Statewide Youth Cybersecurity Summit:

Engaging the Next Generation of Cyber Defenders

Date: October 29, 2025

Cyber threats are growing, and the demand for skilled cybersecurity professionals has never been greater. To inspire and prepare the next generation, we are expanding the successful Youth Cybersecurity Summit into a statewide event, bringing together high school and college students across Iowa to explore the world of cybersecurity.

This year's Statewide Youth Cybersecurity Summit will feature regional host locations at community colleges and universities across Iowa, providing accessible, hands-on learning opportunities for students statewide. Each location will offer local activities, while all venues will be connected through simulcast keynote sessions, expert panels, and interactive discussions.

A Connected Learning Experience

The summit will begin with a live-streamed statewide opening session featuring cybersecurity leaders and industry experts. After the opening, each regional site will run locally tailored activities—including hands-on workshops, Capture the Flag games, and panel discussions. During the lunch hour, all locations will reconnect for a special live-streamed interactive session, offering students a shared statewide experience. The rest of the programming will be managed locally, allowing each site to highlight local strengths and opportunities.

Intended Audience

The Statewide Youth Cybersecurity Summit is designed for high school students interested in exploring cybersecurity, technology, and digital careers. Whether students are curious or considering a tech career, the summit offers an engaging, hands-on introduction to cybersecurity.

Engaging Students with Hands-On Cyber Activities

Each regional site will deliver engaging, real-world cybersecurity experiences, including:

- **Capture the Flag (CTF) competitions** to introduce ethical hacking challenges
- **Interactive security demos** to showcase real-world cyber threats and defenses
- **Pathways sessions** highlighting cybersecurity education opportunities
- **Cyber career panels** featuring professionals from industry, government, and academia

Hosting a Regional Event

Hosting a regional summit is a powerful way to support local students and contribute to Iowa's cybersecurity future and will provide a unique opportunity for community colleges and universities to:

- Connect with future cybersecurity students and workforce talent
- Showcase cybersecurity programs and career pathways
- Engage with industry partners and state agencies
- Be part of a high-impact initiative to strengthen Iowa's cyber resilience

Host sites will be responsible for:

- Securing a venue to accommodate students and local partners
- Providing lunch for attendees
- Recruiting local employers and cybersecurity professionals to participate in panels or demos
- Managing local registration and attendance
- Facilitating locally run sessions, such as CTF competitions, career panels, and interactive activities
- Optional local enhancements might include cybersecurity trivia, tech meet-and-greets, or student poster presentations.

In addition to hosting local sessions, each site is encouraged to involve college students from cybersecurity or related programs in helping run the event. These students serve as near-peer mentors, giving high school attendees a valuable opportunity to see what studying cybersecurity in college is like and inspiring them to pursue similar pathways.

The Iowa Cyber Hub team will support host sites by:

- Offering ideas and templates for interactive sessions
- Assisting with public relations and outreach
- Provide a link to your local information, registration, and other information
- Coordinating the statewide livestream sessions
- Sharing guidance on program structure and best practices

Call for Sponsors & Partners

To make this event a success, we seek sponsorships, industry partners, and host locations that are passionate about growing Iowa's cybersecurity workforce. Whether you are an educational institution, business, or state agency, your support will directly impact the next generation of cyber professionals. Join us in shaping the future of cybersecurity in Iowa!

To learn more about becoming a host site or sponsor, contact Lindsay Foster (cyio@iastate.edu) or visit our summit site: https://www.iowacyberhub.org/youth-cyber-summit/