

Dear Select Board;

There is a current grant opportunity offered by FEMA for Recruitment and Retention activities for volunteer and combination fire departments called the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant. The Recruiting and Retention Committee of the Stratham Volunteer Fire Department would like to apply for \$209,308 to fund several key Recruiting and Retention efforts. This is a no-minimum-effort, non-matching, no cost share grant. The grant application deadline is April 12th at 5pm.

Please see several attached documents. First is the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) which describes the parameters of the grant in detail. Next are FEMA's FAQs regarding the SAFER Grant, the SAFER Application Checklist, and a Self-Evaluation worksheet specific to our application criteria. Finally, please see the initial draft of the required application narrative. This is undoubtedly a rough draft and will need significant input from Town Administration and Fire Department Administration before submittal.

The timeline for submitting this grant application is uncomfortably short, but the opportunity to implement several impactful programs with federal dollars is well worth the time and effort. The Recruiting and Retention Committee is requesting aid from Town Admin in order to meet the quickly approaching deadline. I ask only that you please carefully consider this opportunity and know that the volunteers with SVFD appreciate your support regardless of your decision.

Very Respectfully,

K Kyle Saltonstall
Co-Chair
SVFD Recruiting and Retention Committee

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Since 1951, the Stratham Volunteer Fire Department (SVFD) has provided Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Medical Services on behalf of the Town of Stratham. Although Stratham has grown from a population of less than 800 people in 1950 to almost 8,000 in 2024, the SVFD continues to meet the needs of the town's citizens and visitors through a majority volunteer department. During a time when even career departments in the area are having difficulty hiring adequate staffing, the citizens of Stratham have never gone without a capable crew of like minded volunteers who felt dutifully called to respond to any emergency, at any hour, in even the most extreme weather.

This, however, was never a given. For many years, the Fire Department relied on the Stratham Fair as both a community linchpin and a key source of funding. Every year, volunteers in the SVFD community came together to host a three day carnival in the town's biggest open space, Stratham Hill Park. On good years this put approximately \$100,000 in the fire department's coffers. Just as importantly, it brought volunteers from the fire department together for over a month as they constructed the event's infrastructure from the ground up, staffed the event, and then cleaned it all up. Planning, implementing, and succeeding at this momentous task was the glue that held the department together. Additionally, citizens of Stratham were able to see the Fire Department in a non-emergency setting and inclusive recruitment occurred through organic conversation.

Of course, due to circumstances well outside the control of the Town of Stratham and the SVFD, the annual Stratham Fair ended during the COVID pandemic. This marked the beginning of a new era for the SVFD.

During his first term, Chief Jeff Denton recognized that recruitment and retention of Stratham's volunteer first responders needed attention. In late 2022, he created SVFD's first ever Recruiting and Retention Committee and directed them to identify the barriers and challenges to both recruiting & retention, and to then recommend actionable solutions for the department's leadership team. In their first year, R&R committee members met regularly, attended several New Hampshire State Department of Safety sponsored Recruiting and Retention seminars, assisted SVFD's leadership in recruiting several new qualified volunteer members to join the department's ranks, provided the leadership team with critical feedback on recruiting efforts, and established a SVFD recruiting presence in Stratham at community events. In addition to maintaining a deliberate recruiting effort, the R&R Committee recently began the process of identifying the barriers and challenges facing retention, specifically the retention of Fire and EMS qualified volunteer personnel who will stand ready to respond to emergencies.

Barriers and Challenges to Recruiting:

Volunteer fire departments across the country have learned that word-of-mouth recruiting is no longer effective as the means of cultural communication has largely shifted to a digital world. A 2015 National Volunteer Fire Council report showed that 41% of the US population doesn't know if their department is career, combination or volunteer, and 79% don't know if their department needs volunteers. Stratham is certainly not immune to this phenomena; members of the SVFD regularly encounter citizens of Stratham that are unaware that most of Stratham's fire and EMS first responders are volunteers. Currently, SVFD lacks a developed marketing campaign designed to increase public awareness of the Department's volunteer opportunities.

Barriers and Challenges to Retention:

The fraternal culture of the past relied on a small town atmosphere. Long ago, members of the fire department regularly met for an after-work social hour centered on games of pool and libations. As previously mentioned, the Stratham Fair served as an important gathering where social bonds between members and the members' families were further reinforced. Communication occurred organically via word of mouth in the tight knit, rural community. Of course, the small town has grown, previously acceptable means of socializing are no longer allowable (for good reason), Stratham Fair has ended, and the tight knit community has spread thin.

As these effective means of cultural bonding came to their natural end, nothing was intentionally designed to replace them. This has led to a current cultural deficit that exacerbates SVFD's difficulty in retaining qualified volunteers. Without deliberate plans to correct these deficiencies, the department will likely see a continuation of the attrition trend as aging members of the "old boys club" continue to retire.

Finally, the Recruiting and Retention Committee understands that first responders are by no means immune to, and are in fact particularly vulnerable to, the nationwide mental health crisis. Aside from the compounding factors of EMS and Firefighter related PTSD and stress, SVFD's volunteers experience the same difficulties facing any of Stratham's citizens. While funding sources exist to help members struggling with their experiences with SVFD emergency response, it can be exceptionally difficult and expensive for volunteer members to access help with more common struggles like marital difficulties or loss of a loved one. Regardless, mental health struggles can make it difficult or impossible for a volunteer to remain committed and effective in a particularly demanding role as an EMS provider or Firefighter.

Marketing Campaign:

In order to continue the momentum in recruiting new qualified volunteers, the R&R Committee would like to establish a new, well designed marketing campaign to educate the citizens of Stratham on the history of the department's role in the community, the continued efforts of the department, and volunteer opportunities open to all interested parties. This would include print materials like flyers & banners, and a professionally designed (and Town approved) social media campaign.

Print materials would include mailers and brochures. All mailers and brochures will be designed by a professional graphic designer as specified by the Fire Chief with input from the Recruiting and Retention Committee. Mailers will invite the public to upcoming SVFD sponsored events (like the Annual Fire Prevention Month Pancake Breakfast and the Stratham SummerFest) and highlight the department's inclusive volunteer program. Four mailers per year will be sent via US Postal Service to each residence in Stratham. Brochures will be available all community events and volunteer hiring events attended by the SVFD's R&R Committee. Additionally, brochures will be kept in supply at the station and on all apparatus so that SVFD first responders may issue these materials to interested parties when appropriate.

The social media campaign will be produced by a professional marketing firm. The Fire Chief or designee of the Chief will direct the marketing firm on appropriate content with input from the Recruiting and Retention Committee in accordance with all applicable Federal, State, and Town of Stratham regulations, policies, and guidelines. All posts will be checked by the Chief or designee of the Chief for final approval before being posted. The SVFD will post at least four times per month to Facebook, Instagram, or other popular social media platform as recommended by the professional marketing firm. Posts will be consistently thematic along four key themes: the department's history, the department's current role in the town, public safety announcements, and current volunteer members. Every post will also include promotional language highlighting current volunteer opportunities with the SVFD.

In order to ascertain the efficacy of the media campaign, a question will be added to the new volunteer application asking "How did you hear about this volunteer opportunity?" Applicants will choose from the answers "Word of mouth," "A flyer in the mail," "Via social media," "Through an SVFD recruiter at a community event," and "Other... please explain." These new hire applications will be checked and answers will be tallied quarterly and results will be uploaded to a shared file on emergencyreporting.com or other SVFD database.

Wellness Program:

The Recruiting and Retention Committee would like to move forward with a new program to begin rebuilding a healthful, strong sense of community by establishing a regularly scheduled wellness program open to first responders in the SVFD. This would be a thrice weekly, Personal Athletic Trainer led workout held at the department with a focus on calisthenics, EMS and Firefighter related physical movements (e.g. "hose drags," patient movement, and performing while wearing weighted vests), and teamwork. A pilot program held at the department last year was well attended and received positive feedback from all attendees, but was ultimately unsustainable as the volunteers leading the workouts were not qualified, dedicated Personal Athletic Trainers. An incomplete list of the numerous benefits the SVFD would gain from a regularly scheduled, professionally led workout includes: increased camaraderie through regular scheduled interactions; increased physical and mental health in volunteer members; and basic skills reinforcement through repetition.

