

NEOGOV

3 Steps to _____
**LEVERAGE
TECHNOLOGY**
_____ *and Improve Processes*



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Unlocking THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC SERVICE

Public sector agencies and educational institutions play a critical role in society, tasked with providing life-saving services and shaping future generations. Despite shouldering these vital responsibilities, the public sector is often plagued by inefficiencies that hinder the delivery of high quality, timely services.

FOR DECADES, THE PUBLIC SECTOR HAS GRAPPLED WITH OUTDATED AND INEFFICIENT PROCESSES.

Agencies often remain stagnant due to a resistance to change that's woven into the fabric of workplace culture. This resistance is reinforced by limited budgets, chronic staff shortages, unease with new technology, and overwhelming workloads that contribute to employee burnout.

Although technology holds immense potential to enhance efficiency, the public sector has been a slow adopter of modern solutions. There are several factors contributing to this:

- Fragmented, siloed departments
- A scarcity of skilled IT professionals
- Complex contracting processes
- The challenge of delivering equitable services

Thankfully, many agencies are working to overcome these constraints as they realize the benefits of technology on operational efficiency. This report dives deeper into these benefits, and explores how public sector agencies and educational institutions can leverage technology to empower modernization.





BENEFITS OF TECHNOLOGY

Technology has the power to transform public sector agencies into efficient organizations. There are many benefits of leveraging technology to improve public sector operations.

One of the most prominent benefits is **technology's appeal to younger generations**. Millennial and Gen Z recruits and candidates are inherently tech-savvy and expect modern technology to be integrated in their work. Investing in technology not only attracts younger candidates, but also fosters a culture of progress, which can lead to more efficient operations.

Staff shortages and scarce resources prevent many agencies from operating efficiently. **Technology is the key to overcoming these challenges by doing more with less**. As the public sector hiring crisis continues, technology is becoming a critical lifeline to support small teams. Agencies can often justify the price of technology during times of staff shortages by reallocating payroll dollars to fund employee raises, wellness programs, and supportive software solutions.

Despite the initial investment, implementing **new technology automates routine tasks that often leave agencies in a perpetual state of catch-up**. Operating in a place of reactivity leaves little room to proactively plan for future programs or identify areas for improvement. With routine tasks automated, staff are freed to focus on more complex and critical issues.

Additionally, **technology can ensure government services are more accessible to citizens**. Through digital platforms, online services, and streamlined operations, citizens can easily stay informed and engage with agencies without the in-person hassle. Using technology to improve service delivery not only enhances transparency, but also fosters public trust in government.

USING TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE PROCESSES

Adopting technology is not just a trend. It's a necessity if the public sector wants to keep up with rapidly evolving industry standards. But with so many solutions available, it's easy to become overwhelmed. As agencies navigate an ever-changing digital landscape, taking a pragmatic approach to adopting new technology can reduce stress and streamline the digital transition.

Achieving operational efficiency with technology is a multifaceted process requiring careful consideration. However, with a well-crafted plan, agencies can begin to integrate technology into their operations.

By following these 3 straightforward steps, agencies can begin to leverage technology to improve processes:

- Audit current processes
- Review current and emerging technology
- Get leadership buy-in



AUDIT CURRENT PROCESSES

The first step to improve operations is to audit all of your current processes. This is particularly pertinent if your agency relies on manual, paper-based processes to conduct business. Unless there's a good reason to retain paper-based processes, it's wise to consider a digital alternative. Paper-based processes are often prone to inefficiencies, security risks, and higher rates of human error.

Begin your audit by **examining the purpose of each process** and what the process aims to accomplish. The goal could be anything from issuing licenses, processing applications, or disseminating information. Knowing the objective will help identify areas where technology could be useful.

Next, **scrutinize the steps required to accomplish the goal**. Mapping out the steps is a great way to visualize the entire workflow and highlight possible bottlenecks, redundancies, or unnecessary complexity. You may also discover missing steps or steps still reliant on manual input.

