

REPORT FROM

OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER


Date: June 3, 2024

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Council File No. --

Council District: Various

To: The Mayor and Council

From: Matthew W. Szabo, City Administrative Officer 

Reference: Transmittal from the Board of Fire Commissioners dated October 17, 2023; referred for report October 17, 2023

Subject: **ACCEPTANCE OF THE 2023 FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA) GRANT AWARD FOR THE URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE TASK FORCE – LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT**

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council, subject to the approval of the Mayor:

1. Authorize the Fire Chief, or designee, to accept the 2023 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Cooperative Agreement Grant for the Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Task Force in the amount of \$1,263,456 for the term of September 1, 2023 through August 31, 2026, and to execute any documents or agreements necessary to accept the grant, subject to the approval by the City Attorney as to form;
2. Authorize the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) to deposit the 2023 FEMA grant funds received under this cooperative agreement into Fund 335, Department 38, Account to be determined;
3. Authorize the Controller, for reimbursement purposes, to transfer 2023 FEMA grant funds from Fund 335, Department 38, Account to be determined, to Fund 100, Department 38: 001010, Salaries General Account; 001012, Salaries Sworn Account; 001090, Overtime General Account; and, 001098, Overtime Variable Staffing Account, upon submission of proper documentation by the LAFD for direct staff costs incurred during the grant performance period;
4. Authorize the Controller to transfer 2023 FEMA grant funds from Fund 335, Department 38 to Fund 100, Department 38, Revenue Source Code 5346, Reimbursement of Grant Related Costs, for fringe benefits upon submission of proper documentation by the LAFD for costs incurred during the grant performance period; and,

5. Authorize the Controller to transfer \$482,110 from Fund 100, Department 38, Account 001012, Salaries Sworn, to Fund 335, Department 38, Account to be determined, for the purchase of expense and equipment items, to be reimbursed by the FEMA grant during the period of September 1, 2023 through August 31, 2026, and any extensions granted by FEMA;
6. Authorize the LAFD and the Controller to transfer funds as needed between Fund 335, Department 38 and Fund 100, Department 38 for implementation of the 2023 FEMA US&R Cooperative Agreement program through the end of the performance period;
7. Authorize the Fire Chief to negotiate and execute contracts with the following service providers, each not to exceed \$99,000, for the 2023 FEMA grant performance period: Canine Search Specialist (three contracts); Medical Team Manager (eight contracts); Structural Engineering Specialist (eight contracts); Task Force Leader (five contracts); Safety Officer (two contracts); Plans Manager (two contracts); Rescue Manager (two contracts); and Hazardous Materials Manager (two contracts);
8. Authorize the LAFD to prepare Controller instructions for any technical adjustments, subject to the approval of the City Administrative Officer, and authorize the Controller to implement the instructions.

SUMMARY

The Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) requests the authority to accept the 2023 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Cooperative Agreement Grant for the Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Task Force in the amount of \$1,263,456 with a performance period of September 1, 2023 through August 31, 2026. Matching funds are not required through this cooperative agreement; however, the LAFD is required to front-fund the necessary expenditures. The City will then receive the grant funds on a reimbursement basis, following submission of proper documentation.

BACKGROUND

On April 4, 1993, the City entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with FEMA and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, to establish the LAFD as one of 28 participating agencies of the FEMA US&R Task Force. As a participating agency, the LAFD receives funding from FEMA for the equipment, supplies, training, and salaries in support of the US&R CA-TF1 Team.

Under the terms of this MOA, the LAFD is responsible for organizing and administering the Task Force to include recruiting and training, designating a Program Manager, maintaining capability for 24-hour activation, and complying with financial, administrative, reimbursement, and reporting requirements. As a participating agency, the LAFD receives funding from FEMA for the equipment, supplies, training, and salaries in support of the US&R CA-TF1 Team. Upon request by the State or Federal government, the LAFD will mobilize US&R CA-TF1 for the purposes of locating,

extricating, and providing initial medical treatment to trapped victims of structural collapses at a designated disaster site. On August 12, 2011, the Council approved an amendment to the MOA (C.F. 10-2283-S1) reflecting the transfer of FEMA to the Department of Homeland Security and the publication of the National Urban Search and Rescue Response System regulations.

