GRANT WRITING

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Stimulated by local budgetary constraints, fire service organizations in the United States are searching for new innovative ways generate funds needed to supplement their limited budgets. Funding influences the amount of resources available and the scope of prevention activities, which has an overall influence on public safety. Local fire service organizations are seeking funding from a variety of sources including local government, state government, federal government, and the private sector. [Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), 1999]

Budget reductions, downsizing, rightsizing, and doing more with less is an organizational trend that will be with the fire service well into the future. This trend have a direct impact on the fire service delivery and the ability to proactively address fire and life safety. Grant proposal writing is one effective tool to combat this trend. Through grants and interagency agreements progressive and creative fire service organizations can continue to offer the same programs and level of service while maintaining control over their tight budgets. (Slaughter, 2001)

The problem is that the Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service Department (BFRSD) does not have a grant writing program in place to effectively research and apply for grant funding designated for the fire service. The purpose of this research project is to identify effective grant writing procedures and guidelines that may be used to establish a grant writing program. The action research method was used to answer the following questions:

1. What government and private grants are available?
2. What is the process for applying for government and private grants?
3. What is the actual budgetary impact of grant funding to departments?
4. What type programs and procedures are utilized by other departments when

There are many sources of grant funding available to the fire service and other agencies. These sources include foundations, corporations, federal and state governments. Grants
are categorized by the type of projects or programs that are being funded by the granting agency. Many reference directories are available to identify major foundation, corporation and government grant programs.

FEMA (1999) suggested that a successful grant proposal is one that is thoroughly planned, well prepared and concisely organized. There are many formats used for writing grants proposals. Each agency will have specific guidelines and they should be investigated to determine what needs to be included in the proposal package.

The research showed that the actual budgetary impact of grants varied and was dependent on the size, type and revenue structure of that particular department. The department personnel responsible for grant writing varied with the organization and many organizations have no official guidelines, procedures, or policies implemented to govern their grant process.

The researcher recommends that the Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service Department establish a Grant Section consisting of one or more grant writers. The Grant Section should be responsible for:

1. Researching and investigating all areas of potential grant funding, utilizing the various reference sources available.
2. Identifying and reviewing reference books on grant writing.
3. Identifying and utilizing organizations that offer training and reference materials on grants and proposal writing.
4. Gathering and evaluate relevant data pertaining to the actual budgetary impact of grant funding and the feasibility of pursuing a particular grant source.
5. Develop departmental guidelines to assist in managing the grant process.
6. Establish an effective network with other fire and non-fire service organizations whereby important information, assistance and expertise may be obtained and shared.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ..................................................................................................................2

TABLE OF CONTENTS ..........................................................................................4

INTRODUCTION ..........................................................................................................5

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE .........................................................................6

LITERATURE REVIEW ...............................................................................................8

PROCEDURES ...........................................................................................................30

RESULTS ..................................................................................................................33

DISCUSSION .............................................................................................................40

RECOMMENDATIONS ...............................................................................................44

REFERENCES .............................................................................................................46

APPENDIX A (Alternative Funding Survey) .................................................................48
INTRODUCTION

Stimulated by local budgetary constraints, fire service organizations in the United States are searching for and using a wide variety of fundraising methods beyond the traditional methods. Local and state constraint play a major role in shaping a fire department’s funding policy and determining its budget. Funding influences the amount of resources available and the scope of prevention activities, which has an overall influence on public safety. Local fire service organizations are seeking funding from a variety of sources including local government, state government, federal government, and the private sector. (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], 1999)

Budget reductions, downsizing, rightsizing, and doing more with less is an organizational trend that will be with the fire service well into the future. This trend has a direct impact on fire service delivery and the ability to proactively address fire and life safety. Grant proposal writing is one effective tool to combat this trend. Through grants and interagency agreements, progressive and creative fire service organizations can continue to offer the same programs and level of service while maintaining control over their tight budgets. (Slaughter, 2001)

The fire service is in an enviable marketing position. This is due to the fact that the services provided by the fire service in time of emergencies are both necessary and well regarded by the public. Proposal writing for grants and interagency contracts is, in essence, a well planned marketing strategy. Fire service organizations cannot ignore the value of marketing once they realize that only one in ten, of the million grant proposals submitted each year, is funded. (Slaughter, 2001)

Funding does not exist to support a wide variety of fire related needs and interests, however, fire departments need to become aware and interested in other professions and disciplines if they are to achieve success in seeking and applying for grants. If fire service
organizations are to be effective in obtaining grant funding, they must keep their finger on the pulse of the funding environment and develop a strategy for presenting ideas through effective grant proposal writing. (Slaughter, 2001)

Government grants are awarded on a competitive bases to fire service organizations who demonstrate the need for programs or projects that provide essential community services. Priority is given to departments who are located in rural communities, low population communities of 5,000 or less, and projects that serve low income communities. (FEMA, 1999)

Outside of revenues from emergency medical transport and contributions from local civic and neighborhood organizations, the Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service Department (BFRSD) does not have any other alternative funding sources to generate needed revenue. The problem is that the BFRSD does not have a grant writing program in place to effectively research and apply for grant funding designated for the fire service. The purpose of this research project is to identify effective grant writing procedures and guidelines that may be used to establish a grant writing program within the BFRSD. The action research method was used to answer the following questions:

1. What government and private grants are available?
2. What is the process for applying for government and private grants?
3. What is the actual budgetary impact of grant funding to departments?
4. What type programs and procedures are utilized by other departments when processing grant requests?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The City of Birmingham is the largest city in the State of Alabama and the 58th largest city in the United States. It covers 163 square miles, has a population of approximately 265,000, and contains a wide variety of residential, industrial, commercial, and undeveloped areas within the
city boundaries. The health service industry has come to the forefront as the leading occupation
category for the city. This has been an economic life saver since the decline of the steel industry.

Since it’s inception on March 23, 1873, the Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service
Department (BFRSD) has evolved just like other fire departments across the country. New
technology, new management concepts, and changing community expectations represent just a
few of the factors that illustrate the dynamic nature of the fire service. The key to managing the
ever changing fire service arena is by taking a proactive and aggressive approach to organizational
planning to help chart a course for future activities leading well into the twenty-first century.
(Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service Department [BFRSD], 2000)

The BFRSD (2000) revealed that one of the biggest challenges facing fire service
administrators in recent years has been how to meet increasing demands for service and maintain
the same level of service with no corresponding increase in operating capital. Internal and external
environmental factor are also significant because of their impact on funding and fire department
operations. Some of these factors are:

1. A population shift and corresponding change in the tax base
2. The economic status of federal and state impacts local economy
3. Other departments compete for city dollars
4. The cost of running a department is changing
5. Costly legal actions negatively impacts the city budget

In a thirteen year period between fiscal years 1985 through 1998, the city’s general
revenues increased 96.6 percent. Historically, the City has seen a steady growth in revenues with
expenditures running parallel. The average annual growth rate for revenues was 9.66%. However,
the revenues estimates for fiscal year 1999 showed a $7.3 million decrease in expected revenue.
This indicate that we must find ways to do more with less. (BFRSD, 2000)
The Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service Department began charging for emergency medical advanced life support transport in 1993. Outside of contributions from local civic and neighborhood organizations, the department does not have any other alternative funding sources to generate needed revenue.

