

## Application Score Sheet

Proposed Project: University of West Florida, Healthcare Programs Expansion (293)

Proposed Project/Program County: Escambia

Board of County Commission Support:

Total Projected Project Cost: \$20,196,360

Match Provided: \$12,544,577

Triumph Funds Requested: \$7,651,783 (39%)

Triumph Funds Recommended by Staff: \$7,651,783

Score: B

ROI: \$12.1 per dollar of Triumph cost

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### **Economic Analysis, Impact and Score**

UWF requests a Triumph award of \$7,651,783 over eight years to expand and improve delivery of nursing credentials and related health science certifications via its Usha Kundu, MD College of Health. The program will be focused on meeting demand for credentialled healthcare providers to work at a variety of employers in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties and elsewhere in the Northwest Florida region. For the 1105 licensures to be attained, this represents a cost to Triumph of \$6,925 per licensed graduate. UWF will provide \$12,544,577 in match, so that Triumph will be providing 37.9 percent of the total project cost of \$20,196,360.

The proposal specifies that by the end of the eighth year, a minimum of net new 930 Registered Nurses, 135 Medical Lab Scientists, and 40 Respiratory Therapists licensures will have been attained. These are above and beyond UWF's current production rate. The program will assist with starting two new nursing programs at UWF. One will be an evening/weekend bachelor's degree that will allow current employees of healthcare providers or other students with barriers to enrollment due to normal business hours work schedules access to nursing education, the other will be a direct entry Master's degree that will allow students who have a bachelors in a science to become a nurse.

Workforce data prepared by the UWF Haas Center suggests that in the next five years there will be regional growth rate increases of 7.5% for Medical Lab Technicians, 23% in Nursing, and 5% in Respiratory Therapy. Currently the number of job postings is far exceeding the number of educational completions in the region for these occupations. This is reinforced by discussion at the latest Usha Kundu, MD College of Health Advisory Board where top level administrators and Human Resource Directors from the major health care providers in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties share that these were priority areas for UWF to be focused on.

The proposal specifies that UWF match will provide \$12,544,577 over the life of the project, so that Triumph's share of the project is 39.7 percent over those twelve years. Triumph funds are proposed as \$1,591,000 in renovation expenses, \$3,089,783 in personnel, \$2,541,000 in

equipment, and \$430,000 in student program support (transportation and other non-tuition program expenses). The UWF matching funds are all for instructional personnel.

Given the high cost of renovation of the healthcare instructional facilities, as well as the extensive seat hours and practical experience that are needed in these programs, the cost per cert is high, but still competitive with others that Triumph has funded. Given the strong labor market demand, critical need of healthcare providing businesses, and associated high wages for credentialed employees, staff view is that our calculated ROI presented below is conservative.

At a reimbursement rate of \$6,925 per certification, the discounted total increase in household incomes expected from the program will be \$12.1 per dollar of Triumph cost, which is a somewhat high cost, but still competitive with other Triumph CTE awards. For these reasons, staff rate this program “B” in terms of economic impact.

### **Project Summary (based on information provided by the applicant)**

The University of West Florida (UWF) is requesting a \$7,651,783 Triumph grant to expand healthcare programs including Nursing and Medical Lab Technicians, and to start a Respiratory Therapy program. The funds will be used for facility renovations, simulation and laboratory equipment, supplies, personnel and student transportation.

Renovations to UWF’s Building 37 (Nursing) will increase the Nursing clinical and simulation spaces by over 1500 sq ft. The new state of the art equipment and simulation spaces will enhance student education and preparation. This is upgrade is critical as nursing students need to prepare for the Next Generation NCLEX examination in order to be licensed in the State of Florida, and the Medical Laboratory Science students need to have hands-on training with current equipment that is found in hospital and private labs today.

Workforce data prepared by the UWF Haas Center suggests that in the next five years there will be regional growth rate increases of 7.5% for Medical Lab Technicians, 23% in Nursing, and 5% in Respiratory Therapy. The number of current job postings far exceeds the number of educational completions in the region for these occupations. This data (source: Lightcast) is reinforced by discussion at the latest Usha Kundu, MD College of Health Advisory Board where top administrators and human resource directors from the major health care providers in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties shared that these were priority areas on which UWF should be focused on.

The registered nursing shortage in Florida is projected to increase from 11,500 to 37,400 RNs by 2035 based on data from the Florida Physician and Nursing Workforce 2021 report commissioned by the Florida Hospital Association and the Safety Net Hospital Alliance of Florida. The Florida panhandle area and rural areas that surround the University of West Florida will be one of the hardest hit areas impacted by a shortage of Registered Nurses. The Workforce Report concluded that Florida needs an estimated 2,300 additional RNs entering the workforce each year. The report’s main recommendation is to train more nurses in Florida, but factors such

as low NCLEX first time pass rates in the state remain a barrier to having highly skilled and qualified nurses entering the workforce. Further data suggest that medical laboratory scientists and respiratory therapists are areas of critical workforce shortages for the Florida Panhandle.

In order to address the current and projected nursing workforce needs increased program capacity and academic resources for nursing students at academic institutions that offer a high quality education is critical. The project's overall goal is to increase nursing student enrollment and prepare graduates to enter the nursing workforce in Florida. UWF proposes to do this through two unique initiatives.

