Project Description

The South Salt Lake Fire Department seeks federal funding through the SAFER program to hire 9 firefighters. These firefighters will be assigned to front-line suppression and rescue duties. The addition of these firefighters will dramatically increase our Department's ability to field sufficient personnel at all first alarm assignments.

The SAFER hired firefighters will be trained to Firefighter I and II standards and shall also receive training to either the EMT or Paramedic level within the time period required by the SAFER grant.

These new firefighters will provide a dramatic impact and benefit to the community. Our current staffing only allows for an average of 12 firefighters per first alarm assignment. We must rely on mutual aid and automatic aid partners to fill the first alarm assignment. Adding three firefighters per platoon to the department will provide an average of 15 firefighters in house for a first alarm assignment.

Impact on Daily Operations

Our current risk level is significantly higher than it should be. We are only able to provide 12 firefighters on a first alarm assignment and two of those firefighters are from our ambulance service and have no suppression capability. In essence, we are only able to provide 10 firefighters that have immediate ability to perform suppression and rescue functions.

9 new firefighters will provide a minimum of four-handed staffing on all of our front-line suppression apparatus and allow for 15 firefighters from our department on all first alarm assignments.

The risk to both firefighters and the public will be reduced significantly by these new firefighters. The Fire Department will finally be able to field full NFPA 1710 staffing. There will be sufficient firefighters on scene to conduct immediate fire suppression, search and rescue, RIT, and ICS all under the control and management of one fire department without the necessity to wait undue time for mutual aid and automatic aid departments to arrive on the scene.

Two in and two out is a time tested, safe, and valuable operations design that we will be able to provide. Firefighters will be able to make more aggressive and timely fire attack which will reduce the potential for life and property loss.

Through an extensive review of our first alarm response data over the past several years, we have concluded that we have never been able to provide a full NFPA 1710 first alarm response entirely in-house. This inability to provide adequate personnel directly impacts our ability to provide the level of service our citizens and firefighters deserve. A SAFER
grant award for the requested firefighters will provide us with the ability to field a full NFPA 1710 first alarm assignment nearly 100% of the time.

Financial Need

Little more can be said to describe the overall financial picture of the nation during these difficult times. The South Salt Lake Fire Department is just like every other fire Department in the nation, struggling to make ends meet and provide the maximum amount of service for the least possible expense. However, there are a few issues specific to South Salt Lake that are important during your consideration of our SAFER application.

First, a full 36% of the total land in our City is tax-exempt. We provide fire and rescue services to more State and County critical infrastructure sites per capita than any other municipality in Utah. We receive no financial reimbursement for any of the services we provide to this 36% of our city property. Every year for the past decade, we have attempted to get the State of Utah Legislature to correct this glaring inequality, but, as of yet, have not been successful in our attempts.

We have also attempted to increase our fee structure to include reimbursement for medical, hazardous materials, and some fire responses, however, the fees charged come nowhere near the cost of providing the service to these tax-exempt areas.

Second, our City has raised taxes 136% over the past three years and applied for the SAFER grant every year with no success. We have tried everything in our power to get the funding for these new firefighters. A successful SAFER award is the only option left available to us.

Minority Recruitment

Our Fire Department prides itself on being a workplace of diversity. We have extensive internal policies regarding the recruitment and hiring of minorities and females. Over the past several years we have increase our minority ranks from 4% to 16% and will seek to increase that percentage with a successful SAFER award.

Financial Obligation

Due to recent changes in the way the EMS is provided in our community, we started an ALS ambulance service through our Fire Department. The increased cost of providing the service is supported by anticipated revenue generation within the next two years. Through an extensive review and assessment of projected revenue, we anticipate being able to fund the SAFER firefighters with excess revenue from the ambulance service.
In the event that the ambulance revenue does not provide sufficient funding for the SAFER firefighters, the City will prepare for the additional funding obligation through other revenue sources. Ultimately, the City will fund these positions beyond the performance period because we understand how necessary they are to our ability to provide quick, safe, and adequate service. We simply do not have the funding currently to hire 9 new firefighters.

**Volunteer Discrimination**

Our Department utilizes a dedicated corps of part-time firefighters from the community. Each of the Part-time firefighters that we have are currently employed full-time by other fire departments in the area. We understand how valuable these assets are to service delivery and the firefighting community in general and would never limit an individuals ability to volunteer or work elsewhere as a firefighter.