

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: Walton County School District / School Board of Walton County

Proposal Title: Walton County School District EPIC- CTE expansion

Amount of Triumph Funds Requested: \$ 43,250,000

Total Estimated Project Cost: \$ 66,712,000

Brief Description of Individual/Entity/Organization:

The Walton County School District (WCSD) directly serves over eleven thousand students through six elementary schools, three middle schools, four high schools, one K-12 school, two alternative learning schools, and two charter schools. One postsecondary institution, Emerald Coast Technical College, provides both adult education and career preparation at the technical college level. A full partner with business and industry, the district benefits from the support and guidance of multiple career technical advisory committees to enhance and expand career education offerings.

WCSD is committed to excellence in education. The “Walton County Way,” an **EPIC** commitment to **Excellence, Professionalism, Innovation, and Collaboration** is evidenced by WCSD being ranked the #3 district in the state for the 2022-2023 school year. WCSD is an A+ district and has been for four consecutive years, demonstrating not only the high expectations held for educating all students, but also the commitment to fiscal responsibility. In the 2021-2022 school year, over 2,400 middle and high school students received secondary certifications. At the postsecondary level, ECTC reported 174 industry certifications with a pass rate of 97%.

Through the rigorous process of district accreditation, all WCSD public schools are accredited by Cognia, an organization which utilizes research-based standards to ensure that its institutions inspire and equip learners to succeed at their highest potential. At the postsecondary level, Emerald Coast Technical College (ECTC) is accredited by the Council on Occupational Education (COE) to assure quality and integrity in career and technical education.

Contact Information:

Primary Contact: A. Russell Hughes

Title: Superintendent

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Names of co-applicants, partners or other entities, organizations that will have a role in the proposed project or program:

Walton County School District / School Board of Walton County is the grant applicant for this Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. application. Providing benefits to the local community and region, WCSD brings a history of successful and synergetic partnerships with public and private agencies and organizations as well as business and industry. Partners will assist with successful project implementation through fulfillment of their individual missions.

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.*

Proposal's Eligibility Categories:

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.

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.

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.

- (i) Funds being sought from Triumph Gulf Coast over a five-year period:
\$43,250,000**
- (ii) Amount and Identity of Other Sources of Funds for the EPIC- CTE expansion:
\$ 23,462,000
Contributed through the Walton County School Board/Walton County School District**
- (iii) Location of the Project: Walton County, Florida**
- (iv) Summary Description of the proposed project: (See Below)**
- (v) Summary Timeline: Project will begin with construction design in the first six months (Year 1) following approval of funding request, proceeding through completion of construction (Years 2, 3), initial implementation (Year 4) and continue throughout a span of ten years to yield full, hardy sustainability. Economic benefit to the community will be apparent and measurable during the first year of implementation (Year 4) and continue well beyond the point of break-even sustainability.**

Summary Description of EPIC- CTE Expansion Proposed Project:

Our goal is to increase student industry certifications by providing rigorous alternative pathways for students to strengthen their career readiness. Through the EPIC- CTE Expansion, Walton County School District proposes to continue its leadership in efforts to bend the arc toward innovation in education that is transformational for both students and community while supporting economic development and project sustainability. Bringing together, in one central physical location and enhancing each CTE secondary site, those experiences that will educate for economic and social mobility along with the supports to increase success, students will be better prepared for a lifetime of meaningful employment and the community will be continuously invigorated for responsive, sustained growth.

A proposed EPICenter in the center of Walton County will encompass a CTE headquarters building and a training center building. This building will provide facility space for WCSD staff members, economic development associations, workforce and community support agencies, secondary and postsecondary career technical education and training courses, industry certification preparation and testing, adult education courses, and community education offerings.

The training center will provide a large training room and multiple rooms for extra training spaces. In addition to supplying designed workspaces for a variety of career preparation activities, bilingual aide training, scheduled professional development for educators, and tutoring programs offered by community agencies will be able to be accommodated. Extending community accessibility, the training center will provide a host location for local events such as EPIC Day, School District Science Fairs, job/career fairs, business/industry presentations, and Chamber of Commerce events. Individuals and small businesses will be able to more readily access and navigate a spectrum of services to address specific occupational needs and challenges. Industry certification preparation and testing will facilitate acquisition of credentials of value.

This funding request is for a five-year period to design, construct, and establish the EPICenter, a central facility for student and community career- focused education, training, and support, fusing these services to address gaps and leverage the strengths of the individual along with the business community. Funding would provide for construction of the EPICenter and enhanced CTE facilities at each secondary site, equipment for designed workspaces, initial staffing (five success coaches, one facility manager), materials and supplies, and teacher education scholarships to further student training, thereby helping address the current state-wide critical teacher shortage. The project is expected to begin yielding positive community and student impact in the initial operating year, with on-going financial sustainability being reached by the tenth year of implementation. A facility of this magnitude, with the focus on career education and training, integrating the learner and business/industry and workforce development does not currently exist in Walton County.

Outcomes/Benefits: The EPICenter and enhanced CTE facilities at each secondary site will align the efforts of stakeholders, provide for improved community impact and interaction, encourage and scale up industry certifications, and strengthen career readiness initiatives through earlier and/or more frequent exposure to meaningful career conversations and coursework. Attention to critical worker shortage occupations, such as teachers, through production of certified and properly trained educators will help in mitigating negative impacts of these critical shortage occupations on the region.

We believe these projects have the potential to transform Career and Technical Education in Walton County and provide students with the skills and experiences they need to succeed in the 21st century while also having a positive impact on economic and workforce development. We are committed to using the funds in a responsible and effective manner, and to providing regular updates on the progress of the project. We hope that you will consider our proposal and help us to develop an EPICenter and enhance our CTE secondary spaces for the students in our community that will foster Excellence, Professionalism, Innovation and Collaboration.