

AI-READY OR AI-RISKY?

Find Your “Why in AI”



A Practical County Playbook for Readiness, Results and Guardrails

SCAC INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT

JULY 2026



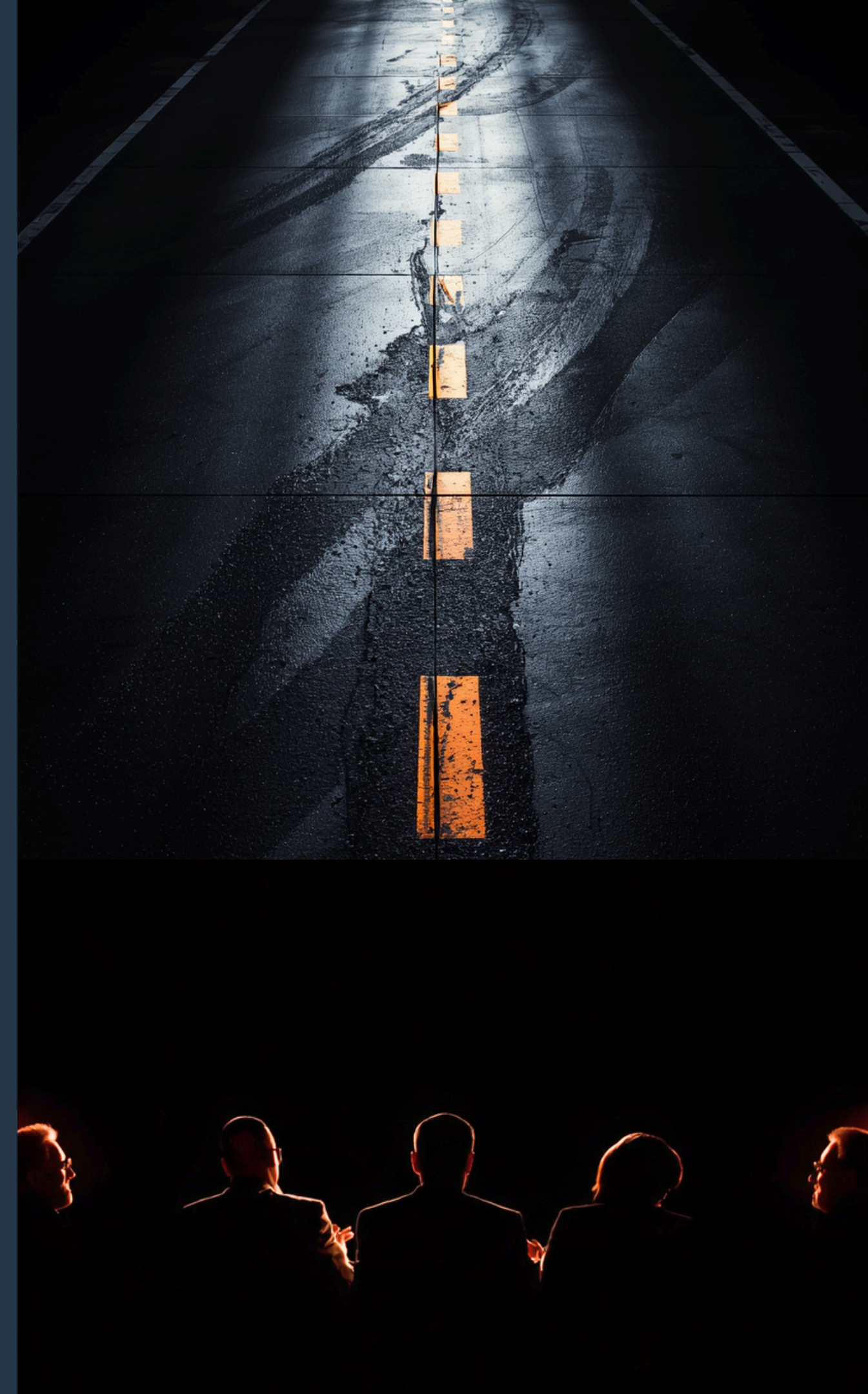
WORTHWHILE

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TODAY'S ROADMAP

(Agenda)

