

U.S. Open Government Secretariat
Intentional Public Participation and Community Engagement in AI Design and
Implementation
December 11, 2024, 1:00 – 2:30pm, Virtual

Meeting Overview

Overview

Within the context of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy's AI and Public Participation module of the new Federal Framework for Public Participation and Community Engagement (PPCE), this 90-minute session was held on Zoom and featured state and local experiences from across the United States in building PPCE into AI design and implementation. Participants discussed opportunities and challenges in this emerging space and shared lessons learned. This event was co-hosted by the U.S. Open Government Secretariat and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

Agenda

1:00 - 1:02 pm	Announcements - Arthur Brunson, Deputy Director, U.S. Open Government Secretariat
1:02 – 1:05 pm	Welcome - Daniel Pomeroy, Deputy Associate Administrator, U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), Office of Government-wide Policy
1:05 - 1:08 pm	Introduction to Session and Framing Remarks - Jennifer Anderson Lewis, Senior Advisor for Open Government, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy
1:08 – 1:15 pm	Overview of White House/OSTP's Public Participation and Community Engagement in AI Design and Implementation Guide - Stephanie Farquhar, Presidential Innovation Fellow, White House Office of Management and Budget
1:15 - 2:05 pm	Moderated Panel - PPCE and AI in Action: Experiences from across the United States. Moderator: Jennifer Anderson Lewis, Senior Advisor for Open Government, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy
2:05 - 2:25 pm	Audience Q&A to Panelists - Moderator: Stephanie Farquhar, Presidential Innovation Fellow, White House Office of Management and Budget
2:25 – 2:28pm	Wrap up - Jennifer Anderson Lewis, Senior Advisor for Open Government, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy
2:28 - 2:30 pm	Thank you - Arthur Brunson, Deputy Director, U.S. Open Government Secretariat

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Opening Remarks

Dan Pomeroy, Deputy Associate Administrator for the Office of Technology Policy at the GSA, emphasized the U.S.'s commitment to transparency and public engagement through the Open Government Partnership (OGP). He highlighted the critical need for inclusivity and accountability in AI governance, especially as AI increasingly shapes government operations and public trust.

Jennifer Anderson Lewis, Senior Advisor for Open Government, reflected on how AI is poised to transform public service delivery and the lives of all Americans. She underscored the importance of public participation and engagement in AI design and implementation to ensure these government tools reflect community needs and build understanding and trust.

Presentation: Federal Framework for Public Engagement in AI

Stephanie Farquhar, Presidential Innovation Fellow, introduced the forthcoming **Public Participation and Community Engagement (PPCE) in AI Design and Implementation Guide**. She outlined key recommendations from the guide, including:

- **Planning Intentional Engagement:** Agencies should assess readiness, map stakeholders (including determining whose rights and safety are potentially impacted by the proposed AI tool), and craft AI-specific plans that identify purpose, appropriateness, and right level and depth of engagement.
- **Make stakeholder engagement accessible, trustworthy, and mutually beneficial:** Efforts should be approachable and accessible, should leverage partnerships to connect with impacted groups, should be respectful and foster trust and transparency, and should use iterative feedback mechanisms to learn and amplify what is working.
- **AI-Specific Considerations:** Efforts should address public concerns about AI misuse and harms through education and transparent monitoring, as well as proactively working to ensure AI fairness

Panel Discussion: Practical Applications Across Jurisdictions

The following panelists from various cities and states shared innovative practices and challenges:

- **Prakhar Bajpai**, Senior Data Scientist, Current member of City of Austin's AI Governance Committee and leads efforts on community involvement in AI design and implementation, City of Austin, Texas
- **Eleonor Bounds**, Data Privacy & Accountability Strategist, Seattle Information Technology Office, City of Seattle, Washington

