



2021-2022 Florida Job Growth Grant Fund Public Infrastructure Grant Proposal

Proposal Instructions: Please read this document carefully and provide the information requested below. Some questions may request that a separate narrative be completed. If additional space is needed, attach a word document with your entire answer.

Governmental Entity Information

Name of Governmental Entity: Immokalee Fire Control District

Government Federal Employer Identification Number: [REDACTED]

Primary Contact Name: Michael J. Choate

Title: Fire Chief

Mailing Address: 502 New Market Road East
Immokalee FL 34142

Phone Number: 239-657-2111

Email: mchoate@immfire.com

Secondary Contact Name: Rita M Greenberg

Title: Deputy Chief - Administration

Phone Number: 239-657-2111, rgreenberg@immfire.com

Public Infrastructure Grant Eligibility

Pursuant to section 288.101, F.S., the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund was created to promote economic opportunity by improving public infrastructure and enhancing workforce training. Eligible entities that wish to access this grant fund must submit public infrastructure proposals that:

- Promote economic recovery in specific regions of the state, economic diversification or economic enhancement in a targeted industry. (View Florida's Targeted Industries here.)
- Are not for the exclusive benefit of any single company, corporation or business entity.
- Are for infrastructure that is owned by the public and is for public use or predominately benefits the Public.

1. Program Requirements:

(If additional space is needed, attach a word document with your entire answer.)

Each proposal must include the following information describing how the project satisfies eligibility requirements listed on page 1.

- A.** Provide a detailed description of the public infrastructure improvements.

Construction of a new Fire Station. See attached word document for detailed response.

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- B.** Provide location of public infrastructure, including physical address and county of project.

510 New Market Road East, Immokalee, FL. 34142, Collier County

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- C.** Is this infrastructure currently owned by the public?

Yes No

If no, is there a current option to purchase or right of way provided to the County?

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- D.** Provide current property owner.

Immokalee Fire Control District

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- E.** Is this infrastructure for public use or does it predominately benefit the public?

Yes No

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- F.** Will the public infrastructure improvements be for the exclusive benefit of any single company, corporation, or business entity?

Yes No

G. Provide a detailed description of, and quantitative evidence demonstrating, how the proposed public infrastructure project will promote:

- Economic recovery in specific regions of the state;
- Economic diversification; or
- Economic enhancement of a Targeted Industry ([View Florida's Targeted Industries here.](#))
 - Describe how the project will promote specific job growth. Include the number of jobs that will be retained or created, and in which industry(ies) the new net jobs will be created using the North American Industry Classification System ([NAICS](#)) codes. Where applicable, you may list specific businesses that will retain or create jobs or make capital investment.
 - Provide a detailed explanation of how the public infrastructure improvements will connect to a broader economic development vision for the community and benefit additional current or future businesses.

See attached word document for response

2. Additional Information:

(If additional space is needed, attach a word document with your entire answer.)

A. Provide the proposed commencement date and number of days required to complete construction of the public infrastructure project.

Anticipate commencement date is September 15, 2021 with a completion date of December 15, 2022 (15 months)

B. What permits are necessary for the public infrastructure project?

Construction Office Trailer permit, Site Development Permit, Underground Fire Permit, Building Permit, Fire Sprinkler Permit, Fire Alarm Permit, Generator Permit, Irrigation Permit, Hood Permit, Ansul System Permit, Dumpster Enclosure Permit, Flagpole Permit, Propane Gas Permit, Fence and Gate Permit, Sign Permits, Sprinkler Monitoring Permit, Fuel Distribution Permit.

- C. Detail whether required permits have been secured, and if not, detail the timeline for securing these permits. Additionally, if any required permits are local permits, will these permits be prioritized?

The Site Development Permit has been secured, the Building Permit is currently in review and anticipated to be secured by 9/10. All other permits noted are local permits that the selected Contractor or sub-contractors will request and will as this project is considered an essential service/facility all local permits will be prioritized and fast tracked. Time line for the additional permits will be as construction ensues and moves forward throughout.

