



REPORT TO COUNCIL City of Sacramento

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915 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-2604
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Consent
September 14, 2010

Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council

**Title: Grant Application: 2010 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency
Response (SAFER) Grant**

Location/Council District: Citywide

Recommendation: Adopt a **Resolution:** 1) authorizing the City Manager to apply for grant funding to increase staffing and deployment capabilities through the SAFER grant; 2) accepting federal funds awarded only if the condition prohibiting layoffs and supplanting is waived; and 3) establishing an operating grant, and revenue and expenditure budgets, contingent on the layoff/supplanting prohibitions being waived.

Contact: Michelle Basurto, Program Specialist, 808-1357; Ray Jones, Fire Chief 808-1601

Presenters: None

Department: Fire

Division: Special Projects

Organization No: 12001051

Description/Analysis

Issue: The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is currently accepting grant applications for the 2010 SAFER grant. SAFER grants provide financial assistance to help fire departments increase their cadre of frontline firefighters or to rehire firefighters that have been laid off or lost through attrition but not filled due to economic circumstances. The Sacramento Fire Department is seeking grant funding to restore and hire twenty-four (24) firefighter positions lost thru attrition.

The SAFER grant provides fire departments with funding to pay 100 percent of the salaries and benefits (excluding overtime) and has a two-year period of performance (see Attachment 1). Grantees must maintain staffing at the level that existed at the time of award as well as the staffing funded by the SAFER grant for the two-year period of performance unless the grantee has been afforded a waiver of this requirement. DHS will consider petitions for waivers from grantees on a case-by-

case basis and under certain conditions. Due to the current state of the City's budget, the City is not in the financial position to accept funding unless the prohibitions on layoffs and supplanting are waived.

Policy Considerations: The continued response to community, industry, construction, and business for rescue services is consistent with the City Council goal of improving and expanding public safety. Applying for the SAFER grant is consistent with City Council actions relative to state and Federal grant awards and the City's goal of establishing and strengthening community and regional partnerships.

Environmental Considerations:

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): CEQA does not apply because the grant application pertains to administrative activities that will not have a significant effect on the environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3)), and that do not constitute a "project" for purposes of CEQA (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(2)).

Sustainability Considerations: There are no sustainability considerations applicable to applying for or acceptance of federal funding through the 2010 SAFER Grant Program.

Commission/Committee Action: None

Rationale for Recommendation:

Since July 2008, the Fire Department has implemented a course of action to achieve a budget reduction by not filling firefighter positions that have been vacated through attrition. To date, twenty-four (24) career firefighter positions have been lost. In an attempt to restore and fill these positions, the Fire Department is seeking funding through the SAFER grant.

Financial Considerations:

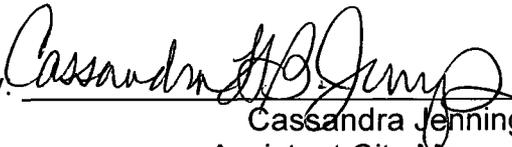
If the Fire Department is successful and awarded SAFER grant funds, there is no prescribed cost-share. Federal funds may be used to pay for 100 percent of the actual salary and benefit costs of rehired firefighters.

Conditions of the grant require that the grant funded positions remain filled through the end of the two-year period of performance. There is no retention commitment beyond the performance period. However, should the Department lose any firefighters during the period of performance, the grant requires the Department to fill the vacated positions or lose grant funding for an equivalent number of positions. Failure to maintain the awarded positions during the two-year performance period would be considered a default of the grant agreement, and may require the return of all the Federal funds disbursed under the grant. DHS will consider petitions for waivers on supplanting on a case-by-case basis and under certain conditions. Staff

is recommending that the City only accept the grant if the waiver on layoffs and supplanting is waived.

Emerging Small Business Development (ESBD): No goods or services are being purchased as a result of this grant.

Respectfully Submitted by: 
Ray S. Jones
Fire Chief

Approved by: 
Cassandra Jennings
Assistant City Manager

Recommendation Approved:


for Gus Vina
Interim City Manager

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Attachment 1

Background Information:

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2010, Congress appropriated a total of \$420 million to the U. S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant. SAFER grants are managed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) Program Office.

On August 17, 2010, DHS opened the application period for the SAFER grant. Applications are due September 17, 2010. The FY 2010 appropriated funds are available for award until September 30, 2011.

