22	**AGENDA ITEM** **ST. JOHNS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**
	Deadline for Submission - Wednesday 9 a.m. – Thirteen Days Prior to BCC Meeting

12/1/2026

BCC MEETING DATE

TO: **Joy Andrews, County Administrator** **DATE:** **September 29, 2026**

FROM: **Jeremy Robshaw, Administrative Services Chief** **PHONE:** **209-1750**

SUBJECT OR TITLE: **Accept Assistance to Firefighters Federal SAFER Grant award for the purpose of hiring 30 firefighters.**

AGENDA TYPE: **Consent Agenda, Grant, Resolution**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

SJCFR applied for and was awarded by the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) an Assistance to Firefighters Federal Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant in the amount of $10,419,141.28. The grant provides for the hiring of 30 new firefighters. This grant program covers a three-year period of performance with a county match requirement of 25% in years 1 and 2 and a 65% match in year three. Total Federal funds awarded are $6,425,137.42 and total County match funds required are $3,994,004.28. The notice of funding opportunity and resolution for approval are included as documents for review. SJCFR requests the Board accept the SAFER award from FEMA and authorize the recognition of the FY 27 portion of the award funds up to an amount of $1,953,590 to be appropriated to the FY 27 Fire Rescue Fund and General Fund budgets; and approve and authorize the County Administrator, or designee, to accept and receive the federal funds through the FEMA Grants Outcome (FEMA GO) system subject to the Award Letter, Agreement Articles, and Obligating Document.

1. IS FUNDING REQUIRED? Yes **2. IF YES, INDICATE IF BUDGETED.** No

IF FUNDING IS REQUIRED, MANDATORY OMB REVIEW IS REQUIRED:

INDICATE FUNDING SOURCE: This item is requesting to recognize and appropriate FY 2027 grant revenue up to the amount of $1,953,590. Firefighter salaries and benefits have already been approved in the FY 27 budget in Cost Center 0048-Emergency Medical Services (EMS) (7 Positions) and in Coster Center 1224-Fire Rescue (23 Positions) for an anticipated hiring date of January 2027. For EMS salaries, FY 27 grant award revenue up to the amount of $468,862 needs to be recognized in General Fund – Federal Grant Public Safety (0001-331200) and appropriated to General Fund – County Commission Reserve – Capital Outlay Reserves (0001-0083-59927). For Fire Rescue Salaries, FY 27 grant award revenue up to the amount of $1,484,728 needs to be recognized in Fire Rescue Fund – Federal Grant Public Safety (1171-331200) and appropriated to Fire Rescue Other – Capital Outlay Reserves (1171-1230-59927).

SUGGESTED MOTION/RECOMMENDATION/ACTION:

Motion to adopt Resolution 2026-____, recognizing and appropriating an amount up to $1,953,590 in federal grant funds awarded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security into the FY 2027 Fire District Fund and General Fund Budgets; and authorizing the County Administrator, or designee, to accept and receive the federal funds through the FEMA Grants Outcome (FEMA GO) system subject to the Award Letter, Agreement Articles, and Obligating Document.

For Administration Use Only:
Legal: Kealey West 10/6/2026 **OMB: ARM 10/8/2026** **Admin: Brad Bradley 11/23/2026**

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-_____

A RESOLUTION BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA, APPROVING THE TERMS, CONDITIONS, AND REQUIRMENTS OF A U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE FIRE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE (SAFER) GRANT AND AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR HIS DESIGNEE, TO ACCEPT THE GRANT AWARD ON BEHALF OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY.

WHEREAS, at its June 16, 2026, meeting the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners authorized the submittal of an application for a 2025 Staffing for adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant on behalf of the County for the purpose of funding additional firefighter positions for St. Johns County Fire Rescue; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has announced that St. Johns County is eligible to receive a SAFER Grant with a total federal contribution of $6,425,137.42; and

WHEREAS, the SAFER Grant will allow St. Johns County Fire Rescue to hire an additional 30 firefighters in support of NFPA 1710 compliance; and:

WHEREAS, the SAFER Grant contains a required match of $3,994,004.28 over the 3-year performance period of the grant for a total project cost of $10,419,141.28; and

WHEREAS, acceptance of the SAFER Grant award will serve the interests of the County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISIONERS OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY:

Section 1. The above recitals are hereby incorporated into the body of this resolution and are adopted as findings of fact.

Section 2. The Board of County Commissioners approves the terms, conditions, and requirements of the SAFER award and authorizes the County Administrator, or his designee, to accept the award on behalf of St. Johns County.

Section 3. If there are typographical or administrative errors or omissions that do not change the tone, tenor or context of this resolution, this resolution may be revised without subsequent approval of the Board of County Commissioners.

Section 4. This resolution shall be effective upon adoption by the board of County Commissioners.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County, Florida, this 1st day of December 2026.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

Attest: Brandon J. Patty, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

By: _____
Ann Taylor, Chair

Award Letter

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20472

Effective date: 09/25/2026

Jeremy Robshaw
SAINT JOHNS COUNTY
500 SAN SEBASTIAN VIEW
SAINT AUGUSTINE, FL 32084

EMW-2025-FF-00860

Dear Jeremy Robshaw,

Congratulations on behalf of the Department of Homeland Security. Your application submitted for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (FF) Grant funding opportunity has been approved in the amount of $6,425,137.32 in Federal funding.
Before you request and receive any of the Federal funds awarded to you, you must establish acceptance of the award through the FEMA Grants Outcomes (FEMA GO) system. By accepting this award, you acknowledge that the terms of the following documents are incorporated into the terms of your award:

- Summary Award Memo - included in this document
- Agreement Articles - included in this document
- Obligating Document - included in this document
- 2025 FF Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) - incorporated by reference

Please make sure you read, understand, and maintain a copy of these documents in your official file for this award.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Spishak
Acting Associate Administrator
Resilience

Summary Award Memo

Program: Fiscal Year 2025 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response
Recipient: SAINT JOHNS COUNTY
UEI-EFT: DKTCSFFFL3Q8
Award number:

Summary description of award

The purpose of the SAFER Grant Program is to provide funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations to assist in increasing the number of firefighters to help communities meet industry minimum standards and attain 24-hour staffing to provide adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards, and to fulfill traditional missions of fire departments. After careful consideration, FEMA has determined that the recipient's project or projects submitted as part of the recipient's application and detailed in the project narrative as well as the request details section of the application — including budget information — was consistent with the SAFER Grant Program's purpose and was worthy of award.

Except as otherwise approved as noted in this award, the information you provided in your application for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant funding is incorporated into the terms and conditions of this award. This includes any documents submitted as part of the application.

Position Cost Limit

The usual cost of a first-year firefighter in your department at the time your application was submitted was $115,768.24. The maximum amount of Federal funding provided to the recipient is limited to the following:

Year	Federal Funding Cap Percent	Federal Funding Cap Amount per Firefighter
First Year	75%	$86,826.18
Second Year	75%	$86,826.18
Third Year	35%	$40,518.88

Amount awarded

The amount of the award is detailed in the attached Obligating Document for Award. The cost share amounts described in this award letter are based on the approved total project cost; however, the Federal funding available is limited based on the applicable position cost limit and the applicable cost share as applied to actual costs.

The following are the total approved budgeted estimates for object classes for all funded firefighter positions for this award (including Federal share plus your cost share, if applicable, as applied to the estimated costs):

Object Class	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Total
Personnel	$2,046,998.70	$2,046,998.70	$2,046,998.70	$6,140,996.10
Fringe benefits	$1,426,048.50	$1,426,048.50	$1,426,048.50	$4,278,145.50
Travel	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Equipment	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Supplies	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Contractual	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Construction	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Other	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Indirect charges	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Federal	$2,604,785.40	$2,604,785.40	$1,215,566.52	$6,425,137.32
Non-federal	$868,261.80	$868,261.80	$2,257,480.68	$3,994,004.28
Total	$3,473,047.20	$3,473,047.20	$3,473,047.20	$10,419,141.60

Program Income	$0.00

Approved scope of work

After review of your application, FEMA has approved the below scope of work. Justifications are provided for any differences between the scope of work in the original application and the approved scope of work under this award. You must submit scope or budget revision requests for FEMA's prior approval, via an amendment request, as appropriate per 2 C.F.R. § 200.308 and the FY2025 FF NOFO.

Approved request details:

Hiring of Firefighters

New, Additional Firefighter(s)

BENEFITS FUNDED

FICA - 6.2012%; Employee Healthcare (15,772.00). WC - 2.3763% Pension 37.9260%). Medicare - 1.45.5%

NUMBER OF FIREFIGHTERS	ANNUAL SALARY PRICE	ANNUAL BENEFITS	TOTAL PER FIREFIGHTER
30	$68,233.29	$47,534.95	$115,768.24

3 YEAR TOTAL

$10,419,141.60

Agreement Articles

Program: Fiscal Year 2025 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response
Recipient: SAINT JOHNS COUNTY
UEI-EFT: DKTCSFFFL3Q8
Award number: EMW-2025-FF-00860

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Article 1	**Assurances, Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, Representations and Certifications** Recipients must complete either the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Standard Form 424B Assurances – Non- Construction Programs, or OMB Standard Form 424D Assurances – Construction Programs, as applicable. Certain assurances in these documents may not be applicable to your program and the DHS financial assistance office (DHS FAO) may require applicants to certify additional assurances. Applicants are required to fill out the assurances, as instructed.
Article 2	**General Acknowledgements and Assurances** a. Recipients are required to follow the applicable provisions of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in effect as of the federal award date and located in Title 2, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 200 and adopted by DHS at 2 C.F.R. § 3002.10. b. All recipients and subrecipients must acknowledge and agree to provide DHS access to records, accounts, documents, information, facilities, and staff pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.337. 1) Recipients must cooperate with any DHS compliance reviews or compliance investigations. 2) Recipients must give DHS access to examine and copy records, accounts, and other documents and sources of information related to the federal award and permit access to facilities and personnel. 3) Recipients must submit timely, complete, and accurate reports to the appropriate DHS officials and maintain appropriate backup documentation to support the reports. 4) Recipients must comply with all other special reporting, data collection, and evaluation requirements required by law, federal regulation, Notice of Funding Opportunity, federal award specific terms and conditions, and/or DHS Component program guidance. Organization costs related to data and evaluation are allowable. The definition of data and evaluation costs is in 2 C.F.R. § 200.455(c), the full text of which is incorporated by reference.
Article 3	**Age Discrimination Act of 1975** Recipients must comply with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Public Law 94-135 (codified as amended at Title 42, U.S. Code § 6101 et seq.), which prohibits recipients from discriminating on the basis of age in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.
Article 4	**American Security Drone Act of 2023** Recipients must comply with the American Security Drone Act of 2023, of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024, Pub. L. 118-31 (41 U.S.C. § 3901 note prec.), which prohibits the procurement and operation of covered unmanned aircraft systems manufactured or assembled by covered foreign entities.
Article 5	**Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990** Recipients must comply with the requirements of Titles I, II, and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Pub. L. 101-336 (1990) (codified as amended at 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101– 12213), which prohibits recipients from discriminating on the basis of disability in the operation of public entities, public and private transportation systems, places of public accommodation, and certain testing entities.

Article 6	**Civil Rights Act of 1964 – Title VI** Recipients must comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which provides that no person in the United States will, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. DHS implementing regulations are in 6 C.F.R. Part 21. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) implementing regulations are in 44 C.F.R. Part 7.
Article 7	**Civil Rights Act of 1968 – Title VIII** Recipients must comply with Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, Pub. L. 90-284 (codified as amended at 42 U.S.C. § 3601 et seq.) which prohibits recipients from discriminating in the sale, rental, financing, and advertising of dwellings, or in the provision of services in connection. therewith, on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, disability, familial status, and sex, as implemented by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development at 24 C.F.R. Part 100. The prohibition on disability discrimination includes the requirement that new multifamily housing with four or more dwelling units— i.e., the public and common use areas and individual apartment units (all units in buildings with elevators and ground-floor units in buildings without elevators)—be designed and constructed with certain accessible features. See 24 C.F.R. Part 100, Subpart D.

Article 8 **Communication and Cooperation with the Department of Homeland Security and Immigration Officials**

(1) The Department of Homeland Security will analyze whether the conditions in this section will be applied to any grant program in a way that is consistent with the specific statutes that apply to each grant program because the purpose of each grant program has a nexus to immigration activities, law enforcement, or national security, including preventing and responding to acts of terrorism and extremism, and DHS may tailor the conditions in this section to a specific grant program. DHS will clarify in the grant documents whether and how the terms in this section apply to each grant. (2) Where applicable, recipients and subrecipients of funds under an award must agree that they will comply with the following requirements related to coordination and cooperation with DHS and immigration officials: (a) They must comply with the requirements of 8 U.S.C. §§ 1373 and 1644. These statutes prohibit restrictions on information sharing by state and local government entities with DHS regarding the citizenship or immigration status, lawful or unlawful, of any individual. Additionally, 8 U.S.C. §§ 1373 prohibits any person or agency from prohibiting, or in any way restricting, a Federal, State, or local government entity from doing any of the following with respect to information regarding the immigration status of any individual: 1) sending such information to, or requesting or receiving such information from, Federal immigration officials; 2) maintaining such information; or 3) exchanging such information with any other Federal, State, or local government entity; (b) They must comply with other relevant laws related to immigration, including prohibitions on encouraging or inducing an alien to come to, enter, or reside in the United States in violation of law, 8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(iv), prohibitions on transporting or moving illegal aliens, 8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(ii), prohibitions on harboring, concealing, or shielding from detection illegal aliens, 8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(iii), and any applicable conspiracy, aiding or abetting, or attempt liability regarding these statutes; (c) That they will honor requests for cooperation, such as participation in joint operations, sharing of information, or requests for short term detention of an alien pursuant to a valid detainer. A jurisdiction does not fail to comply with this requirement merely because it lacks the necessary resources to assist in a particular instance; (d) That they will provide access to detainees, such as when an immigration officer seeks to interview a person who might be a removable alien; and (e) That they will not leak or otherwise publicize the existence of an immigration enforcement operation. (3) The recipient must certify under penalty of perjury pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746 and using a form that is acceptable to DHS, that it will comply with the requirements of this term. Additionally, the recipient agrees that it will require any subrecipients or contractors to certify in the same manner that they will comply with this term prior to providing them with any funding under this award. (4) The recipient agrees that compliance with this term is material to the Government’s decision to make or continue with this award and that the Department of homeland Security may terminate this grant, or take any other allowable enforcement action, if the recipient fails to comply with this term.

Article 9	**CHIPS and Science Act of 2022** (1) Recipients of DHS research and development (R&D) awards must report to the DHS Component research program office any finding or determination of sex based and sexual harassment and/or an administrative or disciplinary action taken against principal investigators (PI) or co-investigators (Co-PI) to be completed by an authorized organizational representative (AOR) at the recipient institution. (2) Notification. An AOR must disclose the following information to agencies within 10 days of the date that the finding is made, or 10 days from when a recipient imposes an administrative action on the reported individual, whichever is sooner. Reports should include: (a) Award number, (b) Name of PI or Co-PI being reported, (c) Awardee name, (d) Awardee address, (e) AOR name, title, phone, and email address, (f) Indication of the report type: (i) Finding or determination has been made that the reported individual violated awardee policies or codes of conduct, statutes, or regulations related to sexual harassment, sexual assault, or other forms of harassment, including the date that the finding was made. (ii) Imposition of an administrative or disciplinary action by the recipient on the reporting individual related to a finding/determination or an investigation of an alleged violation of recipient policy or codes of conduct, statutes, or regulations, or other forms of harassment. (iii) The date and nature of the administrative/disciplinary action, including a basic explanation or description of the event, which should not disclose personally identifiable information regarding any complaints or individuals involved. Any description provided must be consistent with the Family Educational Rights in Privacy Act. (3) Definitions. (a) An “authorized organizational representative (AOR)” is an administrative official who, on behalf of the proposing institution, is empowered to make certifications and representations and can commit the institution to the conduct of a project that an agency is being asked to support as well as adhere to various agency policies and award requirements. (b) “Principal investigators and co-principal investigators” are award personnel supported by a grant, cooperative agreement, or contract under Federal law. (c) A “reported individual” refers to recipient personnel who have been reported to a federal agency for potential sexual harassment violations. (d) “Sex based harassment” means a form of sex discrimination and includes harassment based on sex, sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, and gender identity. (e) “Sexual harassment” means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual’s employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual’s work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment, whether such activity is carried out by a supervisor or by a co-worker, volunteer, or contractor.
Article 10	**Copyright** Recipients must affix the applicable copyright notices of 17 U.S.C. §§ 401 or 402 to any work first produced under federal awards and also include an acknowledgement that the work was produced under a federal award (including the federal award number and federal awarding agency). As detailed in 2 C.F.R. § 200.315, a federal awarding agency reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the work for federal purposes and to authorize others to do so.

Article 11	**Debarment and Suspension** Recipients must comply with the non-procurement debarment and suspension regulations implementing Executive Orders 12549 and 12689 set forth at 2 C.F.R. Part 180 as implemented by DHS at 2 C.F.R. Part 3000. These regulations prohibit recipients from entering into covered transactions (such as subawards and contracts) with certain parties that are debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in federal assistance programs or activities.
Article 12	**Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988** Recipients must comply with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 and drug-free workplace requirements in Subpart B (or Subpart C, if the recipient is an individual) of 2 C.F.R. Part 3001, which adopts the government-wide implementation of the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988.
Article 13	**Duplicative Costs** Recipients are prohibited from charging any cost to this federal award that will be included as a cost or used to meet cost sharing requirements of any other federal award in either the current or a prior budget period. However, recipients may shift costs that are allowable under two or more federal awards where otherwise permitted by federal statutes, regulations, or the federal award terms and conditions.
Article 14	**Education Amendments of 1972 (Equal Opportunity in Education Act) – Title IX** Recipients must comply with the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Pub. L. 92-318 (codified as amended at 20 U.S.C. § 1681 et seq.), which provide that no person in the United States will, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. DHS implementing regulations are codified at 6 C.F.R. Part 17. FEMA's implementing regulations are in 44 C.F.R. Part 19.
Article 15	**Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975** Recipients must comply with the requirements of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act, Pub. L. No. 94-163 (1975) (codified as amended at 42 U.S.C. § 6201 et seq.), which policies relating to energy efficiency that are defined in the state energy conservation plan issued in compliance with the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975.
Article 16	**Equal Treatment of Faith-Based Organizations** Recipients must comply with the equal treatment policies and requirements contained in 6 C.F.R. Part 19 and other applicable statutes, regulations, and guidance governing the participations of faith-based organizations in individual DHS programs. It is DHS policy to ensure the equal treatment of faith-based organizations in social service programs administered or supported by DHS or its component agencies, enabling those organizations to participate in providing important social services to beneficiaries.

Article 17	**False Claims Act and Program Fraud Civil Remedies** Recipients must comply with the requirements of the False Claims Act, 31 U.S.C. §§ 3729- 3733, which prohibits the submission of false or fraudulent claims for payment to the Federal Government and details the administrative remedies for false claims and statements made.
Article 18	**Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws Material to the Government's Payment Decisions Under the False Claims Act** Recipients must agree that its compliance in all respects with all applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws is material to the government's payment decisions for purposes of 31 U.S.C. § 3729(b)(4) (Definition of "material"). (1) Definitions. As used in this term – (a) DEI means "diversity, equity, and inclusion." (b) DEIA means "diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility." (c) Discriminatory equity ideology has the meaning set forth in Section 2(b) of Executive Order 14190. (d) Federal anti-discrimination laws mean Federal civil rights law that protect individual Americans from discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, and national origin. (e) Illegal immigrant means any alien, as defined in 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(3), who has no lawful immigration status in the United States. (2) Grant award certification. (a) By accepting the grant award, recipients are certifying that: (i) They do not, and will not during the term of this financial assistance award, operate any programs that advance or promote DEI, DEIA, or discriminatory equity ideology in violation of Federal anti-discrimination laws; and (ii) They do not, and will not during the term of this award, operate any program that benefits illegal immigrants or incentivizes illegal immigration. (3) DHS reserves the right to suspend payments in whole or in part and/or terminate financial assistance awards if the Secretary of Homeland Security or the Secretary's designee determines that the recipient has violated any provision of subsection (2). (4) Upon suspension or termination under subsection (3), all funds received by the recipient shall be deemed to be in excess of the amount that the recipient is determined to be entitled to under the Federal award for purposes of 2 C.F.R. § 200.346. As such, all amounts received will constitute a debt to the Federal Government that may be pursued to the maximum extent permitted by law.
Article 19	**Federal Debt Status** All recipients are required to be non-delinquent in their repayment of any federal debt. Examples of relevant debt include delinquent payroll and other taxes, audit disallowances, and benefit overpayments.
Article 20	**Fly America Act** Recipients must comply with Preference for U.S. Flag Air Carriers (Certificated Air Carriers List | US Department of Transportation) for international air transportation of people and property to the extent that such service is available, in accordance with the International Air Transportation Fair Competitive Practices Act of 1974, 49 U.S.C. § 40118, and the interpretative guidelines issued by the Comptroller General of the United States in the March 31, 1981, amendment to Comptroller General Decision B-138942.

