

FGCU Southwest Florida Equitable Jobs Pipeline narrative

1. Project Description and Overview

1a: Executive Summary: The five-county Southwest Florida Equitable Jobs Pipeline will scale and accelerate regional collaborations to remove policy barriers to equity and place at least 1,765 workers in jobs in four transforming industry sectors – healthcare, manufacturing, logistics, K-12 public education. Placements begin within 14 months. We estimate outreach to at least 2,477 underserved job seekers; at least 1,858 will complete training; at least 1,765 will be placed in good jobs. As the system lead entity, Florida Gulf Coast University brings: administrative and data capacity, regional convening power, and relationships with industry. As the backbone organization, Collaboratory leverages resources from its Talent Hub cohort to train all Pipeline stakeholders in leading systems change with groups of cross-sector partners, and resources from its FutureMakers Coalition program to recruit unemployed Black, Hispanic, and rural job seekers. Short-term and stackable credentials allow job seekers to gain employment quickly; the Equitable Jobs Pipeline will support their training and career advancement through:

- Wrap-around services through partnerships with established community-based organizations: transportation, child care, language support, psychosocial counseling, and personalized navigation that continues after employment begins.
- Training programs tailored to industry needs. The Pipeline has already secured employer commitments to hire for a minimum of 2,477 jobs.
- Integrating the region’s smaller employers to further diversify the regional economy.
- Improving human resources practices: Mental Health First Aid training, equity certificates to improve hiring and promotion policies and procedures, and training in historical and systemic racism.

1b: System Lead entity and Backbone Organization As the system lead, Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) will administer the Pipeline, lead data collection and analysis, and lead collaborations with employers to develop training curricula. As the backbone for all four industry sectors, Collaboratory will lead recruiting and providing wrap-around services, and will spearhead equity-focused distributed leadership to enhance the engagement of community-based partners. Together, FGCU and Collaboratory have already begun building a regional workforce system through Collaboratory’s FutureMakers Coalition (FMC; futuremakerscoalition.com). FMC’s work extends throughout the Equitable Jobs Pipeline region: Lee, Collier, Hendry, Glades, and Charlotte counties.

As detailed in our [attached staffing plan and organizational chart](#), administration of the Southwest Florida Equitable Jobs Pipeline will be centered at FGCU’s RERI, to leverage RERI’s close ties with regional workforce development boards and county economic development offices. Annual publications from RERI include: Regional Economic Indicators, the Industry Diversification Report, and Southwest Florida Economic Almanac. In addition to serving as the administrator of the Pipeline, FGCU is an important service partner, developing new certificate programs, providing equity micro-credentials to employer-identified HR officers, providing psychosocial counseling to job seekers, and growing the region’s pipeline of teachers, supervisors, nurses and nursing educators. FGCU will employ practices of prior learning assessment to accelerate credential attainment across the sectors.

Collaboratory's FutureMakers Coalition (FMC), a vibrant regional collaborative focusing on workforce educational attainment in the region, demonstrates Collaboratory's capacity to serve as the backbone organization. Particularly important for Southwest Florida, FMC includes stakeholders from both urban and rural sectors of our five-county region. FMC has also received designation as a Talent Hub, establishing the region as an exemplar in cross-sector collaboration and providing access to proven best practices from the 24 other Talent Hubs across the US. As of 2021, as a result of FMC, 60% of stakeholders are more focused on regional goals, and 41% have changed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies and practices in hiring and engagement (FMC Partnership Health Report). Collaboratory and FMC are bolstered by a history of robust financial and political support, including a \$10M New Market Tax Credit deal to create a physical space dedicated to incubating new businesses, providing no-cost meeting space for cross-sector collaboration, and tackling racial inequity through community trust and a mission to solve the region's social problems.

As our attached Work Plan shows, we have integrated equity and trauma-informed training at all levels of our Pipeline, including skills-based hiring and trauma-informed practices for hiring managers, training in historical and systemic racial bias for key employer and education partners, equity micro-credentials for human resources managers, and Mental Health First Aid training for Pipeline navigators and HR managers.

Local technical colleges, along with FGCU and Florida SouthWestern State college will reach rural, Black, and Hispanic job seekers who need a credential to start or advance a career in one of our four target industries. Partner school districts will reach job seekers with school-age children, particularly in rural areas; Goodwill Industries reaches unemployed job seekers; United Way chapters and the housing authority reach job seekers receiving public assistance; Collaboratory's navigators conduct bilingual, targeted outreach to all these populations. The Equitable Jobs Pipeline's target populations are described in detail in section 3 and in the attached Industry and Job Seeker Data Supplement.

