AGENDA

Hardee County Board of County Commissioners

WORKSHOP SESSION

June 5, 2025, at 8:30 AM

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS
412 WEST ORANGE STREET,
ROOM 102, WAUCHULA, FL 33873

COMMISSIONERS

District I Timothy E. Wells
District II Noey A. Flores
District III E. Donald Chancey, Jr.
District IV Russell A. Melendy
District V Kenneth A. Miller

County Manager Terry Atchley
Clerk Victoria L. Rogers
County Attorney Sarah Johnston
Assistant County Manager Doug Baber
Assistant County Manager Christopher Simpron
Administrative Services Manager Holly Smith
Executive Assistant Brandy Crawford
Deputy Clerk Laura Barker
Deputy Clerk Jessica Santibanez

1. **INVOCATION, FOLLOWED BY THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

2. **CALL TO ORDER**

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT PORTION FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

4. **BUSINESS AGENDA**

   A. **Sarah Evers & Krystin Chapman, The Development Group -** IDA Update

   B. **Michelle McCreery, Hardee County Sheriff's Office -** Spring State Grant Application for E911 Hardware

   C. **Michelle McCreery, Hardee County Sheriff's Office -** Florida 911 Region 6 Next Generation MOU Addendum 2

   D. **Sheriff Crawford, Hardee County Sheriff's Office -** Law Enforcement Trust Fund Funding Request

   E. **Christopher Simpron, Assistant County Manager -** Hardee County Bridge Update

   F. **Lorie Ayers, General Services Director -** Opioid Settlement Agreement Amendment with DrugFree Hardee

   G. **Lorie Ayers, General Services Director -** Submission of the Hardee County EDA Grant Application for Design and Engineering of Phase 9 Water and Wastewater Expansion Project

   H. **Lorie Ayers, General Services Director -** Submission of the Hardee County EDA Grant Application for Parks WiFi

   I. **Lorie Ayers, General Services Director -** Submission of the Hardee County EDA Grant Application for Gateway Signs

J. **Diane Moore, Budget Manager -** Operating Amendments

K. **Casey Dasher - Public Safety Director** - Authorization to apply for the Department of Homeland Security Fiscal Year 2024 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant.

L. **Casey Dasher - Public Safety Director -** Authorization to apply for the Department of Homeland Security Fiscal Year 2024 Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) grant.

M. **Lindsey Barwick, Clerk of the Circuit Court -** Fixed Asset Transfer and Disposal

N. **Terry Atchley, County Manager -** Hiring and Termination Policy

O. **Terry Atchley, County Manager -** County Take Home Vehicle Policy

P. **Terry Atchley, County Manager -** 4 Day Work Week Discussion

5. PUBLIC COMMENT PORTION FOR AGENDA ITEMS

6. ADJOURNMENT

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.A

Item Cover Page

HARDEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM REPORT

DATE:	June 5, 2025
SUBMITTED BY:	Brandy Crawford, County Manager's Office
ITEM TYPE:	Business Agenda
AGENDA SECTION:	**BUSINESS AGENDA**
SUBJECT:	**Sarah Evers & Krystin Chapman, The Development Group** - IDA Update
SUGGESTED ACTION:	

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.B

Item Cover Page

HARDEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM REPORT

DATE:	June 5, 2025
SUBMITTED BY:	Brandy Crawford, Hardee County Sheriff's Office
ITEM TYPE:	Business Agenda
AGENDA SECTION:	**BUSINESS AGENDA**
SUBJECT:	**Michelle McCreery, Hardee County Sheriff's Office -** Spring State Grant Application for E911 Hardware
SUGGESTED ACTION:	

ATTACHMENTS:
HCSO Spring State Grant E911 Hardware.pdf

PUBLIC SAFETY

4781357688	CNTY25-HARDEE 911

STATE GRANT APPLICATION

Basic Information

Application Submitted Date : 05-27-2025 12:53:06

PDF Generated Date: 05-27-2025 12:53:47

County : HARDEE

Project Title: 911 Phone Hardware Refresh

Amount Requested: $359,841.42

Procurement Method : SINGLE-SOURCE

1. Chair, Board of County Commissioners

412 W. Orange Ave

Wauchula , FL 33873

Hardee County

2. County 911 Coordinator

900 E Summit St

Wauchula , FL 33873

Hardee County

3. Federal Tax ID Number

596000639

4. County fact information

Number of PSAPs : 1 primary 1 back up

Number of Call-taking Positions per PSAP : 4 at primary, 3 at back up

PSAP(s) in which grant funding will apply : primary and back up

5. Financial Information

A) Current annual costs for 911 systems : $173,340.00	B) Current annual costs for maintenance : $61,038.91
C) Total amount of 911 fee revenue received : $104,942.09	D) Carry-forward funding retained : $0.00
E) Current carry-forward funding : $0.00	F) Applied carry-forward funding : $62,965.25
G) Minimum calculated amount for applied carry-forward funding :$62,965.26	

6. Describe the existing system

Hardee County is a type 4, E911 system consisting of one primary PSAP, and one back-up PASAP.
The primary PSAP consists of four (4) call taker positions. PSAP is on Windows 7, using Viper 6.4 Version software, Power911, Power Metrics (ECaTs), MAPFlex 5.4, and ePrinter. We receive Text-to-911 SMS (short message service) through the West Text Control Center (TCC), a West/Intrado. The Primary PSAP's last overall upgrade was in October 2019.

The Back-up PSAP consists of (3) three call taker positions. PSAP is on Windows 7, using Viper 6.4 version software, Power911, Power Metrics (ECaTs), MAPFlex 5.4m and ePrinter. We receive Text-to-911 SMS (short message service) through the West Text

Center (TCC), a West/Intrado. The back-up sites last overall update was in May 2020.

7. Describe the scope of work
The purpose of this project is to assure that the county's E911 system is refreshed with new work stations and servers as some have reached the 5 year, end of life cycle. Tis update will refresh hardware and software on the overall system and keep it fully functional and maintained.
The upgrade systems are the Viper Platform, individuals work stations, MapFlex, and Power Metrics.

8. Justification of the need for the proposed project
Hardee County currently has Windows 7 and reached the 5 year end of life cycle on our E911 equipment. This is the central location for all of Hardee County and the three municipalities.

Our request is for assistance in keeping the E911 System in full working order through the ever changing and improving industry.

9. Justification of grant funding
Hardee County is a Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern, as defined by FS 228.0656(1), and we would struggle to maintain our E911 system. The expenditures far outweigh the revenues; therefore, Hardee County ios requesting financial assistance to fund the project for upgrading our 911 Viper system. Without this grant funding, Hardee County will be unable to actively and accurately upgrade our 911 hardware-software system.

10. Project timeline
April 2025 - Requested quotes
May 2025- Received quotes and applying for spring state grant
June 2025- Hopefully receive approval of state grant
We hope to have project completed by the end of 2025

11. Single or sole source justification, if applicable
Services will be based on C1 contract # OP-000871854 SO-000985960 and in compliance with Hardee County's and the state of Florida's purchasing policies.

12. Previous service dates, if applicable
Equipment at EOL last refresh was done in 2019. Current system is on Windows 7 and needs to be updated.

13. Budget reports

Year 1

System: Hardware, Software, Equipment, & Labor

Item	Total Amount , Unit Price , Quantity
Software	$16,539.84 ($16,539.84 X 1)
Hardware	$202,622.96 ($202,622.96 X 1)

System Subtotal : $219,162.80

Services: Training, Maintenance, and Warranty Items

Item	Total Amount , Unit Price , Quantity
Professional Services	$111,629.54 ($111,629.54 X 1)
Maintenance	$29,049.08 ($29,049.08 X 1)

Services Subtotal : $140,678.62

Year 1 Budget Total : $359,841.42

Overall Project Total : $359,841.42

Carry-forward Funds Applied : $0.00

Grant Request Total Less Carry-Forward Applied : $359,841.42

14. Assurances

ACCEPTANCE OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS: The grantee accepts all grant terms and conditions.
Grantee understands that grants are contingent upon the availability of funds.

DISCLAIMER: The grantee certifies that the facts and information contained in this application and any attached documents are true and correct.
A violation of this requirement may result in revocation of the grant and return of all grant funds and interest accrued (if any), pursuant to the Emergency Communications Board authority and any other remedy provided by law.

NOTIFICATION OF AWARDS: The grantee understands and accepts that the notice of award will be advertised on the Florida 911 website.

MAINTENANCE OF IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION: The grantee agrees that any improvement, expansion or other effect brought about in whole or part by grant funds will be maintained.
No substantial changes or departures from the original proposal shall be permitted unless the Emergency Communications Board gives prior written authorization. Any unauthorized change will necessitate the return of grant funds,
and accrued interest (if any) to the Board.

The county certifies that all applicable county procurement rules/procedures has been met.

Failure to utilize grant funds as represented may jeopardize eligibility to be considered for future funding.

14. Authority

I hereby affirm my authority and responsibility for the use of funds requested.

_____ _____
SIGNATURE CHAIR, BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OR COUNTY MANGER Date

_____
Printed Name

_____
Position

Regional Signatures if Applicable (add additional lines if needed)

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.C

Item Cover Page

HARDEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM REPORT

DATE:	June 5, 2025
SUBMITTED BY:	Brandy Crawford, Hardee County Sheriff's Office
ITEM TYPE:	Business Agenda
AGENDA SECTION:	**BUSINESS AGENDA**
SUBJECT:	**Michelle McCreery, Hardee County Sheriff's Office -** Florida 911 Region 6 Next Generation MOU Addendum 2
SUGGESTED ACTION:	

ATTACHMENTS:
Region 6 MOU Addendum 2.docx

ADDENDUM NUMBER TWO TO ADD MANATEE COUNTY AND SARASOTA COUNTY AS PARTIES TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) REGARDING A JOINT REGIONAL NEXT GENERATION 911 ROUTING PROJECT BETWEEN CHARLOTTE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, COLLIER COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, DESOTO COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, GLADES COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, HARDEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, HENDRY COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, HIGHLANDS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, LEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, MARTIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, MONROE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, OKEECHOBEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND ST. LUCIE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS.

WHEREAS, this addendum number two to the memorandum of understanding ("Addendum") is made and entered into by and between Charlotte County Board Of County Commissioners (hereinafter, Charlotte BOCC), Collier County Board Of County Commissioners (hereinafter, Collier BOCC), Desoto County Board Of County Commissioners (hereinafter, Desoto BOCC) Glades County Board Of County Commissioners (hereinafter, Glades BOCC), Hardee County Board Of County Commissioners (hereinafter, Hardee BOCC), Hendry County Board Of County Commissioners (hereinafter, Hendry BOCC), Highlands County Board Of County Commissioners (hereinafter, Highlands BOCC), Lee County Board Of County Commissioners (hereinafter, Lee BOCC), Manatee County Board of County Commissioners (hereinafter, Manatee BOCC), Martin County Board of County Commissioners (hereinafter, Martin BOCC), Monroe County Board Of County Commissioners (hereinafter, Monroe BOCC), Okeechobee Board Of County Commissioners (hereinafter, Okeechobee BOCC), Sarasota Board of County Commissioners (hereinafter, Sarasota BOCC) and St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners (hereinafter, St. Lucie BOCC) who desire to enter this addendum number two to Memorandum of Understanding regarding the parties Joint Regional Next Generation 911 (NG911) Systems and Services Project ("Project").

WHEREAS the Boards of County Commissioners listed in this agreement will be referred to collectively as the "Parties" and individually referred to as a "Party" or "_____ BOCC."

WHEREAS the Parties are authorized by 163.01, Florida Statutes, to enter into interlocal agreements to cooperatively and efficiently use their powers to provide public services that will advance the general health, safety and welfare of their respective citizens.

FLORIDA 911 REGION 6 Next Generation 9-1-1 PROJECT
ADDENDUM NUMBER TWO TO MEMORANDUM OF
UNDERSTANDING

WHEREAS the Parties entered into a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the parties Joint Regional Next Generation 911 (NG911) Systems and Services Project ("MOU") in 2022.

WHEREAS, the Parties, pursuant to MOU paragraph VII wish to add Manatee BOCC and Sarasota BOCC to the list of participating Boards of County Commissioners.

WHEREAS the Parties do not intend to disturb or amend any provision of the MOU as adopted by the Parties.

I. ADDENDUM

The Parties hereby add Manatee BOCC and Sarasota BOCC as Parties to the MOU on the date when the Manatee BOCC and Sarasota BOCC notify the Parties that their respective Boards have accepted and acknowledged the MOU's terms and conditions.

II. MOU PROVISIONS TO REMAIN UNDISTURBED OR FURTHER AMENDED

The sole purpose of this addendum is to add Manatee BOCC and Sarasota BOCC as Parties to the MOU. All other provisions of the MOU remain undisturbed and the Parties do not intend to amend such provisions further.

III. CONFLICT

If any provision of this addendum is deemed by a court of competent jurisdiction to conflict with a provision of the MOU, the Parties intend for the MOU to govern. All parties agree that they will comply with the grant's terms. After the grant project period has ended, any party may terminate their participation in this MOU upon thirty (30) days' written notice to all other parties.

Signatures continue on next pages

1) Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners (or designee) -- required

This MOU is passed, duly adopted and signed on this _____day of _____, .

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: _____
Joseph M.Tiseo, Chairman

ATTEST:
Roger D. Eaton, Clerk of
Circuit Court and Ex-Officio
Clerk to the Board of County
Commissioners

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

Approved as to form and legal sufficiency:

_____
Janette S. Knowlton, County Attorney

2) Collier County Board of County Commissioners (or designee) -- required

William McDaniel, Jr. – Chairman
3299 Tamiami Trail East, Suite 303
Naples, FL 34112

_____
Signature/Date

_____
Print Name/Title

3) Desoto County Board of County Commissioners (or designee) -- required

_____

This MOU is passed, duly adopted and signed on this _____day of _____, .

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF DESOTO COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: _____
Elton Langford, Chairman

ATTEST:

_____
Mandy Hines, County Administrator

Approved as to form and legal sufficiency:

_____
Donald D. Conn, County Attorney

4) Glades County Board of County Commissioners (or designee) -- required

Tim Stanley - Chairman
PO Box 1527
500 Ave J
Moore Haven, FL 33471

_____
Signature/Date

_____
Print Name/Title

5) Hardee County Board of County Commissioners (or designee) -- required

Russell Melendy - Chairman
412 W Orange St, Room 103
Wauchula, FL, 33873

_____
Signature/Date

Russell A. Melendy, Chair
Print Name/Title

6) Hendry County Board of County Commissioners (or designee) -- required

C/O Jennifer Davis, County Administrator
PO Box 1760
LaBelle, Florida 33975

_____
Signature/Date

_____
Print Name/Title

7) Highlands County Board of County Commissioners (or designee) -- required

C/O County Administrator
600 S Commerce Ave
Sebring, FL 33870

_____
Signature/Date

_____
Print Name/Title

8) Lee County Board of County Commissioners (or designee) -- required

C/O County Manager
PO Box 398
Fort Myers, FL 33902

With a copy to:

Lee County
Attn: 911 Program Manager
PO Box 398
Fort Myers, FL 33902

_____
Signature/Date

_____
Print Name/Title

9) Monroe County Board of County Commissioners (or designee) -- required

Monroe County Board of County Commissioners
1100 Simonton Street
Key West, FL 33040

With a copy to:

Monroe County Sheriff's Office
Rick Ramsay Sheriff
5525 College Road
Key West, FL 33040

_____
Signature/Date

_____
Print Name/Title

10) Okeechobee County Board of County Commissioners (or designee) – required

C/O Deborah Manzo, County Administrator
304 NW 2nd Street
Okeechobee, FL 34972

_____
Signature/Date

_____
Print Name/Title

11) Martin County Board of County Commissioners (or designee) – required

The authorized signatory(ies) below acknowledges and agree on behalf of the Martin County Board of County Commissions to be bound to the MOU's terms and conditions.

Notices required to be given under this MOU for the Martin County Board of County Commissioners shall be delivered by email or registered or certified mail to:

_____
_____
_____
_____

*C/O*_____
_____
_____

_____
Signature/Date

_____
Print Name/Title

12) St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners (or designee) – required

The authorized signatory(ies) below acknowledges and agree on behalf of the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissions to be bound to the MOU's terms and conditions.

Notices required to be given under this MOU for the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners shall be delivered by email or registered or certified mail to:

_____
_____
_____
_____

*C/O*_____
_____
_____

_____
Signature/Date

_____
Print Name/Title

13) Manatee County Board of County Commissioners (or designee) – required

The authorized signatory (ies) below acknowledges and agree on behalf of the Manatee County Board of County Commissions to be bound to the MOU's terms and conditions.

Notices required to be given under this MOU for the Manatee County Board of County Commissioners shall be delivered by email or registered or certified mail to:

_____
_____
_____
_____

*C/O*_____
_____
_____

_____
Signature/Date

_____
Print Name/Title

14) Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners (or designee) – required

The authorized signatory (ies) below acknowledges and agree on behalf of the Sarasota County Board of County Commissions to be bound to the MOU's terms and conditions.

Notices required to be given under this MOU for the Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners shall be delivered by email or registered or certified mail to:

_____
_____
_____
_____

*C/O*_____
_____
_____

_____
Signature/Date

_____
Print Name/Title

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.D

Item Cover Page

HARDEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM REPORT

DATE:	June 5, 2025
SUBMITTED BY:	Brandy Crawford, Hardee County Sheriff's Office
ITEM TYPE:	Business Agenda
AGENDA SECTION:	**BUSINESS AGENDA**
SUBJECT:	**Sheriff Crawford, Hardee County Sheriff's Office -** Law Enforcement Trust Fund Funding Request

SUGGESTED ACTION:

ATTACHMENTS:
HCSO Law Enforcement Trust Monies.pdf

HARDEE COUNTY SHERIFF
VENT CRAWFORD

May 28, 2025

Honorable Russell Melendy
Hardee County Board of County Commissioners
412 West Orange Street
Wauchula, FL 33873

Honorable Russell Melendy,

In accordance with Florida State Statue 932.7055, subsection 5, please accept this letter as a request for monies from the Law Enforcement Trust Fund for the following:

- $10,000.00 donation to United Way of Central Florida
- $5,000.00 donation to Drug Free Hardee
- $10,000.00 donation to Florida Sheriff's Youth Ranch
- $15,000.00 dedicated to purchase Hardee County Sheriff's Office Patrol Dog
- $15,000.00 dedicated to advanced specialized training to further the expertise in leadership.

Should you need any further information regarding the above-mentioned items please do not hesitate to call.

Respectfully submitted,

Vincent Crawford, Sheriff

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.E

Item Cover Page

HARDEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM REPORT

DATE:	June 5, 2025
SUBMITTED BY:	Brandy Crawford, Capital Projects
ITEM TYPE:	Business Agenda
AGENDA SECTION:	**BUSINESS AGENDA**
SUBJECT:	**Christopher Simpron, Assistant County Manager -** Hardee County Bridge Update

SUGGESTED ACTION:

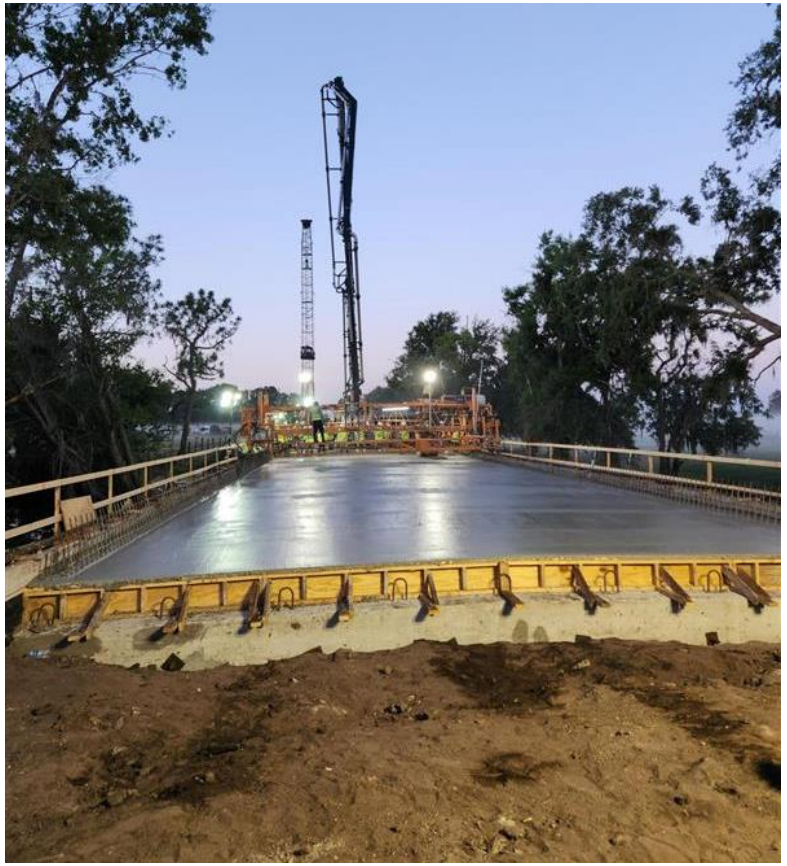
ATTACHMENTS:
Hardee County Bridge Update June 2025.pdf

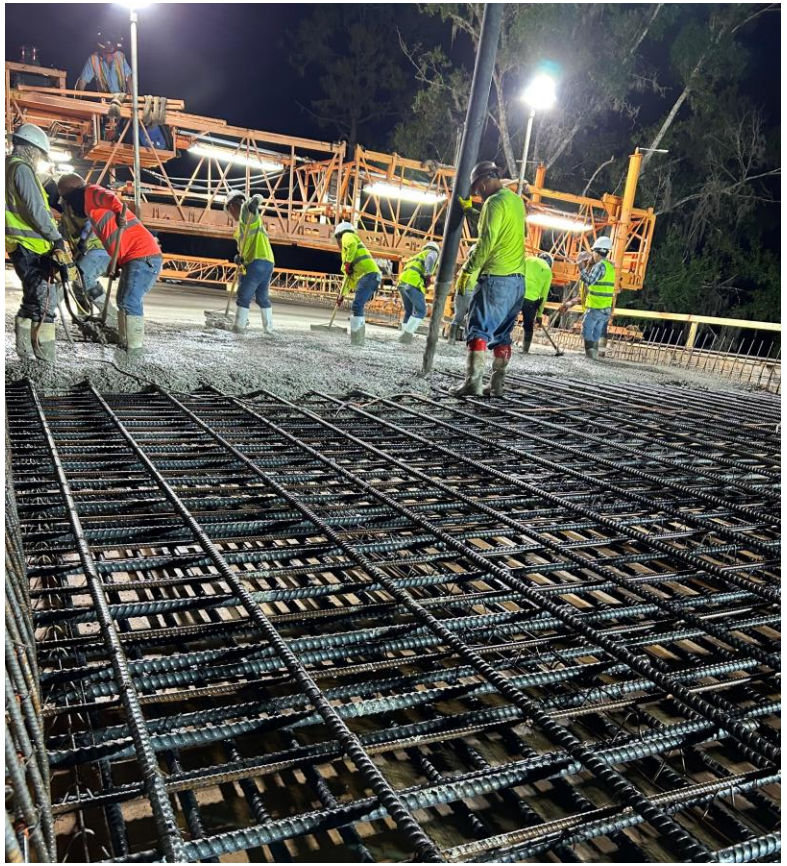
Hardee County Bridges- Update

- N, Hollandtown Road Bridge Replacement
- County Line Road Bridge Replacement
- CR 664 Over Little Charlie Creek
- Center Hill Bridge Replacement
- Griffin Road Bridge Repair
- Airport Road Bridge Repair
- Dansby Road Bridge- Wauchula
- Hurricane Ian Bridge Repairs
- US 17 over Charlie Creek Bridge Project



Christopher Simpron, Assistant County Manger
June 5, 2025







North Hollandtown Bridge Replacement

$2.3 Million Project- Date of Completion - **September 2025**

Bridge Deck was poured on April 25th at 4:00 AM (pour completed within 3 hours)



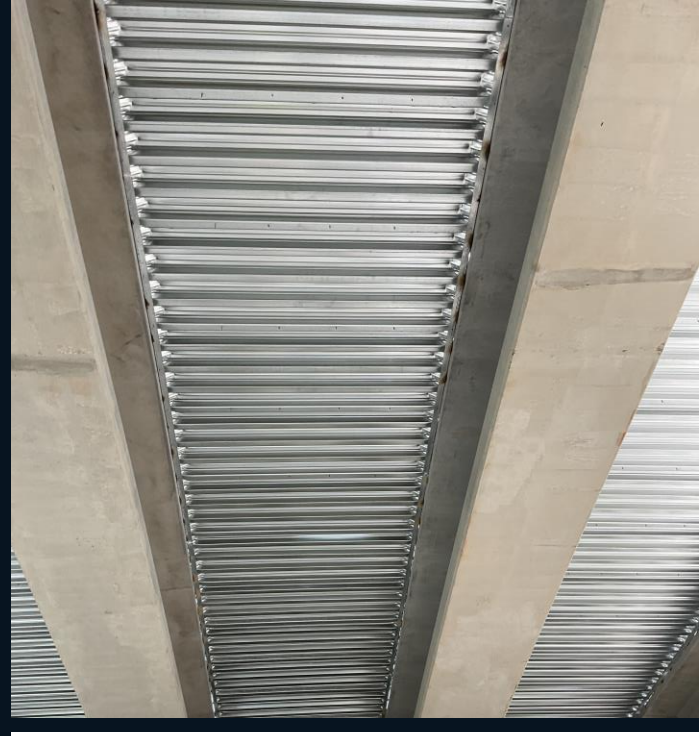
Polk-Hardee County Line Road Bridge Replacement

$2.5 Million Project- Date of Completion **October 6th 2025**

County Road 664 Over Little Payne Creek Bridge Replacement







$2.8 Million Project-
Date of Completion-
December 18th 2025

- **CR 664 Over Little Payne Creek Bridge Replacement Project**
- Deck Pouring on 05/30/2025 at 5am

(completed for 4 hours)



Center Hill Bridge Replacement



- Project Cost: $1.8 Million
- Funding Source: County Incentive Grant Program(CIGP) funded by FDOT
- For Bid Re-advertisement







Griffin Road Bridge Repair

Maintenance Work

- Develop repair plans for the deteriorated steel H-piles at Bent 5
- Design for the Bridge Repair is currently underway (reinforce with pile jackets)
- Potential Repair Cost is approximately $250K (plan to be included in the next FY 2026 budget)
- Long term plan: Will be applied for a bridge replacement project through FHWA's Bridge Investment Program (BIP)

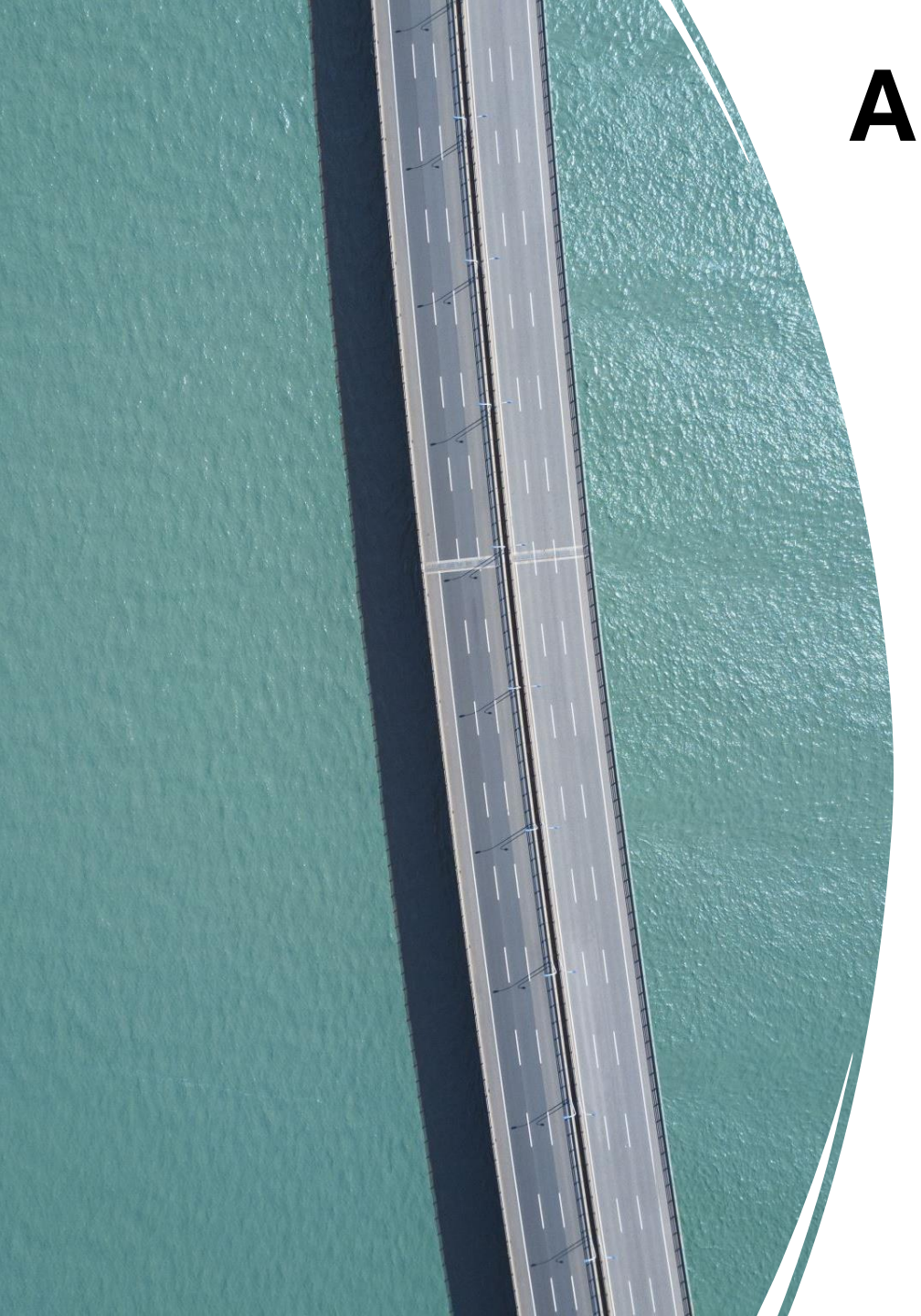






Airport Road Bridge Repair

Deficiencies found after Hurricane Milton



Airport Road Bridge Repairs

Scope of Work
A. Clean and Prepare the Joint Surfaces
B. Install Polymer Nosing at the Large Separation Between Culvert Segments
C. Seal Remaining Joints with Flexible Joint Sealant
D. Grouting Behind Separated Joints
E. Concrete Patching for Small Cracks and Surface Defects
F. Maintenance of Traffic and Sediment and Erosion Control

- Will be advertised as an Invitation to Bid (low-bid project)

-Potential project cost will not exceed $100K

-Source of funding: FEMA Loan

-Submitted as a late (Damage Inventory) DI list under Hurricane Milton for FEMA PA Reimbursement along with the **Sweetwater Bridges** proposed soil stabilization work and the completed soil stabilization work at **Heard Bridge Road/CR 664B Bridge**.

Dansby Road Bridge Repair

- Maintenance Repairs- (In House)
- The scope mainly involves replacement of bridge wooden deck boards
- **Long Term Plan**: Apply for bridge replacement under the FHWA's Bridge Investment Plan (BIP) Program along with **Griffin Road Bridge**, **Hendry Road Bridge,** and **FishBranch Bridge**.












Repairs of Bridges Damaged by Hurricane Ian (advertised under one ITB)

Base Bid Amount $437,212.83 (Bid Opening Date is April 22, 2025)

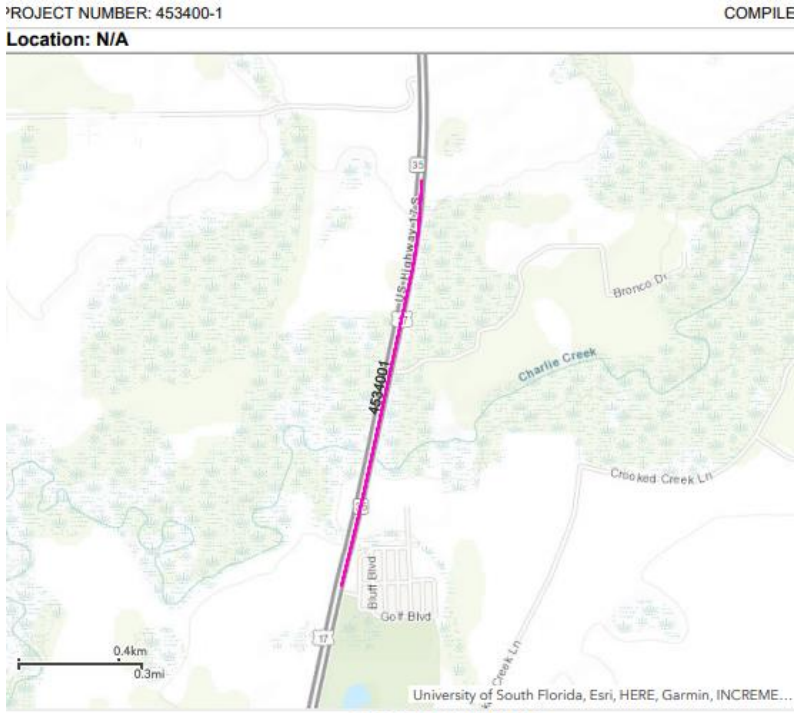
1. Locklar Road Over Charlie Creek
2. Hendry Road over Gum Swamp
3. Kelly Roberts Road over Buckhorn Creek
4. Dansby Road over Troublesome Creek
5. Fussell Road over Barr Branch
6. Murphy Road over Oak Creek
7. Sweetwater Road over Charley Creek
8. Sweetwater Road over Charlie Creek Overflow

-Will be presented to the Board in the June 19th Board Meeting recommending approval to award to the lowest responsive bidder.

These uncompleted projects need to be completed by the end of the year. Working with FEMA for a potential extension.

US 17 Over Charlie Creek Bridge Project (FPID #453400-1

- Project Cost: $14.1M
- Project Letting Year is FY 2028 (actual date is July 2027)
- Will elevate NB lane from Brookside Bluff to N. of Bronco Drive (approx. 1 mile) and will replace existing bridge
- **This is an FDOT Resiliency Project**



PROJECT SUMMARY

N/A

PROJECT HISTORY

N/A

COST	
Project Development & Environment	N/A
Design & Engineering	$940,253
Right Of Way Acquisition	$265,000
Construction	$15,464,033
Total Cost Of Project	$18,836,337

SCHEDULE	
Letting Date	7/22/2027
Plans To Tallahassee	N/A
Plans To District	N/A
Production Date	4/23/2027

PROJECT MANAGER	
Name	Jennifer Freeman (Primary)
Building	D1 Bartow District Office
Phone	(863)519-2985
Email	Jennifer.Freeman@Dot.State.Fl.Us

CITIES & COUNTIES	
Cities	Gardner
Counties	Hardee



Questions?

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.F

Item Cover Page

HARDEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM REPORT

DATE:	June 5, 2025
SUBMITTED BY:	Brandy Crawford, Grants Management Department
ITEM TYPE:	Business Agenda
AGENDA SECTION:	**BUSINESS AGENDA**
SUBJECT:	**Lorie Ayers, General Services Director -** Opioid Settlement Agreement Amendment with DrugFree Hardee
SUGGESTED ACTION:	

ATTACHMENTS:
Opioid Funding Memo.pdf

Hardee County FLORIDA

GRANTS MANAGEMENT

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

RUSSELL MELENDY
CHAIRMAN, DISTRICT 4

NOEY FLORES
VICE CHAIR, DISTRICT 2

TIM WELLS
DISTRICT 1

DONALD CHANCEY
DISTRICT 3

KENNY MILLER
DISTRICT 5

TERRY ATCHLEY
COUNTY MANAGER

SARAH JOHNSTON
COUNTY ATTORNEY

MAILING ADDRESS
412 West Orange Street
Suite 201
Wauchula, FL 33873

PHONE
863-773-6349

WEBSITE
hardeecountyfl.gov

To: Terry Atchley, County Manager

Through: Doug Baber, Assistant County Manager

From: Lorie Ayers, General Services Director

Subject: Opioid Agreement

Date: June 5, 2025

Modification to the current grant agreement with Drug Free Hardee to increase the not to exceed amount to $65,469.62, an increase of $39,777.88. We anticipate receiving additional funds annually over the next 15 years estimated to total $218,128.28. Additionally, we contracted with our regional managing entity, Central Florida Behavioral Health Network to administer the regional funds received in the amount of $168,143. This additional funding will enable Drug Free Hardee to increase their opioid-related prevention programming.

Staff recommends approval.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.G

Item Cover Page

HARDEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM REPORT

DATE:	June 5, 2025
SUBMITTED BY:	Brandy Crawford, Grants Management Department
ITEM TYPE:	Business Agenda
AGENDA SECTION:	**BUSINESS AGENDA**
SUBJECT:	**Lorie Ayers, General Services Director -** Submission of the Hardee County EDA Grant Application for Design and Engineering of Phase 9 Water and Wastewater Expansion Project
SUGGESTED ACTION:	

ATTACHMENTS:
Revised Memo - 2025.pdf
EDA Grant WWW Phase 9.pdf

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

RUSSELL MELENDY
CHAIRMAN, DISTRICT 4

NOEY FLORES
VICE CHAIR, DISTRICT 2

TIM WELLS
DISTRICT 1

DONALD CHANCEY
DISTRICT 3

KENNY MILLER
DISTRICT 5

TERRY ATCHLEY
COUNTY MANAGER

SARAH JOHNSTON
COUNTY ATTORNEY

MAILING ADDRESS
412 West Orange Street
Suite 201
Wauchula, FL 33873

PHONE
863-773-6349

WEBSITE
hardeecountyfl.gov

To: Terry Atchley, County Manager

Through: Doug Baber, Assistant County Manager

From: Lorie Ayers, General Services Director

Subject: EDA (Local) Infrastructure Grant application - Phase 9

Date: June 5, 2025

EDA Infrastructure Grant application in the amount of $325,000.00 was submitted by staff. The proposed project will provide funding for professional engineering services necessary to begin the design and engineering plans for phase 9 of the Hardee County Water/Wastewater expansion project.

Staff recommends ratification.

HARDEE COUNTY EDA
INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT APPLICATION

IMPORTANT NOTE:
This application must be filed ***prior*** to making the decision to locate a new business unit in Hardee County or to expand an existing Florida business unit.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

1. Please review the attached guidelines before preparing the application.
2. After thoroughly reviewing the guidelines and the application, you may wish to call the County Manager's Office listed below to discuss your project and application before submitting a formal proposal.
3. Any information and documentation that cannot be supplied in the space provided on the application form should be attached to the application and referenced to the relevant question.
4. Copies of maps or other descriptive materials that you believe will assist in evaluating your application may be submitted with your proposal. If you do include such material, please itemize all such documents in your cover letter.
5. Any application received after COB on May 30, 2025, will not be accepted and will be returned to the applicant.
6. Only hard copy applications will be accepted, no faxed or e-mailed applications will be accepted or considered.
7. The completed and signed original application and nine copies must be filed with:

County Manager's Office
412 W. Orange St., Room 103
Wauchula, FL 33873
Voice 863-773-9430
Fax 863-773-0958

FOR ADMINSTRATIVE USE ONLY:
Date and time application received:_____Initials_____
Date application deemed complete:_____Initials _____

Please note: The following information may not provide enough space for required answers. Please attach a separate page with tabs that refer to the question number. Please include supporting documentation or explanation with responses where appropriate.

I. APPLICANT INFORMATION

a) Name of Applicant: Hardee County Board of County Commissioners
Mailing Address: 412 West Orange St Room 201 Wauchula FL 33873

Phone Number: 863-773-6349
Fax Number: 863-773-5801
FEID Number: 59-6000632

b) Contact Person: Bobby Keene
Title: Capital Projects Manager
Mailing Address: 412 West Orange St. Room 201 Wauchula FL 33873

Phone Number: 863-773-3465
Fax Number: 863-773-5801
Email Address: bobby.keene@hardeecountyfl.gov

c) Name of the Proposed Project: Wauchula Hills Phase 9 – Sanitary Sewer Improvements

II. PROJECT INFORMATION

a) Complete description of the project.
Related documentation attached. See Tab 01

b) Total estimated cost of the project: $325,000.00

c) Itemize and present in chronological order, if appropriate, the stages of the project from inception to completion (e.g., feasibility studies, design and engineering, land acquisition, construction, etc.). Please provide all relevant cost information for each stage of the project and indicate the source of financing for that stage.
Related documentation attached. See Tab N/A

d) Please describe the nature of the business activities which will be conducted at the site of, or which relate to the proposed project.
Related documentation attached. See Tab N/A

e) Please indicate who will own the infrastructure when completed, and who will provide maintenance for it and other infrastructure related to this project.
Related documentation attached. See Tab 02

III. ENTITY PROVIDING JOBS FOR SPECIFIC EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

a) Name of Entity: N/A
Physical Address: _____

Phone Number: _____
Fax Number: _____

b) Contact Person: _____
Title: _____
Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____
Fax Number: _____
Email Address: _____

c) Principal Business Activity: _____
SIC and/or NAICS Code: _____

Type of Facility: ☐ New
☐ Existing
☐ Expansion

d) Full-time Permanent Employment Generated/Retained:
New _____ Retained _____

e) Average hourly wage of the jobs to be generated/retained: _____

f) New Capital Investment Generated: _____

g) Briefly describe the Facility (New or Existing) or the Expansion: _____

h) Is the business unit minority owned? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please explain: _____

i) Is the business unit planning multiple locations in the State of Florida?
☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please explain: _____

j) Please include a letter from an officer of the entity providing the jobs for the specific employment opportunities. This letter should include the number of targeted full-time permanent positions generate/retained, the average hourly wage of the positions generate/retained, and the expected amount of capital investment. The letter should also mention the importance of the infrastructure required to its ability to provide the specific employment opportunities.

Related documentation attached. See Tab _____

IV. OTHER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THE PROJECT: LOCAL STATE OR FEDERAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING PROGRAM(S) FOR WHICH YOU HAVE APPLIED FOR FINANCIAL ASSITANCE FOR THIS PROJECT

a) Name of Program: N/A
Name of Agency: _____
Mailing Address: _____
_____
_____
Phone Number: _____
Fax Number: _____

b) Contact Person: _____
Title: _____
Mailing Address: _____
_____
_____
Phone Number: _____
Fax Number: _____
Email Address: _____

c) Please provide a copy of your budget for this application.

Related documentation attached. See Tab _____

d) Status of the application: _____
_____
_____

e) If your application has been approved, please provide a copy of the approval or commitment letter.

Related documentation attached. See Tab _____

NOTE: Please provide the same information as in a), b), c), and d) above for each additional program to which you have applied. You may make extra copies of these pages for that purpose.

Related documentation attached. See Tab _____

V. PROJECT LOCATION AND APPLICANT INFORMATION

(Note: If the applicant is a unit of county government, the information requested should be provided for the county area as a whole. If the applicant is a municipality, the information should, to the greatest extent possible, be provided for applying municipality's area. If the information is unavailable for a municipality, relevant county information should be used and labeled as such. Please use the most recent data available and **provide both source and date of the information**.)

a) Is the project located in a Community Redevelopment Area?
X Yes ☐ No

b) Is the project located in an Enterprise Zone?
X Yes ☐ No

c) Is the County or any other entity providing matching funds for this project?
☐ Yes X No

If yes, Related documentation attached. See Tab _____

VI. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The following information, together with other information provided in this application and other sources, will be used to evaluate this project.

a) Please include whatever information you think will be helpful to establish your organization's capacity to complete the project **AND** meet the administrative requirements of the grant.
Related documentation attached. See Tab 03

b) Please include whatever information you think will be helpful in the evaluation of the anticipated impact of the proposed project including a copy of any overall strategic or specific project/development plans and/or executive summary for the project.
Related documentation attached. See Tab N/A

c) This is a ***reimbursement*** grant. Please provide the financing plan for this project indicating which funds will be reimbursed by these grant dollars should the application be funded.
Related documentation attached. See Tab 04

d) Please provide evidence of the public use or other public good resulting from this project.
Related documentation attached. See Tab 05

e) Please describe, in sufficient detail to evaluate the feasibility of the project, the anticipated schedule for the applicant's decision to proceed with the project; e.g., acquisition of property; obtaining permits and similar approvals, ground-breaking and other major phases of construction and initiation or operation; or other appropriate benchmarks for the project.
Related documentation attached. See Tab 06

f) Include a list of all major permits, comprehensive plan amendments, zoning changes, and similar approvals required and the associated time frames for each.
Related documentation attached. See Tab N/A

g) Please provide projected operating budget for a minimum of three years. See Tab N/A

VII. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All applicants must disclose with their application the name of any elected official, officer, director, or agent who is also an employee of Hardee County, or Hardee County Economic Development Authority. Further, all applicants must disclose the name of any Hardee County or Hardee County Economic Development Authority staff or board member who owns, directly or indirectly, an interest of five percent or more in the company creating the employment opportunities that benefits from the proposed project or the name of any Hardee County or Hardee County Development Authority.

