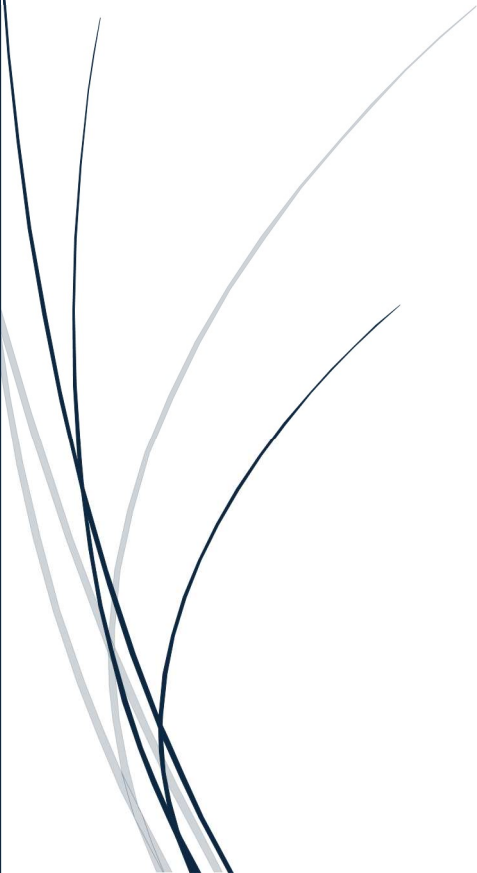# Artificial Intelligence in The State of New Jersey

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Artificial Intelligence in the State of New Jersey

Artificial intelligence has slowly been introduced into many facets of everyday life today. AI has become so common place that the average person doesn't even realize that they have been using AI. Products like Siri and Google Assistant that are powered by AI have simplified many tasks in our lives and public administration is looking to simplify many of its tasks in the same way. The State of New Jersey is looking to become the leader in the country when it comes to AI implementation into the state workforce. In early July 2024 Governor Phil Murphy announced that the State of New Jersey would roll out a Comprehensive Generative AI training program for all state employees. In addition, he announced that the state would be launching a generative AI powered platform for New Jersey State employees called NJ AI Assistant. Among the most important information given was that they emphasized the ability to have a workforce that can responsibly use AI to its full capacity while making the services they provide be more responsive and efficient. Introducing AI into the state workforce can ultimately improve service delivery, simplify processes, and enhance public value all together. The introduction of AI technology into the offices of the State of New Jersey has the potential to have a significant impact on its digital governance, but it comes with its own set of challenges. Is the implementation of a comprehensive generative ai training program for its employees enough to make use of AI in a responsible way?

As part of Governor Phil Murphy's Executive Order 346 in October 2023, the State of New Jersey committed to create a training program to help New Jersey State Government employees use AI to deliver and improve the services provided to NJ residents. In July 2024 Governor Phil

Murphy finally delivered a comprehensive generative AI training program for state of New Jersey employees along with a generative AI powered platform called NJ AI Assistant. As part of Executive Order 346, Governor Phil Murphy established the New Jersey AI Task Force which along with the Office of Information Technology spearheaded these AI initiatives for the State. The comprehensive generative AI training program aims to educate employees on AI fundamentals, risk management, and practical uses for AI. The program is provided to employees of the NJ Department of Labor and Department of Taxation through the state E-Learning platform, Center for Learning and Improving Performance (CLIP). The program itself is broken down into 4 modules that include course overview, generative ai explanation, effective use of AI day to day processes, and effective use of AI best practices. Along with the introduction of the comprehensive generative AI training program, Governor Phil Murphy also announced the launching of NJ AI Assistant. The NJ AI Assistant is a generative AI platform designed to be used by New Jersey State employees. The goal of the NJ AI Assistant is to empower state employees to use AI responsibly to enhance government operations and public service delivery. NJ AI Assistant is described as a sandbox environment where state employees can explore how to use AI to better deliver services to the residents of New Jersey. NJ AI Assistant is hosted on State infrastructure that does not use state data to train a third-party AI model in order to provide security and privacy. The NJ AI Assistant has been used to rewrite emails and informational documents to simplify and better disseminate information to the public. The goal of simplification of documents and emails is to make sure that every resident regardless of ability, education, and background can understand, access and benefit from public services. Additionally, NJ AI Assistant has also been used to analyze data to provide better self-service menu options for residents. The ultimate goal for these two programs is to be able to deliver and

improve services provided to New Jersey residents. The ability to better communicate with New Jersey residents adds an incredible amount of public value.

The introduction of AI into the public sector brings about its own set of risks. The main risk that comes to mind would be that of data privacy and breeches. The NJ AI Taskforce and the Office of Information Technology looks to address that issue by focusing on the design of the AI itself. They have stated that the NJ AI Assistant was designed in a "sandbox" environment with no connection to any third-party AI. Another thing that protects data privacy and breeches is the release of a comprehensive generative AI training program to go along with the release of NJ AI Assistant. Part of the training goes into detail regarding privacy and data protection concerns and effective ways to prevent either. While the training and design of AI help protect data and privacy there is still more work that can be done. At the moment the comprehensive AI training for state employees is voluntary and that itself can be an issue. My recommendation to better improve the security of data is to make the training modules mandatory for all state employees. By making the training mandatory we can ensure that everyone is equally equipped with the same education regarding the safe use of AI in public administration. State employees themselves become a challenge since training is voluntary at the moment. Many might not want to use AI because they might fear new technology or lack the understanding of new technologies. In doing so they might proactively be avoiding the training modules. One way to combat this is to include transparency measures that include state employee feedback and annual reports on AI usage. In doing so, the state can show these employees that other employees are making use of AI and have opinions on how to better improve it.

New Jersey and their attempt to introduce AI into the public sector will have broader implications for public administration in the country. If it is successful in doing so it could lead

to a blueprint for other states to implement AI into their public administration. If it fails it would also do the same by showing states what not to do. In the end by taking the first steps of AI implementation the state of New Jersey will have huge effect on other states and how they see AI in the future. They could inspire states to take the leap into AI and could also bring about potential policy changes in the future regarding AI in public administration. The steps New Jersey is taking today regarding AI could potentially bring about a ripple effect regardless of their success or failure. Only time will tell if New Jersey was the first step into a more digital future.

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