WOMEN IN CYBERSECURITY

WiCyS

Where the recruitment, retention and advancement of women in cybersecurity happens.

Recruiting, Retaining and Advancing Women in Cybersecurity

In an era when rapidly emerging technologies offer both the promise of previously unimagined innovation and enormous challenges for economic and national security, cybersecurity solutions have never been more urgently needed.

The resulting demand for cybersecurity professionals has grown at unprecedented rates, presenting enormous opportunities for those who seek a place in the field. According to ISC2's *2023 Cybersecurity Workplace Research Study*, the number of unfilled cybersecurity roles has tripled from 2014 to an estimated 4 million in 2023.

Yet women now hold only about 24 percent of cybersecurity jobs globally, and many in those positions experience a "glass ceiling" within their organizations.

Women in CyberSecurity (WiCyS)'s mission is to change that. We are the leading nonprofit organization dedicated to bridging the gender gap and fostering a diverse, highly talented cybersecurity workforce.

OPENING DOORS AND
Championing Inclusion, Equity and Innovation

A Message from Lynn Dohm, Executive Director

For more than a decade, Women in CyberSecurity (WiCyS) has stood at the forefront of a crucial movement, dedicated to providing recruitment, retention and advancement for women in the field and **cultivating a more inclusive, equitable industry landscape.**

By providing unparalleled **resources, training, mentorship, networking and job opportunities, and a vibrant international community,** WiCyS empowers women to explore and excel in a field where their voices and talents have traditionally been underrepresented and unencouraged.

Due to the strength of our partnerships in industry, academia and government, our WiCyS Community has grown and our resources have expanded each year.

Today, as we seek to remain nimble and to rise to the changing needs of the cybersecurity field, we seek even greater philanthropic support to sustain our innovative programs, launch new initiatives and strengthen our diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.

Your support truly provides access for all women who have the dream of finding their rightful place in the cybersecurity field.

"

Fortinet aims to bridge the cybersecurity skills gap by training one million individuals by 2026. Through partnerships, such as WiCyS, we are creating new, unique ways to increase access to cybersecurity training, certification programs, and employment opportunities, so we can collectively upskill the next generation of cybersecurity professionals that the industry urgently needs. By fostering these partnerships, we enhance the accessibility of a diverse talent pool, ensuring inclusivity in our efforts. Partnerships will remain vital in our mission to reduce the skills gap."

— Melonia Da Gama, Director of Marketing and Business Development, Fortinet

The WiCyS Difference

- **The first ever conference for women in cybersecurity** was hosted by WiCyS in 2014. Our founder, Dr. Ambareen Siraj, received a grant through the National Science Foundation to help facilitate that conference.

- **Annual WiCyS cybersecurity conferences** are the premier events for women and their allies to recruit, retain and advance women in cybersecurity, welcoming approximately 2,000 attendees and 200 recruiters. WiCyS ensures equal representation of industry professionals, students and underrepresented individuals through scholarship assistance.

- **We take a 360-degree view of the field,** comprising an alliance of trailblazing thought leaders from industry, academia and government, all of whom help create the most comprehensive organization for our members.

- **Our forward-thinking vision** from day one has included a strategy to sustain and grow at scale through:

  + Developing professional affiliates and student organizations, both domestically and internationally, to continually mobilize our community

  + Creating programs that evolve along with advancements in the field to give women the cutting-edge skills and professional development they need to succeed

  + Developing the State of Inclusion Benchmark Study to highlight the disparities of work experiences for women in the field of cybersecurity

WiCyS By the Numbers

9,038 Members

265 Student Chapters

66 Professional Affiliates

92 Countries

62 Strategic Partners

121 Conference Sponsors

In 2023 alone:

84 Diverse Programs
33,872 Program Participants

Dynamic WiCyS Networks

These essential communities serve to launch and further women's careers in the field:

Student Chapters: A unique opportunity for high school, community college and university students to come together to learn, connect and grow; to access WiCyS resources; and to be given primary consideration for WiCyS programs.

Professional Affiliates: Through regional, corporate and specialty affiliates worldwide, members enhance the WiCyS mission through outreach, awareness, networking, sharing, mentoring and engagement.

> *We are more powerful when we empower each other. WiCyS is all about sisterhood and a place where you can find your tribe, find your support, and find your right mentors and mentees."*
>
> **— Sabna Sainudeen, WiCyS India Affiliate**

Bringing Community and Opportunities Together

- Annual Conference
- Career Fair (7,441 participants in 2023)
- Online Member Forum
- Newsletters (27,000+ subscribers)
- Job Board (3,000+ résumés posted)
- Leadership Series
- Mentorship Program
- Skill Development Training Programs

Spotlight on Programs with Impact

Among the many successful programs WiCyS has implemented, the following standouts have been targeted for expansion to serve many more women in the coming years.

Mentorship Program: Since 2020, this vibrant 9-month program is designed to upskill and uplevel women in areas such as influence, negotiation, leadership, work/life harmony, communication, and more. Inclusive mentors cultivate the space of respect and growth for women in cybersecurity to advance their careers. 1459 WiCyS members were enrolled for the 2023/2024 cohort.
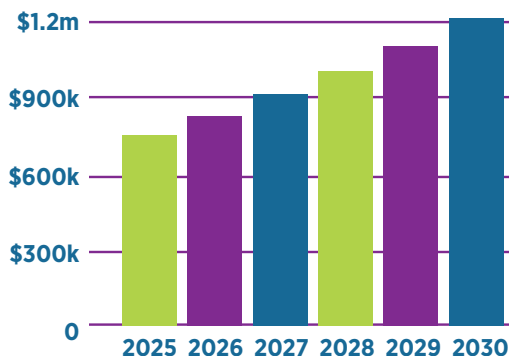
The Security Training Scholarship is a bright light among successful WiCyS partner-supported programs. Through technical mentorship, extensive resources, and hands-on skills training, this multi-stage program, in partnership with the SANS Institute, enables previously undiscovered cybersecurity talent to become certified professionals and launch exciting new careers.

