2019-2020 Florida Job Growth Grant Fund
Workforce Training Grant Proposal

Proposal Instructions: The Florida Job Growth Grant Fund Proposal (this document) must be completed and signed by an authorized representative of the entity applying for the grant. Please read the proposal carefully as some questions may require a separate narrative to be completed. If additional space is needed, attach a word document with your entire answer.

Entity Information

Name of Entity: Northwest Florida State College

Federal Employer Identification Number (if applicable): ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Primary Contact Name: Sam Renfroe

    Title: Executive Director of Grant Development

    Mailing Address: 100 College Blvd

                     Niceville, FL 32578

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Secondary Contact Name: Cristie Kedroski

    Title: Vice President of College Advancement

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Workforce Training Grant Eligibility

Pursuant to 288.101, F.S., the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund was created to promote economic opportunity by improving public infrastructure and enhancing workforce training. This includes workforce training grants to support programs offered at state colleges and state technical centers.

Eligible entities must submit proposals that:
- Support programs and associated equipment at state colleges and state technical centers.
- Provide participants with transferable and sustainable workforce skills applicable to more than a single employer.
- Are offered to the public.
- Are based on criteria established by the state colleges and state technical centers.
- Prohibit the exclusion of applicants who are unemployed or underemployed.

1. Program Requirements:

(If additional space is needed, attach a word document with your entire answer.)

Each proposal must include the following information describing how the program satisfies the eligibility requirements listed on page 1.

A. Provide the title and a detailed description of the proposed workforce training.

Through the Northwest Florida State College CyberWork Center project, the College will expand Cybersecurity and Computer Information Systems workforce programs to train and equip 150 individuals with industry-recognized credentials (CompTIA A+, CompTIA Net+, and CompTIA Security+). See attached narrative.

B. Describe how this proposal supports programs at state colleges or state technical centers.

Please see attached narrative.

C. Describe how this proposal provides participants transferable, sustainable workforce skills applicable to more than a single employer.

Please see attached narrative.

D. Describe how this proposal supports a program(s) that is offered to the public?

Yes, please see attached narrative.

E. Describe how this proposal is based on criteria established by the state colleges and state technical centers.

Please see attached narrative.

F. Does this proposal support a program(s) that will not exclude unemployed or underemployed individuals?

◉ Yes   ○ No

The programs do not exclude unemployed or underemployed individuals. The program provides credentials to support underemployed and unemployed individuals in increasing their employability and wage potential.

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G. Describe how this proposal will promote economic opportunity by enhancing workforce training. Please include the number of program completers anticipated to be created from the proposed training. Further, please include the economic impact on the community, region, or state and the associated metrics used to measure the success of the proposed training.

Please see attached narrative.

2. Additional Information:

(If additional space is needed, attach a word document with your entire answer.)

A. Is this an expansion of an existing training program?   ⦿ Yes   ○ No

If yes, please provide an explanation for how the funds from this grant will be used to enhance the existing program.

The College offers a wide variety of workforce development programs. The funds will be used to expand existing programs and establish new programs. Please see attached narrative.

B. Does the proposal align with Florida's Targeted Industries?

(View Florida's Targeted Industries here.)   ⦿ Yes   ○ No

If yes, please indicate the specific targeted industries with which the proposal aligns.
If no, with which industries does the proposal align?

The proposed programs provide skills that are portable and transferable across many industries including but not limited to the Defense & Homeland Security, Aviation & Aerospace, Cybersecurity and Financial/Professional Services. Please see attached narrative.

C. Does the proposal align with an occupation(s) on the Statewide Demand Occupations List and/ or the Regional Demand Occupations List?

(View Florida's Demand Occupations Lists here.)   ⦿ Yes   ○ No

If yes, please indicate the specific occupation(s) with which the proposal aligns.
If no, with which occupation does the proposal align?

Please see attached narrative for a list of proposed programs and aligned occupational families.

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D. Indicate how the training will be delivered (e.g., classroom-based, computer-based, other). If in-person, identify the location(s) (e.g., city, campus, etc.) where the training will be available.

If computer-based, identify the targeted location(s) (e.g. city, county, statewide, etc.) where the training will be available.

The training will be delivered in-person, classroom-based, with virtual computer supplements. Please see attached narrative.

E. Indicate the number of anticipated annual enrolled students and completers in the proposed program.

Over the two-year project period, the College expects to enroll 150 individuals in the proposed programs with an estimated 128 completing (85% completion rate).

F. Indicate the length of program (e.g., quarters, semesters, weeks, etc.), including anticipated beginning and ending dates.

Aug. 2020   Ongoing
Begin Date:_____   End Date:_____

The College will offer subsequent and simultaneous delivery of the training courses with multiple and rolling admissions. Please see attached narrative.

G. Describe the plan to support the sustainability of the program after grant completion.

The programs will be self-sustaining through tuition. Please see attached narrative.

H. Identify any certifications, degrees, etc. that will result from the completion of the program. Please include the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code and the percent of completers in each code, corresponding with Section E.

The project will award industry-recognized credentials and provide a path for 2 and 4 year degree programs. CIP codes and additional details are provided in the attached narrative.

