



MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION

LIVE FIRE TRAINING FACILITIES GRANT

2025 GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

In July 2018, the 128th State Legislature passed LD1845 creating Public Law, Chapter 444, Section 3, 20-A MRSA §9004. This law established a fund to support the construction, repair or replacement of regional live fire training facilities (LFTF) in the State of Maine. 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) hereby issues the following guidelines to establish the criteria for the Regional Live Fire Service Training Facility Grant Program.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Lead Municipality - Awards made to Regional LFTFs serving multiple jurisdictions or departments must identify one municipality to serve as the Lead Municipality. The Lead Municipality shall be the grant applicant on behalf of all served and shall undertake all administrative and reporting requirements related to the grant, including but not limited to: the receipt, management, and control of grant funds, the filing of reports, and all administrative interface with SMCC/MFSI and the Fire Commission.

Maine Fire Protection Services Commission (MFPSC) – A 23-member commission established in 1999 to monitor and evaluate the State's fire protection services system on a continuing basis and to provide recommendations to the appropriate state agencies and to the Legislature regarding necessary changes in the fire protection services system. Herein referred to simply as the Fire Commission or MFPSC.

Maine Fire Services Institute (MFSI) – A division within the Southern Maine Community College (SMCC) system that serves as the State of Maine's fire service training and certification entity. Hereby referred to as MFSI.

Municipality – A city, town, borough, or incorporated village within the State of Maine eligible to apply for and receive funds from the grant program.

Prototype Specifications – As part of this grant process, in order to promote standardization across the State, and cost efficiencies, the MFSI will conduct a Request for Proposals (RFPs) for a variety of code compliant, pre-engineered LFTFs. Applicants must choose to use one of these prototypes in their proposals based on the unmet needs in their particular region. Use of the prototypes is required. The prototypes can be expanded upon with any additional costs as the sole responsibility of the applicant.

Regional Live Fire Service Training Facility (LFTF) - A training facility owned by a municipality with the exclusive or primary purpose of being used for fire service training delivery, including live fire evolutions, to two or more jurisdictions or fire departments.

Training Facilities Review Committee – A subcommittee representing the key stakeholder groups from the Fire Commission who are charged with reviewing LFTF grant applications in accordance with these guidelines and making recommendations for award to the full Fire Commission. Herein referred to simply as the Review Committee.

AVAILABLE FUNDING

When funding is provided by our State's Legislature a predetermined amount will be set aside to be awarded to grant winning municipalities. The law further established the non-lapsing fund under MFSI within the Maine Community College System. For their fiduciary costs and responsibilities, the Maine Community College System is entitled to a 4.5% administrative fee.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Municipalities are the only eligible applicants as outlined in the public law. Fire Departments, Fire Chief & Firefighter Associations, Regional Fire Training Associations & Collaborative may assist in applying for and managing a grant, but State law mandates the applicant with fiduciary control must be a municipality. Funding from this grant program is open to all jurisdictions and is not restricted to those jurisdictions that currently have existing live fire training facilities. Applications must be executed by the Chief Executive Officer of the municipality such as the Town or City Manager, Administrator, or Chief Elected Official with the legal authority to do so.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Repairing, replacing existing or constructing new live burn firefighter training sites is the sole purpose of this grant program. 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.

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 of the State. Grant recipients must further agree to allow MFSI to conduct skill end tests for certification at their facility twice annually at no cost beyond consumable supplies.

COST SHARE

No specific hard (cash) or soft (in-kind) local match is required, though all cost sharing matches will be seriously considered in the scoring criteria in order to leverage local investments and maximize the cost/benefit analysis of the proposal. Funding may be requested in progress payments as materials are ordered and work is being completed (see Appendix B - Request for Advancement of Grant Funds). Applicants will not be required to fully fund a project to completion prior to requesting progress payments towards an approved grant award.

APPLICATION & SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A single application process will be implemented to determine which projects will be funded with the currently available funding. In order to reduce costs and promote standardization for the replacement or construction of new facilities, MFSI will conduct a formal bid process to identify approved cost for some two standard prototype, pre-engineered, code compliant, facilities that applicants can choose from. Applicants will be restricted to those choices. Any improving deviation must be justified in the application and include the required engineering and NFPA compliance documents. Applicants must accept that any deviations are the full financial responsibility of the applicant and no grant monies may be used for deviations that are not part of the approved prototypes.

