

i. Executive Summary

The United Way of Chattahoochee Valley (UWCV) will increase prime age employment, per capita wages, and overall long-term economic development by expanding training opportunities (particularly in areas of greatest need), enhancing accessibility, and increasing the availability of jobs in advanced manufacturing. Through a coordinated effort involving community-based non-profits, educational institutions, and private sector employers, we will ensure equitable access to employment opportunities, particularly for underserved populations. Through this comprehensive approach we envision not only short-term employment gains but also long-term economic prosperity for the Columbus region.

The Revised Recompete Plan for the Columbus Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA) spans multiple, contiguous high-poverty communities in GA and AL. In accordance with the Recompete Eligibility Mapping Tool and Eligible Service Area List Template (Appendix A), the Columbus GA-AL Local Labor Market is 'Fully Eligible.' The CMSA includes seven counties: Chattahoochee, Harris, Marion, Stewart, Talbot, and Muscogee counties in Georgia; and Russell County in Alabama and has a Prime-Age Employment Gap (PAEG) of 8.23%. Grant funds will serve the entire CMSA and specifically target high-need communities with particularly high PAEG. UWCV will lead the Pilot Program and has the proven expertise and capacity to administer federal funds. The investment thesis is anchored in the understanding that supporting the growth of the advanced manufacturing industry, while expanding career-focused training opportunities at successful community-based organizations, reducing barriers to training program entry, will decrease the PAEG and serve as a catalyst for overall economic growth. **Our goal is to reduce the PAEG by at least 50% within 10 years.** The advanced manufacturing industry is specifically targeted due to the substantial external investments being made in the CMSA through the CHIPS act (over \$2 million in total), the high quality of jobs in the industry (average hourly rate is almost 35% greater than other fields in the area), and the widespread local support for the semiconductor manufacturing industry's growth. This support is evidenced by the participation of the Chattahoochee Hub for Innovation and Production (CHIPS4CHIPS) of Semiconductors, a cross-sector organization comprising over 60 partner institutions and private businesses committed to fostering the sector's expansion. This bi-state and cross-sectoral initiative is underscored by a network of partners, comprising community-based non-profits, educational institutions, private employers, and government agencies.

ii. Understanding of Regional Conditions and Needs

a. Indicators of Persistent Economic Distress in The Community

Across the CMSA, the poverty rate is 18%, as high as 31% in one county, and the child poverty rate is 25%. In Muscogee County, more than half of children live in single parent families. The CMSA household median income is \$55,720, 25% less than the national median income, and the average hourly wage is 19% below the national average. Persistent economic distress is evident throughout the region. According to the Economic Innovation Group, five of the seven counties have distress scores between 68 and 97.2 out of 100. While the entire CMSA has a majority minority aggregate population, the poverty rate for the Black population is 25%, double that of the white population. South Columbus (zip code 31903 in Muscogee County and one of poorest zip codes in GA) is 80% Black. Muscogee County has the largest population within CMSA and contains two of its most significantly distressed areas: South Columbus and North Highland. South Columbus (31903) has a household median income of \$27,926, poverty rate of 38%, a distress score of 91.9, non-working adults make up 47.6% of the population, and 46% of residents have received food stamp/SNAP benefits in the past 12 months. Furthermore, 19% of county adults (18-24) do not have a high school diploma (source of all data: 2022 ACS 5-year estimates).

b. Conditions Contributing to Economic Distress and Barriers Affecting PAEG

Manufacturing/Textile Job Loss. In the target neighborhoods of South Columbus and North Highland, there are strong historic ties to manufacturing and service industries, particularly textile mills, which once

employed 20,000 CMSA residents. Losing over 60% of these jobs between 1980 and 2020 disproportionately impacted these communities. With many families having worked in mills for multiple generations, the decline of the industry led to a drastic change, limiting employment options due to a lack of education, training, and relevant experience.

Fort Moore Force Reduction. The 2015 Fort Moore force reduction cut approximately 3,000 military positions, resulting in the loss of 5,100 additional supporting jobs. This severely impacted impoverished neighborhoods reliant on military-related service jobs.

