Co-op Cyber Goals Program:
Third Year In Review

The [Co-op Cyber Goals Program](#) provides a means for co-ops to establish important fundamental cybersecurity measures and improve their cybersecurity posture. At the end of 2025, 457 co-ops across 44 states are participating in the Co-op Cyber Goals Program. This strong NRECA member participation underscores to both industry and government that cooperatives of all sizes nationwide are taking proactive steps in cybersecurity.

> **457 co-ops across 44 states are participating in NRECA Co-op Cyber Goals Program to date.**

Continuing to Build on Early Successes

In January 2023, NRECA launched the [Co-op Cyber Goals Program](#) to help co-ops improve cybersecurity. This first phase of the voluntary program included 10 fundamental, actionable goals – called Level One – for NRECA members to complete individually, at their own pace, and in any order. In June 2024, NRECA debuted 10 new goals, known as Level Two to the program, providing additional ways for co-ops to advance their cybersecurity posture. Those who are enrolled in the Level One goals have automatic access to the Level Two goals to continue their cybersecurity preparedness.

Year 3 of the Program has continued to build on the efforts of the first two years to further enhance the Goals as a resource for cooperatives. In Year 2 of the program, our team focused on aligning the Goals with Industry Frameworks; indicating how Level One and Level Two goals relate; and highlighting complementary resources from NRECA and other industry stakeholders for co-op use.

The following are ways NRECA has added value to the program:
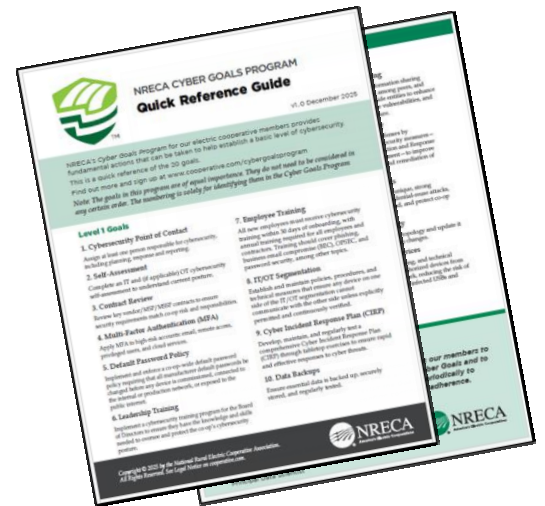
- **Revamped Goals Reference Sheets**

  With the input of our cybersecurity Member Advisory Group (CS-MAG) comprised of co-op volunteers, we improved and updated the one page reference sheets on each goal in March 2025. The updates included highlighting important words and concepts, noting key points about the goals, explaining the relation of the goals to other goals in the program, and adding additional framework mapping.

- **Quick Reference Guide**

  For a quick view of the 20 goals in the program and brief explanations of the requirements, our team developed a downloadable quick reference guide.

- **Downloadable Status Sheet**

  To allow quick view of the participating co-op's status on the goals, and provide a useful resource for communicating the progress to co-op leadership, boards and others, the program now has a downloadable status sheet.

- **Federated Discount**

  NRECA collaborated with Federated to provide further value to participating co-ops. Starting January 1, 2026, Federated is offering co-ops who insure with them and have completed the 20 Goals a 5% discount on cyber insurance. (For more information on the Federated offering, please contact your Federated Account Executive.)

- **Supporting Documents**

  Two documents have been added as tools to support co-ops' participation:

  - **Program FAQ**

    This document provides a series of questions and answers about the program, its purpose and value, and how co-ops can participate.

  - **Guidance for Co-op Leadership and Practitioners** – *coming early 2026*

    This document equips co-op leadership with key questions and considerations to help gauge progress and completion of each goal, fostering shared confidence and informed oversight.

