

Application Score Sheet

Proposed Project: Okaloosa Board of County Commissioners, Project Opal (#356)
Proposed Project/Program County: Okaloosa
Board of County Commission Support: Yes
Rural County: No
Opportunity Zone: No

Total Projected Project Cost: \$157,000,000
Match Provided: \$140,200,000
Triumph Funds Requested: \$16,800,000 (12%)
Triumph Funds Recommended by Staff: \$16,800,000

Score: A

ROI: \$22.2 in additional personal income per Triumph Gulf Coast dollar requested

Economic Impact, Score, and ROI

The Okaloosa Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has recruited Project Opal, a company that is a long-standing leader in the support, development and production of aerospace systems to stand up a new advanced manufacturing center of excellence in direct response to accelerated market demand. Triumph funds of up to \$16,800,000 are proposed to improve a County-owned site for the facility at the Shoal River Ranch Gigasite that will be the site of a billion-dollar investment by the County's private sector partner. The company plans to hire a total of 336 employees at an average wage of \$69,434 (122% of Okaloosa County's current \$56,849 average wage). This represents \$50,000 per job in cost to Triumph.

These funds would be utilized to support design, engineering and site work activities to help facilitate the company's massive capital investment. The timeline for these expenditures would occur on the front end of the planned June 2025 – Dec 2026 construction schedule. The proposed Triumph investment would represent 1.6 percent of total project cost of \$1.04 billion or 12% of the total cost of the first facility. The Okaloosa County BOCC approved the submission of the Triumph application at the April 1, 2025 Board meeting, and Triumph staff have worked with County staff over the past several months to describe and explain a possible Triumph funding commitment.

The requested funding will support site work and necessary design expenses associated with the construction of an ultimate 1,000,000 SF advanced manufacturing complex. The company plans to self-finance the facility, which will be constructed on a 135 acre publicly-owned parcel to be leased by the Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners. Okaloosa County's contemplated 30-year lease will be assignable to Space Florida, which intends to assume the lease once Phase 1 construction is completed. Grant funding awarded by Triumph will be used to support site development expenses including, but not limited to, design, engineering, grading,

storm water facilities construction, utility line extensions, road access improvements, parking, lighting, landscaping, and security fencing.

The location of Project Opal's state-of-the-art facility in the Shoal River Industrial Park will serve to solidify the park as a preferred location for companies requiring ready-access to a high-quality workforce, efficient transportation systems and low-cost utilities. Additionally, Project Opal stands to leverage the region's annual pipeline of approximately 3,000 transitioning military members (many of whom possess skill sets that the company requires) as a valued workforce cohort. Finally, with Project Opal already utilizing more than 2,400 outside suppliers, the company will seek to effectively leverage local vendors in support of their production processes.

It is expected that the increment to personal income in the region will be approximately \$372.4 million (excluding economic impacts of facility construction) over a 10-year job maintenance period following completion of the improvements and associated employment ramp-up. This represents \$22.2 in additional personal income per Triumph Gulf Coast dollar requested.

For these reasons, staff score this program as a "A."

Project Summary (based on information provided by the applicant)

The Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners is requesting a \$16,800,000 Triumph grant to support the recruitment of Project Opal, an aviation aerospace manufacturer, in partnership with Florida Commerce, Space Florida, and the University of West Florida's (UWF) Industry Resilience & Diversification Fund (IRDF). The Triumph grant funds will be used to support design, engineering and site work activities to prepare a 135 acre site at the County's Shoal River Ranch Gigasite for the company's construction of up to three facilities totaling an estimated 1,000,000 sq ft, 336 new high wage jobs paying over 115% of current average Okaloosa wages, and over \$1,000,000,000 in capital investment. The proposal includes Triumph counting \$140,000,000 of anticipated construction costs for the first building as match and all 336 jobs toward the outcome metric.

The company's expansion into Okaloosa will occur in three successive phases. Phase one is construction of a 250,000 SF facility to house various functions including new, highly advanced manufacturing cells projected to be completed in December 2026. The second phase is will be the construction of an additional 250,000 SF manufacturing space by Q4 2028. The third and final phase is anticipated to be a 500,000 expansion occurring in the 2035-2036 timeframe. One Okaloosa EDC and the Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners have identified a 135-acre parcel located within Shoal River Ranch to accommodate this project.

While Project Opal is planning to fund the majority of the capital associated with the expansion, Space Florida and Okaloosa County will enter into a 30-year land and facility lease structure that will benefit the company. UWF's IRDF program has tentatively earmarked \$1,050,000 of remaining funds to support the project (pending approval of formal application) and the State of Florida's High Impact Incentive Program (HIPI) has provided the company with a preliminary

grant award commitment of \$7,000,000. Project Opal benefits from a strong overall balance sheet and the financial means to successfully execute this project.

