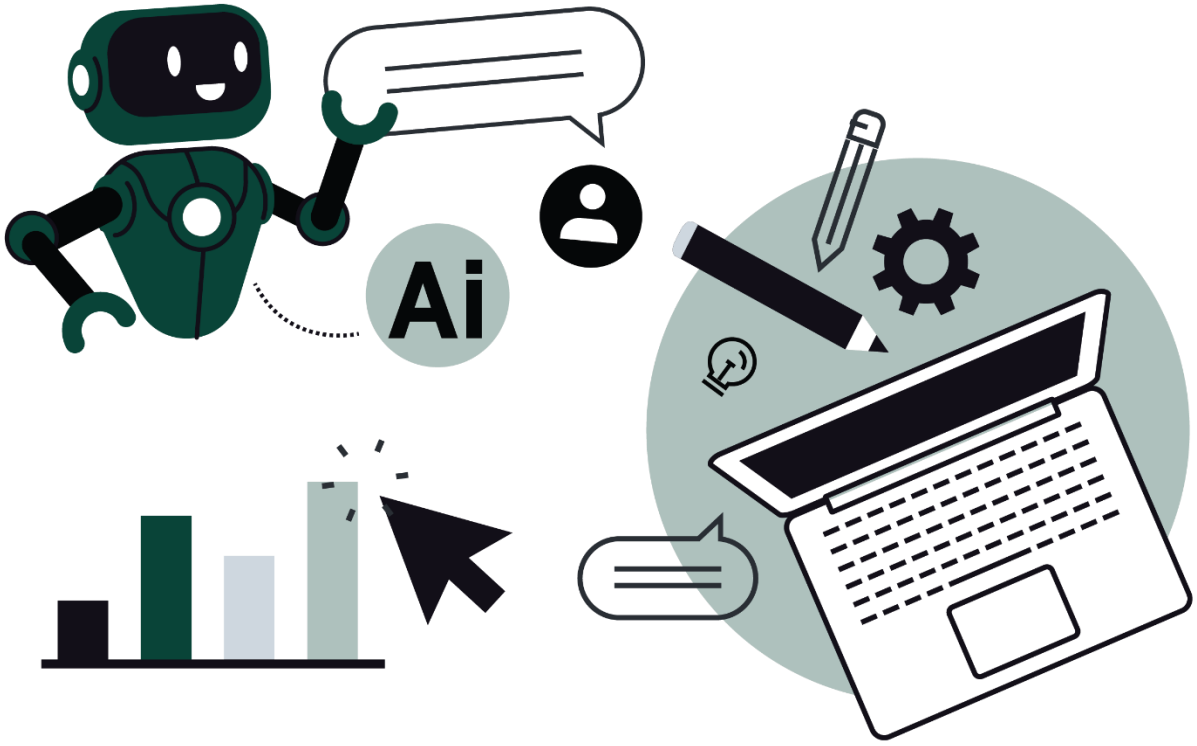
Navigating AI in County Operations

Policy, Practice, and Possibilities



New York State Association of Counties

September 2025

Table of Contents

New York State Association of Counties

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Executive Summary

Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping how governments deliver services, engage the public, and manage operations. Once the domain of the private sector, AI is now being used by counties across the country to streamline workflows and stretch limited resources. For New York's counties, leading—not lagging—in this technological shift is essential to staying competitive, responsive, and resilient.

To support this effort, NYSAC convened the **2025 Artificial Intelligence Summit**, bringing together county leaders to demystify AI, explore real-world use cases, and chart a path for responsible adoption. From chatbots that answer DSS (Department of Social Services) or HR questions to AI-powered tools that monitor infrastructure, Summit participants emphasized that AI could improve government—if deployed with clear goals, strong safeguards, and cross-functional leadership.

This report presupposes that artificial intelligence has the potential for improving government services and operations, supporting public service, and fostering new ways to engage residents, citizens, and business. It is designed to help county leaders better understand AI and provide practical steps for starting or continuing your county's AI journey.
The report outlines:

- What AI is and how it is already being used in county contexts.
- How counties can get started, including forming AI task forces and writing policy.
- Practical tools like workflow mapping, staff brainstorming, and a scoring rubric for prioritizing use cases.
- Case studies and project ideas drawn from counties across the state.

Key Takeaways

- **Start small.** Counties don't need to overhaul operations to begin using AI—many are already using tools like chatbots, Copilot, or document summarizers.
- **Build governance early.** Cross-departmental AI task forces and clear policies are essential to managing risk and ensuring ethical use.
- **Train and engage staff.** Employees need support, clarity, and training to use AI confidently and responsibly.

