



South Haven Fire Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

6th Day of November 2023

2024 Kansas Firefighter Recruitment and Safety Grants Awarded To South Haven Fire Department, 78 Other Volunteer, Part-time Fire Departments

South Haven Volunteer Fire Department was one of 78 departments in Kansas that were awarded funding through the Kansas Firefighter Recruitment and Safety Grant (KFRSG) Program administered by the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM). SHFD was awarded **\$6,525.00** to be used for three sets of replacement bunker gear.

This year, over \$1.3 million was requested by 79 volunteer/part-time fire departments in Kansas for safety gear, washer/extractor machines and firefighter physicals. Departments received over \$350,000 to be used for safety gear, \$45,000 for 9 washer/extractor machines, and \$4,000 for firefighter physicals. Due to the high number of requests, OSFM will be requesting the 2024 Legislature continue funding this important grant.

"This grant provided by The Office of the State Fire Marshal moves the department one big step closer to our goal of enhancing firefighter safety and providing NFPA compliant gear to all our firefighters. Without this funding opportunity, obtaining our goal would be a much more difficult task. Please contact your state senator and representative and urge them to support the continuation of the KFRSG program. Thank you to OSFM!" -Fire Chief Seth Brown

The KFRSG grant has provided 98 washer/extractor machines to departments across Kansas since it's inception in 2017. Having the proper protocols in place to clean firefighting gear is crucial in preventing exposure to carcinogens, particulates and biohazards that firefighters face every day in their profession.

"This year, I was pleased to see so many departments that applied receive some or all of their requested funds," Doug Jorgensen, State Fire Marshal, said. "This funding will go a long way in providing these smaller, but vital departments with the gear and equipment they need to continue keeping their communities safe."

Volunteer and part-time fire departments face recruitment and retention challenges because they do not have the funding to provide safety equipment. Without new equipment provided by the recruiting fire department, potential volunteers are faced with not only donating their time but also providing their own safety gear, sharing gear with others, or doing without. There is also a proven increase in cancer diagnoses for firefighters, which can be caused by prolonged exposure to carcinogens, particulates, and biohazards. The proper gear, regular cleaning of that gear and equipment, along with preventative healthcare is crucial for a firefighter's health and well-being.

For more information on the Kansas Firefighter Recruitment and Safety Grant Program, please visit:

www.firemarshal.ks.gov/grant