In the age of decreasing taxed based revenues, dwindling resources, increased costs, diversity of service delivery, downsizing, and increased customer demand, the BFRSD must be progressive and proactive in its effort to establish itself as a vital revenue generating entity within the city infrastructure. This is particularly important if the BFRSD expects to continue its present and future staffing levels.

This research directly relates to the Financial Management course of the Executive Fire Officer Program because it involved research and evaluation of a proactive approach to supplementing fire departments’ stringent budgets. Fiscal issues addressed included planning, developing, presenting, funding and implementing government budgeted programs and projects.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Research Question 1-What government and private grants are available?**

Grant support in the United States has increased dramatically, both in size and complexity, in the last half century. Today, the support of human services through grants, awards, and gifts is multi billion dollar enterprise. (Bowker, 1996)

When considering a grant as an alternative funding revenue source, the first step is to identify the appropriate agency to submit an application. Making the match of between a project and a grant source is often the deciding factor in the success or failure of the grant application. There are many sources of grants available to the fire service and other agencies.(Risdon, 1991)

**Foundations and Corporations**

As federal government tightens the noose on funding allocation, more grant seekers are
turning to foundations and corporations for funding. With the growing competition for private dollars, grant applicants must do a better job than ever targeting funding sources. (Government Information Services [GIS], 1993)

Bowker (1996) revealed that there certain aspects that are common to all foundation, however they can be categorized into five types:

1. National Foundations are not limited to any geographic area in their grant funding support and are large enough to fund projects of almost any size, including grants of a million dollars or more.

2. Special Interest Foundations devote their entire grant support effort to a particular field of interest. They also function without geographic boundaries.

3. Corporate Foundations carry the name of major corporations, however they are independent of the corporation that founded them. Yet they are often more receptive to proposals that are in line with their corporate image.

4. Family Foundations normally limit their grants to the city or locality in which the family resides and are typically less than $5,000.

5. Community Foundations are not really foundations but rather public charities and they have minimum giving requirements.

According to Bowker (1996), the practice of corporations making grants is now largely accepted. Because corporate gifts and grants are now allowed as charitable deductions, corporations contributions to charities have increased. An important consideration when applying corporate grants is to introduce a proposal that benefits the company either directly or indirectly through its employees. Many corporations are also willing to provide in-kind services such as volunteer services and expert assistance.

Grant seekers should use directories to identify major funders and their giving patterns.
The *Foundation Directory*, published by the Foundation Center annually, lists and describes approximately 7,000 of the nation’s largest foundations. Its includes a variety of useful information on past funding history. The *Foundation Grants Index*, also published by the Foundation Center, lists grants of more than $5,000 given to 450 major foundations. This directory is useful mainly in identifying potential funders, however, more information will be needed to determine the feasibility of approaching that source. Many foundations have published funding guideline that describe the types of programs the funder support and how to apply. These directories are available for free public use at any of the Foundation Center’s network of 176 cooperating libraries. The closest library may be located by calling tool-free: 1-800-424-9836. (GIS, 1993)

**Government Grants**

Bowker (1997) reveals that government funding is complex and confusing with special terms and language that make it seem more confusing than it really is. The federal government makes grant in many forms including:

1. **Block Grants:**
   
   Often comes to States in a ‘block’ and the states may spend the money as it deems appropriate as long as it falls within the authorized guidelines.

2. **Capitation Grants:**
   
   These grants are awarded based on the number of people served rather than the program tasks. They are often used for training grants.

3. **Construction Grants:**
   
   Many construction grants have been severely cut in the past few years. Most grants will not provide funds for capital projects, however, the grantee may rent and lease the appropriate facility.
4. Demonstration Grant:
These grants are made to agencies in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of a certain procedure. They are often the second step of research grant.

5. Formula Grants:
These grants are generally based on the population, income, taxation, and special needs of a particular area.

6. Matching Grants:
Agency who is receiving the grant guarantees to provide a certain portion of the total grant funds from sources other than the government. Matching may be a “hard” match (actual dollars), or “soft” match (referring to the use of services, goods or equipment in lieu of cash dollars).

7. Project Grants:
Grants are determined solely on the merit of the project proposed by the requesting agency.

8. Research Grants:
These are provided to test hypotheses, interpret new information, or revise accepted theories without requiring some benefit to be passed on.

9. Staffing Grants:
These grants provide support of salaries of professional and technical staff members.

10. Training Grants:
These grants are awarded to support the cost of training existing staff, students, or potential staff in a particular field such as nurses, paramedical and legal aid.

The Annual Register of Grant Support (30th edition) lists over 3,212 entries that represent billions of dollars in funding to those seeking grants. In addition to this reference source, there are
other places grant seekers can go to obtain information about the 51 agencies and over 1350 programs that award federal dollars in grants (Bowker, 1997).

The *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* (CFDA) is one of the most important reference sources for identifying federal grant programs (Bowker, 1997). The catalog is compiled annually by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and published by the Government Printing Office (GPO). The catalog provides information on assistance programs, applicant eligibility, functional category, name and subject, program description, objective, type of assistance and eligibility requirement for that particular assistance, program and application deadlines, and other information in the appendices [Grants Management Advisory Service (GMAS), n.d.].

The CFDA is available for subscription at a cost of $72 from the United States GPO, Superintendent of Documents, Washington, DC 20402; (202) 521-1806 or it may be referenced on the Internet at http://www.cfda.gov. (GMAS, n.d.)

The *Federal Register* provides the rules, regulations, and guidelines that direct the 1,350 federal programs. (Bowker, 1997) Most grant information is not required to be listed, however, announcement of funding availability and proposed, and final grant administration regulations are included. The *Federal Registry* is available by subscription from the GPO, Superintendent of Documents, Washington, DC 20402; (202) 521-1806 or it may be referenced on the Internet at http://www.access.gpo.gov. (GMAS, n.d.)

The GMAS (n.d.) revealed that federal and private organizations often provide information services and offer training in grants management to grant seekers. The cost of these services and training vary and some discount may be available. Some of these organizations are:

1. The *Grantsmanship Center* offer training and reference materials on federal, corporate and foundation grants including workshop the instruct on using federal
sources to seek and apply for grants, preparing grant proposals and other areas in the
grant application process. The center’s address is P.O. Box 17220, Los Angeles, CA
90017; (213) 482-9860 or toll free (800) 421-9512.

2. The Support Centers of America (SCA) provide assistance and training in grant
seeking and administration for non-profit organization. The national office address
is 70 10th St., Suite 201, San Francisco, CA 94103-1302; (415) 552-7584.

3. The Foundation Center offers resources and workshops to non-profit organizations.
Normally emphasizing foundation and corporate grants, information on proposal
writing for federal grants may also be listed.

Perrett (1997) cited several programs that provide assistance to rural and local fire service
organization.