I. Does this project have a local match amount?   ⊙ Yes ○ No

If yes, please describe the entity providing the match and the amount. (Do not include in-kind.)

The College cash and in-kind match is estimated at $724,453 of which $55,000 is in funding partial salaries for personnel. The remaining match is in-kind facility costs. The College recently renovated one of the facilities that will house the programs.

J. Provide any additional information or attachments to be considered for the proposal.

Please see attached narrative.

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3. Program Budget
(If additional space is needed, attach a word document with your entire answer.)

Estimated Costs and Sources of Funding: Include all applicable workforce training costs and other funding sources available to support the proposal.

1.) Total Amount Requested $ 865,000.00
Florida Job Growth Grant Fund

A. Other Workforce Training Project Funding: Sources:

City/County	$	
Private Sources	$	

College funds.

Other (grants, etc.)	$ 724,453.00	Please Specify: _____
Total Other Funding	$ 724,453.00	

B. Workforce Training Project Costs:

Equipment	$ 620,000.00
Personnel	$ 145,000.00
Facilities	$
Tuition	$
Training Materials	$ 75,000.00

Professional Development

Other	$ 724,453.00	Please Specify: _____
Total Project Costs	$ 1,589,453.00	

Note: The total amount requested must be calculated by subtracting the total other workforce training project funding sources in A. from the total workforce training project costs in B.

C. Provide a detailed budget narrative, including the timing and steps necessary to obtain the funding, how equipment purchases will be associated with the training program, if applicable, and any other pertinent budget-related information.

Please see attached narrative.

4. Approvals and Authority

(If additional space is needed, attach a word document with your entire answer.)

A. If entity is awarded grant funds based on this proposal, what approvals must be obtained before it can execute a grant agreement with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (e.g. approval of a board, commission or council)?

The College's Board of Trustees must approve awards over $100K.

B. If approval of a board, commission, council or other group is needed prior to execution of an agreement between the entity and the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity:

    i.   Provide the schedule of upcoming meetings for the group for a period of at least six months.

    ii.   State whether entity is willing and able to hold special meetings, and if so, upon how many days' notice.

The College Board of Trustees is willing to hold special meetings providing 7 days notice to the public. Scheduled meetings include 11/19/19, no December meeting, 1/21/20, 2/18/20, 3/24/20, 4/21/20.

C. Attach evidence that the undersigned has all necessary authority to execute this proposal on behalf of the entity. This evidence may take a variety of forms, including but not limited to: a delegation of authority, citation to relevant laws or codes, policy documents, etc.

The President of the College has authority to "approve, execute, and administer contracts" under Florida Statutes section 1001.65. Please see attached narrative.

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that I have express authority to sign this proposal on behalf of the above-described entity and to the best of my knowledge, that all data and information submitted in proposal is truthful and accurate and no material fact has been omitted.

Name of Entity: Northwest Florida State College

Name and Title of Authorized Representative: Dr. Devin Stephenson

Representative Signature:

Signature Date: 11-13-19

NORTHWEST FLORIDA
STATE COLLEGE
Florida Job Growth Grant
Application Responses Submitted November 13, 2019

1. Program Requirements
A. Provide the title and a detailed description of the proposed workforce training.

Northwest Florida State College (the College) is uniquely positioned to play an integral role in the Northwest Florida Forward regional transformation strategy, spurring economic growth, diversity, and resiliency. The College's primary service district includes Okaloosa and Walton Counties, where it operates six campuses and centers. In addition to the flagship Niceville Campus, the College operates a fully combined joint campus with the University of West Florida at the Fort Walton Beach Campus and full-time educational centers: Chautauqua Center in DeFuniak Springs, Robert L. F. Sikes Education Center in Crestview, South Walton Center in Santa Rosa Beach, and at Hurlburt Field.

To meet the demands of the FinTech industry and other key employers, through support from the Florida Job Growth Fund, the College will expand its workforce development training programs in **Cybersecurity and Computer Information Systems** at the Niceville and Ft. Walton Beach campuses. Over the two-year grant period, the College will establish the ***Northwest Florida State College CyberWork Center*** and will **train 150 individuals providing industry-recognized credentials** (CompTIA A+, CompTIA Net+, and CompTIA Security+) that result in individual economic mobility and provide long-term wage increases, as well as meet the demand for workers in the financial services industry in the region and across the state of Florida. Students will be able to gain skills required to obtain industry-recognized credentials that will be embedded into the Cybersecurity AS and Computer Information Systems AS degrees or through standalone courses. Florida Job Growth Funds will be used to equip five (5) labs across the two campuses, embed certifications through curriculum revisions, and provide faculty, and course content specific professional development for faculty.

