All in favor, say “AI”: It’s unanimous in Georgia

GEORGIA TECHNOLOGY AUTHORITY

AWARD CATEGORY: Artificial Intelligence

STATE: Georgia

PROJECT DATES: November 2023 – April 2025

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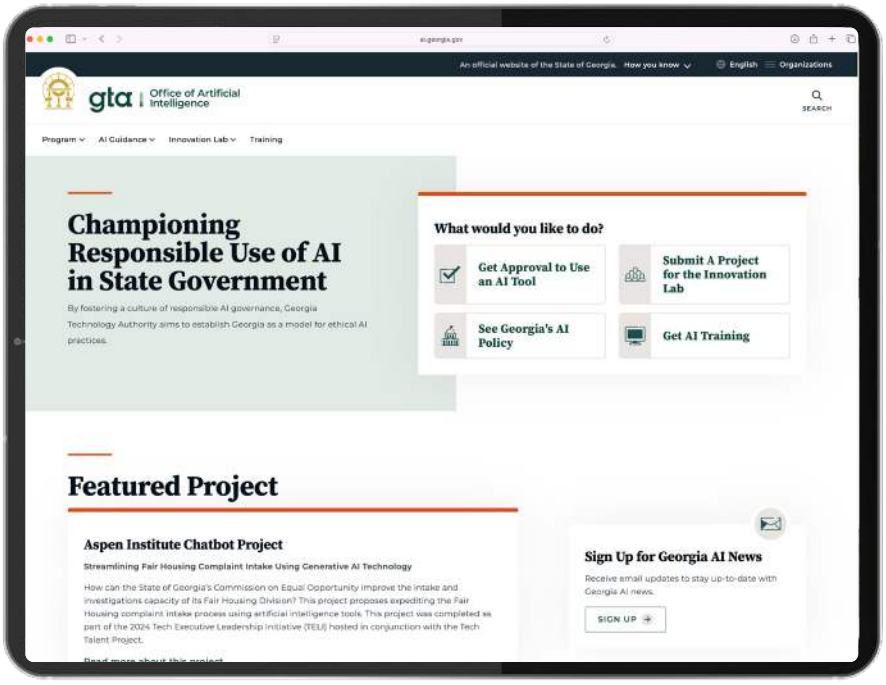
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Georgia's statewide AI program is promoting a future-ready government through responsible, scalable, and strategic AI integration. Led by the Office of the Chief Digital and AI Officer, the initiative blends governance, innovation, and workforce readiness to harness the benefits of AI, while also safeguarding the public's interests.

For one program component, Georgia conducted a statewide procurement in 2024—an AI RFQC (Request for Qualified Contractors)—which selected 20 vetted industry partners across seven strategic AI focus areas. This ensures agencies have pre-qualified, trusted vendors to accelerate AI adoption responsibly.

At the same time, Georgia is investing in human capacity. The AI Pilot's License training program—a three-tier curriculum for public servants—equips staff with foundational, technical, and role-specific AI knowledge across business, legal, ethical, and operational domains. Taken along with related components including the Georgia Innovation Lab, a statewide AI governance council, and agency-led pilot projects, these are the building blocks of a program that provides a comprehensive model for government AI transformation.

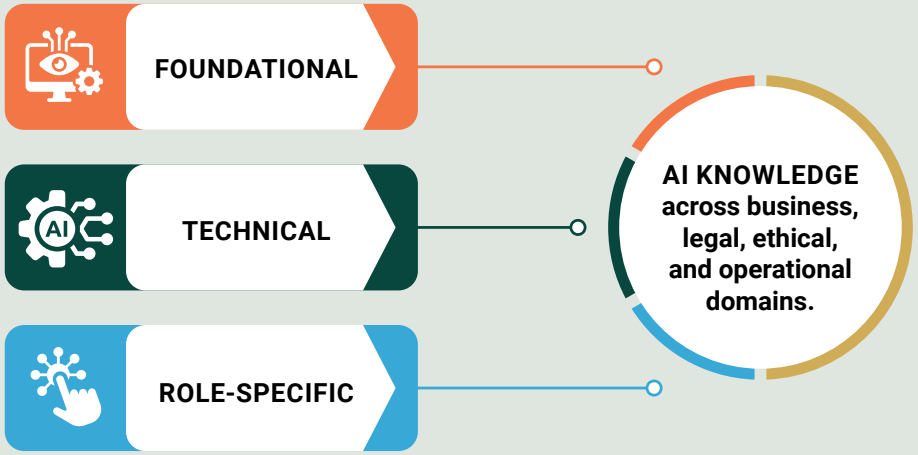
Georgia's AI program is infused with a deep commitment to equity, transparency, and collaboration, and demonstrates how states can move from AI hype to meaningful, measurable impact.



ai.georgia.gov - *a hub for AI information and resources.*

TRAINING

A three-tier curriculum for public servants—equips staff with:



IDEA

What problem or opportunity does the project address?

