



**U.S. Congressman Brad Carson
Second District of Oklahoma**

**Guide to Federal Assistance Programs:
FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant 2004**



February 2004

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has announced a fourth round of funding through the Assistance to Firefighter Grant Program. This program has been extremely beneficial to fire departments across eastern Oklahoma, and I expect many departments in my Congressional District to receiving funding again this year. The Assistance to Firefighter Grant Program is highly competitive, however, by working together, I am confident my office will be able to secure funding for many departments as in the previous three rounds. In 2003, my Congressional District received more fire grants than almost any other Congressional District in the nation. Seventy-seven departments in my district received funding last year!

I have compiled this guide to assist your department in applying for this program, and to ensure applications from Oklahoma's Second Congressional District are among the most competitive in the nation. I want to work with your fire department as much as I can. In 2003, I wrote over 50 support letters for fire departments, and I am more than willing to do anything I can to assist fire departments again this year.

If you should have any questions, need any assistance, or wish to obtain a letter of support, please do not hesitate to contact Shane Jernigan in my Washington, D.C. office at (202) 225-2701.

I recognize the importance volunteer and rural fire departments have in eastern Oklahoma. I have been a strong advocate for increased funding for this program, and will continue to lend my support for programs designed to benefit fire departments.

Very truly yours,

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Brad Carson
Member of Congress

FEMA ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT PROGRAM 2004

ESSENTIAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

- **Program Objective**

To provide direct assistance, on a competitive basis, to fire departments of a State or tribal nation for the purpose of protecting the health and safety of the public and firefighting personnel against fire and fire-related hazards.

- **Deadline**

The deadline for submitting an application is April 1, 2004.

- **Grant Program Areas**

Each department may submit only one application in one of three grant programs areas. There are three program areas:

- Fire Operations and Firefighter Safety
- Fire Prevention
- Firefighting Vehicles

- **Eligibility**

Who May Apply:

- Local Fire Departments of a State, Tribal Community or Territory
- Fire Departments: All-career, all-volunteer, or a combination
- Previous Grant Awardees

Who is NOT eligible:

- Private, for-profit fire departments
- Federally funded departments
- State Agencies, Independent Training Academies
- Organizations not providing fire suppression
- Airport, Port Authorities

- **Matching Requirement**

Departments serving a community of 50,000 or less in population must contribute 10% of the total project cost. In-kind services are not counted toward the match requirement.

- **Application**

The application for this program is on-line at www.usfa.fema.gov

- **Funding Availability**

Congress has appropriated \$750,000,000 for the Assistance to Firefighter Grant Program.

- **Online Grant Tutorial**

www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp

FEMA ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT PROGRAM 2004 CONTACT INFORMATION

Congressman Brad Carson (www.carson.house.gov)

Requests for assistance, letters of support, or any additional information can be addressed to:

Shane Jernigan
Office of Congressman Brad Carson
301 West First Street
Claremore, Oklahoma 74017

Phone: 202-225-2701
Fax: 202-225-3038
E-mail: Shane.Jernigan@mail.house.gov

FEMA (www.usfa.fema.gov)
James Thomason, Fire Program Specialist
FEMA Region VI
800 North Loop 288
Denton, Texas 76209
940-898-5175

Carl McCoy, Fire Program Specialist
FEMA Region VI
800 North Loop 288
Denton, Texas 76209
940-898-5139

Letters of Support

Congressman Brad Carson is more than willing to write a letter of support for any fire department in his Congressional District applying for this grant. To request a letter of support, please fax your application to (202) 225-3038, e-mail you application to Shane.Jernigan@mail.house.gov, or mail a copy of your application to:

Congressman Brad Carson
Attention: Shane Jernigan
301 West First Street
Claremore, Oklahoma 74017

Please do not mail your application for a letter of support to the Washington, D.C. office. Due to precautions taken to prevent additional anthrax mailings, mail to Washington, D.C. can take over a month to arrive.

FEMA ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT PROGRAM 2004

PROGRAM AREAS

- **Program Options**

Departments can apply for only **ONE** program; however, a department may apply for more than one activity under each program.

Fire Operations and Firefighter Safety Program (Eligible Activities):

- Training
- Wellness and Fitness
- Firefighting Equipment
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Modifications of Fire Facilities

Fire Prevention Programs (Eligible Activities):

- Public Education
- Fire Prevention Literature
- Code Enforcement
- Arson Awareness and Abatement
- Public Weapons of Mass Destruction Awareness
- Smoke Alarm and/or Sprinkler Systems

Firefighting Vehicles

- **What is NOT eligible for funding**

- Operating Budgets: May not replace a part of annual operating budget. Departments must maintain expenditure level.
- Indirect Costs
- Construction

EVALUATION PROCESS

- **First Step**

Each application will be scored by computer based on answers to questions about project. Applications which best meet the priorities of the grant program will receive a higher score. All applications will be reviewed in step one.

- **Second Step**

Applications deemed competitive from step one, will move to step two. Firefighter peer reviewers will read the application's narrative description. Applications that best address the need for federal assistance through a cost/benefit analysis and demonstrate a financial need will be awarded.

FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

FEMA will distribute \$750,000,000.

45% of the funding will be provided to career departments

55% of the funding will be provided to volunteer and career/volunteer departments

FEMA must balance funding between rural, urban, and suburban departments.

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Fire Prevention Programs (Eligible Activities):

- Public Education
- Public Awareness
- Code Enforcement
- Arson Prevention

Vehicle Acquisition Program

2003 REQUESTS AND REWARDS

Fire Operations and Safety 49% Success rate	13,759 Applications 6,704 Awards
Prevention Program 68% Success rate	422 Applications 287 Awards
EMS Program 30% Success rate	213 Applications 64 Awards
Vehicle Program 24% Success rate	5,554 Applications 1,353 Awards

In Oklahoma, there were 416 applications, and 196 awards were given.

