

FY 2025

SUMMARY REPORT







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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In academic year 2024–2025, the Amarillo College Innovation Outpost (AC|IO) provided customized workforce training to regional employers through grants and corporate contracts. The IO also hosted workforce-focused business and community events, academic cybersecurity/networking classes, and noncredit career accelerators. This past year, the IO hosted over 100 employers, 5500 employees, and numerous high school and college students.

- In FY 2025, the IO contracted with 19 regional business partners to serve 3,427 employees across 169 courses for a revenue of \$177,288.09.
 - Under the PETE grant, AC received \$318,603, taught 64 courses, and served over 1,250 participants under the IO umbrella.
 - The IO received two TWC Skills Development Fund grants and a small business development grant totaling \$254,000 to support customized workforce training for regional employers.
 - The IO received \$280,000 under the THECB TRUE grant to extend the development of noncredit accelerators in cybersecurity so they align to short-term credit (academic) pathways that lead to high-paying, high-demand jobs.
 - FY 2025 was the final year of the three-year NSF Cybersecurity Accelerator grant held at the IO. The funds (approximately \$98,000 for year three) supported faculty professional development and curriculum development.
 - Under the TMI grant, AC taught 66 courses to 1,068 employees from 61 companies for a total revenue of \$106,383.
 - The IO partnered with Texas Tech Innovation Hub and Pantex, the largest regional employer, to host the Pantex Innovation Challenge for over 60 AmTech and AC STEM students to solve complex issues around national security.
 - The IO has received recognition for the standardized training offered under the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and for cybersecurity (CompTIA, EC Council).
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- In FY 2026, the IO will continue working with the TWC Skills Development Fund and the Skills for Small Business grants. The THECB TRUE 2024 grant ends in early December 2025, and the IO will continue to use funds to pay for faculty teaching the rapid review courses, student vouchers, classroom equipment, and to support renovations to improve classroom and event spaces.**

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

The Amarillo College | Innovation Outpost (AC|IO) provides workforce training and development through partnership contracts and grants with business and industry and through open enrollment workforce training courses for the community. In September 2024, Amarillo College hired an executive director of workforce training and development

- 1 to support the growth of corporate and contract training provided by Amarillo College at the Innovation Outpost,
- 2 to increase business-focused training grants through the Texas Workforce Commission,
- 3 to support the continued success of federal and foundation grants under the director of environmental health and safety, and
- 4 to organize and promote workforce engagement events at the IO throughout the year.



NON-GRANT-FUNDED CORPORATE AND CONTRACT TRAINING

Continuing professional education and training customized to regional business partners provides just-in-time professional development to corporate partners. Training is broad-based, ranging from leadership or soft skills training to customized technical skills workshops. Contracts with employers may be a rental agreement, short-term training (one or two days), or a long-term sessions (twice a month for a year). Workforce training provided 100% online through AC's partnership with Ed2Go (www.ed2go.com) is also part of the corporate and contract training portfolio. Most corporate contracts were with different departments at Pantex.

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GRANT-FUNDED WORKFORCE TRAINING

The AC|IO managed several grants during FY 2025:

- » the third and final year of the National Science Foundation Cybersecurity Accelerator (closed June 30),
- » the one-year THECB Texas Reskilling and Upskilling Through Education (TRUE) grant (closes Dec. 1),
- » the Partnership for Environmental Technology Education (PETE) grant through the Department of Energy,
- » and the Skills for Small Business grant through the Texas Workforce Commission.

The NSF and the TRUE grants focused on building noncredit-to-credit cybersecurity pathways and providing accelerated cybersecurity training and industry certifications for students entering the field, as well as to IT professionals in need of new or renewed industry credentials.

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STATE, FEDERAL, AND OTHER FUNDS

Beginning in fall 2024, the IO staff reached out to the Texas Workforce Commission to request guidance on applying for several grants including SDF, Contingency SDF, and the Skills for Small Business grant. These grants are similar in that they all require employer partnerships; they are distinct from one another in that the funds are used for customized training (SDF and Contingency SDF) or for any open-enrollment course offered at the college (Skills for Small Business). Below is a brief description of each grant, the employer partners utilizing the funds, and the amount of each request.

TWC Skills Development Funds (SDF) and Contingency SDF

The Texas Workforce Commissions issues two types of Skills Development Fund (SDF) grants. One requires an employer partner and the type of workforce training identified at the submission of the grant, while the SDF Contingency grant allows an open-ended grant request with an employer partner named within 90 days of the initial base award (\$50,000). This base award can increase depending on the number of employer partners requesting training.

