

**The Maine Fire Protection Services Commission
&
The Maine Fire Service Institute**



*Informational Package for
Regional Fire Training Grant Program*

FINAL DRAFT
10/25/2022

REGIONAL FIRE TRAINING PROGRAM GRANT OVERVIEW:

To recruit and retain firefighters across the State of Maine, and to ensure they are adequately, safely, and efficiently trained, the program goal is to provide free firefighter training programs (**Firefighter I or Firefighter I & II**) to members of a Maine municipal or volunteer fire department as defined in Maine State Law. Working in collaboration with local and regional fire departments, the plan is to provide a maximum of two or three regional programs per year once the program has been fully established. The programs shall be distributed around Maine to allow Maine Fire Service Institute instructors to meet this demand without interfering with normal fire training activities. The direct costs associated with fire training shall be covered under this program and are clearly defined. Program support shall be provided by the awardee(s). Please read the entire document and feel free to reach out to the provided contacts with any questions.

PURPOSE:

In May of 2022, the 130th State Legislature passed **LD731 creating Public Law, Chapter 731, Section 3, 20-A MRSA §9005**. This law established a fund to support Fire Training Programs in the State of Maine. In accordance with this law and 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 Fire Training Grant Program.

DEFINITION OF TERMS:

Lead Municipality - Awards made to Regional Fire Training Programs serving single or multiple jurisdictions or departments shall identify one municipality to serve as the Lead Municipality. The Lead Municipality shall be the grant applicant on behalf of all served, shall work with the Maine Fire Service Institute to ensure the safety of all training participants, and shall coordinate with MFSI staff and instructors and sign a memorandum of agreement to ensure program success.

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

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. Herein referred to as simply 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.

Training Program Review Panel - A subcommittee representing the key stakeholder groups from the MFPSC who are charged with reviewing grant applications by these guidelines and making recommendations for award to the full Fire Commission. Herein referred to simply as the Review Panel.

AVAILABLE FUNDING:

The law established a non-lapsing fund under MFSI within the Maine Community College System. The Maine Community College System is entitled to a 4.5% administrative fee for its fiduciary costs and responsibilities. The timing of grant awards will be contingent on the receipt of State funding.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:

Municipal fire departments and volunteer fire associations (as defined below) are the only eligible applicants as outlined in public law. Firefighter Associations and Regional Fire Training Associations may apply, but applications must be executed by a municipal Fire Chief as defined in Maine State Law.

- **"Municipal fire department"** means an organized firefighting unit established under the municipal charter, ordinance, or bylaw to prevent and extinguish fires and, if authorized by charter, ordinance, or bylaw, to provide emergency services.
- **"Volunteer fire association"** means an organized firefighting unit incorporated under Title 13, chapter 81, or Title 13-B, and which is officially recognized by the municipality.

PROGRAMS OFFERED:

Firefighter I or Firefighter I & II Support (Partnership)

Note: Firefighter I will meet Maine Bureau of Labor standards (covers Basic Fire School objectives).

The following will be included at no cost to the departments or candidates.

- Textbooks – online learning content
- All Course Lead Instruction
- Live Fire Burns
- Skills & Written Exam
- Materials to support training (i.e. propane gas, building materials, etc.)
- Other costs associated with program delivery

COST SHARE:

Recipients of program funding through this grant process must commit to providing ‘in-kind’ services, such as classrooms with Wi-Fi capabilities, apparatus, apparatus operators and other supportive services, which will be defined during program set-up and confirmed before program commencement.

APPLICATION & SUBMISSION INFORMATION:

The grant application will be made available each year and will remain open for a thirty-day period of time to receive adequate grant applications. For example, December 1st – 31st. Grant program awards will be staggered so as not to overwhelm available state fire instructors.

AWARD LIMITS AND ALLOCATION:

No maximum or minimum amount of grant award is set for this grant process.

