



DUE SEPTEMBER 1, 2015

To:	Arkansas Department of Higher Education
Requesting Institution:	Rich Mountain Community College
Title of Project:	Expanding Workforce Programs in Rural Arkansas
Project Partners:	<div> <div>1. Mena Public Schools</div> <div>2. DeQueen-Mena Educational Co-Op</div> <div>3. Department of Workforce Services</div> <div>4. Nidec Motors</div> <div>5.</div> <div>6.</div> <div>7.</div> <div>8.</div> <div>9.</div> <div>10.</div> </div>
Requested Budget:	\$72,400.00
Date Submitted:	9/1/2015
Applicant Contact:	Steve Rook
Applicant's Information:	<div>1100 College Drive</div> <div>Mena, AR 71953</div> <div>479-394-7622</div> <div>srook@rmcc.edu</div>

If the institution has more than 10 partners, you may attach an additional page for signatures.

Lead Institution

[Handwritten signature]

Authorized Official
See attached letter
of support

Partner

Partner

Authorized Official

Partner

See attached letter
of support

Partner

Authorized Official

Partner

Support letter in
process at DWS
Authorized Official
See attached letter
of support

Partner

Authorized Official

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Authorized Official

Act 1131 of 2015 Regional Workforce Planning Grant Application

*Please complete each section of this application and submit to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education by **September 1, 2015**. Applications should be emailed to ADHE.Workforce.Grant@adhe.edu. Please note that applications will not be accepted without a completed Intent Form, due August 1, 2015.*

SECTION 1 – PROGRAM NEED

30 Points

Proposals will include an overview of the labor needs, as determined by the Local Workforce Development Board, and specifically identify the skills gap employers face in the selected region and will continue to face in the future. Entities seeking grant funds must outline the proposed program and/or equipment needed and how creation of the program and/or acquisition of equipment will address those labor needs.

Keep the following rubric in mind when completing this section:

	Exemplary	Superior	Adequate	Needs Improvement
Program Need (30 Pts)	Significantly addresses a top 3 workforce need in the region (26–30 Pts)	Addresses in a more limited way a top 3 workforce need in the region (21–25 Pts)	Addresses in a limited way a less critical workforce need in the region (16–20 Pts)	Identified labor need is too narrow or not in a critical area (0–15 Pts)

Please enter your answer in the box provided below. Feel free to include any necessary charts, graphs or tables.

Western Arkansas is among the most impoverished regions in the United States, with consistent poverty and unemployment issues. The mountain region is one of the poorest in Arkansas, a state known for generational poverty. Arkansas is in the bottom five states in terms of poverty, with a median income of nearly \$13,000 below the national average of \$51,400. Rich Mountain Community College continually seeks to train students in the skills necessary to lift them from this poverty by providing education for better employment. Serving Polk, Scott, and Montgomery counties, RMCC works with employers and advisory boards to ensure the training students receive immediately allows them access to better paying jobs. This grant is submitted on behalf of a coalition of industry employers, local K-12 school districts, local Department of Workforce Services, and Rich Mountain Community College in an effort to advance the educational and employment opportunities of the region.

This proposal is presented in summary form as requested in the planning grant proposal specifications. The goal of this planning grant is to seek funding for use to plan, design, and prepare a detailed strategy for integrating specific employer needs within the college curriculum. This college curriculum, which begins in the local secondary schools, would train Career Center students for technologically advanced careers documented by the local Workforce Development Board. In addition, the funds would be used to investigate which course work and specific skills must be taught earlier in the secondary curriculum to allow quicker completion of a student's technical program.

International trade has impacted the residents of Western Arkansas. While citizens may enjoy

purchasing a clothing item inexpensively, manufacturing jobs that produced these items locally have disappeared with plant closings. RMCC currently is serving the training needs of TAA-eligible workers in Montgomery County due to the plant closing of Munro shoe factory in Mount Ida. At the moment technical manufacturing is relatively stable. Part of this stability is related to the ability of local plants to adjust quickly to customer needs. Nidec Motors remains a viable entity in large part due to its ability to customize production to specific customer requests, with products designed, engineered and produced for each client. Manufacturing continues to shift from labor-intensive processes to a technology-based industry. Lower-skilled workers continue to be shed as lean-oriented and integrated manufacturing systems evolve. As these workers lose employment, skill gaps prevent them from transitioning into higher demand occupations, or from moving into technical positions within the firm. Secondary schools with constrained budgets cannot afford equipment and faculty to prepare students for immediate employment in high-skill jobs. Manufacturing education must respond to changing employer needs, but teaching actual workplace skills requires equipment and techniques currently found only on the manufacturing floor. The equipment is simply too costly to train workers in an educational environment, regardless of the need for skilled workers. This holds true for machining, welding, and industrial maintenance employment.