- 2:00-2:15: Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Overview
- 2:15-3:05: Panel Discussion
- **3:05-3:15: Break**
- 3:15-3:25: AI Basics: Types and the AI Spectrum
- 3:30-4:05: The AI Readiness Playbook
- 4:05-4:30: County Use Cases & Live Demo
- 4:30-4:45: MVG + Governance
- 4:45-5:00: Tuesday Morning, Q&A & Close



THE GAP WE'RE CLOSING

Many have used AI tools recently, but **few have policies** in place, highlighting the need for today's discussion.



A PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK

This is a **framework you can implement** immediately, driven by real voices from county government, not sales pitches.



Know where
your county
stands.

Find your
first win.

Protect people,
data, and
public trust.



REAL PEOPLE.

REAL EXPERIENCE.

REAL RESULTS.

MEET THE PANELISTS



Nathan Hogue



Lynn Sturkie



David Garner



Jason See - Moderator



Jeremy Ward



Nate Tomforde

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BREAK



KNOW YOUR AI: **FOUR** TYPES



AUTOMATION

Rule-based systems for predictable workflow tasks.



MACHINE LEARNING

Recognizes patterns from historical data effectively.



GENERATIVE AI

Creates new content from user prompts seamlessly.



AGENTIC AI

Performs tasks with specific goals and tools.

TYPE	WHAT IT DOES	COUNTY GOVERNMENT EXAMPLE
 AUTOMATION	 Rule-based, predictable workflows	 Auto-routing 311 requests to the right department
 MACHINE LEARNING	 Pattern recognition from historical data	 Predicting peak permit application periods to staff up
 GENERATIVE AI	 Creates new content from prompts	 Drafting first-pass meeting minutes or grant narratives
 AGENTIC AI	 Acts on workflows with goals and tools	 Constituent-facing chatbot that answers, escalates, and follows up

THE AI SPECTRUM



AUTOMATE

End-to-end solutions.
Low risk. High efficiency.
Maximum productivity.



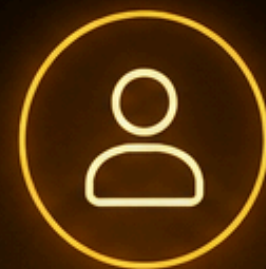
RULE-BASED



REPEATABLE



LOW RISK



ASSIST

Tools that support humans.
Medium risk. Meaningful
enhancements.



HUMAN-IN-THE-LOOP



IMPROVES
DECISIONS



MEDIUM RISK



AUGMENT

New capabilities that transform.
High impact. Higher stakes.
Built for the future.



NEW
CAPABILITIES



HIGH
IMPACT



HIGH
RISK

EXERCISE 1: "SORT IT"

Read each task below. You'll sort them by where they fit on the spectrum.



1.

Route 311 service requests to the correct department



2.

Predict when building permit applications will peak



3.

Answer constituent questions 24/7 with a chatbot



4.

Draft meeting minutes from council discussions



5.

Summarize long policy documents for staff review



6.

Identify fraudulent claims in vendor invoices



7.

Send follow-up emails to applicants with missing information



8.

Prioritize code enforcement cases based on risk factors



9.

Classify and tag incoming public records requests



10.

Generate a grant narrative based on program guidelines

SORT EACH TASK INTO ONE OF THE THREE CATEGORIES BELOW



ASSIST

AI helps people do their work better by providing information, content, or suggestions.

Example: Draft, summarize, answer



AUTOMATE

AI handles repetitive, rule-based tasks or workflows with little to no human intervention.

Example: Route, send, classify



AUGMENT

AI provides insights, predictions, or recommendations to support and enhance human decisions.

Example: Predict, prioritize, detect

THE AI READINESS PLAYBOOK

Counties need to **balance speed and strategy**.

MOVE FAST, WITHOUT CHAOS!



READINESS

Where Does Your County Actually Stand?

Before you buy another AI tool, answer four questions.



DATA

Do you know...

