

Act 1131 of 2015
Regional Workforce Planning Grant

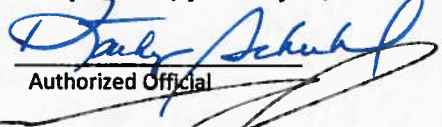
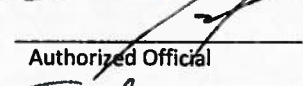
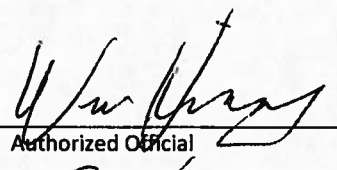


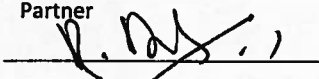

APPLICATION COVER SHEET

DUE SEPTEMBER 1, 2015

To:	Arkansas Department of Higher Education	
Requesting Institution:	University of Arkansas	
Title of Project:	IT Readiness	
Project Partners:	1. JB Hunt 2. Walmart 3. Tata Consultancy Services 4. Bentonville Public Schools 5. Field Agent	6. Acxiom 7. Rockfish 8. Collective Bias 9. Saatchi & Saatchi X 10. Global Campus
Requested Budget:	\$80,402.00	
Date Submitted:	9/1/2015	
Applicant Contact:	Starlyn Danley, Tara Dryer	
Applicant's Information:	Address 3300 Market Street, Suite 402 Rogers, Arkansas 72758	
	Phone 479-464-5024	
	Email danley@uark.edu, tdryer@uark.edu	

Authorized Signatures for Project Partners

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

University of Arkansas Lead Institution	 Authorized Official		
JB Hunt Partner	 Authorized Official	Acxiom Partner	 Authorized Official
Walmart Partner	 Authorized Official	Rockfish Partner	 Authorized Official
Tata Consultancy Services Partner	 Authorized Official	Collective Bias Partner	 Authorized Official

Bentonville Public
Schools

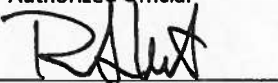
Partner



Authorized Official

Field Agent

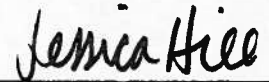
Partner



Authorized Official

Saatchi & Saatchi X

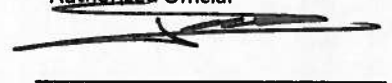
Partner



Authorized Official

Global Campus

Partner



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.

Overview of Labor Need

The University of Arkansas Global Campus has worked very closely with the local chambers of commerce and the Northwest Arkansas Council over the past several years. As these entities have identified the workforce needs of the community, the University of Arkansas School of Continuing Education and Academic Outreach, operating as the University of Arkansas Global Campus (hereafter referred to as the Global Campus) worked to identify training courses, programs and certificates to lessen the skills gaps. Recently, the Northwest Arkansas Council has identified the primary job growth sector in the Northwest Arkansas region as being **Corporate Services/Information Technology (IT)** in the areas of **Retail** and **Logistics**.

The Northwest Arkansas Council's findings are also supported by a 2014 CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy) for Northwest Arkansas Report, which identifies the corporate office clusters along the U.S. 540 corridor (now known as Interstate 49) of Benton and Washington County as quickly becoming the foundation of Northwest Arkansas' economic expansion (pg. 24). This expansion cultivates an environment of innovative businesses and a need to sustain and grow a skilled and prepared workforce. Therefore, the Global Campus has identified that working with these

corporations to build programming in an area of need (IT) could help the economic growth of the region.

Additionally, the NWA Council has indicated that computer and math occupations are the fastest growing high-wage sector (\$33.68/hour) in Northwest Arkansas since 2001. In the past 4 years, over 3,000 net new jobs were added to that sector, a 71% increase. The Council and the Chambers also interview over 450 companies each year and companies have indicated a need for IT workers at all levels in programming, software development, web and digital communications, network systems, information support and information services.

Skills Gaps Based on Identified Labor Needs

Guided by the identified need for IT skills in our community by the NWA Council and CEDS, the Global Campus, in partnership with Bentonville Public Schools and local business partners (Acxiom, Collective Bias, Rockfish, Walmart, JB Hunt, Field Agent, Saatchi & Saatchi X, Tata Consultancy), plans to build and implement certificate programs focused on reducing the skill gaps in the area of IT that exist in the Northwest Arkansas region. To identify which technology skills are currently lacking, Global Campus sent a survey to each of our industry partners for the purpose of obtaining information regarding technology labor needs, technology skill deficiencies, and organizational skill that are needed in the next 3-5 years. Based on survey results, the greatest immediate needs include:

- Data Analytics
- Big Data
- Coding (i.e. JavaScript, HTML, .net, Swift)
- Software Development and Testing
- Programming and Software Development
- Web and Digital Communications
- Network Systems
- Cyber Security
- Critical/Analytical Thinking
- Communications/ Technical Writing

These IT skill gaps exist for entry-level positions as well as current employees. Programming will address a range of IT skills and business partners will aid in identifying the most critical skills shortage needs now and in the future.