Both FGCU and Collaboratory have proven track records of raising funds to implement programs and achieve milestones. FGCU's recent federal funding includes award number HRSA Award number E01HP39216 in the amount of \$753,454 for a Nurse Faculty Loan Program, and Award number P042A201007 from the US Department of Education's SSS-STEM program in the amount of \$507,538 for support of first-generation and disadvantaged undergraduate students. FGCU has drawn down all federal funds in accordance with regulations and submitted all required semi-annual reports on outcomes. Recent industry funding has led to successful FGCU micro-credentialing programs, with Arthrex and NeoGenomics staff participating in the assessment of specific competencies. Philanthropic support includes Lumina Foundation funds for FGCU's Return to the Nest program, with additional funding from the Soderberg Foundation and the Lee County Industrial Development Authority.

Collaboratory's success achieving positive outcomes for workers and communities led to robust funding and a prestigious Talent Hub designation for the FutureMakers Coalition from the Kresge and Lumina Foundations). Complementary investments for this Equitable Jobs Pipeline are detailed in an attachment to Section 5a.

Regional System Lead Entity: Florida Gulf Coast University: 5.65 FTE dedicated staff (convening, budget/subcontracts, data collection/ analysis, new business partnerships)

Primary Backbone Organization for 4 sectors: Collaboratory
 7.8 dedicated FTE (equity training, stakeholder engagement, distributed leadership model, contracts with CBOs for wrap-around support, navigators, contracts with education partners)

Shared by all 4 sectors: Society for Human Resource Management, CareerSource Southwest Florida, 5 county EDOs, Regional Technology Partnership, Southwest Florida Regional Manufacturers Association, chambers of commerce, shared data collection, training for employers in skills-based hiring and equity practices
Wrap-around services for job seekers: Navigators, gap and emergency funding, childcare, transportation, language assistance, psychosocial counseling, recruiting and connection to resources through Goodwill, United Way, housing authority, education partners
Professional Development for hiring managers, Navigators, and advisors at training partners: Mental Health First Aid, trauma-informed practice (Cypress Resilience Network), equity certificate (FGCU), addressing systemic racism (Collaboratory)

Sector: Healthcare
 Employer commitments to hire: Lee Health, NCH, DLC, Healthcare Network, Moorings Park, Shellpoint, Hodges

Key stakeholders: Zeal Technical Institute, FGCU and FSW Schools of Nursing, Hodges University; school district CTE and Adult Education; Technical Colleges in 5 Counties

Sector: Manufacturing
 Employer commitments to hire: Arthrex, NeoGenomics

Key stakeholders: Southwest Regional Manufacturers Association; Technical Colleges in 5 Counties; Hodges University, FGCU, FSW

Sector: Logistics
 Employer commitments to hire: Arthrex, Airglades, Scotlynn

Key stakeholders: Southwest Regional Manufacturers Association; Hodges University; Greater Naples Chambers of Commerce; Technical colleges in 5 Counties, FGCU, FSW

Sector: K-12 Public Education
 Employer commitments to hire: K-12 school districts in 5 Counties

Key stakeholders: 5 County K-12 school districts; FSW and FGCU Schools of Education

2a. Employer Leadership and Commitments Building on commitments secured from employers before the start of the grant period and on our proven framework for employer engagement, we have created a detailed Work Plan and timeline for addressing employers' current and future workforce needs, while also increasing employers' equity practices. The Pipeline process for employer engagement is attached to this section; the Work Plan is attached to section 5b. We are using Collaboratory's FutureMakers Coalition (FMC) program and distributed leadership model to scale and facilitate collaboration among regional employers in the same industry. Through distributed leadership training, any community partner can choose lead any shared project across sectors, such as the collective development of workforce gaps analyses, shared processes for equitable hiring and promotion, for data collection, and for building shared regional metrics to achieve our goal of transforming Southwest Florida's workforce. Some of the Pipeline's committed employers already lead FMC teams; we expect them to be Pipeline leaders as well.

Employers play key roles in all three phases of the pipeline. During System Development employers and stakeholders within each industry will develop shared processes for recruitment and for wrap-around services and navigation from first contact with job seekers. During this phase the Equitable Jobs Pipeline will also work with employers to identify at least three new employer partners, to increase commitments to hire, to finalize data-sharing MOUs, and to complete the first of three equity training programs. During Program Development employer partners will continually refine gaps analyses and shared skills needs, and will work with education partners to tailor training programs. During Program Implementation employer partners will identify further opportunities for upskilling and equitable promotion opportunities. As detailed in attached letters, employers have committed to participating in equity training, providing feedback on barriers and collaborating to address them, and engaging in the process to develop a sustainable region-wide talent-development Pipeline.

Nearly 60% of working age adults in Southwest Florida lack any form of post-secondary credential or degree; many do not even have a GED. The Equitable Jobs Pipeline responds directly to regional employer needs. Additional benefits to employers participating in the Equitable Jobs Pipeline include: 1) customized training programs to meet specific regional needs, 2) greater equity in hiring and promotion, leading to increased retention, 3) skilled and credentialed local employees with supports to continue along a career pathway, 4) a stronger talent pipeline for management positions, and a certificate for first-line supervisors, 5) reduced employee acquisition and turnover costs for employees not rooted in the region, 6) more efficient use of employee benefits for targeted upskilling.

