

## **Application Score Sheet**

Proposed Project: Gulf School District, Fire Academy (#376)

Proposed Project/Program County: Gulf

Board of County Commission Support: Yes

Rural County: Yes

Opportunity Zone:

Total Projected Project Cost: \$5,506,800

Match Provided: \$922,200

Triumph Funds Requested: \$4,584,600

Triumph Funds Recommended by Staff: \$4,584,600

Score: B

ROI: An ROI cannot be definitively associated with disaster preparedness spending

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### **Economic Analysis, Score and Impact**

Gulf School District is seeking up to \$4,584,600 in Triumph Gulf Coast funding to establish the Gulf County Fire Academy Workforce Pathway Initiative at a donated training facility in White City, Florida. The total project cost is \$5,506,800, with the \$922,200 in other project funding consisting of a \$600,000 building contribution (this 4,080 sq ft warehouse building at 140 Volunteer Ave, Wewahitchka shows a 2026 Just Value of \$82,311) and a \$100,000 used fire truck from the Gulf County Board of County Commissioners, a \$100,000 equipment contribution from the Florida State Fire Marshals Association and School District funds. The Triumph share of total project cost is therefore approximately 83.3 percent.

The Triumph statute contains the following language regarding allowable awards: “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.” This need has been identified for Gulf County.

The proposed project would establish a regional workforce training pathway serving both Gulf District Schools students and adult learners. The application states that the program will provide training and certification pathways in Firefighter I, Firefighter II, Emergency Medical Responder, Emergency Medical Technician, hazardous materials, wildland and rural fire operations, CPR, AED, Basic Life Support, and specialized emergency-response training related to electric vehicles and alternative-fuel vehicles. The applicant states that the initiative is intended to support workforce demand in Gulf County while also making training available to participants from Franklin County and eastern Bay County.

The application presents the project as a response to public-safety workforce shortages in a county that currently relies heavily on volunteer fire coverage. According to the application, Gulf

County has 11 active volunteer fire stations covering more than 559 square miles and serving a permanent population of approximately 15,900, with additional seasonal and tourism-related service demands. The applicant asserts that the program is expected to serve approximately 3,000 students and adult learners over nine years and support placement of approximately 50 workers within 24 to 36 months in occupations such as firefighter, firefighter/EMT, EMT, EMR, emergency room technician, and ambulance EMT. The applicant states that 207 pathway completions are expected over the nine years of the grant, for a cost to Triumph per completer of \$22,153. This is substantially above the average cost per credential for Triumph historically and use of Triumph's typical increments to wage income due to credential attainment would yield an expected ROI of approximately \$3.8 dollars in additional household income per Triumph dollar expended, well below the average of \$19 across the broad Triumph portfolio of projects.

While the increment to wages and household income in this project is below the Triumph portfolio average, a reliable public safety and fire response system is paramount to businesses wanting to expand or locate in Bay, Gulf, Franklin, and Wakulla counties. A 2019 study by the MITRE Corporation uses several alternative methods to assess the value of disaster response improvements using FEMA funding. The present project shares some of those characteristics. Subject matter experts assessed the monetary value of these investments when measured against standards of reduced risk of lives lost, of injuries, of time without necessities, or property damages, and of business losses, as well as quality of life. After weighting these categories, the study found an overall relative change in benefits of 5.4 percent from the model baseline in an application to 16 Florida counties, but that variance in the valuation of components driving this change was large and meant that a positive ROI could not be definitively associated with the FEMA spending. MITRE found similarly inconclusive results in applying revealed preference techniques and in applying breakeven analysis to examine the benefits to emergency preparedness spending. Taken together, the program could be responsible for badly needed firefighting capability improvements in our rural counties. The project is clearly eligible for funding under the provisions enacted by the Legislature.

However, given the high need for trained personnel and the fact that this is part of the County's stated needs in their disaster response plan, staff can justify scoring this project as a B.

### **Project Summary (based on information provided by the applicant)**

The Gulf County School District is requesting a \$4,584,600 Triumph grant to train firefighters, emergency responders, and other public safety personnel for disaster response. The funds would be used toward salaries, equipment, curriculum, materials and supplies, and renovations to convert the County's White City Fire Station into a training facility. The Fire Academy will provide students, adult learners, current volunteer firefighters, and other emergency response personnel with local access to training necessary to develop and maintain disaster-response capabilities.

Gulf County currently relies on an all-volunteer fire service to provide fire protection and emergency response across more than 559 square miles. As long-serving volunteers retire or age out of service, maintaining an adequate number of properly trained personnel is increasingly important to this rural county's ability to respond effectively to hurricanes, wildfires, structure

fires, hazardous materials incidents, transportation emergencies, and other natural or man-made disasters.

