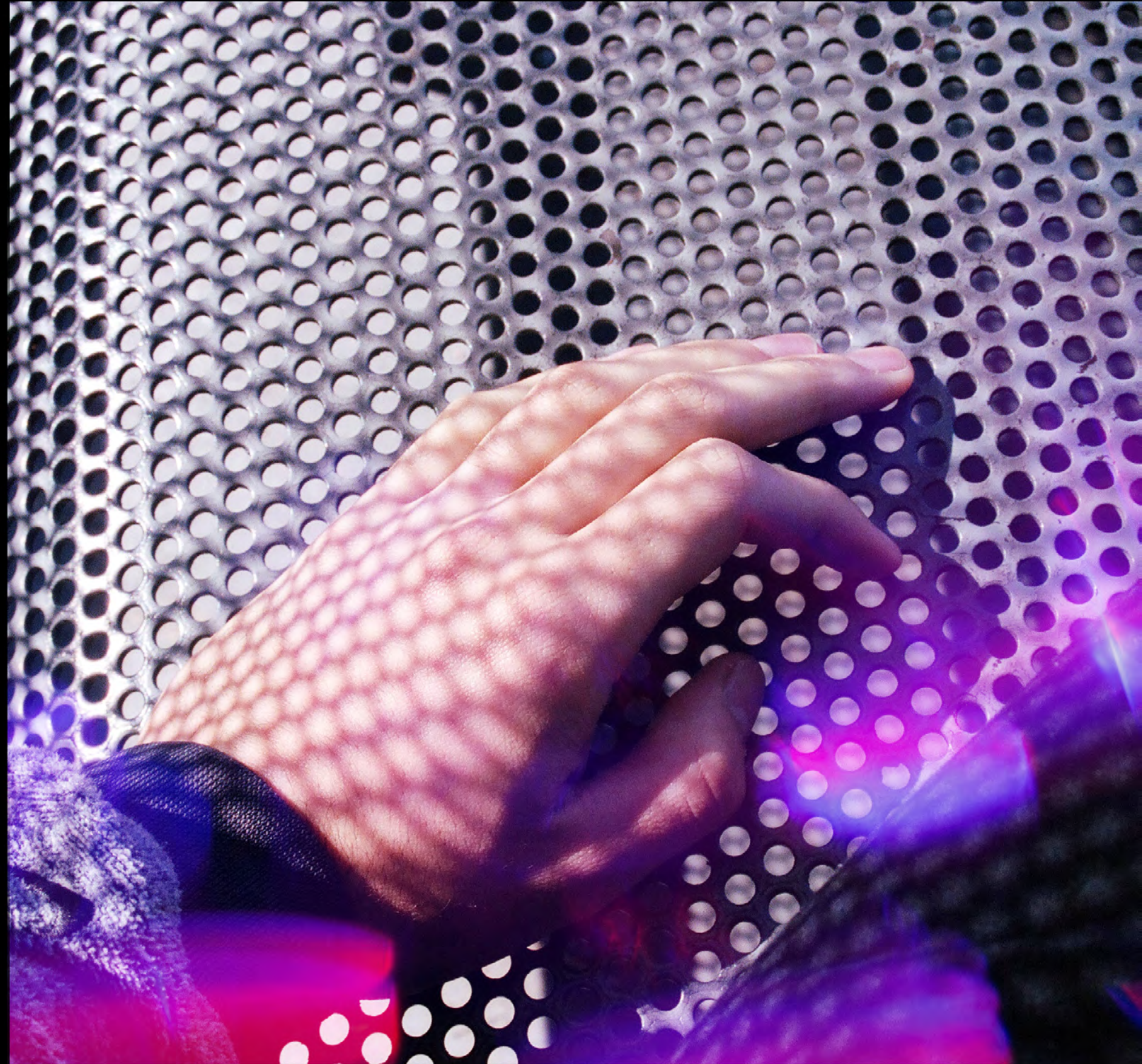




Reimagining Public Services in the Age of AI



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Introduction

Around the world, government agencies face growing budget constraints, mounting backlogs and rising user expectations. Pressure is high for them to deliver digital services that truly meet residents' needs. In recent years, governments have invested heavily in digital tools. Our new survey of 7,250 residents and 4,100 frontline workers, covering 14 countries across all regions, shows signs of this progress. 77% of public service workers say the tools they use every day have changed in the past two years, and 78% say their agency now offers more digital channels than two years ago.

