

**By Bonnie Kurowski**

**May 2021**

# **FIGHT FOR ILLINOIS COVER LETTER**

**Date: 05/10/2021**

**Elected Officials**

**Shelby County**

**301 E Main St, Shelbyville, IL 62565**

Fight for Illinois is organizing a program with the goal to provide online training and certifications to municipal and city elected officials and police officers, across the State of Illinois. This has never been offered in any state before, as a “One-stop-shop” for all online training needs for Elected Officials. We will be the first state to offer this, and we will be able to educate with short, mini eLearning courses geared for a busy politician's lifestyle.

No longer do our elected officials need to take heavy, onsite classes, which rarely are in attendance, or worry about how COVID will affect their learning and attending. They can just click on our site from any laptop, phone, or tablet and complete a mini training course in a specific skill required in under 15 minutes. We know the job and the number of interruptions, so if the course is interrupted, the course will restart where they left off. Each course will then send a follow up job aid to their email for future learning reference needs. All career opportunities should include the ability to educate, learn, and enhance their performance, even Elected Officials. Right now, IL has a large gap in learning needs for this group. We are here to solve that need.

We believe that educating Elected Officials will increase knowledge while decreasing public negative views on corruption, which will positively impact the taxes, offer more fair elections, teach proper campaigning, educate on roles, meetings, and expectations for a better government as well as control the spread of insurgency. Educating Law Enforcement will decrease excessive use of force by police and ensuing brutality and discrimination. We have tied these two groups together as many local municipalities (the Mayors) run their Police Departments. This also ensures that all those elected to a position of power understand each other's responsibility to their community.

We believe that equipping Illinois with the training will uniformly unify the State, set understandable and spelled out expectations for Elected Officials, certify Police Officers, and in doing so, alleviate the court system from unneeded lawsuits against Cities, thus elevating much of the tax burden placed on these cities when a multi-million-dollar lawsuit is handed down for police brutality.

Hence, we are humbly asking your generous heart to be a contributor to our grant request to open this program in the amount of \$50,000. In the body of this proposal is a cost breakdown as of this month. Your grant funding will help us address these costs immediately and ensure that we continue our mission of education, here in Illinois.

# **FIGHT FOR ILLINOIS COVER PAGE**

**Date: May 10th, 2021**

**Submitted To: (Shelby County)**

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CAGE 8ZK02 Exp. 4/16/2022**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*"Fight for Illinois" will deliver high end training for local Elected Officials and Law Enforcement Members across the State of Illinois. This training will be in courses geared specifically to the components of the attendee and their career path. The courses will be accessible via the Internet so that attendees can access them on their schedules.*

## PROJECT ABSTRACT

*Fight for Illinois was founded by Bonnie Kurowski, a former College Professor and currently a course designer and Instructor for the Fortune 500, who volunteers her time with IL Political writing and educating. While working in both fields, she found a gap in learning and educating in the state. This gap is between Elected Officials own learning experiences and the Law Enforcement they provide their residents. Elected Officials currently have no option for training in their new positions and rely on former elected officials to train them hands on. With the growing division in political parties, this training has decreased greatly, leaving newly Elected Officials no knowledge of their predecessors. Once they are in office, they are expected to know their jobs and also run the bodies attached to it, such as the Police. As we see every day, "Follow my Predecessor" isn't working. It's simply doing the same thing over and over and accomplishing no improvements at all.*

*Elected Officials do not undergo Police Training prior to becoming their leader. In the Corporate world, nobody would be offered a CEO job without experience, knowledge, and a proven track record. This lack of training then spills into these departments, which has caused major issues to go swept under the table... This also means that good journalists will write about these issues but will fear instant and career damaging retaliation. These issues include systematic racism, police brutality, and discrimination.*

*On the other spectrum, a lack of training of Elected Officials has opened the door to local extremists and insurgency, as newly elected officials do not always do the right thing, swayed by donations from fringe groups. Although it is not intentional wrongdoing, mostly a lack of education and accidents, it has led to an increase in lawsuits and States Attorney Investigation complaints. These groups have now been utilizing this knowledge to turn IL into a cash cow for themselves. In return, Elected Officials reputations are undergoing brutal attacks and less people want to run for office or participate in government. We believe that by offering this training to the State, together, we can drastically reduce these issues and allow for better governing and policing.*

