded equipment provides for maximum personal protection for our personnel. It also provides for increased department morale and outlook. Further, this aids in the recruitment of new firefighters for the department's longevity.



# EXAMPLE 10

**The XYZ Fire Department respectfully requests funding from the 2023 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program to replace Forestry 2, an unsafe 1986 tanker/tender. The tanker/tender currently in service is a 1986 AM General Military surplus chassis. Our firefighters converted the flatbed chassis with a tank to carry 1,000 gallons of water with a 250 GPM pump. The vehicle was not designed to be a fire truck and was never compliant with NFPA 1901. The chassis was never equipped with seatbelts and the brakes are hydraulic and do not stop the vehicle as efficiently as air brakes. The noise in the cab exceeds 90dba even with hearing protection in place. The transmission is a standard transmission limiting the number of operators who can drive the truck to only 3. Being a 1986, the truck was not constructed with the safety features now common in trucks. Since the gear ratio is so low the vehicle is slow and cannot get to the scene of emergencies in town in a timely manner. Given the safety concerns with this vehicle we are reluctant to utilize the tanker/tender as a primary response vehicle. The officers of the XYZ Fire Department and members of IAFF Local XXXX conducted a risk assessment of our fleet of apparatus and have determined that the most pressing fire protection and firefighter safety need in the community is the replacement of the 1986 tanker/tender. Our risk assessment also found that if awarded, we would also look to streamlining our fleet by also replacing a 1989 Ford Pumper and a 1989 Mack Tanker/Tender with the new tanker/tender, consolidating 3 vehicles with an average age of 36 years into one modern and NFPA 1900 compliant tanker/tender.**



# EXAMPLE 11

## Project Description

**The overall goal of our project is to continue to increase the overall protection of our community and safety of our firefighters. Currently we make due with the equipment that we have available to us. By funding our project it will decrease the overall risk of needing to move equipment. We have a program in place to ensure we have the correct amount on scene but it relies on moving equipment and our mutual aid partners. By granting us the purchase it will increase the safety of our firefighters and it will increase our effectiveness with our citizens.**

## Cost/Benefit

**The project aligns with the need for continuous increase to firefighter safety. by increasing the overall TIC's in our fleet and RIT packs to our engines it will continue to ensure the safety of the crew in an IDLH environment. Our mission is to continue serving our citizens by protecting life and property with reducing the overall risk. By adding 2 more RIT packs it gives us the opportunity to have RIT at each point of entry. The overall cost for this project is \$35,500.**



**Without a doubt, the most hallowed day for firefighters across the Nation continues to be September 11th. While that tragic date will never be overshadowed, September 24th is a day that will haunt our firefighters for the rest of their lives. On that fateful day in 2016, Lieutenant Christopher Leach, Senior Firefighter Jerry Fickes, and Senior Firefighter Ardyth Hope of the Wilmington Fire Department answered their last alarm. The fire – later determined to be caused by arson – broke out in the Canby Estates development; a residential housing area which is partially located in our district and partially within the confines of the City of Wilmington. Just 15 minutes after initial dispatch, Command reported a "MAYDAY" with firefighters trapped in the basement. Our Engine 16-5 crew heard the frantic calls, immediately responding to assist. Just two minutes later, we were the first mutual aid agency to arrive on the scene following the initial MAYDAY declaration. Due to the situation, we were assigned to put water on the fire while units were continuing to work the MAYDAY. While knocking down the fire in the basement, one of our firefighters along with crews from Company 17, Engine 5, and Engine 1 located one of the trapped firefighters face down. Regrettably, all the three firefighters succumbed to injuries sustained in the fire that terrible night. At the time of the fire – which is now more than 7 years ago – our firefighters were utilizing SCBA which were nearly 14 years old at the time. We are not proud to admit we are still utilizing this same breathing apparatus today. We currently have a total of (30) SCBA harnesses which date back as far as the 2002 edition of NFPA 1981 – a standard which is now 22 years old! We also have a mix-matched inventory of obsolete SCBA which includes equipment from both the 2002 and 2007 standards of NFPA 1981.**



