**The 502 Project – GenCyber 2024 Module**

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Proposed Budget: **$15,000**

*Instructions: This is a draft statement for inclusion in 2024/2025 GenCyber proposals. This material is meant as a starting point, and may be slightly edited for length. For substantial edits to the below scope of work, please contact 502 Project program staff or Nathan Fisk to schedule a brief meeting.*

The 502 Project is a CAE-funded initiative hosting a shared, centralized, community infrastructure for cybersecurity workforce development. Partnering with educational institutions, community groups, and industry leaders to the project provides a more inclusive and accessible gateway to the cybersecurity community through shared virtual events, community-developed challenges, and access to subject matter experts ranging from teenage competition hackers to CSOs. The 502 Project explicitly aims to:

* Foster a scalable cybersecurity community, working towards national demographic parity in the cybersecurity workforce,
* Connect employment and training opportunities with qualified aspirants
* Provide a centralized online social platform supporting cybersecurity training and education
* Interconnect local communities and talent to national audiences, events, and opportunities

Working with the 502 Project will connect all camp participants – including volunteers, educators, faculty, and speakers – into a larger, persistent, centralized community including other camps, trainings, and events throughout the year. This partnership will deepen connection to the broader CAE and GenCyber ecosystem by interconnecting camps and funded initiatives nationwide. Additionally, the 502 Project explicitly aims at broadening access to and participation in a more broadly diverse and inclusive community, with a focus on highlighting diverse voices and facilitating interconnection points.

The 502 Project provides three main services: centralized social infrastructure via Discord, persistent CTF-style challenges, and shared community-led virtual events. These three central services interconnect to drive community engagement with automated prompts to connect with people, challenges and events, all grounded in the NICE Workforce Framework. For the purposes of this coalition, the 502 Project will be used as a shared communications platform across partner institutions and workforce collaborators. The coalition will collaborate with the 502 Project to:

* Provide access to a centralized, fully compliant, intergenerational Discord community platform, with customized channels, icons, and emotes for each coalition partner
* Provide virtual SME and student support and moderation through each camp
* Assist with industry and community coalition building
* Assist with identification or development of shared curricula and challenges (including lesson plans and camp scheduling)
* Coordinate and host shared streaming events across camps
* Assist with pre- and post- camp communication and activities (including at least one pre-camp virtual onboarding event and one post-camp debriefing)

Through centralized virtual events, interconnected event support, and ongoing challenges, the project works to make the cybersecurity workforce more accessible, more inclusive, and more broadly participatory. Partner institutions will leverage the 502 platform to enhance their existing cybersecurity education offerings, ultimately building a more inclusive cybersecurity workforce pipeline. The 502 Project is specifically intended to highlight and extend cybersecurity education efforts at partnering universities and state colleges, expanding the reach and scale of locally developed curricula, maintaining connections between faculty and students, and providing access to centralized events and curricula resources.