President's Community-Based Job Training Grants
Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

AWARD AMOUNT: $1,928,457

AREA SERVED: Stone, Harrison, George, and Jackson Counties, Mississippi

INDUSTRY: Geospatial and Information Technology

KEY PARTNERS AND LEVERAGED RESOURCES: $240,500 in leveraged resources from three employer partners, two workforce partners, two education partners and two other partners

CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS: The geospatial and information technology industries are experiencing a regional workforce shortage of job-ready technicians. Currently, Mississippi Gulf Coast College has limited curriculum and training modules with geospatial applications specific to industry segments. The college also has an insufficient number of qualified and certified instructors to teach technical, application-based skills in geospatial and information technology (IT) fields. The industry has indicated a need to further develop the role of the two-year college system in providing geospatial and IT training, as well as a need to improve public and student awareness of career opportunities, skill sets, and competencies required for geospatial and IT jobs.

ACTIVITIES: Local capacity to prepare students for high growth geospatial and IT jobs will be increased by: 1) Assessing workforce needs; 2) Creating a geospatial occupational pathway through selected technical programs; 3) Increasing the supply and diversity of enrollments in technical programs; 4) Strengthening IT instructors' skills to train students in real-world applications; and 5) Operating as a National Information Technology Apprenticeship System (NITAS) regional center. The second goal is to train a geospatial and IT workforce by: 1) Equipping incumbent, dislocated, and entry-level workers with geospatial skills customized to selected industry sectors and/or employers; and 2) Equipping graduates of selected IT programs with validated and profiled IT skill sets and competencies gained from classroom instruction and on-the-job training.

PROJECTED OUTCOMES:
- 45 K-12 teachers will demonstrate geospatial applications and use in classroom instructions;
- 1,500 middle and high school students will participate in geospatial demonstrations;
- 14 faculty will be trained with nine faculty gaining certification;
- 80% of program graduates will attain job placements;
- 150 incumbent workers will receive customized training with 95% receiving continuing education certificate;
- 150 students will gain IT industry-recognized certification; and
- 30 workers/students will receive entry technician certification.