



# Empowering Pennsylvania's Workforce with Generative AI

## A Statewide Pilot of ChatGPT Enterprise



Pennsylvania  
**Office of Administration**

**State:** Pennsylvania

**Agency:** Office of Administration

**Award Category:** State CIO Office Special Recognition

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# Executive Summary

In September 2023, Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro signed an executive order to establish a proactive, values-driven approach for his Administration to explore and govern the use of generative AI by Commonwealth agencies. This landmark policy recognizes the need for government to be proactive in understanding the benefits and risks of generative AI and how it can improve operations, engage with employees, and enhance service delivery to the public.

In alignment with this vision, the Pennsylvania's CIO Office launched a first-of-its-kind, employee-centered pilot to explore how generative AI could be responsibly integrated into public sector work. Over 12 months, 175 employees across 14 agencies used ChatGPT Enterprise throughout their day-to-day work. While focused on generative AI, the pilot modeled what successful CIO leadership requires: innovative procurement, cross-agency collaboration, external stakeholder engagement, human-centered design, UX research, iterative development, and outcome-driven execution.

Participants reported saving an average of 95 minutes per day when using generative AI, with 85% expressing a positive experience—demonstrating clear value across diverse job roles. As generative AI continues to transform the public sector, Pennsylvania's pilot offers a replicable blueprint for responsibly introducing emerging technology through the lens of modern IT leadership.

"We can't ignore new technology - we have to educate ourselves and be proactive to minimize the risks and maximize the benefits of innovation and that's the approach my Administration is taking here in Pennsylvania. We have the potential to become a leader in responsible, ethical use of generative artificial intelligence."

- Governor Josh Shapiro



## Idea

### What problem does the project address & why does it matter?

As generative AI tools rapidly enter the mainstream, state IT organizations face a critical question: How do we prepare our workforce to use these tools safely, effectively, and responsibly? This challenge is compounded by the growing integration of AI features into enterprise software and the expanding role of AI across public sector operations.

In 2024, the Pennsylvania CIO's Office launched a first-of-its-kind statewide pilot to meet this challenge head-on. The pilot of ChatGPT Enterprise with employees enabled the Commonwealth to take a user-informed approach to understanding how, when, and where generative AI tools can create value across the workforce.

Being proactive was essential to maximize the opportunity and responsibly manage risk. Waiting for enterprise software vendors to roll out embedded AI features or relying solely on large-scale procurement and deployments would have delayed Pennsylvania's ability to answer important strategic AI enablement questions such as:

## Idea (cont.)

- Do employees find generative AI tools helpful in their work?
- What does responsible generative AI use look like for public employees?
- What training resources are most effective for our workforce?
- How can generative AI empower rather than replace government employees?
- Which tasks are best suited for generative AI assistance?

### What makes it different?

While many states are beginning to explore generative AI, Pennsylvania's approach stands out for its depth, structure, and focus on long-term, employee-centered learning. This pilot was novel in several key ways:

**Duration** Employees engaged with ChatGPT Enterprise for up to 12 months, allowing the pilot to go beyond just initial impressions to capture sustained insights into how generative AI impacts daily work over time.

**Diverse Participation** The pilot included employees from 14 agencies, spanning a range of job functions, tenures, and professional expertise. It also included union-represented staff, and notably, 48% of participants had never used ChatGPT before—ensuring feedback from both new and experienced users.

**User Experience Research** Employees contributed rich, ongoing feedback through structured surveys, interviews, and focus groups. This effort generated one of the most comprehensive sets of user research on public sector generative AI adoption to date.

**Technology Leadership** Pennsylvania was the first state government to establish an agreement with OpenAI to use ChatGPT Enterprise, demonstrating both technological foresight and a commitment to responsible, enterprise-grade deployment.

### What makes it universal?

Understanding how to effectively and responsibly use generative AI tools like ChatGPT is the foundation for ensuring government workforces are AI-ready.

The relevancy of this work has drawn considerable interest throughout the year. The Commonwealth has sought to share its learnings and findings at every step of the program. Of particular note is a comprehensive public report released in March 2025 that documents the pilot's structure, methods, employee feedback, use cases, and lessons learned. The growing impact of generative AI tools and the open-source approach to sharing results has made this research broadly applicable to public and private sector organizations alike.

