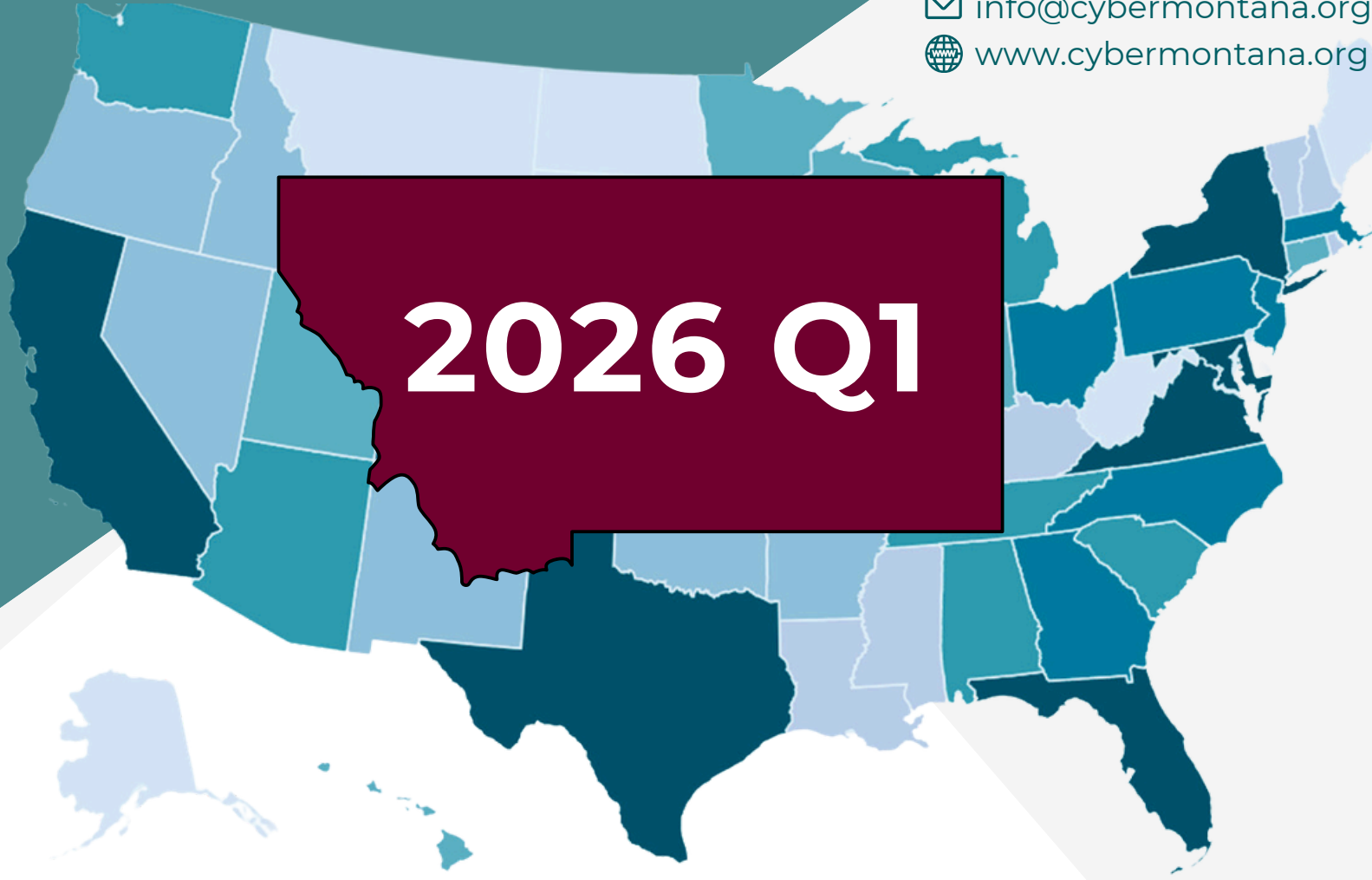


Montana Cybersecurity Jobs **REPORT**

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2026 Q1



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this 2026 Q1 edition of The Montana Cybersecurity Jobs Report, we examine how Montana's cybersecurity-related job market is being shaped by national recruiting, remote work, and growing demand for technical and transferable skills.

