

**2005 Program Guidance
for the
Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program

February 2005**

This document provides a summary of the 2005 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program's priorities. It explains how to apply, what items can be requested, and how applications will be evaluated. Please read this program guidance carefully as well as the Final Rule, the program's Notice of Funds Availability and answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs). Each document should be reviewed as they provide detailed insight into the AFG. These documents will be posted on the website of the Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP), U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Together, these four documents will provide you with the information you need to complete the online application. The online application will be available at www.firegrantsupport.com or about March 7, 2005.



Prepared by the Office for Domestic Preparedness and the U.S. Fire Administration

PROGRAM GUIDANCE FOR THE **2005 ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT PROGRAM**

The purpose of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program is to award one-year grants directly to fire departments and nonaffiliated emergency medical services (EMS) organizations of a State to enhance their abilities with respect to fire and fire-related hazards. Our primary goal is to provide assistance to meet fire departments' and nonaffiliated EMS organizations' firefighting and emergency response needs. This program seeks to support organizations that lack the tools and resources necessary to protect the health and safety of the public and their emergency response personnel with respect to fire and all other hazards they may face.

Applicants to the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program should be aware of a number of key national preparedness initiatives and priority focus areas. Applicants for Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) are encouraged to review closely the language in **Appendix A** in order to stay abreast of significant initiatives being highlighted by DHS and to be aware of the program requirements that will be associated with their grant, if they become a recipient of AFG financial assistance.

Of particular interest will be the requirements for FY2005 with respect to the National Incident Management System (NIMS), and the actions recipients of federal preparedness grants such as the "fire" grants, must carry out in order to support the goals that have been established nationally for the Nation's first responders. Requirements connected to interoperable communications are also included in the appendix for those interested in broad communications projects.

Also, Homeland Security Presidential Directive-8 (HSPD-8) directs the grant program office to assure that Federal resources are directed toward ensuring the Nation is prepared to prevent, respond, and recover from major events, especially the prevention and response to terrorists attacks. It is our belief that funding any fire departments through the AFG is consistent with HSPD-8 and will ensure that first-responders are prepared to respond to major events. As in prior years' programs, equipment and training for preparing for and responding to events that involve chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive devices (CBRNE) are eligible this year.

The authority of this program is derived from the Federal Fire Protection and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. §§ 2229 et seq.), as amended. In fiscal year 2005, Congress reauthorized the AFG and appropriated a total of \$650,000,000 to the Department of Homeland Security's Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) to carry out the activities of this Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program. Congress also authorized the use of up to five percent for administering the grant program. The appropriated funds are available until September 30, 2006.

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program for fiscal year 2005 generally mirrors previous years' programs with two significant changes. The first significant change is the allowance of nonaffiliated EMS organizations (i.e., non-fire based EMS organizations) as eligible applicants for as much as two (2) percent of the appropriated funds. The other change is the segregation of the Fire Prevention and Safety Grant (FP&S) program from the AFG. We will have a separate application period devoted solely to Fire Prevention and Safety. It is our intention to have this application period in the Fall of 2005 which would be open to fire departments as in the past. Please monitor the AFG website (www.firegrantsupport.com) for updated information on this program. Nonaffiliated EMS organizations will not be eligible for the FP&S program.

Eligible applicants for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program are limited to fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations of a State. A "State" is defined as the 50 States plus the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and Puerto Rico. A "fire department of a State" is defined as an agency or organization that has a formally recognized arrangement with a State, territory, local, or tribal authority (city, county, parish, fire district, township, town, or other governing body) to provide fire suppression to a population within a fixed geographical area. A "nonaffiliated EMS organization" is defined as a public or private nonprofit emergency medical services organization that provides direct emergency medical services to a specific geographic area but is not affiliated with a hospital and does not serve a geographic area in which DHS finds that emergency medical services are adequately provided by a fire department. In making the determination regarding "adequately provided," DHS will conclude that any nonaffiliated EMS organization would be eligible under this definition if the organization is providing direct emergency medical services at the time of application and is in good standing with the community, i.e., licensed and/or chartered to provide EMS services to the community. Included in this category of eligibility would be rescue squads that are adequately trained to provide emergency medical services to the community that they serve.

