

# CONSULTANT HANDBOOK



## A Guide to Working with the Fiscal Crisis & Management Assistance Team

**FCMAT**

Revised November 2023

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# Consultant Protocol

## FCMAT Consultant Protocol

The Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) is an independent agency supported by the State of California. Our mission is to provide financial, operational, and management advisory services to local districts, charter schools, community colleges and county offices of education throughout the state. To accomplish this mission, FCMAT utilizes public and private professional consultants who are not full time FCMAT employees. As one of those professional consultants, you should be aware of the following protocols:

### **FCMAT is independent and impartial.**

FCMAT consultants must be independent in fact, attitude, and appearance during FCMAT engagements. FCMAT consultants should avoid participating in engagements where family, business, or personal relationships or financial interests preclude the consultant from being independent in fact or appearance. During a study engagement, FCMAT consultants should not seek additional work from clients separate from the current engagement unless subsequently independently solicited by the district or county office of education (COE). FCMAT consultants should also avoid recommending the services or products of specific vendors.

FCMAT is not an enforcement agency, and in most cases, is not responsible for statutory oversight. As such, FCMAT expects consultants to make clients feel as comfortable as possible with both the routine and detail of our involvement with them. Consultants need to take care not to express opinions or comment on findings or recommendations during fieldwork to anyone other than team members.

### **The study agreement outlines the scope and objectives of the team's assignment.**

FCMAT consultants need to be familiar with the scope and objectives of the engagement as stated in the Study Agreement. The Study Agreement details the focus of the work to be performed. Consultants should not alter the scope and objectives identified in the Study Agreement without approval from the team leader. If the scope changes during the review, the Study Agreement will be amended by the leader, and those details will be provided to each team member.

### **FCMAT consultants should obtain sufficient evidential matter to support their findings and recommendations. The evidence should be gathered through inquiry, observation, interview, documentation, recalculation and other confirmation.**

FCMAT consultants are neutral parties who collect data. As such, the maintenance and preservation of your working papers and documents are very important. All notes should be clear, concise, dated, and initialed by you. They should include the names of persons interviewed or observed. All working papers and documents should be purposeful and understandable. Each should clearly indicate its sources, the purpose for its preparation, the procedures performed in its preparation, and any conclusions determined.

The notes and working papers created by you will be utilized in the development of your written report. At the conclusion of the fieldwork and within fourteen days you are required to submit your written report to the team lead along with any other written information requested. At a minimum that should include:

- All supporting documentation that is to be included in the draft report
- A brief written analysis of each area of responsibility detailing your findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The findings and recommendations should be supported by evidential matter in your working papers.

Complete and accurate findings and recommendations prepared by each consultant are critical to the development of the final report. We have attached sample documents illustrating the format, typical content and structure of FCMAT reports. The FCMAT writing team will compile the final report. The quality and content of the report is determined by the information that is provided by individual consultants. Your analysis, findings and recommendations should be submitted to FCMAT in an electronically processed format, preferably Microsoft Word. FCMAT requests consultants to submit their information to the team lead within fourteen calendar days after the completion of the fieldwork.

**Information should be released only by the team lead or the FCMAT staff member managing the project.**

Consultants should not make independent recommendations separate from the team. No findings or recommendations should be released to anyone before the team has reviewed them and collectively agreed upon the content and/or directions of the recommendations.

The final FCMAT report will not be released prior to its formal presentation to the requesting agency. Prior to the final report, a draft report is submitted to the client for review. The draft report is not a public document and is also not released. Questions from the media, legislators, etc. should be directed to either the team leader or the FCMAT staff member assigned to the project.

**Professional consultants have a contractual relationship with the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team.**

Consultants do not work for or represent their employer while conducting the study. Nor do the consultants represent the state, county or district while working for FCMAT.

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Signature

Date

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Print Name

## Fingerprinting

Education Code section 45125.1 provides that any contractor providing administrative services to a school district must certify that its employees providing that service who may come into contact with pupils have not been convicted of a serious or violent felony as defined by law. Those employees must be fingerprinted, and the Department of Justice must report to the contractor if they have been convicted of such felonies. No person so convicted may be assigned to work under the contract. The school district may determine, under the totality of circumstances including,

- The length of time the employees will be on school grounds,
- Whether pupils will be in proximity of the site where the employees will be working, and
- Whether the contractors will be working alone or with others that the employees will have only limited contact with pupils and neither fingerprinting nor certification is required.

FCMAT has determined that section 45125.1 is applicable to this contract. FCMAT has also determined that the employees assigned to work under this contract will have only limited contact with pupils, provided the following conditions are met at all times:

1. Contractor employees shall not come into contact with pupils or work in the proximity of pupils at any time except under the direct supervision of school district employees.
2. Contractor employees shall use only restroom facilities reserved for district employees and shall not use student restrooms at any time.
3. Contractor will inform all of its employees who perform work at any school or district site of these conditions and require its employees, as a condition of employment, to adhere to them.
4. Contractor will immediately report to the school district and to FCMAT any apparent violation of these conditions.
5. Contractor shall assume responsibility for enforcement of these conditions at all times during the term of this agreement.

Failure of the Contractor to adhere to these conditions shall result in immediate termination of this agreement.

If, for any reason, Contractor cannot adhere to the conditions stated above, Contractor shall so inform FCMAT and shall assign only those employees who have been fingerprinted and cleared for employment by the Department of Justice. In that case, Contractor shall provide to the school district and FCMAT the names of all employees assigned to perform work under this agreement.

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Signature

Date

Print Name

# **Agreement for Professional Services (Consultant Contract)**

# Consultant Requirements and Contract Procedures

All consultants must wear ID badges when conducting fieldwork. A new consultant or contractor should send a recent photo (head and shoulders) and a signature (in black ink) for the FCMAT badge to the FCMAT administrative assistant at [contact@fcmat.org](mailto:contact@fcmat.org) and the FCMAT technical writers at [writers@fcmat.org](mailto:writers@fcmat.org).

FCMAT badges are mailed with the professional services agreement or services agreement to the lead consultant. Upon completion of fieldwork, consultants need to return FCMAT badges to their lead consultant.

Once FCMAT receives a signed study agreement from the county, district office or charter school, a professional services agreement (consultant contract) will be issued to each consultant assigned to the job. FCMAT's practice is to send all contracts electronically; however, a hard copy may be sent to the consultant by request only. Consultants must contact their lead consultant if they need to request a hard copy. The consultant is responsible for signing/dating (blue ink) the contract and returning it to FCMAT prior to the start of the contract date. A copy of the signed contract is to be faxed/mailed to the FCMAT administrative assistant prior to returning the original contract to FCMAT. You may contact the FCMAT administrative assistant at the email address noted above and/or by fax at (661) 636-4647.

It is imperative that the signed contract be returned to FCMAT prior to the first date of the contract. If the contract is not received by the start date of the contract, it will be canceled by the KCSOS business office. As a result, the consultant will not be able to start any fieldwork or report writing until another contract is issued with a deferred start date.



# Professional Services Agreement Samples

VENDOR NO. \_\_\_\_\_

AP REF # \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICE OF JOHN G. MENDIBURU  
KERN COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
FCMAT MASTER SERVICE AGREEMENT # \_\_\_\_\_  
FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES  
Fiscal Year: \_\_\_\_\_

This Agreement for Professional Services ("Agreement") is between THE KERN COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, as administrative agent for the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team ("Superintendent"), and the party whose legal name and status are described in the signature block below ("Contractor").

### RECITALS

A. Superintendent is the administrative agent for the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team ("FCMAT"), a unit established by the California Legislature pursuant to Education Code section 42127.8. As needed, FCMAT requires special services and advice in financial, economic, accounting, engineering, legal or administrative matters from persons specially trained and experienced and competent to provide such services.

B. Contractor is specially trained and experienced and competent to provide the specialized services required under this Agreement. This Agreement is intended to be the written agreement between the parties related to the services and/or products to be provided during the referenced term relating to the educational entity referenced in the title.

### TERMS

Based upon the Recitals and the promises exchanged by the parties in this Agreement, the parties agree as follows:

1. Scope of Services. The nature and scope of services under this Agreement are set forth in Purchase Orders issued prior to actual start of requested services. Contractor shall not furnish additional services beyond those specified on the Purchase Order for additional compensation without a prior written modification of the Purchase Order. Unless otherwise specified on the Purchase Order, final written reports are due within 14 days after completion of site fieldwork.

2. Price. Contractor shall provide all labor, equipment, materials, and supplies to furnish the services called for under this Agreement in exchange for payment in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per hour

Contractor shall be paid for services satisfactorily rendered based upon invoices submitted no less frequently than monthly, detailing the dates and nature of the services provided. Amounts billed per hour or day may include on-site field work, travel time to and from the job site and preparation and review of written reports.

Superintendent will also reimburse Contractor for the following actual, reasonable and necessary related expenses, which Contractor shall certify to Superintendent and submit along with required receipts: lodging, car rental, bus or train fare, airfare if travel is over 125 miles and transportation to and from the site and street parking. Lodging costs should not exceed amounts reasonable for the job site area. Reported mileage is reimbursed at the current IRS rate. Meal reimbursement allowance:

Breakfast \$ (must leave before 6:30 a.m.), Lunch \$ , Dinner \$ (must return after 6:30 p.m.)

Incidental Expense \$

Reimbursements for meal expenses at the above rates can be made without submitting receipts. To be reimbursed for amounts exceeding per diem rates itemized receipts must be submitted; however, reimbursement may never exceed \$50 per day or 200% of individual meal per diem rates and gratuity may not exceed 18%.

3. Additional Provisions. The attached additional provisions are part of the Agreement and fully incorporated by reference.

STRS/PERS Status (must check one):  current member  retired  not applicable

### CONTRACTOR

By \_\_\_\_\_

Name:  
Address:

SS# (for EDD Reporting Purposes):

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### JOHN G. MENDIBURU KERN COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

By \_\_\_\_\_

Signatory Name:  
Title:  
Address: 1300 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301  
Budget Code:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

FCMAT AGREEMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

VENDOR NO.

CONTRACT NO.

OFFICE OF JOHN G. MENDIBURU
KERN COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
Advocates for Children

FCMAT SERVICES AGREEMENT
( )

This Agreement for Professional Services ("Agreement") is between THE KERN COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, as administrative agent for the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team ("Superintendent"), and the party whose legal name and status are described in the signature block below ("Contractor").

RECITALS

A. Superintendent is the administrative agent for the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team ("FCMAT"), a unit established by the California Legislature pursuant to Education Code section 42127.8. As needed, FCMAT requires special services and advice in financial, economic, accounting, engineering, legal or administrative matters from persons specially trained and experienced and competent to provide such services.

B. Contractor is specially trained and experienced and competent to provide the specialized services required under this Agreement. This Agreement is intended to be the written agreement between the parties related to the services and/or products to be provided during the referenced term relating to the educational entity referenced in the title.

TERMS

Based upon the Recitals and the promises exchanged by the parties in this Agreement, the parties agree as follows:

1. Scope of Services. The nature and scope of services under this Agreement are set forth in Attachment A and are incorporated by reference into this Agreement. Contractor shall not furnish additional services beyond those specified in Attachment A for additional compensation without a prior written modification of the Agreement signed by both parties. Unless otherwise specified in this Agreement, final written reports are due within 14 days after completion of site fieldwork.

2. Term. The initial term of this Agreement shall begin effective and shall end on . Extension or renewal shall require the approval of Superintendent.

3. Price. Contractor shall provide all labor, equipment, materials, and supplies to furnish the services called for under this Agreement in exchange for payment in the amount of (check one)

[ ] \$ (total flat fee) [ ] \$ (per hour) [ ] \$ (other \*See Payment Schedule)

Contractor shall be paid for services satisfactorily rendered based upon invoices submitted no more frequently than monthly, detailing the dates and nature of the services provided. Amounts billed per hour or day may include on-site field work, travel time to and from the job site and preparation and review of written reports.

