

## TRIUMPH GULF COAST, INC. PRE-APPLICATION FORM

Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. (“Triumph Gulf Coast”) has created a pre-application process to provide initial consideration of eligibility for potential ideas of projects or programs that may seek an award of funding. Applicants are required to participate in the pre-application process. Notwithstanding the response from Triumph Gulf Coast on the pre-application form, an Applicant may still elect to submit an application.

### **APPLICANT INFORMATION**

Name of Individual/Entity/Organization: Gulf District Schools

Proposal Title: **“Preparing Gulf Coast First Responders- A Workforce Pathway Initiative for Gulf District Schools”** - The focus of this initiative is to establish comprehensive Fire Academy career pathways within Gulf District Schools through a strategic partnership with the Gulf County Board of Commissioners, who are providing a donated training facility requiring minimal upgrades to support program implementation. This initiative will deliver hands-on, industry-aligned training that leads to recognized certifications and career readiness for students pursuing high-demand careers as first responders professionals. Through collaboration with local agencies and employers, the program will create a sustainable workforce pipeline that strengthens community safety and, over time, supports the transition of district volunteer fire response teams into paid professional positions. With a projected return on investment of serving at least 125 students in career pathways over the next nine years, this initiative leverages existing community assets to ensure immediate impact, long-term sustainability, and meaningful workforce outcomes for Gulf County students.

Amount of Triumph Funds Requested: **\$4,584,600**

Total Estimated Project Cost: **\$5,884,600**

Supporting funds paralleled with a donated facility located in White City, Florida- midpoint between both district secondary schools valued at \$600,000 on the Gulf County Property Appraisers Office: [Gulf County Property Appraisers Office Link](#)

Transportation will be provided by Gulf District Schools as an in-kind match, estimated value of \$350,000 over the course of the grant.

CTE funds from the Florida Department of Education to Gulf District Schools for certifications will also be utilized at approximately \$150,000 over the grant duration and put into the program.

\$100,000 donation for equipment from the Florida State Marshall’s Association.

\$100,000 donation of a used fire truck from the Gulf County Board of County Commissioners.

**Brief Description of Individual/Entity/Organization:**

Gulf District Schools is home to four public schools: Two Pre-K through 5 elementary schools and two 6-12 junior/high schools. There are approximately 1,800 students in the district. Over 60% are considered economically disadvantaged.

**Contact Information**

Primary Contact: Melissa Hancock	Secondary Contact: Karen Shiver
Title: Assistant Superintendent for Instruction	Title: CTE Director
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City: Port St. Joe State: Florida Zip Code: 32456	
Telephone Number: 850.229.6940 Ext. 23126	
Email Address: <a href="mailto:mhancock@gulf.k12.fl.us">mhancock@gulf.k12.fl.us</a>	
Website: <a href="https://www.gulfcoschools.com/">https://www.gulfcoschools.com/</a>	

Names of co-applicants, partners or other entities, organizations that will have a role in the proposed project or program:

Gulf County Board of County Commissioners – Dr. Randy Pridgeon –  
[Randolph.p.pridgeon@gmail.com](mailto:Randolph.p.pridgeon@gmail.com)  
Gulf Coast State College – Dr. Cherly Flax-Hyman

**REQUIRED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In a maximum of two (2) pages, please describe the proposed project or program and anticipated outcomes including (i) the amount of funds being sought from Triumph Gulf Coast; (ii) the amount and identity of other sources of funds for the proposed project or program; (iii) the location of the project or program; (iv) summary description of the proposed program, including how the program will be transformational and promote economic recovery, diversification, and enhancement of the disproportionately affected counties, and (v) a summary timeline for the proposed project or program.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

This pre-application process will not result in an award of funding by Triumph Gulf Coast. Rather, this process is designed to facilitate submission of ideas for potential projects or programs before the Applicant expends time and/or resources to complete a full Application. All Applicants for funding are required to complete an application, which will be reviewed and then considered for award at the discretion of Triumph Gulf Coast Board.

