The Department of Homeland Security
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

FY2015 Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG)

NOTE: Applicants pursuing this funding opportunity who have not obtained a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and/or are not currently registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) should take immediate action to obtain a DUNS number, if applicable, and then register immediately in SAM. It may take four weeks or more after SAM registration submittal before the registration is active in SAM, then an additional 24 hours for Grants.gov to recognize the information. Information on obtaining a DUNS number and registering in SAM is available from Grants.gov at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html

A. Program Description

Issued By

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)/Grant Programs Directorate (GPD)

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number

97.044

CFDA Title

Assistance to Firefighters Grants

Notice of Funding Opportunity Title

FY 2015 Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG)

NOFO Number

DHS-15-GPD-044-000-99

Authorizing Authority for Program

Section 33 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974, Pub. L. No. 93-498, as amended (15 USC § 2229)

Appropriation Authority for Program

Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2015 (Pub. L. No. 114-4)

Program Type

New

Program Overview, Objectives, and Priorities

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA), Grant Programs Directorate (GPD) is responsible for the implementation and administration of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program. The purpose of the AFG Program is to enhance the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire and fire-related hazards by providing direct financial assistance to eligible fire departments, nonaffiliated EMS organizations, and State Fire Training Academies (SFTA) for critically needed resources to

equip and train emergency personnel to recognized standards, enhance operational efficiencies, foster interoperability, and support community resilience.

In awarding grants, the Administrator of FEMA shall consider the following:

- The findings and recommendations of the Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP).
- The degree to which an award will reduce deaths, injuries, and property damage by reducing the risks associated with fire related and other hazards.
- The extent of an applicant's need for an AFG Grant and the need to protect the United States as a whole.

For additional information on program priorities and objectives for the FY 2015 AFG, refer to Appendix B, FY 2015 AFG Programmatic Information and Priorities.

As specified in the "*DHS Quadrennial Homeland Security Review*," the AFG Program supports the basic mission of:

- Strengthen National Preparedness and Resilience

The AFG Program also addresses the following "*Presidential Program Directive – 8, Preparedness Terms*":

- Security
- Resilience
- Prevention
- Protection
- Mitigation
- Response, and
- Recovery

B. Federal Award Information

Award Amounts, Important Dates, and Extensions Available

Funding for the NOFO: $306,000,000[1]
Projected number of Awards: 2500

Period of Performance: Twelve months from the date of award.
For additional information on period of performance extensions, refer to Appendix C: Award Administration Information, VIII. Payments and Amendments.

Projected Period of Performance Start Date(s): 03/31/2016

Projected Period of Performance End Date(s): 03/31/2017

Funding Instrument: Grant

[1] Note that this figure differs from the total amount appropriated under the *Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act*, 2015, Pub. L. No. 114-4. In this FY 2015 AFG NOFO, percentages of "*available grant funds*" refers to the total amount appropriated—$340,000,000—by Pub. L. No. 114-4 to meet the statutory requirements of § 33 of the *Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974*, Pub. L. No. 93-498, as amended (15 U.S.C. § 2229). A portion of these "available grant funds" will be allocated to the Fire Prevention & Safety (FP&S) program, which will have a separate NOFO and application period. $34,000,000 will be allocated to FP&S for FY 2015.

C. Eligibility Information

Eligible Applicants

Fire Departments: Fire departments operating in any of the 56 states, which include any state of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico; or, any federally-recognized Indian tribe or tribal organization are eligible applicants. A Fire Department is an agency or organization having a formally recognized arrangement with a state, territory, local, or tribal authority (city, county, parish, fire district, township, town, or other governing body) to provide fire suppression to a population within a geographically fixed primary first due response area.

Nonaffiliated EMS organizations: Nonaffiliated EMS organizations operating in any of the 56 states, which include any state of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico; or, any federally-recognized Indian tribe or tribal organization are eligible applicants. A nonaffiliated EMS organization is an agency or organization that is a public or private nonprofit emergency medical services entity providing medical transport, that is not affiliated with a hospital and does not serve a geographic area in which emergency medical services are adequately provided by a fire department.

FEMA considers the following as hospitals under the AFG Program:

- Clinics
- Medical centers
- Medical college or university
- Infirmary
- Surgery centers
- Any other institution, association, or foundation providing medical, surgical, or psychiatric care and/or treatment for the sick or injured.

State Fire Training Academies: A State Fire Training Academy (SFTA) operating in any of the 56 states, which includes any state of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is an eligible applicant. Applicants must be designated either by legislation or by a Governor's declaration as the sole State fire service training agency within a State. The designated SFTA shall be the only State agency/bureau/division, or entity within that State, to be an eligible AFG SFTA applicant.

Eligibility Criteria

AFG has three activities:

- Operations and Safety
- Vehicle Acquisition
- Regional Projects

Each activity has its own application and its own eligibility requirements. These requirements are outlined in Appendix B: Programmatic Information and Priorities

Other Eligibility Criteria

National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS)
NFIRS reporting is not a requirement to apply for any AFG Program; however fire departments that receive funding under this program must agree to provide information to the NFIRS for the period covered by the assistance. If a recipient does not currently participate in the incident reporting system and does not have the capacity to report at the time of the award, that recipient must agree to provide information to the system for a twelve-month period commencing as soon as possible after they develop the capacity to report. Capacity to report to the NFIRS must be established prior to the termination of the one-year performance period. The recipient may be asked by FEMA to provide proof of compliance in reporting to NFIRS. Any recipient that stops reporting to NFIRS during their grant's period of performance may be subject to the remedies for noncompliance at 2 C.F.R. § 200.338, unless they have yet to develop the capacity to report to NFIRS, as described above.

There is no NFIRS reporting requirements for nonaffiliated EMS organizations and State Fire Training Academies.

National Incident Management System (NIMS) Implementation
AFG applicants are not required to be in compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) to apply for AFG funding or to receive an AFG award. Any applicant that receives an FY 2015 AFG award must achieve the level of NIMS compliance required by the authority having command and control jurisdiction over the applicant's emergency service operations (e.g., a local government), prior to the end of the grant's period of performance.

Maintenance of Effort
An applicant seeking an AFG Grant shall agree to maintain, during the term of the grant, the applicant's aggregate expenditures relating to activities allowable under this NOFO, at not less than 80 percent of the average amount of such expenditures in the two preceding fiscal years to the year this grant is awarded.

Cost Share or Match
Recipient cost sharing is generally required as described below.

In general, eligible applicant shall agree to make available in non-federal funds, an amount equal to and not less than 15 percent of the grant awarded, except for entities serving small communities:

- When serving a jurisdiction of 20,000 residents or fewer, the applicant shall agree to make available non-federal funds in an amount equal to and not less than 5 percent of the grant awarded.
- When serving a jurisdiction of more than 20,000 residents, but not more than 1,000,000 residents, the applicant shall agree to make available non-federal funds in an amount equal to and not less than 10 percent of the grant awarded.
- When serving a jurisdiction of more than 1,000,000 residents, the applicant shall agree to provide non-federal funds in an amount equal to and not less than 15 percent of the grant awarded.

The cost share for SFTAs will be based on the total population of the State.

The cost share for a Regional application will be based on the aggregate population of the primary first due response areas of the Host and participating partner organizations that execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as described in Appendix B, VI, Regional projects.

FEMA has developed a cost share calculator tool in order to assist applicants with determining their cost share. The cost share tool is available at: http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/100145

Types of Cost Share

- Cash (Hard Match): Cost share of non-federal cash is the only allowable recipient contribution for AFG activity (Vehicle Acquisition, Operations and Safety, and Regional).
- Trade-In Allowance/Credit: On a case-by-case basis, FEMA may allow recipients already owning assets acquired with non-federal cash, to use the trade-in allowance/credit value of those assets as cash for the purpose of meeting their cost share obligation. In order for FEMA to consider a trade-in allowance/credit value as cash, the allowance amount must be reasonable, and the allowance amount must be a separate entry clearly identified in the acquisition documents.
- In-kind (Soft Match): In-kind cost share is not allowable for AFG Overmatch: In the application narrative, an organization may indicate a voluntary pledge to commit additional financial support toward a project(s) cost, which is in addition to their required cost share obligation as detailed in the NOFO and required by law. FEMA will not account for this promised additional funding in the terms of the award. The award budget will not account for any voluntary committed cost sharing or overmatch. The use of an overmatch is not given additional consideration when scoring applications.

Economic Hardship Waivers

The Administrator of FEMA may waive or reduce recipient cost share or maintenance of effort requirements in cases of demonstrated economic hardship. Please see Appendix C: Award Administration Information for additional information.

D. Application and Submission Information

Key Dates and Times

Date posted to Grants.gov:	11/30/2015 at 8:00 AM EST
Application Start Date:	12/7/2015 at 8:00 AM EST
Application Submission Deadline Date:	1/15/2016 at 5:00 PM EST
Anticipated Program Office Review Dates:	2/15/2016 – 03/02/2016
Anticipated Funding Selection Date:	03/2/2016

Application Submission Extension

In general, DHS/FEMA will not review applications received after the deadline or consider them for funding. DHS/FEMA may, however, extend the application deadline on request for any applicant who can demonstrate good cause exists to justify extending the deadline. Good cause for an extension may include technical problems outside of the applicant's control that prevent submission of the application by the deadline, or other exigent or emergency circumstances. Applicants experiencing technical issues should notify the FEMA Help Desk as soon as possible.

Key Dates

Event	Suggested Deadline For Completion
Obtaining DNMS Number	Four weeks before actual submission deadline November 23, 2015
Obtaining a valid EIN	Four weeks before actual submission deadline November 23, 2015
Updating SAM registration	Four weeks before actual submission date November 23, 2015
Application submission deadline	Friday, January 15, 2016

Address to Request Application Package
The AFG eGrants system is only accessible through the AFG Application Portal at https://portal.fema.gov/. There are several ways to get AFG Application information:

- AFG Website (http://www.fema.gov/firegrants)
- Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov)
- US Fire Administration (http://www.usfa.fema.gov)

Hard copies of the application are not available.

In addition, the Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD) and/or Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) number available for this Notice is: (800) 462-7585.

Application tutorials and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) assist with the online grant application, and highlight lessons learned and changes for FY 2015. For more details, please click here to visit the AFG Website at http://www.fema.gov/firegrants.

NOTE: Do not use any other browsers than Internet Explorer (IE 6 or higher) when entering information. Do not have multiple browser tabs open when entering information, even when using Internet Explorer (IE 6 or higher). There are several known problems entering application information using non-IE browsers or having multiple browsers open, including but not limited to:

- System failure to recognize correct information
- System failure to capture and retain correct information
- System functions like “cut and paste” being disabled

The eGrants system will allow an authorized representative to log in and create a user name and password. This user name and password is specific to the authorized user and must not be shared with other personnel. If the applicant has submitted any Assistance to Firefighters Grants Program (AFGP) applications (AFG, SAFER, FP&S, SCG) in a previous grant cycle, they must continue to use the same username, password, and Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number for any FY 2015 application(s).

If the applicant has forgotten the password or primary point of contact has changed, please visit http://www.fema.gov/assistance-firefighters-grant-program-most-frequently-asked-questions for instructions on how to update and correct the organization’s information.

Prior to submission and up to the application deadline, the online application can be saved, retrieved, or edited as required.

Content and Form of Application Submission
DHS makes all funding opportunities available through the common electronic storefront Grants.gov, accessible on the Internet at http://www.grants.gov. If applicants experience difficulties accessing information or have any questions, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at (800) 518-4726.

Required Forms and Registrations
All required forms have been incorporated into the online application submission.

Application Submission Receipt
Once the application is submitted and received, the primary point of contact listed in the application, will be electronically messaged within the eGrants system.

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)
DHS is participating in the Grants.gov initiative that provides the grant communities a single site to find grant funding opportunities. Before applying for a DHS Grant applicants must have a DUNS number and must be registered in SAM.

Instructions for obtaining a DUNS number can be found at the following Website:
http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html

System for Award Management
Applicant registration in SAM is free. All applicants must register with SAM in order to apply online. Step-by-step instructions for registering with SAM can be found here:
http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-_register-with-sam.html.
Please remember that SAM registration is only active for one year and must be renewed annually.

Please allow plenty of time before the grant application submission deadline to obtain a DUNS number and then to register in SAM. It may take four weeks or more after the applicant submits the SAM registration before the registration is active in SAM, then an additional 24 hours for Grants.gov to recognize the information.

FEMA may not make an award to an entity until the entity has complied with the requirements to provide a valid DUNS number and maintain an active SAM registration with current information. If the applicant is noncompliant at the time of award offer, then FEMA may determine the applicant is not qualified to receive an award, and award another applicant.

IMPORTANT: Please ensure that applicant organization's name, address, DUNS number, and Employer Identification Number (EIN) are up to date in SAM and that the DUNS number used in SAM is the same one used to apply for all FEMA applications. The applicant organization's name in SAM must also match the organization name provided on the applicant's 1199a. Future payments will be contingent on the information provided in SAM; therefore, it is imperative that the information is correct.