Related documentation attached. See Tab _____

THE HARDEE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REVIEW ALL DATA SUBMITTED AND TO REQUEST ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND TO MAKE INDEPENDENT INQUIRIES TO VERIFY THE INFORMATION IF NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE.

Application completed by:



(Signature)

Courtney Barringer - Grants Specialist

(Print or Type Name & Title)

Hardee County BOCC

(Company)

863-773-6349

(Phone Number)

863 773 5801

(Fax Number)

05/27/2025

(Date)

courtney.barringer@hardeecountyfl.gov

(E-mail Address)

Bobby Keene

(Contact Person, if different)

bobby.keene@hardeecountyfl.gov

(E-mail Address if different)

(Address if different)

863-558-4781

(Phone if different)

To the best of my knowledge, the information included in this application is accurate.



(Signature of Authorized Officer)

Terry Atchley

(Print or Type Name of Authorized Officer)

County Manager

(Print or Type Title of Authorized Officer)

Hardee County BOCC

(Company)

863-773-9430

(Phone Number)

863 773 5801

(Fax Number)

5/27/2025

(Date)

terry.atchley@hardeecountyfl.gov

(E-mail Address

Tab 01

PROJECT INFORMATION/DESCRIPTIONS

The Hardee County Board of County Commissioners is proposing Professional Engineering services for the construction of a sanitary sewer lift station, sanitary sewer gravity system expansion, sewer services, and other appurtenances. The improvements are located within Bostick Road between U.S. Route 17 right-of-way and Barkdoll Road and Barkdoll Road between Bostick Road and SR 64.

The services being proposed by Hardee County include preparation of Construction plans, specifications, and bid documents for Wauchula Hills Phase 9.0 Sanitary Sewer Improvements. The scope of sanitary work includes: the addition of approximately 3,200 feet of 8-inch diameter sanitary sewer mains and manholes installed along Bostick Road and 2,800 feet of 8-inch diameter sanitary sewer mains and manholes installed along Barkdoll Road; a 25 feet deep duplex submersible lift station installed on the north side of Bostick Road near the intersection of Theater Road. Additional scopes include road and property restoration within the limits of construction in the road.

The estimated financial burden for this project totals $325,000 and will be managed in accordance with good cash management principles. The services required for this project are among those provided by local vendors and internet service providers that the county will partner with for implementation.

Tab 02

INFRASTRUCTURE OWNERSHIP

Hardee County Board of County Commissioners will maintain ownership of the Wauchula Hills Phase 9.0 Sanitary Sewer Improvements and rely upon it for future infrastructure endeavors. Any additional infrastructure will be owned by Hardee County. Infrastructure operations and maintenance will be the responsibility of the Hardee County Utilities Department.

Tab 03

ORGANIZATION CAPACITY

Capital Projects Manager, Bobby Keene has been employed by Hardee County almost 15 years. His work involves management and oversight of professional engineering work in the field of civil / environmental engineering and extensive coordination of project activities with staff, users, consultants, regulatory agencies and contractors. He has performed routine and advanced work in the management and operations of the County Infrastructure with Information Technologies and water / wastewater service area treatment plants, collection, distribution and transmission lines and associated construction, operation and maintenance. He ensured systems function continuously, efficiently and in compliance with safety and environmental regulatory standards concerning potable water treatment and distribution and wastewater treatment, reuse and disposal processes.

Additionally, Hardee County Grants Management Department staff have a combined experience of over 33 years administering State, Federal and local grants. The Grants Management Department has successfully administered more than $66 million dollars in grants.

Tab 04

FINANCIAL PLAN

This reimbursement grant would be tracked in accordance with good cash management principles. The costs incurred shall include only expenditures related to the project and grant period as identified in the Grant Agreement. Requests for Reimbursement for allowable cost will include invoice, non-negotiable check and cleared check as backup.

All documents that support the reimbursement will be retained by Hardee County for 5-years following project completion.

Tab 05

PUBLIC USE

Wauchula Hills Phase 9.0 Sanitary Sewer Improvements will assist Hardee County Board of County Commissioners in the expansion of the utilities infrastructure to ensure proper connection to centralized water and sanitary sewer services for existing and future residential and commercial developments within the county areas of operation. It will correspond with the Strategic Plan adopted December 7, 2023. Expansion of existing utilities infrastructure that will promote economic development and build a resilient community.

Tab 06

Wauchula Hills Phase 9.0 Sanitary Sewer Improvements

SCOPE OF WORK

1. **Route & Topographic Survey**

   Map of Specific Purpose Survey

   - Survey will physically locate all above ground, visible improvements within the existing maintenance rights of way of the following street: Bostick Road from 100 feet west of Barkdoll Road to the west right of way of SR 17. Survey baseline will be established at 100-foot intervals and cross sections taken to ten (10) feet beyond each right of way at 50-feet intervals. Plan view elevations will be shown as relative to North American Vertical Datum of 1988 at each section and at pertinent points for facilitation of Engineering Design. All visible, above ground improvements and utilities will be located and shown. Trees 3" or greater will be shown with diameter at breast height (DBH) and common name if known by the Surveyor's agent. The area designated for the proposed lift station easement will be surveyed and elevations gathered at approximate 50 feet intervals. A base map will be created in current software parameters and provided to the Engineering Department as well as a Certified Map of Specific Purpose Survey adhering to the Standards of Practice for Surveying, (Chapter 5J 17) of the Florida Administrative Code, for submittal to entities of interest.

2. **Lift Station Easement:**

   Provide sketch and description for the review lift station easement. The sketch and description will be suitable for inclusion as Exhibit A in easement documents prepared by others.

3. **Electrical Consulting Services**

   Hire an electrical engineering subconsultant for the electrical design of the duplex submersible lift station. The electrical consultant will coordinate with electric utility to acquire a permit for the lift station power requirements.

4. **Engineering Permitting Services**

   Perform, provide, and submit all required FDEP domestic wastewater, the FDOT permit applications, Hardee County Road and Bridge Permits, including supporting documents and all responses for RFI's for final issuance of permits for the improvements. This includes the required list station calculations.

5. **Geotechnical Services**

Perform limited soil borings within the proposed lift station site and pipeline routing areas to provide a reference of typical soil types which are prevalent and may be encountered as a supplemental aid to the Contractor. The soil (s) indicated on the geotechnical report are an indicator of what may be encountered within the vicinity of said borings and is not a representation of the overall site.

6. **Design of Construction Plans, Specifications & Bid Package**

Develop and provide a set of permitted plans with the improvements to be constructed as outlined herein and as described in these documents. The scope of work includes 3,104 feet of gravity sewer.

Sanitary sewers are proposed to be installed on Bostick and Barkdoll Roads. Sewer laterals will be installed for all the homes and proposed potential development along the described route, extending to the edge of right-of-way cleanout onto the private property and to the connection at the occupied structure in consideration of cost-effective sufficient cover and depth.

The duplex submersible lift station wet well depth will be designed for future connection of proposed developments at Bostick and Barkdoll Roads.

Prepare a cost estimate of construction based on final design. Prepare contract documents (bid schedule, plans and technical specifications) to be used during the bidding process for the proposed improvements.

This itemized, chronological description provides a clear roadmap for the professional engineering services for Wauchula Hills Phase 9.0 Sanitary Sewer Improvements, ensuring critical stages are addressed systematically from inception to completion.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.H

Item Cover Page

HARDEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM REPORT

DATE:	June 5, 2025
SUBMITTED BY:	Brandy Crawford, Grants Management Department
ITEM TYPE:	Business Agenda
AGENDA SECTION:	**BUSINESS AGENDA**
SUBJECT:	**Lorie Ayers, General Services Director -** Submission of the Hardee County EDA Grant Application for Parks WiFi
SUGGESTED ACTION:	

ATTACHMENTS:
Memo - EDA WIFI Shortfall.pdf
2025 EDA Application - WIFI Shortfall.pdf

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

RUSSELL MELENDY
CHAIRMAN, DISTRICT 4

NOEY FLORES
VICE CHAIR, DISTRICT 2

TIM WELLS
DISTRICT 1

DONALD CHANCEY
DISTRICT 3

KENNY MILLER
DISTRICT 5

TERRY ATCHLEY
COUNTY MANAGER

SARAH JOHNSTON
COUNTY ATTORNEY

MAILING ADDRESS
412 West Orange Street
Suite 201
Wauchula, FL 33873

PHONE
863-773-6349

WEBSITE
hardeecountyfl.gov

To: Terry Atchley, County Manager

Through: Doug Baber, Assistant County Manager

From: Lorie Ayers, General Services Director

Subject: EDA Countywide Parks Wi-Fi Infrastructure

Date: June 5, 2025

Staff submitted an Economic Development Authority application for the Countywide Parks Wi-Fi Infrastructure in the amount of $30,000.00. The proposed project is a continuation of the previously awarded EDA Countywide Parks Wi-Fi Infrastructure project in the amount of $125,000.00.

Staff recommends ratification.

HARDEE COUNTY EDA
INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT APPLICATION

IMPORTANT NOTE:
This application must be filed ***prior*** to making the decision to locate a new business unit in Hardee County or to expand an existing Florida business unit.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

1. Please review the attached guidelines before preparing the application.
2. After thoroughly reviewing the guidelines and the application, you may wish to call the County Manager's Office listed below to discuss your project and application before submitting a formal proposal.
3. Any information and documentation that cannot be supplied in the space provided on the application form should be attached to the application and referenced to the relevant question.
4. Copies of maps or other descriptive materials that you believe will assist in evaluating your application may be submitted with your proposal. If you do include such material, please itemize all such documents in your cover letter.
5. Any application received after COB on May 30, 2025, will not be accepted and will be returned to the applicant.
6. Only hard copy applications will be accepted, no faxed or e-mailed applications will be accepted or considered.
7. The completed and signed original application and nine copies must be filed with:

County Manager's Office
412 W. Orange St., Room 103
Wauchula, FL 33873
Voice 863-773-9430
Fax 863-773-0958

FOR ADMINSTRATIVE USE ONLY:
Date and time application received:_____Initials_____
Date application deemed complete:_____Initials _____

Please note: The following information may not provide enough space for required answers. Please attach a separate page with tabs that refer to the question number. Please include supporting documentation or explanation with responses where appropriate.

I. APPLICANT INFORMATION

a) Name of Applicant: Hardee County Board of County Commissioners
Mailing Address: 412 West Orange Streer, Room 201
Wauchula, Florida 33873

Phone Number: 863-773-6349
Fax Number: 563-773-5801
FEID Number: 59-6000632

b) Contact Person: Bobby Keene
Title:
Mailing Address: 412 West Orange Street, Room 201
Wauchula, Florida 33873

Phone Number: 863-773-3465
Fax Number: 863-773-5801
Email Address: bobby.keene@hardeecountyfl.gov

c) Name of the Proposed Project: Countywide Parks Wi-Fi Infrastructure

II. PROJECT INFORMATION

a) Complete description of the project.
Related documentation attached. See Tab **01**

b) Total estimated cost of the project: $30,000

c) Itemize and present in chronological order, if appropriate, the stages of the project from inception to completion (e.g. feasibility studies, design and engineering, land acquisition, construction, etc.). Please provide all relevant cost information for each stage of the project and indicate the source of financing for that stage.
Related documentation attached. See Tab **02**

d) Please describe the nature of the business activities which will be conducted at the site of, or which relate to the proposed project.
Related documentation attached. See Tab N/A

e) Please indicate who will own the infrastructure when completed, and who will provide maintenance for it and other infrastructure related to this project.
Related documentation attached. See Tab **03**

III. ENTITY PROVIDING JOBS FOR SPECIFIC EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

a) Name of Entity: N/A
Physical Address: _____
_____

Phone Number: _____
Fax Number: _____

b) Contact Person: _____
Title: _____
Mailing Address: _____
_____

Phone Number: _____
Fax Number: _____
Email Address: _____

c) Principal Business Activity: _____
SIC and/or NAICS Code: _____

Type of Facility: ☐ New
☐ Existing
☐ Expansion

d) Full-time Permanent Employment Generated/Retained:
New _____ Retained _____

e) Average hourly wage of the jobs to be generated/retained: _____

f) New Capital Investment Generated: _____

g) Briefly describe the Facility (New or Existing) or the Expansion: _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

h) Is the business unit minority owned? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please explain: _____
_____

i) Is the business unit planning multiple locations in the State of Florida?
☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please explain: _____
_____

j) Please include a letter from an officer of the entity providing the jobs for the specific employment opportunities. This letter should include the number of targeted full-time permanent positions generate/retained, the average hourly wage of the positions generate/retained, and the expected amount of capital investment. The letter should also mention the importance of the infrastructure required to its ability to provide the specific employment opportunities.

Related documentation attached. See Tab _____

IV. OTHER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THE PROJECT: LOCAL STATE OR FEDERAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING PROGRAM(S) FOR WHICH YOU HAVE APPLIED FOR FINANCIAL ASSITANCE FOR THIS PROJECT

a) Name of Program: Countywide Parks Wi-Fi Infrastructure
Name of Agency: Hardee County Economic Development Authority
Mailing Address: 412 West Orange Street, Room 103 Wauchula, FL 33873

Phone Number: 863-773-9430
Fax Number: 863-773-0958

b) Contact Person: Terry Atchley
Title: County Manager
Mailing Address: 412 West Orange Street, Room 103 Wauchula, FL 33873

Phone Number: 863-773-9430
Fax Number: 863-773-0958
Email Address: bcc@hardeecountyfl.gov

c) Please provide a copy of your budget for this application.
Related documentation attached. See Tab N/A

d) Status of the application: Received grant award agreement.

e) If your application has been approved, please provide a copy of the approval or commitment letter.
Related documentation attached. See Tab **04**

NOTE: Please provide the same information as in a), b), c), and d) above for each additional program to which you have applied. You may make extra copies of these pages for that purpose.
Related documentation attached. See Tab N/A

V. PROJECT LOCATION AND APPLICANT INFORMATION

(Note: If the applicant is a unit of county government, the information requested should be provided for the county area as a whole. If the applicant is a municipality, the information should, to the greatest extent possible, be provided for applying municipality's area. If the information is unavailable for a municipality, relevant county information should be used and labeled as such. Please use the most recent data available and **provide both source and date of the information**.)

a) Is the project located in a Community Redevelopment Area?
☒Yes ☐ No

b) Is the project located in an Enterprise Zone?
☒Yes ☐ No

c) Is the County or any other entity providing matching funds for this project?
☐ Yes ☒No

If yes, Related documentation attached. See Tab _____

VI. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The following information, together with other information provided in this application and other sources, will be used to evaluate this project.

a) Please include whatever information you think will be helpful to establish your organization's capacity to complete the project **AND** meet the administrative requirements of the grant.
Related documentation attached. See Tab **05**

b) Please include whatever information you think will be helpful in the evaluation of the anticipated impact of the proposed project including a copy of any overall strategic or specific project/development plans and/or executive summary for the project.
Related documentation attached. See Tab N/A

c) This is a ***reimbursement*** grant. Please provide the financing plan for this project indicating which funds will be reimbursed by these grant dollars should the application be funded.
Related documentation attached. See Tab **06**

d) Please provide evidence of the public use or other public good resulting from this project.
Related documentation attached. See Tab **07**

e) Please describe, in sufficient detail to evaluate the feasibility of the project, the anticipated schedule for the applicant's decision to proceed with the project, e.g., acquisition of property; obtaining permits and similar approvals, ground-breaking and other major phases of construction and initiation or operation; or other appropriate benchmarks for the project.
Related documentation attached. See Tab **08**

f) Include a list of all major permits, comprehensive plan amendments, zoning changes, and similar approvals required and the associated time frames for each.
Related documentation attached. See Tab N/A

g) Please provide projected operating budget for a minimum of three years. See Tab N/A

VII. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All applicants must disclose with their application the name of any elected official, officer, director, or agent who is also an employee of Hardee County, or Hardee County Economic Development Authority. Further, all applicants must disclose the name of any Hardee County or Hardee County Economic Development Authority staff or board member who owns, directly or indirectly, an interest of five percent or more in the company creating the employment opportunities that benefits from the proposed project or the name of any Hardee County or Hardee County Development Authority.

Related documentation attached. See Tab **09**

THE HARDEE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REVIEW ALL DATA SUBMITTED AND TO REQUEST ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND TO MAKE INDEPENDENT INQUIRIES TO VERIFY THE INFORMATION IF NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE.

Application completed by:

Cindy Granados
(Signature)

Cindy Granados- Grants Specialist
(Print or Type Name & Title)

Hardee County BOCC
(Company)

863-773-6349
(Phone Number)

(Fax Number)

05/27/2025
(Date)

cindy.granados@hardeecountyfl.gov
(E-mail Address)

Bobby Keene
(Contact Person, if different)

bobby.keene@hardeecountyfl.gov
(E-mail Address if different)

(Address if different)

863-558-4781
(Phone if different)

To the best of my knowledge, the information included in this application is accurate.

(Signature of Authorized Officer)

Terry Atchley
(Print or Type Name of Authorized Officer)

County Manager
(Print or Type Title of Authorized Officer)

Hardee County BOCC
(Company)

863-773-9430
(Phone Number)

(Fax Number)

5-27-2025
(Date)

terry.atchley@hardeecountyfl.gov
(E-mail Address

TAB 01 - PROJECT INFROMATION DESCRIPTION

Hardee County Board of County Commissioners proposes to create and expand on Countywide Parks Wi-Fi Infrastructure. Expanding Wi-Fi coverage to county owned parks will promote economic development and build a resilient community. Hardee County is seeking grant funding to complete a Countywide Parks Wi-Fi Infrastructure expansion that will correspond with the Strategic Plan adopted on December 7, 2023.

Countywide Parks Wi-Fi Infrastructure is a comprehensive strategic plan designed to ensure the sustainable, efficient, and reliable provision of county communication services within county owned parks of the region. The plan begins with an initial assessment of existing infrastructure, followed by a detailed infrastructure analysis and identification of necessary upgrades and new infrastructure, with cost estimates and funding strategies developed accordingly.

Upon approval from relevant authorities, the plan moves into the implementation phase where project management oversees construction activities, ensuring adherence to design specifications and timelines. New systems are integrated, staff are trained, and maintenance plans are established to ensure long-term functionality. Continuous monitoring and periodic evaluations assess system performance, informing necessary updates to future services within the parks. This structured approach ensures that communication services meet current and future needs while adhering to regulatory standards and promoting sustainability.

The estimated financial burden for this project totals $155,000. Hardee County previously received $125,000 for this project, but an additional $30,000 is required to complete this project. Funds will be managed in accordance with good cash management principles. The services required for this project are among those provided by local vendors and internet service providers that the county will partner with for implementation.

Tab 02 - Syberstone Project Plan:
Hardee Lake and Pioneer Park Wi-Fi Installation

Duration: 4-6 Weeks
Project Scope: Install Wi-Fi coverage using 28 poles,
with 2 serving as Main Hubs equipped with Ubiquiti hardware.

Initialization – Subcontractors (Pre-Project)

Objective: Align subcontractors, ensuring clarity of responsibilities and timelines.

1. **Engagement of Subcontractors**:
    - Finalize contracts and agreements with Kinbro (pole installation) and a licensed electrician; Moon Electric (power connections).
    - Conduct kickoff meetings to align expectations and confirm project milestones.
2. **Documentation**:
    - Submit permits for pole installation, if required.
    - Communicate project scope, pole placement maps, and technical requirements to all subcontractors.

Deliverables:

- Finalized contracts and agreements.
- Approved permits (if applicable).

Phase 1: Procurement & Survey (Week 1)

Objective: Procure all necessary hardware and conduct surveys to ensure safe and efficient installation.

1. **Procurement of Hardware**:
    - Place orders for the following:
        - **Ubiquiti Wave Micro Radios** for Main Hubs.
        - **Access Points** for all nodes.
        - Outdoor network racks, PoE switches, Ethernet cables, utility boxes, and associated accessories.
        - 28 poles, including materials for secure installation.
        - 2 Starlink Business
    - Confirm delivery timelines to avoid delays in subsequent phases.

Continued

2. **Surveys**:
    - **Pole Placement Survey**:
        - Finalize the placement of 28 poles, ensuring the 2 Main Hubs are strategically located for maximum coverage.
        - Use GPS mapping and on-site evaluations to determine optimal pole locations.
    - **811 Utility Survey**:
        - Coordinate with 811 services to mark underground utilities to ensure safe digging zones for pole installation.

Deliverables:

- Pole placement map and survey reports.
- Confirmation of hardware orders and delivery schedule.

Phase 2: Pole Installation & Utility Box Setup (Week 2)

Objective: Install all 28 poles and secure utility boxes in preparation for power and hardware installation.

1. **Kinbro Role**:
    - Install all 28 poles at designated locations, including 2 Main Hubs.
    - Ensure poles are properly secured, level, and meet structural safety standards.
2. **Syberstone Role**:
    - Install utility boxes on each pole to house PoE switches and supporting components.
    - Prepare Main Hub enclosures to accommodate advanced hardware (Ubiquiti Wave Radios and network racks).
3. **Inspection**:
    - Conduct a preliminary inspection of the installed poles and utility boxes to ensure readiness for the next phase.

Deliverables:

- 28 poles installed and inspected.
- Utility boxes securely mounted on each pole.

Tab 02 - Syberstone Project Plan:
Hardee Lake and Pioneer Park Wi-Fi Installation

Phase 3: Utility and Power Connections (Week 3)

Objective: Establish reliable power connections to each utility box.

1. **Electrician's Role**:
    - Run power lines to all utility boxes on the 28 poles.
    - Ensure that each utility box is properly powered and that electrical connections are up to code.
    - Test each connection to verify power availability.
2. **Syberstone Role**:
    - Coordinate with the electrician to ensure power setup aligns with networking hardware requirements.
    - Inspect utility boxes post-installation to ensure readiness for hardware integration.

Deliverables:

- Functional power connections to all utility boxes.
- Power testing reports.

Phase 4: Network Hardware Installation (Week 4)

Objective: Install and configure networking hardware for full system functionality.

1. **Hardware Installation**:
    - Run Ethernet cables from the utility boxes to the Ubiquiti access points and Wave Radios.
    - Install Ubiquiti Wave Radios, access points, and supporting equipment at all 28 poles.
    - Configure Main Hubs to act as primary points of connectivity, linking all nodes in the network.
2. **Configuration**:
    - Configure Ubiquiti hardware to ensure seamless communication between the Main Hubs and the nodes.
    - Establish initial network settings, including security protocols and SSID setup.
3. **Testing**:
    - Conduct preliminary tests to verify hardware functionality and coverage at all poles.

Deliverables:

- Fully installed network hardware.
- Preliminary testing results, including coverage maps.

Phase 5: Final Testing and Handover (Week 5)

Objective: Conduct final tests, optimize the network, and hand over the system to the client.

1. **Comprehensive Testing**:
    - Test the Wi-Fi coverage and connectivity across the entire park.
    - Address any issues with coverage gaps or hardware malfunctions.
2. **Optimization**:
    - Fine-tune hardware settings to ensure optimal performance and reliability.
    - Implement advanced security measures to protect the network.
3. **Handover**:
    - Provide training to park staff on network management and basic troubleshooting.
    - Deliver documentation, including hardware configurations, network diagrams, and maintenance guides.

Deliverables:

- Fully operational Wi-Fi network with documented configurations.
- Staff training session completed.

Timeline Overview

1. **Initialization**: Finalize subcontractor agreements and responsibilities (Pre-Project).
2. **Phase 1**: Hardware procurement and surveys (Week 1).
3. **Phase 2**: Pole installation and utility box setup (Week 2).
4. **Phase 3**: Power connections established (Week 3).
5. **Phase 4**: Network hardware installed and configured (Week 4).
6. **Phase 5**: Final testing and handover completed (Week 5).

Tab 02 - Syberstone Project Plan:
Hardee Lake and Pioneer Park Wi-Fi Installation

Key Milestones

1. Hardware procured and delivered.
2. 28 poles installed and utility boxes secured.
3. Power connections completed.
4. Network hardware installed and tested.
5. Final system handover and documentation.

TAB 03 - INFRASTRUCTURE OWNERSHIP

Hardee County Board of County Commissioners will maintain ownership of the Countywide Parks Wi-Fi Infrastructure and rely upon it for future infrastructure endeavors. Any additional infrastructure will be owned by Hardee County. Infrastructure operations and maintenance will be the responsibility of the Hardee County Information Technologies Department in coordination with Syberstone LLC and Spectrum Wireless.

24-2302(-85)

HARDEE COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

GRANT AWARD AGREEMENT

HARDEE CLERK TO BOARD
SEP 4 '24 AM11:11

THIS AGREEMENT made and entered into this 29th day of August, 2024, by and between the Hardee County Economic Development Authority, hereinafter referred to as "EDA," and Hardee County Board of County Commissioners, hereinafter referred to as the "COUNTY," located at 412 W Orange St, Suite 103, Wauchula, Florida 33873.

The EDA, pursuant to Chapter 2004-394, Laws of Florida, as amended by Chapter 2020-200, Laws of Florida, is authorized to establish the Infrastructure Grant Program to provide grants to qualified for-profit and not-for-profit entities to fund projects that provide economic development opportunities, job creation and infrastructure within the geographic boundaries of Hardee County.

The EDA has determined that the proposed County infrastructure project, Countywide Parks Wi-Fi Infrastructure, has met all the requirements necessary for participation in the EDA Grant Program in accordance with the submitted grant application incorporated herein and attached as Exhibit "A" and the EDA Infrastructure Grant Program Guidelines attached hereto and incorporated herein as Exhibit "B;" and

The EDA desires to distribute funds to the County for the Countywide Parks Wi-Fi Infrastructure that provide economic development, job creation opportunities and infrastructure within the geographic boundaries of Hardee County the sum of $125,000.00 as provided for in Exhibit "A;" and

The Countywide Parks Wi-Fi Infrastructure, EDA Infrastructure Project Grant Application (Exhibit "A"), EDA Infrastructure Grant Program Guidelines (Exhibit "B") and, is

hereby incorporated into this agreement and the representations made at the duly noticed meeting of the EDA is hereby incorporated into this Agreement as if full set forth herein.

In consideration for the mutual undertakings and agreements hereinafter set forth, EDA and the County agree as follows:

1.0 PARTIES: The parties and their respective addresses for purposes of this Agreement are as follows:

HARDEE COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
C/O COUNTY MANAGER'S OFFICE
412 W. ORANGE ST., ROOM 103
WAUCHULA, FL 33873
P: 863-773-9430; E: BCC@HARDEECOUNTY.NET

HARDEE COUNTY BOCC
412 W ORANGE ST, SUITE 103
WAUCHULA, FL 33873
P: 863-773-9430; E: BCC@HARDEECOUNTY.NET

2.0 ADMINISTRATOR: The EDA Agreement administrator is Terry Atchley, County Manager. The County Agreement administrator is Bobby Keene, Capital Projects Manager. All approvals referenced in this agreement must be obtained from the agreement administrators or their designees. Any notice, demand, request, or other communication shall be effective only if in writing and when it is received by the Agreement Administrator at the address provided for herein.

In the event that a different Agreement Administrator is designated by either Party after execution of this contract, notice of the name, address and telephone number of the new Agreement Administrator shall be delivered in writing to the other Party and said notification shall be attached to this Agreement.

3.0 TERM OF AGREEMENT: The term of this Agreement shall commence on October 1, 2024 and continue until completion of the Project and payment of all outstanding amounts as provided for in the attached.

4.0 COUNTY DESCRIPTION:

(a) The County is an operating unit of Hardee County Board of County Commissioners, FEIN 59-6000632.

5.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Countywide Parks Wi-Fi Infrastructure

6.0 NOTICES: All notices pertaining to this Agreement are in effect upon receipt by EDA, shall be in writing, and shall be transmitted either by personal hand delivery, United States Post Office, return receipt requested; or overnight express mail delivery. The addresses set forth above for the respective parties shall be the places where notices shall be sent unless prior written notice of change of address is given.

7.0 OBLIGATIONS OF THE COUNTY: The County agrees to:

(a) administer funds in accordance with the Approved Plan and project description, a copy of which is attached hereto and incorporated herein as Exhibit "A".

(b) provide a budget and detailed reports to the EDA regarding the project. Reports must be completed to the satisfaction of the EDA.

(c) upon request by the EDA, and within a reasonable time, allow the EDA to inspect supporting documentation of reported outcomes and expenses inclusive of receipts, canceled checks, basis for disbursements and invoices.

(d) retain records for at least five (5) years following the end of this Agreement or deliver such records to the EDA for retention. If any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit, or other action involving the records has been started before the expiration of the five (5) year period, the records shall be retained until completion of the action and resolution of all issues which arise from it, or until the end of the five (5) year period, whichever is later.

(e) upon request by the EDA, and within a reasonable time, allow the EDA to inspect, review and audit all records received or created pursuant to this Agreement.

(f) submit quarterly project status reports and quarterly reimbursement requests as attached hereto and incorporated herein as Exhibit "C".

8.0 OBLIGATIONS OF THE EDA:

(a) provide a format for all required reports and assist the County in completing reports satisfactory to the EDA.

(b) provide or assist in obtaining technical assistance as needed to distribute the Designated Funds in accordance with the Approved Plan.

(c) following any site visit or review, provide a written report with comments and recommendations regarding the manner in which services are being provided.

(d) provide oversight for the efficient and effective distribution of the Designated Funds.

9.0 TERMINATION OF THIS AGREEMENT:

(a) The Agreement may be terminated by EDA upon failure of the County to comply with any material term or condition of this Agreement or a decision by the County either not to proceed with the project defined in Section 5.0 or to proceed with that project in an alternate location without prior approval of the EDA.

(b) The Agreement may be terminated by the County with thirty (30) days prior notice, all funds shall be refunded to the EDA within forty-five (45) days of the date of notice of termination to the EDA. The EDA shall have the option, in its sole discretion, to waive the requirement to refund the grants funds so long as the purchased equipment or facilities shall continue to be used for purposes provided for herein.

10.0 PENALTY: Fraudulent procurement or receipt of funds under this program renders the County liable for repayment.

11.0 LEGAL REQUIREMENTS:

(a) This agreement is executed and entered in Hardee County and will be construed, performed, and enforced in all respects in accordance with the laws and rules of the State of Florida. Each party will perform its obligations in accordance with the terms and conditions of this agreement. Any and all litigation arising under this Agreement shall be brought in the appropriate court in Hardee County, Florida.

12.0 NON-DISCRIMINATION: The County will not discriminate against any employee employed in the performance of this agreement, or against any applicant for employment because of age, ethnicity, religious belief, disability, national origin, or sex. The County shall insert a similar provision in all subcontracts for services by this Agreement.

13.0. RESTRICTION AGAINST ASSIGNMENT: No part of this Agreement shall be assigned, subcontracted, or delegated by either Party to a third party without the prior written consent of the other Party.

14.0 ENFORCEABILITY: If any term or provision of this Agreement is found to be illegal and unenforceable, the remainder of the Agreement will remain in full force and effect and such term of provision will be deemed stricken.

15.0 WAIVER: The failure of either party to this Agreement to object to or to take affirmative action with respect to any conduct of the other which is in violation of the terms of this Agreement shall not be construed as a waiver of the violation or breach, or of any future violation, breach, or wrongful conduct.

16.0 COUNTERPARTS: This Agreement may be executed in counterparts, each of which shall be considered an original for all purposes.

17.0 MODIFICATION: This writing contains the entire Agreement of the parties. No representations were made or relied upon by either party, other than those that are

expressly set forth. No agent, employee, or other representative of either party is empowered to alter any of the terms of this Agreement, unless done in writing and signed by an authorized officer of the County and the authorized agent of EDA.

18.0 INDEMNIFICATION: The County shall indemnify and hold harmless the EDA, its officers, agents, and employees, from and against any and all demands, claims, losses, suits, liabilities, causes of action, judgment or damages, arising from County's acts, errors, or omissions arising out of the performance or non-performance of any provision of this Agreement, including, but not limited to, liabilities arising from contracts between the County and third parties made pursuant to this Agreement. County shall reimburse the EDA for all its expenses including reasonable attorneys' fees and costs incurred in and about the defense of any such claim or investigation and for any judgment or damages arising from County performance or non-performance of this Agreement. The provisions of this Section shall survive termination of this Agreement.

19.0 COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS

(a) The County shall comply with all applicable laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, and lawful orders or public authorities in carrying out this Agreement, and in particular shall obtain all required permits from all jurisdictional agencies.

(b) The County shall be held responsible for any violation of laws, rules, regulations, or ordinances affecting in any way the work and the conduct of all persons engaged in or the materials or methods used on the work. The County shall give all notices and comply with all laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, and orders of any public authority bearing on the performance of the work under this Agreement. At all times during this Agreement, the

County shall secure and maintain all permits, fees, licenses, and inspections necessary for the execution of the work.

20.0 ENTIRE AGREEMENT: This instrument embodies the entire agreement of the parties. There are no provisions, terms, condition, or obligations other than those contained in this agreement; and this agreement superseded all previous communication, representation, or agreement, either verbal or written, between the parties. No amendment will be effective unless reduced to writing and signed by the parties.

21.0 DUPLICATE ORIGINALS: This Agreement is executed in duplicate originals.

HARDEE COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

2-14-25
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE Date

TITLE: Chair

WITNESSES:

HARDEE COUNTY BOCC

9.3.24
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE Date

TITLE: County Manager

WITNESSES:

Attest: Victoria L. Rogers
Victoria L. Rogers, Ex-Officio Clerk to the
Board of County Commissioners
Board Approved: 06/20/2024
Date Signed: 02/14/2025

TAB 05 - ORGANIZATION CAPACITY

Capital Projects Manager, Bobby Keene has been employed by Hardee County almost 15 years. His work involves management and oversight of professional engineering work in the field of civil / environmental engineering and extensive coordination of project activities with staff, users, consultants, regulatory agencies and contractors. He has performed routine and advanced work in the management and operations of the County Infrastructure with Information Technologies and water / wastewater service area treatment plants, collection, distribution and transmission lines and associated construction, operation and maintenance. He ensured systems function continuously, efficiently and in compliance with safety and environmental regulatory standards concerning potable water treatment and distribution and wastewater treatment, reuse and disposal processes.

Additionally, Hardee County Grants Management Department staff have a combined experience of over 33 years administering State, Federal, and local grants. The Hardee County Grants Management Department have successfully administered more than $66 million in grants.

TAB 06 - FINANCIAL PLAN

This reimbursement grant would be tracked in accordance with good cash management principles. The costs incurred shall include only expenditures related to the project and grant period as identified in the Grant Agreement. Requests for Reimbursement for allowable cost will include invoice, non-negotiable check and cleared check as backup.

All documents that support the reimbursement will be retained by Hardee County for 5-years following project completion.

TAB 07 - PUBLIC USE

Countywide Parks Wi-Fi Infrastructure will assist Hardee County Board of County Commissioners in expansion of the communications infrastructure to ensure proper flow of data and other information technologies within the county areas of operation. It will correspond with the Strategic Plan adopted December 7, 2023. Expansion of existing Communications infrastructure that will promote economic development and build a resilient community.

TAB 08 – WI-FI INTERNET FOR THE PARKS

SCOPE OF WORK

1. Inception and Preliminary Planning

    A. Initial Assessment:
    - Conduct a comprehensive review of existing infrastructure.
    - Inventory current assets including pipes, conduit, electrical supply and structure requirements.
    - Evaluate the condition and capacity of existing systems.
    - Ensure understanding of local, state and federal regulations affecting communications and Wi-Fi services.
    - Assess the potential regulatory impacts on proposed projects.

2. Infrastructure Analysis:

    A. Analize and Identify implementation and necessary upgrades.
    - Establish required hardware.
    - Identify locations.
    - Identify bandwidth requirements.
    - Establish electric components.
    - Identify appropriate support structures/facilities.

3. Implementation Phase

    A. Project Management/Construction
    - Ensure adherence to design specifications.
    - Follow timelines.
    - Install appropriate hardware/electrical/structural facilities
    - Integrate into current IT systems.
    - Train staff.
    - Maintain plans.

4. Infrastructure Sustainability and Maintenance

    A. Continuous Monitoring and evaluation
    - Assess system performance periodically.
    - Inform of necessary updates
    - Future service requirements

This itemized, chronological description provides a clear roadmap for the development and implementation of a comprehensive Countywide Parks Wi-Fi Infrastructure, ensuring critical stages are addressed systematically from inception to completion.

TAB 09 - CONFLICT OF INTEREST

To the best of my knowledge and belief, the enclosed application does not benefit any elected official, officer, director, or agent who is also an employee of Hardee County or the Hardee County Economic Development Authority. The proposed project is a community-wide benefit.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.I

Item Cover Page

HARDEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM REPORT

DATE:	June 5, 2025
SUBMITTED BY:	Brandy Crawford, Grants Management Department
ITEM TYPE:	Business Agenda
AGENDA SECTION:	**BUSINESS AGENDA**
SUBJECT:	**Lorie Ayers, General Services Director -** Submission of the Hardee County EDA Grant Application for Gateway Signs

SUGGESTED ACTION:

ATTACHMENTS:
Memo - EDA Gateway Signs.pdf
2025 EDA Application - Hardee County Gateway Signs.pdf

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

RUSSELL MELENDY
CHAIRMAN, DISTRICT 4

NOEY FLORES
VICE CHAIR, DISTRICT 2

TIM WELLS
DISTRICT 1

DONALD CHANCEY
DISTRICT 3

KENNY MILLER
DISTRICT 5

TERRY ATCHLEY
COUNTY MANAGER

SARAH JOHNSTON
COUNTY ATTORNEY

MAILING ADDRESS
412 West Orange Street
Suite 201
Wauchula, FL 33873

PHONE
863-773-6349

WEBSITE
hardeecountyfl.gov

To: Terry Atchley, County Manager

Through: Doug Baber, Assistant County Manager

From: Lorie Ayers, General Services Director

Subject: EDA Hardee County Gateway Signs

Date: June 5, 2025

Staff submitted an Economic Development Authority application in the amount of $80,000 to help fund Gateway Signs in Hardee County. The proposed project will implement six new gateway signs at key entry points, that will enhance the business environment, increase tourism, strengthen our community, signal progress, and directly aligns with economic development goals in Hardee County.

Staff recommends ratification.

HARDEE COUNTY EDA
INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT APPLICATION

IMPORTANT NOTE:
This application must be filed ***prior*** to making the decision to locate a new business unit in Hardee County or to expand an existing Florida business unit.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

1. Please review the attached guidelines before preparing the application.
2. After thoroughly reviewing the guidelines and the application, you may wish to call the County Manager's Office listed below to discuss your project and application before submitting a formal proposal.
3. Any information and documentation that cannot be supplied in the space provided on the application form should be attached to the application and referenced to the relevant question.
4. Copies of maps or other descriptive materials that you believe will assist in evaluating your application may be submitted with your proposal. If you do include such material, please itemize all such documents in your cover letter.
5. Any application received after COB on May 30, 2025, will not be accepted and will be returned to the applicant.
6. Only hard copy applications will be accepted, no faxed or e-mailed applications will be accepted or considered.
7. The completed and signed original application and nine copies must be filed with:

County Manager's Office
412 W. Orange St., Room 103
Wauchula, FL 33873
Voice 863-773-9430
Fax 863-773-0958

FOR ADMINSTRATIVE USE ONLY:
Date and time application received:_____Initials_____
Date application deemed complete:_____Initials _____

Please note: The following information may not provide enough space for required answers. Please attach a separate page with tabs that refer to the question number. Please include supporting documentation or explanation with responses where appropriate.

I. APPLICANT INFORMATION

a) Name of Applicant: Hardee County Board of County Commissioners
Mailing Address: 412 West Orange Streer, Room 201
Wauchula, Florida 33873

Phone Number: 863-773-6349
Fax Number: 563-773-5801
FEID Number: 59-6000632

b) Contact Person: Bobby Keene
Title:
Mailing Address: 412 West Orange Street, Room 201
Wauchula, Florida 33873

Phone Number: 863-773-3465
Fax Number: 863-773-5801
Email Address: bobby.keene@hardeecountyfl.gov

c) Name of the Proposed Project: Hardee County Gateway Signs

II. PROJECT INFORMATION

a) Complete description of the project.
Related documentation attached. See Tab **01**

b) Total estimated cost of the project: $80,000

c) Itemize and present in chronological order, if appropriate, the stages of the project from inception to completion (e.g. feasibility studies, design and engineering, land acquisition, construction, etc.). Please provide all relevant cost information for each stage of the project and indicate the source of financing for that stage.
Related documentation attached. See Tab N/A

d) Please describe the nature of the business activities which will be conducted at the site of, or which relate to the proposed project.
Related documentation attached. See Tab **02**

e) Please indicate who will own the infrastructure when completed, and who will provide maintenance for it and other infrastructure related to this project.
Related documentation attached. See Tab **03**

III. ENTITY PROVIDING JOBS FOR SPECIFIC EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

a) Name of Entity: N/A
Physical Address: _____
_____

Phone Number: _____
Fax Number: _____

b) Contact Person: _____
Title: _____
Mailing Address: _____
_____

Phone Number: _____
Fax Number: _____
Email Address: _____

c) Principal Business Activity: _____
SIC and/or NAICS Code: _____

Type of Facility: ☐ New
☐ Existing
☐ Expansion

d) Full-time Permanent Employment Generated/Retained:
New _____ Retained _____

e) Average hourly wage of the jobs to be generated/retained: _____

f) New Capital Investment Generated: _____

g) Briefly describe the Facility (New or Existing) or the Expansion: _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

h) Is the business unit minority owned? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please explain: _____
_____

i) Is the business unit planning multiple locations in the State of Florida?
☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please explain: _____
_____

j) Please include a letter from an officer of the entity providing the jobs for the specific employment opportunities. This letter should include the number of targeted full-time permanent positions generate/retained, the average hourly wage of the positions generate/retained, and the expected amount of capital investment. The letter should also mention the importance of the infrastructure required to its ability to provide the specific employment opportunities.

Related documentation attached. See Tab _____

IV. OTHER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THE PROJECT: LOCAL STATE OR FEDERAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING PROGRAM(S) FOR WHICH YOU HAVE APPLIED FOR FINANCIAL ASSITANCE FOR THIS PROJECT

a)
Name of Program: Hardee County Gateway Signs
Name of Agency: Tourist Development Council
Mailing Address: 412 West Orange Street Wauchula, FL 33873

Phone Number: 863-773-9430
Fax Number:

b)
Contact Person: Lacey Webb
Title: Parks, Recreation & Marketing Manager
Mailing Address: 412 West Orange Street Wauchula, FL 33873

Phone Number: 863-473-4954
Fax Number:
Email Address: lacey.webb@hardeecountyfl.gov

c) Please provide a copy of your budget for this application.

Related documentation attached. See Tab N/A

d) Status of the application: Awarded.

e) If your application has been approved, please provide a copy of the approval or commitment letter.

Related documentation attached. See Tab **04**

NOTE: Please provide the same information as in a), b), c), and d) above for each additional program to which you have applied. You may make extra copies of these pages for that purpose.

Related documentation attached. See Tab N/A

a) Name of Program: Hardee County Gateway Signs
Name of Agency: Industrial Development Authority
Mailing Address: 107 East Main Street Wauchula, FL 33873

Phone Number: 863-773-3030
Fax Number:

b) Contact Person: Denise Grimsley
Title: CEO
Mailing Address: 107 East Main Street Wauchula, FL 33873

Phone Number: 863-773-3030
Fax Number:
Email Address: denise.grimsley@thedevelopmentgroup.net

c) Please provide a copy of your budget for this application.

Related documentation attached. See Tab N/A

d) Status of the application: Applied, waiting for approval. See Tab **05**

e) If your application has been approved, please provide a copy of the approval or commitment letter.

Related documentation attached. See Tab N/A

V. PROJECT LOCATION AND APPLICANT INFORMATION

(Note: If the applicant is a unit of county government, the information requested should be provided for the county area as a whole. If the applicant is a municipality, the information should, to the greatest extent possible, be provided for applying municipality's area. If the information is unavailable for a municipality, relevant county information should be used and labeled as such. Please use the most recent data available and **provide both source and date of the information**.)

a) Is the project located in a Community Redevelopment Area?
☒Yes ☐ No

b) Is the project located in an Enterprise Zone?
☒Yes ☐ No

c) Is the County or any other entity providing matching funds for this project?
☐ Yes ☒No

If yes, Related documentation attached. See Tab _____

VI. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The following information, together with other information provided in this application and other sources, will be used to evaluate this project.

a) Please include whatever information you think will be helpful to establish your organization's capacity to complete the project **AND** meet the administrative requirements of the grant.
Related documentation attached. See Tab **06**

b) Please include whatever information you think will be helpful in the evaluation of the anticipated impact of the proposed project including a copy of any overall strategic or specific project/development plans and/or executive summary for the project.
Related documentation attached. See Tab **07**

c) This is a ***reimbursement*** grant. Please provide the financing plan for this project indicating which funds will be reimbursed by these grant dollars should the application be funded.
Related documentation attached. See Tab **08**

d) Please provide evidence of the public use or other public good resulting from this project.
Related documentation attached. See Tab **09**

e) Please describe, in sufficient detail to evaluate the feasibility of the project, the anticipated schedule for the applicant's decision to proceed with the project; e.g., acquisition of property; obtaining permits and similar approvals, ground-breaking and other major phases of construction and initiation or operation; or other appropriate benchmarks for the project.
Related documentation attached. See Tab **10**

f) Include a list of all major permits, comprehensive plan amendments, zoning changes, and similar approvals required and the associated time frames for each.
Related documentation attached. See Tab N/A

g) Please provide projected operating budget for a minimum of three years. See Tab N/A

VII. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All applicants must disclose with their application the name of any elected official, officer, director, or agent who is also an employee of Hardee County, or Hardee County Economic Development Authority. Further, all applicants must disclose the name of any Hardee County or Hardee County Economic Development Authority staff or board member who owns, directly or indirectly, an interest of five percent or more in the company creating the employment opportunities that benefits from the proposed project or the name of any Hardee County or Hardee County Development Authority.