Article 21	**Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990** Recipients must ensure that all conference, meeting, convention, or training space funded entirely or in part by federal award funds complies with the fire prevention and control guidelines of Section 6 of the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990.
Article 22	**John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2019** Recipients, subrecipients, and their contractors and subcontractors are prohibited from obligating or expending federal award funds on certain telecommunications and video surveillance products and contracting with certain entities for national security reasons described in section 889 of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019, 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.216, 200.327, 200.471, and Appendix II to 2 C.F.R. Part 200.
Article 23	**Lobbying Prohibitions** None of the funds provided under a federal award may be expended by the recipient to pay any person to influence, or attempt to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with any federal action related to a federal award or contract, including any extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification. Recipients must file a lobbying certification form found on Grants.gov Lobbying Form as described in Appendix A to 6 C.F.R. Part 9, and file a lobbying disclosure form as described in Appendix B to 6 C.F.R. Part 9 found on Grants.gov as the Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL).
Article 24	**National Environmental Policy Act** Recipients must comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, (NEPA).
Article 25	**National Security Presidential Memorandum-33 (NSPM-33) and Provisions of the Science and CHIPS Act of 2022** (1) Recipient research institutions (“covered institutions”) must comply with the requirements in NSPM-33 and provisions of Pub. L.117-167, Section 10254 (codified at 42 U.S.C. § 18951) certifying that the institution has established and operates a research security program that includes elements relating to: (a) cybersecurity; (b) foreign travel security; (c) research security training; and (d) export control training, as appropriate. (2) Definition. “Covered institutions” means recipient research institutions receiving federal Research and Development (R&D) science and engineering support “in excess of $50 million per year.”
Article 26	**Patents and Intellectual Property Rights** Recipients are subject to the Bayh-Dole Act, 35 U.S.C. § 200 et seq. and applicable regulations governing inventions and patents, including the regulations issued by the Department of Commerce at 37 C.F.R. Part 401 (Rights to Inventions Made by Nonprofit Organizations and Small Business Firms under Government Awards, Contracts, and Cooperative Agreements) and the standard patent rights clause set forth at 37 C.F.R. § 401.14.

Article 27	**Procurement of Recovered Materials** States, political subdivisions of states, and their contractors must comply with Section 6002 of the Solid Waste Disposal Act, Pub. L. 89-272 (1965) (codified as amended by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act at 42 U.S.C. § 6962) and 2 C.F.R. § 200.323. The requirements of Section 6002 include procuring only items designated in guidelines of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at 40 C.F.R. Part 247 that contain the highest percentage of recovered materials practicable, consistent with maintaining a satisfactory level of competition.
Article 28	**Rehabilitation Act of 1973** Recipients must comply with the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Pub. L. 93-112 (codified as amended at 29 U.S.C. § 794), which provides that no otherwise qualified handicapped individuals in the United States will, solely by reason of the handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.
Article 29	**Reporting Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters** If the total value of any currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from all federal awarding agencies exceeds $10,000,000 for any period of time during the period of performance of the federal award, then the recipient must comply with the requirements set forth in the government-wide federal award term and condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters in 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Appendix XII, the full text of which is incorporated by reference.
Article 30	**Reporting Subawards and Executive Compensation** For federal awards that total or exceed $30,000, recipients are required to comply with the government-wide federal award term and condition on Reporting Subawards and Executive Compensation set forth at 2 C.F.R. Part 170, Appendix A, the full text of which is incorporated by reference.

Article 31	**Required Use of American Iron, Steel, Manufactured Products, and Construction Materials** (1) Recipients of a federal award from a financial assistance program that provides funding for infrastructure are hereby notified that none of the funds provided under this federal award may be used for a project for infrastructure unless: (a) all iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States—this means all manufacturing processes, from the initial melting stage through the application of coatings, occurred in the United States; (b) all manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States—this means the manufactured product was manufactured in the United States; and the cost of the components of the manufactured product that are mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States is greater than 55 percent of the total cost of all components of the manufactured product, unless another standard for determining the minimum amount of domestic content of the manufactured product has been established under applicable law or regulation; and (c) all construction materials are manufactured in the United States—this means that all manufacturing processes for the construction material occurred in the United States. (2) The Buy America preference only applies to articles, materials, and supplies that are consumed in, incorporated into, or affixed to an infrastructure project. As such, it does not apply to tools, equipment, and supplies, such as temporary scaffolding, brought to the construction site and removed at or before the completion of the infrastructure project. Nor does a Buy America preference apply to equipment and furnishings, such as movable chairs, desks, and portable computer equipment, that are used at or within the finished infrastructure project but are not an integral part of the structure or permanently affixed to the infrastructure project. (3) Waivers. When necessary, recipients may apply for, and the agency may grant, a waiver from these requirements. The agency should notify the recipient for information on the process for requesting a waiver from these requirements. a. When the Federal agency has determined that one of the following exceptions applies, the federal awarding official may waive the application of the domestic content procurement preference in any case in which the agency determines that: i. applying the domestic content procurement preference would be inconsistent with the public interest; ii. the types of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials are not produced in the United States in sufficient and reasonably available quantities or of a satisfactory quality; or iii. the inclusion of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials produced in the United States will increase the cost of the overall project by more than 25%. b. A request to waive the application of the domestic content procurement preference must be in writing. The agency will provide instructions on the format, contents, and supporting materials required for any waiver request. Waiver requests are subject to public comment periods of no less than 15 days and must be reviewed by the Made in America Office. c. There may be instances where a federal award qualifies, in whole or in part, for an existing waiver described at "Buy America" Preference in FEMA Financial Assistance Programs for Infrastructure | FEMA.gov. (4) Definitions. The definitions applicable to this term are set forth at 2 C.F.R. § 184.3, the full text of which is incorporated by reference.
Article 32	**Subrecipient Monitoring and Management** Pass-through entities must comply with the requirements for subrecipient monitoring and management.

Article 33	**System for Award Management and Unique Entity Identifier Requirements** Recipients are required to comply with the requirements set forth in the governmentwide federal award term and condition regarding the System for Award Management and Unique Entity Identifier Requirements in 2 C.F.R. Part 25, Appendix A, the full text of which is incorporated reference.
Article 34	**Termination of a Federal Award** (1) By DHS. DHS may terminate a federal award, in whole or in part, for the following reasons: (a) If the recipient fails to comply with the terms and conditions of the federal award; (b) With the consent of the recipient, in which case the parties must agree upon the termination conditions, including the effective date, and in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated; (c) Pursuant to the terms and conditions of the federal award; or (d) For convenience, pursuant to Executive Order 14332, Improving Oversight of Federal Grantmaking, including when the award no longer advances agency priorities or the national interest, but subject to appropriate exceptions, including agreements entered into in furtherance of international trade agreements or those awarded by the Department of Commerce under title XCIX of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (Public Law 116-283), the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 (Public Law 117-167), or Division F of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Public Law 117-58). (2) By the Recipient. The recipient may terminate the federal award, in whole or in part, by sending written notification to DHS stating the reasons for such termination, the effective date, and in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated. However, if DHS determines that the remaining portion of the federal award will not accomplish the purposes for which the federal award was made, DHS may terminate the federal award in its entirety. (3) Notice. Either party will provide written notice of intent to terminate for any reason to the other party no less than 30 calendar days prior to the effective date of the termination. (4) Compliance with Closeout Requirements for Terminated Awards. The recipient must continue to comply with closeout requirements in 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.344-200.345 after an award is terminated.
Article 35	**Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000** Recipients must comply with the requirements of the government-wide federal award term and condition which implements Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, Pub. L. 106-386, § 106 (codified as amended at 22 U.S.C. § 7104). The federal award term and condition is in 2 C.F.R. § 175.105, the full text of which is incorporated by reference.
Article 36	**Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT Act of 2001)** Recipients must comply with the requirements of Pub. L. 107-56, Section 817 of the USA PATRIOT Act, which amends 18 U.S.C. §§ 175–175c.
Article 37	**Whistleblower Protection Act** Recipients must comply with the statutory requirements for whistleblower protections in 10 U.S.C § 4701 and 41 U.S.C. § 4712.

Article 38	**All Executive Orders Related to Grants** Presidential Executive Orders. Recipients must comply with the requirements and actions of Presidential executive orders related to grants (also known as federal assistance and financial assistance), including those published after the date of this publication, the full text of which are incorporated by reference.
Article 39	**Executive Order 14332, Improving Oversight of Federal Grantmaking** Draw Down of Funds. Recipients are prohibited from directly drawing down general grant funds for specific projects without the affirmative authorization of DHS. Recipients must provide written payment justification, with specificity, for requests for each drawdown.
Article 40	**Executive Order 13513, Federal Leadership on Reducing Text Messaging While Driving** Federal Leadership on Reducing Text Messaging While Driving. Recipients are encouraged to adopt and enforce policies that ban text messaging while driving recipient-owned, recipient-rented, or privately owned vehicles when on official government business or when performing any work for or on behalf of the Federal Government. Recipients are also encouraged to conduct the initiatives of the type described in Section 3(a) of Executive Order 13513.
Article 41	**Executive Order 13224, Blocking Property and Prohibiting Transactions With Persons Who Commit, Threaten to Commit, or Support Terrorism** Terrorist Financing. Recipients must comply with Executive Order 13224 and applicable statutory prohibitions on transactions with, and the provisions of resources and support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism. Recipients are legally responsible for ensuring compliance with the Executive Order and laws.
Article 42	**Acknowledgement of Federal Funding from DHS** Recipients must acknowledge their use of federal award funding when issuing statements, press releases, requests for proposal, bid invitations, and other documents describing projects or programs funded in whole or in part with federal award funds.
Article 43	**Activities Conducted Abroad** Recipients must coordinate with appropriate government authorities when performing project activities outside the United States obtain all appropriate licenses, permits, or approvals.

Article 44	**Collection and Use of Personally Identifiable Information** (1) Recipients who collect personally identifiable information (PII) as part of carrying out the scope of work under a federal award are required to have a publicly available privacy policy that describes standards on the usage and maintenance of the PII they collect. (2) Definition. DHS defines “PII” as any information that permits the identity of an individual to be directly or indirectly inferred, including any information that is linked or linkable to that individual. Recipients may also find the DHS Privacy Impact Assessments: Privacy Guidance and Privacy Template as useful resources respectively.
Article 45	**Non-Supplanting Requirements** Recipients of federal awards under programs that prohibit supplanting by law must ensure that federal funds supplement but do not supplant non-federal funds that, in the absence of such federal funds, would otherwise have been made available for the same purpose.
Article 46	**Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Requirements** All the instructions, guidance, limitations, scope of work, and other conditions set forth in the NOFO for this federal award are incorporated by reference. All recipients must comply with any such requirements set forth in the NOFO. If a condition of the NOFO is inconsistent with these terms and conditions and any such terms of the federal award, the condition in the NOFO shall be invalid to the extent of the inconsistency. The remainder of that condition and all other conditions set forth in the NOFO shall remain in effect.
Article 47	**SAFECOM** Recipients receiving federal awards made under DHS programs that provide 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 SAFECOM Guidance is updated annually and can be found at Funding and Sustainment | CISA.
Article 48	**Use of DHS Seal, Logo, and Flags** Recipients must obtain written permission from DHS prior to using the DHS seals, logos, crests, or reproductions of flags, or likenesses of DHS agency officials. This includes use of DHS component (e.g., FEMA, CISA, etc.) seals, logos, crests, or reproductions of flags, or likenesses of component officials.

Article 49	**Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) Review** FEMA funded activities that could impact the environment and historic properties are subject to the FEMA EHP review process. This review does not address all federal, state, and local requirements. Acceptance of federal funding requires the recipient to comply with all federal, state, and local laws. FEMA is required to consider the potential impacts to natural and cultural resources of all projects funded by FEMA grant funds, through its EHP review process, as mandated by: the National Environmental Policy Act; Endangered Species Act; National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended; Clean Water Act; Clean Air Act; National Flood Insurance Program regulations; and any other applicable laws, regulations and executive orders (EO). General guidance for FEMA's EHP process is available on FEMA.gov. Specific applicant guidance on how to submit information for EHP review depends on the individual grant program. Applicants should contact their grant program officer to be put in contact with EHP staff responsible for assisting with their specific grant program. The FEMA EHP review process must be completed before funds are released to carry out the proposed project. Otherwise, FEMA may not be able to fund the project due to noncompliance with EHP laws, executive orders, regulations, and policies. FEMA may also need to perform a project closeout review to ensure the applicant complied with all required EHP conditions identified in the initial review. If ground is disturbed during construction, the applicant will monitor the ground disturbance, and if any potential archaeological resources are discovered, the applicant will immediately cease work in that area and notify the pass-through entity, if applicable, and FEMA. EO 11988, Floodplain Management, and EO 11990, Protection of Wetlands, require that all federal actions in or affecting the floodplain or wetlands be reviewed for opportunities to relocate, and be evaluated for social, economic, historical, environmental, legal, and safety considerations. FEMA's regulations at 44 C.F.R. Part 9 implement the EOs and require an eight-step review process if a proposed action is in a floodplain or wetland or has the potential to affect or be affected by a floodplain or wetland.
Article 50	**Applicability of DHS Standard Terms and Conditions to Tribal Nations** The DHS Standard Terms and Conditions are a restatement of general requirements imposed upon recipients and flow down to sub-recipients as a matter of law, regulation, or executive order. If the requirement does not apply to Tribal Nations, or there is a federal law or regulation exempting its application to Tribal Nations, then the acceptance by Tribal Nations, or acquiescence to DHS Standard Terms and Conditions does not change or alter its inapplicability to a Tribal Nation. The execution of grant documents is not intended to change, alter, amend, or impose additional liability or responsibility upon the Tribal Nations where it does not already exist.
Article 51	**Acceptance of Post Award Changes** Should FEMA determine that an error has been made in the award package, or if an administrative change must be made to the award package, recipients will be notified of the change in writing. Once the notification has been made, any subsequent requests for funds will indicate recipient acceptance of the changes to the award. Please email FEMA Grant Management Operations at ASK-GMD@fema.dhs.gov for any questions.

Article 52	**Disposition of Equipment Acquired Under the Federal Award** When original or replacement equipment acquired under this 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 non-state recipient or subrecipient (including subrecipients of a state or Tribal Nation), must request instructions from FEMA to make proper disposition of the equipment pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.313(e). State recipients must follow the disposition requirements in accordance with state laws and procedures noted in 2 C.F.R. § 200.313(b). Tribal Nations must follow the disposition requirements in accordance with tribal laws and procedures noted in 2 C.F.R. § 200.313(b); and if such laws and procedures do not exist, then Tribal Nations must follow the disposition instructions in 2 C.F.R. § 200.313(e).
Article 53	**Prior Approval for Modification of Approved Budget** Before making any change to the FEMA approved budget for this award, a written request must be submitted and approved by FEMA as required by 2 C.F.R. § 200.308. For purposes of non-construction projects, FEMA is using its discretion to impose an additional restriction under 2 C.F.R. § 200.308(i) regarding the transfer of funds among direct cost categories, programs, functions, or activities. For awards with an approved budget where the federal share is greater than the simplified acquisition threshold (currently $350,000) and where the cumulative amount of such transfers exceeds or is expected to exceed 10% of the total budget FEMA last approved, transferring funds among direct cost categories, programs, functions, or activities is unallowable without prior written approval from FEMA. For purposes of awards that support both construction and non-construction work, 2 C.F.R. § 200.308(f)(9) requires the recipient to obtain prior written approval from FEMA before making any fund or budget transfers between the two types of work. Any deviations from a FEMA approved budget must be reported in the first Federal Financial Report (SF-425) that is submitted following any budget deviation, regardless of whether the budget deviation requires prior written approval.
Article 54	**Build America, Buy America Act (BABAA) Required Contract Provision & Self-Certification** In addition to the DHS Standard Terms & Conditions regarding Required Use of American Iron, Steel, Manufactured Products, and Construction Materials, recipients and subrecipients of FEMA financial assistance programs that are subject to BABAA must include a Buy America Preference contract provision as noted in 2 C.F.R. § 184.4 and a contractor self-certification as required by the FEMA Buy America Preference in FEMA Financial Assistance Programs for Infrastructure Policy (FEMA Policy #207-22-0001). This requirement applies to all subawards, contracts, and purchase orders for work performed, or products supplied under the FEMA award subject to BABAA.

Article 55	**Award Performance Goals** FEMA will measure the recipient's performance of the grant by comparing the firefighter hiring activities of new, additional firefighters, rehire laid off firefighters, or retain firefighters facing layoff OR recruitment and retention activities of volunteer firefighters who are involved with or trained in the operations of firefighting and emergency response as requested in its application. In order to measure performance, FEMA may request information throughout the period of performance. In its final performance report submitted at closeout, the recipient is required to report on the recipients increased compliance with the National standards described in the NOFO.
Article 56	**Indirect Cost Rate** 2 C.F.R. § 200.211(b)(16) requires the terms of the award to include the indirect cost rate for the federal award. If applicable, the approved indirect cost rate associated with the award must be documented in the budget or other award materials approved by FEMA and maintained in the official award file.

Obligating document

1. Agreement No.	**2. Amendment No.**	**3. Recipient No.**	**4. Type of Action**	**5. Control No.**
EMW-2025-FF-00860	N/A	596000825	AWARD	WX01673N2026T

6. Recipient Name and Address	**7. Issuing FEMA Office and Address**	**8. Payment Office and Address**
SAINT JOHNS COUNTY 500 SAN SEBASTIAN VW SAINT AUGUSTINE, FL 32084	Grant Programs Directorate 500 C Street, S.W. Washington DC, 20528-7000 1-866-927-5646	FEMA, Financial Services Branch 500 C Street, S.W., Room 723 Washington DC, 20742

9. Name of Recipient Project Officer	**9a. Phone No.**	**10. Name of FEMA Project Coordinator**	**10a. Phone No.**
Jeremy Robshaw	9044846026	Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program	1-866-274-0960

11. Effective Date of This Action	**12. Method of Payment**	**13. Assistance Arrangement**	**14. Performance Period**
09/25/2026	OTHER - FEMA GO	COST SHARING	03/24/2027 to 03/23/2030 **Budget Period** 03/24/2027 to 03/23/2030

15. Description of Action a. (Indicate funding data for awards or financial changes)

Program Name Abbreviation	Assistance Listing No.	Accounting Data (ACCS Code)	Prior Total Award	Amount Awarded This Action + or (-)	Current Total Award	Cumulative Non-Federal Commitment
FF	97.083	2026-FK-GF01 - P410-xxxx-4101-D	$0.00	$6,425,137.32	$6,425,137.32	3,994,004.28
		Totals	$0.00	$6,425,137.32	$6,425,137.32	$3,994,004.28

b. To describe changes other than funding data or financial changes, attach schedule and check here:
N/A

~~16.FOR NON-DISASTER PROGRAMS: RECIPIENT IS REQUIRED TO SIGN AND RETURN THREE (3) COPIES OF THIS DOCUMENT TO FEMA (See Block 7 for address)~~
This field is not applicable for digitally signed grant agreements

17. RECIPIENT SIGNATORY OFFICIAL (Name and Title)	**DATE**
18. FEMA SIGNATORY OFFICIAL (Name and Title) **Cynthia Spishak, Acting Associate Administrator Resilience**	**DATE** **09/25/2026**

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Fiscal Year 2025 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program

Fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, and other criminal or noncriminal misconduct related to this program may be reported to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) Hotline. The toll-free numbers to call are (800) 323-8603 and TTY (844) 889-4357.