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- **Greg Whisenant**, AI Policy Advisor Office of Artificial Intelligence Policy, Utah Department of Commerce
- **Ana Peralta Chammas**, Director of County Innovation, Miami-Dade County, Florida
- **Albert Gehami**, City of San José Privacy Officer, Information Technology Department, City of San Jose, California
- **Benjamin Palacio**, Senior IT Analyst, Public-Sector AI, Chatbot and Integration Expert, ESSG-Enterprise Solutions Team, Information Technology Department, Placer County, California

The following are highlights from each panelist's contributions to the discussion:

1. Prakhar Bajpai, City of Austin, TX

Prakhar Bajpai, IT Data Architect, detailed Austin's efforts to integrate AI accountability into its governance structures. Key initiatives included:

- **Accountability Framework:** Austin is co-creating and testing a framework for AI accountability with stakeholders such as the University of Texas and the Austin AI Alliance. This framework focuses on detecting and reporting AI errors, biases, and abuses.
- **Public Workshops:** Interactive community-based workshops have been organized to engage residents, including a collaboration with the Good Systems Lab at UT Austin. These sessions allow participants to discuss the societal impacts of AI and propose solutions.
- **Focus on Marginalized Communities:** The city prioritizes input from historically marginalized groups to address potential AI harms. Austin views ongoing engagement as essential to keeping AI tools fair, relevant, and adaptable.

2. Eleonor Bounds, City of Seattle, WA

Eleonor Bounds, Analyst in Privacy and Responsible AI, shared Seattle's focus on governance and inclusivity in AI design:

- **Tech Literacy and Education:** Seattle is emphasizing foundational knowledge about AI and government systems to empower residents to give meaningful feedback.
- **Addressing Neurodiversity:** The city is actively identifying gaps in how it supports neurodivergent residents in using technology and participating in public forums.
- **Public Trust:** Eleonor highlighted the risk of performative public comment processes, which can erode trust. Seattle strives to provide clear feedback loops, showing how public input informs policy decisions.

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3. Albert Gehami, City of San José, CA

Albert Gehami, Privacy Officer, focused on building trust and enhancing public engagement with AI:

- **Proactive Public Engagement:** San José has shifted conversations from fear to collaboration by attending community meetings and explaining the purpose, scope, and benefits of AI tools. For example, showing residents where they could benefit from technologies like surveillance cameras for school safety or emergency response.
- **Resident Empowerment with AI:** San José has taught residents how to use AI tools such as ChatGPT to better engage with government, such as drafting letters to council members.
- **GovAI Coalition:** Albert emphasized the value of the GovAI Coalition, a national network of over 500 agencies sharing AI best practices and solutions. The coalition's resources, such as procurement templates and AI inventories, have helped jurisdictions scale AI responsibly.

4. Ana Peralta Chammas, Miami-Dade County, FL

Ana Peralta Chammas, Director of Innovation, outlined the county's commitment to embedding community feedback into AI projects:

- **Boots-on-the-Ground Approach:** The county engages directly with residents at community centers to understand their needs. For example, residents contributed to designing processes for utility bill subsidies.
- **Beta Testing and Iteration:** The county will launch a **Beta Lab** in 2025 to pilot three to five AI projects, such as the **Paw Pet Match** chatbot. This tool uses AI to match pets with adopters, reducing returned pets and fostering humane outcomes.
- **Workforce Considerations:** Ana emphasized the importance of communicating AI's potential as a workforce augmentation tool rather than a replacement, particularly for government employees.

5. Greg Whisenant, State of Utah

Greg Whisenant, AI Policy Advisor, shared the state's policy-driven approach to AI governance:

- **AI Office Creation:** Utah established the Office of Artificial Intelligence Policy (through SB149) to address emerging AI challenges and foster innovation. The office runs learning agendas every six months to study new topics, such as AI's impact on mental health.

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- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Utah collaborates with academics, private industry, and residents to gather input and ensure ethical AI use. Recent efforts included regulating AI-driven mental health apps to balance innovation with consumer protection.
- **Regulatory Clarity:** By listening to diverse perspectives, the office helps define ethical boundaries for AI use while supporting a competitive tech ecosystem.

