

Introduction

Catalyst Connection (CC), as the lead applicant, in collaboration with the Consortium members of the Advanced Manufacturing Table of the Pittsburgh Workforce Hub (Consortium), proposes a comprehensive technical assistance (TA) program to prepare manufacturing employers to be more inclusive in their hiring and to prepare women for careers in apprenticeship and nontraditional occupations (A/NTO). CC, an economic development organization advancing the performance of manufacturing companies in Southwestern (SW) Pennsylvania, will leverage its expertise and resources to drive this initiative. The Consortium includes Partner4Work (P4W), the German American Chamber of Commerce, Pittsburgh Chapter (GACC), New Century Careers (NCC), Pittsburgh Robotics Network (PRN), Gizmology, the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC), and the SW Pennsylvania New Economy Collaborative bringing extensive expertise and leveraged resources to this initiative. The proposed geographic service area includes Pittsburgh and the Southwest Pennsylvania Region. Through this initiative, we intend to increase women's participation in higher-wage, high-growth Advanced Manufacturing (AM) career paths and promote inclusion and equity in federally and privately funded projects.

Statement of Need: Despite women comprising 47% of the U.S. labor force in 2023¹, they are significantly underrepresented in manufacturing, with only 33% of those in entry-level positions, 26% at the manager level, 25% at the senior manager level, and 22% in C-suite positions identifying as women.² In SW Pennsylvania, women represent 51% of the population over age 16 but only 23% of the manufacturing workforce.³ Within the manufacturing workforce in

¹ History | U.S. Department of Labor (dol.gov)

² "Williams, M. T. (2020). Microaggressions: Clarification, Evidence, and Impact. Perspectives on Psychological Science, 15(1), 3-26. Women in the Workplace 2023," McKinsey & Company, 2023.

³ JobsEQ, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Data are for the 4 quarters ending 2022 Q3

SWPA, women are over-represented in lower-paying manufacturing roles, like those in food processing and textile, apparel, and finishing.

Several factors deter women from joining AM. Ineffective outreach and recruitment efforts mean that only a small percentage of women learn about manufacturing opportunities from high school counselors (2.1%), military service (0.7%), or American Job Centers (9.5%), according to the "Advancing Women in Manufacturing: Perspectives from Women on the Shop Floor" report.⁴

Among parents of young children considering leaving the industry, 40.1% cite a lack of advancement opportunities, followed by 31.7% citing childcare difficulties. Microaggressions cause disrespect, stress, and negative career impacts. Women face them more often than men, especially those with marginalized identities. Sexual harassment undermines women's authority, safety, and careers, affecting wages, job satisfaction, turnover, and absenteeism.⁵

Failing to address these issues results in high turnover rates, low employee engagement, and a lack of diverse leadership, limiting the industry's potential for innovation and growth. Public sector entities and labor unions play a critical role in addressing these challenges. By providing TA to these entities, we can develop strategies and policies that foster a more inclusive culture, ensuring women have the necessary tools and support to succeed in AM.

How Proposed TA Will Meet the Identified Need: Our TA program leverages the Consortium's collective expertise, resources, and partnerships to implement targeted strategies supporting women in entering and succeeding in AM. Our multi-faceted TA program will address the underrepresentation and retention challenges faced by women in AM within Pittsburgh and SW Pennsylvania.

⁴ Institute for Women's Policy Research. "Advancing Women in Manufacturing: Perspectives from Women on the Shop Floor." November 2023.

⁵ Rose Khattar and Sara Estep, "Playbook for the Advancement of Women in the Economy," Chapter 7, March 14, 2024.

