ACE

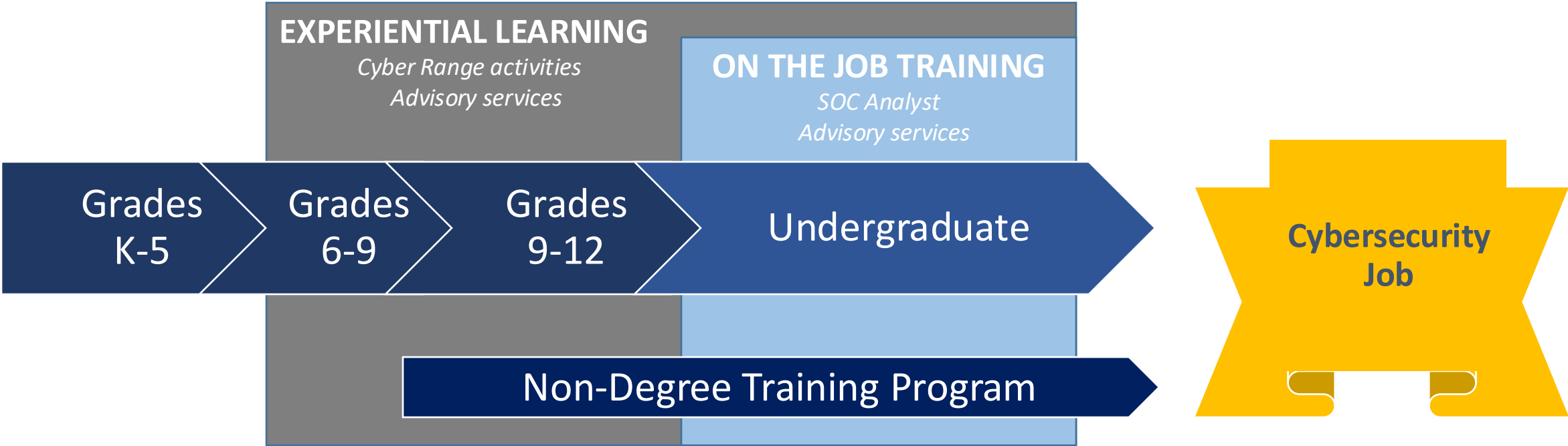## Alternative Cyber Career Education Grant Program

Informational Webinar
NOFO No. 2025-Cyber-02

November 6, 2024

MassCyberCenter
at MassTech

Vision for a Massachusetts Cybersecurity Talent Pipeline

A strong cybersecurity talent pipeline in Massachusetts would progress students through academic instruction or non-academic training programs and integrate experiential learning and on the job training.
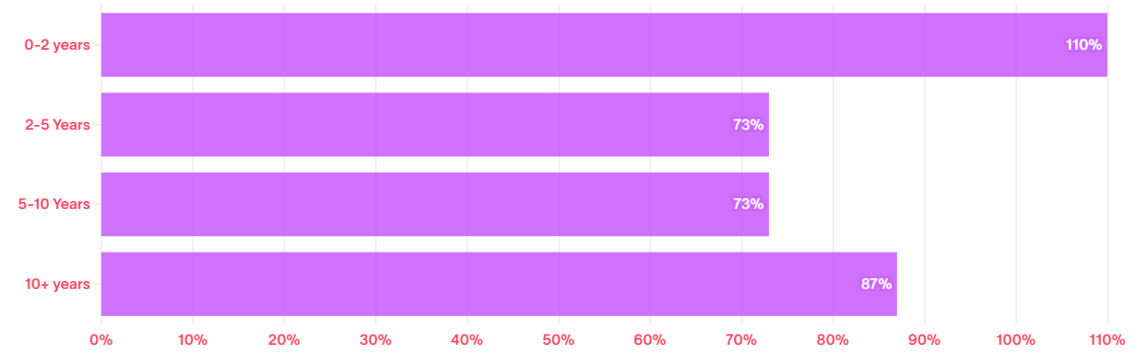
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
Cyber Range activities
Advisory services

ON THE JOB TRAINING
SOC Analyst
Advisory services

Grades K-5 → Grades 6-9 → Grades 9-12 → Undergraduate

Non-Degree Training Program

Cybersecurity Job

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The need: the cybersecurity sector in Massachusetts requires more workers, especially workers with experience

Massachusetts:

