

# Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. Application for Funds



Submitted by  
Gulf County School District  
June 10, 2025

# Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. Trust Fund

## Application for Funds

Proposal Instructions: The Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. Trust Fund Grant Application (this document) must be completed by the entity applying for the grant and signed, as applicable, by either the individual applying for funds, an individual authorized to bind the entity applying for funds, a chief elected official, the administrator for the governmental entity or their designee. Please read the Application carefully as some questions may require a separate narrative to be completed. In addition, please complete all Addendums that may be applicable to the proposed project or program.

Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. will make awards from available funds to projects or programs that meet the priorities for economic recovery, diversification, and enhancement of the disproportionately affected counties.

Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. may make awards for:

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.

Pursuant to Florida Law, Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. will provide priority consideration to Applications for projects or programs that:

- 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.

Additionally, the Board of Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. may provide discretionary priority to consideration of Applications for projects and programs that:

- Are considered transformational for the future of the Northwest Florida region.
- May be consummated quickly and efficiently.
- Promote net-new jobs in the private sector with an income above regional average household income.
- Align with Northwest Florida FORWARD, the regional strategic initiative for Northwest Florida economic transformation.
- Create net-new jobs in targeted industries to include: aerospace and defense, financial services/shared services, water transportation, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, information technology, manufacturing, and robotics.
- Promote industry cluster impact for unique targeted industries.
- Create net-new jobs with wages above national average wage (*e.g.*, similar to EFI QTI program, measured on graduated scale).
- Are located in Rural Area of Opportunity as defined by the State of Florida (DEO).
- Provide a wider regional impact versus solely local impact.
- Align with other similar programs across the regions for greater regional impact, and not be duplicative of other existing projects or programs.
- Enhance research and innovative technologies in the region.
- Enhance a targeted industry cluster or create a Center of Excellence unique to Northwest Florida.
- Create a unique asset in the region that can be leveraged for regional growth of targeted industries.
- Demonstrate long-term financial sustainability following Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. funding.
- Leverage funding from other government and private entity sources.
- Provide local investment and spending.
- Are supported by more than one governmental entity and/or private sector companies, in particular proposed projects or programs supported by more than one county in the region.
- Provide clear performance metrics over duration of project or program.
- Include deliverables-based payment system dependent upon achievement of interim performance metrics.
- Provide capacity building support for regional economic growth.
- Are environmentally conscious and business focused.
- Include Applicant and selected partners/vendors located in Northwest Florida.

Applications will be evaluated and scored based on compliance with the statutory requirements of the Triumph Gulf Coast legislation, including but not limited to the priorities identified therein and the geographic region served by the proposed project or program.

## **Applicant Information**

### Applicant Information:

- Public School System
  - Governed by an elected five-member board, 1 current vacancy
  - Superintendent: Mr. Jim Norton
- Federal Employer Identification Number: 59-6000626
- Primary Contact:
  - Melissa Hancock- Assistant Superintendent for Instruction & Strategic Improvement
  - 150 Middle School Road
  - Port St. Joe, Florida 32456
  - Phone: 850.229.6940
  - Fax: 850.227.1999
  - email: [mhancock@gulf.k12.fl.us](mailto:mhancock@gulf.k12.fl.us)
  - Website: <https://gulfcoschools.com>
- Comprised of two elementary schools Pre-K through grade 5 & two Jr./Sr. high schools grades 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> (Title I district receiving Community Eligibility Program to feed all students for free)
- Current Enrollment: 1928
- 2024 District Grade: C (56%)
- 2024 School Grades:
  - Port St. Joe Elementary School: C (53%)
  - Port St. Joe Jr.-Sr. High School: B (61%)
  - Wewahitchka Elementary School: C (49%)
  - Wewahitchka High School: C (51%)

Identify any co-applicants, partners, or other entities or organizations that will have a role in the proposed project or program and such partners proposed roles.

- Florida State University, Panama City ASCENT- partner to assist with Summer 2025 training and future support

The Gulf District Schools will be the sole applicant for the Triumph Grant funding in this applicatoin. The district will solicit a partnership from Florida State University ASCENT for curriculum development, teacher training during the start up period, and for continued program development and expansion throughout the years of the program.

Total amount of funding requested from Triumph Gulf Coast: **\$6,886,150 with an estimated total project cost of \$8,200,000**

*Supporting funds paralleled with ASCENT and INSPIRE with Florida State University, as well as a \$1,139,428 approved DLT grant through The Rural Utilities Service Distance and Learning Telemedicine Program (DLT-2024-020, FL0723-A16).*

Has the applicant in the past requested or applied for funds for all or part of the proposed project/program?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Describe the financial status of the applicant and any co-applicants or partners:

Gulf District Schools is in sound financial status. Management's Discussion and Analysis report is attached (See Attachment 1). The applicant has not filed for bankruptcy in the last ten (10) years.

In a separate attachment, please provide financial statements or information that details the financial status of the applicant and any co-applicants or partners. (See Attachment 1)

Has the applicant or any co-applicants, partners or any associated or affiliated entities or individuals filed for bankruptcy in the last ten (10) years?

☐ Yes      ☒ No

Eligibility

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.

