

PUBLIC SECTOR AI ADOPTION: U.S.A FACTSHEET

A PROJECT BY PUBLIC FIRST FOR THE CENTER FOR DATA INNOVATION, SPONSORED BY GOOGLE



This factsheet draws on findings from the Global AI Adoption Index for Public Services, based on a survey of 3,335 public sector workers across 10 countries.

This research included a sample of **301 public sector workers in the United States**, comprising **213** from local or regional government entities, **70** Federal government or Federal government entities and **18** from other public sector entities.

The index measures how AI is experienced in practice. What is written in government strategies does not automatically translate into real-world impact. Approaches across countries are varied, the index helps explore these differences and make recommendations to improve AI use.

It brings together five indicators that shape real-world adoption: **enthusiasm** for AI, **education** and skills, **empowerment** through clear permission and governance, **enablement** via access to tools, and **embedding** into everyday workflows. Together, these provide a practical snapshot of AI adoption in the U.S.A, set against international peers. Full results are available on the [main index webpage](#).

PUBLIC SECTOR AI ADOPTION: U.S.A CONTEXT

The United States enters the next phase of AI adoption from a position of global leadership. As home to the world's most advanced AI ecosystem, it has exceptional access to cutting-edge technologies with the potential to improve efficiency, strengthen service delivery and support public servants in managing growing demands. At a time of fiscal pressure and rising public expectations, this creates a clear opportunity to modernize government at scale, with AI supporting public servants across all levels of government.

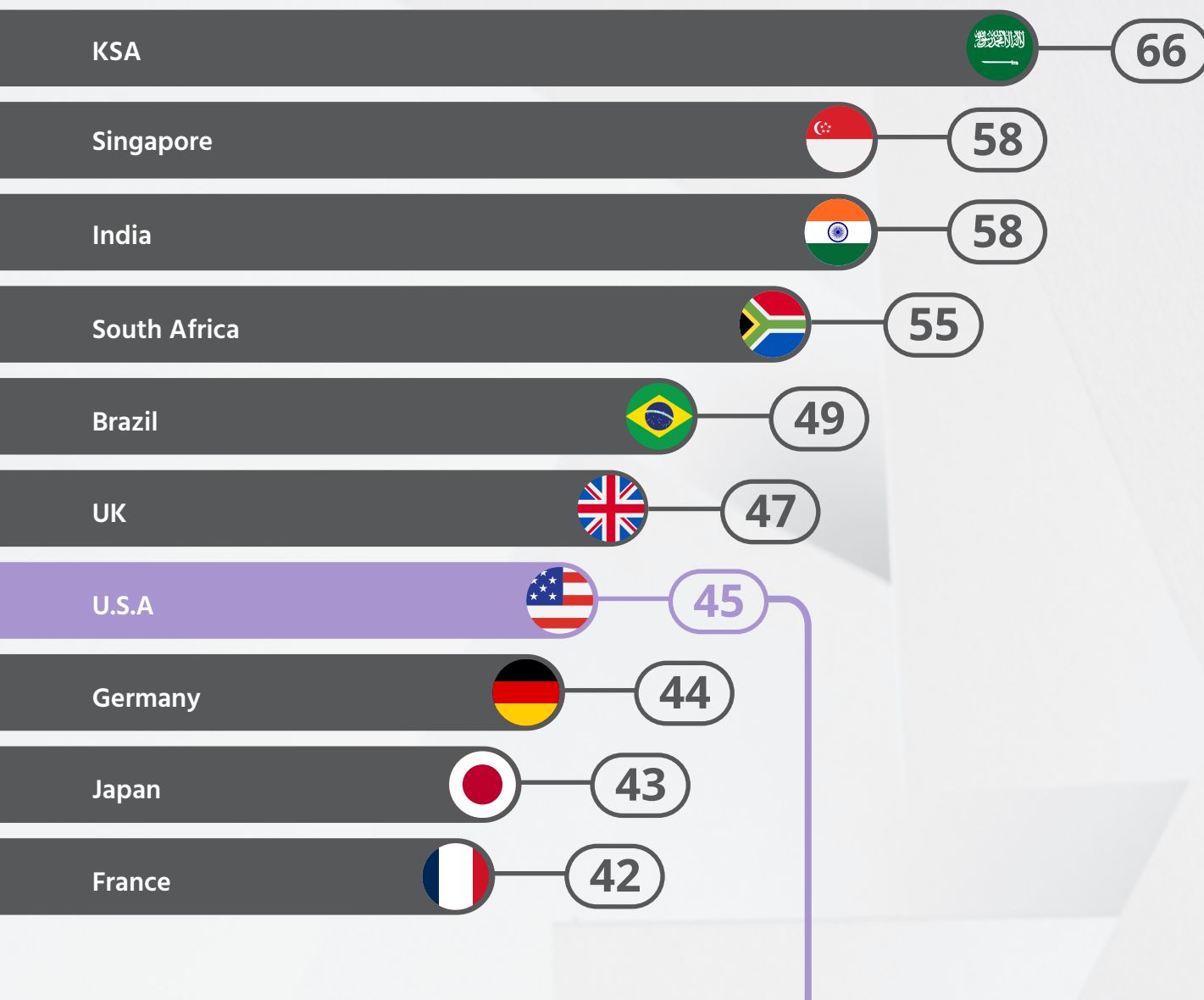
This strong starting position is reinforced by recent research from Google, which finds that **nearly 90% of federal agencies** are already **using AI in some form**. This reflects widespread experimentation and piloting at the organizational and leadership level, with AI increasingly present across a range of public sector functions. At the state level, State CIOs have ranked AI as their number one priority for 2026 and reported that over 90% of states are at least piloting AI projects.

