FAIRVIEW TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

Justification for Hiring Four Full-Time Firefighters

Presented to Fairview Township Supervisors • 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fairview Township Fire Department has experienced significant growth in emergency incidents while relying primarily on volunteer staffing. National trends show declining volunteer availability during daytime hours, creating increased response times and reduced initial staffing at emergency incidents.

Guaranteed Response

Four full-time firefighters on a 24/72 schedule ensure trained personnel are always available.

Improved Safety

Better initial staffing protects both firefighters and residents during critical first minutes.

Reduced Mutual Aid

Less dependency on neighboring departments means faster stabilization of incidents.

COMMUNITY RISK PROFILE

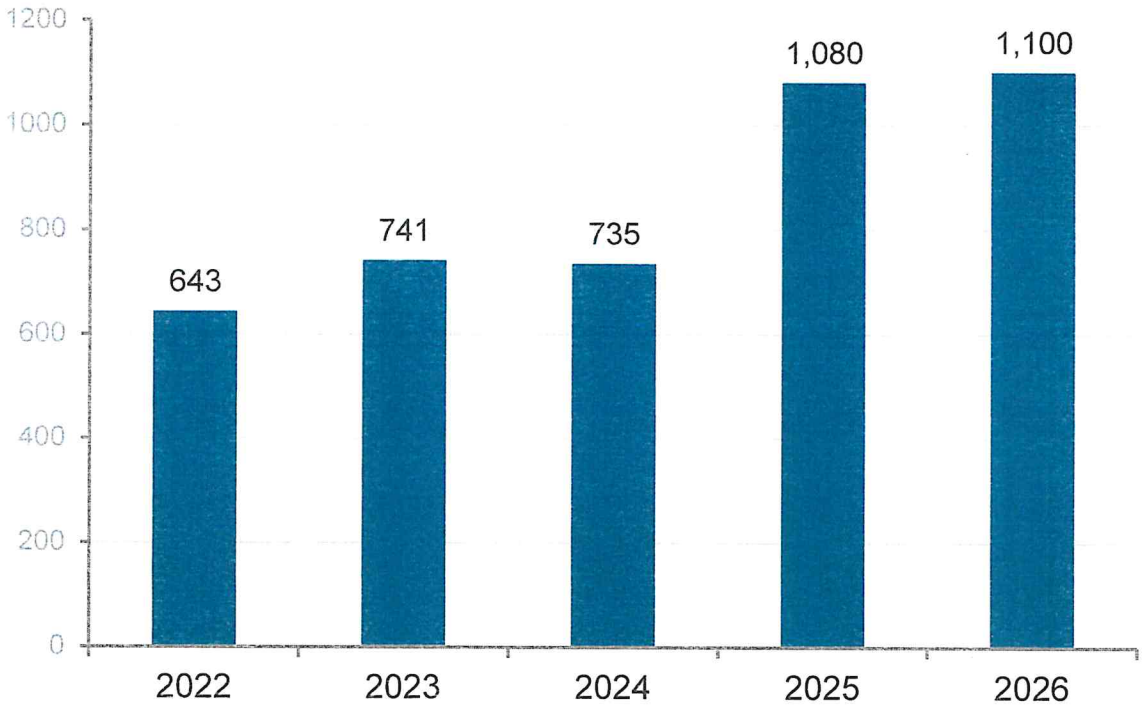
Population	~19,000 residents
Service Area	36 square miles
Interstate Coverage	I-83 & PA Turnpike
Commercial Occupancies	High
Industrial Occupancies	Multiple
Schools	Multiple public
Airport / Railroad	Yes / Yes

THE DEPARTMENT PROTECTS

- Interstate highway corridors
- Heavy commercial corridor
- Warehouses & manufacturing
- Schools & apartment complexes
- Nursing homes & assisted living
- Single-family neighborhoods

CALL VOLUME TRENDS

71% Increase in Five Years



643

2022 Responses

1,100+

2026 Projected

71%

Five-Year Growth

VOLUNTEER STAFFING CHALLENGES

Average Daytime Volunteer Response

Time Period	Avg. Volunteers
Weekdays 0600–1800	2–4
Evenings	6–10
Overnight	3–5

Current Issues

- Volunteers work outside the township
- Increased overtime at regular jobs
- Aging membership
- Recruitment challenges
- Limited daytime availability

Daytime hours are when most residents are at work and volunteer availability is lowest — yet this is when many emergencies occur.

