



**Date:** August 1, 2012

**To:** Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager  
**From:** Bruce T. Pagan, Jr., Fire Chief  
**Subject:** 2011 SAFER Hiring Program Grant

### **Executive Summary**

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Grant Programs Directorate has awarded the City of Durham through the Durham Fire Department the “2011 Staffing For Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant”. This grant will be used to fund hiring 15 additional firefighters which will help increase the department’s “two-in, two-out” [OSHA 29 CFR 1910.134(g)(4)] capability within existing districts; thereby, also improving response times for the Effective Response Force (ERF). The total Federal award amount is \$1,384,650.00 for a two year period.

### **Recommendation**

The Fire Department recommends that the City Council:

1. Authorize the City Manager to accept the “2011 Staffing For Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER)” Grant by executing the grant documents; and
2. Adopt the “2011 Staffing For Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Project Ordinance, in the amount of \$1,384,650.00.

### **Background**

The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grants was created to provide funding directly to fire departments to help them increase the number of trained, “front line” firefighters available in their communities. The goal of SAFER is to enhance the local fire departments’ abilities to comply with staffing, response, and operational standards established by the NFPA and OSHA (NFPA 1710 and/or NFPA 1720 and OSHA 1910.134).

SAFER grants cover 100 percent of the approved entry-level salary and benefits of each newly-hired and/or re-hired firefighter for 24 months. Any costs higher than entry-level salaries and benefits will be the responsibility of the grantee agency. Additionally, all grants awarded under the “new hire” category are required to retain the SAFER-funded firefighters for one full year after the end of the period of performance.

The City of Durham through the Durham Fire Department will use this funding to support hiring 15 new firefighters to increase OSHA “two-in, two-out” capabilities, and to increase compliance with NFPA staffing and response standards. Another benefit will be trained firefighters that could be used to staff Fire Station 17 (FY2015 CIP) in the event that economic conditions make it difficult to add firefighter FTEs at that time.

**Issues and Analysis**

The main issue is whether or not to accept this funding opportunity from the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency. If the City accepts the funding it will have to agree to fund the 15 firefighter's for an additional 12 months (FY2015) after the 24 month Period Of Performance. The deployment details of the additional firefighters, and how it will impact our two-in, two-out capability is attached. Also included in that attachment is a description of how these firefighters could be re-deployed to cover a need for personnel resources when a new fire station is added in southeast Durham.

**Alternatives**

The alternative would be to deny this motion which would leave staffing and response capabilities at the current level, below recognized industry standards.

**Financial Impact**

While there is no match requirement, the City of Durham is obligated to cover any additional cost higher than entry-level salary and benefits over the three year grant period and the cost of retaining all 15 firefighters awarded under the SAFER grant for a minimum of 12 months following the 24 month federal funding period. The additional costs mentioned above include one time costs for uniforms, personal protective equipment (PPE), and academy costs totaling \$75,786; and ongoing benefits coverage above "single" estimated to be \$27,671. With the additional staffing gained through the grant, we will have a decreased need for overtime which will cover these costs. The cost analysis for the financial impact on the City of Durham's general fund if the award is accepted is attached.

**SDBE Summary**

This is a grant agreement that does not require a review for compliance with the City's Ordinance to promote Equal Opportunity in City Contracting.