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DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY**Federal Emergency Management Agency**

[Docket ID FEMA–2026–0562]

Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program; Fire Prevention and Safety Grants

AGENCY: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974, as amended, the Administrator of FEMA is publishing this notice describing the fiscal year (FY) 2025 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) and Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) grant programs application processes, deadlines and award selection criteria. This notice explains the differences, if any, between these guidelines and those recommended by representatives of the national fire service leadership during the annual meeting of the Criteria Development Panel (CDP), which was held September 9, 2025. The application period for the FY 2025 AFG Program was May 19, 2026, to June 22, 2026, and the FY 2025 FP&S Program was May 19, 2026, to June 22, 2026. The application periods were announced on the FEMA Fire Grant website at <https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters>, as well as at <https://www.grants.gov>.

DATES: Grant applications for the FY 2025 AFG and FP&S Programs were accepted electronically through the FEMA Grants Outcomes (FEMA GO) system at <https://go.fema.gov>, from May 19, 2026, to June 22, 2026.

ADDRESSES: DHS/FEMA/Resilience/Grant Programs Directorate, Fire Grants Branch, 400 C St. SW, 3N, FEMA Headquarters, Washington, DC 20472–3635.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul Parsons, Branch Chief, Fire Grants Branch, 866–274–0960 or FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The AFG program awards grants directly to fire departments, nonaffiliated emergency medical service (EMS) organizations, and state fire training academies (SFTA) to enhance the health and safety of first responders and improve their abilities

to protect the public from fire and fire-related hazards.

The FP&S program awards grants directly to eligible fire departments and national, regional, State, local, Territorial and Tribal governments and nonprofit organizations such as academic (e.g., universities), public health, occupational health, and injury prevention institutions to enhance the safety of the public and firefighters, by assisting fire prevention programs and supporting firefighter health and safety research and development. Eligible organizations must be 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, or any federally recognized Tribal Nation.

Applications for the FY 2025 AFG and FP&S Programs were submitted and processed online at <https://go.fema.gov>. Before the application period opened, the FY 2025 AFG and FP&S notices of funding opportunity (NOFO) were published on FEMA's website at <https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters>, as well as at www.grants.gov. FEMA's Fire Grants web page provides additional information and materials useful for FY 2025 AFG and FP&S applicants, including Frequently Asked Questions, Application Checklists, Self-Evaluation Sheets, and a Cost-Share Calculator, as well as Tips and Guidelines for FP&S R&D applications. FEMA received 8,426 AFG applications and \$291.6 million in funding to support approximately 1,800 AFG grant awards. FEMA also received 758 FP&S applications and \$32.4 million in funding to support approximately 100 FP&S grant awards.

Congressional Appropriations

Funding for the FP&S program is through the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program. For the FY 2025 AFG program, Congress appropriated \$324 million through the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025, Public Law 119–4, 1101. From this amount, \$291.6 million will be made available for FY 2025 AFG awards, and \$32.4 million will be made available for FY 2025 FP&S awards, pursuant to 15 U.S.C. 2229, which states that not less than 10% of available grant funds each year must be awarded under the FP&S program. Funds appropriated for FY 2025 will be available for obligation and award until September 30, 2026. The Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 further directs FEMA to administer AFG's appropriations according to the following requirements:

- *Career fire departments:* Not less than 25% of available grant funds.
- *Volunteer fire departments:* Not less than 25% of available grant funds.
- *Combination fire departments and departments using paid-on-call firefighting personnel:* Not less than 25% of available grant funds.
- *Open competition (career, volunteer, and/or combination fire departments and departments using paid-on-call firefighting personnel):* Not less than 10% of available grant funds awarded.
- *EMS providers including fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations:* Not less than 3.5% of available grant funds awarded.
- *Nonaffiliated EMS providers:* Not more than 2% of the total available grant funds.
- *State Fire Training Academies (SFTAs):* Not more than 3% of available grant funds shall be collectively awarded to SFTA applicants, with a maximum of \$500,000 per applicant.
- *Vehicles:* Not more than 25% of available grant funds may be used for the purchase of vehicles; by policy and based on recommendations, FEMA intends to dedicate 10% of those vehicle funds for ambulances.

Background of the AFG Program

Since 2001, AFG has awarded approximately \$9 billion in grant funding to help firefighters and other first responders obtain critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training, and other resources needed to protect the public and emergency personnel from fire and fire-related hazards. FEMA awards grants on a competitive basis to the applicants that best address the AFG program's priorities and provide the most compelling justification. Applications that best address AFG priorities, as identified in the Application Evaluation Criteria section below, are reviewed by a panel composed of fire service personnel. The AFG program has three program activities:

- Operations and Safety;
- Vehicle Acquisition; and
- Regional Projects.

The priorities for each activity are fully outlined in the funding notice.

Background of the FP&S Program

Since FY 2002, the FP&S program has provided nearly \$750 million in grant funding to provide critically needed resources to fire departments and nonprofit organizations to carry out fire prevention education and training, fire code enforcement, origin and cause investigation, firefighter safety and health programming, prevention efforts,

and research and development. FEMA awards grants on a competitive basis to applicants that best address the FP&S program's priorities and provide the most compelling justifications.

Applications that best address FP&S priorities, as identified in the Application Evaluation Criteria section below, are reviewed by a panel composed of fire service personnel. Those applicants to the R&D Activity scoring high on the fire service panel review may also be reviewed by a panel of scientists.