Related documentation attached. See Tab **11**

THE HARDEE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REVIEW ALL DATA SUBMITTED AND TO REQUEST ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND TO MAKE INDEPENDENT INQUIRIES TO VERIFY THE INFORMATION IF NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE.

Application completed by:



(Signature)

Cindy Granados- Grants Specialist

(Print or Type Name & Title)

Hardee County BOCC

(Company)

863-773-6349

(Phone Number)

(Fax Number)

05/27/2025

(Date)

cindy.granados@hardeecountyfl.gov

(E-mail Address)

Bobby Keene

(Contact Person, if different)

bobby.keene@hardeecountyfl.gov

(E-mail Address if different)

(Address if different)

863-558-4781

(Phone if different)

To the best of my knowledge, the information included in this application is accurate.



(Signature of Authorized Officer)

Terry Atchley

(Print or Type Name of Authorized Officer)

County Manager

(Print or Type Title of Authorized Officer)

Hardee County BOCC

(Company)

863-773-9430

(Phone Number)

(Fax Number)

5-27-2025

(Date)

terry.atchley@hardeecountyfl.gov

(E-mail Address

TAB 01 – Project Description

Hardee County is seeking grant funding to support the design and installation of new gateway and wayfinding signage at key entrances and strategic points throughout the county. This project is intended to establish a consistent and visually appealing identity that reflects the character and values of our rural community. By creating a more welcoming and navigable environment, the signage will promote local tourism, support small businesses, enhance economic development efforts, and foster a greater sense of community pride.

The need for this initiative arises from the current lack of cohesive and recognizable signage that welcomes visitors and helps them navigate the area. Without well-defined entry points or directional signs, Hardee County is missing a critical opportunity to make a strong first impression and highlight the unique assets that set it apart. As surrounding communities invest in place-based branding and infrastructure improvements, it is essential that Hardee County keep pace in order to remain competitive and attractive to residents, visitors, and investors alike.

The implementation of professionally designed gateway and wayfinding signs will provide multiple long-term benefits. From an economic development standpoint, the signage will increase the visibility of local businesses, direct visitors to commercial areas, and present a polished, unified image that helps attract new investment. For tourism, improved wayfinding will guide travelers to key destinations such as Pioneer Park, the Peace River, and historic downtown districts, encouraging longer stays and repeat visits by enhancing the overall visitor experience.

Equally important, this project will strengthen Hardee County's sense of identity and pride of place. The signage will create a more memorable sense of arrival for both residents and visitors, reinforcing community values and showcasing the county's heritage, charm, and character. By reflecting local aesthetics and culture, the signage will contribute to a more vibrant and cohesive environment that residents can take pride in.

In addition to these benefits, the project will improve public safety and accessibility by offering clear and intuitive navigation across the county. Whether for tourists, delivery services, or new residents, better signage will make it easier to explore and engage with all that Hardee County has to offer.

In summary, this project is a vital step toward enhancing the county's infrastructure and visibility. By investing in high-quality gateway and wayfinding signage, Hardee County will strengthen its economic foundation, elevate its public image, and ensure that all who pass through our borders are met with a welcoming and unmistakable sense of place.

TAB 02 - Business Activities Related to the Proposed Gateway Signage Project

While the gateway signage itself is not a commercial development, the project is directly connected to and supportive of a wide range of business activities throughout Hardee County. The signs will be strategically placed at key entry corridors and along major thoroughfares leading into population centers, commercial zones, and tourism destinations. These signs will enhance visibility and accessibility for the local business community and are expected to contribute to increased economic activity countywide.

The signage project supports several ongoing and future business-related efforts:

1. **Local Business Visibility and Engagement:**
   Businesses located near the gateway sign sites—including retail shops, restaurants, fuel stations, agribusiness vendors, and service providers—will benefit from increased awareness and improved wayfinding for both residents and out-of-county visitors. The signs will encourage travelers to stop and explore local offerings, thereby generating more foot traffic and boosting customer engagement.
2. **Tourism and Hospitality:**
   Many of Hardee County's economic activities are tied to tourism, including outdoor recreation along the Peace River, events at Pioneer Park, local museums, and annual festivals. Gateway signs will serve as the visual introduction to these destinations, helping direct tourists and eventgoers into nearby business districts where they can dine, shop, and stay. Lodging, dining, and recreational outfitters will all experience increased activity as a result.
3. **Economic Development and Investment Promotion:**
   Clear, well-designed signage is a signal of a forward-thinking and well-maintained community. This visual branding can influence site selectors, potential investors, and entrepreneurs who are considering new business ventures in the region. Gateway signs will support efforts by local economic development organizations to attract and retain businesses by reinforcing Hardee County's identity as a vibrant and connected place to live and work.
4. **Construction, Fabrication, and Installation Services:**
   The physical construction and installation of the gateway signs will provide short-term employment opportunities and contract work for local or regional businesses in sectors such as design, fabrication, construction, landscaping, and maintenance. These contracts can benefit small businesses and tradespeople in and around Hardee County.
5. **Marketing and Place Branding Initiatives:**
   The signage project complements existing and future county marketing campaigns by visually reinforcing brand messages. Businesses participating in co-op advertising, tourism promotions, or "buy local" initiatives will benefit from a more unified and recognizable county identity supported by these signs.

While the gateway signs themselves are not commercial enterprises, they are deeply connected to the local economy and business environment. They will enhance business visibility, attract customers, support tourism, encourage private investment, and generate work for local contractors. This project plays an important role in creating a business-friendly atmosphere that supports long-term economic growth in Hardee County.

TAB 03 - Infrastructure Ownership and Maintenance

The Hardee County Board of County Commissioners will retain full ownership of the gateway signs as well as any additional infrastructure funded through this project. All infrastructure operations, upkeep, and long-term maintenance will be the responsibility of the Hardee County Board of County Commissioners.

TAB 04 – Tourist Development Council Funding Approval

Gateway Sign Discussion on February 4, 2025:

Assistant County Manager Baber presented a proposal for six Gateway entry signs intended to enhance county visibility at key entry points. He introduced Bo Conerly of Kimley-Horn, who provided a slideshow detailing proposed sign designs, locations, pricing, electrical requirements, construction plans, and permitting considerations. The signs are modeled after those used by the City of Wauchula and would be installed perpendicular to the roadway with a one-sided design and limited landscaping included.

Board Discussion Highlights:

• Placement Concerns: Board Member Newman noted a proposed sign on Highway 17 was incorrectly positioned. Conerly explained the location was due to right-of-way limitations. Board Member Albritton suggested moving it south into county limits, which Conerly confirmed as a possibility.

• Design Details: Questions were raised about the signs' angle and visibility. Conerly confirmed they are one-sided, and the rear side would not be visible. Vice Chair Leakey suggested a "Thanks for visiting Hardee County" message on the back; Conerly stated this would require DOT approval.

• Legal Liability: Chair Chancey asked about liability in the event of a vehicle collision. County Attorney Johnston stated the county would not be liable, as the signs are set back from the road.

• Funding Proposal: Total estimated cost for six signs is $400,000. Baber proposed beginning with four signs and a $5,800 design fee contribution from the TDC. He suggested a cost-sharing model among the TDC, EDA, IDA, and BOCC, with each entity contributing $80,000 over two fiscal years ($30,000 in FY2025 and $50,000 in FY2026). The $5,800 fee could be applied toward TDC’s total share, giving them greater project control.

• Local Involvement: Vice Chair Leakey asked about local contractor involvement. Baber confirmed construction would go out to bid.

• Funding Concerns: Board Members Newman and Scheipsmeier felt the county should contribute more. A possibility was raised that the county could fund the final two signs if the other groups funded the first four.

• Private Funding: Commissioner Chancey inquired about private contributions. Baber advised that private donors might request advertising, which may not align with the county's vision.

Assistant County Manager Baber requested a motion from the TDC to approve the sign proposal and design, allowing the project to move forward for further coordination and funding.

Motion by Board Member Newman and second by Board Member Leakey to move forward with securing additional funding for four gateway signs. Motion carried 6 to 0. Ayes – Chancey, Leakey, Scheipsmeier, Cannon, Albritton, and Newman Absent – Ahir

Hardee County FLORIDA

COUNTY MANAGER'S OFFICE

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

TIM WELLS
DISTRICT 1

NOEY FLORES
VICE CHAIR, DISTRICT 2

DONALD CHANCEY
DISTRICT 3

RUSSELL MELENDY
CHAIR, DISTRICT 4

KENNY MILLER
DISTRICT 5

TERRY ATCHLEY
COUNTY MANAGER

SARAH JOHNSTON
COUNTY ATTORNEY

MAILING ADDRESS
412 West Orange Street
Suite 103
Wauchula, FL 33873

PHONE
863-773-9430

WEBSITE
hardeecountyfl.gov

TO: Industrial Development Authority

FROM: Hardee County Board of County Commissioners

CC: Terry Atchley, County Manager

Douglas Baber, Assistant County Manager

DATE: May 15, 2025

SUBJECT: Funding Request for County-Wide Gateway Signage Project

---

The Hardee County Board of County Commissioners respectfully requests funding support in the amount of $80,000 from the Industrial Development Authority to implement a county-wide gateway signage project at six key entry points with an overall cost of approximately $400,000. This initiative represents a strategic and fiscally responsible investment designed to yield significant returns in economic development and the strengthening of our community's identity.

Currently, Hardee County lacks cohesive and impactful signage at its primary entry points to effectively welcome visitors and create a positive first impression. The implementation of this project will directly address this deficiency and provide tangible benefits in the following key areas:

- **Enhanced Business Environment through First Impressions:** Professionally designed gateway signage will establish a positive initial perception of Hardee County for businesses, potential partners, and prospective employees entering the region. This welcoming visual will contribute to a more attractive and business-friendly atmosphere.
- **Increased Tourism Appeal:** Distinctive and attractive gateway signs will enhance the county's appeal to tourists from the moment they arrive. A strong visual welcome signals that Hardee County is a destination that values its visitors, potentially encouraging exploration of local attractions and increased tourism-related spending.
- **Strengthened Community Identity and Pride:** Unified and aesthetically pleasing gateway signage will foster a stronger sense of community identity and pride among residents. These visual markers will reinforce a positive image of Hardee County for both those who live here and those who are passing through.

TEAM HARDEE

- **Signaling Progress and Investment:** The implementation of high-quality gateway signage demonstrates a commitment to progress and investment in the county's infrastructure and image. This can positively influence perceptions of Hardee County as a dynamic and forward-looking community for both residents and external stakeholders.
- **Alignment with Strategic Economic Development Goals:** Creating a positive first impression is a fundamental element of attracting businesses, residents, and tourists. This gateway signage project directly supports the County's broader economic development strategy by enhancing the overall visual appeal and welcoming nature of the region.
- **Long-Term Value and Durability:** Investing in durable, well-designed gateway signage ensures a lasting positive impact on the county's image for years to come. This represents a cost-effective strategy for continuous positive reinforcement of Hardee County's identity.

We firmly believe that this project aligns directly with the IDA's mission to promote sustainable economic growth and enhance the quality of life within Hardee County. We are confident that this investment in our key entry points will generate significant positive impacts on our community's image and economic potential. We appreciate your thorough consideration of this request and welcome the opportunity to discuss this impactful initiative further.

Respectfully submitted,

Lacey Webb, Marketing & Tourism Manager
412 W. Orange Street, Suite 103
Wauchula, FL 33873

TAB 06 - ORGANIZATION CAPACITY

Capital Projects Manager, Bobby Keene has been employed by Hardee County almost 15 years. His work involves management and oversight of professional engineering work in the field of civil / environmental engineering and extensive coordination of project activities with staff, users, consultants, regulatory agencies and contractors. He has performed routine and advanced work in the management and operations of the County Infrastructure with Information Technologies and water / wastewater service area treatment plants, collection, distribution and transmission lines and associated construction, operation and maintenance. He ensured systems function continuously, efficiently and in compliance with safety and environmental regulatory standards concerning potable water treatment and distribution and wastewater treatment, reuse and disposal processes.

Additionally, Hardee County Grants Management Department staff have a combined experience of over 33 years administering State, Federal, and local grants. The Hardee County Grants Management Department have successfully administered more than $66 million in grants.

TAB 07 - Project Plan and Executive Summary

The Hardee County Board of County Commissioners respectfully requests funding support in the amount of $80,000 from the Economic Development Authority to implement a county-wide gateway signage project at six key entry points with an overall cost of approximately $400,000. This initiative represents a strategic and fiscally responsible investment designed to yield significant returns in economic development and the strengthening of our community's identity.

Currently, Hardee County lacks cohesive and impactful signage at its primary entry points to effectively welcome visitors and create a positive first impression. The implementation of this project will directly address this deficiency and provide tangible benefits in the following key areas:

- **Enhanced Business Environment through First Impressions:** Professionally designed gateway signage will establish a positive initial perception of Hardee County for businesses, potential partners, and prospective employees entering the region. This welcoming visual will contribute to a more attractive and business-friendly atmosphere.
- **Increased Tourism Appeal:** Distinctive and attractive gateway signs will enhance the county's appeal to tourists from the moment they arrive. A strong visual welcome signals that Hardee County is a destination that values its visitors, potentially encouraging exploration of local attractions and increased tourism-related spending.
- **Strengthened Community Identity and Pride:** Unified and aesthetically pleasing gateway signage will foster a stronger sense of community identity and pride among residents. These visual markers will reinforce a positive image of Hardee County for both those who live here and those who are passing through.
- **Signaling Progress and Investment:** The implementation of high-quality gateway signage demonstrates a commitment to progress and investment in the county's infrastructure and image. This can positively influence perceptions of Hardee County as a dynamic and forward-looking community for both residents and external stakeholders.
- **Alignment with Strategic Economic Development Goals:** Creating a positive first impression is a fundamental element of attracting businesses, residents, and tourists. This gateway signage project directly supports the County's broader economic development strategy by enhancing the overall visual appeal and welcoming nature of the region.
- **Long-Term Value and Durability:** Investing in durable, well-designed gateway signage ensures a lasting positive impact on the county's image for years to come. This represents a cost-effective strategy for continuous positive reinforcement of Hardee County's identity.

We firmly believe that this project aligns directly with the EDA’s mission to promote sustainable economic growth and enhance the quality of life within Hardee County. We are confident that this investment in our key entry points will generate significant positive impacts on our community's image and economic potential. We appreciate your thorough consideration of this request and welcome the opportunity to discuss this impactful initiative further.

TAB 08 - FINANCIAL PLAN

This reimbursement grant would be tracked in accordance with good cash management principles. The costs incurred shall include only expenditures related to the project and grant period as identified in the Grant Agreement. Requests for Reimbursement for allowable cost will include invoice, non-negotiable check and cleared check as backup.

All documents that support the reimbursement will be retained by Hardee County for 5-years following project completion.

TAB 09 - Public Use and Public Benefit Statement

The installation of new gateway signage in Hardee County represents more than a visual improvement—it is a strategic investment in community identity, pride of place, and the public good. These signs will serve as powerful symbols that signal to residents and visitors alike: *You are in Hardee County.*

The primary public benefit of gateway signage is the clear and immediate sense of arrival it provides. As travelers cross into our county, they will be greeted by professionally designed, visually striking signs that reflect Hardee County's rural heritage, agricultural strength, and small-town charm. These visual cues do more than mark boundaries—they foster a shared identity and reinforce the uniqueness of our community. For residents, these signs offer a sense of belonging and pride. For visitors, they provide a memorable first impression that distinguishes Hardee County as a place worth exploring.

Pride of place is a powerful, intangible public asset. Research shows that when communities visibly invest in their image and identity, it strengthens civic engagement, encourages public stewardship, and boosts morale. For Hardee County, gateway signs will help anchor that sense of pride, reminding residents of the value and beauty of their home, and signaling to newcomers and passersby that this is a community that cares about how it presents itself to the world.

In addition to enhancing local identity, the signs have a clear functional purpose. They improve navigation and orientation for all who enter the county—visitors, delivery drivers, and new residents—making our communities more accessible and user-friendly. They also support tourism by acting as visual entry points to a county rich with natural attractions, outdoor recreation, historical assets, and local events. With clear county identification at key entry corridors, tourists are more likely to stop, explore, and engage with our communities.

Gateway signs also support economic development by creating a strong and unified county brand. A welcoming and recognizable entrance communicates stability, growth, and opportunity —key messages for attracting businesses, developers, and investors. These signs serve as a visible testament to Hardee County's commitment to progress while honoring its roots.

Ultimately, the public good of this project lies in its ability to connect people to place—emotionally, culturally, and economically. These signs will be seen and experienced every day by thousands of drivers, residents, and visitors. They will define the thresholds of our county and frame the narrative of who we are. By investing in gateway signage, Hardee County affirms its identity, boosts civic pride, and lays the foundation for greater public engagement, tourism, and economic vitality.

TAB 10 - Project Schedule and Feasibility

The Hardee County Gateway Sign Project is well-positioned for timely and efficient implementation. The project consists of the installation of six professionally designed monument-style gateway signs at strategic entry points into Hardee County, including US 17 (north and south), SR 64 (east and west), SR 66 (east), and SR 62 (west).

The County has completed conceptual design renderings, selected preferred design themes inspired by the historic Hardee County Courthouse, and identified clear zone-compliant sign placement locations along major transportation corridors. These preparations reflect significant pre-planning and reduce early-stage permitting obstacles.

With funding approval, this project will commence in budget year 2026. The anticipated project schedule is as follows:

Phase 1: Project Authorization and Procurement Upon grant award and allocation in the FY2026 County budget, the Hardee County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) will authorize the project to proceed. Vendor procurement will begin immediately for final engineering, permitting, and survey work in accordance with County procurement policy.

Phase 2: Surveying, Geotechnical, and Engineering Design Topographic surveys, and geotechnical investigations at all six sign sites will be performed to inform structural design and foundation requirements. Concurrently, final engineering design will be completed using the already established aesthetic and dimensional sign concepts. This will include permitting coordination with FDOT and other applicable regulatory agencies.

Phase 3: Permitting and Approvals Design and permitting tasks—estimated at $95,000 in the project budget—will be completed with the goal of obtaining all necessary approvals by the end of Month 6. Easement coordination is not expected, as all proposed locations fall within existing County or State-controlled rights-of-way.

Phase 4: Fabrication and Procurement of Materials
Once approved, the fabrication of four gateway signs will begin. Materials will be selected to reflect high durability and visual consistency with the county's historic identity, and to ensure resilience in Florida's climate. The estimated per-sign cost is $35,607, with a total construction cost of approximately $142,428.

Phase 5: Construction and Installation
Construction of sign foundations and installation of the gateway signs will take place across the four sites. Construction phase services and inspection oversight are included in the project budget to ensure quality control.

Phase 6: Completion and Unveiling Following final inspections and any punch-list items, the County will coordinate a public unveiling event to celebrate the new gateway features. These signs will serve as visual landmarks and symbols of civic pride, economic development, and welcoming character.

Ongoing Operations and Maintenance
After installation, all signage will be maintained by the Hardee County BOCC. Maintenance

responsibilities include cleaning, landscaping, lighting upkeep, and any structural repairs required due to weather or wear over time.

The estimated total project cost is $402,767.50, inclusive of a 20% contingency fund. This budget is based on comparable recent projects and adjusted for inflation using FDOT indices.

The County's advanced planning, defined scope, and alignment with existing infrastructure make this project highly feasible and shovel-ready within the FY2026 implementation timeline.

TAB 11 - CONFLICT OF INTEREST

To the best of my knowledge and belief, the enclosed application does not benefit any elected official, officer, director, or agent who is also an employee of Hardee County or the Hardee County Economic Development Authority. The proposed project is a community-wide benefit.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.J

Item Cover Page

HARDEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM REPORT

DATE:	June 5, 2025
SUBMITTED BY:	Brandy Crawford, Budget and Finance
ITEM TYPE:	Business Agenda
AGENDA SECTION:	**BUSINESS AGENDA**
SUBJECT:	**Diane Moore, Budget Manager -** Operating Amendments
SUGGESTED ACTION:	

ATTACHMENTS:
aaMemo amendments operating 06052025 2.pdf
Operating Amendments 06052025.pdf

Hardee County
FLORIDA

MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

TIM WELLS
DISTRICT 1

NOEY FLORES
VICE-CHAIR, DISTRICT 2

DONALD CHANCEY
DISTRICT 3

RUSSELL MELENDY
CHAIR, DISTRICT 4

KENNY MILLER
DISTRICT 5

TERRY ATCHLEY
COUNTY MANAGER

SARAH JOHNSTON
COUNTY ATTORNEY

MAILING ADDRESS
412 West Orange Street
Suite 201
Wauchula, FL 33873

PHONE
863-773-3199

WEBSITE
hardeecountyfl.gov

To: Terry Atchley, County Manager

Through: Douglas G. Baber, Assistant County Manager

From: Diane Moore, Budget Manager

Subject: Operating Amendments

Date: May 30, 2025

The amendment before you is increasing the amount of sponsorships received and increasing parks and recreation promotion line. Following are the sponsorships received.

Mosaic $7,000
PRECO $3,000
Mosaic $3,500

Staff recommends approval of this amendment.

OPERATING BUDGET AMENDMENTS 2024-2025

June 5, 2025

Account Number	Classification	Adopted Budget	Amended Budget	Increase	Decrease	Revised Budget	Notes
001-366-000-5	GR- Donations- Pioneer Park	$ 2,500.00	$ 2,500.00	$ 13,500.00		$ 16,000.00	Donations are more than budgeted
001-572-248-0	Parks& Rec- Promotional	$ 500.00	$ 7,521.00	$ 13,500.00		$ 21,021.00	

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.K

Item Cover Page

HARDEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM REPORT

DATE: June 5, 2025

SUBMITTED BY: Casey Dasher, Public Safety/Fire/Rescue

ITEM TYPE: Business Agenda

AGENDA SECTION: **BUSINESS AGENDA**

SUBJECT:

Casey Dasher - Public Safety Director - Authorization to apply for the Department of Homeland Security Fiscal Year 2024 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

ATTACHMENTS:
FEMA FY24 SAFER Memo.pdf
Grant Application.pdf

Hardee County FLORIDA

FIRE RESCUE

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

RUSSELL MELENDY
CHAIR, DISTRICT 4

NOEY FLORES
VICE-CHAIR, DISTRICT 2

TIM WELLS
DISTRICT 1

DONALD CHANCEY
DISTRICT 3

KENNY MILLER
DISTRICT 5

TERRY ATCHLEY
COUNTY MANAGER

SARAH JOHNSTON
COUNTY ATTORNEY

MAILING ADDRESS
412 West Orange Street
Suite 103
Wauchula, FL 33873

PHONE
863-773-9430

WEBSITE
hardeecountyfl.gov

To: Terry Atchley, County Manager

Through: Douglas G. Baber, Assistant County Manager

From: Casey Dasher, Public Safety Director

Subject: FEMA FY2024 SAFER Grant

Date: May 30, 2025

Hardee County Fire Rescue is requesting BOCC approval to apply for the Department of Homeland Security Fiscal Year 2024 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant.

The SAFER Grant is one of three grant programs that constitute the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) focus on enhancing the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire-related hazards. The SAFER Program provides funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations to assist in increasing the number of firefighters to help communities meet industry minimum standards and attain 24-hour staffing to provide adequate fire protection from fire and fire-related hazards. Since 2005, the SAFER Program has awarded approximately $5.2 billion in grant funding to provide critically needed resources to hire new, additional firefighters (or to change the status of part-time or paid-on-call firefighters to full-time firefighters), to rehire laid off firefighters, or to retain firefighters facing layoff, as well as recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.

If awarded, recipients are required to contribute 25 percent of the actual costs incurred in each of the first and second years of the grant; and 65 percent of the actual costs incurred in the third year of the grant. The department plans to apply for 6 new firefighter positions to enhance our deployment capabilities for response to emergencies more effectively and safely. With enhanced staffing levels our department should experience a reduction in response times and an increase in the number of trained personnel assembled at an incident scene.

If awarded, the department will strategically budget funds for the continuation of the 6 new firefighter positions during the minimum 36-month period. The award amount is projected to be $1,172,554.00 over a three-year period.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Fiscal Year 2024 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program

Fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, and other criminal or noncriminal misconduct related to this program may be reported to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) Hotline. The toll-free numbers to call are 1 (800) 323-8603 and TTY 1 (844) 889-4357.

Contents

1. Basic Information 4
A. Agency Name 4
B. NOFO Title 4
C. Announcement Type 4
D. Funding Opportunity Number 4
E. Assistance Listing Number 4
F. Expected Total Funding 4
G. Anticipated Number of Awards 4
H. Expected Award Range 4
I. Projected Application Start Date 4
J. Projected Application End Date 4
K. Anticipated Funding Selection Date 4
L. Anticipated Award Date 4
M. Projected Period of Performance Start Date 4
N. Projected Period of Performance End Date 4
O. Executive Summary 5
P. Agency Contact 5
2. Eligibility 6
A. Eligible Entities/Entity Types 6
B. Project Type Eligibility 7
C. Requirements for Personnel, Partners, and Other Parties 8
D. Maximum Number of Applications 8
E. Additional Restrictions 8
F. References for Eligibility Factors within the NOFO 9
G. Cost Sharing Requirement 10
H. Cost Share Description, Type and Restrictions 10
I. Cost Sharing Calculation Example 10
J. Required information for verifying Cost Share 10
3. Program Description 11
A. Background, Program Purpose, and Program History 11
B. Goals, Objectives, and Priorities 11
C. Program Rationale 12
D. Federal Assistance Type 12
E. Performance Measures and Targets 12

F. Program-Specific Unallowable Costs 13
G. General Funding Requirements 13
H. Indirect Costs (Facilities and Administrative Costs) 13
I. Management and Administration (M&A) Costs 14
J. Pre-Award Costs 14
K. Beneficiary Eligibility 14
L. Participant Eligibility 14
M. Authorizing Authority 15
N. Appropriation Authority 15
O. Budget Period 15
P. Prohibition on Covered Equipment or Services 15
4. Application Contents and Format 15
A. Pre-Application, Letter of Intent, and Whitepapers 15
B. Application Content and Format 15
C. Application Components 15
D. Program-Specific Required Documents and Information 16
E. Post-Application Requirements for Successful Applicants 16
5. Submission Requirements and Deadlines 16
A. Address to Request Application Package 16
B. Application Deadline 18
C. Pre-Application Requirements Deadline 18
D. Post-Application Requirements Deadline 18
E. Effects of Missing the Deadline 18
6. Intergovernmental Review 19
A. Requirement Description and State Single Point of Contact 19
7. Application Review Information 19
A. Threshold Criteria 19
B. Application Criteria 19
C. Financial Integrity Criteria 20
D. Supplemental Financial Integrity Criteria and Review 20
E. Reviewers and Reviewer Selection 21
F. Merit Review Process 21
G. Final Selection 25
8. Award Notices 25
A. Notice of Award 25
B. Pass-Through Requirements 26
C. Note Regarding Pre-Award Costs 26
D. Obligation of Funds 26
E. Notification to Unsuccessful Applicants 26
9. Post-Award Requirements and Administration 26
A. Administrative and National Policy Requirements 26
B. DHS Standard Terms and Conditions 26
a. *Ensuring the Protection of Civil Rights* 27
C. Financial Reporting Requirements 27
D. Programmatic Performance Reporting Requirements 27
E. Closeout Reporting Requirements 27

F. Disclosing Information per 2 C.F.R. § 180.335 28
G. Reporting of Matters Related to Recipient Integrity and Performance 29
H. Single Audit Report 29
I. Monitoring and Oversight 29
J. Program Evaluation 30
K. Additional Performance Reporting Requirements 30
10. Other Information 30
A. Period of Performance Extension 30
B. Other Information 31
11. Appendix A – FY 2024 SAFER Program Updates 38
12. Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities 39
A. Ineligible Applications and Organizations 39
B. Supporting Definitions for this NOFO 41
C. Application Tips 43
D. Funding Limitation 44
E. Funding Priorities 45
F. Hiring Activity Overview 45
G. R&R Activity – Fire Departments Overview 46
H. R&R Activity – National, State, Local, Territorial, or Federally Recognized Tribal Nation Volunteer Firefighter Interest Organizations (Interest Organizations) Overview 49
I. Eligible and Ineligible Costs and Requirements 50
13. Appendix C – Award Administration Information 60
A. Help FEMA Prevent Fraud, Waste, and Abuse 60
B. Grant Writer/Preparation Fees 60
C. Maintenance and Sustainment 61
D. Taxes, Fees, Levies, and Assessments 61
E. Excess Funds 62
F. Payments and Amendments 62
G. Disposition of Grant-Funded Equipment 64
H. Post-Award Recipient Responsibilities 64

1. Basic Information

A. Agency Name	Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Resilience/Grant Programs Directorate (GPD)
B. NOFO Title	Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant
C. Announcement Type	Initial
D. Funding Opportunity Number	DHS-24-GPD-083-00-99
E. Assistance Listing Number	97.083
F. Expected Total Funding	$324,000,000
G. Anticipated Number of Awards	300 awards
H. Expected Award Range	N/A
I. Projected Application Start Date	05/23/2025 9:00 a.m. Eastern Time (ET)
J. Projected Application End Date	07/03/2025 5:00 p.m. ET
K. Anticipated Funding Selection Date	No later than 08/18/2025
L. Anticipated Award Date	Beginning on approximately Aug 18, 2025, and continuing thereafter until all FY 2024 SAFER Program grant awards are issued (but no later than September 30, 2025).
M. Projected Period of Performance Start Date	N/A[1]
N. Projected Period of Performance End Date	N/A

[1] FEMA funds SAFER Program awards on a rolling basis; as such, the date the FEMA Assistant Administrator for the Grant Programs Directorate signs the obligating document dictates the unique Period of Performance start and end dates for each award.

O. Executive Summary	The Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program (hereafter referred to as the SAFER Program) is one of three grant programs that constitute the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) focus on enhancing the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire and fire-related hazards. The SAFER Program provides funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations to assist in increasing the number of firefighters to help communities meet industry minimum standards and attain 24-hour staffing to provide adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards, and to fulfill traditional missions of fire departments. Since 2005, the SAFER Program has awarded approximately $5.8 billion in grant funding to provide critically needed resources to hire new, additional firefighters (or to change the status of part-time or paid-on-call firefighters to full-time firefighters), as well as recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Information about success stories for this program can be found at Assistance to Firefighters Grants Program | FEMA.gov.
P. Agency Contact	**a.** ***SAFER Program Office Contact*** The SAFER Program Help Desk provides technical assistance to applicants for the online completion and submission of applications into FEMA Grants Outcomes (FEMA GO), answers questions concerning applicant eligibility, recipient responsibilities, and helps in the programmatic administration of awards. The SAFER Program Help Desk can be contacted at (866) 274-0960 or by email at FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov. Normal hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. ET. Guidance documents such as application tutorials, Self-Evaluation Guides, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are also provided to further explain the current SAFER Program, assist with the online grant application, and highlight lessons learned and changes for FY 2024. For more details, please visit the SAFER Program website. **b.** ***FEMA Grants News*** This channel provides general information on all FEMA grant programs and maintains a comprehensive database containing key personnel contact information at the federal, state, and local levels. FEMA Grants News Team is reachable at fema-grants-news@fema.dhs.gov or (800) 368-6498, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET. **c.** ***Grant Programs Directorate (GPD) Award Administration Division***

	GPD's Award Administration Division (AAD) provides support regarding financial matters and budgetary technical assistance. AAD can be contacted at ASK-GMD@fema.dhs.gov. **d.** ***FEMA Regional Offices*** Assistance to Firefighters Grants Regional Contacts also may provide fiscal support, including pre- and post-award administration and technical assistance. Assistance to Firefighters Grants Regional Office contacts are available at Assistance to Firefighters Grants Regional Contacts | FEMA.gov. **e.** ***Civil Rights*** The FEMA Office of Civil Rights is responsible for ensuring compliance with and enforcement of federal civil rights obligations in connection with programs and services conducted by FEMA. They are reachable at FEMA-CivilRightsOffice@fema.dhs.gov. **f.** ***Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation*** The FEMA Office of Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (OEHP) provides guidance and information about the EHP review process to FEMA programs and recipients and subrecipients. Send any inquiries regarding compliance for FEMA grant projects under this NOFO to FEMA-OEHP-NOFOQuestions@fema.dhs.gov. **g.** ***Payment and Reporting System*** Payments are requested through FEMA GO. The Direct Deposit/Electronic Funds Transfer (DD/EFT) method of payment is used for recipients. For any questions about the system, contact the Customer Service Center at (866) 927-5646 or ask-GMD@fema.dhs.gov. **h.** ***FEMA GO*** For technical assistance with the FEMA GO system, please contact the FEMA GO Helpdesk at femago@fema.dhs.gov or (877) 585-3242, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. ET.

2. Eligibility

A. Eligible Entities/Entity Types	Only the following entities or entity types are eligible to apply. **a.** ***Applicants*** • Fire departments; and • National, regional, state, local, tribal, and nonprofit interest organizations representing the interests of volunteer

	firefighters are eligible to receive a SAFER Program award under the R&R Activity. See Section A of Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities for additional information on ineligible applications and organizations. **b. *Subapplicants*** Subapplicants and subawards are not allowed.
B. Project Type Eligibility	**Applicants and recipients should actively coordinate and collaborate with their local and state authorities to help ensure and prioritize the commitment of future non-federal investments in order to sustain staffing capabilities once an award's period of performance ends.** **a. *Allowable Project Types*** 1. Hiring Activity The Hiring Activity offers grants to support applications to hire new, additional firefighters (or to change the status of part-time or paid-on-call firefighters to full-time firefighters). National, regional, state, local, Tribal Nation, and nonprofit interest organizations representing the interests of volunteer firefighters are not eligible to receive a SAFER Program award under the Hiring Activity. 2. R&R Activity The R&R Activity offers grants to support applications to assist fire departments with the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters who are involved with or trained in the operations of firefighting and emergency response. Career fire departments are not eligible to apply for funding under the R&R Activity. Each activity has its own application and eligibility requirements, as further outlined in Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities of this NOFO. **b. *Unallowable Project Types*** • Under the R&R Activity, applications that request a Staffing Needs Assessment or Risk Assessment project are precluded from applying for additional R&R- related activities. • FEMA will not fund any projects, activities, or line items that are covered under a department's normal operating budget. Federal funding may not be used to supplant (i.e., replace) an existing activity or program.

	• Applicants may not use award funds for matching funds for any other federal grants or cooperative agreements, for lobbying, or for intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. • Applicants may not use federal funds to sue the Federal Government or any other government entity.
C. Requirements for Personnel, Partners, and Other Parties	An application submitted by an otherwise eligible non-federal entity (i.e., the applicant) may be deemed ineligible when the person that submitted the application is not: **1) a current employee, personnel, official, staff, or leadership of the non-federal entity; and 2) duly authorized to apply for an award on behalf of the non-federal entity at the time of application**. Further, the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) must be a duly authorized current employee, personnel, official, staff, or leadership of the recipient and **provide an email address unique to the recipient at the time of application and upon any change in assignment during the period of performance. Consultants or contractors of the recipient are not permitted to be the AOR of the recipient.** Information on ineligible applications and organizations is in Appendix B of this NOFO.
D. Maximum Number of Applications	The maximum number of applications that can be submitted is one application per activity.
E. Additional Restrictions	**a.** ***Period of Performance Restrictions*** 1. Hiring Activity The period of performance for applications funded under the Hiring Activity will be 36 months. A default 180-day recruitment period begins when FEMA approves an application for an award under this activity. The 36-month period of performance automatically starts after the 180-day recruitment period, regardless of whether the recipient has successfully hired the requested firefighters. The period of performance cannot start later than 180 days after the award date. If a recipient can hire all SAFER Program-funded firefighters during the 180-day recruitment period, the period of performance may begin at that time. In these instances, recipients must submit an amendment requesting that the period of performance start before the end of the 180-day recruitment period if they wish to begin the period early.

	2. R&R Activity The period of performance for applications funded under the R&R Activity will be 12, 24, 36, or 48 months. A default 90-day recruitment period begins when FEMA approves the application for award. This period allows each recipient time to gather resources, initiate processes, and finalize contracts needed to implement SAFER Program activities before the start of the period of performance to maximize the funding's availability. However, the recipient can only expend funds within the period of performance. The period of performance automatically starts after the 90-day recruitment period ends, regardless of whether the recipient has begun implementing its grant award. The period of performance cannot start later than 90 days after the award date. If a recipient can begin its recruitment or retention activities during the 90-day recruitment period, the period of performance may begin at that time. In these instances, recipients must submit an amendment requesting that the period of performance start before the end of the 90-day recruitment period if they wish to begin the period early. Extensions to the period of performance are allowed for R&R Activity grants only. For additional information on period of performance extensions, please refer to Section 10.A. **b.** ***National Incident Management System (NIMS) Implementation*** SAFER Program applicants are not required to comply with NIMS to apply for SAFER Program funding or to receive a SAFER Program award. Any applicant who receives an FY 2024 SAFER Program award must achieve the level of NIMS compliance required by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) over the applicant's emergency service operations (e.g., a local government), prior to the end of the grant's period of performance.
F. References for Eligibility Factors within the NOFO	Please see the following references provided below: 1. Subsection 7.A. Threshold Criteria 2. Subsection 7.B. Application Criteria 3. Subsection 7.C. Financial Integrity Criteria 4. Subsection 7.D. Supplemental Financial Integrity Criteria and Review 5. Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities

G. Cost Sharing Requirement	For Hiring Activity grants, recipients are required to contribute non-federal funds as a cost share. For R&R Activity grants, there is no cost share requirement.
H. Cost Share Description, Type and Restrictions	For Hiring Activity grants, recipients are required to contribute 25 percent of the actual costs incurred in each of the first and second years of the grant; and 65 percent of the actual costs incurred in the third year of the grant. In the first and second years of the grant, the amount of federal funding may not exceed 75 percent of the usual annual cost of a first-year firefighter in that department at the time the grant application was submitted; and in the third year of the grant the amount of federal funding may not exceed 35 percent of the usual annual cost of a first-year firefighter in that department. The "usual annual cost" includes a firefighter's base salary (excluding non-FLSA overtime) and standard benefits package (including the average annual cost of health, dental, and vision insurance; FICA; life insurance; retirement and/or pension contributions; etc.) offered by the fire department to first-year firefighters. FEMA does not require recipients to demonstrate availability of cost share funds at the time of application. However, before FEMA issues an award it may contact potential awardees to determine whether the recipient possesses the necessary non-federal funding. For R&R Activity grants, there is no cost share requirement.
I. Cost Sharing Calculation Example	Assuming that the usual annual cost of a first-year firefighter in a department at the time of the grant application is $120,000 per year and the department actually incurred $100,000 per year in each year of the grant, the following cost share requirements and position cost limits would apply: 1. Cost Share Requirement: The grant recipient is required to contribute $25,000 in Year 1; $25,000 in Year 2; and $65,000 in Year 3. 2. Position Cost Limit: The amount of federal funding cannot exceed $90,000 in Year 1; $90,000 in Year 2; and $42,000 in Year 3.
J. Required information for verifying Cost Share	**a.** ***Minimum Budget Requirement***

	In accordance with 15 U.S.C. § 2229a(c)(2), in order to be eligible for SAFER Program funding, applicants are required to certify that their annual budget for fire-related programs and emergency response has not been reduced below 80 percent of the applicant's average funding level in the three years prior to the application date.

3. Program Description

A. Background, Program Purpose, and Program History

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program (hereafter referred to as the SAFER Program) is one of three grant programs that constitute the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) focus on enhancing the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire and fire-related hazards. The SAFER Program provides funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations to assist in increasing the number of firefighters to help communities meet industry minimum standards and attain 24-hour staffing to provide adequate fire protection from fire and fire-related hazards, and to fulfill traditional missions of fire departments. Since 2005, the SAFER Program has awarded approximately $5.8 billion in grant funding to provide critically needed resources to hire new, additional firefighters (or to change the status of part-time or paid-on-call firefighters to full-time firefighters), as well as recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Information about success stories for this program can be found at Assistance to Firefighters Grants Program | FEMA.gov.

The SAFER Program is part of a comprehensive set of measures authorized by Congress and implemented by DHS. In awarding grants, the FEMA Administrator is required to consider:

- The findings and recommendations of the Technical Evaluation Panel;
- The degree to which an award will reduce deaths, injuries, and property damage by reducing the risks associated with fire-related and other hazards;
- The extent of an applicant's need for a SAFER Program grant and the need to protect the United States as a whole; and
- The number of calls requesting or requiring a firefighting or emergency medical response received by an applicant.

B. Goals, Objectives, and Priorities

Goal: To enhance local fire departments' abilities to comply with staffing, response and operational standards established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA 1710 or NFPA 1720[2]).

[2] NFPA 1710 and 1720 are lapsing in 2026 and will be consolidated under the proposed NFPA 1750. FEMA is working with the NFPA Standards Council to evaluate deployment of fire suppression operations. No decisions have been made and FEMA will issue additional guidance when more information becomes available. While the goal of the grant is to increase compliance with NFPA 1710 or 1720, 24-hour staffing is not a requirement of the SAFER Program.

Objectives: The objectives of the SAFER Program are to are to provide funding to communities so they may:

- Increase the number of firefighters to meet industry minimum standards;
- Increase the number of trained personnel assembled at the incident scene;
- Attain 24-hour staffing to improve deployment capabilities; and
- Fulfill traditional missions of fire departments (respond to emergencies and provide adequate fire protection from fire and fire-related hazards).

Priorities: Information on program priorities and objectives for the FY 2024 SAFER Program can be found in Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities of this NOFO.

C. Program Rationale
The SAFER Program represents part of a comprehensive set of measures authorized by Congress and implemented by DHS. Among the six DHS Missions noted in the Department of Homeland Security's Strategic Plan, the SAFER Program supports Mission Five: Build a Resilient Nation and Respond to Incidents. By increasing the number of trained firefighters, the SAFER Program improves deployment capabilities to respond to emergencies and provide adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards. The SAFER Program also aims to support objectives outlined under Mission Five in the Strategic Plan including:

- Objective 5.1: Coordinate Federal Response to Incidents
- Objective 5.2: Strengthen National Resilience
- Objective 5.4: Enhance Training and Readiness of First Responders

Through these objectives, FEMA creates a vision for the field of emergency management and sets an ambitious, yet achievable, path forward to unify and further professionalize emergency management across the country. We invite all our stakeholders and partners to join us in building a more prepared and resilient nation.

D. Federal Assistance Type
Grant

E. Performance Measures and Targets
The grant recipient is required to collect data to allow FEMA to measure performance of the awarded grant in support of the SAFER Program metrics, which are tied to the programmatic objectives and priorities. To measure performance, FEMA may request information throughout the period of performance. In its final performance report submitted at closeout, the recipient must submit sufficient information to demonstrate it has met the performance goal as stated in its award. FEMA will measure the recipient's performance of the grant by comparing the number of items, supplies, projects, and activities needed and requested in its application with the number of items, supplies, projects, and activities acquired and delivered by the end of the period of performance using the following programmatic metrics:

- Percentage of "majority career" SAFER Program recipients who reported and provided evidence that the grant funding increased compliance with structural fire responses that complied with NFPA 1710 structural response standards;
- Percentage of "majority volunteer" SAFER Program recipients who reported and provided evidence that the grant funding increased compliance with structural fire responses that complied with NFPA 1720 structural response standards; and
- Percentage of SAFER Program recipients who reported and provided evidence that the grant funding increased compliance with NFPA 1710 or 1720 assembly and deployment standards.

The target for these measures is the number of firefighters hired and the structural fire responses that complied with NFPA 1710 structural response standards. The measure will be assessed by how the addition of new firefighters has resulted in a percentage increase in compliance with the relevant section of the NFPA standards.

F. Program-Specific Unallowable Costs
Construction costs are not allowable under the SAFER Program. Construction includes major alterations to a building that changes the profile or footprint of the structure.

Modifications to facilities described in Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities are not considered construction costs for purposes of general award cost categorization and may be eligible. However, modifications to facilities activities might be considered "construction" for purposes of procurement or environmental protection and historic preservation purposes.

G. General Funding Requirements
Costs charged to federal awards (including federal and non-federal cost share funds) must comply with applicable statutes, rules and regulations, policies, this NOFO, and the terms and conditions of the federal award. This includes, among other requirements, that costs must be incurred, and products and services must be delivered within the budget period. 2 C.F.R. § 200.403(h).

Recipients may not use federal funds or any cost share funds for the following activities:

1. Matching or cost sharing requirements for other federal grants and cooperative agreements (see 2 C.F.R. § 200.306).
2. Lobbying or other prohibited activities under 18 U.S.C. § 1913 or 2 C.F.R. § 200.450.
3. Prosecuting claims against the federal government or any other government entity (see 2 C.F.R. § 200.435).

