

TRIUMPH GULF COAST, INC. PRE-APPLICATION FORM

Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. (“Triumph Gulf Coast”) has created a pre-application process to provide initial consideration of eligibility for potential ideas of projects or programs that may seek an award of funding. Applicants are required to participate in the pre-application process. Notwithstanding the response from Triumph Gulf Coast on the pre-application form, an Applicant may still elect to submit an Application.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of Individual/Entity/Organization: Florida State University Panama City

Proposal Title: FSU Panama City ASCENT Project – Advancing Science and Career Education in New Technologies

Amount of Triumph Funds Requested: \$11,500,000

Total Estimated Project Cost: \$23,000,000

Brief Description of Individual/Entity/Organization:

Florida State University Panama City (FSU PC) is a campus of Florida State University located in Bay County, Florida. FSU Panama City offers life-changing educational and social opportunities that prepare students, faculty, and community members to achieve their goals, develop a richer culture of diversity, and foster a spirit of lifelong learning. Partnering with area military installations, industry leaders and other Florida State University departments and colleges, FSU Panama City tailors the educational experience to make higher education more accessible to the residents of Northwest Florida. Florida State University is one of the nation’s elite research universities and FSU Panama City amplifies the university’s efforts to preserve, expand and disseminate knowledge in the sciences, technology, arts, humanities, and professions. The Bayside campus is home to a community of innovative thinkers who create programs that support and anticipate the sophisticated needs of business and industry in North Florida, preparing workforce-ready students to meet the region’s economic demand.

Home to FSU’s College of Applied Studies, the FSU Panama City Campus is a full-service campus offering programs within many Colleges of the University – a true microcosm of FSU located in Bay County. Specifically, FSU PC students can pursue programs of study in Business, Engineering, Computer Science, Public Safety, Education, Professional Communications, and Psychology, among others.

Contact Information

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Names of co-applicants, partners or other entities, organizations that will have a role in the proposed project or program:

<i>Partners</i>		<i>Proposed Role</i>
Multiple Colleges within FSU	College of Applied Studies, College of Arts and Sciences, College of Communication and Information, and College of Engineering	Under the ASCENT project, Faculty, administrators, and staff from multiple Colleges within FSU will work together to develop interdisciplinary curriculum (credit and non-

		credit), expand program offerings at FSU PC, and provide instruction and oversight for programs within the ASCENT project.
Military Installations	Tyndall Airforce Base, United State Naval Support Activity Panama City (NSA PC)	The ASCENT project will tailor trainings specific to the needs of its local military installations.
Regional Government and State Agencies	Local and state Law Enforcement Agencies, local Municipalities, Bay EDA, Career Source	The ASCENT project will tailor trainings leading to industry certification specific to the needs of these regional partners.
School Districts	School districts within the eight disproportionately affected counties: Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay, Gulf, Franklin, and Wakulla	The ASCENT project will expand its partnership with local school districts to formalize opportunities to seed interest and expose youth to career opportunities in new technologies.
State and Community Colleges	Chipola State College, Gulf Coast State College, Northwest Florida State College, Community College of the Air Force	The ASCENT project will enhance and expand existing 2+2 articulation initiatives with partner State Colleges and will seek new articulation with the Community College of the Air Force.

REQUIRED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In a maximum of two (2) pages, please describe the proposed project or program and anticipated outcomes including (i) the amount of funds being sought from Triumph Gulf Coast; (ii) the amount and identity of other sources of funds for the proposed project or program; (iii) the location of the project or program; (iv) summary description of the proposed program, including how the program will be transformational and promote economic recovery, diversification, and enhancement of the disproportionately affected counties, and (v) a summary timeline for the proposed project or program.

- (i) **Amount of Funds:** Florida State University Panama City respectfully requests a catalyst investment of \$11.5 Million from Triumph Gulf Coast Inc.
- (ii) **Other Sources of Funding:** Requested Triumph funding will be matched by state, federal, and private grants; private donations, student tuition and fees; and FSU funding.
- (iii) **Location:** The project will be located at the FSU Panama City Campus.
- (iv) **Summary of the program:** See below.
- (v) **Timeline:** The ASCENT project will begin the first academic semester following funding approval and will span 6 years.

FSU Panama City ASCENT Project Advancing Science and Career Education in New Technologies

We are requesting Triumph funds to maximize opportunities for citizens in Bay and surrounding counties to gain education and training in new technologies, with an emphasis in cybersecurity, to support multiple industry sectors, encourage new jobs for our region, and amplify the economic landscape of the Panhandle. As described in the recent Northwest Florida Forward strategic report (2017), Cybersecurity is a fast-growing workforce that is outpacing the availability of jobs nationwide, and the Northwest Florida region is well-positioned to expand into this sector.