Help with SAM - SAM quick start guide for new Recipient registration and SAM video tutorial for new applicants are tools created by the General Services Administration (GSA) to assist those registering

with SAM. If applicants have questions or concerns about a SAM registration, please contact the Federal Support Desk at https://www.fsd.gov/fsd-gov/home.do or call toll free (866) 606-8220.

How to Get a Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) Code - To get a CAGE code, applicants must first be registered in SAM, which is a requirement for doing business with the Federal Government. Applicants will be assigned a CAGE code as part of the SAM validation process, and as soon as the registration is active, applicants can view the CAGE code online by logging in to the SAM account.

Funding Restrictions
Federal funds made available through this award may only be used for the purpose set forth in this award and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Award funds may not be used for matching funds for any other federal grants/cooperative agreements, lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal Government or any other government entity. Failure to adhere to the award conditions will cause the recipient to be considered in default of the grant agreement, and may require the return of all federal funds disbursed under the grant.

Federal employees are prohibited from serving in any capacity (paid or unpaid) on the development of any proposal submitted under this program.

Construction or Remodeling/Renovation Costs
Construction costs are *not eligible* under the AFG Grants. Construction includes major alterations to a building that changes the profile or footprint of the structure. Some of these activities may require an Environmental and Historical Preservation review.

Pre-award Costs
Generally, grant funds cannot be used to pay for products and services contracted for or obligated prior to the effective date of the award. However, costs incurred after the application deadline, but prior to an offer of Award, may be eligible for reimbursement only if the following conditions are met:

- The recipient must submit a written request to FEMA to incur such pre- award costs by providing notification (containing the application number and a justification narrative) to FEMA, via email to the AFG Help Desk at FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov. The notification to FEMA should be concurrent with their acquisition activity, and must be submitted within the eligible timeframe and noted above; and,
- The recipient must receive confirmation from FEMA that the expenses have been reviewed and FEMA has determined the costs to be justified, unavoidable, and consistent with the grant's scope of work.
- Fees for grant writers are considered an exception and may be included as a pre-award expenditure.

Award Limits

Fire Departments and Nonaffiliated EMS organizations
The total amount of funding a fire department or nonaffiliated EMS organization recipient may receive under an AFG award is limited to maximum amounts set by § 33(c)(2) of the *Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974*, as amended (15 U.S.C. § 2229(c)(2)). These award limits are based on two factors: population served and a one percent aggregate amount of available grant funds.

Generally, the population of the jurisdiction served by the recipient will determine the maximum amount of AFG funding a recipient is eligible to receive. Notwithstanding this limitation based on population, no recipient may receive an award that exceeds one (1) percent of available grant funds in FY 2015, or $3,400,000. FEMA may waive this aggregate cap of $3,400,000 in individual cases where FEMA determines that a recipient has an extraordinary need for a grant that exceeds the aggregate cap. FEMA may not waive the statutory funding caps based on population served.

The following table explains the maximum funding that a recipient may receive in FY 2015:

Population of jurisdiction served by the recipient	Maximum award in FY 2015	Statutory waiver available subject to extraordinary need?
1000,000 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 $3,400,000	Yes, but no more than $6 million
More than 2,500,000 people	No more than $3,400,000	Yes, but no more than $9 million

Regional applicants will be subject to the funding limitations based on the total population served by the host and participating partners. Additionally, Regional grants awarded are included in the host organization's funding limitations. For example: if a Recipient serves a population of 100,000 or fewer and are the Recipient of a Regional award for $1 million, they have met their cap and are no longer eligible for additional funds through the Operations & Safety or Vehicle activity.

Allocations and Restrictions of Available Grant Funds by Organization Type
Nonaffiliated EMS Organizations: Not more than 2 percent of available grant funds shall be collectively awarded to all nonaffiliated EMS organization recipients.

Emergency Medical Services Providers: Not less than 3.5 percent of available grant funds shall fund emergency medical services provided by fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations.

State Fire Training Academy: Not more than 3 percent of available grant funds shall be collectively awarded to all State Fire Training Academy recipients. Further, not more than $500,000 of available grant funds are eligible per.

Vehicles: Not more than 25 percent of available grant funds may be used by recipients for the purchase of vehicles. Of that amount, FEMA intends to allocate 10 percent of the total Vehicle funds for ambulances.

Micro Grants: The selection of the voluntary Micro Grant option (cumulative federal participation of $25,000), for eligible Operations and Safety activities, does not impact an applicant's request or federal participation under the Vehicle Acquisition or Regional projects. Applicants that select Micro Grants as a funding opportunity choice may receive additional consideration for award.

Management and Administration
Management and administrative expenses should be based only on actual expenses or known contractual costs; requests that are simple percentages of the award, without supporting justification, will not be allowed or considered for reimbursement.

No more than three percent of the federal share of AFG funds awarded may be expended by the recipient for management and administration (M&A) for purposes associated with the AFG award.

Indirect (Facilities & Administrative {F&A}) Costs
Indirect costs are allowable under this program as described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.414. With the exception of recipients who have never received a negotiated indirect cost rate as described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), recipients must have an approved indirect cost rate agreement with their cognizant federal agency to charge indirect costs to this award. A copy of the approved rate (a fully executed, agreement negotiated with the applicant's cognizant federal agency) is required at the time of application, and must be provided to FEMA before indirect costs are charged to the award. Copies of the indirect cost rate agreements, along with the AFG application number, must be submitted electronically to FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov.

Indirect costs will be evaluated as part of the application for federal funds to determine if they are allowable, reasonable, or disproportionally impact an application's cost benefit.

Other Submission Requirements

Environmental and Historical Preservation (EHP)
As a federal agency, DHS/FEMA is required to consider the effects of its actions on the environment and historic properties to ensure that all activities and programs funded by the agency, including grants-funded projects, comply with Federal EHP regulations, laws and Executive Orders as applicable. Recipients proposing projects that have the potential to impact the environment, including, but not limited to modification or renovation of existing buildings, structures and facilities, must participate in the DHS/FEMA EHP review process. The EHP review process involves the submission of a screening form that includes detailed project description that explains the goals and objectives of the proposed project along with supporting documentation so that DHS/FEMA may determine whether the proposed project has the potential to impact environmental resources and/or historic properties. In some cases, DHS/FEMA also is required to consult with other regulatory agencies and the public in order to complete the review process. The EHP review process must be completed before funds are released to carry out the proposed project. DHS/FEMA will not fund projects that are initiated without the required EHP review.

Additionally, all recipients are required to comply with FEMA EHP Policy Guidance. This EHP Policy Guidance can be found in FP 108-023-1, Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Policy Guidance, and FP 108.24.4, Environmental Planning and Historical Preservation Policy

All Modifications to Facility activities, and any renovation to facilities that would qualify as a modification to facility, that support activities under Training, Equipment, PPE, or Wellness and Fitness will require an EHP Review. Such activities include but are not limited to the installation of:

- Air compressor/fill station/cascade system (fixed) for filling SCBA
- Air quality systems
- Alarm/alerting systems
- Antennas

- Generators (fixed)
- Sprinklers
- Vehicle exhaust systems (fixed)
- Washer/dryer/extractors

AFG Projects that involve the installation of equipment not specifically excluded from a FEMA EHP Review per the GPD Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA), ground-disturbing activities, or modification/renovation of existing buildings or structures must undergo a FEMA EHP Review.

No modification project can proceed, with the exception of project planning, prior to formal FEMA approval. Funds for activities that do not require an EHP Review may be requested by the recipient.

The following activities would not require the submission of the FEMA EHP Screening Form:
- Planning and development of policies or processes
- Management, administrative, or personnel actions
- Classroom-based training
- Acquisition of mobile and portable equipment (not involving installation) on or in a building

The AFG EHP Screening form and instructions are available at: http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/90195.

Complete the AFG EHP Screening form and submit to the EHP Office at GPDEHPInfo@fema.dhs.gov.

E. Application Review Information

Prior to making a federal award, the federal-awarding agency is required by 31 U.S.C. 3321 and 41 U.S.C. 2313 to review information available through any OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information. Therefore application evaluation criteria may include the following risk based considerations of the applicant: (1) financial stability; (2) quality of management systems and ability to meet management standards; (3) history of performance in managing federal award; (4) reports and findings from audits; and (5) ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.

FEMA will rank all complete and submitted applications based on how well they match the program priorities for the type of jurisdiction(s) served. Answers to the application's activity specific questions provide information used to determine each application's ranking relative to the stated program priorities.

Funding priorities and criteria for evaluating AFG Applications are established by FEMA based on the recommendations from the Criteria Development Panel (CDP). Each year, FEMA convenes a panel of fire service professionals to develop funding priorities for the AFG Grant program. The panel makes recommendations about funding priorities as well as developing criteria for awarding grants.

The **nine major fire service organizations** represented on the panel are:
- 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

The CDP is charged with making recommendations to FEMA regarding the creation or modification of previously established funding priorities as well as developing criteria for awarding grants. The content of this NOFO reflects implementation of the CDP's recommendations with respect to the priorities, direction, and criteria for awards.

Review and Selection Process

AFG applications are reviewed through a multi-phase process. First electronically pre- scored and ranked; then scored competitively by (no less than three) members of the Peer Panel Review process. Applications will also be evaluated through a series of internal FEMA review processes for completeness, adherence to programmatic guidelines, technical feasibility, and anticipated effectiveness of the proposed project(s). Below is the process by which applications will be reviewed:

i. Pre-scoring Process

The application undergoes an electronic pre-scoring process based on established program priorities listed in Appendix B. Application Narratives are not reviewed during pre-score. Request Details and Budget information should comply with program guidance and statutory funding limitations. The pre-score is 50 percent of the total application score.

ii. Peer Review Panel Process

Applications with the highest rankings from the pre-score process will be evaluated by a Peer review process. A panel of peer reviewers is comprised of a fire service representatives recommended by the National organizations from the CDP. These peer reviewers will assess each application's merits with respect to the detail provided in the Narrative Statement on the activity, including the evaluation elements listed in the Narrative Evaluation Criteria below.

The panel will independently score each project within the application, discuss the merits and/or shortcomings of the application, and document the findings. A consensus is not required. The panel score is 50 percent of the total application score.

iii. Technical Evaluation Process (TEP)

The highest ranked applications will be deemed in the fundable range. Applications that are in the fundable range will undergo both a Technical Review by a Subject Matter Expert (SME) as well as a FEMA Program Office review prior to being recommended for award. The FEMA Program Office will assess the request with respect to costs, quantities, feasibility, eligibility, and recipient responsibility prior to recommending any application for award.

Once the TEP is complete, each applications cumulative score will be determined and a final ranking of applications will be created. FEMA will award grants based on this final ranking and the ability to meet statutorily required funding limitations outlined in Appendix B, V. Restrictions on Use of Award Funds.

Narrative Evaluation Criteria

1. **Financial Need (25%)**

Applicants should describe their financial need and how consistent it is with the intent of the AFG Program. This statement should include details describing the applicant's financial distress, summarizing budget constraints, unsuccessful attempts to secure other funding, and proving the financial distress is out of their control.

2. **Project Description and Budget (25%)**

This statement should clearly explain the applicant's project objectives and its relationship to the applicant's budget and risk analysis. The applicant should describe the various activities applied for with respect to any program priority or facility modifications, making sure they are consistent with project objectives, the applicant's mission and national, state, and/or local requirements. Applicants should link the proposed expenses to operations and safety, as well as the completion of the project goals.

3. **Operations and Safety/Cost Benefit (25%)**

Applicants should describe how they plan to address the operations and personal safety needs of their organization, including cost effectiveness and sharing assets. This statement should also include details about gaining the maximum benefits from grant funding by citing reasonable or required costs, like specific overhead and administrative costs. The applicant's request should also be consistent with their mission and identify how funding will benefit their organization and affected personnel.

4. **Statement of Effect/Impact on Daily Operations (25%)**

This statement should explain how this funding request will enhance an organization's overall effectiveness. It should address how this request will improve daily operations and reduce an organization's common risk(s). Applicants should include how frequently the requested item(s) will be used and in what capacity. Applicants should also indicate how the requested item(s) will help the community and increase an organization's ability to save additional lives and property.

Turndown Notifications

All applicants who do not receive an FY 2015 AFG award will receive a decision notification from FEMA within the eGrants system.

The notification email will briefly describe those application factors that did not adequately align to the higher AFG Program priorities and consequently, why the application did not score high enough for further consideration. Due to the historical volume of applications and turndowns, a detailed debrief for each applicant will not be possible.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

Notice of Award

Once an award has been approved and recorded in the system, an award package is sent to the grant official authorized by the recipient. The award package and email notification will be made within the eGrants system. The authorized grant official should follow the directions in the notification to accept the award documents. The authorized grant official should carefully read the award package for instructions on administering the grant, whether there has been an adjustment to the award, and to become familiar with the terms, conditions and responsibilities of federal awards.

The offered award will remain on hold and be available (for a maximum of 30 days) until the recipient either accepts the award via the online AFG eGrants system, or declines the award. The awardee should follow the directions in the notification to confirm acceptance of the award.
Failure to accept the grant award within 30 days of an offer of Award may result in a loss of funds. Recipients may request additional time to accept the award if needed.

