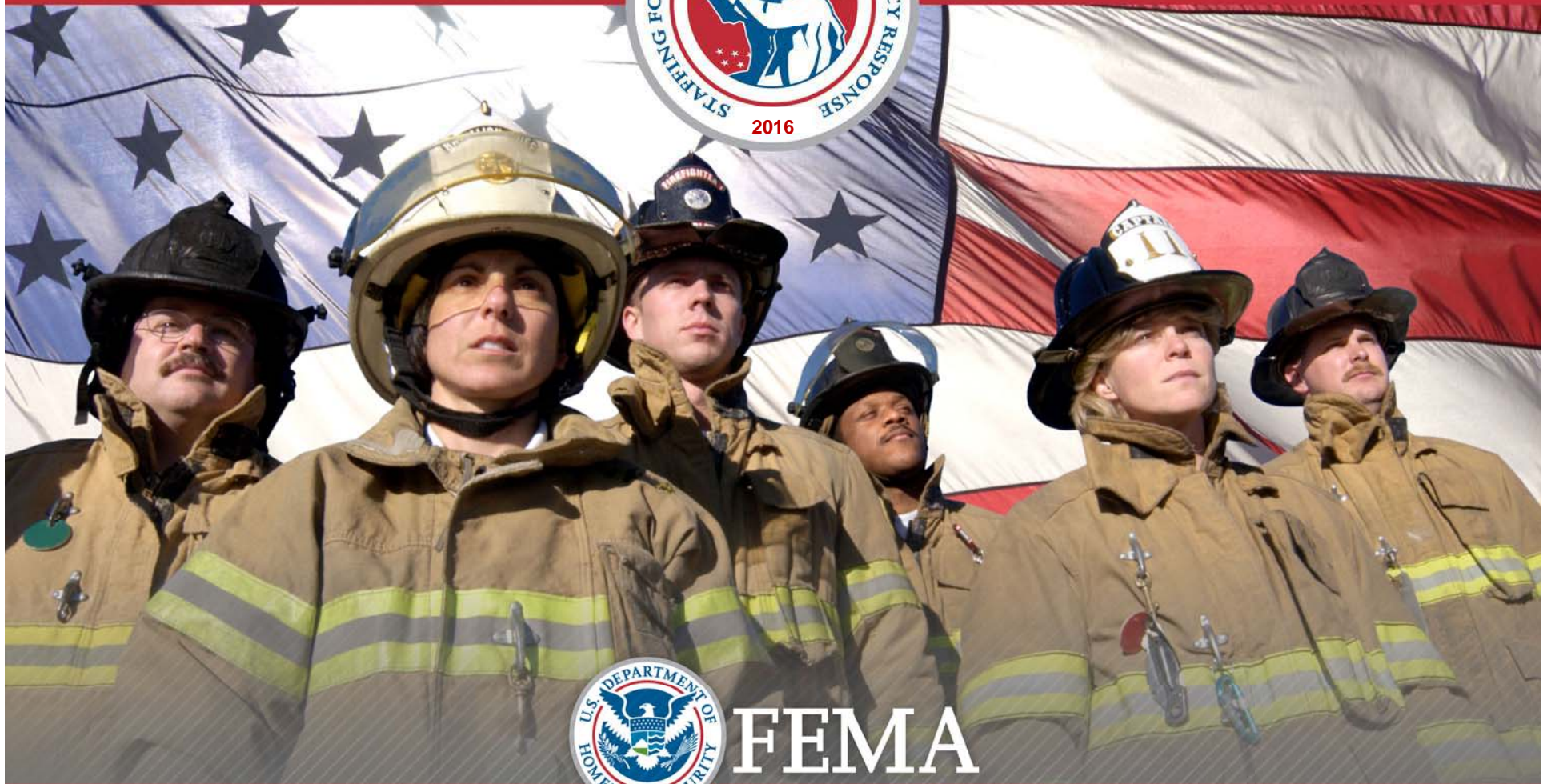


FY 2016 SAFER OVERVIEW



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SAFER Goal

The **goal** of SAFER is to assist local fire departments with staffing and deployment capabilities in order to respond to emergencies, and assure that communities have adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards



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FY 2016 SAFER Funding

- Application will open January 9, 2017
- Application period will close on February 10, 2017
- \$345 million available
- Approximately 300 awards
- All awards will be announced by September 30, 2017



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SAFER Activities

SAFER is composed of two activities:

- Hiring of Firefighters
 - Career, combination, and volunteer fire departments are eligible to apply (interest orgs cannot apply)
- Recruitment and Retention (R&R) of Volunteer Firefighters
 - Combination fire departments, volunteer fire departments, and national, state, local, or tribal organizations that represent the interests of volunteer firefighters are eligible to apply (career fire departments cannot apply)
- If you want to apply for both activities, you will need to submit two separate applications



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SAFER Hiring Grants



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Hiring - Priorities

- FEMA prioritizes bringing non-compliant (NFPA 1710 or 1720) departments into compliance in the most cost-effective manner
- Applications resulting in the largest percentage increases in compliance with NFPA 1710 or 1720 receive higher consideration
 - NFPA 1710 Assembly Requirements (Section 5.2.4.1 – Single-Family Dwelling Initial Full Alarm Assignment Capability)
 - NFPA 1720 Assembly Requirements (Section 4.3 – Staffing and Deployment)



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Hiring – Only New Hires

- NEW! No more “Rehire,” “Retention,” and “Attrition”
- Grant funds may only be used to hire new, additional firefighters (hired after the date of grant award)
- Grant funds may not be used to supplant funds that would otherwise be available from State or local sources, or the Bureau of Indian Affairs
 - You can apply to waive this requirement



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Hiring – Period of Performance (POP)

- NEW! POP has been increased from 2 to 3 years
- 180-day recruitment period after grant is approved for award
- POP automatically starts after the recruitment period
- If you hire within the 180-day period, you can request to start the grant POP early through amendment
- You can only charge the grant for firefighter salary and benefits incurred within the POP
- NEW! No extensions to the POP will be permitted



Hiring – Important Change!

- Recipients of Hiring grants are required to contribute non-federal funds through:
 - Position Cost Limit (no waiver available) **and**
 - Cost Share (waiver available)



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Hiring – Position Cost Limit (No Waiver)

- Federal funds will be limited to:
 - In the first year of the grant, 75 percent of the **usual annual cost** of a first-year firefighter in that department at the time the grant application was submitted
 - in the second year of the grant, 75 percent of the **usual annual cost** of a first-year firefighter in that department at the time the grant application was submitted
 - in the third year of the grant, 35 percent of the **usual annual cost** of a first-year firefighter in that department at the time the grant application was submitted



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Hiring – Position Cost Limit

- “Usual annual costs” includes:
 - base salary (exclusive of overtime)
 - standard benefits package (including the **average** health cost, dental, vision, FICA, life insurance, retirement/pension, etc.) offered by fire departments to first-year firefighters
 - Reference Appendix B of FY 2016 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)



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Hiring – Position Cost Limit Example

- At the time the application is submitted, the usual annual cost of one first year firefighter in your department is \$100,000
- The federal funding will be limited to no more than:
 - Year 1 = \$75,000
 - Year 2 = \$75,000
 - Year 3 = \$35,000
- The Cost Share requirement may further limit this amount...



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Hiring – Cost Share (Waiver Available)

- The Federal portion may not exceed:
 - 75 percent of the **actual costs** incurred, by the recipient, in year 1
 - 75 percent of the **actual costs** incurred, by the recipient, in year 2
 - 35 percent of the **actual costs** incurred, by the recipient, in year 3
- Remember that the Position Cost Limit and the Cost Share requirements overlap...