[ ] If this box is checked, Superintendent will also reimburse Contractor for the following actual, reasonable and necessary related expenses, which Contractor shall certify to Superintendent and submit along with required receipts: lodging, car rental, bus or train fare, airfare if travel is over 125 miles and transportation to and from the site and street parking. Lodging costs should not exceed amounts reasonable for the job site area. Reported mileage is reimbursed at the current IRS rate.

Meal reimbursement allowance: Breakfast \$13.00 (must leave before 6:30 a.m.) Lunch \$15.00 Dinner \$26.00 (must return after 6:30 p.m.)
Incidental Expense \$5.00

Reimbursements for meal expenses at the above rates can be made without submitting receipts. To be reimbursed for amounts exceeding per diem rates itemized receipts must be submitted; however, reimbursement may never exceed \$50 per day or 200% of individual meal per diem rates and gratuity may not exceed 18%.

The total amount payable to Contractor under this Agreement shall not exceed \$

4. Additional Provisions. The attached additional provisions are part of the Agreement and fully incorporated by reference.

CONTRACTOR

JOHN G. MENDIBURU
KERN COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

By
Entity Name:
Entity Type:
Authorized Signatory Name:
Address:

By
Signatory Name:
Title:
Address: 1300 17th Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301
Account No.:

Date:

Date:

# Writing and Report Conventions

# FCMAT Writing Standards

The information and standards that follow are intended to assist FCMAT consultants in completing and submitting their report to the team lead and staff writers.

These standards are based on those used by the RAND Corporation and FCMAT's nearly 20 years of assisting California's local education agencies (LEAs) through on-site fieldwork and written reports. RAND is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decision-making through research and analysis in fields such as health, education, international affairs, and law and business.

A summary of the standards:

- Data and information contained in reports should be the best available.
- Recommendations should be logical, warranted by the findings, and explained thoroughly, with appropriate caveats.
- Reports should be accurate, understandable, well structured, and temperate in tone.
- Reports should be compelling, useful, and relevant to stakeholders and decision-makers.
- Reports should be objective, independent, and balanced.

## **Data and information contained in reports should be the best available.**

Data and other information are essential elements of the research and analysis required to produce a credible report. Research data, such as information gleaned from other districts or counties, statistics gathered from sources such as the Educational Data or Educational Demographics websites, and number data extracted from district records and documents is helpful in its ability to sustain findings and recommendations or to draw conclusions about the organization.

Data-generation methods and database fields should be clearly specified, and the data should be properly screened and manipulated. The study team should indicate limitations in the quality of available data. In addition, information presented as factual should be correct and the source should be verifiable.

To the extent possible, data should be verified using more than one source. Typically, you will verify information utilizing differing review functions. For example, you may notice something in a document that you review. During an interview, you ask a question to verify the information gathered during your document review is accurate. Finally, you observe something within the organization that is consistent with what you have learned through the interview and document review.

In some cases, it is not possible to verify the data despite using multiple sources. You were asked to participate in this work because you have significant background, experience and expertise in the field of study. When other methods fail, FCMAT depends on your professional judgment to make decisions regarding the viability of information and data.

## **Recommendations should be logical, warranted by the findings, and explained thoroughly, with appropriate caveats.**

FCMAT staff and consultants are highly accountable for the courses of action they recommend. Because of the nature of our mission, the actions of decision-makers relying on our reports may affect the resources or well-being of many individuals. For this reason, recommendations must follow logically from a study's findings and implications and be strongly supported by them.

Particularly when recommending courses of action, the report should include caveats to help ensure that it is not applied to inappropriate cases or with unrealistic expectations.

Utilize a common numbering convention for findings and recommendations. This helps the FCMAT staff writers keep track of multiple findings in the same area of study and determine which findings and recommendations go together. The consultant may provide further explanatory text in italics or in parentheses to communicate to the job lead and FCMAT staff writers a rationale, context or more information to assist in composing the final report.

### **Reports should be accurate, understandable, well structured, and temperate in tone.**

A well-written report should be understandable to its intended audiences. Wording should be straightforward and precise. Necessary technical terms should be defined and explained. Graphics or pictorial elements should help explain complex concepts.

The report should be temperate in tone. It should sound engaged, but not emotional since that would indicate a lack of objectivity.

Except for state-mandated comprehensive reports, all FCMAT reports follow the same format. They begin with an introduction, followed by an executive summary, and then the findings and recommendations are presented by review area. The project lead is responsible for writing the introduction and executive summary, and the consultants are responsible for developing findings and recommendations.

### **Reports should be compelling, useful, and relevant to stakeholders and decision-makers.**

A high-quality report makes an impression and compels respectful attention; it cannot be ignored or dismissed by those working in the areas it addresses. FCMAT's studies focus on real-world problems and practical issues. Therefore, the report should be both interesting and useful.

FCMAT is widely respected for operating independently of political and commercial pressures. FCMAT's studies involve frequent interactions with its clients and other agencies, both publicly and privately run. These agencies are recognized as important sources of expertise. These interactions can help to ensure that the report is relevant and its recommendations are practical.

The timing and turnaround of these reports is important to FCMAT's clients, particularly when crucial budgetary and personnel decisions must be made. For that reason, the information from the professional consultants should be turned over to the project lead in a timely manner. Consultants should submit their report information to the project lead **no more than 14 calendar days** after their final day of fieldwork. The sooner FCMAT receives information, the more quickly we can provide the final report to the district or county office.

### **Reports should be objective, independent, and balanced.**

FCMAT's client agencies and working partners, as well as the general public, must be able to rely on and actively utilize FCMAT's work. FCMAT's reputation for objectivity and independence, combined with other aspects of quality, have instilled trust in its work throughout California.

FCMAT's research and resulting documentation seeks balance among competing perspectives by treating them fairly, portraying them accurately, and weighting them according to merit.

# Preparation of Consultant's Written Report

The written report should contain findings and analyses as well as resulting recommendations. It should be submitted to the FCMAT study team leader in the format described here within 14 calendar days of the completion of on-site fieldwork.

## Topic headings

Each major topic addressed in the report area should have a descriptive heading. For example, a typical fiscal review report might include the following topic headings:

- Accounting
- Budget Development
- Payroll
- Purchasing and Contracts
- Multiyear Financial projection

Recommendations should be provided together at the end of each topic section.

The pages following this section contain examples of findings and analyses with recommendations at the end.

Focusing on and adhering to your assigned topic area or areas is critical, particularly if you are working on only one or two portions of a report. Do not seek to address issues outside your assigned topic area.

## About Findings and Analyses

Findings and analyses are the heart of any FCMAT report. Their purpose is to clearly describe what is happening and how this affects or may affect the local educational agency (LEA) being reviewed.

Findings are to be based on the study team's observations, interviews, and document review. They should be clear, unequivocal, logical and justified by the data and evidence reviewed. Interwoven with the findings should be equally clear and justifiable statements of analysis that compellingly describe the present and sometimes potential future effects of the findings on the LEA. When warranted, analyses should contain statements of caution and acknowledge the possibility of multiple courses of action or outcomes.

## About Recommendations

Recommendations describe what the LEA should do to correct the current condition or conditions described in the findings and analyses section.

Recommendations should flow naturally from and be warranted by the preceding findings and analyses narrative. They should be specific and well delineated to avoid confusion regarding their scope and application. They should not be a surprise to any reader who has absorbed the preceding findings and analyses.

Recommendations should be presented in a numbered list and should be short and succinct.

It is permissible to have a finding and analysis without a corresponding recommendation, but not to provide a recommendation without a preceding and directly related finding and analysis.

# Audience and Writing Style

FCMAT reports become public documents with a broad audience that can include education administrators, board members, the public, legislators and the media. It is therefore imperative that consultants define industry-specific terms and acronyms and strive to write a straightforward and concise narrative that will be useful and relevant to a broad range of readers. Narratives should be free of jargon, repetition and excess verbiage. Your written submission should contribute substantially to FCMAT's final goal of a report that is widely accessible, professionally compelling, measured, and temperate.

## Sources and Attribution

Professional data and/or quotations from sources other than the FCMAT study team are used in some reports and often provide support for analyses or recommendations. Consultants should ensure that any outside sources used are of the highest professional quality. Proper attribution and a complete source citation should be included with any such information.

## A Deficit Model of Reporting

Educational agencies contact FCMAT for assistance with areas in which they face difficulties. Therefore, FCMAT reports typically focus on these areas and on recommendations for improvement. Areas that do not need improvement may receive brief mention if they fall within the scope of study; however, avoid praise for or detailed findings and analyses of an area of operation that is functioning effectively. This information may be communicated verbally at the conclusion of fieldwork if desired, but is neither part of FCMAT's purview nor an effective use of FCMAT's resources when producing a final report.

## Part of a Larger Process

The report or section that you submit is vitally important, appreciated and highly valued. Like all FCMAT publications, it will undergo rigorous review, revision and professional editing by FCMAT's writers and management staff to ensure that it meets both FCMAT's standards and the client's needs.

## Questions

If you are uncertain about the approach to take with any topic, contact your FCMAT team leader for further guidance. He or she will be able to provide you with support and advice as well as samples of reports that have addressed the same or similar topics.

# **Examples of Written Findings and Recommendations**



## Staff Turnover and Training

Except for management positions, FCMAT found that the HR Department experiences significant turnover each year.

Throughout the interviews, it was apparent management and staff were either uninformed or have not attended recent training on relevant HR issues. After reviewing the professional development schedule, it appears that staff are trained internally, if at all, so outdated processes continue.

HR staff training needs should be identified yearly, an annual plan should be put in writing, and staff should receive the training necessary to better support the district. Although all nonmanagers in the department shared their desk manuals with FCMAT, many of the manuals had been developed for FCMAT's visit. Ideally, each position in HR should have a process and procedural manual already in place. These manuals should be updated consistently and should be easy for other staff members or new employees to access and understand. No lag should occur in the training of new employees if the manuals are used as intended, which was not the situation during FCMAT's visit. HR staff should be able to continue departmental operations when there is an unexpected vacancy. Based on the interviews, this is not the case.

Although staff seemed qualified for positions, they were not well trained or knowledgeable of their roles. Updating the manuals will assist during cross training, as newer staff members are added, existing duties are added or changed, as procedures and technology continue to change and as overall improvements are made.

Another potential cause of staff turnover was the lack of clear expectations from management. Ideally, written expectations of staff should be shared and reviewed periodically, and used during the evaluation process. It also would be highly advisable for management to develop a training schedule for new staff. This would allow HR staff to understand their role, provide better customer service in their interactions, and provide correct information in a timely manner. There are highly technical aspects of the HR Department such as credentialing, leaves, contract management and workers' compensation. It was evident that staff, including managers, are unaware of relevant laws or utilize their own interpretation of former employees' practices. This is concerning, as human resources laws are constantly changing, and a mistake in the HR Department could be costly to the district.

## Recommendations

*The district should:*

1. Examine the turnover rate of the HR Department and make a better determination of why employees are departing.
2. Develop and provide clear, written expectations of HR staff.
3. Ensure that staff and management attend training related to relevant HR issues so that processes and procedures are no longer dated or misinterpreted.
4. Redesign the training schedule for HR staff.
5. Create a professional development schedule for all staff, including management.
6. Identify HR staff training needs annually in writing and ensure staff receive the training necessary to better support the district.
7. Evaluate all staff, including management, to ensure they meet expectations.

8. Continue to update desk manuals consistently.
9. Ensure that new staff are provided guidance and training to be successful.