The FP&S Program activities include:

1. *FP&S Activity:* Activities designed to reach high-risk target groups and mitigate the incidence of death, injuries, and property damage caused by fire and fire-related hazards. The five project categories eligible for funding under this activity are:

- Community Risk Reduction;
- Wildfire Risk Reduction;
- Code Enforcement/Awareness;
- Origin and Cause Investigation; and
- National/State/Regional Programs and Projects.

2. *Research and Development (R&D) Activity:* Projects aimed at improving firefighter safety, health, or well-being through research and development that reduce firefighter fatalities and injuries. The four project categories eligible for funding under this activity are:

- Clinical Studies;
- Technology and Product Development;
- Preliminary Studies; and
- Early Career Investigator.

The priorities of each activity are fully outlined in the FP&S program NOFO.

Application Evaluation Criteria

Before making a grant award, FEMA is required by 31 U.S.C. 3354, as amended by the Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019, Public Law 116–117 (2020), 41 U.S.C. 2313, and 2 CFR 200.206 to review information available through any Office of Management and Budget-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information. Therefore, application evaluation criteria will 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 awards; (4) reports and findings from audits and monitoring; and (5) ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.

FEMA will rank all complete and submitted applications based on how well they align with program priorities

for the type of activity requested. Answers to activity-specific questions provide information used to determine each application's ranking relative to the stated program priorities.

Funding priorities and criteria for evaluating AFG and FP&S applications are established by FEMA based on the recommendations from the Criteria Development Panel (CDP). The CDP is composed of fire service professionals who make recommendations to FEMA regarding creating new, or modifying previously established, funding priorities, as well as developing criteria for awarding grants. The content of the AFG and FP&S program NOFOs reflect implementation of the CDP's recommendations with respect to the priorities and evaluation criteria for awards.

The nine major fire service organizations represented on the CDP:

- Congressional Fire Service Institute
- International Association of Arson Investigators
- International Association of Fire Chiefs
- International Association of Fire Fighters
- International Society of Fire Service Instructors
- National Association of State Fire Marshals
- National Fire Protection Association
- National Volunteer Fire Council
- North American Fire Training Directors

Review and Selection Process

AFG and FP&S applications are scored competitively by members of a Peer Review Panel. Applications with the highest score rankings per activity 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:

AFG Program Review and Selection Process

AFG applications are reviewed through a multi-phase process. All applications are electronically pre-scored and ranked based on how well they align with the funding priorities outlined in the funding notice. Applications with the highest pre-score rankings are then scored competitively by no less than three members of a Peer Review Panel. Applications are also evaluated through a series of internal FEMA review processes for completeness, adherence to

programmatic guidelines, technical feasibility, and anticipated effectiveness of the proposed project(s). Below is the process by which applications are reviewed:

1. Pre-Scoring Process

The application undergoes an electronic pre-scoring process based on established program priorities listed in the funding notice and answers to activity-specific questions within the online application. Application narratives are not reviewed during pre-scoring. Request details and budget information should comply with program guidance and statutory funding limitations. The pre-score is 50% of the total application score.

2. Peer Review Panel Process

Applications with the highest pre-score undergo peer review. The peer review is composed of fire service representatives recommended by the organizations represented on the CDP. The panelists assess the merits of each application based on the narrative section of the application, including the evaluation elements listed in the Narrative Evaluation Criteria below. Panelists independently score each project within the application, discuss the merits and/or shortcomings of the application with their peers, and document the findings. A consensus is not required. The panel score is 50% of the total application score.

3. Technical Evaluation Process

The highest ranked applications 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 prior to recommending any application for award. Once the Technical Evaluation Process is complete, each application's cumulative score will be determined, and a final ranking of applications will be created. FEMA will award grants based on this final ranking and the ability to meet statutorily required funding limitations outlined in the funding notice.

Narrative Evaluation Criteria

1. Financial Need (25% of the Peer Review Score)

The financial need narrative is where applicants highlight their department's financial situation. Applicants should include details describing their financial

distress, summarize budget constraints, describe unsuccessful attempts to secure other funding, and prove the situation does not allow them to fund their project on their own.

2. Project Description (25% of the Peer Review Score)

The project description is where applicants describe their proposed projects. Applicants should explain the problem they are trying to solve and their plan to use AFG funds to solve it. Good narratives include risk analyses, timelines and milestones, plans for anticipated challenges and how they will execute their plan within the two-year period of performance.

3. Cost-Benefit (25% of the Peer Review Score)

The cost-benefit narrative is where applicants describe how their proposed projects will benefit their communities. Benefits should be detailed and include numbers and dollar amounts whenever reasonable. Applicants should describe how they intend to reduce costs. Good narratives include formulas that relate benefits to costs, costs per resident served, costs per call, or similar expressions.

4. Statement of Effect (25% of the Peer Review Score)

The statement of effect is the narrative where applicants describe how their proposed projects will improve their daily operations. Good narratives will detail the benefits to their service members, their response times, cost reductions, and other internal improvements.

Eligible AFG Applicants

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, or any federally recognized tribal organization. A fire department is an agency or organization having a formally recognized arrangement with a State, Territory, local (city, county, parish, fire district, township, town or other governing body), or tribal authority 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, 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 services entity providing medical transport that is not affiliated with a hospital and does not serve a geographic area in which emergency medical services are adequately provided by a fire department. FEMA considers the following as hospitals under the AFG program:

- Clinics;
- Medical centers;
- Medical colleges or universities;
- Infirmaries;
- Surgery centers; and
- Any other institutions, associations, or foundations providing medical, surgical, or psychiatric care and/or treatment for the sick or injured.