A municipality (such as a fire district) may submit an application on behalf of a fire or EMS organization when the organization lacks the legal status to do so, e.g., when the organization falls within the auspices of the municipality or district. When a municipality submits an application on behalf of an organization, the organization is precluded from submitting an additional application on its own. The Alaska Village Initiative, a nonprofit organization incorporated in the State of Alaska, shall also be considered eligible for purposes of receiving assistance under this program on behalf of Alaska Native villages. Each eligible applicant is limited to one application per program year.

For the purposes of this program, we consider that two or more separate fire departments or nonaffiliated EMS organizations that share facilities are tantamount to being one organization. This determination is designed to assist the grants program office in its fiscal oversight of the program by avoiding or eliminating duplication of

benefits. For example, it would not be cost beneficial to purchase two firefighting vehicles for two fire departments that share a facility to serve the same community when so many other communities need new apparatus. We believe that two or more organizations that share facilities should be able to satisfy all of their operational needs with one application. If two or more organizations that share facilities submit more than one application, we will deem all of the applications ineligible.

A fire department can apply for assistance for its emergency medical services (EMS) unit provided the unit falls organizationally under the auspices of the fire department. Fire departments may **NOT** apply for assistance as an “unaffiliated EMS organization” under the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program. Fire departments whose applications are submitted as a nonaffiliated EMS organization will have their application deemed ineligible. Likewise, a nonaffiliated EMS organization may **NOT** apply for assistance as a fire department. If a nonaffiliated EMS organization submits an application as a fire department, we will deem that application to be ineligible as well.

Non-Federal airport and/or port authority fire or EMS organizations are eligible only if they have 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. Airport or port authority fire and EMS organizations whose **sole** responsibility is suppression of fires or EMS response on the airport grounds or port facilities are not eligible for this grant program.

Fire departments that are Federal or contracted by the Federal government and are solely responsible under their formally recognized arrangement for suppression of fires on Federal installations or land are not eligible for this grant program. Fire stations that are not independent entities, but are rather part of, controlled by, or are under the day-to-day operational direction of a larger fire department or agency, are typically not eligible. Fire departments that are for-profit departments (i.e., do not have specific nonprofit status or are not municipally based) are not eligible to apply for assistance under this program. Also not eligible for this program are auxiliaries, fire service organizations or associations, and State/local agencies such as a forest service, fire marshals, hospitals, and training offices. Not eligible for EMS assistance as a nonaffiliated EMS organization are dive teams and urban search and rescue teams.

Automated Application and Tutorial for 2005

Again, this year’s application is automated and available online. The application will be accessible from the ODP website (www.firegrantsupport.com) and USFA website (www.usfa.fema.gov). We have designed the automated application with many built-in “help screens” and “drop-down menus” to assist you throughout the application process. The application can be saved and retrieved as many times as you need while you’re filling it out, right up to the deadline or submittal. ***Once you’ve submitted your application, however, you cannot change it.*** Another positive feature of the automated system is that it will not allow you to submit an incomplete application, i.e., the system

will alert you if you have not provided required information. Also, by submitting your application online, you will be automatically notified that we have received your application via e-mail.

A tutorial will be available on the Internet to help applicants use the online grant application and become familiar with the AFG program. This tutorial explains the AFG program and many of the application screens; it provides tips for navigating the application screens and summarizes the changes in the grant program that are new in fiscal year 2005. The tutorial also provides a review of the lessons learned from previous years under the grant program.

You may decide to hire or otherwise use a grant writer to assist you in the application process. This is allowable. However, you, as the applicant, are responsible for the information contained in your application. By submitting the application, you are certifying that all of the information contained therein is true and an accurate reflection of your organization. Therefore, please review all work produced by grant writers or other third parties on your behalf prior to submission. Applicants that falsify their applications or misrepresent their organizations in any material manner will have their applications deemed ineligible by the AFG program office and referred to the Office of Inspector General for further action, as appropriate.