Negotiation of Award
During the offer of an AFG award, the application request(s) may have been modified during the review process, or awarded activities may require EHP review.

If the awarded activities, scope of work, or requested dollar amount(s) do not match the application as submitted, the recipient shall only be responsible for completing the activities actually funded by FEMA. The recipient is under no obligation to start, modify, or complete any activities requested but not funded by the award.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements
Successful applicants for all DHS/FEMA grant and cooperative agreements are required to comply with DHS Standard Administrative Terms and Conditions, which are available online at:
http://www.dhs.gov/publication/fy15-dhs-standard-terms-and-conditions

Before accepting the award the authorized official should carefully read the award package. The award package contains instructions on administering the grant award, as well as terms and conditions with which the recipient must comply. Recipients must accept all the conditions in this NOFO as well as all Terms and Conditions in the Notice of Award to receive an award under this program.

Reporting
Recipients are required to submit various financial and programmatic reports as a condition of their award acceptance. Future awards and funds drawdown may be withheld if these reports are delinquent.

Federal Financial Reporting Requirements

Federal Financial Reports (SF-425)
Recipients of AFG Grants awarded on or after October 1, 2009, are required to submit semi-annual Federal Financial Reports (FFR) (SF-425). The FFR is to be submitted using the online eGrants system based on the calendar year beginning with the period after the award is made. Grant recipients are required to submit an FFR throughout the entire period of performance of the grant. Reports are due:

- **June 30** (for period January 1 – June 30) and no later than July 30
- **December 31** (for period July 1 – December 31) and no later than January 31
- Within 90 days after the end of the Period of Performance

The Federal Financial Reporting Form (FFR) and instructions are available at the following sites:

Instructions:
https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/grants/standard_forms/SF-425_instructions.pdf

SF-425 (FFR) Form:
http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/grants/approved_forms/SF-425.pdf

Financial and Compliance Audit Report
For audits of fiscal years beginning on or after December 26, 2014, recipients that expend $750,000 or more from all federal funding sources during their fiscal year are required to submit an organization-wide financial and compliance audit report. The audit must be performed in accordance with the requirements of GAO's Government Auditing Standards, located at http://www.gao.gov/govaud/ybk01.htm, and the requirements of Subpart F of 2 C.F.R. Part 200, located at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=876f827f6fae2c4bce610e9427a6d229&node=sp2.1.200.f&rgn=div6.

For audits of fiscal years beginning prior to December 26, 2014, recipients that expend $750,000 or more from all federal funding sources during their fiscal year are required to submit an organization-wide financial and compliance audit report. The audit must be performed in accordance with GAO's Government Auditing Standards, located at http://www.gao.gov/govaud/ybk01.htm, and OMB Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations, located at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a133_compliance_supplement_2012.

Program Performance Reporting Requirements
The awardees will be responsible for providing updated project(s) information on a semi-annual basis. The recipient is responsible for completing and submitting a programmatic Performance Report using the eGrants system. The programmatic Performance Report is due every six months after the grant's award date, and thereafter until the award is closed out.

Monitoring
Grant recipients will be monitored periodically by FEMA staff, both programmatically and financially, to ensure that the project goals, objectives, performance requirements, timelines, milestone completion, budgets, and other related program criteria are being met.

Monitoring may be accomplished through either a desk-based review or on-site monitoring visits, or both. Monitoring will involve the review and analysis of the financial, programmatic, performance, compliance, and administrative processes and policies, activities, and other attributes of each federal assistance award and will identify areas where technical assistance, corrective actions, and other support may be needed.

Recipients have the opportunity to participate in a Post Award Orientation (PAO) to have their questions answered, receive technical assistance or review the terms and conditions of the grant. The PAO is optional.

Closeout
Within 90 days after the end of the period of performance, recipients must submit a final SF-425 and a final performance report (within the closeout module in eGrants system) detailing all accomplishments and a qualitative summary of the impact of those accomplishments throughout the period of performance.

After these reports have been reviewed and approved by FEMA, a closeout notice will be completed to close out the grant. The notice will indicate the period of performance as closed, list any remaining funds that will be deobligated, and address the requirement of maintaining the grant records for three years from the date of the final SF-425.

The recipient is responsible for returning any federal funds that they have liquidated but remain unobligated by the recipient.

G. DHS Awarding Agency Contact Information

Contact and Resource Information

AFG Help Desk
The AFG Help Desk provides technical assistance to applicants for the online completion and submission of applications into the eGrants system, answers questions concerning applicant eligibility and recipient responsibilities, and offers assistance in the programmatic administration of awards. The AFG Help Desk can be contacted at (866) 274-0960 or by email at FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov. Normal hours of operation are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. All times listed are Eastern Time.

FEMA Regional Fire Program Specialists
Each FEMA region has specialists who can assist applicants with application information, award administration, and technical assistance. Contact information for a Regional Fire Program Specialist can be located on the AFG Website at https://www.fema.gov/fire-grant-contact-information.

eGrants System Information
For technical assistance with the eGrants system or AFG Application or Award questions, please email the AFG Help Desk at FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov. The Help Desk can also be contacted at (866) 274-0960.

Environmental and Historical Preservation (EHP)
- EHP Screening forms and instructions are available at http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assests/documents/90195
- AFG recipients requiring EHP assistance should contact the GPDEHP Team at: GPDEHPInfo@fema.dhs.gov

H. Additional Information

Extensions
Extensions to this program are allowed.

Extensions to the Grant Period of Performance
An award's period of performance must be active for a recipient to submit a proposed extension request to FEMA. Recipients should request extensions sparingly and only under exceptional circumstances. **Approval is not guaranteed**.

Extensions to the initial period of performance identified in the award will only be considered through formal requests, via the eGrants system, and must contain specific and compelling justifications as to why an extension is required.

All extension requests must contain:
1. Grant Program, Fiscal Year, and award number
2. Reason for delay—this must include details of the legal, policy, or operational challenges being experienced that prevent the final outlay of awarded funds by the applicable deadline

3. Current status of the activity/activities
4. Approved period of performance termination date and new project completion date
5. Amount of funds drawn down to date
6. Remaining available funds, both federal and non-federal
7. Budget outlining how remaining federal and non-federal funds will be expended
8. Plan for completion, including milestones and timeframes for achieving each milestone and the position/person responsible for implementing the plan for completion
9. Certification that the activity/activities will be completed within the extended period of performance without any modification to the original Statement of Work approved by FEMA

Requirements for Consideration

To be eligible for consideration, requests must be submitted via the eGrants system. Requests should be submitted no earlier than 120 days but no later than 60 days prior to the end of the award's period of performance.

- In accordance with FEMA policy, extensions are reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and typically granted for no more than a six-month time period. Extension requests will be granted only due to compelling legal, policy, or operational challenges. The review process can take up to 30 days or longer. This review period should be factored into the timing of when to submit a request for an extension.

Example: Recipients may request an extension, when not adjusting the timeline for liquidating obligations would constitute a verifiable legal breach of contract by the recipient with vendors or sub-recipients; or where a specific statute or regulation mandates an environmental review that cannot be completed within this timeframe; or where other exceptional circumstances warrant a discrete waiver.

APPENDIX A – FY 2015 AFG Program Updates-

Appendix A contains detailed information on changes between FY2014 and FY2015 to the AFG Program.

I. New for FY2015

Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards

On December 26, 2014, DHS adopted the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* in 2 C.R.R. Part 200 establishes a uniform set of mandatory requirements for federal awards to non-federal entities. These requirements apply to all awards made after December 26, 2014, including all FY 2014 and 2015 AFG awards. This regulation (also commonly referred to as the "Super Circular" or "Omni Circular") is available at: http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=c1e355be139798e0c2583b0136a0fae7&mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfrv1_02.tpl.

A crosswalk that highlights policy changes, clarifications, and updates to policy provisions, is available at: https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/fedreg/2013/uniform-guidance-crosswalk-from-predominate-source-in-existing-guidance.pdf.

Equipment Priorities for Nonaffiliated EMS Organizations

As the basic mission of nonaffiliated EMS organizations is to provide BLS/ALS care and transport in support of the public and emergency responders; all rescue/extrication equipment will now be considered a Medium priority for EMS organizations.

Product Lifecycles

Historically, for most eligible equipment (e.g., hose, ladders, hand tools, etc.), the highest funding priority is for equipment that is 15 years or older in age, or obsolete by default per a recognized standard (e.g., *NFPA 1851: Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting*). However, for FY 2015 the useful operational life of EMS technology-based equipment has been adjusted to an eight-year replacement lifecycle in many cases. EMS technology-based equipment categories have been marked with "technology" in the funding priority chart available in Appendix B, II. Equipment.

Transitioning Titles in Emergency Medical Services

The US Department of Transportation, under the National EMS Scope of Practice Model, is in the process of changing titles for EMS providers. Under this program, the titles below are changing, and FEMA will incorporate these changes into each grant cycle.

- First Responder to Emergency Medical Responder (EMR)
- Emergency Medical Technician-Basic (EMT-B) to Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
- Emergency Medical Technician Intermediate/85 (EMT-I) to Advanced EMT (AEMT)
- Emergency Medical Technician Intermediate/99 to Paramedic
- EMT-Paramedic (EMT-P) to Community Paramedics (Paramedics with Primary Care certification)

Appendix B –Programmatic Information and Priorities

Appendix B contains detailed information on AFG Program information and priorities. Reviewing this information may help applicants make their application(s) more competitive.

I. Ineligible Applications and/or Organizations

FEMA considers two or more separate fire departments or, nonaffiliated EMS organizations, sharing the same facilities as being one organization. This determination is designed to avoid the duplication of benefits.

If two or more organizations share facilities and each submits an application in the same program area, FEMA may deem all of those program area applications ineligible.

Examples of other ineligible applicants include:

- While fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations may share some common program priorities, there are some restricted activities for nonaffiliated EMS organizations. Nonaffiliated EMS organizations are not eligible to request any activity that is specific or unique to structural/proximity/wildland firefighting gear.
- Fire departments that are a Federal Government entity, or contracted by the Federal Government, and are solely responsible under a formally recognized agreement for suppression of fires on federal installations or land.
- Fire departments or nonaffiliated EMS organizations that are not independent entities; but are part of, controlled by, or under the day-to- day operational command and control of a larger department, agency, or Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ).
- Fire-based EMS organizations are not eligible to apply as a nonaffiliated EMS organization.
- Auxiliaries, hospitals, or fire service associations or interest organizations that are not the AHJ over the applicant.
- State or local agencies, or subsets of any governmental entity, or any authority that do not meet the requirements as defined by 15 USC § 2229(a)(7).
- An applicant that submits two or more applications for the same equipment or other eligible activity. For example, if an applicant submits two or more applications, one under the Regional activity, and one under the Ops and Safety activity for SCBA, both applications may be disqualified. If an applicant submits two separate applications for the same activity (e.g., two separate vehicle applications) during the same application period, both applications may be disqualified.
- Dive teams, search and rescue squads, or similar organizations that do not provide medical transport.
- Fire departments or nonaffiliated EMS organizations that are for profit.

II. Supporting Definitions for this NOFO

Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ): (Per NFPA101-2015 Edition: Life Safety Code) is that person or office charged with enforcing the Life Safety Code.

Automatic Aid: (Per NFPA 1710, 3.3.2.1 - 2010 edition and NFPA1720 - 2009) is a plan developed between two or more fire departments for immediate joint response on first alarms.

Mutual Aid: (Per NFPA 1710, 3.3.2.1 - 2010 edition and NFPA1720 - 2009) is a written intergovernmental agreement between agencies and/or jurisdictions stating that they will assist one another on request by furnishing personnel, equipment, and/or expertise in a specified manner.

Metro Department: A metro fire department is one that has minimum staffing of 350 paid, career firefighters as defined by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC). AFG collects information on metro departments for statistical purposes only. Status as a metro department is not a factor in scoring or funding.

Primary First Due Response Area: The geographical area in proximity to a fire or rescue facility, and normally served by the personnel and apparatus from that facility in the event of a fire or other emergency.

III. Community Classifications

The information the applicant organization supplies in Department Characteristics I and II of the AFG application determines whether the jurisdiction is identified by FEMA as urban, suburban, or rural. The community classification will determine the funding priority.

The US Census Bureau's urban-rural classifications are fundamentally a delineation of geographical areas. For more information, please visit: http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ua/urbanruralclass.html.