1. Volunteer Fire Department Grants-Rural Community Fire Protection (RCFP)

   Program:
   Administered by the state forestry, this program provides cost sharing grants to
   volunteer fire departments.

2. Community Facilities Program:
   This program provides direct and guaranteed loans to rural communities up to 50,000
   in population. Funds may be used to improve facilities such as fire stations, acquire
   land, pay necessary professional fees and purchase equipment such as fire apparatus.

3. Purchasing General Services Administration (GSA) equipment using Federal
   Standard Requisitioning and Issues Procedure (FEDSTRIP):
   FEDSTRIP allows state sponsored fire departments to purchase equipment and
   supplies at reduced prices through GSA.

4. Federal Express Personal Property (FEPP):
The Forestry Service loans excess federal equipment by agreement to state foresters who can sub-loan it to local fire departments. These fire departments must have a cooperative agreement with the state forester to participate in the FEPP program.

5. *Surplus Personal Property Donation Program:*

This program enable non-federal organizations such as fire departments to obtain property the Federal Government no longer needs such as office machine, tools, furniture, appliances, clothing, vehicles electronic equipment, and communication equipment.

The *Technical Opportunity Program Grants* (TOP) has been making matching grants since 1994 to non-profit agencies; state, local, and tribal governments; and schools, colleges and universities. The most current TOP grant filing deadline was March 16, 2000. However this grant will return once again next year. Under the TPO grant, projects in the public safety arena are geared toward facilitating information exchange, providing information in a timely manner to first responders, assisting public safety agencies provide community outreach services. (Alabama Fire Chiefs Association [AFCA], 2001)

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funded a cost shared project with the State of Georgia to build a firefighting and hazardous materials facility. This project, funded under FEMA’s Hazardous Mitigation Grant Program, was designed to assist states and communities prevent or mitigate a recurring major disaster. (FEMA, 2001)

After years of struggling for adequate government funding, the fire and rescue service finally has a program to directly provide financial aid to the nation’s fire service. The $100 million appropriation entitled *Assistance to Firefighters* or the *Fire Act Grant*, has a deadline of September 30, 2001 to be distributed. (Bruno, 2001)
Bowker and Risdon influenced this research by revealing that grant support in the United States has increased dramatically, both in size and complexity, in the last half century. In addition, there are many sources of grants available to the fire service and other agencies.

The GIS (1993) revealed that as the federal government tightens the noose on funding allocation, more grant seekers are turning to foundations and corporations for funding.

According to Bowker (1996), an important consideration when applying for corporate grants is to introduce a proposal that benefits the company either directly or indirectly through its employees. Many corporations are also willing to provide in-kind services such as volunteer services and expert assistance.

Bowker and the GIS revealed that grant seekers should use directories to identify major funders and their giving patterns. The *Foundation Directory*, the *Foundation Grants Index*, the *Annual Register of Grant Support* (30th edition) and the *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* (CFDA) are important reference sources for identifying foundation and federal grant programs.

Bowker (1997) revealed the federal government makes grant in many forms including but not limited to: Block Grants, Construction Grants, Demonstration Grant, Matching Grants, Project Grants, Research Grants, and Training Grants.

The GMAS (n.d.) revealed that federal and private organizations often provide information services and offer training in grants management to grant seekers. The cost of these services and training vary and some discount may be available.

The GMAS, FEMA and Bruno influenced this research by demonstrating that some government grants for the fire service have been successfully obtained in the past, and others are currently available.
Research Question 2 - What is the process for applying for government and private grants?

According to GMAS (n.d.) the basic framework for obtaining grants may be divided into three major phases-planning, application and review, and implementation. The planning phase involves those activities that occur before the grant proposal submittal. These include a needs assessment, policy and program planning, identification of goals and objectives, generating support for the project, source identification, proposal development and budgeting. The application phase involves submitting and presenting the grant proposal. This phase also includes the granting agency’s evaluation and decision on the submitted grant proposal. The implementation phase involves organizing for receipt of the grant funds, managing the administrative aspects of the project, and monitoring and evaluating the project results.

FEMA (1999) suggested that a successful grant proposal is one that is thoroughly planned, well prepared and concisely organized. Potential grant applicants should remember that the format, procedures, requirements, and forms vary with each agency and type of organization making grant awards.

Slaughter (2001) stated that proposal writing for grants and interagency contracts is like a well planned marketing strategy. A marketing plan includes the following activities:

1. Needs assessment:

   A world of opportunities exist for fire service projects and programs and ideas can may be derived from a variety of sources. The fire service proposal writer must look beyond fire related resources for project and program ideas. The needs of the community served should be accessed as well.

2. Data collection:

   The proposal writer needs to collect data that is pertinent and will support the grant proposal. A surprising amount of data is available with little research.
3. Identifying funding sources:

Once the grant seeker has identified an idea for a program, the next step is to identify potential funding sources. Special reference sources may be found at public libraries. The Internet is an excellent tool for identifying public and private funding sources.

4. Seek opinion leaders:

After the grant seeker has targeted a potential funding source, developing contact with someone within the organization is next.

5. Take the customer perspective:

It is most advantageous to target organizations as your customer and the proposal as your product.

According to Slaughter (2001) there are two basic approaches to preparing a proposal. The first approach is to develop your project idea and then search for a potential funding source. This type of proposal is referred to an unsolicited proposal. The second approach is to respond to a request for proposal (RFP), request for qualifications (RFQ), or a request for application (RFA). With this approach the project or program is developed to meet the need of the funding source as well as the objectives of the grant seeker’s organization.

Bowker (1997) explained that proposals written for foundations and those written for government grants usually differ in their final form. While foundations often require a brief letter as an initial approach, government sources almost always require completion of a number of forms in addition to a detailed proposal narrative.

Initial proposal development

According to FEMA (1999), when developing proposal ideas, it is very important for the grant seeker to check their locality or state to ensure that there has not been a similar proposed project and if the proposed project is worthwhile. Throughout the proposal process, write down
ideas and keep them in a file for review. Slaughter (2001) suggests that before picking up a pen to write the proposal, visualize the project or program using free flow of ideas and loosely related thoughts about the subject. Everything relevant to the project or program should be written down on a blank piece of paper.

Slaughter (2001) emphasized that the proposal should always be a positive statement—avoid using negative terms, rhetorical, provocative or inflammatory language.

Slaughter (2001) indicated that some funding agencies require strict adherence to their directions and format. Some agencies are not as rigid and will accept almost anything, however, there are some recognized rules to format most proposals. The following list is a quick reference:

1. Follow the agency directions explicitly
2. For proposals over 5 pages, add a table of contents
3. Use white paper
4. Use headers and sub-headers to help organize the proposal
5. Single space unless told otherwise
6. Use bulleted lists to make the proposal more inviting to read
7. Keep the page design simple
8. Use charts and graphs tastefully and sparingly
9. Number the pages
10. Attach supporting documenting as an appendix
11. Staple or paperclip the proposal together for future duplication

A letter of intent is sometimes required prior to submittal of the actual grant application. This letter of intent includes an executive summary and mini-proposal to determine if the funding source is interested in the project. (Slaughter, 2001)

The Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424), developed by the OMB, is used in the
pre-application and application for federal grants funds. It also can serve as a notice of intent to apply for federal funds that may be circulated for state review. After the completed pre-application is submitted, the federal grantor agency notifies the applicant of the results of the review indicating whether a full application will be invited. (GMAS, n.d.)

