



FIT TO THRIVE / F2T

Wellness and Fitness Program Grant Guidance

The FY2024 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) for Training and Equipment is a great opportunity to apply for grant funding to help implement programs to support the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)/International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) Wellness-Fitness Initiative (WFI) in your department. This document will provide guidance to assist in completing an AFG application for grant funding for the Fit To Thrive (F2T) program.

FEMA continues to emphasize the importance of fire fighter health and safety. Wellness and Fitness programs are intended to improve the quality of life of first responders so that their mental, physical, and emotional capabilities are resilient to withstand life's demands with emergency services response.

Proposed training projects that benefit the highest percentage of applicable personnel within a fire department, or that will be open to other departments in the region, will receive the highest consideration and thus have a competitive advantage. It is possible to submit a regional application (multiple departments participating) for these programs; however, as part of the application you must submit MOU's on department letterhead from each participating agency.



To learn more about the AFG application process click [here](#). You will find several resources to assist you in preparing your application, including:

- AFG Application Information Get Ready Guide
- AFG Narrative Get Ready Guide
- AFG Program Guidance

*If FEMA has not yet posted the Notice of Funding Opportunity Announcement (NOFO), application link, or start dates of the application, you can sign up to [receive email alerts](#) when FEMA releases that information.

Before applying for an AFG Grant for a Fit To Thrive training program, contact the IAFF Health and Safety Department by email at F2T@iaff.org to discuss the different program options.

Please note: The pricing listed in this document is good through December 2024. Contact the IAFF for current pricing.

In order to be eligible for grant funding, fire departments must offer, or plan to offer, all five of the following (these are referred to as Priority 1 Activities): **IAFF Peer Fitness/ Fit To Thrive is a Wellness and Fitness Priority 2 Activity.**

Priority 1 Activities:

- Periodic health screenings
- Entry physical examinations
- Immunizations
- Behavioral health programs
- Cancer Screenings

Applicants must have all five of these Priority 1 activities already in place (or request the missing Priority 1 activities to have all five in place), or they will be unable to request any Priority 2 activities in their application.

Priority 2 Activities

To include but not limited to:

- Formal Fitness and Injury Prevention Program



- Critical Incident Stress Management Programs
- Employee Assistance Programs
- Injury/Illness rehabilitation programs
- Candidate physical ability evaluation
- Formal fitness and injury prevention program/equipment
- Injury/illness rehab
- IAFF/IAFC peer fitness trainer program(s) (now the Fit To Thrive program)

Eligible Expenditures:

- Procurement of entry-level physicals that meet NFPA 1582
- Annual medical/fitness health evaluations consistent with NFPA 1582
- Immunizations, as recommended by the department or law (e.g., NFPA)
- Behavioral health programs
- Implementation of the IAFF/IAFC Peer Fitness Trainer programs (now the Fit To Thrive program)
- Contractual costs (non-hiring) for personnel, physical fitness equipment (including shipping charges and sales tax, as applicable), and supplies directly related to physical fitness activities

Ineligible Expenditures

- Transportation expenses
- Fitness club memberships for participants or their families
- Non-cash incentives (t-shirts or hats of nominal value, and vouchers to local businesses or time-off)
- Purchase of real estate
- Cash incentives
- Purchase of medical equipment that is not used as part of the Wellness & Fitness program
- Contractual services with anyone other than medical professionals (e.g., health care consultants, trainers, and nutritionists)
- Medical exams that do not meet NFPA 1582

Remodeling/Renovations of Existing Facilities

Remodeling/renovations to an existing facility to house a fitness activity, such as exercise or fitness rooms, showers, etc. must be minor interior alterations that do not



change the buildings footprint, cost less than \$10,000, and are justified in the Request Details narrative for the Wellness and Fitness activity. In order to be eligible, renovations must be essential to the successful completion of the grant scope of work. Any request for modifications to facilities may require an Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP) Review. Additional information may also be required for EHP Review.