Some of the FY 2015 demographics for determining urban, suburban, or rural are:

Community	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Population of primary first due response area	>3,000 sq. mi. or 50,000 + population	1,000-2,999/sq. mi. or 25,000-50,000 population	0-999/sq. mi. or <25,000 population
Water Supply (percentage of primary first die response area covered by hydrant service)	75-100% hydrants (municipal water)	50-74% hydrants	<50% hydrant
Land Use within Primary first due response area	<25% for agriculture (based on zoning) industrial and commercial combines >50%	25-49% used for agriculture (based on zoning) industrial and commercial combined >25%-49%	50% used for agriculture (based on zoning) industrial and commercial combined <25%
Number of stations per square mile within primary first due response area	<3 sq. mi. per station	3-9 sq. mi. per station	>10 sq. mi. per station

IV. Application Tips

The following information may be useful when preparing a competitive application:

- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) – "*FREE ACCESS*" - As part of its commitment to enhancing public safety and supporting the emergency responder, the NFPA makes its codes and standards available online for free. Please visit: http://www.nfpa.org/freeaccess.
- Eligible applicants may submit only one application for each activity (Vehicle Acquisition, Operations and Safety, or Regional), but may submit for multiple activities within each activity.
- Fire-based EMS training and equipment must be applied for as a fire department under the AFG activity Operations and Safety.
- Regional Applicants are eligible to only apply for Training, Equipment, and/or PPE within Operations and safety, and Vehicle Acquisition.
- SFTA Applicants are only eligible to apply for Equipment, and/or PPE within Operations and Safety, and Vehicle Acquisition.
- Successful Regional applicants will be subject to the funding limitations based on the total population served by the host and participating partners. Any Regional award made will not impact, or be included in the host organization's funding limitations.

V. Restrictions on Use of Award Funds

- No AFG funds may be used to support hiring (part-time or full-time), salaries, benefits, or fringe benefits (including but not limited to: contributions for social security, insurance, workman's compensation, pension, or retirement plans) for any personnel.
- Documented back fill and overtime/lost wages costs to support awarded Training activities are allowable personnel expenses.
- Instructor's rates/base rates should be provided as part of the application Narrative, as well as the market researched competitive rate for delivering the requested training.
- If the instruction provided for an awarded training activity is delivered by an existing member(s) of the recipient's organization; only the established base rate of compensation, without benefits or overtime, may be eligible for reimbursement.
- Recipients are encouraged to allow other organizations to benefit from an awarded activity; e.g., filling another organization's SCBA cylinders using a grant funded compressor, or cleaning another organization's turnout gear, or offering excess capacity training opportunities. If Recipients choose to include costs associated with shared benefit (e.g., backfill, overtime, tuition) for members outside of their department, they must apply as a Regional application.
- Improperly requesting an Operations and Safety activity may disqualify the request, for example:
    - Do not request flashlights under PPE. Flashlights are equipment.
    - Do not request RIT packs under PPE. RIT packs are equipment.
    - Do not request a Personal Safety/Rescue Bailout System under equipment; a Personal Safety/Rescue Bailout System is PPE.

VI. Funding Priorities

A. Operations and Safety Training Overview

FEMA has determined that hands on, instructor led training that meets a national, state, or DHS adopted standard and results in a national or state certification provides the greatest training benefit.

All of the following are considerations in pre-scoring and peer review panelists: (HIGH H, MEDIUM M, LOW L)

Fire Department, Regional, and State Fire Training Academy Training Priorities	
H	• Training evaluated using national or state standards. • Training that brings a department into compliance with recommended NFPA or other national standards. • Instructor led training that requires student testing to demonstrate academic competence or practical proficiency. • Training that benefits the highest percentage of applicable personnel, such as the hazardous materials training within a fire department or training that will be open to other eligible organizations.
M	• Training that does not result in certification. • Training that is self-directed/validated.
L	• Training will address an identified risk however it is not associated with compliance to any standards.

Fire Department and Regional Training Priorities				
Training	**NFPA #**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural**
NFPA 1001 (firefighter I, II)	1001	H	H	H
NFPA (instructor)	1041	H	H	H
NFPA 472 (Hazmat operations)	472	H	H	H
NFPA 1581(infection control)	1581	H	H	H
Confined space (awareness)	1670	H	H	H
Wildland firefighting (basic)	1143	H	H	H
Wildland firefighting certification (red card)	1051/1143	H	H	H
Rapid intervention training	1407	H	H	H
NFPA (officer)	1021	H	H	H
Emergency medical responder	1710	H	H	H
Firefighter safety and survival	1407	H	H	H
Safety officer	1521	H	H	H
Driver/operator	1002	H	H	H
Fire prevention	1/909/913/ 1035	H	H	H
Fire inspector	1031	H	H	H
Fire investigator	1033	H	H	H
Fire educator	1041	H	H	H

Fire Department and Regional Training Priorities				
Training	**NFPA #**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural**
NIMS/ICS	1561	H	H	H
Firefighter physical ability program	1583	H	H	H
Emergency scene rehab	1584	H	H	H
Critical Incident debriefing	1500/1583	H	H	H
Any training to a National/State or NFPA standards		H	H	H
Compliance with federal/state-mandated program		H	H	H
NFPA (rescue technician)	1006/1670	H	H	H
Emergency Medical Responder to Emergency Medical Technician		H	H	H
Advanced Emergency Medical Technician to Paramedic		H	H	H
Paramedic to Community Paramedic		H	H	H
Vehicle rescue	1670	H	H	H
Other officer	1021	H	H	M
NFPA (ARFF)	1003/402/ 403/408/409 /410/412/ 414/415	H	H	M
Weapons of Mass Destruction (awareness, other/specialized)	472	H	H	L
Mass casualty		H	H	L
Weapons of Mass Destruction (operations)	472	H	H	L
Weapons of Mass Destruction (technician)	472	H	H	L
Hazmat (technician)	472	H	H	L
Training to address a local risk not elevated to a national or state standard		M	M	M
Maritime Firefighting		M	M	M

Fire Department and Regional Training Priorities				
Training	**NFPA #**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural**
Instructor-led training that does not lead to certification		L	L	L
Self-taught courses		L	L	L
Training not elevated to a national or state standard		L	L	L

Funding Priorities for Nonaffiliated EMS Organizations –Training
AFG provides training grants to meet the educational and performance requirements of nonaffiliated EMS personnel. Training should align with the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), which designs and specifies a National Standard Curriculum for EMT training and the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT), a private, central certifying entity whose primary purpose is to maintain a national standard (NREMT also provides certification information for paramedics who relocate to another state).

A higher priority is assigned to the following due to time and cost of upgrading an organization's response level:

- Organizations seeking to elevate the response level from Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) to Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
- Organizations seeking to elevate the response level from Advanced EMT (AEMT) to Paramedic
- Organizations seeking to elevate the response level from Paramedic to Community Paramedic
- Organizations seeking to train a high percentage of the active EMRs will receive additional consideration when applying under the Training activity
- The lowest priority is to fund Emergency Medical Responder

Eligible Training Activities for Fire Departments and Regional Applications include but are not limited to:	
• Train-the-trainer courses • Alternative fuel firefighting • Response to natural disasters • Minor interior alterations (requested under Additional Funding and limited to $10,000 total expenditure) to support the awarded Training activities (e.g., removal/construction of a non-weight bearing wall) • Overtime expenses paid to career firefighters to attend training or to backfill positions for colleagues who are in training • Compensation to volunteers (Fire and nonaffiliated EMS) for wages lost to attend training; there is no overtime or	• Tuition, exam/course fees, and certifications/certification expenses • Purchase of training curricula and training services (instructors) • Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear and Explosive (CBRNE) awareness, performance, planning, and management • Travel expenses associated with Type 3 Incident Management Teams (IMT) attending position development/mentoring assignment with national Type 2 or Type 1 IMTs • Those supplies or expendables or one-time use items essential for an award's scope of work, such as foam, breaching materials (e.g., wood or sheetrock) for ventilation or

Eligible Training Activities for Fire Departments and Regional Applications include but are not limited to:	
backfill for volunteers	rescue props, or the amount of fuel required to sustain an awarded live fire training activity, or per NFPA1403 Standard on Live Fire Training Evolutions, reasonable safety mitigations to a structure acquired for training

Ineligible Training Activities for Fire Departments and Regional Applications include but are not limited to:	
• Construction of facilities (buildings, towers, sheds, etc.) • Firefighting equipment or PPE, such as SCBA, used exclusively for training • Remodeling not directly related to grant activities • Any costs associated with planning and/or participating in formal or planned special event exercises to identify user needs, evaluate an organization's performance capabilities, validate existing capabilities, or to facilitate coordination and asset sharing • Supplies, expendables, or common "one-time" use items not in support of Training (e.g., foam, soaps, disinfectant wipes, medical gowns/gloves, bandages, any drug, intravenous bags/fluids, defibrillator pads/electrodes, syringes, cervical collars, batteries, exhaust system filters, and splints)	• Site preparation to accommodate or modify any training activity, facility, or prop that is a permanent or semi-permanent improvement, including but not limited to: landscaping, cutting or grading an access road, trenching, paving a training area, exterior stairs or sidewalks, or the installation of utilities is an ineligible and non-reimbursable Training activity • Purchase or lease of real estate

Eligible Nonaffiliated EMS Training Activities include but are not limited to:	
• Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) • Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) • Advanced EMT (AEMT) • Paramedic • Community Paramedics (Paramedics with Primary Care certification)	• Attendance at formal training forums or conferences providing continuing education credits, etc. • Overtime expenses paid to career nonaffiliated EMS responders to attend training or to backfill positions for colleagues who are in training • Compensation to volunteers (Fire and nonaffiliated EMS) for wages lost to attend training; there is no overtime or backfill for volunteers

Eligible Nonaffiliated EMS Training Activities include but are not limited to:	
	• Supplies or expendables or one- time use items essential to complete the Training activity of a nonaffiliated EMS award's scope of work

B. Operations and Safety - Equipment Overview

AFG Grants fund equipment for effective response, firefighting, rescue, and emergency medical operations to enhance the public safety.

Requesting to replace obsolete or damaged equipment should be to meet a consensus standard (e.g., a personal SCBA face piece for every operational member of an organization).

Reminder: When requesting training for any items in this section, enter the request under Other in Additional Funding in the Request Details section.

NOTE:

- Accountability systems are located under Equipment (moved from PPE).
- All simulators, tow vehicles, and all mobile or fixed fire/evolution props (e.g., burn trailers, forcible entry, or rescue/smoke mazes) are moved from Training to Equipment.
- EMS technology equipment that is considered to have an eight-year replacement priority will be marked as technology in the chart below.

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All of the following are considerations in pre-scoring and peer review panelists: (HIGH H, MEDIUM M, LOW L)

Priority	Fire and SFTA (Basic)	Fire Regional (Basic)
H	Appliance(s)/Nozzle(s)	Appliance(s)/Nozzle(s)
H	Air Compressor/Fill Station/Cascade System (Fixed or Mobile) for filling SCBA	Air Compressor/Fill Station/Cascade System (Fixed or Mobile) for filling SCBA
H	Basic Hand Tools (Structural/Wildland)	Basic Hand Tools (Structural/Wildland)
H	Computers used in support of Training	Computers used in support of Training
H	Electric/Gas Powered Saws/Tools	Electric/Gas Powered Saws/Tools
H	Fit Test Systems	Fit Test Systems
H	Flashlights	Flashlights
H	Foam Eductors	Foam Eductors
H	Generator – Portable	Generator – Portable
H	Hose (Attack/Supply)	Hose (Attack/Supply)
H	Ladders	Ladders

Priority	Fire and SFTA (Basic)	Fire Regional (Basic)
H	Personal Accountability Systems	Personal Accountability Systems
H	Props	Props
H	PPE Washer/Extractor/Dryer	PPE Washer/Extractor/Dryer
H	RIT Pack/Cylinder	RIT Pack/Cylinder
H	Ropes, Harnesses, Carabiners, Pulleys, etc.	Ropes, Harnesses, Carabiners, Pulleys, etc.
H	Simulators	Simulators
H	Thermal Imaging Camera (Must be NFPA 1801 Compliant)	Thermal Imaging Camera (Must be NFPA 1801 Compliant)
H	IDLH Monitoring Equipment	IDLH Monitoring Equipment
H	Mobile computing devices intended to be used on scene (Tablets)	Mobile computing devices intended to be used on scene (Tablets)
COMMUNICATIONS		
H	Base Station (must be P-25 Compliant)	Base Station (must be P-25 Compliant)
H	Headsets	Headsets
H	Mobile Radios (must be P-25 Compliant)	Mobile Radios (must be P-25 Compliant)
H	Mobile Repeaters (must be P-25 Compliant)	Mobile Repeaters (must be P-25 Compliant)
H	Pagers (limited to number of active members)	Pagers (limited to number of active members)
H	Portable Radios (must be P-25 Compliant, limited to number of AFG approved seated positions)	Portable Radios (must be P-25 Compliant, limited to number of AFG approved seated positions)
H	Mobile Data Terminal (MDT)	Mobile Data Terminal (MDT)
EMS/RESCUE		
H **(Technology)**	Automatic Chest Compression Device (CPR)	Automatic Chest Compression Device (CPR)
H	Airway Equipment (Non-Disposable)	Airway Equipment (Non-Disposable)
H **(Technology)**	Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) BLS Level	Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) BLS Level
H	Blood Pressure Cuffs	Blood Pressure Cuffs
H	EMS/Rescue Equipment	EMS/Rescue Equipment
H **(Technology)**	Monitor/Defibrillator – 15 leads	Monitor/Defibrillator – 15 leads