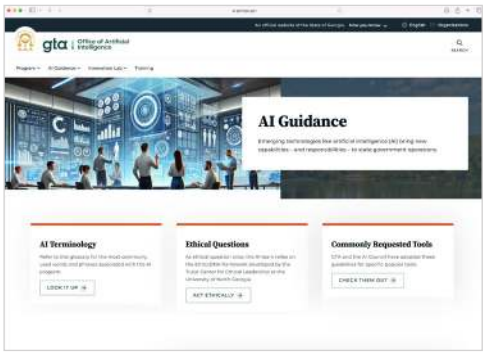
State agencies face increasing pressure to modernize services and improve efficiency while also managing limited resources. AI offers a transformative opportunity to meet these demands—but without centralized governance and a common proving ground, agencies would be left to navigate this complex landscape on their own. Shared guardrails, oversight, and coordinated experimentation promote collective progress, lowered risk, and collaboration. Georgia recognized that enabling responsible AI adoption requires more than technology—it demands a unified strategy, strong governance, and a safe space to pilot and learn. By addressing these foundations, the state is creating a secure, transparent, and citizen-focused model for AI innovation in government.

Why does it matter?

AI is changing how society functions. In state government, this technology must be used carefully: not just to automate but to elevate services, reduce administrative burdens, and improve outcomes for residents. In a world of rising public expectations, tight budgets, and workforce shortages, **AI offers a critical tool to help states do more with less—augmenting staff capacity, improving service delivery, and uncovering operational efficiencies.** Realizing these benefits requires more though than isolated efforts. Georgia's program emphasizes centralized leadership and enterprise-level AI management to align strategy, governance, and investments across agencies. By providing structure, standards, and shared resources, Georgia is ensuring that AI becomes an asset—not a liability—while building public trust, preparing the workforce, and promoting cross-agency collaboration.

What makes it different?

Unlike some government technology initiatives that focus on siloed projects or short-term innovation, Georgia's AI program takes a strategic, enterprise-level approach grounded in governance, scale, and sustainability. Rather than leaving agencies to tackle AI on their own—often with varying levels of risk tolerance, technical capacity, or oversight—the state established a centralized framework to guide, coordinate, and accelerate responsible adoption across the entire executive branch.



What sets the Georgia program apart is its multi-pronged approach:

- The **Georgia Innovation Lab** that acts as a proving ground for agencies to pilot AI use cases in a safe, supported, and evaluative environment
- A **centralized procurement vehicle (RFQC)** that pre-vetted 20 qualified industry partners across seven focus categories, dramatically reducing barriers to entry for agencies
- A **robust governance model** that blends ethical principles, legal guidance, technical oversight, and business alignment to ensure AI implementations are fair, secure, and effective
- The **AI Pilot's License training program**, which prepares public servants—from policymakers to technologists—with tiered, role-specific education on AI's opportunities, risks, and responsibilities

Georgia's model uniquely balances innovation with accountability. It doesn't just provide tools—it provides trust, transparency, and repeatable pathways for AI adoption. That deliberate structure is what transforms AI from an ad hoc experiment into a disciplined enterprise capability.

What makes it universal?

Governments across the country—and around the world—are grappling with how to harness AI while preserving equity, transparency, and accountability. Georgia's program resonates universally because it's not built around a single technology or agency—it's built around solving a common public-sector problem: how to adopt AI thoughtfully, efficiently, and at scale.

Georgia's approach is broadly applicable thanks to its emphasis on readiness and structure rather than one-size-fits-all solutions. The program recognizes that agencies vary in digital maturity and capacity, so it provides tools and pathways that meet organizations where they are: from foundational education and governance support to shared innovation infrastructure and procurement acceleration.

Other governments can learn from Georgia's example not because the state has all the answers, but because it's asking the right questions—and creating systems that are flexible, accountable, and grounded in the public interest. The focus on collaboration, ethical guardrails, and workforce empowerment speaks to the realities of every jurisdiction navigating the AI era. This makes Georgia's model not only replicable, but relevant—regardless of size, structure, or starting point.

IMPLEMENTATION

What was the roadmap?

