University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Trace: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange

MTAS Publications: Hot Topics | Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS)

4-2-2007

Federal Grants Available to Fire Departments: Successful Funding for Tennessee Fire Departments (2007)

Gary West
Municipal Technical Advisory Service

Follow this and additional works at: http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_mtastop

Part of the Public Administration Commons

The MTAS publications provided on this website are archival documents intended for informational purposes only and should not be considered as authoritative. The content contained in these publications may be outdated, and the laws referenced therein may have changed or may not be applicable to your city or circumstances.
For current information, please visit the MTAS website at: mtas.tennessee.edu.

Recommended Citation
West, Gary, "Federal Grants Available to Fire Departments: Successful Funding for Tennessee Fire Departments (2007)" (2007). *MTAS Publications: Hot Topics.*
http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_mtastop/68

This Bulletin is brought to you for free and open access by the Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) at Trace: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in MTAS Publications: Hot Topics by an authorized administrator of Trace: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact trace@utk.edu.

MTAS
Municipal Technical Advisory Service
In cooperation with the Tennessee Municipal League

#138
HOT topic

April 2, 2007

2007 FEDERAL GRANTS AVAILABLE TO FIRE DEPARTMENTS: SUCCESSFUL FUNDING FOR TENNESSEE FIRE DEPARTMENTS

Gary L. West, Fire Management Consultant

The federal government will provide several opportunities for grant funding again this year starting with the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) in March. Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grants typically open in May, and Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) grants will open sometime in the fall.

SAFER grants are used to help fire departments add frontline firefighters. The goal is for fire departments to increase their staffing and deployment capabilities and ultimately attain 24-hour staffing, thus assuring that their communities have adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards. SAFER grants support two specific activities: hiring firefighters, and recruiting and retaining volunteer firefighters.

FP&S grants are part of the AFG program. FP&S grants support projects that enhance the safety of firefighters and the public from fire and related hazards. The primary goal is to target high-risk populations and mitigate high incidents of death and injury.

2007 ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT PROGRAM

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program is administered by the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Grants and Training. The purpose of the AFG program is to award one-year grants directly to fire departments in order to enhance their abilities with respect to fire and fire-related hazards. The primary goal is to provide assistance to meet fire departments' firefighting and emergency response needs. The program supports organizations that lack the tools and resources necessary to protect the health and safety of the public or their emergency response personnel.

In fiscal year 2005, Congress reauthorized the AFG program for an additional five years through 2010. This year, Congress authorized $547 million to carry out the activities of the AFG program, which includes $19 million for EMS and $27 million for fire prevention and safety.

2007 AFG PROGRAM CHANGES

AFG program rules have changed this year, providing more opportunities for fire departments to apply for funding. The grants and training office provided AFG workshops at seven locations across Tennessee. With assistance from both the Tennessee Fire and Codes Enforcement Academy and the Municipal Technical Advisory Service, these workshops were well attended and

April 2, 2007

2007 FEDERAL GRANTS AVAILABLE TO FIRE DEPARTMENTS: SUCCESSFUL FUNDING FOR TENNESSEE FIRE DEPARTMENTS

Gary L. West, Fire Management Consultant

considered successful. Following is a summary of significant changes in 2007:

1. Previous applicants who were awarded a vehicle grant will be eligible again in 2007;
2. Fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations that protect urban and suburban communities may request multiple vehicles on one application;
3. All applicants may request assistance in both vehicle acquisition and operations and safety program areas using two separate applications;
4. All applicants may submit a regional application using a separate application (for a total of three), i.e., vehicle and/or operation and safety and/or regional; and
5. Population protected and call volume will be considered for all activity requests when applications are selected for the peer panel review.

AFG PROGRAM OVERVIEW OF ELIGIBLE ITEMS

AFG program activities are broken down into two groups: operations and safety, and vehicles. Under operations and safety, eligible activities for fire departments are limited to training, equipment, personal protective equipment, wellness and fitness, and modifications to fire stations and facilities. Eligible activities under vehicles include driver training and purchase of NFPA 1901-approved equipment and apparatus. Apparatus available to fire departments under this program area include, but are not limited to, pumpers, brush trucks, tankers/tenders, rescue vehicles, ambulances, quints, aerials, foam units, and fireboats.

