

**GREATER MEMPHIS ALLIANCE  
for a  
COMPETITIVE WORKFORCE (GMACW)**

**2014 Labor and Education Alignment Program (LEAP)**

**L.E.A.P Memphis**

**Greater Memphis Alliance for a Competitive Workforce (GMACW)**

**In Partnership With**

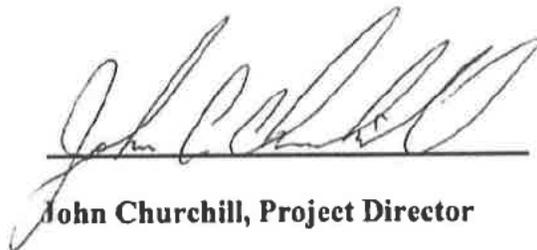
**Southwest Tennessee Community College, Shelby County Schools, the Greater Memphis Chamber and their Manufacturing and Logistics Councils, the Bartlett Chamber, the Medical Device Manufacturing Council, Nike Inc. and FedEx**

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## ABSTRACT

The Greater Memphis Alliance for a Competitive Workforce (GMACW) is the result of a an 18-month collaboration and planning process under the auspices of The Memphis Shelby Regional Economic Development Plan, supported by the Brookings Institution and led jointly by FedEx (represented by Chris Richards), City of Memphis Mayor A C Wharton and Shelby County Mayor Mark Luttrell. In recognition that a prepared workforce is the lynchpin for economic growth, an initiative to strengthen the alignment of education to jobs and industry quickly became the number 1 priority. Named GMACW to connote the collaboration necessary to build this alignment, the new organization was built by a combination of businesses/business groups and education entities: the Greater Memphis Chamber of Commerce and its Chairmen's Circle (106 Greater Memphis employers), Memphis Tomorrow (25 CEOs of Memphis' largest companies), Bartlett Chamber of Commerce, Suburban Chamber Alliance, Memphis Economic Development Growth Engine (EDGE), PeopleFirst Partnership, the Workforce Investment Network, Memphis Bioworks Foundation, Shelby County Schools, Southwest Tennessee Community College, TCAT-Memphis, University of Memphis and multiple non-profit and community-based organizations.

GMACW was established as a catalyst for systems change and to serve employers in major industry sectors as their broker for workforce solutions. GMACW is under the direction of an Executive Board that is heavily concentrated with leaders from business and industry, and also includes the Memphis and Shelby County Mayors. GMACW has established a "Consortium for Education-Employer Alignment" (see MOU in appendix C) and, through the Bartlett and Memphis Chambers, will cultivate industry "Sector Councils" which will clarify employment career pathways and advise the gap analysis and solution development for ensuring education is aligned.

GMACW will be the lead entity for the L.E.A.P-Memphis project, which will leverage a recently awarded (10-1-14) \$9.8 million U.S. Department of Labor grant that provides the partnering postsecondary institutions significant capacity (faculty, equipment, etc) to train workers for the targeted manufacturing and transportation, distribution, and logistics (TDL) sectors. Southwest Tennessee Community College will provide fiscal support for the project and participate in project strategies and activities. The L.E.A.P-Memphis project will provide critical resources for highly skilled and knowledgeable GMACW staff to:

1. Work with **Manufacturing and TDL industry councils** to document workforce skill requirements and employment career pathways within their respective industries.
2. Broker training and education solutions for target industry employers' short term and long term needs.
3. Establish and maintain a comprehensive database of current and projected demand occupations, skill requirements, and K-12—postsecondary program capacity in the Greater Memphis region. This database will form the basis for future supply-side (education) programmatic decisions.
4. Work with a **Consortium of post-secondary institutions, Shelby County Schools and suburban school districts** to identify, improve and/or create high quality training and education pathways programs, aligned with employment career pathways, that address the full array of target sector skill requirements.
5. Especially facilitate cooperative strategies that address those requirements and create articulated education pathways along a continuum of skills that begin in high school and culminate with a bachelors degree, with employable stop-out points and credentials.

