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Reauthorization of the U.S. Fire Administration and of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Programs

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The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) is the lead federal agency on fire safety, fire data collection management, public fire education, fire research, and fire service training. It was established in the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (FPCA; P.L. 93-498). The USFA is organized under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). FPCA was passed to address fatal fires in the United States following the 1973 publication of *America Burning*, a landmark report by the National Commission on Fire Prevention and Control. Since FY2005, Congress has funded the USFA to administer the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program. AFG provides funding to fire departments for personal protective gear, training, and equipment. Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) grants—a subprogram of AFG—support fire safety education with 10% of AFG funds. Since FY2005, Congress also has funded the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program under the AFG program. SAFER provides funding for hiring new firefighters and for recruiting and retaining personnel. The grants are administered by FEMA with USFA guidance.

Authorization History

When Congress created the programs, it authorized certain levels of funding for the USFA and the fire grants. Congress has reauthorized the programs several times. On January 2, 2013, in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (P.L. 112-239), Congress extended the authorization of appropriations for five years, through FY2017, and provided parity in funding between AFG and SAFER. Further, it stipulated that authorization of appropriations would be adjusted each year for inflation and created sunset provisions, ending the authority to award grants five years from enactment of P.L. 112-239. In the United States Fire Administration, AFG, and SAFER Program Reauthorization Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-98), Congress extended the authorization of appropriations for the USFA, AFG, and SAFER through September 30, 2023, and for the sunset provisions—the authorizations to award AFG and SAFER grants—through September 30, 2024.

Legislation and Congressional Considerations

The 118th Congress passed legislation (P.L. 118-67) to extend the authorization of appropriations for the USFA, AFG, and SAFER through FY2028 and for the sunset provisions for AFG and SAFER through FY2030. P.L. 118-67 authorizes a combined \$750 million per year for the programs through FY2028 with no adjustment for inflation. Members introduced reauthorization bills in both Houses. The Senate passed a reauthorization bill (S. 870) on April 20, 2023. The House amended S. 870, substituting the text of its own bill (H.R. 4090) as an amendment and adding a division to the bill on advanced nuclear energy deployment. The House amendment reduced the level of authorized appropriations in the original Senate version and shortened the program extension and authorizations for appropriations by two years. Both versions included a requirement for the Government Accountability Office to audit the grant program and produce a report on “barriers that prevent fire departments from accessing Federal funds” and the USFA within three years. On June 18, 2024, the Senate agreed to the House amendments to S. 870 by a vote of 88-2.

Congress has typically enacted appropriations for these programs below the levels authorized. During deliberations on reauthorization, some Members expressed concern that annual increases in authorizations might spur greater federal spending. Others have advocated for increased appropriations. Another issue was the timeline for sunset provisions. Such provisions provide Congress a measure of additional control over AFG and SAFER but might also affect administration of grant awards if program authorities are allowed to sunset. The fire community advocated for extension of appropriations authorizations and sunset provisions, as well as increased funding overall. Stakeholders argued that additional federal investment is needed, citing loss from over a million fires in 2021 that claimed the lives of 3,800 people (with an additional 14,700 injured) and resulted in about \$16 billion in property loss. Fire community challenges include fires in the wildland urban interface, increased fire deaths, and emerging hazards of battery-powered electric vehicle and energy storage installations. Additionally, recruitment and firefighter mental health continue to challenge many fire departments.

Contents

Introduction	1
Background	1
U.S. Fire Administration (USFA).....	2
USFA Authorization of Appropriations.....	2
USFA Enacted Appropriations	3
Fire Grants.....	4
Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program	5
Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program.....	7
Fire Station Construction Grants in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Arra).....	9
Reauthorization Bills in the 118 th Congress	10
H.R. 4090—Fire Grants and Safety Act of 2023	10
S. 559—Fire Grants and Safety Act	10
S. 870—Fire Grants and Safety Act	11
Issues for Congressional Consideration	11
U.S. Fire Administration	12
Emerging Trends in Fire Safety	12
The Federal Role in Funding Fire Services.....	13
CBO Cost Estimates.....	16
FY2024 Proposed Levels of Appropriations.....	16
Sunset of Authority to Award Grants Under AFG and SAFER.....	17
Program Changes	17
United States Fire Administration, AFG, and SAFER Program Reauthorization Act of 2017	19
Fire Grants Reauthorization Act of 2012	19

Figures

Figure 1. U. S. Fire Administration (USFA) Appropriations FY2006-FY2024	4
Figure 2. FY2001-FY2024 Annual Appropriations for the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) and Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Programs	9

Tables

Table A-1. Key Provisions of Fire Grants Reauthorization Act of 2012	20
Table A-2. Appropriations for Fire Grants.....	22
Table A-3. Authorizations and Appropriations for the AFG Program	24
Table A-4. Authorizations and Appropriations for the SAFER Grant Program	26
Table A-5. Authorizations and Appropriations for the USFA.....	28

Appendixes

Appendix. Previous Reauthorizations 19

Contacts

Author Information..... 29

Introduction

This report provides background on the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) and the federal fire grants—the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grants. It discusses their initial authorization in the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-498) and subsequent reauthorizations in 2013, 2018, and 2024. Congress passed the latest reauthorization bill in June 2024, which was signed by the President on July 9, 2024 (P.L. 118-67). The final version of the bill contained unrelated provisions on nuclear power modernization added as part of a House amendment to the Senate-passed reauthorization bill; these provisions are not covered in this report. An overview of appropriations for USFA and the two programs can be found in **Table A-2**, and more detailed information on previous authorizations and appropriations levels for AFG, SAFER, and the USFA can be found in **Table A-3**, **Table A-4**, and **Table A-5**, respectively.

Background

The Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-498) is the foundational law for federal fire programs. It was passed following publication of the 1973 National Commission on Fire Prevention and Control report, *America Burning*,¹ to address fatal fires in the United States.

Congress established the USFA and the fire grants—AFG and SAFER grant programs—in P.L. 93-498 and reauthorized them through amendments to this law. From FY2013 through FY2023, authorization levels for each of these fire grants rose each year to account for inflation, from \$750 million for each program in FY2013 to about \$986 million in FY2023.² Actual appropriations have been less than authorized. Combined appropriations for the AFG and SAFER programs rose from \$675 million in FY2013 to \$720 million in FY2023—congressional appropriators have typically appropriated a single amount for the programs, with instructions to split the appropriation evenly between both programs. The FY2024 appropriation—made after the expiration of statutory appropriation authorizations—was for \$648 million divided evenly between each program.³ P.L. 118-67—the 2024 reauthorization—authorized appropriations of \$750 million per year for each program through FY2028 and extended the sunset dates for AFG and SAFER through FY2030.

In general, the AFG and SAFER grant programs have been oversubscribed. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reported receiving 7,962 applications for AFG grants and 2,191 applications for SAFER grants during the FY2023 application period. In total, fire departments and other eligible entities during this period requested funding of \$3.72 billion for AFG and \$3.12 billion for SAFER—nearly 10 times the amount of the actual appropriation for FY2023 of \$360 million for each program.⁴

¹ National Commission on Fire Prevention and Control, *America Burning*, 1973-O-495-792, May 4, 1973 (rev. September 1989), <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-264.pdf>.

² Except where indicated, all appropriations amounts listed in this report are in current dollars.

³ See the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-47).

⁴ Information on application numbers and level of requested funding was provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in an emailed monthly update titled “Program Update, July 2024,” sent to subscribers on July 10, 2024.

U.S. Fire Administration (USFA)

The Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 created the National Fire Prevention and Control Administration (NFPCA) and Fire Research Center in the Department of Commerce. In 1978, in P.L. 95-422, the NFPCA was renamed the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA). In 1978, President Carter's Reorganization Plan No. 3 placed the USFA within the newly created FEMA.⁵ The USFA remains under FEMA, which is now part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The USFA is the lead federal agency on fire safety, fire data collection management, public fire education, fire research, and fire service training. The objective of the USFA is to significantly reduce the nation's loss of life from fire and reduce property loss and nonfatal injury due to fire. The USFA manages the National Emergency Training Center, which includes the National Fire Academy (NFA) and the Emergency Management Institute, where firefighters and emergency managers can attend courses, receive training, and enhance firefighting and emergency response skills.⁶ The USFA also advises FEMA on AFG and SAFER grant programs and priorities.

In 1982, the Reagan Administration proposed elimination of the USFA while preserving the NFA.⁷ Congress did not allow the termination of the USFA, but with its separation from the NFA, USFA funding was reduced from about \$16.4 million in FY1982 to \$4.1 million in FY1983.⁸ The agency experienced staffing cuts, and the NFA was moved from the USFA and housed in FEMA emergency training programs.⁹ Many in the fire community criticized this arrangement, arguing that NFA should be restored to the USFA as originally intended in P.L. 93-498.¹⁰ Congress addressed this issue in the 1991 FEMA appropriation bill (P.L. 101-507), which placed the NFA under the exclusive control of the USFA, where it remains today.

USFA Authorization of Appropriations

In P.L. 93-498, Congress authorized such sums as were necessary, not to exceed \$10 million for FY1975 and not to exceed \$15 million for FY1976, to carry out the act. Congress appropriated less than was authorized—\$6 million in FY1975¹¹ and \$11 million in FY1976.¹² Congress has extended the authorization of appropriations for the USFA several times,¹³ often to manage new

⁵ 5 U.S.C.—Appendix, Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1978, §§201 and 301.

⁶ U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), "About the U.S. Fire Administration," <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/about/>.

⁷ U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, *Reorganization of the U.S. Fire Administration*, hearings, 97th Cong., 2nd sess., April 21, 1982. (See Additional Material Submitted for the Record, including Letter from Sen. William V. Roth, Jr., Chairman, Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, to David A. Stockman, Director, Office of Management and Budget, May 19, 1982.)

⁸ International Society of Fire Service Instructors, *Evaluation of Programs of the United States Fire Administration (1974-1983)*, pp. 250-251.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

¹⁰ U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, *Reorganization of the U.S. Fire Administration*, hearings, 97th Cong., 2nd sess., April 21, 1982. (See, for example, testimony of Lou Amabili, Director of the Delaware State Fire School, pp. 28-32, and testimony of Edward H. McCormack, Jr., Executive Director of the International Society of Fire Service Instructors, pp. 41-48.)

