



STATE OF ARKANSAS  
**Department of Finance  
and Administration**

**C (Held)**  
**OFFICE OF BUDGET**  
1509 West Seventh Street, Suite 402  
Post Office Box 3278  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-3278  
Phone: (501) 682-1941  
Fax: (501) 682-1086  
[www.arkansas.gov/dfa](http://www.arkansas.gov/dfa)

October 7, 2022

Senator Jonathan Dismang, Co-Chair  
Representative Michelle Gray, Co-Chair  
Performance Evaluation & Expenditure Review Committee  
Arkansas Legislative Council  
State Capitol Building  
Little Rock, AR 72201

RE: FY 23 American Rescue Plan Act Request

Dear Co-Chairs:

Pursuant to Section 37 (01) of Act 199 of 2022, I am forwarding the attached American Rescue Plan Act request(s) that have received my approval as Chief Fiscal Officer of the State.

- OVA - Veterans Affairs - Fayetteville Veterans Home \$381,783
- OVA - Veterans Affairs - North Little Rock Veterans Home \$275,410
- ADH - Health Department - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administrator \$815,327
- ADH - Health Department - Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity for Prevention and Control of Emerging Infections Diseases \$415,024
- ADH - Health Department - Mitigation of COVID in Confinement Facilities \$9,310,000
- ADH - Health Department - Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Homevisiting Grant Program \$0
- ADH - Health Department - Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Homevisiting Grant Program \$0
- ADE - Division of Higher Education - AmeriCorps \$265,000
- OHS - Medical Services Division - Home and Community Based Services \$685,000
- DEE - Environmental Quality Division - Health Outcome Disparities from Pollution and COVID \$400,178



STATE OF ARKANSAS  
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1509 West Seventh Street, Suite 401  
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Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-3278  
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[www.arkansas.gov/dfa](http://www.arkansas.gov/dfa)

Pursuant to Section 37 (02) of Act 199 of 2022, I am forwarding the attached American Rescue Plan Act request(s) that have received my approval as Chief Fiscal Officer of the State.

- Game and Fish Commission – Lonoke Fish Hatchery External Water Reuse Project and Spawning Building \$5,000,000
- Game and Fish Commission – Bayou Meta Wildlife Management Area Greentree Reservoir Renovations \$15,000,000

Sincerely,

  
Larry W. Walther  
Cabinet Secretary

Attachment(s)

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021 PROGRAM APPROPRIATION  
AND PERSONNEL AUTHORIZATION REQUEST  
SECTION 37 OF ACT 199 OF 2022

C.6

Agency: Arkansas Game and Fish CommissionBusiness Area Code: 0080

Program Title: Lonoke Fish Hatchery External Water Reuse Project and Spawning Building

Granting Organization: AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021CFDA #: \_\_\_\_\_

Effective Date of Authorization: \_\_\_\_\_Beginning: 07/01/2022Ending: 06/30/23

Purpose of Grant / Reason for addition or change (include attachments as necessary to provide thorough information):

This two-part project aims to significantly reduce the Lonoke Fish Hatchery's annual groundwater consumption through the construction of infrastructure that would allow the reuse of the water used for fish production instead of single-use. By developing water recirculating capabilities in the spawning building, the estimated impact on the Sparta aquifer would be a reduction of 141.9 million gallons of water annually based on the ability to reuse water with 90% efficiency. The estimated allowable project cost: \$2,000,000. In addition, upgrades to the outdoor hatchery ponds, including water reuse infrastructure and water storage capability, would further reduce our water use footprint by an estimated 430.1 million gallons annually pumped from the Sparta aquifer based on a reuse rate of 80% efficiency. The estimated Project cost: \$3,000,000.

American Rescue Plan Act Program Funding

Func. Area: RECFund Code: \_\_\_\_\_Direct Funding: \_\_\_\_\_

Funds Center: \_\_\_\_\_Internal Order/WBS Element: \_\_\_\_\_Steering Comm. Approved: 08/18/2022

Continuation: \_\_\_\_\_

	Program Funding Amount
Regular Salaries	
Extra Help	
Personal Services Matching	
Operating Expenses	
Conference & Travel Expenses	
Professional Fees	
Capital Outlay	
Data Processing	
Grants and Aid (CI: 04)	
Other:	5,000,000
Other:	
Total	\$ 5,000,000

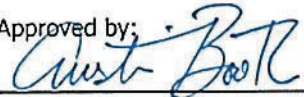
Anticipated Duration of Federal Funds: 06/30/2024

DFA IGS State Technology PlanningDate  
Items requested for information technology must be in compliance with Technology Plans as submitted to DFA IGS State Technology Planning.

Positions to be established: (list each position separately)

Org Unit	Pers Area	Pers SubArea	Cost Center	Position Number	Cmnt Item	Position Title	Class Code	Grade	Line Item Maximum *

State funds will not be used to replace federal funds when such funds expire, unless appropriated by the General Assembly and authorized by the Governor.

Approved by: 8/19/228-22-22

Cabinet Secretary/Agency DirectorDateOffice of BudgetDateOffice of Personnel MgmtDate

CAR



**Chris Racey**  
Chief of Staff

**Ben Batten**  
Deputy Director



**Brad Carner**  
Deputy Director

**Spencer Griffith**  
Deputy Director

## Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

**Austin Booth**  
Director

August 18, 2022

Larry W. Walther, Secretary  
Department of Finance and Administration  
1509 W. 7th St. Suite 401  
Little Rock AR, 72205

Dear Secretary Walther,

Pursuant to Section 38 of Act 997 of 2021, I am requesting the consideration of the attached appropriation requests for two ARPA-funded projects approved by the steering committee on August 18th. These projects include:

### **Bayou Meto WMA GTR Renovation**

\$15,000,000 for the renovation of approximately 13,000 acres of Greentree reservoirs (GRT) in the Bayou Meto Wildlife Management Area (WMA) that have been negatively impacted by prolonged flooding. This appropriation will be utilized for infrastructure renovations that will enhance water flow. These critical infrastructure renovations are essential to allow AGFC to manage water better and enhance drainage within the GTRs, particularly during the summer growing season, thus improving deteriorated forest health conditions to ensure the long-term sustainability of the world-renowned Greentree public land waterfowl hunting opportunities within the state. The long-term health and sustainability of these remnant bottomland hardwood forests are essential to sustaining public land waterfowl hunting opportunities for over 40,000 individuals annually, with an estimated financial benefit of \$70 million annually to local communities across Arkansas. In addition, these unique habitats support a host of other terrestrial and aquatic species, which provide significant wildlife viewing and other hunting opportunities beyond just waterfowl hunting opportunities.

### **Lonoke Fish Hatchery External Water Reuse Project and Spawning Building Water Reuse Project**

\$5,000,000 to modernize how water is used, captured, and then reused at the Lonoke Fish Hatchery and would also increase the efficiency and capacity for fish production. By developing water recirculating capabilities in the spawning building, the estimated impact on the Sparta aquifer will be a reduction of 141.9 million gallons of water annually based on the ability to reuse water with 90% efficiency. This is equivalent to the water use of 3,698 "average" Arkansas water users. Upgrades to the outdoor hatchery ponds, including water reuse infrastructure and water storage capability, will further reduce our water use footprint by an estimated 430.1 million gallons annually pumped from the Sparta aquifer based on a reuse rate of 80% efficiency. This is equivalent to the average consumption of 11,117 Arkansans.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Austin Booth  
Director  
Arkansas Game and Fish Commission





**Project Name:** Lonoke Fish Hatchery External Water Reuse Project and Spawning Building Water Reuse Project

**Project Status:** Design phase underway

- Approved budget for design = \$350,000
- Current budget for construction = \$0

**Project Description:** The Joe Hogan Fish Hatchery located in Lonoke, AR is both the largest and the oldest facility in the AGFC fish culture system. This facility produces an average of 9-10 million fish annually, including catfish, Florida bass, and

baitfish. The proposed project includes the following: 1. Modernization of the 19,200 square foot indoor fish spawning/holding building including enhanced water reuse/recirculation capabilities. 2. Upgrades to the existing outdoor water supply/drain lines to include a water recapture/reuse system and a water storage pond for a 200-acre warm water culture facility.

Spawning building water reuse/recirculation project: This project consists of the construction of a 19,200 sq. ft. modernized indoor production facility that will provide for the complete re-use of water in this new facility. Currently, the groundwater used in two existing buildings for hatching, rearing, and holding fish is used in a one-pass system where the groundwater flows out of the building to the drainage ditches at the same rate that it is pumped in. The current designs for this new indoor facility include all the necessary components for a 100% water reuse system, including a settling basin, mechanical filtration system for the removal of solids, a sterilization system, and all the necessary piping so that each culture unit can drain into this system, go through the necessary treatments, and will then be available for additional use throughout the facility.

Outdoor hatchery water recapture/reuse project: This project consists of the construction of a water storage reservoir that many of the hatchery's 77 ponds will be able to drain into. The Lonoke Hatchery is solely dependent on groundwater for filling ponds and as those ponds are drained during harvest operations, that water flows off the hatchery through a series of underground piping into adjacent ditches. This renovation project will provide a system that will allow for ponds being drained to flow to an on-site storage reservoir. This captured surface water can then pass through a filtration system and a system of valves and pumps that will provide an alternative water source for filling all hatchery ponds and greatly reduce (80% reuse) the hatchery's dependence on groundwater.

**Project Goals and Impacts:** This project aims to increase the sustainability of the water use associated with fish production at the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's Lonoke Fish Hatchery. As a state conservation agency, it is important that we lead by example when it comes to water sustainability. In this case that includes reducing our impact on groundwater use by minimizing our withdrawals and maximizing our reuse of water on the facility to the extent possible. Currently, the hatchery utilizes groundwater brought to the surface through

wells. This water is used for fish production and then leaves the hatchery property through a system of ditches. The aim of this two-part project is to greatly reduce the annual consumption of groundwater through the construction of infrastructure that would allow the reuse of the water used for fish production instead of single-use.

The proposed project would modernize how water is used, captured, and then reused in the facility and would also increase the efficiency and capacity for fish production. Groundwater is an extremely critical resource to the state, and is relied upon by Arkansas for drinking water, agriculture, and aquaculture. By utilizing water recirculating capabilities in the spawning building, the estimated impact on the Sparta aquifer would be a reduction of 141.9 million gallons of water annually based on the ability to reuse water with 90% efficiency. This is equivalent to the water use of 3,698 “average” Arkansas water users. Upgrades to the outdoor hatchery ponds including water reuse infrastructure and water storage capability would further reduce our water use footprint by an estimated 430.1 million gallons annually pumped from the Sparta aquifer based on a reuse rate of 80% efficiency. This is equivalent to the average consumption of 11,117 Arkansans.

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**County:** Lonoke

**Congressional District:** Rick Crawford (1)

**AR Representative District Name and number:** Roger D. Lynch (14)

**AR Senate District Name and number:** Jonathan Dismang (28)

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**Justification of project:**

- a) Benefit to Arkansans - The surrounding Lonoke County and the city of Lonoke, AR, a socially disadvantaged rural community, draw their water from four wells that pump from the Sparta Sand Aquifer. They also purchase treated water from Grand Prairie Regional Water whose sources are five wells that pump from the Sparta Sand Aquifer to two water treatment facilities. Grand Prairie also purchased water from the City of Stuttgart, whose source for water is four wells that pump from the Quaternary System and Sparta Aquifers to two Water Treatment Plants.

AR Natural Resources Division states: “It is important to realize that groundwater levels continue to decline in areas with the highest water use for both the Mississippi River Valley alluvial aquifer and the Sparta aquifer. Arkansas is withdrawing groundwater from the alluvial and Sparta/Memphis aquifers in eastern and southern Arkansas at a rate far above that which is estimated to be sustainable. So long as water-use from these aquifers continues to exceed sustainable yield, this water resource will continue to be depleted.”

Lonoke County and surrounding cities will be positively impacted by the modernized water reuse capabilities of the Joe Hogan hatchery. Again, recirculation and reuse both indoor and outdoor will help decrease the water drawn from the Sparta Aquifer by a total of 572 million gallons annually.

- b) ARPA funding statutory and regulatory criteria - In the Treasury Department's Final Rule [31 CFR Part 35 RIN1505-AC77] on the use of Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds it states that ARPA provides that SLRF funds may be used "[t]o make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure". The Treasury determined that the types of water and sewer projects that were authorized under the interim final rule by reference to existing Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) programs would in all cases be necessary investments given the conditions applicable to such EPA Programs. This includes the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Program. The Final Rule states that eligible uses of the CWSRF are eligible uses of SLFRF in the water and sewer infrastructure category. This includes a broad range of projects that improve drinking water infrastructure, such as building or upgrading facilities and transmission, distribution, and storage systems, including the replacement of lead service lines. With respect to clean water and wastewater infrastructure, the interim final rule provided that recipients may use SLFRF funds to construct publicly owned treatment infrastructure, manage and treat stormwater or subsurface drainage water, and facilitate water reuse, among other uses. The document also references measures to conserve and reuse water including subsurface drainage water (groundwater) as a measure of green infrastructure investments and improvements to climate change resiliency.
- c) Clean Water State Revolving Fund Eligibility - In order to help justify this project's potential positive impacts on the sustainability of groundwater use, its eligibility for inclusion in the Clean Water State Revolving fund guidelines from the EPA was consulted. This document states in the Groundwater Protection and Restoration section that, "Eligible groundwater projects include those that protect and restore the aquifers. This includes pump and treat projects, aquifer recharge projects, and projects that decrease aquifer withdrawals through rainwater harvesting, water conservation, or water reuse."

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**Total Eligible Project cost:** \$5,000,000

Spawning Building Eligible Project Cost: \$2,000,000

Component Breakdown:

- 1) Design and Engineering: \$200,000
- 2) Construction: \$1,800,000

Hatchery Water Re-use Eligible Project Cost: \$3,000,000

Component Breakdown:

- 1) Design and Engineering: \$300,000



2) Construction: \$2,700,000

**Estimated timeline of completion:** 2022 - 2024.

-7/1/22-2/6/23 - Engineering and Design

-10/17/22-3/31/23 - Permitting

-2/6/23-4/3/23 - Request for Proposals

-4/4/23-5/2/23 - Contracting phase

-5/3/23-6/27/24 - Construction phase

-6/27/24 - Project Completion

Agency:Arkansas Game and Fish CommissionBusiness Area Code:0080

Program Title:Bayou Meto WMA GTR Renovation

Granting Organization:AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021CFDA #:

Effective Date of Authorization:Beginning:07/01/2022Ending:06/30/2023

Purpose of Grant / Reason for addition or change (include attachments as necessary to provide thorough information):

The proposed project would renovate water control structures and the infrastructure needed to manage water in Bayou Meto Wildlife Management Area's seven greentree reservoirs (GTRs). This will greatly benefit tree health and the regeneration of red oak species which are a key food resource for wintering waterfowl. Red oaks have been hit hard by the prolonged flooding and in turn are being replaced by less desirable tree species or habitat. Alterations to water control structures will be extensive and will need detailed engineering to determine the best alternative to renovate then GTRs. Additionally, the proposed work here will benefit the state's water resources by: 1) filtering and trapping nutrient loads, 2) reducing sediment and other non-point source pollution, 3) mitigating peak stormwater flows downstream, and 4) storing flood water.

American Rescue Plan Act Program Funding

Func. Area:REC

Funds Center:

Fund Code:

Internal Order/WBS Element:

Direct Funding:

Steering Comm. Approved:8/1/8/2022

Continuation:

	Program Funding Amount
Regular Salaries	
Extra Help	
Personal Services Matching	
Operating Expenses	
Conference & Travel Expenses	
Professional Fees	
Capital Outlay	
Data Processing	
Grants and Aid (CI: 04)	
Other:	15,000,000
Other:	
Total	\$15,000,000

Anticipated Duration of Federal Funds:06/30/2029

DFA IGS State Technology PlanningDate

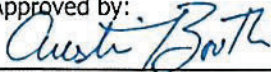
Items requested for information technology must be in compliance with Technology Plans as submitted to DFA IGS State Technology Planning.

Positions to be established: (list each position separately)

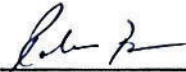
Org Unit	Pers Area	Pers SubArea	Cost Center	Position Number	Cmnt Item	Position Title	Class Code	Grade	Line Item Maximum *

State funds will not be used to replace federal funds when such funds expire, unless appropriated by the General Assembly and authorized by the Governor.

Approved by:



8/19/22



8-22-22

Cabinet Secretary/Agency DirectorDateOffice of BudgetDateOffice of Personnel MgmtDate

**Chris Racey**  
Chief of Staff

**Ben Batten**  
Deputy Director



**Brad Carner**  
Deputy Director

**Spencer Griffith**  
Deputy Director

## Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

**Austin Booth**  
Director

August 18, 2022

Larry W. Walther, Secretary  
Department of Finance and Administration  
1509 W. 7th St. Suite 401  
Little Rock AR, 72205

Dear Secretary Walther,

Pursuant to Section 38 of Act 997 of 2021, I am requesting the consideration of the attached appropriation requests for two ARPA-funded projects approved by the steering committee on August 18th. These projects include:

### **Bayou Meto WMA GTR Renovation**

\$15,000,000 for the renovation of approximately 13,000 acres of Greentree reservoirs (GRT) in the Bayou Meto Wildlife Management Area (WMA) that have been negatively impacted by prolonged flooding. This appropriation will be utilized for infrastructure renovations that will enhance water flow. These critical infrastructure renovations are essential to allow AGFC to manage water better and enhance drainage within the GTRs, particularly during the summer growing season, thus improving deteriorated forest health conditions to ensure the long-term sustainability of the world-renowned Greentree public land waterfowl hunting opportunities within the state. The long-term health and sustainability of these remnant bottomland hardwood forests are essential to sustaining public land waterfowl hunting opportunities for over 40,000 individuals annually, with an estimated financial benefit of \$70 million annually to local communities across Arkansas. In addition, these unique habitats support a host of other terrestrial and aquatic species, which provide significant wildlife viewing and other hunting opportunities beyond just waterfowl hunting opportunities.

### **Lonoke Fish Hatchery External Water Reuse Project and Spawning Building Water Reuse Project**

\$5,000,000 to modernize how water is used, captured, and then reused at the Lonoke Fish Hatchery and would also increase the efficiency and capacity for fish production. By developing water recirculating capabilities in the spawning building, the estimated impact on the Sparta aquifer will be a reduction of 141.9 million gallons of water annually based on the ability to reuse water with 90% efficiency. This is equivalent to the water use of 3,698 "average" Arkansas water users. Upgrades to the outdoor hatchery ponds, including water reuse infrastructure and water storage capability, will further reduce our water use footprint by an estimated 430.1 million gallons annually pumped from the Sparta aquifer based on a reuse rate of 80% efficiency. This is equivalent to the average consumption of 11,117 Arkansans.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Austin Booth  
Director  
Arkansas Game and Fish Commission





**Project Name:** Bayou Meto WMA GTR Renovation – Phase I

**Project Status:** Design phase underway

- Approved budget for design = \$350,000
- Budget for construction = \$0

**Short Project Description:** This 33,832-acre Wildlife Management Area (WMA) has approximately 13,000-acres within 7 greentree reservoirs (GTRs) to provide critical wintering waterfowl habitat and waterfowl hunting opportunities.

Prolonged flooding within this WMA throughout the year is resulting in significant impacts to forest health conditions, jeopardizing both the long-term sustainability of this valuable habitat and the sustainability of the recreational opportunities the WMA provides.

**Project Need:** Major infrastructure renovations are needed to enhance water flows through this WMA. Current rainfall events, coupled with stormwater runoff from Jacksonville, Sherwood and other communities into Bayou Meto is causing prolonged flooding. Current infrastructure is inadequate and cannot evacuate water leading to declining forest health conditions within this vitally important remnant bottomland hardwood forest. The bottomland hardwood forests (BLH) forests found at Bayou Meto WMA are in significant health decline morphologically indicated by basal swelling, extensive epicormic branching, crown dieback and even death. Renovations are needed to replumb water control structures allowing for increased drainage, specifically during the spring and summer. Levees will be altered allowing for additional water to flow off the WMA improving red oak regeneration within the forest complex.

**Project Goals:** The proposed project would renovate water control structures and the infrastructure needed to manage water in the GTRs. This will greatly benefit tree health and the regeneration of red oak species which are a key food resource for wintering waterfowl. Red oaks have been hit hard by the prolonged flooding and in turn are being replaced by less desirable tree species or scrub / shrub habitat. Alterations to water control structures will be extensive and will need detailed engineering to determine the best alternative to renovate the GTRs. Additionally, the proposed work here will benefit the state's water resources by: 1) filtering and trapping nutrient loads, 2) reducing sediment and other non-point source pollution, 3) mitigating peak stormwater flows downstream, *and* 4) storing flood water.

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**County:** Arkansas and Jefferson

**Congressional District:** Rick Crawford (1)

**AR Representative District Name and number:** Roger Lynch (14) and Ken Ferguson (16)

**AR Senate District Name and number:** Stephanie Flowers (25)

**Justification of project:**

- a) Benefit to Arkansans - These critical infrastructure renovations are essential to allow AGFC to better manage water and enhance drainage within the GTRs particularly during the summer growing season thus improving deteriorated forest health conditions to ensure the long term sustainability of the world-renowned greentree public land waterfowl hunting opportunities within the state. The long-term health and sustainability of these remnant bottomland hardwood forests is essential to sustaining public land waterfowl hunting opportunities for over 40,000 individuals annually with an estimated financial benefit of \$70 million annually to local communities across Arkansas. In addition, these unique habitats support a host of other terrestrial and aquatic species which provide significant wildlife viewing and other hunting opportunities beyond just waterfowl hunting opportunities.
  - b) ARPA funding statutory criteria - This project will address declining forest conditions that are occurring in some of the most biodiverse forest ecosystems in Arkansas. Ecosystem services that are benefitted are - flood mitigation, sediment reduction, NPS pollution reduction and management of stormwater. The proposed project will promote climate resiliency in our bottomland hardwood forests. AGFC's system of wildlife management areas provide recreational opportunities that improve mental health for people by providing low-cost recreational opportunities such as hunting, fishing, wildlife watching, hiking, and camping.
- 

**Project cost:** \$15,000,000

**Estimated timeline of completion:** 2022 - 2029 complete.



STATE OF ARKANSAS  
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and Administration**

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September 2, 2022

Senator Jonathan Dismang, Co-Chair  
Representative Michelle Gray, Co-Chair  
Performance Evaluation & Expenditure Review Committee  
Arkansas Legislative Council  
State Capitol Building  
Little Rock, AR 72201

RE: FY 23 American Rescue Plan Act Request

Dear Co-Chairs:

Pursuant to Section 37 (01) of Act 199 of 2022, I am forwarding the attached American Rescue Plan Act request(s) that have received my approval as Chief Fiscal Officer of the State.

- Arkansas Northeastern College – Emergency Grant Aid to Students, Building Ventilation, Servicing/Upgrading HVAC Systems \$259,869
- Cossatot Community College – Emergency Grant Aid to Students, Student Debt Consolidation \$288,441
- Ozarka College – Emergency Grant Aid to Students, Upgrades to HVAC for increased ventilation and filtration \$369,169
- Southeast Arkansas College – Emergency Grant Aid to Students, Lost Revenue Replacement \$477,561
- Pulaski Technical College – Emergency Financial Aid to Students, \$1,603,208
- DHS – County Operations – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Reallocation of Previously Approved Appropriation \$0
- DHS – Developmental Disabilities – First Connections \$232,629

Pursuant to Section 37 (02) of Act 199 of 2022, I am forwarding the attached American Rescue Plan Act request(s) that have received my approval as Chief Fiscal Officer of the State.

- Arkansas Tech University – Multi-Purpose Facility to expand service to underserved populations and overall citizenry of the Arkansas River Valley \$3,200,000





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and Administration**

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- UA – Monticello – Science Center HVAC Grant \$6,000,000
- UA – Pine Bluff – Student Engagement Center \$3,000,000
- DFA – Disbursing Officer – Northwest Technical Institute Education Foundation – Allied Health Facility to accommodate various health programs \$5,000,000
- DFA – Disbursing Officer – Women and Children First – Family Peace Center Construction \$9,597,000
- DFA – Disbursing Officer – Philander Smith College – Expansion of LPN Program, CNA Program and the Panther Pantry and Fresh Market \$5,000,000
- DFA – Disbursing Officer – Arkansas Rural Health Partnership – To address the shortage of health services in rural Arkansas \$10,000,000
- Black River Technical College – Construction of a short-term housing and training facility \$4,622,857
- Southeast Arkansas College – Student Center Building \$3,000,000
- DHS – Aging, Adult & Behavioral Services - to support the training and certification of teams employed by Behavioral Health Agencies in evidence-based models \$5,000,000
- DHS – Medical Services – Emergency Relief for Hospitals - to assist hospitals with offsetting extraordinary costs related to mitigating COVID-19 and retaining staff \$60,000,000

Sincerely,

Larry W. Walther  
Cabinet Secretary

LWW  
Attachment(s)

Agency:Arkansas Tech UniversityBusiness Area Code:0130

Program Title:American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 - Multi-Purpose Facility

Granting Organization:US CongressCFDA #:

Effective Date of Authorization:Beginning:8/31/2022Ending:6/30/2023

Purpose of Grant / Reason for addition or change (include attachments as necessary to provide thorough information):  
A Multi-Purpose Facility that will expand health education, workforce training and community health monitoring by providing opportunities to increase social mobility and overall health improvement for underserved populations and overall citizenry of the Arkansas River Valley.

American Rescue Plan Act Program Funding

Func. Area:UNIVFund Code:FRP1300Direct Funding:Steering Comm. Approved:xContinuation:

Funds Center:Internal Order/WBS Element:

	Program Funding Amount
Regular Salaries	
Extra Help	
Personal Services Matching	
Operating Expenses	
Conference & Travel Expenses	
Professional Fees	190,315
Capital Outlay	2,574,856
Data Processing	
Grants and Aid (CI: 04)	
Other: Sim. Lab/Classroom Equipment	434,829
Other:	
Total	\$3,200,000

Anticipated Duration of Federal Funds:6/30/2023

DFA IGS State Technology PlanningDate

Items requested for information technology must be in compliance with Technology Plans as submitted to DFA IGS State Technology Planning.

Positions to be established: (list each position separately)

\* unclassified positions only

Org Unit	Pers Area	Pers SubArea	Cost Center	Position Number	Cmnt Item	Position Title	Class Code	Grade	Line Item Maximum *

State funds will not be used to replace federal funds when such funds expire, unless appropriated by the General Assembly and authorized by the Governor.

Approved by:James DeLoach8/31/2022

Cabinet Secretary/Agency DirectorDate

Robert Brech9/2/2022

Office of BudgetDate

Office of Personnel MgmtDate

MPK 9/1/22

**A PROPOSAL TO EXPAND ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE EDUCATION, TRAINING  
AND COMMUNITY HEALTH MONITORING**

**ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY  
MORTON HALL HEALTH CARE FACILITY**

**U. S. Treasury  
Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund**

**Date: March 30, 2022**



**Program Plan(s):** A Multi-Purpose Facility that will expand health education, workforce training and community health monitoring by providing opportunities to increase social mobility and overall health improvement for underserved populations and overall citizenry of the Arkansas River Valley.

## **Program**

Use Code: 1C

Program Identifier:

Program Title: Morton Hall Health Care Facility

Total Amount of Request: \$3,365,212

Applicant Presenter: Arkansas Tech University

Location of Applicant: Russellville, Arkansas

Number of Locations Serving the Public: 1

Type of Service to be rendered: Health Care Education, Training and Community Health Monitoring

How Will the Recipient implement the Program: **DIRECT IMPLEMENTATION**

Does the Recipient represent and commit that the Capital Projects will provide services or activities that directly enable work, education, and health monitoring for at least five years from the completion of the Project? **YES**

Will CPF grant funds for this program be used to cover costs incurred after March 15, 2021, but prior to the execution of the Grant Agreement? **NO**

## **Program Narrative/Summary**

### **Introduction and Description of Program:**

Arkansas Tech University (ATU) is a regional comprehensive university recognized across the river valley region for its service in providing entry level training for healthcare professionals. Programming ranges from short term nursing assistant certificates to a master's level education in nursing. The university is recognized across Arkansas for providing health care education and training to over 15 health care occupations. Arkansas Tech University is well-positioned to expand health care education and training at its Morton Hall site in Russellville, Arkansas.

Morton Hall is located at 1700 West C Street in Russellville, Arkansas and is strategically located next to Saint Mary's Regional Medical Center in addition to several other area health care providers, providing student convenience in clinical experiences. With its proximity to Arkansas Tech University, students can engage in all services that the university provides. Additionally, the location of the facility is ideal to serve the education, workforce training and community health monitoring needs of individuals in Russellville and the Arkansas River Valley.

The proposed renovation of Morton Hall (19,700 square feet) expands the unused square footage (9,800 square feet) consisting of interior renovation. This capital project consists of heavy demolition and renovation to expand underroof space for health care program growth. Additionally, the renovation includes mechanical, electrical, technology, and plumbing upgrades, meeting code requirements of the state of Arkansas. The renovation includes the addition of: exterior refinishing, new interior partitions, interior doorways, egress doorways, floor coverings, ceilings, lighting, casework, ramps, and handicapped accessible restrooms for ADA compliance. Minor updates of the current space in use (approximately 8,800 square feet) are also included in the project, to include: updates of windows, doors, floor covering and interior finishes supporting modernization of all interior spaces.

This capital improvement project is inclusive of a multi-purpose community structure (1,500 square feet) to be utilized for academic programming and community outreach activities.

The **Purpose and Program Objectives** of this proposed Capital Projects Fund is to renovate and expand ATU's Morton Hall. Program objectives include:

- Meet the growing healthcare workforce market demand through the addition of both a practical nursing (PN) cohort and a registered nursing (RN) cohort to be housed at Morton Hall. These additions will complement and enhance the current exemplary PN and accredited RN program that operate on the ATU Ozark Campus. The additional PN and RN cohorts enabled by this renovation and expansion will provide increased access in a centralized location in the Arkansas River Valley and will be a direct response to the documented need for more nurses to enter the profession.
- Align efforts to the work of Arkansas Tech Institute's goal of fostering and supporting coordination of workforce education training and activities through ongoing collaboration among community stakeholders and the state of Arkansas' "Ready for Life" initiative.
- Provide expanded access to the education and training needs of other allied health programs to meet growing industry demand, and encourage and facilitate collaboration among programs, including (1) Medical Assisting (MA); (2) Occupational Therapy

Assistant (OTA); (3) EMT/Paramedic; (4) Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) (5) Medication Assistant-Certified (MA-C).

- Offer a complete stackable nursing training pathway. Note: Students will be able to leverage short-term credentials, such as CNA and Medication Assistant-Certified, that will stack into the longer-term practical nursing training. The practical nurse may then opt to use his/her training to further his/her education and become a Registered Nurse. Students may then opt to pursue their Bachelor of Science in Nursing and master's level nursing credential.
- Equip the building with a modern health simulation lab that will be used for (1) clinical simulations; (2) continuing education training; (3) a shared training and education lab for ATU students and health care professionals at Millard-Henry Clinic, St. Mary's Regional Medical Center, Arkansas River Valley School Nurses, regional long-term care facilities, and other willing partner providers.
- Equip the building with a modern HyFlex classroom/training room that will be used for (1) community meeting spaces; (2) targeted continuing education for health professionals; (3) targeted health monitoring and healthy living seminars and events for high need and underserved populations; (4) occupational/job exploration and searches.
- Positively impact the health of residents across the Arkansas River Valley through increased healthcare graduates, a more skilled workforce, and on-going health and wellness monitoring and awareness events.
- Through public and private partnerships, ATU will provide community access to continuing education, training programs, short-term education and life-enhancement activities and programs including community health education events led by members of the medical community, faculty, and students.
- Provide a state-of-the-art community meeting room equipped with up-to-date technology including a computer lab that will provide access to community groups and organizations. This community space will enable organizations and groups to conduct meetings, have shared seminars, provide a space for life-enhancing programs such as a "Silver Sneakers" exercise for the elderly program. The community meeting space may also be utilized for vaccination clinics, blood drives and community health screenings. In partnership with community organizations and healthcare providers, ATU will target underserved populations for education, workforce training and community health monitoring.

### **Renovation and Expansion of Morton Hall**

In 2009, ATU Ozark Campus acquired what is now known as Morton Hall. Morton Hall is a dated building of approximately 19,700 square feet. The building, a former nursing home, needed structural and mechanical repairs at the time it was gifted to the University over ten years ago.

Due to limited capital funding, structural and mechanical repairs have not yet been fully completed. This capital project will enable the needed renovation and expansion of the Morton Hall health care facility. This project proposes renovation of the current space (19,700 sq.ft.) with an added expansion of 1,500 square feet, resulting in a 21,200 square foot health education, training, and community space.

The Morton Hall renovation and expansion will include spaces for nursing education, OTA education, MA education, EMT/Paramedic education, CNA, and MA-C. The renovation and expansion project are inclusive of mechanical and electrical upgrades and technology infrastructure supporting a virtual/hybrid environment. In addition to the educational classroom spaces, the Morton Hall expansion will provide a community space for community health monitoring, health education/outreach activities, and continuing education/professional development.

A complete Morton Hall renovation and expansion will include the addition/implementation of a modern allied health simulation laboratory to significantly improve opportunities for student education. Because one obstacle to increasing the student enrollment in nursing programs has been limitations on clinical sites, approval by the Arkansas State Board of Nursing to validate simulation as a clinical teaching modality serves as a reliable and viable solution for increasing student enrollment in nursing programs. . The renovation and addition of a modern simulation laboratory at Morton Hall would impact more than 150 entry-level healthcare professionals in addition to the impact upon current community healthcare professionals. Additional on-site health care professional training experiences are currently expanding through partnerships with regional long-term care facilities for relevant credential completion programs (i.e., CAN, MA-C and MA).