**Over the lifespan of our current SCBA, our Fire Company has responded to more than 23,000 emergencies. Our leadership recognizes that this equipment is "long overdue" for replacement, but funding restrictions continue to limit our options. The Elsmere Fire Company is appealing to the 2023 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program to resolve several critical firefighter safety risks. Since our oldest SCBAs were originally purchased, THREE newer standards have become available – now with features which have tremendously improved firefighter safety. The 2013 and 2018 standard edition improvements included new performance and test requirements for Emergency Breathing Safety Systems (EBSS), universal integrated PASS alarms, 33% low air alarms, the addition of the Speech Transmission Index (STI) method for measuring speech intelligibility, and new convection lens heat and flame resistance performance requirements. When investigating the fatality report on the Wilmington incident discussed above, NIOSH was able to review critical incident information (such as breathing rates) which were contained within the pneumatic data log incorporated in their SCBA – additional capabilities which are simply not available on our currently obsolete breathing apparatus. Another important outcome which we are hoping to accomplish with the success of this grant is the ability to provide each of our firefighters with a properly-sized face piece. This will be conducted through OSHA-mandated fit testing procedures, which will ensure that all firefighters will achieve an adequate seal. Fit testing procedures are outlined not only by OSHA, but in the NFPA 1852 and 1404 standards as well. Sharing masks is also a hazardous practice which causes a health risk to our firefighters. The project budget is outlined as follows: (30) SCBA units – to include a harness, two**



# EXAMPLE 13

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## **Financial Need:**

**Anytown City Manager is a retired NFL player and runs the city like a team – everyone has their part, and the goal is providing a service to the residents. Using internal and external resources, the Anytown Fire Department (AFD) chiefs and firefighter’s union representatives coordinate regularly with city management to develop solutions to identified gaps and areas of concern – mainly an increasing call volume, an increase in high-density housing, recruiting, and retention. AFD attempts to remain competitive but is significantly behind several neighboring departments with a slower pace and lower call volume.**



# EXAMPLE 14

## Project Description

**Harder, faster, deeper. Yes, we're talking about CPR. Whether you're trying to hum along to "Stayin' Alive" or just counting compressions, there is a science to proper cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Current guidelines require 100 to 120 chest compressions per minute, with an optimal depth of 2 to 2.4 inches. Even the most seasoned Paramedic or EMT can't possibly compress at "exactly" 2.4 inches, twice-a-second, for any reasonable length of time with consistency. As a matter of fact, it would be a challenge to do it even for a minute straight. And we are talking about one of the most basic life-saving interventions that there is. CPR has literally been around since the 1700s; when a bellow was first used as an experiment for artificial respiration. By the late 1800s, it was discovered that external compressions provided adequate circulation to restart the heart and maintain blood flow to the brain. In 1960, some pretty wise doctors finally figured out that putting the two together would**



# EXAMPLE 15

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**The department will not be spending monies on a vehicle that has outlined its life cycle. Over the (at a minimum) 25 year life span of the new tender, this translates to an annual breakdown of \$22,906 (76% of the AFD's TOTAL annual budget), \$1,909 per month, \$63.62 per day and \$2.65 per hour. To protect the personnel and thousands of people served by having a safe and reliable means to transport water for fire suppression, \$2.65 per hour is a good and reasonable investment.**



# REFERENCES?

Thank you for your consideration of this critical funding request. References: 1) IARC Working Group on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans. International Agency for Research on Cancer. World Health Organization. Painting, firefighting, and shiftwork. Lyon, France Geneva: WHO Press. 2010 2) Jalilian H, Ziaei M, Weiderpass E, Rueegg CS, Khosravi Y, Kjaerheim K. Cancer incidence and mortality among firefighters. *Int J Cancer*. 2019 3) Ide CW. Cancer incidence and mortality in serving whole-time Scottish firefighters 1984–2005. *Occup Med (Lond)*. 2014 4) Caban-Martinez AJ, Schaefer Solle N, Santiago KM, Lee DJ, Koru-Sengul T, Bator CG, et al. Impact of organizational-level factors on cancer screening activities in fire departments: A cross-sectional study from the Sylvester Firefighter Cancer Initiative. *Cancer Prev Res (Phila)*. 2019 5) Daniels RD, Kubale TL, Yiin JH, Dahm MM, Hales TR, Baris D, et al. Mortality and cancer incidence in a pooled cohort of US firefighters from San Francisco, Chicago and Philadelphia (1950-2009). *Occup Environ Med*. 2014 6) Lee DJ, Koru-Sengul T, Hernandez MN, Caban-Martinez AJ, McClure LA, Mackinnon JA, et al. Cancer risk among career male and female Florida firefighters: Evidence from the Florida Firefighter Cancer Registry (1981–2014). *Am J Ind Med*. 2020 7) Chen AB, Li L, Cronin AM, Brooks GA, Kavan (1,292 characters)



