

How AI and cloud can help government work



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Government organizations must embed AI into core workflows with human oversight to improve services while overcoming budget and staffing constraints

Government agencies face a difficult balancing act: modernizing services while managing tighter budgets, workforce shortages and growing accountability requirements. The most successful agencies are not treating AI as a standalone innovation initiative. Instead, they are embedding AI and cloud capabilities directly into the core workflows that power government operations.

The most immediate impact is showing up in permitting, licensing, inspections and case management. These are areas characterized by high transaction volumes, manual processes and constant pressure to do more with fewer people. By embedding AI into everyday workflows, agencies can automate the intake check that today eats a planner's first hour every morning – flagging the missing site. This frees the staff to focus on higher value work that requires professional judgement and local knowledge.

Cloud platforms are equally important because they allow agencies to scale these capabilities quickly without large upfront infrastructure investments. In a budget-constrained environment, that flexibility matters. AI is also providing real-time visibility into

workloads and bottlenecks, helping leaders identify where work is backing up, rebalance resources and respond more effectively to changing demand. The outcome is not abstract innovation; it is shorter turnaround times, more predictable service levels and reduced staff burnout.

However, successful modernization depends on maintaining the right balance between AI and human expertise. Human oversight is essential, particularly in government, where decisions must

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be transparent, defensible and accountable to the public. AI should support professional judgement, not replace it. The most effective approach is to design AI within clear operational boundaries, allowing it to surface insights, flag anomalies, recommend next steps and automate repetitive actions, while ensuring humans remain responsible for decisions that affect people, property and public trust.

In the agencies piloting this with us now, one pattern is already clear: the teams began generating value by mapping a single permit type end to end to find inefficiencies, not by buying an AI tool and looking for a use. Successful organizations start with workflows, not tools. They focus on understanding how work gets done, where friction exists and how employees and residents experience services end to end. AI and cloud technologies are then applied deliberately to remove the friction residents feel – the third trip to the counter, the form that bounces back. The best results come when AI is embedded within platforms that already manage workflows and data.

Combined with strong governance, leadership commitment and continuous measurement of outcomes such as turnaround times, backlog reduction, productivity and customer satisfaction, this approach transforms digital transformation from a one-time project into an ongoing capability. Ultimately, the jurisdictions pulling ahead are those making AI and data part of daily operations, so continuous improvement becomes part of how government works. ■

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