

**By** the Committee on Commerce and Tourism; and Senator Calatayud

577-02069-26

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

24           Section 1. Section 1004.0983, Florida Statutes, is created  
25 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

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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. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.