



Act 1131 of 2015
Regional Workforce Continuation Grant

APPLICATION COVER SHEET

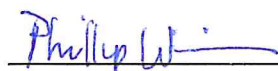
DUE JUNE 1, 2018

To:	Arkansas Department of Higher Education
Requesting Institution:	University of Arkansas Rich Mountain
Title of Project:	Expanding Workforce Programs in Rural Arkansas
Project Partners:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mena Public Schools2. Waldron Public3. Western Arkansas Planning and Development District4. Mena Regional Health System5. Healthy Connections, Inc.6. Sterling Manufacturing, Inc.7. Nidec Motors, Inc.8. Carlos Rocha, M.D.9. Department of Workforce Services10. Queen Wilhelmina State Park11. Janssen Park Bed and Breakfast
Requested Budget:	\$473,900.00
Date Submitted:	June 1, 2018
Applicant Contact:	Krystal Thrailkill
Applicant's Information:	1100 College Drive Mena, AR 71953 479-394-6818 kthrailkill@uarichmountain.edu

Authorized Signatures for Institution

University of Arkansas Rich Mountain

Lead Institution



Authorized Official

Act 1131 of 2015
Regional Workforce Continuation Grant Application

*Please complete each section of this application and submit to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education by **June 1, 2016**. Applications should be emailed to ADHE.Workforce.Grant@adhe.edu. Please note that only projects that were awarded an implementation grant are eligible to apply for a continuation grant.*

SECTION 1 – PROGRAM NEED

20 Points

Proposals will include a thorough description 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 continuation of the program and/or acquisition of equipment will address those labor needs.

Essential Components:

- Regional data demonstrating the need for action - provide empirical data that illustrates needs of the local workforce, with a particular emphasis on anticipated or future needs.
- Clear linkages between grant activities and local needs- clearly illustrate how the proposed grant project is directly linked to addressing the workforce needs and deficits of the region. Successful applications will provide a thorough description of the region's high-demand and high-skill industrial occupations, and identify how the proposed activity will address job candidate deficits in those areas. **Applicants must also submit letters of support from at least two area employers for the proposal, citing need and outlining benefits for local industry.**
- Alignment with Arkansas economic and workforce goals- describe how the proposed project will increase overall higher education attainment in the region and provide clear linkages between a postsecondary credential and the needs of employers.

Keep the following rubric in mind when completing this section:

	Exemplary	Superior	Adequate	Needs Improvement
Program Need (20 Pts)	Significantly addresses a top 3 workforce need in the region. (18–20 Pts)	Addresses in a more limited way a top 3 workforce need in the region. (15–17 Pts)	Addresses in a limited way a less critical workforce need in the region. (11–14 Pts)	Identified labor need is too narrow or not in a critical area. (0–10 Pts)

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

Introduction and Program Need

When this program was initially introduced, Western Arkansas was among the poorest 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. The Fourth Congressional District of Arkansas is ranked as one of the bottom ten of 435 in terms of poverty. Educational attainment is nine percentage points below the state average of 21.5 for a bachelor's degree or higher. The University of Arkansas Rich Mountain 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, UA Rich Mountain 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 school districts, local Department of Workforce Services, and the College in an effort to advance the educational and employment opportunities of the region.

The goal of this grant is to seek funding for use to continue and expand a working, effective strategy for integrating specific employer needs with college curriculum to advance students to employability at a faster pace through course work offered through the Career Center on the College campus. The current college curriculum, which begins in the local secondary schools, trains high school/college students for technologically advanced careers documented by the local Workforce Development Board. In addition, the funds are used to provide resources necessary to advance course work and specific skills within the secondary curriculum, allowing 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 several plant closings. This is a recurring issue in the area. Most recently the College served the training needs of TAA-eligible workers in Montgomery County due to the Munro shoe factory closing in Mount Ida.

Locally, 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 industry.

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 a continued and consistent 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 is 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 resources 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 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 advance 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.

It is the intent of this continuation grant to expand and improve the Career Center offerings in medical profession education to include advanced medical billing and coding. Job opportunities in the medical field are well documented, with nursing, and medical profession opportunities continuing to expand. However, within the medical profession, there is also a need for skilled workers capable of processing complicated insurance documents and medical records.

Lastly, it is the intent of this grant to expand Career Center enrollments in the Culinary Arts. The food industry sector continues to outpace other industries in terms of growth for the state. The need for qualified food service workers, trained in safety and sanitation is essential within the sector.

The design of this program requires the cooperation among Mena High School, Ouachita River Schools, Cossatot River Schools, Waldron Public schools with the University of Arkansas Rich Mountain and area employers to allow high school students to begin taking classes for a post-secondary credential prior to graduation. When implemented, students will begin concurrent classes toward employment certificates in advanced manufacturing, medical billing and coding, and culinary arts in the junior year. The requisite course sequences are further

explained in the section of this grant regarding curriculum. Each certificate is designed for post secondary completion during the summer at the conclusion of the high school senior year.

After referring to the most recent projected employment opportunities list, derived from information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there is a defined need for advanced manufacturing skills, medical office skills, and culinary/hospitality skills, all of which may be introduced at the high school level, advanced through the Career Center, and completed with enrollment at UA Rich Mountain. Further, the food preparation industry continues to provide employment opportunities in significant numbers. Specific information on these three Career Center occupations is provided in the tables below for the state of Arkansas, as well as the Western District.

