

PROJECT NARRATIVE

1. Project Description

“Firefighter safety is the utmost priority for our department and our community. If we cannot provide a safe and effective working environment for our first responders, it is impossible to expect them to provide high levels of service in every situation,” states our Fire Chief, James Ellis. This statement demonstrates the level of our commitment and high regard for our citizens, visitors and our firefighter’s safety and well being. Without a properly outfitted force of highly trained and adequately outfitted staff, it is virtually impossible and unreasonable to expect top-notch results. It is for this reason, the City of Costa Mesa Fire Department (CMFD) is requesting funding assistance from FEMA’s Fire Operations and Firefighter Safety to purchase 26 new self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and to upgrade 28 obsolete SCBA’s. The cost of this life-saving program is \$99,165 (\$69,416 federal share and \$29,749 local match). This will allow total interoperability with our SCBA inventory, compliance with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 2002 standards and mandates for all of our first responders.

This new Personnel Protective Equipment (SCBA’s) is part of a project aimed at lowering the risk of inhalation hazards to fire department personnel, increasing firefighter safety, and increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of Rapid Intervention Crews (RIC’s). Our current inventory of SCBA’s is substandard in 2002 NFPA and OSHA standards.

The 26 new SCOTT self-contained breathing equipment purchased with these grant funds will:

Include an integrated passive Personal Alert Safety Systems (PASS) that is NFPA and OSHA 2002 compliant. Currently, none of our SCBA’s has this capability.

Obtain Dual EBSS Buddy Breathing Kits for enhanced operations, which will be included in the new SCOTT devices.

The 28 upgrade components purchased with these grant funds, for our current SCOTT equipment will:

Include PASS devices that will be retrofitted for our existing SCBA’s.

Add Dual EBSS Buddy Breathing Kits will be added to our current SCBA’s to allow full interoperability with new devices purchased.

Improve Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC) capabilities through the use of built in quick connect Buddy Breathing Systems. The quick connect Buddy Breathing Systems, and other equipment, will be installed on our current SCBA devices to permit full compliance and interoperability for our current obsolete devices.

The three (3) requested upgrade components, (which are now standard equipment on new SCOTT SCBA), will bring our old, malfunctioning SCBA's, into 2002 NFPA and OSHA compliance. Currently our substandard devices are kept functionally operational by "parting out" broken devices. They are unreliable and operationally inconsistent due to age and incompatibility issues.

Currently, our department has 54 SCBA devices that range in age up to 20 years old. Due to budgetary constraints, we have replaced these devices only when they are absolutely inoperable. We are budgeted for six (6) devices next year and for the next five (5) years. Therefore it would take us over four (4) years to obtain the 26 new devices we are requesting with these grant funds. At that rate, it's difficult to ascertain if the devices would be truly interoperable, due to the length of time it would take to purchase all the devices. This does not take into account the remaining 28 devices and obtaining the upgrade parts for their interoperability.

This grant will allow Costa Mesa Fire Department to replace the most obsolete devices immediately, with 26 new, 2002 NFPA and OSHA compliant devices. Additionally, these grant funds will allow us to purchase all the new replacement parts needed to bring the entire department's SCBA devices up to 2002 standards and assure first line firefighter safety with every use.

These grant funds will dramatically change the working environment for our firefighters by providing them with the knowledge and confidence that their equipment will no longer malfunction due to substandard, aging parts and will provide them with the safety and protection that is needed to perform their jobs to the best of their abilities. Additionally, we will no longer need to order a few devices every year in the hopes that all the equipment will be interoperable. With the life span of approximately 20 years per device, we will only need to budget and purchase minimal replacement parts such as gaskets, on an as-needed basis.

2. Financial Need

The use of these grant funds is specifically designated for the direct purchase of twenty-six (26) SCOTT 2002 Edition Harness (less cylinder) with Dual EBSS Buddy Breather, HUD Display/RIC UAC Connection for NFPA 2002 Edition Standard AV3000 Face piece and SCOTT Pak Alert SE (factory installed). The total cost of these devices is \$63,700 (\$2,450 each).

In addition, the funds will be used to purchase upgrade equipment for twenty-eight (28) of our existing Scott Air Pak Fifty's. SCOTT HUD Upgrade Kit, 4.5 for Standard Regulators, SCOTT RIC/UAC Connection Upgrade Kits for 4.5 High Pressure SCBA and SCOTT Dual EBSS Retrofit Kits with Pouches. The total cost of these upgrades are \$28,336 (\$1,012 each). This project will supply 2002 NFPA and OSHA compliant SCBA's to 100% of Costa Mesa's Firefighters. This grant request is for \$99,165 (70% of

the total cost is \$69,416), with the remaining 30% or \$29,749 provided as matching funds, secured by the Costa Mesa Fire Department.

We will use the grant funds as follows:

SCOTT 2002 Harness (less cylinder) with dual EBSS Buddy Breather HUD Display/RIC UAC Connection for NFPS Edition Standard with AV3000 Face piece. SCOTT Pak Alert (SE) Factory Installed.

26 Units \$2,450 each – total **\$63,700**

SCOTT HUD Upgrade Kit, 4.5 for Standard Regulator

28 Units \$385 each – total **\$10,780**

SCOTT RIC/UAC Connection Upgrade Kit for 4.5 High Pressure SCBA

28 Units \$289 each – total **\$8,092**

SCOTT Dual EBSS Retrofit Kit with Pouch

28 Units \$388 each – total **\$9,464**

Subtotal \$92,036

7.75% sales tax **\$7,129**

Total \$99,165

As part of our commitment to firefighter safety, our commitment is also to involve our local community in this funding effort. To meet that end, as part of our 30% local matching funds, we plan to solicit a portion of the 30% match from the Costa Mesa Community Foundation, State Farm Insurance and several other local partners. We have had success in obtaining small grant funds from these organizations in the past. As part of our 2002 Assistance to Firefighters grant award, we received grant funding from these agencies, and several others, to help us meet our matching requirements. We feel it is important for the local community to not only contribute but also play a participatory role in our efforts to secure safe working environments for our first responders.