The program components are: **1. Employer Education, Ongoing Orientations, and Resources:**

We will conduct comprehensive employer education and awareness initiatives highlighting the importance of women in AM. This includes data on diverse workforces' benefits, best practices, case studies, and examples of successes. Outreach tools will include web-based communications, webinars, workshops, e-books, testimonials, site visits, collaboration groups, and overall communication strategies. We will provide education and tools to address microaggressions and sexual harassment through training sessions focused on recognizing and mitigating these issues, creating inclusive work environments, and promoting respectful communication. Additionally, we will develop a Strategic Implementation Guide to center women's worker voices in organizational processes. **2. Development and Enhancement of Training Programs:** We will expand and enhance Pre-Apprenticeship Programs (PAPs), including the Industrial Manufacturing Technician (IMT) PAP, Advanced IMT PAP, and Machinist PAP. Additionally, we will coordinate and advance efforts to recruit women into the following Registered Apprenticeship (RA) Programs: Industrial Manufacturing Technician, CAD/CAM Technical Designer, EV Automotive Technician, Mechatronics Technician, Robotics Technician, and Registered Machinist. We will also expand efforts to recruit women into the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) Certified Production Technician (CPT) Program. We will also develop an Introduction to Manufacturing program for high school students to engage young women in manufacturing careers. **3. Employer of Choice Reputation Building⁶:** We will assist manufacturers in building an Employer of Choice (EOC) reputation by conducting EOC assessments and developing continuous improvement opportunities, focusing on increasing women's employment in AM. **4. Leadership and Interpersonal Skills Training:** We will

⁶ Employer Of Choice, © 2021 Catalyst Connection, Authors: David Rea, Nate Broadus, Erica Frischmann, NPDP, Todd Tommaney.

augment apprenticeship training with leadership and interpersonal skills tailored specifically for women through the TrailblazeHERs program, providing self-discovery tools, addressing workplace biases, and harnessing confidence. **5. Support Groups and Networks:** We will expand and enhance support groups and facilitate networks for women in AM to foster community and peer support. By leveraging relationships with women's networks, such as Women in 3-D Printing Pittsburgh's Chapter and the Women in Manufacturing Association Western Pennsylvania Chapter, we will connect women to others in the sector through meetups, panels, guest speaker sessions, and networking events. Additionally, we will develop a comprehensive toolkit that includes specific and actionable messaging strategies, providing detailed information about available PAPs, RA programs, certificate courses, and career opportunities in AM, along with guidance on how to access these resources. **6. Supportive Service Networks:** Our program will leverage existing supportive service networks of Consortium members, focusing on critical areas of childcare and transportation. We will conduct a systematic review to identify strengths and gaps in current service delivery relationships and develop strategies to enhance these supports and connect women in AM PAPs and RAs to these services. Specifically, we will explore building on the Allegheny County Child Care Matters pilot program by developing a plan to increase employer participation in and support of an affordable, reliable, and high-quality childcare subsidy for women in AM. **7. Targeted Outreach:** We will conduct targeted outreach to engage women from historically underrepresented communities, including women of color, LGBTQ+ women, veterans and spouses of veterans, and women with disabilities. This outreach will be facilitated through strategic partnerships and community engagement initiatives.

Demographic Data: Our program will target women throughout SW Pennsylvania, with a focus on historically underrepresented groups, including Women of Color, Women with Disabilities, Women at or Below the Federal Poverty Line, Justice-Involved Women, and Immigrant Women. We will offer TA to employers within the Pittsburgh and SW Pennsylvania region to support these diverse groups.

Diversity and Inclusion Our initiative aims to significantly expand outreach and recruitment to historically underrepresented communities within the Pittsburgh and SW Pennsylvania region, including women of color, women with disabilities, justice-involved women, LGBTQ+, and immigrant women. Our systematic outreach and recruitment efforts will be facilitated by our Consortium members.

