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Reflective Journal Entry #1

As a college student majoring in Cybersecurity, starting my first internship as a Tier 1 Help Desk Technician with the DHA has been both exciting and challenging. These first two weeks have been filled with learning opportunities, exposure to real world IT environments, and the chance to build foundational professional skills that I know will be invaluable as I move forward in my career.

At the beginning of my internship, I was introduced to the help desk ticketing system (Service Now) used by the agency. I had never worked in a live ticketing environment before, so it was fascinating to see how requests come in from government employees and how they are prioritized, assigned, and resolved. My supervisor gave me a thorough walkthrough of the workflow, including documentation protocols and escalation procedures. I quickly learned the importance of maintain clear, detailed notes and following up with users in a timely and professional manner.

Security awareness was a big theme during my onboarding. I had to complete several online training modules focused on cybersecurity best practices, including

recognizing phishing emails, handling sensitive information, and adhering to the agency's strict compliance standards. I now have a better appreciation for how crucial it is to follow protocol in a government IT environment, where a small mistake can lead to significant consequences.

Interacting with users has been another valuable learning experience. Not everyone who submits a ticket is tech-savvy, so I had to learn to explain technical steps in a way that makes sense to people with varying levels of computer literacy. One of the key takeaways from this experience so far is the importance of patience and active listening. Sometimes the problem reported isn't the actual issue, and by asking the right questions, I'm able to get to the root cause.

Team dynamics have also stood out to me. The full-time IT staff have been incredibly supportive and welcoming. I didn't expect to feel so much like part of the team this early on, but they've made an effort to involve me in meeting and troubleshooting sessions. This has made me feel more confident and motivated to learn as much as I can during my time here.

Overall, my first two weeks have been a strong introduction to the responsibilities of help desk technician in a professional and high security environment. While I still have a lot to learn, I already feel like I've grown both technically and professionally. I'm looking forward to building on this foundation and continuing to improve my troubleshooting, communication, and organizational skills in the weeks to come.