

## **Abstract**

**Applicant's Name: College Bound Institute**

### **Intended Beneficiaries of the Project**

Girls on the Gridline will serve girls aged 14–19 from underserved communities in Jacksonville, FL, particularly in Duval County zip codes 32209, 32206, and 32208—where average household incomes range from \$29,000–\$39,000. Despite women making up 51.9% of Jacksonville's population, they remain underrepresented in the utility industry—a high-wage sector with average salaries between \$58,000 and \$92,000.

### **Purpose of the Project**

Utility roles remain inaccessible to many young women, particularly those from low-income areas. With women in Jacksonville earning on average \$48,525 compared to \$72,359 for utility workers, there's a significant opportunity to close this wage gap.

The program will support utility companies and labor unions in developing inclusive apprenticeship pipelines by providing technical assistance (TA), candidate preparation, and youth-employer engagement strategies. Employers and unions will also receive support in revising hiring practices, conducting workshops, and restructuring pathways to attract female candidates.

Without intervention, young women from poverty-impacted neighborhoods will continue to lack access to skilled trades, and utility employers will struggle to meet workforce equity goals. Girls on the Gridline directly addresses this by providing training, mentorship, and certification aligned with industry needs.

### **Activities to be Funded**

#### **School-Year Engagement:**

Monthly Saturday sessions during the school year (30 hours annually) will introduce participants to trade careers and provide foundational training. Activities include aptitude test prep, guest speakers, job site visits, career panels, resume building, and soft skills development.

#### **Summer Pre-Apprenticeship:**

The 6-week summer component includes 144 hours of hands-on learning across electric, water, wastewater, and metering modules. Sessions incorporate physical agility training, CPR/OSHA

certifications, job shadowing, and career exploration. Small-group instruction (10:1 ratio) ensures safety and personalized support.

### **Expected Outcomes of the Programs**

60 girls served across 2 years (30 annually)

48 summer sessions + 14 school-year sessions

24 technical training lessons delivered

100% OSHA certification rate

80% improve aptitude and agility test scores

80% of eligible students receive Class A license

80% retention into apprenticeship or continued program

3+ MOUs with employers or unions

### **Subrecipient Activities**

The Community Innovation Alliance, Inc. will work with the College Bound Institute as a community liaison. This vital connector between participants, families, schools, employers, and community partners. This agency supports recruitment by conducting outreach in targeted zip codes through schools, churches, and local organizations, and help maintain engagement by facilitating clear, consistent communication with families. The liaison also plays a key role in coordinating mentorships, job shadowing opportunities, and industry engagement activities, ensuring participants build strong relationships with female role models and potential employers in the utility sector.

Additionally, the Community Innovation Alliance, Inc. will identify and address barriers that may hinder a girl's participation, such as transportation, scheduling conflicts, or basic needs. They provide responsive support, organize peer support groups, and collect participant feedback through surveys and interviews to inform program improvements. By building trust and fostering a sense of belonging, the liaison enhances retention, strengthens community buy-in, and ensures Girls on the Gridline remains accessible, empowering, and impactful for young women exploring careers in utilities.