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EXCLUSIVE: Coding school seeks incentives to create 46 jobs in Miami

Sep 29, 2016, 12:13pm EDT

A computer coding and professional skills company has requested public incentives to create 46 jobs at a new regional headquarters and training center in Miami.

The Miami-Dade County Commission will consider the incentives application on Oct. 5 for "Project Loki," which is keeping its identity confidential. However, the applicant has many similarities to General Assembly, a New York-based coding, technology and marketing school with 15 locations in five countries.

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The **Beacon Council**, which helped Project Loki with the application, declined comment.

The application states that Project Loki would be a new company to Florida and it would lease a 3,400-square-foot regional headquarters in the part of the city of Miami that's within Commission District 3. This includes the neighborhoods of Liberty City, Little Haiti, Overtown, Upper East Side, Edgewater, Buena Vista, Allapattah and Wynwood. It describes the company as a "national provider of in-demand skills training and professional development" with multiple locations worldwide.

Project Loki would create 46 jobs with an average salary of $75,109 and invest $2.3 million in capital. If it reaches those goals and maintains them for six years, the company would receive $276,000 from the Qualified Target Industry program, with $55,200 from the county and the rest from the state.

In its application a representative from the company stated: "Project Loki is creating a global community of individuals empowered to pursue work they love, by offering full-time immersive programs, long-form courses, and classes and workshops on the most relevant skills of the 21st century – from web development and user experience design, to business fundamentals, to data science, to product management and digital marketing."

The same sentence is on the General Assembly website here in a description of the company and its scholarship program.

In the application, the company lists its headquarters as New York with the zip code 10010. That is the same zip code where General Assembly is located.

The incentive application, which was filled out in July, said Project Loki had 750 employees. On July 22, *Inc.* reported that General Assembly would cut 50 people from its 750-person staff. General Assembly CEO Jake

Schwartz told *Inc.* that it was a staff re-alignment to avoid a massive layoff down the line because some teams grew too fast. Founded in 2010, General Assembly raised $70 million in series D funding in 2015.

General Assembly spokeswoman Marissa Arnold said the company is always looking at new markets and new cities for expansion, but she wouldn't comment on its possible interest in Miami. In August, the company announced expansions to 10 cities and Miami was not among them.

The closest General Assembly location to Florida is in Atlanta. Its course offerings include social media strategies, Google analytics, Google AdWords, coding, the business of influence, data science, and mastering programs such as Abode Photoshop, Abode InDesign, Excel and Python. It also holds hackathons.

As tech companies in South Florida are growing, there has been increased demand for people with computing skills. Miami-based Wyncode, which launched a coding school in 2014, recently reported impressive results for graduates of its programs.

In its application, Project Loki said it provides students with extensive career services and they have a 99 percent placement rate within six months of completing the program. The company also offers short workshops and community events.

However, the Project Loki application noted that it was also considering Minneapolis, Toronto and St. Louis for the new location. General Assembly does not have campuses in any of those cities.

The application said the biggest challenge to opening a training program in Miami was the lack of access and connectivity for transportation, which makes it difficult to serve a wide audience.

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