

Get AI-Ready: A Checklist for Government Agencies

“The introduction of AI into society will require thoughtful governance and public oversight to ensure it benefits everyone.”

— Sundar Pichai



Public sector AI must uphold **public trust, statutory authority, due process, transparency, and fiscal responsibility.**

This checklist ensures AI adoption strengthens, not undermines, those obligations.

SECTION 1: DATA & AI GOVERNANCE (PUBLIC TRUST, OVERSIGHT, & ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK)

Goal: Ensure AI systems operate within statutory authority, administrative policy, and ethical public service standards.

☐ **AI Strategy is formally adopted.**

- The agency has adopted an AI strategy that aligns with:
 - Agency, mission, and statutory authority
 - Enterprise Data Strategy
 - City/State/Federal IT Modernization Plans
 - Legislative mandates and appropriations language
 - Ethical use of AI principles
 - Risk Management Framework
 - Public transparency obligations
 - Performance and audit requirements

Success Indicator: AI use clearly supports public purpose and authorized functions.

☐ **Executive accountability is designated.**

- An accountable official (e.g., Agency Head, Commissioner, CIO, Chief Data Officer) is formally designated
- AI oversight is integrated into existing Data Governance Boards or Executive Steering Committees
- No parallel or shadow AI governance bodies exist
- Roles and responsibilities are documented in policy

Success Indicator: Clear decision rights and documented oversight authority.

☐ **AI use cases are defined and authorized.**

- For each AI system or tool:
 - Statutory authority is confirmed
 - Intended purpose is documented
 - Boundaries and prohibited use are defined
 - Human oversight requirements are established
 - Decision-making authority remains with a public official

☐ **AI principles are codified in policy.**

- Agency AI policy includes:
 - Human-in-loop oversight
 - Explainability and transparency requirements
 - Non-discrimination and equity standards
 - Public accountability
 - Auditability
 - Appeals and redress mechanisms

☐ **An AI inventory is established.**

- The enterprise-wide inventory includes:
 - Chatbots and public-facing tools
 - Predictive analytics systems
 - Procurement decision tools
 - HR screening tools
 - Case management automation
 - Vendor-provided AI systems

Success Indicator: Agency leadership can identify all AI systems currently in use.

SECTION 2: DATA QUALITY, STEWARDSHIP & PROTECTION (PREVENTING HARM THROUGH BAD DATA)

Goal: Ensure AI outputs are based on accurate, authorized, and lawfully obtained data.

☐ **Critical data assets are identified.**

- Systems of record are documented (HRIS, Finance, Licensing, Public Safety, Benefits, etc.)
- Authoritative data sources are defined
- Data accountability and stewardship are assigned

☐ **Critical data is defined and documented.**

☐ **Data classification is applied.**

- Data is classified using public sector standards such as:
 - Public information
 - Internal use only
 - Confidential
 - Regulated Data (PII, PHI, CJIS, Tax, etc.)

☐ **AI Stewardship is fully integrated into data stewardship domains and bodies.**

- New roles or titles have been added where appropriate, or shared responsibilities have been captured as required for the line of business
- AI decision-making must be embedded within existing data governance structures, ensuring no parallel or duplicative bodies are created, and all oversight flows through established governance channels

☐ **Data and AI governance structure has been determined,** emphasizing who is accountable for critical data and AI within the agency.

☐ **Critical data is identified, fully cataloged, and inventoried across all environments,** including warehouses and data/AI products, with clearly defined access-management rights governing its use.

☐ **Data quality standards are enforced.**

- Use existing data governance standards and measurements here assigned at the domain level by the appropriate stewardship body. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Accuracy benchmarks established
- Timeliness standards documented
- Completeness thresholds defined
- Validation and audit mechanisms exist.

☐ **Prohibited data use is defined.**

- Sensitive data is excluded from AI training where required
- Data subject to consent restrictions identified
- Record retention schedules applied
- Legal hold procedures considered

☐ **Model governance is documented.**

- Model validation procedures exist
- Bias testing conducted
- Performance thresholds documented
- Ongoing monitoring established
- Periodic review and reauthorization required

Success Indicator: The Agency can clearly state which data is safe, restricted, or prohibited for AI use.