The data shows an active market, **with cybersecurity-related job postings higher this quarter than at any point in the past year**. While Montana workers have access to many cybersecurity-related opportunities, a significant portion are offered by employers headquartered outside the state. This reflects the **growing role of remote work and national recruiting**, giving Montanans access to a broader job market while also increasing competition beyond the local workforce.

The data also shows that cybersecurity-related work extends well beyond traditional security roles. Software development, data science, technical support, systems analysis, network architecture, compliance, and IT operations all remain important parts of the cybersecurity workforce. This broader view is especially important in Montana, where cybersecurity responsibilities may be built into technology, data, compliance, and support roles rather than listed in the job title.

Though AI-related skills are rising quickly, employers continue to emphasize communication, problem solving, leadership, management, and troubleshooting. Together, these trends point to a workforce need that includes both specialized technical knowledge and the ability to adapt, communicate, and solve problems across changing systems.

These trends **reinforce the need for flexible training pathways, career awareness, and workforce strategies** that prepare Montanans for both local and remote cybersecurity-related opportunities.

Drop us a note at info@cybermontana.org and let us know what else you'd like to see in upcoming reports. We're always glad to hear from our readers!

Laura Haacke - CyberMontana PM Security Awareness Programs

Carly Cushman - CyberMontana PM Communications | Marketing | Events

Shelby Feirstein - CyberMontana Graduate Assistant

Josh Pike - CyberMontana Graduate Assistant

Shane Kravik - CyberMontana PM Career Development and Early College

Dianne Burke - Strategic Consultant

HOW CYBERSECURITY WORKFORCE TRENDS ARE AFFECTING MONTANA

National Trends Shaping Montana's Cybersecurity Job Market

Montana's cybersecurity-related job market reflects broader national trends. Demand remains strong, but hiring has become more selective, entry-level pathways remain challenging, and artificial intelligence is beginning to change the skills employers need.

According to the most recent U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook data available at the time of this report, employment for information security analysts is projected to grow 29% from 2024 to 2034, much faster than the average for all occupations.*

National data also shows an entry-level bottleneck. Many employers report cybersecurity talent shortages, yet entry-level cybersecurity hiring remains limited. This makes adjacent roles such as help desk, systems administration, networking, compliance, data analysis, and software development important pathways into cybersecurity work.

AI is also reshaping the field. Some routine tasks, such as alert review, log analysis, and basic monitoring, may become more automated. At the same time, employers will need workers who can secure AI tools, understand AI-related risks, protect data, and communicate security concerns clearly.

The Takeaway for Montana

Cybersecurity workforce development should focus on practical, flexible skills across a range of cyber-related roles - not only traditional cybersecurity job titles. As AI becomes more common in the workplace, workers will also need the skills to use AI tools responsibly, understand AI-related risks, and help protect the systems and data those tools rely on.

*Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Information Security Analysts, 2024–2034 projections.

CYBERSECURITY OVERVIEW

MONTANA

The chart below shows the number of cybersecurity job postings in Montana across the last four quarters.

From April 2025 to March 2026, Montana **averaged 1,289 quarterly job postings** for technology roles with cybersecurity components.

The **highest number of job postings was in Q1 of 2026 with 1,458**, which also substantially exceeded **the 874 jobs posted in Q4 of 2025**.