## **Budget Development**

The district adopts its annual budget within the statutory timelines established by EC Section 42127, which requires that on or before July 1, the governing board hold a public hearing on the budget to be adopted for the subsequent fiscal year. No later than five days after the adoption, or by July 1, whichever occurs first, the governing board is required to file that budget with the county office of education. A school district budget communicates how the district intends to achieve its educational goals and objectives. The document is also the primary means by which the school board and administration demonstrate to the community their stewardship of public resources. The process used to develop the budget and the format of the related documents are essential to ensuring these criteria are met. Effective budget development also includes the dissemination of a detailed budget calendar, allowing staff members to be aware of applicable deadlines.

Budget development is a complex and detailed process that begins in January, or earlier, of the preceding fiscal year. During budget development, personnel changes are reviewed and updated, revenues are estimated, and a district prioritizes its goals and ensures that expenditures reflect these goals. The district uses Budget Pro software, available through the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE), to manage personnel costs. Budget Pro is a position control system that is integrated with the county payroll system, HR 2.0; therefore, the data is current.

The district uses an outside contractor to assist with enrollment projections. The business services staff, under the direction of the assistant superintendent of business services, would develop enrollment and ADA projections based on the third-party analysis. Revenue is adjusted based on change in enrollment and staff is adjusted accordingly. Due to the assistant superintendent of business services' vacancy, both the enrollment and staffing projections are now reviewed with the assistant superintendent of human resources.

School site allocations are based on a dollar amount per pupil based on spring enrollment. Business services staff make adjustments to site personnel costs. A cost projection tool is provided to the site/departments if they desire to add labor costs. Those additional labor costs are reviewed and approved by human resources and business services. According to interviews, the business services department meets with individual site administrators or department directors to align their discretionary budgets to their department or school site priorities. In some cases, discretionary budgets are rolled over from prior years because not all site administrators or department directors elect to meet with the business services staff. This may be because staff do not have a good understanding of their budgets and would rather not have to manage them. However, interviews indicated that site administrators or department directors want to better understand their site budgets, and collaboration in this process would help create a sense of shared ownership and responsibility, a better understanding of budgetary issues and possibly fewer budget transfers during the year.

School sites and departments are allowed to carry over 10% of their discretionary funds and may exceed that percentage if a detailed plan has been approved. Estimated carryover of unspent funds from the current year is not included in the budget development. Upon completion of the unaudited actuals all verified carryover balances are allocated to the appropriate site/department with the first interim financial report.

With the institution of the Local Control Accountability Plan, school budgets are required to be aligned with the goals and objectives established by district staff and community members. Therefore, when providing direction on the budget, the board should not focus on specific line items but on resource allocations de-

signed specifically to meet the district's goals. The board should then direct the staff to design an expenditure plan that meets the needs of students and the district.

Budget development is primarily performed by the assistant superintendent of business services and the executive director of business services. The district lacks a detailed budget calendar and does not use desk manuals for budget development. The primary sources of information are the OCDE business advisory bulletins, SSC dartboard, and FCMAT's LCFF Calculator. Additionally, district BP 3100 states that "the Governing Board may appoint a budget advisory committee ..." and interviews indicated that one has existed previously but is not currently functional. A budget advisory committee can assist in review and development of the district's budget. This allows the community and staff the opportunity to offer input and feedback on any funding reduction and other expenditure adjustments. The district has a history of experiencing significant increases in the ending fund balances compared to budgeted amounts at the close of the fiscal year. These increases have lessened credibility among district financial report users and other interested parties. Thorough budget development utilizing a budget advisory committee could help avoid such issues.

## Recommendations

*The district should:*

1. Create a budget development calendar that includes specific functions, the staff member responsible for each task, and the due date for each specific function.
2. Develop formal budget development guidelines to use along with the OCDE bulletins and ensure that these guidelines are reviewed with all staff involved in budget development.
3. Avoid rolling over budgets. Instead, analyze unspent budgets to determine whether to allow sites/departments to carry over unspent funds into the next year.
4. Make it mandatory for site administrators and department directors to participate in developing their budgets each spring for the upcoming fiscal year.
5. Design budget materials and offer a workshop to site and department staff to provide the tools and knowledge needed for budget development.
6. Ensure that site administrators and department directors have online, read-only access to all the accounts they oversee as well as the training needed to understand their budget reports.
7. Establish a budget advisory committee to improve fiscal openness and credibility.

## Competitive Food Sales

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 specifies that nutrition standards apply to all foods sold outside the school meal programs, on the school campus, and at any time during the school day. These changes are intended to improve the health and well-being of the nation's children, increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day, and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits. The standards for food and beverages are minimum standards that local educational agencies, school food authorities and schools are required to meet.

Competitive foods and beverages are those sold at school sites outside of and in competition with the federally reimbursable meal programs. Examples of competitive foods and beverages include those sold

during the school day in student stores, a la carte items sold by the food service department, and items sold at fundraisers. More detailed information can be found at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/compfoods.asp>. Quick reference cards that concisely outline the foods allowed and the food sale regulations for schools can be found in the appendix of this report and at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/documents/compfoodrefcard.doc>. It would benefit the district to add CDE's quick reference cards to its wellness information on the Child Nutrition Services Department website and to provide them to school offices, student clubs and parent teacher associations. The department website is well done and provides much information, and this would be a good addition.

In addition to complying with nutritional requirements such as fat, calorie, sugar, whole grain, and sodium limits, student organizations at middle and high schools must comply with the following regulations (California Code of Regulations Title 5 Section 15501):

1. Up to three types of foods or beverages may be sold each day (e.g., chips, sandwiches, juices, etc.).
2. Food or beverage item(s) must be preapproved by the governing board of the school district.
3. Only one student organization is allowed to sell each day.
4. In addition to the one organization a day, all organizations may sell foods four times a year, all on the same four days. School administration may set these dates.
5. Food(s) or beverage(s) cannot be prepared on campus.
6. The food or beverage categories sold cannot be the same as those sold in the food service program at that school during the same school day.

These rules must be followed on school campuses from midnight until 30 minutes after the end of the school day. This includes vending machines being locked.

During staff interviews and in site observations, the study team was made aware that some high schools do not meet regulations with student store sales. The team visited the student store at Norte Vista High School during the lunch period and found that the store offered a large variety of snacks and beverages, considerably more than three types of foods. The store had a variety of chips, corn nuts, Pop Tarts, Rice Krispy treats, jerky, fruit roll-ups, juice bars, ice cream, Powerade, water, and juices, and students were baking cookies (which is considered on-site preparation). The store sold many of the same foods as the food service program. The teacher at the store indicated that daily income is \$200-\$300. The food service program's a la carte sales for October 2018 averaged \$134 per day, and the student store likely affects these sales.

The teacher showed the study team a notebook that listed the nutritional analysis for the products sold. She stated that all the items are tested in the Smart Snack Calculator located on the Child Nutrition Services Department website. This calculator is from the USDA and determines if nutritional information on product labels meet the regulations for food sales. The instructor was aware of the nutritional guidelines, but did not seem to be aware of the limit on the number of items that can be sold and that the student store cannot sell items also offered by food service. A copy of CDE's quick reference card with food sale regulations was in the front of the notebook; therefore, it appears that guidance has been provided to schools. The district's Student Wellness Policy and board policy and administrative regulations regarding competitive foods address the regulations; however, sites do not fully understand them and/or there is a lack of oversight regarding competitive food sales. Staff indicated there were similar issues with student stores on the other high school campuses.

Although the study team was not made aware of any other areas of noncompliance with competitive foods regulations, such as those for fundraisers, there could be some that food service and district staff do not know about. Failure to abide by competitive food sales requirements may result in the state withholding federal and state meal reimbursements, even when school sites and not the Child Nutrition Services Department cause violations. It is vital that the district educate staff and students about these issues and enforce the requirements.

The nutrition specialist is the co-coordinator of the district Wellness Committee, and competitive food sales should be an item that she routinely discusses with site administrators and reviews at least annually in Wellness Committee meetings. Parents, students and staff at all schools should be regularly reminded about the requirements for food sales. Board Policy 5030, Student Wellness, states that the public shall be informed about the content and implementation of the district's wellness policy on an annual basis.

## **Recommendations**

*The district should:*

1. Review competitive food sale regulations with all site staff and students and ensure that all groups follow them.
2. Ensure that site administrators and child nutrition management staff monitor food sales to ensure compliance.
3. Ensure that student stores comply with regulations regarding the number of items that can be sold, that items sold cannot be the same as the food service program, and that food cannot be prepared (including baking cookies) on campus.
4. Add CDE's quick reference cards to the Child Nutrition Services Department website and make them readily available to school sites, student clubs and parent-teacher associations.
5. Review the Student Wellness Policy, including competitive food sale compliance annually with sites and the public.
6. Ensure food service management staff routinely discusses competitive food sale regulations with site administrators and at Wellness Committee meetings.

# Using SharePoint

## FCMAT uses SharePoint for the following purposes:

- To serve as a document repository and;
- To enable collaborative document editing capabilities.

## Document Repository

Every FCMAT “Final Report” requires the collection, creation, storage and review of multiple documents. These documents include:

- The Study Agreement that outlines the job scope;
- Consultant contracts in which the terms for participation on a review team are specified for individual FCMAT consultants;
- Documents supplied by the client in response to a document request list;
- Documents supplied and/or created by FCMAT consultants during fieldwork;
- Documents created by FCMAT consultants during the report writing phase;
- Exit letters, management letters, and reports in various stages of completion.

The use of SharePoint provides a single, secure and reliable repository for these and many other types of documents.

## Creating Your SharePoint Account

FCMAT implemented a SharePoint system to manage all FCMAT jobs. All consultants are required to obtain a FCMAT account before accessing the new SharePoint site.

You will receive an email from [contact@fcmat.org](mailto:contact@fcmat.org) containing the link to create your new FCMAT account. If it does not appear, you may need to check your spam filter.

A FCMAT staff member will initiate the SharePoint account creation process when you have been assigned to a job. You will receive an e-mail similar to the one presented in Figure 1 below.

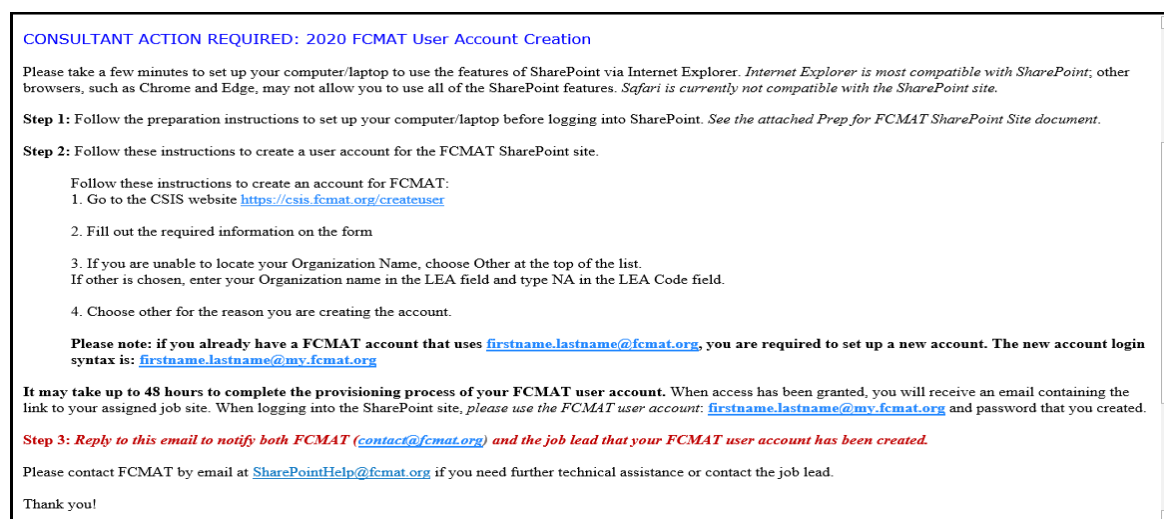


Figure 1

Alternatively, you may request a SharePoint account by contacting the SharePoint help desk via email at [SharePointHelp@fcmat.org](mailto:SharePointHelp@fcmat.org).