- **Evaluate continuously.** Measure impact through time saved, resident satisfaction, and adoption—not just cost.
- **Learn from peers.** Counties can borrow tested ideas, templates, and vendor insights rather than starting from scratch.

Whether your county is just beginning to explore AI or ready to scale up, this report offers a clear, actionable roadmap for putting artificial intelligence to work for the public good. We even offer a list of practical steps that county leaders can use at the end of this report.

Next Steps

In the wake of this summer's AI Summit, NYSAC is convening a committee of county officials to work with the private sector to explore, develop, and vet a series of AI solutions and tools that are being used successfully by other counties in New York State and across the nation.

I. Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer just a concept for Silicon Valley or Fortune 500 companies—it's being used by governments across the globe to streamline services, improve public engagement, support employees, and manage workload. If New York wants to attract industries, foster innovation, and grow our economy then we must lead in this revolution, not follow. Falling behind is not an option. To secure our future, we must invest in smart, strategic AI leadership today.

Throughout NYSAC's 100-year history, New York's counties have risen to meet moments of crisis and change. They've led through economic downturns, natural disasters, cyberattacks and public health emergencies. Today, counties are being called once more to lead—this time in shaping the responsible use of artificial intelligence.

For many county officials, knowing where to start with AI can appear overwhelming—like trying to boil the ocean. That's why we convened county leaders from across the state on July 15, 2025, at the Fort Orange Club in Albany, for the NYSAC Artificial Intelligence Summit. The goal was to demystify AI, share actionable use cases, and

create a path forward for responsible, effective implementation tailored to the needs and capacities of local government.

At the summit, NACo CIO Rita Reynolds reinforced this urgency while laying out a practical roadmap. Using NACo's AI County Compass and AI in Motion frameworks, Reynolds challenged participants to balance innovation with risk mitigation. She highlighted the growing use of generative AI tools by staff—sometimes without county awareness or safeguards—and warned that without strong policies, counties face real dangers including legal liability, data exposure, and loss of public trust.

Reynolds was equally focused on opportunities to identify the potential to optimize service delivery, personalize resident interactions, forecast needs, and improve social services.

She outlined three possible "AI journeys" a county might take.

- **The Scenic Route**: Start slowly, learn deeply.
- **The Fast Lane**: Pilot tools and scale quickly with guiderails.
- **The Custom Route:** Blend learning, governance, and pilot projects tailored to county needs.

This report synthesizes the ideas, challenges, and innovations shared at the Summit—from NACo's policy frameworks to pilots deployed by the Center for Technology in Government, a presentation of an electronic voice-activated solutions being used by county departments of social services, and real-world brainstorming by county leaders. It offers a starting point for counties at any stage of their AI journey, from those considering a single chatbot to those building countywide data strategies.

AI can't do everything. But with intention and collaboration, it can help county government do more—with less.

II. What is AI?

Artificial Intelligence, or AI, is not a new phenomenon, and there is no single agreed-upon definition that covers all its complexities. In 1955, John McCarthy simply defined AI as "the science and engineering of making intelligent machines." This is a more technological and scientific definition.

AI then laid largely dormant for decades, until more recent advances in computing power enabled AI's large language models (LLMs) to complete more intelligent and sophisticated automation. The definitions, then, evolved with these advances, and expanded to include a business solution, and not just a scientific focus.

From a more modern perspective, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is broadly defined as the ability of machines to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. This includes capabilities like learning, problem-solving, decision-making, and perception. Essentially, AI aims to create systems that can mimic or simulate human cognitive functions.

Based on the analyzed discussions during NYSAC's recent summit, AI is a tool that allows computers to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence—like reading documents, answering questions, or recognizing images.

The Center for Technology in Government (CTG) attributes five characteristics in its definition of AI. According to CTG, AI:

1. is designed by humans to solve problems,
2. combines machines, algorithms, and data,
3. attempts to imitate human learning,
4. possesses a certain level of autonomy, and
5. evolves (learns) through feedback.

So, while there is no agreed upon single definition, all these definitions can be used to help us understand what AI is and how it is being used by individuals and organizations to adapt traditional manual processes with intelligent automation.

Key AI Terms

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the automation of tasks using computer systems where little to no human intervention/oversight is needed. These systems are capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, problem-solving, perception, and language understanding.

Machine Learning is a subset of AI that focuses on the development of algorithms that enable computers to learn from and make decisions based on data. Unlike traditional programming where explicit instructions are provided, machine learning allows systems to improve their performance on tasks through experience. (Think of medical diagnosis, retail/movie recommendations, autonomous driving.)