Despite this growth in digital options, service channel preferences have barely shifted since our previous survey in 2022. The most common ways to access government services are still websites, email, phone and in-person visits. With shrinking budgets and an overburdened workforce, one thing is clear: increasing the use of self-service channels is more urgent than ever.

How, then, can governments make the leap from digital foundation to digital excellence? Our survey findings show how agencies are getting the best returns on their digital and AI investments. Those getting it right are focusing on experience-led transformation that fosters trust in digital services. This includes building intuitive, seamless “digital front doors” designed around life events, using AI to automate routine tasks and freeing up skilled workers to handle higher complexity cases.

It's time for a greater leap in how public sector agencies approach digital transformation and prepare their workforces to adapt to continuous changes. Incremental change is no longer viable. By aligning technology with its human users and consumers, agencies can increase adoption of higher efficiency channels, reduce service backlogs, lower cost to serve, boost employee satisfaction and build lasting public trust.

Why digital alone hasn't been enough





Digital service quality in government is on the upswing, a trend we see in our experience and surveys. Our new research shows 59% of residents view digital experiences as “mostly” or “always” good. This marks a significant jump from 44% in 2022.¹

Despite this progress, frustrations persist. Nearly half (49%) of the residents we surveyed have difficulty navigating government websites. Many (43%) distrust technology or have concerns about security. This friction drives people to in-person or phone support or pushes them to give up entirely. Our research conducted in Australia showed that those who failed to complete online needs called the contact center (32%), visited a government department or service center (24%) or just gave up (21%).² This results in duplicate efforts and higher cost to serve.

Workers are also experiencing their own friction from siloed systems, outdated tools and inefficiencies. Nearly two-thirds (62%) said inefficient processes have a significant to severe impact on their ability to deliver core services

to users. Digital upgrades have failed to fully eliminate these challenges and, in fact, have introduced new ones in implementation, training and experience. A third of workers noted a lack of appropriately skilled talent as a top barrier to customer service quality.

These sentiments reveal government service is more than just completing a process; it's about improving outcomes at every step, for everyone involved. The overarching imperative is to make experience the guiding principle for how agencies design and deploy AI.

Our evidence also suggests three steps that can unlock the full potential of agencies' digital investments for internal and external users alike:

- Build and guide toward a digital front door around life events so people start in the right place and stay there.
- Use AI to triage and automate simple cases and route more complex ones to humans.
- Equip teams with continuous learning, clear guardrails and AI assists to mitigate tedious tasks and improve outcomes.

