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**Friends,**

As we reflect upon the year gone by, I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude and pride for what we, as a community, have achieved together. Forge Institute has always stood on the pillar of collaboration and commitment towards fostering knowledge and technical prowess in the cybersecurity domain. This year, we took giant strides in this endeavor, significantly augmenting our educational programs and fortifying our partnerships. Each one of you played a vital role in these endeavors, bringing in dedication and a relentless spirit of innovation.

Our staff have exhibited an unprecedented level of professionalism and dedication, ensuring the smooth operation and continuous growth of our institute. To our members and partners, your unwavering trust and support have been the bedrock of our success, enabling us to expand our horizons and offer enhanced services and programs. The sterling feedback and constructive inputs from our customers and partners have been nothing short of a lighthouse, guiding us to better and refine our engagements.

Looking forward to the coming year, our vision is one of expansion and inclusivity. We aim to forge stronger alliances and facilitate a richer network of knowledge sharing through widened collaborations and partnerships. It is our firm belief that by working together, sharing insights, and leveraging each other's strengths, we can build a cyber ecosystem that is robust, secure, and forward-looking. We envision a community where every member leverages the power of collective intelligence to shape a future that is safer and more secure for all.

To the broader community, our commitment remains undiminished. We are here to serve you, to empower you with the knowledge and tools required to navigate the complex cybersecurity landscape. Our educational initiatives will continue to be our cornerstone, nurturing talent and facilitating seamless transitions to rewarding career paths, just as we have done for many of our alumni, helping them forge successful paths in the cybersecurity arena.

In conclusion, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to each one of you. It is your faith in our mission, your dedication, and your willingness to work towards a common goal that has brought us this far. As we stand on the threshold of a promising future, I am excited to walk this path with you, to forge new partnerships, and to work collaboratively towards realizing our bold vision for the future. Here's to a year of great accomplishments and to a future brimming with boundless possibilities.

**Lee Watson**  
CHAIRMAN & CEO





**THE FIRST, SECOND, AND BEST  
LINE OF CYBER DEFENSE IS YOUR WORKFORCE**

Agents of the Dark Web aren't just cracking your computer codes; they're infiltrating your people. They're looking for your weakest links – members of your staff who are unable to recognize threats and who are woefully under-trained to thwart sophisticated digital advisories. Forge Institute is building a community of private and public members fortified by intelligence, training and collaboration.

#### **Locked & Ready**

How often have you been assured that a recent IT or Cyber hire is credentialed and ready to work, only to discover that significantly more training is needed? The loss of time and resources can prove catastrophic. Through Forge Institute, companies and organizations are promised:

- Early access to job shadow opportunities
- Access to a pool of skilled transitioning veterans
- Equip employees with reskill/upskill training

#### **Forever One Step Ahead**

Cyberterrorists aren't thoughtful enough to provide a schedule for their dark and dirty deeds. "Forever One Step Ahead" is our mantra at Forge Institute. To that end, we offer our partners valuable access to innovative and collective cyber defense and awareness programs and services:

- Earlier access to enhanced contextual awareness of potential Cyber Threats
- Shared intelligence through operational collaboration
- Ability to broaden contextual understanding of potential cyber threats through enhanced information sharing and analysis

#### **Arkansas Is Forged for Cyber**

The Natural State is also the Cyber Defense State, bearing the necessary infrastructure, policy, history and workforce to position Arkansas as the point of the spear for our Nation's cyber defense. Through cyber and infosec, we are building an economy sparked by innovation and globally trending upward.

- Develop high-paying jobs for economic growth
- Retain talent by providing skills relevant to the remote-work economy
- Invest in underprivileged communities by unlocking life-changing salaries

#### **Mitigating Corporate Risk**

In 2022, the cost of a data breach reached an all-time high. The average data breach cost increased 2.6% from \$4.24 million in 2021 to \$4.35 million in 2022. The average cost has climbed 12.7% from \$3.86 million. Some organizations can absorb such a cost. Most can't. Forge Institute recommends that you view upgrades in your IT and cybersecurity as an investment.

- Training customized to individual parameters
- Ongoing education
- Immediate, at-the-ready consultation

## WHO WE ARE



We are the Nation's leader in advancing cyber capabilities through innovative partnerships across the public and private sectors. Our mantra, "Forever One Step Ahead," is a reminder to remain vigilant, updated, and innovative against an enemy that seeks the permanent disruption of our way of life.

### The Anvil & Hexagon

The anvil represents the solid foundation from which we forge our outcomes. The anvil is strong, sturdy and resilient to wear from the elements. Raw materials and partnerships, forged on the anvil, become hardened and resilient forces able to defend and protect our vital communities.

The six points on the hexagon represent our six core values: (1) Professionally Lead with Trust and Integrity, (2) Be Bold and Take Action, (3) Forge Relationships and Deliver Results, (4) Challenge the Status Quo, (5) Kick Ass & Be The Best, and (6) Make A Difference.

The point at the top of the hexagon represents our compass, pointing to the next step we take to remain Forever One Step Ahead.

Symbols matter for what they inspire. As we continue to grow, we are building a new generation of servant leaders, skilled in cyberdefense and educated for a higher purpose – the defense of our communities, our Nation, and our way of life.



