

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: City of DeFuniak Springs, FL

Proposal Title: Project CEPTR – *Center for Electric Pilot Training and Research* (CEPTR-54J)

Amount of Triumph Funds Requested: \$14,200,000

Total Estimated Project Cost: \$47,740,000

Brief Description of Individual/Entity/Organization: The City of DeFuniak Springs (Pop. 5,919), a Small Business Administration HUB Zone and Rural Area of Opportunity, serves as the Walton County seat (Pop. 75,305). City owned and operated, DeFuniak Springs Airport (343 acres) is a public use airfield, Walton County’s sole airport, and includes a Florida First Site industrial park (56 acres) located at the multimodal confluence of Interstate 10, U.S. Highway 90, Route 331, and the CSX rail line. Walton is Florida’s fastest and the Nation’s fourth fastest growing county, attracting five million visitors annually and generating \$5.3 billion in total impact as Florida’s #1 beach destination by revenue.

Contact Information:

Primary Contact: Jennifer Green or Tim Parson (*on behalf of the City of DeFuniak Springs per Council action 8/29/2022*)

Title: Consultants

Mailing Address: 71 US Hwy 90

City: DeFuniak Springs **State:** FL **Zip Code:** 32433

Telephone Number: (850) 528-8809; (850) 910-2678

Email Address: office@libertypartnersfl.com

Website: www.defuniaksprings.net

Names of co-applicants, partners or other entities, organizations that will have a role in the proposed project or program: DeFuniak Springs City Council (ownership of airport and financial investment); Walton County School District (dual enrollment); Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (dual enrollment) and Walton County Board of County Commissioners (financial investment). Other entities may be identified in the full application.

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.

Description of Proposed Project: Project CEPTR refers to the *Center for Electric Pilot Training and Research* (CEPTR-54J), an infrastructure project strategically aligned with electric aviation (EA), K-20, and industry partners to pioneer emerging certification training, diversify career access, and foster the increased utilization of regional and general aviation airports.

Phases, Funds Requested, and Summary Implementation Timeline	Cost	TGC Request	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
1. Expansion of Runway 9-27 (<i>fully funded</i>)	\$11,000,000	0	*	*			
2. New Terminal (<i>fully funded, under construction</i>)	\$8,440,000	0	*				
3. Hangars 25-29	\$4,300,000*	0			*		
4. SE Commercial Access Road & Taxiway	\$6,100,000*	0				*	
5. Paving of Runway 18-36	\$3,700,000*	0				*	
6. Hangar Adjacent to New Terminal	\$3,600,000	\$3,600,000	*	*			
7. Hangars 18-20, Taxiway, Access Road Development (<i>\$IM funded</i>)	\$4,700,000	\$4,700,000		*	*		
8. Photovoltaic (PV) Charging Stations (24 @ 6 NW Florida Airfields)	\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000		*	*		
9. Electric Training Planes (18), Simulators, Immersive Training Devices, and AY 2024-2026 Dual-Enrollment Personnel Support	\$4,300,000	\$4,300,000		8	6	4	
Totals	\$47,740,000	\$14,200,000					

*Note: Designed for perpetual use and multi-purpose adaptability, each CEPTR-54J building includes training spaces (new terminal inclusive) and PV power packages to fuel off-grid operations and support EA grid reserves. *Securing additional funding for these projects is in process.*

Amount and Sources of Other Funds in Support of Project CEPTR: To date, the City of DeFuniak Springs and Walton County combined have secured \$20,440,000 in funding for CEPTR-54J support through the FAA, American Rescue Plan Act (City and County), State Appropriations, and the FDOT Region 3 work plan.

Project Location: DeFuniak Springs Airport (54J). 54J is bordered by five airports across four TGC counties, each optimally positioned for the development of a widescale charging station infrastructure network to support EA training, testing, and public transit. 54J’s intermodal location and centrality are strategic to CEPTR’s efficacy as an EA training and prospective supply chain hub.

