

Cybersecurity Public Service Grant Program

Frequently Asked Questions

The Cybersecurity Public Service Grant Program (CPSG) represents a partnership between the Commonwealth of Virginia and individuals demonstrating an interest and aptitude for cybersecurity defense to address the state's current and future cybersecurity needs. In addition, this program enables public agencies to provide attractive offers that financially compete with prospective private employers.

Qualifying individuals may receive an annual bonus, **up to \$20,000, for up to three years**. This bonus is funded through matching contribution from the employer and the state program. The authorizing language can be found in the 2020 Act of Appropriation, Item 150. H.

The following is designed to answer common questions about this program.

What are the requirements for an employee to qualify for the bonus?

To qualify for the CPSG, the individual must:

- Reside in Virginia during the period of employment counted towards earning the bonus. (Note that the physical report location of the job need not be within the Commonwealth.)
- Either:
 - Be a **college graduate** who completed a degree in computer science or other academic program that prepares a person for a career in cybersecurity or
 - Be a **veteran** who served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States, was discharged or released within the past year from such service under conditions other than dishonorable, gained experience or received training in computer science during such service.
- Begin full-time employment within one year of:
 - Graduation from a regionally accredited Virginia college or university or
 - Separation from active service in the Armed Forces of the United States.
- Accept a qualifying position with an eligible employer.

Which employers are eligible?

The eligible employer must be physically based within the Commonwealth. This would include the military's Pentagon, which is physically within Virginia's boundaries.

An eligible employer includes any of the following:

- Any Virginia state agency, including: Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches and independent agencies of Virginia state government;
- A Virginia local city, town or county government agency;
- An agency of the federal government;
- A state and federal military or defense organization; and
- A private organization contracted to provide cybersecurity service for the above public agencies.

What is the process to set up the Bonus?

The **job applicant** may submit an application at any time to confirm eligibility under the program. This confirmation does not guarantee an award, even if successfully securing an eligible position. The employer must also agree to the terms of participation and there must be funding available to support the bonus. This application process may aid the job applicant when discussing possible compensation packages with a prospective eligible employer. The application is available at www.schev.edu/cyber.

The **prospective employer** must enter into an agreement with SCHEV. Upon agreeing to the terms of the Bonus and number of years, SCHEV will reserve funding needed to meet the state's matching responsibility under the program. The agreement can be completed at any point during the hiring process but will not be enforced unless and until an eligible individual is hired into an eligible position. The agreement is available at www.schev.edu/cyber.

How is the Bonus determined and paid?

Determination of Bonus: State guidelines authorize annual awards of up to \$20,000 for up to three years; however, the program requires an employer match. The employer will determine the annual amount and number of years to be contributed toward the bonus, which will in turn be matched by the state program, up to \$10,000 annually for a maximum total of three years. In no case may the total state contribution exceed \$10,000 annually or more than three years of benefit.

Payment of the Bonus: Either annually (once a year) or biannually (once every six months), subject to employer agreement, the employer will pay the employee its portion upon completion of term of service. SCHEV will then forward the matching funds to the employer to be paid out on SCHEV's behalf to the employee upon verification that conditions for the bonus have been fulfilled.

The employer verification is provided by submitting a letter on company letterhead that contains the following information: the employer's physical address, the employee's full name, position title, hire date, date upon which the bonus was earned (either the one year or six-month anniversary of the hire date), verification that the employee completed full-time employment for the period in which to be paid the bonus, amount paid by the employer to the employee, date this payment was made, employer name and address, and amount due from the program. The letter should be mailed to: SCHEV, Cybersecurity Public Service Grant, 101 N 14th Street, Monroe Bldg 10th Fl, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

What are the conditions for receiving the Bonus?

To receive the Bonus, the employer must verify that the:

- Employee has completed full-time employment for the term in which the Bonus is paid (one year or six months);
- Employee resides in Virginia;
- Employer has paid its matching portion of bonus to the employee; and
- Job position meets the requirements under the program.

How can an open position within the State be found?

- Commonwealth of Virginia Job Board:
https://jobs.agencies.virginia.gov/applicants/jsp/shared/Welcome_css.jsp
- Virginia Cybersecurity Job websites:
<http://cyberjobs.virginia.gov/cov> <http://cyberva.virginia.gov/>
<http://jobs.virginia.gov/>

How can a “cyber-related” position that meets CPSG program requirements be identified?

1. When searching the Commonwealth of Virginia Job Board, select Role Titles “Information Technology Specialist” I-IV, or “Information Technology Manager” I-III.

2. Positions tagged with #COVAcyberjobs next to the job title may be eligible.
3. Positions with other Role Titles **may** be eligible if it:
 - Has a cybersecurity component, or
 - Is an entry-level position that leads directly into a cybersecurity position.
4. To further refine your search, you may search on the following key words, or combination of words:

cyber	cyber security	cyber-security	security
securing	compliance	threat	detection
audit	vulnerability	protect	risk
secure	incident	firewall	

Many positions containing these key words are not eligible under this program but upon request staff will evaluate further to determine if one qualifies.

5. Search for positions that are within the following Framework Categories as described in <https://niccs.us-cert.gov/workforce-development/cyber-security-workforce-framework>.

Analyze	Collect and Operate	Operate and Maintain
Investigate	Protect and Defend	Oversight and Development
Securely Provision		

Many positions within these Framework Categories are not eligible under this program but upon request staff will evaluate further to determine if one qualifies.

If there are further questions, contact Ms. Abbie Handford (Abbiehandford@schev.edu) for information.

Are there any conditions of use for the Bonus?

Because the bonus is paid after having been employed full-time in a qualifying position, the employee has already met the terms for receiving the award and there are no further requirements. These funds may be used by the employee for any purpose. These funds are subject to federal and state taxation.