



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 16, 2024

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: JAMES F. PARAJON, CITY MANAGER /s/

FROM: JAMES SCHWARTZ, INTERIM CHIEF, ALEXANDRIA FIRE AND EMS

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of a Grant Application to the Federal 2023 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant Program from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency.

ISSUE: Should the City submit a grant application to the federal 2023 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)?

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

1. Approve the competitive SAFER grant application submission for \$5,096,171 over a three-year period to mobilize an expansion of services through two additional emergency medical services transport units operated by 15 firefighters funded by the FY 2023 SAFER grant award; and
2. Authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary documents that may be required.

BACKGROUND: On March 11, 2024, FEMA opened the competitive grant application period for the 2023 SAFER grant program. SAFER grants provide financial assistance to help fire departments increase the number of frontline firefighters. The goal of SAFER is to help communities better meet industry minimum standards, obtain 24-hour staffing to provide adequate fire protection, and improve staffing and deployment capabilities.

Medical transport capabilities within the Alexandria Fire Department (AFD) expanded in 2015 with the opening of Station 210. In the past five years, AFD annual medical calls increased 42.3% (5,527 more annual calls than 2019).

DISCUSSION: To address the increased call volume, AFD intends to staff two additional 24/7 emergency medical services transport units operated daily by two positions per transport unit. These transport units would operate across three shifts per day and utilize the 1.25 relief factor provided by the Office of Performance Analytics (OPA). A total of 15 personnel would be required to maintain this service expansion. AFD will use SAFER funding to support the staff to provide this service for three years.

FISCAL IMPACT: The SAFER grant currently pays for 100% of the personnel salary and benefits costs throughout a three-year period of performance while the locality is required to fund all gear, uniform and training costs. This equates to a \$5.1 million three-year grant for 15 positions, up to \$1.8 million annually. After the end of the grant period of performance, salary and benefits costs per firefighter are projected to cost the City approximately \$1.9 million annually for the 15 positions at year four (or, \$124,058 per position).

The City has applied for and received SAFER grants in 2012, 2017, and 2018.

STAFF:

Yon Lambert, Deputy City Manager