Mental Health Initiative:

The Recruiting and Retention Committee would like to launch a SVFD Mental Health Initiative that offers no-questions-asked reimbursement for traditional therapies and preventative care facilitated by a licensed mental health provider. This would streamline the process of receiving mental health therapies for SVFD's first responders by bringing it entirely "in house." Members in need of care would submit an application to the Chief or designated representative and, upon approval from the Chief, choose a licensed mental health care provider of their choice (with clear guidance of who does or does not qualify as a "mental health care provider). The volunteer member would then return invoices for care to the Chief or designated representative for reimbursement.

Recordkeeping and reporting:

During the Period of Performance (POP) for this grant, key metrics will be recorded for reporting to FEMA. A census of current first responders will be taken at the beginning of the POP and then bi-annually each year until the conclusion of the POP. Additionally, data will be collected at the beginning of the POP showing the average number of call responded to by individual members, the average on-call shifts covered by individual members, and the number of individual responders who could be classified as either "frequent," "occasional," or "very infrequent" responders. This data will again be collected quarterly during the POP. Finally, the department will continue to collect data showing response times and responders present at all Fire and EMS calls to measure compliance with NFPA 1720.

One member of the SVFD will be needed to manage and administer all aspects of the grant in order ensure that adequate records are kept and submitted to the Town Administrator, the Town Finance Administrator, and FEMA. This member will be compensated for their time.

IMPACT ON DAILY OPERATIONS

For years, the SVFD has experienced a downward trend in new volunteer applications compounded by a steady rate of attrition as former responders age out. Paradoxically, increases in stipends for volunteers has done little to either increase the quantity of new volunteers or slow the rate of attrition. It appears that volunteers are most motivated by non-monetary aspects of volunteering and that no amount of money can prevent aging related challenges. Previous means of attracting new members and retaining current members are no longer effective or permitted.

In order to reverse the downward trend of volunteerism, all organizations staffed by volunteers must deliberately seek and implement means of recruiting and retaining qualified and dedicated members. The Recruiting and Retention Committee believes that the barriers and challenges preventing potential volunteers from joining the SVF—and preventing current responders from continuing their participation in the SVFD—are definable and fixable problems if the will and resources to solve them are available. An award of a SAFER Grant would allow the SVFD to quickly implement several key measures designed to attract and keep qualified responders.

FINANCIAL NEED NARRATIVE

At the conclusion of the Stratham Fair, the SVFD lost a key source of funding. While the SVFD is incredibly fortunate to have the full backing of the Town of Stratham's municipal government, budgeted funds are already earmarked for—among other things—apparatus, state mandated training, and pay & stipends for paid & volunteer responders. Any further municipal funds must be approved by a majority vote at the Annual Town Meeting in March of 2025. The programs that could be implemented with funds from a SAFER grant award would be most effective if implemented as soon as possible.

COST BENEFIT NARRATIVE

According to the annual Town Report, total salaries and stipends paid to first responders by the Town of Stratham in 2023 were less than \$290,000. If, due to decreased recruitment and increased attrition, the SVFD was required to transition to a full-time, career department, the cost associated with such staffing changes would dramatically alter the Town budget. Comparatively small amounts of funding invested in recruiting, training, and retaining qualified volunteers is unquestionably more affordable.

Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Program: Frequently Asked Questions

This document addresses Frequently Asked Questions related to the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Program. Applicants should refer to the SAFER Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for full details and application requirements.

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General Program Questions

What is the purpose of the SAFER Program?

The purpose of the SAFER Program is to provide funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations to assist with increasing the number of firefighters to help communities meet industry minimum standards, to attain 24-hour staffing to provide adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards, and to fulfill traditional missions of fire departments. The SAFER Program is separated into two activities: Hiring of Firefighters (Hiring) Activity and Recruitment and Retention (R&R) Activity. Using a competitive process that is informed by fire service subject-matter experts, grants in both activities are awarded to applicants whose requests best address the priorities of the SAFER Program.

What changes were made to the SAFER Program since last year?

The SAFER Program NOFO contains information on Program Updates in the appendix.

What do I need to know about Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP)?

SAFER Program projects that involve the installation of supplies/equipment not specifically excluded from a FEMA EHP Review, per the Grant Programs Directorate Programmatic Environmental Assessment, such as ground-disturbing activities, or modification/renovation of existing buildings or structures, will require an EHP review. Some equipment activities will require an EHP review, as well. Such activities include but are not limited to:

- Building renovations, such as removal of wall or installation of electrical or waterlines;
- Training/exercises in natural settings, such as rope or swift water;
- Installation of LED signs; and
- Any scope of work that involves ground disturbances.

Please see FEMA's EHP Screening form and instructions at EHP Screening Form. EHP policy guidance can be found at [Preparedness Grants EHP Compliance webpage](#). Recipients will be notified of their EHP responsibilities in the grant award package.

It is FEMA policy that actions initiated and/or completed without fulfilling the specific EHP requirements will not be considered for funding.

Who is eligible to apply under the SAFER Program?

Eligible applicants for the SAFER Program include fire departments; any federally recognized Indian tribe or tribal organization; and national, regional, state, local, tribal, and nonprofit interest organizations representing the interests of volunteer firefighters.

How do I determine whether I represent a volunteer, combination, or career fire department or a national, regional, state, local, tribal, and nonprofit volunteer firefighter interest organization?

A **volunteer fire department**, as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 2229, has an all-volunteer force of firefighting personnel. For a fire department to have an all-volunteer force, no member may receive financial compensation (in the form of salary or wages) for their services other than life and health insurance, workers' compensation insurance, and/or a nominal stipend per call. For the purposes of this SAFER Program, a department whose membership is comprised of all volunteer firefighters, including any paid-on-call firefighters who receive only a nominal stipend, will be considered a volunteer fire department.

A **career department**, as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 2229, has an all-paid force of firefighting personnel other than paid-on-call firefighters. Fire departments that provide reimbursement on a paid-on-call basis are considered a combination fire department for the purposes of this program.

A **combination department**, as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 2229, has paid firefighting personnel and volunteer firefighting personnel. At a minimum, a combination fire department must have at least one active firefighter who receives financial compensation for services (including paid-on-call) and at least one active firefighter who does not receive financial compensation for services other than life, health, and workers' compensation insurance.

For the purposes of this SAFER Program, a department whose membership is composed of any paid-on-call firefighters who receive more than a nominal stipend will be considered a combination fire department.

FEMA considers a department to be combination majority volunteer if more than 50 percent of its membership is made up of personnel who do not receive financial compensation for services. Departments are considered combination majority career if more than 50% of the active firefighting membership is salaried staff.

A **national, regional, state, local, tribal, and nonprofit volunteer firefighter interest organization** is defined as an organization that supports or represents 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. FEMA shall make the final determination as to whether an applicant is an appropriate volunteer firefighter interest group.

Fire departments applying for a regional grant on behalf of itself and other participating fire departments are not considered an interest organization.

What activities may I apply for under the SAFER Program?

The SAFER Program is separated into two activities:

Hiring Activity: Provides federal financial assistance to help fire departments hire new, additional firefighters (or change the status of part-time or paid-on-call firefighters to full-time firefighters), and to rehire laid off firefighters or retain firefighters facing imminent layoff. National, regional, state, local, tribal, and nonprofit interest organizations are not eligible to apply for funding under the Hiring Activity.

R&R Activity: Assists volunteer and combination fire departments and national, regional, state, local, federally recognized tribal, and nonprofit interest organizations with the recruitment and/or retention of volunteer firefighters who are involved with or trained in the operations of firefighting and emergency response. Career fire departments are not eligible to apply for funding under the R&R Activity.

How many applications may I submit?

Eligible applicants may submit only one application for each eligible activity under the SAFER Program (one under the Hiring Activity and/or one under the R&R Activity). Applicants interested in applying under both the Hiring Activity and the R&R Activity must submit two separate applications, one for each activity. All submissions of duplicate applications may be disqualified.