Today, information technology (IT) plays a key role in most organizations. It helps organizations design, utilize, and support the computer systems that streamline production processes. Certifications and associate's degrees in information technology can open up more career opportunities in almost any industry. Florida ranks 4th nationwide in net tech employment and 2nd in net tech jobs added last year. Net tech employment grew by an estimated 18,147 jobs in 2018, a 3.3 percent increase over 2017, and Florida's tech wages are now 86 percent more than median wages across the state.[i]

Keeping computer systems safe and secure has become a critical function across most all industries. Rampant malware and ransomware attacks are holding companies and agencies hostage. Cyberattacks are growing in frequency and sophistication, yet the availability of sufficiently skilled cybersecurity professionals is falling way behind. To beat these cyberthreats requires not only the right technology but also the right people. The Information Systems Audit and Control Association, a non-profit information security advocacy group, predicts there will be a global shortage of two million cybersecurity professionals by 2019.[ii] Every year in the U.S., 40,000 jobs for information security analysts go unfilled, and employers are struggling to fill 200,000 other cybersecurity related roles, according to cybersecurity data tool CyberSeek.[iii] Within the last 12 months in Okaloosa and Walton Counties, there have been 1,357 unique postings for jobs that require cybersecurity credentials, all of which are on the Florida

Regional Demand Occupations List. There were 214 employers competing for workers for these jobs. The region produced only 53 completers for these jobs. Northwest Florida's training program in Cybersecurity extends knowledge and skills beyond entry-level computer networking and administration. Students will learn concepts and techniques essential for securing data and networks in both a vendor-neutral and Cisco environment.

In industry environments like IT and Cybersecurity, where the skills required to do a job are quickly evolving, it's critical that both workers and companies have access to responsive training that can close the skills gap quickly. As a result, these industries have developed industry recognized credentials to connect individuals to the skills they need to enter into and advance in jobs. Industry recognized credentials identify the knowledge, skills and abilities required in jobs within the specific industries to best align education and training to career success. They provide workers and students with a career pathway toward advancement and can supplement and/or provide an on ramp to higher education credentials. The industry recognized credentials also help employers validate the knowledge and skills of potential employees, saving time and money in the hiring and training processes.

Through the CyberWork Center project, the College **will make IT and Cybersecurity industry-recognized credentials more accessible in Walton and Okaloosa counties**. Costs, location, and availability are barriers to accessing the existing trainings in the Panhandle. Options are currently limited to for-profit providers or through sister colleges/universities that require travel. The College proposes to expand its existing Computer Information Systems program and establish a state-of-the-art Cybersecurity program. Rapidly advancing technology requires that the College continuously invest in new equipment and refine curricula to provide students with the most relevant training and learning environment. The College has identified CompTIA as its third-party assessment partner for the IT and Cybersecurity credentials. CompTIA (Computer Technology Industry Association) is the leading provider of vendor-neutral IT certifications in the world, and for more than 20 years, has developed training and certification exams for computing support, networking, security, open-source (Linux) development, cloud and mobility.

The following CompTIA industry-certifications will be offered through the CyberWork Center: CompTIA A+, CompTIA Net+, and CompTIA Security+. Through Florida Job Growth funding, the College will embed certifications in both the Computer Information Technology and Cybersecurity AS degree programs providing students with portable and stackable certifications and courses that build a path to 2-year and 4-year degrees.

Northwest Florida State College works closely with industries within the region to gain an in-depth understanding of the local economic and employment trends. For example, the College partners with Eglin Federal Credit Union. Eglin Federal has a critical need for IT and Cybersecurity professionals to keep its members' financial information secure and its business operating at capacity. Eglin Federal works with the College to help inform curricula and programs and also provides students with employment opportunities in the Financial Technology industry. Another partner, MAG Aerospace, is the primary computer system integrator for Air Force Special Operations Command. MAG Aerospace has hired more than 40 positions in the past year, with the vast majority from other regions of the United States. Fort Walton Beach Machining, another college partner, is a defense sub-contractor with extensive obligations for cybersecurity. (See attached letters of commitment.)

The College offers a flexible mix of programs that prepares both learners entering the workforce for the first time and workers making transitions with the skills and credentials they will need to be employable, creating a robust workforce for existing and emerging industries. Closing both technical and soft skills gaps is good for employers, employees, students, and regional economies. The CyberWork Center will address the unmet hiring needs of employers and build the capacity of the College to support students in earning family-supporting wages as well as fuel economic diversification and growth in the region.

B. Describe how this proposal supports programs at state colleges or state technical centers.

As part of Florida's public system of 28 state and community colleges, Northwest Florida State College offers bachelor's degree programs, associate degrees, and certificates. The College strives to provide students with a balance of transfer preparation, technical training, and adult studies. Current bachelor's programs include a Bachelor of Applied Science degree program in Project Management, Bachelor of Applied Science in Management and Supervision, a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing, a Bachelor of Science in Education degrees, and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Early Childhood Education, Birth through Four program. In addition to more than 96 different Associate degree and certificate programs, the College also provides adult basic education, high school equivalency instruction, English as a Second Language courses, non-credit continuing education, distance learning, dual enrollment for high school students, and customized training for business and industry.

The College's strategic plan focuses on student centered success, career pathways, innovative partnerships, community connectivity and building the capacity of the College to be the first choice in higher education for Northwest Florida. The project is directly aligned to the College's strategic plan and supports the expansion of Northwest Florida State College's programs to spur economic growth and increase the quality of life for individuals in the Panhandle. All proposed trainings, certifications, and programs offered through the initiative will take place at Northwest Florida State College campuses or online. The College provides an onsite testing center.

The initiative also supports higher educational attainment. The CompTIA A+, Net+ and Security+ certifications earned are transferable into college credit within existing programs at Northwest Florida State College. This awarding of credit can eliminate barriers to education by granting credit for industry experience.