**Please Select the Proposal's Eligibility Category(s)**

Pursuant to Section 288.8017, Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. was created to make awards from available funds to projects or programs that meet the priorities for economic recovery, diversification, and enhancement of the disproportionately affected counties. The disproportionately affected counties are: Bay County, Escambia County, Franklin County, Gulf

County, Okaloosa County, Santa Rosa County, Walton County, or Wakulla County. See, Section 288.08012.

1. From the choices below, please check the box that describes the purpose of the proposed project or program (check all that apply):

- Ad valorem tax rate reduction within disproportionately affected counties;
- Local match requirements of s. 288.0655 for projects in the disproportionately affected counties;
- Public infrastructure projects for construction, expansion, or maintenance which are shown to enhance economic recovery, diversification, and enhancement of the disproportionately affected counties;
- Grants to local governments in the disproportionately affected counties to establish and maintain equipment and trained personnel for local action plans of response to respond to disasters, such as plans created for the Coastal Impacts Assistance Program;
- Grants to support programs that prepare students for future occupations and careers at K-20 institutions that have campuses in the disproportionately affected counties. Eligible programs include those that increase students' technology skills and knowledge; encourage industry certifications; provide rigorous, alternative pathways for students to meet high school graduation requirements; strengthen career readiness initiatives; fund high-demand programs of emphasis at the bachelor's and master's level designated by the Board of Governors; and, similar to or the same as talent retention programs created by the Chancellor of the State University System and the Commission of Education, encourage students with interest or aptitude for science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medical disciplines to pursue postsecondary education at a state university or a
- Florida College System institution within the disproportionately affected counties; Grants to support programs that provide participants in the disproportionately affected counties with transferable, sustainable workforce skills that are not confined to a single employer; and
- Grants to the tourism entity created under s. 288.1226 for the purpose of advertising and promoting tourism and Fresh From Florida, and grants to promote workforce and infrastructure, on behalf of all of the disproportionately affected counties

**Please Select the Priorities this Proposal's Outcomes will Achieve**

1. Please check the box if the proposed project or program will meet any of the following priorities (check all that apply):

- Generate maximum estimated economic benefits, based on tools and models not generally employed by economic input-output analyses, including cost-benefit, return-on-investment, or

dynamic scoring techniques to determine how the long-term economic growth potential of the disproportionately affected counties may be enhanced by the investment.

- Increase household income in the disproportionately affected counties above national average household income.
- Leverage or further enhance key regional assets, including educational institutions, research facilities, and military bases.
- Partner with local governments to provide funds, infrastructure, land, or other assistance for the project.
- Benefit the environment, in addition to the economy.
- Provide outcome measures.
- Partner with K-20 educational institutions or school districts located within the disproportionately affected counties as of January 1, 2017.
- Are recommended by the board of county commissioners of the county in which the project or program will be located.
- Partner with convention and visitor bureaus, tourist development councils, or chambers of commerce located within the disproportionately affected counties.

### **REQUIRED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Proposed project and anticipated outcomes:

- (i) Amount Sought: **\$4,584,600**
- (ii) Other source of funds: **\$1,300,000**
  - \$600,000: Gulf County Board of Commissioners – Land and facility
  - \$100,000: Gulf County Board of Commissioners – used fire truck
  - \$100,000: Florida State Marshall’s Association- equipment
  - \$350,000: transportation- provide bus and fuel, maintenance
  - \$150,000: Projected FLDOE CTE Funding
- (iii) Location: Secondary Gulf District School Sites
  - 1.Port St Joe Junior/Senior High School (PSJHS) – 575 6th – 12th grade students
  - 2.Wewahitchka Junior/Senior High School (WHS) – 450 6th –12th grade students
- (iv) Summary description of proposed program

### **Executive Summary:**

#### **Preparing Gulf Coast First Responders- A Workforce Pathway Initiative for Gulf District Schools**

Gulf District Schools proposes the establishment of a comprehensive Fire Academy career pathway designed to develop a sustainable pipeline of certified, workforce-ready first responders to meet critical public safety needs in Gulf County. This initiative directly supports the county’s planned transition from a volunteer-based fire service model to a fully staffed, professional workforce over the next five years—addressing current service gaps while creating long-term employment opportunities for local residents.