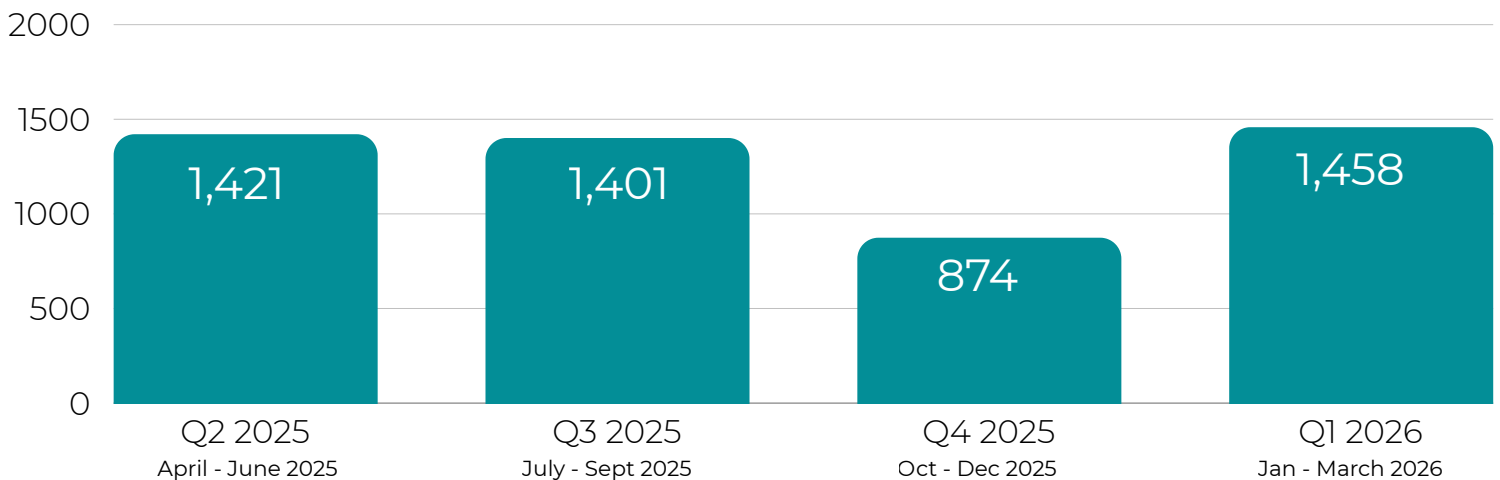
Quarterly Average

Average Statewide
Quarterly Job Postings:

1,289

Quarterly Job Postings in Montana

● Quarterly Postings



About Lightcast Hiring Estimates

Estimated quarterly hiring: ~1,509 positions (Lightcast, 2026)

Lightcast models annual hiring demand rather than actual quarterly hiring. Because the annual estimate is distributed across each quarter, quarterly estimates vary very little and should not be interpreted as actual quarterly hiring activity.

INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

MONTANA

Top 10 Industries

1. General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
2. Employment Placement Agencies
3. Other Scientific and Technical Consulting Services
4. Software Publishers
5. Direct Health and Medical Insurance Carriers
6. Pharmacies and Drug Retailers
7. Computer Systems Design Services
8. Book Publishers
9. Other Vehicle Parts Manufacturing
10. All Other Telecommunications

Lightcast (2026)

Technical expertise matters, but employers also seek strong transferable skills.

Communication, problem solving, leadership, and troubleshooting remain some of the most requested skills across cybersecurity-related occupations.

Top 10 Transferable Skills

% of Total Postings Referencing Transferable Skills

- | | |
|---------------------|-----|
| 1. Communication | 57% |
| 2. Problem Solving | 31% |
| 3. Leadership | 28% |
| 4. Management | 28% |
| 5. Operations | 27% |
| 6. Troubleshooting | 26% |
| 7. Customer Service | 19% |
| 8. Detail Oriented | 18% |
| 9. Innovation | 17% |
| 10. Research | 17% |

Lightcast (2026)

