

CSFA

Training, Physicals, and PPE Reimbursement
for Volunteer Emergency Responders

Administrative Guide



California State Firefighters' Association

2020 SAFER Grant for Recruiting
New Volunteer Emergency Responders

March 7, 2024

Introduction

The California State Firefighters' Association scholarship 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 CSFA scholarship program is funded by a 2020 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

Part 1 - Recruitment: Physicals/PPE

One of the objectives of this program is to attract and recruit new volunteer emergency responders to the California fire service. CSFA will offer grant awards for approximately 40 newly recruited volunteer emergency responders each year throughout the 4-year grant program to field the costs of physicals and equipment.

Program Reimbursement Options:

Each eligible volunteer emergency responder recruited after November 29, 2021 who is selected by the SAFER Committee for this award, may receive reimbursement for their **NFPA 1582 compliant physical (up to \$700)**.

The volunteer must commit to membership at a California volunteer or combination fire department for at least 12 months.

Within the first 12 months of appointment to the department, newly recruited volunteers must complete Firefighter I training or departmental 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 each volunteer in this program passes their physical and are enrolled in or have passed their firefighter training, and their Fire Chief produces proof for both to the CSFA's project coordinator, the department is then eligible for a **reimbursement of up to \$3,275** towards the cost to purchase SAFER eligible NFPA compliant turnouts (PPE).

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

Award Application Process – For the 40 new recruits' Training/Physicals/PPE

Following are the steps intended to process a newly recruited volunteer for a grant award:

Step 1: Candidate completes the membership process with a CA volunteer/combo department and the CSFA's SAFER Application Form.

Step 2: Upon obtaining the signature of the Sponsoring Department/Agency's Chief/Commissioner/Director, the Fire Chief forwards the completed CSFA SAFER Application Form to the CSFA email address listed on the Reimbursement Request Form.

Step 3: CSFA will review the Reimbursement Request Form, verify the facts, approve the award and submit for payment and processing.

Step 4: The volunteer granted the award obtains a confirmation from CSFA and begins the training program on a part-time or full-time basis.

Step 5: CSFA and the department fire chiefs will act as the clearinghouse to monitor the volunteer's training and volunteer service progress throughout the entire program.

Step 6: The volunteer/chief will submit all documentation within 12 months of volunteer's acceptance.

Program Eligibility

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

1. Provide proof of membership to a CA volunteer or combination fire department or emergency services agency.
2. Newly recruited volunteers must be at least 18 years old.
3. Volunteer or paid-call firefighters who work part time for the department and are paid an average of less than 20 hours per week are eligible.
4. Volunteers must remain active and in good standing with the Sponsoring Department/Agency.
5. Volunteers must commit to completing their firefighter training within 12 months of becoming a volunteer.
6. Volunteers must submit a CSFA SAFER Reimbursement Request Form. Upon approval by the Chief/Commissioner/Director, the application is then sent to CSFA to be reviewed. The Chief's signature is required.
7. Applicant's Chief/Commissioner/Director must sign the Reimbursement Form to collect reimbursement for physical/training/PPE expenses.
8. Applications must meet criteria guidelines to be considered for an award.

Award Selection Criteria

General Eligibility:

CSFA will review all Reimbursement Request Forms and documents to approve or decline award eligibility. Applications can be submitted year around. CSFA will submit Reimbursement Request Forms by the 15th of each month for prompt processing. Please include a cover letter listing each New Recruit and their hire date.

Being accepted into the membership of the sponsoring department does not guarantee the volunteer will be awarded a scholarship under the CSFA SAFER program; satisfying these criteria simply makes them eligible for an award.

CSFA has developed the following criteria for final award selection:

1. A maximum number of 10 volunteers per department will be accepted throughout the entirety of the grant; the intent of this SAFER Grant program is to lessen the financial burden of new recruit costs for as many departments as possible within the 4-year grant period.
2. Preference will be given to departments who are members of the CSFA.
3. Preference will be given to post-9/11 Veterans to support these dedicated service members and the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011.
4. Candidates will not be discriminated against based on race or gender. To help the volunteer firefighter population better reflect the gender and racial diversity of the state population as a whole, at least 30% of these awards will go to women and minorities first to fulfill the SAFER grant requirement.

Service and Education Commitment

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

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 who joined the department after November 29, 2021*
- *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 complete firefighter training within 12 months or by the end of the Period of Performance November 28, 2025 – whichever comes first. Documentation of the completed training will be required at time of closeout.*

IMPORTANT: This is a reimbursement program. All major requirements must be met before reimbursement can be made. The grant performance period ends 11/28/2025. We must disburse all reimbursement funds by this date.

Required documents and reporting in order of submission:

1. The Volunteer along with the Chief/Commission/Director will be required to complete their designated portions of CSFA SAFER Grant Application Form verifying department membership. We reserve the right to contact the Sponsoring Department/Agency's Chief/Commissioner/Director for additional information and/or we may require additional written updates from the Chief/Commissioner/Director.
2. A copy of the 1582 Physical Sign Off along with an invoice for the physical referencing the volunteer will be required.
3. Once the physical and Firefighter I level training is complete or enrolled in and documentation is provided for both, invoices/receipts can be submitted for reimbursement for PPE up to \$3,275. **This final step must be completed within 12 months of being accepted into the program; if documents aren't submitted in this time period the volunteer will no longer be eligible.**
4. The training records will be needed to document service requirements. The Sponsoring Department/Agency should keep all training records for active members. A copy of the 1582 compliant physical and Firefighter 1 certificate will be required as proof of completion.
5. A signed letter, on your department's letterhead, that includes the following information:
 - a. Name of each new volunteer that is receiving grant-funded turn-out gear and/or physicals in the payment request
 - b. Date that each new volunteer joined the department
 - c. A statement certifying that each new volunteer received an NFPA 1582-compliant physical (you may also send a letter from the physician, with medical information redacted, certifying the physicals); and
 - d. A statement certifying that each new volunteer met the minimum training requirements in your jurisdiction (or will meet them prior to the end of the grant).

**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.*

Part 2 – Retention: Live Fire Training

The second objective within this grant program is to facilitate at least 12 live fire training courses at no cost to the volunteer or the department. These training courses will be geared towards Fire Control 3 certification and will take place in locations all over California to be as close to volunteer groups as possible. Mobile training units or burn buildings will be managed by certified instructors and arrangements for affordable lodging options will be made available when possible.

Ongoing training opportunities are vital to retention of qualified volunteers and this program is designed to offer this training that will curb the costs departments have to budget for to provide adequate training opportunities. Each training weekend will accommodate approximately 40 volunteers, and the only responsibility to the volunteer or the department is the cost of getting to the training site and lodging if applicable.

New recruits will be eligible to participate in this program once they have reached a level of training with their own department that warrants a Chief signing off on their confidence of the recruit attending.

Program contact for departments:

Marty Creel	CSFA SAFER Grant Manager	marty.creel@csfamail.com
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CSFA Grant Manager, send completed forms after approval to:

Esteban Sandoval	Physicals, PPE, and Training scholarships	esteban.sandoval@csfamail.com
Marty Creel	Travel Expense Reports, Media Invoices, Staff Time Sheets, Invoices and Live Fire, and Leadership Invoices	marty.creel@csfamail.com