NASCIO Awards Submission

State of Connecticut: Bureau of Information Technology Solutions (BITS)

Better Outcomes through Holistic Approach and Responsible

Artificial Intelligence

2025

Bits
Bureau of Information Technology Solutions

Category: Artificial Intelligence
Project Dates: Initiated 2023, Ongoing
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Executive Summary

The State of Connecticut is leading the way in transforming government operations and public service delivery through the ethical and responsible application of Artificial Intelligence (AI). With more than 20 AI use cases already deployed and a structured governance model in place, Connecticut is pioneering an enterprise-wide approach to AI that aligns innovative technology with public value and trust.

From launching an AI task force and statewide AI Advisory Group to deploying tools like ChatGPT and Microsoft Copilot, Connecticut's initiatives represent a holistic commitment to using AI for better outcomes. AI has been integrated across healthcare, education, human services, and internal operations, including an internal AI Enablement Lab for safe experimentation. These efforts are grounded in transparency, equity, and sustainability—resulting in more responsive, efficient, and people-centered government.

Idea

The Problem: State agencies are challenged by growing operational complexity, workforce shortages, and rising public expectations for timely and tailored services. Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI tools are hyped as transformational technologies, but require careful implementation. Traditional service delivery models are often labor-intensive and slow to adapt.

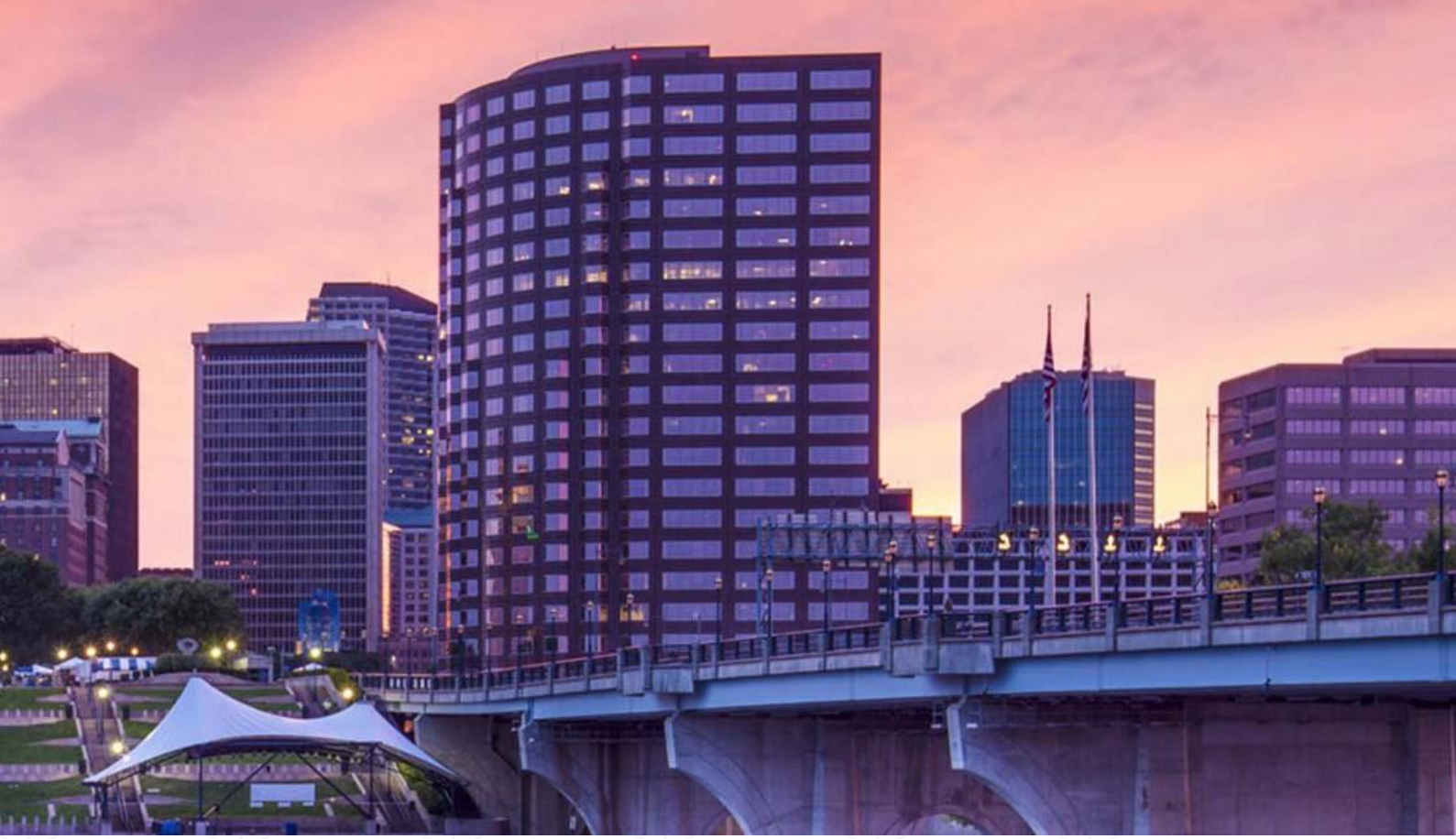
Why it Matters: Connecticut's model ensures AI is used purposefully. This whole-of-government approach includes many perspectives to make responsible use of emerging technology: technology, program, finance, legal, communications, research and procurement staff all participate actively in AI governance. Residents benefit from more personalized, efficient and proactive government services, while public employees are empowered to focus on higher-value tasks.