C. Describe how this proposal provides participants transferable, sustainable workforce skills applicable to more than a single employer.

Educational attainment and portable skills are essential in the current economy. Today's jobs are more complex and more dependent on teams and technology. Workers are facing new challenges to upgrade their skills to keep their job and those without the skills to compete may not be finding jobs at all.[iv] The skills and credentials awarded through the IT and Cybersecurity programs are completely transferable and are applicable to more than one employer. The College has selected certification programs that are applicable across multiple occupations and transferrable to additional industry clusters identified as priorities by state and regional development entities including: Northwest Florida Forward, Florida Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Florida Jobs 2030, and West Florida Regional Planning Council's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2018 reports. For example, Florida's financial services industry is one of the state's fastest-growing sectors and faces a unique set of threats in Fintech that the skills acquired through the IT and Cybersecurity programs are applicable. The credentials listed are either nationally or internationally recognized throughout their specific industry, and are:

- Valued and demanded by employers
- Portable – skills learned are transferable and provide broad opportunities
- Stackable – skills learned may lead to opportunities for continuous or advanced training and education
- Lead to higher wages, career advancement, and/or increased job security

The CompTIA Certificates are stackable toward a Computer Information Systems or Cybersecurity Associate's Degree, helping students to move up the skills ladder one step at a time. The following is a detailed description of the stackable and transferable skills students will gain from each certification program.

The College will offer CompTIA's sequential certifications, which are widely recognized, vendor-neutral programs designed to show proficiency in the IT industry. CompTIA certifications are stackable toward a Computer Information Systems and/or Cybersecurity Career Pathway to help technical specialists achieve IT and Cybersecurity mastery,

from beginning to end. By providing vendor-neutral programs, workers gain portable skills that are applicable across many different systems and industries. To further illustrate the transferability of these certifications across sectors, the Florida Jobs 2030 report notes that "while a single new mid-level occupation exists for Cybersecurity, basic skills and Cybersecurity knowledge are increasingly in demand in other positions, such as auditors."[v]

CompTIA A+ is the industry standard for establishing a career in IT and lays the groundwork for specialized pathway in Cybersecurity. CompTIA A+ training covers:

- The hardware common to virtually every personal computer, including microprocessors, RAM, power supplies, and motherboards;
- BIOS, CMOS, expansion bus;
- Input/output devices;
- Installation, organization, maintenance, and troubleshooting different versions of Windows and Windows structures;
- Installing and troubleshooting printers;
- Select, install and service video, sound, and Portable Computers;
- Networking, including both wired and wireless;
- Security;
- Mobile devices, such as tablets and smartphones.

CompTIA Network+ helps workers develop a career in IT infrastructure by validating the hands-on skills needed to troubleshoot, configure, and manage both wired and wireless networks. Through the training and certification process, IT professionals demonstrate the knowledge and skills to:

- Design and implement functional networks;
- Configure, manage, and maintain essential network devices;
- Use devices such as switches and routers to segment network traffic and create resilient networks;
- Identify benefits and drawbacks of existing network configurations;
- Implement network security, standards, and protocols;
- Troubleshoot network problems;
- Support the creation of virtualized networks.

CompTIA Security+ is a global certification that validates the baseline skills workers need to perform core security functions and pursue an IT security career in any industry. Through the training and certification process candidates demonstrate the knowledge and skills required to install and configure systems to secure applications, networks, and devices; perform threat analysis and respond with appropriate mitigation techniques; participate in risk mitigation activities; and operate with an awareness of applicable policies, laws, and regulations.

While the CompTIA certifications are completely portable across industries, they are particularly valuable in public sector employment because the government mandated Department of Defense Directive 8140 which requires CompTIA Network+ and similar certifications to work for specific agencies. This directive affects any full or part-time military service member, contractor, or local nationals with privileged access to a Department of Defense information system performing information assurance (security) functions – regardless of job or occupational series. The total value of defense contracts in the region is $890M (2015). Aerospace and Defense remains a critical sector for the region due to its integrated supply chain, specialized talent base, and high earnings per job. The top employers for workers with CompTIA certifications in the region are General Dynamics, Jacobs Engineering Group, Inc., Odyssey Systems Consulting Group, Ltd., Lockheed Martin Corporation, and Macaulay-Brown, Inc.

D. Describe how this proposal supports a program that is offered to the public?

Classes will be made available to the public through "open enrollment" scheduling, meaning anyone can register for the courses. Grant funds will be used to offset enrollment costs to reduce barriers to public participation.

E. Describe how this proposal is based on criteria established by the state colleges and state technical centers.

The CyberWork Center will provide short-term courses intended to give individuals a credential and skills to increase their employability. The curricula are based on established industry norms and regulations and validated through reputable third-party assessments where applicable. The CompTIA A+ and CompTIA Network+ certifications also articulate into credit that aligns with Florida's Department of Education's Curriculum Frameworks.