Arkansas Tech University nursing simulation lab instruction is currently approved by the State Board of Nursing. Expansion of the practical nursing and registered nursing programs at Morton Hall would necessitate an additional sim lab to meet the required clinical education / lab experiences for nursing (and other health occupation education) students receiving training at Morton Hall. In addition to the clinical education experiences, the Morton Hall sim lab would provide needed collaborative professional development and training opportunities not only for ATU students but also for current health-care professionals and instructors meeting continuing education requirements.

### **Major Items for Morton Hall 4-Station Simulation Laboratory**

- Four simulation mannequins and supplies to support a sim laboratory
- Four mid-fidelity skills mannequins
- Medication dispensing machine, software & accessories
- Long-term care style medication carts
- Hospital beds with privacy curtains and headwalls
- Vital sign machines
- IV infusion pumps
- Audio/video equipment
- Lab furniture

### **Modern HyFlex (Cisco) Classroom/Community Meeting Room**

The Morton Hall renovation project will also contain a modern HyFlex (Cisco) virtual instruction classroom/meeting room. The HyFlex classroom enables the asynchronous / synchronous broadcasting of virtual community health and education sessions. Arkansas Tech, in partnership with the region's healthcare providers, will webcast from the Morton Hall location a variety of community topics in the betterment of healthy living.

### **Project Timeline and Milestones:**

#### Morton Hall Construction and Education Expansion Timeline

- Secure funding for Morton Hall nursing expansion–September 2022
- RFP to secure project architect- October 2022
- Bid Morton Hall expansion project–January 2023
- Award bid to contractor–April 2023
- Initiate construction project–May 2023
- Complete construction project–May 2024
- Nursing education expansion and regulatory requests will be completed in Spring 2024, instructional support secured by Summer 2024, and student classes will begin August 2024.
- Community education and health monitoring will begin Fall 2024.

**Program Website, Guidance Documents/Rules:** The programs impacted by the expansion and renovation of Morton Hall are outlined specifically on the ATU and ATU Ozark website (ATU.EDU, ATU.EDU/Ozark). Each program website contains program objectives, accreditation information, program data, etc.



## **Eligibility Components: Project Designed to Directly Enable Work, Education, and Health Monitoring**

Eligibility components are embedded in this proposal and are abbreviated in the section below.

### **Work:**

ATU Morton Hall renovation project will directly enable work by increasing the number of entry-level nurses and other healthcare professionals. The non-traditional cohort of nursing students' projects to graduate 16 licensed practical nurses annually. The Morton Hall project will support 20 OTAs, 15 Medical Assistants, 15 EMTs, 48 CNAs, and 24 Medication Assistant-Certified professionals annually. This project will also support a non-traditional two-year RN program that will be initiated after the first LPN cohort.

Students and community members will increase awareness of employment opportunities via local resources including but not limited to: Ready for Life online platform, ATU Norman Career Services, and the Russellville Chamber Workforce Initiative.

This project will also positively impact the future workforce through education and recruitment of secondary students and the adult learner.

According to the recent regional planning led by the Russellville Chamber of Commerce (Building a Regional Workforce Advantage), the healthcare industry will continue to be a leading need in the river valley workforce. Regional long-term care survey data provided by the Arkansas Health Care Association shows over 150 current vacancies in Pope and surrounding service areas (Conway, Franklin, Johnson, Perry, Yell) for certified nurse assistants, licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, and medical technicians. Also, health care training supports livable wages and social mobility. Regional data indicates healthcare training continues to be a growth industry.

Health occupation employment data as determined by the U.S. Department of Labor:

Occupation	Median Salary W. Ark	Growth % by 2028
Practical Nurse	\$39,140	11% Ark.
Registered Nurse	\$55,440	14% Ark.
Nurse Assistant	\$23,440	8% national
Occupational Therapy Assistant	\$68,330	42% Ark.
EMT	\$27,750	11% national
Paramedic	\$39,560	11% national
Medical Assistant	\$29,230	26% Ark.

**Education:**

ATU is committed to providing access to underserved populations which may benefit from education and training leading to advancement in social mobility. Nursing careers, and other allied health careers, provide a livable wage. U.S. Census data reports indicate that 17.9% of local residents are living in poverty. According to the data from the Arkansas Department of Health, 28.6% of children in Pope County reside in a single-parent home. ATU, through its career pathways initiative, will support parents who need to upskill and train to improve their social mobility.

Annually, ATU Ozark enrolls an average of 24 students in registered nursing and 88 students in practical nursing. The Morton Hall expansion includes a cohort of 16 students on a non-traditional schedule. This schedule will support individuals who are looking to upskill or retrain for a future occupation that provides a livable wage.

In addition to serving adult learners and college students, ATU is partnering with public school districts of Russellville, Atkins, Clarksville, Danville, Dardanelle, Dover, Ozark, and Pottsville. These schools graduated 1,169 students in 2019-2020. Of those, 22% are Hispanic, 2% African American, 10% disabled, 15% with limited English proficiency, and 64% economically disadvantaged. We will target specifically the large numbers of these students enrolled in career and technical courses.

The funded project will directly educate entry-level nurses and other healthcare professionals. Additionally, the project will provide a centralized location for continuing education for current healthcare professionals. The non-traditional cohort of nursing students' projects to graduate 16 licensed practical nurses annually. The Morton Hall project will support 20 OTAs, 15 Medical Assistants, 15 EMTs, 48 CNAs, and 24 Medication Assistant-Certified professionals annually. This project will also support a non-traditional two-year RN program that will be initiated after the first LPN cohort.

**Community Health Monitoring:**

According to the U.S. Census, Pope County is home to a growing Hispanic population as well as a high number of citizens with household incomes under the national average. In collaboration with area health care providers and non-profit entities serving vulnerable populations within our region, ATU's Morton Hall will host regular community health screenings, community education on wrap around services, and provide a space for community health support events.

ATU and healthcare partners will sponsor “Hands-on Healthcare” events. This participation will serve as a collaborative recruiting event to encourage high school students to pursue healthcare occupations. During the spring semester, simulation experiences/job shadowing experiences will be offered to high school students who have, through their career-education activities and their student success plans, shown an interest in the health professions.

Based upon the 2021 County Health Rankings as presented by University of Wisconsin Health Institute, adult obesity indicates Pope County is trending upward with a current rate of 35%. This compares to top state performers with an obesity rate of 26%. Although Pope County residents have access to exercise opportunities (68%), senior citizens in the community have indicated a desire to access exercise facilities through programming provided by St. Mary’s Regional Medical Center. St. Mary’s CEO, Mr. Bob Honeycutt, has agreed to reinstate the Silver Sneakers exercise program in partnership with ATU. ATU will provide the space for this program at Morton Hall.

The Morton Hall expansion will provide ongoing access and educational resources to address this need. In addition, the Morton Hall site will provide programming to support community health monitoring and education.

**Other community healthy living promotional/events and meetings will include**

- Bi-annual regional school nurses’ professional development/continuing education opportunities
- Requested continuing education opportunities for nursing and other allied health professionals
- Quarterly community health monitoring events
- Monthly webcast health improvement topics with Russellville Chamber of Commerce and other community partners
- Virtual occupational/job shadowing via HyFlex/Webcast to area public schools
- Occupational exercises utilizing Ready for Life Platform and area career coaches
- Access to community space as needed to include Parkinson’s Support Group, Diabetes Education, AARP Driver Safety, Blood Drives, vaccination clinics and others.
- Partner with private and public care management teams to host community events to share wrap around service support for underserved populations. Regular outreach to public and private organizations serving underserved populations will be engaged regularly to share community events hosted at Morton Hall community space.

### **Critical Need/Needs Assessment and Justification:**

2020 national census data indicated Pope, Johnson, and Yell county population growth of 2.1% from the 2010 census. The data also indicates the increase was primarily due to the minority population growth of 22.3% and a decrease in the predominant Caucasian population of 3.14%. Hispanic growth during the 10 year period jumped 21.9% for the three counties combined.

According to the recent American Community Survey, Russellville is home to a growing Hispanic population, estimated at 19% of total population in the latest census. National census data shows that this minority group has a disproportionately low rate of health insurance coverage at 10.7% as compared to the Caucasian population of 6.4%, and there is a need for community level education and engagement. In partnership with community health providers and insurance experts, ATU would host community health fairs to offer free health screenings and educational materials on insurance coverage options. Arkansas Tech University is a partner with DreamUS, the nation's largest college access and success program for Hispanic students. Over, 57% of our current DreamUS scholars are health care majors, and 56% of ATU DreamUS applicants for Fall 2022 have expressed an interest in pursuing health care degrees. ATU would utilize the Morton Hall community space to host health job fairs to allow underserved populations to meet local employers and explore the various health care certificate and degree pathways.

The poverty rate as defined by the Census Bureau for the population is 16.2% with the minority population at a 17.38% in poverty. 2019 financial aid data for Arkansas Tech Ozark Campus indicated that 70% of its enrolled students met full PELL eligibility. The Ozark Campus oversees the nurse programming which supports these students' upward social mobility. Data obtained from (JObsEQ) notes the underemployment rate of Pope County at 33.7%, which supports the need for an alternative schedule for upskilling and retraining opportunities for residents who might seek a career in a healthcare field such as nursing. Home health care services, outpatient care centers, continuing care communities, physicians' offices, and substance abuse hospitals all are projected to grow in employment needs, reinforcing the need for a Russellville health occupation training location.

Regional health care providers, department of labor statistics, and a recent study commissioned by the Russellville Chamber "Building a Regional Workforce" recognize that health care occupations rank in the top three (3) of Russellville and River Valley employment industries. Prior to the pandemic, nursing as an example (not including nursing assistants), accounted for over 746 advertisement postings. The data, the occupational professionals, and the pandemic all indicate that there is an increased substantial need to provide training in health care professions. Our regional health care providers/partners concur that access to nursing education and training is a primary concern.

The occupational snapshot as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2020 predicts the following 5-year demand for Pope, Yell, and Johnson Counties:

- Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)-119
- Registered Nurse (RN)- 182
- Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)- 274
- Paramedic- 12
- EMT- 24

COVID-19 has severely disrupted the state of health care in Arkansas and the world. The nursing profession has been stressed and stretched due to overload of patient care needs and shortage of health care workers to provide that care. In combination with workforce shortages and the disruption of Covid-19, allied health care education is a priority in the Russellville and the River Valley communities. According to a recent Russellville Chamber workforce report, the healthcare workforce will continue to be a need in the Pope County region. In consultation with members of the health care community and local stakeholders, there is a confirmed need to expand health care educational offerings at all levels to increase the workforce pipeline.

In addition, there is a need to create a centralized, accessible community health space to offer health monitoring, continuing education, and services to the underserved populations in the Pope County region. According to Mr. Bob Honeycutt, CEO of St. Mary's Regional Medical Center, prior to COVID-19, various community health trainings and events were housed at St. Mary's Regional Medical Center, however, these meeting spaces did not meet safety guidelines for social distancing and were converted to patient care spaces.

Like other Arkansas communities, there is a high prevalence of chronic health conditions such as diabetes and obesity. Arkansas Tech University faculty and students will partner with health organizations across the region to enhance community health monitoring and education on disease prevention and management.

The community facet of this initiative will allow ATU students to participate in enhanced education and workforce training while serving the community. Dialogue with Ms. Annie Schanink, Supervisor of School Nurses in the Russellville School District and ATU allied health program chairs, confirmed the need for healthcare professional development and continuing education opportunities in a centralized location.



Arkansas Tech University is currently partnering with the Russellville Chamber of Commerce and industry to develop and enhance workforce education and training in the region through an Arkansas River Valley Works (ARVW) initiative. According to a June 2021 report from JobsEQ, the Arkansas River Valley has an unemployment rate of approximately 5.2%, and an underemployment rate of approximately 30%. Working with the Arkansas Division of

Workforce Services and the local workforce and adult education centers, ARVW will develop and provide wrap-around services (including career coaching) for this pipeline of participants.

**Local Stakeholders Consulted for Needs Assessment:**

Ben Cross, Pope County Judge, Arkansas

Richard Harris, Mayor of Russellville, Arkansas

Suzy Griffin, Vice President of Economic Development, Russellville Chamber of Commerce, Russellville, Arkansas

Rachel Bunch, Executive Director, Arkansas Health Care Association

Annie Schanink, Supervisor of School Nurses, Russellville School District, Russellville, Arkansas

Fred Teague, Director of Housing and Homeless Prevention, ARVAC and Russ Buss Co-founder, Russellville, Arkansas

Jeff Piker, Director of Restore Hope Arkansas, Russellville, Arkansas

Becky Beavers, Director of River Valley Christian Clinic, Russellville, Arkansas

Bob Honeycutt, Chief Executive Office, St. Mary's Regional Medical Center, Russellville, Arkansas

Jenny Barber, Federal Programs Coordinator, Russellville School District

Vanessa Bailey, Assistant Director of Clinic Operations, Millard Henry Clinic, Russellville, Arkansas

Shelly Daily, RN Department Chair, Arkansas Tech University, Russellville, Arkansas

Blaine Snyder, PN Program Chair, ATU Ozark Campus, Ozark, Arkansas

Todd Birkhead, EMT/Paramedic Program Chair, ATU Ozark Campus, Ozark, Arkansas

Wendi Pool, OTA Program Chair, ATU Ozark Campus

Melinda Rhynes, Medical Assisting Program Chair, ATU Ozark Campus

Jaynie Jones, RN, LHU County Administrator, Arkansas Department of Health

Tatum Ownbey, President & Chief Executive Officer, Home Helpers Care of NWA and River Valley, Rogers, Arkansas

GeorgeAnn Peyton, Care Management Director, Home Helpers Care, Rogers, Arkansas

### **Other Resources Consulted:**

White Paper: Contributing Factors and Solutions to the Nursing Shortage in Arkansas, Arkansas Nursing Administrators in Nursing Education (NANEP) Taskforce, 2021

*Building A Regional Workforce Advantage, An Arkansas River Valley Workforce Analysis*, Ted Abernathy, 2020

U.S. Census Bureau 2020. American Community Survey, [American Community Survey \(ACS\) \(census.gov\)](https://www.census.gov/acs/)

Arkansas Ready for Life, <https://www.readyforlife.com>

University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings & Roadmaps 2021. [www.countyhealthrankings.org](https://www.countyhealthrankings.org)

### **Program Administration:**

ATU Office of Research/Sponsored Programs staff request a unique restricted Fund number for any external award received by the university. The Controller's Office sets up the Fund number in the university's accounting system, Banner. This process ensures award funds are separate from University Educational & General funds and may be accounted for and kept separately.

ATU additionally utilizes Priority Software for post-award fiscal management and reporting. Banner feeds over to this cloud-based grant software, and Research/Sponsored Programs staff code grant entries and run financial reports.

Research/Sponsored Programs staff ensure compliance for each external award by adhering to 2 CFR Part 200, State law, university policy, and award requirements. Staff ensure expenditures are allowable, allocable, and reasonable. Staff will ensure funds are reconciled monthly and invoiced/reported for as appropriate in compliance with the award agreement.

Access to view award budgets is restricted to the Principal Investigator/Program Director and their administrative team, as is authorization to enter requisitions. The Office of Procurement ensures requisitions comply within Arkansas State guidelines and electronically route to the appropriate positions for approval (chair, dean, vice president if necessary). Research/Sponsored Programs staff issue approval as well to ensure compliance. Once fully approved the requisition converted into a purchase order by Procurement. Once goods or services are rendered, an invoice is received for payment by the Controller's Office. The Principal Investigator/Program Director signs the purchase order indicating goods or services are rendered. The Office of Research/Sponsored Programs approves the invoice, and both are sent back to the Controller's Office, where a check is issued and mailed to the vendor.

Any credit card transactions are logged by the individuals who are in possession of the card and must have all transactions approved by their supervisor. Copies of credit card transaction logs and receipts are sent to the Office of Procurement and Office of Research/Sponsored Programs for review, and the Controller's Office for payment.

ATU utilizes the Federal Demonstration Partnership templates for any cost-reimbursement subawards. An audit questionnaire is required of any sub awardees in accordance with OMB Circular A-133, for subrecipient monitoring.

Effort reporting is required for all paid grant employees working on federal or pass-through grants.

Once an award is complete, the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs communicates with the Principal Investigator/Program Director and ensures both any financial reporting and programmatic reporting is completed in assurance with award close-out procedures.

Arkansas Tech University will continue to engage with the community, public and private healthcare providers, and area non-profit support agencies within the River Valley Region and the State of Arkansas to foster community outreach on health care education, training, and community health monitoring. ATU also has existing memorandums of understanding with a network of providers and partnerships throughout the state that will represent broad based community outreach that is an integral part of the Morton Hall Allied Health Care program. The ATU Morton Hall building will also educate and reach out to the community through presentations designed to educate, inform, prevent, and build awareness regarding the opportunities for education, training, and community health monitoring. The Morton Hall building will also provide needed access to a community space to house health information fairs, community health screening, continuing education classrooms and health related education and job fairs.

**Program Budget:**

Projected Cost of Construction:

Original Request: 2,239,005

AE Fees: \$190,315

Inflation Construction Escalation: \$335,851

Projected Adjusted Cost of Construction Total: \$2,765,171

Projected Cost of Simulation Laboratory / Classroom Equipment: \$525,692

Projected Cost of HyFlex Training Room: \$74,349

**TOTAL: \$3,365,212**



<b>PROGRAM BUDGET</b>						
<b>Program Administrative Costs</b>						
	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>
<b>2a. Administering the CPF funds (by the Recipient)</b>						
<b>2b. Technical assistance to potential subrecipients</b>						
<b>2c. Complying with grant administration and audit requirement</b>						
<b>2d. Community Engagement</b>						
<b>2e.</b>						
<b>2f.</b>						
<b>2g.</b>						

<b>2. Total Program Administrative Costs (not to exceed amounts listed in source of funding) *</b>	*	*	*	*	*	*
<b>Project Costs</b>						
<b>3a. Recipient Project Costs</b>		<b>\$841,303</b>	<b>\$1,682,606</b>	<b>\$841,303</b>		
<b>3b. Subgrant Project Costs</b>	NA					
<b>3a.vi</b>						
<b>3a.vii.</b>						
<b>3a. viii.</b>						
<b>3a.ix.</b>						
<b>3 Total Project Costs</b>		<b>\$841,303</b>	<b>\$1,682,606</b>	<b>\$841,303</b>		

\* Arkansas Tech University plans to pay for program administration costs through general revenues budgeted toward sponsored program administration functions.

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**AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021 PROGRAM APPROPRIATION  
AND PERSONNEL AUTHORIZATION REQUEST  
SECTION 37 OF ACT 199 OF 2022**

**C.9**

Agency: University of Arkansas at Monticello Business Area Code: 0155  
 Program Title: American Rescue Plan/UAM Science Center HVAC CPF  
 Granting Organization: US Treasury CFDA #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Effective Date of Authorization: \_\_\_\_\_ Beginning: 8/31/2022 Ending: 6/30/2023  
 Purpose of Grant / Reason for addition or change (include attachments as necessary to provide thorough information):  
 Please see the attached grant proposal.

**American Rescue Plan Act Program Funding**

Func. Area: UNIV Fund Code: FRP1550 Direct Funding: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Funds Center: New Internal Order/WBS Element: \_\_\_\_\_ Steering Comm. Approved: X  
 Continuation: \_\_\_\_\_

	Program Funding Amount
Regular Salaries	
Extra Help	
Personal Services Matching	
Operating Expenses	
Conference & Travel Expenses	
Professional Fees	
Capital Outlay	
Data Processing	
Grants and Aid (CI: 04)	
UAM Science Center	6,000,000
Other:	
Total	\$ 6,000,000

Anticipated Duration of Federal Funds: 12/31/2026

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**DFA IGS State Technology Planning** Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Items requested for information technology must be in compliance with Technology Plans as submitted to DFA IGS State Technology Planning.

**Positions to be established: (list each position separately)**

Org Unit	Pers Area	Pers SubArea	Cost Center	Position Number	Comnt Item	Position Title	Class Code	Grade	Line Item Maximum *

State funds will not be used to replace federal funds when such funds expire, unless appropriated by the General Assembly and authorized by the Governor.

Approved by: Reagan Ross 8-31-22 Robert Brech 9/2/2022 **34**  
 Cabinet Secretary/Agency Director Date Office of Budget Date Office of Personnel Mgmt Date  
 MPK 8/31/22

Use Code 1G Multi-Purpose Community Facility Projects  
Use Code 1C Questionnaire

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Program Identifier:

Program Title: Science Center HVAC Grant Proposal

How will the Recipient implement the Program? (picklist below)

Does the Recipient represent and commit that the Capital Projects will provide services or activities that directly enable work, education, and health monitoring for at least five years from the completion of the project?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Will CPF grant funds for this program be used to cover costs incurred after March 15, 2021, but prior to execution of the Grant Agreement?

Yes ☐ No ☒

- If yes, you must provide the information requested under the Pre-Award Cost Annex

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**Program Narrative:**

**Program Summary:**

The University of Arkansas at Monticello (UAM) is an open-access, accredited, four-year public university in the state's southeast corner. UAM's mission as an open-access institution is to provide educational opportunities for students who might not otherwise have the chance to attain a post-secondary education. Our campus is unique because we also have two Colleges of Technology that serve students from adult education (GED) to technical certificates needed for students to enter the workforce immediately upon completion. Under UAM's program offerings, a student can enter the university to earn a GED through a master's degree. According to the 2021 IPEDS report, 36% of UAM's student population identified as a minority, including 28% of our students identifying as African American. The same report states that 62% of our undergraduate students received PELL grants compared to our peer average of 55%. UAM is located in the Arkansas Delta region, and many of our students come from the area. It is one of the poorest regions in the country.

UAM is seeking capital funding to upgrade the HVAC systems in the Science Center, which was constructed in the 1960's and has not received significant upgrades since it opened. This facility

is home to courses that nearly every student on the main campus is required to take and poses substantial challenges in terms of the spread of Covid-19 on our campus and the community. Due to serving many general education courses, the large class sizes, and the lack of air circulation, this facility is more conducive to viral spread.

Implementing this project is vital to our students, who tend to perform much better in the classroom with their faculty members. Retention statistics from the last several years and qualitative feedback from faculty validate our concerns about our students' success in the classroom. Some students manage virtual courses just fine, but UAM has a large population who struggle when instruction shifts to remote learning due to various factors. The biggest concern is students becoming infected with Covid-19 or becoming in direct contact with a classmate or instructor. Once a student pivots to remote learning, the challenges begin with finding access to stable internet service. Some classwork, particularly science lab classes, is challenging to conduct virtually.

Our area of the state does not have reliable broadband service, so access to course materials can be difficult. While UAM has strong Wi-Fi and created opportunities for students to use internet service from the building's parking lot, they will need transportation to get to campus irregularly. These barriers are significant for many students who may lack those resources. This is an issue for our students and our faculty and staff, who must work remotely if quarantined. UAM's ability to teach students in person helps ensure students are retained and make progress toward graduation.

Drew Memorial Hospital serves Monticello and the surrounding communities in southeast Arkansas. During a recent meeting, they expressed the financial hardship of paying for travel nurses due to their inability to hire locally. UAM and Drew Memorial have recently partnered with the hospital offering to pay the tuition of nursing students for four years if they commit to working for the hospital upon graduation. The success of our local hospital is vital to our community since there is already a lack of healthcare access in our region of the state. The ability for UAM to provide an educated workforce in a high-need area hinges on us providing the education. Whether nursing majors or pursuing pre-medicine, they will take classes in the Science Center. It is our job to give them the best possible opportunities for success to serve our community and our state in the medical profession.

The Science Center's current environment contains recirculation units that do not incorporate fresh air into the breathing zone. Filtration on these units is extremely poor due to their design. The building is also negatively pressurized, leading to increased infiltration of humid air from the outside and poor indoor air quality. All of the air handling equipment in the building is approximately sixty years old, well beyond its useful life, and inefficient. For a facility such as this, the building lacks proper lab pressurization controls for occupant safety. Additionally, the exterior envelope will need to be addressed, including unconditioned crawl space, to achieve appropriate indoor air quality.



This project will allow UAM to install all new HVAC equipment to generate better circulation throughout the facility with a fresh air system. One thing contributing to the spread of Covid-19 is the recycling of air in the facility, which creates a situation that can infect multiple people in an enclosed environment such as a classroom, laboratory, or office. This is particularly the case in a lab setting due to the inability to social distance while using the equipment. Due to the lack of investment in the facility, there will be significant upgrades to bring everything up to code and install the new mechanical and plumbing systems necessary. All new air handling equipment will be installed with MERV 13 filtration. The project will upgrade the building from a two-pipe hydronic system, which only allows for heating or cooling of the facility and not the simultaneous operation of both. This allows for proper dehumidification and better control of space temperatures. Proper lab pressurization controls will also be installed to ensure all building occupants will be safe in their respective learning environments. Mitigating the number of students, faculty, and staff exposed keeps everyone safe at work or in the classroom, so learning is uninterrupted.

If this project is approved for funding, we anticipate the project beginning in May 2024 and getting completed in approximately eighteen months. Most of the work would have to take place over the summer and when students were not in the facility. This timeline also reflects the reality of global supply chain challenges that have constrained timelines since the onset of the worldwide pandemic. This projected timeframe would provide enough time for UAM to move the project through all the necessary approvals and procurement processes while also giving time for equipment to be delivered to the site.

The first milestone would be to get the project approved by the Board of Trustees and the Arkansas General Assembly's Legislative Council. The University of Arkansas Board of Trustees meets five times a year, while the Legislative Council will convene monthly when the legislature is not in session. Once the project is approved, we can begin work on selecting design professionals and a contractor to be again supported by the Board and Legislative Council. Getting both parties under contract will take several months, along with the design being finalized so the contractor can provide pricing. After the price has been finalized, UAM will release the contractor to begin procuring materials and prepare for the job to start as soon as classes are completed.

This facility was selected for this application due to the need for upgraded HVAC systems and the large population the facility serves. Under the guidance we have reviewed, it appears to UAM that the Science Center is a candidate for funding out of this appropriation. Updating mechanical systems in this building to provide a safer environment would give UAM the best outcome compared to other facilities on campus.

Our highest priority is providing the faculty, staff, and students with a safer place to work and learn. When the institution began working through this process, the Science Center was at the top of the list for improvements. This facility houses general education courses and students majoring in nursing, forestry, agriculture, pre-med, and other fields of study. Investing in this

facility would provide a high return on investment based on our student population.

### **Eligibility:**

### **Work:**

Implementing this project will directly enable nursing and pre-medicine students to fill jobs in critical fields. The nursing component is of immense importance to Monticello and the surrounding communities because our local, regional hospital direly needs full-time nurses. The cost of paying travel nurses to fill gaps in current jobs is straining their budgets, so our partnership in providing skilled nurses ready to go to work is vital for the region.

While our nursing students take many classes and labs in the building, we also have an extremely high acceptance rate for students applying to medical and dental schools. These professionals often graduate and move back to our community to live and provide services to residents enabling access to quality medical care.

### **Education:**

The HVAC upgrade in the Science Center would significantly enable educational opportunities for a significant percentage of students on our campus. This facility serves most of the undergraduate students on our campus for general education requirements and students majoring in healthcare-related fields due to the science courses and labs they are required to take. Our ability to create a safe environment with better air quality and circulation would enable us to keep more students and faculty in the classroom, which makes better outcomes.

We have now had several years of quantitative and qualitative data regarding remote learning on our campus that shows our students perform much better face-to-face. Replicating science labs in an online environment for students forced to quarantine is not conducive to their progression. We aim to get students through their courses in the first attempt to reduce the cost of retaking courses and getting behind schedule for graduation.

### **Health Monitoring:**

This project will enable health monitoring at UAM because we will determine how well this facility will assist in mitigating spread compared to other facilities on campus that will not have the same standard of air circulation. At UAM, we record and monitor faculty, staff, and students who test positive for Covid-19 and contact trace to identify direct contacts. It would be interesting for our campus to track how many students identified as direct contacts in the Science Center become infected. While numerous factors determine infection, such as immunity from recovery, vaccination status, and others, we still want to limit exposure and risk in each facility.

### **Critical Need:**

Upgrading the HVAC systems in the Science Center would directly address a critical need in our community by providing a safer environment for students to learn and a safer place for faculty and staff to work. The faculty in this facility does an excellent job of preparing students and getting students ready for the medical profession. By keeping everyone healthy, they can deliver the type of instruction needed for these students to succeed and serve our community in areas of desperate need.

One of the direct impediments to work would be that the curriculum for a student pursuing a career in the medical profession is challenging. It takes dedicated faculty and students to seek this career route and successfully complete the required courses. These students cannot afford to become hampered by contracting Covid-19 and have to leave the classroom setting. While the best-case scenario is a quick recovery and the student keeping up with work remotely, there is always a chance of a prolonged battle with the illness. In this instance, a student can fall behind so far that they cannot pass the course and might have to retake classes, which adds to the expense of going to school and prolongs their ability to get a job and begin their career in the medical field. Due to our local medical providers' nursing shortages, we must provide them with as many potential employees as possible.

Many of these impediments could be remediated by this project by providing high-quality air in the facility, which has been shown to assist in reducing the spread of Covid-19. As previously stated, the current environment in the facility merely recycles existing air which could be filled with the virus that spreads throughout the classroom, office, or lab facility. By adding ventilation and fresh air to the facility, we will significantly reduce the spread of viruses, enabling everyone to learn in a safe space. Many of our students come from first-generation households and providing them with the best opportunity to be successful is our goal. The data on our campus proves this is best done in a face-to-face setting with faculty mentoring students, providing critical feedback, and developing relationships.

As a smaller regional university in Southeast Arkansas, UAM does not have the resources to provide the needed upgrades referenced in this proposal. The cost of upgrading the HVAC system is more than we can afford, especially during declining enrollment for most higher education institutions. As the largest employer in our region and the largest provider of a skilled workforce, we must upgrade this facility. Our region needs access to quality education in a safe environment, and UAM is doing everything possible to provide this. However, a lack of access to general improvement funds continues to exacerbate the amount of deferred maintenance that is needed across campus.

As stated earlier, the critical need is the ability to provide an environment where the spread of Covid-19 is mitigated in a way that keeps our students in class. Retention data proves in our case that face-to-face instruction is the best method for overall student success. We also believe our

students' social and emotional well-being improves when they interact with their peers on campus. Overall, the UAM campus has more than \$90 million in deferred maintenance, with much of that considered a critical need. Unfortunately, we can only address some of that need at any given time, and declining enrollment has strained resources and the institution's investment ability.

Recent feedback from our local regional hospital about the need for full-time nurses makes the success of this program vitally crucial to our service area. Drew Memorial Hospital and many other healthcare providers rely on our graduates to work in our area of the state. These healthcare employees serve a region of the state that needs more care access to improve outcomes. This program will help ensure the success of UAM students but particularly those in the healthcare industry. As an institution of higher education, our goal is to serve our students and community. While not everyone in our community will attend college at UAM, they will be served by a UAM graduate in their local dental office, medical clinic, or hospital.

UAM has considered the equity aspect of the Science Center proposal as one that provides the most significant impact for the highest volume of students on campus. Most students will take courses and labs in this facility during their career at UAM. This allows many students to benefit from better air quality and more assurance that the virus is being mitigated so they can stay safe. Everyone deals with Covid-19 differently, and we must consider that while assisting them in achieving their goals. This also helps them in their effort to pass courses that direct them on their way to a degree where they can get the job they desire.

Our faculty in the Science Center has done tremendous work over the last decade or more. We have a near 100% acceptance rate to medical school, dental school, and professional programs. These future healthcare providers are getting the foundation they need at UAM to compete for limited spots in the next phase of their journey. Not only do we graduate nurses that work for our local healthcare providers, but many also become nurse practitioners to add another level of service to the community and region. The value of this facility cannot be overstated due to the mission the institution and these students serve. This week the Bachelors of Science in Nursing program obtained a 100% passage rate on the state nursing licensure examination.

### **Program Administration**

UAM's approach to compliance with award requirements will understand what is expected before initiating the program. UAM has received funds for capital improvements in the past, with various reporting requirements handled by Finance and Administration. Finance and Administration will oversee the project from start to finish while adhering to all federal, state, and UA System guidelines. When the project is approved at the federal level, UAM will begin gaining the necessary approvals, which will require much work on the front end. Once the project is approved, a request for proposals will be issued for design services. A committee will be formed that will score each proposal to submit to the UA Board of Trustees for subsequent approval. Once Legislative Council approves the contract for design services, UAM can begin

working on the plans, which will assist us in soliciting contractors. Due to working on a university campus, the work must be planned and executed in a way that does not disturb students' normal course of business. All factors will be taken into consideration to plan and execute the project in the most efficient manner possible. Once the project has begun, it will be monitored by the design professional and UAM. Reports on capital projects are required by the Board of Trustees as well.

### **Program Budget**

<b>Detailed Capital Project Funds - \$6,987,500</b>		
<b>Detailed Description</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Renovation - walls, floors	\$400,000	Capital Funds Project
Renovation- electrical	\$1,350,000	Capital Funds Project
HVAC- New HVAC unit, duct work, labor	\$4,250,000	Capital Funds Project
HVAC- New HVAC unit, duct work, labor	\$500,000	Other Funding Sources
<b>Total Construction Costs</b>	<b>\$6,500,000</b>	
<b>Total Design Fees</b>	<b>\$487,000</b>	<b>Other Funding Sources</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$987,500</b>	<b>Other Funding Sources</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,000,000</b>	<b>Capital Funds Project</b>

<b>PROGRAM BUDGET</b>						
<b>Program Administrative Costs</b>						
	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>
2a. Administering the CPF funds (by the Recipient)						
2b. Technical assistance to potential subrecipients						
2c. Complying with grant administration and audit requirements						
2d. Community Engagement						
2e.						
2f.						
2g.						