Priority	Fire and SFTA (Basic)	Fire Regional (Basic)
H	Power Lift Cots/Stretchers	Power Lift Cots/Stretchers
H	Pulse Oximeters	Pulse Oximeters
H	Responder Rehab Equipment	Responder Rehab Equipment
H	Stethoscopes	Stethoscopes
H	Stretchers/Backboard/Splint, etc.	Stretchers/Backboard/Splint, etc.
EXTRICATION		
H	Cutter/Spreader	Cutter/Spreader
H	Vehicle Extrication Equipment	Vehicle Extrication Equipment
HAZMAT		
M	Basic Hazmat Response Equipment	Basic Hazmat Response Equipment
M	Decon, Clean-Up, Containment and Packaging Equipment	Decon, Clean-Up, Containment and Packaging Equipment
M	Monitoring and Sampling Devices	Monitoring and Sampling Devices
INVESTIGATION		
L	Cameras	Cameras
L	Investigation Tools	Investigation Tools
L	Lights	Lights
L	Monitoring and Sampling Devices (specialized)	Monitoring and Sampling Devices (specialized)
SPECIALIZED		
M	Class A Boats (16 to less than 26 feet)	Class A Boats (16 to less than 26 feet)
M	Class One Boats (16 feet or less)	Class One Boats (16 feet or less)
M	Marine equipment (NFPA 1925: Standard on Marine Fire-Fighting Vessels)	Marine equipment (NFPA 1925: Standard on Marine Fire-Fighting Vessels)
M	Mobile Generator	Mobile Generator
M	Portable Pump	Portable Pump
M	Skid Unit	Skid Unit
L	Specialized Equipment (Other)	Specialized Equipment (Other)
L	Tow Vehicles	Tow Vehicles
L	Traffic Preemption systems	Traffic Preemption systems
CNRNE EQUIPMENT		
L	CBRNE-related Equipment	CBRNE-related Equipment
L	Non-Disposable Biological Detection	Non-Disposable Biological Detection

Priority	Nonaffiliated EMS	Nonaffiliated EMS Regional
COMMUNICATIONS		
H	Base Stations (must be P-25 Compliant)	Base Stations (must be P-25 Compliant)
H	Mobile Radios (Must be P-25 Compliant)	Mobile Radios (Must be P-25 Compliant)
H	Pagers (limited to number of active members)	Pagers (limited to number of active members)
H	Portable Radios (Must be P-25 Compliant, limited to number of AFG approved seated positions)	Portable Radios (Must be P-25 Compliant, limited to number of AFG approved seated positions)
H	Headsets	Headsets
H	Mobile Repeaters (must be P-25 Compliant)	Mobile Repeaters (must be P-25 Compliant)
M	Mobile Data Terminal (MDT)	Mobile Data Terminal (MDT)
EMS/RESCUE		
H **(Technology)**	Automatic Chest Compression Device (CPR) moved from basic	Automatic Chest Compression Device (CPR) moved from basic
H **(Technology)**	Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) BLS Level	Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) BLS Level
H	ALS/BLS Equipment	ALS/BLS Equipment
H	Backboards	Backboards
H **(Technology)**	Automatic Chest Compression Device (CPR)	Automatic Chest Compression Device (CPR)
H **(Technology)**	Monitor/Defibrillator – 12+ leads	Monitor/Defibrillator – 12+ leads
H	Power Lift Cots/Stretchers	Power Lift Cots/Stretchers
H **(Technology)**	Pulse Oximeters	Pulse Oximeters
H	Suction	Suction
H **(Technology)**	Airway Equipment (Non-Disposable)	Airway Equipment (Non-Disposable)
H	Blood Pressure Cuffs	Blood Pressure Cuffs
H	Responder Rehab Equipment	Responder Rehab Equipment
H	Stethoscopes	Stethoscopes
H	Stretchers/Backboard/Splint, etc.	Stretchers/Backboard/Splint, etc.
M	EMS/Rescue Equipment	EMS/Rescue Equipment
M	Cutter/Spreader	Cutter/Spreader

Priority	Nonaffiliated EMS	Nonaffiliated EMS Regional
M	Vehicle Extrication Equipment	Vehicle Extrication Equipment
BASIC		
H	Computers used in support of training	Computers used in support of training
H	Props	Props
H	Simulators	Simulators
H	Mobile computing devices intended to be used on scene (tablets)	Mobile computing devices intended to be used on scene (tablets)
HAZMAT		
M	Decon, Clean-Up, Containment and Packaging Equipment	Decon, Clean-Up, Containment and Packaging Equipment
M	Basic Hazmat Response Equipment	Basic Hazmat Response Equipment
M	Monitoring and Sampling Devices	Monitoring and Sampling Devices

Fire Department, Nonaffiliated EMS, Regional, and State Fire Training Academy Equipment Priorities	
H	• First-time purchase (never owned by applicant) to support existing mission and/or replace obsolete or damaged equipment
M	• Increased capabilities within the department's existing mission, or to meet a new risk
L	• Requesting items for a new mission, or requesting additional supplies, or reserve equipment

Additional Considerations
• Equipment that has a direct effect on firefighters' health and safety • Age of equipment considered for replacement • Equipment that operationally benefits other jurisdictions • Equipment that brings the department into compliance with a national recommended standard, (e.g., NFPA or statutory compliance e.g., Occupational Safety and Health Administration [OSHA])

Note: First time purchase does not apply to the replacement of equipment that has new technology (e.g., radios)

Nonaffiliated EMS Level of Response	
H	• Advanced Life Support (ALS)
H	• Basic Life Support (BLS)

Fire Department, Nonaffiliated EMS, Regional, and State Fire Training Academy Equipment Activities include but are not limited to:	
• Shipping, taxes, assembly, and installation of the requested equipment • Extended warranties and service agreements if acquired concurrent with initial acquisition • Training specific to the requested equipment • Minor interior alterations (requested under Additional Funding and limited to $10,000 total expenditure) to support the awarded Equipment activities (e.g., removal/construction of a non-weight bearing wall)	• Equipment for response to incidents involving CBRNE/WMD • Requested support activities for Equipment requiring supplies or expendables or "one-time" use items essential for an award's scope of work, such as foam, breaching materials (e.g., wood or sheetrock) for ventilation or rescue props, or the amount of fuel required to sustain an awarded live fire training activity, or per NFPA1403 *Standard on Live Fire Training Evolutions*, reasonable safety mitigations to a structure acquired for training

Ineligible Fire Department, Nonaffiliated EMS, Regional, and State Fire Training Academy Equipment Activities include but are not limited to:	
• Construction of facilities, such as buildings, towers, sheds to house communications, or other equipment • All fixed non-mobile repeaters or fixed site amplifiers • Sirens or other outdoor warning devices • Signage of any kind • Phones (telephone/satellite/cell) • Subject to waiver, any new communications projects or expanding existing communications projects that operate on 700 MHz per FEMA Information Bulletin #386 • Personal Safety/Rescue Bailout System (PPE) • Computer assisted dispatch (CAD) systems and software, geographic information systems (GIS), dispatch consoles, workstations and office furniture	• Nonaffiliated EMS expendable supplies (including, but not limited to, medications, gloves, syringes, and cervical collars) • Utility Vehicles and All-Terrain Vehicles (UTV/ATV) • Goggles • Bomb disposal equipment and robots • Mobile radios for personally owned vehicles (except chief fire officer's personal vehicle, if justified) • Those supplies or expendables or common one-time use items such as foam, soaps, disinfectant wipes, medical gowns/gloves, bandages, any drug, intravenous bags/fluids, defibrillator pads/electrodes, syringes, cervical collars, batteries, exhaust system filters, and splints • Drones and other aerial surveillance devices • Flashover simulators

IMPORTANT: The *only* eligible AFG activity for interoperable communications equipment is the acquisition of P-25 compliant equipment.

- P-25 compliant interoperable communications equipment has a digital platform that is programmable, scalable, and can communicate in analog mode with legacy radios, and in both analog and digital mode with other P-25 equipment. P-25 compliance enhances interoperability, allowing first responders to communicate with each other to coordinate their response to and mitigate all hazards.
- The procurement of interoperable communications equipment that does not meet P-25 compliance is unallowable.
- There are no waivers for P-25 waivers compliance.
- All recipients awarded activities with emergency communication equipment and its related activities must comply with the SAFECOM Guidance for Emergency Communication Grants, including provisions on technical standards that ensure and enhance interoperable communications. The technical specifications for FY 2015 SAFECOM Guidance on Emergency Communications Grants is available at: http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/FINAL FY 2015 SAFECOM Guidance V2 040815 508C.pdf. It is the recipient's responsibility to obtain documented evidence that the equipment to be acquired has been tested and passed all the applicable P-25 requirements and the recipient shall be able to produce such documentation to the AFG Program Office upon request.
- AFG applicants do not have to identify a specific P-25-compliant product in their application narrative, but they must affirm the interoperable communications equipment requested or acquired will be P-25 compliant.

C. Operations and Safety - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Overview

AFG funds used to acquire PPE may only be used to acquire compliant PPE for firefighting and nonaffiliated EMS personnel. Only the acquisition of PPE compliant with the most current edition of NFPA 1971, 1976, 1977, 1981, and 1999 are eligible activities. The acquisition of used, refurbished, or updated PPE will be ineligible for reimbursement.

PPE requested should have the goal of increasing firefighter safety. When requesting to replace obsolete or damaged PPE (e.g., turnout gear and SCBA), applicants will be asked to provide the age of the items being replaced. All PPE items in the current inventory should be accurately described and accounted for in the application narrative.

Based in part on NFPA 1851: Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting, in order for PPE (to include SCBA) to be considered obsolete, the items must be a minimum of two NFPA cycles **and** 10 years of age or older from the date they were manufactured.

Training for requested PPE

- Applicants must certify that all grant-funded PPE will only be used by sufficiently trained personnel. Failure to meet this requirement will result in the request for funding deemed ineligible.
- If applicants are requesting training to support a PPE activity, it must be entered in the Additional Funding section in request details.

- Acquiring or replacing an individual SCBA face piece for each operational member of an organization is a High H priority. To the extent a request for additional face pieces exceeds any face pieces requested as part of an SCBA unit, that request should be entered as a separate request line item, and will not be considered a request "to increase supplies" (e.g., the applicant has the need for 35 Face Pieces, and requested 25 SCBA Units, applicants should separately request 10 additional Face Pieces).
- AFG considers a complete set of Structural/Proximity PPE Turnout gear to be comprised of these NFPA 1971 or 1976 compliant components: one pair pants, one coat, one helmet, one hood, one pair boots, one pair gloves, and one pair suspenders, one pair goggles. In the Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) where additional PPE, like a Personal Safety/Rescue Bailout System is statutorily required, AFG will consider all statutorily required items to be part of a complete PPE set.
- AFG considers a complete set of EMS PPE Turnout gear to be comprised of these NFPA 1999 compliant components: one pair pants, one coat, one helmet, one pair boots, one pair gloves, one pair suspenders, and one pair goggles.
- AFG considers a complete set of Wildland PPE Turnout gear to be comprised of these NFPA 1977 compliant components: one pair pants, one coat, one jumpsuit, one helmet, one pair boots, one pair gloves, one pair suspenders, one pair goggles, one fire shelter, web gear, backpack, and canteen/hydration system.
- AFG considers a complete SCBA Unit to be comprised of the Harness/Backpack, one Face Piece and two cylinders.

All of the following are considerations in pre-scoring and peer review panelists:

Fire Department, Nonaffiliated EMS, Joint/Regional, and State Fire Training Academy Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Priorities	
H	• Departments requesting new PPE for the first time • Departments replacing obsolete or damaged PPE • Members without gear
M	• Departments requesting PPE for a new risk
L	• Departments requesting PPE for a new mission • Departments requesting PPE to increase supplies

Fire Department, Nonaffiliated EMS, Regional, and State Fire Training Academy Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Priorities	
Award will be based on the number of eligible seated riding positions in the department's vehicle fleet and age of existing SCBA, limited to one spare cylinder (unless justified in the Request Details Narrative). With the exception of face pieces. AFG will fund one per trained firefighter.	
H	**Note:** AFG considers SCBA (PPE) obsolete if, it is a minimum of two NFPA cycles and 10 years of age or older, from the date of manufacture. • Replacing SCBA compliant with NFPA 1981, 2002 Edition or prior • Replacing obsolete or damaged SCBA • Funding every operational member with their own individual face piece
M	• Departments requesting PPE for a new risk
L	• Departments requesting PPE to increase supplies

Additional Considerations
• Applicants will be required to provide the age of the PPE being replaced. • Call volume can contribute to the justification for new risk. • Applicants with the oldest PPE and/or trying to bring the department into 100 percent NFPA compliance or the number of active members who will have compliant gear.