At some point during the proposal writing, the working draft should be reviewed by a third party for constructive criticism. Proposals should be typed, collated, neat, organized and packaged properly. A cover letter should always accompany a proposal. Make sure there is enough time for the proposal to reach its destination. (FEMA, 1999)

**Writing the grant proposal**

There are many formats used for writing grant proposals. Each agency will have specific guidelines and they should be investigated to determine what needs to be included in the proposal package. (FEMA, 1999)

Slaughter (2001) stated that there several components that make up the proposal anatomy.

1. **Cover letter:**
   The cover letter lets the funding agency know who you are and briefly describes the scope of your request. It lets the reader know what you are sending and why, a brief description of the funding request, and why the applicant chose their organization for funding.

2. **Title page:**
   The title page should be void of the use of a lot of graphics, designs and borders. The exception is the applicant’s organizational logo or design.

3. **Table of contents:**
   The purpose of the table of contents is to provide a quick reference and also provide the reader with the organization of your request. Table of contents for small
proposals of five or less is not necessary.

4. Executive summary:

Other titles for this section include abstract or summary. The executive summary should briefly describe who the applicant is, what is being requested, and how the proposal is responsive to the needs, interest, and requirements of the funding agency.

5. Introduction:

The introduction section establishes the writing style, tone, and theme of the proposal. This is where the applicant briefly describes the organization and mission, establishing its credibility from the beginning.

6. Problem statement:

The problem statement may also be called needs assessment or background history. The nature, extent, scope, or need for the proposed project or program is outlined in this section. Supportive data and illustrative materials that effectively establish the basis for your proposal are used in this section.

7. Program description:

This section may also be titled activities, program, implementation plan, action plan, approach or operation. The title is dependent upon the type of program or project being proposed. This section is the longest part of the proposal, detailing all actions and activities required to complete the project including what is going to be done, how it is going to be accomplished, and who is responsible for the project or program.

8. Timetable:

Also titled the implementation schedule. This section is basically a graphic depiction of the activities described in the program description with time frames and milestones.
21

for progress checks on the project or program.

9. Evaluation:

This section reveals how the project or program is going to be measured. It is best to define and clarify the evaluation process and expectations with the funding source.

10. Organization statement:

In this section the applicant wants to let the funding source know that the requesting organization has the capability to carry out the proposal. The applicant should point out the organization’s achievements and experience, and that the organization has the personnel, equipment, and support of management.

11. Budget:

This section is where the applicant details the estimated expenses necessary to complete the proposed project or program. Also a cost benefit analysis is added as a subsection in the budget explaining how the cost of solving the problem is less expensive than not addressing it. It is suggested that a clause be placed in the proposal that will allow funds to be moved from one line item to another without increasing total costs of the proposal. In addition, a another clause should be included that allows for a no cost time extension of one to three months in case the project does not go according to plan.

12. Future of Project:

This may also be a subsection of the project description. This lets the funding source know that the money they provide will have a viable impact.

Slaughter, Bowker and FEMA influenced this research by explaining that a successful grant proposal is one that is thoroughly planned, well prepared and concisely organized; that proposal writing for grants and interagency contracts is like a well planned marketing strategy; and
that proposals written for foundations and those written for government grants usually differ in their final form.

According to FEMA (1999), when developing proposal ideas, it is very important for the grant seeker to check their locality or state to ensure that there has not been a similar proposed project and if the proposed project is worthwhile.

FEMA and Slaughter revealed that there several components that make up the proposal anatomy. These components include the cover letter, title page, table of contents, executive summary, introduction, problem statement, program description, timetable, evaluation, organization statement, budget, and future of project. In addition, there are many formats used for writing grant proposals. Each agency will have specific guidelines and they should be investigated to determine what needs to be included in the proposal package.

**Research Question 3- What is the actual budgetary impact of grant funding to departments?**

**Alternative Funding Survey**

A survey was compiled and distributed to the June, 2000, Executive Fire Officer Program - Executive Development students and fire departments throughout the state of Alabama. A total of one hundred surveys were distributed with fifty-six organizations completing and returning the survey instrument. The survey included seven items and is noted in the Appendix (Alternative Funding Survey). The survey was design to evaluate the use, types, and impact of alternative funding methods utilized by departments across the state of Alabama and the country. Specific information pertaining to the use and impact of government grants was requested. The information compiled provided a wide variety of funding methods utilized by fire departments across the country. The type of funding method used by departments and the actual impact on their budget varied greatly dependent upon the organizations’ type, size and revenue structure.
Telephone Interviews

Telephone interviews were conducted with key personnel in approximately twenty fire organizations across the United States. These fire departments represented a cross section of fully paid organizations with similar size populations served as the BFRSD. The interview questions were designed to evaluate the use and impact of grants, determine the department personnel is responsible for grant writing, and obtain data pertinent to any official written guidelines, procedures, or policies used by departments in their grant process. In addition, several police departments, including the Birmingham Police Department, were contacted for resource information and official written guidelines, procedures, or policies used in their grant process.

Information compiled from the survey instrument provided a wide variety of funding methods utilized by fire departments across the country. The type of funding method used by departments and the actual impact on their budget varied greatly dependent upon the organizations’ type, size and revenue structure.

Telephone interviews were conducted with key personnel in approximately twenty fire organizations across the United States and were designed to evaluate the use and impact of grants, determine the department personnel is responsible for grant writing, and obtain data pertinent to any official written guidelines, procedures, or policies used by departments in the grant process.

Research Question 4- What type programs and procedures are utilized by other departments when processing grant requests?

Telephone Interviews

Telephone interviews were conducted with key personnel in approximately twenty fire organizations across the United States. These fire departments represented a cross section of organizations with similar size populations served as the BFRSD. The interview questions were designed to evaluate the use and impact of grants, determine which department personnel is
responsible for grant writing, and obtain data pertinent to any official written guidelines, procedures, or policies used by departments in the grant process. In addition, several police departments, including the Birmingham Police Department, were contacted for resource information and official written guidelines, procedures, or policies used in their grant process.

Spencer (1999) revealed that the administration of grants is complex and the requirements vary. To ensure that grants processing comply with federal and state requirements, all grant should be managed in a centralized manner. The following are expected changes to the City of Huntsville’s grant procedures:

1. All grant applications must be reviewed by the Finance Department (FD) prior to submission. The FD will provide information about the grant to the mayor.
2. The FD must review all grant awards prior to submission to the Mayor and Council.
3. The FD must review all grant financial reports prior to submission.
4. The FD will advise the departments of grant related deadlines and potential ramifications.
5. Grant applications and reports require Mayor and Council approval prior to execution.

