Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

UTILIZING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE WITHIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Wednesday, September 10, 2025
8:30 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

AGENDA

8:30 A.M. **REGISTRATION CHECK-IN & BREAKFAST** *(1st Floor Training Center)*

9:00 A.M. **WELCOME & AI PULSE KICKOFF**
Joe Paul, OptimaNova AI

9:15 A.M. **AI IN CYBER SECURITY**
Palo Alto Networks

Palo Alto Networks will share trusted foundations for AI-enabled government.

10:15 A.M. **BREAK**

10:30 A.M. **AI IN PUBLIC SAFETY**
Peregrine

Peregrine will share how AI can be used in public safety from detection to response.

11:30 A.M. **LUNCH** *(3rd Floor COG Board Room)*

12:00 P.M.

1. **BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING - CALL TO ORDER**
   Rodney Lusk, COG Board Chair

2. **CHAIR'S REPORT**
   Rodney Lusk, COG Board Chair
   - COG Congressional Delegation Reception - October 20th

3. **AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA**

4. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**
   Clark Mercer, COG Executive Director

5. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM JUNE 11TH, 2025**
   Rodney Lusk, COG Board Chair

   Recommended Action: Approve minutes.

Reasonable accommodations are provided upon request, including alternative formats of meeting materials.
Visit www.mwcog.org/accommodations or call (202) 962-3300 or (202) 962-3213 (TDD).

6. **ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**
Rodney Lusk, COG Board Chair

A. Resolution R19-2025 – Resolution authorizing COG to receive a grant to execute the National Capital Prism Invasive Species Management and Outreach Project
B. Resolution R20-2025 – Resolution authorizing updates to the COG Procurement Policy

Recommended Action: Adopt Resolutions R19-2025 and R20-2025.

12:10 P.M. 7. **INTRODUCTION TO AI IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT**
Joe Paul, OptimaNOVA

12:15 P.M. 8. **U.S. CONGRESSMAN DON BEYER – AI IN GOVERNMENT**
Don Beyer, United States Congressman

Congressman Beyer will provide insights on the state of AI nationally and policies at the federal level.

1:00 P.M. 9. **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE COUNTY COMPASS: PRACTICAL TOOLKIT FOR LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION**
Rita Reynolds, National Association of Counties Chief Information Officer
Seamus Dowdall, National Association of Counties Legislative Director for Technology and Telecommunications Policy

Ms. Reynolds and Mr. Dowdall will share best practices from the NACo AI Toolkit.

1:30 P.M. 10. **HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL – AI POLICY DEVELOPMENT**
Chuck Wemple, Houston-Galveston Area Council Executive Director

Mr. Wemple will share the AI Policy developed and implemented by the council of governments representing the Houston, Texas region.

2:10 P.M. 11. **AI IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT - REGIONAL BEST PRACTICES**
Bryan Hill, Fairfax County Executive (moderator)
Stephen Miller, District of Columbia Chief Technology Officer
Vanetta Pledger, City of Alexandria Chief Information Officer; NLC AI Advisory Committee
Gail Roper, Montgomery County Chief Information Officer
Nate Wentland, Loudoun County Chief Information Officer

Mr. Hill will moderate a panel discussion on AI best practices and policies from local governments in the region.

3:15 P.M. 12. **LIVE AI DEMONSTRATION & NEXT STEPS**
Joe Paul, OptimaNova AI
Erin McKinney, Amazon Web Services

Mr. Paul and Ms. McKinney will bring together all the AI best practices and lessons learned and facilitate an interactive AI demonstration for COG board members.

4:00 P.M. **13. ADJOURN**

AGENDA ITEM #2

CHAIR'S REPORT

Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION RECEPTION

COG cordially invites you to meet with the NCR Congressional Delegation to build relationships and discuss opportunities for regional collaboration on common priorities.

Monday, October 20, 2025
Networking Reception: 5:00 - 6:30 P.M.

Rayburn House Office Building Foyer
45 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20515

Invitation RSVP here: http://bit.ly/4p7omrs

AGENDA ITEM #3

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

AGENDA ITEM #4

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

MEMORANDUM

TO: COG Board of Directors
FROM: Clark Mercer, COG Executive Director
SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report – September 2025
DATE: September 3, 2025

POLICY BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) – In June, the TPB received updates on regional resilience efforts, including a new flood risk analysis, the 2025 Enhanced Mobility Program application, and a DMV*Moves* update. In July, the TPB set the fall schedule for the Visualize 2050 review, presented air quality and performance results, received a Virginia DOT Southside Express Lanes update, and approved funding for 12 projects under the Maryland Carbon Reduction and Transportation Alternatives Programs.

Chesapeake Bay Policy Committee (CBPC)– At its July meeting, CBPC heard from WSSC Water about a WRF funded project to reduce PFAS – also known as forever chemicals – in biosolids. The group also received an update from the Chesapeake Bay Program Office and heard about a recent report from the MD Pesticide Education Network on the impact of pesticides to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Officials gather for COG Leadership Retreat

In July, COG hosted its annual Leadership Retreat, bringing together DC, Maryland, and Virginia officials to tackle shared challenges. Discussions centered on emergency management, transportation, workforce development, and developing COG's mission statement and strategic plan.

Climate Energy & Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) - At CEEPC's July meeting, members heard presentations on and discussed barometric changes impacting recent extreme weather events, the TPB's new flood risk analysis, and draft local and regional greenhouse gas inventories.

Food and Agriculture Regional Member (FARM) Policy Committee – In mid-July, FARM held a policy forum to discuss opportunities for regional collaboration amidst rising food prices, cuts to food distribution programs, including those connecting the region's farmers to schools and food banks, and upcoming federal cuts to SNAP and Medicaid. As one outcome, FARM Chair Friedson is working with staff to develop a challenge to encourage members to shift a portion of existing food procurement dollars to purchases from local and regional farmers to increase food system resilience.

Human Services Policy Committee (HSPC) – The HSPC met in July to discuss housing solutions for older adults. Members learned about a new and impactful Frederick County service coordination model, heard from the director of Culpepper Garden, one of the region's oldest and largest affordable senior housing communities, and gained insights from Fairfax City on its locally funded Village in the City model as a replicable and cost-effective approach to supporting aging populations.

Collaboration in Action: Responding to Emergencies, Regionally

On the latest episode of Collaboration in Action, Clark Mercer highlights how regional public safety officials work together to prepare for and respond to emergencies in the DMV. The episode looks at the January 29 mid-air collision near Reagan National Airport and shows how the region's mutual aid agreement enabled a swift, coordinated response.

Watch the episode

OUTREACH & PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

COG 101 Presentations – Clark Mercer made presentations to Arlington and Charles County officials to detail COG's work in the county and regionally, as well as the Return on Investment for member governments. Mercer also made a presentation to the Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce.

Atlanta ARC Leaders DMV Visit - COG staff supported the Atlanta Regional Commission's 2025 LINK trip to the DMV, which hosted more than 130 government, business, and civic leaders from metro Atlanta. Staff organized parts of the agenda, and Clark Mercer, Hilary Chapman, and Sam Kenney joined panels highlighting regional insights on housing, infrastructure, and innovation.

COG Economic Dashboard - COG began sending a revamped version of its newsletter on economic trends promoting its Regional Economic Monitoring System (REMS) reports and new interactive dashboard, which tracks three decades of regional data on jobs, unemployment, inflation, and housing. Early insights showed the Washington MSA lost 17,000+ federal jobs between June 2024 and June 2025, making federal employment the fastest-shrinking subsector in the region. The reports also generated strong media interest.

Go Recycle Campaign – COG wrapped up its annual Go Recycle paid media campaign in June, running from June 9 to June 27 with $65,000 in paid media funded by sponsor local governments and businesses**.** The campaign theme was "WASTED – 1/3 of all food we buy, we throw away. Plan your shopping to save money and reduce waste**.**"

Curbside Management - COG transportation staff hosted a TPB Regional Curbside Management Forum on August 2 on managing curb space for vehicles, transit, cycling, freight, and ride-hailing.

Commuter Connections – COG Commuter Connections staff, along with partners at the Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation, participated in tabling events at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center on July 23 and 30 to educate federal employees about alternatives to driving alone in light of the Return to In-Person Work Executive Order.

Public Safety Trainings - Between June and July, COG staff conducted several key regional initiatives, including from June 2–6, the Crisis Negotiation Subcommittee held an Advanced School to further negotiator training in the NCR; and on June 3–4, DHSPS hosted the Mission Based Resilience Self-Leadership Training Course, equipping stakeholders with enhanced physical, mental, and spiritual skills to manage stress.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Flood Risk Analysis - The TPB flood risk analysis was covered by several news outlets, including WTOP, The Washington Post, FOX 5, WUSA9, MyMCMedia, Bethesda Today, and the I Hate Politics Podcast.

The Washington Post

New Crime Dashboard – COG's new regional crime dashboard has received coverage in various local, regional, and national outlets, including NBC4, Fox 5, 7 News, WUSA9, FFXnow, Government Executive's Route-Fifty site, WTOP, MyMCMedia, and CTV Prince George's News.

Route-Fifty

Homeless Encampment Response – COG data and experts have been quoted in recent stories on homelessness, including Washingtonian, Baltimore Sun, Street Sense, and Fox 5.

Washingtonian

Montgomery County Fireworks Safety Demonstration and Press Conference

On July 1, COG convened regional fire chiefs at the Montgomery County Public Safety Training Academy to do a safety demonstration on the dangers of fireworks. The press conference and demo were covered by The Washington Post, DC News Now, NBC4, Fox 5, 7 News, WUSA9, WTOP, WAMU, MyMCMedia, and Bethesda Today.

Washington Post

Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

MEMORANDUM

TO: COG Board of Directors
FROM: Scott Boggs, COG Director of Homeland Security and Public Safety
SUBJECT: National Capital Region Mutual Aid Agreement
DATE: September 3, 2025

The National Capital Region (NCR) Mutual Aid Agreement (MAA) is the regional agreement enabling resourcing sharing across jurisdictional boundaries in preparation for, mitigation, management, response to, or recovery from any emergency. Mutual aid is the provision of law enforcement, fire, rescue, emergency health and medical services, transportation, communications, public works and engineering, mass care, and resource support.

The MAA authorizes resource sharing across local and state boundaries, but it is not a mandate to share resources. In addition to jurisdictional signatories, all three branches of the federal government, state entities, and regional partners, such as Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) and Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority (WMATA), are signatories.

While the MAA is the overarching agreement among jurisdictions that enables resource sharing, it's COG's Mutual Aid Operations Plans (MAOPs) that put the MAA into action. These plans detail how a discipline will request and share resources in support of an event. The MAOPs are developed by the disciplines, or subject matter experts, and revised as needed, existing MAOPs include Police, Fire and Rescue, Emergency Management, Transportation, Corrections, and Debris Removal.

Following President Trump's August 11, 2025 Executive Order "Declaring a Crime Emergency in the District of Columbia, COG's outside counsel analyzed the following:

1) How does the Executive Order impact the mutual aid agreements?
   The Executive Order operates under DC's Home Rule Act and does not directly impact existing mutual aid agreements. DC's Home Rule Act is limited to the DC Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) providing services to the President or his designee as the President sees fit. The President (or anyone in the Executive Branch) may request the jurisdictions that have entered into a mutual aid agreement to provide aid. A jurisdiction's provision of mutual aid is voluntary pursuant to the Police Mutual Aid Operations Plan.

2) Will the Executive Order's duration be pursuant to DC's Home Rule Act?
   The Executive Order will be in effect for 30 days from the date the MPD started providing services to the President. Congress may extend the expiration date through approval of a concurrent resolution by the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

MEMORANDUM

TO: COG Board of Directors

FROM: Hilary Chapman, COG Housing Program Manager
Sam Kenney, COG Regional Homeless Systems Coordinator

SUBJECT: Status Report on Regional Homelessness Response

DATE: September 3, 2025

BACKGROUND

Since August 11, 2025, following an Executive Order declaring a crime emergency in the District of Columbia, federal agencies led by the National Park Service and U.S. Park Police have accelerated removals of homeless encampments on federal lands in Washington, DC.

Metropolitan Washington regional homelessness coordination uses a standing governance structure that connects strategy to implementation. The Homeless Services Committee (HSC) meets monthly, supported by two working groups: the Regional Case Coordination Learning Collaborative Working Group and the Regional Data Metrics Working Group, and local jurisdictions convene Built for Zero improvement teams to maintain by-name lists of all persons experiencing homelessness and drive case coordination. Together, these forums align policy direction with day-to-day operations and enable timely, consistent responses across jurisdictions. Through this structure, the Homeless Services Committee has convened to share information and coordinate responses to the increased federal actions.

RECENT HOMELESS SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The HSC met on August 19 and September 3 to share updates and assess the impacts of recent federal actions in the District of Columbia.

District of Columbia agencies and partners, including the Department of Human Services, The Community Partnership, and the Interagency Council on Homelessness, reported the following near-term measures:

- Expanded outreach and messaging to encourage unsheltered individuals to access shelter.
- Increased shelter capacity to address immediate needs.
- Expanded transportation and site infrastructure to support placements.

District teams noted that these measures can be scaled as demand for beds and services changes and have been monitoring the need closely.

In addition, on August 28 the District conducted a one-night, citywide unsheltered census that counted tents and people without interviews to identify relocation patterns and target outreach and shelter placements.

These actions have enabled the District to meet immediate demand while preserving flexibility to adjust as conditions evolve.

Other jurisdictions reported close monitoring of spillover effects and, as of September 3, 2025, did not observe significant increases in people relocating to their communities that were attributable to the federal actions.

Overall, the District is managing the situation within existing and emergency response capacity, and the region remains prepared to coordinate adjustments if needed.

REGIONAL MONITORING AND COORDINATION

Regional partners continue to track local data, work with providers and outreach teams, and coordinate through the Committee and its working groups to maintain a common operating picture. This monitoring posture will continue through the fall with regular touchpoints to align operational decisions, data practices, and communications.

NEXT STEPS

Near-term work will focus on coordination and clear communication across jurisdictions:

- The Regional Case Coordination Learning Collaborative will continue to adapt to encampment-related needs and strengthen cross-jurisdictional case coordination.
- Committee members asked COG to explore partnerships with philanthropy to support a regional response, given recent budget reductions.
- Committee members asked COG to be prepared to host additional emergency coordination meetings as needed.
- The next scheduled HSC meeting is October 1st at 10:00 a.m.

These steps are intended to maintain continuity of care, support consistent regional messaging, and enable timely operational adjustments.

CLOSING

The region's coordinated structure, supported by the Committee and working groups, positions metropolitan Washington to respond effectively to immediate challenges while advancing long-term system improvements. Staff will continue to monitor conditions, coordinate cross-jurisdictional actions, and update the Board as appropriate.

AGENDA ITEM #5

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
777 North Capitol Street, NE
Washington, D.C. 20002

MINUTES
COG Board of Directors Meeting
June 11, 2025

BOARD MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES: See attached chart for attendance.

SPEAKERS:
Mark Warner, U.S Senator
Julie Mussog, COG Chief Financial Officer
Russell Hamill, COG Police Chiefs Committee Chair
Eli Russ, COG Senior Public Safety Planner
Matt Chase, National Association of Counties CEO/Executive Director

1. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
COG Board Chair Rodney Lusk called the meeting to order at 12:00 P.M. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. CHAIR'S REPORT
The Chair's report included the following items:
- Honoring U.S. Representative Gerry Connolly and former Fairfax County Supervisor Catherine Hudgins.

3. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA
There were no amendments to the agenda.

4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
The Executive Director's report included the following items:
- During their meeting on May 21st, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) approved $440,000 for five projects through its Transportation Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program and $320,000 for four projects through its Regional Roadway Safety Program (RRSP), with work beginning in September 2025.
- At its May 28 meeting, Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) approved its FY 2026 Work Program and Budget, prioritizing a Redesignation Request and Maintenance Plan for the 2015 ozone standard. MWAQC also endorsed its Air Quality Action Resource Guide, offering a voluntary framework to incorporate equity and environmental justice into regional air quality planning.
- Since its launch a year ago, DMV*Moves* has advanced a shared regional vision for transit as the backbone of a world-class mobility network. During May's DMV*Moves* Task Force meeting, the group aligned on key priorities including rail modernization and a fast, frequent bus network and discussed a long-term funding strategy to address a projected capital funding shortfall.
- The Chesapeake Bay Policy Committee (CBPC) met on May 16 and heard from speakers on topics, including salt influx from land and sea, the Prince William County Energy and Sustainability Master Plan, and USGS' Chesapeake Bay related activities from FY2025
- In April, Transportation Planning Board (TPB) Chair James Walkinshaw signed the Bio to Work proclamation. The board was also briefed on the federal transportation reauthorization process and five draft principles to be part of the TPB's legislative proposal. TPB also received an update on the Virginia I-495/95 Southside Express Lanes project study.
- At the May 28 Climate Energy & Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) meeting, members

heard updates on climate action progress from the state legislative sessions, Montgomery County, and regional bicycle and pedestrian planning activities'
- The Human Services Policy Committee met on May 9 to review the COG 2025 Foster Parent of the Year recipients and the 2025 report on homelessness
- On May 6, COG's Chief Administrative Officers Committee toured the Potomac River with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation to see projects tackling sewer overflow and stormwater runoff and discussed water quality improvements, biodiversity and climate change.
- Clark Mercer presented to the Arlington County Chamber of Commerce on COG's programs as well as regional economic impacts of changes to the federal workforce.
- In May, 27 personnel from 17 agencies completed the three-week NCR Public Safety Leadership Seminar. Applications for the Fall 2025 cohort are currently open through August 25.
- COG's Clean Air Partners program launched its summer campaign during Air Quality Awareness Week with a gas-powered lawn equipment exchange. Residents traded in mowers, trimmers, and blowers at participating Ace Hardware stores for electric models, with old equipment sent for recycling.
- In May, COG wrapped up its Battery Management media campaign, spending $72,500 to promote battery safety and recycling. In June, COG will launch the Go Recycle Campaign with $65,000 in media spending, focusing on food waste with the theme: "WASTED: 1/3 of all food we buy is thrown away."

5. FISCAL YEAR 2026 WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET

The board was briefed on the FY 2026 (July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026) Work Program and Budget. Resolution R18-2025 was introduced to adopt the proposed budget.

Action: Received briefing and approved Resolution R18-2025.

6. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM JUNE 11, 2025

The minutes from the June 11, 2025 board meeting were approved. Montgomery Council President Stewart abstained.

7. ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Resolution R15-2025 – Resolution authorizing COG to procure and enter into a contract to provide response to battery emergency training
Resolution R16-2025 – Resolution authorizing COG to procure and enter into a contract to provide a mid-level leadership development program
Resolution R17-2025 – Resolution authorizing COG to procure and enter into a contract to develop a NCR communications resources software application

Action: The board adopted Resolutions R15—2025; R16-2025; R17-2025.

8. U.S. SENATOR MARK WARNER ON THE STATE OF THE REGION

The board was briefed by Senator Mark Warner on the state of the federal government and how the current Presidential Administration is impacting the federal workforce and funding in the metropolitan Washington region.

Action: Received briefing and discussed.

9. COG REGIONAL CRIME DASHBOARD

The board was briefed on the release of COG's regional real-time crime dashboard.

Action: Received briefing and discussion.

10. IMPACTS OF THE RECONCILIATION BILL ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

The board was briefed on the components of the Reconciliation Bill and highlights from the National Association of Counties on the biggest potential impacts of the legislation on local governments.

Action: Received briefing and discussion.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

Action: There was no other business.