Strategic Foundation (2023–early 2024)

- Established the Office of Artificial Intelligence
- Drafted AI policies and principles aligned with federal NIST guidelines
- Formed interagency working groups
- Hosted the first Emerging Technology Summit: AI, with an attendance of 200 state agency personnel

Infrastructure and Governance (2024)

- Launched the Georgia AI Advisory Council
- Built the Georgia Innovation Lab to facilitate pilot projects
- Published an Ethics Guidelines Playbook for state agencies. Developed training in ethical decision-making.
- Developed initial AI use case inventory and evaluation framework
- Hosted the second Emerging Technology Summit: Data and AI, with an attendance of 300 state agency personnel

Pilot Projects and Training (2024–2025)

- Deployed a Generative AI chatbot on georgia.gov
- Deployed early use cases across departments (e.g., virtual bots, code reviews, natural language data processing, administrative automation)
- Initiated AI literacy and workforce upskilling programs
- Mapped generative AI processes into operational workflows

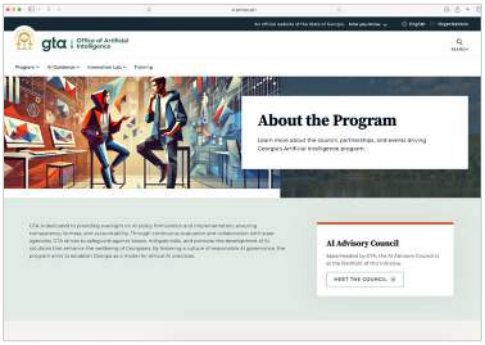
Georgia Chief Digital and AI Officer Nikhil Deshpande and Microsoft's Jeremy Mathurin discuss the Copilot AI personal assistant built into M365. They spoke at a December 2024 AI summit put on by GTA and Government Technology.

Who was involved?

- State CIO and Georgia Technology Authority Executive Director
- Office of the Chief Digital and AI Officer (lead)
- State agency partners (e.g., Human Services, Revenue, Administrative Services)
- Academic collaborators (e.g., Georgia Tech, University of North Georgia)
- Industry advisors and private-sector partners
- Civic tech and open government advocates

How did you do it?

Georgia's success in launching a comprehensive statewide AI program was enabled by its layered, intentional strategy—combining governance, innovation, and workforce enablement into a coordinated effort:



People-first policy design

The program began by establishing clear, ethical guardrails to guide the use of AI in the public sector. Grounded in trusted frameworks such as NIST's AI Risk Management Framework, Georgia created a state-specific AI policy framework focused on equity, transparency, accountability, and public benefit. This framework serves as the foundation for evaluating potential AI use cases, ensuring that technology enhances—and never undermines—citizen trust and service quality.

Ethics Framework

Ethical governance is foundational to Georgia's AI program. In collaboration with the Georgia AI Advisory Council and the University of North Georgia's EthicsDNA Project, the state developed a forward-looking AI Ethics Framework to guide all public-sector AI adoption. This framework addresses not only what AI can do, but what it should do in the context of public service.

Structured around five core ethical domains - progress, trust, opportunity, protection, and forecast—the framework provides a practical tool for navigating the evolving landscape of AI with moral clarity and civic responsibility. Each domain is anchored by an existential question (e.g., Who and what can we trust? or Will all people be able to access the technology?) and matched with guiding values such as fairness, integrity, equity, and accountability.

Core domains of AI Ethics Framework:

- **Progress:** Encouraging human-centered innovation that augments rather than replaces the workforce.
- **Trust:** Promoting transparency in AI decision-making and clear vendor accountability.
- **Opportunity:** Ensuring AI systems are inclusive, reliable, and equitably accessible across demographics and geographies.
- **Protection:** Prioritizing data privacy, digital safety, and the ethical use of algorithms to protect communities.
- **Forecast:** Supporting proactive risk assessment and adaptability in the face of technological change.

The Ethics Framework is embedded into the AI Pilot's License training curriculum and the governance review process for all AI use cases. Agencies are prompted to ask, reflect, and act—a structured ethical inquiry method that supports better, values-driven decision-making.

By addressing ethics up front, not as an afterthought, Georgia is ensuring that its AI transformation is not only innovative, but responsible and resilient—setting a standard well worth following.

Cross-sector partnerships

Recognizing that no single entity can navigate AI alone, GTA established the Georgia Innovation Lab, a hub for collaboration between state agencies, academia, not-for-profits, and private-sector partners. This lab provides a neutral, secure proving ground for testing new AI solutions, enabling agencies to explore use cases in a controlled environment with support from domain experts. It also serves as a space to share lessons learned, coordinate standards, and accelerate adoption across agencies without duplicating effort.