	Projected Ten Year Growth 2012-2022			
Occupation	Western AR Percentage Change	Western AR Annual Openings	AR Percentage Change	Arkansas Annual Openings
Welding, Soldering, Brazing	11.5%	43	6.6	160
Welding, Soldering, Brazing within Metal Fabricators	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	8.2 2014-2016	36
Welding, Soldering, Brazing Machine Setters	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	27.5	26
Health Information/Medical Records Technician	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	19.3	244
Medical Insurance Coding Specialist	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	23.4	85
Medical Secretaries	24.5	39	30.3	596
Information and Record Clerk	11.9	706	16.2	1,415
Medical and Health Services Managers	18.5	146	20.3	368
Healthcare Support Occupations	13.8	443	22.6	7,308
Combined Food Preparation and Serving	6.06	176	4.07 Annually	6,517

A major concern when extrapolating this data from the BLS information is the variance in how data is submitted within the system. For example, Welding is located as a separate category, but then is also located within several other industry classifications, so the growth potential for construction is 6.4% while within construction of buildings, there is growth of 7.1, while in the Highway, Street, and Bridge Construction Industry, there is no listing for welding

needs though welding is a part of the installation, maintenance, and repair occupations. This type of coding, along with the number of welders who are independent contract providers, may tend to lessen the appearance of need within the manufacturing and building industries. Architectural, and Structural Metals manufacturing anticipates growth of 3.9% between 2015-2017 a two percent increase from and earlier 2014-2016 forecast for the state.

The education received through medical billing and coding allows students job opportunities in a number of different positions within the medical industry, ranging from medical records to insurance processing to medical office management. It is intended that the curriculum provided will continue to allow students/employees a number of different avenues to pursue their career goals. Medical billing as a search criteria on the Discover Arkansas website returned approximately 100 occupations where this knowledge could be relevant to building a career. The hospital industry is on the Western Arkansas Top 10 Growing Industries list with a net growth of 170 jobs within the next year or a 4.11% growth rate. Medical and health services managers are listed in the top 45 demand occupations for 2017-2018. Medical billing is certain to be a part of that growth as the need to code insurance claims correctly affects hospital viability. Growth within this occupation is approximately 2.0% per year. However, these projections do not take into account the recent changes in electronic medical records management, insurance billing and new Federal guidelines for government reimbursements. The need for qualified employees changes and expands each day, as evidenced by the letters of support from local entities.

Through the support of generous donors, UA Rich Mountain was able to foster a fledgling program in the Culinary Arts. Through cooperation with the area educational cooperative and the office of Career and Technical Education, the college was able to offer Culinary Arts to the Career Center curriculum in the fall of 2017. Food preparation and serving workers, including fast food was the top growth occupation within the Western Arkansas Local Workforce Development district, as well as the state of Arkansas for 2018. The need for qualified, and health certified food workers is well documented by the Department of Workforce Services with 1,661 new jobs forecasted for the current year.

Very few students were enrolled in Career Center culinary arts during its first year offering. However, interest in the program has grown significantly with 19 students enrolled for the 2018 fall semester. At the present time, resources are not available to accommodate this expanding program. If grant funds are not available for this purpose it is unclear if the classes may be offered.

SECTION 2 – PROGRAM PLAN

25 Points

Program plans must be designed to meet the goals and core requirements of the Regional Workforce Grants program as well as the following Essential Components:

- Detailed project timeline and overview- provide a month-by-month overview of the critical convenings, activities, and actions that will comprise the project.
- Measurable objectives for each phase of the project- detail the metrics utilized throughout the project to track how credentialed job candidates possessing the skills needed by employers will be provided.
- Project governance and accountability plan- clearly describe the plan for governance, meetings, and decision-making structure; identify a project director; and identify members of a project steering committee that will maintain oversight throughout the project period.
- Pathways articulation and support- clearly describe the educational pathway(s) and support services that will be developed, or existing pathways that will be enhanced, to meet the identified workforce needs. Pathways should incorporate all appropriate student outcomes from short-term industry-recognized credentials through the highest certificate or degree programs appropriate to the identified career goals and include career step-out points at the completion of each credential.
- Role of equipment request- required only for those proposals seeking equipment purchases. Outline how equipment purchase will specifically address local labor market needs; provide detailed description of equipment, educational value of equipment in preparing workforce, and justification for purchase. Performance assessment- clearly define measurable outcomes to be achieved through continuation of the plan and strategies to measure and report achievement of those outcomes. Priority will be given to programs which prepare candidates for high wage jobs or which create capacity to move candidates from unemployment to employment.
- 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 detailed project timeline and overview, measurable objectives for each phase of the project, a project governance and accountability plan, pathways articulation and support, the role of any equipment requested, and a performance assessment .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 properly connects all activities to measurable outcomes that address workforce needs. (22–25 Pts)	Plan addresses most goals and requirements and substantially connects activities to measurable outcomes. (18–21 Pts)	Plan addresses many goals and requirements and connects some activities to measurable outcomes. (14–17 Pts)	Plan lacks significant requirements or connections of activities to measurable outcomes are not clear. (0–13 Pts)

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

Program Plan

In large part due to the 2015-2016 Planning Grant, UA Rich Mountain redirected its efforts regarding the viability of programs contained within the Career Center housed and taught on campus. With the input of local employers, advisory group recommendations, and the regional employment outlook, Aviation was removed from the curriculum, and the proper forms processed to add Welding to the Career Center. All programs within the Career Center were reviewed and the Medical Professions Education curriculum was revised to update the skills sets most needed by employers. Specific targeted outcomes were intended for this Career Center change. These included but were not limited to early completion of a technical certificate, an associate degree, and a bachelor's degree, allowing the student to enter the workforce at several different stages as needs may dictate. The goal of the regional workforce grant at UA Rich Mountain was to implement the curriculum designed during the Planning Grant, and complete the Implementation phase.

Due to the success of the Planning and Implementation grants, UA Rich Mountain seeks to reinforce the curriculum and program outcomes fostered within the Career Center for welding and medical billing/coding, and to expand the model to include Culinary Arts. The educational and career pathways within these three CTE disciplines are outlined below including appropriate graduation time lines.