Paper applications will be accepted but are discouraged. We are discouraging paper applications because of the inherent delays associated with processing a paper application. Also, if awarded, applicants who submit paper applications must continue to manage their grants via paper, including payment requests, requests for modifications, reporting, etc., whereas electronic applicants can do all of these functions online. Additionally, paper applications don't have the built-in help that is available to the online applicants. Finally, there is no built-in assurance that your paper application is complete when submitted. If you do not have access to the Internet, contact us directly (1-866-274-0960) to request a paper copy of the application via mail. ***We will not send the paper applications to you via overnight delivery, nor by fax or e-mail.***

The only legitimate paper application is the application that we send you – do not use any paper application that you did not receive directly from us. Do not print the screens from this year's online application and submit it. Do not use a previous year's application. Any paper application that is not in the correct format will be deemed ineligible.

We will begin accepting completed applications for the 2005 program on or about March 7, 2005 (monitor the ODP and USFA Web sites for up-to-date information on the application period). Completed applications must be submitted electronically or otherwise received by us on or before the close of business (5:00 p.m. EDT) on the last day of the application period, currently projected for April 8, 2005. Applications submitted by mail must be postmarked no later than four calendar days prior to the end of the application period. Assuming an April 8, 2005, end-date, we will not accept

applications postmarked after April 5, 2005, unless we receive them prior to the end of the application period. Applications not submitted electronically must be mailed to the USFA Grant Program Technical Assistance Center, 16825 South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, Maryland, 21727-8998. No late, incomplete, or faxed applications will be accepted. No electronically submitted applications other than those submitted online via the automated grant application system will be accepted. We will not be responsible for applications mailed to any address other than the address listed above.

Project Development

In 2005, we have continued our practice of allowing you to formulate a very comprehensive grant proposal. Depending on the program for which you apply, we are allowing your grant proposal to include a number of related “activities” to address all of your needs within a programmatic or functional area. This approach provides you with the opportunity to develop a more comprehensive grant project that addresses a broader range of your fire department’s needs. You may submit only ***one application per application period***, and your application is further limited to only ***one*** of the program areas listed below. Multiple applications submitted on behalf of any one applicant will all be deemed ineligible. Be advised that your application should include only activities that can be completed within the one-year grant period.

Please note: For the 2005 AFG program year, we will conduct a separate application period for the Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) program. While an application period has not yet been established, it is our intention to conduct the fire prevention application period in the Fall of 2005. Fire departments will be eligible to apply for the FP&S program as in the past. Nonaffiliated EMS organizations will not be eligible for FP&S. We suggest that all interested applicants monitor the AFG website (www.firegrantsupport.com) for updated information on this program.

Fire Departments

You can submit an application for either of this year’s two program areas, and you may include as many activities within that one program as necessary to meet your needs. You may submit only ***one application per application period***, and your application is further limited to only ***one*** of the program areas listed below. Multiple applications submitted on behalf of any one applicant will all be deemed ineligible. The programs and associated activities eligible in this year’s grant program are as follows:

1. Operations and Firefighter Safety Program. Eligible activities available for fire departments under this function are limited to training, equipment, personal protective equipment, wellness and fitness, and modifications to fire stations and facilities. Please note that requests for emergency medical services training and equipment are available under the appropriate activities in this program area, i.e., under training or equipment. Also, note that requests for equipment, personal protective equipment, and training to prepare for response to incidents involving CBRNE are

available under the appropriate activities in this program area. Applicants should strive to ensure that all projects applied for under the grant program are consistent with National standards and address interoperability.

2. Firefighting Vehicle Acquisition Program. Eligible apparatus available to fire departments under this program include, but are not limited to, pumpers, brush trucks, tankers/tenders, rescue vehicles, ambulances, quints, aerials, foam units, and fireboats. You may apply for only **one** vehicle per year. Previous AFG vehicle grant recipients are **not** eligible to receive a vehicle grant in subsequent grant years.

As stated above, this year you may submit one application for assistance in only one of these two program areas. Within your selected program area, you may develop a comprehensive program to address all of your needs by applying for as many of the eligible activities you determine are necessary. For example, if you determine that your needs are in the area of Operations and Firefighter Safety, you could apply for any one of the activities under that program, or any combination of activities, or all of the activities listed within that program. If you need a vehicle, you must apply under the Firefighting Vehicle Acquisition Program. You may not apply for a vehicle in any program area other than the Firefighting Vehicle Acquisition Program.

