

# Council Business Meeting

January 18, 2022

<b>Agenda Item</b>	Request to Apply for FEMA Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Grant	
<b>From</b>	Ralph Sartain	Fire Chief
<b>Contact</b>	<a href="mailto:ralph.sartain@ashland.or.us">ralph.sartain@ashland.or.us</a>	541-552-2229

## **SUMMARY**

On December 22, 2021, Ashland Fire & Rescue (AF&R) received an email from FEMA (attached) advising of the short window opening of the FY 2021 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program. Ashland Fire & Rescue is requesting permission from Council to apply for this Grant program which does not require a money match, however, requires staffing to remain the same for the three years through the Grant funding. There will be material startup costs to equip the firefighters if the Grant is awarded. Ashland Fire & Rescue requests to apply for the FEMA SAFER Grant to fund six (6) firefighters.

## **POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED**

Council Goal 1 - Develop current and long-term budgetary resilience

Council Goal 2 - Analyze City departments/programs to gain efficiencies, reduce costs and improve services

Cost Review Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation #5 (approved by Council May 19, 2020)-Direct staff to advise definitive ways where they could streamline operations with the goal of creating a meaningful cost/benefit review of services offered and that also creates efficiencies and reduces costs.

Cultivate External Funding Opportunities

Support Innovative Programs that Protect the Community

## **PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION**

Multiple staffing requests from Ashland Fire & Rescue to Council for continual staffing requests as call volume has steadily increased.

## **BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Last ISO Score deducted 50% from fire department staffing score because of inadequate firefighter staffing.

Ambulance cost service analysis showed the ambulance service was a benefit to the community, however, the fire department was inadequately staffed.

National standards for deployment of first alarm assignment of firefighters on a 2000sgft home with no basement and no exposures, and an ariel apparatus assignment of 18 firefighters. AFR currently has a minimum staffing of 8 firefighters, Fire District 5 has a current minimum staffing of 6 firefighters for a total of 14 firefighters or 4 under national safety standards. If AFR were to receive this SAFR grant and

as you are aware District 5 had received a SAFER grant in December 2021, we will meet minimum standards for fire assignments in 2023.

The SAFER Grant was created to provide funding directly to fire departments to help them increase or maintain the number of trained, "front line" firefighters available in their communities. The goal of SAFER is to enhance the local fire departments' abilities to comply with staffing, response and operational standards established by the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Insurance Services Office (ISO).

Our success for the grant application would depend on two measurements - how often we meet NFPA 1710 now, and how often we expect to do so with the requested personnel. Highest priority goes to fire departments meeting the standard no more than 19% of the time, achieving 80% compliance after the award.

If AF&R were to be successful with the SAFER Grant, we would have an opportunity to:

1. Increase safety and effectiveness at emergency scenes.
2. Create the opportunity to staff Station 2 with a full engine company as well as the ambulance.
3. Create the opportunity to improve the City's ISO scoring related to staffing and deployment.
4. Allow the department to staff a (3<sup>rd</sup>) ambulance during times of extreme call volume from Station 1.

The grant application is due by February 4, 2022. At 5 p.m. Eastern.

If awarded, the department would receive notification later this year (August-October). From the time of notification, we would have six (6) months to hire the six (6) firefighters. There is a three-year period of performance for this grant. Award recipients have no obligation to retain SAFER funded positions at the end of the three years, but it should be assumed that the positions will remain, and future secured funding should be planned to keep these positions.

This will move our current staffing model from 8-10 to 9-12. This will also allow for the contracted two employees off per the Association contract and the flexibility of a third before overtime is required to backfill. It will change minimum staffing by two (2) FTE per shift. Station 2 will move from a minimum staffing of two (2), to a minimum staffing of four (4) again allowing for the deployment of both an ambulance and fire engine from Station 2, which at current minimum staffing is one or the other.

## **FISCAL IMPACTS**

In the event the SAFER Grant is not funded there would be no financial cost to the City.

We cannot supplant local spending with Federal funding (I.e., use SAFER money to pay for Firefighters currently employed by the City),

Salary and associated benefits are eligible.

FLSA requirement costs are eligible.

