

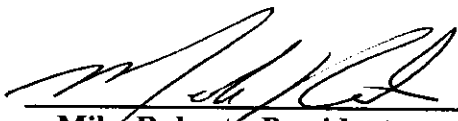
**ORDER: AUTHORIZE JMCM CONSULTING AS A GRANT WRITER FOR THE FIRE
DEPARTMENT**

Motion was made by Larry Gillespie, duly seconded by Chad McLarty, to authorize JMCM Consulting as a grant writer for the Fire Department.

The vote on the motion was as follows:

Supervisor Brent Larson, voted yes
Supervisor Larry Gillespie, voted yes
Supervisor David Rikard, voted yes
Supervisor Chad McLarty, voted yes
Supervisor Mike Roberts, voted yes

After the vote, President Roberts, declared the motion carried, this the 17th day of January, 2023.



**Mike Roberts, President
Board of Supervisors**

Sherry Wall, Chancery Clerk



JMCM Consulting - Your Source for AFG Grant Writing/Administration Assistance

Frequently Asked Questions:

When can I apply for an Assistance to Firefighter Grant?

The President signed the AFG appropriation bill in January 2018 for AFG to continue until September 30, 2024. JMCM works on grants throughout the year, so as soon as you return your information work will begin on your application.

What do you charge to write a grant?

JMCM Consulting does not charge anything up front to write your grant. Our emphasis is on project development and project administration services. We emphasize that we are taking a risk with you. We know there are other grant writers that will charge an upfront fee to write your grant. That is not how we operate because we provide much more services than just "writing the grant".

We want you to know that we take the trust you place in us very seriously. There is nothing more important to us than helping your department and doing it in the legal, ethical, and correct way.

How does JMCM Consulting get paid?

If your project receives a grant award, you will owe JMCM 5% of the funded amount for project administration. For example, if the project's value is \$200,000, you will receive \$190,000 in grant funds, your match will be \$10,000 and JMCM's fee will be \$9,500. Your total out of pocket cost will be \$19,500 (about \$0.10 on the dollar). Not a bad return on your investment.

Can I include your fee in the grant application/Can grant funds be used to pay your fees?

NO. Our fees are for professional project administration services, and contingent upon a department receiving funding for a project. Because our fee is not a grant writing fee, grant funds cannot be used to pay our fees. Our services must be paid from the department's general fund. Most importantly, you do not pay anything if the project does not fund. The benefit of using a project administrator is that our services extend beyond preparation of the project proposal. We do not and cannot promise any grant awards, however, we work very hard at making your project successful. Believe me, we are just as disappointed as you are when your project is turned down.

There are other companies that charge a fee for writing a grant, whether you receive any funding or not. We believe this is not the best use of your resources. Because we do not get paid unless you receive funding, we are taking the risk with you.

If the grant writing fee is included in the grant, funds are taken away from another department that could use those funds to purchase equipment. It is our experience that it is very important that the department provide matching funds. This ensures they have "some skin in the game"!

What does JMCM Consulting do for the fee?

If your project funds, we will manage the project on your behalf from beginning to end. You determine our level of involvement. We work diligently to ensure your department follows all FEMA grant guidelines and that your project moves along quickly, within FEMA's required period. We will work with you to determine the specifications of the equipment you want to purchase and best meets your department's needs. If requested we will assist with preparing bid specifications and the entire bid process. The extent of our assistance and involvement with the procurement process will be determined by you before any work begins. Our assistance with procurement has yielded significant savings to many of the departments we work with and ensured FEMA compliance. Because of Jeff's many years as a professional firefighter, we are an objective resource for technical questions about equipment, which has proven to be an asset for our current clients. We do not recommend or favor any specific brands or manufacturers; but we do offer our objective assistance in evaluation of equipment if requested. The ultimate decision on the equipment to purchase is yours.

This is a very valuable resource with the emphasis FEMA has placed on procurement. If a manufacturer assists you with writing technical specifications, then they cannot submit a bid proposal for a purchase. Therefore, having a 3rd party to assist with this aspect of the project is very important. If a vendor offers to pay your match or grant writing fee, that is a violation of federal law. We will never participate in any type of offer like this. There is no amount of money that is worth our integrity.

We do our best to keep you from violating any laws. Unfortunately, we have had to terminate our relationship with some departments because they have not followed the law.

Once your equipment is purchased, we close out the grant.

What can I apply for? Can I apply for a truck and PPE?

In 2007 the AFG changed to allow applicants to apply for a vehicle and an equipment grant. We encourage departments to apply for at least one operation and one vehicle, if the department can justify a need.

How do you know the value of the equipment in the project and the dollar value of the grant?

After reviewing your department information and working with you, we will suggest the equipment that we believe can be justified. We look at industry averages, talk with multiple vendors on pricing, and then suggest the dollar value of the items you are requesting. On some items FEMA has a dollar limit that they will fund.

What kind of experience do you have with this?

JMCM Consulting provides a variety of professional consulting services to over 900 fire departments in Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia. We work with small volunteer departments to large municipalities. Since we began offering our services, we have helped with over 5,000 applications and helped departments receive approximately \$100 million in funding.