¹¹ P.L. 93-433. Appropriations and authorization figures are in current dollars, not adjusted for inflation.

¹² P.L. 94-116.

¹³ 15 U.S.C. §2216(g).

responsibilities established in statute,¹⁴ and has continuously funded the agency since its creation in FY1975.

Appropriations have fluctuated from year to year but have consistently been below authorized levels. The amount authorized for the USFA remained constant at \$76 million from FY2013 through FY2017.¹⁵ On January 3, 2018, President Trump signed the United States Fire Administration, AFG, and SAFER Program Reauthorization Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-98), which extended the USFA authorization of appropriations of P.L. 112-239 through FY2023.¹⁶ P.L. 118-67 extended the authorization from FY2024 through FY2028 at a level of \$95 million per year.

USFA Enacted Appropriations

Congress has continued to appropriate less than the amount authorized for the USFA. Over the past 10 years, appropriations have fluctuated; overall, appropriations for the USFA (measured in current dollars) have trended upward, increasing from \$44 million in FY2013 to about \$58 million in FY2024.¹⁷ However, if measured in constant FY2024 dollars, appropriations generally trended downward between FY2006 and FY2019 before increasing again (see **Figure 1**).

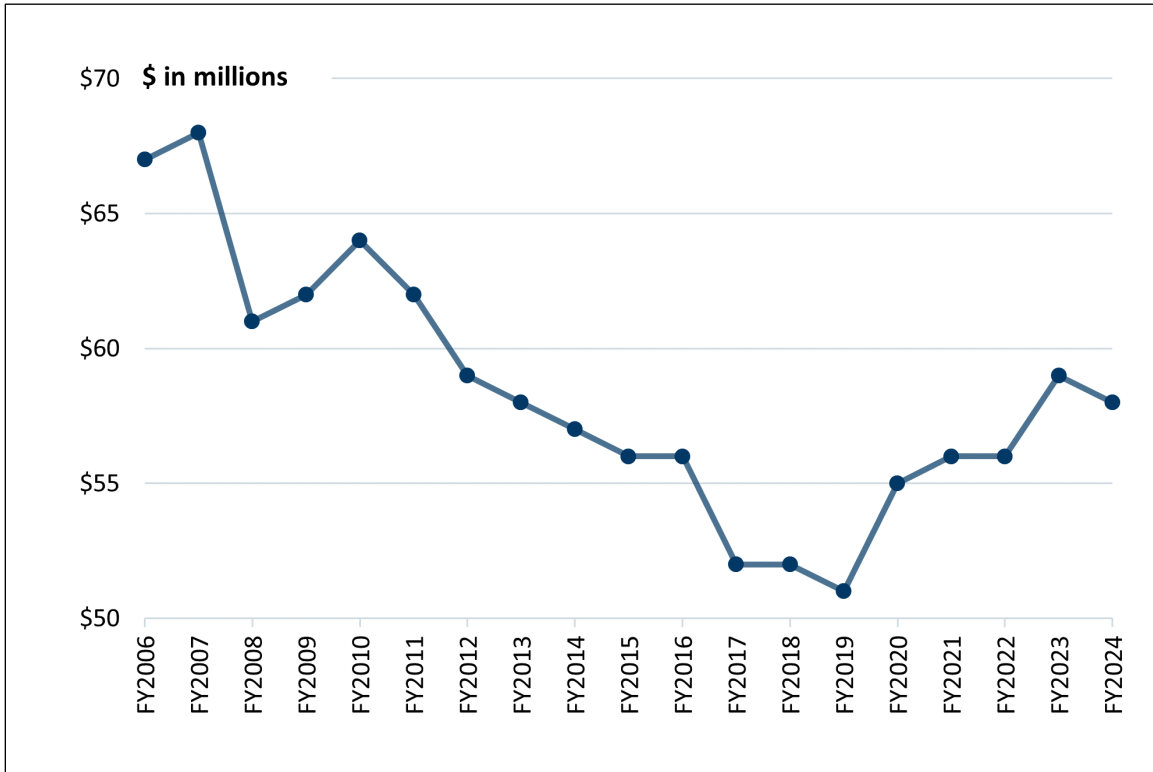
¹⁴ For example, the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-391) requires the USFA to compile a national master list of fire-safe hotels and motels. The Firefighters' Safety Study Act (P.L. 101-446) directs the U.S. Fire Administrator to evaluate and develop hazardous materials identification, response, and incident data for nationwide dissemination to emergency response personnel. In the Explanatory Statement (Book III) accompanying P.L. 116-260, Congress directs USFA to collect data on firefighter suicide rates. Most recently, the Empowering the U.S. Fire Administration Act (P.L. 117-246) authorizes the USFA to conduct on-site investigations of major fires.

¹⁵ P.L. 112-239 and P.L. 115-98.

¹⁶ 15 U.S.C. §2216(g).

¹⁷ See **Table A-5** in the Appendix.

Figure I. U. S. Fire Administration (USFA) Appropriations FY2006-FY2024
(In millions of constant dollars)



Source: Figure created by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) based on historical appropriations acts and adjusted for inflation using the gross domestic product price deflator in FY2024 dollars from the Office of Management and Budget, Table 10.1: Gross Domestic Product and Deflators Used in the Historical Tables: 1940–2029, March 2024, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/hist10z1_fy2025.xlsx.

Fire Grants

Under the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-498), the Administrator of the U.S. Fire Administration (originally called the NFPCA), is authorized to use grants and contracts to

- provide assistance to state and local fire training programs;
- conduct studies of the fire services;
- conduct research concerning firefighting personnel, reduction of injury, and fire prevention;
- develop, test, and demonstrate new technologies and new technology standards;
- support analysis of programs to show the effectiveness of various approaches or predictive consequences;
- conduct research into approaches and equipment to improve fire prevention and control, including in rural areas; and
- facilitate fire data collection.

Initially, the federal government supported fire departments by offering training through the NFA, conducting fire research, evaluating fire response, and disseminating best practices; providing

education and resources on fire prevention; and issuing grants to select state and local entities for fire prevention, training, data collection, and research.¹⁸

In the early 1990s, a national recession led to budgetary shortfalls in many state and local governments¹⁹ and reductions in spending on fire services in some areas.²⁰ Facing fiscal shortfalls and increasing responsibilities (e.g., increased training requirements, emergency medical services [EMS]),²¹ fire organizations advocated for federal grant funding for local fire departments, to protect firefighters, the public, and property.²² They argued that local police departments received annual federal grant funding,²³ but fire departments did not. This led to the creation of federal fire grants, discussed in more detail below.

Congress has, in recent reauthorization bills, set the authority to award certain grants and assistance beyond the date of the last appropriations. It is often the case that funds appropriated in one fiscal year are awarded in the next fiscal year. Extending the authority to award grants in the year following appropriations allows FEMA time to develop grant guidance, review grants, award funds, execute grant agreements, manage any changes, and close out these grants.²⁴

Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program

The AFG program was established by Title XVII of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (FY2001 NDAA; P.L. 106-398).²⁵ The FY2001 NDAA amended the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-498), creating the AFG program. The program provided federal grants directly to fire departments and affiliated EMS organizations to help address a variety of equipment, training, and other firefighter-related and EMS needs. It did not include a sunset provision. The Fire Grants Reauthorization Act of 2012, included in Title VIII, Subtitle A, of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (P.L. 112-239), was signed into law on January 2, 2013; it set a sunset date for program authorities that was five years from the date of enactment. On January 3, 2018, P.L. 115-98 extended the sunset date for AFG to September 30, 2024. The 2024 reauthorization extended the program's sunset date to September 30, 2030.

¹⁸ U.S. Department of Commerce, National Fire Prevention and Control Administration, *Fourth Annual Report of the Secretary of Commerce*, July 1978, <https://www.hsdl.org/c/abstract/?docid=729932>. The annual report highlights a few grants given to entities to conduct research, implement prevention programs, and engage in pilot or demonstration projects.

¹⁹ Susan B. Hansen, "State Fiscal Strategies for the 1990s: Balancing Budgets in a Recession," *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, vol. 21, no. 3 (Summer 1991), p. 156 (noting, in December 1990, "at least thirty-seven states would face deficits in FY 1991 unless they raised taxes, cut spending, or both," partially because of weaknesses in the national economy).

²⁰ U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, *Rebuilding FEMA: Preparing for the Next Disaster*, 103rd Cong., 1st sess., May 18, 1993, p. 117 (noting that state budget cuts included repeated decreases in fire department budgets).

²¹ U.S. Congress, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Science, *Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act*, 102nd Cong., 1st sess., May 21, 1991, pp. 137, 145-146 (noting increasing demands on fire departments, including training and emergency medical services [EMS]).

²² U.S. Congress, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Emergency Management, *Fire Grants: H.R. 1168, H.R. 3155, and the Administration's Proposal for Assistance to Firemen*, 106th Cong., 2nd sess., April 12, 2000, pp. 74-75, 90, 104-105 (citing the need for federal funding to be able to respond to new infrastructure investments and to provide basic staffing, training, and equipment).

²³ See CRS In Focus IF10922, *Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Program*, by Nathan James.

²⁴ 15 U.S.C. §§2229(f), (j)(4)(B).

²⁵ Section 33 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act, as amended, is codified at 15 U.S.C. §2229.

AFG Authorization of Appropriations

P.L. 106-398 authorized \$100 million in FY2001 and \$300 million in FY2002. Congress extended the authorization of appropriations for AFG several times, each time for several years, from \$100 million in FY2001 to \$1 billion in FY2009.²⁶ Authorization of appropriations for AFG lapsed from FY2010 through FY2012, yet Congress continued to appropriate funds for AFG through annual appropriations acts, enabling the programs to continue.²⁷ Title XVIII, Subtitle A, of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (P.L. 112-239), titled the Fire Grants Reauthorization Act of 2012, extended authorization of appropriations for AFG for five years, from FY2013 through FY2017. P.L. 112-239 authorized the appropriation of \$750 million for AFG in FY2013. For each year from FY2014 through FY2017, Congress authorized the appropriation of an amount equal to that in the previous fiscal year, adjusted each year to account for inflation.²⁸

On January 3, 2018, President Trump signed the United States Fire Administration, AFG, and SAFER Program Reauthorization Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-98), which extended AFG authorization of appropriations for six years, from FY2018 through FY2023. It continued use of the formula established in P.L. 112-239, setting authorization of appropriations at the previous year's authorization, with an adjustment for inflation each year.²⁹ The 2024 reauthorization (P.L. 118-67) authorizes annual appropriations of \$750 million through FY2028.