Applications differ based on the applicant type. For example, the Hiring Activity application will be different from the fire department application for the R&R Activity; the R&R Activity application will be different for a fire department than an interest organization. Be sure to select the appropriate applicant type when applying. Applications submitted under the wrong type (e.g., regional fire department R&R Activity application applied through the interest organization application) will be deemed ineligible.

I have an open SAFER Program award(s). May I still apply under the next application period?

Yes. However, because the possibility exists that the period of performance on the open grant award(s) and the next grant period of performance will overlap, you need to ensure that the start of your new grant does not depend on the completion of your open grant(s), or that receipt of a new award will not impact your ability to continue with and/or complete your open grant award(s). The grant activities requested in the new grant must supplement the current award(s) and cannot be for the same activities, expenditures, or personnel funded under the open grant award(s). Applicants with an active SAFER Program award who wish to apply under another SAFER open application period are subject to the guidelines and requirements outlined in the SAFER Program NOFO.

How much funding is available under the SAFER Program?

Please review the SAFER Program NOFO, which defines funds appropriated as part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Appropriations Act (Pub. L. No. 117-103). However, the following specific funding parameters are either required by law or are the outcome of recommendations from the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program Criteria Development Panel:

- 10% of the funding is set aside for grants awarded to all volunteer or majority volunteer departments for hiring of firefighters.
 - If FEMA awards less than 10% of the funds available for the hiring of firefighters to volunteer and majority volunteer fire departments, it will transfer the remaining funds to provide grants for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.
- 10% of the funding is set aside for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.

- No more than 33% of the total amount allocated for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters can be awarded to national, regional, state, local, territorial, or federally recognized tribal organizations that represent the interests of volunteer firefighters.

What is the maximum amount of funding a recipient may be awarded?

There is no maximum award amount for SAFER Program awards. However, it is important to note that all awarded SAFER Program costs and activities must be incurred, received, and completed within the period of performance; therefore, applicants should carefully consider what costs and activities they can reasonably accomplish within the period of performance.

Is there a cost share for all applicants?

Please review the SAFER Program NOFO for specific information on cost share.

When will the awards be announced?

Award announcements will be made at the beginning of the summer and on a continuous basis thereafter until all available funds have been awarded, but no later than September 30th.

Recipients are notified via email and through the FEMA Grants Outcomes (FEMA GO) system of the award offer and must accept their awards no later than 30 calendar days from the award date. The recipient must notify FEMA of its intent to accept and proceed with work under the award through the FEMA GO system. Funds will remain on hold until the recipient accepts the award through the FEMA GO system and all other conditions of the award have been satisfied, or until the award is otherwise rescinded. Failure to accept a grant award within the specified timeframe may result in a loss of funds.

Recipients may request additional time to accept the award if needed.

When a SAFER Program award is accepted, when does the period of performance start?

The period of performance under the Hiring Activity is 36 months for all grants awarded. A default 180-day recruitment period, which allows grant recipients to begin hiring SAFER Program-funded firefighters, begins when FEMA approves the application for an award under this activity. The 36-month period of performance automatically starts after the 180-day recruitment period, regardless of whether the recipient has successfully hired the requested firefighters.

The period of performance under the R&R Activity is 12, 24, 36, or 48 months for all grants awarded. A default 90-day recruitment period, which allows recipients time to gather resources, initiate processes, and finalize contracts needed to implement SAFER Program grant activities, begins when FEMA approves the application for award. The period of performance automatically starts after the 90-day recruitment period ends, regardless of whether the recipient is ready to begin implementing its grant award.

Application Questions

What are some important reminders for each year?

The online SAFER Program application is only available in the [FEMA GO application portal](#).

- Applicants must complete the following to start and submit a SAFER Program application: The applicant organization must be currently registered and active in the System for Award Management (SAM) to apply. Applicants are advised that FEMA may 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. SAM is available from Grants.gov at [Register with SAM \(grants.gov\)](#).
- Effective April 4, 2022, the federal government transitioned from using the Data Universal Number System or DUNS number to a new, non-proprietary identifier known as a Unique Entity Identifier or UEI. For entities that have an active registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) prior to this date, the UEI has automatically been assigned and no action is necessary. For all entities filing a new registration in SAM.gov after April 4, 2022, the UEI will be assigned to that entity as part of the SAM.gov registration.
- FEMA GO has also been updated to use the UEI as the Primary Entity Identifier for registered organizations.
- New registrations in both SAM and FEMA GO will require the use of the UEI.
- For more information about the transition, go to [GSAFSD Service Portal Landing-- GSA Federal Service Desk Service Portal](#) and select the green "Help" on UEI Transition button.
- Additional information about UEI and FEMA GO is provided in the [FEMA GO Startup Guide](#).

What is program income?

Although not common, recipients may generate income while carrying out grant-supported activities during the period of performance under the SAFER Program award. This is referred to as program income. This income can be used to defray program costs, where appropriate, consistent with 2 CFR § 200.307. The Budget Summary section of the grant application contains a field for program income. The response should be \$0 unless the recipient anticipates generating program income during the period of performance. If the recipient plans to generate program income, it should be explained in the narrative. The FEMA GO application will not include program income estimates in the total budget. FEMA will review the program income submitted and adjust the budget as appropriate, prior to award. Any program income must be used and managed in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.307.

What is Management and Administration (M&A)?

M&A costs are administrative expenses that are incurred during the administration of a SAFER Program award. Applicants may apply for M&A costs if the costs are directly related to the implementation of the program for which

they are applying. M&A costs are identifiable costs directly associated with the implementation and management of the grant and cannot exceed 3% of the federal share of SAFER Program funds awarded. If you are requesting M&A expenses, you must list the costs under the "Other" category in the budget and explain the purpose for the administrative costs in your Project Narrative. All M&A costs must be in accordance with 2 C.F.R. Part 225, Cost Principles for state, local and Indian Tribal Governments (OMB Circular A-87) or 2 C.F.R. Part 230, Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations (OMB Circular A-122), as applicable and should be based on actual expenses only, not a percentage of the overall grant.

M&A costs are not eligible under the Hiring Activity.

Where do I submit the federally approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement?

Applicants required to have a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement that desire to charge indirect costs to an award must provide a copy of their negotiated indirect cost rate agreement at the time of application. Applicants that are not required by 2 C.F.R. Part 200 to have a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement but are required by 2 C.F.R. Part 200 to develop an indirect cost rate proposal must provide a copy of their proposal at the time of application. Copies of the indirect cost rate agreements or proposals, along with the SAFER Program application number, must be submitted electronically to FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov. Please ensure that the request details budget portion of your application includes information pertaining to your indirect cost rate agreement or proposal. Post-award requests to charge indirect costs will be considered on a case-by-case basis and based upon the submission of an agreement or proposal as discussed above or based upon on the de minimis rate or cost allocation plan, as applicable.

Indirect costs are not allowable under the Hiring Activity.

What standards does the SAFER Program focus on?

The SAFER Program focuses on the Deployment or Staffing and Deployment compliance standards of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA):

- NFPA 1710 Assembly Requirements – Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Department (Section 5.2.4.1 – Single-Family Dwelling Initial Full Alarm Assignment Capability): This standard applies primarily to career fire departments and combination departments if the combination department chooses it.
- NFPA 1720 Assembly Requirements – Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments (Section 4.3 – Staffing and Deployment): This standard applies primarily to all-volunteer fire departments, but it may also apply to combination departments if the combination department does not choose to comply with the NFPA 1710 standard.

FEMA prioritizes bringing non-compliant (NFPA 1710 or 1720) departments into compliance in the most cost-effective manner.

Do applicants have to report to the National Fire Incident Reporting System?

No. FEMA does not require SAFER Program applicants to report to the National Fire Incident Reporting System.

Do applicants have to comply with the National Incident Management System?

SAFER Program applicants are not required to comply with the [National Incident Management System \(NIMS\)](#) to apply for federal assistance under the SAFER Program. However, any applicant who receives a SAFER Program award must achieve the level of NIMS compliance required by the Authority Having Jurisdiction over the applicant's emergency service operations (e.g., a local government), prior to the end of the grant's period of performance.

SAFER Hiring

What type of firefighter positions will be funded under the Hiring Activity?

