

Updated February 28, 2020

\*\*\*New questions are in red\*\*\*



FEMA

## Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### Program Overview

#### 1. What is the purpose of the FY 2020 HSGP?

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) is one of three grant programs that constitute the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) focus on enhancing the ability of state, local, tribal and territorial governments, as well as nonprofits, to prevent, protect against, respond to and recover from terrorist attacks. These grant programs are part of a comprehensive set of measures authorized by Congress and implemented by DHS to help strengthen the nation's communities against potential terrorist attacks.

#### 2. What legislation authorizes funding for the FY 2020 HSGP?

Sections 2002 to 2004 of the *Homeland Security Act of 2002*, Pub. L. No. 107-296, codified as amended at 6 U.S.C. §§ 603-605, and the *Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2020* (Pub. L. No. 116-93).

#### 3. Where is the FY 2020 HSGP Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) located?

The FY 2020 HSGP NOFO is located online at <http://www.fema.gov/grants>, as well as [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

#### 4. Who is eligible to apply for FY 2020 HSGP funds?

*The State Administrative Agency (SAA) is the only entity eligible to submit HSGP applications to DHS/FEMA, including those applications submitted on behalf of Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) and Operation Stonegarden (OPSG) applicants.* All 56 states and territories, which includes any state of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are eligible to apply for State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) funds. Tribal governments may not apply directly for HSGP funding; however, funding may be available to tribes under the SHSP and OPSG through the SAA.

Eligible high-risk Urban Areas for the FY 2020 UASI program have been determined through an analysis of the relative risk of terrorism faced by the 100 most populous metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) in the United States. Subawards will be made by the SAA to the designated urban areas identified in the FY 2020 HSGP NOFO. In the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the FY 2020 Appropriation for the Department of Homeland Security, Congress expressed its intent that the Secretary fund up to 85 percent of nationwide risk in the UASI program. *In accordance with that intent, the Secretary*

*designated 32 urban areas eligible for funding under the UASI program.* This is an increase from the 31 urban areas eligible in FY 2019.

Under the FY 2020 OPSG Program, subrecipients that are eligible to apply for and receive a sub-award directly from the SAA are divided into three tiers. Tier 1 entities are local units of government at the county level or equivalent and Federally recognized tribal governments that are on a physical border in states bordering Canada, states bordering Mexico, and states and territories with international water borders. Tier 2 eligible subrecipients are those not located on the physical border or international water border but are contiguous to a Tier 1 county. Tier 3 eligible subrecipients are those not located on the physical border or international water border but are contiguous to a Tier 2 eligible subrecipient. The tier structure is only applicable with regard to eligibility. OPSG funding allocations are based on the assessed border security risks as determined by the US Border Patrol.

**5. What are the key dates associated with the FY 2020 HSGP?**

- February 14, 2020: Release date for the FY 2020 HSGP NOFO.
- April 15, 2020, 5 p.m. ET: Applications for the FY 2020 HSGP due to FEMA.

**6. What is the FY 2020 HSGP period of performance?**

The period of performance is 36 months.

**7. What other resources are available to address programmatic, technical, and financial questions?**

- For additional program-specific information, applicants may contact the Centralized Scheduling and Information Desk (CSID) help line at (800) 368-6498 or [askcsid@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:askcsid@fema.dhs.gov). CSID hours of operation are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday.
- For support regarding financial grant management and budgetary technical assistance, applicants may contact the DHS/FEMA Grant Operations Help Desk via e-mail at [ASK-GMD@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:ASK-GMD@fema.dhs.gov).

## **Application Development**

**8. How will FY 2020 HSGP applications be submitted?**

Applying for an award under the HSGP is a multi-step process:

Eligible applicants must submit their initial application through the grants.gov portal at least 7 days before the final application deadline at <http://www.grants.gov>. Applicants needing grants.gov support should contact the customer support hotline at (800) 518-4726.

Eligible applicants will be notified by DHS/FEMA and asked to proceed with submitting their complete application package in the [Non Disaster \(ND\) Grants System](#). Applicants needing technical support with the ND Grants System should contact [ndgrants@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:ndgrants@fema.dhs.gov) or (800) 865-4076, Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET.

Completed applications must be submitted no later than 5 p.m. ET on April 15, 2020.

**9. Is there a stand-alone fusion center Investment Justification required in FY 2020?**

No, there is no requirement to provide a stand-alone fusion center Investment Justification (IJ) this year for SHSP and UASI. However, all fusion center projects must be included in the Intelligence and Information National Priority IJ. The Intelligence and Information Sharing IJ should be labeled as the Fusion Center IJ in the Grant Reporting Tool (GRT) submission.