For all four of our industry sectors we have attached employer letters detailing commitments to hire, the numbers of vacant jobs, the skills required, and starting wages and benefits. During the System Development phase of the Pipeline, we expect to grow these commitments to hire, and to fold smaller employers into industry cohorts.

- In healthcare, we have commitments from 7 employers, totaling at least 492 jobs.
- In logistics, we have commitments from 3 employers, totaling at least 1,620 jobs
- In manufacturing, we have commitments from 2 employers, totaling at least 180 jobs
- In K-12 public education, we have commitments from 5 employers, totaling at least 260 jobs

For each industry, we have also secured agreements with education partners (attached to section 2b) who currently have relevant training, certificate, and micro-credential programs. During the Program Design phase of this Pipeline, we will engage both employers and education partners in the process detailed in our Employer Engagement attachment to revise existing training programs and to create new targeted programs to precisely meet employer needs.

The Equitable Jobs Pipeline is using technology to ensure information is distributed widely to all Pipeline stakeholders, including job seekers. The pilot Career Pathways SWFL website at <https://careerpathwaysswfl.com> provides detail on our healthcare and manufacturing sectors plus resources for job seekers. With EDA funds, the Equitable Jobs Pipeline will add Logistics and K-12 education to this resource.

2b. Other Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities are summarized in the chart in section 1b, in the detailed letters of support in attachments to section 2b, and in the full Pipeline Work Plan attached to section 5b. Proposed processes for data collection MOUs and sharing are detailed in the Regional Data Sharing Plan attached to this section. We view frequent partnership meetings (at least monthly during System Development, and at least quarterly during Program Design and Program Implementation) as key to developing productive, trusting, and sustainable relationships to support the regional workforce training system.

Stakeholder	Services	Equity Strategy
Education partners (12 letters)	Outreach to underserved populations for stackable credentials; training curricula, credentials and certificates; connecting job seekers to services; developing targeted new micro-credential programs; data collection.	Technical colleges and school district CTE programs have access to underserved and diverse populations of job seekers. They also provide language assistance, as will the Pipeline’s bilingual navigators.
Chambers of Commerce and employer-serving organizations (7 letters)	Outreach to new employer partners; refining gaps analysis; articulating shared employer needs; moving job seekers into jobs quickly; aligning with local government; data collection.	Engaging employers in rural as well as urban areas and engaging small employers as well as large ensures the benefits of the Equitable Jobs Pipeline will be distributed equitably.
Community-based organizations (5 letters)	Outreach and services to engage underserved populations where they are; coordination of wrap-around services from outreach through employment; data collection.	CBOs’ longevity as trusted community providers ensure we reach under-served populations. Equity and MHFA training for employers informs more equitable policies and procedures.

Local government (7 letters)	Alignment of the Pipeline with government initiatives through EDOs; connection to job seekers through the workforce development board and housing authority; assistance with regional data collection	Leveraging regional policy reach to ensure training and services are provided to under-served job seekers equitably across the five-county region.
------------------------------	---	--

3. The Need for a Regional Workforce System, and Key Industries and Skills Southwest Florida is home to around 1.4 million people. Our communities are urban (Naples, Fort Myers, Punta Gorda), suburban (Cape Coral, Bonita Springs), and rural (Clewiston, Moorehaven, Immokalee and LaBelle), with residents living in extreme wealth and extreme poverty. For example, most of Charlotte and all of Glades Counties are federal Opportunity Zones, along with 23 other Census Tracts in the region, including Lehigh Acres in Lee County, Immokalee in Collier County, and a portion of Hendry County near Clewiston. As an example of the disparities in our region, the poverty rate for working-age Hendry County residents was 23.8% in 2019; 25% of households in Hendry County are SNAP recipients, as compared to 13.6% for the state and 11.7% for the nation (ACS). The area also has a relatively high risk for natural hazard and a social vulnerability score of 61.53, and so requires more diversification of the economy to become more robust and resilient. We present a more detailed data analysis in the Industry and Job Seeker Data attachment. Our region's challenges are America's challenges; successful systemic and evidence-based solutions for our region could be solutions for communities across America.

Regional indicators disaggregated by race and ethnicity clearly show that Black and Hispanic working-age adults do not hold the certificates and credentials needed to fill in-demand jobs. Similarly, our rural communities have some of the highest unemployment rates in the state and region. We have chosen our four sectors because a) they have potential to grow and diversify the regional economy, b) our target populations are under-represented in each and c) each sector presents a clear career path for credential and certificate holders to advance into progressively better-paying jobs.

