


City of Alexandria, Virginia

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: NOVEMBER 16, 2007

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS FOR A FIRE SAFETY HOUSE FROM
THE ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY
GRANT PROGRAM

ISSUE: Application for grant funds to purchase a replacement fire safety house designed to educate youth in fire and life safety.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Authorize the submission of a Fire Prevention and Safety grant application (due November 30, 2007), not to exceed \$45,000; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary documents that may be required.

BACKGROUND: The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has announced that an application period has been opened beginning on October 22, 2007, ending November 30, 2007 for the Fire Prevention and Safety Grant Program. This grant program offers assistance for public education, smoke alarms, sprinkler awareness, code enforcement awareness, firefighter safety, training, arson prevention and other topics. There is a 20% match requirement for this grant.

Fire and Life Safety Education is essential to reduce the incidence of fire and fire related deaths and injuries. Nationally the number of residential fires has increased and the dollar loss from residential fires is approaching \$7 billion this year. The Commonwealth of Virginia also has experienced increases in fire losses. In Alexandria we have experienced a 22% rise in fires so far this fiscal year as compared to the same period last fiscal year.

DISCUSSION: For a number of years Alexandria has been utilizing a travel trailer style fire safety house to educate our youth at elementary schools, and for community events, fairs, and other activities. The current safety house was donated to the City by the Be Safe Coalition in 1997. The current safety house is in need of replacement due to normal wear and tear. The newer models offer greater opportunities for education by including educational components for weather emergencies in their design.

The Fire Department has allocated money yearly to depreciate the safety house. The safety house was scheduled to be replaced in FY2007 but this was deferred as a cost saving measure. This year the safety house has not been able to be utilized at all events because of its condition.

A new safety house will incorporate other training opportunities including weather related lessons such as tornado safety, lightning safety and will maintain the capabilities of the previous safety house.

FISCAL IMPACT: This grant has a 20% match requirement (up to \$9,000 depending on award), which could be allocated from the Fire Department Vehicle Replacement account. City staff will be responsible to administer the grant. The City is also responsible for the normal administrative costs associated with this grant, including financial and reporting oversight provided by the Fire department, as well as the Office of Management and Budget, and the Finance Department.

STAFF:

Mark Penn, Emergency Management Coordinator

Adam K. Thiel, Fire Chief

Karen Winey, Grants Coordinator