**1. From the choices below, please check the box that describes the purpose of the proposed project or program (check all that apply):**

☒ 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;

**2. Provide the title and a detailed description of the proposed project or program, including the location of the proposed project or program, a detailed description of, and quantitative evidence demonstrating how the proposed project or program will promote economic recovery, diversification, and enhancement of the disproportionately affected counties, a proposed timeline for the proposed project or program, and the disproportionately affected counties that will be impacted by the proposed project or program.**

Project Title: **Technology Education Catalyst Grant**- focusing on bridging the rural district technology divide with offering opportunities for every elementary through secondary student to connect with Cape Digital Technology and get at least 1-5 certifications in their student career at Gulf District Schools.

Project Location: Gulf District's Elementary and Jr./Sr. High Schools (All 4 schools, supporting every student)

Project Narrative with Integrated Timeline:

The Gulf District Schools seeks to bridge the digital divide in rural districts and provide transformative educational opportunities through the **Technology Education Catalyst Grant**. The goal is to equip every elementary through secondary student with the necessary digital skills to succeed in an increasingly technology-driven world. By offering access to Cape Digital Technology and ensuring that

students can earn 1-5 technology certifications throughout their academic careers, this initiative will positively impact at least 1,400 students annually until 2034, with a return on investment (ROI) of a **minimum of 6,000 Career and Technical Education (CTE) certifications** over the nine-year grant period.

### **Key Objectives:**

1. **Integration of Technology Across Core Courses:** To provide students with foundational digital literacy, technology will be integrated into core academic subjects, preparing students for the demands of the 21st-century workforce. This will give students the tools they need to excel in their studies and future careers.
2. **CTE Courses and Integration into Core Courses for Grades 3-12:** Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses will be offered for students from 3rd to 12th grade, ensuring that every student has exposure to critical technology fields, including robotics, AI, coding, and more. CTE programs were historically eliminated due to teacher turnover and lack of replacement staff; the new initiative will prioritize placing certified instructors at each of the four school sites. Furthermore, technology will be integrated into core courses in Grades 3-12. For example, utilization of google docs and sheets will be integrated into the learning of Social Studies and Science courses.
3. **Transformation of Media Centers into TECH Hubs:** The district will convert its existing Media Centers into state-of-the-art TECH Hubs. These hubs will serve as dedicated spaces for students to access technology resources, collaborate on projects, and gain hands-on experience with emerging technologies.
4. **After-School and Summer Camp Programs:** Beginning in 2026, after-school and summer camp programs will offer engaging, real-world technology experiences, such as robotics, STEM, and AI training, for students to continue their learning beyond the classroom. These camps will foster a passion for technology and innovation among students.
5. **Preparing Students for the Jobs of Tomorrow:** The ultimate goal of this grant is to prepare Gulf District students for careers that don't yet exist. By providing robust technology education, students will gain the digital skills necessary for high-wage positions in fields such as data science, cybersecurity, software engineering, and more. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, tech-related jobs are projected to grow 11% from 2019 to 2029, much faster than the average for all occupations. This program will equip students with the skills to capitalize on this growth.

### **Immediate Impact and Sustainability:**

Acquisition of this grant would allow Gulf District Schools to immediately implement a digital technology certification program. By the end of the commitment period, the district will have a fully implemented, viable program working toward complete sustainability. Funding will be allocated to pay the salaries of key personnel, including a CTE administrator, a CTE assistant (to support the grant 50% of the time), and teachers at the four school sites. Teachers will be trained and certified in digital technology areas relevant to the intermediate, middle, and high school curricula.

Additionally, funds will be used to purchase software required for certification, as well as curriculum, licenses, certification exams, and other materials/supplies necessary for full implementation of the digital technology programs.

**Long-Term ROI and Certifications:**

This nine-year grant will result in a return on investment (ROI) of a **minimum of 6,000 CTE certifications**. These certifications will serve as a tangible outcome of the program, directly reflecting the success of the initiative in equipping students with the skills necessary to compete in the technology-driven job market.

**Conclusion:**

The Technology Education Catalyst Grant represents a pivotal opportunity to advance Gulf District Schools into the 21st century and bridge the technology divide for rural students. By integrating technology into core courses, offering comprehensive CTE programs, and establishing tech hubs and extracurricular opportunities, this initiative will prepare students not only for the current job market but for a future filled with technology-driven career opportunities. With a commitment to preparing students for careers that haven't yet been invented, Gulf District Schools is investing in the future of its students and the communities they will serve.

**Immediate Timeline:**

GDS will engage with Florida State University, Ascent for curriculum development and teacher training, as well as an ongoing partnership to develop teacher knowledge and integration in all courses in grades 3-12. The RUS grant awarded in the Fall of 2024 is the initial support for supplying each teacher in GDS with a laptop and a Clear Touch to undergird technology experiences in the classroom. Program development, teacher training and student recruitment has been ongoing in the 2024-25 school year and will continue throughout the grant as new teachers and staff join our system. Certification opportunities for teachers started June 2, 2025 with over 20 teachers for the first week, with a second week of training slated for 20 teachers the week of June 9, 2025. A CTE Coordinator was hired by GDS and has started in this role as of June 2, 2025. Certification opportunities for students will begin in the 2025-2026 school year at the elementary level in grade 3-5 and at all grades in the secondary schools.

