

Nikhil Bonthapally

IT OPERATIONS & INFRASTRUCTURE LEADERSHIP | SECURITY & COMPLIANCE | MICROSOFT 365 ENTERPRISE

Ashburn, Virginia · (571) 344-5462 · nikhil@vniks.com

Board Member, Cyber Grants Alliance

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

IT manager with 18 years of experience running and securing enterprise technology across federal contractor, managed services, and multi-site commercial environments. Currently holds full-lifecycle ownership of IT for a federal contractor, including a ~\$400K annual budget, delivering 80 services across 13 service areas and 27 platforms, from end-user support and Microsoft 365 through security operations, compliance, and internal DevOps.

Combines hands-on technical depth with disciplined operations management: Microsoft 365, Entra ID, and Intune; Windows Server, Hyper-V, and VMware; Cisco Meraki, Cisco ASA, and Fortinet networking; SIEM, EDR, and STIG hardening; ISO/IEC 27001 and CMMC compliance; vendor, budget, and asset management; and business continuity. Has delivered more than \$200K in documented savings across two employers. Currently completing IIT Madras's Professional Certificate Programme in Agentic AI and Applications (IITM Pravartak), expected January 2027.

CORE EXPERTISE

IT Operations & Service Delivery: Service catalog management · End-user support · Device lifecycle management · Asset management · IT process documentation · Knowledge-base development

Infrastructure & Cloud: Microsoft 365, Entra ID, Intune · Windows Server, Active Directory and Entra ID migration · Hyper-V and VMware · SAN and backup (Veeam) · LAN/WAN (EIGRP, OSPF, BGP, VLANs)

Security & Compliance: ISO/IEC 27001:2022 · CMMC 2.0 Levels 1 and 2 · CMMC gap assessments · NIST SP 800-171 · SIEM and EDR · Application allowlisting · STIG hardening · Conditional access and MFA · Incident response

AI & Automation: Local LLMs on NVIDIA DGX Spark (Ollama) · Retrieval design over Microsoft 365 · Python for AI · LLMs, embeddings, and vector search (FAISS, ChromaDB)

Management: Budget ownership and cost reduction · Vendor management · Business continuity and disaster recovery · Team leadership and mentoring

SIGNATURE IMPACT

- **Cost Reduction:** Cut more than \$200K in costs: over \$100K a year in phone costs through a 30-site VoIP rollout, \$50K+ by consolidating VMware onto Hyper-V, \$30K by moving file server data to SharePoint, and about \$20K a year by restructuring Microsoft 365 licensing.
- **Full-Function IT Ownership:** Delivers 80 IT services across 13 service areas and 27 platforms, on a ~\$400K budget, for a federal contractor of approximately 100 employees.
- **Certification Outcomes:** Led the transition to ISO/IEC 27001:2022 and kept the organization certified through every audit of his tenure, most recently with zero nonconformities; took the organization to CMMC Level 1 and was part of the team that earned C3PAO-certified CMMC Level 2 with zero findings.
- **Enterprise Scale:** Nine years supporting and securing a 500+ employee, 30+ location enterprise, including migrating 350 mailboxes to Office 365 and standardizing 15 locations on Cisco ASA firewalls.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

IT Manager (previously IT Lead), Unissant Inc. | Northern Virginia 05/2022 to present

Mandate. Owns information technology and information security for a federal contractor of approximately 100 employees, with a ~\$400K annual technology budget (including the CMMC enclave) and one direct report. Received a company Spot Award for Operational Excellence (Q3 2022). Served under the CISO throughout the 2025 to 2026 CMMC Level 2 program and has held sole ownership of the function since mid-2026.