<b>2. Total Program Administrative Costs (not to exceed amounts listed in source of funding)</b>						
<b>Project Costs</b>						
<i>3a. Recipient Project Costs</i>				\$3,231,000	\$2,775,000	
<b>3b. Subgrant Project Costs</b>						
3a.vi.						
3a.vii.						
3a.viii.						
3a.ix						
<b>3 Total Project Costs</b>				\$3,231,000	\$2,775,000	

## PRE-AWARD COST ANNEX

This annex is only required if you answered “Yes” to question 5 of the Program Questionnaire. Complete the table below for the program costs incurred after March 15, 2021, but prior to the execution of the grant agreement (“Pre-Award Costs”).

Does the applicant provide reasonable assurance that the intended source of funds for the Pre-Award Costs was the CPF Grant?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Submit an attachment describing each project that includes Pre-Award project costs. Also describe the current source of funding for the project and how the CPF funding was contemplated to be used in coordination with current sources of funding.

<b>PRE-AWARD COSTS</b>	<b>Amount (\$s)</b>
<i>3a. Recipient Project Costs (Total)</i>	
3a.ii. Pre-project development, including data-gathering, feasibility studies, community engagement and public feedback processes, equity assessments and planning, and needs assessments.	
3a.iii. Personnel Costs	



3a.iv. Repair, rehabilitation, construction, and improvement, of facilities	
3a.v. Acquisition of real property, leases, and related	

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021 PROGRAM APPROPRIATION  
AND PERSONNEL AUTHORIZATION REQUEST  
SECTION 37 OF ACT 199 OF 2022

C.10

Agency: University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff Business Area Code: 0160

Program Title: American Rescue Plan - Student Engagement Center

Granting Organization: US Congress CFDA #: \_\_\_\_\_

Effective Date of Authorization: Beginning: 8/31/2022 Ending: 6/30/2023

Purpose of Grant / Reason for addition or change (include attachments as necessary to provide thorough information):  
Please see attached information.

American Rescue Plan Act Program Funding

Func. Area: UNIV Fund Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Direct Funding: \_\_\_\_\_

Funds Center: \_\_\_\_\_ Internal Order/WBS Element: \_\_\_\_\_ Steering Comm. Approved: X

Continuation: \_\_\_\_\_

	Program Funding Amount
Regular Salaries	
Extra Help	
Personal Services Matching	
Operating Expenses	
Conference & Travel Expenses	
Professional Fees	
Capital Outlay	
Data Processing	
Grants and Aid (CI: 04)	
Other: Student Engagement Center	3,000,000
Other:	
Total	\$ 3,000,000

Anticipated Duration of Federal Funds: \_\_\_\_\_

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**DFA IGS State Technology Planning** **Date**  
Items requested for information technology must be in compliance with Technology Plans as submitted to DFA IGS State Technology Planning.

Positions to be established: (list each position separately)

\* unclassified positions only

Org Unit	Pers Area	Pers SubArea	Cost Center	Position Number	Cmnt Item	Position Title	Class Code	Grade	Line Item Maximum *

State funds will not be used to replace federal funds when such funds expire, unless appropriated by the General Assembly and authorized by the Governor.

Approved by: Lauren B. Alexander 8-31-2022

Cabinet Secretary/Agency Director Date

Robert Brech 9/2/2022

Office of Budget Date

Office of Personnel Mgmt Date

Use Code:

**1C**

Program Identifier:

**Capital Project Fund**

Program Title:

**Student Engagement Center at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff**

Total Amount of Request:

**\$3 million**

Applicant Presenter:

**The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff**

Location of Applicant:

**Pine Bluff, Arkansas**

Number of Locations Serving the Public: **1**

Type of Service to Be Rendered: The Student Engagement Center (SEC) will be a multi-purpose full service campus-based facility on the grounds of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, which is located at an under-resourced state university that is an Historically Black College/University (HBCU) and that is located in the fragile and underserved community in the Arkansas Delta, one of the poorest regions of the state and nation. It will serve as a hub for program delivery, student engagement, health education, community health engagement, student health and wellness assessment and counseling, workforce development, enrollment management and student success. The full activation of such a facility will serve to provide wrap-around support services that improve the various instructional, research, and service needs of students and faculty that will be provided under one roof, and in a manner that facilitates a consistent, student-centered, and appropriate process of delivery of comprehensive services to the university. Consistent with the land-grant mission of the university, the facility will be used to provide outreach service to the Arkansas Delta Region through sponsorship of community health fairs and guest speakers who can inform the community on the coronavirus and other public health issues.

How Will the Recipient implement the Program: **Direct Implementation**

Does the Recipient represent and commit that the Capital Projects will provide services or activities that directly enable work, education, and health monitoring for at least five years from the completion of the Project? **Yes.**

Will CPF grant funds for this program be used to cover costs incurred after March 15, 2021, but prior to the execution of the Grant Agreement? **No.**

## **Program Narrative**

### ***Program Summary:***

The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB), the oldest and largest historically black university in the state, serves as a link that bridges development and educational access to minority, poor, and underserved citizens of the state. UAPB has a history of educating and serving those living at life's margins, particularly those from the Delta region, demographically one of the most disadvantaged areas in the nation. The university ranks #1 in the state of Arkansas in Addiction Studies, #2 in Best Value for School Affordability, and ranks #11 overall as one of the Top Public Schools in US News and World Reports of Colleges in the South. More than 40 Degree Programs are offered and students enjoy a 14;1 student/teacher ratio. UAPB students hail from 37 states and 20 countries from across the globe. Over the last few years, UAPB has dramatically increased its student 6-year graduation rate from 23.3 percent to 40 percent. UAPB's student success outcomes have been recognized in each of the five years of the state's productivity formula and rewarded with appropriations adding up to more than \$1 million. In addition, UAPB has worked diligently to hold down tuition and fees, while maintaining a low average net price. UAPB is also a member of the University of Arkansas System and is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission.

The University provides a challenging student-focused and learning-centered education designed to meet the changing needs of a diverse and rapidly growing student population. In advancing efforts to address that need, the university has completed an assessment of facilities and resources that require structural or technological modernization. Among the many pressing needs in bringing the university forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a multi-purpose Student Engagement Center (SEC) that combines access to health care, technology, academic support, career planning support, and recreation to meet the needs of today's student and the State of Arkansas. As such, it is critical that the UAPB construct a new Student Center to replace the current facility, which was constructed in 1951. A marvel of its time, especially among campuses of historically black institutions, the UAPB Student Union was featured in a July 1952 magazine feature story, "Dixie College Hits New High," highlighting the functionality and charm of the structure. While well maintained for more than 70 years, it does not include many of the features and characteristics of the modern 21st century student union. As a result, UAPB seeks funding to assist in developing the financial resources necessary to construct a facility that would provide common areas for public health fairs and assemblies as well as student social engagement, co-curricular learning, technological upgrades, and extracurricular activities needed to allow UAPB to remain competitive with its peer institutions and grow its educational impact throughout the state and region.

The facility will serve as a catalyst in linking students--many of whom are the first in their immediate families to attend college--who hail from the Delta and other impoverished regions of the state and nation with the type exposures necessary to prepare them to be competitive in a highly technical society.

Scholars have documented the importance of the connection between the modern-day student center or union facilities and the students' sense of community on university campuses. Other studies have also shown the strong positive impact that participation in extracurricular activities has on student retention and graduation success.

This program plan presents the project requested by UAPB to construct a \$35 million multi-purpose facility that would centralize space for student health and wellness activities, food service outlets, various other student engagement outlets, including the Student Success Center, the Career Services Center, and a Graduate and Professional School Resource Center.

The plan for the Student Center started in 2015 with the development of the UAPB Campus Masterplan, which was completed with the assistance of the planning firm of Hanbury Evans Wright Vlattas and Company, a firm specializing in campus design and planning. The plan was approved by the University of Arkansas System Board of Trustees. Two years later the financing plan was started with students voting to approve a student fee for the facility and the Board's approval of the fee. Now the university is ready to issue bonds to help fund the facility.

The UAPB Student Engagement Center will contribute to student success in the additional ways of developing leadership; gaining a sense of belonging; developing a wide perspective; finding provisions on campus; gathering before and after campus events; attending large events, sharing, learning, and working together; and seeing the campus at its best. The expected outcomes of the investment in the SEC include establishment of state-of-the-art student center, complete with spaces for student meetings, programming and enrichment activities at the state's only public land-grant minority serving institution; larger university student space for meetings and health fairs and health monitoring for the community, which significantly impacts the Arkansas Delta, the state of Arkansas and the region; increased co-curricular opportunities for student development and high-impact practices in student affairs; greater emphasis on student retention and graduation through making student success a focal point of campus and community visitors to the new student center; an enhanced commitment to the career preparation of students that focuses on highly-motivated and well trained students, including space for hosting corporate, government, and non-profit visitors who recruit students for the workforce; stronger collaborations and partnerships between UAPB and other education and private sector institutions and businesses in Arkansas and around the nation; the enhancement of UAPB as a destination institution; and the university rising regionally and nationally in recognition, reputation, prestige and visibility.

### **Description**

As an institution with a rich and historic legacy of providing services to many underserved and underrepresented residents of the state, the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) has significantly and positively improved social mobility for poor and minority citizens. Towards growing its level of services, UAPB has a need to remain socially relevant in comparison to its educational peers. The construction of a new Student Engagement Center will advance the university's efforts towards the objective.

The new Student Center will house service areas that include the following:

#### **Work:**

Office of Career Services

#### **Education:**

Student Success Center

Graduate and Professional School Resource Center  
Undergraduate Research Office  
International Programs Office  
Service Learning Office

**Health Monitoring:**

Wellness Center  
Infirmary  
Counseling (Mental Health) Center

**Multi-purpose Areas:**

Major Event/Multi-purpose Meeting Room (Divided for Simultaneous Use)  
Food Service Areas  
Courtyard  
Indoor/Outdoor Dining  
Game Room  
Computer Lab  
Entry, Lobby, and Information/Welcome Desk  
Theater (1,200-Seat)  
Student Lounge/Study Areas

**Timeline**

The plan is to hire an architect and a contractor to plan, design, and manage the construction of the facility. Below is a general timeline for the project:

August 2022	Bond issuance planned to help pay for the Student Engagement Center
September 2022	Board of Trustees approval of the Capital Projects Fund Grant
Sept./Oct. 2022	Complete and sign contract with the building contractor
October 2022	Groundbreaking Event
October 2024	Completion of Construction (provided no serious supply chain issues)
June 2025	Community Health Education Series Begins

**Eligibility:**

The Student Enhancement Center (SEC) at UAPB meets all three of the eligibility criteria for the Capital Projects Funds:

1. The capital asset in which the project is invested is the Student Enhancement Center, and it is designed to directly enable work, education and health monitoring.
2. A critical need for assistance with finding work, increasing educational emphasis and supporting health monitoring—the lack of which was exacerbated by the COVID-19 public health emergency—will be addressed by the construction of the Student Enhancement Center.
3. The work associated with the Student Enhancement Center is designed to address a critical need for health education and monitoring within the university and the surrounding local community.



Note: The activities of the Student Enhancement Center that enable work, education, and health monitoring do not form the exclusive function of purpose of the project. Other functions and purposes of the SEC are indicated below:

### **Work:**

The Office of Career Services will have a very prominent place in the Student Engagement Center (SEC) because of the important role it has in workforce preparation. Students will obtain assistance finding internships and permanent employment through the Office of Career Services. They will also receive training and development with preparing resumes, interviewing skills, job search processes, employee onboarding, preparation for the work environment and overall plans for post-graduation success. With a staff of resident experts in career development, the Office of Career Services offers free workshops, sponsors career fairs, puts students in touch with internship and summer job opportunities, critiques application essays, and maintains an extensive job-search library and résumé referral system. All students are encouraged to engage the office through registration in their freshman year.

Moreover, the Office of Career Services will continue to host fall and spring career fairs for students to engage with representatives from business, government, education, and graduate/professional schools. However, the students and prospective employers will get to use the modern facilities of the Major Event/Multi-purpose Meeting Room in an exposition-style setting.

UAPB has the institutional capacity and a 150-year record of offering comprehensive and culturally relevant services to students and residents of the state. As a premier source of higher education services to the Arkansas Delta, UAPB is recognized as the go-to institution in providing direct support to the region. The university has a significant and acknowledged record of meeting the educational needs of poor, minority, and underserved residents. In many respects, UAPB has served as the leader in expanding social mobility and expanding the middle class in the state. The university remains a higher education leader in bridging educational gaps and linking educational services to poor and underrepresented citizens of the Arkansas Delta.

### **Education:**

The new Student Engagement Center will provide educational opportunities for students and the general public across several diverse venues, including the Student Success Center, the Graduate and Professional School Resource Center, the Undergraduate Research Office, the Office of International Programs and Studies, the Service Learning Office, the Major Event/Multi-purpose Meeting Room and a 1,200-seat auditorium.

One of the most significant changes in higher education over the last two decades is the increasing emphasis on student success, a concept characterized by efforts to retain students while they progress through a series of courses to graduation. A major function of the new student center will be contributing to student progression to graduation through the Student Success Center. The

center, now housed across campus in Caldwell Hall, will provide help with classes, tutoring, study skills, supplemental instruction, writing and communications, and research assistance. UAPB has designed a comprehensive strategy to advance student success – one student at a time. A major factor in this strategy is the construction of a new Student Success Center that will enhance and realize the alignment of a personalized academic, financial, and social support system for all students.

Strategically locating the Student Success Center in the new multi-purpose facility will enable UAPB to build on its success in student outcomes and continue the upward trajectory that will satisfy the state's needs for a well-prepared diverse and inclusive workforce that contributes to the economic prosperity of the Arkansas Delta and the entire state.

The Graduate and Professional School Resource Center will feature offices and a computer lab that will be used to help prepare students for admission to graduate and professional schools. In addition to receiving assistance with the application process, students can receive assistance with undergraduate research opportunities, test preparation for admission to graduate degree programs, schools of law, medicine, and other professional programs. The effort will contribute to the preparation of UAPB students for admission, progression and success in graduate and professional school programs. By encouraging more students to pursue advanced degrees, UAPB seek to increase the likelihood that some of those students will return to communities in the Arkansas Delta, providing leadership and professional support for the population to access quality health care and health monitoring in those areas.

The Office of International Programs and Studies will provide support services for UAPB faculty and students, assisting them with compliance with immigration regulations; facilitating study, travel and internships abroad, promoting university partnerships and providing activities that enhance global awareness and an appreciation for diversity. UAPB is committed to increasing the number of undergraduate students who study abroad by 75 over the next five years by engaging educators and stakeholders to increase the number of U.S. students who can gain international experience through study abroad programs, internships, service learning and non-credit educational experiences.

A significant and much-needed addition to the UAPB campus is a 1,200-seat auditorium for academic and co-curricular programming. The addition of the Performing Arts Theater would fill a major void on the campus for a room of this size for major theatrical performances, concerts, student events, distinguished lectures and campus-wide meetings among various audiences. Currently, the largest auditorium at UAPB has 500 seats, which is not adequate for large-scale university and community-sized productions. Occasionally, hundreds of UAPB students are turned away from assemblies for major speakers because of insufficient capacity in the university's largest auditorium or ad hoc overflow seating in the museum gallery. The theater will include adequate room backstage for performers, guests, social events, storage and green room. Moreover, the Major Event/Multi-purpose Meeting Room can also be used as an occasional educational space for the campus and the community.

In addition to the activities planned for the new SEC, UAPB offers a full complement of educational programs for the students and the community. The university has a total of more than 40 programs at the bachelor's, master's and Ph.D. level and more than 1,000 part-time and full-time employees combined—all of whom will receive educational experiences and/or professional development sessions in the SEC.

### **Health Monitoring:**

Health and wellness are among the services that will be provided through onsite services in the new Student Engagement Center. The Health and Wellness Center consists of a state-of-the-art service unit that addresses the total student. Our staff is committed to the concepts of wellness and prevention and to providing quality treatment for the physical and emotional needs of the students we serve. We encourage our students and staff to visit the Student Health Services Office not only when they are ill or injured, but also when they have questions or concerns about any health and wellness issues. UAPB stresses that good health is an essential part of a successful educational experience. Offering a variety of health-care services to students and staff, the university endeavors to provide direct on-campus support.

### **Wellness Services**

UAPB will construct an enlarged fitness area in which it will move its fitness and recreation activities inside of the new facility, add an interior walking track, and expand the space for exercise and fitness. Fitness trainers will be available to assist students with using the exercise equipment and developing a personalized fitness plan using exercise equipment, including stationary bicycles, elliptical machines, treadmills and stationary weights connected to machines. The goal is to have more students and employees exercising to curb the rates of high blood pressure, obesity, heart disease, diabetes and arthritis and improve good health practices overall. The new facility will make it possible for the trainers to work on fitness plans with patrons at the facility. Since the COVID-19 emergency, UAPB has endeavored to focus more attention on the importance of exercise in promoting healthy habits to combat the coronavirus and other illnesses that are prevalent in underserved communities like Pine Bluff and the Arkansas Delta. The Wellness Center will monitor student health and wellness using a digital physician scale to calculate Body Mass Index (BMI). Identifying the BMI will allow the staff to assist students with setting and achieving their fitness goals. While using the cardio machines, students can monitor their heart rate by gripping the designated handlebar detectors. In addition, UAPB plans to add an automatic blood pressure kiosk to help identify students who may be at a risk for heart disease or stroke.

### **Medical Services**

Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, the Student Health Services area has taken on an added significance and responsibility. Those services include COVID19 testing and vaccinations, flu testing and vaccinations, women's health services, and basic student wellness and support. During the COVID 19 public health emergency, UAPB also worked in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Health, the City of Pine Bluff, Natural State Laboratories, and others to

sponsor drive-up and walk-in mass testing for the university and occasionally for the broader community. Moreover, the university worked in partnership with Jefferson Regional Medical Center, Doctor's Orders Pharmacy, and Walgreens Pharmacy to set up temporary clinics on the UAPB campus to provide vaccinations for the community. The new facility would be a natural host site for future events to provide information and education on health issues and organize health administration and monitoring activity with the support of the external health agencies and partnerships.

Using a collaborative approach toward the total student development, the mission of Student Health Services is to ensure students who use this facility maintain an optimal level of health. The center is staffed by a professional Registered Nurse, and a secretary. The university also has contracted with a part-time Medical Doctor/Advance Practice Registered Nurse and a reproductive RN Practitioner. The health services office also offers specialized student wellness education and training that looks at the total health of students. The office also sponsors Health Awareness Peer Educators (HAPE), a group of compassionate students at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff whose key focus is HIV/AIDS. The students are trained by certified teachers in HIV/AIDS education which provides information and support to assist in positive lifestyle behaviors. The peer educators communicate with peers about health concerns and related issues (obesity, personal hygiene, blood donation, etc.) and serve as a resource and role model to all people who connect with them. The peers reinforce the belief that an educated peer or person is a more balanced individual in determining his or her destiny. The university also plans to monitor student health through a messaging system in which students can email health questions and concerns to a licensed health nurse [athealthservices@uapb.edu](mailto:athealthservices@uapb.edu). Using on-site medical equipment, the health staff will be able to assist students with monitoring and tracking their cholesterol, glucose, heart rate, and blood pressure. Through urinalysis testing, the staff will also be able to manage a wide range of disorders, such as urinary tract infections, kidney disease and diabetes.

### Counseling Services

UAPB plans to move the Counseling Center from the century-old Caldwell Hall into the new facility to increase the service level provided to students by expanding the waiting area, increasing work areas for counselors, and increasing the level of confidentiality for students who need counseling. As a result of the shocks and disruptions to campus life caused by the COVID 19 pandemic, the need for a more robust mental health counseling program has moved to the forefront. The university has had to engage students, employees, and the community with greater sensitivity to the impact that current stressors and multiple unexpected changes are having on their sense of wellbeing. In response, the university pilot-tested a virtual tele-medicine mental health program to address the increasing student need for access to counseling. The experiences we have obtained from this pilot will be helpful in working with our medical partners on plans to use the facility for community health education and monitoring.

The new facility will enable the university to increase the amount of health monitoring that exists for the university and the community. The newly proposed configuration of the waiting area combining counseling with medical care will hopefully remove some of the remaining stigma that

may be causing some inhibitions about seeking mental health counseling. Like most universities, UAPB has an established student mental health task force to monitor and support students having challenges.

Private institutions and increasingly using mental health assessments for broad-based screening to evaluate groups of students in attempts to identify “risk factors” for adjustment difficulties. These assessments help institutions identify students at risk for poor outcomes; identify students who may need monitoring or intervention; and inform decisions about needed services. The Student Counseling Center, in collaboration with the Dean of Student Life Office, will use Symplicity’s Advocate System to track students who may have mental health issues or need behavioral intervention. The medical and mental health of the students with positive COVID-19 cases and other serious illnesses, are monitored daily via phone.

### **Critical Need/Justification:**

The Student Engagement Center project at UAPB addresses a critical need for the university and the surrounding community by consolidating information resources on employment, job preparation, college achievement and successful completion, and comprehensive health and wellness services, which include health monitoring. The university lacks all of the resources needed to build this comprehensive facility for the university and community.

UAPB and the community of Pine Bluff/Jefferson County have a critical need for the new Student Engagement Center project. UAPB is a university that is located in the Arkansas Delta, one of the poorest areas of the nation, and it lacks the resources in capital outlay to provide a facility that includes employment services, education and health monitoring in a state-of-the-art facility similar to those at its peer institutions. In addition, the local community suffers from higher than average unemployment, lack of high-wage jobs, insufficient matches between job vacancies and qualified job seekers, limitations on access, opportunity, equity, and affordability in higher education; and the lack of access to health and wellness services in modern comprehensive facilities. Specifically, the current student center, which is called the L.A. Davis Student Union, was built in 1951 and it is too small to accommodate the current student body that has now more than doubled in size. It lacks many of the co-curricular spaces such as the Office of Career Services, the Student Success Center that are commonly housed in the center of college and university campuses. Career Services and Student Success are currently housed in smaller, cramped spaces in the university’s historic Caldwell Hall, which was built in 1928 and lacks public parking outside of the building. The facilities for health and wellness, which are scattered across the UAPB campus, would be consolidated into the new student center in an area that allows for coordination and integration of services and activities. Currently the counseling center that provides mental health services is located in Caldwell Hall, while the infirmary is located in a single-story ground-level 70-year old building, and the fitness center is located in a worn-out portable building that’s outlived its useful life and is falling into disrepair. All of these shortcomings will be remedied with the new facility that increases the amount of space for each service area, and it provides a modern 21st century facility that will accommodate the needs of the campus and the community for comprehensive

medical health care, mental health care and wellness education for the UAPB community. Additionally, the new facility will co-locate the three service areas in one building, enabling opportunities for integration and coordination as well as increased use.

UAPB will engage with students, faculty, and the broader community to maximize the use and effectiveness of the SEC. In addition, as a regional educational leader, the university will work with community, political, and educational stakeholders in expanding access and support for the center and its focus. UAPB will also work with regional educational partners to expand stakeholder support for growing educational awareness of the available resources and learning and training opportunities provided through the center. In that the community and the region will be positively impacted by the economic impact of the center, UAPB will also actively engage broader learning ventures in the community and the region.

UAPB has had on-going community engagement surrounding the development of the new center and the health care response to COVID 19 through established partnerships. Some of those partnerships and relationships include the Jefferson Regional Medical Center in which the Chancellor serves on the Board of the Directors, and JRMC has worked in partnership with the university in athletics, nursing and employment opportunities. As the site of the diagnosis of the first positive case of COVID-19 in the state of Arkansas, JRMC has also been a valuable partner in advising the university about health precautions and monitoring throughout the COVID-19 public health emergency. In addition, UAPB has been involved in a growing partnership with CHI St. Vincent Hospital in Little Rock on improving the quality of health education that we provide at the university and that impacts the community. Other community partners with which the university has consulted included the Pine Bluff Leadership Roundtable and the Go Forward Pine Bluff Initiative.

The spread of the deadly coronavirus across the nation and the world has caused colleges and universities to be more concerned than ever about the health and well-being of their students. While most students appear to be healthy, they are also exposed to many new health risks from living in dormitories or close quarters with other students, through the stress of being away from home and the pressure of academic life, or through the use of drugs and alcohol. Higher education institutions, therefore, must provide health services for their students and promote awareness of the various health issues that students encounter. According to Statista, around 54 percent of surveyed students in 2021 in the U.S. agreed or strongly agreed that their health and well-being were priorities at the college or university they were currently attending. While the most common health issue among college students is a cold, campus health centers must deal with a variety of issues, including diseases and select disabilities or conditions, mental health, drugs and alcohol, and a number of other risk factors.

According to the latest available UAPB data on its undergraduates, 37 percent of the students and their families live below the poverty line. In addition, 73 percent of UAPB students were eligible to receive a Pell grant through demonstrating exceptional financial need on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The Pell grant typically does not have to be repaid, which makes it highly desirable. It is awarded by the U.S. Department of Education to help eligible low-income



students pay for college costs, including tuition, fees, room and board, and other educational expenses.

90 percent of the undergraduate students enrolled at UAPB come from the counties in the Arkansas Delta, a region of the state and nation that is among the poorest.

The location of the university is in the city of Pine Bluff, where 24 percent of the population live in poverty compared to 18.9 percent of Arkansans who live below the poverty, which ranks the state in 46<sup>th</sup> Place. Pine Bluff's per capita income is \$19,240 and median household income is \$34,410. About 20 percent of the residents of Pine Bluff have a four-year college degree, while 14 percent of the residents did not complete high school.

The university has a critical need for upgrading facilities to better serve the student population. It is our responsibility to provide state of the art technological educational support services and building a framework for delivering wrap-around services to students. Despite providing high-quality educational services to 2,700 students annually, the university does not have the resources to meet this need or to significantly provide the level of support comparable to its state or regional peers. Therefore the funding requested in this proposal is critically needed to complete construction of the UAPB Student Engagement Center, which will benefit the university and the community through job preparation, education, and health monitoring.

### **Program Administration**

The State of Arkansas has a long history of receiving and monitoring federal grants. The Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration has developed a Capital Projects Fund Beneficiary Agreement that outlines the recipient's institutional, managerial, and financial capability requirements to ensure the proper planning, management, and completion of any such project which receives federal fund money. The Beneficiary agrees to comply with any reporting obligations established by the Treasury or the Department as they relate to this award, including, without limitation, the submission of quarterly project and expenditure reports, annual performance reports, and the submission of information on the Beneficiary's workforce plans and practices related to the approved proposal and subcontracted entities. As required by the State record retention requirements as set out at Ark. Code Ann § 25-18- 604, the Beneficiary shall retain sufficient records to show its compliance with the terms of this agreement, as well as the compliance of all contractors or subcontractors paid from Funds under this agreement, for a period of five (5) years from the date of submission of the final expenditure report.

Likewise UAPB has long experience with grants from several federal agencies, and it is equip to assure compliance with federal and state rules on expenditures and retention of records. Moreover, UAPB is an institution that is governed by the University of Arkansas System Board of Trustees and subject to a statewide coordinating board that is staffed by the state Division of Higher Education.

The university follows the State of Arkansas Procurement Law. It requires that capital projects advertise for bids for project architects for planning the development and contractors to manage the construction. These steps are conducted by the university's Office of Procurement in coordination

with the Facilities Management Department and the Budget Office—all of which are overseen by the Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration, who reports directly to the Chancellor of the University. The proposed project is subject to the approvals by the University of Arkansas System President, the Board of Trustees, and the state Division of Higher Education.

### Program Budget

Consultants working on the SEC have estimated the total cost of the facility at **\$35 million**. So far, UAPB's revenue estimates have come close to achieving the full amount from a variety of sources:

University Bond	\$16,000,000*
Student Fees Collected	\$3,800,000
University Reserves	\$2,000,000
Title III Funds	\$6,200,000
Capital Projects Fund Request	\$2,000,000
<u>Funds Still Needed</u>	<u>\$5,000,000</u>
Total	\$35,000,000

\*Amount shown is an estimate. The bond issue would likely increase to no more than \$17 million.

Despite the significant historical relevance of UAPB to the state and nation, the university lacks the total financial investment of **\$35 million** needed to construct the new Student Engagement Center. Efforts to identify funding have been ongoing for more than two decades. Because of the great need for a larger state-of-the-art 21<sup>st</sup> century facility for the underserved university community in the Arkansas Delta, the university has had to look to multiple sources of revenue:

- ❖ UAPB student government led an effort to approve a student body referendum to request a fee for its construction. In 2017, the University of Arkansas Board of Trustees approved the student-proposed fee increase to help fund the project.
- ❖ The fees generated enough to fund a bond issue worth up to \$17 million. (Conservative estimate: \$16,000,000).
- ❖ Since the approval of the fee, the amount collected is approximately \$3,800,000.
- ❖ Expenditure of the university reserves: \$2,000,000.
- ❖ U.S. Department of Education Title III Program: \$6,200,000.
- ❖ UAPB is requesting \$2,000,000 from the Capital Projects Fund, while \$6-7 million is needed to complete the financing for the project.

PROGRAM BUDGET						
Program Administrative Costs						
		2022	2023	2024		
2a. Building, facility expansion, core construction related costs -Architectural cost -demolition and grading -construction management			\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000		
2b. Technical assistance to potential sub recipients -web-based & tech upgrades -Electrical and Mechanical upgrades						
2c. Complying with grant administration and audit requirement						
2d. Community Engagement						
2e. Wellness Workshops						
2f. COVID19-Flu Annual community testing						
2g.						
2. Total Program Administrative Costs (not to exceed amounts listed in source of funding) *	*	*	*	*	*	*
Project Costs						
3a. Recipient Project Costs						
3b. Subgrant Project Costs						
3a.vi						
3a.vii.						
3a.viii.						
3a.ix.						

3 Total Project Costs			\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000		
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AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021 PROGRAM APPROPRIATION  
AND PERSONNEL AUTHORIZATION REQUEST  
SECTION 37 OF ACT 199 OF 2022

C.11

Agency: DFA Disbursing Officer Business Area Code: 0620

Program Title: ARPA - Northwest Technical Institute Education Foundation

Granting Organization: US Treasury CFDA #: 21.027

Effective Date of Authorization: Beginning: 7/1/2022 Ending: 6/30/2023

Purpose of Grant / Reason for addition or change (include attachments as necessary to provide thorough information):

The NWTI Education Foundation is requesting \$5 million dollars to assist with the construction of a 50,000 sq. ft. Allied Health Facility on the Northwest Technical Institute campus located in Springdale, AR. (See attachment 1). This facility would accommodate NWTI's Licensed Practical Nursing Program, Surgical Technologist Program, Certified Nursing Assistant Program, Sterile Processing, and additional allied health programs being considered for future enrollment.

This newly constructed facility in health-related fields would have five major impacts:

1. Increase enrollment in current allied health programs.
2. Construct updated classrooms and labs to accommodate modern technology and simulation needed to reflect real life health-care environments.
3. Meet the growing needs of the Northwest Arkansas health professions community.
4. Serve marginalized communities in partnership with Upskill NWA.
5. Allow NWTI's Adult Education program to relocate back on campus and save \$87,706 paid in rent annually or allow additional classroom space to offer other courses.

American Rescue Plan Act Program Funding

Func. Area: ADMN Fund Code: FRP6209 Direct Funding: \_\_\_\_\_

Funds Center: \_\_\_\_\_ Internal Order/WBS Element: A.0620.ARPNWTIEF-E Steering Comm. Approved: X

Continuation: \_\_\_\_\_

	Program Funding Amount
Regular Salaries	
Extra Help	
Personal Services Matching	
Operating Expenses	
Conference & Travel Expenses	
Professional Fees	
Capital Outlay	
Data Processing	
Grants and Aid (CI: 04)	
Other: 590:00:46	5,000,000
Other:	
Total	\$ 5,000,000

Anticipated Duration of Federal Funds: 12/31/2026

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**DFA IGS State Technology Planning** **Date**

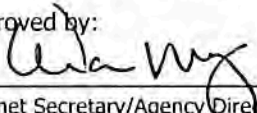
Items requested for information technology must be in compliance with Technology Plans as submitted to DFA IGS State Technology Planning.

\* unclassified positions only

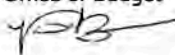
Positions to be established: (list each position separately)

Org Unit	Pers Area	Pers SubArea	Cost Center	Position Number	Cmnt Item	Position Title	Class Code	Grade	Line Item Maximum *

State funds will not be used to replace federal funds when such funds expire, unless appropriated by the General Assembly and authorized by the Governor.

Approved by:  8/31/22 Robert Brech 9/2/2022

Cabinet Secretary/Agency Director Date Office of Budget Date Office of Personnel Mgmt Date

 09/01/22

## **Northwest Technical Institute - \$5,000,000**

The NWTI Education Foundation was incorporated February 26, 2021 to support the needs of the Northwest Technical Institute. The NWTI Education Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization committed to providing and promoting education opportunities for Northwest Technical Institute, its students, and its staff. The NWTI Education Foundation, in partnership with NWTI school administrators and the NWTI Board of Directors, has identified the need for a new NWTI medical educational facility to support the growth of the school as well as to meet the growing needs of the region's medical community.

For over 45 years, Northwest Technical Institute (NWTI) has offered a wide variety of career and technical educational offerings in the Northwest Arkansas region. NWTI recognizes the need for medical training in this region and to expand offerings of short-term trainings to place students in the workforce as soon as possible. NWTI is the only career and technical school in the state. The mission of NWTI is 'changing lives through education, training and skill development'. NWTI has partnered with regional healthcare facilities, including Washington Regional Medical Center, Northwest Health Systems, Mercy Medical Center, Arkansas Children's Hospital Northwest, UAMS, and other organizations such as the Northwest Arkansas Council, Springdale Chamber of Commerce, Benton, Madison and Washington County municipalities to provide training for entry and middle skill support staff. NWTI's focus is to expand and increase our medical offerings to meet the growing need for more medical support personnel in our region.