12. ADJORN

The meeting was adjourned at 1:56 P.M.

COG Board of Directors
Meeting
June 11, 2025 Attendance

Jurisdiction	Member	Y/N	Alternate	Y/N
District of Columbia				
Executive	Hon. Muriel Bowser		Ms. Beverly Perry	
	Mr. Kevin Donahue		Mr. Tomas Talamante	
Council	Hon. Phil Mendelson	Y	Hon. Brianne Nadeau	Y
	Hon. Charles Allen	Y		
Maryland				
City of Bowie	Hon. Tim Adams		Mr. Dufour Woolfley	
Charles County	Hon. Reuben Collins	Y	Hon. Thomasina Coates	
City of Frederick	Hon. Michael O'Connor	Y	Hon. Gayon Sampson	
Frederick County	Hon. Jessica Fitzwater	Y	Ms. Victoria Venable	
City of College Park	Hon. Denise Mitchell		Hon. Fazlul Kabir	
City of Gaithersburg	Hon. Robert Wu		Hon. Neil Harris	
City of Greenbelt	Hon. Emmett Jordan	Y	Hon. Kristen Weaver	
City of Laurel	Hon. Keith Sydnor	Y	Hon. Kyla Clark	
Montgomery County - Exec	Hon. Marc Elrich		Mr. Richard Madaleno Ms. Fariba Kassiri Mr. Earl Stoddard	Y
Montgomery County - Council	Hon. Evan Glass	Y		
Montgomery County - Council	Hon. Kate Stewart	Y		
Prince George's County - Exec	Hon. Tara Jackson		Mr. Barry Stanton	
Prince George's County - Council	Hon. Tom Dernoga	Y	Hon. Wanika Fisher	
Prince George's County - Council	Hon. Ingrid Watson		Hon. Krystal Oriadha	
City of Rockville	Hon. Monique Ashton	Y		
City of Takoma Park	Hon. Talisha Searcy			
Maryland General Assembly	Hon. Brian Feldman			
Virginia				
City of Alexandria	Hon. Alyia Gaskins		Hon. Sarah Bagley	Y
Arlington County	Hon. Takis Karantonis	Y		
City of Fairfax	Hon. Catherine Read	Y	Hon. Stacey Hardy-Chandler	
Fairfax County	Hon. Rodney Lusk	Y	Hon. Daniel Storck	
Fairfax County	Hon. Jeff McKay		Hon. Andres Jimenez	
Fairfax County	Hon. James Walkinshaw	Y	Hon. Walter Alcorn	
City of Falls Church	Hon. David Snyder		Hon. Marybeth Connelly	
Loudoun County	Hon. Laura TeKrony	Y		
Loudoun County	Hon. Phyllis Randall	Y	Hon. Koran Saines	
City of Manassas	Hon. Mark Wolfe		Hon. Sonia Vasquez Luna	
City of Manassas Park	Hon. Darryl Moore	Y		
Prince William County	Hon. Deshundra Jefferson		Hon. Kenny A. Boddye	
Prince William County	Hon. Andrea Bailey		Hon. Tom Gordy	
Virginia General Assembly	Hon. Mark Sickles	Y		

Y = voting member present
P = present alternate in addition to member
Total voting present: 22

AGENDA ITEM #6

ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

September 2025

A. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING COG TO RECEIVE A GRANT TO EXECUTE THE NATIONAL CAPITAL PRISM INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT AND OUTREACH PROJECT

The board will be asked to adopt Resolution R19-2025 authorizing the Executive Director, or his designee, to receive and expend grant funds from Virginia's Department of Forestry FY26 Virginia PRISM Support for Invasive Species Program in the amount of $80,000. The funds will support invasive species management and outreach efforts on Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) parkland. The resolution also authorizes the Executive Director, or his designee, to proceed with procurement for a contractor, or contractors, to manage invasive species on FCPA parkland. Funding for this effort will be provided through a grant from Virginia's Department of Forestry FY26 Virginia PRISM Support for Invasive Species Program. COG will be required to provide a match of $6,492 which is available in the budget of the Department of Environmental Protection, NatCap PRISM Program.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Adopt Resolution R19-2025.

B. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING UPDATES TO THE COG PROCUREMENT POLICY

The Board will be asked to adopt Resolution R20-2025 approving updates to COG's Procurement Policy as detailed in the attached summary of key procurement policy changes. The revised policy addresses approval of small purchases, procurement thresholds and authorized procedures, micro and small purchases, evaluation of the low bid, awards, and board approval. The current Purchasing Policy is available on the COG website.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Adopt Resolution R20-2025.

Resolution R20-2025

Summary of Key Procurement Policy Changes

- Approval of small purchases - Contracts and agreements valued at $50,000 or under can be signed by the CFO or a staff member delegated by them to do so. *(Change of process - Allows CFO or designee to sign off on small contracts)* [p. 7 Section 1.5.1.2]
- Procurement Thresholds and Authorized Procedures – (p.10 Section 2.2)
    - Cost/price: $50,000 or more, but less than or equal to $100,000 Small Purchase. Solicitation of 3 Written Quotes, minimum– COG staff shall solicit written price or rate quotes from at least 3 sources. The solicitation shall be in writing and shall contain sufficient detail to allow accurate pricing of the goods or services to be procured. Lowest responsible quotation must be accepted. All quotes must be reviewed and approved by the Purchasing Manager
    - Cost/price: over $100,000 Formal Procurement

Formal solicitations and sealed bids are conducted by the Contracts and Purchasing Office. A Statement of Work (SOW) shall be included as part of the solicitation. For RFPs a list of scoring factors that will be used to evaluate responses through scoring by a Technical Selection Committee. COG will select the responsible contractor who offers the best combination of price, quality and other elements of required goods or services that are optimal to COG's needs.

- Micro Purchase - A purchase of goods or services with a total cost of less than $50,000 is considered a minor purchase, or micro-purchase, and no competitive quotes are required, so long as the price to be paid is fair and reasonable. Purchases must not be split to avoid this threshold. (p.10 Section 2.2)

- Small Purchase (Informal Procurement) - Small purchase procedures consist of relatively simple and informal solicitation methods, where the goods or services being procured are between $50,000 and up to $100,000. Purchases must not be split to avoid this threshold.

If small purchase procedures are used, price or rate quotations shall be solicited from qualified sources using the same specification getting at least 3 written quotes as per the above chart.

Sole-Source or non-competitive awards are procurements through the solicitation of a proposal from only one source. If an award is to be made from a single quote or proposal at this dollar level, supplier selection memo that substantiates the sole source decision must be completed along with a requirements document and/or scope of work.

Under Uniform Guidance, non-competitive awards may be used when one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- The item is available only from a single source (this must be verifiable and thoroughly explained in the supplier selection memo);
- The public exigency or emergency for the requirement will not permit a delay resulting from competitive solicitation;
- The Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity expressly authorizes noncompetitive proposals in response to a written request from the non-Federal entity; or
- After solicitation of several sources, competition is determined inadequate. (p 10-11, Section 2.2.1)

- Evaluation of the Low Bid – Following the opening and announcement of bids received, COG shall review the apparent low bidder for responsiveness and responsibility. Bids must be unconditionally accepted without alteration or modification except as authorized by law or in the IFB. Bids must be evaluated based upon the requirements set forth in the IFB, which may include evaluation criteria identified in the IFB. In order for a bid to be responsive, it must conform in all material respects to the requirements in the IFB. (p.15, Section 2.2.3.4)

- Award - Following completion of a competitive sealed bidding process, COG may award a contract to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. No contract involving an expenditure of $50,000 or more (regardless of the source of funding) shall be deemed awarded, or shall become binding upon COG, until it has been approved by the Contracting Officer. (p.18 Section 2.2.3.6)
- Board Approval Required - No sole source contract involving an expenditure of $100,000 or more (regardless of the source of funding) shall be deemed awarded, or shall become binding upon COG, until it has been approved by the Board via the Consent Agenda process. (p.23, Section 2.2.4.4)

The current Purchasing Policy is available on the COG website.

Complete Index of Changes

1. Page 7 changed. "the Executive Director, as Contracting Officer, shall execute all contracts and agreements entered into on behalf of COG over $50,000 in value .."
2. Page 7 changed..." Contracts and agreements valued at $50,000 or under can be signed by the CFO or a staff member delegated by them to do so."
3. Page 8 added..." any corresponding agency supplements (2 CFR Subtitle B), and all other controlling requirements"
4. Page 8 added... "...funding agency if the procurement requires it under the rules of the funding agency or applicable funding agreement"
5. Page 10 changed..." Cost/price: Over $100,000 Formal Procurement"
6. Page 10 changed..." A purchase of goods or services with a total cost of less than $50,000 is considered a minor purchase..."
7. Page 10 added... "Purchases must not be split to avoid this threshold."
8. Page 10 changed... "where the goods or services being procured are between $50,000 and up to $100,000."
9. Page 10 added..." Purchases must not be split to avoid this threshold."
10. Page 10 added... "Sole-Source or non-competitive awards are procurements through the solicitation of a proposal from only one source. If an award is to be made from a single quote or proposal at this dollar level, supplier selection memo that substantiates the sole source decision must be completed along with a requirements document and/or scope of work. Under Uniform Guidance, non-competitive awards may be used when one or more of the following circumstances apply:
    - The item is available only from a single source (this must be verifiable and thoroughly explained in the supplier selection memo);
    - The public exigency or emergency for the requirement will not permit a delay resulting from competitive solicitation;
    - The Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity expressly authorizes noncompetitive proposals in response to a written request from the non-Federal entity; or
    - After solicitation of several sources, competition is determined inadequate."
11. Page 11 added..." Purchases must not be split to avoid this threshold."
12. Page 11 added... " qualified sources, providing prospective sources adequate notice of the procurement"

13. Page 11 deleted… “at least 14 days prior to the date set for receipt of proposals”
14. Page 12 added… ” To qualify for award every contractor shall be determined to be responsive and responsible by Contracts and Purchasing staff. A contractor that is listed on the federal Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) (accessed using the System for Awards Management (SAM), or any other state or local governmental entity’s exclusion, debarment, or suspension registry or list shall be deemed to be not responsible. Contracts and Purchasing staff shall review the EPLS prior to the award of any contract.”
15. Page 13 added… “COG has the sole discretion to reject all proposals and/or cancel the request for proposals, at any time prior to the time a contract is fully executed, when it is in the best interest of COG. The reasons for the rejection or cancellation must be made part of the contract file. Offerors have no right or privilege to challenge the cancellation of a request for proposal.”
16. Page 13 added… “cost-plus-a-percentage-of-cost system of contracting shall not be used.”
17. Page 15 added… “Bids must be unconditionally accepted without alteration or modification except as authorized by law or in the IFB. Bids must be evaluated based upon the requirements set forth in the IFB, which may include evaluation criteria identified in the IFB. In order for a bid to be responsive, it must conform in all material respects to the requirements in the IFB.
    - (i) The purchasing agency must determine whether a bid is responsive based upon the criteria in the IFB.
    - (ii) It is important to note that the responsiveness evaluation is not documented for the purpose of determining whether one bidder's item is superior to another but only to determine that a bidder's offering is responsive as set forth in the IFB.
    - (iii) A slight or immaterial variance from the terms and conditions or the specifications contained in the IFB does not destroy the competitive character of the bid so as to require rejection. Those errors which superficially deviate from normal practice do not taint an otherwise acceptable award if the discrepancy does not transgress the actual terms of the bid instructions.
    - (iv) The IFB should reserve the right for the purchasing agency to waive technical defects or informalities. Therefore, waiving a defect is not an automatic violation of competitive bidding. Instead, it must be determined whether the waiver of any defects will cause the competitive bidding process to be noncompetitive.
    - (v) If the variance in a bid gives the bidder an advantage or benefit not enjoyed by other bidders, competitive bidding is destroyed. Mandatory, competitive bidding requirements must be followed.
    - (iv) Post-bid negotiations are prohibited.

    In procurements where two or more responsive and responsible bidders have bid the exact same amount (as may be defined in the solicitation) COG must break the tie. Unless the solicitation provides for a special process to break a tie bid, COG shall notify the affected bidders of the tie and request a voluntary discount from them to be due at a specified date and time. If this does not resolve the tie or is not practical, COG may consider any or a combination of the following factors in order to break the tie: (1) One of the Bidders is located in the Metropolitan Washington Area, and the other is not; (2) One of the bidders is offering a more advantageous delivery date; (3) One of the bidders has past-performance with COG and the other does not; (4) If none of the above options are practical or do not

result in breaking the tie, the COG may utilize a coin flip to resolve the tie. If this method is to be used, COG must notify the affected bidders no less than 48 hours prior to the coin flip to allow for the bidders or their designees to be present, if they so choose, to witness the coin flip.

18. Page 19 added.. " COG is authorized to procure from cooperative purchasing agreements, through a cooperative purchasing program, established by other states, local governments, or the federal government, including General Services Administration (GSA) Multiple Award Schedule contracts. Cooperative purchasing, in any amount, does not require competitive solicitation. All cooperative purchasing agreements shall be authorized in writing by the Executive Director. COG shall negotiate a commercially reasonable participating addendum."
19. Page 24 added…" A cost-plus-a-percentage-of-cost contracting method is a cost reimbursement contract containing some element that obligates COG to pay the contractor an amount, undetermined at the time the contract was made and to be incurred in the future, based on a percentage of future costs."
20. Page 25 added… "including but not limited to the U.S. Government's exclusion lists available at SAM.gov and the debarment lists for each state and jurisdiction that is a member of COG."
21. Page 25 added… "(1) the U.S. Government's Excluded Parties List System, accessible at SAM.gov, and (2) contracting exclusion lists for each state and jurisdiction in which a member of COG is located"
22. Page 29 changed…" relevant COG employee authorized to make such acquisition, issued to a vendor to authorize the purchase of goods or services in specific quantities and prices."
23. Page 32 changed… "within two (2) years thereafter"

24. Page 33 changed.. "Records of each procurement transaction shall be maintained for six years following the end of the relevant agreement's period of performance.

AGENDA ITEM #7

INTRODUCTION TO AI IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Joe Paul, Founder & CEO OptimaNova

As Founder & CEO of OptimaNova AI, Joe helps organizations integrate artificial intelligence to streamline operations, unlock data-driven insights, and prepare for the future of work. His human-centered approach to AI adoption ensures companies don't just implement technology—they master it.

Joe is also a national leader in voter engagement. As Executive Director of Black Men Vote, he led initiatives that registered over 100,000 Black men and increased turnout in battleground states like Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania. His strategic outreach—meeting men in barbershops, churches, and digital spaces—transformed civic participation. His work has been featured on ABC News, Politico, and the Associated Press, where he has spoken on voter mobilization and digital strategy in political outreach.

Previously, Joe served as CEO of Byte Back, where he secured $4.5 million—the largest investment in the nonprofit's history—to expand AI and digital literacy programs. His data-driven leadership increased certification pass rates from 10% to over 75% and helped thousands transition into tech careers.

As Executive Director & COO of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Joe led a major financial and membership turnaround during the COVID-19 pandemic, generating $1 million in new revenue within 90 days and driving a 94% increase in membership revenue. His ability to execute bold, data-driven strategies made him a trusted leader in both nonprofit and corporate sectors.

Joe also played a key role as COO of The Stafford Foundation, where he developed a five-year strategic plan that led to an 83% increase in revenue through e-commerce innovation, expanding the foundation's philanthropic reach.

A published author, Joe has written *Morning Cup of Joe, AI for Good*, and *The Doing Good Book*. He has been featured as a speaker and thought leader at national conferences, investor summits, and policy forums on AI, leadership, and social impact.

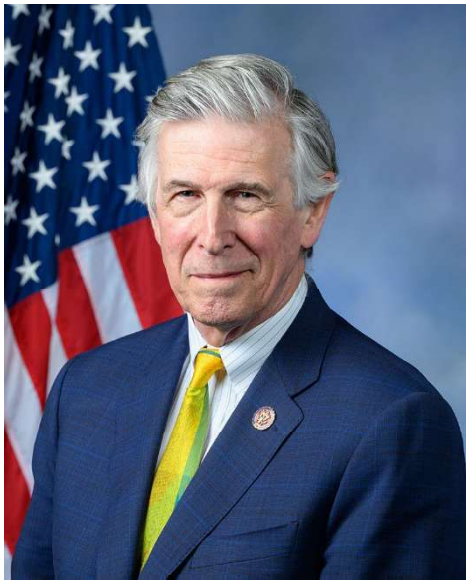
Joe holds a B.A. in Social Science and a B.S. in Spanish and Russian from Florida State University, along with a Digital Leadership Certificate from The Wharton School of Business. Fluent in English, Spanish, French, Russian, and Haitian Creole, he uses his multicultural expertise to bridge global conversations on technology and policy.

His leadership has earned him numerous national awards, including the SHRM "HR Hero" Award, Alpha Phi Alpha National Brother of the Year, FSU Alumni of the Year, and the SXSW Innovation Award for Community Service in Tech.

AGENDA ITEM #8

CONGRESSMAN DON BEYER- AI IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Congressman Don Beyer



Congressman Don Beyer is serving his fifth term as the U.S. Representative from Virginia's 8th District, representing Arlington, Alexandria, Falls Church, and parts of Fairfax County. He serves on Congress' Joint Economic Committee, and also serves on the House Committee on Ways and Means.

He was the Lieutenant Governor of Virginia from 1990 to 1998, and was Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein under President Obama. Rep. Beyer's signature work as lieutenant governor included advocacy for Virginians with disabilities and ensuring protections for Virginia's most vulnerable populations as the Commonwealth reformed its welfare system in the mid-1990s. Rep. Beyer was Virginia's Democratic nominee for governor in 1997.

After leaving office, Rep. Beyer spent fourteen years as Chair of Jobs for Virginia Graduates, a highly successful high school dropout prevention program, and was active for a decade on the board of the D.C. Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. As Chair of the Virginia Economic Recovery Commission, he helped pass permanent pro-business reforms and was co-founder of the Northern Virginia Technology Council.

President Obama nominated Rep. Beyer to serve as Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein in 2009. He used his position to advocate for stricter sanctions to compel Iran to begin nuclear disarmament discussions. As Ambassador, Rep. Beyer was integral to US Department of Justice efforts to halt the abuses of Swiss bank secrecy by wealthy Americans.

Rep. Beyer has spent four decades building his family business in Northern Virginia after a summer job at a car dealership in 1974. He is a graduate of Williams College and Gonzaga College High School in Washington, DC. He was named a Presidential Scholar by President Lyndon Johnson.

Rep. Beyer has four children and two grandchildren. He and his wife Megan live in Alexandria, Virginia.

AGENDA ITEM #9

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE COUNTY COMPASS: PRACTICAL TOOLKIT FOR LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES NACo

December 2024

AI County Compass

A Comprehensive Toolkit for Local Governance and Implementation of Artificial Intelligence

NACo's Vision

Healthy, safe and vibrant counties across America.

NACo's Mission

Strengthen America's Counties.

About the National Association of Counties (NACo)

The National Association of Counties (NACo) strengthens America's counties, serving nearly 38,000 county elected officials and 3.6 million county employees. Founded in 1935, NACo unites county officials to:

- Advocate county priorities in federal policymaking
- Promote exemplary county policies and practices
- Nurture leadership skills and expand knowledge networks
- Optimize county and taxpayer resources and cost savings, and
- Enrich the public understanding of county government.

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INTRODUCTION

Letter from the Co-Chairs

Dear Reader,

The genie is out of the bottle.