Only through a regional workforce system will we be able to address the detrimental economic impacts of regional growth that does not equitably benefit lower-income, lower-educated Black/ African American, Hispanic, rural, and other marginalized communities. Single Counties lack the infrastructure and skilled workforce to take advantage of new opportunities such as the Airglades cargo airport under construction in Hendry (www.airglades.com, 1,700 long-term jobs), the new Amazon warehouse in Lee County (2,000 long-term jobs), and the new Uline fulfillment center in Collier County (due to open in 2023). Moreover, as the region's CEDS states "historically, Southwest Florida's economy has been heavily dependent on tourism, construction, and agriculture,"(p.9), and "this lack of industry diversification was a key weakness for the region during the last economic downturn." (p.10) The CEDS cites three of this proposed Pipelines' four targeted industry sectors as promising areas for growth: healthcare, manufacturing, and logistics. Our Equitable Jobs Pipeline chose K-12 public education as the fourth sector because all five counties' school districts have unfilled jobs, and because building a

strong cradle-to-career pathway is key to addressing systemic inequities that result in unequal employment and wages.

Impacts of COVID-19 As the CEDS notes, the region's economy has not historically been resilient to shocks. According to the government's economic resilience website (<https://www.anl.gov/national-economic-resilience-data-explorer-nerde>), the local economy shows an overall annual growth rate that is very small or even negative for the five-county area. In terms of our target populations, unemployment for Black and Hispanic job seekers has consistently been higher than for White job seekers before, during, and after the initial COVID surge: In February 2020 Black unemployment was 6.3% and Hispanic was 3.1%, compared to 2.3% for White; between March and June 2020, Black unemployment rose to 17.1% and Hispanic to 15.6%, compared to 12.6% for White; as of May 2021, Black unemployment was at 9.7%, and Hispanic unemployment was 6.6% (IPUMS.org; state-wide data). The health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have also disproportionately burdened our target populations of racial and ethnic minorities and low-income rural job seekers, due to a number of factors: existing health disparities and lack of access to healthcare, as well as being an essential worker and/or living in crowded conditions that make it harder to social distance.

Total participants to be served by the Southwest Florida Equitable Jobs Pipeline: at least 2,477 job seekers and 25 employers.

Rationale for Healthcare¹ In Southwest Florida, the healthcare industry is expected to grow 18.7% between 2021 and 2029 (as compared to the average industry growth rate of 13.6%). Even when COVID-19 brought the economy to a near standstill, the healthcare sector was one of the quickest to rebound. By October 2020, nearly 75% of the healthcare jobs that had been lost were recovered, compared to 54% of all jobs in the country.

Earnings potential and projected growth rate for healthcare jobs for credentialed workers are extremely strong; details are available on Collaboratory's Career Pathways website (<https://careerpathwaysswfl.com/>). With particular attention to the region's need for nurses at all practice levels, our Pipeline includes targeted scholarships for BSN and MSN students, tied to a four-year commitment to work in the region. These scholarships and related new faculty positions, which prioritize Black and Hispanic students and faculty, are also part of our regional equity strategy.

Our Pipeline has already secured employer commitments for 492 healthcare jobs. Regional earnings potential and projected growth rate for manufacturing jobs are detailed on Collaboratory's Career Pathways website.

Rationale for Manufacturing These jobs involve a wide range of skills, many of which are transferable between industries: engineers, first-line supervisors, machinist, welders, truck drivers, and repair technicians. The industry is expected to grow 6.8% between 2021 and 2029. In 2020, there were 12,415 manufacturing jobs in SWFL with a location quotient (relative to the

¹ Sources for data about expected growth and earnings potential for each of the four industry sectors include: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Employment Projections; the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Bureau of Labor Statistics; and EmployFlorida.

nation) of .303, indicating that the region was much less concentrated in manufacturing than the nation as a whole. Available land in Charlotte, Glades and Hendry counties create an opportunity for new manufactures to locate here.

Earnings potential and projected growth rate for manufacturing jobs are detailed at <https://careerpathwaysswfl.com/>. We have already secured manufacturing employer commitments for hiring 180 job seekers.

Rationale for Logistics Data show the regional expected increase in transportation and warehousing to be 26.9% between 2021 and 2029. Local jurisdictions have already rezoned areas around the new Airglades cargo airport to encourage development of new distribution centers. Earnings potential and projected growth rate for logistics jobs will be added to the Career Pathways website during the Pipeline’s System Development phase. We already have logistics employer commitments to hire 1,620 job seekers. While most of these are entry-level jobs, the Pipeline will providing continuing support and upskilling for employees to become first-line supervisors, beginning in the logistics sector and expanding to all four sectors.

