

NJAC COUNTY BIZ

An Educational and Informative Newsletter for Counties and Businesses

New Jersey Association of Counties

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The AI Policy Gap: Why Local Governments Need Guardrails Before Tools

By Himanshu Goil, CEO, TechForGov & Dana Zampella, Client Executive, Insight Public Sector New Jersey

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is already reshaping how government works — from intelligent document processing to 24x7 resident-facing chatbots. But for many counties and municipalities, the adoption of AI has raced ahead of the policies that should govern it.

We are entering an era where “**move fast and break things**” is no longer an acceptable mantra — especially when public trust, sensitive data, and equitable service delivery are on the line.

For New Jersey’s counties, the time to act is now. Not just to adopt AI, but to build the **guardrails** that ensure it’s safe, ethical, and transparent.

The Policy Gap in Local Government

Today, most local governments face one of two extremes when it comes to AI:

- **Paralysis:** Avoiding AI altogether out of fear of unintended consequences.
- **Blind Adoption:** Piloting tools with little to no oversight or internal alignment.

Both paths are risky. And both highlight the same core issue — the lack of a clear **AI policy framework** at the local level.

While state and federal agencies are still refining broad AI governance principles, **counties and municipalities are on the front lines**. They cannot afford to wait.

What Makes AI Different from Traditional IT?

Many local leaders ask, “*We already have data and IT policies — isn’t that enough?*”

Unfortunately, no.

AI systems are fundamentally different in ways that challenge traditional policy assumptions:

- **AI learns from data**, meaning it can reflect — or amplify — existing biases.
- **AI decisions are often opaque**, making it hard to trace how a decision was made (a concept known as “black box” logic).
- **AI can operate autonomously**, introducing new accountability questions for both elected officials and staff.
- **AI uses cloud-based APIs and LLMs**, raising questions about where public data goes, how it’s processed, and whether it meets state-level compliance rules.

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The AI Policy Gap: Why Local Governments Need Guardrails Before Tools (continued)

All of this demands **new thinking** – and new policy.

Building Guardrails: Where Counties Can Start

Rather than waiting for perfect laws or federal mandates, counties can take practical steps today to develop their own **AI usage policies**:

1. Create a Local AI Principles Charter

Establish a set of values to guide any AI initiative. For example:

- AI should **enhance**, not replace, human decision-making.
- AI should be **transparent and explainable**.
- AI must **respect privacy and data sovereignty**.
- AI systems must be **auditable** and accountable.

This can be a short, one-page living document endorsed by county leadership.

2. Identify AI Use Cases – and Red Lines

Map where AI is being (or could be) used. At the same time, define boundaries: For example, “AI will never be used to make final eligibility determinations for public services.”

This keeps departments aligned and prevents unintended misuse.

3. Review Vendor Contracts for AI Terms

Ensure contracts include:

- Data ownership and usage clauses
- Transparency around models used
- Requirements for human oversight
- Cybersecurity safeguards for AI-connected systems

If vendors are vague about how their AI works, that's a red flag.

4. Establish an AI Oversight Working Group

This can be cross-functional – IT, legal, department heads, HR, and community reps. It ensures multiple perspectives are considered and helps assess impact over time.

5. Educate Staff and Residents

AI literacy is essential. Offer workshops or learning sessions for county employees. Share plain-language FAQs with the public. Transparency builds trust.

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The AI Policy Gap: Why Local Governments Need Guardrails Before Tools (continued)

A New Responsibility for County Leadership

AI won't replace local government. But it *will* change it. Leaders who set clear expectations today will not only protect their residents — they'll position their counties as models of modern, ethical governance.

AI policy isn't about red tape. It's about **readiness**. The kind that lets your team move forward confidently, knowing the right checks are in place.

Final Word

In the next few years, your county might deploy an AI chatbot, adopt a smart permitting system, or use AI to analyze grant spending patterns. These tools can help — but only if they're built on a foundation of **accountability, transparency, and trust**.

Let's close the policy gap now — and make sure New Jersey's future with AI is both innovative and responsible.

In partnership with Insight, TechForGov supports this journey through the IGNA™ Framework for responsible AI. For more information, visit Insight [here](#).

To schedule an appointment please contact Himanshu Goil via email at himanshu.goil@ignatiuz.com or call (484) 200-7375 or contact Dana Zampella via email at Dana.Zampella@insight.com or call (732) 648 - 8775.



BECOME A MEMBER OF THE NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

Learn about the benefits of being a part of NJAC and how you can join.