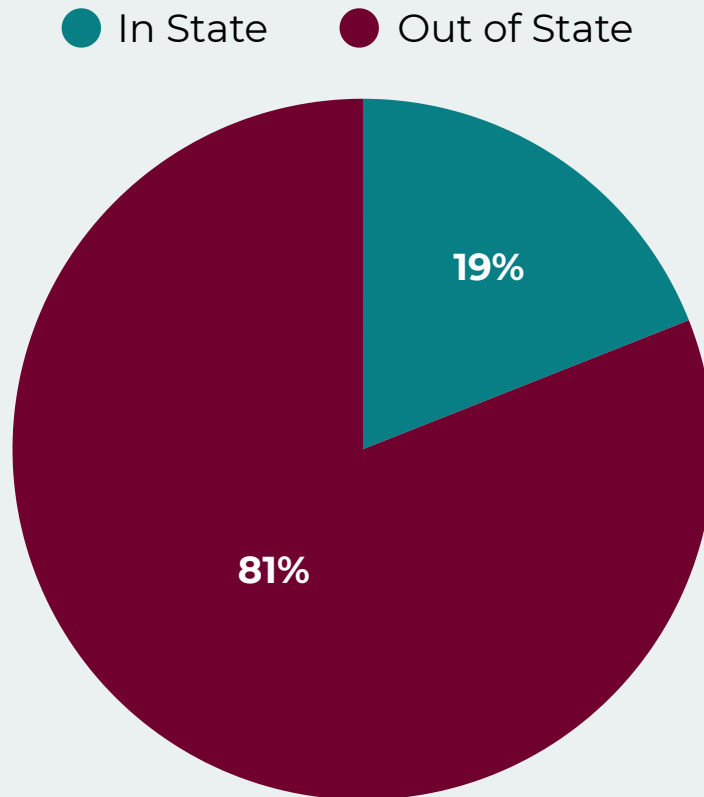
Top 10 Posted Occupations

1. Software Developers
2. Data Scientists
3. Computer User Support Specialists
4. Computer Systems Analysts
5. Computer Network Architects
6. Compliance Officers
7. Database Architects
8. Network and Computer Systems Administrators
9. Database Administrators
10. Computer and Information Research Scientists

Lightcast (2026)

WHERE ARE EMPLOYERS LOCATED?

In-State vs. Out-of-State Job Postings (Q1) Physical Location of Employer



