

FY2026 Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP)

State of TN Instructions & FAQs

The purpose of this document is to assist grant applicants prepare their NSGP Investment Justification (IJ) packet, while addressing issues that have prevented IJs from moving forward for funding. This document addresses the basic requirements for IJ submission and in no way guarantees the IJ will be selected by the Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency (DHS/FEMA) for funding. These Tips and FAQs are based on the review of past IJ applications and Technical Assistance calls with DHS/FEMA Grant Program personnel. Please remember, this is a competitive grant.

KEY INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Read the current grant Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) thoroughly - do not rely on the last grant process or documents.**
2. **READ THE INVESTMENT JUSTIFICATION INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY – FAILURE TO DO SO WILL RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION.**
3. You are the *sub-recipient* – not the Applicant. The State is the Applicant; you only need to complete the forms necessary/required by the State and DHS/FEMA for the *sub-recipient*.
4. Download/obtain all the correct forms for the current supplemental grant – links below.
5. Ensure your nonprofit status is current – consult your finance section/person.
6. Ensure you have a Unique Entity Identifier number (UEI). The State cannot help you with this, your organization must do this – the current NOFO provides instructions for obtaining the UEI.
7. All fields must be completed. Do not use “see attached”, “see below”, or reference another document – your IJ will be considered incomplete by doing so.
8. **Do not change the IJ form formatting. Changing the format is an automatic disqualifier. The form must remain as a fillable PDF – if it does not remain as a fillable document, it will be disqualified.**
Adobe - <https://www.adobe.com/>
9. Ensure your IJ responses align with your Vulnerability Assessment (VA). Do not give vague or interpretive answers, be succinct and clear. If your responses do not clearly express risk or a nexus to a potential terroristic attack, your chances of funding are reduced.
10. Should you use a grant writer who is not intimately associated with your organization – review their work. Generic or “boilerplate” responses will diminish the authenticity of your IJ and reduce the chances of funding. Ensure *your* IJ highlights *your* organization.
11. Should you elect to use an outside organization to complete your Vulnerability Assessment – please ensure their assessment is in alignment with the DHS/FEMA Vulnerability Assessment Tool and Outcomes/Outputs. You must submit the **entire** assessment with your IJ.
12. The IJ will have drop-down options for equipment and services that are allowed for the current grant year. These are the only approved items for the grant. Please review the Preparedness Grant Manual for more information or contact one of the POC listed in the Resources Section if you have questions.
13. **Ensure your IJ packet is complete before submitting it. Due to the short turnaround time of this grant, once you submit your application, it is final.**

REQUIRED MINIMUM DOCUMENTATION:

1. The following documentation is required for your IJ to be reviewed and submitted to DHS/FEMA for final evaluation and selection. If one or more of the items is missing, your IJ **will not** be reviewed or forwarded to DHS/FEMA. **Submit each item as a separate attachment.**
 - a. **Mission Statement:** Your mission statement **must be** on organizational letterhead. This is used to validate information in your IJ and categorize the facility (ideology-based, education, medical, etc.). It should clearly provide the “who, what, and why” of your organization/facility/site.
 - b. **Vulnerability Assessment (VA):** *The vulnerability assessment is the foundation from which your IJ is built.* The VA identifies the threats, vulnerabilities, and potential consequences specific to the facility/site and will be used to validate your IJ responses. It is recommended that you, or the person completing your assessment, uses the DHS/FEMA Assessment Tool (link below – free). **This is not required;** however, if the DHS/FEMA Tool is not used – ensure the assessment clearly addresses and identifies the threats, vulnerabilities, and potential consequences to the location; furthermore, ensure it includes Action Items for improving facility/site security – not just the items of deficiency. Equipment requested in the IJ should directly link to the threats, vulnerabilities, and potential consequences as identified in the VA. Lastly, ensure you submit the **entire VA** – not just the cover sheet or summary.
 - c. **Completed Investment Justification (IJ):** Required fields must be answered. A blank field or “see attached” constitutes an incomplete IJ, please review your work and provide the required information for each field. **Do not change the formatting** – changed formatting is an immediate rejection. *Please maximize the character count in the narrative fields; be clear, concise, and relevant. Not clearly expressing risk or a nexus to a potential terroristic attack against your organization/facility/site will diminish chances of funding.* Be mindful of historical threats and events vs. current threats and events. Historical threats and events may be used to add context, but do not articulate the “here and now” risk, threat, and consequences to your organization/facility/site. Narratives that focus on events and threats against a broader community, in other states or countries, or in years past are not adequately addressing the “here and now” associated with *your* location and community – address how the risk, threat, and consequences of a potential terroristic attack would impact **your** location and community “here and now”.
 - d. **Supplemental Documentation (Optional):** *You may submit supplemental documentation (pictures, police reports, etc.) if you believe it enhances the VA or provides clarification to a particular element of the VA. Supplemental documentation **is not** required and **is not** submitted to DHS/FEMA. Supplemental documentation will only be used during the initial review for substantiation of the VA.*