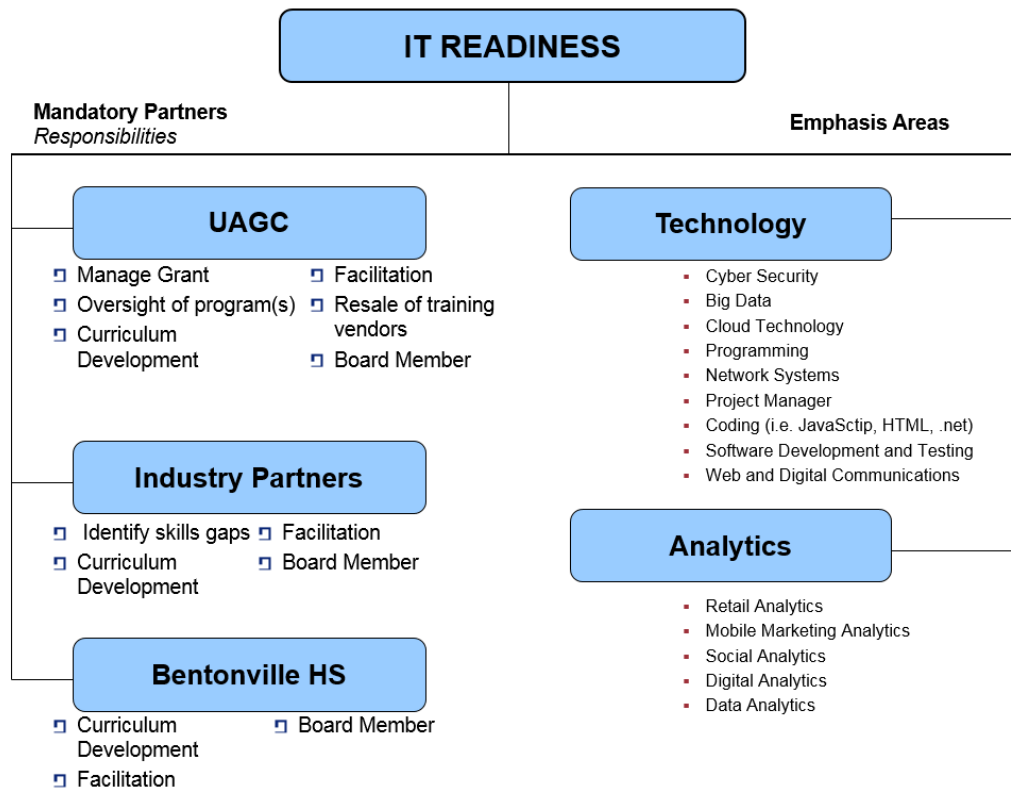
Proposed Program

The Global Campus, Bentonville Public Schools, and eight local business partners propose a solution for addressing existing workforce skills gaps with a program focused on technology and analytics called IT Readiness. The IT Readiness Program oversight will be comprised of an advisory committee comprised of the Global Campus, Bentonville Public Schools and the following local business partners:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| • Bentonville Public Schools | • Tata Consultancy | • Saatchi & Saatchi X |
| • JB Hunt | • Field Agent | • Collective Bias |
| • Walmart | • RockFish | • Acxiom |

The IT Readiness program will address skills deficiencies in the areas of retail and logistics, targeting the specific skill deficiencies mentioned in the Skills Gaps Based on Identified Labor Needs section above.

The following diagram provides a **high-level overview** of the proposed IT Readiness program, identifying mandatory partner responsibilities on the left and program emphasis areas on the right.



Addressing the skilled labor shortage in NWA with learning programs designed in partnership with local business and industry allows for direct targeting of specific IT skills pertinent to local business needs. Furthermore, the continuity of an IT program that has the potential to move from high school to university and /or to local business allows progressive learning which has been defined by local business needs. This program will also allow individuals to enter the IT Readiness Program at various points in their working career from high school, entry level, career change or from various points in their IT career.

Program and Equipment Needs

The scope of the IT Readiness program will run from basic to advanced level and short courses to lengthier certificate programs. To effectively and efficiently develop and implement the IT Readiness Program in a timely manner will require the procurement of two additional staff members: a Project Manager to oversee the program and an Academic Technologist to ensure design and delivery of course material. Minimal funds in the areas of travel, materials and research resources may also be needed.

In order to adequately prepare participants for the current job openings in the technical and analytic fields, proper equipment for training purposes will be required. Equipment needs **during the Implementation Phase** of this grant program will include items such as:

- Tablets (iPad, Surface, Nexus)
- Smart Phones (iPhone, Droid)
- Printers
- SQL Server
- Windows Server 2012
- Windows PCs and laptops
- Apple laptops

Acquisition of additional staff and equipment (during the implementation phase) will ensure training is developed and implemented in a way that students are meeting learning objectives and have an opportunity to work hands-on with technology that is used in the IT workforce.

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.

Grant Core Requirements

The coalition of partners for the IT Readiness Program will satisfy the Arkansas Department of Higher Education's Regional Workforce Grant core requirements for creating a comprehensive career and technical education program, and supporting a successful economic climate in Arkansas, by developing high-skilled employees to fulfill existing business needs. The core requirements will be met by having these features as part of the IT Readiness Program:

1. Include representation from mandatory partners.

Partners include:

University - University of Arkansas Global Campus

High School - Bentonville Public Schools

8 local employers representing critical need

JB Hunt

Walmart

Tata Consultancy

Field Agent

RockFish

Saatchi & Saatchi X

Collective Bias

Axiom

2. Enhance, expand, or create clearly defined career and technical education pathway programs.

Global Campus provided a survey to all 8 business partners requesting information on career pathways needed in the next 3–5 years. Survey results indicated upcoming career pathways as:

- Data Analyst/Scientist
- Big Data Systems Administrator

- Software Development/Coding
- Marketing
- Sales
- Shared Services
- Digital Strategy

In collaboration with our partners, the Global Campus and Bentonville Public Schools will develop certificate programs aligned with the career pathways identified by the business partners. The program will transition participants potentially starting from high school to Global Campus courses/certificates and into local businesses. Students will also be able to enter the program that are already working in an IT career or looking to change careers.

Bentonville High School currently offers 12+ courses as a part of the IT Ignite program, a CAPS model program, and are willing to develop and implement additional courses as identified by the governing body for the IT Readiness Program. Following are the courses currently offered by Bentonville High School that align with the current business needs identified by the mandatory partners for this grant proposal.

AP Computer Science	Marketing I
Computer Applications I	Marketing II
Computer Applications II	Retailing
Digital Electronics	Web Page Design I
Drafting and Design	Web Page Design II
Engineering Design and Development	Essentials Of Computer Programing
Mobile App Development	Computerized Business Applications

Global Campus currently offers a variety of courses in technology and professional development, such as those listed below. Global Campus is willing to develop and implement additional courses as prerequisites identified by the governing body for the IT Readiness Program.

Multiple courses in Microsoft Office Suite	Analytics
	Big Data
Multiple courses in Adobe Creative Suite	Project Management
	Communications
Web Design	Programming

Students that have not experienced the IT Readiness Program in high school will be provided foundational and prerequisite courses to ensure the necessary technology skill set is achieved.

