AI Use Case Development Checklist

A best practice guide for public agencies

About This Checklist

As public agencies move from exploring artificial intelligence to implementing it, often the hardest first step is evaluating whether a specific use case is strategically sound, technically feasible, and responsibly governed. This checklist, developed by the Data Integration Support Center (DISC), provides a structured framework for that evaluation across 11 dimensions. It is a reference, not a pass/fail instrument: Not every item applies to every use case, and items outside a given context can be noted and set aside. These items are not all applicable in every specific use case, but instead give a comprehensive view of considerations, regardless of the tool or AI use case type. Use it to identify gaps, surface dependencies, and structure conversations across leadership, technical, and governance stakeholders.

For foundational guidance on defining AI use cases and assessing organizational readiness before working through this checklist, see DISC's Establishing Clear Use Cases for GenAI in Integrated Data Systems and Assessing Organizational Readiness for AI.

1. Strategic Alignment

- ☐ Identified which organizational goal or strategic priority the use case supports
- ☐ Confirmed alignment with agency mission and statutory authority
- ☐ Verified the use case does not duplicate an existing initiative or tool
- ☐ Assessed how the use case differentiates the agency's approach in the field

2. Use Case Definition

- ☐ Drafted a clear, specific title that a non-technical reader can understand
- ☐ Drafted a plain-language description covering what changes about agency capabilities
- ☐ Defined the specific problem or process the AI will address
- ☐ Identified the AI application tier for the use case (Digital Assistant, Process Automation, or Complex Problem Solving[1])
- ☐ Identified what "success" looks like (measurable outcomes or KPIs)

[1] See DISC's Establishing Clear Use Cases for GenAI in Integrated Data Systems for descriptions of each application tier

3. Beneficiary & Impact Analysis

- ☐ Identified the primary individuals or organizations who benefit
- ☐ Described the value this use case provides relative to what is otherwise available to beneficiaries
- ☐ Assessed whether the use case affects internal and external populations (students, minors, internal staff, non-English speaking citizens, justice-involved individuals, etc.)
- ☐ Rated overall value: Low / Medium / High

4. Feasibility—Technology

- ☐ Assessed current AI capability maturity within the agency: Not acquired / Progressing / Integrated
- ☐ Identified the specific AI technologies/models required (NLP, computer vision, generative AI)
- ☐ Determined whether the solution will be built, bought, or configured from existing tools
- ☐ Evaluated infrastructure readiness(compute, storage, integration points) for the AI solution
- ☐ Confirmed data availability, quality, and accessibility to support the AI solution

5. Feasibility—Risk Mitigation

- ☐ Identified key risks (e.g. bias, hallucination, data leakage, misuse, over-reliance)
- ☐ Rated risk mitigation effort: Low / Medium / High
- ☐ Defined human-in-the-loop requirements and escalation paths
- ☐ Assessed impact of AI failure or degraded performance on operations and constituents
- ☐ Documented plans for testing, validation, and ongoing monitoring
- ☐ Confirmed that agentic AI workflows have been assessed to ensure appropriate controls are in place with delegation, permissible action, and behavioral monitoring.
- ☐ Identified AI-specific cybersecurity threats (e.g., prompt injection, data poisoning, adversarial inputs, or model extraction) and documented mitigations distinctly from general IT security controls

6. Feasibility—Stakeholder Support

- ☐ Identified external stakeholders (community members, partner agencies, advocacy groups, data providers) who may be impacted by the AI use case
- ☐ Rated stakeholder support: Low / Medium / High
- ☐ Identified executive sponsor(s) and decision makers
- ☐ Assessed staff readiness (training and/or retraining) and appetite for adoption
- ☐ Planned for stakeholder communication and change management

7. Resources & Funding

- ☐ Estimated costs for procurement, data readiness activities, implementation, training, and testing
- ☐ Identified funding source(s) and any grant or compliance constraints on use of funds
- ☐ Assessed staffing needs (internal FTEs, contractors, vendor support)
- ☐ Accounted for ongoing operational and maintenance costs beyond initial deployment

8. Governance, Privacy & Compliance

- ☐ Reviewed applicable federal, state, and local regulations (FERPA, CIPA, FTI, etc.)
- ☐ Conducted or planned a Data Privacy Impact Assessment (DPIA)
- ☐ Established data governance protocols (access controls, retention, minimization)
- ☐ Documented AI transparency and explainability requirements
- ☐ Confirmed alignment with agency AI responsible/ethical use policies (or flagged the need to create them)
- ☐ Defined data ownership, licensing, and portability terms for all AI inputs, outputs, and derivative works

9. Complexity & Dependencies

- ☐ Identified cross-agency or cross-system dependencies
- ☐ Documented integration requirements with existing platforms or data systems
- ☐ Assessed vendor dependencies and lock-in risks
- ☐ Noted any legal, procurement, or policy prerequisites that must be resolved first

10. Project Team & Timeline

- ☐ Confirmed that the AI implementation team's expertise meets the requirements for the chosen AI application tier
- ☐ Established a realistic development and deployment timeline
- ☐ Defined key milestones and decision gates (proof of concept, go/no-go, pilot, full rollout)
- ☐ Planned for iterative evaluation and maturity progression

11. Sustainability & Scalability

- ☐ Assessed whether the use case can scale beyond the initial scope or pilot
- ☐ Identified long-term ownership and maintenance responsibility
- ☐ Planned for model retraining, updates, and version control
- ☐ Considered how success with this use case informs the agency's broader AI roadmap
- ☐ Established criteria and process for decommissioning the AI system if it does not meet expectations, causes harm, or is superseded by a more robust solution
- ☐ Evaluated industry peer groups for whether the chosen AI model, tool, or vendor has significant adoption with successful implementation results

How DISC Can Help

DISC at WestEd can facilitate productive conversations and assist in the development of an AI strategy for an organization's integrated data system (IDS). DISC offers technical assistance to public agencies free of cost. For more information on DISC's AI services, visit disc.wested.org/focus-areas/ai/.