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**Lessons Learned
 Information Sharing**

INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

Statewide Security Monitoring Initiative

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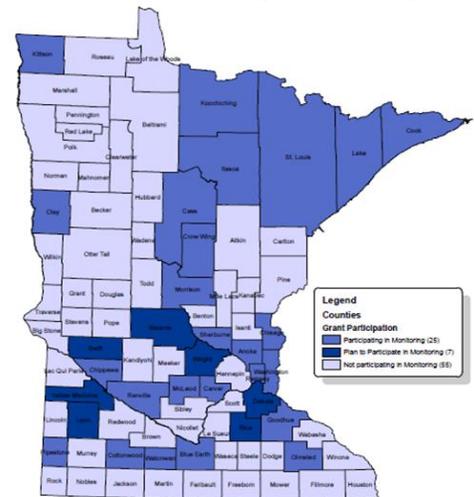
SUMMARY

Recognizing the vulnerability of government information technology (IT) networks to threats from malicious actors, MN.IT—the state’s IT agency—created the Statewide Security Monitoring Initiative (SSMI) to increase IT network security for counties and cities across Minnesota. MN.IT has used Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) funding to support multiple elements of the initiative, including hardware and software investments and network monitoring for 25 counties.

DESCRIPTION

Since 2010, MN.IT has used \$4.4 million in HSGP funds to develop the SSMI. The funding was critical for supporting the program’s start-up costs, including a two-year technical service agreement between MN.IT and local jurisdictions, as well as hardware and software purchases. The grant funding helped lower the barrier-to-entry for cities and counties, making the support offered by MN.IT—which operates on a fee-for-service model—more attainable. As of October 2015, MN.IT has installed monitoring software and firewall technologies for the City of St. Paul and 25 counties, accounting for approximately 35 percent of the state’s population. MN.IT also expanded coverage for state agencies from 4 to 9. The software and firewall technologies enable participating jurisdictions to monitor baseline network activity and pinpoint unusual traffic or network intrusions. Additionally, MN.IT provides technical support, central threat monitoring, and network analysis.

MN Counties Covered by Security Monitoring



As of October 2015, 25 counties participate in SSMI, with an additional 7 counties expected to participate in 2016 (MN.IT)

At the city and county level, HSGP provided the necessary start-up funding for investments in cyber security. For example, Cook County—a small northern county with limited IT resources—used \$25,000 in HSGP funds to revamp its IT infrastructure and replace outdated, ad hoc systems. The county purchased new network monitoring software and a two-year support service agreement with MN.IT. The funding also allowed Cook County to free-up local resources to address other priorities such as e-government services. Additionally, the City of St. Paul used \$235,000 in HSGP funds to increase its baseline IT network monitoring capabilities by replacing outdated legacy IT systems. The county purchased network monitoring for software and hardware in addition to technical support from MN.IT.

REFERENCES

MN.IT, “Who we are,” Last accessed March 23, 2016, <https://mn.gov/mnit/about-mnit/who-we-are/index.jsp>

MN.IT, Email correspondence with the FEMA National Preparedness Assessment Division, February, 2016.

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