WHAT IS THE RWU COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS CENTER?

The Roger Williams University (RWU) Community Partnerships Center (CPC) provides project-based assistance to nonprofit organizations and government agencies in communities in Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts. Our mission is to undertake and complete projects that will benefit the local community while providing RWU students with experience in real-world projects that deepen their academic experiences.

CPC projects draw upon students and faculty from RWU programs in areas such as:

- Accounting
- Architecture
- Business
- Communication
- Community Development
- Construction Management
- Digital Media
- Education
- Engineering
- Environmental science and sustainability
- Finance
- Graphic Design
- History & American Studies
- Historic preservation
- Justice studies
- Law
- Management
- Marketing
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Public Administration
- Public Relations
- Urban Design
- Visual Arts
- Web Development
- Writing Studies

The Center has completed projects ranging from market research and planning, historical research, mill redevelopment feasibility studies, urban policy analysis, design projects for affordable housing and education facilities, community business district revitalization, neighborhood revitalization plans, museum exhibit design, historic building rehabilitation studies, social services research, website and graphic design, environmental sustainability planning, and survey development.

CPC project services are performed by students in support of their educational experience. Applicants shall understand that any deliverables generated through an accepted project are intended to provide conceptual information only to assist in design and planning and as such are not intended, nor should they be used for, construction or other project implementation. Professional and/or other services may be needed to ultimately implement a sponsor’s desired goals.

HOW CAN YOUR ORGANIZATION PARTNER WITH THE RWU CPC?

As we prepare for upcoming semesters, we are seeking new projects that can benefit local communities while providing our student/faculty teams with opportunities to apply their learning, engage the community, and create final products that provide benefits to all.

We hope that your organization considers applying for project assistance with the RWU Community Partnerships Center this year. The next deadline for applications for projects is March 3, 2014. In order to ensure ample time for faculty to develop curriculum to engage students in community projects, the CPC has moved to a year-long application period. Applications submitted for this deadline may be considered for either of the two upcoming academic semesters. The CPC will hold another call for projects in September of 2014, should your organization need more preparation time. In order to assist organizations as they prepare their applications, we are happy to answer specific questions by e-mail or by phone. We look forward to working with you in the future and encourage you to contact us should you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Stephany Hessler                        Arnold Robinson
Phone: (401) 254-5211                  Phone: (401) 254-3307
E-mail: shessler@rwu.edu                Email: arobinson@rwu.edu

RWU Community Partnerships Center
Roger Williams University, One Old Ferry Road, Bristol, RI 02809-2921 | Website: http://cpc.rwu.edu
CALL FOR PROJECTS
Spring 2015 & Fall 2015

Application Deadline: August 4, 2014

Application for CPC Project Assistance

Instructions: We encourage non-profit organizations and municipal agencies to contact the CPC with ideas for projects that can benefit the community while providing meaningful service-learning for RWU students. Please fill out the Application for Project Assistance, answering all applicable questions and including all supporting documents.

In order for any project to be considered for assistance, completed applications must be submitted to CPC Project Coordinator, Stephany Hessler, by 5 pm on August 4, 2014. Applications may be submitted by:

Email: shessler@rwu.edu
Fax: (401) 254-3565
Mail: RWU Community Partnerships Center
Roger Williams University
One Old Ferry Road
Bristol, RI 02809-2921

Any questions regarding the application process can be directed to Stephany at (401) 254-5211.

CPC project services are performed by students in support of their educational experience. Applicants shall understand that any deliverables generated through an accepted project are intended to provide conceptual information only to assist design and planning and as such are not intended, nor should they be used for, construction or other project implementation. Professional and/or other services may be needed to ultimately implement a sponsor’s desired goals.

