

## Application Score Sheet

Proposed Project: Gulf Coast State College, Nursing and Healthcare Expansion (#282)  
Proposed Project/Program County: Bay  
Board of County Commission Support:  
Rural County:  
Opportunity Zone:

Total Projected Project Cost: \$35,551,529  
Match Provided: \$11,248,860  
Triumph Funds Requested: \$24,302,669  
Triumph Funds Recommended by Staff: \$24,302,669

Score: B  
ROI: \$14.8 per dollar of Triumph cost

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

The Gulf Coast State College (GCSC) proposal requests a Triumph award of \$24,302,669 over ten years to expand the regional workforce in nursing, health sciences, and public safety. The program expansion and enhanced clinical training that uses advanced technology, high-fidelity patient simulators will enable students to receive hands-on skills training preparing them for nursing and healthcare careers.

The application requests \$4.9M in faculty/staff salaries, \$4.9M in simulators/equipment, \$13.5M in facility renovations/additions, \$.15M in faculty development, and \$1.25M in ATI technology, for a total of \$24,302,669. A match commitment of \$11,248,860 from the College and the Legislature means that Triumph funding is 68.4 percent of the total project cost. A total of 4,312 program and certificate completions over ten years yields a Triumph cost per completion of \$5,636.

Given the high cost of construction and renovation of the healthcare instructional facilities that are needed in these programs, the cost per cert is high, but still competitive with others that Triumph has funded. Importantly, the program expenditures will support the adoption of cutting-edge technology tools that will provide advanced and realistic simulations for student learning.

At a reimbursement rate of \$5,636 per certification, the discounted total increase in household incomes expected from the program will be \$14.8 per dollar of Triumph cost 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)**

Gulf Coast State College (GCSC) is requesting a \$24,302,669 Triumph grant for the expansion of nursing and healthcare programs at the Panama City campus to meet the growing need for skilled nurses and healthcare providers in the region. The funds will be used for construction, renovation, personnel, equipment, virtual reality and electronic resources, and professional development in the establishment of an Inter-Professional Education Simulation Training Center (SIM Center). The project will result in at least 4,312 net new credentials including certifications, licensures, and degrees.

The proposed SIM Center will serve and support the Nursing and Health Sciences Divisions on the Panama City campus and EMS students at the North Bay campus. The use of advanced technology, high fidelity patient simulators will enable students to receive hands-on skills training in an environment that emphasizes inter-professional collaboration, communication, and patient interaction, while simultaneously honing critical thinking and clinical judgment for each discipline. The limited availability of clinical training sites has long hampered various programs from expanding. The ability to train students in a simulated environment along with clinical rotations will help prepare graduates for careers in nursing and healthcare.

The SIM Center will enable increased enrollment for the associate degree RN, RN-BSN, Respiratory Care, and EMT/Paramedic programs. These degree fields have current job placement rates ranging from 97%-100% and all have a predicted job growth rate increase over the next decade. Students completing degree programs and passing licensures/certification exams will earn a higher per capita income than the local areas served by GCSC. These salaries are expected to be \$20,000 to \$30,000 higher than current per capita incomes.

The project will include in the creation of the GCSC Nursing/Health Sciences Collegiate High School. The Collegiate High School will function as a pipeline for the College's Nursing programs. Focusing on college course work that prepares students to enter nursing programs directly upon high school graduation, dual enrollment provides an alternative educational experience while helping students target a specific career path.

The grant will allow GCSC to establish a Virtual Reality Training Lab within the SIM Center offering dynamic and immersive learning and training experiences. Incorporating this type of training will shift how medical professionals are trained by improving clinical skills, confidence, and the ability to provide high- quality patient care. Virtual reality skills training creates realistic patient scenarios allowing learners to practice medical procedures and interventions in a controlled environment that mimics real-life situations without risk to patients. This type of revolutionary training also enhances student engagement, provides personalized and safe learning environments, allows repetition of skills practice, and promotes remote and flexible learning. Data driven assessment of individual learner outcomes also establishes the often-missing link between theory and practice.

