

A DIVISION OF FUSION LEARNING PARTNERS

2024: CYBERSECURITY AND CITY/COUNTY GOVERNMENT SURVEY RESULTS



FOREWORD

Dear Local Government IT Executive:

With this survey report, the Public Technology Institute (PTI) explores the cybersecurity posture of city and county governments.

As you review the survey findings, consider the issues your organization is dealing with, and take an honest assessment of the strategies you have in place. Do you have the latest tools, updated policies, information- and resource-sharing partnerships in place with your vendor partners, local partners, and state partners? Are you prepared for “when”, not “if” an incident takes place?

Protecting your IT infrastructure is increasingly difficult and complex, with new threats, more threat actors and competition for resources to thwart those threats. The good news is that you are an important part of a community of local government IT professionals who are committed to protecting the data of the public we serve.

Surveys such as this one are important resources for you as a government technology leader; they provide an opportunity to compare your organization’s needs or status within the local government IT community while providing a sense of the overall state of a topic or issue nationally. PTI would like to thank those local government IT executives who participated in this survey, and for their ongoing commitment to public service.

Adam Frumkin, CGCIO
CIO, Franklin County, Ohio
Chair, PTI Leadership Council

Alan Shark
Executive Director
Public Technology Institute

BACKGROUND

PTI conducted this survey of city and county government IT executives to provide a snapshot of the cybersecurity landscape in cities and counties. This is part of PTI's ongoing efforts to highlight the pressing issues impacting local government IT, to analyze and share the results with the local government IT community, and to develop programs that might provide guidance and address possible needs identified through this research.

Two hundred city and county government IT executives - PTI member officials and local government graduates and current students of the PTI / Rutgers University Certified Government CIO (CGCIO) certification program, were contacted to take part in the survey. Fifty-four local leaders participated. Survey participants represent a cross-section of large to small jurisdictions, cities, and counties. The survey was conducted in July-August 2024. PTI values the privacy of survey participants. Results are completely confidential, and the data is only reported in the aggregate.

This is the 12th year that PTI has conducted a survey of local IT leaders regarding cybersecurity. For a couple of questions, we provide a comparison with the results of our 2023 survey.

KEY FINDINGS

- **29%** of IT executives feel elected officials are *very engaged* in cybersecurity efforts.
- The top three barriers that IT executives believe their organization faces when it comes to addressing cybersecurity challenges:
 - #1 increasing sophistication of threats
 - #2 inadequate cybersecurity staffing
 - #3 legacy infrastructure and solutions to support emerging threats

SURVEY RESULTS

We began the survey with the question:

How engaged and familiar are your elected officials with regard to your organization-wide cybersecurity efforts?

Effective engagement is important: The more familiar that elected leaders and senior managers are with cyber operations, governance, priorities, threats, and their organization's cyber strategy the more support is received in budgetary as well as broader policy decisions.

	2023	2024
Very Engaged	23%	30%
Somewhat Engaged	67%	54%
Not Engaged	10%	16%

Over the course of the last year, there was some positive movement towards greater engagement:

- 30% of IT executives responded that their elected officials are very engaged, compared to 23% in 2023
- 54% reported their elected officials are somewhat engaged, compared to 67% in 2023
- 16% reported that their elected officials are not engaged at all, an increase compared to 10% in 2023

Is your cybersecurity budget adequate to support cybersecurity initiatives?

	2023	2024
Yes	64%	72%
No	36%	28%

With regard to cybersecurity budgets, there is a strong positive trend from 2023 to 2024:

- 72% responded that their budgets are adequate, compared to only 64% in 2023
- 28% responded that their budget is not adequate, down from 36% in 2023

Does your organization have a dedicated individual whose job responsibilities are both strategic and operational (managing the day-to-day of your organization's cybersecurity efforts (Example: a CISO, ISO, or equivalent)?

