



- Fire assessments have been used by cities in Florida for many years providing a stable funding source for fire services.
- Gainesville initiated a fire assessment for FY11 commencing October 1, 2010. Revenue collected through the fire assessment may **only** be used to fund fire services.
- Total assessable costs for Gainesville fire services are \$10,696,530. This includes fire service costs eligible to be recovered through a fire assessment.
- Gainesville established a fire assessment rate of 50 percent of the total assessable costs for an FY11 Fire Assessment Rate of \$4,887,500 or \$78 per factored fire protection unit.
  - The fire assessment is collected on the tax bill and is on target to achieve budgeted revenue with approximately \$4,200,000 collected in FY 11 thus far.
- The fire assessment applies to all improved property in the city.
  - Property owned by non-profit organizations receives the benefit of city provided fire services and is subject to the fire assessment.
  - The city is not legally able to require payment for fire assessments on government-owned properties; therefore, the fire assessment for these properties is paid through other available city funding sources.
- The assessment methodology assigns each building Factored Fire Protection Units (FFPU). FFPU's serve as a proxy for the number of firefighters and other associated personnel, quantity and size of apparatus and other firefighting equipment necessary to provide fire protection to a particular building. The assignment of FFPU's is based on three main criteria:
  - Hazard Classification** - The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) provides hazard classifications (according to the type of occupancy) ranging from 3 (most hazardous) to 7 (least hazardous).
  - Building Area** - The database maintained by the Alachua County Property Appraiser is used as the source for building area data. Buildings are assessed individually based on the records of "total square feet" under roof which includes drive-thru areas, carports, garages and other such areas.
  - Historical Demand** - Historical demand is based on the response load within each hazard class based on one year of incident reports in the Florida Fire Incident Reporting System (FFIRS) provided by the city.
- The city is working with the Property Appraiser to place the fire assessment on the annual TRIM notice for FY12 and future years.
- The city established a Hardship Assistance Program to prevent low-income households from losing title to their properties due to the fire assessment.
  - There are two ways to qualify: one for low-income senior citizens and one for low-income citizens.
  - The application deadline is March 1, 2011.**
- Owners of buildings that are fully protected by automated fire sprinkler systems are eligible to receive Fire Flow Mitigation Credits.
  - Credits can reduce net factored fire protection units assigned to buildings by 10 percent.
  - The application deadline is June 1, 2011.**

- Owners of mobile home or recreational vehicle (RV) park property are eligible to receive mobile home space vacancy adjustments. **The application deadline is June 1, 2011.**
- Property owners who believe their buildings are a different size than indicated on their assessments should check their parcel information and building footprint on the [Alachua County Property Appraiser's website](#). The assessment is based on TOTAL square footage, including garages, drive-throughs, covered walkways, and similar "under-roof" sections. If the "total" square footage still appears to be different than the actual building, please leave a message with Gainesville Fire Rescue at 352-334-5088.
- For more information on the fire assessment and application forms for the Hardship Assistance Program, Fire Flow Mitigation Credit and Mobile Home/Recreational Vehicle Park Vacancy Adjustment, please visit the City of Gainesville website at [www.cityofgainesville.org/fire](http://www.cityofgainesville.org/fire) or to leave a message or question call Gainesville Fire Rescue at 52-334-5088. Messages are checked Monday – Thursday.