## **L.E.A.P.-Memphis**

### **SECTION 1: PROGRAM NEED**

Memphis is among the poorest regions of the country—a place where poverty and unemployment are endemic. The Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) ranks first nationally in poverty rate (29.7%) among the 50 largest MSAs (U.S. Census Bureau). At the same time, last year nearly 18,000 jobs went unfilled, highlighting that Memphis, like the rest of the nation, has a substantial “Skills Gap”. In response, the economic development and business communities launched a strategic initiative called the Greater Memphis Alliance for a Competitive Workforce (GMACW), under the auspices of The Memphis Shelby Regional Economic Development Plan, supported by Brookings Institution, and led jointly by FedEx, City of Memphis Mayor A C Wharton and Shelby County Mayor Mark Luttrell. In recognition that a prepared workforce is the lynchpin for economic prosperity, strengthening the alignment of education to jobs and industry quickly became the number 1 priority. Named GMACW to connote the collaboration necessary to build education-employer alignment, the new initiative was built by a combination of business groups and education entities: the Greater Memphis Chamber of Commerce and its Chairmen's Circle (106 Greater Memphis employers), Memphis Tomorrow (25 CEOs of Memphis' largest companies), Bartlett Chamber of Commerce, Suburban Chamber Alliance, Memphis Economic Development Growth Engine (EDGE), PeopleFirst Partnership, the Workforce Investment Network, Memphis Bioworks Foundation, Shelby County Schools, Southwest Tennessee Community College, TCAT-Memphis, University of Memphis, Tennessee Department of ECD, , and a number of other partners.

GMACW endeavors to make human capital a leading economic development tool in Memphis incorporating elements to raise skill levels to meet employer needs; enhance business productivity through workplace training; develop education pathways that are aligned with employment career pathways; and build regional high-tech skills. GMACW will serve as the lead entity for the L.E.A.P.-Memphis project that targets the manufacturing and transportation, distribution, and logistics industrial sectors. Higher education partners include Southwest Tennessee Community College (fiscal agent), Tennessee College of Applied Technology-Memphis, and the University of Memphis. The postsecondary education institutions, in partnership with the Shelby County Schools and suburban

school systems, will create or expand education pathways in manufacturing and transportation, distribution, and logistics, while improving alignment with employer demand and articulation along the education pathway.

**Localized Data Demonstrating the Need for Action:** The Greater Memphis MSA ranks 86 out of 100 largest metros on the Skills Gap Index produced by the Brookings Institution. In general, employers in the region struggle to find qualified workers at all skill levels despite a large local labor pool and a training and education infrastructure with many assets and resources. In Shelby County last year, nearly 18,000 jobs went unfilled and in December of 2013 there were 2.02 unemployed workers for every job opening. Furthermore, in the Made in Memphis Manufacturing Industry Survey of 2013, conducted by the Greater Memphis Chamber and Workforce Investment Network (WIN), it was found that 1) few employers reported working with education institutions to recruit employees and, 2) educators and workforce development professionals reported that employees and job candidates are often unaware of education programs and their value to job placement and career opportunities.

The GMACW year-long planning process included significant engagement with employers and employer organizations. Employers reported that: 1) The region's collection of K-12 and post-secondary programs and institutions are not sufficiently producing workers that meet employer skill requirements, and in turn are not sufficiently helping students and job candidates advance along career pathways; 2) Education and training organizations are not designing programs that effectively link to each other or create efficient career pathways responsive to regional employer requirements; 3) Education and training organizations aren't successfully helping their students master competencies – from basic soft skills to higher level hard skills -- to employers' satisfaction; 4) Employers don't know where to get help, or how to get the "system" to respond to their needs; and, 5) Job and training candidates often are not equipped with basic knowledge, skills and resources to navigate the training/education (supply) and employment marketplace (demand).

Advanced manufacturing and TDL are very strong economic sectors in the Memphis region, employing 37,260 people in the manufacturing sector and 83,270 people in the TDL sector and there is considerable synergistic relationship between these two sectors. Regionally, important sub-sectors include medical device manufacturing, chemical processing, and ground and air shipping. Locally Smith & Nephew, a medical device manufacturer, has current openings for 150 CNC operators, finishers and quality assurance technicians; FedEx, which is headquartered

in Memphis, has a need for 300 mechanics and long-haul drivers; Nike is completing a \$400 million expansion of their Memphis facility which will require 275 new workers in warehousing and distribution; UPS has announced a \$70 million expansion of their Memphis operation which will create 350 new diesel mechanic, driving and logistics technician jobs in TDL. Table 1, Appendix A shows examples of specific employer demand in the Memphis MSA.