- D. What is the future land use and zoning designation on the proposed site of the infrastructure improvements, and will the improvements conform to those uses?

The current and future land use for this site is Industrial. A fire station is a permissible use for this zoning designation, and therefore will conform to the future land use and zoning designation.

- E. Will an amendment to the local comprehensive plan or a development order be required on the site of the proposed project or on adjacent property to accommodate the infrastructure and potential current or future job creation opportunities? If yes, please detail the timeline.

Yes No

- F. Is the project ready to commence upon grant fund approval and contract execution? If no, please explain.

Yes No

- G. Does this project have a local match amount? Yes No

If yes, please describe the entity providing the match and the amount.

- H. Provide any additional information or attachments to be considered for this proposal. Maps and other supporting documents are encouraged.

See attached - proposed blueprints of the new facility, site photos and a map of the area.

3. Program Budget

(If additional space is needed, attach a word document with your entire answer.)

Estimated Costs and Sources of Funding: Include all applicable public infrastructure costs and other funding sources available to support the proposal.

1.) Total Amount Requested \$2,466,802.00
 Florida Job Growth Grant Fund

A. Other Public Infrastructure Project Funding Sources:

City/County \$500,000.00

Private Sources \$0.00

Other (grants, etc.) \$ 2,458,108.00

Total Other Funding \$ 2,958,108.00

Please Specify: See attached word document

B. Public Infrastructure Project Costs:

Construction \$4,716,802.00

Reconstruction \$

Design & Engineering \$295,000.00

Land Acquisition \$263,108.00

Land Improvement \$150,000.00

Other \$

Total Project Costs \$5,424,910.00

Please Specify: _____

Note: The total amount requested must be calculated by subtracting the total other public infrastructure project funding sources in A. from the total public infrastructure project costs in B.

- C. Provide a detailed budget narrative, including the timing and steps necessary to obtain the funding and any other pertinent budget-related information.

See attached word document.

4. Approvals and Authority

(If additional space is needed, attach a word document with your entire answer.)

- A. If the governmental entity is awarded grant funds based on this proposal, what approvals must be obtained before it can execute a grant agreement with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (e.g., approval of a board, commission or council)?

The Board of Fire Commissioners has given authorization to submit for this grant in advance and therefore approval is inherent within the authorization to submit. No additional approvals will be required.

If board authorization is not required, who is authorized to sign?

Patricia Anne Goodnight - Fire Commission Chair and/or
Joseph Brister - Fire Commission Vice Chair

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- B. If approval of a board, commission, council or other group is needed prior to execution of an agreement between the governmental entity and the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity:

- i. Provide the schedule of upcoming meetings for the group for a period of at least six months.
- ii. State whether entity is willing and able to hold special meetings, and if so, upon how many days' notice.

NA

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- C. Attach evidence that the undersigned has all necessary authority to execute this proposal on behalf of the governmental entity. This evidence may take a variety of forms, including but not limited to: a delegation of authority, citation to relevant laws or codes, policy documents, etc.

Attached is the Districts enabling act, which provides authority to the Board of Fire Commissioners to act on behalf of the District, the Fire Chiefs contract and a letter from the Fire Chief authorizing Deputy Chief Greenberg to sign and submit grant applications on behalf of the District.

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that I have express authority to sign this proposal on behalf of the above-described entity and to the best of my knowledge, that all data and information submitted in proposal is truthful and accurate and no material fact has been omitted.

