

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 18, 2005

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: SUBMISSION OF ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT
APPLICATION TO THE OFFICE OF DOMESTIC PREPAREDNESS TO
PURCHASE EMS MANIKINS FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

ISSUE: City Council consideration of a grant application, in the amount of \$31,000, for Office of Domestic Preparedness's Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Approve the submission of an electronic grant application totaling \$31,000 to the Office of Domestic Preparedness to purchase two advanced life support (ALS) training mannequins for the Fire Department; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents that may be required.

BACKGROUND: The Assistance to Firefighters Grant program, formally known as the Fire Act Grant, is a program to protect the health and safety of civilians and firefighting personnel against fire and fire-related hazards. Restored by Congress in 2001 with \$100 million allocated, the program has \$600 million for the fiscal year 2005. The Assistance to Firefighters Grant is administered by the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Domestic Preparedness. Two major categories are funded in this program: operations and safety and firefighting vehicle acquisition. The grants are awarded on a competitive basis to fire departments that demonstrate financial need for assistance and illustrate how the funds will benefit the firefighters.

DISCUSSION: A problem facing the Alexandria EMS division is that there is no equipment for practicing the most difficult, advanced airway techniques on adult and pediatric patients. In the past, the EMS Division has partnered with Inova Alexandria Hospital to schedule EMS responders' rotations in the emergency room and same-day surgeries. During these rotations, the Advanced Life Support (ALS) providers were able to practice intubation, the process of inserting a hollow tube into a patient's airway to allow the patient to breathe more freely. Unfortunately, legal issues and insurance liability now preclude our providers from using the hospital facility to help practice their advanced techniques. The Alexandria Fire Department is requesting funds to

help address this problem through the purchase of one Advance Life Support/Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive (ALS/CBRNE) adult mannequin (\$29,000) and one ALS pediatric mannequin (\$2,000).

Without the new proposed training equipment, the providers would need to continue to learn the procedures in the classroom and would “verbalize” the intubation procedure in the practical portions of the classroom and training. The EMS providers currently receive “on-the-street” training on the advanced techniques. On-the-street training is difficult and the new EMS providers are given one chance to attempt to intubate an adult patient before a senior medic takes over. For pediatric patients, the intubation procedure is always deferred to the senior medic. Our quality assurance review committee has examined data showing that medics with more confidence in their skills tend to intubate more frequently. The community is better served by having medics who are as well trained as possible.

FISCAL IMPACT: The Assistance to Firefighters Grant is designed to cover 80 percent of the total project budget. The total cost of the program would be \$31,000, including a federal share of \$24,800 and a local match of \$6,200. The cost of the local match, or City share, would be absorbed in the Fire Department FY 2006 operating budget.

In addition, the City is also responsible for normal administrative costs associated with this grant. These costs include financial and reporting oversight provided by the administering agency (Alexandria Fire Department) as well as the Office of Management and Budget and the Finance Department.

The Fire Department has submitted the grant application in order to meet the deadline of April 8, 2005, with the understanding that subsequent City Council authorization would be required to accept this grant award.

ATTACHMENTS: None.

STAFF:

Laura Pettus, Emergency Management Analyst
Vince Whitmore, Deputy Fire Chief, EMS
Gary A. Mesaris, Fire Chief