Overview
The Capital Region Collaborative: Jobs in Technical Careers (CRC), a consortium of three Maryland community colleges (Montgomery College, Frederick Community College, and Prince George’s Community College) in the suburbs of Washington, DC, provides training funded by the America’s Promise Grant and designed to strengthen the pipeline of skilled workers to expand our region’s middle-to high-skilled workforce in in the Information Technology (IT) industry.

The CRC has trained over 1,200 unemployed and underemployed individuals, giving them the opportunity to attain high-quality, tuition-free education that leads to in-demand industry-recognized credentials and IT employment. Each college delivers different specialized IT training with different delivery models, offering classes evenings, weekends, and in intensive full-day boot camps. The training includes real-world projects in consultation with local employers.

In addition to technical training, participants also receive career navigator guidance to assist them in attaining their employment goals. Training opportunities include: IT Fundamentals, Java Web Development, Cybersecurity, Data Analytics, and Amazon Web Services, among others. Many of our graduates successfully test for industry certifications post-completion, including: CompTIA A+, IT Fundamentals+, Network+, Security+, AWS Developer Associate, CAHIMS, CCNA, OCA Java, and Tableau.

Program Highlight
With a focus on helping those under-represented in IT and Cybersecurity, the CRC has trained 1,256 individuals; 42% were female versus an industry average of 10%, and 79% were ethnic minorities. Intensive, hands-on instructional delivery, coupled with intensive, in-depth group and individual career navigation services, have proven pivotal for our participants’ success in finding fulfilling, training-related employment. So far we have recorded 30% of our completers finding employment.

We continue following up with our participants and alumni with incentivized surveys, and supporting them; including a “Workplace Excellence” seminar, Zoom webinars related to career preparation and personal branding, and individual career counseling. When the pandemic limited in-person classes, we were able to transition
instruction and counseling to remote delivery, even finding a remote “hands on” experience for cybersecurity students, and offering all students a virtual career fair. Our agility and holistic approach to instruction and student support is a promising practice for sustainability.

**Regional Workforce Partnerships and Sector Strategies**

The CRC works with local, regional, state, and national agency workforce and employer partners to improve our service delivery and the outcomes of our participants. We are connected with over 56 employers offering varying degrees of direct program advisory and hiring support. Partners including Amazon, the Department of Defense, and Lockheed Martin, have hired our students.

We also have a Tech Talent Advisory Committee, in partnership with the largest organization of technology companies in the state of Maryland: The Maryland Tech Council (MTC) that has over 90 members. Our advisory committee consists of 10 IT employers, including local companies and local representatives of national companies. We meet quarterly, discussing industry trends, curricula, hiring needs and capacities, and other relevant topics, such as the recent move to mostly remote education and work in IT.

We also recently piloted a virtual career fair with MTC. It had 15 employer exhibitors, 623 registrants, and culminated in the submission of 326 job applications.

**Success Story and Impact**

After the pandemic hit, we were faced with migrating instruction online, and some of that instruction was very “hands on.” One mitigating strategy that proved productive was a partnership with the Baltimore Cyber Range. Through funding by the Maryland Department of Labor’s EARN (Employment Advancement Right Now) grant, our students are able to build on our intensive instruction with an advanced, hyper-realistic cybersecurity threat event using commercial Security Operation Center (SOC) tools. This training offers valuable and recognizable experience that students can use to test for industry-recognized credentials and gain cybersecurity employment.

One of the students that went through CRC training and participated in the Cyber Range found employment as one of our cybersecurity instructors. She has helped to prepare subsequent students for their journeys toward cybersecurity certification and employment.

**Capital Region Collaborative: Jobs in Technical Careers**

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America’s Promise at Montgomery College  
America’s Promise at Frederick Community College  
America’s Promise at Prince George’s Community College