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USFA Grant Program Technical Assistance Center
16825 South Seton Avenue
Emmitsburg, Maryland 21727-8998

RE: ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTER GRANT PROGRAM

OAKLAND FIRE SAFE HILLS – PREVENTION IN PRACTICE

On behalf of the Oakland Fire Department, our grant writing team would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit this grant proposal. We are requesting \$75,000 for a total program cost of \$370,000 for this project. Many fire hazard mitigation measures have been implemented in the City of Oakland, however more fire safe practices need to be embraced by our citizenry, especially in the high fire hazard zone of the City.

Our proposal is focused on achieving fuel reduction and enhanced response capabilities in the “high fire hazard” area of the Oakland Hills by providing education, training and resources. This program will meet the needs of the Oakland firefighters and 15,000 people who live and work in our targeted area. It also includes direct delivery of training to 1,500 participants who live within the City’s high fire hazard zone targeted pilot project area.

Prudential Insurance Company has been identified as a secondary source of funding and we have applied for funds from their America Giving Program. Prudential’s corporate giving program addresses recognized problem areas and supports programs that help to solve existing problems.

Over 3,000 homes were destroyed or severely damaged during the Oakland Hills fire in 1991. Prudential Insurance Company was impacted and currently holds the insurance policies of many of the homes in the Oakland Hills. This proposal fulfills the company’s focus and emphasis on developing a “Spirit of Community Initiative”.

We must rely on our community’s spirit and a commitment to this program to reduce the fire threat that still exists ten years after the Oakland hills burned. The *Oakland Fire Safe Hills – Prevention in Practice* program includes opportunities for public/private sector collaboration making it a true “PARTNERSHIP FOR A SAFER FUTURE”.

We appreciate any consideration given to funding our proposal.

Sincerely,

GERALD A. SIMON, Chief
Fire Department Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. ABSTRACT	1
II. INTRODUCTION	2
III. NEEDS STATEMENT	3
IV. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES	4
V. PROGRAM METHODS/TIMELINES	5
VI. PROGRAM EVALUATION	7
VII. BUDGET-COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS	8
VIII. FUTURE FUNDING	9
APPENDIX	10

***“If it be not to come, it will be now;
if it be not now, yet it will come:
the readiness is all.”***

Hamlet, Act V. Scene 2

Abstract

There have been five major fires over the past century in the Oakland hills. In 1991 the City of Oakland experienced one of the most devastating fires in United States history. Over 3000 structures were destroyed, 175 structures were damaged, and 25 lives lost, including one firefighter and one police officer.

From 1992 to date, residents are required by Fire Code and City Ordinance to maintain an area of defensible space around their homes; to protect them from these wildland fires. The City budget covers inspection and enforcement, but currently there is no training program that provides citizens with a model for compliance. Some citizens do not have the tools, equipment or resources to remove and dispose of the fuel surrounding their property. In addition, there are many new homeowners living in the area with no experience of past fire problems.

The Oakland Fire Department proposes to develop a training program that includes a model of fire safe property, equipment for removal and disposal of fuel, and assistance to elderly, low income, and non-ambulatory citizens with the money received through the FEMA Assistance To Firefighter Grant. We anticipate empowering our citizens with problem solving skills, an area of interest specified by our secondary funding source, Prudential Insurance Company's America Giving Program.

Introduction

The City of Oakland was founded in 1852 just three years after the discovery of gold at Sutter's Fort. Located on the east shore of San Francisco Bay, Oakland covers 79 square miles, 52 square miles of land and 27 square miles of water. There are 19 miles of shoreline. The 2000 census lists the population of Oakland as just under 400,000.

The Oakland Fire Department was organized in 1869. The Department has 26 fire stations staffed by 495 full time paid firefighters divided into three battalions working a 24 on 48 off schedule. The total non-uniform support staff is 57 employees. The total non-uniform support staff is 57 employees.

Oakland Fire Department's Administration is divided into divisions: Support Services, Operations, and Technical Services, Fire Prevention Bureau, Training and the Office of Emergency Services. The Fire Dispatch Center dispatches for the cities of Oakland, Piedmont and Emeryville. The Department reports statistics on responses to the State of California through the CIRS system. The State then forwards the results to NIFRS.

The Emergency Services Manager is the director of Office of Emergency Services. OES administers the Citizens of Oakland Respond to Emergencies (CORE) program. CORE was created after the Oakland Hills Fire to prepare citizens to assist each other during fires and natural disaster. The Emergency Services Manager will administer the FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant. OES and the Training Division will work in collaboration with CORE to implement and deliver the program.

In the year 2000, the Department responded to a total of 60,850 responses. Of these, 2,047 were vehicle and outside fires and 970 were grass/wildland fires.

The Oakland Fire Department mission statement is:

The proud men and women of the Oakland Fire Department are committed to providing the highest quality and highest level of courteous and responsive service to the citizens of Oakland.

This mission is accomplished by implementing comprehensive strategies and training in fire prevention, fire suppression, emergency medical services, all risk mitigation, emergency preparedness, 911 services and community-based fire services.