SharePoint will send an e-mail similar to the one presented above to you containing instructions on how to create your SharePoint account.

**Follow the steps outlined below to create your new SharePoint account.**

Complete the new user form and then select **Submit** (see Figure 2 below).

**Create New User**

All fields are required.

First Name

Last Name

Email  
  
Please put a valid email address. This would be used to recover your password, incase you forget it.

Password

**PASSWORD REQUIREMENTS:**

- Between 8 and 16 characters long
- At least one lowercase character
- At least one uppercase character
- At least one number 0 - 9
- At least one symbol such as @ # \$ % ^ & \* - \_ ! + = [ ] { } | \ : ; , . ? / ' ~ ( ) ;

Confirm password

Organization Name

LEA name

LEA Code

Tell us why you are creating an account

**Submit**

Figure 2



Once your SharePoint account has been completed, you will receive an e-mail, similar to the one presented in Figure 3 below, containing the job site link to your assigned job.

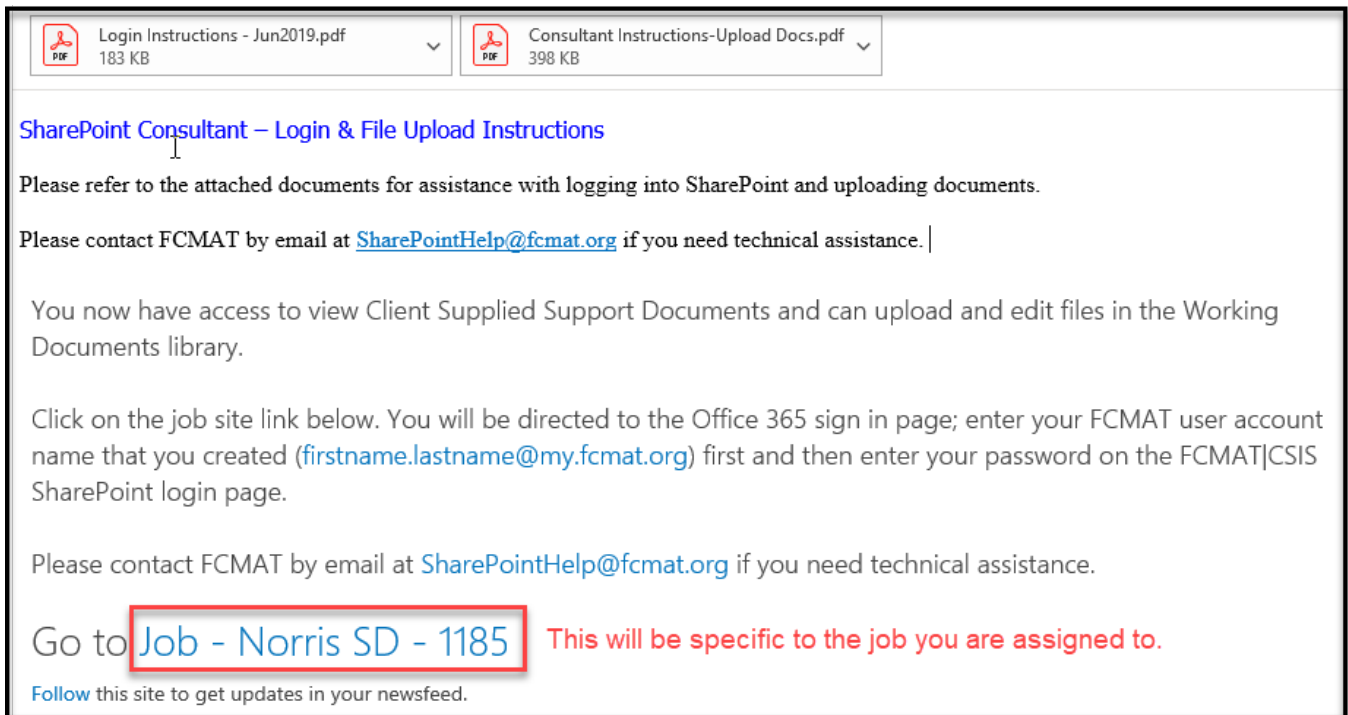
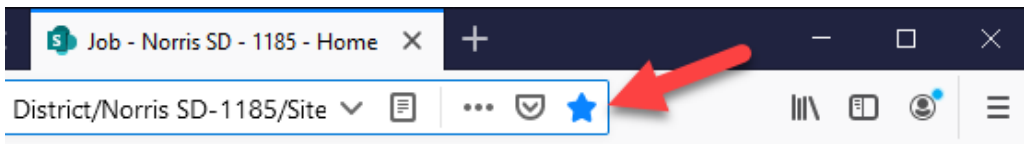


Figure 3

Click on the job site link inside the red box shown above and then **bookmark the job site URL to the Bookmarks Toolbar on your web browser** (see Figure 4 below). Refer to your saved bookmark(s) for easy access to your assigned job site(s).

Figure 4



**NOTE:** You will receive a separate e-mail each time you are assigned to a job.

Please send an email to [SharePointHelp@fcmat.org](mailto:SharePointHelp@fcmat.org) or contact the job lead if you have any questions or need further assistance.

# Logging into SharePoint for the First Time

## Access Job Landing Page

To access the basic consultant landing page on the FCMAT SharePoint Site, follow the SharePoint link found on the FCMAT website at [FCMAT.org](https://www.fcmat.org) (see Figure 5 below).



Figure 5

Scroll to the bottom of the [FCMAT.org](https://www.fcmat.org) home page until you see the turquoise-blue ribbon and then follow the **For Staff & Consultants** link (see Figure 6 below).



Figure 6

You will be taken to the For Staff & Consultants web page where the SharePoint link is found (see Figure 7 below).

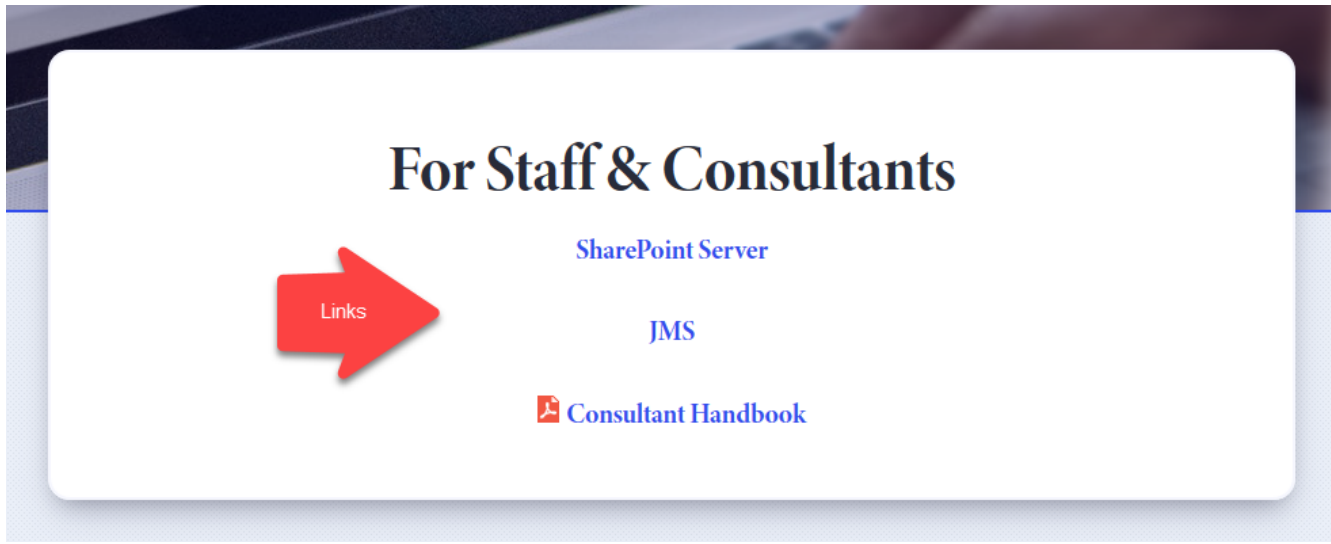


Figure 7

Alternatively, you may select the URL below to access the SharePoint site.

[https://fcmat2.sharepoint.com/sites/fcmat\\_jobs/pages/jobslandingpage.aspx](https://fcmat2.sharepoint.com/sites/fcmat_jobs/pages/jobslandingpage.aspx)

**Follow the steps outlined below to login to your new SharePoint account.**

1. Enter your FCMAT username on the Office 365 sign in page (see figure 8 below).

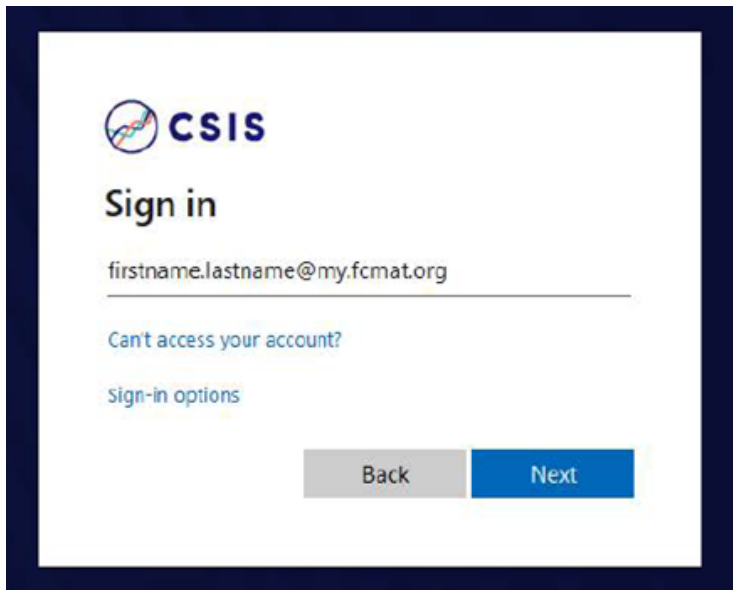


Figure 8

2. After entering your username (firstname.lastname@my.fcmat.org), you will be redirected to the FCMAT/CSIS SharePoint Login page. Enter your password (see Figure 9 below).

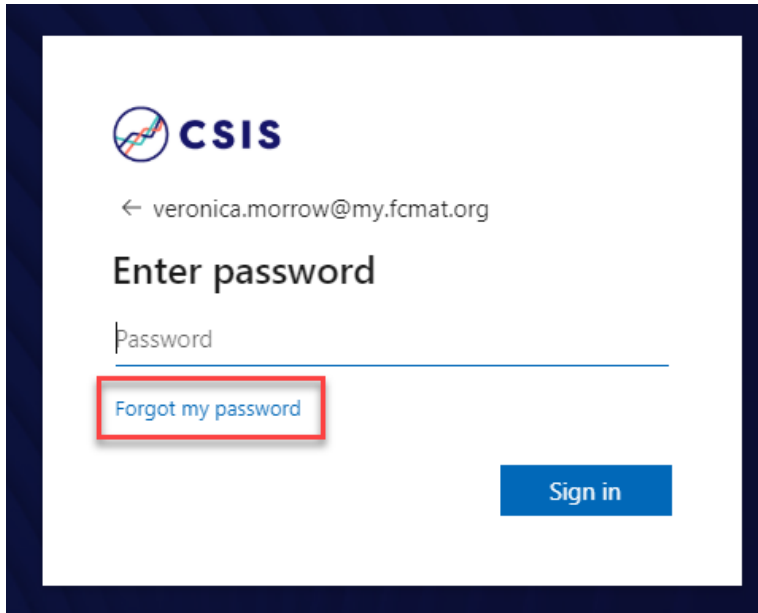


Figure 9

If you need to reset your password, click on the “Forgot my password” link inside the red box shown above on the login page.

