



## RESPONDING TO THE INTERFACE

### Grant Guidance

The FY2025 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Training and Equipment program is a great opportunity to apply for grant funding to bring the **Responding to the Interface Program (RTI) and the Responding to the Interface Program (RTI) Train-the-Trainer Program** to your department.

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, will receive the highest consideration and thus have a competitive advantage. It is possible to submit a regional training application for the RTI program; 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 Responding to the Interface training program, contact the IAFF Health and Safety Department, by email at [RTI@iaff.org](mailto:RTI@iaff.org) to determine the best RTI program for your department.**

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

- Tuition, exam/course fees, and certifications/certification expenses
- 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 each category (H, M, L), 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 firefighters 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 if possible.

## **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 – Remember, this is a high priority for the AFG program. If your organization has not trained all fire fighters to this level and you are not requesting funds to do so, you will need to discuss your plans for doing so.
- What are your community’s greatest needs, risks and challenges and how does your request address these?

**Call volume:** Department Specific Call Volume Data

**Grant request details:** This is where you begin to complete the information specific to the IAFF Responding to the Interface (RTI) Program or the Responding to the Interface (RTI) Train-the-Trainer 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

### 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 **Training** from the list

## Add an activity

Select activity:

Select

- 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

In the Request Information Section click the **Add a project** button.



**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.

[+ Add a project](#)

**Project**

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

- Select **“Wildland Firefighting (Basic) (NFPA 1140/NWCG)”**

Mass Casualty Incident Training (MCI)  
 NIMS/Incident Management System (IMS) (NFPA 1026, 1561 / NFA/EMI/NWCG)  
 Paramedic to Community Paramedic (NFPA 1001)  
 Rapid Intervention Training (NFPA 1407)  
 Safety Officer (NFPA 1026, 1521)  
 Technical Rescue - Awareness, Operations, Technician (NFPA 1006, 2500)  
 Vehicle Rescue (NFPA 2500)  
 Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) (NFPA 470)  
 Wildland Fire Officer (NFPA 1051/NWCG)  
**Wildland Firefighting (Basic) (NFPA 1140/NWCG)**  
 Wildland Firefighting Certification (Red Card) (NFPA 1140/NWCG)

Select

[Add this project](#)

- After this selection, it will add additional fields to the application. There is a question asking you “Provide a detailed description of the Training Program you selected”. *You have 500 characters.* Discuss how training is comprised of the following concepts:
  - Instructor-led
  - Requires students to demonstrate skills with both academic competence as well as practical proficiencies



- Hands-on program
- Mention the train-the-trainer program if you are requesting that.
- Developed by subject matter experts in Wildland Urban Interface Firefighting

## Section Questions:

- Generally, this program can best be categorized as: - **select** – “Training that is evaluated using National or State Standards.”
- Generally, the training program provided under this grant: - **select** – “Will bring your department into compliance with recommended applicable NFPA or other standards.” *You will have 500 characters to explain your answer.* This training program addresses the following federal regulations:
  - Describe the specific risks and operational capabilities this training will address.
  - Discuss that increasingly, dangerous urban interface fires are raging across the United States, becoming catastrophic with enormous loss of property and significant risk to human life.
  - NFPA 1140
- Will this training enhance your ability to perform mutual aid? - **select** – “Yes.” You will have 500 characters to explain your answer.
  - How does this training enhance your ability to perform mutual aid?
  - Why is it important for all members to follow the same procedures during an incident?
  - Are there SOP’s for other fireground operations that enhance mutual response capabilities, and will this training do the same?
  - Why is this important?
- Will this training include members from 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 high competitive advantage.
- Will this training be: - **select** – “Instructor-led”



Click the “**Add an item**” button

No

**Will this training include members from other fire departments and/or nonaffiliated EMS organizations?**

Yes

No

**Will this training be:**

Instructor-led

Self-directed/test-validated

None of the above

**+ Add an item**

**Cost Items**

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

- Select “**Wildland**” from the list

Marine

Non-Construction

Officer I-IV

Paramedic

Public Educator

Reference Texts

Rescue

Specialized

Supplies

**Wildland**

Select

**Add this item**

✕ [Cancel](#)



- Budget Class is **“Contractual”**

<b>Item</b>		
Wildland		
<b>Description</b>		
<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Unit price</b>	<b>Total</b>
	\$	\$0.00
<b>Budget class</b>		
Select		
Select		
Construction		
<b>Contractual</b>		
Equipment		
Fringe benefits		
Indirect charges		
Other		
Personnel		
Supplies		
Travel		

**Contact the IAFF Health and Safety Department to discuss options and pricing.**

Responding to the Interface (RTI) Train-the-Trainer (TtT) Program

- Four-day class designed to train your instructors to train your fire fighters for \$48,000.
- Designed to train fire department instructors on how to deliver consistent, effective urban-interface response training. At the conclusion, fire fighters and company officers will have the ability to teach their fellow colleagues. The program includes:
  - Classroom review of online material and final exam
  - Program overview and teaching-skills methodology
  - Field training to practice and apply skills learned in the classroom portion of the course. The training is guided by IAFF subject-matter experts and delivered in the



## local jurisdiction

Responding to the Interface (RTI) Operations Course is \$34,000.00

- Two-day RTI operations course provides fire fighters and company officers with hands-on skills to operate in the urban interface, assess risk, and quickly determine strategies to conserve property and protect lives
1. Quantity: - You have several different options here.
    - a. If you plan to host an **RTI Train-the-Trainer** class of the maximum number of 24 students (all members of your department) enter the number 24 for the quantity and \$2,000 as the unit number.
    - b. If you plan to host an **RTI Train-the-Trainer** class of the maximum number of students, but some members will come from other departments, enter the number 1 for the quantity and \$48,000 as the unit cost.
    - c. If you plan to host the **two-day Operations** class for the maximum of 24 students (all members of your department), enter the number 24 for quantity and \$1,417 as the unit number.
    - d. If you plan to host the **two-day Operations** class for the maximum number of students, but some members will come from other departments, enter the number 1 for the quantity and \$34,000 as the unit cost.
  2. You will have *500 characters* to explain the information about the training you want funded.

