

Grant Funding for Your Fire Department

Triad Associates

Now is the time to assess your fire department's needs. Availability and guidelines for FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) will be announced shortly. Since 2001, this program has provided millions of dollars to fire departments and emergency response units across the country. In FY 2008 alone, Congress authorized \$560 million to carry out the activities of the AFG program. Over 3,000 fire departments benefited from last year's funds.

The goal of the AFG program is to meet the firefighting and emergency response needs of fire departments and nonaffiliated emergency medical services (EMS) organizations. The grant program helps firefighters and other first responders obtain critically needed resources required to protect the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards. Both volunteer and full-time fire departments are eligible for funding, as are non-affiliated EMS units. Allowable activities for the program include training, equipment, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and wellness and fitness activities that offer periodic health screenings, entry physical examinations and immunizations. Modifications to fire stations and related facilities and vehicle acquisitions are also eligible projects. Eligible apparatus available to fire departments under this program include pumpers, brush trucks, tankers/tenders, rescue vehicles, ambulances, quints, aerials, foam units and fire boats.

There is a matching requirement to this grant program. Fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations serving populations of over 50,000 or more must match 20 percent of the total project cost, organizations serving populations between 20,000 and 50,000 must match 10 percent of the total project cost and organizations serving areas with a population of 20,000 or fewer must match 5 percent of the total project cost.

Fire departments can also apply for large scale or regional projects that include neighboring jurisdictions. A regional project is one in which multiple organizations serving more than one local jurisdiction benefit directly from the activities implemented with the grant funds. Regional projects are designed to facilitate interoperable communications and efficiency among the participating jurisdictions.

Last year's AFG program accepted on-line applications starting in the early spring. With that in mind, now is a great time to sit down with your fire department and emergency response units to determine their areas of greatest need. In light of recent budget cuts, and in anticipation of additional federal funding, this is a great opportunity to help your

fire department or emergency response team identify and obtain the resources needed to protect the public and avoid fire-related disasters.

This is a highly competitive program. To assist applicants AFG regional staff host overview sessions throughout the country. Beginning in the middle of February and continuing through the middle of March 2009, workshops will be held to provide information about this competitive grant program. The workshops will include program changes, program priorities, eligibility requirements and the application process.

For more information, visit the AFG website at www.firegrantsupport.com/afg.

Triad Associates is currently the League's Grant Consulting Firm. Their firm, which is known for its expertise in community and economic development, including strategic planning, redevelopment, acquisition, relocation and funding, has brought diverse plans and projects to life by generating more than \$580,000,000 for over 120 public, private and nonprofit clients throughout the Northeast region since 1978. Every member of the Triad team is personally committed and dedicated to the success of its clients and the projects that benefit communities.