



**Act 1131 of 2015**  
**Regional Workforce Implementation Grant**

**APPLICATION COVER SHEET**

*DUE JUNE 1, 2016*

<b>To:</b>	Arkansas Department of Higher Education
<b>Requesting Institution:</b>	Rich Mountain Community College
<b>Title of Project:</b>	Expanding Workforce Programs in Rural Arkansas
<b>Project Partners:</b>	1. Mena Public Schools 2. DeQueen-Mena Educational Service Cooperative 3. Western Arkansas Planning and Development District 4. Mena Regional Health System 5. Healthy Connections, Inc. 6. Sterling Manufacturing, Inc. 7. Nidec Motors, Inc. 8. Carlos Rocha, M.D. 9. Department of Workforce Services 10.
<b>Requested Budget:</b>	\$378,000
<b>Date Submitted:</b>	June 1, 2016
<b>Applicant Contact:</b>	Krystal Thrailkill
<b>Applicant's Information:</b>	1100 College Drive Mena, AR 71953 479-394-6818 kthrailkill@rmcc.edu

**Authorized Signatures for Institution**

Rich Mountain Community College

Lead Institution

Authorized Official

**Act 1131 of 2015**  
**Regional Workforce Implementation 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](mailto:ADHE.Workforce.Grant@adhe.edu). Please note that only projects that were awarded a planning grant are eligible to apply for an implementation 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 creation 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:

	<b>Exemplary</b>	<b>Superior</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>
<b>Program Need (20 Pts)</b>	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**

Western Arkansas is 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. Rich Mountain Community College continually seeks to train students in the skills necessary to lift them from this poverty by providing education for better employment. Serving Polk, Scott, and Montgomery counties, RMCC works with employers and advisory boards to ensure the training students receive immediately allows them access to better paying jobs. This grant is submitted on behalf of a coalition of industry employers, local school districts, local Department of Workforce Services, and Rich Mountain Community College in an effort to advance the educational and employment opportunities of the region.

The goal of this grant is to seek funding for use to prepare and implement a detailed 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 RMCC campus. This college curriculum, which begins in the local secondary schools, would train high school/college students for technologically advanced careers documented by the local Workforce Development Board. In addition, the funds would be used to provide equipment necessary to advance course work and specific skills earlier in 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 the plant closings. RMCC is serving 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 firm. Secondary schools with constrained budgets cannot afford equipment and faculty to prepare students for immediate employment in high-skill jobs. Manufacturing education must respond to changing employer needs, but teaching actual workplace skills requires equipment and techniques currently found only on the manufacturing floor. The equipment is simply too costly to train workers in an educational environment, regardless of the need for skilled workers. This holds true for machining, welding, and industrial maintenance employment.

Research conducted on the advanced manufacturing sector revealed high need for electro-mechanical technicians, electrical and electronics repair technicians, and industrial machinery operators and repair. According to the most recent information received from the

local workforce development board in Fort Smith, Arkansas, manufacturing held three of the top ten fastest growing industries in Western Arkansas. It must be noted that two of these three had job growth projections of 18.76% and 17.33%, the top two growing industries in the region. Manufacturing has changed from low-skill manufacturing to that which needs additional expertise. Preparing students early will be key to their success.

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

Many high school students do not take advantage of the opportunities available in secondary school simply because they are unaware of the necessity for learning these skills. While public school counselors work to provide information to students, they are often focused on other aspects of the high school experience. Therefore, students often find themselves wondering how best 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.

Area employers are facing a skills gap related to advanced manufacturing simply because the equipment on the manufacturing floor is far advanced from those in the educational setting.

It is also the intent of this implementation grant to expand the Career Center offerings in medical profession education to include 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.

While the original planning grant did not include expansion of the medical billing and coding technical certificate, Medical Profession Education is already a part of the RMCC Career Center. Extending this program reach is a logical extension of the Career Center and would not require extensive additional funds to implement.

The design of this program requires the cooperation among Mena High School, Ouachita River Schools, The DeQueen-Mena Educational Cooperative, Rich Mountain Community College 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 or medical billing and coding in the junior year. The requisite course sequences are further explained in the section of this grant regarding curriculum. The entire 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 and medical office skills, both of which may be introduced at the high school level, advanced through the Career Center, and completed with enrollment at RMCC. Specific information on these 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

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 will allow 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 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 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.

## 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.

*NOTE: Equipment may not be purchased during the planning phase*

- Performance assessment- clearly define measurable outcomes to be achieved through implementation 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
<b>Program Plan (25 Pts)</b>	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, RMCC 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 are intended for this Career Center change. These include but are 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 dictate. The primary goal of this grant is to implement the curriculum designed during the Planning Grant that clearly defines the manufacturing career pathways and time lines listed in the following table.