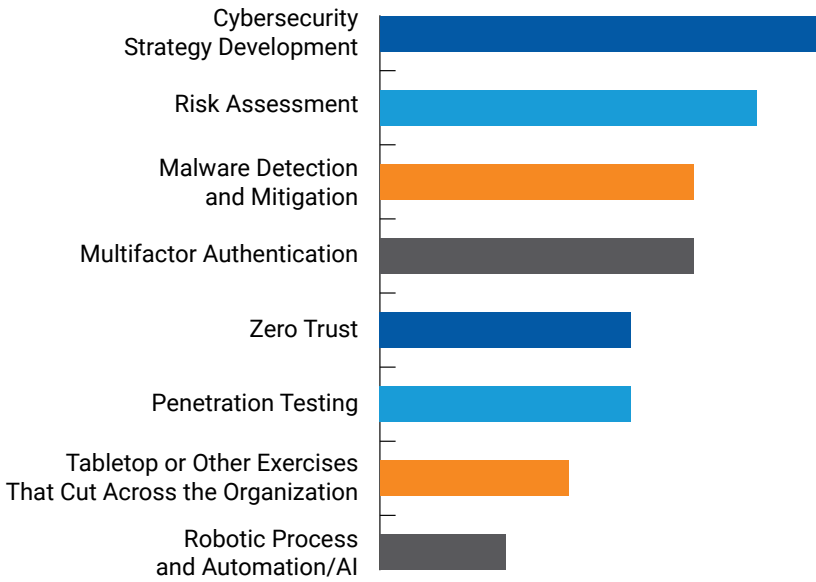
Having a CISO is growing in importance to better balance and manage cyber risk factors that affect every organization. This role places an importance on innovation and protection of critical data and systems.

	2023	2024
Yes	52%	67%
No	48%	33%

Another positive trend is an increase in a dedicated cybersecurity leadership position within their local government:

- In 2024, 67% report having a dedicated individual whose job responsibilities are both strategic and operational for managing the day-to-day of the organization's cybersecurity efforts (i.e. Chief Information Security Officer or equivalent).
- In 2023, 52% reported having someone with a similar job description.

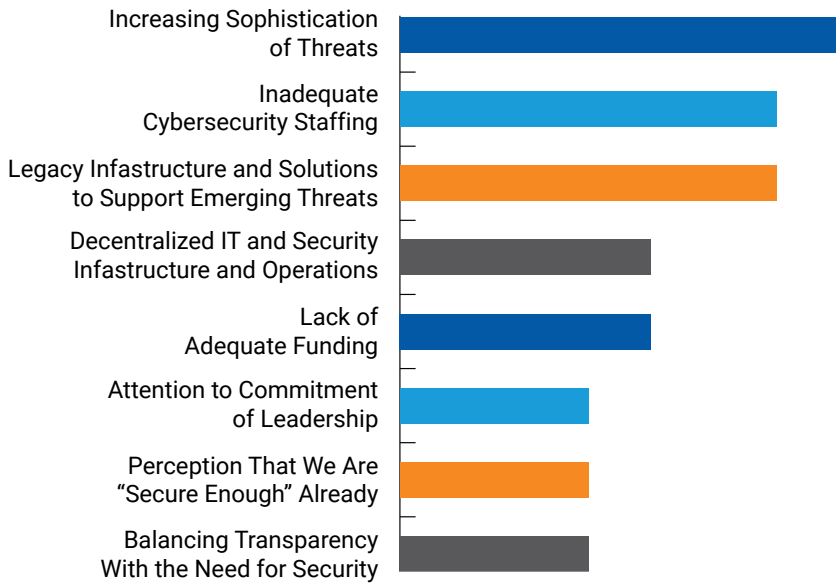
Of the following activities, please rank the priority initiatives for the next twelve months.



Regarding priority initiatives for the next twelve months, IT executives were provided a list of activities to rank. The same top three initiatives were cited in both 2023 and 2024:

- #1 cybersecurity strategy development
- #2 risk assessment
- #3 malware detection and mitigation

Of the following, please rank the barriers that you believe your organization faces to address cybersecurity challenges.



In 2024, the top three barriers that IT executives believe their organization faces when it comes to addressing cybersecurity challenges include:

- #1 increasing sophistication of threats
- #2 inadequate cybersecurity staffing
- #3 legacy infrastructure and solutions to support emerging threats