## Implementation

To meet the moment with rapidly evolving generative AI technology, the pilot required an agile and disciplined approach. Recognizing that traditional procurement timelines were ill-suited for emerging tools, the CIO's Office collaborated with the Department of General Services to

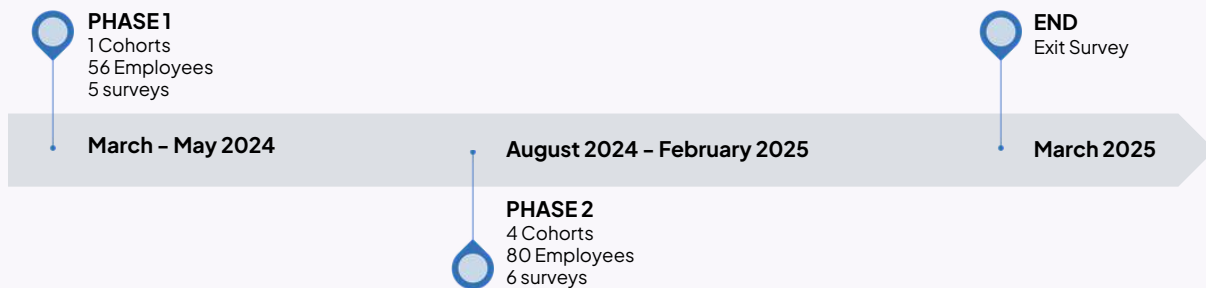
# Implementation (cont.)

leverage a limited-term, pilot-specific procurement policy to rapidly contract with OpenAI. This made Pennsylvania the first state to deploy ChatGPT Enterprise under strict governance conditions, including advanced administrative controls and a clear prohibition on training AI models with Commonwealth data.

After procuring licenses, the formal pilot period ran from March 2024 through March 2025. There were ultimately five cohorts of employees across the 14 agencies that participated. Each cohort was onboarded in phases, supported by live instruction, and studied through structured research instruments. Feedback was captured throughout the pilot, enabling iterative refinements to training materials, communications, and tool access. This approach allowed the CIO's Office to run the pilot not only as a demonstration of emerging technology, but also as a model for responsive, people-centered enterprise IT deployment.

## Timeline

Of participants who provided feedback, five employee cohorts began the pilot in two phases from March 2024 - March 2025. Along the way, each cohort participated in bimonthly surveys and regular focus groups.



**Please Note:** Not every pilot participant provided survey-based feedback. The above represents the timeline for the 136 employees who provided direct feedback throughout the pilot.

## Who was involved?

The pilot was initiated by the CIO's Office and coordinated through the Office of Administration (OA). OA served as both the strategic and operational leads, ensuring alignment across policy, legal, procurement, and IT functions. The CIO's Office led the project with support and oversight from the Governor's Office and the Generative AI Governing Board. The Commonwealth Office of Digital Experience (CODE PA) user experience research team collected and analyzed feedback from pilot participants. Lastly, collaboration with external stakeholders such as Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) and OpenAI was key to this pilot.

## How did you do it?



### Technology

A key design choice was to use an out-of-the-box, general-purpose generative AI tool rather than a custom deployment method. This choice had several advantages:

- It mirrored how most employees will first encounter generative AI tools; embedded within broadly available software like Microsoft 365 or Google Workspace.
- It allowed employees to explore a wide variety of use cases, from writing and summarization to coding and research.

## Implementation (cont.)

- It surfaced real-world limitations and risks in a safe, controlled setting, including hallucinations, citation challenges, and usability hurdles.

While this tool was not customized to Commonwealth-specific workflows or data systems, it did allow for our research to focus on the user experience of a generative AI tool and ensure that employees were aware of the process of engaging with the technology.



### Training & Support

Rather than taking a “launch and leave” approach, the CIO’s Office developed a diverse enabled strategy. These supports were tailored to each cohort’s experience level, learning goals, and domain-specific needs.



### User Experience & Research Methods

From day one, the CIO’s Office set the strategic direction of the pilot as a user-centered research initiative to learn from employees. In total, the Commonwealth collected 599 survey responses over a 12-month period.

## Impact

### What did the project make better?

This pilot affirmed a simple, fundamental question with generative AI tools in the public sector: Is there value to be gained from public sector employees using these tools? The answer has clearly been yes across a wide range of tasks, domains, and agencies. The Commonwealth is better equipped to prepare employees for success with generative AI through first-hand knowledge of the opportunities and challenges they experienced during this pilot. Employees had a positive and empowering experience, with 85% reporting a positive or very positive experience using ChatGPT despite roughly half having never used it before the pilot. Additionally, effective use came from many types of users and there was no single profile of a “successful” ChatGPT user.



“Thank you SO much for allowing me to take part in this pilot... Tools like ChatGPT allow our team to promote the Commonwealth brand in a way that is relevant, relatable, and attractive to job seekers.

### How do you know?

While employees had different experiences using ChatGPT, there were several clear reported and observed benefits to productivity at large and individual workstreams. On the days participants reported using ChatGPT, they used it for an average of 35 minutes and reported saving 95 minutes. These gains were spread across use cases like drafting, summarizing, document review, and brainstorming, with 58% of the most helpful tasks completed in under 15 minutes. These benefits are particularly relevant because the most helpful use cases solved uniquely governmental challenges. These mapped to three success profiles:

# Impact (cont.)



## Innovation Engines

Empowering participants to generate ideas, explore solutions, and accelerate power-solving despite various constraints.