Build a frictionless digital front door



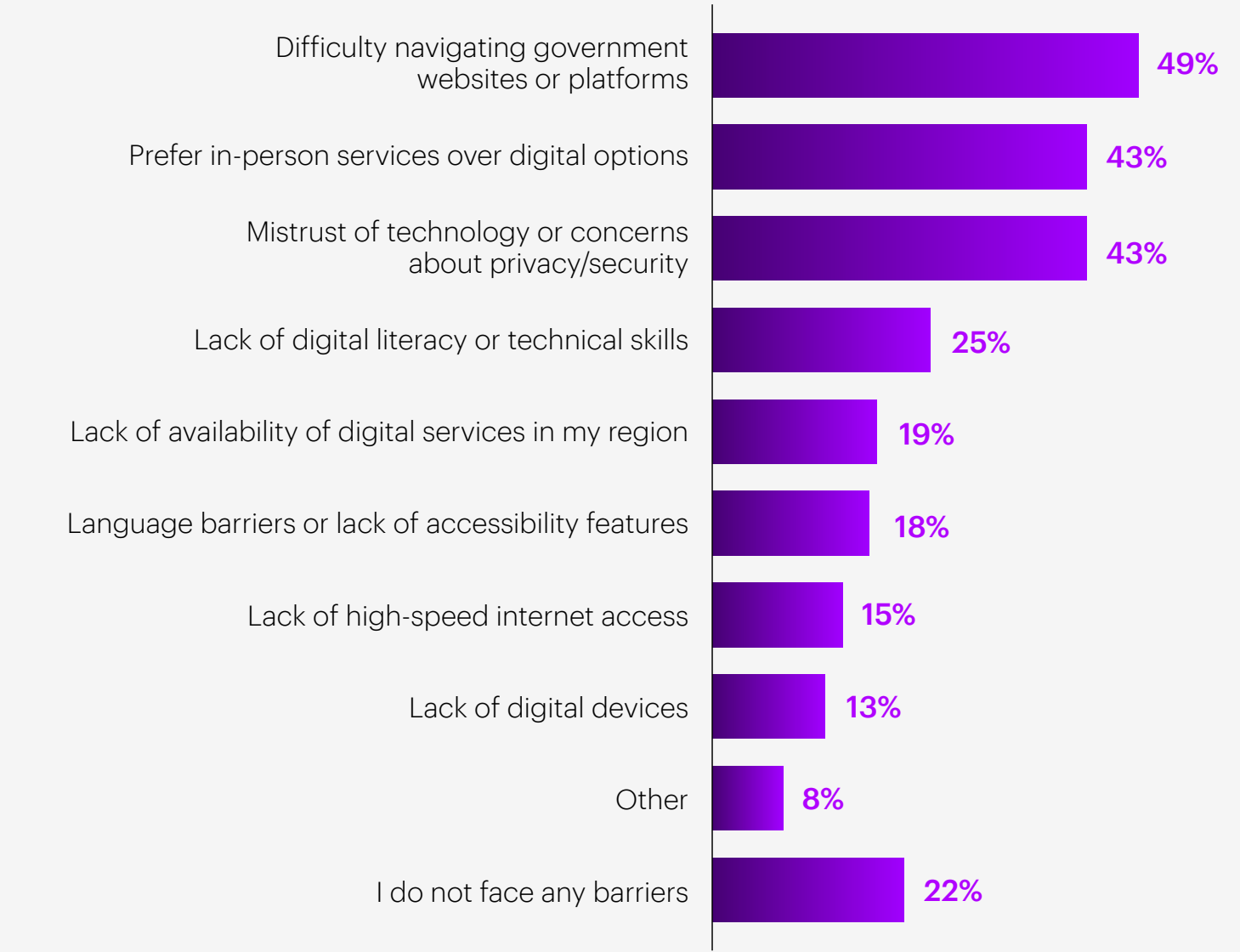
Creating a seamless, intuitive digital experience is no longer a luxury; it’s a necessity. Only 41% of residents say government processes and interactions are intuitive. Government leaders often emphasize a “no wrong door” approach, ensuring residents get the services they need no matter where they start their journey. While this approach is important, too many doors can create confusion.

Nearly half of residents (49%) report struggling to navigate sites and platforms. Poor design and resulting low trust impact their greater adoption of digital channels: 43% state a preference for in-person services over digital options and 43% note a mistrust of technology or privacy/security concerns (Figure 1).

By contrast, having a clear and well-designed front door simplifies digital government and builds trust. No wrong door remains essential. Residents should be able to find the services they need through a variety of paths. But that doesn’t eliminate the need for a clear, seamless front door that greets them and guides them to the right services.

Agencies can largely address confusion through thoughtful investment in user-friendly design. Users typically form an opinion of a website’s credibility within milliseconds, and poor design can drive them away quickly.³ In the government context, design signals legitimacy. It can also solve the greatest barrier: where to begin. Forty percent of residents and 34% of workers say people simply do not know where to start. A single entry point—the digital front door—can simplify the path by structuring content around life events and streamlining login from the start.

Figure 1. What are the top 3 issues you face when accessing government digital services?
Select all that apply.



Residents who used services in 2025
Source: Accenture Public Service Experience Survey, 2025

Uniform layouts, clear language that matches users' goals and single-entry access across agencies without interruption allows residents to complete a task from start to finish themselves, even when multiple services are involved. This keeps people on task without jumping, decreases demand for in-person channels and builds service credibility. Visible privacy commitments and an easy path to a human, when needed, further boost trust and service.

AI offers a powerful solution here, especially in navigating interagency silos. AI assistants can guide residents through multi-step processes without requiring them to jump between disconnected systems. An embedded conversational AI agent, for example, can lead someone starting a business through registration, licensing, taxation and employment tasks all from their initial point of access. When human intervention is necessary, the agent can route the user to the right team along with the full context for quick, uninterrupted service.

