

Provide Funding for State Governments to Modernize Legacy IT Systems

Issue and Background

- States are the primary agents for the federal government to deliver vital services to citizens across the country. The ability to safely and securely deliver these services has taken on unprecedented importance during the ongoing pandemic.
- As the highest-ranking technology officials in their state, CIOs are tasked with implementing information technology (IT) policies and business practices to ensure the timely and secure delivery of essential services to citizens.
- These federal services and programs include Medicaid, food and nutrition assistance, unemployment insurance and critical justice information.
- Most of these programs operate on outdated and legacy technology systems that are susceptible to failure and cyber-attacks, including sophisticated ransomware attacks.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has unfortunately revealed – with real-world consequences – how many states and localities have struggled to deliver essential services, from unemployment benefits to public health tracking data, due to outdated IT infrastructure.
- IT modernization requires a significant level of flexible, agile funding to effectively plan for and finance multi-year modernization efforts. In the 116th Congress, NASCIO advocated for the inclusion of IT modernization funding for state and local governments in COVID-19 stimulus legislation.
- In the 116th Congress, NASCIO endorsed the *State and Local IT Modernization and Cybersecurity Act*, introduced by Reps. James Langevin (D-RI) and Mike Gallagher (R-WI), which would establish a Public Health Emergency Information Technology Grant Program and a Modernizing Information Technology Program for state and local governments.
- The legislation would allow for the migration of legacy systems to new, secure platforms in line with and state IT modernization strategies reviewed by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA).

Recommendation

- **NASCIO urges Congress to fund a grant program to allow state and local governments to migrate legacy IT infrastructure to modern, secure platforms.**
- **The *State and Local IT Modernization and Cybersecurity Act* should serve as a commonsense and bipartisan example** of a grant program that would immensely improve the IT infrastructure for state and local governments. IT modernization is vital not only because it saves money and enhances cybersecurity, but it is the primary means for states to deliver vital services securely and capably to the American people.