Through strategic partnerships, utilization of existing infrastructure, and delivery of industry-recognized training and certifications, this program will expand workforce capacity, increase access to high-wage, high-demand careers, and contribute to the economic resilience and stability of Gulf County and surrounding disproportionately affected communities.

(i) Amount of Funds Being Sought from Triumph Gulf Coast  
Gulf District Schools is seeking **\$4,584,600.00** in funding from Triumph Gulf Coast to support facility upgrades, instructional equipment, curriculum development, certification costs, and program startup expenses necessary to launch and sustain Fire Academy training programs.

**(ii) Other sources of Funds**

In addition to TRIUMPH funding, the project will be supported through a combination of in-kind and anticipated funding sources, including:

- Gulf County Board of Commissioners – Donation of a dedicated training facility requiring minimal updates to meet program needs (in-kind contribution valued at approximately \$700,000 and fire truck valued at \$100,000).
- Florida State Marshall’s Association donation of \$100,000 for equipment.
- Local Public Safety Partners – Instructional support, equipment access, mentorship, and work-based learning opportunities (in-kind support).
- Future Sustainability Funding – Potential Perkins V, workforce, and state CTE funds to support ongoing program operations and expansion.

This blended funding model demonstrates strong local investment and ensures responsible stewardship of TRIUMPH resources.

**(iii) Location of the Project or Program**

The Fire Academy will be housed in Gulf County, Florida, utilizing a donated county-owned facility centrally located to serve students across Gulf District Schools. Instruction will also include on-site training at partner locations, as appropriate, to support real-world, hands-on learning experiences.

**(iv) Summary Description and Transformational Impact**

This project will establish structured, career-connected pathways for students interested in fire service, emergency response industries—sectors that are critical to Gulf County’s safety, economic stability, and long-term growth.

**Program Design and Components**

- Industry-aligned Fire Academy coursework embedded within the high school experience
- Hands-on training using professional-grade equipment
- Opportunities to earn industry-recognized certifications
- Partnerships with local fire departments, and emergency services employers
- Career exploration, mentoring, and work-based learning opportunities

## **Transformational Impact**

This initiative is transformational because it moves beyond traditional classroom instruction to create direct pipelines from education to employment in sectors that are essential to Gulf County's economy and public safety. By preparing students locally for local careers, the program reduces workforce shortages, increases employment readiness, and keeps talent within the region.

The program also supports economic recovery and diversification by:

- Strengthening first responder capacity and workforce readiness
- Reducing reliance on volunteer fire response teams by establishing a long-term pipeline toward eventual transition to paid professional positions
- Leveraging existing county assets to minimize startup costs while maximizing impact
- Providing equitable access to high-wage, high-demand careers for rural students

Over the next nine years, the program is projected to serve at least 125 students, delivering a strong return on investment through workforce placement, certification attainment, and community safety outcomes.

## **(v) Summary Timeline**

Year 1

- Finalize partnerships and agreements
- Complete minimal facility upgrades
- Purchase equipment and instructional materials
- Develop curriculum and certification alignment
- Recruit and enroll initial student cohort

Years 2–3

- Full program implementation
- Expansion of student enrollment
- Launch work-based learning and certification opportunities
- Ongoing evaluation and refinement

Years 4–9

- Program sustainability and growth
- Continued student enrollment serving an average of 15 students annually
- Strengthened employment pipelines and workforce outcomes
- Evaluation of long-term impacts on workforce development and public safety

## **Anticipated Outcomes**

- At least 125 students enrolled in Fire career pathways over nine years
- Increased credential attainment and job readiness
- Strengthened local public safety workforce capacity
- Long-term economic resilience and workforce diversification for Gulf County

