

## AWARD CRITERIA AND EVALUATION

### Executive Summary 15 Points

In the Spring of 2022, Houston Community College launched the Gulf Coast Region Apprenticeship Hub (<https://www.hccs.edu/apprenticeship>) with the singular goal of expanding the reach and role of registered apprenticeships in the gulf coast region beyond the traditional construction craft trades that have long provided access and entry to high demand careers. Understanding the vital role and essential effectiveness of registered apprenticeships in attracting, training and retaining talent for employers while at the same time providing access and entry into high demand careers that supply a steady wage progression, Houston Community College sought to deliver on this long standing pillar of workforce development by expanding registered apprenticeships in nontraditional sectors such as business and professional services, health care and IT among others.

The Hub provides a space for employers to find the talent they need and career seekers the training and employment they desire. In most cases, Houston Community College serves as the registered apprenticeship sponsor removing the employers' burden of not only training apprentices, but also handling all of the documentation required by the US Department of Labor to establish and maintain a registered apprenticeship. In addition to accessing strong talent through an earn and learn model, employers can be reimbursed for initial wages through the state's workforce agency, the Texas Workforce Commission. Thus, the effort is a win-win-win for all involved. The student enters a career while training both at college and on the job, the employer accesses a new talent pipeline and supports through on the job training and mentorship, and the college fulfills its mission.

Since its inception just last spring, the Gulf Coast Region Apprenticeship Hub at HCC has launched 25 registered apprenticeships in partnership with employers with a projected annual enrollment of 1100. In addition to the above expansion in a short amount of time, through the Gulf Coast Region Apprenticeship Hub, HCC held the first annual "Women in Apprenticeship" conference coinciding with National Apprenticeship Week in November of 2022. The event showcased active apprentices and employers engaged through the Hub to an audience of business and industry leaders, high school female students, and community members. Key to the success of the Hub is the college's commitment to provide dedicated resources to support the growth and expansion across the region. Utilizing five repurposed positions, HCC built a team that lives and breaths all things apprenticeship including an Executive Director, two business and community outreach developers, a program coordinator to manage the DOL registered apprenticeship sponsorship and RAPID system, and a student recruiter.

## Project Description

### Partnerships and Collaborations 20 Points

- **Describe the partnerships and collaborations developed in implementing this program:**

HCC's Gulf Coast Region Apprenticeship Hub is built on a foundation of meaningful partnerships with employers and community organizations. In just one year, the following partners have been engaged and have launched or are in the process of launching a Registered Apprenticeship through the Hub:

Company			
Aon	Texas Mutual	MD Anderson	Harris County
Pepsi Co	Shell	Dwyer	Target
NAMC	BP	Memorial Hermann	UT Health
Petroleum Express	Geospatial AI	SHRM	Memorial Hermann
City of Sugarland	Block Construction	Encompass Technology	Cintas
Baylor Scott and White	Capital Construction	Valero Energy	

- **How does the project fit within local workforce and economic development needs?**

HCC provides workforce training through 13 Centers of Excellence that reflect the large-scale job growth the Houston region continues to see year over year. The HCC Centers of Excellence are a concentration of resources, expertise and human capital that provide sector-based training as follows: Architectural Design and Construction, Business, Consumer Arts and Sciences, Digital and Information Technology, Education Professions, Engineering, Global Energy, Health Sciences, Logistics, Public Safety, Material Sciences and Smart Manufacturing, Transportation, and Visual and Performing Arts. The Gulf Coast Region Apprenticeship Hub works with employers to understand their talent needs and then pairs them with the appropriate Center of Excellence to deliver the training required. Along the way the staff at the Hub provide operational and administrative support to the employer. Thus, each partnership is employer-led based on the specific talent demand.

- **How is the project funded?**

The Gulf Coast Region Apprenticeship Hub is funded for the most part on hard dollars from the College's operational budget. Repurposed positions and funding were utilized to initiate the work. Since launching four grants have been secured to fund scholarships, event coordination and an Apprenticeship Navigator who provides students additional support. In some cases, employers are funding student tuition and fees. In other cases, apprentices are utilizing scholarships from the college's foundation, the above referenced grants, or through WIOA dollars through the local workforce board.