Over the past two years, we have witnessed the rise of an innovative new technology poised to transform our economy and society: generative artificial intelligence (GenAI). The advent of GenAI is bringing vast new opportunities in computing power and capability that will alter how society utilizes technology for the public good.

Perhaps a more significant leap than the dawn of the internet, GenAI is laying the groundwork for how companies, organizations, and governments will operate in the future with great speed. Building on artificial intelligence, which is not new, the generative technology offers the ability to produce text, audio, and video in a novel way, as well as support vastly increased productivity.

In light of this moment, we face an unprecedented challenge—and ultimately, a significant opportunity—to frame the rise of GenAI in a way that will promote its responsible enablement and not endanger humanity's rights or roles. This challenge is mirrored by few other moments in the history of technological progress - such as the invention of nuclear technology or the dawn of the industrial revolution.

Four key themes emerged during our committee's year-long exploration of GenAI: Prepare the Workforce, Establish an Ethical Framework, Promoting Policy Models, and Enable Responsible Applications. Each theme prompted our committee to study the impact of GenAI deeply, specifically through the lens of county governance.

The goal of this report and toolkit is to enable county government leaders to recognize low-risk versus high-risk implementations of artificial intelligence (AI) and GenAI and address the risk and rewards that both bring to local government. This report represents the cumulative discussions and contributions of a diverse collection of county leaders, policymakers, administrators and CIOs. and we hope it will provide you with a framework for approaching GenAI. You will also find more in-depth information and valuable resources on the NACo.org website.

As a society, we are entering a new frontier and our goal is to help prepare America's county officials for this technological moment.

Sincerely,

Co-Chair Andy Brown
County Judge, Travis County, Texas

Co-Chair Gregg Weiss
Commissioner, Palm Beach County, Fla.

Executive Summary

The Rise of Artificial Intelligence

The advent of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) worldwide presents unique opportunities and challenges for county governments. NACo has convened an Artificial Intelligence Exploratory Committee, with the goal of developing a knowledge base and best practice resource hub for counties to utilize in considering, adopting and regulating the use of GenAI in their respective operations, services and communities.

As county officials, we have a vested interest in the development and oversight of GenAI policies and usage. While artificial intelligence (AI) has been around for decades, the unprecedented rise of GenAI has created heightened awareness of both the risks and rewards that this new evolution in technology brings.

This toolkit is tailored specifically for counties. As a committee, we investigated four key themes with respect to GenAI: Enable Responsible Applications, Promote Policy Models, Establish an Ethical Framework and Prepare the Workforce. Our toolkit is divided into the following sections: an overview that includes an executive summary, a list of guiding principles and then work group recommendations that address the four key themes. The toolkit ends with suggested next steps and a path forward.

Through the use of this toolkit, the AI County Compass, the reader will:

- **Increase** county official awareness and understanding of key GenAI terms and definitions
- **Learn** about key opportunities as well as challenges with respect to the development of policy models, ethical frameworks, applications development, and preparation of the workforce
- **Explore** county lessons learned and pracices with the use of GenAI
- **Strategize** next steps for a county's journey in GenAI
- **Expand** county official knowledge base for what GenAI will bring to county government today, in the near future and beyond, and
- **Acclimate** to resources that will keep county officials informed while keeping track of the revolutionary technologies that will continue to unfold.

NACo AI Exploratory Committee members receive a briefing from the Microsoft team on AI and security risks.

Introduction to GenAI and Its Relevance to Local Governance

To conceptualize the impact of AI and GenAI on county governments, the committee developed a set of definitions to establish a set of definitions to establish an initial framework for investigation.

Understanding AI vs. GenAI

AI	GenAI
Technical Definition	**Technical Definition**
The automation of tasks utilizing computer systems where little to no human intervention and oversight is required. Examples include speech recognition, language translation, security cameras, and software applications such as computer monitoring and HVAC systems that automate heating/cooling.	The development and deployment of artificial systems that can generate novel content by relying on large language models, data sets and other methods of machine learning, including inputs from humans. Examples include ChatGPT, Copilot, Google Bard, Einstein, Claude, and Otter.ai.
Layman's Definition	**Layman's Definition**
AI is like a digital assistant automating processes that organize data for employees to make informed decisions. Examples include smart devices such as lights in the courthouse or self-driving cars that collect data. Other examples include transcribing apps, voice command prompts, and customer relationship management scripts used in chatbots. This is similar to a behind-the-scenes advisor.	GenAI, such as ChatGPT, generates creative content, which not only assists in regular tasks but also is capable of drafting documents, designing educational materials, or creating public service announcements, showcasing its ability to produce new and original content when you ask it questions, otherwise known as prompts.

Glossary of AI Terms and Concepts

Automation: The use of technology to perform tasks where little to no human input is needed. Generally used to replace or minimize manual tasks that are repeatable.

AI Models: Software programs that use training data to autonomously make decisions or predictions. May or may not be generative.

Open Source Model: GenAI tool who's underlying model is publicly available, reviewable and customizable for a particular use case or function.

Closed Source Model: GenAI resource who's underlying model is proprietary and not available to the general public.

Deepfakes: An image or recording that has been convincingly altered and manipulated to misrepresent someone as doing or saying something that was not actually done or said.

Hallucinations: A phenomenon wherein a large language model (LLM) perceives patterns or objects that are nonexistent or imperceptible to human observers, creating outputs that are nonsensical or altogether inaccurate.

Large language model (LLM): A category of models that are pre-trained on vast amounts of data, making them capable of understanding and generating natural language and other types of content to perform a wide variety of tasks. Such large-scale models can ingest data, often from the internet, as well as other publicly available data sets.

Machine learning (ML): A subfield of AI; focuses on the use of data and algorithms to create models that enable machines to perform like humans. Machine learning often powers many of the digital goods and services we use every day. Machine learning is widely used today for such things as recommending products to consumers based on their past purchases and translating text from one language to another.

Natural language processing (NLP): The process of making human communication, such as speech and text, understood by computers. Some of the most common ways NLP is used include voice-activated digital assistants on smartphones, email-scanning programs used to identify spam, and translation apps that decipher foreign languages.

Prompts: Text commands or queries that you type or say to a GenAI tool to provide context and guidance to machine learning models.

Small Language Model (SLM): Similar to Large Language Models, except that they rely on a smaller set of data. Unlike LLMs trained on vast amounts of internet data, the smaller models use curated, high-quality training data.

Structured data: Typically categorized as quantitative data, is highly organized and easily decipherable by machine learning algorithms. Structured data is most often in a database or spreadsheet and is generally very easily used by machine learning, however, can be limited in its flexibility or applicability.

Unstructured data: Typically categorized as qualitative data and cannot be processed and analyzed via conventional data tools and methods. Since unstructured data does not have a predefined data model, it is best managed in non-relational databases.

Use Case: A term that explains how a solution meets a business need. Use of AI in identifying forest fires is a Use Case.

Watermarks: The process of embedding a recognizable, unique signal into the output of an AI model, such as text, audio, video, or an image, to identify that content as generated by an AI model.

Landscape Analysis

Benefits of GenAI

- **Enhance productivity and cost savings** by automating routine tasks, such as data entry, document drafting, contract negotiation, grant writing and help desk support.
- **Improve service delivery** by providing quick access to information, streamlining processes and enhancing communication and retention.
- **Generate new ideas and solutions** by synthesizing data, prescribing actions and creating applications.
- **Increase equity and accessibility** by providing multilingual and inclusive services, addressing biases and bridging language gaps.

Challenges of GenAI

- **Ensure governance, compliance and accountability** by establishing clear policies, standards and oversight for GenAI usage and decision-making.
- **Protect security and privacy** by securing data and systems against cyber threats and unauthorized access, and respecting data ownership and consent.
- **Deal with copyright issues** when a GenAI tool utilizes other people's work without proper attribution or express permission.
- **Validate the accuracy** of the information that is being returned through GenAI tools.
- **Prevent bias and ethical issues** by auditing algorithms for fairness and accuracy and disclosing GenAI involvement and limitations.
- **Manage change, trust and decision-making** by educating policymakers, staff, and residents about GenAI's role and benefits, and mitigating fears of job displacement and AI misuse.
- **Train county staff** in light of a rapidly changing landscape for GenAI tools and applicability, where peer institutions may be taking a more cautious approach.

Opportunities for Counties

- **Optimize social services** by helping constituents identify and access resources, track performance and engagement, and provide early intervention and crisis support.
- **Improve public safety and security** by using AI technology in video cameras, drones and body cameras for surveillance and analysis, and providing real-time cyber response and threat detection.
- **Personalize service delivery** by using AI to help people better identify local needs and connections to services, including providing interactive assistants and chatbots.
- **Create tailored local solutions** by using county-centric AI models with local data and ensuring relevance and responsiveness to community needs.
- **Utilize forecasting** so that counties can direct resources to the greatest needs for resident services.
- **Engage community stakeholders** and voices of the most vulnerable and underserved in the county.

Myth-busting

The fast growth of GenAI has led to many myths, mixing up facts and false ideas, which makes it hard to separate truth from fiction. Check out some of the top articulated myths on AI below:

Myth One **My county can avoid the use of GenAI by not ever permitting employees to use the technology.**

Answer Counties are already discovering that GenAI is being integrated into many common software applications and tools used in daily operations, making it impractical to completely avoid its use. Further, counties are hearing from staff as well, that they are already using GenAI to improve their productivity, speed, and quality of work.

Myth Two **AI is a new technology that has not previously been utilized by society.**

Answer AI has been used in various forms for decades, such as in data analysis, automation, and even in early expert systems in the medical diagnosis and chemical analysis domains. What is new is the advanced capabilities that generative AI models offer, such as novel content creation and highly adaptive machine learning technologies.

Myth Three **GenAI models are always accurate, and do not need their outputs to be verified.**

Answer GenAI responses are dependent on the context of their prompts; as a result, GenAI models can sometimes produce convincing but inaccurate or biased outputs. It is essential to always keep the human in the loop to verify the outputs of a GenAI model to ensure correctness and reliability.

Myth Four **I can turn off GenAI features in applications if I don't want to use them.**

Answer Many applications are already integrating GenAI features deeply into their functionality, making it difficult or impossible to completely disable these features without losing essential functionality. If a county is considering a particular use case of GenAI, be sure to follow-up with the appropriate vendor to determine possible next steps.

Myth Five **All GenAI tools are designed using the same underlying open-source model.**

Answer Just like different makes and models of cars, GenAI tools may be based on various models, including proprietary ones, and each tool may have different strengths, weaknesses, and design considerations. The user should be mindful to explore different tools and assess the relative strengths and shortcomings of each product.

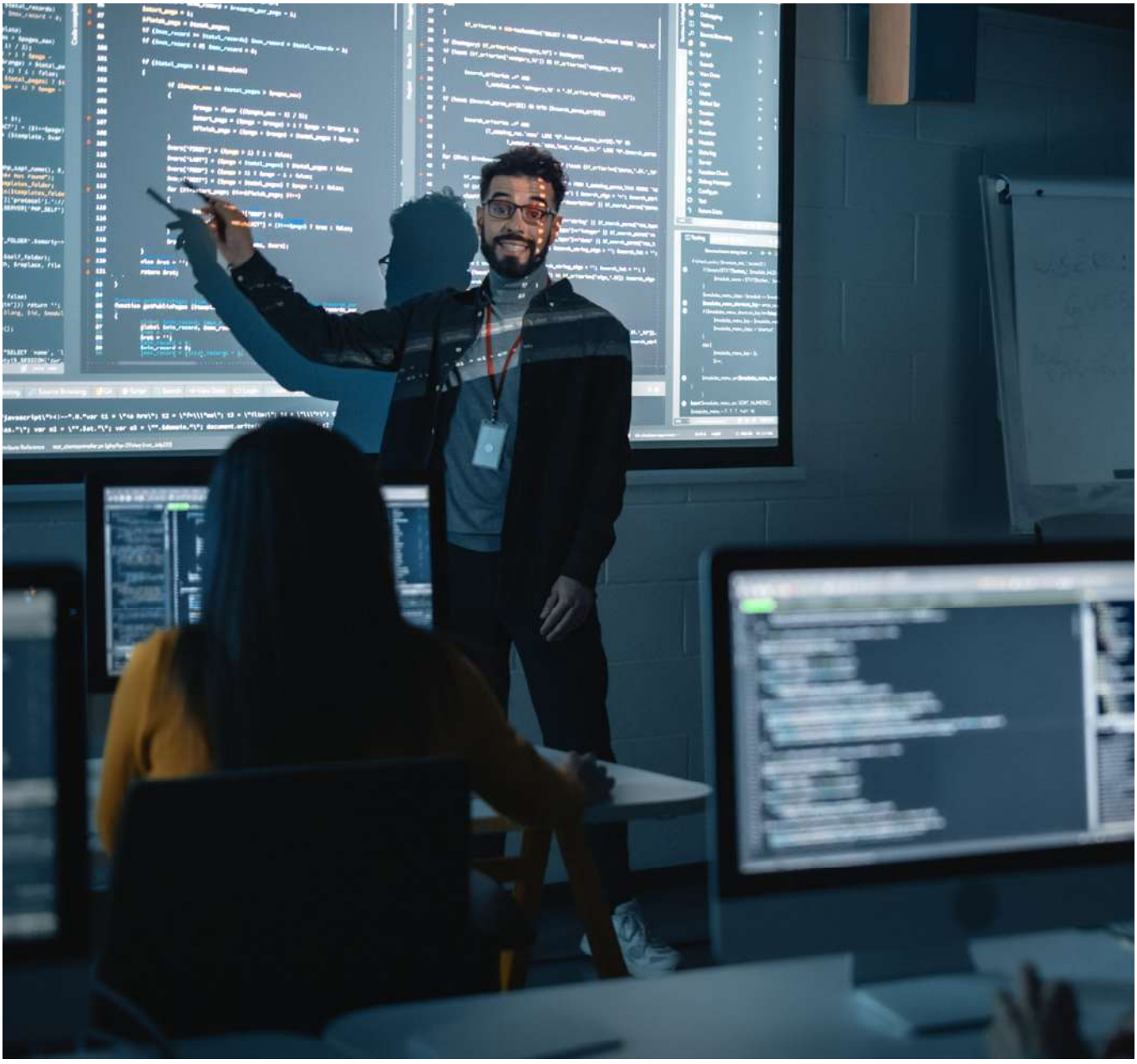
Myth Six **GenAI tools will return the same answer every time, so long as the prompt you offer is written the same exact way.**

Answer GenAI tools often apply probability methods in generating responses, which means that even identical prompts can yield different answers on different occasions

Myth Seven **AI and GenAI can steal any data that I enter into the model.**

Answer While there are concerns about data privacy and security, AI and GenAI systems are not designed to "steal" data. Updating default settings during implementation and adhering to county data governance practices can mitigate risks of data misuse of AI and GenAI.

Some of these myths may lead readers to dismiss the possibilities of AI based on uncertain outcomes for utilizing such technology. Ultimately, our toolkit seeks to clarify and educate readers on some of these key myths that may emerge as your county begins to encounter GenAI tools and resources. As you read through this toolkit, you will discover that all of the above myths can be thoroughly addressed with the proper resources and tools.



WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Recommendations

WORK GROUP	RECOMMENDATION
Policy Workgroup *"Promote Policy Models"*	1. Establish your county's policy framework for GenAI 2. Review key legal considerations 3. Review and assess existing procurement policies
Ethics Workgroup *"Establish an Ethical Framework"*	1. Fairness, Equitableness, and Impartiality – ensure the development, deployment, use and impact of GenAI is fair and impartial 2. Transparency – utilize GenAI in an open and explainable fashion, while practicing responsible disclosures 3. Privacy – follow applicable local, state and federal policy guidelines 4. Accountability – assess impact, remediate risk, create an audit trail and validate results 5. Train and educate employees on the "why" along with guidance on best practices
Applications Workgroup *"Enable Responsible Applications"*	1. Review and evaluate potential use cases based on description and sensitivity 2. Familiarize yourself with federal resources on the application of artificial intelligence tools, including the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) as well as Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) standards 3. Regularly assess the current landscape of publicly available resources 4. Practice robust data governance and management 5. Update and expand the county's cybersecurity measures 6. Design procedures to train data used in GenAI models 7. Determine software, hardware and procurement minimum standards and needs
Workforce Workgroup *"Prepare the Workforce"*	1. Focus on skills development, training and capacity building 2. Consider skills acquisition options that best fit your county needs 3. Develop a multi-year workforce strategy 4. Inform and seek feedback from unions, skilled trades and the broader workforce

Guiding Principles

The committee identified seven guiding principles for counties to consider as we embark on or continue the journey towards implementation of GenAI policies and procedures. Readers are reminded that AI and GenAI are technologies and counties should approach these technologies in the same way you would adopt any type of technology. With that in mind, the seven guiding principles are:

1. **Be agile, flexible and creative. Think big!**

   The sky is not the limit. However, while thinking of solutions for the impossible, keep in mind that AI and GenAI are just tools and that these technologies are evolving rapidly. The responsibility of reviewing and utilizing the tools and the subsequent outcomes still resides with the county and users.

2. **Set the outcome(s) that you want to achieve for your county and in your community by identifying and evaluating use cases.**

   Knowing and focusing on the end goal is crucial, whether it involves improving direct service delivery, modernizing internal processes to enhance employee productivity or strengthening cybersecurity defenses. This can be accomplished through identifying low, medium and high-risk use cases and prioritizing accordingly in reference to cost and privacy. A best practice is to start with your desired business outcomes and then tie each to potential GenAI use cases.

3. **Be proactive, not reactive. Approach staff utilization of GenAI with guardrails and guidance, rather than saying "we won't allow or implement" AI or GenAI.**

   Taking the time to educate staff on the benefits and risks will greatly reduce unwanted outcomes. Ignoring the advancements in AI, particularly GenAI, will be detrimental to your county. County staff are most likely using these technologies and implementing them into their daily workflows.

NACo AI Exploratory Committee members visit the Microsoft Experience Center in San Jose, Calif.

NACo members attend technology symposium at the NACo 2024 Legislative Conference to discuss draft AI County Compass workgroup recommendations.

4. Maintain vigilance when it comes to accuracy, privacy, bias and ethical challenges.

AI and GenAI are influenced by both the inherent and systemic biases in their training data, as well as the human biases involved in decision-making. Keeping this in mind as you develop a solid review process is critical to the successful use of GenAI. Further, avoiding the input of private or confidential data, as well as verifying the accuracy of the results, is critical to successful GenAI implementation.

5. Communicate how GenAI can bring positive change to the workforce, and address challenges up front.

Everyone has seen stories about GenAI replacing the workforce and disenfranchising residents. In reality, implementing GenAI tools may allow employees to deliver higher-value services and help reduce employment gaps that many counties are experiencing. Counties will need to offer opportunities to their existing workforce that include training, reskilling and upskilling, which encourages career advancement.

6. Establish functional requirements for implementing AI systems that include strong data governance measures.

County data, whether public or internal, may be outdated, inconsistent or inaccurate. The emergence of AI and GenAI tools offers an excellent opportunity to develop a comprehensive data catalog and ensure high-quality data is available to both staff and the public, with consistent quality reviews becoming routine.

7. Plan ahead for the transition to GenAI technologies and tools, which will involve financial commitment, staff time and resources.

When entering into a GenAI implementation, the positive return on investment may not be immediate. Some of the return is more than monetary in nature; this includes improved work environment and faster client service delivery. Utilizing cost models that keep these intangible properties in mind will help manage budgetary expectations.

