



Homeland Security

JAN 3 - 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR: Elizabeth Harman
Assistant Administrator, Grant Programs Directorate
Federal Emergency Management Agency

FROM: Anne L. Richards *John E. McCoy II for*
Assistant Inspector General for Audits

SUBJECT: *Fire Station Construction Grants Funded by the American
Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*

Attached for your information is our final letter report, *Fire Station Construction Grants Funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*. We incorporated formal comments from the Director of the Office of Policy and Analysis in the final report.

The report contains two recommendations aimed at improving the fire station construction grants program. The Office of Policy and Analysis concurred with both recommendations. Within 90 days of the date of this memorandum, please provide our office with a written response that includes a correction action plan and target completion dates for each recommendation. Also, please include responsible parties and any other supporting documentation necessary to inform us about the current status of the recommendations. Until your response is received and evaluated, the recommendations will be considered open and unresolved.

Consistent with our responsibility under the *Inspector General Act*, we are providing copies of our report to appropriate congressional committees with oversight and appropriation responsibility over the Department of Homeland Security. The report will be posted on our website.

Should you have any questions, please call me, or your staff may contact John E. McCoy II, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audits, at (202) 254-4100.

Background

The *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* (Recovery Act) appropriated to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) \$610 million, of which \$210 million was for competitive firefighter assistance grants for “modifying, upgrading, or constructing non-Federal fire stations.” The Recovery Act also specifies that no grant shall exceed \$15 million and that FEMA may use up to 5% of the appropriation for management and administration. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) must obligate the grant funds by September 30, 2010.

Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-09-15, *Updated Implementing Guidance for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*, requires federal agencies to submit plans for each program funded by the Recovery Act. The plan must include information on the goals and objectives of the program; kinds and scope of activities to be performed; delivery schedule; measures of program outputs, outcomes, and efficiency; and program monitoring processes.

FEMA issued its spending plan for the fire station construction (FSC) grants on May 15, 2009. The plan called for awarding the grants by December 31, 2009. The spending plan required that the grant projects be subjected to reviews mandated by the *National Environmental Policy Act* and the *National Historic Preservation Act* prior to release of grant funds. The plan also identified how grant projects would be monitored programmatically and financially to ensure that the project goals, objectives, performance requirements, timelines, milestone completion, budgets, and other related program criteria are met.

Within FEMA’s Grant Programs Directorate (GPD), the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program Office administers the FSC grants. The AFG Program Office used the overall framework for grant administration employed for all other AFG grant programs and obtained recommendations for funding priorities and criteria for awarding grants from the nine major fire service organizations listed below:

| Fire Service Organizations | | |
|---|---|---|
| Congressional Fire Services Institute | International Association of Arson Investigators | International Association of Fire Chiefs |
| International Association of Firefighters | International Society of Fire Service Instructors | National Association of State Fire Marshals |
| National Fire Protection Association | National Volunteer Fire Council | North American Fire Training Directors |

FEMA grant application guidance gave the highest priority to replacing unsafe or uninhabitable structures and to expanding fire protection coverage to meet increased service demand. The next priority was to fund projects modifying or expanding existing structures to provide sleeping quarters and/or amenities for full-time occupancy. A slightly lower priority was to fund modifying or expanding existing structures to accommodate support functions such as communications. The lowest priority was to fund projects replacing or expanding habitable structures that are cramped or inefficiently configured for operation.

Results of Review

FEMA is generally administering the Recovery Act FSC Grant Program according to its plan and requirements. FEMA awarded 116 grants totaling \$207 million after receiving and evaluating approximately 6,000 grant applications. FEMA awarded 91.4% of the grants by December 31, 2009, and awarded all grants by September 30, 2010. All grant projects awarded were examined for compliance with applicable *National Environmental Policy Act* and *National Historic Preservation Act* requirements. FEMA's status report to DHS as of September 30, 2011, shows outlays to grant recipients of approximately \$67 million, or 32.6% of total FSC grant projects. In addition, grantees reported funding about 1,315 jobs for the quarter ended September 30, 2011.¹ Appendix C lists all grant awards and obligations and a breakout of the 1,315 jobs by grant.

We identified that FEMA needs to improve program monitoring. It should approve the programmatic monitoring protocol and plan and implement a process to collect and analyze grant program performance measures identified in the FSC Recovery Act plan. FEMA also needs to ensure that recommended corrective actions from FSC grant financial desk reviews are communicated to GPD leadership.

