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**1. State of Problem:** Kansas deems it important to establish formal technical skills training in the women's correctional facility for four reasons. **First, employment mitigates multiple risk areas by giving offenders a prosocial status, including a prosocial environment, and prosocial behaviors and influences.** *Integrated Reentry and Employment, Strategies: Reducing Recidivism and Promoting Job Readiness*, published by the Council of State Governments Justice Center in September 2013, cites numerous studies indicating the positive link between post-release employment and reduced recidivism of offenders. "Employment can make a strong contribution to recidivism-reduction efforts because it refocuses individuals' time and efforts on prosocial activities, making them less likely to engage in riskier behaviors and to associate with people who do. Having a job also enables individuals to contribute income to their families, which can generate more personal support, stronger positive relationships, enhanced self-esteem, and improved mental health. For these reasons, employment is often seen as a gateway to becoming and remaining a law-abiding and contributing member of a community. Employment also has important societal benefits, including reduced strain on social service resources, contributions to the tax base, and safer, more stable communities." The Rand Corporation Report sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, *How Effective is Correctional Education and Where Do We Go from Here?* finds inmates who participated in correctional education programs had a 36% to 43% lower odds of recidivating than inmates who did not. The research also reports the odds of obtaining post-release employment among inmates who participated in correctional education programs are 13% higher than the odds of obtaining post-release employment among inmates who did not. Among offenders revoked from parole in Kansas in 2013, 77.4% were unemployed at the time of revocation and 97.6% were assessed as moderate to high risk while incarcerated. The risk/need assessments using the Level of Services

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Inventory – Revised (LSI-R), reflects that nearly two-thirds of all Kansas offenders score as high or moderate risk in education and employment, further indicating the need for formal skills training for inmates currently incarcerated in the state.

**Secondly, there are currently no formal postsecondary vocational skills training opportunities for inmates housed at Topeka Correctional Facility (TCF)** due to budget and infrastructure constraints. Prison populations continue to grow, creating an increased need to spend limited state funds on expanding prison capacity. Further, and specifically at TCF, security restraints dictate Medium and Maximum Security inmates cannot have access to classroom space in Minimum Security areas of the complex, resulting in limited ability to provide training to all interested and qualified inmates. Because no training is offered at TCF, there are no **post-training job placement outcomes** to date.

Topeka Correctional Facility, under the **jurisdiction of the Kansas Department of Corrections** (Corrections), located in the capital of Kansas, houses all of the female inmates in the State. It currently costs \$27,818.00 per year to house one inmate at TCF. While Corrections uses a contractor to operate GED courses and academic remediation services within the facility, TCF does not currently partner with any postsecondary institutions to provide formal vocational training opportunities which lead to postsecondary credentials or certifications. This lack of training decreases the likelihood of post-release employment while increasing the likelihood of recidivism.

**Third, as participants of the proposed program exit the prison, technology training in the advanced systems technology (AST) fields along the engineering technology career pathway, and other grant-supported services, will give them skills and credentials needed to find jobs in the expanding manufacturing and systems technology markets in the State**

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**of Kansas.** The Kansas Department of Commerce (Commerce), the state's Workforce Development administering agency, seeks to ensure technology career-based training is available to incarcerated females to facilitate each participant's re-entry into the local community with marketable, certified skills.

**Fourth**, such training will not only reduce recidivism and increase offender economic independence, it will also **help employers experiencing high turnover due to their aging workforce by providing a new skilled, certified workers.** According to the Kansas Department of Labor Job Vacancy Survey for Northeast Kansas, there were 345 jobs left unfilled in the manufacturing industry as of December 31, 2013. Moreover, electrical and electronic assemblers are projected as the top high demand occupation for northeast Kansas through 2020 (Kansas Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Services, *Regional Focus Report*).

Job readiness efforts in Kansas for female offenders need to be augmented with more specialized job development and service coordination to meet industry needs and reduce the likelihood of offender recidivism. The key to success for job placement is preparing offenders for **market-relevant jobs in high-demand occupations**, including those along the engineering skills pathway, such as Certified Production Training (CPT) and AST. Commerce, the five local workforce development boards (LWIBs) and postsecondary partners have developed and established vocational training programs for market-relevant, high-demand occupations throughout Kansas. Proposed CPT career-based technology training will play a key role in the expansion of **similar, successful programs** currently offered in prison facilities housing male inmates in Kansas. Training is being delivered on-site by postsecondary partners in three adult prisons, one juvenile correctional facility and two community corrections sites in Heating,

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Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC); Plumbing; Welding; and Advanced Manufacturing Skills, through industry-recognized certification programs.