3. Cost Benefit of Request

The most significant benefit derived from this purchase will be enhanced firefighter safety due to this much-needed personal protective equipment. The passive integrated PASS device along with the quick-connect buddy Breathing System will greatly enhance the Rapid Intervention Crew's (RIC) efficiency during firefighter rescue operations. The integrated PASS device will alert RIC's as early as possible and the Buddy Breathing System will help provide life-saving air to firefighters that are incapacitated in a toxic environment. This SCBA program will bring 100% of Costa Mesa Fire Department into 2002 regulatory compliance. In addition, the new PASS incorporates a Heads Up Display (HUD) on the regulator that provides the user with an additional way to confirm the amount of air left in the SCBA. This redundant system is required by 2002 NFPA standards. None of our current SCBA's has these features.

The purchase of these basic tools not only benefits our firefighters' "response without borders" attitudes, but clearly benefits our residents and the local business community, as well, including the millions of visitors to South Coast Plaza (22 million visitors per year), the Orange County Fairgrounds (5 million visitors per year), Orange County Performing Arts Center, (600,000 guests per year), John Wayne Airport, our three (3) local freeways, plus a myriad of specialized venues held on a yearly basis. Additionally, our city is the home of Orange Coast College (25,000+ students per year), Vanguard University (2,000+ students per year) and National University (14,000+ students per year). In conjunction with those high profile venues, we have the Jewish Federation Council (JFC) located in our jurisdiction. The JFC and South Coast Plaza have been listed as potential WMD sites.

In the event of any catastrophe, these SCBA devices will prove invaluable in saving the lives of our firefighters so they can save countless victims and provide a safe working environment for our first responders. Our fire department has the responsibility for safeguarding those visitors who travel from around the state, the country, and the world with the same due diligence as our residents and business owners. These devices will allow us to become active partners with the local hospitals and other local jurisdictions in saving the lives of countless victims of accidents, illness and perhaps acts of terrorism.

Through our Mutual Aid and Automatic Aid agreements, these breathing devices could conceivably be used at Disneyland, Edison Field, Arrowhead Pond, our local beaches or anyplace in Orange County where our assistance would be provided for any kind of disaster. The interoperability of this equipment with surrounding jurisdictions highlights its value and increases exponentially as the possibilities for use as a shared resource for the Orange County area. These devices will truly allow Costa Mesa Fire Department the interoperability with other local jurisdictions that we are currently lacking and financially unable to acquire.

While our City Council recognizes the importance of having all our breathing apparatus meeting 2002 standards for firefighter safety, it continues to be fiscally impossible for funds to be devoted to purchasing new air packs at one time. Currently, we are allowed to purchase up to six (6) devices yearly to keep our firefighters outfitted with devices that are a reasonable age and working condition. The Fire Department is funded exclusively from the City's General Fund. General Fund revenues continue to decrease due to California's Proposition 13 (limiting property tax revenues); the State's shifting of fees from cities to the State budget, the possibility of redistributing state sales tax, and the unknown impact of the current State fiscal crisis and its impact on individual cities. In addition, the City has never fully recovered from the State's take-away for the Education Relief Augmentation Fund (ERAF), which shifts property tax revenues away from California cities toward schools. Thus far, this has amounted to over \$30 million dollars of City property tax revenues. This year, over \$3.6 million of City property tax will be shifted to the State, with an additional \$885,000 earmarked for next year. The City is expending all of its General Fund revenues each year to maintain current levels of service, while at the same time seeing an increase in the demand for services. This leaves an increasing shortfall, which equates to a lack of available funding for several high priority projects, such as this one.

Costa Mesa Fire Department currently finds itself in a precarious situation. We are one of the largest cities in Orange County, California. We have over 100,000 in population but unlike many other suburban cities, we have highly trafficked venues within our jurisdiction, including three major freeways. All of these factors plus the thousands of mutual and automatic aide responses that our firefighters respond to, make it imperative to have equipment that is not substandard and obsolete, which is presently the situation. With our state and local budgets in uncertain situations, it is impossible for us to purchase more than six (6) breathing devices per year. At that that rate, it will take us over four years to obtain the 26 new devices we are requesting with these grant funds. Then, we would have to justify and obtain permission to order the replacement parts for the 28 devices that are currently obsolete. In four years, it is anticipated that our fleet of first responders will not have adequate personal protective gear to enable them to work at full force. Imagine the consequences of that scenario if a major disaster struck the Orange County Fairgrounds, South Coast Plaza Mall, John Wayne Airport, or any of our other high profile venues.

Additional Information

The City of Costa Mesa's Purchasing Division will take responsibility, as always, for purchasing grant-funded equipment. Their Sole Source Policy, established in 1996 has established guidelines for sole source purchases, when necessary. They solicit competitive bids for procurement and always negotiate competitive prices. For three (3) consecutive years, the City's Purchasing Division has been honored with the "Achievement of Excellence in Procurement" award. Costa Mesa was one of 38 cities in the United States and Canada to receive these awards. Furthermore, the Costa Mesa Fire Department will continue to maintain all grant related documentation in a project binder, for audit and/or program review. This will be done in conjunction with filing any progress reports or submitting any documentation requested and required during the grant period. It is our desire to continue to provide excellent service in all aspects of our operations.