JMCM Consulting is Co-owned by Jeff and Cindy Monroe; they have extensive background in fire service and in business. Jeff Monroe has been a firefighter/paramedic for over 30 years and still works as a firefighter/paramedic today. Additionally, he has a Bachelors in Public Safety Administration and a Masters degree in Public Administration. Cindy Monroe has over 30 years of experience in Business with a BS degree in Accounting from UAB and a Masters in Plant Science from Missouri State University.

What are my chances of getting a grant?

We cannot guarantee anything; however, the chances are ZERO if you do not apply. Applications are computer scored, and then they are scored by a peer panel. Even though our success rate has been high we cannot guarantee you will receive a grant. If there is not a strong justification for the project, we will advise you on the chances of it funding, but we are not always right. We try to provide you with our "best guess" based on our years of experience. We promise you this – we will do everything we can to make sure we submit the best application possible for your department.

What is the *Authorization to Engage* and who should sign it?

The Authorization to Engage is the contract that we require each organization sign before we begin any work on developing the grant application. It states the Terms and Conditions regarding hiring us to develop the grant application. It is important that you read this carefully and understand what you are agreeing to.

The person that signs this must have the authority to sign a contract for the organization. Please refer to our document "Instructions for Completing Forms". Beginning in 2021, we require the following: Government entities (city, county, etc.) The Mayor, County Administrator or someone at that level sign the contract. For VFDs/non-profit/Fire District, etc. we require the Board Chairman sign the Agreement or provide something in writing from the Chairman that authorizes the Fire Department to submit a grant application.

Unfortunately, we have had situations arise where the person that signed the contract, did not have the authority to sign the document. This resulted in the organization not wanting to pay for our services. It is unfortunate when this occurs, so we are being very diligent in ensuring the person signing the contract has the authority to sign the contract.

What if my project does not fund? Can I resubmit the grant the next year?

If you choose to hire us again the 2nd year, we will review the application for any obvious errors, then resubmit it.

What if do not want to use you again and resubmit the application myself?

Our relationship is based on trust and integrity. Unfortunately, we have discovered some people do not have those qualities. PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE understand this requirement. It is clearly stated in the Authorization to Engage that we require to be signed before we begin any work on a grant application. By signing our contract, you agree you will NOT share the information we develop.

What if I want to share the application with my neighboring department?

Again, PLEASE refer to the Authorization to Engage. The agreement you sign with us expressly forbids copying, sharing, or distributing the grant application to anyone else. If you do, you will owe us the fee if the grant funds. We know you may want to help a neighboring department; however, by signing our contract, you have agreed you will not share the information. Giving away our work product amounts to giving away our money. We rely on the personal integrity of our clients to help us with this.

Unfortunately, this has really become an issue over the last few years. We work very hard to develop the best application possible for our clients. As a result, we have experienced a lot of success. This has made us a target for unethical people that want to steal our work. Sadly, there are other grant writers who will convince a department to let him resubmit the grant that we wrote for the department for a very low fee or will use the information we develop in another application. We have discovered our information, word for word, in applications.

This is a competitive business. When someone else takes credit for our work product (and the department pays them), we are competing against ourselves!

The statement we have heard is "Well, it is their information." That is true, however, you sign a legally binding agreement that states you will NOT give the information to anyone else.

We have to trust that our clients will act with honor and integrity.

Is my information secure?

Absolutely. We do not share your information with anyone without your approval. Additionally, our employees are required to sign confidentiality agreements.

What about SAM; FEMA GO; and NFIRS?

There are 3 important areas where the department must be compliant before applying to any federal grant program. They are:

1. **SAM-The System for Award Management** – EVERY entity that receives government funding must be SAM registered.
2. **FEMA GO – FEMA Grant Outcomes** – This is the web portal where the application is entered. The information is tied to SAM, so it is important this be correct.
3. **NFIRS – National Fire Incident Reporting System** –NFIRS is a requirement for all departments that receive AFG funds. Your state Fire Marshal's office is required to report NFIRS reporting compliance by department to FEMA. FEMA has begun to validate call volume in your grant against incidents reported in NFIRS. Each department is responsible for entering their own incident reports! There are several programs that are "user-friendly". We suggest you set this up and begin reporting ASAP.

Why do I need to provide a copy of the department's purchasing policy?

Any recipient of federal grant dollars must follow purchasing and procurement policy as written in the 2 Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR 200) Uniform Admin Requirements Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Award. (OMB Supercircular).

If your department's grant award is audited, you must be able to produce these documents and prove you are compliant with CFR200.

It is not enough to say "We follow state bid laws." Your city/county/department must have an adopted, written purchasing/procurement policy.

FEMA also requires an Asset/Inventory Management Policy. This should cover how you maintain inventory records and how you dispose of property.

We have some general sample policies we can provide. However, your policy must be compliant with CFR200 AND the purchasing/procurement laws in your state.

Who submits the grant and who is responsible for it?

Your department is responsible for the information contained in the application. We will only submit information you provide to us. We submit the grant application that is loaded onto the web portal once you verify the entered data.

What do I need to do to get started?

An **Authorization to Engage** must be returned before we begin any work. There are a few worksheets we need completed and returned that will give us the information we need to prepare a grant application for your department. It is a lot of information; however, do not let it overwhelm you. We can walk you through the info over the phone.

We ask that you have a one primary point of contact for your project. It becomes confusing when more than one person gives us directions on a project.

VERY IMPORTANT – If you are NOT registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) contact us ASAP.