The NWTI Education Foundation is requesting \$5 million dollars to assist with the construction of a 50,000 sq. ft. Allied Health Facility on the Northwest Technical Institute campus located in Springdale, AR. (See attachment 1). This facility would accommodate NWTI's Licensed Practical Nursing Program, Surgical Technologist Program, Certified Nursing Assistant Program, Sterile Processing, and additional allied health programs being considered for future enrollment. Currently, NWTI's Allied Health programs make up over 45% of NWTI's overall enrollment. The Allied Health Department currently utilizes six classrooms and four labs for instructional delivery. Over the past five years, Licensed Practical Nursing, Surgical Technology and Certified Nursing Assistant programs are at maximum capacity.

This newly constructed facility in health-related fields would have five major impacts:

1. Increase enrollment in current allied health programs.
2. Construct updated classrooms and labs to accommodate modern technology and simulation needed to reflect real life health-care environments.
3. Meet the growing needs of the Northwest Arkansas health professions community.
4. Serve marginalized communities in partnership with Upskill NWA.
5. Allow NWTI's Adult Education program to relocate back on campus and save \$87,706 paid in rent annually or allow additional classroom space to offer other courses.

## Use Code 1C Multi-Purpose Community Facility Projects

### Use Code 1C Questionnaire

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#### **Program**

Use Code: 1C

Program Identifier: **1-CPF-NWTI**

Program Title: **Northwest Technical Institute (NWTI), Allied Health Facility**

Total Amount of Request: \$5,000,000

Applicant Presenter: NWTI Education Foundation

Location of Applicant/Facility: Springdale, Arkansas

Number of Locations Serving the Public: 1

Type of Service to be rendered: The Northwest Technical Institute Allied Health Facility will be a medical educational facility that will provide work, education, and health monitoring to the local community of Northwest Arkansas by providing career and technical training in medical programs.

How Will the Recipient implement the Program: **DIRECT IMPLEMENTATION**

Does the Recipient represent and commit that the Capital Projects will provide services or activities that directly enable work, education, and health monitoring for at least five years from the completion of the project?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Will CPF grant funds for this program be used to cover costs incurred after March 15, 2021, but prior to execution of the Grant Agreement?

Yes ☒ No ☐

- If yes, you must provide the information requested under the Pre-Award Cost Annex
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#### **Program Narrative:**

##### **Program Summary:**

The NWTI Education Foundation was incorporated February 26, 2021 to support the needs of the Northwest Technical Institute. The NWTI Education Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization committed to providing and promoting education opportunities for Northwest Technical Institute, its students, and its staff. The Foundation is made of up eight (8) members including Don Gibson, President; Dan Douglas, Vice President; Keith Underhill, Treasurer; Lara Donaldson, Secretary; Tom Freking, member; Angela Grayson, member; Dr. Joe Rollins, member; Michael Wright, member; and Michael Hamley, ex officio member. The NWTI Education Foundation, in partnership with NWTI school administrators and the NWTI Board of Directors, has identified the need for a new NWTI medical educational facility to support the growth of the school as well as to meet the growing needs of the region's medical community.

For over 45 years, Northwest Technical Institute (NWTI) has offered a wide variety of career and technical educational offerings in the Northwest Arkansas region. NWTI recognizes the need for medical training in the region and to expand offerings of short-term training to place students in the workforce as soon as possible. NWTI is the only career and technical school in the state. The mission of NWTI is 'changing lives through education, training, and skill development'. NWTI has partnered with regional healthcare facilities, including Washington Regional Medical Center, Northwest Health Systems, Mercy Medical Center, Arkansas Children's Hospital Northwest, UAMS, and other organizations such as the Northwest Arkansas Council, Springdale Chamber of Commerce, Benton, Madison and Washington County municipalities to provide training for entry and middle-skill support staff. NWTI's focus is to expand and increase our medical offerings to meet the growing need for more medical support personnel in our region.

**The NWTI Education Foundation is requesting \$5 million dollars to assist with the construction of a 50,000 sq. ft. Allied Health Facility on the Northwest Technical Institute campus located in Springdale, AR.** (See attachment 1). This facility would accommodate NWTI's allied health programs in Licensed Practical Nursing, Surgical Technology, Certified Nursing Assistant, Sterile Processing, as well as, additional allied health programs being considered for future enrollment. Currently, NWTI's allied health programs make up over 45% of NWTI's overall enrollment. The Allied Health Department currently utilizes six classrooms and four labs for instructional delivery. Over the past five years, Licensed Practical Nursing, Surgical Technology and Certified Nursing Assistant programs have been at maximum capacity.

This newly constructed facility in health-related fields would have five major impacts:

1. Increase enrollment in current allied health programs.

Program	Current Enrollment	Increased Enrollment
Practical Nursing	50	100
Surgical Technology	24	35
Sterile Processing	15	30
Nursing Assistants (Certified)	65	120

- 1b. Offer new entry and middle level programs.

Program	Milestone Outputs/Outcomes During Startup Period	Number of Students served	Startup Period	Start Date (July 1)
Behavioral Health Technician		75	2023	2023
Medical Billing and Coding	All programs milestones to include the following:	36	2023	2023
Medical Assisting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction of building</li> </ul>	30	2022	Fall 2022
Electrocardiography Technician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curriculum development</li> </ul>	75	2023	2023
Limited License Radiologic Technician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selection of staff</li> </ul>	16	2023-2024	2024
Pharmacy Technician		75	2023	2023
In Home Health Care Assistant		48	2024	2024
Medication Assistant (Certified)		90	2022	5/2022

2. Construct updated classrooms and labs to accommodate modern technology and simulation needed to reflect real life health-care environments.
3. Meet the growing needs of the Northwest Arkansas health professions community.
4. Serve marginalized communities in partnership with Upskill NWA.
5. Allow NWTI's Adult Education program to relocate back on campus and save \$87,706 paid in rent annually, or allow additional classroom space to offer other courses.



**The total project cost is \$15,816,379.00 which breaks down into the following categories: The timeline for completion of the project is August 2024.**

- \$898,000.00 – Site work
- \$11,849,300.00 (New Construction) - Capital Project Funds
- \$983,750.00 Special Construction
- \$200,000.00 Building Contingency
- **Subtotal Building and Site work** **\$13,931,050.00**
- \$1,164,828.75 Design Cost
- \$720,500.00- Site Cost
- Building, design and site **\$15,816,379.00**

The following sources have pledged the following amounts to the construction of the building:

<b>Funding Sources</b>	<b>Amounts</b>
Alice Walton Foundation	\$2,500,000.00
City of Springdale	\$2,000,000.00
Excellerate Foundation	\$3,000,000.00
Washington County	\$500,000.00

The grant requested from the State of Arkansas in the amount of \$5,000,000.00 will bring the total funds for construction support to \$13,000,000.00. This amount coupled with \$2,000,000.00 verbally committed to NWTI from the FY23 Federal Community Project Funds grant places the acquired total at \$15,000,000.00, which approximates the required cost of this construction project.

### **Description**

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused tremendous strain on American healthcare systems and emergency personnel. It is NWTI's goal to assist in the healthcare workplace shortage. NWTI plans to offer short term trainings to accommodate the medical personnel shortage in the region. NWTI has collaborated with regional medical providers to verify their needs and plan to offer programs to add to its current trainings to help replenish a workforce both exhausted and depleted by COVID-19. Many individuals will also have the opportunity to upskill their current employment status by learning new skills to apply in the workforce.

By increasing the number of allied health graduates annually from 100 to more than 300 students, NWTI can play a major role in reducing the workforce gap in the medical industry in Northwest Arkansas. Many of these students will come from low income families and thus through training and skill development, these graduates will be prepared to meet a major need of the medical industry in our region and simultaneously be positioned to break the bonds of generational poverty which in and of itself has stymied economic growth in our region. This proposed model is a “difference maker for good” on many fronts and its positive impact will change the landscape of the Northwest Arkansas region. Programmatically, expansion in allied health graduates - LPN, Surgical Technologist, CNA, etc. – will allow the burgeoning medical industry in Northwest Arkansas to continue to grow and improve the quality of service for the residents of the region. In addition, industry growth will be the catalyst for the expansion of additional new service-oriented and specialty positions which will assure the constant address of quality education services.

An additional ancillary component of this proposed NWTI medical education facility is the facility's impact on the image of the school. This new facility will significantly improve the overall image of NWTI, and as a result, serve as a positive influence or magnet in attracting CTE students to all programs offered by the school. In this way, this proposed facility will have a significant impact on the preparation of CTE workers to serve industry needs across the region.

**Project Timeline:**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>Finish</b>
CPF Application Submission	60 days		08/12/2022
CPF Application Review (DFA)			
CPF Application Review (Dept of Treasury)			
RPF Publishing			
Grant Agreement Processing			
Award Made from DFA to *Organization*			
Site Investigations			
Design	12 months	10/01/2021	10/01/2022
Contractor Negotiations		07/01/2022	ongoing
Permitting & Approval	6 months	07/01/2022	12/31/2022
Construction	48 months (estimated)	12/1/2022	08/01/2024
Contractor Mobilization			
Site Improvements			
Construct Facility	48 months		
Organization Occupies Facility			08/01/2024
Facility Open		TBD	08/01/2024

**Eligibility:****Work:**

Many good paying jobs exist in the Northwest Arkansas region, but people lack the skills necessary to perform them. Job opportunities increased 11% annually in NWA each year between 2015 and 2020. Healthcare is one of the highest demand, best paying industries. There is a gap for entry-level skilled positions and middle-skill opportunities. However, two-thirds of the local workforce have less than a bachelor's degree and lack the financial resources required to complete the education required for these positions and take these higher wage jobs. Educational institutions lack the facilities to train this untapped (unemployed and underemployed) workforce. Despite the huge demand in healthcare—which has grown even larger in the wake of COVID-19, our local educational institutions lack the instructional space needed to increase their training capacity.

Employment in Career and Technical Education trades are in high demand. NWTI is at enrollment capacity in multiple programs of study, especially medical programs. Moving the allied health Programs of study into an independent facility at the new medical education facility would relieve classrooms, labs, and office space for use in other programs. Space is critical to expanding all NWTI programs. The economic impact to Northwest Arkansas will go well beyond the allied health professions.

This proposed new medical education facility and its corresponding additional instructional space will allow NWTI the opportunity to better serve medical industry needs and significantly enhance the image of the school which in turn will help attract additional students for training in all CTE programs offered.

Meeting the career and technical training needs of the projected job growth is dependent upon having the resources of a new facility that will support the growth; classrooms, medical labs, simulation stations, computer labs, and support space for faculty and staff.

The construction of this facility at NWTI will address the following:

- Increase allied health graduates from 100 students to 300 students annually as indicated in table 1, and new program offerings as identified are expected to produce 445 graduates as indicated in table 1b. These graduates would be prepared to enter the medical industry workforce upon program completion.
- This number of annual NWTI graduates that enter the workforce will significantly reduce the workforce gap in the medical industry across Northwest Arkansas. Based on data from the Northwest Arkansas Council, there are approximately 3600 unfilled medical positions in the region currently and about 85% of these positions are in middle-skill development area. NWTI is the primary educational facility in Northwest Arkansas that is focused on middle-skill development training and the proposed medical education building will ensure opportunity for CTE training that will satisfy this employment need.
- The graduates of NWTI are middle skill development workers whose service will lay the foundation for allied health services across the region.
- The graduates of NWTI will then make up the foundation of employees that will provide support for enhanced performance for all medical professionals in the region, including the staff of six major hospitals and multiple health clinics and private providers in the region.
- The focus of NWTI medical training will prepare students for careers in licensed practical nursing, surgical technology, certified nursing assistant, medical assisting, medication aid certified, pharmacy technician, emergency medical workers, medical billing and coding, home health care, behavioral health technician, etc.
- Based on 2018-2021 enrollment and placement data, NWTI is placing approximately 93% of LPN graduates, 97% of Surgical Technology graduates, and approaching 100% of CNA graduates into the local labor market. Based on labor market projections, there is an employment shortfall of LPNs, Surgical Technologists, and CNAs. The increased enrollment in NWTI allied health programs will significantly decrease the employment shortfall in the regional medical industry. As a result, the burgeoning medical industry in the region will be better prepared to meet the growing medical needs of Northwest Arkansas.
- The new NWTI medical education facility will allow for the creation of educational programs for new and emerging medical training needs in the region. This will solidify the foundation of medical industry education and allow NWTI to assist in activities to continue to enable work in the region.

## **Education:**

Northwest Technical Institute is the only post-secondary institution in Northwest Arkansas that provides training in Licensed Practical Nursing and Surgical Technology and is the only school in the state offering Sterile Processing. Additionally, NWTI's plan for new and expanding programs will allow for continued medical training to meet the needs of the medical industry in Northwest Arkansas. Growth in the medical field in Northwest Arkansas is expanding exponentially on multiple fronts to provide medical service to patients from all backgrounds and their personalized medical needs. The horizon for continued medical expansion is without limits, including the impact arising from increasing ethnically and racially diverse populations and from increasing needs due to the increase in life expectancy.

Healthcare workers have been most impacted by COVID-19. Many have stopped working in the medical industry during this crisis leaving even more of a gap in the workforce. We need to replenish workers in these areas. In response to this need and partnering with medical providers in this region, NWTI will be the training institution for entry level and middle skill development to support the needs of Northwest Arkansas. The new medical education facility will more than triple the number of allied health program graduates from NWTI and a projected 445 students will be served through new and additional allied health programs.

NWTI has partnered with the Upskill NWA program through the Excellerate Foundation. Upskill NWA is based on a model that has been successfully deployed for decades in several major cities in Texas, as well as other locations around the country. This proposed plan is our effort is our plan to bring the Upskill NWA model to Northwest Arkansas. This Upskill NWA project will move lower-income wage earners into higher wage, high demand jobs through additional education and certifications in the regional workforce. Upskill NWA will focus on recruiting community members typically left out of workforce development efforts. Upskill NWA will serve the marginalized community (including employed and underemployed women and minority community members) and will pay academic-related expenses, as well as wraparound

services that are barriers to classroom attendance and successful graduation. This partnership will provide the necessary resources for students to attend Northwest Technical Institute for their training, and as a result, to prepare them to enter the job market and close the workforce gap in the medical industry in northwest Arkansas.

The staff of NWTI has worked closely with representative organizations of all areas in the region. Specific program expansion needs have been identified and course work is being developed to satisfy those needs. The NWTI proposed medical education facility will assure there is appropriate space that has been specifically designed for quality instruction to meet the need of the medical training that is required. In addition, the design of the facility has at its very core flexibility and ease of expansion for future programmatic adjustments that surely will come over time. Input from the medical partners in the region has been essential in design, equipment needs, adequate space, mobility, and functionality and these partnerships will be a part of the future operation protocols of the facility thus assuring that instruction provided in this facility will be rigorous and relevant to meet the training needs of today and tomorrow.

### **Health and Behavioral Monitoring:**

NWTI has offered and participated over time in a wide variety of community health monitoring and in providing critical health services in partnership with the Northwest Arkansas regional hospitals, medical clinics, and health units:

- Vaccination and immunizations clinics
- Blood drives
- First Aid Health booths at local events
- Annual health fairs which offer a wide variety of health monitoring activities including:
  - Blood pressure readings
  - Blood sugar testing
  - Weight and BMI evaluations
- Covid-19 related known and unknown community support needs
- Medical needs springing from other pandemics that may occur in the future
- Emerging Whole Health educational programs
- Preparation of entry level and middle skill development staff serving the needs of the medical industry in the region

The new medical education facility will allow NWTI the opportunity to host community health education, health screenings and whole health clinics to allow for increased health and behavioral monitoring in the Northwest Arkansas region. The additional space will allow NWTI to work with partner medical providers to host vaccination clinics, community health fairs, and other events to promote the health of students and staff of the NWTI campus, as well as the Northwest Arkansas region. Students in the allied health programs will be able to use their training to help facilitate these events.

Additionally, the graduates of NWTI allied health programs are employed in local hospitals and clinics which increases the region's capacity to provide health and behavioral monitoring to the community and Northwest Arkansas region. The medical foundation training provided to NWTI students can and will serve as the impetus for continued career and technical growth that will allow students to pursue advancement in medical careers and in so doing, vastly strengthen the medical industry in our state.

NWTI's Allied Health department continues to participate and seek avenues to serve community members and better train students in real-life situations. NWTI graduates stand side by side and assist physicians, surgeons, medical providers in hospitals, clinics, assisted living facilities, home health care, etc. which enhance the lives of the citizens of the region both in advanced and day-to-day healthcare services in multiple areas for graduates which might include:

- Cancer House- blanket drive
- Homeless Shelter in NWA- hygiene items
- Food Bank- collecting donations
- Children's Shelter- Socks and diapers
- As well as the most sophisticated medical services provided across the region which enhance the quality of life for all citizens.

### **Critical Need/Justification:**

The number of students prepared will increase from the current number of 100 to more than 300 annually in the NWTI allied health programs because of the space and resources of a new facility. The projected growth is dependent upon having resources that will support additional classrooms, labs, simulation spaces, computer labs, offices, faculty and staff support services. Northwest Technical Institute does not receive budget compensation from the State for FTE enrollment. A one-time investment of \$5 million by the State of Arkansas to support the construction of an Allied Health Facility on the NWTI campus would allow NWTI to meet the need and future growth in the health professions in Northwest Arkansas while training an expanded number of health professionals at a minimal cost per FTE to the state.

- There is a substantial need for healthcare workers in the region, state and nation. According to the Northwest Arkansas Council, there are approximately 3600 unfilled medical positions in the region, with approximately 85% of those positions being in the middle-skill development area served by NWTI. Additionally, with the population growth expected in the region, the need for healthcare workers will continue to increase.
- According to a study by the Northwest Arkansas Council, the region's ethnically and racially diverse communities continue to increase. The Hispanic population in Springdale, the location of Northwest Technical Institute, is more than 38% according to US census data. Currently, NWTI students are approximately one-third Hispanic. Additionally, Springdale has the largest Marshallese population in the US. NWTI works closely with community partners to provide educational support for students from these communities. A recent partnership with the Marshallese Consulate and the Marshallese community as a whole has created a scholarship fund for Marshallese students in the region. This fund is being financially supported by local business and industry and by the members of the Marshallese community. NWTI also provides the LEAP (Latino Educational Achievement program) which provides scholarships to Hispanic students. NWTI is committed to continuing to serve the students of these underserved communities. Students in the NWTI allied health programs will be able to receive these scholarships which will assist them in pursuing their educational goals. By serving these students, NWTI will be placing more bilingual and bicultural employees into the medical industry to serve these growing diverse populations.
- NWTI is the only school in the region that is solely focused on providing career and technical training. NWTI offers the only programs in the region for LPN, surgical technology, and sterile processing.
- NWTI programs are shorter in length and more affordable than traditional higher education which allows more disadvantaged students in our community an opportunity to pursue education and well-paying career paths. Allied health programs will range in length from two weeks to eighteen months which will place students in the job market in less time than traditional higher education.
- Scholarship opportunities, including Upskill NWA, the Single Parent Scholarship Fund, the Marshallese Scholarship program, and the LEAP scholarship, allow students from these underserved communities to pursue career paths at NWTI. These scholarships will allow students in the NWTI allied health programs to break the bonds of generational poverty by pursuing educational opportunities.
- Increase the visibility of the school and attract well-qualified students, faculty and position the programs for future growth
- Physical space of two classrooms only accommodate thirty-five Nursing students per classroom. Fifty students are accepted and students are overcrowded in the classroom, or sent to an overflow classroom designated for another department
- Current classroom and labs were not designed for health course
- 50-70 Nursing students are using one Simulation lab
- Lab spaces do not reflect modern real world learning environments
- Practice labs for nursing students have taken two (2) additional rooms designated for other programs to practice skills
- Internet feasibility in the current collegiate building is not acceptable. Wiring is old and cement blocks create connection issues
- Current HVAC system is outdated and cannot be repaired in the current building
- Increased enrollment in all three areas: Practical nursing, Surgical Technologist (ST), Sterile Processing and Nursing Assistants

- Allied health programs are taught in separate buildings. There is not enough space to have all programs in one building.
- As the population age increases in our region, the need for more healthcare workers are needed
- Increase of people in our region will demand more of our allied health students to meet the need for healthcare.

NWTI's nursing program was essential in the later stages of the pandemic. Many of the hospitals allowed students to assist because of the urgent need for medical personnel in the field. Our efforts would be to increase enrollment in our current offerings and focus efforts on meeting the gap in healthcare.

The construction of an allied health facility will provide an additional opportunity to serve the marginalized communities in our region. NWTI will also be able to help fill the workforce gap of entry-level and middle-skill development. This new facility could also serve community events where individuals and families could be more aware of health seminars, events, and fairs.

The finalization of the proposed plan to construct a new medical education building on the campus of NWTI was the culmination of many years of study by the NWTI administration, the NWTI Board of Directors and staff, as well as, the school's industry partners. Consideration was given to the expansion of the existing NWTI facility and the opportunities that were available to utilize space in a number of regional medical facilities, hospitals, clinics, etc. These considerations were discarded after a thorough review because of the limitations of each including lack of access to campus support services, including school administration, IT support, maintenance support, and student support services. Additionally, these options would not provide for image-building and continued renewal of the NWTI campus as a whole.

NWTI is immersed in a major process of renewal. This renewal process has been supported by recent facility expansion such as the construction of the new Byrd Welding Center and the construction of a new ammonia refrigeration complex which is nearing completion. The proposed new medical education building to be located on the NWTI campus complements the renewal effort underway at the school and simultaneously allows for the expanded preparation of more than three hundred medical employees per year thus significantly closing the workforce gap in the Northwest Arkansas medical industry. The other considerations for alternate site selection, thus, paled in contrast to the holistic opportunities and advantages provided by the location of the facility on the NWTI campus.

The campus of the Northwest Technical Institute is centrally located within the region with optimal access to students, industry partners, and participants in health-related services that will be provided in this proposed new facility. In addition, the proposed facility is critical to growing the school, improving its image, and subsequently the recruitment of CTE students in all programmatic offerings of the school. NWTI is the career and technical education training institution for Northwest Arkansas offering a myriad of essential CTE training programs. This new NWTI Medical Education Facility will be the "difference-maker for good" influencing the training of hundreds of new medical employees annually as well as a similar increase in trained workers in multiple career fields. The very future of NWTI and its overall capability to train CTE workers in the region is impacted by the potential benefits provided by the proposed NWTI Medical Education building.

### **Program Administration:**

The State of Arkansas has a long history of receiving and monitoring federal grants. The Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration has developed a Capital Projects Fund Beneficiary Agreement that outlines the recipient's institutional, managerial, and financial capability requirements to ensure the proper planning, management, and completion of any such project which receives federal fund money. The Beneficiary agrees to comply with any reporting obligations established by the Treasury or the Department as they relate to this award, including, without limitation, the submission of quarterly project and expenditure reports, annual performance reports, and the submission of information on Beneficiary's workforce plans and practices related to the approved proposal and subcontracted entities. As required by the STATE record retention requirements as set out at Ark. Code Ann § 25-18- 604, the Beneficiary shall retain sufficient records to show its compliance with the terms of this agreement, as well as the compliance of all contractors or subcontractors paid from Funds under this agreement, for a period of five (5) years from the date of submission of the final expenditure report.

### **Program Administration**

Northwest Technical Education Foundation will follow all State of Arkansas and Federal guidelines to ensure proper compliance with award requirements. As the Beneficiary, we agree to comply with reporting obligations established by

the Treasury or the Department including quarterly and/or annual reports as required. This project will be managed by a Construction Management Company from the beginning to completion of the building. This team will be responsible for verifying reimbursement requests and job performance of subcontractors. The Construction Management Company will report back to the Education Foundation's Board of Directors. The Foundation's Board of Directors will be responsible for retaining sufficient records to comply with the terms of the grant for a period of five years from the date of submission of the final report of expenditures.

Northwest Technical Education Foundation's partnership with the NW Arkansas community is created with equity in mind. NWTI's new facility partnered with Upskill NWA specifically targets lower-income households; hard working people who do not earn enough to provide economic stability for their families. These community members are often forgotten and neglected economic development efforts and many of the people are women or minority community members. This partnership will help those economically impacted by COVID-19, because lower-income families have been some of the hardest hit by the financial ramifications of the pandemic.

Anticipated Operating costs will be \$1,410,000 at the new facility yearly. Tuition and General Revenue will be the source for this funding.

### **Program Budget**

**These estimates may be approximations, but more detailed and accurate information will be required in reporting.**

<b>Detailed Capital Project Funds - \$5,000,000</b>		
<b>Detailed Description</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
<b>Construction of</b>	<b>\$5,000,000</b>	<b>Capital Project Funds</b>
Lab Bays, Simulation Labs, Surg-Tech	\$3,500,000	
Offices & Office Support Areas	\$ 700,000	
Classroom & Other Teaching Spaces	\$ 800,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,000,000</b>	<b>Capital Project Funds</b>

<b>Total Project Cost - \$15,816,379</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Construction Costs	\$5,000,000	Capital Project Funds
Construction Costs	\$2,500,000	Alice Walton Foundation
Construction Costs	\$2,000,000	City of Springdale
Construction Costs	\$3,000,000	Excellerate Foundation
Construction Costs	\$ 500,000	Washington County

**Instructions:** Using the Program Budget table, specify the amounts of funds that the Recipient proposes to allocate to each of the following years. Please distribute the budget into the estimated year the expenditures will occur. CPF Funds will be evenly distributed by the State of Arkansas on a quarterly basis from the beginning of the construction period to the completion.

**These estimates may be approximations, but more detailed and accurate information will be required in reporting.**

PROGRAM BUDGET						
Program Administrative Costs						
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
2a. Administering the CPF funds (by the Recipient)						
2b. Technical assistance to potential subrecipients						
2c. Complying with grant administration and audit requirement						
2d. Community Engagement						
2e.						
2f.						
2g.						
2. Total Program Administrative Costs (not to exceed amounts listed in source of funding) *	*	*	*	*	*	*
Project Costs						
3a. Recipient Project Costs		\$500,000	\$3,000,000	\$1,500,000		
3b. Subgrant Project Costs						
3a.vi						
3a.vii.						
3a.viii.						
3a.ix.						
3 Total Project Costs		\$500,000	\$3,000,000	\$1,500,000		

\* The State of Arkansas plans to tentatively put a hold on program administration funding for this program, paying administrative costs out of general revenues. It is the hope of the State that economic strength continues such that the State can eventually apply funding reserved for administrative expenses to programmatic expenditures. Should economic activity falter, the State may use these to cover programmatic administrative expenses.

**PRE-AWARD COST ANNEX** (See attachment 2)

This annex is only required if you answered “Yes” to question 5 of the Program Questionnaire.

Complete the table below for program costs incurred after March 15, 2021 but prior to execution of the grant agreement (“Pre-Award Costs”)

Does the applicant provide reasonable assurance that the intended source of funds for the Pre-Award Costs was the CPF Grant? Yes ☒ No ☐

Submit an attachment describing each project that includes Pre-Award project costs. Also describe the current source of funding for the project and how the CPF funding was contemplated to be used in coordination with current sources of funding.



PRE-AWARD COSTS	Amount (\$s)
3a. Recipient Project Costs (Total)	\$ 180,000
3a.ii. Pre-project development, including data gathering, feasibility studies, community engagement and public feedback processes, equity assessments and planning, and needs assessments.	\$ 165,000 Architect pre-bid work \$ 15,000 Construction Manager pre-bid work
3a.iii. Personnel Costs	\$
3a.iv. Repair, rehabilitation, construction, and improvement, of facilities.	\$
3a.v. Acquisition of real property, leases, and related	\$

# Exhibits

# Endorsements (Political)



**SPRINGDALE**<sup>TM</sup>  
WE'RE MAKING IT HAPPEN

[www.SpringdaleAR.gov](http://www.SpringdaleAR.gov)

April 8, 2022

I am writing to express my full support of Northwest Technical Institute's request for FY23 Community Project Funding to construct a medical education building that will have a tremendous impact in Northwest Arkansas in the following areas:

1. Annual increase in medical CTE graduates
2. Closing the workforce gap in the medical industry in Northwest Arkansas
3. An increase in graduates from 100 to 300
4. Creating a more affordable option in higher education

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the vital importance of the health care sector – and the healthcare workforce – to the resiliency and stability of the regional economy. Approximately 150,000 people in Northwest Arkansas are employed but at high risk of financial instability. COVID-19 has exacerbated this issue with thousands of workers impacted and needing new training to stabilize their households. Educational institutions do not have the capacity to meet the employer demand, which has especially dire implications for the regional healthcare goals.

This new facility will train and place members of lower-income households into higher wage, high demand occupations in order to increase their economic fortunes while addressing the current and future labor shortages of the region's most vital sectors. The facility will also enable our region to train and move unemployed and underemployed individuals – many of whom suffered job losses related to COVID-19 – into health care jobs that offer security and stability, while also addressing the region's labor shortage in the health care sector. Expanding graduate medical education is an important element, as each physician in Arkansas supports an average of 11.26 jobs.

The City of Springdale is committed to Northwest Technical Institute's advancement of this project by allocating \$2,000,000 to the construction of this project, along with an additional \$800,000 in programming opportunities through other funding.

We are confident in the success of Northwest Technical Institute's endeavor to address the labor shortage in our region, build healthcare resiliency, reduce unemployment, and strengthen our health care system and our economy.

Sincerely,

Doug Sprouse

**Doug Sprouse** Mayor

(479) 750.8114 phone | (479) 750.8559 fax | 201 Spring Street | Springdale, Arkansas 72764



April 7, 2022

Honorable Steve Womack  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2412 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Womack,

On behalf of the 1,200 members of the Springdale Chamber of Commerce, I would like to add my voice in support of the FY2023 Community Project Funding request submitted by Northwest Technical Institute for its planned Medical Education Center.

When complete, this 50,000-square foot facility will allow the school to significantly increase the number of students it trains for the expanded allied health programs the center will support.

The continued growth of our region, recently ranked the No. 8 Best Performing Metro in the nation, is dependent upon a robust health care workforce. It is worth noting that this project has garnered broad support from our region's major health care providers, local governments and philanthropists.

It is this broad support, secured through the personal outreach of NWTI's visionary president Dr. Jim Rollins, that makes this particular funding request ideal for serious consideration. Thank you for your continued assistance on our behalf.

Sincerely,

Bill Rogers  
President/CEO

P.O. Box 166 | Springdale, AR 72765



479-872-2222 | [www.Springdale.com](http://www.Springdale.com)



JOSEPH K. WOOD  
County Judge

280 N. College Ave, Ste 500  
Fayetteville, AR 72701

WASHINGTON COUNTY, ARKANSAS  
County Courthouse

April 07, 2022

Congressman Steve Womack  
3333 S Pinnacle Hills Pkwy #120  
Rogers, AR 72758

Dear Congressman Womack,

As County Judge of the 3rd largest county in the state of Arkansas and one of the fastest growing in the country, I wish to extend my support of the grant submission from Northwest Technical Institute (NWTI). As we look to collaborate and address the medical shortage in our fast growing region, Washington County has already financial committed to helping meet this need.

NWTI is constructing a new ten thousand square foot medical education building. This new facility will allow the school to increase the number of annual CTE medical students from about 100 students to 300 students. These new students entering the medical workforce annually will go a long way in closing the medical workforce gap and benefit all stakeholders in Northwest Arkansas.

As you are considering how to appropriate for the FY23 Community Project Funding, I strongly urge you to consider financially supporting NWTI.

Sincerely,

Joseph K. Wood  
Washington County Judge

# Endorsements (Hospitals)



October 4, 2022

Arkansas Legislative PEER Committee  
1 Capitol Mall, Fifth Floor  
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Members of the Arkansas Legislative PEER Committee,

NWTI has requested a contribution from the State of Arkansas in the amount of \$5,000,000 to assist with the construction costs of the proposed NWTI Medical Education Building. The projected construction cost of the project is \$15,000,000 and \$8,000,000 has been raised from local, political entities, and philanthropic partners. The requested state support would raise the construction level to \$13,000,000, with the balance to be from other construction grant opportunities.

I would like to add my voice in support of this Community Facilities Project funding grant request submitted by Northwest Technical Institute. When complete, this 50,000-square foot facility will allow the school to significantly increase the number of students it trains and expand the Allied Health programs the school currently offers.

These additional middle-skill trained workers will shrink the workforce employee gap being seen in the medical industry today. Additionally, these skilled workers will have opportunities to improve the lives of their families and the lives of future families in minority and disadvantaged areas.

I understand that these grants are approved through the Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review (PEER) Legislative Committee with the state, and then move forward to the next committee in the process. I would implore your team of legislators to strongly consider granting the request of \$5,000,000 to the Northwest Technical Institute in Springdale, Arkansas. This niche educational market provides training for a variety of medical workers in multiple allied health areas; Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), Surgical Technologists, Medication Aide Certified, and Sterile Processing Technologists. Other future programs to be added will be Behavioral Health Technician, Medical Billing and Coding, Medical Assisting, Electrocardiography Technician, Limited License Radiologic Technician, Pharmacy Technician, and In-Home Health Care Assistant.

This project has garnered broad support from our all six of our region's major hospitals as well as local governments, and philanthropists.

The NWTI Medical Education Facility will train the desperately needed workforce decimated by the Covid pandemic. Thank you for your assistance in bringing this essential project forward.

Respectfully,



Shannon Hendrix, MS, RD, LD, FACHE  
SVP/Chief Administrator, Arkansas Children's Northwest



September 30, 2022

Dr. Jim Rollins  
President  
Northwest Technical Institute  
709 S. Old Missouri Rd.  
Springdale, AR 72764

Dear Dr. Rollins,

I am thrilled to provide this letter of support for the expansion of educational opportunities designed to meet the growing need for additional medical support staff in Northwest Arkansas.

Prior to the COVID pandemic, Mercy experienced challenges in filling several of our skilled medical positions. Post-pandemic, those staffing challenges have grown exponentially, due to the impact of community need outpacing local educational capacity.

