

## Opportunity Announcement: RC3 Online Cybersecurity Self-Assessment License Program Round 2 for Applications Now Open for Cooperatives – **Deadline Extended to May 15**

*Please note: In light of the current business challenges posed by COVID-19, we have extended the deadline for applications to May 15 to allow additional time for cooperatives to work with their boards to receive support for this opportunity.*

Applications are now being accepted to participate in the RC3 Online Cybersecurity Self-Assessment License Program (RC3 Self-Assessment License Program).<sup>1</sup> Participants in the RC3 Self-Assessment License Program will receive free access to an **online version** of the [RC3 Cybersecurity Self-Assessment \(RC3 Self-Assessment\)](#).<sup>2</sup> Each license is a multi-year software subscription providing co-ops with unlimited access to the online version of the *RC3 Self-Assessment* through March 2022. The online version of the *RC3 Self-Assessment* offers many features not feasible in the hardcopy version of the *RC3 Self-Assessment*.<sup>3</sup>



Each license can provide access to the online platform for up to 30 cooperatives. Therefore, licenses will be awarded to groups of cooperatives (5 to 30 cooperatives per group) with a designated License Lead.

Cooperatives will have three opportunities to apply to the RC3 Self-Assessment License Program. This is an announcement for the second round for applications. ***The deadline for the second round of applications is Friday, May 15, 2020.*** The first round of applications has closed and approximately 30 Licenses were awarded that will provide more than 300 cooperatives access to the online version of the RC3 Self-Assessment. A final opportunity to apply for a License will be announced after April 1, 2020, with a final deadline in late spring 2020.

IMPORTANT DATES	
Application Process Opens	February 24, 2020
First Round Application Deadline	Closed
Second Round Application Deadline	<b>May 15, 2020</b>
Final Round Application Deadline	Late Spring 2020; TBD

<sup>1</sup> No financial contributions from cooperatives are required for participation in the RC3 Online Cybersecurity Self-Assessment License Program, and no award funds will be transferred to cooperatives that participate in the Program.

<sup>2</sup> The *RC3 Self-Assessment* is a tool that provides cooperatives an opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses in their cybersecurity posture, and to use these insights to create a cybersecurity action plan or roadmap for improvement.

<sup>3</sup> A hardcopy version of the *RC3 Self-Assessment* is available to all cooperatives at no cost on cooperative.com at: <https://www.cooperative.com/programs-services/bts/Pages/Assessing-Your-Cybersecurity-Posture.aspx>

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Only “Group Licenses” will be awarded. Each Group License must consist of at least five (5) cooperatives, and no more than thirty (30) cooperatives.<sup>4</sup> All members of the Group License must be owner/operator electric cooperatives or a Statewide Association.<sup>5</sup> ***If an individual cooperative wants to participate in the RC3 Self-Assessment License Program, the cooperative must be part of a Group License application.***

All of the members of the Group License must agree on and designate one member as the “License Lead.” All License Lead organizations must be voting members of NRECA.

There are three ways cooperatives can assemble into a Group:

- Category A: Individual distribution and G&T cooperatives can form a Group and designate one member of the Group, either a distribution or G&T cooperative, as the License Lead.
- Category B: A G&T cooperative can assemble its member distribution cooperatives into a Group with the G&T as the License Lead;
- Category C: A Statewide Association can assemble its member distribution and G&T cooperatives into a Group with the Statewide as the License Lead.

*Every member of a License Group, including the License Lead, will need to submit a separate application. The License Lead entity needs to be identified by each cooperative on the cooperative’s individual application.*

All participating electric cooperatives will need to submit a letter of support from their leadership (CEO or Board of Directors) endorsing the cooperative’s participation in the RC3 Self-Assessment License Program. If the License Lead entity is a Statewide, a leadership letter of support is recommended, but not required for the Statewide; however, each of the cooperatives in the Group License must submit a letter of support from their leadership. Letters of support should be emailed to [CyberSecurityRC3@nreca.coop](mailto:CyberSecurityRC3@nreca.coop). A sample letter is available [on cooperative.com](https://www.nreca.coop/cooperative).

Once all members of a Group have submitted their individual applications, the Group application will be deemed ‘Complete.’ Once the Group application is considered Complete, no additional cooperatives can be added to that Group application. Approximately 30 Licenses were awarded in the first round of applications. The RC3 Program anticipates awarding up to 60 Licenses in the second round of applications.