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1. Basic Information

A. Agency Name	U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Resilience/Grant Programs Directorate (GPD)
B. NOFO Title	Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant
C. Announcement Type	Initial
D. Funding Opportunity Number	DHS-25-GPD-083-00-99
E. Assistance Listing Number	97.083
F. Expected Total Funding	$324 million
G. Anticipated Number of Awards	190 awards
H. Expected Award Range	N/A
I. Projected Application Start Date	May 19, 2026 at 8 a.m. ET
J. Projected Application End Date	June 22, 2026 at 5 p.m. ET
K. Anticipated Funding Selection Date	No later than September 30, 2026
L. Anticipated Award Date	Beginning on approximately September 14, 2026, and continuing thereafter until all FY 2025 SAFER Program grant awards are issued (but no later than September 30, 2026).
M. Projected Period of Performance Start Date	N/A[1]
N. Projected Period of Performance End Date	N/A
O. Executive Summary	The FY 2025 SAFER Grant Program, known as the SAFER Program, is one of three grant programs from DHS and FEMA that improve

[1] FEMA funds SAFER Program awards on a rolling basis; as such, the date the FEMA Assistant Administrator for the Grant Programs Directorate signs the obligating document dictates the unique Period of Performance start and end dates for each award.

	public and firefighter safety related to fire hazards. The SAFER Program provides funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter organizations to increase the number of firefighters. This funding supports communities in meeting industry standards, achieving 24-hour staffing, and ensuring adequate protection from fire hazards while supporting the traditional missions of fire departments. Since its launch in 2005, the SAFER Program has awarded approximately $6.1 billion in grants. These funds have been used to hire new firefighters, convert part-time or paid-on-call firefighters to full-time roles, and recruit and retain volunteer firefighters. For examples of how this program has made a difference, visit the Assistance to Firefighters Grants Program page on FEMA.gov.
P. Agency Contact	**a.** ***Fire Grants Program Office Contact*** The Fire Grants Program Help Desk provides technical assistance to applicants for the online completion and submission of applications into FEMA Grants Outcomes (FEMA GO), answers questions concerning applicant eligibility, recipient responsibilities, and helps in the programmatic administration of awards. The Fire Grants Program Help Desk can be contacted at (866) 274-0960 or by email at FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov. Normal hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. ET. Guidance documents such as application tutorials, Self-Evaluation Guides, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are also provided to further explain the current SAFER Program, assist with the online grant application, and highlight lessons learned and changes for FY 2025. For more details, please visit the SAFER Program website. **b.** ***FEMA Grants News*** This channel provides general information on all FEMA grant programs and maintains a comprehensive database containing key personnel contact information at the federal, state, and local levels. FEMA Grants News Team is reachable at fema-grants-news@fema.dhs.gov OR (800) 368-6498, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. ET. **c.** ***Grant Programs Directorate (GPD) Award Administration Division*** GPD's Award Administration Division (AAD) provides support regarding financial matters and budgetary technical assistance. AAD can be contacted at ASK-GMD@fema.dhs.gov. **d.** ***FEMA Regional Offices*** Assistance to Firefighters Grants Regional Contacts also may provide fiscal support, including pre- and post-award administration and technical assistance. Assistance to Firefighters Grants Regional Office

	contacts are available at Assistance to Firefighters Grants Regional Contacts | FEMA.gov. **e.** ***Civil Rights*** Consistent with Executive Order 14173, Ending Illegal Discrimination & Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity, the FEMA Integration and Coordination Division (ICD) is responsible for ensuring compliance with and enforcement of federal civil rights obligations in connection with programs and services conducted by FEMA. They are reachable at fema-ocr@fema.dhs.gov. **f.** ***Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation*** The FEMA Office of Environmental Planning and Historic Planning (OEHP) provides guidance and information about the EHP review process to FEMA programs and recipients and subrecipients. Send any inquiries regarding compliance for FEMA grant projects under this NOFO to FEMA-OEHP-NOFOQuestions@fema.dhs.gov. ***g. Payment and Reporting System*** FEMA uses FEMA GO for financial reporting, invoicing, and tracking payments. The Direct Deposit/Electronic Funds Transfer (DD/EFT) method of payment is used for recipients. For any questions about the system, contact the FEMA GO Helpdesk at femago@fema.dhs.gov or (877) 585-3242, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. ET. ***h. FEMA GO*** For technical assistance with the FEMA GO system, please contact the FEMA GO Helpdesk at femago@fema.dhs.gov or (877) 585-3242, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. ET.

2. Eligibility

A. Eligible Entities/Entity Types	Only the following entities or entity types are eligible to apply. **a.** ***Applicants*** • Fire departments; and • National, regional, state, local, tribal and nonprofit interest organizations[2] representing the interests of volunteer firefighters are eligible to receive a SAFER Program award under the Recruitment and Retention (R&R) Activity.

[2] The District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are all defined as "States" in the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974. See 15 U.S.C. § 2203(10).

	See Section A of Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities for additional information on ineligible applications and organizations. **b. *Subapplicants*** Subapplicants and subawards are not allowed. Subapplicants should not have foreign nationals or noncitizens included. If a subapplicant has foreign nationals, they must be properly vetted and must adhere to all government statutes, policies and procedures including "staff American, stay in America" and security requirements.
B. Project Type Eligibility	**a. *Unallowable Project Types*** • Under the Recruitment and Retention (R&R) Activity, applications that request a Staffing Needs Assessment or Risk Assessment project are precluded from applying for additional R&R-related activities. • FEMA will not fund any projects, activities or line items that are covered under a department's normal operating budget. Federal funding may not be used to supplant (i.e., replace) an existing activity or program. • Applicants may not use award funds for matching funds for any other federal grants or cooperative agreements, for lobbying, or for intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. Applicants may not use federal funds to sue the Federal Government or any other government entity. **b. *Allowable Project Types*** 1. Hiring Activity The Hiring Activity provides grants to support fire departments in hiring new firefighters or converting part-time or paid-on-call firefighters to full-time positions. However, national, regional, state, local, Tribal Nation, and nonprofit organizations that represent volunteer firefighters are not eligible for SAFER Program awards under the Hiring Activity. 2. R&R Activity The R&R Activity provides grants to help fire departments recruit and retain volunteer firefighters trained in firefighting and emergency response operations. Career fire departments are not eligible for funding under the R&R Activity.

	Each activity has its own application and eligibility requirements, as further outlined in Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities of this NOFO.
C. Requirements for Personnel, Partners, and Other Parties	An application submitted by an otherwise eligible non-federal entity (i.e., the applicant) may be deemed ineligible when the person that submitted the application is not: **1) a current employee, personnel, official, staff, or leadership of the non-federal entity; and 2) duly authorized to apply for an award on behalf of the non-federal entity at the time of application**. Further, the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) must be a duly authorized current employee, personnel, official, staff, or leadership of the recipient and **provide an email address unique to the recipient at the time of application and upon any change in assignment during the period of performance (POP). Consultants or contractors of the recipient are not permitted to be the AOR of the recipient.** Subapplicants should not have foreign nationals or noncitizens included. If a subapplicant has foreign nationals, they must be properly vetted and must adhere to all government statues, polices, and procedures including "staff American, stay in America" and security requirements. Subapplicants/subrecipients must submit short bios and resumes. This should include the type of entity, organizational leadership, and board members along with the both the names and addresses of the individuals. Resumes are subject to approval.
D. Maximum Number of Applications	The maximum number of applications that can be submitted is one application per activity.
E. Additional Restrictions	**a.** ***POP Restrictions*** 1. Hiring Activity The POP for applications funded under the Hiring Activity will be 36 months. A default 180-day recruitment period begins when FEMA approves an application for an award under this activity. The 36-month POP automatically starts after the 180-day recruitment period, regardless of whether the recipient has hired the requested firefighters. The POP cannot start later than 180 days after the award date.

	If a recipient can hire all SAFER Program-funded firefighters during the 180-day recruitment period, the POP may begin at that time. In these instances, recipients must submit an amendment requesting that the POP start before the end of the 180-day recruitment period if they wish to begin the period early. 2. R&R Activity The POP for applications funded under the R&R Activity will be 12, 24, 36 or 48 months. A default 90-day recruitment period begins when FEMA approves the application for award under this activity. This period allows each recipient time to gather resources, initiate processes, and finalize contracts needed to implement SAFER Program activities before the start of the POP. By the start of the POP, the recipient should be fully prepared to implement all awarded activities and begin drawing down awarded funds. The recipient can only expend funds within the POP. The POP automatically starts after the 90-day recruitment period ends, regardless of whether the recipient has begun implementing its grant award. The POP cannot start later than 90 days after the award date. If a recipient can begin its recruitment or retention activities during the 90-day recruitment period, the POP may begin at that time. In these instances, recipients must submit an amendment requesting that the POP start before the end of the 90-day recruitment period if they wish to begin the period early. Extensions to the POP are allowed for R&R Activity grants only. Recipients must submit all proposed extension requests to FEMA for review and approval at least 120 days before the end of the POP to allow sufficient processing time. For additional information on POP extensions, please refer to Section 10.A. **b.** ***National Incident Management System (NIMS) Implementation*** SAFER Program applicants are not required to comply with NIMS to apply for SAFER Program funding or to receive a SAFER Program award. Any applicant who receives an FY 2025 SAFER Program award must achieve the level of NIMS compliance required by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) over the applicant's emergency service operations (e.g., a local government), before the end of the grant's POP.

	Applicants/subapplicants or recipients/subrecipients are required to certify their compliance with federal statutes, DHS directives, polices, and procedures.
F. References for Eligibility Factors within the NOFO	Please see the following references provided below: 1.“Responsiveness Review Criteria” subsection 2 “Threshold Criteria” subsection 3 “Application Criteria” subsection 4. FEMA may/will request financial information such as Employer Identification Number (EIN) and bank information as part of the potential award selection. This will apply to everyone prospered, including subrecipients. 5. “Supplemental Financial Integrity Criteria and Review” subsection 6. Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities
G. Cost Sharing Requirement	For Hiring Activity grants, applicants selected for this award must commit to an acceptable cost share agreement. Otherwise, they will not be funded. For R&R Activity grants, there is no cost share requirement. Please see Application Criteria for more information.
H. Cost Share Description, Type and Restrictions	For Hiring Activity grants, recipients are required to contribute 25% of the actual costs incurred in each of the first and second years of the grant; and 65% of the actual costs incurred in the third year of the grant. In the first and second years of the grant, the amount of federal funding may not exceed 75% of the usual annual cost of a first-year firefighter in that department at the time the grant application was submitted; and in the third year of the grant the amount of federal funding may not exceed 35% of the usual annual cost of a first-year firefighter in that department. The “usual annual cost” includes a firefighter’s base salary (excluding non-Fair Labor Standards Act overtime) and standard benefits package (including the average annual cost of health, dental, and vision insurance; FICA; life insurance; retirement and/or pension contributions; etc.) offered by the fire department to first-year firefighters. For R&R Activity grants, there is no cost share requirement.

I. Cost Sharing Calculation Example	Assuming that the usual annual cost of a first-year firefighter in a department at the time of the grant application is $120,000 per year and the department actually incurred $100,000 per year in each year of the grant, the following cost share requirements and position cost limits would apply: 1. Cost Share Requirement: The grant recipient is required to contribute $25,000 in Year 1; $25,000 in Year 2; and $65,000 in Year 3. 2. Position Cost Limit: The amount of federal funding cannot exceed $90,000 in Year 1; $90,000 in Year 2; and $42,000 in Year 3.
J. Required information for verifying Cost Share	FEMA does not require recipients to demonstrate availability of cost share funds at the time of application. However, before FEMA issues an award, it may contact potential awardees to determine whether the recipient possesses the necessary non-federal funding. **a.** ***Minimum Budget Requirement*** In accordance with 15 U.S.C. § 2229a(c)(2), in order to be eligible for SAFER Program funding, applicants are required to certify that their annual budget for fire-related programs and emergency response has not been reduced below 80% of the applicant's average funding level in the three years prior to the application date. As part of each SAFER application, applicants are required to provide their total annual operating budget for the current fiscal year and the three years prior.

3. Program Description

A. Background, Program Purpose, and Program History
The FY 2025 SAFER Grant Program is one of three grant programs that constitute DHS and FEMA's focus on protecting the public and firefighters from fire and fire-related hazards. The SAFER Program provides funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations to assist in increasing the number of firefighters to help communities meet industry minimum standards and attain 24-hour staffing to provide adequate fire protection from fire and fire-related hazards, and to fulfill traditional missions of fire departments. Since 2005, the SAFER Program has awarded approximately $6.1 billion in grant funding to provide critically needed resources to hire new, additional firefighters (or to change the status of part-time or paid-on-call firefighters to full-time firefighters), as well as recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Information about success stories for this program can be found at Assistance to Firefighters Grants Program | FEMA.gov.

The SAFER Program is part of a comprehensive set of measures authorized by Congress and implemented by DHS. In awarding grants, the FEMA Administrator is required to consider:

- The findings and recommendations of the Technical Evaluation Panel;

- 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 a SAFER Program grant and the need to protect the United States as a whole; and
- The number of calls requesting or requiring a firefighting or emergency medical response received by an applicant.

B. Goals and Objectives

Goal: To enhance local fire departments' abilities to comply with staffing, response, and operational standards established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA 1710 or NFPA 1720).[3]

Objectives: The objectives of the SAFER Program are to provide funding to communities so they can:

- Increase the number of firefighters to meet industry minimum standards;
- Increase the number of trained personnel assembled at the incident scene;
- Attain 24-hour staffing to improve deployment capabilities; and
- Fulfill traditional missions of fire departments (respond to emergencies and provide adequate fire protection from fire and fire-related hazards).

Priorities: Information on program priorities and objectives for the FY 2025 SAFER Program can be found in Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities of this NOFO.

C. Program Rationale

The SAFER Program represents part of a comprehensive set of measures authorized by Congress and implemented by DHS. Among the six DHS Missions noted in the Department of Homeland Security's Strategic Plan, the SAFER Program supports Mission Five: Build a Resilient Nation and Respond to Incidents. By increasing the number of trained firefighters, the SAFER Program improves deployment capabilities to respond to emergencies and provide adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards. The SAFER Program also aims to support objectives outlined under Mission Five in the Strategic Plan including:

- Objective 5.1: Coordinate Federal Response to Incidents
- Objective 5.2: Strengthen National Resilience
- Objective 5.4: Enhance Training and Readiness of First Responders

Through these objectives, FEMA creates a vision for the field of emergency management and sets an ambitious, yet achievable, path forward to unify and further professionalize emergency

[3] NFPA 1710 and 1720 are lapsing in 2026 and will be consolidated under the proposed NFPA 1750. FEMA is working with the NFPA Standards Council to evaluate deployment of fire suppression operations. No decisions have been made, and FEMA will issue additional guidance when more information becomes available. Although the goal of the grant is to increase compliance with NFPA 1710 or 1720, 24-hour staffing is not a requirement of the SAFER Program.

management across the country. We invite all our stakeholders and partners to join us in building a more prepared and resilient nation.

D. Federal Assistance Type
Grant

E. Performance Measures and Targets
Grant recipients must collect data to help FEMA evaluate the performance of SAFER Program grants. These metrics align with the program's objectives and priorities. FEMA may request performance data throughout the grant's POP. At closeout, recipients must submit a final performance report with enough information to show they met the performance goals outlined in their award.

FEMA will assess performance by comparing the items, supplies, projects and activities requested in the application to those acquired and delivered by the end of the performance period. The following program metrics will be used:

- **Hiring Activity:**
  1. Percentage of "majority career" SAFER Program recipients' structural fire responses that complied with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1710 structural response standards.
  2. Number of full-time career firefighter positions filled.
- **R&R Activity:**
  1. Percentage of "majority volunteer" SAFER Program recipients' structural fire responses that complied with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1720 structural response standards.
  2. Number of operational volunteer firefighters who have joined a department.

The target for these measures is the number of firefighters hired and the resulting improvement in compliance with NFPA 1710 or 1720 standards. FEMA will assess how the addition of new firefighters increased compliance with the relevant NFPA standards.

F. Program-Specific Unallowable Costs
Construction costs are not allowable under the SAFER Program. Construction includes major alterations to a building that changes the profile or footprint of the structure.

Modifications to facilities described in Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities are not categorized as construction costs for general award purposes and may be eligible for funding. However, these activities may be considered 'construction' for procurement, environmental protection, or historic preservation purposes.

Please see Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities for additional information on funding restrictions and allowable costs.

G. General Funding Requirements

Costs charged to federal awards (including federal and non-federal cost share funds) must comply with applicable statutes, rules and regulations, policies, this NOFO, and the terms and conditions of the federal award. This includes, among other requirements, that costs must be incurred, and products and services must be delivered within the budget period. 2 C.F.R. § 200.403(h).

Recipients may not use federal funds or any cost share funds for the following activities:

1. Matching or cost sharing requirements for other federal grants and cooperative agreements (see 2 C.F.R. § 200.306).
2. Lobbying or other prohibited activities under 18 U.S.C § 1913 or 2 C.F.R. § 200.450.
3. Prosecuting claims against the federal government or any other government entity (see 2 C.F.R. § 200.435).

H. Indirect Costs (Facilities and Administrative Costs)
Indirect costs are allowed for recipients.
Indirect costs (IDC) are costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective and not readily assignable to specific cost objectives without disproportionate effort. Applicants with a current negotiated IDC rate agreement who want to charge indirect costs to a federal award must provide a copy of their IDC rate agreement with their applications. Not all applicants are required to have a current negotiated IDC rate agreement. Applicants that are not required to have a negotiated IDC rate agreement, but are required to develop an IDC rate proposal, must provide a copy of their proposal with their applications. Applicants without a current negotiated IDC rate agreement (including a provisional rate) and wish to charge the de minimis rate must reach out to FEMA for further instructions. Applicants who wish to use a cost allocation plan in lieu of an IDC rate proposal must reach out to FEMA for further instructions. As it relates to the IDC for subrecipients, a recipient must follow the requirements of 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.332 and 200.414 in approving the IDC rate for subawards.

I. Management and Administration (M&A) Costs
M&A costs are allowed only under the R&R Activity and are not allowed under the Hiring Activity.

Recipients may use up to 3% of the federal share of SAFER Program funds for M&A costs directly related to managing and administering the SAFER award, such as financial management and monitoring. These costs must be based on actual expenses or known contractual costs. Requests based on simple percentages of the award or unsupported estimates will not be approved or reimbursed. Salaries and fringe benefits for personnel directly supporting the grant do not need to be included in the M&A budget line item.

M&A are not overhead costs but are necessary direct costs incurred in direct support of the federal award or as a consequence of it, such as travel, meeting-related expenses, and salaries of full/part-time staff in direct support of the program. As such, M&A costs can be itemized in financial reports.

J. Pre-Award Costs
The following pre-award costs are allowable:

1. Fees for grant writers (capped at $1,500 of federal funds per application).

Generally, grant funds cannot be used to pay for products and services contracted for or obligated prior to the effective date of the award.

See Appendix C – Award Administration Information for further information regarding grant writer fees and Section 10.B. Other Information for general procurement under grants requirements.

K. Beneficiary Eligibility
There are no program requirements to be an eligible beneficiary. This NOFO and any subsequent federal awards create no rights or causes of action for any beneficiary.

L. Participant Eligibility
There are no program requirements to be an eligible participant. This NOFO and any subsequent federal awards create no rights or causes of action for any participant.

M. Authorizing Authority
Section 34 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974, Pub. L. No. 93-498, as amended (15 U.S.C. § 2229a).

N. Appropriation Authority
Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025, Pub. L. No. 119-4, § 1101.

O. Budget Period
There will be only a single budget period with the same start and end dates as the POP.

P. Prohibition on Covered Equipment or Services
Recipients, sub-recipients, and their contractors or subcontractors must comply with the prohibitions set forth in Section 889 of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019, which restrict the purchase of covered telecommunications and surveillance equipment and services. Please see 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.216, 200.327, 200.471, and Appendix II to 2 C.F.R. Part 200, and FEMA Policy #405-143-1 - Prohibitions on Expending FEMA Award Funds for Covered Telecommunications Equipment or Services for more information.

4. Application Contents and Format

A. Pre-Application, Letter of Intent, and White Papers
Pre-applications, letters of intent, and white papers are not required to be eligible to apply.

B. Application Content and Format
Applications are processed through the FEMA GO system. To access the system, go to https://go.fema.gov/.

Specific formatting guidelines can be found on page 21 of this NOFO.

Additional application and program guidance documents such as Fact Sheets, Self Evaluation Sheets, and an Application Checklist are available at the SAFER Program website.

C. Application Components
The following forms or information are required to be submitted via FEMA GO. The Standard Forms (SF) are also available at Forms | Grants.gov.

- SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance
- Grants.gov Lobbying Form, Certification Regarding Lobbying
- SF-424A, Budget Information (Non-Construction)
- SF-424B, Standard Assurances (Non-Construction)
- SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

D. Program-Specific Required Documents and Information
The following program-specific document is required to be submitted as an attachment in FEMA GO for each regional project under the R&R Activity:

1. 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 participating in the award.

E. Post-Application Requirements for Successful Applicants
Applicants likely to be funded may receive a request for additional information by email prior to award. Applicants must respond to the request to move forward with the grant review process.

5. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

A. Address to Request Application Package
Applications are processed through the FEMA GO system. To access the system, go to https://go.fema.gov/.

Steps Required to Apply for An Award Under This Program and Submit an Application:

All applicants must:

a. Apply for, update, or verify their Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number and EIN from the Internal Revenue Service;
b. In the application, provide an UEI number;
c. Have an account with login.gov;
d. Register for, update, or verify their System for Award Management (SAM) account and ensure the account is active before submitting the application;
e. Register in FEMA GO, add the organization to the system, and establish the AOR. The organization's electronic business point of contact (eBiz POC) from the SAM registration may need to be involved in this step. For step-by-step instructions, see https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/181607;
f. Submit the complete application in FEMA GO; and

g. Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal awarding agency. As part of this, applicants must also provide information on an applicant's immediate and highest-level owner and subsidiaries, as well as on all predecessors that have been awarded federal contracts or federal financial assistance within the past three years, if applicable.

Per 2 C.F.R. § 25.110(a)(2)(iv), if an applicant is experiencing exigent circumstances that prevents it from obtaining an UEI number and completing SAM registration before receiving a federal award, the applicant must notify FEMA as soon as possible. Contact fema-grants-news@fema.dhs.gov and provide the details of the exigent circumstances.

How to Register to Apply:

General Instructions:

Registering and applying for an award under this program is a multi-step process and requires time to complete. Below are instructions for registering to apply for FEMA funds. Read the instructions carefully and prepare the requested information before beginning the registration process. Gathering the required information before starting the process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

The registration process can take up to four weeks to complete. To ensure an application meets the deadline, applicants are advised to start the required steps well in advance of their submission.

Organizations must have a UEI number, EIN, and an active SAM registration.

Obtain a UEI Number:

All entities applying for funding, including renewal funding, must have a UEI number. Applicants must enter the UEI number in the applicable data entry field on the SF-424 form. For more detailed instructions for obtaining a UEI number, refer to SAM.gov.

Obtain Employer Identification Number:

In addition to having a UEI number, all entities applying for funding must provide an EIN. The EIN can be obtained from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) by visiting https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online.

Create a login.gov account:

Applicants must have a login.gov account in order to register with SAM or update their SAM registration. Applicants can create a login.gov account at https://secure.login.gov/sign_up/enter_email?request_id=34f19fa8-14a2-438c-8323-a62b99571fd.

Applicants only have to create a login.gov account once. For existing SAM users, use the same email address for both login.gov and SAM.gov so that the two accounts can be linked.

For more information on the login.gov requirements for SAM registration, refer to https://www.sam.gov/SAM/pages/public/loginFAQ.jsf.

Register with SAM:

In addition to having a UEI number, all organizations must register with SAM. Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through FEMA GO. SAM registration must be renewed annually and must remain active throughout the entire grant life cycle.

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to: Register with SAM

Note: per 2 C.F.R. § 25.200 , applicants must also provide the applicant's immediate and highest-level owner, subsidiaries, and predecessors that have been awarded federal contracts or federal financial assistance within the past three years, if applicable.
Register in FEMA GO, Add the Organization to the System, and Establish the AOR:

Applicants must register in FEMA GO and add their organization to the system. The organization's eBiz POC from the SAM registration may need to be involved in this step. For step-by-step instructions, see: FEMA GO Startup Guide

Note: FEMA GO will support only the most recent major release of the following browsers:

- Google Chrome;
- Mozilla Firefox;
- Apple Safari; and
- Microsoft Edge.

Applicants using tablet type devices or other browsers may encounter issues with using FEMA GO.

Submitting the Final Application:

Applicants will be prompted to submit the standard application information, and any program-specific information required. SFs may be accessed in the Forms tab under the: SF-424 Family | Grants.gov.

Applicants should review these forms before applying to ensure they are providing all required information.

After submitting the final application, FEMA GO will provide either an error message, or an email to the submitting AOR confirming the transmission was successfully received.

B. Application Deadline
June 22, 2026 at 5 p.m. ET

C. Pre-Application Requirements Deadline
Not applicable.

D. Post-Application Requirements Deadline
Not applicable.

E. Effects of Missing the Deadline
All applications must be completed in FEMA GO by the application deadline. FEMA GO automatically records proof of submission and generates an electronic date/time stamp when FEMA GO successfully receives an application. The submitting AOR will receive via email the official date/time stamp and a FEMA GO tracking number to serve as proof of timely submission prior to the application deadline.

Applicants experiencing system-related issues have until 3 p.m. ET on the date applications are due to notify FEMA. No new system-related issues will be addressed after this deadline. Applications not received by the application submission deadline will not be accepted.

6. Intergovernmental Review

A. Requirement Description and State Single Point of Contact
An intergovernmental review may be required. Applicants must contact their state's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to comply with the state's process under Executive Order 12372.

7. Application Review Information

A. Threshold Criteria
FEMA reviews a random sample of applications to check for duplication, including narrative statements and statistical data. All narrative statements must be specific and unique to the applicant, and all statistical data must be accurate. Applications with narrative statements that substantially duplicate content from other applications or contain inaccurate data that could mislead reviewers may be disqualified. Any discovery of falsification, fabrication or plagiarism will result in disqualification.

Note: FEMA evaluates each application based on its merit, accuracy and how well the narrative reflects the applicant's unique circumstances, risks and needs. FEMA also considers how selecting the applicant advances the SAFER Program's goal of helping fire departments improve staffing and deployment to respond to emergencies and protect communities from fire-related hazards.

During the review process, including the technical review stage, FEMA may request additional documentation, such as:

- Official or certified documents demonstrating the claimed financial need;
- A needs assessment report, survey, or other documentation showing the applicant's unique project objectives;
- A risk analysis explaining how the project addresses the applicant's specific needs and aligns with the SAFER Program's purpose;
- Additional information or evidence detailing the applicant's risks; and
- Any other information needed to evaluate the funding request.

Important: Funding is not guaranteed for any applicant.

B. Application Criteria
FEMA sets funding priorities and evaluation criteria for SAFER Program applications based on recommendations from the Criteria Development Panel (CDP). Each year, FEMA brings together a panel of fire service professionals to establish these priorities and criteria. The panel provides input on funding priorities and helps develop the criteria used to award 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

CDP and Application Evaluation

The CDP advises FEMA on creating or updating funding priorities and developing criteria for awarding grants. This NOFO reflects the CDP's recommendations regarding priorities, direction, and award criteria.

See subsection 7.F., "Merit Review Process" for a description of the narrative evaluation criteria that peer review panelists use to score each SAFER application.

C. Financial Integrity Criteria
Before making an award, FEMA is required to review the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)-designated databases for applicants' eligibility and financial integrity information. This is required by the Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 116-117, § 2 (2020)), 41 U.S.C. § 2313, and the "Do Not Pay Initiative" (31 U.S.C. 3354). For more details, please see 2 C.F.R. § 200.206.

Thus, the Financial Integrity 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.
5. Ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory or other requirements.

D. Supplemental Financial Integrity Criteria and Review
Before making an award expected to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold, defined at 41 U.S.C. § 134,over the POP:

1. FEMA is required by 41 U.S.C. § 2313: to review or consider certain information found in SAM.gov. For details, please see 2 C.F.R. § 200.206(a)(2).
2. An applicant may review and comment on any information in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov.
3. Before making decisions in the risk review required by 2 C.F.R. § 200.206, FEMA will consider any comments by the applicant.

E. Reviewers and Reviewer Selection
A panel of peer reviewers is comprised of fire service representatives recommended by the CDP. Peer reviewers are subject matter experts recommended by the nine major fire service organizations. In their role as Special Government Employees, peer reviewers must certify and observe Federal Conflict of Interests rules.

F. Merit Review Process
SAFER Program applications are reviewed through a multi-phase process. All applications are electronically pre-scored and ranked based on how well they align with the funding priorities outlined in this NOFO.

Applications with the highest pre-score rankings per activity are then scored competitively by no less than three members of a Peer Review Panel.

Applications will also be evaluated through a series of internal FEMA review processes for completeness, adherence to programmatic guidelines, technical feasibility, costs/quantities, and anticipated effectiveness of the proposed project(s). Below is the process by which applications will be reviewed:

a. ***Pre-Scoring Process***
Applications are electronically pre-scored based on program priorities outlined in Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities as well as responses to activity-specific questions in the online application. Application Narratives are not reviewed during the pre-scoring process. 'Request Details' and 'Budget' information must align with program guidance and statutory funding limitations. The pre-score accounts for 50 % of the total application score under the Hiring Activity and 30 % under the R&R Activity.

b. ***Peer Review Panel Process***
Applications with the highest rankings from the pre-scoring process will undergo a Peer Review Panel process. A panel of peer reviewers is composed of fire service representatives recommended by the CDP. Peer reviewers will assess the merits of each application based on the narrative statement on the requested activity. The evaluation elements listed in the "Narrative Evaluation Criteria" below will be used to calculate the narrative's score for each activity requested. Panelists will independently score each requested activity within the application, discuss the merits and shortcomings of the application with their peers, and document the

findings. A consensus is not required. The panel score is 50 % of the total application score under the Hiring Activity, and 70 % of the total application score under the R&R Activity.

FEMA ranks all complete applications based on how well they align with the program priorities for the specific activity. Responses to the activity-specific questions in the application are used to determine each application's ranking relative to these priorities.

The Narrative Statements in the application must include specific details about the requested activity, including budget information. Peer reviewers evaluate these narrative elements using weighted criteria, as described below, to determine the grant award.

Peer Review Panelists will evaluate and score each activity based on the following narrative elements within each activity.

1. Hiring Activity

The panel score is 50 % of the total application score.

- Project Description (30%):
  - Why does the department need the positions requested in this application?
  - How will the positions requested in this application be used within the department (e.g., fourth firefighter on engine, open a new station, eliminate browned out stations, reduce overtime)?
  - What unique and specific services will the requested positions provide to the fire department and community?
  - How will funds awarded through this grant enhance the department's ability to protect critical infrastructure within the primary response area?

- Impact on Daily Operations (30 %):
  - How are the community and the current firefighters employed by the department at risk without the positions requested in this application?
  - How will that risk be unequivocally reduced if awarded?

- Financial Need (30 %):
  - Provide an income versus expenses breakdown of the department's current annual budget.
  - Describe the department's precise budget shortfalls and inability to address financial needs without federal assistance.
  - Describe what other actions the department has taken to obtain funding elsewhere (e.g., state assistance programs, other grant programs).
  - Discuss how the critical functions of the department are uniquely affected without this funding.

- Cost Benefit (10 %):

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

2. R&R Activity (Fire Departments)

The panel score is 70 % of the total application score.

- Project Description (30 %):
  - Describe the unique problems and issues the department is experiencing in recruiting new volunteer firefighters.
  - Describe the problems and issues the department is experiencing in retaining current members.
  - Describe the precise implementation plan, including the goals, objectives, methods, specific steps, and timelines to directly address the identified problems or issues.
  - Describe the current marketing plan already in place, or the marketing program to be put in place with or without grant funds.
  - Describe how the program will be uniquely evaluated for its impact on identified recruitment and retention problems and issues. Describe how the overall effectiveness of the grant will be measured.
  - Describe the unique and specific services the new volunteer firefighters, retention of current volunteer firefighters, or both, will provide for the fire department(s) and community.
  - If the grant request will have a regional impact, discuss how the regional partners will benefit and which activities they will benefit from.
  - If the grant request includes executive or management positions, define the purpose of all requested positions and personnel expenditures.

- Impact on Daily Operations (30 %):
  - Clearly describe how the community and current volunteer firefighters in the department are at risk without the items or activities requested in this application.
  - Explain how the awarded funding will directly and effectively reduce the identified risk.
  - Describe the specific impact that recruiting new volunteer firefighters, retaining current volunteer firefighters, or both will have on the department's compliance with NFPA standards.

- Financial Need (30 %):
  - Provide an income versus expenses breakdown of the department's current annual budget.
  - Describe the department's precise budget shortfalls and its inability to address financial needs without federal assistance.
  - Describe what other actions the department has taken to obtain funding elsewhere (e.g., state assistance programs, other grant programs), and how similar projects have been funded in the past.
  - Discuss how the critical functions of the department are uniquely affected without this funding.

- Cost Benefit (10 %):
  - Describe the unique and specific benefits (e.g., quantifying the anticipated savings and efficiencies) the department and community will realize if awarded the items or activities requested in this application.

3. R&R Activity (National, state, local, or federally recognized tribal volunteer firefighters interest organizations)

The panel score is 70 % of the total application score.

- Project Description (30 %):
  - Explain the challenges and issues faced by the fire departments that the organization aims to assist with this grant in recruiting new volunteer firefighters.
  - Describe the problems and issues the same departments are experiencing in retaining current members.
  - Describe the organization's implementation plan, including the goals, objectives, methods, specific steps, and timelines to directly address the problems or issues identified.
  - Describe the current marketing plan already in place, or the marketing program to be put in place with or without grant funds.
  - Explain how the program will be evaluated to measure its impact on the recruitment and retention challenges faced by the fire departments participating in this grant.
  - Describe how the overall effectiveness of the grant will be measured.
  - Describe the specific services the new volunteer firefighters, retention of current volunteer firefighters, or both, will provide for the fire departments participating in this application and their respective communities.
  - Describe the organization's procurement practices and the timelines outlining chronologically the steps to complete the activities requested.

- Impact on Daily Operations (30 %):
  - Describe how the fire departments participating in this application and their current volunteer firefighters and communities are at risk without the items or activities requested in this application.
  - Explain how funding will reduce that risk.
  - Describe the impact that the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters, the retention of current volunteer firefighters, or both, will have on the NFPA compliance of the fire departments participating in this application.

- Financial Need (30 %):
  - Provide an income versus expenses breakdown of the organization's current annual budget.
  - Describe the organization's particular budget shortfalls and the inability to address the financial needs without federal assistance.

- Describe the other actions the organization has taken to obtain funding elsewhere (e.g., state assistance programs, other grant programs), and how similar projects have been funded in the past.
- Discuss how the critical functions of the organization are affected without this funding.

- Cost Benefit (10 %):
  - Describe the specific benefits (e.g., quantifying the anticipated savings and efficiencies) the fire departments participating in this application and their communities will realize if awarded the items or activities requested in this application.

The Narrative Statement blocks do not allow for formatting. Do not type the Narrative Statements using only capital letters. Additionally, do not include tables, special characters, or fonts (e.g., quotation marks, bullets), or graphs. Space for the Narrative Statement is limited. While each element must have a minimum of 200 characters, the maximum number of characters varies based on the questions being asked.

G. Final Selection

a. ***Technical Evaluation Process (TEP)***

The highest-ranking applications from both activities will be considered within the fundable range. Applications that are in the fundable range will undergo both a Technical Review by a subject-matter expert as well as a FEMA Program Office review before being recommended for award. The FEMA Program Office will assess the request with respect to costs, quantities, feasibility, eligibility, and recipient responsibility before recommending any application for award.

During the TEP, information in Appendix B - Programmatic Information and Priorities is used to make final corrections to any request not meeting program eligibility requirements. This is not a scored phase of the application process. Requests may be recommended for partial funding or disqualification based on TEP findings.

8. Award Notices

A. Notice of Award

The Authorized Organization Representative should carefully read the federal award package before accepting the federal award. The federal award package includes instructions on administering the federal award as well as terms and conditions for the award.

By submitting an application, applicants agree to comply with the prerequisites stated in this NOFO and the material terms and conditions of the federal award, should they receive an award.

FEMA will provide the federal award package to the applicant electronically via FEMA GO. Award packages include an Award Letter, Summary Award Memo, Agreement Articles, and Obligating Document. An award package notification email is sent via the grant application system to the submitting AOR.

Recipients must accept their awards no later than 30 days from the award date. Recipients shall notify FEMA of their intent to accept the award and proceed with work via the FEMA GO system.

Funds will be held until the recipient accepts the award via FEMA GO and all other conditions of the award have been satisfied, or until the award is otherwise rescinded. Not accepting a grant award within the specified timeframe may result in a loss of funds. Recipients may request additional time to accept the award if needed.

During the review process for a SAFER Program award, FEMA may have modified the application request(s). These modifications will be identified in the award package provided upon the offer of an award. 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 funded by FEMA. The recipient is under no obligation to start, modify or complete any activities requested but not funded by the award. The award package will identify any differences under the approved scope of work section.

B. Pass-Through Requirements
Standard pass-through requirements in 2 C.F.R. Part 200 apply.

C. Note Regarding Pre-Award Costs
Even if pre-award costs are allowed, beginning performance is at the applicant and/or sub-applicant's own risk.

D. Obligation of Funds
E. The grant funds are obligated in accordance with applicable laws, and no later than upon award. Notification to Unsuccessful Applicants
FEMA GO will provide all applicants who do not receive a FY 2025 SAFER Program award with a turndown notification after September 30, 2026.

9. Post-Award Requirements and Administration

A. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Presidential Executive Orders

Recipients must comply with the requirements of Presidential Executive Orders related to grants (also known as federal assistance and financial assistance), the full text of which are incorporated by reference.
Pursuant to the preliminary injunction order issued on November 21, 2025, in County of Santa Clara et al. v. Noem, et al., No. 25-cv-08330-WHO (N.D. Cal.), this requirement does not apply to awards or subawards issued to any of the plaintiffs subject to the preliminary injunction order while the order remains in effect. If the preliminary injunction is stayed, vacated, or extinguished, this requirement will immediately become effective. Also, pursuant to the preliminary injunction order issued on November 21, 2025, in City of Chicago et al. v. Noem, et al., No. 25-CV-12765 (N.D. Ill.), this requirement does not apply to awards or subawards issued

to any of the plaintiffs subject to the preliminary injunction order while the order remains in effect. If the preliminary injunction is stayed, vacated, or extinguished, this requirement will immediately become effective.

In accordance with Executive Order 14305, Restoring American Airspace Sovereignty (June 6, 2025), and to the extent allowed by law, eligible state, local, tribal and territorial grant recipients under this NOFO are permitted to purchase unmanned aircraft systems, otherwise known as drones, or equipment or services for the detection, tracking or identification of drones and drone signals, consistent with the legal authorities of state, local, tribal and territorial agencies. Recipients must comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations, and adhere to any statutory requirements on the use of federal funds for such unmanned aircraft systems, equipment or services.

Subrecipient Monitoring and Management

Pass-through entities must comply with the requirements for subrecipient monitoring and management as set forth in 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.331-333.

B. DHS Standard Terms and Conditions

A recipient under this funding opportunity must comply with the DHS Standard Terms and Conditions in effect as of the date of the federal award, unless a term and condition specifically indicates otherwise. The DHS Standard Terms and Conditions are available online: DHS Standard Terms and Conditions | Homeland Security. For continuation awards, the terms and conditions for the initial federal award will apply unless otherwise specified in the terms and conditions of the continuation award. The specific version of the DHS Standard Terms and Conditions applicable to the federal award will be in the federal award package.

A recipient under this funding opportunity must comply with the FY 2026 Department of Homeland Security Standard Terms and Conditions, with the following exceptions. The term titled "Communication and Cooperation with the Department of Homeland Security and Immigration Officials" and paragraph (2)(a)(ii) of the term titled "Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws Material to the Government's Payment Decisions Under the False Claims Act" do not apply to any federal award under this funding opportunity.

Pursuant to the preliminary injunction order issued on November 21, 2025, in County of Santa Clara et al. v. Noem, et al., No. 25-cv-08330-WHO (N.D. Cal.), the following terms and conditions do not apply to awards or subawards issued to any of the plaintiffs subject to the preliminary injunction order while the order remains in effect: (1) the term titled "Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws Material to the Government's Payment Decisions Under the *False Claims in*Act"; and (2) the term titled "All Executive Orders Related to Grants". If the preliminary injunction is stayed, vacated, or extinguished, both terms and conditions will immediately become effective. As stated above, paragraph (2)(a)(ii) of the term titled "Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws Material to the Government's Payment Decisions Under the *False Claims* Act" of the DHS Standard Terms and Conditions will not apply even if the preliminary injunction is stayed, vacated, or extinguished.

Pursuant to the preliminary injunction order issued on November 21, 2025, in City of Chicago et al. v. Noem, et al., No. 25-CV-12765 (N.D. Ill.), the following terms and conditions do not apply to awards or subawards issued to any of the plaintiffs subject to the preliminary injunction order while the order remains in effect: (1) the term titled "Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws Material to the Government's Payment Decisions Under the *False Claims* Act"; and (2) the term titled "All Executive Orders Related to Grants". If the preliminary injunction is stayed, vacated, or extinguished, both terms and conditions will immediately become effective. As stated above, paragraph (2)(a)(ii) of the term titled "Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws Material to the Government's Payment Decisions Under the *False Claims* Act" of the DHS Standard Terms and Conditions will not apply even if the preliminary injunction is stayed, vacated, or extinguished.

