

Finding a New Path: Elliott Thompson and CyberUp

Meet Elliott Thompson

Elliott Thompson was a veteran in the United States Air Force, who worked in logistics management. While he also held a bachelor's degree in management, he wanted something challenging, dynamic, and relevant to the evolving needs of today's world. The program at CyberUp, a program that provides accessible cybersecurity career pathways for veterans, offered him an opportunity to pivot toward a promising career in cybersecurity. CyberUp offered a perfect fit because their programs not only support veterans, but also offered the chance for a new challenging career and apprenticeships with hands-on opportunities.

Apprentice: Elliot Thompson
Sponsor: CyberUp
Employer: Centene Corporation
Role: Reporting Analyst
Why: He chose CyberUp because their programs specifically supported veterans.



Navigating the Transition

Elliott began his journey with CyberUp with their LevelUp Training program. The training helped him build foundational knowledge, and Elliott appreciated the structured approach it provided along with the additional labs. His determination paid off when he landed an apprenticeship at Centene Corporation as a reporting analyst. His new role focused on analyzing portfolio management processes and supporting budgeting decisions. The journey wasn't always easy and while he had several personal challenges along with struggling with technical issues and integration, he didn't let these challenges deter him. Instead, Elliott demonstrated his capabilities through consistent effort, engaging in all aspects of his role, and showing that he could adapt and grow. At the end of his apprenticeship, Elliott's persistence paid off when he was offered a full-time position with Centene.

"Elliott Thompson stands as a testament to the transformative power of CyberUp's mission to create accessible career pathways."

Paying It Forward

Due to the profound impact CyberUp had on his success he decided that once his apprenticeship was over, he wanted to stay involved with CyberUp, offering mentorship to new apprentices. He believes that sharing his story, along with the lessons learned could help others navigate their own paths.

He advises future apprentices to embrace every opportunity that comes their way, to stay involved, and to not give up when faced with difficulties. Building connections, Elliott says, is crucial—not just for professional opportunities but also for personal growth and support. He encourages apprentices to highlight the diversity of their experiences, understanding that technical skills are just part of what makes a great cybersecurity professional.

Elliot realizes now that the skills he developed in the Air Force and during his apprenticeship were highly valuable, even if they weren't all purely technical. He learned that showcasing a wide range of skills—problem-solving, adaptability, teamwork—was just as critical as the technical knowledge he had worked so hard to build.

About AIR: Founded in 1946, AIR is a leading not-for-profit institution specializing in social policy research, evaluation, and technical assistance. Our Employment and Economic Opportunity Program (EEOP) focuses on the full employment cycle, including workforce readiness, recruitment, selection, performance management, and training. We are dedicated to improving employment and life outcomes for all people. AIR has been integral to the U.S. apprenticeship ecosystem for over 15 years, collaborating with states to expand apprenticeship programs and serving as a national apprenticeship intermediary. Our evidence-building, systemic improvement, and change management efforts aim to contribute to economic vitality, future-readiness, and resiliency for all people and communities.