As proposed, Washburn Institute of Technology (WIT) will provide technology career-based training for at least 130 women in CPT to meet the skilled labor needs of companies located in northeast Kansas. Currently, 51.1% of all offenders released from prison enter counties in northeast Kansas which includes Topeka and Kansas City. With the Production Technology credential, women are most likely to be interviewed and considered for employment at Mars Chocolate North America and Excide Technologies. Mars has recently built its first plant in the US in Topeka and is still trying to complete its staffing requirements. Excide is an established company in northeast Kansas finding it difficult to find qualified workers. These entry-level positions typically pay \$13.00 to \$15.00 per hour.

Requested funds will be used to train incarcerated individuals in TCF which currently houses 715 inmates, coming from all parts of Kansas. Most offenders are convicted in the Wichita, Topeka and Kansas City areas, the state's most populous areas. Because there is only one correctional facility for women in Kansas, the TCF population is comprised of offenders convicted at all felony levels, in need of all levels of medical and mental health treatment, and in need of all levels of educational, vocational and life skills programming. The inmates of this facility were chosen for participation in the proposed project because incarcerated women do not receive any formal postsecondary training resulting in college credit and certification while at TCF. Additionally, the partnership between the Warden, the local postsecondary institution and Commerce created the opportunity to not only meet the job-readiness needs of the offenders, but also meet the needs of employers in northeast Kansas.

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Based on most recent trends and current sentences, approximately **210** of those 715 inmates will be released in the 12-18 months following the start of the project and will be the focus of the training, providing a pool of inmates from which to recruit successful program participants. Of those 210, **162** are likely to score 24 or above on the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R), indicating moderate to high risk on this validated risk/need assessment tool.

The **baseline recidivism rate** for women leaving TCF is 15.79%. As detailed in the Department of Corrections *2013 Annual Report*, “the rate of offender **recidivism has been operationally defined** by Corrections as the rate of return to Kansas prisons by offenders released to post-incarceration supervision. In deriving the data in this measure each offender is tracked individually for the follow-up (36 months) period.”

To provide the proposed training at TCF, instructional space will be established both in the Medium/Maximum Security environment and in the Minimum Security program building. Current TCF security and administrative staffing patterns are sufficient and no additional staff are needed to successfully house the training program. WIT will provide instructional staff hours to deliver training in a traditional classroom setting in the Minimum Security unit. WIT will provide and staff their *AST Mobile Training Unit* in the Medium/Maximum Security compound to create the needed classroom space within the separated unit. WIT will also create a job readiness coach to coordinate and mitigate soft skills deficiencies and other non-technical employability issues. Commerce will fund one FTE to manage the grant, provide release planning activities for trainees, maintain participant tracking systems and required federal reporting. This position will also provide technical assistance, guidance and grant agreement oversight to assure desired performance outcomes.

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**2. Program Design and Implementation:** Based on current and projected hiring needs in northeast Kansas, Commerce chose the WIT short-term CPT portion, five to nine weeks depending on individual need, of the Advanced System Technology (AST) program as the basis for this proposal. WIT developed the CPT program and the AST Associates Degree with the input and support of industry, to ensure the graduates from the training will have obtained the skills most needed by employers. The Associate's Degree program consists of stackable credentials along the two-year program, including the Production Technology Certificate. Because of the short length of this grant period of performance, Kansas has chosen only this certificate program for the proposed project. Employers value this certification, as indicated in their letters of commitment, and will offer qualified participants an interview upon completion of training and release from the institution.

Commerce has identified the following goals and objectives for this program's development, implementation and outcomes:

The first **goal of the proposed project is to identify, assess, train and credential female inmates** at the Topeka Correctional Facility in engineering technology-related skills to increase their post-release employability. Training strategies will include classroom, web-based and hands-on training. Any remedial academic training for program participants needing enhanced math and/or reading skills will be provided by existing TCF educational contractors. Inmate tutors will also be available to assist participants with academic challenges. Training will be provided forty hours per week to simulate typical employment schedules.