With the growth of online recruiting and remote work, it can be challenging to determine where employers are physically located. Many companies advertising cybersecurity-related jobs in Montana do not have a local presence.

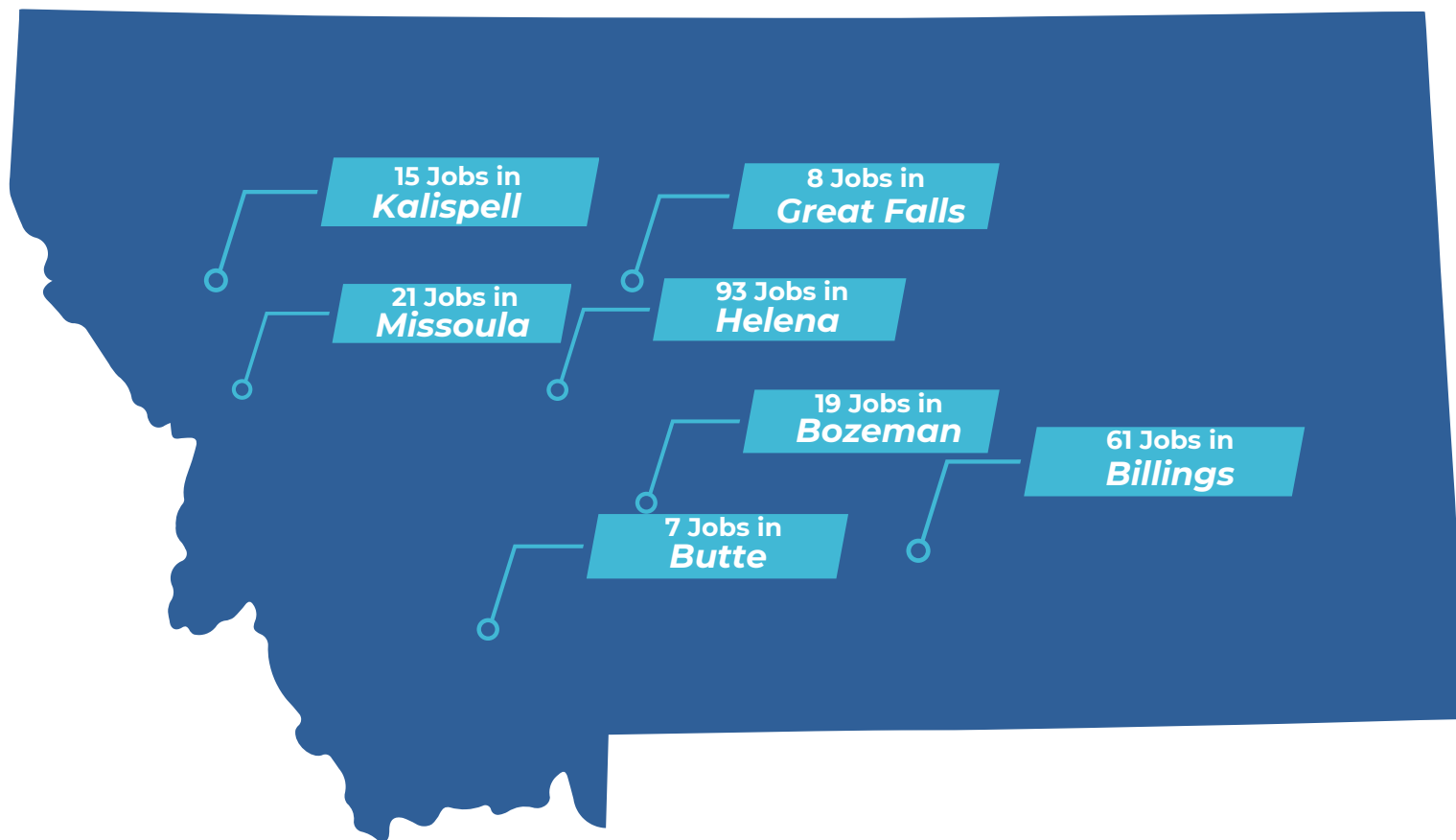
This chart shows the percentage of cybersecurity-related job postings from employers with a physical presence in Montana compared with postings from employers located out of state.