AFG Enacted Appropriations

For FY2001, Congress appropriated \$100 million for the AFG program.³⁰ For FY2002, Congress appropriated \$150 million for AFG, less than the \$300 million authorized, and mandated that up to 5% of this amount be transferred to salaries and expenses for program administration.³¹ On January 10, 2002, in the Department of Defense and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Recovery from and Response to Terrorist Attacks on the United States Act, 2002 (P.L. 107-117), Congress appropriated \$210 million to the AFG program for emergency expenses in response to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and for counterterrorism activities. Thus, in total, AFG received \$360 million in FY2002.³² The AFG program's appropriations for FY2021 through FY2024 are provided in **Table A-3** in the Appendix.

²⁶ See **Table A-3** in the Appendix.

²⁷ CRS Report R46497, *Authorizations and the Appropriations Process*, by James V. Saturno (noting that in the absence of an authorization of appropriation, “the enacted appropriation, in effect, carries its own authorization,” and “if Congress appropriates funds for a program whose funding authorization has expired, that appropriation provides sufficient legal basis to continue the program during that period of availability absent indication of congressional intent to terminate the program”).

²⁸ 15 U.S.C. §2229(q)(1)(B).

²⁹ 15 U.S.C. §2216(g).

³⁰ P.L. 106-554.

³¹ P.L. 107-73.

³² In addition to the \$150 million and \$210 million, the FY2002 Supplemental Appropriation (P.L. 107-206), signed into law on August 2, 2002, included \$150 million in funding for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program; however, on August 13, 2002, President Bush announced that he would not spend \$5.1 billion of funding in the bill designated as “emergency contingent funding.” The \$150 million of supplemental appropriations for the fire grant program was included in this \$5.1 billion and was therefore not allocated. See Lennard G. Kruger, *Assistance to Firefighters Program*, CRS Report to Congress, February 14, 2003, https://www2.law.umaryland.edu/marshall/crsreports/crsdocuments/RS21302_02142003.pdf.

Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) Grants

FP&S grants are part of the AFG program and support projects that enhance the safety of the public and firefighters from fire and related hazards. The FY2001 NDAA (P.L. 106-398) authorized the FP&S program under Title XVII by amending the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974. The original authorization prioritized funding for organizations that focused on preventing fire injuries to children and mandated that a minimum of 5% of available AFG funds be used for FP&S grants. Title XXXVI of the Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005 (P.L. 108-375), also known as the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program Reauthorization Act of 2004, reauthorized appropriations for AFG and FP&S, expanded the eligible use of funds beyond children to all populations at risk, and allowed applicants to use funds for firefighter safety research and development. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (P.L. 112-239) increased the minimum amount of AFG funding for FP&S from 5% to 10%.³³

FEMA administers these grants and holds a separate competition for FP&S grants. These grants are available not only to fire departments but also to national, state, local, tribal, or nonprofit organizations recognized for their fire safety or prevention expertise, institutions of higher education, national fire service organizations, and national fire safety organizations. These grants fund such projects as fire prevention activities in wildfire-prone communities, fire prevention education for children, mental health awareness for firefighters, cancer screening for firefighters, and research on battery fires.³⁴

While appropriations for FP&S are not authorized separately, amounts available under FP&S for prevention and research projects are tied to appropriations for AFG. At times, through reports accompanying appropriations legislation, Congress has encouraged FEMA to award funds for specific research priorities, such as firefighter mental health, hazardous material response, or exposure studies, but has not increased funding to the program for these activities.

Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, increased concerns about the adequacy of firefighter staffing. The 108th Congress passed the SAFER Act as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 (FY2004 NDAA; P.L. 108-136),³⁵ which was signed into law on November 24, 2003. Section 1057 of the FY2004 NDAA amended the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974, authorizing the SAFER grant program—a program to incentivize the hiring of new firefighter staff and recruitment and retention activities. P.L. 108-136 included a sunset provision, which stated that the authority to make SAFER grants under this section would lapse 10 years from the date of enactment. P.L. 112-239 also extended the sunset provisions, stating that the authority to award AFG and SAFER assistance and grants would expire five years after the date of the enactment of P.L. 112-239 on January 2, 2013. P.L. 115-98 also extended the SAFER sunset provisions, stating that the authority to award SAFER assistance and grants would expire on September 30, 2024. The 2024 reauthorization extended the sunset date to the end of FY2030.

³³ 15 U.S.C. §2229(h)(4).

³⁴ For a list of awards since FY2015 under the Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) program, see FEMA, “Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S),” <https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters/safety-awards#awards>.

³⁵ 15 U.S.C. §2229a.

SAFER Authorization of Appropriations

In P.L. 108-136, Congress increased current-dollar authorizations for the SAFER program by incremental amounts over the next seven years: \$1.0 billion for FY2004, \$1.0 billion for FY2005, \$1.1 billion for FY2006, \$1.1 billion for FY2007, \$1.1 billion for FY2008, \$1.2 billion for FY2009, and \$1.2 billion for FY2010.³⁶ Congress has appropriated funding for SAFER every year since its creation but typically at amounts less than are authorized.³⁷ On January 2, 2013, President Obama signed P.L. 112-239, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013. Title XVIII, Subtitle A, of the act is the Fire Grants Reauthorization Act of 2012, which, among other things, extended authorization of appropriations for SAFER. P.L. 112-239 authorized the appropriation of \$750 million for each program (AFG and SAFER) in FY2013 and, for each year from FY2014 to FY2017, authorized the appropriation of an amount equal to that appropriated in the previous fiscal year, adjusted for inflation.³⁸ On January 3, 2018, President Trump signed the United States Fire Administration, AFG, and SAFER Program Reauthorization Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-98), which extended AFG and SAFER authorization of appropriations through FY2023, including the adjustment for inflation.³⁹ The 2024 reauthorization extended authorization of appropriations at \$750 million annually through FY2028 without the adjustment for inflation.

³⁶ Measured in constant 2004 dollars rounded to the nearest tenth of a billion, the authorizations between FY2004 and FY2010 were unchanged.

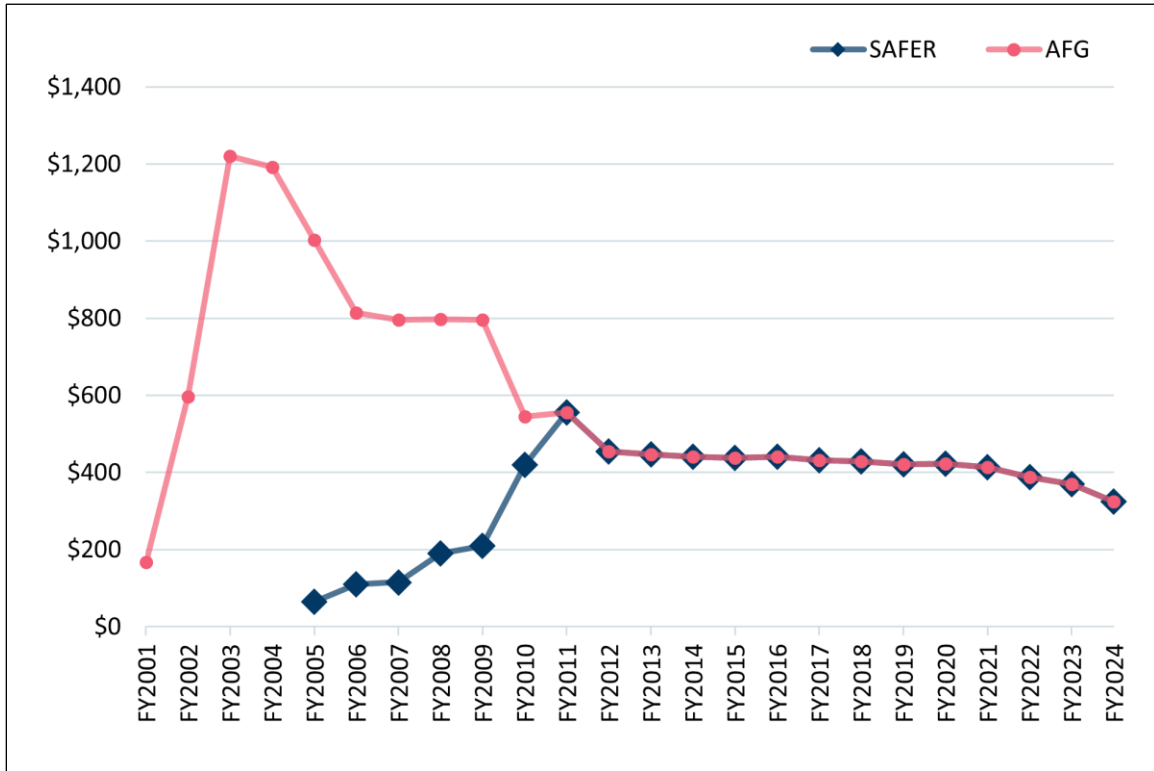
³⁷ See **Table A-4** in the Appendix.

³⁸ 15 U.S.C. §2229a(j)(1)(I).

³⁹ 15 U.S.C. §2216(g).

Figure 2. FY2001-FY2024 Annual Appropriations for the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) and Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Programs

(In millions of constant dollars)



Source: Figure created by CRS based on historical appropriations acts and adjusted for inflation using the gross domestic product price deflator in FY2024 dollars from the Office of Management and Budget, Table 10.1: Gross Domestic Product and Deflators Used in the Historical Tables: 1940–2029, March 2024, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/hist10z1_fy2025.xlsx.