Prospective **training participants will be initially identified by LSI-R score.** Those scoring at least 24 will be interviewed by Job Bank Counseling Staff at TCF to determine interest in and basic capability for participating in training. Additionally, these identified medium and

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high-risk offenders will complete the O\*NET computer-based assessment to further assess the appropriateness of CPT program participation. Throughout the performance period of the grant, it is estimated 180 inmates will complete the ACT WorkKeys assessment, 128 of whom likely will earn a **KANSASWORKS WORKReady!** certificate, recognized by Kansas employers as an entry-level credential. Individuals who score at the Bronze level or higher on initial assessments will be eligible for CPT immediately. Unit Counseling staff will refer selected participants to training staff for placement in the CPT program. All CPT participants will receive **soft skills instruction and practice** throughout the training period, delivered in partnership by WIT, Commerce and Corrections staff, coordinated by a Job Readiness Coach.

The second **goal of the proposed project is the employment or continued postsecondary education of 60% of successful program completers within one year of release.**

Employment placement services will be provided through a partnership of Commerce and Corrections staff. Those wishing to continue postsecondary education upon release will be assisted by WIT for entrance into the AST program.

The **third goal of the project is to reduce recidivism.** This will be measured by comparing program completers' recidivism rate with the recidivism rate of offenders who received no postsecondary education during incarceration.

**Six objectives for reaching the stated goals** include: (1) 180 offenders will be recruited and assessed for basic skills. (2) Of these, 140 will be enrolled in appropriate training, whether Adult Basic Education, Academic Remediation or KeyTrain to improve *WorkReady!* scores. (3) Of these 140, 128 will obtain at least the Bronze *WORKReady!* certificate within the first nine months of the performance period and be enrolled in postsecondary education programs. (4) Of these 128 participants, 104 will obtain at least one industry-recognized postsecondary credential

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and college credit. (5) Through the Commerce workforce system, all 104 participants who successfully complete the CPT program will be referred to companies throughout northeast Kansas, including those who have specifically committed to interviewing program graduates, for job openings as they occur. (6) Of these 104, 63 will either enter employment or additional postsecondary education within one year of release.

As stated above, **public and private partners collaborating with Commerce to train and place participants** in technology-related jobs include WIT, Topeka Correctional Facility and local employers. Both institutions and businesses have agreed to partner with Commerce to assist women paroling to northeast Kansas with the technical and behavioral skills to remain in the community and obtain self-sufficiency. Two industry partners, listed in Section 1, participated in the development of the curriculum and will support the project through consultation and on-site visits with both training staff and participants. Further, industry partners will interview qualified participants for open positions. Commerce has received verbal commitments from four additional companies interested in hiring program graduates. The AST Mobile Unit and purchased simulators which closely mirror machinery and processes found on the job will provide hands-on training to participants. Training is open-entry, open-exit to allow maximum flexibility for success. Instructors in CPT have a strong background in manufacturing and instructional strategies to engage diverse learners. Instructional approaches will include the engagement of students in small, cooperative learning groups to practice teamwork in a manufacturing setting, use of simulation to practice work and soft skills, use of on-line learning modules to provide pre-learning and re-learning for participants during tutoring sessions, leaving more time for team interaction, simulation and skills practice in the classroom. Pre-learning and re-learning will occur using web-based Amatrol simulated units in Electricity, Fluid Power, and



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Mechanical Systems. These items provide interactive learning and are important for quality maintenance and preventative problem solving. The AST Production Technology Certificate program curriculum includes instruction in Basic & Intermediate Pneumatic & Hydraulic Systems, Mechanical Drive Systems, Pneumatic Trouble Shooting and Pump Systems. Both hands-on simulators and theoretical concepts will be mastered by successful students. Basic electricity, industrial mathematics and following written instruction are also included in the curriculum, in addition to technical skills, to ensure participants develop all of the detailed the **skills and competencies** demanded by employer partners.

To support participants along the engineering technology skills career pathway, successful completers will earn 13 hours of college credit toward the Associate's Degree in AST in addition to at least one industry-recognized credential. The AST Associate's Degree articulates with the Bachelor of Applied Science Degrees at Fort Hays State, Pittsburg State, Kansas State and Washburn universities across Kansas.

Project participants will not only be provided with job readiness, remedial and other academic supports, they will also receive support from the network of Offender Workforce Development Specialists employed by both Corrections and the state's workforce system. The **National Institute of Corrections (NIC)** established the **Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS) model**, a comprehensive curriculum to train staff to deliver effective job readiness services to offenders. Kansas began working with NIC to implement the OWDS model in 2004 with a team of six corrections staff being trained and certified in this model. Today, over 231 Kansans, within the correctional systems, local workforce systems and community-based organizations, have been trained and certified in this model and are delivering services to offenders in both prison facilities and after release.