Nonaffiliated EMS Organizations

Nonaffiliated EMS organizations are eligible to apply for assistance during the 2005 program period. The nonaffiliated EMS portion of the AFG program will mirror that available to fire departments in that applicants will have the option to apply for assistance under either the EMS Operations and Safety Program or the EMS Vehicle Acquisition Program. The EMS operations and safety program provides you with a range of eligible activities for you to formulate a very comprehensive grant proposal that could very easily satisfy all of your operational needs. The EMS vehicle acquisition program allows you to apply for a vehicle to enhance your emergency response capabilities and may include operator training as necessary.

Be aware, you may submit only **one application per application period**, and your application is further limited to only **one** of the two program areas listed below. Multiple applications submitted on behalf of one applicant will all be deemed ineligible. Be advised that your application should include any only activities that can be completed within the one-year grant period. The programs and associated activities eligible in this year's grant program are as follows:

1. EMS Operations and Safety Program. Eligible activities available to nonaffiliated EMS organizations under this function are limited to EMS training, EMS equipment including personal protective equipment, wellness and fitness, and modifications to stations and facilities. Also, note that requests for equipment, personal protective equipment, and training to prepare for response to incidents involving CBRNE are available under the appropriate activities in this program area. Applicants should

strive to ensure that all projects applied for under the grant program are consistent with National standards and address interoperability.

2. EMS Vehicle Acquisition Program. Eligible apparatus available to nonaffiliated EMS organizations under this program include, but are not limited to ambulances, transport units and rescue squads. Small specialty access vehicles such as ATVs, snowmobiles, and gators are not considered vehicles; rather, they are considered “equipment” and should be applied for under the EMS equipment activity under the EMS Operations and Safety Program. You may apply for only **one** vehicle per year. Applications requesting more than one vehicle will be deemed ineligible.

Regional Projects

An applicant, whether a fire department or a nonaffiliated EMS organization, may act as a “host applicant” and apply for large-scale or regional projects on behalf of itself and any number of neighboring organizations. Examples of such projects would be county-wide communications system, county-wide standardization of breathing apparatus, or the purchase of a specialized vehicle such as a hazmat vehicle that will be used for a larger geographic area than the applicant’s first-due area. Generally, these types of projects are designed to address issues of interoperability within a jurisdiction. In order to apply for such a project, the applicant must be eligible, i.e., either a fire department or a nonaffiliated EMS organization (a county, county association, or a city could not apply for the project) and agree, if awarded, to be responsible for the all aspects of the grant, such as accountability for the assets and all reporting requirements.

In the application, the host organization should provide only its own characteristics, i.e., the population of its own first-due area, not the total population that will be affected by the project. The extent of the affect of the project should be elaborated on in the narrative. The applicant must also include in the narrative section of the application a list of each third-party organization that will benefit from the regional project if the project is approved. The third-party organizations, i.e., either fire departments or non-affiliated EMS organizations, which will be the beneficiaries of the project may also apply for funding under the AFG as long as these third-party organizations do not ask for the same items as the host applicant. In the example where a host applicant is applying for a county-wide communications project, a third-party organization that will receive some of the communications equipment can apply for other needs as long as they do not apply for duplicative communications equipment. Additionally, the host applicant can apply for other needs beyond the regional project.

When evaluating the benefits of any regional project, we will take into account the other partners that will be involved in the project, whether that is other fire departments and/or non-affiliated EMS organizations, or other public service organizations. We will also take into consideration the extent to which the non-fire/EMS partners will contribute to the overall costs of the regional project.

Application Procedure

Eligible applicants can apply for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program online via the established “e-grants” application process. The system will allow one authorized representative of an applicant to log in and create a username and password for the applicant. If you submitted an application in previous years, it is advised that you use the same username and password that you used for your previous applications. The selection of the authorized representative is at the discretion of each applicant. The information requested online is an electronic version of many Federal grant forms. The application includes general questions about your organization and your community, as well as questions regarding your proposed project.