Grants awarded under the Hiring Activity enable all volunteer, combination, and career fire departments to restore staffing levels to attain a more effective level of response and a safer incident scene. FEMA awards Hiring Activity grants directly to volunteer, combination, and career fire departments to help fire departments increase their cadre of frontline firefighters by providing financial assistance in three categories:

- **Rehire:** Rehiring firefighters who were laid off within the two years prior to the start of the application period outlined in the NOFO;
- **Retention:** Retaining firefighters facing imminent layoff – within 120 days of the close of the application period outlined in the NOFO; and
- **New Hire:** Hire new, additional firefighters.

What are the eligible expenses under the Hiring Activity?

The only eligible expenses are the salary and associated benefits (actual payroll expenses) for the positions funded under the SAFER Program grant. Costs are reimbursable if they are included as part of the standard package, available to all operational firefighter positions, contractually obligated, and reimbursed via payroll. Compensation for a firefighter's normal, contracted work schedule is reimbursable, but overtime costs are not eligible for reimbursement by the SAFER Program grant award (including overtime for holdovers, extra shifts, to attend training, etc.). Only costs for overtime that the fire department routinely pays as a part of the base salary or a firefighter's regularly scheduled and contracted shift hours, in order to comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act, are eligible.

What are the requirements if applying under the Rehire or Retention categories?

Eligible positions for funding under the **Rehire** category must have been laid off in the two years prior to the start of the application period outlined in the NOFO. Copies of the official, signed, and issued layoff notices will be required at the time of application.

Firefighters who have been issued a formal layoff notice, which includes a specific date for the layoff action, prior to the start of the application period, and those who face imminent layoff – within 120 days of the close of the application period outlined in the NOFO – are eligible for SAFER Program funding under the **Retention** category. Copies of the official, signed, and issued layoff notices will be required at the time of application.

Eligible positions under the **Retention** category must be employees of the department at the time the application is submitted. Note: if a retention position becomes vacant after the application is submitted, departments must fill the vacancy with a new hire in order to maintain the operational staffing level.

A layoff notice that is not executed within the specified terms will be considered void unless an additional notice is provided within 14 days of the original action date will not qualify for funding in the Rehire or Retention categories.

Applicants who do not meet these parameters must apply under the New Hire category.

Any layoff action not executed in accordance with the terms of the official layoff notice, or which does not meet the above requirements, will not qualify for funding in the Rehire or Retention categories. Applicants who do not meet these parameters must apply under the New Hire category.

SAFER Recruitment and Retention

What are the eligible expenses under the R&R Activity?

Applicants must correlate the activities for which funding is being requested with the identified recruitment and/or retention problems/issues being addressed. SAFER Program grant funds may only be used for volunteer firefighters who are involved with, or trained in, the operations of firefighting and emergency response. FEMA will not provide funding for a budgeted line item if an applicant does not provide enough information detailing how the item and/or activity will enhance the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Allowable costs may be limited to reasonable amounts, as determined by FEMA.

All grant-related purchases and activities must be incurred, received, and completed within the period of performance. Additionally, all funded activities under the R&R Activity must be governed by formally adopted Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Minimally, these 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. FEMA may ask for copies of SOPs prior to, or after a grant is awarded.

Examples of eligible expenses include but are not limited to the following:

- Marketing Program (e.g., media and print advertising) to recruit new volunteer firefighters;
- New recruit basic training;
- Leadership/career development training; and

- Personal Protective Equipment for new recruits.

For the full list of eligible and ineligible costs, please refer to the Programmatic Information and Priorities, in the SAFER Program NOFO.

How is “new recruit” defined according to the SAFER Program?

The SAFER Program defines a “new recruit” as a volunteer that joins the department with the intent to serve as a firefighter after the recipient is notified of the grant award (e.g., the date of the award notification email in FEMA GO).

Does the SAFER Program allow regional applications?

Yes. Eligible applicants may apply for a regional R&R Activity grant if the request will have a direct regional or local benefit beyond the immediate boundaries of the applicant’s first-due response area. Direct regional or local benefit means that other eligible organizations will receive a portion of the grant awarded funds, or the department will receive items purchased with the grant funds.

An eligible applicant will serve as the “host applicant” and can apply for funding on behalf of itself and any number of other participating R&R Activity eligible organizations. The application must include a list of all the participating organizations, including the point of contact information and EIN for each organization benefitting from a proposed regional project.

If awarded, the host applicant must agree to be responsible for all aspects of the grant. This includes but is not limited to accountability for all assets and all reporting requirements. Regional host applicants and participating partner agencies must execute a Memorandum of Understanding or equivalent document, signed by all parties participating in the award, before applying under the Regional Program activities.

The Hiring Activity is not eligible as a regional project.

Application Process

How do I apply for a SAFER Program grant?

The online SAFER Program application is available through the [FEMA GO application portal](#). The application will also be linked with the [U.S. Fire Administration’s website](#) and the [Grants.gov website](#).

Which internet browsers are compatible with FEMA GO?

FEMA GO is compatible with the most recent major release of Google Chrome, Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Apple Safari, and Microsoft Edge. Users who attempt to use tablet type devices or other browsers may encounter issues with using FEMA GO.

When can I apply?

Applications will only be accepted during the application period outlined in the NOFO. FEMA GO automatically records proof of timely submission and the system generates an electronic date/time stamp when FEMA GO successfully receives the application. The individual with the Authorized Organization Representative role that submitted the application will also receive the official date/time stamp and a FEMA GO tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission on the date and time that FEMA GO received the application.

Applications not received by the application submission deadline will not be accepted. Applicants using unreliable internet connections, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that submission can take some time before FEMA GO receives your application.

Applicants who experience system-related issues will be addressed until 3 p.m. ET on the day the application closes. No new system-related issues will be addressed after this deadline.

Do I need to register with the System for Award Management (SAM)?

Yes. Per 2 C.F.R. § 25.205, SAM registration is required to both begin and submit a SAFER Program application in the FEMA GO system. Organizational SAM.gov registrations are only active for one year and must be renewed annually. Therefore, applicants must ensure the applicant entity has a valid and active registration in SAM.gov before starting an application.

Step-by-step instructions for registering with SAM can be found at [SAM.gov | Entity Registrations](#). Applicants should contact SAM.gov with questions or concerns about their SAM registration.

DHS may not make a federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS/UEI and SAM requirements. 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. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time DHS is ready to make a federal award, DHS may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and may make a federal award to another applicant.

The submission of payment requests and amendments are also contingent on the information provided in the entity's SAM.gov registration. It is imperative that all information in the application is correct, current, and matches the information in the SAM.gov registration. Please ensure that your organization's name, address, DUNS number, and Employer Identification Number (EIN) are up to date in SAM.gov and that the DUNS number used in SAM.gov is the same number used to apply for all other FEMA grant program awards.

More information on SAM.gov may be located in the SAFER Program NOFO and on the [Assistance to Firefighters Grant Programs Website](#). If applicants have questions or concerns about a SAM registration, please contact the [Federal Support Desk](#) or call (866) 606-8220, Monday – Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. ET.

May I change or edit my application after it has been submitted?

You will be able to review or edit the entire application prior to submission. However, if you would like to edit or change your application after submission, you will need to withdraw the application from consideration of award. The

application must then be resubmitted to FEMA prior to the application submission deadline to be considered for an award.

How are the applications reviewed and selected for funding?

SAFER Program 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 SAFER Program NOFO.

Applications are then scored competitively by no less than three 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).

How important is it to address all Narrative Statements in the application?

The Narrative Statements of the application must provide unique and specific details about the activity for which applicants seek funding, including budget details. Peer Review Panelists will evaluate and score each activity based on the narrative elements within each activity. The weighted evaluation criteria used by the peer reviewers in determining the grant award, as described in the NOFO, make up the elements of the Narrative Statements' score.

Under the Hiring Activity, the peer review panel score is 50% of the total application score. Under the R&R Activity applications, the peer review panel score is 70% of the total application score.

Note: FEMA conducts reviews of a random sampling of applications to compare them for duplication including the narrative statements and statistical data. Therefore, all elements of the narrative statements must be specific and unique to the applying entity, and all statistical data must be accurate.

