



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

This document addresses FAQs related to the FY 2020 HSGP.

Program Overview

What is the purpose of the FY 2020 HSGP?

The FY 2020 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.

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).

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. DHS/FEMA modified certain FY 2020 HSGP application requirements via Information Bulletin (IB) 447. These changes are described in the next section of this FAQ document.

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.



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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.

What are the key dates associated with the FY 2020 HSGP?

- February 14, 2020: Release date for the FY 2020 HSGP NOFO.
- April 30, 2020, 5 p.m. ET: Applications for the FY 2020 HSGP due to FEMA.

What is the FY 2020 HSGP period of performance?

The period of performance is 36 months.

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. 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.

In this FAQ document, is there a way to have key word searches or better navigate the document?

The user should employ the Adobe search feature to find questions and answers containing key words. In addition, all questions are grouped under major subject headings for ease of navigation.

How do we ensure that we are receiving the latest information, updates, and guidance from FEMA on the status of the preparedness grants?

All communications will be sent to our State and Urban Area partners via the ASKCsid@fema.dhs.gov e-mail address and posted on the www.fema.gov/grants website. If you are not receiving these e-mails, please send a request to your assigned Preparedness Officer or directly to the ASKCsid@fema.dhs.gov e-mail address and you will be added to the distribution list.

Key Changes: Information Bulletin No. 447, Published April 10, 2020

Has the application deadline for the FY 2020 State Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) been extended?

No. Applications remain due by 5:00pm Eastern Time on April 30, 2020.

Are the FY 2020 HSGP application requirements being changed?

Yes. These changes include:

- All States and Urban Areas will now receive funding equal to the high end of their target allocation range in the FY 2020 HSGP NOFO.
- Applicants are no longer encouraged to apply for funding at least 15 percent over their allocations.
- Project-level information for the four National Priority areas may now be submitted with the Biannual Strategy Implementation Report (BSIR), which is due by January 30, 2021.

Complete details of the changes to the application requirements in the FY 2020 HSGP NOFO can be found in Information Bulletin (IB) 447, published on April 10, 2020. IB 447 is located at <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/185927>.

Will States, territories, and eligible Urban Areas still potentially lose funding?

No. All States, territories, and eligible Urban Areas will receive the high end of their target allocation range as identified in the FY 2020 HSGP NOFO. No state, territory, or eligible Urban Area will lose any funding.

Are States, territories, and eligible Urban Areas still required to submit Investment Justifications (IJs) for each of the four National Priority areas with their applications?

Yes. States, territories, and eligible Urban Areas *must* submit one (1) IJ with *at least* one (1) respective project for each of the four National Priority areas (Cybersecurity, Soft Targets/Crowded Places, Intelligence and Information Sharing, and Emerging Threats) with their application. However, complete project-level information will not be required until States, territories, and eligible Urban Areas submit their first Biannual Strategy Implementation Report (BSIR), which is due on January 30, 2021.

Are States, territories, and eligible Urban Areas still required to demonstrate a minimum spend of five (5) percent for each of the four National Priority areas with their applications?

Yes. Each of the IJs covering the four National Priority areas (Cybersecurity, Soft Targets/Crowded Places, Intelligence and Information Sharing, and Emerging Threats) *must* account for *at least* five (5) percent of the applicant's total allocation.

Should I still submit the additional projects beyond my target allocation?

No. Because all states, territories, and eligible Urban Areas will receive the high end of their target allocation range, there is no need to submit additional projects.

Can I still submit project level details for the four National Priority area IJs with my application on April 30, 2020?

Yes. However, because of the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic, these funds will be placed on hold until DHS has sufficient resources available to conduct the effectiveness review of these projects.

If I don't submit complete project-level information with my application on April 30, 2020, when is this information due?

All project-level information for the FY 2020 SHSP and UASI programs must be submitted with the BSIR report, which is due on January 30, 2021.

Will funding for the projects *not* included as part of the four National Priority area IJs be available at the time of award?

Yes, funds for these projects will be available for use at the time of award. However, as in past years, project-level information for these funds must be provided with the first BSIR report, which is due on January 30, 2021. DHS/FEMA may place a hold on those funds at that time should any of the projects be deemed ineffective during their review.

If one of more of my FY 2020 SHSP or UASI projects is deemed ineffective, will I lose funding?