SECTION 1: Organization Information

Name of Organization: TINKER Bristol

Mailing Address: TINKER Bristol, c/o Todd Thomas, 9 Woodland Drive, Portsmouth, RI, 02871

Name of Project Contact Person(s): Todd M. Thomas

Contact Information:
Phone: 413-441-7608 (cell – best contact method) 401-619-1384 (office)   Fax: 401-619-1384

E-mail: todd@tandtdev.com OR thomat@rpi.edu

Type of Organization
☐ Public (town, city, municipality, special district, government agency)
☐ Private (citizen, non-profit)
☒ Other (please explain) Public / Private Partnership with the Town of Bristol, RI – We will be applying for 501c3 type Non-profit status. Partnership with Town is to facilitate Job & Business growth within Bristol and surrounding communities.

Description of Organization and Mission:

Located in Bristol’s historic business district, TINKER Bristol is a manufacturing incubator and Makerspace. Its mission is to use innovation in a collaborative environment to create prototypes, products, businesses, and jobs that will help revitalize Bristol’s economy and preserve its quality of life. Any individual, business, or organization can be a member; To use innovation, access to tools and resources, and creative and collaborative community to produce rapid prototypes, develop finished products, found and grow businesses, and create quality jobs that will help revitalize Bristol’s economy and preserve its quality of life. The Creative Community
enabled by the Makerspace aspect will also develop innovation practices and advanced technological skills in the open-to-all membership base drawn from local residents – from Youth & College Students through Retirees – Professionals and Hobbyists alike. The combination of Makerspace and Business Incubator benefits the entire community.

The goal is to house TINKER Bristol in the Bristol Industrial Park, the gateway to Bristol’s historic manufacturing district. The operation will be funded with membership fees, service charges, and philanthropy and operate as a non profit. As a grassroots collaborative, TINKER Bristol is committed to partnering with local businesses and manufacturers, as well as Mosiaco, Roger Williams, RI Advanced Manufacturing Center, the RICC and more.

TINKER Bristol responds to a critical need for innovation and entrepreneurship to grow our economy. With its rich maritime culture and manufacturing heritage, Bristol has the resources and talent necessary to successfully fuel a manufacturing incubator and maker space. We want to rekindle Bristol’s tinkering tradition and galvanize a new generation of independent, innovative businesses.

The Maker Movement has become a national phenomenon. Makerspaces are increasingly seen as sources of creativity and invention: workshops where inventors can prototype their ideas; hands-on educational resources that supplement K-12 STEM education and workforce retraining; social spaces that serve as a hub of urban activity and help to drive Main Street revitalization efforts. The best Makerspaces go a step further: while maintaining an informal, improvisational environment that encourages practical creativity and interdisciplinary collaboration, they deliberately search for and extract technologies that have commercial potential, and ensure that the necessary support mechanisms are present - such as design and prototyping services, market research, intellectual property counsel, and investor networks - to maximize the chances for these technologies to succeed in the marketplace. The result is a significantly streamlined pathway from ideation to commercialization, which consistently circumvents and outstrips traditional academic and corporate R&D processes.

The TINKER mission is four-fold:

1. To provide support for young professionals, growing businesses, and even seasoned veterans looking to change up their status quo in Bristol, RI and the surrounding East Bay communities, in ways that will help the region attract and retain young entrepreneurs, business professionals, and a skilled workforce.
2. To offer a creative environment in an urban setting designed to foster innovation, attract “Makers,” and support start-ups and other small companies in ways that mitigate and share costs and other risks, by providing community access to equipment, expertise, and shared business services.
3. To augment the skills of TINKER members, both individual and corporate, through workshops, one-on-one mentoring, and skills training on particular equipment or in particular disciplines, with an emphasis on leading edge technologies and business development.
4. Reinforce and expand the current areas of Technology and Materials advancement already in Bristol.