- **POC Recognition Certificate**

  The POC for a co-op's participation is an essential role and one that takes time and dedication. They are the champions who initiate, guide and encourage their organization's completion of the goals. NRECA created a recognition certificate to be sent to the POC upon completion of the program. This certificate is to provide recognition from NRECA to the POC, and also allow the POC a tangible way to communicate their key role in their co-op's participation. We are especially proud of this addition to the program, as it was fulfilling a request from a co-op member who was a POC and looking for a means to demonstrate their role in the program to their co-op leadership.
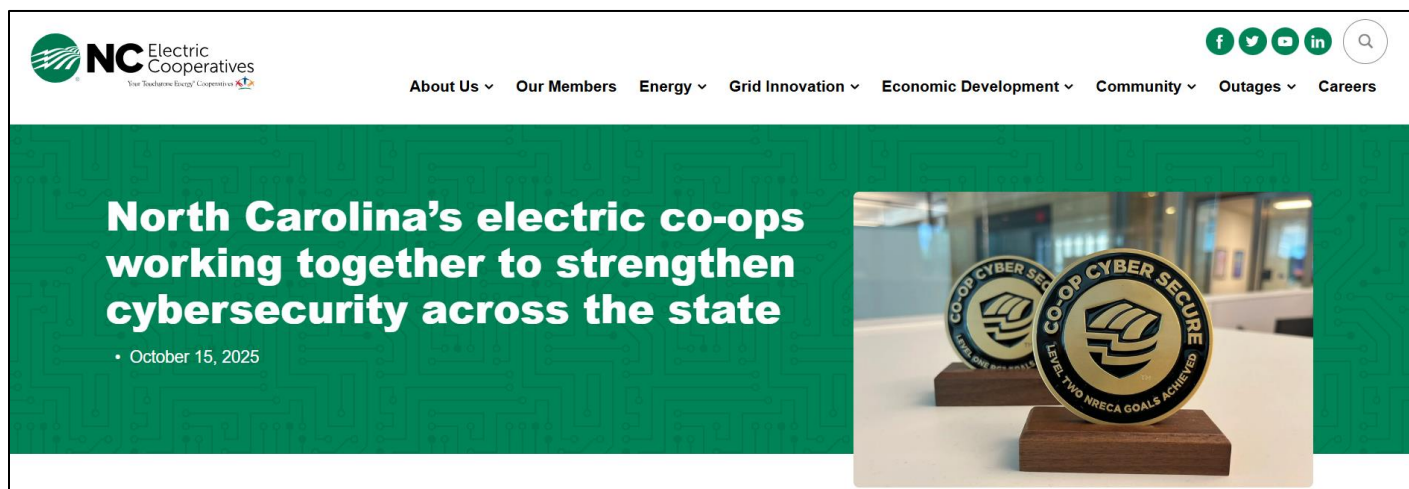
Co-ops Showcasing Their Participation

Upon completion of a Level of the goals, the POC receives a digital badge and a commemorative coin to use at their discretion to communicate their achievement.

A recent example of co-ops announcing their accomplishments in the NRECA Co-op Cyber Goals program on their websites is North Carolina's electric co-ops:

Digital Badge

Commemorative Coin

The following is an excerpt from their October 15, 2025 online publication:

 "Collectively, North Carolina's electric cooperatives are being recognized nationally for their ongoing work to strengthen cybersecurity practices. Their progress is reflected in NRECA's Co-op Cyber Goals Program, a national initiative launched in 2023 to help electric cooperatives assess and enhance their cybersecurity readiness. Thirteen North Carolina co-ops have achieved Level 1 by meeting the first 10 goals, and three others have advanced to Level 2 after completing 10 more."

Co-ops Confirming the Value of the Program

Participants have shared with NRECA that the Co-op Cyber Goals program has provided valuable guidance and resources that have not only made direct impact on their cybersecurity readiness but also been a catalyst for transformational changes in the culture at their organizations. The Goals require cross-functional engagement, bringing staff and departments together for this important cause.

The NRECA cyber goals strengthen every cooperative by building a shared foundation of readiness, resilience, and trust. They turn security from a single task into a collective commitment that protects our members, our mission, and the communities we serve.

Toby Schaefer, Senior Manager, Cyber Operations, Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc.

> *The Cyber Goals program has been a way to get cybersecurity at the forefront of our executive leadership and board of directors talking points. It has been a way for me to communicate more effectively to the leadership about our cyber maturity and where we strive to get to, while following the goals. It has created a cybersecurity culture that I am proud to be a part of.*
>
> Jordan Nickels, Technology Manager, BENCO Electric Cooperative

Recognizing Participants at Co-op Cyber Tech

NRECA continues to recognize co-ops who completed a Level of the goals in time for our annual Co-op Cyber Tech conference. As shown in the following photos, the number of attending co-ops has increased significantly each year, showing program momentum and popularity with our members.

Cyber Tech Conference, May 2023

Cyber Tech Conference, June 2024

Cyber Tech Conference, June 2025

4

Looking Ahead

As we proceed into the next year of the Program, NRECA is focused on further integrating the Cyber Goals into the other NRECA Cybersecurity offerings, to provide a comprehensive approach to co-op cybersecurity advancement. We are committed to continued support for our member in their efforts to protect their organizations and the industry grid from cyber threats. We closely listen to our members, through the CS-MAG and other engagement opportunities, to gain important insights, keep a pulse on what keeps our members up at night, and help ensure our efforts align to member needs and provide value.

We encourage all co-ops to participate in the Co-op Cyber Goals Program, and those currently enrolled to continue progressing to completion of all the Goals. Co-ops with questions or any difficulty completing a Goal are welcomed to contact our Cybersecurity Team at: membersecurity@nreca.coop.

Contact: NRECA Cybersecurity Team membersecurity@nreca.coop

Program Website: www.cooperative.com/cybergoalsprogram

Additional Resources

- NRECA Cybersecurity Website
- Co-op Cyber Goals Website
- Brochure: NRECA Cybersecurity Programs and Efforts
- Advisory: Cybersecurity Resources Summary
- Report: RE Magazine Special Report: Co-op Cybersecurity
- Article: NRECA Unveils Next Set of Co-op Cyber Goals; 81 More Co-ops Achieve Level One
- Article: Co-ops Begin Meeting NRECA's Level Two Cyber Goals