



November 6, 2024

Connecting Constituents with Federal Programs for Firefighters and Fire Departments

This In Focus includes a list of selected federal agencies and programs that may support fire departments seeking funding for a variety of activities, including, but not limited to, equipment acquisitions, hiring, training, and facility construction. Some of the programs listed below focus on supporting fire departments specifically, while others may support a range of community initiatives. The programs also vary in scope and funding level. This list should not be considered comprehensive.

Some programs award funds to state and local governments, which in turn may issue grant awards to other entities. Other programs make grant awards to eligible entities directly on a competitive basis. Interested applicants can contact federal agencies, state agencies, or both for information on eligibility, the application process, award cycles, and funding availability. Each program's funding availability depends on annual appropriations. Where applicable, program websites and Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) numbers are included to provide direct access to information about each program. CFDA numbers can be used to search assistance listings for and identify potential open funding opportunities at <https://grants.gov>.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program

The Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as “a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community in a primarily rural area, and does not include private, commercial, or business undertakings.” Rural areas, including cities, villages, townships, and towns, as well as Federally Recognized Tribal Lands, with no more than 20,000 residents are eligible for this program. Funds can be used to purchase, construct, and/or improve essential community facilities, purchase equipment, and pay related project expenses. Examples in the public safety area include fire departments, police stations, prisons, police vehicles, fire trucks, and public works vehicles or equipment.

CFDA Number: 10.766

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program>

Community Facilities Guaranteed Loan Program

The Community Facilities Guaranteed Loan Program provides loan guarantees “to eligible lenders to develop essential community facilities in rural areas.”

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/community-facilities-guaranteed-loan-program>

U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)

GSA Office of Personal Property Management

The U.S. General Services Administration's Office of Personal Property Management helps state and local agencies and nonprofits acquire surplus federal property, which may include equipment, furniture, and vehicles, among other items.

<https://www.gsa.gov/buy-through-us/government-property-for-sale-or-lease/personal-property-for-reuse-and-sale/for-state-agencies-and-public-organizations>;

<https://www.gsa.gov/buy-through-us/government-property-for-sale-or-lease/personal-property-for-reuse-and-sale>

Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFG)

This suite of programs includes the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program, Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Firefighters Program (SAFER), and the Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) Grant Program. All three programs are competitive grants administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

AFG provides federal grants directly to local fire departments and unaffiliated Emergency Medical Services (EMS) organizations to help address a variety of equipment, training, and other firefighter-related and EMS needs.

CFDA Number: 97.044

<https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters>

SAFER provides federal grants directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations for hiring, recruiting, and retaining firefighters.

CFDA Number: 97.083

<https://www.fema.gov/staffing-adequate-fire-emergency-response-grants>

FP&S supports fire prevention projects and firefighter health and safety research and development. FP&S awards grants to fire departments; national, regional, state, local, tribal, and nonprofit organizations, such as academic institutions (e.g., universities); research foundations; public safety institutes; and public health, occupational health, and injury prevention institutions to conduct research aimed to improve firefighter safety.

CFDA Number: 97.044

<https://www.fema.gov/fire-prevention-safety-grants>

Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA)

FEMA funds three Hazard Mitigation Assistance programs that could potentially provide funding for upgrading fire stations: the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Grant Program (BRIC), the Safeguarding Tomorrow Revolving Loan Fund Program (STRLF), and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). Funding from the HMA programs cannot be used for new fire station construction, but funding may be used to make modifications to an existing fire station to make it more resilient. This could include, for example, retrofitting buildings using ignition-resistant building materials or fire suppression systems. These programs could also potentially provide funding for wildfire mitigation actions such as fuels reduction, vegetation management, or fire early warning systems. All FEMA HMA-funded projects must aim to reduce future risk from natural hazards.

BRIC and STRLF are pre-disaster mitigation funding, intended to reduce risk before a disaster occurs, and are awarded competitively. STRLF funding can be used for the nonfederal cost share of the other HMA programs.

CFDA Numbers: 97.047 (BRIC), 97.139 (STRLF)

<https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/building-resilient-infrastructure-communities> (BRIC)

<https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/storm-rlf> (STRLF)

HMGP is awarded after a disaster and is formula funded.

CFDA Number: 97.039

<https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/hazard-mitigation>

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The Community Development Block Grant is a flexible program that provides funds to address a wide range of unique community development needs. Certain fire equipment and facilities are eligible for funding under the Public Facilities and Improvements category of the program, described at https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/DOC_17133.PDF.

CFDA Number 14.218

<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/cdbg/>

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IF12806

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