On average, how many individuals does your organization serve per year?
Anticipate 300 per year minimum

How did you hear about the CPC?
Direct referral from Arnold Robinson and Peter Wilbur

SECTION 2: Project Description

Title of the Project:
TINKER Bristol

Project Location (Address, City, State, and Zip):
Unit 111, Bristol Industrial Park, Bristol, RI (Proposed location)

General Project Description (you may attach a longer narrative if necessary):

Assist us with formulating the final Business Structure, Best Practices, Final Business Plan, etc for the Manufacturing Business Incubator. This would include helping determine best operating plan, leadership / organizational / governance structure, sustainable funding path (we are planning a number of income producing elements to provide long-term funding/sustainability – but growth and added offerings will likely corporate sponsorships, private philanthropy, grants, etc), and Incubator “tenant parameters” including selection of types of tenants, length-of-stay, financial contribution, etc.
Potential Scope of Work/Tasks for RWU CPC (you may attach a longer narrative if necessary):

We anticipate the basic structure of the Incubator and Makerspace to be started, including legal structure, initial fundraising, leased location secured, and base improvements on the space started by the time the RWU program would be initiated. We would like to request CPC assistance in:

1. Pairing TINKER Bristol with the Business Management program:
   a. To help us formulate final Business Structure, Best Practices, Final Business Plan, etc for the Manufacturing Business Incubator. This would include helping determine best operating plan, leadership / organizational / governance structure, sustainable funding path (we are planning a number of income producing elements to provide long-term funding/sustainability – but growth and added offerings will likely corporate sponsorships, private philanthropy, grants, etc), and Incubator “tenant parameters” including selection of types of tenants, length-of-stay, financial contribution, etc.
   b. Sketch out a preliminary structure or concept for a Business Accelerator program based at the TINKER Bristol facility – with a partnership with the RWU Business School – and how this would integrate with Manufacturing Business Incubator plans. (This portion would be as time and resources allow, and secondary to the higher priority item 1a above)

2. Pairing TINKER Bristol with the Schools Engineering, Arts, and Architecture:
   a. Similar to item 1a above, but with specific regards to the Makerspace portion of our proposed program and how the Makerspace physical makeup, governance structure, and volunteer/community staffing system may be best organized or designed with current Best Practices in mind. We see a strong potential for multidisciplinary cooperation and integration in this project.

What will be the final product output for this project? (survey, website, design plans, drawings, etc.)

- Detailed Final Business Plan and Operating Model for the Manufacturing Business Incubator.
- A sketch of a Business Accelerator Model that will integrate with the Incubator / Makerspace programme.
- A roadmap for further partnerships and collaboration with RWU including intern development programs, lab time

Proposed Project Schedule (when the tasks/project needs to be completed):

Operating Model and Final Business Plan for the Incubator should be completed by the end of the Spring Semester of the 2014-2015 Academic Year.

Please provide the names and contact information for any staff members or volunteers who will be playing a primary role in the proposed CPC project.

Todd Thomas  - todd@tandtdev.com  
Mike Byrnes   - mtbyrnes46@gmail.com  
Jessica Thomas - jthomas@tandtdev.com  
Francis Chaves - chavescoinc@yahoo.com  
Andrea Rounds  - andrearounds@me.com  
Tom Kowalczyk  - tomkmit@cox.net

What resources/previous work would the CPC be building upon that you already have completed? (Please select all items that are applicable)

- Strategic Plan  (We have a good Draft Strategic and Business Plan for a starting point)
- Marketing & Communication Plans
- Additional organizational documents  (We have a wide variety of anecdotal articles and studies on Makerspaces and Incubators, formulation documentation from similar recently developed facilities, etc)
- Preliminary photos of the site/project  (We have existing conditions site photos and Master Plan info)
- Maps
- Previous research
- Survey results
- Architectural or building plans  (We have base drawings in AutoCAD as well as preliminary Design Development Drawings already created for the build-out of the Incubator/Makerspace already completed)

1 CPC project services are performed by students in support of their educational experience. Applicants shall understand that any deliverables generated through an accepted project are intended to provide conceptual information only to assist design and planning and as such are not intended, nor should they be used for, construction or other project implementation. Professional and/or other services may be needed to ultimately implement a sponsor’s desired goals.
What active support would your organization be able to contribute should your project be selected?

