



# Homeland Security

## FY 2008 Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG)

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### Overview

The Department of Homeland Security's Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) program is an important component of the Administration's larger, coordinated effort to strengthen the Nation's overall level of preparedness and ability to respond to fire and fire-related hazards. Since 2004, with the Fiscal Year 2008 awards, AFG has provided a total of almost \$2.75 billion to first-responder organizations to purchase response equipment, personal protective equipment, and vehicles.

*In Fiscal Year 2008, the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program will award approximately **\$500 million** directly to fire departments and EMS organizations to enhance their response capabilities and to more effectively protect the health and safety of the public and emergency response personnel with respect to fire and all other hazards.*

### Purpose

The purpose of the FY 2008 AFG is to award grants directly to fire departments and nonaffiliated emergency medical service (EMS) organizations. These awards aim to enhance first responders' ability to protect the health and safety of the public, as well as that of first-responder personnel, with respect to fire-related hazards. Using a competitive process overseen by fire service subject matter experts, AFG grants are awarded to applicants whose requests best address the priorities of the AFG program.

### Funding

The FY 2008 AFG provides approximately \$500 million in competitive grants to fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations.

### Eligibility

Eligible FY 2008 AFG applicants were limited to fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations operating in any of the 50 states plus the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and Puerto Rico.

A "fire department" is defined as an agency or organization that has a formally recognized arrangement with a state, territory, local or tribal authority (city, county, parish, fire district, township, town, or other governing body) to provide fire suppression to a population within a fixed geographical area on a first-due basis.

A "nonaffiliated EMS organization" is defined as a public or private nonprofit emergency medical services organization that provides direct emergency medical services, including medical transport, to a specific geographic area on a first-due basis, but which is not affiliated with a hospital and does not serve a geographic area where emergency medical services are adequately provided by a fire department.

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## **Program Highlights**

Two areas of activities were eligible for funding through FY 2008 AFG awards:

- Operations and Safety Program Area: Eligible activities for fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations were limited to training, equipment, personal protective equipment, wellness and fitness, and health and safety modifications to stations and facilities.
- Vehicle Acquisition Program Area: Eligible apparatus available to fire departments under this program area included, but was not limited to, pumpers, brush trucks, tankers/tenders, rescue vehicles, ambulances, quints, aerials, foam units, and fireboats.

Interested applicants were allowed to submit two separate applications for consideration under each of the two program areas. The FY 2008 AFG also allowed eligible applicants to submit an additional application for a regional project in which multiple organizations serving more than one local jurisdiction benefit directly from the activities implemented with the grant funds.

Funding for vehicles was limited to 25 percent of the appropriated funds. No less than three and one-half percent of funds were awarded for EMS training and equipment. However, awards to nonaffiliated EMS organizations were limited to two percent of the appropriation. No less than fifty-five percent of AFG funds were awarded to fire departments that have either all-volunteer firefighting personnel or combined forces of volunteer and career firefighting personnel.

## **Evaluation Criteria**

Funding priorities and criteria for evaluating FY 2008 AFG applications were established from recommendations provided by a criteria development panel that is composed of fire service professionals representing the nine major fire service organizations. Funding priorities for the FY 2008 AFG included: achieving national baseline capabilities; risk-based funding; and communications and equipment interoperability.

Applications were ranked based on the substance of the application relative to the established funding priorities for the type of community served. Highest scoring applications were determined to be in a “competitive range” and undergo further evaluation by a panel of peers – that is members of the fire service. Applications requesting CBRNE-related equipment or training or interoperable communications equipment also were reviewed by a designated state homeland security official to ensure requests were consistent with the State Homeland Security Strategy and interoperable communications plan and did not duplicate assistance provided through the state.

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