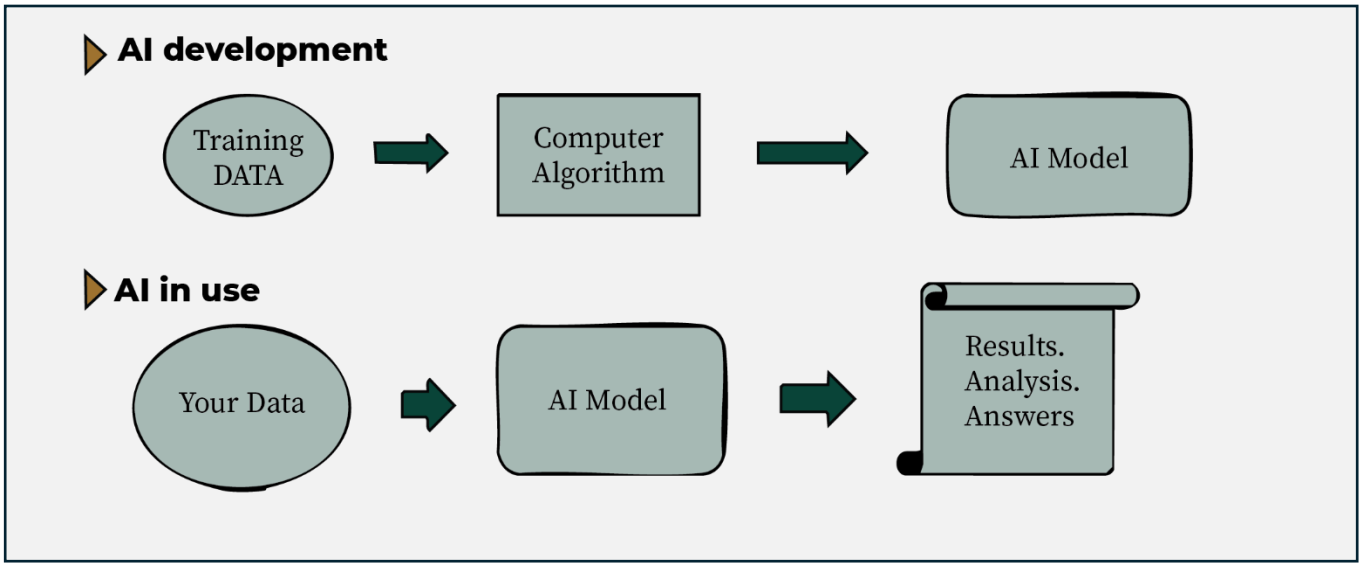
Generative AI focuses on creating new content based on patterns learned from existing data. Unlike traditional AI, which is primarily designed to analyze data, make predictions, or automate tasks, generative AI can generate text, images, music, and other forms of media that exhibit creativity akin to human expression. (Think of text generation, image generation, music composition.)

Agentic AI refers to AI systems that possess the capacity to make autonomous decisions and take actions without direct human intervention. These systems are designed to achieve specific goals by perceiving their environment, learning from it, and adapting their behaviors accordingly. (Think of self-driving cars, personal assistants, industrial robots.)

Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) is an AI solution that retrieves relevant information from external sources (like a database or the internet) and generates a response based on that information. This makes RAG more dynamic and capable of providing more accurate and up-to-date answers, as it does in some electronic voice activation tools.

How does AI work?

At the NYSAC AI Summit, Derek Werthmuller of CTG UAlbany described AI using the flow chart below.



In other words, AI "learns" from examples (called training data), applies rules (algorithms), and then generates results. For example, if you give an AI tool hundreds of examples of zoning codes, it can start to recognize outdated or conflicting rules in your local laws.

III. Getting Started on Your County's AI Journey

As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly integrated into county operations, establishing a dedicated AI governance team, task force, or committee is often a first step toward ensuring responsible and effective use of these technologies. Such a task force will provide counties with the leadership structure necessary to develop, implement, and maintain robust AI governance policies and guidelines. This can be done by an executive who chooses a team of cross functional individuals to sit on the committee, an administrator by direction of the board, or through a resolution of the board.

The task force or committee may be composed of a diverse group of stakeholders, including, but not limited to the following.

- County leadership (e.g., administrators, department heads)
- IT and data security professionals
- Legal and compliance
- Human resources and training representatives
- Frontline staff from departments piloting AI

A chair or co-chairs can be designated to lead the task force, and subcommittees may be established to focus on specialized topics such as ethics, privacy, or public engagement.

The AI Governance Task Force can be charged with developing and/or updating countywide AI policies and guidelines addressing data privacy, transparency, accountability, and ethical use. This team can also evaluate proposed AI use cases, monitor pilot implementation, and provide oversight throughout the project lifecycle.

