

To: CRCOG Municipal Services Committee
From: Elizabeth Sanderson, BIL Coordinator/Principal Program Manager
CC: Matt Hart, Executive Director; Pauline Yoder, Chief Operating Officer
Meeting Date: December 10, 2024
Subject: Overview of On-the-Job Training Program for Building Code Officials

Background: In February 2024, the State of Connecticut Department of Administrative Services (DAS) applied through the State Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) **Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grant Program**. DAS requested \$1,975,078 in Federal funding to protect health and safety in communities by strengthening local building departments. The new program term will be for a 36-month period, beginning from the time of grant award.

Benefit to Member Towns/CRCOG: The program seeks to **improve municipal building departments and address the shortage of building code professionals in Connecticut**. DAS will partner with Councils of Governments (COGs), the CT Council of Municipalities (CCM), the CT Building Officials Association (CBOA), technical high schools, community colleges, and universities throughout the state. Below is an overview of the activities this grant will fund:

1. Support building code activities
 - a. **Cover costs of premium digital access for codes for all CT municipalities.**
 - b. Improve the state's training programs and continuing education classes.
 - c. Attract and retain professionals by offering enhanced technical assistance and training and developing an easier Code Development process.
2. Code official training and certification:
 - a. Offer ICC Technical Training Program at 16 Connecticut Technical High Schools.
 - b. Develop certificate and degree programs with CT public higher education institutions.
3. **Develop on-the-job training (OJT) opportunities** in collaboration with COGs, CCM and CBOA for student interns and/or apprentices (collectively, trainees). The trainees will support municipal building departments both during and after their educational programs.

Financial/Operational Impact: DAS' project budget is estimated to be \$2,748,070, which includes a 25% non-Federal cost share (match) equal to \$866,992. The match will be comprised of funds from DAS/ODEM, CRCOG, and additional partners.

CRCOG will mainly be involved with activity #3, developing an OJT Program. The OJT Program budget is estimated to be \$540,000, comprised of \$405,000 (75%) from FEMA and **\$135,000 (25% match) from CRCOG**. Match can include in-kind supervisor time, office space, equipment, etc. Matching funds for this reimbursable grant will be from the **Regional Fund**.

CRCOG will employ a Program Manager (OJT Coordinator) to work part-time on this project. The OJT Coordinator will collaborate with state and local partners to establish the OJT Program, and will work as liaison between participating municipalities, academic partners, and DAS' Program Manager to ensure the program operates smoothly.

Municipalities from across the state can opt-in to serve as OJT Sites, providing student interns/apprentice trainees with practical work experience at local building departments to supplement educational programs offered at schools and DAS. In exchange for this assistance work, **municipalities will be asked to subsidize trainees**. DAS' has budgeted for **40 trainees** to participate in the OJT Program over the 36-month period of performance.

Project Schedule: The BRIC grant program requires a 36-month Period of Performance, starting on the date of the recipient's federal award. DAS anticipates the **OJT Program to kick-off in January 2025 - December 2027**.

Recommendation: We are bringing this program to your attention to learn what municipalities are interested in participating in the OJT Program, and who is interested in helping design the program with project partners.

Over the coming weeks, CRCOG Staff will continue collaborating with DAS and other project partners. Once FEMA/DEMHS/DAS execute a grant agreement, CRCOG and DAS will work to execute a sub-agreement and take necessary steps to accepting Federal funding to establish the OJT Program.