\*Data as of 10.2023 unless otherwise indicated

# CUSTOMERS, PARTNERS & PROGRAM SPONSORS

19<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Little Rock Air Force Base  
 223<sup>rd</sup> Cyberspace Operations Squadron  
 Acxiom  
 Air Force Research Lab  
 Arkansas Aerospace & Defense Alliance  
 Arkansas Association of Counties  
 Arkansas APEX Accelerator  
 Arkansas Better Business Bureau  
 Arkansas Blue Cross Blue Shield  
 Arkansas Center for Data Science  
 Arkansas Economic Development Commission  
 Arkansas Military Affairs Committee  
 Arkansas Municipal League  
 Arkansas National Guard  
 Arkansas School Board Association  
 Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce  
 AR Research Alliance  
 AR Governor Asa Hutchinson  
 AR Department of Education  
 AR Department of Finance & Administration  
 AR Department of Health  
 AR Division of Emergency Management  
 AR Division of Information Systems  
 AR Division of Workforce Services  
 AR Office of Skills Development  
 AR Small Business & Technology Development Center  
 Arvest Bank  
 Bank of England Mortgage  
 Bank OZK  
 Boyette Strategic Advisors  
 BreachBits  
 Central Arkansas Planning & Development District  
 Checkpoint  
 City of Little Rock  
 City of Fort Smith  
 Congressman Rick Crawford  
 Conway Area Chamber of Commerce  
 CriticalStart  
 Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency  
 Cyware  
 Delta Regional Authority  
 Edafio  
 Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas  
 Flashpoint  
 Fortinet

Gentry Professional Services  
 GlaxoSmithKline  
 GuidePoint Security  
 Idaho National Laboratory  
 Mainstream Technologies  
 National Energy Technology Laboratory  
 National Guard Bureau Professional Education Center  
 Nelson Intelligence Solutions  
 North Arkansas College  
 NWA Tech Summit  
 Oaklawn  
 Optiv  
 Pacific Northwest National Laboratory  
 PCA Technology Solutions  
 Pernod Ricard  
 PeopleShores  
 Power Technology, Inc.  
 Riceland  
 Rubrik  
 Rural Community Alliance  
 SAIC  
 SentinelOne  
 SmartResume  
 State of Arkansas  
 Southwest Arkansas Education Cooperative  
 Simmons Bank  
 Simmons Foods  
 Sullivan Wright Technologies  
 Tyson Foods  
 University of Arkansas Fayetteville  
 University of Arkansas Little Rock  
 University of Arkansas Pine Bluff  
 University of Arkansas Pulaski Tech  
 University of Arkansas System  
 US Air Force  
 US Army  
 US Marine Corps  
 US Navy  
 US Department of Defense SkillBridge  
 US Department of Defense Starbase  
 US Department of Homeland Security  
 US Small Business Administration  
 Walmart Global Tech  
 & Members of the Arkansas Congressional Delegation



## OUR IMPACT

### 2018

- Forge Institute formed
- Forge hosts first Summit
- Lee Watson & Scott A. Anderson served on Governor's Coding & Cybersecurity Task Force



### 2019

- Governor signs Arkansas Cyber Initiative (Act 1085 of 2019)
- Forge receives first grant to initiate Emerging Threat Center from Governor Hutchinson via Military Affairs Committee
- Forge Academy launches with first course "Advanced Powershell"
- Forge hosts second annual Summit



### 2020

- Forge Academy launches first multi-week Cyber Bootcamp
- COVID-19 forces Forge to move training to virtual, instructor-led format
- Scott A. Anderson joins Forge Institute
- Collaboration w/ OSD to support industry workforce training
- Forge Academy launches second multi-week bootcamp "IT/Cyber Fundamentals" w/ AR Division of Workforce Services



### 2021

- Forge & Acxiom initiate partnership for workforce & applied research
- Forge partners w/ SmartResume to provide free digital resumes for all Academy graduates
- Governor selects Lee Watson to serve on Arkansas Cybersecurity Advisory Council
- Forge leads establishment of Consortium for Cyber Innovation
- Forge adds CISA CISCIP program to ETC
- Forge signs MOU w/ UA System for applied research collaboration in AI, Cyber, ICS/SCADA & other emerging technologies
- Forge signs MOU w/ UA Little Rock for professional course acceptance
- Lee Watson & Scott A. Anderson selected to serve on Cyber Threat Information Sharing (CTIS) Working Group, Critical Infrastructure Partnership Advisory Council, Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency, US Dept. of Homeland Security
- Forge authorized by Dept. of Defense to be a DoD SkillBridge provider (Forge Fellowship)

### 2022

- Forge launches Arkansas Cyber Defense Center (ACDC)
- Forge & AR OSD partner to provide tuition assistance for Arkansans for Forge bootcamps
- Forge receives second grant from AR Military Affairs Committee to conduct statewide cyber economic impact study
- Forge forms strategic partnership with Fortinet
- Forge added to State of Arkansas Emergency Response Plan
- 19th Airlift Wing at the Little Rock Air Force Base selects Forge Institute to run Starbase Arkansas
- Forge receives \$1M grant from US SBA for ACDC
- Forge hosts third annual Arkansas Cyber Summit



### 2023

- Forge releases Cyber Impact Study results
- Forge signs Cooperative Research & Development Agreement (CRADA) with Air Force Research Lab
- Forge signs partnerships with Arkansas Municipal League to scale ACDC services
- Forge signs partnership with Idaho National Laboratory to support CCI Partners
- Starbase exceeds 1,000 students in program & added a third classroom at LRAFB
- Forge, UA Little Rock & UA Fayetteville host ET-ISAC Kickoff Meeting with DOE, NETL & INL
- Forge & AR Nat. Guard convene innovation session with Air Force Research Lab
- Forge executes Partnership Agreement with Arkansas Attorney Gen. Tim Griffin
- Forge Academy launches OSINT Series & new AI Bootcamp
- Forge convenes private-public Task Force to address risk from nation-state APTs
- Forge & Partners host first Private-Public Collaborative Classified Event in Arkansas



## 2023 CYBER ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS & PLANNING STUDY

The study identified cyber and emerging technology economic opportunities across Forge and its multiple stakeholders, including academia, industry, military, and federal, state, and local government.

