In the Nation, it is estimated that around 900,000 people are employed in Cybersecurity related type of jobs according the State Ranking Annual Report by Business Facilities Magazine. The demand of skilled professionals in the Information Technology (IT) sector is growing exponentially each year and exceeding the supply with an estimated shortage of 3 million workers by 2021. This makes the IT industry to be considered the sector with the largest growth potential for the next 3 years.

The State of Texas ranked #1 in Cybersecurity sector growth potential followed by Virginia and Louisiana. The capacity to place and retain the number one ranking resides in the ability to continue aligning education, industry and government sectors to collaborate in future opportunities for industry development.

In the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV), Workforce Solutions has identified at least 15 IT growing occupations that feed into all sectors of the local economy. For the current year, there is an estimate of 3,335 IT jobs in the LRGV region with an expected growth of 25% by the year of 2028. This represents an estimate of 832 new IT jobs with median wages ranging from $18 to $57 dollars per hour and an overall average of $31.75 dollars per hour considering current labor market conditions.

Among the main growing IT occupations, those that are under the categories of systems engineers, software developers, databases architects and administrators, networks architects and administrators, security and intelligence analysts, quality assurance and testers are the occupations with the greatest potential to lead and expand into Cybersecurity related type of jobs. These specific occupations are:

1. 11-3021   Computer and Information Systems Managers
2. 15-1121   Computer Systems Analysts
3. **15-1122   Information Security Analysts**
4. 15-1131   Computer Programmers
5. 15-1132   Software Developers, Applications
6. 15-1133   Software Developers, Systems Software
7. **15-1141   Database Administrators**
8. 15-1142   Network and Computer Systems Administrators
9. **15-1143   Computer Network Architects**
10. 15-1152   Computer Network Support Specialists
11. 15-1199   Computer Occupations, All Other
     11.1   15-1199.01   **Software Quality Assurance Engineers and Testers**
     11.2   **15-1199.02**   **Computer Systems Engineers/Architects**
     11.3   15-1199.03   Web Administrators
     11.4   **15-1199.06**   **Database Architects**
     11.5   15-1199.07   Data Warehousing Specialists
     11.6   15-1199.08   Business Intelligence Analysts

The Wagner-Peyser Grant of **$490,268** awarded to Mission Economic Development Council (MEDC) represents not only the opportunity for 130 students to access IT industry certifications, but also the continuous efforts of industry and government sectors to collaborate on initiatives to prepare the local workforce for future high skilled and high paying jobs.

It is also worth mentioning that Workforce Solutions is collaborating with local businesses, organizations and industry leaders to develop a regional IT Workforce Assessment to identify and assess the region's needs in terms of workforce, education, infrastructure, and economic growth potential to help drive future workforce development initiatives.