The Fire Academy will establish an ongoing pipeline of trained personnel through instruction and credentialing opportunities that include firefighter, emergency medical, hazardous materials, safety, incident management, wildland and rural firefighting, and specialized emergency-response training. These areas directly support the knowledge and skills required to respond to fires, medical emergencies, hazardous conditions, severe weather, and other disasters.

The First Responder Workforce Pathways Initiative is also designed to serve as a regional training hub for firefighters, emergency responders, and public safety professionals throughout Gulf County, Franklin County, eastern Bay County, and neighboring communities. Opportunities for continuing education, recertification training, specialized certifications, and emerging technology training related to Electric Vehicle (EV) Fire Safety, Alternative Fuel Vehicle Emergency Response, and other evolving public safety needs will create ongoing demand for program participation beyond the initial student cohorts.

Currently, students who earn Firefighter I and Firefighter II certifications often seek employment opportunities in neighboring counties, including Bay County, where additional career opportunities within the fire service are available. At the same time, Gulf County continues to invest in strengthening its public safety workforce through its Emergency Services Department and network of volunteer fire departments. The proposed Fire Academy will expand beyond firefighter training to include Emergency Medical Responder (EMR), Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), and related certifications that align directly with existing workforce needs within Gulf County and the surrounding region. By creating a local pipeline of qualified firefighters and emergency medical personnel, the program will increase employment opportunities, strengthen workforce retention, and support higher household incomes for residents throughout Gulf County and neighboring disproportionately affected counties.

Training will be delivered through face-to-face classroom instruction, hands-on practical training, live fire simulations, laboratory experiences, and work-based learning opportunities. The program will be coordinated through Gulf District Schools in partnership with Gulf Coast State College, the Gulf County Board of County Commissioners, local fire departments, and regional public safety agencies.

High school students from Gulf and Franklin will participate through the traditional academic calendar, while adult learner offerings will vary in length based on certification requirements and workforce needs. Program development will occur during the 2026–2027 school year, with instruction beginning in August 2027. As the Academy grows, the District plans to expand programming to include summer Fire Academy courses and certification opportunities for both secondary students and adult learners, increasing access to workforce training and accelerating credential attainment.

Over the nine-year grant period, the District conservatively projects approximately 270 new participants will enter the structured Fire Academy workforce pathway. Of these, approximately 243 are projected to continue in the pathway, 207 to complete their planned pathway, and 165 to

transition into workforce employment and/or related postsecondary education or advanced training. Additional certificates are expected to be awarded for a total of 3000 credentials.

Participants will have opportunities to pursue credentials and training appropriate to their individual pathway, including:

- Firefighter I
- Firefighter II
- Emergency Medical Responder (EMR)
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
- CPR/AED and Basic Life Support
- National Incident Management System (NIMS)
- Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operations
- EV Fire Safety and Suppression
- Alternative Fuel Vehicle Emergency Response
- Wildland Firefighting and Rural Fire Operations

The Academy will primarily serve Gulf District Schools students and adult learners. When scheduling and program requirements permit, Franklin County High School students may also participate, expanding the potential workforce pipeline into another disproportionately affected county.

The Gulf County Fire Academy will be sustained through a combination of Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) funding, Career and Technical Education (CTE) program funding, CAPE certification performance funding, adult workforce training revenues, and continued support from community and industry partners. As student enrollment and certification attainment increase, the program will generate additional funding through Florida's CTE and CAPE funding mechanisms.

The Academy will be fully integrated into Gulf District Schools' long-term Career and Technical Education programming while continuing its partnership with Gulf Coast State College and regional public safety agencies. Ongoing collaboration with local fire departments and emergency response organizations will ensure that curriculum, equipment, and training remain aligned with workforce needs, allowing the Academy to continue operating beyond the grant period.

Graduates of the program will be prepared for occupations with annual wages ranging from approximately \$31,000 to more than \$65,000, depending on certifications earned, experience level, employer, and career pathway. Participants who earn multiple certifications, particularly Firefighter and EMT credentials, are expected to experience greater employment opportunities and higher earning potential. Additional certifications and workforce experience may also provide pathways into advanced emergency medical training and leadership positions within the public safety sector..

Gulf County residents currently have limited local access to Firefighter I, Firefighter II, EMT, and other public safety training programs. Establishing the Fire Academy in White City will

reduce transportation, scheduling, and financial barriers to training while creating local pathways to occupations with meaningful earning potential.

