



**CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE  
COST ESTIMATE**

November 2, 2009

**H.R. 3791  
Fire Grants Reauthorization Act of 2009**

*As ordered reported by the House Committee on Science and Technology  
on October 21, 2009*

**SUMMARY**

H.R. 3791 would authorize appropriations totalling \$9.8 billion in addition to that already authorized under current law for the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) to aid in preventing and responding to fires and other related hazards. CBO estimates that implementing the legislation would cost about \$6.0 billion over the 2010-2014 period and \$3.8 million thereafter, assuming appropriation of the specified amounts. Enacting H.R. 3791 would not affect direct spending or revenues.

H.R. 3791 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

**ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

The estimated budgetary impact of H.R. 3791 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 450 (community and regional development).

	By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars					2010-2014
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
<b>CHANGES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION</b>						
Assistance to Firefighters Grants						
Authorization Level	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	5,000
Estimated Outlays	50	550	800	950	990	3,340
Fire Grants (SAFER)						
Authorization Level <sup>a</sup>	0	1,194	1,194	1,194	1,194	4,776
Estimated Outlays	0	25	535	900	1,190	2,650
Studies and Reports						
Authorization Level	*	*	0	0	0	1
Estimated Outlays	*	*	*	0	0	1
Total Changes						
Authorization Level	1,000	2,194	2,194	2,194	2,194	9,777
Estimated Outlays	50	575	1,335	1,850	2,180	5,991

Note: SAFER = Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response; \* = less than \$500,000.

- a. H.R. 3791 would authorize the appropriation of \$1,194 million for fiscal year 2010 for the SAFER program, which is equal to the amount authorized under current law for that year (see Public Law 108-136).

## BASIS OF ESTIMATE

### Assistance to Firefighters Grants

H.R. 3791 would authorize the appropriation of \$1 billion in each of fiscal years 2010 through 2014 for the USFA to award grants to fire departments, state fire training academies, and other organizations. In 2009, the Congress provided \$565 million for this purpose (see Public Law 110-329).

Established in 2000, the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program provides funding to hire additional personnel, modify facilities, and obtain equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training, and other resources to respond to fire and related hazards. H.R. 3791 would expand program eligibility to include state fire training academies and would increase minimum funding for fire prevention and safety programs from 5 percent to 10 percent. Additionally, the legislation would reduce the grantee matching requirement from 20 percent to 10 percent.

Based on historical spending patterns, CBO estimates that implementing the AFG program under the legislation would cost about \$3.3 billion over the 2010-2014 period and about \$1.7 billion thereafter, assuming appropriation of the specified amounts.

### **Fire Grants (SAFER)**

H.R. 3791 would authorize the appropriation of about \$1.2 billion in each of fiscal years 2010 through 2014 for the USFA to award grants to departments staffed with all career members, with all volunteer members, and those with both career and volunteer members. In 2009, the Congress provided \$210 million for this purpose (see Public Law 110-329). For 2010, the Congress has already authorized the appropriation of about \$1.2 billion for the program (see Public Law 108-136).

Established in 2003, the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program provides funding to hire additional firefighters and to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters. H.R. 3791 would reduce the term of a SAFER grant from four years to three years and would require grantees to commit to retaining an additional hire for at least three years. Under current law, grantees are required to retain any subsidized personnel for one year beyond the termination of funding for that position. Additionally, the legislation would limit grant funding to 80 percent of the cost of hiring a firefighter for the duration of the grant. Under current law, grants cover 90 percent of the cost of a new hire in the first year. This proportion gradually decreases to 30 percent in the fourth year.

CBO estimates that implementing the SAFER program under the legislation would cost about \$2.7 billion over the 2010-2014 period and about \$2.1 billion thereafter, assuming appropriation of the specified amounts.

### **Studies and Reports**

H.R. 3791 would authorize the appropriation of \$300,000 for each of 2010 and 2011 for the USFA to conduct a study of the resources and needs of fire services at the national, regional, and local level, and the impact that grant programs have had on those areas. Based on the spending patterns of similar studies, and assuming the appropriation of the authorized amounts, CBO estimates that implementing this provision would cost \$600,000 over the 2010-2012 period.

### **INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT**

H.R. 3791 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments. Those governments would benefit from the authorization of appropriations in this bill for grants

and technical assistance. Any costs to those governments would be incurred voluntarily as conditions of federal assistance.

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