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Using this model, Job Specialists have been established in many facilities, parole offices and community corrections officers who deliver OWDS-based **job readiness classes and services**. They address skills/interests/aptitude assessments; barriers to employment; job seeking and employability skills; mock interviews; completion of job applications; practice speaking to employers about conviction history; state and federal incentive programs for employers; federal bonding programs; job retention strategies; the role of computers in career planning; soft skill training regarding reliability, conflict resolution; and other issues important to employers. The proposed certificate program will use this evidence-based program and successful strategies in the correctional facility setting to provide appropriate services to program participants. Both the *WorkReady!* Certificate and the competence-based Production Technology certificate will formalize completers' employability skills.

A summary of how **mandatory requirements** have been met by this proposal is as follows: Attached letters of commitment from Washburn Institute of Technology, industry representatives and Corrections demonstrate the partnerships Commerce will use to successfully implement the proposed project for female inmates paroling to northeast Kansas, the typical release location of 51.1% of offenders released from prison. The LSI-R will be used to assess risk and need of potential participants and only those scoring 24 or above, indicating medium and high risk/need, will be considered for training. The baseline recidivism rate of female offenders is 15.79%. Public safety will be maintained by allowing inmate access to the Internet only as indicated by TCF policy, restricting access to information, data, images or other materials authorized for inmate access by the Secretary of Corrections with access monitored by TCF staff at all times. Each participant will receive individualized reentry plans and case management, utilizing staff from both TCF and Workforce Services, who will link offenders to community-based services,

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including Workforce Investment and Wagner-Peyser funded services, as appropriate. Post-program employment outcomes will be tracked using the Workforce Development Management Information System as is required for federal reporting of all workforce services programs.

Corrections will maintain and update recidivism indicator data.

A summary of how **Priority Considerations** have been met by this proposal is as follows: the proposed project confers industry-recognized credentials, both the *WORKReady!* certificate and the postsecondary Production Technology Certificate and college credit to participants who successfully complete assessment and training offered. Participants may also earn Forklift Operator Certification. Ongoing training for employers will occur using OWDS-certified staff of Corrections and the workforce system, and through a position shared by Commerce and Corrections designed to provide outreach and training to employers, staff and the community. The position is held by a professional with more than 20 years of experience in the corrections and community corrections fields and has a wealth of experience coaching business owners on successful integration of offenders in the workplace. Commerce will leverage the WIT mobile unit, TCF program and security staff hours, TCF classroom space and associated costs, TCF and WIT *WorkReady!* testing costs, employer partner expertise and classroom instruction hours, Corrections Contractor Training and OWDS.

Proposed activities include classroom occupational training leading to permanent employment in a technology-related field. Engineering Technology fields are aligned with Registered Apprenticeship, another program administered by Commerce, easing the partnership with employers using the Registered Apprenticeship training model. Adult Basic Education and limited Job Readiness Training is available through existing contracts held by Corrections and

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will not be funded by the proposed project. **All proposed activities are allowable** for SCA funds.

**3. Capabilities and Competencies:** The Kansas Department of Commerce has successfully administered over \$25 million in workforce grants per year and is a cabinet-level agency lead by a Secretary appointed by the Governor. The Secretary has two Deputy Secretaries responsible for the day-to-day operations of the agency. Each Deputy Secretary has Directors as immediate reports. The two individuals supporting and managing the proposed program report to the Director of Training Services.

The project is **organized as a joint partnership and is staffed** by two Commerce employees, one whose expertise is in Corrections and holds a position shared between Commerce and Corrections and another who has expertise is in program design and management; both will assure the requirements of the grant are met or exceeded. Commerce, the **agency responsible for this project**, utilizes its shared position with Corrections to facilitate the partnership between the workforce and correctional systems to better serve our common customers. This position works closely with Commerce and Local Workforce Investment Boards, vocational training providers, chambers of commerce and employers and will be able to identify additional matches between the needs of the offenders and employers, work with key partners to broker agreements to meet those needs and enhance the Kansas workforce. Commerce also employs a manager for federal and state programs designed to meet the needs of special populations and other workforce development programs. The manager has administered over \$12 million per year in state and federal funds for Commerce for nearly eight years. This position will serve as the **grant coordinator**, manage the project and provide technical

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assistance to all partners as needed, as well as develop and oversee all formal agreements between Commerce and sub-grantees. Resumes for each of these staff members are attached.