Name of Governmental Entity: Immokalee Fire Control District

Name and Title of Authorized Representative: Deputy Chief Rita M. Greenberg

Representative Signature: *Rita M Greenberg*

Signature Date: 9-3-2021

1.A – Detailed Description of the Public Infrastructure Improvements

The goal of this proposed project is to construct a new fire station (Station #30) at 510 New Market Road East, Immokalee FL 34142. This facility will be utilized to provide safe and adequate space for fire apparatus and personnel and will allow for the continuity of emergency operations during severe storms, hurricane/tropical storms, localized flooding and wildfire events. The current facility was built over 30 years ago for a trucking operation and over the years has been repaired many times over. Due to the age of the facility and the constant need for repairs this facility is not safe for our personnel or equipment to remain in during a threat of disaster and is abandoned. The financial challenges the District faces do not support needed major repairs, nor do they support a new construction project, so we have been working to obtain funding from outside sources to complete this project. We have been able to acquire the property complete architectural design and engineering, and secure a portion of funds for site work and vertical construction to date – this proposal is to secure funding to allow us to complete vertical construction of the new fire station in an efficient manner.

1.G- Detailed description of, and quantitative evidence, demonstrating how the proposed public infrastructure project will promote: economic recovery in specific regions of the state; economic diversification; economic enhancement of a Targeted Industry.

The proposed new station will include facilities for meeting space and educational or training opportunities for both fire service personnel and members of the community. Every day the new fire station will better enable us to provide basic fire and rescue services to the members of the Immokalee community – supporting their health and wellness, as well as assist with general safety and security for members of our community while working with other community groups at festivals, fairs, and special events. Fire personnel will also be in a better position to assist in mitigating hazardous materials as the new facility will allow for more indoor storage of appropriate apparatus and equipment needed for these types of incidents. District personnel also provide a basic level of service to the local regional airport, as the closest Crash Fire Rescue (CFR) units are more than 40 miles away in the City of Naples. Before, during and after a manmade or natural disaster impacts our community – personnel will be help to prepare areas of the community pre-storm (versus currently loading and abandoning the current station), during the storm in the new hardened facility, personnel can evaluate and monitor the immediate impacts to the area and will be able to maintain communications with needed community partners, and post-storm personnel will be able to rapidly respond and render aid, as all of the equipment and resources needed will be with them, versus being limited to the resources taken to the shelter when the station is abandoned.

The new facility will better enable personnel to support local, regional and state Fire/Rescue needs, during/after a large scale incident, as may be requested through the Florida Fire Chiefs, State Emergency Response Plan, neighboring jurisdictions or local Emergency Management Director. This project allows our personnel and apparatus to “shelter in place” and be able to quickly respond to the needed priorities within the impacted areas, whether it be local, regional or State wide. We

also offer assistance and work together with our local Sheriff's Office and EMS, Emergency Management and other Community providers at large events (festivals, fairs, protests, testing sites, etc.) as together our presence provides a sense of safety for those in attendance.

The Community of Immokalee is a Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern (RACEC) which is now known as a Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO). The proposed project will improve aesthetics to create a unified community character and improve the visibility of and economic viability of existing and future businesses within the industrial area in which the project site is located and help to promote the infrastructure improvements throughout the community. The Immokalee community is heavily agricultural and one of the major tomato providers in the United States. The federally recognized Seminole Tribe of Florida has one of six reservations located here as well. A primarily rural/agricultural community, with a large migrant population, this proposed station will provide support for infrastructure related to the development of affordable housing as this facility is necessary in order to provide effective response capabilities and protection to the existing affordable housing and any future affordable housing.

3.1.A – Other Public Infrastructure Project Funding Sources

On the City/County line is listed \$500,000 – this is actually DISTRICT funding, as we are neither a City/County, but a State Independent Special Fire Control District.

