



# Commonwealth Cyber Initiative

CENTRAL VIRGINIA

## Call for Proposals: CVN Workforce Development Grant FY27

Application Due Date: June 12, 2026 5:00 p.m.

### Objective

The Commonwealth Cyber Initiative (CCI) is establishing Virginia as a global center of excellence at the intersection of security, autonomous systems, and data. With a mission of research, innovation, and workforce development, CCI serves as a catalyst for the Commonwealth's long-term leadership in this sector through the leadership of a central hub and four regional nodes. The Central Virginia Node (CVN) is led by Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU).

CVN seeks to support programs of workforce development that build on the expertise of the higher education institutions that are members of the CVN network and extend workforce development opportunities aligned with CCI to students across the Commonwealth. The objective is to enhance students' essential skills to enter the cybersecurity workforce once they finish their current studies; we are particularly interested in projects that expose students to experiences in industry. With this grant, CVN will support programs that are aligned with CCI's overall mission and CVN's focus areas.

### Eligibility

Eligible applicants are researchers and faculty members at institutions of higher education in CVN who are deemed eligible by their home institution to serve as a Principal Investigator (PI) on an external grant. Each faculty member may submit up to two proposals (one as a PI and one as a co-PI). Their home institution must be a member of the CVN network. Each proposal must include a co-PI from another institution within CVN<sup>1</sup>. Budgets must be approved in accordance with the home institution's policies for external grants. We also encourage researchers who have not previously been funded by CCI to apply. **However, PIs or co-PIs who are currently funded through CCI or CVN on three or more projects at the time of this award are not eligible to apply.** I.E. PIs or co-PIs should have no more than three CCI or CVN projects running concurrently.

### Awards

Amount of Funds to be Awarded: \$150,000

Maximum Award Amount: \$50,000

Match: No match is required for this funding announcement.

Award Details: Awardees will receive \$50,000 that can be used to support workforce development programs.

Awardees will be required to submit periodic reporting. PIs and co-PIs are expected to participate in CVN meetings, respond to data collection requests by CCI, and may be asked to present their research at other CCI engagements as required.

---

<sup>1</sup> CVN institutions include Brightpoint Community College, Longwood University, Piedmont VA Community College, Reynolds Community College, University of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia State University, Virginia Union University, and the University of Richmond.

Any publications that result from this project must include the following statement (contract numbers will be assigned during the award process):

*This work was supported [in part] by the Commonwealth Cyber Initiative, an investment in the advancement of cyber R&D, innovation, and workforce development, under the contract number xxxxx. For more information about CCI, visit [www.cyberinitiative.org](http://www.cyberinitiative.org).*

According to the terms under which CCI is funded, the following costs are **not** allowable:

- Costs of developing and delivering undergraduate capstone programs, except as part of the larger effort to align cyber and cyber-physical systems security-focused undergraduate program content with industry needs.
- Portion of salaries and benefits of faculty for time spent teaching undergraduates, including teaching cyber-related courses. However, effort required for the PI to complete the proposed project is allowable.
- Scholarships for costs of attendance at institutions of higher education. However, Tuition reimbursement for graduate students is allowable.
- Indirect costs (IDC)

### **Schedule**

Request for Proposals Released	May 22, 2026
Last Day for Q&A	June 5, 2026
Proposal Deadline	June 12, 2026, 5 p.m.
Award Notification	Prior to August 1, 2026
Project Dates	August 1, 2026 – July 31, 2027

### **Proposal Format**

Proposals must use 1-inch margins, 11 point (Calibri or arial) font, and single line spacing. Proposals submitted in the wrong format or missing items will be deemed incomplete and will not be considered. The following outline should be followed:

1. Title Page (See template; 1 page)
  - Title of proposed project, contact information for Principal Investigator (PI) and coprincipal Investigators (co-PIs).
2. Proposed Program (up to 3 pages)
  - Description of the project: Problem description/Need Statement, objectives, methodology, milestones, and timeline.
  - Past performance (if applicable): description of methodology, scale, success, and lessons-learned from prior iterations of project
  - Discussion of the alignment of the project with CCI objectives and CVN focus areas.
  - Measures of success: key performance indicators, how success will be measured and tracked.
3. Target student population and pre-requisites for student participation (up to 2 pages)
  - Methods to recruit and ensure successful participation of students throughout CVN.

- Any measures taken to improve participation by under-represented groups (women and under-represented minorities).
  - Note: For the purposes of this program, “student” means individuals enrolled at institutions of higher education in the CVN network.
4. Budget (See template; 1 page)
    - Budget items and justification
    - Budget must include requested amount
    - Budget must be approved by OSP, or other office as determined by institutions’ internal policies
  5. Biographical Sketches (NSF format; 3 pages)
    - Required for PI and all Co-PI

### **Proposal Submission**

Proposals must be submitted via the CVN jotform ([CCI CVN Proposal Form](https://vcu.jotform.com/team/engineering/CCICVN_ProposalForm)) no later than the close of the business day (5:00pm) on Friday, June 12, 2026. All proposals must be uploaded to the jotform as a single PDF document. Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered. The CVN proposal jotform can be found at: [https://vcu.jotform.com/team/engineering/CCICVN\\_ProposalForm](https://vcu.jotform.com/team/engineering/CCICVN_ProposalForm)

### **Evaluation Criteria**

The applications received in response to this RFP will be evaluated by a panel of reviewers and scored according to the following criteria:

#### Intellectual merit

- Alignment with CCI mission and CVN focus areas, including preparing students to enter the cyber workforce, and to help Virginia retain that workforce.
- Added value to Commonwealth students.
- Clear performance and evaluation metrics proposed for the project.
- Track record of the team involved and likelihood of achieving the stated goals.

#### Impact

- Impact to the competitiveness of the Commonwealth in workforce development at the intersection of cybersecurity, autonomy, and data.
- Long-term scalability of the program.
- Cost per student involved in the training.
- Improvements in diverse and inclusive representation.
- Quality of the workforce development component of proposal.

### **Contact Information:**

For questions on this solicitation or technical assistance with submitting an application, contact [ccicvn@vcu.edu](mailto:ccicvn@vcu.edu).