Once students can demonstrate proficiency in prerequisites, they will enter a particular IT track to obtain basic skills and IT skills which ultimately will lead to a certificate. Certificates may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- UA Cyber Security Certificate

- UA Cloud Technologies Certificate
- UA Programming Certificate
- UA Big Data Certificate
- UA Mobile App Development Certificate
- UA Graphic Design Certificate
- UA Website Development Certificate
- UA Social Media Analytics Certificate

Outlined below is one of the sample courses that would be offered in the mobile app development certificate:

Course Title: iOS Written in Swift

Day 1:

- Getting familiar with Xcode
 - The IDE
 - Capabilities
 - Debugging
 - Console
 - Playgrounds
- Setting up a new project
 - Project types
 - Source Control (git repo)
 - Storyboard vs. no storyboard
- “Hello World”

Lab:

- Create a new project
- Compile Hello World

Homework:

- Create a new project
- Create a custom class with custom init function
- Create an array of objects using your class
- Iterate the list and print at least one variable

Day 2:

- MVC
 - Keeping things separate
 - Model
 - View
 - Controller
- Auto Layout
 - Basics
 - Constraints
- Adding a ViewController
 - New file
 - Interface Builder
 - Properties
- Adding TableView
 - What is a TableView
 - Data source

- Delegate methods
- Custom TableCell
 - Subviews & outlets
 - Interface file
 - UICollectionViewController

Lab:

- Add a ViewController
- Add a TableView
- Add a custom TableCell

Homework:

- Set up a table view to display the values of the custom class you created in HW #1

Day 3:

- Adding 3rd-party framework
 - What is it?
 - Examples
- Using AFNetworking
 - Multi-threading
 - Blocks
 - Categories
- Unmarshalling JSON
 - NSDictionary
 - Custom object

Lab:

- Add AFNetworking
- Unmarshall JSON

Homework:

- Hit a JSON service and unmarshall it's values to a new custom class
- Update your TableView from HW #2 to use the new data source

Day 4:

- Pushing a new ViewController
 - Adding detail screen
 - Navigation Stack
 - Pushing
- Delegation #2
 - What is it?
 - Delegator vs. delegate
 - What's a protocol?
 - Defining functions
- Popping a ViewController
 - Popping
 - Updating parent values & reloading TableView

Lab:

- Add detail screen
- Add favorite button
- Wire up protocol, delegator, and delegate

Homework:

- Make a detail ViewController for your TableView from the previous homeworks

Day 5:

- Putting it all together
- Q&A

3. Include programs which emphasize basic skills instruction concurrently with occupational training.

The business partners identified in the survey that basic skills such as technical writing, communications, critical thinking and analytical thinking were important skill sets for individuals working in IT. These basic skills will be implemented in the certificate programs along with other essential skills like problem solving, negotiation, time management, diversity and professionalism. Furthermore, the certificate earning programs designed for the IT Readiness Program will incorporate existing workforce scenarios and case studies. Participants will have the opportunity for mentoring with existing employees in local businesses identified as successful in their career path.

4. Embrace diversity of student enrollment.

The IT Readiness Program will strive to enroll a diverse population of students. This will be done by marketing the program through diverse avenues such as high schools, regional workforce outlets, colleges and universities, and local businesses. This program will also be inclusive of individuals at various places within their career. Students will be able to enter the program directly after high school, as they change careers or look to enhance their already existing IT career.

5. Provide essential support services which link to resources that assist students in progressing along the identified pathways, including advising on academic, employment, financial, and personal issues.

The IT Readiness Program partners are prepared to support participants to ensure their success in the workforce.

The Global campus will provide:

- Networking opportunities
- Access to technology
- Resources for job placement

Business and industry partners will provide:

- Advice and guidance on IT career pathways
- Potential career placement

6. Develop and implement collaborative apprenticeship or training programs that prepare workers for rapid entry into the workforce or provide a recognized industry certifications.

The IT Readiness Program will work in conjunction with training programs offered by local companies and organizations to support the success of participants. The program will also collaborate with local companies for mentorship and apprenticeship opportunities. By including existing and new resources from local organizations, the IT Readiness Program will be sure to specifically address immediate labor needs in the area.

Some of the identified career pathways include the opportunity for participants to obtain an industry recognized certification. For example, the pathway for Cyber Security, will assist in preparing participants for the CISSP (Certified Information Systems Security Professional) certification and include testing if the participant has successfully achieved all requirements for taking the exam.

While completing courses in the IT Readiness Program, participants will build a portfolio of work directly related to their desired career path that they can present to potential employers. This will be another concrete way for participants to market their skills and gain an advantage on other job seekers when they are ready for job placement.

Summary of Expected Outcomes

Learning gaps currently exist with both new hires and existing employees transitioning into other technical positions, according to industry partners. Existing gaps will be reduced through foundational concepts and specific content development, which will be delivered through this program.

In the results of the Global Campus Survey (2015), industry partners identify expected outcomes of the IT Readiness Program as:

- Improved customer service and effective delivery of solutions
- Larger, more experienced potential employee base
- Larger population of candidates meeting requirements of our open positions
- Grow partner and regional companies with talented new hires who bring skills that are going to be necessary for us to meet our revenue and growth goals

With these expected outcomes as a foundation, the following objectives will be in place. Note that there are measures in place for each outcome, and these will provide the criteria for adjustments and reporting. The measures are reliable performance indicators that will ensure the grant goals and objectives are met:

1. Clearly defined outcomes for each objective.
2. An assessment of the current situation.
3. Required actions for the fulfillment of objectives.
4. Qualitative and/or quantitative measures for the evaluation of each outcome.

Using outcomes identified by industry partners as their foundation, the following objectives will be in place:

Objective: Identify essential competencies for career readiness in IT career paths as outlined in Global Campus survey (2015) and Northwest Arkansas Council findings (2014).			
Outcome	Current Situation	Action	Measure
Essential competencies for career readiness in the following career path areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Analytics • Big Data 	Need for success indicators in career path areas.	Partners provide key performance indicators for success in each career path areas.	Key performance indicators identified for each career path area by program, course and level.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coding (i.e. JavaScript, HTML, .net, Swift) • Software Development and Testing • Programming and Software Development • Web and Digital Communications • Network Systems • Cyber Security • Critical/Analytical Thinking • Communications/ Technical Writing 			
Objective: Work with partners to design program solutions/courses to address skills deficiencies for each career path.			
Outcome	Current Situation	Action	Measure
Program design for courses in identified career path areas, including delivery methods, entry and stepping out points.	Courses and course content exist. The <i>need</i> is for a comprehensive design for each career path.	Collect existing course information from partners, Global Campus and other providers to determine implementation design, i.e., face-to-face, online/blended and what to buy and what to build.	A completed course design for each career path area that best meets the learning requirements of the key performance indicators for the career path area.
Objective: Work with partners to develop content and curriculum for identified career paths including entry and advanced levels.			
Outcome	Current Situation	Action	Measure
Cascading curriculum for each career path area.	Key performance indicators need to be identified for each level of achievement in each career path area	Key performance indicators will be evaluated and ranked in levels of entry level skills, intermediate level skills and advanced skills for each career path area, vetted against program design.	Entry, intermediate and advanced curriculum for each career path area developed and ready for pilot launch.
Objective: Create criteria for successful completion of each program for each career path.			
Outcome	Current Situation	Action	Measure

