

Advocate for Widespread Adoption of DotGov Domain

- *The DotGov domain provides enhanced security and increases the public trust in government*
- *NASCIO supports S. 2749, the DOTGOV Act of 2019, which takes serious steps to expand the adoption of the DotGov domain in order to improve the cybersecurity of local government websites*

The United States government began operating the DotGov domain in 1985 and extended availability to state, local, and tribal governments beginning in 2003. Prior to 2003, the federal government had exclusive use of the DotGov domain. At that time, the domain's goal was to provide naming conventions to facilitate access to the electronic resources of federal government agencies.

As early as 2001, NASCIO has been a vocal advocate of the expansion of the DotGov domain to state and local governments, primarily due to its security functions. However, nearly twenty years after making DotGov available to state and local governments, the vast majority of local governments are still not making use of this advantage. As of today, there are only approximately 8.5 percent of all eligible local governments on the DotGov domain.

Registration of DotGov sites require thorough vetting and background checks, which prevents spoofing and misinformation. With the vast majority of local government websites on domains other than DotGov, there is no official governing body validating whether their websites are legitimate entities or fraudulent actors.

NASCIO encourages all local governments to transition to the DotGov domain, which is why we endorsed S. 2749, the DOTGOV Act of 2019, introduced by U.S. Senators Gary Peters (D-MI), Ron Johnson (R-WI), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and James Lankford (R-OK). S. 2749 would move the DotGov program currently managed by the General Services Administration (GSA) to the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). The legislation would also require the Department of Homeland Security to develop an outreach strategy to inform and support the migration to the DotGov domain of local governments, as well as provide technical information on how to migrate online services to DotGov. Additionally, the bill authorizes the use of Homeland Security Grant funds as an allowable expense for the adoption of the DotGov domain and further stipulates that the CISA Director may waive any fees associated with DotGov registration.

