

Council Business Meeting

January 4, 2022

Agenda Item	Request to Apply for FEMA Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Grant	
From	Ralph Sartain	Fire Chief
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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

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 (3rd) 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 10-12. 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.

Overtime costs are not eligible.

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.

Ashland Fire and Rescue would need to pay for the cost of uniforms and protective equipment for these positions. This is estimated at \$40,000.

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 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. 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
- 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

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.

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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 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

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

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