Research conducted on the advanced manufacturing sector revealed high need for electro-mechanical technicians, electrical and electronics repair technicians, and industrial machinery operators and repair. According to the most recent information received from the local workforce development board in Fort Smith, Arkansas, manufacturing held three of the top ten fastest growing industries in Western Arkansas. It must be noted that two of these three had job growth projections of 18.76% and 17.33%, the top two growing industries in the region. Manufacturing has changed from low-skill manufacturing to that which needs additional expertise. Preparing students early will be key to their success.

The following have emerged as a hindrance to high-paying manufacturing jobs in Western Arkansas. The first is career knowledge and awareness; students knowing what jobs are available and skills required for success; Second, is the need for an integrated system of educational access that bridges from career education at the secondary level to technical skill based education at the college level; Third, is the lack of equipment needed to teach advanced manufacturing for immediate employment. Lastly, students lack workplace readiness skills which includes basic reading and mathematics, as well as soft skills in responsibility and attendance.

Many high school students do not take advantage of the opportunities available in secondary school simply because they are unaware of the necessity for learning these skills. While public school counselors work to provide information to students, they are often focused on other aspects of the high school experience. Therefore, students often find themselves wondering how best to proceed after receiving their diplomas. Additionally, students often do not take the appropriate courses in a linear path for success. In this area, there is no integrated system of high school courses that consistently advances students toward a career goal. Pathways need to be established, especially for students who do not wish to receive a bachelor's degree, that will allow a student to progress as quickly as possible toward a career.

Area employers are facing a skills gap related to advanced manufacturing simply because the equipment on the manufacturing floor is far advanced from those in the educational setting. While this is an important part of the training process and need be mentioned here, it is beyond the scope of this grant and would be addressed during the implementation phase, should said grant be awarded.

SECTION 2 – PROGRAM PLAN**25 Points**

Program plans must be designed to meet the goals and core requirements of the Regional Workforce Grants program. At a minimum, the plan must include a summary of expected outcomes, a description of career pathways that will be created or enhanced, a description of any anticipated equipment needs and a proposed governance and accountability structure for the program.

Keep the following rubric in mind when completing this section:

	Exemplary	Superior	Adequate	Needs Improvement
Program Plan (25 Pts)	Plan addresses all goals and core requirements and identifies significant outcomes (22–25 Pts)	Plan addresses most goals and requirements and identifies outcomes (18–21 Pts)	Plan addresses many goals and requirements and identifies few outcomes (14–17 Pts)	Plan lacks significant requirements or lacks apparent outcomes (0–13 Pts)

Please enter your answer in the box provided below. Feel free to include any necessary charts, graphs or tables.

The proposed planning grant funds would be used to plan a detailed strategy for integrating specific employer needs with college curriculum and training to move secondary students and low-skill workers into technologically advanced careers. This would come in phases with the first component being the planning grant. The funds from this grant will be used to hire a facilitator to work on the RMCC campus. With local CTE partners, this facilitator would meet with local employers, high school counselors, and targeted instructors to design curriculum and student schedules to meet training and employment needs. Goals of this planning grant would include:

- 1) Designing a complete marketing plan to educate and attract secondary students into relevant college degree programs. This marketing plan would include a particular focus on recruiting students historically under-represented in manufacturing employment;
- 2) Working to design, enhance, expand, or create clearly defined career and technical education pathways to meet specific area technical manufacturing needs for secondary and traditional students;
- 3) Working to enhance the current career and technical education pathways for secondary students from Mena Public Schools, including the possibility of rescheduling career center opportunities and coordinating other school district schedules within the DeQueen-Mena Educational Cooperative;
- 4) Working closely with the Department of Workforce Services to create a viable office on the college campus to assist with employment skills and placement;
- 5) Designing an advising pathway for secondary students to advance their technical skills prior to completing their high school diploma;
- 6) Developing and/or expanding the apprenticeship programs fostered through RMCC for secondary and traditional students;
- 7) Investigate and budget equipment needs for teaching the most current manufacturing technologies;

- 8) Investigate and budget faculty training needs at the secondary and post-secondary level;
 9) Work with secondary schools to determine how the secondary curriculum may be redesigned to progress students at an accelerated pace.
 10) Investigate the requirements for various certifications within the manufacturing/industrial sector and determine their applicability to current secondary and college curriculum;
 12) Determine the curriculum needed to advance students toward the correct courses for certification and career pathways;

