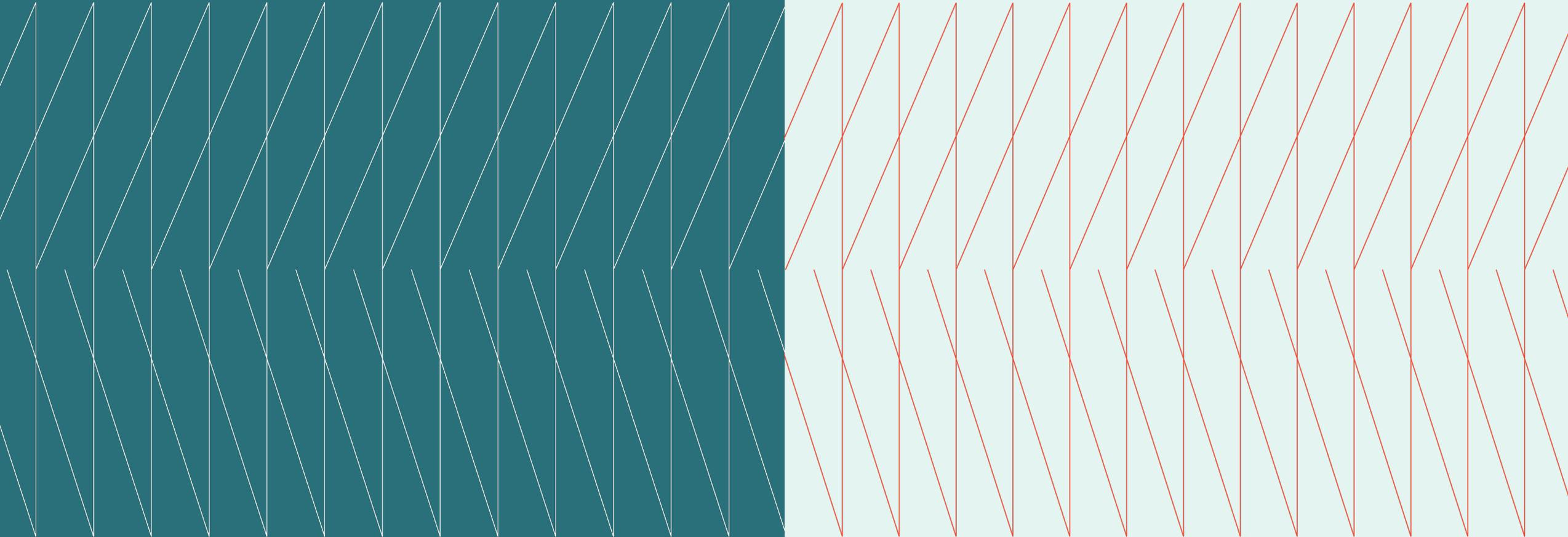


Government CIO

# Expert Exchange

Executive Summary  
December 12, 2025





# Overview

A group of government executives representing multiple state and local jurisdictions met for an expert exchange to discuss strategic technology challenges and priorities as they close out 2025 and look ahead to 2026.

# Host(s)

Anita Mikus, Managing Director,  
US State and Local Government,  
Kyndryl

Jeff Pany, Enterprise Architect,  
Kyndryl

# Key topics

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# Navigating Political and Administrative Transitions

- Executives shared successful strategies for ensuring the continuity and longevity of technology programs when facing impending political shifts and resource constraints, focusing on embedding services deeply and securing multi-year funding.
- Executives facing confirmed administration changes prioritize establishing funding structures that extend beyond the transition date, seeking to codify program support into hard policy or legislation to shield initiatives from potential budget cuts.

- One leader noted that embedding programs deeply within essential organizational processes makes them “sticky” and difficult to remove, which is critical when budgets are tight and administrations look for centralized services to cut or redistribute.
- When preparing for new administrations, leaders emphasized the importance of telling a data-driven story, using solid performance metrics to immediately demonstrate a program's value when officials ask which services to reduce or expand.

- Participants described diverging experiences regarding financial autonomy: some jurisdictions experienced a loss of purchasing flexibility and delays (up to nine months) in spending funds already allocated, while another agency reported gaining increased budget autonomy for individual internal organizations.

