

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: \$17,244,169

Match Provided: \$10,558,412

Triumph Funds Requested: \$6,685,757 (39%)

Triumph Funds Recommended by Staff: \$6,685,757

Score: B

ROI: \$14.1 per dollar of Triumph cost

Economic Analysis, Impact and Score

Via a letter offering an amendment to their prior proposal, UWF requests a Triumph award of \$6,685,757 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 credentialed healthcare providers to work at a variety of employers in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties and elsewhere in the Northwest Florida region. For the 1,125 licensures to be attained, this represents a cost to Triumph of \$5,943 per licensed graduate. UWF will provide \$10,558,412 in match, so that Triumph will be providing 39 percent of the total project cost of \$17,244,169.

The proposal specifies that by the end of the eighth year, a minimum of net new 200 Registered Nurses, 135 Medical Lab Scientist certificates, 40 Respiratory Therapists licensures, and 750 CNA certificates 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 5 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 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 \$10,558,412 over the life of the project, so that Triumph's share of the project is 39 percent over the eight years. Triumph funds are

proposed as \$1,407,000 in renovation expenses, \$2,597,757 in personnel, \$2,111,000 in equipment, and \$570,000 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 \$5,943 per certification, the discounted total increase in household incomes expected from the program will be \$14.1 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 \$6,685,757 Triumph grant to expand healthcare programs including Nursing from CNA through Masters, Medical Lab Technicians and a new Respiratory Therapy program. The funds will be used for facility renovations at the Pensacola and Emerald Coast campuses, simulation and laboratory equipment, supplies, personnel and student transportation.

Renovation of UWF’s Building 37 (Nursing) in Pensacola will increase the Nursing clinical and simulation spaces by 4600 sq ft, including the conversion of existing office space and computer labs into new nursing simulation space and renovation of the existing nursing simulation spaces. The renovation will result in a separation of high fidelity simulation spaces into separate ICU, Med Surg, and Pediatric units, and the inclusion of a new home/mental health unit. The new rooms require additional connectivity to support modern nursing standards for debriefing activities at the conclusion of simulation exercises. Renovations of UWF’s Fort Walton Emerald Coast campus classrooms will result in sufficient virtual connection to the main UWF campus to allow the two cohorts to interact. The renovations are estimated to cost \$283 per square foot.

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 a number of unique initiative.

A new Certified Nursing Assistant certification (CNA) will be integrated into all existing nursing programs. Integrating the CNA certification will ensure that all existing UWF students seeking to become registered nurses can gain an additional credential as a CNA. This will allow students to be able to work directly in the healthcare industry prior to graduating and receiving more advanced licenses. The CNA certification can provide a meaningful healthcare job for those students who are unable to complete the UWF nursing program, as the CNA certification is a credential that can lead to immediate employment.

Expanding the Nursing Direct Entry Master's Degree in Pensacola and starting a program in Okaloosa at the Emerald Coast Campus will 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 can 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.

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 registered nurses. 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.

In addition, the project will integrate a Biotechnology Assistance Certificate into the curriculum UWF's Medical Lab Science Students. The BACE certificate is a credential that will enhance the job outlook for all students in the program, expanding options to support the biotechnology workforce needs of the Panhandle region.

A significant portion of the total project cost will be used for nursing faculty salaries. In order to effectively run two new nursing programs (evening weekend Bachelors of Science in Nursing and a Direct Entry Master's degree with cohorts in two different counties) a large number of new faculty are needed. Local clinical partners prefer eight students to a clinical cohort during the latter stages of the program. With clinical cohorts of this size, faculty have time to engage in a more impactful manner with the students. This necessitates a larger number of faculty in order to handle the 1:8 faculty: student.

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 \$28/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 healthcare areas identified in the proposal 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 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

Project #, name

Budget

Estimated construction start date if applicable

Estimated education component start date if applicable

	Renovation	Personnel/Consumables	Equipment	Student Programming Support	Total
Please change year # to actual year					
Project Total					
Calendar Year 1	184,000.00	345,000.00	500,000.00	70,000.00	1,099,000.00
Calendar Year 2	1,223,000.00	1,932,162.00	-	70,000.00	3,225,162.00
Calendar Year 3	-	2,065,295.00	1,411,000.00	70,000.00	3,546,295.00
Calendar Year 4	-	2,203,428.00	200,000.00	90,000.00	2,493,428.00
Calendar Year 5	-	2,203,428.00	-	90,000.00	2,293,428.00
Calendar Year 6	-	2,203,428.00	-	90,000.00	2,293,428.00
Calendar Year 7	-	2,203,428.00	-	90,000.00	2,293,428.00
Calendar Year 8	-	-	-	-	-
Calendar Year 9	-	-	-	-	-
Calendar Year 10	-	-	-	-	-
Calendar Year 11	-	-	-	-	-
Calendar Year 12	-	-	-	-	-
Project Total	1,407,000.00	13,156,169.00	2,111,000.00	570,000.00	17,244,169.00

Triumph					
Calendar Year 1	184000	55000	500000	70000	809,000.00
Calendar Year 2	1223000	220760	0	70000	1,513,760.00
Calendar Year 3	0	353893	1411000	70000	1,834,893.00
Calendar Year 4	0	492026	200000	90000	782,026.00
Calendar Year 5	0	492026	0	90000	582,026.00
Calendar Year 6	0	492026	0	90000	582,026.00
Calendar Year 7	0	492026	0	90000	582,026.00
Calendar Year 8					-
Calendar Year 9					-
Calendar Year 10					-
Calendar Year 11					-
Calendar Year 12					-
Triumph Total	1,407,000.00	2,597,757.00	2,111,000.00	570,000.00	6,685,757.00

Grantee					
Calendar Year 1	0	290,000	0	0	290,000.00
Calendar Year 2	0	1711402	0	0	1,711,402.00
Calendar Year 3	0	1711402	0	0	1,711,402.00
Calendar Year 4	0	1711402	0	0	1,711,402.00
Calendar Year 5	0	1711402	0	0	1,711,402.00
Calendar Year 6	0	1711402	0	0	1,711,402.00
Calendar Year 7	0	1711402	0	0	1,711,402.00
Calendar Year 8					-
Calendar Year 9					-
Calendar Year 10					-
Calendar Year 11					-
Calendar Year 12					-
Grantee Total	-	10,558,412.00	-	-	10,558,412.00

Match Source 1					
Calendar Year 1					-
Calendar Year 2					-
Calendar Year 3					-
Calendar Year 4					-
Calendar Year 5					-
Calendar Year 6					-