DUNS Number

Effective October 1, 2003, all Federal grantees must obtain a DUNS number, (a unique nine-character identification number provided by the commercial company Dun & Bradstreet). The Federal government will use the DUNS number to better identify related organizations that are receiving funding under grants and cooperative agreements and to provide consistent name and address data for electronic grant applications. Additional information about DUNS numbers can be found on the Dun & Bradstreet Web site (<https://eupdate.dnb.com/requestoptions/government/ccrreg/>).

There is no charge to obtain a DUNS number, and it is the applicant's responsibility to obtain one. Applicants are encouraged to apply for a DUNS number well in advance of the application period because it may take 2 to 3 weeks or more to obtain the number online. It is recommended that applicants request a DUNS number as soon as possible by calling 1-866-705-5711. When completing the online application, there is a special data field for entering the DUNS number. If applying on paper, use the box entitled “Federal Identifier” on the SF 424, Application for Federal Assistance, to enter the DUNS number. Be advised that this number is required for all Federal grant applications, and there may not be any extensions granted for applicants who were unable to obtain their number prior to the end of the application period.

Application

As in previous years, you will be required to answer a series of questions designed to provide the FIRE Grants Program Office with general information about your organization and your community. The answers you provide to these questions may be used in the evaluation of your application. We will also use some of the information to determine whether your organization serves an urban, suburban, or rural community. We believe that characteristics such as population, water supply, land use, number of stations, number of inhabitable structures over four stories tall in your jurisdiction, and call volume are indicators of the type of community you serve. We will use these characteristics to determine what type of community you serve. However, we will also allow you to designate the type of community that you serve. The designation will be

displayed on the application once you have completed the Department Characteristics sections of the application.

For fire department applicants, we have established different funding priorities in some of the program or activity areas depending on the type of community you serve. These funding priorities are delineated in each program area below, if applicable. This community designation (i.e., urban, suburban, or rural) may affect the ranking of your application depending on the program area or activity for which you are applying. If your designation differs from our determination, you will be required to explain in the narrative section of the application why your designation is different than ours.

After you have completed the general questions, you will be asked a series of activity-specific questions relative to the program you selected and the activities for which you plan to apply. You will answer the questions for each of the activities that support your project.

Lastly, you will be required to provide a written narrative describing your planned project. The narrative portion of your application should provide the details of activities you propose to be funded, including budget details for each of your activities. It should describe the financial need of your organization and elaborate on the benefits your community and/or organization will gain from the expenditure of the grant funds, particularly noting the benefits that would be realized due to your department's responsibilities for protection of critical infrastructure. Finally, the narrative should explain the extent to which the grant would enhance your daily operations and/or how the grant will positively impact your ability to protect life and property.

We recommend that you type your narrative offline in any word processing software, such as Word, Word Perfect, Notepad, etc. Once your narrative is complete, you can copy it or "cut-and-paste" it from your word-processing document into the narrative block in the application. Space for the narrative is limited, so your narrative should not exceed five pages. Do **NOT** type your narrative entirely in capital letters.

Evaluation Process

We will rank all complete and eligible applications based on the substance of your application relative to the established program priorities for the type of community served. We determine this relationship from your answers to the activity-specific questions. If you apply for more than one activity in your selected program, each activity will be scored separately. Then your scores will be prorated based on the individual activities' funding level compared to the total requested funding in your application. For example, if you are applying under the Operations and Safety Program, and you are applying for \$9,000 in training and \$1,000 in equipment, the training portion of your proposal will represent 90 percent of your score and the equipment will represent 10 percent of your score. The number of activities included in your application will not provide any advantage or disadvantage with respect to its evaluation.

Applications that best address the grant program’s priorities (as outlined below) will score higher than those applications that are not directed toward the priorities. The applications that score the highest will be determined to be in the “competitive range.” A panel of at least three technical evaluation specialists will further evaluate the applications that are in the competitive range, i.e., the highest-ranked applications. These panelists will evaluate the application using your project narrative along with the answers to the general questions and the activity-specific questions.