- **Service Delivery:** Delivers 80 services across 13 areas, including end-user support, Microsoft 365, network and infrastructure, security operations, compliance, internal DevOps, and audio-visual.
- **Microsoft 365 & Identity:** Supports 100 users; administers 218 mailboxes and 31 license types, cloud-only Entra ID, Intune, conditional access, and MFA.
- **Endpoint Modernization:** Moved every company laptop, 80+ in service and 20 spares, to Microsoft Entra ID join, scripted the move of 106 contractors, and retired on-premises Active Directory, leaving identity cloud-only. Rolled out company-wide MFA (2023) and replaced Symantec with EDR plus USB blocking (2022), now running Cynet XDR with a 24x7 SOC.
- **Infrastructure Modernization:** Personally built the move from 3 unsupported VMware ESXi hosts to 2 Hyper-V hosts running 8 VMs with zero unplanned downtime, retiring the standalone SAN for local storage with S3 backup and eliminating VMware licensing, saving at least \$50K; led the emergency replacement of the 3 HQ core switches with UniFi (May 2026, \$3,180 in hardware); replaced the Avaya PBX with Microsoft Teams Phone company-wide; moved asset management to self-hosted Snipe-IT (about \$77 a year against commercial quotes of \$24K and up), now tracking about 500 assets.
- **Device Lifecycle:** Governs devices from procurement through disposal, hardening every new and reissued endpoint to STIG baselines.
- **Financial & Vendor Management:** Owns the ~\$400K budget and IT vendor relationships, with a cost baseline built from the general ledger; saved \$30K in support and license costs by moving file server data to SharePoint, and cut annual Microsoft spend from \$73.6K to \$53.2K by restructuring 110 seats onto Microsoft 365 Business Premium.
- **ISO/IEC 27001:** Led the transition from ISO/IEC 27001:2013 to 2022, remapping all 93 Annex A controls to delivered services; the organization has passed every audit during his tenure, most recently with zero nonconformities. Cut penetration test exposure from 5 critical and 1 high findings (November 2024) to zero critical or high (October 2025, 67 hosts re-tested), after also leading remediation of the 2023 test findings.
- **CMMC:** Took the organization to CMMC Level 1. For CMMC Level 2, worked with the third party that built the 10-user CUI enclave, delivered the remaining implementation, and completed the documentation with the compliance director; certified by a C3PAO in April 2026 with zero findings (110 of 110 requirements).
- **Security Operations:** Migrated the firewalls from Fortinet to Cisco Meraki for FIPS-validated encryption; runs self-hosted SIEM, EDR, application allowlisting across 668 applications, protective DNS, and incident response.
- **AI Enablement:** Runs local LLMs on an NVIDIA DGX Spark through Ollama; building a CISO Assistant and a talent acquisition resume parser; leads the infrastructure for George Mason University's ChallengeX (September to November 2026), serving 60+ remote students.
- **Business Continuity:** Owns continuity and disaster recovery, including restore testing and immutable backup for collaboration platforms.
- **Operational Documentation:** Authored 14 published IT processes and 11 employee knowledge-base articles; built and operates two management dashboards.

Senior Network Engineer, ABC Imaging | Alexandria, VA 09/2016 to 05/2022

Mandate. Senior infrastructure engineer for a 500+ employee enterprise operating across 30+ locations, accountable for network operations, systems administration, and company-wide technology programs.

- **Unified Communications:** Led the 3CX VoIP rollout (2019 to 2022) across 30 sites, cutting phone costs by more than \$100K a year, and trained staff on the new platform.
- **Cloud Migration:** Led the 2019 Office 365 migration of 350 mailboxes across 30+ US locations and offices in London and Dubai; administered Office 365 and Google Apps for Business.
- **Perimeter Modernization:** Led the Cisco ASA firewall rollout (2021 to 2022), standardizing 15 locations, and supported Fortinet and SonicWall platforms.
- **Escalation Leadership:** Served as the senior escalation point (Tier 3/4) for infrastructure, network, and user issues across all locations, and mentored junior engineers.
- **Systems & Resilience:** Administered Windows Server 2016/2019, Active Directory, DNS, DHCP, FTP, and Linux; owned backup, restoration, and recovery for all VMware servers.
- **Network Operations:** Operated the multi-site LAN/WAN, including EIGRP, OSPF, and BGP routing and VLAN segmentation on Cisco switching.

Network Engineer / Backup Administrator, NetLogicDC (MSP) *03/2014 to 09/2016*

- **Client Delivery:** Delivered end-to-end IT for 20+ client organizations, from help desk and on-site support to standardized server builds, NAS, monitoring, and ticketing.
- **Managed Backup & Disaster Recovery:** Designed and operated Veeam backup and disaster recovery for all managed clients, with GFS retention and archival to Amazon S3.
- **Client Infrastructure:** Built VMware HA/DRS and Microsoft failover clusters, led a client SAN migration, and migrated clients to Office 365 and Google Apps.

System Administrator, ABC Imaging *07/2011 to 03/2014*

- **Team & Vendor Leadership:** Senior administrator guiding a team of three system administrators; managed all infrastructure, network, and telecom vendors.
- **Windows Infrastructure:** Designed and operated Windows Server infrastructure (2003 through 2012 R2) across 30 locations, including Active Directory, Group Policy, DNS/DHCP, file and print, DirectAccess, Terminal Services, and IIS.
- **Data Center Build:** Led the design and build of the colocation data center: 5 ESXi hosts running 30+ VMs, with vCenter, SAN, Veeam, and NAS backup.
- **Messaging Migration:** Migrated users from Exchange 2010 to Exchange 2013.
- **Crisis Recovery:** Following Hurricane Sandy's destruction of a New York client's offices, relocated server infrastructure, restored Active Directory and SAN, and deployed 50+ workstations in temporary space within weeks.

Earlier Roles

Backup Engineer, Idealstor (2010) · Tier 2 Technician, CPN Networks (2010 to 2011) · Jr. Systems Administrator, GSA Telework Center at George Mason University (2008 to 2010)

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Professional Certificate Programme in Agentic AI and Applications, IITM Pravartak (Technology Innovation Hub of IIT Madras) · In progress, expected January 2027. Curriculum spans LLMs, embeddings and vector search, retrieval-augmented generation, multi-agent systems, agent evaluation, and responsible AI, with three IBM certificates on completion.
- M.S., Electrical Engineering, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia
- B.E., Electronics and Communications Engineering, Osmania University, Hyderabad, India

BOARD SERVICE

- **Board Member, Cyber Grants Alliance (01/2026 to present):** Has performed 25 CMMC gap assessments for small and mid-sized businesses and advises members on their security programs.