

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: Northwest Florida State College

Proposal Title: Nursing Program Expansion

Amount of Triumph Funds Requested: \$21,801,957

Total Estimated Project Cost: \$37,032,561

Brief Description of Individual/Entity/Organization: Northwest Florida State College is an open-door, open-access institution committed to serving all members of the community and infusing local industry with high-quality employees equipped with high-demand, relevant skills. The College provides students with robust academic services to prepare students for coursework and to guide them toward success. As part of Florida’s public system of 28 state and community colleges, Northwest Florida State College offers bachelor’s degree programs, associate degrees, and certificates. The College’s primary service district includes Okaloosa and Walton Counties. The College operates seven campuses and centers. Annual enrollment is 8,054, which includes 7,054 students pursuing college credit and 1,000 students taking non-credit coursework.

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: N/A

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.

Executive Summary

The mission of Northwest Florida State College (NWFSC) is, in part, “to improve lives by providing a high-quality...education that is a catalyst for...economic development throughout the region.”¹ Development is contingent upon a region’s ability to provide quality healthcare. The nursing shortage crisis in our region threatens this goal, compelling NWFSC to expand its high-quality Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) program to meet the regional demand for nurses. The College expanded health sciences programming with the establishment of the Physical Therapist Assistant and Medical Laboratory Technology programs in 2021 and is highly attuned to the urgent need in the community for additional nurses. The next phase of College growth must target expanded opportunities for nursing students to increase placement in healthcare facilities and mitigate community risks faced with extended nursing shortages.

NWFSC is the ideal recipient of targeted investments in preparing future Florida nurses, as the College has a longstanding reputation for excellence in nursing education. NWFSC’s ADN program is nationally accredited through the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) and boasts NCLEX pass rates that have exceeded state averages by double digits for the past 14 years. The job placement rate for NWFSC’s ADN graduates remains greater than 98% and frequently students have positions lined up prior to program completion. Over 75% of the ADN graduates continue their education by enrolling in the NWFSC RN to BSN program, resulting in a stronger nursing workforce that has a deeper understanding of the complex needs of today’s healthcare consumer.

The College’s ADN program is currently located in Building 420 on the Niceville Campus. This facility is one of the original campus buildings, built more than 50 years ago, and is in dire need of renovation to support the learning needs for contemporary students. The College is primed to receive state funding for renovation of this building, but the budget allocated to the project is based on construction figures that are several years old. A commitment to the renovation of this facility is necessary to create a space that will cater to the needs of health sciences students and professionals throughout the service district. An expanded high-tech Nursing Simulation Center, designed to maximize students’ clinical experiences while not overwhelming local clinical facilities with an increased number of students, will be at the forefront of this new learning space, with skills laboratories, smart classrooms, and faculty offices rounding out the physical facilities. The College will offer continuing education opportunities in this state-of-the-art learning space to the area’s clinical professionals, giving them interactive, engaging experiences that will help to maintain current skills and develop new competencies needed to keep pace with the ever-changing advances in healthcare.

Funds granted to support expanded nursing programming will enable NWFSC to implement a rapid response to the urgent nursing staffing needs in the region. Investments and commitments for recurring funds will empower the College to accelerate recovery from recent nursing staffing losses at local facilities and to plan for renewal and deepening of the employee pool for nursing positions in the years ahead as the State continues to respond to crippling and long-lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Needs Assessment

In August 2021, the Florida Hospital Association stated that “Nearly 70% of Florida hospitals are expecting critical staffing shortages.”² On September 20, 2021, Florida hospital administrators petitioned House committees for emergency support to address the critical nursing shortage resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, Florida is currently exploring all options to mitigate the direct and indirect, short-term and long-term impacts of staffing shortages, including reviving a state-funded center tracking nursing shortages in Florida and strategizing approaches to resolve the crisis. The Legislature

¹ “Mission.” *Northwest Florida State College*. <https://www.nwfsc.edu/about/>

² Associated Press. “Hospitals Face a Shortage of Nurses as COVID Cases Soar.” *NPR*. 10 Aug. 2021. <https://www.npr.org/2021/08/10/1026577164/hospitals-face-a-shortage-of-nurses-as-covid-cases-soar>

originally established the Florida Center for Nursing in 2001. The Center was charged with maintaining a database on nursing supply and demand in the state, including data on nursing education and the number of graduates that were being produced across the state. At the time, the Center “predicted a shortfall of 52,500 nurses by 2020 in Florida.”³ This predicted shortfall coincided with the onset of the pandemic, and critical staff shortages are compounding the pressure on the staff who remain at the facilities. Speaking to the House Health & Human Services Committee, Neil Finkler, Chief Clinical Officer of AdventHealth Orlando, described the critical staffing levels as “one of the great existential threats to our ability to continue to deliver healthcare.”⁴ This is a threat that state colleges are prepared to mitigate by expanding nursing programs. An investment in nursing education translates to an investment in healthcare infrastructure vital to our state’s recovery from the pandemic.