Boyette Strategic Advisors' analysis considered the impact of Forge's employment and projected employment through 2030; capital investment in a planned highly secure facility for Forge and its partners; and contract and grant funding to Forge for a variety of infrastructure, research, and workforce development projects.

Data does not include the expanded employment by corporate partners enabled by Forge's services, savings due to reduced cyber attacks to both public and private entities or expansion of military missions. The study was funded by the Arkansas Department of Commerce Military Affairs Committee.

**\$1 billion**  
Total economic  
impact by 2030

## PARTNERSHIP

*“Arkansas is building a strategically-aligned ecosystem, with purposeful collaborations that develop the workforce, accelerate innovation, and support community resiliency and national defense.”*

### Dawn Meyerriecks

Former Deputy Director of Science & Technology  
Central Intelligence Agency



Forge Institute partners with Industry and Government entities alike. See below how a partnership could benefit your organization. Forge Institute understands first and foremost that your best defense against cyberthreats is a cyber-trained workforce. Computer-based, off-the-rack training is popular not because it's effective, but because those programs are easy. Ours is a comprehensive, thoughtful, and ultimately far more effective approach.

#### **Instructor Led.**

Our instruction is not a self-paced slideshow. Our courses are professionally led by able and seasoned instructors who have genuinely lived the cyber life. The world's cyber adversaries aren't handing out multiple choice quizzes. Neither are we.

#### **Bona fide Certified.**

Yes, our courses provide professional certification. However, the objective of our courses is not "to print an IT/Cyber certificate." The objective is to make everyone who completes a course cyber-ready, meaning our graduates are prepared to provide cyber protection the moment you make them part of your team.

#### **Forever One Step Ahead.**

In cyber, it's not enough to inoculate yourself from last year's vulnerability. Our curriculum is continuously updated to remain relevant in the ever-changing world of IT and cyber operations. As a result, we're driven by innovative, forward-thinking individuals focused on emerging technology risks and opportunities.

#### **Strength in Numbers.**

Forge Institute understands that cybersecurity is only as strong as our collective weakest link. Therefore, as a non-profit organization we approach cyber as a community, collaborating with essential private and public entities to share knowledge, marshal resources, and set policy.

[forge.institute/partnerships](https://forge.institute/partnerships)



## ADVISORY BOARD



Collaboration is key to forging a good cyber defense. A diverse collaboration makes the defense even stronger. Our Advisory Board is composed of experienced industry leaders and former CIA, FBI, and U.S. Military professionals.