IAFF/IAFC Fit To Thrive 101 Fitness Principles and Practice (Peer Fitness Trainer) Program

The Criteria Development Panel recommended that AFG continue to emphasize the importance of training in the AFG program with respect to fire departments. FEMA continues to emphasize the importance of training in the AFG grants program and has determined the highest benefit is derived from instructor-led training that is hands-on and leads to a national or state certification. Therefore, applications focused on national or state certification training, including train-the-trainer initiatives, receive a higher competitive rating. Instructor-led training that requires students to demonstrate academic competence and/or practical proficiency for certification will receive a high competitive rating. Instructor-led training that does not lead to a certification as well as any self-taught courses will not be high priorities.

Proposed training projects that benefit the highest percentage of applicable personnel within a fire department, or that will be open to other departments in the region, such as IAFF/IAFC Fire Service Wellness-Fitness Initiative and IAFF/IAFC Fit To Thrive 101 Fitness Principles and Practice (Peer Fitness Trainer) Programs, will receive the highest consideration and thus have a competitive advantage. Large departments with a high number of active fire fighters will receive additional consideration when applying under the Fire Fighter Training Activity.

Eligible uses of training funds include but are not limited to:

- Tuition, exam/course fees, and certifications/certification expenses
- Purchase of training curricula, training equipment (trailers, mobile simulators), training props and training services (instructors)
- Overtime expenses paid to career fire fighters to attend training or to cover colleagues who are in training

Ineligible Activities:



- Construction of facilities (buildings, towers, etc.)
- Site preparation to accommodate any training activity, facility, or prop
- Firefighting equipment, or PPE, for use in training exercises, such as SCBA
- Purchase or lease of real estate
- Remodeling not directly related to grant activities

Training is categorized as a High (H), Medium (M) or Low (L) funding priority; within these categories, listed activities have an equal funding priority. Fire fighter safety and survival is categorized as a HIGH priority.

Other Scoring Considerations:

- Multiple departments trained
- Number of fire fighters trained
- Instructor-led vs. media-led
- Population served Call volume

Once you access the online application for the AFG program, you will begin by completing sections of the applications with demographic information specific to your department. ***It is recommended that you review these sections as soon as possible so you can begin to gather the required information.***

We recommend typing your Narratives in a Word Document outside of the application, then copying and pasting it into the written narrative sections. ***Otherwise, the application will time out and you will lose what you have written.***

- After pasting your narratives in each section, we recommend fixing any formatting issues.
- When typing your narratives, it is best to use small paragraphs.

The AFG Application:

The first sections of the application are about your organization.

Applicant characteristics: includes a narrative section where you must describe your critical infrastructure.

Discuss:

- Schools and Universities



- Health Care Facilities
- Chemical or Manufacturing Facilities
- Transportation Infrastructure – Roads, Bridges, Ports, Rail.
- Large Commercial or Industrial Sites
- Power plants, water / sewer treatment, dams, etc.
- Other high consequence infrastructure that is not listed above

Operating budget: includes a narrative section where you must describe your organization's need for Federal financial assistance. *There is a 4,000-character limit to this narrative.*

Your Financial Need narrative should address why your organization has been unable to fund your request locally, including such details as:

- Describe why you can't complete this project without the assistance of federal funds.
- Compare your income to expenses in order to illustrate current funding deficiencies.
- Show other attempts you have made to fund department needs.
- Describe your community/agency budgets including:
 - Where money comes from
 - Where money goes
- What are your funding challenges?
- Provide attempts to acquire funding from other sources
- Describe operating budget limitations
- What does the future look like? Are revenues likely to increase or decrease and why?
- List primary sources of revenue, average annual operating budget over the last several years, how much is dedicated to personnel costs etc.?
- What are the consequences for not receiving the award?
- Will you be able to provide this critical training without this award?
- Will this place fire fighter lives at risk?
- Describe financial stressors.
 - Other capital projects
 - Unemployment rate
 - Loss of tax base
 - Non-tax paying entities
 - Any deficit spending from previous years that must be paid this year



- Anything putting a strain on your budget
- What has your department done to control costs? Has the union offered concessions?
 - If so, state, “IAFF local ## has provided concessions...”
 - Have fire prevention or other staff been moved to front line positions to reduce overtime?
- Define and explain local terms.
 - For example, explain any tax levy limiting legislation that you may have in place in terms that someone not familiar with your area will understand.
- Has your department had large expenditures which limited your ability to pay for the requested equipment?
 - Perhaps you recently added personnel or are playing catch-up after years of neglecting the capital budget because all funding was directed to keeping fire stations open.
- If you have shown budget increases for prior years, or have a large reserve, explain where funds are directed and why they can't be used.
 - For example, station or apparatus replacement, pension obligation increases, etc.
- Provide an itemized budget breakdown

Applicant and community trends: includes statistics on injuries and apparatus information.