Personal Protective Equipment List	
Structural/Proximity H	
• Boots • Coats • Complete Set of Turnout Gear • Personal Safety/Rescue Bailout System • Gloves • Suspenders	• Goggles • Helmets • Hoods • Pants • Pass Devices • ANSI Traffic Vests
Respiratory H	
• Accountability Systems • Air-Line Unit • Respirators • SCBA Spare Cylinders	• Face Pieces • SCBA (SCBA Unit includes: Harness/Backpack, Face Piece, and 2 cylinders)
Wildland H	
• Jumpsuits/Coveralls • Boots • Coats	• Goggles • Shelters • Web Gear/Backpacks

Personal Protective Equipment List	
• Pants • Suspenders	• Canteens/Hydration Systems • Helmet
Specialized PPE M	
• PPE: Ballistic Protective Equipment (BPE, to include one vest, one helmet, one triage bag, one pair of goggles) • Extrication Clothing/Rescue Clothing • Encapsulated Suites • Chemical/Biological Suits (Must conform to NFPA 2012 edition)	• Wet and Dry Suits • Proximity Suits • Splash Suits

Eligible Fire Department, Nonaffiliated EMS, Joint/Regional and State Fire Training Academy PPE Activities include but are not limited to:	
• American National Standards Institute (ANSI)-approved retro-reflective highway apparel • Training for requested PPE	• Customized helmet shields • Level C suits • Personal Safety/Rescue Bailout System

Ineligible Fire Department, Nonaffiliated EMS, Regional and State Fire Training Academy PPE Activities include but are not limited to:	
• Three-quarter length rubber boots • Uniforms (formal/parade or station/duty) and uniform items (hats, badges, etc.) • Rapid Intervention Packs (Equipment) • Flashlights (Equipment) • Gear Bags (Equipment) • Personal Safety/Rescue Bailout System (PPE) for nonaffiliated EMS organizations	• Bomb disposal suits • Any communications equipment (e.g., radios and pagers) in the PPE section • Structural, proximity, wildland firefighting gear, or rescue and extraction gear for nonaffiliated EMS organizations • Any decals, embroidery, engraving, flags, graphics, logos, or vehicle lettering that customizes awarded items, *except* customized helmet shields

D. Operations and Safety - Wellness and Fitness

Overview

Wellness and Fitness activities are intended to strengthen emergency responders so their mental, physical, and emotional capabilities are resilient enough to withstand the demands of all hazards operations. In order to be eligible for funding, applicants must offer, or plan to offer, all four of the following Priority 1 H activities as discussed in the table below.

Fire Department and Nonaffiliated EMS Wellness and Fitness Priorities

Priority 1 - Below are the four activities required for a complete Wellness and Fitness program.

Initial medical exams H (Priority 1)

Job-related immunization H (Priority 1)

Annual medical and fitness evaluation H (Priority 1)

Behavioral health H (Priority 1)

Priority 2 - Applicants may only apply for Priority 2 Items if the applicant offers or is requesting a combination of the four activities required under Priority 1.

Departments that have some of the Priority 1 programs in place must apply for funds to implement the missing Priority 1 programs before applying for funds for any additional program or equipment within this activity. In addition, for all AFG Programs, any grant funded medical exams must meet current NFPA 1582, as required by DHS standards.

- Candidate physical ability evaluation
- Formal fitness and injury prevention program/equipment
- Injury/illness rehab
- IAFF or IAFC peer fitness trainer program(s)
- Formal fitness and injury prevention program/equipment
- IAFF or IAFC peer fitness trainer program, (including transportation, travel, overtime/backfill, and reasonable expenses associated with member participation in Train-the-Trainer for IAFC/IAFF and implementation of a peer fitness trainer programs)

NOTE: Simultaneous requests for Priority 1 and Priority 2 activities will receive a lower funding consideration than requests that complete the bundle of the four Priority 1 activities.

Fire Department and Nonaffiliated EMS Eligible Wellness and Fitness activities include but are not limited to:

- The four Priority 1 items, initial medical exams, job-related immunization, annual medical and fitness evaluation, and behavioral health
- Behavioral health programs to include, but not limited to: Critical Incident Stress Management Programs or Employee Assistance Programs
- Transportation expenses related to a member's participation in offered Wellness and Fitness activities
- Contractual costs (non-hiring) for personnel, physical fitness equipment (including shipping charges and sales tax, as applicable), and supplies directly related to physical fitness activities
- Minor interior alterations (requested under Additional Funding and limited to $10,000 total expenditure) to support the awarded Wellness and Fitness activities (e.g., removal/construction of a non-weight bearing wall)

Ineligible Fire Department and Nonaffiliated EMS Eligible Wellness and Fitness activities include but are not limited to:	
• Fitness club memberships for participants or their families • Non-cash incentives, (e.g., t-shirts or hats of nominal value and vouchers to local businesses or time-off) • Purchase of real estate • Cash incentives	• Purchase of medical equipment that is not used as part of the Wellness and Fitness Program • Contractual services with anyone other than medical professionals (e.g., health care consultants, trainers, and nutritionists) for programs such as smoking cessation

E. Operations and Safety - Modifications to Facilities Overview

AFG Grants may be used to modify fire stations and other facilities. New fire station construction is not allowed.

Requested activities may only retrofit existing structures built prior to January 1, 2003 that do not already have those AFG eligible safety features (being requested) in place. Structures built prior to January 1, 2003, that have been expanded/added on to, may be eligible for an award to retrofit areas.

The January 1, 2003, benchmark for eligibility does not apply to minor interior alterations (requested under Additional Funding and limited to $10,000 total expenditure) to support Training, Equipment, or Wellness and Fitness activities (e.g., removal/construction of a non-weight bearing wall). However, the eligibility of certain minor interior alterations does not release the recipient from their EHP responsibilities resulting from those alterations.

In recognition of the risks posed by exposure to diesel fumes, Source Capture Exhaust Extraction Systems (SCES) are an AFG High H priority for vehicle exhaust mitigation under Modification to Facilities.

An SCES is a system where exhaust gases from a vehicle are captured directly, via a conduit that attaches to/over the end of the vehicle's exhaust system at the tailpipe. The captured exhaust gases are expelled through the attached conduit via mechanical/pneumatic means to the exterior of the building.

No modification may change the structures footprint or profile. If requesting multiple items, such as a sprinkler system and exhaust system, the funding for any projects or activities cannot cumulatively exceed $100,000 (Total Project Cost(s)) for any individual station. Eligible projects under this activity must have a direct effect on the health and safety of firefighters.

All of the following are considerations in pre-scoring and peer review panelists:

Fire Department and Nonaffiliated EMS Modifications to Facilities Priorities include but are not limited to:	
H	• Departments requesting direct, source capture exhaust systems, sprinkler systems, or smoke/fire detectors
M	• Emergency generators, Air Quality Systems

Fire Department and Nonaffiliated EMS Ineligible Modifications to Facilities activities include but are not limited to:	
• Station maintenance • Resurfacing bay floors	• Interior remodeling not pertaining to the requested project(s)

Facility Considerations
Level of Occupancy H Full-time coverage 24/7 M Part-time or selected coverage L Not on a regular basis H Facilities with sleeping quarters M Facilities without sleeping quarters L Training facilities and marine fire facilities

Additional Considerations
Additional considerations will be given for the age of the building; older facilities receive a higher priority. If requesting multiple items in this activity, funding cannot exceed a maximum of $100,000 per station.

F. Regional

Overview

A Regional application is an opportunity for a fire department or a nonaffiliated EMS organization to act as a host, and apply on behalf of itself and any number of other participating AFG eligible organizations. SFTA are not eligible to apply under the Regional activity. Eligible Regional activities are Vehicle Acquisition and Operations and Safety (but only for Training, Equipment, and PPE activities). Regional activities should achieve cost effectiveness, support regional efficiency and resilience, and benefit more than one local jurisdiction (county, parish, town, township, city, or village) directly from the activities implemented with the grant funds.

The community identification characteristic (e.g., Rural, Urban, or Suburban) and the organizational status of the Host applicant (e.g., Career, Combination, or Volunteer), will be entered and used for the regional application, regardless of the composition of the participating partners.

Regional populations served are the aggregate of the geographically fixed primary first due response areas of the host and participating partner organizations.

Neither the regional host, nor any participating partner is prevented from also submitting an application on behalf of their own organization for any AFG activity (Vehicle Acquisition or Operations and Safety). However, individual organizational applications submitted by either the host or any participating partner, that duplicates any portion of the regional application will be considered a duplicate submission, and both applications will be deemed ineligible.

Example: The host and participating partners in a regional request for SCBA units, are prohibited from submitting individual organizational applications for essentially similar SCBA units, or any component of the SCBA unit.

In the application Narrative, a Regional host *must* include a list of all the AFG eligible participating organizations benefitting from a proposed Regional project, to include validated points of contact, each organization's Employee Identification Number (EIN), and provide clear and detailed information on the regional activities requested.

Host organizations should provide specific details, fully explaining the distribution of any grant funded acquisitions or grant funded contracted services, as well as the responsibilities between the host and the partner organizations.

In order to apply for a regional project, the host organization must agree, if awarded, to be responsible for all aspects of the grant. This includes, but is not limited to, cost share, accountability for the assets and all reporting requirements in the regional application.

The host will be required to enter information that captures the macro demographics (e.g., total square miles) and master listings of information (e.g., combined SCBA inventories) of the partners that serve the region.

All participants of a Regional applicant must be compliant with AFG requirements, including being current with past grants, closeouts, and other reporting requirements. Upon notification by the AFG Program Office, the host agency shall not distribute grant funded assets or provide grant funded contractual services to non-compliant partner organizations. The host and the delinquent partners will be notified by the AFG Program Office of their specific deficiency.

Regional host applicants and participating partner agencies must execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or equivalent document, signed by the host and all participating organizations. The agreement should specify the individual and mutual responsibilities of the participating partners, the participant's level of involvement in the project(s), and the proposed distribution of all grant funded assets and/or contracted services. Copies of the MOU will be requested during the technical evaluation of the application.

The MOU agreement must specify the individual and mutual responsibilities of the host and participating partners, the host and participant's level of involvement in the project(s), the participating partner's EIN numbers, and the proposed distribution of all grant funded assets or contracted services. Any entity named in the application as benefiting from the award, must be an eligible AFG organization, and must be a party to the MOU or equivalent document.

G. Vehicle Acquisition Overview

Vehicles purchased with AFG Funds must be compliant with NFPA 1901 (*Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus*), NFPA 1906 (*Standard for Wildland Fire Apparatus*) or NFPA 1917 (Standard for Automotive Ambulances).

Leasing or installment plans to obtain a vehicle are not eligible acquisition activities under the AFG Program and will not be reimbursed.

Community Paramedic vehicles are *non-transport* vehicles and are not intended to have a dual role (e.g., as utility or support vehicles). There is nothing inherent in the delivery of community paramedic services that requires any emergency response packages (e.g., lights, sirens.), or operational equipment (e.g., rescue tools, structural/woodland firefighting equipment); consequently, such activities are ineligible.

Applicants may apply for more than one vehicle. Requests cannot exceed the financial cap based on population listed in the application. If a department submits multiple types of applications, and more than one of those requests are approved, the department will be held to the same financial cap based on the population listed in the application.

When requesting more than one vehicle, applicants will be asked to fill out a separate line item and answer all the questions including a separate Narrative for each vehicle. For example, if applicants are requesting to replace three ambulances, the applicant must fill out the age and vehicle identification number (VIN) of each vehicle being replaced. Applicants cannot use the same VIN in each line item.
In the case(s) when an applicant is not replacing a vehicle but only changing the service status of a vehicle(s), such as from first due to reserve, a VIN number is still required for the Narrative and for the vehicle being reassigned.

Applicants requesting fire vehicles that do not have drivers or operators trained to NFPA 1002 or equivalent, and are not planning to have a training program in place by the time the awarded vehicle(s) is delivered, will not receive any vehicle award.

Applicants requesting nonaffiliated EMS vehicles that do not have drivers or operators trained to the National Standard Emergency Vehicle Operator Curriculum (EVOC) developed by the United States Department of Transportation (DOT), or equivalent, and are not planning to have a training program in place by the time the awarded vehicle(s) is delivered, will not receive any vehicle award.

All applicants may request funding for a driver training program in the Vehicle Acquisition section but must add the request in the Additional Funding area in the Request Details section of the Vehicle Application.

All Driver training program(s) must be in place prior to the delivery of the awarded vehicle(s) or the recipient will be considered to be in violation of the grant agreement.

The pre-score evaluation criteria consider the department’s need for the vehicle, based on the age/condition of current vehicles and/or the demands on the organization.

