



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 080054., **Version:** 0

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### **Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Firefighter Grant Program (NB)**

**This item requests that the City Commission authorize an application for the 2008 Federal SAFER Grant Program for firefighter staffing funds.**

On May 27, 2008, the US Department of Homeland Security, Preparedness Directorate - Office of Grants and Training, began accepting applications for the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Firefighter Grant Program. The purpose of the program is to assist fire departments with increasing the number of firefighters available to respond to calls for service in order to meet staffing guidelines as established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) in NFPA 1710. In part, the NFPA response guidelines describe a deployment goal for 90% of building fire dispatches of having four (4) fire suppression personnel on scene with one suppression apparatus within four (4) minutes from the time units begin responding. Gainesville Fire Rescue's staffing does not currently support four (4) personnel on engine companies and the department's minimum staffing requirement for an engine company is three (3) personnel. To achieve the NFPA 1710 goal, Gainesville Fire Rescue must frequently have more than one unit on scene within four (4) minutes; this requires the dispatch of units from multiple stations.

The City recently responded to an identified gap in the fire service area in Northwest Gainesville by committing funds to support development of Fire Station 8. Gainesville Fire Rescue currently staffs seven full-time stations with 132 combat personnel. An increment request for thirteen firefighting positions was submitted by the Fire Department for FY07 in anticipation of the need to hire and train personnel for Station 8 in FY09. Since SAFER program funds for hiring must be used for salaries and associated benefits for new, full-time firefighter positions only, application of these funds would support staffing of Fire Station 8.

Awards for hiring firefighters must be used to support a position for a minimum of five (5) years and are limited to \$108,380 per position over the course of the period. The maximum annual Federal share of funds per position may not exceed the lesser of the following: Year 1 - 90% of actual costs or \$39,015; Year 2 - 80% of actual costs or \$34,675; Year 3 - 50% of actual costs or \$21,670; Year 4 - 30% of actual costs or \$13,020; and Year 5 0%.

Cash match required for each year would be: Year 1 \$219,639; Year 2 \$318,295; Year 3 \$532,246; Year 4 \$692,410; Year 5 \$912,404 for a total cost of \$2,674,994. Matching funds will be requested in the City Manager's proposed budget each year.

The City Commission authorize the City Manager to: 1) apply to the US Department of Homeland Security for the SAFER Grant Program; and, if awarded: 2) accept the award; 3) approve the required payment process for expending the grant funds; and 4) allocate the required cash match.

Alternative Recommendation A: The City not apply for the SAFER Grant Program. The fiscal impact would be that the City meet the full financial burden of any firefighter positions required for Station 8.