

NASCIO State IT Recognition Award Submission

Cover Page

State: Florida

Agency: Florida Department of Corrections

Award Category: Artificial Intelligence

Project Title: Harnessing Artificial Intelligence to Reinvent Government Service Delivery

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Executive Summary

Across the United States, correctional systems are wrestling with rising operational demands, increasingly complex security threats, workforce shortages, and heightened expectations for transparency and performance. The Florida Department of Corrections – the nation’s third-largest state corrections system – made a pivotal choice: rather than continue operating within traditional resource constraints, it would **reimagine government service delivery through responsible, secure, human-centered Artificial Intelligence**.

Over the past year, FDC launched a suite of AI-enabled capabilities that touch virtually every part of its mission: security intelligence, staff productivity, education and rehabilitation, classification and assessment, and the modernization of policies and legacy systems. These innovations share one unifying purpose: **to serve Floridians more effectively by equipping frontline state employees with tools that make government faster, safer, smarter, and dramatically more efficient**.

These solutions were built with rigorous guardrails, grounding in Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) compliance, U.S. only data residency, Retrieval Augmented Generation (RAG) validation, and a policy framework that ensures **AI augments rather than replaces human judgement**.

The results are transformative. FDC has reduced core processes from hours to minutes, vastly expanded investigative reach, empowered educators, and pioneered the nation’s first AI-based motivational interviewing field test in a corrections environment—where participants reported **greater comfort, trust, and openness** with the AI system than with traditional human-led interviews.

This is not a story of technology—it is a story of government meeting the moment. FDC is proving that when AI is used responsibly, ethically, and strategically, it can **fundamentally reinvent public-sector service delivery**.

Project Description

I. Idea – A Vision for a Safer, Smarter, More Humane System

a. Setting the Stage: A Mission Too Big for Traditional Tools

FDC's mission exceeds the limits of traditional tools. With 450 million minutes of recorded inmate phone calls, 90,000 individuals in custody requiring rehabilitation, and thousands of officers needing real-time data access, Florida needed a transformative approach. AI became the force multiplier that extended human capacity, enabling staff to detect threats, personalize education, and accelerate rehabilitation with unprecedented reach.

The challenge was clear: **the mission had outgrown the available human bandwidth.**

Florida needed a way to:

- Detect criminal activity and threats in real time
- Accelerate assessment and rehabilitation
- Support overstretched staff
- Improve public safety and reduce victimization
- Modernize decades-old systems without waiting decades

At the same time, the state could not compromise on **security, privacy, ethics, or accountability**. AI needed to be powerful – but also **trustworthy**.

b. The Core Idea: AI as a Force Multiplier for Public Servants

FDC approached AI not as automation, but as **augmentation** – an assistant working under human guidance, never making autonomous decisions, and always grounded in verified data sources. The department envisioned AI that could:

- Listen at scale
- Read at scale
- Learn at scale
- Analyze at scale
- Support staff at scale

In short: **Extend human capacity so the agency can protect and serve the public with unprecedented reach and precision.**

II. Implementation – Responsible, Secure, and Enterprise-Scale Execution

FDC built a secure, CJIS-compliant AI environment relying solely on U.S.-hosted models. AI solutions include call-monitoring intelligence, SchoolAI for educators, AIDA for assessments, and CLEO – a policy-grounded chatbot supporting officers with accurate real-time information. Each tool was deployed with strict safeguards: human oversight, policy grounding, and verified data sources.

a. Secure-by-Design AI Ecosystem

FDC built its AI environment around the strictest standards:

- **U.S.-only data residency** with no external replication or public-domain model access
- **CJIS-compliant** hosting and operations
- **U.S.-personnel-only** administration with FDLE background checks
- **A defined AI Policy** mandating ethics, annual review, training, and prohibition on external AI tools for sensitive or confidential data
- **RAG grounding** for all policy-linked queries to eliminate hallucinations and ensure traceability

These were not afterthoughts – they were prerequisites.

b. AI Solutions Deployed Across the Enterprise

1. Threat Detection & Criminal Intelligence

AI now reviews and analyzes 450M minutes of inmate phone calls—something human staff could never fully do—flagging speech patterns, keywords, or suspicious behaviors for rapid investigation. Systems also monitor public social media and online activity for potential threats to facilities.

Why this matters:

Florida now identifies risks that would previously go undetected—and does so in near-real time.

2. AI for Education & Rehabilitation (SchoolAI)

Educators use AI to create lesson plans, worksheets, quizzes, and differentiated instruction to meet the needs of individuals who average a 7th-grade reading level. Each grade-level improvement reduces recidivism by 2%—a small number with massive public-safety impact.

