

Before the Board put anything on the ballot, the Fire District secured over \$2.5 million in competitive grants. Here is what that bought, and why some of it runs out.

Since 2019:

- 2024 SAFER grant
 - \$2,042,478 to hire six full-time firefighters for Station 352.
 - SAFER is among the most competitive federal fire grants in the country.
- 2019 and 2021 AFG grants
 - \$407,913 for a complete SCBA air pack replacement, new cutting-edge technical rescue equipment and training.
- BWC grants
 - \$65,832 for firefighter health and safety equipment.

Total: \$2,516,223 that local taxpayers did not have to pay.

Here is the catch with SAFER. It is a three-year grant, and the federal share shrinks every year before it stops entirely. Years one and two, the federal government covers 75%. Year three, 25%. After that, the district pays all of it.

Departments across the country reach that point every year, and the outcomes are consistent: layoffs, station brownouts, or station closures. Having funding in place before the grant expires is what avoids the funding and staffing gap.

One more thing about growth. Many of the new residential, multi-family, and commercial developments across our four communities sit inside TIF agreements. Tax Increment Financing redirects much of the increased value from new construction into infrastructure funds rather than to the taxing districts.

BST&G responds to every call and inspects every building in those developments while receiving little or none of their new property tax value. Growth adds to the workload. Under TIFs and HB920, it adds only a fraction of the funding that workload requires.

<https://bstgfire.org/2026-fire-levy>

Serving Berkshire Twp. | City of Sunbury | Trenton Twp. | Village of Galena

ELECTION DAY: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2026

THE 2024 SAFER GRANT • \$2,042,478

THE GRANT ENDS. THE FIREFIGHTERS DON'T.

Federal share of six firefighters' cost, by grant year



SAFER paid to hire six full-time firefighters for Station 352. Its federal share shrinks every year, then stops. When it does, the district carries the full cost; which is why the timing of this levy matters.