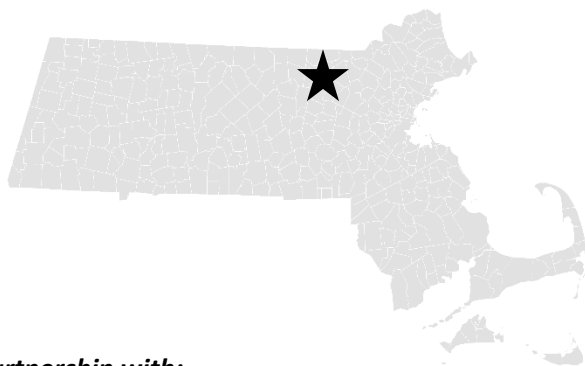*Town of*
Ayer

Report prepared by: Amelia Percentie, Michael Pineau, and Michael Hamel

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Ayer adopted the Cyber Security best practice as part of a Community Compact agreement signed with the Baker-Polito Administration in February of 2016. Leveraging Community Compact funding, the Town retained the services of DriveTech to assist with the development of a cyber security policy. The Town will also implement the top five CIS Critical Security Controls as recommended by the SANS Institute, with further implementation of the top ten expected by April of 2018. The adoption of these policies and the CIS Critical Security Controls will provide additional security for Ayer's critical digital assets and increase overall information technology security for the Town.

In partnership with:

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Town of Ayer is located in Nashoba Valley, in northern Middlesex County. Historically, Ayer has been known as a major commercial railroad junction, and modern commuter rail service continues today to Boston. Ayer is also known for its close proximity to the former Fort Devens (now the Devens Enterprise Zone) which serves as a business and technology center under the authority of MassDevelopment, along with a continue military presence with an Army Reserve installation.

Population is 7,472 residents*
Annual Budget is $12M (2016)
Median Household Income is $74,659*

*US Census Bureau

Photo Credit: Wikimedia Commons – John Phelan on Main Street in Ayer, Massachusetts

THE CHALLENGE

With a small population and limited budget, the Town of Ayer must delicately manage its Information Technology budget while providing the services that their residents and visitors need. In particular, the Town must find ways to maximize the investments made in technology so their impact is not only strong but sustainable over time.

THE SOLUTION

Ayer received a grant from the Community Compact to retain the services of a consultant for assistance in developing a cyber security policy and implementation of the top ten Central for Internet Security (CIS) Controls. Implementation of these controls will greatly increase security of Ayer's most critical information technology assets.

THE RESULTS

The CIS controls are industry-standard cybersecurity best practices. Ayer plans on implementing the top five controls (outlined below) immediately by leveraging available grant funding and consultant assistance. The Town plans on implementing the top ten controls by April of 2018.

1. **Inventory of Authorized and Unauthorized Devices** - Continuously acquire, assess, and take action on new information in order to identify vulnerabilities, and to remediate and minimize the window of opportunity for attackers.
2. **Inventory of Authorized and Unauthorized Software** - Actively manage (inventory, track, and correct) all software on the network so that only authorized software is installed and can execute, and unauthorized and unmanaged software is located and prevented from installation or execution.
3. **Secure Configuration of End-User Devices** - Establish, implement, and actively manage (track, report on, and correct) the security configuration of laptops, servers, and workstations using a rigorous configuration management and change control process in order to prevent attackers from exploiting vulnerable services and settings.
4. **Continuous Vulnerability Assessment & Remediation** - Continuously acquire, assess, and take action on new information in order to identify vulnerabilities, and to remediate and minimize the window of opportunity for attackers.
5. **Controlled Use of Administrative Privileges** - Track, control, prevent, and correct the use, assignment, and configuration of administrative privileges on computers, networks, and applications.

Source: https://www.sans.org/media/critical-security-controls/critical-controls-poster-2016.pdf

"The Town of Ayer is committed to protecting the personal information of all residents of the Commonwealth that interact with the Town on a public or professional basis. Our number one objective in considering technology needs is security. Partnering with the Commonwealth through the Community Compact program has enabled us to implement many programs to mitigate this risk."

Cindy Knox, Information Technology Director, Town of Ayer

Photo Credit: Wikimedia Commons – Marc N. Belanger at the Ayer Historical District in Ayer, Massachusetts