

Application Score Sheet

Proposed Project: Smart Horizons COHS, Career Online High School (#119)

Proposed Project/Program County: Multi (8)

Board of County Commission Support:

Total Projected Project Cost: \$1,953,437.00

Match Provided: \$136,875.00

Triumph Funds Requested: \$1,816,562.00 (93%)

Triumph Funds Recommended by Staff: \$0

Score: C

Date: January 7, 2019

Economic Impact Analysis and Score Sheet

The Smart Horizons Career Online Education (SHCOE) proposal describes a 5-year project to engage residents within the eight Northwest Florida counties disproportionately affected by the oil spill who have not earned a GED or high school diploma in Smart Horizons Career Online High School (COHS). The workforce-based career online private high school program targets the adult high school dropout population (unemployed or underemployed). The application states that the Triumph “request represents 93% of a total State COHS project budget.”

The applicant students who are successful in the COHS program earn a High School Diploma and Career Credential from an accredited private virtual high school. The applicants expect 910 students will graduate from COHS of approximately 2,500 who enroll in the program. 6-18 months is the range for graduation, based on a rolling start and a gated program model.

The application provides suggested ways in which SHCOE would meet Triumph priorities include: “estimation of economic impact will be provided as a model supported by authoritative research on the economic impact of high school education on the economy. The educational valuation of Florida's libraries are leveraged through their direct participation in the COHS Triumph program and in relation to the positive outcomes for individuals, families, and communities in the 8 counties of services. Outcomes of the program are measured and disseminated as graduation success as evidence that will influence further investment in the program by the business communities who rely on a skilled workforce.”

While the application provides generic information regarding the value of effective educational interventions, it is lacking in several dimensions. The application notes that community-based public libraries will be integral to outreach recruitment, and as support throughout the project. However, there are no specific indicators of partnership or support from these proposed library partners. The application suggests that outcome measures will be limited to COHS graduation data because it is not practicable to track student employment as a measure of outcome. However, other Triumph-funded programs are expected to overcome this obstacle. The

application notes that “COHS Triumph would be launched with existing resources ... within 60 days or less,” and that the costs “represent 23-24% of the annual costs of the Florida statewide COHS program.” Over half of the costs are in scholarships to be awarded to students presumably to then be spent on COHS tuition.

For these reasons, staff assign the project a grade of “C” and do not recommend moving it forward for Triumph Board consideration.

Project Summary (based on information provided by the applicant)

Smart Horizons Career Online Education (SHCOE) requests \$1,816,562.00 in Triumph funds to enroll residents in the eight disproportionately affected Triumph counties in self-paced instruction leading to private high school diplomas and career certificates. The funds requested would be used for a minimum of 910 scholarships.

The COHS Triumph proposal is a collaboration of Smart Horizons Career Online Education and Gale, a Cengage company, to expand the current Career Online High School (COHS) program that is currently delivered through Florida public libraries. The Career Online High School program is currently in almost 40 Florida communities and over 100 Public Libraries nationwide, with over 300 graduates in Florida.

COHS is a workforce-based online private high school program for adult high school dropouts currently unemployed or underemployed. Students graduate with an accredited high school diploma and a credential in a high-growth, high-demand career field, along with a resume, cover letter and other tools to start or advance their career.

The private virtual high school program is delivered via computer for 6-18 months. The self-paced program enables residents to maintain their current family and work commitments while working toward their diploma. It is expected that approximately 2,500 will enroll in the proposed Triumph funded program with 910 students graduating.

COHS operates in public libraries. Potential students would be identified by local library staff for program placement. Staff at each local library would contact the potential students and inform them of the online career education program.

Potential students who respond would be enrolled in a pre-requisite career elective to ascertain their ability to engage in self-paced instruction. COHS employs this approach to ensure that the expenditure of education resources is prioritized towards students with a demonstrated capability to succeed in a self-paced learning environment. Students completing the pre-requisite career elective within the allotted time would be prioritized for enrollment into the online career education program.

Newly enrolled students would also complete pre-test using the Wonderlic General Assessment of Instructional Needs (GAIN) test. SHCOE employs the Wonderlic Basic Skills Test (WBST) in pre- and post-test assessments with corporate client-partners to gauge student improvements.

Upon conclusion of the pre-test, the library staff, with SHCOE's support, would provide students with initial guidance on areas that require improvement to meet graduation requirements.

Following the pre-test, the student will select a career elective and proceed with the program of study. When students complete the entire 18-month program of study, SHCOE, with the assistance of library staff, will notify the student that they have completed all the requirements for issuance of his/her AdvancED/SACS/NCA/NWAC high school diploma and entry-level career-credentialed certificate.

Depending on the program, students can graduate with both a high school diploma and career-credentialed certificate. SHCOE's customized online high school programs provide students with an opportunity to learn at their own pace, as they manage their day-to-day lives.

Students will be engaged through virtual access and/or their community-based libraries in the affected counties. The Division of Library and Information Services (Florida Department of State) will coordinate the community-based library project activities in each county.

Gale will provide direct assistance to the Division and the community libraries with marketing, training, and technical assistance for the program. Gale's customer care and training teams partner with libraries as they engage students and enroll them into the prerequisite course and award scholarships into the full Career Online High School program. Together with the Career Online High School management team and academic coaches, Gale works with designated staff to achieve positive student outcomes.

The proposed COHS program funded by Triumph, would be produced through a collaboration of Smart Horizons Career Online Education and Gale, a Cengage company, to expand current COHS program that is delivered as programming through Florida public libraries. The current statewide model spreads a limited number of scholarships across the entire state population leaving the targeted community of focus vulnerable in relation to the larger populated communities of Florida.

The Florida COHS program is budgeted for \$750,000 per year for the entire state of Florida and its residents (for state fiscal year 2018-19). The Triumph Gulf Coast project annual costs would represent 23-24% of the annual costs of the Florida statewide COHS program. The funds from Triumph will allow scholarships currently available through a COHS program in FL to be reallocated to other Florida communities that are not eligible for Triumph support.

The proposed Triumph funded program would be measured by graduation numbers from the COHS program. Additionally, an economic model would provide a report that includes: a) an estimated % of individual increased wages; b) an estimated % of cumulative COHS graduate wages; and c) an estimated increase in post-high school education. This data will be provided in Year 2 and Year 5 of the program and projected over an additional 5-year period as a 10-year/long-term estimate of the impact on the 8 targeted counties of NW Florida.

As it relates to sustainability of the program, the COHS is proposed to advance an existing model for the program as delivered through libraries. Nationally, it includes significant investment by