All of the following are considerations in pre-scoring and peer review panelists:

Eligible Fire Department, and State Fire Training Academy Vehicle activities include but are not limited to the following Vehicle Priorities:			
Priority	**Urban Communities**	**Suburban Communities**	**Rural Communities**
H	• Pumper • Ambulance • Aerial • Rescue • Non-Transport Community Paramedic	• Pumper • Ambulance • Aerial • Tanker-Tender • Rescue • Non-Transport Community Paramedic	• Pumper • Ambulance • Brush-Attack • Tanker-Tender • Aerial • Non-Transport Community Paramedic
M	• Command • Hazmat • Light/Air unit • Rehab	• Hazmat • Command • Light/Air unit • Brush-Attack • Rehab unit	• Command • Hazmat • Rescue • Light/Air unit
L	• Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Vehicle (ARFF) • Brush-Attack • Foam truck • Fire boat • Tanker-Tender • Highway safety unit • Hybrid (Fire/Nonaffiliated EMS)	• ARFF • Foam truck • Highway safety unit • Fire boat • Hybrid (Fire/Nonaffiliated EMS)	• Foam Truck • Highway safety unit • ARFF • Rehab • Fire boat • Hybrid (Fire/Nonaffiliated EMS)

Compliance with Standards
• New fire apparatus must be compliant with NFPA 1901 or 1906 for the year ordered/manufactured • Ambulances, NFPA1917, Edition 2013, or GSA Federal Standard KKK-A-1822F • Applicants must certify that unsafe vehicles will be permanently removed from service if awarded a grant. Acceptable uses of unsafe vehicles include farm, nursery, scrap metal, salvage, construction, or donation to a foreign entity

Additional Considerations (to include but not limited to)
• Departments that have automatic aid agreements, mutual aid agreements, or both • Call volume of primary first due response area or region • Replacement of open cab/jump seat configurations • Age and mileage of the vehicle being replaced; older equipment receive higher consideration • Age of the newest vehicle in the department's fleet that is like the vehicle to be replaced • Disclose vehicles on loan to the organization in the application narrative but not in the organization's inventory • Disclose damaged vehicles and out of service vehicles in the organization's inventory • Average age of the fleet; older equipment within the same class • Converted vehicles not designed or intended for use in the fire service

Eligible Regional Vehicle activities for Fire Departments (ALL Community Types) Nonaffiliated EMS organizations are limited to Bariatric Ambulance and Community Paramedic	
H	• Aerial • Air/Light • Bariatric Ambulance • Mobile Command • Rehabilitation Unit • Non-Transport - Community Paramedic
M	• Heavy Rescue (Nonaffiliated EMS ineligible) • Highway Safety Unit (Nonaffiliated EMS ineligible)
L	• Hazmat (Nonaffiliated EMS ineligible) • Specialized Foam Unit (Nonaffiliated EMS ineligible)

Nonaffiliated EMS Eligible Vehicle Activities	
H	• Ambulances or transport units to support nonaffiliated EMS functions • Non-Transport Community Paramedic

Performance Bond Strongly Recommended: Performance bonds are strongly recommended but not required by the AFG Program. This is for any organization that is going to advance its own funds to their vendor prior to receipt of the vehicle. The bond may be obtained through the vendor or bank. The concept behind this is to ensure the applicant's funds are not lost in the event of a vendor's failure to perform, e.g., not finishing or delivering the vehicle or going out of business.

Prepayment Bond Required: AFG vehicle awardees are required to obtain a prepayment bond if the recipient plans to advance federal funds to their vendor. This is to safeguard the federal

funds against loss if the vendor goes out of business or fails to deliver the vehicle. Prepayment bonds may be obtained through the vendor or bank. The cost of a Prepayment Bond is a reimbursable activity under an AFG Vehicle Acquisition Award.

Penalty Clause: All contracts for any AFG funded vehicle must contain a penalty clause.

Non-delivery by the contract's specified date, or other vendor nonperformance, will require a penalty that is no less than $100 per day until such time that the vehicle, compliant with the terms of the contract, has been accepted by the recipient.

Down Payment: A down payment for the purchase of a vehicle is allowable if required in the vehicle purchase contract, but FEMA will only allow up to 25 percent of the federal share to be drawn for this purpose.

Any costs over-and-above the 25 percent limit, such as the cost of a chassis or any other fees or services, must be borne by the grantee or deferred until final payment is drawn.

Federal funds may not be requested for any other payments to include, but not limited to: periodic or progress vehicle payments, or the acquisition of NFPA 1901 compliant equipment for the awarded vehicle if they are being supplied under the vehicle contract. Purchases outside of the vehicle contract can be requested for payment.

Final Payment: To expedite the acquisition process, and prior to the vehicle being received, inspected and accepted, the grantee may request the final vehicle payment as an advance payment request. However, the grantee shall not disburse or satisfy the vehicle obligation until after the vehicle is received, inspected, and accepted by the grantee.

IMPORTANT
Upon accepting an offer of an award for the AFG activity-*Vehicle Acquisition*, grant recipients must submit a copy of their vehicle purchase contract to the designated Regional Fire Program Specialist. To locate Regional Fire Program Specialists, please visit: http://www.fema.gov/fire-grant-contact-information.

- Applicants will be asked to scan document(s) into a PDF format and email them to the Regional Fire Programs Specialist for inclusion in the grant file.

Submitting a vehicle purchase contract will assist in the programmatic monitoring of an award and help ensure programmatic compliance with the *Improper Payments Information Act of 2002* (Pub. L. No. 107-300) and the *Improper Payments Eliminations and Recovery Act of 2010* (Pub. L. No. 111-204). If recipients do not submit a vehicle purchase contract, they will be unable to:

- Advance federal funds for partial vehicle payment or chassis payment; or,
- Submit an amendment requesting a Period of Performance extension for the project.

Eligible Fire Department, Nonaffiliated EMS Organizations, Regional, and State Fire Training Academy Vehicle activities include but are not limited to:	
• Cost of vehicle • Physicals to meet current NFPA 1582/US Department of Transportation (DOT) 649 F	• Driver/operator training programs that meet applicable standards, current NFPA 1002 or Emergency Vehicle Operator Curriculum (EVOC), or equivalent

Eligible Fire Department, Nonaffiliated EMS Organizations, Regional, and State Fire Training Academy Vehicle activities include but are not limited to:	
• Cost of associated equipment that is eligible under current NFPA 1901/1906	• Transportation to inspect a requested vehicle during production (if justified in the Vehicles Narrative)

Ineligible Fire Department, Nonaffiliated EMS Organizations, Joint/Regional, and State Fire Training Academy Vehicle activities include but are not limited to:	
• Leasing or installment purchase of any grant funded vehicle • Aircraft, bulldozers, and construction-related equipment • Using the vehicle being awarded as collateral for any financial loan	• Utility Vehicles (UTV) and All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV) are not eligible • Used or refurbished apparatus are ineligible activities under Vehicle Acquisition. • Converted vehicles not originally designed for firefighting are not eligible for refurbishment.

Example of vehicles types

- Pumper (an apparatus that carries a minimum of 300 gallons of water and has a pump with the capacity to pump a minimum of 750 gallons per minute)
- Urban interface vehicles (Type I) pumper (300 gallons and 750 GPM) Ambulance (vehicle used for transporting patients)
- Tanker-Tender (an apparatus that has water capacity in excess of 1,000 gallons

Unsafe Vehicles

If applicants specify the vehicle(s) to be replaced are unsafe, they must certify that if awarded, the unsafe vehicle to be replaced will be permanently removed from emergency service response.

Permanently removed from emergency service response means the recipient cannot use the vehicle being replaced for *any* emergency service response, nor can the recipient sell or otherwise transfer title to any individual or emergency service response organization that will use the unsafe vehicle for emergency service response.

A recipient who certifies it will remove an unsafe vehicle from service but then sells/transfers the unsafe vehicle to another emergency service response organization, or otherwise does not remove the unsafe vehicle from emergency service response, is considered to be in violation of the grant agreement.

Acceptable dispositions (donation or sale) of unsafe vehicles include, but are not limited to: a training facility (**NO** emergency response off the training grounds), farm use, construction or nursery use, sale to a non-emergency service response entity for refurbishment, scrap metal, salvage, or foreign donation.

Appendix C: Award Administration Information

Appendix C contains detailed information on AFG Award Administration. Reviewing this information may help recipients in the programmatic and financial administration of their award(s).

Help FEMA Prevent Fraud, Waste, and Abuse
If applicants or recipients have information about instances of fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement involving FEMA programs or operations, they should contact the DHS OIG Hotline at (800) 323-8603, by fax at (202) 254-4297, or email DHSOIGHOTLlNE@dhs.gov

I. Economic Hardship Waivers of Cost Share and Maintenance of Effort

NOTE: In cases of demonstrated economic hardship, and upon the request of the recipient, the Administrator may waive or reduce an AFG cost share or maintenance of effort requirement for certain recipients (15 USC § 2229(k)(4)(A)).

An Award must be accepted, before a hardship waiver for cost share, or maintenance of effort, can be submitted as an amendment request via the online eGrants system.

This policy applies to AFG per § 33 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (Pub. L. No. 93-498, as amended) (15 USC § 2229). For complete requirements concerning these waivers, including a description of how a recipient may demonstrate economic hardship and apply for a waiver, please refer to FEMA Policy FP 207-088-01, dated April 8, 2014, at:
http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1398109239435-ec23997d8351382710896fa77d02bc7d/AFG+Economic+Hardship+Waiver+Policy.pdf

As described in NOFO Section F, Administrative and National Policy Requirements, Financial and Compliance Audit Report, certain recipients are required to submit an organization-wide financial compliance audit. For those recipients that are required to conduct an audit, reasonable costs incurred for such an audit are an eligible expenditure and should be included in the applicant's proposed budget.

Audit costs are considered administrative expenditures and may be treated as a direct cost or an allocated indirect cost, as determined in accordance with the provisions of applicable OMB cost principles circulars or other applicable cost principles or regulations.

If the AFG Grantee that must complete an audit pursuant to federal regulations is the recipient of *multiple* federal funding sources then *only* a pro rata share of the audit cost(s) may be chargeable to their AFG Award.

Example: Total Audit Costs of $1,000.00
During their fiscal year, an organization expends $150,000 from an AFG Award and $600,000 from other federal sources for a total of $750,000.

The AFG pro rata share is ($150,000/$750,000 = 1/5 or twenty percent), of the $1,000 total audit costs; so only $200 (twenty percent of $1,000) would be an eligible cost that can be charged to the AFG Award.

II. Grant Writer/Preparation Fees

Fees for grant writers may be included as a pre-award expenditure. Fees payable on a contingency basis are not an eligible expense. For grant writer fees to be eligible as a pre-award expenditure, the fees must be specifically identified and listed in the Request Details section of the application. FEMA will only consider reimbursements for application preparation, but not administration, up to but not more than $1,500. Pursuant to 2 CFR Part 180, recipients may not use federal grant funds to reimburse any entity, including a grant writer or preparer, if that entity is presently suspended or debarred by the Federal Government from receiving funding under federally-funded grants or contracts. Recipients must verify that the contractor is not suspended or debarred from participating in specified federal procurement or non-procurement transactions pursuant to 2 CFR § 180.300.

By submitting the application, applicants are certifying all of the information contained therein is true and an accurate reflection of the organization, and that regardless of the applicant's intent, the submission of information that is false or misleading may result in actions by FEMA that include but are not limited to the submitted application not being considered for award, temporary withholding of funding under the existing award pending investigation, or referral to the Office of the Inspector General.

Prior to submission of the application, please review all work produced by grant writers or other third parties for accuracy. In addition, the fees must have been paid, within 30 days of the end of the application period, and prior to any contact with AFG Program Office staff or an Offer of Award.

Applicants will be required to provide documentation to support these pre-award expenditures. A copy of the cancelled check and bank statement shall be provided upon request. Failure to provide the requested documentation may result in the grant writer fee being deemed ineligible and the grant reduced accordingly.

NOTE: AFG requires that all grant writer or preparer information must be entered into the Overview section of the AFG application, whether that person, entity or agent is compensated or not.

III. Maintenance and Sustainment for AFG Programs

The use of FEMA preparedness grant funds for the costs of repairs or replacement, as well as maintenance contracts, warranties, and user fees may be allowable.

The intent of eligible Maintenance and Sustainment activities is to provide direct support to the critical capabilities developed using FEMA and other DHS Grants and support activities. Routine upkeep and the supplies, expendables, or one-time use items that support routine upkeep (e.g., gasoline, tire replacement, routine oil changes, monthly inspections, or grounds and facility maintenance) are the responsibility of the recipient and may not be funded with AFG funding.

Generally, when purchasing a maintenance agreement, service contract, or extended warranty for systems or equipment, the period of coverage provided under such a plan may not extend beyond the period of performance of the grant with which the agreement, warranty, or contract is purchased.

However, only if the maintenance contract or extended warranty is purchased incidental to the original purchase of the system or equipment, recipients may procure maintenance or warranty coverage which

exceeds the period of performance, as explained in FEMA Policy 205-402-125-1, document available at http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1915-25045-9444/gpd_maintenance_policy.pdf

The duration of an extended warranty purchased incidental to the original purchase of the equipment may exceed the period performance as long as the coverage purchased is consistent with that which is typically provided for, or available through, these types of agreements, warranties, or contracts. When purchasing a stand-alone warranty, or extending an existing maintenance contract on an already-owned piece of equipment or system, coverage purchased may not exceed the period of performance of the award used to purchase the maintenance agreement or warranty. As with warranties and maintenance agreements, this policy extends to licenses and user fees as well.

Even if purchased incidental to the original purchase of the equipment, the duration of an extended maintenance agreement or warranty must also be reasonable for the type of equipment or system being purchased. For example, if a vendor offers a 10-year extended warranty incidental to the purchase of a piece of equipment, but the useful life of that equipment being purchased is five years, the purchase of a 10-year extended warranty would not be a reasonable cost and may not be charged to the grant.

IV. Taxes, Fees, Levies, and Assessments

Taxes, fees, levies, or assessments that the recipient is legally required to pay and is directly related to any eligible AFG Program acquisition activity may be charged to an AFG award pursuant to 2 CFR § 200.470. These charges shall be identified and enumerated in the AFG application's Narrative and the Request Details section of
the acquisition activity.