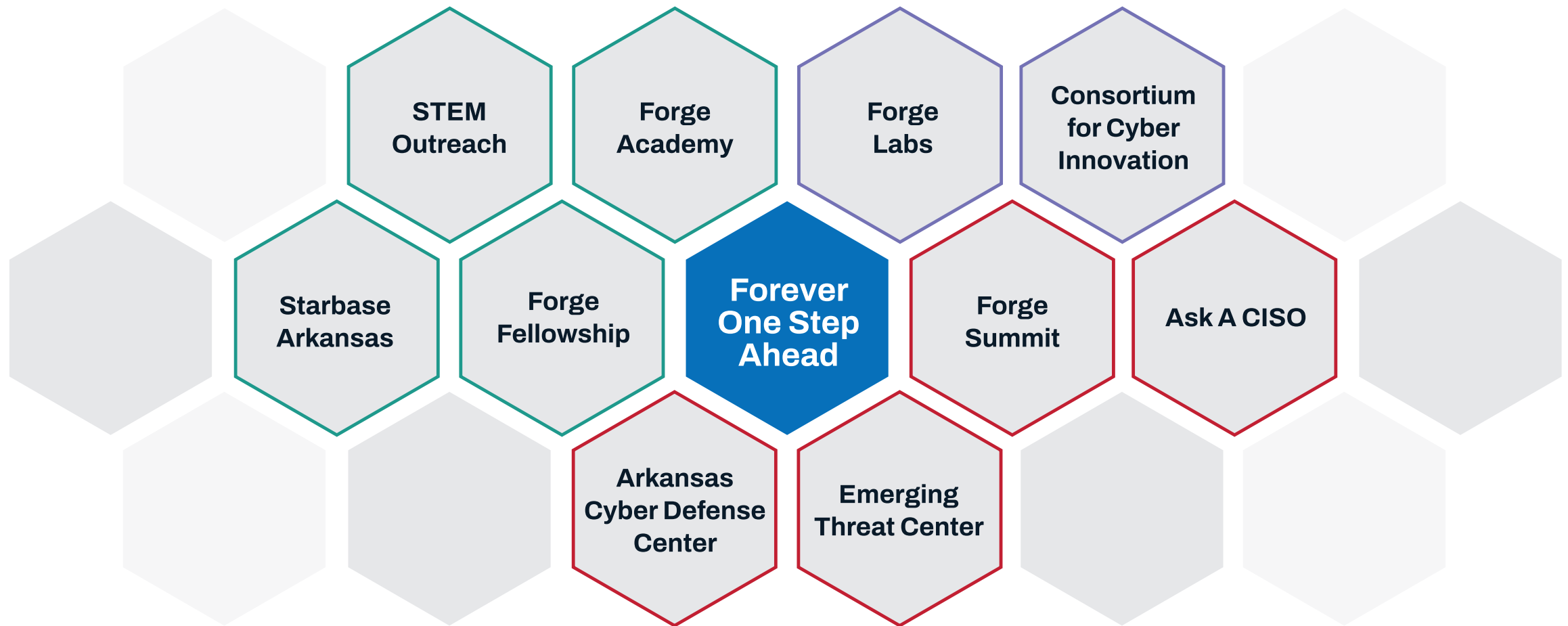
Forging a Strong Workforce

Forging Innovations to Propel Growth

Forging Enhanced Resiliency



**CYBERSECURITY & EMERGING TECHNOLOGY**  
**ADVANCING NEXT GEN CAPABILITIES**



# FORGING A STRONG WORKFORCE

*“Forge Institute’s Academy provides the modern, relevant and experiential training my team needs to stay current in this complex and changing threat environment.”*

Adam Holland  
Chief Information Security Officer  
Wendy’s (formerly with Walmart, & GSK)



## FORGE ACADEMY

We develop and deliver top-tier training programs based on the needs of our public and private sector partners to forge new talent. Curriculum is built by battle-proven SMEs, developed in a partnership with Chief Information Officers/Chief Information Security Officers, and kept in alignment with the National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education (NICE) Framework. Each program incorporates assessments using technical and non-technical tools, used to gauge the progress of each participant. Training is delivered either in-person or in virtual classrooms, is led by expert instructors, and implements instructional methods across all learning modalities. In our programs, participants perform their labs in secure, cloud-based training environments, providing them with real-time tactical and technical experience as they develop their knowledge, skills, and abilities to become the next generation of expert talent.

### Industry Partners

Our bootcamps, courses, and workshops are engineered in a way that focuses on the competency and skill development of each and every one of our participants. We incorporate teaching methods that are specifically tailored to adult learners, providing them with the tools and resources that they need to not only be successful, but to stay competitive in the industry. Our unique, approach to training empowers our entire cadre of instructors to teach concepts, train skills, and increase the capability of the workforce. Our continuously evolving curriculum allows our training programs to fully meet the needs of the industry and face the challenges of the ever-changing threat landscape head on.

### Workforce Intermediaries

A successful workforce development strategy not only focuses on the relevancy of the training but also on the desirable outcomes of our workforce partners. This

includes training that is directly related to industry jobs-in-demand, career readiness coaching & mentorship as well as capturing measurable & reportable data to help showcase skills gained, technical and tactical abilities, and overall performance. Our goal is to ensure that all of our workforce partners are supported and that partnership with Forge Academy feels easy and seamless.

### Participants

You are the first, second, and best line of defense against cyber threats. To know the enemy's motivations and tactics is a powerful weapon, and the Forge Academy has helped hundreds of dedicated cyber warriors to wield it.

From basic IT to advanced courses like Red Team/Blue Team operations, the Forge Academy provides the hands-on learning experiences needed to transform you into a highly-trained and capable cyber operative.

## FORGE ACADEMY: BOOTCAMPS

### IT/CYBER FUNDAMENTALS BOOTCAMP

Forge Institute's IT/Cyber Fundamentals bootcamp program is designed to provide individuals with the foundational knowledge, skills & abilities across six different domains of IT and Cyber: Networking; Operating Systems; Software and Product Management; Troubleshooting Methodologies; Information Security; Administrative and Legal Security Concepts. Graduates will leave the course with the required capabilities to perform tasks in any entry- or junior-level information technology/security work role.

- **Delivery:** Remote training is provided with online course materials, a virtual training environment, and instructor-led zoom and coaching sessions.
- **Prerequisites:** Participants must have a GED/High School Diploma or higher and a usable computer, clear audio and camera, strong internet connectivity, and an appetite for learning.

#### WHO SHOULD APPLY:

This bootcamp is for beginners or those with little IT/Cyber experience.

#### TOPICS

- Introduction to Cybersecurity
- Operator Mindset
- Network Concepts
- Subnetting & Network Operations
- Operating Systems
- Software/Product Management
- Cloud Services
- Hardware Components & Computer Peripherals
- Troubleshooting Methodology
- IT Concepts for Security
- Defense-in-Depth
- Encryption
- Administrative Security Concepts
- Information Classification
- Laws, Regulations & Compliance Frameworks

Our curriculum is strategically mapped to the NIST/NICE framework.



