

CS/CS/HB 1081

2026

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:

26        1004.0983 Cybersecurity Experiential Internship and  
27 Clearance Readiness Program.—

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

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

50        (c) The Legislature further finds that expansion of this

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

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

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

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

76 institutions, and private postsecondary educational  
77 institutions.

78 (4) The program shall include all of the following  
79 components:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

124        (7) This section expires January 1, 2032.

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