Education Pathway	Certification Pathway	Career Pathway	Expected Graduation
Applied Industry Bachelor's Degree	Society of Manufacturing Engineers; Engineering Technologist Certification	Engineer, Manager	3 rd year at transfer institution
Associate Degree with Multiple Specialties	National Institute of Metalworking; Complete Series of Machining and Metalworking Certifications	Engineering Technician	2 nd year at transfer institution
Associate Degree with Specialty	Manufacturing Skills Standard Council: Certified Production Technician; Certified Logistics Technician	Engineering Technician	1 st full UA Rich Mountain year
Diploma and Certificate of Proficiency; or Diploma and Technical Certificate	American Welding Society: Complete Series of Welding Certifications	Certified Production Technician	Complete at the end of the senior year
Diploma	ACT National Career Readiness Certificate: Academic and Workplace Readiness	Operator	Program begins in high school

Optimally, students begin the welding program the sophomore year, complete the Welding Society Certifications the junior year, and the Technical Certificate as a senior in high school. However, differing scheduling concerns at the local high schools currently are not aligned that will allow this transition. Due to these constraints, students begin the welding credential the junior year with Basic Welding through a CTE agriculture program at the local high school and receive concurrent UA Rich Mountain credit. Then, students complete the American Welding Society certifications as seniors, and finish the Welding Technical Certificate in the summer following the senior year. The curriculum for this program and its learning outcomes are listed here:

Degree Plan Certificate of Proficiency Basic Welding		
	Credits	
WELD1107 Arc Welding I	7	Completed the senior year of high school.
WELD1207 Arc Welding II	7	
Total Hours	14	

The certificate of proficiency in basic welding intends to provide students with knowledge regarding current welding techniques and applications. At the conclusion of the degree, students are qualified to take the American Welding Society Certification examination. Students completing the program should have 1) industry standard skills in welding; 2) possess skills necessary for state and national welding certifications; 3) demonstrate safe work habits when operating oxyfuel and electric welding equipment; 4) demonstrate skills necessary to secure employment; 5) read and interpret blueprint welding symbols to fabricate components; 6) display manipulative skills with various welding processes to assure adequate weld integrity and appearance; 7) perform welding operations with appropriate processes on various metals; and 8) use basic math fundamentals and measurements.

In addition to the skills acquired in the certificate of proficiency, students earning a technical certificate in welding should be able to 1) work effectively independently and as a team member; 2) read and interpret blueprint symbols applicable to building and fabrication; 3) display proper written and oral communication skills; 4) use research effectively; 5) demonstrate proficiency in measurement, geometric dimensioning, and industrial mathematics.

The Associate Degree curriculum listed in the career pathway is not listed here as it is outside the scope of the grant. However, as outlined in the plan, students who begin the degree using the Career Center option will complete the Associate and Bachelor degrees one year or more earlier than their traditional peers. A student may opt to take concurrent credit in English, Mathematics, or Social Sciences that would allow for further advancement prior to high school graduation.

Degree Plan Technical Certificate Basic Welding		
First Semester	Credits	
Blueprint Reading/ Geometric Dimensioning	3	Summer/Fall following Sr. Year
Technical Math or College Algebra	3	Summer/Fall following Sr. Year
Arc Welding I	7	Career Center

Second Semester	Credits	
Industrial Computer Competency	1	Summer/Fall following Sr. Year
Business Communication or English I	3	Summer/Fall following Sr. Year
Arc Welding II	7	Career Center
Total Hours	26	

Medical Professions/Billing and Coding

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Employment of medical records and health information technicians is expected to increase by 20% through 2018, faster than the average for all occupations,” due, in part, to an aging population and innovative medical technology. This trend has created new opportunities within the industry, as not all of today’s health care jobs require patient contact. Medical billing and coding is an administrative support specialty that is expected to increase in need as patient records are being increasingly scrutinized by health insurance companies, regulators, courts, and consumers. Technology is advancing at a rapid pace and is producing more advanced medical procedures and treatments. With these advances comes the need for trained professionals with the knowledge to code, bill, and correctly document the performance of these procedures.

Students can begin their career preparation in high school by taking computer applications for concurrent credit by the end of the junior year. As a senior, students take Medical Professions Education and receive hours of training for the Certified Nursing Assistant as well as Medical Terminology and Legal Aspects of Health Care for a possible total of twelve (12) hours toward Certificates of Proficiency.

Education Pathway	Certification Pathway	Career Pathway	Expected Graduation
Applied Industry Bachelor's Degree	American Health Information Management Association: Various Professional Certifications	Multi-practice/ Hospital Billing Manager	Complete Fall of 4 th year after transfer
Associate Degree with Multiple Specialties	American Academy of Professional Coders: Certified Medical Auditor Certified Professional Compliance Officer Certified Physician Practice Manager	Medical Office Supervisor	2 nd year at UA Rich Mountain
Technical Certificate	American Academy of Professional Coders: Certified Professional Coder Certified Professional Biller	Medical Biller; Insurance Processor	1 st year at UA Rich Mountain
Diploma and Certificate(s) of Proficiency;	Certified Nursing Assistant;	Certified Nursing Assistant	Career Center and complete clinical/credit summer following the senior year
Diploma	ACT National Career Readiness Certificate: Academic and Workplace Readiness	Office Assistant	Career Center

There are several points at which a student may acquire employment along the career pathway. The first of these is the Certified Nursing Assistant, which provides the student with practical aide skills for work at home health or nursing facilities. While exploring nursing possibilities, students will also be gaining credit toward the Certificate of Proficiency in Medical Billing and Coding. Students completing this Career Center option will 1) acquire industry standard skills in bedside nursing; 2) possess skills necessary for state nursing assistant certifications; 3) demonstrate skills necessary to secure employment; 4) gain knowledge in medical terminology; 5) and recognize legal liabilities in a nursing environment.

Degree Plan Certificate of Proficiency Certified Nursing Assistant		
	Credits	
Certified Nursing Assistant	7	Includes 112 hours of instruction and clinical experience.

