



LEGISLATIVE MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Suzanne Sherman, City Manager

THRU: Richard E. Stover, Fire Chief

DATE: April 4, 2024

RE: Consideration of submitting an application for the Fiscal Year 2023 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program for thirty-three (33) new Firefighter positions.

SUMMARY:

FEMA has opened the Fiscal Year 2023 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program. The Fire Rescue department would like to submit a Grant application through FEMA, to request staffing assistance from a recently opened Grant opportunity in the amount of approximately \$8.7 million. The application would

There is no cost share, match, position cost limit or minimum budget requirement for the FY 2023 SAFER Program.

As part of the application, staff will be requesting funding for 33 new Firefighter positions, to be funded in full for 36 months, or three fiscal years. Those positions will include:

- 15 firefighters to staff Engine 9 (for new Fire Station 9 planned for the Babcock/SJHP area)
- 9 firefighters to staff Squad 3
- 9 firefighters to staff Squad 7

These positions are critical to meeting the needs of our growing City. Adding a squad to existing Fire Station 3 will provide additional capacity to respond to medical calls in that response zone. Fire Station 7 will be under construction in 2024, and initial staffing for the station has already been funded; adding a Squad to Station 7 will further enhance response times in this high-volume corridor of NE Palm Bay. Planning for new Fire Station 9 is also already underway. Staff is also planning to bring future requests to City Council to purchase vehicles for Squad 3 & 7 using Fire Impact Fees.

If awarded, this will afford the City an opportunity to build up the funding necessary over the next three years to absorb the cost of these new positions in full, once the grant period ends. It will also assist in allowing the City to add additional positions to further complement the efforts above, including the need to begin adding staff for future Fire Station 8 in the Malabar/SJHP area.

The SAFER Program provides funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations to assist in increasing the number of firefighters to help communities meet industry minimum standards and attain 24-hour staffing to provide adequate fire protection from fire and fire-related hazards, and to fulfill traditional missions of fire departments. Since 2005, the SAFER Program has awarded approximately \$5.2 billion in grant funding to provide critically needed resources to hire new, additional firefighters (or to change the status of part-time or paid-on-call firefighters to full-time firefighters), to rehire laid off firefighters, or to retain firefighters facing layoff, as well as recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.

The objectives of the SAFER Program are to assist local fire departments with staffing and deployment capabilities to respond to emergencies and ensure that communities have adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards. Local fire departments accomplish this by improving staffing and deployment capabilities, so they may more effectively and safely respond to emergencies. With enhanced staffing levels, recipients should experience a reduction in response times and an increase in the number of trained personnel assembled at the incident scene.

The period of performance for applications funded under the Hiring Activity will be 36 months.

Extensions to the period of performance are allowed.

REQUESTING DEPARTMENTS:

City Manager's Office

FISCAL IMPACT:

The grant application will be for approximately \$2.9 million per year for 3 years, or a total of \$8.7 million. There is no cost share, match, position cost limit or minimum budget requirement for the FY 2023 SAFER Program.

Turnout gear, uniforms & equipment and Indirect costs are ineligible for grant funding. This cost for the city would be approximately \$507,000 to start the positions.

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Motion to approve the Fire Rescue Department to apply for the Fiscal Year 2023 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. FY23 SAFER Notice of Funding Opportunity