COMPLIANCE WITH MAINE STATE FIRE SERVICE RULES & LAWS:

- All programs shall meet the National Professional Qualification Board of the Joint Council of Fire Services Organizations standards. (NFPA Standards)
- All apparatus, self-contained breathing apparatus, equipment, tools, hose, and appliances shall meet Maine BLS Rules and Laws (i.e. annual service testing).
- All departments must ensure that all candidates attending the program have serviceable, compliant personal protective equipment, are covered by, but not drawing from Workers’ Compensation, and are compliant with the respiratory standard. This shall include medical clearance, current fit test, and no facial hair in the seal area of their SCBA face piece.
- All participating departments must submit ME FIRS data to the Maine State Fire Marshal’s Office per the following statute.

§2395. Filing statement of fire occurrence.

The municipal fire chief or a designee shall submit to the State Fire Marshal an incident report for each response made, regardless of whether an actual fire occurred. The report must be submitted in a manner consistent with a national fire incident reporting system.

GRANT GOALS & PRIORITIES:

These funds intend to reach parts of Maine that are struggling to train firefighters. To meet the current demands on firefighter training and to maximize the impact of this grant program, the Fire Commission has established the following grant goals and priorities:

1. Maximize local/regional training efforts in rural Maine
2. Add additional firefighters to assist in growing departments
3. Serve the greatest number of firefighters possible through regional collaborations
4. Recruit and retain Fire Service Instructors

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

The Review Panel will evaluate applications based on the following:

1. Under served regions of Maine
2. Statement of impact on firefighter training within the region
3. Participating departments reporting to the State Fire Marshal's Office
4. Compliance with Maine Bureau of Labor Rules & Laws
5. Regional fire training commitment
6. Fire training facility or acquired structure availability
7. Estimated number of firefighters committed to completing the program
8. Projected start and completion dates for the program

NARRATIVE:

The application requires a short concise narrative to provide a deeper understanding of what is needed and the regional impact of this program. Successful applicants shall explain the following;

1. Regional fire training challenges
2. Regional return on investment in training fire department personnel
3. Participating fire department's commitment to the program's success

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS:

The Fire Commission is responsible for establishing a Fire Training Programs Review Panel to evaluate and score applications based on the aforementioned goals, priorities, and criteria. That review panel has been appointed by the Chair of the Fire Commission consisting of the following members of stakeholder organizations:

- The Fire Commission Chair - **Dan Brooks, Chief Winthrop Fire Department**
- The Maine Fire Service Institute – **James A. Graves, Director MFSI**
- Maine Fire Chiefs' Association - **Chris Whytock, Chief Rockland Fire Department**
- Maine State Federation of Firefighters - **Vicki Schmidt, Buckfield Fire Department**
- Professional Firefighters of Maine - **Gerry Gay, Sanford Fire Department (Retired)**

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

MAINE RESIDENTS AND NON-MAINE RESIDENTS

Maine residents shall not be charged a fee for this fire training program.

Non-Maine residents shall be disclosed and a fee charged to participate in this program. If you are anticipating out-of-state participation it must be disclosed on the application. We will take into consideration border communities that rely on mutual aid from out-of-state departments. Such as Conway and Fryeburg or Somersworth and Berwick.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

MFSI will report all data to the Maine Fire Protection Service Commission bi-annually. Additionally, reports will be made available to the Community College, the Maine Fire Service Institute Advisory Committee, and the Maine Fire Chiefs Association. The reports shall include the following:

- Programs delivered
- Number of firefighters trained
- Costs associated with training
- Certificates or certifications awarded

INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS:

All participants must provide proof of workers' compensation insurance coverage that protects them while participating in the training. Moreover, no participant shall be collecting workers' compensation while participating in the program.

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.

FOR GRANT INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Dan Brooks, Chair of the Maine Fire Protection Service Commission
Cell: 207-462-2631
firechief@winthropmaine.org

James A. Graves, State of Maine Fire Training Director MFSI
Office: 207-844-2078
jgraves@smccme.edu



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