Rationale for creating certificate programs for paraprofessionals and guest teachers in K-12 public education. Each of the school districts in our region has unfilled K-12 teaching positions. K-12 paraprofessionals in the region are disproportionately Black and Hispanic, while teachers are disproportionately white. A lack of educators from communities of color depresses the academic achievement of students of color; as in healthcare, in teaching representation matters. Diversifying the teaching workforce will help address lifelong inequities in educational attainment and career growth. Additional micro-credentials will be developed to provide career-changers with pathways to teaching and other district-identified positions. Earnings potential, projected growth rate, and job-seeker resources will be added to the Career Pathways website during the Pipeline’s System Development phase. We have employer commitments to hire 260 certified teachers.

The Southwest Florida Equitable Jobs Pipeline aligns with the region’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy as noted in Section 3 above and in the attached letters from the region’s five EDOs. Of the CEDS’s six strategic pillars for economic growth, our Equitable Jobs Pipeline aligns most closely with 1) Talent Supply & Education, which has as a goal building “a sufficiently skilled workforce to meet future employment demands,” (p 20); 4) Civic & Governance Systems, “to improve public/private/civic cooperation, collaboration, and communication of the Region’s economic strategies,” (p.21); and 5) Business Climate & Competitiveness, “develop projects and programs that support existing and new business,” (p. 21). Further, the CEDS performance measures align with our Equitable Jobs Pipeline, and will add robust metrics to help measure the effectiveness of our Pipeline. We detail how this Pipeline aligns with the CEDS SWOT analysis for resilience in section 5c.

4. Anticipated Impacts

4a The Southwest Florida Equitable Jobs Pipeline encompasses the system development, program design, and program implementation phases, and will leverage existing strengths to engage at least 25 employers and place at least 1,765 job seekers Our attached Work Plan

provides details about activities, training models, and metrics for each phase. Section 5b summarizes our goals for each phase.

4b The Equitable Jobs Pipeline meets EDAs recovery and resilience investment priorities.

Equity through: targeting underserved populations (racial, ethnic, rural, residents of opportunity zones) and providing wrap-around supports such as transportation, childcare, language assistance; increasing the equity knowledge of employers; changing employers' policies and procedures to increase equity in hiring and promotion; upskilling BIPOC education paraprofessionals to diversify the K-12 cradle-to-career pathway.

Recovery and resilience through: diversifying the Southwest Florida economy to focus on opportunities in healthcare, logistics, manufacturing, and K-12 education; increasing the resilience of individual job seekers through connection to services, psychosocial counseling, and increasing average wages; increasing trust and collaboration among stakeholders for shared regional planning to increase resilience through Collaboratory's distributed leadership model.

Workforce development through: enhancing collaboration among employers and education providers in each industry; improving acquisition of transferable skills; creating a robust regional plan through shared metrics and data; shared equity training; navigation services from outreach beyond employment; sustainability planning.

Manufacturing through: developing partnerships with manufacturing employers to develop local talent committed to remaining in the area; developing a micro-credential for first-line supervisors to enable promotion from within.

4c. Number of High-Quality Jobs Available to Workers Post-Training

The Southwest Florida Equitable Jobs Pipeline has secured commitments for at least 2,477 good jobs in the region. The average wage committed to by employer partners is \$43,930, 2.4% over the average wage of the top five industries in the region (\$42,929, excluding our target industries). All committed jobs include benefits and career pathways.

We expect reach at least 2,477 job seekers, to train at least 1,858 of them, and to place at least 1,765 trained workers, beginning within 14 months of project inception. Using data detailed in the attached Industry and Job Seeker Data Supplement, we calculate that 75% of job seekers (1,858) and workers placed (1,324) will be from our target underserved unemployed, rural, African American, and Hispanic populations.

The average cost of training and wrap-around services per job seeker reached is \$4,123; per job seeker trained the total is \$5,497; and per job seeker placed the total cost is \$5,786.

As we are targeting unemployed workers, it is not possible to calculate the average wage increase. However, comparing the average wages from employer commitments to the average wages in retail and food service (\$26,016), where uncredentialed workers might otherwise find jobs, we see a potential wage increase of 31% per worker for the lowest average wage committed by employer partners (\$34,036 in logistics) to 82% per worker for the highest average wage committed by employer partners (\$47,440 in education).

There are an estimated 31,252 job openings in our four industries combined. Assuming at least half of these can be considered quality jobs, we estimate 15,626 high-quality jobs vacant in Southwest Florida in these four industries. We have defined high-quality jobs as those that pay a wage that is above average for the region, that have clearly defined career paths, and that include benefits. Letters attached to section 2a detail each employer's needs and the characteristics of the jobs for which they have committed to hire. For example, Lee Health has 2,166 open positions, and commits to hiring at least 320, ranging from medical assistants to critical care nurses. We have placed particular emphasis on a career path for advancement by providing navigation support post-hiring and upskilling through additional credentials. For example, a first-line supervisor credential will be available to workers in all four industries. Similarly, we are developing a pipeline of educators for all of the region's health facilities and nursing-education programs by expanding FGCU's MSN Nurse Educator program and launching FGCU's Accelerated BSN pathway by offering scholarships with requirements to work in the region for at least four years.

