



CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
HOMELAND SECURITY-EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
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Cyber Washington Employer Engagement And Work Experience

TechHire Grant

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The Employer Engagement is critical to building successful pathways to employment of Cyber Washington's target populations. Engaging employers produces benefits at every stage of the educational process and requires close cooperation with industry as well as public workforce agencies to ensure that pathways and supporting curriculum and instruction align with the labor market. The grant proposal is targeting industries which need computer user support, security analysts and systems and network specialists. Successful employer engagement and activities supporting it are part of a continuum and each step is important in deepening the relationship with an employer to ensure a success match of student with employers. The Center will be active in:

1. **Engagement - Solicit on-going employers involvement and commitment**

- To expand the current employer commitments the Center will utilize a variety of **Employer Engagement** methods using Homeland Security-Emergency Management pathway employers (Criminal Justice, Security, Cybersecurity/Technology, Fire Services; HSEM and Occupational Safety and Health, Emergency Medical and Health Services) in the public, private and non-profit sectors. The Center will directly engaging hiring managers within the departments of these agencies and organizations listed in the target area. These one-on-one meetings will gather information about the organization/industry needs and future demands including how to gain industry participation with college programs work-based training (internships) opportunities for students.

The Center will partner with Cyber Washington colleges' program faculty and staff during these engagements to ensure that the linkage is made between the college and business to establish the relationships needed for successful intern and apprenticeship placements. The Center will provide education and training information for organizations and businesses on how to establish and manage a successful internship program and will provide on-going coaching and mentoring with the employers to ensure participants and businesses have a positive and quality experience that results in the employment of the Cyber Washington participant.

The Center will assist in tracking and evaluating the internship placements including the reporting of successful employment of students by participating employers. Summaries of findings will be provided to all of the Cyber Washington participating colleges. The HSEM staff will meeting with faculty and staff of participating colleges to discuss data, lessons learned and determine any modifications to be made in the programs process or curriculum content. In programs and/or curriculum and engagement that will strengthen student employability. The Center will continue the face-to-face employer engagement with any modifications learned expanding the engagement to additional career clusters.

- The Center utilizes the opportunity at conferences and other events to engage employers in gathering trends, skills and needs/gaps information. The Center is a sponsor of the Partners in Preparedness Annual Conference which occurs in April in Tacoma and draws over 1000 participants including practitioners, educators and the industries that support the sector cluster. This year the Center will completed one-on-one interviews with a minimum of 50 employers including government, healthcare, higher education,

Military, NGO's, and private sector businesses (business services, commercial real-estate, manufacturing-Boeing, Starbucks). The information gathered will be used to continue to build new placements for students because we will have become informed on hiring practice, and IT work related gaps and needs so we can assist the participating colleges in matching students with the right placement. This same approach was used at other business and industry training and education gatherings.

2. Building Education Capacity – Expand capacity of colleges' career and placement services.

- The Center will work one-on-one with employers to identify and develop additional work-based learning opportunities (e.g. internships, on-the-job training, and paid/un-paid volunteers' position) that will enhance industry participation in the Cyber Washington Program. We will be providing information and assistance to employers on how to host interns and discussing the benefits of providing a paid internships hiring students who have successfully completed a certificate or degree programs. The Center's successful **"Work Experience Market Place"** (section on the Center's website) will bring students, employers, colleges and their faculty together in one centralized location to find newer, internships and job opportunities which will help them gain that much needed work experience to compliment the moving forward on their employment or certificate/degree. The Market Place will be utilized to specifically target Cyber Washington internship placements/employer matches and track results. Results will be provided quarterly to participating colleges in a discussion forum setting where lessons learned can be quickly translated into productive program modifications.