

AI with a North Star: Minnesota's guide to innovation



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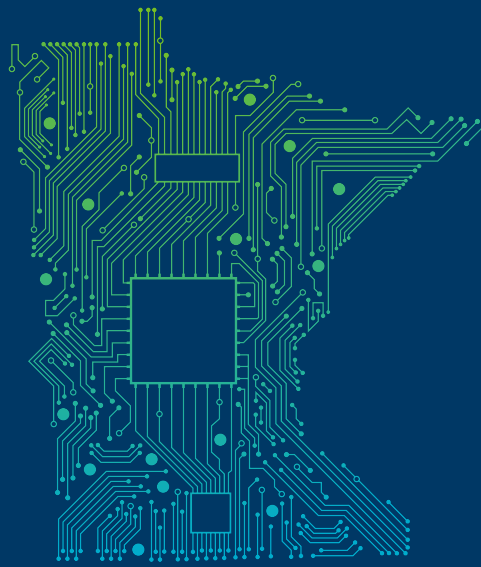
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Executive summary

Minnesota didn't wait for the AI wave—it led it. At a time when government agencies across the nation faced uncertainty about how to apply artificial intelligence (AI) responsibly, Minnesota took action. Recognizing AI's transformative potential and the risk of unchecked implementation, State CIO Tarek Tomes and Minnesota IT Services (MNIT) launched the Transparent Artificial Intelligence Governance Alliance (TAIGA) in 2023. The goal is to ensure Minnesota advances AI adoption with urgency, while upholding the highest standards of ethics, security, and service to the public good.

What began as a small team with a bold vision has grown into a statewide initiative that has already trained more than 1,300 employees, reviewed 78 technologies, and implemented AI in areas reaching thousands of Minnesotans—such as language access, enhanced efficiency, and public service communications.

TAIGA equips agencies with governance structures, ethical guidelines, and practical tools to implement AI securely and responsibly. By uniting experts in cybersecurity, legal policy, accessibility, and procurement, Minnesota has set a new standard for transparent, trusted innovation—one that directly advances NASCIO priorities.

TAIGA strengthens cybersecurity through responsible AI use, improves customer experience, supports data-driven government, and scales digital services across the enterprise. Minnesota's collaborative approach offers a repeatable model for other states seeking to harness AI's potential while safeguarding public trust.

And this is just the beginning. With enterprise-wide governance in place, a growing community of AI leaders across agencies, and ongoing collaboration with policymakers and residents, Minnesota is positioned to continue leading the nation in responsible, people-centered AI adoption—setting the bar for ethical innovation in the public sector.

Why it matters: From cutting DMV wait times to improving language access for immigrant communities, TAIGA has already impacted thousands of Minnesotans—and it's just the start. This is public sector innovation in action: smarter, faster, more equitable services. In a time when standing still means falling behind, TAIGA moves Minnesota forward—securely, strategically, and with purpose.

Idea

Paving the way for scalable, future-ready AI in government

The Office of the State CIO launched the Transparent Artificial Intelligence Governance Alliance (TAIGA) to meet growing demand for faster, more efficient public services. Designed to better allocate resources and reduce repetitive tasks, TAIGA helps agencies automate processes, streamline workflows, and improve service quality for Minnesotans.

What sets TAIGA apart is its enterprise-wide, collaborative approach. Rather than imposing mandates, it unites agencies with legal, procurement, cybersecurity, and accessibility experts to shape AI solutions that strengthen service delivery while safeguarding equity, security, and accountability.

Through flexible tools, clear guidance, and continuous learning, TAIGA supports people-centered AI adoption—empowering agencies to make ethical, informed decisions at every stage.

Scalable solutions with national relevance

Rooted in Minnesota, TAIGA tackles challenges shared by states nationwide—limited resources, growing public expectations, and rapid technological change. Aligned with NASCIO priorities like customer experience, cybersecurity, digital services, and data governance, TAIGA is designed to scale and adapt. It offers a blueprint for states seeking to implement generative AI responsibly, showing how strong governance and cross-agency collaboration can unlock AI's potential to serve the public efficiently, ethically, and sustainably.

Implementation

A phased, principled roadmap to responsible AI

Minnesota's AI journey followed a phased approach that balanced innovation with responsibility, focusing on transparency, inclusion, and public service.

Build



The first step aligned partners across legal, security, procurement, and accessibility to create governance structures ensuring ethical, secure, resident-centered AI adoption.

