



Call for Action

May 2007

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Strengthening National Cybersecurity – State Homeland Security Program Funding

The Issue

The information technology and communication (ICT) systems that enable the business of state government are under attack each day by external threats. This threat vector continues to grow in numbers, as well as severity. The protection of these critical assets and resources is particularly important because state government depends on this cyber infrastructure to operate. As part of the nation's critical infrastructure, the state government IT sector demands the same attention, prioritization and resources necessary to prevent the disruption of services and continuity of government. The cyber threat is not always given this priority and is a weak link in our infrastructure preparedness. Cyber attacks have disrupted state government operations and could certainly impact mission-critical homeland security systems. During a homeland security incident, first responders rely on state ICT capabilities to execute their mission. These critical technology resources must be secure, protected and continually upgraded to thwart unseen enemies.

The Problem

The State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) is a core assistance program managed by DHS to provide “funds to build capabilities at the State and local levels through planning, equipment, training, and exercise activities. SHSP also supports the implementation of State homeland security strategies and key elements of the national preparedness architecture, including the National Preparedness Goal, the National Incident Management Systems and the National Response Plan.”¹ Among other critical infrastructure, SHSP funds help states to develop or enhance cybersecurity plans, develop or enhance cyber risk mitigation plans, and conduct cyber risk and vulnerability assessments. SHSP funding can also be used to enhance the capability of state government to address potentially malicious and virulent cyber attacks.

A total of \$525 million was made available for the SHSP in FY2007 to assist US states, territories, and local governments develop critical homeland security support programs and terrorism prevention activities, enhance homeland security plans and protocols, and conduct preparedness assessments to achieve better protection of American citizens and assets, among other critical preparedness activities. The FY2008 Presidential Budget Request for the program is currently \$250 million, **less than half of the amount appropriated in the FY2007 enacted bill**. Such a dramatic decrease in funding will limit the ability of state and local officials to protect their communities against threats, as the SHSP is essential to achieve better protection of American citizens and assets at all levels of government and in every state, including in the realm of cybersecurity.

¹ U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office of Grants and Training

How Congress and the Administration Can Help

NASCIO recommends that State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) funding be restored to the enacted FY2007 level of \$525,000,000 (\$509,250,000 for SHSP funds and \$15,750,000 for administrative fees).

Requested Statutory Language²

To amend the FY2007 Homeland Security Appropriations enacted legislation- Office of Grants & Training: State & Local Programs

“\$525,000,000 for formula-based grants pursuant to section 1014 of the USA PATRIOT ACT (42 U.S.C. 3714)”

Suggested Report Language

“The Committee provides not less than \$525,000,000 for formula-based grants pursuant to section 1014 of the USA PATRIOT ACT (42 U.S.C. 3714). This funding level restores program funding to the enacted FY2007 level. The Committee supports state efforts to prepare for, prevent, deter and respond to threats and believes investments in critical infrastructure and key resource protection at the state level will make the nation’s homeland more secure.”

² As the FY2008 Appropriations process moves forward, there will likely be some confusion as it relates to this account, as the Administration has proposed multiple changes which we understand the Congress does not intend to support. NASCIO’s requested statutory language seeks to amend the FY2007 Homeland Security Appropriations enacted legislation, to avoid such confusion.