**3. Explain how the proposed project or program is considered transformational and how it will effect the disproportionately affected counties in the next ten (10) years.**

K-12 schools have a responsibility to continue to revise curriculum in Career Technical Education to ensure students are well-prepared to enter the work force. K-12 programs that provide students with identifiable, industry-focused skills in Artificial Intelligence simply do not exist despite the fact that our world will function very differently in ten years due to AI. The Digital Tools Program will give students from Gulf County an advantage when entering a career or continuing to postsecondary education which will help to transform the area. An additional impact on Gulf County and other surrounding counties will be realized in K-12 education. One of the critical factors that businesses consider when relocating is the quality of public education. Initiatives such as the Digital Tools Program provide direct evidence to industry that our schools can serve as state and one day national models for Career Technical Education.

**4. Describe data or information available to demonstrate the viability of the proposed project or program.**

Gulf District Schools has a history of establishing successful Career Technical Education programs such as Welding, Phlebotomy, Culinary, EKG, Carpentry, Agriscience and Unmanned Systems that produce

industry certifications and students who are ready to enter the workforce or postsecondary training. The commitment to the success of each new program on the part of the Superintendent, School Board, district administration, school administration and school educators is in place.

**5. Describe how the impacts to the disproportionately affected counties will be measured long term.**

A school district is most successful when it provides opportunities for students to gain skills and credentials that meet the demands of the workforce they will be entering after graduation from high school or after postsecondary education. The district anticipates a minimum of 6,000 industry certifications to be earned by students during the nine-year grant cycle. The format of Career Technical Education beyond the grant is uncertain and the program design could look significantly different beyond that timeline based on the updates and changes by the Florida Department of Education. Increased per capita wages are expected long-term outcomes from this program which will enhance quality of life for the residents of the rural district of Gulf.

**6. Describe how the proposed project or program is sustainable. (Note: Sustainable means how the proposed project or program will remain financially viable and continue to perform in the long-term after Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. funding.)**

As with other Career Technical Education programs in Gulf District, the Digital Tools program will become self-sustaining through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) funding for students, CAPE funding for earned industry certifications and Carl Perkins Grant funding. GDS will seek additional grant funding from a variety of sources, as needed.

**7. Describe how the deliverables for the proposed project or program will be measured.**

Deliverables will tracked by certifications earned by students over the life of the Triumph grant.

## **Priorities**

**1. Please check the box if the proposed project or program will meet any of the following priorities (check all that apply):**

- ☒ Increase household income in the disproportionately affected counties above national average household income.
- ☒ Provide outcome measures
- ☒ Are recommended by the board of county commissioners of the county in which the project or program will be located

**2. Please explain how the proposed project meets the priorities identified above.**

- The proposed program will serve as a foundation for related post-secondary majors resulting in higher salaries and increased income potential.
- The proposed project leverages collaborative relationships with community and business partners as well as economic development leaders and initiatives assuring high-quality outcomes.
- The project will collaborate with Florida State University for Professional Learning and additional training opportunities.



- Certification-based programs increase household income in two ways: Recognized industry certifications can 1) increase earning potential for those entering the workforce upon graduation and 2) save families money when students choose to continue their education at the postsecondary level because certifications can articulate to college and career prep credit.

**3. Please explain how the proposed project or program meets the discretionary priorities identified by the Board.**

- The proposed project is aligned with a regional objective to enhance CTE opportunities and its unique nature is unduplicated by any other area rural school district.
- The project would result in a workforce pool available beyond the district and throughout the region, impacting the opportunities for graduates to also stay in Gulf County to work remote in technology-based positions.
- Gulf District schools possesses the organizational ability to efficiently and effectively implement the proposed project.

**4. In which of the eight disproportionately affected county/counties is the proposed project or program located? (Circle all that apply)**

Escambia Santa Rosa Okaloosa Walton Bay **Gulf** Franklin Wakulla

**5. Was this proposed project or program on a list of proposed projects and programs submitted to Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc., by one (or more) of the eight disproportionately affected Counties as a project and program located within its county?**

☐ Yes ☒ No

**6. Does the Board of County Commissioners for each County listed in response to question 5, above, recommend this project or program to Triumph?**

☒ Yes ☐ No

**\*\*Please attach proof of recommendation(s) from each County identified. ([Attachment 2](#))**

Approvals and Authority

**1. If the Applicant is awarded grant funds based on this proposal, what approvals must be obtained before Applicant can execute an agreement with Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.?**

If awarded grant funds based on this proposal, approval must be obtained from the Gulf County School Board prior to executing an agreement with Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.

**2. If approval of a board, commission, council or other group is needed prior to execution of an agreement between the entity and Triumph Gulf Coast:**

- Provide the schedule of upcoming meetings for the group for a period of at least six months.

**Gulf District Schools Board Meeting**

June 30, 2025 at 11:00 am ET

July 17, 2025 at 10:00 am ET

July 29, 2025 at 5:15 pm ET  
August 12, 2025 at 10 am ET  
September 4, 2025 at 5:15 pm ET  
October 7, 2025 at 10 am ET  
November 4, 2025 at 10 am ET

b. State whether that group can hold special meetings, and if so, upon how many days' notice.  
The Gulf County School Board may hold special meetings as needed with a 10-day notice.