Lack of Support Services. Access to childcare, transportation, and adequate, affordable housing are significant systemic barriers contributing to the PAEG. With nearly 50% of children residing in single parent households, the prime age population’s childcare needs and resultant employment barriers are significant. Within the Columbus Mill District, which includes the North Highland community, 55% of households do not own a car, creating a major barrier to employment. Residents in these most impoverished areas are literally “too poor to work.”

Isolation and Disconnection. Within the region’s most impoverished communities, residents are not cohesively “connected” to the greater community. While difficult to quantify, impacts and evidence are clear. Service and amenity “deserts” severely limit access to healthy food, healthcare, childcare, transportation, and social services. Mistrust of the government, and barriers to leaving the neighborhood restricts accessibility of holistic opportunities.

c. Targeted Populations and Anticipated Change

Grant funds will serve the entire CMSA and specifically target impoverished and high-need communities and counties with excessive PAEG rates. Within these areas, grant funds will support the following targeted populations: people living near or below the poverty line; non-skilled labor force; technical college students challenged by work/life/school balance and associated costs; prime age parents unable to enter the workforce due to lack of equitable access to resources such as childcare; college graduates leaving for better jobs elsewhere; high school students at risk of entering the PAEG; external workforce and employers that, if incentivized, may relocate and invest locally.

Anticipated Changes. Pilot grant funds and other financial and in-kind support will enable the CMSA to expand and advance proven highly-collaborative, neighborhood-embedded, and industry-driven PAEG reduction initiatives. Anticipated improvements and changes include:

- Prime age vocational training in growing industries, particularly embedded in distressed neighborhoods, will increase transition for PAEG population into sustainable jobs with living wages.
- Increased collaboration, including firm hiring commitments, between educators and private industry will better align local workforce skills with near term and future employment opportunities.
- Expanded breadth and participation in technical and trade training, particularly within advanced manufacturing, will increase availability/diversity of local workforce to meet industry needs.
- Emphasis on Advanced Manufacturing skilled trades will lay a foundation for future jobs.
- Increased childcare availability, accessibility, quality, and affordability will enable PAEG parents to enter the workforce, including those with non-traditional hours.
- Integrated case management across the CMSA will help provide the disengaged workforce with supportive services to enable participation in vocational training, and then to match qualified graduates with jobs and monitor continuance of employment.

iii. Component Project & External Investment Connectivity

In formulating our strategy to increase prime age employment and foster long-term economic development, our Recompete projects are designed to interconnect and mutually reinforce each other, alongside recent and projected external investments in the advanced manufacturing industry. This cohesive approach will form

a training-to-jobs pipeline within CMSA and result in a significant increase in prime age employment, per capita wages, and long-term economic development. A key external alignment lies in the recent congressionally directed spending initiatives and funding commitments under the CHIPS and Sciences Act. Georgia is one of only 5 states in the nation that has passed a CHIPS act. Since the act was passed in March of 2024, \$1.55 million has been allocated for semiconductor facility site development in the CMSA, and \$550k has been earmarked for curriculum development and student recruitment at Columbus State University. Both allocations bolster our mission to expand training opportunities in advanced manufacturing. Furthermore, Columbus Technical College's (CTC) \$34 million Advanced Manufacturing & Robotics Center, currently in design, will furnish state-of-the-art training facilities, perfectly complementing our endeavors to fortify workforce skills, particularly in critical domains like mechatronics and engineering technology. Additional CHIPS Act funding is committed throughout the region, including \$1.25M from the City of Columbus, \$250k from Phenix City, and \$750k from the Bradley Turner Foundation. These external investments complement the proposed expanded training programs and help attract advanced manufacturers requiring employees with the certifications and expertise offered by these programs.

Additionally, Georgia state-funded HOPE grants, which already cover tuition and student fees, will continue to play a pivotal role in our efforts to remove financial barriers to education and training. With most students in technical training programs eligible for these grants, we anticipate a significant increase in enrollment and participation, aligning seamlessly with our goal of expanding access to vocational training programs.

