



Cybersecurity

Policy Position Statement:

The Florida League of Cities SUPPORTS legislation dedicating state resources for the development and enhancement of municipal cybersecurity by providing funding for technical assistance, threat assessments, employee training, infrastructure improvements and data protection, including the protection of exempt and confidential information such as law enforcement personnel information and security plans for government buildings and other key critical infrastructure.

Background:

- Local governments are routinely entrusted with gigabytes of personally identifiable, confidential and proprietary information about the businesses and citizens who live and operate within their jurisdictions. Several high-profile cyber-incidents in the public sector have highlighted the emerging challenges that cities face in protecting these data.
- When a system is compromised, the “hidden” impact on local government operations (longer response times for police and fire personnel, delays in service delivery to utility customers, or holdups in the permitting process for businesses), may be more significant than any ransom payment. The loss of personally identifiable, confidential, and proprietary information about businesses and citizens has its costs and contributes to the public losing trust in its government.
- Local governments need help from the state in three primary areas: technical assistance, training and infrastructure improvements. Outside experts should be retained to conduct threat assessments to identify operational and system vulnerabilities so they can be addressed before they are exploited. Local governments should increase training for employees, emphasize the importance of being a cyber-aware organization, and develop response plans in the event of a security breach. Finally, many cities and counties must devote resources to improving critical cyber-infrastructure to ensure that hardware and software are impenetrable.
- During the 2021 Legislative Session, the Legislature allocated funding and resources for the Florida Digital Service to ensure the state is working on its critical infrastructure and cyber hygiene. In the future, the League encourages the Legislature to work with local governments and other partners to ensure the protection of data and other critical infrastructure.

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