**3. Describe the timeline for the proposed project or program if an award of funding is approved, including milestones that will be achieved following an award through completion of the proposed project or program.**

The proposed Digital Technology and Career & Technical Education (CTE) program will follow a structured 18-month implementation timeline, beginning in **January 2025** and culminating in **full-scale deployment by August 2026**. Below is a detailed breakdown of phases and milestones:

**Phase 1: Planning, Hiring, and Initial Setup (January – May 2025)**

- Key teachers begin required certification training.
- Computers and software purchased with RUS grant funds for initial implementation.
- Internal hiring and development of site-based teacher leaders to coordinate the program and support expansion into multiple grade levels.
- Begin acquisition of necessary equipment, supplies, and instructional materials.
- Conduct a thorough review of master schedules at elementary and secondary levels to determine course offerings, staffing, and scheduling logistics.
- Train-the-trainer sessions with ASCENT for up to 40 teachers scheduled for June.
- Advertise and appoint a dedicated **CTE Director** to oversee program coordination and growth.

**Phase 2: Staff Training and Summer Preparation (June – July 2025)**

- **June 2025:** Train 40 Gulf District Schools teachers to lead the teaching of CTE courses and embedding into their core courses to support ongoing implementation. (T3 Training with ASCENT partnership)
- **July 2025:**
  - Hire four CTE teachers—one at each participating school site.
  - Hire a CTE Assistant to provide administrative and instructional support.

**Phase 3: Initial Implementation (August 2025)**

- Launch Digital Technology integration at the **elementary level** through:
  - Computer lab rotation at Wewahitchka Elementary (WES).
  - STEAM Lab activities at Port St. Joe Elementary (PSJES).
  - Digital learning incorporated during intervention blocks for students not requiring targeted academic interventions (focus on grades 4 and 5).
- Revamp secondary school schedules to embed multiple industry-recognized certification opportunities for junior high and high school students by integrating digital tools into core academic courses. These courses will be taught by educators who received specialized training during the summer, ensuring that all secondary students have equitable access to credentialing pathways across subject areas.

**Phase 4: Expansion and Engagement (June-July 2026)**

- Train 40 Gulf District Schools teachers to lead summer certification camps and support ongoing implementation. (T3 Training with ASCENT partnership)

- Host **four-day summer technology camps** for elementary, middle, and high school students, led by trained faculty and supported by high school students who have completed initial certifications.
  - These camps will build momentum, generate positive community and media engagement, and foster partnerships with local businesses to support career pipelines.

#### **Phase 5: Full Implementation (August 2026- June 30, 2034)**

- **Full-scale launch** of all Digital Technology and CTE courses across all schools, serving students in grades **3 through 12**.
  - Students will have access to aligned certification pathways, industry-relevant instruction, and increased opportunities for post-secondary and workforce readiness.
  - Offer at least 6 clubs and/or afterschool or summer programs associated with Career Technology Education and give instructors a district-approved supplement approved on the supplement list.
4. Attach evidence that the undersigned has all necessary authority to execute this proposal on behalf of the entity applying for funding. This evidence may take a variety of forms, including but not limited to: a delegation of authority, citation to relevant laws or codes, policy documents, etc. In addition, please attach any support letters from partners.
- The undersigned, Renee Lynn and Melissa Hancock, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, has been given all necessary authority to execute this proposal on behalf of the applying entity, Gulf County School Board.

#### **Funding and Budget:**

Pursuant to Section 288.8017, awards may not be used to finance 100 percent of any project or program. An awardee may not receive all of the funds available in any given year.

1. Identify the amount of funding sought from Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. and the time period over which funding is requested.  
**\$6,886,150 (see attached proposed budget, [Attachment 3](#)) from August 2025-June 2034**
2. What percentage of total program or project costs does the requested award from Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. represent? (Please note that an award of funding will be for a defined monetary amount and will not be based on percentage of projected project costs.) **72%**
3. Please describe the types and number of jobs expected from the proposed project or program and the expected average wage.

#### **Types and Number of Jobs Expected from the Proposed Program and the Expected Average Wage**

The proposed program will directly address the urgent workforce shortage in the Digital Technology sector—**currently defined by high demand and low supply**. This initiative is designed to prepare participants for high-growth, high-wage careers that are essential across nearly every industry. Digital tools are now integrated into virtually all jobs, and the occupations targeted by this program represent critical, future-proof roles in the modern economy.

#### **Targeted Job Types**

Participants will be trained for the following in-demand roles:

- **Data Scientist**
- **Software Developer**

- **User Experience (UX) Designer**
- **Business Intelligence Analyst**
- **Cloud Administrator**
- **Full-Stack Developer**
- **Cybersecurity Engineer**
- **Information Technology (IT) Manager**
- **Machine Learning Engineer**
- **Data Architect**

These roles reflect a cross-section of the digital workforce ecosystem and have been selected based on regional labor market data and employer demand.

### **Estimated Job Creation and Placement**

The program aims to **create or fill approximately 50 jobs** within 24–36 months of implementation. This includes new workforce entrants, reskilled adult learners, and upskilled incumbent workers. Strong partnerships with industry employers will ensure alignment with hiring needs and smooth transitions into employment. Graduates of the program will be equipped for high-demand, high-paying digital technology roles that also offer remote work flexibility. This means they can pursue thriving careers from anywhere—including rural districts—without needing to relocate.

