



STAFF REPORT

DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2012
TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: ROD FOSTER, CITY MANAGER
PREPARED BY: TIM MCHARGUE, ACTING FIRE CHIEF
SUBJECT: STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE FIRE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE (SAFER) GRANT

RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is recommended that the City Council adopt Resolution No. R-07-12 approving the submission of the application for the two year Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant to fill nine firefighter positions.

GOAL STATEMENT

The proposed action will support the City's goal to provide a safe and livable city.

BACKGROUND

In March 2011, due to the City's fiscal situation, the Fire Department implemented the Fire Department Rolling Brown Out Plan. The Plan called for closing a fire station each day on a rotating basis. As part of the Plan, the Fire Department lost nine suppression positions through attrition (six retirements and three firefighter paramedics being hired by other fire departments).

SAFER provides two-year grants to assist fire departments by paying the entry level salaries and benefits of the SAFER-funded firefighters. The goal is to increase frontline firefighters, rehire firefighters that have been laid off, retain firefighters facing imminent layoffs, or fill positions that were vacated through attrition. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Grant Programs Directorate implements and administers the SAFER Grants.

The objective of the SAFER program is to augment or restore local fire departments' staffing and deployment capabilities so they may more effectively respond to emergencies. With the enhanced or restored staffing, a SAFER grantee's response time is anticipated to be noticeably reduced and an appropriate number of trained personnel will be assembled at the incident scene.

ISSUES/ANALYSIS

If awarded the SAFER Grant, the Fire Department intends to hire nine firefighter/paramedics, promote three captains and three engineers, and discontinue the fire station brown outs implemented in March of 2011. The addition of nine new firefighters will assist the City in meeting its goal to decrease response times and increase safety on incidents. There is no matching requirement or retention commitment for the grant.

FISCAL IMPACTS

The requested grant amount will be \$1,986,300 and will cover entry-level salary and benefits for nine firefighter paramedics for a two year period. Current cost estimates would require the City to fund an estimated \$408,106 the first year and \$378,982 for the second year for new safety gear and additional staffing costs not covered by the grant. In the event the grant is awarded to the City, staff will present alternatives for funding the costs in excess of the grant award, including third year full costs. The City may choose to decline acceptance of the grant if funding sources are not identified and approved by the City Council.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS

Resolution No. R-07-12
SAFER Guidance and Application

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RESOLUTION NO. R-07-12

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLTON, CALIFORNIA, AUTHORIZING APPLICATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY'S GRANT PROGRAMS, FOR A STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE FIRE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE (SAFER) GRANT

WHEREAS, The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Grant Programs Directorate implements and administers the SAFER Grants; and

WHEREAS, the SAFER Grants provide financial assistance to help fire departments increase frontline firefighters, rehire firefighters that have been laid off, retain firefighters facing imminent layoffs, or fill positions that were vacated through attrition; and

WHEREAS, SAFER grantees should be able to demonstrate that they have achieved more efficient responses and safer incident scenes, thereby insuring communities have improved protection from fire and fire-related hazards; and

WHEREAS, the City of Colton desires to apply for a SAFER Grant to be used to hire nine firefighters and stop the Fire Department Rolling Brown Out Plan implemented in March of 2011; and,

WHEREAS, the City, if selected as a grant recipient, will enter into an agreement with FEMA and will seek the approval of the City Council to accept the funds, and comply with required financial and program performance reporting; and

WHEREAS, there is no cost-share and no retention commitment beyond the two year grant period; and,

WHEREAS, the cost to the City will be for safety equipment and staffing costs not covered by the grant.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Colton:

Section 1. Approves the filing of an application for a SAFER Grant for an amount up to \$1,986,300 to hire nine firefighters and stop the Fire Department Rolling Brown Out Plan.

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Section 2. Authorizes the City Manager and/or his designee to identify the appropriate funds to purchase safety equipment and for staffing costs not covered in the grant.

Section 3. Designates Timothy M. McHargue, Acting Fire Chief, as the City's authorized representative for purposes of the grant.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 21st day of February, 2012.

