

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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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) 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

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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.

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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.