Once you’ve logged in successfully, SharePoint will respond with a screen, known as the **Jobs** landing page, displaying all of the current and recent jobs that you, as a consultant, have been assigned to (see Figure 10 below).

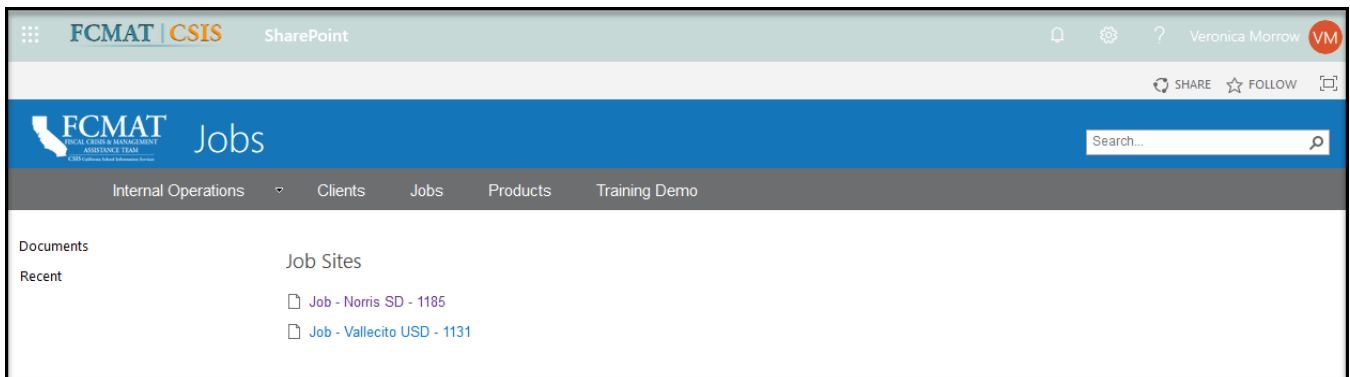


Figure 10

You will have access to the **Job Sites** library and **Account Manager** for your account (see Figure 11 below). Your assigned jobs will be listed in the **Job Sites** library on the **Jobs** landing page.

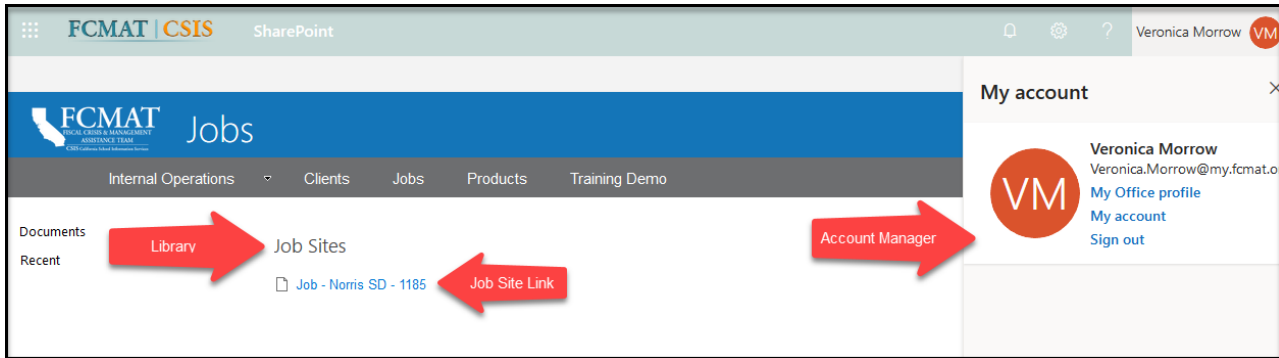


Figure 11

In the **Job Sites** library, you will be able to access your assigned job site(s). In **Account Manager**, you will be able to update your profile information under the **My Office Profile** option, change your password under the **My Account** option, and sign out of SharePoint under the **Sign out** option.

Please contact FCMAT at [SharePointHelp@fcmat.org](mailto:SharePointHelp@fcmat.org) if you have been contracted to serve as a consultant on a review but do not see an item associated with that job in your **Job Sites** library.

## What Can/Can't I Do After Logging In?

As a consultant, please know your access will be limited to only the consultant navigation items.

For example, you will have access to the **Job Sites** library and **Account Manager**. However, many of the items listed in the gray ribbon are peripheral systems that require login credentials (see Figure 12 below).

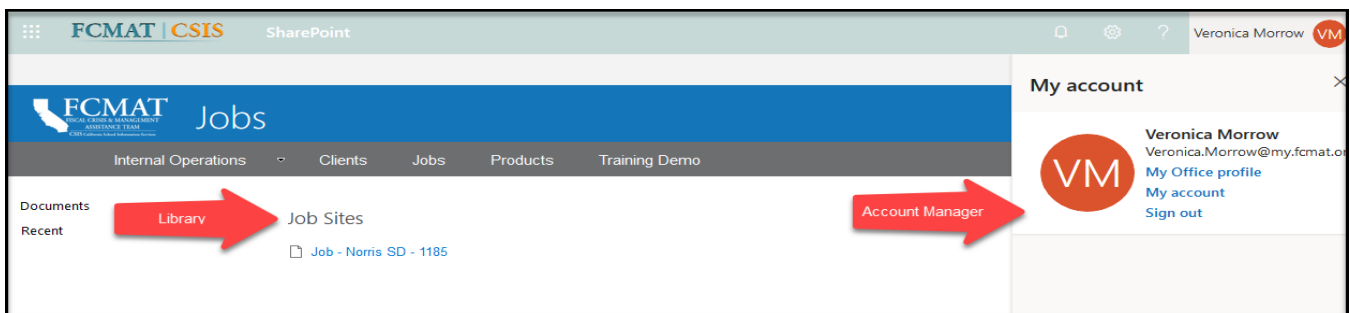
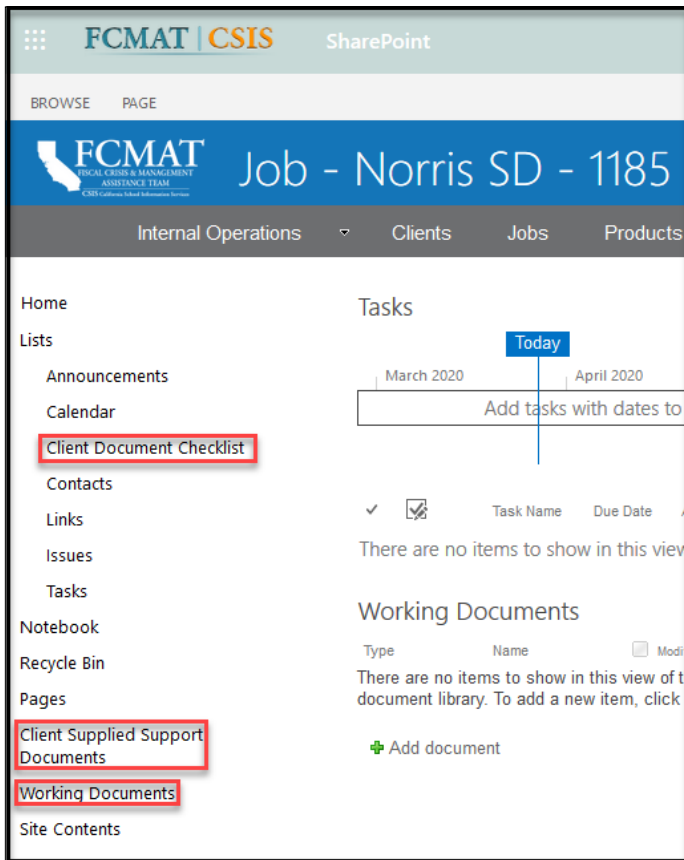


Figure 12

One of the first things to gain your attention after accessing a job site will be the navigation items displayed on the left side of the screen (see Figure 13 below).



Most of your SharePoint work will be conducted using the Client Document Checklist, the Client Supplied Support Documents library, and the Working Documents library.

The Lists library contains the Client Document Checklist that is used to obtain documents and/or files from the client.

Contact your job lead for more information and assistance regarding your assignment.

Figure 13

Your access to and purpose for each of the libraries is outlined below.

<p><b>Client Supplied Support Documents</b></p>	<p>E-mail messages, spreadsheets, documents, databases, portable document format files (PDFs), and files from applications such as PowerPoint, Visio, Project, etc. as supplied by the client.                  Note: All files uploaded to this folder are designated as “originals” and must remain unaltered so that authenticity as “unaltered original documentation” can be validated in court if necessary.                  Consultant can access? Yes                  Consultant can add files? Yes                  Consultant can add subfolder(s)? Yes                  Primary contributors: Job lead, assigned consultant(s), assigned client staff</p>
<p><b>Working Documents</b></p>	<p>E-mail messages, spreadsheets, documents, databases, PDFs, and files from applications such as PowerPoint, Visio, Project, etc. as supplied by job lead, assigned FCMAT staff, and assigned consultants.                  Consultant can access? Yes                  Consultant can add files? Yes                  Consultant can add subfolder(s)? Yes                  Primary contributor(s): Job lead, assigned consultant(s)</p>
<p><b>Final Documents</b></p>	<p>Limited to completed final versions of deliverables, in PDF format (Exit Letter, Final Report, 6-Month Follow-up Letter, etc.).                  Consultant can access? Yes                  Consultant can add files? No                  Consultant can add subfolders? No</p>

# Uploading a File to SharePoint

The steps outlined below describe the process of uploading documents to SharePoint.

1. Select Working Documents from the left-hand menu (see Figure 14 below)

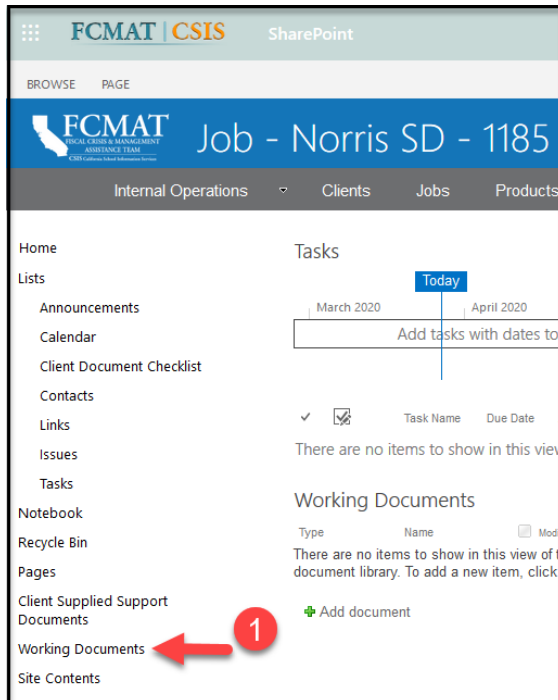


Figure 14

2. Select Upload
3. Browse to access the file/document on your computer and select it to upload (*Do not upload folders*)
4. Enter Version Comments. e.g., First Upload (see Figure 15 below)