Community description: includes a narrative section where you must describe your organization and/or community that you serve. *There is a 4,000-character limit.*

Discuss:

- Number of residents served
- Number of square miles protected
- Number and types of responses
- Describe the area you protect
- Critical infrastructure protected by your organization
- Firefighter I and II training and certification
- What are your community's greatest needs, risks and challenges and how does your request address these?



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

Call volume: Department Specific Call Volume Data

Grant request details: This is where you begin to complete the information specific to the IAFF Peer Fitness Program (now called Fit To Thrive program).

- Click the “**Add Activity**” button

Grant request details

Are you requesting a Micro Grant? A Micro Grant is limited to \$75,000 in federal resources.

☐ Yes

☒ No

i Instructions
If you intend to request funds for an activity, you must answer all of the activity specific questions and specify at least one budget item [budget object class information](#). The cost figures you provide do not have to be firm quotes from your vendors, but they should be estimated based on research of current prices (i.e., check with at least two vendors for your estimates). If you do not have these estimates, you can come back and modify this area at any point before you submit your application to DHS. The Assistance to Firefighters Grant program does not allow for any grant funds to be used for construction. Select grant writer fee when adding an activity if there is a grant-writing fee associated with the preparation of the request

+ Add activity

Grand total: \$0.00

- Select “**Wellness and Fitness**” from the list

Add an activity

Select activity:

Wellness and fitness programs

Select

Equipment

Modify facilities

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Training

Vehicle acquisition

Wellness and fitness programs

Grant writer fee

- This adds the main Narrative Fields to the application.
 - This will be addressed later in this guide

Fill out the section that appears asking about the Wellness and Fitness Priority 1 areas



Project	Does your organization currently offer this activity?	Will this program be mandatory?	Will this program be offered to all?
Initial Physical Exam	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Job Related Immunization Program	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Periodic Physical Exam/Health Screening	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Behavioral Health NFPA 1500 or equivalent	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Cancer Screening Program/Equipment	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

Answer all the questions regarding your department's current status of Wellness and Fitness programs. If you say no to any of the five program areas, you will not be able to add any Priority 2 Wellness and Fitness Programs for funding requests. **You must have all 5 Priority 1 programs either in place or be asking for them in this request to be eligible for Priority 2 requests. The IAFF Peer Fitness/ Fit To Thrive Program is a Priority 2 request.**

- In the Request Information Section click the **"Add a Project"** button.



Periodic Physical Exam/Health Screening	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Behavioral Health NFPA 1500 or equivalent	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Cancer Screening Program/Equipment	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

Project

+ Add a project

An activity must contain at least one project. You must add a project or remove this activity.

- Select **“IAFF or IAFC peer fitness trainer program(s)”**

Add a project

Select project:

Select

Select

Behavioral Health NFPA 1500 or equivalent

Cancer Screening Program/Equipment

Candidate physical ability evaluation

Critical Incident Stress Management Program (CISM)

Employee assistance program

Formal fitness and injury prevention program

IAFF or IAFC peer fitness trainer program(s)

Initial Physical Exam

Injury/illness rehabilitation program

Job Related Immunization Program

Periodic Physical Exam/Health Screening

Answer questions:

- Do you offer this program?
- Will it be mandatory?
- Will it be open to all?



- Then click the **Add an Item**

☐ Yes
☐ No

Will this program be mandatory?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Will this program be offered to all?

☐ Yes
☐ No

+ Add an item

Cost Items

A project must contain at least one item. You must add an item or remove this project.