In parallel, the federal government has moved to strengthen the policy and governance frameworks for AI. White House Executive orders and America's AI Action Plan have positioned AI as a clear strategic priority for competitiveness, public sector productivity and national resilience. At the operational level, new guidance from the Office of Management and Budget, including updated memoranda on AI governance and procurement, aims to reduce friction in how agencies acquire, deploy and oversee AI systems.

Together, strong access to technology, active agency-level adoption and a clearer policy framework mean the foundations for advanced AI use in the public sector are already in place. Our research builds on this picture by examining how far this activity is translating into everyday use by public servants. If effectively scaled and embedded into routine workflows, AI has the potential to deliver meaningful productivity gains — saving time, improving outcomes and strengthening the effectiveness of US public services.



THE U.S.A IN THE GLOBAL INDEX



The U.S.A has built strong AI foundations through federal leadership, investment and access to cutting-edge tools, but the next phase is about matching this ambition with confident, everyday use by public servants across government.

- US public servants have some of the highest levels of AI use in both their personal lives and at work. **76%** of US public servants say they use AI in their personal lives and **nearly three-quarters (72%)** also use AI at work. **Almost nine in ten (89%)** public servants who use AI at work report having **access to AI tools through their organization**.
- Access to AI for US public servants does not just include basic tools, **around a third (32%)** of public servants report having access to **enterprise-grade tools**, higher than many other countries in the index.
- There is a gap, however, between the ambition and investment of government leaders and everyday use by public servants, despite the provision of enterprise-grade tools. US public servants report having lower confidence using AI tools than countries who are advanced adopters of AI: **56%** say they are **confident using AI tools**. US public servants are currently less likely to use AI regularly, just **29%** say they use AI **more than once a week**.

This points to a substantial opportunity — with clearer understandings of use cases, widespread commitment to AI training, and consistent sponsorship from organization leaders, AI could quickly move from something viewed as abstract or overwhelming to a trusted tool that helps public servants work more effectively.

WHAT OUR RESEARCH SHOWS

Our research shows that the United States sits in the middle of the Global AI Adoption Index, characterized by high awareness and capability, but more limited translation into everyday workplace use.



Enthusiasm 43/100

AI is approached with skepticism or concern, with limited evidence of benefit and low levels of experimentation or discussion. AI is more often perceived as ineffective, overwhelming, or risky than empowering.



Education 50/100

Training is widely available and provides a useful foundation, though it is often introductory and uneven across organizations. There is a clear opportunity to build on this base with more consistent, role-specific training that translates awareness into practical impact.



Empowerment 46/100

Emerging but not fully formalized governance around AI use, with expectations shaped by informal guidance or team-level practices rather than being codified or consistently applied across the organization. While a robust starting point, this limits confidence in appropriate use across contexts and constrains adoption beyond basic tasks.



