



# News Release

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CONTACT: [Chloe Scott](#)  
Public Affairs Specialist, 301-600-2590

## **Frederick County Awarded \$9.7 Million SAFER Grant to Hire 32 Additional Firefighters**

FREDERICK, Md. – Frederick County has been awarded a \$9,732,102.08 federal grant to hire additional firefighters in the Division of Fire & Rescue Services. County Executive Jessica Fitzwater announced the grant, the largest awarded to a Maryland fire service to date this year, this afternoon at a press conference alongside U.S. Senator Ben Cardin, U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen, and Congressman David Trone. The grant is through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program.

“I am grateful to Senator Cardin, Senator Van Hollen and Congressman Trone for their support and assistance to secure these funds,” Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater said. “It has been a priority of ours to increase the size of our crews to better protect our first responders, who put their lives on the line every day for our community. This SAFER grant allows us to phase in this important change.”

“Firefighters and first-responders are always on the front lines in an emergency. They often respond to fires, medical emergencies, hazardous materials spills, natural disasters and active shooter situations,” said Senator Cardin. “As many fire stations across the state struggle to fund equipment, training and staff, this federal funding will help provide Frederick County with the personnel and support it needs to keep its growing community safe in an emergency.”

“Strong local fire departments are fundamental to the safety of our communities. This investment that Federal Team Maryland fought to secure will enable Frederick County to continue its firefighter recruitment efforts, which will improve emergency response capabilities and better protect those on the front lines who are putting themselves at risk to keep the rest of us safe every day,” said Senator Van Hollen. “I will keep working to make sure Maryland firefighters and first responders have the resources to stay fully equipped, staffed, and trained in the years to come.”

“Maryland relies on its firefighters every day to keep our communities safe and sound,” said Congressman David Trone, member of the House Appropriations Committee. “All of our brave first responders are heroes who deserve the utmost admiration, respect, and support. So I couldn’t be more proud to work with Team Maryland in Congress and County Executive Fitzwater to deliver federal funding to stand by our first responders and improve the safety of our communities.”

Increasing engine and ladder truck crews was one of the recommendations made by an external review panel that examined the Aug. 11, 2021, house fire on Ball Road in Ijamsville that claimed the life of Battalion Chief Joshua Laird.

“The award of the SAFER Grant allows Frederick County to hire 32 additional firefighters,” said Chief Tom Coe, Director of the Division of Fire & Rescue Services, “so we can continue the transition from three-person to four-person staffing on our fire suppression units. Four-person staffing is a national fire service consensus standard and key recommendation found in the Ball Road After Action and Improvement Report.”

When the new positions are filled, the Division of Fire & Rescue Service will have 633 operational career firefighters. Frederick County’s combined fire service also includes approximately 500 volunteer responders across 30 fire and rescue stations.

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