4d. The Southwest Florida Equitable Jobs Pipeline will train and place job seekers within 14 months, within the proposed budget

As we detail in Section 1, the Pipeline partners are building on a foundation of successful collaboration through Collaboratory's FutureMakers Coalition (FMC) to increase the educational attainment and skills-readiness of the Southwest Florida workforce, in response to employer-identified needs. As a testament to Collaboratory's proven capacity to engage diverse stakeholders, even during the pandemic, FMC convened more than 1,200 of the region's stakeholders in courageous conversations around race. Both FGCU and Collaboratory have experience administering programs and grant funds, and meeting benchmarks and objectives. Course curricula for existing training programs are attached to this section, including examples of the Florida Department of Education's requirements for CTE and technical college training for manufacturing, welding, and practical nursing; the curriculum for the ongoing pilot of FGCU's Senior Care Partner program; and two different curricula for K-12 teacher certification. These and other existing curricula will be the foundations for developing new curricula targeted to employer-identified needs.

4e. We estimate the direct and indirect impact of the Equitable Jobs Pipeline as:

Direct: 25 employers already committed to the Pipeline, plus at least 9 more employer commitments to hire, for a total of at least 34; at least 2,477 job seekers through outreach activities; at least 5 community-based organizations directly partnering with the Pipeline; at least 13 education partners; at least 7 employer-serving organizations; and at least 7 local government entities.

Indirect: The Equitable Jobs Pipeline will impact 1) the full five-county region of Southwest Florida, through the reach of the regional cross-sector partnerships and the additional flow of money to job seeker training, wrap-around supports, and placement; 2) additional businesses that engage with our four industry cohorts of employers.

Using IMPLAN data and modelling, we estimate the potential effect of new employment by industry on Southwest Florida's economy. Ten additional new jobs in the Health Care industry

contributes to a total (direct, indirect, and induced) 40 new jobs in the economy and \$3.3 million in GDP; for Education the total estimated impact is 22 new jobs and \$0.9 million in GDP; for the Logistics industry the total estimated impact is 48 new jobs and \$4.8 million in GDP; and for the Manufacturing industry total estimated impact is 11 new jobs and \$0.9 million in GDP for ten new jobs.

5. Funding Request and Program Design and Implementation

5a. Funding request: \$24,371,506

Committed complementary funding totaling \$560,000 is detailed in the attached letter from Collaboratory.

5b. Anticipated System Development, Program Design, and Program Implementation Projects

Specific activities, goals, and metrics for each phase are in the attached Work Plan. Our overall timeline is:

6 months for System Development to 1) convene regional partnership meetings at least monthly, 2) formalize the shared governance and communications plans, 3) finalize MOUs for data sharing, 4) engage stakeholders in Collaboratory's Conversations about Structural Racism and Implicit Bias, 5) test the data sharing and Rapid Cycle Quality Improvement (RCQI) systems, 6) hire new Pipeline staff, 7) seek at least 3 additional employer commitments to hire, 8) refine our gaps analyses, 9) develop a full outreach plan targeting underserved job seekers, 10) complete the SWFL Career Pathways website, 11) track key outcome measures, and 12) seek new complementary funds.

Although we will be leveraging the proven regional reach and systems change processes of Collaboratory's FutureMakers Coalition, it will take six months to ready the full Pipeline system, develop granular shared goals for the Pipeline, and to ensure the rapid and accurate cross-sector communication we need in order to create a sustainable workforce training system.

Most crucially for the Pipeline's ability to effect sustainable systems change to enhance both the resilience and the equity of Southwest Florida's economic development strategy, during the System Development phase Collaboratory will develop the capacity of Pipeline partners to identify common barriers to equity and pursue policy solutions. Through Collaboratory's Talent Hub-verified model for systems change, Pipeline partners and stakeholders will learn a powerful iterative process for changing and aligning policies across sectors. Through this distributed leadership process, all stakeholders acquire the skills to lead the change process for the barriers and policies about which they are most knowledgeable. Collaboratory's success using this model to achieve systems change around regional support for adult learners, even through the COVID-19 pandemic and shut downs, demonstrates that it is a shock-proof model, through which a small team at Collaboratory can support hundreds of stakeholders to lead regional change.

With recently-awarded funding from CivicLab's "Building Rural Community Learning Systems" program, Collaboratory will further develop replicable processes for building collaborative economic and training systems in rural areas, a particular focus of this Southwest Florida Equitable Jobs Pipeline.