Our Recompete projects are designed to interconnect and mutually reinforce each other, by collectively addressing the greatest barriers to employment. The expansion of career-focused training opportunities lies at the heart of our initiative. By creating and expanding training programs in advanced manufacturing, at CTC and Chattahoochee Valley Community College (CVCC), we seek to equip unemployed adults with the certifications and skills needed for lucrative careers in growing advanced manufacturing fields. These programs have been purposefully selected to reach unemployed adults within the CMSA, especially the areas of greatest need—South Columbus, North Highland, and transportation-limited rural areas. These programs will be made more accessible and successful through the comprehensive support services provided under the Connect Chattahoochee Valley project, providing wrap-around services to students to enable their attendance, and stipends for educators in advanced manufacturing fields to help the programs hire competitively. This synergy ensures the educational institutions' capacity to deliver quality training aligns seamlessly with the needs and availability of the workforce.

We recognize merely creating opportunities is not enough; we must actively mitigate the complex barriers preventing those most in need from participating. By bringing training resources directly to communities in need and eliminating cost-related barriers to program entry we strive to ensure that individuals with the greatest need have true access to skill-building opportunities.

Furthermore, our efforts to increase job availability are intertwined with our strategy's training and accessibility components. Leveraging CHIPS Act funding, we seek to attract new employers to the region and strengthen partnerships between training programs and private employers. The Tech-Nexus AL-GA project will create a space for semiconductor startups and student training, with Micromize as an anchor tenant. Micromize has committed to hiring 30 new employees, further solidifying the connection between training and employment.

This collaborative approach aims to align training programs with the evolving needs of the job market, thus enhancing job availability for the prime age workforce. Also, implementing a CMSA-wide case management system will play a crucial role in monitoring the success of individuals in the training-to-employment pipeline, ensuring they receive timely support and intervention as needed. This integrated approach fosters a seamless transition from training to employment, contributing to the overall goal of increasing prime age

employment and driving economic development in the CMSA.

iv. Component Projects Summary

a. Truth Spring Trade School

Truth Spring Trade School Expansion (TSTS-Expand), led by Truth Spring Trade School, LLC (TSTS), renovates an old fire station into a modern trade school in Columbus' North Highland neighborhood, increasing capacity and enhancing opportunities for residents in the PAEG. The project includes renovations to accommodate classrooms, workshops, and administrative offices, along with improvements to accessibility, parking facilities, and essential systems like HVAC and plumbing. TSTS anticipates accommodating 32 students annually, predominantly from the PAEG, with goals of 80% completion of the initial training, 100% obtaining their GED, and 85% employment within 1 month of graduation.

b. Tech Readiness GA

The Tech Readiness GA project, led by Columbus Technical College (CTC), aims to increase prime age employment and per capita wages by providing accessible opportunities for skills training and up-skilling. The project involves establishing an advanced manufacturing/mechatronics skills mobile training lab to provide training in rural areas, on-site training for new industries, and training for incarcerated individuals. Goals include enrolling 600 students, achieving a 95% job placement rate among graduates, and certifying six new instructors. This project eliminates geographical and transportation opportunity barriers.

c. Tech Readiness AL

Tech Readiness AL, led by Chattahoochee Valley Community College (CVCC), introduces the Advanced Manufacturing Immersion Program, bridging the education-to-employment gap for high school students and unemployed adults in advanced manufacturing. Through strategic partnerships and equipping CVCC's Workforce Training Center (WTC) and local high schools with essential lab equipment, the program offers comprehensive training in mechatronics, robotics, and electrical technology, including new industry-focused degrees and certifications, ensuring participants are prepared for high-paying jobs, increasing prime age employment, and per capita wages. Goals include enrollment of 350 students within 5 years.