Needs Statement

Following the devastating 1991 Firestorm in the Oakland Hills, the city and its communities have been in a rebuilding process. Over the past ten years, emphasis has been placed on helping the owners of the 3000+ burnt homes and assisting citizens and fire personnel in recovering from the loss of 25 lives. The Oakland Fire Department recognizes that there are still urban/wildland sections of the Oakland hills that were not affected by the 1991 fire and are considered “high hazard”. The State of California compiled a comprehensive vegetation management program and unfortunately, Oakland was unable to get voter support to continue the 1.5 million dollars of funding previously awarded to the City. In light of that loss of funds, Oakland is seeking funds to establish this new pilot program.

The target area for the *Oakland Fire Safe Hills, Prevention in Practice Program* was chosen based upon the needs of the Northern Montclair community as it is one of Oakland’s older residential areas situated in a heavily wooded environment. Within the target area, a large number of people reside. These citizens are in danger of being caught in fire, because of possible of physical and mental limitations preventing escape. Also, they may be at risk based on the medications affecting judgment.

The Oakland Fire Department perceives the needs of this district as it relates to the pilot vegetation management program:

- To educate residents, new and old, to the hazards of living in an urban/wildland area as well as the need to be in compliance with the fire code
- To provide citizens with a model of how to create defensible space
- To train fire department personnel on public education, conducting inspections, and working with inspectors on enforcement of program
- To create a tool lending process to assist citizens in clearing and removing fuel from their property
- To design a system for tracking elderly, non-ambulatory, and low income residents within the target area in order to assist them in complying with program
- To establish public-private partnerships with community organizations to assist the elderly, non-ambulatory and low income citizens in clearing and removing fuel from their residences

The Oakland Fire Department will be taking this pilot program to all of the high fire hazard zone areas of the Oakland Hills. The needs of the original target neighborhood are indicative of the needs of Oakland’s urban/wildland interface areas.

Program Objectives

The *Oakland Fire Safe Hills, Prevention in Practice* program objectives are designed to meet the needs of the residents and businesses that are located in the “high fire hazard” areas of the Oakland Hills, as they relate to reducing the high fire risk to more manageable conditions.

There are five objectives that will be met with the proposed program:

1. Raise the level of awareness and educate a minimum of 10% of the target area population (1500 residents/students/businesses)
2. Reduce the potential fuel load by a minimum of 5% in the targeted residential areas. (250 homes/businesses)
3. Provide tools and resources for fuel reduction for up to 5% in the targeted residential areas. (250 homes/businesses)
4. Provide vegetation clearance services to elderly, low-income, and non-ambulatory constituencies in the target area. (100 homes)
5. Increase the level of training for Oakland fire fighters in current wildland firefighting techniques. (300 members)

Program Methods

Objective	Method(s)	Resources Needed	Location(s)
Awareness & Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Direct Mail to 15k residents 2. Training classes for 1500 3. Schools outreach & education 4. Develop defensible space model 	Flyers, postage, mailing Produce video, workbooks Presentations & information Tools, materials, staff	Households & Businesses Public assembly locations Schools Neighborhood Home
Fuel Reduction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Develop demonstration gardens 6. Enforcement programs 	Public-Private partners, plants Inspection & Admin. Staff; notices	City site for public use Target area – 5000 parcels
Tools & Resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Establish a Public Tool Lending Library 8. Provide mobile Chipper Services 	Tools, staff, location, process Equipment, staff and supplies	Library or other location Within target area
Vegetation Clearance Services for Special Needs Populations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Provide Youth & Adult volunteers teams 10. Provide necessary tools & resources 11. Create Registry for Special Needs group 	Training, schools, partners Private partners Surveys, Database, Staff	Homes of Special Needs Target area & Fire Dept.
Firefighter Training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Utilize current eradication techniques 	Fire department training division	Fire Training Center & Target area

Program Methods - Timelines

The methods to identify the objectives are quantified in the graph on page 5. In this graph we have targeted the resources and locations as well as the goals we wish to achieve. Some resources will be purchased, e.g., chipper, tools and training materials, as well as some labor will be contracted services.

Upon successful funding of the grant, over the course of one year our methodology will include the following timelines:

The first three months

- Secure public/private partnership
- Purchase and distribute equipment, materials and supplies
- Program development
- Contract staff services
- Establish model of defensible space
- Initiate community and fire department training
- Establish tool lending location
- Prepare Program Budget Request for next fiscal year
- Monitor effectiveness of program

The next three months

- Begin inspection program
- Implement fuel reduction program
- Target special needs groups
- Initiate enforcement of fire code
- Monitor effectiveness of program
- Removal of combustible fuel load

The next three months

- Continue vegetation abatement
- Conduct surveys of compliance and non-compliance lots
- Maintain data base
- Continue enforcement of fire code
- Monitor effectiveness of program

The final three months

- Monitor grant program deliverables
- Evaluate program effectiveness of firefighter training
- Evaluate effectiveness of the program in the target community
- Elements of the program are sustainable and will continue in the high fire risk areas

Program Evaluation

Success of the pilot program will be measured by the ability to fulfill the agreements set forth in the grant proposal. Meeting each objective as well as submitting the necessary financial statements and progress reports throughout the grant period will provide both the grant recipient and the funding partners opportunities to assess the accomplishments and improvement areas within the program.