Workgroup Recommendations: Preparing for GenAI

Each of the NACo AI Exploratory Committee's four key themes evolved into a broader exploration of recommendations for county governments to consider. For each theme, a workgroup composed of committee members and non-committee members helped to formulate the below recommendations.

Promote Policy Models: The Policy Workgroup

The Policy Workgroup explored the implications for regulating, monitoring, guarding and promoting the use and application of AI and GenAI in county governance and operations as well as across various sectors in the broader economy. Conclusions from this group focused on the county perspective and areas of potential contribution to a broader policy lens.

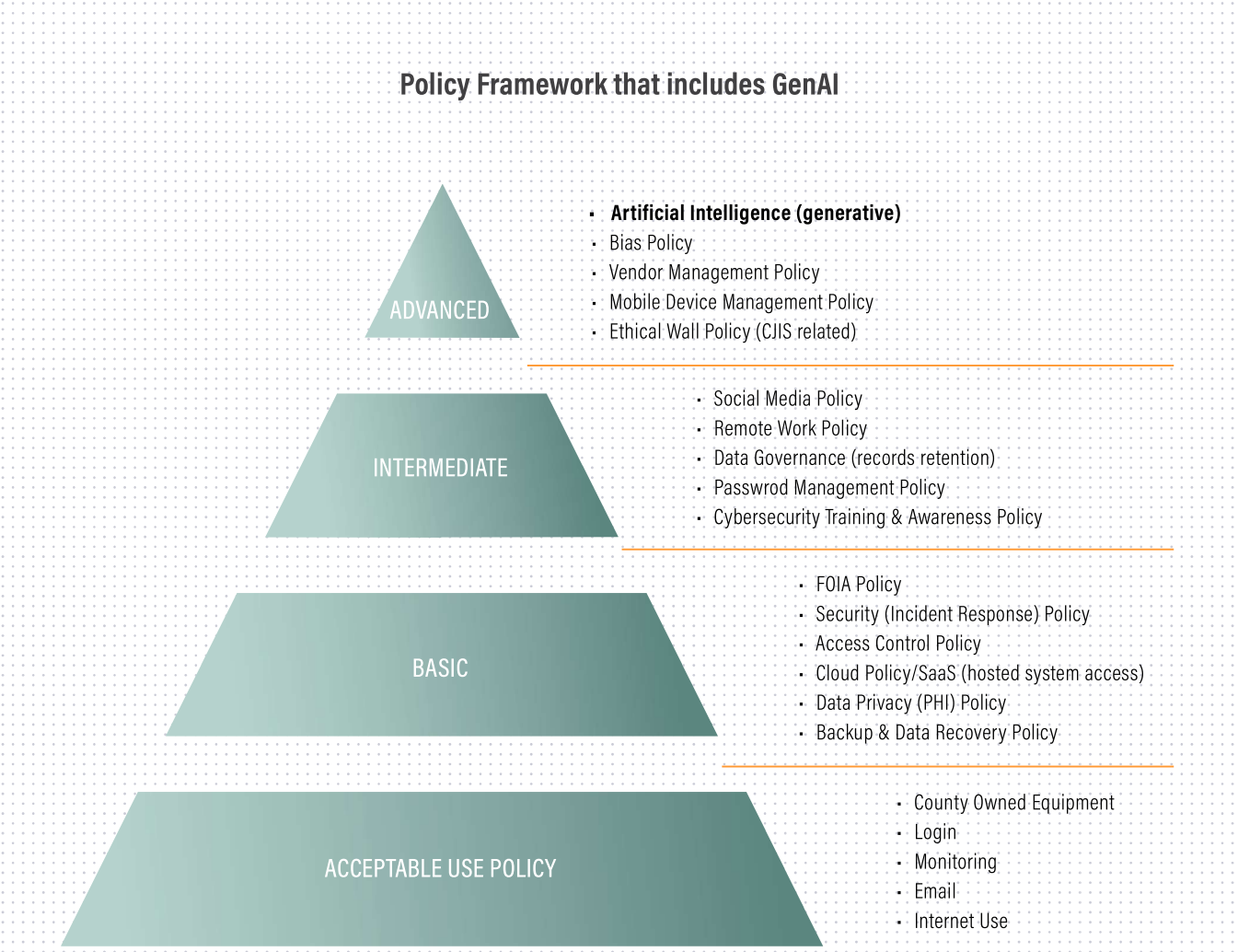
The key to regulation for GenAI is when to apply a policy, a standard or a guideline.

Policies	**Strict impact:** A rule that sets the boundaries for approved use and non-approved use. Policies provide clear guidance and consequences for not following the policy. *Counties should consider only implementing a policy when the objective is well understood and "future-proofed," in order to avoid a policy that becomes outdated or ineffective.*
Standards	**Moderate impact:** Establishes general conduct that outlines minimum requirements. Can be utilized to help establish ethical utilization of GenAI tools and technology. *Counties should consider implementing standards when establishing clear expectations of behavior for how an artificial intelligence technology should operate, be utilized and be deployed across functions and services. Further, the county should be careful to address the ability to enforce standards when utilizing AI and GenAI tools.*
Guidelines	**Light impact:** Recommends best practices for users, which may or may not be mandatory. Can be used to help guide productivity in the workforce, or to develop in response to applications of AI and GenAI. *County should consider implementing guidelines when seeking to establish transparency over the utilization of GenAI technology use for public-facing mediums and constituent-facing resources.*

Recommendation 1: Establish your county's policy framework for GenAI.

The Policy Workgroup recommends following a pyramid approach for how to implement a GenAI policy within the county. Each level of the pyramid aligns with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) security and privacy controls for information systems and organizations, which can be found on the agency's website. Sample county policies are available on NACo's website, with a full library of county policies available through the NACo Tech Xchange.

Scan the QR code to access the NACo Tech Xchange



Framework developed by the NACo AI Exploratory Committee policy workgroup

The recommended approach, which is not exhaustive, is to begin with a stand-alone policy on GenAI that will include references to other policies that have applicable guidelines and are relevant. The workgroup also recommends establishing a process for regularly reviewing the existing policies on GenAI (i.e., every six months) for continued applicability and relevancy to the then-current state of GenAI.

Recommendation 2: Review key legal considerations.

As of Spring 2024, there is not a universal legislative framework at the federal level which addresses the utilization of generative artificial intelligence in society, the economy or uniformly at the state and local government levels. However, the U.S. House of Representatives has formed an Artificial Intelligence Task Force, and in May 2024, the U.S. Senate Working Group on Artificial Intelligence released recommendations and guidelines on AI. Additionally, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) estimates in a 2023 report that approximately 35 states introduced bills or resolutions pertaining to artificial intelligence in 2023 alone.

As state legislatures and Congress begin to actively deliberate the policy frameworks to implement on GenAI, counties will need to be mindful of legal considerations that may include:

- Accuracy and factual integrity including the use of watermarks, or identifiers to define content as AI-generated
- Plagiarism and originality
- Bias and fairness
- Intellectual property (IP)
- Data protection and privacy
- Contractual commitments and obligations, and
- Areas of permissible and non-permissible use

Continuing to monitor the legal landscape regularly through resources such as NACo will help ensure your county is operating under a fully legal framework.

Recommendation 3: Review and assess existing procurement policies

Robust procurement policies and practices are key to ensuring the county's interests are maintained as third parties are contracted and partnered with to help deliver county services to residents. The county procurement team should always verify that protective clauses are included in requests for proposals (RFPs), requests for information (RFIs) and final contracts with solution providers, vendors and other consultants who seek to assist counties in the delivery of government services. This policy should apply regardless of whether the service or solution is technology based.

Counties can consider following a checklist as a means to ensure the county can meet minimum requirements to securely and adequately contract with third parties who utilize generative artificial intelligence in services procured for the county. Additional information can be found under Recommendation 7 of the Applications Workgroup.

From a contractual and procurement perspective, guidance can be found under the Application Workgroup recommendations.

*These recommendations highlight the importance of **security** and **authenticity** when implementing GenAI tools and the results.*

Establish An Ethical Framework: The Ethics Workgroup

The Ethics Workgroup focused on developing ethical principles in the use of AI and GenAI. It is understood that there are challenges with respect to bias, access concerns with respect to adoption and utilization of AI, privacy of use, accountability for decisions made based on AI and GenAI technology, transparency of services, and ensuring human dignity is prioritized.

Foundational ethical principles for use of GenAI should include:

Fairness, Equitableness, and Impartiality

Transparency

Privacy

Accountability

Recommendation 1: Fairness, Equitableness, and Impartiality.

Counties must ensure that the development, deployment, use and impact of AI technologies is fair and impartial. The design, access to and the outcomes derived from AI must eliminate bias as much as possible and should be available to all, regardless of socio-economic background or level of education. This is especially true for counties who lack access to high-speed broadband connectivity, who may be at a significant disadvantage for being able to access AI and GenAI technologies.

Bias can exist within GenAI models, either from the model construct itself, or from the systemic bias inherent in the data and assumptions provided to the model. Keep a balance between education and presenting facts in an impartial manner when utilizing a GenAI tool. Follow the below action steps:

- Ensure that AI decisions are explainable, repeatable, transparent and accountable.
- Carefully craft prompts to avoid adding bias, as question phrasing affects output.
- Implement a loopback function to fine-tune queries or update training data based on human input.
- Consistently fact-check AI results and regularly verify the model to prevent bias from developing over time.
- Keep humans in the loop from start to finish when using GenAI tools and reviewing results.

Recommendation 2: Transparency.

Counties using AI and GenAI should implement transparency in the development and use of AI. This means that the use of AI and GenAI should be open, explainable and accessible, with responsible disclosures in place in areas such as official county communications for elections administration or county artwork and presentation materials.

Action steps include:

- Evaluate use of artificial intelligence for whether there should be disclosure to the user that an AI technology is being used. For example, in chat sessions; to the greatest possible extent, including that the data is accurate and up to date.
- Create an easy way for the end user to reach a human whenever possible (for example, when implementing a chatbot).
- Consider the use of watermarks for artificially generated graphics or art produced by the county for information-sharing purposes. Balance this, however, by comparing it to how you do business today, where you may cite a source of information. This is no different than if you are citing an exact quote, where you would then include a footnote.

Recommendation 3: Privacy.

Follow applicable local, state and federal privacy guidelines. This may include data protection, gaining consent, anonymizing the data, being transparent and conforming to regulatory compliance.

Here are some useful action steps:

- Know the regulations you must follow, including but not limited to state privacy laws, federal HIPAA law, payment card industry (PCI) compliance and other applicable laws.
- Review online forms already in place and focus on training with staff concerning text fields, where end users may enter personally identifiable information (PII). If you are creating dashboards from that data or using that data as part of an AI training model, then you must have a process in place to redact PII.
- Develop a training plan for both your employees and elected officials that avoids putting PII in the AI or GenAI tool or process. Remember, certain individuals may not have exposure to government and privacy regulations, such as those new to county government, newly elected officials, elderly individuals, developmentally disabled individuals and non-English speaking individuals.
- While all of these subpoints apply to GenAI information and tools that are accessible to the public, an internal GenAI tool can be less restrictive, due to the way data is used and how the tool is trained. As a county, decide on those differences for when an open source or closed environment should be used.

Recommendation 4: Accountability.

Accountability hinges on being transparent, responsible and legally compliant, all of which have been covered under the three previous recommendations. Accountability also includes assessing impact, remediating risk, creating an audit trail and validating results.

Action steps include:

- Assess the impact of a potential project, program or process you are considering using AI and GenAI by implementing a known assessment tool. Then include an ongoing monitoring process to evaluate the real-world use of the AI tool.
- Remediate negative impacts as quickly as possible. This may include turning off the tool for a period of time, revisiting or updating the data or tagging the tool as a “pilot” or “beta” resource.
- Be sure that your IT team or the solution provider has demonstrated that there are audit logs for an agreed period (follow your records retention policy or practices here).
- Create a mechanism for residents and employees to share feedback. An example of this is an online survey form.
- Develop a process that ensures results are verified and that questions are answered. For the verification of results, this most likely will involve a variety of county staff personnel to review for potential bias. This could be HR staff or other appropriate subject matter experts. At the end of certain AI processes, include an icon or a one question survey, saying “On a scale of 1-5, how did this answer your question?” Keep in mind that AI services you provide, like a chatbot or other media that interacts with residents or employees, needs to rely on accurate and transparent information.

Recommendation 5: Training.

Finally, the Ethics Workgroup recommends training, recognizing that the purpose of training is not only the "how" of a tool, but also the "why," along with guidance for best practices and lessons learned. Action steps include:

- Develop a training program for staff and consultants that will convey the county rules and guidelines on addressing ethics in the use and development of GenAI solutions. This will help mitigate risk and improve the output of the engine.
- Work with solution and GenAI service providers to ensure that they are following similar training and education with their employees.
- Form partnerships with local colleges, universities and other experts in order to stay current on developments concerning the application of ethics.

The NACo County Tech Xchange is a source of additional AI resources.

Enable Responsible Applications: The Applications Workgroup

The AI Applications Workgroup focused on identifying and evaluating current use cases of GenAI. The workgroup similarly identified risks of applying AI to county services and operations.

Recommendation 1: Review and evaluate potential use cases based on description and sensitivity.

AI Use Case Catalog		
Department – Areas of Application	**County Spotlight**	**Risk Measure**
All departments - Analyzing agenda items, emails, documents	Santa Cruz County, Calif. Industry: Westlaw Research	1
Commissioner or executive office - Analyzing agenda items, emails, documents	Santa Cruz County, Calif.	1 or 2
Human services (mental health, aging, children's services) - Documentation, intake & referrals, development plans services availability (eliminate client redundant data)	Riverside County, Calif. New Hanover County, NC.	3
Community services (pet application)	Miami-Dade County, Fla.	1
Planning, assessor, tax collector - Property taxes, code review, permitting proposals	Douglas County, Neb.	1
911 non-emergency calls	Buncombe County, NC.	1 or 2
District attorney, courts, public defender - Court records (or pdfs), translation services	Lehigh County, Pa.	3
Technology - Cyber monitoring, application code development (solutions, router configurations, website)	Santa Cruz County, Calif.	2
Human resources - Recruitment, job descriptions, analysis of pay, policy development, development/review of union contracts	Chester County, Pa.	3
Automated fire detection	Travis County, Texas	1
Grant proposal development	Berrien County, Mich.	1

Markers: 1 = Low risk (public information); 2 = Medium risk (protected information classes, such as SSNs, health data, etc.) 3 = High risk (such as criminal justice information sharing)

Scan the QR code for an up-to-date list of county examples on the NACo AI Compass and Resource Hub.

Recommendation 2: Familiarize yourself with federal resources on the application of artificial intelligence tools, including the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) as well as Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) standards.

Counties may benefit greatly with responsible implementation of AI and GenAI solutions. It is recommended that counties make themselves familiar with federal resources for governmental use of AI and GenAI, including the AI.gov website that contains up to date information and resources on the federal approach to AI, as a baseline guide.

Utilize the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) AI Risk Management Framework Versions 1 and 2 as a basis for determining the best applications of AI.

- **Establish** infrastructure and technical requirements for implementation of systems.
- **Identify** both necessary hardware and software for implementation of artificial intelligence.
- **Strategize** data management practices, including data collection, retention, storage, protection and analysis.
- **Ensure** security, including implementing cyber security measures and protecting against breaches.

AI Risk Management Framework

Additional information may be found online at NIST's AI Risk Management Framework Playbook webpage.

As public servants, counties are stewards of private information for residents – if counties are using AI to place information into databases and open learning models in a manner that is replicated, this could involve privacy considerations. Personal data of residents needs to be protected to the greatest extent possible.

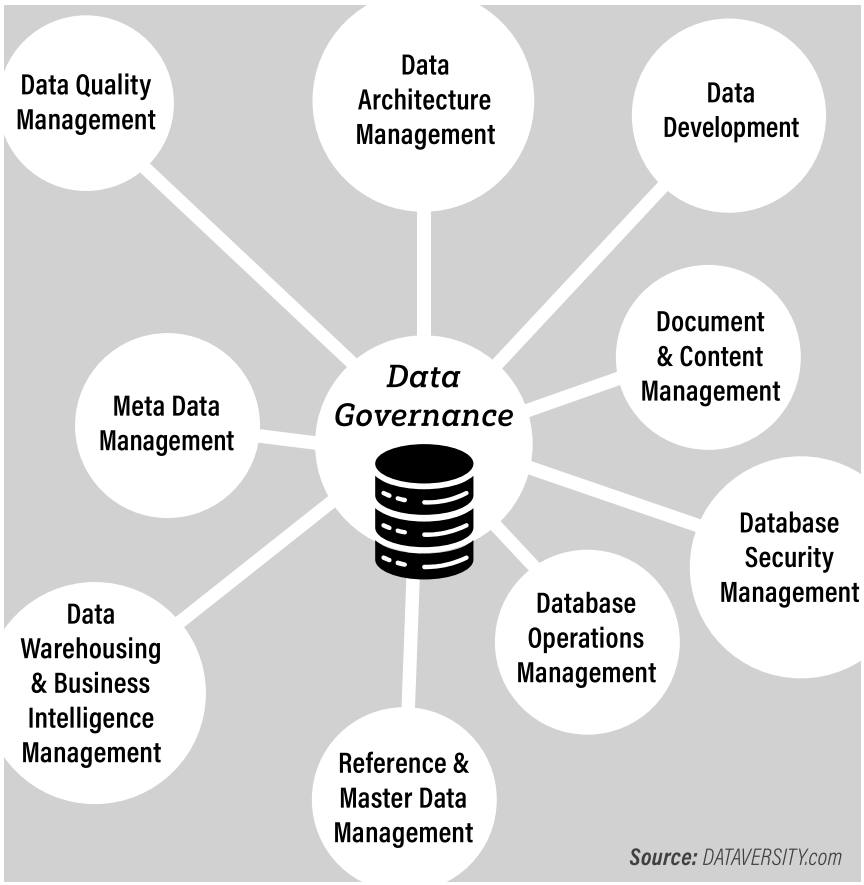
Counties should follow standards established by the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL), which include service strategy, service design, service transition, service operation and continual service improvement.

Recommendation 3: Practice robust data governance and management.

Now, more than ever, counties need to have a strategy for data collection, storage, records retention, protection, and analysis. The accuracy and relevance of county data (both structured and unstructured) is paramount to successful use of AI and GenAI.

Consider resources, such as the model provided below by DATAVERSITY.com, which offer a comprehensive approach to data governance and a framework that includes nine areas of importance, as well as guidance on how to form a data governance committee and assign roles and responsibilities.

Keep in mind any applicable local, state and/or federal laws related to protected data retention and management.



Recommendation 4: Regularly assess the current landscape of publicly available resources.

Become familiar with the various tools that are available that may be needed to implement GenAI responsibly. An updated list is available on the NACo AI Compass and Resource Hub.

The workgroup also has identified a list of existing GenAI tools with overall guidance on their use for counties. These GenAI tools may be broken down into the following categories:

- **Traditional** - Traditional AI systems are excellent at solving well-defined problems and performing repetitive tasks, yet lack the ability to adapt to new situations or generate novel ideas. Not only does this include tools such as voice assistants, but also autonomous vehicles, drones and robots.
- **Generative** – Tools that may be used in either a commercial (open and public) way, but also in an enterprise (closed to the county) way. An assessment on which approach to use should be based on the use case listing and potential sensitivity level as well as whether you are inputting data into the tool or just requesting output from the tool. Generative tools can be classified in the following categories based on type of content generated:
  - Text – OpenAI's ChatGPT, Microsoft Co-Pilot, Google Gemini (Bard), AWS Claude
  - Image - Open AI's DALL-E, Google Gemini
  - Audio - Open AI's Jukebox
  - Video – Deepfake technology
  - Code generation – GitHub Copilot by Open AI Codex
  - Creative writing and storytelling - Jasper AI, Writesonic, StoryLab

Recommendation 5: Update and expand the county's cybersecurity measures.

