



AGENDA MEMORANDUM

Action Item for the City Council Meeting June 17, 2025

DATE: June 17, 2025

TO: Peter Zaroni, City Manager

FROM: Brandon Wade, Fire Chief
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Application to the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant for the Corpus Christi Fire Department

CAPTION:

Resolution authorizing the submission of a grant application for the FY 2024 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant in the amount of \$4,004,254.53 from the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency for salaries and benefits over a three-year period for 15 additional firefighters for the Corpus Christi Fire Department for our four-person staffing plan.

SUMMARY:

This resolution authorizes the submission of a grant application for the FY 2024 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant in the amount of \$4,004,254.53 from the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). If awarded, the grant funds will provide funding for salaries and benefits for 15 additional firefighters over the next three fiscal years (36 months) with a city cash match of 25% in the first and second year, and a match of 65% in the third year.

BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS:

The SAFER grant program provides funding directly to fire departments to assist in increasing the number of firefighters. The goal of the SAFER grant program is to help communities meet industry minimum standards, attain 24-hour staffing to provide adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards, and to fulfill the overall missions of fire departments. Additionally, the SAFER grant program seeks to help fire departments enhance their abilities to comply with staffing, response, and operational standards established by the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA). NFPA sets minimum criteria for the staffing of firefighter crews, and how they will respond and operate at emergency scenes. The NFPA's criteria state that fire departments will respond with a minimum of four personnel on each apparatus and that they will arrive at the emergency scene within four minutes of the dispatch center receiving an emergency call.

The City's goal is to achieve four-person for all of its frontline fire companies. Currently, the City is working toward achieving this goal over the next five fiscal years. The City's purpose for applying for this grant is to shorten the timeframe it will take for CCFD to complete its goal of four-person staffing on all frontline fire companies. CCFD currently has only 8 of 22 fire companies with four-person staffing. In order to complete four-person staffing for all 22 fire companies, CCFD requires a total of 86 additional uniformed positions, which would total 541 uniformed positions. The current authorized complement for CCFD is 455 uniformed positions. If approved, the additional 15 uniformed positions will increase the authorized complement to 470 uniformed positions.

Without this grant, the city would need to fully fund the 15 uniformed positions or delay adding the positions, which would push back the goal of FY30 to achieve four-person staffing for all 22 fire companies. Reaching the 5-year goal of achieving four-person staffing would be accomplished by City Council approving the addition of 15 uniformed personnel above the average CCFD attrition rate (average attrition rate is 23 uniformed personnel per year) this fiscal year and 18 firefighters for the next three years, and 17 firefighters in the fifth year above attrition. However, if the SAFER grant is awarded, CCFD would use the grant funding to hire 15 uniform positions above the average attrition, which would help alleviate the costs of the first three years of these uniformed positions and would be beneficial for the city. If awarded, the grant funds will provide funding for salaries and benefits for 15 additional firefighters over the next three fiscal years (36 months) with a city cash match of 25% in the first and second year, and a match of 65% in the third year.

As has been discussed at previous City Council meetings, there is an option for a \$0.02 increase to the City property tax rate if capacity allows, which will result in an estimated \$3 million to the General Fund. If the City Manager recommends the \$0.02 increase to the City property tax rate as part of the FY 2026 Proposed Budget and if the City Council approves the recommendation, the estimated \$3 million generated will be proposed to fund additional new uniform positions with the Police Department (\$1.5 million) and the Fire Department (\$1.5 million). If the City Manager does not recommend the \$0.02 increase to the City property tax rate as part of the FY 2026 Proposed Budget or if the City Council does not approve the \$0.02 increase, then the City will not be able to participate in this grant. The additional \$1.5 million in the Fire Department will be designated to fund the 15 new Firefighter positions in FY 2026, pending the results of this grant application. Should the application be approved and the funds awarded to the City for the additional 15 Firefighters, the appropriated funds will be utilized to cover the 25% match requirement and one-time needed equipment purchases for the Fire Department such as fire trucks or medic units.

Listed in the table below is the funding covered by the SAFER grant as well as the cost to the City per year if the grant is awarded.

Fiscal Year	Cost per Fiscal Year	SAFER Grant (1/5/26-1/5/29)	City Cost
FY 2026 (9 Months)	\$842,130.00	\$631,597.50 (75%)	\$210,532.50* (25%)
FY 2027	\$1,265,182.52	\$948,886.89 (75%)	\$316,295.63 (25%)
FY 2028 (3 Months)	\$368,539.58	\$276,404.69 (75%)	\$92,134.89 (25%)
FY 2028 (9 Month)	\$1,136,465.37	\$397,762.88 (35%)	\$738,702.49 (65%)
FY 2029 (3 Months)	\$391,937.06	\$137,177.97 (35%)	\$254,759.09 (65%)
TOTAL	\$4,004,254.53	\$2,391,829.93	\$1,612,424.60

*City would be responsible for the cost of training, tuition, fees, personal protective equipment, and uniforms, which would be a total of \$283,598. If the SAFER grant is awarded, CCFD will submit a decision package as part of the Proposed FY 2026 Budget for 15 new Firefighter positions, training, tuition, fees, personal protective equipment, and uniforms.

In FY 2029, the City will budget for nine months of costs when the grant funding ends. The amount to be budgeted would be \$1,209,146.

This is the third time that the City has applied for this grant. In 2013, the City received \$3,380,824 from this grant for funding for 34 additional uniformed positions in CCFD. Last year, the City applied but pulled the application due to budget constraints.

ALTERNATIVES:

The alternative is not to submit the grant application and continue to move forward with adding 15 uniformed positions next fiscal year and 18 firefighters for the next three years, and 17 firefighters in the fifth year above attrition to accomplish the City's four-person staffing plan.

FISCAL IMPACT:

If awarded, grant funds will be appropriated in FY 2026 Fire Grants Fund. There is a City cash match required as part of this grant, which is 25% in the first and second year, and a match of 65% in the third year. However, to retain all added grant funded uniformed positions, it will cost the City \$1,209,146 to fully fund them in FY 2029 (9 Months).

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends authorizing the Corpus Christi Fire Department to submit the grant application, as presented.

LIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

Resolution