H. Indirect Costs (Facilities and Administrative Costs)
Indirect costs are allowed for recipients and subrecipients.

Indirect costs (IDC) are costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective and not readily assignable to specific cost objectives without disproportionate effort. Indirect costs are allowable only under R&R Activity for this program as described in 2 C.F.R. Part 200, including 2 C.F.R. § 200.414. Applicants with a current negotiated IDC rate agreement who desire to charge indirect costs to a federal award must provide a copy of their

IDC rate agreement with their applications. Not all applicants are required to have a current negotiated IDC rate agreement. Applicants that are not required to have a negotiated IDC rate agreement, but are required to develop an IDC rate proposal, must provide a copy of their proposal with their applications. Applicants without a current negotiated IDC rate agreement (including a provisional rate) and wish to charge the de minimis rate must reach out via email to FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov for further instructions. Applicants who wish to use a cost allocation plan in lieu of an IDC rate proposal must also reach out via email to FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov for further instructions. As it relates to the IDC for subrecipients, a recipient must follow the requirements of 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.332 and 200.414 in approving the IDC rate for subawards.

I. Management and Administration (M&A) Costs
M&A costs are allowed under the R&R Activity only. M&A costs are not eligible under the Hiring Activity.

No more than 3% of the federal share of SAFER Program funds awarded may be expended by the recipient for M&A for purposes associated with the SAFER Program award. M&A activities are those directly related to the management and administration of the SAFER award funds, such as financial management and monitoring. M&A expenses should be based only on actual expenses or known contractual costs; requests that are simple percentages of the award or estimates, without supporting justification or adequate documentation will not be allowed or considered for reimbursement. Salaries and fringe benefits for personnel directly supporting the grant are not required to be included in the M&A budget line item.

M&A are not overhead costs but are necessary direct costs incurred in direct support of the federal award or as a consequence of it, such as travel, meeting-related expenses, and salaries of full/part-time staff in direct support of the program. As such, M&A costs can be itemized in financial reports.

J. Pre-Award Costs
The following pre-award costs are allowable:

1. Fees for grant writers.

Generally, grant funds cannot be used to pay for products and services contracted for or obligated prior to the effective date of the award.

See Appendix C – Award Administration Information for further information regarding grant writer fees and Section 10.B. Other Information for general procurement under grants requirements.

K. Beneficiary Eligibility
To be an eligible beneficiary, there are no program requirements. This NOFO and any subsequent federal awards create no rights or causes of action for any beneficiary.

L. Participant Eligibility
To be an eligible participant, there are no program requirements. This NOFO and any subsequent federal awards create no rights or causes of action for any participant.

M. Authorizing Authority
Section 34 of the *Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974*, Pub. L. No. 93-498, as amended (15 U.S.C. § 2229a).

N. Appropriation Authority
Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2024, Pub. L. No. 118-47, Title III, Protection, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Financial Assistance (2024 DHS Appropriations Act).

O. Budget Period
There will be only a single budget period with the same start and end dates as the period of performance.

P. Prohibition on Covered Equipment or Services
Recipients, subrecipients, and their contractors or subcontractors must comply with the prohibitions set forth in Section 889 of the *John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019*, which restricts the purchase of covered telecommunications and surveillance equipment and services. Please see 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.216, 200.327, 200.471, and Appendix II to 2 C.F.R. Part 200, and FEMA Policy #405-143-1 - Prohibitions on Expending FEMA Award Funds for Covered Telecommunications Equipment or Services for more information.

4. Application Contents and Format

A. Pre-Application, Letter of Intent, and Whitepapers
Pre-applications, letters of intent, and whitepapers are not required to be eligible to apply.

B. Application Content and Format
Applications are processed through the FEMA GO system. To access the system, go to https://go.fema.gov/. Additional application and program guidance documents are available at the SAFER Program website. Applicants will be prompted to submit the standard application information and any program-specific information required as described in Sections 4.C. Application Components and 4.D. Program-Specific Required Documents and Information of this NOFO. The Standard Forms (SF) may be accessed in the Forms tab at Forms | Grants.gov. Applicants should review these forms before applying to ensure they have all the information required.

After submitting the final application, FEMA GO will provide either an error message or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the AOR that submitted the application. Applicants using slow internet connections, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before FEMA GO receives your application.

For additional application submission requirements, including program-specific requirements, please refer to the Section 4.C. Application Components of this NOFO.

C. Application Components

The following forms or information are required to be submitted via FEMA GO. The Standard Forms (SF) are also available at Forms | Grants.gov.

- SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance
- Grants.gov Lobbying Form, Certification Regarding Lobbying
- SF-424A, Budget Information (Non-Construction)
- SF-424B, Standard Assurances (Non-Construction)
- SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

D. Program-Specific Required Documents and Information
For program-specific updates and information, please see the Appendix A – FY 2024 SAFER Program Updates, Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities, and Appendix C – Award Administration Information.

E. Post-Application Requirements for Successful Applicants
Applicants likely to be funded may receive a request for additional information by email prior to award. Applicants must respond to the request to move forward with the grant review process.

5. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

A. Address to Request Application Package
Applications are processed through the FEMA GO system. To access the system, go to FEMA GO.

Steps Required to Apply for An Award Under This Program and Submit an Application:

To apply for an award under this program, all applicants must:

a. Apply for, update, or verify their Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number and Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service;
b. In the application, provide an UEI number;
c. Have an account with login.gov;
d. Register for, update, or verify their SAM account and ensure the account is active before submitting the application;
e. Register in FEMA GO, add the organization to the system, and establish the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR). The organization's electronic business point of contact (eBiz POC) from the SAM registration may need to be involved in this step. For step-by-step instructions, see the FEMA GO Startup Guide;
f. Submit the complete application in FEMA GO; and
g. Always maintain an active SAM registration with current information when the applicant has an active federal award or an application under consideration by a federal awarding agency. As part of this, applicants must also provide information on an applicant's immediate and highest-level owner and subsidiaries, as well as on all predecessors that have been awarded federal contracts or federal financial assistance within the last three years, if applicable.

Per 2 C.F.R. § 25.110, if an applicant is experiencing exigent circumstances that prevents it from obtaining an UEI number and completing SAM registration prior to receiving a federal award, the applicant must notify FEMA as soon as possible. Contact fema-grants-news@fema.dhs.gov and provide the details of the exigent circumstances.

How to Register to Apply:

General Instructions:

Registering and applying for an award under this program is a multi-step process and requires time to complete. Below are instructions for registering to apply for FEMA funds. Read the instructions carefully and prepare the requested information before beginning the registration process. Gathering the required information before starting the process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

The registration process can take up to four weeks to complete. To ensure an application meets the deadline, applicants are advised to start the required steps well in advance of their submission.

Organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, Employer Identification Number (EIN), and an active System for Award Management (SAM) registration.

Obtain a UEI Number:

All entities applying for funding, including renewal funding, must have a UEI number. Applicants must enter the UEI number in the applicable data entry field on the SF-424 form. For more detailed instructions for obtaining a UEI number, refer to SAM.gov.

Obtain Employer Identification Number:

In addition to having a UEI number, all entities applying for funding must provide an Employer Identification Number (EIN). The EIN can be obtained from the IRS by visiting https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online.

Create a login.gov account:

Applicants must have a login.gov account to register with SAM or update their SAM registration. Applicants can create a login.gov account at: https://secure.login.gov/sign_up/enter_email?request_id=34f19fa8-14a2-438c-8323-a62b99571fd.

Applicants only must create a login.gov account once. For existing SAM users, use the same email address for both login.gov and SAM.gov so that the two accounts can be linked.

For more information on the login.gov requirements for SAM registration, refer to https://www.sam.gov/SAM/pages/public/loginFAQ.jsf.

Register with SAM:

In addition to having a UEI number, all organizations must register with SAM. Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through FEMA GO. SAM registration must be renewed annually and must remain active throughout the entire grant life cycle.[3]

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to: Register with SAM.

Register in FEMA GO, Add the Organization to the System, and Establish the AOR:

Applicants must register in FEMA GO and add their organization to the system. The organization's electronic business point of contact (eBiz POC) from the SAM registration may need to be involved in this step. For step-by-step instructions, see FEMA GO Startup Guide.

Note: FEMA GO will support only the most recent major release of the following browsers: Google Chrome; Mozilla Firefox; Apple Safari; and Microsoft Edge.

Applicants using tablet type devices or other browsers may encounter issues with using FEMA GO.

Submitting the Final Application:

Applicants will be prompted to submit the standard application information and any program-specific information required. Standard Forms (SF) may be accessed at Forms | Grants.gov. Applicants should review these forms before applying to ensure they are providing all required information.

After submitting the final application, FEMA GO will provide either an error message, or an email to the submitting AOR confirming the transmission was successfully received.

B. Application Deadline
07/03/2025 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time

C. Pre-Application Requirements Deadline
Not applicable.

D. Post-Application Requirements Deadline
Not applicable.

E. Effects of Missing the Deadline
All applications must be completed in FEMA GO by the application deadline. FEMA GO automatically records proof of timely submission and generates an electronic date/time stamp when FEMA GO successfully receives an application. The submitting AOR will receive via email the official date and time stamp and a FEMA GO tracking number to serve as proof of timely submission prior to the application deadline.

[3] Per 2 C.F.R. § 25.200, , applicants must also provide the applicant's immediate and highest-level owner, subsidiaries, and predecessors that have been awarded federal contracts or federal financial assistance within the past three years, if applicable.

Applicants experiencing system-related issues have until 3:00 p.m. ET on the date applications are due to notify FEMA. No new system-related issues will be addressed after this deadline. Applications not received by the application submission deadline will not be accepted.

6. Intergovernmental Review

A. Requirement Description and State Single Point of Contact
An intergovernmental review is not required.

7. Application Review Information

A. Threshold Criteria
FEMA conducts reviews of a random sampling of applications to compare them for duplication including the narrative statements and statistical data. Therefore, all elements of the narrative statements must be specific and unique to the applying entity, and all statistical data must be accurate. Applications with narrative statements that have substantial duplication of statements, sentences, or paragraphs to other submitted applications, or inaccurate data that may mislead reviewers may be disqualified. Discovery of falsification, fabrication, or plagiarism of other grant proposals will disqualify the application(s).

Note: FEMA evaluates each application on its merit, veracity, and accuracy to ascertain how the narrative statement(s) outlined within the application depicts the applicant's and their community's uniqueness, their particular risks, and how selecting them over a similarly situated applicant advances the objectives of the SAFER program to assist local fire departments with staffing and deployment capabilities to respond to emergencies and assure that communities have adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards. At any time during application review process, including the technical review stage, FEMA may request additional documentation from applicants, including but not limited to:

- Copies of official or certified documents demonstrating the claimed financial need;
- Copies of the applicant's needs assessment report, survey, or any documented other efforts undertaken to identify the applicant's unique project objectives;
- Copies of the risk analysis conducted to ascertain how said project will address the applicant's unique needs in alignment with their mission and SAFER Program grant purpose;
- Additional information or evidence detailing the applicant's particular risks; and
- Any other information deemed necessary to adequately weigh the applicant's assistance request for funding under this discretionary-competitive grant program. No applicant is guaranteed funding.

B. Application Criteria
Funding priorities and programmatic criteria for evaluating SAFER Program applications are established by FEMA based on the recommendations from the Criteria Development Panel (CDP). Each year, FEMA convenes a panel of fire service professionals to develop funding priorities for the SAFER Program. The panel makes recommendations about funding priorities as well as developing criteria for awarding grants.

The **nine major fire service organizations** represented on the panel are:

- International Association of Fire Chiefs

- International Association of Fire Fighters
- National Volunteer Fire Council
- National Fire Protection Association
- National Association of State Fire Marshals
- International Association of Arson Investigators
- International Society of Fire Service Instructors
- North American Fire Training Directors
- Congressional Fire Service Institute

The CDP is charged with making recommendations to FEMA regarding the creation or modification of previously established funding priorities as well as developing criteria for awarding grants. The content of this NOFO reflects implementation of the CDP's recommendations with respect to the priorities, direction, and criteria for awards.

FEMA will rank all complete and submitted applications based on how well they align with the program priorities for the activity. Answers to the application's activity specific questions provide information used to determine each application's ranking relative to the stated program priorities.

The Narrative Statements of the application must provide specific details about the activity for which applicants seek funding, including budget details. The weighted evaluation criteria used by the peer reviewers in the determination of the grant award, as described below, make up the elements of the narrative statement score.

C. Financial Integrity Criteria

Before making an award, FEMA is required to review OMB-designated databases for applicants' eligibility and financial integrity information. This is required by the *Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019* (Pub. L. No. 116-117, § 2 (2020)), 41 U.S.C. § 2313, and the "Do Not Pay Initiative" (31 U.S.C. 3354). For more details, please see 2 C.F.R. § 200.206.

Thus, the Financial Integrity Criteria may include the following risk-based considerations of the applicant:

1. Financial stability.
2. Quality of management systems and ability to meet management standards.
3. History of performance in managing federal award.
4. Reports and findings from audits.
5. Ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.

D. Supplemental Financial Integrity Criteria and Review

Before making an award expected to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (currently a total federal share of $250,000) over the period of performance:

1. FEMA is required by 41 U.S.C. § 2313 to review or consider certain information found in SAM.gov. For details, please see 2 C.F.R. § 200.206(a)(2).
2. An applicant may review and comment on any information in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov.

3. Before making decisions in the risk review required by 2 C.F.R. § 200.206, FEMA will consider any comments by the applicant.

E. Reviewers and Reviewer Selection

A panel of peer reviewers is comprised of fire service representatives recommended by the Criteria Development Panel. Peer reviewers are subject matter experts recommended by the nine major fire service organizations. In their role as Special Government Employees, peer reviewers must certify and observe Federal Conflict of Interests rules.

F. Merit Review Process

SAFER Program applications are reviewed through a multi-phase process. All applications are electronically pre-scored and ranked based on how well they align with the funding priorities outlined in this NOFO.

Applications with the highest pre-score rankings per activity are then scored competitively by no less than three members of a Peer Review Panel.

Applications will also be evaluated through a series of internal FEMA review processes for completeness, adherence to programmatic guidelines, technical feasibility, costs/quantities, and anticipated effectiveness of the proposed project(s). Below is the process by which applications will be reviewed:

1. Pre-Scoring Process

The application undergoes an electronic pre-scoring process based on established program priorities listed in Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities and answers to activity-specific questions within the online application. Application Narratives are not reviewed during the pre-score process. "Request Details" and "Budget" information should comply with program guidance and statutory funding limitations. The pre-score is 50% of the total application score under the Hiring Activity, and 30% of the total application score under the R&R Activity.

2. Peer Review Panel Process

Applications with the highest rankings from the pre-scoring process will undergo a Peer Review Panel process. A panel of peer reviewers is comprised of fire service representatives recommended by the CDP. Peer reviewers will assess the merits of each application based on the narrative statement on the requested activity. The evaluation elements listed in the "Narrative Evaluation Criteria" below will be used to calculate the narrative's score for each activity requested. Panelists will independently score each requested activity within the application, discuss the merits and shortcomings of the application with their peers, and document the findings. A consensus is not required. The panel score is 50% of the total application score under the Hiring Activity, and 70% of the total application score under the R&R Activity.

Peer Review Panelists will evaluate and score each activity based on the following narrative elements within each activity.

a. ***Hiring Activity***
The panel score is 50% of the total application score.

1. Project Description (30%):

   - Why does the department need the positions requested in this application?
   - How will the positions requested in this application be used within the department (e.g., fourth firefighter on engine, open a new station, eliminate browned out stations, reduce overtime)?
   - What unique and specific services will the requested positions provide to the fire department and community?
   - How will funds awarded through this grant enhance the department's ability to protect critical infrastructure within the primary response area?

2. Impact on Daily Operations (30%):

   - How are the community and the current firefighters employed by the department at risk without the positions requested in this application?
   - How will that risk be unequivocally reduced if awarded?

3. Financial Need (30%):

   - Provide an income versus expenses breakdown of the department's current annual budget.
   - Describe the department's precise budget shortfalls and inability to address financial needs without federal assistance.
   - Describe what other actions the department has taken to obtain funding elsewhere (e.g., state assistance programs, other grant programs).
   - Discuss how the critical functions of the department are uniquely affected without this funding.

4. Cost Benefit (10%):

   - Describe the unique and specific benefits (e.g., quantifying the anticipated savings and efficiencies) the department and community will realize if awarded the positions requested in this application.

b. ***R&R Activity (Fire Departments)***
The panel score is 70% of the total application score.

1. Project Description (30%):

   - Describe the unique problems and issues the department is experiencing in recruiting new volunteer firefighters.

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

2. Impact on Daily Operations (30%):

- Describe with particularity and discreteness how the community and current volunteer firefighters in the department are at risk without the items or activities requested in this application.
- Describe how that risk will be unequivocally reduced if awarded funding.
- Explain the definitive impact the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters, the retention of current volunteer firefighters, or both, will have on the department's NFPA compliance.

3. Financial Need (30%):

- Provide an income versus expenses breakdown of the department's current annual budget.
- Describe the department's precise budget shortfalls and its inability to address financial needs without federal assistance.
- Describe what other actions the department has taken to obtain funding elsewhere (e.g., state assistance programs, other grant programs), and how similar projects have been funded in the past.
- Discuss how the critical functions of the department are uniquely affected without this funding.

4. Cost Benefit (10%):

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

c. *R&R Activity (National, state, local, or federally recognized tribal volunteer firefighters interest organizations)*

The panel score is 70% of the total application score.

1. Project Description (30%):

- Describe the problems and issues the fire departments that the organization will be reaching with this grant are experiencing in recruiting new volunteer firefighters.
- Describe the problems and issues the same departments are experiencing in retaining current members.
- Describe the organization's implementation plan, including the goals, objectives, methods, specific steps, and timelines to directly address the problems or issues identified.
- Describe the current marketing plan already in place, or the marketing program to be put in place with or without grant funds.
- Describe how the program will be evaluated for its impact on the identified recruitment and retention problems and issues of the fire departments participating in this grant. Describe how the overall effectiveness of the grant will be measured.
- Describe the specific services the new volunteer firefighters, retention of current volunteer firefighters, or both, will provide for the fire departments participating in this application and their respective communities.
- Describe the organization's procurement practices and the timelines outlining the chronological steps to complete the activities requested.

2. Impact on Daily Operations (30%):

- Describe how the fire departments participating in this application and their current volunteer firefighters and communities are at risk without the items or activities requested in this application.
- Explain how that risk will be reduced if awarded funding.
- Describe the impact that the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters, the retention of current volunteer firefighters, or both, will have on the NFPA compliance of the fire departments participating in this application.

3. Financial Need (30%):

- Provide an income versus expenses breakdown of the organization's current annual budget.
- Describe the organization's particular budget shortfalls and the inability to address the financial needs without federal assistance.
- Describe the other actions the organization has taken to obtain funding elsewhere (e.g., state assistance programs, other grant programs), and how similar projects have been funded in the past.
- Discuss how the critical functions of the organization are affected without this funding.

4. Cost Benefit (10%):

   - Describe the specific benefits (e.g., quantifying the anticipated savings and efficiencies) the fire departments participating in this application and their communities will realize if awarded the items or activities requested in this application.

The Narrative Statement blocks do not allow for formatting. Do not type the Narrative Statements using only capital letters. Additionally, do not include tables, special characters, or fonts (e.g., quotation marks, bullets), or graphs. Space for the Narrative Statement is limited. While each element must have a minimum of 200 characters, the maximum number of characters varies based on the questions being asked.

G. Final Selection

a. ***Technical Evaluation Process (TEP)***

The highest-ranking applications from both activities will be considered within the fundable range. Applications that are in the fundable range will undergo both a Technical Review by a subject-matter expert as well as a FEMA Program Office review before being recommended for award. The FEMA Program Office will assess the request with respect to costs, quantities, feasibility, eligibility, and recipient responsibility prior to recommending any application for award.

During the TEP information in Appendix B - Programmatic Information and Priorities is used to make final corrections to any request not meeting program eligibility requirements. This is not a scored phase of the application process. Requests may be recommended for partial funding or disqualification based on findings made during this assessment.

8. Award Notices

A. Notice of Award

The Authorized Organization Representative should carefully read the federal award package before accepting the federal award. The federal award package includes instructions on administering the federal award as well as terms and conditions for the award.

By applying, applicants agree to comply with the prerequisites stated in this NOFO and the material terms and conditions of the federal award, should they receive an award.

FEMA will provide the federal award package to the applicant electronically via FEMA GO. Award packages include an Award Letter, Summary Award Memo, Agreement Articles, and Obligating Document. An award package notification email is sent via the grant application system to the submitting AOR.

Recipients must accept their awards no later than 30 days from the award date. Recipients shall notify FEMA of their intent to accept the award and proceed with work via the FEMA GO system.

Funds will remain on hold until the recipient accepts the award via FEMA GO and all other conditions of the award have been satisfied, or until the award is otherwise rescinded. Failure to accept a grant award within the specified timeframe may result in a loss of funds.

During the review process for a SAFER Program award, FEMA may have modified the application request(s). These modifications will be identified in the award package provided upon the offer of an award. If the awarded activities, scope of work, or requested dollar amount(s) do not match the application as submitted, the recipient shall only be responsible for completing the activities funded by FEMA. The recipient is under no obligation to start, modify, or complete any activities requested but not funded by the award. The award package will identify any differences under the approved scope of work section.

B. Pass-Through Requirements
Standard pass-through requirements in 2 C.F.R. Part 200 apply.

C. Note Regarding Pre-Award Costs
Even if pre-award costs are allowed, beginning performance is at the applicant or sub-applicant's own risk.

D. Obligation of Funds
Grant funds are obligated upon the offer of grant award in the FEMA GO system. Recipients must accept their awards no later than 30 days from the award date. Acceptance of the award is confirmation of the obligation. The recipient shall notify FEMA of its intent to accept and proceed with work under the award through the FEMA GO system.

Funds will remain on hold until the recipient accepts the award through the FEMA GO system and all other conditions of the award have been satisfied or until the award is otherwise rescinded. Failure to accept a grant award within the specified timeframe may result in a loss of funds. Recipients may requestion additional time to accept the award if needed.

E. Notification to Unsuccessful Applicants
FEMA GO will provide all applicants who do not receive a FY 2024 SAFER Program award with a turndown notification after September 30, 2025.

9. Post-Award Requirements and Administration

A. Administrative and National Policy Requirements
In addition to the requirements of this section, FEMA may place specific terms and conditions on an individual award in accordance with 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

B. DHS Standard Terms and Conditions
A recipient of a federal award under this funding opportunity is required to comply with DHS Standard Terms and Conditions in effect at the time the award is issued. The DHS Standard Terms and Conditions are available online. For continuation awards, the terms and conditions for the initial federal award will apply unless otherwise specified in the terms and conditions of the continuation award. The specific version of the DHS Standard Terms and Conditions applicable to the federal award will be in the federal award package. NOTE: Although not a requirement in

the DHS Standard Terms and Conditions, as a best practice entities receiving funds through this program should ensure that cybersecurity is integrated into the design, development, operation, and maintenance of investments that impact information technology (IT) and/ or operational technology (OT) systems.

a. *Ensuring the Protection of Civil Rights*

As the Nation works towards achieving the National Preparedness Goal, it is important to continue to protect the civil rights of individuals. Recipients and subrecipients must carry out their programs and activities, including those related to the building, sustaining and delivering of core capabilities, in a manner that respects and ensures the protection of civil rights for protected populations.

The DHS Standard Terms and Conditions include a fuller list of the civil rights provisions that apply to recipients. They can be found in the DHS Standard Terms and Conditions. Additional information on civil rights provisions is available at https://www.fema.gov/about/offices/equal-rights/civil-rights.

C. Financial Reporting Requirements

1. Recipients must report obligations and expenditures through a federal financial report. The Federal Financial Report (FFR) form, also known as Standard Form 425 (SF-425), is available online at: SF-425 OMB #4040-0014.
2. Recipients must submit the FFR semi-annually throughout the period of performance (POP) as detailed below:
   - No later than July 30 (for the period Jan. 1 – June 30)
   - No later than January 30 (for the period July 1 – Dec. 31)
3. The final FFR is due within 120 calendar days after the end of the POP.
4. FEMA may withhold future federal awards and cash payments if the recipient does not submit timely financial reports, or the financial reports submitted demonstrate lack of progress or provide insufficient detail.

D. Programmatic Performance Reporting Requirements

1. A Performance Report must be submitted semi-annually throughout the POP.
2. A Performance Report must include:
   - A brief narrative of overall project(s) status;
   - A summary of project expenditures; and
   - A description of any potential issues that may affect project completion.
3. The Progress Report must be submitted through FEMA GO.
4. Performance Report Due Dates
   - No later than July 30 (for the period Jan. 1 – June 30)
   - No later than January 30 (for the period July 1 – Dec. 31)

E. Closeout Reporting Requirements

Within 120 days after the end of the period of performance, or after an amendment has been issued to close out a federal award, recipients must submit the following:

1. The final request for payment, if applicable.
2. The final FFR.

3. The final progress report detailing all accomplishments. The recipient must include with the final progress report an inventory of all construction projects.
4. A qualitative narrative summary of the impact of those accomplishments throughout the period of performance.
5. Other documents required by this NOFO, terms and conditions of the federal award, or other DHS Component guidance.

After FEMA approves these reports, it will issue a closeout notice. The notice will indicate the period of performance as closed, list any remaining funds to be de-obligated, and address the record maintenance requirement. Unless a longer period applies, such as due to an audit or litigation, for equipment or real property used beyond the period of performance, or due to other circumstances outlined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.334, this maintenance requirement is three years from the date of the final FFR.

Also, pass-through entities are responsible for closing out those subawards as described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.344; subrecipients are still required to submit closeout materials within 90 calendar days of the subaward period of performance end date. When a subrecipient completes all closeout requirements, pass-through entities must promptly complete all closeout actions in time for the recipient to submit all necessary documentation and information to FEMA during the closeout of their prime award. The recipient is responsible for returning any balances of unobligated or unliquidated funds that have been drawn down that are not authorized to be retained per 2 C.F.R. § 200.344(e).

Administrative Closeout
Administrative closeout is a mechanism for FEMA to unilaterally execute closeout of an award. FEMA will use available award information in lieu of final recipient reports, per 2 C.F.R. § 200.344(h)-(i). It is an activity of last resort, and if FEMA administratively closes an award, this may negatively impact a recipient's ability to obtain future funding.

F. Disclosing Information per 2 C.F.R. § 180.335
Before entering into a federal award, the applicant must notify FEMA if it knows that the applicant or any of the principals (as defined at 2 C.F.R. § 180.995) for the federal award:

1. Are presently excluded or disqualified;
2. Have been convicted within the preceding three years of any of the offenses listed in § 180.800(a) or had a civil judgment rendered against you for one of those offenses within that time period;
3. Are presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (federal, state, or local) with the commission of any of the offenses listed in § 180.800(a); or
4. Have had one or more public transactions (federal, state, or local) terminated within the preceding three years for cause or default.

This is requirement is fully described in 2 C.F.R. §180.335.

Additionally, 2 C.F.R. § 180.350 requires recipients to provide immediate notice to FEMA at any time after entering a federal award if:

1. The recipient learns that either it failed to earlier disclose information as required by 2 C.F.R. § 180.335;
2. Due to changed circumstances, the applicant or any of the principals for the federal award now meet the criteria at 2 C.F.R. § 180.335 listed above.

G. Reporting of Matters Related to Recipient Integrity and Performance
Appendix XII to 2 C.F.R. Part 200 states the terms and conditions for recipient integrity and performance matters used for this funding opportunity.

If the total value of all active federal grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts for a recipient exceeds $10,000,000 at any time during the period of performance:

1. The recipient must maintain the currency of information reported in SAM.gov about civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings described in paragraph 2 of Appendix XII;
2. The required reporting frequency is described in paragraph 4 of Appendix XII.

H. Single Audit Report
A recipient expending $1,000,000 or more in federal awards (as defined by 2 C.F.R. § 200.1) during its fiscal year must undergo an audit. This may be either a single audit complying with 2 C.F.R. § 200.514 or a program-specific audit complying with 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.501 and 200.507. Audits must follow 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart F, 2 C.F.R. § 200.501, and the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards.

I. Monitoring and Oversight
Per 2 C.F.R. § 200.337, DHS and its authorized representatives have the right of access to any records of the recipient or subrecipient pertinent to a federal award to perform audits, site visits, and any other official use. The right also includes timely and reasonable access to the recipient's or subrecipient's personnel for the purpose of interview and discussion related to such documents or the federal award in general.

Pursuant to this right and per 2 C.F.R. § 200.329, DHS may conduct desk reviews and make site visits to review and evaluate project accomplishments and management control systems as well as provide any required technical assistance. Recipients and subrecipients must respond in a timely and accurate manner to DHS requests for information relating to a federal award.

FEMA staff will periodically monitor recipients to ensure that administrative processes, policies and procedures, budgets, and other related award criteria are meeting federal Government-wide and FEMA regulations. Aside from reviewing quarterly financial and programmatic reports, FEMA may also conduct enhanced monitoring through either a desk-based review, an onsite monitoring visit, or both. Enhanced monitoring will involve the review and analysis of the financial compliance and administrative processes, policies, activities, and other attributes of each federal assistance award, and it will identify areas where the recipient may need technical assistance, corrective actions, or other support.

Financial and programmatic monitoring are complementary processes within FEMA's overarching monitoring strategy that function together to ensure effective grants management, accountability, and transparency; validate progress against grant and program goals; and safeguard federal funds against fraud, waste, and abuse. Financial monitoring primarily focuses

on statutory and regulatory compliance with administrative grant requirements, while programmatic monitoring seeks to validate and assist in grant progress, targeting issues that may be hindering achievement of project goals and ensuring compliance with the purpose of the grant and grant program. Both monitoring processes are similar in that they feature initial reviews of all open awards, and additional, in-depth monitoring of grants requiring additional attention.

In terms of overall award management, recipient and subrecipient responsibilities include, but are not limited to: accounting of receipts and expenditures, cash management, maintaining adequate financial records, reporting and refunding expenditures disallowed by audits, monitoring if acting as a pass-through entity, or other assessments and reviews, and ensuring overall compliance with the terms and conditions of the award or subaward, as applicable, including the terms of 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

J. Program Evaluation

Federal agencies are required to structure NOFOs that incorporate program evaluation activities from the outset of their program design and implementation to meaningfully document and measure their progress towards meeting agency priority goal(s) and program outcomes. OMB Memorandum M-21-27, Evidence-Based Policymaking: Learning Agendas and Annual Evaluation Plans, implementing Title I of the *Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018*, Pub. L. No. 115-435 (2019) (Evidence Act), urges federal awarding agencies to use program evaluation as a critical tool to learn, improve delivery, and elevate program service and delivery across the program lifecycle. Evaluation means "an assessment using systematic data collection and analysis of one or more programs, policies, and organizations intended to assess their effectiveness and efficiency." Evidence Act, § 101 (codified at 5 U.S.C. § 311).

As such, recipients and subrecipients are required to participate in a Program Office (PO) or a DHS Component-led evaluation, if selected. This may be carried out by a third-party on behalf of the PO or the DHS Component. Such an evaluation may involve information collections including but not limited to, records of the recipients; surveys, interviews, or discussions with individuals who benefit from the federal award, program operating personnel, and award recipients; and site visits or other observation of recipient activities, as specified in a DHS Component or PO-approved evaluation plan. More details about evaluation requirements may be provided in the federal award, if available at that time, or following the award as evaluation requirements are finalized. Evaluation costs incurred during the period of performance are allowable costs (either as direct or indirect) in accordance with 2 C.F.R.§ 200.413. Recipients and subrecipients are also encouraged, but not required, to participate in any additional evaluations after the period of performance ends, although any costs incurred to participate in such evaluations are not allowable and may not be charged to the federal award.

K. Additional Performance Reporting Requirements

Not Applicable.

10. Other Information

A. Period of Performance Extension

Extensions to the period of performance are allowed forR&R Activity grants only.

Recipients should consult with their FEMA point of contact for requirements related to a performance period extension.

Extension requests will be granted only due to compelling legal, policy, or operational challenges. Extension requests will only be considered for the following reasons:

1. Contractual commitments by the recipient or subrecipient with vendors that prevent completion of the project, including delivery of equipment or services, within the existing period of performance;
2. The project must undergo a complex environmental review that cannot be completed within the existing period of performance;
3. Projects are long-term by design, and therefore acceleration would compromise core programmatic goals; or
4. Where other special or extenuating circumstances exist.

Recipients should submit all proposed extension requests to FEMA for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the end of the period of performance to allow sufficient processing time. Extensions are typically granted for no more than a six-month period.

All extension requests must address the following:

1. The grant program, fiscal year, and award number;
2. The reason for delay – including details of the legal, policy, or operational challenges that prevent final outlay of awarded funds by the deadline;
3. Status of the activity or activities;
4. Approved period of performance termination date and requested extension;
5. Amount of funds drawn down to date;
6. Remaining available funds, both federal and non-federal, if applicable;
7. A budget outlining how remaining federal and non-federal funds will be expended;
8. A plan for completion, including milestones and timeframes for achieving each milestone and the individual responsible for completing the plan;
9. Certification that the activity or activities will be completed within the extended period of performance without any modification to the original statement of work, as described in the original statement of work and as approved by FEMA.

B. Other Information

a. ***Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) Compliance***

FEMA is required to consider effects of its actions on the environment and historic properties to ensure that activities, grants, and programs funded by FEMA, comply with federal EHP laws, Executive Orders, regulations, and policies.

Recipients and subrecipients proposing projects with the potential to impact the environment or cultural resources, such as the modification or renovation of existing buildings, structures, and facilities, new construction, or replacement of buildings, structures, and facilities, must participate in the FEMA EHP review process. This includes conducting early engagement to help identify EHP resources, such as threatened or endangered species, or historic properties; submitting a detailed project description with supporting documentation to determine whether the proposed project has the potential to impact EHP resources; and, identifying mitigation measures or alternative courses of action that may lessen impacts to those resources.

FEMA is sometimes required to consult with other regulatory agencies and the public to complete the review process. Federal law requires EHP review to be completed before federal funds are released to carry out proposed projects. FEMA may not be able to fund projects that are not in compliance with applicable EHP laws, Executive Orders, regulations, and policies. FEMA may recommend mitigation measures or alternative courses of action to lessen impacts to EHP resources and bring the project into EHP compliance.

EHP guidance is found at Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation. The site contains links to documents identifying agency EHP responsibilities and program requirements, such as implementation of the *National Environmental Policy Act* and other EHP laws, regulations, and Executive Orders. DHS and FEMA EHP policy is also found in the EHP Directive & Instruction.

All FEMA actions, including grants, must comply with National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) criteria or any more restrictive federal, state, or local floodplain management standards or building code (44 C.F.R. § 9.11(d)(6)). For actions located within or that may affect a floodplain or wetland, the following alternatives must be considered: a) no action; b) alternative locations; and c) alternative actions, including alternative actions that use natural features or nature-based solutions. Where possible, natural features and nature-based solutions shall be used. If not practicable as an alternative on their own, natural features and nature-based solutions may be incorporated into actions as minimization measures.

The GPD EHP screening form is located at https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_ehp-screening_form_ff-207-fy-21-100_5-26-2021.pdf. SAFER Program applications that involve the installation of supplies/equipment not specifically excluded from a FEMA EHP review, per the GPD Programmatic Environmental Assessment, such as ground-disturbing activities, or modification/renovation of existing buildings or structures, will require an EHP review. Some equipment will require an EHP review as well. Such activities include, but are not limited to:

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

The following activities would not require the submission of the FEMA EHP Screening Form:

- Planning and development of policies or processes;
- Management, administrative, or personnel actions;
- Classroom-based training;
- Acquisition of mobile and portable equipment (not involving installation) on or in a building that does not require a storage area to be constructed; and
- Purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

b. *Procurement Integrity*

When purchasing under a FEMA award, recipients and subrecipients must comply with the federal procurement standards in 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.317 – 200.327. To assist with determining whether an action is a procurement or instead a subaward, please consult 2 C.F.R. § 200.331.

For detailed guidance on the federal procurement standards, recipients and subrecipients should refer to various materials issued by FEMA's Procurement Disaster Assistance Team (PDAT). These resources, including an upcoming trainings schedule can be found on the PDAT Website: https://www.fema.gov/grants/procurement.

Under 2 C.F.R. § 200.317, when procuring property and services under a federal award, states (including territories) and Indian tribes, must follow the same policies and procedures they use for procurements from their non-federal funds; additionally, states and Indian tribes must now follow 2 C.F.R. § 200.321 regarding socioeconomic steps, 200.322 regarding domestic preferences for Procurements and 2 C.F.R. § 200.327 regarding required contract provisions. States, but not Indian tribes, must also follow 200.323 regarding procurement of recovered materials.

Local government and nonprofit recipients or subrecipients must have and use their own documented procurement procedures that reflect applicable state, local, Tribal Nation, and territorial (SLTT) laws and regulations, provided that the procurements conform to applicable federal law and the standards identified in 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

1. Important Changes to Procurement Standards in 2 C.F.R. Part 200

On April 22, 2024, OMB updated various parts of Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations, among them the procurement standards. These revisions apply to all FEMA awards with a federal award date or disaster declaration date on or after October 1, 2024, unless specified otherwise. The changes include updates to the federal procurement standards, which govern how FEMA award recipients and subrecipients must purchase under a FEMA award.

More information on OMB's revisions to the federal procurement standards can be found in Purchasing Under a FEMA Award: 2024 OMB Revisions Fact Sheet.

2. Competition and Conflicts of Interest

2 C.F.R. § 200.319(b), applicable to local government and nonprofit recipients or subrecipients, requires that contractors that develop or draft specifications, requirements statements of work, or invitations for bids or requests for proposals must be excluded from competing for such procurements. FEMA considers these actions to be an organizational conflict of interest and interprets this restriction as applying to contractors that help a recipient or subrecipient develop its grant application, project plans, or project budget. This prohibition also applies to the use of former employees to manage the grant or carry out a contract when those former employees worked on such activities while they were employees of the recipient or subrecipient.

Under this prohibition, unless the recipient or subrecipient solicits for and awards a contract covering both development and execution of specifications (or similar elements as described above), and this contract was procured in compliance with 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.317 – 200.327, federal funds cannot be used to pay a contractor to carry out the work if that contractor also worked on the development of those specifications. This rule applies to all contracts funded with federal grant funds, including pre-award costs, such as grant writer fees, as well as post- award costs, such as grant management fees.

In addition to organizational conflicts of interest, situations considered to be restrictive of competition include, but are not limited to:

- Placing unreasonable requirements on firms for them to qualify to do business;
- Requiring unnecessary experience and excessive bonding;
- Noncompetitive pricing practices between firms or between affiliated companies;
- Noncompetitive contracts to consultants that are on retainer contracts;
- Specifying only a "brand name" product instead of allowing "an equal" product to be offered and describing the performance or other relevant requirements of the procurement; and
- Any arbitrary action in the procurement process.

Under 2 C.F.R. § 200.318(c)(1), local government and nonprofit recipients or subrecipients are required to maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of their employees engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts. No employee, officer, or agent may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by a federal award if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest. Such conflicts of interest would arise when the employee, officer or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization that employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for a contract. The officers, employees, and agents of the recipient or subrecipient may neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors or parties to subcontracts. However, the recipient or subrecipient may set standards for situations in which the financial interest is not substantial, or the gift is an unsolicited item of nominal value. The recipient's or subrecipient's standards of conduct must provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations of such standards by officers, employees, or agents.

Under 2 C.F.R. 200.318(c)(2), if the local government and nonprofit recipient or subrecipient has a parent, affiliate, or subsidiary organization that is not a SLTT government, the recipient or subrecipient must also maintain written standards of conduct covering organizational conflicts of interest. Organizational conflict of interest means that because of a relationship with a parent company, affiliate, or subsidiary organization, the recipient or subrecipient is unable or appears to be unable to be impartial in conducting a procurement action involving a related organization. The recipient or subrecipient must disclose in writing any potential conflicts of interest to FEMA or the pass-through entity in accordance with applicable FEMA policy.

3. Supply Schedules and Purchasing Programs

Generally, a recipient or subrecipient may seek to procure goods or services from a federal supply schedule, state supply schedule, or group purchasing agreement.

Information about GSA programs for states, Indian tribes, and local governments, and their instrumentalities, can be found at Help for state, local, and tribal governments to make MAS buys | GSA and https://www.gsa.gov/buying-selling/purchasing- programs/gsa-schedules/schedule-buyers/state-and-local-governments.

If a non-federal entity other than a state seeks to use a state supply schedule, cooperative purchasing program, or other similar type of arrangement, FEMA recommends the recipient discuss the procurement plans with its FEMA Preparedness Officer or Fire Program Specialist.

4. Procurement Documentation

Per 2 C.F.R. § 200.318(i), local government and nonprofit recipients or subrecipients are required to maintain and retain records sufficient to detail the history of procurement covering at least the rationale for the procurement method, selection of contract type, contractor selection or rejection, and the basis for the contract price. States and Indian tribes are reminded that in order for any cost to be allowable, it must be adequately documented per 2 C.F.R. § 200.403(g).

Examples of the types of documents that would cover this information include but are not limited to:

- Solicitation documentation, such as requests for quotes, invitations for bids, or requests for proposals;
- Responses to solicitations, such as quotes, bids, or proposals;
- Pre-solicitation independent cost estimates and post-solicitation cost/price analyses on file for review by federal personnel, if applicable;
- Contract documents and amendments, including required contract provisions; and
- Other documents required by federal regulations applicable at the time a grant is awarded to a recipient.
- Additional information on required procurement records can be found on pages 24-26 of the PDAT Field Manual.

c. *Financial Assistance Programs for Infrastructure*

1. Build America, Buy America Act

Recipients and subrecipients must comply with FEMA's implementation requirements of the *Build America, Buy America Act (BABAA)*, which was enacted as part of the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* §§ 70901-70927, Pub. L. No. 117-58 (2021); and Executive Order 14005, Ensuring the Future is Made in All of America by All of America's Workers. See also 2 C.F.R. Part 184, Buy America Preferences for Infrastructure Projects.

None of the funds provided under this program may be used for a project for infrastructure unless the iron and steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in that infrastructure are produced in the United States.

The Buy America preference only applies to articles, materials, and supplies that are consumed in, incorporated into, or affixed to an infrastructure project. As such, it does not apply to tools, equipment, and supplies, such as temporary scaffolding, brought to the construction site and removed at or before the completion of the infrastructure project. Nor does a Buy America preference apply to equipment and furnishings, such as movable chairs, desks, and portable computer equipment, that are used at or within the finished infrastructure project but are not an integral part of the structure or permanently affixed to the infrastructure project.

To see whether a particular FEMA federal financial assistance program is considered an infrastructure program and thus required to implement FEMA's Build America, Buy America requirements, please see Programs and Definitions: *Build America, Buy America Act* | FEMA.gov.

2. Waivers

When necessary, recipients (and subrecipients through their pass-through entity) may apply for, and FEMA may grant, a waiver from these requirements.

A waiver of the domestic content procurement preference may be granted by the agency awarding official if FEMA determines that:

- Applying the domestic content procurement preference would be inconsistent with the public interest, or
- The types of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials are not produced in the United States in sufficient and reasonably available quantities or of a satisfactory quality, or
- The inclusion of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials produced in the United States will increase the cost of the overall project by more than 25%.

The process for requesting a waiver from the Buy America preference requirements can be found on FEMA's website at: "Buy America" Preference in FEMA Financial Assistance Programs for Infrastructure | FEMA.gov.

3. Definitions

For definitions of the key terms of the Build America, Buy America Act, please visit Programs and Definitions: *Build America, Buy America Act* | FEMA.gov.

d. *Mandatory Disclosures*

The non-federal entity or applicant for a federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award. (2 C.F.R. § 200.113)

e. *Termination Provisions*

FEMA may terminate a federal award in whole or in part for one of the following reasons. FEMA and the recipient must still comply with closeout requirements at 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.344-200.345 even if an award is terminated in whole or in part. To the extent that subawards are permitted under this NOFO, pass-through entities should refer to 2 C.F.R. § 200.340 for additional information on termination regarding subawards. Either party will provide written notice of intent to terminate to the other party no less than 30 days prior to the effective date of the termination.

1. Noncompliance

If a recipient fails to comply with the terms and conditions of a federal award, FEMA may terminate the award in whole or in part. Any action to terminate based on noncompliance will follow the requirements of 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.341-200.342.

2. With the Consent of the Recipient

FEMA may also terminate an award in whole or in part with the consent of the recipient, in which case the parties must agree upon the termination conditions, including the effective date, and in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated.

3. Notification by the Recipient

The recipient may terminate the award, in whole or in part, by sending written notification to FEMA setting forth the reasons for such termination, the effective date, and in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated. In the case of partial termination, FEMA may determine that a partially terminated award will not accomplish the purpose of the federal award, so FEMA may terminate the award in its entirety. If that occurs, FEMA will follow the requirements of 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.341-200.342 in deciding to fully terminate the award.

