



PRUDENTIAL CYBER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM



*Upskilling the
Workforce to Thrive
in Careers Related to Information Technology*

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Prudential Financial, Inc., an insurance company, contacted WSB and indicated interest in supporting an increase in the number of professionals with Information Technology (IT) certificates in the region. WSB then partnered with Prudential to create a program that would allow participants to access training opportunities and gain certifications after training and testing.

About the Program

Through this partnership with Prudential Financial, Inc., Workforce Solutions Borderplex offered Borderplex residents the opportunity to take part in a new IT training/certification program that offered free training to selected participants. The 6-week course was led by a certified CompTIA instructor. Workforce Solutions offered a new certification program that provided candidates with the necessary skills required to pass the following certifications:

- Salesforce Certified Administrator
- AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner
- Certified Associate in Python Programming
- Querying Data with Transact – SQL

Candidates interested in this program were required to take an assessment test and pass with a 55% or more. Candidates were then interviewed and invited for a WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker screening to ensure their success in the program. WSB searched for individuals with specific interests in a career in IT, previous IT experience, or hobbies related to IT. WSB was especially interested in candidates who were looking to upskill and grow in their careers in IT. WSB also partners with the Adult Education and Literacy Consortium (AEL), which recommended students for the program.

The selected program participants had the opportunity to enter a 6-week training cohort that offered a suite of IT certificates to build an individual's capacity to work in the technology field. This innovative training program was targeted to adults; students; veterans, transitioning soldiers, and military spouses; and currently unemployed and underemployed professionals. WSB was especially interested in recruiting Veterans and transitioning soldiers to provide certification opportunities that would allow them to transition into the civilian workforce.

Program Goals & Funding Sources

Our goal was to assist 20 individuals through this program. We have ultimately assisted 13 individuals so far. The program was funded by Prudential Financial, Inc. and a Texas Industry Partnership grant. WIOA funds also covered some expenses related to the program. The total cost for this program was about \$100,000. This funding went towards exam costs, instructors, facilities, operations, and support services.

Program Challenges

This program was fast paced, which proved to be a greater challenge than originally expected for WSB as well as program participants. The program was designed as a six-week course that allowed participants to obtain four different IT-related certificates. However, these certificates often take up to two years to complete. Thus, participants were challenged to complete all certifications in just over six weeks. The program ended up being significantly more rigorous for participants. Perhaps expanding the timeline for earning the certifications could be something reevaluated in future iterations of this program.

WSB may also want to consider conducting more thorough research regarding the certification process, demands, and criteria for candidates entering the program. Changing the timeline or admitting more experienced participants may provide fewer challenges in the future. Restructuring the program may also be important because although all participants ended up finishing the classes, not everyone passed the certification exams on the first attempt. This proves that the timeline may have been too quick. However, many of these participants continued to study and have since passed or are looking to take the exam in the future again to gain the credentials.

Outcomes and Successes

Several program participants earned their certifications, and many went on to gain employment opportunities related to their IT skills. Hourly wages ranged from \$12 per hour up to \$36 per hour because of these new credentials. Some individuals were even able to transition their military experience into a job in the private or public industry, including opportunities for the federal government. This opportunity ultimately allowed individuals to take the next step to upskill their credentials in the IT industry and transition from the military into the civilian workplace.

About Workforce Solutions Borderplex

Workforce Solutions Borderplex (WSB) is the public workforce system in the six-county Borderplex region that assists employers in finding quality employees, and training individuals with the skills necessary to thrive in the workplace. We administer a broad range of programs and services to effectively address local workforce issues. Workforce Solutions also establishes partnerships with various stakeholders within the region to improve education, employment, and economic development. Our organization aims to provide skilled workers for employers by advancing education, employment, entrepreneurship, and economic development opportunities in support of global competitiveness and regional prosperity. Ultimately, we are interested in empowering the most dynamic workforce to achieve global competitiveness and regional prosperity.