A GUIDE FOR COURTS

AI Readiness for the State Courts

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NCSC | SJI State Justice Institute

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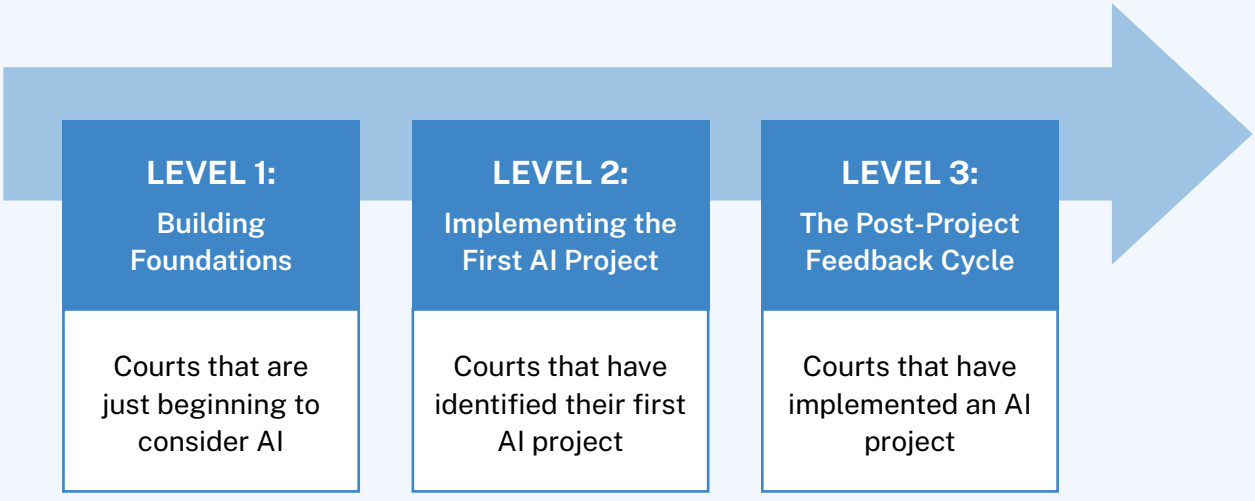
How to Use This Guide

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies advance, they have the potential to integrate into a wide variety of tasks involved in case processing and caseflow management, including helping court users navigate court systems, and in substantive legal decision-making that shapes case outcomes. If AI is implemented thoughtfully and with care, these technologies could improve access to the courts, promote fair and equitable justice outcomes, improve the work experience for court personnel, increase efficiency in case processing, and promote public trust and confidence in the courts.

The *AI Readiness for the State Courts* Guide is a set of resources designed to help state courts prepare for an increasingly AI-integrated world and successfully integrate AI into their operations. It provides leaders with a comprehensive framework for: 1) assessing the current state of AI readiness in the court, and 2) taking concrete steps to improve AI readiness.

This Guide provides information and tools to courts at three points on the spectrum of AI maturity: courts that are just beginning to consider AI, courts that have identified a specific AI project to implement, and courts that have already completed at least one successful AI implementation.

Court AI Maturity



WHO SHOULD USE THIS GUIDE?

This Guide can be used at the state or territory level or at the local court level (for example, a district, county, or courthouse). It is designed for those who have some kind of role in court leadership or in AI decision making.

The reference to "court leaders" throughout this Guide should be interpreted flexibly to fit different courts' circumstances. For example, one user of this Guide may be a state court administrator considering how to implement AI readiness across the entire state. Another group of users may be an AI Governance Committee comprised of multiple personnel from across the court system. Another user may be a Presiding Judge considering how to improve AI readiness in her county or district.

USING THIS GUIDE

There are many ways to use this Guide, and our intent is that courts can use and adapt the material to suit their needs. For example, a court might decide to start at the first section of guidance, AI Governance, and work through each section step-by-step. Another court may have already determined that its next action item is to draft an internal AI use policy — that court could jump right into the guidance on internal use policies.

If you don't know where your court should begin, we recommend using the AI Readiness Assessment Tool. This tool asks the user a series of questions about the current state of AI in their court and then provides suggestions prioritizing next steps.

ADDITIONAL HELP

NCSC is available to provide additional support to courts that are working on AI Readiness. For specific questions about this *AI Readiness for the State Courts* Guide, contact the project director, Andrea Miller, at amiller@ncsc.org. To request an expert speaker for a presentation or training session related to AI, complete the AI Speaker Request Form. For other inquiries about AI-related projects or technical assistance, contact ai@ncsc.org.

Key Terms and Definitions

This section defines some of the key AI-related terms that are used in this Guide. Because there are many technical terms related to AI, and because the technologies and jargon are constantly evolving, it would not be practical to provide a complete AI glossary here. Instead, this section focuses on the terminology that users need to understand to effectively use this Guide.

The following are resources that provide introductory explanations of AI concepts for a court system audience:

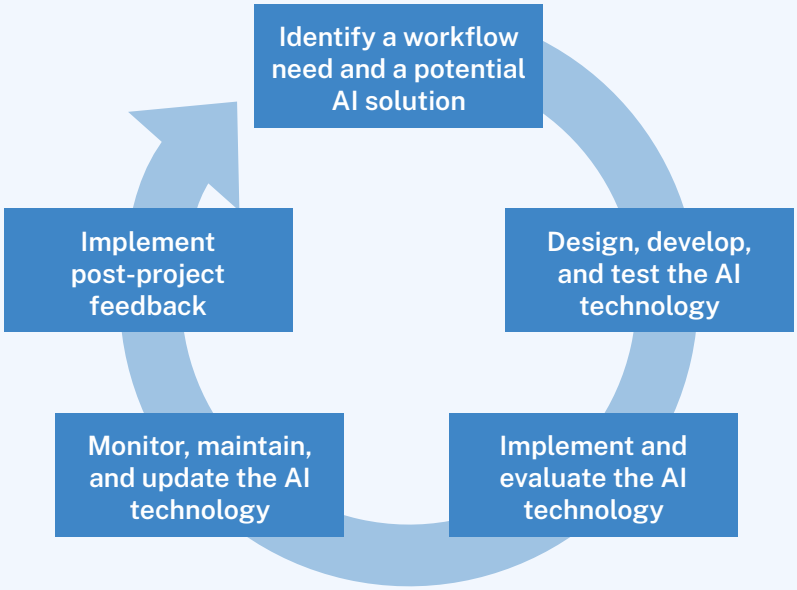
- American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), *Artificial Intelligence: Foundational Issues and Glossary*
- Joint Technology Committee (JTC), *Introduction to AI for Courts*

Additionally, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) maintains a comprehensive AI glossary. Courts should refer to this resource for up-to-date terminology and definitions.

AI READINESS AND THE AI LIFECYCLE

AI Readiness means that the courts have the capacity, processes, systems, and policies in place to use AI effectively across the entire AI lifecycle:

The AI Lifecycle



KEY AI READINESS TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The following definitions were compiled from a combination of sources, including the glossaries referenced above, the New Jersey Courts *Glossary of Artificial Intelligence Terms for Judges*, and *Principles and Practices for Using AI Responsibly and Effectively in Courts*.

Artificial Intelligence and Automation

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** There is no single agreed-upon definition. The following are definitions from the EU and NIST glossaries referenced above:
  - » **EU:** A set of sciences, theories and techniques whose purpose is to reproduce by a machine the cognitive abilities of a human being. Current developments aim to be able to entrust a machine with complex tasks previously delegated to a human.
  - » **NIST:** An engineered or machine-based system that can, for a given set of objectives, generate outputs such as predictions, recommendations, or decisions influencing real or virtual environments. AI systems are designed to operate with varying levels of autonomy.
- **Agentic AI:** An AI system that can accomplish a specific goal with limited supervision. Agentic systems can maintain long-term goals, manage multistep problem-solving tasks, track progress over time, and learn from their experiences.
- **Generative AI (GenAI):** A category of AI that uses a model's own underlying logic and training to generate new artificial outputs or datasets. This can include images, videos, audio, text, and other digital content.
- **Large Language Model (LLM):** A category of GenAI that uses natural language processing to recognize, summarize, translate, predict, and generate text content using very large datasets.
- **Robotic Process Automation (RPA)**: A category of software programs that use business rules and predefined activity sequences to automatically perform tasks. RPA is particularly useful for automating repetitive tasks that have clear decision rules. Traditional RPA is not a form of AI, but some modern RPA platforms are beginning to incorporate AI capabilities to automate complex and dynamic processes.

AI Inputs and Outputs

- **Algorithm:** A step-by-step procedure for solving a problem or accomplishing some end. In a computer, an algorithm is implemented in computer code and details the discrete steps and calculations a computer needs to implement to complete a task. An algorithm is the "engine" an AI uses to "think"' and make predictions.
- **Machine Learning (ML):** A method of creating AI. A machine learning AI algorithm is trained by engineers who feed it data, which it slowly learns to interpret and understand. In response to the data, the AI gradually tweaks its code to steadily improve its abilities. These tweaks add up over time, helping the AI create better outcomes.
- **Model:** The product of applying an algorithm (or set of algorithms) to data to optimize on a particular goal and produce insights or decisions.
- **AI Solution or System:** The ecosystem that includes AI models (themselves composed of algorithms and data), along with the humans, their organizations, and any other technologies associated with the AI Lifecycle.

Additional Resources

American Association for the Advancement of Science (2022), Artificial Intelligence: Foundational Issues and Glossary, *Artificial Intelligence and the Courts: Materials for Judges*.

Joint Technology Committee (2024), *Introduction to AI for Courts*.

National Institute of Standards and Technology (2024), *The Language of Trustworthy AI: An In-Depth Glossary of Terms*.

UNESCO (2023), *Global Toolkit on AI and the Rule of Law for the Judiciary*.

AI READINESS LEVEL 1

Building Foundations

AI Governance

Artificial intelligence is transforming industries and institutions, including state courts. As courts explore AI's potential to enhance efficiency, accuracy, and access to justice, governance structures must be in place to ensure ethical, effective, and equitable implementation.

AI has the potential to streamline court administration, automate mundane tasks to allow court personnel to focus on higher-value work, and enhance access to justice for court users. To harness AI's benefits, courts must establish governance frameworks that set clear policies, ensure transparency, and mitigate risks. Ongoing attention to AI governance is essential for ensuring AI serves the unique needs of each jurisdiction while maintaining public trust.

WHY AI GOVERNANCE IS VITAL

Although AI offers significant efficiencies, its adoption without proper oversight poses risks, including reduced transparency, unintended consequences, and diminished public trust and confidence. A well-defined governance framework provides a structured approach to managing and identifying risks, setting standards, and maintaining public trust. Effective AI governance includes clear policies, safeguards against unintended consequences, and mechanisms for ongoing oversight.

Governance can take various forms, including an AI governance committee to oversee adoption, ensure compliance with legal and ethical standards, and address emerging challenges proactively. However, governance also extends to personnel training and stakeholder engagement, ensuring that those interacting with AI understand its capabilities and limitations.

By implementing robust governance mechanisms, courts can improve their operations, mitigate risks, and ensure AI supports, rather than disrupts, the administration of justice.

AI GOVERNANCE COMMITTEES

AI governance is typically established and managed by a representative cross-functional group tasked with overseeing the effective use of AI within the organization. An AI governance committee provides the structure to answer "should we" and "can we" questions regarding AI. While specific tasks may vary depending on the organization, the AI governance group or committee typically develops an understanding of the impact of AI, sets a strategic direction for the use of AI, helps to establish polices, monitors compliance, authorizes AI projects, and addresses risks, such as those related to bias, transparency, privacy, and accountability.

If appropriate, the task of governing AI for the organization can be assigned to a new committee or one that already exists, such as a data governance committee. Whether it is referred to as a committee, task force, team, or group, it is important for court leaders to formally designate and support a group of individuals to focus on AI decision making within the organization.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

An AI governance committee has a better chance to mitigate assumptions and blind spots if it is composed of a diverse group of internal and external stakeholders, ensuring a balance of expertise and perspectives in the integration of new AI systems.

Committee members should include personnel with decision-making authority (such as court administrators, presiding judges, or department heads), technical expertise (such as IT and data experts), and operational experience (such as clerical and program staff). Members of legal, strategic planning, and project management teams also bring valuable perspectives and experience. When identifying members, it is also important to consider broader perspectives on how the court operates as a whole. Externally, legal experts, AI or technology ethicists, and community representatives can provide comprehensive oversight and accountability.

Additionally, human-centered and participatory processes should be prioritized, ensuring that AI-related decisions are effectively communicated and evaluated, particularly when systems have an impact on court personnel or on public-facing services. By fostering collaboration across technical, administrative, design, and policy-oriented roles, the committee can establish a representative AI governance framework within state courts, promoting inclusive and thoughtful interactions with new technologies.

ESTABLISHING AND EMBEDDING THE COMMITTEE

To increase the chances of success for AI implementation, the AI governance committee should be formally established and embedded within the structure and processes of the organization. This often requires a combination of communication, meetings, and change management practices over a period of time. Formally embedding the AI governance committee within the organization demonstrates that AI is important, that leadership supports the committee's work, and that tools and processes will be put in place to help make AI implementation successful.

Key activities that support the integration of the committee into the organization include, but are not limited to, a formal announcement from leadership that a committee is being formed, the development of talking points for committee members and leaders, town hall listening sessions or focus groups, deliberate periodic updates to organizational policies and processes, and, if applicable, information sessions and training on any processes or policies that result from the committee's work.

AI GOVERNANCE EXAMPLES

This section provides examples of how some courts have approached AI or data governance. These examples illustrate the breadth of strategies that courts might use to establish AI governance practices in a way that fits into existing organizational structures.

The Superior Court of California, County of Orange

The Superior Court of California, County of Orange, serves over 3 million residents across eight locations. It has 145 judicial positions, supported by approximately 1,500 employees. The court processes approximately 500,000 cases annually across criminal, civil, probate, juvenile, family law, and mental health matters. Known for its technological advancements, the court operates entirely with electronic records and mandates e-filing in several case types to enhance efficiency and accessibility.

