NICE Community Coordinating Council
Meeting Minutes
September 30, 2025 | 3:30-4:45PM ET

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

    a.   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.

    b.   Members are encouraged to participate in the meeting via the platform chat space. We will also be introducing polls throughout the meeting.

    c.   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

        i.   Dr. Blankenbaker expressed excitement about the progress being made in integrating feedback for the new NICE Strategic Plan.

        ii.   Dr. Blankenbaker called for continued sharing of the pivotal work and impact of the Council with colleagues and the community.

    b.   Industry Co-Chair – Michael Alicea, Chief Human Resources Officer, Trellix

        i.   Michael noted a current industry impetus toward consolidation among cybersecurity vendors.

        ii.   Michael observed that the NICE Framework is generally agreed upon as the "Rosetta Stone" and a core concept for consolidation.

        iii. Michael predicted that the focus of organizations undergoing transformation (due to acquisitions or external factors) will shift from training and development to consolidation and synergies, likely through the middle of next year.

        iv.   Michael stated that CISOs are seeking fewer vendors (currently averaging 30) for a holistic picture, driving the need for consolidation.

    c.   Government Co-Chair - Rodney Petersen, Director of Education and Workforce, NIST

        i.   Rondey highlighted that October marks the kickoff of Cybersecurity Awareness Month.

        ii.   Rodney announced that the NICE webinar on October 1st will focus on Mental Health in Focus - Managing Burnout and Finding Balance in Cybersecurity

Work. This is highly relevant due to cybersecurity's reputation as a high-burnout, high-turnover profession.

    iii. Rodney mentioned the upcoming Cybersecurity Career Week as part of the effort to promote and explore careers in the field.

III. Featured Content

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

America's Talent Strategy: Building the Workforce for the Golden Age
Presented by David Langdon, U.S. Department of Commerce
URL: https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OPA/newsreleases/2025/08/Americas-Talent-Strategy-Building-the-Workforce-for-the-Golden-Age.pdf

      i. The report is the first of two deliverables from Executive Order 14278, which aims to optimize federal workforce investments to align with U.S. reindustrialization needs (e.g., strengthening manufacturing and supply chains) and equip workers with necessary skills.

      ii. The strategy has five pillars: Industry-Driven Strategies, Worker Mobility, Integrated Systems, Accountability, and Flexibility and Innovation.

        1. Pillar 1 (Industry-Driven Strategies) focuses on scaling registered apprenticeships, aligning education with workforce needs, growing industry-specific training, and modernizing career and technical education.

        2. Pillar 2 (Worker Mobility) involves engaging disconnected workers (e.g., prime-age men 25-54, veterans, formerly incarcerated), using technology like CyberSeek for career navigation, and modernizing workforce data.

        3. Pillars 3-5 focus on changes to the public workforce system, including a proposed reorganization/consolidation of federal statistical agencies (BLS joining the Department of Commerce).

      iii. The strategy emphasizes the use of AI for system management and prioritizing AI skills development and literacy (Pillar 5).

    b. Report Roundup – Learning from Good Ideas

2025 NCyTE Cybersecurity Alumni Workforce Study
Presented by Michele Robinson, Senior Director, NCyTE Center, Whatcom Community College
URL: https://www.ncyte.net/academia/faculty/faculty-resources/ncyte-cybersecurity-alumni-workforce-study-2025

      i. The study is a follow-up to the 2019 Where Are They Now research, focusing on the effectiveness of Center of Academic Excellence (CAE) designated institutions, particularly two-year colleges.

      ii.   Key Findings:

          1. Strong Job Placement: Approximately 80% of alumni reported employment in technology-related positions, with many directly in cyber work roles.

          2. Alignment with NICE Framework: Alumni job roles showed moderate to strong alignment with NICE roles.

          3. Top 5 NICE Aligned Job Roles: Technical Support, System Administration, Incident Response, Cybersecurity Policy and Planning, and Network Operations.

