

INTERN SUCCESS STORY



PETER SIMMONS

After going through the interview process, I was excited to learn that I had been selected for an internship.

My journey with the Comptroller's office started when I applied for an Enterprise Security Analyst internship. I was in my final year at the University of Texas at San Antonio as a cybersecurity major, and I knew that a summer internship in my field would help me land a job when I graduated.

I arrived at the LBJ building on the first day not quite knowing what to expect (and feeling more than a bit nervous). I had plenty of preconceived notions about working for the government — I imagined that the Comptroller's office would be made up entirely of ancient civil servants using outdated technology. What I found couldn't have been further from this; new employee orientation introduced me to a vibrant, dynamic organization full of highly capable professionals working to serve their community. Starting day one of the internship, I was working with my team to ensure the security of the agency's email communications. I was able to work within the email security tool to modify and improve filtering rules. I also performed daily maintenance and monitoring of email quarantines to further tune these filters and prevent malicious emails from making it to users.

In addition to these day-to-day responsibilities, I was assigned a project to implement a new phishing response tool. My team helped guide me through the implementation process, giving me valuable experience in the planning and change management procedures used in enterprise environments. Besides the standard internship duties, my manager encouraged me to take advantage of any extra learning opportunities and to direct the internship to areas I was interested in

learning more about. As a result, I was able to expand my skills using PowerShell, create tools and scripts to manage user accounts, learn more about incident response/vulnerability management and more.



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Throughout the internship experience, I always felt encouraged, supported and valued.

I wasn't assigned busy work and never felt like I was sitting around doing nothing — from the start I was working on real problems and could clearly see the impact of my work. I was included in meetings that concerned my team and was always asked to voice my opinion and thoughts on a given topic or problem. Despite having a minuscule fraction of the experience and knowledge of my coworkers, I was never made to feel like the "new guy" in the room.

As my internship was ending, I was offered a full-time position on the Incident Response and Vulnerability Management team. I didn't have to decide whether I would accept or not — truth be told, I had been hoping to stay on with the Comptroller's office. Since being hired full-time, I have had the opportunity to take on several new projects and challenges. The internship and working for the agency have been such amazing experiences, and I know I will continue to learn and grow here. Looking back, I can already see how much my confidence and skills have developed. I am excited to continue working with the incredibly talented folks here at the Comptroller's office and encourage anyone to look for opportunities here.