✨ The Ultimate Tools & Resources Guide for Cleared Professionals ✨

🎯 A One-Stop-Shop for Tools, Training, Certifications, and Career Advancement 🎯

The Ultimate Cleared Professional Resource Guide: This guide is your starting point for navigating the cleared professional world, bringing together **mostly free resources** (with paid options available) to help you thrive. While it's not a *comprehensive* list, it's a great place to begin building your career and skills. **Got a suggestion? Let us know, and we'll grow the guide together!**

Here's what you'll find:

🔍 Job Boards: Your Gateway to Cleared Opportunities

- **Certifications**: Boost your credentials with industry-recognized certifications.
- **Training Resources**: Free and paid tools to upskill in IT, cybersecurity, cloud, and more.
- **Networking Tools**: Connect with other professionals in the cleared and GovCon community.
- **Mental Health Tools**: Free support to help you maintain balance and well-being.
- **News Resources**: Stay informed with updates on government, defense, and IT trends.

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1. Job Boards & Career Platforms: These platforms are essential for finding cleared and related roles.

- [ClearanceJobs](): Dedicated platform for security-cleared positions.

- [Cleared Connections](): Offers a range of job listings for individuals with security clearances, focusing on defense and intelligence sectors.

- [ClearedJobs.Net](): Provides job listings and career resources specifically for cleared professionals.

- [Contract Professionals Inc. (CPI)](): Focused on cleared roles in engineering and aerospace.

- [CyberSecJobs.com](): Focuses on cybersecurity positions, including those requiring security clearances.

- [DefenseCareers.com](): Provides job listings in the defense industry, including roles requiring security clearances.

- [Dice](): Tech-specific job board often featuring roles requiring clearances.

- [Glassdoor](): Search jobs while reading reviews about salaries and company culture.

- [GovLoop](): Government-focused networking site with job opportunities and free learning resources.

- [Indeed](): Use search terms like "security clearance" to find relevant roles.

- [IntelligenceCareers](): Jobs in intelligence, DoD, and federal agencies.

- [IntelligenceCareers.gov](): The official job portal for the U.S. Intelligence Community, listing positions that require various levels of security clearance.

- [LinkedIn](): Build a professional profile, highlight your clearance, and connect with recruiters.

- [MilitaryHire](): Job platform for transitioning service members and veterans.

- [Patriot Jobs](): Caters to veterans and cleared professionals seeking employment in defense and government sectors.

- [Security Clearance Careers](): Offers a variety of job listings for individuals with active security clearances.

- [SecurityJobsToday.com](): Features security-related job postings, some of which require clearances.

- [Silent Professionals](): Specializes in private security and defense contracting jobs, including roles requiring security clearances.

- [USAJobs](): Federal government's official job portal.

- [WeWorkRemotely](): Lists remote jobs, including roles in cleared industries.

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2. Training & Certifications: Certifications & training are key for breaking into and advancing in IT.

Free Training & Resources:

- [Alison](): Offers a wide range of IT courses in networking, security, software development, and more.

- [AWS Skill Builder](): Foundational courses on AWS cloud computing.

- Class Central: Aggregates over 900 developer and IT certification courses from various providers.
- CodeAcademy Free Tier: Learn programming languages like Python, SQL, and Java.
- Coursera: Offers courses in IT and data science (select options).
- Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA): Webinars, cybersecurity exercises, and tools.
- Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA): Courses in information and personnel security.
- EC-Council Essentials: Courses for beginners in cybersecurity.
- edX: Courses from top universities on IT, networking, and cybersecurity (with an option to pay for certificates).
- Federal Virtual Training Environment (FedVTE): Over 800 hours of cybersecurity training for federal employees and veterans.
- GCFLearnFree.org: Provides tutorials on technology, job training, reading, and math skills.
- Google Digital Garage: Courses in data analysis, cloud computing, and career skills.
- Google IT Automation with Python: Free for limited periods via Coursera's scholarships.
- Harvard Online Courses: Courses in computer science, cybersecurity, and AI.
- IBM Skills Network: Training in data science, cybersecurity, and AI, with certifications upon completion.
- LaunchCode: A nonprofit offering coding bootcamps and training programs to help individuals enter the tech industry.
- Linux Foundation Training: Courses on Linux, cloud infrastructure technologies, and open-source software development.
- Microsoft Learn: Training on Microsoft Azure, M365, and more.
- MIT OpenCourseWare: IT, engineering, and project management courses from MIT.
- Open Learning for Development: A UNESCO-driven platform offering training and learning resources on a wide range of development topics.
- Pluralsight Free Weekend: Periodically offers free access to its entire library, including IT and cybersecurity courses.
- RangeForce Community Edition: Hands-on cyber defense training.
- TryHackMe: Hands-on cybersecurity training for beginners and professionals.
- U.S. Cyber Range: Cybersecurity labs and training for military and government personnel.

Common Baseline Certifications (Paid):

- CompTIA A+: Foundation for IT roles ($246 per exam).
- CompTIA Network+: Networking concepts, configuration, and troubleshooting (~$338).
- CompTIA Security+ and/or IAT I, II, III: Entry-level cybersecurity certification (~$392).
- Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA): Networking and security fundamentals (~$300).