The Birmingham Police Department (BPD [n.d.]) developed a comprehensive procedure that outlines the guidelines for managing their grant process.

I. PURPOSE:

   A. To develop alternative sources of funding to supplement city funding
   B. To ensure that such funds are used to foster the administration and developmental goals of the Department and approved public safety interests
   C. To stipulate requirements concerning the generation of grants for delivery of services, including supplementary services undertaken pursuant to the
provision of a grant.

II. DEFINITIONS:

A. Administration of Grants - Refers to processes associated with the allocation and consumption of grant funds in order to ensure that such resources are utilized in conformance with the terms and conditions set forth in any written agreement executed by the City and the grantor.

B. Grants - Refers to supplementary monetary awards which are allocated to the Department from other than city funds, in furtherance of one or more of the goals/objectives established by the Department.

III. MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

A. GRANTS MANAGER

1. Will forward a copy of the proposed grant to the appropriate Division Head Commander(s) for their review of the program requirements and determination as to whether these program requirements can be met.

2. Notify the City Finance Department of any matching fund requirements in order that they may determine whether matching funds are available.

3. Schedule meeting with the Chief of the Department and appropriate staff to discuss the grant and to obtain approval prior to making application.

4. Obtain the name of project manager from affected Division Head, to assist in the application process.

5. Provide to appropriate personnel, authorized to incur expenditures, copies of all program guidelines and the proper budget line items to which allowable grant expenditures should be charged.
6. Will publish a monthly *Grants Financial Activity Log* that includes the following information:

a. Title of grant
b. Grant period (i.e. start and ending dates)
c. Program summary
d. Award amount
e. Expenditures to date
f. Encumbrances
g. Remaining balance
h. Financial report due date
i. Program report due date

7. Coordinate with city finance personnel to ensure that each financial report reconciles to the City’s financial statements.

8. Review each quarterly financial grant report approved and signed by the principal accountant whose department is responsible for completing and filing the report.

9. Notify appropriate personnel of changes in grant guidelines/regulations or internal procedures.

10. Review and approve all grant purchase requests prior to obligation of grant funds.

11. Forward all approved grant purchase requests to the Finance Officer.

**B. PROGRAM MANAGER**

1. Is responsible for administering all program activities, in order to ensure that all program goals and objectives are met
2. Coordinate with the personnel department to hire all personnel required under the grant

3. Must follow the approved budget that stipulates allowable expenditures; and maintain a record of all program expenditures

4. Submit all approved grant purchase requests to the Grants Manager for approval

5. Must submit all quarterly progress reports and/or program final report to the Grants Manager in a timely manner

6. Must verify the accuracy of the Grant Financial Activity Log and report any and all discrepancies to the Grants Manager

7. Will notify the grants Manager, if an extension of the program is required

C. FINANCE OFFICER

1. Will verify that the Project Manager and Grants Manager have approved each grant purchase request

2. Verify that all codes and grant numbers are correct

3. Forward the grant purchase request to the appropriate party for issuance of a purchase order

4. Approve/release purchase order request for payment

D. PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

1. Will prepare the required PCIF’s for personnel hired under the grant

Telephone interviews were conducted with key personnel in approximately twenty fire organizations across the United States and were designed to evaluate the use and impact of grants, determine the department personnel responsible for grant writing, and obtain data pertinent to any official written guidelines, procedures, or policies used by departments in the grant process.
Spencer (1999) revealed that to ensure grants processing comply with federal and state requirements, all grants should be managed in a centralized manner. To accomplish this, the City of Huntsville’s grant procedures require that the Finance Department (FD) review all grant applications, all grant awards, all grant financial reports, and will advise the departments of grant related deadlines.

The BPD (n.d.) outlined the guidelines for managing their grant process. The procedure guidelines include the management and administration of the grant, the duties and responsibilities of the Grants Manager, Program Manager, Finance Officer and the Personnel Department.

**Literature Summary**

Grant support in the United States has increased dramatically, both in size and complexity, in the last half century. Today, the support of human services through grants and awards, and gifts is multi billion dollar enterprise. (Bowker, 1996)

There are many sources of grants available to the fire service and other agencies. (Risdon, 1991)

As federal government tightens the noose on funding allocation, more grant seekers are turning to foundations and corporations for funding. (GIS, 1993)

According to Bowker (1996), an important consideration when applying for corporate grants is to introduce a proposal that benefits the company either directly or indirectly through its employees. Many corporations are also willing to provide in-kind services such as volunteer services and expert assistance.

Grant seekers should use directories to identify major funders and their giving patterns. According to Bowker and the GIS, the *Foundation Directory*, the *Foundation Grants Index*, the *Annual Register of Grant Support* (30th edition), and the *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* (CFDA) are important reference sources for identifying foundation and federal grant programs.
Bowker (1997) revealed the federal government makes grant in many forms including but not limited to: Block Grants, Construction Grants, Demonstration Grant, Matching Grants, Project Grants, Research Grants, and Training Grants.

The GMAS (n.d.) revealed that federal and private organizations often provide information services and offer training in grants management to grant seekers. The cost of these services and training vary and some discount may be available.

The GMAS, FEMA and Bruno demonstrated that some government grants for the fire service have been successfully obtained in the past, and others are currently available.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA [1999]) suggested that a successful grant proposal is one that is thoroughly planned, well prepared and concisely organized.

Slaughter (2001) stated that proposal writing for grants and interagency contracts is like a well planned marketing strategy.

Bowker (1997) explained that proposal written for foundations and those written for government grants usually differ in their final form.

According to FEMA (1999), when developing proposal ideas, it is very important for the grant seeker to check their locality or state to ensure that there has not been a similar proposed project and if the proposed project is worthwhile.

FEMA, (1999) and Slaughter (2001) revealed that there several components that make up the proposal anatomy. These components include the cover letter, title page, table of contents, executive summary, introduction, problem statement, program description, timetable, evaluation, organization statement, budget, and future of project.

There are many formats used for writing grant proposals. Each agency will have specific guidelines and they should be investigated to determine what needs to be included in the proposal package. (FEMA, 1999)
A survey was compiled and distributed to the June, 2000, Executive Fire Officer Program - Executive Development students and fire departments throughout the state of Alabama. The information compiled provided a wide variety of funding methods utilized by fire departments across the country. The type of funding method used by departments and the actual impact on their budget varied greatly dependent upon the organizations’ type, size and revenue structure.

Telephone interviews were conducted with key personnel in approximately twenty fire organizations across the United States and were designed to evaluate the use and impact of grants, determine the department personnel responsible for grant writing, and obtain data pertinent to any official written guidelines, procedures, or policies used by departments in their grant process.

Spencer (1999) revealed that to ensure grants processing comply with federal and state requirements, all grant should be managed in a centralized manner. To accomplish this, the City of Huntsville’s grant procedures require that Finance Department (FD) review all grant applications prior to submission. all grant awards, all grant financial reports, and will advise the departments of grant related deadlines.