State Fire Training Academies (SFTAs)

SFTAs 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, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Applicants must be designated either by legislation or by a governor's declaration as the sole fire service training agency within a State, Territory, or the District of Columbia and recognized by the National Fire Academy. The designated SFTA shall be the only agency/bureau/division, or entity within that State, Territory, or the District of Columbia to be an eligible SFTA applicant under the AFG program.

Non-Federal Airport and/or Port Authority Fire or EMS Organizations

These entities are eligible only if they have a formally recognized arrangement with the local jurisdiction to provide fire suppression or emergency medical services on a first-due basis outside the confines of the airport or port facilities. Airport or port authority fire and EMS organizations whose sole responsibility is suppression of fires or EMS response on the airport grounds or port facilities are not eligible for funding under the AFG program.

Ineligibility

FEMA considers two or more separate fire departments or nonaffiliated EMS organizations with different funding streams, personnel rosters, and Employer Identification Numbers (EIN) but sharing the same facilities, as being separate organizations for the purposes of AFG eligibility. If two or more organizations share facilities and each submits an application in the same

program area (*i.e.*, Equipment, Modifications to Facilities, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Training, or Wellness and Fitness Programs), FEMA reserves the right to review all of those program area applications for eligibility. This determination is designed to avoid the duplication of benefits.

Examples of ineligible applications and/or organizations include:

- Nonaffiliated EMS organization requests for any activity that is specific or unique to structural/proximity/wildlands firefighting gear.
- Fire departments that are a Federal Government entity, or contracted by the Federal Government, and are solely responsible under a formally recognized agreement for suppression of fires on Federal installations or land.
- Fire departments or nonaffiliated EMS organizations that are not independent entities but are part of, controlled by, or under the day-to-day operational command and control of a larger department, agency or Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ).
 - However, if a fire department is considered to be the same legal entity as a municipality or other governmental organization, and otherwise meets the eligibility criteria, that municipality or other governmental organization may apply on behalf of that fire department as long as the application clearly states that the fire department is considered part of the same legal entity.
- Fire-based EMS organization applying as a nonaffiliated EMS organization.
- Auxiliaries, hospitals or fire service associations or interest organizations that are not the AHJ over the applicant.
- Dive teams, search and rescue squads, or similar organizations that do not provide medical transport.
- Fire departments, regional or nonaffiliated EMS organizations that are for profit.
- State or local agencies, or subsets of any governmental entity, or any authority that do not meet the requirements as defined by 15 U.S.C. 2229(a), (c).
- If an applicant submits two or more applications for the same equipment or other eligible activity (for example, if an applicant submits two or more applications, one under the Regional activity, and one under the Operations and Safety activity for self-contained breathing apparatus [SCBA]), both applications may be disqualified. If an applicant submits two separate applications for the same activity (*i.e.*, two separate vehicle applications for the same vehicle) during the same

application period, both applications may be disqualified.

○ This is different from when an entity is applying on behalf of other organizations that are agencies or instrumentalities of the applicant (e.g., multiple fire departments under the same county, city, borough, parish, or other municipality). In that situation, the applicant may request similar or the same equipment as long as the application clearly states which equipment (including quantities) is for which agency/instrumentality. This is permissible even if that entity submits multiple applications across regional versus direct applications.

○ *Eligible Fire Department and nonaffiliated EMS applicants may submit only one application for each of the following application types:* Individual Operations and Safety, Individual Vehicle, Regional Operations and Safety, and Regional Vehicle. Under the Operations and Safety applications, applicants may submit for multiple activities and for multiple items within each activity. Under the Vehicle application, applicants may submit one application for a vehicle activity (or activities) for their department and one separate application for a regional vehicle (the same vehicle(s) may not be requested for both purposes). All duplicate application submissions may be disqualified.

FP&S Program Review and Selection Process

1. Peer Review Panel Process

FP&S Activity Projects: All applications will be evaluated through the Peer Review Panel process. The panelists will assess the merits of each project within the application based on the narrative section of the application using the evaluation elements listed in the Narrative Evaluation Criteria below to calculate the narrative's score for each activity requested. Panelists will independently score each requested project within the application, discuss the merits and/or shortcomings of the application with his or her peers, and document the findings. A consensus is not required.

R&D Activity Projects: The Peer Review Panel process is composed of a Fire Service Panel Review and a Science Panel Review.

Fire Service Panel Review

All eligible project applications will first be reviewed and scored by a panel of fire service experts to assess the need for the research results and the likelihood that the results would be implemented by the fire service in the

United States. The projects that are determined most likely to be implemented to enable improvement in firefighter safety, health, or well-being will be deemed to be in the "competitive range" and will be forwarded to the second level of project review, which is the scientific panel review process. A consensus is not required.

Science Panel Review

This panel will be composed of scientists and technology experts who have expertise pertaining to the subject matter of the proposal. Scientific reviewers will independently score projects in the competitive range based on the fire service panel evaluation and, if necessary, discuss the merits or shortcomings of the project to reconcile any major discrepancies identified by fellow reviewers. A consensus is not required.

3. Technical Evaluation Process

The highest scoring project(s) for both activities will be considered within the fundable range. Projects that are in the fundable range will undergo a technical review by the FEMA FP&S Program Office to assess the request with respect to costs, quantities, feasibility, eligibility, and recipient responsibility prior to recommending any application for award. Additionally, FEMA will review whether the project duplicates other federally funded research or prevention activities in order to avoid duplication. Once the technical evaluation process is complete, each project's final score is determined, and a final ranking of projects will be created. FEMA will award grants based on this final ranking and the ability to meet statutorily required funding limitations listed in this notice and FP&S program NOFO.