In Congressman Carson's district, there were 77 awards totaling over \$3,447,00.

In 2003, Congressman Carson wrote over 50 letters of support for departments in his district.

FIRE OPERATIONS AND FIREFIGHTER SAFETY PROGRAM

Training Activity (Examples of projects):

- Firefighting Training
- Wildland Fire Training
- Hazardous Material Response
- Supervision and Safety

Priorities Placed on:

- Tested Training leading to certification receives the highest priority
- Rural Departments should focus attention to basic training

Wellness and Fitness Activity

Priorities Placed on:

- The establishment of new programs
- Programs that are mandatory or offer participation incentives
- Fitness, injury prevention, and mental health programs
- Applications for this program must already offer or be requesting programs that provide entry physicals, immunizations, and periodic health screenings.
- FEMA looks very favorably upon departments incorporating a wellness and fitness activity with their application.

Firefighting Equipment Activity (Examples of Projects):

- Hoses
- Nozzles
- SCBAs refill systems
- Wildland equipment
- Radios
- pagers

Priorities placed on:

- Basic equipment to meet codes and standards
- First time purchase over replacing old or substandard equipment
- Replace old and obsolete equipment over newer and functional equipment

Personal Protective Equipment Activity (Examples of projects):

- Clothing for structural and wildland suppression
- haz mat equipment
- fire-shelters
- SCBAs
- spare cylinders
- personal alert safety systems

Priorities Placed on:

- Equip large percentage of active firefighters
- First time purchase over replacing old or substandard equipment
- Call volume and community size

Modifications to Fire Facilities Activity (Examples of projects):

- Installation of sprinkler systems
- vehicle exhaust extraction systems
- smoke detectors
- fire alarms

Priorities placed on:

- Promoting fire and life safety
- Fire stations over training facilities
- High occupancy and frequent usage

This activity DOES NOT provide funding for the construction of fire stations

FIRE PREVENTION PROGRAM

Examples of projects:

- Public Education
- public awareness
- enforcing fire codes
- wildland fire risk mitigation actions
- purchase and installation of smoke alarms and fire suppression systems
- arson prevention and detection

Priorities placed on:

- New Programs
- Long term, self-sustaining programs
- Targeting high-risk groups (firefighters, children under 14, seniors over 65)
- Community wide benefits over limited projects
- Projects over purchase of materials

VEHICLE ACQUISITION PROGRAM

Departments can request only one vehicle (new, used, or refurbished vehicle)

Priorities, in order, are placed on

- Departments with few or no firefighting vehicles
- Replacing old/high mileage vehicles
- Primary response vehicle

For rural fire departments, emphasis is placed on, in order:

- Pumper Trucks
- Tanker
- Brush/Attack
- Quint (Ariel <76')

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Pre-award expenditures usually not allowed

Grant writers fees are eligible, but can not be contingent on receiving an award

Grant Requirements:

- Departments must maintain spending levels
- Pay 10% match for departments serving 50,000 or less
- Report to NFIRS

Applicants must have a DUNS number. Your department may obtain one at 1-866-705-5711.

PREPARING A COMPETITIVE GRANT

Steps to Follow to Develop a Competitive Grant

- Conduct a community and fire department needs assessment
- Compare your weakness to the priorities of the grant program
- Decide what program to apply for
- Complete the application – Answer questions about your request, write the narrative

Needs Assessment

- Analyze the community your department serves:
- Residential, Industrial, Commercial
- Buildings of Importance: Schools, Industrial Parks, Large Wildland area
- Are their major highways in your service area?

Conduct a Risk assessment

Evaluate the capabilities of your fire department

Identify your departments most pressing needs

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Use relevant information gathered in the needs assessment

Be Concise

Include an itemized list, if necessary

- Components of a Competitive Narrative
 - Project Description
 - Compare weaknesses identified in needs assessment to funding
 - Have identifiable goals and objectives
 - Have a beginning, middle, and end
 - State purpose of the grant
 - How will your department support this program in the future?
- Financial Need
 - Why your department cannot fund this project without federal assistance?
 - Demonstrate attempts at other funding sources
 - Describe current and past financial situation
 - Make a strong case for financial need
 - Give a picture of your local economy
- Cost/Benefit Analysis
 - Demonstrate that your solution is provided at the lowest possible funding
 - Willingness to share with other communities; mutual aid agreements
 - Collaboration with other organizations

Focus on the Grant Program Priorities

Demonstrate Financial Need

Develop a Proposal that provides good Cost/Benefit

- Information your department will need for your application
 - Population size
 - Square mile of the department's response area
 - Number of active members
 - Call volume
 - Budget information
 - FDIN or FDID Number
 - DUNS Number

WHY GRANTS FAIL

- Requests are for low priority items
- Lack of partnerships with other departments
- Department didn't proofread the application
- Didn't make case for financial need
- Didn't shop around for lowest costs
- Didn't provide a problem statement
- Failed to make cost-benefit analysis
- Application didn't itemize equipment requests
- Requested too many items
- Didn't follow directions

FINAL THOUGHTS FROM BRAD CARSON

I hope this booklet has been helpful to you and your department. Eastern Oklahoma has been extremely successful in receiving funding through this program, and I am confident we will be again this year.

I want to help your department receive funding, as I did for the 77 departments in my Congressional district last year. If you have any questions, need any assistance, or wish to request a letter of support, please call me.

Good luck with your application!

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