

News From Congressman Brian Higgins

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Congressman Higgins & Mayor Brown Announce Major Federal Fire Grant for Buffalo

Buffalo Fire Department Awarded \$ 758,400 in Homeland Security Funds

Today, Congressman Brian Higgins (NY-27) and City of Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown announced that the City of Buffalo Fire Department will receive \$758,400 in federal Homeland Security funding through the Assistance to Firefighters Grants Program (AFGP)

Congressman Higgins said, "Buffalo Firefighters have one of the toughest jobs in the region. Each day they bravely enter situations in buildings under conditions that are often older, vacant and highly dangerous and each day they make us proud with their selfless service to our city. This grant will go a long way toward providing updated equipment that protects the firefighters and the community they serve."

"This is very good news for the men and women of the Buffalo Fire Department and I thank Congressman Higgins for his key support in helping the city land these important federal grant funds," said Mayor Brown. "While our firefighters daily serve our residents and businesses with great bravery and professionalism, it is imperative that we do everything we can to provide them with the best equipment available. These funds will help us do just that."

This federal grant will be used to purchase new personal protective equipment for the firefighters, which includes helmets and turn out gear. The city will contribute 20% to the total federal grant and that amount is already available in the BFD budget.

"These funds will provide tremendous aid to the Buffalo Fire Department, helping to update critical equipment for our firefighters," said Buffalo Fire Commissioner Michael Lombardo. "Our firefighters, day in and day out, face very dangerous conditions and the wear and tear on their equipment is significant. Their equipment is often used for other incidents beyond fighting fires and these funds will help with timely equipment upgrades."

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The Buffalo Fire Department's history dates back to 1816, years before the City was incorporated in 1832. The Buffalo Fire Department responds to over 60,000 fire, EMS, and hazardous materials incidents calls a year from its 19 fire stations. In addition to answering residential and commercial calls within the City boundaries, the Fire Department also has mutual aid plans with many local municipalities as well as Canadian fire agencies.

Congressman Higgins has hosted several fire grants workshops where participants are invited to learn first hand from a DHS Fire Grant Specialist how to put together a qualifying application. All applications are then submitted to DHS and go through a non-partisan, merit based review ranked by factors established by a panel of service professionals. Over the last several years, fire companies in Congressman Higgins' district have received over \$ 8 million in aid.

The program was originally appropriated by Congress and signed into law by President Bush in 2008, includes \$500 million in direct assistance to firefighters to improve the effectiveness of firefighting operations, firefighter health and safety programs, and to establish or expand fire prevention programs throughout the United States. The Department of Homeland Security's Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness (SLGCP) administers the program, in cooperation with the U.S. Fire Administration.

For more information about the grant program please contact Congressman Higgins' office at 716-852-3501.