



STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE FIRE & EMERGENCY RESPONSE GRANTS (SAFER)

Request: Seek a 2013 SAFER grant to fund the extension of 42 firefighter positions currently funded by a 2010 SAFER grant.



Community Value:

With the exception of SAFER-funded firefighters, the Phoenix Fire Department has only been able to hire seven firefighters since 2008. As attrition occurs and firefighters retire, the ability of the fire department to continue staffing all emergency response units may be compromised without continued grant-funded firefighters.

If Phoenix had not had the support of SAFER since 2008, the Fire Department would have been compelled to suspend the operation of some emergency units. Removal of these units from the emergency response system would have negative impacts on emergency response times and the outcome of emergency incidents.

The population of Phoenix has begun to grow again after the Great Recession and fire department emergency calls are at historically high levels.

Phoenix firefighters are among the most active fire in the United States. In 2012, Phoenix firefighters responded to 170,023 emergency incidents and the Phoenix firefighters transported 70,736 medical emergency patients to local hospitals by ambulance.

If Phoenix is not successful in gaining approval for the 2013 SAFER request, or if the SAFER program is reduced or eliminated, Phoenix will be compelled to assume the cost of 42 firefighters who are currently funded by a 2010 SAFER grant as early as September of 2013 at an estimated annual cost of \$3.8 million.

Background:

The SAFER grant program is administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and funds 100 percent of a firefighter's salary and benefit costs for a period of two years. No local funding match is required and there is no requirement for retention at the end of the grant period. The SAFER grant program was originally intended to fund new positions for fire departments that were not compliant with the National Fire Protection Association's 1710 standard that identifies minimum staffing levels for fire crews. However, since 2009, the program has been modified to permit funding to sustain firefighter positions that otherwise would be eliminated and subsequently unfilled due to economic conditions.

Over the past four years, the Phoenix Fire Department has received more than \$21 million in grant funding awards from the SAFER program. These grants currently fund the fully loaded cost of 98 Phoenix firefighters.

The Phoenix Fire Department received a 2009 SAFER grant, which currently funds 28 firefighter positions. This grant funding will be fully expended in May of 2013. Phoenix received a 2012 SAFER grant to extend the funding for the 28 firefighters through May 2015.

Phoenix also received a 2010 SAFER grant, which funds 42 firefighter positions. This grant funding will expire in September 2013. The Phoenix Fire Department plans to submit an application to extend the funding of the 42 firefighters currently funded by the 2010 grant. This grant request will be for approximately \$7.6 million.

Contacts: Bob Khan, Fire Chief
602-495-7399, robert.a.khan@phoenix.gov

Kara Kalkbrenner, Assistant Chief
602-256-3189, kara.kalkbrenner@phoenix.gov

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