Add an item

Select item:

Select

Select

Additional funding

Aerobic Instructors

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Programs

Employee Assistance Programs

Exercise Equipment

Fitness Assessments and Counseling

Nutrition

Physical Trainers

Rehab and Therapy

Smoking Cessation

- Select **Physical Trainers** from the item dropdown box.
- Budget Class: **Contractual**



- Quantity/Cost: **Contact the IAFF Health and Safety Department for course options and pricing.**
 - There are several levels of IAFF F2T training programs offered. Please contact F2T@iaff.org to determine which level of F2T you would like to apply for before filling out the application.
 - Cost examples:
 - F2T 101 in-person HOST, \$24,975
 - F2T 101 in-person per person, \$999
 - F2T 103,104,105, 2-day in-person Course HOST, \$12,475 (Each Course)
 - F2T 103,104,105, 2-day in-person Course per person, \$499 (Each Course)
 - You must explain that you are opening this program to other departments. Remember - proposed training projects that benefit the highest percentage of applicable personnel within a fire department or that will be open to other departments in the region receive a highly competitive advantage.
- You will have *500 characters* to describe the program and costs. Items to consider:
 - Program includes Instructor led Train-the-Trainer program, manuals, curriculum, course materials, exam administration.
 - Peer Fitness Trainer Certification
 - 32 hours of training over 4 days
 - Attendees will improve their ability to assess, design, implement and evaluate exercise sessions for fire fighters with varying interests — as well as have the knowledge and skills to become fitness and wellness leaders within their department.

To add exercise equipment:

- Click the “**Add an Item**” button.




☐ Yes
☐ No

Will this program be mandatory?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Will this program be offered to all?

☐ Yes
☐ No

 [+ Add an item](#)

Cost Items

A project must contain at least one item. You must add an item or remove this project.

Add an item

Select item:

Select

- Select
- Additional funding
- Aerobic Instructors
- Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Programs
- Employee Assistance Programs
- Exercise Equipment**
- Fitness Assessments and Counseling
- Nutrition
- Physical Trainers
- Rehab and Therapy
- Smoking Cessation

- Select the appropriate choices and budget class
- You have *500 characters* to explain your request

To add **Additional Funding** for overtime or backfill click the “Add an item” and select “Additional Funding”



☐ Yes
☐ No

Will this program be mandatory?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Will this program be offered to all?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Cost Items

+ Add an item

A project must contain at least one item. You must add an item or remove this project.

Add an item

Select item:

Select

Select

Additional funding

Aerobic Instructors

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Programs

Employee Assistance Programs

Exercise Equipment

Fitness Assessments and Counseling

Nutrition

Physical Trainers

Rehab and Therapy

Smoking Cessation

Eligible uses of training funds include, but are not limited to:

- Tuition, exam/course fees, and certifications/certification expenses
- Purchase of training curricula and training services (instructors)
- Overtime expenses paid to career fire fighters to attend training or to cover colleagues who are in training



- Cost for qualified behavioral health experts to provide continued clinical training/consultation

Under the **Additional Funding** category, you can add the cost of personnel attending the training and/or other costs to conduct this training. You will have *500 characters* to explain your request. The more detail you provide on the requested funds, the better understanding the reviewers will have of your request.

- If you are requesting the cost for personnel to attend training or to cover colleagues who are in training, be sure to include the number of personnel x the number of hours x the hourly rate. Explain the need for the personnel costs which may include the need to maintain minimum response capabilities during the scheduled training.

Go Back and Fill in the Main Narrative Sections

Project Description and Budget: Clearly explain the organization's project objectives and the relationship to your organization's budget (e.g., personnel, equipment, contracts, etc.) and risk analysis by providing statistics to justify the needs. Describe the various activities to be implemented, including program priorities or facility modifications, to include details on how these are consistent with project objectives, your organization's mission and national, state, and/or local requirements. Provide details that link the proposed expenses to operations and safety, as well as to the completion of the project's goals. You are *limited to 4,000 characters*.

Clearly identify all aspects of the project and project budget.