Specific career pathways for manufacturing, and the associated credential is listed below:

Education Pathway	Certification Pathway	Career Pathway
Applied Industry Bachelor's Degree	Society of Manufacturing Engineers: Engineering Technologist Certification	Engineer, Manager
Associate Degree with Multiple Specialties	Nation Institute of Metalworking: Complete Series of Machining and Metalworking Certifications	Engineering Technician
Associate Degree with Specialty	Manufacturing Skills Standard Council: Certified Production Technician; Certified Logistics Technician	Engineering Technician
Diploma and Specialty	American Welding Society: Complete Series of Welding Certifications	Certified Production Technician
Diploma	ACT National Career Readiness Certificate: Academic and Workplace Readiness	Operator

Expected outcomes of this project include a detailed curriculum plan, assembled with the help of participating, informed partners, that provides area students the opportunity to train on state of the art equipment for immediate employment upon graduation. This detailed plan would incorporate learning outcomes necessary for success early in a student's secondary career, including but not limited to training regarding punctuality and attendance. The final outcome would be a seamless curriculum design for advanced technical education.

SECTION 3 – STRENGTH OF PARTNERSHIP**25 Points**

Proposals are required to address how the program plan incorporates each of the mandatory partners, as identified above, and other regional partners who can contribute significantly, in a unique and meaningful role. Describe the anticipated role for each member of the alliance. **Include with the proposal a commitment letter from each partner and the Local Workforce Development Board.**

Keep the following rubric in mind when completing this section:

	Exemplary	Superior	Adequate	Needs Improvement
Strength of Partnership (25 Pts)	Plan includes broad representation and each partner has a defined role with identified critical contributions (22–25 Pts)	Plan includes broad representation but partner roles are not clearly defined (18–21 Pts)	Plan lacks one or two important partners or not all partners are critical to success of the plan (14–17 Pts)	Partner participation is too narrow or some partners do not contribute meaningfully (0–13 Pts)

Please enter your answer in the box provided below. Feel free to include any necessary charts, graphs or tables.

This grant proposal contains letters of support from Mena Public Schools, the De-Queen-Mena Educational Cooperative, the Local Workforce Development Board, and the Department of Workforce Services. In addition local employer, Nidec Electrical Motors is a partner in the proposal. Participation of these partners is essential to the success of the process and their roles include but are not limited to the following activities:

- 1) Mena Public Schools is a secondary school partner participates by allowing students to attend classes during the regular school day. Students are currently allowed to receive high school and college credit for work completed at RMCC. They will be active participants in determining curriculum and designing the career pathway.
- 2) The DeQueen-Mena Educational Cooperative serves as the coordinator of Career Center programs and will actively participate in determining curriculum and designing the career pathways.
- 3) Nidec Motors is an international business employing approximately 400 people locally. Nidec will be active participants in determining necessary and evolving employment skills.
- 4) The Local Workforce Development Board will be active participants by providing relevant employment and statistical data on emerging technologies;
- 5) The Department of Workforce Services will be an active participant in planning and providing workshops, employment advice, and job placement for students on the RMCC campus.

SECTION 4 – BUDGET PLAN**20 Points**

Proposals will include a detailed financial plan assigning cost estimates to all proposed planning activities and a completed budget template. Efficiency in planning grant expenditures is expected.

Keep the following rubric in mind when completing this section:

	Exemplary	Superior	Adequate	Needs Improvement
Budget Plan (20 Pts)	All requested resources are essential and clearly support the goals of the plan. (18–20 Pts)	Most requested resources are important and clearly support the goals of the plan (15–17 Pts)	Plan includes some questionable resource requests (11–14 Pts)	Budget includes requests deemed unnecessary (0–10 Pts)

Section 4.1 – Budget Plan Detail

Please provide your detailed financial plan in the box below.

The budget for this planning grant is strategic and simple. One person would be hired to coordinate the efforts of all partners in the grant toward the goal of upgrading technical education, starting at the secondary level. Expanding the program with the help of the area educational cooperative to other school districts would be part of the implementation grant. This planning grant would allow RMCC to hire one full-time coordinator, pay fringe benefits, pay any necessary travel costs and purchase necessary office equipment. RMCC would assume any other costs associated with the project including providing office space, furniture, copying, printing, and internet access.