4. Change in Program Goals or Agency Priorities

Pursuant to the terms and conditions of the award and to the extend authorized by law, FEMA may terminate the award if it no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities.

f. *Disability Integration*
Pursuant to Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, recipients of FEMA financial assistance must ensure that their programs and activities do not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities.

g. *Record Retention*
1. Record Retention Period

Financial records, supporting documents, statistical records, and all other non-federal entity records pertinent to a federal award generally must be maintained for at least three years from the date the final FFR is submitted. *See* 2 C.F.R. § 200.334. Further, if the recipient does not submit a final FFR and the award is administratively closed, FEMA uses the date of administrative closeout as the start of the general record retention period.

The record retention period **may be longer than three years or have a different start date** in certain cases.

2. Types of Records to Retain

FEMA requires that recipients and subrecipients maintain the following documentation for federally funded purchases:

- Specifications
- Solicitations
- Competitive quotes or proposals

- Basis for selection decisions
- Purchase orders
- Contracts
- Invoices
- Canceled checks

h. ***Actions to Address Noncompliance***
Non-federal entities receiving financial assistance funding from FEMA are required to comply with requirements in the terms and conditions of their awards or subawards, including the terms set forth in applicable federal statutes, regulations, NOFOs, and policies. Throughout the award lifecycle or even after an award has been closed, FEMA or the pass-through entity may discover potential or actual noncompliance on the part of a recipient or subrecipient.

In the case of any potential or actual noncompliance, FEMA may place special conditions on an award per 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.208 and 200.339. FEMA may place a hold on funds until the matter is corrected, or additional information is provided per 2 C.F.R. § 200.339, or it may do both. Similar remedies for noncompliance with certain federal civil rights laws are authorized pursuant to 44 C.F.R. Parts 7 and 19 or other applicable regulations.

If the noncompliance is not able to be corrected by imposing additional conditions or the recipient or subrecipient refuses to correct the matter, FEMA may take other remedies allowed under 2 C.F.R. § 200.339.

i. ***Audits***
FEMA grant recipients are subject to audit oversight from multiple entities including the DHS OIG, the GAO, the pass-through entity, or independent auditing firms for single audits, and may cover activities and costs incurred under the award. Auditing agencies such as the DHS OIG, the GAO, and the pass-through entity (if applicable), and FEMA in its oversight capacity, must have access to records pertaining to the FEMA award.

j. ***Hazard-Resistant Building Codes***
Hazard-resistant building codes are a foundational element of a more resilient nation, safeguarding communities, and lives against natural disasters, with an estimated $11:1 return on investment. The adoption, enforcement and application of modern building codes mitigates community vulnerabilities, reduces disaster recovery costs, and strengthens nationwide capability. FEMA is working to promote and support building codes in all areas of its work. In the interest of building a stronger, more resilient nation, FEMA encourages all grant recipients and subrecipients to meet current published editions of relevant consensus-based building codes, specifications, and standards, and to exceed them where feasible.

11. Appendix A – FY 2024 SAFER Program Updates

Appendix A contains a brief list of changes between FY 2023 and FY 2024 to the SAFER Program. The FY 2024 SAFER Program NOFO contains some changes to definitions, descriptions, and priority categories. Changes include:

- Under Eligibility – Allowable Project Types
    - The Hiring Activity offers grants to support applications to hire new, additional

firefighters

- Under Eligibility – Unallowable Project Types
    - FEMA will not fund any projects, activities, or line items that are covered under a department's normal operating budget
- Under Eligibility – Cost Sharing Requirement
    - Hiring Activity grant recipients are required to contribute non-federal funds as a cost share
- Under Eligibility – Cost Share Description, Type and Restrictions
    - In the first and second years of the grant, the amount of federal funding may not exceed 75 percent of the usual annual cost of a first-year firefighter and in the third year of the grant, the amount of federal funding may not exceed 35 percent of the usual annual cost of a first-year firefighter
- Under Eligibility – Required information for verifying Cost Share
    - Applicants are required to certify that their annual budget for fire-related programs and emergency response has not been reduced below 80 percent of the applicant's average funding level in the three years prior to the application date
- Under Register in FEMA GO:
    - FEMA GO will no longer support Internet Explorer.
- Under Additional Information
    - Inclusion of Hazard-Resistant Building Codes.
- Under R&R Activity – Eligible Costs
    - New Member Costs – eligible physical exam costs for new members include: initial medical exams; annual physicals; job-related immunizations; behavioral health; and Cancer Screening Programs to meet NFPA 1582.
    - Wellness and Fitness for Existing Members – eligible subcategories of physical exams for existing members
    - Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to provide behavioral health training for coping with fire service duties.
- Under Other Information
    - Extensions to the period of performance are allowed for R&R Activity grants only
-

12. Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities

Appendix B contains details on SAFER Program information and priorities. Reviewing this information may help applicants make their application(s) more competitive.

A. Ineligible Applications and Organizations

Volunteer and combination fire departments may apply for funding under both the Hiring Activity and the R&R Activity; however, departments must complete separate applications for each activity. Applicants are limited to one application per activity, per application period. If an applicant submits two applications for the same activity during a single application period, FEMA will disqualify both applications.

If two or more of the following entities have different funding streams, personnel rosters, and EINs but share the same facilities, FEMA considers them as being separate organizations for the purposes of FY 2024 SAFER Program eligibility:

- Fire departments; and
- National, state, local, federally recognized Tribal Nation, and nonprofit interest organizations.

However, if two or more organizations share facilities and each applies for the same activity (e.g., Hiring of Firefighters), FEMA reserves the right to review and compare all those program area applications to determine eligibility and review for potential overlap to avoid duplication of benefits.

Additionally, federal employees are prohibited from serving in any capacity (paid or unpaid) on the development of any application submitted under this program.

Examples of ineligible applications and organizations include:

- For-profit organizations, federal agencies, and individuals;
- Fire departments that are a Federal Government entity, or contracted by the federal government, and are solely responsible under a formally recognized agreement for suppression of fires on federal installations or land;
- Fire departments that are not independent entities but are part of, controlled by, or under the day-to-day operational command and control of a larger department, agency or AHJ;
    - However, if a fire department is the same legal entity as a municipality or other governmental organization, and otherwise meets the eligibility criteria, that municipality or other governmental organization may apply on behalf of that fire department if the application clearly states that the fire department is considered part of the same legal entity.
- State or local agencies, or subsets of any governmental entities, or any authorities that do not meet the requirements as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 2229a(a)(1)(A) and (a)(2);
- Ambulance services, emergency medical service organizations, rescue squads, auxiliaries, dive teams, and urban search and rescue teams; and,
- Non-federal airport or port authority fire departments whose sole responsibility is the suppression of fires on the airport grounds or port facilities unless the airport/port fire department has a formally recognized arrangement with the local jurisdiction to provide fire suppression on a first-due basis outside the confines of the airport or port facilities.
- Eligible applicants may submit only one application for each eligible activity (Hiring Activity and R&R Activity); all submissions of duplicate applications may be disqualified.
- If an applicant submits two or more applications for the same activity, both applications may be disqualified.
    - This is different from when where an entity is applying on behalf of other organizations that are agencies or instrumentalities of the applicant (e.g., multiple fire departments under the same county, city, borough, parish, or other municipality). In that situation, the applicant may request similar or the same costs if the application clearly states which costs (including quantities) are for which agency/instrumentality. This is permissible even if that entity submits multiple applications across regional versus direct applications.

B. Supporting Definitions for this NOFO

Attrition is a gradual reduction in work force without laying off personnel, e.g., when workers resign or retire and are not replaced.

Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) is that person or office charged with enforcing the NFPA codes (Per NFPA101-2015 Edition: Life Safety Code).

Automatic Aid is a plan developed between two or more fire departments for immediate joint response on first alarms (Per NFPA 1710 – 2020 edition and NFPA 1720 – 2020).

Benefits, as defined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.431, means the regular compensation paid to employees during periods of authorized absences from the job, e.g., vacation leave, sick leave, military leave. Benefits may include employer contributions or expenses for social security, employee insurance, workmen's compensation, and pension plan costs, and the like, whether treated as indirect costs or as direct costs, and are also eligible and shall be distributed to awards and other activities in a manner consistent with the pattern of benefits accruing to the individuals or group of employees whose salaries and wages are chargeable.

Career Fire Department, as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 2229, means a fire department that has an all-paid force of firefighting personnel other than paid-on-call firefighters.

Combination Fire Department, as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 2229, means a fire department that has paid firefighting personnel and volunteer firefighting personnel. FEMA considers a fire department with firefighting personnel paid a stipend, regardless of the amount, on a per event basis, or paid on- call, to be a combination fire department. This includes non-fire emergency medical service personnel of the department.

Emergency Medical Services Organization is a public or private organization that provides direct emergency medical services, including medical transport.

Fire Department is an agency or organization that has a formally recognized arrangement with a state, territory, local government, or Tribal Nation authority (city, county, parish, fire district, township, town, village, or other governing body) to provide fire suppression on a first-due basis to a fixed geographical area. Fire departments may be comprised of members who are volunteer, career, or a combination of volunteer and career.

Firefighter is an individual having the legal authority and responsibility to engage in fire suppression; employed by a fire department of a municipality, county, fire district, or state, engaged in the prevention, control, and extinguishing of fires; and responding to emergency situations in which life, property, or the environment is at risk. This individual must be trained in fire suppression, but may also be trained in emergency medical care, hazardous materials awareness, rescue techniques, and any other related duties provided by the fire department.

Initial Full Alarm Assignment is the personnel, equipment, and resources ordinarily dispatched upon notification of a structural fire.

Majority Career departments are considered majority career if more than 50% of the active firefighting membership is salaried staff.

Majority Volunteer departments are considered majority volunteer if more than 50% of the active firefighting membership is NOT compensated for service other than a nominal stipend and insurance.

Mutual Aid is a written intergovernmental agreement between agencies or jurisdictions stating that they will assist one another on request by furnishing personnel, equipment, or expertise in a specified manner (NFPA 1710 Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments, 2020 edition; and NFPA 1720 Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments, 2020 Edition).

National, State, Local, or Federally Recognized Tribal Organizations that Represent the Interests of Volunteer Firefighters are organizations that support or represent the interests of firefighters in front of legislative bodies at the local, state, tribal, or federal level. Such organizations include, but are not limited to, state or local firefighter or fire chiefs' associations, and volunteer firefighter relief organizations and associations. FEMA shall make the final determination as to whether an applicant is an appropriate volunteer firefighter interest group.

New Recruit is a volunteer that joins the department with the intent to serve as a firefighter, after the recipient is notified of the grant award (the date of the award notification email in the FEMA GO mail center).

Nominal Stipend is a stipend that does not exceed 20% of what the fire department would otherwise pay to hire a full-time firefighter to perform the services for which the stipend is provided. Whether a stipend falls above or below the 20% threshold may be determined in one of two ways. Departments that maintain paid full-time firefighters on their payrolls may compare the stipend to the salary they pay a full-time firefighter who performs similar services to determine whether the stipend is more or less than 20% of that salary.

Departments that do not maintain full time firefighters on their payrolls may make the determination based on a comparison to the salary paid to a full-time firefighter in a neighboring jurisdiction, elsewhere in the state or ultimately the nation, and may also utilize data from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. A nominal stipend may also include reimbursements to volunteer firefighters for approximate out-of- pocket expenses they incur.

If a stipend paid exceeds 20% of the prevailing wage calculated as described above, then the firefighter receiving compensation would not qualify as a volunteer and is considered an employee who may be covered by the *Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)* minimum wage and overtime provisions.

Operational Budget is the funding supporting fire-related programs or emergency response activities (e.g., salaries, maintenance, equipment, apparatus).

Operational Position is a position with a primary assignment (more than 50% of time) on a fire suppression vehicle, regardless of collateral duties, in support of the department's NFPA 1710 or NFPA 1720 compliance.

Paid-on-Call is defined as firefighters who are paid a stipend for each event to which they respond. Paid-on-call firefighters may be considered paid firefighters or volunteer firefighters, depending on whether the stipend they receive is a nominal stipend. For the purposes of this SAFER Program, a department whose membership is composed of all volunteer firefighters, including any paid-on-call firefighters who receive only a nominal stipend, will be considered a volunteer fire department. Also, for the purposes of this SAFER Program, a department whose membership is composed of any paid-on-call firefighters who receive more than a nominal stipend will be considered a combination fire department. Also refer to the definition of a nominal stipend.

Part-Time Firefighter is a firefighter who works less than 40 hours per week. When more than one part-time firefighter shares a position that results in work in excess of 40 hours per week, FEMA considers that shared assignment to be a Full-Time Equivalent position that must be accounted for in the staffing information provided in the application.

Primary First Due is a geographic area surrounding a fire station in which a company from that station is projected to be first to arrive on the scene of an incident.

Salary is a fixed payment made by an employer to an employee to compensate for a regular work schedule. Typically, the payment is made on a monthly, biweekly, or weekly basis but often expressed as an annual sum. The salary structure should be documented in writing by the employer. Note: Only costs for overtime that an employer routinely pays as a part of a firefighter’s regularly scheduled and contracted shift hours to comply with FLSA are eligible salary costs under the Hiring Activity.

State is defined as any of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Staffing and Deployment is the minimum staffing requirements to ensure a sufficient number of members are available to operate safely and effectively as defined in NFPA 1710 and 1720.

Supplanting is to replace or take place of funds that would otherwise be available from state or local sources, or the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Tuition Assistance is only eligible for reimbursement of undergraduate and graduate studies, vocational/technical training, certification, and job training programs for the member of the department and not a spouse nor a dependent.

Volunteer Fire Department, as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 2229, means a fire department that has an all-volunteer force of firefighting personnel.

C. Application Tips

The following information may be useful when preparing a competitive application:

- NFPA – "FREE ACCESS": as part of its commitment to enhancing public safety and supporting the emergency responder, the NFPA makes its codes and standards available online for free. Please visit http://www.nfpa.org/freeaccess.
- For the most competitive applications, select those local need(s) that most closely align with one or more SAFER Program funding priorities.

- Applications differ based on the applicant type. For example, the Hiring Activity application will be different from the fire department application for the R&R Activity; the R&R application will be different for a fire department than an interest organization. Be sure to select the appropriate applicant type when applying.
- When filling out the online application, applicants are required to provide basic demographic information regarding their organization and the community served and must provide detailed information regarding the items or activities for which they are seeking funding.
- If awarded, the application request(s) may be modified during the award review process; if the awarded activities, Scope of Work, or amount(s) do not match the application as submitted, the grant recipient shall only be responsible for completing the activities funded. The grant recipient is under no obligation to start, modify, or complete any activities requested, but not funded by this award. Please review the Award Package.

D. Funding Limitation

Specific funding parameters are either required by law or are the outcome of recommendations from the CDP. Each requirement is identified below, followed by the source of the requirement noted in parentheses:

- A total of 10% of the funding appropriated for FY 2024 SAFER Program awards is set aside for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters (15 U.S.C. § 2229a(a)(2)).
  - No more than 33% of the total amount allocated for the recruitment and retention of volunteers can be awarded to national, state, local, territorial, or federally recognized tribal organizations that represent the interests of volunteer firefighters (CDP).
- A total of 10% of funding appropriated for FY 2024 SAFER Program awards is set aside for grants awarded to all volunteer or majority volunteer departments for hiring of firefighters (15 U.S.C. § 2229a(a)(1)(H)).
  - A majority volunteer fire department is one that more than half its personnel do not receive financial compensation for their services, other than life, health, and worker's compensation insurance, or a nominal stipend payment, including certain paid-on-call personnel. Although applications are normally awarded based on total score (high to low), to meet this 10% statutory set aside, the SAFER Program Office may be required to fund an application that meets the criteria for the set aside instead of a higher-scoring application that does not meet the set aside criteria (15 U.S.C. § 2229a(a)(1)(H)).
  - If FEMA awards less than 10% of the funds available for the hiring of firefighters to volunteer and majority volunteer fire departments, it must transfer the remaining

funds to provide grants for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters (15 U.S.C. § 2229a(a)(1)(H)).

E. Funding Priorities

a. ***Meeting the National Standards***

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

FEMA will ask applicants general questions about the NFPA standard they are attempting to meet as well as their current ability to meet that standard (without the use of overtime).

FEMA will also ask applicants to indicate what their ability will be to meet that same standard if awarded grant funds. Having additional firefighters on staff should improve a local fire department's ability to comply with the staffing, response, and operational standards that enhance community and firefighter safety.

Applications resulting in the largest percentage increases in compliance with the relevant section of NFPA 1710 (for career departments) or 1720 (for volunteer departments) receive higher pre-scores than applications resulting in smaller percentage increases in compliance.

Note: SAFER Program grants focus only on the Deployment, or Staffing and Deployment sections of these two standards, respectively.

- NFPA 1710 Assembly Requirements – Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Department (Section 5.2.4.1 – Single-Family Dwelling Initial Full Alarm Assignment Capability, Section 5.2.3.1 – Engine Companies, 3.3.53 Rapid Intervention Crew). This standard applies primarily to career fire departments and combination departments if the combination department chooses it.
- NFPA 1720 Assembly Requirements – Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments (Section 4.3 – Staffing and Deployment, Section 4.6 Initial Firefighting Operations). This standard applies primarily to all-volunteer fire departments, but it may also apply to combination departments if the combination department does not choose to comply with the NFPA 1710 standard.

F. Hiring Activity Overview

Grants awarded under the Hiring Activity enable volunteer, combination, and career fire departments to improve or restore staffing levels to attain a more effective level of response and a safer incident scene. FEMA awards Hiring Activity grants directly to volunteer, combination, and career fire departments to help fire departments increase their cadre of frontline firefighters by providing financial assistance to hire new, additional firefighters (**New Hire**).

All the following are considerations in pre-scoring and peer review determinations: High (H), Medium (M), Low (L)

a. ***Compliance with NFPA Standards***
The tables below identify the priority levels for current and new compliance with the NFPA 1710/1720 standards discussed in Appendix B Section E. Funding Priorities of this NOFO.

Current (Pre-Award) 1710/1720 Compliance Priorities	
H Never or 0%	M Half of the time or 40-59%
H Rarely or 1-19%	L Very often or 60-79%
M Sometimes or 20-39%	L Most of the time or 80-100%

New (Post-Award) 1710/1720 Compliance Priorities	
H Always or 91-100%	M Half of the time or 40-59%
H Most of the time or 80-90%	L Sometimes or 20-39%
M Very often or 60-79%	L Rarely or 0-19%

b. ***Call Volume and Population Served***
Department call volume and population served are both factors in the initial application evaluation. Departments responding to a higher number of incidents and departments that protect a larger jurisdiction will receive higher consideration than those departments responding to fewer incidents and protecting smaller jurisdictions.

c. ***Firefighter Health Measures***
The health and well-being of firefighters is of paramount importance. Therefore, applicants who indicate newly hired firefighters will undergo an entry-level physical and receive immunizations and who indicate they will provide annual medical exams receive higher consideration than applicants who do not specify that these benefits will be provided. To qualify for this higher consideration, the physicals must be consistent with those required under NFPA 1580 Chapter 13, Occupational Medical: Evaluations (NFPA 1582).

Applicants should note that FEMA is working with the NFPA Technical Committee on Fire Service Occupational Safety and Health to evaluate whether the NFPA 1582 standard complies with applicable federal civil rights laws. No decisions have been made and FEMA will issue additional guidance when more information becomes available.

Entry-Level Medical Exams	
H NFPA 1582-compliant physicals	M Non-NFPA 1582-compliant physicals

Annual Medical Exams	
H NFPA 1582-compliant physicals	M Non-NFPA 1582-compliant physicals

d. ***Training Requirements***
Applicants will receive higher pre-scores if the personnel funded under the grant will meet the minimum EMS training and certification requirements prescribed by the AHJ.

G. R&R Activity – Fire Departments Overview

Grants awarded under this R&R Activity are to fire departments to assist with the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters who are involved with or trained in the operations of firefighting and emergency response. The grants are intended to create a net increase in the number of trained, certified, and competent firefighters capable of safely responding to emergencies within the recipient's response area.

All the following are considerations in pre-scoring and peer review determinations. Program priorities are listed as: **High (H), Medium (M), Low (L)**

a. ***Compliance with NFPA Standards***
The highest priority is to assist departments experiencing a high rate of turnover and that have staffing levels significantly below the ideal staffing level required to comply with NFPA standard 1710 or 1720 as discussed in Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities, Funding Priorities of this NOFO.

b. ***Volunteer Membership***
Departments or organizations with the highest percentage of volunteers should benefit the most from the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Therefore, applicants whose membership is comprised of mostly volunteer members, or have a significant number of volunteer firefighters, receive higher consideration.

Percentage of Volunteer Firefighters	
H 91-100%	M 41-50%
H 81-91%	M 31-40%
H 71-80%	L 21-30%
H 61-70%	L 11-20%
M 51-60%	L 1-10%

c. ***Call Volume***
Department call volume is a factor in the initial evaluation. Departments responding to a higher number of incidents receive higher consideration.

d. ***Firefighter Health Measures***
Applicants who indicate the newly recruited firefighters will undergo an entry-level physical and receive immunizations, and who indicate they will provide annual medical exams receive higher consideration. To qualify for this higher consideration, the physicals must be consistent with those required under NFPA 1580, Chapter 13, Occupational Medical: Evaluations (NFPA 1582). Applicants who provide worker's compensation/Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D) benefits to their members receive higher consideration than applicants who do not specify these benefits will be provided.

Entry-Level Medical Exams	
H NFPA 1582-compliant physicals	M Non-NFPA 1582-compliant physicals

Annual Medical Exams	
H NFPA 1582-compliant physicals	M Non-NFPA 1582-compliant physicals

e. ***Firefighter Training and Certification Requirements***

Firefighter	
H Both Firefighter (FF) II/Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)	M FF I
H FF II	L First Responder
M Both FF I/EMT	

f. ***R&R Coordinator/Program Manager/Grant Administrator***

R&R Coordinator
H Applicants who currently have a coordinator, program manager, or grant administrator in place
M Applicants who request grant funding for a coordinator, program manager, or grant administrator's position
L Applicants who do not have, or are not requesting, a coordinator, program manager, or grant administrator

g. ***Regional Requests***

Applications that will have a direct regional or local benefit beyond the immediate boundaries of the applicant's first-due area will receive higher consideration.

A regional request is an opportunity for an eligible R&R Activity organization to act as a host and apply for funding on behalf of itself and any number of other participating R&R Activity eligible organizations. Regional activities should achieve cost effectiveness, support regional efficiency and resilience, and have a direct regional or local benefit to more than one local jurisdiction (county, parish, town, township, city, or village). Direct regional or local benefit means that other eligible organizations will receive a portion of the grant-awarded funds, will receive items purchased with the grant funds, or share an item purchased with grant funds.

The community identification characteristic, the organizational status of the applicant, and the permanent resident population should be entered for the host entity, regardless of the composition of the participating partners.

Regional populations served are the aggregate of the geographically fixed areas of the host and participating partner organizations.

Neither the regional host nor any participating partner is prevented from also applying on behalf of their own organization for any SAFER Program Activity. However, it cannot be for the same item.

In completing the application, the host applicant must include a list of all participating organizations, including a point of contact and phone number for each organization that will directly benefit from the regional project if they receive the grant. The organizations that will

benefit from the R&R Activity may also apply for funding under the SAFER Program if the organizations do not apply for a project or activity that could conflict with or duplicate the host applicant's project. Applicants must also certify that they will ensure the organizations participating in this application have not received grants for similar items/activities.

To apply for a regional project, the host organization must agree, if awarded, to be responsible for all aspects of the grant. This includes, but is not limited to, cost share, accountability for the assets, and all reporting requirements in the regional application.

All participants of a regional application must be compliant with SAFER Program requirements, including being current with past grants, closeouts, and other reporting requirements. Upon notification by the SAFER Program Office, the host agency shall not distribute grant-funded assets or provide grant-funded contractual services to non- compliant partner organizations. The host and the delinquent partners will be notified by the SAFER Program Office of their specific deficiency.

Regional host applicants and participating partner agencies must execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), or equivalent document signed by the host and all participating organizations participating in the award. The MOU must specify the individual and mutual responsibilities of the host and participating partners, the host's and participants' level of involvement in the project(s), the participating partners' EINs, and the proposed distribution of all grant-funded assets or contracted services. Any entity named in the application as benefiting from the award must be an eligible SAFER Program organization and must be a party to the MOU or equivalent document. **Copies of the MOU or equivalent document should be submitted as an attachment in the application**.

H. R&R Activity – National, State, Local, Territorial, or Federally Recognized Tribal Nation Volunteer Firefighter Interest Organizations (Interest Organizations) Overview

Grants awarded under this R&R Activity are to applicants who identify as an Interest Organization. These grants are intended to create an aggregate increase in the number of trained, certified, and competent firefighters capable of safely responding to emergencies on behalf of the fire departments being represented. For this reason, projects that are comprehensive in nature and based on a clear needs assessment, implementation plan, evaluation plan, and have, or will establish, fire service partnerships will receive higher consideration.

In completing the application, the applicant must include data that approximates the characteristics of the entire region and all fire departments affected by the grant. If awarded, recipients may be required to provide documentation of each fire department's consent to participate in the application. Applicants must also certify that they will ensure the fire departments participating in this application have not received grants for similar items/activities. The following identifies the elements that the applications will be evaluated on during the pre-scoring process. Automated (pre-score) evaluation scores represent 30% of the total application score.

All the following are considerations in pre-scoring and peer review determinations. Program priorities are listed as: **High (H), Medium (M), Low (L)**

a. ***Compliance with NFPA Standards***

The highest priority is to assist departments experiencing a high rate of turnover that have staffing levels significantly below the ideal staffing level required to comply with NFPA standards 1710 or 1720 as discussed in Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities, Funding Priorities of this NOFO. Interest Organizations that currently have the lowest recruitment and retention rates among the entire region and all fire departments benefitting from the grant funds receive higher consideration for funding.

b. ***R&R Coordinator/Program Manager/Grant Administrator***

R&R Coordinator
H Applicants who currently have a coordinator, program manager, or grant administrator in place
M Applicants who request grant funding for a coordinator, program manager, or grant administrator's position
L Applicants who do not have, nor are not requesting, a coordinator, program manager, or grant administrator

c. ***Needs Assessment***

Needs Assessment	
H Applicants with projects based on a needs assessment	L Applicants with projects that are not based on a needs assessment

d. ***Fire Service Partnerships***

Fire Service Partnerships	
H Applicants who have, or will establish, fire service partnerships as part of this project	L Applicants who will not have, nor establish, fire service partnerships as part of this project

I. Eligible and Ineligible Costs and Requirements

Regardless of the eligibility of any costs requested or the results of the review of the application conducted in accordance with Section 7 Application Review Information of this NOFO, FEMA reserves the right to approve the activities requested in an application in whole or in part.

Hiring Activity – Eligible Costs and Requirements
Eligible Costs: • Salary and associated benefits (actual payroll expenses) for the positions funded under the SAFER Program grant are eligible. Costs are reimbursable if they are included as part of the standard package, available to all operational firefighter positions, contractually obligated, and reimbursed via payroll. Refer also to the definitions in Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities, Supporting Definitions for this NOFO or this NOFO.

Hiring Activity – Eligible Costs and Requirements

- Compensation for a firefighter's normal, contracted work schedule is reimbursable, but overtime costs are not eligible for reimbursement by the SAFER Program grant award (including overtime for holdovers, extra shifts, to attend training, etc.). Only costs for overtime that the fire department routinely pays as a part of the base salary or a firefighter's regularly scheduled and contracted shift hours, to comply with FLSA, are eligible. For more information on FLSA, please visit the U.S. Department of Labor.
- Salaries and benefits of firefighters hired with SAFER Program funding while they are engaged in initial recruit training are eligible.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Only firefighters hired (**New Hire category**) after the SAFER Program grant offer of award are eligible for grant funding.
- Only full-time positions are eligible for funding. A full-time position is one position that is funded for at least 2,080 hours per year, e.g., 40 hours per week, 52 weeks per year.
- SAFER Program grant funds will only pay for operational positions, whose primary assignment (more than half the time) is on a fire suppression vehicle, regardless of collateral duties.
- Volunteer and mostly volunteer fire departments may also hire individuals to fill officer-level positions (e.g., chief, fire inspector, training officer, safety officer) in addition to their primary operational assignment.
- Funds received under the SAFER Program must not be used to replace funds that would be available from state or local sources, or from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, but shall be used to increase the amount of funding that would, in the absence of Federal funds received, be made available from state or local sources, or funds supplied by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Hiring Activity - Ineligible Costs

- The salaries and benefits of full-time firefighters who are employees at the time of grant award are ineligible to be funded under this grant.
- Job-sharing positions (e.g., utilizing more than one person to fill a full-time SAFER Program-funded position) are ineligible.
- The SAFER Program may not be used to fund promotions (e.g., to pay a current member a higher salary by placing him/her in a new SAFER Program-funded position).
- Pre-application costs, such as grant writer fees, administrative costs (e.g., physicals/ medical exams, background checks, etc.), and indirect costs associated with hiring firefighters are ineligible.
- Costs to train and equip firefighters (e.g., PPE/Turnout Gear) are ineligible (this does not include the salaries and benefits of firefighters hired under the SAFER Program while they are engaged in training).
- Costs for additional benefits such as uniform allowances, education stipends, meal allowance, etc., that are not contractually obligated, included as part of the standard benefits package for all employees, and reimbursed via payroll are ineligible.

- Costs of annual physicals/medical exams are ineligible.
- Overtime costs (including overtime for holdovers, extra shifts, to attend training, etc.) are ineligible (except as noted in "eligible costs" above).
- M&A costs.
- Indirect costs.

R&R Activity – Eligibility Requirements

- Applicants must correlate the activities for which funding is requested and the identified recruitment or retention problems or issues to be addressed. FEMA will not fund a budget line item if an applicant does not provide sufficient information detailing how it will enhance recruitment and retention. Allowable costs may be limited to reasonable amounts, as determined by FEMA.
- Applicants who propose to focus on retention of volunteers will receive equal consideration as applicants focusing on recruitment of volunteers. A focus on retention may include providing incentives for volunteer firefighter members to continue service in a fire department.
- SAFER Program grant funds may only be used for volunteer firefighters who are involved with, or trained in, the operations of firefighting and emergency response.
- FEMA recommends that departments consult their AHJ or the department's legal counsel to understand the full legal and financial implications involved with implementing or sustaining programs that offer benefits or financial awards to firefighters (e.g., stipends, Length of Service Award Program [LOSAP]/Retirement Program).
- All grant-related purchases and activities must be incurred, received, and completed within the period of performance. The period of coverage or service delivery on all contracts and agreements may not begin prior to or extend beyond the period of performance of the grant. FEMA may permit prorated costs to be charged to the grant for training courses that begin during the period of performance but end after the period of performance ends.
- All funded activities under the R&R Activity must be governed by formally adopted Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Minimally, these SOPs should specify who qualifies for each of the incentives, specific requirements for earning the incentives, and the disposition of the awarded incentives if an individual fails to fulfill the stipulations. FEMA may ask for copies of SOPs before or after being awarded.
- Funds received under the SAFER Program must not be used to replace funds that would be available from state or local sources, or from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, but shall be used to increase the amount of funding that would, in the absence of Federal funds received, be made available from state or local sources, or funds supplied by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: High Priority

- Costs to support a staffing needs assessment identifying the operational staff and support that are required to carry out fire department responsibilities safely and effectively (e.g., supplies for data collection, contractors, or personnel to collect and analyze data, software programs, etc.).
  - **Note**: If a staffing needs assessment is requested and the application is selected for funding, the staffing needs assessment will be the only activity that will be funded.
- Costs to support a R&R Coordinator, a Program Manager, and/or a Grant Administrator (including reasonable salary, fringe benefits, contract support, supplies, travel, etc.).
  - **Note**: Computers for these positions are low priority items.
- Marketing Program to recruit new volunteer firefighters, such as:
  - Media advertising (e.g., television, radio, social media);
  - Print advertising (e.g., newspapers, billboards, signs, banners, brochures, flyers); and,
    - LED/electronic sign. **Note:** this is a high priority item only when included as part of a comprehensive marketing program. Only one LED/electronic sign is allowed per applicant and 75% of usage must be dedicated to R&R activities. Allowable costs may be limited to reasonable amounts as determined by FEMA. Additional restrictions apply (for details see Section 10.B.a. Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) Compliance of this NOFO).
  - **Note**: If requesting funds to recruit new members, a marketing plan must be in place, or the application must show a marketing plan will be implemented either with grant funds (requested as a line item) or that the applicant will implement a marketing plan using existing department resources.
- New Member Costs may include:
  - Entry-level physical exam for each new recruit;
  - Annual physicals for newly recruited members[4]; and
  - Station duty uniforms.
- Wellness and Fitness for Existing Members. Wellness and Fitness costs of an annual exam may include:
  - Physical exams;
  - Job-related immunization;
  - Periodic Physical Exam/Health Screening;
  - Behavioral health; and
  - Cancer Screening Program to meet NFPA 1582.
    - All grant-funded physicals (except those for explorers/cadets) must meet NFPA 1582 standards (Chapter 9, Occupational Medical Evaluation).
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to provide behavioral health training for coping with fire service duties.
- New recruit basic training that is not covered under a department's normal operating budget, and as required by the AHJ to meet minimum firefighter certification (e.g., cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), First Responder, EMT, FF1, FF2).

[4] The cost of physicals should be based on local physician or health center prices. Detailed information on implementing NFPA 1582 physicals can be found at https://www.fstaresearch.org.

R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: High Priority
▪ Reimbursement to members for lost wages, mileage and transportation costs, lodging costs, and per diem while attending required basic training is also eligible. ▪ **Note:** costs for mileage/transportation, lodging, and per diem must comply with the department's written travel policies and procedures. If policies are not established, costs will only be reimbursed at the federal government rate. • Leadership or career development training when used as a retention incentive that is not covered under a department's normal operating budget. ▪ Reimbursement to members for lost wages, mileage and transportation costs, lodging costs and per diem while attending leadership/career development training or conferences are also eligible. ▪ **Note:** costs for mileage/transportation, lodging and meals must comply with the department's written travel policies and procedures. If policies are not established, costs will only be reimbursed at the federal government rate. ▪ Courses must provide Continuing Education Units (CEU) or certificates of completion to be eligible. • Instructor/train-the-trainer training that is not covered under a department's normal operating budget. ○ Reimbursement to members for lost wages, mileage and transportation costs, lodging costs, and per diem while attending instructor/train-the-trainer training are also eligible. ▪ **Note**: Costs for mileage/transportation, lodging, and per diem must comply with the department's written travel policies and procedures. If policies are not established, costs will only be reimbursed at the federal government rate. • Tuition assistance for higher education (including books, lab fees and student fees). ▪ Coursework or certifications in this category should be more advanced than what departments typically fund for required minimum-staffing requirements and specific to an accredited university or trade school program. ▪ Courses are not limited to firefighter training or education. ▪ Only tuition payments for classes offered and taken during the period of performance are allowable. ▪ Computers for individual students are not eligible for funding. ▪ Payments for student loans are not eligible for funding. ▪ Recipients must provide internal policies that explain how funding is administered. ▪ Allowable costs may be limited to reasonable amounts, as determined by FEMA. • PPE/Turnout Gear. ▪ PPE may only be funded for new firefighters that join the department after the date of grant award, that successfully pass an NFPA 1582-compliant physical, and that are certified as "fit for duty." PPE purchased with SAFER Program funding must be utilized by adequately trained staff. ▪ Funds are available to acquire Occupational Safety and Health Administration-required and NFPA-compliant PPE for firefighting personnel. In addition, PPE must meet any national or state standards and increase firefighter safety. Failure to meet these requirements may result in ineligibility for PPE funding. Copies of NFPA standards may be reviewed at http://www.nfpa.org/freeaccess. ▪ Only actual costs for PPE are allowed.

R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: High Priority

- Allowable costs may be limited to reasonable amounts, as determined by FEMA.
- To receive payment, recipients must provide the following documentation to support the purchase of PPE:
  - Invoices/proof of payment (e.g., canceled checks, bank statements, electronic funds transfers) for PPE.
  - Proof that the firefighter(s) have passed an NFPA 1582-compliant physical and are certified as "fit for duty."
- Eligible PPE Expenditures:
  - Only one set of PPE for structural and wildland firefighting per each new recruit.
  - The SAFER Program considers a complete set of structural PPE to be comprised of one self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) mask/face piece, one pair of pants, one coat, one helmet, two hoods, one pair of boots, two pairs of gloves, one pair of suspenders, and one pair of goggles. In those jurisdictions where additional PPE, like Personal Safety/Rescue Bailout Systems are statutorily required, the SAFER Program will consider all statutorily required items to be part of a complete PPE set.
  - The SAFER Program considers a complete set of wildland PPE to be comprised of one pair of pants, one coat, one jumpsuit, one helmet, one pair of boots, one pair of gloves, one pair of suspenders, one pair of goggles, one fire shelter, one web gear, one backpack, and one canteen/hydration system.
- Traditional therapies and preventative care facilitated by a licensed mental health or physical healthcare provider.
- LOSAP or Retirement Program:
  - New LOSAP or Retirement Programs (meaning the department has never had a LOSAP or Retirement Program).
  - Increasing existing LOSAP or Retirement Program coverage to include newly recruited members (FEMA will only fund the increase portion of the program). **Note**: FEMA will not fund LOSAP or Retirement Programs that were previously funded by a SAFER Program grant.

R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: Medium Priority

- Nominal stipends, as defined under Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities, Supporting Definitions for this NOFO in this NOFO for volunteer firefighters who are involved with, or trained in, the operations of firefighting and emergency response (e.g., Pay-per-Call, Points Based System, etc.). Stipends may only be provided for participation in operational (firefighting) activities, such as duty shifts, operational training, or responding to incidents.
  - Food vouchers may be used for nominal stipends if the Narrative supports their use as an effective recruitment and retention tool for the department. However, food vouchers must be issued through formally adopted SOPs.
  - Award recipients must maintain records of all food vouchers including firefighter name, amount, date received, and signature of the receiving firefighter.
  - Gift cards may not be used for nominal stipends. For information on gift cards, see Low Priority – Awards/Incentives below.
  - Only actual costs for stipends are allowed.

R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: Medium Priority

- Allowable costs may be limited to reasonable amounts as determined by FEMA.

- Costs to support explorer/cadet, and mentoring programs, such as:
  - Only one set of station duty uniforms (the SAFER Program considers one set of station duty uniform as one pair of pants, one shirt, one hat, and one pair of boots) for each newly recruited cadet/explorer per the department's documented uniform policy.
  - Training (Non-Immediate Danger to Life and Health [IDLH]).
  - One set of structural or wildland PPE as defined above for each new cadet/explorer that joins the department after the date of grant award, with the following two exceptions: 1) SCBA mask/face pieces are not eligible because PPE for explorers/cadets may not be used in an IDLH atmosphere, and 2) physicals for explorers/cadets are not required to meet NFPA 1582.
  - One introductory physical exam per each newly recruited explorer/cadet.
- Insurance packages (e.g., AD&D, workers compensation, disability, health, dental, life).
- Exercise equipment is limited to no more than $10,000 total per grant award.
- Wellness programs (e.g., group fitness led by health instructors that come to the department).

R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: Low Priority

- New Member Costs. Only one set of station duty uniforms (the SAFER Program considers one set of station duty uniforms as one pair of pants, one shirt, one hat, and one pair of boots) for new firefighters that join the department after the date of grant award, per the department's documented uniform policy.
  - **Note**: Class A or B uniforms (e.g., Dress Uniforms) and badges are not allowable costs under the SAFER Program.
- American National Standards Institute-approved retro-reflective highway apparel.
- PPE gear bags.
- Costs for advanced training not currently covered under the department's operating budget (e.g., extrication training, specialized equipment training, swift water rescue, etc.). Advanced training requests are only eligible for members who have already met the minimum firefighter certifications required by the AHJ and must closely correlate to the applicant's recruitment and retention goals.
  - Reimbursement to members for lost wages, mileage and transportation costs, lodging costs, and per diem while attending advanced training are also eligible.
  - **Note**: Costs for mileage and transportation costs, lodging costs, and per diem must comply with the department's written travel policies and procedures. If policies are not established, costs will only be reimbursed at the federal government rate.
- Two computers (including monitor, keyboard, mouse) and printer for grant-appointed R&R Coordinator, Program Manager, and/or Grant Administrator.
- Awards or Incentive program for participation in operational (firefighting) activities, such as operational training or responding to incidents (e.g., length of service plaques, gift cards for top responders, non-uniform clothing).

R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: Low Priority

- Non-uniform clothing (limited to a shirt, a jacket, or a pullover) as part of an award program only.
  - **Note**: Class A or B uniforms (e.g., Dress Uniforms) and badges are not allowable costs under the SAFER Program.
- Gift Cards: a logbook for the purchase and issuance of gift cards is required. The logbook should include name of recipient, date, amount of card, reason for issuance, and signature of recipient. Gift cards should be issued to operational firefighters who have completed the minimum firefighter training required by the AHJ.

- LED/electronic sign when it is not included as part of a comprehensive marketing program.
- Fire service association membership fees.
- Projector or screen to support classroom training.
- Payments for housing or rent for volunteers at or near the fire station.
- Other costs associated with new recruits (background checks, aptitude tests, etc.).
- Station modifications/remodeling/renovation of existing facilities.
  - Remodeling/renovations to an existing facility are allowable (e.g., converting space into bunkroom) and must correlate to the identified recruitment or retention problems or issues being addressed with the grant. The renovations must be minor interior alterations not to exceed $10,000 total per grant award.
  - Remodeling/renovations may not change the footprint or profile of the building.
  - Any request for modifications to facilities may require EHP review (for details see Section 10.B.a. Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) Compliance of this NOFO). Recipients are encouraged to have completed as many steps as possible for a successful EHP Review in support of their proposal for funding, including coordination with their State Historic Preservation Office to identify potential historic preservation issues and to discuss the potential for project effects, and compliance with all state and EHP laws and requirements. Preservation Office to identify potential historic preservation issues and to discuss the potential for project effects, and compliance with all state and EHP laws and requirements.
  - Written approval must be provided by FEMA before using any SAFER Program funds for remodeling or renovation. If awarded funds for remodeling or renovation, recipients may be required to submit evidence of approved zoning ordinances, architectural plans, any other locally required planning permits, and a notice of interest.

R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: Non-Prioritized Costs

- M&A costs up to 3% of the total awarded amount in accordance with 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. M&A costs must be identifiable and directly related to the implementation and management of the SAFER Program grant. Salaries and fringe benefits for personnel directly supporting the grant are not required to be included in the M&A budget line item.

R&R Activity – Eligible Costs: Non-Prioritized Costs

- Indirect costs for national, state, local, or federally recognized Tribal Nation volunteer firefighter interest organizations that are expended pursuant to Section 3.H. Indirect Costs (Facilities and Administrative Costs).
- Up to $1,500 in grant writer fees for application preparation, but not grant administration. The fee must have been paid between 90 days before the publication date of this NOFO and up to 30 days of the end of the application period and prior to any contact with SAFER Program Office staff or an Offer of Award. For details see Appendix C – Award Administration Information, Grant Writer/Preparation Fees.
- Audit costs proportional to the total SAFER Program award. Recipients of multiple federal funding sources can only charge a pro rata share of the audit cost(s) to the SAFER Program award, and they must be incurred during the period of performance.

R&R Activity – Ineligible Costs

This list is not exhaustive:

- Salary and benefits for firefighters.
- Retroactive payments or recognition for operational services rendered prior to the grant award.
- Costs incurred (including the delivery of goods or services) outside of the period of performance except for grant writer fees; see Appendix C – Award Administration Information, Grant Writer/Preparation Fees.
- Fire suppression equipment.
- Vehicles.
- Fire simulators, fire evolution, or fire training props (e.g., burn trailers, forcible entry, rescue/smoke maze, flashover simulators).
- Supplies, expendables, or "onetime" use items such as foam, fuel/propane, breaching materials (e.g., wood or sheetrock).
- Sirens, warning lights for fire department or private vehicles, or other outdoor warning devices.
- Communication equipment and monthly expenses including cell phones, pagers, portable radios, or Computer- Aided Dispatch systems.
- Video cameras/recording equipment.
- Photographs/photographer unless part of a marketing contract for recruitment of new members.
- Intruder alerting systems and deployment notification systems.
- Retroactive payments or recognition for non-operational activities (including payments, gift cards, recruitment bonuses, or stipends for recruiting firefighters).
- Payments for travel to or participation in leisure or social activities such as theater tickets, entertainment tickets, and trips (e.g., professional sporting events).
- Costs associated with award banquets, such as food, photographers, refreshments, entertainment, or rental facilities. Reimbursement for actual awards (e.g., plaques and trophies) is eligible.

