

# How Congress Should Shape AI Implementation in Federal Agencies

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The current artificial intelligence landscape in federal agencies is a complex mix of an [increasing number of AI use cases](#), varied approaches to AI governance and workforce changes pushed forward [in the name of improving government efficiency](#)—but it is built on a foundation of sand. This fast-growing system is underpinned by insufficient technical talent and outdated technology systems that risk leaving the federal government behind as AI continues to evolve. While Congress and the White House have given critical thought to AI use in government through [taskforce reports](#), [roadmaps](#) and [action plans](#), lawmakers must take additional direct action to address the foundational concerns threatening agency AI implementation.

Since 2018, the Partnership for Public Service has [developed over a thousand government AI leaders](#) and researched the workforce and operational [needs of agencies to leverage and scale AI](#). Through conversations with House and Senate staff in 2025, the Partnership has identified ongoing bipartisan recognition of the need for congressional action to better support AI implementation in federal agencies.

## THE FOLLOWING ARE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONGRESS TO BOLSTER AGENCY PROGRESS TOWARD AN AI-ENABLED FEDERAL GOVERNMENT:

-  1. Require agencies to do specific planning for AI workforce needs, including an inventory of skills and positions that agencies will need to fill over the next two years.
-  2. Provide legislative authority and funding to help agencies reimagine and rebuild technical talent pipelines to better execute projects that effectively serve the American people.
-  3. Improve communication channels between Congress and federal agencies to better understand how agencies are implementing AI and to enable congressional committees to responsibly evaluate funding requests.
-  4. Deliver timely and stable funding for modernization of the federal government's technology infrastructure to provide the basis for secure and effective data management, interoperable systems and governance practices that are the necessary foundation for the adoption of AI tools.

## THE PARTNERSHIP HAS IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPECIFIC ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT EACH RECOMMENDATION:

### 1. WORKFORCE PLANNING

#### Challenge:



Congress does not receive sufficient information from agencies on hiring challenges, occupational data or talent gaps, which is needed to inform legislative action to address agency staffing needs. This is particularly acute when it comes to technical talent. In addition, federal agencies have [faced a perpetual challenge in identifying their own talent needs](#). Recent workforce reductions by the Trump administration have further decreased the cadre of technical talent in government. For example, the April 2025 [resignations of nearly every member of the Defense Digital Service](#) left the Pentagon with hampered capability to rapidly create innovative technical solutions that address national security crises.

#### Solutions:

Congressional authorizing committees should request updated information from the agencies they oversee on their workforce planning, analysis and strategic human capital frameworks related specifically to AI talent needs. The workforce planning should include several factors:

- An analysis of how their technical workforce has been impacted by [2025 employee separations](#).
- The number of technical positions agencies need to fill during the next two years.
- [Change management strategies](#) for how the workforce and service delivery as a whole will change as the result of AI adoption.
- Plans to provide employees with the necessary skills to oversee and implement the use of AI.

Congress should act based on the findings, including providing adequate funding to build and maintain well-functioning HR systems and offices that are foundational to the government's ability to manage its workforce.

### 2. TECHNICAL TALENT



#### Challenge:

Federal hiring mechanisms are not designed for a modern technical workforce. Agencies typically do not have recruitment functions or HR offices with the capacity to focus on hiring technical talent. Moreover, they lack funding for technical assessments that can be used in the hiring process to identify top talent and they are stuck using a pay and classification system that was [designed in the 1940s](#) for non-technical clerical work. Multiple laws must be updated for agencies to keep pace with hiring the talent needed for an AI-enabled workplace.

#### Solutions:

In 2024, Congress passed, and President Joe Biden signed into law, the [Chance to Compete Act](#), which requires agencies to use assessments to identify technical skills rather than relying on candidates' self-reported expertise. Improved assessments are an initial tool to hire highly skilled technical talent, but more changes are needed, including:

- Ensure agencies are budgeting for and receiving funding for the use of technical assessments in the hiring process, have robust recruiting functions and a fully staffed HR office with specific expertise in hiring technical talent. This is critical to supporting implementation of the Chance to Compete Act.
- Require agencies to provide opportunities to upskill non-technical leaders who can manage AI project implementation.
- Modernize the pay system to be occupation-based and market-sensitive so that agencies have more flexibility to set pay and better compete for talent with the private sector.
- Continue to improve the security clearance process to reduce the burden of long wait times, give applicants a clear view about their status and allow greater data sharing between human capital and security offices and between agencies.
- Streamline additional mechanisms to bring technical talent into government, including public-private rotation programs, the Intergovernmental Personnel Act and other flexibilities to allow talent to easily move in and out of government roles.