Section 4.2 – Budget Plan Template

Please complete the budget template below. Totals will calculate automatically based on your input.

A. Partner Participant Support Costs

1. Personnel/Stipend	\$67,700.00
2. Travel	\$2,000.00
3. Other (Explain Below)	\$0.00
Briefly Explain Other Costs	
TOTAL PARTNER PARTICIPANT COSTS	\$69,700.00

B. Other Direct Costs

1. Materials and Supplies	\$2,500.00
2. Publication Costs/Documentation/Dissemination	\$200.00
3. Consultant Services	\$0.00
4. Other (Explain Below)	\$0.00
Briefly Explain Other Costs	
TOTAL OTHER DIRECT COSTS	\$2,700.00

C. TOTAL DIRECT COSTS

	\$72,400.00
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SUBMIT BY SEPTEMBER 1, 2015Email to ADHE.Workforce.Grant@adhe.edu*Applications that are received without an Intent Form (Due August 1) will not be accepted.***PLANNING GRANT SCORING RUBRIC**

Critical Elements	Exemplary	Superior	Adequate	Needs Improvement	Value
Program Need	Significantly addresses a top 3 workforce need in the region (26–30)	Addresses in a more limited way a top 3 workforce need in the region (21–25)	Addresses in a limited way a less critical workforce need in the region (16–20)	Identified labor need is too narrow or not in a critical area (0–15)	30 Pts
Program Plan	Plan addresses all goals and core requirements and identifies significant outcomes (22–25)	Plan addresses most goals and requirements and identifies outcomes (18–21)	Plan addresses many goals and requirements and identifies few outcomes (14–17)	Plan lacks significant requirements or lacks apparent outcomes (0–13)	25 Pts
Strength of Partnership	Plan includes broad representation and each partner has a defined role with identified critical contributions (22–25)	Plan includes broad representation but partner roles are not clearly defined (18–21)	Plan lacks one or two important partners or not all partners are critical to success of the plan (14–17)	Partner participation is too narrow or some partners do not contribute meaningfully (0–13)	25 Pts
Budget Plan	All requested resources are essential and clearly support the goals of the plan. (18–20)	Most requested resources are important and clearly support the goals of the plan (15–17)	Plan includes some questionable resource requests (11–14)	Budget includes requests deemed unnecessary (0–10)	20 Pts
Total Points Possible					100 Pts



August 31, 2015

Steve Rook, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs
Rich Mountain Community College
1100 College Drive
Mena, AR 71953

RE: Regional Workforce Planning Grant

Dear Mr. Rook:

I am writing this letter to express support for the Regional Workforce Planning Grant Proposal being submitted by the Rich Mountain Community College. We look forward to engaging in the planning process to help design a career ladder in manufacturing that benefits students and the community, while creating a talent pool that supports the high-skill, high-demand positions needed by our area industries.

Sincerely,

Tracy Chapple
WIOA Administrator
Western Arkansas Planning & Development District, Inc.



August 27, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

Mena Public Schools supports Rich Mountain Community College's Regional Workforce Planning Grant application.

The focus of the grant will provide a career ladder in manufacturing for students to move from secondary to post secondary to the workforce in a high demand, high wage occupation. Mena Public Schools participates in DeQueen-Mena Education Service Cooperative Secondary Career Center program housed on the RMCC campus which is the perfect first step in the career ladder.

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Benny Weston, Superintendent

BW/sln

De Queen-Mena ESC

P.O. Box 110 • 305 S. Hornberg Road

Gillham, Arkansas 71841

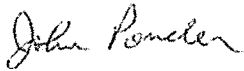
Phone: 870-386-2251

Fax: 870-386-7731

To Whom It May Concern:

The De Queen- Mena Education Service Cooperative supports Rich Mountain Community College's Workforce Planning Grant application. The focus of the grant will provide a career ladder in manufacturing for students to move from secondary to post-secondary and continue into a high demand, high wage occupation. The Secondary Career Center program housed on the RMCC campus is the perfect first step in the career ladder.

Sincerely,



John Ponder
DMESC Director

Serving Schools in Five Counties

Howard

Little River

Montgomery

Polk

Sevier



Steven Holland
Human Resources Manager

Maureen Keese:

Nidec Motor Corporation supports the purchase of a "FANUC LR Mate 200 iD/4S; Cert Cart" to integrate robotics into RMCC curriculum. This technology will be instrumental in better preparing existing and potential Nidec Motor Corporation employees with higher level skill sets required for success in our motor manufacturing industry.

Kind Regards,

Steven Holland