

February 19, 2016

Attn: Carlotta Donisi  
USDA Rural Development  
1835 Black Lake Blvd SW, Suite C  
Olympia, WA 98512

Re: USDA Rural Business Development Grant Program

Dear Ms. Donisi,

I am writing to express the support of the Columbia River Economic Development Council (CREDC) for the USDA grant proposal to increase educational options and to serve agri-businesses in rural counties of our state.

Specifically, our county has been helped by a federal grant program called Make It in Washington that has provided technical assistance, no cost business consulting and online educational opportunities to manufacturing employees in distressed counties.

As the Associate Development Organization (ADO) designated by the Washington State Department of Commerce to coordinate economic development activities in Clark County, CREDC proactively reaches out to over 75 unique companies each year, including many of our local manufacturers. To date, at least 35 companies in Clark County have explored the educational options, and many have enrolled employees in the program offerings. Many have also expressed an interest in seeing these programs expanded to provide additional options.

We understand that the grant proposal before you is to build on the assistance currently available. It will perform survey needs assessments about educational needs of our employees, and work with community colleges in our state to expand these online educational offerings. This is an important resource for companies around the state, and we encourage you to continue supporting this important work.

Sincerely,



Mike Bomar  
President

Custom Interface, Inc.  
410 South Larch St.  
PO Box 605  
Bingen, WA 98605  
USA



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February 19, 2016

Carlotta Donisi  
Rural Development  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1835 Black Lake Blvd SW, Suite C | Olympia, WA 98512

Re.: Letter of Support  
USDA Rural Business Development Grant Program

Dear Ms. Donisi,

I am writing to express my support of the USDA grant proposal to increase educational options and to serve agri-businesses in rural counties of our state.

Custom Interface has received assistance from federal grant opportunities in the past year that have helped us in advancing our business. One of these grants is the Make it in Washington grant, from which we were offered both business consulting and educational program options that were targeted especially in support of rural areas of Washington.

We understand that the grant proposal before you is to build on this assistance to rural counties. It will perform survey needs assessments about educational needs of our employees; and work with community colleges in our state to expand these online educational offerings. This is very important to businesses like ours, as well as those in agri-business, a strong component of the economy in rural communities where access to resources is limited, and we urge you to continue this work by funding this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Dana Robison-Miller'.

Dana Robison-Miller  
Vice President



*Composite Engineering*

February 17, 2016

Carlotta Donisi  
Rural Development USDA  
1835 Black Lake Blvd, SW: Suite C  
Olympia, WA, 98512

Re.: Letter of Support

Dear Ms. Carlotta Donisi,  
USDA Rural Business Development Grant Program

I am writing to express my support of the USDA grant proposal to increase educational options and to serve agri-businesses in rural counties of our state.

Our business has been helped by a federal grant program called Make It in Washington that has provided technical assistance, no cost business consulting and online educational opportunities to manufacturing employees in distressed counties.

Two ICE employees are accessing online educational opportunities that would otherwise be unavailable to them. One entry level production employee is working toward his undergraduate degree in engineering, the 2<sup>nd</sup> employee is accessing graduate courses; both via online WSU curriculum. In our rural area, it is difficult to obtain courses beyond the associate level via the local community college. These classes allow each employee to develop within their current positions as well as set them up for promotion.

We understand that the grant proposal before you is to build on this assistance. It will do survey needs assessments about educational needs of our employees, and work with community colleges in our state to expand these online educational offerings. This is very important to businesses like ours in rural communities where access to resources is limited, and we urge you to continue this work by funding this project.

Sincerely,

Lori D Wolford

HR Manager

February 25, 2016

Carlotta Donisi  
Rural Development USDA  
1835 Black Lake Blvd, SW: Suite C  
Olympia, WA, 98512

Re.: Letter of Support

Dear Ms. Carlotta Donisi,  
USDA Rural Business Development Grant Program

I am writing to express my support of the USDA grant proposal to increase educational options and to serve agri-businesses in rural counties of our state.