Enablement 45/100

Some AI tools and resources are available, which helps to help many US organizations successfully convert at-home use to public sector productivity, but access is uneven across departments or not well matched to everyday needs. Gaps in coverage, support, or role-specific access prevent consistent and scalable use across the organization.



Embedding 39/100

Minimal formal infrastructure, with few supporting structures, limited investment, and significant barriers to integration with existing systems. Structural barriers significantly limit the ability to scale AI use.

US public servants report some of the highest levels of personal experience with AI, with a third of public servants (32%) having access to enterprise grade AI tools, higher than many other countries on the index. This indicates a strong underlying foundation for adoption that many countries have yet to build. This gives the US a good enablement score from the index.

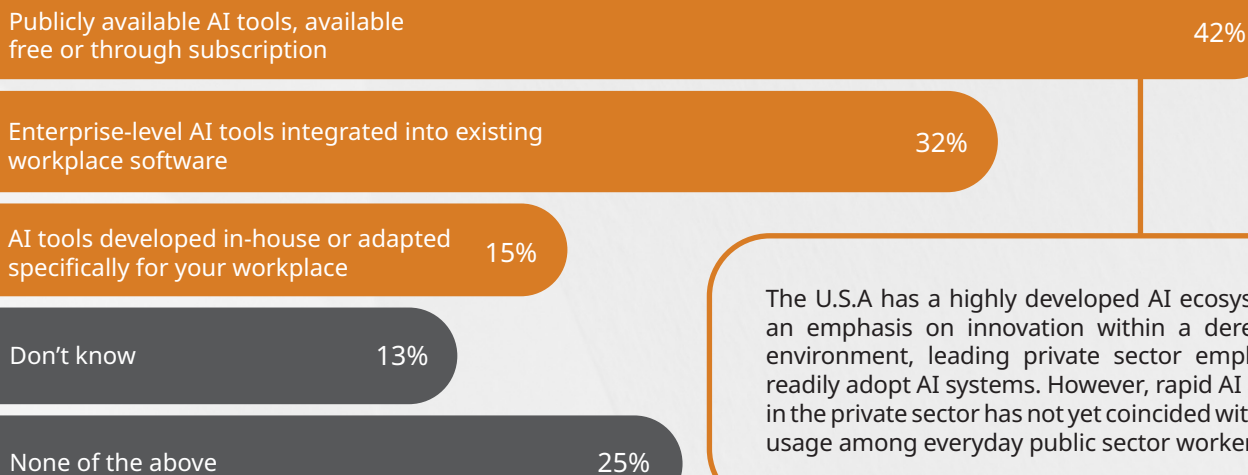
However, this awareness and access to technology has not yet consistently translated into confident, enthusiastic use at work. The US scores just **43/100** in our measure of AI enthusiasm. While AI awareness is good, many public servants have yet to see clear, role-specific benefits in their day-to-day tasks. As a result, AI is more often described as **overwhelming (40%)**. Fewer workers report experiencing tangible gains such as time savings or AI acting as an effective assistant.

We see this pattern as reflecting caution rather than resistance. **Nearly half of public servants (45%)** say their organization should **move carefully to avoid mistakes**, suggesting that uncertainty about appropriate use — rather than opposition to AI itself — is shaping behaviour. Empowerment sits in a middle ground: some tools, training and guidance exist, but they are uneven. More than one in three public servants are unclear whether their organization has a formal AI policy, and fewer than half feel they receive clear direction from leadership.

Overall, the US performance reflects a translation gap rather than a lack of activity. Strong agency-level adoption and leadership engagement, but slower diffusion into everyday use. This points to a substantial opportunity — with clearer understandings of use cases, widespread commitment to AI training, and consistent sponsorship from organization leaders, AI could quickly move from something viewed as abstract or overwhelming to a trusted tool that helps public servants work more effectively.

UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE U.S.A

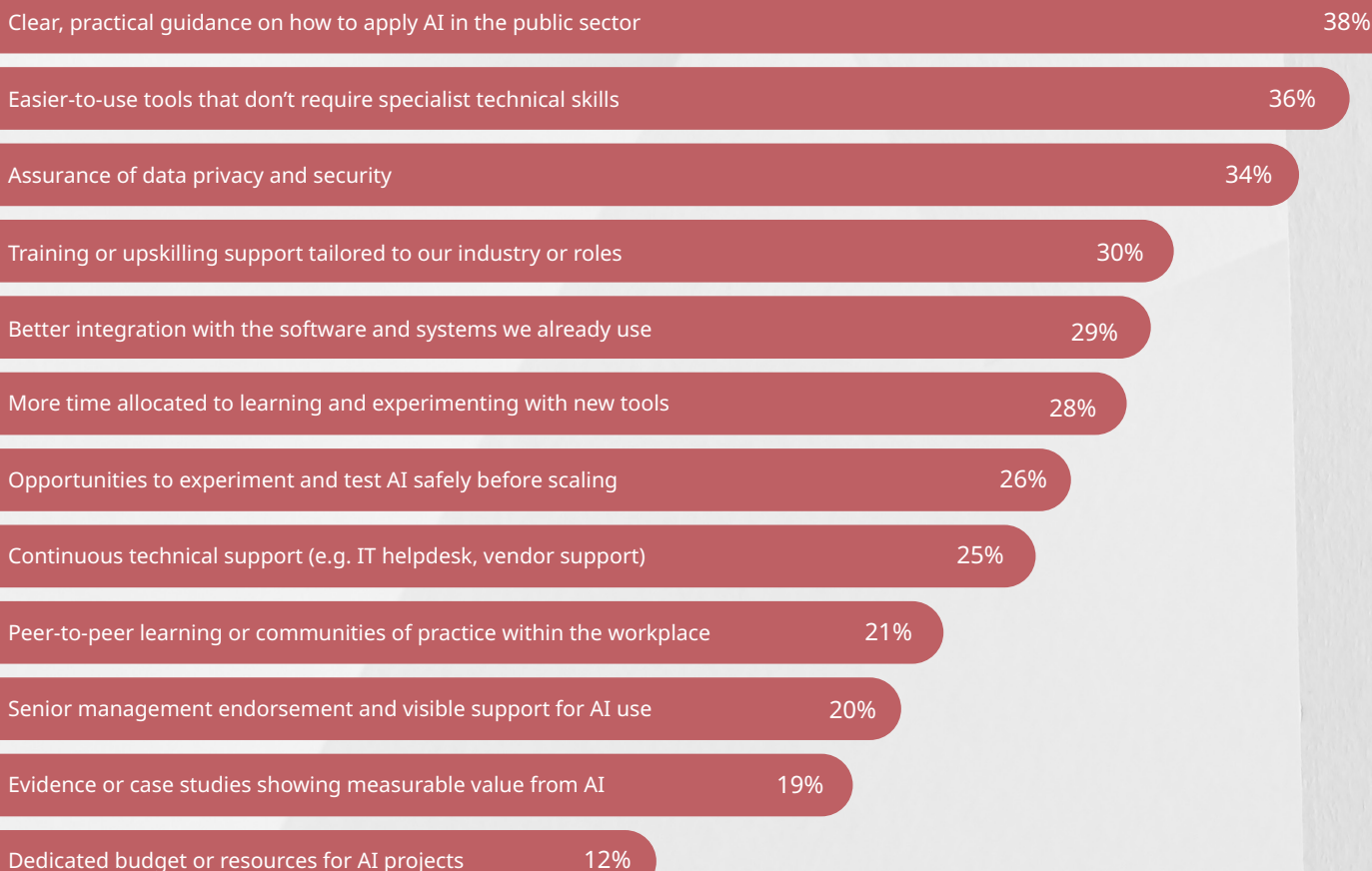
Which of the following AI tools, if any, do you currently have access to in your workplace?



The U.S.A has a highly developed AI ecosystem and an emphasis on innovation within a deregulatory environment, leading private sector employers to readily adopt AI systems. However, rapid AI adoption in the private sector has not yet coincided with regular usage among everyday public sector workers.