Pursuant to the preliminary injunction order issued on October 31, 2025, in City of Seattle v. Trump, et al., No. 2:25-cv-01435-BJR (W.D. Wa.), the following terms and conditions do not apply to awards or subawards issued to any of the plaintiffs subject to the preliminary injunction order while the order remains in effect: the term titled "Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws Material to the Government's Payment Decisions Under the *False Claims* Act". If the preliminary injunction is stayed, vacated, or extinguished, Paragraph C.XVII will immediately become effective. As stated above, paragraph (2)(a)(ii) of the term titled "Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws Material to the Government's Payment Decisions Under the *False Claims* Act" of the DHS Standard Terms and Conditions will not apply even if the preliminary injunction is stayed, vacated, or extinguished.

C. National Incident Management System (NIMS) Implementation

SAFER Program applicants are not required to comply with NIMS to apply for SAFER Program funding or to receive a SAFER Program award. Any applicant who receives an FY 2025 SAFER Program award must achieve the level of NIMS compliance required by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) over the applicant's emergency service operations (e.g., a local government), before the end of the grant's POP. Applicants/subapplicants or recipients/subrecipients are required to certify their compliance with federal statutes, DHS directives, polices, and procedures.

D. Financial Reporting Requirements

1. Recipients must report obligations and expenditures through a federal financial report. The Federal Financial Report (FFR) form, also known as Standard Form 425 (SF-425), is available online at: SF-425 OMB #4040-0014.
2. Recipients must submit the FFR semi-annually throughout the POP as detailed below:
   - No later than July 30 (for the period January 1 – June 30)
   - No later than January 30 (for the period July 1 – December 31)
3. The final FFR is due within 120 days after the end of the POP.

FEMA may withhold future federal awards and cash payments if the recipient does not submit timely financial reports, or the financial reports submitted demonstrate lack of progress or provide insufficient detail.

E. Programmatic Performance Reporting Requirements

1. A Performance Report must be submitted semi-annually throughout the POP. A tutorial is available here: https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/FEMA_GO_SF-425_and_PPR_User_Guide_508.pdf.
2. A Performance Report must include:
   - A brief narrative of overall project(s) status;
   - A summary of project expenditures; and
   - A description of any potential issues that may affect project completion.
3. The Performance Report must be submitted through FEMA GO.
4. Performance Report Due Dates
   - No later than July 30 (for the period January. 1 – June 30)
   - No later than January 30 (for the period July 1 – December 31)

F. Closeout Reporting Requirements
Within 120 days after the end of the POP, or after an amendment has been issued to close out a federal award, recipients must submit the following:

1. The final request for payment, if applicable.
2. The final FFR.
3. The final progress report detailing all accomplishments.
4. A qualitative narrative summary of the impact of those accomplishments throughout the POP.
5. Other documents required by this NOFO, terms and conditions of the federal award, or other DHS Component guidance.

After FEMA approves these reports, it will issue a closeout notice. The notice will indicate the POP as closed, list any remaining funds to be de-obligated, and address the record maintenance requirement. Unless a longer period applies, such as due to an audit or litigation, for equipment or real property used beyond the POP, or due to other circumstances outlined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.334, this maintenance requirement is three years from the date of the final FFR.

Administrative Closeout

Administrative closeout is a mechanism for FEMA to unilaterally execute closeout of an award. FEMA will use available award information in lieu of final recipient reports, per 2 C.F.R. § 200.344(h)-(i). It is an activity of last resort, and if FEMA administratively closes an award, this may negatively impact a recipient's ability to obtain future funding.

Additional Reporting Requirements

Anytime there is a change in personnel for any of the awardees, their information needs to be submitted for approval (all the previous personal information identified).

G. Disclosing Information per 2 C.F.R. § 180.335
Before entering into a federal award, the applicant must notify FEMA if it knows that the applicant or any of the principals (as defined at 2 C.F.R. § 180.995) for the federal award:

1. Are presently excluded or disqualified;
2. Have been convicted within the preceding three years of any of the offenses listed in § 180.800(a) or had a civil judgment rendered against you for one of those offenses within that time period;
3. Are presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State, or local) with the commission of any of the offenses listed in § 180.800(a); or
4. Have had one or more public transactions (federal, state or local) terminated within the preceding three years for cause or default.

This is requirement is fully described in 2 C.F.R. §180.335.

Additionally, 2 C.F.R. § 180.350 requires recipients to provide immediate notice to FEMA at any time after entering a federal award if:

1. The recipient learns that either it failed to earlier disclose information as required by 2 C.F.R. § 180.335;
2. Due to changed circumstances, the applicant or any of the principals for the federal award now meet the criteria at 2 C.F.R. § 180.335 listed above.

H. Reporting of Matters Related to Recipient Integrity and Performance
Appendix XII to 2 C.F.R. Part 200 states the terms and conditions for recipient integrity and performance matters used for this funding opportunity.

If the total value of all active federal grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts for a recipient exceeds $10 million at any time during the POP:

1. The recipient must maintain the currency of information reported in SAM.gov about civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings described in paragraph 2 of Appendix XII;
2. The required reporting frequency is described in paragraph 4 of Appendix XII.

I. Single Audit Report
A recipient expending $1 million or more in federal awards (as defined by 2 C.F.R. § 200.1) during its fiscal year must undergo an audit. This may be either a single audit complying with 2 C.F.R. § 200.514 or a program-specific audit complying with 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.501 and 200.507. Audits must follow 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart F, 2 C.F.R. § 200.501, and the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards.

J. Monitoring and Oversight
Per 2 C.F.R. § 200.337, DHS and its authorized representatives have the right of access to any records of the recipient or subrecipient pertinent to a federal award to perform audits, site visits, and any other official use. The right also includes timely and reasonable access to the recipient's or subrecipient's personnel for the purpose of interview and discussion related to such documents or the federal award in general.

Pursuant to this right and per 2 C.F.R. § 200.329, DHS may conduct desk reviews and make site visits to review and evaluate project accomplishments and management control systems as well

as provide any required technical assistance. Recipients and subrecipients must respond in a timely and accurate manner to DHS requests for information relating to a federal award.

FEMA staff will periodically monitor recipients to ensure compliance with federal regulations and FEMA requirements. This includes reviewing administrative processes, policies, procedures, budgets, and other award criteria. In addition to reviewing semi-annual financial and programmatic reports, FEMA may conduct enhanced monitoring through desk reviews, onsite visits, or both. Enhanced monitoring involves analyzing financial compliance, administrative processes, and program activities to identify areas where recipients may need technical assistance, corrective actions, or other support.

Financial and Programmatic Monitoring

FEMA's monitoring strategy includes both financial and programmatic monitoring to ensure effective grant management, accountability, and transparency. These processes:

- Validate progress toward grant and program goals.
- Safeguard federal funds against fraud, waste and abuse.
- **Financial Monitoring** focuses on compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements for grant administration.
- **Programmatic Monitoring** ensures progress toward project goals, addresses issues hindering success, and confirms compliance with the grant's purpose.

Both processes include initial reviews of all open awards, with additional in-depth monitoring for grants that require extra attention.

Recipient Responsibilities

Recipients are responsible for:

- Accounting for receipts and expenditures.
- Managing cash and maintaining adequate financial records.
- Reporting and refunding disallowed expenditures identified in audits.
- Monitoring subrecipients, if acting as a pass-through entity.

Ensuring compliance with the terms and conditions of the award or subaward, including 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

K. Program Evaluation

Title I of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018, Pub. L. No. 115-435 (2019) (Evidence Act), PUBL435.PS urges federal agencies to use program evaluation as a critical tool to learn, improve delivery, and elevate program service and delivery across the program lifecycle. Evaluation means "an assessment using systematic data collection and analysis of one or more programs, policies, and organizations intended to assess their effectiveness and efficiency." Evidence Act, § 101 (codified at 5 U.S.C. § 311). OMB A-11, Section 290 (Evaluation and Evidence-Building Activities) further outlines the standards and practices for evaluation activities. Federal agencies are required to specify any requirements for

recipient participation in program evaluation activities (2 C.F.R. § 200.301). Program evaluation activities incorporated from the outset in the NOFO and program design and implementation allow recipients and agencies to meaningfully document and measure progress and achievement toward program goals and objectives, and identify program outcomes and lessons learned, as part of demonstrating recipient performance (2 C.F.R. § 200.301).

As such, recipients and subrecipients are required to participate in a Program Office (PO) or a DHS Component-led evaluation, if selected. This may be carried out by a third-party on behalf of the PO or the DHS Component. Such an evaluation may involve information collections including but not limited to, records of the recipients; surveys, interviews or discussions with individuals who benefit from the federal award, program operating personnel, and award recipients; and site visits or other observation of recipient activities, as specified in a DHS Component or PO-approved evaluation plan. More details about evaluation requirements may be provided in the federal award, if available at that time, or following the award as evaluation requirements are finalized. Evaluation costs incurred during the POP are allowable costs (either as direct or indirect) in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.413.

Recipients and subrecipients are also encouraged, but not required, to participate in any additional evaluations after the POP ends, although any costs incurred to participate in such evaluations are not allowable and may not be charged to the federal award.

L. Additional Performance Reporting Requirements
Not Applicable.

M. Termination of Federal Award

1. The FY 2026 DHS Standard Terms and Conditions sets forth a term and condition entitled "Termination of a Federal Award." The termination provision condition listed below applies to the grant award and the term and condition in the FY 2026 DHS Standard Terms and Conditions does not.

2. Termination of the Federal Award by FEMA
   FEMA may terminate the federal award in whole or in part for one of the following reasons:
   a. If the recipient or subrecipient fails to comply with the terms and conditions of the federal award.
   b. With the consent of the recipient, in which case FEMA and the recipient must agree upon the termination conditions. These conditions include the effective date and, in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated.
   c. If the federal award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities. Under this provision, FEMA may terminate the award for these purposes if any of the following reasons apply:

      i. If DHS/FEMA, in its sole discretion, determines that a specific award objective is ineffective at achieving program goals as described in this NOFO;

ii. If DHS/FEMA, in its sole discretion, determines that an objective of the award as described in this NOFO will be ineffective at achieving program goals or agency priorities;
iii. If DHS/FEMA, in its sole discretion, determines that the design of the grant program is flawed relative to program goals or agency priorities;
iv. If DHS/FEMA, in its sole discretion, determines that the grant program is not aligned to either the DHS Strategic Plan, the FEMA Strategic Plan, or successor policies or documents;
v. If DHS/FEMA, in its sole discretion, changes or re-evaluates the goals or priorities of the grant program and determines that the award will be ineffective at achieving the updated program goals or agency priorities; or
vi. For other reasons based on program goals or agency priorities described in the termination notice provided to the recipient pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.341.
vii. If the awardee falls out of compliance with the agency's statutory or regulatory authority, award terms and conditions, or other applicable laws.

d. For convenience, including, but not limited to, when the award no longer advances agency priorities or the national interest

3. Termination of a Subaward by the Pass-Through Entity

The pass-through entity may terminate a subaward in whole or in part for one of the following reasons identified in 2 C.F.R. § 200.340:

a. If the subrecipient fails to comply with the terms and conditions of the federal award.
b. With the consent of the subrecipient, in which case the pass-through entity and the subrecipient must agree upon the termination conditions. These conditions include the effective date and, in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated.
c. If the pass-through entity's award has been terminated, the pass-through recipient will terminate its subawards.

4. Termination by the Recipient or Subrecipient
The recipient or subrecipient may terminate the federal award in whole or in part for the following reason identified in 2 C.F.R. § 200.340: Upon sending FEMA or pass-through entity a written notification of the reasons for such termination, the effective date, and, in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated. However, if FEMA or the pass-through entity determines that the remaining portion of the federal award will not accomplish the purposes for which the federal award was made, FEMA or the pass-through entity may terminate the federal award in its entirety.

5. Impacts of Termination
a. When FEMA terminates the federal award before the POP ends due to the recipient's material failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the federal award, FEMA will report the termination in SAM.gov in the manner described at 2 C.F.R. § 200.340(c).
b. When the federal award is terminated in part or its entirety, FEMA or the pass-through entity and recipient or subrecipient remain responsible for compliance with the

requirements in 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.344 and 200.345.

6. Notification requirements
FEMA or the pass-through entity must provide written notice of the termination in a manner consistent with 2 C.F.R. § 200.341. The federal award will be terminated on the date of the notification unless stated otherwise in the notification.

7. Opportunities to Object and Appeal
Where applicable, when FEMA terminates the federal award, the written notification of termination will provide the opportunity and describe the process, to object and provide information challenging the action, pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.342.

8. Effects of Suspension and Termination
The allowability of costs to the recipient or subrecipient resulting from financial obligations incurred by the recipient or subrecipient during a suspension or after the termination of a federal award are subject to 2 C.F.R. § 200.343.

M. Best Practices
Although not a requirement in the DHS Standard Terms and Conditions, as a best practice, entities receiving funds through this program should ensure that cybersecurity is integrated into the design, development, operation and maintenance of investments that impact information technology (IT) and/or operational technology (OT) systems. Additionally, "The recipient and subrecipient must … take reasonable cybersecurity and other measures to safeguard information including protected personally identifiable information (PII) and other types of information." 2 C.F.R. § 200.303(e).

N. Payment Information

Recipients will submit payment requests in FEMA GO for FY 2025 awards under this program.

Instructions to Grant Recipients Pursuing Payments

FEMA reviews all grant payments and obligations to ensure allowability in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.305. These measures will ensure funds are disbursed appropriately while continuing to support and prioritize communities who rely on FEMA for assistance. Once a recipient submits a payment request, FEMA will review the request. If FEMA approves a payment, FEMA GO will notify recipients and the payment will be delivered pursuant to the recipients' SAM.gov financial information. If FEMA disapproves a payment, FEMA will inform the recipient.

Processing and Payment Timeline

FEMA must comply with regulations governing payments to grant recipients. See 2 C.F.R. § 200.305. For grant recipients other than states, 2 C.F.R. § 200.305(b)(3) stipulates that FEMA is to make payments on a reimbursement basis within 30 days of receiving the payment request, unless FEMA reasonably believes the request to be improper. For state recipients, 2 C.F.R. § 200.305(a) instructs that federal grant payments are governed by Treasury-State Cash

Management Improvement Act (CMIA) agreements ("Treasury-State agreement") and default procedures codified at 31 C.F.R. part 205 and Treasury Financial Manual (TFM) 4A-2000, "Overall Disbursing Rules for All Federal Agencies." *See* 2 C.F.R. § 200.305(a).

Treasury-State agreements generally apply to "major federal assistance programs" that are governed by 31 C.F.R. part 205, subpart A and are identified in the Treasury-State agreement. 31 C.F.R. §§ 205.2, 205.6. Where a federal assistance (grant) program is not governed by subpart A, payment and funds transfers from FEMA to the state are subject to 31 C.F.R. part 205, subpart B. Subpart B requires FEMA to "limit a funds transfer to a state to the minimum amounts needed by the state and must time the disbursement to be in accord with the actual, immediate cash requirements of the state in carrying out a federal assistance program or project. The timing and amount of funds transfers must be as close as is administratively feasible to a state's actual cash outlay for direct program costs and the proportionate share of any allowable indirect costs." 31 C.F.R. § 205.33(a). Nearly all FEMA grants are not "major federal assistance programs." As a result, payments to states for those grants are subject to the "default" rules of 31 C.F.R. part 205, subpart B.

If additional information is needed, a request for information will be issued by FEMA to the recipient; recipients are strongly encouraged to respond to any additional FEMA request for information inquiries within three business days. If an adequate response is not received, the request may be denied, and the entity may need to submit a new reimbursement request; this will re-start the 30-day timeline.

Submission Process

All non-disaster grant program reimbursement requests must be reviewed and approved by FEMA before drawdowns.

For all non-disaster reimbursement requests (regardless of system), please ensure submittal of the following information:

1. Grant ID / Award Number
2. Total amount requested for drawdown
3. Purpose of drawdown and timeframe covered (must be within the award performance period)
4. Subrecipient Funding Details (if applicable).
    - Is funding provided directly or indirectly to a subrecipient?
        - If **no,** include statement "This grant funding is not being directed to a subrecipient."
    - If **yes**, provide the following details:
        - The name, mission statement, and purpose of each subrecipient receiving funds, along with the amount allocated and the specific role or activity being reimbursed.
        - Whether the subrecipient's work or mission involves supporting aliens, regardless of whether FEMA funds support such activities.
        - Whether the payment request includes an activity involving support to aliens.

- Whether the subrecipient has any diversity, equity, and inclusion practices.[4]

5. Supporting documentation to demonstrate that expenses are allowable, allocable, reasonable, and necessary under 2 C.F.R. Part 200 and in compliance with the grant's NOFO, award terms, and applicable federal regulations.

O. Immigration Conditions
The term titled "Communication and Cooperation with DHS and Immigration Officials" and paragraph (2)(a)(ii) of the term titled "Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws Material to the Government's Payment Decisions Under the *False Claims* Act" in the FY 2026 DHS Standard Terms and Conditions do not apply to any federal award under this funding opportunity.

10. Other Information

A. Period of Performance (POP) Extension
Extensions to the POP are allowed for R&R Activity grants only.

Recipients should consult with their FEMA point of contact for requirements related to a performance period extension.

Extension requests will be granted only due to compelling legal, policy or operational challenges. Extension requests will only be considered for the following reasons:

1. Contractual commitments by the recipient or subrecipient with vendors that prevent completion of the project, including delivery of equipment or services, within the existing POP;
2. The project must undergo a complex environmental review that cannot be completed within the existing POP;
3. Projects are long-term by design, and therefore acceleration would compromise core programmatic goals; or
4. Where other special or extenuating circumstances exist.

Pursuant to the preliminary injunction order issued on November 21, 2025, in County of Santa Clara et al. v. Noem, et al., No. 25-cv-08330-WHO (N.D. Cal.), the DHS Standard Term and Condition titled "Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws Material to the Government's Payment Decisions Under the False Claims Act" does not apply to awards or subawards issued to any of the plaintiffs subject to the preliminary injunction order while the order remains in effect. If the preliminary injunction is stayed, vacated, or extinguished, the term will immediately become effective.

Pursuant to the preliminary injunction order issued on November 21, 2025, in City of Chicago et al. v. Noem, et al., No. 25-CV-12765 (N.D. Ill.), the DHS Standard Term and Condition titled "Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws Material to the Government's Payment Decisions Under the False Claims Act" does not apply to awards or subawards issued to any of the plaintiffs subject to the preliminary injunction order while the order remains in effect. If the preliminary injunction is stayed, vacated, or extinguished, the term will immediately become effective.

Pursuant to the preliminary injunction order issued on October 31, 2025, in City of Seattle v. Trump, et al., No. 2:25-cv-01435-BJR (W.D. Wa.), the DHS Standard Term and Condition titled "Anti-Discrimination" does not apply to awards or subawards issued to any of the plaintiffs subject to the preliminary injunction order while the order remains in effect. If the preliminary injunction is stayed, vacated, or extinguished, the term will immediately become effective.

As stated above, Paragraph(2)(a)(ii) of the DHS Standard Term and Condition titled "Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws Material to the Government's Payment Decisions Under the False Claims Act" will not apply even if any of these preliminary injunctions are stayed, vacated, or extinguished.

Recipients must submit all proposed extension requests to FEMA for review and approval at least 120 days before the end of the POP to allow sufficient processing time. The review process can take up to 30 days or longer. Recipients should factor this review period into the timing of when to submit a request for an extension. Extensions are typically granted for no more than a six-month period.

All extension requests must address the following:

1. The grant program, fiscal year, and award number;
2. The reason for delay – including details of the legal, policy, or operational challenges that prevent final outlay of awarded funds by the deadline;
3. Current status of the activity or activities;
4. Approved POP termination date and new project completion date;
5. Amount of funds drawn down to date;
6. Remaining available funds, both federal and non-federal, if applicable;
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 individual responsible for completing the plan;
9. Certification that the activity or activities will be completed within the extended POP without any modification to the original statement of work, as described in the original statement of work and as approved by FEMA.

B. Other Information

a. *Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) Compliance*

FEMA is required to consider effects of its actions on the environment and historic properties to ensure that activities, grants and programs funded by FEMA, comply with federal EHP laws, Executive Orders, regulations and policies.

