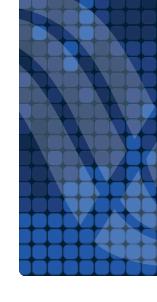# STATE WORKFORCE CIOs 2025-2026 TOP PRIORITIES & INITIATIVES

Priorities for Strategy, Policy, and Management Processes

Each year, State Workforce Agency CIOs participate in a survey to identify their top priorities and initiatives for the coming year. For 2025-2026, budget and fiscal management emerged as the number one priority due to funding cuts impacting state operations. Cybersecurity remains a critical concern, maintaining its place among the top priorities. Artificial Intelligence continues to gain momentum, sustaining its high ranking as states explore its transformative potential in workforce development. Digital government has dropped in priority this year to #8, reflecting a shift toward more urgent operational needs like budget and modernization.

1 BUDGET, COST CONTROL, FISCAL MANAGEMENT

Managing budget reduction • Savings • Reducing or avoiding costs • Inadequate funding

2 CYBERSECURITY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Governance • Security frameworks • Data protection • Training • Insider threats • Third party security practices • De-identification • ID verification

3 AI / MACHINE LEARNING / ROBOTIC PROCESS AUTOMATION

Adoption • Delivery of services • Bots • Digital Assistants • Citizen interaction • Policy • Data management and privacy

4 DATA AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Governance • Architecture • Open data • Data portals • Knowledge management • Data integration • Data strategy • Data warehouse • Reporting • Data sharing • Intelligence

5 CLOUD SERVICES

Cloud strategy • Selection and deployment models • Scalable and elastic • "As a service" • Governance • Security • Privacy • Data ownership • Multi-cloud ecosystem • Audit compliance

6 ACCESSIBILITY

Services, policies, websites, tools, etc. are accessible • Support digital equity and increased access to employment and training opportunities.

7 AGILE AND INCREMENTAL SOFTWARE DELIVERY

Iterative design • Incremental development • Software solutions • Design modifications, prototyping new capabilities process

8 DIGITAL GOVERNMENT

Digital services • Improving citizen experience • Accessibility • Digital assistants • Cross-agency collaboration • Responsive design • Privacy

9 LEGACY MODERNIZATION

Enhancing, renovating, replacing, legacy platforms and applications • business process improvement

10 VISION AND ROADMAP

IT is a strategic capability • strategic planning and visioning of future IT innovations • aligning with policy agenda

Priorities for Tool Development and Future Planning

1. Artificial Intelligence
2. Data Analytics
3. Data Storage, Data Lake
4. "X" as a Service
5. Fraud Detection, ID Verification

6. Business Process Integration Tools
7. Automation
8. Collaboration Technologies
9. Customer Service/CRM
10. Security Enhancement Tools

Focused State Technology Initiatives for 2025-2026

State workforce agencies play a vital role in supporting workforce and unemployment insurance programs, each with distinct IT systems and priorities. When asked about their top technology initiatives in each program for the upcoming year, states highlighted a focus on modernizing systems in both areas. Although states are at various stages in this process, modernization is an ongoing journey, particularly as new technologies emerge and the need to address evolving challenges in a dynamic world grows.

WORKFORCE
Replacing/Modernizing Case Management System, including system integrations

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE
UI IT Modernization, Integrations, and Improvements/Maintenance

About

This document, produced by the NASWA Technology Committee, summarizes an annual survey that highlights key technology policies and priorities for State Workforce Agencies. The insights gathered help shape the Committee's activities, conference sessions, and publications. It reflects the viewpoints of individual state agencies and does not represent formal NASWA policy.

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