Degree Plan Certificate of Proficiency Health Information Technology: Medical Billing and Coding		
First Semester	Credits	
Medical Terminology	3	Career Center
Electronic Health Information Management	2	Summer/Fall following Senior Year
Basic Human Anatomy and Physiology	3	Summer/Fall following Senior Year
Total Hours	8	

The certificate program is designed for students who wish to acquire a thorough understanding of the human anatomy, the language used in the medical profession, regulations that govern the practice of medicine, and the knowledge of how to correctly code and bill for services provided. The UA Rich Mountain Allied Health Information Technology- Medical and Coding program is designed to prepare students with the knowledge, technical skills, and work habits required for an entry-level position as a medical receptionist, billing and insurance specialist, or medical coder in either a physician's office or institutional setting. The program prepares students for industry recognized certification examinations. Upon completion of the program, student may expect employment in physician offices, multi-specialty group practices, insurance companies, outpatient care facilities, or government agencies.

At the end of the technical certificate program students will have the following proficiencies: 1) knowledge of anatomy, physiology, and medical terminology necessary to correctly code provider diagnosis and services; 2) perform administrative functions of medical billing and coding; 3) apply computer literacy skills in managing electronic medical claims; 4) demonstrate proficiency across a range of services, including evaluation and management, anesthesia, surgery, radiology, pathology, and medicine; 5) demonstrate knowledge of coding and billing guidelines and requirements in the process of medical claims management; 6) analyze ethical and legal standards in practical applications within the discipline of coding and medical claims processing; and 7) apply problem-solving skills to real and simulated health care scenarios. These outcomes are assessed throughout various courses within the curriculum plan.

using case studies, assignments, work projects, and testing. Students are encouraged to seek certification through national examinations.

Degree Plan Technical Certificate Health Information Technology: Medical Billing and Coding		
First Semester	Credits	
Medical Terminology	3	Career Center
Electronic Health Information Management	2	Summer/Fall following Senior Year
Legal Aspects of Healthcare	1	Career Center
Basic Human Anatomy and Physiology	3	Summer/Fall following Senior Year
Computer Applications	3	Concurrent credit
Second Semester		
Quick Books I and II	3	Fall or Spring
Medical Coding	3	Fall or Spring
Medical Billing and Reimbursement	3	Fall or Spring
Business Communication or English I	3	Concurrent or Fall following Sr. Year
Spreadsheet Applications	3	Summer/Fall following Senior Year
Total Hours	26	

Culinary Arts

Expertise in the culinary arts continues to be a demand occupation in 2018. Four of the top 45 jobs in Arkansas and is listed within the Leisure and Hospitality sector of the top five industry “supersectors.” Further, food services and food manufacturing are listed third and fourth respectively within the top ten growth industries of the Western Arkansas Local Workforce Development Area. It is expected that this sector will continue to grow at approximately 5.00-6.00% annually. Students who complete a certificate in this field can expect immediate and continued employment on the way to supervisory roles within the industry.

Education Pathway	Certification Pathway	Career Pathway	Expected Graduation
Applied Industry Bachelor’s Degree	Certified Executive Chef	Kitchen manager	Complete Fall of 4 th year after transfer
Associate Degree with Multiple Specialties	Certified Chef De Cuisine	Operations Chef	2 nd year at UA Rich Mountain
Technical Certificate	Certified Culinarian; Certified Sous Chef	Kitchen shift/station supervisor; Sous chef, banquet chef	1 st year at UA Rich Mountain
Diploma and Certificate(s) of Proficiency;	ServeSafe Certification; Certified Fundamentals Cook	Food preparer; Cook	Career Center and complete credit in summer following the senior year
Diploma	ACT National Career Readiness Certificate: Academic and Workplace Readiness		Career Center

Students completing a technical certificate in the culinary arts have proficiencies in the following areas: 1) Practice proper basic principles of food safety (sanitation) and their application to food service operations and procedures; 2) Practice the principles and methods of food preparation emphasizing use of standardized recipes, industry production standards, and development of work skills; 3) Perform dining room service functions using a variety of types of service and demonstrate and understanding of quality customer service; 4) Maximize nutrient retention in food preparation and storage and application of nutritional principles in menu planning; 5) Demonstrate basic baking principles and to apply fundamentals to the preparation of a variety of products; 6) Demonstrate supervisor skills and complete responsibilities in managing a food service operation. These skills are requisite to lasting success in the food

industry. While many persons begin work life with a job in the food service industry, most do not pursue a college education in this area, simply because many food vendors do not require culinary skills. However, those that do find few qualified candidates with a background in sanitation and quality food preparation. These program outcomes are assessed at the course level and students completing the technical certificate are encouraged to seek national certification in culinary arts.

Students who begin their college careers through the Career Center culinary arts can expect to complete the certificate of proficiency at the end of the senior year and the full technical certificate one semester after graduation from high school.

Degree Plan Certificate of Proficiency Culinary Arts		
	Credits	
Fundamentals of Culinary Arts	5	Career Center/Senior Year
Sanitation and Safety	1	Career Center
Soups, Stocks, and Sauces	3	Career Center
Introduction to Hospitality and Tourism	1	Career Center

Career Center students receive the Certificate of Proficiency at the completion of one year of culinary instruction.

Degree Plan Technical Certificate Culinary Arts		
First Semester	Credits	
Fundamentals of Culinary Arts	5	Career Center
Sanitation and Safety	1	Career Center
Soups, Stocks, and Sauces	3	Career Center
Introduction to Hospitality and Tourism	1	Career Center
Baking	5	Summer or Fall

Second Semester		
Math for Culinary Arts	2	Fall
Garde Manger	3	Fall
Meats and Seafood	3	Fall
Menu Design and Strategy	3	Fall
Business Communication	3	Fall or Spring
Nutrition for Food Service	1	Fall or Spring
Total Hours	30	

Students are recruited into Career Center programs by high school counselors working closely with the UA Rich Mountain recruiter and high school administrators. Students visit campus during their junior year as part of an UA Rich Mountain service area event. Part of the visit is to encourage students to enroll in programs to advance their career options. Students are advised academically by both high school counselors and UA Rich Mountain faculty once they enroll in the Career Center. This advising includes information on academic and employment options, referrals for financial aid, or personal counseling if desired. Students may also receive tutoring help if needed. The UA Rich Mountain Career Center student enrollment reflects the diversity of the local area high schools and appropriate accommodations are made for students with physical and learning disabilities.