Published criteria for successful completion of each level of each career path area.	Need for success criteria linked to key performance indicators in each career path area.	Work with the Global Campus, partners and certifying bodies to identify and set standards for successful completion of each level of each career path. Create certificate of achievement issued by the Global Campus in conjunction with partners and certifying bodies.	Standards for successful achievement for each level of each career path area accepted by the Global Campus and our partners and certifying bodies.
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Description of Career Pathways that will be Created or Enhanced

Another item asked of our business partners on the survey we sent addressed identifying IT career pathways that could be created or enhanced. The following are some jobs or careers that are currently needed or will be needed within their organizations now or in the future:

- Data Analyst/Scientist
- Big Data Systems Administrator
- Software Development/Coding
- Marketing
- Sales
- Shared Services
- Digital Strategy

Based on this information, the IT Readiness Program will create certificate programs that specifically address these career path needs in the following areas:



Linking Information Technology and Analytics together in an IT Readiness initiative provides a business-ready workforce by connecting necessary skills and understanding. While IT employees are seen as the people who store and manage data while analysts examine that data to answer questions,

participants in this program will have an understanding of both of these functions. Successful analysts or data scientists require a solid foundation in areas such as software development, coding, and big data management to allow them the ability to pull data from multiple sources and collate the data effectively and efficiently. Likewise, software developers and coders are better equipped to manage big data storage, security, and software when they understand the needs of an analyst to have large quantities of data behave in specific ways. Gaining this understanding will make participants in this program workforce-ready employees.

The identified career pathways will include certificate earning programs that will be created to meet the needs of businesses in Northwest Arkansas, and some will include industry acknowledged certifications when determined appropriate for the certificate goals.

Anticipated Equipment Needs

In completing the Information Technology Readiness Program, participants will become proficient with technologies and learn important skills applicable to local workforce needs such as mobile app development, programming, analytics and other areas identified by local business.

During the Implementation Phase of this grant, the Global Campus will need to purchase technologies including:

- Tablets (iPad, Surface, Nexus)
- Smart Phones (iPhone, Droid)
- Printers
- SQL Server
- Windows Server 2012
- Windows PCs and laptops
- Apple laptops

By ensuring competency with multiple technologies, the IT Readiness Program will prepare its participants for a range of skills that local businesses may need. Students in both the IT tracks and Analytics tracks of the program will gain skills with various technologies so that they can better preform their own job while understanding how their tasks fit in with their organization as a whole.

The procurement of these resources **during the Planning Grant Proposal** phase is detailed in Section 4: Budget Plan of this document.

Proposed Governance and Accountability Structure for the Program

Throughout the planning and implementation of the IT Readiness program, the University of Arkansas Global Campus intends to work closely with the Bentonville Public Schools and industry partners to provide high-quality and relevant training to participants. By structuring the program with clear leaders and with opportunity for each partner to advise and guide the program, the Global Campus will be able to effectively create and carry out programming.

Governance – To ensure that the workforce grant efforts are carried out in the most effective way possible, the Global Campus will maintain a governance and advisory structure that provides oversight and guidance to the direction of the grant. This structure will maintain clear programming

goals and objectives, provide partners the opportunity to give content input, and allow the Global Campus and Bentonville School District to contribute educational expertise.

Decision-Making Structure – The Global Campus will be the project director/manager; however, there will be equal input on technology content and needs from the high school, the Global Campus, and the business partners. The group will collaborate and work together to create IT programming and fill the gaps identified by the business sector. Maintenance and upkeep of the budget, staff, timelines – all aspects of project management - will be directed by the Global Campus.

Responsible Institution – The Global Campus will be responsible for the direct supervision and management of the workforce grant.

Project Steering Committee/ External Advisory – The external advisory/steering committee members will be comprised of Bentonville School District, Global Campus and business partners. Each organization will be allowed one advisory member. The External Advisory/Steering Committee members will provide input and guidance on the direction of the IT programming. The proposed steering committee will consist of the following initial members. However, individuals may be substituted at the company or organization's request:

- Global Campus, Project lead – Starlyn Danley
- Bentonville Public Schools – Andy Mayes
- Global Campus – Tara Dryer
- JB Hunt – Monty Morton
- Walmart – Vikas Sharma
- Saatchi & Saatchi X – Jessica Hill
- Rockfish – Jarrod Ramsey
- Field Agent – Rick West
- Acxiom – Wes Hinesley
- Tata Consultancy Services – Ram Ramasubramanian
- Collective Bias – Angelique O'Brien

Meetings –

Composition: Attendees at the meetings will be comprised of the advisory/steering committee which include all partners from K-12, university and business/industry. Guests or speakers may be permitted to attend based on meeting agenda.

Frequency: Meetings will be held on a quarterly basis.

Scheduling: The dates of the meetings and location of the meetings will be arranged by the Global Campus staff and attendees will be notified at least a month in advance. At this time, members will also be given a tentative agenda.

Attendance: All committee members are required to attend the quarterly meeting. It is recognized that it may be difficult for all members to attend. It is suggested that if a committee member cannot attend, they send a representative from their organization to sit in their place.

During the meeting: The meeting will be scheduled for approximately 2 hours. The meetings will address old business from previous meetings, new business that needs to be discussed, questions from partners and an overall update of the program progression.

Goals of meetings: To continue to discuss IT programming, identify current needs to move programming forward, collaborate on projects, update committee on status of programming, and any other determined needs that will keep the IT Readiness Program on track to meet its objectives.

