

This project narrative is what was submitted by the applicant. The final EDA-approved scope of work may differ.

Scope of Work – Opportunity Now
University of Memphis
Center for Regional Economic Enrichment

Opportunity Now! will serve as a **regional strategy**, led by the University of Memphis Center for Regional Economic Enrichment, designed to create economic mobility for adult and youth learners throughout the mid-south. **Opportunity Now!** will endeavor to launch an **accelerated skills training network**, collaborating with existing workforce development structures throughout the tri-state region (Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee) as well as establishing one accelerated skills training center conveniently located in West Tennessee.

Driven by **industry input** and **delivered by premiere providers**, the **Opportunity Now!** accelerated skills training network will deliver in-demand, intensive, stackable credentialing programs (4-24 weeks) to address the unique needs of learners as well as employers; fill anticipated vacancies for high-quality jobs; and combat the region's economic stagnation. Sectoral partnerships, led by a backbone organization representing the area's high-growth advanced manufacturing, logistics technology, and construction sectors have been created, formalizing network alignment across regional boundaries and state lines; thus, creating the optimal workforce development ecosystem for job seekers and employers.

Employers, learning institutions, and training providers will collaborate to create a **comprehensive skills-based curriculum**. Content will be convertible to academic credit enabling learners to establish a foundation for a lifelong journey of skill development.

Phase I of the project will focus on **Network Alignment** drawing upon existing workforce development structures throughout the tri-state region. Training and education partners throughout the region will be recruited to comprise the **ON! Network**. A structure for governance and decision-making will be established under the guidance of central as well as backbone organization staff. **Phase II** will focus on **Curriculum Alignment**. To ensure consistency of delivery, network training and education partners will consult with industry learning and development specialists to confirm the inclusion of fundamental competencies within the targeted curriculum. Likewise, policies and procedures will be established for the intake and registration process as well as process and milestone mapping. Ultimately, **Training Implementation** will occur in **Phase III**. An aggressive marketing and communication plan will draw attention to ON! with Courses, 4-24 weeks in duration, delivered by network partners. Data collection and sustainability processes will be operationalized.

Through the **collective project strategy**, ambitious completion and placement rates have been established. During the implementation phase it is anticipated that at least **1,860 individuals will be enrolled** in an accelerated skills training program with **1,554 completing training**, and **1,399 placed in employment** that meets the Good Jobs Challenge "Quality Job" definition. Enrolled learners, specifically high-barrier individuals, will attain an 85% completion rate with an employment rate of 90% within 90 days of completion.