The court has created a comprehensive Data Governance Plan designed to ensure effective management of its data assets in alignment with guidelines from the Judicial Council of California and the National Center for State Courts. The approach to governance is characterized by continuous, systemic practices that encompass validation, policy enforcement, and data quality measures, aiming to enhance operational decision-making and transparency. A Data Council, alongside judicial and executive leadership, holds the authority to oversee data governance strategies, including those related to AI, ensuring buy-in across all levels of court staff. Key roles include Data Stewards who monitor data integrity and compliance, and the Data Governance Administrator managing overall governance efforts.

New Jersey

The New Jersey Courts serve the state's entire population of approximately 8.9 million residents, employ around 9,000 individuals, including roughly 460 Superior Court trial judges, and process around 7 million cases annually.

The New Jersey Courts have taken a multipronged proactive approach to the use of AI. In 2023, the Chief Justice established two groups: the New Jersey Supreme Court Committee on AI and the Courts, which focuses on public-related issues including the practice of law, and a separate internal Working Group on the Judiciary's Use of AI, which explores policies for ethical AI use by the courts.

The Committee on AI and the Courts includes individuals with expertise in technology, judicial and administrative leaders, lawyers, educators, security specialists, legal service providers, and nonlawyer advocates. This inclusive model fosters buy-in and collaboration, ensuring that as AI transforms the legal landscape, all segments of the legal community move forward together.

The Committee and the internal Working Group quickly developed critical strategies that set an example for how state court systems can and should approach generative AI. These strategies seek to balance the benefits available through AI technologies, including the potential to improve court access and legal resources for unrepresented court users with the very real risks that flow from biases associated with AI tools. Internal processes that have been established include evolving Q&A resources to support employees in using AI tools appropriately, protocols for prioritizing and evaluating potential AI projects, and a pilot project for exploration of secure, internal AI technologies. The ongoing work of the Committee and Working Group reflect a commitment to responsible AI adoption in court processes.

Arizona

Arizona has adopted a multipronged approach to addressing the use of AI in the courts. The state has an integrated state court system, and its constitution provides the Supreme Court with administrative supervision over all courts in the state, exercised by the Chief Justice.

In early 2024, the Court issued administrative order 2024-33 creating the Arizona Steering Committee on Artificial Intelligence and the Courts. Recognizing the unprecedented opportunities of challenges that AI technologies would bring, the Court charged the committee with advising the Arizona Judicial Council on AI matters, serving as a collaborative platform to bring together experts from within and outside the judiciary, recommending guidelines for identifying and implementing AI solutions, and developing guidelines, rules, procedures, and products for the use of AI.

In addition to committee work, Arizona has incorporated generative AI guidance into its Code of Judicial Administration. Adopted in October of 2024, section 1-509 governs the use of generative artificial intelligence and large language models in all state courts. It applies to all court personnel and defines the acceptable uses of email accounts and devices, requires compliance with laws and judicial branch policies, requires human review of all AI-generated material, and encourages appropriate training on the use of AI tools. Further, the section adopts specific protocols for sharing court content in both sequestered and non-sequestered AI systems. Notably, the section clarifies the responsibility for processes to approve AI tools for use and defines categories of tools including those approved for all purposes, approved for public content only, and those that are prohibited.

Arizona's multifaceted framework for addressing generative AI incorporates legal and technical expertise in setting high-level standards, while also establishing clear guidance for users on how to approach the question of whether and how they can utilize available AI tools. This approach balances the needs of both the organization as well as the individuals working within it.

THE AI GOVERNANCE TOOL

The AI Governance Tool is designed to aid court leaders in implementing and establishing effective AI governance within their organization. Establishing effective AI governance requires a dedicated and collaborative, team-based approach over a period of time. The tool brings together insights from experts in court technology, psychology, computer science, design, and law, as well as experience from NCSC efforts, such as the AI Rapid Response Team, the TRI-NCSC AI Policy Consortium for Law and Courts, and early AI governance implementations in state courts.

The tool lays out a year-long process for establishing AI governance, beginning with identifying members of the AI Governance Committee and convening for monthly meetings with suggested agendas and tasks. By following the plan laid out in this tool, a court can implement all of the major tasks that are covered in Level 1 of this *AI Readiness Guide*: articulate guiding principles, develop an initial internal AI use policy, create an AI literacy strategy, assess data governance, and identify the court's first AI project.

CONCLUSION

AI technologies have the potential to transform the way people interact with organizations and institutions, including courts. As a result, court leaders have a responsibility to prepare their court for the impacts AI may have on court operations and how services are delivered. Establishing effective AI governance enables courts to effectively manage the impacts of AI and ensure that technologies are implemented in accordance with state laws, court rules, and ethical standards.

Additional Resources

Jarral (2025), *Artificial Intelligence Playbook for Justice, Public Safety, and Security Professionals*, Integrated Justice Information Systems (IJIS) Institute.

National Association for Court Management (2024), *Courting AI: Understanding Artificial Intelligence in Courts*.

National Center for State Courts (2022), *Just Horizons: Charting the Future of the Courts*.

Responsible AI Institute (2024), *AI Policy Template: Build your Foundational Organizational AI Policy*.

Tabassi (2023), *Artificial Intelligence Risk Management Framework (AI RMF 1.0)*, National Institute of Standards and Technology.

Statement of AI Guiding Principles

One of the first important tasks for the AI Governance Committee is to articulate the court's guiding principles related to AI. Documenting guiding principles for AI usage and implementation is essential to ensure that AI technologies are developed and deployed responsibly, ethically, and effectively. As AI becomes more integrated into critical systems, specific questions will arise regarding which operations to integrate with AI, which technologies to use, how to develop and roll out new technologies, and potential impacts on court stakeholders. Providing decision makers with a set of clear guiding principles to look to at each stage helps to prevent misuse, mitigate risks, and maintain public trust.

STATEMENT OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A court's Guiding Principles statement should be a relatively short document (often, 1-2 pages), outlining the high-level values that will shape its AI-related decisions. It should articulate the commitments that court is making and the principles to which all court applications of AI must adhere. There are many possible ways to structure this document, including a more narrative approach, such as these examples from Illinois and New Jersey, or a list approach.

SUGGESTED PRINCIPLES

This section lays out some core AI principles that can guide responsible and effective AI usage in organizations. These are suggested principles that courts might consider when developing the Guiding Principles statement.

Transparency

- **Transparent:** AI systems and their underlying models, including processes used to validate, test, and mitigate bias, should be clearly documented by developers.
- **Explainable:** Mission-critical AI solutions should be designed to provide transparent and interpretable explanations for their decisions and actions to the extent possible. Where full explainability is not feasible due to technical limitations, efforts should be made to enhance interpretability, document personnel decision-making and oversight processes, and provide meaningful insights into how the relevant AI system reached or generated a particular outcome.

Accountability

- **Responsible:** AI capabilities should be responsibly developed, deployed, and used, with careful judgment exercised to align with the Courts' mission and values. Human oversight and control are maintained to ensure AI capabilities are safe, reliable, traceable, and secure, mitigating the risk of unintended consequences or potential misuse.
- **Governable:** Effective monitoring, regulation, and measures should be designed to enforce compliance, detect and rectify deviations from desired behavior, and ensure accountability. Personnel responsible for different phases of the AI system lifecycle are identified and held accountable for the outcomes of the AI solutions.
- **Reliable:** AI solutions should have explicit and well-defined uses, are developed and deployed to consistently produce accurate and dependable results and are subject to recurrent testing and assurance to ensure safety, security, and effectiveness throughout their entire lifecycle.
- **Secure:** AI systems should be designed with robust security measures to protect against cyber threats, data breaches, and unauthorized access. Safeguards should be in place to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of AI-driven processes, particularly when handling sensitive court information.

Fairness

- **Accessible:** AI solutions should be designed to be inclusive and accessible to all individuals, regardless of socioeconomic status, disability, or technological proficiency, ensuring equal access to justice and legal resources.
- **Unbiased:** AI solutions should be developed and deployed with the goal of identifying, reducing, and eliminating bias, ensuring that decisions and outcomes are equitable and free from unjust discrimination external and internal to the solutions. Ongoing assessment and refinement of AI systems are conducted to detect and correct any biases that may emerge throughout their lifecycle.

Human-Centered Design

- **Human-centered:** Decisions about which AI tools and technologies to implement should be driven by court personnel and court user needs. Human-centered design involves specific strategies such as: considering what is the appropriate amount of work for a human and avoiding relying on outdated assumptions about how much work makes a full-time job; ensuring that new technologies don't

simply create more work for the workers it is designed to support; giving humans the "last word" on decisions or actions made by an automated system; and avoiding leftover design (designing technologies to automate certain tasks and leaving whatever work is leftover to the humans).

- **Participatory:** Participatory methods should be used to inform decision making at all stages of an AI implementation project. Court personnel who do the tasks that are being integrated with AI have lived expertise, and their insights should inform project needs, goals, and success metrics, as well as project design. In cases where court users will interact with new AI tools and technologies, their insights and experiences should inform decision making as well.

CONCLUSION

Documenting guiding principles for AI usage and implementation is essential to ensure that AI technologies are developed and deployed responsibly, ethically, and effectively. A court's Guiding Principles statement should articulate the commitments that court is making and the principles to which all court applications of AI must adhere.

Additional Resources

American Association for the Advancement of Science (2022), Artificial Intelligence and Bias: An Evaluation, *Artificial Intelligence and the Courts: Materials for Judges*.

Association for Computing Machinery (2022). *Statement on Principles for Responsible Algorithmic Systems*.

Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) (2024), *Generative AI and the Future of the Courts: Responsibilities and Possibilities*.

National Center for State Courts (2022), *The Future of Work in the State Courts at the Human-Technology Frontier: Research Agenda*.

National Center for State Courts (2022), *Just Horizons: Charting the Future of the Courts*.

Tabassi (2023), *Artificial Intelligence Risk Management Framework (AI RMF 1.0)*, National Institute of Standards and Technology.

Theofanos, Choong, & Jensen (2024), *AI Use Taxonomy: A Human-Centered Approach*, National Institute of Standards and Technology.

Thomson Reuters Institute and National Center for State Courts (2025). *Principles and Practices for Using AI Responsibly and Effectively in Courts*.

Internal AI Use Policy

An important component of building a strong foundation for AI is developing an initial policy for internal AI use. This policy is meant to provide guardrails that promote safe AI use by court personnel during the transition period while the court establishes its AI governance infrastructure and longer-term strategy.

This initial policy should not aim to cover all AI-related issues or potential AI use scenarios. Rather, the focus should be on identifying and mitigating the most immediate risks that may be involved in court personnel using AI for court business. The policy should make clear to court personnel which AI practices are allowed or prohibited in the short term.

Because the initial internal use policy is designed to be an interim policy, the court should establish a specific timeline or specific milestones for re-assessing and updating the policy. This timeline can be articulated in the policy itself or built into the court's broader AI governance strategy. Either way, the court should regularly re-evaluate the internal use policy to ensure that it covers the full scope of AI in court operations and that it continues to provide clarity to court personnel on appropriate and inappropriate uses of AI.

The remainder of this section outlines some common approaches to internal use policies with examples from state courts. Note that because these policies can (and should) evolve over time, the examples provided here are not meant to illustrate which provisions are currently in effect in a particular jurisdiction. These examples were all in place at the time of this writing, but they are only intended to illustrate the range of potential approaches to policy format and language. To see what policies are currently in effect in the courts, visit NCSC's AI in State Courts webpage or individual court websites.

COMMON POLICY FORMATS

State courts have adopted two broad types of internal AI use policies.

Requirement of Court Approval for Each AI Use

The first overall approach to internal use policies is to lay out the specific ways court personnel are allowed to use AI. Under this approach, any AI uses that are not specifically approved by the court are prohibited. Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, South Carolina, and Utah have adopted this approach. The following are excerpts from these jurisdictions, illustrating this type of policy:

- **Arizona:** "Court personnel are authorized to use approved Generative AI tools for work-related purposes as set forth in this section. … Only approved Generative AI tools are permitted to be installed or used on court-owned devices, and on personal devices that are used to access court non-public content."
- **Connecticut:** "Employees must secure supervisory approval before using LLMs for each use."
- **Delaware:** "'Approved GenAI' means GenAI tools that have been approved by the Administrative Office for use by Authorized Users in the performance of their duties and using State Technology Resources.
- **Maryland:** "Only use generative AI tools/platforms that have been approved by Judicial Information Systems."
- **South Carolina:** "Judicial Branch Officers and Employees may only use Generative AI tools and systems in the performance of their Judicial Branch duties that are approved by the Supreme Court or South Carolina Court Administration."
- **Utah:** " These rules set forth the only authorized use of generative AI tools for court-related work or on court-owned devices. Any use not expressly permitted herein will be considered a violation of court policies."

Guidelines for AI Use

A second approach to internal use policies is to lay out requirements that personnel must fulfill when using AI. Under this approach, court personnel do not need to obtain court approval for each type of AI usage, but if they choose to use AI, they must adhere to a set of guidelines and constraints. Kentucky's Office of Information and Technology Services and South Dakota have adopted this approach.

COMMON POLICY PROVISIONS

Both policy approaches described above tend to share a common set of provisions. When developing an internal AI use policy, courts might consider which of these items may make sense to include, given the court's individual circumstances. Not every one of these provisions may be needed in every jurisdiction, and some courts may wish to include additional types of provisions that aren't listed here. As described above, the court should choose language that: 1) puts guardrails in place to mitigate risks in the short term and 2) clarifies for personnel which uses of AI are allowed or prohibited.

