# TOP TEN SERIES

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## BUiLT
BLACKS UNITED IN LEADING TECHNOLOGY INTERNATIONAL

### Student Pathways Guide from Class to Your First Gig

## Diversity in cybersecurity is instrumental in advancing the industry and creating a more secure world.

(ISC)² is proud to be a top resource to help professionals acquire the best skills they need to become information security leaders with the mission to support professionals by providing industry information, vast networking, collaboration opportunities, and development tools. We have the necessary **tips and resources** to help diverse professionals thrive in the industry and take their careers to the next level.

We know that it's essential for cybersecurity professionals to look like the people they serve and protect. Diversifying the industry improves online defenses and allows a space for different perspectives to contribute to the advancement of technology.

Our efforts have provided a diverse, equitable, and inclusive cybersecurity space for nearly 330,000 members, associates and candidates who serve in critical cyber, information, software, and infrastructure security roles.

As a part of this commitment, we have joined forces with Blacks United in Leading Technology® International, Inc. (**BUiLT**) to provide multiple guides with proven methods that Black and diverse professionals use to get in, stay, and advance in cybersecurity.

It's well documented that there are not enough people currently working in cybersecurity to adequately protect against today's complex and growing cyberthreats. Verizon, in its **2022 Data Breach Incident Report**, found that ransomware attacks increased 13% - an increase that is as big as the last five years before.

(ISC)², the world's largest nonprofit association of certified cybersecurity professionals, estimates that there is a worldwide gap of 3.4 million cybersecurity workers. Even after adding more than 464,000 workers in the past year, the global cybersecurity workforce gap has grown more than twice as much as the workforce.

Regardless of this massive need, the opportunities to get your first gig are NOT the same depending on your ethnicity, age, gender, and sexual orientation. Although the cybersecurity industry is growing and evolving and desperately needs diversity of thoughts and perspectives, the cybersecurity industry is not immune from the discrimination that has plagued societies since the beginning of humankind.

So if you possess some diversity and are in school, looking to land your first job in the cybersecurity industry, here are ten concrete ways to get started.

# (ISC)² + BUILT

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# TIPS

## on Student Pathways into

## CYBERSECURITY

## 1.  Leverage Your School's Resources

If you are already studying cybersecurity, many colleges and universities have student-run organizations where you can learn more about cybersecurity trends and available resources. Ideally, your school has job placement services that you should take advantage of.

If your school doesn't have a support organization, consider starting your own by partnering with organizations with chapters like the **National Cybersecurity Student Association**, **Women Society of Cyberjitsu** or **Blacks United in Leading Technology International**.

## 2.  Pursue Scholarship and Internship Opportunities

You should have an advantage in relying on your school's resources, but you should also explore scholarships for continued training, and internships and apprenticeships to begin working which are available to those who seek them, qualify, and apply. Organizations like the **Center for Cyber Safety & Education** have multiple scholarships targeted towards diverse students.

• See, *Getting Into Cybersecurity,* Tip #8: Get an Internship or Apprenticeship

## 3.  Limit Your Search to Areas of Passion

With such demand for jobs in this field, it's easy to get overwhelmed by the sheer number of options available. To speed up the success in landing a job, first familiarize yourself with the job categories and fields in cybersecurity.

**CyberSN**, a staffing and recruiting company has defined **45 cybersecurity job categories** and **Cybersecurity Ventures** has listed **50 cybersecurity titles**. Another great resource is **ONGIG's Top 30 cyber security job titles and descriptions**. By understanding what's out there, you can start to narrow down and focus your search for positions and projects that interest you.

• See, *Career Switchers,* Tip #9: Show How Passionate You Are About the Industry

## 4.     Make Your Resume Sing the Right Tune

Once you have identified the roles you would like to apply for, look at the qualifications that are listed as needed and dig into your current resume to highlight where you already have those skills. If you are new to the workforce with limited technical experience, highlight projects, your education, volunteering, awards, and other experiences which relate to the role you seek. If your work experience has truly been non-technical (i.e. in retail, teaching, fashion and beauty), you may want to list all of your work experience briefly, without details, just to show you have been employed.

Non-technical abilities are vital in cybersecurity roles too. Hiring managers look specifically for problem solvers with critical and analytical thinking skills, as well as people who can communicate well, and work independently and on a team. Take your current qualifications and translate them into the needs of desired roles, highlighting any leadership roles, negotiation skills, and risk management approaches.

**Get a person in cybersecurity or information technology to critique your resume.**

## 5. Round Out Your Transcript with a Life Script

Consider and don't overlook opportunities to add "life lessons" on your resume to bolster your school transcript.

Employers are looking for people who can solve problems and overcome challenges. Plus, we all like rooting for survivors and people who made it against exceptional odds. The world needs more heroines and heroes, and we all have our unique challenges hat we must overcome.

New entrants in the workforce don't have long professional resumes and these job seekers can show their distinction of highlighting ways they have overcome some of life's obstacles. If you lost a parent or grew up without one or dealt with childhood trauma, write a book, blog about your experience, and highlight what you've learned on your resume.

## 6. Learn the Industry Jargon and Motifs

To get into cybersecurity you will undoubtedly face an individual or team interview. When that time comes, speak like a person who follows the cybersecurity industry.

Keep up to date on international news on current data breaches and evolving threats, as well as tools and practices used to mitigate risk. Identify and follow **valuable sources of cybersecurity insights** to stay up to date. Listen to security podcasts, read industry publications and attend **virtual and in-person events** about cybersecurity like those sponsored by BUiLT.

Look up the **cybersecurity terms you should know**. Understand what is ethical hacking, and know terms like bug bounty, Blue Team, Red Team, and Purple Team.