Since 2020, the Security Training Scholarship Program has had outstanding results in the training and placement of women in lucrative cybersecurity careers.

- 2,954 WiCyS members with beginner-level Capture The Flag (CTF)
- 812 CyberStart scholars
- 337 CyberGEN.IQ aptitude assessments
- 175 Advanced Training Scholarships
- 100% career placement within 12 months of multi-stage program completion and graduation
- Top performers earned Global Information Assurance Certifications (GIAC).

Funding requirements for the Security Training Scholarship include:

Chart (bar graph):
Y-axis values: $1.2m, $900k, $600k, $300k, 0
X-axis years: 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030

> **"**
> *As a WiCyS Mentee, I had the opportunity to learn from cyber professionals practicing in the field. We shared our interests in IoT, machine learning, threat intelligence, incident response, and critical infrastructure. And I learned that by using our innate superpowers as women, we can add great value to any role we choose to pursue in cybersecurity and make an impactful difference."*
>
> **— Sarah Bartsch, Cybersecurity Analyst, Evolve Security Academy**

> **"**
> *WiCyS' Security Training Scholarship is not only about learning cybersecurity skills in every tier of the program, it's also about building my confidence and realizing I can achieve anything I set my mind to. This experience has truly changed my life and how I see my career and opportunities for my future."*
>
> **— Stephani Guimaraes Lima, Security Health Technician**

WiCyS Initiatives and Programs

- Skill Development and Training Programs
- Scholarships, Grants & Awards
- Inclusion and Allyship Resources
- Speaking and Media Opportunities
- NICE Workforce Framework Video Library
- Leadership Series
- Inclusion Benchmark Study
- CyberTalent Study
- Mentor/Mentee Program

Programs That Support Our Military Community

To help advance more female military community members into the cybersecurity field, WiCyS offers extensive resources, exclusive community forums, designated scholarship opportunities, and mentors within the network.

Growing the Impact of WiCyS

We are focused on the future, and have created a five-year strategic plan to both sustain what has made our organization strong and to build upon those strengths. These plans call for us to raise an additional $2.9 million to our annual $5.4 million sustaining budget to fund both the aforementioned program expansion, and the organizational priorities that include:

- **Strengthening our core capacity**—the professional staff that is the heart of WiCyS success and increased collaborations and programs.

- **Increase our student chapters and professional affiliates by 3 to 5 percent each year,** further promoting leadership-skills-building workshops and bolstering the cybersecurity talent pipeline.

- **Expand peer support networks** through the launch of our new member portal.

- **Creating more pathways for women to have increased accessibility to cybersecurity careers and advancement —** further engage in partnerships for more skill development training programs.

- **An initiative to further collaborate with academic leaders,** with an emphasis on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), community colleges, and international institutions to increase female enrollment in cyber-focused academic programs.

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A strong partnership is the backbone of any successful business. It's inspiring to see the ongoing collaboration between Cisco and WiCyS. Through this partnership, we have hired several talented women, and WiCyS educational programs have helped our team stay up-to-date on industry trends. Together, let's continue to make room for amazing women to thrive."

— LaKetta Hawkins, Leader of Inclusive Workforce Enablement Team in The Security & Trust Organization, Cisco

Investing in the Future of WiCyS

Our strategic partners, philanthropic funders, premier supporters and conference sponsors are the foundation for all that WiCyS accomplishes, yielding invaluable results for our shared community and for the long-term vitality and growth of the cybersecurity ecosystem.

Your support enables women to expand their reach, organizations to bridge the gender gap, and the creation of a diverse, talented workforce equipped to tackle the evolving challenges of cybersecurity.

Most importantly, philanthropic investment in WiCyS is also an investment that produces outcomes well beyond financial metrics to encompass broader social, cultural and organizational impacts.

Now, further investment from additional supporters and partners is needed, not only to sustain our work but also to grow at pace with both technology and demand.

We ask that you consider joining WiCyS as a committed supporter. Together, let's build a safer digital world, one where every voice is heard and every mind empowered to innovate.

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Target is so proud to be a part of the incredible WiCyS community. The Cyber Defense challenge sponsored by Target started as a conversation about the needs for more real-world experiences for the WiCyS community. WiCyS jumped at the opportunity to partner and launched the program within only a few months. We've had more than 1400 participants and it's now in its third year. They are truly amazing partners and I'm grateful for all they are doing to advance the industry."

— Nicole McKoin, Director, External Engagement Cybersecurity at Target

Leadership

Dr. Ambareen Siraj, WiCyS Founder, Program Director at the National Science Foundation and former Professor and Founding Director of the Cybersecurity Education, Research, and Outreach Center at Tennessee Technological University

Dr. Janell Straach, Chair of the Board, Professor of Computer Science at Rice University, with a focus on Intelligent Systems and Cybersecurity

Lynn Dohm, Executive Director, whose accolades include being named one of CS Hub's top 25 cybersecurity leaders for 2024, and People's Choice award for Cybersecurity Woman of the Year

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Women in CyberSecurity (WiCyS) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to the recruitment, retention and advancement of women in cybersecurity. All gifts are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Our EIN is 82-2750482.