6. Benjamin Palacio, Placer County, CA

Benjamin Palacio, Senior IT Analyst, described the county's pragmatic AI implementations:

- **Chatbots for Accessibility:** Placer County implemented an AI chatbot on its 5,000-page website, simplifying public access to government services like building permits. The chatbot reduces response times and improves clarity by translating government jargon into plain language.
- **Metrics for Success:** The chatbot handles approximately 200 inquiries daily, saving an estimated \$360,000 annually in staff time.
- **AI as an Augmentation Tool:** Ben stressed that AI tools should enhance government operations, not replace workers, helping employees focus on strategic, higher-value tasks.

Common Themes Across Panelists

1. **Public Engagement Strategies:** All jurisdictions emphasized direct community involvement, proactive education, and transparency.
2. **Ethical AI Practices:** Addressing bias, equity, and privacy were critical to every panelist's strategy.
3. **Workforce Augmentation:** There was a shared recognition of AI's role in improving, not replacing, human capabilities.
4. **Collaboration Networks:** Many highlighted the value of collective learning and shared resources, such as the **GovAI Coalition**, to overcome resource limitations.
5. **Iteration and Learning Mindset:** Panelists noted that, given the rapid pace of innovation, engagement strategies were constantly evolving and having a learning mindset and trying new things were key elements of success.

This discussion underscored the diverse and creative approaches being tested across jurisdictions to make AI an equitable, accountable, and community-driven tool in governance.

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Key Opportunities and Challenges

1. Opportunities:

- Expanding public understanding and trust through transparency and proactive engagement.
- Leveraging academia and private sector expertise to co-develop ethical and effective AI systems.
- Creating networks like the **GovAI Coalition** to share best practices and policies across jurisdictions.

2. Challenges:

- Addressing public fears and misinformation about AI replacing jobs or infringing on privacy.
- Resource constraints for smaller agencies to implement inclusive and meaningful engagement strategies.
- Navigating complexities of multilingual and culturally sensitive communication.

Public Q&A Highlights

- **Metrics for Success:** Agencies track metrics such as time savings, cost reductions, and public satisfaction with AI tools.
- **Language Accessibility:** Hybrid approaches combine automated tools like Google Translate with in-house expertise to ensure critical accuracy.
- **Role of Academia:** Universities were identified as essential partners for workforce training, ethical research, and public education in AI.

Closing Remarks

The meeting concluded with an acknowledgment of the ongoing need for collaboration and learning across sectors to foster ethical AI governance. Participants were encouraged to stay engaged with the U.S. Open Government Secretariat. All materials from the event will be posted on the Secretariat's [website](#). Participants were also encouraged to follow the U.S. Open Government Secretariat on [LinkedIn](#).

Attendees

#	First Name Last Name	Organization
1	Natalie Hulsey	City of Austin Equity Office
2	Shruti Pandey	Administration for Children Services (ACS)
3	Stephen Buckley	Int'l. Assn. for Public Participation (U.S.)

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#	First Name Last Name	Organization
4	Jory Heckman	Federal News Network
5	Jennifer Atala	U.S. Dept of Homeland Security
6	Ana Castellanos	Portland State University
7	Susan Earley	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
8	Carlyn Osborn	Library of Congress
9	Mark Janchar	City of Austin
10	Jane Pennington	WA Dept of Ecology
11	Suzanne Crostic	Chesterfield County Local Government
12	Michelle Savage	XBRL US
13	R Metz	National Credit Union Administration
14	Michael Thomas	Information Security Oversight Office
15	Dr. Dwight Sanders	Federal Reserve Board
16	Ameena Hester	CEQ EJ Team
17	Suzanne Piotrowski	Rutgers University
18	Shaibya Dalal	EoP - Office of Management and Budget
19	Ro Encarnacion	Univ of Pennsylvania
20	Chris Stoner	Amazon Web Services (AWS)
21	Mike Gifford	CivicActions
22	Janine Ashe	U.S. Dept of Transportation
23	Mark Forman	Amida Technology Solutions
24	Carmem Domingues	EoP - Office of Management and Budget
25	Mamei Willie-Bonglo	U.S. General Services Administration
26	Katie Steen-James	Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC)
27	Phil Russell	
28	Sabrina Donley	CybrCastle
29	Zillery Fortner	Honeywell
30	Owen Ambur	

