



Federal Emergency Management Agency

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANTS PROGRAM

Legislative Authority

- FEMA was authorized to make grants directly to local fire departments in Title XVII, Section 1701 of P.L. 106-398, the Defense Authorization Act of fiscal year 2001.
- FEMA was appropriated \$100 million in P.L. 106-554, the Consolidated Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2001, to make grants this fiscal year.

Who is Eligible?

- Grants will be made directly to local fire departments that are recognized by the State.
- Eligible applicants and recipients are limited to fire departments of a State (or emergency medical services operations under organizational control of a fire department).

Highlights of the New Grants Program

- The Defense Authorization Bill for FY01 authorized FEMA to make grants in up to fourteen categories. On January 10, 2001, FEMA met with the major fire service organizations to discuss implementation of this new program. At that meeting, all agreed upon limiting the categories of eligibility to six during this fiscal year. These six eligible grant categories will provide funds to:
 1. Train firefighting personnel,
 2. Establish wellness and fitness programs for firefighting personnel,
 3. Buy firefighting vehicles, including fire trucks (no more than 25% of the total amount appropriated may be awarded to purchase vehicles),
 4. Buy firefighting equipment, including equipment for communications and monitoring,
 5. Buy personal protective equipment, or
 6. Fund fire prevention programs.
- Applicants may apply for grants in any two of the six categories, but the maximum amount an applicant may be awarded is \$750,000 during any fiscal year. As part of the application, applicants must demonstrate financial need and articulate the benefits to be derived from the grant funds.
- Volunteer and combination departments must receive a proportion of the total grant funding that is not less than the proportion of the population that those firefighting departments protect. According to the statistics provided to FEMA by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), paid departments protect 43.2% of the population while volunteer and combination departments protect the remaining 56.8% of the population.

- Additionally, FEMA will use \$5,000,000 of the appropriated funds to make grants to, or enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with national, state, local, or community organizations that are recognized for their experience and expertise with respect to fire prevention or fire safety programs and activities, for the purpose of carrying out fire prevention programs.

Requirements of the Grant Recipients

After the awards have been determined, there are a number of actions the grantees must fulfill. Specifically, grantees must:

- Share in the cost of the projects funded by this program. Grantees that serve jurisdictions of 50,000 or fewer residents are required to provide a non-Federal cost-share of 10 percent. Grantees that serve jurisdictions of over 50,000 provide a 30 percent cost-share. The match must be in cash without the use of in-kind contributions.
- Agree to maintain expenditures at the average of their department's expenditures in the selected grant category/categories from the previous two fiscal years. This grant is intended to supplement, not supplant a fire department's current budget.
- Agree to provide information to the United States Fire Administration's national fire incident reporting system during the period of assistance.
- Provide a final report to the Director of FEMA on how the assistance was used.

Timeline for Implementation

The appropriation for the fire grant program is for fiscal year 2001, and all grants must be awarded by September 30, 2001.

- During the week of January 22, FEMA, the USFA, and major fire service organizations met for three days to develop criteria for each grant category.
- FEMA will issue an interim final rule in the Federal Register that will explain the application process and criteria for the categories during March.
- The application period for the grant program is April 2, to May 2, 2001.
- It is anticipated that the applications for grants will be available shortly after the publication of the rule in the Federal Register in March 2001.

How can I get more information about this program?

- Questions about the program can be sent by e-mail to USFAGRANTS@fema.gov.
- A toll free information line has been set up to answer questions about the program (866-274-0960). The toll free fax line is (866-274-0942).
- Additional information and application material on the new grant program will be posted as it becomes available on the USFA web site at www.usfa.fema.gov.
- An e-mail list is also available for news updates. To sign up, internet-users can go to the USFA web site listed above and click on the e-mail list link at the bottom of the page.
- FEMA and the USFA will provide regular updates to the Congress, fire trade publications, national fire service organizations, state and local officials through their national and state organizations and associations, as well as the national organizations that represent emergency management. Others who will be sent information include Tribal Governments and FEMA's Project Impact: Building Disaster Resistant Communities.