Narrative Evaluation Criteria

FP&S Activity Projects

1. Financial Need (Fire Departments—10%; Interest Organizations—0% of the Peer Review Score)

Applicants must describe, in detail, their unique financial need in the Applicant Information section of the application and detail how consistent it is with their need for financial assistance to carry out the proposed project(s). Applicants may include other unsuccessful attempts to acquire financial assistance. Applicants should provide details about their total operating budget, including a high-level breakdown of the budget, the applicant's inability to address financial needs without Federal assistance, and

other actions the applicant has taken to meet their needs (e.g., State assistance programs or other grant programs).

Although interest organizations do not receive points for their financial need, this information is necessary to holistically evaluate and understand the applicant's financial need in comparison to similarly situated applicants.

2. Commitment to Hazard (Fire) Mitigation (Fire Departments Only—5% of the Peer Review Score)

Fire department applicants that can demonstrate their commitment and proactive posture to reducing fire risk will receive higher consideration. Applicants must explain their code adoption and enforcement (to include Wildland Urban Interface [WUI] and commercial/residential sprinkler code adoption and enforcement) and mitigation strategies (including whether the jurisdiction has a FEMA-approved hazard mitigation strategy). Applicants can also demonstrate their commitment to reducing fire risk by applying to implement fire mitigation strategies (code adoption and enforcement) via this application.

3. Vulnerability Statement (Fire Departments—15%, Interest Organizations—25% of the Peer Review Score)

The assessment of fire risk is essential in the development of an effective project goal, as well as meeting FEMA's goal to reduce risk by conducting a risk assessment as a basis for action. Vulnerability is a "weak link," demonstrating high-risk behavior, living conditions, or any type of high-risk situation. The Vulnerability Statement should include a detailed description of the steps taken to determine the vulnerability and identify the target audience. The methodology for determination of vulnerability (i.e., how the vulnerability was found) should be discussed in-depth in the application's Narrative Statement.

The specific vulnerability that will be addressed with the proposed project can be established through a formal or informal risk assessment. FEMA encourages the use of local statistics to illustrate the applicant's particular vulnerability, rather than national statistics.

In a clear, concise statement, the applicant should summarize the precise vulnerability the project will address, including who is at risk, what the risks are, where the risks are, and how the risks can be prevented, reduced, or mitigated.

For the purpose of the FP&S program NOFO, formal risk assessments consist of the use of software programs or recognized expert analysis that assess risk trends.

Informal risk assessments could include an in-house review of available data (e.g.,/NERIS) to determine fire loss, burn injuries, or loss of life over a period of time, and the factors that are the cause and origin for each occurrence, including a lack of adoption or enforcement of certain codes.

4. Project Description (Fire Departments—20%, Interest Organizations—25% of the Peer Review Score)

Applicants must describe in detail not only the project components but also how the proposed project addresses the identified capability gap due to financial need and/or the specific vulnerabilities identified in the vulnerability statement. The following information should be included:

- Project components;
- Review of any existing programs or models that have been successful;
- Detailed description of how the proposed project components fill the identified capability gap; and
- If working with Fire Service partners/organizations, identify each partner/organization and the role(s) they will fill in the successful completion of the proposed project.

5. Implementation Plan (Fire Departments—25%, Interest Organizations—30%)

Each project proposal should include nuanced details on the implementation plan that discusses the proposed project's goals and objectives. The following information should be included to support the implementation plan:

- Goals and objectives;
- Details regarding the methods and specific steps that will be used to achieve the goals and objectives;
- Timelines outlining the chronological project steps (this is critical for determining the likelihood of the project's completion within the period of performance);
- Where applicable, examples of marketing efforts to promote the project, who will deliver the project (e.g., effective partnerships), and the manner in which materials or deliverables will be distributed;
- Requests for props (i.e., tools used in educational or awareness demonstrations), including specific goals, measurable results, and details on the frequency for which the prop will be utilized. Applicants should include

information describing the efforts that will be used to reach the high-risk audience and/or the number of people reached through the proposed project (examples of props include safety trailers, puppets, or costumes); and

- Where human subjects are involved, indicate whether the project has obtained exemption from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (for details see Section 9.A.a—Human Subjects Research of the FP&S Program NOFO).

Note: Applicants proposing a complex project that may require a 24-month period of performance should include significant justification and details in the implementation plan that justify the applicant's need for a period of performance of more than 12 months.

6. Evaluation Plan (Fire Departments—15%, Interest Organizations—15%)

Projects should include a plan for evaluation of effectiveness and identify measurable and quantifiable goals. Applicants seeking to carry out awareness and educational projects, for example, should identify how they intend to determine that there has been an increase in knowledge about fire hazards, or measure a change in the safety behaviors of the audience. Applicants should demonstrate how they will measure risk at the outset of the project in comparison to how much the risk decreased after the project is finished. There are various ways to measure the knowledge gained about fire hazards, including the use of surveys, pre- and post-tests, or documented observations. Applicants are encouraged to attend training on evaluation methods, such as the National Fire Academy's "Demonstrating Your Community Risk Reduction Program's Worth," <https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/nfacourses/catalog/details/774>.

Note: In addition to a detailed evaluation plan as described above, if awarded, grant recipients are required to report on specific performance metrics through performance reports and at closeout (for details see Section 3.E—Performance Measures and Targets of the FP&S program NOFO).

