



# Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFG)

2026 edition

Preserve funding for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program  
AFG is key to equipping adequately the nation's first responders and ensuring a high level of protection against fires, natural disasters, terrorism, and other emergencies across the United States.

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program was established by Congress in 2001 to assist communities in equipping our nation's first responders, including firefighters and EMS personnel.

Through AFG, local fire departments may apply for grants to purchase new and needed equipment, much of which replaces older, outdated equipment that no longer meets standards established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

AFG provides funding to equip firefighters and other first responders, helping to provide a universal level of protection across the United States, and ensuring public safety. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administers the grants in cooperation with the United States Fire Administration (USFA).

Through the FEMA program, fire departments of all sizes purchase personal protective equipment clothing (PPE), self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), personal alert safety system (PASS) devices, fire apparatus, and other essential safety and response equipment. AFG is extremely important to every state's first responders.

FAMA and FEMSA: Fire Apparatus Manufacturers' Association (FAMA) and Fire and Emergency Manufacturers and Services Association (FEMSA) represent "the industry that helps

first responders save lives" by manufacturing and supporting lifesaving equipment utilized by first responders. Member companies are predominately U.S.-based, employ 115,030 U.S. workers, and tend to be small and medium-sized businesses.

Efficient and effective: AFG is one of the most efficiently-run and effective programs in the federal government. Funds are distributed directly to local fire departments. Bureaucracy is minimal and local community benefit is paramount.

America's fire service: In 2023, the nation's fire and rescue services responded to more than 42.4 million calls to protect the public. These firefighters and EMS personnel serve as the backbone of the nation's first response capabilities for both natural disasters and potential terrorist attacks. As the population ages and expands, this number is expected to increase significantly.

In 2023, the nation had approximately 1 million fire and rescue personnel, with 635,100 (62%) of these serving as volunteers. Without such service, the nation's response capability would be seriously compromised and no longer universal, serving all communities.

## AFG at a Glance

**Established:**  
2001

**Reauthorized in 2024: \$750 million per year through FY 2028, sunset extended through 2030.**

**FY2027 FAMA/FEMSA appropriations ASK:**  
\$405 million

**FY2025 appropriation:**  
\$324 million

**Administered by:**  
FEMA

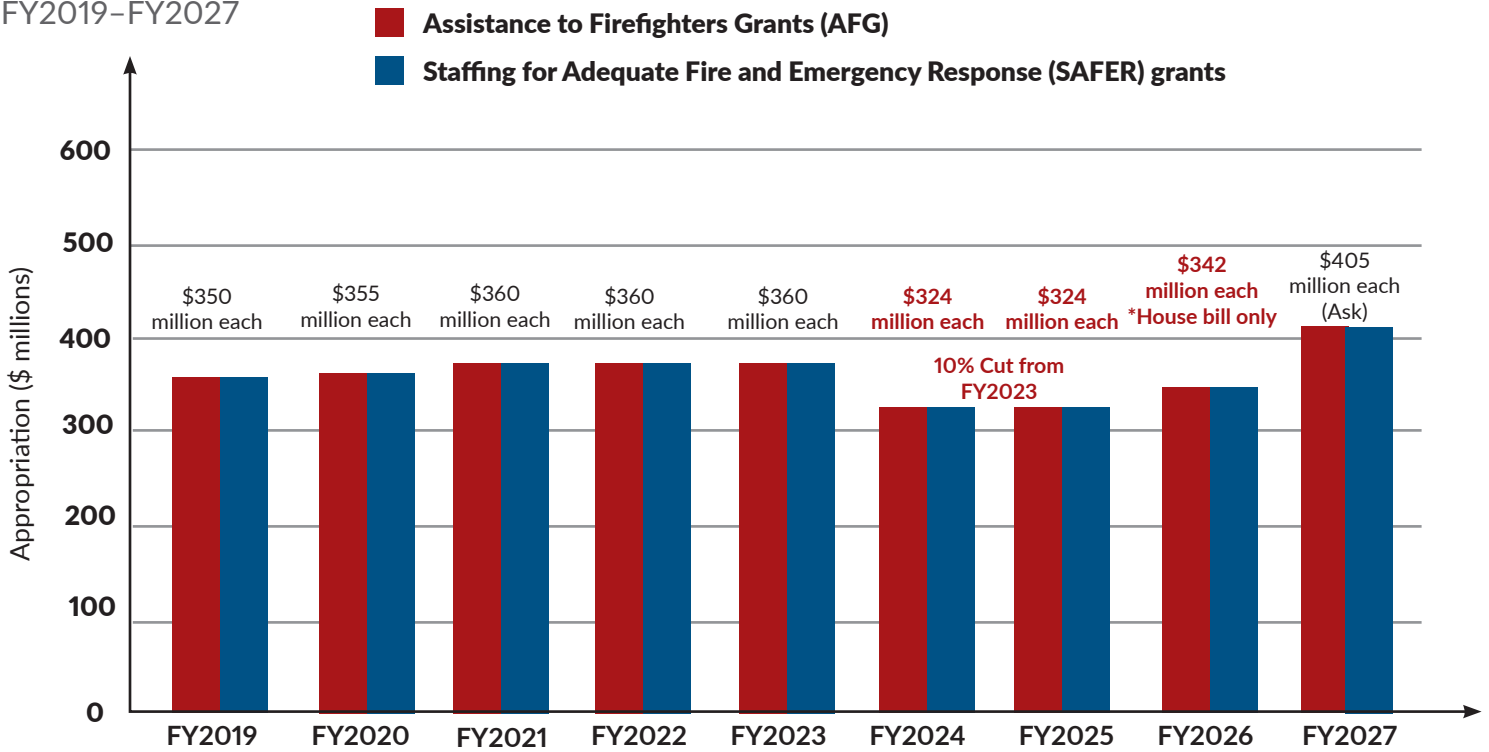
**Supports:**  
Purchase of personal protective equipment, self-contained breathing apparatus, personal alert safety system, fire apparatus and other vehicles, and more.