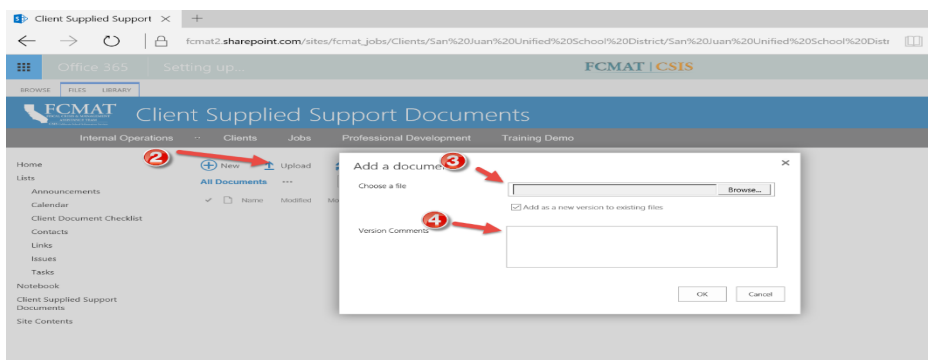


Figure 15

5. The document metadata form will appear as shown below; Enter the Title of the Document
6. Select Document Type and Fiscal Year from the drop-down lists. Select Document Status from the drop-down list

7. Select Document ID from the drop-down list
8. Select Save (see Figure 16 below)

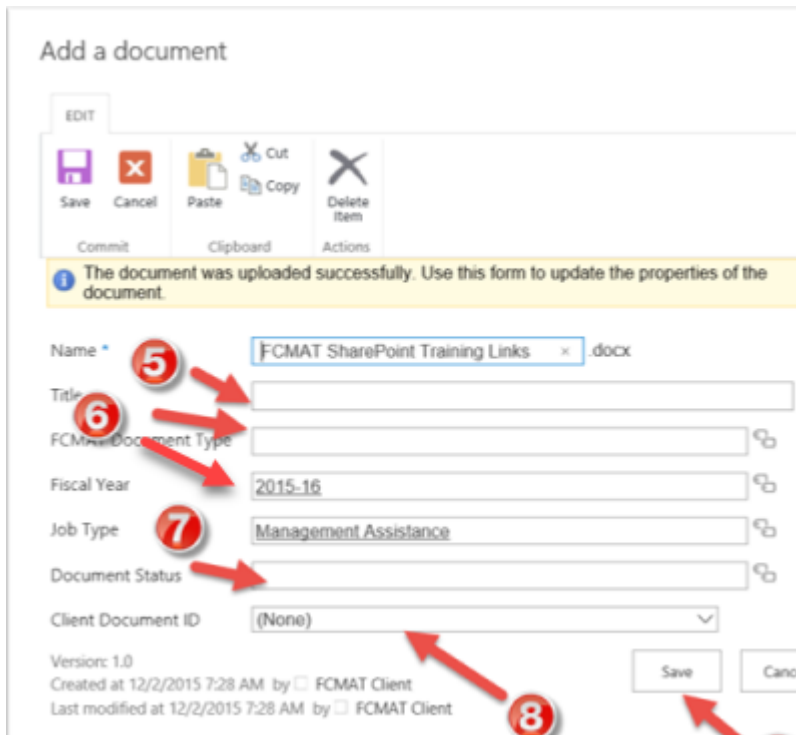


Figure 16

9. Please make sure that each file is checked in before leaving the webpage (see Figure 17 below).

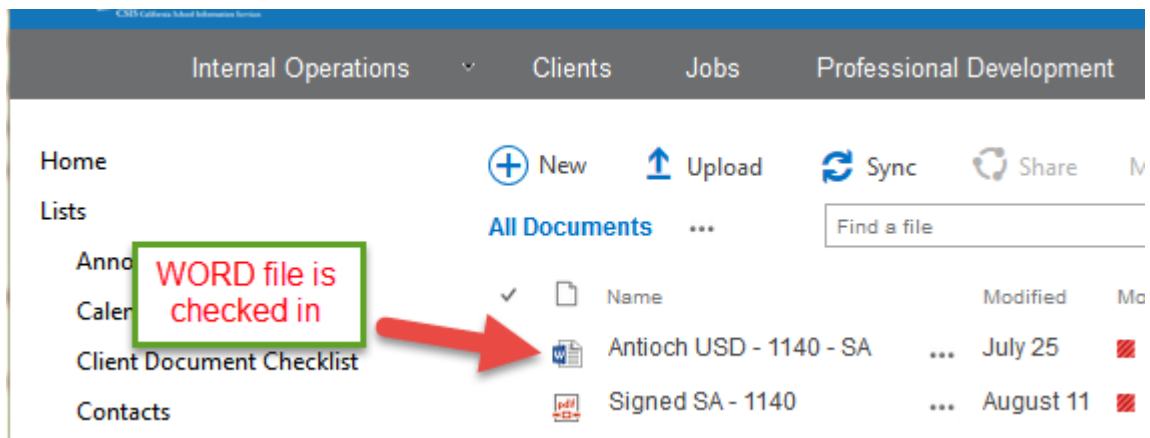


Figure 17



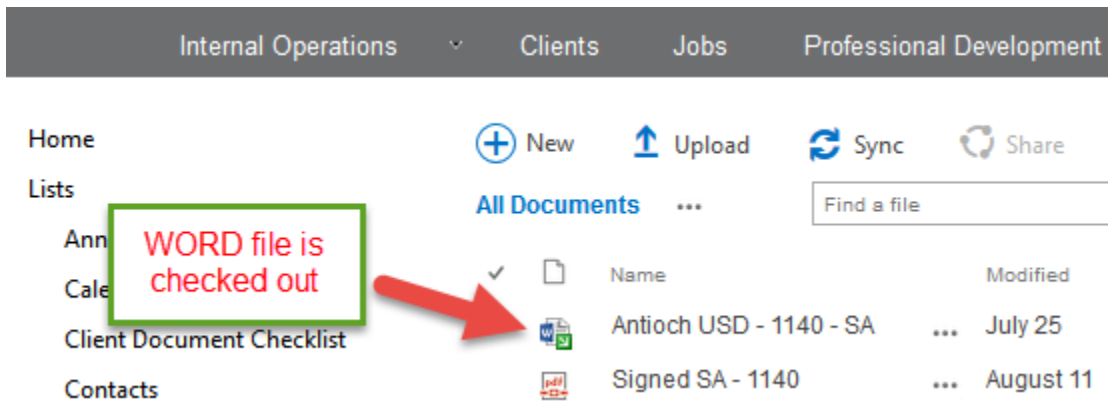


Figure 18

10. To check in a file, select the file by placing a check mark next to it and then right-click for more options.
11. Click on Check In and then add “First Upload” to the version comment box. Click OK (see Figure 19 below)

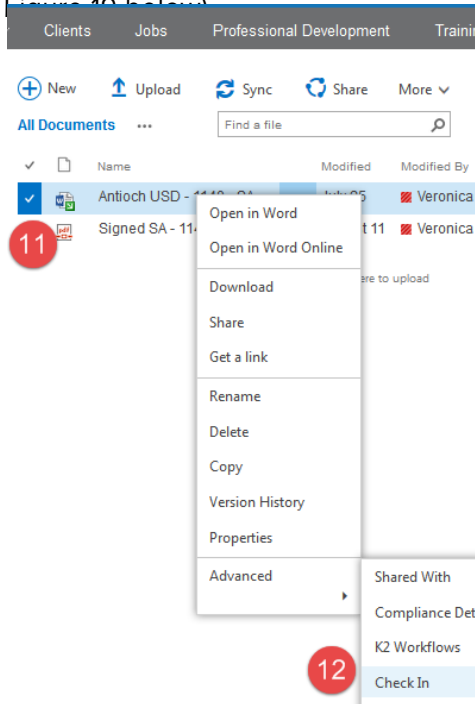


Figure 19

Please send an email to [SharePointHelp@fcmat.org](mailto:SharePointHelp@fcmat.org) or contact the job lead if you have any questions or need further assistance.

# Uploading Multiple Files to SharePoint

The steps outlined below describe the process of uploading multiple documents to SharePoint.

1. Open OneDrive or the SharePoint site library (see Figure 20 below).

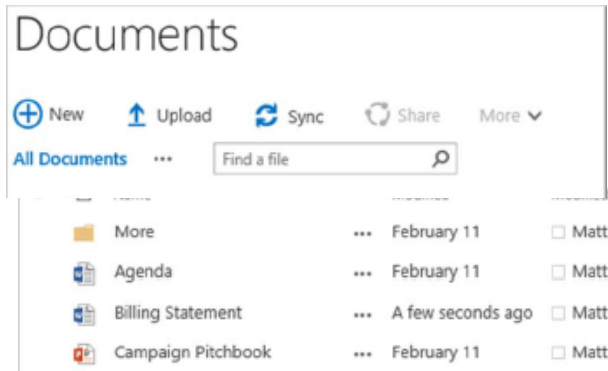



Figure 20

2. On your computer click Start  and then click File Explorer (see Figure 21 below).

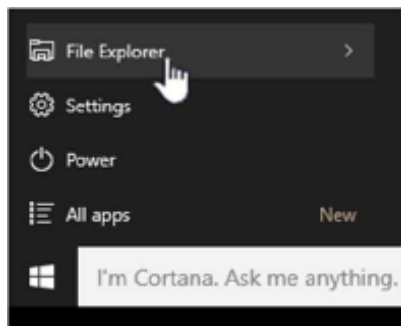


Figure 21

3. Navigate to the folder with the documents that you want to upload.
4. Drag the files to the space in the SharePoint library where it says drag files here. The library should display “Drop here” when you hover the file over it (see Figure 22 below).

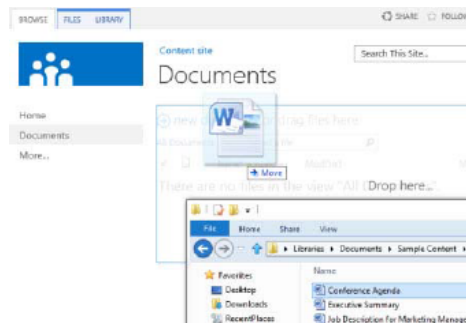


Figure 22

You should see your files appear in the document library as they come in.

# Naming Conventions for Files That You Upload

The established SharePoint folder structure is a FCMAT filing system – *not* an individual filing system. To be successful, certain rules must be consistently enforced and adhered to by everyone who uses the system.

## File Naming Convention

Generally, consultants will need to upload the following types of files:

- Fieldwork notes
- Documents obtained from the client
- External documents obtained from a non-client source (e.g. the client is a school district however you obtain a revenue limit calculation report from the county office of education)
- Draft reports

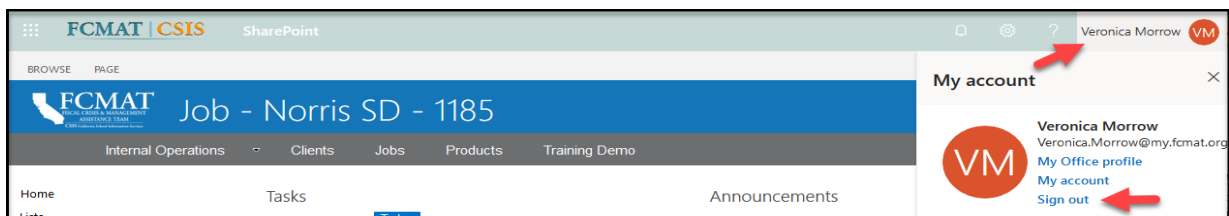
Naming conventions for each of these types of documents is provided below.

If the document type is...	then the filename convention is:
Client-supplied Documents	No naming convention
External Documents	No naming convention
Fieldwork Notes	<LEA Name> Fieldwork Notes <Date> Escondido Union SD Fieldwork Notes 8-16-10 Alameda USD Fieldwork Notes 7-24-10 Peralta CCD Fieldwork Notes 2-15-10
Draft Report	<LEA Name> Draft Report <Date> Escondido Union SD Draft Report 8-16-10 Alameda USD Draft Report 7-24-10 Peralta CCD Draft Report 2-15-10

## Logging out of SharePoint

It’s always a good idea to logout of SharePoint when you are finished working. Logging out prevents unauthorized users from gaining access to the system. The steps outlined below describe the process of logging out of SharePoint.

