



NICE Community Coordinating Council
Meeting Minutes
June 24, 2025 | 3:30-5:00PM ET

I. Introduction and Ground Rules –Susana Barraza, NICE Program Manager

- The NICE Community Coordinating Council was established to provide a mechanism in which public and private sector participants can develop concepts, design strategies, and pursue actions that advance cybersecurity education, training, and workforce development.
- Members are encouraged to participate in the meeting via the platform chat space. We will also be introducing polls throughout the meeting.
- Reminder: The meeting is not intended for marketing or other commercial purposes.

II. Opening Remarks

- a. Academic Co-Chair – Zarina Blankenbaker, Ph.D., President, Tarrant County College – Northwest
 - Dr. Blankenbaker emphasized that cybersecurity is now integral to daily life and infrastructure, not just a defensive tool.
 - She advocated for a "secure by design" approach, built into systems from the start.
 - Dr. Blankenbaker highlighted the importance of inclusivity and broadening representation in cybersecurity roles.
 - Dr. Blankenbaker encouraged early engagement in cybersecurity education as early as 3rd grade.
 - Dr. Blankenbaker stressed that cybersecurity education must go beyond technical skills to include communication and critical thinking.
- b. Industry Co-Chair – Michael Alicea, Chief Human Resources Officer, Trellix
 - Michael observed increased attendee engagement at the recent conference compared to previous years.
 - He also noted AI was a dominant topic throughout the sessions.
 - Michael also shared his experience speaking on the final AI panel and praised the cybersecurity community's collaboration and support.
- c. Government Co-Chair - Rodney Petersen, Director of NICE

- He focused his update on state-level developments rather than federal or international.
- Rodney mentioned the NICE Conference in Colorado had strong support from the state government. Each year, local cities and states actively participate in the conference. There are 50 states, each with unique cybersecurity and workforce initiatives.
- Rodney recently participated in the Maryland Cybersecurity Council meeting. Maryland's cybersecurity talent strategy aligns with NICE and national strategies. Other states may have similar plans worth sharing.
- NICE works with national associations such as the NGA and NASCIO to coordinate state-level collaboration.

III. Featured Content (Part I)

a. Strategy Stories – New Developments that align to NICE Strategic Plan

The Rise of Micro-Credentialing in K-12 Education

Presented by Anne Kim, FutureEd

URL: <https://www.future-ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Skill-Building-The-Emerging-Micro-Credential-Movement-in-K-12-Education.pdf>

- Micro-credentialing is rapidly expanding in K-12 settings, especially in career and technical education (CTE). The field lacks rigorous research due to its novelty. The report is based on qualitative interviews with educators, students, and stakeholders. The credentialing landscape is disorganized, with over 1.1 million credentials available.
- K-12 schools are using badges for job skills, academic achievement, and even attendance.
- States like North Carolina and Maine are integrating micro-credentials into graduation requirements.
- Programs such as Jobs for Maine's Graduates offer practical work experiences with badges.
- Badging pilots in Idaho, Kentucky, and Illinois aim to replace grades in math with skills-based badges.
- Teachers report increased student engagement in applied, project-based learning.
- Some districts are exploring replacing high school transcripts with "mastery transcripts." There are significant obstacles including employer skepticism, lack of trust in school-issued credentials, and misalignment with labor market needs.
- Only 18% of K-12 credentials align with actual employer demand.
- Infrastructure limitations also hinder adoption.
- Many badges are issued in systems with no interoperability or validation.