The proposed expansion of Northwest Technical Institute's medical program offerings will provide immediate workforce relief to Mercy Hospital NWA, along with other health care providers within the region.

With your excellent reputation for providing quality educational opportunities for a diverse population of students, I know this proposed expansion will be a game-changer for the entire state. By helping us replenish our skilled medical workforce, we can continue to provide high-quality health care services, while reducing the existing barriers to care.

I look forward to continuing our collaboration with you to serve the diverse and growing health care needs of Northwest Arkansas, and I'm pleased to support your application for funding from the State of Arkansas.

Sincerely,

Ryan Gehrig  
President  
Mercy Hospitals Arkansas



October 3, 2022

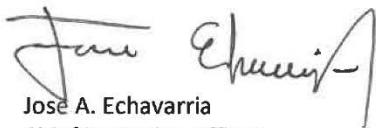
Dr. Jim Rollins, President  
Northwest Technical Institute  
709 So. Old Missouri Rd.  
Springdale, AR 72764

Dear Dr. Rollins:

I am writing to express my support of the Northwest Technical Institute grant proposal for the construction of a new Medical Education Building.

The Northwest Arkansas region is increasing in population at an exponential rate and the need for health professionals is growing. The region and state would greatly benefit from having more education and training facilities available for health professional students and I commend you for planning for our future success. We look forward to a continued partnership in growing the next generation's healthcare professionals.

Respectfully,



Jose A. Echavarria  
Chief Executive Officer  
Northwest Medical Center

Northwest Regional Campus  
1125 N. College Avenue  
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72703

Pearl Anna McElfish, M.B.A., M.S., Ph.D.  
Director, Office of Community Health and Research  
pamcelfish@uams.edu  
(479) 713-8102



September 28, 2022

Arkansas Legislative PEER Committee  
1 Capitol Mall, Fifth Floor  
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Members of the Arkansas Legislative PEER Committee,

NWTI has requested a contribution from the State of Arkansas in the amount of \$5,000,000 to assist with the construction costs of the proposed NWTI Medical Education Building. The projected construction cost of the project is \$15,000,000, and \$8,000,000 has been raised from local, political entities, and philanthropic partners. The requested state support would raise the construction level to \$13,000,000, with the balance to be from other construction grant opportunities.

I would like to add my voice in support of this Community Facilities Project funding grant request submitted by Northwest Technical Institute. When complete, this 50,000-square foot facility will allow the school to significantly increase the number of students it trains and expand the Allied Health programs the school currently offers.

These additional middle-skill trained workers will shrink the workforce employee gap being seen in the medical industry today. Additionally, these skilled workers will have opportunities to improve the lives of their families and the lives of future families in minority and disadvantaged areas.

I understand that these grants are approved through the Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review (PEER) Legislative Committee with the state and then move forward to the next committee in the process. I would implore your team of legislators to strongly consider granting the request of \$5,000,000 to the Northwest Technical Institute in Springdale, Arkansas. This niche educational market provides training for a variety of medical workers in multiple allied health areas; Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), Surgical Technologists, Medication Aide Certified, and Sterile Processing Technologists. Other future programs to be added will be Behavioral Health Technician, Medical Billing and Coding, Medical Assisting, Electrocardiography Technician, Limited License Radiologic Technician, Pharmacy Technician, and In-Home Health Care Assistant.

This project has garnered broad support from our all six of our region's major hospitals as well as local governments and philanthropists.

The NWTI Medical Education Facility will train the desperately needed workforce decimated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for your assistance in bringing this essential project forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pearl McElfish". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pearl Anna McElfish, MBA, PhD  
Director, Office of Community Health and Research  
Associate Director of Community Engagement, Winthrop P Rockefeller Cancer Institute  
Professor, College of Medicine, Department of Internal Medicine  
Co-Director, Center for Pacific Islander Health  
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences  
1125 N. College Avenue | Fayetteville, AR 72703-1908  
Office phone: (479) 713-8680  
Cell phone: (479) 264-8690  
E-Mail: [pamcelfish@uams.edu](mailto:pamcelfish@uams.edu)



**Dr. Jim Rollins  
Northwest Technical Institute  
709 South Old Missouri Road  
Springdale, AR 72764**

**Washington Regional Medical Center is supportive of Northwest Technical Institute's goal to assist in the healthcare workplace shortage. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused tremendous strain on American healthcare systems and emergency personnel. NWTI plans to offer short-term trainings to accommodate the medical personnel shortage in the region and has collaborated with Washington Regional to verify our needs and plan to offer programs to add to its current trainings to help replenish a workforce both exhausted and depleted by COVID-19.**

**I agree this proposed model is a "difference maker for good" on many fronts and its positive impact will change the landscape of the Northwest Arkansas region. Expansion in allied health graduates- Surgical Technologist, CNA, etc. – will allow the burgeoning medical industry in Northwest Arkansas to continue to grow and improve the quality of service for the residents of the region. Increasing the number of allied health graduates annually from 100 to more than 300 students, NWTI will play a major role in reducing the workforce gap in the medical industry, while also assisting low-income families through training and skill development. In addition, health sector growth will be the catalyst for expansion of additional new service oriented and specialty positions which will assure the constant address of quality education services. Washington Regional is committed to grow to keep pace with the population and committed to providing Centers of Excellence to keep that care within our State. Growing our workforce is key to accomplishing that goal.**


**Sincerely,**

**J. Larry Shackelford  
President and CEO  
Washington Regional Medical System**

**Washington Regional**

3215 N. Northhills Blvd. | Fayetteville, AR 72703 | 479.463.1000 | [wregional.com](http://wregional.com)

# Endorsements (Educational)

The logo for Quality Express Clinic features a large, dark red circle with a white outline, surrounded by several smaller, lighter red and orange circles of varying sizes, creating a cluster effect.

## Quality Express Clinic

Quality Express Clinic LLC  
2001 South Fescue Court  
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701

### Arkansas Legislative PEER Committee

1 Capitol Mall, Fifth Floor  
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Members of the Arkansas Legislative PEER Committee,

It is my privilege to provide a letter of support for the proposed Allied Health Facility on the Northwest Technical Institute (NWTI) Campus. The NWTI Licensed Practical Nursing and Surgical Technologist students are held in high regard in Northwest Arkansas and around the state.

Demand for these allied health professionals is at an all-time high. The current education building lacks physical classroom and laboratory space, as well as advanced technology. This is a major barrier to increasing enrollment and graduating students that are prepared for the ever changing medical environment.

This project has my full support, and I am honored to be a part of the nursing educators that will prepare allied health students for the future.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Debra Walker', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Debra Walker DNP, FNP-BC, APRN**

Doctor of Nursing Practice

Director of Nursing Programs NWTI

[debnurprac@gmail.com](mailto:debnurprac@gmail.com)

940-631-5428

Northwest Arkansas Nursing Education Consortium  
P.O. Box 2000 ~ Springdale, AR 72765  
479-751-8824 ext:123  
**Providing Nursing Education Excellence in Northwest Arkansas**

AMS-Northwest \* Eleanor Mann School of Nursing, University of Arkansas \* Northwest Arkansas Community College \* Northwest Technical Institute \* John Brown University \* Harding University

September 29/2022

Arkansas Legislative PEER Committee

1 Capitol Mall, Fifth Floor

Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Members of the Arkansas Legislative PEER Committee,

The Northwest Arkansas Nursing Education Consortium exists to provide an outlet for communication and coordination between the schools of nursing and the medical facilities located in Northwest Arkansas. Our mission is to provide nursing education excellence in NWA.

The schools of nursing located in NWA are UAMS Northwest, University of Arkansas, Northwest Arkansas Community College, Northwest Technical Institute, John Brown University, and Harding University. These schools of nursing are attempting to reduce the nursing shortage by increasing enrollment and providing the highest quality of nursing education.

This goal requires increased educational classroom and laboratory space as well as a building that will support the high technology demands of health care education. The proposed 50,000-square foot education facility located on the NWTI campus, will remove the barrier of space and technology and allow increased enrollment in the Licensed Practical Nursing Program, Surgical Technologist Program, and Certified Nurse Assistant Program, as well as the expansion of other much needed allied health professional programs.

The Northwest Arkansas Nursing Education Consortium is in full support of the NWTI Medical Education Facility.

Respectfully,

Janet Gardner MSN, RN – President NEC  
Assistant Professor John Brown University

Sarah Bemis DNP, RN – President Elect NEC  
Associate Professor University of Arkansas

Debra Walker DNP, RN – Secretary NEC  
Director of Nursing Programs NWTI





# UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

College of Education and Health Professions  
*Eleanor Mann School of Nursing*

September 28, 2022

Arkansas Legislative PEER Committee  
1 Capitol Mall, Fifth Floor  
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Members of the Arkansas Legislative PEER Committee,

I would like to offer this letter of support to Northwest Technical Institute for the proposed Medical Education Building. As a long time health care professional and educator in Northwest Arkansas I am acutely aware of the need this will fill for our community. These additional middle-skill trained workers will shrink the workforce employee gap being seen in the medical industry today. Additionally, these skilled workers will have opportunities to improve the lives of their families and the lives of future families in minority and disadvantaged areas.

NWTI has requested a contribution from the State of Arkansas in the amount of \$5,000,000 to assist with the construction costs of the NWTI Medical Education Building. The projected construction cost is \$15,000,000 and \$8,000,000 has been raised from local, political entities, and philanthropic partners. When complete, this 50,000-square foot facility will significantly increase the number of students trained and expand the Allied Health programs.

I ask your team of legislators to strongly consider granting the request of \$5,000,000 to the Northwest Technical Institute. This will make a difference in Northwest Arkansas, supporting the health goals of this region across all socioeconomic levels. This education market provides training for a variety of medical workers in the allied health areas; Licensed Practical Nurses, Certified Nursing Assistants, Surgical Technologists, Medication Aide Certified, and Sterile Processing Technologists. Future programs planned; Behavioral Health Technician, Medical Billing/Coding, Electrocardiography Technician, Limited License Radiologic Technician, Pharmacy Technician, and In-Home Health Care Assistant.

This project has garnered broad support from all six of our region's major hospitals as well as local governments, and philanthropists. The NWTI Medical Education Facility will train the desperately needed workforce decimated by the Covid pandemic. Thank you for your assistance in bringing this essential project forward.

Respectfully,

Dr. Kelly Vowell Johnson  
Associate Professor  
Eleanor Mann School of Nursing  
University of Arkansas



# Endorsements (Community)

September 29, 2022

Arkansas Legislative PEER Committee  
1 Capitol Mall, Fifth Floor  
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Members of the Arkansas Legislative PEER Committee,

My name is Carlos Chicas, I am the NWTI Chair of The Board. I really appreciate all the hard work that you do for our State.

NWTI has requested a contribution from the State of Arkansas for \$5,000,000 to assist with the construction costs of the proposed NWTI Medical Education Building. The projected construction cost of the project is \$15,000,000 and \$8,000,000 has been raised from local, political entities, and philanthropic partners. The requested state support would raise the construction level to \$13,000,000, with the balance to be from other construction grant opportunities.

As Chair of the NWTI Board and school counselor, I would like to add my voice in support of this Community Facilities Project funding grant request submitted by Northwest Technical Institute. When complete, this 50,000-square foot facility will allow the school to significantly increase the number of students it trains and expand the Allied Health programs the school currently offers.

These additional middle-skill trained workers will shrink the workforce employee gap being seen in the medical industry today. Additionally, these skilled workers will have opportunities to improve the lives of their families and the lives of future families in minority and disadvantaged areas.

I understand that these grants are approved through the Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review (PEER) Legislative Committee with the state, and then move forward to the next committee in the process. I would implore your team of legislators to strongly consider granting the request of \$5,000,000 to the Northwest Technical Institute in Springdale, Arkansas. This niche educational market provides training for a variety of medical workers in multiple allied health areas; Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), Surgical Technologists, Medication Aide Certified, and Sterile Processing Technologists. Other future programs to be added will be Behavioral Health Technician, Medical Billing and Coding, Medical Assisting, Electrocardiography Technician, Limited License Radiologic Technician, Pharmacy Technician, and In-Home Health Care Assistant.

This project has garnered broad support from our all six of our region's major hospitals as well as local governments, and philanthropists.

The NWTI Medical Education Facility will train the desperately needed workforce decimated by the Covid pandemic.

Thank you for your assistance in bringing this essential project forward.

Respectfully,



Carlos Chicas

NWTI Chair of the Board



October 3, 2022

Arkansas Legislative PEER Committee  
1 Capitol Mall, Fifth Floor  
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Members of the Arkansas Legislative PEER Committee,

NWTI has requested a contribution from the State of Arkansas in the amount of \$5,000,000 to assist with the construction costs of the proposed NWTI Medical Education Building. The projected construction cost of the project is \$15,000,000 and \$8,000,000 has been raised from local, political entities, and philanthropic partners. The requested state support would raise the construction level to \$13,000,000, with the balance to be from other construction grant opportunities.

I would like to add my voice in support of this Community Facilities Project funding grant request submitted by Northwest Technical Institute. When complete, this 50,000-square foot facility will allow the school to significantly increase the number of students it trains and expand the Allied Health programs the school currently offers.

These additional middle-skill trained workers will shrink the workforce employee gap being seen in the medical industry today. Additionally, these skilled workers will have opportunities to improve the lives of their families and the lives of future families in minority and disadvantaged areas.

I understand that these grants are approved through the Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review (PEER) Legislative Committee with the state, and then move forward to the next committee in the process. I would implore your team of legislators to strongly consider granting the request of \$5,000,000 to the Northwest Technical Institute in Springdale, Arkansas. This niche educational market provides training for a variety of medical workers in multiple allied health areas; Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), Surgical Technologists, Medication Aide Certified, and Sterile Processing Technologists. Programs for other needed positions will be able to be added in the future.

This project has garnered broad support from our all six of our region's major hospital systems, as well as local governments and philanthropists.

The NWTI Medical Education Facility will train the desperately needed workforce decimated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for your assistance in bringing this essential project forward.

Respectfully,

Jeff Webster  
President / CFO



P.O. Box 6490  
Springdale, AR 72766

479.717.1900  
479.717.1919 fax  
877.717.1900 toll free

[www.legacyar.com](http://www.legacyar.com)

September 28, 2022

Arkansas Legislative PEER Committee  
1 Capitol Mall, Fifth Floor  
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Members of the Arkansas Legislative PEER Committee,

NWTI has requested a contribution from the State of Arkansas in the amount of \$5,000,000 to assist with the construction costs of the proposed NWTI Medical Education Building. The projected construction cost of the project is \$15,000,000 and \$8,000,000 has been raised from local, political entities, and philanthropic partners. The requested state support would raise the construction level to \$13,000,000, with the balance to be from other construction grant opportunities.

I currently am the Chairman of the Northwest Technical Institute Educational Foundation. In addition, I am on the Board of the Arkansas Children's Research Institute and The advisory Board of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute. As a result, I am acutely aware of the needs in the health community for a trained workforce to fill the abundance of job openings. When complete, this 50,000-square foot facility will allow the school to significantly increase the number of students it trains and expand the Allied Health programs the school currently offers.

These additional middle-skill trained workers will shrink the workforce employee gap being seen in the medical industry today. Additionally, these skilled workers will have opportunities to improve the lives of their families and the lives of future families in minority and disadvantaged areas.

I would implore your team of legislators to strongly consider granting the request of \$5,000,000 to the Northwest Technical Institute in Springdale, Arkansas. This niche educational market provides training for a variety of medical workers in multiple allied health areas; Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), Surgical Technologists, Medication Aide Certified, and Sterile Processing Technologists. Other future programs to be added will be Behavioral Health Technician, Medical Billing and Coding, Medical Assisting, Electrocardiography Technician, Limited License Radiologic Technician, Pharmacy Technician, and In-Home Health Care Assistant.

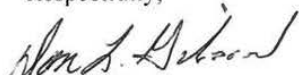
This project has garnered broad support from our all six of our region's major hospitals as well as local governments, and philanthropists.

Member FDIC

The NWTI Medical Education Facility will train the desperately needed workforce decimated by the Covid pandemic.

Thank you for your assistance in bringing this essential project forward.

Respectfully,



Don L. Gibson

CEO Emeritus Legacy National Bank

# Endorsements (Financial Commitments)

May 4, 2022

Pearl Anna McElfish, Ph.D., MBA  
Regional Economic Competitiveness Officer  
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences  
1125 N. College Avenue | Fayetteville, AR 72703-1908  
Office phone: (479) 713-8680 | Cell phone: (479) 264-8690  
E-Mail: [pamcelfish@uams.edu](mailto:pamcelfish@uams.edu)

Dear Dr. McElfish,

On behalf of the City of Springdale, I am writing to express my full support of the collaborative application from UAMS, Northwest Arkansas Council, and health care leaders to develop an E-Health Transformation Cluster consisting of the following component projects:

1. Upskill for Equitable E-Health Employment Growth
2. Accelerated Bachelor of Nursing Focused on E-Health
3. E-Health Simulation for Workforce Training and Resiliency
4. Physician Graduate Medical Education for an E-health Workforce
5. E-Health BioDesign for Entrepreneurial Excellence
6. E-Health Leadership, Equity, Evaluation, Governance, and Sustainability

The E-Health Transformation Cluster will focus on Economic growth and resilience through: Electronic health solutions, Entrepreneurial health care solutions, and Equitable workforce development with specific focus on training racial and ethnic minorities, women, and rural residents of our region. This cluster/ecosystem approach will allow the region to achieve maximum economic benefit from highly interrelated projects.

The City of Springdale is committing \$2 million in support of the Upskill NWA Project as the required EDA match for the construction of a new building at Northwest Technical Institute (NWTI). Please let this serve as our letter of confirmation the funds are awarded, available, and unencumbered for the Upskill NWA project. Through this project, the region's unemployed and lowest income residents will be able to receive training and certification in the allied health professions the region's hospitals and clinics desperately need. In addition to the actual training programs, Upskill NWA will provide wrap

**Doug Sprouse** Mayor  
(479) 750.8114 phone | (479) 750.8559 fax | 201 Spring Street | Springdale, Arkansas 72764



around services like career counseling services, assistance with transitioning from school to work, transportation, and child-care., which will put these educational programs in reach of those who need them most but would otherwise be unable to participate. By constructing a new building at NWTI, the institute will be able to significantly expand capacity in their allied health training programs and ensure participants have access to the latest technology used in the clinical setting.

We additionally commit to supporting business development in the health care sector beyond the Build Back Better Regional Challenge and working with businesses and organizations like the Northwest Arkansas Council to help recruit and retain workers in our region.

The Health Care Transformation Division has facilitated strong collaboration among all stakeholders in our region and we are excited to continue to work with you (Dr. McElfish) and Mr. Ryan Cork to ensure the success of the E-Health Transformation Cluster, because it is deeply important for our region.

Health care is one of the fastest growing sectors of the national and world-wide economics, spurred by an increase in population and leaps forward in technology such as medical device development, telemedicine, and E-Health technology development. The health care sector in the U.S. is more than 15% of total GDP – more than agriculture, construction, and utilities combined.

The population in Northwest Arkansas has doubled in population in the last 20 years, but our health care economy has not been able to keep pace with this growth. The regional health care sector comprises only 7% of the regional GDP (less than half of the national GDP of 15%). Additionally, an economic impact study of health care in the region found that we lose nearly \$2 billion per year in out-migration and lost opportunity costs when residents leave the area to seek health care services they can't access here. This has a huge impact on the economy and affects the ability of major employers like Walmart, Tyson, Simmons, and JB Hunt – all of which are headquartered here – to competitively recruit talent from around the country.

This is a complex problem that requires enormous time and investment to solve. The model designed by the members of the E-Health Transformation Cluster is thoughtful, innovative, equitable and inclusive, replicable for other parts of the country, and represents the same thorough and transformative approach that has long-guided some of our region's largest businesses. We are also pleased to see that the E-Health Transformation Cluster projects have incorporated a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion across all levels of the cluster projects, in line with our desire to ensure equitable economic growth across our region.

The City of Springdale is pleased to support all component projects of the E-Health Transformation cluster. In addition to our financial support of Upskill NWA and the construction project at NWTI, we commit to supporting business development in the health care sector beyond the Build Back Better Regional Challenge and working with businesses and organizations like the Northwest Arkansas Council to help recruit and retain workers in our region.

**Doug Sprouse** Mayor

(479) 750.8114 phone | (479) 750.8559 fax | 201 Spring Street | Springdale, Arkansas 72764



We are confident this interconnected approach of the E-Health Transformation Cluster will expand the health care workforce, build health care resiliency, reduce unemployment, and strengthen our health care system and our economy.

Sincerely,



Doug Sprouse  
Mayor, Springdale

**Doug Sprouse** Mayor

(479) 750.8114 phone | (479) 750.8559 fax | 201 Spring Street | Springdale, Arkansas 72764



JOSEPH K. WOOD  
County Judge

280 N. College Ave, Ste 500  
Fayetteville, AR 72701

WASHINGTON COUNTY, ARKANSAS  
County Courthouse

May 6, 2022

Pearl Anna McElfish, Ph.D., MBA  
Regional Economic Competitiveness Officer  
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences  
1125 N. College Avenue | Fayetteville, AR 72703-1908  
Office phone: (479)713-8680 | Cell phone: (479) 264-8690  
E-Mail: pamcelfish@uams.edu

Dear Dr. McElfish,

On behalf of Washington County, I am writing to express my full support of the collaborative application from UAMS, Northwest Arkansas Council, and health care leaders to develop an E-Health Transformation Cluster consisting of the following component projects:

1. Upskill for Equitable E-Health Employment Growth
2. Accelerated Bachelor of Nursing Focused on E-Health
3. E-Health Simulation for Workforce Training and Resiliency
4. Physician Graduate Medical Education for an E-health Workforce
5. E-Health BioDesign for Entrepreneurial Excellence
6. E-Health Leadership, Equity, Evaluation, Governance, and Sustainability

The E-Health Transformation Cluster will focus on Economic growth and resilience through: Electronic health solutions, Entrepreneurial health care solutions, and Equitable workforce development with specific focus on training racial and ethnic minorities, women, and rural residents of our region. This cluster/ecosystem approach will allow the region to achieve maximum economic benefit from highly interrelated projects.

**Washington County is committing \$500,000 in support of the Upskill NWA Project, to go toward the construction of a new building at Northwest Technical Institute (NWTI). Please let this serve as our letter of confirmation the funds are awarded, available, and unencumbered for the Upskill NWA project.** Through this project, the region's unemployed and lowest income residents will be able to receive training and certification in the allied health professions the region's hospitals and clinics desperately need. In addition to the actual training programs, Upskill NWA will provide wrap around services like career counseling services, assistance with transitioning from school to work, transportation, and child-care., which will put these educational programs in reach of those who need them most but would otherwise be unable to participate. By constructing a new

building at NWTI, the institute will be able to significantly expand capacity in their allied health training programs and ensure participants have access to the latest technology used in the clinical setting.

We additionally commit to supporting business development in the health care sector beyond the Build Back Better Regional Challenge and working with businesses and organizations like the Northwest Arkansas Council to help recruit and retain workers in our region.

The Health Care Transformation Division has facilitated strong collaboration among all stakeholders in our region and we are excited to continue to work with you (Dr. McElfish) and Mr. Ryan Cork to ensure the success of the E-Health Transformation Cluster, because it is deeply important for our region.

Health care is one of the fastest growing sectors of the national and world-wide economics, spurred by an increase in population and leaps forward in technology such as medical device development, telemedicine, and E-Health technology development. The health care sector in the U.S. is more than 15% of total GDP – more than agriculture, construction, and utilities combined.

The population in Northwest Arkansas has doubled in population in the last 20 years, but our health care economy has not been able to keep pace with this growth. The regional health care sector comprises only 7% of the regional GDP (less than half of the national GDP of 15%). Additionally, an economic impact study of health care in the region found that we lose nearly \$2 billion per year in out-migration and lost opportunity costs when residents leave the area to seek health care services they can't access here. This has a huge impact on the economy and affects the ability of major employers like Walmart, Tyson, Simmons, and JB Hunt – all of which are headquartered here – to competitively recruit talent from around the country.

This is a complex problem that requires enormous time and investment to solve. The model designed by the members of the E-Health Transformation Cluster is thoughtful, innovative, equitable and inclusive, replicable for other parts of the country, and represents the same thorough and transformative approach that has long-guided some of our region's largest businesses. We are also pleased to see that the E-Health Transformation Cluster projects have incorporated a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion across all levels of the cluster projects, in line with our desire to ensure equitable economic growth across our region.

Washington County is pleased to support all component projects of the E-Health Transformation cluster. In addition to our financial support of Upskill NWA and the construction project at NWTI, we commit to supporting business development in the health care sector beyond the Build Back Better Regional Challenge and working with businesses and organizations like the Northwest Arkansas Council to help recruit and retain workers in our region.

We are confident this interconnected approach of the E-Health Transformation Cluster will expand the health care workforce, build health care resiliency, reduce unemployment, and strengthen our health care system and our economy.

Sincerely,



Joseph K. Wood  
Washington County Judge

May 6, 2022

Don Raines  
NWTI Education Foundation  
709 South Old Missouri Road  
Springdale, AR, 72764-1142



RE: Grant ALWF103745

Dear Don,

I am pleased to inform you that a grant payment has been initiated from the Alice L. Walton Foundation ("Foundation") in the amount of \$1,410,000.00, of an up to \$2,820,000.00 grant, to NWTI Education Foundation ("Grantee"). The grant funds are to support the construction of a new allied healthcare training facility and the integration of whole health principles into healthcare instruction. An electronic grant payment has been initiated. You should receive the funds within 14 business days.

Grant publicity related to this grant consistent with Grantee's normal practice is permitted, subject to the following provisions. The Foundation expects any announcements and other publicity to focus on Grantee's work and the project or issue funded by the grant. Recognition of the Foundation's role in funding the project is permitted, provided that the timing, content and strategic focus of such publicity is approved by the Foundation. Publicizing the grant and the Foundation in Grantee's publications and communications in a manner consistent with similar grants obtained by Grantee is permitted. If publicized or recognized, the grant should be listed as from the "Alice L. Walton Foundation."

For all communications regarding this grant, your point of contact at the Foundation will be Roger Norman, Program Officer. Roger can be contacted via phone 479-553-5911 or email [rnorman@wppg.org](mailto:rnorman@wppg.org). Please reference Grant ALWF103745 in your communication.

On behalf of the Foundation, I extend every good wish for the success of your organization's endeavors.

Regards,  
Alice L. Walton Foundation



Alice L. Walton Foundation  
PO Box 2030  
Bentonville, AR 72712-2030

# Building Designs

## Attachment 1

Composite of exterior  
Original first and second floor designs  
Final first and second floor designs





Original Drawings July 2021  
FirstFloor



## NURSING FLOOR

1ST FLOOR PROGRAM PLAN  
35'0" x 115'0"

NORTHWEST TECHNICAL INSTITUTE - HEALTH SCIENCES FACILITY

**1ST FLOOR**

Original Drawings July 2021  
on Floor



## ALLIED HEALTH FLOOR

2ND FLOOR PROGRAM PLAN  
3/27/17

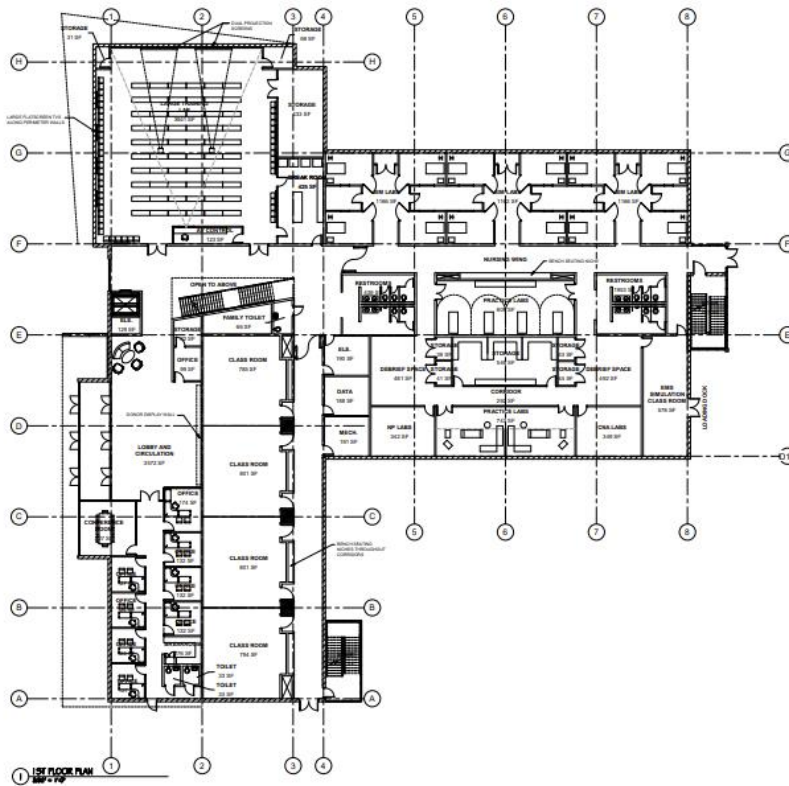
NORTHWEST TECHNICAL INSTITUTE - HEALTH SCIENCES FACILITY

## 2ND FLOOR





Final Drawings to Date  
First Floor

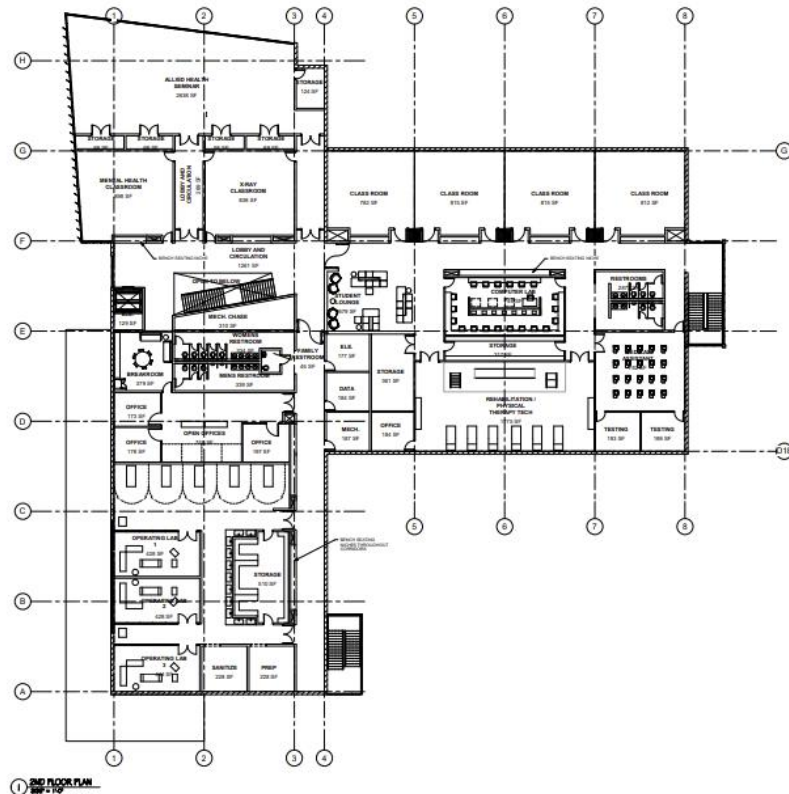


NORTHWEST TECHNICAL INSTITUTE - HEALTH  
SCIENCES FACILITY

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

A1.00

Final Drawings to Date  
Second Floor



NORTHWEST TECHNICAL INSTITUTE - HEALTH  
SCIENCES FACILITY

2ND FLOOR PLAN

A1.10

**CPF Pre-Award Cost Annex Narrative  
(Attachment 2)**

The professional services procurement process for the NWTI Medical Education Building included interviews for the Architect and the Construction Manager. Three Architectural firms and three Construction Management firms were interviewed. Teams representing these firms made professional presentations to the Administrative team from NWTI on behalf of the NWTI Education Foundation. Each firm had approximately one hour and thirty minutes to present their firm's history and ability to handle the proposed construction of the NWTI Medical Education building. The NWTI Administrative Team then selected the firm they felt was the best prepared to construct the NWTI Medical Education Building in a timely manner.

The intervening variables that influenced the professional services selection process were:

- Desired opening date of the new facility – August 1, 2024
- The rapidly increasing cost of construction
- The process for gathering funds from local, state, and federal agencies, as well as philanthropic organizations. The CPF funding grant of \$5 million is an integral part of the anticipated \$15 million cost for the facility. The remainder of the funding costs will come from other local, federal and philanthropic grants.

Clearly, there was a perceived need to do as much expeditious pre-construction planning as possible in an effort to meet the established timeline and minimize the impact of rising construction costs.

The professional services firms selected were:

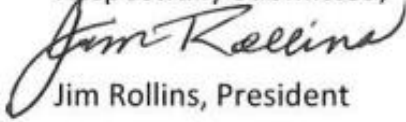
- Architect  
Wittenburg, Deloney, and Davidson Architects  
2434 East Joyce Blvd. #100  
Fayetteville, AR 72703  
Date Selected – May 24, 2022
- Construction Manager  
Flintco Construction Management Company  
184 Fantinel Drive  
Springdale, AR 72762  
Date Selected – June 28, 2022

These selections then allowed the pre-construction process to continue, although no official contracts were let. The mutually agreed upon process for pre-construction services in the absence of a contract between either the architect or the construction manager was that each firm would work to reach completion of the design phase and get the project ready for bid on or before September 1, 2022. The understanding was clear that the firms would only be compensated for their pre-design work if funds were procured and only when the project was officially bid and the construction project put in place. Should the fundraising fall short of the required levels to let the contract, these firms would have provided their services gratis or for no fee.

In closing, this process was objective and professional. Each interested professional firm had every opportunity to demonstrate their preparedness for the job. The preferred teams agreed to the work conditions stipulated and each firm has worked diligently to comply with the pre-design project agreed-upon conditions.

The NWTI Medical Education building project is maturing as planned and with the necessary financial funds in place, the design plans will be bid in the marketplace, a construction contract finalized, and the new building completed and ready for occupancy by August 1, 2024.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Rollins", written in a cursive style.

Jim Rollins, President

Northwest Technical Institute

JR: hm

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021 PROGRAM APPROPRIATION  
AND PERSONNEL AUTHORIZATION REQUEST  
SECTION 37 OF ACT 199 OF 2022

C.12

Agency: DFA Disbursing Officer Business Area Code: 0620  
Program Title: ARPA - Philander Smith College  
Granting Organization: US Treasury CFDA #: 21.027  
Effective Date of Authorization: Beginning: 7/1/2022 Ending: 6/30/2023

Purpose of Grant / Reason for addition or change (include attachments as necessary to provide thorough information):  
Expansion in three areas: Licensed Practical Nursing Program (LPN), Certified Nursing Assistant Program (CNA), and the Panther Pantry and Fresh Market.  
Program Objectives:  
The Dr. Joycelyn Elders School of Allied and Public Health will be a multi-purpose community resource facility to address work, education, and health monitoring in the State of Arkansas. This will be accomplished with these primary objectives:  
1.The creation of a CNA and LPN program to educate and provide additional health care workers in the State of Arkansas.  
2. The expansion of the Elders Community Health Clinic to increase public health monitoring for underserved communities and as a pandemic resource support site.  
3.The expansion of the Philander Smith College Food Pantry to the community served by the Elder’s initiative.

American Rescue Plan Act Program Funding

Func. Area: ADMN Fund Code: FRP6210 Direct Funding: \_\_\_\_\_  
Funds Center: \_\_\_\_\_ Internal Order/WBS Element: A.0620.ARP PHILANDER-E Steering Comm. Approved: X  
Continuation: \_\_\_\_\_

	Program Funding Amount
Regular Salaries	
Extra Help	
Personal Services Matching	
Operating Expenses	
Conference & Travel Expenses	
Professional Fees	
Capital Outlay	
Data Processing	
Grants and Aid (CI: 04)	
Other: 590:00:46	5,000,000
Other:	
Total	\$ 5,000,000

Anticipated Duration of Federal Funds: 12/31/2026

DFA IGS State Technology Planning Date  
Items requested for information technology must be in compliance with Technology Plans as submitted to DFA IGS State Technology Planning.

Positions to be established: (list each position separately)

Org Unit	Pers Area	Pers SubArea	Cost Center	Position Number	Cmnt Item	Position Title	Class Code	Grade	Line Item Maximum *

State funds will not be used to replace federal funds when such funds expire, unless appropriated by the General Assembly and authorized by the Governor.

Approved by: Robert Brech 9/2/2022  
Cabinet Secretary/Agency Director Date Office of Budget Date Office of Personnel Mgmt Date  
8/31-22 09/01/22

## **Philander Smith College - \$5,000,000**

Philander Smith College, established in 1877, is the oldest Historically Black College or University (HBCU) in Arkansas. Our founding mission was to educate teachers and preachers for the newly freed slaves after the Civil War. Over the last 140 years we have maintained our alliance to that mission while expanding to reach the needs of that same community, as well as the broader community.

In September 2015, the College took the bold step to approve the Dr. Joycelyn Elders School of Allied and Public Health. Although it was unknown then, this was a timely move in that the pandemic of 2020 would affect the immediate and broader community that we have serviced for over 140 years. COVID-19 has impacted the underserved and minority communities at a much larger rate than the general public. The need for testing, vaccinations, mental health, and overall healthcare is at a peak. The Dr. Joycelyn Elders School for Allied and Public Health is prepared, with your assistance, to render to the underserved communities of Arkansas trained health care workers and access to health care from a trusted community partner.

Philander Smith College, with support from many of our community partners, has already began the process of responding to the pandemic. We have laid a firm academic foundation regarding our work in the Allied and Public Health space. We are prepared to expand this foundation in three areas: Licensed Practical Nursing Program (LPN), Certified Nursing Assistant Program (CNA), and the Panther Pantry and Fresh Market.

### **Program Objectives:**

The Dr. Joycelyn Elders School of Allied and Public Health will be a multi-purpose community resource facility to address work, education, and health monitoring in the State of Arkansas. This will be accomplished with these primary objectives:

1. The creation of a CNA and LPN program to educate and provide additional health care workers in the State of Arkansas.
2. The expansion of the Elders Community Health Clinic to increase public health monitoring for underserved communities and as a pandemic resource support site.
3. The expansion of the Philander Smith College Food Pantry to the community served by the Elder's initiative.

Agency: DFA Disbursing OfficerBusiness Area Code: 0620

Program Title: ARPA - Arkansas Rural Health Partnership

Granting Organization: US TreasuryCFDA #: 21.027

Effective Date of Authorization: Beginning: 7/1/2022Ending: 6/30/2023

Purpose of Grant / Reason for addition or change (include attachments as necessary to provide thorough information):  
The intent of this request is to address the critical needs of Arkansas rural hospitals post COVID-19 by strengthening these organizations through initiatives that will ensure these hospitals continue to provide needed healthcare services by offering technical assistance to make in-depth health system enhancements to improve financial position and increase operational efficiencies, provide workforce recruitment, training, and retention needs, assist hospitals with integrating social services to address socio-economic challenges and enhance services, and integrating mental and behavioral health services to address the shortage of these services in rural Arkansas.

American Rescue Plan Act Program Funding

Func. Area: ADMNFund Code: FRP6208Direct Funding: \_\_\_\_\_  
Funds Center: \_\_\_\_\_Internal Order/WBS Element: A.0620.ARPARHP-ESteering Comm. Approved: X  
Continuation: \_\_\_\_\_

	Program Funding Amount
Regular Salaries	
Extra Help	
Personal Services Matching	
Operating Expenses	
Conference & Travel Expenses	
Professional Fees	
Capital Outlay	
Data Processing	
Grants and Aid (CI: 04)	
Other: 590:00:46	10,000,000
Other:	
Total	\$ 10,000,000

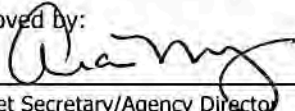
Anticipated Duration of Federal Funds: 12/31/2026

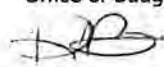
**DFA IGS State Technology Planning**      **Date**  
Items requested for information technology must be in compliance with Technology Plans as submitted to DFA IGS State Technology Planning.

Positions to be established: (list each position separately) \* unclassified positions only

Org Unit	Pers Area	Pers SubArea	Cost Center	Position Number	Cmnt Item	Position Title	Class Code	Grade	Line Item Maximum *

State funds will not be used to replace federal funds when such funds expire, unless appropriated by the General Assembly and authorized by the Governor.

Approved by:  8/31/22 Robert Brech 9/2/2022  
Cabinet Secretary/Agency Director      Date      Office of Budget      Date

 09/01/22  
Office of Personnel Mgmt      Date



**Proposal for Arkansas State Fiscal Recovery Fund**  
**Submitted by Department of Human Services**  
**Titled: Proposal to Provide \$10 million to Enhance Rural Hospital Services**  
**August 29, 2022**

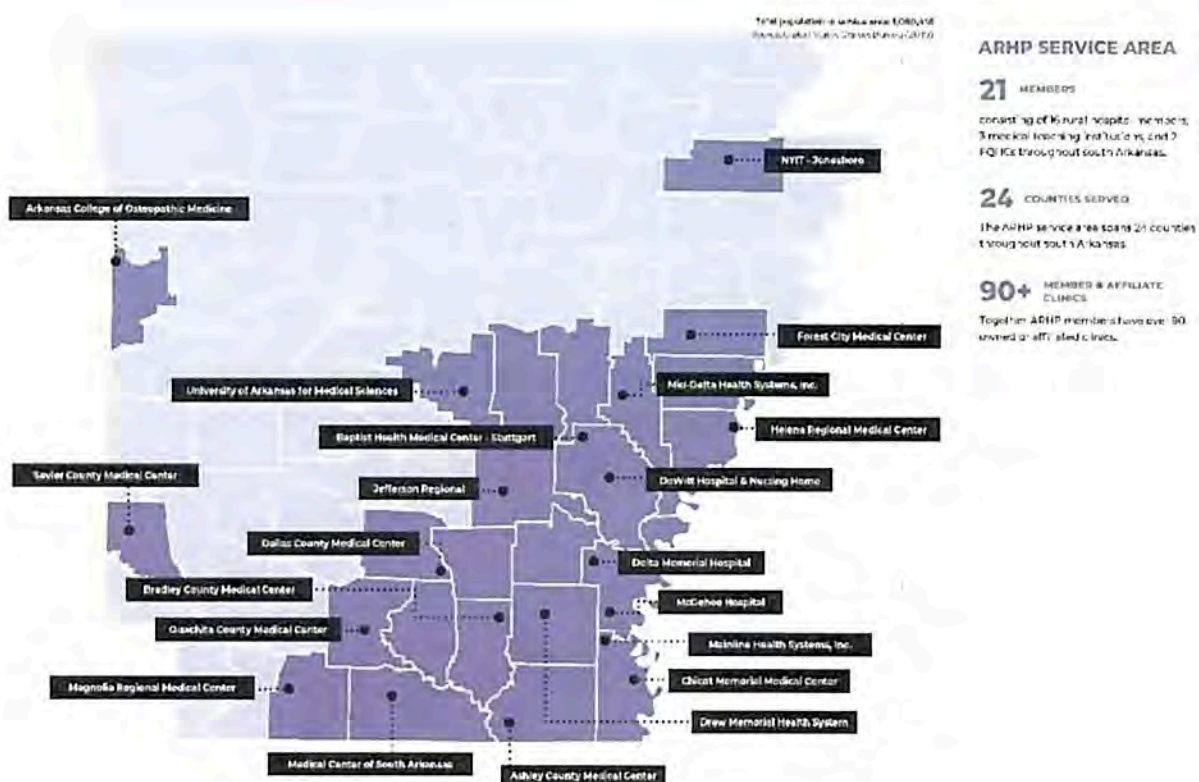
**Summary**

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, hospitals are struggling to maintain capacity to treat patients and protect the public and their staffs. The pandemic has disrupted the hospitals' and nursing facilities' abilities to maintain qualified staff at all levels within their organizations.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) proposes an additional \$10 million in funding for services to benefit rural hospitals through the Arkansas Rural Health Partnership (ARHP). This assistance will enable rural hospitals to respond to the public health emergency related to COVID-19 and its negative impacts by addressing critical needs within these facilities and strengthening their operations through initiatives that will ensure that they continue to provide needed healthcare services. These funds may be used for costs related to COVID-19 between March 3, 2021, and December 31, 2024, that have not been reimbursed and are incurred for any of the purposes described below.

**Applicant Description:** Nobody understands the needs of rural hospitals like the leaders that work in rural hospitals. ARHP is a non-profit organization of 17 rural hospitals, two Federally Qualified Health Centers, and three medical schools where member rural hospitals are committed to remain autonomous for as long as they can. These hospitals understand that by partnering together and combining forces there is leverage in numbers giving them an advantage; especially when it comes to cutting operational costs, increasing access to healthcare services, improving quality of care, and addressing the needs of their patients and residents through population health initiatives, assistance services, and mental and behavioral health services and shared programs. ARHP offers its members multiple advantages; like purchasing power and discounts, contract negotiation, medical training, information technology, recruitment, and most recently, the formation of a Clinically Integrated Network. The organization works at keeping resources in rural areas and contracts with its member hospitals for services to support partnering hospitals. The organization is pursuing lowering costs for employee benefits, workers' compensation, and medical malpractice insurance, along with business office procedures. This would be done in partnership with members only or possibly partnering with a larger health system. ARHP priorities have an emphasis on finding new approaches and organizational frameworks to improve health outcomes, control costs, increase the rural workforce, and improve population health. Education, financial assistance, and an experienced, educated, and competent support system to pursue the changes needed to survive would prevent our rural hospitals from closing. ARHP administration and leadership have vast knowledge and experience as healthcare administrators, hospital financial professionals, recognized rural health experts, grant writers, fundraisers in place. The organization is ready to provide immediate support to rural hospitals across the state.

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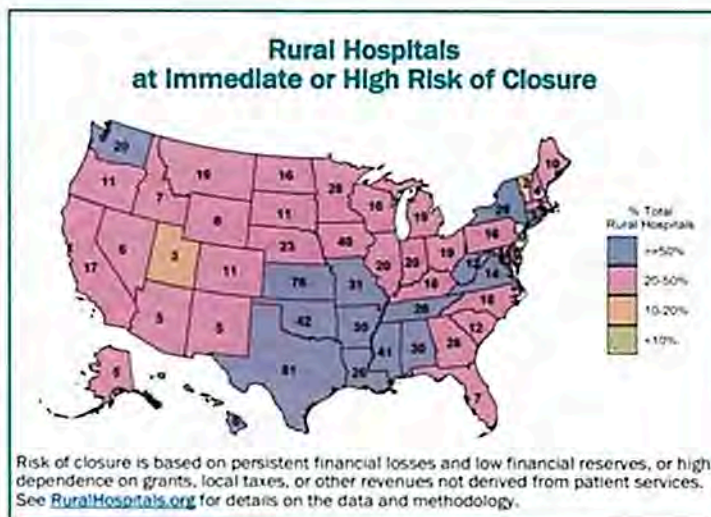
**Purpose of Requested Funds:** The intent of this request is to address the critical needs of Arkansas rural hospitals post COVID-19 by strengthening these organizations through initiatives that will ensure these hospitals continue to provide needed healthcare services by offering technical assistance to make in-depth health system enhancements to improve financial position and increase operational efficiencies, provide workforce recruitment, training, and retention needs, assist hospitals with integrating social services to address socio-economic challenges and enhance services, and integrating mental and behavioral health services to address the shortage of these services in rural Arkansas.

**Number of Locations Served:** 52 rural hospitals throughout Arkansas

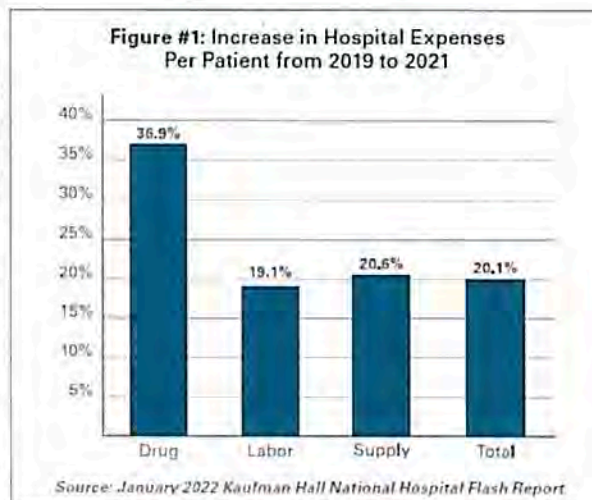
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**Need:** More than 800 rural hospitals – 40% of all rural hospitals in the country – are at risk of closing in the near future. According to the Center for Healthcare Quality and Payment Reform, 61% of the rural hospitals in Arkansas have been identified as at risk of closure. Most of these are small rural hospitals that provide not only emergency care, inpatient care, and outpatient services, but also primary care, rehabilitation, and long-term care services for their communities. Moreover, most of the hospitals are in isolated communities where loss of the hospital could severely limit access to health care services. More than 2 million people could be directly harmed if these hospitals close, and people in all parts of the country could be affected through the impacts on workers in agriculture and other industries. These funds will be used in a long-term program to strengthen the rural hospitals, increase workforce in both numbers and quality, and improve the leadership skills that combined may prevent hospital closures and improve care in Arkansas.



According to the American Hospital Association (AHA), hospitals and health systems have faced massive financial losses throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and continue to experience staffing shortages, rising expenses, and supply chain issues. Hospitals and health systems have been efficient in keeping up with COVID-19 surges since the onset of the pandemic. Facilities have expanded treatment capacity, hired additional staff, and maintained patient access to critical services and programs, AHA said. However, as a result, hospitals have experienced billions of dollars in losses. According to AHA, more than a third of hospitals have negative operating margins.



At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed significant inequities in the availability of healthcare services and resources in rural Arkansas, as well as gaps in the availability of adequate mental and behavioral health services across the state. And the pandemic itself has exacerbated both the rural inequities and the need for additional capacity in mental and behavioral health services.

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The drivers for the current overall hospital crisis are:

**Cost Reimbursement.** Hospitals are not being paid enough to cover the cost of delivering care to patients. Inadequate payments from both public and private health plans along with the inability of patients to pay their bills continues to be one of the concerns for hospitals.

**Staffing Costs.** According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, hospital employment nationally is down approximately 100,000 from pre-pandemic levels. At the same time, hospital labor expenses per patient through 2021 were 19.1% higher than pre-pandemic levels in 2019. Labor costs account for more than 50% of hospitals' total expenses. Therefore, even a slight increase in these costs can have significant impacts on a hospital's total expenses and operating margins. Driving the growth in labor expenses has been an increased reliance on contract staff, especially contract nurses, who are integral members of the clinical team. In 2019, hospitals spent a median of 4.7% of their total nurse labor expenses for contract travel nurses, which skyrocketed to a median of 38.6% in January 2022. Contract staff agencies have increased the rates they bill hospitals significantly. In fact, hourly billing rates that hospitals pay staffing firms for contract employees increased 213% compared to pre-pandemic levels and led to a 62% profit margin for contract staff agencies, i.e., the difference between what the firms charge hospitals and what the firms pay the contract employees. (See Attachment A for cost analysis for Arkansas Rural Health Partnership hospitals conducted in August 2022).

**Supply/Drug Costs.** Drug expenses also increased dramatically, 36.9% on per patient bases, compared to pre-pandemic levels. As a share of non-labor expenses, drug expenses grew from approximately 8.2% in January 2019 to 10.6% in January 2022. Medical supply expenses grew 20.6% through the end of 2021, compared to pre-pandemic levels. When focusing on hospital departments most directly involved in care for COVID-19 patients – ICUs and respiratory care departments – medical supply expenses increased 31.5% and 22.3%, respectively, from pre-pandemic levels.

This is exacerbated in small, independent rural hospitals because:

Unlike most larger hospitals and those that are part of a larger health system that have been experiencing financial losses, independent rural hospitals have reached the point where they no longer have sufficient financial reserves available to cover their losses and no method of paying their staff or creditors.

Private health plans pay small rural hospitals less than they pay larger hospitals for the same services, and Medicare Advantage plans appear to be among the worst payers at small rural hospitals. Most small rural hospitals operate one or more rural health clinics, and the low payments for primary care services from private payers are a major cause of losses at these hospitals.

Independent rural hospitals experience high costs for supplies, equipment, and contracted services because they do not have the volume to benefit from cost savings that are offered to larger healthcare systems.

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There is a higher cost to recruiting and retaining healthcare providers, administration, and leadership to rural areas. Rural communities do not offer all the amenities of larger metropolitan areas. Without the volume of this workforce in rural communities, hospitals are having to pay the cost to keep the current workforce from leaving and, at the same time, pay staffing agencies the costs to ensure retention of services.

### **Proposed Services and Initiatives:**

- 1. Swing-bed Coordination:** ARHP is proposing to increase the coordination and care of post-acute care patients across the state. This program will assist with moving patients within the statewide system to the appropriate level of care which makes the most economic sense for patients and hospitals. The proposed project will strengthen its relationship between small rural hospitals and larger hospitals by bringing a proven model from nationally recognized healthcare organizations (Allevant, developed by Mayo Clinic and Select Medical) into rural Arkansas. ARHP will focus efforts on marketing and communications for participating hospitals to assist them with communication and marketing to both larger hospitals and within their own communities. This project will improve the coordination and care of post-acute care patients across the state through the development of an online platform and hiring of a dedicated coordination team to organize and coordinate swing bed utilization between acute care and critical access hospitals. This will enhance care delivery for hospitals of every size across the state, while directly improving the financial viability of rural CAH hospitals. ARHP is currently implementing this project which is resulting in positive revenue for member Critical Access Hospitals. (\$1.5 million for three years)
- 2. On-site Healthcare Provider Simulation Training:** ARHP is proposing to provide on-site simulation training to rural hospitals throughout rural Arkansas in partnership with UAMS Centers for Simulation Education to coordinate on-site COVID-response preparedness simulation training to rural hospital workers in rural hospitals in Arkansas. ARHP will work with rural hospitals throughout the proposed service area to coordinate three trainings a year at each site. By providing this training on-site, trainers/educators can work with hospital teams to assist them with facility preparation as well as procedures. Most importantly, the training can be facilitated in a team environment so participating healthcare workers can learn how to work together more effectively and efficiently in case of an emergency. (\$2.7 million for three years)
- 3. Expand Rural Clinical Nursing Training:** To address the nursing shortage across the state, and especially in rural healthcare organizations, ARHP is proposing to expand its current task force to coordinate and increase the number of available nursing clinical rotations, in turn, increasing the number of rural trained nurses in the region in partnership with nursing schools throughout the state. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the problem as many nurses have been recruited out of the region by urban hospitals and/or travel nursing agencies that promise hefty sign-on bonuses and free housing. Nurses from the rural region are less likely to be enticed by these offers and leave the region, however rural healthcare organizations are struggling to fill vacant nursing positions. Although there are numerous nursing schools throughout the state with students from rural communities, there are too few available clinical

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rotations in rural areas to increase the number of (predominantly local) nurses trained. The project will address the need for formalized collaborative efforts, locally available nurse preceptors, and the creation of additional clinical rotation thus increasing the capacity for nursing schools located in rural areas to expand their admissions and provide students that are unable to leave their rural community with an opportunity to pursue a career in nursing. (\$1 million over three years)

4. **Integration of Mental and Behavioral Health Services:** Rural hospitals are struggling with revenue while mental and behavioral health services are almost non-existent in rural Arkansas. ARHP is proposing to assist rural hospitals in transitioning empty hospital beds into mental and behavioral health inpatient and outpatient service beds and integrating telehealth services as an approach to address the shortage of mental and behavioral health providers. The COVID-19 pandemic created an even more dire need for additional mental and behavioral health services. By providing these services in the rural hospital setting, patients can receive care close to home and the hospital benefits from the revenue from these services. There is still a significant resource need to enable rural hospitals to assemble the infrastructure and resources needed to implement mental and behavioral health services. (\$2.8 million for three years)
5. **Integration of Social Determinants of Health:** ARHP is proposing to increase the capacity of identifying and addressing social determinants of health (SDOH) in small rural communities in partnership with rural hospitals in Arkansas. Identifying and addressing SDOH such as housing, education, nutrition, and access to services can have a significant influence on health outcomes. This connection is particularly important for individuals receiving behavioral or mental health services, and SDOH must be addressed to better ensure positive health outcomes as a result of the integration of mental and behavioral health services discussed above. This connection has also proven critically important in addressing the ongoing social effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the rural inequities exposed by the pandemic. These workers will be able to assist with insurance enrollment (Medicare, traditional Medicaid, and ARHome), prescription assistance, social needs screening, telehealth and telemonitoring support, food assistance, patient navigation services, COVID testing and vaccinations, and health events working together with member healthcare organizations and providers. These assistance services will result in cost savings to patients, revenue to healthcare providers, and healthier patients. These services have been critical during the COVID pandemic when patients were struggling to find resources. (\$2 million for three years)

#### **Restrictions on funds:**

The recipient of funds will be required to attest that these are necessary expenditures due to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19 and that none of these funds are used to duplicate or supplant funding from any other source of payment.

#### **Process and Procedures for Payment:**

Payment will be issued by the Arkansas Department of Finance & Administration (DFA) following approval of this proposal. Expenses covered under this program may not be reimbursed under any other federal or state program.

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AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021 PROGRAM APPROPRIATION  
AND PERSONNEL AUTHORIZATION REQUEST  
SECTION 37 OF ACT 199 OF 2022

C.14

Agency: Black River Technical College Business Area Code: 0675

Program Title: American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Black River Technical College Short-Term Housing and Training Facility

Granting Organization: United States Congress CFDA #: \_\_\_\_\_

Effective Date of Authorization: \_\_\_\_\_ Beginning: 8/31/2022 Ending: 6/30/2023

Purpose of Grant / Reason for addition or change (include attachments as necessary to provide thorough information):  
Detailed plan attached.

American Rescue Plan Act Program Funding

Func. Area: \_\_\_\_\_ Fund Code: FRP6750 Direct Funding: \_\_\_\_\_

Funds Center: New Internal Order/WBS Element: \_\_\_\_\_ Steering Comm. Approved: xx

Continuation: \_\_\_\_\_

	Program Funding Amount
Regular Salaries	
Extra Help	
Personal Services Matching	
Operating Expenses	
Conference & Travel Expenses	
Professional Fees	
Capital Outlay	
Data Processing	
Grants and Aid (CI: 04)	
Other: (CI: 05) BRTC Short-Term Housing and Training Facility	4,622,857
Other:	
Total	\$ 4,622,857

Anticipated Duration of Federal Funds: 6/30/2023

<b>DFA IGS State Technology Planning</b>	<b>Date</b>
Items requested for information technology must be in compliance with Technology Plans as submitted to DFA IGS State Technology Planning.	

**Positions to be established: (list each position separately)** \* unclassified positions only

Org Unit	Pers Area	Pers SubArea	Cost Center	Position Number	Cmnt Item	Position Title	Class Code	Grade	Line Item Maximum *

State funds will not be used to replace federal funds when such funds expire, unless appropriated by the General Assembly and authorized by the Governor.

Approved by: [Signature] 8/31/2022 Robert Brech 9/2/2022

Cabinet Secretary/Agency Director Date Office of Budget Date Office of Personnel Mgmt Date



## Use Code 1C Questionnaire

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Program Identifier: **1-CPF-BRTC**

Program Title: Black River Technical College Short-Term Housing and Training Facility

How Will the Recipient implement the Program: **DIRECT IMPLEMENTATION**

Does the Recipient represent and commit that the Capital Projects will provide services or activities that directly enable work, education, and health monitoring for at least five years from the completion of the Project? **YES**

Will CPF grant funds for this program be used to cover costs incurred after March 15, 2021, but prior to the execution of the Grant Agreement? **NO**

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### Program Narrative:

#### Program Summary:

Black River Technical College (BRTC) is a two-year college proposing the construction of a short-term housing and training facility at a cost of \$4,622,857. The multi-purpose community facility will function as a regional response center, and emergency response center during disasters, and as an overflow hospital during emergencies while addressing these critical needs of rural Northeast Arkansas. It offers a wide variety of community health monitoring and critical health services in partnership with Northeast Arkansas (NEA) hospitals, medical clinics, and health units. It also partners with the community and directly provides support services.

BRTC's short-term housing and training facility will provide a wide range of services, including but not limited to

- Provide adequate short-term housing for students and faculty during the accelerated training programs and for the BRTC Law Enforcement Training Academy (LETA) 13-week program;
- A location for an existing EMS partner to base its local headquarters and provide training to students and community members while addressing services east of Black River;
- A large venue to increase accelerated training for healthcare, emergency responders, and other large groups, including training during national emergencies, such as the COVID-19 public health emergency and serve as a FEMA disaster response command; and
- An additional venue to accommodate large community events, especially those which provide health care monitoring and such as vaccination clinics, health fairs, community classes such as CPR and first aid, accelerated training to large community groups.

As noted earlier, the total project cost is **\$4,622,857.00**, Please see below for key concepts:

- \$3,942,300      Construction costs
- \$680,557      Professional fees, soils analysis, FFE (fixtures, furniture, and equipment), and project contingency

- The entire planning, bidding, and construction process to complete this facility is expected to take no longer than 2 years, allowing the first law enforcement class to begin in January 2025 and accelerated training begin April 2025.
- A rigorous quality assurance process will be undertaken by both the CFO and the president to ensure the program funds are being spent on only eligible costs.

BRTC currently provides training for healthcare personnel and emergency responders; and their accelerated program has reduced the time needed to train nurses, respiratory therapists, EMS and other emergency responders aiding the workforce in recruiting eligible employees during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

BRTC is located next to the airport to assist with rapid transport of patients, supplies, and personnel during emergencies. It already has the healthcare, first responder, and emergency programs in place to address COVID-19 as well as having the partnership, expertise, and staff to provide accelerated emergency and health training. BRTC is within 3 miles of the projected future I-57 exit; is already perceived to be the regional response hub for health emergencies and natural disasters; and has the existing state connections and partnerships to engage the rest of Arkansas.

<b>PROPOSED TIMELINE</b>	
Q3 2021	RFP publication date: September 2021 Application portal launch date: September 24, 2021 BRTC application process begins
Q4 2021	BRTC application process continues BRTC application submitted RFP application deadline: December 27, 2021
Q1-Q2 2022	Application evaluation with consultants and DFA
Q3-Q4 2022	Submission to the U.S. Treasury Grant Plan and Program Plan deadline: September 24, 2022 U.S. Treasury approval of the application Evaluation and approval through the Arkansas American Rescue Plan Act Steering Committee Submission to and approval by Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson Submission and approval to Arkansas Legislative Council Approval and acceptance of DFA Capital Projects Fund Beneficiary Agreement Project management and oversight begins
Q1 2023	RFQ for architectural services Project management and oversight continues Submission of DFA quarterly project and expenditure reports
Q2 2023	Architectural finalization Soils Analysis Project management and oversight continues Submission of DFA quarterly project and expenditure reports Submission of DFA annual performance reports

Q3 2023	Drainage and earthwork begins Construction begins Beneficiary's workforce plans and practices including subcontracted entities submission to DFA Project management and oversight continues Submission of DFA quarterly project and expenditure reports
Q4 2023	Construction continues Project management and oversight continues Submission of DFA quarterly project and expenditure reports
Q1 2024	Construction continues Fixtures, furniture, & equipment purchases begin Project management and oversight continues Submission of DFA quarterly project and expenditure reports
Q2 2024	Construction continues Fixtures, furniture, & equipment purchases continue Project management and oversight continues Submission of DFA quarterly project and expenditure reports Submission of DFA annual performance reports
Q3 2024	Construction nears completion Fixtures, furniture, & equipment purchases continue Project management and oversight continues Activity oversight, monitoring, and assessment begin Submission of DFA quarterly project and expenditure reports
Q4 2024	Fixtures purchases complete Furniture & equipment purchases continue Construction finals completion Project management and oversight continues Activity oversight, monitoring, and assessment continues Submission of DFA quarterly project and expenditure reports
Q1 2025	Quality assessment of construction Furniture & equipment purchases complete Final evaluation Construction finals completion Project management and oversight continues First law enforcement class to begin Activity oversight, monitoring, and assessment continues Submission of DFA quarterly project and expenditure reports
Q2 2025	Projected project completion Project management and oversight continues Accelerated trainings begin Activity oversight, monitoring, and assessment continues Submission of DFA quarterly project and expenditure reports Submission of DFA annual performance reports
Q3 2025–Q4 2026	Continued project activity, monitoring, oversight, and assessment

**Description:**



The COVID-19 public health emergency caused tremendous strain on American healthcare systems and emergency personnel. BRTC strives to address workplace and community problems quickly and efficiently by currently training NEA's healthcare personnel and emergency responders. BRTC can reduce the time needed to train nurses, respiratory therapists<sup>1</sup>, EMTs<sup>2</sup>, and other emergency responders to replenish a workforce<sup>3</sup> exhausted by the COVID-19 public health emergency<sup>4</sup>. As the only college-connected law enforcement training academy in Arkansas<sup>5</sup>, BRTC is also able to cross-train law enforcement, firefighters<sup>6</sup>, and healthcare workers<sup>7</sup> to effectively manage first-on-the-site emergency situations.

### **Eligibility:**

### **Work:**

To achieve sustainable infrastructure during a post-COVID world, BRTC must be prepared to face the next healthcare crisis or natural disaster without sacrificing the community health monitoring, workforce education, and community education services currently offered. **A short-term housing and training facility will allow BRTC to continue to offer students direct access to its existing career counseling program<sup>8</sup>.** Near the end of their programs, students spend several days learning to create a resume, how to dress and act professionally, and practicing interview skills. Relevant businesses and industries are then invited to visit with students about job opportunities. This facility would be the location for these activities.

This facility would also enable BRTC to expand on the already existing community and multi-county job fairs<sup>9</sup> including providing space for employers to interview candidates. These types of activities serve hundreds of community members, particularly minority and undereducated residents. BRTC's job fairs for PECO Foods and others attracts many Pacific Islander and low-income residents. The need for these services and the logistical challenges to offer them were exacerbated during the pandemic. This facility will allow BRTC, in collaboration with the Clay, Lawrence, and Randolph county chambers of commerce and the Northeast Arkansas Intermodal Authority<sup>10</sup>, a location to continue to offer a variety of business and career services mid- and post-crisis.

Finally, BRTC's Law Enforcement Training Academy<sup>11</sup>, which graduates 2 classes of over 40 employed officers yearly since 1999, is in desperate need of a summer academy. However, because state law requires BRTC to cover all police cadet room and board, no funds exist for summer lodging. With the exodus of law enforcement personnel, experienced first responders who

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.aarc.org/aarc-membership/aarc-membership-benefits/professional-development/cn21-the-rt-job-market-is-booming-should-you-be-looking-around/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.businessinsider.com/emt-labor-shortage-could-mean-longer-911-wait-time-2021-10>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.odmp.org/search/year?year=2020>

<sup>4</sup> <https://theconversation.com/high-rates-of-covid-19-burnout-could-lead-to-shortage-of-health-care-workers-166476>

<sup>5</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/academics/service-programs/leta>

<sup>6</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/academics/service-programs/fire-training>

<sup>7</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/academics/allied-health>

<sup>8</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/brtcstudents/student-support-services/career-counselor-2>

<sup>9</sup> <https://neareport.com/2022/05/17/more-than-400-positions-available-at-local-job-fair/>

<https://blackrivertech.org/brtc-hosts-rn-job-fair>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.kait8.com/2019/02/16/farmers-learn-about-new-agricultural-advances-expo/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/academics/service-programs/leta/leta-programs/basic-police-training>

work alongside EMS<sup>12</sup> and medical workers<sup>13</sup> during emergencies are in short supply. **This facility will be instrumental in providing a location to expand and accelerate already existing healthcare cross-training to law enforcement** who are often first at the scene of an emergency<sup>14</sup> and must handle life-threatening medical care<sup>15</sup> before EMS is able to arrive.