# SAFER NARRATIVE EXAMPLES

# EXAMPLE 1

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**\* 1b. How will the positions requested in this application be used within the department (e.g., 4th on engine, open a new station, eliminate browned out stations, reduce overtime)? (2500 characters)**

The positions requested in this application will be used to fill positions that were lost due to attrition. The loss of the positions has eliminated the ability to properly staff our equipment on a daily basis without a large amount of overtime. The awarding of this request will allow for the reduction of the overtime needed to maintain the vital 12 man minimum required to safely and effectively protect our citizens.



# EXAMPLE 3

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**\* 1c. What specific benefits will the requested positions provide to the department and community? (2500 characters)**

The benefit of the requested positions is the ability to maintain the much needed 12 man minimum daily staffing without the exorbitant overtime cost it is currently having on the city.



# EXAMPLE 4

## **1c. What specific benefits will the requested positions provide to the department and community?**

XYZ Fire Department has seen a significant decrease in our ability to meet established critical benchmarks such as adequate minimum staffing for structure fires and response times goals. Per our comprehensive Standards of Coverage document, between 2012 and 2016 the City of XYZ exceeded the NFPA Western States average yearly fire loss three out of the five years. We did not meet the NFPA standard on adequate staffing levels for structure fires any of those five years. The (7) requested positions would reopen our third station that was forced to close in 2015 due to budget shortfalls. With the additional SAFER funded personnel, XYZ FD will be able to re-staff that station, which means we would meet the NFPA standard 100% of the time.

Per the XYZ Fire Department 2018 Standards of Coverage (SOC), with the third station closed, the average response time to the neighborhood geographically directly behind the station is 5-10 minutes. Prior to 2015, with our third station staffed with Firefighters, the average response time was 0-3 minutes. With this grant, our average response time to this neighborhood would decrease to less than 5 minutes. Per the SOC, this neighborhood has approximately 1,350 households and 50 business buildings over 2,000 square feet. The addition of the requested firefighters will assist XYZ FD with deployment of adequate resources throughout three stations in order to improve the response time of responding apparatus.



# EXAMPLE 5

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**3a. Provide an income versus expenses breakdown of the current annual budget as indicated in the Applicant Characteristics section of the application. (2500 characters)**

The income versus expenses breakdown is exactly how and why the City Fire Department is in the predicament. The fact that the city has experience an \$8 million loss in revenue over the last 4 years illustrates the reason for a declining fire department budget and loss of personnel through attrition. These losses are due to decrease property tax collection and reduced sales tax revenues. This has spurred the current hiring freeze and cut in capital projects city wide. The expenses in the department's current budget is approximately 92% dedicated to cost of personnel. This fact should help illustrate that all non-essential items have been cut.



# EXAMPLE 6

### 3a. Provide an income versus expenses breakdown of the current annual budget as indicated in the Applicant Characteristics section of the application.

The City's current fiscal year is October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019. The FY annual budget was adopted on September 18, 2018. Total Operating Expense Budget for FY 2018 – 2019 is \$7,124,670 and total Budgeted Revenue is \$970,000.00. The difference (budget shortfall) of \$6,154,670 is supported by the General Fund. Below is a break-down of Revenue and Expenses.

Revenue Fees consists of charges associated with the following services, permits, and investigations per rates approved by City Council in the Master Fee Schedule: false alarm responses, incident reports, fire permits, fire investigation reports, fireworks/ pyrotechnical permits, fire dance permits, fire hydrant tests, special event permits

Total Revenue Fees: \$150,500

Safety Sales Tax - The one-half cent sales tax collected by the State Board of Equalization and apportioned to each county for public safety services is split 50/50 between XYZ FD and the XYZ PD. This tax is typically used for vehicle replacement and for debt service of loans for vehicles.

Total Safety Sales Tax: \$629,500

Emergency Medical Engine Service: \$190,000- paramedic services provided by XYZ FD refunded up to 82% of amount billed and paid through United Health.