Applications with narrative statements that have substantial duplication of statements, sentences, or paragraphs to other submitted applications, and/or inaccurate data that may mislead reviewers may be disqualified. Discovery of falsification, fabrication, or plagiarism of other grant proposals will disqualify the application(s).

What are the character limitations for text boxes in FEMA GO?

The Narrative Statements blocks do not allow for formatting. Do not type the Narrative Statements using only capital letters. Additionally, do not include tables, special characters, or fonts (e.g., quotation marks, bullets), or graphs. Space for the Narrative Statements is limited. Although each element must have a minimum of 200 characters, the maximum number of total characters is 3,000 per each narrative element, except Financial Need, which is 4,000 characters.

FEMA Contacts

How can I help FEMA prevent fraud, waste, and abuse?

If you have information about instances of fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement involving FEMA programs or operations, you should contact the Department of Homeland Security [Office of Inspector General Hotline](#), at 1-800-323-8603, or by fax at 202-254-4297.

How can I obtain help with the application?

The SAFER Program Help Desk at 866-274-0960 will be available to provide technical assistance with completing your SAFER Program application(s).

During the application period, the Help Desk will be staffed between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday; and until 5 p.m. ET on the last day of the application period. However, these hours may change as the application period progresses. The toll-free number also accepts voicemail messages after hours or if the line is busy. Questions may also be e-mailed to FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov.

Where can I find SAFER Program documents and other information?

You can find SAFER Program documents and additional information on the [Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Program webpage](#).

How do I sign-up for e-mail notifications about the SAFER Program?

To register for automatic e-mail notices of NOFO availability and other important program information go to: [Signup for FEMA Email Updates](#).

Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Program: Fire Department Application Checklist

Completing this checklist will help you prepare your Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Program application for fire departments applying under the Hiring and Recruitment and Retention activities. This document is for planning purposes only and collecting this information beforehand will reduce the time and level of effort needed to complete your online application when the next grant cycle opens.

SAFER Program Application Checklist Table 1: Application and Submission Information

DUNS/UEI, SAM, and FEMA GO	
Applicants must provide a valid Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number/Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) to apply. What is your organization's DUNS/UEI number?	
Is your System for Award Management (SAM) registration current?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
What is the expiration date for your SAM registration? SAM registration is only active for one year and must be renewed annually. 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.	
Search the SAM.gov website to confirm this DUNS/UEI number matches your SAM registration. You will also find your SAM expiration date through this search.	
Are you registered in the FEMA Grants Outcomes (FEMA GO) System?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

SAFER Program Application Checklist Table 2: Applicant Information

Applicant Characteristics	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Fire Department/Fire District



FEMA

Applicant Characteristics	
What is your applicant type?	<input type="checkbox"/> National, Regional, State, Local, or Federally Recognized Tribal Volunteer Firefighter Interest Organization
If Fire Department/Fire District, what kind of organization do you represent? If combination, what is the percentage of career members in your organization?	<input type="checkbox"/> All Paid/Career <input type="checkbox"/> All Volunteer <input type="checkbox"/> Combination (Majority Volunteer) <input type="checkbox"/> Combination (Majority Paid/Career)
Which activity are you applying for?	<input type="checkbox"/> Hiring of Firefighters (Hiring) <input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters (R&R)
If applying as a fire department under R&R, is this grant application a regional request? A regional request provides a direct regional and/or local benefit beyond your organization. You may apply for a regional request on behalf of your organization and any number of other participating eligible organizations within your region.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If a regional R&R application, how many regional partners will directly participate in this project?	
If a regional R&R application, please list each participating agency by name along with a point of contact (POC), to include a phone number. All regional participants must be eligible as defined by the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).	Participating organization name: POC first name: POC last name: Phone number: Phone number extension: Employer Identification Number:
If a regional R&R application, do you have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or equivalent documents in place with the regional partners? If yes, please attach your MOU or equivalent document.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Note: The community identification characteristic (e.g., rural, urban, suburban) and the organizational status (e.g., combination, volunteer) will be entered for the host organization and used for the regional application, regardless of the composition of the participating partners. For additional information on regional applications and MOU requirements, please refer to the SAFER Program NOFO.	
How many stations are operated by your department?	
If a regional R&R application, how many stations are in your region?	

Applicant Characteristics	
<p>Does your organization protect critical infrastructure of the state?</p> <p>If a regional R&R application, answer this question based on your region.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>Do you currently report to the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS)?</p> <p>If a regional R&R application, answer this question based on all departments in this request.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>What is your Fire Department Identification Number (FDIN/FDID) Number?</p> <p>If a regional R&R application, enter the FDIN/FDID of the host department.</p>	

Operating budget		
<p>What was the operating budget (e.g., personnel, maintenance of apparatus, equipment, facilities, utility costs, purchasing expendable items) related to fire-related programs and emergency response for the current (at time of application) fiscal year (FY), as well as the previous three FYs?</p>	Current FY20____	\$
	FY20____	\$
	FY20____	\$
	FY20____	\$
<p>What percentage of the declared operating budget is dedicated to personnel costs (salary, benefits, overtime, etc.)?</p>		%
<p>Does your department have any rainy-day reserves, emergency funds, or capital outlay?</p> <p>If yes, what is the total amount currently set aside? Describe the planned purpose of this fund.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<p>What percentage of the declared operating budget is derived from the following?</p>	Taxes	%
	Bond Issues	%

Operating budget	
	Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Billing %
	Grants %
	Donations %
	Fund Drives %
	Fee for Service %
	Other %
	Total (Must equal 100%) %
Describe your financial need to include descriptions of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income vs. expense breakdown of the current annual budget; Precise budget shortfalls and the inability to address financial needs without federal assistance; Actions taken to obtain funding elsewhere (e.g., state assistance programs, other grant programs); How similar projects have been funded in the past; and How your critical functions are uniquely affected without this funding. 	4,000 total character maximum
This FY, are you receiving federal funding from any other grant program for the same purpose for which you are applying for this grant? If yes, please provide an explanation for other funding sources.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
This FY, are you receiving federal funding from any other grant program regardless of purpose?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Applicant and Community Trends - Injuries and Fatalities	Current FY	Previous FY	Two FYs Ago
What is the total number of fire-related civilian fatalities in your jurisdiction over the last three fiscal years?			

What is the total number of fire-related civilian injuries in your jurisdiction over the last three calendar years?			
What is the total number of line-of-duty member fatalities in your jurisdiction over the last three calendar years?			
If a regional R&R application, answer this based on your region.			
What is the total number of line-of-duty member injuries in your region over the last three calendar years?			
If a regional R&R application, answer this based on your region.			
What is the total number of line-of-duty members with self-inflicted fatalities over the last three years?			
If a regional R&R application, answer this based on your region.			

Applicant and Community Trends - Type or Class of Vehicles	Number of frontline apparatus	Number of available riding positions	Number of filled riding positions
How many frontline vehicles does your organization have in each of the types or classes of vehicle listed below that respond to first-alarm assignments in support of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1710/1720? You must include vehicles that are leased or on long-term loan as well as any vehicles that have been ordered or otherwise currently under contract for purchase or lease by your organization but not yet in your possession.			
Engines or pumpers (pumping capacity of 750 gallons per minute [GPM] or greater and water capacity of 300 gallons or more): pumper, pumper/tanker, rescue/pumper, foam pumper, CAFS pumper, type I, type II engine urban interface.			
Ambulances for transport and/or emergency response.			
Tankers or tenders (water capacity of 1,000 gallons or more).			
Aerial apparatus: aerial ladder truck, telescoping, articulating, ladder towers, platform, tiller ladder truck, quint.			
Brush/quick attack (pumping capacity of less than 750 GPM and water carrying capacity of at least 300 gallons): brush truck, patrol unit (pickup w/ skid unit), quick attack unit, mini-pumper, type III engine, type IV engine, type V engine, type VI engine, type VII engine.			