Though AI promises great leaps in outcome in this regard, only 47% of residents trust their government to use it responsibly. More than 60% doubt AI-generated decisions. Like web design, consistency and functionality lead to better wins. Our Technology Vision 2025 report found 99% of public service executives expect a consistent AI personality to be critical for customer-facing

agents within the next three years.⁵ "Trust-centric" AI design means creating an AI persona and voice that is clearly government-owned, empathetic, inclusive and adaptive to user needs. By integrating sentiment analysis, past interactions and contextual awareness, AI can offer personalization for a faster user journey with fewer errors. Successful results compel people to choose digital again.

A human services agency transformed its customer engagement model by creating a "no wrong door" approach to its services. With over 30 different phone numbers for residents to call, services were fragmented, wait times long and multiple transfers led callers to repeat their needs. Staff spent more time managing basic inquiries than on core casework. The agency launched a virtual assistant to manage over two million conversations and consolidated more than 20 separate contact centers onto a unified, cloud-based telephony platform with a single, centralized support number. Speech recognition technology now automatically routes nearly 90% of calls and a new CRM platform gives agents a 360-degree visibility into prior interactions, helping them provide more informed, seamless support with fewer transfers and improved resolution times. The simplified digital front door streamlined multiple channels, automatically routed 30,000 calls and resulted in a 23% decrease in abandonment rates.

The benefits of seamless digital identity verification

- Allows residents to sign in once and move across services without restarting.
- Meets resident needs: 41% rank a simple login among their top three priorities.
- Redirects employee time to solving complex issues; 63% of government employees say identity verification takes more than five minutes per case.
- Enables consistent personalization, clearer consent and increases trust and completion with fewer errors.
- Is intuitive: 55% feel comfortable using a mobile driver's license or digital ID in a smartphone wallet.

Innovation in action

With the Universal Wallet Infrastructure⁴, residents present verifiable identity from a secure wallet for one-tap access to a jurisdiction's services, providing speed and ease while boosting confidence in digital government.

Use AI to automate and empower





AI isn't just a tool; it's a game-changer for employees. When AI handles mundane, repetitive tasks, workers can turn their attention and human capabilities to what matters most: improving customer service. We know this is important from our earlier public service research that showed 83% of residents preferred access to a human for complex issues even when digital can automate most steps.⁶ People want empathy, reassurance and connection, especially when stakes are high or a situation is emotional.

This deep, personalized assistance is what agencies want to provide. Yet they are contending with an aging workforce, flat or shrinking budgets and steadily rising expectations from residents accustomed to the speed and convenience of the private sector. Over half (58%) of public service workers agree it's harder than ever to deliver consistently excellent customer service. Workers cited inefficient processes and dated digital tools as the top barriers to delivering core services.

This is where AI comes in, in its ability to clear routine work and free people for more complex cases. We found 69% of public service workers expect AI to reduce workload by automating repetitive tasks. This represents a critical opportunity to preserve and even improve the human touch in cases where empathy, nuance and deep problem-solving matter most. Workers report 42% of customer interactions are simple queries. Automated channels can resolve these requests. A chatbot, for instance, can complete a straightforward update request. As complexity arises, AI agents at the front door can read history, urgency and eligibility, and pass along full context when a case needs a specialist. In this way, residents get the right help at the right time, and workers spend more time where judgment matters.

Leading organizations are following this pattern of dynamic allocation. A recent cross-industry customer service report showed successful organizations are using AI to personalize, predict and integrate service in ways that amplify human impact, not just cut costs.⁷

As much as they help customers, smarter tools also build workforce resilience. While 65% of public sector workers believe AI will help them improve customer service, less repetitive work also links to higher job satisfaction and lower attrition. Instead of relying solely on individual expertise or searching through multiple disconnected systems, frontline workers can use AI-powered assistants to instantly surface relevant policies, cross-agency requirements and complete case histories. With faster answers and fewer toggles, workers can handle complex issues with more confidence along with better service quality.

Queensland University of Technology (QUT) experienced positive outcomes through this approach. It reduced administrative overhead via automation and integration, supporting 8,000 additional student outreaches and 17 new domestic outreach campaigns year-over-year. By automating routine tasks, AI freed staff from routine load to focus on proactive outreach and relationship-building. After introducing Salesforce Data Cloud and Einstein AI for enquiry management and personalization, QUT expects additional benefits, including a 10% cut in response times and a 50% drop in follow-up requests.⁸

Reinvent the workforce experience



The strain on public service employees is intensifying. The share of employees who say they have the right tools and resources has fallen 12 points since 2022 (from 89% to 77%) while technology rollouts continue to outpace complementary upskilling and continuous learning investments.

