



**Training Proposal for:
HigherGround, Inc.**

Fast Track ≤ \$100,000

ET15-0113

Panel Meeting of: June 27, 2014

ETP Regional Office: North Hollywood

Analyst: J. Romero

CONTRACTOR

- Type of Industry: Communication

- Priority Industry: Yes No

- Number of Full-Time Employees
 - California: 34
 - Worldwide: 38
 - Number to be trained: 34

- Owner Yes No
- Mgr/Supr 6
- Frontline 28

- Out-of-State Competition: Competitors Outside CA
- Special Employment Training: Yes No
- High Unemployment Area: Yes No
- Turnover Rate: 10%
- Repeat Contractor: Yes No
- Substantial Contribution: Yes No

FUNDING

- Requested Amount: \$70,720
- In-Kind Contribution: \$87,000

TRAINING PLAN TABLE

Job No.	Job Description	Type of Training	Estimated No. of Trainees	Range of Hours		Average Cost per Trainee	Post-Retention Wage
				Class / Lab	CBT		
1	Retrainee SB <100 Priority Rate	Business Skills; Computer Skills; Mgmt Skills; PL-Comp Skills	34	8-100	0-20	\$2,080	\$16.04
				Weighted Avg: 80			

- Reimbursement Rate: \$26 SB Priority
- County(ies): Los Angeles County
- Occupations to be Trained: Administration Staff, Production Staff, Sales & Marketing Staff, Managers & Supervisors, Technical Staff, Research & Development Staff
- Union Representation: Yes
 No
- Health Benefits: N/A
- Electronic Recordkeeping: N/A

SUBCONTRACTORS

- Development Services: California Training Coalition (CTC) in Upland assisted in the development of this proposal at no charge to the contractor.
- Administrative Services: CTC will also provide administration services for an amount not to exceed 13% of payment earned.
- Training Vendors: To Be Determined

OVERVIEW

HigherGround, Inc. (HGI) is a small business located in Canoga Park that specializes in development and manufacture of call center software, data integration and reporting tools used by both public and private organizations. HGI collaborates with each client to customize each system to monitor and measure data and key performance indicators critical to a specific client. The Company qualifies for standard retraining under the Out-of-State Competition.

Over the last few years, HGI has continually implemented many changes, designing, developing, and manufacturing higher-complexity products, to meet customers' ever-expanding requirements. Because these high-complexity products require constant support and optimized methodologies and processes, the Company needs to regularly train all staff to effectively support these products and create more value for their customers.

Training Plan

HGI recently completed its second ETP-funded small business project which facilitated formal training in HCI's 911 Call Center product and enhancements. With this third Agreement, HCI plans to train employees in its new proprietary software product, Calibre. This is a call center management solution that utilizes multichannel recording and associated analytics (actionable intelligence) for improved performance, compliance, and liability protection. In order to offer Calibre as the software solution to its customers, HGI will customize development, monitor and measure data and key performance indicators to the needs and specification of individual businesses.

Training for this proposal will concentrate on internally focused continuous improvement; analytics training to understand process controls, exception reporting, threshold monitoring and speech and text analytics; training on system upgrades and optimization; and general management training to help the Company effectively scale to meet future requirements. Training will be provided in different levels of intensity and scope consistent with the needs of the staff and their base line knowledge.

Business Skills (25%) - Training will be given to all trainees to improve internal operations and understand how customers will receive the true value from the application of new analytics capabilities that are available to use on the latest products.

Computer Skills (25%) Training will be given to Technical and Production Staff. HGI software products are very complex and utilize sophisticated algorithms. This training will provide skill on how to install, implement, maintain, and upgrade the new software. These classes are vital to enabling employees to be responsive to customer demands and keeping the Company efficient.

Continuous Improvement (30%) – Training will be provided to all trainees. This training will cover topics to help employees understand variation and measure and analyze processes for improvement in order to have greater control of anticipated outcomes.

Management Skills (10%) - Training will be given to Managers and Supervisors to improve their leadership and coaching skills to enable them to be more effective leaders. This training will equip the management team with tools to challenge, motivate, and fully-engage employees in pushing for performance improvements.

Productive Laboratory

The Panel recently adopted regulations to authorize reimbursement for training delivered in a Productive Laboratory (PL) setting. PL trainees may produce goods for profit as part of the training, in the courses identified under the Curriculum and with no more than 10 trainees per instructor. The instructor must be dedicated to training delivery during all hours of training, and special attendance rosters will be used to assist in monitoring.

In this proposal, 24 trainees will receive PL – Computer Skills. The training will be provided to Research & Development Staff, Technical Staff and Production Staff to get them “up to speed” in new technology. These are the staff who support, customize and integrate the Service Manager Report, Virtual Servers, and Performance Management System (Performance Pro) equipment.

Approximately 15 of the 24 trainees will receive no more than 60 hours for PL each. Their training will cover all the different types of call center metrics and analytics using live interaction with customers. PL training will use actual customer calls taken by a trainee.

The trainer will direct the trainee with step-by-step processes for troubleshooting; ensuring that the trainee executes the various steps needed to correct a system or perform an upgrade while ensuring the customer receives the highest level of support. The trainer-to-trainee ratio will not exceed 1:2.

Modification to Maximum Hours

HGI is requesting a modification to the maximum hours, increasing the maximum from 60 hours for a small business to 100 hours. HGI is training on new software with lots of features (mainly around analytics). These features require employees to train on install, use, and support which will comprise a large portion of training.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of this proposal.

PRIOR PROJECTS

The following table summarizes performance by HGI under ETP Agreements that were completed within the last five years:

Agreement No.	Location (City)	Term	Approved Amount	Payment Earned \$ %
ET11-0237	Canoga Park	04/18/11- 04/17/13	\$49,400	\$49,400 (100%)
ET09-0377	Canoga Park	12/17/08 – 12/16/10	\$54,600	\$54,600 (100%)

Exhibit B: Menu Curriculum**Class/Lab Hours**

8-100

Trainees may receive any of the following:

BUSINESS SKILLS

- Business Analytics
- Competitive Analysis
- Customer Service Skills
- Presentation Skills
- Lead Processing and Analysis
- Sales Training
- Negotiation Skills
- Cost Analysis and return on Investment
- Finance
- Business Writing
- Strategic Marketing and Product Positioning

COMPUTER SKILLS

- Calibre Product Training
- Calibre Installation
- Calibre Maintenance & Support
- User Interfaces
- VoIP
- Integrations
- Trunked Radio
- Agent Evaluation
- Microsoft Office

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- KPI Indicators
- Statistics and Process Control
- Root Cause Failure Analysis
- Variation
- Process Value Mapping

MANAGEMENT SKILLS (Managers and Supervisors only)

- Strategy and Goal Deployment
- Leadership and Management
- Situational Leadership and Team Building
- Organizational Development

PL Hours

0-60

COMPUTER SKILLS

- Calibre Installation Productive Lab Training (PLT)
- Calibre Product Productive Lab Training (PLT)
- Calibre Maintenance & Support Productive Lab Training (PLT)
- User Interfaces Productive Lab Training (PLT)
- VoIP Productive Lab Training (PLT)

- Integrations Productive Lab Training (PLT)
- Trunked Radio Productive Lab Training (PLT)

CBT Hours

0–20

COMPUTER BASED TRAINING (CBT)

- Microsoft Word (16 hours)
- Microsoft Excel (16 hours)
- Microsoft Outlook (16 hours)

Note: Reimbursement for retraining is capped at 100 total training hours per-trainee, regardless of the method of delivery. CBT is capped at 50% of total training hours, per-trainee.