

President Biden Announces \$22.4M FEMA Grant for Philadelphia to Hire 72 New Firefighters

Release Date: décembre 11, 2023

FEMA-funded SAFER grant program provides communities nationwide with the resources to hire more firefighters and open engine and ladder companies to effectively and safely respond to emergencies

PHILADELPHIA -- President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. announced that FEMA awarded a \$22.4 million grant to the city of Philadelphia, paying for 72 firefighters' salaries and benefits for three years, allowing three city fire stations to reopen: Engine 6 in Fishtown, Ladder 1 in Fairmount and Ladder 11 in South Philadelphia. In 2022, Philadelphia suffered its highest number of fire fatalities in a decade with more than a dozen of those deaths occurring from a single fire in the Fairmont neighborhood, which was formerly served by now-closed Ladder 1. This new funding will allow these fire stations to now provide faster responses to first-due areas.

Through the [Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response \(SAFER\)](#) grant, FEMA provided \$22,432,509 to assist the city of Philadelphia in increasing the number of firefighters to help communities meet industry minimum standards and attain 24-hour staffing to provide adequate fire protection from fire and fire-related hazards, and to fulfill traditional fire department missions.

“Firefighters are the first to be called and the last to leave when nearly any emergency arises,” said Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas. “The Department of Homeland Security, in partnership with FEMA and the U.S. Fire Administration and under President Biden’s leadership, is committed to ensuring every firehouse and every firefighter has the support and resources they need to do their critical jobs. The SAFER grant President Biden awarded today meets that mandate, helping the City of Philadelphia recruit and retain more first responders, and helping keep the Fishtown, Fairmount, and South Philadelphia neighborhoods safe.”



FEMA

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“As a former firefighter, I understand just how critical it is that our local fire departments are funded as they work to save lives and protect livelihoods,” said FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell. “Disasters start at the local level, and our firefighters are often the first on the scene. Thanks to President Biden, this grant funding allows FEMA to send additional dollars to these crucial first responders so they can build capacity and focus on saving lives.”

The President signed legislation last year that delivered \$360 million each for FEMA’s Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program and the SAFER programs. It also increased funding for the U.S. Fire Administration to fund expanded training courses, renovate the National Emergency Training Center and invest in public awareness and messaging campaigns about fire safety.

To date, the SAFER Program has awarded approximately \$5.2 billion in grant funding to provide critically needed resources to hire new, additional firefighters (or to change the status of part-time or paid-on-call firefighters to full-time firefighters), to rehire laid off firefighters, or to retain firefighters facing layoff, as well as recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. This past year, FEMA made 177 awards totaling \$360 million.

The SAFER grant is an annual competitive grant which eligible fire companies, unaffiliated EMS and state fire academies can apply for. The grant is subject to annual appropriations. Interested applicants can find tools and resources, including links to Program Webinars, at <https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters/workshops>.

For more information on this grant and how to apply for future funding opportunities, please visit <https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters>.