Our business has been helped by a federal grant program called Make It in Washington that has provided technical assistance, no cost business consulting and online educational opportunities to manufacturing employees in distressed counties. I am currently enrolled in the WSU program and have been able to use the knowledge gain in the classes to grow my business, hire additional employees, improve my supply chain and be more profitable.

I hope you continue and expand the program as some of the aspects need improvement and tweaking. Feel free to contact me for additional suggestions and ideas for improvement.

Sincerely,  
**Jill Rohrs**

Co-owner,  
**Skagit's Best Salsa Company**

360-610-9818 (mobile)  
[jillrohrs@live.com](mailto:jillrohrs@live.com)  
Leadership Skagit Class of 2010

February 20, 2016

Jonathan Hefflinger  
1215 Lotus Lane  
Freeland WA, 98249

Mike Brennan  
Grant Manager, Economic Development Specialist  
Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board  
128 - 10th Avenue, S.W.  
P.O. Box 43105  
Olympia, WA 98504

SUBJECT: Make it in Washington Grant Impact – Thank You

Dear Mr. Brennan,

During the final quarter of 2014 you contacted me about the Make it in Washington grant program. At the time I was working as the Human Resource Manager at Nichols Brothers Boat Builders, I wanted to say thank you for reaching out when you did and reflect on the opportunities following that meeting.

I can only speak for myself, but I am very grateful for the opportunity to continue my studies. I would not have been able to afford to continue my education without the MIIW Grant program. Each class I would study I passed on what I learned with my boss on the Production Manager to give ideas on things we could improve. One suggestion I felt was beneficial from the EM567 class on lifecycle cost and risk of down time of equipment, was to prioritize equipment, allocate budgets and maintenance plans for key tooling to minimize the risk of shutting down production.

These classes helped me consider the production aspects of the company while making Human Resource decisions and look at things from the organizational perspective when assessing alternatives. I would like to see these programs expanded and continued to help Washington State become more innovative and competitive in the global market place.

As a lifelong Washingtonian I am very proud of our state and the impact Washington has on the global market place, and am very thankful for the investment the MIIW Grant made in me. I have now taken a position at Boeing and hope to continue my learning through a Masters in Engineering Technology Management and teach at community college. The MIIW program opened the door to continue my education. Thank you for believing in me and investing in my development; it was an honor to participate in MIIW and I believe it is a simple and innovative grant program.

Respectfully,

Jonathan Hefflinger



Northwest Applied Marine, LLC  
3376 Cottonwood Creek Rd.  
Chewelah, WA 99109



Date: February 19, 2016

To: Carlotta Donisi  
Rural Development  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1835 Black Lake Blvd SW, Suite C | Olympia, WA 98512

Re: Re.: Letter of Support  
USDA Rural Business Development Grant Program

Dear Ms. Donisi,

I am writing to express my support of the USDA grant proposal to increase educational options and to serve agri-businesses in rural counties of our state.

Our business has been helped by a federal grant program called Make It in Washington that has provided technical assistance, no cost business consulting and online educational opportunities to manufacturing employees in distressed counties. In our case, we gained important insight into the core value of our business, and specifically the area of our operations that needed attention in order to address various business risks. Being a small business, we did not have easy or affordable access to consulting services, nor did we recognize the need. The MiiW program was instrumental in our company realigning its vision of the future and driving change to improve labor challenges and reinforce the focus on improving our manufacturing processes. Additionally, myself and one other employee took advantage of the educational scholarship program and are currently taking supply Chain Management courses through Shoreline Community College.

We understand that the grant proposal before you is to build on this assistance. It will perform survey needs assessments about educational needs of our employees, and work with community colleges in our state to expand these online educational offerings. This is very important to businesses like ours in rural communities where access to resources is limited, and we urge you to continue this work by funding this project.

Sincerely,

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Robert E. Stevens  
Owner/ Member

Northwest Applied Marine, LLC  
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[bob@nwappliedmarine.com](mailto:bob@nwappliedmarine.com)  
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