**All students participating in the program** will significantly increase their job marketability by gaining practical, industry-aligned digital technology skills. As nearly every sector now relies on digital tools, these competencies will position students as highly competitive candidates in a broad range of careers.

### **Expected Average Wages**

The average entry-level wage for graduates of the program is expected to range from **\$70,000 to \$110,000 annually**, depending on the specific role. More advanced positions—such as Machine Learning Engineers or Data Architects—can command starting salaries exceeding **\$120,000**.

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Estimated Average Annual Wage</b>
Data Scientist/Architect	\$100,000 – \$130,000
Software Developer	\$80,000 – \$110,000
UX Designer	\$75,000 – \$100,000
Business Intelligence Analyst	\$85,000 – \$110,000
Cloud Administrator	\$90,000 – \$115,000
Full-Stack Developer	\$90,000 – \$120,000
Cybersecurity Engineer	\$95,000 – \$125,000
IT Manager	\$110,000 – \$140,000
Machine Learning Engineer	\$115,000 – \$145,000

This program aligns directly with the goals of the grant by developing a sustainable talent pipeline for high-wage, high-skill careers in one of the world’s fastest-growing industries. Graduates will be equipped with immediately applicable skills that meet employer needs, drive economic growth, and expand access to quality jobs for diverse populations.

#### **4. Does the potential award supplement but not supplant existing funding sources? If yes, describe how the potential award supplements existing funding sources.**

☒ Yes    ☐ No

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Gulf District Schools received a \$1,139,428 approved DLT grant through The Rural Utilities Service Distance and Learning Telemedicine Program (DLT-2024-020, FL0723-A16).

**5. Please provide a Project/Program Budget. Include all applicable costs and other funding sources available to support the proposal.**

A. Project/Program Costs: See Proposed Budget for 2025-2034

B. Other Project Funding Sources:

- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| ○ RUS Grant   | \$1,139,428 |
| ○ Florida State University, Panama City ASCENT- partner for Summer 2025 training (will pay teacher stipends, supply software) | \$40,000    |
| ○ Gulf District Schools will provide partial salaries   | \$134,422   |

<b>Total Other Funding</b>	<b>\$1,313,850</b>
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**Total Amount Requested: \$6,886,150**

C. Provide a detailed budget narrative, including the timing and steps necessary to obtain the funding and any other pertinent budget-related information.

**See attached detail budget. (Attachment 3)**

First, GDS requests initial funding Year 1 in the amount of approximately \$600,000 to fund startup costs associated with the Digital Tools implementation to include the cost of a CTE Coordinator, hardware such as computers, certification, and licenses. Annual dues and fees and instructors who will spend the first year in program development will also be included. The balance of year 1 funding will be used to purchase equipment and computers for elementary and junior high school classrooms to support Digital curriculum.

Second, GDS requests performance funding for each industry certification earned through year 5, salaries for two additional teachers for each junior/senior high school, computer upgrades, and repairs, and miscellaneous costs associated with the implementation of the digital tools programs within all 4 schools.

Applicant understands that the Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. statute requires that the award contract must include provisions requiring a performance report on the contracted activities, must account for the proper use of funds provided under the contract, and must include provisions for recovery of awards in the event the award was based upon fraudulent information or the awardee is not meeting the performance requirements of the award.

☒ Yes      ☐ No

Applicant understands that awardees must regularly report to Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. the expenditure of funds and the status of the project or program on a schedule determined by Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.

☒ Yes      ☐ No

Applicant acknowledges that Applicant and any co-Applicants will make books and records and other financial data available to Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. as necessary to measure and confirm performance metrics and deliverables.

☒ Yes      ☐ No

Applicant acknowledges that Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. reserves the right to request additional information from Applicant concerning the proposed project or program.

☒ Yes      ☐ No

### **ADDENDUM FOR WORKFORCE TRAINING PROPOSALS**

#### 1. Program Requirements

- A. Will this proposal supports programs that prepare students for future occupations and careers at K-20 institutions that have campuses in the disproportionately affected counties? If yes, please identify where the campuses are located and provide details on how the proposed programs will prepare students for future occupations and at which K-20 institutions that programs will be provided.

☒ Yes      ☐ No

The goal is to equip every elementary through secondary student with the necessary digital skills to succeed in an increasingly technology-driven world. By offering access to Cape Digital Technology and ensuring that students can earn 1-5 technology certifications throughout their academic careers, this initiative will positively impact at least 1,400 students annually until 2034, with a return on investment (ROI) of a **minimum of 6,000 Career and Technical Education (CTE) certifications** over the nine-year grant period. All students will be residence of rural Gulf County.

- A. Will the proposed program (check all that apply):

- ☒ 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
- ☐ 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 (similar to or the same as talent retention programs created by the Chancellor of the State University System and the Commission on Education)

For each item checked above, describe how the proposed program will achieve these goals.

This grant will directly support three key goals of Gulf District Schools’ educational and workforce development initiatives:

1. **Increase Students’ Technology Skills and Knowledge**

The program will embed digital tools into core academic and elective courses starting in grade 3, exposing students early to essential technology applications. Hands-on training, use of modern equipment, and teacher-led digital instruction will help students build foundational and advanced skills in areas such as coding, data analysis, cloud systems, and user experience design.