Statement of Purpose

Many courts begin their internal use policies with a statement of purpose. These statements articulate the court's motivation for implementing the policy. Most of them describe both a desire to foster innovation and a desire to mitigate risks. The following are some example statements of purpose:

- **Arizona:** "Purpose. To promote the use of Generative AI tools when it is beneficial and appropriate, this section provides the administrative requirements, standards, and guidelines to ensure its appropriate use and safeguard controls."
- **Connecticut:** "This policy and the collection of procedures listed below seek to establish an (AI) framework that upholds the ethical use of AI in the Judicial Branch, and prioritizes fairness, privacy, transparency, accountability, and security. This is an organic framework intended to evolve in tandem with technological advancements, future iterations of relevant legislation at the state and federal levels, societal needs, and government operational necessities."
- **Delaware:** "This Interim Policy is intended to ensure the safe and appropriate use of GenAI by Authorized Users."
- **Kentucky:** "The purpose of this standard is to outline the expectations and acceptable use of generative artificial intelligence within the Office of Information and Technology Services (ITS). The standard is created to protect the safety, privacy, and intellectual property rights of the Kentucky Court of Justice (KCOJ)."
- **Maryland:** "The emergence of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools and platforms has prompted the Maryland Judiciary to develop a set of guidelines for acceptable use of AI by Judiciary personnel. … As with all technologies, employees must make a conscious effort to protect the confidentiality, integrity and availability of Judiciary assets."
- **South Carolina:** "This policy seeks to ensure the responsible and secure integration of these technologies into the judiciary, while safeguarding the integrity of judicial proceedings and protecting the privacy and rights of parties and others involved in matters in all courts in the Unified Judicial System."
- **South Dakota:** "While AI provides many workplace benefits, it also brings potential risks. To capitalize on its advantages and minimize its risks, the Unified Judicial System has established guidelines for the safe and ethical use of AI. These guidelines support UJS employees in effectively leveraging AI while ensuring they adhere within secure and ethical operational parameters."

Policy Scope

Another common provision in internal use policies is a statement describing the scope of the policy. There are several ways to define scope:

- By user (describing which people the policy applies to)
- By tool (describing which types of AI technologies the policy applies to)
- By activity (describing which tasks or use cases the policy applies to)
- By device/system (describing which devices, systems, or servers the policy applies to)

Many policies combine these different methods for defining the scope, as illustrated in the following examples:

- **Arizona:** "This section applies to all court personnel. … Court personnel are authorized to use approved Generative AI tools for work-related purposes as set forth in this section."
- **Connecticut:** "This policy applies to AI software, hardware, services, and appliances. It also applies to developed, procured, and embedded AI and covers the CT Judicial Branch employees and affiliated entities."
- **Delaware:** "This Interim Policy applies to the use of GenAI by Authorized Users in the course and scope of their official duties and on State Technology Resources."
- **Kentucky:** "This standard applies to all Information and Technology Services personnel."
- **Maryland:** "All Judiciary employees, as well as temporary employees and contractors must abide by the following guidelines when using emerging technological tools like generative AI for Judiciary business."
- **South Carolina:** "This Interim Policy applies to all Judicial Officers and Employees of the South Carolina Judicial Branch."

Note that some of the policies also provide definitions of terms that are included in the policy scope. These definitions further define the application of the policy. Sometimes these definitions appear in the scope section itself. For example, South Carolina's scope section defines employees as follows: "Judicial Officers and Employees includes Justices, judges, attorneys, law clerks, administrative assistants, interns, externs, temporary employees, paralegals, and all other employees or volunteers within the Branch regardless of whether they are compensated by state or local funds, including information technology professionals." In other cases, definitions that further refine the scope of the policy appear in a dedicated Definitions section (see next page).

Definitions

Many internal use policies include a dedicated section providing definitions of terms. As described above, some of the terms that are defined in this section appear in the policy's scope statement. Many of the terms also appear in the provisions laying out allowed and prohibited activities. The following are some commonly defined terms:

- **Technologies:** *Artificial Intelligence (AI), Generative AI (GenAI), Large Language Model (LLM), Machine Learning (ML), Sequestered System, Non-sequestered System*
- **Roles:** *Administrative Director, Judicial Leadership, Court Personnel, Court Employee, Authorized User*
- **Information:** *Confidential, Sensitive, Non-public, Personally Identifying Information*
- **Content:** *Work Products, Court Proprietary Content*
- **Approval Status:** *Approved, Non-approved*

Statement on Human Oversight and Responsibility

Many policies include a blanket statement requiring human oversight of all AI tools and giving humans the final responsibility for decision making. The following are some examples:

- **Arizona:** "Court personnel using AI tools are expected to understand the limitations of such tools. Court personnel must review their AI-generated material for accuracy, completeness, and potentially erroneous, incomplete, hallucinated, biased, or otherwise problematic output. Court personnel must use caution when relying on the output."
- **Connecticut:** "LLMs may generate content that is incorrect or fictitious. This content may seem reasonable and not be readily distinguishable from factual information. Employees and affiliated entities using an LLM must review all information obtained from the LLM for accuracy, veracity and completeness. … Employees and affiliated entities using LLMs are responsible for their work product, regardless of what portion of it is produced by the LLM. … While it is acceptable to use LLMs to perform official job duties. These tools must be used to augment/assist and not replace common sense.
- **Delaware:** "Any use of GenAI output is ultimately the responsibility of the Authorized User. Authorized Users are responsible to ensure the accuracy of all work product and must use caution when relying on the output of GenAI. … Authorized Users may not delegate their decision-making function to Approved GenAI."

- **Kentucky:** "Responses generated from generative AI outputs shall be reviewed by knowledgeable individuals for accuracy, appropriateness, privacy, and security before being acted upon or disseminated. … Responses generated from generative AI shall not: i. Be assumed to be truthful, credible, or accurate; ii. Be used verbatim; iii. Be treated as the sole source of reference; iv. Be used to issue official statements (i.e., policy, legislation, or regulations); v. Be solely relied upon for making final decisions; vi. Be used to impersonate individuals or organizations."
- **Maryland:** "When using a JIS-approved generative AI platform, it remains the obligation of the employee to ensure that the information contained in the employee's work product is accurate, complies with all applicable laws and regulations (including copyright laws), contains proper attribution, and does not contain material that reflects unintended and/or undesirable bias."
- **South Carolina:** "Judicial Branch Officers and Employees may not use Generative AI to draft memoranda, orders, opinions, or other documents without direct human oversight and approval. Generative AI tools are intended to provide assistance and are not a substitute for judicial, legal, or other professional expertise. As such, content from Generative AI may not be used verbatim; be assumed to be truthful, reliable, or accurate; be treated as the sole source of reference; or be solely relied on in making final decisions."
- **South Dakota:** "Generative AI should not be used to make decisions or provide recommendations. AI systems cannot consider subtle nuances a human must take into consideration, nor is it free from discrimination and bias. While useful for data-driven insights and automating routine tasks, AI should not replace human judgment in areas requiring nuanced understanding and ethical considerations."
- **Utah:** "Any use of AI-generated content is ultimately the responsibility of the person who uses it."

Allowed and Prohibited AI Uses

The core of most internal use policies is a set of provisions that lay out specific uses of AI that are allowed, prohibited, or constrained in some way. These provisions vary widely by jurisdiction, so it is not possible to provide a list of common provisions. However, many of these provisions can be categorized based on how they define allowed and prohibited AI uses (by tool, activity, or device/system). The following are some examples from each category:

- Defining allowed and prohibited AI uses by tool:
  - **Maryland:** "Only use generative AI tools/platforms that have been approved by Judicial Information Systems (JIS)."

  - » **South Carolina:** "Judicial Branch Officers and Employees may only use Generative AI tools and systems in the performance of their Judicial Branch duties that are approved by the Supreme Court or South Carolina Court Administration."

- Defining allowed and prohibited AI uses by activity:
  - » **Arizona:** "Court personnel are not permitted to put non-public content into a non-sequestered AI system."
  - » **Connecticut**: "Employees shall not input non-public information into LLMs."
  - » **Maryland:** "Use strong passwords when using AI platforms and do not share your passwords with others. Refer to the Judiciary's password guidelines when creating passwords for AI platforms. Create AI-specific accounts for Judiciary usage by using your Judiciary email address and never re-use a password that you use anywhere else when using an AI platform. Judiciary-related AI accounts should not be used for personal matters."
  - » **South Carolina:** "In addition to assisting Judicial Officers and Employees in legal matters, Generative AI may be used to create or modify software code. Such use may only be permitted after identification and mitigation of business and security risks related to its use. All software code generated by Generative AI must be documented."
  - » **South Dakota:** "During work hours, UJS employees may only use AI for work purposes, including tasks such as research, data analysis, and draft communications. The use of generative AI systems for personal reasons during work hours must be within the scope of the state acceptable use policy."
  - » **Utah:** "You may only use generative AI for these purposes: Preparing educational materials; Legal research; Preparing draft documents; Preparing surveys; Testing reading comprehension of public documents (e.g., to ensure a document is accessible to a self-represented litigant); Instructions on how to use a new piece of software (e.g., Adobe Captivate)."

- Defining allowed and prohibited AI uses by device/system:
  - » **Arizona:** "Court personnel are permitted to use a judicial branch work email account to use or register for Generative AI tools or create AI-generated material for work-related purposes. … Only approved Generative AI tools are permitted to be installed or used on court-owned devices, and on personal devices that are used to access court non-public content."

- » **Delaware:** "Non-Approved GenAI may not be used on State Technology Resources."
- » **South Carolina:** "Any Generative AI tools or systems used in the performance of Judicial Branch duties may only be accessed using approved devices. Judicial Officers and Employees may not circumvent this rule by using Generative AI on personal devices or systems."

Response to a Breach

Some policies describe what personnel should do in case of a breach of information security while using AI. The following are some examples of these provisions:

- **South Dakota:** "Report any security issues or confidentiality breaches to IT, immediately. Should any problems arise related to the use of generative AI, such as unauthorized access or misuse of sensitive, confidential, or privacy-restricted information, users must alert the Help Desk and their supervisor immediately."
- **Utah:** "You must report inadvertent disclosures: Judicial officers and court employees must immediately report any data breaches or inadvertent disclosures in violation of paragraphs 5 or 6 to the Office of General Counsel."

Approval Authority

Some policies contain a provision specifying who has the authority to approve specific AI uses. The following are some examples of these provisions:

- **Arizona:** "Court personnel are responsible for identifying the nature of content to ensure that nonpublic content is not put into a non-sequestered AI system. If the nature of the content is not clear or cannot be determined by court personnel, they must obtain approval from judicial leadership before putting the content into the system."
- **Connecticut:** "Employees must secure supervisory approval before using LLMs for each use. Supervisors may consult with the Judicial Branch's Artificial Intelligence Committee to help decide acceptable use."
- **Maryland:** "If an employee wants to use a generative AI tool or platform that is not on the approved list, they must request and obtain approval through Service Now before using that tool or platform."
- **South Carolina:** "Notwithstanding any general approval, supervising justices, judges, lawyers, and information technology professionals retain the authority to

limit or prohibit the use of approved Generative AI tools by lawyer and nonlawyer employees under their supervision."

- **Utah:** "Any use not expressly permitted herein will be considered a violation of court policies. Deviations must be pre-approved by the state court administrator."

Training

Some policies include a provision outlining expectations for employee training. Some of these provisions are phrased as a requirement employees must meet in order to use AI. Others are described as a commitment of the court to ensure employees have access to adequate training. The following are some examples of these provisions:

- **Arizona:** "Court personnel should receive appropriate training on the use of AI tools and the advantages and drawbacks of using AI technologies."
- **Delaware:** "Authorized Users should be trained in the technical capabilities and limitations of Approved GenAI prior to use."
- **South Carolina:** "The South Carolina Judicial Branch will develop training programs to educate Judicial Officers and Employees on the proper and improper use of AI and Generative AI."
- **Utah:** "Prior to using generative AI tools for court-related work or on court-owned devices, you must complete court-approved training posted on LMS. The Judicial Council may impose additional education requirements at any time."

Policy Updates

Finally, some policies contain language describing when (or under what circumstances) the policy will be updated. The following are some examples of these provisions:

- **Arizona:** "This section and local court policies must be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary to account for changes in AI technologies and to ensure compliance with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, and other policies."
- **Maryland:** "This document should be referred to often, as guidance on this subject may change based upon advancements in AI and the enactment of new regulations and legislation."
- **South Carolina:** "This Interim Policy shall remain in effect until further Order of the Chief Justice or the Supreme Court."

A Brief Word on Token Optimization Strategies

When paying a vendor for a GenAI service that calculates usage using tokens, there are a few strategies that decrease the number of tokens required for individual tasks. Training court personnel on how to use these strategies effectively can help reduce costs for the court:

- **Prompt compression (30-60% savings per call):** This means making your instructions to the AI shorter and more direct. AI systems charge based on the number of "tokens" (roughly words) you send them. By removing unnecessary words, you can cut costs significantly. For example, the prompt, "Please read the following paragraph and summarize it in a concise manner for judicial review..." can be shortened to "Summarize for judge."
- **Token truncation (Up to 80% fewer tokens):** This involves cutting off or limiting the amount of text you send to the AI. For example, instead of sending a 50-page document, you might send only the most relevant 5 pages. This dramatically reduces costs while often maintaining quality.
- **Model tiering (50-90% cost reduction):** Different AI models have different capabilities and costs. A simple task like classification might work fine with a cheaper model, while complex analysis needs an expensive one. Using the right model for each task saves money.
- **Batching (10-40% savings):** Instead of sending one request at a time, group multiple similar requests together. Many AI providers offer discounts for processing multiple requests at once.

CONCLUSION

As courts begin to establish their AI governance frameworks, it is important to establish an internal AI use policy to address the most immediate risks and needs related to AI. The initial internal AI use policy should put guardrails in place to mitigate risks in the short term and clarify for personnel which uses of AI are allowed or prohibited.

Additional Resources

Jarral (2025), *Artificial Intelligence Playbook for Justice, Public Safety, and Security Professionals*, Integrated Justice Information Systems (IJIS) Institute.

National Center for State Courts, *AI in State Courts*.

Responsible AI Institute (2025), *AI Policy Template: Build your Foundational Organizational AI Policy*.

Thomson Reuters Institute and National Center for State Courts (2025). *Getting the best of GenAI: How to Use Prompt Engineering*.

