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## **America's SBDC and USTelecom Team Up to Bolster Small Business Cyber Defenses**

*New partnership to train small firms to better protect critical network infrastructure, security and customer information*

WASHINGTON, DC – America's SBDC, the Association that represents the nation's largest small business resource network, Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) and USTelecom | The Broadband Association, a leading association of connectivity providers and innovators, today announced a new partnership to help small businesses and entrepreneurs bolster cybersecurity defenses.

America's critical infrastructure and national security is directly connected to the cybersecurity risks and defensive posture of individual, yet highly interconnected, organizations. Because a small or medium-sized business cyber failure or data breach can impact the broader digital ecosystem, leading to financial and reputational loss, service disruption, and in some instances, loss of life, helping these companies strengthen their defenses is imperative.

Through the new partnership, USTelecom will contribute cybersecurity subject matter experts and best practices to the SBDCs North Star CMM cyber and data protection awareness training to help small enterprises protect critical business and customer information. North Star CMM will be available to small and medium-sized business across the network's 4,000 advisors and nearly 1,000 local centers at no or low-cost. North Star CMM provides standards-based direction for businesses based on guidance by the Department of Defense.

Charles "Tee" Rowe, President and CEO of America's SBDCs said: "America's small businesses benefit from using the standards-based approaches of the North Star CMM to enhance their cybersecurity knowledge. This is vital. Businesses will be safer, our Nation will be more secure, and our economy will be stronger when efforts are coordinated to inform and train them."

Jonathan Spalter, President and CEO of USTelecom said: “The sad truth is that any business that relies on connectivity is also a potential target of cyber criminals seeking to infiltrate our networks and devices. Small businesses are uniquely vulnerable to these 21<sup>st</sup> century attacks. Our diverse membership – including local Main Street innovators and heartland cooperatives – are on the frontlines of this global war and have valuable insight and expertise to share with the small business community to protect infrastructure and personal information. We’re excited to share what we know with SBDC’s nationwide network of resource partners.”

More information about the North Star CMM program is available [here](#).

#### **About America’s SBDC and Small Business Development Centers**

America's SBDC represents the Nation's 63 Small Business Development Centers, a national network of partnerships uniting higher education, state and local nonprofit economic development organizations, private enterprise and government. It is the Small Business Administration's largest partnership program, providing management and technical assistance to help Americans start, run and grow their own businesses. *Learn more at [www.AmericasSBDC.org](http://www.AmericasSBDC.org).*

#### **About USTelecom**

USTelecom is the national trade association representing technology providers, innovators, suppliers, and manufacturers committed to connecting the world through the power of broadband. Visit us at [www.ustelecom.org](http://www.ustelecom.org).

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