

New Bedford Schools to be recipient's of the Massachusetts's first-ever Cybersecurity Awareness Grant Program Awards

42,000 employees from 94 municipalities and public school districts will receive cybersecurity awareness training to better detect and avoid cyber threats.

Today, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito and Secretary of Technology Services and Security Curt Wood joined legislative, municipal and public school officials to announce \$250,000 in grants awarded to 94 municipalities and public school districts across the Commonwealth to provide critical cybersecurity awareness training for over 42,000 employees to better detect and avoid cyber threats. Lt. Governor Polito addressed the group of award recipients at Worcester City Hall to mark the end of October as Cybersecurity Awareness Month.

The number of employees for the school system in New Bedford that will receive training are 341 for Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical School 3,300 for New Bedford Public Schools.

Employees in communities participating in the program will receive interactive online training in topics ranging from email security to USB device safety. Employees will also receive simulated phishing emails. Phishing is a growing threat in local government in which an attacker seeks to influence the employee to take an action that may be harmful to the organization, by masquerading as a trusted entity.

"Raising awareness of the challenges posed by cyber threats is

an important strategy for the Commonwealth's communities to best train and equip its employees with the tools needed to defend against cyber threats," said Governor Charlie Baker. "We are pleased to collaborate with our partners in local government to understand how we can better protect our communities."

"Cybersecurity is a critical issue for Massachusetts communities and schools who face cybersecurity threats but sometimes lack the resources to prepare for and combat them," said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito. "These first-ever cybersecurity grant funds are a crucial tool to complement the over \$9 million in funding for municipal IT infrastructure projects through the Community Compact program in providing Massachusetts communities and schools the resources and tools they need to combat cyber threats."

The grant funding was included, in part in the Fiscal Year 2019 operating budget passed by the Legislature and matched by the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security to ensure as many communities and schools could participate in the cybersecurity training as possible.

In June 2017, Governor Baker filed legislation through the Article 87 government restructuring process under the Massachusetts Constitution to establish the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security as the cabinet-level lead information technology organization in the Executive Branch.

The Executive Office of Technology Services and Security began deployment of annualized cybersecurity awareness training for Executive Branch employees to better detect and mitigate cyber threats at the state level in 2018. The training will be enhanced year-over-year to account for evolving trends in cyber threats.

In April 2019, Governor Baker filed a \$1.1 billion bond bill that includes \$600 million in information technology (IT)

infrastructure funding. \$140 million of the funds are dedicated to further enhance the cybersecurity of the Commonwealth's digital assets including the standing up of a new Security Operations Center.

"Cyberattacks are an emerging and increasing threat to communities across the Commonwealth and the nation," said Secretary of Technology Services and Security Curt Wood. "By strengthening our communities' cybersecurity posture, we are preparing municipal and school employees to better detect and defend against cyber threats."

"Failure to proactively defend against cybersecurity threats in today's digital world puts both the city and its residents at risk," said Worcester City Manager Ed Augustus. "This is why training city staff to follow best practices and to be vigilant in the prevention of online attacks is so critical. We are grateful that the State is taking this issue seriously and we will continue to work together to keep our community safe."

"In the wake of growing concerns relative to data privacy, security and increased threats, we are taking action to improve the Commonwealth's preparedness within the cyberspace," said Senator Michael O. Moore (D-Millbury), who served as Chair of the Senate Special Committee on Cyber Security Readiness. "These efforts complement a national conversation and need for resources to support cybersecurity readiness. I commend the Administration for taking an active role in working to better prepare our schools and municipalities for these very real threats."