Fire Station Construction Grants in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

Since its inception, the traditional fire grant program has provided money specifically for health- and safety-related modifications of fire stations but has not funded major upgrades, renovations, or construction. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 (P.L. 111-5) provided \$210 million in firefighter assistance grants for modifying, upgrading, or constructing state and local nonfederal fire stations; mandated that 5% be set aside for program administration; and limited the amount of each grant to \$15 million. The conference report (H.Rept. 111-16) cited a DHS estimate that this spending would create 2,000 jobs.

The application period for ARRA Assistance to Firefighters Fire Station Construction Grants (SCGs) ran from June 11, 2009, to July 10, 2009. FEMA administered these one-time grants—technically separate from the AFG program—under the auspices of the existing AFG grant office. There was no cost-share requirement for SCGs. Eligible applicants were nonfederal fire departments that provide fire protection services to local communities. Ineligible applicants included federal fire departments, EMS or rescue organizations, airport fire departments, for-profit fire departments, fire training centers, emergency communications centers, auxiliaries and

fire service organizations or associations, and search and rescue teams or similar organizations without fire suppression responsibilities. Altogether, 6,025 SCG applicants requested a total of \$9.9 billion in federal funds.

Reauthorization Bills in the 118th Congress

The authorization of appropriations for the USFA, AFG, and SAFER expired on September 30, 2023, with the authority to make grants under AFG and SAFER set to expire on September 30, 2024.⁴⁰ The 118th Congress considered three bills that would (1) extend appropriation authority for the USFA, (2) extend appropriation authority for the AFG and SAFER programs, and (3) extend the sunset provisions for AFG and SAFER. The bills did not include significant program changes⁴¹ but differed in appropriations authority and the term of the reauthorization.

H.R. 4090—Fire Grants and Safety Act of 2023

H.R. 4090 was introduced by Representative Kean on June 14, 2023. On September 1, 2023, it was reported by the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology and placed on the House calendar. The bill would

- authorize appropriations of \$95 million for the USFA for five years, from FY2024 to FY2028;
- authorize appropriations of \$750 million each for AFG and SAFER for five years, from FY2024 to FY2028, while striking language that would index authorization levels to inflation; and
- extend the sunset provisions for AFG and SAFER for six years, from September 30, 2024, through September 30, 2030.

H.R. 4090 also would direct the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct an audit and issue a report on barriers that prevent fire departments from accessing federal funds.

S. 559—Fire Grants and Safety Act

S. 559 introduced by Senator Peters on February 28, 2023, would

- authorize appropriations of \$95 million for the USFA for each year from FY2024 to FY2030;
- extend authorization of appropriations for AFG and SAFER for seven years, from September 30, 2023, through September 30, 2030, using the formula in P.L. 112-239, including the adjustment for inflation; and
- extend the sunset provisions, granting authority to award grants and assistance under AFG and SAFER for nine years, through September 30, 2032.

⁴⁰ The Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-47), signed into law on March 23, 2024, provided a \$648 million appropriation for the AFG program, to be divided evenly between the AFG and SAFER programs. Appropriations made by Congress carry their own implicit authorization in cases where authorizations for appropriations have expired.

⁴¹ At times, during reauthorization of USFA, AFG, and SAFER, Congress has made certain program changes. See section on “Program Changes.”

On March 15, 2023, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs approved the bill by voice vote, and it was ordered to be reported with amendments favorably, but no further action was taken on the bill.

S. 870—Fire Grants and Safety Act

S. 870 was introduced by Senator Peters on March 16, 2023. As passed by the Senate, S. 870 would have

- authorized appropriations of \$95 million for the USFA from FY2024 through FY2030;
- extended authorization of appropriations for AFG and SAFER through September 30, 2030, using the formula in P.L. 112-239, including the adjustment for inflation;
- extended the sunset provisions to September 30, 2032;
- directed the GAO to conduct an audit of the grant programs and issue a report on barriers that prevent fire departments from accessing federal funds, among other things; and
- made the government of China, and any entity or organization operating or incorporated in China, ineligible to be a recipient or subrecipient of federal assistance under such programs.

S. 870 passed the Senate 95-2 on April 20, 2023. On May 8, 2024, the House then passed (by a 393-13 vote), as an amendment to S. 870, its own version of the bill with the text of H.R. 4090 as reported by the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology (see above). This version of the bill passed the Senate in June 2024 and was signed into law by President Biden on July 9, 2024.

Issues for Congressional Consideration

Since 1975, Congress has reauthorized and continuously funded the USFA and fire grant programs. The 118th Congress authorized new appropriations for the USFA, AFG, and SAFER and extended the sunset provisions for the AFG and SAFER programs, which had been set to expire on September 30, 2024. Issues of debate included (1) appropriation authority in the reauthorization bills and whether to include the automatic increase to account for inflation; (2) the levels of appropriations for the USFA, AFG, and SAFER; (3) new directives or program changes for the USFA, AFG, and SAFER; and (4) extension or repeal of the sunset provisions.

Congress can authorize appropriations at any level it chooses. Congress can appropriate funding at the amount authorized, a lesser amount, or not at all.⁴² Even if the authorization of appropriations lapses, Congress can still appropriate funds, in which case, the enacted appropriation effectively carries its own authorization.⁴³ Some Members may see increased USFA and fire grant authorizations of appropriations as reasonable given expanding USFA duties.⁴⁴ Others may see increased authorization levels as a ceiling, while recognizing that Congress can

⁴² CRS Report R46497, *Authorizations and the Appropriations Process*, by James V. Saturno, p. 10.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁴⁴ For example, the Empowering the U.S. Fire Administration Act (P.L. 117-246) authorized the USFA to conduct on-site investigations of major fires, expanding its duties. On congressional support for reauthorization and increased funding, see Chris Hebert, “AFG, SAFER, USFA Reauthorization Bill Signed into Law,” Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI), July 9, 2024, <https://cfsi.org/afg-safer-usfa-reauthorization-bill-signed-into-law/>.

appropriate funding at the level it chooses. Still others may see increased authorization of appropriations as a pathway to increased federal fire spending, thereby contributing to broader federal spending concerns.⁴⁵

U.S. Fire Administration

USFA appropriations have traditionally been less than authorized. For example, in FY2023, authorization of appropriations for the USFA was \$76,490,890; Congress appropriated \$58,287,000. The 2024 reauthorization increases the annual authorization levels for the USFA to \$95 million for FY2024-FY2028. Congress would still need to approve appropriations for the USFA in a separate appropriations bill to continue funding for the USFA. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) cost estimate for H.R. 4090 showed the authorization for the USFA each year from FY2024 to FY2028 at \$95 million and estimated outlays in the first year, FY2024, at \$86 million (nearly \$30 million above the FY2023 appropriations) and in subsequent years, FY2025 to FY2028, at \$95 million each year (about \$37 million above the FY2023 appropriations of \$58,287,000).⁴⁶

Emerging Trends in Fire Safety

At the U.S. Fire Administrator’s Summit on Fire Prevention and Control in October 2022, fire officials, engineers, and scientists described several recent fire incidents, including the high-rise building fire in the Bronx, NY, in 2022 that claimed the lives of 17 people; fire officials stressed the need for prevention education, including multilingual classes and training. Fire officials also discussed a rowhouse fire in Philadelphia, PA, where 12 people, including 8 children, lost their lives, and conveyed the challenges presented by aging infrastructure and local building code enforcement.⁴⁷ Fire engineers reported that while progress has been made in reducing fires since 1980, particularly home fires, the death rate from home fires has been increasing. They emphasized the continual need for fire training, research, and prevention education to reduce fire deaths and loss. Fire officials also discussed emerging challenges, including fighting fires in high-risk structures, such as lithium-ion energy storage facilities and large shipping warehouses with robotic technology, that call for new firefighting methods and training.⁴⁸ USFA officials noted the increase in wildfires resulting in significant loss of life and property. They cited the need for continual planning, training, and exercises to improve response during fast-moving fires and for increased preparedness and public education to improve personal and government response.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ CRS Report R46497, *Authorizations and the Appropriations Process*, by James V. Saturno, p. 3, and International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), “U.S. Congress Proposes 10% Cut to AFG and SAFER Grant Programs,” IAFC Blog, March 22, 2024, <https://www.iafc.org/blogs/blog/iafc/2024/03/22/u.s.-congress-proposes-10-cut-to-afg-and-safer-grant-programs>.

⁴⁶ Congressional Budget Office (CBO), *Cost Estimate, S. 559, Fire Grants and Safety Act*, March 17, 2023, <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2023-03/s559.pdf>.

⁴⁷ For more information on building codes, see CRS Report R47215, *Hazard-Resilient Buildings: Sustaining Occupancy and Function After a Natural Disaster*, by Linda R. Rowan, August 15, 2022.

⁴⁸ USFA, “U.S. Fire Administrator’s Summit on Fire Prevention and Control,” October 11, 2022, <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/about/usfa-events/2022-10-11-usfa-summit/> (see State of Science video presentations detailing recent fires and persistent and emerging fire challenges at <https://youtu.be/xWzmNObsWDM>). See also National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, “U.S. Fire Administrator’s Summit on Fire Prevention and Control,” <https://www.firehero.org/usfa-summit/> (detailing emerging fire services issues such as recruitment and retention, electric vehicle and energy transition, firefighter mental health, and fighting fires in the wildland urban interface).

⁴⁹ Office of the Governor of Hawaii, “Address on the Maui Wildfire Disaster,” press release, August 18, 2023, <https://governor.hawaii.gov/main/address-on-the-maui-wildfire-disaster-friday-august-18-2023/>.