## **Immediate Impact and Sustainability:**

### **Immediate Impact**

The proposed Fire Academy Workforce Pathways Initiative will deliver immediate impact by leveraging a donated training facility provided through a partnership with the Gulf County

Board of Commissioners, allowing program implementation to begin quickly with minimal infrastructure investment. Upon award, funds will be used to complete minor facility upgrades, procure industry-standard equipment, and launch hands-on instruction for students across Gulf District Schools. The program will immediately expand access to high-demand career training, increase student engagement through real-world learning experiences, and address critical workforce needs in public safety. Early cohorts of students will begin earning industry-aligned credentials and certifications, strengthening the local talent pipeline and enhancing community safety outcomes.

### **Sustainability**

Long-term sustainability is built into the program design through strong intergovernmental partnerships, use of existing facilities, and alignment with established career and technical education funding streams. Gulf District Schools will integrate the Fire Academy program into its ongoing CTE framework, leveraging Perkins V and other workforce funding to support instructional costs and program continuation. Ongoing collaboration with local fire departments and emergency services, employers will ensure curriculum relevance, work-based learning opportunities, and employment pathways for graduates. Over time, the program will support the transition from volunteer-based fire response teams toward paid professional positions, reinforcing workforce stability and retention. With a projected reach of at least 125 students over nine years, this initiative represents a sustainable, high-return investment in Gulf County's workforce, economic resilience, and community safety.

### **Long-Term ROI and Certifications:**

#### **Long-Term Return on Investment**

The Fire Academy Workforce Pathways Initiative represents a strategic, high-impact investment in Gulf County's long-term economic stability and workforce capacity. Over a nine-year period, the program is projected to serve at least 125 students, creating a sustained pipeline of trained, credentialed individuals prepared to enter high-demand public safety careers. By utilizing a donated facility and leveraging established partnerships, startup and operational costs are minimized while maximizing student access and overall community impact.

The long-term return on investment extends beyond individual student outcomes to measurable economic and community benefits, including enhanced emergency response capacity, reduced reliance on volunteer fire services, improved workforce retention, and increased access to stable, benefited employment. Graduates who remain in the region will contribute to the local tax base, support economic diversification, and strengthen critical public safety infrastructure—key components of Gulf County's continued recovery and long-term resilience.

As the program matures, it will directly support the county's transition to a paid fire service model by developing a consistent pipeline of locally trained candidates, ultimately reducing recruitment, onboarding, and training costs for local agencies while improving workforce stability and service delivery.

#### **Certifications and Credential Attainment**

Students participating in the Fire Academy pathways will have opportunities to earn industry-recognized certifications aligned with state and national standards, increasing employability and postsecondary readiness. Anticipated certifications include, but are not limited to:

- Firefighter I (FLSFM005)
- Firefighter II (FLSFM006) – Post Secondary/ Adult only
- Certified Emergency Trainer (ACSMD002)
- Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) (NREMT003) (as applicable)
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) (NREMT001)

Certification attainment will be embedded within coursework and tracked as a key performance metric. These credentials provide immediate workforce value, stack toward postsecondary training or apprenticeship opportunities, and ensure students graduate with tangible, portable skills recognized by employers. Collectively, the certifications earned through this program strengthen Gulf County’s labor force, enhance career mobility for students, and deliver a measurable return on investment for TRIUMPH Gulf Coast funding.

### **Future Expansion Plans:**

The Fire Academy Workforce Pathways Initiative is intentionally designed with scalability in mind to meet evolving workforce demands and regional economic needs. As the program demonstrates successful student outcomes, Gulf District Schools will pursue strategic expansion opportunities to broaden training options and increase overall workforce impact.

Planned future expansions include the addition of Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and paramedic coursework, providing students with advanced medical response training that directly supports fire services, emergency response agencies, and rural healthcare capacity. These programs will strengthen the public safety and healthcare workforce pipeline while enhancing emergency readiness throughout Gulf County and neighboring disproportionately affected areas.