G. Describe how this proposal will promote economic opportunity by enhancing workforce training.

Program Completers and Success Metrics

Through this proposed 2-year initiative, the College will train 150 individuals providing industry-recognized credentials that result in individual economic mobility and provide long-term wage increases, as well as, meet the demand for high-skill workers in the region. Of the 150 participants, the College anticipates 128 completers (85% completion rate). A completer is defined as someone who receives a third-party industry-recognized certificate, Northwest Florida State College certificate, or a non-credit workforce development certificate. The College will track participants and completers as the primary success metrics for the program. We will also track employment data for participants who are underemployed and unemployed and register through CareerSource Okaloosa Walton for job placement and counseling services.

The CyberWork Center will establish a new workforce certification program. As a result, individuals will earn a certificate to be employed in the targeted industries, increasing their wage 400% of the minimum wage ($74,318 average annual salary for the targeted occupations vs $17,160 minimum wage). The College estimates the initiative will yield a 4:1 ROI with an $4.5M economic impact in terms of annual wage increases over regional average salary alone for the 1 year after completing the program (inclusive of 128 completers only). Each completer is estimated to earn an additional $35,486 above the regional average salary for all occupations ($38,832).

The following details targets for each program aligned to target occupations:

Target Occupation	CyberWork Center Certificate Programs	Total
System Administrators, Computer User Support Specialists	CompTIA A+	60
System Administrators, Computer Network Support Specialists	CompTIA Network+	40
Information Security Analysts, Network Administrators	CompTIA Security+	50
	Total	150

Fueling Economic Opportunity through Workforce Training

The Northwest Florida region's economy is predominately concentrated in the tourism and military sectors. While these sectors are tremendous assets to the area, the region is vulnerable to economic shocks from natural disasters and retraction in military spending. Economic diversification strategies are imperative for economic growth and resiliency, and skilled workforce presents one of the most significant barriers to diversification. The Northwest Florida Forward, Florida Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Florida Jobs 2030, and West Florida Regional Planning Council's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2018 reports all cite talent as the key driver for economic diversity. For example, the first strategy in the CEDS is "Talent Supply and Education: Create a regional

workforce training and development initiative designed to meet the needs of large employers relocating or expanding in West Florida."[vi] A skilled workforce attracts new businesses and creates increased productivity and efficiencies that enable existing businesses to expand. **Without the training infrastructure to develop a skilled workforce across multiple industries, the capacity of the region to diversify its economy is reduced.**

Okaloosa and Walton Counties comprise Florida Workforce Region 2 under the CareerSource Workforce Development Board. Between 2005 and 2015, the Okaloosa and Walton Counties population grew by an estimated 12.3%.[vii] Walton County saw the greatest population growth between 2010-2015 (15.38% compared to 6.5% for the region and 7.8% for the State) and is forecasted to grow by 21% between 2015-2025.[viii] In addition to population growth, both Okaloosa and Walton Counties also experienced a high skilled labor shortage (job demand exceeds supply by at least 2.5% and up to 10%). All employment in Region 2 is projected to grow 1.2% over the next ten years, with occupations typically needing a 2-year degree or certificate forecasted to grow at a faster rate than those requiring a bachelor's degree (1.4% vs 1.2% per year respectively).[ix] The average worker in the Region 2 earned annual wages of $42,195 in 2017 compared to $53,246 for the nation.[x] **The combination of growing population (more workers in the labor pool) and growth in middle and high skilled jobs provide the region with a ripe opportunity to increase wages and diversified economic growth through education and workforce training.**

To have the greatest economic impact with this initiative, the College is targeting the IT and Cybersecurity industry sectors, which have been identified as an opportunity and a priority in the Northwest Florida Forward strategic report and the CEDS. Florida is already experiencing significant demand for jobs associated with disruptive technologies. During 2015, there were over 60,000 postings in Florida that mentioned data analytics, 13,000 that mentioned cybersecurity, and nearly 5,000 that mentioned cloud computing.[xi] The cybersecurity sector is one of the four target industries in the Northwest Florida Forward Strategy. While Cybersecurity is not considered a traditional cluster, it presents promising high-wage growth opportunities due to unique assets and new supporting programs in the region.[xii] The projected average growth rate (2017-2023) in this sector for the region is 10.2%. The average hourly wage across six IT and Cybersecurity occupations targeted with the CyberWork Center is $35.73 hour compared to the region average hourly wage of $18.67. The top skills advertised for these positions include: Systems Engineering, Information Systems, Information Assurance, Professional Services, Vulnerability, and Cybersecurity. Between January 2019 and September 2019 there were 2,634 unique job postings for the IT and Cybersecurity targeted occupations in Okaloosa and Walton counties with 453 employers seeking workers for these jobs. The existing education programs in the region produced 70 completers with credentials applicable to these jobs.

The CyberWork Center will build the capacity of the College to increase educational opportunities and expand demand-driven workforce development programs that address the unmet hiring needs of employers and fuel economic diversification and growth in the region. Research demonstrates that skilled talent is the key to productivity improvements, higher wages, innovation, and increased economic prosperity. Increasing workers' ability to earn higher wages is especially important in the Northwest Florida region where underemployment, high cost of living, and the high prevalence of low wage jobs are significant risk factors for the long-term economic viability of the area. The Northwest Florida Forward Strategic Comprehensive Economic Development Plan Strategic Action 1.3 specifically calls out the need to address chronic unemployment among vulnerable populations and underemployment as a high priority to "explore establishing an employer-driven workforce training initiative focused on assisting underemployed and long-term unemployed residents."[xiii] Industry certifications are linked to higher wages and career upward mobility.