Identifying waste is the next step. Waste can be anything from the time squandered on manual data entry, money spent on printing and storing paper documents, or the amount of human resources dedicated to tedious, repetitive tasks. This exercise can reveal the extent of inefficiency in your current processes.

Once you've examined these areas, **consider potential technology solutions** that could automate or simplify all or part of the process. Calculate how much time, money, and people resources you could save if technology was introduced.

Now, with all this in mind, **compare what you will save by switching to the new process to your current process**. Does the new process provide enough savings to justify the transition to new technology? If the answer is yes, it becomes clear that there are **costs associated with not taking action**. With a clear understanding that your current process is no longer serving your organization, it's time to consider your technology options.



REVIEW CURRENT AND NEW TECHNOLOGY

Now that you've identified specific ways technology can improve your operations, the next step is to assess available software solutions. It's no surprise that this step is often the most overwhelming. With so many solutions available and new ones entering the market every day, it's hard to know which system will be most effective.

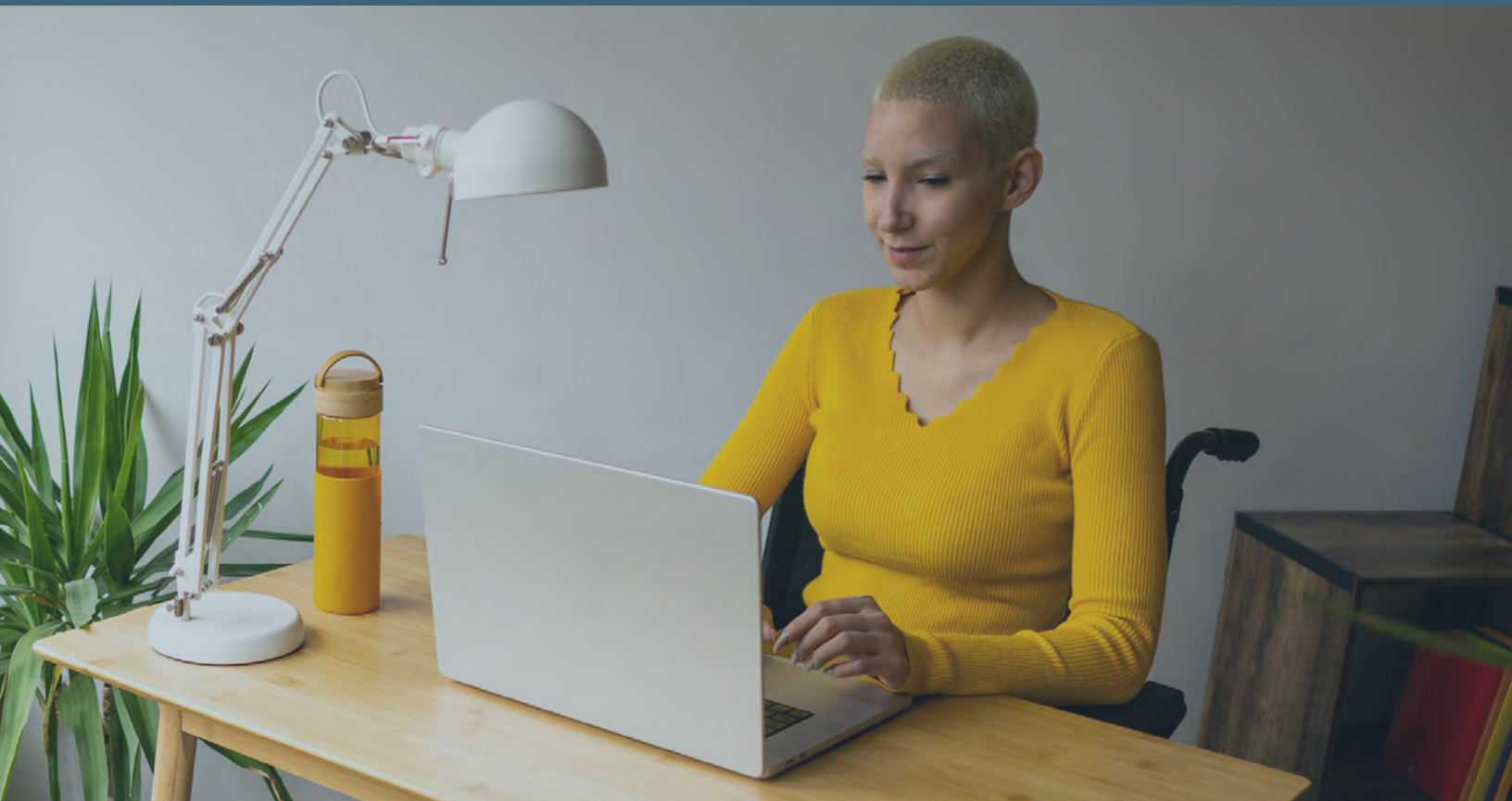
Taking the time to research solutions will pay dividends in the long run. Thankfully, reviewing current and new technology is as straightforward as the auditing process outlined above.