SARAH S. ZAMORA, Mayor

ATTEST:

EILEEN C. GOMEZ, CMC
City Clerk

SAFER GUIDANCE AND APPLICATION KIT EXCERPTS

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Program Overview and Priorities:

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Grant Programs Directorate implements and administers the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grants.

SAFER grants provide financial assistance to help fire departments increase frontline firefighters, rehire firefighters that have been laid off, retain firefighters facing imminent layoffs, or fill positions that were vacated through attrition.

The goal of the SAFER Grants is to assist local fire departments with staffing and deployment capabilities in order to respond to emergencies, assuring communities have adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards.

FEMA strongly encourages applicants, to the extent practicable, to seek, recruit, and hire post-9/11 veterans to increase their ranks within your department in order to take advantage of the provisions of the VOW To Hire Heroes Act of 2011. More information on the Act can be found at http://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/other_programs/vow.html. In FY 2012, FEMA anticipates a requirement that all SAFER applicants have a policy in place addressing their intent to implement strategies to support this Act and have recruiting efforts aimed at post-9/11 veterans.

Program Objectives:

The objective of the SAFER program is to augment or restore local fire departments' staffing and deployment capabilities so they may more effectively respond to emergencies. With the enhanced or restored staffing, a SAFER grantee's response time will be reduced sufficiently and an appropriate number of trained personnel will be assembled at the incident scene.

While not required for a SAFER grant, it is preferable that the enhanced or restored staffing levels of all SAFER grantees should improve the safety of firefighters by ensuring all first-arriving apparatus are staffed with a minimum of four qualified personnel (to meet OSHA standards (1910.134) who are capable of initiating the suppression response. Ultimately, SAFER grantees should be able to demonstrate that they have achieved more efficient responses and safer incident scenes, thereby ensuring communities have improved protection from fire and fire-related hazards.

SAFER grants are comprised of two primary categories: the Hiring of Firefighters Activity

and the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity.

The highest priority in the Hiring of Firefighters activity is for departments seeking to rehire

Hierarchy of Priorities

First priority: Rehiring laid-off firefighters

Second priorities: Retention of firefighters who face imminent layoff and/or filling positions vacated through attrition but not filled due to economic circumstances

Third priority: Hiring new firefighters

The exceptions to these priorities are the statutory requirements that no less than 15 percent be awarded to new hire applicants as discussed in the Hiring of New Firefighters Activity, and the statutory requirement to award no less than 10 percent of funds to volunteer and mostly volunteer departments.

Under the Recruitment and Retention Activity, the highest priority is to assist departments experiencing a high rate of turnover and have staffing levels significantly below the ideal staffing level required to comply with NFPA standards 1710 or 1720.

II. Funding Information

Award Amounts, Important Dates, and Extensions:

Available Funding for the FOA: \$380,747,000.00

Projected Number of Awards: 400

Projected Award Start Date(s): 05/01/2012

Projected Award End Date(s): 09/30/2012

Period of Performance: *24 months under the Hiring of Firefighters Activity; Up to 48 months for the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity*

Period of Performance: Is an extension to the period of performance permitted?

Yes No

Extensions to the period of performance will be considered only through formal requests to FEMA with specific and compelling justifications why an extension is required. All extension requests must be submitted to FEMA at least 60 days prior to the end of the

period of performance and must address:

- *Reason for delay*
- *Current status of the activity/activities*
- *Approved period of performance termination date and new project completion date*
- *Remaining available funds, both federal and non-federal*
- *Budget outlining how remaining federal and non-federal funds will be expended*
- *Plan for completion including milestones and timeframes for achieving each milestone and the position/person responsible for implementing the plan for completion*
- *Certification that the activity/activities will be completed within the extended period of performance without any modification to the original Statement of Work approved by FEMA*

IV. Funding Restrictions

Restrictions on Use of Award Funds:

Hiring of Firefighters Activity:

Eligible Expenses

The only eligible costs under the Hiring of Firefighters for new or rehired firefighters activity are:

- Salary
- Associated benefits (actual payroll expenses)

SAFER funding will pay 100 percent of the salary and benefit costs for each funded position (see Appendix 1 for SAFER Grant Definitions)

- Firefighters that are employees at time of and/or hired prior to the award date, except if applying under the retention activity, are not eligible under the Hiring of Firefighters category.
- Overtime costs are not eligible. However, costs for overtime fire departments routinely pay as a part of the base salary or the firefighter's regularly scheduled and contracted shift

hours are eligible in order to comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act.