d. Tech Nexus AL-GA

The Tech Nexus AL-GA project, led by StartUP Columbus in collaboration with Columbus State University (CSU), establishes an advanced manufacturing-focused business incubator and Fab Lab on the CSU campus. The project's scope includes outfitting 6-10,000 square feet of space with state-of-the-art equipment and supplies to support innovation and entrepreneurship. The initiative anticipates the creation of 150 new jobs and \$10 million in private investment over five years.

e. Connect Chattahoochee Valley

Connect Chattahoochee, led by UWCV in partnership with Goodwill Industries of the Southern Rivers, Inc. (GWISR) and other coalition partners, aims to bridge existing initiatives and support systems to address the PAEG comprehensively. Focusing on the human element of the recompete plan, Connect Chattahoochee provides wrap-around services to individuals, partner programs, and the broader community. These services range from stipends for instructors in higher education to transportation and childcare assistance for students, scholarships, and individualized case management, ensuring individuals have the support they need to access training opportunities and transition out of the PAEG successfully.

v. Overview of Deliverables and Key Milestones

Project title	Key Milestone	Key Deliverable	Final project closeout
Tech Readiness AL	Finalize contracts and issue purchase orders: 2/1/25	Delivery and acceptance of equipment/labs (deliverables) as follows: Industrial Wiring Training System – 6/1/25 Robotics Arm – 3/1/25 Mechatronics Lab Equipment – 8/1/25 Industrial Maintenance Lab Equipment – 7/1/25 Supplies - annually from 25 - 28	10/1/28
Tech Readiness GA	Finalize contracts and issue purchase orders: 2/1/25	Delivery and acceptance of equipment/labs (deliverables) as follows: Mobile Lab - 9/1/25 Avionics Lab System - 8/1/25 Smart Factory Lab System - 8/1/25 Supplies - annually from 25 - 28	10/1/28
Tech Nexus AL-GA	Finalize contracts and issue purchase orders: 2/1/25	Delivery and acceptance of FabLab equipment (deliverables): 5/1/25	10/1/28
Truth Spring Trade School Expansion	Finalize contracts, hold preconstruction conference, and issue notice to proceed: 2/1/25	Substantial completion, final acceptance, occupancy certificate: 9/1/25	11/1/25
Connect Chattahoochee: Comprehensive Support Services	Contract Award: 1/1/2025 Finalize Contract: 2/1/25	Contract Services end: 7/1/29	7/1/29

vi. Sustainable Commitments and Partnerships (*top commitments in bold*)

- In-Kind Contributions:
 - WC Bradley Real Estate Company is donating a 6,000 square foot building for TechNexus, facilitating advanced manufacturing expansion.**
 - Columbus State University (CSU) has committed to provide below market cost commercial real estate for TechNexus.**
- Financial Matches:
 - City of Columbus pledges \$1.2 million for an avionics instruction facility at Columbus Technical College.
 - Truth Spring Real Estate commits \$1.8 million to support workforce initiatives.**
 - **Columbus 2025 will invest \$875,000 to incentivize technical-focused entrepreneurship**

and provide relocation incentives for tech startup companies considering the CMSA.**

- CHIPS Investments:
 - **CHIPS4CHIPS has committed \$1.5 million in direct support of Recompete (see letter of support for more detail).****
 - \$550,000 for curriculum development and student recruitment at CSU.**
 - \$1.55 million for semiconductor facility site development.**
 - \$2.25 million collectively from the City of Columbus, Phenix City, and the Bradley Turner Foundation to support semiconductor industry growth initiatives, including workforce development, lobbying, and consulting services.**
- Other Investments:
 - Columbus Consolidated Government aims to pursue legislation for a childcare tax incentive for supportive employers.**
 - Columbus Consolidated Government is funding an independent public transportation study to enhance transit accessibility.**
 - CSU has committed \$6 million to fund a new facility for their Robotics Engineering Program and \$25k/year for economic impact analysis of Recompete investments.**
- Private Sector Hiring Commitments:
 - Micromize, a semiconductor startup to be based at TechNexus, plans to create 30 jobs.**
 - Truth Spring Real Estate plans to generate 10 new jobs and preserve 5 existing positions, alongside their financial investment.**
 - **Pratt & Whitney has committed to hiring approx. 400 employees in coming years, and providing interview opportunities and internships for CTC students.****
 - **Sierra Pacific anticipates hiring 300 people over the next 3 years, and commits to guarantee interviews to graduates of CVCC and CTC advanced manufacturing/mechatronics programs.****