Accountability Structure –

In order to accomplish this large program building, an accountability structure is necessary. Included in this will be proper communication methods and modes, making clear who is accountable for what and how each partner will be measured, appointing individuals to steer activities and make sure sub-projects are on task, and most importantly creating measureable objectives and achieving the outcomes.

This governance structure will allow all partners to be held accountable and to influence the direction of the IT Readiness Program. By holding these meetings each quarter, program partners will be able to hear feedback from each other on a regular basis. While the Global Campus will be the lead in this program, partners can be confident that their industry expertise will have an impact on the overall guidance and the specific outputs of the program.

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.

How the Program Plan Incorporates Each of the Mandatory Partners

Each partner will play a crucial role in development of the IT certificate programs. Likewise, each partner was chosen based on their area of expertise and what they can contribute to the program's success. Outlined below is a detailed description of the role of the K-12 school district, the university and the business partners.

Bentonville School District Partner (Bentonville Public Schools)

Tasks assigned and how they will be implemented (carried out) in project:

The Bentonville Public school will be able to help identify career paths for students completing high school and entering into IT jobs and careers. They will also, by way of their IT department, be able to provide support and guidance on our advisory board in the area of content development and creation.

Personnel and roles:

Career Counselors, IT Director and/or IT department

The career counselors in the high school may be able to assist with program planning and identifying career paths that students may take out of high school in the area of IT. The IT Director may help with course content and curriculum pertaining to basic IT skills.

Integration of K-12 role in project:

The Bentonville High School has already implemented a career pathway program called the IGNITE program (formerly the CAPS program). This program is designed to give students professional skills

and soft skills that will advance them in a career path. The IT portion of IGNITE gives juniors and seniors the opportunity to learn basic IT skills and participate in an unpaid IT internship in the local community. We see these students as following an IT career into the certificate and certification programs as well as 4 year degrees such as Computer Science or Computer Engineering.

University Partner (University of Arkansas Global Campus)

Tasks assigned and how they will be implemented (carried out) in project:

The University of Arkansas will oversee the overall management of the IT Readiness grant program. Within the University, the School of Continuing Education and Academic Outreach has long been known for its non-credit program development. They will be able to guide the grant in program formation and execution, provide support for communication with the community, maintain the budget, provide classroom locations, maintain IT support and troubleshooting and other management functions as they arise. Furthermore, the University is backed by a legacy of research and scholarship and will be able to provide another avenue of career pathways through baccalaureate and graduate degrees.

Personnel and roles:

Director of Training, Corporate and Academic Outreach, Assistant Director of Technology Training, IT Department, Accounting Department, Communications Department:

The Director and Assistant Director will provide guidance on program development, implementation and delivery in conjunction with needs identified by partners. The University IT department can provide IT upkeep and support for the equipment.

Integration of University role in project:

The University will maintain sight and scope of the overall project and maintain management of all aspects of programming.

Business/Industry Partners (JB Hunt, Walmart, Saatchi & Saatchi X, Rockfish, Field Agent, Acxiom, Tata Consultancy Services, Collective Bias)

Tasks assigned and how they will be implemented (carried out) in project:

The business partners will assist in identifying skills gaps and labor needs in NWA. They have the ability to contribute course content and curriculum, facilitate courses, contribute to the development of measurements of success, and provide feedback from employees and supervisors within their organization.

Personnel and roles:

IT Subject Matter Experts and Human Resource personnel

The IT Subject Matter Experts will be able to identify content and curriculum that is needed in the various career paths. The HR personnel will assist with identifying IT jobs that are unfilled within their company and aid in matching the jobs with the career paths, certificates and certifications.

Business/Industry Partners (JB Hunt, Walmart, Saatchi & Saatchi X, Rockfish, Field Agent, Acxiom, Tata Consultancy Services, Collective Bias):

The business and industry partners for the IT readiness grant were chosen based on three main factors:

1. A prior relationship with them was already formed.
2. They have expertise in some form of IT.
3. They have a need to hire trained individuals in IT.

Each partner brings a different set of IT skills and perspective to the table. From large multinational corporations to local companies that started up in NWA, this group will be able to act as our IT content area experts. Listed below are the some of the IT strengths of each partner:

- JB Hunt: programming, data analytics
- Walmart: cloud, cyber security, programming, data analytics
- Saatchi & Saatchi X: graphic design, web development
- Rockfish: tablet and mobile app development, cloud, social media, analytics, web development and design, data visualization, big data, agile
- Field Agent: mobile app development, big data, mobile research
- Acxiom: big data, cloud, server, mainframe, network, security
- Tata Consultancy Services: digital enterprise, IT infrastructure, application development, application management, security services, end user computing, big data, analytics, social media, cloud
- Collective Bias: social media, data analytics

This group of industry partners will not leave an area of IT expertise untouched. Furthermore, the power of bringing them together will create dynamic programming for the NWA region.

Commitment letters from all mandatory partners, the Northwest Arkansas Council and the Local Workforce Development Board are included as attachments to this document.

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.

Financial Plan Assigning Cost Estimates to all Proposed Planning Activities and Completed Budget Template

During the planning phase of the IT Readiness Program, funds will be used to support the planning of the IT Readiness Program and prepare to move into implementation of the program. Efficiency of funds has been maximized.

A Program Manager will be required to fulfill responsibilities for delivery of the program obligations for preparing for the Implementation Proposal phase of the Regional Workforce Grant Program. Responsibilities of the Program Manager will include:

- Plan the delivery of the overall program and its activities in accordance with the guidelines and recommendations of the grant proposal and governing body.
- Develop initiatives supporting the strategic direction of the IT Readiness Program proposal.
- Develop a program evaluation framework to assess the strengths of the program and identify areas for improvement.
- Develop the budget and funding proposals for the program to ensure continuous delivery of services.
- Engage program partners and activities for ensuring fulfillment of program success.

An Academic Technologist will also be required to provide guidance on design and development of program courses. This item in the budget lists the position as paying \$35,000 but the grant would only require \$8,750 during the planning phase since this will not be an immediate hire but rather would start after some of the initial planning phase has been completed. Responsibilities of the Academic Technologist will include:

- Create design plan for IT Readiness Program training projects.
- Develop concepts/themes and instructional strategies for projects.
- Create reports, design plans, and storyboards within timeframe required.
- Interact with Subject Matter Experts and IT Readiness Program members to ensure accuracy of concepts.
- Coordinate with all members of team to meet deliverables on project.