In addition to recent regional industry expansions, an analysis of labor market forecasts is shown in Appendix A where Table 2 lists the Tennessee supply and demand for selected employment career pathways; Table 3 lists Tennessee demand for targeted occupations; and Table 4 lists localized labor market demand for targeted occupations for the Memphis MSA.

**Linkage between Grant Activities and Local Needs:** Recently (10/1/2014), the GMACW partnering education institutions and other GMACW partners were awarded a U.S. Department of Labor grant that provides significant funding (\$9.8 million) for faculty, equipment, supplies and other funding to support capacity building for manufacturing and TDL programs and the occupations shown in Table 4, Appendix A. While the DOL funding provides necessary funding for capacity building at postsecondary institutions, it does not support K-12 activities such as concurrent credit programs with postsecondary institutions, nor does it support creation and maintenance of a Workforce Trends (supply/demand) data system that will be the basis for

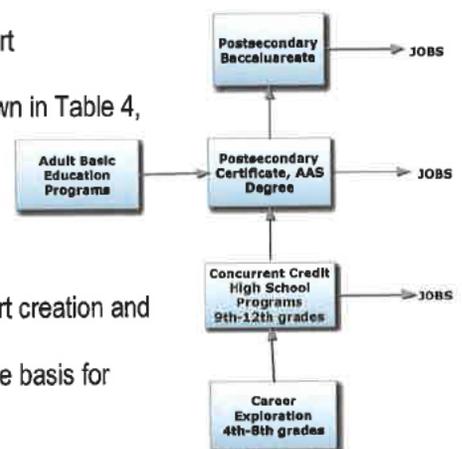


Figure 1

development of articulated education pathways, see Figure 1, that are aligned with employment career pathways. This funding does not support establishing a web site to support employers and students by linking the demand side (employers) to the supply side (education providers), and most importantly it does not support the long-term structure that will ensure permanent alignment between education and employers.

The Greater Memphis Alliance for a Competitive Workforce requests funding from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission to support: 1) Creation and maintenance of a Workforce Trends Data acquisition and analysis system that will document, analyze, and publish regular data on local hiring trends, employer skill requirements, and labor supply; 2) Development of an Employer-Education Alignment Plan (EEAP); 3) Creation of a pipeline of workers by developing articulated K-12 thru baccalaureate degree education pathways that are aligned with employment

career pathways; 4) Engagement of K-12 and postsecondary institutions in aligning education pathways to eliminate gaps, avoid duplication, and improve quality; 5) Creation and maintenance of an interactive Web site to create enthusiasm for local career pathways and provide a roadmap for accessing aligned education programs; and, 6) Connection of targeted sector employers to high-quality workforce solutions.

**Alignment with State Drive to 55 Goals:** L.E.A.P. is positioned as an anchor for Drive to 55, and calls for local D55 alignment groups to help drive alignment between education and employer needs. GMACW responds directly to that "call to action" among other D55 goals. The GMACW-proposed documenting of target industry employment career pathways and establishing articulated education pathways that include concurrent credit K-12 thru baccalaureate degree, will provide students, adult and high school, avenues into and through education programs that are aligned with the workforce needs of regional employers while providing employable stop-out points along a career trajectory. Improved articulation between the K-12 system (concurrent credit courses) and the postsecondary system; the TCAT-Memphis contact hour/diploma and community college credit hour/diploma system; and between associate of applied science degree programs and a new applied baccalaureate degree<sup>1</sup> will support increased credential completion. The interactive Web site will provide students and parents a "navigation" tool that will increase student enrollment and completion of programs aligned with local employment opportunities. The L.E.A.P.-Memphis project will support all of the Drive to 55 Goals: 1) Get students ready; 2) Get them into school; 3) Get them out of school; 4) Finish what we started with adult students – 55% earn AAS degree or higher by 2015 and, 5) Tie education directly to workforce needs. This project supports the three objectives of the Tennessee Pathways to Prosperity Program. This project supports all five objectives of the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development Integrated State Plan-2014.