While AI and GenAI have many advantages, your county must be up to date on cybersecurity standards that will protect county staff and residents against breaches, especially as it pertains to data loss protection.

- Train new end users by including county AI guidelines in your regular onboarding process. Provide regular training to all end users on AI in general and then on the county AI policy.

- For GenAI, be sure to include citations for source of content and applicable disclosures and/or watermarks. Also, understand when a model may be producing an AI hallucination, which is when a GenAI model presents false information as if it were true, by verifying outputs and implementing control mechanisms.
- Be aware that the potential misuse of GenAI raises significant concerns in various areas, including county board operations. For instance, recorded meetings could be altered using GenAI when released to the public after a period of 1-2 years. Moreover, there is a risk of individuals using "meeting bots," posing as citizens to record proceedings for unauthorized purposes. Additionally, GenAI technology could be misused in phone calls to county departments, such as finance, allowing impersonation of council members' voices for fraudulent purposes like requesting money transfers.
- Be sure to have safeguards and fraud detection policies and practices.

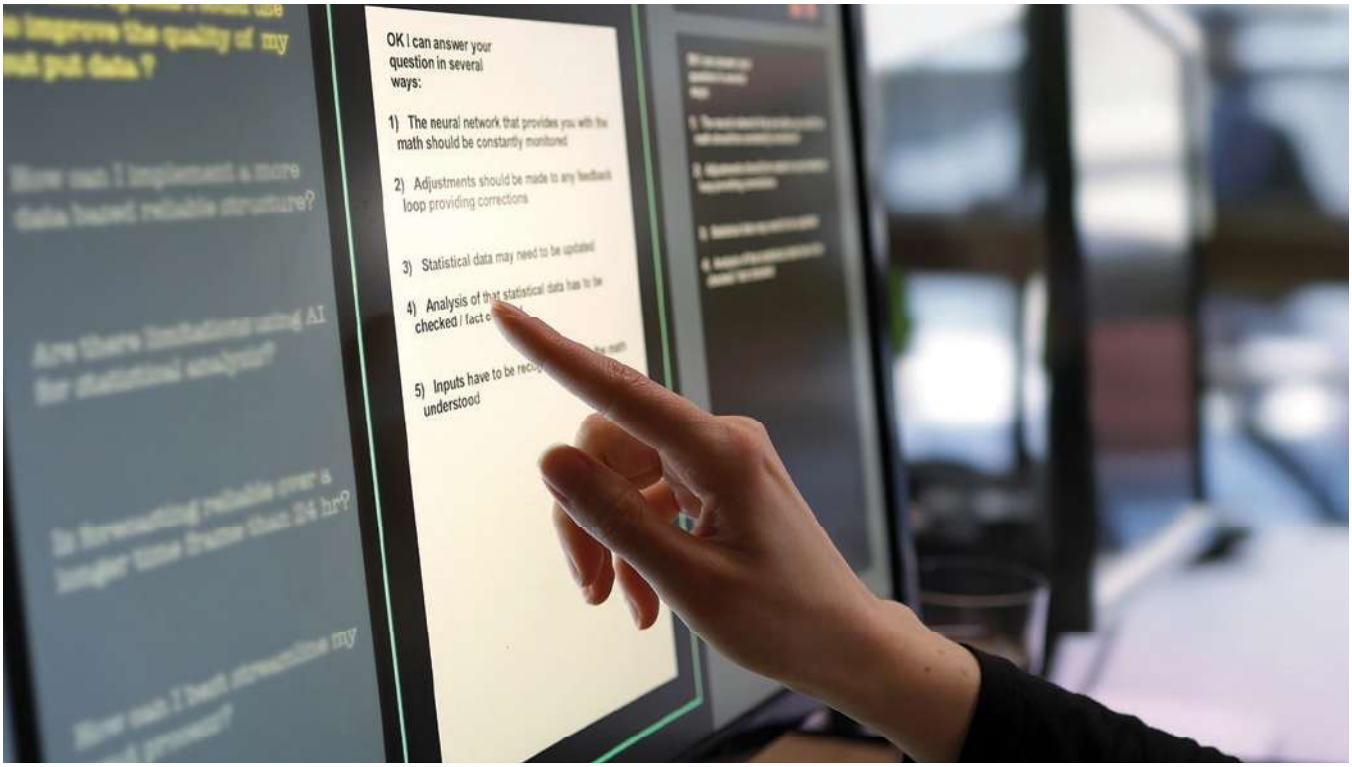
Recommendation 6: Design procedures to train data used in GenAI models.

It is important to understand that GenAI tools may be trained based on wide sets of data from the public domain. It is recommended that counties consider GenAI tools and models that can be customized to utilize an identified set of documents and other data sets that contain accurate, up-to-date, and relevant data.

Recommendation 7: Determine software, hardware and procurement minimum standards and needs.

Understanding the tools and how each works as a component of your overall GenAI strategy.

This understanding is achieved through preplanning to determine your county and departmental business needs. Most often this will be assessing the cloud software offering. Work with your IT team and/or trusted IT vendor to determine what is needed and if it is financially prudent.



A few additional action items when engaging in the procurement process:

- Embed terms and conditions into your regular procurement process that cover the county perspective of the use/reuse of data.
- Many vendors currently use or have added AI to their products. Learn how and whether they are using the county data to build other products and whether they have updated the vendor terms and conditions, and if so, what those updates are.
- Be sure your IT team is collaborating with the procurement office and counsel to provide AI and GenAI questions and requirements in all RFPs, RFIs and contracts. A sample list of questions is below:

AI software and procurement questions to ask

- Are you using GenAI in your solution?
- Is it a closed environment, where the customer data is not used to train the model that then becomes available to other customers?
- Where do you get the data that your model is trained on?
- How long do you retain the data and does your model consume new client provided data to further train the model?
- Have you done a security assessment of your model and run any GenAI solution through a code review?
- Do you have ongoing security monitoring in place to detect viruses or anomalies?
- How often do you reassess the model for data accuracy and model methodology?
- What is the computing cost as well as other underlying costs, including access and egress, and is it monthly, yearly or transactional?
- A complete template with additional questions is available through the NACo Tech Xchange Unlimited Subscription.

Scan the QR code to visit NACo's TechBrief on Key AI Procurement Questions

Prepare the Workforce: The Workforce Workgroup

The AI Workforce Workgroup assessed opportunities for the future of promoting employee skills and exploring opportunities for upskilling the county workforce to integrate AI in a productive and non-disruptive manner. This working group also considered broader dynamics on the implementation of AI and implications for the workforce, both from a job description perspective to the perspective of business use case implications. The workgroup's recommendations cover the short-term, mid-term and long-term.

Recommendation 1: Focus on skills development, training and capacity building.

- Start small with staff through transition, training and re-skilling and then build up over time.
- Provide accessible training for county staff roles, including administrative, programmatic, technical and executive leaders.
- Ensure ongoing learning and development in AI and related technologies for all workforce positions based on the level of hard skills versus generalized skill training. The training will range in complexity based on whether it is end user training, career development training, technical training or executive level training.
- Partner with educational institutions to provide ongoing AI and GenAI training. This may include community development agencies, post-secondary education opportunities, training centers, and federal and state resources.
- To build capacity, stay open-minded when reviewing job applications. The traditional "go to college and get a job" approach may be augmented by the non-traditional skills development workforce.
- Explore other retention options that include retirees. As the older workforce enters retirement, there are examples of professionals with a desire to continue giving back. Such examples exist in counties like Fairfax County, Va. and Flagler County, Fla., with more detailed case studies available on the NACo AI Compass and Resource Hub.

Recommendation 2: Consider skills acquisition options that best fit your county needs.

This may include the consideration of a singular chief AI officer or other skilled position or office that will provide the overall guidance, governance and monitoring needed to successfully implement responsible AI solutions, tools and policies. Other skilled positions to consider are:

- In-house AI developers.
- In-house AI analysts who are more focused on the outcome and business needs and how to successfully apply GenAI and AI processes.
- Contracted professionals, either individual or through a staffing firm, which may be more cost effective for a county budget both initially and long-term.
- For smaller counties, consider working strategically with existing IT staff or the county administrator's office to seek low-cost or free technical resources to educate and learn how to responsibly govern and guide the county's AI utilization.
- Consider regional collaboration with other counties as well as with your state association for staff sharing opportunities.
- Counties may also consider exploring a variety of low- or no-cost resources, including the U.S. Digital Response's online GenAI resource hub and Microsoft's LinkedIn Learning series on GenAI.

Recommendation 3: Develop a multi-year workforce strategy.

Consider how the county can re-organize efforts to fill vacancies and how to address the new paradigm of work (i.e., the rise of remote work in the post-COVID era,) through the development of a multi-year strategy that focuses on incorporating AI. This may include a short-term focus on recruitment, a mid-term focus on retention and a long-term focus on growing and identifying subject matter expertise even into retirement.

A few ideas include:

- Conduct an employee AI Idea Hackathon. An Idea Hackathon allows employs to recommend novel ways that GenAI can improve workflows and the workplace.
- Regularly assess the landscape of vendor applications of AI tools and impact on counties.
- Assess areas of improvement for the use of robotics automation and other future technologies.
- Research and participate in focus groups and pilots with AI companies on beta testing business needs that can benefit from AI's potential and workforce automation or enhancements.
- Develop an ongoing and regularly updated training regimen.
- Consider engaging private consultants that can assist management with the new paradigm and help to develop, in collaboration with existing employees, revised job descriptions for today and into the future.
- Partner with educational institutions on curriculum development regarding use of GenAI.
- Apply for apprenticeship partnerships available through the current MS-ISAC AI cybersecurity program, and study examples such as the approaches of Miami Dade College or North Carolina State University, which can be found online.
- Continue to assess vendor applications of AI tools and the potential impact on counties. This may be done through NACo resources, state associations, and other national institutions that are monitoring the further development of GenAI.

Recommendation 4: Inform and seek feedback from unions, skilled trades and the broader workforce.

Many counties have organized workforce sectors, including unions, subcontractors, skilled trades and the broader workforce. It is important to communicate early and share with the organized workforce entities the benefits and challenges that GenAI will bring to the workforce, and jointly identify areas for change and how best to address that change in a collaborative manner.

CONCLUSIONS

Key Takeaways

Roadmap to Implementing GenAI Solutions

In counties, GenAI is already making its mark in various ways. You might notice it in services you already use, test programs, projects developed within organizations, collaborations between public and private sectors and academic research. But as GenAI expands, it brings up important questions about how it is managed, funded, secured and adopted.

Next Steps

As you embark on your AI Journey, here is a proposed list of next steps:

Step 1 Review this publication in its entirety and share with your county team on AI use, implementation and policy.

Step 2 Familiarize yourself with the NACo AI Membership Survey publication located on the NACo AI Compass and Resource Hub.

Step 3 Survey your county departments to assess current utilization of AI and GenAI tools. A sample of questions to include in your survey is located in the NACo AI Primer.

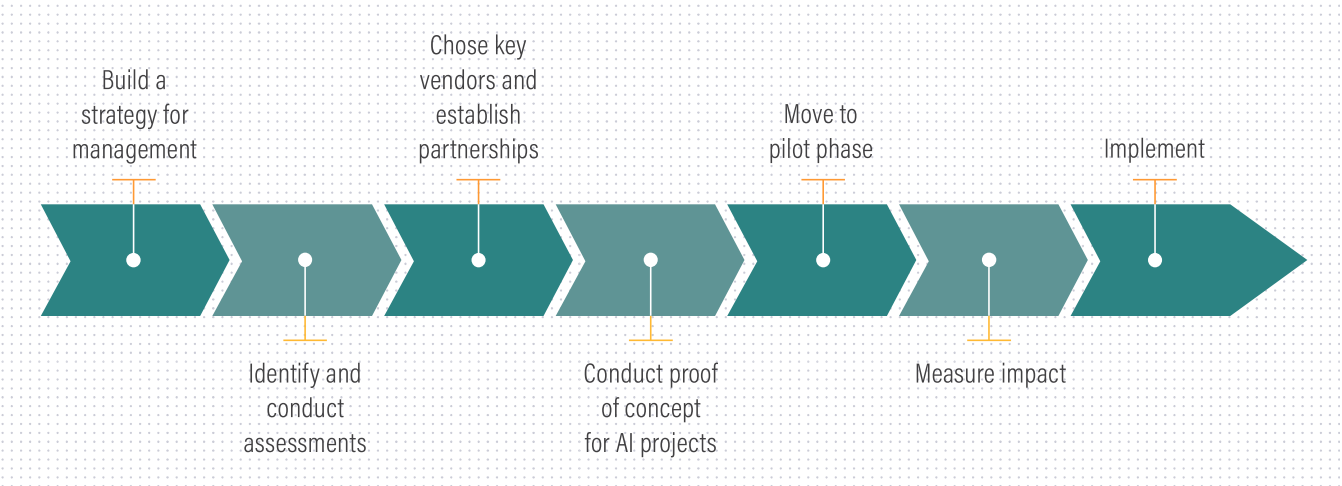
Step 4 Sign up for NACo's on-going AI webinar series. Register interest by completing the online form available through the NACo AI Compass and Resource Hub.

Step 5 Develop your GenAI policy, guidelines and standards. Sample policies, guidelines and standards may be found by joining the NACo Tech Xchange Unlimited Program.

Step 6 Make available to your workforce online educational resources such as the no-cost LinkedIn AI Series.

Step 7 Assess projects and requests for proposals that may have an AI component by scheduling an AI Idea Hackathon and utilizing available tools such as Microsoft's assessment tool.

Scan the QR code to visit NACo's AI Compass and Resource Hub



What will the future hold for GenAI?

As counties plan for responsible GenAI implementation in the next one, two, or three years, county officials should also consider the impending adoption of video and Augmented Reality (AR) technologies that will dovetail with increased AI and GenAI use. Additionally, there is growing support for deploying robots to handle routine tasks within county operations. Envisioned applications include robot-assisted chores in settings like nursing homes and jails, such as floor cleaning, table clearing, laundry delivery, book distribution, and advanced video surveillance for inmate monitoring.

There are many considerations for counties as we venture into the world of GenAI. It is important to keep in mind that humans must be an integral part of the implementation from start to finish, especially in the review process. Further, we cannot overestimate the need for high speed broadband and technology literacy to use GenAI effectively.

Other key issues to address will include helping individuals impacted with workforce disruptions and transitions, as well as the need for the on-going evaluation of energy and computing resources that are needed to run GenAI.

The possibilities are endless. Not too far in the future, some areas are already seeing applications such as the utilization of uncrewed vehicles, including drones and cars. Driverless lawn mowers or tractors for facilities management or agricultural purposes. The use of robotics to assess safety in a vehicle accident, safety in a collapsed building, and evaluation of a mud slide from a public safety perspective. With people's powerful imagination, GenAI will continue to evolve and expand.

The reason we close by mentioning the ideas waiting around the next corner is that these potential uses highlight the diverse roles GenAI could play in county operations – a role we lay the groundwork for today. The breadth of current and future possibility demands careful planning for responsible integration. Counties should set our sights in a meaningful manner that will benefit county workers and residents, improve county operations, and leverage the future of AI and GenAI technology for the better of society.

NACo AI Exploratory Committee members participate on panel at NACo's Corporate Premier

Lessons Learned

In closing, members from the NACo AI Exploratory Committee, workgroups and corporate offer some of their favorite takeaways from a year investigating the role of AI in counties, running the gamut from food for thought to specific recommendations. Below is a select list, with more quotes available on the NACo AI Compass and Resource hub:

> You have to incorporate cybersecurity – once you begin implementing AI, hackers and malicious actors will start to attempt to hack into and exploit GenAI tools. Monitoring and robust protections will be key.

> **Everyone wants GenAI, but not everyone understands the technology. Education is essential.**

> GenAI features are showing up in applications, where you may least expect it and/or don't want it (and may not be able to turn it off).

> Pay attention to who is logging into which tools when implementing GenAI into the county's internal operations and services. This will ensure you mitigate risk and manage the use of the tools responsibly.

> **Experiences are going to vary across the counties and with individuals.**

> There is an expectation that it doesn't take long to implement. It is important to know and measure how much the AI or GenAI solution will improve or meet expectations.

> There is sticker shock in procuring GenAI tools; so you may need to be more judicious in deciding who gets access to the tools, at least in the beginning of your GenAI journey.

> **Do you realize you are already using AI?**

> **Make sure your data is accurate. Know the right question to ask and have the experts to provide the right answer.**

> **You can get staff trained on GenAI, but it may take time for some.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NACo AI Exploratory Committee Members

CO-CHAIRS

Hon. Andy Brown
County Judge
Travis County, Texas

Hon. Gregg Weiss
Commissioner
Palm Beach County, Fla.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Stephen Acquario
Executive Director
NYSAC

Bryan Hill
County Administrator
Fairfax County, Va.

Scott Sorrel
County Administrator
Peoria County, Ill.

Hon. Keith Carson
Supervisor
Alameda County, Calif.

Tom Lynch
Chief Information Officer
Cook County, Ill.

Shannon Smith
Chief of Staff
Dept. of IT,
King County, Wash.

Hon. Tarryl Clark
Commissioner
Stearns County, Minn.

Hon. Chad Peterson
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Cass County, N.D.

Scott Teruya
Director of Finance
Maui County, Hawaii

Peter Crary
Senior Manager of Technology, Texas Assoc of Counties

Hon. Chokwe Pitchford
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Berrien County, Mich.

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Wake County, N.C.

Hon. Ricky Hatch
Clerk/Auditor
Weber County, Utah

Hon. Christopher Rodgers
Commissioner
Douglas County, Neb.