<b>Education Pathway</b>	<b>Certification Pathway</b>	<b>Career Pathway</b>	<b>Expected Graduation</b>
Applied Industry Bachelor's Degree	Society of Manufacturing Engineers; Engineering Technologist Certification	Engineer, Manager	3 <sup>rd</sup> year at transfer institution
Associate Degree with Multiple Specialties	National Institute of Metalworking; Complete Series of Machining and Metalworking Certifications	Engineering Technician	2 <sup>nd</sup> year at transfer institution
Associate Degree with Specialty	Manufacturing Skills Standard Council: Certified Production Technician; Certified Logistics Technician	Engineering Technician	1 <sup>st</sup> full RMCC 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 would 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 will begin the welding credential the junior year with Basic Welding through a CTE agriculture program at the local high school and will receive concurrent RMCC credit. Then, students will 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.

<b>Degree Plan Technical Certificate Basic Welding</b>		
<b>First Semester</b>	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
<b>Second Semester</b>		
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 will take Medical Professions Education and will 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.

<b>Education Pathway</b>	<b>Certification Pathway</b>	<b>Career Pathway</b>	<b>Expected Graduation</b>
Applied Industry Bachelor's Degree	American Health Information Management Association:  Various Professional Certifications	Multi-practice/ Hospital Billing Manager	Complete Fall of 4 <sup>th</sup> 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 <sup>nd</sup> year at RMCC
Technical Certificate	American Academy of Professional Coders:  Certified Professional Coder  Certified Professional Biller	Medical Biller; Insurance Processor	1 <sup>st</sup> year at RMCC
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.

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

<b>Degree Plan</b> <b>Certificate of Proficiency</b> <b>Health Information Technology: Medical Billing and Coding</b>		
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 RMCC 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.

<b>Degree Plan</b>		
<b>Technical Certificate</b>		
<b>Health Information Technology: Medical Billing and Coding</b>		
<b>First Semester</b>	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
<b>Second Semester</b>		
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	

Students are recruited into Career Center programs by high school counselors working closely with the RMCC recruiter and high school administrators. Students visit campus during their junior year as part of an RMCC 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 RMCC 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 RMCC 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 began last year with discussions among the Western Arkansas Planning and Development District, RMCC, employer advisory groups, Mena Public Schools,

and the Department of Workforce Services. The progress of the implementation grant will adhere to the following calendar:

- May 1, 2016 - RMCC requests a change to the Career Center offering from Aviation to Welding
- June 1, 2016 - Complete all planning requirements for developing, writing, and submitting the Implementation Grant including the appropriate funding request for bringing the necessary to modify equipment and personnel needs for the Career Center updates and changes
- June 1, 2016 - Send First Letter of Intent to Arkansas Department of Higher Education Coordinating Board July meeting for the Associate of Applied Science in Health Information Management and Technology
- June 8, 2016 - Send Letter of Intent to RMCC Board of Trustees as an action item for approval
- July 1, 2016 - Notification of funding/non-funding
- July 2, 2016 - Build out for expanding the welding facility to accommodate high school Career Center students
- August 1, 2016 - (Pending funding) - Hire necessary faculty for the revised curriculum, expand the program, recruit students into the program, and teach required courses. (There are currently 10 students requesting the Welding program for fall 2016.)
- December 15, 2016 - Project Steering Committee meeting and review of course evaluations.
- January 15, 2017 - Begin offering courses intended for the A.A.S. degree in Medical Billing and Coding (Pending approval by ADHE)
- April, 2017 - 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, 2017 - Project Steering Committee meeting and review of course, program, and graduate evaluations
- January - July, 2017 - Recruit students into the Career Center programs from Mena, Waldron, Cossatot River and Ouachita River Public Schools
- July 1, 2017 - Revise and update CTE curriculum as necessary, update software, and supply needs as warranted by review and evaluation results
- August 1, 2017 - Extend contracts for faculty to the 2017-2018 year

Governance and accountability responsibility for the project will be Dr. Krystal Thrailkill, Vice President for Assessment, Evaluation, and Planning as director, who is charged with submitting the grant, its implementation 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 will be 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 implementation 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:

	<b>Exemplary</b>	<b>Superior</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>
<b>Strength of Partnership (20 Pts)</b>	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 DeQueen-Mena Educational Service Cooperative, 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 RMCC 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** is the fiscal agent for the Career Center. 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.

**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 steering committee 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 committee 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 committee to determine necessary current employment skills.

**Dr. Carlos Rocha** is a local medical doctor in practice in Mena, Arkansas. He is responsible for working with the project steering committee to determine necessary current employment skills.

**The Department of Workforce Services** will be an active participant in planning and providing workshops, employment advice, and job placement for students on the RMCC campus. Completing part of the planning grant a Memorandum of Understanding is in its final stages between the college and DWS to bring employment services to the campus as a permanent office.

**Rich Mountain Community College** is the educational provider for the Career Center and is responsible for the presenting the content within the CTE framework. RMCC will also provide the project coordinator, instructors, facilities, and materials for completing the respective programs of study. RMCC is also responsible for assessment and evaluation.