To fully sustain digital transformation, agency leaders must also reimagine government workforce experience. Tools only deliver value when employees have the confidence, skills and curiosity to use them effectively. Leaders must be ready to rewire the work of employees, align organizational designs, develop talent pipelines and cultivate the capacity for change.

Our Technology Vision 2025 report found 96% of public service executives expect routine employee tasks to shift significantly to innovation in the next three years.⁹ These changes open the opportunity to restructure work, reorganize teams and refresh job descriptions to emphasize uniquely human strengths in a human+technology partnership.

A large part of this work comes in preparing talent for digital transformation. While 70% of agencies are advanced in implementing AI technologies, only 35% are upskilling their workforce accordingly. As a result, just 28% are delivering improved outcomes through those tools.¹⁰ Agencies cannot hire their way out of today's skill gap challenges; they must grow capability at pace with continuous learning strategies. Co-learning, where people and AI systems learn together in the flow of

work, is critical and can drive higher engagement, faster innovation and improved productivity. Organizations adopting human-AI collaboration and creating the conditions for co-learning are achieving 5x higher workforce engagement and 4x faster skill development.¹¹

Effective leveling up for existing employees entails tailoring AI support to different learning preferences. Our research shows that while all generations share some concerns about AI, including data security and output accuracy, their learning priorities differ. Older workers (Baby Boomers and Gen X) prefer practical, hands-on guidance with a coach nearby. Younger workers (Millennials and Gen Z) want clear rules and best practices with the freedom to try new things. Giving employees the autonomy to “choose their own adventure” to develop AI skills ensures everyone gains what they need most to best serve residents.

Strong leadership through continuous change is also key. AI era leadership is less about announcing a plan and more about making curiosity, courage and connection visible. Lightweight nudges in collaboration tools reinforce habits, as does tracking which behaviors stick. Responsible AI primers equip supervisors to explain why a tool is being used, for whom and with what guardrails. This builds trust with employees and the residents they serve. When done well, the potential impact of an equipped and empowered workforce is significant. In our analysis, stronger workforce experience can cut expected attrition from 20.6% to 9.7%.¹²



Experience as the engine of transformation

In the public sector, modernization is not just about adding tools or processes. It is about ensuring that residents, and the people who serve them, have great experiences. Most agencies are already heavily investing in new technologies. The real challenge lies in turning those investments into visible, trusted outcomes.

The way forward is to make experience the strategy: the central lens through which services are designed, built and continuously improved with AI. Agencies that lead will design seamless, intuitive journeys that remove friction at every step and make digital the channel of choice by design, not by default. By streamlining the digital front door, they will increase adoption of low-cost channels and make services easier to access. At the same time, they will use AI to amplify human service, automating routine tasks while routing complex cases to skilled people with full context. This approach expands human capacity where empathy and expertise matter most. Just as importantly, they will

reinvent the workforce experience by equipping employees with the skills, tools and autonomy to innovate alongside AI.

When this system runs, the results follow: faster service, shorter backlogs, lower costs, higher employee satisfaction and greater resident trust. Leaders can track value through metrics such as digital completion rates, time to decision, backlog reduction, cost per contact, employee experience and resident outcomes.

Commitment to experience-led transformation turns AI from a technology upgrade into a catalyst for measurable improvement. Residents expect services as simple, responsive and reliable as the best in the private sector, and employees are eager to deliver. By aligning technology with human needs, governments can transform today's digital investments into tomorrow's enduring public value.

About the research

Accenture conducted two online surveys between March and April 2025 to assess the impact and potential of artificial intelligence (AI) on public sector service delivery.

The research captured insights from both service users and providers, offering a comprehensive perspective on how AI can improve efficiency, reduce backlogs and enhance outcomes in public sector environments.

The resident survey engaged 7,250 individuals across 14 countries who regularly interact with government services, while the workforce survey gathered responses from 4,100 frontline public service employees. Together, these dual perspectives provide a holistic view of evolving experience needs in public services.

Countries included: Australia, Belgium, Luxembourg, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Public Service subindustries: Social Services, Tax and Revenue, Public Safety, Border Services, Higher Education, Veteran Affairs, Postal Services, Public Health, Public Transportation and Infrastructure and Government Administration.



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About Accenture

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