*"The training I've received so far has gone way above and beyond my expectations. I knew this subject and material would be challenging but the instructors have done an amazing job being patient and willing to go over things until we understood it. I was hoping this would be a field of study that would lead me to a new career and I truly believe at this stage it will. I'm super excited for my future in cybersecurity."*

**Burt Ballard**  
Bootcamp Graduate

*"I was ready for a change-of-pace with a skill set that would be new to me, but entirely relevant to today's marketplace. The IT certification was ideal! There's a spectrum of opportunities, and the material was taught at a pace and in a format that worked perfectly with my real life!"*

**Karen Satterfield**  
Bootcamp Graduate



### CYBER TRAINING BOOTCAMP

Cybersecurity is a critical industry that protects our most important information and computer systems. The shortage of qualified cybersecurity operators continues to rapidly increase, leaving many key job openings unfilled & the security of organizations at risk. With the continuously changing digital landscape, the current method for educating cannot keep up. The Cyber Training Bootcamp is a proven solution for recruiting, training and retaining cybersecurity talent that is ready to hit the ground running in just 14 weeks!

#### HOW IT WORKS:

**Weeks 1 - 7** build upon a participant's existing knowledge and experience from an information technology (IT) / technical job role or computer-related bachelor degree, and transition them into a more cyber operational mindset.

**Weeks 8 - 14** are the core of the program, focused on offensive and defensive tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) as well as guided, real-life scenario-based lab exercises where participants gain the hands-on experience they'll immediately be able to apply on the job.

Our curriculum is aligned to the NICE framework and includes input from industry and military cyber professionals to ensure it encompasses the required Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) and relevant Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTPs).

### CYBER THREAT INTELLIGENCE ANALYST BOOTCAMP

This multi-week bootcamp provides a thoughtful deep-dive into the concepts and skills an individual needs to become a Cyber Threat Intelligence Analyst. Industry professionals and retired experts from 3-letter agencies, have contributed to the curriculum of this incredible bootcamp.

#### TOPICS

- Introduction to Ethical Hacking
- Tactics and Methods
- Vulnerability Analysis
- Introduction to Threat Intelligence
- Cyber Threats and Kill Chain Methodology
- Requirements, Planning, and Direction
- Data Collection and Processing
- Data Analysis
- Intelligence Reporting and Dissemination
- Network Attacks and Defense Strategies
- Data Security
- Incident Response and Forensic Investigation
- Risk Anticipation with Risk Management
- Security Operations and Management
- Cyber Threats, IoCs, and Attack Methodology
- Incidents, Events, and Logging
- Incident Detection with Security Information and Event Management (SIEM)
- Enhanced Incident Detection with Threat Intelligence Incident Response

## FORGE ACADEMY: COURSES

### System and Network Defender (Blue Team Operations)

Four-day training course to teach you everything about what constitutes a cybersecurity event, incident, and attack; leveraging log review, threat hunting, and incident response TTPs. This training aids in the development of advanced blue team operators through the understanding of hardening operating systems, applying network security and intrusion detection tools that protect and defend critical networks.

### System and Network Vulnerability Assessors (Red Team Operations)

Four-day training course to teach you everything you need to know about Red Team Ops, emerging into the minds of cyber hacker's leading-edge tactics, techniques, and procedures. We're bringing in some of the best instructors who have taught hundreds of cyber operators to guard against skilled adversaries and conducted offensive and defensive cyber throughout their careers.

### Governance, Risk, & Compliance Analyst

This four to five-day course equips GRC analysts with the ability to assess and document an organization's compliance and risk posture through accurately reviewing its information assets. Using both an informative and hands-on approach, participants will learn how to analyze contracts & third party vendors to effectively identify, mitigate and reduce risks. Participants will gain the skills needed to examine & audit current policies and procedures to support more risk-aware decisions across workspaces.

### Principles of Open-Source Intelligence for Law Enforcement

Five-day, in person course helping law enforcement professionals and prosecutors utilize open-source information to: find and gather evidence; identify information to aid in obtaining search warrants; identify and gather details about subjects, victims,

and witnesses; utilize social media as an information gathering tool; explore the use of OSINT for search engines, images, physical locations, e-mails, usernames and accounts; and how to protect themselves and use operational security through covered accounts while conducting OSINT.

### Digital Forensics

Two-day training course equips cyber professionals with the expertise on how to collect, preserve and transfer digital evidence in accordance with legal and industry standards; assisting authorities in investigation and arrest.

### Malware Analysis

This two-day course takes a deep-dive into the functionality, origin and potential impact of a given malware sample such as a virus, worm, trojan horse, rootkit, or backdoor.

### Open Source Intelligence Analysis (OSINT)

Whether you're a business leader, military personnel, law enforcement official, or journalist, this four-course series elevates your OSINT proficiency. Covers foundational OSINT principles to intricate collections management, the curriculum combines interactive sessions, real-case scenarios, and hands-on learning. Expect heightened decision-making, streamlined intelligence workflows, enhanced security, and accurate risk evaluations.

### 3-day AI Prompt Engineering Course

This course equips participants with the competencies and practical skills needed to fully leverage AI tools, ushering in new levels of productivity, innovation, and tool-building. The training methodology interweaves instructor-led education with hands-on training sessions and focused group discussions, creating an environment where knowledge is not just imparted but experienced.

## FORGE ACADEMY: WORKSHOPS

### Cybersecurity for Executives

Provides executives with a better understanding of how cyber impacts them, their organization and their sphere of influence. It all begins with you as leaders and decision-makers, and your ability to successfully lead and integrate cyber requirements within your organizations. As the adversarial cyber activity becomes increasingly prevalent and attacks become more sophisticated and damaging, current practices must evolve to provide appropriate safeguards for everyone. Over the course of one day, we go over how to effectively enable safeguards, instill operational best practices, and teach you how to implement a team-based approach to building a cyber-risk-aware culture.