Founding Partners and NACo Staff

FOUNDING PARTNERS

Tyler Clark
US Government Affairs
Industry Director
Microsoft

Michael Mattmiller
Senior Director, State
Government Affairs
Microsoft

Andrew Welker
Executive Director
CAI

Jessica Killeen
Deputy for State and Local
Government Relations
Deloitte

Matthew Peters
Chief Technology
Officer
CAI

Franklin Williams
President
Data & Insights
Tyler Technologies

NACo STAFF

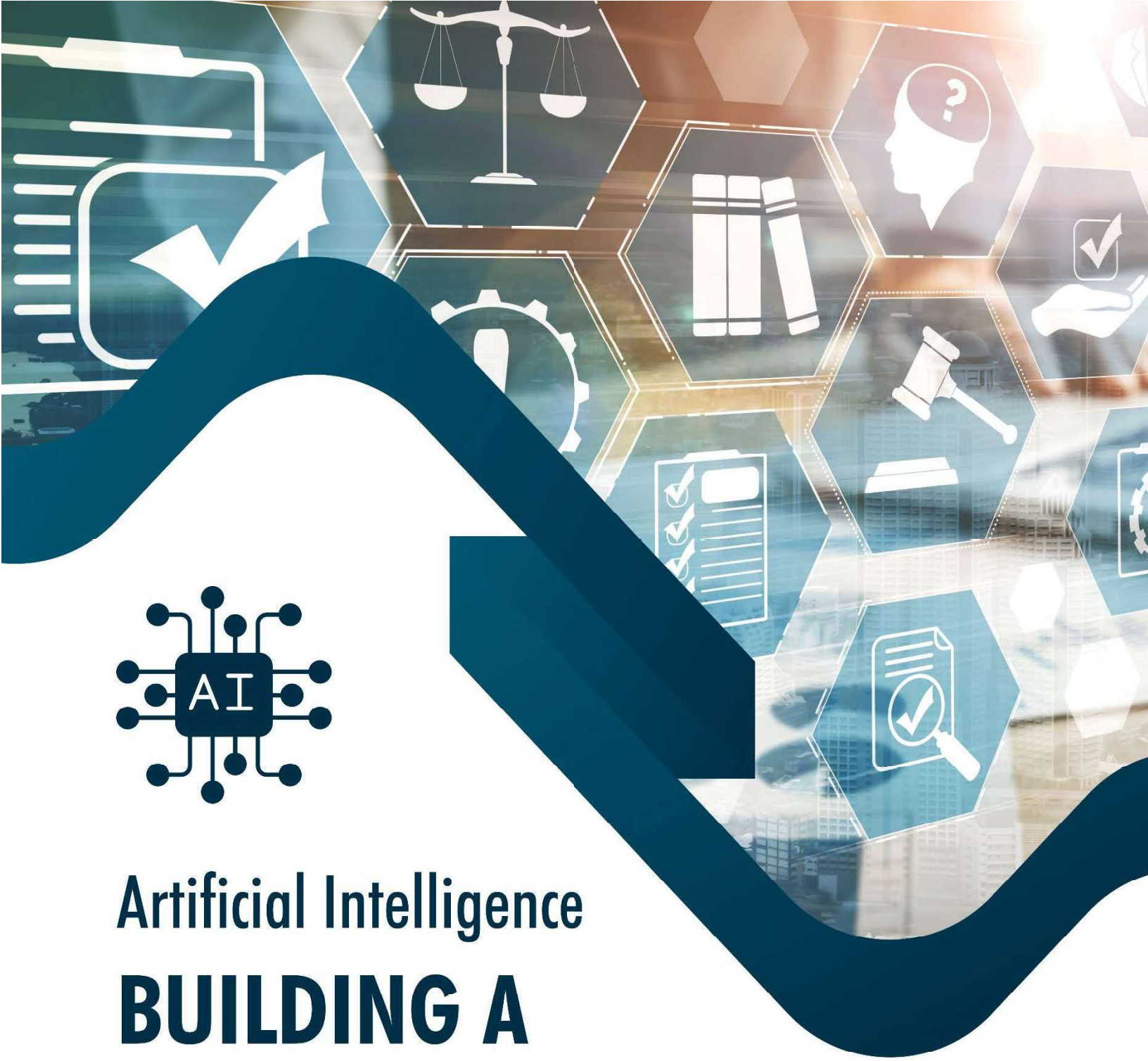
Seamus Dowdall
Associate Legislative
Director
National Association
of Counties

Cara Hackett
Associate Director of
Corporate Relations
National Association
of Counties

Rita Reynolds
Chief Information
Officer
National Association
of Counties

AGENDA ITEM #10

HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL – AI POLICY DEVELOPMENT



Artificial Intelligence

BUILDING A SMARTER, MORE INNOVATIVE ORGANIZATION

Houston-Galveston Area Council

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H-GAC AI Initiative Overview

Building a Smarter, More Innovative Organization

At H-GAC, our approach to artificial intelligence began with establishing a strong foundation of safety and responsibility. We launched this effort by releasing our AI Acceptable Use Guidelines, a clear framework designed to help staff understand what AI tools can and cannot be used for. These guidelines ensure that all experimentation with AI aligns with H-GAC's values of integrity, accountability, and innovation, while protecting data, privacy, and equity.

Since then, we've continued to grow our internal AI ecosystem by offering learning opportunities, sharing resources, and inviting staff to engage with tools in ways that enhance productivity, creativity, and collaboration.

H-GAC Artificial Intelligence Guidance

1. Purpose

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems designed to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as decision-making, language translation, and data analysis. With its ability to automate workflows, enhance decision-making, and streamline content creation, AI has the potential to revolutionize the way H-GAC operates, improving efficiency, quality, and innovation.

However, responsible use of AI is essential to address risks such as ethical concerns, legal and privacy issues, and over-reliance on automation.

To ensure thoughtful and effective use of AI, this document establishes a governance framework that aligns AI usage with H-GAC's guiding principles, data governance, security, and privacy measures. The framework defines roles and responsibilities, outlines processes to assess and manage risks, and ensures compliance with organizational policies.

By adopting these practices, H-GAC aims to:

- Protect the confidentiality, integrity, and reputation of its data and operations.
- Provide stakeholders with the tools and knowledge to use AI securely and ethically.
- Promote informed adoption of AI while maximizing its potential benefits.
- Maintain consistency with broader organizational values to foster trust and accountability.

This guidance supports the responsible integration of AI into H-GAC's operations, ensuring alignment with ethical, legal, and regulatory standards.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All H-GAC employees, agents, interns, volunteers, contractors, consultants, vendors, and third parties using AI systems on behalf of H-GAC must follow this guidance, as well as the Information Services and Acceptable Use policies.

Before submitting materials to external AI systems, director approval is required. All personnel should:

- Review and understand this guidance.
- Follow all outlined guidelines to ensure responsible and secure AI use.
- Take accountability for protecting the integrity and confidentiality of agency operations and data.

SCOPE

These guidelines apply to all systems, both automated and manual, that fall under the agency's administrative responsibility. This includes systems managed or hosted by contractors, consultants, and third parties on behalf of the agency. The policy covers all uses of artificial intelligence—regardless of its form or format—that are created, implemented, or utilized in support of the agency's business activities.

2. Guiding Principles for Responsible AI Systems

This section defines H-GAC's guidelines and requirements for the use of AI tools and services within its products, information, and operations. These guidelines establish key principles for AI systems that are purchased, configured, developed, operated, or maintained. All AI systems, along with their inputs, outputs, configurations, intentions, and impacts, must align with these principles to ensure responsible, ethical, and effective use.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Protecting confidentiality is critical when using AI tools to safeguard sensitive, proprietary, and restricted information.

- Review AI-generated content for credibility, privacy violations, and sensitive disclosures.
- Do not share or submit to external AI systems:
    - Proprietary or copyrighted agency information.
    - Data with PII, sensitive, or restricted information.
    - Information that could harm the agency's reputation or lead to regulatory/legal action.
    - Details enabling reverse engineering or system access.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND OWNERSHIP

Tracking AI use ensures efficiency, proper stewardship, and clarity of ownership for AI-generated information.

- Document sources, origins, and limitations of AI-generated data used in agency programs or services.
- AI-generated data is considered the work of the employees and their respective programs.

ACCURACY

AI systems can produce convincing but incorrect or biased results, leading to organizational risks. Users must verify accuracy and not rely solely on AI-generated outputs.

- Verify all AI-generated outputs for accuracy.
- Ensure outputs do not result in:
    - Fraudulent or inappropriate system use.
    - Biased, unethical, or harmful practices.
    - Reputational, financial, or legal harm.
    - Violations of laws, regulations, or agency policies.

Key Considerations:

- AI may hallucinate, distort facts, or lack current legal/regulatory knowledge.
- Outputs may not align with organizational culture, industry nuances, or legal standards like HIPAA or PCI.

TRANSPARENCY & EQUITY

Transparency in AI usage fosters trust, accountability, and ethical decision-making. External AI systems often require users to give attribution to the system for any output utilized. Otherwise, work produced could be invalidated for proprietary uses; risk copyright violations or conflicts with other organizations; and cause misinterpretation, confusion, or bias.

- Do not present AI-generated outputs as work directly undertaken by employees or programs.
- Avoid using AI to replace personal involvement in activities requiring direct presence.
- Use AI as a brainstorming tool but do not fully rely on it to create internal documents, especially those containing sensitive, proprietary, or confidential information.

GOVERNANCE & OVERSIGHT

Effective governance ensures that AI systems align with H-GAC goals, ethical standards, and regulatory requirements. Oversight mechanisms are crucial for monitoring compliance and mitigating risks.

- The agency will establish governance structures to evaluate and approve AI systems, including an AI Review Committee to oversee implementation and compliance.
- Employees must submit all AI-related projects to the AI Review Committee for approval to ensure alignment with the agency's standards.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

AI use must reflect H-GAC's commitment to ethical practices, avoiding harm and promoting equitable outcomes. Misuse or unethical deployment of AI could undermine trust and organizational integrity.

- Employees must ensure AI systems are used ethically, with consideration for fairness, inclusivity, and non-discrimination.
- AI-generated outputs must not contribute to unethical practices, harm, or violations of H-GAC values.

USAGE

Access to AI systems should be controlled to ensure compliance and security. Approved AI systems are listed in this document based on vendor compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

- Employees may use approved AI systems on corporate-managed devices.
- Limit AI access from production servers unless part of service workflows.
- Employees must log in to approved systems using their corporate identity.
- Contractors and third parties may use non-approved AI systems if usage aligns with agency guidelines, contracts, and regulatory requirements.

3. Next Steps & Final Guidance

Responsible use of AI systems is essential to protect the integrity, confidentiality, and trustworthiness of H-GAC's operations. By following this guidance, all employees and affiliated parties contribute to the agency's success while mitigating risks associated with AI technology.

As AI continues to evolve, H-GAC will provide additional information and updates, including expanded policies and resources for acceptable use. Stay informed by monitoring future communications, ensuring the continued success and security of our organization.

For questions or further clarification, please consult your supervisor or the Information Services team.

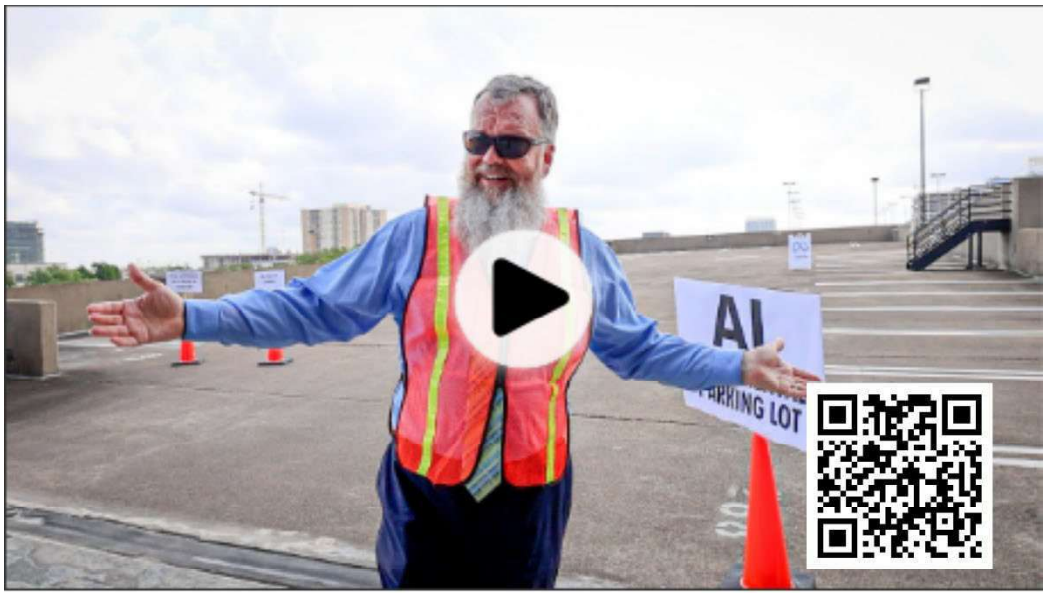
AI Activation Events

We officially kicked off H-GAC's AI journey with hands-on Activation events designed to introduce staff to our AI tools and showcase their real-world applications in a low stakes' environment.

We held three in person and one virtual event to give all staff an opportunity to participate.

The event included:

- Live demos of AI tools
- Prompt-writing workshops
- A facilitated discussion on safe and ethical AI use
- Presentation reviewing available AI tools (see end of document to view)
- Fun video visualizing the AI event (To watch, scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/HGAC_AI_ParkingLot)



Staff Email Communications

To keep staff engaged and informed, we launched a dedicated email campaign focused on practical AI use, including:

- A launch announcement introducing the tools
- Prompt-writing best practices
- Weekly follow-up emails with practice prompts
- Invitations to virtual and in-person AI sessions

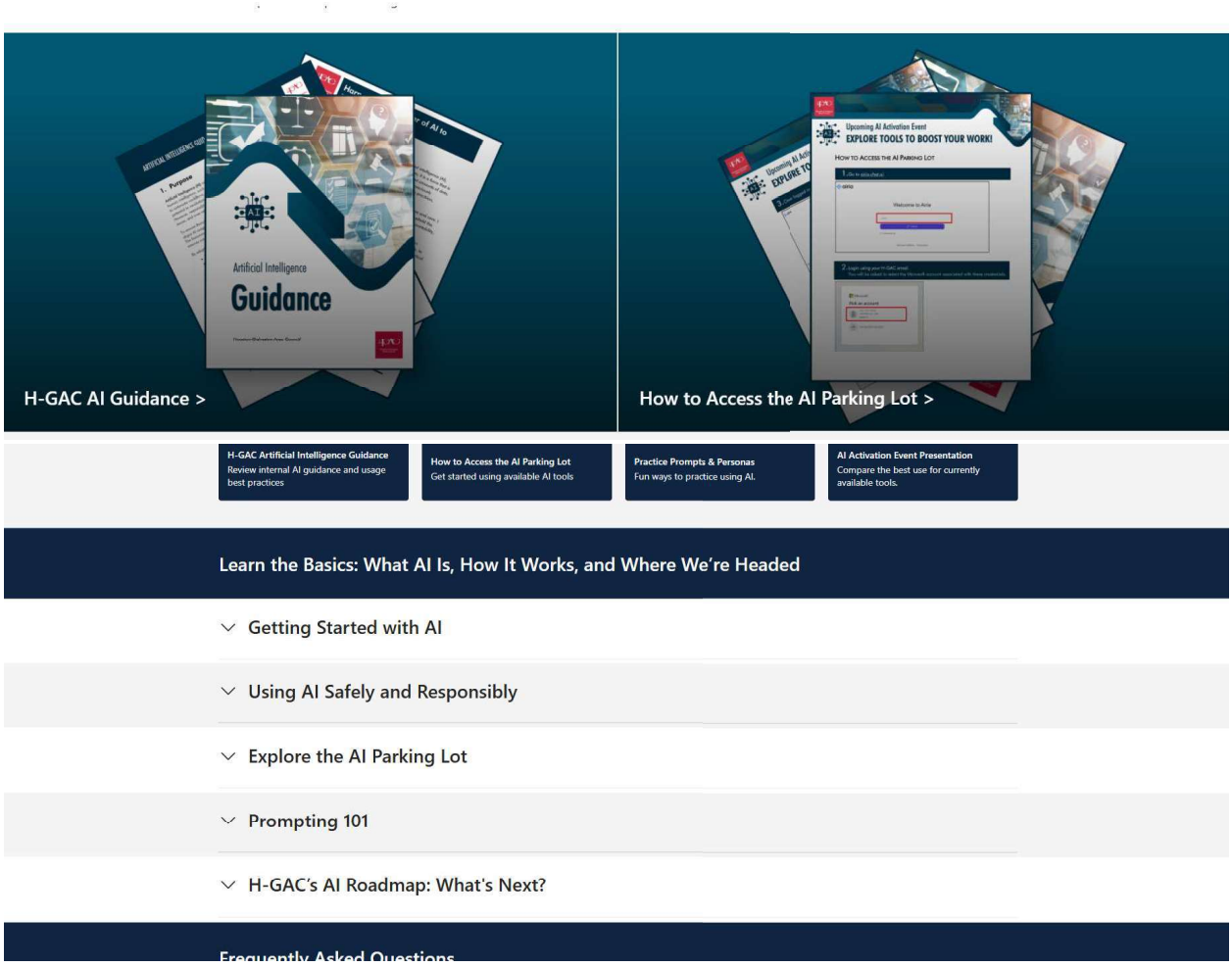
Each message reinforced that staff are not expected to be experts, but rather experimenters, as we build skills together. These email communications will continue as we progress along our AI journey.

AI Resource Hub

We created a centralized AI Resource Hub on our intranet (SharePoint) to house everything staff need to explore and apply AI at H-GAC, including:

- AI guidance and usage best practices
- Access to the AI Parking Lot
- Beginner-friendly guides and videos on the basics of AI
- Prompt writing templates and guides
- H-GAC's phased AI roadmap to see where we're headed
- Upcoming AI events

This hub is regularly updated based on feedback and will serve as the living home for all AI resources at H-GAC.



