PLEASE USE ORGANIZATIONAL LETTERHEAD

[Date]

Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development Alejandra Castillo

U.S. Economic Development Administration

1401 Constitution Avenue, NW

Suite 71014

Washington, DC 20230

To Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development Castillo:

On behalf of the {Organization name and brief description}, I am writing in full support of the State of Wisconsin’s application for the U.S. Economic Development Administration’s 2021 Good Jobs Challenge grant. Our company plans to support every component to help leverage this grant for not only our unique workforce needs but also to create a more resilient and diversified economic recovery.

Our company currently has approximately X roles open that could be filled by someone recently skilled in the digital and workplace skills the Skills Accelerator could skill on in the next five years. While we don’t know exactly what the jobs we will need five years from now we know that the foundational digital roles in securing and supporting our customers and clients, advancing and protecting our IT infrastructure, and analyzing our work will only grow.

We commit to hiring x employees into digital roles over the course of the grant - late 2022 to early 2027 and hope to hire as many Skills Accelerator graduates as possible.

Two critical agencies that drive the economic prosperity of our state - Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation and Department of Workforce Development - are coming together in a collaborative effort to support innovation in human capital. Wisconsin has the lowest unemployment rate in the state’s 174-year history which comes amid a worker shortage stemming from the pandemic that continues to impact businesses across the state. Employers throughout our region are struggling to find candidates to fill open positions while navigating the “great reshuffle” along with the shifting expectations of the workforce.

The state gained 5,300 private-sector jobs in December 2021. In addition, the number of people counted as unemployed in Wisconsin - 86,200 - also hit a record low. When speaking with a crowd in Milwaukee, WI, Charles Evans, president and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, commented on jobs and unemployment when asked his predictions for the upcoming year. He reflected that the low unemployment rate might be reflective of people not coming enough into the labor force and that there are opportunities for people who want jobs.

Furthermore, digital skills are needed in virtually every role in every organization, yet there are limited programs working towards reducing the digital workplace chasm that was growing before the pandemic and has exponentially increased in the last two years. According to the “State’s Digital Equity Scorecards”, a publication issued by the National Digital Inclusion Association, in partnership with National Skills Coalition and Microsoft, nearly 33% of our unemployed individuals in Wisconsin lacked the foundational digital skills to compete for over 138,000 open positions (July, 2021). Closing this skills gap is an important aspect of the continued economic growth in our region and our state and this grant serves as an integral role in facilitating an equitable training platform to help more of our residents secure good jobs today and be digitally prepared for careers of tomorrow.

The three component parts of this proposal addresses several workforce issues in our region, including not having enough workers for roles, equity gaps in accessing the basic digital tools needed for employment and living a full life, and tools for how to navigate changes in the workplace exacerbated by the pandemic.

We are excited to watch our region’s employers and residents innovate and engage in how our workplaces and communities will grow in the future. We are ready to participate in discussions about supporting our industry and workers to push Wisconsin to the forefront of disrupting and innovating in how our talent and our economy grow with these changes.

We look forward to working with the state to support the activities laid forth in this proposal and watch our region’s employers and residents innovate and engage in how our workplaces and communities will grow in the future.

On behalf of the {Organization}, I ask for your full support of the State of Wisconsin’s application.

Sincerely,

[Name

Title]

[Organization]