Overview

Congress established the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) in 2004 to better integrate nonprofit preparedness investments and activities within the broader national response to terrorism and violent extremism in the post-911 environment. This security grant benefits the charitable sector, including faith-based communities. At a time of increasing extremism and antagonism towards aspects of the charitable sector, NSGP has become one of the largest preparedness grant programs administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

NSGP provides federal funding for security enhancements to nonprofit organizations that are at risk of a terrorist attack. Eligible investments include Physical Security Enhancement Equipment; Security Planning, Training and Exercises; and Contracted Security Personnel. Through two grant tracks (NSGP-Urban Area and NSGP-State), this funding opportunity is open to all 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, nationally. It entails a competitive application and review process based on the availability of funding, assessment of risk, and the quality, efficiency and efficacy of the grant proposals submitted.

What is the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP)?

FEMA has the statutory authority to deliver numerous disaster and non-disaster financial assistance programs in support of FEMA’s mission, largely through grants and cooperative agreements. These programs account for a significant amount of the Federal funds for which FEMA is accountable.

NSGP is one of those assistance programs. It provides Federal funding to support target hardening and other physical security enhancements and activities to nonprofit organizations that are at high risk of terrorist or terroristic attack. The intent of the program is to integrate nonprofit preparedness activities with broader state and local preparedness efforts. It is also designed to promote coordination and collaboration in emergency preparedness activities among public and private community representatives, as well as state and local government agencies.

Potential applicants should note that grants under the program constitute Federal financial assistance.

How is NSGP funded, and who is eligible to receive these grants?

NSGP is funded by Congress and administered by FEMA. Each year, Congress funds the NSGP through discretionary appropriations. The next grant opportunity is for fiscal year 2022. The start date has not yet been determined and will be dependent on when Congress completes the appropriations process.
for the year (we expect the funding will commence sometime between March and May). We highly recommend that interested organizations make plans ahead of the Notice of Funding Opportunity if they intend to apply, especially if they are applying for the first time.

The Department of Homeland Security awards grants on a competitive basis to nonprofits determined to be at-risk of attack by violent extremists or terrorists. All places of worship are eligible, as well as other faith-based and charitable (501(c)(3)) organizations.

Two funding sources are available to nonprofit organizations under NSGP, based on geographic location. If an applicant is located within an urban area that FEMA and DHS have designated as a high-threat location, they would be eligible for the **Nonprofit Security Grant Program - Urban Area (NSGP-UA)**. The list of NSGP-UA jurisdictions is subject to change each year, although the list is mostly static, and the most recent list for FY 2021 included:

- Arizona: Phoenix Area
- California: Anaheim/Santa Ana Area
- California: Bay Area
- California: Los Angeles/Long Beach Area
- California: Riverside Area
- California: Sacramento Area
- California: San Diego Area
- Colorado: Denver Area
- District of Columbia: National Capital Region
- Florida: Miami/Fort Lauderdale Area
- Florida: Orlando Area
- Florida: Tampa Area
- Georgia: Atlanta Area
- Hawaii: Honolulu Area
- Illinois: Chicago Area
- Maryland: Baltimore Area
- Massachusetts: Boston Area
- Michigan: Detroit Area
- Minnesota: Twin Cities Area
- Missouri: St. Louis Area
- Nevada: Las Vegas Area
- New Jersey: Jersey City/Newark Area
- New York: New York City Area
- North Carolina Charlotte Area
- Oregon: Portland Area
- Pennsylvania" Philadelphia Area
- Texas: Dallas/Fort Worth/Arlington Area
- Texas: Houston Area
- Texas: San Antonio Area
- Virginia: Hampton Roads Area
- Washington: Seattle Area

Nonprofit organizations in the rest of the country are eligible for the **Nonprofit Security Grant Program - State (NSGP-S)**. An organization’s physical address will determine which program option is applicable to them.

**What can the grants be used for?**

The funds are intended to protect life and property by enhancing physical security, conducting preparedness planning, and training and contracting with security personnel. Grant recipients primarily use the funds for security upgrades such as security surveillance cameras/CCTV; controlled entry/access systems; security enhanced doors/windows; alarm/alert/notification systems; blast proof doors/windows; and physical barriers/fences/bollards. All eligible NSGP equipment is designated in FEMA’s Approved Equipment List, which can be viewed at: [https://www.fema.gov/grants/guidance-tools/authorized-equipment-list](https://www.fema.gov/grants/guidance-tools/authorized-equipment-list). The funds can also be used for preparedness training, planning, some cybersecurity, and to contract security.

Awards under both the NSGP Urban Area and NSGP-State initiatives are currently capped as follows:

- Sub-applicants with one site may apply for up to $150,000 for that site. However under NSGP-State, the state has the discretion to cap the maximum award below FEMA’s maximum level (check with the state for the established cap). The site must be in existence and occupied by the
nonprofit at the time of application. If under construction and/or unoccupied, the site would be ineligible to apply.

- Sub-applicants with multiple sites may apply for up to three sites at $150,000 per site, for a maximum total award of $450,000. Limitation: To be eligible, all the sites must be located in either an NSGP-UA jurisdiction or the NSGP-S jurisdiction, but not both. A separate vulnerability/risk assessment and application must be completed for each site applying for funding. Each site must be in existence and occupied by the nonprofit at the time of application.

FEMA sets the period of program performance for the grant at 36 months. However, the state at its discretion may reduce the period or performance below FEMA’s maximum period (check with the state for the period of performance).