1 million first responders

# AFG & SAFER Appropriations Funding

\*Note: FY2026 figures reflect the funding levels for AFG & SAFER passed in the House. As of March 2026, FY26 appropriations for Homeland Security have yet to pass in the Senate.

FY2019–FY2027



FAMA & FEMSA Support FY2027 Funding at \$405 Million Each for AFG & SAFER

## Increase Funding for AFG & SAFER

Over the last decade, AFG funding has remained largely flat. **In FY2024, Congress cut AFG and SAFER funding by 10% each, where funding levels remained through FY2025.** The fire service supports \$405 million for each program in FY2027 to meet the growing demands of firefighters and first responders.

## Responding to New and More Severe Disasters

America's first responders are on the front lines when a disaster occurs. As the number and intensity of storms and natural disasters continue to intensify, first responders are being put at even greater risk, and are in even greater need of support.

In 2024 alone, there were 27 disasters in the U.S. that caused over \$1 billion in damage. Together, these disasters cost our country \$182.7 billion. To put this in perspective, from 1980-1989, disasters of this magnitude cost the U.S. \$22 billion per year on average. The frequency and cost of large-scale disasters is expected to rise dramatically in the coming years, and it will be the responsibility of our nation's fire service to help respond to them.

As our first responders continue to fulfill their role to locally execute the nation's response to fires, storms, public health emergencies, and other disasters, it is critical that AFG funding is increased to support them in keeping our communities safe.

# Meeting the Needs of First Responders

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFG) helps roughly 1 million firefighters throughout the United States meet their baseline equipment needs and plays a critical role in the nation's emergency response capabilities.

Since the program's inception in 2001, AFG has remained critical in supporting our nation's fire service. However, as first responder responsibilities increase, more work must be done to expand the AFG program to meet their needs.

**53%** of all fire departments cannot equip all firefighters on a shift with self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA).

**55%** of departments have personnel that engage in structural firefighting, but have not been formally trained.

**21%** of department personnel who perform EMS lack certification.

**64%** of all departments have at least one piece of personal protective clothing that is 10 years old.

**49%** of all fire department engines and pumpers are at least 15 years old.

[Source: National Fire Protection Association \(NFPA\)](#)

## The Cost and Frequency of Natural Disasters Continue to Rise

Time Period	Billion-Dollar Disasters	Events/Year	Cost	Percent of Total Cost	Cost/Year	Deaths	Deaths/Year
1980s (1980-1989)	33	3.3	\$219.6B	7.5%	\$22.0B	2,994	299
1990s (1990-1999)	57	5.7	\$335.3B	11.5%	\$33.5B	3,075	308
2000s (2000-2009)	67	6.7	\$621.3B	21.3%	\$62.1B	3,102	310
2010s (2010-2019)	131	13.1	\$994.6B	34.1%	\$99.5B	5,227	523
Last 5 Years (2020-2024)	115	23.0	\$746.7B	25.6%	\$149.3B	2,520	504
Last 3 Years (2022-2024)	73	24.3	\$461.6B	15.8%	\$153.9B	1,534	511
Last Year (2024)	27	27.0	\$182.7B	6.3%	\$182.7B	568	568
<b>All Years (1980-2024)</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>\$2,917.5B</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$64.8B</b>	<b>16,918</b>	<b>376</b>

\*Cost statistics not included for Hurricane Milton (August 2024), Hurricane Helene (September 2024)

The chart above shows the number of disasters in the U.S. that have exceeded \$1 billion in the last four decades, last year, last three years, and last five years. It also reflects the total monetary and human cost of these disasters during these time periods, with cost per-year averages. During the 1980s, the total cost of these disasters was \$219.6 billion. During the 2010s, this number rose to \$994.6 billion. This represents an increase of 353%.

