

PRESS RELEASE—Contact DSPS Newsroom at dspnewsroom@wisconsin.gov

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DSPS Communications
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Applications for \$150,000 in Youth Firefighter Training Grants Opening Soon
DSPS spreading the word about expanded eligibility guidelines

Madison, Wis. – Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) Secretary-designee Dan Hereth announced today the department is gearing up to open applications for the grant program that funds youth firefighter training programs in Wisconsin.

[The Youth Firefighter Grant Program](#) helps address the recruitment concerns of Wisconsin fire departments by exposing students to career and volunteer opportunities in the fire service at a time when they are making decisions about their future careers and endeavors.

“Recruitment and retention have become a key focus for nearly all Wisconsin fire departments, especially the all-volunteer departments in many rural Wisconsin communities,” Hereth explained. “These grants help educate youth about the benefits of fire service and hopefully inspire them to serve as a firefighter in one of these communities.”

The total amount of funding available is \$150,000 over the next two years, with individual applicants eligible for up to \$25,000. DSPS revised eligibility guidelines this year to expand grant funding opportunities to more groups in more parts of the state. The department awards the grants to qualified fire departments, technical colleges, and/or school districts to establish or expand youth firefighter training programs for middle and high school age youth.

The schedule for this latest round of grants is:

- January 8 – Grant applications open
- February 5 – Application submission deadline
- February 29 – Anticipated announcement date for awards

Groups interested in applying for a grant are invited to [register for a webinar](#) scheduled for December 20 where they can ask questions and learn more about the application process and expanded eligibility.

DSPS is primarily known as a licensing and regulatory agency. However, the department’s safety mission also includes work with state fire service agencies. In addition to administering the Youth Firefighter Grant Program, DSPS regulates firefighter health and safety, administers the [2% Dues](#) program, and recently unveiled a new [Fire Risk Tool](#) on its public website to help Wisconsin fire departments assess risk in their respective communities.

The word “safety” is in our department’s name,” Hereth said. “We are proud to work with state fire departments on a variety of fronts, including the Youth Firefighter Grant Program. We are also pleased to have more money to award this year, and we look forward to a wider range of proposals thanks to our eligibility expansion.”

In addition to responding to calls, fire departments provide fire prevention education to schools and community groups. They also collaborate extensively with organizations working to support living in place for older adults, and they provide critical demographic housing information and response support during weather emergencies and natural disasters like floods, tornados, and wildfires.

Three applicants received funding in the last round of grant awards, receiving a total of \$50,000.

About DSPS:

DSPS issues more than 240 unique licenses, administers dozens of boards and councils that regulate professions, enforces state building codes, runs the state fire prevention program, and maintains the award-winning Wisconsin Enhanced Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, which is a key tool in the multi-faceted public health campaign to stem excessive opioid prescribing. A fee-based agency, DSPS is self-sustaining and receives no general fund tax dollars for its day-to-day operations. With five offices and 250 employees throughout Wisconsin, DSPS collaborates with constituents and stakeholders across a wide range of industries to promote safety and advance the economy.

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