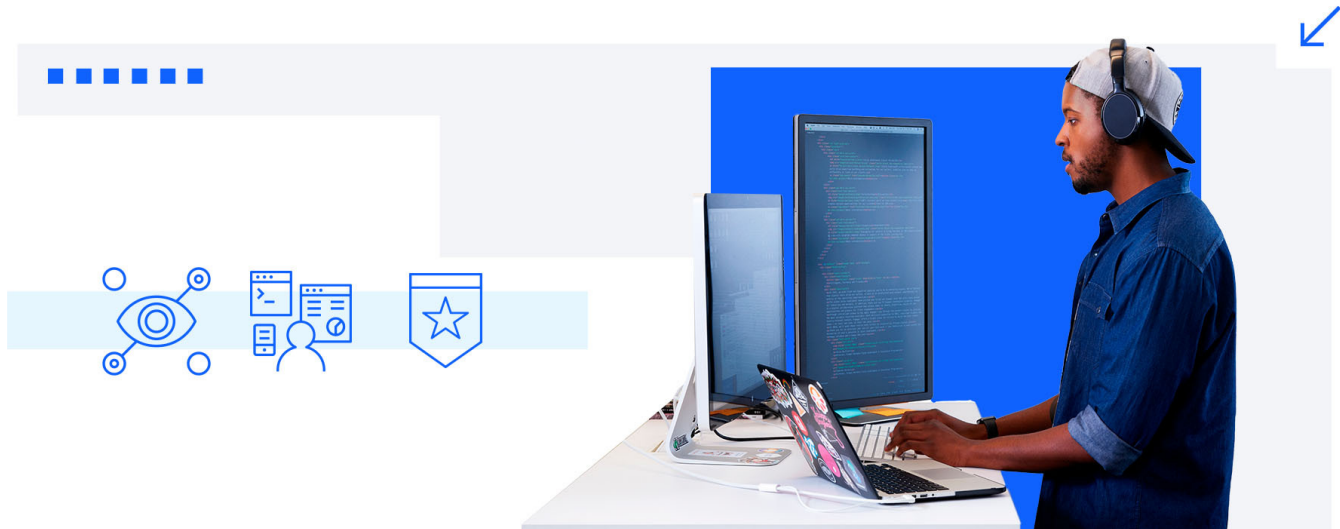


IBM Tackles Talent Shortage and Cybersecurity Crisis with New and Expanded Partnerships

IBM collaborates with U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Specialisterne Foundation, and six Historically Black College & Universities to train underrepresented communities on technology



ARMONK, N.Y., May 10, 2022 -- IBM (NYSE: IBM) today announced education initiatives with the [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs \(VA\)](#), [Specialisterne Foundation](#), and six [Historically Black Colleges & Universities](#) (HBCUs) to provide no-cost STEM job training to U.S. military veterans, neurodivergent learners worldwide, and university students from underrepresented communities in the U.S.

These collaborations underscore IBM's focus on providing STEM job training to traditionally underrepresented communities as part of its [commitment](#) to skill 30 million people worldwide by 2030 to create equitable, inclusive economic opportunities while also addressing a [longstanding STEM job skills shortage](#) impacting the business community.

- **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs:** [IBM SkillsBuild](#) will be an enhanced resource for transitioning Service members who are seeking job training and credentials through the VA to pursue a career after completing their military service. Together with the VA's Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses ([VET TEC](#)) Employer Consortium, IBM will help military veterans to pursue customized learning paths and other accelerated, non-traditional job training for high-demand technology careers. The Department of Defense [estimates](#) that 250,000 Service members transition annually to veteran status.
- In 2021, IBM Chairman and CEO Arvind Krishna [pledged](#) for IBM to partner with **HBCUs to establish Cybersecurity Leadership Centers**, with the goal of building a more diverse U.S. cyber workforce. Today, IBM is announcing the first six of more than 20 Cybersecurity Leadership Centers with the following HBCUs and HBCU systems: **North Carolina A&T State University, Southern University System, Clark Atlanta University, Xavier University of Louisiana, Morgan State University, South Carolina State University.**

Participant universities will have access to a customized, multi-year cybersecurity experience with IBM, including cybersecurity curricula, cloud access, and an immersive learning experience to expand HBCUs' capacity to develop top talent in the cybersecurity sector.

- **Cybersecurity curricula:** IBM will develop for each HBCU, a customized IBM Security Learning Academy portal – IBM client offering – including courses designed to help the university enhance its cybersecurity education portfolio. In addition, IBM will continue to give access to IBM Academic Programs.
- **Immersive learning experience:** HBCUs' faculty and students will have an opportunity to benefit from IBM Security's Command Center, through which they can experience a highly realistic, simulated cyberattack, designed to prepare them and train them on response techniques. Moreover, HBCUs' faculty will have access to consultation sessions with IBM technical personnel on cybersecurity.
- **Cloud access:** IBM will provide faculty and students with no-cost access to multiple SaaS IBM Cloud environments.
- **Specialisterne Foundation:** Together with the Specialisterne Foundation, IBM SkillsBuild will be tailored

to the job training needs of neurodivergent individuals across 13 countries (Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Spain, UK, U.S.). Specialisterne Foundation helps harness the talents of autistic persons and those with profiles such as ADHD, OCD, and dyslexia.