The time line for this grant was developed among the Western Arkansas Planning and Development District, UA Rich Mountain, employer advisory groups, Mena Public Schools, and the Department of Workforce Services. The progress of the continuing grant will adhere to the following calendar:

- June 1, 2018 - Complete all planning requirements for developing, writing, and submitting the Continuation Grant including the appropriate funding request for the necessary to modify equipment and personnel needs for the Career Center updates and changes. Culinary arts and food preparation are added to the Continuation Grant funding request.
- July 1, 2018 - Notification of funding/non-funding
- July 1, 2018 - (Pending funding) - Rehire necessary faculty for evaluating the curriculum and programs, recruiting students, and teaching required courses.
- December 15, 2018 - Project Steering and Advisory Committee meetings and review of course evaluations.
- April 1, 2019 - Students completing a program of study in May or June apply to graduate and counsel with Department of Workforce Services regarding employment opportunities. Students nearing completion of requisite skills take industry certification examinations.
- May 1, 2019 - Project Steering Committee meeting and review of course, program, and graduate evaluations
- January - July, 2019 - Recruit students into the Career Center programs from Mena, Waldron, Cossatot River and Ouachita River Public Schools
- July 1, 2018 - Revise and update CTE curriculum as necessary, update software, and supply needs as warranted by review and evaluation results
- August 1, 2019 - Extend contracts for faculty to the 2019-2020 year

Governance and accountability responsibility for the project will be Dr. Krystal Thrailkill, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs as director, who is charged with submitting the grant, implementing new phases of the continuation grant, providing oversight for all phases, and assessment of program outcomes. Faculty teaching within the program at the secondary and post-secondary level are responsible for covering the appropriate curriculum and assessing course outcomes. Further, faculty remain part of the steering committee comprised of employer representatives, public school administrators, and a representative from Department of Workforce Services. Student information regarding certifications, credentialing, employment offers, and employment placement will be maintained in a database.

SECTION 3 – STRENGTH OF PARTNERSHIPS

20 Points

Proposals are required to address how the program plan incorporates each of the mandatory partners, as identified above, in a meaningful role.

Essential Components:

- Detailed description of role of each partner in continuation of the project- describe how each partner will carry out components of the grant project; provide a description of assigned tasks for each of the mandatory partners; identify specific personnel and the roles they will play throughout the project; describe the integration of each role into the overall project; and describe the process for implementing fully articulated pathways from K-12 through a baccalaureate degree, as appropriate.
- Capabilities of each partner in ensuring project success- discuss the unique strengths of each partner in executing planned proposal; describe how each partner is qualified to participate in the proposed project and how each partners strengthens the overall partnership.
- Consideration of all potential partners in the region – describe the process for identifying each selected partner, including the consideration of regional community colleges, universities, public schools, education service cooperatives, businesses and industries, career and technical education programs, multidistrict vocational centers, and private partnerships.

Keep the following rubric in mind when completing this section:

	Exemplary	Superior	Adequate	Needs Improvement
Strength of Partnership (20 Pts)	Plan includes broad representation and each partner has a defined role with identified critical contributions. (18–20 Pts)	Plan includes broad representation but partner roles are not clearly defined. (15–17 Pts)	Plan lacks one or two important partners or not all partners are critical to success of the plan. (11–14 Pts)	Partner participation is too narrow or some partners do not contribute meaningfully. (0–10 Pts)

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

Strength of Partnerships

This grant proposal contains letters of support from Mena Public Schools, the local workforce development board, and has the cooperation of the Department of Workforce Services. In addition, local employers representing diverse occupational entities are partners in the proposal. These letters of support are included as part of this grant. Participation of these partners is essential to the success of the process and their roles include but are not limited to the following activities:

Mena Public Schools as 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 UA Rich Mountain and as part of this proposal will be receiving concurrent college credit for a limited number of courses at the high school campus. Mena School partners were active participants in determining curriculum and designing the career pathway in the planning phase of the grant. In addition, high school faculty will be involved in providing concurrent credit to CTE students at the secondary location.

The DeQueen-Mena Educational Service Cooperative was the fiscal agent for the Career Center in the original planning and implementation grants. Since that time, their fiduciary responsibilities have changed and the payment system for CTE students no longer passes through the DMESC. However, they remain strong supporters of CTE by providing workshop and professional development services to area CTE instructors relevant to the College's programs. They are responsible for assuring quality career technical education through program reviews and oversight of the curriculum frameworks. They are strong supporters of CTE in the local area.

Nidec Motors is an international business employing approximately 500 people locally. Nidec is responsible for working with the project steering committee to determine necessary and evolving employment skills and in hiring competent graduates. They continue to be active participants in advisory committee meetings.

The Western Arkansas Planning and Development District is responsible for helping to provide relevant employment and statistical data on emerging technologies, employers, employment trends, and contacts.

Mena Regional Health System is as the name implies a 65-bed regional provider of health care and hospital services. They are responsible for working with the project and technical advisory committees to determine current employment skills and hiring graduates.

Healthy Connections, Inc. is a rural health care provider of medical and dental services. They are responsible for working with the project steering and advisory committees to determine current employment skills and hiring graduates.

Sterling Manufacturing, Inc. is a local advanced manufacturing company that hires welders and machinists. They are responsible for working with the project steering and advisory committees to determine necessary current employment skills.

Dr. Carlos Rocha is a physician in practice in Mena, Arkansas. He is responsible for working with the project steering and advisory committees to determine necessary current employment skills.

Queen Wilhelmina State Park is part of the Arkansas State Park system and operates a permanent restaurant on the premises. They are responsible for working with the project steering and advisory committees to determine necessary current employment skills in the areas of hospitality and culinary arts.

Janssen Park Bed and Breakfast is an active local participant in planning curriculum and serving on the advisory committee in the area of hospitality and culinary arts.

The Department of Workforce Services is an active participant in planning and providing workshops, employment advice, and job placement for students on the UA Rich Mountain campus. Part of the original planning and implementation grants outlined plans to bring employment services to the campus as a permanent office. This transition was completed in Fall 2017.