- **86%** supply of workers for jobs in demand
- **12,337** job openings

Source: Cyberseek.org

Cybersecurity Supply and Demand Ratio by Experience Level

Experience Level	
0-2 years	110%
2-5 Years	73%
5-10 Years	73%
10+ years	87%

Note: Experience levels are categorized into different ranges denoting the number of years of experience. Each range is defined by a lower limits (inclusive) and an upper limit (exclusive). Date range: September 2023-August 2024
Source: Lightcast

Distribution of Cybersecurity Workers by their Previous Career

Previous Role — Current Role

Non-IT Occ Family
Another Cybersecurity Role (IT Occ Family)
IT Occ Family (other than cyber)
Straight from BA+ Degree
Straight from Sub-BA

Cybersecurity

Source: Lightcast

Alternative Cyber Career Education (ACE) Grant Program Overview

Summary: Provide grants to organizations to support programs in Massachusetts that train young adults and retrain existing professionals to enter the cybersecurity workforce

Goal: Expand non-degree pathways leading to cybersecurity employment

- Focus on scalable non-degree training programs that contain experiential learning and on the job training components for learners

- Grants would fund operating costs for programs

- Up to $150,000 awarded total (estimated up to 3 awards)

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Target Populations

- **Individuals seeking to transition into a cybersecurity career from a non-cybersecurity role**

- **Young adults**

- **Populations underrepresented in the cybersecurity field including women and minorities**

- **Socio-economically disadvantaged populations**

- **Veterans**

- **Unemployed and underemployed individuals**

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Applicant Eligibility

- **Eligible applicants**
  - Non-profit training entity
  - For-profit training entity
  - MassHire Workforce Board and/or Career Center
  - Municipality or state government agency operating a workforce training program
  - Other workforce development organizations
  - High schools and vocational high schools

- **Ineligible applicants**
  - Community college, college, or university
  - Elementary and middle schools

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Eligible Expenses

- **Eligible expenses**
  - o Staff time for program instructors
  - o Staff time devoted to program management and administration
  - o Staff time for partnership and program coordination, job development, and placement
  - o Marketing, communication, and outreach activities related to recruitment for the program
  - o Curriculum development
  - o Training delivery, including classroom, online, and formal on-the-job training
  - o Cost of licenses associated with delivery of digitally enabled training
  - o Cost associated with testing and credentialing for learners
  - o Support services needed to ensure participants' success (e.g., transportation, childcare, supplies, etc.)

- **Ineligible expenses**
  - o Capital expenditures
  - o Expenses for operating or participating in Security Operations Center or Cyber Range programs

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Application Requirements

- **An overview of the lead applicant and any co-applicants**

- **The proposed use of grant funds**

- **Projected grant outcomes**

- **Existing program funding the proposal will leverage**

- ***Optional*: Letter(s) of support from industry or employer partners that endorse the respondent's training approach.**

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Grant Evaluation Criteria

- Ability of project to expand non-degree pathways that lead to cybersecurity employment

- Inclusion of experiential learning and on the job training components

- Level of industry engagement

- Project scalability and sustainability

- Number of current or future workers trained

- Job placement potential

- Inclusion of project in other cybersecurity collaborations

- Whether the project represents a new and novel approach

- Level of matching funds (for new programs)

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Reporting Requirements

Grantees will be required to report to the MassCyberCenter on:

➢ Number of Individuals Enrolled in Training Program
➢ Number of experiential and/or on-the-job training activities per individual trained
➢ Hours of experiential and/or on-the-job training activities per individual trained
➢ Total dollars expended (including non-MassTech funds) as part of training program
➢ Number of individuals that completed training
➢ Number of individuals that received an industry recognized credential
➢ Number of individuals placed in a job/internship
➢ Total dollars expended (including non-MassTech funds) as part of training program
➢ Project status (on track; some obstacles or project delays but will be overcome; off track/project in jeopardy)

See grant reporting template here.

Timeline

Date Issued:	October 21, 2024
Informational Webinar:	November 6, 2024
Questions Due:	November 13, 2024
Questions and Answers File Posted:	November 20, 2024
Responses Due:	December 31, 2024

NOFO document: https://masscybercenter.org/notice-funding-opportunity-ace-grant-program

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Questions?

Questions regarding this NOFO must be submitted by email to proposals@masstech.org with the following Subject Line: "Questions – NOFO No. 2025-Cyber-02"