



METAL TOAD

March 7, 2016

*U.S. Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration
Office of Grants Management*

Dear TechHire Reviewers,

I am submitting this letter in support of *TechRise PDX*, the Portland Metro region's response to the Department of Labor TechHire grant announcement. This past summer, Metal Toad signed up for the Portland Tech Diversity pledge along with 16 other companies. This was a first step toward addressing the significant gender and ethnicity gap that exists in the Portland tech industry. For us, it means committing time, money, and resources to both looking at the challenge of increasing diversity at our company and working with people to improve things. *TechRise PDX* could accelerate these collective efforts to create a diverse talent pipeline.

Our company is a software consulting, implementation, and management company with the mission to help people seeking the world's best technology and processes. We have grown alongside Portland's software industry and it is clear that we, as well as the nation, are facing a workforce shortage of unprecedented proportions. Solving this problem involves activating a broader workforce, which can also address the ethnic and gender gap in our industry. This is because we believe the problem is not only one of unconscious bias, but also a lack of exposure and gaps in traditional education that lead into our industry.

The current tech-worker shortfall - over a million people over the next five years as estimated by the US Department of Labor Statistics - is starting to be addressed by code schools and online training. However, programming students graduating from these institutions are moving into a job market that demands on-the-job experience. Metal Toad has been a leader in pioneering many of the *TechRise PDX* proposal strategies to help non-traditional candidates get exposure and demonstrate their competency. At our company we are committed to providing 96 paid apprenticeships over the next three years, setting students up for success and creating an onramp into the industry. In addition, we are eager to help replicate the success we have been having through the creation of an "apprenticeship-in-a-box" - a profitable model that will allow other businesses to adopt and extend what has been working so well for us. We see our know-how, not as secret sauce, but instead a model for improving a dysfunctional hiring paradigm. Additionally our company provides a Mentorship Saturday program, which provides an initial first exposure for people considering entering the industry.

The workforce pipeline represents the biggest challenge to our nation remaining the greatest center of technological innovation. I urge the Department of Labor to fund this proposal.

Sincerely,

*Joaquin Lippincott
President*