Pilot



MNIT then piloted AI tools, such as AI-powered customer service and document summarization, to test capabilities, assess risks, and refine the approach.

Expand



After successful pilots, Minnesota expanded AI adoption with structured policies, risk tools, and networks like TAIGA, improving services in areas like language access, fraud detection, and communications.

Sustain



To ensure long-term success, Minnesota embedded AI governance into enterprise processes, with continuous learning and safeguards to adapt with technology and the needs of Minnesotans.

Milestones in Minnesota's AI journey

- **March 2023: AI-powered customer service in multiple languages**
MNIT and the Department of Public Safety deployed a virtual assistant in Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS), offering support in Hmong, Somali, and Spanish to better serve Minnesota's diverse communities.
- **July 2023: TAIGA's first convening**
Commissioner Tarek Tomes convened the inaugural TAIGA meeting, launching a statewide effort to build a comprehensive AI governance framework.
- **September 2023: Partnering with Technology Advisory Council**
MNIT introduced TAIGA to the Technology Advisory Council and began an ongoing, fruitful collaboration on AI-related activities.
- **October 2023: Establishing AI security standards**
MNIT released a security standard to guide the responsible and secure use of AI by state employees, with a focus on productivity and data protection.
- **January 2024: TAIGA collaboration with the Enterprise Translations Office**
TAIGA works with the newly created Enterprise Translations Office (ETO) to ensure productive governance for AI-driven translation services for multilingual communities across the state.
- **February 2024: Legislative engagement and internal learning resources**
MNIT briefed the Minnesota Senate Committee on TAIGA's progress. TAIGA also launched the AI Champions team site to help state employees explore and engage with AI topics.
- **April 2024: AI considerations incorporated into MNIT technology governance processes**
Artificial intelligence governance processes formally added as a "pillar" in the enterprise services technology governance review process.
- **June 2024: Statewide resource sharing**
TAIGA governance model presented to State of MN Deputy Commissioners to promote AI initiatives and resource sharing.
- **August 2024: National recognition**
Minnesota was named a TEKNE finalist for "AI Unleashed" award for leadership in ethical and effective AI implementation.
- **October 2024: New leadership and expanded collaboration**
Ted Goessling was appointed Minnesota's first AI Director. MNIT also launched the AI Leads group to foster cross-agency dialogue and collaboration on AI.
- **January 2025: Fraud detection pilot announced**
Governor Tim Walz announced a pilot program using AI and machine learning to detect and prevent fraud in state assistance programs.
- **February 2025: Workforce training with InnovateUS**
MNIT partnered with InnovateUS to offer no-cost, self-paced AI training to state employees, emphasizing responsible and ethical use. More than 1,300 state employees have taken the training.
- **April 2025: Productivity through generative AI**
MNIT launched Copilot Chat, an AI tool integrated with Microsoft's Government Cloud, to boost employee productivity while maintaining strong data protections.

A statewide coalition for impactful change

TAIGA's success stems from a broad, inclusive coalition. Led by the Office of the State CIO, the initiative drew strong support from MNIT, legal and compliance teams, the Office of Accessibility, the Technology Advisory Council (TAC), and agencies like Health, Human Services, Labor, and Transportation—ensuring the roadmap reflected each sector's unique needs.

To build momentum and statewide buy-in, the team launched a clear communication strategy. Executive briefings, workshops, surveys, and public forums fostered transparency and encouraged input. Cross-functional workgroups—including the new TAC AI Subcommittee—shaped key decisions based on frontline experiences.

This collaborative approach built trust and alignment, enabling TAIGA to scale across state government.

Building AI into Minnesota's digital future

Implementing this centralized approach required long-term vision, strategic planning, and strong

collaboration.

Minnesota invested in the infrastructure and workforce needed to launch and sustain AI-powered services across state government.

Leveraging modern digital architecture—built on modularity, security by design, and interoperability—MNIT safely integrated AI into existing systems. The team also adapted national best practices, including the NIST AI Risk Management Framework, to reflect Minnesota's values and enterprise priorities.

Through the Enterprise Architecture Standards and Governance (EASG) process, the AI Director has reviewed 78 technologies to assess their potential use of artificial intelligence. These reviews are conducted as part of the Enterprise Technology Management Process (ETMP).

Of the 78 technologies reviewed, 23 were identified as containing AI capabilities that required formal AI Risk Reviews and were added to the State of Minnesota's AI inventory.

Rooted in ethics, equity, and public good, Minnesota's approach positions the state as a leader in government AI—and provides a model for other states seeking to innovate responsibly.