A minimal amount of travel will be required for staff working on the planning of the IT Readiness program. This travel will include going to individual partner offices to collaborate on the creation of curriculum for the certificate programs.

Materials budgeted will include items that will be needed to support the development of the IT Readiness Program. This may include items needed for curriculum development such as tracking supplies, identification supplies and/or organization supplies.

Another anticipated direct cost is research resources which would include any primary or secondary sources needed in the creation of the programs. This may include items like books or journals for curriculum creation.

The proposed budget for acquiring the necessary assets are identified in the budget below:

BUDGET - University of Arkansas					Date:		8/18/2015			
Proposed to (Sponsor):			Arkansas Dept. of Higher Education							
Proposed Start & End Dates:			October 2015 - June 2016							
UA Lead Investigator:			Dr. Javier Reyes							
UA Lead Dept/College:			Global Campus							
			PLANNING GRANT							
			Base Salary		Type Appointment		Person-Months CAL/AY SMR		Year 1	
SALARIES & WAGES									Sponsor UA	
Program Manager			\$50,000		12 mo. NonCL		12.00		50,000	
Academic Technologist			\$35,000		12 mo. NonCL		3.00		8,750	
Total S&W									58,750 0	
FRINGE BENEFITS										
Faculty/staff academic / calendar salary					Institutional Rate:				15,152 0	
					25.79%				15,152 0	
Total FB									15,152 0	
Total Salaries + Benefits									73,902 0	
TRAVEL - Domestic									1,000	
TRAVEL - Foreign										
MATERIALS & SUPPLIES (not fees or services, which are "Other")									500	
JOURNAL PUBLICATION FEES										
OTHER DIRECT COSTS (Itemize by type; insert extra rows if needed.)										
Research Resources									5,000	
Subtotal Other Direct Costs									5,000 0	
Modified Total Direct Costs (above subtotal costs subject to F&A Cost)									80,402 0	
TOTAL DIRECT COST									80,402 0	
TOTAL PROJECT COST									\$80,402 \$0	

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	\$73,902.00
2. Travel	\$1,000.00
3. Other (Explain Below)	\$0.00
Briefly Explain Other Costs	
TOTAL PARTNER PARTICIPANT COSTS	\$74,902.00

B. Other Direct Costs

1. Materials and Supplies	\$500.00
2. Publication Costs/Documentation/Dissemination	\$0.00
3. Consultant Services	\$0.00
4. Other (Explain Below)	\$5,000.00
Research Resources	
TOTAL OTHER DIRECT COSTS	\$5,500.00

C. TOTAL DIRECT COSTS

\$80,402.00

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

LEGAL
Sandra Buja
Associate General Counsel
Phone: 479-204-2156
Fax: 479-277-5889
sandra.buja@walmartlegal.com

August 7, 2015

Arkansas Department of Higher Education
432 Main Street, Suite 400
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

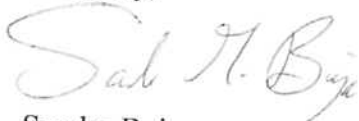
Dear Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Planning Grant Committee,

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. ("Walmart") is pleased to partner with the University of Arkansas Global Campus on the Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Planning Grant. We see this grant as valuable to Walmart's long-term workforce development and employee training goals. We look forward to being involved in a program that will help Northwest Arkansas address existing labor needs and skill gaps.

Walmart will support the grant and will assist with planning and implementation of programs to help ensure success. We look forward to assisting the University of Arkansas Global Campus in identifying the labor needs and skills gaps in our community before building and carrying out a program to help address these issues. Through coordination and collaboration with the University and other companies, schools and industries in NWA, we will be able to build extraordinary non-credit training programs in the area of IT. We believe these programs will not only help our existing employees but also help us fill our IT jobs with new employees.

The Regional Workforce Planning Grant is important for us at Walmart, and we believe that not only our employees but the Northwest Arkansas region as a whole will be well served by the implementation of this grant.

Sincerely,



Sandra Buja
Associate General Counsel
Leverage, Intellectual Property & Privacy



NORTHWEST ARKANSAS
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT, INC.

NWAEDD PLAZA
818 Highway 62-65-412 North • P.O. Box 190
Harrison, Arkansas 72602-0190
(870) 741-5404

August 19, 2015

Arkansas Department of Higher Education
432 Main Street, Suite 400
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Planning Grant Committee,

The Local Workforce Development Board supports the University of Arkansas Global Campus proposal on the Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Planning Grant. We see this IT Readiness grant as valuable to Northwest Arkansas regional development. We look forward to support a high demand career pathway that will help Northwest Arkansas address existing labor needs and skill gaps.

In support of the program, the Local Workforce Development Board will provide both job seekers and job providers' program information on the IT certificates and certifications in order to fill employment needs. In our One-Stop Career Centers, individuals will be able to gain employment information on IT careers, learn about the IT Readiness grant program and then connect with employers upon obtaining an IT certificate or certification. This will allow individuals to maximize their time and resources in order to gain employment.

The Regional Workforce Planning Grant is a priority for the Local Workforce Development Board, and we believe the Northwest Arkansas region as a whole will be well served by the implementation of this IT grant proposal.

Sincerely,

Joe Willis
Executive Director
Northwest Arkansas Local Workforce Development Board



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

School of Continuing Education and Academic Outreach
Global Campus

August 17, 2015

Arkansas Department of Higher Education
432 Main Street, Suite 400
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Planning Grant Committee,

The University of Arkansas is excited to partner with Walmart, JB Hunt, Collective Bias, Rockfish, Acxiom, Field Agent, Saatchi & Saatchi X, Tata Consultancy Service and Bentonville Public Schools to meet the workforce training needs and close the skills gaps that currently exist in the area of Information Technology (IT). The University of Arkansas sees the Regional Workforce Training Grant as a priority for our School of Continuing Education and Academic Outreach. The grant is perfectly aligned with the school's goals and vision. The school's exceptional history of identifying, creating and implementing programming will complement our partners' IT expertise which will lead to dynamic new IT preparation for the NWA workforce.