The University of Arkansas Rich Mountain is the educational provider for the Career Center and is responsible for the presenting the content within the CTE framework. UA Rich Mountain provides the project coordinator, instructors, facilities, and materials for completing the respective programs of study. UA Rich Mountain is also responsible for assessment and evaluation and program sustainability beyond the term of the grant.

SECTION 4 – BUDGET PLAN

15 Points

Proposals will include a detailed financial plan that maximizes efficient use of existing resources and a completed budget template.

Essential Components:

- Clear alignment between funding request and grant activities- detailed discussion of how each component of the grant budget supports the goals and stated outcomes of the program.
- Institutions may request up to \$1 million over two years that will provide resources to implement approved Phase 1 projects.
- Local match of at least 10% of the total request, with a maximum cap of \$50,000- all proposals will include a plan for local funding to match 10% of the total grant proposal. For example, a grant requesting \$400,000 in funding would be required to provide \$40,000 in matching funds. However, the local match is capped at \$50,000, meaning grants in excess of \$500,000 will have the same match as a \$500,000 project.

Note: With a submitted written commitment and payment guarantee from an industry partner, internship wages paid during the initial twenty-four (24) months of this program may be used to offset the local match amount on a dollar-to-dollar basis. Additionally, wages paid to incumbent workers of the employer while enrolled in academic training may be deducted from the match as well. Any entity wishing to utilize this method of funding the match must include the appropriate documentation with their proposal and, if selected for funding, will be monitored to ensure compliance.

Keep the following rubric in mind when completing this section:

	Exemplary	Superior	Adequate	Needs Improvement
Budget Plan (15 Pts)	Plan identifies efficiencies that take full advantage of existing human and physical resources and all requested resources clearly support the goals of the plan. (13-15 Pts)	Plan includes significant efficiencies from existing resources and all requested resources clearly support the goals of the plan. (10-12 Pts)	Plan includes limited efficiencies from existing resources or includes some questionable resource requests. (7-9 Pts)	Budget includes limited or no existing resources from partners or includes requests deemed unnecessary. (0–6 Pts)

Section 4.1 – Budget Plan Detail

Please provide your detailed financial plan in the box below.

The budget plan for this Continuation grant is very straightforward. Grant funds will be used to change and update the existing UA Rich Mountain welding facility to expand the number of welding booths from seven to twelve. Grant funds will be used to expand the CTE program the five additional booths including duct work, ventilation fans, paint, and screens. Additionally, some electrical modifications will need to be made to safely support increased electrical demand with the five new booths. Grant funding will also be instrumental in the purchase of the required consumable supplies. UA Rich Mountain will provide the five welding units as part of its commitment to the Continuation Grant.

Qualified career technical faculty will be needed to successfully launch and sustain this project. The budget provides for the hiring of individuals with the industry credentials and experience to meet academic deliverables in the Welding and Medical programs. These faculty are currently working in the requisite fields and require a wage comparable to their counterparts in the private sector. Wages need to be commensurate with their industry recognized credentials and experience. Additionally, the new CTE faculty will play a major role in the ongoing promotion and good will of the program, as well as, be active participants in advisory/steering committees thereby strengthening partnerships with employers and other key stakeholders. These faculty members will be recognized “champions” for the career center programs increasing student interest and enrollment. Funding is also requested for program promotion. Greater promotion of the program will have a significant impact on increased student enrollment.

Outside of hiring qualified CTE faculty, the medical billing and coding pathway does not require additional funding. The technology and software inherent within the program are already a part of the UA Rich Mountain master plan and are on a rotational cycle for update and replacement. UA Rich Mountain bears these costs as part of its operations.

Section 4.2 – Budget Plan Template

Please complete the budget template below. Totals will calculate automatically based on your input. Institutions may request up to \$1 million in grant funding for Phase 3 Projects.

Requesting Institution:	University of Arkansas Rich Mountain
Title of Project:	Expanding Workforce Programs in Rural Arkansas

A. PROGRAM LEADERSHIP SUPPORT COSTS

1. Personnel/Stipend	378,818.00
2. Travel	6,000.00
3. Other (Explain Below)	
Briefly Explain Other Costs	
TOTAL PARTNER PARTICIPANT COSTS	\$384,818.00

B. OTHER DIRECT COSTS

1. Equipment	00.00
2. Materials and Supplies	\$42,000.00
3. Publication Costs/Documentation/Dissemination	4,000.00
4. Consultant Services	
5. Other (Explain Below)	
TOTAL OTHER DIRECT COSTS	\$46,000.00

C. TOTAL DIRECT COSTS (A & B)	\$430,818.00
--	---------------------

D. COST SHARING (Minimum 10% of C; up to \$50,000)	\$43,082.00
---	--------------------

Total Continuation Grant Budget	\$473,900.00
--	---------------------

SECTION 5 - SUSTAINABILITY

20 Points

Proposals will include a commitment and detailed plan for sustaining grant activities beyond the twenty-four (24) month continuation period. Equipment requests will clearly specify how purchased equipment will continue to be linked to addressing labor and workforce needs beyond the grant period.

Essential Components:

- Detailed plan for sustaining the program beyond the twenty-four (24) month continuation grant funding period- describe how the work supported by this grant will continue beyond the grant period; outline the roles and funding sources of each partner after the grant period.
- Detailed plan for maintaining communication and sharing resources among all the program partners beyond the twenty-four (24) month funding period;
- Identify availability of long-term resources to maintain and/or repair any equipment requested. Describe plan for redistribution of equipment to meet additional workforce needs once the employer needs addressed by the proposal have been satisfied.

	Exemplary	Superior	Adequate	Needs Improvement
Sustainability (20 Pts)	Identifies existing resources to continue the program with no reduction in services at the end of grant funding period. (18–20 Pts)	Identifies significant resources to continue the program with limited reduction in services at the end of grant funding period. (15-17 Pts)	Identifies limited resources to continue the program or proposes significant reduction in services at the end of grant funding period. (11-14 Pts)	New funding sources must be identified for continuation of program at the end of grant funding. (0-10 Pts)

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

Sustainability

The grant funding requested in this proposal “jump starts” and supplements a Career Center expansion that currently lacks resources to fully implement. The resources needed for this project are one time costs used for reconfiguring and expanding the welding facility, and hiring qualified faculty to teach more students a fast-paced, employer based curriculum. Once the facility is modified, no further costs are expected in that regard. Further, it is anticipated that, due to the job market requiring the necessary skill sets taught in the welding and medical curriculum, students seeking employment will be more likely to pursue these educational avenues. Awareness will be key to enrollments in this regard, so the budget does have some requested promotional monies. However, it is believed that the program will become self-sustaining with increased enrollments in these areas. The two-year grant funding should provide enough lead time, promotional monies, and supplemental faculty salaries to launch the expansion. If the funds are not received, UA Rich Mountain does not have the funds to expand the Career Center offerings to meet the needs of local employers at this time.

UA Rich Mountain advisors and recruiters work closely with high school counselors, local parents, and high school students to promote the Career Center. The anticipated changes

envisioned with these grant monies make it possible to reach more students, and help regional employers fill positions that require more advanced skill sets than those possessed by a high school graduate. The long range plan for the Career Center is to provide these educational opportunities to students in other area high schools in the Cossatot River, Ouachita River, and Waldron Public Schools. Area employers wish to hire local workers as acclimating non-residents to the isolated region often proves problematic. Being able to hire skilled workers from the region solves this employer problem and enhances the quality of life for the employee by offering a better wage.

Critical to sustainability, is the ongoing engagement of current and potential employer partners through and beyond the life of the grant. Moving towards sustainability requires appropriate decisions be made at each stage of program through evaluation. The steering/advisory framework that UA Rich Mountain identified in this grant provides continuous assessment by key partners to ensure that goals are being met. Assessment of program viability will be based on real data, allowing all partners to make informed decisions on any changes or adaptations that may be needed to meet goals and objectives. This coalition of engaged and committed partners will be beneficial in designing strategies to sustain the program initially funded by the grant.

SUBMIT BY JUNE 1, 2018

Email to ADHE.Workforce.Grant@adhe.edu

Applications will only be accepted for projects that were awarded an implementation grant.

CONTINUATION GRANT SCORING RUBRIC

Critical Elements	Exemplary	Superior	Adequate	Needs Improvement	Value
Program Need	Significantly addresses a top 3 workforce need in the region. (18–20 Pts)	Addresses in a more limited way a top 3 workforce need in the region. (15–17 Pts)	Addresses in a limited way a less critical workforce need in the region. (11–14 Pts)	Identified labor need is too narrow or not in a critical area. (0–10 Pts)	20 Pts
Program Plan	Plan identifies efficiencies that take full advantage of existing human and physical resources and all requested resources clearly support the goals of the plan. (22–25 Pts)	Plan includes significant efficiencies from existing resources and all requested resources clearly support the goals of the plan. (18–21 Pts)	Plan includes limited efficiencies from existing resources or includes some questionable resource requests. (14–17 Pts)	Budget includes limited or no existing resources from partners or includes requests deemed unnecessary. (0–13 Pts)	25 Pts
Strength of Partnership	Plan includes broad representation and each partner has a defined role with identified critical contributions. (18–20 Pts)	Plan includes broad representation but partner roles are not clearly defined. (15–17 Pts)	Plan lacks one or two important partners or not all partners are critical to success of the plan. (11–14 Pts)	Partner participation is too narrow or some partners do not contribute meaningfully. (0–10 Pts)	20 Pts
Budget Plan	Plan identifies efficiencies that take full advantage of existing human and physical resources and all requested resources clearly support the goals of the plan. (13–15 Pts)	Plan includes significant efficiencies from existing resources and all requested resources clearly support the goals of the plan. (10–12 Pts)	Plan includes limited efficiencies from existing resources or includes some questionable resource requests. (7–9 Pts)	Budget includes limited or no existing resources from partners or includes requests deemed unnecessary. (0–6 Pts)	15 Pts
Sustainability	Identifies existing resources to continue the program with no reduction in services at the end of grant funding period. (18–20 Pts)	Identifies significant resources to continue the program with limited reduction in services at the end of grant funding period. (15–17 Pts)	Identifies limited resources to continue the program or proposes significant reduction in services at the end of grant funding period. (11–14 Pts)	New funding sources must be identified for continuation of program at the end of grant funding. (0–10 Pts)	20 Pts
Total Points Possible					100 Pts



May 14, 2018

Krystal Thrailkill
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
1100 College Drive
Mena, Arkansas 71953
479-394-7622
kthrailkill@uarichmountain.edu

Dear University of Arkansas Rich Mountain Leadership:

It has been brought to my attention that the University of Arkansas Rich Mountain is applying for a technical grant focusing on welding as a skillset in the workplace. This is exciting news for Nidec Motor Corporation. Candidates with a welding skillset are far more flexible in our multi-craft manufacturing facility. We utilize welding skills in virtually all departments and are essential in the following departments: Fabrication, Rotorcast, Lamination, Maintenance, and Machine Shop.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with the University of Arkansas Rich Mountain. The education you supply to this region and specifically Nidec Motor Corporation's current and potential workforce is invaluable in securing our future as a manufacturing facility.

Sincerely,

Billy Carmack, PHR, SHRM-CP
Human Resources Manager
Nidec Motor Corporation




May 24, 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

Mena Regional Health System ("MRHS") is a 65 bed hospital offering a diverse compliment of inpatient and outpatient services to the communities of Polk County, Western Arkansas and Eastern Oklahoma. MRHS continues to expand its services to accommodate a wide geographic area for residents in Western Arkansas. The hospital inpatient services include acute care medical/surgical services, a 6 bed ICU, labor and delivery services, a 12 bed geriatric psychiatric unit and a 12 bed physical rehabilitation unit.