***New for Phase 2*

vii. Equity

Addressing equity considerations, our Recompete effort is deeply rooted in the recognition of persistent economic distress within the CMSA, particularly within the geographics areas highlighted in Section ii. Our Recompete effort addresses the multifaceted barriers contributing to economic distress and prime age unemployment in these targeted neighborhoods. Through a comprehensive set of component projects, we provide tailored solutions to uplift underserved and underrepresented populations. These projects are strategically designed to expand access to education and training opportunities by directly addressing the factors that have historically limited access in our community: lack of transportation, childcare, awareness of opportunities, and availability of training opportunities. The projects will actively create pathways to employment in advanced manufacturing through industry certifications and partnerships with employers, expansion of successful community-based training programs in highest-need communities, and provision of stipends to students for essential support services like childcare and transportation.

Furthermore, our commitment to equity extends beyond programmatic interventions to encompass the creation of safe, healthy, and accessible workplaces and training facilities—exemplified by the Truth Spring Trade School expansion in North Highland, the state-of-the-art Tech Nexus facilities, the purchase of a mobile training lab, and establishment of two satellite vocational training labs to meet rural, transportation-constrained communities where they are. By fostering collaborative partnerships with community-based nonprofits and educational institutions, and employers, we aim to capitalize on relationships with trusted

intermediaries who have ties with underserved populations.

In our Recompete effort, we provide comprehensive wraparound services aimed at reducing barriers to program entry and ensuring equitable access to education and training opportunities. Specifically, we will offer student stipends tailored to address critical needs such as childcare and transportation costs. By providing financial assistance for these essential services, we aim to alleviate the financial burden on individuals seeking to participate in training programs. This support will enable students, particularly those facing economic hardship, to overcome logistical challenges and fully engage in skill-building activities without the added stress of childcare and transportation expenses.

viii. Climate and Environmental Considerations

This Recompete Initiative integrates environmental responsibility into its core strategies for economic development. The renovation of an old fire station for the Truth Spring Trade School Expansion exemplifies infill development and adaptive re-use and prioritizes energy-efficient technologies and sustainable building materials, fostering job creation while reducing environmental footprints. By targeting high-poverty areas with high PAEG, the plan ensures equitable access to training programs and employment opportunities in green sectors, uplifting underserved communities while advancing environmental sustainability. Notably, Truth Spring Trade School’s popular construction training program, to be expanded with recompete funds, includes hands-on training building energy efficient homes in the North Highland neighborhood. Homes are then rented at highly affordable rates to low-income residents—thus providing high quality housing made even more affordable by energy cost savings; helping residents build wealth and improving environmental sustainability. The environmental benefit is also extended through CTC’s mobile lab, which will decrease the number of vehicles on the road by traveling to rural areas, thereby reducing emissions. Finally, through streamlined operations via Connect Chattahoochee’s unified case management system, the plan minimizes administrative overhead and maximizes efficiency, contributing further to environmental responsibility and economic growth.

ix. Goals and Metrics

Program Activity	Program Outputs Metrics	Program Outcomes Metrics to be Tracked*	Equity Metric to be Tracked	MSA Metric	Long-term Goal
Launch of new career-focused technical training programs with emphasis on advanced manufacturing	1) # students enrolled 2) # of students with industry recognized credentials	1) #/% of program graduates employed within 1 month of graduation 2) #/% of graduates employed 6 months after graduation 3) #/% of graduates who rate themselves as better off after program	1) #/% of individuals who increase employment* 2) #/% of individuals who increase educational attainment * 3) Enrollment higher for marginalized groups	1) Annual increase in PAE rate 2) #/% of adults with GED, post-secondary degree, or credential	PAEG closed by 50% in 10 years