SECTION 3: AGENCY OPERATIONS & PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY (VALUE TO CONSTITUENTS FIRST)

Goal: Deploy AI to improve service delivery, operational efficiency, and mission outcomes.

☐ **Core agency functions are mapped and documented.** Examples include:

- Licensing and Permitting
- Benefits Administration
- Public Safety Operations
- Procurement and Contracting
- HR and Workforce Management
- Constituent Services
- Regulatory Enforcement

☐ **Operational pain points are documented:**

- Backlogs
- Manual processing delays
- Data entry duplication

- Compliance monitoring inefficiencies
- Error Rates

☐ **Quantifiable impact is evaluated.** Examples include:

- Reduced processing time
- Reduced administrative burden
- Improved service delivery timelines
- Cost avoidance
- Increased compliance detection
- Risk Reduction

☐ **Human oversight is explicitly defined.** For each use case:

- Human review thresholds defined
- Override mechanisms in place and documented
- Escalation paths established
- Appeals process for impacted individuals exists

Success Indicator: Every AI deployment ties directly to a public service outcome,

SECTION 4: REGULATORY, LEGAL & OVERSIGHT ALIGNMENT (AVOIDING CONSTITUTIONAL & STATUTORY RISK)

Goal: Ensure AI deployment complies with all applicable laws and oversight bodies.

☐ **All applicable legal authorities have been identified.** Review across:

- Federal statutes and executive orders
- State statutes and administrative code
- Municipal ordinances
- Industry-specific regulations
- Civil rights and anti-discrimination laws
- Privacy laws
- Public records laws

☐ **Procurement and vendor compliance are assessed.**

- AI use permitted under contract
- Data accountability and ownership, in some cases, is clearly defined
- Indemnification clauses are reviewed
- Model training rights clarified

- Sub-processor transparency obtained
- Right to audit included

☐ **Transparency and public disclosure requirements are met.**

- AI usage publicly disclosed where required
- Impact assessments are completed
- Public notice requirements are satisfied
- Records Management procedures are applied

☐ **High-risk AI use cases have been identified.** Special scrutiny applied to AI impacting:

- Hiring decisions
- Benefits eligibility
- Criminal justice or enforcement
- Healthcare determinations
- Credit or financial assistance
- Housing decisions

Success Indicator: Legal and constitutional risks are addressed before deployment.

SECTION 5: TECHNOLOGY & INFRASTRUCTURE (SECURE, SUSTAINABLE & SCALABLE IMPLEMENTATION)

Goal: Integrate AI into existing government architecture without compromising security or continuity.

☐ **The current technology environment is documented.** Documentation is inclusive of:

- System or tool lifecycle
- Integration dependencies
- Cloud versus on-premises architecture noted
- Legacy system constraints identified

☐ **Data accountability is formally documented across all critical platforms and tools,** with clear linkage to the established data governance structure, ensuring decision rights are understood and enforced throughout the entire data lifecycle, regardless of where the data resides.

☐ **Buy vs Build decision is documented.**

- Cost-benefit analysis completed
- Total cost of ownership evaluated

- Workforce capability assessed
- Sustainability and vendor lock-in evaluated

☐ **Security and access controls are confirmed.**

- Identity management integrated (SSO, MFA)
- Logging and monitoring enabled
- Role-based access controls enforced
- Incident response procedures updated

☐ **Monitoring and performance reporting are established.**

- Performance dashboards exist
- Audit logs retained
- Regular review cycles scheduled
- Sunset criteria defined

☐ **Scalability and continuity planning have been addressed.**

- Business continuity plan updated
- Disaster recovery integrated
- Workforce training provided
- Funding sustainability confirmed

Success Indicator: AI operates within existing IT governance and continuity frameworks.

GOVERNMENT AI READINESS

An agency is AI-ready when:

- Leadership can identify all AI systems in operation.
- Statutory authority is confirmed for each use case.
- Human accountability is clearly documented.
- Data risk is classified and governed.
- Public trust considerations are embedded into policy.
- Legal and procurement risks are addressed prior to deployment.
- Each initiative ties directly to measurable public value.

AI Success in Government Is Not Just About Technology, It's About Governance.

From policy design to operational oversight, we help public sector organizations implement AI with accountability, transparency, and measurable impact.

[Connect with us](#) to discuss your agency's AI governance roadmap.