



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of April 21, 2012**

DATE: April 11, 2012

SUBJECT: Application for and acceptance of a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant from the U. S. Department of Homeland Security.

C. M. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Authorize the County Manager or her designee to apply for the SAFER grant.
2. Authorize the County Manager or her designee to enter into an agreement(s) associated with this grant, subject to approval as to form of the agreement by the County Attorney.

ISSUES: Applying for a SAFER grant to fund twelve additional firefighter positions allows the Fire Department to have four person staffing with all companies as well as place a uniformed presence in the Emergency Communications Center at all times. The County would need to pay the full cost of these new positions after the two-year grant period.

SUMMARY: The purpose of SAFER grants is to award grants directly to fire departments to help increase the number of firefighters thus assuring communities have adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards. This is a grant to provide desired staffing levels on the remaining two front line fire apparatus (companies) currently staffed with only three firefighters and provide the Emergency Communications Center (ECC) with full-time firefighters with operational experience. The SAFER grant funds salaries and benefits for two (2) years. Unlike SAFER grants in prior years, jurisdictions are not obligated to retain the SAFER grant funded positions after the conclusion of the granting period.

BACKGROUND: The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1710 identifies a minimum staffing level of four firefighters on Engine, Rescue and Truck companies. Currently, the Department staffs 12 of its 14 companies with four Firefighter/EMT's. The fourth firefighter on these two remaining companies makes the department compliant with NFPA 1710 and reaches the County Board goal to staff all front line companies with staffing levels of four Firefighter/EMT's.

County Manager:

BMD/mjs

County Attorney:

[Signature]

MNC

Staff:

35.

The grant will also provide positions for assignment to the Emergency Communications Center (ECC). The Fire Department has determined the complex work of the ECC is improved with a uniformed presence in the center at all times. The operational understanding brought to the communications job by an experienced fire officer aids in decision-making, resource allocations, and communications support to field units. The Department proposes to use four positions from the SAFER grant to staff ECC with one person per shift.

DISCUSSION: The purpose of SAFER grants is to award grants directly to fire departments to help increase the number of firefighters thus assuring communities have adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards. The department is proposing to apply for 12 full-time Firefighter/EMT positions. Eight of these positions will be used to provide a fourth person on the two remaining companies currently staffed with only three personnel. The remaining four positions will be used to staff the Emergency Communications Center (ECC) with four full-time fire department personnel.

According to the granting agency, all applicants will be notified in the spring of 2012 with grant awards beginning as early as winter 2012.

FISCAL IMPACT: If Arlington County is awarded the SAFER grant it is estimated that the grant would begin in January 2013. The grant fully pays for normal salary and benefit costs. Jurisdictions are responsible for the remaining costs associated with the additional positions which include uniforms, physicals, transportation for the recruits, overtime and callback. It is estimated that the County costs would be \$121,500 in FY 2013 if Arlington County were to receive the full SAFER grant request. If Arlington County is awarded the SAFER grant, due to the timing of the grant notification and award (winter 2012) it is recommended that the costs for FY 2013 be funded with one-time monies identified at close-out of FY 2012 or allocated from the County's General Fund General Contingent. County and grant-funded expenses estimated for FY 2013 through FY 2016 are shown in the table below.

	Grant-funded	County-funded	Total
FY 2013	\$446,000	\$121,500	\$567,500
FY 2014	\$914,300	\$139,700	\$1,054,000
FY 2015	\$473,300	\$612,900	\$1,086,200
FY 2016		\$1,120,000	\$1,120,000