



city of
bristol

News Release

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Asst. Chief selected as a panelist: Federal AFG Grant Program

Recently the International Association of Arson Investigators announced the selection of Jack Spurgeon, Jr., IAAI-CFI, Assistant Fire Chief and Fire Marshal at Bristol Fire Rescue to serve on the 2016 Fire Act Grant Program's peer review panel.

"Keeping our communities safe is important. Funding our first responders and assisting municipalities with maintaining appropriate staffing, equipment and training is a priority of Federal, State and local governments," said Spurgeon. "I am not only honored to be one of those chosen nationally to serve on the panel, but I am also eager to begin."

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program, also known as fire grants or the FIRE Act grant program, was established by Title XVII of the FY2001 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 106-398). Currently administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the program provides federal grants directly to local fire departments and unaffiliated Emergency Medical Services (EMS) organizations to help address a variety of equipment, training, and other firefighter-related and EMS needs. A related program is the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Firefighters (SAFER) program, which provides grants for hiring, recruiting, and retaining firefighters.

The fire grant program is now in its 16th year. There is no set geographical formula for the distribution of fire grants—fire departments throughout the nation apply, and award decisions are made by a peer panel based on the merits of the application and the needs of the community. The law does require that fire grants be distributed to a diverse mix of fire departments, with respect to type of department (paid, volunteer, or combination), geographic location, and type of community served (e.g., urban, suburban, or rural).

National fire service organizations are asked to assist FEMA in identifying qualified panelists to volunteer their time. Meeting in the Baltimore, MD, area over a five day period, panelists review and make recommendations on how the \$690 million in federal funding is awarded and disbursed to more than 6,000 applicants from across the U.S. The International Association of Arson Investigators, representing more than 8,500 fire and arson investigators worldwide, receives applications from more than 200 qualified volunteer each year to be considered for final

selection of only 20 IAAI representatives to serve on the FEMA AFG peer review and selection panel. Members are selected based on their experience, areas of expertise and interest, and demonstrated commitment to community service. There will be only 225 panelists representing America's fire service organizations participating in this year's review process.

For more information contact Asst. Chief Jack Spurgeon, at 423-989-5701 or email jspurgeon@bristoltn.org.