Georgia partnered with nonprofit organizations such as Code for America, InnovateUS, Paragon Policy Hub, and Aspen Institute.

Scaled learning and capacity building

Georgia deliberately avoided a top-down, one-size-fits-all mandate. Instead, the program focused on building momentum organically through education, quick wins, and strong communication. The AI Pilot's License training program was launched to meet staff at different levels—from executives to analysts—with tiered content covering legal, business, ethical, and technical topics. This is intended to create a culture of AI readiness across the enterprise and empower agencies to participate confidently in proof of concept, proof of value, and pilot projects.

GTA joined Microsoft in presenting an AI Hackathon in March 2025 where agency staff could try out AI tools and devise ways they could be applied.

Iterative evaluation and continuous improvement

Each AI pilot is treated not just as a deployment, but as an experiment—with feedback loops, performance metrics, and post-implementation reviews. Pilots are selected and approved through a standardized intake and governance process, evaluated for risk and alignment with state priorities. The results feed directly into the refinement of policies, procurement practices, and training curricula. This learn-and-adjust approach ensures that innovation moves at the pace of insight and public trust.

Together, these layers allowed Georgia to create a responsible, enterprise-wide AI program that is grounded in governance, designed for scalability, and built to evolve.

IMPACT

What did the project make better?

Georgia's statewide AI program has meaningfully improved public-sector readiness, operational efficiency, and responsible innovation—even at the proof-of-concept stage. **These early-stage outcomes demonstrate how strategic AI investment can build a foundation for scalable, sustainable transformation:**

1 Operational Efficiency (Proof of Concept):

Pilot projects using AI-powered automation—such as document processing, content categorization, and email summarization—have reduced time spent on repetitive administrative tasks. This has freed up valuable staff capacity and allowed agencies to reallocate resources toward higher-impact service delivery.

2 Software Development Quality and Speed:

AI-assisted development tools were piloted to support tasks like code generation, review, and documentation. These tools led to faster prototyping and higher-quality code, reducing the time from ideation to deployment and lowering error rates during testing and production.

3 Enterprise AI Governance:

The creation and rollout of structured governance tools—like AI risk intake forms, review rubrics, and ethical checklists—have enabled consistent evaluation of AI use cases across agencies. This structure has reduced implementation risk, increased interagency alignment, and laid the groundwork for long-term public trust.

4 Workforce Readiness and Digital Literacy:

Through the AI Pilot's License program, over 300 public servants have been introduced to foundational AI concepts, including legal, ethical, business, and technical considerations. Early participants reported increased confidence in engaging with AI projects, especially around decision-making and oversight.

5 Reusable, Scalable Models:

The program developed and tested standardized templates and protocols for project intake, pilot evaluation, and vendor collaboration. These tools are now being reused across agencies and will serve as the basis for broader enterprise-wide implementation.

How do you know?

Georgia's AI program plans to use both quantitative metrics and qualitative feedback to measure success at this early phase:

Pilot Metrics:
Projects demonstrated improved engagement metrics (up to 200% uptick in meaningful engagements) and decreased error rates in responses.

Agency Engagement:
Agencies participating in initial pilots—such as the Department of Human Services, Department of Behavioral Health, and Department of Revenue —have requested additional use cases, indicating satisfaction and growing confidence.

Cross-Sector Participation:
Stakeholders — including academic partners, nonprofits, and industry advisors—have participated in governance design, pilot planning, and Georgia Innovation Lab activities.

Governance Integration:
The AI evaluation framework is now embedded in procurement and vendor review processes, showing alignment between governance principles and operational practices.

Training Uptake:
High enrollment and completion rates in the AI Pilot's License program—especially among non-technical roles—signal broad-based interest and cross-functional relevance.

What Now?

Georgia is moving into the next phase of the AI program, focused on scale, specialization, and sustained impact:

- **Expanding the Georgia Innovation Lab's Capacity:**
  The lab will support more pilots concurrently, with deeper partnerships across agency clusters (e.g., health, finance, education). Emphasis will be placed on high-impact, multidisciplinary use cases and shared infrastructure.
- **Agency-Specific AI Roadmaps:**
  GTA is working with individual agencies to develop tailored AI strategies that align with their missions, digital maturity levels, and unique data environments.
- **Public Transparency and Accountability:**
  The state will add public-facing dashboards to report AI pilot status, training participation, and governance reviews—reinforcing transparency and building public trust.
- **National Leadership and Collaboration:**
  Georgia is actively contributing to national AI policy conversations, including Code for America, City of Atlanta, and intergovernmental associations. The state is sharing its framework as a potential model for responsible AI governance at scale.