2. Additional Information
A. Is this an expansion program?
The College currently provides workforce development trainings to over 2,000 individuals annually in Industrial Engineering Technology, Welding, Precision Machining, Microsoft Systems, and Leadership Development among

many others. All programs included in the proposal are expansions and/or new areas of specialization that have not been previously offered. The CyberWork Center will increase the number of individuals completing certificates from 6 in 2018-19 to at least 128 over the next two years.

B. Does this proposal align with Florida's Targeted Industries?
This program provides students with portable skills that are applicable to most any industry including many identified sectors on the Florida Enterprise Qualified Targeted Industries List. This program particularly aligns with the Defense & Homeland Security industry by offering cybersecurity training in compliance with meeting DOD 8570 standards for Cybersecurity certifications. The programs also provide foundational skills required for the Financial Technology (FinTech) industry.

C. Does this proposal align with an occupation(s) on the Statewide Demand Occupations List and/or the Regional Demand Occupations List?
The College has aligned the IT and Cybersecurity programs to SOC codes that are listed on Regional Demand Occupation List for region 2 (Okaloosa and Walton Counties), which is our service region. See table below for alignment and demand data. Data is sourced from Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc.

Northwest Florida State College Programs	Project Target Occupations	Region 2 Demand Occupations List	2019 Unique Job Postings	2019 Jobs	Projected Growth Service Area 2019-24
Cybersecurity	Information Security Analyst (SOC 151122)	√	781	245	13%
Computer Information Systems	Computer Network Architects (SOC 151143)	√	52	114	10%
	Computer Network Support Specialists (SOC 151152)	√	7	52	12%
	Computer Systems Analysts (SOC 151121)	√	227	306	11%
	Computer User Support Specialists (SOC 151151)	√	702	481	11%
	Database Administrators (SOC 151141)	√	76	60	12%
	Computer Programmer (SOC 151131)		70	190	4%

D. Indicate how the training will be delivered (e.g. classroom-based, computer-based, other). If in person, identify locations where the training will be available.
The training will be delivered using a multi-modal approach. Programs will meet synchronously in classroom settings that are flexible enough to be offered at either of our CyberWork Center locations (Niceville and Fort Walton Beach).

By having the flexibility to offer these programs across the region, we will be better able to respond to industry demand and be able to initiate program delivery immediately. Additionally, students in the IT and Cybersecurity programs will have access to a virtual classroom that extends beyond in-class participation. Students will create networks in the cloud.

F. Indicate the length of the program (e.g. quarters, semesters, weeks, etc.), including anticipated beginning and ending dates.
The certification programs in IT and Cybersecurity have flexible lengths that are customizable to each training instance. Most courses are designed to be delivered in a 45-hour block of instruction that would end with students testing for their industry credential in programs that require a test.

The CompTIA courses include an extended virtual classroom and students are required to test for certification within six months. Anticipated start date for the first programs is August 2020 with programs having subsequent and simultaneous multiple cohorts and rolling admissions.

Training Course	Duration	Start Date	End Date
CompTIA A+	6 Months Virtual, 90 hours classroom	August 2020	Multiple cohorts, rolling admission
CompTIA Network+	6 Months Virtual	August 2020	Multiple cohorts, rolling admission
CompTIA Security+	6 Months Virtual	August 2020	Multiple cohorts, rolling admission

G. Describe the plan to support the sustainability of the proposal.

The program is designed to be self-sustaining through the tuition and fees that are normally associated with this program. The student expenses that are included in the grant proposal are designed to support program implementation and sustain the program throughout the grant period. The grant funded period provides the College with an opportunity to establish the Center as a recognized, trusted source for these types of trainings within the community and among business industries. The College will be able to establish a track record of successful outcomes from the trainings that can be marketed throughout the community to ensure self-sustaining tuition. The pool of program participants for the proposed trainings is self-regenerating, as many of the certifications require either re-certification or ongoing Professional Development Units that ensure continued demand and support the sustainability of the programs.

H. Identify any certifications, degrees, etc. that will result from the completion of the program.

The following certifications will be awarded through the programs: CompTIA A+, CompTIA Network+, CompTIA Security+. The following degrees will be awarded through the programs: Computer Information Systems AS degree (CIP Code 0511090107) and Cybersecurity AS degree (CIP Code 1511100308).

J. Additional Information:

Workforce Development Region 2 (which includes Okaloosa and Walton Counties) is home to a significant number of veterans (16.9% of the population are veterans ages 18-64 compared to 6.1% Florida and 5.5% U.S.).[xiv] Each year there are over 3,000 military men and women separating from the military and staying in the area, and an estimated 74% of the region's military retirees are employed in a second career.[xv] The College's student body is diverse including high school graduates going directly to college, active duty military, separating veterans reorienting to civilian life, and people who are changing careers or returning to the workforce. Annual enrollment is 7,728 of which 7,422 students are pursuing college credit and 306 are earning noncollege credits. Northwest Florida is home to Eglin Air Force Base (the largest installation in the world). The College has the highest percentage of students (11%) receiving post 9/11 GI Bill benefits as compared to the Florida College System average (3%).