Building and improving a cooperative’s cybersecurity capabilities is an ongoing challenge. While cooperatives are not expected to share data or their *RC3 Cybersecurity Self-Assessment* results, the RC3 Program strongly encourages participants to utilize Cooperative Principle 6, *Cooperation Among Cooperatives*, and help one another by sharing their experiences in using the *RC3 Self-Assessment* and general lessons learned. At this time, the RC3 Program will not offer access to the online version of the *RC3 Cybersecurity Self-Assessment* directly to individual cooperatives, and Axio will not be providing access independent of the RC3

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<sup>4</sup> Exceptions to this will be made on a case-by-case basis under unique circumstances. For exception requests, please contact Cynthia Hsu, NRECA’s Cybersecurity Program Manager ([cynthia.hsu@nreca.coop](mailto:cynthia.hsu@nreca.coop)) to discuss options.

<sup>5</sup> If you are an NRECA member cooperative that is interested in a License but you are not an owner/operator electric cooperative, please contact Cynthia Hsu, NRECA’s Cybersecurity Program Manager ([cynthia.hsu@nreca.coop](mailto:cynthia.hsu@nreca.coop)) to discuss options.

Self-Assessment License Program. Options to continue access to the online platform after March 2022 are yet to be determined, however, details will be shared with cooperatives as soon as available. Cooperatives will continue to have free access to the hardcopy version of the *RC3 Self-Assessment* through cooperative.com.

(Please see the [RC3 Online Cybersecurity Self-Assessment License Program Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.)

## SELECTION PROCESS

Applications to participate in the RC3 Self-Assessment License Program will be accepted in three (3) rounds. This announcement is for the Second Round of applications. The RC3 Program will award up to 60 Licenses in this Second Round of applications. All remaining licenses up to the 100 total available will be awarded during the Final Round selection process.

**Applications for the *Second Round* participants will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis for the first 60 group applications that are considered “Complete.”** Applicants will have an additional month after the May 15, 2020 deadline to submit their leadership letters of support, but all other application information from each of the Group members must be submitted for the Group License application to be considered “Complete.” No cooperatives can be added to a Group License after the application is considered “Complete.”

Announcements about the opening of the *Final Round* will be made in NRECA’s *Business and Technology Update* newsletter and the NRECA IT and Engineering and Operations community forums. Information will also be available on the [RC3 website on cooperative.com](#).

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information on the unique benefits of using the online version of the *RC3 Cybersecurity Self-Assessment*, the RC3 Self-Assessment License Program application and selection processes, the handling of cooperative data related to the application, and other topics, please see the accompanying [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) document](#).

## Using the RC3 Cybersecurity Self-Assessment In-Person or Virtually

The R3 Cybersecurity Self-Assessment is a tool to use with staff from across the co-op organization. However, the Self-Assessment can be conducted ***in-person or in a virtual environment*** through a coordinated web conference. ***It does not require participants to assemble at the same location.***

## APPLYING

Interested cooperatives may apply using the link below.

*Note: This application is estimated to take about 30 minutes to complete. Some of the questions may require a combination of management, legal counsel, and technical staff input to complete. We recommend that you have all the answers for the application prepared before you begin the application form. You will not be able to save an incomplete application for completion at a later time. To help you prepare your responses before you begin the application process, a complete list of the application questions is provided in the [RC3 Online Cybersecurity Self-Assessment License Program Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) document](#).*

### [APPLICATION for RC3 Online Cybersecurity Self-Assessment License Program](#)

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [RC3 Online Cybersecurity Self-Assessment License Program– Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#)
- [RC3 Cybersecurity Self-Assessment Toolkit Website Page](#) – for details on the *RC3 Self-Assessment Toolkit* and access to the free downloadable hardcopy version
- [RC3 Website Page](#) – for information on a variety of cybersecurity products and services for cooperatives

## CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

- RC3 Team: [CyberSecurityRC3@nreca.coop](mailto:CyberSecurityRC3@nreca.coop)
- Cynthia Hsu, Ph.D., NRECA Cybersecurity Program Manager: [cynthia.hsu@nreca.coop](mailto:cynthia.hsu@nreca.coop)
- Grayson Estes, Cybersecurity Subject Matter Expert: [grayson.estes-contractor@nreca.coop](mailto:grayson.estes-contractor@nreca.coop)

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