The company is a long-standing leader in the support, development and production of aerospace systems and has been at the forefront of the aviation industry for decades. With a diverse customer base, the company has excelled at innovating and iterating to provide products that are widely valued for their unsurpassed reliability and efficiency. The company's efforts to stand up a new advanced manufacturing center are in direct response to accelerated market demand. The specific products planned for production at the proposed Crestview facility are of high interest and importance to the company's most valued customers.

Working with FloridaCommerce and similar agencies in other states known for their support of the aerospace industry, Project Opal conducted a multi-state search for a new expansion location beginning in 2023. After painstakingly reviewing sites in dozens of communities, Project Opal has identified Okaloosa County's Shoal River Ranch Gigasite as offering the best combination of infrastructure assets, transportation advantages and workforce opportunities (particularly given the community's large percentage of veterans and transitioning military members who remain in the area post- service).

Project Opal is vertically integrated and manufactures a majority of its components in- house. As the industry supply base shrinks and re-aligns to address geo-political obstacles, the Company is making additional investments in vertical integration. The Company also maintains an extensive supply chain, at this time the Company has approximately 2,400 outside suppliers.

With unprecedented demand for its products, and new markets rapidly emerging, the industry and the company see substantial growth available in the next decade. The site in Okaloosa County is an ideal fit to enable this expansion and growth.

Project Opal plans to draw upon the region's technical and academic resources to support its workforce recruiting and training including Northwest Florida State College's Engineering Technology program (Industrial Maintenance Technician AS; Mechanical Design and Fabrication AS) and the FAA-approved A&P aviation mechanics program. Project Opal anticipates utilizing CareerSource Okaloosa Walton to assist in the coordination of recruitment, training, employment placement and retention strategies. Project Opal is particularly interested in partnering with CareerSource to identify opportunities through SkillBridge for active-duty service members to gain valuable civilian work experience through specific industry training, apprenticeships, or internships during the last 180 days of military service prior to separation. Attracting and retaining the numerous service members in the region who are separating from active-duty is a key component to the company's long-range recruiting plan.

Advanced manufacturing is a key targeted industry sector for the northwest Florida region. The Economic Policy Institute in the U.S. reports that each manufacturing job creates at least three additional jobs, as manufacturing supplies are purchased and wages are spent in other parts of the economy. Okaloosa County's percentage of manufacturing employment has hovered around 4% in recent years, well beneath the 11% national average. Additionally, according to Lightcast,

some 3,095 manufacturing jobs exist in Okaloosa County at present compared with 9,214 manufacturing jobs for comparably-sized U.S. markets.

Project Opal seeks to employ higher-wage personnel including process automation engineers, repair and overall technicians and precision machine operators. The opportunity to provide viable advanced manufacturing career pathways for northwest Florida transitioning military members, students participating in career technical education programs and lower-wage service industry workers looking to upskill is significant.

The Triumph funds will be used to support site development expenses including, but not limited to, design, engineering, grading, storm water facilities construction, utility line extensions, road access improvements, parking, lighting, landscaping, and security fencing on a publicly-owned parcel to be leased by the Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners. Okaloosa County's contemplated 30 year lease will be assignable to Space Florida, which intends to assume the lease once Phase 1 construction is completed. The company will be required by their lease with Space Florida (and Space Florida's ground lease with Okaloosa County) to provide maintenance and upkeep for the facility and grounds.

The company is on a fast track for ground breaking in June 2025 with construction of the first facility commencing in the late Fall of 2025 and early 2026. Final site work is expected to occur in early 2026. The first 250,000 SF facility is targeted for completion in summer 2026. Full production is slated to begin by late 2026.

The location of Project Opal's state of the art facility in the 10,500 acre Shoal River Industrial Park will serve to solidify the park as a preferred location for companies requiring ready-access to a high quality workforce, efficient transportation systems and low cost utilities., the company will seek to effectively leverage local vendors in support of their production processes.

Budget

See attached

Letters of Support

President Mel Ponder, Northwest Florida State College

Michele Burns, Executive Director, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton

Project ###, Project Opal

Budget

Estimated construction start date if applicable

Estimated education component start date if applicable

	Design/ Engineering, Work & Construction	Site Total
Project Total		
Pre-award 2025	200,000	200,000
2025	11,750,000	11,750,000
2026	20,050,000	20,050,000
2027	62,500,000	62,500,000
2028	62,500,000	62,500,000
Project Total	157,000,000	157,000,000
Triumph		
Pre-award 2025	0	0
2025	6,800,000	6,800,000
2026	10,000,000	10,000,000
2027	0	0
2028	0	0
Triumph Total	16,800,000	16,800,000
Grantee		
Pre-award 2025	200,000	200,000
2025	0	0
2026	0	0
2027	0	0
2028	0	0
Grantee Total	200,000	200,000
Match Source 1 - Project Opal		
Pre-award 2025	0	0
2025	4,950,000	4,950,000
2026	10,050,000	10,050,000
2027	62,500,000	62,500,000
2028	62,500,000	62,500,000
Match Source 1 Total	140,000,000	140,000,000