At the 2022 summit, the U.S. Fire Administrator identified six critical issues that call for immediate action on the part of the federal government: recruitment and training, firefighter cancer research, firefighter mental health, impact of climate change and challenges in fighting fires in the wildland urban interface, enforcement of codes and standards, and elevation and integration of the fire service in the federal response framework to assist communities with planning and response to fires.⁵⁰ In 2023, the USFA and its stakeholders testified about the challenges facing local fire departments, stressed the importance of continued research and dissemination of best practices, and called for reauthorization of appropriations for the USFA, AFG, and SAFER and extension of the sunset provisions for AFG and SAFER.⁵¹ The agency's 2023 summit identified seven critical issues. These largely restated ongoing priorities identified by the U.S. Fire Administrator in the previous year's summit but identified electric vehicle and energy transition challenges as new priorities.⁵²

The Federal Role in Funding Fire Services

An issue for Congress is the federal role in supporting fire services. While there has been bipartisan support for federal fire programs, some Members have raised concerns about increasing federal spending generally;⁵³ others have argued that firefighting is an inherently local function that should be supported by local tax dollars.⁵⁴ On the other hand, the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 finds a need for federal involvement in addressing fire loss; it states that “while fire prevention and control is and should remain a State and local responsibility, the Federal Government must help if a significant reduction in fire losses is to be achieved.”⁵⁵ The act defines the role of the federal government in fire safety and response—training, research, prevention education, data collection, dissemination of best practices, and grants. The USFA, as the lead federal fire agency, fulfills these functions.

Fire stakeholder groups, in general, supported the reauthorization of appropriations for the USFA.⁵⁶ Specifically, they voiced support for increasing USFA authorization of appropriations to

⁵⁰ USFA, “U.S. Fire Administrator’s Summit on Fire Prevention and Control,” October 11, 2022, <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/about/usfa-events/2022-10-11-usfa-summit/> (see State of Science video presentations detailing these fires and challenges at <https://youtu.be/xWzmNObsWDM>).

⁵¹ U.S. Congress, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Research and Technology, *Reauthorizing the U.S. Fire Administration and Fire Grant Programs: Evaluating Effectiveness and Preparedness for Modern Challenges*, 118th Cong., 1st sess., May 11, 2023, <https://science.house.gov/2023/5/research-and-technology-subcommittee> (see testimony of Chief Donna Black, President, International Association of Fire Chiefs, Fire Lieutenant David Bullard, Georgia Director, National Volunteer Fire Council, and Kevin S. Reardon, State Fire Marshal of Ohio, all of whom supported reauthorization of the USFA and extension of appropriation authority and extension of the sunset provisions for AFG and SAFER).

⁵² See USFA, “U.S. Fire Administrator’s Summit on Fire Prevention and Control,” October 10, 2023, <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/about/usfa-events/2023-10-10-usfa-summit/>.

⁵³ Sen. Rick Scott, Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Markup, *Congressional Record*, vol. 169 (April 19, 2023), p. S1238; see also Sen. Rand Paul, Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Markup, *Congressional Record*, vol. 169 (April 19, 2023), p. S1225.

⁵⁴ Sen. Rand Paul, Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Markup, *Congressional Record*, vol. 169 (April 19, 2023), p. S1225.

⁵⁵ P.L. 93-498 §2(5).

⁵⁶ International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), “IAFF Urges House Lawmakers to Approve Federal Fire Service Funding,” May 17, 2023, <https://www.iaff.org/news/iaff-urges-house-lawmakers-to-approve-federal-fire-service-funding/>; IAFC, “Call to Action: IAFC Asks Fire Chiefs to Call Congress to Save FIRE and SAFER Grant Programs and USFA,” *IAFC Blog*, December 8, 2022, <https://www.iafc.org/blogs/blog/iafc/2022/12/08/call-to-action-iafc-asks-fire-chiefs-to-call-congress-to-save-fire-safer-grant-programs-and-usfa>; CFSI, “Appropriations,” <https://www.cfsi.org/> (continued...)

\$95 million and supported proposed increases in appropriations for the USFA in FY2024 to address emerging needs, new mission requirements, and necessary upgrades for the agency's data collection system. Fire experts, participating in a national roundtable at the 2022 USFA Summit on Fire Prevention and Control, identified new fire challenges and priorities, concluding that the USFA must be fully funded and adequately staffed to address these challenges and execute its mission.⁵⁷

In contemplating future funding for the USFA, Congress may consider the costs of added tasks and emerging needs identified by the fire community. Fire experts argue that new fire-related threats (e.g., from electric scooters, battery storage facilities, and wildland urban interfaces) and threats not specific to firefighting (e.g., public health emergencies, active shooting incidents) are emerging and that steady annual funding is needed to fulfil the USFA's role as defined in the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974.

Congress has acknowledged existing and emerging needs of local fire departments. For example, a Senate report for FY2024 appropriations⁵⁸ directed the USFA to conduct a study of fire station reconstruction and renovation needs in response to calls for funding for new fire station construction.⁵⁹ In response to concerns about wildfire prevention and assistance for local fire departments assisting in fires at the wildland urban interface, a House report for FY2024 appropriations encouraged FEMA to continue to fund, through the FP&S grant, wood chipper programs in communities with high risk of wildfires.⁶⁰ In its 2024 AFG reauthorization, Congress directed the GAO to study barriers to applying for federal grant funds. Thus, citing firefighter needs, Members of Congress have proposed changes to the AFG and SAFER programs to expand the scope of activities it can fund and to increase access to those grants. Supporters of increasing federal assistance for local fire services note that grant applications received far exceed the resources available, new fire challenges are mounting, staffing challenges persist, and firefighting costs are increasing.⁶¹

The fire community argues that federal funding for local law enforcement continuously exceeds federal funding for local fire departments and that these funding levels should be equivalent.⁶² In FY2023, grants to state and local law enforcement totaled \$4.4 billion, an increase of \$506.4

appropriations/ (see "FY2024 CFSI Ask" column); and National Volunteer Fire Council, "House Committees Move on AG, SAFER, and USFA Reauthorization and Funding," June 27, 2023, <https://www.nvfc.org/house-committees-move-on-afg-safer-and-usfa-reauthorization-and-funding/>.

⁵⁷ USFA, *U.S. Fire Administrator's Summit on Fire Prevention and Control Proceedings*, January 2023, p. 119, <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fire-administrators-summit-proceedings-report.pdf>.

⁵⁸ The Joint Explanatory Statement for FY2024 states that "unless otherwise noted, the language set forth in H.Rept. 118-123 and S.Rept. 118-85 carries the same weight as language included in this joint explanatory statement and should be complied with unless specifically addressed to the contrary in this joint explanatory statement." See Division C, Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2024, <https://docs.house.gov/bills/thisweek/20240318/Division%20C%20Homeland.pdf>.

⁵⁹ S.Rept. 118-85 accompanying S. 2625.

⁶⁰ H.Rept. 118-123 accompanying H.R. 4367. Wood chipper programs lessen the risk of wildfires by reducing the amount of vegetation around homes.

⁶¹ U.S. Congress, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Research and Technology, *Reauthorizing the U.S. Fire Administration and Fire Grant Programs: Evaluating Effectiveness and Preparedness for Modern Challenges*, 118th Cong., 1st sess., May 11, 2023 (see Statement of Fire Lieutenant David Bullard, Georgia Director, National Volunteer Fire Council, p. 2, https://republicans-science.house.gov/_cache/files/7/1/71a5e79a-c1e7-426e-9507-c4717b15116b/4B95DF8D2ECFEDD5D0FA1B7AE1697622.2023-05-11-bullard-testimony.pdf).

⁶² USFA, *U.S. Fire Administrator's Summit on Fire Prevention and Control Proceedings*, January 2023, pp. 7, 33, 119, <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fire-administrators-summit-proceedings-report.pdf>.

million from FY2022.⁶³ In FY2023, funding for AFG and SAFER totaled \$720 million. Fire experts assert that the persistent fire problem in the United States (e.g., 1.35 million fires in 2021 claimed the lives of 3,800 civilians, injured 14,700 civilians, and resulted in about \$16 billion in property loss) indicate that there is additional work to be done.⁶⁴ The USFA presented working group recommendations on assistance needs from the USFA Summit on Fire Prevention and Control to the President in a report released in October 2023.⁶⁵

Advocates have proposed options for Congress if it seeks to enhance federal fire assistance. Examples include the following:

- Increase appropriations to AFG and SAFER to directly fund equipment and staff for local fire departments, as well as prevention education activities.⁶⁶
- Increase appropriations to fire research through the FP&S grant or through the USFA and its partner organizations to research emerging risks, identify best practices, and disseminate information to enhance local capabilities.⁶⁷
- Direct FEMA to target existing funding to address specific priorities and needs (e.g., wildland firefighting, mental health programs) or create a one-time grant to supplement AFG and SAFER funding to address a specific need (e.g., fire station construction).⁶⁸
- Provide additional funding to the USFA or state fire training academies to expand training, planning, and preparedness or to assist with recruitment programs.⁶⁹

⁶³ House Committee on Appropriations, *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023: Summary of Appropriations Provisions by Subcommittee*, December 23, 2022, p. 5, <https://democrats-appropriations.house.gov/sites/democrats-appropriations.house.gov/files/FY23%20Summary%20of%20Appropriations%20Provisions.pdf>.

⁶⁴ Shelby Hall and Ben Evarts, National Fire Protection Association, *Fire Loss in the United States During 2021*, September 2022, p. 1., <https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/News-and-Research/Fire-statistics-and-reports/US-Fire-Problem/osFireLoss.pdf>. See also statements of fire officials and experts reported in USFA, *U.S. Fire Administrator's Summit on Fire Prevention and Control Proceedings*, January 2023, p. 24 (citing work to be done to address emerging challenges), p. 38 (citing work to be done on code adoption), pp. 95-96 (citing work to be done in woodland urban interface firefighting and training), p. 146 (citing work to be done to reduce firefighter death and injury), <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fire-administrators-summit-proceedings-report.pdf>.

⁶⁵ USFA, *U.S. Fire Administrator's Summit on Fire Prevention and Control*, workgroup report, October 2023, p. 5, <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/summit/usfa-summit-workgroup-report-2023.pdf>.

⁶⁶ See Chris Hebert, "AFG, SAFER, USFA Reauthorization Bill Signed into Law," CFSI, July 9, 2024, <https://cfsi.org/afg-safer-usfa-reauthorization-bill-signed-into-law/>, and Sen. Gary Peters, "Senate Passes Bipartisan Legislation to Extend Federal Support for Local Fire Departments," press release, April 20, 2023, <https://www.peters.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/senate-passes-peters-bipartisan-legislation-to-extend-federal-support-for-local-fire-departments>.

