

few or no firefighting vehicles relative to other departments servicing similar types of communities. We consider vehicles that are on long-term loan or assignment to the applicant to be part of the applicant's fleet.

We will also give higher competitive rating to departments that have not recently purchased a new firefighting vehicle, and departments that wish to replace or relegate an old, high-mileage vehicle. We will also provide a higher competitive rating to departments seeking a vehicle that incur a significant number of responses relative to other departments servicing similar communities.

We believe that more benefit will accrue to a community that needs a new vehicle (*i.e.*, the initial purchase of a new or used vehicle) as its first vehicle or to relegate a non-compliant vehicle to reserve status, *i.e.*, relegate a vehicle that does not conform to applicable standards. Relegating a compliant vehicle has a lower priority than relegating a non-compliant vehicle. But replacing a compliant vehicle has more benefit than purchasing a vehicle to

expand the operational capacity of a department into a new mission area.

While no competitive advantage has been assigned to the purchase of commercial vehicles versus custom vehicles, or used vehicles versus new vehicles in the preliminary evaluation of applications, it has been our experience that depending on the type and size of department, the technical evaluation panelists often prefer low-cost vehicles when evaluating the cost/benefit section of the project narratives. Panelists may be provided with guidance for use in their evaluation on the reasonableness of vehicle costs. We may also instill funding limits on requests for vehicles that we deem excessive or otherwise not in the best interest of the program.

Finally, we believe that it would be more beneficial to the nation's fire service if we gave these vehicle awards to as many fire departments as possible, therefore, we will allow each fire department to apply for only one vehicle per year.

Reporting Requirements

The grantees may be required to submit a progress report regarding the financial and performance status of their project after six months of performance and at the closure of the grant. The due dates will vary from grantee to grantee, based on the performance period as indicated in the Articles of Agreement. These performance reports should provide us with a comparison of actual accomplishments to the objectives approved in the grant scope of work. Any issues that may affect a timely close out of the award should be reported at this time.

The mid-term report is due within 30 days of the end of the first six-months. All grantees will be required to submit a final report within 90 days of completion of the grant performance period or the closure of the grant, whichever comes first.

Dated: March 7, 2003.

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Acting Under Secretary, Emergency Preparedness and Response Directorate.

[FR Doc. 03-6172 Filed 3-13-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6719-08-P