When reviewing your application, the panelists will use your narrative and all the information in your application to determine the worthiness of your request for an award. During the panel review process, the panelists will provide a subjective but qualitative judgment on the merits of each request.

Applications that include requests equipment and/or training will be evaluated by the panelists relative to the critical infrastructure within the applicant’s area of first due response. Critical infrastructure includes any system or asset that if attacked or impacted by a hazardous event would result in catastrophic loss of life or catastrophic economic loss. Critical infrastructure also includes the following: Public water or power systems, major business centers, chemical facilities, nuclear power plants, major rail and highway bridges, petroleum and/or natural gas transmission pipelines or storage facilities, telecommunications facilities, or facilities that support large public gatherings such as sporting events or concerts. Panelists will be instructed to assess such infrastructure and the hazards confronting the community as explained in the narrative in order to begin their judgment of the benefits that will be realized from a grant to the applicant.

The panelists will evaluate and score: 1) the clarity of your proposed project including your project’s budget detail, 2) the financial need of your organization, 3) the benefits that would result should you be awarded the grant, and 4) the extent to which the grant would enhance your daily operations and/or how the grant will positively impact your ability to protect life and property. These four elements carry equal weight when factored into the panelists’ scores (i.e., one-fourth).

Each application will be judged on its own merits – not against other applications. The panelists will consider all expenses budgeted, including administrative and/or indirect costs, as part of their cost-benefit review. In addition, an applicant can demonstrate cost-benefit by describing, as applicable, how the grant award will do the following: 1) fit in with a regional approach, i.e., is consistent with current capabilities and requests of neighboring organizations or otherwise benefits other organizations in the region; 2) implement interoperability of equipment/technology with other organizations and local, State, and Federal first-responders; and/or, 3) allow the first responder organizations to respond to all hazards (all hazards include incidents involving seismic (earthquake), atmospheric (tornadoes, hurricanes), or technological (hazardous materials, nuclear, etc.) events, or incidents involving CBRNE, as well as fire prevention/suppression). The

panelists will review each application in its entirety and compare the application against established evaluation criteria, not against other applications.

Keep in mind that we will use your answers to the activity-specific questions when conducting our initial assessment. Your answers to these questions are the primary bases upon which we will determine whether your application warrants further evaluation. Applicants whose answers indicate that their project is consistent with our established priorities (as outlined below) will have a better chance of reaching the competitive range and the second level of review than those applicants whose projects do not reflect the established priorities. Applicants that falsify their applications or misrepresent their organizations in any material manner will have their applications deemed ineligible by the AFG program office and referred to the Office of Inspector General for further action as appropriate.

State Technical Review

Following our preliminary determination of award (i.e., after the panel process is complete) but prior to award, we will involve the State's homeland security office in a technical review of any application that is seeking equipment and/or training for preparation for incidents involving CBRNE. In addition, we will seek the State's comment on the extent to which an communications equipment conforms with the State's interoperability requirements or plans. Each State will be asked to provide the AFG program office with a representative to carry out this technical review of applications from the State that include CBRNE-related and interoperable communications equipment requests and that have been rated as fundable by the peer review panelists. During the technical review, the State representative will attest to and certify that such requests are consistent with the State's homeland security strategies and that the requests do not duplicate assistance already provided or about to be provided. If a State representative determines that an application is either inconsistent with the State plan or duplicates the State's assistance, that portion of the AFG application will not be funded.

AFG Programs and Program Priorities

The program priorities are different for fire departments than for nonaffiliated EMS organizations. Please read this guidance document with that in mind and make sure that you are researching the appropriate sections for your organization.

Fire Department Priorities

Specific rating criteria and priorities for each of the grant categories are provided below following the descriptions of this year's eligible programs. The rating criteria, in conjunction with the program description, will provide you with an understanding of what information we are seeking about your proposed projects.

(1) Operations and Firefighter Safety Program

There are five different activities available for funding under this program area: training, equipment, personal protective equipment, wellness and fitness, and modifications to facilities. Please note that fire-based emergency medical services (EMS) training and equipment are available under the appropriate activity in this program area. Also note that requests for equipment and training to prepare for response to incidents involving CBRNE are available under the applicable equipment and training activities.