- Federal employees are prohibited from serving in any capacity (paid or unpaid) on any proposal submitted for this grant opportunity. Federal employees may not receive funds under this award.
- Only full-time positions will be funded. A full-time position is one position that is funded for at least 2,080 hours per year, i.e., 40 hours per week, 52 weeks per year. However, recognizing many departments have shifts exceeding a 40-hour workweek, FEMA also will consider funding the job-sharing of a full-time position if the grantee has sufficient justification. A job-share position is a full-time position occupied by more than one person.

Example: A department may hire two part-time staff persons at 28 hours each to fulfill the scheduled work hours of one 56-hour shift position.

Ineligible Expenses

- Pre-application costs, such as grant writer fees, administrative costs, and indirect costs associated with hiring of firefighters
- Costs for training and equipping firefighters (however, the salaries and benefits of firefighters hired under the SAFER grants while they are engaged in training are eligible.)
- Costs for uniforms and physicals
- Funds to support additional hired positions or funds received from federal, state, or local sources cannot be used to supplant normal operating budgets unless a waiver has been granted.

Volunteer and mostly volunteer fire departments may hire individuals to fill officer-level positions such as chief, fire inspector, training officer, safety officer, etc.

However, since the purpose of SAFER grants is to enhance incident scene safety, all applicants must certify the primary assignment of all SAFER-funded firefighters will be an operational assignment (e.g., fire suppression) regardless of collateral duties.

V. Application Review and Selection Information

Application Review Information:

All complete and eligible applications are evaluated based on the substance of the application relative to the established SAFER Grant funding priorities. The answers to activity-specific questions, as well as information under Department Characteristics, provide the basis to determine the application's standing relative to stated priorities. This initial evaluation assesses how closely each application matches the program's established priorities (see information on the funding priorities in *Part I. Funding Opportunity Description*).

Applications most consistent with the SAFER Grant funding priorities score higher in the automated evaluation than those applications not aligned with the priorities. The initial scores are combined later with the scores of the applications after they receive peer review evaluations; each score represents 50 percent of the total application score with respect to the final award determinations.


A panel of at least three peer review panelists performs the second phase of the applications' evaluations. These panelists evaluate the application using the narrative statement, along with the answers to the general questions and the activity-specific questions, to determine the worthiness of the request for an award. Each application is judged on its own merits against established criteria and is not compared to other applications.

Panelists will evaluate and score the following criteria:

1. Hiring of Firefighters Category Narrative Elements

The narrative statement for applications requesting funding in this category must include the following five elements. Each element will be evaluated independently by the peer review panelist. The relative weight of the evaluation criteria in the determination of the grant award is listed below.

- a. Project Description (30%):** This statement should describe why the applicant needs the grant funds, i.e., how the requested firefighters will be used within the department and a description of the specific benefit these firefighters will provide for the fire department and community. If the applicant is requesting funding under the rehiring of firefighters activity, the narrative should provide details as to when and why the vacancies occurred, and how the vacancies have affected the service to the community. Applications must also discuss how the grant would enhance the department's ability to protect critical infrastructure.

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- b. **Impact on Daily Operations (30%):** This statement should explain how the community and current firefighters are at risk without the requested firefighters, and to what extent that risk will be reduced if the applicant is awarded. What impact will the newly funded positions have on NFPA and/or OSHA (1910.134) compliance?
 - c. **Financial Need (30%):** This statement should explain the applicant's organizational budget and its inability to address the need without federal assistance, including other actions the applicant has taken to meet their staffing needs.
 - d. **Cost/Benefit (10%):** This statement should explain, as clearly as possible, what benefits your department and/or your community will realize if the project described is funded (e.g., anticipated savings and/or efficiencies).
 - e. **Performance (Additional Consideration):** Applicants should explain whether they have a proven record of accomplishment for timely project completion and satisfactory performance of other AFG, FP&S, and SAFER awards.

http://www.fema.gov/firegrants/docs/pdf/FY2011_SAFER_ProgramGuidance.pdf