Outreach and Recruitment Plan: As the workforce development board for Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh, P4W will leverage the breadth of the workforce development system for outreach to adults, dislocated workers, veterans and spouses of veterans, and specifically P4W's Priority Populations department, to engage women from underrepresented communities, justice-involved women, women with disabilities, and immigrant women through targeted outreach and support. P4W will also leverage the experiences of women AM apprentices to serve as ambassadors, inspiring and guiding new participants. **Increasing Participation from**

Underrepresented Communities: Consortium Member Gizmology will play a crucial role in advancing racial equity and inclusion within the AM industry. Gizmology focuses on engaging high school graduates and underemployed adults in Pittsburgh's Black and marginalized communities. Through their recruitment efforts, they will engage Black women and members of the LGBTQ+ community, ensuring they have access to the opportunities and resources provided by our TA, including all project PAPs, RA programs, and nontraditional occupations. By

leveraging Gizmology's expertise and community connections, we aim to create a more diverse and inclusive workforce in the AM sector. **Strategy to Target Women at or Below the Federal Poverty Line:** We will leverage P4W’s Employment, Advancement, and Retention Network (EARN) program to engage women at or below the federal poverty line. The EARN program provides comprehensive case management, education, skills training, job placement, and supportive services, including childcare. EARN provides services from local Workforce Development Area staff, the PA Department of Labor & Industry Bureau of Workforce Development Partnership, educational institutions, & County Assistance Office (CAO) staff. A Local Management Committee manages the program at the local level, ensuring tailored support. By leveraging the EARN program's resources low-income women will learn how to access training opportunities to pursue careers in AM. This comprehensive approach ensures we address the unique needs of each target group, fostering an inclusive environment where women from

diverse backgrounds can thrive in AM careers.

Expected Outcomes -

Our proposal’s expected outputs and outcomes are listed in *table 1*:

Sustainability of

Products and Services:

Integrating WANTO

<i>Table 1</i>		
Outcome/Output	Target	Description
Number of women enrolled in pre-apprenticeship programs	(30)	With a completion rate of (50%) by the end of the grant period.
Number of women enrolled in registered apprenticeship programs	(40)	With a completion rate of (50%).
Number of women enrolled in other nontraditional skills training programs	(50)	With a completion rate of (80%).
Number of women from underrepresented communities served	(40)	Including women of color, women with disabilities, women at or below the federal poverty line, justice-involved women, immigrant women, and transgender women.
Number of outreach and awareness campaigns conducted	(24)	Leading to an increase in an awareness and engagement among women from underrepresented communities about opportunities in advanced manufacturing.
Number of women securing employment consistent with Good Jobs Principles	(32)	Representing (80%) of total participants.
Number of women securing jobs with higher wages	(40)	Representing (100%) of total participants.
Number of comprehensive employer education and awareness initiatives conducted	(10)	Leading to a increase in awareness of the role women can play in advanced manufacturing and understanding/mitigating microaggressions and sexual harassment.
Development of Strategic Implementation Guide	1	Creating a guide to center women's worker voices in organizational processes.
Development of Comprehensive Toolkit	1	Including specific and actionable messaging strategies, providing detailed information about available pre-apprenticeship programs, apprenticeship programs, other certificate courses, and career opportunities in advanced manufacturing, along with guidance on how to access these resources, specifically designed for women.

with other consortium member initiatives provides a strong foundation for sustainability, ensuring continued support and resources for women in AM. Our collaborative approach,

involving multiple entities, reinforces the sustainability and scalability of the initiative, fostering long-term impact and systemic change. By deploying a multi-faceted model, we will create sustainability that supports women in the AM industry and drives systemic change across the sector. Leveraging the diverse resources and expertise from both public entities and private sector companies ensures ongoing success and expansion. Our guides and toolkits will be accessible to all Consortium members and partners, strengthening relationships with employer leaders to encourage continuous improvement and adaptation. Successful practices will be integrated into partner organizations' standard operating procedures, training programs, and policy frameworks. **Tracking Outcomes and Outputs:** CC, as the lead applicant of the Consortium, will oversee data collection and reporting requirements for the project. This includes developing templates and tools for data collection, establishing reporting schedules, and monitoring progress toward program goals and outcomes. Consortium members will be responsible for day-to-day data collection, gathering accurate and timely data from women participating in PAPs, RAs, and other nontraditional skills training programs, as well as those securing employment. CC will track employer education and awareness initiatives and lead the development and utilization of survey instruments to measure the increase in awareness of the important role women can play in the AM workforce, as well as an increase in understanding and mitigation of microaggressions and sexual harassment.