Advanced Certifications (Paid):

- AWS Certified Solutions Architect – Associate: Validates skills in designing & deploying scalable systems on AWS.
- Certified Ethical Hacker (CEH): Focused on ethical hacking and penetration testing.
- Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP): Industry-leading credential for cybersecurity leaders.
- GIAC Security Essentials (GSEC): Comprehensive foundational cybersecurity certification.
- Google Professional Cloud Architect: Validates expertise in advanced cloud architecture design.

- ITIL 4 Foundation: Focused on IT service management best practices.
- Offensive Security Certified Professional (OSCP): Advanced certification for ethical hacking and penetration testing.
- Project Management Professional (PMP): Gold standard for project management certification.

3. Clearance Management & Support:

- Adjudicative Desk Reference (ADR): Provides detailed information on clearance adjudication factors to help professionals understand denials and appeals.
- Adjudicative Guidelines: Explains how clearance decisions are made, enabling management of your standing.
- Clearance Self-Check Guide (DCSA): A step-by-step guide to managing clearance issues effectively.
- ClearanceJobs Blog: Offers expert advice on navigating clearance renewals, appeals, and common issues.
- Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA): Official portal for managing clearance renewals and updates, as well as understanding clearance-related processes.

💡 Additional Guidance

- If you have questions or need support regarding your clearance, always reach out to your SSO (Special Security Officer) or FSO (Facility Security Officer) for tailored advice and assistance. They are your primary resource for clearance-related matters.

4. Networking & Professional Development:

- Cleared Connections: A networking site specifically designed for cleared job seekers.
- Eventbrite: Find free local events for GovCon, IT, and networking opportunities.
- GitHub: A platform for developers to showcase projects, contribute to open-source communities, and connect with peers.
- LinkedIn Groups: Join groups like "Cleared Professionals Network" or "GovCon Talent Network" to expand your professional connections.
- Meetup: Search for local GovCon, cybersecurity, and IT-related networking events in your area.
- OWASP: Participate in free global meetups focused on cybersecurity, secure coding practices, and risk management.
- Security Clearance Careers (GovCon Careers): Connect with recruiters actively hiring for cleared roles in defense and intelligence.
- Veterati: A free mentorship platform tailored for transitioning professionals seeking guidance and career advice.

Paid Opportunities:

- AFCEA Membership: A professional association connecting individuals in government, military, and industry IT. Provides access to events, resources, and valuable networking opportunities (~$50-$150/year).
- Black Hat Conferences: Industry-leading events for cybersecurity professionals to network, share knowledge, and learn about cutting-edge security technologies (~$2,500+ per ticket).
- DEF CON: One of the largest and oldest hacker conferences, offering unparalleled networking opportunities for cybersecurity professionals (~$300+).
- Gartner IT Symposium/Xpo: A leading IT conference for government and industry professionals focused on innovation, strategy, and networking (~$4,000+).
- GovCon Summit: Paid networking events bringing together leaders in the government contracting (GovCon) industry to share insights and make valuable connections.
- ISACA Membership: Offers access to IT governance and cybersecurity certifications, training, and networking events (~$135/year).

- RSA Conference: A premier cybersecurity event featuring networking opportunities, workshops, and exhibitions (~$1,500+).
- TechNet Cyber: A high-profile networking event focused on government IT and cybersecurity professionals, hosted by AFCEA (~$1,000+

5. Salary & Benefits Tools:

- ClearanceJobs Salary Calculator: Provides tailored salary estimates specifically for roles requiring security clearances.
- Glassdoor: Offers company reviews, salary insights, and information on benefits from current and former employees.
- NerdWallet Cost of Living Calculator: Compare the cost of living between locations to evaluate job offers effectively.
- PayScale: Allows you to compare salaries by role, industry, location, and experience level.

Paid Resources:

- Salary.com Premium: In-depth salary reports ($29.95/month).
- Payscale Career Profile: Comprehensive salary benchmarking for cleared roles (~$29.99/month).

6. Mental Health & Wellness:

- BetterHelp for Veterans: Offers discounted online therapy services tailored for veterans and their families.
- Cohen Veterans Network: Provides free or low-cost mental health care specifically designed for veterans and their families.
- Give an Hour: Connects military personnel, veterans, and their families with volunteer mental health professionals offering free care.
- Headspace for Veterans: Provides free mindfulness and meditation tools to enhance mental well-being for veterans.
- Make the Connection: Features real stories from veterans and provides resources for overcoming mental health challenges.
- Military OneSource: Offers free counseling services, resources, and support for service members, veterans, and their families.
- National Veterans Crisis Line: Provides 24/7 confidential support for veterans, active-duty members, and their families.
- Real Warriors Campaign: Offers resources and support to address mental health challenges faced by service members and veterans.
- VA Mental Health Services: Provides comprehensive mental health services through the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) Talk Program: Offers confidential, non-clinical emotional support and assistance for warriors and their families.

