



RESOLUTION 2026-022

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) GOVERNANCE POLICY

WHEREAS, the Washington County Board of Commissioners recognizes that Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies are becoming increasingly prevalent in governmental operations, communications, data analysis, and service delivery; and

WHEREAS, the responsible use of AI tools may enhance efficiency, productivity, accuracy, and accessibility in the performance of county functions; and

WHEREAS, the use of AI technologies also presents potential risks related to privacy, confidentiality, cybersecurity, transparency, accuracy, public trust, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of Washington County to establish clear guidelines governing the use of AI by county employees, officials, contractors, and volunteers acting on behalf of the County; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the AI Governance Policy is to promote the ethical, responsible, secure, and transparent use of AI technologies while protecting sensitive information and maintaining accountability in governmental operations; and

WHEREAS, the proposed AI Governance Policy establishes standards for authorized use, data protection, human oversight, records retention, employee responsibilities, and compliance with federal and state laws; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners has reviewed the AI Governance Policy and finds that its adoption will provide appropriate guidance for the use of AI technologies within Washington County government.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Washington County Board of Commissioners that:

1. The Washington County Artificial Intelligence Governance Policy, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, is hereby approved and adopted.
2. County employees, officials, contractors, and volunteers utilizing AI technologies in the performance of County business shall comply with the provisions of the adopted policy.
3. The County Manager is authorized to implement administrative procedures necessary to carry out the intent of this policy and to provide training and guidance regarding the appropriate use of AI technologies.
4. The County Manager may recommend future amendments to the policy as technology, laws, regulations, and best practices evolve.
5. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

ADOPTED on this day, the 8th of June, 2026.


John Spruill, Chair
Washington County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:


Julie J. Bennett, MMC, NCMCC
Clerk to the Washington County Board of Commissioners



Artificial Intelligence (AI) Governance Policy

Washington County, North Carolina

Reflecting Guidance & Best Practices from the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners and National Association of Counties

Washington County recognizes the growing role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies in local government operations and public service delivery. This policy establishes a framework for the ethical, transparent, secure, and responsible use of AI technologies in alignment with emerging county government best practices promoted through the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) and the National Association of Counties (NACo) AI County Compass. (ncacc.org)

SECTION 1 — PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage responsible innovation within Washington County government
- Improve efficiency and customer service while maintaining public trust
- Protect confidential and sensitive information
- Ensure meaningful human oversight of government decisions
- Promote transparency, accountability, and cybersecurity
- Align County operations with evolving North Carolina and national local government standards regarding AI usage

Washington County acknowledges that AI is a rapidly evolving technology that presents both opportunities and risks for county governments. (National Association of Counties)

SECTION 2 — SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- All Washington County departments, offices, boards, and agencies
 - All County employees, elected officials, contractors, interns, and volunteers
 - Any AI-enabled software, applications, or systems used for County business
 - Third-party vendors providing AI-related services to the County
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SECTION 3 — GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Washington County adopts the following principles for AI governance consistent with county government best practices promoted by NACo and emerging North Carolina guidance.

A. Human-Centered Governance

AI tools shall assist County employees—not replace human judgment, accountability, or decision-making authority.

Final responsibility for all governmental actions remains with authorized County personnel.

B. Transparency

The County will strive to maintain transparency regarding the use of AI in governmental operations and communications when appropriate.

Departments should disclose substantial AI involvement in public-facing materials when doing so serves the public interest.

C. Privacy & Data Protection

Sensitive, confidential, protected, or personally identifiable information (PII) shall not be entered into public AI systems unless expressly authorized and appropriately secured.

County employees shall comply with all applicable:

- North Carolina public records laws
- Records retention requirements
- HIPAA requirements
- CJIS standards
- Cybersecurity policies
- Data privacy regulations

(it.nc.gov)

D. Security & Risk Management

The County shall evaluate cybersecurity risks associated with AI systems prior to deployment.

Departments shall coordinate with Information Technology staff before:

- Purchasing AI-enabled software
 - Connecting AI systems to County networks
 - Uploading County data into AI tools
 - Implementing automated workflows involving AI
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E. Accuracy & Reliability

Employees are responsible for reviewing and verifying all AI-generated content, recommendations, summaries, analyses, and communications prior to use.

AI-generated information shall not be treated as automatically accurate or authoritative.