### **Education:**

It is important to note the demographics of the region within which BRTC is located and BRTC's goal is to provide a better educated workforce. BRTC is centrally located in Clay, Lawrence, and Randolph counties<sup>16</sup>, which are both rural and have low educational attainment. Only 13.4% of residents have a bachelor's degree or higher compared to Arkansas's average of 23.8%, and 17.7% are below the poverty level compared to Arkansas's 15.2% .

Of the residents in the three counties:

- 0.1% are Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander
- 0.9% are African American
- 1.7% Hispanic
- Few minorities exist in the counties, but they are over-represented in poverty.
  - 17.7% are below the poverty level compared to Arkansas's average of 15.2%
  - 31.6% of African Americans are below the poverty level
  - 30.3% of Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islanders are below the poverty level, and
  - 20.1% Hispanics are below the poverty level
  - Only 17.3% of white Americans are below the poverty level.
- 13.4% have a bachelor's degree or higher compared to Arkansas's 23.8% average

Healthcare workers and emergency responders have been impacted most by the COVID-19 public health emergency. To stop the hemorrhage of this essential workforce, higher education must reduce the length of training programs to replenish the pipeline of workers into these areas. The State has done its part by speeding up licensing procedures for healthcare workers. In response, BRTC has the personnel, relationships, and students to accelerate these already existing programs<sup>17</sup>. The college needs a short-term housing facility for students and specialized faculty who have lengthy travel time to participate in training. Local motels are both sub-par and unaffordable for BRTC's low-income, working students. **This facility would address the need for a short-term housing facility for students and specialized faculty.**

College-level academic programs currently available<sup>18</sup> to these students include

- basic police training,
- criminal justice,
- EMS and firefighter training,

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<sup>12</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/academics/allied-health/emt-paramedic-program>

<sup>13</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/academics/allied-health>

<sup>14</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/workforce-corporate-and-community-training/security-firearms-first-responder-fire>

<sup>15</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/workforce-corporate-and-community-training/health-safety>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/randolphcountyarkansas,lawrencecountyarkansas,claycountyarkansas/PST045221>

<sup>17</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/brtcs-facility-on-the-ammc-campus-now-open>

<sup>18</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/academics>

- health professions,
- health sciences,
- nursing assistant,
- paramedic,
- phlebotomy,
- practical nursing,
- registered nursing, and
- respiratory care.

Several of these programs continually have some of the highest pass rates in the state and are recognized as the best programs in the state:

- LPN Program Ranked #1 in Arkansas<sup>19</sup> and achieves 100% pass rate<sup>20</sup>;
- Nutrition and Foodservice Management Students achieve 100% pass rate<sup>21</sup>;
- Fire Science class achieves 100% pass rate<sup>22</sup> and is named in the Top 10 Online Associate's in Fire Science in the U.S.<sup>23</sup>

Adult community classes currently available include<sup>24</sup>

- First Aid and CPR,
- First Responder,
- First Responder and Tactical Emerge,
- First Responder Refresher, and
- Heartsaver CPR and AED.

Each of the programs are essential to first responder and healthcare training during and after the pandemic, and when accelerated would rely on this facility to offer short-term housing<sup>25</sup> to those with too lengthy a drive home. Furthermore, this facility's two (2) classrooms and facility-wide controlled WiFi will allow for efficient access in the classroom.

Each of the program components offered in the facility are intended to assist in filling the employee pipeline and addressing workforce shortages due to COVID. During times of crisis, the 30 double-occupancy rooms may be used in shifts, thereby doubling or tripling potential occupancy. Faculty with lengthy drives would be housed in one of the 5 single occupancy instructor rooms.

Many of these programs are mandated by outside accrediting or state agencies<sup>26</sup> and must follow strict rules. These rules often specify a student/faculty ratio, number of hours to be taught, and other directives. **Utilizing this facility would enable BRTC to meet these restrictions while educating students as efficiently as possible.** In addition, adequate safety measures, such as key

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<sup>19</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/btrcs-lpn-program-ranked-1-in-the-state>

<sup>20</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/btrcs-nursing-class-of-2021-achieve-100-pass-rate-for-licensure>

<sup>21</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/black-river-technical-colleges-nutrition-and-foodservice-management-students-achieve-100-pass-rate>

<sup>22</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/fire-science-hits-100-pass-rate>

<sup>23</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/btrc-fire-science-program-ranked-in-the-top-10>

<sup>24</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/workforce-corporate-and-community-training>

<sup>25</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/btrc-pre-disaster-mitigation-plan/mitigation/safe-room>

<sup>26</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/about/accreditation>

cards and a backup emergency generator, will be installed to ensure the safety of our students and faculty.

### **Health and Behavioral Monitoring:**

BRTC currently offers a wide variety of community health monitoring and critical health services in partnership with NEA hospitals, medical clinics, and health units and has for many years. BRTC healthcare programs prepare students to work at and lead these organizations and activities<sup>27</sup>, and **these services will be enhanced and amplified with this short-term housing and training facility.**

BRTC has offered multiple health fairs to the entire BRTC service area for many years. These 1-day health fairs include a wide variety of services such as vaccinations, immunizations, and health monitoring activities including but not limited to blood pressure readings, blood sugar testing, BMI evaluations, and mammograms<sup>28</sup>. Not only do currently enrolled BRTC healthcare students run these health fairs and provide some of the services, hundreds of community members, most of them low-income and many of them minority residents, participate at no charge. **This facility will provide an additional location for existing and additional health fairs.**

BRTC also offers multiple blood drives a year<sup>29</sup>. These Red Cross blood drives are open to the public and do not require an appointment. A steady stream of donors from NEA, southeast Missouri, and students participate in these events. **Small blood drives with only a few beds would be held in the new facility when the large public venue is booked, as it often is.**

During the COVID-19 public health emergency, BRTC partnered with local health units to provide outreach for COVID-19 testing and vaccines<sup>30</sup>. Due to its size relative to the health units', BRTC was the location which provided information and details to help the community access important resources. BRTC also hosted several COVID-19 vaccination clinics on campus<sup>31</sup> and continues to plan for upcoming clinics. **During future emergencies, BRTC's short-term housing and training facility will enable healthcare workers from local health units to offer round-the-clock service, assessment, and training to speedily address health crises.** These opportunities enable BRTC's health students to serve community members and participate in real-life situations.

### **Critical Need/Justification:**

A short-term housing and training facility will allow BRTC to serve as a regional response center<sup>32</sup> and function as an overflow hospital during emergencies while addressing the critical needs of rural NEA by providing a wide range of services, including, but not limited to

- Adequate short-term housing for students and faculty during accelerated training;

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<sup>27</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/brtc-students-administer-over-300-flu-shots>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.kait8.com/2019/10/09/free-health-screenings-all-local-campus/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/brtcs-dean-for-general-studies-reaches-3-gallons-of-blood-donated-to-the-american-red-cross>

<sup>30</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/brtc-hosts-vaccination-clinic>

<sup>31</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/brtc-to-host-flu-and-covid-19-vaccine-clinic>

<sup>32</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/brtc-board-of-trustees-approve-initiatives-for-paragould-in-special-meeting> -- last paragraph

- A location for an existing EMS partner to base its local headquarters and provide training to students and community members while addressing service east of Black River<sup>33</sup>;
- A large venue to increase accelerated training for healthcare<sup>34</sup>, emergency responders, and other large groups, including training during national emergencies, such as the COVID-19 public health emergency;
- A FEMA disaster response command and training center<sup>35</sup> and regional earthquake-safe<sup>36</sup> community facility; and
- An additional venue to accommodate large community events, especially those which provide healthcare monitoring such as vaccination clinics, health fairs, community classes such as CPR and first aid, and accelerated training to large community groups.

Under normal circumstances, the proposed short-term housing and training facility will be used to house BRTC's Law Enforcement Training Academy students during their 13-week Basic Police Training, thus serve as the BRTC LETA barracks<sup>37</sup>. The remaining 26 weeks will use this facility to offer accelerated training to address the employee pipeline deficiencies and employee shortages created by the COVID-19 public health emergency.

### **Program Administration**

The State of Arkansas has a long history of receiving and monitoring federal grants. The Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) developed a Capital Projects Fund Beneficiary Agreement that outlines the recipient's institutional, managerial, and financial capability requirements to ensure the proper planning, management, and completion of any such project which receives federal fund money. The Beneficiary agrees to comply with any reporting obligations established by the Treasury or DFA as they relate to this award, including, without limitation, the submission of quarterly project and expenditure reports, annual performance reports, and the submission of information on Beneficiary's workforce plans and practices related to the approved proposal and subcontracted entities. As required by the State record retention requirements as set out at Arkansas Code Ann § 25-18- 604, the Beneficiary shall retain sufficient records to show its compliance with the terms of this agreement, as well as the compliance of all contractors or subcontractors paid from Funds under this agreement, for a period of five (5) years from the date of submission of the final expenditure report.

A rigorous quality assurance process will be undertaken by both the BRTC CFO and the president to ensure the program funds are being spent on only eligible costs. The college's information system has the ability to separate program costs. The college employs a grant accountant<sup>38</sup> whose responsibility includes program compliance. When questions arise, communication and collaboration between the State of Arkansas and BRTC will continue.

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<sup>33</sup><https://www.facebook.com/promed911/posts/black-river-technical-college-paramedic-students-braved-the-heat-and-joined-prom/10157856227236109/>

<sup>34</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. (2021, September 8). Respiratory therapists. *Occupational Outlook Handbook* website. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/respiratory-therapists.htm>

<sup>35</sup><https://www.kait8.com/2022/06/09/brtc-offering-active-shooter-training-educators/>

<sup>36</sup><https://www.usgs.gov/media/images/new-madrid-seismic-zone-7>

<sup>37</sup><https://blackrivertech.org/academics/service-programs/leta/scheduled-classes>

<sup>38</sup><https://blackrivertech.org/kelly-edington-accepts-position-at-brtc>

Current personnel including program directors and faculty will operate the facility, and the college's grant accountant will monitor the project. Internal controls are incorporated into the workflow of the finance office and cash management monitoring is performed by the controller<sup>39</sup>.

Black River Technical College (BRTC) will continue to engage with the community leaders, the Arkansas State Department of Public Safety<sup>40</sup>, healthcare providers, first responders, and law enforcement agencies within the BRTC service area, and throughout the State of Arkansas for professional feedback, development and growth. The college holds existing memoranda of understanding with a network of providers, educators, and partners throughout the state that form an extensive knowledge base that is integral to BRTC's program assurance and review process.

The short-term housing and training facility will also be available to support and educate the community through times of crisis and may be used for emergency housing during times of natural disaster, regional healthcare emergencies, or community distress. BRTC will continue to host information fairs, special events and speaking engagements<sup>41</sup> for schools<sup>42</sup>, civic clubs<sup>43</sup>, businesses<sup>44</sup> and other organizations<sup>45</sup>. Evaluation and assessment of these events as well as community comments and feedback will continue to engage the community and address their needs in an on-going basis.

### **Program Budget**

No charge will be assessed to organizations when BRTC is a cosponsor of activities or where the state prohibits charging for activities, such as in the case with fire science and law enforcement training activities. If the rare instance a fee is assessed, it will be both to offset costs of running the facility and reasonable for both the local area and the organization.

The proposed program budget is as follows. No other federal funds will be used for this project.

<b>PROGRAM BUDGET</b>						
<b>Program Administrative Costs</b>						
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
2a. Project Management and Oversight		\$91,987	\$91,987	\$91,987		
2b. Architectural Expenses		\$27,596				
2c. Soils Analysis		\$5,000				

<sup>39</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/julie-williams-accepts-position-at-brtc>

<sup>40</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/top-cadets-honored-at-brtc-fall-2021-law-enforcement-training-academy-graduation>

<sup>41</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/brtc-to-host-the-first-horizon-bank-lecture-series>

<sup>42</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/brtc-hosts-fbla-district-competitions>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/PocahontasARRotaryClub/posts/4049649205128975>

<sup>44</sup> <https://blackrivertech.org/brtc-hosts-meetings-for-area-industry-leaders>

<sup>45</sup> <http://neaintermodal.com/2019/03/19/northeast-arkansas-intermodal-authority-and-arkansas-community-foundation-to-host-regional-community-forum/>



<b>PROGRAM BUDGET</b>						
<b>Program Administrative Costs</b>						
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
2d. FFE (Fixtures, furniture, & equipment)			\$61,000	\$61,000		
2e. Project Contingency			\$125,000	\$125,000		
2. Total Program Administrative Costs (not to exceed amounts listed in source of funding) *	*	\$124,583*	\$277,987*	\$277,987*	*	*
<b>Project Costs</b>						
3a. Construction: sq. ft. 18,900			\$3,912,300			
3b. Construction: Drainage and earthwork			\$30,000			
<b>3. Total Project Costs</b>			<b>\$3,942,300</b>			

\* The State of Arkansas plans to tentatively put a hold on program administration funding for this program, paying administrative costs out of general revenues. It is the hope of the State that economic strength continues such that the State can eventually apply funding reserved for administrative expenses to programmatic expenditures. Should economic activity falter, the State may use these to cover programmatic administrative expenses.

Annual operating and maintenance costs are anticipated to run about \$2.90 per square foot, which would be approximately \$54,707 for this facility. Current budget expenditures for housing cadets and Workforce 2000 funds will fund the O & M costs, insuring the facility is able to be funded and continue proposed and continuing activities indefinitely.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021 PROGRAM APPROPRIATION  
AND PERSONNEL AUTHORIZATION REQUEST  
SECTION 37 OF ACT 199 OF 2022

C.15

Agency: Southeast Arkansas College Business Area Code: 0691  
Program Title: American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 - SEARK Student Center  
Granting Organization: US Congress CFDA #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Effective Date of Authorization: \_\_\_\_\_ Beginning: 8/31/2022 Ending: 6/30/2023  
Purpose of Grant / Reason for addition or change (include attachments as necessary to provide thorough information):  
SEARK Student Center Building - See Attached.

American Rescue Plan Act Program Funding

Func. Area: TCOL Fund Code: FRP6910 Direct Funding: \_\_\_\_\_  
Funds Center: New Internal Order/WBS Element: \_\_\_\_\_ Steering Comm. Approved: X  
Continuation: \_\_\_\_\_

	Program Funding Amount
Regular Salaries	
Extra Help	
Personal Services Matching	
Operating Expenses	
Conference & Travel Expenses	
Professional Fees	
Capital Outlay	
Data Processing	
Grants and Aid (CI: 04)	
Other:Student Center Building	3,000,000
Other:	
Total	\$ 3,000,000

Anticipated Duration of Federal Funds: 6/30/23

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**DFA IGS State Technology Planning** **Date**  
Items requested for information technology must be in compliance with Technology Plans as submitted to DFA IGS State Technology Planning.

Positions to be established: (list each position separately)

\* unclassified positions only

Org Unit	Pers Area	Pers SubArea	Cost Center	Position Number	Cmnt Item	Position Title	Class Code	Grade	Line Item Maximum *

State funds will not be used to replace federal funds when such funds expire, unless appropriated by the General Assembly and authorized by the Governor.

Approved by: [Signature] 8/31/22  
Cabinet Secretary/Agency Director Date

Robert Brech 9/2/2022  
Office of Budget Date  
MPK 09-01-22

Office of Personnel Mgmt Date

**Program**

Use Code: 1C

Program Identifier: 1-CPF-1G

Program Title: Southeast Arkansas College – Student and Community Center

Total Amount of Request: \$3,000,000.00

Applicant Presenter: Dr. Steven Bloomberg

Location of Applicant/Facility: 1900 Hazel Street, Pine Bluff, AR 71603

Number of Locations Serving the Public: 4

Type of Service to be rendered: Southeast Arkansas (SEARK) College proposes the construction of a Student and Community Center, a multi-purpose community facility providing work education and health monitoring to the local community of Pine Bluff and southeast Arkansas, offering both short-term and long-term workforce development training, community health and monitoring services, and community workshops such as financial literacy and job preparation.

How Will the Recipient implement the Program: DIRECT IMPLEMENTATION

Does the Recipient represent and commit that the Capital Projects will provide services or activities that directly enable work, education, and health monitoring for at least five years from the completion of the project?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Will CPF grant funds for this program be used to cover costs incurred after March 15, 2021, but prior to execution of the Grant Agreement?

Yes ☐ No ☒

- If yes, you must provide the information requested under the Pre-Award Cost Annex

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**Program Narrative:**

**Program Summary:**

SEARK College was created by Act 1244 of the 78<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the State of Arkansas, which was signed into law by the Governor on April 17, 1991. Prior to becoming a comprehensive community college, SEARK was born in 1959 as “Pines Vocational Technical School”. Today, in 2022, SEARK combines relevant technical education programs with general education studies to offer students more than forty-two degree and certificate options.

SEARK’s primary service delivery area encompasses six counties in southeast Arkansas, including: Jefferson, Grant, Lincoln, Cleveland, Desha, and Drew. These counties share similar characteristics such as higher unemployment/underemployment rates, geographic isolation, limited access to broadband Internet services, lower college attendance/completion rates, and limited opportunity for enhanced economic vitality.

To better serve its populations, SEARK recently reengineered its vision and mission statements to more accurately reflect the college’s aspirations:

Statement of Vision: *Empowering Students...Changing Lives.*

Mission Statement: *Building a community of lifelong learners committed to becoming the leaders of tomorrow.*

The following Core Values set forth the standard for daily operations:

- *Students*—the reason we exist.
- *Safety*—providing a safe and secure learning environment.
- *Integrity*—the standard of always doing what is right.
- *Authenticity*—being genuine and honest in our daily activities.
- *Innovation*—expanding our world and refusing to simply maintain the status quo.
- *Diversity*—our diversity in mind, body, and spirit is our strength.
- *Transparency and Communication*—our institution is transparent, and communication is recognized as a vital component of how we conduct our business.

SEARK College's Student and Community Center will offer workforce support services, credit and non-credit academic programs, health-related services and other services intended to lift individuals out of poverty. As an example of the disproportionate poverty rates, the rate of poverty in SE Arkansas, according to the United States Census Bureau is fifteen percent. Conversely, with approximately 41,000 residents, Pine Bluff, the largest population center in SEARK's service delivery area, has more than a thirty-two percent poverty rate. Rison, AR, a fifty-minute drive from Pine Bluff, has more than a thirty-six percent poverty rate with a population base of approximately 1,200 residents. The Student and Community Center is designed to provide the below spectrum of services through the five-year aware period.

Academic programming such as Cyber Security, Nursing and Allied Health programs such as Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA), Patient Care Technician (PTC), and Medical Assistant, all offer viable employment opportunities within a forty-five-minute drive time from SEARK's campus. The Student and Community Center includes a walk-in health clinic for students, employees, and low-income individuals/families from throughout SEARK's service delivery area—this type of access is critical for those who are unable to afford health-care or lack transportation necessary to regional health care facilities.

The Student and Community Center will also serve as an Emergency Operations Center when a publicly-declared health emergency, or similar emergency is encountered. SEARK College has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Jefferson County where both entities will co-locate during a publicly-declared health, or similar, emergency, providing access to a facility which can be quickly transitioned to offer space dedicated to quarantine/screening, mass vaccinations, co-locating first responders and federal/state entities who are responding to a publicly-declared health, or similar emergency in a one-stop environment.

This program plan presents the project requested by SEARK College to construct an approximate \$14 million Student and Community Center, with the addition of \$3 million acquired through these funds. The new facility will be a multi-purpose college and community facility that, once constructed, will provide job training and development, education services, health care monitoring and related services, and emergency services during a publicly-declared emergency.

The funding in place now includes:

- \$2 million from SEARK College's Reserve Funds to be pledged once construction begins
- \$2 million from a private foundation (e-mail attached)

- \$1 million from a financial institution (Sponsorship Agreement attached)
- \$3 million from Jefferson County, Arkansas (MOU attached)
- \$3 million in additional funding from a commercial loan

## **Description**

The Student and Community Center will serve as a multi-faceted one-stop community center providing the following workforce development, education, and health-related services under the same roof:

- *Workforce Development Services:*
  - Workforce skills programs including 21<sup>st</sup> Century Impact Skills and Principles of Workplace Success
  - Skills development programs including resume writing and interviewing techniques in a digital world
  - Employment assistance
  - Job fairs
- *Education services including credit, non-credit, and community courses and programming:*
  - Cyber Security and related Information Technology training
  - Nursing and Allied Health programs such as:
    - RN and Nursing related training
    - Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) training,
    - Patient Care Technician (PTC) training, and
    - Medical Assistant training
- *Health and Behavioral Health Monitoring*
  - Pandemic-related services including quarantine facility, mass vaccination clinics, onsite testing and distribution of home COVID-19 test kits, and space for state and federal agencies to offer services
  - Health screenings
  - Mental health counseling
  - Food Assistance
- *Emergency/critical services during a publicly-declared health or similar emergency, including:*
  - Emergency operations center
  - Pandemic-related services
- *Housing Assistance*
  - Housing referral services

The following table denotes how often critical health and social services will be offered at the Student and Community Center:

<b>Type of Intervention</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Approximate Participants</b>
Workshops: Financial literacy, employment skills, etc.	Quarterly	75
Job fairs	Quarterly	250
Mental health counseling	Quarterly	650

Health Screenings	Quarterly	120
Food Assistance	Quarterly	900

There is a proposed budget that includes the cost of design, site work, and construction of the building. A floor plan detailing normal and pandemic operations and outside renderings are included.

### **Project Timeline:**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>Finish</b>
CPF Application Submission			06/30/2022
CPF Application Review (DFA)			
CPF Application Review (Dept of Treasury)			
RPF Publishing			
Grant Agreement Processing			
Award Made from DFA to *Organization*			
Site Investigations			
Design	150 days	01/30/21	06/30/21
Contractor Negotiations	90 days	01/30/21	03/30/21
Permitting & Approval	150 days	02/01/22	07/01/22
Construction	450 days	11/01/22	02/01/24
Contractor Mobilization	30 days	11/01/22	12/01/22
Site Improvements	30 days	12/01/22	01/01/23
Construct Facility	365 days	01/01/23	02/01/24
Organization Occupies Facility	30 days	02/01/24	03/01/24
Facility Open	60 days	03/01/24	05/01/24

### **Eligibility:**

### **Work:**

A motivated, available, and skilled workforce is integral to the success of any economic ecosystem—the region of Southeast Arkansas is no exception. The current COVID-19 Pandemic has exacerbated existing issues of employee availability, training opportunities, and has forced many employers to reach beyond Southeast Arkansas in order to find qualified candidates—a process which ultimately increases the cost of conducting business.

The Student and Community Center will be home to a new program which will help bridge these critical employment gaps. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Impact Skills: Building a Better Workforce program represents the foundation for developing and sustaining a local, high-performance workforce. The program is divided into two components:

1. “Principles of Workplace Success”, a new three-credit course that is now required of all students enrolled in a workforce program leading to a certificate of completion or an applied science associate degree; and
2. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Impact Skills will also be offered as a non-credit, community education program which is intended to help build the knowledge, skills, and abilities of individuals who are either unemployed or underemployed. Curriculum for the program is divided into the following major topical areas:
  - communication and communication in the workplace;
  - enthusiasm and attitude;
  - teamwork;
  - networking;
  - problem-solving and critical thinking; and
  - workplace professionalism.



SEARK College's Student and Community Center will expand and strengthen existing partnerships and relationships with the ultimate objective of infusing individuals with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to become gainfully employed within an occupation that offers upward mobility and, most importantly, economic freedom.

- SEARK has existing partnerships with area financial institutions, such as Simmons Bank and Relyance Bank, to offer students and community members sound financial literacy advice. A key element in economic freedom is understanding how to manage personal finances. These programs will be expanded in frequency and number of participants when the new Student and Community Center is constructed. This critical programming will continue to be offered at no-cost to both students and community members.

These efforts at building a better workforce will culminate with employment opportunities offered through an innovative technology company. SEARK College was instrumental in bringing a technology company, PeopleShores, to Pine Bluff. PeopleShores purpose is to locate facilities in underserved communities and offer technology-related employment opportunities for individuals who may be overlooked in this field, unemployed, or underemployed. The relationship between SEARK and PeopleShores is unprecedented—PeopleShore's operation will be co-located on SEARK's campus, offering internship and employment opportunities for students who will not be forced to drive hours to realize their dreams of a viable career in the technology field. SEARK and PeopleShores have signed an MOU outlining this powerful concept. A copy of the MOU is included with this proposal. To help bridge the gap between education and work, SEARK will increase the number of job fairs on campus and hold additional events at the Student and Community Center for PeopleShores and other companies who are seeking access to a skilled workforce. The job fairs will be open to both students and the surrounding community.

### **Education:**

The Student and Community Center will significantly expand the educational opportunities in SE Arkansas for students seeking education and training in high demand professions. As a Multi-Purpose Community Facility, the Student Center also satisfies the Capital Projects Fund criteria by allowing SEARK College to increase its "comprehensive academic programs" and provide "workforce training."

The Student and Community Center will be home to SEARK's new Associate of Applied Science Cyber Security Program, enabling students to earn a degree leading toward a job that pays above poverty-level wages in Arkansas. Cyber Security talent gaps are prevalent throughout the United States. According to the website Cyberseek.org, as of March 14, 2022, there are 1,908 open Cyber Security jobs in the State of Arkansas. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists Information/Cyber Security as an occupation whose growth is "much faster than the average for all occupations" and "demand for information security analysts is expected to be very high. Cyberattacks have grown in frequency, and analysts will be needed to come up with innovative solutions to prevent hackers from stealing critical information or creating problems for computer networks."

Additionally, the ongoing pandemic has seen an exponential rise in remote work being performed by employees throughout the public and private sectors. And, while remote work can prove beneficial to maintaining productivity during a pandemic, the reliance on technology can create additional security concerns. A March 2, 2022, article from Forbes Magazine, "*The Cyber Security Challenges of Working from Anywhere*" pointed to increased cyber-attacks due to the rapid rise in the use of home devices for business purposes. The continued reliance on home devices will create a higher demand for cyber security specialists to protect employees conducting work on or off-site. The Arkansas "Projected Employment Opportunities List 2021-22" lists Computer and Information Systems Security/Information Assurance, as a top employment target for the state.

The Student and Community Center will also provide additional space for SEARK College to expand its current offerings in Nursing and Allied Health disciplines. Arkansas was in the midst of a critical nursing shortage pre-pandemic and the current public health emergency has only made the shortage worse. On January 3, 2022, according to testimony from the University of Arkansas Medical Sciences (UAMS) Center before the Arkansas House and Senate Public Health, Welfare, and Labor Committees, education is the key to resolving nursing shortages. UAMS Vice Chancellor Dr. Tranda Ray indicated to the joint committee members, “We need to find ways to increase the number of people so we have more nurses in the state to even work with, to begin with.”

SEARK’s current proposal offers the opportunity to increase the Nursing pipeline in Southeast Arkansas and provide additional, quality graduates to health care partners such as the Jefferson Regional Medical Center. Jefferson Regional, over the past twelve months, averaged at least fifty-five open Nursing positions per month. Conversely, the Delta Memorial Hospital, located in the small rural community of Dumas, AR, population 4,173 consistently advertises for Nursing positions which prove to be difficult to hire and retain qualified nurses.

Occupational therapy assistants (OTA’s), working under the direction of Occupational Therapists, help patients develop, recover, improve, as well as maintain the skills needed for daily living and working. OTA’s are directly involved in providing therapy to patients; occupational therapy aides typically perform support activities.

According to data from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), employment of OTA’s is projected to increase thirty-two percent from 2019 to 2029. Additionally, BLS projects job openings for OTA’s to grow much faster than the average for all occupations. The median wage for an OTA in the United States is \$60,950. The Arkansas Department of Workforce Services lists \$47,040 as the entry wage for a new OTA, with the median wage as \$61,990. Occupational Therapist Assistant is listed on the Arkansas Demand Occupation list. On March 8, 2022, the website ZipRecruiter, listed more than forty-six open jobs for OTA’s in the Little Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

Occupational Therapy is also playing a critical role in the recovery of COVID-19 patients. Specifically, Occupational Therapy deals with remedial, restorative, and rehabilitation of persons who are recovering from COVID-19. A March 2021 article published in *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, underscored the importance of this discipline as it relates to recovery of COVID-19 patients. “The COVID-19 crisis has provided opportunities to highlight the essential occupational therapy contributions in critical care settings. As the world continues to face this pandemic, rehabilitation and survivorship have become central themes and occupational therapy practitioners specializing in critical care rehabilitation have illustrated the profession’s essential role in the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Disadvantaged individuals who must work now, and lack the time to complete a Nursing degree, can receive training within thirty days that will allow them to enter work immediately at Jefferson Regional, or other local facilities as a Patient Care Technician (PCT). PCT’s provide critical bedside functions such as checking patient blood pressure/temperature and responding to individual patient needs. These positions start out at \$15 per hour. Jefferson Regional is seeking to fill more than thirty-five open PCT positions. Obtaining an entry level health-care job, such as a PCT, can help introduce disadvantaged individuals to the myriad of careers in the Nursing and Health Related fields.

The Student and Community Center will also offer numerous community-oriented enrichment programs such as financial literacy, resume-writing and job-seeking in a digital world, workplace skills development, and other related programming previously discussed which is intended to provide foundational skills to individuals working in jobs that pay below poverty-level wages.

## **Health Monitoring:**

The new Student and Community Center will feature a walk-in health clinic for students, employees, and community members. The neighborhoods that surround SEARK College are home to lower-income, socioeconomically-disadvantaged individuals whose barriers to quality health care include a lack of reliable transportation, an inability to enroll and maintain comprehensive health insurance coverage, and elderly whose medical plans may only cover minimal services. The walk-in clinic is a partnership between SEARK College and area doctors and physician's assistants. These individuals will offer their time pro-bono to conduct health screenings, including blood pressure checks, cholesterol screenings, diabetes screenings, and other health related screenings through monthly wellness checks—all with the intent of discovering any health-related problems as early as possible.

While the neighborhoods surrounding SEARK College are home to lower-income, socio-disadvantaged individuals, these community members are within minutes of the campus. The acute need for access to health and behavior monitoring is exacerbated throughout SEARK's service delivery area. For example, the counties of Cleveland, Drew, Desha, and Lincoln have been designated by the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) as "Arkansas Medically Underserved Areas" (MUA's). ADH has also identified Cleveland, Lincoln, and Desha Counties have more than ten percent of their adult population under the age of sixty-five who are uninsured. Monthly health screenings held at the Student and Community Center may provide the only viable opportunity for these residents to receive preventative health care.

SEARK's Nursing and Allied Health students will also be able to utilize the walk-in health clinic to meet clinical requirements for their respective programs. The ongoing global pandemic has made it difficult for Nursing and Allied Health students to have access to clinical sites on a regular, consistent basis. For example, the overall access to clinical sites for SEARK's Nursing and Allied Health students has declined by more than forty percent since the onset of the pandemic in 2020. The new walk-in clinic offers time for our students to serve their campus community and earn valuable clinical hours while doing so.

SEARK's partnership with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) will offer access to mental health services through an internship program. Students enrolled in the Master of Social Work (MSW) at UALR will be using SEARK as a clinical site through an MOU. These students can offer valuable mental health counseling services to students, employees, and community members at no cost to the individual. Access to mental health services are more critical now due to the increased stress which accompanies the ongoing global pandemic. For example, several surveys, including those collected by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), have shown substantial increases in self-reported behavioral health symptoms. According to one CDC report, which surveyed adults across the U.S., thirty-one percent of respondents reported symptoms of anxiety or depression, thirteen percent reported having started or increased substance use, twenty-six percent reported stress-related symptoms, and eleven percent reported having serious thoughts of suicide in the past thirty days. These numbers are nearly double the rates experienced prior to the pandemic. In Pine Bluff and Jefferson County, the Southeast Behavioral Center, has seen an increase of more than sixty percent of African American residents seeking some type of mental health/behavioral counseling.

As previously mentioned, the Student and Community Center will serve as a food pantry for individuals who are food insecure. According to ADH, the percentage of individuals throughout SEARK's service delivery area who are food insecure are staggering: each of the six counties has at least fifteen percent of residents who experience food insecurity. People who reside in Jefferson County, home to SEARK College, have a food insecurity rate of more than twenty-five percent.

More than forty percent of residents throughout SEARK's service delivery area, according to ADH, have health issues stemming from obesity and poor eating habits. Community members will have access to new cooking and

dietetics programming held in the new Student and Community Center. This community education program will feature partnerships with entities such as the Arkansas Extension Service and offer diet, cooking, and other classes. These self-improvement courses are intended to assist lower-income individuals and families practice a healthier lifestyle by eating foods which may help reduce certain health-issues such as obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, and Type II Diabetes.

SEARK College has signed an interlocal agreement with Jefferson County (copy of agreement attached). The interlocal agreement calls for, in times of a public health emergency, for the student center to transition from normal operations and serve as a joint command center/emergency operations center. Among other uses, the student center could potentially serve the public good during a declared public health emergency, such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, in the following capacities: a) large-scale vaccination clinic site; b) isolation and quarantine center; c) food service for first responders and health officials; d) emergency operations center housed in the state-of-the-art Cyber Security Operations Center; and e) additional square footage to increase intensive care unit or emergency room bed capacities.

With the recent, exponential rise in COVID-19 cases in Arkansas due to the Omicron variant, and an uncertain future about new variants, represent additional examples of how the Student and Community Center can be used to address critical needs which are apparent, or exacerbated, by the COVID-19 public health emergency. The Student and Community Center can serve as a valuable asset when large-scale vaccinations are required, or home COVID-19 testing kits are distributed, or mass vaccination/booster clinics are held.