Other topics this group can take on include:

- Identifying employee training needs,
- Facilitating collaboration between departments,
- Soliciting feedback from staff, and
- Evaluating the ongoing deployment of AI solutions.

By developing this cross-functional AI Governance team, counties are in a position to empower themselves to thoughtfully shape their AI journey. This committee becomes the steward of responsible AI adoption—balancing innovation with risk mitigation and ensuring that the deployment of AI serves the public interest, fosters trust, and aligns with both local needs and broader legal or ethical standards.

IV. Creating Sound AI Policy and/or Guidance

A well-crafted AI policy serves as the cornerstone for responsible and effective artificial intelligence adoption in local government. Without a clear policy, counties risk confusion, misuse, and inconsistent practices in how employees use AI.

At its core, the purpose of an AI policy is to articulate the county's objectives and motivations for using AI, ensuring that these technologies align with the county's mission, service goals, and legal requirements. By clearly defining the policy's purpose, counties can set expectations for how AI will support public service delivery and community well-being, while reducing uncertainty for staff and fostering public trust.

Oversight and governance frameworks are critical to managing risk and ensuring accountability throughout the AI lifecycle. Designating roles and structures for oversight, such as AI review boards or designated officers, helps ensure ongoing evaluation of AI systems for operational, legal, and ethical compliance. Oversight includes the periodic review of acceptable use, ensuring that AI tools are only deployed in authorized contexts and in accordance with established procurement policies and counties' goals. This structured approach reassures county leaders and the public that AI is used deliberately, with transparent checks and balances in place.

Data management and tool selection are equally essential components of a robust AI policy. Counties must establish standards for data privacy, quality, storage, and sharing to mitigate risks of data breaches or misuse, as highlighted by organizations like NACo. The policy should outline criteria for selecting AI tools, focusing on reliability, security certifications, and suitability for government workflows. By embedding these standards, counties can make informed decisions that protect sensitive information and maintain public confidence.

Finally, training and capacity building, ethical use and transparency, monitoring, and policy maintenance round out the framework for a dynamic and adaptive AI environment. Regular staff training ensures employees understand both the power and limitations of AI, fostering a culture of informed and ethical use. Comprehensive policies should mandate transparency in algorithmic decision-making, facilitate ongoing monitoring and remediation of AI outcomes for bias or unintended effects, and require scheduled policy reviews to address evolving technologies and regulations. Through continuous policy maintenance, counties remain agile, upholding their responsibility to serve the public interest as the AI landscape rapidly evolves.

Genesee County AI Policy

The Genesee County Legislature adopted the following Governance Policy in March 2025. This was based on a policy initially developed by Monroe County.

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of Genesee County to recognize the efficiencies that may be obtained through the ethical, appropriate, and responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and ensure that employees use AI technology to benefit the County and its citizens.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

Artificial Intelligence is a relatively broad term with specific types of AI suitable for various purposes. This policy addresses general use of AI but is primarily targeted towards Generative AI (Gen AI).

AI is a rapidly evolving field of technology, and an increasing amount of AI tools are becoming available for public use, such as CoPilot, Gemini and ChatGPT. While the County may realize benefits from the responsible use of AI, it is also important to understand the risks associated with this technology.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** - The simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, especially computer systems.

2. **Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI)** - Leverages large volumes of data along with machine learning (ML) techniques to produce content based on inputs or prompts from users. Gen AI is a technology that enables users to quickly generate new content based on a variety of inputs.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR USE

1. It is strictly prohibited to use AI for any illegal, harmful, or unethical purposes.

2. It is strictly prohibited to share personal, sensitive, or confidential information when using AI, as AI models cannot maintain confidentiality, and you nor the County can control how data is used in the future. All employees must adhere to the County's data security policies when using AI.

3. AI should be viewed as a tool to augment human decision making, not replace it. Always double-check information provided by AI. Decisions affecting citizens, employees, or County operations must always involve human oversight. Employees must indicate when content is AI-generated.

4. Be aware that AI may unintentionally produce biased or prejudiced responses and strive for fairness in your interactions. AI responses may not always align with County policies or values; use critical thinking to evaluate AI responses and avoid disseminating misinformation.

5. Employees must stay updated on the latest guidelines and policies surrounding AI usage and undergo rigorous testing and validation before implementing AI tools.

AI TASKFORCE & TRAININGS

Departments are required to seek continuing education to remain up to date on AI technologies when implementing AI tools into their workflows. Genesee County has created an AI Taskforce to increase awareness, further explore best practices, and review procedure updates for AI within county operations.

V. Assessing AI Use and Generating New Ideas

We recognize that there are challenges inherent in any new technology, and that those challenges can be minimized with a thoughtful and strategic approach to assessing AI use, generating ideas for improving processes and deploying new tools.