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Hiring – Cost Share Example

- Remember in our example the Position Cost Limit was \$75,000, \$75,000, and \$35,000 in years 1, 2, and 3 respectively
- The grant is awarded and the department accrues the following **actual costs**:
 - Year 1 = \$80,000
 - Year 2 = \$95,000
 - Year 3 = \$110,000
- If the cost share is not waived, the federal portion will be limited to:
 - \$60,000 in year 1 (less than the Position Cost Limit)
 - \$71,250 in year 2 (less than the Position Cost Limit)
 - \$35,000 in year 3 (because of the Position Cost Limit)
- If the cost share is waived, the federal portion would be \$75,000, \$75,000, and \$35,000 (because of the Position Cost Limit)



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Hiring – Minimum Budget Requirement

- NEW! At the time of application, the applicant's budget for fire-related programs and emergency response must not be below 80 percent of the applicant's average funding level in the 3 years prior to November 24, 2003
 - What was your department's operating budget (e.g., personnel, maintenance of apparatus, equipment, and facilities; utility costs; purchasing expendable items, etc.) for 2001, 2002, and 2003 fiscal years?
- Applicants experiencing economic hardship may apply for a waiver of this requirement



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Hiring – Economic Hardship Waiver

- Applicants experiencing economic hardship may apply to waive or reduce:
 - Cost share requirement
 - Minimum budget requirement
 - Restriction on supplanting
- You may apply to waive one, two, or all three of these requirements
- Note your interest in a waiver within the application and we will provide you with more instructions about how to submit the waiver
- Read the Information Bulletin (IB) 413 posted to:
<https://www.fema.gov/staffing-adequate-fire-emergency-response-grants-documents>



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Hiring – Eligible/Ineligible Costs

- Only positions hired after the grant award date are eligible
- Only full-time positions are eligible
 - You may apply to job-share a position
- The primary assignment of the SAFER-funded position (more than 50%) must be fire suppression, which includes staffing a fire suppression vehicle, regardless of collateral duties, in support of the department's NFPA 1710 or NFPA 1720 compliance



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Hiring – Eligible/Ineligible Costs

- Refer to pages 42-43 of the NOFO
- Grant funds cover salary and benefits (actual payroll costs) for SAFER positions
- “Benefits” defined on page 30 of the NOFO and 2 CFR § 200.431
- Examples:
 - Will cover the time recruits are in training/academy
 - Will not cover PPE or uniform costs paid to a vendor
 - Will cover certification incentive pay or contractually obligated stipends
 - Will cover FLSA-required overtime, but not overtime for extra shifts or comp time



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Hiring – After Award Requirements

- No lay-offs permitted during period of performance
- Must maintain operational staffing at the level that existed at the time of award, in addition to SAFER-funded positions
 - Applies to the grant period of performance
 - Must take active and timely steps to backfill any operational vacancies
 - Waiver available for economic hardship (waivers are not for SAFER positions)
- No obligation to retain the SAFER-funded positions after POP ends



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Recruitment & Retention Category

- Objective is to create a more favorable working environment for volunteer firefighters in order to encourage volunteerism



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R & R –Priorities

- Refer to pages 36-39 of the NOFO
- The highest priority is to assist departments experiencing a high rate of turnover and with staffing levels significantly below the ideal staffing level required to comply with NFPA 1710 or 1720
- Organizations that currently have the lowest recruitment and retention rates are given a higher consideration for funding



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R & R – Period of Performance (POP)

- Between 12 and 48 months
- Default 90-day recruitment period begins after award
- You may start the POP early through an amendment
- All grant related purchases and activities must be incurred, received, and completed within the period of performance
- Extensions to the POP may be granted if there are unavoidable delays/circumstances



R & R – Eligible Costs

- Activities/costs must correlate to identified recruitment or retention needs
- Refer to pages 44-50 of the NOFO
- New! Costs are categorized as High, Medium, Low, and Non-Prioritized
- Examples of High Priority Costs:
 - R&R Coordinator
 - Marketing Program
 - NFPA 1582 physicals
 - PPE
 - Tuition assistance



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R & R – Eligible Costs

- Examples of Medium Priority Costs:

- Stipends
- LOSAP
- Insurance

- Examples of Low Priority Costs:

- Station duty uniforms
- Awards program

- Examples of Non-Prioritized Costs:

- M&A

Indirect Costs



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R & R – Ineligible Costs

- Activities/items normally covered under the department operating budget
- Costs for food or refreshments
- “Giveaways” for recruitment events
- Annual medical exams
- Payments for student loans
- Mileage reimbursement for responding to incidents or operational training
- Station internet access/user fees and equipment to install internet
- Computers in common areas or individual computers for training/education



