

Clewiston Fire Rescue

121 Central Ave
Clewiston, FL 33440
(863) 983-1500



June 6, 2025

Subject: Justification for adding Paid Career Firefighting Staff to assist our Volunteer Staff using NFPA 1720 Standards

Mr. Williams,

I am formally recommending, that our fire department, add two paid career firefighters to assist our volunteer firefighters in the 2025/2026 budget cycle. This recommendation is grounded in our department's ongoing inability to consistently meet the standards outlined in the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1720, which defines staffing and response time benchmarks for fire departments serving primarily volunteer communities.

NFPA 1720 Table 4.3 Staffing and Response Time Objective provides the following requirement for urban and suburban areas (which our jurisdiction falls under based on population density and call volume):

Demand Zone	Demographics	Staffing (Minimum)	Response Time	% Compliance	
Suburban(500– 1,000 people/sp. Mile)	Residential	10 personnel	10 minutes	80%	*Hendry County areas
Urban (>1,000 people/sq. mile)	Residential	15 personnel	9 minutes	90%	**City of Clewiston areas

Unfortunately, our department has experienced significant difficulty in meeting both the personnel availability and response time benchmarks:

- **Personnel Shortages:** On numerous occasions, we are unable to staff 10–15 trained responders per incident during the critical first response window. Volunteer availability, especially during daytime (regular work hours), continues to decline due to employment commitments and reduced volunteer availability.
- **Delayed Response Times:** Our average turnout and travel time often exceed the NFPA 1720 standard of 9–10 minutes, especially during the work week, Monday through Friday.
- **As Call Volume and Risk Profiles** have changed over the past years the risk to public safety has risen accordingly.

By adding paid career staff during the work week, this will help us:

- Guarantee minimum staffing levels during this time.
- Move closer to compliance with NFPA 1720 response time standards.
- Improve operational effectiveness and firefighter safety.
- Provide consistent, professional service to the community during critical emergencies.

I am committed to working to develop a phased, budget-conscious implementation plan, including exploring available grant programs (e.g., SAFER grants) and mutual aid enhancements in the future.

This change is not merely a matter of convenience—it is a necessary evolution to maintain the safety and well-being of our community in accordance with nationally recognized best practices. I appreciate your attention to this important matter and welcome the opportunity to further discuss our department's future staffing model.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Travis Reese', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Travis Reese - Chief
Clewiston Fire Department

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