The Solution: Connecticut responded with an enterprise AI strategy built around responsible innovation. The state established foundational governance through Public Act 23-16 and created a comprehensive Responsible AI Use Framework (https://portal.ct.gov/opm/fin-general/policies/-/media/D13D6F704FA3408998F20E67EBDA8AAB.ashx). The Framework described how an Advisory Group would guide responsible use of AI by providing: education/training, evaluation of use cases risk, and implementation support. The Framework also covers the publication of a state AI use cases inventory aligned with our transparency principles. Furthermore, the state has implemented an AI Enablement Lab which allows agencies to safely test and refine AI solutions. Initiatives range from predictive analytics for health equity to intelligent automation

What Makes it Different?

Connecticut's approach aligns policy, infrastructure, and talent:

- **Ethical Grounding:** Responsible AI Use Framework that is iterative to be responsive to changing technical and substantive environments.
- **Cross-Sector Collaboration:** AI Advisory Group and its subcommittees leverage expertise across the state's agencies to enhance educational pathways and identify evolving AI policy needs in areas such as procurement. This group also reviews high-risk use cases from multiple perspectives such as legal, privacy, technology, workforce impact, procurement and mode.
- **Inclusive Innovation:** AI Academy for the general public to build skills and a public sector specific set of staff training from InnovateUS.
- **Transparency:** Approved use cases are published on data.ct.gov. (https://data.ct.gov/Government/Executive-Branch-Artificial-Intelligence-System-In/8kut-uzcx/data_preview)



What Makes it Universal?

AI uses in the public sector are filled with promise, yet often held back by fear, uncertainty and doubt. Connecticut's work explores the critical aspects of this technology and provides thoughtful guidance on how to move forward safely. The model is replicable and adaptable. The Framework, governance model, and capacity-building initiatives provide a template other states can adopt. **The blend of policy foresight, technical enablement, and resident-focused design ensures the program's universal appeal.**

Implementation

Key milestones include:

- **2023:** Public Act 23-16; Convening of AI task force.
- **2024:** Responsible AI Use Framework; AI Enablement Lab; InnovateUS AI training for employees and AI Academy for the general public.
- **2025:** AI Innovation Institute proposals solicited to encourage private sector centers of excellence.
- **2025:** The AI Enablement Lab provides a sandbox environment for piloting solutions with privacy and risk assessments.

Impact

Connecticut's AI work has already yielded significant benefits:

- **Improved Outcomes:** Predictive tools support. Example includes use of AI tools that enable less experienced audit staff to be more effective in their roles more quickly
- **Operational Efficiency:** Improved performance of administrative tasks
- **Transparency and Trust:** Dashboards and public use case listing

How Do You Know?

- Over 20 AI pilots are live and listed on data.ct.gov
- Strong resident participation in AI Academy
- Use case oversight by the AI Advisory Council
- Over 60 participants in AI Advisory Group, including first policy revisions developed related to use of Virtual Meeting Assistant AI and AI procurement

Was it Better?

This is actually very difficult to measure. In taking a thoughtful, principle-based approach to AI rollout, we believe this is far better than experientially uncovering issues. **Through policy development, user training, technical assistance provision and multi-disciplinary reviews, our outcomes include:**

- Reduced process time to implement AI use cases and a more complete view of risk profiles. Two high-risk use cases were reviewed through the process reducing the time that would have been spent in a non-coordinated approach.
- Empowered agencies to explore concepts and submit for review through standard intake process
- Support for equity and transparency in service delivery
- Educated state workforce is better prepared to embrace AI opportunities and manage AI weaknesses. More than 60 state staff from multiple agencies are involved in Advisory Group activities and over 260 employees have taken specialized public sector AI training.
- Experiential learning in a safe environment through ChatGPT and Microsoft Copilot trials

Long-term Plan

Connecticut will:

- Expand AI Enablement Lab including learnings on automated testing for biases as AI models changes over time
- Advance equity in AI systems through robust impact assessments and regular monitoring
- Quantify costs and benefits of on-going AI use across government
- Share best practices with other governments

Connecticut is committed to building a trustworthy, innovative, and inclusive digital government.