Impact

Reimagining public service delivery for the digital age

TAIGA has reshaped how Minnesota delivers public services—advancing digital equity, operational efficiency, and empowered government. Before its launch, agencies relied on manual processes, slow response times, and overburdened staff to meet growing demands. Today, generative AI helps reduce wait times, improve communication, and support high-demand areas like translation and call centers—making services faster, more inclusive, and more resilient.

Real-world results show this impact. At DVS, a virtual assistant offers 24/7 support in English, Hmong, Somali, and Spanish, helping residents renew licenses more easily and independently. During the legislative session, the Department of Revenue used AI to track and summarize over 6,500 tax bills, speeding up analysis and enabling faster policymaking. The Enterprise Translations Office, launched in June 2024, uses generative AI with human oversight to complete over 6,000 translation requests—delivering routine jobs in under 72 hours and urgent ones in less than two. Expanded services like plain language, Braille, and handwritten translations improve statewide language access.

TAIGA-supported implementations demonstrate the breadth of AI's role in transforming services



Copilot Chat

Boosts productivity with secure generative AI to draft emails, summarize documents, and support daily work.



Enterprise Translations Office

Automates translation intake and processing, reducing turnaround times and increasing accessibility.



DVS Virtual Assistant

Provides multilingual, 24/7 support to improve access and customer service.



AI in Education

Personalizes student learning through adaptive tools that support better educational outcomes.



MMB Communications Pilot

Uses AI to draft internal messages, cutting workloads in half and freeing time for strategic work.



Revenue Legislation Tracker

Uses AI to scan and summarize bills, providing timely, accurate insights to policymakers.



MPCA Air Quality Alerts

Automates public health alerts using real-time environmental data.

Minnesota tracks AI impact through performance metrics, usage data, and partner feedback. Agencies report reduced workloads, faster service delivery, and improved outcomes for residents. By combining measurable results with ethical governance, Minnesota continues to lead in responsible, people-centered AI adoption.

Powering a modern, human-centered government

This transformation advances Minnesota's goals to modernize operations, improve customer experience, and make data more usable. AI reduces repetitive tasks, freeing staff to focus on high-impact work.

Agencies now deliver faster, more accurate, and more inclusive services. Employees report less burnout, greater support, and more time for mission-driven priorities. TAIGA tools boost efficiency and empower public servants.

Connecting AI governance to our work

MNIT brings the TAIGA vision to life by embedding responsible AI practices directly into Minnesota's centralized technology governance approach.



ESARB integration: TAIGA developed a risk assessment process that routes AI-enabled tools through the Enterprise Solution Architecture Review Board (ESARB), aligning innovation with established architectural oversight.



AI leads: Agencies have appointed AI leads to serve as liaisons to TAIGA helping manage risks, track projects, and build internal communities of practice.



AI inventory: A statewide inventory tracks and manages AI tools already reviewed and in use, creating visibility and accountability.



Procurement filter: TAIGA added a procurement standard to ensure AI technologies from vendors meet safety, transparency, and ethical disclosure requirements.



Contract language: A new AI section in RFP templates and standard contracts increases clarity around vendor use of AI, supporting informed decision-making.

Extending the impact across state government

Minnesota continues to scale the impact of AI as more agencies adopt tools with support from TAIGA. Staff feel increasingly confident using AI because of clear governance, accessible training, and hands-on guidance. MNIT recently rolled out Copilot Chat—a secure generative AI tool integrated with Microsoft's Government Cloud—giving employees a powerful resource to draft communications, summarize documents, and boost productivity across agencies.

Scaling innovation for the future of public service

Minnesota continues to grow TAIGA into an enterprise-wide shared service that delivers AI tools, guidance, and support to all state agencies. MNIT began rolling out Microsoft Copilot Chat to its employees in April, with a broader rollout planned for this year.

Agencies are already identifying new use cases where AI can support tasks like drafting communications, analyzing data, and improving resident engagement. Later this year, new tools will use natural language processing and retrieval augmented generation to surface expert knowledge from stored documents.

TAIGA provides the structure to scale AI safely and responsibly. The team actively refines governance, expands training, and monitors risks like bias, privacy, and cybersecurity. A formal feedback loop and regular evaluations help Minnesota adapt its AI ecosystem and deliver measurable public value.

By pairing innovation with ethics, Minnesota leads the way in building a modern, inclusive, and human-centered government. TAIGA supports long-term modernization by empowering public servants, improving services, and setting the standard for responsible AI.