The mission of the ASCENT project is to contribute to the development of a strong, regional workforce in

cybersecurity and new technologies. In order to complete this mission, ASCENT aims to develop and integrate education and training resources to produce industry-specific certifications for students and citizens of the Northwest Florida region to position them well for job attainment and advancement. Aligned with this mission, the main goals of the ASCENT project are to: 1) expand and enhance cyber- and technology- focused programs at FSU PC, 2) establish a Workforce Training Institute to support local industries and attract new jobs to the area, 3) expand technology-related summer camps and industry certification opportunities for middle- and high-school students, 4) enhance FSUs partnerships with state colleges, military installations, and other government/state agencies and 5) produce a minimum of 3,300 industry certifications in the 6-year project.

Expanding and Enhancing Academic Programs

Similar to Northwest Florida Forward's finding that Cybersecurity employment spans multiple industry sectors, FSU currently offers cybersecurity coursework in multiple degree programs across the University without a stand-alone program in this area. Recognizing the importance of training students for this workforce, the ASCENT program will establish an Applied Cybersecurity Center at FSU PC to integrate and enhance FSUs cybersecurity course offerings. This interdisciplinary center will be housed at FSU PC and will allow faculty to engage with cyber, military, and technology industries for course development, alignment of academic courses with related industry certifications, and creation of laboratories to serve student and community training needs for simulating and defending cyber-attacks.

Establishing a Workforce Training Institute

Another goal of the ASCENT program is to establish a Workforce Training Institute at FSU PC where individuals can complete non-academic, professional courses and sit for industry certification exams. In fields where content is constantly evolving, such as cybersecurity, there is a pressing need for FSU PC to expand its portfolio of offerings to non-credit courses to keep pace with the training needs of technology-based industries. Through this new institute, FSU PC will offer open-enrollment trainings in-person and online, and engage with economic development agencies, local military officials, and industry leaders to help increase opportunities in the area and provide customized trainings to meet their needs.

Expanding Youth Programs

Each summer, FSU PC STEM and FSU iCamp programs offer a variety of educational camps for middle- and high- school children. The ASCENT project will expand existing camps by increasing the number of technology-related programs offered for middle- and high- school students throughout the year, expanding the reach of youth programs into areas outside of Leon and Bay counties, and embedding new industry certifications in these youth programs. Additionally, we plan to work with K-12 teachers across school districts to reach students who have yet to be intrigued by these technology topics or are unable to attend one of the FSU programs. By working with these teachers, we hope to further expand the reach of these youth programs, build a pipeline of interest in new technologies, and enable teachers to provide career courses within their own schools to maximize exposure through a "train-the-trainer" model.

Enhancing Partnerships

In addition to working closely with industries, FSU PC also works with state college, military, and other government/state agencies to contribute to the sustainability and growth of the local region. The ASCENT project will expand FSU PC's partnerships with these groups by supporting their workforce/educational needs in cybersecurity and other technologies. FSU PC currently has articulation agreements with Connect Programs at local state colleges, and the ASCENT project will allow expansion of those agreements to include cyber- and technology- related programs, as well as create access to the ASCENT activities to students from those state colleges. Additionally, under ASCENT we will tailor industry certificate training programs specific to the needs of our partners in cybersecurity and new technologies. These partners include our local military installations – the Panama City Naval Surface Warfare Center, Tyndall AFB, and Eglin AFB - and any other government and state agencies (e.g., law enforcement agencies, local economic development alliance, etc.) with training needs. The specific work FSU PC can do for these partners will greatly enhance the cybersecurity sector for the

Northwest Florida region.

Producing Industry Certifications

As mentioned above, ASCENT's final goal is to provide education, training, and testing to support the completion of 3,300 industry certifications by participants of the project. We believe this investment will significantly help the region expand into cybersecurity and other related technology industries. All participants of ASCENT activities will be from the 8 disproportionately affected counties in Northwest Florida and the military. While our offerings would be available to all 8 counties, we believe there is sufficient need alone within Bay County, its surrounding counties, and local military, to support our goal of 3,300 certifications in 6 years. For example, there are currently 6,625 middle school and 8,266 high school students within FSU PCs immediate 3-county area (Bay, Gulf, Franklin) who have minimal career academy opportunities. Additionally, as Tyndall AFB finishes their rebuild, the US Air Force is predicting an influx of 4,100 military personnel to Bay County, accompanied by their spouses and an estimated 2,049 school-aged, military dependent children (United States Air Force, 2020. p. 4-186). Moreover, FSUs university student populations will further contribute to interest in ASCENT activities, including 1,000 on-campus FSU PC students, and 1,500 additional students served by FSU PC in online courses.