7. Cost-Benefit (Fire Departments—10%, Interest Organizations—5%)

Projects will be evaluated and scored by the Peer Review Panelists based on how well the applicant addresses the fire prevention needs of the department or organization in an economical and efficient manner. The applicant should show how it will maximize the level of funding that goes directly into the delivery of the project. The costs associated with the project also must be

reasonable for the target audience that will be reached, and a description should be included of how the anticipated project benefit(s) (quantified if possible) outweighs the cost(s) of the requested item(s). The application should provide justification for all costs included in the project to assist the Technical Evaluation Panel with their review.

R&D Activity Projects

Peer review panelists will evaluate and score each project based on the following narrative elements:

Fire Service Panel Evaluation Criteria

1. Purpose (25%)

Applicants should clearly identify the specific benefits of the proposed research project to improve firefighter safety, health, or well-being. The discussion should include: the specific risk to firefighter safety, health, or well-being that the project will address; the expected benefits of the project, including how the project could prevent, reduce, or mitigate the specific risk; the gaps in knowledge that will be addressed; and the general project methods planned to produce the intended results. If applying under Early Career Investigator, applicants should identify how this project will support the professional development of the Principal Investigator (PI). If applying under Preliminary Studies, applicants should consider the project being proposed as well as the potential results of a closely related future full-scale study.

2. Potential Impact (15%)

Applicants should discuss the potential impact of the research outcome/product on firefighters. Applicants should discuss who will benefit directly from the research outcome/product, i.e., the entire fire service or specific portions (career, volunteer, structural, wildland, fire investigators, etc.). The discussion should be supported by describing the specific type(s) of impact to the safety, health, or well-being of the identified group from use of the results in practice.

3. Implementation by Fire Service (25%)

Applicants should discuss how the outcomes/products of this research, if successful, are likely to be widely/nationally adopted and accepted by the fire service as changes that enhance firefighter safety, health, or well-being. The discussion should include the methods and costs associated with implementation at the fire department level; and organizations, manufacturers,

and/or others that will need to be involved to aid the process of adoption.

4. Barriers (15%)

Applicants should identify and discuss potential fire service and other barriers to successfully completing the project on schedule, including contingencies and strategies to deal with barriers if they materialize. This may include barriers that could inhibit the proposed fire service participation in the project, barriers that could inhibit the adoption of successful results by the fire service when the project is completed, or project components most likely to cause delay in successful completion.

If applying under Early Career Investigator, applicants should discuss potential barriers specific to that project, such as if the principal investigator (PI) does not receive the expected mentorship.

5. Partners (20%)

Applicants should recognize that participation of the fire service as a partner in the research from development to dissemination is regarded as an essential part of all projects. Describe the fire service partners and contractors that will support the project to accomplish the objectives. The specific roles and contributions of the partners to the project should be described. Partnerships should be formed with national fire-related organizations and local and regional fire departments appropriate for the project. Letters of support and letters of commitment to actively participate in the project should be included in the Appendix attachment to the application. Generally, participants of a varied population, including both career and volunteer firefighters, are expected to facilitate acceptance of results nationally. In cases where this is not practical, due to the nature of the project or other limitations, these circumstances should be clearly explained.

Science Panel Evaluation Criteria

1. Project Purpose, Goals, Objectives, or Specific Aims (All Applicants—15%)

Applicants should address how the purpose, goals, objectives, or specific aims of the project will lead to results that will improve firefighter safety, health, or well-being. Describe the specific goals, objectives or specific aims for each year of the project.

1. Literature Review (All Applicants—10%)

Applicants should provide a literature review that is relevant to the project's

goals, objectives, and specific aims. The citations should be placed in the narrative text and the complete references listed at the end of the Narrative Statement (and not in the Appendix) of the application. The review should be of sufficient depth to make it clear that the proposed project is necessary, adds to an existing body of knowledge, is different from current and previous studies, and offers a unique contribution. Applicants may consider previously funded R&D Activity projects, available at <https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters/safety-awards/research-development>.

2. Project Methods (Early Career Investigator Applicants—15%, All Other Applicants—20%)

Applicants should provide a description of how the project will be carried out, including demonstration of the overall scientific and technical rigor and the merit of the project. This includes the operations to accomplish the purpose, goals, and objectives, and the specific aims of the project. The roles and responsibilities of the entire research team must be described, including the relevant sub-contractors and sub-awardees involved in the project. Applicants should provide supporting information for the research team in the Appendix, including bio sketches and budget information. Plans to recruit and retain human subjects, where applicable, should be described. Where human subjects are involved, describe plans for submission to the IRB (for details see Section 9.A—Human Subjects Research of the FP&S program NOFO).

3. Project Measurements (Early Career Investigator Applicants—15%, All Other Applicants—20%)

Applicants should provide evidence of the technical rigor and merit of the project, such as data pertaining to validity, reliability, and sensitivity (where established) of the facilities, equipment, instruments, standards, and procedures that will be used to carry out the research. The applicant should discuss the data to be collected to evaluate the performance methods, technologies, and products proposed to enhance firefighter safety, health, or well-being. The applicant should demonstrate that the measurement methods and equipment selected for use are appropriate and sufficient to successfully deliver the proposed project objectives.

4. Project Analysis (Early Career Investigator Applicants—15%, All Other Applicants—20%)

The applicant should indicate the planned approach for analysis of the data obtained from measurements, questionnaires, or computations. Specify within the plan what will be analyzed, the statistical methods that will be used, the sequence of steps, and interactions as appropriate. It should be clear that the PI and research team have the expertise to perform the planned analysis and defend the results in a peer review process. The adequacy of the number of participants, samples, or tests to address the research question should be discussed.