First, through a Direct Entry Master's Degree in Nursing that would allow students who already have a Bachelor's degree in a major that has a strong core of basic science education to become a registered nurse. Students could be recruited from majors such as biomedical sciences, exercise science, or health science. The program would produce a more mature graduate, and similar programs nationally have demonstrated strong NCLEX pass rates and performance in the workforce. Second, UWF proposes to offer an evening/weekend BSN program. This program will allow students who are working full time during the normal business day to have access to education to become a registered nurse. There are many students who are already working in entry level positions in healthcare, who desire to become nurses. However, these potential students cannot leave their current jobs in order to attend a program that meets during the traditional 'bell schedule' hours of undergraduate education programs. Therefore, this program will allow those students access to education and increase the number of students being prepared to enter the workforce as registered nurses.

Students who have experience in healthcare settings represent a great opportunity, as this pre-existing knowledge will enhance their probable retention in the workforce after graduation. It is well understood that not only is there a nursing shortage, but also a problem with turn-over and burnout in the existing workforce. Students who have an appreciation for the nature of employment in the sector, will be better equipped to manage the transition from nursing student to full time nurse. It is estimated that it can cost employers in excess of \$30,000 when a nurse leaves employment, thus attracting a population of students who may have an advantage in resilience that can reduce the costly turn-over and enhance the stability of the local workforce. These students would be up-skilling into a career with good pay and job security

UWF proposes to start a bachelors degree program in Respiratory Therapy. There are no existing education programs in either Escambia or Santa Rosa counties, therefore this program will make an immediate impact. Respiratory therapy has been a request from multiple healthcare organizations in both Escambia and Santa Rosa counties. Respiratory therapists are employed in many healthcare settings, from hospitals to assisted living facilities. After the pandemic the workforce in respiratory therapy struggled to recover. This fact combined with the lack of a local education program have made the shortage significantly worse in the two county area surrounding Pensacola.

Nurses currently make on average \$34/hour in the Pensacola area according to Indeed.com. Average compensation for medical laboratory scientists in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties is \$24/hour and for respiratory therapists the average salary is twenty eight dollars per hour

(Source: Lightcast Q4 2022 dataset). The proposal seeks to increase the number of credentials received by 930 Registered Nurses, 135 Medical Lab Scientists and 40 Respiratory Therapists.

The project is sustainable after the Triumph grant due to costs beyond the project term being mostly personnel. The cost share allocated from UWF to this project covers the majority of the personnel costs associated with the project, and there are plans to ensure that any personnel costs that are requested from Triumph Gulf Coast would be budgeted for by the College beyond the project period.

The three healthcare areas identified in the proposal nursing, medical laboratory sciences and respiratory therapy have been examined using external data resources available at the University of West Florida.

The use of Lightcast and Hanover Digital platforms allow the university to track job applications, and education completions over time with the gap between these two data streams serving as an indication of workforce shortage. Over time the goal will be to see the trend lines show more alignment. UWF also has a strong presence and active role in AchieveHealthyEscaRosa. This non-profit organization maintains a community health dashboard for both Escambia and Santa Rosa counties in partnership with the University of West Florida Haas Center. Data in the dashboard is regularly updated and can be used to longitudinally track the impact of the proposed project on community health.

The undergraduate programs identified in this proposal are designed to be completed in eight semesters. The graduate program (Direct Entry Master's Degree Program) is designed to be completed in four semesters. Students' length of study is dependent upon the number of completed credit hours they have prior to enrollment at UWF. Students who have completed an Associate's Degree or have some college may have a reduced time to earn a degree.

All programs identified in this proposal are taught in person on the Pensacola campus of UWF. Students additionally engage in clinical education experience with local healthcare partners, which occur offsite.

**Exhibit A**

**Proposal 293 UWF Healthcare**

Budget	20,196,360
Estimated construction start date if applicable	2024
Estimated education component start date if applicable	2023

	Renovation	Personnel/Consumables	Equipment	Student Programming Support	Total
<b>Project Total</b>					
2023	184,000	619,763	500,000	35,000	1,338,763.00
2024	1,407,000	1,932,162	-	35,000	3,374,162.00
2025	-	2,065,295	1,721,000	35,000	3,821,295.00
2026	-	2,203,428	320,000	65,000	2,588,428.00
2027	-	2,203,428	-	65,000	2,268,428.00
2028	-	2,203,428	-	65,000	2,268,428.00
2029	-	2,203,428	-	65,000	2,268,428.00
2030	-	2,203,428	-	65,000	2,268,428.00
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>1,591,000.00</b>	<b>15,634,360.00</b>	<b>2,541,000.00</b>	<b>430,000.00</b>	<b>20,196,360.00</b>
<b>Triumph</b>					
2023	184,000	55,000	500,000	35,000	774,000.00
2024	1,407,000	220,760	-	35,000	1,662,760.00
2025	-	353,893	1,721,000	35,000	2,109,893.00
2026	-	492,026	320,000	65,000	877,026.00
2027	-	492,026	-	65,000	557,026.00
2028	-	492,026	-	65,000	557,026.00
2029	-	492,026	-	65,000	557,026.00
2030	-	492,026	-	65,000	557,026.00
<b>Triumph Total</b>	<b>1,591,000.00</b>	<b>3,089,783.00</b>	<b>2,541,000.00</b>	<b>430,000.00</b>	<b>7,651,783.00</b>
<b>Grantee</b>					
2023	-	564,763	-	-	564,763.00
2024	-	1,711,402	-	-	1,711,402.00
2025	-	1,711,402	-	-	1,711,402.00
2026	-	1,711,402	-	-	1,711,402.00
2027	-	1,711,402	-	-	1,711,402.00
2028	-	1,711,402	-	-	1,711,402.00
2029	-	1,711,402	-	-	1,711,402.00
2030	-	1,711,402	-	-	1,711,402.00
<b>Grantee Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>12,544,577.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>12,544,577.00</b>