

April 15, 2020

Dear Congressional leaders,

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, state government services have been put under intense pressure to ensure the continuity of government while providing timely and critical services to citizens. While we greatly appreciate the actions taken by Congress thus far to support state governments, we want to highlight the additional costs beyond the direct benefits that must be considered as you debate additional legislation.

As you know, states administer a myriad of federal programs and benefits. During this pandemic, state technology systems, which are overburdened and under-resourced, have been inundated with significant demands to continue to provide crucial benefits such as small business loans, unemployment insurance and other vital services that have become increasingly critical during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To continue to support the delivery of these services during the pandemic, additional information technology (IT) resources are needed. These resources are critical and necessary to ensure that all American citizens who need benefits can successfully interact with state governments in a timely and secure manner. As depicted in the attached document, state IT agencies, led by state chief information officers (CIOs), have rapidly invested in significant IT infrastructure to support the drastic increase in technological demands. While IT agencies have done a valiant job to ensure availability and to increase the capacity of state networks, we request federal funding for our state IT agencies to continue to appropriately respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As Congress considers additional legislation related to COVID-19 response, we encourage you to:

- Authorize and appropriate a dedicated cybersecurity grant program for state governments.
- Allow for the flexible utilization of this grant fund to help states address both cybersecurity and IT needs associated with increased use of state networks in response to COVID-19.

To help quantify the nature of our request, we have provided the attached document, collected from state CIOs across the country, to demonstrate the significant increase in IT demands during this pandemic. This document is categorized by how state IT agencies have supported access for a suddenly remote workforce, including increasing the scale of unemployment insurance portals to meet demand and significantly expanding contact/support center(s). The document also highlights numerous security processes and protocols implemented by state IT agencies to ensure the secure remote access to systems while simultaneously continuing to defend against a constant barrage of cybersecurity attacks to state networks. Additionally, state CIOs have highlighted the acquisition and deployment of remote workstations and the purchase of additional technologies required to support these demands. State CIOs have also been required to configure changes in applications to ensure compliance with provisions relating to benefits in the CARES Act.





On behalf of the nation's state chief information officers, we greatly appreciate your consideration of these requests and appreciate your bipartisan efforts during this unprecedented moment in American history. Should you have any questions, please contact Matt Pincus, NASCIO Director of Government Affairs, at mpincus@nascio.org or 302-547-1814.

Sincerely,

Denis Goulet
NASCIO President and New Hampshire CIO

Doug Robinson
NASCIO Executive Director

