

PRESS RELEASE

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DSPS Communications

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Fourth Round of DSPS Youth Firefighter Training Grants Opens in February

Wisconsin's Safety Agency continues investment in future of state fire departments

Madison, Wis. – Wisconsin Safety and Professional Services Secretary Dan Hereth announced today his department will soon open applications for more Youth Firefighter Training Grants.

This will be the fourth round of funding distributed through the DSPS grant program, which helps address recruitment concerns of Wisconsin fire departments. The funding supports programs that expose middle and high school students to career and volunteer opportunities in the fire service, at a time when they are making decisions about future careers and endeavors.

“Wisconsin fire departments have an age problem. Longtime professionals and volunteers have either retired or cut back, so recruiting and retaining replacements is vital, especially for the all-volunteer departments that protect many Wisconsin communities,” Sec. Hereth explained in announcing this round of funding. “These grants help educate youth about the benefits of fire service and service to their community.”

“We’re thankful for the opportunity that (our) students get to have,” said Luxemburg-Casco Schools Director of Student Services, Mike Snowberry, who wrote the application that won a nearly \$25,000 grant last year for the Kewaunee County Junior Firefighter Program. “As you know, the age is going up in our fire departments, so we’re hopeful with 17- and 18-year-olds we can bring that number down and ensure safety and support in our communities for the future.”

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 last year to expand grant funding opportunities to more groups in more parts of the state.

The funding is available to all qualified fire departments, technical colleges, and/or school districts to establish or expand youth firefighter training programs for students.

The schedule for this latest round of grants is:

- February 3 – Grant applications open/DSPS hosts informational webinar
- March 2 – Application submission deadline
- March 19 – Anticipated grant awards announcement date

Groups interested in applying for a grant are invited to register for the February 3 webinar, where they can ask questions and learn more about eligibility and the application process. Register by emailing Brad Johnson at Bradley.Johnson@Wisconsin.gov.

In addition to the grant program, DSPS works with the state fire service to administer the 2% Fire Dues program and to regulate firefighter health and safety. Last year, the department unveiled a new, free [Fire Risk Tool](#) on its public website to help Wisconsin fire departments assess risk in their respective communities.

“Governor Evers declared this week Community Risk Reduction Week in Wisconsin, and I can’t think of a better way to celebrate that than to announce the continuation of this grant program that strengthens the local fire departments on the front lines of community risk reduction,” said Sec. Hereth.

Wisconsin 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.

About DSPS

DSPS issues more than 240 unique licenses, administers dozens of boards and councils that regulate professions, enforces state building codes, and maintains the 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 two offices and roughly 250 employees, DSPS collaborates with constituents and stakeholders across a wide range of industries to promote safety and advance the economy.

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