Recipients and subrecipients proposing projects with the potential to impact the environment or cultural resources, such as the modification or renovation of existing buildings, structures, and facilities, and/or new construction and/or replacement of buildings, structures and facilities, must participate in the FEMA EHP review process. This includes conducting early engagement to help identify EHP resources, such as threatened or endangered species, historic properties, or communities with environmental concerns; submitting a detailed project description with supporting documentation to determine whether the proposed project could impact EHP resources; and identifying mitigation measures and/or alternative courses of action that may lessen impacts to those resources.

FEMA is sometimes required to consult with other regulatory agencies and the public to complete the review process. Federal law requires EHP review to be completed before federal funds are released to carry out proposed projects. FEMA may not be able to fund projects that are not in compliance with applicable EHP laws, Executive Orders, regulations, and policies. FEMA may recommend mitigation measures and/or alternative courses of action to lessen impacts to EHP resources and bring the project into EHP compliance.

EHP guidance is found at Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation. The site contains links to documents identifying agency EHP responsibilities and program requirements, such as

implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act and other EHP laws, regulations and Executive Orders. DHS and FEMA EHP policy is also found in the EHP Directive & Instruction.

All FEMA actions, including grants, must comply with National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) criteria or any more restrictive federal, state or local floodplain management standards or building code (44 C.F.R. § 9.11(d)(6)). For actions located within or that may affect a floodplain or wetland, the following alternatives must be considered: a) no action; b) alternative locations; and c) alternative actions, including alternative actions that use natural features or nature-based solutions. Where possible, natural features and nature-based solutions shall be used. If not practicable as an alternative on their own, natural features and nature-based solutions may be incorporated into actions as minimization measures.

The GPD EHP screening form is located at https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_ehp-screening_form_ff-207-fy-21-100_5-26-2021.pdf.

b. *Procurement Integrity*

When purchasing under a FEMA award, recipients and subrecipients must comply with the federal procurement standards in 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.317-200.327. To help determine whether an action is a procurement or instead a subaward, please consult 2 C.F.R. § 200.331.
For detailed guidance on the federal procurement standards, recipients and subrecipients should refer to various materials issued by FEMA's Procurement Disaster Assistance Team (PDAT). Additional resources, including an upcoming trainings schedule can be found on the PDAT Website: https://www.fema.gov/grants/procurement.

Under 2 C.F.R. § 200.317 when procuring property and services under a federal award, States (including territories) and Indian Tribes, must follow the same policies and procedures they use for procurements from their non-federal funds; additionally, states and Indian Tribes must now follow 2 CFR §200.322, regarding domestic preferences for Procurements and 2 CFR§ 200.327 regarding required contract provisions.

Local government and nonprofit recipients or subrecipients must have and use their own documented procurement procedures that reflect applicable state, local, tribal and territorial (SLTT) laws and regulations, provided that the procurements conform to applicable federal law and the standards identified in 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

1. Important Changes to Procurement Standards in 2 C.F.R. Part 200

On April 22, 2024, OMB updated various parts of Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations, among them the procurement standards. These revisions apply to all FEMA awards with a federal award date or disaster declaration date on or after October 1, 2024, unless specified otherwise. The changes include updates to the federal procurement standards, which govern how FEMA award recipients and subrecipients must purchase under a FEMA award.

More information on OMB's revisions to the federal procurement standards can be found in Purchasing Under a FEMA Award: 2024 OMB Revisions Fact Sheet.

2. Competition and Conflicts of Interest

2 CFR §200.319(b) , applicable to local government and nonprofit recipients or subrecipients, requires that 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. FEMA considers these actions to be an organizational conflict of interest and interprets this restriction as applying to contractors that help a recipient or subrecipient develop its grant application, project plans, or project budget. This prohibition also applies to the use of former employees to manage the grant or carry out a contract when those former employees worked on such activities while they were employees of the recipient or subrecipient.

Under this prohibition, unless the recipient or subrecipient solicits for and awards a contract covering both development and execution of specifications (or similar elements as described above), and this contract was procured in compliance with 2 C.F.R. § § 200.317-200.327, federal funds cannot be used to pay a contractor to carry out the work if that contractor also worked on the development of those specifications. This rule applies to all contracts funded with federal grant funds, including pre-award costs, such as grant writer fees, as well as post- award costs, such as grant management fees.

In addition to organizational conflicts of interest, situations considered to be restrictive of competition include, but are not limited to:

- Placing unreasonable requirements on firms 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;
- 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.

Under 2 C.F.R§ 200.318(c)(1) , local government and nonprofit recipients or subrecipients are required to maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of their 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 conflicts 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 that 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 recipient or subrecipient may neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors or anything of monetary value from contractors or parties to subcontracts. However, the recipient or subrecipient may set standards for situations in which the financial interest is not substantial, or the gift is an unsolicited item of nominal value. The recipient's or subrecipient's standards of conduct must provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations of such standards by officers, employees, or agents.**

Under 2 C.F.R. 200.318(c)(2), if the local government and nonprofit recipient or subrecipient has a parent, affiliate, or subsidiary organization that is not a SLTT government, the recipient or subrecipient must also maintain written standards of conduct covering organizational conflicts of interest. Organizational conflict of interest means that because of a relationship with a parent company, affiliate, or subsidiary organization, the recipient or subrecipient is unable or appears to be unable to be impartial in conducting a procurement action involving a related organization. The recipient or subrecipient must disclose in writing any potential conflicts of interest to FEMA or the pass-through entity in accordance with applicable FEMA policy.

3. Supply Schedules and Purchasing Programs

Generally, a recipient or subrecipient may seek to procure goods or services from a federal supply schedule, state supply schedule, or group purchasing agreement.

Information about GSA programs for states, Indian Tribes, and local governments, and their instrumentalities, can be found at Purchasing Resources and Support for State and Local Governments.pdf

4. Procurement Documentation

Per 2 C.F.R. § 200.318(i), local government and nonprofit recipients or subrecipients are required to maintain and retain records sufficient to detail the history of procurement covering at least the rationale for the procurement method, selection of contract type, contractor selection or rejection, and the basis for the contract price. States and Indian Tribes are reminded that in order for any cost to be allowable, it must be adequately documented per 2 CFR §200.403(g).

Examples of the types of documents that would cover this information include but are not limited to:

- Solicitation documentation, such as requests for quotes, invitations for bids, or requests for proposals;
- Responses to solicitations, such as quotes, bids, or proposals;
- Pre-solicitation independent cost estimates and post-solicitation cost/price analyses on file for review by federal personnel, if applicable;
- Contract documents and amendments, including required contract provisions; and
- Other documents required by federal regulations applicable at the time a grant is awarded to a recipient.

c. *Financial Assistance Programs for Infrastructure*

1. Recipients and subrecipients must comply with FEMA's implementation requirements of the Build America, Buy America Act (BABAA), which was enacted as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act §§ 70901-70927, Pub. L. No. 117-58 (2021); and Executive Order 14005, Ensuring the Future is Made in All of America by All of America's Workers. See also 2 C.F.R. Part 184, Buy America Preferences for Infrastructure Projects and Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Memorandum M-24-02, Implementation Guidance on Application of Buy America Preference in Federal Financial Assistance Programs for Infrastructure.

None of the funds provided under this program may be used for a project for infrastructure unless the iron and steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in that infrastructure are produced in the United States.

The Buy America preference only applies to articles, materials, and supplies that are consumed in, incorporated into, or affixed to an infrastructure project. As such, it does not apply to tools, equipment, and supplies, such as temporary scaffolding, brought to the construction site and removed at or before the completion of the infrastructure project. Nor does a Buy America preference apply to equipment and furnishings, such as movable chairs, desks, and portable computer equipment, that are used at or within the finished infrastructure project but are not an integral part of the structure or permanently affixed to the infrastructure project.

To see whether a particular FEMA federal financial assistance program is considered an infrastructure program and thus required to implement FEMA's Build America, Buy America requirements, please see Programs and Definitions: Build America, Buy America Act | FEMA.gov

2. Waivers

When necessary, recipients (and subrecipients through their pass-through entity) may apply for, and FEMA may grant, a waiver from these requirements.

A waiver of the domestic content procurement preference may be granted by the agency awarding official if FEMA determines that:

- Applying the domestic content procurement preference would be inconsistent with the public interest, or
- The types of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials are not produced in the United States in sufficient and reasonably available quantities or of a satisfactory quality, or
- The inclusion of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials produced in the United States will increase the cost of the overall project by more than 25%.

The process for requesting a waiver from the Buy America preference requirements can be found on FEMA's website at: "Buy America" Preference in FEMA Financial Assistance Programs for Infrastructure | FEMA.gov.

3. Definitions

For definitions of the key terms of the Build America, Buy America Act, please visit Programs and Definitions: Build America, Buy America Act | FEMA.gov.

a. ***Mandatory Disclosures***
The non-Federal entity or applicant for a federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award, 2 CFR § 200.113 .

b. ***Adaptive Support***
Pursuant to Section 504, of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 , recipients of FEMA financial assistance must ensure that their programs and activities do not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities.

c. ***Record Retention***
1. Record Retention Period

Financial records, supporting documents, statistical records, and all other non-federal entity records pertinent to a federal award generally must be maintained for at least three years from the date the final FFR is submitted. *See* 2 C.F.R. §200.334. Further, if the recipient does not submit a final FFR and the award is administratively closed, FEMA uses the date of administrative closeout as the start of the general record retention period.

The record retention period **may be longer than three years or have a different start date** in certain cases.

2. Types of Records to Retain

FEMA requires that recipients and subrecipients maintain the following documentation for federally funded purchases:

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

d. ***Actions to Address Noncompliance***
Non-federal entities receiving financial assistance funding from FEMA are required to comply with requirements in the terms and conditions of their awards or subawards, including the terms set forth in applicable federal statutes, regulations, NOFOs and policies. Throughout the award lifecycle or even after an award has been closed, FEMA or the pass-through entity may discover potential or actual noncompliance on the part of a recipient or subrecipient.

In the case of any potential or actual noncompliance, FEMA may place special conditions on an award per 2 C.F.R.§ 200.208 and 2 C.F.R.§ 200.339. FEMA may place a hold on funds until the matter is corrected, or additional information is provided per 2 C.F.R.§ 200.339. or it may do both. Similar remedies for noncompliance with certain federal civil rights laws are authorized pursuant to 44 C.F.R. Part 7 and 44 C.F.R. Part 19 or other applicable regulations.
If the noncompliance is not able to be corrected by imposing additional conditions or the recipient or subrecipient refuses to correct the matter, FEMA may take other remedies allowed under 2 C.F.R.§ 200.339.

e. ***Audits***

FEMA grant recipients are subject to audit oversight from multiple entities including the DHS Office of the Inspector General (OIG), the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the pass-through entity, or independent auditing firms for single audits, and may cover activities and costs incurred under the award. Auditing agencies such as the DHS OIG, the GAO, and the pass-through entity (if applicable), and FEMA in its oversight capacity, must have access to records pertaining to the FEMA award.

11. Appendix A – FY 2025 SAFER Program Updates

Appendix A contains a brief list of changes between FY 2024 and FY 2025 to the SAFER Program. The FY 2025 SAFER Program NOFO contains some changes to definitions, descriptions, and priority categories. Changes include:

- Under Definitions
  - Clarification regarding roles and responsibilities for Grant Administrators, Program Managers and R&R Coordinators.
  - Clarification regarding Explorer, Cadet, or Mentoring Programs.
- R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: Medium Priority
  - Training supplies and nominal stipends are now eligible costs to support an explorer, cadet, or mentoring program.
  - Medium Priority wellness program costs are not eligible unless paired with a request for a High Priority Wellness and Fitness cost (e.g. physicals). Eligible Medium Priority wellness program costs are now limited to those described in the R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: Medium Priority table.
- Excess funds restrictions have been updated.

12. Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities

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

A. Ineligible Applications and Organizations
Volunteer and combination fire departments may apply for both the Hiring Activity and the R&R Activity, but they must submit separate applications for each. Applicants are limited to one application per activity per application period. If an applicant submits more than one application for the same activity during a single period, FEMA will disqualify both applications.

If two or more of the following entities have separate funding streams, personnel rosters, and EINs but share the same facilities, FEMA considers them separate organizations for FY 2025 SAFER Program eligibility:

- Fire departments
- National, state, local, federally recognized Tribal Nation, and nonprofit interest organizations

However, if two or more organizations sharing facilities apply for the same activity (e.g., Hiring of Firefighters), FEMA may review and compare their applications to determine eligibility and avoid duplicating benefits.

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

Examples of Ineligible Applications and Organizations

The following are ineligible to apply:

- For-profit organizations, federal agencies, and individuals
- Fire departments that are federal entities or contracted by the federal government and solely responsible for fire suppression on federal installations or land
- Fire departments that are not independent entities but are part of, controlled by, or under the operational command of a larger department, agency, or Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ)
    - **Exception:** If a fire department is part of the same legal entity as a municipality or other government organization and meets eligibility criteria, the municipality or organization may apply on behalf of the fire department. The application must clearly state that the fire department is part of the same legal entity.
- State or local agencies, subsets of governmental entities, or authorities that do not meet the requirements defined by 15 U.S.C. § 2229a(a)(1)(A) and (a)(2).
- Ambulance services, emergency medical service organizations, rescue squads, auxiliaries, dive teams, and urban search and rescue teams.
- Non-federal airport or port authority fire departments whose sole responsibility is fire suppression on airport grounds or port facilities, unless they have a formally recognized agreement to provide fire suppression on a first-due basis outside the airport or port.

Duplicate Applications
If an applicant submits two or more applications for the same activity, both may be disqualified.

Exception for Multi-Agency Applications

An entity applying on behalf of other organizations (e.g., multiple fire departments under the same county, city, borough, parish, or municipality) may request similar or identical costs. The application must clearly state which costs (including quantities) are for each agency or organization.

B. Supporting Definitions for this NOFO
Attrition is a gradual reduction in work force without laying off personnel, e.g., when workers resign or retire and are not replaced.

Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) is that person or office charged with enforcing the NFPA codes (Per NFPA101-2024 Edition: Life Safety Code).

Automatic Aid is a plan developed between two or more fire departments for immediate joint response on first alarms (Per NFPA 1710 – 2020 edition and NFPA 1720 – 2020).

Benefits, as defined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.431, means the regular compensation paid to employees during periods of authorized absences from the job, e.g., vacation leave, sick leave, military leave. Benefits may include employer contributions or expenses for social security, employee insurance, workmen's compensation, and pension plan costs, and the like, whether treated as indirect costs or as direct costs, and are also eligible and shall be distributed to awards and other activities in a manner consistent with the pattern of benefits accruing to the individuals or group of employees whose salaries and wages are chargeable.

Career Fire Department, as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 2229, means a fire department that has an all-paid force of firefighting personnel other than paid-on-call firefighters.

Combination Fire Department, as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 2229, means a fire department that has paid firefighting personnel and volunteer firefighting personnel. FEMA considers a fire department with firefighting personnel paid a stipend, regardless of the amount, on a per event basis, or paid on- call, to be a combination fire department. This includes non-fire emergency medical service personnel of the department.

Emergency Medical Services Organization is a public or private organization that provides direct emergency medical services, including medical transport, and are not eligible for SAFER grant funding.

Explorer, Cadet or Mentoring Program, also known as a junior firefighter program, is a program conducted by a fire department to introduce youths between the ages of 15 and 18 to the fire service. Such programs teach basic firefighting skills, provide opportunities for mentorship by adult career and volunteer firefighters, and encourage future participation in the fire service. An explorer, cadet or mentoring program is a valuable volunteer firefighter recruitment tool because it grows the local population of individuals with basic firefighter training and interest in supporting their local fire department. Programs must be conducted in accordance with state and federal labor law and explorers, cadets, or junior firefighters should not engage in fireground/scene operations other than providing support or auxiliary work outside the operational area.

Fire Department is an agency or organization that has a formally recognized arrangement with a state, territory, local government, or Tribal Nation authority (city, county, parish, fire district, township, town, village or other governing body) to provide fire suppression on a first-due basis to a fixed geographical area. Fire departments may be comprised of members who are volunteer, career, or a combination of volunteer and career.

Firefighter is an individual having the legal authority and responsibility to engage in fire suppression; employed by a fire department of a municipality, county, fire district, or state, engaged in the prevention, control and extinguishing of fires; and responding to emergency situations in which life, property or the environment is at risk. This individual must be trained in fire suppression, but may also be trained in emergency medical care, hazardous materials awareness, rescue techniques, and any other related duties provided by the fire department.

Grant Administrator is an individual who is responsible for managing the financial and administrative aspects of grants supporting R&R projects or programs designed to benefit combination or majority volunteer fire departments. This role ensures compliance with grant terms, oversees budgeting and reporting, and facilitates the effective use of grant funds to achieve program objectives. The Grant Administrator serves as the liaison between the funding agency, program staff, and fire departments to ensure transparency and accountability.

Initial Full Alarm Assignment is the personnel, equipment, and resources ordinarily dispatched upon notification of a structural fire.

Majority Career departments are considered majority career if more than 50 % of the active firefighting membership is salaried staff.

Majority Volunteer departments are considered majority volunteer if more than 50 % of the active firefighting membership is NOT compensated for service other than a nominal stipend and insurance.

Mutual Aid is a written intergovernmental agreement between agencies or jurisdictions stating that they will assist one another on request by furnishing personnel, equipment or expertise in a specified manner (NFPA 1710 Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments, 2020 edition; and NFPA 1720 Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments, 2020 Edition).

National, State, Local or Federally Recognized Tribal Organizations that Represent the Interests of Volunteer Firefighters are organizations that support or represent the interests of firefighters in front of legislative bodies at the local, state, tribal or federal level. Such organizations include, but are not limited to, state or local firefighter or fire chiefs' associations, and volunteer firefighter relief organizations and associations. FEMA shall make the final determination as to whether an applicant is an appropriate volunteer firefighter interest group. The District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are all defined as "States" in the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974. See 15 U.S.C. § 2203(10).

New Recruit is a volunteer that joins the department with the intent to serve as a firefighter, after the recipient is notified of the grant award (the date of the award notification email in FEMA GO).

Nominal Stipend is a stipend that does not exceed 20 % of what the fire department would otherwise pay to hire a full-time firefighter to perform the services for which the stipend is provided.

Whether a stipend falls above or below the 20 % threshold may be determined in one of two ways. Departments that maintain paid full-time firefighters on their payrolls may compare the

stipend to the salary they pay a full-time firefighter who performs similar services to determine whether the stipend is more or less than 20 % of that salary.

Departments that do not maintain full time firefighters on their payrolls may make the determination based on a comparison to the salary paid to a full-time firefighter in a neighboring jurisdiction, elsewhere in the state or ultimately the nation, and may also utilize data from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. A nominal stipend may also include reimbursements to volunteer firefighters for approximate out-of- pocket expenses they incur.

If a stipend paid exceeds 20 % of the prevailing wage calculated as described above, then the firefighter receiving compensation would not qualify as a volunteer and is considered an employee who may be covered by the *Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)* minimum wage and overtime provisions.

Operational Budget is the funding supporting fire-related programs or emergency response activities (e.g., salaries, maintenance, equipment, apparatus).

Operational Position is a position with a primary assignment (more than 50 % of time) on a fire suppression vehicle, regardless of collateral duties, in support of the department's NFPA 1710 or NFPA 1720 compliance.

Paid-on-Call is defined as firefighters who are paid a stipend for each event to which they respond. Paid-on-call firefighters may be considered paid firefighters or volunteer firefighters, depending on whether the stipend they receive is a nominal stipend. For the purposes of this SAFER Program, a department whose membership is composed of all volunteer firefighters, including any paid-on-call firefighters who receive only a nominal stipend, will be considered a volunteer fire department. Also, for the purposes of this SAFER Program, a department composed of any paid-on-call firefighters who receive more than a nominal stipend will be considered a combination fire department. Also refer to the definition of a nominal stipend.

Part-Time Firefighter is a firefighter who works less than 40 hours per week. When more than one part-time firefighter shares a position that results in work in excess of 40 hours per week, FEMA considers that shared assignment to be a Full-Time Equivalent position that must be accounted for in the staffing information provided in the application.

Primary First Due is a geographic area surrounding a fire station in which a company from that station is projected to be first to arrive on the scene of an incident.

Program Manager is an individual who oversees the planning, execution and evaluation of R&R projects or programs designed to benefit combination and majority volunteer fire departments. This role ensures that all program activities align with organizational goals, comply with funding requirements, and achieve measurable outcomes. The Program Manager acts as a central point of coordination, managing resources, timelines, and stakeholder relationships to ensure program success.

R&R Coordinator is an individual who is responsible for developing, implementing and managing strategies to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters within combination and majority volunteer fire departments. This role focuses on outreach, engagement, and support initiatives to ensure the sustainability of volunteer staffing levels. Key responsibilities include organizing recruitment campaigns, conducting retention-focused activities, addressing barriers to volunteer participation, and fostering a positive environment within the fire department.