H-GAC AI Roadmap

Our AI roadmap outlines a phased approach to long-term integration, starting with experimentation and building toward adoption at scale. The roadmap includes:

- **Phase I: Intro to AI (May 2025):** Explore ChatGPT, Claude, and Llama through the AI Parking Lot. Practice using prompts, review examples, and watch intro videos. This is your time to learn and experiment.
- **Phase II: AI for Our Work (June 2025):** Begin using AI to interact with documents (e.g., upload a file and ask questions about its content), connect with SharePoint and OneDrive, and identify simple tasks that could be automated or streamlined.
- **Phase III: Launch Internal Chatbot (End of 2025):** Develop role-specific chatbots (e.g., Transportation Analyst, HR Coordinator) to support recurring questions and routine workflows within departments.
- **Phase IV: Documentation Optimization (Late Spring 2026):** Enable AI tools to securely pull and respond to internal data queries (e.g., "What contracts are expiring this quarter?").
- **Phase V: Launch External Chatbots (Summer 2026):** Create public-facing chatbots to support programs like Enterprise Solutions, allowing clients to find relevant information about vendors, contracts, locations, and more.
- **Phase VI: Data Prediction (End of 2026):** Use internal data to begin identifying patterns, trends, and factors driving change. This phase will support strategic planning and decision-making

Where We're Headed

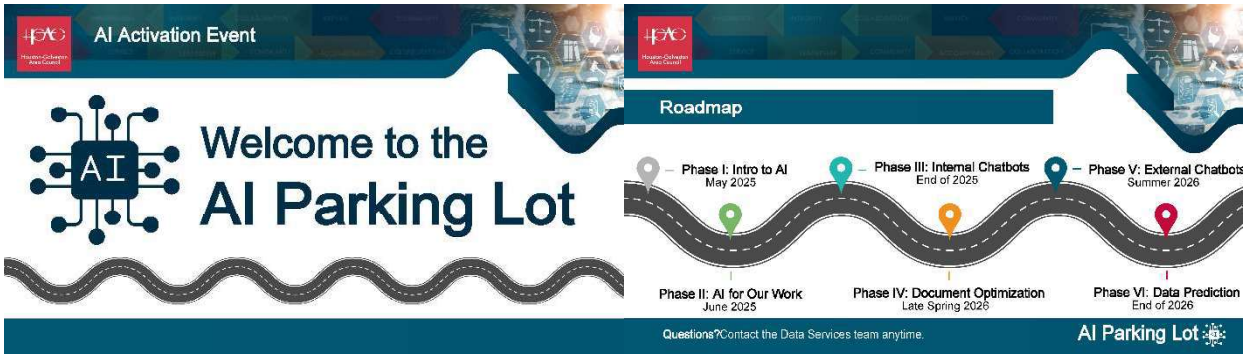
The future of AI at H-GAC is centered on thoughtful, informed integration. Over the coming months, we will:

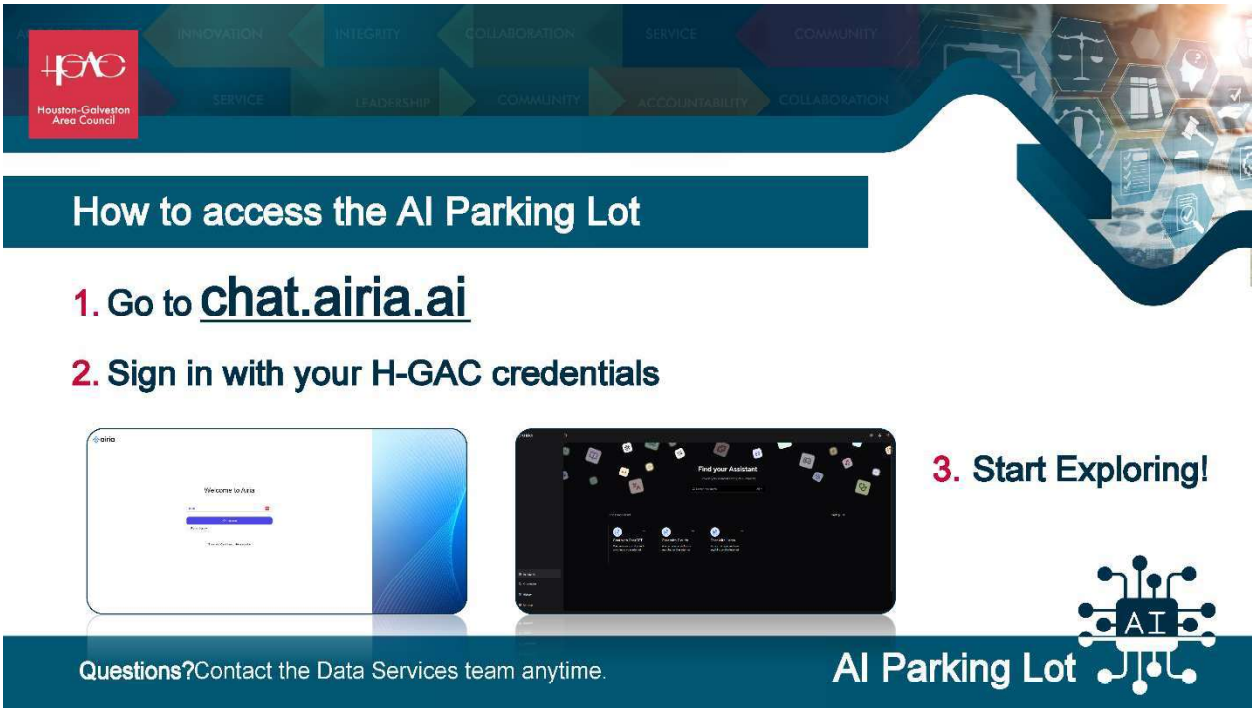
- Host more department-specific learning labs
- Expand our prompt bank with real examples from H-GAC teams
- Develop internal AI usage policies based on testing and feedback
- Continue refining tools and training to meet staff needs
- Collect success stories to highlight how AI is making a difference

As we move forward, our goal is to position H-GAC as a model of safe, effective, and creative AI use in public service.

AI presentation reviewing available AI tools:

This presentation focused on how to access the AI "Parking Lot" where available tools are available, and best use for each of these tools.





Claude – The Brainstorming & Editing Pro

Why Use Claude?

- **Excels at:** Creative brainstorming, personalized experiences, fact-checking, proofreading
- **Multimodal:** Text only
- **Languages:** Supports 12 languages

Best For:

- Generating unique, non-generic ideas
- Reviewing and editing long documents
- Personalizing content based on large data sets
- What-If Scenarios

Each AI Model can: Search the web, upload and analyze files, & summarize websites and research

Questions? Contact the Data Services team anytime.

AI Parking Lot

Llama – The Customization Expert

Why Use Llama?

- **Excels at:** Efficiency, customization, chatbots, translations
- **Multimodal:** Text only
- **Languages:** Supports 8 languages

Best For:

- Developing custom tools and workflows
- Creating efficient, lightweight applications
- Translation tasks

Each AI Model can: Search the web, upload and analyze files, & summarize websites and research

Questions? Contact the Data Services team anytime.

AI Parking Lot

ChatGPT– Your Creative Powerhouse

Why Use ChatGPT?

- **Excels at:** Creative writing, content generation, nuanced conversations
- **Multimodal:** Works with text, images, and other media
- **Languages:** Multilingual

Best For:

- Drafting emails, reports, social media posts, etc.
- Summarizing articles or research
- Brainstorming ideas with a human-like touch

Each AI Model can: Search the web, upload and analyze files, & summarize websites and research

Questions? Contact the Data Services team anytime.

AI Parking Lot

Your AI Parking Lot at a Glance

TOOL	BEST FOR	KEY FEATURES
ChatGPT	Writing, summarizing, asking questions, brainstorming	- Works with text *and* images - Easy to adjust tone - Multilingual
Llama	Quick tasks, checklists, translations, simple writing	- Fast, text-only tool - Lightweight and efficient - Supports 8 languages
Claude	Editing, outlining, creative ideas, longer content	- Strong at rewriting & feedback - Great for structure & clarity - Most natural tone

Each AI Model can: Search the web, upload and analyze files, & summarize websites and research

Questions? Contact the Data Services team anytime.

AI Parking Lot

AGENDA ITEM #11

AI IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT – REGIONAL BEST PRACTICES

NLC NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES

CITIES STRONG TOGETHER

Google

AI in Cities

REPORT

NLC NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES
CITIES STRONG TOGETHER

Google

About the National League of Cities

The National League of Cities (NLC) is the voice of America's cities, towns and villages, representing more than 200 million people. NLC works to strengthen local leadership, influence federal policy and drive innovative solutions.

Authors

Christopher Jordan, Senior Program Specialist, Urban Innovation
Julia Glickman, Senior Program Specialist, Urban Innovation
Angelina Panettieri, Legislative Director, Information Technology and Communications

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Additionally, thank you to the following members of NLC's AI Advisory Committee for their insights and time throughout this year.

Van Johnson, Mayor - Savannah, GA (co-chair)
Nikki Lee, Councilmember - Tucson, AZ (co-chair)
Jonas Anderson, Mayor - Cave City, AR
Gloria Betcher, Councilor- Ames, IA
Nathaniel Booker, Mayor - Maywood, IL
Susan Farber, Councilmember - Dubuque, IA
Tim Kelly, Mayor - Chattanooga, TN
Josh Linsenbach, IT Director - Pennsylvania League of Cities
Bart Littlejohn, Commissioner - Lawrence, KS
Rob Lloyd, Deputy City Manager - San Jose, CA
Lisa Matichak, Vice Mayor - Mountain View, CA
Denise Riedl, CIO - South Bend, IN
Tim Rosener, Mayor - Sherwood, OR
Kevin Kramer, Councilor - Louisville, KY
Vanetta Pledger, CIO- Alexandria, VA
Byron Amos, Councilmember- Atlanta, GA
Janice Zahn, Councilmember - Bellevue, WA
Murali Srinivasan, Vice Mayor - Sunnyvale, CA
Andrea Barefield, Councilmember - Waco, TX

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Foreword

AI Advisory Committee Co-Chairs

The state of artificial intelligence today introduces us to applications and tools that were nearly impossible to imagine a few short years ago. Organizations across nearly every industry are grappling with how to navigate this crossroads. As local officials, we consider opportunities by first thinking about how we might deliver better outcomes for our residents. AI, like any technology, will not reinvent public government alone, but it does unlock tools and capacity to build more efficient, equitable and resident-centered futures for our communities.

We are pleased to present this report and toolkit on AI and cities. This resource represents a year's work by the National League of Cities' AI Advisory Committee. Formed at the beginning of 2024, our committee brought together 20 local government leaders – elected officials, technology and innovation executives, and state municipal league leaders – to better understand and evaluate the role and impact of AI-powered tools in local government. Our work centered on three critical themes.

First, we focused on demystifying AI to better understand the technology and its practical implications for local governments. We learned that while many cities are established AI users, recent advancements in the technology have significantly expanded accessibility and potential applications in cities, towns and villages of all sizes.

Second, we evaluated how local governments can use AI-powered tools responsibly and ethically. AI may expose risks such as misuse, opaque decision-making, and potentially harmful outcomes when improperly governed. AI implementation requires us to consider new strategies to manage these externalities, while reinforcing existing security and safety practices.

Finally, we explored the implementation of AI-powered tools in cities. AI is opening doors to creative practices for cities to improve services, assist their staff, and make better decisions. This report includes case studies demonstrating the benefits of AI-powered tools in cities.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to AI adoption in cities. As you consider emerging tools, we hope this resource serves as a starting point to help you envision the role and impact of AI in your community.

Van Johnson
Mayor, Savannah, GA

Nikki Lee
Councilmember, Tucson, AZ

National League of Cities

As the National League of Cities celebrates our 100th anniversary and we reflect on what the past century has meant for our cities, towns and villages, we're also looking ahead to what the next one hundred years will bring. I hear from local officials every day who are excited about the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) to improve efficiency, solve problems, and ignite local economies. On the flip side, I also hear from leaders who worry about the risks of AI for the displacement of workers, public disinformation and new cybersecurity and data privacy threats. Over the last year, NLC's Artificial Intelligence Advisory Committee has played a crucial role in exploring these topics. AI is already starting to change how we do business and move through the world -- and these changes will only become more pronounced. NLC remains committed to supporting local governments as they navigate our changing world.

NLC's AI Advisory Committee has worked hard throughout the year to help local leaders really understand what those risks and benefits are, so they can chart a path forward. The committee's work helped NLC create resources for local governments to better understand AI, without exaggerations or fearmongering. This report and toolkit are a product of their work. I am grateful to the members of the committee for their work on this complex and delicate subject.

This report focuses on how cities can harness the power of AI to enhance public services and improve the quality of life for residents. From optimizing traffic flow and reducing energy consumption, to enhancing public safety and streamlining administrative tasks, AI offers a wealth of opportunities for cities to become more efficient, sustainable and livable. For city officials who are new to AI, the toolkit can help them identify ways their cities can best adopt new technologies.

Thank you to the AI Advisory Committee and Centennial Sponsor, Google for bringing this report and toolkit to life. These resources are invaluable as we help cities, towns and villages navigate this new technology.

Sincerely,

Clarence Anthony
CEO and Executive Director
National League of Cities

Google

Artificial intelligence holds immense potential to benefit communities of all sizes. Performing tasks that range from the everyday to the extraordinary, AI is positioned to help the National League of Cities (NLC) members improve the lives of their residents in a myriad of ways.

We're already seeing incredible progress: breaking down language barriers with Google Translate, providing early warnings of natural disasters with Flood Hub and FireSat, and helping local businesses reach new customers.

But perhaps the biggest opportunity AI presents is to help city governments streamline operations and better meet the needs of their constituents.

However, not all cities are utilizing or have access to AI. This risks turning the digital divide that has plagued many cities into an AI divide, with lasting impacts on urban communities.

City governments across the country have a vital role to play in this effort and stand to be big beneficiaries of AI, provided they think and act strategically. This NLC AI Toolkit is designed to help. It focuses on how cities can harness the power of AI to enhance public services and improve the quality of life for residents.

This toolkit builds on our continued work to deliver on our AI Opportunity Agenda, supporting governments in focusing not only on harms to avoid and risks to mitigate – but on opportunities to seize. Responsible and bold AI innovation that promotes public trust and adoption continues to be our focus at Google. Guided by our AI Principles, we continue to work in collaboration with industry partners, academia, and governments worldwide to develop and deploy AI with a focus on building solutions for society's biggest challenges.

We are excited to partner with the National League of Cities, providing tools, resources, and expertise to help its members leverage AI in ways that meet the unique needs of their communities. We believe that by working together, we can unlock the transformative power of AI to build a better future for everyone.

Karan Bhatia
Vice President & Global Head
Government Affairs & Public Policy Google

Exploring AI in Cities

REPORT

Understanding AI for Local Governments

DEMYSTIFYING AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is not a new concept; it has existed for decades. However, recent advancements have brought AI to the forefront of technological discussions, with potential to revolutionize the workforce, expand productivity, and transform various aspects of society and governance.

AI refers to technologies that simulate human perception, behavior, and decision-making.[1] It's important to understand that AI is an umbrella term encompassing various applications that often have little in common apart from learning from data. Like other general purpose technologies such as the internet and electricity, AI's impact depends on how it's applied.

AI

AI refers to technologies that simulate human perception, behavior and decision-making.

AI

Generative AI

AI that can create new content such as text, images, audio, or code based on patterns learned from existing data.

AI has seen rapid advancements, partly due to increased availability of computing resources and data. AI has garnered significant attention due to advancements and increased accessibility of Generative AI applications.[2] This subset of AI models can generate new content, relying on machine learning techniques to produce statistically probable outputs based on input data. These models can create content in the form of text, images, videos, and sound.

The release of generative AI applications in 2022 and 2023 allowed many to personally experience this technology for the first time. The ability of AI tools to comprehensively respond to written questions and generate new images and videos caught the attention of those who hadn't previously considered the power of this technology.

Generative AI is expected to have a significant economic impact in coming years.[3] It may enable workers to focus on more creative and meaningful tasks rather than mundane ones that can be automated. It is critical that city officials understand their role in harnessing the potential of AI applications to modernize city services, and implement strong guardrails to responsibly implement and operate these new services.

KEY AI BACKGROUND CONCEPTS

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a field of science concerned with building computers and machines that can reason, learn, and act in such a way that would normally require human intelligence or that involves data whose scale exceeds what humans can analyze.

Natural Language Processing (NLP)

A branch of AI focused on enabling computers to understand, interpret, and generate human language.[4]

Computer Vision

A branch of AI focused on training computers to understand and interpret visual information.

Machine Learning

A subset of AI that enables computers to learn from data and improve their performance on a task over time without being explicitly programmed.

Types of AI Relevant to Local Governments

	APPLICATIONS	POTENTIAL RISK
PREDICTIVE AI Systems that analyze patterns in existing data to make predictions about future events or trends.	Anticipating traffic patterns, predicting maintenance requirements for city infrastructure, assessing risk for emergency management.	Historical data may contain biases that manifest in predictions, potentially leading to unfair or inaccurate outcomes without adequate human review and oversight.
GENERATIVE AI AI that can create new content such as text, images, audio, or code based on patterns learned from existing data.[5]	Translation services for public meetings and 311, creating data visualizations for urban planning projects, chatbots to assist staff or respond to resident inquiries.	Using generative AI that has not been procured through city government could place city and resident information at risk for exposure. Additionally, residents should be educated through literacy campaigns to use AI-generated content carefully, considering that models can make mistakes.
PERCEPTIVE AI AI tools designed to interpret and understand sensory inputs, primarily relying on computer vision and natural language processing.	Traffic monitoring and management, public safety and surveillance systems, environmental monitoring (e.g., air quality, waste management).	Perceptive AI in city government presents opportunities for enhanced services and safety using sensors and cameras. It also presents a risk of collecting and storing excessive personal data, which may violate data protection policies. However, careful data management, transparency, and consent are crucial to protect residents' privacy and uphold data protection standards.

THE IMPACT OF AI ON THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Adoption of AI tools is impacting the workforce across sectors, and local government is not exempt. Local leaders are monitoring the impact that AI will have on their communities. They are considering the opportunities that AI presents for their local economy and starting to explore the use of generative AI within government operations and services.

This technology has the potential to improve government services and expand the capacity of local governments, but also comes with risks that governments must closely consider.

While many cities are exploring, testing, or implementing generative AI, most have not developed staff capabilities and use policies. An October 2023 survey by Bloomberg Philanthropies found that 96% of mayors expressed interest in using generative AI[6]. While only 2% of respondents were actively implementing generative AI, 69% reported that they were exploring or testing the technology for their municipality. Mayors envisioned that Generative AI will be most useful to address transportation and infrastructure issues, followed by public safety.

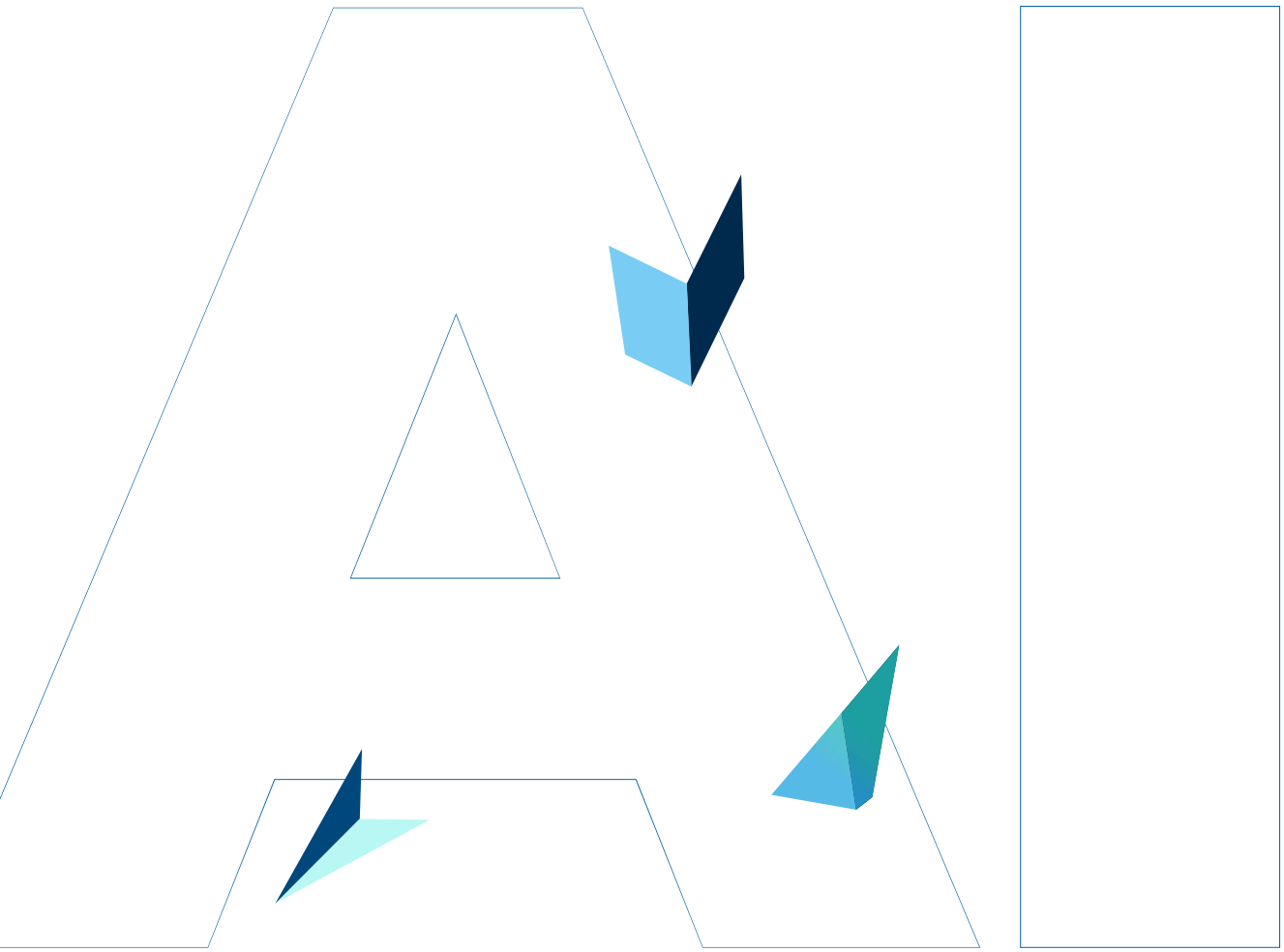
It's important to note that while local government use cases of generative AI are just starting to emerge, other forms of AI, such as predictive AI, have been used by local governments for years. For example, law enforcement agencies have long used automatic license plate readers, powered by perceptive AI, to help locate stolen vehicles and investigate other crimes.[7]

According to Bloomberg Philanthropies' 2023 survey:

96%

of mayors expressed interest in using generative AI

Responsible AI Use for Local Governments



As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly integrated into local government operations, it is crucial to understand both the potential risks and the principles of responsible use. Laws and proposed legislation to govern AI technologies and their use continue to evolve at a rapid pace. This section outlines key considerations for ethical AI implementation in municipal settings.