Project Design: To achieve the identified outputs and outcomes, our project will implement the components and methods listed in *Table 2* (page 8), ensuring results are effectively tracked and measured:

Data Collection and Reporting: As noted above, CC will oversee data collection and reporting. Whit Little, VP of Administration and Consulting and CFO, with an MBA from the University

of Edinburgh, directs these functions at CC. His leadership ensures accurate, reliable, and timely data reporting, training partner staff, and maintaining accountability throughout the project, contributing to our initiative's overall success and sustainability.

Plan of Action: Upon award,

CC will develop a detailed project management plan. This plan will comprehensively cover scope, schedule, cost, quality, resource, and risk management strategies and will include a communications plan to ensure effective stakeholder engagement and information dissemination. Regular updates, stakeholder meetings, and the use of shared project management

Table 2		
Program Component	Methods	Tracking
Employer Education, Ongoing Orientations, and Resources	Conduct comprehensive employer education initiatives using web-based communications, webinars, workshops, e-books, testimonials, site visits, and collaboration groups. Provide training on recognizing and mitigating microaggressions and sexual harassment, creating inclusive work environments, and promoting respectful communication.	Track attendance and participation in education sessions. Measure increases in awareness through pre- and post-training surveys. Collect feedback on the practical impact of the training.
Development and Enhancement of Training Programs	Expand and enhance Pre-Apprenticeship Programs, Registered Apprenticeship Programs, and Certificate Programs. Customize the TrailblazeHERs leadership and interpersonal skills training program for women in AM	Monitor enrollment and completion rates in each training program. Gather participant feedback. Track job placement and wage rates post-completion.
Employer of Choice Reputation Building	Conduct Employer of Choice (EOC) assessments. Develop continuous improvement opportunities to enhance employer practices and create inclusive work environments.	Use assessment tools to evaluate employer practices. Track changes implemented. Measure improvements in employee satisfaction and retention.
Support Groups and Networks	Expand and enhance support groups and facilitate networks for women in Advanced Manufacturing, leveraging relationships with women's networks such as Women in 3-D Printing Pittsburgh's chapter and the Women in Manufacturing Association Western Pennsylvania chapter.	Track participation in support groups and networking events. Measure satisfaction and perceived benefits through surveys. Monitor career progression of participants.
Supportive Service Networks	Leverage existing supportive service networks of consortium members. Conduct a systematic review to identify strengths and gaps. Develop strategies to enhance these supports. Explore opportunities to build on the Allegheny County Child Care Matters program.	Monitor utilization of supportive services. Gather feedback on service effectiveness. Assess the impact of childcare subsidies on training participation and completion.

tools will facilitate transparency and collaboration. This will be completed in the first month.

Scope and Detail of Proposed Work: The proposed project will be executed over a 24-month period and will encompass the project's key components, with specific timelines and milestones to ensure timely completion and effective outcomes (*table 3* pg. 9).