Salaries and benefits of recruits in training are eligible, assuming those recruits are not brought online prior to the beginning of the performance period.

No additional vehicles are needed to support the positions.

Job-sharing positions are not eligible (using two or more people to fill one full time FTE).

Training classes and equipment are not eligible (distinct from salaries/benefits of FFs going through that training).

Annual physicals/medical exams are not eligible.

Management and Administration costs in support of this grant are not eligible.

Indirect Facilities and Construction costs in support of this grant are not eligible.

“Benefits” are eligible: “... regular compensation paid to employees during periods of authorized absences from job” (vacation, sick leave, military leave, etc.). This can include social security contributions, employee insurance, workers comp, pension plan, and other similar costs.

Financial Impact for Continued Employment post SAFR:

### **Costs covered by the grant**

**Salary and benefits** for 6 firefighters (excluding overtime):

- Year 1 \$804,000 – \$836, 160 - assumed EMT or Paramedic certification and starting at step 1
- Year 2 \$868,000 – \$902,720 - assumed a 5% step increase and a 3% increase for wages and benefits
- Year 3 \$937,00 – \$974,000 - assumed a 5% step increase and a 3% increase for wages and benefits

**The grant would cover 100% of the above cost.** At the end of three years the estimated cost to keep the firefighters would be just over \$1 million in year 4.

### **Costs not covered by the grant:**

**Overtime costs**

- Year 1 \$71,000 – estimated based on current average hours per employee
- Year 2 \$77,000 – same hours just increase due to wage increases
- Year 3 \$83,000 – same hours just increase due to wage increases

If the positions are retained after the grant is over, the estimate cost of overtime would be \$90,000 in year 4. Note...This years overtime numbers were generated because of vacancies which have yet to be filled, injuries, FMLA, and medical retirement.

**Uniforms and protective equipment**

- Year 1 \$40,000 – \$10,000 for uniforms, \$30,000 for protective equipment
- Year 2
- Year 3

If the 6 positions are retained after the grant is over, every 5 years we would need to purchase protective equipment which currently costs \$30,000 for 6 firefighters.

**Note**

The referenced costs estimates above do not include, and are subject to any salary/benefit changes that may come out of the anticipated/upcoming labor negotiations.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff requests Council approve to move forward with this grant application process and bring adequate staffing to Ashland Fire & Rescue.

**ACTIONS, OPTIONS & POTENTIAL MOTIONS**

I move to approve Ashland Fire & Rescue’s applications to FEMA’s Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant application for the purpose of funding six (6) additional firefighters.

**REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS**



**The fiscal year (FY) 2021 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program application period will open on Monday, January 3, at 8 a.m. ET and will close on Friday, February 4, at 5 p.m. ET.**

Start planning your FY 2021 SAFER grant application now by reviewing the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and application guidance materials. These materials were produced specifically to help potential applicants begin to plan their 2021 grant applications ahead of the application period. These documents can be viewed on the SAFER Program website at [www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters/safer/documents](http://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters/safer/documents) and/or downloaded to your computer:

- Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
- Self-Evaluation – Hiring of Firefighters

- Career, combination and volunteer fire departments
- Self-Evaluation - Recruitment and Retention - Fire Departments
  - Combination and volunteer fire departments
- Self-Evaluation - Recruitment and Retention – Interest Organizations
  - National, State, Local, or Tribal Volunteer Firefighters Interest Organizations
- SAFER Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- FEMA GO Account Creation User Guide
- Applicant Checklist
  - This checklist will help you prepare to answer questions within the grant application.
- Recruitment and Retention - Request Details Description Instructions
  - This document will provide Recruitment and Retention applicants with a list of the categories and sub-category available in the application as well as information on the level of details needed for each budget line item.

**Fire Grants Help Desk:** *If you have questions about the guidance materials listed above, call or email the Fire Grants Help Desk. The toll-free number is 1-866-274-0960; the e-mail address is for questions is [firegrants@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:firegrants@fema.dhs.gov). The Fire Grants Help Desk is open Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. ET.*

## APPLICATION PORTAL

The online SAFER grant application will be available through the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program’s FEMA GO (FEMA Grants Outcomes) application portal at <https://go.fema.gov>.

