

By Senator Calatayud

38-01408A-26

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A bill to be entitled
An act relating to cybersecurity internships; creating
s. 1004.0983, F.S.; providing legislative findings;
providing legislative intent; 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 appropriation;
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

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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 and Florida College System institutions will accelerate the
53 development of a highly qualified, clearance-ready cybersecurity
54 workforce. This expanded capacity to develop a more qualified
55 cybersecurity workforce is necessary to both close existing gaps
56 and keep pace with the growth in demand for cybersecurity talent
57 within this state.

58 (2) (a) The Legislature intends to establish the

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59 Cybersecurity Experiential Internship and Clearance Readiness
60 Program across all NCAE-C-designated state universities and
61 Florida College System institutions, beginning with the 2026-
62 2027 academic year.

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

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

74 (4) The program shall include all of the following
75 components:

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

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

85 (c) Delivering a federal security clearance readiness
86 curriculum, including comprehensive background checks
87 preparation, national security information and protection

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88 training, clearance application preparation and vetting, and
89 mentoring for selected participants.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

119 (7) This section expires October 1, 2031.

120 Section 2. Beginning in the 2026-2027 fiscal year, the sum
121 of \$11.9 million in recurring funds is appropriated from the
122 General Revenue Fund to the Department of Commerce to establish
123 the Cybersecurity Experiential Internship and Clearance
124 Readiness Program.

125 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.