**10. Should the additional effectiveness information delineated in page 35 of the NOFO be input by applicants under the Project Description field in the GRT?**

Yes. However, because the GRT's project description fields are limited to 4,000 characters, States and territories may submit narrative addenda that can be uploaded to ND Grants. There is a two-page limit *per project* and addenda should meet the following criteria:

- Font: Arial or Times New Roman
- Font Size: 11 point (11 pt.) or larger
- Page Dimensions: Page dimensions must be 8.5" x 11" or smaller
- Margins: All margins (top, bottom, left, and right) must be at least 1"
- File Name: File names should be in the following format:  
State\_Urban Area\_IJ #\_National Priority\_Project Title

**11. States and High-Risk Urban Areas are encouraged to apply for at least 15 percent more funding above the top target range for SHSP and UASI. Do states need to delineate these projects requested as part of this additional funding above the top target range from the “regular” projects?**

Yes, these additional projects should be clearly identified in the National Priority area IJs with a “+15” in front of the project title.

**12. Must the additional projects included as part of the funding requested that is at least 15 percent above the top target range align with the four National Priorities (Cybersecurity, Soft Targets/Crowded Places, Intelligence and Information Sharing, and Emergent Threats)?**

Yes, these additional projects must align with *and be included in* the applicant's IJs for one or more of the four National Priority areas identified in the FY 2020 HSGP NOFO (see page 3, Priorities Section for more information on the four National Priority areas). The title of each additional project shall be preceded with a “+15” in front of the project title to identify it as an additional project submission.

**13. Are states required to include at least one election security project in their investments under the Enhancing the Protection of Soft Targets/Crowded Places National Priority area IJ and in their investments under the Enhancing Cybersecurity National Priority area IJ as part of their SHSP and UASI applications?**

Yes, SHSP and UASI applicants must include at least one election security project in both their Enhancing Cybersecurity National Priority area IJ *and* in their Enhancing the Protection of Soft Targets/Crowded Places National Priority area IJ. No funding minimum is prescribed for the election security projects in these two National Priority areas; however, the overall IJ

for each National Priority area must equal or exceed the 5 percent required minimum spend as described in the FY 2020 HSGP NOFO.

**14. Should the four National Priority area IJs include all projects at the time of application?**

Yes, the four National Priority area IJs (Cybersecurity, Soft Targets/Crowded Places, Intelligence and Information Sharing, and Emergent Threats) must include all projects at the time of application. All projects submitted as part of the additional funding of at least 15 percent more than the top of the target range must also be included in the IJ at the time of application.

The requirement to submit all projects at the time of application does not apply to projects in the IJs that do not align to the four National Priorities. Recipients will still be able to amend these IJs and projects in the first Biannual Strategy Implementation Report (BSIR).

**15. Is there additional guidance to define what types of projects could fit into Emergent Threats (similar to CISA guidance provided under Soft Targets/Crowded Places)?**

Page 4 of the FY 2020 HSGP NOFO lists several core capabilities and project types for the emergent threats investments for applicants to use as a guide in developing their IJs.

**Funding Questions**

**16. How much funding is available under the FY 2020 HSGP?**

Per the *Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2020* (Pub. L. No. 116-93), \$1,120,000,000 is available for funding under the FY 2020 HSGP. The total amount of available funding for each of the three programs is as follows:

HSGP Programs	FY 2020 Allocation
State Homeland Security Program	\$415,000,000
Urban Area Security Initiative	\$615,000,000
Operation Stonegarden	\$90,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,120,000,000</b>

**17. What are the changes in funding levels between FY 2019 and FY 2020?**

The funding level for the SHSP in FY 2020 is \$415 million, the same funding level as FY 2019. The funding level of the UASI is \$615 million, \$25 million more than the funding level in FY 2019. The funding level in FY 2020 for the OPSG Program is \$90 million, the same funding level as FY 2019.

**18. How will the FY 2020 HSGP funds be allocated?**

The FY 2020 allocation process for SHSP, UASI, and OPSG will be as follows:

**SHSP Allocations**

For FY 2020, DHS/FEMA will award SHSP funds based on risk and the anticipated effectiveness of the proposed use of grant funds. Targeted allocation ranges are provided

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for each State based on DHS/FEMA's relative risk methodology pursuant to the *Homeland Security Act of 2002*, as amended. States are strongly encouraged to apply for funding at least 15% over the high end of their target allocation range as ineffective projects will not be funded. Final award amounts will be based on DHS/FEMA's evaluation of the effectiveness of proposed investments and projects.

### UASI Allocations

For FY 2020, DHS/FEMA will award funding based on risk and the anticipated effectiveness of the proposed use of grant funds. Targeted allocation ranges are provided for each high-risk urban area based on DHS/FEMA's relative risk methodology pursuant to the *Homeland Security Act of 2002*, as amended. Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply for funding at least 15% over the high end of their target allocation range as ineffective projects will not be funded. Final award amounts will be based on DHS/FEMA's evaluation of the effectiveness of proposed investments and projects.

### OPSG Allocations

For FY 2020, DHS/FEMA will award OPSG funds based on risk and the anticipated effectiveness of the proposed use of grant funds. The FY 2020 OPSG risk assessment is designed to identify the risk to border security and to assist with the distribution of funds for the grant program. Entities eligible for funding are the state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies that are located along the border of the United States. Final award amounts will be based on DHS/FEMA's evaluation of the effectiveness of proposed investments and projects.