The district will also explore the integration of additional health science and emergency response-related certifications that align with regional workforce needs. These certifications will provide students with stackable, industry-recognized credentials that expand career opportunities within public safety, healthcare, and related service sectors.

Future expansion efforts will leverage the existing training facility, established partnerships, and instructional infrastructure to minimize additional startup costs. As new pathways are developed, the district will pursue aligned funding sources, including workforce development grants, Perkins V expansion funds, and public-private partnerships. These expanded offerings will increase student enrollment capacity, diversify career pathways, and further enhance long-term return on investment by addressing critical workforce shortages in high-demand sectors.

Conclusion:

(vi) Timeline (pre-proposal through December 30, 2035)

Summer of 2026:

- Meet with Gulf County Commissioners
- Identify instructors
- Assess interest and pathways
- Articulation agreement with Gulf Coast State College

August 2026– June 2027:

- Purchase curriculum & instructional materials to include firefighting items
- Complete renovations
- Start first class August 2027

August 2027 – May 2029

- Full Program Implementation
- Expansion of enrollment
- Begin Firefighter II certification

August 2029 – December 2035

- Expand program to include EMT and Sports Medicine

\*All dates subject to change upon grant approval and collaboration with other districts and vendors currently providing like programs.



TRIUMPH GRANT PROJECTED BUDGET (January 1, 2027-December 31, 2035)

Gulf Fire Academy

	Year	January 1, 2027- December 31, 2027	January 1, 2028- December 31, 2028	January 1, 2029- December 31, 2029	January 1, 2030- December 31, 2030	January 1, 2031- December 31, 2031	January 1, 2032- December 31, 2032	January 1, 2033- December 31, 2033	January 1, 2034- December 31, 2034	January 1, 2035- December 31, 2035	
Proposed Expense	FTE POSITION	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7	YEAR 8	YEAR 9	
Personnel	Salary for Academy Coordinator	0.5	\$ 42,500.00	\$ 42,500.00	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 47,500.00	\$ 47,500.00	\$ 47,500.00	\$ 47,500.00
	Benefits 20% at 50%		\$ 8,500.00	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,500.00	\$ 9,500.00	\$ 9,500.00	\$ 9,500.00
	Insurance- base plan		\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00
	Salary for CTE Assistant (50%)	0.5	\$ 28,000.00	\$ 28,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
	Benefits 20% at 50%		\$ 5,600.00	\$ 5,600.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00
	Insurance- base plan (50%)		\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00
	Salary for Fire Academy Instructor	1	\$ 42,500.00	\$ 85,000.00	\$ 85,000.00	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 95,000.00	\$ 95,000.00
	Benefits (20%)			\$ 8,500.00	\$ 17,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 19,000.00	\$ 19,000.00	\$ 19,000.00	\$ 19,000.00
	Insurance - base plan			\$ 6,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 12,000.00
	Salary for Bus Driver	1	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00
	Benefits (20%) * ins. pd by district		\$ 3,600.00	\$ 3,600.00	\$ 3,600.00	\$ 3,600.00	\$ 3,600.00	\$ 3,600.00	\$ 3,600.00	\$ 3,600.00	\$ 3,600.00
Equipment, Material, Supplies, Curriculum, Cert Fees, Software	Office set up and supplies- including computers		\$ 15,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00
	Office Furniture-lockers		\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00							
	Equipment- including uniforms, hoses, ladders		\$ 150,000.00	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	
	curriculum- including live training		\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	
			\$ 50,000.00	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 25,000.00					
Building	Insurance for site		\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	
	Renovations		\$ 400,000.00								
		3	\$ 910,700.00	\$ 552,700.00	\$ 481,100.00	\$ 483,600.00	\$ 446,100.00	\$ 425,100.00	\$ 425,100.00	\$ 430,100.00	
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>\$ 4,584,600.00</b>	<i>*based on current projections, subject to be modifications due to union negotiations, inflation, etc.</i>							

District match- bus and fuel