



Legislation Text

File #: 140598., **Version:** 2

Fire Assessment Hardship Assistance Program (B)

On September 16, 2010 the City adopted Ordinance No. 100244, to create an Economic hardship program to assist residential property owners, who are living below the or close to the poverty level and are at risk of losing title to their homes as a result of the imposition of the fire services special assessment.

The program outlines eligibility for both low income seniors and low income families. Eligibility is based on household income and cash or cash equivalents (see attached). Applicants must apply each year and supply the City with all required documentation.

The initial application period begins January 1 and ends May 1 of each year. All prior applicants are sent a reminder notification by the City in January. An additional application period is available from the date when TRIM notices are mailed in August until September 1st. If staff are contacted by the property owner after they have received their tax bill in November, we allow them to submit a late application. If they meet the eligibility requirements, staff files a DR-409 with the Tax Collector to remove the assessment from the tax bill. The Tax Collector then sends a corrected tax bill to the property owner.

In 2014, 72 applicants were approved for assistance, 24 of which were low income families and 48 low income seniors. Four applicants were denied based on eligibility. The assistance provided totaled less than \$10,000.

None at this time.

The Audit and Finance Committee recommends the City Commission:

- 1) Direct staff to enhance outreach to low income families and seniors regarding the Fire Assessment Hardship Assistance Program through communication methods such as ElderCare, the Senior Recreation Center, the Alachua County Schools Free and Reduced Lunches program, neighborhood watch programs, local churches and ministerial alliances, etc.; and
- 2) Remove this item from the referral list.