Grant funding will be used to provide nursing students access to Assessment Technology Institute (ATI) electronic learning resources which have been shown to statistically improve

understanding of didactic content, clinical skills and judgement, and licensure pass rates in nursing programs across the country.

Programs associated with the grant include:

**Associate Degree RN program:** The program length is 72 credit hours/two years for a GCSC associate in science (AS) degree and provides eligibility to sit for the National Counsel Licensure Examination (NCLEX). The Phlebotomy and Intravenous certifications are completed during the Associate Degree Nursing program.

**RN-BSN program:** The program length is an additional 48 credit hours and can be completed in as little as one calendar year after completion of the Associate Degree RN program.

**Respiratory Care program:** The program length is 76 credit hours/two years for a GCSC AS degree and provides eligibility to sit for the Therapist Multiple Choice Examination (TMC)

**Paramedic Program:** The program length is 42 credit hours/one year for a GCSC program certificate and provides eligibility to sit for the National Registry for Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT)

**EMT Program:** The program length is 12 credits/one semester for a GCSC program certificate and provides eligibility to sit for the National Registry for Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT)

**Certified Nursing Assistant (articulated):** The program length is 165 contact hours/8 weeks for completion of a program certificate and provides eligibility to sit for the National Nursing Assistant (CNA) licensure exam

**RN-FA program:** The program length is 9 credit hours/3 semesters for an advanced technical certification and provides eligibility to sit for the Certified Registered Nurse First Assistant (CRNFA) certification exam.

Students completing program content and successfully passing licensure/certification exams will be eligible to pursue employment throughout the region at numerous healthcare facilities, including Encompass Health and Rehabilitation, HCA Florida Gulf Coast Medical Center, Ascension Sacred Heart Hospital, Emerald Coast Behavioral Hospital & Outpatient Center, Select Rehabilitation Center, Sacred Heart on the Gulf, Weems Hospital, the Tallahassee Memorial Hospital under construction, as well as private medical offices and outpatient treatment centers in the area.

GCSC will expand its partnership with Haney Technical Center and Florida State University-Panama City (FSU-PC) creating a conduit for students to easily access nursing programs and further their education. Practical Nursing graduates from Haney Technical Center could have advanced placement opportunities in the ADN-RN program at GCSC. Further, GCSC RN-BSN graduates could have advanced placement opportunities in the MSN/DNP nursing program that is currently being establishing at FSU-PC.

Due to the working relationship between institutions of learning and the establishment of the Nursing Collegiate High School, students will have a direct pathway literally from high school through completion of a terminal degree in nursing all without leaving Bay County. GCSC will also partner with Ascension Sacred Heart Bay to utilize their in-kind match acute care unit square footage to begin simulation training for larger nursing cohorts during the 2-year renovation of the Asbell Business Building on the GCSC-PC campus.

The nursing programs will partner with HCA Florida Gulf Coast Hospital to provide all ADN-RN students electronic medical record access for patient charting systems during all clinical rotations. Enabling real time patient charting ensures graduates are ready to meet the time management and organizational challenges in nursing practice.

The college is preparing to educate a larger number of skilled nurses due to the need from existing community healthcare partners and in preparation for future growth of retirement communities and new healthcare facilities. The population of Bay County is projected to grow exponentially over the next several decades following the construction of a large retirement community in Panama City Beach, with over 170,000 permitted homes. A new 500 bed hospital facility with 320,000 square feet and a level II Trauma Center is planned to open the first 100-200 beds in 2027.

An estimated 40% of the current nursing workforce will reach retirement age over the next decade. A shortage of 59,100 nurses is projected by the Florida Hospital Association and Safety Net Hospital Alliance of Florida by 2035.

The cost to fund simulation facilities, equipment, and necessary building renovations for training is also substantial. Healthcare simulation training, particularly when utilizing advanced technology, is costly due to the cost of facility development and design, expense related to purchasing high-fidelity equipment and technology, daily operational costs, and the purchase of licensing and copyrights for software updates and equipment maintenance. Funding from this grant will allow the college to build a state-of-the-art simulation facility and train the future nurses and healthcare providers the region requires.