Retired and separating military personnel are a potential built-in, ready workforce due to the number of military installations located in our region; however, a survey administered by Okaloosa-Walton CareerSource from 2011-2016 for personnel separating from the military revealed that 25% of respondents were leaving the region due to lack of job opportunities. The CyberWork Center can help bridge the skills developed in the military to the needs of the local labor market. The College provides support services specific to students who are veterans and military connected.

3. Program Budget

Provide detailed budget narrative.

The total amount requested is $865,000 inclusive of the following budget items.

Equipment: $620,000

All equipment items requested will increase the training capacity and provide students with up-to-date and state-of-the-art technology. Equipment includes: 30 computers each for the 5 labs, classroom video capabilities, racks, switchgear, servers, classroom furnishing, cloud space, and virtual networks to support classrooms and instruction. Equipment items will be purchased following all appropriate local and state procurement policies and guidelines.

Faculty: $120,000

Additional faculty will be required to accommodate the increased number of students and course offerings. Once the programs are fully operational, faculty costs can be sustained through tuition and fees.

Professional Development: $25,000

To accommodate the increased number of students and expanded certifications, faculty will require additional training and certifications. All professional development will be specific to the course content as described in the proposal.

Training Materials and Licensure/Certification Exams: $75,000

The materials requested include training software and licensure and educational/consumable supplies for initiative operations. The licensure and certification exam fees are included to remove barriers to obtaining industry credentials for students.

Curriculum Development: $25,000

To revise the existing curriculum ensuring the most relevant and up-to-date principles are being taught and to embed industry-recognized certifications into courses across the IT and Cybersecurity degree programs. A total of 10 courses will be revised through this initiative.

4. Approvals and Authority

Florida Statutes Section 1001.65 defines powers and duties given to Florida College System presidents stating, "The president is the chief executive officer of the Florida College System institution, shall be corporate secretary of the Florida College System institution board of trustees, and is responsible for the operation and administration of the Florida College System institution." As provided in subsection (5), each Florida College System president shall, "Approve, execute, and administer contracts for and on behalf of the Florida College System institution board of trustees for licenses; the acquisition or provision of commodities, goods, equipment, and services; leases of real and personal property; and planning and construction to be rendered to or by the Florida College System institution, provided such contracts are within law and guidelines of the State Board of Education and in conformance with policies of the Florida College System institution board of trustees, and are for the implementation of approved programs of the Florida College System institution."

Endnotes

[i] CompTIA Cyberstates Report 2019 retrieved from https://www.comptia.org/newsroom/press-releases/2019/03/26/technology-employment-expands-its-presence-in-florida-s-workforce

[ii] Kauflin, Jeff. "The Fast-Growing Job With A Huge Skills Gap: Cyber Security." Forbes, Forbes Magazine, 17 Mar. 2017, www.forbes.com/sites/jeffkauflin/2017/03/16/the-fast-growing-job-with-a-huge-skills-gap-cyber-security/#751e5f475163.

[iii] Ibid.

[iv] Baum, S. and Payea, K. (2005) The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society. Retrieved from https://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/education-pays-2004-full-report.pdf

[v] Lamback, S. (2016) Florida Jobs 2030 Report: A Cornerstone Series Report for the Florida 2030 Initiative. Jobs for the Future. Retrieved from http://www.flchamber.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/FINAL_Florida-Jobs-2030-Report-013117.pdf

[vi] West Florida Regional Planning Council. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022 retrieved from http://www.wfrpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/DRAFT-FINAL-CEDS.pdf.

[vii] Economic Modeling Specialists Intl. (2018) EMSI 2018.1; QCEW, non-QCEW, Self-Employed. Available at www.economicmodeling.com

[viii] Ibid.

[ix] Career Source (2017) Okaloosa Walton Economic Overview Region 2. Retrieved from http://www.chmuraecon.com/jobseq

[x] Ibid.

[xi] Lamback, S. (2016) Florida Jobs 2030 Report: A Cornerstone Series Report for the Florida 2030 Initiative. Jobs for the Future. Retrieved from http://www.flchamber.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/FINAL_Florida-Jobs-2030-Report-013117.pdf

[xii] Florida's Great Northwest. (2017) Northwest Florida Forward: A Regional Strategy for Economic Transformation. Available from www.northwestfloridaforward.com

[xiii] Florida's Great Northwest. (2017) Northwest Florida Forward: A Regional Strategy for Economic Transformation. Available from www.northwestfloridaforward.com

[xiv] Career Source (2017) Okaloosa Walton Economic Overview Region 2. Retrieved from http://www.chmuraecon.com/jobseq

[xv] Ibid.

Nov. 12, 2019

Ken Lawson
Executive Director
Department of Economic Opportunity
107 E. Madison St.
Caldwell Building
Tallahassee, FL 32399-4120

Dear Executive Director Lawson:

Please find attached the application from Northwest Florida State College for the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund Workforce Training Grant titled CyberWork Center.

This proposal responds not only to the directive of Governor Ron DeSantis for projects to support the FinTech industry, but also to the compelling regional labor market data and requests from prominent employers in our service area, as evidenced by the attached letters.