### Discuss:

- Instructor-led
- Train-the-Trainer format (if applying for TtT) to increase the number of personnel trained while minimizing cost
- Train all ranks within the department
- Includes classroom and hands-on instruction, all instructor and resource materials.
- The field training, provided by subject matter experts and delivered in your jurisdiction, is an opportunity to practice and apply the skills learned in the online course in the actual environment where fire fighters will be dispatched to your urban interface fires.



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

### Discuss:

- Critical infrastructure assets of significance that are subject to potential terrorist attacks
- Vital services to (number of residents) of (city name)
- Types of facilities protected
- The number of personnel you intend to train
- What the training includes (designed to provide fire fighters and company officers a consistent basic understanding of safety, command and control, and strategy and tactics to use when defending structures from a wildland fire (defensive strategy) or suppressing a wildland fire in and around structures (offensive strategy).
- The need for this training and how it will improve fire fighter/civilian safety
- How will the program be delivered?
- How many hours of training are included?
- Mention that this is a Train-the-Trainer program if you choose that option
- After the initial delivery of the RTI program, how will you go about providing training to the rest of your members.
- Describe how you will minimize the impact on the department's ability to provide



service during training.

- What topics will be covered in the training?
- Why are these topics important to your department and mutual aid?
- What federal regulations or national standards are addressed with this training?
- Most important is to tell your story and reasons for wanting this training. If you have examples of incidents that relate to the need for this program, then explain here.

Need to consider the following:

- Personnel Costs
  - Costs for personnel to go through training if hosting a class and not opening it up to other departments; consider overtime rates for personnel attending and other administrative costs for personnel that may be necessary.
- How the training will be delivered - Will you host the class and allow other attendees to offset the costs or will all 24 spots be filled with personnel from your department? Once your instructors are trained how will you deliver the training to the remaining members of your department?
- 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:

- Number of first responders to receive the training.
- Number of residents who will be better protected.
- Why are your fire fighters not currently trained for the Wildland/Urban Interface
- Why is it critical that they receive this training?
- How will this training better prepare your members to perform risk – benefit analysis during an incident?
- Why is it important to include all members and all ranks within your department?
- Why is it important to learn and practice these skills before the emergency occurs?
- Will you collect data and evaluations that demonstrate the effectiveness of your



training and how will you collect that information?

- Have you had an WUI incident that led to the loss of life or property, injuries? Explain and provide details.
- Provide a Breakdown per capita. (i.e. Cost / resident / firefighter)

**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 training resulted in further damage or injuries to fire fighters, civilians, or property? Be specific.

To add **Additional Funding for overtime or backfill:**

3. Back under the "Program area: Operations and safety" section
4. Click the "**Add a project**" button



**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.

[+ Add a project](#)

**Project**

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

## 5. Select “Additional Funding”

Select

- Additional funding
- Advanced Emergency Medical Technician to Paramedic (NFPA 1001)
- Aircraft Rescue Firefighting (ARFF) (NFPA 102, 403, 1003)
- Another officer (NFPA 1021)
- CBRNE Awareness, Performance, Planning, and Management
- Confined Space Response- Awareness, Operations, Technician (NFPA 2500/29 CFR 1910.146)
- Critical Incident Debriefing / Crisis Intervention (NFPA 1500)
- Emergency Medical Responder (NFPA 1001)
- Emergency Medical Technician (NFPA 1001)
- Emergency Medical Technician - Advanced (NFPA 1001)
- Emergency Scene Rehab (NFPA 1584)
- Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator (NFPA 1002)
- Fire Educator (NFPA 1035)
- Fire Inspector (NFPA 1031)
- Fire Investigator (NFPA 921, 1033)
- Fire Officer I, II, III, IV (NFPA 1021)
- Fire Prevention (NFPA 1037, 1730)
- Fire/Emergency Services Instructor (NFPA 1041)
- Firefighter I (NFPA 1001)

Select

Add this project

[✕ Cancel](#)

Under the **“Additional Funding”** section you can add the cost of personnel attending the training and/or other costs to conduct this training. *You will have 2,000 characters to explain 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. The more detail you provide on the requested funds, the better understanding the reviewers will have of your request.

6. 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 rental
  - Overtime expenses paid to career firefighters to attend training or to cover colleagues who are in training

**Grant request summary:** This section will fill in automatically

- Review for accuracy and mistakes

**Budget summary:** This section will fill in automatically

- Review for accuracy and mistakes

For additional information on applying for grants, contact the IAFF Grants Department at [FireGrants@iaff.org](mailto:FireGrants@iaff.org)

For more information on the IAFF Responding to the Interface Program, visit our website at <https://www.iaff.org/wildfire/> , contact us by email at [RTI@iaff.org](mailto:RTI@iaff.org), or by phone at (202) 824-1572.

## **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](mailto: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.