Operating Expenses consist of the following:

- Personnel Costs- \$6,174,254: includes Salaries, Benefits, and Overtime expenses for 32 employees.
- Contractual Services - \$68,900: includes technical and professional services, software support, maintenance support, laundry services and consulting services.
- Operating Expenses- \$346,059: tools, parts, equipment, repairs, utilities, travel, training, office supplies, fire station supplies, janitorial, fire suppression apparatus, furniture and fixtures
- Capital Outlay/ Debt Service - \$535,457: includes Vehicle and large equipment purchases, leases and loans.



# EXAMPLE 7

## Impact on daily operations

Describe how the community and current volunteer firefighters in the department are at risk without the items or activities requested in this application.

**Firefighting is a team sport. It's a lot like football where you have a team with smaller groups that perform specific functions. In football you have the offense, defensive line, secondary, special teams, etc. In firefighting we have the attack crew, search crew, vent crew, RIT, etc. As Eagles fans (Philly Philly), we would fire the entire coaching staffing in a heartbeat if they played against the Cowboys with only half of the players because we would get crushed! If it's unacceptable to be short-staffed in football, shouldn't it also be unacceptable to operate in IDLH conditions without minimum staffing to comply with NFPA 1720?**



# EXAMPLE 8

The benefit of these new positions greatly outweighs the associated costs. These 12 positions will cost FEMA \$10.40 per citizen per year over the three-year period ( $\$3,928,355.41 / 125,886 = \$ 31.21/3$  years). This is a very small price to pay to ensure the safety of our community. The department and community anticipate lower fire loss numbers due to the rapid extinguishment of structure fires in residential and commercial fires in the southern portion of the city limits. By bringing fires and EMS emergencies under control faster, we not only save the business but save the wage earner's jobs that work for this business, thus will keep money in our community's local economy. ABCFD also anticipates a reduction in lost time injuries because a safe number of firefighters will be responding to and mitigating emergencies more efficiently and safer. The average cost of a lost-time, worker's compensation claim is \$42,000. With industry-accepted safe staffing levels, our supervisors will function at that tactical level and ensure the safe operations of the firefighters, rather than having to engage in dangerous task-level work. Additional staff means more balanced physical labor reducing the chances of injury. NIST estimates firefighter injuries cost \$50,000 to \$200,000 per department per year. This translates to \$1,500-\$5,500 per firefighter in the county. With adequate staffing levels, we expect to see a marked reduction in firefighter injuries. Another important efficiency we expect to realize is the faster delivery of ALS care. As noted above, a crew dispatched and responding from station 7 will allow for more efficient delivery of CPR and critical care. According to the



# EXAMPLE 9

## Impact on daily operations

**Explain how the community and the current firefighters employed by the department are at risk without the positions requested in this application.**

NFPA 1701 requirements are based off of experience and significant detailed research, reaching these numbers and understanding the stress of each position on the fire ground and having the ability to add these positions and distribute the stress evenly among the firefighters on scene gives them the ability to think clearer, physically able to perform the job better as there will be less stress. Stress leads to the leading cause of firefighters fatalities, Heart Attacks and Cardiac related emergencies. Chief Officers of Clark County Fire Department understand this and are trying to make scenes and operations safer with what budget we are presented, If awarded this grant it will substantially benefit our department and community.



# EXAMPLE 10

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## Cost benefit

**Describe the benefits (e.g., quantifying the anticipated savings and/or efficiencies) the department and community will realize if awarded the positions requested in this application.**

Adding Firefighters at no cost up front gives County Fire Department the opportunity to show the changes it has the ability to impacting public safety by providing Better response times, Quicker more efficient rescues, Fast water on the fire, getting appropriate trucks and equipment to the scene in a timely manner without waiting on second alarm personnel. while being able to provide these great improvements without cost it will allow the public and Fiscal Court the ability to see the importance and work with Chief Officers future budgets to keep these firefighters on line.



# EXAMPLE 11

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## Cost benefit

Describe the benefits (e.g., quantifying the anticipated savings and/or efficiencies) the department and community will realize if awarded the positions requested in this application.

**The City expects that the daytime response times will decrease dramatically response times from x.xx minutes per call to y.yy minutes per call. This will reduce the risk of loss to life and property during a time of day that the City is struggling to get volunteers to arrive for calls on a consistent basis.**



# EXAMPLE 12

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How will the positions requested in this application be used within the department? (e.g., 4th on engine, open a new station, eliminate browned out stations, reduce overtime)?

