

**The Maine Fire Protection Services Commission
&
Maine Fire Services Institute**



***Competitive Grant Program Outline
for Regional Live Burn Fire Training Facilities***

Revised Draft August 22, 2018

Introduction:

In July 2018 the State Legislature passed LD1845 creating a grant program for the construction, and repair or replacement of regional live fire service training facilities. The final bill was funded at \$500,000 annually with a sunset provision after three years ending in FY2020-21 unless the legislature approves additional funding.

In accordance with this law and in order to establish a fair, competitive, and effective process to distribute the funds, the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission (Fire Commission, MFPSC) submits the following outline of our proposed formal grant process. This program was developed based on the very effective national Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFG) developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), a previous grant program from the Maine Fire Service Institute (MFSI), and similar programs in other states that serve as best practices.

The intent of this grant program is to create an application and peer review process that maximizes resources by analyzing cost/benefit data and leveraging local resources while assuring resources are allocated across Maine to meet the training needs of our firefighters within the existing funding limitations.

Proposed Timeline:

- 8/6/18 – MFPSC meeting - Initial review of program summary to elicit feedback
- Ongoing - Work on a draft of the detailed grant guidance, application materials & forms
- 9/10/18 – MFPSC meeting - review final draft of program summary / authorization to release to fire service stakeholders for review and comment.
- 11/16/18 – Deadline for comments back to MFPSC
- 1/7/19 - Final edits, legal reviews, and draft of detailed guidance and application materials ready for Fire Commission review at their January meeting.
- 2/4/19 – Fire Commission approval of final documents
- 3/1/19 – Proposed application period begins (60 day application period)
- 5/1/19 – Deadline for applications / peer and technical review process begins
- 7/1/19 – Grant awards announced – performance periods staggered over 3 years

Logistics:

Due to the sunset provision and funding limitation included in the final bill, the Fire Commission proposes a single grant application process where all applications will be reviewed at one time, and awards made with periods of performance scheduled over the three-year life of the currently authorized funding. Utilizing this process, decisions can be made to assure the intent of the law is followed by providing funds for repairs as well as replacement and/or construction of new facilities. Once initial projects are completed the fire service will be in a better position to seek additional funding from a future legislature based on the initial success of the program. Our long-range goal is to seek extension this grant program in order to fully meet the live-fire training needs across the State as originally supported by the data collected.

Grant Program Summary:

1. Eligible Applicants
 - a. Municipalities as outlined in the law.
 - b. Fire Departments, Fire Chief & Firefighter Associations, Regional Fire Training Associations & Collaboratives may assist in applying for and managing a grant, but State law mandates the applicant with fiduciary control must be a municipality.
2. Eligibility Criteria
 - a. Repairing, replacing existing, or constructing new live burn firefighter training sites is the sole purpose of this grant program. It is primarily intended to fund fixed sites and infrastructure costs that aren't authorized under the AFG program.
 - b. Applicant's department, and all other departments that benefit from the facilities created or maintained with these funds, must be reporting incident data to the Maine Fire Incident Reporting System (MFIRS) at the time of application and throughout the useful life of the improvements funded through the grant.
 - c. Facilities funded through this grant process must certify that their facility has sufficient and suitable space to accommodate set up and operation of MFSI's portable training props and that they will cooperate with MFSI to use the grant funded facilities to deliver training and certification testing in that geographical area.
3. Cost Share
 - a. Although no specific hard (cash) or soft (in-kind) local match is required, all cost sharing matches will be seriously considered in the scoring criteria in order to leverage local investments and maximize cost/benefit analysis.
 - b. Funding may be requested in progress payments as materials are ordered and work is being completed. Applicants will not be required to fully fund a project to completion prior to requesting progress payments towards an approved grant award.
4. Application & Submission Information
 - a. Dates, times, and schedules of performance to be determined in the final guidance document (see initial proposed timeline above).
 - b. Due to the limited funding and sunset clause, a single application process will be used to determine which projects will be funded over the 3 years of available funding.
 - c. In order to reduce costs and promote standardization for the replacement or construction of new facilities, the MFPSI will conduct a formal bid process, in advance of the grant application period, to identify the approved cost for some standard, pre-engineered, facilities that applicants can choose from. Applicants will not be restricted to those choices, but any deviation must be justified in the application and include the required engineering and NFPA compliance.
 - d. Approved grant projects will be staggered and have an 18 month schedule of performance.

5. Award Limits
 - a. The total available funding over three years is \$1,500,000.00 less a 4.5% administrative fee to the Maine Community College System leaving a net of \$1,432,500.00.
 - b. The MFPSA will allocate a suitable portion of the total funding for repairs to existing facilities based on the need as identified in the applications received.
 - c. Direct costs for construction are the only eligible costs. Land acquisition costs are ineligible. Grant preparation and management costs will not be reimbursed.
 - d. Current MFSI approved facilities may apply for both repairs and replacement projects in separate applications.
6. Compliance with laws, codes & ordinances
 - a. Applicants must have and follow approved procurement procedures that meet Maine Community College, State, and Federal generally accepted accounting practices.
 - b. Facilities must be designed and approved by a licensed professional engineer as defined in Title 32, section 1251, subsection 4.
 - c. Applicants are responsible for and must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local policies, ordinances, regulations, laws, and codes including *NFPA 1402 Guide to Building Fire Service Training Centers* 2012 Edition, and *NFPA 1403 Standard for Live Fire Training Evolutions* 2012 Edition.
7. Application Review Process
 - a. The Fire Commission is responsible for establishing a panel to review and score applications based on the priorities as published in the grant guidance. That panel will be appointed by the Chair of the Fire Commission and shall consist of one member of the Fire Commission representing each of the following stakeholder organizations:
 - i. Chair of the Fire Commission
 - ii. Director of the Maine Fire Service Institute
 - iii. Maine Fire Chiefs' Association
 - iv. Maine State Federation of Firefighters
 - v. Professional Firefighters of Maine
 - b. Application evaluation criteria will include equal weighted scoring (25% to each):
 - i. Financial need
 - ii. Project description and budget
 - iii. Cost/benefit analysis
 - iv. Statement of effect/impact on firefighter training within the region
 - c. Grant Priorities will be established in order to:
 - i. Maximize local/regional investment through hard or soft matches
 - ii. Assure financial plan & resources for ongoing maintenance and sustainability.
 - iii. Serve the greatest number of firefighters possible through regional collaborations
 - d. The review panel may seek technical review and support as necessary during the review process, and may also enter into discussions with applicants as necessary to clearly understand their proposal and to negotiate award details.
 - e. To avoid any real or perceived conflicts of interest, members of the review panel must disclose any potential conflict or personal benefit with or from any proposed grant

application. The review committee member may abstain from voting on that application, or may ask the remaining members of the review committee to rule on the need for recusing that member from voting based on the circumstances of the potential conflict. Should there be a tie in that vote, the matter will be forwarded to the full Fire Commission for resolution.

f. Final approval of all grant awards will be made by majority vote of the MFSPC.

8. Reporting requirements

- a. Successful applicants are required to file financial and programmatic reports to the Fire Commission every six months and maintain financial records for audit purposes in accordance with GAO's Government Auditing Standards and OMB Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local governments, and Non-Profit Organizations.
- b. The applicant is responsible for providing the MFSPC the required annual documentation of inspection of all facilities funded by the grant as per NFPA 1403.
- c. Applicant must provide the MFSPC with a copy of their required engineering study as required in NFPA 1403.
- d. Failure to comply with any of the terms of the grant agreement will result in revocation of the grant award and repayment of any sums already dispersed to the grantee.

9. Monitoring & Grant Management

- a. The MFSPC has oversight responsibility for this grant program
- b. The MFSPC is responsible for management of the grant program and distribution of funds through the Maine Community College System.