Just as the workforce once shifted from switchboard operators physically connecting phone calls to automated systems, today's counties face another transformation. Technology has always changed how work is done, but it has never erased the need for people at the center of service delivery.

In the words of Dylan Soaper of Jefferson County, humans always need to be the first, and the last step when using AI.

So where should counties begin?

The Summit encouraged counties to take a step-by-step approach:

1. Find out who is already using AI and how. Some departments may be trying new tools informally.
2. Designate a point person or group/committee/task force to explore use cases and coordinate with IT.
3. Look for small, repeatable tasks that are good candidates for AI.

In terms of assessing current AI use in counties, Many counties have surveyed their department staff, asking what AI tools employees may already be using at the office or at home. many employees are already using AI—often without realizing it. If they use ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, or certain Google tools, they're already engaging with AI. Once your AI team or task force has a sense of current use, they can then start generating a list of new ideas for how AI help employees, department by department, help improve operations and/or services.

Examples of AI tools currently in use include:

- Chatbots that answer HR or DSS questions 24/7, like "How do I apply for SNAP?" or "When is open enrollment for health insurance?"
- AI-powered form scanners that extract data from handwritten or scanned applications.
- Payroll and contractor tools that help automate onboarding or send reminders for paperwork.

One of the biggest barriers counties face in adopting AI is knowing where to start. Counties don't need to "boil the ocean." Start small, learn, and build over time.

At the NYSAC AI Summit, county participants shared their challenges, and facilitators offered ways to identify AI opportunities that are realistic, impactful, and appropriate for local government. Below are several methods counties can use to generate AI ideas internally, along with examples drawn from the Summit.

1. **Map Your Workflows**

Begin by identifying routine, repetitive tasks that eat up staff time. Ask each department:

- What do we do over and over again?
- Where do we spend time reviewing or transferring information?
- What takes longer than it should?

These areas are strong candidates for automation or AI-assisted support.

2. **Ask Your Staff What They Need**

Your employees often know exactly where bottlenecks are—but they may not realize AI could help. Hold a department-level meeting or send out a survey with questions like:

- Where do you wish you had an extra pair of hands?
- What tasks feel tedious or time-consuming?
- Do you already use tools like ChatGPT, Copilot, or Grammarly?

3. **Review Backlogs and Friction Points**

Examine areas where service delivery slows down, where mistakes frequently occur, or where you've had resident complaints. Look for:

- Delays in processing (e.g., invoices, applications).
- High call volumes with similar questions.
- Redundant reviews (e.g., contracts, policies, grants).

4. **Start with Department-Specific Brainstorms**

Ask each department to come up with 2–3 ideas by considering:

- What documents or data do we handle in high volumes?
- What questions do we answer over and over?
- What would help us serve the public more efficiently?

Then bring those ideas together at the leadership level to identify common needs and prioritize projects.

5. Look to Peers for Inspiration

You don't have to invent use cases from scratch. Many counties are already experimenting with:

- Chatbots to assist residents and employees.
- AI to check the accuracy of invoices or grant applications.
- Tools that scan for outdated or contradictory policies.
- AI that summarizes long documents into key points.

6. Use a Simple Idea Capture Template

Counties can encourage staff to submit AI ideas using a simple form that asks:

- What is the task?
- Why is it important?
- How often is it done?
- What would happen if we could do it faster?

This helps counties build an internal idea bank and evaluate projects more systematically.

You don't need to be a tech expert to start identifying ways to use AI. By tapping into staff experience, reviewing routine tasks, and learning from other counties, you can generate a list of practical ideas

VI. Prioritizing Use Case Ideas

Once counties have generated a list of potential AI use cases, the next step is to evaluate which ones are worth pursuing first. At the NYSAC AI Summit, participants used a simple but effective scoring system to help prioritize ideas based on their potential benefits, risks, and feasibility. This section outlines the criteria counties used to evaluate AI ideas and includes examples of how different projects scored.

The Scoring Rubric

Each AI use case was rated across four categories:

Category	Score Range	Description
Cost	1-5	Measures affordability and financial burden (including set up and maintenance).
Information Readiness	1-5	Assesses whether data infrastructure, quality, and accessibility are in place.
Risk Sensitivity	1-5	How dangerous or harmful would it be if the AI system makes errors (higher score = lower sensitivity)?
Feasibility	1-5	How easy is it to implement in terms of staffing, tech, time, and logistics?

Each idea was scored on a 1-5 scale in each category, with 5 being the most feasible or easiest/cheapest and 1 being the lowest feasibility or most difficult/risky/expensive.