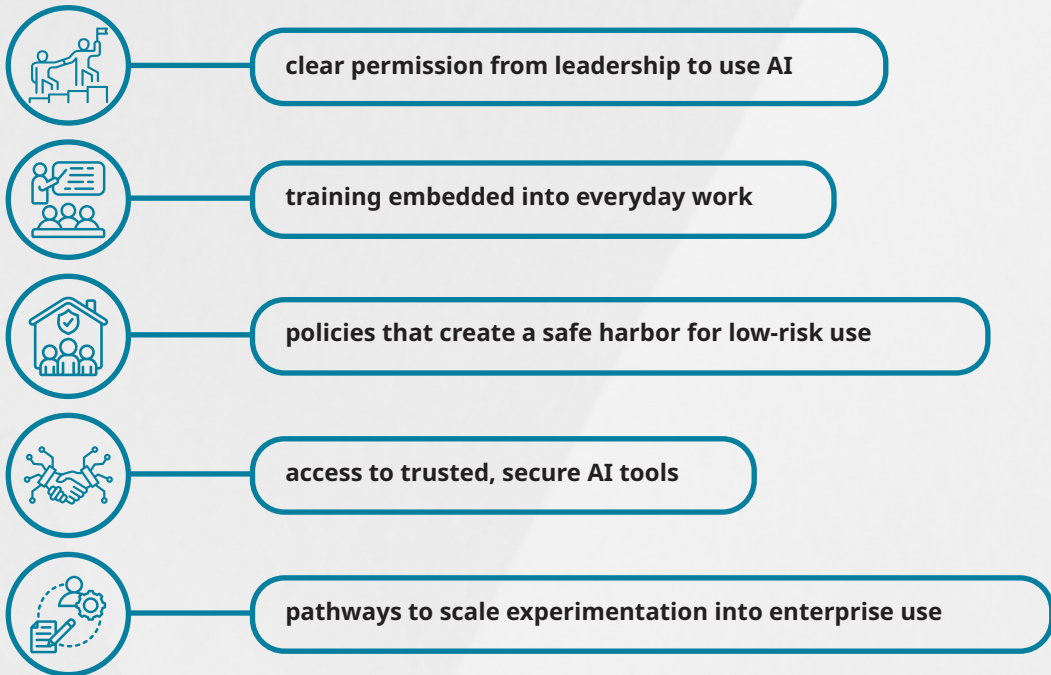
The U.S.A's challenge is **not infrastructure or basic access**, but **friction within the workforce**: lack of ambition and lack of clear direction, scoring just **46/100** in our measure of empowerment. The opportunity for the U.S.A lies in reframing AI's role in the workforce by providing clear guidance, support and encouragement to use AI to help them in their roles. We know from other countries in the index that once these simple steps are in place, confidence and use in AI is much higher.

What would encourage you to use these tools more frequently? Select all that apply



HOW TO ENHANCE AI USE IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: STEPS THAT CAN BE TAKEN IN THE U.S.A

Our research points to five actions that consistently support stronger AI adoption across countries:



Together, these create the conditions for public servants to move from basic experimentation to confident use that can prepare the ground for significant public sector transformation.

WHAT MATTERS MOST FOR THE U.S.A

For the United States, the opportunity is to convert **global AI leadership** into **confident, everyday use** across public services. The index points to three priorities that could rapidly lift adoption if pursued together:

1

Build on global AI leadership, to set a clear, positive mandate from the top

Public servants need consistent, visible reassurance that AI use is encouraged, supported and aligned with public service values. Clear messaging from senior leadership should emphasize AI as a tool to help all public servants deliver better outcomes, to overcome fears of AI as a disruptive or risky experiment. Explicit permission can be especially effective for driving widespread use in low-risk, everyday tasks. Investing in trusted, secure solutions is also an important part of setting a shared mandate, empowering teams to leverage AI, and helping shift AI from something to be approached cautiously to a normal part of modern public service work.

2

Build confidence through evidence and real-world case studies

Sharing concrete case studies — where AI has reduced administrative burden, improved service delivery or supported better decision-making — would help public servants see how AI can work in practice. Curated examples from across agencies and organizations, backed by evidence of time savings or improved outcomes, could play a powerful role in changing perceptions and building momentum.

3

Embed practical, role-specific training and guidance

Awareness of AI is high, but confidence is not. Short, practical training tailored to specific roles can help bridge this gap. Guidance should focus on how AI supports existing tasks, with worker-friendly templates. Embedding this training into onboarding and progression would ensure that public servants' ability and interest in using AI will grow. Partnering with trusted providers not only helps deliver training at scale, providing access to a wider library of training materials, but can also provide the information needed to reassure public servants that the AI they are using is secure and has robust safeguards around data security.