5. Dissemination and Implementation (All Applicants—15%)

Applicants should indicate dissemination plans for both scientific audiences (e.g., plans for submissions to specific peer review publications) and firefighter audiences (e.g., via websites, magazines, and conferences). Also, assuming positive results and where applicable, indicate future steps that would support dissemination and implementation throughout the fire service. These are likely to be beyond the current study, so those features of the research activity that will facilitate future dissemination and implementation should be discussed. All applicants should specify how the results of the project, if successful, might be disseminated and implemented in the fire service to improve firefighter safety, health or well-being. Additionally, an applicant should specify how the results of the project, if it does not achieve proposed goals, might be disseminated in the fire service to document lessons and inform future projects for improving firefighter safety, health, or well-being.

6. Mentoring (Early Career Investigator Applicants Only—15%)

An important factor in the evaluation of Early Career Investigator projects is the participation of a mentor(s) in the project. A mentor for the PI should be an experienced researcher in areas appropriate to the research project and be able to provide support to the PI for ongoing development of knowledge and skills throughout the project. The mentor needs to have relationships with the fire service community sufficient to assist the PI in building relationships with fire departments and fire service organizations. The mentor has a role to support the applicant from defining the project and submitting the application for funding through the completion of a

funded project. The applicant should identify the mentor(s) that has agreed to support the applicant and the proposed mentoring plan. In the plan, the applicant should discuss the role of the mentor(s) in the project and the expected benefits of the mentoring relationship to the applicant and the project. A biographical sketch and letter of commitment/support from the mentor(s) are required to be included in the Appendix document.

Eligible Applicants

FP&S Activity: 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, or any federally recognized Indian Tribe or Tribal government. A fire department is an agency or organization having a formally recognized arrangement with a State, local (city, county, parish, fire district, township, town, or other governing body), Tribal government, or Territorial authority to provide fire suppression to a population within a geographically fixed primary first due response area. National, regional, State, local, Tribal Nation and nonprofit interest organizations that are recognized for their experience and expertise in fire prevention and safety programs and activities are eligible applicants.

R&D Activity: National, State, local, federally recognized Tribal government, and nonprofit organizations, such as academic (e.g., universities), research foundations, public safety institutes, public health, occupational health, and injury prevention institutions.

Ineligibility

- To avoid a duplication of benefits, FEMA reserves the right to review all program activities or grant applications where two or more organizations share a single facility. To be eligible as a separate organization, two or more fire departments, national, State, local, federally recognized Tribal government, and nonprofit interest organizations, and other nonprofit organizations, such as academic (e.g., universities), public health, occupational health, and injury prevention institutions will have different funding streams, personnel rosters, or Employer Identification Numbers (EINs). If two or more organizations share facilities and each submits an application in the same activity (e.g., Community Risk Reduction, Wildfire Risk Reduction, Code Enforcement/Awareness, Origin and Cause Investigation, or National/

State/Regional Programs and Projects), FEMA will carefully review all of those program area applications for eligibility.

- For-profit organizations, Federal agencies, and individuals are not eligible to apply for FP&S Program funding.

Statutory Limits to Funding

AFG Program

AFG program awards are limited based on population served (15 U.S.C. 2229(c)(2)). Additionally, no single grant may exceed 1% of the available grant funds in a fiscal year, except where it is determined that a recipient has an extraordinary need for a grant in an amount that exceeds the 1% aggregate limit.

- In the case of a recipient that serves a jurisdiction with 100,000 people or fewer, the amount of available grant funds awarded to such recipient shall not exceed \$1 million in any fiscal year.

- In the case of a recipient that serves a jurisdiction with more than 100,000 people, but not more than 500,000 people, the amount of available grant funds awarded to such recipient shall not exceed \$2 million in any fiscal year.

- In the case of a recipient that serves a jurisdiction with more than 500,000 people, but not more than 1 million people, the amount of available grant funds awarded to such recipient shall not exceed \$2.91 million in any fiscal year.

- In the case of a recipient that serves a jurisdiction with more than 1 million people, but not more than 2.5 million people, the amount of available grant funds awarded to such recipient is subject to the 1% aggregate cap of \$2.91 million for FY 2025. FEMA may waive this aggregate cap in individual cases where FEMA determines that a recipient has an extraordinary need for a grant that exceeds the aggregate cap. If FEMA waives the aggregate cap, the amount of grant funds awarded to such a recipient shall not exceed \$6 million for any fiscal year.

- In the case of a recipient that serves a jurisdiction with more than 2.5 million people, the amount of available grant funds awarded to such recipient is subject to the 1% aggregate cap of \$2.91 million for FY 2025. FEMA may waive this aggregate cap in individual cases where FEMA determines that a recipient has an extraordinary need for a grant that exceeds the aggregate cap. If FEMA waives the aggregate cap, the amount of grant funds awarded to such recipient shall not exceed \$9 million for any fiscal year.

- FEMA may not waive the population-based limits on the amount

of grant funds awarded as set by 15 U.S.C. 2229(c)(2)(A).

The cumulative total of the Federal share of awards in Operations and Safety, Regional, and Vehicle Acquisition activities will be considered when assessing award amounts and any limitations thereto. Applicants may request funding up to the statutory limit on each of their applications.

For example, an applicant that serves a jurisdiction with more than 100,000 people, but not more than 500,000 people, may request up to \$2 million on their Operations and Safety Application and up to \$2 million on their Vehicle Acquisition request. However, should both grants be awarded, the applicant would have to choose which award to accept if the cumulative value of both applications exceeds the statutory limits.

