

# Moving from Collaboration to Partnership:

## LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT IT

Perhaps not since the late 1990s and early 2000s, with the advent of e-government and then public safety information sharing after the September 11, 2001 terrorists attacks, have city and county IT executives seen more opportunities for collaboration between local and state government IT.

For the past several years, preparation for and response to cyber-attacks have spurred cooperation between state and local government: threat-sharing intelligence, the creation of state government teams, to include the National Guard, being mobilized to help local governments respond to incidents and to strengthen their cyber capabilities to name just a few.

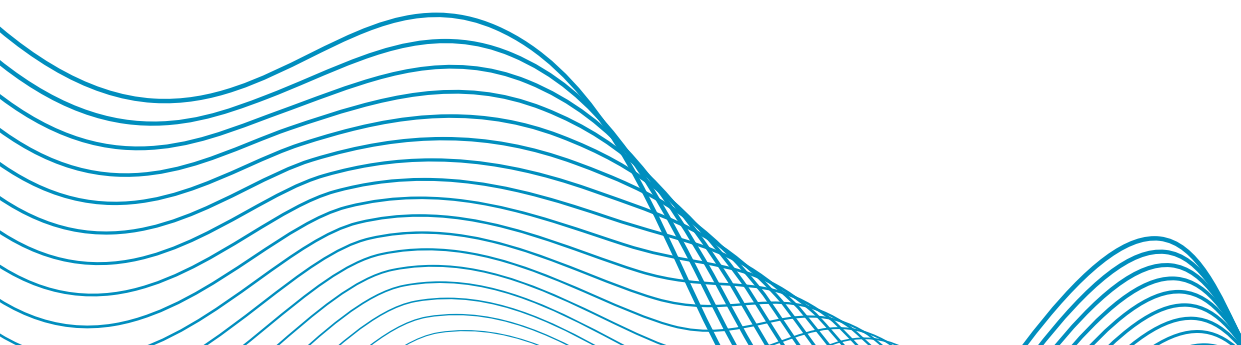
Within the past two years, with the passage of the federal CARES Act, ARPA, and most recently, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, federal funding has become available for city and county tech-related initiatives. Some of the funding passes through states to local governments or states have created their own programs that encourage local government initiatives. A prime example of this is broadband: A number of states have set up grant programs to spur broadband deployment at the local level.

Local and state government collaboration has transitioned from a model of mostly passive information sharing to more proactive resource sharing and partnerships.

Despite this increased cooperation, there is still much more work that needs to be done to foster a trusted relationship between local and state government IT. According to the CompTIA Public Technology Institute (PTI) 2021 National Survey of Local Government Cybersecurity Programs and Cloud Initiatives, when asked to rate the relationship between the local government IT organization and their state's IT organization in terms of information-sharing, resource-sharing, education and training provided by the state to local government—specific to Cybersecurity—31% of local IT executives rated the relationship as excellent. Forty-four percent of IT executives rated the state-local cyber relationship as just fair, and 25% rated the relationship as poor.

Developing and maintaining successful partnerships does not happen overnight. It will take time to develop a level of cooperation that will, ultimately, better serve the public.

To help local governments build strong and effective relationships with state government IT, city and county IT executives with CompTIA PTI have identified the following keys to success to consider:



## Local Government Approaches

- Reach out: Collaboration is a two-way street. All too often local government IT executives complain that they have no interaction with the state CIO or state IT. Be proactive and introduce your organization to state IT. Don't depend on the state to reach out to you.
- Don't go it alone. Collaboration is a team concept. Have others from your department or agency involved, reaching out to the state when appropriate. The intent here is to build relationships that will remain in place long after the state or local CIO departs.
- Many IT executives participate in state-based professional groups, for example through their state municipal league or other not-for-profit organization. Work with these groups to involve state IT leaders in conference programming to stay informed on state initiatives and to build personal relationships.
- Share best practices and experiences with programs and solutions.
- Define and then manage expectations: Set goals for the partnership initiative and leverage the strengths or resources of each organization.
- Vendor partners can be of great assistance with developing contacts as many vendors have relationships at the local and state level. In fact, some IT executives may learn about state initiatives from vendor partners.

## State Government Approaches

- Consider creating the position of local government IT liaison to help coordinate programming with local governments. This position should report directly to the state CIO.
- Hold an event (virtual, in-person or hybrid) where state IT provides an overview of programming, new initiatives, and policy changes that will impact local government. Do not assume that local officials are in the know when it comes to state IT priorities.

## The Role of Elected Leaders in Local and State IT Resource Sharing

- Elected leaders—both local and state—have an important role to play as well. State legislatures are exploring enacting reporting requirements for local governments that experience a cyber-attack (currently there is no requirement to do any notification in most states). Local leaders need to be heard when it comes to state policy development and funding priorities that impact local government.
- Local elected leaders need to keep their counterparts at the state level informed about local IT needs—both for service delivery and community engagement. The public often does not differentiate between local and state—they think government and government's response to their issues or needs.

The most important factor that makes for a successful partnership is mutual respect and the alignment of core values. For local and state IT, these shared values are improved internal service delivery, secure operations, and the deployment of enhanced and evolving tools to engage the public. For all involved it is important to build on your successes and to share with the public how localities and the state are working together to solve common problems.

## Additional Resource

CompTIA PTI works closely with the National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) to share leading practices in local and state collaboration. Understanding the relationship between the local and state IT executive is cited in annual surveys, conferences and white papers. Please visit the NASCIO website, [www.nascio.org](http://www.nascio.org), for additional resources.

NASCIO and the National Governors Association (NGA) partnered to publish Stronger Together: State and Local Cybersecurity Collaboration. This publication outlines promising programs that states have initiated to enhance collaboration with their local government counterparts for cyber resilience: <https://www.nascio.org/resource-center/resources/stronger-together-state-and-local-cybersecurity-collaboration>.

## About CompTIA PTI

PTI merged into CompTIA in January 2019 yet remains a distinct and semi-autonomous membership and service delivery organization. Established in 1971 by the several major national associations representing state and local governments, PTI has been viewed as the focal point for thought leaders who have a passion for the furtherance and wise deployment of technology. PTI's initial funding was through a grant from the National Science Foundation. Today, PTI actively supports local government officials through research, education, professional development, executive-level consulting services, and national recognition programs. Visit [www.pti.org](http://www.pti.org).