## **SECTION 2: PROGRAM PLAN**

**Project Timeline and Overview:** The L.E.A.P.-Memphis project will leverage the DOL grant which provides resources to support manufacturing and TDL program support. In addition, L.E.A.P.-Memphis will: 1) Create a Workforce Trends database system to document, analyze, and publish regular data on local hiring trends, employer

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<sup>1</sup> The University of Memphis is funded in the DOL grant to develop a Bachelor of Applied Science Degree that will effectively articulate with the Associate of Applied Science Degree

skill requirements, and labor supply-this system will provide the data-basis for programmatic decisions; 2) Create a pipeline of workers by developing articulated K-12 thru baccalaureate degree education pathways that are aligned with employment career pathways; 3) Engage the K-12 and postsecondary institutions in aligning these education pathways to eliminate gaps, avoid duplication, and improve quality; 4) Create and maintain an interactive Web site to foster enthusiasm for local career pathways and provide a roadmap for accessing aligned education programs; and, 5) Connect employers in the targeted sectors to high-quality workforce solutions by addressing their short-term hiring and training needs. Table 1 shows the Project Timeline, Measurable Objectives and Activities.

**Measurable Objectives in Each Phase of the Project:** See Table 1. Note Quarter 1, Year 1 begins 1/1/2015.

Table 1: Measurable Objectives, Activities, and Timeline									
Objectives Phase 1	Activities	Timeline							
		Year 1				Year 2			
		Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4
1. Develop, analyze and publish data on local hiring trends, employer skill requirements, and labor supply 2. Document employment career pathways in manufacturing and TDL sectors, and engage K-12 and postsecondary institutions to develop aligned education pathways. 3. Employer-Education Alignment Plan 4. Address employers short-term hiring needs 5. Seek and leverage more private dollars to support workforce innovations	Workforce Trends (supply/demand reporting system built and semi-annual reports published)								
	Employment career pathways for manufacturing and TDL mapped, approved by employer councils, and published								
	Employer-Education Alignment Plan (EEAP) established with gaps, problems and solutions/timeline for implementation identified								
	Secondary school initiative launched, emphasizing concurrent credit with postsecondary institutions								
	Business Services demonstrates steady expansion of Sector Council employer clientele served with high satisfaction rating								
	Operating capital to sustain L.E.A.P.-Memphis for five years obtained								
	MOU between education partners signed								
	<b>DOL Grant</b>								
1. Utilize grant funds to increase postsecondary capacity to train workers for the manufacturing and TDL sectors 2. Education pathways in manufacturing and TDL	Faculty/Staff hired, equipment purchased and project launched to support DOL project								
	In partnership with L.E.A.P.-Memphis project, design education pathways aligned with employment career pathways								

aligned with employer career pathways 3. 400 students/participants enter training 4. Implement evaluation plan to provide accountability for grant outcomes 5. Equipment purchased, faculty hired	Conduct training & initialize technical assistance resources								
	Develop and incorporate work-based experience into curricula. Develop prior learning assessment (PLA) practices								
	Conduct planned evaluation activities								
<b>Objectives Phase 2</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Timeline</b>							
		<b>Year 1</b>				<b>Year 2</b>			
		<b>Q 1</b>	<b>Q 2</b>	<b>Q 3</b>	<b>Q 4</b>	<b>Q 1</b>	<b>Q 2</b>	<b>Q 3</b>	<b>Q 4</b>
1. Education pathways in manufacturing and TDL operational. 2. Workforce Trends reports utilized by education partners and employers 3. Operational capital to continue L.E.A.P. –Memphis project for five years secured 4. Steady expansion of sector employers reporting high satisfaction ratings 5. Semiannual workshops held with stakeholder 6. Broad visibility for LEAP project	Implement Education Alignment Plan (EAP)								
	A minimum of two high schools have operational concurrent credit programs								
	Bachelor of Science Degree in place (DOL funded)								
	Articulation agreements between TCAT-Memphis and Southwest Tennessee CC								
	Interactive Web site operational								
	Employer surveys conducted								
<b>DOL Grant</b>									
1. Additional 500 students/participants enter training/education programs 2. Online entrepreneurship modules available 3. Implementation of prior learning assessments for credit	Continue recruiting students/participants to targeted pathways								
	Non-credit to credit process in place								
	Utilize interactive Web site as center piece of student/participant interaction with employers								