Rescue vehicles: rescue squad, rescue (light, medium, heavy), technical rescue vehicle, hazardous materials unit.			
Additional vehicles: EMS chase vehicle, air/light unit, rehab units, bomb unit, technical support (command, operational support/supply), hose tender, salvage truck, aircraft rescue firefighting, command/mobile communications vehicle.			
Is your department facing a new risk, expanding service to a new area, or experiencing an increased call volume?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		

Community Description

Type of jurisdiction served:	<input type="checkbox"/> Airport/Port Authority <input type="checkbox"/> City <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Indian Tribe <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Parish <input type="checkbox"/> Private not-for-profit <input type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> Township <input type="checkbox"/> Unincorporated village <input type="checkbox"/> Village <input type="checkbox"/> Ward
What type of community does the host organization serve?	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input type="checkbox"/> Rural
What is the square mileage of the first due response zone/jurisdiction to be served?	

What percentage of the primary response area is for the following?

Agriculture, wildland, open space, or undeveloped properties	%
Commercial and industrial purposes	%
Residential purposes	%
Total (Must equal 100%)	%

What is the permanent resident population of the first due response zone/jurisdiction being served?	
Is there a seasonal increase in population?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, what is the seasonal increase in population (approximate number of people)?	
Please describe your organization and/or community that you serve: (4,000 total characters maximum)	

SAFER Program Application Checklist Table 3: Call Volume

Call volume			
<p>Please provide the total number of incidents that your department responded to for each year of the previous three-year calendar year period (Jan - Dec). Include only those alarms for which your department was a primary responder and not second due or giving Mutual Aid.</p> <p>Note: Each incident must be counted only once regardless of the number of units or agencies that responded to that incident (e.g., a vehicle fire with entrapment and injuries may be counted as a vehicle fire or a rescue call or an EMS call, but not all three).</p>			
Summary of responses per year by category. Enter whole numbers only. If you have no calls for any of the categories, enter 0.	Current FY	Previous FY	Two FYs Ago
NFIRS Series 100: Fire			
NFIRS Series 200: Overpressure Rupture, Explosion, Overheat (No Fire)			
NFIRS Series 300: Rescue & Emergency Medical Service Incident			
NFIRS Series 400: Hazardous Conditions (No Fire)			
NFIRS Series 500: Service Call			
NFIRS Series 600: Good Intent Call			
NFIRS Series 700: False Alarm & False Call			
NFIRS Series 800: Severe Weather & Natural Disaster			
NFIRS Series 900: Special Incident Type			

Fire Responses - How many responses per year by category? Enter whole numbers only. If you have no calls for any of the categories, enter 0.	Current FY	Previous FY	Two FYs Ago
Of the NFIRS Series 100 calls, how many are "Structure Fire" (NFIRS Codes 111-123)?			
Of the NFIRS Series 100 calls, how many are "Vehicle Fire" (NFIRS Codes 130-138)?			
Of the NFIRS Series 100 calls, how many are "Vegetation Fire" (NFIRS Codes 140-143)?			
What is the total acreage of all vegetation fires?			
Rescue and emergency medical service incidents - How many responses per year by category? Enter whole numbers only. If you have no calls for any of the categories, enter 0.	Current FY	Previous FY	Two FYs Ago
Of the NFIRS Series 300 calls, how many are "Motor Vehicle Accidents" (NFIRS Codes 322-324)?			
Of the NFIRS Series 300 calls, how many are "Extrications from Vehicles" (NFIRS Code 352)?			
Of the NFIRS Series 300 calls, how many are "Rescues" (NFIRS Codes 300, 351, 353-381)?			
How many EMS-Basic Life Support (BLS) Response Calls?			
How many EMS-Advanced Life Support (ALS) Response Calls?			
How many EMS-BLS Scheduled Transports?			
How many EMS-ALS Scheduled Transports?			
How many Community Paramedic Response Calls?			
Mutual and Automatic Aid	Current FY	Previous FY	Two FYs Ago
How many times did organizations in your region receive Mutual Aid?			
How many times did organizations in your region receive Automatic Aid?			
How many times did organizations in your region provide Mutual Aid?			
How many times did organizations in your region provide Automatic Aid?			
Of the Mutual and Automatic Aid responses, how many were structure fires?			

SAFER Program Application Checklist Table 4: Grant Request Details

R&R Activity Request Details	
<p>For the R&R Activity, choose the line item(s) from the following list of categories to add to your SAFER Program Application.</p> <p>For more information about each line item category, the applicable sub-categories, and the specific level of detail needed, please refer to the SAFER Program NOFO and SAFER Program R&R Request Details Information and Instructions documents.</p> <p>FEMA will not provide funding for a budget line item if an applicant does not provide sufficient information detailing how the proposed cost and activity will enhance recruitment and retention efforts.</p>	<p>Line Item Categories Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grant Writer Fee ▪ Staffing Needs/Risk Assessment ▪ Recruitment & Retention Coordinator, Program Manager, and Grant Administrator ▪ Marketing Program ▪ New Member Costs ▪ Training ▪ Tuition Assistance for Higher Education ▪ Personal Protective Equipment ▪ Nominal Stipends ▪ Explorer/Cadet/Mentoring Programs ▪ Length of Service Award Program or Retirement Program ▪ Insurance Packages ▪ Awards/Incentives for Operational Activities ▪ Remodeling/Renovation of Existing Facilities ▪ Other (Explain) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Management and Administration Costs ○ Indirect Costs ○ Audit Costs ○ Exercise Equipment and Gym Memberships
<p>What NFPA standard your department is attempting to meet?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 1710 – Career with aerial <input type="checkbox"/> 1710 – Career without aerial <input type="checkbox"/> 1720 – Urban combo/volunteer > 1,000 pop/square mile <input type="checkbox"/> 1720 – Suburban combo/volunteer 500 - 1,000 pop/square mile <input type="checkbox"/> 1720 – Rural combo/volunteer < 500 pop/square mile <input type="checkbox"/> 1720 – Remote combo/volunteer travel > 8 mi

<p>Based on current volunteer staffing levels: How often does the department meet the selected NFPA assembly requirements for your department's first due response zone/jurisdiction served?</p> <p>If awarded the grant: How often do you anticipate that the department will meet the NFPA assembly requirements indicated above?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Never (0%) <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely (1-19%) <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes (20-39%) <input type="checkbox"/> Half of the time (40-59%) <input type="checkbox"/> Very often (60-79%) <input type="checkbox"/> Most of the time (80-99%) <input type="checkbox"/> Always (100%)
<p>What is the total number of active volunteer firefighters in your department, not including administrative or EMS only members?</p> <p>If a regional R&R application, answer this based on your region.</p>	
<p>How many active volunteer firefighters are needed by your department to adequately comply with the NFPA assembly requirements as indicated in the table above? Include only operational volunteer firefighters; administrative or EMS only members should not be included.</p> <p>If a regional R&R application, answer this based on your region.</p>	
<p>The difference between the answers provided for the total number of active volunteer firefighters in your department and how many active volunteers are needed by your department should correspond to the total number of new volunteer firefighters your department is attempting to recruit under this grant and must match the information in the grant request details and narrative statements.</p>	
<p>How many active volunteer operational firefighters joined your department over the last three years?</p> <p>If a regional R&R application, answer this based on your region.</p>	
<p>How many active volunteer operational firefighters left your department over the last three years?</p> <p>If a regional R&R application, answer this based on your region.</p>	
<p>Prepare specific and unique narrative responses to each of the narrative evaluation criteria outlined in the SAFER program NOFO. The narrative evaluation criteria include the financial need criteria (30%) noted above as well as Project Description (30%); Impact on Daily Operations (30%); and Cost Benefit (10%).</p>	

Hiring Activity Request Details	
<p>For the Hiring Activity, select the specific position category from the following list to add the requested positions. For more information, please reference the SAFER Program NOFO.</p>	<p>Position Categories Include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New Hire ▪ Rehire ▪ Retention
<p>If applying under the Rehire or Retention categories, were the layoff notices executed in accordance with the requirements outlined in the NOFO?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>If yes, what is the date the position(s) being requested under this budget line item were (or will be) laid-off?</p>	<p>(mm/dd/yyyy)</p>
<p>If yes, please be prepared to attach copies of the official, signed, and executed layoff notices that correspond to the number of positions being requested in each budget line item.</p>	
<p>What NFPA standard is your department is attempting to meet?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> 1710 – Career with aerial</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1710 – Career without aerial</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1720 – Urban combo/volunteer > 1,000 pop/square mile</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1720 – Suburban combo/volunteer 500 - 1,000 pop/square mile</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1720 – Rural combo/volunteer < 500 pop/square mile</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1720 – Remote combo/volunteer travel > 8 mi</p>
<p>Based on current volunteer staffing levels: How often does the department meet the selected NFPA assembly requirements for your department's first due response zone/jurisdiction served?</p> <p>If awarded the grant: How often do you anticipate that the department will meet the NFPA assembly requirements indicated above?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Never (0%)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Rarely (1-19%)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes (20-39%)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Half of the time (40-59%)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Very often (60-79%)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Most of the time (80-99%)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Always (100%)</p>