**“We are trying to get our programs embedded in ways that they just can’t be removed, prioritizing anything we see that is sticky because that is the only way that programs survive when budgets are tight.”**

**– Government CIO Expert Exchange Participant**

# Overcoming Bureaucracy and Expediting Project Timelines

- The exchange clarified that internal organizational processes, rather than capacity issues, commonly cause significant delays in contracts and technology adoption, highlighting the need for extensive upfront planning and effective communication to achieve true “agility.”

- One executive stated that slowing down government initiatives often occurs when someone references an existing policy or process, requiring an entire new cycle of review or approval, creating a deep nesting of process hurdles. This contrasts with the private sector, where delays often result from conversational challenges.
- One participant detailed the necessity of two years of initial legwork and scoping conversations before publicly surfacing a contract, allowing them to wait for the optimal executive sponsor and legislative timing, giving the appearance of a very fast, or agile, deployment.

- One leader successfully countered internal gatekeeping and time delays by adopting a risk-based approach, which was effective in justifying the “why” of technological innovation to non-technical stakeholders involved in budget and contracts.
- Participants agreed that projects mandated by board or statutory requirements tend to accelerate rapidly, suggesting that when the political will is aligned, the process problems causing common delays seem to magically disappear.

**“There is so much legwork that goes in ahead of time before you even really surface these things at a high level; preparation is where the magic comes in.”**

**– Government CIO Expert Exchange Participant**

# Enhancing Citizen Services through Mobile Channels and Digital Identity

- Executives detailed ongoing work to modernize citizen interactions by building comprehensive mobile channels, integrating digital identity verification, and extending identity benefits to niche use cases like disabled parking credentials.
- Several jurisdictions are moving past standalone applications to build single, comprehensive mobile channels that provide users with personalized information, such as vehicle status or license expiration alerts, even though usage volume may be low given that citizens interact with the agencies only every few years.

- One agency has made substantial progress using identity wallets (native and via major mobile operating systems) to enable frictionless remote identity verification for online transactions, leveraging their existing photo records to ensure authenticity.
- A department is exploring providing digital versions of documents like vehicle titles and disabled parking placards through the mobile wallet; however, participants debated whether high-value items like titles should be permanently stored on the device or restricted to temporary, view-only authentication.

- Leaders acknowledged the need to address digital inclusion for clients, such as elderly citizens, who may not own smartphones; they affirmed that mobile engagement would remain an option, ensuring physical placards and traditional services remain available.
- To combat fraud, one agency has added a QR code and online verification metadata to permanent credentials, enabling parking enforcement to verify authenticity digitally and remotely revoke the credential status, even when officials are conducting checks in an offline environment.

**“We have the system of record there, so we take advantage of that now to do identity verification and create frictionless journeys.”**

**– Government CIO Expert  
Exchange Participant**

# Strategic Implementation and Governance of Agentic AI

- Discussions confirmed that agentic AI is a critical focus for 2026, centering on three main areas of application: customer contact centers, back-office operations, and the software development life cycle, while emphasizing the need for robust risk governance.
- In customer contact centers, agentic AI solutions move beyond simple chatbots by having secure access to customer records via application programming interfaces (APIs) to provide specific, personalized fulfillment (like starting a form or checking a driver's license status), though this requires customer authentication.

- The deployment of agents in back-office operations focuses on “lightweight decisions and actions,” such as automatically managing helpdesk tickets for thousands of employees or facilitating password resets, while actively limiting high-risk actions like automatically restarting servers until greater certainty is achieved.
- Executives are exploring future integration into the software development life cycle, where agents could evaluate requirements, generate tests for identified gaps, and potentially self-fuel and execute automation scripts written with various tools.

- Leaders stressed that strategic implementation must prioritize high-level governance frameworks that evaluate the risk profile of specific actions and the data sets being utilized; this is necessary to determine the appropriate firewalls and gating mechanisms around large data sets, particularly those containing sensitive personal data.

“Generative artificial intelligence (AI) would generate the responses and the answers, but the agents are going to act on that information.”

– Government CIO Expert Exchange Participant

Access Kyndryl’s 90-day agentic AI roadmap for government

[Learn more](#)



The Expert Exchange is hosted by Kyndryl, Inc. For questions about Kyndryl services or future Expert Exchange sessions, please contact Anita Mikus or Jeff Pany.

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