FAQs:

1. **I am not sure if my organization qualifies, how do I make sure?** 1) Refer to the FY26 NOFO, Page 5, Section Eligible Entities - Subapplicant Eligibility. 2) Able to demonstrate, through the application, that the organization is at high risk of a terrorist attack.
2. **Where do I download/obtain the correct forms for the current FY grant?** Grant forms and documents may be downloaded from one of the following websites: Grants.gov; the Tennessee Department of Safety & Homeland Security; and the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) (links below).
3. **What forms/documents do I need to submit to the State?** 1) Investment Justification (IJ); 2) Organization's Mission Statement (on letterhead); 3) Vulnerability Assessment. *All three documents are required; your application will not be considered for funding if missing.*
4. **Who do I contact (POC) if I have questions?** James Cotter – james.cotter@tn.gov Gary Baker – gary.baker@tn.gov Misty Walker – misty.walker@tn.gov
5. **Do I submit my IJ through Grants.gov?** *NO. Your IJ is submitted to the email address provided on the Department of Safety and Homeland Security website. Do not submit directly to the POCs. Nonprofit organizations may not apply to DHS/FEMA directly – you must apply through the State.*
6. **When does my IJ have to be turned in?** Please note - The date provided in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is the date the state must have the IJs submitted to DHS/FEMA. ***Your submission date is listed on the Department of Safety & Homeland Security website.***
7. **Is a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number required?** YES, see the current NOFO for instructions.
8. **Do I have to register with Grants.gov?** NO.
9. **Can I do the Vulnerability Assessment (VA) myself?** YES (link below)
10. **My organization has more than one location, can I apply for each?** Depends. Please refer to the NOFO, Section: D. Maximum Number of Applications – Page 7.
11. **What is Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) Compliance?** Please refer to FY26 NOFO, Page 48, Section 3. Other Information, Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) Compliance for full requirements. If your organization has been selected for grant funding, you will receive further information concerning EHP.
12. **Should I review the Preparedness Grants Manual?** YES – section NSGP. This manual provides information about how to manage your grant, resources for a successful IJ application, and answers to questions that may arise over the course of the performance period (link below).
13. **Must I have an established purchasing policy?** YES. You will be required to provide a copy if your organization receives an award.
14. **Can I change the contract verbiage?** NO. The contracts comply with State and Federal laws and policies for grant funding opportunities. If this is a point of contention, please contact Mr. Gary Baker (POC) for further steps to resolve any issues.
15. **Do I have to be Title VI compliant?** YES. Please refer to the Resources Section for contact information to obtain the self-survey.
16. **How will I know if my organization is selected for funding?** You will be contacted directly (awarded or not) once funding decisions have been finalized, and the State receives an award.
17. **What can grant funds be used for?** Please refer to the current NOFO and Investment Justification – items are preselected in a drop-down menu.

RESOURCES/LINKS:

DHS/FEMA NSGP Website: <https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/nonprofit-security>

Tennessee Department of Safety & Homeland Security –
<https://www.tn.gov/safety/homeland-security/grants.html>

Title VI Self-Survey – Effective September 30, 2020, all subrecipients of federal funds administered by the State Administrative Agency (SAA) must update their Title VI information on an annual basis by submitting a new Title VI Self-Survey Form. Compliance under the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 must be met to receive federal assistance. Please email Linda Crawford at linda.crawford@tn.gov for the fillable forms and guidance documents.

Grants.gov - https://simpler.grants.gov/search?utm_source=Grants.gov

NOTE – Ensure you have the current operating system and Adobe version installed on your computer for best results when downloading forms. **Adobe Homepage** - <https://www.adobe.com/>

DHS/FEMA Vulnerability Assessment Tool - <https://www.cisa.gov/houses-worship-security-self-assessment>

****NOTE*** This may be used even if your location is not a house of worship.*

Preparedness Grants Manual - <https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/manual>

State Points of Contact (POC) - James Cotter – james.cotter@tn.gov Gary Baker – gary.baker@tn.gov Misty Walker – Misty.walker@tn.gov