A nursing shortage in Northwest Florida poses a dangerous threat to the community and can be addressed only through comprehensive measures including expansions of nursing education programs to restore local employment pools and to address critical needs for nurses over the next ten years. The Northwest Florida region echoes the cry for nurses heard throughout the state and the nation, with current job postings higher than in comparable areas nationwide and an anticipated 8.5% increase in job openings over the next ten years.⁵

The College recognizes the critical need for dramatic increases in highly qualified nurses and stands ready to increase access through multiple strategies to increase capacity of the existing program and add a secondary site for an ADN program for an additional cohort of nurses. The College sees specific opportunities to develop a highly qualified nurse population by increasing the annual number of graduates. With dedicated funding to support a nursing program expansion, the College will be able to deliver new programs that provide increased access to nursing education.

The Request

NWFSC requests \$21,801,957 from Triumph to support the hiring of several faculty members and support personnel, completing the interior renovation of the Niceville Campus Health Sciences Building including expanding the Nursing Simulation Center, and purchasing the equipment to support the expanded program at a secondary location within the College’s service district. The total cost of this project is \$37,032,561. This project is contingent on receiving critical renovation funding from the State of Florida (PECO). The College projects that a total of 1,440 new nurses will graduate from the ADN program over the course of 10 years, with 544 of these new nurses graduating as a result of the expansion efforts.

Conclusion

Creating a partnership with Triumph Gulf Coast to expand the nursing program is critical to increase the number of nurses, which will help meet the local healthcare needs. Expanding the Nursing Simulation Center will provide opportunities for local healthcare providers to partner with the College to train their employees and ensure that practicing nurses and other healthcare professionals maintain current skills and develop new ones. This project will allow NWFSC to support the community’s needs while providing strong job opportunities for graduates.

³ Kumar, Divya. “USF will house center that tracks nursing shortages in Florida.” *Tampa Bay Times*. 1 Sept. 2021. <https://www.tampabay.com/news/education/2021/09/01/usf-will-house-center-that-tracks-nursing-shortages-in-florida/>

⁴ Dailey, Ryan. “AdventHealth officials testify to hospital staffing shortage before Florida Legislature.” *Orlando Weekly*. 21 Sept. 2021. <https://www.orlandoweekly.com/Blogs/archives/2021/09/21/adventhealth-officials-testify-to-hospital-staffing-shortage-before-florida-legislature>

⁵ “Occupational Overview: Registered Nurses.” *EMSI, Q2, 2021*. www.economicmodeling.com

Proposed Request Budget

	Personnel	Renovation	Equipment	Miscellaneous	Total
Project Total					
2023	\$578,768	\$20,600,000			\$21,178,768
2024	\$739,021		\$1,300,000	\$206,000	\$2,245,021
2025	\$1,160,655			\$200,000	\$1,310,655
2026	\$1,594,889			\$150,000	\$1,744,889
2027	\$1,632,833			\$50,000	\$1,682,833
2028	\$1,671,858			\$50,000	\$1,721,858
2029	\$1,711,905				\$1,711,905
2030	\$1,752,964				\$1,752,964
2031	\$1,795,168				\$1,795,168
2032	\$1,838,500				\$1,838,500
Project Total	\$14,476,561	\$20,600,000	\$1,300,000	\$656,000	\$37,032,561

Triumph

2023	\$578,768	\$9,900,000			\$10,778,768
2024	\$739,021		\$1,300,000	\$106,000	\$2,145,021
2025	\$1,160,655			\$100,000	\$1,260,655
2026	\$1,594,889			\$100,000	\$1,694,889
2027	\$1,632,833			\$50,000	\$1,682,833
2028	\$853,812			\$50,000	\$903,812
2029	\$875,284				\$875,284
2030	\$897,314				\$897,314
2031	\$920,016				\$920,016
2032	\$943,365				\$943,365
Triumph Total	\$10,195,957	\$9,900,000	\$1,300,000	\$406,000	\$21,801,957

Grantee (NWFSC, PECO)

2023		\$10,700,000			\$10,700,000
2024				\$100,000	\$100,000
2025				\$100,000	\$100,356
2026				\$50,000	\$50,000
2027					\$0
2028	\$818,046				\$818,046
2029	\$836,621				\$836,621
2030	\$855,650				\$855,650
2031	\$875,152				\$875,152
2032	\$895,135				\$895,135
Grantee Total	\$4,280,604	\$10,700,000		\$250,000	\$15,230,604

NWFSC: \$4,530,604

PECO: \$10,700,000

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.

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

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.

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.