



**CYBER
SECURITY**

**INVITATION TO
INVEST IN:
VETERAN AND
BUSINESS SUCCESS
THROUGH
CYBERSECURITY
CERTIFICATION**





Introduction

This paper outlines the details of serving as a pioneering anchor employer in a national initiative to hire and support U.S. military veterans who have obtained industry-recognized certifications in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Cybersecurity, and emerging digital technologies. By becoming an anchor employer, this is an opportunity to demonstrate ongoing commitment to innovation, inclusive hiring, and social impact—while tapping into a robust pipeline of highly skilled, operations-driven, and leadership-ready talent.

“With the shortage of cybersecurity professionals and the need for cybersecurity protection mounting... veterans are an obvious choice to be those boots on the ground as our frontline defense against cybercrime.”
— Hari Ravichandran, CEO of Aura and Forbes Technology Council member

This invitation to be anchor employer is a strategic expansion to create frontline defense—connecting companies directly with credentialed veteran talent trained in today's most critical digital domains.



Background

As the digital economy accelerates, the need for skilled talent in AI, cybersecurity, and emerging tech has become both urgent and competitive. The cybersecurity job market in the US is experiencing strong growth and high demand, with a projected 33% increase in employment for information security analysts from 2023 to 2033, which is significantly faster than the average for all occupations. Despite the high demand, there is a shortage of qualified cybersecurity professionals with the specific skills needed. Meanwhile, over 200,000 U.S. military members transition to civilian life annually—many completing certifications through programs like DoD SkillBridge, VA VET TEC, and other DoL-registered upskilling pathways.

Veterans offer an unmatched blend of operational focus, adaptability, leadership, and security awareness. Qualities increasingly aligned with roles across technology, strategy, and operations. Yet veterans often face significant barriers in translating their experience and transferring their skills to new careers.

The ASCEND Collective in collaboration with iZen's Boots2Bytes program launch a transformative training program designed to help veterans enter high-demand careers in AI, cybersecurity, and emerging digital technologies. With a shared commitment to skills-first hiring, equitable access, and real-world readiness, this collaboration bridges the gap between military experience and the future of work—empowering veterans with the technical training, industry certifications, and career pathways needed to thrive in today's digital economy.



About The Northern Compass Academy

Our staff has a combined 50+ years of military experience and over 30 years of talent optimization experience behind us.

The Northern Compass Academy is a digital platform designed to address employment challenges and empower individuals.

It includes:

Career Readiness Modules

- Comprehensive guides to help individuals develop essential workplace skills and prepare for long-term employment.
- Tools to build confidence, resilience, and adaptability as they navigate barriers to meaningful careers.
- Success stories highlighting individuals who have excelled in their roles.

Practical Tools for Job Seekers

- Skills profile and interview preparation tailored to highlight transferable skills.
- Guidance on communicating strengths and career goals effectively to prospective employers.
- Resources to match participants with forward-thinking organizations and hiring opportunities.

About Boots2Bytes

iZen's Boots2Bytes program is hands-on training in Cybersecurity and AI-ML—tailored for transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses.

Participants gain real-world skills, earn industry-recognized certifications, and collaborate with veteran mentors to build leadership, grow soft skills, and receive personalized support in job readiness and placement.

Career Aligned Training

- Kickstart or re-kindle your career: This is an “Outcome-based training” with a focus on employability, designed to prepare you for employment opportunities to work at a Security Operations Centre (SOC/NOC)
- Learn by doing: Access iZen's cyberlabs for lab exercises to reinforce the understanding of concepts. Get hands-on experience
- Get practical insights from an (ISC)² Fellow, with over 40 years of experience in the cybersecurity industry and academia
- Real-life use-cases and case studies to give you practical insights
- Learn from the best in the world expert instructor, who earned the title “Father of the Computer Virus” and devised defenses used in more than 80% of computers worldwide



Anchor Benefits to Employers

Branding and Visibility

- Prominent branding on the Northern Compass Academy platform, course and promotional materials, and learning modules.
- Recognition as an anchor employer of the initiative in all outreach and campaigns.

Thought Leadership

- Opportunities for Executive leaders to contribute to webinars, videos, and case studies within the Northern Compass Academy.
- Co-branded whitepapers and research showcasing the benefits of retention-focused hiring practices.

Candidate Selection

- Early profile delivery and mock/informational interviews.
- Direct connection and priority/first acceptance to hire graduates.

Social Impact Recognition

- Public acknowledgment of company leadership in advancing the success of veterans into AI, cybersecurity and advancing technology careers.
- An invitation to be on the Advisory Board for Veterans ASCEND or MilSpouse ASCEND for one year.

Talent Value

- Innovation and Impact: Veteran technologists bring real-world experience in high-stakes environments, well-suited for client engagements and internal teams.
- Leadership Ready: Veterans transition with deep experience in team leadership, strategic operations, and problem-solving under pressure.
- Work Opportunity Tax Credits: Up to \$9,600 per veteran hired.



Anchor Request

Be uniquely positioned to serve as an anchor employer in this initiative by investing in three critical workforce domains:

- **Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning**
- **Cybersecurity**
- **Emerging Digital Technologies (cloud, blockchain, data analytics, automation)**

As an anchor employer, you commit to hiring at least one from a specified cohort through a per hire fee, as a deductible donation to our 501c(3).

Looking for Priority Access?

Become a Premier or Elite Anchor Employer and gain exclusive, high-impact access to the next generation of cybersecurity talent.

As a Premier Anchor, you'll receive early delivery of candidate profiles, featured branding across our platform, and recognition in all outreach—plus the opportunity to conduct informational interviews with three candidates of your choice.

Want to take it a step further? Our Elite Anchor tier gives you everything in the Premier package plus the prestige of being named the exclusive Champion of a cohort, with your leadership featured in webinars and case studies, an invitation to be on the Advisory Board of Veterans ASCEND or MilSpouse ASCEND for one year, and first access to the top five candidates. This is more than a hiring opportunity—it's a strategic investment in your workforce and your brand.

- **Premier Anchor: \$3,500 per cohort - four available**
- **Elite Anchor: \$5,000 per cohort - one available**



Our Commitment

Impact, and Metrics Reporting

- Provide AI-driven skills matching aligned with company role specifics.
- Support candidate preparation through coaching and mentoring.
- Deliver metrics and insights on talent pipeline, hire outcomes and retention.
- Partner with veteran service organizations and tech certification providers to expand reach.
- Enhance workforce diversity and readiness aligned with company values and skills needs.
- Testimonials and success stories from veterans who benefit from the program.





Conclusion

The Northern Compass Academy represents a powerful opportunity for companies to make a lasting impact on our nation's security, our service members and veterans and their employment journeys.

This is more than a hiring initiative—it's an opportunity to create lasting economic mobility for veterans, drive innovation within cybersecurity defense, and lead the way in skills-based, retention-focused hiring.

We invite you to make an investment in our country's future. As an anchor employer, you are committed to unlocking the potential of veterans in emerging digital careers while ensuring the security of the American dream remains in tact.

Thank you.



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