Research
Cybersecurity of County Governments
CIO Forum February 2023
NACo & Accenture
Unique Cyber Challenges for CIOs

“I think technology leadership at the local level is under a lot of pressure these days... And I think local governments are increasingly dependent on that technology leadership to keep them safe, to deliver services, to raise the efficiency and effectiveness of entire organizations.”

-Interviewed County CIO
We surveyed 134 IT county officials from around the country and conducted two focus groups.
Key Findings Along Four Dimensions

• Cyber Strategy
• Cyber Protection
• Cyber Resilience
• Cyber Ecosystem
Half of respondents use the NIST 800-53 Framework to measure their cybersecurity effectiveness; half have their cyber risk-based framework at least partially integrated in county wide plans.
41% of respondents feel they have experienced an increased workload for their staff due to shortage in cybersecurity talent.
Respondents say non-competitive wages (72%) and budgetary constraints (64%) are the top challenges to recruiting cybersecurity professionals.
Cyber Protection

Almost two-thirds agree or strongly agree cybersecurity is a top priority for county officials and counties are investing in multiple ways to increase their cyber protection.
Cyber Resilience

86% of counties have an external cyber insurance policy, but only 31% are happy with their policy.

In the last year, has your cyber insurance changed?

- **Cost**
  - Increase: 70%
  - Decrease: 2%
  - Stay the same: 28%

- **Required more lengthy questionnaires**
  - Yes: 69%
  - No: 11%
  - Unsure: 20%

- **Reduced coverages**
  - Yes: 33%
  - No: 27%
  - Unsure: 40%
Cyber Ecosystem

Other county departments and ISACs are engaged with more frequently than state or federal agencies.

To what extent is your organization currently engaged in information sharing and collaboration with other agencies?

- Other county departments:
  - Never: 1%
  - 5 or less times per year: 21%
  - 6 or more times per year: 66%

- ISACs (Information Sharing and Analysis Centers):
  - Never: 7%
  - 5 or less times per year: 29%
  - 6 or more times per year: 48%

- State agencies or legislature:
  - Never: 7%
  - 5 or less times per year: 41%
  - 6 or more times per year: 39%

- Federal agencies or U.S. Congress:
  - Never: 18%
  - 5 or less times per year: 41%
  - 6 or more times per year: 23%
3 Actions for County CIOs

1. Conduct an industry assessment to establish a current state.
2. Develop a cybersecurity strategy that includes a focus on workforce.
3. Take advantage of security and automation provided by cloud and software-as-a-service (Saas) ecosystem partnerships.
Full Report Launch
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