### 3. CONGRESSIONAL-AGENCY COMMUNICATION



#### Challenge:

Congress lacks both timely information and comprehensive understanding about how agencies are using AI and the barriers they face in scaling AI-powered tools. In addition, appropriators are wary of large-scale investments in the current fiscal climate. They want to understand the value in funding pilot projects or cross-agency use cases before agreeing to additional appropriations. Congress should receive timely updates on how AI tools and pilots are performing in order to identify successes and failures that will inform future funding and authorizing decisions. While the Trump administration [has required agencies to publish an AI use case inventory on their websites](#) and update the information on at least an annual basis, AI is a rapidly-evolving technology and more regular updates to Congress on agency AI use are critical.

#### Solutions:

The process for agencies to report on AI use cases to Congress should be balanced and refined to facilitate congressional oversight, create a sustainable model for how innovative AI projects can receive funding and avoid placing undue burden on agencies to fulfill requests for information. Congressional committees should invite proactive agency briefings to build a collaborative relationship on AI implementation and workforce needs rather than relying on mandated reports that do not keep pace with the use and scaling of AI tools. To support consistent communication and understanding, authorizing and appropriations committees should ensure that they have at least one staffer or fellow with the hands-on experience and skills to understand AI as a technology.

### 4. TECHNOLOGY MODERNIZATION



#### Challenge:

Without updated technology infrastructure that can enable the use of AI with interoperable systems and enterprise-wide scaling, the full potential of AI to transform workflows and government services cannot come to fruition. Modernized technology systems are necessary to enable agencies to design processes around AI use that are essential to its implementation. This means agencies will need timely evaluation of outcomes and processes in place to ensure data security and privacy, responsible governance, streamlined procurement and compliance with cybersecurity best practices.

#### Solutions:

To provide stable funding that agencies need to start in-depth and multi-year modernization projects, Congress should authorize and appropriate flexible funding mechanisms such as the Technology Modernization Fund, which as of December 2024 had [allocated over \\$1 billion across 63 projects at 34 agencies](#). The fund is currently supporting AI implementation projects including the [Social Security Administration's TMF-funded project to use AI to support disability claim processing](#). As more AI use cases emerge, Congress should continue to use hearings and recurring reporting mechanisms to update its understanding of what funding model meets agency AI-related technology needs.

Successful integration of AI into government is not just a technical matter—it will require Congress to focus its attention on making meaningful improvements to federal human capital management, agency technology systems and its own information gathering functions. As our conversations with congressional staff uncovered, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle are aware of the challenges created when these foundational systems are neglected.

If Congress is to achieve its collective vision of the government responsibly using AI, more must be done by lawmakers to fix these agreed upon problems. Improved information sharing of workforce concerns, technology problems and current agency AI use cases must be paired with evidence-based legislating, sufficient multi-year technology modernization funding and consistent oversight as a start. While questions remain regarding need for legislation to regulate the use of AI in the private sector, there is little doubt that lawmakers hold a responsibility to work with agencies to develop and implement solutions to the foundational challenges so the federal government can use AI responsibly and effectively in service of the American people.

## ABOUT US

The **Partnership for Public Service** is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that is building a better government and a stronger democracy. The Partnership's [AI Center for Government](#)® is committed to fostering AI leadership, talent and literacy across federal, state and local governments. The AI Center's programming and [AI Government Leadership Program](#) are designed to convene government leaders to learn, build and exchange best practices for developing and implementing public sector AI strategies. The AI Center recognizes the potential of artificial intelligence to enhance the government's ability to deliver solutions and services to the public and aims to ensure public sector leaders are effective users and smart regulators of the technology.

**Inclusive Abundance** is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization building a dynamic community of notable policy experts, think tanks, and advocacy groups to shape America's future through an abundance-focused agenda. On artificial intelligence, Inclusive Abundance promotes efforts to attract more technical experts to American government and world-leading talent to American industry, to greatly expand national investment in interpretability and control research, and to explore high-value public sector technological applications. It published [dual explainers](#) on talent in 2025.

## GOVERNMENT FOR A NEW ERA

The Government for a New Era Initiative, at the Partnership for Public Service, is focused on developing ideas and action plans to make government more effective, responsive and accountable.

View our approach to making government work better for the American people at: [neweragov.org](http://neweragov.org)



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