

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

An Informational Brochure Developed by K. W. Poore & Associates, Inc.
Community Development Consultants

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What is SAFER?

The SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) grants program was created by Congress under the Fire Grants Act of 2005 to provide funding directly to fire departments to help them increase the number of trained, frontline firefighters available in their communities.

The goal of the SAFER grant program is to enhance the ability of local fire departments to comply with staffing, response, and operational standards established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Grant funding is administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Agencies seeking funding apply directly to the federal government.

Through enhanced staffing levels, response times can be reduced and an appropriate number of first responders can be assembled on scene to safely accomplish operations. Faster, safer, and more efficient emergency operations create safer, better-prepared communities.

Does Your Fire Department Have The Staffing It Needs?

Current NFPA and OSHA standards call for the first emergency unit to be on the scene of an incident within four minutes on 90% of all incidents. Additionally, current standards call for the first-arriving unit to be staffed with at least four trained personnel.

The SAFER program was created to help local fire departments provide their communities with adequate staffing to respond to emergencies 24 hours a day. The program is available to any fire department regardless of whether the agency is staffed by full-time personnel, volunteers, or a combination of both.

HOW CAN THE PROGRAM WORK FOR MY LOCALITY?

There are many benefits to participating in the SAFER grant program. By complying with NFPA and OSHA standards, localities can significantly decrease the risk to citizens' lives and property in the event of an emergency. Also, participation in the SAFER grant program could help improve the local fire department's Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating. Decreasing your ISO rating by one class could result in homeowner's insurance premium discounts of up to 5% locality-wide. Enhanced staffing also creates a safer environment for emergency responders, so they can be more efficient and effective during emergencies.

WHAT WILL IT COST?

The SAFER grant program poses little cost to local government. Most localities only have to pay for the cost of the application. Since there is no cost-sharing involved with the SAFER grant program, it provides 100% of the project funds.

In 2011, FEMA has made available \$420 million for the SAFER grant program. There is no limit to how much funding a department may request; however, costs charged to the grant must be the actual costs incurred. The grants are competitive between localities nationwide.

Funds can be utilized for:

- Hiring new firefighters,
- Re-hiring recently laid off firefighters, and
- Recruitment and/or retention of volunteer firefighters

Departments may apply for multiple activities within the SAFER program, such as hiring new firefighters in conjunction with developing a volunteer recruitment and retention program.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE GRANT IS AWARDED?

The SAFER grant has a two year period of performance. If a department requests grant

SAFER Projects

SAFER grant funds can be utilized for projects such as:

- Increasing staffing to meet rising population demands
- Converting volunteer positions into full time positions
- Creating volunteer incentive programs

BENEFITS

By applying for the SAFER grant program, your locality could realize additional benefits to your community, including:

- Lower its Insurance Services Organization (ISO) rating, thus increasing the discount residents receive on homeowner's insurance premiums;
- Enhance the prestige and visibility of the locality's emergency services;
- Provide a safer work environment for local first responders;
- Reduce the risk to citizens' lives and property; and
- Allow the department to expand the range of services it provides to the public.



funds to hire new firefighters, it must commit to retaining those firefighters for one year after the period of performance.

WHEN IS THE GRANT APPLICATION DUE?

FEMA has not released a due date for this year's grant cycle, but applications have been traditionally due in the fourth quarter of the year. Award notices are made in rounds throughout the year.


HOW WE CAN HELP

K.W. Poore & Associates, Inc. is available to help you manage grant funds during the period of performance and assist you in leveraging other funding sources to retain SAFER-funded positions. Firm staff can also help your department develop volunteer recruitment and retention strategies that maximize award funds and help you attract capable, dedicated volunteers. Our staff can also oversee application preparation and submission, post-award grant management, and compliance with grant requirements.



Firm personnel have extensive experience in successfully applying for a variety of federally-funded grants. The firm has helped several Virginia jurisdictions in securing over \$30 million in FEMA funding. Our staff has the knowledge and expertise to make your application stand out in a highly competitive grant process.

In addition, some of our staff has actual experience serving with several fire departments throughout Virginia. Other staff members have worked previously in emergency management and local government. We understand the challenges fire departments face on a daily basis. Our firm's experience in federal grant applications, combined with our knowledge of the fire service and local government, allows us to provide your locality with the resources it needs to enhance the level of service your fire department provides to the community.

We recognize that every client has unique needs. K.W. Poore & Associates, Inc. is committed to providing individualized, hands-on services to your department. Principals are directly involved and responsible for each client. Our firm can work as an extension of your staff and oversee all aspects of grant and project management, from pre-bid to closeout. We are available to discuss project development and funding eligibility with localities that have an interest in improving the capabilities of their departments through SAFER grant funding. 

About Our Firm

K. W. Poore and Associates, Inc. is a community development, planning and economic development firm established in 1978. The Richmond, Virginia, based firm has provided a diverse range of services to over 200 public and private clients throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. The firm offers professional assistance to local governments and public agencies in many different fields related to various aspects of community planning, revitalization and redevelopment, disaster recovery, public safety, and emergency management. We pride ourselves in providing professional, "hands on" service to our clients and working with them to make their communities safer and more prosperous. K.W. Poore and Associates, Inc., is an employee-owned, certified Small Business (#676906).