Further, SHSP and UASI applicants will be required to submit an IJ for each of the following four national priorities and their associated minimum spend requirements:

1. Cybersecurity: 5 percent
2. Soft Targets/Crowded Places: 5 percent
3. Intelligence and Information Sharing: 5 percent
4. Emerging Threats: 5 percent

For additional information, see pages 16-24 of the FY 2020 HSGP NOFO.

### **19. Is the minimum 5 percent funding investment for each of the four National Priorities calculated from the high end of the target allocation range?**

Yes. For states that receive more than the statutory minimum, the 5 percent should be calculated from the top-end funding amount indicated in the target range.

### **20. If certain projects under the National Priority IJs are not selected for funding, and the amount of project funding falls below the 5 percent minimum, is the state expected to continue to fund each of the National Priorities at or above the 5 percent minimum?**

No. If a recipient has a disapproved project (or projects) that cause it to fall below the 5 percent minimum in a National Priority, they will only be required to fund the investment at the approved percentage.

*Example:* If a recipient is approved for projects under its FY 2020 Cybersecurity National Priority area IJ that represent 4.2 percent of the final award, the recipient will be only be required to fund that project at 4.2 percent for the duration of the award's period of performance.

**21. Under SHSP and UASI, what happens if a project under one of the four National Priority area IJs is deemed ineffective?**

FEMA will award SHSP and UASI grants by investment and project following the effectiveness review of the four National Priority area IJs (Cybersecurity, Soft Targets/Crowded Places, Intelligence and Information Sharing, and Emergent Threats). If a National Priority area IJ has a project that is deemed ineffective it will not be funded. Once awards are made, there will be no further ability to increase award amounts.

*Example:* An applicant submits 5 projects representing 5 percent of the required minimum for the Soft Targets/Crowded Places Investment. After review, only 3 projects are selected for funding, representing 3.5 percent of the award allocation. Assuming all of the recipient's other National Priority area IJs are funded at 5 percent each, as are the nonrequired investments at 80 percent of the high end of the target allocation, the recipient will lose 1.5 percent of funding they could have received.

**22. Does the funding ratio need to be spread evenly across the four National Priorities (e.g., can more projects/funding be under one priority than another)?**

As long as states and urban areas meet or exceed the 5 percent minimum spend for each, the funding ratio *does not* need to be spread evenly across each of the four National Priority area IJs.

**23. Are SHSP and UASI recipients required to meet the 80% pass-through and 25% law enforcement terrorism prevention activities (LETPA) requirements, including if they have money reduced from their final award amount due to non-compliant or ineffective projects?**

The 80 percent pass-through and 25 percent LETPA requirements remain in effect and will be applied as percentages of the final award allocation issued to each State and territory. For further information on the pass-through requirement, see page 37 of the FY 2020 HSGP NOFO. For further information on the LETPA requirement, see page 12 of the FY 2020 HSGP NOFO.

## Application Effectiveness Review

**24. Will the evaluation criteria apply to only projects within the four National Priority area IJs or every project under any IJ?**

The five-factor effectiveness evaluation criteria will only apply to the projects under each National Priority area IJ. The four IJs addressing the National Priorities will be assessed for effectiveness based on the following five criteria:

1. Investment Strategy (30%)
2. Budget (10%)
3. Impact/Outcomes (30%)

4. Collaboration (30%)
5. Past Performance (additional consideration)

For additional information, see pages 35-36 of the FY 2020 HSGP NOFO.

**25. What are the administrative and eligibility criteria that FEMA will use to verify compliance for all proposed investments that are not in the National Priority area IJs?**

FEMA is using the same administrative and eligibility review conducted in past several funding cycles. FEMA is required by 31 U.S.C. § 3321 note, 41 U.S.C. § 2313, and 2 C.F.R. § 200.205 to review information available through any OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information. Application evaluation criteria may include the following risk-based considerations of the applicant: (1) financial stability; (2) quality of management systems and ability to meet management standards; (3) history of performance in managing federal award; (4) reports and findings from audits; and (5) ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.

FEMA will also evaluate applications for completeness, adherence to programmatic guidelines, and anticipated effectiveness of the proposed investments. FEMA's review will include verification that each IJ or project:

- Aligns with at least one core capability identified in the National Preparedness Goal;
- Demonstrates how investments support closing capability gaps or sustaining capabilities identified in the THIRA/SPR process; and
- Supports a NIMS-typed resource and whether those assets are deployable/shareable to support emergency or disaster operations per existing EMAC agreements.

**26. Will projects be scored individually?**

Yes, projects will be reviewed and scored individually.

**27. If States receive above the statutory minimum allocation and do not meet the 5% spend and effectiveness criteria will they be given a chance to revise their project narratives?**

No, States that receive an allocation above the statutory minimum for SHSP but do not meet the minimum 5 percent spend or have projects deemed ineffective will not be able to revise their project narratives. If the National Priority projects do not reach the 5 percent minimum or the projects are deemed ineffective, the award will be reduced by the amount under the required 5 percent or the ineffective project amount.