Why this matters:

Education is one of government’s strongest levers for reducing future crime; AI expands reach and personalization.

3. AI for Risk & Needs Assessment (AIDA)

Assessment times dropped from **45–60 minutes to 10–15 minutes**—a 4–6x efficiency gain—while improving consistency and quality of information.

In field testing:

- Participants preferred AI-led interviewing
- Reported feeling less judged
- Disclosed more openly
- Believed AI better understood their responses

Why this matters:

Better assessments lead to better programming, better outcomes, and greater long-term public safety.

4. CLEO – The AI Policy & Knowledge Assistant

CLEO gives staff instant answers to policy and operational questions, always linked to the authoritative source document.

Capabilities include:

- General knowledge generation (hosted securely, GPT-4 based)
- Policy-grounded Q&A backed by FDC’s uploaded policy library
- Data cleansing to support OBIS modernization
- Future automated reporting and analysis

Why this matters:

Staff save time, reduce errors, and stay aligned with the most current policies—essential in a high-risk environment.

5. Security & Surveillance Modernization

FDC is converging data from cameras, body-worn devices, license plate readers, drones, inmate phone calls, banking, visitation, and Security Threat Group (STG) intelligence into a unified, AI-enhanced operational picture for Security Intelligence Gathering Network Analysis Layer (SIGNAL).

Why this matters:

The agency is transforming fragmented systems into actionable intelligence.

6. A Culture of Innovation

The department infused private-sector speed and discipline, modernizing code bases, using AI for software development (legacy code decomposition, business requirements mapping, software development, and testing & remediation), test automation (500 test cases across four apps), and accelerating modernization of legacy environments.

Why this matters:

Enhance operational efficiency, reduce technical debt, improve software quality, and accelerate the transition to modern, reliable, and scalable systems, ultimately supporting better service delivery and innovation.

III. Impact – Transforming Government at Scale

The impact of AI across the Department has been profound. Assessment times dropped from 60 minutes to 15. Educators now generate customized instructional content instantly. Investigators can analyze millions of minutes of audio in seconds. Most importantly, individuals reported feeling more comfortable and understood when interviewed by AIDA – leading to more accurate assessments and better rehabilitation outcomes.

Florida is redefining what modern, data-driven, human-centered public-sector service delivery looks like. With its secure and ethical AI framework, FDC has built a replicable blueprint for government agencies nationwide.

1. Public Safety Impact

- AI-flagged phone calls lead investigators precisely to relevant segments, dramatically reducing time-to-action.
- Threats—external or internal—are detected earlier than ever before.
- Cross-system intelligence reveals patterns (e.g., financial transactions + visit patterns + gang affiliation) that were previously invisible due to manual workload limits.

Outcome: A safer corrections environment and safer communities.

2. Workforce Impact

- Classification staff now complete assessments **up to six times faster**.
- Educators generate instructional materials instantly, focusing more time on teaching.
- Officers get immediate, policy-grounded answers through CLEO, reducing time spent searching documents.

Outcome: Staff spend more time on mission-critical human judgment and less on administrative burden.

3. Operational Impact

- AI scaled investigative reach from “impossible” to “continuous.”
- Data quality improvements accelerate modernization efforts like OBIS.
- RAG-backed policy queries ensure consistent compliance across facilities.

Outcome: Processes once requiring hours across dozens of staff now take minutes.

4. Human Impact & Rehabilitation

AIDA’s field trial produced extraordinary results:

- Participants felt **more comfortable, less judged**, and **more understood** by the AI system.
- Youthful offenders and women—often groups less likely to disclose openly—reported significantly greater openness during AI-assisted interviews.

Outcome: Richer data for case planning, stronger therapeutic rapport, and more effective rehabilitation pathways.

5. Government Innovation Impact

FDC is demonstrating that:

- AI *can* be deployed responsibly in sensitive environments
- Ethical safeguards *can* coexist with innovation
- Large government agencies *can* adopt AI at scale, securely
- Public safety agencies *can* pioneer national models

Outcome: Florida is redefining what modern government service delivery looks like.

Conclusion

The Florida Department of Corrections is not merely using AI—it is **leading the national movement toward modern, data-driven, human-centered public-sector transformation.**

By grounding innovation in ethics, privacy, and security, and by deploying AI where it enhances—not replaces—human expertise, FDC has built a replicable blueprint for government organizations nationwide.

This project demonstrates that with the right vision, policy framework, and commitment, AI can help government deliver **more safety, more transparency, more efficiency, more dignity, and more impact** for the people it serves.