## 7. Brainstorm in Aligned Study Groups

In the workforce and if you have a customer-facing role, you will likely deal with preconceptions by people about what a cybersecurity employee "should"' look like. Organizations like **Blacks United in Leading Technology (BUiLT)**, and **WiCyS** are all dedicated to increasing the participation of underrepresented groups in tech. These groups provide opportunities for professional development as well as networking and mentoring.

If in-person events are not your style, follow security influencers to get a better understanding of the industry and connect and engage with other cybersecurity professionals on **Reddit** and **LinkedIn**.

## 8. Look Past the Traditional Pathways

When you're just starting your job search, it might be hard to get in front of hiring managers. Human Resources and Talent Acquisition departments are the "standard" front doors to getting a job, but you need to work past the traditional methods of applying to job postings on the Internet.

Before responding to job postings, learn as much as possible about the company and use online platforms like LinkedIn to identify members of the security team. Introduce yourself to them and start building your network of cybersecurity contacts and people within the company you want to join. Work harder and identify the nonprofits and organizations where some of those people participate, and join those groups to meet the cybersecurity professionals you hope to work with.

Look for local chapters of professional cybersecurity organizations like (ISC)² in the cities where you want to work to make connections to both the employers you are interested in and get advice regarding your job search.
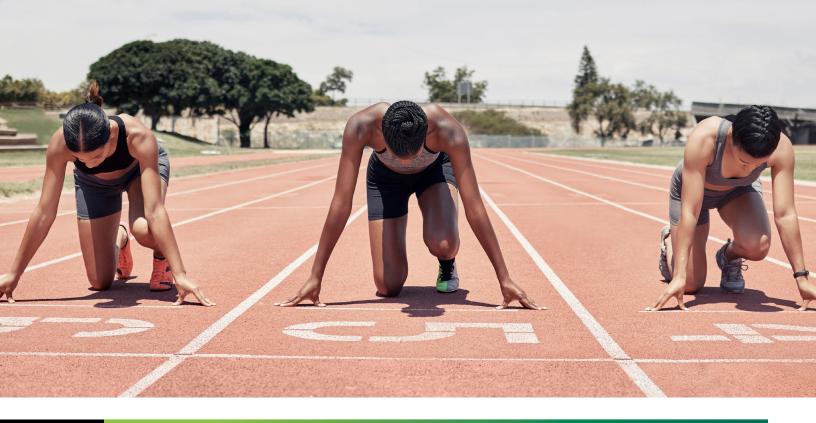
## 9. Follow Up and Be Assertively Aggressive

Be persistent in following up and "aggressively assertive" in showcasing your skills. Be aware that negative stereotypes exist that have kept marginalized and underrepresented groups out of the cybersecurity profession. No employer or team wants to work with people who come off as being hard to work with or have a personal agenda based on who they are. Everyone should be authentic to who they are, but when you are on the outside trying to get in, there are many advantages of showing how well you work with others.

Conversely, your follow-up and persistence should be done assertively. Send thank you messages after interviews, proactively send reminders of upcoming interviews, and always ask how you can help others.

Don't rely only on online applications alone. Reach out to companies directly to find an internal recruiter or rely on your new network of cyber professionals for introductions.

• See, *Staying and Advancing* Tip #6: Demonstrate Added Value and Be a Resource for Others

## 10.  Practice, Practice, Practice

Cybersecurity has a huge number of unfilled jobs. But don't be naïve and assume that you will get a job just because there are many openings. Whether you like it or not, the cybersecurity industry is one profession that holds its workers to high standards and is highly selective of who gets in. So, you'll have to demonstrate that you are one of the best candidates that an employer should recruit above all the others.

Before you show up for an interview, be prepared for a variety of technical and non-technical questions. Develop responses for common interview questions about your skills and background and practice the stories and examples you developed during your resume reset. Always be prepared. Rely on mentors, peer groups, and allies to give you mock interviews for practice. Consider viewing some job interviews merely as practice.

Much of the challenge for students entering the workforce can be your own self-confidence. Many people who enter technology jobs are naturally introverted, and to get a job you will often need to sell yourself. Having great grades, relevant personal projects, and past experience volunteering can help you be more self-assured.

Cybersecurity careers can be satisfying because there are many opportunities to advance and grow, as well as making a difference protecting against complex and costly attacks. Working in cybersecurity is fun as everyday is a bit different in an evolving field. The pace is fast. The rewards are high. Know that you know the pathway you have to earn the ultimate goal of getting a job in cybersecurity.

• See, *Getting Into Cybersecurity*, Tip #10: Land You First Gig

![BUiLT logo] **BUiLT**
BLACKS UNITED IN LEADING TECHNOLOGY INTERNATIONAL

Blacks United in Leading Technology® International **(BUiLT)**, founded in September 2020, increases the representation and participation of Black people in tech. And as we hold the **Three Doors Open**, others can follow in too.

## BUiLT's 2022 annual survey reconfirmed what Black professionals seek most:

**Professional networking**

**Jobs**

**Technical training/certification opportunities to advance their careers in tech**

BUiLT's growing worldwide footprint meets those needs with programming on career and professional development, technology training, and volunteer opportunities to hone leadership skills.

Our partnerships with organizations like (ISC)² are vital to the industry's success at filling the hundreds of thousands of technology jobs with people who bring creativity and diversity of thought in today's business problems are solved.

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How to Get into Cyber © 2023 – (Getting In)

Student Pathways Guide from Class to Your First Gig © 2023 – (Student Pathways)

You Already Have the Skills and the Talent: A Guide to Switching to Cybersecurity Mid-Career © 2023 – (Career Switchers)

How to Stay and Advance in Cybersecurity © 2023 – (Staying & Advancing)