INITIAL ALARM STAFFING

NFPA 1710 recommends approximately 15 firefighters for a residential structure fire.

CURRENT REALITY

Engine often arrives with only
2 firefighters
(Driver + Officer)

Additional personnel arrive via mutual aid — causing delays in water supply, search, attack, ventilation & RIT establishment.

WITH CAREER STAFFING

Minimum 3 firefighters on duty
every day (with PT support)

Immediate apparatus response with trained personnel ready to begin critical fireground tasks without waiting for mutual aid arrivals.

RESPONSE TIME & MUTUAL AID

Dispatch to First Staffed Engine

CURRENT

8-10 minutes

Average daytime response

GOAL

< 2 minutes

With career staffing on duty

MUTUAL AID DEPENDENCY

Over 70% of working fires require immediate mutual aid staffing due to insufficient initial personnel.

Effects: Increased reliance on neighbors • Longer incident stabilization • Reduced firefighter safety

RECOMMENDATION

Hire Four Career Firefighters

Schedule	Platoons	Daily Staffing	Avg. Hours
24 / 72	**4**	**Min. 3**	**42 / wk**
24 hours on, 72 hours off	One platoon on duty every day	With part-time staffing support	84 hours biweekly average

This combined career-volunteer model provides consistent daytime coverage, improves response reliability, enhances firefighter safety, and reduces dependence on neighboring departments — while still leveraging the valuable contributions of dedicated volunteers.

BENEFITS TO THE TOWNSHIP

Immediate Response

Career staff on duty means apparatus leaves the station in under 2 minutes instead of 8–10.

Reduced Turnout Time

No waiting for volunteers to leave work or travel from outside the township.

Improved Firefighter Safety

Adequate initial staffing enables two-in/two-out and rapid RIT establishment.

Better ISO Performance

Improved staffing and response metrics can positively affect the community's ISO rating.

Improved Insurance Protection

Stronger fire protection can translate into better insurance rates for residents and businesses.

Better Service to Residents

Reliable 24/7 coverage for EMS, fire, rescue, and hazardous materials incidents.

SAFER GRANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response (SAFER)

Grant Period	36 months from award date	**Recruitment Window**	180 days to onboard new hires
Year 1–2 Cost Share	Community pays 25%	**Year 3 Cost Share**	Community pays 65%
Federal Cap (Yr 1–2)	Up to $90,000 per firefighter	**Federal Cap (Yr 3)**	Up to $42,000 per firefighter

The SAFER grant helps departments achieve NFPA 1710/1720 staffing standards. Federal funding covers the majority of first-year firefighter costs (salary + benefits) in years 1–2, significantly reducing the near-term financial impact on the Township while building sustainable career staffing capacity.

KEY JUSTIFICATION FACTORS

Increased Call Volume

71% rise in five years (643 → 1,100+)

Response Times

8–10 min daytime vs. <2 min goal

Firefighter Safety

Often only 2 firefighters on first engine

Volunteer Trends

Aging membership & recruitment challenges

Daytime Staffing Gap

Only 2–4 volunteers available 0600–1800

Mutual Aid Dependence

70%+ of working fires need mutual aid

Community Risk

Interstates, industry, schools, healthcare

NFPA Standards

15 firefighters recommended for structure fire

THE ASK

Approve the hiring of four full-time career firefighters on a 24/72 schedule to provide guaranteed daytime emergency response capability for Fairview Township.

This investment protects our growing community, improves firefighter safety, reduces mutual aid dependency, and positions the Department to meet national staffing standards.

Fairview Township Fire Department • Serving ~19,000 Residents