

Cybersecurity Workforce Accelerator Program: The Key is Coordination

March 11, 2022 - Compared to last week's heavy cybersecurity legislative agenda, this week's schedule was light; we provided testimony in Thursday's House Appropriations Committee hearing to support the creation of the Cybersecurity Workforce Accelerator Program (HB1334). While programmatically located at UMBC, the Program serves to coordinate, and increase investment in, successful programs administered by the Maryland Departments of Commerce, Education, and Labor to grow the cybersecurity workforce.

Specific investments for FY24 and FY25 include:

- \$1,000,000 TO THE MARYLAND EARN FOR CYBERSECURITY PROGRAMS AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT;
- \$1,000,000 TO THE MARYLAND APPRENTICESHIP AND TRAINING PROGRAM FOR CYBERSECURITY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT;
- \$2,500,000 TO THE CYBER WARRIOR DIVERSITY PROGRAM;
- \$500,000 TO FUND THE SUMMER K-12 TEACHER EXTERNSHIP GRANT PROGRAM;
- \$1,000,000 FOR THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND TO DEVELOP CYBER RANGE SCENARIOS BASED ON INDUSTRY DEMAND;
- \$500,000 TO FUND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES ABOUT CYBERSECURITY CAREERS IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION;
- \$500,000 FOR THE MARYLAND TECHNOLOGY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM.

We know that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to building the cybersecurity talent pipeline. Providing in-demand training is a necessary step, but it's employers who create opportunities to gain practical experience and eventual employment in a high-growth field. We can only make significant progress toward bridging the talent gap when industry and workforce development programs work hand-in-hand to create scalable solutions. The Cybersecurity Workforce Accelerator Program is a step in the right direction.

What's next?

- SB 810 (HB 1339) - Critical Infrastructure Security Act of 2022: We will be supporting this bill on March 15 with oral testimony.
- SB 753 (HB 1334)- Workforce Development - Cybersecurity: We will be back in Annapolis on March 17 to support this Bill. We are encouraging our members to submit written testimony in support of this Bill.

Other Updates

- SB 4 - Cybersecurity Scholarship Program - Alterations: On the heels of the cross-filed HB 24, SB 4 was voted out of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs committee with the amendment eliminating the creation of the Loan Repayment Program. The Bill is now in the Appropriations Committee.