

NARRATIVE STATEMENT

The Costa Mesa Fire Department (CMFD) has developed a two-pronged approach to increase the health, welfare and well being of our firefighters. By developing a comprehensive fitness and wellness program, combined with Haix Leather Turnout Boots to augment our current Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), it is our intention to support our first responders in every way possible to enhance daily operations, for increased safety, well being and the security and safety of our residents and the continued protection of life and property. The Costa Mesa Fire Department therefore requests funding assistance under the Operations and Firefighter Safety Program to purchase 102 pair of Haix Boots for our fire personnel, which are necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), six (6) Life Fitness Treadmills and four (4) Life Fitness Lifecycle Recumbent Bikes. An incentive program has been devised to offer all personnel the ability to earn workout gear for maintaining and increasing fitness levels. Additionally, we propose to include immunizations (flu, tetanus and Hepatitis C) and medical testing (TB) for our firefighters to bring about an all-inclusive wellness and fitness program.

The cost for the Haix PPE boots is \$250.00 per pair multiplied by 102 firefighters, equaling \$25,500. The six (6) Life Fitness Treadmills are \$6,679 each, equaling \$40,074. The four (4) Life Fitness Lifecycle Recumbent Bikes are \$3,015 each, equaling \$12,060. The cost for the medical component for testing and inoculations is \$90.00 per firefighter, (Hepatitis C booster, TB testing, flu shots) equaling \$9,180. The incentive program will provide workout shirts, shorts and hats costing \$35.00 per person, equaling \$3,570. The requested grant funds will be utilized solely to purchase fitness equipment, the wellness program and PPE, totaling \$90,384 with a Federal share (80%) of \$72,307 and applicant share of \$18,077 (20%).

Currently, the CMFD does not provide Haix Boots for our personnel due to budgetary restrictions. The current PPE boots worn by CMFD personnel are Black Diamond and depending on the tenure of the individual, vary in age up to ten years old. The proposed Haix boots meet and exceed the most recent NFPA, OSHA and ANSI standards. These boots have a larger foot pattern, are re-soleable and offer a lifetime guarantee, unlike our current boots. The Haix boots are slip-resistant, have self-cleaning treads and have a much larger (46%) boot-heel surface area. This means more surface area is in contact with the ground, thus providing greater stability. Conversely, the Black Diamond rubber boots are exceptionally unstable when wet. This is extremely important when working during emergency operations that include slippery roofs, high-angle rescues and unknown homeland security threats where any liquid will be present. The Haix boots are also more comfortable due to their new design. They are made of waterproof but breathable leather with an inner material that wicks moisture away from the skin rather than the Kevlar Nomex lining in the Black Diamond Boot that doesn't breath. In addition, the Haix boot provides an orthopedic fit and better

ankle support, both important for comfort, which allows the wearer to work longer without discomfort and increased safety. The new boots will create a stable and safe work environment decreasing the risk of sprains, strains and falls. Any injury, regardless of severity, impacts our community through escalating medical costs, increasing insurance premiums, the inability to perform our duties and the lost services of fire fighters.

In combination with providing increased safety by purchasing Haix PPE boots, the Costa Mesa Fire Department seeks to offer a comprehensive wellness and fitness program for our fire personnel. With the available grant funds, the Department we will be able to implement an all-inclusive wellness and fitness program including cardiovascular equipment for fitness testing, immunizations and medical testing, an incentive program to encourage, promote and enhance personnel fitness.

The FEMA grant will enable the City to purchase six (6) Life Fitness Treadmills and four (4) Life Fitness Lifecycle Recumbent bicycles for our six (6) fire stations (we currently have two recumbent bikes), so all personnel benefit equally from this new equipment. Firefighters will be afforded the onsite opportunity and availability of standardized cardiovascular equipment at their worksites that will help to achieve City mandatory requirements for a yearly fitness test.