As noted in our mission statement, Northwest Florida State College delivers outstanding educational programs that are relevant, accessible and engaging for students of all ages, and provides economic development activities for the communities we serve. With our proximity to Eglin Air Force Base and the many local companies that support the military, offering Cybersecurity and related IT training is a priority not only to meet the needs of FinTech companies but also of defense contractors. These companies are currently often forced to hire trained individuals from other regions.

Should you have any questions about this proposed project, please contact Michael Erny, Dean of Career Education, at 850-729-6051.

Thank you for the opportunity to apply for these needed funds.

Sincerely,

Dr. Devin Stephenson
President

November 4, 2019

Dr. Devin Stephenson
President
Northwest Florida State College
100 College Blvd. E.
Niceville, FL 32578

Dear Dr. Stephenson:

I am writing to express the support of Eglin Federal Credit Union for the Northwest Florida State College proposal to the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund of the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

As the project is dedicated to producing more skilled individuals in the fields of Cybersecurity and Computer Network Systems Technology, it will help to address a crucial need in our industry.

Eglin Federal Credit Union provides financial services to over 121,000 members at nine branch locations in Northwest Florida and world-wide through online electronic services. Security of our member's financial information is critical to our ongoing operations. Of course, our security posture is a direct reflection of the skill level of the employees that configure and monitor our systems. Our need for trained cybersecurity experts will grow along with the expansion of our electronic services.

As a part of the project, we will consult with the College on knowledge, skills and abilities desired in our employees and assist the College in preparing curricula. We will also consider hiring program completers when those individuals meet criteria of openings in our company.

We look forward to working with Northwest Florida State College on this project.

Sincerely,

Jerry B. Williams
President/CEO

///⊄MAG AEROSPACE

Nov. 4, 2019

Dr. Devin Stephenson
President
Northwest Florida State College
100 College Blvd. E.
Niceville, FL 32578

Dear Dr. Stephenson:

I, Chad A. Vuyovich, am writing to express the support of MAG Aerospace for the Northwest Florida State College proposal to the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund of the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

As the project is dedicated to producing more skilled individuals in the fields of Cybersecurity and Computer Network Systems Technology, it will help to address a crucial need in our industry.

MAG Aerospace is the primary computer system of systems integrator for Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC). Our Fort Walton Office has hired over 40 positions in the last year and the majority were relocated from other United States Regions. These programs would help build a pipeline of talent and prevent huge moving costs for all defense contracting companies. MAG has been a large proponent in the Economic Development Council – Okaloosa Branch and can assure programs such as these attract other engineering and information technology firms to expand services within the tri-county area of Northwest Florida!

As a part of the project, MAG will consult with the College on knowledge, skills and abilities desired in our employees and assist the College in preparing curricula. We will also consider program completers for hiring when those individuals meet criteria of openings in our company.

We look forward to working with Northwest Florida State College on this project.

Sincerely,

Chad A. Vuyovich
Director of Engineering
MAG Aerospace FWB

FORT WALTON MACHINING
Dead Center Perfect Manufacturing

43 Jet Drive NW
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548
850-244-9095
Fax 850-244-4874
www.fwmachining.com

November 8, 2019

Dr. Devin Stephenson
President
Northwest Florida State College
100 College Blvd. E.
Niceville, FL 32578

Dear Dr. Stephenson:

I am writing to express the support of Fort Walton Machining, Inc. for the Northwest Florida State College proposal to the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund of the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

As the project is dedicated to producing more skilled individuals in the fields of Cybersecurity and Computer Network Systems Technology, it will help to address a crucial need in our industry.

Fort Walton Machining, Inc. is a sub-contractor for Department of Defense prime contractors; therefore, we fall under the Cybersecurity NIST requirements. The extensive obligations have increased the need for high tech cybersecurity candidates for our company to meet and exceed these demands. Northwest Florida is home to multiple military bases and DOD contractors all competing for the limited candidate pool. A cybersecurity program at Northwest Florida State College would enlarge the candidate pool and allow companies to hire local talent.

As a part of the project, we will consult with the College on knowledge, skills and abilities desired in our employees and assist the College in preparing curricula. We will also consider program completers for hiring when those individuals meet criteria of openings in our company.

We look forward to working with Northwest Florida State College on this project.

Sincerely,

Tim McDonald
Director of Operations

Nov. 4, 2019

Dr. Devin Stephenson
President
Northwest Florida State College
100 College Blvd. E.
Niceville, FL 32578

Dear Dr. Stephenson:

I am writing to express the support of CareerSource Okaloosa Walton for the Northwest Florida State College (NWFSC) proposal to the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund of the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

As the project is dedicated to producing more skilled individuals in the fields of Cybersecurity and Computer Network Systems Technology, it will help to address a skills deficiency in our regional workforce.

There is clearly a need for expanding the quality of Cybersecurity and Computer Network Systems Technology training programs in our community. CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will make a commitment to work with NWFSC and other community partners to support these expanded training programs in Okaloosa and Walton Counties. We agree to provide outreach to our job seekers and business partners, who may be eligible to participate in these grant funded training programs at NWFSC.

We look forward to working with Northwest Florida State College on this project.

Sincerely,

Michele Burns
Executive Director