SAFER grants provide financial assistance to help fire departments increase their cadre of frontline firefighters or to rehire firefighters that have been laid off. The SAFER Program intends to improve local fire departments' staffing and deployment capabilities, so they may more effectively respond to emergencies whenever they may occur. It is hoped that as a result of the enhanced or restored staffing, a SAFER grantee's response time should be sufficiently reduced with an appropriate number of trained personnel assembled at the incident scene. Additionally, the enhanced or restored staffing levels should provide improved safety for firefighters by ensuring all frontline/first-due apparatus of SAFER grantees have a minimum of four qualified personnel to meet National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards. Ultimately, SAFER grantees should achieve more efficient responses and a safer incident scene; thereby ensuring communities have improved protection from fire and fire-related hazards.

The highest priority under the Hiring of Firefighters activity will be afforded to applications that are seeking to rehire firefighters who have been laid off. Therefore, in the hierarchy of priorities, the first priority will be the rehiring of laid-off firefighters; the second priority will be the retention of firefighters who may face layoffs in the future; the third priority will be the filling of positions that were vacated through attrition but not filled due to economic circumstances; and finally, the fourth priority will be the hiring of new firefighters.

Grants for rehiring of firefighters provide fire departments with funding to pay 100 percent of the salaries and benefits (excluding overtime) and have a two-year period of performance. Grantees must maintain their staffing at the level that existed at the time of application as well as the staffing funded by the SAFER grant for the two-year period of performance. Grantees cannot layoff any firefighters during the two-year period of performance. FY 2010 grantees who are unable to back-fill firefighting positions vacated due to documentable economic hardship may petition FEMA for a waiver of staffing maintenance requirements. In order to qualify for this waiver, the economic hardship must affect the entire public safety sector in the jurisdiction, and not only the fire department.

Additional features of the grant include:

- No annual salary limits.
- No maximum award amount for applications to rehire firefighters.
- No other positions qualify for rehiring under the Hiring of Firefighters Activity.
- Applicants requesting to rehire firefighters are not eligible to request funding for hiring new firefighters. A firefighting position that was lost to attrition and not subsequently refilled as a result of the economy is considered to be the equivalent of a laid-off firefighter and eligible under a rehire request.
- No prescribed cost-share. Federal funds may be used to pay for 100 percent of the actual salary and benefit costs of rehired firefighters with no requirement for a local cost-share.
- No retention commitment beyond the performance period of two years.
- A recruitment period of 90 days, which begins when the application is approved for award, is provided for all grantees under the Hiring of Firefighters Activity regardless of whether the grant is for hiring new firefighters or for rehiring firefighters. The 2-year period of performance starts after the 90-day recruitment period, regardless of whether the grantee has been able to affect the hiring of the requested firefighters.
- Overtime costs are not eligible. However, costs for overtime, in order to comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which fire departments routinely pay as a part of the base salary or the firefighter's regularly scheduled and contracted shift hours, are eligible.
- Costs for uniforms and physicals are not eligible.
- Costs for training and equipping firefighters are not eligible. However, the salaries and benefits of firefighters hired under the SAFER grants while they are engaged in training are eligible.
- Funds to support additional hired positions or funds received from Federal, State, or local sources cannot be used to supplant normal operating budgets.

The Fire Department is intending to submit an application for SAFER grant funds to restore and rehire twenty-four (24) firefighter positions lost through attrition.

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Attachment 2

RESOLUTION NO.

Adopted by the Sacramento City Council

AUTHORIZATION TO APPLY FOR GRANT FUNDING THROUGH THE 2010 STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE FIRE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE (SAFER) GRANT

BACKGROUND

- A. On August 17, 2010, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security opened the application period for the SAFER Grant. Applications are due by September 17, 2010.
- B. The Sacramento Fire Department is seeking grant funding to restore and rehire twenty-four (24) firefighter positions lost through attrition.

BASED ON THE FACTS SET FORTH IN THE BACKGROUND, THE CITY COUNCIL RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

- Section 1. The City Manager or his designee is authorized to apply for grant funding through the 2010 SAFER grant.
- Section 2. The City Manager, or his designee, is authorized to accept federal funds in the amount awarded only if the condition prohibiting layoffs and supplanting is waived.
- Section 3. An operating grant for the SAFER grant including revenue and expenditure budgets for the program shall be established in the amount awarded, contingent on the layoff/supplanting prohibitions being waived.