

Item Title: Memorandum of Understanding between the North Carolina Association of Fire Chiefs and Wake County for participation in the Volunteer Workforce Solutions Grant Program

Specific Action Requested:
That the Board of Commissioners:

- 1. Accept the 2018 Volunteer Workforce Solutions service grant if awarded to Wake County; and**
- 2. At or after the award of the service grant, authorize the Chair and County Manager to sign a memorandum of understanding between the North Carolina Association of Fire Chiefs and Wake County for participation in the Volunteer Workforce Solutions grant program subject to terms and conditions acceptable to the County Attorney.**

Item Summary:

The North Carolina Fire Chiefs Association (NCAFC) has offered a grant opportunity for fire departments throughout North Carolina to participate in a volunteer recruitment and retention program, Volunteer Workforce Solutions. The fire service in unincorporated Wake County is heavily volunteer based, with approximately 450 current volunteers answering emergency calls for service. By volunteering their time, these individuals provide an invaluable cost-savings to the community.

Unfortunately, many fire departments are having difficulty both retaining and recruiting volunteers. This grant will provide Wake County fire departments with tools to identify how to improve volunteer recruitment rates, as well as, develop strategies to increase volunteer retention. This program is being funded through a FEMA SAFER grant to the NCAFC and has a two-year period of performance. This is a service only grant. Wake County will not receive any monetary funding and there are no fund matching requirements. If awarded the Volunteer Workforce Solutions grant, Wake County volunteer fire departments will receive assistance, through the NCAFC, in developing volunteer recruitment and retention strategies, GIS Tapestry reports, which will identify the demographic areas to target for volunteer recruitment efforts, customizable recruitment materials and multimedia support. These efforts will be directed and supported by the Wake County Fire Commission's Volunteer Recruitment and Retention subcommittee.

This request directly supports two of the Board's Public Safety initiatives, 5.1 Develop and implement strategies to increase public safety personnel recruitment and retention rates, and 5.2 Develop timeline and begin implementation of best practices for volunteer recruiting, retention, and utilization in emergency services.

Although Wake County has not been awarded the grant, the short turn-around time from award notification to submitting a signed MOU, necessitates pre-authorization of the memorandum of understanding signing. The requested authorization shall apply only to the award of the service grant for 2018.

Attachments:

1. Memorandum of Understanding, North Carolina Association of Fire Chiefs
2. North Carolina Volunteer Workforce Solutions Fact Sheets