

Best Practices for Adoption

Best Practices for GenAI Use Guidance Rollout

By Hande Güven and Jessica Wang

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These best practices were developed by Aspen Policy Academy fellows while participating in the Science and Technology Policy Fellowship. They were asked to recommend updates to the New York City Office of Technology and Innovation's [Artificial Intelligence Action Plan](#). This document is intended to help agencies incorporate generative AI into their work in accordance with the Use Guidance for Generative AI developed for this project. The full project, including a policy brief explaining the fellows' core recommendations, is [available here](#). Please note that all authors' opinions published here are their own. This publication does not reflect the views of the Aspen Policy Academy or the Aspen Institute.

Overview

Rolling out generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) use guidance in city contexts requires more than just publishing a document. Successful adoption depends on thoughtful planning, clear communication, and continuous iteration. The best practices outlined here are designed to support agencies in developing guidance that is not only aligned with strategic goals but also usable, maintainable, and adaptable over time.

These recommendations emphasize the importance of thinking through the full life cycle of a document, in the context in which it will be consumed, from a user-centric perspective: starting with a values-based foundation, offering layered guidance tailored to different users, creating feedback loops, and preparing for regular updates. By approaching GenAI use guidance as both a policy tool and a user resource, agencies can foster more responsible, informed, and effective use of generative AI technologies.

1. Clearly articulate strategic goals and priorities

Before drafting practical guidance on GenAI use, it is essential to define a clear strategic outlook grounded in your agency's core values and priorities. This clarity would ensure that the guidance is not only actionable but also aligned with the broader mission of the agency and the public interest.

One of the most effective ways of accomplishing this is to articulate the agency's or city's guiding principles related to GenAI use. For example, New York City's [AI Principles](#) define 5 key categories, including "Validity and Reliability" and "Information Privacy," and specify that all subsequent guidance and actions should be rooted in these same 5 categories. A foundational framework that incorporates these principles will help create consistency in the way that risks are evaluated and guardrails are set, as well as what responsible use looks like in practice.

2. Create a Quickstart Guide

Full GenAI use guidance is important to document thoroughly. However, such documents can become long and difficult for every audience to consume in detail. To ensure accessibility and clarity of your bottom line guidance for GenAI use, provide a concise and accessible Quickstart Guide that includes the following:

- A statement of your GenAI strategic goals and priorities;
- For advisory guidance, key questions to consider regarding your GenAI use;
- For prescriptive and enforceable guidance, key do's and don'ts;
- A clear link to the full, detailed guidance; and
- A clear point of contact for questions or concerns.

The Quickstart Guide should be written in plain language and made available in accessible formats.

3. Provide detail in tool-specific guides

Supplement the main use guidance with practical, tool-specific how-to guides. These documents should be rooted in real, everyday use cases that users in your jurisdiction encounter. They can help users translate abstract principles into daily practice. Contents may include the following:

- **Prompting guides:** A key factor shaping the performance of GenAI tools is the quality of the user's "prompt" — the query that the user enters into a GenAI tool. A prompting guide provides examples of effective prompts for common tasks like summarizing, drafting, brainstorming, translating, or classifying. A prompting guide also instructs users on how to write their own specific and contextual prompts to produce better-quality results from GenAI tools.

- **Known limitations:** Today's GenAI tools do not achieve consistent performance across tasks, and in fact can perform quite poorly in certain areas. In high-risk scenarios, these limitations can be dangerous. Tool-specific guides should provide clear warnings about known scenarios in which particular GenAI tools tend to perform poorly (e.g., legal or medical advice, hallucination-prone tasks, ambiguous queries) and offer caveats about the risks associated with these limitations.
- **Responsible use scenarios:** Tool-specific guides should provide examples of tasks where GenAI can be deployed in lower-risk scenarios and where extra human scrutiny or alternative tools are required. Human oversight is always recommended with any GenAI use.
- **Security and privacy considerations:** Guides should offer reminders about appropriate data handling, including what kinds of inputs are prohibited (e.g., personally identifiable information, confidential information), and refer to any relevant security and privacy policies.

4. Review and test the usability of the guidance

Guidance is easy to overlook when it is rolled out as a long text document, as users may find it tedious or frustrating to consume. Small changes in the visual presentation of the guidance can go a long way toward improving its readability and usability. The following methods are recommended:

- Have a user experience or graphic designer give your guidance a visual treatment to highlight the structure of the document and emphasize key points using color, font, and sizing. Employ visual hierarchy intentionally to make the document easier to consume — for example, emphasize key takeaways with highlighted sections and relevant icons. Keep the visual treatment simple but engaging.
- Test both the presentation and the content of your guidance with end users and incorporate their feedback into subsequent iterations of the document before and after rollout.
- Consider supplementing your guidance with more interactive artifacts such as images and flowcharts. If resources allow, turning the guidance into an interactive website is a great way to make the document more accessible.

5. Establish feedback channels

Establish feedback mechanisms that allow users to report on how the tools and guidance are working in practice. These methods are recommended:

- A designated email or feedback form linked in all guidance documents and in the GenAI tool interface;
- Regular user check-ins or office hours;
- Anonymous surveys after major rollouts or updates; and
- Slack or Teams channels or internal forums for peer discussion and shared learnings.

Ensure that feedback loops include a way for policy or IT teams to act on concerns and communicate responses back to users.

6. Establish clear processes for updating use guidance

To ensure that the guidance remains useful and relevant, create a structured update process that supports both scheduled and responsive revisions. These are some best practices:

- Schedule standing quarterly reviews to revisit the state of GenAI technology and consider whether the guidance needs updating.
- Maintain a changelog or revision history at the end of the document, noting what changed, when, and why.
- Highlight major updates in a “What’s New” box or summary page at the front of the document.
- Notify users across multiple channels (e.g., email, intranet, agency meetings) when the guidance is revised.
- Create live space for feedback and concerns regarding latest updates. Examples include setting up special office hours or an onboarding meeting for agency stakeholders.
- Log emerging risks or policy shifts that may trigger unscheduled updates (e.g., new tool capabilities, legal developments).

If you'd like to learn more, see the full project, including a policy brief explaining the fellows' core recommendations, at aspenpolicyacademy.org/project/nyc-genai-guidance-2025.



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