

The Two Questions

Before you build a governance structure, run this scan.

Use this page in a single sitting — thirty to forty-five minutes, alone or with one trusted colleague. If the honest answer to any sub-question is “I don’t know” or “nobody,” that is not a failure. That is your first governance decision. Circle it and move to the action block at the bottom.

QUESTION ONE — CAPABILITY

Do we know what we have?

1 What AI tools are staff actually using right now?

Not what you authorized. What they are actually using — including free consumer tools on personal accounts.

2 Which vendors just added AI features to their products in the last twelve months?

Check your top five software contracts. Look at recent release notes. Check terms-of-service updates.

3 Who can evaluate a contract that now involves an AI component?

Contract IT? A regional partner? A neighboring county’s CIO? Name the person or the arrangement.

QUESTION TWO — CAPACITY

Do we have the people?

1 Who chairs the governance body?

One person. By name. Has the authority to make a call when the body cannot reach one.

2 Who reviews AI outputs before anything goes public?

Every AI-drafted press release, advisory, or client communication. A named reviewer. On the record.

3 Who handles an incident at 9 PM on a Tuesday?

When — not if — something goes wrong. Who gets the first call? What is the second call?

If any answer above is “I don’t know” or “nobody” —

name the person who will find the answer, and the date.

Who will find the answer:

By when:

Reports back to:

The Five Pieces

A first draft of your governance structure, on one page.

The five pieces below are scaffolding. Use the right column to write what each piece will look like in your department. Pick one of the example columns as your starting point, or write something new.

	PIECE	LARGER DEPARTMENT	SMALL / RURAL DEPARTMENT	OUR DEPARTMENT
1	A named oversight body	AI committee with 5–7 members across IT, legal, programs, and leadership.	Two or three people with other jobs, meeting monthly.	
2	A chair	Dedicated role — often a Deputy Commissioner or CIO.	You, or your deputy. One person with the authority.	
3	An escalation path	Tiered — staff handles routine, body reviews new tools, commissioner approves high-risk.	Simpler — “if PHI or public-facing, it comes to the chair.”	
4	A review cadence	Quarterly meetings, annual full policy review.	Annual review, plus a trigger: any new AI vendor contract.	
5	A decision record	Minutes, decision log, inventory of approved and rejected tools.	A shared document. One line per decision. Date, tool, decision, who.	

Two commitments that turn this worksheet into real governance —

WHO CHAIRS OUR GOVERNANCE BODY

Name. Title. One person with the authority.

FIRST MEETING OF THE GOVERNANCE BODY

Date. On the calendar. Not a series — one meeting.

Four Controls That Close the Doors

One row per control. Status, owner, date. A working project plan.

Each control below maps to one of the three doors introduced in the security segment. Mark the status. Name the owner. Set a target date. Bring this sheet to your next governance-body meeting.

	CONTROL	STATUS	OWNER & DATE
1	<p>CLOSES DOOR 1</p> <p>An approved tools list</p> <p>A written list of the AI tools you have vetted and contracted with. If it is not on the list, confidential information does not go near it.</p> <p>FIRST STEP <i>Draft the list. Even three tools is enough to start.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Have this <input type="checkbox"/> In progress <input type="checkbox"/> Need this	<p>OWNER</p> <hr/> <p>TARGET DATE</p> <hr/>
2	<p>CLOSES DOOR 2</p> <p>Human review before anything public</p> <p>Every AI-drafted output has a named reviewer before it leaves the department. Not “the team.” A person, by name, on the record.</p> <p>FIRST STEP <i>Name the reviewer role. Put it in writing.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Have this <input type="checkbox"/> In progress <input type="checkbox"/> Need this	<p>OWNER</p> <hr/> <p>TARGET DATE</p> <hr/>
3	<p>CLOSES DOOR 3</p> <p>The four vendor questions</p> <p>Every new contract and every renewal answers four questions: Does this product use AI? How? What data does it send? Who gets notified in an incident?</p> <p>FIRST STEP <i>Hand the four questions to whoever runs procurement.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Have this <input type="checkbox"/> In progress <input type="checkbox"/> Need this	<p>OWNER</p> <hr/> <p>TARGET DATE</p> <hr/>
4	<p>CLOSES ALL THREE</p> <p>An AI-specific incident response plan</p> <p>When — not if — something goes wrong, you have a written playbook. Who gets called. In what order. What the department says publicly.</p> <p>FIRST STEP <i>Add an AI section to your existing incident response plan.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Have this <input type="checkbox"/> In progress <input type="checkbox"/> Need this	<p>OWNER</p> <hr/> <p>TARGET DATE</p> <hr/>

REVIEW DATE

The date the governance body will review progress on all four controls.

The Traffic Light

Translate the framework to your department. Your office's examples in each tier.

Each tier shows the test and the condition from the security segment, plus a few starter examples. In the bottom of each column, write three to five examples from your own office that fit each tier. These are the examples you will hand to staff on Monday.

GREEN GO	YELLOW USE WITH CONTROLS	RED STOP + ESCALATE
<p>Public information only. No names, no PHI, no internal non-public data.</p> <p><i>A human reviews the output before it goes out.</i></p>	<p>Internal information, but no PHI and no identifiable resident info.</p> <p><i>Must be an approved tool, vetted by your department.</i></p>	<p>PHI, identifiable residents, case files, personnel, investigations.</p> <p><i>Governance body decides.</i></p>
<p>STARTER EXAMPLES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drafting a press release for a public meeting• Summarizing a published journal article• Brainstorming a vaccine outreach campaign	<p>STARTER EXAMPLES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summarizing an internal memo• Drafting responses to routine public inquiries• Cleaning up staff-retreat meeting notes	<p>STARTER EXAMPLES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anything involving a named resident• Case intake notes• Disease surveillance tied to individuals
<p>EXAMPLES FROM OUR OFFICE</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>EXAMPLES FROM OUR OFFICE</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>EXAMPLES FROM OUR OFFICE</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Red is where governance lives. Yellow is where policy works. Green is where productivity lives.