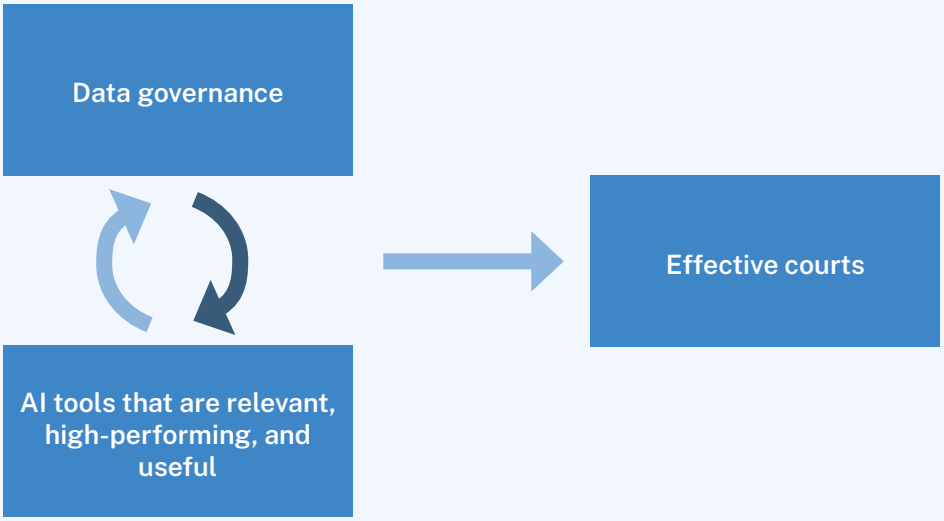
Thomson Reuters Institute and National Center for State Courts (2025). *Key Considerations for the Use of Generative AI Tools in Legal Practice and Courts*.

Data Governance Assessment

Data governance is a framework encompassing the people, policies, processes, and technology that ensure high-quality data, data management, and data security. Although strong data governance has always been an essential component of high court performance, the increasing use of AI in court operations makes data governance even more critical.

The relationship between court data governance and AI moves in both directions. The quality of a court's data determines what kinds of AI innovations are possible and plays a critical role in successful implementation. At the same time, AI technologies can be used to improve data governance while also creating new kinds of data and corresponding data-governance issues, considerations, and ethical concerns. This Guide focuses on the former question: what can courts do to improve their data governance in the process of advancing their AI readiness?

Data Governance and AI Readiness



Adapted from Robinson, Cleary, Gibson, & Miller (2024), *Data Governance and AI in State Courts*

DATA QUALITY AND AI READINESS

Because AI technologies are built on data, data quality must be addressed as part of both a general AI Readiness process and as part of specific AI implementations. To the extent that a court's data measure the right things and are accurate, complete, and compatible across jurisdictions, the court will be equipped to:

- Understand where AI technologies are most needed, will have the greatest benefits, and will do the least harm.
- Identify specific court operations and tasks to enhance with AI and which tasks to leave to humans.
- Develop better-performing AI tools.
- Measure the performance of AI tools to ensure they meet the courts' needs before launch and make adjustments and improvements as needed.
- Make sound, data-driven decisions about court policies and practices.
- Share technology and knowledge across jurisdictions, coordinate with justice partners, and learn from other courts.

Conversely, when inaccurate or biased data are used to design or train a new AI tool, the AI may perpetuate and magnify those inaccuracies and biases.

IMPROVING DATA GOVERNANCE

As courts begin to explore potential new AI solutions, it is vital that they assess and improve their broader data governance practices. This process should begin well before any specific AI projects are planned, and it should be maintained as an ongoing practice.

If your court is not sure where to begin, the following are some initial data governance improvements that are likely to be relevant in any court and likely to make a big impact on AI readiness:

- **Improve Data Quality:** Many case management systems contain a significant amount of missing or inaccurate data or data that were collected by another entity outside of the courts. Addressing these issues is crucial for AI readiness, as the data may be needed to train AI models. For specific guidance on improving data quality, see NCSC's Data Governance Guide.
- **Standardize Data Across Jurisdictions:** Software platforms and data standards are often incompatible across jurisdictions. The courts' increased reliance on future technologies will make it vital to reconcile technology and data formats,

increase information sharing, and build systems that can share and merge mismatching data. Adopting the National Open Court Data Standards (NODS) is one step in this direction.

- **Build Data Literacy:** To meet the coming changes, court leaders and staff need a better understanding of the fundamental principles of data governance and data-driven decision-making. Other court stakeholders, including justice partner organizations, attorneys, and the public, also need a better understanding of how courts collect and use data. Some resources for improving data literacy include Data-driven Decision Making for Courts and Using Data to Understand, Monitor, and Improve Court Performance.

For a specific example of how one court addressed its data quality and standardization as part of a new AI project, see the AI Case Study on Nevada's guardianship monitoring portal. For a tailored assessment of data governance practices and opportunities for improvement, courts can also use the Data Governance Self-Assessment Tool.

CONCLUSION

It is vital that courts begin to assess and improve their data governance practices well before any specific AI projects are planned, and data governance should be maintained as an ongoing practice. Improving data quality is likely to be a useful first step in many courts.

Additional Resources

Miller (2023), *Data-driven Decision Making for Courts*, National Center for State Courts.

Miller, Genthon, Hotchkiss, & Elek (2025), *Using Data to Understand, Monitor, and Improve Court Performance*, National Center for State Courts.

National Center for State Courts (2019), *Data Governance Policy Guide*.

National Center for State Courts, *Data Governance Self-Assessment Tool*.

National Center for State Courts, *National Open Court Data Standards (NODS)*.

Robinson, Cleary, Gibson, & Miller (2024), Data Governance and AI in State Courts, *Trends in State Courts*, NCSC.

AI Literacy Strategy

Another vital component of building a strong foundation for AI in the court is developing an AI literacy strategy. **AI literacy refers to the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to effectively interact with, critically evaluate, and responsibly use artificial intelligence systems.** By developing a plan for building and maintaining AI literacy in the workforce, courts can ensure that all personnel are equipped to navigate an increasingly AI-integrated workplace with confidence and discernment.

Promoting AI literacy in the court workforce is an ongoing process, beginning with the recruitment and onboarding of new personnel and continuing with education and training as business processes evolve and technologies advance.

The exact definition of AI literacy will vary across different roles in the court workforce. Generally, however, AI literacy includes the following components:

- **Knowledge:** Knowing what AI systems are and having a basic understanding of how different types of models work.
- **Critical Evaluation:**
  - Assessing the quality and accuracy of AI outputs and recognizing the potential impacts of AI bias.
  - Recognizing the boundaries of AI capabilities, understanding which tools are appropriate for which uses, and recognizing when human judgment is needed.
  - Understanding the ethical considerations surrounding AI usage and its potential impacts on public trust in the courts.
- **Openness to innovation:** Demonstrating a willingness to complete workflow tasks in new ways and adopting a mindset of lifelong learning.
- **Practical Skills:** Using AI tools and technologies effectively.

DEVELOPING AN AI LITERACY STRATEGY

An AI Literacy Strategy is a critical component of the court's overall AI governance, and developing the initial version of this plan should be one of the early tasks of the AI governance committee. Ensuring that all court personnel receive relevant training to build and sustain AI literacy is critical for the successful implementation of AI in the courts. The following are some recommended steps the courts can take to develop their strategy:

Step 1: Define AI Literacy

For each specific role in the court workforce, the court should consider what each of the AI literacy components listed above means in practice. For example, the knowledge and practical skills a clerk needs to use AI-based tools may differ from the knowledge and practical skills a judge needs. To the extent possible, this process should include input from the personnel in each role (for example, through surveys, focus groups, or informal conversations). Starting with a clear and specific definition of AI literacy for each role helps to ensure that recruitment and training strategies align with the court's AI literacy needs.

Step 2: Delineate Literacy Milestones

For each personnel role, the court should delineate which aspects of AI literacy — which knowledge and skills — must be present at various milestones in an employee's tenure. For example, the court might decide that clerks need a certain literacy level at hiring, a greater level of literacy one year into their employment, and an even greater level of literacy before being promoted. There are likely many roles for which little-to-no AI literacy is needed upon hiring, especially in courts that have not yet adopted AI technologies. However, there may be specific roles for which AI literacy is more central to the job requirements (for example, some IT roles). Furthermore, as the court integrates more AI technologies into its operations over time, the need for AI literacy in many roles may increase.

Step 3: Update Recruitment Practices

If the court has identified any roles for which at least some AI literacy is needed upon hiring, the next step is to update the court's recruitment practices. This may involve updating job descriptions and job postings to ensure that the relevant AI skills and knowledge are articulated. It may also involve adjusting the court's outreach and recruitment strategies to ensure a strong and diverse applicant pool.

Step 4: Identify Education and Training Needs

Next, the court should identify the training that is needed for each personnel role at each employment milestone identified in Step 2. Skills and knowledge that are needed early on in an employee's tenure can be developed during the onboarding process. Other skills and knowledge can be developed through on-the-job experience, dedicated AI training events, or continuing education.

Step 5: Update Personnel Evaluation Processes

Once the court has defined AI literacy for each personnel role and provided the training and education needed, the final step is to evaluate employees' AI literacy. The court should update whatever processes are used to evaluate performance, such as annual reviews, to ensure that each member of the team is demonstrating AI literacy as needed. Individual employees showing gaps in literacy should be supported with additional training and resources. The court should also be aware of any widespread gaps in literacy across individuals — these may indicate a greater need for training overall or a reconsideration of the AI literacy definition for the role.

Step 6: Update the AI Literacy Strategy

As the court's use of AI evolves over time, it should regularly re-evaluate the AI Literacy Strategy and update it as needed. Important milestones that could lead to an update include implementing new AI technologies in the court workflow, creating or redesigning a personnel role, or discovering new gaps in personnel knowledge and skills as technologies advance.

CONCLUSION

An AI Literacy Strategy is a critical component of the court's overall AI governance. By developing a plan for building and maintaining AI literacy in the workforce, courts can ensure that all personnel are equipped to navigate an increasingly AI-integrated workplace.

Additional Resources

Jarral (2025), *Artificial Intelligence Playbook for Justice, Public Safety, and Security Professionals*, Integrated Justice Information Systems (IJIS) Institute.

National Association for Court Management (2024), *Courting AI: Understanding Artificial Intelligence in Courts*.

National Center for State Courts, AI Literacy Courses.

UNESCO (2023), *Global Toolkit on AI and the Rule of Law for the Judiciary*.

First AI Project Selection

Artificial Intelligence has the potential to transform court operations by improving efficiency, reducing backlogs, and enhancing access to justice. AI is likely already present in every court workplace as an integrated, often invisible, component of word processing programs and other common software tools. However, adopting an AI tool or technology to automate or enhance part of the court's workflow can be daunting due to concerns about risk, cost, and stakeholder trust. By starting with a well-chosen project, courts can build confidence, demonstrate value, and lay the foundation for future AI initiatives.

This section outlines a step-by-step process to help courts identify potential AI projects and select the best candidate for their first implementation. For real-world examples of how courts identify new AI projects, see the AI Case Studies.

STEP 1: DEFINE GOALS AND CONSTRAINTS

The first step is to identify the court's top priorities for the AI project. For example, priorities might include efficiency, backlog reduction, cost savings, reduced employee burnout, improved service for court users, fewer errors, better communication, and more. As part of this process, the court should closely examine its business processes to identify pain points in the workflow and specific tasks that are most in need of innovation. This should include having dedicated conversations with judges and staff about their experiences and the workflow pain points that they have observed. The following are some useful questions to guide these conversations:

- Which aspects of the court's workflow ...
  - ... are manual, inefficient, or labor-intensive?
  - ... are most stressful for staff?
  - ... are error-prone?
  - ... cause the most inconvenience for court users?
  - ... create disproportionate burdens on court users from marginalized groups?
- If there was one task you could take off your plate, what would it be?
- If you weren't spending as much time on [Task], what important work would you be able to do instead?

In addition to identifying priorities, the court should also identify any limitations and constraints that the court currently faces, such as the budget, staff capacity, data availability, or regulatory environment.

STEP 2: EVALUATE CANDIDATE TASKS

The next step is to take the list of potential workflow tasks that were identified in Step 1 and evaluate each as a potential project for AI innovation. The following are seven key characteristics of a good first AI project:

1. Aligns with Strategic Goals

- ***Supports Current Court Priorities:*** Target projects that advance the key goals identified in Step 1 and address high-priority issues.
- ***Fits the Court's Mission:*** Aim for projects that align with broader initiatives like modernization, digital transformation, or service equity.

2. Low-Risk

- ***Not Public-Facing:*** Avoid projects that directly impact litigants, attorneys, or the public, as errors or biases could erode trust. Instead, focus on internal, back-office processes.
- ***Low Legal and Ethical Risk:*** Avoid projects involving sensitive decisions (for example, sentencing or case outcomes) that could raise ethical or legal concerns.
- ***Minimal Data Privacy Concerns:*** Use non-sensitive or anonymized data to reduce privacy risks.

3. Addresses Repetitive and Time-Consuming Tasks

- ***High Manual Effort:*** Target tasks that require significant staff time and are prone to human error.
- ***Repetitive and Rule-Based:*** Focus on processes with clear, consistent rules that AI can easily learn.

4. Manageable Scope

- ***Small Scale:*** Start with a pilot project that can be implemented in a single department or for a specific task.
- ***Limited Integration Needs:*** Avoid projects requiring extensive integration with legacy systems, which can increase complexity and cost.
- ***Short Timeline:*** Aim for projects that can be implemented and evaluated within 6-12 months.

5. Measurable Impact

- ***Clear Success Metrics:*** Choose projects with quantifiable outcomes (such as time saved, error reduction, or cost savings).
- ***High Return on Investment (ROI)Potential:*** Focus on projects that deliver significant value relative to cost and effort.

6. Stakeholder Buy-In

- ***Addresses Pain Points:*** Select projects that solve well-known challenges for personnel.
- ***Low Resistance to Change:*** Avoid projects that require significant cultural or operational shifts.

7. Scalable and Reusable

- ***Potential for Expansion:*** Choose projects that can be scaled or adapted for other use cases in the future.
- ***Reusable Technology:*** Use AI tools or models that can be repurposed for future projects.