How to Use the Rubric

Counties can apply this scoring system internally by assembling a small working group—IT, legal, finance, department heads—and discussing each idea.
Some tips:

- Don't overthink it. The goal is to compare relative value, not produce a perfect score.
- Start with "low-hanging fruit"—projects that score high on impact and feasibility, and low on cost and risk.
- Use this process to build consensus and momentum.

Top-Scoring Use Cases from the Summit

During the Summit, county leaders applied the rubric to a list of brainstormed AI ideas. Below are several high-potential projects that scored well:

1. Implementation of AI visualization tools near low-clearance bridges for analysis of large vehicles and warning drivers when necessary (18).
    a. Cost: 5
    b. Information Readiness: 5

c. Risk Sensitivity: 3
d. Feasibility: 5

2. Creation of a self-service tool to assist in the creation of AI-powered tools for the listed use cases (18).
   a. Cost: 4
   b. Information Readiness: 4
   c. Risk Sensitivity: 5
   d. Feasibility: 5

3. Implementation of AI analysis software to monitor 911 calls and subsequent response, allowing AI tools to make recommendations post-call to increase operational efficiency (18).
   a. Cost: 5
   b. Information Readiness: 5
   c. Risk Sensitivity: 4
   d. Feasibility: 4

4. Use of AI to create departmental templates for county board actions (18).
   a. Cost: 5
   b. Information Readiness: 4
   c. Risk Sensitivity: 4
   d. Feasibility: 5

5. Implementation of an AI chatbot to assist in the explanation of county specific procedures, for HR and procurement applications (17).
   a. Cost: 4
   b. Information Readiness: 5
   c. Risk Sensitivity: 5
   d. Feasibility: 3

6. Use of AI to analyze wear on public infrastructure, to better predict and understand when intervention/repairs are needed (17).
   a. Cost: 4
   b. Information Readiness: 5
   c. Risk Sensitivity: 4
   d. Feasibility: 4

7. NYSAC analysis of county needs for AI and create a “second phase” list of AI applications, charting the future of county AI usage (17).
    a. Cost: 4
    b. Information Readiness: 5
    c. Risk Sensitivity: 4
    d. Feasibility: 4

8. Implementation of AI to assist with payroll administration, staff on/offboarding, contractor on/offboarding (16).
    a. Cost: 4
    b. Information Readiness: 4
    c. Risk Sensitivity: 4
    d. Feasibility: 4

9. Use of AI chatbot to explain health benefits to employees (16).
    a. Cost: 4
    b. Information Readiness: 4
    c. Risk Sensitivity: 5
    d. Feasibility: 3

10. Use of AI to assist in implementation and filling out of digital timecards for employees (16).
    a. Cost: 4
    b. Information Readiness: 5
    c. Risk Sensitivity: 4
    d. Feasibility: 3

VII. Challenges and Considerations

While the potential of artificial intelligence in county government is significant, the road to effective implementation is not without its obstacles. Through the NYSAC AI Summit and related discussions, county leaders surfaced several critical challenges that must be addressed to ensure the responsible and sustainable use of AI tools.

These challenges are not reasons to avoid AI, but rather key considerations to tackle head-on through governance, planning, and collaboration.

Data Governance and Infrastructure Gaps

AI systems rely on clean, well-structured data—but many counties still operate with siloed systems, inconsistent data practices, or legacy infrastructure. Without strong data governance, AI tools can struggle to function effectively or may even reinforce existing inefficiencies.

Solutions

- Inventory existing data systems and assess their readiness for AI use.
- Designate data stewards in each department to ensure quality, consistency, and privacy.
- Incorporate data governance into broader IT modernization efforts.

Public Perception and Trust

AI can raise valid concerns from residents and employees alike: Will this replace jobs? Is my information safe? How do I know decisions are fair? Building trust requires clear communication, public engagement, and internal transparency.

Solutions

- Communicate early and often about what AI is—and is not—doing.
- Ensure human oversight is embedded in all decision-making processes.
- Provide plain-language explanations of how AI tools are selected and evaluated.

Bias and Fairness

AI systems are only as good as the data they're trained on. If historical data reflects bias, the AI may replicate it. Counties must be vigilant in reviewing algorithms—especially those that impact public services, benefits, or enforcement decisions.

Solutions

- Require vendors to demonstrate efforts to test for and mitigate bias.
- Prioritize transparency in how AI recommendations are generated.
- Incorporate fairness checks as part of procurement and pilot evaluation processes.

Workforce Readiness and Change Management

County staff are central to successful AI implementation. But new tools can be intimidating without training and support. Employees may feel uncertain about how AI will affect their roles or day-to-day work.