The BPD (n.d.) outlines the guidelines for managing their grant process. The procedure guidelines include the management and administration of the grant, the duties and responsibilities of the Grants Manager, Program Manager, Finance Officer and the Personnel Department.

**PROCEDURES**

The researcher used a three-step methodology to collect information to answer the research questions. The desired outcome of this research effort was to identify effective grant writing procedures and guidelines that may be used to establish a grant writing program within the BFRSD.

The first method consisted of a historical research designed to answer the following questions:
1. What government and private grants are available?
2. What is the process for applying for government and private grants?
3. What is the actual budgetary impact of grant funding to departments?
4. What type programs and procedures are utilized by other departments when processing grant applications?

Several resource materials that were pertinent to the research questions asked were reviewed for applicability and cited. Research information was obtained from the National Fire Academy’s Learning Resource Center, the Internet, the Birmingham Public Library, and the University of Alabama-Birmingham Library.

The second method consisted of a survey instrument as part of the research process. A survey was compiled and distributed to the June, 2000, Executive Fire Officer Program - Executive Development students and fire departments throughout the state of Alabama. A total of one hundred surveys were distributed with fifty-six organizations completing and returning the survey instrument. The survey included seven items and was design to evaluate the use, types, and impact of alternative funding methods utilized by departments across the state of Alabama and the country. Specific information pertaining to the use and impact of government grants was requested. The information compiled provided a wide variety of funding methods utilized by fire departments across the country. The type of funding method used by departments and the actual impact on their budget varied greatly dependent upon the organizations’ type, size and revenue structure.

The third method consisted of telephone interviews conducted with key personnel in approximately twenty fire organizations across the United States. These fire departments represented a cross section of organizations with similar size populations served as the BFRSD. The interview included three questions and was designed to evaluate the use and impact of grants,
determine which department personnel is responsible for grant writing, and obtain data pertinent to any official written guidelines, procedures, or policies used by departments in their grant process.

In addition, several police departments, including the Birmingham Police Department, were contacted for resource information and official written guidelines, procedures, or policies used in their grant process.

**Limitations**

The literature research was limited to the number of resources available which provided comprehensive data to answer the research questions asked. The survey instrument was limited to providing general data due to only approximately fifty percent of the surveys being returned. The departments surveyed varied in size, type and principal funding source which helped to determine the magnitude of the impact of government grant funding as an alternative funding method to that organization’s budget. In addition, many of the surveys returned contained incomplete information and some answers to specific questions were generalized.

The telephone interviews were limited to twenty fire organizations and several police organizations. Time limitations and budgetary constraints contributed to this limited number of telephone contacts. As a result, the information gather was very helpful and informative, but must be viewed cautiously in terms of quantitative analysis.

Also, the accuracy of information provided by both methods should always be questioned.

**Definitions**

1. Administration of Grants:

   Refers to processes associated with the allocation and consumption of grant funds in order to ensure that such resources are utilized in conformance with the terms and conditions set forth in any written agreement executed by the City and the grantor.
2. Grants:

Refers to supplementary monetary awards which are allocated to the Department from other than city funds, in furtherance of one or more of the goals/objectives established by the Department.

RESULTS

**Research Question 1-What government and private grants are available?**

Grant support in the United States has increased dramatically, both in size and complexity, in the last half century. Today, the support of human services through grants and awards, and gifts is multi billion dollar enterprise. (Bowker, 1996)

There are many sources of grants available to the fire service and other agencies.(Risdon, 1991)

**Foundations and Corporations**

As the federal government tightens the noose on funding allocation, more grant seekers are turning to foundations and corporations for funding. (GIS, 1993)

Bowker (1996) revealed that there are certain aspects that are common to all foundation, however they can be categorized into five types: National Foundations, Special Interest Foundations, Corporate Foundations, Family Foundations, and Community Foundations

According to Bowker (1996), an important consideration when applying corporate grants is to introduce a proposal that benefits the company either directly or indirectly through its employees. Many corporations are also willing to provide in-kind services such as volunteer services and expert assistance.

Grant seekers should use directories to identify major funders and their giving patterns. The *Foundation Directory*, published by the Foundation Center annually, lists and describes approximately 7,000 of the nation’s largest foundations. Its includes a variety of useful
information on past funding history. The *Foundation Grants Index*, also published by the Foundation Center, lists grants of more than $5,000 given by 450 major foundations. These directories are available for free public use at any of the Foundation Center’s network of 176 cooperating libraries. The closest library may be located by calling tool-free: 1-800-424-9836. (GIS, 1993)

**Government Grants**

Bowker (1997) asserted that government funding is complex and confusing with special terms and language that make it seem more confusing than it really is. The federal government makes grant in many forms including Block Grants, Capitation Grants, Construction Grants, Formula Grants, Matching Grants, Project Grants, Research Grants, and Training Grants:

The *Annual Register of Grant Support* (30th edition) list over 3,212 entries that represent billions of dollars in funding to those seeking grants. (Bowker, 1997)

The *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* (CFDA) is one of the most important reference sources for identifying federal grant programs. (Bowker, 1997)

The CFDA is available for subscription at a cost of $72 from the United States GPO, Superintendent of Documents, Washington, DC 20402; (202) 521-1806 or it may be referenced on the Internet at http:www//cfda.gov. (GMAS, n.d.)

The GMAS (n.d.) revealed that federal and private organizations often provide information services and offer training in grants management to grant seekers. The cost of these services and training vary and some discount may be available. Some of these organizations are:

1. The *Grantsmanship Center* - The center’s address is P.O. Box 17220, Los Angeles, CA 90017; (213) 482-9860 or toll free (800) 421-9512.

2. The *Support Centers of America (SCA)* - The national office address is 70 10th St., Suite 201, San Francisco, CA 94103-1302; (415) 552-7584.
3. The *Foundation Center*

  Perrett (1997) divulged that there are programs available to provide assistance to rural and local fire service organization:

1. *Volunteer Fire Department Grants-Rural Community Fire Protection (RCFP)*

2. *Community Facilities Program:*

3. *Purchasing General services Administration (GSA) equipment using Federal Standard Requisitioning and Issues Procedure (FEDSTRIP):*

4. *Federal Express Personal Property (FEPP):*

5. *Surplus Personal Property Donation Program:*

  The *Technical Opportunity Program Grants (TOP)* has been making matching grants since 1994 to non-profit agencies; state, local, and tribal governments; and schools, colleges and universities. This grant will return once again next year (AFCA, 2001).

  The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funded a cost shared project with the State of Georgia to build a firefighting and hazardous materials facility in 1998 (FEMA, 2001).

  After years of struggling for adequate government funding, the fire and rescue service finally has a program to directly provide financial aid to the nation’s fire service. The $100 million appropriation entitled *Assistance to Firefighters* or the *Fire Act Grant*, has a deadline of September 30, 2001 to be distributed. (Bruno, 2001)

**Research Question 2 - What is the process for applying for government and private grants?**

  According to GMAS (n.d.) the basic framework for obtaining grants may be divided into three major phases-planning, application and review, and implementation.