- Without standardization and universal access, micro-credentials risk becoming a “lesser than” option.
- To move forward, the field must clarify the purpose of micro-credentials. Employer engagement is critical to give value to credentials.
- Data infrastructure must be improved to track outcomes and ensure quality.
- Anne did not find significant California-specific examples but emphasized the need for a national program directory.
- Anne closed by inviting collaboration and deeper investigation into alignment with higher education and workforce standards.

b. Report Roundup – Learning from Good Ideas

2025 Cybersecurity Workforce Research Report

Presented by Brian Correia, Director of Business Development, GIAC, SANS

URL: <https://www.sans.org/mlp/2025-attract-hire-retain-cybersecurity-roles/>

- The report was created by and for cybersecurity hiring managers and HR leaders. It aimed to explore the root causes behind the cybersecurity headcount gap.
- A key finding was that lack of the right skills surpassed lack of staff as the top hiring concern. Employers are shifting from requiring experience to emphasizing technical capability.
- Organizations are now hiring candidates with 70–80% fit and training them.
- Cultural fit and collaboration skills are gaining importance.
- 65% of employers require skills validation for client needs, auditing, or insurance.
- Use of the NICE Framework in job descriptions rose dramatically to 53%.
- Employers are struggling to find qualified candidates, with salary being the top concern, followed closely by skills gaps.
- Teamwork and problem-solving are the most valued culture fit traits.
- Recommendations include embracing skills-based hiring, refining job descriptions, and investing in internal talent pathways.
- Brian highlighted surprising data, including that high school teachers make excellent penetration tester candidates.

c. Framework Feature – Applications and Uses of Workforce Framework for Cybersecurity

The NICE Workforce Framework for Cybersecurity (NICE Framework)

Presented by Karen Wetzel and Michael Prebil, NICE

URL: <https://www.nist.gov/itl/applied-cybersecurity/nice/nice-framework-resource-center>

- Major updates to the NICE Framework included the removal of cyberspace effects and intelligence work roles.
- Those roles are now maintained under the DOD Cyber Workforce Framework.
- A new work role was added: Operational Technology (OT) Cybersecurity Engineer.
- Updated roles now include visible mappings between tasks, knowledge, and skills (TKS).
- A new competency area—Cyber Resiliency—was added to reinforce system preparedness.
- Competency areas group skills and knowledge without listing tasks.
- Public comments have been incorporated, and final publication is expected soon.
- The AI Cybersecurity Competency Area is under public review.
- Updates to the Cybercrime Investigation work role are also in progress.
- NICE is exploring AI's broader workforce impact including task, skill, and security shifts.
- New strategy includes updating work roles and incident response competencies to include AI/OT elements.

IV. Community Progress Reports

a. Community of Interest Update

i. Promote Career Discover

Co-chair: Karl Cureton, Council Exchange Board of Trade (CEBOT)

- Monthly meeting attendance doubled due to engaging speakers and new initiatives.
- Developed an “entry points” flyer to outline diverse paths into cybersecurity careers.
- Launched a new project targeting faith-based and alternative education ecosystems.

- Planning a toolkit to support non-traditional education settings aligned with workforce goals.
- ii. Cybersecurity Career Ambassadors
Co-chair: Rasha Horn, Critical Infrastructure
Ambassador: Supritha Pulla
 - Monthly ambassador spotlights highlight individual efforts and increase motivation.
 - Refined the ambassador onboarding process and launched formal regional hubs.
 - Held an information session on May 20 welcoming 24 new ambassadors.
 - Preparing for Cybersecurity Career Week on October 24, 2025, at the Department of Commerce.
 - Developing a best practice guide to support both new and experienced ambassadors.
- iii. K12 Cybersecurity Education
Co-chair: Willie Henderson, CYBER.org
 - Hosted an engaging K-12 session at the NICE Conference with local student participation.
 - Monthly meetings include “cyber snack” activities and career-role discussions.
 - Shared interdisciplinary lesson strategies for non-IT educators.
 - Highlighted a successful peer-led model from Utah involving middle schoolers teaching cybersecurity.
 - Current projects include career week, a best practices guide, and a library/media toolkit.
- iv. NICE Framework Users Group
Lead: Karen Wetzel, NICE
 - The NICE Framework Users Group provides space to share use cases, challenges, and feedback on the NICE Framework.
 - Discussed engagement strategies and new communication tools at the conference.
 - Encouraged members to use the platform for continuous input and collaboration.
 - Working to expand stakeholder conversations and resource visibility.