Cost Sharing and Maintenance of Effort

AFG Program grant recipients must share in the costs of the projects funded under this grant program as required by 15 U.S.C. 2229(k)(1) and in accordance with applicable Federal regulations at 2 CFR part 200, but they are not required to have the cost-share at the time of application nor at the time of award. However, before a grant is awarded, FEMA validates that the grant recipient has provided sufficient evidence that the cost-share requirement will be fulfilled during the performance period of the grant award.

In general, an eligible applicant seeking a grant shall agree to make available non-Federal funds equal to not less than 15% of the grant awarded. However, the cost share will vary as follows based on the size of the population served by the organization, with exceptions to this general requirement for entities serving smaller communities:

Applicants that serve populations of 20,000 or less shall agree to make available non-Federal funds in an amount equal to not less than 5% of the grant awarded.

Applicants serving areas with populations above 20,000, but not more than 1 million, shall agree to make available non-Federal funds in an amount equal to not less than 10% of the grant awarded.

Applicants serving areas with populations above 1 million shall agree to make available non-Federal funds in an amount equal to not less than 15% of the grant awarded.

The cost share for SFTAs will apply the requirements above based on the total population of the State.

The cost share for a regional application will apply the requirements

above based on the aggregate population of the primary first due response areas of the host and participating partner organizations that execute a Memorandum of Understanding as described in Appendix B, Regional Applications Overview, of the FY 2025 AFG funding notice.

On a case-by-case basis, FEMA may allow a grant recipient that may already own assets (equipment or vehicles), acquired with non-Federal cash, to use the trade-in allowance/credit value of those assets as “cash” for the purpose of meeting the cost-share obligation of their AFG program award. In-kind, cost-share matches are not allowed. Grant recipients under this grant program must also agree to a maintenance of effort requirement as required by 15 U.S.C. 2229(k)(3) (referred to as a “maintenance of expenditure” requirement in that statute). A grant recipient shall agree to maintain during the term of the grant the applicant’s aggregate expenditures relating to the activities allowable under the funding notice at not less than 80% of the average amount of such expenditures in the two fiscal years preceding the fiscal year in which the grant amounts are received.

FP&S Program

FP&S Program awards are limited to a maximum Federal share of \$1.5 million dollars regardless of applicant type, in accordance with 15 U.S.C. 2229(d)(2). FP&S R&D Activity applicants that applied under the Early Career Investigator category are limited to a maximum Federal share of \$600,000 per project.

Cost Sharing and Maintenance of Effort

Grant recipients must share in the costs of the projects funded under this grant program as required by 15 U.S.C. 2229(k)(1) and in accordance with the applicable Federal regulations at 2 CFR part 200, but they were not required to have the cost share at the time of application nor are they required to have it at the time of award. However, before a grant is awarded, FEMA validates that the grant recipient provided sufficient evidence that the cost-share requirement will be fulfilled during the performance period of the grant award.

In general, an eligible applicant seeking an FP&S Program grant shall agree to make available non-Federal funds equal to not less than 5% of the grant awarded. Cash match and in-kind matches are both allowable. Cash (hard) matches include non-Federal cash spent for project-related costs. In-kind (soft) matches include, but are not limited to,

the valuation of in-kind services; complementary activities; and provision of staff, facilities, services, material, or equipment. In-kind is the value of something received or provided that does not have a cost associated with it. For example, where an in-kind match (other than cash payments) is permitted, then the value of donated services could be used to comply with the match requirement. Also, third party in-kind contributions may count toward satisfying match requirements provided the grant recipient receiving the contributions expends them as allowable costs in compliance with provisions listed above.

Grant recipients under the FP&S program must also agree to a maintenance of effort requirement as required by 15 U.S.C. 2229(k)(3) (referred to as a “maintenance of expenditure” requirement in that statute). A grant recipient shall agree to maintain during the term of the grant the applicant’s aggregate expenditures relating to the activities allowable under the FP&S program NOFO at not less than 80% of the average amount of such expenditures in the two fiscal years preceding the fiscal year in which the grant amounts are received.

Application Process

AFG Program

Organizations may submit one application per application period in each of the three AFG Program activities (e.g., one application for Operations and Safety, one for Vehicle Acquisition, and/or a separate application to be a Joint/Regional project host). If an organization submits more than one application for any single AFG program activity (e.g., two applications for Operations and Safety, two for Vehicles), either intentionally or unintentionally, both applications may be disqualified.

Applicants may access the grant application electronically at <https://go.fema.gov/>.

New applicants must register and establish a username and password for secure access to the grant application. Previous AFG program applicants must use their previously established username and password.

Applicants are expected to answer questions about their grant request that reflect the AFG Program funding priorities. In addition, each applicant must complete four separate narratives for each project or grant activity requested. Grant applicants will also provide relevant information about their organization’s characteristics, call

volume, and existing organizational capabilities.

FP&S Program

Organizations may apply for funding under both eligible activities (FP&S and R&D) but must complete separate applications for each eligible activity. Each application may be for up to three projects under that activity; however, each project within an application must be presented separately as a free-standing proposal. Organizations are limited to one application per activity, per application period. If an organization submits more than one application for the same activity, either intentionally or unintentionally, both applications may be disqualified. Also note that any single entity is limited to a total award of \$1.5 million from both activities.

Applicants access the grant application electronically at <https://go.fema.gov/>.

The application is also accessible from the *Grants.gov* website at <http://www.grants.gov>. New applicants must register in the FEMA Grants Outcomes system (FEMA GO) and establish a username and password for secure access to the grant application. Previous FP&S program applicants must use their previously established username and password for FEMA GO.

Applicants are expected to answer questions about their grant request that reflect the FP&S Program funding priorities. In addition, applicants must complete narratives for each project requested.

