

Press Release

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Fire and EMS Departments Preparing Applications for 2010 Assistance to Firefighters Grants

PITTSBURGH, PA – Eligible fire departments and non-affiliated emergency medical service organizations are starting to prepare applications for the 2010 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program. Launched in 2001 by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the program helps first responders obtain critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training and other resources.

“With many municipal and regional departments facing budget cuts and deficits, these grants are an important source of funds to help upgrade fire safety operations and to meet training certification requirements,” said Greg Sesny, product management protection, Draeger Safety, Inc. The company manufactures the Swede Survival system for live fire training. Only mobile units are eligible for AFG grants. These include Swede Phase I, II and III systems. All three meet relevant National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards for firefighter training.

Congress has appropriated \$390 million for Assistance to Firefighters Grants for fiscal year 2010. The application period is now open and application guidelines are posted on the AFG website at www.firegrantsupport.com. Grant requirements and procedures are detailed in the Program Guidance Document on the website. Information is also available in the Federal Register Notice or from FEMA.

Firefighter training and certification courses are considered a high priority by the Department of Homeland Security. According to the Federal Register (Vol. 74, FR 17979 - April 20, 2009), “applications focused on national or State certification training, including train-the-trainer initiatives, will receive a higher competitive rating.”

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Sesny points out that grant proposals should not include a specific brand name or company. Products should be identified by type or category only. “Draeger Safety, Inc. will assist applicants by providing relevant information on its products, services and costs,” he said. “However, applicants must adhere to procurement policies and maintain competitive bid processes.”

AFG’s cash matching program requires the department to match a percentage of the award based on the size of the population served. The required matching criteria are five percent for populations under 20,000; 10 percent for populations of 20,000 to 50,000; and 20 percent for populations of 50,000 or more.

Applicants are encouraged to get started with the Grants Management Tutorial on the AFG website. FEMA also runs AFG workshops to assist them in preparing relevant and timely proposals.

“Proposals should make a compelling case for the project, identifying the risk or problem and the proposed solution, along with itemized cost details and financial needs,” Sesny advises.

Fire departments and emergency services are advised to research additional sources of funding, such as state and regional grants. FEMA also offers the Urban Areas Security Initiative Grant Program for nonprofit organizations identified at high risk for terrorist attack and located within specific eligible urban areas.

(3,209 characters with spaces)

Dräger Safety AG & Co. KGaA is the manufacturer of the Dräger Swede Survival training systems.

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