UNDERSTANDING POTENTIAL RISKS

AI can reflect or amplify existing biases present in training data.	AI tools are trained on real-world data and designed by real people. That means they can reflect existing biases. Local governments should use AI carefully to avoid perpetuating or amplifying existing societal biases, leading to unfair treatment of vulnerable communities. This could manifest in various ways, such as reinforcing inequitable resource allocation to discriminatory practices in law enforcement or social services.[8]
AI can produce inaccurate or misleading information.	Generative AI has the capability to produce content quickly, but it can also generate inaccurate or false information. For local governments, relying solely on AI-generated content without checking the output could lead to inaccuracies This risk is particularly acute in public communications.
AI algorithms can lack transparency and explainability.	The complexity of AI tools can make it difficult to explain how decisions are made, leading to a lack of transparency. This "black box" problem is particularly concerning for local governments, which have a responsibility to be transparent and accountable to their residents. To maintain trust in local government, residents must understand how AI is being used to make decisions that affect their lives. Governments have a responsibility to distinguish between fully automated decision making and determinations that might be informed by technologies such as AI, but with human inputs and review processes.
AI tools require human involvement for accountability.	As AI tools are increasingly used in government operations and decision making, local governments have a responsibility to ensure human accountability for the AI tools in use. They should also build human oversight into processes involving AI to reduce potential errors.
AI tools may pose risks to data privacy and security.	Local governments handle vast amounts of sensitive personal data about their residents. Closed AI tools that have been procured or approved by their IT departments minimize risk. This will prevent sharing sensitive information with applications that may not be secure or may retain the data. Additionally, like any software, AI tools themselves could become targets for cyberattacks, potentially leading to large-scale data breaches.

CITIES LEADING WITH RESPONSIBLE AI STRATEGIES

There are many ways cities can manage the potential risks of using AI while still capturing benefits. Some municipalities have implemented staff guidelines and use policies to ensure that AI-powered tools are handled with proper care and attention. NLC's review of publicly available municipal policies and guidelines revealed six themes that underlie AI governance plans.

Accountability

Municipal staff using AI-powered tools have the obligation to be responsible for their outcomes. Mechanisms should be put in place to track, audit and address issues of adverse effects and misconduct. Accountability requires the delegation of clear roles and responsibilities among stakeholders and decision-makers involved in AI development and deployment.

- Provide clear documentation for residents whenever AI plays a substantive role in decision making.
- Create an AI oversight position or committee to monitor AI use across city departments. For example, **Washington, D.C.** hosts an AI Values Alignment Group composed of department heads and the public to oversee that the city's AI use is consistent with their commitment to AI Principles.[9]

Transparency

The processes, decisions and outcomes of AI tools should be made available and understandable to the public. This includes reporting out who is responsible for AI applications, how they benefit residents, and what city data they use. Transparency aims to build trust and meaningful avenues for residents to provide feedback.

- Clearly cite generative AI use in public-facing content and media.
- Host regular public forums to discuss the city's AI initiatives and gather feedback.
- Develop a public resource that discloses AI tools or applications in use by the city. For example, the **City of Lebanon, NH** maintains an Algorithm Registry to provide transparency on its use of AI.[10]

Privacy Protection

Individuals' personal data should be protected from unauthorized use. AI use should comply with existing laws, regulations and practices regarding private data. City workers should only use AI tools procured or approved by their IT departments. Sensitive information should not be shared openly with AI tools.

- Align AI use with existing data and privacy policies.
- Implement a privacy-by-design approach in all AI projects.
- Conduct regular algorithmic risk assessments to ensure personal or sensitive information is not exposed through AI models or violates citizens' privacy. For example, the City of **San Jose** conducts an algorithmic impact assessment and mandates that vendors complete an AIFactSheet to demonstrate how they source and manage data.[11]

Fairness & Equity

Incorporating fairness and equity should be intentional so that AI tools and applications do not create or exacerbate inequity. Measures should be taken to mitigate any discrimination and biased outcomes. Leaders should promote equal access to AI's benefits.

- Ensure diverse representation in AI project development teams and community engagement processes.
- Conduct regular assessments of AI uses used in critical areas like education, housing and law enforcement. For example, before implementing generative AI tools, **Seattle** requires its employees to work with their department's Racial and Social Justice Initiative team to complete the Racial Equity Toolkit, which outlines specific measures to evaluate AI-generated content for accuracy and freedom from bias or discrimination against protected groups.[12]

CITIES USING AI

Washington, D.C. hosts an AI Values Alignment Group composed of department heads and the public

---

The **City of Lebanon, NH** maintains an Algorithm Registry to provide transparency on its use of AI

The **City of San Jose** conducts an algorithmic impact assessment

Safety & Security

Leaders should ensure that AI tools are reliable and protected from threats. This principle involves implementing safeguards to prevent harm to people and property, ensuring the AI tools perform as intended, and protecting them from cyber-attacks and other malicious activities. It also includes contingency planning for potential failures or adverse scenarios involving AI technologies.

- Implement rigorous testing protocols for AI before deployment.
- Develop incident response plans for potential AI system failures or breaches.
- **New York City**'s Artificial Intelligence Action Plan establishes the city's intention to develop an AI Risk Assessment and Project Review Process so that all AI projects will be assessed on the bases of data privacy, reliability, cyber security and more. The Office of Technology and Innovation will develop this process for ensuring the safety of AI tools, and will continuously update the process as new use cases and guidance emerge.[13]

Education & Training

Individuals should be equipped with the knowledge and skills to use AI effectively and responsibly. Training should be provided to educate employees on AI ethics and use cases. Training should be continuous and adapted with emerging applications of the technology.

- Partner with private sector and local educational institutions to develop AI literacy courses for staff.
- Create an AI resource center to provide ongoing support and information to staff and residents. For example, the **City of Chattanooga, TN**, has created a "Prompt Library" to help its staff effectively use generative AI tools like Gemini or ChatGPT. This library contains a collection of pre-written prompts designed to guide AI models in performing specific tasks. By providing staff with these carefully crafted prompts, the city aims to streamline the process of generating AI-assisted materials and ensure consistent, high-quality outputs across various departments.

CITIES USING AI

New York City's Artificial Intelligence Action Plan establishes the city's intention to develop an AI Risk Assessment and Project Review Process.

The **City of Chattanooga, TN**, has created a "Prompt Library" to help its staff effectively use generative AI tools like Gemini or ChatGPT.

AI POLICY SNAPSHOTS

The following examples demonstrate various approaches taken by cities to govern internal use of AI. For further examples of local policies and guidance aimed at governing the use of AI tools by municipal staff, please see NLC's AI Policy Dashboard.[14]

Responsible Experimentation in Boston, MA

Boston's interim guidelines on generative AI emphasize responsible experimentation. The policy encourages city staff to fact-check AI-generated content, disclose AI use in public-facing content and written reports, and avoid the sharing of sensitive information with AI tools. The city also acknowledges that generative AI, like all technology, is a tool, and users remain accountable for its outcomes.[15]

Ethical Governance in Tempe, AZ

Tempe's Ethical Artificial Intelligence Policy facilitates collaboration between all departments and IT for AI reviews, including semi-annual evaluations of AI solutions. The policy establishes a Technology and Innovation Steering Committee to oversee monitoring, reporting, public awareness and non-compliance measures. Additionally, it directs IT to create AI review processes and provide training programs to promote AI literacy, ethics, privacy protection and responsible AI practices among employees involved in AI solutions.[16]

Transparency Efforts in San Jose, CA

San Jose has published Generative AI Guidelines that are regularly updated in response to changing laws, technologies and best practices. Employees must record their use of generative AI through the city's generative AI reporting form and are encouraged to join AI working groups to help enhance the city's guidelines. The city also maintains an algorithm register to review and approve of all AI tools in use. Their AI review framework mandates that all algorithmic systems must be assessed by the city's Digital Privacy Office.[17]

Procurement and Accountability in Seattle, WA

Seattle's policy mandates that all software, even free or pilot products, must be submitted for approval through the city's procurement process.[18] The policies also address intellectual property, attribution, reducing bias and harm, data privacy, and public records. Seattle IT plans to collaborate with stakeholders to research future policy implications, indicating a commitment to continual improvement.[19]

Harnessing AI for Local Governments

Local governments of all sizes face a universal challenge: balancing limited resources with the imperative to maximize value for residents. Cities grapple with a range of priorities but are constrained by the resources available to address them. The rise of AI across various sectors has prompted government officials to explore how these emerging tools can drive innovation in the public sector to enhance existing priorities and enable the pursuit of new ones.

The NLC AI Advisory Committee identified dozens of potential use cases for AI to energize the public sector. Their findings coalesce around three main categories: enhancing city services, supporting employee tasks, and bolstering analytics and decision-making processes.

IMPROVING CITY SERVICES

The responsible use of AI technologies can help local governments deliver better products, services and outcomes for their residents. Across the public sector, there is enthusiasm for AI to make city information available in more languages, transcribing city meetings, help monitor and assess infrastructure conditions, review permitting requests, and more.

The Committee identified several ways AI can enhance service delivery but expressed the most interest in the potential for improved public communication and engagement, 311 services, and public safety.

CITIES USING AI

Dearborn, MI
Residents can now use translation to read online content and get assistance from a virtual chatbot .

Sunnyvale, CA
Residents who attend in-person city council meetings have access to closed captioning that offers in-time translation services.

Washington, D.C.
The AI assistant, called DC compass, can provide statistical summaries and generate visualizations of data.

Ann Arbor, MI
Ask Ann helps users find information about city services and projects, submit service requests, and contact staff

Offering Translation Services in Dearborn, MI

More than half of Dearborn's population of 110,000 residents speaks a language other than English at home. By leveraging AI, Dearborn is improving the accessibility of information available on the city website.[20] Residents can now use translation to read online content and get assistance from a virtual chatbot.

Assisting Public Meetings in Sunnyvale, CA

The city of Sunnyvale is creating more inclusive public meetings by utilizing AI-enabled translation services. Residents who attend in-person city council meetings have access to closed captioning that offers in-time translation services.

Accessing Open Data in Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C. is piloting an AI assistant integrated with the jurisdiction's open data portal. This generative AI-powered chat interface lets users ask and receive answers related to the datasets on Open Data DC. The AI assistant, called DC compass, can provide statistical summaries and generate visualizations of data[21]. For example, DC compass can generate a map of bike lanes in DC, or tell you how many traffic accidents occurred in a given year. The tool was created in alignment with the Districts AI Values, which provide commitments to accountability, fairness, sustainability, and other key areas.

Chatbot Assistant in Ann Arbor, MI

The City of Ann Arbor has introduced "Ask Ann," an AI-powered web chat assistant integrated into the city's website. This chatbot uses large language model technology to provide 24/7 assistance to residents. Ask Ann helps users find information about city services and projects, submit service requests, and contact staff. The chatbot can communicate in 71 different languages. If users need additional help, they can send a message through Ask Ann for follow-up by city staff during business hours.[22]

ASSISTING EMPLOYEE TASKS

AI can help employees with everyday tasks. While there is uncertainty around the impact of generative AI on the workforce, early studies suggest that tools like chatbot assistants help new and lesser-skilled employees. Other AI applications help employees with permitting, coding, and emergency services.

- Summarizing content like meeting notes, transcripts or articles
- Assessing permitting applications to determine whether a plan adheres to the code
- Answering questions about the city budget
- Assisting with grant writing and ensuring that requirements are met in each grant application
- Optimizing transportation routes

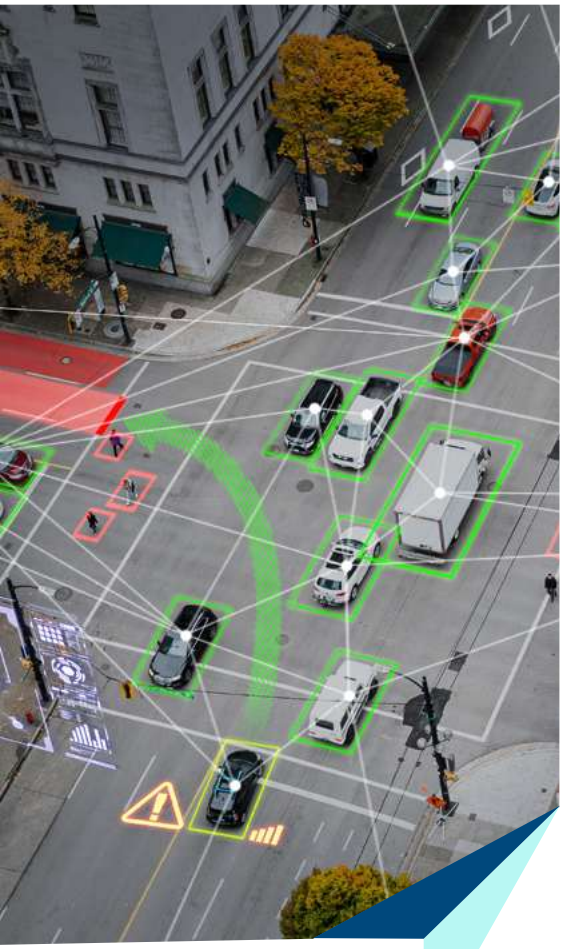
ANALYTICS AND DECISION MAKING

Water Infrastructure Management in Tucson, AZ

Tucson's Water Department uses AI software to manage its water pipe system. The AI analyzes patterns from past pipe failures to predict which pipes are most likely to fail next. It assesses over 4,600 miles of water pipes, assigning risk scores to each segment. This helps the city prioritize maintenance and repairs, focusing resources on the most critical areas. The system provides quarterly updates, allowing Tucson to proactively manage its water infrastructure, make data-driven decisions, and potentially save costs on unnecessary replacements.[23]

4,600

miles of water lines analyzed by Tucson, AZ using AI software to prevent pipe failures.



Seattle, WA
Seattle, in partnership with Google Research, is participating in Project Green Light to enhance traffic analysis.

Detecting Potholes and Blight in Memphis, TN

The City of Memphis implemented an AI solution to address potholes and property blight. By analyzing video footage from city vehicles and combining it with existing data sources, the AI system can identify potholes with high accuracy. Similarly, the technology examines various property-related data to predict areas at risk of urban decay.[24]

Public Safety in Warner Robins, GA

The City of Warner Robins, Georgia is leveraging AI to improve public safety and emergency management. The city has implemented a Digital Twin project that uses AI and machine learning to analyze crime data. This system helps optimize the placement of cameras for real-time license plate monitoring across the city. The use of smart cameras can pair with audio technology to detect gunshots and improve responses even before 911 is called.[25]

Project Green Light in Seattle, WA

Seattle, in partnership with Google Research, is participating in Project Green Light to enhance traffic analysis and provide recommendations.[26] Leveraging Google Maps data, the AI-powered tool identifies inefficient signal timings. These insights support city traffic engineers in making decisions that can lead to smoother traffic flow and reduced emissions. Early implementations showcase promising results, with the potential to slash stops by 30% and CO2 emissions by 10%.[27]

Increasing Graduation Rates in New York City, NY

AI-produced risk assessment scores can help identify vulnerable individuals for targeted interventions. For example, John Jay College, part of the City University of New York (CUNY) system, partnered with DataKind, a nonprofit organization, to develop an AI model aimed at increasing student graduation rates.[28] The model uses data such as years of enrollment, grades, and credit hours to identify students at high risk of dropping out. These students then receive proactive support, including one-on-one coaching from advisors. The implementation of this AI-driven intervention program increased John Jay's senior graduation rate from 54% to 86% over two years.

BARRIERS TO CITY AI USE

The NLC AI Advisory Committee collaborated to identify barriers to AI Implementation:

Resource constraints

AI has a start-up cost of staff and financial resources that many cities may not be able to accommodate in their current budgets. This initial investment requires concerted planning and political will.

Organizational culture change

City staff or elected officials may have concerns around using this technology to change the way things are done. It is important to work to shift the culture in your city to enable technological innovation.

Political considerations

Limited terms of elected officials often limits their ability to make the longer term investments needed to adopt new technologies like AI. The political will for these changes could come and go.

CITIES USING AI

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Warner Robins, GA

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New York, NY

The implementation of this AI-driven intervention program increased John Jay's senior graduation rate from

54% to 86%

Fear and privacy concerns

Some cities are afraid to utilize AI because of concerns around privacy and cybersecurity. Cities may not have the data privacy practices in place to implement AI tools in a safe and secure manner.

Data literacy and readiness

City staff may not have foundational data literacy skills that could be seen as a prerequisite to adopting AI. There is a need for foundational data literacy training.

Digital equity concerns

AI enabled tools require high speed internet. Many municipalities do not have universal access to high-speed internet, so there are concerns about equity if AI tools are only accessible by certain households or in areas where high speed internet is available.

Access to infrastructure

Metro areas lacking access to data centers face significant limitations in AI adoption. Data centers provide the crucial computing power and storage capacity needed to train and deploy sophisticated AI models. Without them, cities struggle to process the massive datasets required for AI applications in areas like transportation, public safety, and healthcare.[29]

AI in Global Cities

Looking at cities outside of the United States offers a broader and more varied set of use cases of AI for local governance. Cooperating and learning with peer municipalities, both within the United States and internationally, can help municipalities make sense of this technology and imagine its uses within their own communities.

USE CASES

Dublin, Ireland: Public Sentiment Analysis

Dublin uses AI to analyze social media posts, helping the city understand public opinion. An AI system processes residents' social media content, producing a monthly report called "The Dublin Beat." This report shows trending topics in different areas of the city and how public sentiment is changing over time. By using AI in this way, Dublin can better respond to residents' concerns and priorities.[30]

Montreal, Canada: Snow Removal

Montreal employs AI to prevent fraud in snow removal operations. The system uses cameras on dump trucks to capture images, which an AI model then analyzes to determine the level of snow in each truck. This approach ensures accurate reporting by snow removal companies without compromising privacy, as the system only detects snow levels and doesn't capture license plates or other identifying information.[31]

Barcelona, Spain: Inquiry Management

Barcelona has implemented an AI system called MARIO to help manage resident inquiries more efficiently. MARIO uses natural language processing to analyze incoming inquiries and suggest the most appropriate categories for them. This has improved the accuracy of inquiry classification from 50% to over 85%, leading to faster response times.[32]

Singapore: AI Staff Assistant

Singapore is integrating AI into its government operations through two main initiatives. The first, called "Pair," is an AI tool integrated with Microsoft Office to help civil servants with common tasks. The second, VICA (Virtual Intelligence Chat Assistant), powers various public-facing chatbots for different government agencies.[33]

AGENDA ITEM #12

LIVE AI DEMONSTRATION & NEXT STEPS

AGENDA ITEM #13

ADJOURN