**The six positions requested in this application will provide us with firefighter paramedics who will staff a fourth ALS ambulance company from our fire station #18. This will have tremendous benefits in reducing incident response times, ensuring the physical and mental health of our firefighter paramedics, reducing the workload on our 3 overburdened ambulances, and make more personnel available for fire and life safety education, smoke detector installation, and CPR class support. It will also increase our minimum daily staffing of firefighter paramedics to 30 from 28 each shift.**



# EXAMPLE 13

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Why does the department need the positions requested in this application?

**A comprehensive and data-driven GIS study was recently completed for the City of XYZ that used 24 months of call data to complete an Emergency Services Response Capabilities Analysis. The results showed a clear need to address current staffing and deployment methodologies. XYZ has experienced exponential population growth, due to construction, and increased call volumes. XYZ rarely meets the 1710 (with Aerial) requirements for a single-family dwelling of a minimum of 17 members with an 8 min response time, 90% of the time. Not meeting these standards leaves the Citizens and infrastructure within XYZ at risk.**



Why does the department need the positions requested in this application?

**Like the old saying goes, "when you fall off a horse, get back on." Last year, we were unsuccessful in applying for a SAFER grant – but with our head-strong firefighter mentality, we refuse to give up! We acknowledge that the limited funding means that many worthy applicants are unable to be funded each year. However, since our last attempt, things have gotten even worse around here. We received the bad news "Dear John" e-mail on October 6, 2021 that we weren't selected for the grant. Just three weeks later, we made the national "Firehouse.com" headlines when two of our firefighters were hospitalized following a fire on October 25, 2021. Due to our staffing crisis, our firefighters were overwhelmed by yet another house fire which was well-involved prior to our arrival. With just two firefighters on the first-in Engine, it was like bringing a knife to a gun fight. For any fire department, staffing is not a "want," it is a need. Chances are that those of you who are reading this grant application have been in the same position that we are at some point in your fire service career; where you have been forced to do a job with far less help than is expected. If you haven't, we welcome you to pay us a visit (we could use the help!). In firefighting crew terms – "size matters." Like so many mid-sized, urban career departments across the Country, we are unable to meet NFPA 1710 staffing standards for the majority of our responses. Our manpower situation has been further compounded over the course of the past decade; as our full-time staffing has been reduced from 20 firefighters as of 2003 – down to just 13 today. It doesn't take a math major to determine that 13 full-time personnel cannot adequately staff a fire department around-the-clock. Without portraying a picture of a department which operates 'dangerously,' we have to be very straightforward with our**



Explain how the community and the current firefighters employed by the department are at risk without the positions requested in this application.

**High-risk fires are not uncommon here in ABC. Too many recent incidents have been "close calls," and one of these times – it's not going to end favorably. A late-night house fire on October 6th broke out just after 3AM. Our crews arrived to find heavy fire coming from the third-floor attic area. Shortly after our firefighters arrived, the roof collapsed, which made fighting the fire challenging – especially with limited staffing. What made this incident even more unique was that the home was occupied by four residents, yet there was no electric service; something far too common in our impoverished city. An understaffed Fire Department subjects itself to many liabilities (we know this all-too-well). In addition to our inability to meet our mission goals, the chances of injuries or long-term disabilities are increased due to understaffing. A career-ending disability would cause our staffing levels to decrease even further. This would have an impact on our long-term financial stability as well, further inhibiting us from hiring any additional personnel. Structure fires are by far the most dangerous incidents we face. Many structures here in ABC are abandoned or collapsing. The terrible tragedy which just occurred in Baltimore last week claimed the lives of three young firefighters who were battling an abandoned row-home fire. The crews were operating as a team of "four" when a collapse occurred. These brave firefighters gave their lives risking it for others – meanwhile, we are facing very similar challenges with just half the personnel. It gives us chills to think of the potential for the very same incident to occur here in ABC. But structure fires are just one of the challenges we encounter. It seems that fire department responses across America have expanded to include emergency medical services, hazardous materials response and mitigation, terrorism response, natural disaster response, specialized rescue, and responses to other community needs. No matter**