Airport Network	Distance to 54J	County	Charging Stations
CEW, Crestview	24 Miles	Okaloosa	3
VPS, Destin	29 Miles	Okaloosa	3
ECP, NW	32 Miles	Bay	3
DTS, Executive	44 Miles	Okaloosa	3
2R4, Peter Prince	54 Miles	Santa Rosa	3

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

Transformational Summary Description:

Transformative with right timing, CEPTR-54J incorporates EA within a training campus and hybrid airport operations research center. The Nation’s first *Center for Electric Pilot Training and Research* enlarges Florida’s reputation as a mover of aviation diversification, establishing a ground floor center of excellence connecting NW Florida communities through EA, workforce training, and business development. While carbon reduction targets and inflationary economies accelerate EA regulatory approvals and commercialization, CEPTR’s mission is: (1) to diversify and increase pilot training

efficiency, access, and affordability; (2) to recruit, develop, and *certify* a new generation of EA pilots, technicians, and hybrid-airport operations managers/leaders; (3) to facilitate regional EA micro-airline (2-20 passengers) and cargo transit; and (4) to attract EA supply chain providers to 54J. CEPTR's vision is to contemporize 54J as a national nexus for affordable EA certification training, and this project is tactically timed to enter the market in-step with projected regulatory approvals, certifications, and commercial service introductions.

Flight school cost of attendance influences who becomes a pilot, and Project CEPTR remedies flight training barriers while anticipating EA workforce demands. The five-step, four-year progression from non-pilot to Airline Transport Pilot typically incurs personal debt of \$50,000-\$150,000 along with a 70-percent attrition rate. Less than 1-percent of the U.S. population earns a PPL (Private Pilot License): 3-percent are African American, 5-percent are Hispanic, 7-percent are women, and PPL training is a 3-month process with eligibility beginning at age 16. In sum, pilot and technician shortages paired with emerging EA commercial transportation present new opportunities to reframe aviation certifications, training pedagogy, access, opportunity, and social mobility.

Compared to fossil-fuel training planes, EA PPL training presents: (1) an 80-percent reduction in energy consumption; (2) in a 100-mile flight, an energy/fuel cost of \$8-12 compared to \$400+; (3) a purchase price nearly 70-percent less than a fossil-fuel plane (e.g., < \$140,000); (4) fewer parts, simplified maintenance; (5) correlational avionics and instrumentation; (6) carbon-free emissions; and (7) shorter runway specifications. As an adaptive, interdependent proposal, Project CEPTR pairs new training, poised to become norms and needs, with industry, corporate, and K-20 alliances. Upon project completion, CEPTR:

- Will become an FAA certified electric pilot, maintenance, and hybrid-airport operations training campus and research center, fortified by an affiliated non-profit entity (i.e., CEPTR Educational Foundation) to manage synergistic partnerships, articulation agreements, training operations, enrollment, retention, certification, and donor/resource cultivation.
- Will contractually secure partners to implement tailored courseware and competency-based training and assessment (CBTA).
- Will deliver virtual, in-person, hybrid, and hands-on certificate, short-course, cohort-model, and internship instruction utilizing immersive training devices (ITDs), electric aircraft, augmented simulation, and subject matter experts.
- Will enter articulation agreements with higher education and/or commercial alliances to establish, upon FAA approval, clock hour certification programs in Electric Airframe and Powerplant Mechanics, Navigation Systems, and Safety Systems.
- PPL program will provide low-cost access for prospective pilots whose workforce aspirations exceed their economic means, also serving as an enrollment funnel for Florida 2-/4-year programs leading to Commercial Pilots License (CPL) certification.
- Will provide low-cost PPL-G (Glider) flight training to Walton County H.S. students enrolled in ATF1102 (i.e., Ground School), a NWFSC dual-credit course, and AS121 (Private Pilot Operations), an ERAU dual-credit course.
- Will provide career-transition training/certificate programs for exiting military and current fossil-fuel commercial pilots and technicians seeking to become electric pilots, technicians, and/or hybrid airport managers.

- Summer Flight Academy (SSFA) will expose 3rd-12th grade students/parents to EA via clinics, weekend, and day camps.
- SSFA will build a pipeline of prospects positioned for certifications and/or Florida 2-/4-year aviation degree programs, prioritizing outreach, affordability, and dual-enrollment flight intensive courses for EA PPL-G/PPL training to Floridians of color and/or low-income. The Florida Commissioner of Education is empowered to provide single-site dual-enrollment programs across multiple counties if training embodies statewide appeal.
- Will endeavor to establish partnerships with in-state 2-/4-year higher education institutions to create new Hybrid Airport Management curriculums, certifications, and degrees (A.S.; B.S.; M.S.). Not everyone becomes a pilot, but EA short-haul micro-airline and cargo transit will increase regional travel and require a new generation of certified hybrid airport managers and directors. In turn, CEPTR-54J will serve as a qualitative hybrid airport operations research center/leadership laboratory.

