

PROTECT:  
Higher Education Services

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Virtual Information Security Officer



# DEER BROOK

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Educational Institutions as well as other verticals today host a wide range of information that, due to its external value to competitors, nation-states, or cybercriminals, needs to be properly protected. The role of a Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) is to establish and maintain the organizational strategy and execution to protect its sensitive and valuable information assets and surrounding technologies.

But many organizations, while having data that needs protecting, choose to utilize a virtual CISO (vCISO) to address the needs of the CISO role rather than hire one internally.

*Maine's Premier Veteran Owned & Staffed Cybersecurity Company*

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### What is a virtual Chief Information Security Officer?

The vCISO is a security practitioner who uses the culmination of their years of cybersecurity and industry experience to help organizations with developing and managing the implementation of the organization's information security program. At a high level, vCISOs help to architect the organization's security strategy, with some helping to also manage its' implementation. Internal Security staff may still exist, either reporting to or working with the vCISO and their team to execute an impactful security program. Additionally, the vCISO is usually expected to be able to present the organization's state of information security to an organization's board, executive team, auditors, or regulators.

vCISOs can provide value to organizations by helping with a number of aspects of the overall information security program, including:

- Information security planning and management activities
- Regulatory compliance and Rule Compliance activities
- Organizational and management structure
- Initiatives affecting information practices
- Security risk management activities
- Evaluation of third parties with access to organizational data
- Coordination of audits by regulators or customers



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### Why are vCISOs becoming more popular?

The idea of a virtual CISO has grown in demand with organizations for a number of reasons: CISOs are in demand – Cybersecurity has moved to the forefront of organizational concern. With the rise in cyberattacks, data breaches, sophistication in attacks, and the focus of the board locked in on an organization's information, brand integrity, regulatory changes.

A vCISO provides an organization the ability to fill a vCISO role, with top talent within a budget.

**CISOs are expensive** – According to salary.com, the average CISO costs over \$200,000 a year. While nearly every organization needs a CISO, not every one of them can afford one. A vCISO allows organizations to avoid the expense of employing one in-house full-time, only paying for the services and time used.

**vCISOs can be more experienced** – A vCISO has implemented information security programs for many clients in a diverse set of industries and sizes, giving them a broad range of expertise that can be applied to your organization.

**vCISOs can be anywhere** – Rather than needing to hire someone locally or relocated individuals (which limits your options), the vCISO works as a team member, working from just about anywhere, giving the organization exposure to more potential candidates.

**vCISOs are a consumption-based option** – While not every vCISO works the same, this is a staff member who will perform the tasks based on an agreed upon scope of work. So, you're paying for the services you want from them to augment or enhance your team.



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### Why have a vCISO ?

The choice of a vCISO versus a full-time CISO may still be unclear. Deer Brook believes there are several tangible use cases for when a vCISO may be a great choice:

**Bridging and Hiring a New Full-Time CISO** – The departure of a business's existing CISO may be untimely with regard to current security initiatives. A seasoned vCISO can come in, provide value in reviewing the current cybersecurity strategy and help recruit, select and transition to a full-time CISO.

**Development of Compliance Programs** – Organizations with or without a current CISO may be missing the expertise on a specific compliance mandate (FTC, HIPAA) and how it translates to policy and process to secure protected information. A vCISO that specializes in a given compliance regulation can assist to develop a strategy and execution plan that meets the specific mandates – Deer Brook has a cross section of industry experts to handle any area - think FTC Regulations or PCI DSS experts helping academic institution conform to both retail payment card regulation and financial aid regulations or a HIPAA savant supporting a healthcare org.

**Developing a Mature Cybersecurity program for a Smaller Organization** – When a full-time CISO is too costly for an SMB, a vCISO works on contract specific hours to provide enterprise-caliber expertise to design a security program to the SMB specific needs and budget which, otherwise, would not be capable of developing.

**Re-aligning Cyber Spend** – Whatever the organization was doing 6 months ago to protect against cyber risk is likely not as effective today. A vCISO can help organizations of every size by taking a look at the current budget, how it's spent, and identify ways to more effectively and efficiently spend it to create a more secure stance.