You may apply for as many of the activities within this program as you think are necessary in one application. There are no bonuses or penalties for applying for only one activity or for multiple activities. Whenever there are applicable standards, requests in this program should be consistent with National standards and have the intent and/or goal of solving applicable interoperability or compatibility problems. The Responder Knowledge Base (RKB), which can be accessed at <http://www.rkb.mipt.org/>, includes relevant information on first responder standards and allows “guest users” to answer any questions they may have on applicable standards. The applicant should describe in the narrative section how the purchase of equipment would facilitate solving interoperability or compatibility problems.

a) Training activities:

DHS may make grants for the purpose of training firefighting personnel. Examples of training activities include, but are not limited to, firefighter I and II certifications; first-responder EMS; driver/operator; fire officer; hazardous materials response; incident command; supervision and safety; CBRNE awareness, performance, planning and management; or train-the-trainer courses in any of these areas.

We believe that the most benefit is derived from training that is instructor-led, hands-on, and leads to a nationally sanctioned or State certification. Training requests that include Web-based home study or distance learning and the purchase of training materials, equipment, or props are a lower priority. Therefore, applications focused on national or State certification training, including train-the-trainer initiatives, will receive a higher competitive rating. Training that involves instructors where the students must demonstrate their grasp of knowledge of the training material via testing and is integral to a certification will receive a high competitive rating, but not to the extent of the trainings that would lead to national certification. Training that is instructor-led but does not lead to a certification, or any self-taught courses, are of low benefit, and therefore they will not be afforded a high priority.

We will rate more highly those proposed programs that benefit the highest percentage of applicable personnel within a fire department or those proposed programs that will be open to other departments in the region. Training that brings the department into statutory (or Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)) compliance or compliance with Federally mandated initiatives (such as knowledge and understanding of

the National Incident Management System and/or incident command systems) would provide the highest benefit relative to training that is not required, therefore receive the highest consideration. Training that brings a department into voluntary compliance with national standards will also receive a high competitive rating, but not as high as the training that brings a department into statutory compliance. Training that does not have statutory compliance or voluntary compliance with a national standard will receive a low competitive rating.

Due to the inherent differences between urban, suburban, and rural firefighting characteristics, we have developed different priorities in the training activity for departments that service these different types of communities. However, CBRNE awareness training has a high benefit and will receive the highest consideration regardless of the type of community served.

For departments serving rural communities, we believe that funding basic, operational-level firefighting, operational-level rescue, driver training, or first-responder EMS, EMT-B, and EMT-I, (i.e., training in basic firefighting or EMS duties) has greater benefit than funding officer training, or safety officer training. In rural communities, after basic training, there is a greater cost-benefit to officer training than for other specialized types of training such as mass casualty, hazmat, advance rescue and EMT, or inspector training for rural departments.

Conversely, for departments that are serving urban or suburban communities, we believe there is a higher benefit to be gained by funding specialized training, such as mass casualty, hazmat, advance rescue and EMS, or inspector training than the funding of officer training, safety officer training, or operations training, which in turn has a higher benefit than basic-, operational-, or awareness-level activities. Training designated to enhance multi-jurisdictional capabilities will be afforded a slightly higher rating.

Eligible uses of training funds include but are not limited to tuition, exam and course fees, certification and/or re-certification expenses, purchase of training curricula, training equipment (including trailers and simulators), training props, training services (such as instructors), attendance at formal training forums, etc. Tow vehicles or other means of transport may be eligible as a transportation expense under this activity if adequately justified in your grant proposal, but we will limit transportation expenses to \$6,000 per year per application. Compensation to volunteer firefighters for wages lost because of attending training under this program is an eligible expense if justified in your grant proposal. Overtime expenses paid to career firefighters to attend training, or overtime expenses paid to firefighters to cover for colleagues while the colleagues are in training, are eligible expenses if justified in your grant proposal. Even though compensation is an eligible expense, proposals that contain such compensation expenses may be less favorably scored than similar proposals without compensation expenses due to the cost-benefit element in the evaluation process.