- Identify the problem, solution, and cost.
- Describe how the project aligns with program priorities.
- Demonstrate that the project will be completed within the 1-year period of performance.
- Mention that the grant is a combined effort of management and labor.
 - **Include IAFF local # and the city/town**

Discuss:

- The IAFF F2T PFT information can be located [here](#) for program specifics
- The extreme physical demands and stress of fire fighting
- Line-of-Duty deaths and injuries



- The need for a wellness program and how it will improve fire fighter health, wellness and safety
- Create a working environment conducive to maintaining healthy, physically and mentally fit fire fighters
 - The need for baseline medical and physical assessments
 - Significant cost savings in lost work time, workers compensation and disability
 - The essential components of a wellness program
 - What federal regulations or national standards are addressed with this training? Related National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) consensus standards including NFPA 1500, 1582 and 1583
 - How the program will be delivered?
 - Fit To Thrive (F2T) / Peer Fitness Trainer (PFT), if applying for this program
 - How many hours of training are included? (PFT = Mon-Thu 32hrs)
 - Behavioral Health – management of health risk behaviors, training in behavioral skills, spirituality, financial planning, reactions to stress, mental illness, marriage and family issues
 - EAP and CISM programs if applying for these priority 2 programs – refer to NFPA 1500
 - Written drug and alcohol policies
 - Education and counseling\
 - Support networks

Need to consider the following:

- Personnel Costs
- Need to explain how you will meet the mandatory match of the grant money being requested.

Cost Benefit: Describe how you plan to address the operations and personal safety needs of your organization, including cost effectiveness and sharing assets. The Operations and Safety Cost Benefit statement should also include details about gaining the maximum benefits from grant funding by citing reasonable or required costs, such as specific overhead and administrative costs. The request should also be consistent with your organization's mission and identify how funding will benefit your organization and affected personnel. You will be limited to 4,000 characters.

Discuss:

- [4th edition of Wellness-Fitness Initiative](#) – chapter 6 has more cost justification



- Why a wellness fitness program is critical to members and the community first responders protect
- Number of residents who will be better protected
- Reduce worker's comp claims and lost workdays
- Data collection – justification for implementing new programs
- Positive return on investment (ROI)
- Program evaluation methods
- What have been the department's costs associated with physical fitness? (e.g., worker's comp, disability claims, lost productivity)
- How will this training better prepare your members to assist fellow fire fighters during potentially traumatic events or large-scale disasters?

Personnel costs include:

- Overtime expenses paid to career fire fighters to attend training or to cover colleagues who are in training to maintain minimum response capabilities.
- Be sure to include the number of personnel x the number of hours x hourly rate.

Include a statement addressing impact and cost per person.

- Specify total number impacted (e.g., # in department)
- Divide total training cost by number impacted for cost per person.
- Provide a Break down per capita. (i.e. Cost / resident / fire fighter)

Statement of Effect on Operations: Explain how this funding request will enhance the organization's overall effectiveness. Describe how the grant award will improve daily operations and reduce the organization's risk(s) including how frequently the requested item(s) will be used and in what capacity. Indicate how the requested item(s) will help the community and increase the organization's ability to save additional lives and property. Jurisdictions that demonstrate their commitment and proactive posture to reducing fire risk, by explaining their code enforcement (to include Wildland Urban Interface code enforcement) and mitigation strategies (including whether or not the jurisdiction has a FEMA-approved mitigation strategy) may receive stronger consideration under this criterion. You will be limited to 4,000 characters.

Remember, the most important thing is for you to tell your story and why this funding and training are critical to your members and the community you protect. Additionally, proposed training projects that benefit the highest percentage of applicable personnel (your department and others) receive a higher rating and are more likely to be funded.



Include items such as:

- How it will improve operations
- How it will increase department viability
- Reduce risk
- Use and frequency of use
- Impact on fire fighter and public safety
- Have you had instances where the lack of physical fitness has led to a situation that could have been prevented?

For additional information on applying for grants, contact the IAFF Grants Department at FireGrants@iaff.org

For more information visit <https://www.iaff.org/wellness-fitness/#wfi> Contact us by email at F2T@iaff.org.

Requesting a Grant Review by IAFF Grant Staff

The IAFF Grants Department is available to assist IAFF affiliates and their fire departments through the application process. For more information, contact the IAFF Grants Department via email - firegrants@iaff.org. To request a review of an application prior to submission, or any application that was turned down in a prior application cycle, affiliates can send their completed application, including both the data entry and narrative portions, to the IAFF Grants Department.