The Gulf County Firefighter Training Academy is an existing local priority that has progressed beyond the conceptual planning stage and is now moving toward implementation. The initiative was identified by Gulf County as Project #37, the Gulf County Firefighter Training Academy, with the purpose of providing high school students with a career pathway in firefighting and the opportunity to work toward firefighter certification while still in high school. The local plan identifies the Gulf County Board of County Commissioners as the lead entity and anticipates benefits to unincorporated Gulf County, Gulf District Schools, the City of Port St. Joe, and the City of Wewahitchka.

Budget

See attached

Project # 376 - Gulf District Fire Academy

Budget - \$4,584,600

N/A

Aug-27

|                                     |      | Personnel    | Equipment,<br>Materials,<br>Supplies,<br>Curriculum,<br>Certifications | Building and<br>Renovations | Transportation | Total        |
|-------------------------------------|------|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Please change year # to actual year |      |              |                                                                        |                             |                |              |
| Project Total                       |      |              |                                                                        |                             |                |              |
|                                     | 2027 | 185,700.00   | 520,000.00                                                             | 1,030,000.00                | 10,500.00      | 1,746,200.00 |
| Calendar Year 2                     |      | 217,700.00   | 305,000.00                                                             | 30,000.00                   | 10,500.00      | 563,200.00   |
| Calendar Year 3                     |      | 237,600.00   | 193,500.00                                                             | 50,000.00                   | 10,600.00      | 491,700.00   |
| Calendar Year 4                     |      | 243,600.00   | 190,000.00                                                             | 50,000.00                   | 10,700.00      | 494,300.00   |
| Calendar Year 5                     |      | 243,600.00   | 152,500.00                                                             | 50,000.00                   | 10,800.00      | 456,900.00   |
| Calendar Year 6                     |      | 247,600.00   | 127,500.00                                                             | 50,000.00                   | 10,900.00      | 436,000.00   |
| Calendar Year 7                     |      | 247,600.00   | 127,500.00                                                             | 50,000.00                   | 11,000.00      | 436,100.00   |
| Calendar Year 8                     |      | 252,600.00   | 127,500.00                                                             | 50,000.00                   | 11,100.00      | 441,200.00   |
| Calendar Year 9                     |      | 252,600.00   | 127,500.00                                                             | 50,000.00                   | 11,100.00      | 441,200.00   |
| Calendar Year 10                    |      | -            | -                                                                      | -                           | -              | -            |
| Project Total                       |      | 2,128,600.00 | 1,871,000.00                                                           | 1,410,000.00                | 97,200.00      | 5,506,800.00 |

|                  |      |              |              |            |   |              |
|------------------|------|--------------|--------------|------------|---|--------------|
| Triumph          |      |              |              |            |   |              |
|                  | 2027 | \$160,700    | 320,000.00   | 430,000.00 |   | 910,700.00   |
|                  | 2028 | 217,700.00   | 305,000.00   | 30,000.00  |   | 552,700.00   |
|                  | 2029 | 237,600.00   | 193,500.00   | 50,000.00  |   | 481,100.00   |
|                  | 2030 | 243,600.00   | 190,000.00   | 50,000.00  |   | 483,600.00   |
|                  | 2031 | 243,600.00   | 152,500.00   | 50,000.00  |   | 446,100.00   |
|                  | 2032 | 247,600.00   | 127,500.00   | 50,000.00  |   | 425,100.00   |
|                  | 2033 | 247,600.00   | 127,500.00   | 50,000.00  |   | 425,100.00   |
|                  | 2034 | 252,600.00   | 127,500.00   | 50,000.00  |   | 430,100.00   |
|                  | 2035 | 252,600.00   | 127,500.00   | 50,000.00  |   | 430,100.00   |
| Calendar Year 10 |      |              |              |            |   | -            |
| Triumph Total    |      | 2,103,600.00 | 1,671,000.00 | 810,000.00 | - | 4,584,600.00 |

|                  |      |           |   |   |           |            |
|------------------|------|-----------|---|---|-----------|------------|
| Grantee          |      |           |   |   |           |            |
|                  | 2027 | 25,000.00 |   |   | 10,500.00 | 35,500.00  |
|                  | 2028 |           |   |   | 10,500.00 | 10,500.00  |
|                  | 2029 |           |   |   | 10,600.00 | 10,600.00  |
|                  | 2030 |           |   |   | 10,700.00 | 10,700.00  |
|                  | 2031 |           |   |   | 10,800.00 | 10,800.00  |
|                  | 2032 |           |   |   | 10,900.00 | 10,900.00  |
|                  | 2033 |           |   |   | 11,000.00 | 11,000.00  |
|                  | 2034 |           |   |   | 11,100.00 | 11,100.00  |
|                  | 2035 |           |   |   | 11,100.00 | 11,100.00  |
| Calendar Year 10 |      |           |   |   |           | -          |
| Grantee Total    |      | 25,000.00 | - | - | 97,200.00 | 122,200.00 |