The court can use a scoring system to evaluate each workflow task on the seven characteristics listed above. The following is an example scoring matrix for this purpose:

Criteria	Description	Scoring (1-5)
Strategic Alignment	How well does the project align with current goals and priorities?	5 = Very high alignment (for example, addresses an urgent workflow problem or fits into a current court initiative) 1 = Very low alignment (the need it addresses is a low priority)
Risk Level	How risky is the project in terms of public impact, legal/ethical concerns, and data privacy?	5 = Very low risk (for example, uses only internal, non-sensitive data) 1 = Very high risk (for example, public-facing, sensitive, or high-stakes decisions)

Criteria	Description	Scoring (1-5)
Effort and Time Savings	Does the process involve repetitive, time-consuming tasks that AI can automate?	5 = High effort/time savings (for example, a manual task taking hours daily) 1 = Low savings (for example, a task requiring minimal manual effort)
Scope and Feasibility	Is the project manageable in terms of scale, integration needs, and timeline?	5 = Very feasible (for example, small scale, standalone, 6-12 months) 1 = Not feasible (for example, complex integration, >12 months)
Measurable Impact	Can the project deliver quantifiable outcomes (for example, time saved, error reduction)?	5 = High impact (for example, clear metrics, high ROI) 1 = Low impact (unclear or minimal benefits)
Stakeholder Buy-In	Will the project address pain points and gain support from personnel?	5 = Strong buy-in (for example, solves major pain points, has low resistance) 1 = Low buy-in (high resistance)
Scalability and Reusability	Can the project be scaled or adapted for future use cases?	5 = Highly scalable/reusable (for example, adaptable AI tools) 1 = Not scalable (for example, one-off solutions)

STEP 3: SELECT A FIRST PROJECT

The final step is to review the top-ranked workflow tasks and select one for the first AI innovation project. The AI governance committee should discuss the tasks with stakeholders to get more detailed insights about what it may look like to automate the task or enhance it with AI. Stakeholders include court personnel who perform the task as part of their everyday roles, court personnel whose work may be affected by the innovation (for example, staff who perform tasks that are downstream in the workflow), and court users.

CONCLUSION

Implementing AI for the first time can be daunting due to concerns about risk, cost, and stakeholder trust. Courts can lay a strong foundation for future AI initiatives by taking a thoughtful and systematic approach to selecting their first AI project.

Additional Resources

American Association for the Advancement of Science (2023), *Decision Tree for the Responsible Application of Artificial Intelligence*.

Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) (2024), *Generative AI and the Future of the Courts: Responsibilities and Possibilities*.

Jarral (2025), *Artificial Intelligence Playbook for Justice, Public Safety, and Security Professionals*, Integrated Justice Information Systems (IJIS) Institute.

Theofanos, Choong, & Jensen (2024), *AI Use Taxonomy: A Human-Centered Approach,* National Institute of Standards and Technology.

AI READINESS LEVEL 2

Implementing the First AI Project

Change Management Strategy

Once a court has determined that AI is the right tool for a clearly defined need, it is ready to begin implementing its first AI project. A critical component of AI implementation is developing a strong change management strategy. Change management begins well before the actual integration of the new AI solution and continues beyond deployment.

Change management is about helping people adapt to new ways of working while ensuring that transitions happen smoothly and successfully. Effective change management is vital to the success of any technology implementation project. No matter how well a new technology solution is designed, it can fail if change management is neglected. Strong change management can help ensure that the new AI technology has stakeholder buy-in, improves the job experience for personnel, enhances the quality and efficiency of the court's work, and improves experiences for court users.

Reminder

It is important to begin by identifying a specific workflow need, then choose an AI tool or technology that can help address that need. If your court is embarking on an AI project because you came across a technology that looked appealing — or because a vendor approached the court with an AI product — we recommend referring to First AI Project Selection and conducting a business process analysis.

The following are key components of change management:

- **Understanding people's needs:** Stakeholders will experience change differently. Some may be excited, while others may be nervous about learning new systems or concerned about job impact.
- **Clear and open communication:** People need to know why the change is happening, how it will affect them, and what support they'll receive. This prevents confusion and builds trust.
- **Providing training & support:** As with any new technology, people need time and guidance to understand AI tools. Workshops, step-by-step guides, and real-time assistance can make adoption much easier.

- **Addressing fears, concerns, & resistance:** Change can feel overwhelming. Listening to concerns and involving people in the process makes individuals more likely to embrace new ways of working.
- **Measuring success & making adjustments:** Even the best plans need fine-tuning. Checking in with users, gathering feedback, and making improvements ensures that the transition works for everyone.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

In the process of preparing for a new technology implementation, the court should develop a change management strategy that includes the following components:

Assess Stakeholder Readiness and Impact

- **Identify key stakeholders**, including court personnel, court users, and the public. This includes both stakeholders that will use and interact with the new technology directly and those who may experience an indirect impact.
- **Engage personnel early** to clarify AI's role, address job concerns, and emphasize AI as an enhancement to human expertise rather than a replacement. Conduct a change readiness assessment across affected departments, focusing on personnel concerns and ideas. Foster an open dialogue with personnel and other stakeholders to ensure AI meets their needs. Include those who will be involved in later stages of development and implementation right from the outset of the project (for an example of why this is important, see the AI Case Study on Nevada's guardianship monitoring portal). Analyze potential resistance from employees and others that might engage in or be impacted by the new process.

Develop Communication Strategy and Use Participatory Design

- **Define key messages** emphasizing the goals of the project and AI's role in supporting, not replacing, human decision-making. Conduct initial briefings for stakeholders on the purpose, benefits, and expected challenges of AI integration to align expectations and address concerns about AI's role.
- **Establish dedicated communication channels** (for example, email updates, webinars, or an intranet portal) for providing updates and receiving feedback. Choose communication channels based on how stakeholders prefer to send and receive information.

- **Ensure that stakeholders have ongoing input into the design** of the new technology and that all design decisions are made in consultation with those who will use the new technology in practice.

Develop Phased Implementation Plan

- **Establish a phased rollout plan**, starting with limited implementation before expanding system-wide. Ensure a human oversight mechanism to validate AI-generated outcomes. During rollout, collect feedback from relevant stakeholders on usability, fairness, accessibility, and other metrics of success. Refine the technology as needed before scaling up.
- **During rollout, assess skill gaps related to the new technology.** Develop and refine training resources tailored to different roles. Where possible, provide access to on-demand learning resources and real-time troubleshooting.
- **As the implementation is expanded and scaled up, continue to measure success** metrics and continue to seek feedback from stakeholders to monitor for unintended impacts. Continue to provide and update ongoing support and troubleshooting resources. Collect data on costs associated with or relevant to the changes in process that can be compared to data from pre-change cost analysis.

Develop Continuous Improvement & Optimization Strategy

- **Once full rollout is complete, implement ongoing performance monitoring**, including success metrics and stakeholder feedback. Maintain and update the new technology as needed.
- **Conduct a new business process analysis** to determine whether integrating the technology has created or highlighted any new pain points in the workflow. Identify any unforeseen or unaddressed impacts on personnel, such as the need to reallocate their time to new types of tasks.

For specific examples of how courts have implemented change management in their AI projects, see the AI Case Studies on the Cleo and EVA chatbot projects. In the Cleo project, the court did not initially use a formal change management strategy but brought in stakeholders as needed to provide feedback throughout the development process. This ad hoc approach meant that change management was reactive, rather than planned, which contributed to delays in launching the full product. In hindsight, the court acknowledged that a more structured change management strategy would have streamlined implementation, and subsequent projects have

since incorporated formal change management practices to better engage stakeholders early. In contrast, the EVA project involved a multi-layered change management strategy from the outset, and the court experienced a successful rollout and high rates of adoption of the new chatbot.

Note that although the change management strategy is developed at the beginning of the project, it will likely need to be updated and refined as the project proceeds and the court gains new insights. The change management strategy should include specific time intervals or milestones throughout the implementation project at which the court will re-examine the strategy and update it as needed.

CONCLUSION

A critical component of AI implementation is developing a strong change management strategy. In the process of preparing for a new technology implementation, the court should develop a change management strategy. The strategy should include specific time intervals or milestones throughout the implementation project at which the court will re-examine and update the strategy as needed.

Additional Resources

Jarral (2025), *Artificial Intelligence Playbook for Justice, Public Safety, and Security Professionals*, Integrated Justice Information Systems (IJIS) Institute.

National Association for Court Management (2024), *Courting AI: Understanding Artificial Intelligence in Courts*.

Project Scope and Resource Assessment

A critical task in preparing to implement an AI project is analyzing the project's costs, as well as the benefits and savings that may result from the innovations. For specific examples of this process in court AI projects, see the AI Case Studies. The first step in this analysis is articulating exactly what the new AI technology should accomplish.

PROJECT SCOPE AND METRICS FOR SUCCESS

Project scope includes identifying the specific tasks that the AI system will perform, such as automating scheduling or summarizing documents, and clearly stating the expected outputs. The court should articulate to what extent the AI is replacing human tasks altogether or enhancing employees' work as part of a human-AI team.

The court should also establish specific metrics for project success. Metrics for success should be articulated in a way that can be measured—it is vital that the court be able to assess the technology during and after its implementation and determine whether it is meeting the court's goals. For example, success could be defined as processing 300 court filings per day, reducing personnel time on a task from 8 hours per week to 2 hours per week, or raising the court's average Access score from 4.2 to 4.5. The court should also develop a plan for when and how success will be measured, both during rollout and after implementation is complete.

PROJECT COSTS AND BENEFITS

Project costs can be grouped into three broad categories:

- **Direct costs** are relatively straightforward to identify and include infrastructure investments, software licensing, and personnel training. They also include recurring costs associated with maintaining the technology over time, such as vendor fees, staff time, and license renewal fees.
- **Indirect costs**, such as increased security requirements, compliance measures, and system integration, are often harder to estimate but can significantly impact overall project feasibility.
- **Intangible costs** include factors that may be harder to quantify, such as the time required for staff to adapt to the new workflow, changes in work culture or behavior, and unforeseen consequences of automation.

Similarly, benefits from AI implementation can take multiple forms. Many court systems expect increased productivity, as AI is well-suited to handle routine and repetitive tasks and can reduce error rates. AI may also allow for operations to scale without a corresponding increase in resources. AI innovation may also lead to improved service delivery, especially for underserved populations. However, these benefits must be weighed against potential risks, such as double-work during hybrid human-AI operations and challenges in accurately attributing improvements to the AI intervention.

To evaluate AI projects, both quantitative and qualitative metrics are important. Quantitative indicators might include time savings, cost reductions, capacity gains, and adoption rates. Qualitative metrics can offer additional insights, such as improvements in job satisfaction or court user experiences (note, however, that if this feedback is obtained using a survey, these benefits may also be measured quantitatively). Performance metrics can include traditional AI indicators (such as precision, recall, or F1 scores) and UX indicators (such as customer satisfaction scores) to gauge satisfaction with the new tool. A combination of these indicators will help ensure a well-rounded assessment of the project's success.

In addition to examining the costs and benefits of AI integration, it is important to consider potential risks, including vendor lock-in, ethical concerns related to data usage, and the challenges posed by emergent behaviors from AI systems. These risks should be considered from the outset to avoid disruption and ensure responsible deployment.

EXAMPLES

Example 1: AI-Powered E-Filing System

Context: A mid-sized court system implements AI to automate the processing and validation of electronic case filings.

Scope: AI system automatically processes incoming e-filings, validates document completeness, checks formatting compliance, categorizes filing types, calculates appropriate fees, and routes documents to proper departments. The system handles 85% of routine filings without human intervention while flagging complex or non-compliant submissions for clerk review.

Cost Analysis:

- **Direct Costs:** $180,000 initial software licensing and customization, $65,000 hardware infrastructure upgrades, $45,000 staff training on new workflows
- **Indirect Costs:** $35,000 system integration with existing case management systems, $20,000 enhanced cybersecurity measures, $25,000 compliance documentation and process updates
- **Intangible Costs:** 180 hours of staff adaptation time, temporary processing delays during system transition, initial attorney learning curve for new submission requirements

Benefits Realized:

- **Quantitative:** 40% reduction in filing processing time, 60% decrease in filing errors requiring correction, $220,000 annual labor cost savings, 30% improvement in filing fee collection accuracy
- **Qualitative:** Improved attorney satisfaction with faster processing times, enhanced public access through 24/7 filing capability, reduced clerk workload allowing focus on complex cases

Lessons Learned: Early engagement with the bar association was crucial for smooth attorney adoption. The system achieved positive ROI within 16 months, with benefits continuing to grow as staff became more proficient with the new workflows.

Example 2: Intelligent Court Calendar Management

Context: Large metropolitan court implements AI-powered system to optimize court event scheduling and calendar management across multiple courtrooms and case types.

Scope: AI system manages scheduling for 45 courtrooms, automatically schedules hearings based on case type and priority, predicts hearing durations using historical data, optimizes judge and resource allocation, and automatically reschedules events when conflicts arise. The system integrates with attorney calendars and sends automated notifications to all parties.

Cost Analysis:

- **Direct Costs:** $220,000 software development and licensing, $85,000 integration with existing calendar systems, $55,000 annual maintenance and support
- **Indirect Costs:** $40,000 workflow redesign and process documentation, $30,000 staff retraining across multiple departments, $25,000 change management consulting
- **Intangible Costs:** 4-month adjustment period with occasional scheduling conflicts, initial resistance from some personnel, temporary increase in administrative coordination

Benefits Realized:

- **Quantitative:** 25% improvement in courtroom utilization rates, 35% reduction in scheduling conflicts and continuances, $280,000 annual efficiency gains through optimized resource allocation, 20% decrease in case processing time
- **Qualitative:** Significantly improved attorney and litigant satisfaction with predictable scheduling, reduced administrative burden on court staff, enhanced ability to accommodate urgent matters
- **Lessons Learned:** Success required extensive collaboration with judges, staff, and court administrators during the design phase. Investment in comprehensive change management proved essential. The system exceeded cost projections by delivering benefits within 12 months while continuing to improve performance as the AI learned from scheduling patterns.

CONCLUSION

A careful analysis of the potential costs and benefits of a new AI innovation is vital to the success of the project. It can be challenging to quantify all of the potential costs and savings, but the more precisely the court can define the goals and metrics for success, the better position the court will be in to make sound decisions about the project's development.