		completion**			
Establish and launch new community workforce case management system and supportive services network	1) # individuals enrolled in workforce case management 2) # enrolled in community skills-based training program 3) # of community partners utilizing shared system	1) #/% of participants receiving wrap-around or support services 2) Percentage of graduates employed 6 months after graduation	1) % of participants unemployed 2) Relatively higher rates of system enrollment for marginalized groups 3) Enrollment distributed across 7-county region in proportion to non-working population /county	1) Reduction in % of distressed households 2) Annual increase in PAE rate 3) #/% of adults with post-secondary degree or credential	PAEG closed by 50% in 10 years
Support the launch of new manufacturing businesses	1) newly designed center opens within 1 year 2) # of program participants	1) # of businesses launched annually 2) # of jobs created by new businesses annually	1) #/% of new jobs tracked by race, gender, and zip code 2) #/% of entrepreneur program participants*	1) Annual increase in PAE rate 2) Annual increase in jobs in advanced manufacturing	2000 jobs created in advanced manufacturing in 5 years***
* Goal is higher participation of marginalized groups. All data to be disaggregated by race, gender, and zip code/county.					
**While this will be tracked quantitatively, it will also be tracked qualitatively through interviews with graduates and students who do not complete programs to assess satisfaction and areas for improvement.					
***We are confident that external investments in advanced manufacturing will spur additional job creation and contribute to overall employee gains.					

x. Phase 1 to Phase 2 Evolution

The application’s evolution from Phase 1 to Phase 2 has centered on ensuring the plan is implementable and designed for success, primarily by securing strong commitments from project partners, especially private sector employers, and ensuring that the proposed component projects work in tandem to holistically address the interconnected factors contributing to PAEG in the CMSA. Additionally, an experienced Recompete Plan Coordinator, with 27 years of strategic leadership and community development experience, has been hired to manage the program. Our mission has been refined to focus on increasing PAE by preparing and connecting the local workforce to jobs in advanced manufacturing. This mission encompasses two principal areas: preparing the workforce and creating jobs.

Meeting with community-based non-profits, primary and higher education institutions, and semi-governmental agencies, we have discovered that the challenges they face are the same. These include

inadequate certification opportunities in advanced manufacturing fields, a lack of funding for teachers in these fields, inability to access educational opportunities due to childcare and transportation barriers, and limited awareness of available job training programs among unemployed individuals.

In our Phase 1 application, each community-based non-profit was designated as a direct award recipient. However, discussions with these groups revealed a common concern about the lack of holistic case management across the various organizations working with unemployed individuals. Recognizing the potential for underscoring the fragmentation that already exists and allows clients to fall through the cracks, we decided to consolidate programmatic funds under UWCV and incorporate a data integration component into our application to establish a unified case management system among community groups.

With over 72 years of experience, the United Way leverages valuable resources and expertise. As a backbone organization we will distribute funding for student stipends for transportation, childcare, and supplies, along with teacher salary stipends, ensuring consistency in program priorities and attainment of milestones over the grant's lifespan.

This unified strategy will facilitate goal achievement and accountability. Without sufficient resources or a cohesive support system those disengaged from the job market will remain so, and temporarily unemployed individuals can become disengaged and chronically unemployed. This Phase 2 strategy outlines a comprehensive approach to reduce prime age unemployment by:

1. **Expanding Training Opportunities:** We will create and expand training opportunities in skilled trades, particularly in the fields of advanced manufacturing, by catering to both youth entering the workforce and adults seeking employment or upskilling.
2. **Enhancing Accessibility:** By bringing training resources to communities in need and eliminating cost-related barriers to program entry, we aim to increase accessibility for all individuals. In Phase I, student stipends and wraparound support services were part of each component application. In Phase 2, UWCV will oversee and distribute all student support services, streamlining implementation and enhancing monitoring across programs, and allowing project leads to focus on program offerings.
3. **Increasing Job Availability:** Leveraging CHIPS funding, we will attract new employers to the region, continue to pursue site certification for advanced manufacturing, and strengthen partnerships between training programs and private employers to enhance job availability for the prime age workforce.
4. **Monitoring Success:** A CMSA-wide case management and data integration system will be implemented to track the success of individuals in the training-to-employment pipeline, ensuring effective support and intervention as needed.