  FEMA (1999) suggested that a successful grant proposal is one that is thoroughly planned, well prepared and concisely organized. Potential grant applicants should remember that the
format, procedures, requirements, and forms vary with each agency and type of organization making grant awards.

Slaughter (2001) stated that proposal writing for grants and interagency contracts is like a well planned marketing strategy. A marketing plan includes activities such as a needs assessment, data collection, identifying funding sources, seeking opinion leaders, and taking the customer perspective.

According to Slaughter (2001) there are two basic approaches to preparing a proposal. The first approach (unsolicited proposal) is to develop your project idea and then search for a potential funding source. The second approach is to respond to a request for proposal (RFP), request for qualifications (RFQ), or a request for application (RFA) by developing a project or program to meet the need of the funding source as well as the objectives of the grant seeker’s organization.

Bowker (1997) explained that proposals written for foundations and those written for government grants usually differ in their final form. While foundations often require a brief letter as an initial approach, government sources almost always require completion of a number of forms in addition to a detailed proposal narrative.

**Initial proposal development**

According to FEMA (1999), when developing proposal ideas, it is very important for the grant seeker to check their locality or state to ensure that there has not been a similar proposed project and if the proposed project is worthwhile.

The proposal should always be a positive statement-avoid using negative terms, rhetorical, provocative or inflammatory language.

Slaughter (2001) indicates that some funding agencies require strict adherence to their directions and format. Some agencies are not as rigid and will accept almost anything, However, there are some recognized rules to format most proposals.
A letter of intent is sometimes required prior to submittal of the actual grant application. This letter of intent includes an executive summary and mini-proposal to determine if the funding source is interested in the project. (Slaughter, 2001)

At some point during the proposal writing, the working draft should be reviewed by a third party for constructive criticism. Proposals should be typed, collated and packaged properly. A neat, organized, and attractive proposal package can leave a positive impression with the reader. A cover letter should always accompany a proposal. Make sure there is enough time for the proposal to reach its destination. (FEMA, 1999)

**Writing the grant proposal**

There are many formats used for writing grant proposals. Each agency will have specific guidelines and they should be investigated to determine what needs to be included in the proposal package. As a general guideline, the following generic proposal format is discussed. (FEMA, 1999)

Slaughter (2001) stated that there several components that make up the proposal anatomy:

1. Cover letter
2. Title page
3. Table of contents
4. Executive summary
5. Introduction
6. Problem statement
7. Program description
8. Timetable
9. Evaluation
10. Organization statement
11. Budget

12. Future of Project

**Research Question 3- What is the actual budgetary impact of grant funding to departments?**

**Alternative Funding Survey**

A survey was compiled and distributed to the June, 2000, Executive Fire Officer Program - Executive Development students and fire departments throughout the state of Alabama. A total of one hundred surveys were distributed with fifty-six organizations completing and returning the survey instrument. The survey included seven items and was design to evaluate the use, types, and impact of alternative funding methods utilized by departments across the state of Alabama and the country. Specific information pertaining to the use and impact of government grants was requested. The information compiled provided a wide variety of funding methods utilized by fire departments across the country. The type of funding method used by departments and the actual impact on their budget varied greatly dependent upon the organizations’ type, size and revenue structure.

The results of the survey are shown below:

Is your organization ________?

- Fully Paid (FP) **29**,
- Paid / Volunteer (P/V) **18**,
- Fully Volunteer (FV) **9**

Is your department’s budget Taxed Base / Fee Based?

- FP **14 / 1**,
- P/V **16 / 2**,
- FV **3 / 2**

Does your department use alternative funding?

- FP **14**,
- P/V **15**,
- FV **9**

Government Grants / Fees?

- FP **9 / 10**,
- P/V **14 / 8**,
- FV **7 / 0**
Impact on budget?

FP 0.05%/10%,  P/V 0.01%/20%,  FV 1/15%

Other funding sources (Donations, Fund-raises)?

FP 0,  P/V 0,  FV 4

Impact on budget?

FP n/a,  P/V n/a,  FV 100%

**Personal Interviews**

Telephone interviews were conducted with key personnel in approximately twenty fire organizations across the United States. These fire departments represented a cross section of fully paid organizations with similar size populations served as the BFRSD. The interview included three questions and was designed to evaluate the use and impact of grants, determine the department personnel responsible for grant writing, and obtain data pertinent to any official written guidelines, procedures, or policies used by departments in the grant process. In addition, several police departments, including the Birmingham Police Department, were contacted for resource information and official written guidelines, procedures, or policies used in their grant process. The information obtained from the telephone interviews revealed that the estimated financial impact of grant funding to department budget ranged between 0.05 percent to 7 percent - consistent with other fully paid organizations.

**Research Question 4 - What type programs and procedures are utilized by other departments when processing grant requests?**

Telephone interviews were conducted with key personnel in approximately twenty fire organizations across the United States. The interview questions were designed to evaluate the use and impact of grants, determine the department personnel is responsible for grant writing, and obtain data pertinent to any official written guidelines, procedures, or policies used by
departments in the grant process.

The department personnel responsible for grant writing varied with the organization and included sworn fire personnel, public safety service coordinator, supply technician, and other civilian positions. Many of the organizations did not have any official guidelines, procedures, or policies implemented to govern their grant process.

Spencer (1999) revealed that to ensure grants processing comply with federal and state requirements, all grant should be managed in a centralized manner. To accomplish this, the City of Huntsville’s grant procedures require that the Finance Department (FD) review all grant applications, all grant awards, all grant financial reports, and will advise the departments of grant related deadlines

The BPD (n.d.) outlined the guidelines for managing their grant process. The procedure guidelines include the management and administration of the grant, the duties and responsibilities of the Grants Manager, Program Manager, Finance Officer and the Personnel Department.

**DISCUSSION**

**Research Question 1-What government and private grants are available?**

Like other fire service organizations in the United States and around the world, the BFRSD finds itself faced with a tightened budget. The BFRSD is currently experiencing a city budget freeze and for the past two years has seen it’s capital budget requests denied by city leaders.

Budget reductions, downsizing, rightsizing, and doing more with less is an organizational trend that will be with the fire service well into the future. This trend has a direct impact on fire service delivery and the ability to proactively address fire and life safety. Grant proposal writing is one effective tool to combat this trend. (Slaughter, 2001)

Outside of revenues from emergency medical transport and contributions from local civic and neighborhood organizations, the department does not have any other alternative funding
sources to generate needed revenue. Although overall grant support has dramatically increased in
the United States in the last fifty years, the federal government has tightened it’s funding
allocations. As a results, more grant seekers are looking at foundation and corporation for funding.
In addition to providing funding, corporations are also willing to provide in-kind services.

The federal government makes grants in many forms dependent upon the type of program
or project being funded. There are many reference books generated by foundations, corporations
and the federal government that grant seekers may reference to find information on granting
organizations, programs, eligibility requirements, deadlines, rules, regulations, and other
information pertaining to grant management. It is important to note that some grants for the fire
service have been successfully obtained in the past are other are currently available.