## OVER 20 COURSES ARE AVAILABLE & MORE IN DEVELOPMENT

- Custom courses (Designed to meet your needs)
- Cybersecurity for Board Members
- Future Bootcamps in Data Science, Full Stack Development, and UI/UX

## The Secret Sauce

### 1. Gap Analysis

Team & corporate partners identify workforce-ready skills gaps.

### 2. Curriculum Development

Curriculum built by battle-proven SMEs and developed in partnership with CIOs and CISOs, aligned to NICE Framework.

### 3. Assessments

Individuals are assessed using our technical & non-technical tools. A recommendation for training is made for each student.

### 4. Course Delivery

Courses delivered online, instructor-led, demonstration, technical assessments & group work.

### 5. Labs & Capstone

Participants work numerous hands-on labs in cloud-based training environment. Courses conclude with capstone exercise.

### 6. Final Reports

Each employer receives a Participant Scorecard, instructor feedback and other information used to help them advance.



## FORGE FELLOWSHIP

The Forge Fellowship is not just a program; it's a thrilling pathway to success. Tailored for exceptional individuals, it offers immersive, hands-on work-based learning, exclusive access to Forge Academy's reskill/upskill courses, and the chance to foster transformative relationships for a seamless transition into a new career. What sets us apart? Our dynamic network of partnerships, both public and private, propelling transitioning service members towards unparalleled career opportunities. With opportunities to join the Fellowship either in-person or fully remote, service members from all over the country have joined our ranks. Over 98% of our Fellows are either employed full-time in a new career or are pursuing full-time higher education goals.

Forge was proud and excited to establish a partnership with Acxiom, a renowned leader in data-driven solutions and innovative technologies. As the first corporate sponsor of the Forge Fellowship, Forge and Acxiom are opening doors to new opportunities that equip military veterans with the necessary skills for a successful civilian career in tech.

### Why Vets are Cyber Ready

Cybersecurity is a field that requires a special set of skills and qualities: integrity, work ethic, discipline, threat analysis, and attention to detail. Military vets are cyber-ready and dedicated to defending our nation.

### Benefits for our Community

The Fellowship program injects dozens and dozens of dedicated and skilled individuals into the Arkansas economy each year. These high-paying jobs positively contribute to the growth of our economy and our community resiliency.

### DoD SkillBridge

SkillBridge, a program run by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, offers service members the opportunity to gain valuable civilian work experience through specific industry training, apprenticeships, or internships during the last 180 days of service. Leveraging the SkillBridge program, Forge Institute connects service members with valuable experience and access to our industry partners.

The Forge Fellowship supports service members from all six branches of the United States Military.



*“After 20 years in the Army, transitioning could have been overwhelming. But with the Forge Fellowship, it was transformational. They welcomed me like family, and their IT/Cyber Fundamentals training was unparalleled. The breadth and quality of training opportunities they offer are truly impressive.”*

**Jennifer Martinez**  
Forge Fellow (2023)

*“The unwavering support, training, and knowledge I gained through the Fellowship program and Forge Academy played a pivotal role in securing my full-time position as a Lead Forensic Technologist. It was an incredible opportunity to bridge the gap between my military service and my new career path.”*

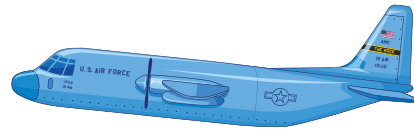
**Morgan Fleury**  
Forge Fellow (2023)



*“Leveraging Forge’s resources and partnerships, I was able to network with other transitioning members and was placed with Acxiom as an intern, where I have advanced my skills as an IT professional working in Audit Readiness, where I work with subject matter experts to review evidence provided for their respective systems. I can’t thank Forge and Acxiom enough for their support.”*

**Seth Lujan**  
Forge Fellow (2023)

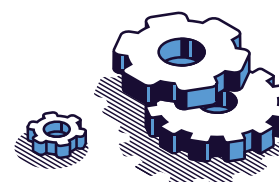
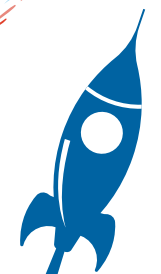
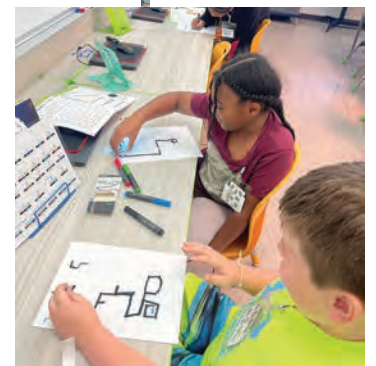
## STEM OUTREACH & STARBASE



Forge Institute and the 19th Airlift Wing at Little Rock Air Force Base are partnering to provide Arkansas' STARBASE program, whose focus is to motivate fifth graders to explore STEM opportunities. Department of Defense (DoD) StarBase programs are established in 34 states, serving more than 1.5 million students since the program began in 1993.

