

SFFMA SAFER #3

**Training, Physicals, PPE, and
SFFMA Membership Dues Reimbursement
for Volunteer Emergency Responders**

Administrative Guide



State Firefighters' & Fire Marshals'
Association of Texas

SAFER Grant for Recruiting
New Volunteer Emergency Responders

December 14, 2022

The State Firefighters' & Fire Marshals' Association of Texas Grant program was developed to Recruit and Retain Volunteers in response to a critical need identified by our association's Volunteer Fire Departments and Emergency Medical Services providers. The SFFMA Grant program is funded by a 2021 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant through the Department of Homeland Security.

All funds earmarked for this program shall be maintained to ensure available funding for department participants through the conclusion of this program.

Program Description

Recruitment: Physicals/PPE

An objective of this program is to recruit new Volunteer emergency responders to the Texas Fire Service. SFFMA will offer grant awards for approximately 50 newly recruited Volunteer Emergency Responders each year throughout the 4-year Grant program to field the costs of Physicals and PPE.

Program Reimbursement Options:

Each eligible Volunteer emergency responder recruited after December 14, 2022 may receive reimbursement for an NFPA 1582 compliant physical (up to \$700) and a PPE reimbursement up to \$3,725. The Volunteer must commit to membership at a Texas Volunteer or Combination fire department for at least 24 months. Within the first year of appointment to the department, newly recruited volunteers must be enrolled in or have completed Firefighter I training or the department equivalent.

For Volunteers accepted under this program, the sponsoring Department/Agency will be reimbursed for each newly recruited Volunteer's NFPA 1582 compliant physical upon receipt of a NFPA 1582 Sign-Off Form. Once the Volunteer in this program passes their physical and are enrolled in or have passed their Firefighter 1 training, the department is then eligible for the reimbursement of up to \$3,725 towards the cost to purchase SAFER eligible NFPA compliant turnouts (PPE). When the annual funding limit has been reached, a waiting list will be created. Any remaining funds in the final year of the grant will be used to reimburse those on the waiting list.

Required documents and reporting in order of submission for Physicals & PPE:

1. SFFMA Reimbursement Request Form
2. 1582 Physical Sign Off and invoice (up to \$700) for the physical referencing the Volunteer.
3. Invoices/receipts for PPE up to \$3,725 referencing the Volunteer.

Program Eligibility

The following is a list of program guidelines set forth in the SAFER Grant narrative and must be adhered to by SFFMA and all participants:

1. Provide proof of membership to a Texas Volunteer or combination fire department or emergency services agency.
2. Newly recruited Volunteers must be at least 18 years old and have a valid Driver's License.
3. Volunteers must remain active and in good standing with the Sponsoring Department/Agency.
4. Volunteers must be enrolled in or have completed their firefighter training within 12 months of becoming a volunteer.
5. The applicant's Chief or governing body must sign the Reimbursement Form to collect reimbursement for physical/training/PPE expenses.
6. Applications must meet the criteria guidelines to be considered for an award.
7. SFFMA reserves the right to audit for compliance. Failure to comply may result in ineligibility for future benefits under the grant.

Service and Education Commitment

The SFFMA SAFER grant program is a federally funded FEMA grant. This fact means that the accepted applicant and SFFMA MUST follow and adhere to requirements set forth in the grant award package. The grant was awarded to recruit and retain Volunteer firefighters in Texas.

For an accepted applicant to receive any reimbursement from this SAFER grant DHS has required the following stipulations:

As a special condition to the award, the awardee must agree to and understand the following stipulations with regards to purchasing PPE/Turnout gear with grant funds:

- *Turnout gear is only for newly recruited Volunteer members; joined department after December 14, 2022.*
- *Newly recruited members must obtain and pass the physical prior to requesting grant funds for the gear. Documentation of completed physicals will be required prior to funds being disbursed; an NFPA 1582 compliant physical sign off and an invoice for the physical with the Volunteer's name on it will be required.*
- *The newly recruited member(s) must be enrolled in or have completed firefighter training within 12 months or by the end of the Period of Performance 12/13/2026– whichever comes first. Documentation of the enrollment or completed training will be required at time of closeout.*
- *All PPE must be delivered to the department by 12/13/2026*

Volunteer Emergency Responders Training

The SFFMA has \$60,000 per year to reimburse fire departments for First Responder, EMT, FF1, and FF2 training expenses including travel to attend training and meals in exchange for a 2-year commitment to a recognized volunteer or combination fire department in Texas.

We will reimburse Volunteer Firefighters who successfully complete an approved SFFMA or TCFP Fire Academy up to \$2,500 each. We will reimburse either the individual or the department for these expenses after certification proof is submitted with the SFFMA request form.

IMPORTANT: This is a reimbursement program.

All major requirements must be met before reimbursement can be made.

The grant performance period ends 12/13/2026. We must disburse all reimbursement funds by this date.

State Firefighters' and Fire Marshals' Association Membership Dues Assistance:

The goal of the program is to provide fire departments with assistance paying their SFFMA membership dues. The assistance can help cover the cost of department membership, and the membership of individuals on the department's roster up to the maximum stipulated below. Although any department can request dues assistance, the most important goal of the program is to help departments that:

- Had active association membership but have been unable to pay membership dues since 2020 (2019 being the last year of active membership).
- Have never enjoyed SFFMA membership or have not been a SFFMA member in many years.

To request membership dues assistance, the Fire Chief of the department must submit a signed/dated letter requesting assistance. Your department does not need to send a check to SFFMA. You just need to send your request form and roster. The letter should be emailed to membership@sffma.org or mailed to:

SFFMA
PO Box 1709
Manchaca, TX 78652

Qualifying fire departments:

- Will be limited to a maximum of \$2,000.00 in assistance from the SFFMA SAFER grant program in any year.
- May receive assistance with basic SFFMA membership dues. Any additional costs incurred such as optional insurance, etc., must be paid by the department.

IMPORTANT – All requests must be submitted no later than August 14, 2026.

SFFMA SAFER Committee Members

Cherry Abel, SFFMA Executive Director	cabel@sffma.org
Greg Redden	greg@volunteerfirefighter.org
Chief Billy Tidwell	rallsfiretidwell@hotmail.com
Rick Isaacks	rick.isaacks@nationalfoam.com
Joe Koch	joe.m.koch@gmail.com
Kim Hilsenbeck	khilsenbeck@ssfma.org
Vicki Wright	vicki@volunteerfirefighter.org

For questions regarding reimbursement benefits and reimbursement request forms contact:

Vicki Wright	Benefits Processor	vicki@volunteerfirefighter.org	855-VOL- FIRE
Jessica Acfalle	Benefits Processor	jessica@volunteerfirefighter.org	855-VOL- FIRE

**Receipt of grant monies in either capacity may have tax consequences. Please consult your tax advisor PRIOR to participation in this program.*

**All applicable local, state, or federal laws and regulations shall supersede the procedures and conditions outlined in this administrative guide. These guidelines are subject to change without notice.*