- ✓ What data you have?
- ✓ Where it lives?
- ✓ Who can access it?



TOOLS

What's already happening?

- ✓ Approved AI tools
- ✓ Shadow AI
- ✓ Duplicate platforms



PEOPLE

Who will lead?

- ✓ Curious
- ✓ Capable
- ✓ Willing



POLICY

What's written?

- ✓ Acceptable use
- ✓ Governance
- ✓ What you'd defend publicly



**Readiness isn't about technology.
It's about clarity.**

Your Readiness Self-Check



Readiness Dimension	Honest Answer (put it in words)
 Data — Do you know what you have, where it lives, and who can access it?	
 Tools — What AI is already in use in your county, approved or not?	
 People — Who is curious, capable, and willing to lead this?	
 Policy — What do you have in writing you'd stand behind today?	

SC AI Strategy Findings:

Data Governance and Policy Gaps were the most common AI blockers, not technology.



Why Most AI Fails...



Data +
integration gaps.



No clear owner.



Risk ambiguity
stalls decisions.



EXERCISE 2 - HONEST INVENTORY



EXERCISE 2 MECHANICS



STEP 1

3 MINUTES

Privately write down three AI tools currently used in your county (approved or not).



STEP 2

1 MINUTE

Write your best honest guess at adoption percentage.



THIS IS NOT SHARED ALOUD.
THE PURPOSE IS PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY.



Be honest with yourself.
This is how we create real progress.

THE AI READINESS PLAYBOOK

Counties need to **balance speed and strategy**.

MOVE FAST, WITHOUT CHAOS!



USE CASES: FROM HYPE TO HIGH IMPACT



OUTCOMES
over demos.



ONE USE CASE,
one owner,
one metric.



PICK A VERSION 0 (POC)
built to scale.

“

**“SLOW IS SMOOTH,
SMOOTH IS FAST”**

— U.S. NAVY SEALS



SOUTH CAROLINA AI USE CASE MENU



CONSTITUENT CHATBOT

Enhancing communication
with citizens through
AI-driven responses.



MEETING SUMMARIES

Streamlining notes with
technology to **improve
efficiency.**



PERMIT TRIAGE

Automating processes to
reduce staff workload
effectively.



GRANT DRAFTING

Maximizing resources with
smart AI assistance.



GIS ANALYSIS

Utilizing spatial data for
enhanced **planning
capabilities.**



AI INTEGRATION

Fostering **innovation**
through teamwork and
technology.



SMARTER SERVICES.

STRONGER COMMUNITIES.

BETTER DECISIONS.



SELECTION: PICKING THE FIRST USE CASE (1-5 SCORECARD)



HIGH VALUE



LOW RISK



CLEAR OWNER



HIGH VALUE + LOW RISK + CLEAR OWNER.

SCORE (1-5)		
	Value in 90 days	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
	Data readiness	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
	Workflow fit	★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆
	Risk level	★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆
	Ease of implementation	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆

Evaluate your AI applications using a **scorecard** to ensure effective county implementation and identify areas for improvement.

USE CASE	TYPE	COUNTY REALITY
 Constituent chatbot	 Augment	Bradley chatbot
 Meeting minutes & summaries	 Assist	Low-risk Gen AI win for nearly every county
 Permit triage / 311 routing	 Automate	Reduces staff load; clear ownership required
 Grant narrative drafting	 Assist	High-leverage for small staff; always needs human review
 GIS / land use / permitting analysis	 Assist	Strong fit for planning departments
 Code enforcement triage	 Assist	Strong fit; requires guardrails and audit trail
 HR / hiring screening	 Do Not Start Here	Bias, legal exposure, and public trust risk

Identifying high-value **use cases** is crucial for AI implementation, ensuring quick wins and sustainable adoption moving forward.

▶▶ DEMO

INTRODUCING NATE FROM LAND TAKEOFFS

Nate shows how Land Takeoffs and its AI-powered engine, **SubSync**, **automate quantity takeoffs** from construction plan sets—transforming hours of manual measurement into accurate results in minutes.