In addition to available interest through the populations described above, workforce data from February 2020 to January 2021 for the same 3-county region (Bay, Gulf, Franklin) showed that 1489 cyber-related jobs, as defined by Northwest Florida Forward, were posted this past year exhibiting a 9% growth since 2017 (EMSI Q1, 2021). Thus, there appears to be increased demand in Bay and surrounding areas, supporting the timeliness of the ASCENT project and the need for further investment in the expansion of the cybersecurity sector to this region of the Panhandle.

Conclusion: ASCENT - A Transformational Project

Given all aspects of the ASCENT project described above, we believe this endeavor will be transformational for Northwest Florida in positive ways by promoting economic growth, diversification of job opportunities, and enhancement of career readiness for citizens of the region. Additionally, the Bay County region is ripe for expanding into the cybersecurity sector, due to its availability of 1) an international airport to connect to cyber-related companies around the country, 2) local industries with demand for cybersecurity jobs, 3) a university with numerous academic programs to support the workforce, and 4) a favorable business and financial climate to attract new industries and businesses to the region (Northwest Florida Forward, 2017). Thus, we believe the ASCENT project is timely and very beneficial. Thank you for the opportunity to propose this project and seek permission to complete a full grant application to work together in furthering the educational and economic development of the Northwest Florida region.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This pre-application process will **not** result in an award of funding by Triumph Gulf Coast. Rather, this process is designed to facilitate submission of ideas for potential projects or programs before the Applicant expends time and/or resources to complete a full Application. All Applicants for funding are required to complete an Application, which will be reviewed and then considered for award at the discretion of Triumph Gulf Coast Board.

Please Select the Proposal's Eligibility Category(s)

Pursuant to Section 288.8017, Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. was created to make awards from available funds to projects or programs that meet the priorities for economic recovery, diversification, and enhancement of the disproportionately affected counties. The disproportionately affected counties are: Bay County, Escambia County, Franklin County, Gulf County, Okaloosa County, Santa Rosa County, Walton County, or Wakulla County. *See*, Section 288.08012.

1. From the choices below, please check the box that describes the purpose of the proposed project or program (check all that apply):
 - Ad valorem tax rate reduction within disproportionately affected counties;
 - Local match requirements of s. 288.0655 for projects in the disproportionately affected counties;
 - Public infrastructure projects for construction, expansion, or maintenance which are shown to enhance economic recovery, diversification, and enhancement of the disproportionately affected counties;
 - Grants to local governments in the disproportionately affected counties to establish and maintain equipment and trained personnel for local action plans of response to respond to disasters, such as plans created for the Coastal Impacts Assistance Program;
 - Grants to support programs that prepare students for future occupations and careers at K-20 institutions that have campuses in the disproportionately affected counties. Eligible programs include those that increase students' technology skills and knowledge; encourage industry certifications; provide rigorous, alternative pathways for students to meet high school graduation requirements; strengthen career readiness initiatives; fund high-demand programs of emphasis at the bachelor's and master's level designated by the Board of Governors; and, similar to or the same as talent retention programs created by the Chancellor of the State University System and the Commission of Education, encourage students with interest or aptitude for science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medical disciplines to pursue postsecondary education at a state university or a Florida College System institution within the disproportionately affected counties; Grants to support programs that provide participants in the disproportionately affected counties with transferable, sustainable workforce skills that are not confined to a single employer; and
 - Grants to the tourism entity created under s. 288.1226 for the purpose of advertising and promoting tourism and Fresh From Florida, and grants to promote workforce and infrastructure, on behalf of all of the disproportionately affected counties.

Please Select the Priorities this Proposal's Outcomes will Achieve

1. Please check the box if the proposed project or program will meet any of the following priorities (check all that apply):
 - Generate maximum estimated economic benefits, based on tools and models not generally employed by economic input-output analyses, including cost-benefit, return-on-investment, or dynamic scoring techniques to determine how the long-term economic growth potential of the disproportionately affected counties may be enhanced by the investment.
 - Increase household income in the disproportionately affected counties above national average household income.
 - Leverage or further enhance key regional assets, including educational institutions, research facilities, and military bases.
 - Partner with local governments to provide funds, infrastructure, land, or other assistance for the project.
 - Benefit the environment, in addition to the economy. Provide outcome measures.
 - Partner with K-20 educational institutions or school districts located within the disproportionately affected counties as of January 1, 2017.
 - Are recommended by the board of county commissioners of the county in which the project or program will be located.
 - Partner with convention and visitor bureaus, tourist development councils, or chambers of commerce located within the disproportionately affected counties.