



**HOUSTON BLACKWOOD**

Workforce Director | ACCS Innovation Center

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March 20, 2024

Dear Grant Committee.

I am writing to express our organization's commitment to supporting the projects undertaken by the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), particularly in the Tuscaloosa/Fayette areas and urban sections across the state. We understand the importance of fostering community development and enhancing opportunities, especially for low-income and disadvantaged communities.

Our organization, The ACCS Innovation Center, is dedicated to providing valuable resources and programs to empower individuals and contribute to economic vitality. We have already demonstrated our commitment to workforce development and job creation through our collaboration with various entities such as the Alabama Road Builders Association (ARBA) and the Alabama Asphalt Pavement Association (AAPA).

In line with Section 4 of the application, our programs aim to address the needs of low-income and disadvantaged communities by offering high-quality training opportunities. Our flagship initiative, the ACCS Innovation Center's "Skills for Success" rapid training program, has been instrumental in equipping Alabamians with the skills necessary to thrive in the workforce.

Since its inception in January 2022, the Skills for Success program has registered over 14,000 individuals for training in industries including construction, food and beverage, retail, telecommunications, and transportation. We are proud to offer this training at no cost, thanks to legislative appropriations that enable statewide deployment.

One of the unique aspects of our program is its agility in meeting the demands of various industries. Through a combination of online modules and hands-on instruction at our community college partners' facilities, participants gain practical skills that are immediately applicable in the workplace. Additionally, successful completion of training results in the attainment of an ACCS Credential, providing tangible evidence of skill mastery to potential employers.

We recognize the importance of community engagement, as outlined in the application. Our organization is committed to collaborating with local stakeholders to ensure that our programs are accessible to all individuals, especially those facing barriers to employment. We view community involvement meetings as an opportunity to communicate the availability of our training resources and to solicit feedback for continuous improvement.

In conclusion, the Innovation Center stands ready to support the initiatives of the Alabama Department of Transportation. We believe that by working together, we can create meaningful opportunities for individuals in underserved communities and contribute to the overall prosperity of the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "H. Blackwood", written over a horizontal line.

Houston Blackwood

Workforce Director- ACCS Innovation Center