Solutions

- Invest in AI training tailored to different staff roles.
- Emphasize that AI is a tool to support—not replace—employees.
- Include frontline staff in brainstorming sessions, pilot design, and evaluation.

Procurement and Vendor Management

With rapid growth in AI tools, not all vendors offer solutions that are secure, explainable, or appropriate for public sector use. Counties must be cautious in how they evaluate and procure AI systems.

Solutions

- Include data privacy, explainability, and performance metrics in RFPs.
- Pilot tools before wide-scale deployment and require auditability.
- Consult with other counties or organizations like NACo to identify trusted tools.

Legal and Ethical Considerations

AI introduces new legal and ethical questions- especially around data use, accountability, and discrimination. Without clear policies, counties may be vulnerable to unintended consequences or legal exposure.

Solutions

- Work with legal counsel to develop acceptable use policies and liability safeguards.
- Ensure that all AI-generated content or recommendations are clearly labeled.
- Review policies regularly to stay aligned with evolving state and federal guidance.

Looking Ahead

These challenges should not deter counties from engaging with AI- they should guide how counties proceed. Thoughtful planning, open communication, and small, manageable steps can help counties build AI programs that are both innovative and grounded in public service values.

VIII. Moving Forward and Evaluation

As counties continue navigating the rapidly changing landscape of artificial intelligence, it is essential to remain flexible and embrace a spirit of continuous learning. New innovations, emerging technologies, and creative solutions are constantly becoming available, offering fresh opportunities to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and responsiveness of county government. By staying open to these advancements and thoughtfully evaluating their impact, counties can ensure they are meeting the evolving needs of residents and communities while positioning themselves at the forefront of public service innovation.

Whether your county decides to move forward on your AI journey via the scenic route, the fast lane, or a blended custom route, there are next steps that every organization can take.

- Formalize your AI policy and guidance materials.
- Select one or two pilot ideas with strong scores.
- Conduct tabletop exercises with department heads and employees to simulate implementation.
- Assign accountability—whether to a staff member, advisory committee, or IT team.
- Find quality training opportunities for your employees who will be using AI.

Recommended Training Opportunities

As counties formalize their AI policies and begin piloting projects, training will be a critical step to ensure staff and leaders can use these tools responsibly and effectively.

NYSAC recommends the following programs as particularly relevant to county governments:

NACo Chart Your Course

- Key Features: Digital learning platform offering over 4,000 curated online resources, including AI and digital transformation content, available on-demand.
- Opportunities: Flexible, self-paced access for county staff at all levels; broad coverage beyond AI, including digital skills and governance; affordable through NACo partnership.
- Considerations: Content is general and not always tailored specifically to AI or county government use cases; requires internal accountability to ensure staff complete modules.

NACo AI Leadership Training Academy

- Key Features: Six-week, fully online program designed for county government leaders; combines asynchronous modules, weekly breakout sessions, coach-led webinars, and peer cohort collaboration (~ 5 hours/week).
- Opportunities: Tailored to county leadership context; high interactivity with peer learning, coaching, and accountability; practice modules include ethics, operational planning and roadmap design.
- Considerations: Cost ($1,000/enrollee) may be a barrier for smaller counties; time commitment may be difficult for busy executives; best suited for management/leadership, not frontline staff.

GSA AI Training Series for Government Employees

- Key Features: Free e-learning modules with multiple "tracks" (leadership, policy, acquisition, and technical staff).
- Opportunities: Free for government employees; multiple role-based tracks; broad volume of recorded content with flexible access.
- Considerations: Tailored to federal compliance and procurement rules, limiting local applicability; mostly presentation/webinar-based with limited hands-on practice; recordings from 2024 may not be fully current.

InnovateUS "AI for the Public Sector" Workshop Series

- Key Features: Free workshops and self-paced online courses for public sector professionals; includes short videos, live workshops, and modules on generative AI, ethical use, sensitive data protection, and integration into government workflows.
- Opportunities: Free and accessible regardless of
- Considerations: Introductory in scope; limited technical depth for staff tasked with implementing projects; workshops lack coaching, peer follow-up, or project planning; not New York-specific.

NetCom Learning

- Key Features: They have AI training programs designed to meet the diverse needs of professionals across industries and roles, including experienced and beginning AI users. They provide training for NYC and state employees.
- Opportunities: Training programs can be customized for your county's needs. Learners can retake the same course at no cost within a year.
- Considerations: Breadth of courses must be winnowed based on county needs. Cost components only available after discussion with learning consultants.

Evaluating Your County's Use of AI

To know if an AI tool is working, counties must evaluate both the results and the process.

What to measure:

- Time saved – How many hours did it free up?
- Resident satisfaction – Are people getting answers faster?
- Error rates – Did AI reduce mistakes in data or paperwork?
- Adoption – Are staff using it?

