A bill to be entitled

An act relating to cybersecurity internships; creating s. 1004.0983, F.S.; providing legislative findings; providing legislative intent; subject to legislative appropriation, creating the Cybersecurity Experiential Internship and Clearance Readiness Program within the Department of Commerce; requiring the department to enter into an agreement with the Florida Center for Cybersecurity (Cyber Florida) to implement the program in collaboration with specified universities and institutions; requiring that the program include specified components; requiring that the program be available at specified universities and institutions beginning in a specified academic year; requiring the department, using data and analyses provided by Cyber Florida, to submit a report by a specified date and annually thereafter to the Governor and the Legislature; providing requirements for the report; providing for expiration of the program; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 1004.0983, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1004.0983 Cybersecurity Experiential Internship and Clearance Readiness Program.—

(1)(a) The Legislature finds that this state's cybersecurity workforce is essential to state and national security, multi-sector state economic resilience, and the protection of critical infrastructure. The Legislature also finds that this state has a persistent shortfall in its supply of qualified cybersecurity professionals relative to the workforce demand and that the growing integration of digital technologies in all economic sectors will exacerbate this workforce gap in the future.

(b) The Legislature further finds that the elements of the program described in this section were successfully tested and refined in two pilot programs: an experiential cyber internship program with the University of South Florida and a combined security clearance readiness and cyber certification program with the University of West Florida. Both schools are designated as National Security Agency National Centers of Academic Excellence in Cybersecurity (NCAE-C). The successful pilot programs demonstrated the feasibility and effectiveness of combining cybersecurity experiential internships, federal security clearance readiness preparation, and CompTIA Security+ certification for students as critical elements of workforce development.

(c) The Legislature further finds that expansion of this

program statewide to all NCAE-C-designated state universities and Florida College System institutions will accelerate the development of a highly qualified, clearance-ready cybersecurity workforce. This expanded capacity to develop a more qualified cybersecurity workforce is necessary to both close existing gaps and keep pace with the growth in demand for cybersecurity talent within this state.

(2)(a) The Legislature intends to establish the Cybersecurity Experiential Internship and Clearance Readiness Program across all NCAE-C-designated state universities and Florida College System institutions, beginning with the 2026-2027 academic year.

(b) The Legislature further intends to sustain the program through the 2030-2031 academic year and establish clear metrics and reporting requirements to measure the impact on this state's workforce and national security posture.

(3) Subject to appropriation, the Cybersecurity Experiential Internship and Clearance Readiness Program is created within the Department of Commerce. The department shall enter into an agreement with the Florida Center for Cybersecurity (Cyber Florida) at the University of South Florida, to implement the program in collaboration with all NCAE-C-designated state universities and Florida College System institutions.

(4) The program shall include all of the following

components:

(a) Increasing the number of experiential cyber risk analyst internships statewide by using an instrumented platform of automated assessments with employers based in this state in the defense, finance, health care, transportation, utility, and critical infrastructure sectors.

(b) Providing intern-supporting organizations with actionable, prioritized analytics, reporting, and risk mitigation action plans to enhance cyber resilience across this state.

(c) Delivering a federal security clearance readiness curriculum, including comprehensive background checks preparation, national security information and protection training, clearance application preparation and vetting, and mentoring for selected participants.

(d) Providing CompTIA Security+ certification training and examination for selected participants.

(e) Coordinating with state, federal, and private sector partners to facilitate placement of graduates in high-demand cybersecurity roles.

(f) Providing access to datasets for statewide cyber assessments, research, and development.

(5) Beginning in the 2026-2027 academic year, the program must be available at all currently NCAE-C-designated state universities and Florida College System institutions.

(6)(a) Beginning January 1, 2027, and annually thereafter through January 1, 2032, the department, using data and analyses provided by Cyber Florida as required by the agreement under subsection (3), shall submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(b) The report must include all of the following:

1. The number of students participating in internships, clearance readiness preparation, and CompTIA Security+ certification programs at each institution.

2. The number of students who have earned CompTIA Security+ certification and the number of students who have completed internship and clearance readiness milestones.

3. The number of students who subsequently reported entering federal, state, or private sector cybersecurity positions requiring a federal public trust or national security clearance, and any available data on those positions.

4. Recommendations for program improvements, including potential integration with other state workforce initiatives.

(7) This section expires January 1, 2032.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.