

State Leadership in Public Sector AI Governance

A Breakdown of Key Officials & Their Responsibilities

June 2025

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Many states have already acknowledged the importance of an interdisciplinary, inter-agency approach to public sector AI governance with the creation of statewide [task forces](#) and [commissions](#) to develop policies and oversee the use of AI in state government. State policymakers and administrators across government have unique and critical roles to play in managing the development, acquisition, use, and ongoing monitoring of AI in public service delivery.

Specifically, three categories of state leaders play important roles in governing responsible public sector AI use:

- **Policymakers**, like governors, state legislators, attorneys general, and agency executives, develop and set AI priorities, such as statewide policy objectives, resource allocation, talent strategies, and guardrails for responsible use.
- **Cross-government administrators**, including Chief Information Officers, Chief Procurement Officers, and Chief Auditors, oversee AI use in state agencies and support statewide implementation of AI priorities set by state policymakers.
- **Agency officers and staff**, such as Program Directors, Civil Rights Officers, and General Counsel, implement AI systems into agency operations and operationalize AI-related priorities set by state policymakers.

Although a more diverse range of officials are becoming involved in decision-making and oversight of public sector AI, too often decision-making remains limited to technology-focused offices or positions. To better understand how policymakers across all parts of state government should play a role in public sector AI governance, the following infographics map the roles and responsibilities that state officials should have in these critical decisions. Some states are more centralized in their operations than others, so the listed roles and responsibilities in these infographics may vary by state depending on their technology governance structures.

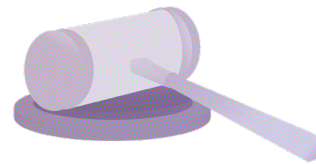
State Policymakers

State policymakers play vital roles in the AI ecosystem by developing and setting priorities in areas such as statewide policy objectives, resource allocation, and guardrails for responsible use. These priorities can be informed by collaboration between state policymakers and the other players in the state AI ecosystem – cross-government administrators and agency officers and staff.



Agency Leadership

- Oversee **program delivery and modernization**, including the adoption and use of AI systems in the administration of government programs
- Establish **agency strategic plans, programmatic goals, and budgetary priorities**, including allocating AI-related resources and identifying opportunities for responsible AI use
- Ensure that the state's use of AI **complies with laws and regulations**



Attorneys General

- Provide **technical assistance and legal counsel** to state agencies on the use of AI systems
- Oversee **enforcement** of civil rights laws, privacy laws, and other legal protections in the context of AI



Governors

- Oversee the **implementation** of state laws and executive orders, **appointment** of senior leadership, and **operations** of the executive branch, spanning both the regulation and use of AI
- Establish **budgetary and regulatory priorities** on the use and oversight of AI within state government
- Coordinate with the state legislature on **AI policy priorities**, including proposing and vetoing legislation

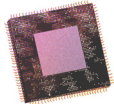


State Legislators

- **Enact legislation** to regulate and/or promote the use of AI and **approve state budget** to fund AI implementation and oversight
- **Conduct oversight** (hearings, inquiries, etc.) of government agencies and implementation of state laws, including the use and governance of AI

Cross-Government Administrators

Cross-government administrators oversee AI use in state agencies and help ensure compliance with the AI-related priorities set by state policymakers. These leaders provide critical domain-specific knowledge across government operations to support consistent and efficient implementation of AI in the state.