FY24 WANTO Technical Assistance Grant Program–Narrative
Catalyst Connection

Table 3			
Component	Scope	Timeline	Functions and Activities
Employer Education, Ongoing Orientations, and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct comprehensive employer education and awareness initiatives. Provide ongoing orientations and resources for employers, unions, and workers. Develop a companion practical guide for centering women's worker voices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Months 1-3: Develop training materials and outreach tools. Schedule initial training sessions and workshops. Months 4-24: Implement training sessions, webinars, and workshops. Distribute e-books, testimonials, and other resources. Conduct regular orientations and update materials as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Management: Oversee the development and implementation of training materials and sessions. Stakeholder Engagement: Coordinate with employers, unions, and workers.
Development and Enhancement of Training Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand/enhance PA, RA and Certificate Programs including the TrailblazeHERs leadership & interpersonal skills training program. Collect baseline data on current enrollment and participation. Develop shared messaging/recruitment tools. Establish a shared framework & communication mechanisms for consortium-wide data collection and tracking of outputs and outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Months 1-3: Collect baseline data on current enrollment and participation. Develop shared messaging and recruitment tools. Establish a shared framework and communication mechanisms for consortium-wide data collection and tracking of outputs and outcomes. Months 4-24: Launch training programs and monitor progress. Conduct regular assessments and adjust as needed. Track participant enrollment and completion rates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Collection/Reporting: Track participant enrollment and completion rates. Continuous Improvement: Conduct regular assessments/adjust programs as needed. Messaging/Recruitment: Develop & implement shared tools for messaging and recruitment. Data Management: Implement a shared framework & communication mechanisms for data collection and tracking.
Employer of Choice Reputation Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist manufacturers in building an Employer of Choice (EOC) reputation by conducting EOC assessments. Develop and implement continuous improvement opportunities. Gain insights to understand, manage, and leverage current and future risks and opportunities, with a focus on strategies to increase the employment of women in AM. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Months 1-3: Enhance employer outreach to promote the existing EOC assessment tools and criteria. Months 4-12: Conduct initial assessments with participating employers. Months 13-24: Implement continuous improvement initiatives and track progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder Engagement: Coordinate with employers for assessments & improvements. Continuous Improvement: Implement & monitor continuous improvement initiatives. Strategy Development: Assist with developing strategies & coaching on increasing the employment of women in AM.
Support Groups and Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand and enhance support groups and facilitate networks for women in Advanced Manufacturing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Months 1-3: Strengthen partnerships with Women in 3-D Printing Pittsburgh's chapter & the Women in Manufacturing Association Western PA chapter. Identify existing networking events & develop strategies to connect women to these networks & events. Months 4-12: Identify & connect women to meetups, panels, guest speaker sessions, and other networking events. Plan additional events as needed. Months 13-24: Monitor participation & gather feedback for continuous improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Management: Oversee the strengthening of partnerships, identification of existing networking events, and planning of additional events. Stakeholder Engagement: Engage with women's networks and participants and develop strategies for connecting women to these events.
Supportive Service Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage existing supportive service networks and conduct a systematic review to enhance supports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Months 1-6: Conduct a systematic review of current service delivery relationships. Identify strengths and gaps. Months 7-12: Develop strategies to enhance supportive services, focusing on childcare and transportation. Months 13-24: Implement enhanced supportive services and monitor utilization and impact. Explore opportunities for piloting childcare subsidies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Collection and Reporting: Review current service delivery relationships. Continuous Improvement: Develop and implement strategies to enhance supportive services.
Reporting and Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit quarterly reports to DOL in accordance with their requirements. Complete a final report detailing lessons learned to support the sustainability, growth, and replication of the project statewide and nationwide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing: Submit quarterly reports as required. End of Project: Complete final report with lessons learned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Management: Collect and report data in accordance with DOL requirements. Documentation: Compile lessons learned and best practices for future sustainability and replication.

The plan will account for all functions and activities identified in the application. **Factors**

Influencing Project Implementation: Our project implementation may be influenced by

various factors that could either accelerate or decelerate the work. **Accelerating Factors:** Strong

Consortium partnerships, experienced leadership from CC, the use of existing PAPs, RA and

Cert. Programs, and support from industry leaders. **Decelerating Factors:** Limited funding for

supportive services, particularly for high-cost needs such as childcare, and unexpected issues like

economic changes or public health concerns. **Proposed Approach:** Grounded in research to

maximize impact while mitigating risks, our program components integrate TA and support for