⁶⁷ See U.S. Congress, House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, Research and Technology, *Reauthorizing the U.S. Fire Administration and Fire Grant Programs: Evaluating Effectiveness and Preparedness for Modern Challenges*, Statement of Fire Chief Donna Black, EFO, CFO, President and Board Chair, 118th Cong., 2nd sess., May 11, 2023, https://www.iafc.org/docs/default-source/1gr/gr_black_testimony_11may2023.pdf; and Fire Safety Research Institute (FSRI), "FSRI Receives Federal Funding to Enhance Battery Fire Safety Education," press release, November 7, 2024, <https://fsri.org/program-update/fsri-receives-federal-funding-enhance-battery-fire-safety-education>.

⁶⁸ See FEMA, "Biden-Harris Administration's Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission Releases Report Outlining Comprehensive Recommendations to Change the Nation's Relationship with Wildfire," press release, September 28, 2023, <https://www.fema.gov/press-release/20230928/biden-harris-administrations-wildland-fire-mitigation-and-management>; and IAFC Staff, "IAFC Endorses Senate Legislation to Fund Fire Station Construction," *IAFC Blog*, August 3, 2022, <https://www.iafc.org/blogs/blog/iafc/2022/08/03/iafc-endorses-senate-legislation-to-fund-fire-station-construction>.

⁶⁹ AFG grants may support certain training and equipment acquisition activities by state fire training academies.

The FY2025 President’s Budget proposes an increase to AFG and SAFER grants of \$25 million each for a total appropriation of \$770 million divided evenly between the programs.⁷⁰

CBO Cost Estimates

The 118th Congress considered varying levels of authorizations of appropriations for the AFG and SAFER programs. CBO cost estimates for related reauthorization legislation illustrated the differences in estimated outlays for authorizations of appropriations with and without an inflation adjustment. For S. 559, which included increases each year with inflation (and contained other provisions substantially similar to those in S. 870), CBO estimated a five-year program cost of \$9.7 billion if Congress appropriated the full authorized amounts during this period.⁷¹ For H.R. 4090, which did not include the provision to adjust the authorization of appropriations based on inflation, CBO estimate of authorizations for AFG and SAFER remained constant at \$750 million each year from FY2024 to FY2028. CBO estimated that if anticipated outlays increased incrementally each year for five years, the combined outlay would be \$7.1 billion.⁷² That is, the estimated outlays for AFG and SAFER in H.R. 4090 were roughly one-third less than those in S. 559.⁷³

P.L. 118-67—the enacted reauthorization—adopted the appropriations authorization provisions in H.R. 4090 that did not include an inflation adjustment.

FY2024 Proposed Levels of Appropriations

The USFA, fire stakeholders, and fire experts advocated for the reauthorization of appropriations for the USFA, as well as an increase in annual authorization levels to \$95 million to manage new tasks assigned by Congress⁷⁴ and for adequate funding and staffing for the USFA to execute its mission.⁷⁵ In a report accompanying FY2024 appropriations, the House Appropriations Committee encouraged the USFA and FEMA’s Office of Response and Recovery to support geospatial urban search and rescue training, planning and response, and ongoing collaboration with nonprofits to explore innovative technologies to support disaster preparedness and emergency response.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ See U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Department of Homeland Security: Federal Emergency Management Agency Budget Overview, Fiscal Year 2025 Congressional Justification*, 2024, p. FEMA-7, https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2024-04/2024_0320_federal_emergency_management_agency.pdf.

⁷¹ CBO, Cost Estimate, S. 559, Fire Grants and Safety Act, March 17, 2023, <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2023-03/s559.pdf>.

⁷² CBO, Cost Estimate, H.R. 4090, Fire Grants and Safety Act of 2023, July 25, 2023, <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2023-07/hr4090.pdf>.

⁷³ Estimates include outlays for USFA operations authorized in the bills.

⁷⁴ New tasks include authorization for the USFA to conduct on-site investigations of major fires, provided in the Empowering the U.S. Fire Administration Act (P.L. 117-246), and tasks assigned through reports accompanying appropriations, such as those assigned to FEMA in S.Rept. 118-85 to collaborate with fire departments to find cost-effective procedures to reduce chemical exposure and cancer risks.

⁷⁵ USFA, “Elevation of the Fire Service in Federal Policy Development,” <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/about/usfa-events/2022-10-11-usfa-summit/fire-service-elevation>; IAFF, “IAFF Urges House Lawmakers to Approve Federal Fire Service Funding,” May 17, 2023, <https://www.iaff.org/news/iaff-urges-house-lawmakers-to-approve-federal-fire-service-funding/>; and CFSI, “The U.S. Fire Administration,” <https://www.cfsi.org/the-u-s-fire-administration/> (see section on “Funding Needs of the U.S. Fire Administration” for recommendations for additional funding).

⁷⁶ H.Rept. 118-123, p. 69.

In another report accompanying FY2024 appropriations, the Senate Appropriations Committee directed FEMA, through the USFA, and in collaboration with relevant partner organizations and stakeholders, to provide a report within 180 days of enactment on the reconstruction and renovation needs of career, volunteer, and combination (i.e., career and volunteer) fire departments across the country, including an estimated cost for such needs.⁷⁷ Further, the committee stated that the USFA shall use funds to train firefighters and maintain the congressionally mandated National Fallen Firefighters Memorial. The committee directed the USFA to provide a briefing on its role in national response, specifically regarding Emergency Support Function #4, which defines federal agency roles and responsibilities in federal firefighting response for both structural fires and fires that burn into the wildland urban interface.⁷⁸

Sunset of Authority to Award Grants Under AFG and SAFER

The authorizations to award grants and assistance under P.L. 115-98 had been set to expire on September 30, 2024. Most of the discussion on reauthorization was about how long to extend the sunset date of the grant authority, rather than whether the federal government should continue the grants. In recent years, some Members proposed to repeal the sunset provisions. They favored permanent authorization for FEMA to award grants under AFG and SAFER. For example, in the 117th Congress, S. 4882 proposed repealing the sunset provisions; however, in markup, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee did not support repeal of the sunset provisions and instead extended the date from September 30, 2024, to September 30, 2032, before reporting the bill favorably to the Senate. Other Members argued that the sunset provisions would give Congress the opportunity to periodically review the grant programs, provide oversight, adjust terms and conditions, add to priorities, and generally improve on the grant. The enacted 2024 reauthorization set a sunset date of September 30, 2030.

Program Changes

In the 118th Congress, some members sought to attach provisions (that were not ultimately adopted) to the reauthorization bills that would have allowed funds to be used for new fire stations. Other Members, in separate bills, proposed new eligible uses for fire grants, such as for cancer prevention programs (H.R. 5212). A Senate committee report accompanying DHS appropriations for FY2024 directed FEMA to work with fire departments to develop cost-effective solutions to reduce chemical exposure by fire department personnel⁷⁹ and directed the USFA to provide a briefing on its role in the national response to structural fires and wildland fires that burn into the wildland urban interface.⁸⁰

The 2024 reauthorization largely extended the USFA and the fire programs as previously authorized (see the **Appendix** for previous reauthorization-related program changes). Options for future changes in the fire grant programs could include expanding or narrowing eligible costs and adjusting funding formulas. More substantive changes could be based on reports on the program

⁷⁷ S.Rept. 118-85, p. 95.

⁷⁸ S.Rept. 118-85, pp. 97-98. Per the USFA, the *WUI* is “the zone of transition between unoccupied land and human development. It is the line, area or zone where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels” (see USFA, “What Is the WUI?” June 8, 2022, <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/wui/what-is-the-wui.html>).

⁷⁹ S.Rept. 118-85, p. 97.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

(e.g., fire station cost study, barriers hindering applications, the USFA's role in federal firefighting response) that Congress mandated in the reauthorization and appropriation acts.

Appendix. Previous Reauthorizations

United States Fire Administration, AFG, and SAFER Program Reauthorization Act of 2017

On January 3, 2018, President Trump signed the United States Fire Administration, AFG, and SAFER Program Reauthorization Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-98). P.L. 115-98 retained many of the provisions of the Fire Grants Reauthorization Act of 2012 and also

- extended authorization of appropriations for the AFG and SAFER programs through FY2023, including the adjustment for inflation;
- extended the sunset date for AFG and SAFER programs through September 30, 2024;
- extended the USFA authorization through FY2023;
- provided that the USFA may develop and make widely available an online training course on AFG and SAFER grant administration;
- expanded SAFER hiring grant eligibility to cover the conversion of part-time or paid-on-call firefighters to full-time firefighters;
- directed FEMA, acting through the U.S. Fire Administrator, to develop and implement a grant monitoring and oversight framework to mitigate and minimize risks of fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement related to the AFG and SAFER grant programs; and
- made various technical corrections to the AFG and SAFER statute.

Fire Grants Reauthorization Act of 2012

On January 2, 2013, President Obama signed P.L. 112-239, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013. Title XVIII, Subtitle A, is the Fire Grants Reauthorization Act of 2012, which authorized the fire grant program through FY2017 and made changes in how grant money would be disbursed. **Table A-1** summarizes key provisions of the 2012 reauthorization and compares them with those of the previously existing statute.