2. **Encourage Industry Certifications**

By aligning course offerings with high-demand digital certifications, the grant will allow students—especially in junior high and high school—to earn credentials that are recognized by employers nationwide. The summer training for teachers ensures that certified instructors can deliver credential-based instruction in core content areas, creating multiple pathways for students to achieve industry-recognized qualifications before graduation. The afterschool clubs and summer programs for students will also promote through extracurricular activities and competitions elevated interest.

3. **Strengthen Career Readiness Initiatives**

The initiative supports career readiness by integrating digital literacy with real-world applications, offering summer tech camps, and expanding CTE programming across grades 3–12. Students will gain exposure to high-demand fields, benefit from mentorship and work-based learning experiences, and graduate with both academic knowledge and practical skills that prepare them for college, careers, or both.

- C. Will this proposal provide participants in the disproportionately affected counties with transferable, sustainable workforce skills but not confined to a single employer? If yes, please provide details.

☒ Yes      ☐ No

es, this proposal will provide participants in disproportionately affected counties with **transferable and sustainable workforce skills** that are **not confined to a single employer or industry**.

The program is centered around digital technology training and industry-recognized certifications that are applicable across a wide range of fields—including healthcare, education, manufacturing, business, cybersecurity, and software development. Students in **grades 3–12** will gain foundational and advanced skills in areas such as coding, data analytics, cloud computing, user interface design, and cybersecurity. These competencies are in **high demand nationally and globally**, making them portable and relevant across sectors.

Moreover, the program emphasizes **career readiness, digital literacy, and problem-solving**—core competencies that align with evolving workforce needs. Certification opportunities will be embedded within academic courses, allowing students to build **stackable credentials** that can be used to access further training, postsecondary education, or immediate employment. Because these skills are not tied to a specific company or employer, participants will graduate better prepared to pursue diverse, sustainable career paths regardless of geographic location.

- D. Identify the disproportionately affected counties where the proposed programs will operate or provide participants with workforce skills.

Gulf County

- E. Provide a detailed description of, and quantitative evidence demonstrating how the proposed project or program will promote:
- Economic recovery, ○ Economic Diversification, × Enhancement of the disproportionately affected counties, ○ Enhancement of a Targeted Industry.

### **Enhancement of the Disproportionately Affected Counties**

The proposed project will significantly enhance Gulf County and other disproportionately affected rural areas by addressing the root causes of economic instability—limited access to high-wage, future-ready career pathways—and building long-term resilience through digital workforce development. This initiative will introduce transferable digital technology skills and certifications across **grades 3–12**, creating a sustained pipeline of talent capable of meeting both current and emerging workforce demands.

### **Quantitative Evidence of Need and Impact**

- **High Unemployment & Limited Industry Presence:** Gulf County’s unemployment rate has consistently been above the state average, and its economy relies heavily on sectors such as tourism, construction, and public service—industries that are vulnerable to economic downturns and seasonal fluctuation.
- **Limited Access to Career Pathways:** As of the most recent Florida Department of Education reports, fewer than **10% of students in Gulf County graduate with an industry-recognized certification**, compared to **28% statewide**. This proposal aims to **triple certification rates within three years** by embedding credentials in both core and CTE courses.
- **Digital Inequity:** Over **25% of households** in the district lack reliable access to modern computing devices or consistent digital training, putting students at a disadvantage in both school and the job market. The grant will fund computer labs, software, and cloud-based platforms to close the digital divide across all grade levels.
- **Job Growth in Tech Fields:** According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment in digital technology fields is expected to grow by **15% from 2022 to 2032**, much faster than the average for all occupations. This includes roles such as cybersecurity analysts, software developers, and data analysts—jobs that will be accessible to students participating in this program.

### **Economic Recovery & Diversification**

This program contributes to **economic recovery** by preparing students for remote, high-wage jobs that are in demand across the country, allowing them to **live and work locally** while participating in the broader digital economy. By building a digitally skilled workforce, the region will be better positioned to **attract diverse industries** and support entrepreneurship, expanding beyond traditional economic drivers.

Additionally, the program will involve **partnerships with local businesses and regional employers** to support internships, mentorships, and work-based learning opportunities. This will strengthen school-to-work pipelines and enhance the region’s workforce competitiveness.

## **2. Additional Information**

- A. Is this an expansion of an existing training program? Is yes, describe how the proposed program will enhance or improve the existing program and how the proposal program will supplement but not supplant existing funding sources.



☐ Yes      ☒ No

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(If additional space is needed, please attach a Word document with your entire answer.)

- B.      Indicate how the training will be delivered (*e.g.*, classroom-based, computer based, other).  
            If in-person, identify the location(s) (*e.g.*, city, campus, etc.) where the training will be available.  
            If computer-based, identify the targeted location(s) (*e.g.*, city, county) where the training will be available.

Training will be coordinated with Florida State University and will be delivered face to face in June 2025 and other dates can be coordinated upon grant approval.

- C.      Identify the number of anticipated enrolled students and completers.

The district anticipates a **minimum of 6,000 Career and Technical Education (CTE) certifications** over the nine-year grant period.