8 months for Program Design to 1) provide equity and Mental Health First Aid training and certification for employers' HR officers, 2) develop a timeline for wrap-around services (including navigation, connection to services, gap and emergency funding, transportation, language support, child care, and psychosocial counseling), 3) create new and refine existing training curricula in response to employer-identified needs, 4) continue outreach activities, 5) secure commitments from at least 3 new employers, 6) refine our sustainability plan, 7) continue to track outcome metrics for RCQI, and 8) develop new proposals for complementary funds.

During the Program Design phase employer partners in each industry will lead the process of refining our gaps analysis, work with education partners to tailor training programs to address those gaps, and work with Pipeline administration to coordinate outreach and recruiting of unemployed, Black, Hispanic, and rural job seekers for those training programs.

22 months for Program Implementation to 1) deliver wrap-around services and training, 2) place trainees in jobs and support their career development, 3) strengthen our regional system and elevate successes and lessons learned to the regional level, 4) bring small employers into the Equitable Jobs Pipeline to give them access to skilled employees, 5) scale training programs, 6) continue training for employers in skills-based hiring and promotion, 7) continue tracking metrics for RCQI, 8) provide training for industry leaders to change policies that reinforce historical inequities in hiring and promotion, and 9) implement our plan for sustainability.

While the Equitable Jobs Pipeline is training and placing job seekers, many of the systems-change activities begun during the Systems Development phase will continue, to strengthen the region's capacity to sustain this collaborative economic development program. These ongoing activities include Collaboratory's training in distributed leadership for systems change, equity training for industry to be able to address policies that reinforce economic disparities, and the continuous Rapid Cycle Quality Improvement process to address challenges to coordinated regional economic development as they arise.

5c. Addressing Barriers, Providing Wrap-Around Services, Planning for Resilience and Sustainability The biggest barrier with regard to equity is reaching our target populations. We will address this barrier by sending navigators to communities and organizations where our target populations receive services. Navigators will walk alongside trainees until they complete their certificate or credential, and will support career development after job seekers are placed in good jobs.

Other barriers to be addressed include: 1) job seekers' lack of access to information and supports; addressed through use of community-based and bilingual navigators, targeted outreach and marketing using non-traditional methods (e.g. presentations at public housing and radio spots) and the SWFL Career Pathways website; 2) persistent racial education and wage gaps, to be addressed by the entire Equitable Jobs Pipeline; 3) large income disparities in the region, to be addressed by our inclusion of rural counties and communities, and our focus on regional systems that will distribute support, training, and job placements equitably; 4) job seekers' economic constraints, which the Equitable Jobs Pipeline will address by providing tuition, fees, and gap funding, once candidates have applied for available financial aid; 5) lack of transportation to

education sites, addressed by locating training programs at both community and employment sites near job seekers as well as online.

Necessary wraparound services for job seekers have been identified through Collaboratory's ongoing FutureMakers Coalition workforce development programs in healthcare and manufacturing, and FGCU's "Return to the Nest" and "FGCU Complete" programs to support stopped-out students to return and complete a degree or micro-credential. As data in the attached FMC 2020-2021 Workforce Now report demonstrate, childcare, transportation, tuition assistance, language assistance, navigation/ referral to services, and gap/ emergency funding are among the most critical supports for job seekers, especially those from underserved populations, who have historically had fewer personal and family resources to tap. In addition, as a result of the additional isolation and stresses of the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health supports have become increasingly necessary, especially, again, for the Black and Hispanic populations we are targeting, who as research by the CDC shows, have experienced the brunt of pandemic stresses and losses.

As our Work Plan details, our Southwest Florida Equitable Jobs Pipeline addresses each of these needs through navigators assigned to each job seeker, through partnerships with Goodwill and United Way, and through budget allocations for training tuition, gap funding, transportation, child care, language assistance, and psychosocial counseling. These wrap-around supports will increase the resilience of individual underserved job seekers so that they can complete certificate programs, fill in-demand jobs, and pursue further education and career development.

More specifically, Collaboratory's navigators, who are hired from the target populations, will be key to recruiting job seekers and linking them with services, and are central to our equity strategy. Navigators conduct outreach (at public housing, PTAs, community-based organizations), advise job seekers about appropriate training programs, help with forms and applications, and connect job seekers with financial aid, childcare, transportation vouchers, gap funding, psychosocial counseling, and other needed supports. Navigators will receive training in Mental Health First Aid and trauma-informed practices from the Cypress Resilience Project. Navigators will also be aligned with employers who have made commitments to hire, so that navigators can guide new hires through the company's career development pathways. The United Way Houses of Lee, Hendry, Glades, and Okeechobee, Goodwill Industries, and education partners serving our target populations will also conduct outreach and connect job seekers with services. FGCU's Community Counseling Center will provide access to psychosocial counseling both in person and through telemedicine in Spanish and English. CareerSource Southwest Florida, the regional public/private workforce development board, will provide career coaching.

