

The Size up!

ILLINOIS PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

THE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

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IPFA MEMBERS - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

What the New Stimulus Bill Means For You

Fairfax, Va., Feb. 20, 2009... On February 17, President Obama signed H.R. 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The \$787 billion package of new federal spending and tax cuts is supposed to provide a stimulus to help our economy climb out of recession.

The bill contains specific provisions that will help America's fire service. Below is a brief description of them and how you can take advantage of these provisions:

\$210 million for fire station construction

The stimulus bill provided the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program with \$210 million for fire station construction. According to the law, no grant can exceed \$15 million. We expect the AFG office to use a competitive application process that will be similar to the FIRE and SAFER grant application process so applications will be fairly and appropriately reviewed.

The application period is expected to take place this summer. The AFG office said they will have information on the fire station construction grants available as soon as possible at www.firegrantsupport.com.

An automatic waiver of the local 10-20-50-70% local match for new SAFER grants awarded in fiscal years 2009 and 2010

The stimulus bill automatically waives the 10-20-50-70% local match for *new* SAFER grants awarded during the FY 2009 and FY 2010 application periods. The FY 2009 application period is expected to take place during the summer of this year.

Please note that this waiver doesn't affect previously awarded SAFER grants. For example, if a fire department received a SAFER grant last year, it still would have to pay for 20% of the cost of the SAFER firefighter this year. In addition, other existing conditions still remain. A 5-year commitment to keep the SAFER firefighter remains, as well as the approximately \$111,000 cap (in FY 2009) on the total federal share of salaries and associated benefits for the firefighter. In addition, the fire department still can't use a SAFER grant to supplant state or local funds. The recruitment and retention section of the SAFER grant program is not affected by the stimulus bill and continues to not require a local match.

Approximately \$9 billion of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund is designated for state governors to fund public safety, education and other government services

The stimulus bill allocated 18.2% of the \$53.6 billion State Fiscal Stabilization Fund for state governors to fund public safety and other government services, including elementary and secondary education and public institutions of higher education.