R&R Activity – Ineligible Costs

- Costs for food or refreshments that are not part of a conference or training hosted by the grant recipient (food vouchers can be requested as a nominal stipend but must be provided only under formally adopted SOPs).
- Costs for training currently covered under the department's operating budget (e.g., tuition or instructor fees for department-mandated, basic-level training).
- Tuition assistance for family members of the volunteer.
- Services at a member's personal residence (e.g., internet access, plowing of driveways).
- Furniture (except for newly converted bunkrooms), televisions, fixtures, appliances (e.g., refrigerators), and entertainment equipment.
- "Giveaways" for recruitment events, such as stickers, pencils, pens, t-shirts, cups, mugs, or balloons.
- Fees for courses and training that are available free of charge on the internet or at state/local training facilities (e.g., NIMS 100, 700, 800).
- Costs for fuel. Costs for travel to training or other eligible activities are reimbursed through mileage rates.
- Gym Memberships.
- Payments for student loans.
- Mileage reimbursement for responding to incidents or periodic operational training at the fire house (mileage reimbursement is allowed for other types of training as explained under eligible costs).
- Station internet access/user fees and equipment to install internet (such as routers).
- Continued funding of an existing (or previously funded through the SAFER Program) LOSAP or Retirement Program.
- Computers in common areas or individual computers for training/education.
- Copiers/printers.
- Incentives for career firefighters within the recipient's fire department.
- Ineligible explorer/cadet/mentoring program expenditures:
  - SCBAs, including masks/face pieces.
  - Anything involving the IDLH atmosphere.
  - Any activities precluded by the AHJ.
- Ineligible PPE expenditures:
  - Three-quarter length rubber boots.
  - SCBAs (not including SCBA masks/face pieces).
  - PASS Devices.
  - Spare cylinders.
  - Bomb disposal suits.
  - PPE for hazardous materials and other specialized incidents.
  - More than one set of structural or wildland PPE per newly recruited member (within the period of performance).
- PPE for existing members, R&R Coordinator, Program Manager, and/or Grant Administrator.

13. Appendix C – Award Administration Information

Appendix C contains detailed information on SAFER Program Award Administration. Reviewing this information may help recipients in the programmatic and financial administration of their award(s).

A. Help FEMA Prevent Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

If applicants or recipients have information about instances of fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement involving FEMA programs or operations, they should contact the DHS OIG Hotline at (800) 323-8603, by fax at (202) 254-4297, or email HOTLINE@oig.dhs.gov.

B. Grant Writer/Preparation Fees

Fees for grant writers may be included as a pre-award expenditure. For grant writer fees to be eligible as a pre-award expenditure, the services must be competitively sourced, specifically identified, and listed within the "Grant Request Details" section of the application and must satisfy the requirements under 2 C.F.R. § 200.458. FEMA will only consider reimbursements for application preparation, not administration, up to $1,500 per annum. The allowability of grant writer fees as a pre-award expenditure must be paid between the 90 days before the publication date of this NOFO and up to 30 calendar days after the application period closes. For the grant writer fees held either on retainer or subscription basis to be an eligible pre-award cost, the claimed retainer or subscription must have been competitively secured, and the costs are limited to the start of the appropriation period for the underlying award and meet the requirements under 2 C.F.R. § 200.458. Fees payable on a contingency basis are not an eligible expense.

Pursuant to 2 C.F.R. Part 180, recipients may not use federal grant funds to reimburse any entity, including a grant writer or preparer, if that entity is presently suspended or debarred by the federal government from receiving funding under federally-funded grants or contracts. Recipients must verify that the contractor is not suspended or debarred from participating in specified federal procurement or non-procurement transactions pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 180.300.

Prior to submission of the application, please review all work produced by grant writers or other third parties for accuracy. By submitting the application, applicants are certifying all information contained therein is true and an accurate reflection of the organization, and that regardless of the applicant's intent, the submission of information that is false or misleading may result in actions by FEMA. These actions include but are not limited to the submitted application not being considered for award, temporary withholding of funding under the existing award pending investigation, or referral to the DHS OIG.

The following documentation shall be provided to FEMA upon request:

1. A copy of the grant writer's contract for services;
2. A copy of the invoice or purchase order;
3. A copy of the canceled check (front and back); and
4. Evidence that the services were competitively procured.

Failure to provide the requested documentation may result in the grant writer fee being deemed ineligible and the grant reduced accordingly.

Note: FEMA requires that all applicants identify the following as "Application Participants" in the "Contact Information" section of the application: Any individual or organization that assisted with the development, preparation, or review of the application to include drafting or writing the narrative and budget; whether that person, entity, or agent is compensated or not; and whether the assistance took place before submitting the application.

C. Maintenance and Sustainment

The use of FEMA preparedness grant funds for the costs of repairs or replacement, as well as maintenance contracts, warranties, and user fees may be allowable.

The intent of eligible Maintenance and Sustainment activities is to provide direct support to the critical capabilities developed using FEMA and other DHS grants and support activities. Routine upkeep and the supplies, expendables, or one-time use items that support routine upkeep (e.g., gasoline, tire replacement, routine oil changes, monthly inspections or grounds and facility maintenance) are the responsibility of the recipient and may not be funded with SAFER Program funding.

Generally, when purchasing a maintenance agreement, service contract, or extended warranty for systems or equipment, the period of coverage provided under such a plan may not extend beyond the period of performance of the grant with which the agreement, warranty or contract is purchased.

The duration of an extended warranty purchased incidental to the original purchase of the equipment may exceed the period of performance if the coverage purchased is consistent with that which is typically provided for, or available through, these types of agreements, warranties, or contracts. When purchasing a stand-alone warranty or extending an existing maintenance contract on an already-owned piece of equipment or system, coverage purchased may not exceed the period of performance of the award used to purchase the maintenance agreement or warranty. As with warranties and maintenance agreements, this policy extends to licenses and user fees as well.

Even if purchased incidental to the original purchase of the equipment, the duration of an extended maintenance agreement or warranty must also be reasonable for the type of equipment or system being purchased. For example, if a vendor offers a 10-year extended warranty incidental to the purchase of a piece of equipment, but the useful life of that equipment being purchased is five years, the purchase of a 10-year extended warranty would not be a reasonable cost and may not be charged to the grant.

D. Taxes, Fees, Levies, and Assessments

Taxes, fees, levies, or assessments that the recipient is legally required to pay and are directly related to any eligible SAFER Program acquisition activity may be charged to a SAFER Program award pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.470. These charges shall be identified and enumerated in the SAFER Program application narrative, as well as the "Grant Request Details" section of the acquisition activity.

Any avoidable and unreasonable costs that result from the action or inaction of a recipient (or recipient's agent) or that prevent that recipient from enjoying any lawful exemption, waiver, or reduction of any tax, fee, levy, or assessment directly related to any eligible SAFER Program acquisition activity are not chargeable to any SAFER Program award.

Example: Governmental entities and Public Safety Agencies are exempt from some Federal Communications Commission (FCC) fees*, but only if the eligible organization submits an exemption or waiver request to the FCC.

**Government entities are not required to pay FCC regulatory fees. Nonprofit entities (exempt under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code) may also be exempt. The FCC requires that any entity claiming exempt status submit, or have on file with the FCC, a valid Internal Revenue Service Determination Letter documenting its nonprofit status, or certification from a governmental authority attesting to its exempt status. For more information, please visit http://www.fcc.gov.*

E. Excess Funds

After completing the initial project(s) proposed in the recipient's application, some recipients may have unexpended funds remaining in their budget. These excess funds may result from any combination of under-budget acquisition activities or competitive procurement processes.

These excess funds may be utilized to address an organization's local needs or to mitigate identified capability gaps. FEMA expects excess funds to be obligated concurrent with an award's period of performance to address a known or critical need. An amendment request must be submitted to document the expenditure of excess funds. As a reminder, all costs must be incurred, and all goods and services must be delivered or completed within the period of performance to be allowable.

F. Payments and Amendments

FEMA uses the Direct Deposit/Electronic Funds Transfer method of payment to recipients.

SAFER Program payment/drawdown requests are generated using FEMA GO. SAFER Program payment/drawdown requests from state or local government entities will be governed by applicable federal regulations in effect at the time a grant is awarded to the recipient and may be either advances or reimbursements. Recipients should not expend funds until all special conditions listed on the grant award document have been met, including completion of EHP review, and the request for payment in FEMA GO has been approved. Recipients should draw down funds based upon immediate disbursement requirements; however, FEMA strongly encourages recipients to draw down funds as close to disbursement or expenditure as possible to avoid accruing interest.

Non-federal entities should keep detailed records of all transactions involving the grant. FEMA may at any time, request copies of any relevant documentation and records, including purchasing documentation along with copies of cancelled checks for verification. See, e.g., 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.318(i), 200.334, 200.337.

a. ***Advances***
Recipients shall be paid in advance, provided they maintain or demonstrate the willingness and ability to maintain procedures to minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds and disbursement by the recipient (not to exceed 30 days), and the financial management systems that meet the standards for fund control and accountability as established in 2 C.F.R. Part 200. The recipient shall include all applicable source documentation such as invoice(s), purchase orders, contracts, etc., to support the costs associated with the advance SAFER Program payment/drawdown requests. EHP review requirements must be met prior to advanced payments.

Although advance drawdown requests are permissible, recipients remain subject to applicable federal laws in effect at the time a grant is awarded to the recipient.

Governing interest requirements include the Uniform Administrative Requirements Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200 and the *Cash Management Improvement Act (CMIA)* and its implementing regulations at 31 C.F.R. Part 205. Interest under CMIA will accrue from the time federal funds are credited to a recipient's account until the time the recipient pays out the funds for program purposes. For the rate to use in calculating interest, please visit Treasury Current Value rate at https://www.fiscal.treasury.gov/fsreports/rpt/cvfr/cvfr_home.htm.

b. ***Reimbursement***
Payment by reimbursement is the preferred method when the requirements to be paid in advance, pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.305, cannot be met. In accordance with U.S. Department of Treasury regulations at 31 C.F.R. Part 205, if applicable, the recipient shall maintain procedures to minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds and the disbursement of said funds. As a prerequisite of SAFER Program approval for reimbursement requests, recipients shall submit all applicable source documentation, such as payroll records, timecards, contracts, invoices, purchase orders, proof of payment (e.g., canceled checks, bank statements, electronic funds transfers) to support the costs associated with each payment/drawdown request.

c. ***Rebates***
Recipients shall disburse program income, rebates, refunds, contract settlements, audit recoveries, and interest earned on such funds before requesting additional cash payments, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.305. The reduction of federal financial participation via rebates/refunds may generate excess funds for the recipient if the recipient previously obligated their Cost Share match based upon the original award figures. If the recipient previously obligated their original Cost Share prior to the rebate, then the recipient may have minimum excess funds equal to the difference between the original Cost Share less the rebate-adjusted Cost Share.

d. ***Payment Requests During Closeout***
A recipient may only submit reimbursement payment requests up to 120 calendar days after the expiration of the period of performance, during an award's closeout reconciliation per 2 C.F.R. § 200.344. Reimbursement payments are the only eligible type of requests to be submitted after a grant's period of performance has expired. The expenditure must have been obligated and received during the period of performance of the award. The recipient's request should contain

clear and specific information certifying that the liquidation of federal funds is reimbursement for an obligation properly incurred during the active period of performance. FEMA may request documentation supporting the reimbursement for review at any time.

e. ***Amendments***

FEMA may approve SAFER Program award amendments on a case-by-case basis for the following reasons:

- Extension of the period of performance to complete the scope of work under the R&R Activity;
- Changes to the activity, mission, retroactive approval (pre-award), closeout issues, and some excess funds requests;
- Budget changes (adding funds to award/non-closeout deobligation of funds); and
- Change of key personnel.

FEMA will only consider amendments submitted via FEMA GO. These requests must contain specific and compelling justifications for the requested change. Amendments or changes to the scope of work may require additional EHP review. FEMA strongly encourages recipients to expend grant funds in a timely manner to be consistent with SAFER Program goals and objectives.

Note: A recipient may deobligate or return unused funds (i.e., those remaining funds previously drawn down via payment request or remaining award funding that was never requested) to FEMA prior to the end of an award's period of performance. To exercise this option, a recipient must submit an amendment via FEMA GO and state in the amendment that the unliquidated funds (e.g., the funds to be returned) are not necessary for the fulfillment or success of the grant's obligations or mission. The recipient must also indicate in the amendment that it understands that the returned funds will be deobligated and unavailable for any future award expenses. Deobligation of funds will decrease the federal portion of the grant and the amount of the recipient's cost share obligation. FEMA will confirm deobligation amendments with all points of contact; after confirmation of the recipient's intent to deobligate, FEMA will hold the approved deobligation request for 14 calendar days as a period for recipient reconsideration before FEMA processes the deobligation request.

G. Disposition of Grant-Funded Equipment

A recipient must use, manage, and dispose of SAFER Program-funded equipment in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. § 200.313. Except for state governments, when original or replacement equipment acquired under a SAFER Program award is no longer needed for the original project, program, or other activities currently or previously supported by a federal awarding agency, the recipient must request disposition instructions from FEMA. FEMA strongly recommends contacting the SAFER Help Desk before disposing of SAFER Program-funded equipment.

H. Post-Award Recipient Responsibilities

Once awarded, recipients under the Hiring Activity must submit a pre-SAFER Program roster listing paid operational/firefighting personnel, in support of NFPA 1710 or NFPA 1720, who are employees at time of award. FEMA compares the pre-SAFER Program roster to names submitted for SAFER Program-funded positions to ensure that the SAFER Program-funded firefighters are new employees.

The SAFER Program Office will work with recipients to establish the correct staffing maintenance numbers, which combine the number of pre-SAFER Program and SAFER Program-funded operational positions. Once this is established, recipients must agree to maintain this number throughout the period of performance by taking active and timely steps to fill any vacancies.

Recipients under the Hiring Activity who lay off any operational personnel during the period of performance will be considered in default of their grant and the award will be terminated. In those situations, recipients may be required to return the federal funds disbursed under the grant award.

Recipients who are unable, due to documentable economic hardship, to backfill non-SAFER Program operational positions vacated through attrition (e.g., resignation, retirement) after receiving an award may petition FEMA to waive the staffing maintenance requirements.

Approved waivers allow recipients to decrease and reestablish the staffing maintenance numbers agreed to at the time of award by the number of positions that recipients are unable to fill. To qualify for this waiver, the economic hardship must affect the entire public safety sector in a recipient's jurisdiction, not just the fire department. FEMA will not grant waivers for SAFER Program-funded positions. Recipients who fail to maintain the required level of staffing risk losing federal funds awarded under this grant.

Recipients must agree that, notwithstanding any provision of other laws, firefighters hired under these grants will not be discriminated against or be prohibited from engaging in volunteer firefighting activities in another jurisdiction during off-duty hours.

FEMA strongly encourages applicants, to the extent practicable, to seek, recruit and hire military veterans to increase their ranks within their departments.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.L

Item Cover Page

HARDEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM REPORT

DATE: June 5, 2025

SUBMITTED BY: Casey Dasher, Public Safety/Fire/Rescue

ITEM TYPE: Business Agenda - Action Items

AGENDA SECTION: **BUSINESS AGENDA**

SUBJECT:

Casey Dasher - Public Safety Director - Authorization to apply for the Department of Homeland Security Fiscal Year 2024 Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) grant.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

ATTACHMENTS:
FEMA FY24 FP&S Memo.pdf
NOFO Grant Application.pdf

Hardee County FLORIDA

FIRE RESCUE

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

RUSSELL MELENDY
CHAIR, DISTRICT 4

NOEY FLORES
VICE-CHAIR, DISTRICT 2

TIM WELLS
DISTRICT 1

DONALD CHANCEY
DISTRICT 3

KENNY MILLER
DISTRICT 5

TERRY ATCHLEY
COUNTY MANAGER

SARAH JOHNSTON
COUNTY ATTORNEY

MAILING ADDRESS
412 West Orange Street
Suite 103
Wauchula, FL 33873

PHONE
863-773-9430

WEBSITE
hardeecountyfl.gov

To: Terry Atchley, County Manager

Through: Douglas G. Baber, Assistant County Manager

From: Casey Dasher, Public Safety Director

Subject: FEMA FY2024 Fire Prevention and Safety Grant

Date: May 30, 2025

Hardee County Fire Rescue is requesting BOCC approval to apply for the Department of Homeland Security Fiscal Year 2024 Fire Prevention and Safety Grant (FP&S) grant.

The focus of the FEMA FY2024 FP&S Grant Program is to enhance the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire and fire-related hazards. The FP&S Program provides grants directly to eligible entities for fire prevention programs and firefighter health and safety research and development.

Our application will focus on acquiring a new fire extinguisher training system, enhancing our fire safety education outreach. Securing this grant funding would significantly bolster our capabilities without placing an additional financial burden on the county. It would allow us to provide hands-on, realistic fire extinguisher training to the public and county employees.

If awarded, the department will strategically budget funds for the required 20% cost share. The award amount is projected to be $18,400.00.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Fiscal Year 2024 Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) Grant Program

Fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, and other criminal or noncriminal misconduct related to this program may be reported to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) Hotline. The toll-free numbers to call are 1 (800) 323-8603 and TTY 1 (844) 889-4357.

Contents

1. Basic Information 4
A. Agency Name 4
B. NOFO Title 4
C. Announcement Type 4
D. Funding Opportunity Number 4
E. Assistance Listing Number 4
F. Expected Total Funding 4
G. Anticipated Number of Awards 4
H. Expected Award Range 4
I. Projected Application Start Date 4
J. Projected Application End Date 4
K. Anticipated Funding Selection Date 4
L. Anticipated Award Date 4
M. Projected Period of Performance Start Date 5
N. Projected Period of Performance End Date 5
O. Executive Summary 5
P. Agency Contact 5
2. Eligibility 7
A. Eligible Entities/Entity Types 7
B. Project Type Eligibility 8
C. Requirements for Personnel, Partners, and Other Parties 8
D. Maximum Number of Applications 9
E. Additional Restrictions 9
F. References for Eligibility Factors within the NOFO 10
G. Cost Sharing Requirement 10
H. Cost Share Description, Type and Restrictions 10
I. Cost Sharing Calculation Example 11
J. Required information for verifying Cost Share 11
3. Program Description 11
A. Background, Program Purpose, and Program History 11
B. Goals and Objectives 12
C. Program Rationale 12
D. Federal Assistance Type 13
E. Performance Measures and Targets 13

F. Program-Specific Unallowable Costs 13
G. General Funding Requirements 13
H. Indirect Costs (Facilities and Administrative Costs) 14
I. Management and Administration (M&A) Costs 14
J. Pre-Award Costs 14
K. Beneficiary Eligibility 15
L. Participant Eligibility 15
M. Authorizing Authority 15
N. Appropriation Authority 15
O. Budget Period 15
P. Prohibition on Covered Equipment or Services 15
4. Application Contents and Format 15
A. Pre-Application, Letter of Intent, and Whitepapers 15
B. Application Content and Format 15
C. Application Components 16
D. Program-Specific Required Documents and Information 16
E. Post-Application Requirements for Successful Applicants 16
5. Submission Requirements and Deadlines 16
A. Address to Request Application Package 16
B. Application Deadline 19
C. Pre-Application Requirements Deadline 19
D. Post-Application Requirements Deadline 19
E. Effects of Missing the Deadline 19
6. Intergovernmental Review 19
A. Requirement Description and State Single Point of Contact 19
7. Application Review Information 20
A. Threshold Criteria 20
B. Application Criteria 20
C. Financial Integrity Criteria 21
D. Supplemental Financial Integrity Criteria and Review 22
E. Reviewers and Reviewer Selection 22
F. Merit Review Process 22
G. Final Selection 29
8. Award Notices 30
A. Notice of Award 30
B. Pass-Through Requirements 30
C. Note Regarding Pre-Award Costs 31
D. Obligation of Funds 31
E. Notification to Unsuccessful Applicants 31
9. Post-Award Requirements and Administration 31
A. Administrative and National Policy Requirements 31
B. DHS Standard Terms and Conditions 32
C. Financial Reporting Requirements 33
D. Programmatic Performance Reporting Requirements 33
E. Closeout Reporting Requirements 33

F. Disclosing Information per 2 C.F.R. § 180.335 35
G. Reporting of Matters Related to Recipient Integrity and Performance 35
H. Single Audit Report 35
I. Monitoring and Oversight 36
J. Program Evaluation 36
K. Additional Performance Reporting Requirements 36
10. Other Information 37
A. Period of Performance Extension 37
B. Other Information 37
11. Appendix A – FY 2024 FP&S Program Updates 44
12. Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities 45
A. Supporting Definitions for this NOFO 45
B. Funding Priorities 46
13. Appendix C – Award Administration Information 55
A. Help FEMA Prevent Fraud, Waste, and Abuse 55
B. Grant Writer/Preparation Fees 56
C. Maintenance and Sustainment 56
D. Taxes, Fees, Levies, and Assessments 57
E. Excess Funds 57
F. Payments and Amendments 58
G. Disposition of Grant Funded Equipment 59

1. Basic Information

A. Agency Name	U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
B. NOFO Title	Fiscal Year 2024 Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) Grant Program
C. Announcement Type	Initial
D. Funding Opportunity Number	DHS-24-GPD-044-00-97
E. Assistance Listing Number	97.151
F. Expected Total Funding	$32,400,000
G. Anticipated Number of Awards	100 awards
H. Expected Award Range	The total amount of funding a recipient may receive under an FP&S Program award is limited to a maximum federal share of $1.5 million set by § 33(d)(2) of the *Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act* of 1974, Pub. L. 93-498, as amended (15 U.S.C. § 2229(d)(2)). R&D Activity applicants applying under the Early Career Investigator category are limited to a maximum federal share of **$600,000 per project**.
I. Projected Application Start Date	05/23/2025 09:00 a.m. Eastern Time (ET)
J. Projected Application End Date	07/03/2025 05:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET)
K. Anticipated Funding Selection Date	No later than Aug 18, 2025
L. Anticipated Award Date	Beginning on approximately Aug 18, 2025, and continuing thereafter until all FY 2024 FP&S Program grant awards are issued (but no later than September 30, 2025).

M. Projected Period of Performance Start Date	Aug 18, 2025 (will vary based on award date and activity type) The period of performance may be 12-48 months. **FP&S Activity:** The period of performance for projects funded under the FP&S Activity is generally 12 months. Eligible applicants who propose complex projects may apply for up to a 24-month period of performance from the date of award. **R&D Activity:** The period of performance for projects proposed under the R&D Activity will be 12, 24, 36 or 48 months from the date of award.
N. Projected Period of Performance End Date	08/18/2026 – 08/18/2029 (will vary based on award date and activity type)
O. Executive Summary	The focus of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) Grant Program (hereafter referred to as the FP&S Program) is to enhance the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire and fire-related hazards. The FP&S Program provides grants directly to eligible entities for fire prevention programs and firefighter health and safety research and development.
P. Agency Contact	**a.** ***Program Office Contact*** The FP&S Program Help Desk provides technical assistance to applicants for the online completion and submission of applications into FEMA Grants Outcomes (FEMA GO), answers questions concerning applicant eligibility, recipient responsibilities, and helps in the programmatic administration of awards. The FP&S Program Help Desk can be contacted at (866) 274-0960 or by email at FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov. Normal hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. ET. Guidance documents such as application tutorials, Self-Evaluation Guides, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are also provided to further explain the current SAFER Program, assist with the online grant application, and highlight lessons learned and changes for FY 2024. For more details, please visit the FP&S Program website. **b.** ***FEMA Grants News*** This channel provides general information on all FEMA grant programs and maintains a comprehensive database containing key personnel contact information at the federal, state, and local levels. FEMA Grants News Team is reachable at fema-grants-

	news@fema.dhs.gov. or (800) 368-6498, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET. **c. *Grant Programs Directorate (GPD) Award Administration Division*** GPD's Award Administration Division (AAD) provides support regarding financial matters and budgetary technical assistance. AAD can be contacted at ASK-GMD@fema.dhs.gov **d. *FEMA Regional Offices*** Assistance to Firefighters Grants Regional Contacts also may provide fiscal support, including pre- and post-award administration and technical assistance. Assistance to Firefighters Grants Regional Contacts are available at https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters/regional-contacts. **e. *Civil Rights*** The FEMA Office of Civil Rights is responsible for ensuring compliance with and enforcement of federal civil rights obligations in connection with programs and services conducted by FEMA. They are reachable at FEMA-CivilRightsOffice@fema.dhs.gov. **f. *Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation*** The FEMA Office of Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (OEHP) provides guidance and information about the EHP review process to FEMA programs and recipients and subrecipients. Send any inquiries regarding compliance for FEMA grant projects under this NOFO to FEMA-OEHP-NOFOQuestions@fema.dhs.gov. **g. *Payment and Reporting System*** FEMA uses the Direct Deposit/Electronic Funds Transfer (DD/EFT) method of payment to recipients. Payment requests are submitted through FEMA GO. **h. *FEMA GO*** For technical assistance with the FEMA GO system, please contact the FEMA GO Helpdesk at femago@fema.dhs.gov. or (877) 585-3242, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. ET.

2. Eligibility

A. Eligible Entities/Entity Types	Only the following entities or entity types are eligible to apply. **a.** ***Applicants*** ***FP&S Activity*** Fire departments operating in any of the 50 states, as well as fire departments in the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico[1], or any federally recognized Indian tribe or tribal organization. A fire department is an agency or organization having a formally recognized arrangement with a state, local, tribal, or territorial authority (city, county, parish, fire district, township, town, or other governing body) to provide fire suppression to a population within a geographically fixed primary first due response area. National, regional, state, local, Tribal Nation and nonprofit interest organizations that are recognized for their experience and expertise in fire prevention and safety programs and activities are eligible applicants. Both private and public nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply for funding under this activity. ***R&D Activity*** National, state, local, federally recognized Tribal Nation and non-profit organizations, such as academic (e.g., universities), research foundations, public safety institutes, public health, occupational health, and injury prevention institutions. Both private and public non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for funding in this activity. Fire departments are not eligible to apply for funding in this Activity. Each activity has its own application and eligibility requirements, as further outlined in Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities of this NOFO. **b.** ***Subapplicants*** Subapplicants and subawards are not allowed.

[1] The District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are all defined as "States" in the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974. See 15 U.S.C. § 2203(10).

B. Project Type Eligibility	**Applicants and recipients should actively coordinate and collaborate with their local and state authorities to help ensure and prioritize the commitment of future non-federal investments in order to sustain staffing capabilities once an award's period of performance ends.** **a.** ***Unallowable Project Types*** Please see Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities of this NOFO for additional information on unallowable project types. **b.** ***Allowable Project Types*** ***FP&S Activity*** The FP&S Activity is designed to reach high-risk target groups [2]and mitigate the incidence of death and injuries caused by fire and fire-related hazards. The five project categories eligible for funding under this activity are: 1. Community Risk Reduction; 2. Wildfire Risk Reduction; 3. Code Enforcement/Awareness; 4. Origin and Cause Investigation; and 5. National/State/Regional Programs and Projects. ***R&D Activity*** The R&D Activity is aimed at improving firefighter safety, health, or well-being through research and development that reduces firefighter fatalities and injuries. The four project categories eligible for funding under this activity are: 1. Clinical Studies; 2. Technology and Product Development; 3. Preliminary Studies; and 4. Early Career Investigator.
C. Requirements for Personnel, Partners, and Other Parties	An application submitted by an otherwise eligible non-federal entity (i.e., the applicant) may be deemed ineligible when the person that submitted the application is not: **1) a current employee, personnel, official, staff or leadership of the non-federal entity; and 2) duly authorized to apply for an award on behalf of the non-federal entity at the time of application.**

[2] Per 15 U.S. Code § 2229(j)(3)(A) FEMA shall give priority to applicants who focus on prevention of injuries to high-risk groups from fire. Applicants may choose the following options within the application to include children under 14, adults over 65, firefighters, people with disabilities (e.g., deaf/hard-of hearing), college/university housing, low-income families/neighborhoods, geographic area and/or other populations.

	Further, the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) must be a duly authorized current employee, personnel, official, staff or leadership of the recipient and **provide an email address unique to the recipient at the time of application and upon any change in assignment during the period of performance. Consultants or contractors of the recipient are not permitted to be the AOR of the recipient.** Federal employees are prohibited from serving in any capacity (paid or unpaid) on the development of any proposal submitted under this program.
D. Maximum Number of Applications	The maximum number of applications that can be submitted is: 1. One application per eligible entity, per activity (up to one application under the FP&S Activity and up to one application under the R&D Activity) Each application may include up to three projects. Each project within an application must be presented separately as a free-standing proposal. Each project requires its own separate supporting budget and narrative statement. If an applicant submits two or more applications for the same activity, both applications may be disqualified. • This is different from when an entity is applying on behalf of other organizations that are agencies or instrumentalities of the applicant (e.g., multiple fire departments under the same county, city, borough, parish, or other municipality) • In that situation, the applicant may request similar or the same costs as long as the application clearly states which costs (including quantities) are for which agency/instrumentality • This is permissible even if that entity submits multiple applications across regional versus direct applications
E. Additional Restrictions	**National Incident Management System (NIMS) Implementation** FP&S Program applicants are not required to comply with NIMS to apply for FP&S Program funding or to receive an FP&S Program award. Any applicant who receives a FY 2024 FP&S Program award must achieve the level of NIMS compliance required by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) over the applicant's emergency service operations (e.g., a local government) before the end of the grant's performance period. **National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS)** NFIRS reporting is not a requirement to apply for any FP&S Program; however, fire departments that receive funding under this program

	must agree to provide information to the NFIRS for the period of performance covered by the assistance. If a recipient does not currently participate in the incident reporting system, they must start as soon as possible. Capacity to report to NFIRS must be established prior to the end of the performance period. The recipient may be asked by FEMA to provide proof of compliance in reporting to NFIRS. **Note:** Reporting to other sources, (E.g., National Fire Operations Reporting System [NFORS]) does not satisfy the requirement for reporting to NFIRS.
F. References for Eligibility Factors within the NOFO	Please see the following references provided below: 1. "Financial Integrity Criteria" subsection 2. "Supplemental Financial Integrity Criteria and Review" subsection 3. Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities
G. Cost Sharing Requirement	Applicants selected for this award must agree to an acceptable cost share agreement. Otherwise, they will not be funded.
H. Cost Share Description, Type and Restrictions	Recipient cost sharing is generally required as described below and under 15 U.S.C.§ 2229(k)(1). In general, eligible applicants shall agree to make available non-federal funds to carry out an FP&S Program award in an amount equal to not less than 5% of the grant award. ***Types of Cost Share*** **Cash (Hard Match)**: Cost share of non-federal cash is allowable for FP&S Program grants. **In-kind (Soft Match)**: In-kind cost share is allowable for FP&S Program grants, including the value of the following: • Complementary activities (such as providing additional smoke alarms for installation or education materials for public education); and • Provision of staff, facilities, services, materials, equipment. In-kind is the value of something received or provided that does not have a cost associated with it. For example, the value of donated services could be used to comply with the match requirement. Also, third party in-kind contributions may count toward satisfying match requirements, if the recipient expends them as allowable costs.

	Recipients who use in-kind contributions for their 5% cost share must comply with all applicable regulations and 2 C.F.R. Part 200.306 regarding matching or cost-sharing.
I. Cost Sharing Calculation Example	FEMA has developed a cost share calculator tool to assist applicants with determining their cost share. The cost share tool is available on the FEMA website at Fire Prevention and Safety Documents.
J. Required information for verifying Cost Share	Applicants should submit their plan for cost share within the Request Details (budget) section of the grant application. **Maintenance of Effort** Pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 2229(k)(3), an applicant seeking an FP&S Program grant shall agree to maintain, during the term of the grant, the applicant's aggregate expenditures relating to activities allowable under this NOFO, at not less than 80% of the average amount of such expenditures in the two fiscal years before the fiscal year an FP&S Program grant is awarded. In other words, an applicant agrees that if it receives a grant award, the applicant will keep its overall expenditures during the award's period of performance for activities that could be allowable costs under this NOFO at a level that is at least 80% or more of the average of what the applicant spent on such costs for those activities in FYs 2022 and 2023. This includes those funded with non-federal funding for activities that could be allowable costs under this NOFO.

3. Program Description

A. Background, Program Purpose, and Program History

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) Grant Program (hereafter referred to as the FP&S Program) is one of three grant programs that constitute the DHS and FEMA's focus on enhancing the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire and fire-related hazards. The FP&S Program provides financial assistance directly to eligible fire departments, national, regional, state, local, tribal, and non-profit organizations such as academic (e.g. universities), research foundations, public safety institutes, public health, occupational health, and injury prevention institutions for fire prevention programs and firefighter health and safety research and development such as clinical studies that address behavioral or physiological and medical research activities.

The funding categories for FP&S are:

1. Community Risk Reduction;

2. Wildfire Risk Reduction;
3. Code Enforcement/Awareness;
4. Origin and Cause Investigation; and
5. National/State/Regional Programs and Projects.

The funding categories for R&D are:

1. Clinical Studies;
2. Technology and Product Development;
3. Preliminary Studies; and,
4. Early Career Investigator.

Abstracts and results of research and development grants that have been funded under this program can be found at Fire Prevention and Safety | FEMA.gov.

B. Goals and Objectives

Goals: The goal of the FP&S Program is to enhance the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire and fire-related hazards by providing grants to eligible fire departments, national, regional, state, local, Tribal Nation and non-profit organizations such as academic (e.g., universities), research foundations, public safety institutes, public health, occupational health, and injury prevention institutions. The FP&S Program strives to strengthen community fire prevention programs and enable innovative solutions to improve firefighter safety, health and well-being.

Objectives: The objectives of the FP&S Program are to:

- Reduce community fire risk through assessments, education, and tools;
- Reduce wildfire risk through property assessments, education, and fuel reduction;
- Increase code awareness, adoption, reinstatement, and enforcement;
- Increase fire origin and cause investigations;
- Enhance the safety of the public and firefighters through national programs that aim to improve behaviors and decision-making regarding fires; and
- Increase research to improve firefighter safety, health, or well-being.

Priorities: Information on program priorities for the FY 2024 FP&S Program can be found in Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities of this NOFO.

C. Program Rationale

The FP&S Program represents part of a comprehensive set of measures authorized by Congress and implemented by DHS. Among the six DHS Missions noted in the Department of Homeland Security's Strategic Plan, the FP&S Program supports Mission Five: Build a Resilient Nation and Respond to Incidents. By enhancing the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire and fire-related hazards, the FP&S program provides critically needed resources to strengthen community fire prevention programs and enables scientific research on innovations that improve firefighter safety, health, and well-being. The FP&S Program also aims to support objectives outlined under Mission Five in the Strategic Plan including:

- Objective 5.2: Strengthen National Resilience
- Objective 5.4: Enhance Training and Readiness of First Responders

Through these objectives, FEMA creates a vision for the field of emergency management and sets an ambitious, yet achievable, path forward to unify and further professionalize emergency management across the country. We invite all our stakeholders and partners to join us in building a more prepared and resilient nation.

D. Federal Assistance Type
Grant

E. Performance Measures and Targets
The grant recipient is required to collect data to allow FEMA to measure performance of the awarded grant. To measure performance, FEMA may request information throughout the period of performance. In its final performance report submitted at closeout, the recipient must submit sufficient information to demonstrate it has met the performance goal as stated in its award. FEMA will measure the recipient's performance of the grant by comparing the number of items, supplies, projects, and activities needed and requested in its application with the number of items, supplies, projects, and activities acquired and delivered by the end of the period of performance using the following programmatic metrics.

FP&S Activity
- Community Risk Reduction: Percent of target population receiving an intervention.
- Wildfire Risk Reduction: Percent of target population receiving an intervention.
- Code Enforcement/Awareness: Percent of properties inspected.
- Origin and Cause Investigation: Percent of fires where cause is determined.
- National/State/Regional Programs and Projects: Number of firefighters receiving interventions.

The target for these measures is set by each applicant within the grant application. For example, "we plan to install smoke alarms in 500 households, reaching a total of 2,000 individuals."

Research and Development (R&D) Activity
- All Categories: Percent of research project aims met.

F. Program-Specific Unallowable Costs
Please see Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities for additional information on funding restrictions and allowable costs.

G. General Funding Requirements
Costs charged to federal awards (including federal and non-federal cost share funds) must comply with applicable statutes, rules and regulations, policies, this NOFO, and the terms and conditions of the federal award. This includes, among other requirements, that costs must be

incurred, and products and services must be delivered within the budget period. 2 C.F.R. § 200.403(h).

Recipients may not use federal funds or any cost share funds for the following activities:

1. Matching or cost sharing requirements for other federal grants and cooperative agreements (see 2 C.F.R. § 200.306).
2. Lobbying or other prohibited activities under 18 U.S.C. § 1913 or 2 C.F.R. § 200.450.
3. Prosecuting claims against the federal government or any other government entity (see 2 C.F.R. § 200.435).

H. Indirect Costs (Facilities and Administrative Costs)
Indirect costs are allowed for recipients and subrecipients.

Indirect costs (IDC) are costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective and not readily assignable to specific cost objectives without disproportionate effort. Applicants with a current negotiated IDC rate agreement who desire to charge indirect costs to a federal award must provide a copy of their IDC rate agreement with their applications. Not all applicants are required to have a current negotiated IDC rate agreement. Applicants that are not required to have a negotiated IDC rate agreement, but are required to develop an IDC rate proposal, must provide a copy of their proposal with their applications. Applicants without a current negotiated IDC rate agreement (including a provisional rate) and wish to charge the de minimis rate must reach out to FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov for further instructions. Applicants who wish to use a cost allocation plan in lieu of an IDC rate proposal must reach out to FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov for further instructions. As it relates to the IDC for subrecipients, a recipient must follow the requirements of 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.332 and 200.414 in approving the IDC rate for subawards.

I. Management and Administration (M&A) Costs
M&A costs are allowed.

No more than **3%** of the federal share of FP&S Program funds awarded may be expended by the recipient for M&A for purposes associated with the FP&S Program award. M&A expenses should be based only on actual expenses or known contractual costs; requests that are simple percentages of the award, without supporting justification or adequate documentation, will not be allowed or considered for reimbursement. Salaries and fringe benefits for personnel/contractors directly supporting the grant are not required to be included in the M&A budget line item.

M&A activities are those directly related to the management and administration of the FP&S award funds, such as financial management and monitoring. M&A are not overhead costs but are necessary direct costs incurred in direct support of the federal award or as a consequence of it, such as travel, meeting-related expenses, and salaries of full/part-time staff in direct support of the program. As such, M&A costs can be itemized in financial reports.

J. Pre-Award Costs
The following pre-award costs are allowable:

1. Fees for grant writers.

Generally, grant funds cannot be used to pay for products and services contracted for or obligated prior to the effective date of the award.

See Appendix C – Award Administration Information for further information regarding grant writer fees and Section 10.B Other Information of this NOFO for information about procurement integrity.

K. Beneficiary Eligibility
To be an eligible beneficiary, there are no program requirements. This NOFO and any subsequent federal awards create no rights or causes of action for any beneficiary.

L. Participant Eligibility
To be an eligible participant, there are no program requirements. This NOFO and any subsequent federal awards create no rights or causes of action for any participant.

M. Authorizing Authority
Section 33 of the *Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974*, Pub. L. No. 93-498, as amended (15 U.S.C. § 2229)

N. Appropriation Authority
Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2024, Pub. L. No. 118-47, Title III, Protection, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Federal Assistance (2024 DHS Appropriations Act)

O. Budget Period
There will be only a single budget period with the same start and end dates as the period of performance.

P. Prohibition on Covered Equipment or Services
Recipients, sub-recipients, and their contractors or subcontractors must comply with the prohibitions set forth in Section 889 of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019, which restrict the purchase of covered telecommunications and surveillance equipment and services. Please see 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.216, 200.327, 200.471, and Appendix II to 2 C.F.R. Part 200, and FEMA Policy #405-143-1 - Prohibitions on Expending FEMA Award Funds for Covered Telecommunications Equipment or Services for more information.

4. Application Contents and Format

A. Pre-Application, Letter of Intent, and Whitepapers
Pre-applications, letters of intent, and whitepapers are not required to be eligible to apply.

B. Application Content and Format
Applications are processed through the FEMA GO system. To access the system, go to https://go.fema.gov/.

Additional application and program guidance documents are available at the FP&S Program website.

C. Application Components
The following forms or information are required to be submitted via FEMA GO. The Standard Forms (SF) are also available at Forms | Grants.gov SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance

- Grants.gov Lobbying Form, Certification Regarding Lobbying
- SF-424A, Budget Information (Non-Construction)
- SF-424B, Standard Assurances (Non-Construction)
- SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

D. Program-Specific Required Documents and Information
The following program-specific document is required to be submitted as an attachment in FEMA GO for each regional project under the FP&S Activity:

1. Regional host applicants and participating partner agencies must execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), or equivalent document signed by the host and all participating organizations participating in the award.

The following program-specific documents are required to be submitted as attachments in FEMA GO for each project under the R&D Activity:

1. No more than a five-page Narrative Statement that responds to the Fire Service Panel Evaluation Criteria;
2. No more than a 20-page Narrative Statement that responds to the Science Panel Evaluation Criteria; and
3. No more than a 35-page Appendix.

The required formatting and content instructions for these documents can be found in the Tips and Guidelines for FP&S R&D Applicants, available at https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters/safety-awards.

E. Post-Application Requirements for Successful Applicants
Applicants likely to be funded may receive a request for additional information by email before award. Applicants must respond to the request to move forward with the grant review process.

5. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

A. Address to Request Application Package
Applications are processed through the FEMA GO system. To access the system, go to https://go.fema.gov/.

Steps Required to Apply for an Award Under This Program and Submit an Application:

To apply for an award under this program, all applicants must:

a. Apply for, update, or verify their Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number and Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service;
b. In the application, provide an UEI number;
c. Have an account with login.gov;
d. Register for, update, or verify their SAM account and ensure the account is active before submitting the application;
e. Register in FEMA GO, add the organization to the system, and establish the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR). The organization's electronic business point of contact (eBiz POC) from the SAM registration may need to be involved in this step. For step-by-step instructions, see the FEMA GO Startup Guide.
f. Submit the complete application in FEMA GO; and
g. Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal awarding agency. As part of this, applicants must also provide information on an applicant's immediate and highest-level owner and subsidiaries, as well as on all predecessors that have been awarded federal contracts or federal financial assistance within the last three years, if applicable.

Per 2 C.F.R. § 25.110, if an applicant is experiencing exigent circumstances that prevents it from obtaining an UEI number and completing SAM registration prior to receiving a federal award, the applicant must notify FEMA as soon as possible. Contact FireGrants@fema.dhs.gov and provide the details of the exigent circumstances.

How to Register to Apply:

General Instructions:

Registering and applying for an award under this program is a multi-step process and requires time to complete. Below are instructions for registering to apply for FEMA funds. Read the instructions carefully and prepare the requested information before beginning the registration process. Gathering the required information before starting the process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

The registration process can take up to four weeks to complete. To ensure an application meets the deadline, applicants are advised to start the required steps well in advance of their submission.

Organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, Employer Identification Number (EIN), and an active System for Award Management (SAM) registration.

Obtain a UEI Number:

All entities applying for funding, including renewal funding, must have a UEI number. Applicants must enter the UEI number in the applicable data entry field on the SF-424 form. For more detailed instructions for obtaining a UEI number, refer to SAM.gov.

Obtain Employer Identification Number:

In addition to having a UEI number, all entities applying for funding must provide an Employer Identification Number (EIN). The EIN can be obtained from the IRS by visiting https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online.

Create a login.gov account:

Applicants must have a login.gov account in order to register with SAM or update their SAM registration. Applicants can create a login.gov account at: https://secure.login.gov/sign_up/enter_email?request_id=34f19fa8-14a2-438c-8323-a62b99571fd.

Applicants only have to create a login.gov account once. For existing SAM users, use the same email address for both login.gov and SAM.gov so that the two accounts can be linked.

For more information on the login.gov requirements for SAM registration, refer to https://www.sam.gov/SAM/pages/public/loginFAQ.jsf.

Register with SAM:

In addition to having a UEI number, all organizations must register with SAM. Failure to register with will prevent your organization from applying through FEMA GO. SAM registration must be renewed annually and must remain active throughout the entire grant life cycle.

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to: Register with SAM.

Note: per 2 C.F.R. § 25.200, applicants must also provide the applicant's immediate and highest-level owner, subsidiaries, and predecessors that have been awarded federal contracts or federal financial assistance within the past three years, if applicable.

Register in FEMA GO, Add the Organization to the System, and Establish the AOR:

Applicants must register in FEMA GO and add their organization to the system. The organization's electronic business point of contact (eBiz POC) from the SAM registration may need to be involved in this step. For step-by-step instructions, see FEMA GO Startup Guide.

Note: FEMA GO will support only the most recent major release of the following browsers:

Google Chrome;

Mozilla Firefox;

Apple Safari; and

Microsoft Edge.

Applicants using tablet type devices or other browsers may encounter issues with using FEMA GO.

Submitting the Final Application:

Applicants will be prompted to submit the standard application information and any program-specific information required. Standard Forms (SF) may be accessed in the Forms tab under the SF-424 family on Grants.gov. Applicants should review these forms before applying to ensure they are providing all required information.

After submitting the final application, FEMA GO will provide either an error message, or an email to the submitting AOR confirming the transmission was successfully received.

B. Application Deadline
07/03/2025 05:00:00 p.m. Eastern Time

C. Pre-Application Requirements Deadline
Not applicable

D. Post-Application Requirements Deadline
Not applicable

E. Effects of Missing the Deadline
All applications must be completed and submitted in FEMA GO by the application deadline. FEMA GO automatically records proof of submission and generates an electronic date/time stamp when FEMA GO successfully receives an application. The submitting AOR will receive via email the official date/time stamp and a FEMA GO tracking number to serve as proof of timely submission prior to the application deadline.