### **Critical Need:**

The Student and Community Center will offer health-related opportunities through the walk-in clinic, targeted at demographics whose access to quality health care is limited at best. Moreover, during times of a publicly-declared health emergency, or similar situation, the Student and Community Center, in collaboration with SEARK's partnership with Jefferson County, will offer support in the form of an emergency operations center, one-stop center for health/disaster services, space for first responders, and a critical community access point for help related to the ongoing pandemic including screening services, distribution of home COVID-19 test kits, mass vaccinations, or quarantining. Mental health services offered in partnership with UALR will help fill gaps in mental health counseling for students, employees, and community members.

The Student and Community Center will help SEARK College to address the needs of its current and future students by increasing the educational attainment of the college's service delivery area. From a statewide perspective, according to [thestatesproject.org](http://thestatesproject.org), Arkansas ranks 44<sup>th</sup> in the nation with 85% of adults holding a high school diploma, while only twenty one percent of Arkansans have earned a bachelor's degree or higher.

The lack of educational attainment in Pine Bluff is even more dismal. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates approximately eighty-three percent of Pine Bluff residents have achieved a high school diploma and only seventeen percent of the population have earned a bachelor's degree or higher. The lack of educational attainment also equates to higher poverty rates. According to the Census Bureau, the poverty rate in Pine Bluff for those who have less than a high school diploma is a staggering forty-two percent, while the poverty rate for a high school graduate is thirty percent. This number drops to eighteen percent for residents who have some college or earned an associate degree.

Recent high school graduates are also not prepared for success in college. A new study by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) examined high school graduates in SEARK's service area and their level of preparedness for college-level coursework. The study found only sixteen percent of students in SEARK's service area met at least 3 of 4 college-ready benchmark scores. This number is in comparison to the state average of twenty-seven percent and the national average of sixty-nine percent.

According to data from the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) only forty-six percent of students from SEARK's largest feeder high school, Pine Bluff High School, attend college. Moreover, per ADE, the average composite ACT test score from Pine Bluff High School is 16.57, compared to an average composite score of 19.93 for the State of Arkansas. The Student and Community Center is critical to help boost college enrollment with feeder high schools such as Pine Bluff High School because more than ninety percent of enrolled students are African American.

The Student and Community Center will offer high school students from the Pine Bluff and surrounding school districts the opportunity to enroll in concurrent credit courses—courses which award college credit and also count towards high school graduation requirements. Cyber Security and the Nursing and Allied Health programs will have onsite and online learning opportunities for high school students; thus, helping to bridge the gap between high school and college.

### **Program Administration:**

The State of Arkansas has a long history of receiving and monitoring federal grants. The Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration has developed a Capital Projects Fund Beneficiary Agreement that outlines the recipient's institutional, managerial, and financial capability requirements to ensure the proper planning, management, and completion of any such project which receives federal fund money. The Beneficiary agrees to comply with any reporting obligations established by the Treasury or the Department as they relate to this award, including, without limitation, the submission of quarterly project and expenditure reports, annual performance reports, and the submission of information on Beneficiary's workforce plans and practices related to the approved proposal and subcontracted entities. As required by the STATE record retention requirements as set out at Ark. Code Ann § 25-18- 604, the Beneficiary shall retain sufficient records to show its compliance with the terms of this agreement, as well as the compliance of all contractors or subcontractors paid from Funds under this agreement, for a period of five (5) years from the date of submission of the final expenditure report.

SEARK College has the appropriate internal infrastructure to receive and monitor this federal grant. The college currently receives federal funds through existing grants, including a Primary Black Institution (PBI) grant and TRIO grant. SEARK undergoes an annual audit from the Arkansas Legislative Audit. The audit is a comprehensive analysis of how the college expended its funds, including grant funds. SEARK has established necessary procedures and processes to effectively govern these grants. Funds received through this request will be placed in a separate, restricted account. The Vice President for Fiscal Affairs and the College's Controller will serve as the fiscal agents for the disbursement of these funds. Once construction has commenced and approved pay requests have been received from the contractor, and the scope of work completed has been verified by the Controller, the college will remit up to the award amount for construction work completed in the structural phase of the project. SEARK's President shall serve as the final approval for the disbursement of funds under this award.

SEARK's current, non-grant operating budget is approximately \$15 million. The operating costs at the new Student and Community Center are estimated at \$500,000 annually. Student tuition and fees, as well as ancillary revenue provided through the bookstore will be the source for this funding.

## Program Budget

**Instructions:** Using the Example Detailed Capital Projects Funds table below, specify the amounts of funds that the Recipient proposes to allocate to each of the following elements. The budget should include line items and sub-totals for which information is available and appropriate for the types of activities anticipated for the program. Below example is just an example outline. If more areas are required, please add. If a narrative explanation is necessary, available area is below.

**These estimates may be approximations, but more detailed and accurate information will be required in reporting.**

<b>Detailed Capital Project Funds - \$3,000,000</b>		
<b>Detailed Description</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
General Requirements	\$651,703	Other Funding Sources
Existing Conditions—demolition/removal concrete pads	\$323,875	Other Funding Sources
Concrete	<b>\$436,211</b>	<b>Capital Funds Project</b>
Masonry	\$121,339	Other Funding Sources
Metals	\$2,651,004	Other Funding Sources
Wood, Plastics, & Composites	\$18,203	Other Funding Sources
Thermal & Moisture Protection	\$1,208,205	Other Funding Sources
Openings, Doors, Frames, & Hardware	\$895,959	Other Funding Sources
Finishes, inc. Sheetrock	<b>\$1,495,230</b>	<b>Capital Funds Project</b>
Specialties	\$65,750	Other Funding Sources
Equipment, Backup Generator	\$132,057	Other Funding Source
Millwork, Vent Hood, Window Shades, Appliances	<b>\$186,976</b>	<b>Capital Funds Project</b>
Fire Suppression	\$162,225	Other Funding Source
Plumbing	\$723,792	Other Funding Source
HVAC	<b>\$881,583</b>	<b>Capital Funds Project</b>
Electrical	\$1,088,030	Other Funding Source
Electronic Safety & Security	\$24,126	Other Funding Source
Earthwork	\$148,807	Other Funding Source
Exterior Improvements, Paving, Exterior Lights	\$221,145	Capital Funds Project
Utilities	\$158,325	Capital Funds Project
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$8,594,545</b>	<b>Other Funding Sources</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$3,000,000</b>	<b>Capital Funds Project</b>

**Instructions:** Using the Program Budget table, specify the amounts of funds that the Recipient proposes to allocate to each of the following years. Please distribute the budget into the estimated year the expenditures will occur. CPF Funds will be evenly distributed by the State of Arkansas on a quarterly basis from the beginning of the construction period to the completion.

**These estimates may be approximations, but more detailed and accurate information will be required in reporting.**

<b>PROGRAM BUDGET</b>						
<b>Program Administrative Costs</b>						
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
2a. Administering the CPF funds (by the Recipient)						
2b. Technical assistance to potential subrecipients						
2c. Complying with grant administration and audit requirement						
2d. Community Engagement						



2e.						
2f.						
2g.						
2. Total Program Administrative Costs (not to exceed amounts listed in source of funding) *	*	*	*	*	*	*
Project Costs						
3a. Recipient Project Costs		\$500,000	\$2,500,000			
3b. Subgrant Project Costs						
3a.vi						
3a.vii.						
3a.viii.						
3a.ix.						
3 Total Project Costs		\$500,000	\$2,500,000			

\* The State of Arkansas plans to tentatively put a hold on program administration funding for this program, paying administrative costs out of general revenues. It is the hope of the State that economic strength continues such that the State can eventually apply funding reserved for administrative expenses to programmatic expenditures. Should economic activity falter, the State may use these to cover programmatic administrative expenses.



STATE OF ARKANSAS  
**Department of Finance  
and Administration**

**OFFICE OF BUDGET**  
1509 West Seventh Street, Suite 402  
Post Office Box 3278  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-3278  
Phone: (501) 682-1941  
Fax: (501) 682-1086  
[www.arkansas.gov/dfa](http://www.arkansas.gov/dfa)

August 22, 2022

Senator Jonathan Dismang, Co-Chair  
Representative Michelle Gray, Co-Chair  
Performance Evaluation & Expenditure Review Committee  
Arkansas Legislative Council  
State Capitol Building  
Little Rock, AR 72201

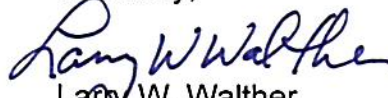
RE: FY 23 American Rescue Plan Act Request

Dear Co-Chairs:

Pursuant to Section 37 (02) of Act 199 of 2022, I am forwarding the attached American Rescue Plan Act request(s) that have received my approval as Chief Fiscal Officer of the State.

- Department of Finance and Administration Disbursing Officer – To provide reimbursements under Ark. Code Ann. §11-5-118 \$25,000
- Arkansas Game and Fish Commission – Lonoke Fish Hatchery External Water Reuse Project and Spawning Building \$5,000,000
- Arkansas Game and Fish Commission – Bayou Meto Wildlife Management Area Greentree Reservoirs Renovation \$15,000,000
- Department of Agriculture – To support water, wastewater/stormwater, and irrigation projects \$280,000,000

Sincerely,

  
Larry W. Walther  
Cabinet Secretary

LWW  
Attachment(s)

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021 PROGRAM APPROPRIATION  
AND PERSONNEL AUTHORIZATION REQUEST  
SECTION 37 OF ACT 199 OF 2022

C.16

Agency: DFA Disbursing Officer Business Area Code: 0620  
Program Title: Employee Vaccination Testing Reimbursement - § 11-5-118  
Granting Organization: US Treasury CFDA #: 21.027  
Effective Date of Authorization: Beginning: 08/26/2022 Ending: 12/31/2026  
Purpose of Grant / Reason for addition or change (include attachments as necessary to provide thorough information):

Arkansas Code 11-5-118 allows for an "exemption for employees from mandates related to the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19)." This exemption is related to vaccines. DFA has promulgated rules (see attached) that will allow for reimbursement to employees and employers for the cost of COVID-19 testing for those exempt employees.

This request is for appropriation to provide reimbursements under ACA 11-5-118 using ARPA funding approved for this purpose at the August 18, 2022 meeting of the ARPA Steering Committee.

American Rescue Plan Act Program Funding

Func. Area: ADMN Fund Code: FRP6209 Direct Funding: \_\_\_\_\_  
Funds Center: \_\_\_\_\_ Internal Order/WBS Element: A 0620 ARPVACREIM-E Steering Comm. Approved: x  
Continuation: \_\_\_\_\_

	Program Funding Amount
Regular Salaries	
Extra Help	
Personal Services Matching	
Operating Expenses	
Conference & Travel Expenses	
Professional Fees	
Capital Outlay	
Data Processing	
Grants and Aid (CI: 04)	25000
Other:	
Other:	
Total	\$ 25000

Anticipated Duration of Federal Funds: 12/31/2026



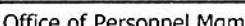
<b>DFA IGS State Technology Planning</b>	<b>Date</b>
Items requested for information technology must be in compliance with Technology Plans as submitted to DFA IGS State Technology Planning.	

\* unclassified positions only

Positions to be established: (list each position separately)

Org Unit	Pers Area	Pers SubArea	Cost Center	Position Number	Cmnt Item	Position Title	Class Code	Grade	Line Item Maximum *

State funds will not be used to replace federal funds when such funds expire, unless appropriated by the General Assembly and authorized by the Governor.

Approved by:  8/22/22  8-22-22   
Cabinet Secretary/Agency Director Date Office of Budget Date Office of Personnel Mgmt Date  
K Bridges 08/19/22

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION  
AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR COVID-19 TESTING

## **OVERVIEW**

Act 1115 of 2021 provides an exemption for employees in Arkansas from impending termination due to vaccination mandates. Codified as ACA 11-5-118, this legislation protects employees if their employer requires or is mandated to require vaccination or immunization for coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) or its variants. The law outlines a specific exemption process and tasked the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) with establishing rules regarding the method of distribution of funds from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to employees and employers to cover the cost of testing. DFA promulgated an emergency rule on January 12, 2022. The legislation went into effect on January 14, 2022. DFA is required to report monthly to the Arkansas Legislative Council on distribution of these funds.

## **COVID-19 TESTING PROGRAM**

The legislation calls for:

- 1) Timely distribution of funds to recipients within thirty (30) days;
- 2) Establishment of an option for distribution to an employer that chooses to receive funds for disbursement to employees; and
- 3) Verification and method of authentication of receipts that shall meet legislative auditing requirements, including without limitation the development of forms.

## **FORMS**

DFA has created the following forms:

- 1) Contract and Grant Disclosure Form – this form is necessary to comply with Governor’s Executive Order 98-04
- 2) Form for Submission of Reimbursement Claims – this form will gather information necessary to implement the reimbursement claim component of the COVID-19 Testing Program while adhering to the reporting requirements for subrecipient awards under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Final Rule.
- 3) Form for Requesting Distribution of Funds to Employer for COVID-19 Testing and for Monthly Reporting – this form will be used by employers to disburse funds to their employees to cover the cost of COVID-19 testing which is not covered by the employee’s health benefit plan. The employer would be a subrecipient and is required to submit documentation that will be used to meet the monitoring, oversight, and reporting requirements under the American Rescue Plan of 2021, Final Rule.
- 4) American Rescue Plan Act required documentation
  - a. Subrecipient Agreement
    - i. Acceptance Certification
  - b. Authorized Agent Form
  - c. Proposed Testing Roster Form
  - d. Completed Testing Roster Form
  - e. Employee Separation Roster Form

## **PROCESS FOR SUBMITTING CLAIMS**

Under the Program, an employer or employee may submit a claim for reimbursement to cover the cost

of COVID-19 testing not covered by the employee's health benefit plan on the form(s) provided by the DFA for that purpose. The employer or employee shall denote on the form(s) whether the employer or the employee is the Claimant to be reimbursed.

In addition to the properly completed form(s), the Claimant shall provide the original, or a digitally scanned copy, of the invoice, receipt, or other document(s) evidencing that the test was conducted, the name of each employee tested, the cost of COVID-19 testing, the name of the manufacturer of each COVID-19 test, the United States Food and Drug Administration ("FDA") emergency use authorization number for each test, and a paycheck stub for the most recent pay period for each employee tested, and with all documents submitted in legible format.

By both signing the form(s), the employer and employee shall certify that the information provided on the form(s) and all documents submitted with their reimbursement claim are true, accurate, and complete. Upon receipt of the documents and the properly completed form(s), the DFA - Disbursing Officer shall issue funds to the Claimant within thirty (30) days.

#### **OPTION FOR DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS TO AN EMPLOYER**

An employer that chooses to receive funds for disbursement to employees to cover the cost of COVID-19 testing not covered by the employee's health benefit plan shall submit a request for funding on the form(s) provided by DFA for that purpose.

The employers shall be required to submit the following forms:

- a. Contract and Grant Discloser Form
- b. Subrecipient Agreement and Acceptance Certificate
- c. Proposed Testing Roster
- d. Other documentation – including receipts, invoices or other documents evidencing testing

The Department will determine the amount of funds to be provided to an employer, for disbursement to employees to cover the cost of testing, based upon the information provided on the form(s) and the proposed testing roster.

#### **MONTHLY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

An employer that receives funds to distribute to employees for COVID-19 testing shall report monthly to DFA on form(s) provided for that purpose. In addition to providing the properly completed form(s), an employer shall provide the original, or a digitally scanned copy, of invoices, receipts, or other documents evidencing that each test was conducted, name of each employee tested, the cost of COVID-19 testing, the name of the manufacturer of each COVID-19 test, the FDA emergency use authorization number for each test, and a paycheck stub for the most recent pay period for each employee tested with all documents submitted in in legible format.

An employer that receives funds to distribute to employees for COVID-19 testing shall provide on a monthly basis an updated proposed testing roster, a completed testing roster, and an employee separation roster on the form(s) provided by DFA.

By signing the form(s), the employer shall certify that the information provided on the form(s) and all documents submitted with the form(s) are true, accurate, and complete.



STATE OF ARKANSAS  
**Department of Finance  
 and Administration**

**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**  
 1509 West Seventh Street, Suite 401  
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 Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-3278  
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 Fax: (501) 682-1029  
[www.arkansas.gov/dfa](http://www.arkansas.gov/dfa)

September 15, 2022

Senator Jonathan Dismang, Co-Chair  
 Representative Michelle Gray, Co-Chair  
 Performance Evaluation & Expenditure Review Committee  
 Arkansas Legislative Council  
 State Capitol Building  
 Little Rock, AR 72201

RE: FY 23 American Rescue Plan Act Request

Dear Co-Chairs:

Pursuant to Section 37 (02) of Act 199 of 2022, I am forwarding the attached American Rescue Plan Act request(s) that have received my approval as Chief Fiscal Officer of the State.

- Ouachita County Medical Center \$6,077,852.65
- North Arkansas Regional Medical Center \$10,000,000.00

Sincerely,

Larry W. Walther  
 Cabinet Secretary

cc: Senator Terry Rice, Co-Chair, Arkansas Legislative Council  
 Representative Jeff Wardlaw, Co-Chair, Arkansas Legislative Council





# BRINGING **BETTER** TO YOU

September 15, 2022

Department of Human Services  
Attn: Arkansas American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Steering Committee  
5800 West Tenth St. Suite 400  
Little Rock, AR 72204

RE: ARPA Funding Request

Dear Committee,

Healthcare teams across Arkansas demonstrated unyielding commitment throughout the pandemic, and we are now faced with insurmountable obstacles to continue providing care. North Arkansas Regional Medical Center (NARMC) has seen a dramatic change in financial performance post pandemic. NARMC's fiscal year runs from April to March. The fiscal year 2020 ended with a contribution margin of 1.7% as the pandemic was beginning. The first four months of fiscal year 2020, prior to the pandemic, yielded a contribution margin of 1.95%. However, the same period of time, post pandemic, yielded a contribution margin of -14%.

North Arkansas Regional Medical Center received Medicare Accelerated Payments in April 2020 at the beginning of the pandemic. NARMC has repaid 91.2% of the advanced payments and is prepared to remit the remaining balance upon request from Medicare, which is expected in September. The Medicare Accelerated Payments did not offset the increased cost of providing care.

Comparing the four months ending 7/31/2022 to the same four month period prior to the pandemic, ending 7/31/2019, North Arkansas Regional Medical Center experienced a decrease in volume and net revenue with an increase in operating expenses. The net revenue for April-July 2019 decreased by 8.75% for the same period in 2022. This decrease represents primarily a reduction in adjusted admissions of 8.1% as the facility due to ongoing volume losses related to the COVID-19 pandemic. NARMC has experienced a 17.6% increase in average hourly rate across the workforce. As a result, gross salaries increased by 8.8%. The overall increase would have been significantly higher, but the organization took steps to offset the rising cost by reducing the total FTEs (full time equivalents) by 8.9% during the same period of time. This accelerated attrition fueled by the pandemic resulted in a reduction of 64 non-patient care full time equivalents. NARMC experienced a 470% increase in contract labor expense over this period of time to ensure direct patient care workers were available. This contract labor increase is attributable to two factors, challenges locating nursing personnel during the pandemic and increased contract labor rates due to the nursing shortage. During this same period of time, supply cost increased by 9.1% per adjusted admission.

The Medicare IPPS (Inpatient Prospective Payment System) market basket (inflation) update proposes a nationally averaged increase of 4.1%. The calculated impact for NARMC will be 3.1% for NARMC's inpatient volume. The 3.1% increase adjusts for decreased high cost outlier payments, disproportionate share payments, and new technology payments. However, even with the 3.1% market basket adjustment, the facility will experience an overall decrease of 6.5% in Medicare reimbursement. This overall proposed decrease is largely due the approaching expiration of the Medicare Low Volume Adjustment Rule (LVA). Absent legislative



action, the discharge criteria will revert back to pre-pandemic levels, and most recipients will no longer qualify. Prior to the pandemic, only hospitals with fewer than 200 total discharges qualified for the LVA. Congress updated/modified the expanded criteria during the pandemic— most recently to a cutoff of 3,800 total discharges per year. The legislation to support extending these programs is critical to the survival of rural hospitals across our state. The legislative proposals are H.R. 1887 and S.B. 4009. Hospitals like North Arkansas Regional Medical Center strongly support these proposals.

In early 2022, NARMC embarked on an aggressive financial management plan aimed at stabilizing EBITDA and reaching financial sustainability. The goals of NARMC's plan include creating a correct-sized organization, building efficiencies, reducing waste, creating strategic growth initiatives, and improving revenue cycle without negatively affecting safety or quality. This program is currently comprised of over forty individual initiatives and is divided into five major domains: expense reduction, 340B impact, revenue capture, new revenue generation, and service line reduction. In addition, NARMC continues to develop and refine a strategic plan for catastrophic expense reductions. This catastrophic expense reduction plan will be staged to have the least effect necessary to ensure solvency of the organization, but at the expense of significant changes in access to healthcare and a further significant reduction in workforce.

**Expense Reduction.** Reduction of contract labor expense will be achieved by both reduction of contract staff FTEs and reduction in contract labor expense per hour. In 2022, NARMC invested in an energy-efficient chiller for the facility as part of anticipated facility expense to replace nonfunctional equipment. The chiller investment is expected to generate energy savings of 680,000 kWhr of electricity per year. Additional initiatives include reduction in supply expenses, purchased service expenses such as maintenance contracts, elimination of the Nuclear Medicine on-call service, and reduction in length of stay. In particular, length of stay reduction has been complicated by the pandemic through reduced availability at accepting facilities such as LTAC (long-term acute care), LTC (long-term care), and behavioral health facilities. Additionally, NARMC is exploring reductions in workforce.

**340B Impact.** NARMC is pursuing additional 340B Drug Pricing Program (340B) savings. The 340B program created in 1992 requires drug manufacturers to provide outpatient drugs to covered entities at reduced prices. The intent of the program is to allow covered entities to "stretch scarce federal resources as far as possible, reaching more eligible patients and providing more comprehensive services." These 340B impact initiatives include referral capture, contract pharmacy network enhancement, and mitigation of unlawful pharmaceutical manufacturer contract pharmacy reductions. 340B remains one of the most impactful federal programs for Arkansas's rural and indigent populations, and NARMC remains a strong advocate for protecting the 340B program.

**Revenue Capture.** NARMC has identified revenue cycle improvements and opportunities to improve revenue capture. Approximately 50% of the revenue capture initiatives are identified as a one-time financial gain, and 50% is ongoing net revenue improvement. These projects include auditing, identifying, and rebilling qualifying claims for high cost medications and procedures. The initiatives for on-going revenue-cycle improvement center on coding efficiency, provider-based billing improvements, and a planned increase to the charge master.

**New Revenue Generation.** NARMC has identified opportunity related to generating new revenue. These limited projects include new services. NARMC has also identified net revenue enhancements associated with Medicare Advantage payors. Because of the reliance on third-party government payors such as Medicaid,



# BRINGING **BETTER** TO YOU

Medicare, and VA, healthcare entities like NARMC cannot simply increase prices to generate proportional net revenue. Reimbursement is set by the third party payors without the healthcare entity having any reasonable ability to negotiate. This model in other business sectors could be considered anti-competitive- a model whereby payment is essentially fixed by the payer with no reasonably effective means by which an entity can negotiate. For example, Medicare sets annual rate increases that are not negotiable. As stated above, changes in Medicare for NARMC in 2022 will create a net decrease in Medicare reimbursement of 6.5%, including expiration of the LVA protections.

**Service Line Reduction.** NARMC has made the difficult decision to close the NARMC Eureka Springs Family Practice Clinic in Eureka Springs, AR in November 2022. Because of the effect service line reduction has on access to care in rural communities, all other service lines identified for potential reduction or elimination are part of the catastrophic expense reduction discussion below.

**Catastrophic Expense Reduction.** Catastrophic expense reduction is an evolving discussion and analysis of expense reductions which have a potentially significant negative impact on access to healthcare or a stable workforce in the NARMC service area. The service area includes the following five Arkansas counties: Boone, Newton, Searcy, Carroll, and Marion. Many hospitals across the nation are reducing services, ceasing service lines and eliminating positions to sustain minimal healthcare services.

If hospitals across the state close, we will see a significant economic impact to the entire state of Arkansas. For example, NARMC is the second largest employer in Boone County, and provides over \$50 million in salaries on an annual basis. The facility's service area contains over 95,000 people surrounding Boone County. Many of these individuals need immediate care and do not have resources to travel 70 or more miles to access care. The facility has been extremely fortunate to serve the community with an emergency room that was not on divert at any point during the pandemic. We have partnered with local and state agencies to provide necessary COVID-19 treatment modalities and prevention strategies, while incurring the labor, supply, and travel costs associated with providing these services.

NARMC was awarded a \$500,000 community development block grant through Boone County. This funding was used to access necessary supplies to care for COVID-19 patients and equipment necessary to protect our staff from exposure to illness. NARMC operated an incident command center for nearly 2 years, and will be submitting funding requests for reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) with all necessary supporting documentation. This request will be submitted in the month of October. North Arkansas Regional Medical Center has taken active steps in educating our staff and community about the impact of inflation within the healthcare setting through various media sources and public meetings such as city council and chamber of commerce events.

North Arkansas Regional Medical Center is actively engaged in negotiations with commercial payors to increase reimbursement to facilities to cover the rising cost in care. However, as patients have increases in premium cost, commercial insurance companies are not passing those increases on to facilities and physicians for services rendered. The American Hospital Association provided a white paper on the impact of commercial payors to the healthcare delivery system. This document provides detailed information about the regulatory constraints that also impact and delay healthcare delivery. These delays further impact the ability of the organization to receive accurate and timely payment for services.



# BRINGING **BETTER** TO YOU

It is imperative that new relief funds are issued immediately to bridge the gap of rising cost to provide care and the lack of reimbursement available. Arkansas hospitals are presently accessing reserves to supplement their losses, but this is not sustainable.

North Arkansas Regional Medical Center has served as a leader for our community throughout the pandemic, and we are now asking for relief funding to support the healthcare in the community. The organization has taken immediate steps in an attempt to mitigate losses and is aggressively moving towards stability. However, with the increases in cost, loss of revenue, and limited workforce, these plans, without other intervention, will result in a significant loss of access to healthcare and hospital closures. Hospitals in the State of Arkansas are feeling the pressure and are very concerned about financial sustainability under the current environment.

Sincerely,

Sammie Cribbs, MSN, AGCNS-BC, APRN  
President & CEO  
North Arkansas Regional Medical Center

**North Arkansas Regional Medical Center  
July YTD Income Statement**

	YTD				
	Actual Jul-22		Budget Percent		PY Actual Jul-21
Inpatient Revenue	\$ 17,810,282	-14.4%	\$ 20,813,038	-11.5%	\$ 20,124,428
Outpatient Revenue	77,964,751	-4.9%	82,021,238	2.9%	75,786,390
Gross Revenue	95,775,033	-6.9%	102,834,276	-0.1%	95,910,819
Deductions From Gross Revenues	66,042,386	-2.2%	67,505,347	7.9%	62,564,933
Provision for Uncollectible Accounts	1,391,837	-23.3%	1,813,981	4.3%	1,738,379
Charity Allowance	220,548	-38.2%	357,018	-9.2%	393,327
Total Deductions from Revenue	67,654,771	-2.9%	69,676,345	4.6%	64,696,639
Net Patient Revenues	28,120,262	-15.2%	33,157,930	-9.9%	31,214,179
Other Revenue including COVID-19 Funding	565,768	25.1%	452,400	-86.0%	4,055,377
Total Net Revenues	28,686,030	-14.7%	33,610,330	-18.7%	35,269,556
Salaries & Wages	14,898,591	-6.3%	15,903,506	6.5%	13,983,513
Employee Benefits	2,137,035	-15.9%	2,541,380	-9.8%	2,370,024
Contract Labor	3,091,588	54.2%	2,004,879	4.4%	2,960,264
Professional Fees	1,817,676	2.7%	1,769,153	7.0%	1,698,618
Supplies	5,855,852	-3.1%	6,044,186	-14.7%	6,863,455
Utilities	532,115	0.7%	528,230	0.7%	528,230
Leases/Rentals	500,839	-4.2%	522,784	-0.3%	502,137
Insurance	378,889	10.1%	343,977	8.6%	349,019
Purchased Services	1,603,146	-10.9%	1,799,851	-10.2%	1,784,737
Other Expenses	1,892,757	6.4%	1,779,234	6.4%	1,779,737
Total Operating Expenses	32,708,487	-1.6%	33,237,181	-0.3%	32,819,735
Operating Income Before Depr., Amortization & Int	(4,022,457)		373,150		2,449,821
Contribution Margin (Operating)	-14.0%		1.1%		6.9%
Depreciation & Amortization	1,018,483		1,001,666		974,854
Interest Expense	182,592		270,048		283,795
Operating Income	(5,223,532)		(898,564)		1,191,173
Investment Return-Realized	224,256		6,668		566,385
Excess of Revenues Over Expenses	(4,999,276)		(891,896)		1,757,558
Investment Return-Unrealized Gains/Losses	(1,761,262)		333,340		1,180,535
Transfer (To) From Affiliates	(14,117)		-		(15,410)
Contributions	137		80,613		76,452
Increase in Unrestricted Net Assets	\$ (6,774,518)		\$ (477,943)		\$ 2,999,134
Total Margin	-23.6%		-1.4%		8.5%



## FUNDING REQUEST AND ATTESTATION FROM AR ARPA STEERING COMMITTEE

*This form should only be completed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the applicant hospital. Language in [brackets] is for informational purposes and should be replaced with appropriate details. The CEO/CFO completing the form should hand-write their initials in the blank fields adjacent to bracketed fields that indicate "CEO/CFO initials." The CEO/CFO completing the form should also include a hand-written signature in the appropriate field at the end of the form.*

I, Sammie Cribbs, on behalf of North Arkansas Regional Medical Center (hereinafter "Hospital") hereby request \$10,000,000 in funding from the Arkansas American Rescue Plan Act Steering Committee.

I, Sammie Cribbs, on behalf of the Hospital, hereby attest to the following:

### **SECTION 1. ELIGIBILITY**

The Hospital meets the following conditions:

- The Hospital is licensed by the Arkansas Department of Health as a general hospital, with license number AR4480.
- The Hospital is currently enrolled with the Arkansas Medicaid program, with AR Medicaid ID: #131319105
- The Hospital has insufficient assets to cover liabilities, as indicated by the Hospital's quick-ratio of less than one (1), and as shown by the most recent month-end financial statements attached hereto. The hospital's quick ratio is -.45.
- The Hospital has less than 90 days' cash on hand or is operating on a margin of less than -10% in Quarter 1 or Quarter 2 of Calendar Year 2022, as shown by the most recent month-end financial statements attached.



[SC]

### **SECTION 2. REQUIREMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS**

The Hospital acknowledges and attests to the following:

- The requested amount above does not exceed three (3) months' payroll expenses and contract labor and expense documentation is attached hereto showing the Hospital's payroll expenses for the previous three (3) months preceding the date of this application.
- These funds are necessary to cover expenses incurred between July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023, to mitigate and prevent the spread of COVID-19, and to address extraordinary costs related to the Public Health Emergency due to COVID-19, including but not limited to closing critical gaps in infrastructure, capacity, sustainability, and strategic planning.
- The Hospital has attached its plan for achieving sustainability. Within 90 days of approval of this application, the Hospital will provide the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) with progress made on the sustainability plan. Hospital's failure to timely submit progress statements or to make adequate progress will be grounds for DHS to recover the total amount of payment.
- All requested funding will be expended during the period of July 1, 2022—December 31, 2022, and only for expenses incurred during that period.
- For expenses incurred prior to receipt of funds from DHS, the Hospital will submit documentation of the expenses within 60 days of receipt of funds.



## FUNDING REQUEST AND ATTESTATION FROM AR ARPA STEERING COMMITTEE

- For expenses incurred after the date of receipt of funds from DHS, the Hospital will submit documentation of the expenses within 90 days after the expenses are incurred.
- The Hospital acknowledges that these funds may be used for the following reasons:
  - To recruit or retain healthcare staff;
  - For healthcare staff payroll and labor expenses generally; and
  - Funds may also be used for Hospital's drug and supply costs.
- None of these funds will be used to pay any increase in management fees to administrative personnel.
- None of these funds will be used to duplicate or supplant funding from any other federal or state program.
- To the extent that expenses are subsequently reimbursed under any other federal or state program, the Hospital will notify DHS immediately of such fact and will fully comply with DHS in reconciling and recovering such funds.
- Payments or other reimbursement for direct patient care is not included as funding from a federal or state program.
- The Hospital will retain records sufficient to support each expenditure related to this funding, for so long as may be deemed necessary, but in no case less than seven (7) years.
- The Hospital will make records of its expenses available to DHS and/or any other lawful authority, upon request.
- DHS will audit Hospital to ensure these funds are used only for appropriate purposes and, if it is determined that Hospital used funds inappropriately or failed to expend the entirety of the awarded funds, DHS may recoup questioned costs, up to the full amount requested above.
- In the event any amount is denied as the result of an audit by state or federal authorities, the Hospital will repay DHS such denied amount, together with any associated penalty or cost imposed as a result of the audit.

80 [SC]

### SECTION 3. COMPLIANCE STATEMENTS

The Hospital attests that the following statements are true and correct:

- The Hospital complies with all legal requirements related to COVID-19 vaccination, including without limitation Arkansas state laws, EEOC requirements, and Medicare Conditions of Participation.
- The Hospital allows religious, antibody, and testing exceptions in lieu of getting the COVID-19 vaccine, as required by law.

80 [SC]

**Signed and Agreed:**

Printed Name	Sammie Cribbs
Email Address	Sammie.Cribbs@narmc.com
Telephone No.	870-414-5130

FUNDING REQUEST AND ATTESTATION FROM AR ARPA STEERING COMMITTEE

Signature

*Samuel B. Gibbs ARPA*

Date

Sept, 15, 2022