Salary is a fixed payment made by an employer to an employee to compensate for a regular work schedule. Typically, the payment is made monthly, biweekly or weekly, but often expressed as an annual sum. The salary structure should be documented in writing by the employer. Note: Only costs for overtime that an employer routinely pays as a part of a firefighter's regularly scheduled and contracted shift hours to comply with FLSA are eligible salary costs under the Hiring Activity.

State, as defined in 6 U.S.C. § 101(17), is defined as any of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Staffing and Deployment is the minimum staffing requirements to ensure enough members are available to operate safely and effectively as defined in NFPA 1710 and 1720.

Supplanting is to replace or take place of funds that would otherwise be available from state or local sources, or the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Tuition Assistance is only eligible for reimbursement of undergraduate and graduate studies, vocational/technical training, certification, and job training programs for the member of the department and not a spouse nor a dependent.

Volunteer Fire Department, as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 2229, means a fire department that has an all-volunteer force of firefighting personnel.

C. Application Tips

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

- 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.
- For the most competitive applications, select those local need(s) that most closely align with one or more SAFER Program funding priorities.
- Applications differ based on the applicant type. For example, the Hiring Activity application will be different from the fire department application for the R&R Activity; the R&R application will be different for a fire department than an interest organization. Be sure to select the appropriate applicant type when applying.
- When filling out the online application, applicants are required to provide basic demographic information regarding their organization and the community served and

must provide detailed information regarding the items or activities for which they are seeking funding.
- If awarded, the application request(s) may be modified during the award review process; if the awarded activities, Scope of Work, or amount(s) do not match the application as submitted, the grant recipient shall only be responsible for completing the activities funded. The grant recipient is under no obligation to start, modify or complete any activities requested, but not funded by this award. Please review the Award Package.

D. Funding Limitation

Specific funding parameters are either required by law or are the outcome of recommendations from the CDP. Each requirement is identified below, followed by the source of the requirement noted in parentheses:

- A total of 10 % of the funding appropriated for FY 2025 SAFER Program awards is set aside for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters (15 U.S.C. § 2229a(a)(2)).
  - No more than 33 % of the total amount allocated for the recruitment and retention of volunteers can be awarded to national, state, local, territorial, or federally recognized tribal organizations that represent the interests of volunteer firefighters (CDP).
- A total of 10 % of funding appropriated for FY 2025 SAFER Program awards is set aside for grants awarded to all volunteer or majority volunteer departments for hiring of firefighters (15 U.S.C. § 2229a(a)(1)(H)).
  - A majority volunteer fire department is one that more than half its personnel do not receive financial compensation for their services, other than life, health and worker's compensation insurance, or a nominal stipend payment, including certain paid-on-call personnel. Although applications are normally awarded based on total score (high to low), to meet this 10% statutory set aside, the SAFER Program Office may be required to fund an application that meets the criteria for the set aside instead of a higher-scoring application that does not meet the set aside criteria (15 U.S.C. § 2229a(a)(1)(H)).
  - If FEMA awards less than 10 % of the funds available for the hiring of firefighters to volunteer and majority volunteer fire departments, it must transfer the remaining funds to provide grants for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters (15 U.S.C. § 2229a(a)(1)(H)).

E. Funding Priorities

a. ***Meeting the National Standards***

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

FEMA will ask applicants general questions about the NFPA standard they are attempting to meet as well as their current ability to meet that standard (without the use of overtime).

FEMA will also ask applicants to indicate what their ability will be to meet that same standard if awarded grant funds. Having additional firefighters on staff should improve a local fire

department's ability to comply with the staffing, response and operational standards that enhance community and firefighter safety.

Applications resulting in the largest percentage increases in compliance with the relevant section of NFPA 1710 (for career departments) or 1720 (for volunteer departments) receive higher pre-scores than applications resulting in smaller percentage increases in compliance.

Note: SAFER Program grants focus only on the Deployment, or Staffing and Deployment sections of these two standards, respectively.

- NFPA 1710 Assembly Requirements – Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Department (Section 5.2.4.1 – Single-Family Dwelling Initial Full Alarm Assignment Capability, Section 5.2.3.1 – Engine Companies, 3.3.53 Rapid Intervention Crew). This standard applies primarily to career fire departments and combination departments if the combination department chooses it.

- NFPA 1720 Assembly Requirements – Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments (Section 4.3 – Staffing and Deployment, Section 4.6 Initial Firefighting Operations). This standard applies primarily to all-volunteer fire departments, but it may also apply to combination departments if the combination department does not choose to comply with the NFPA 1710 standard.

F. Hiring Activity Overview

Hiring Activity grants help volunteer, combination and career fire departments improve or restore staffing levels for better emergency response and safer incident scenes. FEMA provides these grants directly to fire departments, offering financial support to hire new firefighters **("New Hires")** and expand their frontline workforce.

All the following are considerations in prescoring and peer review determinations: High (H), Medium (M), Low (L)

a. ***Compliance with NFPA Standards***

The tables below identify the priority levels for current and new compliance with the NFPA 1710/1720 standards discussed in Appendix B Section E. Funding Priorities of this NOFO.

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

New (Post-Award) 1710/1720 Compliance Priorities

H Always or 91-100%	**M** Half of the time or 40-59%
H Most of the time or 80-90%	**L** Sometimes or 20-39%
M Very often or 60-79%	**L** Rarely or 0-19%

b. ***Call Volume and Population Served***
Department call volume and population served are both factors in the initial application evaluation. Departments responding to a higher number of incidents and departments that protect a larger jurisdiction will receive higher consideration than those departments responding to fewer incidents and protecting smaller jurisdictions.

c. ***Firefighter Health Measures***
The health and well-being of firefighters is of paramount importance. Therefore, applicants who indicate they will provide newly hired firefighters with an entry-level physical and receive immunizations and who indicate they will provide annual medical exams receive higher consideration than applicants who do not specify that these benefits will be provided. To qualify for this higher consideration, the physicals must be consistent with those required under NFPA 1580 Chapter 13, Occupational Medical: Evaluations (NFPA 1582).

Entry-Level Medical Exams	
H NFPA 1582-compliant physicals	**M** Non-NFPA 1582-compliant physicals

Annual Medical Exams	
H NFPA 1582-compliant physicals	**M** Non-NFPA 1582-compliant physicals

d. ***Training Requirements***
Applicants receive higher pre-scores if the personnel funded under the grant will meet the minimum Emergency Medical Services (EMS) training and certification requirements prescribed by the AHJ.

G. R&R Activity – Fire Departments Overview

R&R Activity grants help fire departments recruit and keep volunteer firefighters trained in firefighting and emergency response. These increase the number of skilled, certified, and capable firefighters who can safely respond to emergencies in the department's service area.

The following are considerations in prescoring and peer review determinations. Program priorities are listed as: **High (H), Medium (M), Low (L)**

a. ***Compliance with NFPA Standards***
The highest priority is to assist departments experiencing a high rate of turnover and that have staffing levels significantly below the ideal staffing level required to comply with NFPA standards 1710 or 1720 as discussed in Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities, Funding Priorities of this NOFO.

b. ***Volunteer Membership***

Departments or organizations with the highest percentage of volunteers are prioritized for recruitment and retention support. Applicants with mostly volunteer members or a large number of volunteer firefighters will receive greater consideration.

Percentage of Volunteer Firefighters	
H 91-100%	M 41-50%
H 81-91%	M 31-40%
H 71-80%	L 21-30%
H 61-70%	L 11-20%
M 51-60%	L 1-10%

c. ***Call Volume***
Department call volume is a factor in the initial evaluation. Departments responding to a higher number of incidents receive higher consideration.

d. ***Firefighter Health Measures***
Applicants who commit to providing newly recruited firefighters with an entry-level physical, immunizations, and annual medical exams will receive higher consideration. These physicals must meet the standards outlined in NFPA 1582, Chapter 13: Occupational Medical Evaluations.

Additionally, applicants who offer worker's compensation or Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D) benefits to their members will receive higher consideration compared to those who do not specify these benefits.

Entry-Level Medical Exams	
H NFPA 1582-compliant physicals	M Non-NFPA 1582-compliant physicals

Annual Medical Exams	
H NFPA 1582-compliant physicals	M Non-NFPA 1582-compliant physicals

e. ***Firefighter Training and Certification Requirements***

Firefighter	
H Both Firefighter (FF) II/Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)	M FF I
H FF II	L First Responder
M Both FF I/EMT	

f. ***R&R Coordinator/Program Manager/Grant Administrator***

R&R Coordinator
H Applicants who currently have an R&R coordinator, program manager, or grant administrator in place
M Applicants who request grant funding for an R&R coordinator, program manager, or grant administrator's position

L Applicants who do not have, or are not requesting, an R&R coordinator, program manager, or grant administrator

g. ***Regional Requests***

Applications that will have a direct regional or local benefit beyond the immediate boundaries of the applicant's first-due area will receive higher consideration.

A regional request is an opportunity for an eligible R&R Activity organization to act as a host and apply for funding on behalf of itself and any number of other participating R&R Activity eligible organizations. Regional activities should achieve cost effectiveness, support regional efficiency and resilience, and have a direct regional or local benefit to more than one local jurisdiction (county, parish, town, township, city, or village). Direct regional or local benefit means that other eligible organizations will receive a portion of the grant-awarded funds, and will receive and/or share items purchased with those funds

The community identification characteristic, the organizational status of the applicant, and the permanent resident population should be entered for the host entity, regardless of the composition of the participating partners.

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

Neither the regional host nor any participating partner is prevented from also applying on behalf of their own organization for SAFER funding. However, the regional host or participating partner must not apply for a project or activity that conflicts with or duplicates another project or activity that the host or participating partner already benefits from, or will benefit from if awarded. Applicants must certify that the organizations participating in the application have not received grants for similar items, activities or projects.

In completing the application, the host applicant must include a list of all participating organizations, including a point of contact and phone number for each organization that will directly benefit from the regional project if they receive the grant.

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.

All participants of a regional application must comply with SAFER Program requirements. Upon notification by the SAFER 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 SAFER Program Office of their specific non-compliance.

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 participating in the award. The MOU must specify the individual and mutual

responsibilities of the host and participating partners, the host's and participants' level of involvement in the project(s), the participating partners' EINs, 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 SAFER Program organization and must be a party to the MOU or equivalent document. **Copies of the MOU or equivalent document must be submitted as an attachment in the application**.

H. R&R Activity – National, State, Local, Territorial, or Federally Recognized Tribal Nation Volunteer Firefighter Interest Organizations (Interest Organizations) Overview

Grants awarded under this R&R Activity are to applicants who identify as an Interest Organization. These grants are intended to create an aggregate increase in the number of trained, certified, and competent firefighters capable of safely responding to emergencies on behalf of the fire departments being represented. For this reason, projects that are comprehensive in nature and based on a clear needs assessment, implementation plan, evaluation plan, and have, or will establish, fire service partnerships will receive higher consideration.

In completing the application, the applicant must include data that approximates the characteristics of the entire region and all fire departments affected by the grant. If awarded, recipients may be required to provide documentation of each fire department's consent to participate in the application. Applicants must also certify that they will ensure the fire departments participating in this application have not received grants for similar items/activities. The following identifies the elements that the applications will be evaluated on during the pre-scoring process. Automated (pre-score) evaluation scores represent 30 % of the total application score.

All the following are considerations in pre-scoring and peer review determinations. Program priorities are listed as: **High (H), Medium (M), Low (L)**

a. ***Compliance with NFPA Standards***

The highest priority is to assist departments experiencing a high rate of turnover that have staffing levels significantly below the ideal staffing level required to comply with NFPA standards 1710 or 1720 as discussed in Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities, Funding Priorities of this NOFO. Interest Organizations that currently have the lowest recruitment and retention rates among the entire region and all fire departments benefitting from the grant funds receive higher consideration for funding.

b. ***R&R Coordinator/Program Manager/Grant Administrator***

R&R Coordinator
H Applicants who currently have a coordinator, program manager, or grant administrator in place
M Applicants who request grant funding for a coordinator, program manager, or grant administrator's position
L Applicants who do not have, nor are not requesting, a coordinator, program manager, or grant administrator

c. *Needs Assessment*

Needs Assessment	
H Applicants with projects based on a needs assessment	L Applicants with projects that are not based on a needs assessment

d. *Fire Service Partnerships*

Fire Service Partnerships	
H Applicants who have, or will establish, fire service partnerships as part of this project	L Applicants who will not have, nor establish, fire service partnerships as part of this project

I. Eligible and Ineligible Costs and Requirements

Regardless of the eligibility of any costs requested or the results of the review of the application conducted in accordance with Section 7 Application Review Information of this NOFO, FEMA reserves the right to approve the activities requested in an application in whole or in part.

Hiring Activity – Eligible Costs and Requirements

Eligible Costs:

- Salary and associated benefits (actual payroll expenses) for the positions funded under the SAFER Program grant are eligible. Costs are reimbursable if they are included as part of the standard package, available to all operational firefighter positions, contractually obligated, and reimbursed via payroll. Refer also to the definitions in Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities, Supporting Definitions for this NOFO or this NOFO.
- Compensation for a firefighter's normal, contracted work schedule is reimbursable, but overtime costs are not eligible for reimbursement by the SAFER Program grant award (including overtime for holdovers, extra shifts, to attend training, etc.). Only costs for overtime that the fire department routinely pays as a part of the base salary or a firefighter's regularly scheduled and contracted shift hours, to comply with FLSA, are eligible. For more information on FLSA, please visit the U.S. Department of Labor.
- Salaries and benefits of firefighters hired with SAFER Program funding while they are engaged in initial recruit training are eligible.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Only firefighters hired after the SAFER Program grant offer of award ("New Hires") are eligible for grant funding.
- Only full-time positions are eligible for funding. A full-time position is one position that is funded for at least 2,080 hours per year, e.g., 40 hours per week, 52 weeks per year.
- SAFER Program grant funds will only pay for operational positions, whose primary assignment (greater than or equal to 50 % of the time) is on a fire suppression vehicle, regardless of collateral duties.

Hiring Activity – Eligible Costs and Requirements

- Only volunteer and mostly volunteer fire departments may hire individuals to fill officer-level positions (e.g., chief, fire inspector, training officer, safety officer) in addition to their primary operational assignment.
- Funds received under the SAFER Program must not be used to replace funds that would be available from state or local sources, or from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, but shall be used to increase the amount of funding that would, in the absence of Federal funds received, be made available from state or local sources, or funds supplied by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Hiring Activity - Ineligible Costs

- Salaries and benefits for full-time firefighters who were employees at the time of grant award are ineligible.
- Salaries and benefits for job-sharing positions (e.g., utilizing more than one person to fill a full-time SAFER Program-funded position) are ineligible.
- SAFER Program funding may not be used to fund promotions for existing members (i.e., to promote a current member by placing the member in a new SAFER Program-funded position with a higher salary).
- Pre-application costs, such as grant writer fees, administrative hiring costs (e.g., physicals, medical exams, background checks, etc.), and indirect costs associated with hiring firefighters are ineligible.
- Costs to train and equip firefighters (e.g., personal protective equipment or Turnout Gear) are ineligible unless they are salaries and benefits for firefighters hired under the SAFER Program while they are engaged in training.
- Costs for additional benefits such as uniform allowances, education stipends, meal allowance, etc., are ineligible unless they are contractually obligated, included as part of the standard benefits package for all employees, and reimbursed via payroll.
- Costs of annual physicals or medical exams are ineligible.
- Overtime costs are ineligible unless they are costs that the fire department routinely pays as a part of the base salary or a firefighter's regularly scheduled and contracted shift hours to comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).
- M&A costs.
- Indirect costs.

R&R Activity – Eligibility Requirements

- Applicants must clearly connect the requested activities to the specific recruitment or retention challenges they aim to address. FEMA will not approve funding for any budget item unless the applicant provides enough detail showing how it will improve recruitment and retention. Costs must be reasonable, as determined by FEMA.
- Applicants who propose to focus on retention of volunteers will receive equal consideration as applicants focusing on recruitment of volunteers. A focus on retention may include providing incentives for volunteer firefighter members to continue service in a fire department.

R&R Activity – Eligibility Requirements

- SAFER Program grant funds may only be used for volunteer firefighters who are involved with, or trained in, the operations of firefighting and emergency response.
- FEMA recommends that departments consult their AHJ or the department's legal counsel to understand the full legal and financial implications involved with implementing or sustaining programs that offer benefits or financial awards to firefighters (e.g., stipends, Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP), or Retirement Program).
- All grant-related purchases and activities must be incurred, received and completed within the POP. The period of coverage or service delivery on all contracts and agreements may not begin prior to or extend beyond the POP of the grant. FEMA may permit prorated costs to be charged to the grant for training courses that begin during the period of performance but end after the POP ends.
- All funded activities under the R&R Activity must be governed by formally adopted Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Minimally, these SOPs should specify who qualifies for each of the incentives, specific requirements for earning the incentives, and the disposition of the awarded incentives if an individual fails to fulfill the stipulations. FEMA may ask for copies of SOPs before or after being awarded.
- Funds received under the SAFER Program must not be used to replace funds that would be available from state or local sources, or from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, but shall be used to increase the amount of funding that would, in the absence of Federal funds received, be made available from state or local sources, or funds supplied by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: High Priority

- Costs to conduct a staffing needs assessment to determine the operational staff and support necessary for the fire department to perform its duties safely and effectively. This may include costs for data collection supplies, hiring contractors or personnel to gather and analyze data, and purchasing software programs.
  - **Note:** If a staffing needs assessment is requested and the application is selected for funding, the staffing needs assessment will be the only activity that will be funded.
- Costs to support a R&R Coordinator, a Program Manager, and/or a Grant Administrator (including reasonable salary, fringe benefits, contract support, supplies, travel, etc.).
  - **Note:** Computers for these positions are low priority items.
- Marketing Program to recruit new volunteer firefighters, such as:
  - Media advertising (e.g., television, radio, social media);
  - Print advertising (e.g., newspapers, billboards, signs, banners, brochures, flyers); and,
  - LED/electronic sign. Note: This is a high priority item only when included as part of a comprehensive marketing program. Only one LED/electronic sign is allowed per applicant and 75% of usage must be dedicated to R&R activities. Allowable costs may be limited to reasonable amounts as determined by FEMA. Additional restrictions apply (for details see Section 10.B.a. Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) Compliance of this NOFO).

R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: High Priority
○ **Note:** If requesting funds to recruit new members, a marketing plan must be in place, or the application must show a marketing plan will be implemented either with grant funds (requested as a line item) or that the applicant will implement a marketing plan using existing department resources. • New Member Costs may include: ○ Entry-level physical exam for each new recruit; ○ Annual physicals for newly recruited members; and ○ Station duty uniforms. • Wellness and Fitness for Existing Members. Wellness and Fitness costs of an annual exam may include: ○ Physical exams; ○ Job-related immunization; ○ Periodic Physical Exam/Health Screening; ○ Behavioral health; ○ Traditional therapies and preventative care facilitated by a licensed mental health or physical healthcare provider; and ○ Cancer Screening Program to meet NFPA 1582. ○ **Note:** All grant-funded physicals (except those for explorers/cadets) must meet NFPA 1582 standards (Chapter 9, Occupational Medical Evaluation). • Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to provide behavioral health training for coping with fire service duties. • New Recruit Basic Training: Training required by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) to meet minimum firefighter certification (e.g., CPR, First Responder, EMT, FF1, FF2) that is not covered under the department's normal operating budget is eligible. ○ Reimbursement is also eligible for members' lost wages, mileage/transportation costs, lodging, and per diem while attending required basic training. ○ **Note:** Mileage/transportation, lodging and per diem costs must comply with the department's written travel policies and procedures. If no policies are established, reimbursement will be at the federal government rate. • Leadership or Career Development Training: Leadership or career development training, when used as a retention incentive and not covered under the department's normal operating budget, is eligible. ○ Reimbursement is also eligible for members' lost wages, mileage/transportation costs, lodging, and per diem while attending leadership/career development training or conferences. ○ **Note:** Mileage/transportation, lodging, and meal costs must comply with the department's written travel policies and procedures. If no policies are established, reimbursement will be at the federal government rate. ○ To be eligible, courses must provide Continuing Education Units (CEU) or certificates of completion. • Instructor/train-the-trainer training that is not covered under a department's normal operating budget. • Reimbursement to members for lost wages, mileage and transportation costs, lodging costs, and per diem while attending instructor/train-the-trainer training are also eligible.

R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: High Priority

- **Note:** Costs for mileage/transportation, lodging, and per diem must comply with the department's written travel policies and procedures. If policies are not established, costs will only be reimbursed at the federal government rate.