## 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:

	<b>Exemplary</b>	<b>Superior</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>
<b>Budget Plan (15 Pts)</b>	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 Implementation grant is very straightforward. Grant funds will be used to change and update the existing RMCC welding facility to expand the number of welding booths from seven to twelve. Grant funds will be used to fabricate 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. RMCC will provide the five welding units as part of its commitment to the Implementation 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 RMCC master plan and are on a rotational cycle for update and replacement. RMCC 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 2 Projects.

<b>Requesting Institution:</b>	Rich Mountain Community College
<b>Title of Project:</b>	Expanding Workforce Programs in Rural Arkansas

### A. PROGRAM LEADERSHIP SUPPORT COSTS

1. Personnel/Stipend	\$289,000.00
2. Travel	4,000.00
3. Other (Explain Below)	
Briefly Explain Other Costs	
<b>TOTAL PARTNER PARTICIPANT COSTS</b>	<b>\$293,000.00</b>

### B. OTHER DIRECT COSTS

1. Equipment	00.00
2. Materials and Supplies	\$32,000.00
3. Publication Costs/Documentation/Dissemination	4,000.00
4. Consultant Services	
5. Other (Explain Below)	49,000.00
Construction	
<b>TOTAL OTHER DIRECT COSTS</b>	<b>\$85,000.00</b>

<b>C. TOTAL DIRECT COSTS (A &amp; B)</b>	<b>\$378,000.00</b>
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<b>D. COST SHARING (Minimum 10% of C; up to \$50,000)</b>	<b>\$37,800.00</b>
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<b>Total Implementation Grant Budget</b>	<b>\$415,800.00</b>
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### Other Notes

Construction costs include electrical modifications (\$21,000) and build out for construction of five (5) new welding booths, materials, overhead duct work, three (3) new fans, and paint (\$24,000)

## SECTION 5 - SUSTAINABILITY

20 Points

Proposals will include a commitment and detailed plan for sustaining grant activities beyond the twenty-four (24) month implementation 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 implementation 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.

	<b>Exemplary</b>	<b>Superior</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>
<b>Sustainability (20 Pts)</b>	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.*

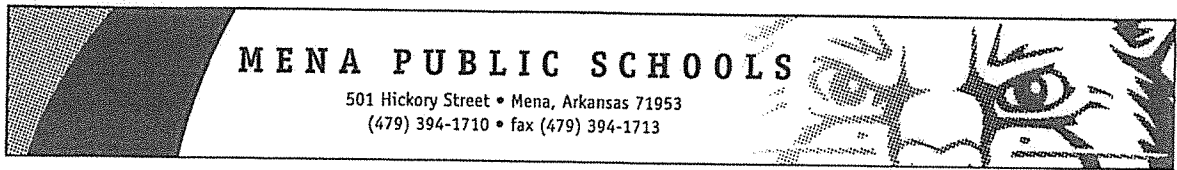
### **Sustainability**

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, RMCC does not have the funds to expand the Career Center offerings to meet the needs of local employers at this time.

RMCC 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 development and 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 development. The steering/advisory framework that RMCC identifies 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 need to be made 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.



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



# De Queen-Mena ESC

P.O. Box 110 • 305 S. Hornberg Road

Gillham, Arkansas 71841

Phone: 870-386-2251

Fax: 870-386-7731

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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

Serving Schools in Five Counties

Howard

Little River

Montgomery

Polk

Sevier



311 North Morrow Street ~ Mena, Arkansas 71953 ~ [www.menaregional.com](http://www.menaregional.com) ~ (479) 394-6100

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May 25, 2016

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 Rich Mountain Community College 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 RMCC 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 RMCC Health Information Management Medical Billing and Coding program. The partnership between MRHS and RMCC creates a synergy and collaborative value that benefits both organizations, and ultimately the population of Western Arkansas.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay", is written over a horizontal line.

Jay Quebedeaux, CEO



May 25, 2016

Maureen C. Keese  
Director of Lifelong Learning and Workforce Development  
Division Chair- Technical Programs  
1100 College Drive  
Mena, Arkansas 71953  
479-394-7622 ext. 1311  
[mkeese@rmcc.edu](mailto:mkeese@rmcc.edu)

Dear RMCC Leadership:

It has been brought to my attention that RMCC 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 is essential in the following departments: Fabrication, Rotorcast, Lamination, Maintenance, and Machine Shop.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with RMCC. 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,

Steven Holland, SPHR, SHRM-SCP  
Human Resources Manager  
Nidec Motor Corporation



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.**

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

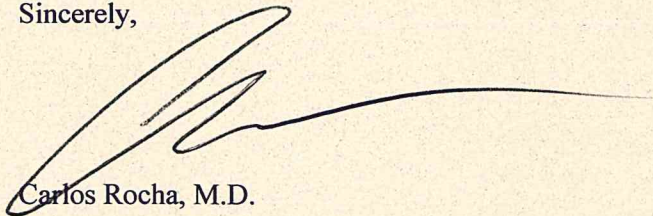
To Whom It May Concern,

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 4<sup>th</sup> 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