In regards to the OTHER (grants, etc) we have received the following:

- \$263,108 HUD/CDBG Collier County – Land Acquisition
- \$295,000 HUD/CDBG Collier County – Design and Engineering
- \$1,000,000 HUD/CDBG Collier County – Construction
- \$900,000 State Legislative Appropriations – Construction

3.C Budget Narrative

This vision for this project began in 2018. The Board and Fire Chief secured funding through the Collier County CDBG grant program to purchase the property, which was completed in March of 2019. In securing the property through the CDBG program, the District is bound by grant provisions to have an operational fire station constructed within 5 years from the time of the land purchase – March 2024. The District was then awarded a second CDBG grant through Collier County to complete the Design and Engineering of the planned new facility. This phase of the project was completed in December 2020. In the meantime, the District worked to secure funding for construction. The District petitioned the State Legislature for funding support and requested \$5,000,000 (higher than what was anticipated to be needed, but knew that amount would be reduced) in State Allocation funding – however the amount allocated for the project by the State Legislators was \$900,000. A third award of CDBG funding provided by CDBG through Collier County, provided for \$1,000,000 for construction. The District has secured \$1,900,000 in funding through other resources and budgeted to utilize general funds and impact fee funds too absorb the remainder of the projects estimated costs of \$2,500,000. The project went to bid in

February/March of 2021 and the bids came in much higher than anticipated – ranging from \$4,716,802 to \$5,311,800. The Board chose to commit to the project knowing that the District would need to find a way to secure an additional \$2.5 million dollars in order to complete the project - the lowest bid of \$4,716,802 was accepted by the Board and a General Contractor was engaged in May of 2021. Presently the District is working with the Contractor and Design team to secure the necessary building permits with an anticipated construction start date in late September 2021, with anticipated completion in October 2021.

When this project was envisioned in 2018 the estimated cost of \$2.5 million was within reach, but as the Coronavirus Pandemic began and had such a tremendous impact on construction materials, labor forces and all facets of general expenses, the District finds itself in another challenging situation as we work to secure additional funding for this project so that we can meet the required timelines for completion of the station – March 2024. Should the district fail to meet the grant requirements established by the Collier County CDBG Grant Agreement – they would have to repay over \$1.5 million dollars to the county – which obviously the District does not have (as evidenced below).

The Immokalee Fire Control District sits in the northeastern section of Collier County – a county often affiliated with coastal communities and affluence. Due to this perception, many simply do not realize the financial challenges faced not only by the Immokalee Fire Control District, but the entire community of Immokalee as a whole. In the years of the great recession - even after a successful citizen vote to increase their tax rate in 2012 – the District lost a combined 36.43% of its total revenue over a 4 year period. With legislative controls on how much property values can increase, legislative mandates for increased contributions for retirement and general inflation for utilities, and insurances, the Immokalee Fire Control District is still struggling to maintain safe and efficient operations. In 2018 the District turned to the citizens once again in an effort to adjust their revenue stream from property value based to a usage/square footage-based assessment fee – this would ensure that the global effects of an unstable economy would not diminish the funding levels as had occurred in previous years. Nearly 55% of the current residents of the Immokalee community reap the benefits of exemptions and pay little to no taxes, based on the current revenue stream. The District lost the vote, in 2018, to impose assessment fees – why would someone who is currently exempt, and struggling financially themselves, be willing to either add a new “tax” or increase their existing one? Simply put – it was a difficult question for the District to ask of its citizenry, but there really were no other viable options. The District has been utilizing “rainy day” reserve funds to balance the general fund budget to maintain daily operations over the past several years – in 2018 \$106,539 of the Districts reserve funds were used to balance the budget, in 2019 it was planned to utilize another \$438,349 of reserves – but a decision was made to sell the Districts’ only ladder truck and close one of the 3 stations, to reduce the impact of reserves used to \$131,627, in order to balance the budget. In the current fiscal year, the District is expending \$181,627 of the reserves, and as the 21-22 FY budget is being prepared it is anticipated the District will utilize \$147,634 of reserves to balance the operating budget. This type of financial hardship leaves very little funding for emergency or unanticipated expenses, and makes setting monies aside for future capital purchases even more challenging. The District is still has one of 3 stations closed due to financial challenges, that have no allowed the District to maintain the staffing needed to

operate 3 stations. The District continues to seek alternative revenue sources and plans to reach out to the citizens of the community in another attempt to secure a more stable based funding platform, rather than one that relies on the very flexible market value of properties.