- **Have you leveraged resources to support the initiative (examples: economic development, industry, workforce development, other educational institutions, community-based organizations, etc.)?**

In addition to the above resource allocation, the College has partnered with the Gulf Coast Workforce Board to support not only student tuition and fees, but also employer wage reimbursement. Seeing the success of the Hub within the first few months, the Workforce Board also has referred both employers and potential students to the Hub to engage in apprenticeships. Lastly, as part of the roll out the program, community-based organization have been engaged to refer potential students in need of entry level employment. In one case, a community-based organization is providing additional wrap around services to students within the registered apprenticeship at the employer's request.

#### **Economic Impact 15 Points**

- **What is the potential economic impact of the program on your community, both short and long-term? Economic impact may include employer demand to number trained, competitive wages, return on investment, capital raised or funds leveraged, expanded facilities, etc.**

As indicated above, just since Spring 2022, the Hub has launched 25 registered apprenticeships with with a projected annual enrollment of 1100. These numbers continue to grow rapidly as employers look for creative ways to attract and retain talent in a tight labor market. The Hub has already provided enough revenue to be self-funded and built a case for additional resource allocation to meet the increasing demand. With the additional grant funding sought and received, the wage reimbursement provided through the Workforce Board, the tuition and fees captured and the earned media, the Gulf Coast Region Apprenticeship Hub is showing significant economic impact for the region.

#### **Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity 20 Points**

- **Describe how the program addressed equity (racial, ethnic and/or gender) and inclusivity gaps for students who may be historically underrepresented in higher education and/or in high demand occupations.**
- **How were those DEI efforts measured? Did the effort lead to a positive impact?**

As a majority minority serving college, HCC's is innately diverse as the following breakdown indicates: 41.12% Hispanic/Latino, 26.63% African-American/Black, 12.89% White, 12.27% Asian, and 7.09% Other. Additionally, as a measure of economically disadvantage, in 2022, 73% of enrolled students received a federal PELL grant. Given the economically disadvantage population of the college, a program that provides the opportunity earn and learn simultaneous is key. To this end, the College recruits students for registered apprenticeships by utilizing the Hub as a communication and engagement tool for current and potential students. In this regard, the make-up of apprentices mirrors that of the college; however, by nature of the program apprentices are on a trajectory to complete college training and receive wage

progression, a requirement of the DOL registered apprenticeship, at the same time. This situates students to establish financial well-being while still in school.

The Gulf Coast Region Apprenticeship Hub at its launch established an internal data tracking system in tandem with the DOL RAPID system. As required by DOL registered apprenticeships, milestones along the way including student learning outcome mastery, wage progression, and retention are all tracked. Given the program is fairly new, long term data is not yet available; however, the College is already seeing increasing in wages, retention over one year, and programmatic completions.

### **Program Results 20 Points**

**Discuss program results: completion statistics, retention strategies, certifications and/or degrees earned, number of people placed in jobs, etc.**

As indicated above, the Hub established a system of benchmarking to ensure compliance with the DOL and to track job placement, matriculation and retention. While the program is in a nascent phase, the College is already seeing success: HCC's registered apprenticeship partnership in insurance with Aon, a global risk management firm, set in motion the College's plans to launch the Gulf Coast Region Apprenticeship Hub with the goal of expanding registered apprenticeships in nontraditional occupations. The HCC-Aon partnership began in 2021 after Aon had success launching similar registered apprenticeships in Chicago. As we set to launch the third cohort in the fall of 2023, the first cohort just graduated this spring with eight apprentices and eight more are now in year two. This successful model has provided the framework for launching the Hub and expanding registered apprenticeships across the region. In fact, we have since replicated a registered apprenticeship in insurance with Texas Mutual.

### **Replication 10 Points**

**Describe how this program can be replicated in other locations as a model or concept?**

The Gulf Coast Region Apprenticeship Hub is easily replicable. The key to the success has been threefold: 1. establishing a strong marketing and communication plan that includes strong web and social presence, dedicated business and community outreach strategy, direct communication with current and potential students, 2. dedicating and investing resources in human capital to manage relationships, operations and programmatic administration such as the DOL RAPID system, and 3. Collaborating with internal stakeholders, namely the Centers of Excellence that oversee workforce instructional programming, and external stakeholders including business partners, community based organizations and government agencies such as the Gulf Coast Workforce Board. The investment in time and resources to make this happen was the key to the successful launch and could be replicated at any site.