Table A-I. Key Provisions of Fire Grants Reauthorization Act of 2012

Compared with Previous Statutory Authorities

Previous Statute (15 U.S.C. §2229 and 15 U.S.C. §2229a)	Fire Grant Reauthorization Act of 2012 (Title XVIII of P.L. 112-239)
<i>Grant Money Allocation</i>	
Volunteer and combination fire departments shall receive a proportion of the total grant funding that is not less than the proportion of the U.S. population that those departments protect.	Not less than 25% to career fire departments Not less than 25% to volunteer fire departments Not less than 25% to combination and paid on-call fire departments Not less than 10% for open competition among career volunteer, combination, and paid-on-call fire departments Not less than 10% to fire prevention and safety grants No fire prevention and safety grant may exceed \$1.5 million. Includes establishment of fire-safety research centers to conduct research to improve firefighter health and safety No fire prevention and safety grant may be provided to the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN).
5% (minimum) to fire prevention and safety grants	Not less than 3.5% to EMS provided by fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations Not more than 2% to nonaffiliated EMS organizations Not more than 3% to state training academies, no more than \$1 million per state academy in any fiscal year Not more than 25% for purchasing vehicles
3.5% (minimum) to EMS provided by fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations 2% (maximum) to nonaffiliated EMS organizations	Not less than 3.5% to EMS provided by fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations
<i>Grant Recipient Limits</i>	
Populations over 1 million—lesser of \$2.75 million or 0.5% of total appropriation	\$9 million—over 2.5 million population
Populations of 500,000 to 1 million—\$1.75 million	\$6 million—1 million to 2.5 million population
Populations under 500,000—\$1 million	\$3 million—500,000 to 1 million population
No single grant can exceed 0.5% of total funds appropriated for a single year.	\$2 million—100,000 to 500,000 population
DHS can waive the funding limits for populations up to 1 million in instances of extraordinary need: however, the lesser of \$2.75 million or 0.5% limit cannot be waived.	\$1 million—under 100,000 population FEMA may not award a grant exceeding 1% of all available grant funds unless it determines extraordinary need.
<i>Nonfederal Match Requirements</i>	
20% for populations over 50,000	15% for populations over 1 million
10% for populations 20,000 to 50,000	10% for populations 20,000 to 1 million
5% for populations less than 20,000	5% for populations under 20,000
No match requirement for non-fire department prevention and firefighter safety grants	5% match required for fire prevention and safety grants

Previous Statute (15 U.S.C. §2229 and 15 U.S.C. §2229a)	Fire Grant Reauthorization Act of 2012 (Title XVIII of P.L. 112-239)
<i>Maintenance of Expenditures</i>	
Requires applicants to maintain expenditures at the same level as the average over the preceding two fiscal years	Requires applicants to maintain expenditures at or above 80% of the average over the preceding two fiscal years
<i>Economic Hardship Waivers</i>	
No economic hardship waivers are available.	Waivers are available for nonfederal matching and maintenance of expenditures requirements. FEMA will develop economic hardship waiver guidelines considering unemployment rates, percentages of individuals eligible to receive food stamps, and other factors as appropriate.

Source: CRS using 15 U.S.C. §§2229 and 2229a and Fire Grants Reauthorization Act of 2012, Title VIII, Subtitle A, of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (P.L. 112-239).

Notes: EMS = emergency medical services, DHS = Department of Homeland Security, FEMA = Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Table A-2. Appropriations for Fire Grants
 FY2001-FY2024 (in millions of current dollars)

Fiscal Year	AFG ^a	SAFER	SCG ^b	Total
2001	\$100 ^c			\$100
2002	\$360 ^d			\$360
2003	\$750			\$750
2004	\$750			\$750
2005	\$650	\$65		\$715
2006	\$545	\$110		\$655
2007	\$547	\$115		\$662
2008	\$560	\$190		\$750
2009	\$565	\$210	\$210	\$985
2010	\$390	\$420		\$810
2011	\$405	\$405		\$810
2012	\$338	\$338		\$675
2013	\$338	\$338		\$675
2014	\$340	\$340		\$680
2015	\$340	\$340		\$680
2016	\$345	\$345		\$690
2017	\$345	\$345		\$690
2018	\$350	\$350		\$700
2019	\$350	\$350		\$700
2020	\$355	\$355		\$710
2020-S	\$100 ^e			\$100
2021	\$360	\$360		\$720
2021-S	\$100 ^f	\$200 ^f		\$300
2022	\$360	\$360		\$720
2023	\$360	\$360		\$720
2024	\$324	\$324		\$648
Total	\$10,326	\$6,219	\$210	\$16,755

Source: CRS.

Notes: Firefighter grants, created in the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. §2201 et seq.), are administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the Department of Homeland Security. Congress provides funding through annual appropriations and has provided supplemental funding in other bills (noted below). Firefighter grants include Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG), Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S), and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER). Congress provided one-time funding through P.L. 111-5 for fire station construction (SCG = Station Construction Grant).

- a. The FP&S grant is a subgrant under AFG; each year, 10% of AFG funding is designated for fire prevention and research and is awarded separately through the FP&S program. Thus, FP&S is incorporated here under AFG appropriations. Further, prior to FY2015, a portion of appropriations (typically 5%) was set aside for management and administration (M&A) costs. Starting in FY2015, pursuant to an agreement between FEMA and appropriations committees to centralize grants management functions, Congress began providing a

separate appropriation for M&A for several grant programs, including fire assistance grants (e.g., AFG, SAFER). Thus, for AFG grants awarded before FY2015, the “Amount Available” in the AFG Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is the amount appropriated by Congress less a portion (typically 5%) for M&A and less 10% for FP&S grants. From FY2015 through FY2023, the “Amount Available” in the AFG NOFO is the amount appropriated by Congress less 10% for FP&S grants.

- b. Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-5), Congress appropriated \$210 million to FEMA for Fire SCGs; this was one-time funding.
- c. In P.L. 106-398, Congress authorized appropriations of \$100 million in FY2001 and \$300 million in FY2002.
- d. In P.L. 107-107, Congress authorized the appropriation of \$900 million each year from FY2002 through FY2004. In P.L. 107-73, enacted November 26, 2001, Congress appropriated \$150 million for programs authorized by Section 33 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (i.e., AFG) and provided that up to 5% of this amount shall be transferred to salaries and expenses for program administration. In P.L. 107-117, enacted January 10, 2002, Congress appropriated \$210 million to AFG for emergency expenses to respond to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States and to support activities related to countering terrorism. The FY2002 Supplemental Appropriation (P.L. 107-206), signed into law on August 2, 2002, included \$150 million in funding for AFG; however, on August 13, 2002, President Bush announced that he would not spend \$5.1 billion of funding in the bill that is designated as “emergency contingent funding.” The \$150 million of supplemental appropriations for the fire grant program is included in this \$5.1 billion and was therefore not allocated. Thus, the total appropriation for AFG in FY2002 was \$360 million (\$150 + \$210 million). For more information, see Lennard G. Kruger, *Assistance to Firefighters Program*, CRS Report for Congress, February 14, 2003, https://www2.law.umaryland.edu/marshall/crsreports/crsdocuments/RS21302_02142003.pdf.
- e. Through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Division B (P.L. 116-136), Congress provided \$100 million for the purchase of personal protective equipment and related supplies, including reimbursements. This program is known as the AFG COVID-19 Supplemental.
- f. Through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (P.L. 117-2), Congress appropriated \$100 million to AFG and \$200 million to SAFER.

Table A-3. Authorizations and Appropriations for the AFG Program
 FY2001-FY2024 (in millions of current dollars)

Fiscal Year	Authorization Amount ^a	Authorization Law	Appropriation Amount	Appropriations Law
2001	\$100 ^b	P.L. 106-398	\$100	P.L. 106-554
2002	\$900 ^c	P.L. 107-107	\$150 ^d \$210 ^e	P.L. 107-73 P.L. 107-117
2003	\$900	P.L. 107-107	\$750	P.L. 108-7
2004	\$900	P.L. 107-107	\$750	P.L. 108-90
2005	\$900	P.L. 108-375	\$650	P.L. 108-334
2006	\$950	P.L. 108-375	\$545	P.L. 109-90
2007	\$1,000	P.L. 108-375	\$547	P.L. 109-295
2008	\$1,000	P.L. 108-375	\$560	P.L. 110-161
2009	\$1,000	P.L. 108-375	\$565	P.L. 110-329
2010 ^f			\$390	P.L. 111-83
2011 ^f			\$405	P.L. 112-10
2012 ^f			\$338	P.L. 112-74
2013	\$750 ^g	P.L. 112-239	\$338	P.L. 113-6
2014	~\$762 ^h	P.L. 112-239	\$340	P.L. 113-76
2015	~\$762 ^h	P.L. 112-239	\$340	P.L. 114-4
2016	~\$773 ^h	P.L. 112-239	\$345	P.L. 114-113
2017	~\$790 ^h	P.L. 112-239	\$345	P.L. 115-31
2018	~\$808 ^h	P.L. 115-98	\$350	P.L. 115-141
2019	~\$822 ^h	P.L. 115-98	\$350	P.L. 116-6
2020	~\$833 ^h	P.L. 115-98	\$355	P.L. 116-93
2020-S			\$100 ⁱ	P.L. 116-136
2021	~\$878 ^h	P.L. 115-98	\$360	P.L. 116-260
2021-S			\$100 ⁱ	P.L. 117-2
2022	~\$950 ^h	P.L. 115-98	\$360	P.L. 117-103
2023	~\$985 ^h	P.L. 115-98	\$360	P.L. 117-328
2024	\$750 ^k	P.L. 118-67	\$324 ^l	P.L. 118-47
Total	\$17,473		\$10,326	

Source: CRS.

Notes: In 2000, in the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (P.L. 106-398), Congress amended the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-498), adding a new Section 33 (15 U.S.C. §2229), which created the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program. AFG is administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the Department of Homeland Security. Congress has continuously provided funding to AFG since its creation (2001) through annual appropriations and other acts (noted below).