Additional Resources

Jarral (2025), *Artificial Intelligence Playbook for Justice, Public Safety, and Security Professionals*, Integrated Justice Information Systems (IJIS) Institute.

National Association for Court Management (2024), *Courting AI: Understanding Artificial Intelligence in Courts*.

Build or Buy?

State courts face increasing pressure to modernize operations while maintaining the highest standards of accountability and public trust. As AI solutions become more prevalent in the court sector, court leaders must navigate complex decisions about whether to purchase commercial AI software or develop custom solutions in-house.

Many courts are familiar with this decision process as it relates to other types of technologies, such as case management systems, and many of the same principles apply to AI solutions. One of the factors that differentiates AI solutions from other kinds of technology is the level of technical expertise required to build, maintain, and secure high-quality AI tools. For specific examples of how courts have approached this decision in their AI projects, see the AI Case Studies.

The decision to build or buy an AI tool must balance the pros and cons of each approach:

Buy		Build	
Pros	**Cons**	**Pros**	**Cons**
• Quicker deployment • Lower maintenance burden • Support and training • Potential for built-in compliance	• Limited customization • Dependency on vendor for updates • Risk of low AI explainability or misalignment with court values	• Full customization to the court's needs • Full control and greater transparency • Better alignment with court policies and values	• High cost and long timelines • High need for internal skills and constant upkeep • Potential for greater legal liability

BUYING AI SOLUTIONS

Generalist AI tasks are often better suited for buying pre-existing software solutions. The following are some examples of use cases that fall under this category:

- **Document redaction:** Automatically removing PII from court filings before public release
- **Transcription services:** Turning audio court proceedings into text
- **Summarizing tools:** Condensing long motions or rulings
- **Calendar management and scheduling optimization:** Assigning cases to judges based on availability

The court should lean more strongly toward buying the AI solution to the extent that the following conditions are met:

- Vendor solutions already exist
- The court can avoid an RFP process
- Available technologies are explainable and transparent
- Vendors can be held accountable for errors or harms

BUILDING AI SOLUTIONS

Specialist AI tasks may often be better suited for building custom solutions in-house. This is because the data used to train the AI model, as well as the specific decision processes and outcomes, are more tailored to the particular court and its circumstances. The following are some examples of use cases that fall under this category:

- **Jury pool fairness analysis:** Assessing demographic fairness of jury selection
- **Workload forecasting for judges or clerks:** Predicting caseload spikes based on local court trends
- **Case triaging** based on urgency or risk (for example, differentiated case management)
- **Evaluating outcomes for equity:** Custom analysis of sentencing patterns or bail decisions

The court should lean more strongly toward building the AI solution to the extent that the following conditions are met:

- The court employs personnel with the necessary skills (such as data science, machine learning, or data analysis)
- The court's data is high-quality enough to train an AI model
- The court has the resources and capacity to maintain and update the system over time
- The court's needs justify a highly customized solution

HYBRID SOLUTIONS FOR GENAI

In addition to the considerations listed above for building a customized AI solution, we strongly recommend that courts do not attempt to build their own GenAI systems. If the custom solution the court needs involves a GenAI application, a hybrid build/buy approach may be the best course of action.

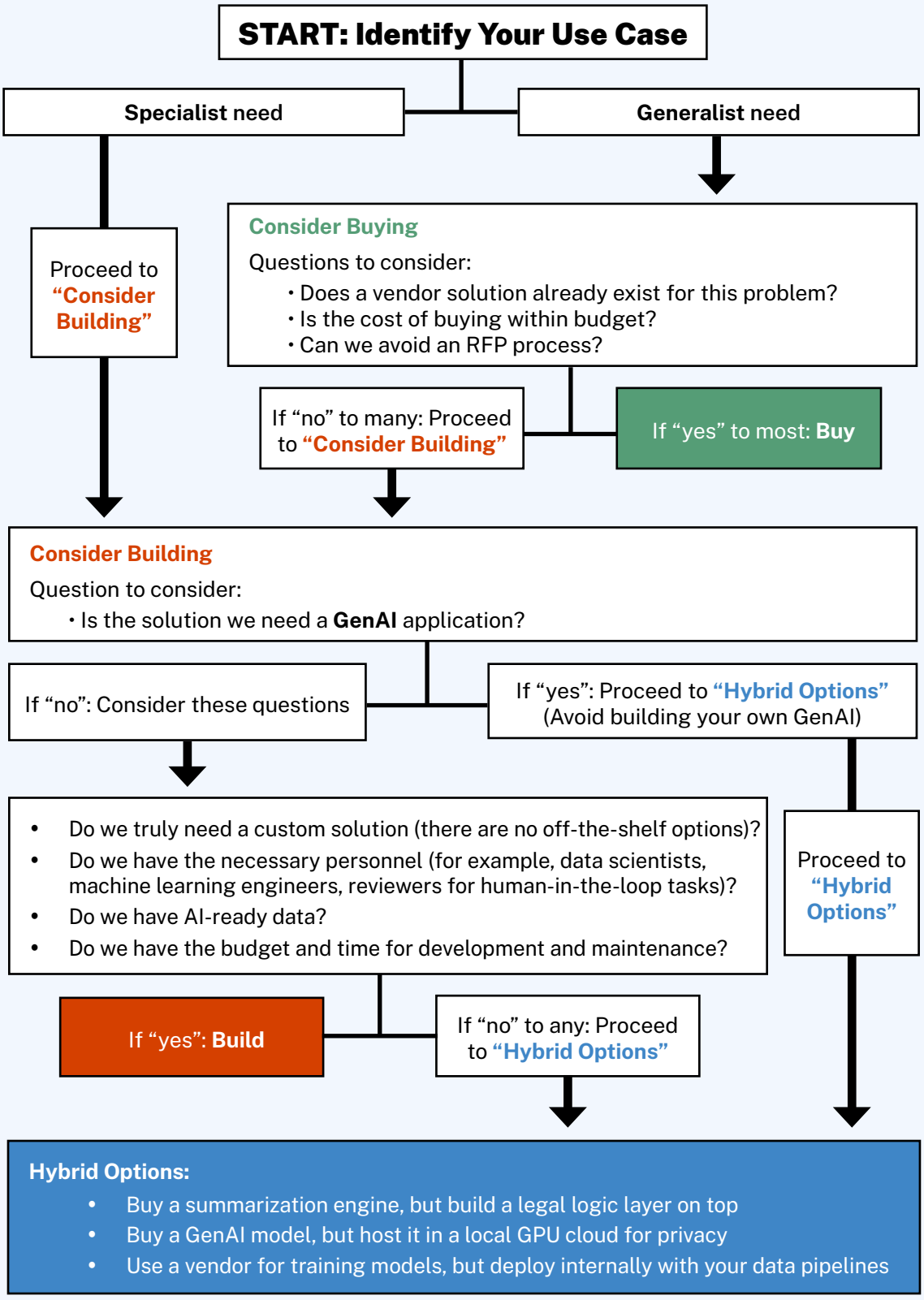
Hybrid approaches can include the following:

- Buying a summarization engine, but building a legal logic layer on top
- Buying a GenAI model, but hosting it in a local GPU cloud for privacy
- Using a vendor for training models, but deploying internally with the court's data pipelines

CONCLUSION

As AI solutions become more prevalent in the court sector, court leaders must navigate complex decisions about whether to purchase commercial AI software or develop custom solutions in-house. The Build or Buy decision tree on the next page provides a visual summary of the major considerations and decision points that are discussed above.

Build or Buy Decision Tree



Vendor Engagement and Procurement

A critical component of successful AI implementation is careful attention to the role of private vendors in the court's technology systems. Courts have had to navigate technology vendor relationships for many years, and the introduction of AI-based technologies into court environments only adds to the critical importance of effectively managing these relationships. Courts are bound by constitutional duties to their constituents that many technology vendors are not accustomed to navigating in their own work, and AI can require a greater dependency of the court on the vendor. Accordingly, it is vital that courts carefully select vendors and craft procurement and contract terms that protect the court and court users.

VETTING AND SELECTING AI VENDORS

Selecting a vendor requires focused attention. The vetting and negotiation process must reflect the court's technical requirements and its legal, ethical, and operational mandates. This guidance highlights important areas to evaluate and negotiate. This guidance is not legal advice, and court leaders should adapt these recommendations to comply with federal and state law and any relevant norms.

When courts evaluate AI vendors, it is essential to look beyond marketing claims and focus on the structural features that will determine long-term success. Courts should require vendors to disclose all affiliated or linked third parties and investors, including those involved in system development, hosting, or funding. A due diligence process — such as background checks or requiring a list of all subcontractors and their roles — should be built into procurement reviews to identify potential conflicts of interest or security concerns.

The following features offer a structured method for comparing vendors and identifying those best suited to serve court needs. Courts should involve legal counsel and IT teams early in the procurement process and consider using structured evaluation scorecards to compare vendors across these dimensions.

- **Vendor Expertise:** Experience matters, especially in complex, high-stakes environments like the courts. Tools designed for general business contexts may not work within or respect the distinct constraints of public law institutions. A vendor's experience with court or legal-sector clients is a good indicator of how well their product will align with court operations. Strong onboarding and training resources

are also essential for ensuring a smooth transition. Prioritize vendors with legal domain knowledge, experience with public-sector clients, and a proven ability to translate abstract AI capabilities into practical tools. Ask for references from other courts or public-sector clients, case studies, or pilot program results. Evaluate whether the vendor offers role-based training for judges, clerks, and IT staff.

- **Security & Compliance:** In the court context, AI systems must meet high standards for data protection and legal compliance. Request encryption protocols (both in transit and at rest), certifications, and role-based access controls. Request specific documentation such as encryption standards, system architecture diagrams, integration case studies, and a software build of materials (SBOM) that lists all underlying software and applications to support the solution. Ask for third-party audit results or compliance attestations, such as a copy of the vendor's SOC 2 report.
- **Customizability & Integration:** Courts vary widely in their workflows, and AI systems must be able to accommodate this variation without requiring the court to redesign its operations. Tools that cannot integrate with case management systems (CMS) or internal platforms may create silos or duplication. Favor modular systems with secure open APIs, and request demonstrations of past integrations with public-sector or legal environments.
- **Scalability & Performance:** A court's AI needs may expand over time, and systems must be able to grow accordingly. Service Level Agreements (SLAs) that guarantee uptime, support response times, technical performance benchmarks, security benchmarks, and disclosures are essential. Discuss benchmarks for load handling, latency, and system responsiveness, along with a roadmap for product updates. Ask for performance metrics from jurisdictions of comparable size or complexity. Include penalty clauses or remedies in case SLAs are not met and consider requiring that disaster recovery tests be performed on an annual basis.
- **Transparency & Explainability:** AI systems used in the court context should be explainable to human users, to the extent that it is possible. This is critical for accountability, auditing, and trust. Judges, clerks, and the public must understand how recommendations or outputs are generated. Require model documentation, audit logs, and a mechanism to challenge or verify system outputs.
- **Validation & Measurable Outcomes:** Claims of accuracy, efficiency, or time savings must be backed by data. Measurable outcomes help courts evaluate whether the tool is achieving its intended purpose and justify its continued use. Request baseline metrics, pre-deployment testing, and regular performance reporting.

- **Ongoing Development & Innovation Commitment:** Courts must ensure that AI solutions remain current, secure, and functional in a rapidly evolving technology environment. Require a clear development roadmap, regular version updates, and a demonstrated commitment to improving product capabilities over time. Ask vendors to commit in writing to ongoing development efforts, including updates to address emerging threats, evolving legal standards, and new technological opportunities. At the same time, reserve the right to refuse updates that are not properly vetted and evaluated.
- **Support & Engagement:** A vendor's commitment to long-term support is as important as the technology itself. Courts need dependable partners who provide ongoing training and system maintenance. Ask for onboarding tailored to different user roles, 24/7 technical support, and regular updates that include performance and security improvements. Assess responsiveness during the vetting process and include support terms in the contract.
- **Cost Transparency:** AI contracts can hide complexity in subscription tiers, usage-based pricing, or support add-ons. Courts should seek predictability and clarity. Require full cost breakdowns, including licensing, storage, training, and support. Consider negotiating 'not to exceed' amounts, multi-year pricing, and discounts to help ensure savings and predictability. Ask for ROI estimation tools and require a fixed trial period before full commitment.

Finally, the following vendor behaviors should be regarded as warning signs not to proceed with the vendor:

- **Vague or evasive answers** regarding data handling, model architecture, or compliance responsibilities (for example, a vendor claiming that their system is compliant without disclosing that a key component of their AI model was developed by an offshore partner with unclear data governance practices). Lack of transparency about how the AI system works, what data it was trained on, or how outputs can be explained.
- **Inflexible solutions** that cannot be adapted to court-specific needs or workflows.
- **Absence of a clear support plan**, or reliance on generic documentation without meaningful training or human support.

NEGOTIATING CONTRACT TERMS

When the court has vetted and selected an AI vendor, it is important to negotiate contract terms carefully to protect court data, operations, and legal interests. In addition to the considerations listed above, the following are some especially important terms to negotiate with care:

- **Data Ownership & Use:** Court data includes sensitive, often sealed information subject to strict confidentiality rules. Courts should retain full ownership of all data provided to or generated by the AI system. Vendors must not use this data for model training, resale, or analytics without express, written permission. Consideration should also be given to retention schedules, as well as data that is expunged or sealed after inclusion in a data set.
- **Intellectual Property (IP) Rights:** Any outputs or customizations developed specifically for the court should be clearly owned or licensable by the court. This prevents vendors from monetizing court-specific workflows or data insights.
- **Compiled & Source Code:** Contracts should specify the ownership and access rights to both compiled and source code developed for the court. Courts should have the ability to access, review, and modify the source code as needed. They should also have access to clear documentation on the source code so that it is legible and accessible to those who aren't the original developer. Having access to the source code and clear documentation on it ensures that the court can maintain, update, and customize the AI system independently, reducing reliance on the vendor and enhancing security and control.
- **Termination, Audit, & Exit Provisions:** Contracts should include the right to terminate for cause or convenience, rights to audit vendor compliance (especially regarding data handling), and vendor obligations to support smooth data migration upon contract end. Courts should identify how and in what format they want their data exported and include that within the terms and conditions of the contract. Provisions should also include how data are removed and permanently deleted from vendor systems. This ensures the court can retain control and minimize disruption if the relationship ends.
- **Model Drift & Change Management:** Unannounced changes could introduce bias, degrade performance, or violate legal constraints. Vendors must commit to disclosing any planned model changes (for example, retraining or algorithm updates) in advance and allow courts to test such changes.

