STRENGTHENING THE NATION'S CYBER CAPABILITY

The nation will require robust cyber talent to meet emerging requirements and respond to future challenges and threats. However, Federal agencies and the military face challenges in attracting and retaining cyber professionals. Inefficient Federal hiring processes, limited professional development opportunities, and rigid personnel systems throughout the government make it difficult for agencies and the military to compete with the private sector given the high demand for individuals with these critical skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission proposes to improve governmental capability and bolster national security by developing cyber talent pathways to Federal civilian and military service, reskilling opportunities for current employees and service members, and improving talent management structures that will help attract and retain cyber professionals. The Commission also recommends several new approaches to accessing individuals with cyber skills during a national emergency.

PUBLIC SERVICE

- **Expand Cyber Talent Pipelines to Service.**

  - Establish a Federal Fellowship and Scholarship Center to enhance programs to develop individuals with critical skills, including cyber talent, for Federal employment.

  - Create a Public Service Corps to fund scholarships for university students to pursue degrees in high-need fields in exchange for a commitment to work in the civil service.

  - Pilot the use of new authorities to hire students and recent graduates with critical skills.

- **Develop Cyber Talent within Federal Agencies.**

  - Upgrade the skills of the existing Federal workforce.

  - Fix outdated rules that prevent agencies from reappointing reskilled individuals to new positions at the same or a higher salary and grade.

  - Base an appropriate portion of the evaluations for certain agency executives on their actions to utilize all available authorities to recruit and retain IT professionals.

- **Create a More Competitive Cyber Talent Management Structure.**

  - Expand special personnel systems for civilian cybersecurity professionals.

  - Test a new personnel system at agencies with a significant number of STEM employees, providing a body of evidence to create a modern talent-management system.

<u>MILITARY SERVICE</u>

- **Expand Cyber Talent Pipelines to Service.**

    o Expand access to the Cyber Leadership Development Program for ROTC cadets and midshipmen.

    o Appropriate additional funding to the newly established Cyber Institutes and consider expansion to other universities.

    o Offer limited tuition grants for pre-service technical degrees and certificates in exchange for an enlisted service commitment.

- **Develop Cyber Talent within Military Services.**

    o Partner with community colleges and vocational schools to offer technical education programs, including those focused on cybersecurity, for current service members.

    o Enhance tuition assistance for new service members, prioritizing programs focused on developing critical skills such as cyber.

- **Create a More Competitive Cyber Talent Management Structure.**

    o Develop a new personnel management structure for cyber talent.

    o Use existing authorities to establish warrant officers as an optimal pathway for military career flexibility and compensation.

    o Facilitate cyber developmental opportunities by establishing permanent billets at Defense Digital Service and similar entities.

    o Collect better data to identify retention challenges, increase transparency, and support the use of new authorities in areas such as merit promotion, lateral entry, and constructive credit.

<u>ACCESSING CYBER TALENT IN A NATIONAL EMERGENCY</u>

- **Public Service**
    o Pilot a Civilian Cybersecurity Reserve to allow the Department of Homeland Security and the National Security Agency ready access to technical experts with the necessary platform knowledge and clearances in case of a cyber emergency that exceeds the capacity of the current workforce.

- **Military Service**
    o Maintain a list of type and amount of needed skilled personnel for national security purposes.

    o Authorize an Individual Ready Reserve of non-prior service personnel with critical skills.

- **Military, National, and Public Service**
    o Establish a Council on Military, National, and Public Service in the Executive Office of the President to coordinate whole-of-government efforts to address gaps in critical skills.

    o Create an internet-based service platform where individuals may learn about service opportunities; upload skill sets, certifications, and other qualifications of interest to service organizations; and indicate willingness to serve in response to an emergency.