1. Click on your name in the upper right-hand corner of the screen to access **Account**



**Manager** (see Figure 23 below).

Figure 23

2. Click on the **Sign Out** option.

# **Using the Job Management System (JMS)**

# Job Management System

The Job Management System (JMS) provides consultants with information regarding the job(s)/review(s) they are assigned to. The JMS provides general information such as scope points and fieldwork dates. In addition, the JMS allows consultants to submit their expense claims, out-of-pocket expenses, and invoices to FCMAT.

The JMS login screen (see Figure 1 below) can be found online at: <https://admin.fcmat.org>

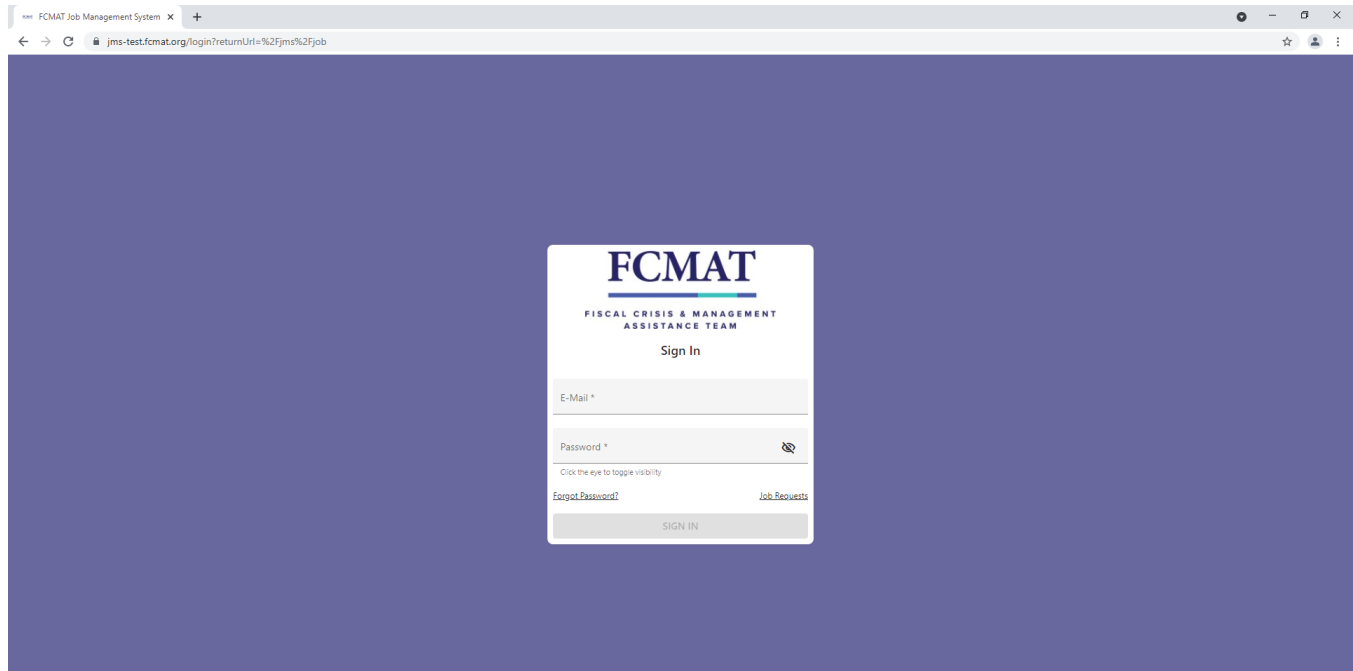


Figure 1

The JMS works best with Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge.

To log in, you will need your email address that is on file with FCMAT. The first time you access the system, enter your email address and click on “Forgot Password” on the main log in screen. The system will then send a link to your email. If you have any problems logging in to the JMS, please contact the Bakersfield FCMAT office at (661) 636-4611.

Once you have logged in successfully, the JMS will present the Jobs List screen (see Figure 2 below).

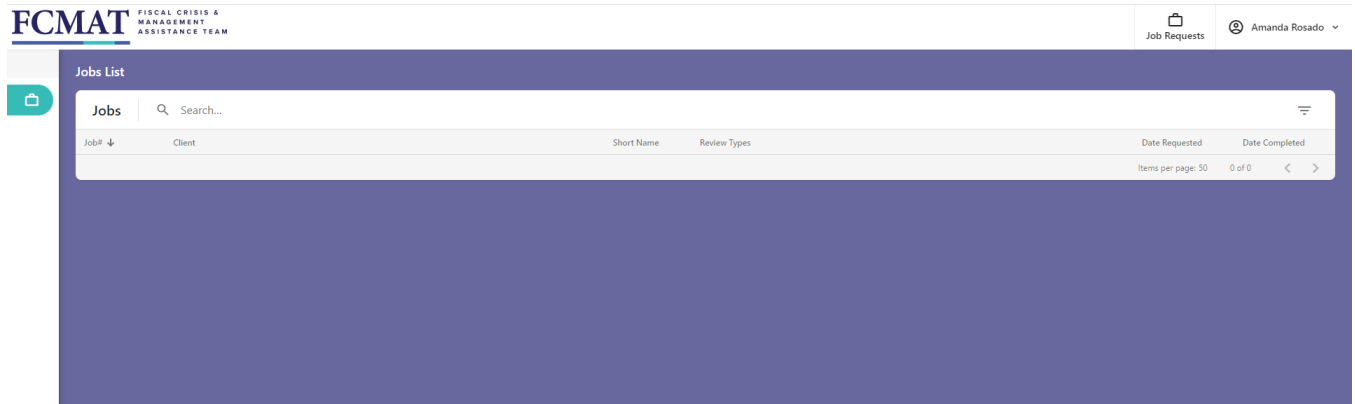


Figure 2

All jobs you have been assigned should show on this Jobs List screen. If you have not been assigned to any jobs yet, your Job List screen will be empty as it is in Figure 2 above.

Click on the name of your assigned job (if available). The JMS will respond by displaying the Job Info screen (see Figure 3 below). This is an example of a job where the Client name is “test”.

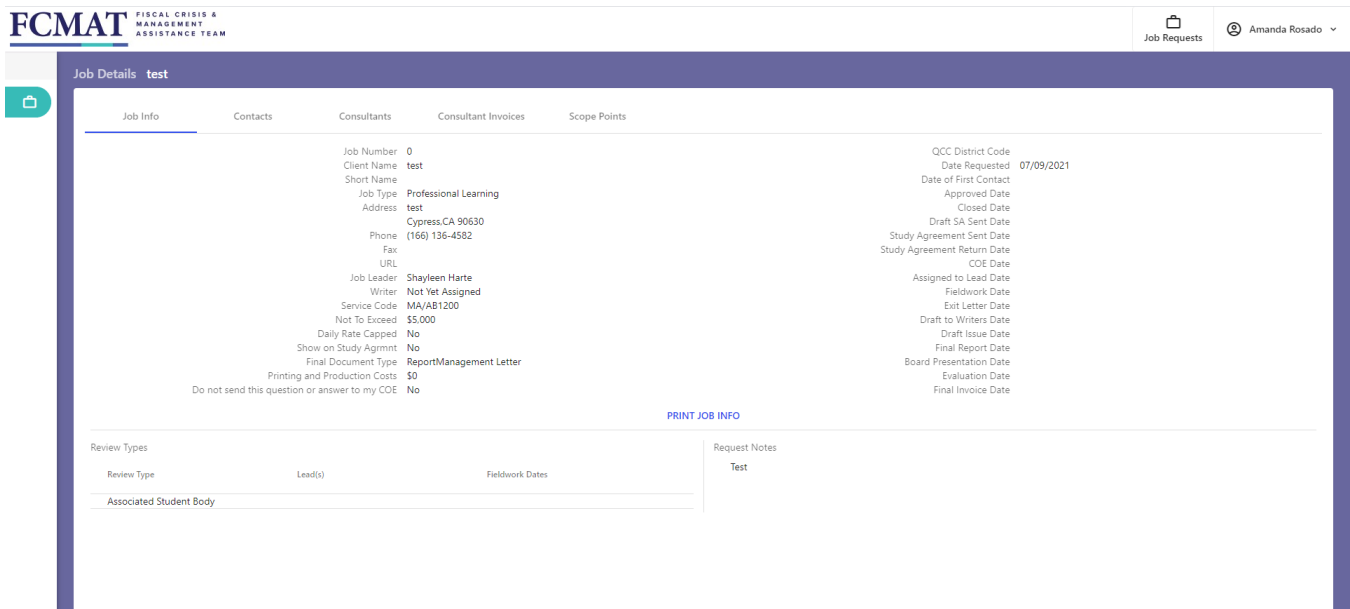


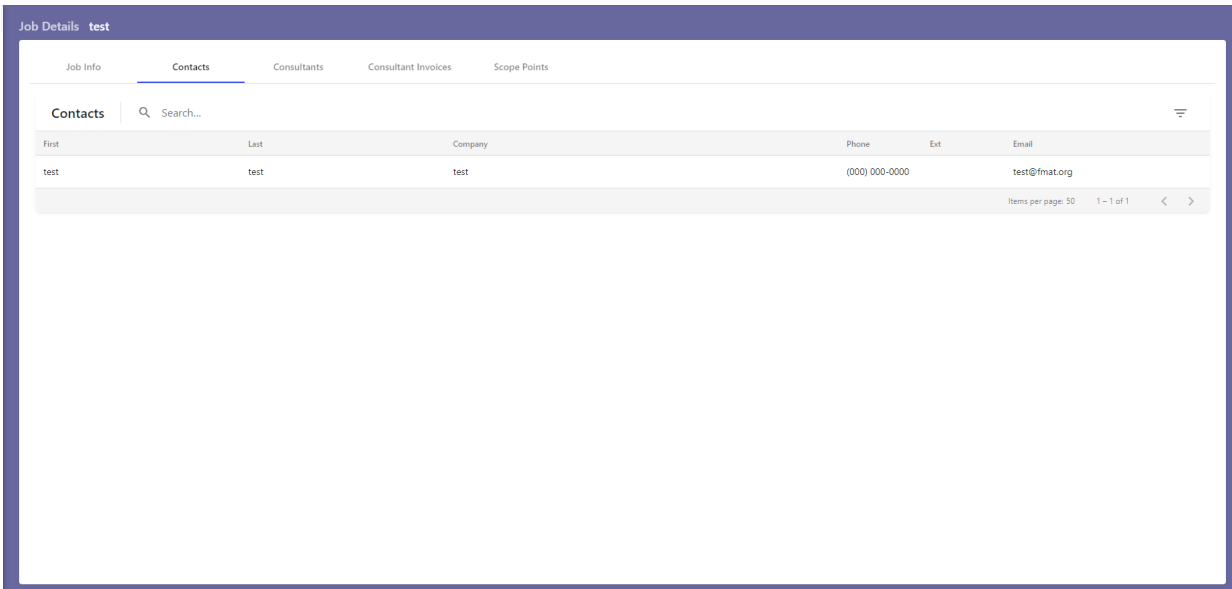
Figure 3

Five buttons are displayed across the top of the Job Info screen. These buttons allow a consultant to access a variety of information, submit invoices, and review the scope points associated with this job. The table below briefly describes each button and its function.