**How does the application process work?**

Nonprofit organizations apply through their State Administrative Agency (SAA), which is typically the state homeland security and emergency management agency. The SAA conducts first-stage review of the applications and submits them to FEMA. The SAA locator may be accessed at: [https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/state-administrative-agency-contacts](https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/state-administrative-agency-contacts).

FEMA administers the program nationally. FEMA conducts a second-stage review and makes funding recommendations to the Secretary of Homeland Security, who makes the final award determinations.

The State Administrative Agency will notify those applicants that secure an award and will instruct them on all post-award project implementation and administrative requirements.

**The applicant’s primary point of contact for instruction and guidance throughout the application and post-award process is the SAA.** The applicant should have no or very little contact directly with FEMA.

**What materials do we need to submit?**

The SAA will instruct applicants on what and when they will need to submit. In general, the application package will include the application form called an Investment Justification (IJ), a vulnerability/risk assessment (upon which the investments requested in the IJ are based/substantiated), the applicant’s mission statement (preferably on letterhead), and any documentation substantiating the applicant elevated, such as past incidents. The SAA may also request additional information at their discretion.

**How will our application be evaluated?**

The following criteria are used to evaluate applicants:

- Identification and substantiation of current or persistent threats or attacks (from within or outside the United States) by a terrorist organization, network, or cell against the applicant (or similar institutions) based on their ideology, beliefs, or mission.
- Symbolic value of the site(s) as a highly recognized regional and/or national or historical institution(s).
- Role of the applicant nonprofit organization in responding to or recovering from terrorist attacks.
- Findings from a previously conducted vulnerability/risk assessment.
- Integration of nonprofit preparedness with broader state and local preparedness efforts.
Complete a feasible application that addresses identified risks and proposes building or sustaining capabilities resulting from the investments made to address the threats and vulnerabilities assessed.

What key dates and deadlines should we be aware of?

All key dates and deadlines will be set forth in FEMA’s Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). FEMA will post the NOFO approximately 60 days after Congress appropriates funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program. The NOFO will determine when the SAA must complete its first-stage review of the applications (between 30-80 days). Within that timeframe, the SAA will establish a deadline within which the nonprofits will be required to complete and submit their application packages (typically about 30-45 days). The timelines may differ between states (check with the SAA for the application deadline). FEMA must make final award recommendations, and DHS final awards decisions, before the start of the next fiscal year (up to 65 days and before mid-night September 30th).

What are the Critical First Steps to Applying for the NSGP Funding Opportunity?

1) **Identify the State Administrative Agency**: The SAA administers the program to the nonprofit applicants. They will provide applicants with all instructions and set any state/or local guidelines that may modify or add to Federal requirements. This includes establishing the deadlines to receive applications. Instructions and timelines may vary between SAAs. For a list of SAA contacts and websites go to: [https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/state-administrative-agency-contacts](https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/state-administrative-agency-contacts).

2) **Complete a Vulnerability/Risk Assessment**: Obtaining an assessment is a key prerequisite to moving forward with the application. Information requested in the application (called an Investment Justification), are based on the assessment’s finding and recommendations. There are basically three approaches to obtaining a vulnerability/risk assessment:

   - A professional assessment may be conducted by state or local law enforcement partners, or possibly DHS Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency Protective Security Advisors (if available) may provide them at no cost.
   - A private vendor, whose cost would not be reimbursable through the grant. Private sector vendors may vary in cost, quality, competency, so it would be advisable to vet/conduct due diligence on all prospective candidates.
   - A self-assessment, at no cost, including but not limited to the following:
     - [https://securecommunitynetwork.org/resources/dhs-grant-funds-information/nsgp-tvra-tool](https://securecommunitynetwork.org/resources/dhs-grant-funds-information/nsgp-tvra-tool).

3) **Obtain Vendor estimates for potential investments**: To ensure there is enough time to complete the application. It is important as soon as possible (after the risk assessment is completed) to:
   - Identify potential vendors or sources for products and services. Check with peers or local security advisors for reputable vendors.
Get two to three quotes for each product or service to estimate costs for your grant application. Ensure quotes include installation, maintenance, or service, as appropriate.

Discuss needed security measures with your organizational leadership to identify the most suitable solutions for the organization.

4) **Draft an application (Investment Justification).** Time is of the essence -- do not wait. The application period will be short (perhaps 4-6 weeks on average). Preliminary preparations:

- Draft in a word document (later to be cut and pasted into the IJ (which will likely be in Excel format). Refine draft over a period of time. (See link to IJ below).
- Research threat/risk to the applicant. Supporting research and documentation will help to validate/support threat to the facility, if applicable, such as police or insurance reports
- Familiarize with the Federal requirements:
  - Review the FY2021 NSGP Investment Justification at *(do not complete this form, it is just an archived sample)* at: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html?keywords=nonprofit%20security (Under File Name: FY_2021_NSGP_Investment Justification (new) 030221 locked.xlsx).

Where to address NSGP questions and seek Information?

- Federal Questions & Assistance: FEMA’s Grant Programs Directorate (GPD): FEMA-NSGP@fema.dhs.gov.
- State Questions & Assistance: State Administrative Agency (SAA): of SAA contacts and websites go to: https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/state-administrative-agency-contacts
- General Technical Assistance & Guidance: The Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA): NSGP@jewishfederations.org.

What if the NSGP Grant Program is not for us?

All faith and charitable sector organizations should familiarize themselves with safety and security best practices. Whether they intend to apply for the NSGP grant or not, assessing and enhancing their preparedness is advisable. Faith- and community security resources may be accessed at: https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/individuals-communities/faith.