          4. Critical Factors for Success: Hands-on learning, industry certifications, internships, and faculty mentorship.

          5. Career Advancement Challenge: Some alumni reported difficulty transitioning from entry-level to mid-career positions.

      iii.   Recommendations: Strengthen work-based learning (internships, apprenticeships), enhance industry partnerships, and develop post-graduation support systems (mentoring, career services).

      iv.   Discussion Point: A major challenge in tracking alumni is the lack of standardized cybersecurity program coding (Classification of Instructional Programs - CIP), which causes cybersecurity graduates to be "buried" in broader categories like Computer Science, making tracking difficult.

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

Schneider Electric + The NICE Framework
Presented by Dee Kimata, Global Cybersecurity Thought Leadership Director, Schneider Electric
URL: https://www.se.com/us/en/

      i.   Schneider Electric (a global company with about €38 billion in annual revenue) aligned its cybersecurity talent strategy to the NICE Framework.

      ii.   Talent Strategy Pillars: Organizational Agility, Future Ready Talent, and an Inclusive Nature (making cyber roles visible to non-cyber employees).

      iii.   The company took the NICE Framework and modified it to align with their enterprise talent strategy, using NICE work role categories as disciplines and identifying common roles across different organizations (governance, business teams, digital functions, etc.) for consistency.

      iv.   Talent Communities/Frameworks:

          1. Cybersecurity Community: 800 people identified with cyber responsibilities (100% or 25%). Holds monthly calls for information sharing.

2. Cyber People Committee: Top cyber leaders focused on organizational agility, identifying gaps, and benchmarking talent strategy.

3. Electrifiers: The top-tier technical cybersecurity experts (about 100 people) dedicated 10-30% of their time to specific, unique technical projects (e.g., research-based AI).

v. Role Visibility: Created ID cards for each common role profile (e.g., Regional Cybersecurity Leader/CISO) accessible to all employees, outlining the job, needed skills, and recommended upskilling courses via platforms like Coursera.

IV. Community Progress Reports

a. Working Group Update

i. Promote Career Discover
Co-chair: Karl Cureton, Council Exchange Board of Trade (CEBOT)

1. This Working Group (WG) supports expanding awareness of cybersecurity career pathways.

2. Project 1: Effective Practices to Identify, Track, and Measure Cybersecurity Career Goals. Reframed as a 5-year impact story documenting accomplishments and impacts. A report is being prepared for discussion on October 2nd.

3. Project 2: Unlocking Untapped Cybersecurity Potential through Faith-Based Organizations and Alternative Education Pathway Ecosystem. Focused on faith-based and alternative education pathways (homeschools, microschools). A literature review is complete, and a national survey is being distributed over the next two weeks.

4. Project 3: Galvanizing Employers to Promote Work-Based Learning Experience. Examining employer requirements/preferences for work-based learning. Conducting a literature review and inviting employers to share insights; an environmental scan is the next step.

5. Next Meeting: The WG will host a special event (webinar) during Cybersecurity Career Week instead of a regular meeting.

b. Community of Interest Update

i. Cybersecurity in Apprenticeships
Lead: Mike Prebil, NICE

1. A partnership between NIST and USDOL is in development to continue work on apprenticeship (expected to launch next year).

2. The new structure will shift from monthly calls to a quarterly webinar schedule focused on industry and intermediary efforts, program implementation, and downstream outcomes.

3. The webinars will be augmented with a less formal "drop-in period" for educators and institutions to speak with NIST, USDOL, and USDOL's technical assistance partner, Softel Partners.

c. Project Progress Reports

i. US Cyber Games
Presented by Jessica Gulick, Katzcy
URL: https://www.uscybergames.com/

1. Season 5 of the US Cyber Team Draft recently kicked off.

2. Major Program Refinements:

a. Repositioning to a single, 40-person team (from a 30-person and a 12-person team) to ensure everyone trains and compete together.

b. Selection is now based on a metric-driven scouting combine to quantify domain knowledge, problem-solving ability, instinct, and speed.

c. Teams and coaches will be selected for each specific game individually, allowing for competition at the International Cybersecurity Challenge (ICC), European Finals, and niche events (e.g., women-only, student-only).