Staffing levels	Total number of operational career personnel	Number of operational career officers	Number of NFPA support
Staffing levels at the start of the application period:			
Staffing levels at one year prior to the start of the application period:			
Staffing levels at two years prior to the start of the application period:			
If awarded this grant, what will the staffing levels be in your department?			
Please provide details on the department's existing staffing model to include the number of shifts, number of positions per shift, chief level officer staffing per shift (e.g., Battalion Chief, District Chief), and contracted shift hours per week/pay period. If the contracted shift hours included Fair Labor Standards Act overtime or Kelly Days, please be sure to include details.			
Prepare specific and unique narrative responses to each of the narrative evaluation criteria outlined in the SAFER Program NOFO. The narrative evaluation criteria include the financial need (30%) criteria (30%) noted above as well as Project Description (30%); Impact on Daily Operations (30%); and Cost Benefit (10%).			

SAFER Program Application Checklist Table 5: Budget Summary

Program Income	
<p>Although not common, recipients may generate income in the course of carrying out grant-supported activities during the period of performance under the FEMA grant award.</p> <p>This is referred to as program income. This income can be used to defray program costs, where appropriate, consistent with 2 CFR § 200.307. This response should be \$0 unless the recipient anticipates generating program income during the period of performance.</p>	<p>\$</p>

Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Program Self-Evaluation Sheet: Recruitment and Retention Activity for Fire Departments

This Self-Evaluation Sheet is designed to help you understand the criteria that you must address in your Narrative Statement when applying under the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Program – Recruitment and Retention (R&R) Activity for Fire Departments. A peer review panel will review all the criteria in the Narrative Statement to assess your department’s financial need, the degree to which your proposal best describes your fire department and community risks, the requirements you have listed that will reduce those risks, and how your application aligns with the SAFER Program priorities. The panel score is 70% of the total application score. Space for the Narrative Statement is limited to a maximum number of 3,000 characters per narrative element and 4,000 characters for the Financial Need.

1. Project Description (30%)

Applicants must describe in detail the unique problems and issues the department is experiencing in recruiting new volunteer firefighters and/or the particular problems and issues with retaining current members. Applicants must describe the precise implementation plan, including the goals, objectives, methods, specific steps, and timelines to directly address the identified problems or issues. Applicants must describe the current marketing plan already in place, or the marketing plan to be put in place with or without grant funds. Applicants must describe how the program will be uniquely evaluated for its impact on the identified recruitment and retention problems and issues. The application must clearly explain how the effectiveness of the grant will be measured. Applicants must also describe the unique and specific services the new volunteer firefighters and/or retention of current volunteer firefighters will provide for the fire department(s) and community. If the grant request will have a regional impact, applicants must discuss how the regional partners will benefit and which activities they will benefit from. If the grant request includes executive or management positions, define the purpose of all requested positions and personnel expenditures.

Below are the same scoring dimensions the peer review panel will use to rate each application. Using the criteria below, rate your own application and assess how the peer reviewers might rate your application:



FEMA

Strongly Agree: The applicant clearly explains the unique recruitment and/or the particular retention problems and issues identified by the department. There is a clear explanation of the department's precise implementation plan as well as clear details on the goals, objectives, methods, specific steps, and the anticipated timeline to directly address the identified problems or issues. The applicant clearly describes the current marketing plan already in place or the marketing program to be put in place. The applicant provides a clear description on how they will uniquely evaluate the overall effectiveness of the grant program for its impact on identified recruitment and retention problems and issues. The applicant clearly describes the unique and specific benefits the new volunteer firefighters and/or retention of current volunteer firefighters will provide to the fire department and community. If applicable, the applicant clearly discusses how the regional partners will benefit and from which activities they will benefit. If applicable, the applicant clearly defined the purpose of all requested positions and personnel expenditures. I have a clear understanding of the project description.

Agree: The applicant adequately explains the unique recruitment and/or the particular retention problems and issues identified by the department. There is an adequate explanation of the department's precise implementation plan as well as adequate details on the goals, objectives, methods, specific steps, and the anticipated timeline to directly address the identified problems or issues. The applicant adequately describes the current marketing plan that is already in place or the marketing program to be put in place. The applicant provides adequate information on how they will uniquely evaluate the overall effectiveness of the grant program's impact on identified recruitment and retention problems and issues. There is an adequate description of the unique and specific benefits the new volunteer firefighters and/or retention of current volunteer firefighters will provide to the fire department and community. If applicable, the applicant discusses how the regional partners will benefit and from which activities they will benefit. If applicable, the applicant discusses the purpose of the requested positions and personnel expenditures. I understand most elements of the project description, but a greater level of detail on some aspects would have been helpful.

Neither Agree nor Disagree: The applicant provides some explanation on the unique recruitment problems and/or particular retention issues identified by the department, but some details are lacking. There is some explanation of the department's precise implementation plan as well as the goals, objectives, methods, specific steps, and timelines to directly address the identified problems or issues. The applicant somewhat describes the current marketing plan already in place or the marketing program to be put in place. The applicant provides some information on how they will uniquely evaluate the overall effectiveness of the grant program for its impact on identified recruitment and retention problems and issues, but lacks the level of detail needed. The applicant somewhat addresses the unique and specific benefits the new volunteer firefighters and/or retention of current volunteer firefighters will provide to the fire department and community. If applicable, the applicant somewhat discusses how the regional partners will benefit and from which activities they will benefit. If applicable, the applicant somewhat discusses the purpose of the requested positions and personnel expenditures. The project description is moderately described but more detail on most of the elements would have been helpful.

Disagree: The applicant provides minimal detail and explanation regarding the unique recruitment and/or particular retention problems and issues identified by the department. There is minimal explanation of the department's precise implementation plan as well as minimal details on the goals, objectives, methods, specific steps, and the anticipated timeline to directly address the identified problems or issues. Minimal details are also provided on the current marketing plan already in place, or the marketing program to be put in place. There is minimal explanation regarding how the overall effectiveness of the grant program will be uniquely evaluated for its impact on identified

recruitment and retention problems and issues. There is minimal discussion on the unique and specific benefits the new volunteer firefighters and/or retention of current volunteer firefighters will provide to the fire department and community. If applicable, the applicant provides minimal details on how the regional partners will benefit and from which activities they will benefit. If applicable, the applicant provides minimal details about the purpose of the requested positions and personnel expenditures. I do not have a clear understanding of the recruitment and/or retention problems or issues the fire department is experiencing, or how this grant would address their needs.

Strongly Disagree: The applicant provides no details or explanation of the recruitment and/or retention problems and issues. There is no detail on the department's implementation plan or the goals, objectives, methods, specific steps, and timelines to directly address the identified problems or issues. The applicant does not provide information on the current marketing plan already in place or the marketing program to be put in place. There is no indication that the project will be evaluated for its impact on identified recruitment and retention problems and issues. There is no discussion on the specific benefits the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters and/or retention of current volunteer firefighters will provide to the fire department and community. If applicable, the applicant provides no details as to how the regional partners will benefit and activities from which they will benefit. If applicable, the applicant provides no detail about the purpose of the requested positions and personnel expenditures. I do not understand what the project proposes to accomplish.

2. Impact on Daily Operations (30%)

Applicants must describe with particularity and discreteness how the community and current volunteer firefighters in the department are at risk without the items or activities requested in the application. The applicant must also describe how that risk will be unequivocally reduced if awarded grant funding. The applicant must also explain the definitive impact the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters and/or the retention of current volunteer firefighters will have on the department's National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) compliance.