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#	First Name Last Name	Organization
31	Roshanak (Ro) Basty	University of Cincinnati
32	Sera Linardi	EAAMO
33	Dana Inzinna	DOI BOEM
34	Nathan Coffman	U.S. Dept of Treasury
35	Brian Peretti	U.S. Dept of Treasury
36	Mika'il Petin	States Newsroom
37	Michael Hunsberger	Harmonia Holdings Group, LLC
38	Matt Stempeck	Civic Tech Field Guide
39	Zong-Xian Huang	
40	Felicia Chao	U.S. Dept of Veterans Affairs
41	Ben Berres	U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services
42	Charlie Gillig	DOJ ATJ
43	Justin Magruder	SAIC
44	Genesis Torres	
45	Nicole Leondike	
46	Jadie Oldfield	
47	Ananda Bhatia	House Digital Service
48	Anita Shervington	BLAST Fest
49	Fritz Mulhauser	DC Open Government Coalition
50	Madison Snider	Siegel Family Endowment
51	Albert Thompson	ID Privacy AI
52	Annabel Osburn	City of Austin
53	Ian Huff	Partnership for Public Service
54	Madhavi B	
55	Richard Abisla	PIF
56	Ivor Horn	
57	Marta Miranda	Alma Cívica

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#	First Name Last Name	Organization
58	Monika Potgieter	
59	Anjali Patel	EEOC
60	Nishchal Chaudhary	
61	Adriana Luevanos	
62	Michael Kim	
63	Frederick Mobley	General Services Administration
64	Ingrid Will	
65	Silviu Adrian Varga	
66	Adrienne Ruth	
67	Willice Onyango	The Youth Cafe
68	Robert Harvey	RebuildingTheCommun7ty
69	Cliffton Styles	The Giving Rose Foundation ATX
70	Madhavan Pallan	
71	Frank LoMonte	
72	Jose Acevedo	
73	Maria Cordero Bojorque	
74	Nakia Graham	
75	Jennifer Cercone	
76	Jean-Paul Bessou	
77	Nicole Alberico	General Services Administration
78	Courtney Anderson	General Services Administration
79	Nathan Varnell	Data Foundation
80	Avery Freeman	Data Foundation
81	Bethany Cron	General Services Administration
82	Daniel York	General Services Administration
83	Jennifer Anderson Lewis	EoP - Office of Science and Technology Policy
84	Daniel Pomeroy	General Services Administration

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#	First Name Last Name	Organization
85	Prakhar Bajpai	City of Austin
86	Stephanie Farquhar	EoP - Office of Science and Technology Policy
87	Albert Gehami	City of San Jose
88	Eleonor Bounds	City of Seattle
89	Shannon Arvizu	US Dept of Commerce
90	Benjamin Palacio	Placer County, CA
91	Katie Arioli	General Services Administration
92	Zach Boyd	State of Utah
93	Arthur Brunson	General Services Administration
94	Ana Peralta Chammas	Miami Dade County
95	Denice Ross	EoP - Office of Science and Technology Policy
96	Greg Whisenant	State of Utah
97	Kelly Bunting	General Services Administration
98	Jason Chang	General Services Administration
99	Stuart Murphy	U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services
100	David Mullis	U.S. Small Business Administration
101	Michelle Ward	EoP - Office of Management and Budget
102	Burgan Shealy	General Services Administration
103	Herman VanLow	
104	Peter Schmiedeskamp	Amazon
105	Ana DeFrates	City of Austin
106	Molly Shannon	Fairfax County
107	Alexander Howard	