Applicants experiencing system-related issues have until 3:00 PM ET on the date applications are due to notify FEMA. No new system-related issues will be addressed after this deadline. Applications not received by the application submission deadline will not be accepted.

FEMA will not review applications that are received after the deadline or consider these late applications for funding. FEMA may, however, extend the application deadline on request for any applicant who can demonstrate that good cause exists to justify extending the deadline. Good cause for an extension may include technical problems outside of the applicant's control that prevent submission of the application by the deadline, other exigent or emergency circumstances, or statutory requirements for FEMA to make an award. Applicants with these issues must notify FEMA before to the application deadline and within 48 hours after the applicant became aware of the issue.

6. Intergovernmental Review

A. Requirement Description and State Single Point of Contact
An intergovernmental review may be required. Applicants must contact their state's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to comply with the state's process under Executive Order 12372.

(See https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/12372.html;

https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/SPOC-list-as-of-2023.pdf).

7. Application Review Information

A. Threshold Criteria

If two or more entities have different funding streams, personnel rosters, and EINs but share the same facilities, FEMA considers them as being separate organizations for the purposes of FY 2024 FP&S Program eligibility.

FEMA will review applications for duplication of benefits if two or more organizations share facilities and each submit an application in the same activity.

Examples of ineligible applications and/or organizations include:

- For-profit organizations, federal agencies, and individuals
- Fire departments that are a Federal Government entity, or contracted by the Federal Government, and are solely responsible under a formally recognized agreement for suppression of fires on federal installations or land
- Fire departments that are not independent entities but are part of, controlled by, or under the day-to-day operational command and control of a larger department, agency or AHJ
    - However, if a fire department is considered to be the same legal entity as a municipality or other governmental organization, and otherwise meets the eligibility criteria, that municipality or other governmental organization may apply on behalf of that fire department as long as the application clearly states that the fire department is considered part of the same legal entity
- Non-federal airport or port authority fire departments whose sole responsibility is the suppression of fires on the airport grounds or port facilities, unless the airport/port fire department has a formally recognized arrangement with the local jurisdiction to provide fire suppression on a first-due basis outside the confines of the airport or port facilities.

B. Application Criteria

a. ***Criteria Development***

Funding priorities and programmatic criteria for evaluating FP&S Program applications are established by FEMA based on the recommendations from the Criteria Development Panel (CDP). The **nine major fire service organizations** represented on the panel are:

- International Association of Fire Chiefs
- International Association of Fire Fighters
- National Volunteer Fire Council
- National Fire Protection Association
- National Association of State Fire Marshals
- International Association of Arson Investigators
- International Society of Fire Service Instructors
- North American Fire Training Directors
- Congressional Fire Service Institute

The CDP is charged with making recommendations to FEMA regarding the creation or modification of previously established funding priorities as well as developing criteria for awarding grants. The content of this NOFO reflects implementation of the CDP's recommendations with respect to the priorities, direction, and criteria for awards.

FEMA will rank all complete submitted applications based on how well they respond to the evaluation criteria. Answers to the application's activity specific questions provide information used to determine each application's ranking

b. ***Peer Review Panel Process***
FP&S Program applications go through the following Peer Review Panel process:

1. FP&S Activity Projects

Peer reviewers will independently grade each narrative statement within each project. The evaluation elements listed in the "Narrative Evaluation Criteria" below will be used to calculate the score for each project. If needed, peer reviewers will meet as a team to discuss the merits and/or shortcomings of the application. A consensus is not required.

2. R&D Activity Projects

The Peer Review Panel process is composed of a Fire Service Panel Review and a Science Panel Review. Narratives within the application will be evaluated through the following processes:

Fire Service Panel Review
All eligible project applications will first be reviewed and scored by a panel of fire service experts to assess the need and priority for the research results and the likelihood that the results would be implemented by the fire service in the United States. The projects that are determined most likely to be implemented to enable improvement in firefighter safety, health, or well-being will be deemed to be in the "competitive range" and will be forwarded to the second level of project review, which is the scientific panel review process. A consensus is not required.

Science Panel Review
This panel will be comprised of scientists and technology experts who have expertise pertaining to the subject matter of the proposal. Scientific reviewers will independently score projects in the competitive range and, if necessary, discuss the merits or shortcomings of the project to reconcile any major discrepancies identified by fellow reviewers. A consensus is not required. Scientific peer review evaluations will impact the ranking of a project for funding.

C. Financial Integrity Criteria
Before making an award, FEMA is required to review OMB-designated databases for applicants' eligibility and financial integrity information. This is required by the Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 116-117, § 2 (2020)), 41 U.S.C. § 2313, and the "Do Not Pay Initiative" (31 U.S.C. 3354). For more details, please see 2 C.F.R. § 200.206.

Thus, the Financial Integrity Criteria may include the following risk-based considerations of the applicant:

1. Financial stability.
2. Quality of management systems and ability to meet management standards.
3. History of performance in managing federal award.
4. Reports and findings from audits.
5. Ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.

D. Supplemental Financial Integrity Criteria and Review
Before making an award expected to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (currently a total federal share of $250,000) over the period of performance:

1. FEMA is required by 41 U.S.C. § 2313 to review or consider certain information found in SAM.gov. For details, please see 2 C.F.R. § 200.206(a)(2).
2. An applicant may review and comment on any information in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov.
3. Before making decisions in the risk review required by 2 C.F.R. § 200.206, FEMA will consider any comments by the applicant.

E. Reviewers and Reviewer Selection
All applications will be evaluated through the Peer Review Panel process. A panel of peer reviewers is comprised of three fire service representatives recommended by the CDP.

F. Merit Review Process
The FP&S Activity and the R&D Activity have different Narrative Statement requirements (see below). Narrative Statements must provide specific details about the activity for which the applicant seeks funding.

Note: FEMA conducts reviews of a random sampling of applications to compare them for duplication including the narrative statements and statistical data. Therefore, all elements of the narrative statements must be specific and unique to the applying entity, and all statistical data must be accurate. Applications with narrative statements that have substantial duplication of statements, sentences, or paragraphs to other submitted applications, and/or inaccurate data that may mislead reviewers, may be disqualified. Discovery of falsification, fabrication, or plagiarism of other grant proposals will disqualify the application(s). FEMA evaluates each application on its merit, veracity, and accuracy to ascertain how the narrative statement(s) outlined within the application depicts the applicant's and their community's uniqueness, their particular risks, and how selecting them over a similarly situated applicant advances the objectives of the FP&S Program. At any time during application review process, including the technical review stage, FEMA may request additional documentation from applicants.

Fire Departments and Interest Organizations are assigned differing weights for each scored element under the FP&S Activity. Peer Review Panelists will evaluate and score each project based on the following narrative elements.

a. *FP&S Activity*

1. Financial Need (Fire Departments – 10%; Interest Organization – 0%)

Applicants must describe with particularity their unique financial need in the Applicant Information section of the application and detail how consistent it is with their need for financial assistance to carry out the proposed project(s). Applicants may include other unsuccessful attempts to acquire financial assistance. Applicants should provide detail about the applicant's operating budget, including a high-level breakdown of the budget, the applicant's inability to address financial needs without federal assistance, and other actions the applicant has taken to meet their needs (e.g., state assistance programs or other grant programs).

While interest organizations do not receive points for their financial need, this information is necessary to holistically evaluate and understand the applicant's financial need in comparison to similarly situated applicants.

2. Commitment to Hazard (Fire) Mitigation (Fire Departments only – 5%)

Fire department applicants that can demonstrate their commitment and proactive posture to reducing fire risk will receive higher consideration. Applicants must explain their code adoption and enforcement (to include Wildland Urban Interface [WUI] and commercial/residential sprinkler code adoption and enforcement) and hazard mitigation strategies (including whether or not the jurisdiction has a FEMA-approved hazard mitigation strategy). Applicants can also demonstrate their commitment to reducing fire risk by applying to implement fire mitigation strategies (code adoption and enforcement) via this application.

3.Vulnerability Statement (Fire Departments – 15%, Interest Organizations – 25%)

The assessment of fire risk is essential in the development of an effective project goal, as well as meeting FEMA's goal to reduce risk by conducting a risk assessment as a basis for action. Vulnerability is a "weak link," demonstrating high-risk behavior, living conditions, or any type of high-risk situation. The Vulnerability Statement should include a detailed description of the steps taken to determine the vulnerability and identify the target audience. The methodology for determination of vulnerability (i.e., how the vulnerability was found) should be discussed in-depth in the application's Narrative Statement.

- The specific vulnerability that will be addressed with the proposed project can be established through a formal or informal risk assessment. FEMA encourages the use of local statistics to illustrate the applicant's particular vulnerability, rather than national statistics, when discussing the vulnerability.
- In a clear, concise statement, the applicant should summarize the precise vulnerability the project will address, including who is at risk, what the risks are, where the risks are, and how the risks can be prevented, reduced, or mitigated.
- For the purpose of this NOFO, formal risk assessments consist of the use of software programs or recognized expert analysis that assess risk trends.

- Informal risk assessments could include an in-house review of available data (e.g., NFIRS) to determine fire loss, burn injuries, or loss of life over a period of time, and the factors that are the cause and origin for each occurrence, including a lack of adoption or enforcement of certain codes.

4. Project Description (Fire Departments – 20%, Interest Organizations –25%)

Applicants must describe in detail not only the project components but also how the proposed project addresses the identified capability gap due to financial need and/or the specific vulnerabilities identified in the vulnerability statement. The following information should be included:

- Project components;
- Review of any existing programs or models that have been successful;
- Detailed description of how the proposed project components fill the identified capability gap; and
- If working with Fire Service Partners/Organizations, identify each partner/organization and the role(s) they will fill in the successful completion of the proposed project.

5. Implementation Plan (Fire Departments – 25%, Interest Organizations – 30%)

Each project proposal should include nuanced details on the implementation plan that discusses the proposed project's goals and objectives. The following information should be included to support the implementation plan:

- Goals and objectives;
- Details regarding the methods and specific steps that will be used to achieve the goals and objectives;
- Timelines outlining the chronological project steps (this is critical for determining the likelihood of the project's completion within the period of performance);
- Where applicable, examples of marketing efforts to promote the project, who will deliver the project (e.g., effective partnerships), and the manner in which materials or deliverables will be distributed;
- Requests for props (i.e., tools used in educational or awareness demonstrations), including specific goals, measurable results, and details on the frequency for which the prop will be utilized. Applicants should include information describing the efforts that will be used to reach the high-risk audience and/or the number of people reached through the proposed project (examples of props include safety trailers, puppets, or costumes); and
- Where human subjects are involved, indicate whether the project has obtained exemption from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (for details see Section 9.A.a – Human Subjects Research of this NOFO).

Note: For applicants proposing a complex project that may require a 24-month period of performance, please include significant justification and details in the implementation plan that justify the applicant's need for a period of performance of more than 12 months.

6. Evaluation Plan (Fire Departments – 15%, Interest Organizations – 15%)

Projects should include a plan for evaluation of effectiveness and identify measurable and quantifiable goals. Applicants seeking to carry out awareness and educational projects, for example, should identify how they intend to determine that there has been an increase in knowledge about fire hazards, or measure a change in the safety behaviors of the audience. Applicants should demonstrate how they will measure risk at the outset of the project in comparison to how much the risk decreased after the project is finished. There are various ways to measure the knowledge gained about fire hazards, including the use of surveys, pre- and post-tests, or documented observations. Applicants are encouraged to attend training on evaluation methods, such as the National Fire Academy's "Demonstrating Your Fire Prevention Program's Worth."

Note: In addition to a detailed evaluation plan as described above, if awarded, grant recipients are required to report on specific performance metrics through performance reports and at closeout (for details see Section 3. E -Performance Measures and Targets of this NOFO).

7. Cost-Benefit (Fire Departments – 10%, Interest Organizations – 5%)

Projects will be evaluated and scored by the Peer Review Panelists based on how well the applicant addresses the fire prevention needs of the department or organization in an economic and efficient manner. The applicant should show how it will maximize the level of funding that goes directly into the delivery of the project. The costs associated with the project also must be reasonable for the target audience that will be reached, and a description should be included of how the anticipated project benefit(s) (quantified if possible) outweighs the cost(s) of the requested item(s). The application should provide justification for all costs included in the project to assist the Technical Evaluation Panel with their review.

8. Additional Considerations

The following considerations are not scored but may impact the evaluation of the entire application. This information may be used by application reviewers or by FEMA during technical review prior to making funding decisions.

- Meeting the needs of people with disabilities: Applicants in the Community Risk Reduction category will receive additional consideration if, as part of their comprehensive smoke alarm installation and education program, they address the needs of people with disabilities (e.g., deaf/hard-of-hearing) in their community.
- Experience and expertise: Applicants who demonstrate their experience and ability to conduct fire prevention and safety activities, and to execute the proposed or similar project(s), will receive additional consideration.
- Use of an Overmatch: Applicants who demonstrate the use of a cost-share overmatch are given additional consideration which will impact the evaluation of the entire application by application reviewers or FEMA during technical review.

b. *R&D Activity*
Peer review panelists will evaluate and score each project based on the following narrative elements:

1. Fire Service Panel Evaluation Criteria

Purpose (25%)

- Applicants should clearly identify the specific benefits of the proposed research project to improve firefighter safety, health, or well-being. The discussion should include:
    - The specific risk to firefighter safety, health, or well-being that the project will address;
    - The expected benefits of the project, including how the project will prevent, reduce, or mitigate the specific risk;
    - The gaps in knowledge that will be addressed; and
    - The general project methods planned to produce the intended results.

    If applying under Early Career Investigator, applicants should identify how this project will support the professional development of the Principal Investigator (PI).

    If applying under Preliminary Studies, applicants should consider the project being proposed as well as the potential results of a closely related future full study.

Potential Impact (15%)

- Applicants should discuss the potential impact of the research outcome/product on firefighters. Applicants should discuss who will benefit directly from the research outcome/product, i.e., the entire fire service or specific portions (career, volunteer, structural, wildland, fire investigators, etc.). The discussion should be supported by describing the specific type(s) of impact to the safety, health, or well-being of the identified group from use of the results in practice.

Implementation by Fire Service (25%)

- Applicants should discuss how the outcomes/products of this research, if successful, are likely to be widely/nationally adopted and accepted by the fire service as changes that enhance firefighter safety, health, or well-being. The discussion should include:
    - The methods and costs associated with implementation at the fire department level; and,
    - Organizations, manufacturers, and/or others that will need to be involved to aid the process of adoption.

Barriers (15%)

- Applicants should identify and discuss potential fire service and other barriers to successfully completing the project on schedule, including contingencies and strategies to deal with barriers if they materialize. This may include barriers that could inhibit the proposed fire service participation in the project, barriers that could inhibit the adoption of successful results by the fire service when the project is completed, or project components most likely to cause delay in successful completion.

  If applying under Early Career Investigator, applicants should discuss potential barriers specific to that project, such as if the PI does not receive the expected mentorship.

Partners (20%)

- Applicants should recognize that participation of the fire service as a partner in the research from development to dissemination is regarded as an essential part of all projects. Describe the fire service partners and contractors that will support the project to accomplish the objectives. The specific roles and contributions of the partners to the project should be described. Partnerships should be formed with national fire-related organizations and local and regional fire departments appropriate for the project. Letters of support and letters of commitment to actively participate in the project should be included in the Appendix of the application. Generally, participants of a diverse population, including both career and volunteer firefighters, are expected to facilitate acceptance of results nationally. In cases where this is not practical, due to the nature of the project or other limitations, these circumstances should be clearly explained.

2. Science Panel Evaluation Criteria

   Project goals, objectives, and specific aims (All Applicants - 15%)

- Applicants should address how the purpose, goals, objectives, and specific aims of the project will lead to results that will improve firefighter safety, health, or well-being. Describe the specific goals and objectives for each year of the project.

Literature Review (All Applicants – 10%)

- Applicants should provide a literature review that is relevant to the project's goals, objectives, and specific aims. The citations should be placed in the narrative text and references listed at the end of the Narrative Statement (and not in the Appendix) of the application. The review should be of sufficient depth to make it clear that the proposed project is necessary, adds to an existing body of knowledge, is different from current and previous studies, and offers a unique contribution. Applicants may consider previously funded R&D Activity projects.

Project Methods (Early Career Investigator Applicants – 15%, All Other Applicants – 20%)

- Applicants should provide a description of how the project will be carried out, including demonstration of the overall scientific and technical rigor and merit of the project. This includes the operations to accomplish the purpose, goals, and objectives, and the specific aims of the project. The roles and responsibilities of the entire research team must be described, including the relevant sub-contractors and sub-awardees involved in the

project. Applicants should provide supporting information for the research team in the Appendix, including bio sketches and budget information. Plans to recruit and retain human subjects, where applicable, should be described. Where human subjects are involved, describe plans for submission to the IRB (for details see Section 9.A- Human Subjects Research of this NOFO).

Project Measurements (Early Career Investigator Applicants – 15%, All Other Applicants – 20%)

- Applicants should provide evidence of the technical rigor and merit of the project, such as data pertaining to validity, reliability, and sensitivity (where established) of the facilities, equipment, instruments, standards, and procedures that will be used to carry out the research. The applicant should discuss the data to be collected to evaluate the performance methods, technologies, and products proposed to enhance firefighter safety, health, or well-being. The applicant should demonstrate that the measurement methods and equipment selected for use are appropriate and sufficient to successfully deliver the proposed project objectives.

Project Analysis (Early Career Investigator Applicants – 15%, All Other Applicants – 20%)

- The applicant should indicate the planned approach for analysis of the data obtained from measurements, questionnaires, or computations. Specify within the plan what will be analyzed, the statistical methods that will be used, the sequence of steps, and interactions as appropriate. It should be clear that the PI and research team have the expertise to perform the planned analysis and defend the results in a peer review process. The adequacy of the number of participants, samples, or tests to address the research question should be discussed.

Dissemination and Implementation (All Applicants – 15%)

- Applicants should indicate dissemination plans for scientific audiences (e.g., plans for submissions to specific peer review publications) and for firefighter audiences (e.g., via websites, magazines, and conferences). Also, assuming positive results and where applicable, indicate future steps that would support dissemination and implementation throughout the fire service. These are likely to be beyond the current project, so those features of the research activity that will facilitate future dissemination and implementation should be discussed. All applicants should specify how the results of the project, if successful, might be disseminated and implemented in the fire service to improve firefighter safety, health, or well-being. Additionally, an applicant should specify how the results of the project, if it does not achieve proposed goals, might be disseminated in the fire service to document lessons and inform future projects for improving firefighter safety, health, or well-being.

Mentoring (Early Career Investigator Applicants Only – 15%)

- An important factor in the evaluation of Early Career Investigator projects is the participation of a mentor(s) in the project. A mentor for the PI should be an experienced researcher in areas appropriate to the research project and be able to provide support to the PI for ongoing development of knowledge and skills throughout the project. The

mentor needs to have relationships with the fire service community sufficient to assist the PI in building relationships with fire departments and fire service organizations. The mentor has a role to support the applicant from defining the project and submitting the application for funding through the completion of a funded project. The applicant should identify the mentor(s) that has agreed to support the applicant and the proposed mentoring plan. In the plan, the applicant should discuss the role of the mentor(s) in the project and the expected benefits of the mentoring relationship to the applicant and the project. A biographical sketch and letter of commitment/support from the mentor(s) are required to be included in the Appendix document.

3. Additional Considerations:

The following considerations are not scored but may impact the evaluation of the entire application. This information may be used by FEMA during technical review prior to making funding decisions.

- Cost vs. Benefit: Cost vs. benefit in this evaluation element refers to the costs of the grant for the R&D project vs. the benefits that are projected for firefighters who would have improved safety, health, or well-being. Applicants should demonstrate a high benefit for the cost incurred and effective utilization of federal funds for research activities.
- Financial Need: In the Applicant Information section of the application, applicants must provide details on the need for federal financial assistance to carry out the proposed project(s). Included in the description might be other unsuccessful attempts to acquire financial assistance. Applicants should provide details about the organization's operating budget, including a high-level breakdown of the budget; the organization's inability to address financial needs without federal assistance; and other actions the organization has taken to meet their staffing needs (e.g., state assistance programs, other grant programs).
- Use of an Overmatch: Applicants who demonstrate the use of a cost-share overmatch are given additional consideration which will impact the evaluation of the entire application by application reviewers or FEMA during technical review.

G. Final Selection

Technical Evaluation Process (TEP)

The highest scoring project(s) for both activities will be considered within the fundable range. Projects that are in the fundable range will undergo a Technical Review by the FEMA Program Office before being recommended for award. The FEMA Program Office will assess the request with respect to costs, quantities, feasibility, eligibility, and recipient responsibility prior to recommending any application for award. Additionally, FEMA will review whether the project duplicates other federally funded research or prevention activities. Once the TEP is complete, a final ranking of projects will be created. FEMA will award grants based on this final ranking and the ability to meet statutorily required funding limitations outlined in Appendix B - Programmatic Information and Priorities of this NOFO.

FEMA may not make a federal award until the applicant has complied with all applicable SAM requirements. Therefore, an applicant's SAM registration must be active not only at the time of

application, but also during the application review period and when FEMA is ready to make a federal award. Further, as noted above, an applicant's or recipient's SAM registration must remain active for the duration of an active federal award. If an applicant's SAM registration is expired at the time of application, expires during application review, or expires any other time before award, FEMA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant.

In awarding grants, the FEMA Administrator is required to consider:

- The findings and recommendations of the Technical Evaluation Panel;
- The degree to which an award will reduce deaths, injuries, and property damage by reducing the risks associated with fire-related and other hazards; and
- The extent of an applicant's need for an FP&S Program grant and the need to protect the United States as a whole.

8. Award Notices

A. Notice of Award

The Authorized Organization Representative should carefully read the federal award package before accepting the federal award. The federal award package includes instructions on administering the federal award as well as terms and conditions for the award.

By submitting an application, applicants agree to comply with the prerequisites stated in this NOFO and the material terms and conditions of the federal award, should they receive an award.

FEMA will provide the federal award package to the applicant electronically via FEMA GO. Award packages include an Award Letter, Summary Award Memo, Agreement Articles, and Obligating Document. An award package notification email is sent via the grant application system to the submitting AOR.

Recipients must accept their awards no later than 30 days from the award date. Recipients shall notify FEMA of their intent to accept the award and proceed with work via the FEMA GO system.

Funds will remain on hold until the recipient accepts the award via FEMA GO and all other conditions of the award have been satisfied, or until the award is otherwise rescinded. Failure to accept a grant award within the specified timeframe may result in a loss of funds.

Note: The award package may contain changes made during the application review process. The recipient will only be responsible for completing the activities listed in the Approved Scope of Work section of the award package.

In addition to the requirements of in this section and in this NOFO, FEMA may place specific terms and conditions on individual awards in accordance with 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

B. Pass-Through Requirements

Standard pass-through requirements in 2 C.F.R. Part 200 apply.

C. Note Regarding Pre-Award Costs
Even if pre-award costs are allowed, beginning performance is at the applicant and/or sub-applicant's own risk.

D. Obligation of Funds
Grant funds are obligated upon the offer of grant award.

E. Notification to Unsuccessful Applicants
FEMA GO will provide all applicants who do not receive an FY 2024 FP&S Program award with a turndown notification.

9. Post-Award Requirements and Administration

A. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

a. ***Human Subjects Research***

The information in this section pertains to both FP&S Activity and R&D Activity applications with projects that include human subjects. See Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities for more information on eligible projects involving human subjects. DHS/FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that mechanisms and procedures are in place to protect the safety of human subjects in DHS/FEMA-supported research. DHS requirements are set forth in 6 C.F.R. Part 46. A grant recipient must agree to meet all DHS requirements for projects using human subjects (and ensure any subrecipients or subcontractors meet those requirements) before implementing any work with human subjects.

For the definition of "research" and "human subjects," please see Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities. If a project involves human subjects, the project must undergo review by an Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB must provide an approval or exemption determination. In addition, the DHS Compliance Assurance Program Office (CAPO) must review and concur with the IRB approval or exemption determination. Both IRB approval/exemption and DHS CAPO concurrence must precede any project activities involving human subjects.

b. ***R&D Activity – Research Terms and Conditions***

These Research Terms and Conditions implement the requirements of the Uniform Guidance (2 C.F.R § 200) issued by the Office of Management and Budget as it applies to research-related grants made by federal awarding agencies to institutions of higher education and nonprofit organizations, and consistent with government-wide research policy.

- Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research - Applicants must have a plan in place to provide appropriate training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research to undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers who will be supported by FP&S Program funds to conduct research. Training plans should comply with federal laws covering the use of humans in research, and establish procedures for investigating and reporting research misconduct, conflicts of interest, and for managing recipient's responsibilities under a federal award consistent with the ethical principles of the Belmont Report. (See the National Research Act, Pub. L. 93-348 and the Federal policy for the Protection of Human Subjects or the "Common Rule," codified at 6 C.F.R.

Part 46.) Training plans are subject to review, upon request. The recipient shall ensure that these requirements flow down to all subrecipients or are otherwise appropriately addressed in the subaward.

- Academic Technology Transfer and Commercialization of University Research - Any institution of higher education, such as defined in section 101(A) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. § 100(a)), that receives FP&S Program support and has received at least $25 million in total federal research grants in the most recently completed federal fiscal year shall keep, maintain, and make available upon request information concerning its general approach to and mechanisms for transfer of technology and commercialization of research results.

- Annual Meeting - The recipient agrees to participate in each two-day annual meeting that may take place during the period of performance and should include the primary staff involved with the grant (example: PI and one researcher). The award recipient also agrees to notify and allow participation/attendance by FP&S Program Office staff at key meetings involving grant activities.

- Acknowledgement - For any publication that results from FEMA grant-supported research, the award recipient must include an acknowledgment of FEMA grant support and the grant award number. If the award recipient issues any press releases concerning the outcome of the funded research, FEMA must be notified in advance to allow for coordination.

- Publications - The award recipient agrees to provide full public access to any peer reviewed scholarly publications directly arising from research funded by the Federal Government in whole or in part under this award. This shall be accomplished by the recipient providing FEMA the final published documents no later than twelve months after their initial publication for republication by FEMA, in keeping with FEMA's rights under 2 C.F.R. §200.315(b).

B. DHS Standard Terms and Conditions

A recipient of a federal award under this funding opportunity is required to comply with DHS Standard Terms and Conditions in effect at the time the award is issued. For continuation awards, the terms and conditions for the initial federal award will apply unless otherwise specified in the terms and conditions of the continuation award. The specific version of the DHS Standard Terms and Conditions applicable to the federal award will be in the federal award package. NOTE: While not a requirement in the DHS Standard Terms and Conditions, as a best practice: Entities receiving funds through this program should ensure that cybersecurity is integrated into the design, development, operation, and maintenance of investments that impact information technology (IT) and/ or operational technology (OT) systems.

Ensuring the Protection of Civil Rights

As the Nation works towards achieving the National Preparedness Goal, it is important to continue to protect the civil rights of individuals. Recipients and subrecipients must carry out their programs and activities, including those related to the building, sustainment, and delivery of

core capabilities, in a manner that respects and ensures the protection of civil rights for protected populations.

The DHS Standard Terms and Conditions include a fuller list of the civil rights provisions that apply to recipients. Additional information on civil rights provisions is available at https://www.fema.gov/about/offices/equal-rights/civil-rights.

C. Financial Reporting Requirements

1. Recipients must report obligations and expenditures through a federal financial report. The Federal Financial Report (FFR) form, also known as Standard Form 425 (SF-425), is available online at: SF-425 OMB #4040-0014. Recipients must file the FFR electronically using FEMA GO.
2. Recipients must submit the FFR *semi-annually* throughout the period of performance (POP) as detailed below:
    - **No later than July 30** (for the period Jan. 1 – June 30)
    - **No later than January 30** (for the period July 1 – Dec. 31)
    - Within 120 days after the end of the Period of Performance
3. The final FFR is due within 120 days after the end of the POP.
4. FEMA may withhold future federal awards and cash payments if the recipient does not submit timely financial reports or the financial reports submitted demonstrate lack of progress or provide insufficient detail.

D. Programmatic Performance Reporting Requirements

1. A Performance Report must be submitted semi-annually throughout the POP.
2. A Performance Report must include:
    a. A brief narrative of overall project(s) status indicating progress toward project objectives;
    b. A summary of project expenditures;
    c. A summary of any products from research activities;
    d. A description of any potential issues that may affect project completion; and
    e. Other information specific to the Activities awarded.
3. The Progress Report must be submitted through FEMA GO.
4. Performance Report Due Dates
    - No later than July 30 (for the period Jan. 1 – June 30)
    - No later than January 30 (for the period July 1 – Dec. 31)
    - Within 120 calendar days after the end of the Period of Performance

E. Closeout Reporting Requirements

Within 120 days after the end of the period of performance, or after an amendment has been issued to close out a federal award, recipients must submit the following:

1. The final request for payment, if applicable.
2. The final FFR.
3. The final progress report detailing all accomplishments.
4. A qualitative narrative summary of the impact of those accomplishments throughout the period of performance.

5. Other documents required by this NOFO, terms and conditions of the federal award, or other DHS Component guidance.

If the final FFR and performance report periods coincide with the end of the period of performance, FEMA has discretion under 2 C.F.R. Part 200 to waive the last quarterly/semiannual/annual reports and only require the final FFR and performance report for closeout purposes. The recipient is responsible for returning any balances of unobligated or unliquidated funds that have been drawn down that are not authorized to be retained per 2 C.F.R. § 200.344(d).

After FEMA approves these reports, it will issue a closeout notice. The notice will indicate the period of performance as closed, list any remaining funds to be de-obligated, and address the record maintenance requirement. Unless a longer period applies, such as due to an audit or litigation, for equipment or real property used beyond the period of performance, or due to other circumstances outlined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.334, this maintenance requirement is three years from the date of the final FFR.

Also, pass-through entities are responsible for closing out those subawards as described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.344; subrecipients are still required to submit closeout materials within 90 calendar days of the subaward period of performance end date. When a subrecipient completes all closeout requirements, pass-through entities must promptly complete all closeout actions in time for the recipient to submit all necessary documentation and information to FEMA during the closeout of their prime award. The recipient is responsible for returning any balances of unobligated or unliquidated funds that have been drawn down that are not authorized to be retained per 2 C.F.R. § 200.344(e).

Administrative Closeout
Administrative closeout is a mechanism for FEMA to unilaterally execute closeout of an award. FEMA will use available award information in lieu of final recipient reports, per 2 C.F.R. § 200.344(h)-(i). It is an activity of last resort, and if FEMA administratively closes an award, this may negatively impact a recipient's ability to obtain future funding.

Additional Reporting Requirements
As part of the closeout report, R&D Activity recipients must provide a minimum of ten (10) pages that emphasize results derived from the funded project. The format for this document should include the following sections:

- Describe the purpose of the research and the relevance of the results and products to the safety, health, or well-being of firefighters.
- List the specific aims of the research project. After each aim provide the following:
    - Describe the study design;
    - Describe the procedures/measures to achieve the aim;
    - Mention any deviation from the original grant aims or methods; and

- State the main outcome for each aim.

- Discuss the general outcome(s) of the entire project.
- Discuss implications for policy, practice, safety, health, or well-being of firefighters from completion of the project.
- State the highlights of dissemination activities completed or in process

F. Disclosing Information per 2 C.F.R. § 180.335
Before entering into a federal award, the applicant must notify FEMA if it knows that the applicant or any of the principals (as defined at 2 C.F.R. § 180.995) for the federal award:

1. Are presently excluded or disqualified;
2. Have been convicted within the preceding three years of any of the offenses listed in § 180.800(a) or had a civil judgment rendered against you for one of those offenses within that time period;
3. Are presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State, or local) with the commission of any of the offenses listed in § 180.800(a); or
4. Have had one or more public transactions (Federal, State, or local) terminated within the preceding three years for cause or default.

This is requirement is fully described in 2 C.F.R. §180.335.

Additionally, 2 C.F.R. § 180.350 requires recipients to provide immediate notice to FEMA at any time after entering a federal award if:

1. The recipient learns that either it failed to earlier disclose information as required by 2 C.F.R. § 180.335;
2. Due to changed circumstances, the applicant or any of the principals for the federal award now meet the criteria at 2 C.F.R. § 180.335 listed above.

G. Reporting of Matters Related to Recipient Integrity and Performance
Appendix XII to 2 C.F.R. Part 200 states the terms and conditions for recipient integrity and performance matters used for this funding opportunity.

If the total value of all active federal grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts for a recipient exceeds $10,000,000 at any time during the period of performance:

1. The recipient must maintain the currency of information reported in SAM.gov about civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings described in paragraph 2 of Appendix XII;
2. The required reporting frequency is described in paragraph 4 of Appendix XII.

H. Single Audit Report
A recipient expending $1,000,000 or more in federal awards (as defined by 2 C.F.R. § 200.1) during its fiscal year must undergo an audit. This may be either a single audit complying with 2 C.F.R. § 200.514 or a program-specific audit complying with 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.501 and 200.507.

Audits must follow 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart F, 2 C.F.R. § 200.501, and the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards.

I. Monitoring and Oversight
Per 2 C.F.R. § 200.337, DHS and its authorized representatives have the right of access to any records of the recipient or subrecipient pertinent to a Federal award to perform audits, site visits, and any other official use. The right also includes timely and reasonable access to the recipient's or subrecipient's personnel for the purpose of interview and discussion related to such documents or the Federal award in general.

Pursuant to this right and per 2 C.F.R. § 200.329, DHS may conduct desk reviews and make site visits to review and evaluate project accomplishments and management control systems as well as provide any required technical assistance. Recipients and subrecipients must respond in a timely and accurate manner to DHS requests for information relating to a federal award.

J. Program Evaluation
Federal agencies are required to structure NOFOs that incorporate program evaluation activities from the outset of their program design and implementation to meaningfully document and measure their progress towards meeting agency priority goal(s) and program outcomes. OMB Memorandum M-21-27, Evidence-Based Policymaking: Learning Agendas and Annual Evaluation Plans, implementing Title I of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018, Pub. L. No. 115-435 (2019) (Evidence Act), urges federal awarding agencies to use program evaluation as a critical tool to learn, improve delivery, and elevate program service and delivery across the program lifecycle. Evaluation means "an assessment using systematic data collection and analysis of one or more programs, policies, and organizations intended to assess their effectiveness and efficiency." Evidence Act, § 101 (codified at 5 U.S.C. § 311).

As such, recipients and subrecipients are required to participate in a Program Office (PO) or a DHS Component-led evaluation, if selected. This may be carried out by a third-party on behalf of the PO or the DHS Component. Such an evaluation may involve information collections including but not limited to, records of the recipients; surveys, interviews, or discussions with individuals who benefit from the federal award, program operating personnel, and award recipients; and site visits or other observation of recipient activities, as specified in a DHS Component or PO-approved evaluation plan. More details about evaluation requirements may be provided in the federal award, if available at that time, or following the award as evaluation requirements are finalized. Evaluation costs incurred during the period of performance are allowable costs (either as direct or indirect) in accordance with 2 C.F.R.§ 200.413. Recipients and subrecipients are also encouraged, but not required, to participate in any additional evaluations after the period of performance ends, although any costs incurred to participate in such evaluations are not allowable and may not be charged to the federal award.

K. Additional Performance Reporting Requirements
Not applicable.

10. Other Information

A. Period of Performance Extension

Extensions to the period of performance (POP) for this program are allowed. Extensions to the POP identified in the award will only be considered through formal, written requests via FEMA GO and must contain specific and compelling justifications as to why an extension is required. Recipients are advised to coordinate with the FEMA Fire Program Specialist or Program Analyst as needed when preparing an extension request. Recipients should request extensions sparingly and only under exceptional circumstances. Approval is not guaranteed. R&D Activity grants with a four-year POP are not expected to need an extension.

All extension requests must address the following:

a. The grant program, fiscal year, and award number;
b. Reason for the delay –including details of the legal, policy, or operational challenges that prevent the final outlay of awarded funds by the deadline;
c. Current status of the activity(ies);
d. Approved POP termination date and new project completion date;
e. Amount of funds drawn down to date;
f. Remaining available funds, both federal and, if applicable, non-federal;
g. Budget outlining how remaining federal and, if applicable, non-federal funds will be expended;
h. Plan for completion, including milestones and timeframes for achieving each milestone and the position or person responsible for implementing the plan for completion; and
i. Certification that the activity(ies) will be completed within the extended POP without any modification to the original statement of work, as described in the original statement of work and as approved by FEMA.

Extension requests will be granted only due to compelling legal, policy, or operational challenges. Extension requests will only be considered for the following reasons:

- Contractual commitments by the recipient or subrecipient with vendors prevent completion of the project, including delivery of equipment or services, within the existing POP;
- The project must undergo a complex environmental review that cannot be completed within the existing POP;
- Projects are long-term by design, and therefore acceleration would compromise core programmatic goals; or
- Where other special or extenuating circumstances exist.

Recipients should submit all proposed extension requests to FEMA for review and approval at least 60 days prior to the end of the POP to allow sufficient processing time. The review process can take up to 30 calendar days or longer. Recipients should factor this review period into the timing of when to submit a request for an extension. Extensions are typically granted for no more than a six-month period.

B. Other Information

a. ***Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) Compliance***

FEMA is required to consider effects of its actions on the environment and historic properties to ensure that activities, grants and programs funded by FEMA, comply with federal EHP laws, Executive Orders, regulations, and policies.

Recipients and subrecipients proposing projects with the potential to impact the environment or cultural resources, such as the modification or renovation of existing buildings, structures, and facilities, and/or new construction and/or replacement of buildings, structures, and facilities, must participate in the FEMA EHP review process. This includes conducting early engagement to help identify EHP resources, such as threatened or endangered species or historic properties; submitting a detailed project description with supporting documentation to determine whether the proposed project has the potential to impact EHP resources; and, identifying mitigation measures and/or alternative courses of action that may lessen impacts to those resources.

FEMA is sometimes required to consult with other regulatory agencies and the public in order to complete the review process. Federal law requires EHP review to be completed before federal funds are released to carry out proposed projects. FEMA may not be able to fund projects that are not in compliance with applicable EHP laws, Executive Orders, regulations, and policies. FEMA may recommend mitigation measures and/or alternative courses of action to lessen impacts to EHP resources and bring the project into EHP compliance.

EHP guidance is found at Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation. The site contains links to documents identifying agency EHP responsibilities and program requirements, such as implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act and other EHP laws, regulations, and Executive Orders. DHS and FEMA EHP policy is also found in the EHP Directive & Instruction.

All FEMA actions, including grants, must comply with National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) criteria or any more restrictive federal, state, or local floodplain management standards or building code (44 C.F.R. § 9.11(d)(6)). For actions located within or that may affect a floodplain or wetland, the following alternatives must be considered: a) no action; b) alternative locations; and c) alternative actions, including alternative actions that use natural features or nature-based solutions. Where possible, natural features and nature-based solutions shall be used. If not practicable as an alternative on their own, natural features and nature-based solutions may be incorporated into actions as minimization measures.

The GPD EHP screening form is located at https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_ehp-screening_form_ff-207-fy-21-100_5-26-2021.pdf.

b. *Procurement Integrity*

When purchasing under a FEMA award, recipients and subrecipients must comply with the federal procurement standards in 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.317 – 200.327. To assist with determining whether an action is a procurement or instead a subaward, please consult 2 C.F.R. § 200.331.

For detailed guidance on the federal procurement standards, recipients and subrecipients should refer to various materials issued by FEMA's Procurement Disaster Assistance Team (PDAT), such as the PDAT Manual and Contract Provisions Guide. Additional resources, including an

upcoming trainings schedule can be found on the PDAT Website: https://www.fema.gov/grants/procurement.

Under 2 C.F.R. § 200.317, when procuring property and services under a federal award, states (including territories) and Tribal Nations must follow the same policies and procedures they use for procurements from their non-federal funds; additionally, states and Tribal Nations must now follow 200.322 regarding domestic preferences for Procurements and 2 C.F.R. § 200.327 regarding required contract provisions.

Local government and nonprofit recipients or subrecipients must have and use their own documented procurement procedures that reflect applicable state, local, Tribal Nation, and territorial (SLTT) laws and regulations, provided that the procurements conform to applicable federal law and the standards identified in 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

1. Important Changes to Procurement Standards in 2 C.F.R. Part 200

On April 22, 2024, OMB updated various parts of Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations, among them the procurement standards. These revisions apply to all FEMA awards with a federal award date or disaster declaration date on or after October 1, 2024, unless specified otherwise. The changes include updates to the federal procurement standards, which govern how FEMA award recipients and subrecipients must purchase under a FEMA award.

More information on OMB's revisions to the federal procurement standards can be found in Purchasing Under a FEMA Award: 2024 OMB Revisions Fact Sheet.

2. Competition and Conflicts of Interest

2 C.F.R. § 200.319(b), applicable to local government and nonprofit recipients or subrecipients, requires that contractors that develop or draft specifications, requirements statements of work, or invitations for bids or requests for proposals must be excluded from competing for such procurements. FEMA considers these actions to be an organizational conflict of interest and interprets this restriction as applying to contractors that help a recipient or subrecipient develop its grant application, project plans, or project budget. This prohibition also applies to the use of former employees to manage the grant or carry out a contract when those former employees worked on such activities while they were employees of the recipient or subrecipient.

Under this prohibition, unless the recipient or subrecipient solicits for and awards a contract covering both development and execution of specifications (or similar elements as described above), and this contract was procured in compliance with 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.317 – 200.327, federal funds cannot be used to pay a contractor to carry out the work if that contractor also worked on the development of those specifications. This rule applies to all contracts funded with federal grant funds, including pre-award costs, such as grant writer fees, as well as post- award costs, such as grant management fees.

In addition to organizational conflicts of interest, situations considered to be restrictive of competition include, but are not limited to:

- Placing unreasonable requirements on firms for them to qualify to do business;

- Requiring unnecessary experience and excessive bonding;
- Noncompetitive pricing practices between firms or between affiliated companies;
- Noncompetitive contracts to consultants that are on retainer contracts;
- Specifying only a "brand name" product instead of allowing "an equal" product to be offered and describing the performance or other relevant requirements of the procurement; and
- Any arbitrary action in the procurement process.

Under 2 C.F.R. § 200.318(c)(1), local government and nonprofit recipients or subrecipients are required to maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of their employees engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts. **No employee, officer, or agent may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by a federal award if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest. Such conflicts of interest would arise when the employee, officer or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization that employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for a contract. The officers, employees, and agents of the recipient or subrecipient may neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors or parties to subcontracts. However, the recipient or subrecipient may set standards for situations in which the financial interest is not substantial, or the gift is an unsolicited item of nominal value. The recipient's or subrecipient's standards of conduct must provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations of such standards by officers, employees, or agents.**

Under 2 C.F.R. 200.318(c)(2), if the local government and nonprofit recipient or subrecipient has a parent, affiliate, or subsidiary organization that is not a SLTT government, the recipient or subrecipient must also maintain written standards of conduct covering organizational conflicts of interest. Organizational conflict of interest means that because of a relationship with a parent company, affiliate, or subsidiary organization, the recipient or subrecipient is unable or appears to be unable to be impartial in conducting a procurement action involving a related organization. The recipient or subrecipient must disclose in writing any potential conflicts of interest to FEMA or the pass-through entity in accordance with applicable FEMA policy.

3. Supply Schedules and Purchasing Programs

Generally, a recipient or subrecipient may seek to procure goods or services from a federal supply schedule, state supply schedule, or group purchasing agreement.

Information about GSA programs for states, Tribal Nations, local governments, and their instrumentalities, can be found at Help for state, local, and tribal governments to make MAS buys | GSA and Purchasing Resources and Support for State and Local Governments.

4. Procurement Documentation

Per 2 C.F.R. § 200.318(i), local government and nonprofit recipients or subrecipients are required to maintain and retain records sufficient to detail the history of procurement covering at

least the rationale for the procurement method, selection of contract type, contractor selection or rejection, and the basis for the contract price. States and Tribal Nations are reminded that in order for any cost to be allowable, it must be adequately documented per 2 C.F.R. § 200.403(g).

Examples of the types of documents that would cover this information include but are not limited to:

- Solicitation documentation, such as requests for quotes, invitations for bids, or requests for proposals;
- Responses to solicitations, such as quotes, bids, or proposals;
- Pre-solicitation independent cost estimates and post-solicitation cost/price analyses on file for review by federal personnel, if applicable;
- Contract documents and amendments, including required contract provisions; and
- Other documents required by federal regulations applicable at the time a grant is awarded to a recipient.
- Additional information on required procurement records can be found on pages 24-26 of the PDAT Field Manual.

c. *Financial Assistance Programs for Infrastructure*

1. Build America, Buy America Act

Recipients and subrecipients must comply with FEMA's implementation requirements of the Build America, Buy America Act (BABAA), which was enacted as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act §§ 70901-70927, Pub. L. No. 117-58 (2021); and Executive Order 14005, Ensuring the Future is Made in All of America by All of America's Workers. See also 2 C.F.R. Part 184, Buy America Preferences for Infrastructure Projects.

None of the funds provided under this program may be used for a project for infrastructure unless the iron and steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in that infrastructure are produced in the United States.