IBM is committed to extending skills training and technology credentials to individuals from underrepresented communities and will continue to pursue new and enhanced education partnerships like these.

"We believe that the most promising job candidates for today's demanding careers will come from communities that may have been historically overlooked or excluded due to outdated hiring policies and old-fashioned credentialing," said Justina Nixon-Saintil, Vice President, IBM Corporate Social Responsibility and ESG. "That's why we're uniting the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors to cultivate STEM talent from underrepresented communities to address the world's most critical challenges."

"We want Veterans to have as many pathways to employment and career success as possible," said Michael Frueh, VA's Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits. "This is an urgent need and goes beyond hiring. This partnership will offer our Veterans a unique opportunity to obtain skills and find job opportunities across companies and industries."

"We strongly believe that hiring diverse talent increases companies' success," said Steen Lohse, CEO and Managing Director of Specialisterne Foundation. "Neurodivergent people across the world will have access to free, online courses from IBM SkillsBuild on disruptive technologies such as AI, cybersecurity, and cloud computing, enabling meaningful employment for neurodivergent learners."

"NC A&T State University being chosen as one of the first six HBCU Cybersecurity Leadership Centers is a great privilege that will provide our students with access to top-notch education, technology, and industry professionals and will ensure the future cybersecurity workforce will be diverse, experienced, and capable of protecting this country," said Hossein Sarrafzadeh, PhD, Director of the Center of Excellence in Cybersecurity Research, Education and Outreach. "IBM recognizes the untapped talent at HBCUs and with this investment they are building a cybersecurity education infrastructure that will propel underrepresented communities to the forefront of security leadership."

"As we know, technology-related services are in constant demand, and cybersecurity is paramount," said Dr. Ray L. Belton, President of the Southern University System. "Consistent growth in all areas of industry requires a well-prepared workforce. We are proud to partner in this initiative that will offer in-demand programming and opportunities to our students, adding to a diverse, global marketplace."

"Through South Carolina State University's collaboration with IBM, students, staff, and faculty have access to modern technology, resources, and skills development," said Dr. Nikunja Swain, Chair and professor, Computer Science and Mathematics Department; Executive Director, Center of Excellence in Cybersecurity. "We are glad to be part of this new IBM HBCU Cybersecurity Leadership initiative, which will further enhance our ongoing activities on several key areas, including cybersecurity, data science analytics, cloud computing, IOT, blockchain, design thinking, quantum computing, and artificial intelligence."

"Xavier is excited to partner with IBM to expand the opportunities offered to our talented students," said Dr. Anne McCall, provost and senior vice president of Academic Affairs at Xavier University of Louisiana. "At Xavier, we are responsible for cultivating the talents of the next generation, and cybersecurity is an industry of the

future. This partnership will help our nation meet the growing need for skilled professionals in the cyberspace workforce."

"The Morgan State University CAP Center is excited about this partnership opportunity as we work together with IBM to address the high workforce demand in the cybersecurity industry," said Dr. Kevin T. Kornegay, Professor and IoT Security Endowed Chair, Morgan State University.

"Clark Atlanta University welcomes the partnership and the expanded collaboration with IBM to build a more diverse and innovative U.S. cyber workforce. This amazing opportunity prepares our students for the future in developing cutting edge technology to solve complex cybersecurity challenges and better protect organizations in a challenging and uncertain global security environment," said Silvanus Udoka, Ph.D., Dean, Clark Atlanta University School of Business Administration.

In 2020, Manpower Group [found](#) that the talent shortage in the U.S. has more than tripled over 10 years, with 69% of employers surveyed struggling to fill skilled positions, up from just 14% in 2010. By September 2021, there were more than 1.2 million U.S. job vacancies postings in software-related professions, [according to the National Foundation for American Policy](#).



About IBM Education

As part of the company's Corporate Social Responsibility efforts, [IBM's education portfolio](#) takes a personalized, diverse, and deep approach to STEM career readiness. IBM's pro bono programs range from education and support for teens at public schools and universities, to career readiness resources for aspiring professionals and job seekers. IBM believes that education is best achieved through the collaboration of the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors.

IBM SkillsBuild offers more than 1,000 online courses, and shareable badges upon their successful completion, on topics ranging from professional workplace proficiencies to technical skills for many industries, roles, and technologies, including hybrid cloud computing, AI, cybersecurity, data analytics, help desk, and project management. It also offers access to mentors, resume-building projects, as well as partner-led job fairs and job referrals. As of February 2022, IBM SkillsBuild has helped 1.72 million students and job seekers globally to complete 4 million learning hours in cybersecurity, data analysis, and other technical disciplines.

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Additional assets available online:  [Photos](#) 

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