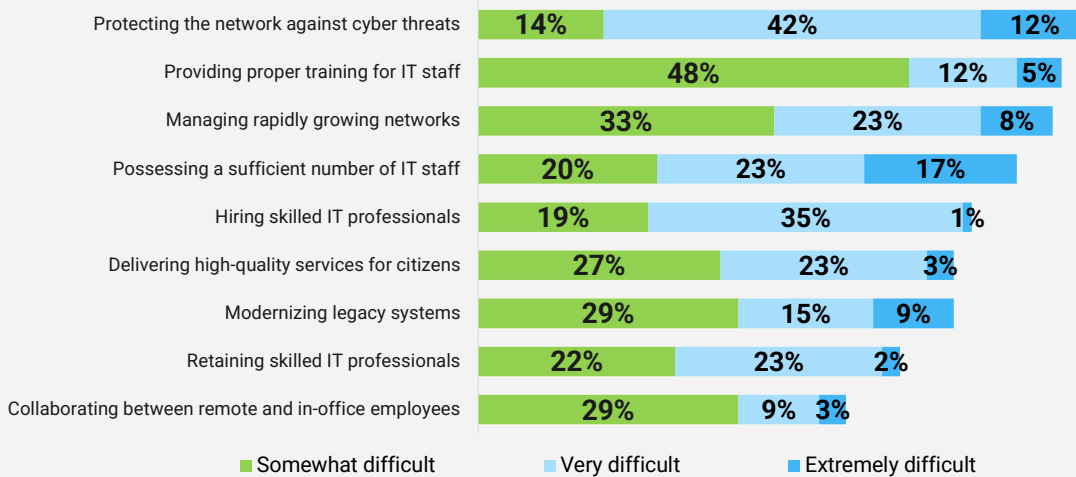# Introduction

With growing populations and the complexities that come with them, state and local governments need technologies and strategies that will evolve with the needs of their communities — including robust cybersecurity measures, comprehensive disaster recovery plans, and smart city solutions. In May and June 2023, Government Business Council (GBC) polled a random sample of 100 state, county, and city government IT decision makers and influencers to address pertinent questions related to these topics.
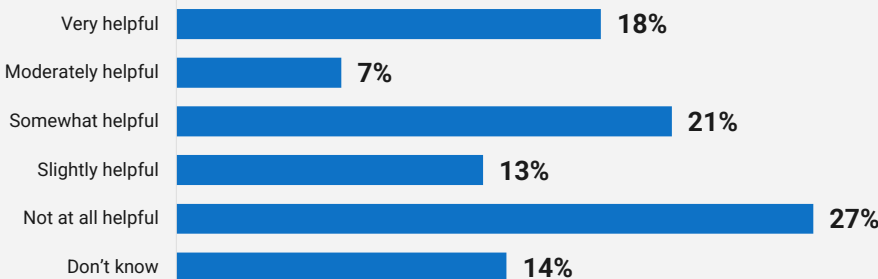
What Are the Biggest Difficulties for IT Decision Makers?

	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult	Extremely difficult
Protecting the network against cyber threats	14%	42%	12%
Providing proper training for IT staff	48%	12%	5%
Managing rapidly growing networks	33%	23%	8%
Possessing a sufficient number of IT staff	20%	23%	17%
Hiring skilled IT professionals	19%	35%	1%
Delivering high-quality services for citizens	27%	23%	3%
Modernizing legacy systems	29%	15%	9%
Retaining skilled IT professionals	22%	23%	2%
Collaborating between remote and in-office employees	29%	9%	3%

According to CISOs, state governments continue to face challenges related to **malware, ransomware, and phishing attempts.** They have also expressed significant concern over foreign state-sponsored espionage.[1]

1 https://www.nascio.org/press-releases/cybersecurity-survey-of-state-cisos-identifies-many-positive-trends/
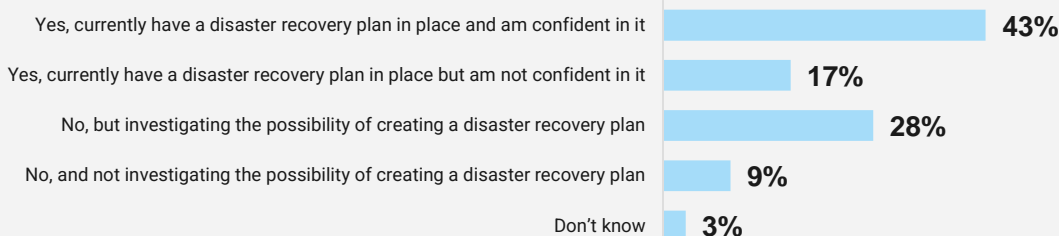
Were COVID-Era Stimulus Packages for IT Upgrades Helpful?

Very helpful	18%
Moderately helpful	7%
Somewhat helpful	21%
Slightly helpful	13%
Not at all helpful	27%
Don't know	14%

Through the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) program, **$350 billion dollars** were allocated to state, local, territorial, and tribal governments. This program is a result of the American Rescue Plan designed to contain COVID-19 and improve the economy.[2]

2 https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments/state-and-local-fiscal-recovery-funds
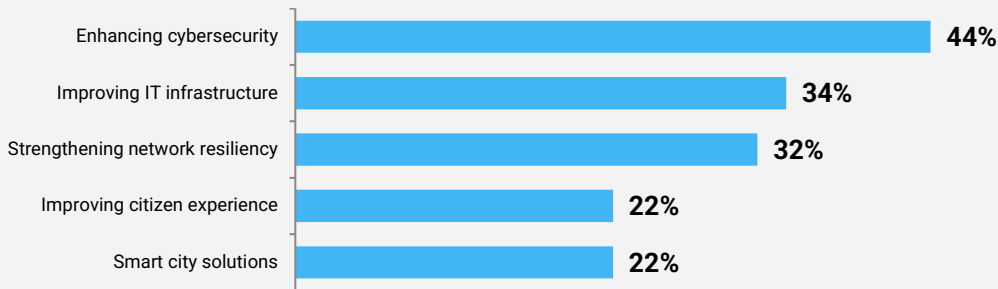
Do Organizations Have a Disaster Recovery Plan?