## Why does the department need the positions requested in this application?

February 24, 2024 at about 2am, a call came into our dispatch firefighter from Jasmine, a 12-year-old girl, reporting a fire in her home. Our shift was in quarters and responded immediately. Mutual aid was requested right away and our whole shift of only 4 FFs on duty arrived within 3 minutes from Center Station with a shift command vehicle -1, engine-2 and tower-1. Crews arrived to heavy fire from the first floor windows, extending to the roofline. Firefighters attempted an interior search for family members before they were recalled due to the rapidly deteriorating conditions. 2 FFs attempted aggressive interior searches over ladders until they faced fire coming down the hallway pushing them back. Orders from the IC were enough to get our members out before they were hurt or worse. Portions of helmets and packs were damaged by flames and heat in their retreat. While two FFs searched, only one FF remained outside, protecting adjacent homes and citizens. In addition to their regular fireground tasks, this FF kept close watch on the house, ready for a mayday because of the conditions. In the few minutes before mutual aid and off duty members arrived, heavy fire had taken over much of the home. It took over 25 additional minutes to control the flames and hours to fully extinguish it. When our crews located Jasmine, it was too late. Her room was an area of refuge and essentially intact. The paint color on her walls, her toys and the small makeup table in the corner of her room will be details our members never forget. Firefighters on scene that night are convinced that if more staffing arrived initially on scene, we could have done more and been able to save Jasmine.



# FINANCIAL NEED

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- Income vs. expense breakdown of the current annual budget
- Budget shortfalls and the inability to address financial needs without federal assistance
- Actions taken to obtain funding elsewhere (i.e. state assistance programs or other grant programs)
- How your critical functions are affected without this funding

**The City of XYZ continues to make a large, financial investment in the maintenance of Fire Department personnel, health care and personal protective equipment. However, due to rising costs associated with maintaining current personnel as well as acquiring and replenishing personal protective equipment during this unprecedented health pandemic, as it relates to response, preparedness and safeguarding first responders as well as residents, financial need is critical as municipalities did not plan for this sizable and tragic crisis. The economic impact of the pandemic on the City has been significant and has impacted the collection rate of Franchise Fees and Special Taxes, which are major revenue generators. Municipalities are also being faced with difficult cost saving decisions; therefore, in the event alternate grant funds could not be obtained, the City of XYZ would currently not have the funding to hire 15 additional firefighters.**



# Financial Need:

The Town Fire Department (TFD) is funded through the Town's municipal budget. The Fire Department allocates 92% of its \$4,210,884 budget on personnel expenses, leaving a mere 8% for other operating costs such as building and vehicle maintenance, miscellaneous small equipment, training and supplies. We have asked the Town for funding to cover unbudgeted expenses dealing with several long-term injuries without success. They have denied any additional funding due to a projected budget shortfall of \$1 million dollars between now and the end of our fiscal year on June 30, 2023 due to the slower than expected recovery after COVID. This is especially hurting to our community who depends on property taxes and local receipts – such as real estate taxes, motor vehicle excise, building permits, etc. - to fund our budget. The disruption to the economy, with many taxpayers still out of work, has had a devastating impact on our revenues. This new shortfall is in addition to the shortages in the Town's education and snow removal budget. In the last several years, our Town has had to spend unbudgeted funds of well over \$1.5 million on snow removal per year. Snow removal costs can be deficit spent but are required to be paid the next fiscal year. All non-critical expenditures have been eliminated from the Town's current budget to make up for these unforeseen costs. This year TFD has incurred excessive unbudgeted vehicle repairs, including over \$25,000 on repairing our lead engine and another \$10,000 to repair our 23-year-old ladder. Due to the slow recovery from the COVID crisis the Town has notified us that we will have to prepare for a possible 4% cut to our budget for next fiscal year resulting in the loss of 2 firefighter positions that were just filled...



**...While our actual budget has increased, the only line items that have increased have been through collective bargaining and our contractual obligations with our IAFF Local, resulting in staffing and wage increases. We have also been hit hard with 2 firefighters who are out with long term injuries requiring us to backfill their positions at overtime, costing over \$50,000 so far this year to maintain shift strength. All funds for municipal budgets are raised through property tax assessments and through Local Aid. Our State uses Local Aid from excess State revenue and State lottery profits as a mechanism for helping offset inequality of local services that would otherwise exist if these cities and towns only funded their budgets with local property tax revenue. We are restricted by a state-wide property tax initiative, known as Proposition 2 ½, that limits revenue collected from property tax increases to no more than 2 ½ % of what was received in the previous year. Our State prohibits cities and towns from levying local taxes such as sales, income, and hotel. Since Prop 2 ½ passed our call volume has increased over 94% to 4,051 incidents during 2022, placing an immense strain on our already deteriorating equipment. In the last few years our Town has received 28% less Local Aid than in previous years and combined with continued increases in health insurance premiums, our financial outlook continues to be bleak. Only 5.7% of the Town's entire budget (\$73,345,041.43) is dedicated to the Fire Department, we are obviously considered a low priority among town departments. FIRE BUDGET \$4,210,884; Personnel and benefits: \$3,880,184 (92%); SUPPLIES (4%): Building Maintenance: \$20,000; Office Supplies: \$4,500; Education Materials: \$78,000; Ambulance Supplies: \$40,000; Natural Gas: \$15,000; Technology: \$15,000; PURCHASE OF SERVICES (4%): Telephone: \$12,000; Ambulance Billing: \$30,000; Vehicle Maintenance: \$75,000; Gas/Diesel: \$40,000; Other Expenses: \$1,200. Without AFG funding we have no way to fund this request. We have attempted to find funding from other sources with no success.**



# PEER REVIEW

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- Applications with the highest scores from the pre-score process will undergo a peer review.
- The panel score is worth 50% of the total application score.
- Reviewers represent nine major fire service organizations.
  - They volunteer their time to be there.
  - About 100 reviewers.
  - Applications are reviewed by like type agencies.
    - Career FFs read career department applications etc.



# PEER REVIEW

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- Each application is read by three people.
- Each application must be scored individually.
  - **Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Disagree or Strongly Disagree.**
  - Every score must have comments.



# PEER REVIEW

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- There is a cross-section of reviewers working together.
  - Might be FF, chief, fire marshal, from the NFPA® etc.
  - All reviewers have some background in the fire service.
  - Reviewers may be from much bigger or smaller jurisdictions.
- The application you see at home is exactly what the reviewer sees.



# AFTER PEER REVIEW

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- **Post Panel Technical Review**
  - Performed by FEMA professionals.
  - They make sure that you haven't already gotten a grant for the same reason.
  - They check pricing and quantity.
    - Riding positions etc.
    - Cost must be within FEMA numbers.



# IF YOU GET A TURNDOWN LETTER

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- Contact your FEMA regional contacts and ask why.
- They will look into the reviewer feedback.
- Applications are very competitive; scoring is very tight.
- Thousands of AFG applications make it to peer review.
- May only fund 1,500-2,000 AFG applications.



# IF YOU GET A TURNDOWN LETTER



Good projects are left on the table – even excellent applications aren't funded.



There are always applications right on the edge of being funded, but FEMA simply runs out of money.



Contact your FEMA Regional Grant Representative.



# Special Requirements - NOFO

## **9. Post-Award Requirements and Administration**

### **A. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

In addition to the requirements of this section, FEMA may place specific terms and conditions on an individual award in accordance with 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

### **B. DHS Standard Terms and Conditions**

A recipient of a federal award under this funding opportunity is required to comply with DHS Standard Terms and Conditions in effect at the time the award is issued. The DHS Standard Terms and Conditions are available [online](#). For continuation awards, the terms and conditions for the initial federal award will apply unless otherwise specified in the terms and conditions of the continuation award. The specific version of the DHS Standard Terms and Conditions applicable to the federal award will be in the federal award package. NOTE: Although not a requirement in

*FEMA Version 25-01*



# FY25 STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

## (2) Grant award certification.

### (a) By accepting the grant award, recipients are certifying that:

- (i) They do not, and will not during the term of this financial assistance award, operate any programs that advance or promote DEI, DEIA, or discriminatory equity ideology in violation of Federal anti-discrimination laws; and
- (ii) They do not engage in and will not during the term of this award engage in, a discriminatory prohibited boycott.
- (iii) They do not, and will not during the term of this award, operate any program that benefits illegal immigrants or incentivizes illegal immigration.

## (3) DHS reserves the right to suspend payments in whole or in part and/or terminate financial assistance awards if the Secretary of Homeland Security or her designee determines that the recipient has violated any provision of subsection (2)..



# FY25 STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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Contracts, and Cooperative Agreements, and the standard patent rights clause set forth at 37 C.F.R. § 401.14.

## XXXI. Presidential Executive Orders

Recipients must comply with the requirements of Presidential Executive Orders related to grants (also known as federal assistance and financial assistance), the full text of which are incorporated by reference.