Program Monitoring

GPD issued Grants Policy and Procedure 09-12 to set policy for monitoring grants. To implement this policy, both the AFG Program Office and the Grant Administration and Assistance Division implemented specific protocols and plans to monitor program and financial grant activities. As of October 25, 2011, GPD senior leadership has not approved the programmatic monitoring protocol and plan. Also, GPD leadership has not approved the Recovery Act performance measures for FSC program performance.

The fiscal year 2011 FEMA Financial Monitoring Plan states that the Regional Coordination and Oversight (RCO) Branch will communicate plans for corrective actions resulting from grantee financial activities' desk reviews to senior management quarterly. However, the quarterly report is still in development. Consequently, the RCO Branch distributes a monthly "Issue Paper" to GPD leadership, but this paper does not include the Recovery Acts grants. For 4 of 15 desk reviews that we examined, the reviewer identified findings; however, corrective actions for these findings were not included in the status update to GPD leadership.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Assistant Administrator, Grant Programs, ensure that:

1. The AFG Program Office finalizes and implements its Programmatic Grants Monitoring Protocols and Plan for Monitoring of Fire Station Construction Grants and approves measures to monitor program performance.

¹ September 30, 2011, is the ending date for the most recent quarter for recipient reporting on jobs created or retained.

2. The RCO Branch communicates corrective actions from desk reviews to senior GPD leadership.

Management Comments and OIG Analysis

We obtained written comments on a draft of the report from the Director of the Office of Policy and Analysis. A copy of the comments is in appendix B. The Director concurred with both recommendations, indicated that progress had been made, and said that additional corrective actions would be described in response to the final report.

Although the comments agreed with the recommendations and indicated progress in implementing the improvements, we have classified the recommendations as unresolved pending receipt of a corrective action plan identifying the official responsible for implementation and the date that necessary actions will be completed.

Appendix A

Purpose, Scope and Methodology

Our objective was to determine (1) whether FEMA was administering the Recovery Act funds for the Fire Station Construction Grants Program in accordance with program plans and requirements, and (2) the status of Fire Station Construction Grants Program funds and projects. To accomplish our objective, we—

- Reviewed applicable laws, policy, and FEMA guidance used to award grants and monitor program performance;
- Reviewed the process for awarding grants to determine whether program guidance was sufficient and followed;
- Reviewed FEMA procedures for project monitoring to determine if grantees submitted required reports and FEMA evaluated and acted as appropriate on the financial information;
- Reviewed the contract for program management support, interviewed contractor staff, and reviewed tasks performed to obtain an understanding of work performed;
- Interviewed FEMA GPD officials to obtain information on the administration, management, and oversight of the Program;
- Evaluated a judgmental sample to confirm compliance with (1) grant guidance and (2) financial and program requirements; and
- Surveyed grant recipients to identify reasons for delays in starting projects and any other program issues.

We conducted this performance audit between February and June 2011 pursuant to the *Inspector General Act of 1978*, as amended, and according to generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based upon our audit objectives. We obtained an understanding of the internal controls that were significant within the context of our audit objective. We evaluated the design and operating effectiveness of these internal controls to determine the reliability of information used in performing these significant controls. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based upon our audit objectives.

We appreciate the efforts by DHS management and staff to provide the information and access necessary to accomplish this review.


Appendix B Managements Comments to the Draft Letter Report

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20472



OCT 25 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR: Anne L. Richards
Assistant Inspector General for Audits
Office of Inspector General

FROM: 
David J. Kaufman
Director
Office of Policy and Program Analysis

SUBJECT: Comments to OIG/GAO Draft Letter Report, *Fire Station Construction Grants Funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 –For Official Use Only OIG Project No. 11-060-DHS-AUD*

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft report. The findings in the report will be used to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of how we execute and measure our programs. We recognize the need to continue to improve the grants management process, including addressing the recommendations raised in this report. Our responses to the two recommendations are as follows:

OIG Recommendation #1. The OIG recommends that Assistant Administrator, Grant Programs, ensure that the AFG Program Office finalizes and implements its Programmatic Grants Monitoring Protocols and Plan for Monitoring of Fire Station Construction Grants and approves measures to monitor program performance.

FEMA Response. FEMA concurs with this recommendation. Significant progress has been made in monitoring, however, further development and implementation of a monitoring plan and protocols for the station construction grants are in development. We will provide a report on additional progress with regard to monitoring in our response to the OIG's final report on the audit. In the meantime, we request that the status of the recommendation be resolved and open pending GPD's report on additional progress.