**Project Governance and Accountability Plan:** GMACW is under the governance of its Executive Board which is comprised of the Mayors of Memphis and Shelby County, Greater Memphis Chamber President, Suburban Chambers Alliance President, Memphis Tomorrow President, business leaders who lead sector councils and other selected business leaders. The GMACW CEO/President reports directly to the Board. The L.E.A.P.-Memphis Project Director will report directly to the GMACW CEO, thus there is clear accountability chain to the business and public

leadership of the greater Memphis region. John Churchill, who currently works for the President of Southwest Tennessee Community College will join GMACW as the Project Director. Prior to his Southwest appointment Churchill had over 24 years experience supporting Fortune 500 companies talent requirements. The Project Director responsibilities are shown in Table 1, Appendix B-Budget and Budget Narrative.

**Role of Equipment Request:** No equipment is requested.

### SECTION 3: STRENGTH OF PARTNERSHIP

**Description of Role of Each Partner in Implementation of Project:** The L.E.A.P.-Memphis project is a partnership between the K-12 system, the postsecondary system, employers, the economic development community, the workforce investment system, public policy makers and leadership, and the philanthropic community. This partnership is governed, in part, by the Consortium for Employer-Education Alignment Memorandum of Understanding-see Appendix C, which demonstrates the viability of the collaborative. Also see employers, employer-facing organizations and education organization letters of support in Appendix C. Table 2 describes the role of each partner in the L.E.A.P.-Memphis project.

<b>Table 2: Strategic Partner Alignment</b>	
<b>Partner</b>	<b>Role</b>
GMACW	Leads the L.E.A.P.-Memphis project. Provides matching funds for project. Ensures long-term sustainability funding. <b>Funded by LEAP project to:</b> Develop and maintain a Workforce Trends (supply/demand) reporting system. Provide dedicated business services to employers. Develops Employer-Education Alignment Plan (EEAP) that supports creation of education pathways that are aligned with employment career pathways. Develops Web site and communications plan. Facilitates sharing of resources by education partners.
Southwest Tennessee Community College	<b>Funded by LEAP project to:</b> Provide fiscal support for LEAP project. In partnership with SCS and other postsecondary institutions develops and implements education pathways that are aligned with employer career pathways. <b>Funded by DOL grant to:</b> Develop and deliver non-credit training to employers and develop a non-credit to credit articulation process.
Shelby County School System	Aligns CTE programs with postsecondary programs. Support creation of concurrent high school programs in partnership with postsecondary institutions
Greater Memphis Chamber	Serves on GMACW Executive Board. <b>Funded by LEAP project to:</b> Provide employer recruitment support for sector partnerships. Convene Manufacturing Council and Logistics Council to provide input to education programs.
Bartlett Chamber	<b>Funded by LEAP project to:</b> Convene Medical Device Council to provide input to education programs.
Employers-FedEX, Smith Nephew, Dupont, Nike	Serve on GMACW Executive Board. Participate in Workforce Trends system development. Support development of EEAP and alignment of employer demand-side to education supply-side. FedEx provides matching funds.

**Capabilities of Each Partner in Ensuring Project Success:** The Greater Memphis Alliance for a Competitive Workforce (GMACW) has the support of the Memphis leadership including the Memphis Mayor, Shelby County Mayor, Greater Memphis Chamber, Memphis Tomorrow, Memphis Economic Development Growth Engine, PeopleFirst Partnership<sup>2</sup>, Shelby County Schools, postsecondary Institutions, employers, and employer organizations. Additional capabilities of key partners in the L.E.A.P.-Memphis project are contained in the Consortium for Employer-Education Alignment MOU located in Appendix C.

Southwest Tennessee Community College (Southwest) is a partner in the DOL grant and will be the fiscal agent for the project. As the largest community college in Tennessee, Southwest has the financial systems in place to provide fiscal support for this project. A small sum is budgeted to offset the costs of project fiscal management.

