

lost to on-duty injury” quantified in units of full-time equivalents. The bureau lost the on-duty equivalent of 8.80 FTE in FY 2016-17, 7.70 in FY 2017-18, and 6.10 year to date in FY 2018-19 (a straight-line projection puts the total for FY 2018-19 at a 68% increase over the prior year). While the costs of service and occupational claims for fire fighters—which surpass \$2 million for the last two years—are largely funded by the Fire and Police Disability and Retirement Bureau, the cost to backfill the hours missed by that employee is incurred by the Fire Bureau. Backfilling these hours increases use of fire fighter overtime. The bureau estimates that the cost to backfill service injuries totaled at least \$770,000 in overtime costs for FY 2017-18.

CBO finds that there is clear need and financial benefit for additional mental and physical health support for firefighters. However, there may be opportunities to better provide this support with existing resources. Because of the potential of a position like this to create savings related to injury and sick leave, CBO recommends the bureau pilot the position with an internal realignment or through carryover of anticipated underspending and hire a limited-term employee to determine the effectiveness of the program. If the pilot is effective, CBO recommends the bureau propose funding the ongoing position in overtime savings. As a new program, if funding is approved by Council, CBO would recommend that the bureau evaluate the effectiveness of the proposal within three years of appropriation to see if initially intended results have transpired.

CBO Recommendation: \$0 | 0.00 FTE

Fund Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) and Turnout Gear Replacement Reserves

\$300,000 ongoing, 0.00 FTE

Direction Language

“In order to ensure adequate lifecycle replacement funding for essential life safety gear, Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty directs Portland Fire and Rescue to develop a decision package for ongoing funding for one FTE Health and Wellness Coordinator.”¹⁷

CBO Analysis

The Fire Bureau received \$1.1 million in Capital Set-aside money in the FY 2018-19 Adopted Budget for the replacement of SCBAs and \$707,000 in one-time General Fund carryover resources. This amount supplemented the Fire Bureau’s contribution towards the cost of the replacement, which totaled \$2.5 million. The projected total cost of the project was \$3 million but remains to be determined as the bureau is still in the solicitation process to procure the equipment. During the current fiscal year, the bureau was awarded a \$2 million “Assistance for Firefighters” grant (AFG) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, bringing their total allocation for the project to \$4.5 million. Fire currently has a \$300,000 budget allocation deficit to maintain their equipment capital assets, budgeting \$600,000 for \$900,000 in total need.

¹⁷ For complete direction language, please see the Bureau’s requested budget. <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/cbo/article/711607>