During the FY 2025 FP&S program application period, FEMA released videos online to inform potential applicants about the FP&S Program. In addition, FEMA provided applicants with information on the FP&S web page, <https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters/safety-awards/documents>, to help them prepare quality grant applications. The Fire Grants Help Desk is staffed throughout the application period to assist applicants with the automated application process, as well as answer any questions.

Applicants can reach the Fire Grants Help Desk through a toll-free telephone number Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. ET (866-274-0960) or email at firegrants@fema.dhs.gov.

System for Award Management (SAM)

Per 2 CFR 25.200, all Federal grant applicants and recipients must register at <https://SAM.gov>. SAM is the Federal Government’s System for Award Management, and registration is free of charge. Effective April 4, 2022, the

Federal Government transitioned from using the Data Universal Numbering System or DUNS number, to a new, non-proprietary identifier known as a Unique Entity Identifier or UEI. For entities that had an active registration in *SAM.gov* before this date, the UEI has automatically been assigned, and no action is necessary. For all entities filing a new registration in *SAM.gov*, the UEI will be assigned to that entity as part of the *SAM.gov* registration process. FEMA will not make a Federal award until the applicant has complied with all applicable SAM requirements. Therefore, an applicant's SAM registration must be active not only at the time of application, but also during the application review period and when FEMA is ready to make a Federal award.

Criteria Development Panel Recommendation

For FY 2025, FEMA accepted, and will implement, most of the CDP's recommendations as described below.

Adopted and Implemented Recommendations for FY 2025

The FY 2025 AFG and FP&S NOFOs contain some changes to definitions, descriptions, and priority categories from the previous fiscal year. Changes include:

AFG Program:

- Under Equipment Activity: Priority 1 programs are now designated as High Priority, while Priority 2 programs are designated as Medium Priority.
- Under Wellness and Fitness Activity: a clarification that ineligible participants have been updated to anyone other than fire personnel, fire inspector, or EMS personnel;
- Props (single-use or permanent) essential for training programs requested in the application cannot exceed \$100,000 for Operations and Safety.

• Excess Funds restrictions have been updated

- Period of Performance Extensions and amendment requests have been updated

FP&S Program:

- Under Appendix B, FP&S Activity Overview:
 - Added Wildfire Sprinkler Trailers and Tripod Sprinklers as examples of eligible Wildfire Risk Reduction projects when proposed as part of a WUI education/awareness effort.
 - Added salary and overtime expenses paid to backfill for activities during Origin and Cause Investigator training as an eligible project.
 - Removed fire extinguisher training for adults over the age of 65 from the list of Ineligible Projects and Items.

Adopted and To Be Implemented in Future Cycles

AFG Program

Below is a list of recommendations that were not adopted for FY 2025 due to FEMA GO system limitations and the ability to update changes in the online platform:

- Brush Trucks have been added as a High-Priority vehicle request for Regional Applicants.
- To promote consistency and improve data tracking, tuition costs, travel expenses, and other common expenses as separate, selectable line-item options within the application.
- Limiting funding to exercise equipment, physical evaluations, and formal fitness program development costs, excluding other equipment or items identified as Priority 2 within the NOFO.
- Unsourced question to be added in the application asking applicants to outline their plans for sustaining wellness and fitness awards the future.
- Add a new series of scored questions to more effectively assess the need for Wellness & Fitness funding and ensure alignment with program priorities.

Authority: 15 U.S.C. 2229.

Cameron Hamilton,

Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency.

[FR Doc. 2026-18419 Filed 9-9-26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 9111-78-P

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Federal Emergency Management Agency

[Docket ID FEMA-2026-0002; Internal Agency Docket No. FEMA-B-2628]

Changes in Flood Hazard Determinations

AGENCY: Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice lists communities where the addition or modification of Base Flood Elevations (BFEs), base flood depths, Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) boundaries or zone designations, or the regulatory floodway (hereinafter referred to as flood hazard determinations), as shown on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), and where applicable, in the supporting Flood Insurance Study (FIS) reports, prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for each

community, is appropriate because of new scientific or technical data. The FIRM, and where applicable, portions of the FIS report, have been revised to reflect these flood hazard determinations through issuance of a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR), in accordance with Federal Regulations. The current effective community number is shown in the table below and must be used for all new policies and renewals.

DATES: These flood hazard determinations will be finalized on the dates listed in the table below and revise the FIRM panels and FIS report in effect prior to this determination for the listed communities.

From the date of the second publication of notification of these changes in a newspaper of local circulation, any person has 90 days in which to request through the community that the Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator, Federal Insurance Directorate, Resilience reconsider the changes. The flood hazard determination information may be changed during the 90-day period.

ADDRESSES: The affected communities are listed in the table below. Revised flood hazard information for each community is available for inspection at both the online location and the respective community map repository address listed in the table below. Additionally, the current effective FIRM and FIS report for each community are accessible online through the FEMA Map Service Center at <https://msc.fema.gov> for comparison.

Submit comments and/or appeals to the Chief Executive Officer of the community as listed in the table below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

David N. Bascom, Acting Director, Engineering and Modeling Division, Federal Insurance Directorate, Resilience, FEMA, 400 C Street SW, Washington, DC 20472, or (email) david.bascom@fema.dhs.gov; or visit the FEMA Mapping and Insurance eXchange (FMIX) online at https://www.floodmaps.fema.gov/fhm/fmx_main.html.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The specific flood hazard determinations are not described for each community in this notice. However, the online location and local community map repository address where the flood hazard determination information is available for inspection is provided.

Any request for reconsideration of flood hazard determinations must be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer of the community as listed in the table below.