F. Fairness & Ethical Use

AI systems shall not be used in ways that:

- Discriminate unlawfully
 - Create biased outcomes
 - Mislead the public
 - Deprive individuals of due process
 - Replace required human review in high-impact decisions
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SECTION 4 — AUTHORIZED USES

Subject to departmental approval and County procedures, permissible AI uses may include:

- Drafting emails, reports, agendas, and summaries
 - Assisting with grant writing and research
 - Developing public information materials
 - Brainstorming communication ideas
 - Improving workflow efficiency
 - Data organization and analysis
 - Meeting transcription and summarization
 - Translation assistance
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- Public engagement support
- Administrative task automation

County employees must maintain professional review and oversight of all outputs.

SECTION 5 — PROHIBITED USES

The following uses are prohibited unless expressly authorized by County Administration and legal counsel:

- Uploading confidential personnel, medical, legal, law enforcement, or financial data into unauthorized AI systems
- Sole reliance on AI for employment, disciplinary, procurement, legal, or law enforcement decisions
- AI-generated impersonation, misinformation, or deceptive content
- Use of AI in violation of public records laws or records retention schedules
- Circumventing cybersecurity controls or County IT procedures
- Unauthorized AI surveillance or monitoring practices

Washington County recognizes the importance of maintaining public trust and minimizing risks related to misinformation, privacy, and bias associated with AI systems. (National Association of Counties)

SECTION 6 — PUBLIC RECORDS & RECORD RETENTION

AI-generated content used in conducting County business may constitute public records under North Carolina law.

Departments shall:

- Retain official AI-assisted records in accordance with approved retention schedules
 - Preserve records related to significant governmental actions
 - Ensure AI-generated records remain accessible when legally required
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SECTION 7 — PROCUREMENT & THIRD-PARTY VENDORS

Departments seeking AI-enabled software or vendor services shall coordinate with:

- County Administration
- Information Technology
- Finance/Purchasing
- Legal counsel when appropriate

Vendor evaluations should consider:

- Cybersecurity protections
- Data ownership
- Data storage location
- Privacy practices
- Compliance certifications
- Human oversight controls
- Vendor transparency

An AI Request / Risk Assessment Form will be generated to aid in this procedure.

SECTION 8 — EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees using AI tools for County business shall:

- Complete any required County AI awareness training
- Use approved systems and accounts
- Verify information accuracy
- Protect confidential information
- Follow cybersecurity protocols
- Exercise professional judgment
- Report suspected misuse, inaccuracies, or security concerns
- Disclose usage of AI

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Definitions

Generative Artificial Intelligence (Generative AI) is a class of computer software and systems, or functionality within systems, that use large language models, algorithms, deep-learning, and machine learning models, and are capable of generating new content, including but not limited to text, images, video, and audio, based on patterns and structures of input data.

SECTION 9 — GOVERNANCE & OVERSIGHT

The County Manager or designee shall oversee implementation of this policy and may establish:

- Approved AI use procedures
- Departmental guidelines
- Risk assessment protocols
- Employee training standards
- AI inventory procedures
- Vendor review requirements

The County may maintain an inventory of approved or high-impact AI systems consistent with emerging North Carolina government guidance. (it.nc.gov)

SECTION 10 — PUBLIC TRUST & ACCOUNTABILITY

Washington County is committed to:

- Responsible innovation
- Ethical government operations
- Maintaining human accountability
- Protecting citizen privacy
- Ensuring trustworthy public service delivery

AI technologies shall be used in a manner that supports—not diminishes—public confidence in local government. An AI Training will be implemented.

SECTION 11 — POLICY REVIEW

This policy shall be reviewed periodically and updated as:

- State guidance evolves
- Federal standards develop
- County operational needs change
- AI technologies advance

Recommended Administrative Actions

Washington County should consider:

1. Establishing an approved AI software list
2. Developing employee AI usage guidelines
3. Providing annual AI awareness training
4. Creating departmental AI procedures where needed
5. Conducting cybersecurity reviews of AI systems
6. Monitoring future guidance from NCACC, NACo, and NCDIT

Reference Organizations & Guidance

- [North Carolina Association of County Commissioners \(NCACC\)](#)
- [NACo AI County Compass Toolkit](#)
- [North Carolina Department of Information Technology \(NCDIT\) AI Resources](#)
- [Executive Order No. 24 – Advancing Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence](#)

(ncacc.org)