SAMPLE

Message from the Fire Chief to the political/management (city or county) leadership explaining the CFAI process from the beginning.

To: City Manager

From: Fire Chief

Subject: Fire Department Accreditation Process

In the coming weeks and months, the fire department will be embarking on an in-depth self-assessment model as presented by the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE). This initial self-assessment is the beginning of a new and holistic approach to managing our fire department and will involve numerous people both within and from outside our ranks. As fire chief, I am extremely excited to begin this journey through self-assessment, which will lead us to the overall goal of agency accreditation.

The self-assessment model requires the fire department to complete and participate in a community-driven strategic plan, a comprehensive community risk assessment, and an adopted standard of cover. These elements will require the entire city/county/community to play a role in not only providing timely feedback to us, but to set the benchmarks for anticipated service from the fire department.

Once complete, these two key components will serve to allow our staff to respond to 250 individual performance indicators. These performance measurements cover all aspects of the fire department. Everything from our legal standing to our field operations will be described and appraised. Once this self-assessment is completed a team of peer assessors will come to our city/county to verify and validate that we are in fact doing what we say we’re doing. This team will prepare an in-depth report of their findings for review by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International. These fire service professionals will then review and make a final judgement on our department’s credibility, based on our responses to the model.

The cost of such an undertaking cannot be forgotten. I anticipate when all the process is completed, we will have spent in the range of eight to ten thousand dollars applying the model and having our work peer reviewed. In my opinion, this is a small price to pay for both supporting and participating in this comprehensive assessment. We plan to use this entire process going forward as the business plan for operating the department. Annually, we will be required to update our processes, and every five years, return for further peer review and validation.

As your fire chief, I am excited to have the ability to apply such a comprehensive, self-assessment model to our community’s public safety operation. I look forward to seeing the progress we will make both as a fire department and a community. I see this process as helping you, and the elected officials, make more outcome-based decisions when it comes to the operations of the fire department. I will be including any potential budget implications of the process in my upcoming estimates.

Sincerely,

Fire Chief