OIG Recommendation #2. The OIG recommends that Assistant Administrator, Grant Programs, ensure that the Regional Coordination and Oversight Branch communicate corrective actions from desk reviews to senior GPD leadership.

FEMA Response. FEMA concurs with this recommendation. The Regional Coordination and Oversight Branch have implemented several communication methods to keep senior GPD leadership informed of issues in the monitoring of grantees. These communication methods include regional assessments involving the Director of Grant Operations, monthly conference calls between headquarters and regions, and the exchange of monthly reports on funding between headquarters and regions to keep all staff advised of the status of funding. We will provide a report on additional corrective actions planned and taken in our response to the OIG's final report on the audit. In the meantime, we request that the recommendation be resolved and open pending the report on additional progress.

We thank you, again, for the opportunity to provide our comments to your recommendations contained in your draft report. Should you have further questions regarding our response, please do not hesitate to call FEMA's Chief Audit Liaison, Brad Shefka, at 202-646-1308.

Appendix C Grant Awards, Obligations, and Jobs

| Grantee | State | Obligation | Outlays | Jobs |
|--|-------|------------|-----------|-------|
| EUFAULA FIRE DEPARTMENT | AL | \$ 360,978 | 0 | 0 |
| MADISON FIRE/RESCUE | AL | 1,415,043 | 424,512 | 2.33 |
| MOBILE FIRE-RESCUE DEPARTMENT | AL | 1,952,763 | 0 | * |
| BIRMINGHAM FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE | AL | 1,832,907 | 7,900 | 0 |
| COUNTY 17 FIRE & RESCUE | AL | 276,130 | 0 | 0 |
| LITTLE ROCK FIRE DEPARTMENT | AR | 2,017,800 | 135,602 | 0.7 |
| BRYANT FIRE DEPARTMENT ¹ | AR | 34,000 | 0 | * |
| HORSESHOE LAKE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT | AR | 765,813 | 227,000 | 43 |
| CITY OF MESA FIRE DEPARTMENT | AZ | 4,040,000 | 0 | 6.72 |
| GILBERT FIRE DEPARTMENT | AZ | 2,977,838 | 297,783 | 0 |
| TOWN OF BUCKEYE FIRE DEPARTMENT | AZ | 3,522,456 | 791,198 | 13 |
| CITY OF MORRO BAY | CA | 1,602,940 | 160,294 | 2.25 |
| SANTA MARIA CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT | CA | 4,368,907 | 0 | 0 |
| CITY OF ONTARIO FIRE DEPARTMENT | CA | 1,354,000 | 71,143 | 3.45 |
| MARIPOSA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT | CA | 2,184,586 | 269,666 | 0 |
| SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO FIRE DEPARTMENT | CA | 2,050,000 | 260,272 | 5 |
| COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT | CA | 3,623,900 | 0 | 40.63 |
| MARINA FIRE DEPARTMENT | CA | 497,878 | 497,878 | 12 |
| ROUGH AND READY FIRE DEPARTMENT | CA | 1,126,832 | 540,531 | 75 |
| FAIRMOUNT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT | CO | 132,787 | 13,278 | 0 |
| CITY OF PUEBLO FIRE DEPARTMENT | CO | 2,734,445 | 0 | 12.79 |
| TOWN OF EAST HARTFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT | CT | 3,660,019 | 3,477,015 | 26.85 |
| LIBERTY FIRE DISTRICT, INC. | FL | 856,260 | 32,094 | 3 |
| COLUMBIA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT ² | FL | 0 | 0 | * |