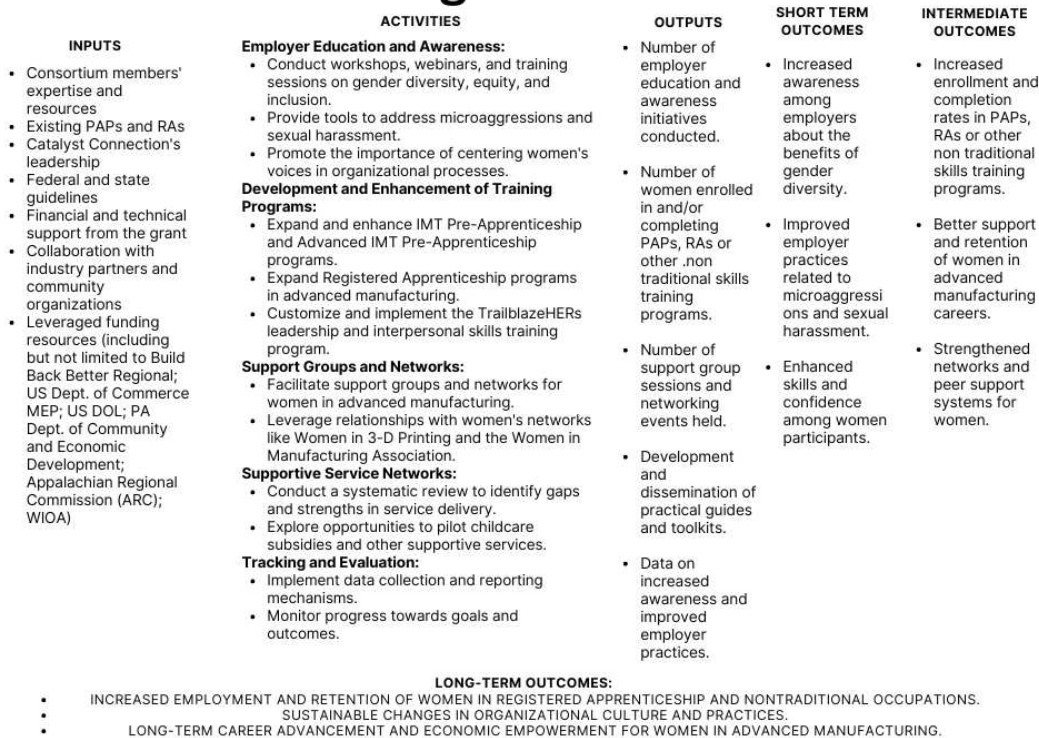
both employers and women. Leveraging the Consortium's strengths maximizes resource

utilization and reach, with a flexible and adaptable approach allowing continuous feedback and

prompt adjustments. **Potential Barriers and Mitigation Strategies - Economic Conditions:**

Fluctuating economic conditions can affect employer participation and resource availability. We will leverage strong public-private partnerships to ensure a stable funding base and maintain program continuity through flexible design. **Policy Changes:** Potential changes in federal or state policies could impact the regulatory environment and funding priorities. Ongoing collaboration with federal and state agencies and regular communication with policy stakeholders will help us stay informed and responsive to policy shifts, ensuring alignment with current laws and regulations. **Collaboration with Federal and State Agencies:** Our Consortium will comply with the U.S. DOL’s Grantee Handbook and work closely with our federal project officer (FPO). We will attend all required trainings and maintain regular communication with the FPO to ensure our activities align with federal and state laws, policies, and regulations. **Key Collaboration Partners:** Please see the attached Consortium agreement and letters of commitment from key collaboration partners.

Logic Model



Performance Evaluation - Measures, Methods, Techniques, and Tools: We will employ a

mixed-methods approach using both quantitative and qualitative measures to evaluate the project, including pre- and post-surveys, focus groups, and individual interviews. Quantitative measures will track enrollment, completion rates, and employment outcomes, while qualitative methods will capture participant experiences and feedback. These methods will assess the extent to which project outcomes have been met, such as increases in women's participation and retention in AM and attribute these outcomes to the project by comparing baseline data with post-intervention results. **Participant Involvement in Evaluation:** Participants will be invited to engage in surveys and focus groups throughout the program. Their feedback will provide valuable insights into the program's effectiveness and areas for improvement. **Use of Data and Documentation of Lessons Learned:** Data collected will inform and refine program delivery. Regular data reviews will allow for timely adjustments to improve outcomes. "Lessons learned," both positive and negative, will be documented and shared with Consortium members to enhance the overall program. This iterative process will ensure continuous improvement and sustainability of successful practices. **Tracking Progress of Outcomes and Outputs:** CC will use a centralized data management system to collect and analyze key metrics, such as enrollment, completion rates, and employment outcomes. Regular monitoring and reporting will ensure accountability and transparency, allowing us to measure progress effectively and make data-driven decisions to achieve our goals.

Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity - Mission, Structure, and Staffing

Mission: CC is an economic development organization whose mission is to advance the performance of manufacturing companies in SW Pennsylvania by accelerating their growth and productivity improvements. **Background and Organizational Structure:** Founded over 35

years ago as a Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center (IRC) and a National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) affiliate, CC has been at the forefront of helping small and medium-sized manufacturers (SMMs) in the 12-county SW PA region retool and diversify. CC's work has resulted in more than \$3.51 billion in increased sales, more than \$3.29 billion in retained sales, and nearly \$269 million in cost savings for more than 2,700 companies employing more than 86,000 people. In 2023, CC's Capital Assistance Programs provided more than \$1 million to support SMMs' investments in advanced technology, clean energy supply chains, and worker training. CC is dedicated to assisting SMMs by offering consulting and training services that accelerate revenue growth and enhance productivity. By actively collaborating with the manufacturing community, CC fosters the AM industry's growth, vibrancy, and sustainability. CC assists regional manufacturers in identifying, attracting, and retaining manufacturing talent. These efforts engage K-12 education, regional training programs, colleges/universities, nonprofits, and community support organizations.

Leadership and Board: President and CEO, Ms. Petra Mitchell, reports to a twenty-six person Board chaired by Tricia Breeger, President of Mitsubishi Electric Power Products, Inc. **Staffing**

and Expertise: CC has a dedicated staff of 29 employees and numerous Third Party Consultants.

As the lead agency, CC will provide executive leadership to facilitate the planning, implementation, and completion of the project, as well as performing the administrative, reporting, and fiscal functions required by the DOL and all applicable laws and regulations. CC's leadership approach includes engagement and coordination of all project stakeholders, alignment of funded and leveraged program activities with grantor priorities, and planning to ensure scalability and sustainability after the project's completion. CC and Consortium partners will allocate personnel resources to the project as outlined in the Project Budget. This includes the

dedicated efforts of Scott Dietz, Director of Workforce Development, who holds a B.S.B.A. degree from Robert Morris University and has 25 years of service, serving as the Program Manager for this effort. The program will be overseen by President and CEO Petra Mitchell. With extensive experience in manufacturing operations, technology acceleration, and business development since 1988, she has led CC to achieve significant milestones. Before joining CC, she worked for GE Aircraft Engines (now GE Aviation). She holds a B.S. in mechanical engineering from the University of Dayton and an M.S. from the University of Cincinnati. Petra has been recognized as a Top Women in Business Leader, Top Energy Leader, and Most Admired CEO in Pittsburgh by the Pittsburgh Business Times. She serves on several boards, including the Advanced Robotics in Manufacturing Institute, American Small Manufacturers Coalition, and PA IRC Network. **Grant Staff Qualifications:** CC's and the Consortium's team comprises professionals with expertise in manufacturing consulting, TA, and workforce and economic development. Consortium members are leveraging their resources, with key members of their teams contributing to the project's success. The Consortium leader's extensive experience and the roles of members are detailed in the Consortium agreement. **Fiscal and Administrative Controls - Strong Fiscal and Administrative Controls:** CC demonstrates robust financial capacity and organizational responsibility in managing federal funds. With an annual budget of approximately \$10 million, CC has a proven track record as a responsible fiscal agent for both public and private funding sources. **Proven Experience with Federal and State Awards:** CC has extensive experience in managing multi-million dollar federal and state awards, along with local subcontracts, ensuring effective administration of subawards. Notably, CC has successfully overseen the allocation and management of grants, with significant new awards totaling \$16.5 million since September 2022. **Leveraging Additional Federal Funding:** To

further enhance the capability of the project activities, we will leverage additional federal funding sources such as BBB, Green Infrastructure, ARC ARISE funding NIST MEP, ensuring a comprehensive and well-supported program. **Current Operating Expenses and Revenues:**

CC's current operating expenses and revenues reflect our strong fiscal health and capacity to manage large-scale projects. For 2023, CC's total operating expenses were approximately \$9.8M, with revenues totaling \$9.8M. Our primary revenue sources include federal and state grants, private donations, and service fees, ensuring a diversified and stable funding base.

