

**Narrative Statement**

## Project Description

\* Please provide your narrative statement in the space provided below.

## 2005 SAFER Grant

## Organization Description

The North Carolina State Firemen Association's mission is to form a more perfect organization, establish harmony of action, insure prosperity and promote the best interests of the firefighters of North Carolina, and compile statistics of information concerning the practical working of various systems and the merits of the different apparatus in use for the extinguishing of fires, also the cultivation of fraternal fellowship between the several fire departments of the state.

Our organization represents the 1289 fire departments which house 48,910 firefighters across our state with a total of 1548 fire districts. There are 1008 total volunteer departments, 207 combination departments and 74 all career fire departments broken down from these figures. There are ten members on the Board of Directors consisting of a President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Treasurer, Statistician, Eastern Director, Western Director, Piedmont Director, Past President and an Executive Director. Our office is strategically located within the state.

## Grant Request

We are applying under the Recruitment and Retention portion of the SAFER Grant on behalf of the entire State of North Carolina. Our organization has developed a marketing plan that will focus on every fire department or fire district concerning the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Our goal is to launch a one year advertisement campaign through mass media located throughout the state. We have progressively worked with film and video production companies to receive estimates for our budget during this campaign.

Our plan goal consists of a thirty minute video, a thirty second commercial clip, and a one minute radio announcement. This media will be produced using various fire departments and personnel throughout the state. The quote received from Dragon Fly Video Productions located in Charlotte, NC includes price quotes for media coverage with affiliate ION Media Group. We plan on flooding the prime time markets in the month of October. Our goal will be to specialize within the month of October, because this is when National Fire Prevention Week is observed. So as we educate the public on fire safety, we can work on recruiting volunteer firefighters into our fire departments and districts.

All costs for our recruitment and retention plan through mass media include the following:

Dragon Fly Video Productions – Develop and produce a thirty second commercial, thirty minute video and a one minute radio spot utilizing firefighters across the state. These media will show the importance of volunteerism with detailed instructions on how the general public can become involved in their local fire department. These commercials will have professional producers that will direct and compile this project. The cost for the production is \$74,840.00.

ION Media Group – Buy and secure key dates throughout the year totaling fifteen weeks with prime media markets in Asheville, Charlotte, Greensboro, Winston Salem, High Point, Greenville, New Bern, Raleigh and Wilmington, which covers the entire State of North Carolina. The marketing plan includes buying time slots where the largest portion of the general public will view the professionally produced commercial and video. The cost for media time is \$124,376.00.

ION Media Group – Buy and secure media broadcasting through all prime networks for the entire Fire Prevention Week in October 2006. The professional video and commercial will be aired on all media markets in prime time during the week while everyone is most mindful of fire. The cost for this media time is \$31,225.00.

Dragon Fly Video Productions – We have included cost for recording 1500 DVD's for every fire department and Fire Marshal in every county within the State of North Carolina. This includes the Dragon Fly Video Productions mailing out each copy. This will allow the message for the need of volunteers to be shown during fire prevention classes, community activities and other key organizations within each fire district. This includes extra copies to send each State Firemen's Association upon request. The cost for DVD's is \$6,570.00.

The total cost for our grant is \$237,011.00 dollars.

The North Carolina State Firemen's Association has already implemented a 1-800-FIRE LINE for people who are interested in volunteering at their local fire department. This phone line now receives little activity. We are prepared to staff this line with personnel that will give instructions concerning who to contact within their respective fire district to begin a volunteer fire service career. This number will be broadcast within all media coverage.

Our association has held discussions with the University of North Carolina's Broadcast Television Network. UNC-TV has agreed, free of charge, to broadcast a panel interview of key figures in the Fire Service and diversified firefighters from all regions of the State of North Carolina. This panel will discuss critical issues involving recruitment and retention. They will also discuss key aspects within fire department organizations such as camaraderie within the fire service, helping others, and impacting the loss of life and property with positive results. We are presently working with Time Warner Cable for free media. They cannot offer any information until after the SAFER deadline for applications.

Each advertisement will be curtailed to reach all ethnic groups and minorities. Our organization encourages and supports equality with the Fire Service.

#### Why Our State Needs SAFER?

Every organization in America that depends on volunteerism is suffering. It is the organizations providing life safety services such as the fire and rescue departments in our country that are suffering the brunt of this struggle. America's citizens are unfortunately feeling the consequences. In our state alone economic hard times prevents hiring of full-time members to serve in this capacity. The largest percentage of the general public is unaware of the problem and how they can assist in their local fire department to help remedy the solution. We cannot afford not to receive this investment. Money has been set aside for this type of program and we are depending on it to aid with this dilemma.

#### Financial Need

Every organization eligible for any Federal Grant has tremendous budgeting needs. It is more crucial for such fire departments to apply individually for operational, staffing and equipment needs under these grants. We urge individual fire department and jurisdictions to apply for grant money under recruitment and retention. Our organization would like to apply for a state wide campaign grant that will coincide with each local recruitment and retention effort that organizations apply for individually.

The North Carolina State Firemen's Association operates one hundred percent within our general fund, which is generated by membership dues. This budget only allows expenditures for salaries, insurance, office expenses, conferences, legal fees, and dues to outside agencies to manage our organization. This general fund provides the structures for managing two other accounts governed by the State of North Carolina. Those accounts are the Fire Relief Fund and the Fire Fraternal Insurance Fund. The Relief Fund, under state guidelines offers benefits to firefighters such as line of duty and AD&D disbursements. We are also allowed to pay legal fees from this account.

The Fire Fraternal Insurance Fund is a self sustaining account generated from an optional membership fee for those firefighters interested. This account pays decreasing death claims for members who remain enrolled. In general, our general fund is used to maintain these two accounts for the welfare of the firefighters in the State of North Carolina. Our general budget does not allow for this magnitude of expenditure for efforts in recruitment and retention.

#### Closing Remarks

We have concentrated our grant application on the State of North Carolina; however, we have made arrangements to enthusiastically share this product across the nation with our extended family within the Fire Service. We have established resource avenues for any fire department or district within the United States of America to obtain copies of all three marketing products, whether it is the commercial, radio announcement or the thirty minute DVD. We have also prepared to statistically prove how well this project will enhance the numbers of volunteers across our state. We will track the number of calls received on our fire line telephone number, as well as the numbers from rosters before, and up to five years after receiving this grant.

Thank you for taking your time as peer reviewers to consider our grant request. We hope this grant narrative has been explained to the magnitude we feel it would generate.

\* Please describe any grants that your department has received from DHS including the AFG. For example: 2002 AFG Fire Engine, 2003 UASI Equipment... (Enter "N/A" if Not Applicable)

N/A