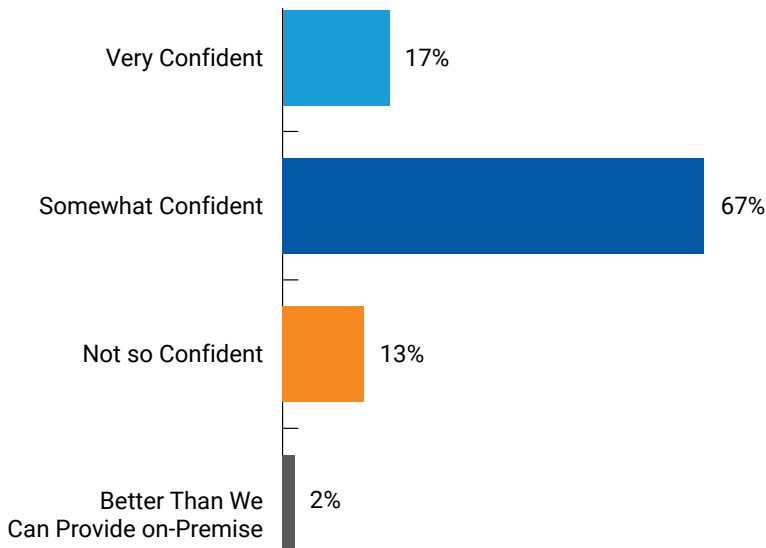
Specific to cybersecurity: How would you rate the relationship between your IT organization and your state’s IT organization in terms of information-sharing, resource-sharing, education and training provided by the state to local governments?

	2023	2024
Good	16%	32%
Fair	60%	36%
Poor	24%	32%

For this question we provide a comparison with the 2023 survey results:

- 32% described the relationship as good (16% in 2023)
- 36% percent of local government IT executives stated the relationship is fair compared to 60% in 2023
- 32% rate the local – state relationship as poor (24% in 2023)

For the cloud services you utilize, how confident are you regarding the security measures of those services or providers?



When it comes to the confidence level IT executives have to the security measures of cloud services / providers:

- 17% are very confident
- 67% are somewhat confident
- 13% not so confident
- 2% better than we can provide on-premise

RESOURCE

[Public Technology Institute 2023 LOCAL GOVERNMENT CYBERSECURITY NATIONAL SURVEY](https://fusionlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/PTI-Cybersecurity-Survey-Results-1123.pdf)

<https://fusionlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/PTI-Cybersecurity-Survey-Results-1123.pdf>

[Sharkbytes and Conversations with Technology Leaders: Cybersecurity Awareness Month – What We Learned from the CrowdStrike Disruption](https://blubrri.com/1469918/136908342/season-4-episode-31-cybersecurity-awareness-month-what-we-learned-from-the-crowdstrike-disruption/)

<https://blubrri.com/1469918/136908342/season-4-episode-31-cybersecurity-awareness-month-what-we-learned-from-the-crowdstrike-disruption/>

[PTI Cyber Awareness Simulation for Public Managers](https://fusionlp.org/public-technology-institute/consulting/)

<https://fusionlp.org/public-technology-institute/consulting/>

To help local government officials outside of the IT organization develop a better understanding of what it is like to experience a cyberattack, PTI provides a virtual cyber tabletop exercise where the PTI team of experts – staff and volunteer cyber executives from other local governments – take participants through a simulated cyberattack and make recommendations as to how to improve the jurisdiction's incident response.

The PTI Cyber Incident Team works with the jurisdiction to identify a scenario applicable to that local government, reviews applicable policies, plans and procedures, and interviews key players, then conducts the exercise.

The objectives are:

- a. To raise cybersecurity as a priority with jurisdiction officials and to expose these officials to realistic and time-sensitive experiences and decision making.
- b. To provide a realistic experience for those involved to improve planning and response for a real incident.
- c. To build a strong and unified understanding among key players so that, if and when a real attack occurs, everyone has an understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities.

For more information contact Dale Bowen, Managing Director, PTI, dbowen@fusionlp.org

ABOUT PTI

Public Technology Institute - a division of nonprofit Fusion Learning Partners - supports local government officials through research, education, professional development, executive-level consulting services, and national recognition programs.

Since our inception, PTI has focused on raising the profile of today's IT professional, ensuring that IT has a seat at the table when it comes to decisions, and helping to build/strengthen the professional/leadership/management skills of IT professionals. With a focus on navigating the emerging trends that will impact government IT and service delivery, PTI has created a collaborative leadership development environment that rewards sharing solutions and identifying leading practices together. In IT roles that often leave leaders feeling like they're on an island, PTI also provides opportunities to make valuable professional connections.

The Value of PTI Membership:

- Professional Development
- Learning and Networking Events
- Research
- Information-sharing
- Member Recognition

PTI has expanded its membership offerings to provide members with access to significant public sector research and certification resources.

By joining PTI, everyone in your organization can take advantage of PTI membership benefits that are designed to strengthen you and your staff in their individual roles and as a team.

To find out more about PTI, visit: