

## 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:**

Research and Engineering Education Facility, University of Florida

**Proposal Title:** REEF/FLARE Regional Defense Hub Workforce Alignment & Amplification

**Amount of Triumph Funds Requested:** \$19,000,000

**Total Estimated Project Cost:** \$76,000,000

**Brief Description of Individual/Entity/Organization:**

The University of Florida (UF) is a public land-grant (R1) research university and senior member of the State University System of Florida (SUS). The Research and Engineering Education Facility (REEF) in Shalimar, Florida is a UF regional campus on land leased from Eglin Air Force Base (AFB) that serves the Eglin community. Florida Applied Research in Engineering (FLARE) is a UF College of Engineering mission-driven unit focused on advancing innovative research, developing the next generation of scientific and engineering talent, and forging strategic partnerships with academic, industry, small business, and Department of Defense (DoD) collaborators.

**Contact Information:**

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

- Team Eglin leadership including: 96<sup>th</sup> Test Wing (AFTC), Air Force Research Laboratory Munition Directorate (AFRL/RW), and Air Force Life Cycle Management Center Armament Directorate (AFLCMC/EB).
- Proposing team leads of a surrounding 98-acre Eglin AFB “Innovation District” EUL project.
- The Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County, Florida (One Okaloosa EDC).
- Seeking Resolutions of Support from Okaloosa County League of Cities and Northwest Florida League of Cities for full application based on pre-application enthusiasm and encouragement.
- Anticipating Letters of Support from across/beyond NWF based on several recent *Science, Innovation & Technology Partnership* Letters of Support for FLARE/REEF in 2024 – including from local school districts, SUS peers, local education consortiums, and industry supporters.

## **REQUIRED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Proposed Project:** *REEF/FLARE Regional Defense Hub Workforce Alignment and Amplification* will unleash regional growth by accelerating expansion of the academic core of a regional innovation, education, and workforce development engine with capability complementing Team Eglin’s critical technology investment areas, needs, and missions. This project will secure strategic technology and enable talent infusion at the 20-acre REEF campus to align our operations with adjacent Eglin AFB’s next generation weapons development. We will build on our long-standing regional partnership between Eglin AFB and UF with an increased level of synergy facilitated by a professional team led by FLARE that has collaborated closely with Team Eglin since 2019 to deliver unique technology and highly secure research and capabilities on the REEF Campus. By recruiting portfolio managers with expertise across the Team Eglin-defined focus areas of our joint vision and introducing state of the art tools in each area, we’ll rapidly supercharge our regional impact. This includes new high-paying jobs, attracting and retaining desired talent, enhancing the STEM pipeline, supporting local entrepreneurs and returning veterans, and increasing the establishment and growth of partnerships between private, academic, and public sectors within and beyond Northwest Florida.

UF’s Florida Applied Research in Engineering (FLARE) team is leading the technology and expertise alignment in partnership with Team Eglin under our shared vision to provide the academic core of a regional innovation, education, and workforce development competency to meet the applied and advanced research mid and near-term needs of the Air Force. This comprises unique technology and capabilities aligned with Team Eglin’s strategy and missions including creation of unique and specialized research capabilities adjacent to the 48,000 square feet of office, conference, classroom, collaborative, and laboratory space. This UF REEF/FLARE Regional Defense Hub is surrounded by a separate Eglin AFB 98-acre mixed-use / enhanced use lease ([EUL](#)) site proposed for development of an “Innovation District” that will be focused on bringing together government, industry, and academia in a collaborative environment focused on the next generation mission at Eglin AFB.

The proposed surrounding Innovation District, with aligned mission and goals, should be an incredible force multiplier beyond this project and resulting anticipated growth. The REEF/FLARE Regional Defense Hub will be positioned to feed the Innovation District ecosystem during its inception with talent, capabilities, partnerships, and lessons learned. As it matures, the Innovation District will in turn feed our growth, directly and indirectly, with our increasing national recognition.

**Amount of funds being sought from Triumph Gulf Coast:** \$19M.

The budget for this proposal is \$19M, including purchasing advanced tools, technology, and equipment that will enable, expand, and accelerate research, education, and entrepreneurship in lockstep with the most recent and emerging critical science and technology (S&T) investment areas and strategy of Team Eglin. Labor for hiring subject matter expert (SME) faculty and staff with experience aligned with these focus areas to lead the facility technology updates, applied and advanced research pursuits, custom short course and certificate programs, and talent recruitment is also included in the requested amount. The advanced tools, technology, and equipment will also enhance existing and emerging aligned STEM programs that will leverage space, talent, and capability at the REEF. A Technology Incubator Lab and/or Maker Space will also be created to support emerging areas and to facilitate technology transfer/transition and entrepreneurial growth.

**Amount and identity of other sources of funds for the proposed project:** \$57M.

Defense funding that will be enabled by this project includes that from aligned research and education contract vehicles with combined ceilings of \$55M and periods of performance from 2025 through 2030. The anticipated value of total research awards will surpass \$55M in five years but could potentially exceed \$100M based on additional competitive pursuits/awards aligned with this investment. \$2M in UF/FLARE funds for initial startup including long-lead technology items and initial hiring including fund intake/management are planned/pending. No assumptions of funding resulting from the immense potential benefit of the surrounding proposed Innovation District and related government, industry, and academia collaborations are included in this \$57M “other sources of funds” amount. However, we anticipate epic and synergistic opportunities and investments based on the Innovation District’s alignment, collocation, and common anticipated strategy and needs.

**Location of the project:** Okaloosa County

The Research and Engineering Education Facility (REEF) in Shalimar, Florida is a UF regional campus on land leased from Eglin Air Force Base (AFB) approximately 1.5 miles northwest of the west gate. Constructed in 1995 on the 20-acre REEF Campus, UF Building 1700 includes 48,000 net square feet of office, conference, classroom, collaborative, and laboratory space. UF’s Florida Applied Research in Engineering (FLARE) team is leading the technology alignment in partnership with Team Eglin and has recently completed creation of a 6,000 square foot highly secure research capability (UF Building 1701). This UF REEF/FLARE Regional Defense Hub is surrounded by a separate Eglin AFB 98-acre mixed-use / enhanced use lease ([EUL](#)) site proposed for development of an “Innovation District” that will be focused on bringing together government, industry, and academia in a collaborative environment focused on the next generation mission at Eglin AFB.

**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:**

This program will drive the creation of diverse high-paying jobs (faculty instructors and researchers, engineers, technicians, lab managers, research coordinators, IT professionals, security managers, administrators, student interns, etc.) in hot areas of technology (artificial intelligence, machine learning, digital twinning, robotics, autonomy, microelectronics, additive manufacturing, advanced materials, S&T munitions and manufacturing, advanced sensors, software development, simulation, etc.) across multiple engineering disciplines (Mechanical & Aerospace, Industrial & Systems, Electrical & Computer, Material Science, Computer & Information Science, Chemical, etc.).

The proposed investment in aligned advanced tools and area leads will enable, expand, and accelerate research, education, and entrepreneurship in lockstep with the most recent and emerging critical S&T focus areas and strategy of Team Eglin. This will in turn attract and produce the talent to match their urgent mid and near-term workforce needs and simultaneously enhance STEM programs to match their long-term workforce needs. This will also improve local commercial companies’ talent pools.

The technology area leads will be mission-driven collaborative workforce development amplifiers that will attract talent to Northwest Florida by promoting unique research and collaboration opportunities in partnership with Team Eglin, industry, local business, and academic collaborators.

Promotion through potential national marketing and communication of “plans for a common and attractive high-tech theme between the largest US AFB, a premier public university’s unique regional campus, and a proposed futuristic 98-acre Innovation District – all on contiguous land located in the most beautiful place on earth” – could be a helpful catalyst for Okaloosa and, likely, NWF at large.

Meeting the human capital demands of the region, retention of talent, alignment to a major local employer's needs (Eglin AFB), and the timing to invest in the required academic core for growth that has all the other pieces in place (the mission, model, site, contracts, PPP, expertise, and support) is a once in a generation opportunity. Lessons learned toward scaling this program up with the proposed surrounding Innovation District and other academic institutions with same mission and needs will help with regional economic recovery and growth far past this program's timeline.

### **UF's Mission for Regional Economic Development & STEM Education Outreach**

UF as the state's land grant university has a mission to serve the citizens and industry of the state of Florida and the defense industry is a critical part of that strategy. Growing the state's economy is an important mission for UF and one element of that mission is our focus on engineering and computer science outreach directly to industry, and other stakeholders across the state.

The REEF Campus' technology, talent, capabilities, and educational components, tailored to meeting region-specific needs to grow the economy, will be extended to support, and amplify, the already successful STEM and K20+ programs of our Team Eglin partners. The key to the success of our regional engagement approach is the power of UF locally delivered to serve regional needs that impact the technology economy for current and future generations of citizens and industry ranging from K20+ to returning veterans.

The REEF/FLARE Regional Defense Hub's unique operational environment will attract new types of partnerships and will strengthen the talent and knowledge exchange between UF's campuses and other SUS institutions, ensuring that the region becomes a magnet for top talent. Increased opportunities will result for returning veterans and defense industrial base experts seeking to make an impact in a region known for its beauty, quality of life, and high-tech opportunities. The economic return to the region will be significant and lasting, creating high-paying jobs in advanced engineering, research, and manufacturing, while attracting industry leaders and emerging startups to the area.

### **Summary timeline for the proposed project: 5 years / 2025-2030**

This project will produce increasing impact, realizing transformational workforce development and economic results by year 5 including job creation to support the anticipated \$55-\$100M of Eglin AFB-aligned research and development. The spend plan is front-loaded to support key personnel during startup and to procure the advanced tools, technology, and equipment that will immediately enable, expand, and accelerate research, education, and entrepreneurship in lockstep with the most recent and emerging critical S&T investment areas and strategy of Team Eglin. Anticipated increased industry partnerships in joint research and technology transfer/transition will sustain growth beyond year 5.

### **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.

**Please Select the Proposal’s Eligibility Category(s)**

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):

- 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.

**Please Select the Priorities this Proposal’s Outcomes will Achieve**

1. 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.