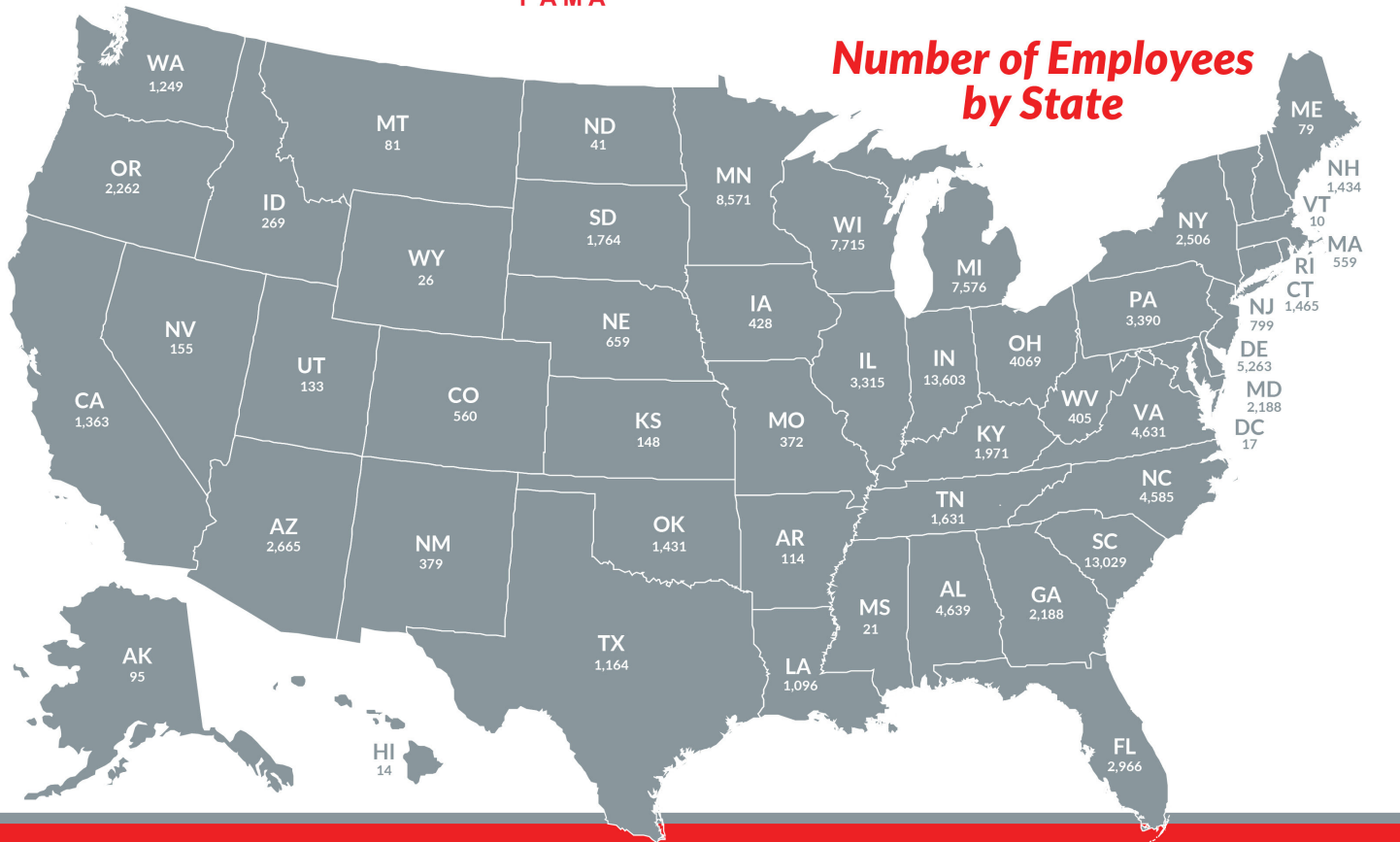
[Source: NOAA](#)

# FAMA and FEMSA Member Employees

Fire Apparatus  
Manufacturers' Association  
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115,030 FAMA and FEMSA Employees Nationwide

2026 Data based on survey of FAMA & FEMSA member companies



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