b. Project Progress Reports

i. US Cyber Games

Presented by Brad Wolfenden, Katzcy

URL: <https://www.uscybergames.com/>

- Launched Season 5 with over 2,000 registrants for kickoff and competitions.
- U.S. Women's Cyber Team hosted a successful CTF at the RSA Conference.
- Season 4 team preparing for global competitions in Warsaw and Tokyo.
- Recognized Lily Gross as MVP for technical and team contributions.
- Ongoing activities include monthly scrimmages, tool-building workshops, and training camps.

ii. NICE K12 Cybersecurity Education Conference

December 8-9, 2025, Nashville, TN

Presented by Felicia Rateliff, iKeepSafe

URL: <https://www.k12cybersecurityconference.org/>

- Conference scheduled for December 8–9, 2025, in Nashville, TN.
- Call for proposals open until June 28 at 11:59 PM PT.
- Actively encouraging submissions from educators and practitioners.
- Cyber Signing Day nominations are open.

iii. NICE Conference and Expo

June 1-3, 2026, Philadelphia, PA

Presented by Barbara Peres-Furones, Florida International University

URL: <https://niceconference.org/>

- 2025 conference in Denver hosted 450 attendees from 42 states and several countries.
- Attendance included academia (223), government (50), industry (119), and students (23).
- Featured 28 selected breakout sessions and 4 community of interest sessions.
- Conference theme emphasized AI, equity, and inclusive workforce development.
- The 2026 NICE Conference will be held June 1–3 in Philadelphia, PA.

V. Featured Content (Part II)

- a. Framework Feature – Applications and Uses of Workforce Framework for Cybersecurity

NICCS Education & Training catalog: NICE framework and csv user guide for current Training providers

Presented by Tracy Schoenleber, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

URL: <https://niccs.cisa.gov/tools/nice-framework-mapping-tool>

- Updated tools now align with NICE Framework 2.0 work roles and competencies.
- Mapping tool, interactive framework viewer, and training catalog all refreshed.
- Specialty areas will be phased out by the end of 2025.
- Training providers are re-mapping their course content accordingly.
- Tools help users identify relevant training and improve credential alignment.

VI. Featured Topic

- a. *CyberSeek Update: Expanded data coverage and site design refresh*

Presented by Matt Walsh, Research Analyst, Lightcast

URL: <https://www.cyberseek.org/>

- U.S. cybersecurity job postings reached 514,000—a 12% year-over-year increase.
- Global workforce estimate introduced, totaling around 5 million professionals.
- Refreshed website features new insights, career journey videos, and updated design.
- 10% of cybersecurity postings now include explicit AI-related skills.
- NICE-aligned TKS data now available to better connect roles with demand and education.

- b. *Charting a Course to the Next NICE Strategic Plan*

Presented by Danielle Santos and Karen Wetzel, NICE

URL: <https://www.nist.gov/itl/applied-cybersecurity/nice/about/strategic-plan>

- Current strategic plan ends in 2025; new plan will cover 2026–2030.
- Development will reflect past achievements, stakeholder input, and emerging needs.
- The planning cycle includes environmental scanning and goal alignment.
- Community conversations, working groups, and feedback will shape draft goals.
- Final release is targeted for late 2025 or early 2026; input is welcome at nice@nist.gov.

VII. Closing Remarks and Next Meeting Reminder

The next NICE Community Coordinating Council Meeting will be **September 30, 2025**, at 3:30PM ET.

Upcoming Meetings:

- [NICE Transform Learning Process WG](#): July 8, 2025, 2:00-3:00PM ET
- [NICE K12 Cybersecurity Education COI](#): July 10, 2025, 3:30-4:30PM ET
- [NICE Cybersecurity Career Ambassadors COI](#): July 11, 2025, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET
- [NICE Promote Career Discovery WG](#): July 16, 2025, 3:30-4:30PM ET

Upcoming Events:

- [NICE Webinar Series](#)
- [Cybersecurity Career Week](#): October 20-25, 2025
- [NICE K12 Cybersecurity Education Conference](#): December 8-9, 2025, Nashville, TN
- [NICE Conference & Expo](#): June 1-3, 2026, Philadelphia, PA
- NICE Events [Calendar](#)