Expenditure Plan

The 2023 FEMA US&R grant funds will be utilized to cover personnel expenses and administrative and operation expenses as outline below:

Personnel Expenses

The 2023 FEMA US&R grant program will provide \$598,966 to the LAFD to fund one Fire Captain I, one Management Analyst, and one Storekeeper II, to administer and manage the US&R program. Responsibilities of the US&R CA-TF1 Team staffers include day-to-day Task Force activities, including grant management and administration, Task Force development and management, and collaboration with Task Force stakeholders. This amount includes \$363,000 for direct costs and \$235,996 for fringe benefits. It should be noted that the City Administrative Officer report for the acceptance of the grant funds for the 2020 FEMA US&R grant program (C.F. 20-1387) included a recommendation instructing the LAFD to reprogram available grant funding within the 2020 FEMA grant budget to support unbudgeted indirect costs, in accordance with 2020 FEMA grant guidelines and Council approval procedures, as necessary, and request and submit for full indirect cost funding in future FEMA US&R grants. Upon further communication with the grantor, it was determined that only fringe benefits are eligible to be funded through grant funds. The remaining indirect costs for Central Services and Department and Administration costs are estimated at \$215,379, and will be absorbed within the Department's budgeted funds.

An amount of \$182,350 will be utilized for overtime costs for staff assigned to specialized training on search and rescue activities for emergency incidents. Funding will support time spent attending function trainings and other FEMA-approved trainings.

Administrative and Operational Expenses

An amount of \$482,110 will be provided to fund various personal services contracts for specialized team members (\$77,540), storage and maintenance (\$59,500), travel expenses (\$97,800), supplies (\$67,270) and equipment (\$180,000) for programming operations.

Sole source service contracts have been executed with two Canine Specialists; four Medical Team Managers; and four Structural Engineering Specialists; one Safety Officer; and one Plans Manager under the 2020 FEMA grant. The LAFD seeks authority to negotiate and execute contracts for one Canine Specialist; four Medical Team Managers; four Structural Engineering Specialists; three Task Force Leaders; one Safety Officer; one Plans Manager; two Rescue Managers; and two Hazardous Materials Managers. Due to the specialized nature of these services, the City Attorney has approved the use of sole source contracts, in accordance with City Charter Section 371(e)(2), which provides for exceptions to the City's competitive bidding process.

While each agreement will have a total maximum compensation of \$99,000, the LAFD reports that expenditures under each agreement will remain within the budgeted funding allocations; the higher contractual ceiling is needed to accommodate unanticipated FEMA deployments. Under these circumstances, FEMA will reimburse the City through another Federal funding source separate from the 2023 FEMA grant.

The LAFD's transmittal includes a recommendation to continue position authority for the Fire Captain I, Management Analyst, and Storekeeper II positions. As the 2023-24 Adopted Budget already includes approval of resolution authority for these positions, this recommendation will be excluded. The continuation of these positions is subject to annual review during the budget development process to ensure funding is available to fully support the staff positions.

In accordance with Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 14.6, the LAFD is required to transmit grant applications for Mayor and Council approval before accepting and receiving the grant award.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Approval of the recommendations included in this report will authorize the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) to accept the 2023 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) Cooperative Agreement Grant funding in the amount of \$1,263,456 effective from September 1, 2023 through August 31, 2026. The LAFD will front-fund all costs and will be reimbursed by FEMA upon submission of proper documentation. Matching funds by the City are not required. Funds will support the personnel and overtime costs for three positions: one Fire Captain I, one Management Analyst, and one Storekeeper II; office and equipment expenses; and, agreements for specialized services for the US&R CA-TF1 program. The 2023 FEMA grant budget for personnel will support the direct costs and fringe benefits of the three positions in this report; other indirect costs, including Central Services and Department and Administration costs, estimated at \$215,379, are not covered and must be absorbed. Resolution authority for the three positions is included in the 2023-24 Adopted Budget.

FINANCIAL POLICIES STATEMENT

These actions are in compliance with the City's Financial Policies in that all grant funds will be utilized to the extent possible, to fund the grant program activities.