First, it's essential to **understand whether the software solution is actually efficient at achieving your process goal**. If the software introduces more complexity, it may not be the best solution for your needs. This could also indicate the process itself needs an adjustment. There is a fine line between adapting the solution to fit your process and adapting your process to fit the solution. Too far on either side can create undue complexity.

The next step is to **identify hidden processes that are built into software**. When purchasing software, you're not only acquiring a tool, but also subscribing to a vendor's philosophy of best practices. Understanding these embedded processes and their implications on your agency's operations is key to avoiding friction and inefficiency down the line.

Before making a commitment to any software, take the time to **conduct demos and test the software during free trial periods**. You may also want to take advantage of **using the software in a controlled sandbox environment** to gain a deeper understanding of the software's functionality and compatibility with your agency's processes.

Taking these steps to review current and new technologies can avoid costly mistakes in the future, and ensure the chosen software will truly enhance your agency's operations rather than hinder them. Gathering this information will also help generate buy-in from decision makers.



GET LEADERSHIP BUY-IN

Leaders play a critical role in the modernization of public sector agencies, whether they are involved in the day-to-day modernization efforts or not. A recent look at the [top trends shaping government in 2023](#) revealed **35% of federal IT workers point to a lack of vision and direction from agency leadership as the reason why modernization efforts fail**. Conversely, 64% of the federal agencies that achieved their modernization goals said leadership consistently communicated updates to the team.

Changes in leadership or direction can also have a slowing effect on modernization efforts. Of the 80% of federal IT workers in agencies with software not regularly used, approximately half of them point to a change in leadership as the reason for the inconsistent use of technology.

Gaining buy-in from leadership is key to all aspects of modernization, but especially to implement new technology to improve processes. Here are a few ways to get buy-in from leadership:



Identify a champion

Ideally, you want to find an executive leader who understands the value of new technology and will remain an advocate for the plan until completion. Even if this leader is not the decision maker, it helps to have visionary leadership on your side.

Craft a compelling business case

Clearly outline the benefits, costs, and risks of the new technology now and into the future. Show how the solution aligns with the agency's strategic objectives.

Demonstrate the value

Show how the new software will improve processes, increase efficiency, improve service delivery, and any other mission objectives. Laying out clear cause and effect is harder to object to.

Showcase success stories

If similar solutions were successful in other organizations, share these stories to build confidence and reduce perceived risk.

Propose an implementation plan

Offer a clear plan outlining the implementation process, project milestones, potential team members, and training opportunities to demonstrate a clear path toward success.

Taking these steps to gain leadership buy-in can make or break your agency's modernization efforts. Leadership buy-in forms the backbone of a project's success from inception to completion. Ultimately, communication is the most powerful tool leaders can use to cultivate a culture willing and ready for change.



NEXT STEPS

Thanks for reading the Report: **3 Steps to Leverage Technology and Improve Processes** by NEOGOV. We hope these insights and resources have been helpful.

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