AI VENDOR LICENSING CHECKLIST

The following checklist is designed to guide courts as they consider licensing AI tools. It outlines the key considerations outlined above, accompanied by short explanations.

Checklist Item	Why It Matters	What to Ask or Require
Judicial Authority Safeguards	Prevents AI from interfering with or obscuring judicial decision-making.	Specify permitted uses; prohibit adjudicative functions; require human oversight clauses.
Risk & Benefit Assessment	Ensures adoption serves the public interest and upholds court values.	Conduct a pre-procurement risk/impact review; document public benefit rationale.
Data Ownership & Use	Ensures court retains control over sensitive data and prevents unauthorized reuse.	Require data ownership clauses. Restrict data access and use for training, analytics, or other commercial or R&D purposes by vendor or any vendor's affiliated entity.
Security & Privacy Compliance	Protects confidential court data and supports regulatory compliance.	Request encryption standards, compliance certifications (e.g., CJIS, HIPAA), and audits (e.g., SOC 2).
Transparency & Explainability	Courts must understand how the AI works to ensure accountability and trust.	Require model documentation, decision logs, explainability tools, and contestability.
Bias & Accuracy Controls	Prevents automation and confirmation bias from skewing outputs or decisions.	Demand bias audits, validation reports, and ability to contest system-generated outcomes.
Customizability & Integration	Enables the tool to fit into existing court workflows and systems.	Ask for integration examples, open APIs, and configuration flexibility.

Checklist Item	Why It Matters	What to Ask or Require
Vendor Expertise & Track Record	Ensures the vendor understands court environments and is prepared for long-term partnership.	Request court-sector references, case studies, and legal domain experience.
Support, Training & Engagement	Facilitates effective implementation, sustained use, and user confidence.	Include onboarding, role-specific training, and dedicated support commitments in contract.
Scalability & System Reliability	Ensures the AI tool can grow with court needs and maintain uptime.	Ask for performance metrics, SLAs, scaling plans, and disaster recovery plans and testing.
Performance Guarantees & SLAs	Courts need service consistency and recourse in case of failure.	Include SLAs for uptime, response time, and remedies for non-compliance.
Model Drift & Change Management	Prevents unnoticed changes from introducing risk or undermining accuracy.	Require advance notice of updates, testing rights, and approval protocols.
Cost Transparency & ROI	Helps courts avoid budget surprises and assess value.	Request full pricing breakdowns, ROI calculators, and trial periods. Consider 'not to exceed' amounts, multi-year pricing and discounts.
Validation & Measurable Outcomes	Verifies real-world performance and alignment with court objectives.	Require testing, metrics, and periodic reporting aligned to court-defined success criteria.
Termination, Audit & Exit Provisions	Protects the court from vendor lock-in and ensures continuity.	Include exit support, audit rights, and clear termination clauses.

CONCLUSION

It is vital that courts carefully select vendors and craft procurement and contract terms that protect the court and court users. This Guide provides important areas to evaluate and negotiate with potential AI solution vendors.

Additional Resources

Ford Foundation (2023), *A Guiding Framework for Vetting Technology Vendors Operating in the Public Sector*.

National Association for Court Management (2024), *Courting AI: Understanding Artificial Intelligence in Courts*.

National Center for State Courts and Digital Public (2022), *Contracting Digital Services for Courts*.

Responsible AI Institute (2025), *AI Policy Template: Build your Foundational Organizational AI Policy*.

Small Scale and National Center for State Courts (2022), *Exiting Technology Projects*.

Tabassi (2023), *Artificial Intelligence Risk Management Framework (AI RMF 1.0)*, National Institute of Standards and Technology.

Thomson Reuters Institute and National Center for State Courts (2025). *AI Tool Due Diligence Survey*.

United States Department of Defense (2025). AI Data Security: Best Practices for Securing Data Used to Train & Operate AI Systems.

AI READINESS LEVEL 3

The Post-Project Feedback Cycle

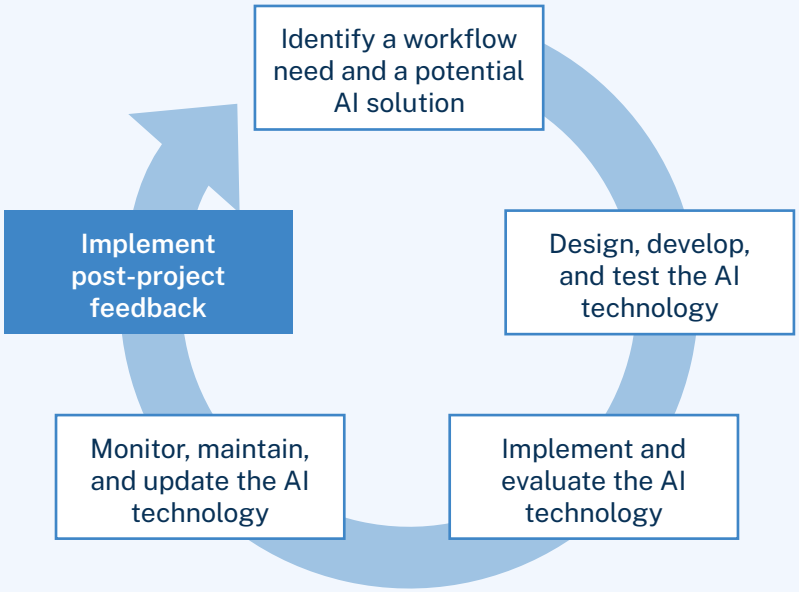
The Post-Project Feedback Cycle

After the court has successfully implemented its first AI project, it is important to incorporate any workflow changes and lessons learned back into the court's broader governance and business practices. For specific examples of system-wide updates stemming from new AI projects, see the AI Case Studies. For example, when Orange County implemented its EVA chatbot, the project revealed that many court procedures were outdated or inconsistent, prompting the court to focus on regularly reviewing and updating documentation.

From this point forward, AI integration in the court should be an iterative process, alternating between implementing new technologies and making updates across the court system that reflect those innovations.

POST-PROJECT FEEDBACK CHECKLIST

The AI Lifecycle



After an AI implementation project is complete, the court's AI Governance Committee should oversee the post-project feedback process. Courts can use the Post-Project Feedback Checklist below as a guide. Each item on the checklist should be addressed before the court begins to implement the next AI project.

When completing the checklist, a court may find that some of the areas need improvement or weren't fully developed before the AI project was implemented. For example, a court may have taken on an AI project without first establishing an AI Governance Committee or developing an Internal AI Use Policy. In this situation, we recommend referring to the corresponding sections of this Guide and executing the missing AI Readiness steps — in addition to completing the post-project feedback process — before taking on the next AI project.

Post-Project Feedback Checklist	
AI Governance: Does the court's AI Governance Committee structure still make sense? Do we need new subcommittees or members with new types of expertise? Do we need new processes or procedures?	
Guiding Principles: Does the Statement on Guiding Principles still reflect the court's guiding principles for AI, or does it need to be updated?	
Internal AI Use Policy: Does our internal use policy cover new AI risks and circumstances that may arise as a result of the new AI implementation? Should we strengthen or loosen any restrictions? Do any of the rules need clarifying?	
Data Governance: Do any of the court's data governance practices or policies need to be updated? Does the new AI technology create new data that needs to be managed or protected? Do we need to update case management configurations, business processes, or data definitions? Have we identified any gaps in data literacy among personnel?	
AI Literacy: Do we need to update the definition of AI Literacy for any personnel roles, now that a new AI technology has been implemented? Have we identified any gaps in AI literacy among personnel? Do we need to update recruitment or evaluation criteria for any personnel roles that interact with the new technology?	

Post-Project Feedback Checklist	
Project Implementation: What lessons did we learn from each stage of the project? What worked well, and what could be improved? • Identifying workflow pain points and choosing a project to implement • Developing and implementing a change management strategy • Estimating project costs and benefits • Deciding whether to build or buy the new technology • Selecting and contracting with vendors • Designing the new technology with input from personnel • Communicating with court personnel (and, if applicable, court users) • Testing and rolling out the new technology • Defining and measuring success • Implementing performance monitoring and maintenance	
Workflow: Has the new technology created or highlighted any new pain points in the workflow? Have there been any unforeseen or unaddressed impacts on personnel, such as the need to reallocate their time to new types of tasks?	

Once the court has reviewed its policies and practices and made any updates that result from the new AI innovation, it is ready to return to the beginning of the AI Lifecycle. The court can once again assess its new workflow to identify pain points that may benefit from AI. As the Court gains experience implementing AI projects and fine-tunes its approach to change management, it will gradually become equipped to take on AI integrations with greater potential impacts and navigate greater potential risks.

AI CASE STUDIES

Implementation Projects in the State Courts

EVA, A Chatbot for Court Staff

Jurisdiction: Orange County, CA

This case study is based on an interview with Darren Dang, Chief Technology Officer, Orange County Employees Retirement System (formerly Chief Financial & Administrative Officer, Orange County Superior Court).

AI Implementation Project: EVA is an AI-powered smart chatbot that serves court staff, especially those in public-facing roles providing assistance to court users. EVA is designed to retrieve accurate answers from a curated knowledge base using natural language queries. It began as a tool for civil procedures but has since expanded to other domains like criminal, probate, family law, and juvenile. EVA operates primarily on unstructured data, allowing it to provide responses from existing operational procedures. Its key features include semantic search, citation of sources, and adaptability to any knowledge base, making it a scalable and foundational tool for internal and potentially public-facing use.

1. How did the court choose this project?

The court chose the EVA project in response to a significant organizational pain point: a growing knowledge gap caused by high staff turnover and retirements (approximately 50% of entry level staff are new to their role or have been in that role for less than two years). With many employees new to their roles, there was an urgent need to accelerate training and access to procedural knowledge. EVA was seen as a foundational solution that could provide immediate, intelligent answers to staff questions, helping them get up to speed quickly. The project was selected because it addressed a universal challenge, leveraged existing documentation, and aligned well with available AI technology. This was a good project to develop since it was such a pain point court-wide as well as low-risk and provided a high value.

2. How did the court determine the potential costs and benefits of the project?

The court did not conduct a formal return-on-investment (ROI) analysis but focused on the time savings and operational benefits EVA could deliver. A key driver was the need to accelerate training for new staff, who were often placed in public-facing roles with limited preparation due to staffing shortages. EVA helped reduce the time required to become proficient by providing immediate access to procedural information, which translated into faster and more consistent public service. The court viewed this time-to-value and improved service delivery as the primary benefits, outweighing the initial development costs.

3. Which stakeholders were involved in shaping the project? How did their input influence the design or implementation?

The project was shaped by a diverse group of stakeholders, with a strong emphasis on collaboration between the court's innovation team, subject matter experts from operations, IT, and data teams. The innovation team conducted surveys and observations across various departments to identify pain points, with the most pressing being the knowledge gap caused by staff turnover.

Operational units played a key role by surfacing real-world challenges and validating the need for a tool like EVA, while IT and data teams helped articulate the business case and design a scalable solution. Their input ensured that EVA was not only technically sound but also aligned with day-to-day operational needs, which helped drive adoption and laid the groundwork for future expansion into other areas like HR and public-facing services.

4. Did the court build the technology itself or hire a vendor to build it? Would the court make the same decision today?

The court built the EVA technology in-house, leveraging its well-established internal technology development team. This decision was driven by the court's long-standing strategy to invest in technology for efficiency, especially given funding constraints and increasing workloads. At the time, commercial solutions weren't available, so building it internally allowed for greater customization and alignment with their broader vision.

Although the court would still choose to build EVA if starting out back then, today's landscape — with more off-the-shelf options — might make buying a more cost-effective choice for courts today.

5. What were the goals or success metrics for the project? How did the court ensure that the technology was performing well?

The primary goal of the EVA project was to close the growing knowledge gap among court staff, especially due to high turnover and the influx of new employees with limited training. The court aimed to "hyper-accelerate" staff readiness by giving them immediate access to accurate, procedure-based answers through a smart, conversational interface. To measure success, the court tracked several key metrics: user adoption rates, the accuracy and completeness of responses, and overall utility to the end user. A simple feedback mechanism — thumbs up or down — allowed staff to rate responses, and this input was monitored by subject matter experts who updated the knowledge base as needed.

Additionally, usage data was collected and visualized through dashboards to monitor engagement and identify areas for improvement. The tool's integration into Microsoft Teams also ensured ease of access, helping to drive consistent use and reinforce its value as a daily resource.

6. What were the steps involved in designing, testing, and rolling out the project?

The design of the EVA project began with a clear focus on solving a foundational business problem — closing the knowledge gap among staff — while also ensuring the solution would be scalable and user-friendly. A key design principle was to make the tool accessible to non-technical users, allowing operational staff to upload documents, configure settings, and manage content without needing advanced programming skills. Testing was led by subject matter experts and analyst teams from the operational units, who rigorously evaluated the tool's performance and accuracy.

The rollout followed an incremental approach, starting with a small test group before expanding more broadly across departments. To support adoption, the court implemented a robust change management strategy that included training videos, internal roadshows, promotional materials like stickers, and behavioral nudges — such as encouraging staff to consult EVA before asking supervisors. Integration into Microsoft Teams made the tool easy to access, reinforcing daily use and helping to embed it into the court's workflow.

7. What data were collected or produced as part of this project? How did the court address concerns around privacy, security, and data ownership?

As part of the EVA project, the court collected data on user interactions, questions asked, responses provided, and optional feedback, such as thumbs up or down (correct answer, partially correct, or missed the mark). This data was used to monitor adoption, evaluate accuracy, and continuously improve the system.

