



Spencer J. Cox
Governor

EXECUTIVE ORDER
2026-08

Establishing Utah's Pro-Human Approach to Artificial Intelligence in State Government

WHEREAS, Utah recognizes that artificial intelligence (AI) represents a generational opportunity to expand capabilities and opportunities for the residents of Utah;

WHEREAS, Utahns have expressed legitimate concerns regarding the potential impacts of AI use in government;

WHEREAS, the choice between innovation and safety is a false one, and state government can use AI in an innovative way while doing so with appropriate safeguards,

WHEREAS, AI should strengthen human judgment, creativity, and responsibility rather than replace them, ensuring technology remains accountable to the people it serves;

WHEREAS, in December 2025, I established the Pro-Human AI Initiative to ensure developments in AI technology remain human-guided and human-enhancing, ensuring individuals stay in control of the AI tools that impact their work and lives;

WHEREAS, Utah is committed to responsible, pro-human AI implementation within state government, exemplifying how AI can be integrated both ethically and effectively;

WHEREAS, the State values its workforce and is committed to developing its employees as AI technology is adopted;

WHEREAS, a structured, ongoing approach to workforce AI literacy is essential to equipping state employees to safely interact with, evaluate, and responsibly deploy these technologies;

WHEREAS, the rapid advancement of AI requires trustworthy, privacy-preserving methods for verifying the authenticity of individuals, organizations, AI agents, and digital information that enable Utahns to confidently distinguish genuine interactions from synthetic or fraudulent ones while ensuring individual control over personal information; and

WHEREAS, Utah has established the State-Endorsed Digital Identity (SEDI) Framework to provide privacy-preserving, individually controlled, cryptographically verifiable digital identity and credentials that strengthen trust while preventing identity fraud, impersonation, unauthorized AI agent activity, and fraudulent digital content;

WHEREAS, Utah is engaged in ongoing statewide efforts to identify and implement AI-driven process improvements that increase efficiency, improve quality, foster transparency, and enhance decision making for the benefit of Utahns, while adhering to the foundational principles of Utah’s Pro-Human AI Initiative; and

WHEREAS, Utah will become the nation's leading example of how AI can expand human potential while preserving individual liberty, privacy, and democratic governance;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Spencer J. Cox, Governor of the State of Utah, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of this state, hereby order the following:

1) Purpose. The purpose of this executive order is to:

- a) Promote responsible AI use within government by utilizing Utah’s Pro-Human AI Initiative principles to evaluate AI tools;
- b) Designate procedures for the Department of Government Operations to lead the state in the use of AI-driven process improvements, choosing tools that adhere to Pro-Human AI principles,
- c) Invest in the state workforce by providing training and upskilling opportunities that equip employees to grow alongside AI, prioritizing the development of state employees;
- d) Provide a framework for agencies to improve services through the deployment of citizen-facing tools, while establishing guardrails and technical safeguards to protect state data; and
- e) Establish agency responsibilities to adhere to Pro-Human AI principles, maintain transparency, complete AI literacy training, and evaluate opportunities to responsibly optimize processes using AI technology.

2) Definitions. As used in this order:

- a) “Agency”
 - i) includes:
 - (1) A department, division, office, bureau, or other organization within the state executive branch, including the State Tax Commission, the National Guard, and the Board of Pardons and Parole; and
 - ii) does not include:
 - (1) an institution of higher education;
 - (2) the Utah Board of Higher Education;
 - (3) the State Board of Education;
 - (4) an independent entity as defined in Utah Code § 63E-1-102;
 - (5) the Attorney General's Office;
 - (6) the State Auditor's Office;
 - (7) the State Treasurer's Office;
 - (8) the Legislative Branch; or
 - (9) the Judicial Branch.

