

Calera and Alabama's SLCGP

A Partnership in Cyber Resilience



Cybersecurity can be difficult for local governments to explain, fund, and sustain. Unlike a road, facility, or other visible public investment, successful cybersecurity improvements are rarely noticed by residents. Yet for Alabama's cities, counties, schools, utilities, and other public-sector entities, strong cybersecurity is essential to keeping public services running.

That message was central to Alabama's inaugural Public Sector Cybersecurity Summit, which took place on Thursday, June 4, 2026, in Montgomery. Hosted by the Alabama Office of Information Technology (OIT) and Government Technology, the event provided an important opportunity to promote Alabama's State and

Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP) and encourage eligible entities to apply for available support.

A featured session highlighted a success story from the City of Calera. Craig Whittinghill of Auburn University's McCrary Institute for Cyber and Critical Infrastructure Security and James Fuller, Chief Information Officer for the City of Calera, discussed how Alabama's SLCGP is helping local governments strengthen cybersecurity in a way that is approachable, collaborative, and responsive to local needs.

Like many growing municipalities, Calera supports a broad range of public services with a lean technology team and an IT environment that must remain available, reliable, and secure. Fuller emphasized that cybersecurity investments may not always be visible to the public, but they are critical to protecting systems that residents, employees, and local leaders depend on every day.

Through Alabama's SLCGP, Calera found a practical way to build on its cybersecurity priorities. The city worked with cybersecurity professionals from the McCrary Institute to evaluate needs, identify opportunities for improvement, and determine which services would provide meaningful value. Rather than navigating the process alone, Calera had access to knowledgeable partners who understand the realities of local government IT.

That partnership-driven approach is a defining feature of Alabama's SLCGP. OIT serves as the State Administrative Agency for the grant program and works with the McCrary Institute to provide

cybersecurity guidance and service delivery. Through this model, eligible entities can assess their cybersecurity posture, identify gaps, and connect with resources designed to improve resilience.

For Calera, the experience was both practical and validating. Fuller described the process as straightforward and responsive, noting that it helped the city prioritize improvements while reinforcing that its team was asking the right questions and moving in the right direction.

The session also addressed a common concern among local governments: whether participating in a state-supported cybersecurity program means giving up control of local systems. Fuller made clear that this was not his experience. Instead, he described Alabama's SLCGP as a collaborative program that respects local decision-making while providing access to expertise, tools, and support that many local governments could not easily obtain on their own.

Fuller emphasized that the goal of Alabama's SLCGP is not to take over local networks. Rather, it is to help eligible entities make informed cybersecurity decisions, improve their posture, and strengthen public services across Alabama.

Alabama's SLCGP offers eligible cybersecurity services and resources such as assessments, security awareness and phishing training, endpoint protection, vulnerability scanning, multi-factor authentication, enhanced logging, boundary protection, network monitoring, password management, business continuity support, cybersecurity planning, incident response exercises, and related services.

The program also supports participating entities through the Alabama Cybersecurity Intelligence Center (ACIC), a centralized cybersecurity hub developed through OIT's partnership with the McCrary Institute. ACIC is designed to enhance threat intelligence, information sharing, monitoring, vulnerability analysis, and incident response coordination for eligible entities that participate in the program.

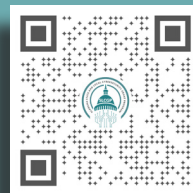
Calera's experience demonstrates why this work matters. Local governments are responsible for essential services, sensitive information, public safety functions, financial systems, and citizen-facing operations. Even modest improvements in visibility, authentication, monitoring, training, and planning can strengthen an entity's ability to prevent, detect, respond to, and recover from cyber threats.



Fuller's advice to other eligible Alabama entities was simple: apply. Entities do not have to solve every cybersecurity challenge before participating. The program is designed to help them understand where they are, determine where they need to go, and identify practical next steps.

Eligible Alabama entities are encouraged to learn more and apply at slcgp.alabama.gov. Services and resources are available while funding remains available and are subject to program approval.

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Just sign up for the program. It really is the easiest grant you'll ever apply for.
~ James Fuller, Chief Information Officer, City of Calera



**SCAN
and
APPLY
TODAY!**