The AI-amplified future of work in public sector policymaking

From crunching vast data sets to simulating long-term policy effects, AI can help governments craft more transparent and responsive policies

Today, policy analyst roles exist across multiple government domains and programs

Here's a small sampling of them:

Health care	Immigration	Education	Technology	Intelligence
Commerce	Housing	Transportation	Agriculture	Space
Defense and national security	Treasury			

Tasks common to most policy analyst roles:

- Conduct in-depth research on relevant policy issues
- Help legislators draft bills and conduct impact analysis on proposed bills to guide legislative committee actions
- Propose new policies or modifications to existing ones based on research findings
- Track the implementation of policies and assess their effectiveness over time, measuring costs and benefits and evaluating compliance burden
- Prepare comprehensive reports outlining research findings and policy recommendations to advise decision-makers

How AI and gen AI can help:

- Curate and summarize relevant academic papers, industry reports, and news articles to assist with research
- Run simulations of various scenarios so policymakers can better anticipate future policy needs
- Analyze public consultation feedback from various channels, including social media, public forums, and surveys, to gauge public opinion and identify concerns
- Track the impact of policies over time via AI-driven monitoring systems
- Draft, edit, and refine reports and create outputs in varied formats for internal and external communication and dissemination

Outcomes: improved situational awareness and efficiency, and informed decision-making

Source: Deloitte analysis.

In the future, here's how work could evolve with the arc of change AI technology is creating

AI tools can empower policy professionals to offer prompt and responsive advice, broaden their research scope, and dedicate more time to critical thinking for addressing complex policy issues.

	AI/gen AI capability	Some examples of tasks where AI and gen AI can support policymakers
Automate	Automate routine, repetitive administrative tasks to free up capacity	• Automate the curation of research reports and summarize insights • Automate the generation of routine administrative and compliance reports
Augment	Supplement available tools and resources to increase productivity	• Access laws and policies on command via chatbots • Augment human judgment in assessing compliance during audits and inspections
Extend	Execute and expand activities humans are unable to perform at scale	• Enable policy analysts to make sense of large volumes of qualitative research • Quickly analyze large data sets to identify trends and correlations, providing insights for policy development
Create	Generate new content, analyses, and ideas using gen AI	• Create models to test potential effects of proposed policies before implementation • Create reports and other policy outputs in engaging text and audiovisual formats for stakeholder briefings

This evolution provides insight into what technical and human-centric skill sets policy analysts should build ...

AI and tech skills

- Data interpretation
- Digital twins
- Prompt engineering
- AI ethics and bias awareness
- Data visualization

Human-centric skills

- Critical thinking
- Stakeholder management
- Political acumen
- Systems thinking
- Communication
- Public policy

... and what role they play in interacting with AI

AI Consumers	AI Builders	AI Pathfinders
They use AI tools in daily work to boost productivity, make data-driven decisions, and streamline tasks—all without needing deep technical expertise.	These technical experts design, develop, and maintain robust AI solutions that meet organizational needs.	They focus on strategic implications and opportunities, fostering an AI-enabled culture by identifying new applications instead of relying on deep technical skills.

Expert: Certain members of each group have higher levels of expertise and proficiency.

AI Ambassadors	AI Architects	AI Visionaries
Proficient in using AI tools, they promote AI adoption within their teams, provide guidance and training, and bridge the gap between technical groups and end users.	They design and manage complex AI projects, considering enterprisewide impacts and the integration of various systems.	They set the enterprise and external strategic direction for AI initiatives, leading the organization toward innovative AI adoption.

With AI changing the nature of work, what might the policy analyst role look like if it were reframed?

The agile policy analyst

Policy analysts are relied on for their knowledge, judgment, and ability to offer sound recommendations. Their effectiveness depends heavily on the quality of information at their disposal.

Armed with gen AI and other technologies, policy analysts of the future would be able to integrate sensing, foresight, and agility to quickly interpret large volumes of data. This would lead to exponentially greater situational awareness, analytical power, and agility.

From policy analyst to sandbox strategist

Using the power of AI and digital twins, policy analysts can play the role of strategists, dynamically testing the outcomes of potential policy actions in a virtual sandbox rather than relying solely on static data sources and research.

Analysts can model simulations with real data and make comparisons. The forecasts and insights from these experiments can realistically inform various policy decisions. They can also simulate stakeholder reactions and gauge how a particular group would likely react to a policy in its current form and then tweak it for greater acceptance.

Putting all the pieces together, what might an AI-amplified policy analyst look like in action?

Smarter scenario simulation

He's got all the tools he needs at his fingertips. Surrounded by screens displaying real-time traffic data, historical reports, and public feedback, Carl harnesses the power of generative AI and digital twin technology to generate detailed scenarios around future road infrastructure in the region. Ranging from full augmented reality integration to maintaining the status quo, his simulations reveal a tapestry of second- and third-order consequences for congestion, health and safety, new urban planning needs, environmental considerations, costs, and more. With each scenario, Carl uncovers insights that shape his policy recommendations.

The ability to think through every "what if" using real data is invaluable to Carl's work and the policy decisions he can influence.

Here's where some of this is starting make an impact today

Digital twins in Singapore

The Singapore government has created an advanced digital twin of the city-state using cutting-edge technology for urban planning and management. This detailed virtual replica integrates real-time data from sensors, IoT devices, and satellite imagery. It enables agencies to simulate urban scenarios, optimize infrastructure, and improve public services. By visualizing and predicting policy impacts, the digital twin supports informed decision-making and enhances residents' quality of life.

Note: IoT stands for Internet of Things.

Sources: Ibtekr, "How Singapore developed the world's first national digital twin," May 6, 2023; Govtech Singapore, "5 things to know about Virtual Singapore," March 28, 2017.

AI chatbots support staff at the US Department of State

The US State Department has integrated several AI tools to enhance efficiency and support its diplomatic mission. The internal AI chatbot, StateChat, assists employees in drafting emails, translating documents, and brainstorming policy ideas. Northstar helps summarize and analyze news stories from multiple countries, while FAM Search allows users to quickly find information in the extensive Foreign Affairs Manual. These AI tools, launched in 2024, aim to free up time for strategic work and improve analysis capabilities, with plans to further expand AI adoption through an AI marketplace.

Source: Madison Alder, "From translation to email drafting, State Department turns to AI to assist workforce," *FedScoop*, Dec. 11, 2024.

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