3) Foundational Principles. The use of AI technologies within the state government is to be pro-human. Agencies shall avoid AI technologies that do not adhere strictly to the foundational principles of Utah's Pro-Human AI Initiative:

Human-Guided: AI systems should protect human dignity, preserve human agency, and ensure individuals remain in control of the tools that shape their work and lives. AI should be understandable in how it functions, accountable in its impact, and adaptable to human needs.

Human-Enhancing: AI systems should amplify human potential by focusing on creating a value-based ecosystem that is pioneering in its vision, empowering in its outcome, and connective in how it brings people and ideas together.

4) The Department of Government Operations (DGO) Responsibilities. The Department of Government Operations (DGO) shall lead statewide efforts in AI-driven process improvements that increase efficiency, improve quality, and enhance decision-making for the benefit of Utahns in adherence to the foundational principles of Utah's Pro-Human AI Initiative. DGO shall:

- a) Establish guardrails and technical safeguards to protect State information technology assets, systems, and data from cyberattacks, malicious actors, and unauthorized or rogue AI agents, and provide Agencies with the guidance, resources, and technical support necessary to implement equivalent protections.
- b) Assist agencies in:
 - i) Identifying areas where AI could be deployed responsibly to reduce wait times, expand public services access, and improve operational outcomes while ensuring human-in-the-loop review for determinations affecting individual rights.
 - ii) Evaluating AI tools that can improve operational outcomes for Utahns while adhering to foundational principles of pro-human AI use.
- c) Develop and utilize the SEDI Framework, where applicable, as the State's strategic trust infrastructure for AI by enabling cryptographically verifiable identities, credentials, and data that protect privacy while preventing identity fraud, impersonation, unauthorized AI agent activity, and fraudulent digital content.

5) Agency Responsibilities. In coordination with the Division of Technology Services (DTS), each Agency, in adherence with Pro-Human AI principles, shall:

- a) Ensure that all applicable Agency employees complete AI literacy training prescribed by DTS and the Division of Human Resource Management (DHRM).
- b) Evaluate opportunities for optimizing and transforming state government business functions through the use of AI technology in a cost-effective manner.
- c) Actively investigate and propose areas where citizen-facing government processes and automated workflows can responsibly be optimized or transformed using AI technology.
- d) Maintain transparency regarding its use of AI technology by documenting how AI systems, including their inputs, outputs, and roles in decision-making, are integrated into Agency processes that impact the public.
- e) Collaborate with other agencies to share resources, best practices, and findings.

6) The Division of Technology Services (DTS) Responsibilities. DTS shall:

- a) In coordination with DHRM, and in adherence with Pro-Human AI principles, establish and implement a comprehensive training strategy for AI literacy for employees in all Agencies, which must include:
 - i) Foundational, general AI concepts;
 - ii) Practical, applicable, and beneficial uses of approved state AI tools; and
 - iii) Ethical and pro-human principles governing AI use.
- b) Develop specialized training on AI systems analysis for designated Agency leads who are accountable for evaluating and executing AI-assisted process improvements and ensuring that tools are deployed using Pro-Human principles.
- c) Evaluate scalable training platforms and content providers, prioritizing Utah-based entities, to optimize the delivery of AI literacy training.
- d) Coordinate the development and publication of uniform AI technology implementation standards for state government.

- e) Evaluate next-generation AI solutions to elevate the State's ability to detect and protect against cybersecurity threats at scale.

7) Applicability and Reporting

- a) The Commissioner of DGO shall provide a progress report to the Governor by July 1, 2027, and each July 1st thereafter.
- b) Nothing in this Order shall be construed to limit or alter an Agency's obligations under existing state or federal law, including the Government Records Access and Management Act (GRAMA), the Government Data Privacy Act (GDPA), or applicable federal privacy and civil rights law.

THIS ORDER is effective immediately and shall remain in effect until otherwise modified, amended, rescinded, or superseded.



ATTEST:

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Utah. Done on this, the 6th Day of October, 2026.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Spencer J. Cox".

Spencer J. Cox
Governor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deidre M. Henderson".

Deidre M. Henderson
Lieutenant Governor