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R & R – After Award Requirements

- PPE for new recruits
 - Must provide proof of NFPA 1582 physicals
 - Must provide documentation to support actual PPE costs
- Some items/activities need Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) approval before starting
- All funded activities must be governed by formally adopted Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). At a minimum, 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



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R & R – Procurement

- All procurement activity must be conducted in accordance with Federal Procurement Standards at 2 C.F.R. § 200.317 – 200.326
- You must have a written procurement policy in place
- You must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and actions of employees engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts
- You must provide full and open competition
- You must verify that your contractors are not suspended or debarred
- We highly recommend that you do not enter into any contracts prior to the start date of the grant period of performance



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R&R - Regional Requests

- Fire departments may act as a “host applicant” and apply for grant that will have a regional impact (i.e., beyond the immediate boundaries of the applicant’s first-due area)
 - One application can support both the department’s own internal needs and the regional initiative
 - Requires information on participating organizations and size/population of region
- Prior to submitting application, host must obtain a letter of understanding or MOU with all partners that outlines responsibilities and asset distribution



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R & R - Interest Organizations

- National, State, Local, or Tribal Organizations that Represent the Interests of Volunteer Firefighters:
 - Organizations that support or represent the interests of firefighters in front of legislative bodies at the local, state, tribal, and federal level. Such organizations include, but are not limited to, state or local firefighter and/or fire chiefs' associations, volunteer firefighter relief organizations, and associations
- 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



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R&R – Minimum Budget Requirement

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 - What was your department's operating budget (e.g., personnel, maintenance of apparatus, equipment, and facilities; utility costs; purchasing expendable items, etc.) for 2001, 2002, and 2003 fiscal years?
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R & R – Economic Hardship Waiver

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Application Scoring

- PHASE 1: Computer will score all complete and eligible applications
 - Applications will be evaluated relative to eligibility criteria and funding priorities
 - Answers to activity-specific questions as well as information submitted under the Department Characteristics section of the application will determine an application's standing relative to stated priorities
- PHASE 2: Panel of peer reviewers score the application (including Narrative Statement) and make funding recommendations
- Each phase is 50% of total score



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Application Scoring (continued)

- Technical Review
 - FEMA conducts technical reviews of the highest-scoring applications, including evaluation of project budgets to determine if costs are reasonable
- Referral for Award
 - Applications are rank-ordered starting with the highest-scoring application and combined with the statutory allocation requirements
 - Applications are sent to FEMA award administration, which conducts additional review



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Application Tips

- Establish a link between the activities being requested and your department's needs
- Align your greatest needs with the highest program priorities (starting on page 34 of the NOFO)
- Use the Self-Evaluation Sheets (<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/127856>)
 - Developed to help you understand the criteria that you must address in your Narrative Statement
 - The Peer Reviewers will use these to score your application



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How to Apply

- Register or update your SAM registration at <http://www.sam.gov>
 - SAM registration is only active for one year and must be renewed annually
- Submit the application in the e-Grants System at <https://portal.fema.gov>
 - Use the same username and password that you used for any Assistance to Firefighters (AFG) applications previously submitted



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Application Resources

- Technical Assistance Tools are available at:
<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/127856>
 - Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
 - SAFER Application Checklist
 - Self-Evaluation Guides
 - SAFER Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
 - Economic Hardship Waiver Information Bulletin (IB)



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Application Resources (continued)

- SAFER Program Help Desk
 - 1-866-274-0960 or via email at firegrants@fema.dhs.gov
 - Help Desk is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. ET
- SAFER Program Officers
 - Julia.Barron@fema.dhs.gov 202-786-0929
 - Yesenia.Diaz@fema.dhs.gov 202-431-3310
 - Tina.Godfrey@fema.dhs.gov 202-786-9785
 - Naomi.Johnson@fema.dhs.gov 202-786-9981
 - Danielle.Shelton@fema.dhs.gov 202-786-0819



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Questions?

Thank you!



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