Below are the same scoring dimensions the peer review panel will use to rate each application. Using the criteria below, rate your own application and assess how the peer reviewers might rate your application:

Strongly Agree: The applicant clearly explains the particular and discrete risk(s) to the community and current volunteer firefighters without the items or activities requested. The applicant clearly describes how those risks would be unequivocally reduced if awarded grant funding. The applicant provides detailed information on how the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters and/or the retention of current volunteer firefighters will definitively impact the department's NFPA compliance. The applicant has clearly addressed how risks will be reduced, both to the current volunteer firefighters and the community, through the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters and/or the retention of current volunteer firefighters.

Agree: The applicant provides an adequate explanation of the particular and discrete risk(s) to the fire department, including their communities and current volunteer firefighters, without the items or activities requested. The applicant provides adequate information on how those risks would be unequivocally reduced if awarded grant funding. The applicant provides adequate information on the definitive impact the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters and/or the retention of current volunteer firefighters would have on the department's NFPA compliance. I understand the risks to the fire department and their current volunteer firefighters and communities, but a greater level of detail on some aspects would have been helpful.

Neither Agree nor Disagree: The applicant provides some explanation of the particular and discrete risk(s) to the fire department, including to the community and the current volunteer firefighters, without the items or activities requested. The applicant provides some information on how those risks would be unequivocally reduced if awarded grant funding. The applicant provides some information on the definitive impact the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters and/or the retention of current volunteer firefighters would have on their NFPA compliance but has not included a sufficient level of detail needed to confirm this. There is some indication that recruiting new volunteer firefighters and/or retaining current volunteer firefighters is linked to the reduction of risk, both to the community and current volunteer firefighters. More details on most elements would have been helpful.

Disagree: The applicant provides minimal information about the particular and discrete risk(s) to the community and current volunteer firefighters without the items or activities awarded. It is unclear how the risks would be unequivocally reduced if awarded. The applicant provides minimal information on the impact the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters and/or the retention of current volunteer firefighters would have on the department's NFPA compliance. Without any additional detail, I believe there is little indication that recruiting new volunteer firefighters and/or retaining current volunteer firefighters is linked to the reduction of risk, both to current firefighters and the community.

Strongly Disagree: The applicant provides insufficient details regarding the risk(s) to the community and current volunteer firefighters without the items or activities awarded, nor is there any information on how the risk would be reduced. There is no information on the impact the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters and/or the retention of current volunteer firefighters would have on the department's NFPA compliance. I do not believe recruiting new volunteer firefighters and/or retaining current volunteer firefighters is linked to the reduction of risk to the fire department and the community.

3. Financial Need (30%)

Applicants must provide a detailed income versus expenses breakdown of the current annual budget. The applicant must include details about the department's precise budget shortfalls and its inability to address financial needs without federal assistance. The applicant must explain what other actions the department has taken to obtain funding elsewhere (e.g., state assistance programs, other grant programs), and how similar projects have been funded in the past. The applicant must discuss how the critical functions of the department are uniquely affected without this funding.

Below are the same scoring dimensions the peer review panel will use to rate each application. Using the criteria below, rate your own application and assess how the peer reviewers might rate your application:

Strongly Agree: The applicant clearly identifies and articulates an income versus expenses breakdown of their annual budget. The applicant clearly describes their precise budget shortfalls and provides clear justification regarding why federal assistance is needed. The applicant provides clear information on other actions they have taken to obtain funding from other sources and clearly explains how similar projects have been funded in the past. The applicant provides clear details on how critical functions of their department are uniquely affected without federal funds. It is clear that the financial needs described by the applicant are beyond the applicant's control, and I believe their request shows a dire need for federal assistance.

Agree: The applicant adequately identifies and articulates an income versus expenses breakdown of their annual budget. The applicant adequately describes their precise budget shortfalls and provides adequate justification of why federal assistance is needed. The applicant explains some attempts to obtain funding from other sources and adequately explains how similar projects have been funded in the past. The applicant provides adequate details on how critical functions of their department are uniquely affected without federal funds. I understand the applicant's current budget and believe there is a need for federal assistance, but a greater level of detail on some aspects would have been helpful.

Neither Agree nor Disagree: The applicant provides some information on an income versus expenses breakdown of their annual budget. The applicant briefly explains their precise budget shortfalls but the reasons why federal assistance is needed is lacking. The applicant briefly discusses their attempts to obtain funding from other sources and how similar projects have been funded in the past. The applicant provides some details on how critical functions of their department are uniquely affected without federal funds. I am unsure of the applicant's current budget and needs; therefore, I am unsure if there is an urgent need for financial assistance. More detail on most elements would have been helpful.

Disagree: The applicant provides minimal details on an income versus expenses breakdown of their annual budget. There is minimal detail on their precise budget shortfalls or the need for federal assistance. There is minimal explanation on their attempts to obtain funding from other sources or how similar projects have been funded in the past. There is minimal information on how critical functions of their department are uniquely affected without federal funds. There is minimal information to understand the applicant's financial need; therefore, I believe there is no apparent need for financial assistance.

Strongly Disagree: The applicant provides no detail on an income versus expenses breakdown of their annual budget. There is no detail on their budget shortfalls or the need for federal assistance. There is no explanation on their attempts to obtain funding from other sources or how similar projects have been funded in the past. There is no information on how critical functions of their organization are affected without federal funds. There is no detail for the reviewer to understand the extent of the organization's financial situation or budget; therefore, I am unable to determine a financial need.

4. Cost Benefit (10%)

Applicants must clearly describe the unique and specific benefits (e.g., quantifying the anticipated savings and/or efficiencies) the department and community will realize if awarded the items or activities requested in this application.

Below are the same scoring dimensions the peer review panel will use to rate each application. Using the criteria below, rate your own application and assess how the peer reviewers might rate your application:

Strongly Agree: The applicant provides a clear and quantifiable explanation of the unique and specific benefits the department and community expect to achieve. I believe the benefits are well explained and likely to be achieved.

Agree: The applicant provides an adequate explanation of the unique and specific benefits the department and community expect to achieve. I believe the benefits are adequately described and may be achieved, though a greater level of detail would have been helpful.

Neither Agree nor Disagree: The applicant provides some explanation of the unique and specific benefits the department and community expect to achieve. I believe the benefits have not been clearly defined and I am unsure whether the benefits will be achieved. More detail would have been helpful.

Disagree: There is minimal detail regarding the unique and specific benefits the department and community expect to achieve. I am unable to determine whether the stated benefits would be achieved.

Strongly Disagree: There is no detail regarding the benefits the department and community expect to achieve. Because there is insufficient information, I do not understand what the project proposes to accomplish, and it is doubtful the benefits would be achieved.

David Moore

From: Kyle Saltonstall <kylesaltonstall@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 29, 2024 1:07 PM
To: David Moore
Subject: SAFER Grant Materials
Attachments: fema_gpd-fy-2023-safer-recruitment-and-retention-self-evaluation-fire-departments.pdf; fema_gpd-fy-2023-safer-application-checklist.pdf; fema_fy23-safer-nofo.pdf; fema_gpd-fy-2023-safer-faqs.pdf

David,

Here are the materials that I've assembled. I hope that I met the standards that you laid out when we last met. Please see the attached Notice of Funding Opportunities; it lays out all of the specific logistical requirements for both application and implementation of the grant.

I've attached several documents. A letter to the Select Board, SAFER Grant explanatory documents from [fema.gov](https://www.fema.gov), and the Project Description, Impact on Daily Operations, Financial Need, and Cost Benefits narratives required in the grant application.

I am aware that all of the narratives are absolute rough drafts. I am by no means a grant writer. They need to be edited for coherence & accuracy and expanded with relevant Town and Fire Department financials. I would appreciate any assistance you can provide in making these the most competitive narratives possible. Please let me know if I can be of any assistance in this regard.



Letter to the Select Board



Project Description Narrative



Impact on Daily Operations Narrative



Financial Need Narrative



Cost Benefit Narrative

Very Respectfully,

K Kyle Saltonstall
Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems, '21
Co-Owner, Saltonstall Farm
US Army Special Operations Combat Veteran