The healthcare industry continues to change rapidly. The Health Information Management Medical Billing and Coding program at University of Arkansas - Rich Mountain ("UA-RM") has been an excellent resource for continuing professional development of current and future employees at MRHS. This has been especially true with the implementation of ICD-10-CM/PCS. As the MRHS increases the scope and diversity of services offered, we rely on the college to train professionals with expertise in revenue cycle management. Expansion of the current program at UA-RM will focus on key elements such as compliance; privacy and security, management of the electronic health record, credentialing, and ongoing skill development in clinical documentation improvement. To have a program of this caliber in rural Western Arkansas is a tremendous asset to MRHS and the patients it serves.

Mena Regional Health System wholeheartedly supports the UA-RM Health Information Management Medical Billing and Coding program. The partnership between MRHS and UA-RM creates a synergy and collaborative value that benefits both organizations, and ultimately the population of Western Arkansas.

Kind Regards,


Jay Quebedeaux, CEO

De Queen-Mena ESC

P.O. Box 110 • 305 S. Hornberg Road
Gillham, Arkansas 71841
Phone: 870-386-2251
Fax: 870-386-7731

Rich Mountain Community College
110 College Drive
Mena, AR 71953

Dear Dr. Wilson:

The De Queen-Mena Education Service Cooperative supports Rich Mountain Community College's Workforce Implementation Grant application. It is vital for students to receive the necessary training to better prepare them for career opportunities. With the focus of this grant being advanced manufacturing and medical billing and coding we feel it is a great fit for moving students into high demand, high wage occupations. The career pathway/educational ladder outlined in the grant is appropriate for transitioning students from secondary school into a college curriculum with employment opportunities at several stages. The Secondary Career Center program housed at RMCC is the perfect step in this career ladder.

Sincerely,



John Ponder
DMEC Director



May 23, 2016

Krystal Thrailkill, Vice President for Assessment, Evaluation and Planning
Rich Mountain Community College
1100 College Drive
Mena, AR 71953

RE: Regional Workforce Implementation Grant

Dear Mrs. Thrailkill:

I am writing this letter to express support for the Regional Workforce Implementation Grant Proposal being submitted by the Rich Mountain Community College. We look forward to participating in the implementation phase to help build a career framework in the manufacturing and healthcare industries 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.



CARLOS B. ROCHA, M.D.
Mena Center for Women's Health, P.A.

400 Crestwood Circle, Ste. P - Mena, Arkansas 71953 - Phone (479) 394-2534 Fax (479) 394-7012

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter in support of the Rich Mountain Community College *Health Information Management Medical Billing and Coding* program. I have a busy Obstetrics and Gynecology practice in Mena, Arkansas. As a 4th generation doctor I have seen the tremendous changes in medicine and healthcare. Many of these changes have come on the business or revenue cycle management side of medicine. Additionally, healthcare has moved from a paper based to an electronic health record system, with a focus on confidentiality, security, and protecting the personal privacy of individuals. Medical office management has changed as new regulations, technology, and data-sharing initiatives have reshaped the landscape.

Rich Mountain Community College has been an exceptional partner in providing the needed continuing professional development for employees, who now must have an expanding set of knowledge and skills in the work place, as regulatory pressures and technological initiatives have grown within medical practices. Changes continually occur in the medical coding and billing industry. RMCC's program is dedicated to providing employees with a depth of knowledge about federal regulations, medical terminology, disease processes, as well as, coding and billing initiatives that require absolute accuracy.

I fully support RMCC's *Health Information Management Medical Billing and Coding* program and its ability to expand the scope and depth of its curriculum. RMCC has become an invaluable partner in meeting our demand for trained medical billing and coding specialists who also understand the importance of following guidelines set by healthcare agencies to ensure privacy, fairness, compliance and accuracy in revenue cycle management.

Sincerely,



Carlos Rocha, M.D.



May 31, 2016

From: Bob Martin / Sterling Machinery Company

To: Krystal Thrailkill

Subject: Grant Submission

Dear Krystal,

Thanks for letting me know what RMCC is seeking as to the welding program grant.

As I mentioned to you last week, there has been a need for this trade in our community for some time and this, along with the machine shop program, will give our local students a very marketable opportunity as well as keeping them in the local area.

Usually, this trade is offered in Tulsa, and most cases, the student ends up staying in Tulsa or other areas other than Mena and its surroundings.

Sterling Machinery always has a need for certified welders and sees this as positive moving forward.

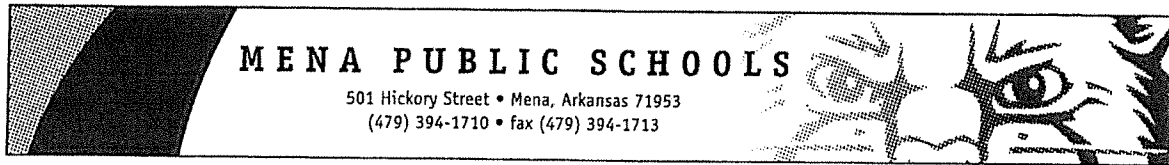
Please let me know your progress as we will definitely want to participate in new hires as well as sending existing Sterling employees to your classes.

All the best,

Bob Martin

President

Sterling Machinery Company



May 25, 2016


Dr. Krystal Thrailkill
Rich Mountain Community College
1100 College Drive
Mena, AR 71953

Dear Dr. Thrailkill:

Please let this letter serve as support for the Rich Mountain Community College Implementation Grant request. If funded as proposed, the grant will allow our high school students the opportunity to accelerate their career/technical education with workplace skills that coordinate with local employer needs.

The structure of the grant proposal allows for input from all areas, public school through employment to ensure the job skills being taught are relevant, current, and assessed for any needed revision. Mena Public Schools is committed to the area Career Center program and provides scheduling opportunities for our high school students to attend class. We support this grant and would encourage the Arkansas Department of Higher Education to fund it in its entirety, for our students and area employers.

Sincerely,


Benny Weston, Superintendent