Currently, the IO has been awarded a regular TWC SDF grant in partnership with International Aerospace Coatings for \$167,000; the IO has also received a contingency SDF for the minimum amount of \$50,000 and expects ASCO Heavy Equipment to participate in training under this award. Both training courses are expected to begin late fall 2025.

Skills for Small Business (SSB) Funds

In fall 2024, the IO was awarded a TWC Skills for Small Business (SSB) funds grant. This grant allows small businesses with fewer than 100 employees the opportunity to send their workforce to take college coursework directly supporting the employer's workforce training and development needs in the short term. There are some restrictions on the types of courses an SSB fund but most importantly, they can be either noncredit or for-credit open-enrollment classes, and the employee cannot be on a formal degree plan.

The IO was awarded \$37,000 under the SSB grant with an opportunity to expand this by \$10,000 to support the training of childcare workers.

FY 2025 THECB TRUE Grant

The THECB TRUE grant supports the development and implementation of new career and technical education (CTE) or the redesign of workforce pathways at community and technical colleges. The workforce programs must be in high-demand, high-earning occupations; developed in collaboration with regional workforce boards,

workforce solutions offices, and employers; and must focus on the acceleration of time to certification or degree in continuing education or academic pathways.

In FY 2025, the Innovation Outpost was awarded \$280,000 to develop and implement career accelerators in cybersecurity aligned to academic pathways. From January through August, the program served 39 students who received one or more industry recognized certifications (e.g., CompTIA) in one-to-five-week sprints or reviews. These 39 students earned 63 certifications, thereby accelerating their transition to further higher education and/or the workforce.

FY 2023–2025 National Science Foundation (NSF) Cybersecurity Accelerator Grant

FY 2025 was the final year of the three-year NSF Cybersecurity Accelerator grant. During this final year, the grant PI and IO staff developed the cybersecurity roadmap. Braiding funds from TRUE 2024–25 and NSF, faculty began revising the roadmap in spring 2025 to include academic coursework aligned to each cybersecurity-related certification. The revised map will be completed in November 2025.

For the three-year period, the IO was awarded \$348,792 with the third year at approximately \$98,500. The funds in year three were utilized for faculty pay/stipends, third party evaluator contracting, and travel.

National Partnership for Environmental Technology Education (PETE) Grant

Funded through the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and administered by the National Partnership for Environment Technology Education (NPETE), this grant provides cost effective training for hazardous materials and waste workers. PETE provides Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) training to DOE contractors and subcontractors (Pantex) so the workforce gains the knowledge and skills to protect themselves and their communities from exposure to hazardous materials during hazardous waste operations, facility decommissioning and decontamination, hazardous materials transportation, environmental restoration of contaminated facilities, or chemical emergency response.

Under the PETE grant, AC|IO received \$318,603, taught 64 courses, and served over 1,250 participants.

Texas Mutual Insurance (TMI)

Through community grants to nonprofit entities, Texas Mutual Insurance funds workforce development and safety training programs that promote safe work practices, especially in industries or occupations at higher risk of workplace accidents. The grants provide pathways for in-demand middle skill jobs, and upskill/reskill adult learners using work-based learning initiatives (e.g., earn and learn).

Under the TMI grant, AC taught 66 courses to 1068 employees from 61 companies for a total revenue of \$106,383.



- Solution
- Multiple locations
 - Product movement
 - Personnel safety

- Single Location
- Unified Storage, P
and Testing
- Product Movement
- Personnel Co-locat

COMMUNITY, STUDENT, AND EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

The Innovation Outpost hosted several college and community events open to high school and college students, employers, and members of the community at large throughout the year. Some of the events with the largest turnouts or which were impactful for students and employers were the HSI-STEM Employability Forum, the Manufacturers Alliance, and the Pantex Innovation Challenge.

Capture the Flag

The Innovation Outpost worked with AC cybersecurity/networking faculty to host the 2025 Capture the Flag Cybersecurity Challenge. The event consisted of team competitions and individual challenges. The challenges were designed for high school and college students as well as IT professionals. The relevance and timeliness of the challenges keep students and professionals up to date on the current threats to network systems across workforce sectors.

Eight high school students, 15 AC students, and 16 IT professionals participated in the one-day event. Twelve teams and 39 individuals competed for team and individual scholarships from EC Council.