Any avoidable and unreasonable costs that result from the action or inaction of a recipient (or recipient's agent), or that prevent that recipient from enjoying any lawful exemption, waiver, or reduction of any tax, fee, levy, or assessment directly related to any eligible AFG Program acquisition activity, are not chargeable to any AFG award..

Example: Governmental entities and Public Safety Agencies are exempt from some Federal Communications Commission (FCC) fees*, but only if the eligible organization submits an exemption or waiver request to the FCC.

**Government entities are not required to pay FCC regulatory fees. Non-profit entities (exempt under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code) also may be exempt. The FCC requires that any entity claiming exempt status submit, or have on file with the FCC, a valid IRS Determination Letter documenting its nonprofit status or certification from a governmental authority attesting to its exempt status. For more information, please visit http://www.fcc.gov/.*

V. Subscription, Access, Membership, Rental, Lease, or User Fees

No subscription, access, membership, rental, lease, termination of services, or user fees, are chargeable to any AFG Award.

VI. Excess Funds

After completing the initial projects proposed in the recipient's application, some recipients may have unexpended funds remaining in their budget. These excess funds may result from any combination of under-budget acquisition activities or competitive procurement processes.

These cost shared excess funds may be utilized to address an organization's local needs or to mitigate identified capability gaps. FEMA and AFG expect excess funds to be obligated concurrent with an award's period of performance to address a known or critical need.

Excess Funds Restrictions
In general, excess funds may be limited to no more than $10,000 for any Award.

The $10,000 maximum is cumulative for any grant, regardless of the number of activities within the award, and will require no amendment; except when the use of excess funds is for any eligible activity that would normally require an EHP Review.

- Excess funds cannot be used to support Fire Prevention and Safety activities.
- The opportunity for excess funds is limited when the original uncompleted Scope of Work is changed via an Amendment.

Example: An award has a single activity (the acquisition of 50 SCBAs) which is reduced via Amendment (to 49 SCBAs). The federal participation and the recipient cost obligation are both reduced and any remaining unliquidated federal participation resulting from the reduction in quantity is *not allowable* as Excess funds.

- Excess funds cannot be used for grant writer/preparer fees.
- Excess funds may only be used for allowable activities identified in the program guidance for that fiscal year's grant cycle.

Exceptions to the $10,000 use may be considered by FEMA if urgent and compelling need that can be directly related to a demonstrated event impacting the health and safety of the firefighters within the department can be identified. This request must be submitted in writing via an amendment.

VII. Procurement Integrity

Through audits conducted by the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General (OIG) and AFG Program Office grant monitoring, findings have shown that some AFG recipients have not fully adhered to the proper procurement requirements when spending grant funds. Anything less than full compliance with federal procurement policies jeopardizes the integrity of the grant as well as the grant program. Below, we highlight the federal procurement requirements for fire department, SFTAs, and nonaffiliated EMS organization grantees when procuring goods and services with federal grant funds. DHS will include a review of grantees' procurement practices as part of the normal monitoring activities. **All procurement activity must be conducted in accordance with Federal Procurement Standards at 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.37 – 200.326**. Select requirements under these standards are listed below. The recipient must comply with all requirements of these standards, even if they are not listed below.

With the exception of State governments, which must comply with the terms of 2 C.F.R. § 200.317, the non-federal entity must use its own documented procurement procedures which reflect applicable State, local, and tribal laws and regulations, provided that the procurements conform to

applicable federal law and the standards identified in 2 C.F.R. Part 200. These standards include, but are not limited to providing for full and open competition consistent with the standards of 2 C.F.R. § 200.319.

Among the requirements of 2 C.F.R. § 200.319, in order to ensure objective contractor performance and eliminate unfair competitive advantage, contractors that develop or draft specifications, requirements, statements of work, or invitations for bids or requests for proposals must be excluded from competing for such procurements. Some of the situations considered to be restrictive of competition include but are not limited to:

- Placing unreasonable requirements on firms in order for them to qualify to do business;
- Requiring unnecessary experience and excessive bonding;
- Noncompetitive pricing practices between firms or between affiliated companies;
- Noncompetitive contracts to consultants that are on retainer contracts;
- Organizational conflict of interests;
- Specifying only a "brand name" product instead of allowing "an equal" product to be offered and describing the performance or other relevant requirements of the procurement; and
- Any arbitrary action in the procurement process.

Generally, a recipient may seek to procure good or services from prequalified lists of persons, firms, or products which are used in acquiring goods and services, e.g., Government Services Administration (GSA) schedule, a State schedule, or co-operative or group purchasing, as having satisfied AFG Program requirements for competition. In order for such procurements by entities other than State governments to be permissible, the following must be true:

- The procurement of the original contract or purchasing schedule and its use by the recipient complies with state and local law, regulations, and written procurement procedures.
- The state or other entity that originally procured the original contract or purchasing schedule with the express purpose of making it available to the recipient and other similar types of entities, the contract or purchasing schedule specifically allows for such use, and the work to be performed for the local government falls within the scope of work under the contract as to type, amount, and geography.
- The procurement of the original contract or purchasing schedule complied with all of the procurement standards applicable to a local government at 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.318 to 326.
- With respect to the use of a purchasing schedule, the recipient must follow ordering procedures that adhere to state and local laws and regulations and the minimum requirements of full and open competition under 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

If a recipient other than a State government seeks to use such a prequalified list, purchasing schedule, or other similar type of arrangement, it must first contact the AFG Program Office.

To the greatest extent possible, the FEMA recommends that federal grant funds be used for the purchase of goods and services manufactured, assembled, and distributed in the United States.

Pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.318(c)(1), the recipient (other than States) are require to maintain written standards of conduct covering conflict of interests and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the selection, award and administration of contracts. No employee, officer, or agent may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by a federal award if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest. Such a conflict of interest would arise when the employee, officer, or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs

or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for a contract. The officers, employees, and agents of the non-federal entity may neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors or parties to subcontracts. However, non-federal entities may set standards for situations in which the financial interest is not substantial or the gift is an unsolicited item of nominal value. The standards of conduct must provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations of such standards by officers, employees, or agents of the non-federal entity.

If the recipient (other than States) has a parent, affiliate, or subsidiary organization that is not a state, local government, or Indian tribe, the non-federal entity must also maintain written standards of conduct covering organizational conflict of interests. Organizational conflict of interests means that because of relationships with a parent company, affiliate, or subsidiary organization, the non-federal entity is unable or appears to be unable to be impartial in conducting a procurement action involving a related organization. The non-federal entity must disclose in writing any potential conflict of interest to the federal awarding agency or pass-through entity in accordance with applicable Federal Awarding agency policy.

NOTE: For the purposes of this, conflict of interests under procurements executed by the recipient, FEMA considers volunteers of an organization and grant writers to be employees, officers, and/or agents of the grantee. As such, no volunteer or member of an organization or anyone involved in preparing the application for funding can participate in, or benefit from, the procurement if federal funds are involved.

Grantees that purchase items with grant funds from vendors who employ any of their volunteers/members will have to document how they avoided a *Conflict of Interests* during the procurement process (i.e., specific details regarding how the members/volunteers removed themselves or how they were prevented from participating in the process). Grantees may be required to provide this documentation upon request. Grantees who fail to fully document their purchases may find their expenditures questioned and subsequently disallowed. Remember that FEMA reserves the right to request and review any and all bids/spec prior to purchase. Grantees may be subject to an audit after award.

Documentation
Grantees are required to maintain and retain the following:

- Backup documentation, such as bids and quotes
- Cost/price analyses on file for review by federal personnel
- Other documents required by federal regulations applicable at the time a grant is awarded to a grantee

FEMA generally recommends that the recipient maintain the following documentation for federally funded purchases:

- Specifications
- Solicitations
- Competitive quotes or proposals
- Basis for selection decisions
- Purchase orders
- Contracts
- Invoices
- Cancelled checks

Grantees who fail to fully document their purchases may find their expenditures questioned and subsequently disallowed.

Specifications
When drafting bid specifications, and prior to publicizing or publishing such bid specifications, a recipient should ensure the following:

- Bids and specifications are not proprietary to any one product or manufacturer. In-state or local geographical preferences are not imposed in the evaluation of bids or proposals.

Recipients may not use the vehicle(s) being awarded as collateral for any type of financial loan(s). Any grantee activity that encumbers or clouds the title of an awarded vehicle may result in actions:

- By FEMA or other federal agencies to modify or revoke the award
- That may include federal actions to claim or seize awarded vehicle
- Of Debarment and Suspension

VIII. Payments and Amendments

Payments
AFG Payment/Drawdown Requests are generated using the eGrants system.

AFG Payment/Drawdown Requests from state or local government entities will be governed by applicable federal regulations in effect at the time a grant is awarded to the recipient and may be either advances or reimbursements

Recipients should not expend funds or request drawdowns until all special conditions listed on the grant award document have been met and request for payment in the eGrants system has been approved.

Grant recipients should draw down funds based upon immediate disbursement requirements; however, FEMA strongly encourages recipients to draw down funds as close to disbursement or expenditure as possible to avoid accruing interest.

Advances
Recipients shall be paid in advance, provided they maintain or demonstrate the willingness and ability to maintain procedures to minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of the funds and their disbursement by the recipient, and financial management systems that meet the standards for fund control and accountability as established in 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

Although advance drawdown requests are permissible, recipients remain subject to applicable federal law in effect at the time a grant is awarded to the recipient governing interest requirements, including the Uniform Administrative Requirements Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200 and the Cash Management Improvement Act (CMIA) and its implementing regulations at 31 CFR Part 205. Interest under CMIA will accrue from the time federal funds are credited to a recipient's account until the time the recipient pays out the funds for program purposes.

Recipients must follow applicable federal regulations governing interest earned on payment advances in effect at the time a grant is awarded to the recipient, including § 200.305.
For the rate to use in calculating interest, please visit Treasury Current Value rate at http://www.fms.treas.gov/cvfr/index.html.

Reimbursement
Reimbursement of the recipient is the preferred method when the requirements to be paid in advance, per applicable federal regulations in effect at the time a grant is awarded to the recipient, cannot be met. In accordance with U.S. Department of Treasury regulations at 31 CFR Part 205, if applicable, the recipient shall maintain procedures to minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds and the disbursement of said funds.

Rebates
Recipients shall disburse program income, rebates, refunds, contract settlements, audit recoveries, and interest earned on such funds before requesting additional cash payments, in accordance with applicable federal regulations in effect at the time a grant is awarded to a recipient.

The reduction of federal financial participation via rebates/refunds *may* generate excess funds for the recipient, if the recipient had already obligated their Cost Share match based upon the original award figures.

If the recipient had *already* obligated their original Cost Share *prior* to the rebate, then the recipient *may* have minimum excess funds equal to the difference between the original Cost Share less the rebate adjusted Cost Share.

Payment Requests During Closeout
For 90 days after the expiration of the period of performance, during an award's closeout reconciliation, a recipient may only submit reimbursement payment requests.

Reimbursement payment requests shall only be for obligations that were obligated within the active period of performance of the award. The recipient's request should contain clear and specific information certifying that the liquidation of federal funds is reimbursement for an obligation properly incurred during the active period of performance; FEMA may request documentation supporting the reimbursement for review.

Amendments
AFG Award amendments may be approved, on a case-by-case basis, for the following reasons:

- Extension of the period of performance in order to complete the scope of work
- Changes to the activity, mission, retroactive approval [pre-award], closeout issues, some excess funds requests, requests for economic hardship Cost Share waiver, and requests for maintenance of expenditure waivers
- Cost over/under run (adding funds to award/non-closeout deobligation* of funds)
- Economic Hardship Waiver

Amendments will only be considered when submitted via the online eGrants system. These requests must contain specific and compelling justifications for the requested change.

AFG strongly encourages the timely expenditure of grant funds by recipients to be consistent with the goals and objectives outlined in AFG Programs.

**A recipient may deobligate (return) unused funds (those remaining funds drawn down via payment request and/or remaining award funding that was never requested) to DHS prior to the end of an award's Period of Performance. To exercise this option, a recipient must submit a cost over/under run Amendment via the eGrants system and state in their amendment that the unliquidated funds (funds to be*

returned) are not necessary for the fulfillment or success of the grant's obligations or mission. The recipient must also indicate that it understands that the returned funds will be deobligated and unavailable for any future award expenses.

Deobligation of funds will decrease the federal portion of the grant and the amount of the recipient's Cost Share obligation. The AFG Program Office will confirm deobligation amendments with all points of contact; after confirmation of the recipient's intent to deobligate, the Program Office will hold the approved deobligation request for 14 calendar days as a period for recipient reconsideration before processing the deobligation request.

IX. Disposition of Grant Funded Equipment

A recipient must use, manage, and dispose of AFG-funded equipment in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. § 200.313. With the exception of State governments, when original or replacement equipment acquired under an AFG award is no longer needed for the original project or program or for other activities currently or previously supported by a Federal awarding agency, the recipient must request disposition instructions from FEMA. The AFG Program Office strongly recommends contacting a Regional Fire Program Specialist or the AFG Help Desk prior to the disposition of AFG-funded equipment, including vehicles.