- a. Caveats to the authorizations shown in this column are discussed in the notes below. The Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) grant is a subgrant under AFG; each year, 10% of AFG funding is designated for fire prevention and research projects and is awarded separately through the FP&S program. Thus, FP&S is

- incorporated here under AFG appropriations. Also, prior to FY2015, a portion of appropriations (typically 5%) was set aside for management and administration (M&A) costs. Starting in FY2015, pursuant to an agreement between FEMA and appropriations committees to centralize grants management functions, Congress began providing a separate appropriation for M&A for several grant programs, including fire assistance grants (e.g., AFG, SAFER). Thus, for AFG grants awarded before FY2015, the “Amount Available” in the AFG Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is the amount appropriated by Congress less a portion (typically 5%) for M&A and less 10% for FP&S grants. From FY2015 through FY2023, the “Amount Available” in the AFG NOFO is the amount appropriated by Congress less 10% for FP&S grants.
- b. In P.L. 106-398, Congress authorized the appropriation of \$100 million in FY2001 and \$300 million in FY2002. P.L. 107-107 later authorized the appropriation of \$900 million (rather than \$100 million).
 - c. P.L. 107-107 authorized the appropriation of \$900 million for each year from FY2002 to FY2004.
 - d. In P.L. 107-73, enacted November 26, 2001, Congress appropriated \$150 million for programs authorized by Section 33 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (i.e., AFG) and provided that up to 5% of this amount shall be transferred to salaries and expenses for program administration.
 - e. In P.L. 107-117, enacted January 10, 2002, Congress appropriated \$210 million to AFG for emergency expenses to respond to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States and to support activities related to countering terrorism. The FY2002 Supplemental Appropriation (P.L. 107-206), signed into law on August 2, 2002, included \$150 million in funding for AFG; however, on August 13, 2002, President Bush announced that he would not spend \$5.1 billion of funding in the bill that is designated as “emergency contingent funding.” The \$150 million of supplemental appropriations for the fire grant program is included in this \$5.1 billion and was therefore not allocated. Thus, the total appropriation for AFG in FY2002 was \$360 million (\$150 + \$210 million). For more information, see Lennard G. Kruger, *Assistance to Firefighters Program*, CRS Report for Congress, February 14, 2003, https://www2.law.umaryland.edu/marshall/crsreports/crsdocuments/RS21302_02142003.pdf.
 - f. From FY2010 through FY2012, authorization of appropriations lapsed; however, Congress continued to appropriate funds for activities under Section 33 (i.e., AFG) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974. Thus, the appropriation “carries its own authorization and is available to the agency for obligation and expenditure,” according to the Government Accountability Office (GAO). For more information, see CRS Report R46497, *Authorizations and the Appropriations Process*, by James V. Saturno, p. 9.
 - g. P.L. 112-239 authorized \$750 million in FY2013 and for each year from FY2014 to FY2017, an amount equal to the amount authorized for the previous fiscal year increased by the percentage by which (1) the Consumer Price Index (CPI) (all items, U.S. city average) for the previous fiscal year exceeds (2) the CPI for the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year described in clause (1) (i.e., the rate of inflation).
 - h. The authorization of appropriations amounts from FY2014 through FY2023 were calculated by CRS using the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI Inflation Calculator (https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm), starting with \$750 million in FY2013 (September), adjusting for inflation to obtain an FY2014 (September) authorization level. The FY2014 amount was adjusted for inflation (using the CPI calculator) to obtain the FY2015 authorization of appropriations. This approach was repeated each year thereafter through FY2023 to obtain an estimated authorization of appropriations for each year that included an adjustment for inflation.
 - i. Through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Division B (P.L. 116-136), Congress provided \$100 million for the purchase of personal protective equipment and related supplies, including reimbursements. This program is known as the AFG COVID-19 Supplemental.
 - j. Through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (P.L. 117-2), Congress appropriated \$100 million to AFG.
 - k. The \$750 million authorization for annual appropriations runs from FY2024 to FY2028.
 - l. In 2024, authorization of appropriations lapsed; however, Congress continued to appropriate funds for activities under Section 33 (i.e., AFG) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974, as described above.

Table A-4. Authorizations and Appropriations for the SAFER Grant Program
 FY2005-FY2024 (in millions of current dollars)

Fiscal Year	Authorization Amount	Authorization Law	Appropriation Amount	Appropriations Law
2005	\$1,000	P.L. 108-136	\$65	P.L. 108-334
2006	\$1,030	P.L. 108-136	\$110	P.L. 109-90
2007	\$1,061	P.L. 108-136	\$115	P.L. 109-295
2008	\$1,093	P.L. 108-136	\$190	P.L. 110-161
2009	\$1,126	P.L. 108-136	\$210	P.L. 110-329
2010	\$1,159	P.L. 108-136	\$420	P.L. 111-83
2011	\$1,194	P.L. 108-136	\$405	P.L. 112-10
2012 ^a			\$338	P.L. 112-74
2013	\$750 ^b	P.L. 112-239	\$338	P.L. 113-6
2014	~\$762 ^c	P.L. 112-239	\$340	P.L. 113-76
2015	~\$762 ^c	P.L. 112-239	\$340	P.L. 114-4
2016	~\$773 ^c	P.L. 112-239	\$345	P.L. 114-113
2017	~\$791 ^c	P.L. 112-239	\$345	P.L. 115-31
2018	~\$809 ^c	P.L. 115-98	\$350	P.L. 115-141
2019	~\$822 ^c	P.L. 115-98	\$350	P.L. 116-6
2020	~\$834 ^c	P.L. 115-98	\$355	P.L. 116-93
2021	~\$879 ^c	P.L. 115-98	\$360	P.L. 116-260
2021-S			\$200 ^d	P.L. 117-2
2022	~\$951 ^c	P.L. 115-98	\$360	P.L. 117-103
2023	~\$986 ^c	P.L. 115-98	\$360	P.L. 117-328
2024	\$750 ^e	P.L. 118-67	\$324	P.L. 118-47
Total	\$17,532		\$6,219	

Source: CRS.

Notes: In response to concerns about the adequacy of firefighter staffing after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the 108th Congress enacted the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Act as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 (P.L. 108-136). This act created a new Section 34 to the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. §2229a), which created the SAFER program. Congress has continuously provided funding to SAFER since its creation (2005) through annual appropriations and other acts (noted below). Prior to FY2015, a portion of appropriations (typically 5%) was set aside for management and administration (M&A) costs. Starting in FY2015, pursuant to an agreement between FEMA and appropriations committees to centralize grants management functions, Congress began providing a separate appropriation for M&A for several grant programs, including fire assistance grants (e.g., AFG, SAFER). Thus, for SAFER grants awarded before FY2015, the “Amount Available” in the SAFER Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is the amount appropriated by Congress less a portion (typically 5%) for M&A. From FY2015 through FY2023, the “Amount Available” in the SAFER NOFO is the total amount appropriated by Congress.

- a. In FY2012, authorization of appropriations for SAFER lapsed; however, Congress continued to appropriate funds for activities under Section 34 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (i.e., the SAFER grant program). The appropriation “carries its own authorization and is available to the agency for obligation and expenditure,” according to the Government Accountability Office. For more information, see CRS Report R46497, *Authorizations and the Appropriations Process*, by James V. Saturno, p. 9.

- b. P.L. 112-239 authorized \$750 million in FY2013 and, for each year from FY2014 to FY2017, an amount equal to the amount authorized for the previous fiscal year increased by the percentage by which (1) the Consumer Price Index (CPI) (all items, U.S. city average) for the previous fiscal year exceeds (2) the CPI for the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year described in clause (1) (i.e., the rate of inflation).
- c. The authorization of appropriation amounts from FY2014 through FY2023 were calculated by CRS using the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI Inflation Calculator (https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm), starting with \$750 million in FY2013 (September), adjusting for inflation to get a FY2014 (September) authorization level. The FY2014 amount was adjusted for inflation (using the CPI calculator) to get the FY2015 authorization of appropriations. This approach was repeated each year thereafter through FY2023 to get an estimated authorization of appropriations for each year that included an adjustment for inflation.
- d. Through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (P.L. 117-2), Congress appropriated \$200 million to SAFER.
- e. The \$750 million annual authorization for appropriations runs from FY2024 to FY2028.

Table A-5. Authorizations and Appropriations for the USFA
 FY2006-FY2024 (in millions of current dollars)

Fiscal Year	Authorization Amount	Authorization Law	Appropriation Amount	Appropriations Law
2006	\$64	P.L. 108-169	\$45	P.L. 109-90
2007	\$67	P.L. 108-169	\$47	P.L. 109-295
2008	\$69	P.L. 108-169	\$43	P.L. 110-161
2009	\$70	P.L. 110-376	\$44	P.L. 110-329
2010	\$72	P.L. 110-376	\$46	P.L. 111-83
2011	\$74	P.L. 110-376	\$46	P.L. 112-10
2012	\$77 ^a	P.L. 110-376	\$44	P.L. 112-74
2013	\$77	P.L. 112-239	\$44	P.L. 113-6
2014	\$77	P.L. 112-239	\$44	P.L. 113-76
2015	\$77	P.L. 112-239	\$44	P.L. 114-4
2016	\$77	P.L. 112-239	\$44	P.L. 114-113
2017	\$77	P.L. 112-239	\$42	P.L. 115-31
2018	\$77	P.L. 115-98	\$43	P.L. 115-141
2019	\$77	P.L. 115-98	\$43	P.L. 116-6
2020	\$77	P.L. 115-98	\$47	P.L. 116-93
2021	\$77	P.L. 115-98	\$49	P.L. 116-260
2022	\$77	P.L. 115-98	\$53	P.L. 117-103
2023	\$77	P.L. 115-98	\$58	P.L. 117-328
2024 ^b	\$95	P.L. 118-67	\$58	
Total	\$1,435		\$840	

Source: CRS.

Notes: The Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-498) created the National Fire Prevention and Control Administration (NFPCA) within the Department of Commerce. P.L. 93-498 provided such sums as are necessary, not to exceed \$10 million for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1975, and not to exceed \$15 million for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1976. (At that time, the federal fiscal year ended on June 30. The Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act [P.L. 93-344, 2 U.S.C. §631], established that beginning on October 1, 1976, the fiscal year would run from October 1 of each year through September 30 the following year.) Thus, NFPCA appropriations were adjusted to align with the new fiscal year (October 1) and remained within Department of Commerce annual appropriations. In June 1978, President Carter’s Reorganization Plan No. 3 placed the NFPCA within the newly created Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In October 1978, in P.L. 95-422, the NFPCA was renamed the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA). Under FEMA, the USFA received its annual appropriation through the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies; however, USFA funding was bundled with other FEMA funding (under Emergency Planning and Assistance). Thus, Congress did not specify exact levels of funding for the USFA. Beginning in FY2004, USFA appropriations were included in Department of Homeland Security appropriations and, starting in FY2006, specified in FEMA Budget Justifications to Congress.

- a. In FY2013, P.L. 112-239 authorized annual amounts for the USFA at \$76,490,890 from FY2013 through FY2017. In P.L. 115-98, in the United States Fire Administration, AFG, and SAFER Program Reauthorization Act of 2017, the USFA authorization of appropriations (\$76,490,890) was extended through FY2023.
- b. FY2024 appropriations were made under a continuing resolution.

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