To address privacy and security concerns, access to user interaction logs was restricted to a small group based on roles, such as supervisors or managers. Although the infrastructure supports redacting sensitive data and implementing granular security, the court found that such measures weren't necessary at the time due to the nature of the data. The system was designed with built-in protections and flexibility to scale privacy controls if future use cases required it.

8. What change management strategies did the court use during the project's implementation and afterward?

The court implemented a multi-layered change management strategy to ensure successful adoption of EVA during and after its rollout. First, the court focused on solving a meaningful organizational pain point — staff knowledge gaps — which helped build immediate relevance and buy-in. The court also emphasized individual utility, ensuring the tool was genuinely helpful to each user, not just beneficial at the organizational level. To encourage usage, EVA was embedded into Microsoft Teams, making it easily accessible and familiar, like chatting with a coworker. The rollout included promotional efforts such as roadshows, training videos, and even stickers to generate excitement and visibility.

Behavioral nudges were also used to shift habits: staff were encouraged to consult EVA before asking supervisors, and supervisors were prompted to redirect questions back to EVA. This helped reinforce usage and gradually change behavior. The court also celebrated small wins and relied on word-of-mouth to build momentum, with interest spreading organically across departments. Judges and other leaders talking about EVA further boosted credibility and adoption. Overall, the strategy combined utility, accessibility, visibility, and cultural reinforcement to embed EVA into daily operations.

9. What have been the outcomes of the project so far? Has the project changed or been scaled up since it launched?

Since its launch, the EVA project has delivered strong outcomes and has significantly expanded in scope. Initially developed for civil procedures, EVA has since been scaled to support other domains such as criminal, probate, family law, and juvenile. Its capabilities have also evolved — such as being able to dynamically move between the different case contexts. Although it currently serves internal users, the court envisions expanding EVA to public-facing services, particularly in areas like self-help and multilingual support, where it can answer questions in languages such as Spanish and Vietnamese.

The success of EVA has also helped surface outdated procedures, prompting updates and improving consistency across departments. Its growing utility and adaptability have positioned it as a foundational tool with the potential to transform both internal operations and public service delivery.

10. What resources are required to maintain and sustain the project over time?

To sustain the EVA project over time, the court required a combination of initial development resources and ongoing operational support. The initial investment involved building the foundational technology, which was a one-time cost. Ongoing maintenance is relatively minimal from a technical standpoint and is largely absorbed into existing workflows. Most of the long-term effort involves keeping the knowledge base current — something already handled by training and analyst teams as part of their regular duties.

Because EVA is designed to be user-friendly and low-maintenance, it doesn't require a large, dedicated team to support it. Instead, existing staff monitor usage, update procedures, and respond to feedback. The project is "resource positive," meaning it ultimately saves time and effort by reducing repetitive questions and accelerating staff training. If another organization were to purchase a similar tool today, the return on investment would likely be quick, making it a sustainable and cost-effective solution.

11. Once the project was implemented, what other changes or updates were needed throughout the court system?

After EVA was implemented, one of the most significant system-wide updates involved the court's operational procedures. The project revealed that many procedures were outdated or inconsistent, prompting a renewed focus on regularly reviewing and updating documentation. This not only improved the accuracy of EVA's responses but also enhanced overall organizational consistency. The project reinforced the importance of maintaining up-to-date content and highlighted the value of centralized knowledge management.

Additionally, EVA helped reduce reliance on informal "tribal knowledge" by encouraging staff to consult a single, authoritative source. This shift supported more consistent training and onboarding practices, though it didn't necessitate formal changes to staffing or recruitment strategies. The infrastructure also allowed for future enhancements, such as redacting sensitive data or expanding access controls, though these weren't immediately needed. Overall, the project encouraged a more systematic and proactive approach to knowledge governance across the court.

12. Is there anything the court would do differently next time? What advice or resources would the court give to others looking to implement a similar project?

The EVA project was thoughtfully planned and executed, so there is little the court would change in hindsight. One of the key reasons for its success was the deliberate focus on identifying real, high-impact business problems — like the knowledge gap from staff turnover — and selecting a solution that was both achievable and scalable. The court's advice to others is to start by surveying and prioritizing their biggest pain points, then look for "low-hanging fruit" where current technology can offer meaningful solutions. The court also recommends using an agile approach: test early with a small group, gather feedback, and iterate before a full rollout.

Another major lesson was the importance of change management — building excitement, ensuring ease of use, and reinforcing new behaviors through nudges and leadership support. Courts should also think like product managers: treat the solution as a product with long-term value, aim for wide adoption, and plan for future growth. Finally, the court emphasized that today's courts don't necessarily need to build from scratch — many tools are now commercially available, making it easier and more cost-effective to implement similar solutions.

Guardianship Monitoring Portal

Jurisdiction: Nevada

This case study is based on an interview with Kathleen McCloskey, Statutory and Family Support Unit Program Manager, Nevada Supreme Court Administrative Office of the Courts.

AI Implementation Project: Nevada's guardianship monitoring portal uses AI to detect signs of fraud, particularly in financial reporting, and sends alerts to the court. The system allows for automated integration of financial information through Plaid integration, which connects with bank accounts to ensure accuracy.

1. How did the court choose this project?

In 2017, Nevada made multiple legislative changes, and the court wanted to evaluate how these changes impacted guardianship monitoring. The court partnered with NCSC to assess the district court's ability to gather data and evaluate guardianship practices. When the court conducted its initial assessment with NCSC, it found that a standard and secure process for monitoring was badly needed — in fact, some courts were using sticky notes to track cases because they didn't have any other resources. The results of the assessment, along with a feasibility study conducted by the court, led to the development of a new portal that assists with improved data collection and better guardianship monitoring practices.

2. How did the court determine the potential costs and benefits of the project?

The court conducted a feasibility study, which showed that the court was in a good position to start developing the portal and that it made sense financially. The court has dedicated staff working on development, and they will also help to maintain the portal over time. The court is also planning to enhance the portal with additional capabilities in the future, and it will dedicate the resources needed for continued development and maintenance.

3. Which stakeholders were involved in shaping the project? How did their input influence the design or implementation?

Stakeholders representing the end users of the portal have been involved from the start and throughout the development process. Initial stakeholder meetings included representatives from district courts, judges, judges' staff, public guardians, legal aid offices, and private and

family guardians. Throughout the development process, the court has continued to seek feedback from these stakeholders through development meetings, user testing, and site visits. The court has been responsive to this feedback, making adjustments to the features and functionality of the portal based on stakeholder suggestions.

4. Did the court build the technology itself or hire a vendor to build it? Would the court make the same decision today?

The portal was developed internally using software purchased by the court. Initially, the court purchased a software product specifically for this purpose and used it to develop the first version of the portal. The court then determined that the platform wasn't as flexible as it needed to be to meet everyone's needs. The project team discovered that the court was using a different software product for other purposes that would work better for this portal as well. As a result, the court has had to spend some time and resources moving the portal over to the new platform (in addition to spending money on a software product that it ended up not using).

5. What were the goals or success metrics for the project? How did the court ensure that the technology was performing well?

The major goal was to develop a system that makes reporting easier and more efficient for guardians, as well as improving district courts' ability to monitor cases. Many court staff are overworked and under-resourced, and the process of monitoring guardianship cases requires more time and skills than many staff possess (especially when it comes to financial accounting). The court needed a system that would both make the reporting process more efficient and also detect signs of financial fraud that may be missed by human reviewers. Through user group feedback, the court has been able to determine that the portal is performing well and meeting these goals.

6. What were the steps involved in designing, testing, and rolling out the project?

The portal's design was informed by the initial assessment, the feasibility study, and stakeholder feedback processes. The portal was initially developed using one software platform, and when testing revealed that the platform wasn't as flexible as it needed to be, the portal was migrated to a different platform. The project is now set to roll out in October 2025.

7. What data were collected or produced as part of this project? How did the court address concerns around privacy, security, and data ownership?

During the assessment period, the court looked at every case management system in use at the district court level, as the state does not have a unified system for case management. The court checked each system's capabilities and inventoried the data being collected using the National Open Court Data Standards (NODS) as a baseline.

Decisions about what data to collect in the new portal were informed by the initial assessment, as well as discussions with stakeholders regarding what information is important for them to capture. Meetings were held with every district court to demonstrate the portal and discuss the system's abilities.

Note: This project was about to launch when this Case Study was published. Stay tuned for an update on **questions 8–11** after implementation.

12. Is there anything the court would do differently next time? What advice or resources would the court give to others looking to implement a similar project?

If the court were to do this project over, it would make sure that all parties that would eventually be involved in developing the portal were included in design conversations from the beginning. This would have helped ensure that any software purchased by the court could implement all of the court's ideas and needs.

The court also recommends inventorying what software or systems the court already uses, to see if they can be used in any new project being developed. The court learned only after purchasing a software product that they were already using a product that worked better.

Automated Document Processing for Approving e-Filings

Jurisdictions: Texas

This case study is based on an interview with Casey Kennedy, Director of Information Services, Texas Courts.

AI Implementation Projects: Document Automation software by CSI/Tyler Technologies processes court filings using a combination of AI and Robotic Process Automation. In the Texas courts, the software is used to verify that e-filings meet the minimum standards to be electronically filed.

1. How did the court choose this project?

The court determined that because the volume of e-filings was so high, it was taking too long for the clerk's office to accept the filings. The staff's capacity to keep up with this task wasn't high enough to meet demand using human labor alone, so the court looked for a way to automate parts of the workflow.

2. How did the court determine the potential costs and benefits of the project?

The court wasn't sure exactly what the cost-benefit balance would look like, so it decided to pilot test the technology in a small subset of cases. This small-scale pilot would give the court enough information to decide whether to implement the technology system-wide. And because the initial scope was small, the court knew that in the worst-case scenario of a total failure, it could afford the expense. In the end, the project was successful in drastically reducing the amount of staff time needed to accept filings, and the court decided to expand it to other case types.

3. Which stakeholders were involved in shaping the project? How did their input influence the design or implementation?

The main stakeholders were the clerk's office and the court staff who do caseflow processing tasks downstream from the clerk's office. One big impact of their feedback was that the court eventually decided to only operate the new system during business hours. Although one of

the benefits of automating tasks is that they can be done 24 hours per day, the high efficiency of the technology in this case was creating stress for the staff. They would arrive to work on Monday morning to find 2.5 days' worth of filings that had been approved over the weekend and were ready for staff review. They shared that this made them feel like they were always behind. The purpose of the technology is to lighten the load for court personnel, not to make them feel more stressed, so the court now uses the technology to process new filings during the same hours that staff are working.

4. Did the court build the technology itself or hire a vendor to build it? Would the court make the same decision today?

The court worked with CSI, which was acquired by Tyler Technologies.

How did the court choose a vendor? What considerations or terms were involved in negotiating the contract?

The court had already identified the need to speed up the approval process for new e-filings. The court saw a demonstration by CSI and learned that their products might meet these needs.

5. What were the goals or success metrics for the project? How did the court ensure that the technology was performing well?

Prior to the project, the clerk had good data on how long it took staff to review and approve each filing. Once the new system was implemented, the court was able to calculate the new processing time (which now only required a staff member to review the AI's decision) and the total time savings.

6. What were the steps involved in designing, testing, and rolling out the project?

The new system was initially implemented for only one case type, so the court could assess how it performed. Right out of the box, CSI's model was getting about 60% right, before it had the chance to learn from the court's data. But once the data from each clerk's office started being fed into each model, that percentage jumped up. Staff spent time reviewing the decisions that the technology made and provided feedback for gradual adjustments and improvements. Over time, the system performed better, and the court gained confidence in its decisions. Now, the accuracy rate is better than human performance. Eventually, the system was expanded to other case types.

7. What data were collected or produced as part of this project? How did the court address concerns around privacy, security, and data ownership?

All of the data going into the models and being produced by the models are owned by the court. All of the hardware, software, and servers involved in using the products are also owned and controlled by the court. CSI had access to the court's systems in order to install the software, but once the technology was implemented, it was fully under the control of the court's IT department. The models themselves are closed systems — they only access and learn from court data, and they are never sent out and used for product training or testing by CSI.

8. What change management strategies did the court use during the project's implementation and afterward?

The most important part of change management was communication. It was important to be transparent about the process and let personnel know when things were happening. It was also critical to manage expectations and help people understand that perfection wasn't the goal. A common misstep in court technology projects is to want the tool to be perfect before turning it "on." The project team had to make a deliberate effort not to let perfection get in the way of having a good product that could be used with guardrails and improved over time.

9. What have been the outcomes of the project so far? Has the project changed or been scaled up since it launched?

Before the project began, the court had more e-filings than its staff could process in time. The technology now performs above the level of human accuracy, and it has significantly reduced the amount of time it takes the clerk's office to approve each new filing. The court started by implementing the new technology in lower-volume case types, and as it gained confidence in the technology's performance, it has expanded to more case types with higher volumes. As the technology has scaled up, both the burden on staff and the delays in case processing have decreased.

10. What resources are required to maintain and sustain the project over time?

Initially, the project required extra staff time to train, test, and improve the models. As the technology improved over time, staff spent less and less time reviewing the output. Once the technology was fully implemented and the new, more efficient workflow was in place, the ongoing costs were the subscription fees for the software and the typical IT staff resources that the court uses to maintain all of its systems.

11. Once the project was implemented, what other changes or updates were needed throughout the court system?

This project didn't require any new policies, HR practices, or CMS updates. The only broader change that was needed was addressing the impact of the technology on downstream caseflow tasks. As mentioned above, the court limited the operating hours of the new system so that staff wouldn't be inundated with new cases to review on certain days of the week.

12. Is there anything the court would do differently next time? What advice or resources would the court give to others looking to implement a similar project?

The court's phased rollout process was key to its success. The court emphasized the importance of understanding that implementing AI projects requires a different mindset from implementing other IT projects. The process is gradual and iterative, starting with a limited "soft" launch and expanding and improving over time. Getting all stakeholders comfortable with the idea that they can't achieve perfection before launching the technology requires strong communication and change management, as well developing basic AI literacy among court personnel.

Stay tuned for more case studies to be added here!

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