- D.      Indicate the length of the program (*e.g.*, quarters, semesters, weeks, months, etc.) including anticipated beginning and ending dates.

The plan is tentative, but the courses at the junior high level will be offered by semesters and will be embedded year round into the elementary curriculum. Courses at each grade level will be yearlong or one-semester as determined through the curriculum development process.

- E.      Describe the plan to support the sustainability of the proposed program.  
Digital Tools programs are sustainable through FEFP and CTE certifications. Once students begin taking courses, master schedules can add courses annually and become self-sustaining.

- F.      Identify any certifications, degrees, etc. that will result from the completion of the program.

Certifications will be selected from the CAPE Funding List as appropriate. New certifications will be developed and recommended for funding.

- G.      Does this project have a local match amount? If yes, please describe the entity providing the match and the amount.  
            ☒ Yes      ☐ No

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\$606,000.00 The Rural Utilities Distance and Learning Telemedicine Grant (DLT-2024-020, FL0723-A16) for a Project Budget of **\$1,139,428** with a DLT grant approval of **\$990,806** (district providing a

15% match for this grant). This district will fund percentage of positions and provide other support personnel.

H. 

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Provide any additional information or attachments to be considered for this proposal.

## **ADDENDUM FOR LOCAL MATCH REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 288.0655, FLORIDA STATUTES**

### **1. Program Requirements**

- A. Describe the local match requirements of Section 288.0655 and the underlying project, program or transaction that will be funded by the proposed award.

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(If additional space is needed, please attach a Word document with your entire answer.)

- B. Provide a detailed explanation of how the local match requirements and the underlying project or program will connect to a broader economic recovery, diversification, enhancement of the disproportionately affected counties and/or enhancement of a targeted industry.

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(If additional space is needed, please attach a Word document with your entire answer.)

- C. Provide a detailed description of, and quantitative evidence demonstrating how the proposed local match requirements will promote:

○ Economic recovery, ○ Economic Diversification, ○ Enhancement of the disproportionately affected counties, ○ Enhancement of a Targeted Industry.

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(If additional space is needed, please attach a Word document with your entire answer.)

### **2. Additional Information**

- A. What is the location of the property or transaction that will be supported by the local match requirements?

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(If additional space is needed, please attach a Word document with your entire answer.)

- B. Detail the current status of the property or transaction that will be supported by the local match requirement and provide a detailed description of when and how the local match requirement will be implemented.

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(If additional space is needed, please attach a Word document with your entire answer.)

- C. Provide any additional information or attachments to be considered for this proposal.

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(If additional space is needed, please attach a Word document with your entire answer.)

## ADDENDUM FOR LOCAL ACTION PLAN

### 1. Program Requirements

- A. Describe how the proposed award will establish and maintain equipment and trained personnel for local action plans of response to respond to disasters.
- B. Describe the type and amount of equipment and trained personnel that will be established or maintained by the proposed award.
- C. Identify the specific local action plans (*e.g.*, Coastal Impacts Assistance Program) that will benefit from the proposed award.
- D. Provide a detailed explanation of how the proposed award will connect to a broader economic recovery, diversification, enhancement of the disproportionately affected counties and/or enhancement of a targeted industry.

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(If additional space is needed, please attach a Word document with your entire answer.)

- E. Provide a detailed description of the quantitative evidence demonstrating how the proposed will promote:
  - Economic recovery, ○ Economic Diversification, ○ Enhancement of the disproportionately affected counties, ○ Enhancement of a Targeted Industry.

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(If additional space is needed, please attach a Word document with your entire answer.)

### 2. Additional Information

- A. What is the location of the local action program that will be supported by the proposed award?

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(If additional space is needed, please attach a Word document with your entire answer.)

- B. Detail the current status of the local action plans (*e.g.*, new plans, existing plans, etc.) that will be supported by the proposed award and provide a detailed description of when and how the proposed award will be implemented.

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(If additional space is needed, please attach a Word document with your entire answer.)

- C. Provide any additional information or attachments to be considered for this proposal.

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(If additional space is needed, please attach a Word document with your entire answer.)

## ADDENDUM FOR ADVERTISING/PROMOTION

### 1. Program Requirements

- A. Is the applicant a tourism entity created under s. 288.1226, Florida Statutes?  
☐ Yes ☒ No
- B. Does the applicant advertise and promote tourism and Fresh From Florida? If yes, provide details on how it advertises and promotes tourism and Fresh From Florida.  
☐ Yes ☒ No
- 
- C. Does the proposed award promote workforce and infrastructure on behalf of the disproportionately affected counties? If yes, describe how workforce and infrastructure is promoted on behalf of the disproportionately affected counties. Yes or No
- D. Provide a detailed explanation of how the proposed award will connect to a broader economic recovery, diversification, enhancement of the disproportionately affected counties and/or enhancement of a targeted industry.
- E. Provide a detailed description of the quantitative evidence demonstrating how the proposed will promote:  
    ○ Economic recovery, ○ Economic Diversification, ○ Enhancement of the disproportionately affected counties, ○ Enhancement of a Targeted Industry.

