



# Homeland Security

## FY 2018 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program

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### Overview

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is an important component of the larger, coordinated effort to strengthen the nation's overall level of preparedness and ability to respond to fire and related hazards. Since Fiscal Year (FY) 2001, the AFG Program has provided approximately \$7.1 billion in grants to first-responder organizations to obtain much needed emergency response equipment, personal protective equipment, as well as firefighting and emergency vehicles, and training. The FY 2018 AFG Program will award another \$315 million to first-responder organizations that need support to improve their capability to respond to fires and emergencies of all types.

FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program will make available \$315 million directly to fire departments, State Fire Training Academies, and nonaffiliated EMS organizations to enhance their response capabilities and to more effectively protect the health and safety of the public and emergency response personnel with respect to fire and all other hazards.

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### Purpose

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

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### Funding

The AFG Program will award approximately \$315 million in competitive grants to fire departments, non-affiliated EMS organizations, and state fire training academies. Funding for vehicles is limited to 25 percent of the total FY 2018 AFG Program appropriation. Not less than 3.5 percent of available grant funds shall fund emergency medical services provided by fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations.

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## Eligibility

**Fire Departments:** Fire departments operating in any of the 50 states, as well as fire departments in the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico,<sup>1</sup> or any federally recognized Indian tribe or tribal organization. A fire department is an agency or organization having a formally recognized arrangement with a state, territory, local, or tribal authority (city, county, parish, fire district, township, town, or other governing body) to provide fire suppression to a population within a geographically fixed primary first due response area.

**Nonaffiliated EMS organizations:** Nonaffiliated EMS organizations operating in any of the 50 states; as well as, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico,<sup>1</sup> or any federally recognized Indian tribe or tribal organization. A nonaffiliated EMS organization is an agency or organization that is a public or private nonprofit emergency medical service entity providing medical transport that is not affiliated with a hospital and does not serve a geographic area in which emergency medical services are adequately provided by a fire department.

FEMA considers the following as hospitals under the AFG Program:

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

**State Fire Training Academies:** A State Fire Training Academy (SFTA) operates in any of the 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.<sup>1</sup> Applicants must be designated either by legislation or by a Governor's declaration as the sole fire service training agency within a state, territory, or the District of Columbia. The designated SFTA shall be the only agency/bureau/division, or entity within that state, territory, or the District of Columbia.

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## Program Highlights

Under the FY 2018 AFG Program, eligible organizations may apply for grants under the following activities:

### **Operations and Safety:**

- Grant projects funded include professional training, wellness and fitness programs equipment, personal protective equipment, modifications to facilities,

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

and supplies that support firefighting and non-affiliated EMS operations and safety.

**Vehicle Acquisition: Fire Departments and non-affiliated EMS Organizations**

- Eligible apparatus included, but are not limited to: pumpers, aerials, quints, brush trucks, tankers/tenders, rescue vehicles, and ambulances.

**Regional Grants:**

- Regional projects in which multiple organizations (fire and/or non-affiliated EMS) serving more than one local jurisdiction would benefit directly from the activities requested with grant funds.

**State Fire Training Academies**

- State fire training academies are eligible to apply for critically needed resources to protect the public, to train emergency personnel, and to foster interoperability and support community resilience.

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## Evaluation Criteria

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

Based on the input received, the FY 2018 AFG NOFO contains some changes to definitions, descriptions, and priority categories. Changes to the FY 2018 AFG NOFO include: the FY 2018 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) revises and, in some places changes, the “high”, “medium”, “low” priorities for applications submitted for equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE), training, and wellness and fitness expenditures under the Operations and Safety Activity. Under these changes, the FY 2018 NOFO and application include questions designed to solicit pertinent information from the applicant with regard to the purpose of the request. The criteria are designed to be easier to understand and will assist FEMA in obtaining the necessary information to assess the application request. The numerical scores for each activity line item requested are based on objective criteria in order to reduce the subjectivity of the category itself.

All submitted applications are ranked based on the substance of the application, relative to the established funding priorities.

Applications that score the highest and are determined to be in the “competitive range” will undergo further evaluation by a panel of peers, from the fire service and non-affiliated EMS organizations.

Applications that are considered for award will undergo an extensive technical review prior to an award offer.

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## AFG Program Resources

For additional information on the FY 2018 AFG program, please visit our web site at:  
<http://www.fema.gov/assistance-firefighters-grant>.

You may also contact the AFG Program Help Desk by calling 1-866-274-0960 or via email at [firegrants@dhs.gov](mailto:firegrants@dhs.gov).

*Note: \$350 million is the FY 2018 appropriation for the AFG initiative. From this appropriation, \$35 million will be allocated to fund the FY 2018 Fire Prevention & Safety Grant Program.*