- Funding
- Volunteers
- Staff time
- Consultants
- Other (please list) (The City of Troy, NY sponsored and was one of the driving forces behind a recently created and “incredibly” successful Makerspace and Incubator project – called the Center of Gravity. The civic administration as well as the Founding members of the CoG are more than happy to share any of their development resources as needed or helpful. The civic administration is also happy to provide interviews or host site visits as desired as well.)

SECTION 3: Project Outcomes

Please describe how this project will benefit your organization and the advancement of your mission:

We have a Draft version of our Mission and Business Plan – as well as Strategic Planning – however, it could use some refinement in terms of Best Practices (and most current), recommendations for Operational and Governance Structure, and long term sustainable financial model (that includes both revenue generation AND fundraising). Our Steering Committee and Team Members are well versed in a number of areas, but one of our weaker areas is in the nuances of developing the detailed financial projection and planning that will assist us in the best initial start for a sustainable future. Technology and Manufacturing fields are changing rapidly and the styles of operation and management as well as best practices changes along with this. Being able to work with Faculty and Students would give us better and more currently informed ideas and opinions.

In order to promote Technical Innovation & Creativity – sources of intellectual & practical knowledge, access to previous research data, networking with other people or projects in a given field such as Engineering, Chemistry and Physical Sciences, Architecture and Building Materials – a connection to RWU would prove invaluable in not only helping to determine how to best incubate and grow nascent businesses in these areas but also foster innovation and growth in already established local businesses. RWU also produces graduating students in these matching fields – we would like to be able to attract and retain these students to work and live in Bristol and greater RI.

Not specific to this request, but a partnership with RWU is also very important from a Programming and Community Resources point of view. Developing a relationship on a number of levels would help encourage Student and Faculty participation on the basic ‘community’ level as well as more formalized relationships such as an Intern Development Program, the ability for companies or business owners to get Technical or Business advice (either through a Paid services model, or pro-bono) are beneficial to RWU as well as core elements of what TINKER Bristol would like to be able to offer.

Please describe how this project might benefit the overall community, including specific groups that could benefit from this project (i.e. target populations, neighborhoods, specific town/city/region).

Bristol is at an inflection point where innovation, collaboration and ingenuity will drive economic development. Tinker Bristol responds to a critical need that has been identified both locally and nationally, which is: sustainable economies depend on innovation and entrepreneurship—small companies are the growth engines of the economy. The latest Economic Development Element for the Town of Bristol’s Comprehensive Plan calls for exploring technology and professional service centers, and collaborative partnerships to “foster embryonic technical and service businesses.” Indeed, the White House recently hosted a “Maker Faire” to highlight “…entrepreneurs and everyday citizens who are using new tools and techniques to launch businesses, learn vital [STEAM skills] and lead a grassroots renaissance in American manufacturing.” Any Bristolian, or East Bay area resident would be able to take part; any individual, business, or organization that wants to make things: entrepreneurs, start-ups, and emerging businesses; existing businesses requiring rapid prototyping, new processes or access to diverse expertise; small companies needing shared business services to allow them to affordably grow; master tradesmen, mentors and college professors; students of all ages, apprentices and trainees; hobbyists, craftsmen, artists and tinkerers. The benefit to Bristolians: their economy, their community, their way of life. For three centuries Bristol has contributed to American ingenuity and inventiveness. The potential benefits of Tinker Bristol reach well beyond the East Bay.
Please explain why you have chosen to seek assistance from the RWU CPC with your project request, instead of undertaking the project using fee-for-services from a paid professional:

As we are putting this project together under a grass-roots effort, and this is not a real-estate development model with collateral assets, we cannot afford to go the fee-for-services route during the early development phases. Also, in many ways because of the critical partnerships we see that could be developed with RWU, a private services model would not easily facilitate this – whereas an initial CPC effort will help create such partnerships and connections almost immediately. We do have private and corporate philanthropic interest at this time, however we are trying to reserve those funds for brick and mortar build-out costs, as well as some of the more costly Makerspace equipment that cannot be found through used or government re-assignment channels. Our Steering Committee members are more adept in the Strategic Planning realm and old-school business for the most part and a fresh view from Students and Faculty fills gaps in our project ‘team’ profile. We also see integration with RWU Faculty and Students on numerous levels helps grow an organic connection between RWU and TINKER Bristol.