National companies often advertise openings across multiple states with remote opportunities more commonly listed in larger Montana cities such as Billings and Helena.

JOB POSTINGS BY LOCATION

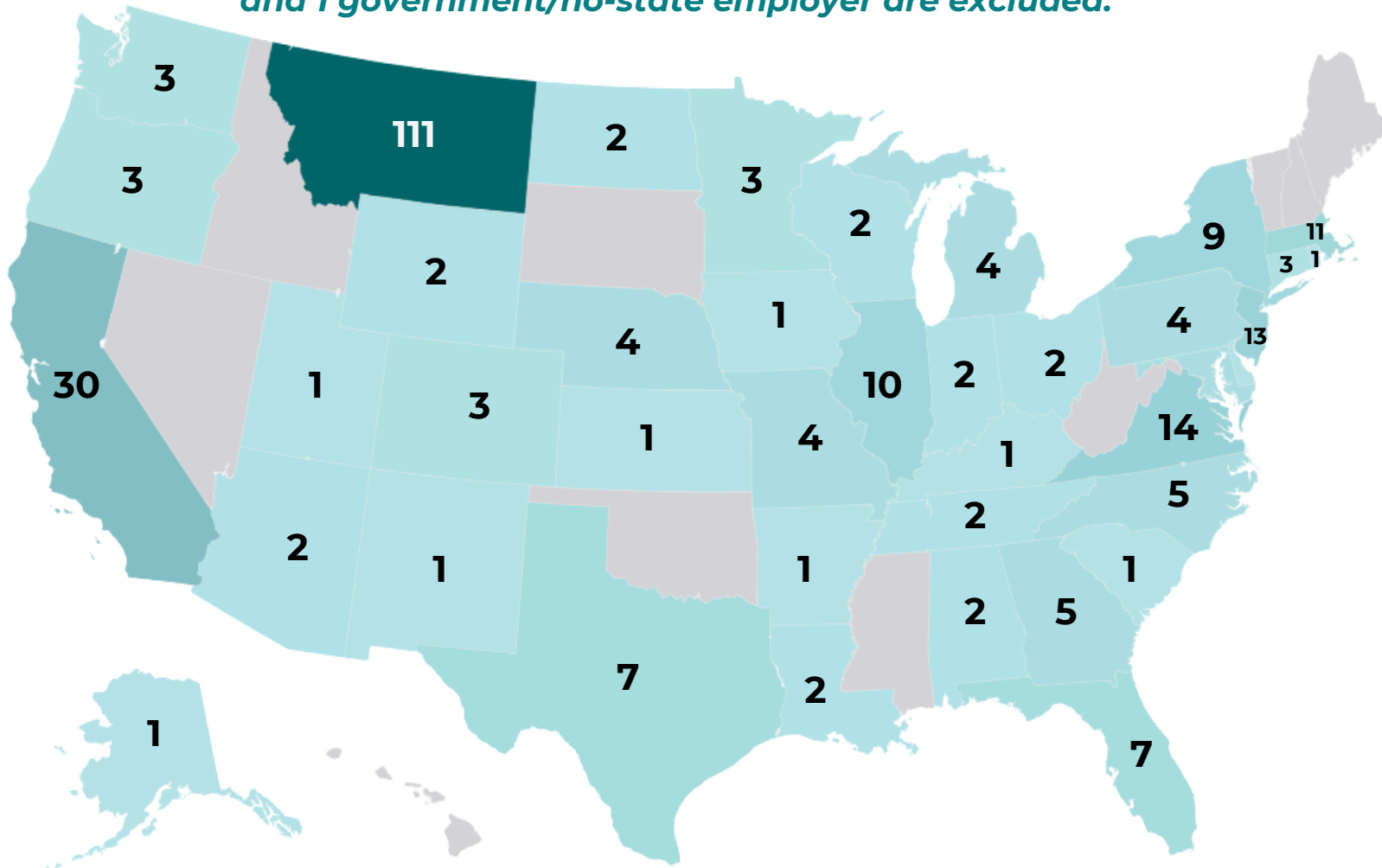
MONTANA

Of the 1,458 unique cybersecurity-related postings advertised in Montana this quarter, 276 listed a Montana work location. Of those Montana-based positions, 81% were concentrated in these seven cities:



Top 10 Montana Employers for Quarter 1:

- [Intermountain Health](#) (30) - Butte
- [Providence](#) (29) - Missoula
- [State of Montana](#) (17) - Helena
- [Glacier Bank](#) (11) - Billings
- [Best Buy](#) (7) - Missoula
- [Montana State University](#) (6) - Bozeman
- [Computer Unlimited](#) (5) - Billings
- [Butte-Silver Bow](#) (5) - Butte
- [Tyler Technologies](#) (5) - Billings
- [First Call Computer Solutions](#) (4) - Missoula



Top Companies Hiring for Quarter 1

CAI (28) - Falls Church, VA

	Total	In-State	Out-of-State
Employers	305	111	194
Job Postings	1,458	276	1,182

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPECIALIZED SKILLS

Top Requested Skills

% of Total Postings Referencing Specialized Skills

1. Computer Science	37%
2. Workflow Management	28%
3. Artificial Intelligence	24%
4. Automation	24%
5. SQL (Programming Language)	24%
6. Scalability	23%
7. Python (Programming Language)	22%
8. Agile Methodology	17%
9. Microsoft Azure	16%
10. Amazon Web Services	16%

Lightcast (2026)

AI Demand Accelerated

Artificial Intelligence (AI) experienced significant growth in demand over the past year, **increasing 5 percentage points** from 19% in Q4 2025 to 24% in Q1 2026. This increase moved AI from 7th place in Q4 2025 **to 3rd among specialized skills in Q1 2026.**

Earlier in 2025, AI did not appear among the top 10 specialized skills in either Q2 or Q3. Its rapid rise into the top three by Q1 2026 highlights how quickly **employer demand for AI-related expertise has accelerated.**

EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT

Education Insights from Dianne Burke



Dianne Burke, Associate Professor of Computer Science at Carroll College, has spent more than 40 years in technology and cybersecurity-related work. Her career began in the oil industry in Houston in the 1980's. She moved from writing chemical-analysis programs into systems administration, operations, and eventually cybersecurity education.