On average, total STEM knowledge scores increased by an overall 17% for students who attend the program. Teachers perceived that DoD STARBASE helps students better appreciate how math can be applied to a variety of situations. Starbase Arkansas Director Robert Baker says, "Forge is engaged in developing the trusted workforce to meet the future demand for technically-skilled labor. We believe that by taking an active role in encouraging and empowering young minds we can develop our nation's future tech-savvy leaders."

- The program launched on October 31, 2022
- Eight school districts were served during SY 2022-23
- 990 students attended the traditional 5-day academies during the 2022-23 school year
- STARBASE Arkansas completed 12 outreach events, covering central and NWA.
- STARBASE added a 3rd classroom and CAD computer lab, able to accommodate up to 90 students every week.

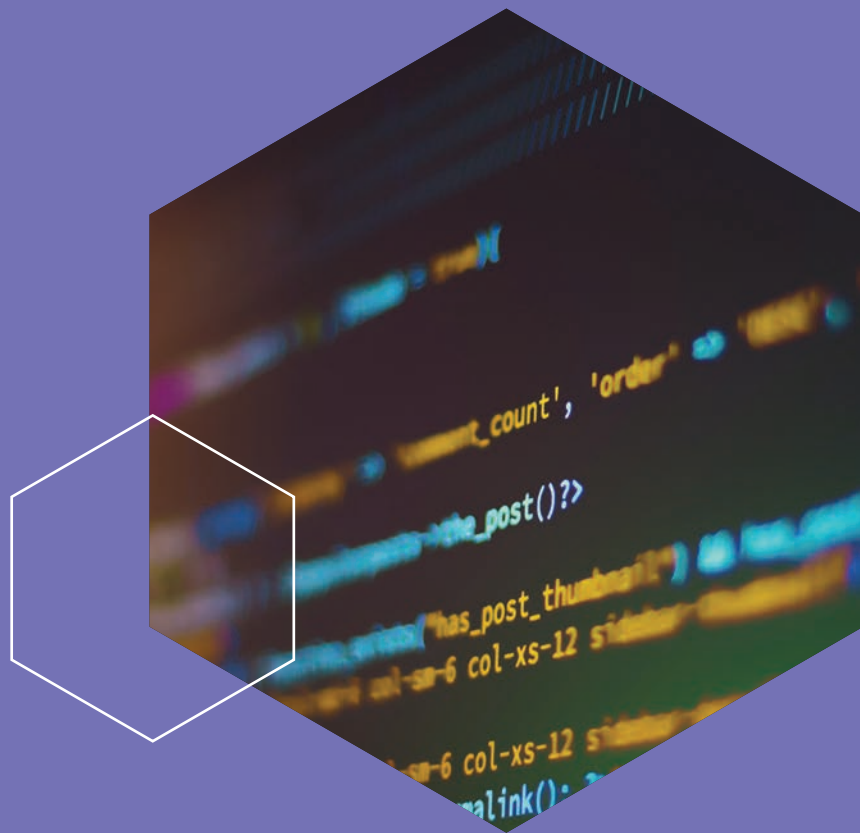


*"Forge... allows us to take a critical next step to exciting youth to pursue STEM careers and build a stronger, more diverse trusted workforce. And of course, we hope some of them will choose to join the military and support the defense of our great country."*

**Colonel Angela Ochoa**  
Fmr. Commander of the 19th Airlift Wing, Little Rock Air Force Base

# FORGING INNOVATIONS TO PROPEL GROWTH

The Forge Labs is where practical innovation intersects with experiential workforce development. These funded applied research projects or early-stage startup programs are a catalyst for economic growth by providing unique hands-on learning experiences. The first of these is the Consortium for Cyber Innovation (CCI).



## CONSORTIUM FOR CYBER INNOVATION

The Consortium for Cyber Innovation is building a diverse regional industry cluster through purposeful collaboration across business, government, and academia in cybersecurity, data science, and emerging technologies.

The Consortium for Cyber Innovation's (CCI) main objective is to create a strategic regional industry cluster in emerging technologies that will support national defense and enhance Arkansas as a Cyber Defense State. Through public-private partnerships and strategic initiatives, CCI will provide next-level student, industry, and research experiences. It will create flexible workforce and academic credentials and industry entryways into cybersecurity and data science. This work will expand the cyber workforce to include more diverse and underrepresented populations, which will build regional capacity to support economic development and growth across industry sectors across Arkansas.

This active collaboration builds on existing partnerships among the Forge Institute, UA Little Rock, and UA Fayetteville that has resulted in National Security Agency (NSA) and Department of Energy (DOE)-

funded academic training and research programs, including the GenCyber summer camp for 7-12 graders, and the Healthcare Cybersecurity Certification research project. The nationally recognized faculty and leadership across UA System schools and the Forge Institute creates a dynamic team committed to driving a successful regional industry cluster strategy and leading the way in cyber innovation.

By leveraging nationally-recognized academic faculty and global industry experts across its network, the Consortium also plans to enhance access to cyber curriculum through creating shared undergraduate certificate and training programs. These certificate programs will develop and diversify cyber workforce capacity throughout the region by providing real-world experiences and connecting students directly with employers.