| TAMPA FIRE RESCUE | FL | 1,624,880 | 487,464 | 2.38 |
| EDGEWATER FIRE RESCUE | FL | 1,141,357 | 342,407 | * |
| CITY OF QUINCY FIRE DEPARTMENT | FL | 1,200,987 | 87,911 | 0 |
| SUMTER COUNTY FIRE RESCUE | FL | 2,131,638 | 1,385,565 | 13.69 |
| BUTTS COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT | GA | 531,600 | 53,578 | 9 |
| SMYRNA FIRE DEPARTMENT | GA | 1,434,967 | 71,847 | 0 |
| LOUISVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT | GA | 858,673 | 787,108 | 2 |
| SCREVEN COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT | GA | 135,000 | 0 | 0 |
| HAWAII COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT | HI | 4,113,686 | 411,368 | 14 |
| BRITT FIRE DEPARTMENT | IA | 543,640 | 543,640 | 60 |
| PAYETTE CITY & RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS | ID | 1,979,891 | 1,292,828 | 7.86 |
| NORTHERN LAKES FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT | ID | 1,054,120 | 132,333 | 1 |
| SOUTH BOUNDARY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT | ID | 356,870 | 356,870 | ** |
| ATKINSON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT | IL | 1,359,000 | 1,291,050 | 27 |
| COLONA FIRE DEPARTMENT | IL | 562,387 | 562,387 | 0 |
| MUNICIPAL FIRE DEPARTMENT | IL | 1,160,000 | 129,357 | 1 |
| VILLAGE OF WESTERN SPRINGS | IL | 1,100,000 | 1,100,000 | 65 |
| CHICAGO FIRE DEPARTMENT | IL | 4,800,000 | 0 | 16.25 |
| VALPARAISO FIRE DEPARTMENT | IN | 461,368 | 461,368 | ** |
| NEW WHITELAND FIRE DEPARTMENT | IN | 510,248 | 510,248 | 32 |
| POSEY TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT | IN | 1,265,777 | 343,766 | 0 |
| VOLUNTEER FIRE & RESCUE OF HARRISON TOWNSHIP | IN | 1,149,490 | 10,000 | 0 |
| NEWTON FIRE/EMS DEPARTMENT | KS | 2,962,365 | 1,925,537 | 0 |
| LOUISVILLE FIRE AND RESCUE | KY | 3,319,765 | 900,000 | 3.5 |
| MT. STERLING FIRE DEPARTMENT | KY | 1,100,000 | 20,000 | 17 |
| GROSSE TETE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT | LA | 2,763,080 | 809,779 | 0.26 |
| PAINCOURTVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT | LA | 547,400 | 0 | 10 |
| CHELSEA FIRE DEPARTMENT | MA | 1,515,020 | 0 | 0 |
| WARE FIRE DEPARTMENT | MA | 5,000,000 | 400,000 | 5 |
| BRUNSWICK VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY, INC. | MD | 2,431,161 | 1,580,254 | 35 |
| ANNE ARUNDEL, COUNTY OF | MD | 1,866,100 | 186,610 | 0 |
| GOODWINS MILLS FIRE & RESCUE | ME | 879,753 | 879,753 | 0 |
| WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT | MI | 1,510,016 | 1,434,504 | 0 |
| GRAND TRAVERSE METRO FIRE DEPARTMENT | MI | 2,813,034 | 2,589,021 | 6 |
| NORTH OAKLAND COUNTY FIRE AUTHORITY | MI | 759,704 | 713,717 | 0.72 |
| CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK FIRE DEPARTMENT | MI | 2,681,167 | 0 | * |
| DUTTON FD / GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP | MI | 866,561 | 823,232 | 0 |
| FULTON FIRE DEPARTMENT | MO | 1,265,487 | 1,048,359 | 3 |
| MAPAVILLE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT | MO | 925,363 | 880,750 | 50 |
| WINFIELD-FOLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT | MO | 1,206,550 | 143,565 | 10 |