Economic Recovery: Seeking to expand production of two-seat electric training planes, an aviation company considered locating their operations to NW Florida. This enterprise forecasted to create 115 new jobs at an average base pay of \$52,280. However, 54J's runway and infrastructure limitations proved insufficient for proposal. Over the past decade, DeFuniak Springs incurred economic and tax revenue declines totaling nearly 900 jobs and 40 million dollars. 80.1-percent of residents live above the poverty line and per capita income is 38-percent below Florida's MHI. In sum, these infrastructure and economic deficiencies challenged the city of DeFuniak Springs to plan its economic recovery adaptively and strategically.

EA arrived in Florida, highlighted by Lillium's 2020 development contract for a 10-site network of Florida vertiports. eVTOL (Vertical Take Off and Landing) developer Joby Aviation received FAA certification to enter service as a Part 135 airline (on-demand air taxi) in 2024; United Airlines purchased 100 19-seat electric planes for regional rollout service in 2026; and Denmark and Sweden intend to offer *only* carbon-free domestic flights by 2030. Boeing predicts a 400-percent increase in pilot demand by 2041, outpacing all occupations. In the next 10 years, long distance flights will *not* occur in electric airplanes. Rather, in the next 3-7 years nearly 200 current worldwide EA programs will restore the profitability of short-haul air travel in an estimated 8,000 regional markets (i.e., >310 miles) through the launch of small charter, air-taxi, and cargo services (by 2025) and 50-70 seat commercial carriers (by 2030).

Strategic infrastructure projects done well are characterized by future planning 3-7 years in advance. Based on 54J's nucleus among NW Florida airfields and Florida's upsurge in EA mobility, the onset of lower-cost point-to-point air transit and cargo forecasts to create new route networks utilizing smaller airports. EA market investments totaled \$7 billion with an additional \$26.1 billion in new electric aircraft orders in 2021, and global expansion of this target cluster forecasts growth to \$1.5 trillion by 2040. In sum, CEPTR-54J delivers on each economic growth goal as well as every key location criterion for the Aerospace and Defense Sector within *NW Florida Forward*. As an EA and hybrid airport operations training campus, CEPTR's long-term viability as a workforce development enterprise combined with 54J's intermodal industrial park serve as the levers that move DeFuniak Springs' economic recovery plan.

Enhancement of the Disproportionally Affected Counties: Project CEPTR mobilizes strategies to: (1) leverage existing intermodal assets with emerging technologies that advance career and economic development; (2) improve public infrastructures and economic growth to meet demands for affordable, efficient regional EA mobility; (3) benefit the environment through carbon-free, renewable energy; (4) promote short-haul/micro-airline travel through a widescale infrastructure network of EA services; and (5)

General Benchmarks	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030-34	Total
Summer Flight Academy Enrollment	60	90	120	150	150	750	1320
Dual-Enrollment Credit Hours (Academic Year + Summer)	480	720	960	1200	1200	6000	10560
EA FAA Pilot Certifications	76	104	132	156	156	800	1424
EA Technician & Hybrid-Airport Operations Certifications	84	114	144	174	174	870	1560

advance job creation by developing a new generation of certified electric pilots, technicians, and hybrid-airport managers. In addition, CEPTR-54J provides NW FL appeal to EA-related supply chain and manufacturing companies.

Anticipated Outcomes: As a singular premise, if 40-percent of CEPTR-54J’s pilot certification completers advance (250 flight hours+) to CPL (Commercial Pilot License) certification, a ten-year increased earnings impact of \$43.58 million and a 3.07:1:1 ROI yield are realized compared to the difference between the average Walton Country per capita income (USCB) and FL CPL average salary (USDLB). A CPL does not require an A.S./B.S. degree and qualifies a pilot to receive compensation for transporting passengers and/or cargo. While this metric does not include the total additional earnings impact/net new jobs related to impending EA certifications for technicians and hybrid airport managers, conservative forecasts project a TGC cost of \$4,758 per CEPTR-54J certificate.

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 (*Walton County has committed \$5.5 Million to the \$11 Million runway expansion project*).
- Partner with convention and visitor bureaus, tourist development councils, or chambers of commerce located within the disproportionately affected counties.