3. Team Composition: The team is divided into primary/secondary skill areas for training. This year's draft showed a high concentration in Forensics.

4. Statistics: 2 athletes have returned for all 5 seasons; 12 are brand new; 13 were selected from the pipeline program; and prospective athletes discovered 12 CVEs during the combine.

5. Upcoming Competitions: European finals in Warsaw, Poland (next week) and the ICC in Tokyo (November).

ii. Cybersecurity Career Week
Presented by Davina Pruitt-Mentle, NICE
URL: https://www.nist.gov/itl/applied-cybersecurity/nice/events/cybersecurity-career-week

1. Cybersecurity Career Week dates are October 20-25, 2025.

    2. Attendees are encouraged to engage in commitments and check the website for resources.

    3. Selected Special Events: Virtual Career Journeys panel (Monday), In-person event with SAs at Capitol Hill (Wednesday), Career Ambassador Program annual celebration at Department of Commerce (Friday).

    4. Competitions like a social media contest, Capture the Flag, and a PSA contest are also running.

  iii. NICE K12 Cybersecurity Education Conference
December 8-9, 2025, Nashville, TN
Presented by Felicia Rateliff, iKeepSafe
URL: https://www.k12cybersecurityconference.org/

    1. Key Update: Early bird registration is open through Friday, October 10th.

    2. Keynote speaker is Andrew Lehman, Senior Instructor at Sans.

    3. The following events will also take place at the conference: The School Counselor Panel, National Cyber Signing Day, and a free Insight Workshop (with a $250 stipend) for attending Insight members.

  iv. NICE Conference and Expo
June 1-3, 2026, Philadelphia, PA
Presented by Barbara Peres-Furones, Florida International University
URL: https://niceconference.org/

    1. Registration link for the hotel is expected by November.

    2. The theme will be announced next week.

    3. The Call for Proposals will open on October 16th, and Early Bird registration opens in February.

    4. Mentioned a sold-out "reset" event in Uruguay on October 23rd that will be live-streamed.

V. Featured Topic

  a. *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

    i. The current 2020-2025 strategic plan is expiring; the process is underway to build the next plan.

    ii. New Proposed Format:

      1. Will include an overarching Mission, Vision, and Values.

2. A set of new Leading Principles will guide the plan (e.g., weaving the NICE framework throughout all work, emphasizing research).

3. The plan will focus on 4 long-term Pillars (which may outlive the 5-year plan).

4. The Pillars will be supported by Goals (3 proposed per pillar) that will be reviewed annually for flexibility.

5. An Implementation Document will follow, describing specific, measurable objectives and activities.

iii. Four Pillars:

1. Preparing a Skilled Workforce

2. Transforming Talent Acquisitions

3. Advancing and Sustaining the Workforce

4. Building Workforce Ecosystems

iv. A special open session on the plan is scheduled for the next Council meeting on October 28, 2025, at 3:30 PM ET.

VI. Closing Remarks and Next Meeting Reminder

The next NICE Community Coordinating Council Meeting will be **October 28, 2025,** at 3:30PM ET.

Upcoming Meetings:

- [NICE K12 Cybersecurity Education COI](): October 9, 2025, 3:30-4:30PM ET
- [NICE Cybersecurity Career Ambassadors COI](): October 10, 2025, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET
- [NICE Transform Learning Process WG](): October 14, 2025, 2:00-3:00PM ET
- [NICE Promote Career Discovery WG](): No meeting – the group is hosting a special event (webinar) during Cybersecurity Career Week. See Oct 21 event details below.

Upcoming Events:

- [NICE Webinar Series]():
  - [Mental Health in Focus - Managing Burnout and Finding Balance in Cybersecurity Work]() - October 1, 2025
  - [Cybersecurity Influencers: Making Careers Click in the Digital Age]() - October 21, 2025 *(CCW Special Event)*
- [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]()