



Legislation Text

File #: 19-373, **Version:** 1

Report Prepared by: Janet German, Secretary III, Fire Dept.

SUBJECT: Adoption of Resolution Approving a Collaboration Between the City of Merced, the Fire Fighters Union and the California Fire Foundation to Provide Financial Assistance to Victims of Fire and Natural Disasters

REPORT IN BRIEF

Considers the adoption of a Resolution approving the collaboration between the City, the Fire Fighters Union and the California Fire Foundation to implement a Supplying Aid to Victims of Emergency (SAVE) program thereby enabling firefighters to provide gift cards to residents who have lost property and material possessions in an emergency through the execution of a Memorandum of Understanding and development of a Standard Operating Guideline.

RECOMMENDATION

City Council - Adopt a motion:

A. Adopting **Resolution 2019-54**, a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Merced, California, authorizing the Fire Chief to act for the City Manager by entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the California Fire Foundation (CFF), Merced Fire Department, and the bargaining unit, the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF Local 1479), representing Firefighters within the City of Merced, (City) to implement the Supplying Aid to Victims of Emergency (SAVE) within the City: and,

B. Authorizing the Fire Chief to adopt and submit to CFF, the CFF's suggested Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG) for the CFF's SAVE program.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve as recommended by Staff; or
2. Approve, subject to other than recommended by staff; or,
3. Deny; or,
4. Refer to Staff for further evaluation.

AUTHORITY

Government Code §40602
MMC Article V, §501

CITY COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The proposed action is consistent with the city's operating principle to promote safety, livability, and

community wellness.

DISCUSSION

Background

SAVE is a program funded and sponsored by the CFF, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization providing emotional and financial assistance to families of fallen firefighters, firefighters, and the communities that they protect. Formed in 1987 by California Professional Firefighters, the CFF's mandate includes an array of survivor and victim assistance projects and community initiatives.

The MFD has been continuously participating in this program since June, 2014, when MFD's Acting Fire Chief, IAFF Local 1479's President, and the CFF's Chair, executed the MOU and SOG.

The MFD is formalizing its collaboration with the IAFF Local 1479 and the CFF with a Resolution and MOU approved by the City's Attorney's Office and City Council to allow us to continue to provide assurance that those impacted by a disaster will receive instant, direct relief before, during and after their time of need.

Through the SAVE program, Merced's frontline firefighters will be able to provide a MasterCard gift card to eligible victims of fire and natural disasters allowing the victims to purchase basic necessities such as food, clothing or medicine. The amount of the MasterCard gift card and number of cards issued to the MFD is determined by the CFF and the CFF has determined that 38 MasterCard gift cards in the amount of \$250 will be issued to the MFD for this year.

We, as firefighters can't restore everything that a victim has lost and we are aware that the first 24 hours of the recovery process are challenging and the gift card will enable our firefighters to provide instant relief during the victim's time of need.

To implement the program requires that the:

- Fire Chief enter in a Memorandum of Understanding (See Attachment 1)
- The MOU requires the MFD to adopt Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG) for the SAVE program administration. CFF provides a sample SOG for the program (See Attachment 2). The MFD may adopt CFF's sample SOG by signing the document and returning it to CFF with the MOU. In the alternative, the MFD may adopt a unique SOG, provided it is approved by CFF. *The MFD recommends adopting CFF's sample SOG.*

Selected SAVE Program Information Highlights:

- Based upon statistical analysis of working fires on an ongoing basis, the CFF determines the number of SAVE gift cards (Currently 38) and amounts (Currently \$250/Card) to be issued.
- Fire Chief appoints his two Deputy Chiefs to oversee the SAVE program.
- Distribution of cards to victims will be determined by MFD's Incident Commanders.
- IAFF Local 1479 will oversee the SAVE program for the firefighters.
- MFD oversees accountability, handling, and distribution of gift cards.
- MFD oversees education and communication to firefighters on guidelines/protocol of SAVE program.

- MFD provides post incident reporting to CFF upon usage of gift card.
- MFD/IAFF Local 1479 are required to immediately report misuse not limited to fraud or inappropriate activation of gift card to CFF.
- MFD and IAFF Local 1479 to promote success of the SAVE program as opportunities arise.
- No financial cost will be borne by the City or IAFF Local 1479 to participate in program.
- Funding for the SAVE gift cards are derived in part by private donations and specialty license plates available only to firefighters.
- MFD and IAFF Local 1479 must provide 30 days notice to CFF if they no longer desire to participate in the SAVE program.
- CFF may terminate SAVE program at any time.
- The CFF sample SOG provides that gift cards may be distributed to victims, of:
 - Fire; or
 - Earthquakes; or
 - Flooding; or
 - Landslides/Mudslides
- Victims must be residents with a minimum of 25% damage to the property where they reside.
- Only 1 gift card per occupancy, regardless of whether the victim is an individual or a family.
- Gift card shall be provided to the individual residing full-time at the damaged occupancy, regardless of whether that individual is a renter or a home-owner.
- Gift cards expire three years past the date of the gift card.
- Victims do NOT need to fill out any questionnaire or answer any questions to receive their \$250 gift card
- Ineligible Gift Card Recipients:
 - Businesses
 - Victims of crisis or emergencies not impacted by damage caused by fire or natural disaster such as car crashes, evacuees forced to flee due to pending wildfires, or those victims who do not incur 25% damage to their residential property.
- Gift Cards may be used for:
 - Food/Water
 - Over the Counter or prescription medication as medically needed
 - Gas
 - Shelter as provided by a hotel/motel
 - Clothing to replace any destroyed articles of clothing
 - Basic household necessities

Further details of the program are contained in the MOU / SOG.

Participation in this program will increase the MFD's ability to care for the wellbeing of the City's residents. This program provides the MFD with a tool for helping victims of disasters to obtain basic items such and we are grateful for this opportunity to collaborate with others for the benefit of our citizens.

IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES

The MOU specifies that the City will not incur any financial cost to participate in the SAVE program. Minimal staff time will be required to implement and maintain the program.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution
2. Memorandum of Understanding / Standard Operating Guideline