



September 2, 2022

Florida Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.
P.O. Box 12007
Tallahassee, FL 32317

RE: Support of Northwest Florida State College's Triumph Gulf Coast Grant Request

Dear Reviewing Official,

The Air Force Enlisted Village strongly and enthusiastically supports Northwest Florida State College's Enhanced Pathways in Nursing Education grant request to expand its nursing education program. The full funding of this grant proposal would have a positive impact in Okaloosa County and the entire panhandle region.

The impact the pandemic has had on the workforce in Okaloosa and surrounding counties is far reaching and profound. For our own part, we have struggled to find qualified healthcare applicants to serve in Hawthorn House, the Air Force Enlisted Village's assisted living facility. Nurses comprise approximately 60% of the health care workforce, and research has shown that by 2025 the nursing gap will be at 10% to 20%. The increase of accredited courses and technology to teach is critical to meet the demand. According to a 2021 Gallup Poll, nursing ranks #1 as the *Most Trusted* profession in the United States, and education is a key component in maintaining this position. To that end, implementation of virtual reality technology proposed by Northwest Florida State College's Enhanced Pathways in Nursing Education grant request will not only reduce cost, but develop skills, build confidence, and better prepare nursing students for clinical practice in a controlled environment. The same is true for all healthcare related fields of study. Awarding this grant request will help produce more and better trained healthcare professionals to meet demand for Florida's panhandle region.

Approving the Northwest Florida State College's Enhanced Pathways in Nursing Education grant request will provide Okaloosa County, the Florida Panhandle, and the Air Force Enlisted Village with a much-needed boost in qualified candidates who want to live and thrive in the area and have a direct impact on our residents. Your support of this grant is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brooke P. McLean".

Brooke P. McLean, CMSgt, USAF, Ret.
President and CEO