**Research Question 2 - What is the process for applying for government and private grants?**

The process for acquiring grant can be divided into three distinctive phases which include
the planning phase, the application and review phase, and the implementation phase. These phases
involves those activities that occur before the grant process and extends through the
implementation and evaluation of the proposed program or project.

FEMA (1999) suggested that a successful grant proposal is one that is thoroughly planned,
well prepared and concisely organized. Potential grant applicants should remember that the
format, procedures, requirements, and form vary with each agency and type of organization
making grant awards. Grant seekers should make sure that there are no similar projects or
programs currently being funded in their geographic area.

FEMA and Slaughter revealed that there several components that make up the proposal
anatomy. These components include the cover letter, title page, table of contents, executive
summary, introduction, problem statement, program description, timetable, evaluation,
organization statement, budget, and future of project. In addition, there are many formats used for
writing grant proposals. Each agency will have specific guidelines and they should be investigated to determine what needs to be included in the proposal package.

Federal and private organizations also often provide information and training in grants management to grant seekers. The cost of these services and training vary and some discounts may be available.

**Research Question 3- What is the actual budgetary impact of grant funding to departments?**

The survey instrument was design to evaluate the use, types, and impact of various alternative funding methods utilized by departments across the state of Alabama and the country. Specific information pertaining to the use and impact of government grants was requested. The information compiled provided a wide variety of funding methods utilized by fire departments across the country including grant funding. The actual impact of grant and other funding alternatives the departments’ budgets varied greatly dependent upon the organizations’ type, size and revenue structure.

The research revealed that generally larger fully paid departments with substantial tax revenue bases utilized government grants and other alternative funding sources to a lesser degree than the typical small fully volunteer or combination paid/volunteer departments. In addition, the impact to smaller departments’ budgets was significantly greater than the impact to larger departments’ budgets. Of course this impact is inversely proportionate to the size of the organization’s overall budget.

The information obtained from the telephone interviews revealed that the estimated financial impact of grant funding to department budget ranged between .05 percent to 7 percent, consistent with other fully paid organizations.
In addition, many participants in the survey and interviews revealed that there has just not been much grant funding available for the fire service. Also, the process and subsequent paperwork necessary for acquiring the grants was so extensive that many were reluctant to even apply for the grant funding.

**Research Question 4- What type programs and procedures are utilized by other departments when processing grant requests?**

Telephone interviews were conducted with key personnel in approximately twenty fire organizations across the United States. The interview questions were designed to evaluate the use and impact of grants, determine the department personnel is responsible for grant writing, and obtain data pertinent to any official written guidelines, procedures, or policies used by departments in the grant process.

The department personnel responsible for grant writing varied with the organization and included sworn fire personnel, public safety service coordinator, supply technician, and other civilian positions. Many of the organizations did not have any official guidelines, procedures, or policies implemented to govern their grant process.

Some organizations have formal procedures, guidelines or policies in place to manage their grant seeking and application process- other organizations do not. However, the researcher suggests that there may be many organizations not contacted during this research that may have formal procedures in place to manage their grant process.

Spencer (1999) revealed that to ensure grants processing comply with federal and state requirements, all grant should be managed in a centralized manner. To accomplish this, the City of Huntsville’s grant procedures require that Finance Department (FD) review all grant applications, all grant awards, all grant financial reports, and will advise the departments of grant related deadlines.
The BPD (n.d.) outlines the guidelines for managing their grant process. The procedure guidelines include the management and administration of the grant, the duties and responsibilities of the Grants Manager, Program Manager, Finance Officer and the Personnel Department.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Research Question 1 - What government and private grants are available?**

The researcher recommends that the BFRSD establish a grant writing program. This grant writing program may encompass a Grant Section consisting of one or more individuals assigned as grant writer(s). The Grant Section should research and investigate all areas of potential grant funding including but not limited to corporations, foundations, and government sources. The Grant Section should utilize all reference sources available to identify and evaluate potential grant funders including private and public grant reference manuals and the Internet.

The Grants Section should establish a network with other fire and non-fire service organization across the country. This network should be utilized to obtain and disseminate pertinent information on possible grant reference sources and the procedures, guidelines, and policies that they have successfully implemented in their grant acquisition programs.

**Research Question 2 - What is the process for applying for government and private grants?**

The researcher recommends that the Grants Section within the BFRSD identify and review the many written reference books on grant writing that are available. The process for applying for grants differ with the type of grant and the particular agency being solicited. There are many organizations that offer training and reference materials on federal, corporate and foundation grants. They include workshops that give instructions on how to seek and apply for grants, and preparing grant proposals. These resources should be utilized by the Grants Section.

The Grants Section should network with other fire and non-fire service organizations to
obtain assistance, guidance, and expertise in developing a successful grant proposal.

**Research Question 3- What is the actual budgetary impact of grant funding to departments?**

The BFRSD and the Grants Section should make a concerted effort to obtain as much data as possible from other fire service organizations on the actual financial impact of grant funding to their perspective budgets. The feasibility of actively seeking a particular grant should be evaluated based upon it’s potential positive or negative impact on the department’s existing budget. The availability of grants for the fire service has increased in recent years, however, the BFRSD must careful to thoroughly review the budgetary impact each potential grant may have on department resources.

The Grant Section should review all data gathered from other fire service organizations as well as guidelines, conditions, and restrictions of potential funding agencies to determine the feasibility of pursuing a particular grant.

**Research Question 4- What type programs and procedures are utilized by other departments when processing grant requests?**

The BFRSD and the Grant Section should develop and maintain a network with other fire and non-fire service organizations. Information obtained from this network may reveal procedures, guidelines, and policies utilized by other organizations that may be feasible for implementation within the BFRSD. These procedures, guidelines, and policies may be used as a guideline for developing department policies for it’s grant program. In addition, the BFRSD should review other organizations’ grant program structure to determine 1) what is the appropriate number of personnel needed in the Grant Section, 2) if the grant section will be staffed by sworn or civilian personnel, and 3) if new department position(s) will be required.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX (ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SURVEY)

(Please complete and return to Reginald E. Anderson)

Department Name _________________________________________________

Your Name and Rank ______________________________________________

Is your Department (Please insert Dept. staffing numbers in appropriate slot):


Is your department’s budget tax based?__________ Service fee based? _________

Does your Department utilize alternative funding sources?________. If yes please check all that apply:

EMS Transport__________________ State Grants________________
Fire Inspection Fees______________ Government Grants___________
Fire Lane Violation Fees____________ Fire reports Fees_____________
Other(list all)_____________________ __________________________
                                __________________________

What is the total financial impact of the funding sources above as compared to your general budget(Please estimate percentage- %)? __________.

If you checked Fire Inspection Fees, please give separate % estimate on financial impact to your Department________.

Would you or your department be willing to share initial implementation information on this service? _______.

If yes, please provide me with a contact name and number, if than yourself ______________
                                   ______________

If you checked State or Government Grants, please give separate % estimate on financial impact to you Department________.

Would you or your department be willing to share initial implementation information on this service? _______.

If yes, please provide me with a contact name and number, if other than yourself_______________________________________