Please describe how this project will benefit RWU students.

- We feel that our concept of an integrated Business Incubator AND Makerspace is ground-breaking and will be able to do some very interesting things for the local community, RWU, the East Bay area of RI, and Greater RI itself. The students being a part of this are helping to craft a relationship and community that not only they will be able to utilize in years to come but those students that come along in future years.
- RWU Schools of Business and Engineering would have a ‘live lab’ space for various programmes, and types of relationships including Intern Development Programs, “Office Hours” type setup where Incubator tenants seek basic business advice in an open/communal setting.
- Hosted lecture series produced by TINKER Bristol where students & faculty may find interesting in attending, or lectures or events “hosted” by RWU faculty or Departments at the TINKER facility.
- Provide a hobby/tinkering space for RWU students – advancing and honing mechanical, materials, engineering, and business prowess – as well as being able to be part of a Maker community.
- Encouraging a stronger local connection to Bristol
- As we are working on creating a network of different connections and relationships across the state in the business & economic development world and the manufacturing & technical industries, RWU students helping to develop TINKER as well as those that participate in our programming later on will be able to network into and through these same relationships and communities.

SECTION 4: Financial Information

What is your organization's annual operating budget? Please include a copy of your most recent budget with the application.

Our proposed budgets are attached, however after the initial startup year, we are currently anticipating an annual base income of $315,600 - $379,000 and an expenses base of $256,800. We anticipate startup expenses to be between $860,000 and $1,017,000

What are your major sources of funding?

We are developing our funding model currently. Once operational, we believe that income based operations and offerings will allow TINKER Bristol to be net-positive for day-to-day operations. Special events are typically fee-based set by event cost. Startup funding is already consisting of:

- RI Foundation Grant
- RICC assistance in sourcing funding
- State/Federal Economic Development and Block Grants
- Corporate Sponsorships
- Private Donations
- Crowdfunding

How much funding from your annual operating budget is set aside for this project (if any)?

At this time none. However, most of the project team is willing to volunteer such personal time as required to work with Students and RWU. Some professional services may be donated as well in addition to personal time.
SECTION 5: Private Sector Involvement

Have you or your organization discussed the project with practicing professionals (e.g. architect, engineer, planner, consultants, etc.)? (please circle one): Yes / No

Todd Thomas is a Historic Preservation architect as well as being involved in the Makerspace arena. Jessica Thomas is an engineer, as well as Eric Offenberg (team-member). We have other professionals in the legal and philanthropic fields who have also donated time and effort to date as well.

On our team are also the founders of the Center of Gravity, an incredibly successful Makerspace and Incubator in Troy, NY – Bob Bownes and Laban Coblentz.

Our current Steering Committee includes (but not only) Halsey Herreshoff, Georgina MacDonald, Jerry Dauterive, Gilbert Brunnhoeffer, Jane Lavender, Francis Chaves, Tom Kowalczyk, Mike Byrnes, Gary Holstrom, and Andrea Rounds.

We have been working directly with John Riendeau at the RICC (Marcel Valois has also expressed interest in the project on a conceptual level). We have had previous and have upcoming discussions with local civic officials including Tony Taxeria, Diane Williamson, and Stacey Carter. Senator Whitehouse’s office has also expressed interest and is being kept in the information loop per their request.

If no, please explain why:

SECTION 6: Supporting Documents

Please include the following items when submitting your application:

- Budget for the current fiscal year
- List of current Board members
- Copies of supporting resources identified in section 2 as needed to support your application