The University of Arkansas fully supports the initiatives outlined in the grant proposal and will provide space, staff time and other resources to carry out the implementation of the grant. Given our infrastructure and dedication to research and continuing education, we feel the University of Arkansas will be able to continue to expand the activities and scope of the program and assist in meeting the educational needs of the region. Additionally, the Global Campus has the capabilities for expanding the reach of the educational programs beyond the Northwest Arkansas region due to its online infrastructure, its experience in distance learning formats (blended learning as well as face to face programs on location), its relationship with the University of Arkansas System and its six four-year universities and five two-year colleges.

In closing, the University of Arkansas is proud to partner with high caliber companies to create IT programming and certificates for our community. We view this program and these partnerships as a long-term commitment to continuing the economic growth and development of our region.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ashok Saxena
Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
University of Arkansas



July 30, 2015

Arkansas Department of Higher Education
432 Main Street, Suite 400
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Planning Grant Committee,

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is pleased to partner with the University of Arkansas Global Campus on the Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Planning Grant. We see this grant as valuable to Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)'s long-term workforce development and employee training goals. We look forward to being involved in a program that will help Northwest Arkansas address existing labor needs and skill gaps.

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is committed to the grant and will assist with planning and implementation of programs to ensure success. We look forward to assisting the University of Arkansas Global Campus in identifying the labor needs and skills gaps in our community before building and carrying out a program to help address these issues. Through coordination and collaboration with the University and other companies, schools and industries in NWA, we will be able to build extraordinary non-credit training programs in the area of IT. We believe these programs will not only help our existing employees but also help us fill our IT jobs with new employees.

The Regional Workforce Planning Grant is a priority for us at Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), and we believe that not only our employees but the Northwest Arkansas region as a whole will be well served by the implementation of this grant.

Sincerely,
For Tata Consultancy Services Limited

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Ramasamy'.

Mr. Ramasubramanian Ramasamy
Head, Strategic Accounts
Retail and CPG Industry Solution Unit

TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES

609 SW 8th St Suite 900 Bentonville AR 72712
Ph +1-479-286-1286 Fax +1-479-286-1101 website www.tcs.com
Registered Office: Bombay House, 24 Homi Mody Street, Mumbai 400 001, INDIA



Saatchi & Saatchi X

605 W. Lakeview Drive
Springdale, AR 72764
Telephone: +1 479 575 0200
www.saatchix.com

August 4, 2015

Arkansas Department of Higher Education
432 Main Street, Suite 400
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Planning Grant Committee,

Saatchi & Saatchi X is pleased to partner with the University of Arkansas Global Campus on the Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Planning Grant. We see this grant as valuable to Saatchi & Saatchi X's long-term workforce development and employee training goals. We look forward to being involved in a program that will help Northwest Arkansas address existing labor needs and skill gaps.

Saatchi & Saatchi X is committed to the grant and will assist with planning and implementation of programs to ensure success. We look forward to assisting the University of Arkansas Global Campus in identifying the labor needs and skills gaps in our community before building and carrying out a program to help address these issues. Through coordination and collaboration with the University and other companies, schools and industries in NWA, we will be able to build extraordinary non-credit training programs in the area of IT. We believe these programs will not only help our existing employees but also help us fill our IT jobs with new employees.

The Regional Workforce Planning Grant is a priority for us at Saatchi & Saatchi X and we believe that not only our employees but the Northwest Arkansas region as a whole will be well served by the implementation of this grant.

Sincerely,

Jessica Hill, NA Talent Director
Saatchi & Saatchi X



July 30, 2015

Arkansas Department of Higher Education
432 Main Street, Suite 400
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Planning Grant Committee,

Rockfish is pleased to partner with the University of Arkansas Global Campus on the Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Planning Grant. We see this grant as valuable to Rockfish's long-term workforce development and employee training goals. We look forward to being involved in a program that will help Northwest Arkansas address existing labor needs and skill gaps.

Rockfish is committed to the grant and will assist with planning and implementation of programs to ensure success. We look forward to assisting the University of Arkansas Global Campus in identifying the labor needs and skills gaps in our community before building and carrying out a program to help address these issues. Through coordination and collaboration with the University and other companies, schools and industries in NWA, we will be able to build extraordinary non-credit training programs in the area of IT. We believe these programs will not only help our existing employees but also help us fill our IT jobs with new employees.

The Regional Workforce Planning Grant is a priority for us at Rockfish, and we believe that not only our employees but the Northwest Arkansas region as a whole will be well served by the implementation of this grant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jarrod Ramsey".

Jarrod Ramsey
Rockfish Interactive

VP of Technology



4100 Corporate Center Drive
Suite 205
Springdale, Arkansas 72762
479.582.2100
www.nwacouncil.org

TO: Arkansas Department of Higher Education
FROM: Michael D. Malone, CEO and Michael E. Harvey, COO
RE: Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Planning Grant
DATE: August 4, 2015

On behalf of our Board of Directors, we write to you in support of the University of Arkansas' School of Continuing Education's efforts to provide Northwest Arkansas with a pipeline of workers for our rapidly growing Information Technology sector. Computer and Math Occupations have been the fastest growing high-wage sector (\$33.68/hour) in the Northwest Arkansas metro area since 2001. During that time, over 3,000 net new jobs were added in that sector – a 71% increase – a pace of growth that is expected to continue over the next ten years.

The Council and its Chamber Partners interview over 450 local companies each year, and many of the companies interviewed have indicated a need for Information Technology workers, at all levels and areas: Programming and Software Development, Web and Digital Communications, Network Systems, Information Support, and Information Services. The importance of delivering these workers can not be stressed enough: our ability or inability to do so will determine whether or not Northwest Arkansas remains in the top tier of US Metro growth economies.

The Governor's coding initiative in K-12 is a fantastic way to give students the proper foundation for work in information technology careers, and we feel like a training program like this will complete the pathway needed for Northwest Arkansans to meet our employers' growing demand. Meeting our employer's workforce needs is priority one for the Council, and we applaud the University of Arkansas' School of Continuing Education's efforts to help us achieve our regional workforce goals.