Today, Burke teaches and mentors the next generation of cybersecurity professionals. Her message is clear: cybersecurity education is not only about learning tools and technical skills. It is also about building curiosity, critical thinking, adaptability, and the confidence to solve problems that may not have clear answers yet.

Cybersecurity Is More Than Technical Training

“Cybersecurity is as much about critical thinking as it is about technical training.”

Burke emphasizes that cybersecurity work depends on more than technical knowledge. While students need strong technical foundations, they also need to understand how to think through problems, evaluate risk, and adapt when technology changes.

Students Are Preparing for Jobs That May Not Exist Yet

Cybersecurity education has to keep pace with rapid and unpredictable change. Burke said educators are often preparing students for future jobs, software, and threats that have not yet fully emerged.

EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT

Continued

“We are essentially preparing students for jobs that haven’t been developed yet, for software that hasn’t been written yet.”

That reality makes foundational skills especially important. If students understand core security concepts, systems, and problem-solving strategies, they are better prepared to adapt as new technologies and threats appear.

Curiosity Keeps Cybersecurity Engaging

Burke’s long career has spanned major changes in technology, from mainframe systems to modern cyber threats like phishing, ransomware, and insider threats. For her, the constant change is part of what makes the field compelling.

“I view all of this work as a big puzzle to solve, and that’s the intriguing part to me.”

That curiosity is also something she tries to pass on to students. Cybersecurity professionals need to keep learning, asking questions, and looking for connections across systems, people, and processes.

Montana Cybersecurity Careers Require Flexibility

Burke said broad, flexible skills are especially important in Montana. Many cyber-related opportunities in the state may not have “cybersecurity” in the job title. The path into the field may begin through IT support, systems administration, networking, compliance, data, or another technical role.

Compared to larger cities, Montana may offer fewer entry-level cybersecurity-specific positions, but it also offers unique advantages, including remote work opportunities and room for experienced professionals to build meaningful careers.

The Takeaway

For Burke, the most important role of cybersecurity educators is not simply to teach tools or prepare students for one specific job. It is to help students build the mindset they will need throughout their careers.

“The most important thing we can do as educators is encourage and teach people to think critically.”

Cybersecurity will continue to change, but students who can think critically, stay curious, and adapt to new challenges will be better prepared for whatever comes next.

CAREER PATHWAY SPOTLIGHT

SOC Analyst / Cyber Defense Pathway

Building Montana's Cyber Defense Workforce



OVERVIEW

The SOC Analyst pathway prepares learners for careers in cyber defense, threat monitoring, and incident response. It provides a practical entry point for new learners, career changers, and IT professionals building security skills.