Appendix C

Grant Awards, Obligations, and Jobs

| Grantee | State | Obligation | Outlays | Jobs |
|---|-------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| UNIVERSITY CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT | MO | 2,612,197 | 10,045 | 0 |
| KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI FIRE DEPARTMENT | MO | 2,030,000 | 1,319,500 | 12.73 |
| BIGGERSVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT | MS | 469,173 | 445,711 | 1.53 |
| KALISPELL FIRE DEPARTMENT | MT | 1,348,039 | 1,140,674 | 43 |
| VALLEY HILL FIRE & RESCUE | NC | 640,000 | 456,679 | 6.55 |
| PITTSBORO VOLUNTEER FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT | NC | 607,500 | 448,774 | 68 |
| TOWN OF SUNSET BEACH | NC | 1,494,103 | 290,553 | 86 |
| BETHLEHEM COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT | NC | 2,008,515 | 57,785 | 3.12 |
| NAVASSA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT | NC | 1,607,950 | 1,599,988 | 0 |
| WINSTON-SALEM FIRE DEPARTMENT | NC | 2,008,541 | 0 | 0 |
| LONDONDERRY FIRE/RESCUE | NH | 1,655,671 | 1,655,671 | 2 |
| PATERSON FIRE DEPARTMENT | NJ | 4,500,000 | 0 | 0 |
| BAYONNE FIRE DEPARTMENT | NJ | 3,567,491 | 0 | 0 |
| SANDOVAL COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT | NM | 2,700,204 | 791,404 | 27 |
| SIERRA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT | NV | 2,089,130 | 208,913 | 3.77 |
| LYON COUNTY TREASURER | NV | 2,091,524 | 2,091,524 | ** |
| OTTER LAKE FIRE COMPANY, INC. | NY | 1,469,862 | 342,070 | 5.3 |
| WAYNE TOWNSHIP FIRE AND RESCUE | OH | 820,000 | 820,000 | ** |
| OLMSTED TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT | OH | 1,954,079 | 1,172,444 | 31 |
| BRISTOL TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT | OH | 2,235,191 | 1,927,826 | 25 |
| JACKSON TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT | OH | 1,412,920 | 0 | 0 |
| TOLEDO FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT | OH | 2,995,603 | 216,000 | 0 |
| AUSTINTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT | OH | 333,000 | 316,050 | 52 |
| GATES RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT | OR | 1,582,821 | 1,570,993 | 0 |
| KLAMATH COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1 | OR | 4,353,954 | 0 | 0 |
| CITY OF NEWBERG | OR | 809,225 | 61,555 | 7 |
| LAFAYETTE FIRE COMPANY OF E. LAPETER TOWNSHIP | PA | 2,285,436 | 985,805 | 24 |
| SIX MILE RUN AREA VOL. FIRE COMPANY | PA | 2,001,710 | 168,317 | * |
| MALVERN FIRE COMPANY | PA | 1,076,845 | 150,000 | 8 |
| EAST PROVIDENCE FIRE DEPARTMENT | RI | 6,406,715 | 16,207 | 0.25 |
| INDIAN LAND FIRE DEPARTMENT | SC | 1,669,808 | 1,586,317 | 6.98 |
| SOUTH GREENVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT | SC | 842,008 | 98,836 | 2.37 |
| HEATH SPRINGS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT | SC | 976,000 | 976,000 | 1.33 |
| ST. PAUL'S FIRE DISTRICT | SC | 1,686,246 | 602,946 | 3 |
| OLAR FIRE DEPARTMENT | SC | 209,000 | 209,000 | 0 |
| HAYWARD FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES | SD | 196,000 | 196,000 | 21 |
| NIOTA RURAL VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT | TN | 336,680 | 88,202 | 34 |
| CITY OF MUNFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT | TN | 1,817,000 | 1,089,836 | 14.69 |
| PIGEON FORGE FIRE DEPARTMENT | TN | 2,045,072 | 0 | 25.14 |
| LIMESTONE COVE FIRE DEPARTMENT | TN | 110,872 | 71,761 | 2 |
| ALLEN FIRE DEPARTMENT | TX | 1,803,126 | 1,433,470 | 1.9 |
| BRIARROAKS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT, INC. | TX | 301,800 | 90,540 | 1.58 |
| EL PASO FIRE DEPARTMENT | TX | 1,256,115 | 0 | 2.1 |
| CITY OF SAN ANTONIO FIRE DEPARTMENT | TX | 7,316,260 | 0 | 28.39 |
| CEDAR CITY/IRON COUNTY | UT | 974,205 | 974,205 | ** |
| NEWPORT NEWS FIRE DEPARTMENT | VA | 2,597,425 | 2,597,425 | 0 |
| RICHMOND FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES | VA | 3,520,109 | 352,010 | 0.57 |
| FLUVANNA COUNTY VFD - FORK UNION COMPANY | VA | 1,415,540 | 141,554 | 0 |
| CITY OF SEDRO-WOLLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT | WA | 1,450,660 | 1,450,660 | 21 |
| GIG HARBOR FIRE & MEDIC ONE | WA | 2,182,336 | 147,402 | 1.25 |
| SNOQUALMIE PASS FIRE AND RESCUE | WA | 4,007,374 | 4,007,374 | ** |
| NEENAH MENASHA FIRE RESCUE | WI | 1,208,522 | 1,158,371 | 103 |
| Total | | \$206,365,944 | \$67,438,739 | 1314.93 |

*No report filed.
**Project complete, no report required.
¹ Bryant Fire Department initially received a grant of \$100,000. FEMA canceled the grant and reduced the obligation to \$34,000 to cover the costs claimed by Bryant Fire Department before the grant was canceled.
² Columbia County Fire Department initially received a grant of \$684,000. FEMA cancelled the grant and deobligated the funds.

Appendix D
Major Contributors to this Report

Roger LaRouche, Director
Pamela Weatherly, Lead Auditor
Jason Kim, Auditor
Shelley Howes, Independent Reference Reviewer

Appendix E
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