HSI STEM Employability Forums

Hosted at the IO in fall 2024 and expected in fall 2025, the HSI STEM grant's Employability Forum engages AC students with regional employers to promote work-based learning opportunities for STEM majors. The Employability Forum bridges the gap between career ready preparation and the workforce. By engaging directly with employers through mock interviews, networking, and career-readiness activities, students gain practical skills, build professional confidence, and expand their connections. This experience not only prepares students for future internships and jobs but also helps them see firsthand the opportunities available in our community's STEM industries.

In fall 2024, 23 employers engaged with 26 students.

Manufacturing Alliances

This year, the IO hosted the Panhandle Regional Manufacturer's Alliance (PRMA) in collaboration with the Manufacturing Education Center and local employers. The Alliance promotes networking among manufacturers and provides opportunities for them to learn about workforce training available to them at the College. At Alliance meetings, manufacturers can share insights into the challenges and opportunities facing their industry and workforce. The IO, in collaboration with corporate contract training and Workforce Solutions Panhandle, collaborates with manufacturers to offer targeted, just-in-time training for a cohort of business partners with similar needs.

In December, the IO hosted 16 employers who joined the meeting with multiple staff representing 60 attendees to learn from Paul Mayer of the Garland Chamber of Commerce and the director of the 300-member Dallas County Manufacturers' Association about the development of their Association and best practices for starting one in the Texas Panhandle.

Pantex Innovation Challenge

During Engineering Week, Feb. 19–23, students from Amarillo College and AmTech participated in the First Annual Pantex Innovation Challenge at Amarillo College's Innovation Outpost. The event is designed for students interested in science, technology, engineering, and math fields. Students competed in mixed teams (high school with college students) to solve real-world national security challenges through the customer discovery process. Working with a Pantex employee as a mentor, each team was presented with a unique challenge. The process of asking questions, understanding the problem, validating assumptions, and developing a real solution as a team is the primary goal of the challenge. At the end of the two-day challenge, teams presented to a group of judges who chose first, second, and third place winners for cash prizes.

The two-day event hosted 72 students and over 15 mentors from Pantex.





INNOVATION OUTPOST RECOGNITION

OSHA ALLIANCE

The OSHA Alliance Program establishes a partnership with Amarillo College to advance worker safety and health. Through this collaboration, Amarillo College provides the necessary OSHA training to prevent workplace fatalities, injuries, and illnesses. As an Alliance partner, Amarillo College works with OSHA to provide workers and employers with information, guidance, and resources that promote safer workplaces while ensuring both are informed, empowered, and equipped to foster a culture of workplace safety. This partnership raises awareness of worker rights and employer responsibilities under the Occupational Safety and Health Act. Over the last year the PETE and TMI grants held 53 OSHA classes in OSHA including Safety Team Refresher, OSHA Brigade fire protection, confined space rescue, HAZWOPER refresher, and fire extinguisher serving 899 participants.

EC COUNCIL

Amarillo College is a partner with the International Council of E-Commerce Consultants (EC-Council), a global leader in training and certifying cybersecurity professionals. Through this collaboration, the college delivers training in critical areas such as ethical hacking and information security. As an EC-Council member, faculty at Amarillo College shape cybersecurity education to

ensure the curriculum aligns with industry standards by integrating real-world simulation experiences in coursework. Students benefit from hands-on experience that prepares them for careers in a rapidly growing and evolving workforce.

In recognition of these efforts, Amarillo College's Innovation Outpost was named "Academic Innovator of the Year" in 2024 by the EC-Council, thereby highlighting the college's commitment to excellence in cybersecurity education and its role in developing the next generation of cybersecurity professionals.

COMPTIA AUTHORIZED PARTNER

Amarillo College and the Innovation Outpost are recognized as CompTIA Authorized Partners, allowing the college to promote, deliver, and support CompTIA certification programs. As a CompTIA Academic Partner, the college can provide training and resources aligned with CompTIA's IT certifications. This partnership ensures that students have access to authorized curricula and instructional materials that prepare them to achieve industry-recognized credentials. It also allows the college to provide testing materials (e.g., testing vouchers) to students at a lower cost than commercially available.

CONCLUSION

The primary goal at the AC Innovation Outpost for FY25 was to generate enough revenue to offset expenses by developing, promoting, and delivering

- 1 non-traditional educational pathways in an accelerated format to support regional high-demand workforce training and development, and
- 2 leadership and technical training for regional employers through multiple federal/state grants and corporate contracts.

The AC IO achieved this goal in FY25 and generated a profit of \$75,000.







Innovation Outpost

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