NLC NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES

AI in Cities

Baltimore Avenue Connected Communities: Smart Cities Roundtable

March 4th, 2025

Overview

Background on the National League of Cities

Diverging Views on AI in Cities

NLC's AI in Cities Report and Toolkit

Future of AI work at NLC

The National League of Cities

- The National League of Cities (NLC) is an organization comprised of city, town and village leaders that are focused on improving the quality of life for their current and future constituents.

- With more than 100 years of dedication to the strength and advancement of local governments, NLC has gained the trust and support of more than 2,700 cities across the nation. Our mission is to relentlessly advocate for, and protect the interests of, cities, towns and villages by influencing federal policy, strengthening local leadership and driving innovative solutions.

Diverging Views of AI in Cities

- Three Surveys on AI in Local Government

  - **ICMA** Survey: Focused on chief administrative officers, examining AI priorities, governance, and barriers.

  - **Public Technology Institute** Survey: Surveyed IT executives to understand AI governance readiness, security concerns, and workforce challenges.

  - **Bloomberg** Survey: Captured insights from mayors, focusing on AI interest, adoption, and applications.

Diverging Views of AI in Cities

Is AI a Priority for Local Governments?

- 96% of mayors are interested in AI (Bloomberg)

- 48% of local government staff consider AI a low priority (ICMA)

- 38% of IT leaders feel unprepared for AI use (PTI)

Diverging Views of AI in Cities

Where can AI make an impact?

- City Managers: Resident engagement, budget forecasting, policy development

- Mayors: Transportation, infrastructure, public safety

Diverging Views of AI in Cities

Are local governments ready to govern AI?

- 10% of local governments have assigned AI personnel (ICMA)

- 13% have developed formal AI policies (Bloomberg)

- 53% of IT executives are working on governance frameworks (PTI)

AI in Cities

REPORT & TOOLKIT

Types of AI Relevant to Local Governments

	APPLICATIONS	POTENTIAL RISK
PREDICTIVE AI Systems that analyze patterns in existing data to make predictions about future events or trends.	Anticipating traffic patterns, predicting maintenance requirements for city infrastructure, assessing risk for emergency management.	Historical data may contain biases that manifest in predictions, potentially leading to unfair or inaccurate outcomes without adequate human review and oversight.

Types of AI Relevant to Local Governments

	APPLICATIONS	POTENTIAL RISK
GENERATIVE AI AI that can create new content such as text, images, audio, or code based on patterns learned from existing data.[5]	Translation services for public meetings and 311, creating data visualizations for urban planning projects, chatbots to assist staff or respond to resident inquiries.	Using generative AI that has not been procured through city government could place city and resident information at risk for exposure. Additionally, residents should be educated through literacy campaigns to use AI-generated content carefully, considering that models can make mistakes.

Types of AI Relevant to Local Governments

	APPLICATIONS	POTENTIAL RISK
PERCEPTIVE AI AI tools designed to interpret and understand sensory inputs, primarily relying on computer vision and natural language processing.	Traffic monitoring and management, public safety and surveillance systems, environmental monitoring (e.g., air quality, waste management).	Perceptive AI in city government presents opportunities for enhanced services and safety using sensors and cameras. It also presents a risk of collecting and storing excessive personal data, which may violate data protection policies. However, careful data management, transparency, and consent are crucial to protect residents' privacy and uphold data protection standards.

AI Governance: Policies and Use Guidance

Learning from early adopters

How are cities leading responsible AI use?

- 🔷 **Accountability** – Ensure human oversight of AI decisions.
  📍 *Example:* Lebanon, NH – AI Algorithm Register ensures transparency in AI use.

- 🔷 **Transparency** – Residents should know when AI is used.
  📍 *Example:* Boston, MA – Requires disclosure of AI-generated public content.

- 🔷 **Privacy Protection** – Safeguard sensitive resident data.
  📍 *Example:* Seattle, WA – Requires AI risk assessments before deployment.

- 🔷 **Fairness & Equity** – AI should mitigate, not reinforce, bias.
  📍 *Example:* Seattle, WA – Racial Equity Toolkit for AI evaluation.

- 🔷 **Safety & Security** – AI systems must be cyber-secure and reliable.
  📍 *Example:* New York City, NY – AI Risk Assessment and Review Process.

- 🔷 **Education & Training** – Equip city staff with AI literacy.
  📍 *Example:* Chattanooga, TN – "Prompt Library" to help staff use generative AI responsibly.

Harnessing AI for Local Governments

Improving Public Services
- Translating online content in Dearborn, MI
- Transcribing public meetings in Sunnyvale, CA
- Accessing open data in Washington, D.C.
- Chatbot assistant in Ann Arbor, MI

Assisting Employee Tasks
- Summarizing meeting notes, articles
- Assessing permitting applications
- Answering questions about the city budget
- Assisting grant writing

Analytics and Decision Making
- Detecting potholes in Memphis, TN
- Digital Twin for public safety in Warner Robins, GA
- Project Green Light in Seattle, WA

Overview of AI Toolkit
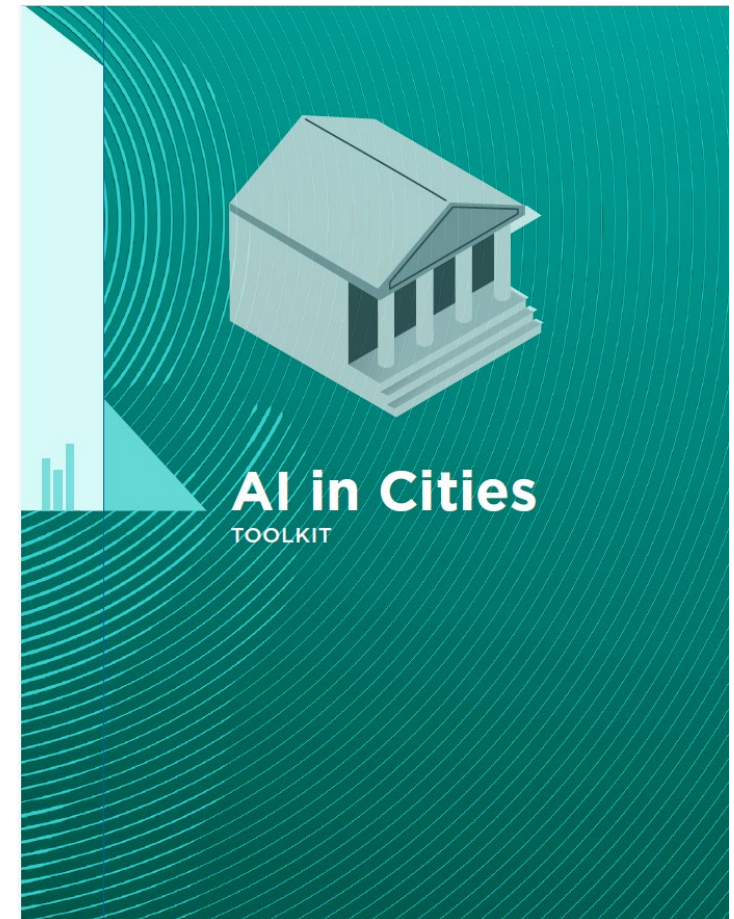
Thank You!

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