As a secondary component of this wellness and fitness program, but equally important, we will implement an injury and illness prevention element which includes yearly TB testing for all fire personnel, yearly flu vaccines for all medic personnel, Hepatitis B screening and shots for all fire personnel and Tetanus booster shots when needed, all of which will be tracked and maintained in a database by City of Costa Mesa Risk Management. This will bring the Costa Mesa Fire Department into compliance with national standards, Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), regarding annual vaccinations for healthcare workers. This is an essential element of any comprehensive wellness and fitness program, which is lacking in Costa Mesa. It would complement our existing program that includes a pre-employment medical exam, and two options to evaluate yearly fitness levels. This two-pronged approach would be wide-ranging in that it not only offers cardiovascular activity for increased fitness but also is taking into account illness and disease, which can be prevented by testing and periodic inoculations and boosters. Without this element of the program, fitness is irrelevant if exposure to potentially life-threatening diseases can be avoided and eliminated with testing and inoculations but isn't provided. That not only puts our first responders at greater risk than necessary but also potentially threatens our citizens and those visiting our city when they require our assistance.

Currently, jogging and two (2) exercise bicycles are used for aerobic workouts. While jogging provides excellent cardiovascular fitness, running on the street or sidewalk is high impact and leads to stress injuries over time. Our yearly fitness

testing, which all department members must pass, is an aerobic fitness capacity test. This test determines an individual's maximum oxygen consumption level and aerobic fitness status. The individual has the choice between a physical ability/agility test administered by a local college, or a graded treadmill test using "Bruce Protocol." Studies show that consistent cardiovascular exercise will decrease mortality and morbidity rates. We are requesting treadmills for each of the fire stations because they provide the greatest benefit to our firefighters and they simulate the type of testing participants are evaluated on. We are also requesting the additional four (4) recumbent bicycles to provide an aerobic cross training option at each fire station.

Purchasing this cardiovascular equipment will have a dramatic impact on the department's ability to provide employees with safe, low impact aerobic exercise which will in turn, decrease incidents of knee and back injuries and will assist in the prevention of cardiovascular disease while increasing fitness, flexibility and strength. Additionally, the wellness component of this program, which will provide the inoculations and tracking of these important life-saving vaccines, will provide another level of protection, which is an enhanced component of this new wellness and fitness program.

As an added bonus to our fire personnel, we will initiate an incentive program for the new wellness and fitness program. For the upcoming annual fitness testing, fire personnel whose physical ability/agility is lowered by 10% over the previous year, and individuals whose physiological age stays the same or decreases from the previous year will receive department workout clothing (t-shirt, shorts and baseball cap). It is hoped that each of our personnel will attain this goal and receive the incentive gifts. This will be a valuable component of this program, as currently participants must purchase these items, and now have the ability to "earn" them.

Financial Need

While our City Council recognizes the importance of providing the best and safest personal protection equipment (PPE) and keeping fire department personnel physically fit to reduce injuries, increase fitness and decrease costs, it has been fiscally impossible for funds to be devoted to this program. 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 tax revenues and DMV license fees from cities to the State budget. 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 increasing shortfalls, which equate to a lack of available funding for several high priority projects such as wellness and fitness programs. These negative revenue impacts are further aggravated by rapid and significant expenditure increases for retirement costs, medical insurance premiums, and escalating workers' compensation costs.

The Costa Mesa Fire Department's overall budget for fiscal year 2005-2006 is proposed at \$17,247,267. Of that overall budget, 95% of that amount, \$16,384,903 is used for salaries. That leaves 5% of our overall budget for maintenance and operations, which equates to only \$862,364 for all necessities for a department of 102 staff. Of that 5%, our department must pay for phones, postage, electricity, vehicle maintenance and internal rent. That leaves very little budget for anything other than absolute necessities.

Our city council requires approval for all equipment purchases and in the past several years, we have not gained approval to enhance and implement our wellness program and there has not been money budgeted for PPE in previous years and probably not in the foreseeable future. We are completely dependent on grant funding for PPE, new fitness equipment and wellness testing and inoculations.

Replacement of our boots and requests for new fitness equipment has been requested in the preceding three-year's budgets. However, due to budget constraints neither program has been funded. In addition to the current level of services the city provides, the need to satisfy new occupational safety and health requirements and mandates absorb any available funding, making the acquisition of this equipment with city funds even less likely, particularly since September 11th. Although there is a clear need to replace our turnout boots and exercise equipment, mandates obviously take the highest priority in increasingly tight fiscal constraints. Therefore, we are seeking financial assistance to purchase these much-needed items.

