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Ninety-Four Percent of State and Local IT Managers Say Cloud Will Impact Their Government's Ability to Address Citizen Service Improvements

But fewer than one in four say their infrastructure, policy, or culture are well prepared for cloud

Alexandria, Va., October 14, 2019 – MeriTalk State & Local, a public-private partnership focused on improving the outcomes of government IT, today announced the results of its new report, "Ready, Set, Innovate: Cross-Country Cloud Preparedness." The study, underwritten by Amazon Web Services, compiled qualitative data from in-depth interviews with State CIOs, as well as quantitative data from an online survey of 150 state and local government (SLG) IT managers. The combined report explores cloud adoption strategies, examines cloud preparedness, and offers recommendations to put modernization and transformation in the lead.

It's time to hit the track – nearly all state and local IT pros say cloud will impact their government's ability to address citizen service improvements (94 percent), public safety (89 percent), and elections (83 percent) over the next five years. However, progress varies – 26 percent describe themselves as "Cloud Innovators" – aggressively moving systems to the cloud; 52 percent are "Cloud Conservative," and 17 percent are "Cloud Newbies." The bulk of state and local governments say they are slowly but surely moving systems with fewer security and privacy concerns and less reliability and operational risk. As one CIO put it, "Although we have a number of cloud implementations going on, the live ones are small." So, how do we advance?

Overall, 73 percent say they are evaluating cloud as more of a business solution than an infrastructure solution. Cloud Innovators are significantly more likely (79 percent) to evaluate cloud as part as their overall IT strategy (compared to 54 percent of Cloud Conservatives and 33 percent of Cloud Newbies). This group is also more likely to follow an official cloud-first policy. One State

CIO noted that "Spending time with agency partners to modify the way we procure and adjusting RDFs accordingly," has helped them make strides and those with an official cloud-first policy are almost twice as likely to consider procurement as a business partner.

While progress may be slow, 78 percent say their role is more strategic than it was three years ago, due to increasing cloud options. Among the top cloud hurdles are security, workforce, and procurement challenges. Despite these hurdles, state and local IT pros agree the journey to the cloud is a marathon (72 percent) and not a sprint (21 percent). Over the next 12 months, SLG IT leaders plan to focus on migration, cost savings, and security.

Cloud adoption is no longer optional, and cloud success will be determined by performance (59 percent), reliability (57 percent), and cost savings (49 percent). State CIOs recommend focusing on goal setting, agility, and training to improve cloud-readiness. As cloud adoption ramps up, agencies are still plagued by security concerns and antiquated procurement policies. Focus on education of both IT and non-IT workforces to mitigate concerns. Additionally, State CIOs recommend developing a detailed cloud strategy and communicate it repeatedly to all teams to maximize understanding and buy-in.

"It's clear that state and local governments understand that cloud is the future," said Kim Majerus, Leader of U.S. State and Local Government Business, AWS. "In order to move forward successfully, state and local governments must clarify cloud goals, develop better procurement policies and legislation, and secure buy-in from the top down with frequent communication and training." To download the full report, please visit: https://www.meritalkslg.com/study/cloud-preparedness/.

About MeriTalk State & Local

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