All users must have their own FEMA GO account. Each account is specific to the authorized user and must not be shared with other personnel. A [FEMA GO Account Creation User Guide](#) can be viewed on the SAFER Program website or downloaded to your computer.

### Web Browser Information

FEMA GO will only support the most recent major release of the following browsers:

- Google Chrome
- Internet Explorer
- Mozilla Firefox
- Apple Safari
- Microsoft Edge

Users who attempt to use tablet type devices or other browsers may encounter issues with using FEMA GO.

## SAM.GOV REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED TO APPLY AND RECEIVE GRANTS

All eligible applicants **must** be registered and active in the System for Award Management (SAM) **before** you can start an application. Per 2 CFR § 25.205, FEMA may not make an

award to an entity until the entity has complied with the requirements to provide a valid DUNS number and maintain an active SAM.gov registration with current information. To register, or validate your SAM.gov information, please visit <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/>.

---

### **SAM.gov Registration Tips:**

Please ensure the following items are current in SAM and the DUNS number used in SAM is the same one you use for all FEMA applications:

- Organization's name
- Address
- Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS)
- Employer Identification Number (EIN)
- Banking information - type of account (checking or saving), routing number, and account number

The above information should be consistent throughout all registration documents.

Many websites may look official in appearance but are not. As a reminder, registration in the SAM.gov is FREE.

SAM.gov registration is only active for one year and must be renewed annually.

---

### **Should you need assistance with your SAM.gov account, there are several ways to get help:**

- Submit your SAM.gov question online to the Federal Service Help Desk at [https://www.fsd.gov/gsafsd\\_sp](https://www.fsd.gov/gsafsd_sp)
- Call the Federal Service Help Desk toll free at (866) 606-8220 open Monday - Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET.
- [Quick Start Guides for Grant Registrations](#) and [SAM Video Tutorial for New Applicants](#) are tools created by the General Services Administration to assist those registering with the System for Award Management (SAM).

If you have questions or concerns about your SAM.gov registration, please contact the Federal Support desk at [https://www.fsd.gov/gsafsd\\_sp](https://www.fsd.gov/gsafsd_sp)

---

### **Submitting Preparer Information**

FEMA requires that all applicants identify any individual or organization that assisted with the development, preparation, or review of the application to include drafting or writing the narrative and budget, whether that person, entity, or agent is compensated or not and whether the assistance took place prior to submitting the application. Please ensure that this information is accurate at the time of submission. As a reminder, all applicants must attest that all information contained within the application, including preparer information, to be true, complete, and accurate to the best of your knowledge. If you contract with a grant writer, and they either advise you to not list them in the preparer information section of the application, or refuse to be listed, please notify the SAFER program office.

---

**Twitter** [@FEMAGrants](#)

Want the most up-to-date information on FEMA Grant programs? Follow us on Twitter [@FEMAGrants](#).

### SHARE YOUR SUCCESS STORY

Do you have a Success Story regarding a FEMA Grant that you'd like to share with everyone? Contact us at [gpd-comms@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:gpd-comms@fema.dhs.gov) or through Twitter [@FEMAGrants](#) using a private message.

AFG Home Page: <https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters>

AFG Regional Representatives:

<https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters/regional-contacts>

AFG Help Desk: E-mail: [firegrants@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:firegrants@fema.dhs.gov)

Telephone Toll-Free: 1-866-274-0960

 SHARE



[Update Your E-mail Address](#) | [Change Delivery Preference](#) | [Update State and Zip Code](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)

[Subscribe to receive alerts during disasters in your state.](#)

If you have questions or problems with the subscription service, please contact [subscriberhelp.govdelivery.com](http://subscriberhelp.govdelivery.com).

This service is provided to you at no charge by [FEMA](#).

[Privacy Policy](#) | GovDelivery is providing this information on behalf of U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and may not use the information for any other purposes.

This email was sent to [ashfireduck@gmail.com](mailto:ashfireduck@gmail.com) using GovDelivery Communications Cloud on behalf of FEMA · U.S. Department of Homeland Security · Washington, DC 20472