7. Transitioning Military Resources:

Career Transition & Job Placement

- DoD SkillBridge: Provides internships and certifications during the last 180 days of service to prepare for civilian careers.
- HireMilitary: Free job placement services connecting transitioning personnel with employers seeking military talent.

- Veteran and Military Transition Center: A one-stop site for employment, training, and financial resources for veterans and transitioning service members.
- RecruitMilitary: Connects veterans and service members with job fairs, career opportunities, and resume assistance nationwide.
- LinkedIn Premium for Veterans: Free one-year premium account for transitioning service members to network and find job opportunities.
- FourBlock: A nationwide career readiness program providing workshops, mentorship, and networking opportunities.
- O2O - Onward to Opportunity: A free career training and certification program through Syracuse University.
- Amazon Military Programs: Career opportunities for transitioning service members in IT, logistics, and operations.
- Work for Warriors: Job placement services for National Guard, Reservists, and veterans.
- Corporate Fellowship Program (Hiring Our Heroes): Offers professional training and hands-on experience in civilian careers.
- Helmets to Hardhats: Connects transitioning service members to apprenticeship opportunities in construction and related industries.

Financial, Education, & Family Support

- GI Bill Comparison Tool: Helps maximize education benefits and understand tuition assistance options.
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC): Provides tax incentives for employers hiring veterans and transitioning service members.
- Military OneSource Transition Assistance Programs: Comprehensive resources for service members and their families navigating the transition to civilian life.
- Patriot Boot Camp: Helps veterans and military spouses start businesses through mentorship and training.
- Operation Homefront: Offers financial planning, housing assistance, and family support.

Training & Internships

- Microsoft Software & Systems Academy (MSSA): Provides training in software engineering and cloud administration for transitioning service members.
- SkillMil: Offers SkillBridge internships tailored to align military skills with civilian opportunities.
- VetsinTech: Connects veterans to tech industry resources in education, employment, and entrepreneurship.
- Northrop Grumman Military Internship Program: Offers internships in defense and aerospace through the SkillBridge program.
- Apprenti: Provides registered apprenticeship programs in technology roles, combining paid on-the-job training and education.
- Per Scholas: Tuition-free training in IT and software engineering with career placement support.
- Revature: Offers training and placement in software engineering roles.
- Cisco Veteran Talent Incubation Program: Provides training and employment opportunities in technology careers.

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8. Writing & Resume Tools:

- Canva Free: Design visually appealing resumes, LinkedIn banners, and other professional documents.
- ChatGPT (Free Tier): AI for drafting resumes, brainstorming ideas, and refining professional content.
- Copy.ai: AI-powered tool for generating copy for resumes, LinkedIn summaries, and cover letters. *(Free plan available)*
- DeepAI: Free AI tools for generating creative content and exploring AI-based text solutions.

- [Google Docs](#): Collaborative writing platform with free templates for resumes, cover letters, and more.
- [Grammarly Free](#): Improve grammar, clarity, and tone in resumes, cover letters, and emails.
- [Hemingway Editor](#): Highlights complex sentences and errors to improve clarity and readability.
- [Hugging Face](#): Access pre-trained AI models for natural language processing tasks.
- [Jasper AI](#): AI-powered writing assistant for creating polished, professional content. *(Free trial available)*
- Microsoft Word Online: Create and format professional documents for free using Microsoft's web-based editor.
- [OpenAI Playground](#): Experiment with GPT models for content generation and conversational AI.
- [ProWritingAid Free](#): Advanced grammar and style editor for improving overall writing quality.
- [Resumake.io](#): Generate professional resumes tailored to specific industries.
- Zety Resume Builder: Offers AI-driven resume building and formatting tools. *(Free basic features)*

9. Industry News & Updates:

- [Acquisition.gov News](#): Provides official news and announcements related to federal acquisition regulations and policies.
- [Breaking Defense](#): Focuses on defense industry news, military technology, and policy analysis.
- [Defense News](#): Covers defense policies, military technology, and global security news.
- [ExecutiveBiz](#): Provides news on government contracting companies, focusing on executive-level business activity and corporate developments.
- [ExecutiveGov](#): Offers news and insights on government policies, executive movements, and federal government developments.
- [FCW (Federal Computer Week)](#): Specializes in federal technology and business management news.
- [Federal News Network](#): Delivers updates on government operations, policies, and federal workforce news.
- [Federal Times](#): Focuses on federal procurement, policy, and management for federal managers and executives.
- [Fedscoop](#): Provides the latest news on federal IT, policy, and modernization efforts.
- [GovConWire](#): Offers insights on government contracting trends, major contract awards, and industry developments.
- [Government Executive](#): Delivers news and analysis on federal management, policy, and politics.
- [MeriTalk](#): Covers government IT, cloud computing, and cybersecurity news.
- [Nextgov](#): Focuses on IT modernization, emerging technologies, and cybersecurity news within federal agencies.
- [PubKGroup](#): Offers comprehensive news on government contracting, law, cybersecurity, and compliance.
- [Washington Technology](#): Provides news and insights for government contractors and the integrator community.

Have questions or concerns?

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