

Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.

MyFloridaTriumph.com

Mr. Lindsey Cannon  
Children's Home Society of Florida  
1300 N. Palafox Street, Suite 103  
Pensacola, Florida 32501

December 7, 2020

Dear Mr. Cannon:

Thank you for submitting an application for funding to Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. We appreciate your time and effort and your commitment to creating a better Northwest Florida.

As you may know, Triumph Gulf Coast has received many more requests for funding than can be supported with the resources available to us. Unfortunately, after a thorough review by our professional advisors, it does not appear that your proposal meets our purposes and requirements for substantially improving the economy of the eight counties disproportionately affected by the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill.

We are required by law to score each application as to its likely return on investment and potential for diversifying and enhancing our regional economy. Proposal # 161, "Children's Home Society – Creating Tomorrow's Workforce with Weis", was scored as a C based on the economic impact information provided in the application.

Proposals with a score of C, D, or F will not be recommended to our Board of Directors. There is no certainty that all A and B scored proposals will be funded.

The proposal describes a project intended to implement a Community Partnership School (CPS) to meet the needs of the students, parents and families in order to remove barriers to learning. Services offered often include mental health counseling and success coaching, medical care, vision, dental services, academic tutoring, enrichment services, cultural activities and programs, psychoeducational support groups, mentoring, wellness and nutrition education, and service-learning opportunities with hands-on application of instruction. These services aim to meet the social, emotional, mental, physical, nutritional and sometimes financial needs of the student population.

The Children's Home Society (CHS) proposes to reach at least 580 students and parents per year at a cost to Triumph of \$566 per year per participant. The proposal identifies approximately \$392,500 in match funding in the first year. Subsequent year match funding is not identified although the proposal notes that CHS Western Region 2019 operating budget is \$5,300,000. The proposed programs and student numbers include: Creative Computing (K-2) = at least 200 students per year Whiz Kids (K-5) = at least 50 students afterschool and summer per year IC3 Spark (3-5) = at least 200 students per years RATC = 30 parents per year IC3 Digital Literacy = 25 students per year.

While we agree with this premise, the proposal does not provide the types of workforce training curricula that would create the high wage jobs in specific occupations that Triumph Gulf Coast is

tasked with producing. The Triumph Board has generally insisted on production of state recognized CAPE career and technical certifications associated with specific occupations in order to make a workforce education funding award. This proposal suggests attainment of credentials by elementary school children and their families, noting that success early in school is likely to be associated with success in subsequent schooling.

In the first projects to be reviewed for Triumph grants, staff had decided to determine if Florida's Digital Tools curriculum could be moved from middle school to elementary school in order to set a 3rd -12th grade IT pathway in Florida. Now that the concept has been determined to be successful, we await FLDOE's determination of expansion of this option into CAPE formulas. It was not Triumph Gulf Coast's intent to include future funding of Digital Tools in elementary school to support Triumph workforce initiatives. Our short trial run set the precedent for statewide adoption which will eventually lead to a 3rd-12th grade IT certification pathway. The trial was, as part of our work with FLDOE, to demonstrate that a 3rd-12<sup>th</sup> grade IT pathway could be successfully established in Florida with Triumph and Florida leading the nation in this workforce linkage.

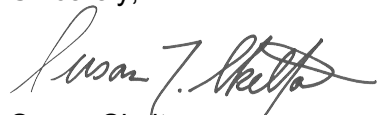
Digital Tools as a stand-alone curriculum doesn't connect with the state's current workforce training\education pathways. Hopefully, in the future FLDOE will build an approved bridge from 3rd-12th grade for IT certifications. In addition, using Digital Tools with the adult population does not provide a strong enough link to the type of jobs Triumph is charged with developing. Since our early efforts in 2017, districts have included Digital Tools in their proposals as part of the total project. Triumph has not included those certifications in the formula to approve projects. Funding for Triumph projects has been based on completion of state recognized CAPE Certifications for in-demand occupational skills.

Additionally, the return on the proposed Triumph investment cannot be calculated in the absence of identified career and technical certifications to be attained via the project. For these reasons, staff score the project as a "C." Staff does not recommend further action by the Triumph Board at this time.

As you also may be aware, Triumph Gulf Coast is not the only source of funds arising from the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. The RESTORE Act, a federal law, provides \$6.2 billion to coastal states, counties and communities for environmental projects and other needs. If you believe your proposal qualifies, you may want to be in contact with the RESTORE coordinator in your county.

We appreciate your participation and welcome any future proposals that more closely fulfill the purposes and requirements of Triumph Gulf Coast.

Sincerely,



Susan Skelton  
Executive Director