#### **SECTION 4: BUDGET PLAN**

**Alignment Between Funding Request and Grant Activities:** The Greater Memphis Alliance for a Competitive Workforce requests THEC funding which will be utilized to support the Project Director who will provide overall management and accountability for the project; two employer-facing Business Services managers who will act as intermediaries between the manufacturing and TDL sectors to broker training/education solutions; and a Workforce Innovations Manager who will support system alignment by providing curriculum that is aligned with employer-driven requirements and that supports maximum articulation of prior academic and/or work experience. Funding is also requested for the Greater Memphis Chamber and the Bartlett Chamber to convene industry sector councils that will support alignment of education pathways with employment career pathways. Funding is requested to support development and maintenance of a Workforce Trends (supply/demand) Reporting System which will house a detailed database of employer demand, including occupations and skills, and database of education/training programs. Funding is requested for Southwest Tennessee Community College for project fiscal support. See Appendix B for the detailed Budget and Budget Narrative.

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<sup>2</sup> PeopleFirst is an unprecedented collaboration of top business, government, academic and civic leaders dedicated to strengthening Memphis and Shelby County's cradle-to-career pipeline.

**Local Match:** See Appendix B-Budget and Budget Narrative for detail on local match. Also see letter of support in Appendix D from FedEx committing to one million dollars over several years, specifically providing the required \$50,000 in local match.

## SECTION 5: SUSTAINABILITY

**Detailed Plan for Sustaining the Program Beyond the 24-Month Funding Period:** The Greater Memphis Alliance for a Competitive Workforce (GMACW) is the workforce component of the soon-to-be released (November 24, 2014) Greater Memphis Regional Economic Development Plan (developed with support from the Brookings Institution). As such, GMACW will have the support of employers, the philanthropic community, the Memphis Economic Development Growth Engine (EDGE), the political structure, and other strategic partners. GMACW will utilize a braided funding model that will include both private and public sector funding to support and sustain this project. GMACW has commitments of \$2 million, both employer and philanthropic, of private sector funding for the next five years. GMACW has already demonstrated its capacity to successfully compete for federal funding as evidenced by the recently awarded \$9.8 million U.S. Department of Labor grant. GMACW intends to utilize the investment by the private sector to compete for future State and federal dollars. The braided funding model will ensure that the components of the L.E.A.P.-Memphis project will be sustained indefinitely. K-12 and postsecondary workforce development programs and education pathways will be sustained by, and supported by:

1. Leveraging private sector dollars to compete for State and federal funding;
2. The Shelby County School (SCS) System, with over 43,000 students in career and technical education programs, has significant funding streams allocated to these programs. The Superintendent of SCS has committed to alignment of sector CTE programs with the goals of the L.E.A.P.-Memphis project-specifically, in partnership with postsecondary institutions, to support articulated, concurrent, education pathways that are aligned with employer career pathways.
3. The postsecondary component of the pathways will be maintained by tuition and fees, state funding, and other revenues to the institution. As these pathways are implemented and gain support of employers it is expected that these programs will experience increased enrollments. Increased enrollments in workforce development programs will also be supported by the availability of an interactive Web site where students

and parents can navigate career opportunities and available programs. Most importantly, establishment of articulated, concurrent pathways with the K-12 system will provide a long-term pipeline of students into workforce development programs.

**Detailed Plan for Maintaining Communication and Sharing of Resources Among Partners Beyond 24-Month Funding Period and Availability of Long-Term Resources to Maintain and/or Repair Equipment:** The Greater Memphis Alliance for a Competitive Workforce provides the strategic structure that will coordinate communications and the sharing and utilization of resources. A Memorandum of Understanding has been completed between the strategic education partners, see Appendix C. This MOU provides the detailed plan for the sharing of resources including, faculty, equipment, laboratories, and curriculum and ensures a communication process for pathway alignment. The creation and maintenance of a comprehensive workforce trends database system that is easily accessible through the dedicated Web site will ensure that there is a clear understanding of the employer demand component and the available programmatic supply side. Through the engagement of Chamber-led employer sector councils a continuous feedback mechanism will ensure that employer program skill requirements are incorporated into the K-12 thru baccalaureate education pathways.