## SCHEDULE

*We are looking to develop approximately 200 courses, spread out over two years, with a focus on providing constant updates that pertain to real time situations, thus providing current situations as teaching tools. The first 20 courses have been mapped out for the highest need first. We plan on rolling out 5 courses a month in each category; Elected Officials & Law Enforcement.*

## SCOPE OF FUNDING NEEDED

*The Organization Chairperson has self-funded the project thus far, costing approximately \$20K. The websites are complete, news is already being disseminated, but the demand for more means that more staff needs to be added and timelines shortened. Therefore, a Grant is required to meet this immediate staffing demand. We are looking at \$100,000.00 to complete this on the timelines needed and asked for by many Illinois Communities. With the next election in 2022, we need this system up and running, available to all, current and accurate.*

## STATEMENT OF NEED

Currently there is no “one stop shop” that exists for Elected Officials to gather needed knowledge through training. This leaves them with no way of gathering the needed information to perform their duties properly and for the betterment of their communities.

Systemic Racism is now in the spotlight as we see the number of Police vs. Citizen cases sadly and needlessly ending in deadly violence increasing daily; Police facing numerous Excessive Force complaints and countless communities having to pay millions of dollars in settlements awarded to the families of those victims. Our organization wishes to be the solution to these problems. Educating those in charge is the key to change. De-Escalation Training, Mental Health Awareness, and more Crisis Negotiation teams are needed. This need can and must be met by training existing Law Enforcement personnel and enlightening the Elected Officials of every township in Illinois. It's a very sad reality that de-escalation training hasn't really been improved/changed/modified in over 25 years. This must be addressed, and our organization wishes to do just that. Immediately.

## OUR PROPOSAL

With this grant we can offer training and education to these select groups. Most of these groups lack any updated, formal training to combat these issues. How can these people lead such large masses with no education to support real world situations? School education doesn't teach elected officials how to be elected officials. Police Officer training is offered in schools, but current issues aren't addressed in today's certifications. We feel that this is the root cause of the horrific situations Police find themselves in, sadly, on a daily basis. We are proposing real time, updated solutions to address and solve this cycle of violence.

We are also preparing to “vet” every Trainer that will be in our organization. We will assure those taking our courses that they will be trained by the very best, most qualified and screened educators.

## GOALS & OBJECTIVES

We offer all courses online which addresses the availability issue for participants. The cost to fund this program is very minimal when you consider the number of users that can access these classes, with over 3000 townships and over 100 counties within Illinois. This covers all Law Enforcement and Elected Officials and converts to investing less than a quarter of dollar per elected official alone.

Because we understand the changing times, our objective is to update all courses regularly, to address current issues and changes in laws, legal precedents, and current cases facing Officers and Officials. This is why our Budget allows for a Subject Matter Expert as a yearly expense. As we have all seen throughout the news of the last year, what worked two years ago is not working now. Time and Methods change, and our courses will change as needed to address situations that both Elected Officials and Law Enforcement Members may find themselves in.

Our Main Goal is to educate and enhance everyday life for Law Enforcement, Elected Officials & Communities and we truly believe this can be accomplished through communication, transparency and shared knowledge.

Your grant will assist us in getting everyone on the same page.

## BUDGET

Yearly Costs:	
\$1,500.00	Domain Fees
\$10,000.00	LMS Server Usage
\$1,800.00	Postage for Township/County correspondence
\$2,000.00	Marketing and yearly IDs for our press members
\$135,000.00	Yearly Salaries
\$50,000.00	Subject Matter Expert
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Total Yearly Costs, including salaries	\$200,300.00
One Time Costs:	
\$240.00	Domain Setup for all current domains as of 5/2021
\$400.00	Laptop
\$3000.00	May 1-2, 2021 Naperville Conference Board Chairperson Costs
\$1,200.00	Software for Organization
\$60,000.00	Development & Updating Costs for all courses
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Total One-Time Costs	\$ 64,840.00
TOTAL for Fight for IL as of 5/2021	\$265,140.00