

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: SCOTT WESTROPE, FIRE CHIEF
SUBJECT: GRANT APPLICATION TO THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA) STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE
FIRE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE GRANT (SAFER) FOR
FUNDING FOR THE HIRING OF TWELVE (12) FIREFIGHTERS
FOR HIGH DEMAND SERVICE AREAS

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Fire Department that the Council, by resolution: 1) authorize staff to submit a grant application to FEMA for the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant (SAFER) in the total amount of \$7,084,440 for the hiring of twelve (12) firefighters for response in high demand areas; 2) authorize the Fire Chief or his designee to accept the grant award and approve and execute all documents and agreements related to the grant, subject to approval as to form by the City Attorney; and 3) authorize the Chief Financial Officer to appropriate funds into the project account by the amount of the grant award.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This item relates to City Council Goal # 3 – Ensure a healthy and safe community for all. This grant will provide funding to support emergency preparedness of residents and City staff. This grant will fund the hiring of twelve (12) firefighters, which would enable the department to provide four additional on-duty firefighters to assist in suppression and Advanced Life Support (ALS) response daily.

BACKGROUND

The SAFER grant program intends to improve or restore local fire department's staffing and deployment capabilities so they may more effectively respond to emergencies. Grant funds are available for two activities: Hiring firefighters or the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. SRFD is requesting funding to hire 12 firefighters to address high service demand areas of the City, adding an additional four on-duty firefighters daily.

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These 4 additional on-duty firefighters will be assigned to two quick attack squads to be dispatched to either ALS calls, or as additional suppression support.

The City of Santa Rosa has experienced an approximate 8% increase in calls year-over-year since 2020. This increase along with the new developments in high demand districts has led to an increase in response times to overlapping incidents.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

Not applicable.

ANALYSIS

A Staffing Needs Assessment conducted by Emergency Services Consulting International (ESCI) from 2019, found that due to increased call volumes, engine companies in high service demand areas of Santa Rosa are unable to meet NFPA 1710 response times requirements 61% of the time due to overlapping incidents and minimal staffing. Nine (9) out of the ten (10) fire stations are minimally staffed daily with only three firefighters.

These ALS squads will be located at Stations 8 and 11 and be in service during our high demand hours. These will allow the department to improve compliance with NFPA 1710 initial full assembly fire suppression requirements, which will lead to a safer firefighting environment for staff and the public. During non-peak hours, the ALS squads will join single engine companies to make up a 4 firefighter engine company, to continue to reduce response times for ALS calls.

FISCAL IMPACT

If awarded this grant, the City of Santa Rosa Fire Department will be able to hire 12 additional firefighters to meet the NFPA 1710 requirements full alarm assembly, which fiscally it would be unable to do at this time without the additional funding. Years 1 through 3 of the grant funding would be fully funded by the grant program, and after the period of performance the City of Santa Rosa intends to retain these employees through attrition. Once grant funding expires after year 3, no funding currently exists for these positions or is included in current financial projections. The City will need to allocate funding at that time, or reduce positions accordingly. The department will continue to explore other funding sources as well.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

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This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

None.

NOTIFICATION

None.

ATTACHMENTS

- Resolution
- Presentation

PRESENTER

Scott Westrope, Fire Chief