No. However, recipients and subrecipients will not be permitted to expend funding under the National Priority areas until the effectiveness of the proposed projects has been reviewed and confirmed by FEMA. FEMA will work with you to address deficiencies identified in the effectiveness review.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

You may reach out to your assigned Preparedness Officer, or contact the Centralized Scheduling and Information Desk via email at askcsid@fema.dhs.gov, or by telephone at (800) 368-6498, Monday through Friday between 9:00am and 5:00pm Eastern Time.

Application Development and Submission

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 seven (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 or (800) 865-4076, Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET.

Is there a stand-alone fusion center IJ required in FY 2020?

No, there is no requirement to provide a stand-alone fusion center 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.

If a State or Urban Area has an election security project that is managed from the fusion center (e.g., a state-wide training/awareness project conducted by fusion center staff), can that project be included as an election security project under the Soft Targets/Crowded Places or the Cybersecurity National Priority area IJs?

Election security projects, such as statewide training and awareness efforts, that can be captured as standalone projects may be included in the Soft Targets/Crowded Places or Cybersecurity National Priority area IJs. However, core fusion center operating investments **must** be included in the Intelligence and Information Sharing National Priority area IJ.

Should the additional effectiveness information delineated on 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:

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- 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

Are SHSP and UASI applicants 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 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 five (5) percent required minimum spend as described in the FY 2020 HSGP NOFO.

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

Per IB 447, DHS/FEMA will no longer require SAAs to submit complete project-level information at the time of application for the National Priority Areas. The FY 2020 HSGP submission *must* still include one (1) IJ and *at least* one (1) respective project for each of the four identified National Priority Areas (Cybersecurity, Soft Targets/Crowded Places, Intelligence and Information Sharing, and Emerging Threats), with each of these four investments accounting for a minimum of five (5) percent of the total allocation. If not submitted with the application on April 30, 2020, all project-level information, including those for the four National Priority Areas, must be submitted as part of the BSIR submission, which is due by January 30, 2021.

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.

Prior to FY 2020, the HSGP NOFO required that any State that retained a portion of an UASI allocation (up to 20%) for projects that directly support the Urban Area must include an IJ for the State-retained funds. The FY 2020 NOFO does not contain language for this requirement. Is this still a requirement for FY 2020?

Yes, the language was inadvertently omitted from the NOFO. The State will still create an IJ for state-retained funds as part of the applicable UASI's IJ submission, except if the State proposes to use funding under one of

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the four National Priorities (Cybersecurity, Soft Targets/Crowded Places, Intelligence and Information Sharing, and Emergent Threats). Those projects shall be included in the applicable National Priority area IJ, ensuring the project name includes the word "STATE" to indicate the activity is a proposed State-funded UASI project.

Since FY 2018, FEMA has required States and Urban Areas to submit one consolidated Emergency Communications IJ. This IJ included all emergency communications investments and describes how such activities align with their Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP). Will FEMA still require States and Urban Areas to submit one Emergency Communications IJ even if projects align with one of the four National Priorities (Cybersecurity, Soft Targets/Crowded Places, Intelligence and Information Sharing, and Emergent Threats)?

In FY 2020, States and Urban Areas are **not** required to submit one consolidated Emergency Communications IJ. States and Urban Areas may still submit an Emergency Communications IJ; however, Emergency Communications projects that fall under one of the four National Priorities (Cybersecurity, Soft Targets/Crowded Places, Intelligence and Information Sharing, and Emergent Threats) should be included under the applicable priority.

Funding Questions

How much funding is available under the FY 2020 HSGP?

Per the *Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2020* (Pub. L. No. 116-93), \$1.12 billion 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
Total	\$1,120,000,000

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.

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. Each State will receive the high end of their target allocation based on DHS/FEMA's relative risk methodology pursuant to the *Homeland Security Act of 2002* as amended and published in the FY 2020 HSGP NOFO.

UASI Allocations

For FY 2020, DHS/FEMA will award UASI funds based on risk. Each eligible Urban Area will receive the high end of their target allocation based on DHS/FEMA's relative risk methodology pursuant to the *Homeland Security Act of 2002* as amended and published in the FY 2020 HSGP NOFO.

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 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.

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

What happens if a project under one of the four National Priority area IJs is deemed ineffective?

If a project under one of the four National Priority areas is deemed ineffective, DHS/FEMA will work with the States and Urban Areas to bring the project into compliance with the requirements.

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

If States and Urban Areas meet or exceed the 5 percent minimum spend for each National Priority, the funding ratio *does not* need to be spread evenly across each of the four National Priority area IJs.

Application Effectiveness Review

Will all projects included in the four National Priority area IJs undergo an effectiveness review?

No. Only those the projects designated as making up the minimum 5% requirement for each of the National Priority areas will undergo the enhanced effectiveness review (which is new for FY 2020) and could be subject to a hold for

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that purpose. However, as in past years, all applications are still subject to the review process described in the NOFO and highlighted in Question 38 below.

Will all projects undergo an effectiveness review, or will only those submitted under the four National Priority areas (Cybersecurity, Soft Targets/Crowded Places, Intelligence and Information Sharing, and Emergent Threats) receive this review?

Only those the projects designated as making up the minimum spend (5%) for each of the National Priority areas will undergo the enhanced effectiveness review (which is new for FY 2020) and could be subject to a hold for that purpose. However, as in past years, all applications are still subject to the review process described in the NOFO and highlighted in Question 38 below.

Pages 35-37 of the FY20 HSGP NOFO outline the effectiveness criteria that will be used to assess the National Priority area IJs. Can FEMA provide additional details to help applicants better understand how success will be determined across the criteria?

FEMA recommends including as much supporting detail as possible to demonstrate how projects and IJs are addressing the National Priority areas in an effective manner. Supporting details when drafting narratives could include:

- How the project/investment descriptions support and align to the proposed budget
- How/why a project has a nexus to terrorism
- How/why a project will influence/address the National Priority area
- How/why the projects/investments/priorities align and build upon each other for an overall investment strategy that addresses the National Priority area
- Current and future partners and external entities (government, tribal, for-profit, nonprofit) and their geographic area/scope (local, regional, state, federal) you engage and collaborate with to address grant objectives and the National Priority area
- How you currently engage and collaborate with partners and any efforts to improve and/or expand engagement in the future
- How you currently and/or will engage and collaborate with partners to address and overcome challenges (including what the challenges are)
- How you measure and evaluate success, improvement, outcomes, impacts (quantitatively and/or qualitatively)
- How you use capability gaps, standardized targets, and other results identified in the THIRA/SPR to measure and evaluate improvement
- How you maximize cost effectiveness of grant expenditures through oversight processes and/or other strategies throughout the grant life cycle

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 will evaluate all applications for completeness, adherence to programmatic guidelines, and anticipated effectiveness of the proposed investments. This review applies to all projects, *including those in*

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the four National Priority area IJs. In addition, for SHSP and UASI projects, FEMA's review will include verification that each project:

- Has a demonstrated nexus to preventing, preparing for, protecting against, and responding to acts of terrorism;
- 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 Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and Stakeholder Preparedness Review (SPR) process; and
- Supports a National Incident Management System (NIMS)-typed resource, and whether those assets are deployable/shareable to support emergency or disaster operations per existing Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) agreements.

FEMA is also 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.

Will projects be scored individually?

Yes, projects will be reviewed and scored individually.

Award Administration

Are SAAs still required to pass through at least 80 percent of the funds awarded under SHSP and UASI to local or tribal governments within 45 calendar days of receipt of the funds?

Yes. To meet this requirement, the SAA must issue sub-awards to local or tribal governments in an amount that accounts for at least 80 percent of the SHSP or UASI award, in a manner consistent with the FY 2020 HSGP NOFO. The SAA may issue sub-awards for funding under one or more of the National Priority areas during the 45-day period and apply that funding to the 80 percent pass-through requirement. The SAA may issue these sub-awards even if the effectiveness review has not been completed. The subrecipient, however, will not be permitted to expend SHSP or UASI funding under the National Priority areas until that effectiveness review has been completed by FEMA.

For example, if an SAA receives a \$10 million SHSP award, it must pass through at least \$8 million to local or tribal governments within 45 days. If any of that \$8 million is subject to the National Priority areas effectiveness review, the SAA would issue applicable subawards covering that portion, but the subrecipients could not expend that funding that remains subject to the National Priority areas effectiveness review until the review is completed by DHS/FEMA.

Once the effectiveness of a National Priority investment or project is reviewed and confirmed by FEMA, may the recipient or subrecipient incur costs under that investment or project dating back to the start of the award's period of performance, even if those costs were incurred prior to the completion of the effectiveness review?

Technically, yes, however, recipients and subrecipients are cautioned that they will only be reimbursed for National Priority investments and projects that are deemed effective. If the recipient or subrecipient incurs costs prior to completion of the effectiveness review it runs the risk that those costs will not be reimbursed with SHSP or UASI funds. Once the effectiveness of an investment or project is confirmed by FEMA, recipients may charge allowable costs to the SHSP or UASI award that are incurred at any point during the award's period of performance.