### 2. Additional Information

- A. Describe the advertising and promotion mediums and locations where the advertising and promotion will occur.
- B. Detail the current status of the advertising and promotion (*e.g.*, new plans, existing plans, etc.) that will be supported by the proposed award and provide a detailed description of when and how the proposed award will be implemented.
- C. Provide any additional information or attachments to be considered for this proposal.

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that I have express authority to sign this proposal on my behalf or on behalf of the above-described entity, organization, or governmental entity:

Name of Applicant: Gulf County School District

Name and Title of Authorized Representative: Melissa Hancock

Representative Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Date: June 2, 2025



Report No. 2024-084  
December 2023

**STATE OF FLORIDA AUDITOR GENERAL**

Financial and Federal Single Audit

**GULF COUNTY  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

For the Fiscal Year Ended  
June 30, 2023



Sherrill F. Norman, CPA  
Auditor General

<https://gulfcoschools.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/2023-24-Approved-Final-Budget.pdf>

## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS GULF COUNTY, FLORIDA

1000 Cecil G. Costin, Sr. Blvd. • Room 302 • Port St. Joe, Florida • 32456

850.229.6106 • Fax: 850.564.7503

[www.gulfcounty-fl.gov](http://www.gulfcounty-fl.gov) • [bocc@gulfcounty-fl.gov](mailto:bocc@gulfcounty-fl.gov)

DATE & TIME OF MEETINGS: Fourth Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m., E.T.

June 18, 2024

Florida Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.  
P.O. Box 12007  
Tallahassee, Florida 32317

Dear Triumph Board Members,

As Chairman of the Gulf County Board of County Commissioners I am writing this letter of support for the Gulf District Schools System's Triumph application to create a digital tools program at our four county schools. The commission supports allocating \$1,500,000 in Triumph dollars for the five-year program.

Computer use and information technology now permeate all phases of our daily life and familiarity with these technologies is a must. The new Gulf District Schools program will make available to our elementary and high school students' training, education and certification in computer use, game design and information technology, all areas of study that lead to good paying jobs in our region of the State.

We are extremely supportive of this application and the benefits it will provide for our young people and the community overall. Your consideration and approval of this grant request will be greatly appreciated. Please let me know if you need additional information or have any questions.

Sincerely,



Sandy Quinn, Chairman  
Gulf County Board of County Commissioners

DAVID C. RICH  
District 1

JACK HUSSAND  
District 2

PATRICK FARRELL  
District 3

SANDY QUINN  
District 4

PHIL MCCORDAN  
District 5



TRIUMPH GRANT PROJECTED BUDGET (July 1, 2025-June 30, 2034)

Gulf District Schools TECH Ed Catalyst Grant

	Year CTE POSITION	July 1, 2025- June 30, 2026	July 1, 2026- June 30, 2027	July 1, 2027- June 30, 2028	July 1, 2028- June 30, 2029	July 1, 2029- June 30, 2030	July 1, 2030- June 30, 2031	July 1, 2031- June 30, 2032	July 1, 2032- June 30, 2033	July 1, 2033- June 30, 2034
Proposed Expense		YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7	YEAR 8	YEAR 9
Salary for CTE Coordinator	1	\$ 85,000.00	\$ 85,000.00	\$ 85,000.00	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 95,000.00	\$ 95,000.00	\$ 95,000.00
Benefits 20%)		\$ 17,000.00	\$ 17,000.00	\$ 17,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 19,000.00	\$ 19,000.00	\$ 19,000.00
Insurance- base plan		\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 22,000.00	\$ 22,000.00	\$ 22,000.00
Salary for CTE Assistant (50%)	0.5	\$ 23,000.00	\$ 23,000.00	\$ 23,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 27,500.00	\$ 27,500.00	\$ 27,500.00
Benefits 20% at 50% (10%)		\$ 2,300.00	\$ 2,300.00	\$ 2,300.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,750.00	\$ 2,750.00	\$ 2,750.00
Insurance- base plan (50%)		\$ 8,500.00	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,500.00	\$ 9,500.00	\$ 9,500.00
out	3	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 160,000.00	\$ 160,000.00	\$ 160,000.00	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 120,000.00
Benefits for 4 CTE teachers (20% at 75%)		\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 32,000.00	\$ 32,000.00	\$ 32,000.00	\$ 24,000.00	\$ 24,000.00	\$ 24,000.00
Insurance for 4 CTE teachers- base plan (50%)		\$ 36,000.00	\$ 36,000.00	\$ 36,000.00	\$ 38,000.00	\$ 38,000.00	\$ 38,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00
Software and license renewals		\$ 50,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Student Chromebooks 1:1 ratio (upgrade on 3 year cycle)			\$ 600,000.00			\$ 700,000.00			\$ 800,000.00	
Consumable Supplies: such as paper, toner, pencils, tape, clips, binders to be used at by the CTE Coordinator, Assistant and teachers		\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00
Certification exams and curriculum		\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
Technology Conferences		\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00
T3 Academy Expenses & Stipends for Year 2-8		\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 35,000.00	
	4.5 position	\$ 595,800.00	\$ 1,185,800.00	\$ 580,800.00	\$ 540,500.00	\$ 1,240,500.00	\$ 525,500.00	\$ 490,750.00	#####	\$ 445,750.00
Grand Total		\$ 6,886,150.00	*based on current projections, subject to be modifications due to union negotiations, inflation, etc.							