

MEMORANDUM

TO: Western Fire Chiefs Association Board of Directors
 FROM: Ken LaSala, IAFC Director of Government Relations and Policy
 DATE: January 22, 2018
 RE: Legislative Update

- The federal government is open until February 8.
- Federal government shutdown notwithstanding, here’s how the funding situation looks for FY 2018:

In Millions (\$)

Program	FY 2017	FY 2018 (President’s Budget)	FY 2018 (H.R. 3354)	FY 2018 (Senate)
FIRE	345	344.344	345	345
SAFER	345	344.344	365	345
USFA	44	43.41	44.41	44.397
USAR	38.28	27.5	35.18	27.5
UASI	605	448.844	635	600
SHSGP	467	349.362	467	471

- FIRE-SAFER-USFA Reauthorization:
 - On January 3, President Trump signed the United States Fire Administration, AFG, and SAFER Program Reauthorization Act (P.L. 115-98). This legislation would:
 - Authorize \$76.49 million for the USFA through Fiscal Year (FY) 2023.
 - Authorize approximately \$750 million for the AFG and SAFER grant programs through FY 2023.
 - Move the termination date for the AFG and SAFER programs to September 30, 2024.
 - Clarify that SAFER grants can be used to change the status of part-time firefighters to full-time positions.
 - Develop online training programs, through USFA, to help fire departments to better manage AFG and SAFER grants.
 - Develop a framework at the Federal Emergency Management Agency to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse of AFG and SAFER funds.
- Tax Reform:
 - On December 22, President Trump signed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (P.L. 115-97). This legislation included the following provisions to help fire prevention and volunteer fire service priorities:
 - Allows small business owners to deduct the cost of retrofitting fire protection systems, including automatic fire sprinklers, into buildings under Section 179 of the tax code. This provision would affect commercial buildings, such as restaurants, bars, night clubs, and other establishments.

- Allows volunteer firefighters to increase their contribution to Length of Service Award Programs (LOSAP) to \$6,000 per year. This provision will serve as an incentive for recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.
- Medicare Extenders:
 - On January 1, Congress allowed the add-on payments that fire departments receive for ambulance transport of Medicare patients to expire. Prior to their expiration, fire departments had received an additional 2%, 3% or 22.6% addition to their transportation of Medicare patients for urban, rural, or super-rural zip codes, respectively.
 - The IAFC endorsed the Comprehensive Operations, Sustainability, and Transport Act (H.R. 3729). This legislation would:
 - Reauthorize the add-on payments for five years.
 - Create a cost-reporting system that would allow fire service organizations to prove that fire departments are under-reimbursed for treating Medicare patients.
 - With the cost-reporting data, we would like to reform the Medicare Ambulance Fee Schedule.
- T-Band:
 - The FCC is required to begin auctioning public safety spectrum in the T Band (470-512 MHz) by February 2021.
 - Public safety is supposed to clear operations from the band within in two years of the auction's close (i.e., by early 2023).
 - This law would affect 11 major metro areas, including Los Angeles and San Francisco/Oakland.
 - The IAFC is working with New York City and other public safety organizations to resolve this issue before 2021.
- FirstNet:
 - All 56 U.S. states and territories opted in.