Cost Benefit

Increasing the aerobic and strength capacity of firefighters, will better prepare them for meeting their vigorous daily routines of responding to dangerous, challenging and unknown circumstances. The addition of upgraded safety boots can only enhance the safety of our first-line personnel but will also benefit the citizens, visitors and business owners in our city because increasing fire fighter efficiency equates to more effective means of support for those in need, no matter what the situation. This will also benefit those beyond our borders. Our city provides thousands of Mutual Aid calls each year. With each Mutual Aid response, our increased aerobic and physical strength in conjunction with the safety provided by the Haix leather boots, we are better able and better equipped to effectively respond in any emergency, no matter where that emergency may originate or what it may entail.

These requested items will therefore reduce illness and injury, thus lowering the cost to taxpayers through reducing costs due to employee injuries and lower insurance costs. Studies of CMFD work-related illness and injury data reveal that

80 percent of our fire fighters' injuries over the past three years involved back or extremities, and roughly half of those injuries occurred during training, responding, or on the fireground. This equates to inadequate fitness levels and deficient safety equipment. That is what we seek to resolve with these grant funds.

The most common reasons that rubber boots fail is because the toe cap wears through, the soles wear down or the rubber cracks at the ankle bend. The new Haix boots are resoleable and come with a Lifetime guarantee on the sole and toe cap. This is much more cost effective than replacing our current Black Diamond boots, which only have a one-year guarantee. In addition, the Haix boot has leather ankle support. The leather can be treated to maintain flexibility and waterproofing. Both of these advantages make the boot more durable, add a component of safety to everyday wear and add to the life expectancy of the gear.

By providing our front line personnel with the availability of fitness equipment in conjunction with the new incentive program, our staff will be able to adjust their workouts around their duty schedules, and make it not only easier to get an efficient and effective workout, but the incentive program will reward them for their efforts! By increasing the availability and desire to workout, and the upgraded PPE boots, fitness levels will increase, accidents and disease will diminish and the addition of the medical testing and inoculations will provide our fire personnel with a comprehensive and complete wellness, fitness and PPE program which provides for their well-being, safety and increases their chances of survival in a major catastrophe and while on routine calls. Additionally, these elements will greatly improve and enhance our ability to protect life, property and safety of our residents and fire personnel.

Operational Outcomes

Although individual goals will vary widely, it is not unusual for any individual, over time, in similar programs to achieve a 10% reduction in body weight, 8% reduction in body fat, 20% reduction in total cholesterol, and 8-10mmHg drop in systolic and/or diastolic blood pressure, along with other health improvements and a dramatic improvement in physical and mental performance. The result of a thoughtful wellness and fitness program will provide equipment to reduce risks of sudden adverse events caused by rigorous working conditions, aging and diseases. Many of these may be avoided by the availability of adequate fitness programs and equipment. Aside from the positive benefits of having healthy staff, the cost savings of avoiding a lifetime of medical expenses to control certain disease and illness and the medications to control these conditions is astronomical.

It is our intent, to increase fitness and safety levels for our first responders, and thus avoid any avoidable illness or injury. By providing the incentive program, it is

realistic to assume that personnel will increase their workout schedules, which will now be possible with the new fitness equipment at each fire station. As fitness levels increase, and the incentives are circulated, we will expand and increase wellness, fitness and diminish injuries. In addition to this, the testing for TB and Hepatitis and the flu and tetanus inoculations will provide an expanded level of wellness and illness prevention that is currently lacking, and thus exposing our fire personnel and citizens to potential medical hazards and exposure to illness, which can be prevented.

As with all components of a comprehensive wellness and fitness program, prevention of health problems and improvements in physical performance benefit the individual firefighter as well as their fellow firefighters and the public they serve. The outlined programs contained in this proposal will enable the Costa Mesa Fire Department to efficiently and effectively increase fitness levels; by providing fitness equipment at all six (6) fire stations, the incentive program will increase motivation to utilize the new equipment and the PPE Haix boots will further expand out safety efforts on behalf of our personnel and citizens. The added benefit of the medical testing and inoculations will add one more layer of protection for our first responders and those they so dedicatedly serve.