## Bureaucracy Hackers

Creating documentation demystifying policies, and navigating processes that are primarily manual, outdated, or text-based.



## Strategic Communicators

Improving the clarity, consistency, and impact of communications between government stakeholders operating across a wide range of topics.

## Methods

Pilot participation reports on their experience using ChatGPT at work through three channels:



**Surveys:** After beginning the pilot, participants received surveys every other week for ~8 weeks, plus an exit survey at the pilot's end.

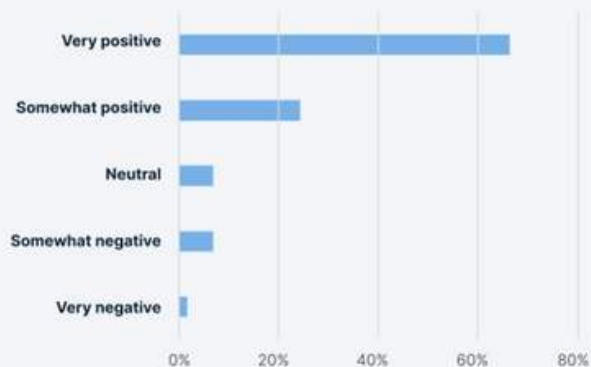


**Focus group:** All pilot participants were invited to weekly focus group conducted by the research team.



**Interviews:** Select participant spoke one-on-one with the research team during Phase 1.

## Overall Experience Using ChatGPT During Pilot



These success profiles came to life in real, high-impact projects, including:

- The Commonwealth's job classification team used ChatGPT to assist in evaluating over 3,600 job descriptions. HR staff used generative AI to align the position descriptions of employees with appropriate classifications — a process that historically involved sorting through thousands of documents and internal standards. This work contributed to Pennsylvania's broader time-to-hire initiative, which has reduced average hiring times by 35% (from 90 to 58 days as of March 2025). Generative AI supported this progress by improving classification accuracy, aiding in the drafting of engaging job postings, and helping staff draft interview questions and summarize candidate notes more efficiently.
- The Commonwealth's enterprise governance, risk, and compliance team is piloting generative AI to aid in drafting and editing of new IT policies, enabling subject matter experts to focus on refinement rather than starting from scratch. The goal is for a 60% reduction in total policy volume (from over 500 pages to around 200), making it faster for vendors to confirm compliance and easier for Commonwealth employees to understand and apply policy requirements.
- In response to an influx of former federal government employees into the job market, human resources staff used ChatGPT to match experience and qualifications for federal positions to job openings with the Commonwealth, making it easier for former federal employees to identify relevant jobs to which to apply. This accelerated the matching process and contributed to a proactive, people-centered hiring response. From March to May 2025, Commonwealth agencies hired nearly 120 individuals with federal work experience to fill critical public service vacancies.

## Impact (cont.)

Throughout other projects, users reported:

“

“ChatGPT has been a monumental game changer for my job. As a grant manager, I have to do several things that ChatGPT can help me with: write professionally, read MANY documents, research, and document. It’s been an incredible, incredible experience working with this technology.”

“

“I use it with purpose in many areas of my work. I use ChatGPT to help me write better, to analyze data and provide results, as a search engine to obtain information on multiple topics, to compare old and new documents and identify differences, etc. ChatGPT has saved me more and more time as I’ve expanded the ways and reasons I use it.”

“

For me, using GenAI is about getting closer to a solution faster...I can use it to sift through lots of information to make suggestions and ask it why if I disagree. From there, I can use my own expertise and consult with others to validate and make a decision.”

## What now?

Generative AI is more than a new software category; it represents a fundamental rethinking of how work happens, particularly in knowledge- and policy-driven environments like government. For public sector leaders, this transformation is real, but hard to measure. That’s why Pennsylvania’s pilot was so important: it offered a yearlong, evidence-based study of how generative AI actually impacts the public workforce. This work adds to the future playbook for understanding where generative AI helps, where it doesn’t, and how to scale it responsibly.

Following the success of the pilot, Pennsylvania will continue to refine and expand AI integration in government operations, focusing on:

**Expanding AI training opportunities** for employees, such as creating communities of practice to learn and share ideas, step-by-step instructions for specific uses of Gen AI, and leveraging subject matter experts within departments to foster AI adoption.

**Testing additional AI applications** for improving customer service, legal analysis, and internal operations.

**Ensuring long-term AI governance** through continuous oversight from the Generative AI Governing Board.

Pennsylvania’s proactive approach has set a national precedent, demonstrating that when deployed responsibly, generative AI can help government work smarter, faster, and more efficiently — while always keeping employees at the forefront. AI systems will continue to advance, and by continuing to learn, adapt, and engage employees at every step, we will ensure that generative AI is leveraged safely and responsibly to better serve Pennsylvania.