Chief AI Officers¹

- Oversee statewide **strategy and policy implementation** for AI
- Develop **guidance** for individual state agencies, lead **AI workforce development**, and serve as the **AI policy expert** across the executive branch



Chief Auditors

- Lead **independent oversight** of AI systems used by state agencies
- Conduct **audits of agency-wide AI governance and overall system performance** — including both AI tools and other enterprise technologies — to evaluate effectiveness and potential weaknesses or harms



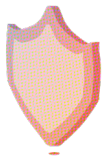
Chief Data Officers

- Develop policies and procedures to **manage data quality, sharing, standards, governance, and strategy** across agencies



Chief Information Officers

- Oversee **policies and procedures for statewide IT and technical systems**, including AI tools
- Lead statewide technology **acquisition policies and management** of statewide technology resources



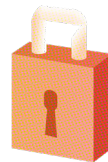
Chief Information Security Officers

- Develop AI governance policies and procedures — including security, risk management, and procurement policies — to **manage the security risks of AI**
- **Protect government networks and systems** from threats to internal and external AI tools



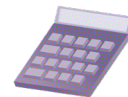
Chief Personnel/ HR Officers

- Lead statewide efforts to **hire AI talent and upskill existing workforce**
- Develop **template job listings** for AI-related positions and create **centralized workforce training materials**



Chief Privacy Officers

- Develop policies and procedures to **manage the privacy risks of AI**, including access, use, deletion, retention, procurement, and disclosure policies
- Ensure **compliance with existing federal and state privacy laws** and regulations to secure and protect data used by AI tools



Chief Procurement Officers

- Oversee statewide **procurement policy and process** for the acquisition of AI systems
- Develop **practices and training to support agency monitoring** of contract performance and compliance



Financial Officers

(including Budget Officers, Treasurers, Comptrollers, Chief Financial Officers)

- Manage statewide **planning and budgetary policies and processes** for the acquisition and adoption of AI tools in state government
- Oversee **cost accounting and cost-benefit analysis** for AI systems

1. Chief AI Officers serve as C-Suite level leaders responsible for developing and leading statewide AI strategy and policy. These roles are either established as new standalone positions or are added to the responsibilities of an existing role, such as the Chief Information Officer. See, e.g.: Julia Edinger, *Do Local Governments Need to Appoint a Chief AI Officer?*, Government Technology (February 21, 2025), <https://perma.cc/8VFR-EXD3>.

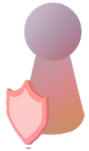
Agency Officers and Staff

Agency officers and staff implement AI systems into agency operations and carry out the details of AI-related priorities set by state policymakers. Through their proximity to AI system use and performance, they can provide vital insight into how AI systems are working in practice.



Agency Privacy Officers

- **Manage data privacy and protection** within agency services and programs, including through the implementation of privacy risk management procedures and staff training



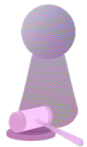
Agency Security Officers

- **Manage cybersecurity risks** within agency services and programs, including through the implementation of enterprise risk management procedures and staff training



Civil Rights Officers

- Enforce and ensure **compliance with federal and state civil rights and disability laws** to prevent unlawful discrimination, including potential discrimination related to the use of AI
- Help agency staff **identify and mitigate risks of AI-related bias and discrimination** in state operations and services
- Provide means through which individuals can **submit inquiries and file complaints** regarding AI and potential discrimination or accessibility violations



General Counsels

- Provide **legal advice and representation** to agency leadership on the use and **oversight** of AI within the agency
- Oversee and implement **AI contracts and data sharing agreements**
- Help **coordinate incident responses**, such as data breaches, that involve an AI system



Program Directors and their Staff

- **Identify business problems** for which AI is a potential solution
- **Implement, use, and oversee maintenance** of AI systems in agency programs and operations
- **Interface with the public** around AI use in agency programs



Public Engagement and Communications Officers

- Lead agency **communications, outreach, and stakeholder engagement** about the development and use of AI, **soliciting public input** about AI projects and **informing the public** about how their rights and freedoms are affected by the agency's use of AI
- Ensure content, communications, and other public engagement related to AI are **accessible** for non-English speakers and people with disabilities



Technology Directors/ Seniormost IT Officers

- **Implement AI strategy**, including the development, acquisition, and rollout of new products across the agency
- Serve as a **thought partner** to program leaders to assess whether AI is an appropriate solution to a given problem

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