



## Legislation Text

---

**File #:** 24-1300, **Version:** 1

---

**To:** Board of Directors

**From:** Lewis Broschard, Chief, Contra Costa County Fire Protection District

**Report Title:** Fiscal Year 2023 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant

Recommendation of the County Administrator  Recommendation of Board Committee

---

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

RATIFY the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District's execution of a grant application to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, in an amount not to exceed \$14,890,080, for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program for a three-year period to become effective upon award.

### FISCAL IMPACT:

100% Federal. The District applied for SAFER grant funding in the amount of \$14,890,080. If awarded, the funding would cover a three-year performance period, with an anticipated start date no later than April 1, 2025. The amount awarded may be less than the amount requested. There is no local agency match requirement or position cost caps for the FY23 SAFER grant program. This action is for the application execution only. Should the District be awarded the grant, staff will return to the Board for approval to accept grant funds. At that time, an updated fiscal impact will be provided.

### BACKGROUND:

The SAFER grant program aims to allocate funds directly to fire departments, aiding them in maintaining or boosting their firefighter count. This initiative is crucial for enabling communities to meet industry standards and achieve ample staffing, ensuring sufficient protection against fires and related hazards. In our District, a captain, an engineer, and a firefighter operate a typical fire engine, with at least one being a paramedic. In addition, our ladder trucks are staffed by four personnel, two of whom hold the rank of firefighter.

With funding from the FY 23 SAFER grant, no later than April 1, 2025, the District would hire fifteen (15) firefighter/paramedics and strategically place them as the 4th firefighter at five (5) of our engine companies. These placements will be strategically situated in close proximity to each other, ensuring that the majority of firefighters respond to the same fires and incidents. This arrangement aims to enhance operational capabilities, decrease response times, expand service coverage, reduce unnecessary move-up of resources from other communities, and establish a designated "apprentice program" for our new and inexperienced firefighters. Within these designated areas, new firefighters can safely learn their profession and assimilate into our organization while receiving mentorship from senior firefighters throughout their first year of service.

Our District continues to experience annual increases in emergency call volume. While the fire academy prepares our recruits as much as possible, we have identified a need to provide a more thorough training and mentorship plan that extends past the initial fire academy to include this new apprenticeship program for their

first year of service. Beyond training and mentorship, we believe these additional resources placed in the right locations will better front-load the necessary resources to mitigate emergency incidents both more quickly and safely. This extra staffing will also result in a direct benefit to the firefighters and the community they serve.

Due to deadlines, the application for this grant was submitted in early April. This action is to ratify submission of the District's application. This grant would result in the addition and hiring of 15 new positions. Historically, notifications of awards by FEMA are completed by the end of September each year. Should the District be awarded the grant, staff will return to the Board to obtain approval for accepting the grant award, adding additional positions, and for Board approval of a side letter with IAFF Local 1230 to outline the program and funding commitment of the grant program. If awarded, the District will be reimbursed on a quarterly basis for the cost of the SAFER funded positions.

The period of performance for this grant is three years. Extensions to the period of performance are typically not available.

SAFER grants previously required a match by the grant recipient. The FY 23 SAFER program does not have a cost share or match or position cost limit.

SAFER grant funds may only be used to hire new, additional firefighters and may not be used to supplant funds that would otherwise be available from State or local sources. Throughout the performance period of the grant, the District will need to maintain the total number of authorized and funded firefighter positions that existed at the time of award plus the total number of SAFER-funded firefighter positions. The District cannot lay off firefighters that would result in a reduction of staffing below these numbers during the period of performance, or the grant award will be reduced by an equal amount per position that is reduced. Additionally, vacancies that arise through attrition, such as openings created by retirements, must be filled within a reasonable time period to maintain compliance with the minimum number of firefighters required of the grant.

**CONSEQUENCE OF NEGATIVE ACTION:**

Due to deadlines, this application has already been filed. If this action is not approved, the District will notify FEMA that it is withdrawing the application.