The Topeka Correctional Facility employs security and program staff who will facilitate inmate participation in the training program. New staff will not be required. WIT employs five instructors who are either fully or partially CPT certified by the Manufacturing Skills Standards Council (MSSC). Additionally, WIT will hire the Job Readiness Coach; a Position Description is attached. Both the Job Readiness Coach and technical training instructors will receive required four day Contractor Training provided by the Corrections Training Academy. Contractor Training includes security procedures, communication skills, skills for working with female inmates, disciplinary procedures and requirements, Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) training, and gender responsive training prior to entering the TCF classrooms.

Commerce operates a Management Information System to collect and report all required data elements for the US Department of Labor. TCF participants will be registered in this system and it will be used to collect and track training, case management and employment data. The grant manager will analyze outcomes throughout the period of performance and require changes to program delivery if the data indicates a breakdown in service delivery. Corrections will gather and maintain post-release data including housing, supportive services, behavior issues and agrees to track recidivism data to Commerce for reporting and outcome determination purposes.

#### **4. Impact/Outcomes, Evaluation and Sustainment, and Plan for Collecting Data for**

**Performance Measures:** The Commerce Technology Career Training Program as proposed will be assessed for effectiveness through the collection of both Corrections and Workforce Systems data. **Participant information** including demographic characteristics, number of offenders applying for training, number of participants enrolled in training, LSI-R scores,

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WorkReady! certification levels, behavior incidents, mental health services received, tutoring services received, number of training participants completing training, post-training assessment scores and certifications and release data and services information will be gathered and maintained in the Offender Management Information System (OMIS) and/or the Total Offender Access Data System (TOADS) systems administered by Corrections. Written behavioral and academic reports for each participant will be submitted to TCF Unit Counseling staff and will be included in the aggregate to the Commerce grant coordinator. Post-release data including address, supportive services provided by the Workforce Investment Act, workforce system case management services, job development, résumé, employment referrals, employment, wage and income data will be gathered and maintained by Commerce. Information will be entered into each system at the time of each service or contact with the participant. **Commerce staff will consolidate the required data elements in the DOJ reporting system and will develop and submit narrative reports providing progress of the training program, analysis of service delivery and rationale for modifying service delivery.**

**Collaborative partnerships with industry and with Corrections and postsecondary institutions will be leveraged to build long-term support of the CPT training.** Corrections will continue to have classroom space available in the Topeka facility for use by training providers at no cost to the provider. Postsecondary education partners are likely to sustain training activities for those who can pay tuition either by self-pay or through grants and scholarships. Because the number of participants in this initial training offering is relatively small, as compared to the overall prison population, TCF counselling staff, workforce services staff and parole staff will be able to maintain close contact with each participant. Further, OWDS professionals across the area will be used to provide post-release services including

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employment retention activities and counselling. Commerce will be provided access to participant data as it relates to employment outcomes, wage and employment retention.

Corrections staff, including parole and OWDS professionals will provide follow-up contact with each program participant after release. All participants will sign a Release of Information allowing all partners access to information pertinent to program success and post-release employment.

As stated in Sections 2 and 3, performance will be defined as the percent of enrollees in training who satisfactorily complete training, the number of industry-recognized credentials received and the percent of completers who are employed within one year of release. **Long-term, recidivism rate of completers will be used to identify the impact** of the proposed training and program strategies. Performance will be **documented, monitored and evaluated** through existing Management Information Systems, monitored by the grant coordinator and evaluated by all program partners.

The proposed Commerce Technology Career Training Program will be integrated into the state's justice system if it proves to reduce recidivism and improve prosocial outcomes for those released from TCF. As stated earlier, it costs nearly \$28,000.00 per year to house one woman in Topeka Correctional Facility. Reducing recidivism by only 25% among those who successfully complete the training program will save close to \$336,000.00 in facility operations cost over a three year period. The ability to provide this cost savings and improved offender outcomes will support Corrections Secretary's ability to request funds from the Kansas Legislature to continue postsecondary education programs in the women's facility. Department of Corrections views this program as a demonstration project and will use the evaluation of it to establish policy and programmatic decisions in future fiscal years.