Detailed Financial Management: Our detailed financial statements and budget reports, audited annually by an independent firm, consistently result in unqualified opinions, demonstrating our adherence to generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). This rigorous financial oversight ensures transparency and accountability in all financial operations. **Experience and Capabilities**

- Experience Preparing Women for Employment in Apprenticesable and Nontraditional

Occupations: CC has substantial experience in preparing women for employment in AM occupations. Women constitute 25% of CC's IMT apprentices. CC has now developed and facilitated TrailblazeHERs, a leadership and interpersonal skills training program tailored specifically for women. This comprehensive series helps women acquire indispensable skills, adopt a growth-oriented mindset, understand their workplace personality, identify natural leadership traits, and align their long-term career goals. Participants explore effective leadership principles, such as systems thinking, active listening, and conflict resolution, to nurture robust leadership abilities and foster collaborative team environments. They learn to reframe vulnerability as a strength, address workplace biases with professionalism, and navigate challenges confidently. CC also runs two PAPs. These programs offer seven industry-recognized credits upon completion. In 2023, 80 total students participated in these programs, with sixteen

being young women. **Equity Intermediary** - Gizmology is the Consortium’s equity intermediary (see the attached letter/Consortium agreement). **Past Performance - Category 1:** To demonstrate our capability and experience in managing federally funded projects, *table 4* outlines three grants and cooperative agreements that Catalyst Connection has successfully administered within the last five years. Each project showcases our expertise in training, workforce development, and industry collaboration, aligning with the objectives of the WANTO program.

<i>Table 4 Past Performance</i>	
Project Title and Grant Number: Regional Earn and Learn (REAL) Jobs in Energy & Adv. Manufacturing PW-20065-1M Contact: [REDACTED]	
Funding Amount: \$998,240.00	
Project Period of Performance: 10/01/20 - 12/22/23	
Brief Description of Grant and Population Served: REAL aimed to recruit & place dislocated workers, unemployed & underemployed individuals, and emerging learners into jobs in advanced manufacturing, robotics, & technology sectors.	
Significant Performance Goals and Outcomes	
Performance Goals	Results
272 Jobs Created	315
138 Jobs Retained	934
Project Title and Grant Number: DOC NIST Award #70NANB21H153 Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership Contact: [REDACTED]	
Funding Amount: \$1,175,340.00	
Project Period of Performance: 10/01/22 - 9/30/23	
Brief Description of Project and Population Served: The NIST MEP Award supported small to medium-sized manufacturers to develop new products, expand markets, adopt new technology, and enhance supply chain value.	
Significant Performance Goals and Outcomes	
Performance Goals	Results
\$35 M Retained Sales	\$79.8 M
500 Jobs created and retained	696
Project Title and Grant Number: DMCS OEA GRANT MSC1290-20-01 Contact: [REDACTED]	
Funding Amount: \$5,000,000	
Project Period of Performance: 09/01/2020-08/31/2023	
Number of Participants Enrolled: N/A	
Brief Description of Project and Population Served: The project accelerated research and innovation in defense manufacturing, improved small manufacturers and local defense supply chain companies, addressed workforce development and training needs, and provided access to capital for growth in the defense sector.	
Significant Performance Goals and Outcomes	
Performance Goals	Results
150 Suppliers Receive Technical Assistance	244
750 Workers Trained	840

Budget and Budget Narrative: Please see attachments.

Bonus Points: Please see attached documents.