This multifaceted strategy, encompassed in our 5 component projects, is designed to address the complex web of factors driving PAEG within the CMSA and create a sustainable employment pipeline.

xi. Further Addressing Evaluation Criteria

a. Sustainable Partnerships and Commitments

UWCV is located within and acts on behalf of the CMSA with a staff addressing barriers that perpetuate poverty and PAEG. Over its 72-year history, UWCV has earned a reputation for exceptional volunteer, community, and strategic leadership in collaboration with an extensive, growing network of partners. With nearly 50 employees UWCV leads multiple cross-sector programs involving over 500 partners which collaboratively enact solutions to support shared goals and strategies, addressing poverty, training, and employment.

The following types of organizations have been heavily involved in this Recompete Plan, as reflected in the letter of commitment/support file: technical schools/colleges, Fort Moore and military veteran organizations, four-year universities, local primary school systems, vocationally focused non-profits, government and policy,

and private industry partners.

b. Leadership and Governance

UWCV boasts a rich history of collaborative decision-making, most notably through our role as lead for the Continuum of Care. With an Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and specialized steering committees, UWCV ensures diverse perspectives in decision-making, guided by community needs, alignment with goals, equity, and return on investment. Moreover, UWCV's successful 2023 annual campaign, raising over \$9 million with the support of 11,000 corporate and community partners, donors, and volunteers, underscores its capacity to mobilize resources and engage stakeholders effectively.

At the helm of the Recompete initiative is Andy Hilmes, a retired U.S. Army General Officer with over 27 years of leadership experience in various settings, both domestically and internationally. Andy has been integral to the leadership team of C4C since February 2023, focusing on site development and the Recompete pilot. His wealth of experience and strategic insight further bolsters the initiative's capabilities, ensuring effective execution of responsibilities, accountability, and commitment to equity. Together, under Andy's guidance and UWCV's collaborative governance structure, Empower Chattahoochee is well-positioned to create and reinforce pathways to leadership for all community members, regardless of race, gender, wealth, or other factors.

c. Overall Impact and Risk Mitigation

Through a series of targeted component projects, this Recompete effort seeks to create a sustainable employment pipeline and uplift underserved communities within the CMSA. Outcomes and outputs include increasing completion rates of training programs, obtaining GEDs, and achieving high rates of employment within a month of graduation. These outcomes are aligned with the overarching goal of reducing PAEG and improving economic conditions in the region. Leveraging partnerships with technical schools, vocational nonprofits, industry partners, and government entities, the proposed projects are poised to lead to meaningful impacts for the identified service area.

Focusing on areas with high poverty rates and PAEG, locating training opportunities in those areas, and bringing employers to those programs, the initiative targets communities in greatest need and with the fewest resources.

The initiative includes mitigation strategies designed to address risks proactively and ensure the successful execution of the plan. As discussed in Section vii: Phase 1 to Phase 2 Evolution, a key shift in Phase 2, driven by identifying lack of coordination among stakeholders as a significant risk, is the consolidation of supportive services and the introduction of a data integration component under the Connect Chattahoochee Valley component project. We identified the potential for training programs to exist in silos, hindering resource sharing, cohesive tracking of success metrics, and issue identification. Furthermore, UWCV's strong relationships with private manufacturing-sector employers through CHIPS4CHIPS will facilitate the alignment of qualified graduates from all programs with emerging jobs in manufacturing.

The plan emphasizes equitable outcomes and proposes disaggregating data by population to measure impact effectively (see section vi). By tracking key indicators such as employment rates and participation from underserved populations the plan aims to assess progress towards its goals and adjust strategies as needed to promote equity and inclusivity. With clear outcomes, robust risk mitigation strategies, and a focus on equitable outcomes, the plan is poised to make a meaningful impact on the region's workforce and economic landscape.