## XXXII. Procurement of Recovered Materials

States, political subdivisions of states, and their contractors must comply with Section



# BEST PRACTICES

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**Read the NOFO!**



# BEST PRACTICES

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- Start your research and grant as soon as possible
- Use the FEMA AFG Self-Evaluation Sheets
  - These parallel the peer review score guidance!
- Be very careful using place holders in sections.
  - Make sure you go back and fill in all the place holders.
  - Xxxxx



# BEST PRACTICES

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- Ensure your department's needs are written clearly, focusing on **QUALITY** not **QUANTITY**; you do not need to “fill the space” in the narrative box, but be sure each section paints a clear picture of the subject being addressed.



# BEST PRACTICES

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- Explain your project and financial need as if you are having a conversation and someone asked you to tell them why you need the \_\_\_\_\_ and why you cannot afford the project
- Tell the reviewer everything that is wrong with your current staffing, equipment, PPE etc.
- Tell related “war stories” to provide real, true examples of why you need your request.



# BEST PRACTICES

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- Be vulnerable and tell your story. This is no time for pride.
- Make sure your request is for basic needs and not all the bells and whistles.
- Paint a clear picture of your need and your project.
- Tie your request to public and fire fighter safety.



# BEST PRACTICES

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- Use MS Word or other word processor to write your narratives. Then paste them in each section.
- Have someone outside the fire service read your narratives.
- Don't site sources.
- No AI.
- Do not copy other narratives.
- Bullet points do not translate into the narratives.



# BEST PRACTICES

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- After you write your narratives in a word document. Reread it out loud. Then, along with the grant criteria, send it to someone who will give you an unbiased opinion on how it was written. Do not send this to a friend that will say “looks good.”
- Make sure all the data matches up and aligns with everything else in the grant application. Numbers reported should match and support the narrative.
- Leave the fluff out. There is no need for it and the reader can see right through it. You only have a limited amount of space to tell your story, use it effectively.



# BEST PRACTICES

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- Before You Submit
  - Print the application.
  - Read every line again.
    - Not just the narratives
  - Leave no placeholders.
  - Recheck all your numbers/math.
  - Fix any errors and check again.
- Look at the layout of your narratives before submitting.
  - Do they look okay and flow?
  - Are they hard to read?



# NUMBER 1 MOST COMMON MISTAKE

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**Not answering the questions!**



# OBSERVATION

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- The value of requests continue to increase as costs continue to rise but the amount of funding is stagnant. This has led to more competition and fewer awards each year.
- Attention to detail is very important.
- Importance of lobbying



# OTHER FUNDING POSSIBILITIES

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- FEMA State Homeland Security Grant (SHSGP)
- Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI)
- Port Security Grant Program (PSGP)
- Fire House Subs
- Leary Firefighters Foundation
- Gary Sinise Foundation
- Motorola Solutions Foundation
- Local Organizations
- State Organizations



# FEMA GRANT RESOURCES

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- AFG Program Office
  - AFG Help Desk Phone Number :  
1-866-274-0960
  - AFG Help Desk E-mail:  
[firegrants@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:firegrants@fema.dhs.gov)
  - AFG Web site: [http:  
www.fema.gov/firegrants](http://www.fema.gov/firegrants)



# Remember:

## The IAFF Grants Department is here to help you and your Local.

### Requesting a Grant Review by IAFF Staff

The IAFF Grants Department is available to assist IAFF affiliates and their fire departments through the application process. For more information, contact the IAFF Grants Department via email - [firegrants@iaff.org](mailto:firegrants@iaff.org). To request a review of an application prior to submission, or any application that was turned down in a prior application cycle, affiliates can send their completed application, including both the data entry and narrative portions, to the IAFF Grants Department.





THANK YOU!  
ANY QUESTIONS?

MARC OSHRY

IAFF Grants Specialist  
[FireGrants@iaff.org](mailto:FireGrants@iaff.org)

# EVALUATION AND WIN AN IPAD!

- **Submit your workshop and overall evaluations to be automatically entered in two drawings for a new iPad!**
- **Complete your evaluations using the IAFF app:**
  1. Download the IAFF app and sign in with your iaff.org username
  2. Tap the 2026 Strive for Excellence Summit event image to enter the event's dashboard
  3. Tap "Sessions" and tap on the workshops you attended
  4. Tap "Evaluation" and complete the evaluation
  5. Tap "Submit"

**For the event's overall evaluation, follow steps 1 and 2, then tap "Event Evaluation" located in the event's Dashboard.**