<b>Job Info</b>	Displays a variety of information about the client and milestone dates.
<b>Contacts</b>	Displays contact information for key individuals associated with the client for this job.
<b>Consultants</b>	Displays contact information for FCMAT team members (including consultants) for this job.
<b>Consultant Invoices</b>	Displays options that allow consultants to enter expense information and submit invoices to FCMAT. This is the screen that consultants typically use the most.
<b>Scope Points</b>	Displays the scope points for the job.

You’ve already seen the Job Info screen. The following pages provide a closer look at the other screens.

Use of the Contacts screen (see Figure 4 below) is optional. The screen can be used to collect and display contact information for a client’s staff members and those of the client’s county office of education.



**Figure 4**

**PLEASE NOTE:** Consultants are not to contact clients directly. All contact should be directed through the FCMAT job lead assigned to the review. If you are contacted by the client, please refer the caller to the assigned job lead.

Also, do not independently disclose findings and/or recommendations to the client. Doing so may jeopardize the integrity of the report and could result in your termination from the review team and/or suspension from future FCMAT assignments.

The Consultants screen (see Figure 5 below) is used to identify every team member who will participate on the job, and their role (e.g., job lead, lead consultant, consultant, writer).

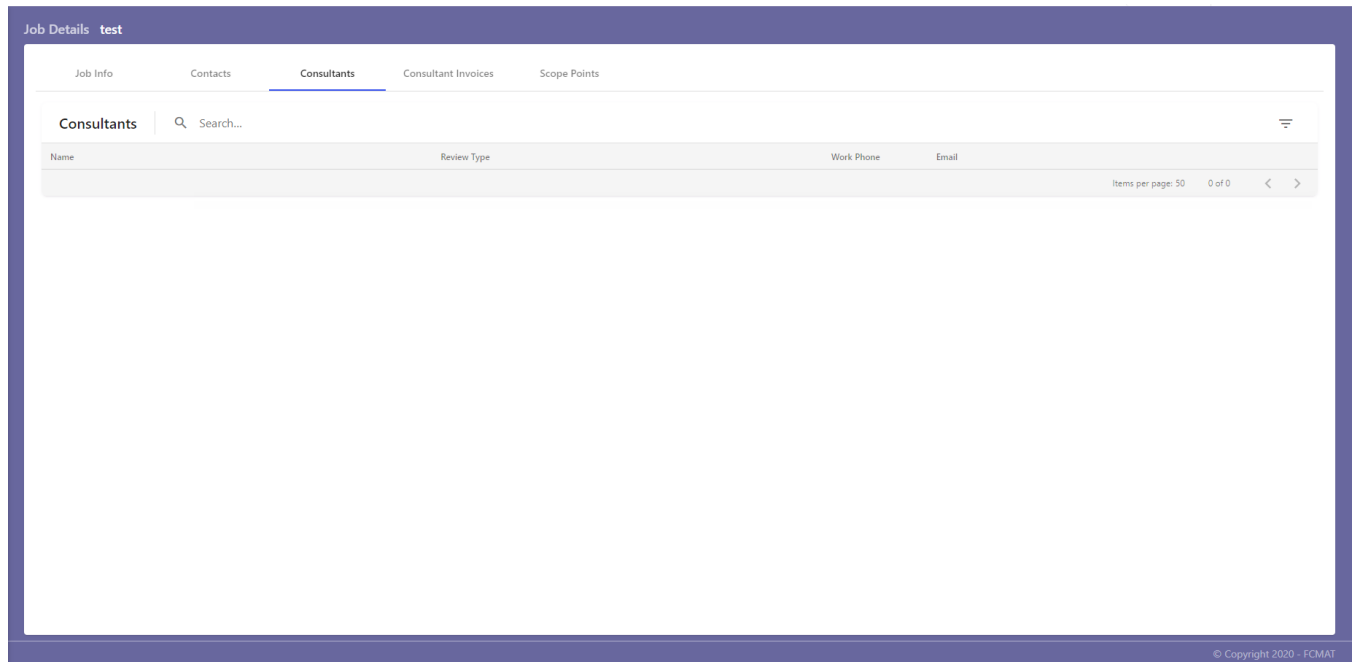


Figure 5

The Consultant Invoices screen (see Figure 6 below) is the screen you will use to invoice FCMAT for your services. Please submit your invoices in a timely manner.

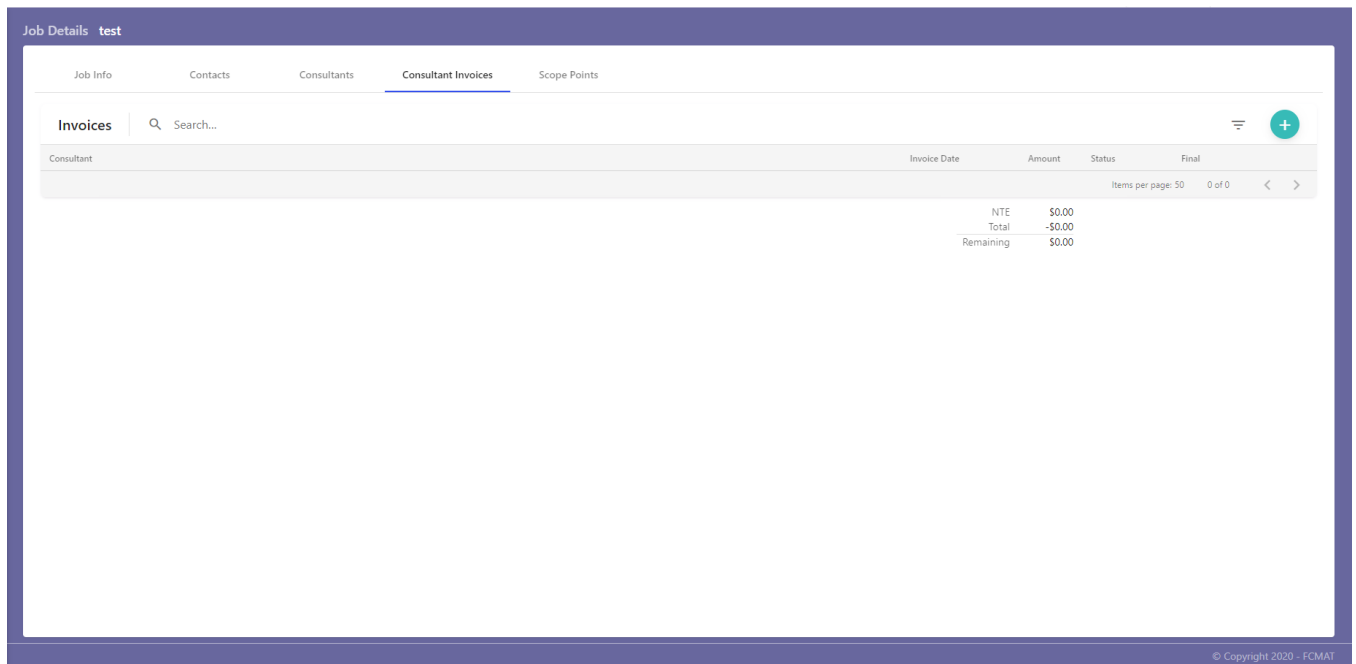


Figure 6



Follow the steps outlined below to create a new invoice.

1. Click the **+** “add” button at the top right corner of the Consultant Invoices screen to create a new invoice (Figure 6). The invoice will pop up in a new screen. Click the **+** “add” button in the top right corner of this new screen (Figure 7) to bring up another new screen where you can begin entering invoice information (Figure 8).

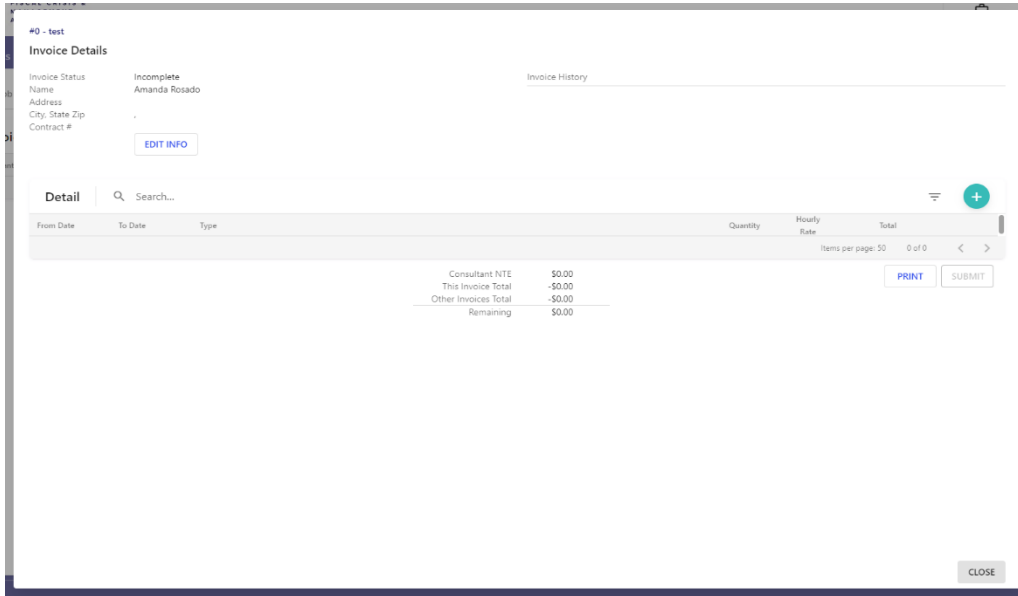


Figure 7

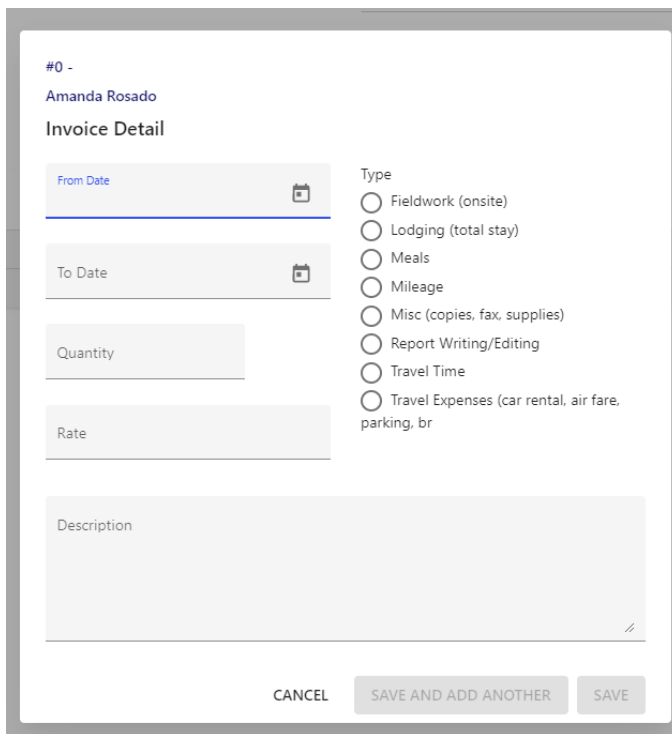


Figure 8

When adding invoice detail items, please organize your receipts and expenses in the order shown below:

- a. Fieldwork time
- b. Travel time
- c. Report writing time
- d. Lodging
- e. Meals
- f. All other receipts and expenses

Please be careful when entering your time for fieldwork, travel, and report writing. Dates and hours-per-day should be entered accurately to ensure your invoices are correct. Examples are provided below.

Correct:            4/01/21 to        4/04/21=        4 days

Correct:            4/01/21 to        4/01/21 =        1 day

Incorrect:        4/01/21 to        4/07/21=        4 days

If you worked a fraction of a day, select the “Hours” option.

Select “Save and Add Another” after entering each item. Click the “Save” button when you have finished entering items.