



PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 2, 2020

CONTACT:

Partnership for Public Service

[Austin Laufersweiler](#)

202-775-6898

CYBERSECURITY TALENT INITIATIVE ANNOUNCES INAUGURAL CLASS AND OPENINGS FOR SECOND COHORT

Public and private sector partner to start reducing the cybersecurity talent gap and provide participants with up to \$75,000 in student loan assistance

WASHINGTON – The nonprofit, nonpartisan Partnership for Public Service today announced the inaugural class of the [Cybersecurity Talent Initiative™](#) – a first-of-its-kind public-private partnership aimed at recruiting and training a world-class cybersecurity workforce. As the initiative’s first participants begin their federal agency work, applications to join the next cohort are now open.

The inaugural class of ten future cybersecurity leaders brings a variety of academic and professional experience to the federal government and is more racially and ethnically diverse than the national cybersecurity talent pool trends¹. These recent college graduates will serve a two-year placement at one of six federal agencies before being invited to apply for positions with one of the initiative’s corporate partners, and once hired, will receive up to \$75,000 in student loan assistance.

In 2020, there will be more than [507,000 unfilled U.S. cybersecurity jobs](#). The COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated the critical need for competent and highly-skilled workers—in both the public and private sectors—to protect the security and health of all Americans.

Max Stier, president and CEO of the Partnership for Public Service, the organization operating the initiative, said the COVID-19 pandemic and its fallout have illustrated the critical need for competent and highly-skilled workers in every sector of the government.

“The pandemic is showing us what happens when an underprepared federal government faces a disaster. Our reliance on remote work and learning through technology underscores the critical need to prepare for and safeguard against cyber threats,” said Max Stier, president and CEO of the Partnership. “We can’t wait for another emergency to shore up our talent pipeline and staff the government with cybersecurity experts, and that is why the Cybersecurity Talent Initiative is so important,” Stier said.

¹ National averages are drawn from Data USA, a collaboration between Deloitte, Datawheel, and Professor Hidalgo at MIT. The purpose of their work is to understand and visualize the critical issues facing the United States in areas like jobs, skills and education across industry and geography and to use this knowledge to inform decision making among executives, policymakers and citizens. See more at [datausa.io](#).

To compare data from the Cybersecurity Talent Initiative with national averages from Data USA, the cybersecurity talent pool is defined as US college graduates with degrees in Computer & Information Systems Security. This is the most closely linked degree to a broader “cybersecurity” degree.

The Cybersecurity Talent Initiative inaugural class includes [Michelle Massarik](#), a graduate from the State University of New York at Albany.

“I received my Bachelor of Science in cybersecurity and a minor in homeland security, and I really wanted to explore cybersecurity and infrastructure security,” Massarik said. “As a new college grad, I was unsure of what cybersecurity areas I wanted to pursue, but this initiative assisted me with career and professional development to make the transition from university as smooth as possible. Service in the federal government also gives me a chance to apply my skills in a way that will make a difference to the lives of all Americans. I am really excited to bring my knowledge and experience into the working world.”

The inaugural class also includes graduates from The George Washington University; John Jay College of Criminal Justice; Maryville University; State University of New York at Albany; Marymount University; Regent University; University of Maryland Global Campus; Howard University and Western Governors University.

Federal agencies participating in the Cybersecurity Talent Initiative include the Central Intelligence Agency, Departments of Defense, Energy, Health and Human Services, and Homeland Security, Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Federal Election Commission, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Office of Naval Intelligence. Corporate partners include Mastercard, Microsoft and Workday.

Applications for the second cohort are now open. Students completing undergraduate or graduate degree programs in cybersecurity-related fields are encouraged to apply. Agencies will make offers by spring 2021 and participants will start in the summer or fall of 2021. Before the end of their federal service, participants will be invited to apply for full-time positions with the program’s corporate partners, and those hired will receive up to \$75,000 in student loan assistance.

To learn more about the inaugural class of the Cybersecurity Talent Initiative, apply for the next cohort or for more information about becoming a corporate partner, visit cybertalentinitiative.org. Applications close on Friday, November 13.

The Cybersecurity Talent Initiative launched in April 2019 and is a public-private partnership designed to reduce the critical talent gap and develop the next generation of motivated, mission-driven cybersecurity leaders. The initiative also serves as a call to action for leading companies, federal agencies and higher education institutions to come together and help grow the talent pipeline of cybersecurity technologists to protect the nation and support our digital economy. For more information, visit cybertalentinitiative.org.

###

Note to editors:

Supporters of the Cybersecurity Talent Initiative had the following to say:

Ron Green, Chief Security Officer at Mastercard: “The demand for qualified cybersecurity professionals continues to rise. To meet that need, the public and private sectors must work together to build a first-class cybersecurity workforce that is ready to combat today’s threats. The Cybersecurity Talent Initiative uniquely addresses the talent shortage by creating a win-win-win situation for the students, the government agencies and the partner businesses.”

Ann Johnson, CVP SCI for Business Development at Microsoft: “While machine learning, artificial intelligence, and quantum computing hold promise for addressing cyber threats, that promise will be stifled if we do not recruit, train, and retain new cyber security professionals outside of traditional channels. With an

abundance of cybersecurity jobs unfilled, investing in initiatives like Cybersecurity Talent Initiative helps not only address the current projected shortfall, but also helps keep our current cyber defenders from being stretched too thin, while fostering more inclusive cyber communities that help future proof bias' in tech."

Simone Petrella, CEO of CyberVista: "CyberVista is pleased to join the Cybersecurity Talent Initiative and partner with top companies across the country to develop cybersecurity talent and provide them with opportunities that help support our nation's defense. This program advances our mission to transform the workforce of today to prepare for tomorrow's cybersecurity challenges. The initiative also reflects the immense value we see in collaborating with the public and private sector to redefine talent needs and, in turn, attract the right kind of talent to fill open positions to make a substantial impact on the country's cybersecurity workforce shortage."

Janet Vogel, chief information security officer at the Department of Health and Human Services: "The HHS Office of Information Security is excited to continue to partner with the Cybersecurity Talent Initiative in 2020. Together we will address the growing need for talent to safeguard the nation's health and human services digital infrastructure from cyber threats. We were thrilled to be part of the inaugural year of the initiative. In the coming year, we remain committed to public-private partnerships that identify the best emerging digital leaders from the participating colleges and universities."

Liza Durant, professor of Strategic Initiatives and Community Engagement, associate dean at George Mason University's Volgenau School of Engineering and director of the NoVa Node of the Commonwealth Cyber Initiative: "The federal government presents some of the greatest cybersecurity challenges and opportunities. The Cybersecurity Talent Initiative program is bringing the next generation of cybersecurity experts to advance solutions while providing these students with federal government experience that will serve them in any sector as they advance in their careers."

About the Partnership for Public Service

During the past 19 years, the nonpartisan, nonprofit Partnership for Public Service has been dedicated to making the federal government more effective for the American people. We work across administrations to help transform the way government operates by increasing collaboration, accountability, efficiency and innovation. As the operating partner of the Cybersecurity Talent Initiative, the Partnership works in coordination with agency and corporate partners to help recruit top cybersecurity talent; manage and oversee the application process; and provide comprehensive professional and leadership development opportunities for the participants. Visit ourpublicservice.org to learn more. Follow us on social [@RPublicService](https://twitter.com/RPublicService) and [subscribe](#) today to get the latest federal news, information on upcoming Partnership programs and events, and more.