

NICE Community Coordinating Council Meeting Minutes March 24, 2026 | 3:30-4:30PM 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. Industry Co-Chair – Michael Alicea, Principal and Public Director, The Alicea Group
 - Michael shared that AI has become a central force driving cybersecurity activity across sectors.
 - He noted that organizations are using AI for learning, threat analysis, and real-time information support.
 - He also emphasized that adversarial uses of AI are growing in importance.
 - Michael said advancing the AI agenda will remain critical to the future of cybersecurity work.
- b. Government Co-Chair – Danielle Santos, Deputy Director of NICE, NIST (Substitute)
 - Danielle served as substitute co-chair and echoed that AI is now a recurring theme in cybersecurity events and planning.
 - She highlighted the newly released national cyber strategy, especially its talent and capacity pillar focused on workforce development.
 - Danielle said implementation details remain unclear, and the team is waiting for further guidance.
 - She shared that NICE is still working through approval of its next strategic plan and planning for the transition.
 - Danielle encouraged continued engagement through active communities of interest during that transition.
 - She also shared updates on recent and upcoming events, including the NICE local stakeholder event, AFCEA workforce summit, and RSA.

III. Featured Topic

Sustainable, Hands-on, Community-driven and Multi-disciplinary Cybersecurity Skills Training to Meet Workforce Needs of Critical Infrastructure Sectors in Florida

Presented by Sriram Chellappan, Professor, University of South Florida

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

- Sriram presented the RAMS project, which addresses cybersecurity workforce gaps in critical infrastructure sectors.
- He explained that critical infrastructure security is often underrepresented in academic programs because it is costly, specialized, and difficult to scale.
- The project is built on four pillars: industry engagement, student talent development, hands-on training, and long-term community sustainability.
- USF created a 15-week hands-on training program that includes foundational training, industrial control systems instruction, experiential learning, site visits, and certifications.
- Two student cohorts have completed training, and students have already secured internships and full-time positions in the sector.
- Sriram said the model is transferable and could help shape cybersecurity programs nationwide to better support critical infrastructure workforce needs.

IV. Featured Content

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

NIST Cybersecurity Framework 2.0: Cybersecurity, Enterprise Risk Management, and Workforce Management Quick-Start Guide

Presented by Daniel Eliot, Lead for Small Business Engagement, NIST

URL: <https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/SpecialPublications/NIST.SP.1308.pdf>

- Daniel introduced the new quick-start guide connecting CSF 2.0, the NICE Framework, and NIST IR 8286.
- He said the guide is designed to help organizations shift from reactive hiring to risk-informed workforce planning.
- The resource is organized around the five CSF organizational profile implementation steps.
- Daniel explained that organizations can use the guide to better connect cybersecurity posture, enterprise risk, and workforce decisions.
- He noted that workforce responses may include upskilling, hiring, restructuring, or using third-party support.
- Daniel also shared that NIST released another quick start guide on informative references and invited public comment through May 6.

V. Community Progress Reports

a. Community of Interest Update

- Cybersecurity Career Ambassadors
Region #1 - Northeast Lead: Neferteri Strickland
 1. Neferteri shared that the Cybersecurity Career Ambassadors initiative launched a national campaign to recruit and activate 250 ambassadors.
 2. She described the effort to translate cybersecurity awareness into visible and accessible career pathways.
 3. She emphasized that the challenge is not only talent shortage, but also a lack of translation and access for career seekers.
 4. The ambassador network includes educators, employers, and community leaders who help guide others into cybersecurity pathways.
 5. She encouraged attendees to attend monthly information sessions and nominate ambassadors from their communities.
 6. Neferteri also highlighted Pennsylvania's role in the initiative as the host state for the 2026 NICE Conference.
 7. She asked communities to recruit, host, integrate, and amplify ambassadors through local programs and events.

b. Project Progress Reports

- NICE Conference and Expo
June 1-3, 2026, Philadelphia, PA
Presented by Vanessa Leker, Florida International University
URL: <https://niceconference.org/>
 1. Vanessa shared that early bird registration had closed and regular registration remained open until May 11.
 2. She said the full conference agenda would be posted later that week.
 3. Hotel booking remained open at the Philadelphia Marriott Downtown.
 4. Sponsorship opportunities were still available at multiple levels.
 5. Vanessa encouraged participants to continue sharing conference information across their networks.

- NICE K12 Cybersecurity Education Conference (4:24 – 4:28)
December 7-8, 2026, New Orleans, Louisiana
Presented by Amber Lindsay, iKeepSafe
URL: <https://www.k12cybersecurityconference.org/>
1. Amber shared that the NICE K-12 Cybersecurity Education Conference will take place in Louisiana in December.
 2. She announced a final call for planning committee members ahead of the first planning call.
 3. The call for proposals would launch on April 20.
 4. Amber invited recommendations for student keynote speakers and participants for Cyber Signing Day.
 5. She described Cyber Signing Day as a way to recognize students pursuing internships, apprenticeships, and future cybersecurity careers.
 6. Sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities were now open.
 7. Registration for the conference is expected to launch in June.

VI. Closing Remarks and Next Meeting Reminder

The next NICE Community Coordinating Council Meeting will be **May 26, 2026**, at 3:30PM ET.

- We welcome ideas for future meeting topics, presentations, or discussion items. If there is a subject you would like the council to explore, or if you have a report, update, or resource you would like to highlight in a future meeting, please feel free to share it [here](#).

Upcoming Meetings:

- [NICE K12 Cybersecurity Education COI](#): April 9, 2026, 3:30 – 4:30 PM ET
- [NICE Cybersecurity Career Ambassadors COI](#): April 10, 2026, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET

Upcoming Events:

- [NICE Webinar Series](#)
- [NICE Conference & Expo](#): June 1-3, 2026, Philadelphia, PA
- [Cybersecurity Career Week](#): October 19-24, 2026
- [NICE K12 Cybersecurity Education Conference](#): December 7-8, 2026, New Orleans, Louisiana
- NICE Events [Calendar](#)