The specified areas to be evaluated are:

1. Public awareness and education
2. Fuel reduction
3. Tools and resources
4. Vegetation clearance services for special needs population
5. Firefighter training

Tracking progress of the grant will be conducted by Oakland Fire Department's grant team and the appropriate Division head. The information gathered from the evaluative process will be presented in written form to the funding partners, Chief of the Oakland Fire Department, City Manager and City Council. It is the ultimate goal that all involved parties agree on the program benefits and will provide support for expanded services in the future to further assist the Oakland Hills community.

Budget- Cost/Benefit Analysis

The Oakland/Berkeley Hills Firestorm was one of the most devastating and costly fires in America's history of fires. (cited in National Fire Protection Handbook, 1998 edition.)

As a result of this disaster, 25 lives were lost, over 3000 homes and apartments were destroyed, private property losses exceeded \$2 billion dollars and FEMA's response and recovery costs exceeded \$54 million dollars. (cited in Oakland/Berkeley Hills Tunnel Fire After Action Report, 1992.)

Oakland Fire Safe Hills, Prevention in Practice pilot program targets a section of the Oakland hills that has been designated a high fire hazard zone.

The Northern Montclair area of the Oakland hills represents a population of approximately 15,000 residents and is comprised of homes, businesses and schools. Current private property values in this area range from \$300,000 to \$750,000, conservatively. This area of the Oakland hills was not impacted by the 1991 Oakland/Berkeley Hills Firestorm and represents an older housing stock.

The cost/benefit of the \$75,000 FEMA grant investment will be realized upon successful completion of this pilot program. The fire risk, loss and human impact reductions to the area will have immediate benefits to the Oakland community and long-term benefits to the State and FEMA relative to major emergencies and disasters.

Also, upon approval of the requested grant funding of \$75,000, FEMA will realize an immediate 4 to 1 ratio, return on investment. This benefit translates into the Oakland Fire Department in collaboration with Prudential Insurance Company and other partners (e.g. American Red Cross, Oakland schools, East Bay Conservation Corps, Home Depot, etc.) to commit to the additional \$295,0000 of funding that is needed to implement the proposed pilot program.

The Budget detail information for the proposed pilot program outlines who the primary funding sources are and how the funding will be utilized. This budget detail information is contained on a spreadsheet on the following page.

The Oakland Fire Department has gained valuable experience in leveraging funding, resources and establishing Private-Public partnerships from participating in other FEMA sponsored grant programs such as the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Project Impact, and most recently, the United States Fire Administration's, Fire Safe City Initiative.

**Budget Information for Grant Application for
The Oakland Fire Safe Hills Prevention in Practice Program**

Program Costs	Applicant Share	FEMA	Prudential Insurance Company	Contributions	Subtotals
Personnel	150,000			30,000	180,000
Travel	5,000				5,000
Equipment & Tools- Fuel Reduction		25,000	15,000	10,000	50,000
Supplies & Materials –Enforcement Programs		7,000		3,000	10,000
Contractual-Fuel Removal; Training		20,000	10,000	7,000	37,000
Central Services	45,000				45,000
Rentals				5,000	5,000
Program Development	15,000	6,000		6,000	27,000
Training materials/books		17,000		4,000	21,000
TOTAL:	215,000	75,000	25,000	65,000	370,000

Future Funding

The purpose of the Oakland pilot program, *Oakland Fire Safe Hills, Prevention in Practice*, is to create and establish Public-Private partnerships as well as a model that demonstrates a community-based Fire Prevention/Mitigation approach.

Oakland Fire Safe Hills, Prevention in Practice program will also serve as the catalyst for a “high visibility” program for the Fire Department that will raise public awareness, interest and demand from citizens and businesses. The demand for the program will cause the City of Oakland to support and continue this vital program for the remaining 65,000 residents in the designated “high fire hazard” areas of the Oakland Hills.

Upon successful implementation of the pilot program, the Oakland Fire Department plans to continue the program in a phased approach throughout the Oakland Hills. The Oakland Fire Department will request that the City Council authorize funding for the program to continue in the remaining eight (8) contiguous areas that comprise the Oakland Hills and would ask Public-Private partners to make long-term commitments to the program.

The *Oakland Fire Safe Hills, Prevention in Practice* program would be implemented and phased into each area by ranking the remaining eight (8) areas based upon risk factors.

Additionally, the Oakland Fire Department has already committed 58% of the funding towards the program costs and is confident that the remaining 42% of the funds can either be secured or obtained via in-kind services.

Appendix

References

1. National Fire Protection Handbook, 1998 edition
2. Oakland/Berkeley Hills Tunnel Fire After Action Report, 1992
3. Oakland Fire Mitigation Plan, 1992
4. Oakland Fire Department Annual Report 2000
5. Year 2000 Census Report
6. Socioeconomic Factors and The Incidence of Fire
7. Distance Learning Funding Sourcebook
8. Searchable Data Base Foundation Center

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