Resilience and Sustainability. The Southwest Florida CEDS SWOT analysis identifies workforce availability as a particular concern in areas of high unemployment, which this Pipeline will help address by targeting underserved job seekers in Hendry and Glades Counties. Because the Southwest Florida economy is too reliant on hospitality and tourism, our Equitable Jobs Pipeline is prioritizing other industries that are projected to grow in the near future. The CEDS identifies a competitive advantage in medical devices, which this Pipeline will leverage by working closely with Arthrex, a leading manufacturer of orthopedic devices.

This Pipeline will also increase the resilience of individual job seekers through connection to services, psychosocial counseling, and higher average wages; will create trust and collaboration among stakeholders for shared regional planning to increase resilience; will help employers promote equitably from within, creating a stable workforce; and will create a local credentialed talent pool that will attract and keep new employers in the region. All of these outcomes will in turn create a virtuous cycle, in which employers come to and grow in the region because of our supportive regional infrastructure – including our trained workforce --, which in turn creates more opportunities for employees’ spouses and children to find employment in the region, which increases the pool of local talent, and so forth.

Sustainability is built into the design of the three phases of this Pipeline, including building engagement and trust among regional partners through Collaboratory’s proven engagement and distributed leadership processes; aligning with government planning at multiple levels through RERI; working with established agencies such as Goodwill and United Way for wrap-around services; leveraging complimentary funding, staffing, and ongoing programs that have institutional budgetary support; providing ongoing services such as career navigation and gap funding to workers after hiring; planning for the next certificates and degrees trained workers will want to pursue through FGCU and FSW outreach and degree-completion programs, and through certificates (such as FGCU’s Medical Device Industry Micro-credential, ABSN pathway, and IBM Skills Academy) that will be available to upskilling workers who have a bachelor’s degree. The workforce training and job placement that this Equitable Jobs Pipeline will provide to underserved job seekers is the first step in their career ladder; we are simultaneously building the next steps for them to pursue new skills and credentials to respond to rapid shifts in the workplace².

Further, we have aligned our projects with local government priorities (such as re-zoning and incentives for the new Airglades cargo airport and Amazon warehouse) by targeting new micro-credential and certificate programs to skills needed for those forthcoming jobs. FGCU has made a 2022-2023 request to the Florida legislature to secure funds for faculty salaries and for new laboratory and classroom space to sustain our proposed expansion of FGCU’s Accelerated BSN pathway and MSN program. FGCU will also apply for funding from several HRSA programs such as the Nurse Faculty Loan Program (from which FGCU has been awarded previous funding) and the Nursing Workforce Diversity Program. Notably, creating a pipeline of diverse nursing faculty with a commitment to work in the region is an example of FGCU’s leadership in creating a more resilient regional economy. These nursing graduates will a) help meet the extreme need for nurses in the area and b) provide nurse educators for nursing programs in the area, from CNA, LPN, and ASN RN programs at local technical colleges to BSN programs at area colleges and universities; and c) provide nurse educators to meet healthcare facilities’ needs for continuing education. This plan aligns with the goals of the Florida Center for Nursing’s 2017 Statewide Strategic plan and its 2019 Annual Report. FGCU’s commitment to recruiting and admitting nursing students who reflect the increasing diversity of the five-county region, and

² See McKinsey Global Institute’s Skill Shift: Automation and the Future of the Workforce (McKinsey & Company, 2018) and EMSI’s The New Geography of Skills: Regional Skill Shapes for the New Learning Ecosystem (Weise M.R., 2019).

to prioritizing the hiring of faculty of color, is evidence of FGCU's commitment to making the regional economy more equitable as well.

Finally, both the system lead entity, FGCU, and the backbone organization, Collaboratory, have both already been stress-tested, and have continued to grow the programs that are complimentary to this Pipeline throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rapid Cycle Quality Improvement (RCQI) will be a further aid to resilience and sustainability for the Southwest Florida Equitable Jobs Pipeline, as regular communication and data sharing, built into the structure of the Pipeline, allow us to identify and respond to needs at the system level, and across industries. Importantly, these needs might be identified by any stakeholder – a job seeker, an employer, a community-based organization, a government entity – and could relate to equity, to streamlining hiring processes, or to more closely aligning government and private investment. Our regional workforce system strategies rely on high-trust rapid-cycle learning processes to pilot projects, evaluate their potential, and replicate best practices and lessons learned throughout Southwest Florida. For details about planned data collection, analysis, and reporting for RCQI, please see the attached Data Plan and Work Plan.

Data collected will be used to identify opportunities for continuous improvement of our interventions and to provide detailed annual evaluation reports and higher level report cards that provide a comprehensive understanding of the successes and challenges we've encountered throughout implementation. To tell a coherent impact story, we will also go beyond what data can describe by collecting stories from the community to help translate social and economic indicators we measure into actual impacts on our residents' and communities' lives. This combined approach enables us to show how our activities ultimately lead to the impact we hope to achieve for the communities we serve.