We appreciate your consideration in regards to their grant application.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Co-Chair, 2015-16
Donnie Smith,
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Rosalind Brewer,
Past-Chair, 2014-15
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Vice Chair and
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Randy Lawson
Greg Lee
Jim Lindsey
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David Matthews
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Adam Rutledge
Reynie Rutledge
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Nick Santoleri
Marshall Saviers
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Charles Scharlau

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Walter Turnbow
John Tyson
Eddie Vega
Jerry Vest
Fred Vorsanger
Matt Waller
Rob Walton
Perry Webb
John White
Jeremy Wilson
Charles Zimmerman
Randy Zook



417.268.3232

1750 S. Osage Springs Dr.
STE #100
Rogers, AR 72758

July 30, 2015

Arkansas Department of Higher Education
432 Main Street, Suite 400
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Planning Grant Committee,

Collective Bias, Inc. is pleased to partner with the University of Arkansas Global Campus on the Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Planning Grant. We see this grant as valuable to Collective Bias' long-term workforce development and employee training goals. We look forward to being involved in a program that will help Northwest Arkansas address existing labor needs and skill gaps.

Collective Bias is committed to the grant and will assist with planning and implementation of programs to ensure success. We look forward to assisting the University of Arkansas Global Campus in identifying the labor needs and skills gaps in our community before building and carrying out a program to help address these issues. Through coordination and collaboration with the University and other companies, schools and industries in NWA, we will be able to build extraordinary non-credit training programs in the area of IT. We believe these programs will not only help our existing employees but also help us fill our IT jobs with new employees.

The Regional Workforce Planning Grant is a priority for us at Collective Bias, and we believe that not only our employees but the Northwest Arkansas region as a whole will be well served by the implementation of this grant.

Sincerely,

Angelique O'Bryan
Director, HR & Operations
Collective Bias



J.B. HUNT TRANSPORT, INC.

July 30, 2015

Arkansas Department of Higher Education
432 Main Street, Suite 400
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Planning Grant Committee,

JB Hunt Transport Inc. is pleased to partner with the University of Arkansas Global Campus on the Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Planning Grant. We see this grant as valuable to JB Hunt Transport Inc.'s long-term workforce development and employee training goals. We look forward to being involved in a program that will help Northwest Arkansas address existing labor needs and skill gaps.

JB Hunt Transport Inc. is committed to the grant and will assist with planning and implementation of programs to ensure success. We look forward to assisting the University of Arkansas Global Campus in identifying the labor needs and skills gaps in our community before building and carrying out a program to help address these issues. Through coordination and collaboration with the University and other companies, schools and industries in NWA, we will be able to build extraordinary non-credit training programs in the area of IT, Supply Chain Management and Transportation. We believe these programs will not only help our existing employees but also help us fill our IT, Supply Chain Management and Transportation jobs with new employees.

The Regional Workforce Planning Grant is a priority for us at JB Hunt Transport Inc., and we believe that not only our employees but the Northwest Arkansas region as a whole will be well served by the implementation of this grant.

Sincerely,

Monty Morton
JB Hunt Transport Inc.



July 31, 2015

Arkansas Department of Higher Education
432 Main Street, Suite 400
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Planning Grant Committee:

Field Agent is currently partnering with the University of Arkansas Global Campus on the Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Planning Grant.

We see this grant as valuable to NW Arkansas and Field Agent's long-term workforce development. We have been actively involved in recruiting and training locally based employees and we are excited to participate in a program that will help Northwest Arkansas address existing labor needs and skill gaps.

Field Agent is committed to the grant and will assist in whatever way necessary to ensure that the implementation of the program is successful. We will also assist the University of Arkansas Global Campus in identifying employment needs and skills gaps in our community in advance of the program launch.

This type of engagement with the University and other companies in NW Arkansas will ensure that we are able to build a great training program in the area of Development (e.g. coding, IT, etc.). We believe these programs will help our existing employees and also help us fill our Development jobs with new employees.

The Regional Workforce Planning Grant is a priority for us at Field Agent, and we believe that not only our employees but the Northwest Arkansas region as a whole will be well served by the implementation of this grant.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick West".

Rick West
Co-Founder, CEO
Field Agent
rick.west@fieldagent.net
479.236.4262



BENTONVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MICHAEL POORE, SUPERINTENDENT

500 TIGER BOULEVARD, BENTONVILLE, AR 72712

PHONE: 479.254.5000 | FAX: 479.271.1159

FIND US ONLINE AT: BENTONVILLEK12.ORG

August 11, 2015

Arkansas Department of Higher Education
432 Main Street, Suite 400
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Planning Grant Committee,

Bentonville Public School is pleased to partner with the University of Arkansas Global Campus on the Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Planning Grant. We see this grant as valuable to Bentonville Public School's long-term workforce development and employee training goals. We look forward to being involved in a program that will help Northwest Arkansas address existing labor needs and skill gaps.

Bentonville Public School is committed to the grant and will assist with planning and implementation of programs to ensure success. We look forward to assisting the University of Arkansas Global Campus in identifying the labor needs and skills gaps in our community before building and carrying out a program to help address these issues. Through coordination and collaboration with the University and other companies, schools and industries in NWA, we will be able to build extraordinary non-credit training programs in the area of IT. We believe these programs will not only help our existing employees but also help us fill our IT jobs with new employees.

The Regional Workforce Planning Grant is a priority for us at Bentonville Public School, and we believe that not only our employees but the Northwest Arkansas region as a whole will be well served by the implementation of this grant.

Sincerely,

Michael Alan Poore
Superintendent

July 30, 2015

Arkansas Department of Higher Education
432 Main Street, Suite 400
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Planning Grant Committee,

Acxiom is pleased to partner with the University of Arkansas Global Campus on the Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Planning Grant. We see this grant as valuable to Acxiom's long-term workforce development and employee training goals. We look forward to being involved in a program that will help Northwest Arkansas address existing labor needs and skill gaps.

Acxiom is committed to the grant and will assist with planning and implementation of programs to ensure success. We look forward to assisting the University of Arkansas Global Campus in identifying the labor needs and skills gaps in our community before building and carrying out a program to help address these issues. Through coordination and collaboration with the University and other companies, schools and industries in NWA, we will be able to build extraordinary non-credit training programs in the area of IT. We believe these programs will not only help our existing employees but also help us fill our IT jobs with new employees.

The Regional Workforce Planning Grant is a priority for us at Acxiom, and we believe that not only our employees but the Northwest Arkansas region as a whole will be well served by the implementation of this grant.

Sincerely,

Wes Hinesley

Wes Hinesley
Senior Manager of Learning