## COLLABORATION PARTNERS



# FORGING ENHANCED RESILIENCY

*“The ACDC represents a significant stride towards our collective commitment to protecting our cities, towns and utilities from ever-increasing cyber threats. We encourage all our member cities to take full advantage of the services provided by the ACDC to ensure they are protected against potential cyberattacks.”*

Mark Hayes  
Executive Director, AML

*“The ACDC helps provide a digital shield that safeguards and strengthens our natural state and its inhabitants from those who wish to do us harm.”*

Jaylon Darden  
Cyber Analyst II, Forge Institute



## ARKANSAS CYBER DEFENSE CENTER (ACDC)

The Arkansas Cyber Defense Center (ACDC) has secured a \$1 million grant to bolster cybersecurity for small businesses, a sector from which 60% never rebound after a cyber incident. Through awareness campaigns, training, assessments, and incident support, ACDC aims to foster readiness and resilience, helping nearly 2,604 local small businesses to date. Their efforts, enhancing community preparedness and partnerships, are crucial in safeguarding critical infrastructure against potential cyberattacks.



### Awareness

We keep our community cyber-aware through individual and group presentations. Quality cyber awareness can make you more alert and more protected.



### Assessments

We assess and identify key areas of cyber risk and the maturity level of existing cyber practices.



### Training

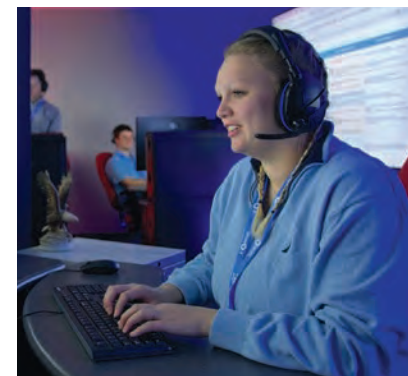
We provide relevant technical & non-technical training webinars for several key areas of cyber-defense. The best defense is a workforce trained to identify and even counter cyber threats.



### Support

Anyone may call the ACDC to report a cyber incident and seek next-step resources. Our state's cyber defense is only as strong as its weakest link.

## PARTNERS





## EMERGING THREAT CENTER (ETC)

The Emerging Threat Center (ETC) stands as a pivotal national initiative, taking the lead as the first cross-sector Information Sharing and Analysis Center (ISAC) devoted to tackling emerging threats. Through fostering private-public partnerships anchored on our non-profit foundation, we build a resilient community focused on understanding and mitigating threats to state and national security.

### Overview

Serving as a next-gen private-public fusion cell, the ETC offers a trusted nexus for security experts to join forces in safeguarding crucial infrastructures. Our approach, known as ET-ISAC, ensures partners can access:

**Collaborative Platforms:** Join a community of peers for collaborative discussions through our threat briefs and forums.

**Advanced Analysis Tool - Bronze Lion:** Utilize our tool for deeper understanding and identification of emerging risks.

**Preemptive Strategies:** Equipping decision-makers with proactive strategies derived from historical data analysis and predictive analytics to bolster national resilience.

By connecting with the ETC, stakeholders gain an ally in securing a future protected against emerging threats through informed and collaborative defense strategies.



### Information Sharing

We deliver timely and credible data to policymakers through detailed whitepapers and quick-read advisories, focusing on emerging technology issues and immediate threats.



### Analytic Collaborations

Engaging experts for deep analyses, we offer reports that contextualize Indicators of Compromise (IoCs) and briefings on critical infrastructure vulnerabilities, aiming to aid risk mitigation and thwart potential attacks through preemptive analysis.



### Strategic Briefings

Facilitating roundtables and virtual meetings to foster collaborative dialogues on critical evolving threats and the impact of new technologies on security landscapes.

### Objectives

**Identify and Report on Threats:** To meticulously monitor and report on imminent threats affecting both state and national spheres.

**Enhance Predictive Tools:** To further develop our existing predictive strategies to foresee potential issues more efficiently.

**Collaborative Trust-Based Environment:** To cultivate a secure platform for trusted relationships and fostering collective defense.

### Who We Serve

- Critical Infrastructure Owners and Operators
- Defense Industrial Base Members
- Government Entities at Various Levels
- Cyber Threat & Intelligence Analysts
- Chief Information Security Officers and Other Strategic Leaders

## 2023 FORGE ARKANSAS CYBER SUMMIT

Oct. 4-5 • Little Rock, AR

Join us at the epicenter of innovation and expertise in vibrant Little Rock, Arkansas! This year, we're elevating the discourse to unprecedented heights, guiding you through a labyrinth of the most pertinent and exciting topics shaping our digital landscape today. From deep-diving into the nuanced world of cybersecurity to standing on the frontier of artificial intelligence developments, we're assembling a revered panel of industry trailblazers, respected experts, and governmental decision makers to foster rich discussions and innovative partnerships.

Whether you're from industry, academia, or government, prepare to forge invaluable connections and equip yourself with knowledge at the cutting-edge, fostering a future where

collective defense and innovation are at the heart of progress. Join us in championing the next wave of advancements in national security, startups & companies, and beyond.

Participants will be equipped with cutting-edge insights from private sector executives & senior leaders from the U.S. Intelligence Community into emerging technologies, risk management strategies, and innovative approaches to workforce and national security issues, empowering them to thrive in a highly competitive digital landscape.

Cyber • AI • Emerging Tech • Supply Chain • National Defense Intelligence • Big Data • Compliance • Innovation



## SPONSORS & SPEAKERS:



Through unique private-public partnerships we can accelerate workforce-ready transformations, equip our people and organizations to better protect themselves from aggressive adversaries and leverage next generation technologies to drive economic growth and prospering communities.

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