WHO THIS PATHWAY SERVES



New to
Cyber



Career
Changers

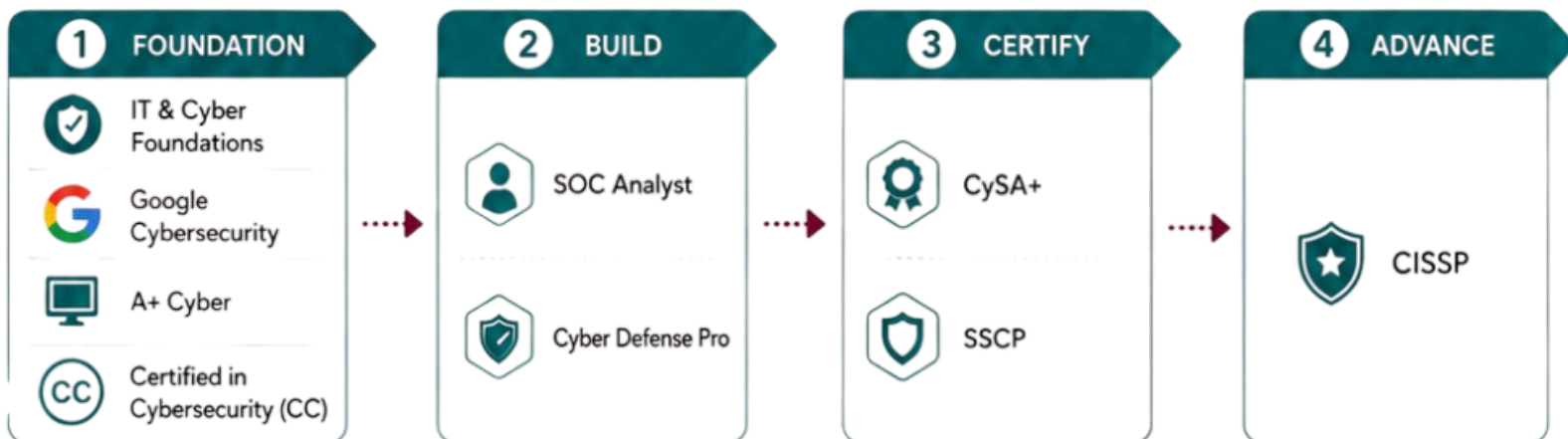


IT
Professionals



Future
Leaders

THE PATHWAY



CAREER OUTCOMES



SOC Analyst



Threat Hunter



Security Analyst

WHY IT MATTERS

Organizations across education, government, healthcare, and business need professionals who can recognize threats, monitor systems, support incident response, and strengthen cyber resilience. This pathway helps build a practical talent pipeline for cyber defense roles.



For more information contact us at: info@cybermontana.org

JOBS REPORT OVERVIEW

The **Montana Cybersecurity Jobs Report** presents current and historical data on Montana's cybersecurity-related job market, including growth projections, in-demand skills, and job posting trends. These insights can help students, job seekers, educators, employers, and workforce partners better understand where demand is growing and which skills are most valuable.

Information for this report is collected from labor market analytics firm Lightcast, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Cyberseek.org, a joint effort sponsored by Lightcast, CompTIA, and the National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education (NICE). This report focuses on the following occupations:

- Computer and Information Systems Managers (SOC code 11-3021)
- Compliance Officers (SOC code 13-1041)
- Computer Systems Analysts (SOC code 15-1211)
- Information Security Analysts (SOC code 15-1212)
- Computer and Information Research Scientists (SOC code 15-1221)
- Computer Network Support Specialists (SOC code 15-1231)
- Computer User Support Specialists (SOC code 15-1232)
- Computer Network Architects (SOC code 15-1241)
- Database Administrators (SOC code 15-1242)
- Database Architects (SOC code 15-1243)
- Network and Computer Systems Administrators (SOC code 15-1244)
- Computer Programmers (SOC code 15-1251)
- Software Developers (SOC code 15-1252)
- Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers (SOC code 15-1253)
- Web Developers (SOC code 15-1254)
- Web and Digital Interface Designers (SOC code 15-1255)
- Data Scientists (SOC code 15-2051)
- Computer Hardware Engineers (SOC code 17-2061)

The quarterly **Montana Cybersecurity Jobs Report** is a joint effort of the University of Montana's Center for Cybersecurity Workforce & Rural Policy and CyberMontana, a legislatively funded initiative focused on furthering cybersecurity education, enhancing cybersecurity literacy statewide, and expanding the cybersecurity pipeline by connecting IT professionals and students with jobs across Montana.

IN SUMMARY

CyberMontana provides this report to summarize trends in Montana's cybersecurity-related job market. These insights help students, job seekers, educators, employers, and workforce partners understand where demand is growing and which skills matter most.

Key Takeaways for the 2026 Q1 Report:

1,458 cybersecurity-related postings were advertised between January and March (Q1). Of these jobs:

- **276** listed a physical work location in Montana
- **81%** of those Montana-based positions were advertised in **seven Montana cities**

305 unique employers advertised in Montana.

- **111** were physically located **in-state**
- **194** were located **out-of-state**

Cybersecurity work extends beyond "security" job titles, with **strong demand for:**

- Software development
- Data science
- Technical support
- Systems analysis
- Network architecture.

AI-related skill demand increased from **19% (Q4 2025)** to **24% (Q1 2026)**, making AI one of the top specialized skills requested by employers.

Employers value **transferable skills**, especially:

- Communication, Problem Solving, Leadership, Management, and Troubleshooting