- Tuition assistance for higher education (including books, lab fees and student fees).
  - Coursework or certifications in this category should be more advanced than what departments typically fund for required minimum-staffing requirements and specific to an accredited university or trade school program.
  - Courses are not limited to firefighter training or education.
  - Only tuition payments for classes offered and taken during the POP are allowable.
  - Computers for individual students are not eligible for funding.
  - Payments for student loans are not eligible for funding.
  - Recipients must provide internal policies that explain how funding is administered.
  - Allowable costs may be limited to reasonable amounts, as determined by FEMA.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or Turnout Gear.
  - PPE may only be funded for new firefighters that join the department after the date of grant award, that successfully pass an NFPA 1582-compliant physical, and that are certified as "fit for duty." PPE purchased with SAFER Program funding must be utilized by adequately trained staff.
  - Funds are available to acquire Occupational Safety and Health Administration-required and NFPA-compliant PPE for firefighting personnel. In addition, PPE must meet any national or state standards and increase firefighter safety. Failure to meet these requirements may result in ineligibility for PPE funding. Copies of NFPA standards may be reviewed at http://www.nfpa.org/freeaccess.
  - Only actual costs for PPE are allowed.
  - Allowable costs may be limited to reasonable amounts, as determined by FEMA.
  - To receive payment, recipients must provide the following documentation to support the purchase of PPE:
    - Proof of cost (e.g., invoices) and proof of payment (e.g., canceled checks, bank statements, electronic funds transfers) for PPE.
    - Proof that the firefighter(s) have passed an NFPA 1582-compliant physical and are certified as "fit for duty."
  - Eligible PPE Costs:
    - Only one set of PPE for structural and wildland firefighting per each new recruit.
    - The SAFER Program considers a complete set of structural PPE to be composed of one self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) mask or face piece, one pair of pants, one coat, one helmet, two hoods, one pair of boots, two pairs of gloves, one pair of suspenders, and one pair of goggles. In those jurisdictions where additional PPE, like Personal Safety or Rescue Bailout Systems are statutorily required, the SAFER Program will consider all statutorily required items to be part of a complete PPE set.
    - The SAFER Program considers a complete set of wildland PPE to be comprised of one pair of pants, one coat, one jumpsuit, one helmet, one pair of boots, one pair of gloves, one pair of suspenders, one pair of goggles, one fire shelter, one web gear, one backpack, and one canteen or other hydration system.

R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: High Priority

- LOSAP or Retirement Program:
  - Establishment of a new LOSAP or Retirement Program.
  - Increasing coverage of an existing LOSAP or Retirement Program to include new recruits.

R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: Medium Priority

- Nominal stipends, as defined under Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities, Supporting Definitions for this NOFO in this NOFO for volunteer firefighters who are involved with, or trained in, the operations of firefighting and emergency response (e.g., Pay-per-Call, Points Based System, etc.). Stipends may only be provided for participation in operational (firefighting) activities, such as duty shifts, operational training, or responding to incidents.
  - Food vouchers may be used for nominal stipends if the Narrative supports their use as an effective recruitment and retention tool for the department. However, food vouchers must be issued through formally adopted SOPs.
  - Award recipients must maintain records of all food vouchers including firefighter name, amount, date received, and signature of the receiving firefighter.
  - Gift cards may not be used for nominal stipends. For information on gift cards, see Low Priority – Awards/Incentives below.
  - Only actual costs for stipends are allowed.
  - Allowable costs may be limited to reasonable amounts as determined by FEMA.
- Costs to support explorer, cadet, or mentoring programs, such as:
  - Only one set of station duty uniforms (the SAFER Program considers one set of station duty uniform as one pair of pants, one shirt, one hat, and one pair of boots) for each newly recruited cadet/explorer per the department's documented uniform policy.
  - Training (Non-Immediate Danger to Life and Health [IDLH]), including training supplies.
  - One set of structural or wildland PPE as defined above for each new cadet/explorer that joins the department after the date of grant award, with the following two exceptions: 1) SCBA mask/face pieces are not eligible because PPE for explorers/cadets may not be used in an IDLH atmosphere, and 2) physicals for explorers/cadets are not required to meet NFPA 1582.
  - One introductory physical exam per each newly recruited explorer/cadet.
  - Nominal stipends, when governed by a formally adopted SOP and provided consistent with applicable state and federal labor laws.
- Insurance packages (e.g., AD&D, workers compensation, disability, health, dental, life).
- Exercise equipment is limited to no more than $10,000 total per grant award.
- Wellness programs. Wellness program costs are only eligible for funding if the application also requests funding for a High Priority Wellness and Fitness cost (e.g. physical exams). Wellness program costs may include:
  - Candidate physical ability evaluation;
  - Injury/illness rehab;
  - Formal fitness, injury prevention; or
  - International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) or IAFC peer fitness trainer program.

R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: Low Priority

- New Member Costs. Only one set of station duty uniforms for new firefighters that join the department after the date of grant award, per the department's documented uniform policy. The SAFER Program considers one set of station duty uniforms as one pair of pants, one shirt, one hat, and one pair of boots. Class A or B uniforms (e.g., Dress Uniforms) and badges are not eligible costs.
- American National Standards Institute-approved retro-reflective highway apparel.
- PPE gear bags.
- Costs for advanced training not currently covered under the department's operating budget (e.g., extrication training, specialized equipment training, swift water rescue, etc.). Advanced training requests are only eligible for members who have already met the minimum firefighter certifications required by the AHJ and must closely correlate to the applicant's recruitment and retention goals.
  - Reimbursement to members for lost wages, mileage and transportation costs, lodging costs, and per diem while attending advanced training are also eligible.
  - **Note**: Costs for mileage and transportation costs, lodging costs, and per diem must comply with the department's written travel policies and procedures. If policies are not established, costs will only be reimbursed at the federal government rate.
- Two computers (including monitor, keyboard, mouse) and printer for grant-appointed R&R Coordinator, Program Manager, and/or Grant Administrator.
- Awards or Incentive program for participation in operational (firefighting) activities, such as operational training or responding to incidents (e.g., gift cards for top responders, non-uniform clothing).
  - Non-uniform clothing is only eligible as part of an award program. Non-uniform clothing is limited to a shirt, jacket or pullover. Class A or B uniforms (e.g., Dress Uniforms) are not eligible costs.
  - A logbook for the purchase and issuance of gift cards is required. The logbook must include name of recipient, date, amount of card, reason for issuance, and signature of recipient. Gift cards should be issued to operational firefighters who have completed the minimum firefighter training required by the AHJ.
- LED/electronic sign when it is not included as part of a comprehensive marketing program.
- Fire service association membership fees.
- Projector or screen to support classroom training.
- Payments for housing or rent for volunteers at or near the fire station.
- Other costs associated with new recruits (background checks, aptitude tests, etc.).
- Station modifications, remodeling or renovation of existing facilities.
  - Remodeling or renovations to an existing facility are allowable (e.g., converting space into bunkroom) and must directly relate to the identified recruitment or retention problems or issues being addressed with the grant. The renovations must be minor interior alterations not to exceed $10,000 total per grant award.
  - Remodeling or renovations may not change the footprint or profile of the building.

R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: Low Priority

- A request for modifications to facilities may require EHP review (for details see Section 10.B.a. Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) Compliance of this NOFO). Recipients are encouraged to have completed as many steps as possible for a successful EHP Review in support of their proposal for funding, including coordination with their State Historic Preservation Office to identify potential historic preservation issues and to discuss the potential for project effects, and compliance with all state and EHP laws and requirements. Preservation Office to identify potential historic preservation issues and to discuss the potential for project effects, and compliance with all state and EHP laws and requirements.
- Written approval must be provided by FEMA before using any SAFER Program funds for remodeling or renovation. If awarded funds for remodeling or renovation, recipients may be required to submit evidence of approved zoning ordinances, architectural plans, any other locally required planning permits, and a notice of interest.

R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: Non-Prioritized Costs

- M&A costs up to 3 % of the total awarded amount in accordance with 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. M&A costs must be identifiable and directly related to the implementation and management of the SAFER Program grant. Salaries and fringe benefits for personnel directly supporting the grant are not required to be included in the M&A budget line item.
- Indirect costs for national, state, local or federally recognized Tribal Nation volunteer firefighter interest organizations that are expended pursuant to Section 3.H. Indirect Costs (Facilities and Administrative Costs).
- Up to $1,500 in grant writer fees for application preparation but not grant administration. The fee must have been paid between 90 days before the publication date of this NOFO and up to 30 days of the end of the application period and prior to any contact with SAFER Program Office staff or an Offer of Award. For details see Appendix C – Award Administration Information, Grant Writer/Preparation Fees.
- Audit costs proportional to the total SAFER Program award. Recipients of multiple federal funding sources can only charge a pro rata share of the audit cost(s) to the SAFER Program award, and they must be incurred during the POP.

R&R Activity – Ineligible Costs

This list is not exhaustive:

- Salary and benefits for firefighters.
- Retroactive payments or recognition for operational services or non-operational activities (including payments, gift cards, recruitment bonuses, or stipends for recruiting firefighters) rendered prior to the grant award.
- Costs incurred (including the delivery of goods or services) outside of the period of performance except for grant writer fees; see Appendix C – Award Administration Information, Grant Writer/Preparation Fees.

R&R Activity – Ineligible Costs

- Fire suppression equipment.
- Vehicles.
- Fire simulators, fire evolution, or fire training props (e.g., burn trailers, forcible entry, rescue/smoke maze, flashover simulators).
- Supplies, expendables, or "one time" use items such as foam, fuel/propane, breaching materials (e.g., wood or sheetrock).
- Sirens, warning lights for fire department or private vehicles, or other outdoor warning devices.
- Communication equipment and monthly expenses including cell phones, pagers, portable radios, or Computer-aided Dispatch systems.
- Video cameras or recording equipment.
- Photographs or photographer services, unless part of a marketing contract for recruitment of new members.
- Intruder alerting systems and deployment notification systems.
- Payments for travel to or participation in leisure or social activities such as theater tickets, entertainment tickets, and trips (e.g., professional sporting events).
- Costs associated with award banquets, such as food, photographers, refreshments, entertainment, or rental facilities. Reimbursement for actual awards (e.g., plaques and trophies) is eligible.
- Costs for food or refreshments that are not part of a conference or training hosted by the grant recipient (food vouchers can be requested as a nominal stipend but must be provided only under formally adopted SOPs).
- Costs for training currently covered under the department's operating budget (e.g., tuition or instructor fees for department-mandated, basic-level training).
- Tuition assistance for family members of the volunteer.
- Services at a member's personal residence (e.g., internet access, plowing of driveways).
- Furniture (except for newly converted bunkrooms), televisions, fixtures, appliances (e.g., refrigerators), and entertainment equipment.
- "Giveaways" for recruitment events, such as stickers, pencils, pens, t-shirts, cups, mugs, or balloons.
- Fees for courses and training that are available free of charge on the internet or at state or local training facilities (e.g., NIMS 100, 700, 800).
- Costs for fuel. Costs for travel to training or other eligible activities are reimbursed through mileage rates.
- Gym Memberships.
- Payments for student loans.
- Mileage reimbursement for responding to incidents or periodic operational training at the fire house. Mileage reimbursement is allowed for other types of training as explained under eligible costs.
- Station internet access or user fees and equipment to install internet, such as routers.
- Continued funding of an existing (or previously funded through the SAFER Program) LOSAP or Retirement Program.

R&R Activity – Ineligible Costs

• Computers in common areas or individual computers for training or education.
• Copiers and printers.
• Incentives for career firefighters within the recipient's fire department.
• Ineligible explorer, cadet, mentoring program expenditures:
  ○ SCBAs, including masks/face pieces.
  ○ Anything involving the IDLH atmosphere.
  ○ Any activities precluded by the AHJ.
• Ineligible PPE expenditures:
  ○ Three-quarter length rubber boots.
  ○ SCBAs (not including SCBA masks or face pieces).
  ○ PASS Devices.
  ○ Spare cylinders.
  ○ Bomb disposal suits.
  ○ PPE for hazardous materials and other specialized incidents.
  ○ More than one set of structural or wildland PPE per newly recruited member (within the period of performance).
• PPE for existing members, R&R Coordinator, Program Manager, and/or Grant Administrator.

13. Appendix C – Award Administration Information

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

A. 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 to HOTLINE@oig.dhs.gov.

B. Grant Writer and Preparation Fees

Fees for grant writers may be included as a pre-award expenditure. For grant writer fees to be eligible as a pre-award expenditure, the services must be competitively sourced, specifically identified, and listed within the "Grant Request Details" section of the application and must satisfy the requirements under 2 C.F.R. § 200.458. FEMA will only consider reimbursements for application preparation, not administration, up to $1,500 peryear. Grant writer fees must be paid between the 90 days beforethe publication date of this NOFO and up to 30 days after the application period closes. For the grant writer fees held either on retainer or subscription basis to be an eligible pre-award cost, the claimed retainer or subscription must have been competitively secured, and the costs are limited to the start of the appropriation period for the underlying award and meet the requirements under 2 C.F.R. § 200.458. Fees payable on a contingency basis are not an eligible expense.

Pursuant to 2 C.F.R. 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 C.F.R. § 180.300.

Before submitting the application, please review all work produced by grant writers or other third parties for accuracy. By submitting the application, applicants are certifying all information contained therein is true and an accurate reflection of the organization. Regardless of the applicant's intent, the submission of information that is false or misleading may result in consequences imposed by FEMA. These consequences may 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 DHS OIG.

The following documentation shall be provided to FEMA upon request:

1. A copy of the grant writer's contract for services;
2. A copy of the invoice or purchase order;
3. A copy of the canceled check (front and back); and
4. Evidence that the services were competitively procured.

Failure to provide the requested documentation may result in the grant writer fee being deemed ineligible and the grant reduced accordingly.

Note: FEMA requires that all applicants identify the following as "Application Participants" in the "Contact Information" section of the application: Any individual or organization that assisted with the development, preparation, or review of the application to include drafting or writing the narrative and budget; whether that person, entity, or agent is compensated or not; and whether the assistance took place before submitting the application.

C. Maintenance and Sustainment

The use of FEMA Preparedness Grant funds for the cost of repairs or replacement, as well as maintenance contracts, warranties, and user fees may be allowable.

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 SAFER Program 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.

D. Taxes, Fees, Levies and Assessments

Taxes, fees, levies or assessments that the recipient is legally required to pay and are directly related to any eligible SAFER Program acquisition activity may be charged to a SAFER Program award pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.470. These charges shall be identified and enumerated in the SAFER Program application narrative, as well as the "Grant 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 SAFER Program acquisition activity are not chargeable to any SAFER Program 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.

E. Excess Funds

FEMA expects recipients to complete awarded activities within the budget allocated. However, excess funds may remain after completing the original project described in the recipient's award. This may be due to cost savings from under-budget acquisition activities or competitive procurement processes. These excess funds are to generally be deobligated and may not be used for additional activities.

FEMA may consider exceptions if urgent and compelling needs are identified that directly relate to a demonstrated event(s) impacting the health and safety of the department's firefighters, such as a presidentially declared disaster. Requests must be submitted at least 120 days before period of performance expiration.

Note: The opportunity for excess funds is limited when the Scope of Work is changed via an amendment such as reduction in quantities.

F. Payments and Amendments

SAFER Program payment requests from non-federal 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 until all special conditions listed on the grant award document have been met, including completion of EHP review, and the request for payment in FEMA GO has been approved. 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.

Non-federal entities should keep detailed records of all transactions involving the grant. FEMA may at any time, request copies of any relevant documentation and records, including purchasing documentation along with copies of cancelled checks for verification. See, e.g., 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.318(i), 200.334, 200.337.

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 funds and disbursement by the recipient (not to exceed 30 days), and their financial management systems meet the standards for fund control and accountability established in 2 C.F.R. Part 200. The recipient shall include all applicable source documentation such as invoices, purchase orders, contracts, etc., to support the costs associated with the advance SAFER Program payment requests. EHP review requirements must be met before advanced payments are made.

Reimbursement

Payment by reimbursement is the preferred method when the requirements to be paid in advance, pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.305, cannot be met. In accordance with U.S. Department of Treasury regulations at 31 C.F.R. Part 205, if applicable, the recipient shall maintain procedures to minimize the time elapsing between the transfer and disbursement of fundsAs a prerequisite of SAFER Program approval for reimbursement requests, recipients shall submit all applicable source documentation, including payroll records, timecards, contracts, invoices, purchase orders, and proof of payment (e.g., canceled checks, bank statements, electronic funds transfers) to support the costs associated with each payment request.

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 2 C.F.R. § 200.305.

Payment Requests During Closeout

Recipients may submit reimbursement payment requests only during the 120 days following the end of the award's period of performance, as part of the closeout reconciliation process under 2 C.F.R. § 200.344. These requests must be for reimbursement payments only, as no other types of payment requests are allowed after the period of performance has expired. The expenditure must have been obligated and received during the award's period of performance. The request must include clear and specific information certifying that the reimbursement is for an obligation properly incurred during the active period of performance.

FEMA may request supporting documentation for the reimbursement at any time for review.

Amendments

FEMA may approve SAFER Program award amendments on a case-by-case basis for the following reasons:

- Extending the period of performance to complete the scope of work under the Recruitment and Retention (R&R) Activity.
- Changes to the activity, mission, retroactive approval (pre-award), or closeout issues.

- Budget changes, including adding funds to the award or non-closeout deobligation of funds.
- Changes to key personnel.

Amendment requests must be submitted through FEMA GO and include specific, compelling justifications for the change. Amendments or changes to the scope of work may require additional Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP) review. FEMA strongly encourages recipients to use grant funds promptly to align with SAFER goals and objectives.

Deobligation of Funds

Recipients may return unused funds (e.g., funds drawn down but not used or award funding never requested) before the end of the award's period of performance. To do this, recipients must submit an amendment through FEMA GO and include the following:

- A statement that the unliquidated funds are not needed to fulfill the grant's obligations or mission.
- Confirmation that they understand the returned funds will be deobligated and unavailable for future expenses.

Deobligating funds will reduce the federal portion of the grant and the recipient's cost share obligation. FEMA will confirm deobligation requests with all points of contact. Once confirmed, FEMA will hold the approved request for 14 days to allow the recipient time to reconsider before processing the deobligation.

G. Disposition of Grant-Funded Equipment

A recipient must use, manage and dispose of SAFER Program-funded equipment in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. § 200.313. Except for state governments, when original or replacement equipment acquired under a SAFER Program award is no longer needed for the original project, program, or other activities currently or previously supported by a federal awarding agency, the recipient must request disposition instructions from FEMA. FEMA strongly recommends contacting the SAFER Help Desk before disposing of SAFER -funded equipment.

H. Post-Award Recipient Responsibilities

Once awarded, recipients under the Hiring Activity must submit a pre-SAFER Program roster of paid operational firefighting personnel who were employees at the time of the award. This roster, which supports NFPA 1710 or NFPA 1720 standards, will be compared to the names of SAFER Program-funded positions to ensure that the funded firefighters are new employees.

The SAFER Program Office will work with recipients to establish the correct staffing maintenance number. The staffing maintenance number is a sum of the number of paid operational firefighting personnel who were employees at the time of award and the number of SAFER Program-funded positions. Recipients must agree to maintain this staffing level throughout the period of performance by actively and promptly filling any vacancies.

Staffing Maintenance and Layoffs

- Recipients who lay off operational personnel during the period of performance will be considered in default of their grant, and the award will be terminated. In such cases, recipients may be required to return federal funds received under the grant.
- If recipients face a documented economic hardship that prevents them from backfilling non-SAFER Program operational positions vacated through attrition (e.g., resignation, retirement), they may petition FEMA for a waiver of the staffing maintenance requirements.
- Applicants and recipients should actively coordinate and collaborate with their local and state authorities to help ensure and prioritize the commitment of future non-federal investments in order to sustain staffing capabilities once an award's period of performance ends.

Waiver Conditions

- Approved waivers allow recipients to reduce and reestablish the staffing maintenance numbers agreed to at the time of the award by the number of positions they cannot fill.
- The economic hardship must affect the entire public safety sector in the recipient's jurisdiction, not just the fire department.
- FEMA will not grant waivers for SAFER -funded positions.
- Recipients who fail to maintain required staffing levels risk losing federal funds awarded under the grant.

Volunteer Firefighting and Anti-Discrimination
Recipients must agree that firefighters hired under these grants will not be discriminated against or prohibited from participating in volunteer firefighting activities in another jurisdiction during off-duty hours.

Veteran Recruitment
FEMA strongly encourages recipients to actively seek, recruit, and hire military veterans to increase their department's ranks, whenever practicable.