|                                                            |      |  |            |            |  |            |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------|--|------------|------------|--|------------|
| Match Source 1 - Gulf County Board of County Commissioners |      |  |            |            |  |            |
|                                                            | 2027 |  | 100,000.00 | 600,000.00 |  | 700,000.00 |
| Calendar Year 2                                            |      |  |            |            |  | -          |
| Calendar Year 3                                            |      |  |            |            |  | -          |
| Calendar Year 4                                            |      |  |            |            |  | -          |

|                      |   |            |            |   |            |
|----------------------|---|------------|------------|---|------------|
| Calendar Year 5      |   |            |            |   | -          |
| Calendar Year 6      |   |            |            |   | -          |
| Calendar Year 7      |   |            |            |   | -          |
| Calendar Year 8      |   |            |            |   | -          |
| Calendar Year 9      |   |            |            |   | -          |
| Calendar Year 10     |   |            |            |   | -          |
| Match Source 1 Total | - | 100,000.00 | 600,000.00 | - | 700,000.00 |

|                                                           |      |            |   |   |            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------|------------|---|---|------------|
| Match Source 2 - Florida State Fire Marshal's Association | 2026 | 100,000.00 |   |   | 100,000.00 |
| Calendar Year 2                                           |      |            |   |   | -          |
| Calendar Year 3                                           |      |            |   |   | -          |
| Calendar Year 4                                           |      |            |   |   | -          |
| Calendar Year 5                                           |      |            |   |   | -          |
| Calendar Year 6                                           |      |            |   |   | -          |
| Calendar Year 7                                           |      |            |   |   | -          |
| Calendar Year 8                                           |      |            |   |   | -          |
| Calendar Year 9                                           |      |            |   |   | -          |
| Calendar Year 10                                          |      |            |   |   | -          |
| Match Source 2 Total                                      | -    | 100,000.00 | - | - | 100,000.00 |

Exhibit A  
Project # 376 - Gulf District Fire Academy

Detail of Project Account to Date

| Date                                    | Equipment,<br>Materials,<br>Supplies,<br>Curriculum,<br>Certifications |                             |                |           | Total        |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------|--------------|
|                                         | Personnel                                                              | Building and<br>Renovations | Transportation |           |              |
| Project Total                           | 2,128,600.00                                                           | 1,871,000.00                | 1,410,000.00   | 97,200.00 | 5,506,800.00 |
| Triumph                                 | 2,103,600.00                                                           | 1,671,000.00                | 810,000.00     | -         | 4,584,600.00 |
| Funding Request #1                      |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Funding Request #2                      |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Funding Request #3                      |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Funding Request #4                      |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Funding Request #5                      |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Funding Request #6                      |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Funding Request #7                      |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Funding Request #8                      |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Funding Request #9                      |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Funding Request #10                     |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Funding Request #11                     |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Funding Request #12                     |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Funding Request #13                     |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Funding Request #14                     |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Funding Request #15                     |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Funding Request #16                     |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Funding Request #17                     |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Funding Request #18                     |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Triumph Total                           | -                                                                      | -                           | -              | -         | -            |
| Remaining                               | 2,103,600.00                                                           | 1,671,000.00                | 810,000.00     | -         | 4,584,600.00 |
| Total Grantee Documented Funds Expended |                                                                        |                             |                | 97,200.00 | 97,200.00    |
| Grantee Funding #1                      |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Grantee Funding #2                      |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Grantee Funding #3                      |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Grantee Funding #4                      |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Grantee Funding #5                      |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Grantee Funding #6                      |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Grantee Funding #7                      |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Grantee Funding #8                      |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Grantee Funding #9                      |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Grantee Funding #10                     |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Grantee Funding #11                     |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Grantee Funding #12                     |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Grantee Total                           | -                                                                      | -                           | -              | -         | -            |
| Remaining                               |                                                                        |                             |                | 97,200.00 | 97,200.00    |
| Proof of payment                        |                                                                        |                             |                |           |              |
| Other Sources expended #1               |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Other Sources expended #2               |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Other Sources expended #3               |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Other Sources expended #4               |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Other Sources expended #5               |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Other Sources expended #6               |                                                                        |                             |                |           | -            |
| Other Funding Sources Total             | -                                                                      | -                           | -              | -         | -            |