Yes, currently have a disaster recovery plan in place and am confident in it	43%
Yes, currently have a disaster recovery plan in place but am not confident in it	17%
No, but investigating the possibility of creating a disaster recovery plan	28%
No, and not investigating the possibility of creating a disaster recovery plan	9%
Don't know	3%

In 2022, there were **18** weather and climate disasters in the U.S. with each costing at least **1 billion dollars in damages.**[3]

3 https://www.climate.gov/news-features/blogs/2022-us-billion-dollar-weather-and-climate-disasters-historical-context#:~:text=In%202022%2C%20the%20U.S.%20experienced,the%2020%20events%20in%202021.
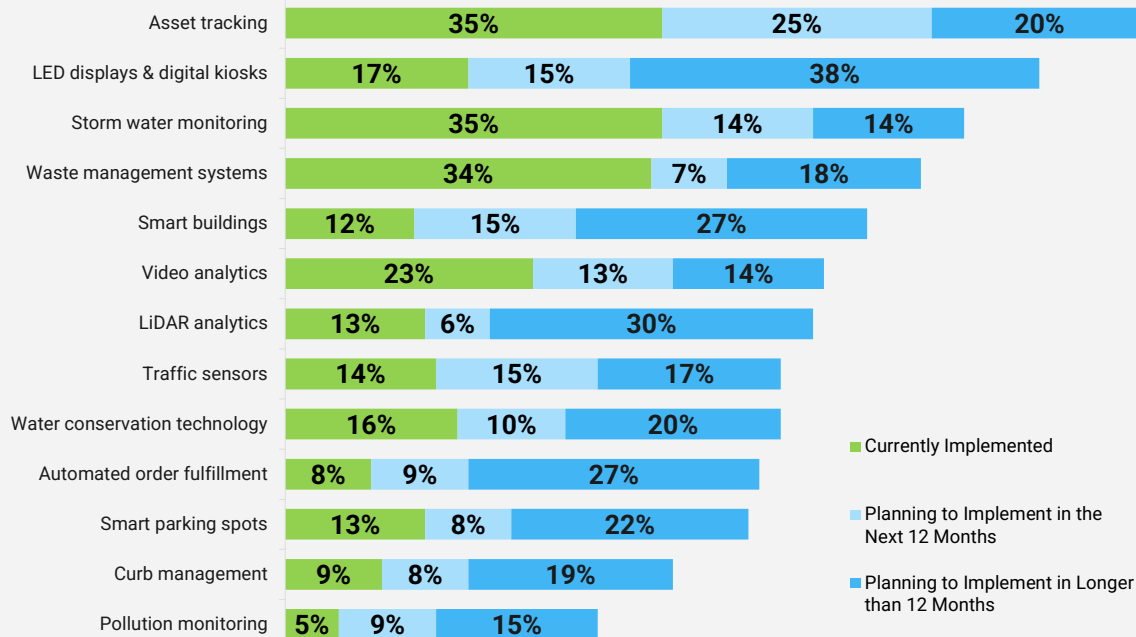
What Are the Top 5 Investment Priorities?

Priority	%
Enhancing cybersecurity	44%
Improving IT infrastructure	34%
Strengthening network resiliency	32%
Improving citizen experience	22%
Smart city solutions	22%

CISOs report that several states are electing to allocate over **10%** of their IT budgets to cybersecurity. Additionally, **30 states** increased their cybersecurity budgets in 2022.[4]

4 https://www.nascio.org/press-releases/cybersecurity-survey-of-state-cisos-identifies-many-positive-trends/

What is the Status of Smart City Solutions Implementation & Planning?

Solution	Currently Implemented	Planning to Implement in the Next 12 Months	Planning to Implement in Longer than 12 Months
Asset tracking	35%	25%	20%
LED displays & digital kiosks	17%	15%	38%
Storm water monitoring	35%	14%	14%
Waste management systems	34%	7%	18%
Smart buildings	12%	15%	27%
Video analytics	23%	13%	14%
LiDAR analytics	13%	6%	30%
Traffic sensors	14%	15%	17%
Water conservation technology	16%	10%	20%
Automated order fulfillment	8%	9%	27%
Smart parking spots	13%	8%	22%
Curb management	9%	8%	19%
Pollution monitoring	5%	9%	15%

According to the U.S. Census, the national urban population increased by **6.4%** from 2010 to 2020. Urban areas now make up **80%** of the U.S. population.[5]

5 https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2022/urban-rural-populations.html

Comcast Business' Perspective

From the development of digital portals that provide residents intuitive ways to engage with their local government to ensuring disaster resilient communities with redundant data centers—state and local governments rely on their technology investments as the foundation of service delivery and regional stability. The need for innovation is critical for government agencies who need to consistently improve operational efficiency, stay ahead of resident demands, and implement advanced technologies to stay ahead of malicious actors. At Comcast Business, we're proud to support government leaders at every step of their digital transformation journey with flexible and scalable connectivity solutions. From ethernet infrastructure to secure networking—we're here to help.

Methodology

GBC deployed a 5-question poll to a random sample of 100 government employees. The poll was fielded in May and June 2023.