Grant project awards will be staggered as funding becomes available and will have an 18 month schedule of performance.

The application period opens on **January 21, 2025**.
The deadline for applications to be received is 4:00 PM on **March 14, 2025**.

One (1) hard copy and one (1) electronic copy (in pdf format) of the application and all support documents must be received, prior to the deadline noted above, at the following address:

Maine Fire Service Institute
ATTN: MFPSC LFTF Grant
19 Sewall Street, Brunswick, ME 04011

Grant awards will be announced in **April 2025** with varying periods of performance based on the timing of available funding.

AWARD LIMITS AND ALLOCATION

Maximum amounts of grant awards are set for this grant process. Grants that show substantial cost benefit with matching or in-kind funds are highly encouraged. Upon review of the applications submitted, the Fire Commission will allocate a suitable portion of the total available funding for repairs

to existing facilities based on the needs identified in the applications received. The majority of the funding allocation will be used to replace or construct new facilities.

Direct costs for material, labor, and, construction, and permitting are the only eligible costs. Land acquisition costs are ineligible. Facility design, grant preparation and management costs will not be reimbursed. Current MFSI approved training facilities may apply for both repairs and replacement projects in separate applications.

COMPETITIVE PROCUREMENT

Applicants agree to abide by their municipality's competitive procurement process. A copy of which must be attached in the application packet provided to MFPSC and MFSI/SMCC. Should the provided procurement process not meet the necessary requirements of SMCC, the applicant will be provided with the Maine Community College System's competitive procurement process to follow.

COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS, CODES & ORDINANCES

Facilities must be designed and approved by a licensed professional engineer as defined in Title 32, section 1251, subsection 4.

Applicants and those Departments identified as regionally sharing the facility shall be in compliance of *Maine statute Title 25 M.R.S. §2395* which requires that Fire Chiefs submit to the State Fire Marshal an incident report for each response made, regardless of whether an actual fire occurred. All departments listed on the application shall comply.

Applicants are responsible for, and must comply with, all applicable federal, state, and local policies, ordinances, regulations, laws, codes, and standards, including:

- NFPA 1402 Guide to Building Fire Service Training Centers 2019 Edition
- NFPA 1403 Standard for Live Fire Training Evolutions 2019 Edition

GRANT GOALS & PRIORITIES

In order to maximize the impact of this grant program, the Fire Commission has established the following grant goals and priorities:

- Maximize local/regional investment through hard or soft matches
- Assure financial plan & resources for ongoing maintenance and sustainability
- Serve the greatest number of firefighters possible through established regional collaborations

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

The Fire Commission is responsible for establishing a Training Facilities Review Committee to review and score applications based on the stated goals and priorities. That review 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:

1. Chair of the Fire Commission
2. Director of the Maine Fire Service Institute
3. Maine Fire Chiefs' Association
4. Maine State Federation of Firefighters
5. Professional Firefighters of Maine

The review committee may seek technical review and support as necessary during the review process and may enter into discussions with applicants as necessary to clearly understand their proposal and to negotiate award details. To avoid any real or perceived conflicts of interest, members of the review committee 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.

The review committee shall submit their recommendations to the full Fire Commission and final approval of all grant awards will be made by majority vote of the Fire Commission based on the needs of Maine's fire service and the availability of funding.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Review Committee will evaluate applications based upon the following quantitative scoring criteria that measures the substance of the application and supporting documentation relative to the goals and priorities of the grant program. Applications will be scored in four main areas as noted below. Each area is equally weighted with up to 25 potential points awarded in each category with a maximum possible score of 100. Proposals should include sufficient information and details to explain each of the items clearly.

1. Project description and budget
 - a. Quality and completeness of the application and supporting documents.
 - b. Budget includes detailed plans, including a site plan, and formal quotes that meet the grant guidance and formal bidding requirements.
 - c. Fully explains how the project will meet regional needs for basic training standards including the elements of Firefighter I & II as prescribed in NFPA 1001 and 1403.
 - d. Determines scope of the project, fit and matches the fire training needs of the region.
2. Statement of effect/impact on firefighter training within the region
 - a. Provided well-documented data on firefighters trained and hours the facility has been or will be used.
 - b. Defined what geographical area of the State and how many departments and firefighters the proposal potentially serves.
 - c. Applicant included Memorandum of Understanding of Agreement supporting multi-jurisdictional regional training partnerships and support for the grant.
 - d. The proposed LFTF is located in an area where MFSI can conduct training and certification training. Does it contain the resources necessary to do so?
3. Financial need
 - a. What resources are requested?
 - b. Did the applicant adequately documented their identified need?
 - c. Does the applicant own or have a long-term lease on the site where the improvements are being made?
 - d. Has the applicant provided a financial plan that demonstrates the ability to sustain and maintain the LFTF going forward beyond the grant award to possibly include and not limited to annual costs, engineering studies, and repairs?
4. Cost/Benefit Analysis
 - a. What hard (cash) or soft (in-kind) match has been provided by the municipality and others to maximize the investment requested?
 - b. What is the benefit per firefighter or training hour for the cost requested?
 - c. How does this proposal rank with others in terms of return on the State's investment?

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Successful applicants are required to file programmatic reports (see Appendix C) to the Fire Commission quarterly during the period of performance and maintain financial records for audit purposes in accordance with Title 2 U.S. Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance).

- The applicant is responsible for providing the Fire Commission with the required annual documentation of inspection of all facilities funded by the grant as outlined in NFPA 1403.
- Applicant must provide the Fire Commission with a copy of their required engineering study as required in NFPA 1403.

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.

DISBURSEMENT OF GRANT FUNDS

Disbursements from the LFTF Grant Program Fund are made as a grant to a Lead Municipality. Payments are not made until the Lead Municipality has entered into a Grant Agreement (see Appendix E) binding the municipality to the terms and conditions of the grant. The municipality's Chief Executive Officer, Town or City Manager, Administrator, Chief Elected Official or other duly authorized designee – shall execute such an agreement/contract. Disbursements will not be made to individual fire departments.

Disbursements of grant funding will be provided solely through an electronic transfer of funds to a banking institution. Payments will only be made for projects completed, or due to be completed within 60 days, in accordance with the approved grant award upon submission of supporting documentation of eligible costs. Supporting documentation of eligible costs includes vendor invoices, receipts, and approval/certification of completion by the designated Project Manager and engineer. Requests for the advancement of funds for approved grant projects must be made using the Request for Advancement of Funds form found in Appendix B.

Grant funds can only be used for the specific scope of work authorized in the grant award. If actual costs are less than the budgeted amount, or an applicant defaults on the performance of their grant award, any excess grant funds not expended to accomplish that scope of work will not be distributed and will remain in the fund.

The Fire Commission may initiate additional grant application processes to award any remaining funds.

INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

No person or entity shall commence construction or repair work, unless and until such person or entity has provided proof of general liability insurance and automobile liability insurance with minimum \$1,000,000 single occurrence and \$1,000,000 aggregate coverage, and Worker's Compensation insurance from insurers licensed to provide such insurance in the State of Maine.

Insurance must be maintained at all times when any construction or repair work is being performed. Grantee shall submit a Certificate of Coverage or Certificate of Insurance evidencing that the required insurance coverage is in effect for the appropriate entities, including coverage for sub-contractors. The Lead Municipality must be named as an additional insured party for certain types of insurance as specified in the Grant Agreement.

BONDING REQUIREMENTS

The contractor shall provide 100% performance and payment bonds for all large projects (over \$125,000.00). Combining bonds of subcontractors is not acceptable. Large projects also require a bid bond or letter of credit acceptable to the Community College Financial office to assure bidder has the financial means to undertake the project under the terms they bid.

OWNERSHIP OF SITE

The Lead Municipality, or other governmental entity, must own or hold a long-term lease* for the site (land) where any permanent installation of a training facility is proposed. That site must not be subject to any restriction or limitation that would prohibit or impair the use of the property as a Regional LFTF. *The Review Committee may consider long-term lease agreements. The length of any lease agreement shall be consistent with the expected life of the Regional LFTF.

MONITORING & GRANT MANAGEMENT

The Fire Commission has oversight responsibility for this grant program as outlined in public law. The Fire Commission is responsible for management and monitoring of the grant program and distribution of funds through the Maine Community College System's Finance Office. MFSI will assist the Fire Commission with periodic monitoring, site visits, and inspections of the LFTFs to assure compliance with this grant program and completion of project benchmarks.

PRECEDENTS OF LAW & DISCLAIMER

Nothing contained within this document shall be construed to supersede the applicable laws and regulations of the State of Maine. In the event of a conflict, the applicable law shall supersede the conflicting provision of this guidance document.