**Is it time for a career refresh?**

**Image:** Included in toolkit. **Alt Text:** Person touching a digital screen with icons, including those representing cybersecurity and digital assets such as the cloud, email, and data.

Need a fresh start? A new career? Consider a career in cybersecurity or privacy. Cybersecurity and privacy career fields are rewarding, in demand, and well paying. They offer many opportunities as organizations prioritize data protection and embrace ever-evolving modern technology.

Whether you’re beginning your journey or looking to pivot from another field, here’s how you can start to build a successful career in cybersecurity or privacy.

**What’s involved?**

**Cybersecurity professionals** safeguard data and personal privacy, protect critical infrastructure, devices, and digital assets. The day-to-day responsibilities will vary depending upon the job position and work role, and might include assessing security risks, designing innovative strategies to secure systems and data, patching weaknesses, and implementing technologies to protect organizations from cyberattacks. They might also monitor cybersecurity events; scan the network for intrusion attempts; arm employees, Veterans, and the public against phishing scams; and conduct education and outreach around safeguarding Veteran and public data.

**Privacy professionals** are responsible for ensuring collection, storage, and use of personally identifiable information (PII) in VA complies with applicable privacy laws and regulations. This involves managing policies, conducting audits, and staying updated on legal requirements. It's a role that combines legal knowledge, technical skills, and ethical considerations. Privacy professionals also serve as first responders to privacy events and mitigate risks by promoting a culture of privacy awareness and maintaining the trust of those we serve. VA Privacy professionals are advocates for the protection of VA and Veteran sensitive information.

**VA cyber and privacy careers**

A career in cybersecurity or privacy at the VA offers a rewarding path with significant opportunities to make a difference in protecting Veteran data. VA offers inclusive, purpose-driven careers that allow you to reach your highest potential by collaborating with some of the brightest minds on today’s most innovative projects.

Our goal is to be an on-ramp for those pursuing cybersecurity and privacy roles by hiring, training, and promoting innovative and mission-driven staff so you succeed here and wherever your career takes you.

There are also cyber careers and privacy compliance roles in other federal, state, and local agencies and industry.

**Develop your skills**

While you do not need a degree, having some structured training can accelerate your career path.

Proficiencies to keep in mind:

* Are you already in a related field, such as acquisition, analytics, policy, or engineering, and looking to pivot?
* Do you like working with data and want to focus on ways to protect it, or bring a passion to enhancing online safety?
* Do you have an analytical mindset that you’d like to apply to enhancing cybersecurity and privacy protections for Veterans and the public space?

Start by building a strong foundation in cybersecurity and privacy principles and available career paths for each.

* Use frameworks like the National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education (NICE) Framework, which outline essential skills and competencies for cybersecurity and privacy roles. This framework can guide you to develop specific skills required of a cybersecurity or privacy professional, including understanding privacy laws, threat analysis, conducting risk assessments, and managing data protection strategies. Explore the 51 Work Roles and their tasks, knowledge, and skills on the [Cyber Career Pathways Tool](https://niccs.cisa.gov/workforce-development/cyber-career-pathways-tool).
* Join professional organizations for cyber and privacy professionals and for those looking to join these professions. Professional organizations can provide valuable networking opportunities, access to resources, and insights into industry trends. These organizations often offer training, and certification programs essential for development. One example is the [National Institute of Standards and Technology Privacy Workforce Public Working Group](https://www.nist.gov/privacy-framework/privacy-workforce-public-working-group)

**Get hands-on experience**

Hands-on experience can include many things such as looking for internships or entry-level positions that offer exposure to cyber and privacy policies, data protection measures, and compliance activities. Gaining practical experience is key to your success.

**More resources**

Explore the resources below and take your first steps towards becoming a security or privacy professional today.

* [VA Careers in Cyber and Other IT Professions](https://digital.va.gov/careers/)
* [Privacy Workforce Public Working Group](https://www.nist.gov/privacy-framework/workforce-advancement/privacy-workforce-public-working-group)