Counties were encouraged to start with basic metrics and build from there. If something isn't working, then change it. Evaluation isn't about catching failure, it's about learning what works.

IX. Helpful References

There are many available AI briefs, white papers, and reports that can help you learn about these new technological advances. At the end of this report, we provide a list of resources that were helpful to use and could help support you and your team as you continue your AI journey.

NACo AI Compass

This comprehensive toolkit for local implementation of artificial intelligence was developed by an exploratory committee of county leaders to assist a county's AI journey.

www.naco.org/resource/ai-county-compass-comprehensive-toolkit-local-governance-and-implementation-artificial

NACo AI in Motion

This report highlights counties across the nation who have already integrated new public-facing and internal use cases for AI and GenAI in their governance.

Artificial Intelligence and GenAI In Motion: County Innovations and Use Cases | National Association of Counties

CTG AI Primer

This report from UAlbany's Center for Technology in Government is a comprehensive primer regarding AI in the private sector, covering the basics of AI systems, key questions for public sector leaders, use cases, and key recommendations for AI readiness.

CTG AI Primer

NACo/Microsoft Training Platform

NACo and Microsoft have partnered to provide county employees with a curated selection of over 4,000 digital and AI learning resources, empowering local governments with cutting-edge AI information and training.

Chart Your Course: Digital Learning Resources for the County Workforce | National Association of Counties

Center for Democracy and Technology AI Governance Report

CDT's report on AI in local government investigates local government AI governance policies, and identifies commonalities between them, giving local governments a blueprint for AI governance policy adoption.

AI in Local Government: How Counties & Cities Are Advancing AI Governance - Center for Democracy and Technology

KPMG Government Technology Report

KPMG has released a report chronicling the digital transformation of the public sector and recommended best practices for governments looking to implement AI into their digitization movements.

KPMG Government Technology Presentation

GovAI Coalition

The GovAI coalition is a group of local and state governments that seek to develop resources for the implementation, regulation, and management of AI technologies in local governments, creating policy templates and knowledge-sharing tools to assist public agencies in jump-starting their AI governance.

GovAI Coalition Resources

Harvard Business Review AI Articles

The Harvard Business Review has published numerous articles on AI and machine learning, providing insight into AI strategies, application and implementation, among other topics.

HBR: AI and Machine Learning

Digital.gov AI Resources

Digital.gov is a federal government website that helps the government community deliver better digital services and has compiled many resources regarding AI. Digital.gov also aggregates AI-related news regarding administration actions on AI policy and governance.

Digital.gov Artificial Intelligence

Acknowledgments

The New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) would like to recognize the following individuals for their contributions to the development of this Artificial Intelligence Report, which grew out of discussions at NYSAC's first Artificial Intelligence Summit. Their leadership, expertise, and perspectives have been invaluable in shaping this report and its recommendations for New York's counties.

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Sincere thanks to the summit participants, speakers, and members who have offered recommendations to make this report as useful and impactful as possible. Their practical insights and commitment to public service were critical in the design and development of this document.

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County AI Roadmap

A Practical Guide for County Leaders

Step 1 – Awareness & Exploration

- Learn the basics of AI (what it is, how it's used in government).
- Identify existing AI use (chatbots, Copilot, document tools).
- Share plain-language briefings with leadership and staff.

Step 2 – Governance & Policy

- Establish an AI Task Force (leadership, IT, legal, HR, frontline staff).
- Draft or adopt a county AI policy: ethical use, data privacy, human oversight.
- Define roles, accountability, and training expectations.

Step 3 – Idea Generation

- Map repetitive workflows and backlogs.
- Ask staff: "Where could an extra set of hands help?"
- Capture ideas in a simple template (task, frequency, impact).
- Look to peer counties for inspiration.

Step 4 – Prioritization & Pilots

- Apply the scoring rubric (Cost, Readiness, Risk, Feasibility).
- Select 1–2 "low-hanging fruit" pilots with high value and low risk.
- Pilot small-scale projects in HR, DSS, or infrastructure monitoring.

Step 5 – Training & Engagement

- Provide tailored AI training for different staff roles.
- Emphasize AI as a support tool, not a replacement.
- Encourage staff feedback and share success stories.

Step 6 – Evaluation & Scaling

- Measure: Time saved, Resident satisfaction, Error reduction, Staff adoption.
- Adjust projects based on lessons learned.
- Scale successful pilots across departments.

Step 7 – Continuous Improvement

- Review policy and practices annually.
- Monitor state/federal guidance and update accordingly.
- Stay connected with NACo, NYSAC, and peer counties.
- Maintain public transparency to build trust.

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