AUTOMATE: Reads plan documents, extracts dimensions, and calculates material quantities automatically.



SAVE TIME: Replaces hours of manual, line-by-line review with intelligent automation.



APPLY EVERYWHERE: The same workflow logic applies across planning, permitting, and inspection workloads.



SEE AI IN ACTION. REAL WORKFLOWS. REAL IMPACT.

**SHARING
IS CARING**



THE AI READINESS PLAYBOOK

Counties need to **balance speed and strategy**.

MOVE FAST, WITHOUT CHAOS!



MINIMUM VIABLE GUARDRAILS (MVG): MOVE FAST SAFELY



ACCEPTABLE USE + DATA RULES.

Clear guidelines for responsible use of AI and county data.



HUMAN-IN-THE-LOOP + ESCALATION.

People stay in control with clear escalation paths when it matters.



APPROVED TOOLS, SECURE SPACE.

Use only approved tools in a secure, county-managed environment.



LIGHTWEIGHT GOVERNANCE.

Right-sized oversight to ensure accountability without slowing down.



READINESS + USE CASES + GUARDRAILS = AI-READY

THE **MVG** CHECKLIST

FIVE ESSENTIAL GUARDRAILS. BUILT FOR TRUST. DESIGNED FOR IMPACT.



01



ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

An acceptable use policy exists and has been reviewed by counsel.



02



DATA CLASSIFICATION

Data classification is defined - staff know what can and can't go into AI tools.



03



APPROVED TOOLS ONLY

Only approved, enterprise-grade tools are in use.



04



HUMAN REVIEW REQUIRED

Every AI-assisted output has a human reviewer before reaching the public or a decision-maker.



05



GOVERNANCE IN ACTION

A governance body - however small - meets regularly to review and adapt.



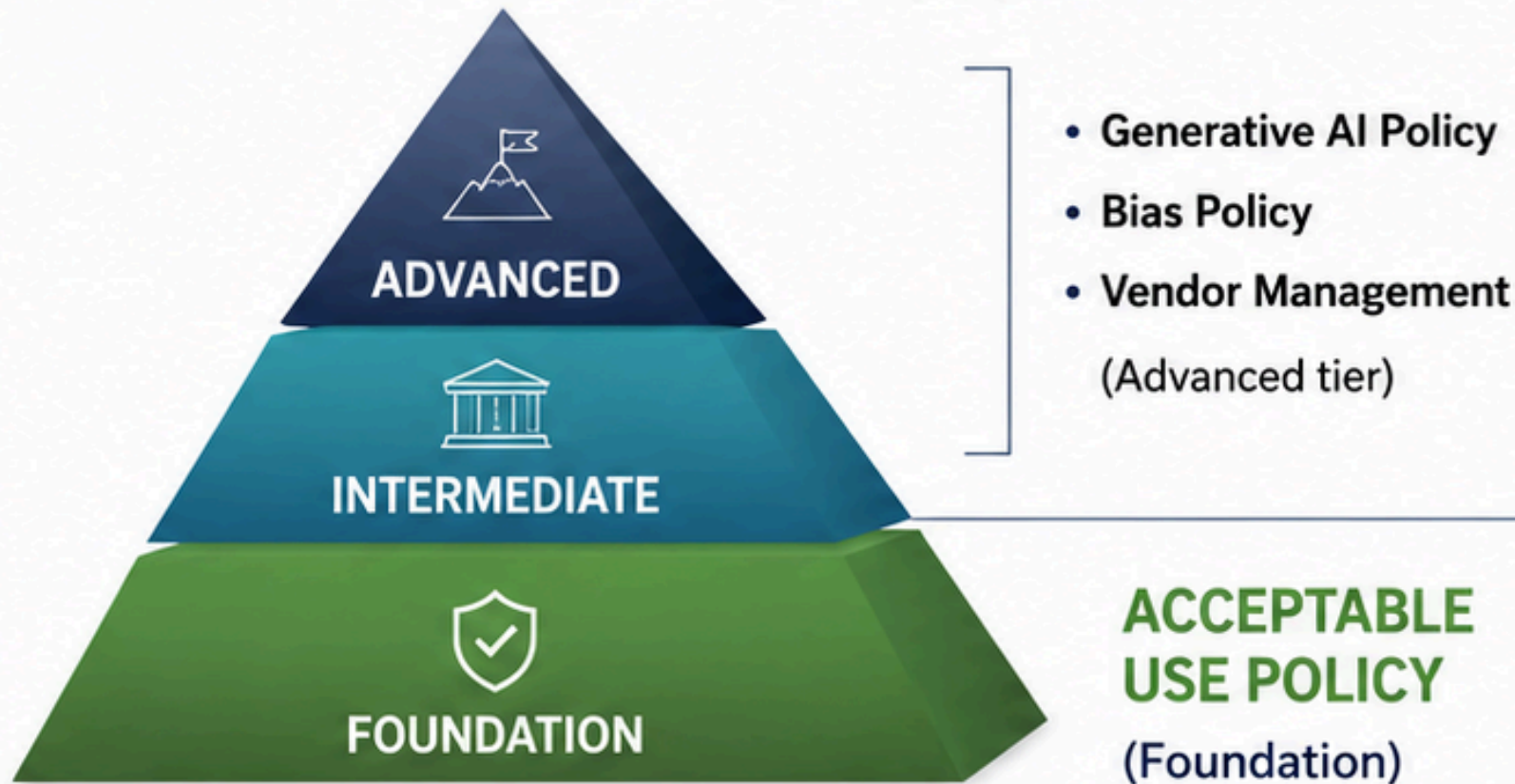
STRONG GUARDRAILS. SMART USE. STRONGER OUTCOMES.