Applicants should strive to ensure that all projects applied for under the AFG program are consistent with national standards and address interoperability. Applicants are encouraged to read the 2007 Grant Guidance Document carefully before deciding on what to apply for.

LOCAL FUNDING MATCH

The AFG again requires a local cash funding match that is based on population served. For fire departments serving populations below 20,000, the local match is 5 percent. For fire departments serving populations between 20,000 and 50,000, the local match is 10 percent, and for departments serving areas with a population of over 50,000, the local match is 20 percent.

PLANNING YOUR APPLICATION

The single most important thing applicants can do to ensure they have the best opportunity for success in the AFG program is to closely align the most significant risks in the community to AFG program priorities. Deviation from this will reduce the chances of obtaining a grant.

Three things go into identifying risks: history, current situation, and future probabilities. History includes previous trends and the

frequency and severity of past situations. Your current situation includes your core mission, political climate, and current financial situation. Future probabilities deal with things that can possibly happen or even things that are certain to happen in the future. In determining risk, answer these three questions:

1. Are you sufficiently equipped to respond safely to your risks?
2. Where and when are your responders and citizens vulnerable?
3. Would the operational condition of your equipment put your responders or citizens at risk?

From this information, you should be able to determine your risk and anticipate future needs. This assessment can assist in aligning priorities that match that of the AFG program.

Follow these six steps in planning your application submittal:

1. Know the purpose, rules and priorities of the program;
2. Align your departmental risks that need to be addressed with the AFG program priorities;
3. Apply for only those items that are top priorities that address your organization's highest risk or need;
4. Become familiar with the application and complete it well in advance of the closing date;
5. Use a team approach to develop your application and narrative; and
6. Enlist a third party who has not been involved with the process to review and evaluate the clarity and reasonableness of your application.

Applicants should refer to the AFG Web site for additional information at http://www.firegrantsupport.com/afg.

TENNESSEE'S SUCCESS HISTORY

Tennessee has an excellent track record of being awarded fire grants. A study conducted last year showed that, on average, one in three Tennessee applicants receive grants. Since 2001, Tennessee has been successful in the AFG program by receiving 3 percent of the overall grants awarded and 2.99 percent of the federal share of money awarded. In 2005, Tennessee was ranked 14th in the nation for the dollar amount of awards received and 16th in the number of awards received. This is a success story, but considering that Tennessee has one of the highest fire death rates in the nation, it is obvious that this funding is very much needed.

The Tennessee analysis can be further reviewed by looking at the success rate of Tennessee cities. As of the end of February 2007, all but 69 of the 347 cities across the state have received some amount of funding from one of the grant programs.

April 2, 2007

2007 FEDERAL GRANTS AVAILABLE TO FIRE DEPARTMENTS: SUCCESSFUL FUNDING FOR TENNESSEE FIRE DEPARTMENTS

Gary L. West, Fire Management Consultant

Most cities have received multiple grant awards and have applied multiple times. City size, resources, and the progressiveness of the fire department appear to be a factor in who applies for the grants. This is probably why 21 of the 347 Tennessee cities have never applied for this type of grant funding.

In comparing the award amounts, Tennessee cities have received 61 percent of the funding that has been awarded to the state as a whole. Tennessee cities have obtained approximately $40,709,000 in the past five years.

MTAS OFFICES

Knoxville (Headquarters) . . . (865) 974-0411
Johnson City . . . . . (423) 854-9882
(423) 282-0416
Jackson . . . . . (731) 423-3710
Nashville . . . . . (615) 532-6827
Martin. . . . . (731) 881-7057

The Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) is a statewide agency of The University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service. MTAS operates in cooperation with the Tennessee Municipal League to provide technical assistance services to officials of Tennessee's incorporated municipalities. Assistance is offered in areas such as accounting, administration, finance, public works, ordinance codification, and water and wastewater management.

MTAS Hot Topics are information briefs that provide a timely review of current issues of interest to Tennessee municipal officials. Hot Topics are free to Tennessee local, state, and federal government officials and are available to others for $2 each. Photocopying of this publication in small quantities for educational purposes is encouraged. For permission to copy and distribute large quantities, please contact the MTAS Knoxville office at (865) 974-0411.

www.mtas.tennessee.edu

The University of Tennessee is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution.

MTAS1085 • E14-1050-000-043-07