



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE



NACo PRIMER FOR COUNTIES:

THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



NACo Thanks Our AI Exploratory Committee Founding Partners



OVERVIEW

The advent of generative artificial intelligence across the world presents unique opportunities and challenges for county governments. NACo established the Artificial Intelligence Exploratory Committee in July 2023 to build a knowledge base and best practices resources hub for counties.

This primer will offer an overview of artificial intelligence and generative artificial intelligence, share the work of NACo's Artificial Intelligence Exploratory Committee, and provide a list of resources that NACo will plan to debut at the NACo 2024 Annual Conference.

Introduction to Artificial Intelligence and Its Relevance to Counties

UNDERSTANDING AI AND GENERATIVE AI:

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Technical Definition

The theory and development of computer systems able to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and translation between languages. Other examples include devices such as security cameras, software applications such as computer monitoring and HVAC systems that automate heating/cooling.

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.

GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Technical Definition

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, Otter.ai, etc.

Layman's Definition

Generative AI, such as ChatGPT, acts like a creative advisor, not only assisting in regular tasks but also capable of drafting legal 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.

Basic Terminology and Concepts of Artificial Intelligence

- **Automation** is the use of technology (software, rules, triggers, actions) to perform tasks where little to no human input is needed. Generally used to replace or minimize manual tasks that are repeatable.
- **Machine learning**, a subfield of artificial intelligence, 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)**, also a subset of artificial intelligence, refers to 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.

- **Large language models (LLMs)** are 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 massive amounts of data, often from the internet, as well as other data sets such as Reddit or X (formerly Twitter).
- **Prompts** are text that you type or say to a generative artificial intelligence tool that is then used to provide context and guidance to machine learning models. One will hear of the term prompts quite often when receiving education and training on generative AI (ChatGPT or BingChat for example)



NACo's AI EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE AND WORKGROUP PROGRESS

NACo's AI Exploratory Committee

NACo's Artificial Intelligence Exploratory Committee was formally established in July 2023 to explore the role of counties in utilizing generative artificial intelligence in county operations, constituent services, communications, and more. The committee is also tasked with exploring the risks and benefits of the role of generative artificial intelligence in society and the economy.

The AI Exploratory Committee is actively building out recommendations among four workgroups: Policy, Ethics, Applications, and Workforce. The committee will debut a final report by the NACo 2024 Annual Conference in Hillsborough County, Florida in July 2024.

POLICY WORKGROUP

The Policy Workgroup is tasked with exploring the policy implications for regulating, monitoring, guarding, and promoting the use and application of artificial intelligence in county governance and operations as well as across various sectors in the broader economy. Conclusions from this group will focus on the county perspective and areas of potential contribution to a broader policy lens.

ETHICS WORKGROUP:

The Ethics Workgroup is developing ethical principles in the use of artificial intelligence. This working group will identify challenges with respect to bias, equity concerns with respect to adoption and utilization of artificial intelligence, privacy of use, accountability for decisions made based on AI technology, transparency of services, and ensuring human dignity is prioritized.

Ethical Principles for AI must include: **Equity, Transparency, Privacy and Accountability** for use of AI in government services and applications.

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

POLICIES

Strictest rule mandates a rule structure that will set the boundaries for approved use and non-approved use. Policy structure provides clear guidance and consequences for not following the policy. Counties should consider only implementing a policy when the objective is well understood, in order to avoid a policy that becomes out-dated or ineffective

STANDARDS

Moderate impact rule: mandatory rules (that support policy) and outline minimum requirements. To be utilized to help inform ethical utilization of AI tools and technology.

GUIDELINES

Light impact rule: recommendations for users that outline best practices but are not mandatory. To be used to help guide productivity in the workforce, or to develop in response to applications of AI.

APPLICATIONS WORKGROUP:

The Applications Workgroup is identifying and evaluating current use cases of generative artificial intelligence. The working group will similarly seek to identify risks of applying artificial intelligence to county services and operations. The working group will utilize the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) AI Risk Management Framework as a basis for determining best applications of AI.



Establish infrastructure and technical requirements for implementation of systems



Identify necessary hardware and software for implementation of artificial intelligence



Strategize on data management practices, including data collection, storage, protection, and analysis



Ensure security, including implementing cyber-security measures and protecting against breaches

NIST emphasizes a playbook that encourages governance by measuring, managing and mapping the risks.


WORKFORCE WORKGROUP:

The Workforce Workgroup is assessing opportunities for the future of promoting employee skills and exploring opportunities for upskilling the county workforce to integrate artificial intelligence in a productive and non-disruptive manner. This working group is also considering broader dynamics on the implementation of artificial intelligence and implications for the workforce.

THE FOCUS IS ON SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING, INCLUDING:

- **Providing accessible training** for various county staff roles, including administrative, programmatic, technical, and executive
- **Ensuring ongoing learning and development** in artificial intelligence and related technologies is a continued focus

Additional Resources:

- NACo's TechBrief on ChatGPT can be found [here](#) 
- Training materials from NACo Corporate Partners can be found below:

[AWS Skill Builder](#)



[Career Essentials in Generative AI by Microsoft and LinkedIn](#)



- The NACo AI Exploratory Committee Founding Partners also have valuable online resources on AI. Links to these resources can be found below:
 - CAI: [Modernize your service desk with conversational AI](#)
 - Deloitte: [AI Institute for Governments](#)
 - Microsoft: [AI Resource Hub](#)
 - Tyler Technologies: [Driving the Future of Public Services with Data & Insights](#)

To learn more, access the committee page here



HOW TO GET STARTED

Your AI Journey can start today by taking these two steps

STEP 1 Document how your county employees are using generative AI. One way to do this is to survey your departments. Here is a [sample template](#) of questions to include in your survey.

Department Name _____

Total Number of Staff _____

Number of staff using generative AI (ChatGPT, BingChat, Google Bard, Otter.AI, Dall-E are examples)

How are your staff using generative AI?

<input type="checkbox"/> Article Writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Analyzing data
<input type="checkbox"/> Research	<input type="checkbox"/> Completing repetitive tasks
<input type="checkbox"/> Ice Breakers	<input type="checkbox"/> Explaining policy or procedures
<input type="checkbox"/> Content word-smithing	<input type="checkbox"/> Communications
<input type="checkbox"/> Taking notes in a meeting (or attending the meeting for the staff person)	

Why are the staff using the generative AI tools? (what value have they found). Some suggestions one can include: Time savings, more professional, thought generator)

How often is your staff using generative AI? (Daily, weekly, monthly, never)

What type of data is your staff putting into the generative tools?

What would your staff like to see automated or simplified? (potentially using AI)

STEP 2 Sign up for NACo's 2024 Webinar Series, which will include 13 learning opportunities, including those listed below.



You can register here.

- AI Use Cases in Data Privacy
- AI Use Cases in Human Services
- AI Use Cases in Human Resources
- AI Use Cases in Transportation/Public Works
- AI Use Cases in Cyber
- AI Use Cases in Agriculture & Forestry
- AI Use Cases in Elections Administration and Security
- AI Use Cases in Justice and Public Safety
- AI Use Cases in Public Lands
- AI Uses Cases in Telecommunications
- AI Use Cases in Environment, Energy & Land Use (Zoning & Surveying)
- AI Use Cases in Health Care
- AI Use Cases in Workforce Development

Next Steps

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