COUNTY OF ERIE

MARK C. POLONCARZ
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

October 30, 2026

Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street, 4th Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

Re: Authorization to Accept FY 2025 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Program, Recruitment & Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity (R&R)

Dear Honorable Members:

Please find an accompanying memorandum and proposed resolution from the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services requesting authorization to accept $82,500 in funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Should your Honorable Body require further information, I encourage you to contact Dan Neaverth Jr. at the Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Services. Thank you for your consideration on this request.

Sincerely yours,

Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.
Erie County Executive

MCP/crn
Enclosure

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature
From: Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Services
Re: Authorization to Accept FY 2025 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Program, Recruitment & Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity (R&R)
Date: October 30, 2026

SUMMARY Legislative authorization is requested to accept $82,500 in funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) FY 2025 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Program, Recruitment & Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity (R&R) (December 20, 2026 – December 19, 2030).

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The funding for this action is derived entirely from 100% Federal Aid dollars. No County tax dollars are necessary to support this request.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Services has been awarded $82,500 in FEMA, DHS funds FY 2025 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Program, Recruitment & Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity (R&R). The SAFER Program provides funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations to assist in increasing the number of firefighters to help communities meet industry minimum standards and attain 24-hour staffing to provide adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards, and to fulfill traditional missions of fire departments. The SAFER Program provides for critically needed resources to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters.

The Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Services Fire Safety Division plans to use these grant funds to support the development and implementation of the Erie County Fire Officer Leadership, Recruitment & Retention Program through several key categories. Funding will support curriculum development, including research and lesson plan creation, subject matter expert consultation, and the development of instructor guides, student manuals, and evaluation tools.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

The Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services Division of Fire Safety would not have the funding or capacity to develop such a leadership program. Without dedicated resources for recruitment and retention, we risk a continued decline in staffing

levels, degraded emergency response capabilities, and increased danger to the community we serve. Grant assistance is not only beneficial but also essential for preserving public safety.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

The Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services will work with the Division of Budget and Management to amend the 2026 Adopted Budget amounts.

A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY: DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY & EMERGENCY SERVICES

RE: Authorization to FY 2025 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Program

WHEREAS, the Erie County Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services has been awarded $82,500 in federal funding to enhance and strengthen recruitment and retention efforts across Erie County's volunteer fire community infrastructure through the DHS and FEMA FY 2025 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Program, and

WHEREAS, the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services requires legislative approval to accept the Federal funds and to amend the Adopted 2026 budget; and

WHEREAS, no County funds will be necessary for Erie County to accept this Federal aid to enhance public safety.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature hereby authorizes the County Executive or Deputy County Executive to accept $82,500 from the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and be made available as a multi-year grant to Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (Fund 281, Funds Center 16700) as follows:

Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Services
Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response Program, Recruitment & Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity Grant
HS167SAFER2630
12/20/2026-12/19/2030

REVENUES	**BUDGET**
409000 Federal Aid Revenues	$82,500
TOTAL	$82,500

APPROPRIATIONS	**BUDGET**
500010 Part Time - Wages	$49,500
510200 Training and Education	$30,000
561410 Lab & Technical Equipment	$ 3,000
TOTAL	$82,500

and be it further

RESOLVED, that authorization is hereby given for the Division of Budget and Management to adjust grant appropriations and revenues including those required to comply with the grantor funding changes provided there are no changes to authorized personnel levels or county share amounts; and be it further

RESOLVED, that authorization is hereby given to the County Executive or Deputy County Executive to amend contracts as necessary to implement any no-cost extension that may be permitted by the grantor; and be it further

RESOLVED, that authorization is hereby given to the Division of Budget and Management to make any technical adjustments necessary to effectuate this resolution; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be sent to the County Executive's Office, Comptroller's Office, Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, Department of Law, and Division of Budget and Management.