The Buy America preference only applies to articles, materials, and supplies that are consumed in, incorporated into, or affixed to an infrastructure project. As such, it does not apply to tools, equipment, and supplies, such as temporary scaffolding, brought to the construction site and removed at or before the completion of the infrastructure project. Nor does a Buy America preference apply to equipment and furnishings, such as movable chairs, desks, and portable computer equipment, that are used at or within the finished infrastructure project but are not an integral part of the structure or permanently affixed to the infrastructure project.

To see whether a particular FEMA federal financial assistance program is considered an infrastructure program and thus required to implement FEMA's Build America, Buy America requirements, please see Programs and Definitions: Build America, Buy America Act | FEMA.gov.

2. Waivers

When necessary, recipients (and subrecipients through their pass-through entity) may apply for, and FEMA may grant, a waiver from these requirements.

A waiver of the domestic content procurement preference may be granted by the agency awarding official if FEMA determines that:

- Applying the domestic content procurement preference would be inconsistent with the public interest, or
- The types of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials are not produced in the United States in sufficient and reasonably available quantities or of a satisfactory quality, or
- The inclusion of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials produced in the United States will increase the cost of the overall project by more than 25%.

The process for requesting a waiver from the Buy America preference requirements can be found on FEMA's website at: "Buy America" Preference in FEMA Financial Assistance Programs for Infrastructure | FEMA.gov.

3. Definitions

For definitions of the key terms of the Build America, Buy America Act, please visit Programs and Definitions: Build America, Buy America Act | FEMA.gov.

d. *Mandatory Disclosures*
The non-Federal entity or applicant for a federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award. (2 C.F.R. § 200.113)

e. *Termination Provisions*
FEMA may terminate a federal award in whole or in part for one of the following reasons. FEMA and the recipient must still comply with closeout requirements at 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.344-200.345 even if an award is terminated in whole or in part. To the extent that subawards are permitted under this NOFO, pass-through entities should refer to 2 C.F.R. § 200.340 for additional information on termination regarding subawards. Either party will provide written notice of intent to terminate to the other party no less than 30 days prior to the effective date of the termination.

1. Noncompliance

If a recipient fails to comply with the terms and conditions of a federal award, FEMA may terminate the award in whole or in part. Any action to terminate based on noncompliance will follow the requirements of 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.341-200.342.

2. With the Consent of the Recipient

FEMA may also terminate an award in whole or in part with the consent of the recipient, in which case the parties must agree upon the termination conditions, including the effective date, and in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated.

3. Notification by the Recipient

The recipient may terminate the award, in whole or in part, by sending written notification to FEMA setting forth the reasons for such termination, the effective date, and in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated. In the case of partial termination, FEMA may determine that a partially terminated award will not accomplish the purpose of the federal award, so FEMA may terminate the award in its entirety. If that occurs, FEMA will follow the requirements of 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.341-200.342 in deciding to fully terminate the award.

4. Change in Program Goals or Agency Priorities

Pursuant to the terms and conditions of the award and to the extent authorized by law, FEMA may terminate the award if it no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities.

f. *Disability Integration*

Pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, recipients of FEMA financial assistance must ensure that their programs and activities do not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities.

g. *Record Retention*

1. Record Retention Period

Financial records, supporting documents, statistical records, and all other non-Federal entity records pertinent to a federal award generally must be maintained for at least three years from the date the final FFR is submitted. *See* 2 C.F.R. § 200.334. Further, if the recipient does not submit a final FFR and the award is administratively closed, FEMA uses the date of administrative closeout as the start of the general record retention period.

The record retention period **may be longer than three years or have a different start date** in certain cases.

2. Types of Records to Retain

FEMA requires that recipients and subrecipients maintain the following documentation for federally funded purchases:

- Specifications
- Solicitations
- Competitive quotes or proposals
- Basis for selection decisions

- Purchase orders
- Contracts
- Invoices
- Canceled checks

h. ***Actions to Address Noncompliance***
Non-federal entities receiving financial assistance funding from FEMA are required to comply with requirements in the terms and conditions of their awards or subawards, including the terms set forth in applicable federal statutes, regulations, NOFOs and policies. Throughout the award lifecycle or even after an award has been closed, FEMA or the pass-through entity may discover potential or actual noncompliance on the part of a recipient or subrecipient.

In the case of any potential or actual noncompliance, FEMA may place special conditions on an award per 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.208 and 200.339. FEMA may place a hold on funds until the matter is corrected, or additional information is provided per 2 C.F.R. § 200.339, or it may do both. Similar remedies for noncompliance with certain federal civil rights laws are authorized pursuant to 44 C.F.R. Parts 7 and 19 or other applicable regulations.

If the noncompliance is not able to be corrected by imposing additional conditions or the recipient or subrecipient refuses to correct the matter, FEMA may take other remedies allowed under 2 C.F.R. § 200.339.

i. ***Audits***
FEMA grant recipients are subject to audit oversight from multiple entities including the DHS OIG, the GAO, the pass-through entity, or independent auditing firms for single audits, and may cover activities and costs incurred under the award. Auditing agencies such as the DHS OIG, the GAO, and the pass-through entity (if applicable), and FEMA in its oversight capacity, must have access to records pertaining to the FEMA award.

11. Appendix A – FY 2024 FP&S Program Updates

Appendix A contains a brief list of changes between FY 2023 and FY 2024 to the FP&S Program. Changes to the FY 2024 FP&S Program NOFO include:

- Under Section 3.E - Performance Measures and Targets
  - Added a performance measure for Wildfire Risk Reduction: Percent of target population receiving an intervention.
- Under Section 4.D - Program-Specific Documents and Information
  - Clarified that the Appendix is limited to 35 pages per project.
- Under Section 7.G.b.1. - Fire Service Panel Evaluation Criteria
  - Clarified the Potential Impact Criteria. Applicants should discuss the potential impact of the research outcome/product on firefighters. Applicants should discuss who will benefit directly from the research outcome/product i.e., the entire fire service or specific portions (career, volunteer, structural, wildland, fire investigators, etc.) The

discussion should be supported by describing the specific type(s) of impact to the safety, health, or well-being of the identified group from use of the results in practice.

- Under Section 7.G.b.2 - Science Panel Evaluation Criteria
  - Added that the roles and responsibilities of the entire research team must be described, including the relevant sub-contractors and sub-awardees involved in the project, under the Project Methods Criteria. Added that applicants should provide supporting information for the research team in the Appendix, including bio sketches and budget information.
- Under Appendix B.a – FP&S Activity Overview
  - Renamed the Fire and Arson Investigation Category to Origin and Cause Investigation Category.
  - Added cancer screenings and behavioral and mental health as examples of other eligible projects under the Origin and Cause Investigation Category.
  - Removed National Strategic Projects under the National/State/Regional Programs and Projects Category.
  - Clarified that costs for firefighter salary/overtime for fire suppression and operational activities are ineligible.
- Under Appendix B.c - R&D Activity Project Eligibility Information
  - Removed Database System Development as an R&D Activity Category. Clarified descriptions of the Preliminary Studies and Early Career Investigator Categories.

12. Appendix B – Programmatic Information and Priorities

Appendix B contains details on FP&S Program information and priorities. Reviewing this information may help applicants make their application(s) more competitive.

A. Supporting Definitions for this NOFO
Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) is that person or office charged with enforcing the NFPA codes (Per NFPA101-2015 Edition: Life Safety Code).

Career Fire Department, as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 2229, means a fire department that has an all-paid force of firefighting personnel other than paid-on-call firefighters.

Combination Fire Department, as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 2229, means a fire department that has paid firefighting personnel and volunteer firefighting personnel. FEMA considers a fire department with firefighting personnel paid a stipend on a per-event basis, or paid on-call, to be a combination fire department.

Human Subject means a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research:

1. obtains information or biospecimens through intervention or interaction with the individual, and uses, studies, or analyzes the information or biospecimens; or,
2. obtains, uses, studies, analyzes, or generates identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens.

Human subjects are the living participants involved in the testing of some object, measurement of physiologic or biologic process, providing an opinion about behavior, identifying personal behaviors, or participating in an intervention, either as a test or control person. Human subjects may be a healthy individual or a clinical patient.

Interest Organizations are national, regional, state, local, Tribal Nation and non-profit entities that are recognized for their experience and expertise in fire prevention and safety programs.

Fire Department is an agency or organization that has a formally recognized arrangement with a state, territory, local government, or tribal authority (city, county, parish, fire district, township, town, village or other governing body) to provide fire suppression on a first-due basis to a fixed geographical area. Fire departments may be comprised of members who are volunteer, career, or a combination of volunteer and career.

Primary First Due is a geographic area surrounding a fire station in which a company from that station is projected to be first to arrive on the scene of an incident.

Research means a systematic investigation, including development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Research should be conducted in accordance with suitable methodologies set by specific professional fields and academic disciplines. Any research involving human subjects must be reviewed by an IRB (for details see Section 9.A.a.- Human Subjects Research of this NOFO). Only projects determined by an IRB as exempt from further IRB oversight are eligible for FP&S activity funding under the National/Regional/State Programs and Projects category.

State. as defined in 6 U.S.C. § 101(17), as any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and any possession of the United States

Volunteer Fire Department, as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 2229, means a fire department that has an all-volunteer force of firefighting personnel.

B. Funding Priorities

a. ***FP&S Activity Overview***

FEMA desires to provide flexibility to applicants to design innovative strategies and/or unique proposals that reach for a higher level of safety for the public with respect to fire and fire-related hazards. All proposals, as part of the vulnerability statement, will be evaluated on how well the applicant demonstrates the understanding of their actual community fire and safety risks. A community risk assessment should be used to document the "risk" as a basis for mitigation. If the applicant has evidence of a community risk, the application should be based on solving the problem that will reduce the risk. A risk analysis should be the foundation of the application.

Category Priorities and Eligible Projects

The following tables list the eligible categories and priorities under the FP&S Activity.

Community Risk Reduction Category

Community Risk Reduction Category - Program Priorities

According to data available to FEMA and the USFA, working smoke alarms and residential sprinklers greatly reduce the risk of fire casualties for the nation's residents. Therefore, under this category there are three distinct, but equal, priorities.

- **Smoke Alarm Installations:** Programs that target a specific high-risk population to conduct both door-to-door smoke alarm installations and provide home safety inspections, as part of a comprehensive home fire safety campaign. The comprehensive home fire safety campaign must also include an educational program that is delivered to the occupant at the time of the installation and inspection. Installation may include combination smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.

  Further, additional consideration will be given to applicants who incorporate supplies for deaf/hard-of-hearing alarm installations as part of their comprehensive installation and education effort (hardwiring of deaf/hard-of-hearing smoke alarms is eligible).

  FEMA, through its FP&S Program, promotes the use of smoke alarms that are powered by non-removable, long-life batteries, and are enclosed within a tamper-resistant housing. Applicants who do not plan on using smoke alarms powered by non-removable, long-life batteries, and are not enclosed within a tamper-resistant housing, must address the rationale for using alternatives.

  FEMA requires residential smoke and carbon monoxide detectors to be installed in accordance with the most recent NFPA 72 National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code. For example, 2022 Edition of NFPA 72, Chapter 29, specifically section 29.7.1 for carbon monoxide detectors and section 29.8.1 for smoke detectors.

- **Sprinkler Awareness:** Programs that include sprinkler awareness that affect the entire community in this effort, such as educating the public about sprinklers, promoting sprinklers, and demonstrating working models of sprinklers. Installation of sprinkler systems is only eligible if proposed as part of a sprinkler demonstration/educational effort.

  Fire sprinkler trailers/side by side trailers for the purpose of public education are eligible. 75% of usage must be dedicated to public education.

- **Risk Assessments**: Community-appropriate comprehensive risk assessments and risk reduction planning. WUI risk assessment projects should be applied for under this category.

  Note: Applications that request a risk assessment are precluded from applying for or being awarded additional projects.

Community Risk Reduction - Examples of Other Eligible Projects

- **Smoke Alarms:** Applicants who are unable to meet the above stated funding priority (door-to-door installations and home safety inspections) for this category are still eligible to apply for smoke alarms (or combination smoke and carbon monoxide [CO] alarms). This includes projects that encompass educational components that teach how smoke alarms work to provide early warning in case of a fire, while promoting the installation of smoke alarms and/or inspections to assure that previously installed smoke alarms are operational. Applicants who will not perform installation of the alarms should discuss in their Narrative Statement the methodology for ensuring that the alarms will be properly installed in accordance with the most recent NFPA 72 National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code. For example, 2022 Edition of NFPA 72, Chapter 29, specifically section 29.7.1 for carbon monoxide detectors and section 29.8.1 for smoke detectors. FEMA, through its FP&S Program, promotes the use of smoke alarms that are powered by non-removable, long-life batteries, and are enclosed within a tamper-resistant housing. Applicants who do not plan on using smoke alarms powered by non-removable, long-life batteries, and are not enclosed within a tamper-resistant housing, must address the rationale for using alternatives.
- **Training:** Local or regional projects to educate or train personnel in the area of public education are eligible under this activity.
- **General Prevention/Awareness:** Projects that include general prevention initiatives, including lock-box installation, CO detectors, address markers, cooking range technologies, etc., are eligible under this activity.
- **Public Education:** National or local projects that promote the reduction of injury due to fire or other safety hazards are eligible under this activity. Projects may include burn prevention, media/public relations campaigns, injury prevention, or other community risk reductions that could be justified in the Narrative Statement.

  Educational props (educational tools), including fire extinguisher trainers, must be part of a comprehensive and detailed public safety education campaign.

  An LED/electronic sign is eligible if it is part of a comprehensive and detailed public safety education campaign. Only one LED/electronic sign is allowed per applicant and 75% of usage must be dedicated to the comprehensive/detailed public education campaign. Additional restrictions apply (for details see Section 10.B.a- Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) Compliance of this NOFO).

  Eligible items also include escape planning, model homes, and curriculum delivery tools. Projects that will deliver training to the public in the area of automatic external defibrillators (AEDs), Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), or age-appropriate fire extinguisher training will be considered. However, if the projects are for fire department operational staff, these projects should be requested under the AFG Program.

Community Risk Reduction - Examples of Other Eligible Projects
Fire safety trailers/houses for the purpose of educating the public on the basics of fire behavior and residential fire hazards are eligible and must be submitted under the Public Education Category. 75% of usage must be dedicated public education. • **Juvenile Fire Setter Prevention Projects:** Projects that are designed to mitigate the instances of fire set by children are eligible under this activity. Projects may have treatment and intervention components. The intervention components should be age appropriate.

Wildfire Risk Reduction

Wildfire Risk Reduction - Program Priority
Education and awareness programs that protect lives, property, and natural resources from fire in the WUI (not forestry), including Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) or programs supporting fire adapted community initiatives, should be applied for under this activity. Fuel reduction demonstrations, in a targeted location as part of an awareness and education effort, are considered but additional restrictions apply (for details see Section 10.B.a- Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) Compliance of this NOFO). Education and awareness programs should apply to the entire community such as educating the public about fire-related WUI risks, promoting fuel reduction, and may include a community Wood Chipper Program and/or External Home Sprinkler Kits. **Note:** WUI risk assessment projects should be applied for under the Community Risk Reduction, Risk Assessment Category.

Wildfire Risk Reduction - Examples of Other Eligible Projects
• External Home Sprinkler Kits - only eligible if proposed as part of a WUI education/awareness effort. • Wood Chipper Programs - only eligible if proposed as part of a WUI education/awareness effort. Wood Chipper Programs may include contract services for fuel reduction or removal (community wood chipper) or renting wood chippers plus salary and benefits for employees with dedicated community wood chipper duties. Wood Chippers may not be purchased through this grant program.

Code Enforcement/Awareness Category

Code Enforcement/Awareness Category - Program Priority
Projects that focus on first time or reinstatement of code adoption and code enforcement, including WUI fire codes for communities with a WUI-wildfire risk. See the U.S. Fire

Administration Wildfire and the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) resources for additional information.

Code Enforcement/Awareness Category - Examples of Other Eligible Projects
• Assistance for the adoption or awareness of building codes. • Support for conducting inspections or pre-planning (including personnel costs, software, supplies, and training assistance). • Promotion of code enforcement to improve engineering and/or enacting fire-related ordinances for new construction.

Origin and Cause Investigation Category

Origin and Cause Investigation Category - Program Priority
Projects that aim to investigate every fire.

Origin and Cause Investigation - Examples of Other Eligible Projects	
• Origin and cause investigation trailers (trailers equipped to conduct/train to conduct fire origin and cause investigations) • Origin and cause investigation equipment (including PPE) • Origin and cause investigator training • Origin and cause-related surveillance equipment	• Arson prevention training • Personnel costs • Educational materials • Media equipment • Cancer screenings • Behavioral and/or mental health

National/State/Regional Programs and Projects Category

National/State/Regional Programs and Projects - Program Priority

Projects should aim to measurably change behavior and decision-making of the target audience. Projects should communicate and disseminate strategies to measurably effect change.
 	
Projects may include, but are not limited to, the following:
• Projects that focus on residential fire issues, such as:
  ◦ Projects that reduce the fire fatality rate;
  ◦ Projects that advance the adoption and awareness of current building codes; and,
  ◦ Projects that focus on first-time or reinstatement of code adoption and code enforcement.
• Projects that focus on firefighter safety, health, and well-being by dissemination and

National/State/Regional Programs and Projects - Program Priority

implementation of programs, policies, or products from previous research studies that used rigorous scientific methods to determine effectiveness.
• Other projects that do not include a research component, such as:
  • Projects that address emerging fire risks associated with battery powered devices ;
  • Projects that promote code enforcement to improve engineering and/or enacting fire-related ordinances for new construction;
  • Projects that address abandoned building issue;
  • Projects that improve occupational factors and injury/illness/disease/death/behavior health.
 	
Projects requiring IRB approval to work with human subjects are not eligible. Projects with an IRB exemption determination may be eligible (for details see Section 9.A- Human Subjects Research of this NOFO). Unless otherwise directed by the FP&S Program Office, the IRB exemption determination letter and IRB application must be provided at time of application.
 	
Applicants proposing to interface with government databases must explain how the systems will interface or data exchange will occur. The narrative must also explain how this effort will not duplicate existing databases or previously funded efforts.

Ineligible Projects and Items

Applicants must correlate the activities for which funding is requested and the identified problems or issues to be addressed. FEMA will not fund a budget line item if an applicant does not provide sufficient information detailing how it will support FP&S Program objectives. Allowable costs may be limited to reasonable amounts, as determined by FEMA.

The following table describes the projects and items that are **ineligible** under the FP&S Activity:

Ineligible Projects and Items for FP&S Activity	
• Educational props (e.g., tools that are used in educational or awareness demonstrations) that are not part of a comprehensive educational program, a planned educational effort, or lack description of these elements • Costumes and/or puppets that are not part of a comprehensive educational program • AED, CPR, or fire extinguisher training for operational staff	• Fire suppression or EMS equipment, supplies, and vehicles • Firefighter salary/overtime for fire suppression and operational activities • Fire extinguishers • Firefighting training tools, props or equipment, PPE, fitness equipment, immunizations, or firefighter physicals (NOTE: PPE traditionally worn in fire suppression may also be appropriate for origin and cause investigation when a

Ineligible Projects and Items for FP&S Activity	
• Fire hydrants/dry hydrants, supplies, labor, and installation costs • Weather/disaster notification devices (e.g., sirens) • Intruder alerting systems and deployment notification systems • Driver simulator training tools that are not part of a state or national education effort that leads to driver certifications compliant to NFPA 1002 or its equivalent • Sprinkler head caps • Development of administrative documents (e.g., Standard Operating Procedures, manuals) • Live animals • Firearms • Fire extinguisher training for children under 14 years old and adults over the age of 65 • Equipment that is considered entertainment as opposed to educational tools that are part of a comprehensive program • Fire extinguisher training that is not part of a comprehensive prevention/education program • Vehicles (not including tow vehicles, which are limited to $6,000 per application) • Dollar amount for giveaways (plastic fire helmets, stickers, plastic badges, coloring books, marketing items, etc.) is limited to $2,500 per project (or $5,000 for a regional project). The cap does not apply to state or national projects. Safety devices are not considered giveaways (such as potholders) because the intended purpose of the item is to directly reduce risk or prevent injury. • Inflatable bounce houses (this does not include houses with non-inflatable	risk for reignition exists, and is allowable under the Origin and Cause Investigation Category if justified in the Narrative Statement) • Trailers for the purpose of firefighting training/suppression (such as burn trailers or maze trailers) • Installation of sprinkler systems that do not include an educational/ demonstration component • Suppression-related training including Firefighter I, Firefighter II, wildland firefighting, training exercises, or drills for suppression or disasters activities • Communication equipment, including portable radios or computer-aided dispatch (CAD) systems • Community projects that include the use of tot finder/child finder, seniors, or pet finder decals • Hydrant poles or markers • Fire-retardant house gel(s) • Alarm system and alarm system installation • Fire safety equipment (e.g., smoke alarms, CO detectors, surge protectors) that does not adhere to a fire service recognized standard (e.g., non-UL, listed, ANSI fire safety equipment) • Equipment that has no intrinsic fire prevention or life safety education application • Command Center Packages on fire safety trailers • Prescribed burns • Fuel reduction equipment, such as purchase of wood chippers • Vegetation removal equipment • Fuel or vegetation removal/reduction on public land • Entertainment: electronics, events, etc.

Ineligible Projects and Items for FP&S Activity	
floors, commonly used in education programs) • Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), drones, or related costs • Research and development • Creation of new databases • Projects requiring IRB approval to work with human subjects • Code plan review stations • Technology development/building of virtual reality games/simulations • Construction costs, including constructing buildings or making major alterations to a building that changes the profile or footprint of the structure.	• Props (except as required for educational programs) • Robotics • Demonstration tugboats • Evacuation roads • Ballistic vests • Body cameras • Remodeling/renovations to an existing facility is only eligible if limited to minor interior alterations costing less than $10,000 • Other items or services that do not directly support the FP&S Program objectives • Items/activities intended to be primarily funded under the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program or Staffing to Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Program. Fire departments that wish to carry out internal, local, firefighter safety and well-being projects should apply under the AFG Program.

Regional Project

A regional project is an opportunity for an eligible FP&S Activity organization to act as a host and apply for funding on behalf of itself and any number of other participating FP&S Activity-eligible organizations. Regional activities should achieve cost effectiveness, support regional efficiency and resilience, and have a direct regional or local benefit to more than one local jurisdiction (county, parish, town, township, city, or village). Direct regional or local benefit means that other eligible organizations will receive a portion of the grant awarded funds, will receive items purchased with the grant funds, or share an item purchased with grant funds.

Neither the regional host nor any participating partner is prevented from also applying on behalf of their own organization for any FP&S Activity or R&D Activity project; however, it cannot be for the same item. For example, a department cannot apply for smoke alarms under its own organization and participate in a regional smoke alarm project.

Regional host applicants and participating partner agencies must execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), or equivalent document signed by the host and all participating organizations participating in the award. The MOU must specify the individual and mutual responsibilities of the host and participating partners, the host's and participants' level of

involvement in the project(s), the participating partners' EINs, and the proposed distribution of all grant-funded assets or contracted services. Any entity named in the application as benefiting from the award must be an eligible FP&S Program organization and must be a party to the MOU or equivalent document. **Copies of the MOU or equivalent document should be submitted as an attachment in the application.**

b. *R&D Activity Overview*

The goal of the R&D Activity is to reduce firefighter line-of-duty fatalities and injuries through research to improve firefighter safety, health, or well-being. Projects that address the National Fire Service Research Agenda with respect to firefighter health and safety are strongly encouraged.

c. *R&D Activity Project Eligibility Information*

All proposed projects under the R&D Activity must address the potential for improvement in firefighter safety, health, or well-being both in the short term and long term. Proposed projects must also address the potential for a successful research outcome to be disseminated and implemented in the fire service and reduce firefighter fatalities or injuries. Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek partnerships with the fire service that will support the ongoing project efforts from design through dissemination and implementation.

The following are descriptions of the four R&D Activity categories. These categories are not listed in order of importance. This is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of projects that will be considered. Applicants may also find the abstracts of previously funded R&D Activity projects on the FP&S Program Website.

Clinical Studies

This category includes projects that address behavioral or physiological and medical research activities.

Technology and Product Development

This category includes projects that result in outcomes that can enhance safety and effectiveness of firefighter activities. Projects can develop new technology or adapt existing products and technology to new uses.

Preliminary Studies

This category includes projects that may require information, evidence, experimentation, and study to justify a larger and complete project that can impact firefighter safety, health, or well-being. Preliminary studies may be proposed to obtain enough evidence to justify a future larger study.

Early Career Investigator

This category is defined by the qualifications of the principal investigator (PI) and includes all types of research projects to improve firefighter safety, health, and well-being This category is reserved for projects led by a PI who received a terminal academic degree (a doctoral level, professional level, or equivalent advanced level research degree) or ended post-graduate training

(such as a post-doctoral fellowship or residency, whichever date is later) within 10 years of the opening date of the application period and who has not been a PI on a previous FP&S Program award. These projects are limited to a maximum $600,000 federal share.

Special Emphasis Topics
The following considerations are not scored but may be used by application reviewers or by FEMA during technical review prior to making final funding decisions.

- **Mental Health and Well-being**
  Projects that address firefighters' concerns with post-traumatic stress, depression, suicide, and related mental health and well-being issues.

- **Occupational Health**
  Projects that aim to understand the occupational health of firefighters, such as those that study the impact of chemical exposures on firefighter health, safety, and well-being.

- **Wildland and WUI**
  Projects that aim to mitigate the safety and health hazards associated with wildland firefighting.

Ineligible Projects and Items
The following table describes projects and items that are ineligible under the R&D Activity.

R&D Activity Ineligible Projects and Items	
• Projects that focus primarily on curriculum development and delivery of education or training materials • A descriptive project about the fire service or any project without reduced firefighter injury or enhanced firefighter safety aims • Projects that emphasize funding for service delivery	• Projects with local emphasis and little or no indication of application to the broader fire service • Applications that include violations of intellectual property • International travel to attend conferences or disseminate results • Projects to purchase stock in any entity

13. Appendix C – Award Administration Information

Appendix C contains detailed information on FP&S Program Award Administration. Reviewing this information may help recipients in the programmatic and financial administration of their award(s).

A. Help FEMA Prevent Fraud, Waste, and Abuse
If applicants or recipients have information about instances of fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement involving FEMA programs or operations, they should contact the DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) Hotline at (800) 323-8603, by fax at (202) 254-4297, or email HOTLINE@oig.dhs.gov.

B. Grant Writer/Preparation Fees
Fees for grant writers may be included as a pre-award expenditure. For grant writer fees to be eligible as a pre-award expenditure, the services must be competitively sourced, specifically identified, and listed within the "Grant Request Details" section of the application and must satisfy the requirements under 2 C.F.R. § 200.458. FEMA will only consider reimbursements for application preparation, not administration, up to $1,500 per annum. Grant writer fees must be paid between the 90 days prior to the publication date of this NOFO and up to 30 calendar days after the application period closes. For grant writer fees held either on retainer or subscription basis to be an eligible pre-award cost, the claimed retainer or subscription must have been competitively secured, and the costs are limited to the start of the appropriation period for the underlying award and meet the requirements under 2 C.F.R. § 200.458. Fees payable on a contingency basis are not an eligible expense.

Pursuant to 2 C.F.R. Part 180, recipients may not use federal grant funds to reimburse any entity, including a grant writer or preparer, if that entity is presently suspended or debarred by the Federal Government from receiving funding under federally-funded grants or contracts. Recipients must verify that the contractor is not suspended or debarred from participating in specified federal procurement or non-procurement transactions pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 180.300.

Prior to submission of the application, please review all work produced by grant writers or other third parties for accuracy. By submitting the application, applicants are certifying all of the information contained therein is true and an accurate reflection of the organization, and that regardless of the applicant's intent, the submission of information that is false or misleading may result in actions by FEMA. These actions include but are not limited to the submitted application not being considered for award, temporary withholding of funding under the existing award pending investigation, or referral to the DHS OIG.

The following documentation shall be provided to FEMA upon request:

1. A copy of the grant writer's contract for services;
2. A copy of the invoice or purchase order;
3. A copy of the canceled check (front and back); and
4. Evidence that the services were competitively procured.

Failure to provide the requested documentation may result in the grant writer fee being deemed ineligible and the grant reduced accordingly.

Note: FEMA requires that all applicants identify the following as "Application Participants" in the "Contact Information" section of the application: Any individual or organization that assisted with the development, preparation, or review of the application to include drafting or writing the narrative and budget; whether that person, entity, or agent is compensated or not; and whether the assistance took place prior to submitting the application.

C. Maintenance and Sustainment

The use of FEMA preparedness grant funds for the costs of repairs or replacement, as well as maintenance contracts, warranties, and user fees may be allowable.

Routine upkeep and the supplies, expendables, or one-time use items that support routine upkeep (e.g., gasoline, tire replacement, routine oil changes, monthly inspections, or grounds and facility maintenance) are the responsibility of the recipient and may not be funded with FP&S Program funding.

Generally, when purchasing a maintenance agreement, service contract, or extended warranty for systems or equipment, the period of coverage provided under such a plan may not extend beyond the period of performance of the grant with which the agreement, warranty or contract is purchased.

D. Taxes, Fees, Levies, and Assessments
Taxes, fees, levies, or assessments that the recipient is legally required to pay and are directly related to any eligible FP&S Program acquisition activity may be charged to an FP&S Program award pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.470. These charges shall be identified and enumerated in the FP&S Program application narrative, as well as the "Grant Request Details" section of the acquisition activity.

Any avoidable and unreasonable costs that result from the action or inaction of a recipient (or recipient's agent) or that prevent that recipient from enjoying any lawful exemption, waiver, or reduction of any tax, fee, levy, or assessment directly related to any eligible FP&S Program acquisition activity, are not chargeable to any FP&S Program award.

Example: Governmental entities and Public Safety Agencies are exempt from some Federal Communications Commission (FCC) fees*, but only if the eligible organization submits an exemption or waiver request to the FCC.

**Government entities are not required to pay FCC regulatory fees. Nonprofit entities (exempt under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code) may also be exempt. The FCC requires that any entity claiming exempt status submit, or have on file with the FCC, a valid Internal Revenue Service Determination Letter documenting its nonprofit status or certification from a governmental authority attesting to its exempt status. For more information, please visit* Federal Communications Commission | The United States of America (fcc.gov).

E. Excess Funds
After completing the initial project(s) proposed in the recipient's application, some recipients may have unexpended funds remaining in their budget. These excess funds may result from any combination of under-budget acquisition activities or competitive procurement processes.

An amendment request must be submitted to document the expenditure of excess funds. As a reminder, all costs must be incurred and all goods and services must be delivered or completed within the period of performance in order to be allowable.

F. Payments and Amendments

FP&S Program payment/drawdown requests from state or local government entities will be governed by applicable federal regulations in effect at the time a grant is awarded to the recipient and may be either advances or reimbursements. Recipients should not expend funds until all special conditions listed on the grant award document have been met, including completion of EHP review, and the request for payment in FEMA GO has been approved. Recipients should draw down funds based upon immediate disbursement requirements; however, FEMA strongly encourages recipients to draw down funds as close to disbursement or expenditure as possible to avoid accruing interest.

Non-federal entities should keep detailed records of all transactions involving the grant. FEMA may at any time request copies of any relevant documentation and records, including purchasing documentation along with copies of canceled checks for verification. See, e.g., 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.318(i), 200.334, 200.337.

Advances

Recipients shall be paid in advance, provided they maintain or demonstrate the willingness and ability to maintain procedures to minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds and disbursement by the recipient (not to exceed 30 days), and the financial management systems that meet the standards for fund control and accountability as established in 2 C.F.R. Part 200. The recipient shall include all applicable source documentation such as invoice(s), purchase orders, contracts, etc., to support the costs associated with the advance FP&S Program payment/drawdown request. EHP review requirements must be met before advanced payments.

Reimbursement

Payment by reimbursement is the preferred method when the requirements to be paid in advance, pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.305, cannot be met. In accordance with U.S. Department of Treasury regulations at 31 C.F.R. Part 205, if applicable, the recipient shall maintain procedures to minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds and the disbursement of said funds. As a prerequisite of FP&S Program approval for reimbursement requests, recipients shall include proof of purchase, in the form of a canceled check or credit card transaction, active SAM.gov registration, and a final invoice(s) in each reimbursement FP&S Program payment/drawdown request.

Rebates

Recipients shall disburse program income, rebates, refunds, contract settlements, audit recoveries, and interest earned on such funds before requesting additional cash payments, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.305.

Payment Requests During Closeout

A recipient may only submit reimbursement payment requests up to 120 calendar days after the expiration of the period of performance, during an award's closeout reconciliation per 2 C.F.R. § 200.344. Reimbursement payments are the only eligible type of requests to be submitted after a grant's period of performance has expired. The expenditure must have been obligated and

received during the period of performance of the award. FEMA may request documentation supporting the reimbursement.

Amendments
FEMA may approve FP&S Program award amendments on a case-by-case basis, for the following reasons:

- Extension of the period of performance in order to complete the scope of work;
- Changes to the activity or mission, retroactive approval, closeout issues, and some excess funds requests; and/or,
- Budget changes (adding funds to award/non-closeout deobligation of funds).

FEMA will only consider amendments submitted via FEMA GO. These requests must contain specific and compelling justifications for the requested change. Amendments or changes to the scope of work may require additional EHP review. FEMA strongly encourages recipients to expend grant funds in a timely manner, to be consistent with FP&S Program goals and objectives.

G. Disposition of Grant Funded Equipment
A recipient must use, manage, and dispose of FP&S Program-funded equipment in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. § 200.313. With the exception of state governments, when original or replacement equipment acquired under an FP&S Program award is no longer needed for the original project, program, or other activities currently or previously supported by a federal awarding agency, the recipient must request disposition instructions from FEMA. FEMA strongly recommends contacting the FP&S Program Help Desk prior to the disposition of FP&S Program-funded equipment.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.M

Item Cover Page

HARDEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM REPORT

DATE:	June 5, 2025
SUBMITTED BY:	Brandy Crawford, Clerk of Courts
ITEM TYPE:	Business Agenda
AGENDA SECTION:	**BUSINESS AGENDA**
SUBJECT:	**Lindsey Barwick, Clerk of the Circuit Court -** Fixed Asset Transfer and Disposal
SUGGESTED ACTION:	

ATTACHMENTS:
Assets Sheet.pdf
Brother EM-530 Typewriter.pdf
HP Laser Jet P3015.pdf
Dell Monitor.pdf
Canon Scanner.pdf
Optiplex 3040.pdf

VICTORIA L. ROGERS
HARDEE COUNTY, CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND COMPTROLLER
417 WEST MAIN STREET, SUITE 202
WAUCHULA, FL 33873
PHONE : (863) 773-4174 WEBSITE
: WWW.HARDEECLERK.COM

FIXED ASSETS PROPERTY CONTROL
TRANSFER/DISPOSITION OF EQUIPMENT

Send to: Lindsey Barwick, Fixed Assets/Property Control c/o Clerk of Courts
Email: lbarwick@hardeeclerk.com, Phone: 863 773-4174 ext. 7228 Fax: 863 773-4422

Attn: Lindsey Barwick **Subject:** Transfer/Disposition of Fixed Assets/Equipment.

This is a request to change the property records to reflect the transfer and/or disposal of property as indicated:

	PRC #	Description	Condition **
1		Computer Towers (18)	
2		Dell Monitors (24)	
3		HP Printers (16)	
4		Canon Scanner (1)	
		Brother EM530 Typewriter (1)	
6		Dell All-In-One Moniter (1)	
7		Kodak Photo Printer (1)	
8		Card Printer (1)	
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			

Transfer X Surplus ___ Parts ___ Lost/Stolen ___ Disposal to Landfill ___ Auction ___

Other _____

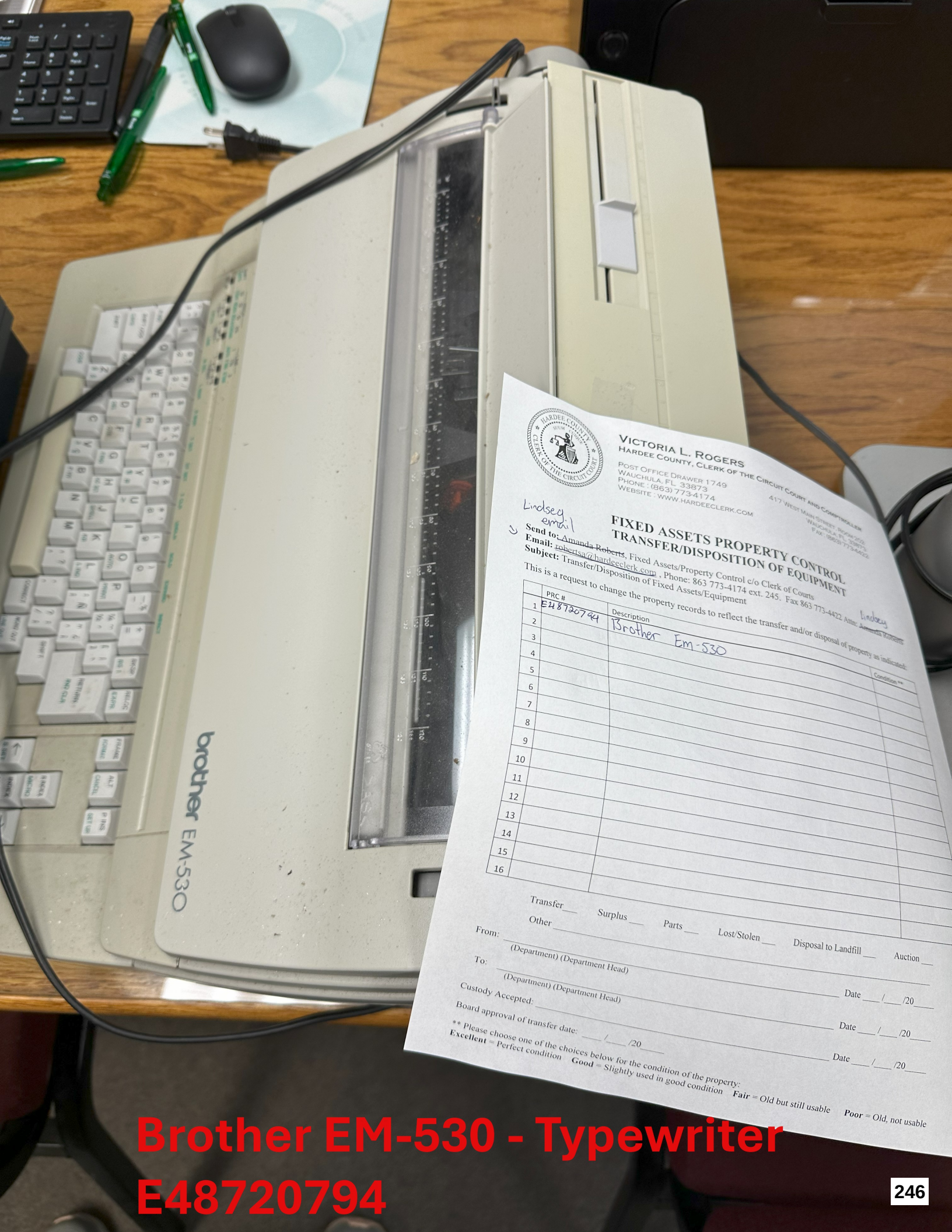
From: Charlene Albritton Date 06/03/20 24
(Department) (Department Head)

To: _____ Date ___/___/20___
(Department) (Department Head)

Custody Accepted: _____ Date ___/___/20___

** Please choose one of the choices below for the condition of the property:
Excellent = Perfect condition **Good** = Slightly used in good condition **Fair** = Old but still usable **Poor** = Old, not usable

Board approval of transfer date: ____ /____ /20_____

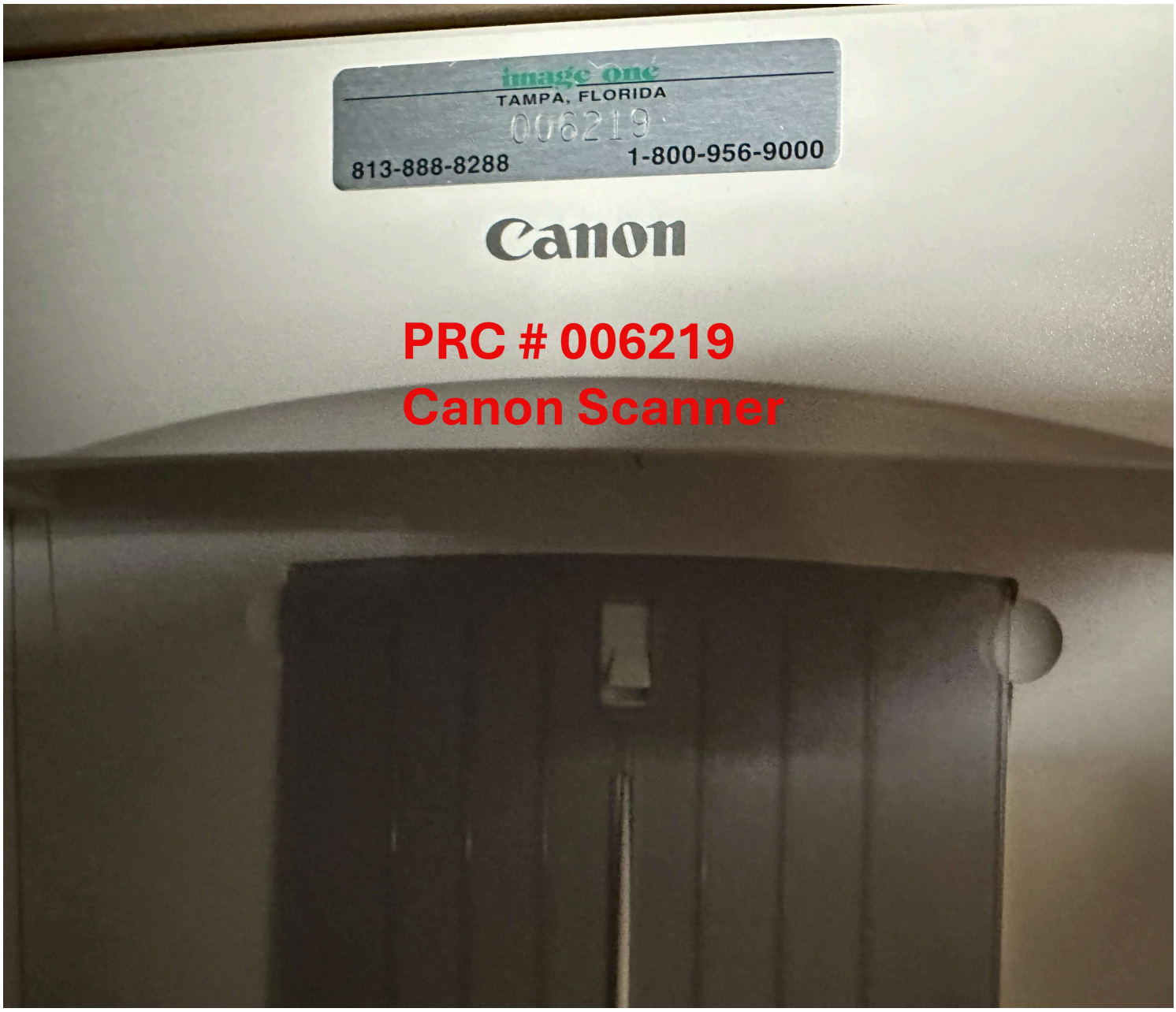


Brother EM-530 - Typewriter
E48720794



Hewlett Packard Printer Laser Jet P3015
Serial No VNBCC4M2XN


Dell Monitor P2314Ht
S/N: CN017R1K3-74445-42Q-490L
MANUFACTURED DATE: FEB 2014


image one
TAMPA, FLORIDA
006219
813-888-8288
1-800-956-9000
Canon
PRC # 006219
Canon Scanner


OptiPlex 3040
DELL
DELL
PRC # 01-02-130
Dell Optiplex 3040
Service Tag 1TT8F82
Express Service Code:
3979403282

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.N

Item Cover Page

HARDEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM REPORT

DATE:	June 5, 2025
SUBMITTED BY:	Brandy Crawford, County Manager's Office
ITEM TYPE:	Business Agenda
AGENDA SECTION:	**BUSINESS AGENDA**
SUBJECT:	**Terry Atchley, County Manager -** Hiring and Termination Policy
SUGGESTED ACTION:	

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.O

Item Cover Page

HARDEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM REPORT

DATE:	June 5, 2025
SUBMITTED BY:	Brandy Crawford, County Manager's Office
ITEM TYPE:	Business Agenda
AGENDA SECTION:	**BUSINESS AGENDA**
SUBJECT:	**Terry Atchley, County Manager -** County Take Home Vehicle Policy
SUGGESTED ACTION:	

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.P

Item Cover Page

HARDEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM REPORT

DATE:	June 5, 2025
SUBMITTED BY:	Brandy Crawford, County Manager's Office
ITEM TYPE:	Business Agenda
AGENDA SECTION:	**BUSINESS AGENDA**
SUBJECT:	**Terry Atchley, County Manager -** 4 Day Work Week Discussion
SUGGESTED ACTION:	