TWO POWERFUL REFERENCES. ONE STRONGER POLICY.



NACo REFERENCE

The AI County Compass places the **Acceptable Use Policy** as the foundation of a policy pyramid.



TODAY'S SESSION ESTABLISHES THE FOUNDATION.
Handout 4 maps the full pyramid.



SC AI STRATEGY CONNECTION

The state's five guiding principles are a useful test for any county policy clause.



SAFELY AND SECURELY

Protect people, data, and systems.



FAIRLY AND OBJECTIVELY

Prevent bias and ensure equitable outcomes.



ETHICALLY

Do the right thing.



TRANSPARENTLY

Be open, explainable, and accountable.



BENEFICIALLY

Deliver real public value and improve lives.



If drafting an acceptable use policy and don't know where to start, **run every clause through these five.**

The SC strategy is a public document and gives elected officials a credible, SC-specific anchor rather than relying solely on national frameworks.

GOVERNANCE TIPS

- **Embed AI guidance in existing HR and IT policy** - don't create a new standalone document nobody reads
- **Be explicit about media**: what employees can and cannot upload to AI tools (photos, recordings, identifiable constituent information)
- Pair every policy update with a **one-page summary** employees can actually follow
- Plan to **revisit every six months** - the landscape changes faster than any policy can keep up

STEERING COMMITTEE SIZING

Right-sized governance. Realistic to start. Built to grow.



LARGER COUNTIES



Formal AI governance committee
with charter, cadence,
and reporting structure.



Charter



Cadence



Reporting



Accountability



MID-SIZE COUNTIES



Standing agenda item
in leadership team +
IT + HR + legal.



Leadership
Team



IT



HR



Legal



SMALLER COUNTIES



County administrator
+ IT director +
one department head –
quarterly is enough to start.



County
Administrator



IT
Director



One
Department Head



KEEP IT PRACTICAL.

Start simple, stay consistent,
and scale as your needs grow.



CADENCE MATTERS.

Regular meetings, clear decisions,
and documented actions drive results.

TUESDAY MORNING TEST

A SIMPLE TEST. A POWERFUL START.
YOU CAN DO THIS BY TUESDAY MORNING.

Small step today.
STRONGER GOVERNANCE TOMORROW.



LEAD WITH PURPOSE. USE AI RESPONSIBLY. **SERVE YOUR COMMUNITY.**



LET'S TALK ABOUT IT!

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NEED HELP?

CALL ME!