Contact Loren Wizman, Business Development Director at
(609) 394-3467 or loren@njac.org

Discover What's New In The NJSTART Marketplace

By Tania Dinis, Marketing Communications Manager, SOVRA

Purchasing just got a whole lot easier for New Jersey's public agencies. The **NJSTART Marketplace**—the state's official procurement platform—has been upgraded with new tools and features that make it faster, smarter, and more convenient to buy the goods and services your agency needs.

Whether you're outfitting a department, sourcing technology, or restocking supplies, the enhanced NJSTART Marketplace is designed to support your workflow from start to finish.

What's New?

Direct Vendor Communication

Have questions about a product or service? Now you can message vendors directly through the platform to get timely answers, quotes, or support.

Contracted Vendor Punchouts

Browse and shop from contracted vendor catalogs right inside the Marketplace—seamlessly and securely.

Effortless Cart Sharing

Speed up internal approvals and streamline your purchasing process with the new cart sharing functionality.

Intuitive User Interface

An updated look and feel makes browsing more efficient, so you can find what you need with fewer clicks.

Smart Filtering & Keyword Search

Quickly search by contract category, vendor, or item using a single, powerful search field. It's never been easier to locate contracts that meet your needs.

Statewide Purchasing Power

Access **competitive pricing** through **reliable, vetted contracts** that meet all state procurement laws—so you can buy with confidence.

A Wide Selection at Your Fingertips

The NJSTART Marketplace offers an expansive range of products and services—all in one centralized platform.

Whether you're a seasoned procurement professional or just starting to use NJSTART, these enhancements are built to simplify your purchasing journey and help you make informed, compliant decisions.

See It in Action

NJSTART holds quarterly webinars where we provide helpful information and tips and tricks on how to use NJSTART. If you are interested in signing up for these webinars, are having a personal training session for yourself or your team, please contact us at coop-njstart@mdfcommerce.com.

For more information, visit njstart.info.



PKA Technologies, Inc. Named Authorized Contract Reseller For Dell New Jersey NASPO 23026 Contract

By Nicole Buccola, Marketing Assistant, PKA Technologies, Inc.

PKA Technologies, Inc., a leading IT solutions provider committed to delivering innovative and secure technology infrastructure, is proud to announce its designation as an

Authorized Contract Reseller for the Dell New Jersey NASPO ValuePoint 23026 Contract.

This recognition enables PKA Technologies to provide Dell products and solutions under the NASPO ValuePoint contract, offering streamlined purchasing and competitive pricing to government, education, and non-profit organizations throughout the state of New Jersey.

The NASPO (National Association of State Procurement Officials) ValuePoint cooperative purchasing program is one of the most respected public contract vehicles in the nation, providing public entities access to best-in-class technology with the assurance of compliance, value, and efficiency.

“We are honored to expand our long-standing partnership with Dell and proud to support public sector organizations in New Jersey through this trusted procurement vehicle,” said Felise Katz, CEO of PKA Technologies, Inc. “This opportunity strengthens our commitment to delivering the highest quality IT solutions with integrity, responsiveness, and expert guidance.”

With this new status, PKA Technologies is poised to deepen its impact across New Jersey, offering industry-leading Dell hardware, software, and services tailored to the unique needs of local government, education institutions, and other public organizations.

For more information about purchasing through the Dell New Jersey NASPO 23026 contract with PKA Technologies, please visit www.pkatech.com or contact solutions@pkatech.com.

About PKA Technologies, Inc.

Founded in 1996, PKA Technologies, Inc. is a woman-owned, certified WBE IT solutions provider. With a focus on strategic partnerships and a commitment to customer success, PKA delivers tailored, end-to-end solutions that help organizations harness the power of technology to achieve their goals.



The Summer Surplus Calendar: When Timing Equals Money

By Shari Williams, Content Creator, GovDeals

Most county administrators know that surplus disposal generates revenue, but few realize how much timing affects those final sale prices. Understanding seasonal demand patterns can mean the difference between getting fair value and maximizing taxpayer returns.

Construction Equipment: Strike While the Iron's Hot

Heavy equipment, trucks, and construction materials hit peak demand from May through September. Contractors are actively working, equipment rental rates are highest, and buyers are willing to pay premium prices for immediate availability. Contractors are willing to pay premium prices for immediate availability during peak construction season.

The key is listing construction-related surplus by early summer, not waiting until fall when demand drops and buyers start planning for winter shutdowns.

Vehicles: School's Out, Prices Up

Fleet vehicles, especially trucks, vans, and SUVs, see their strongest resale market from June through August. Why? Businesses are replacing their own fleets during slower periods, families are shopping for vacation vehicles, and other municipalities are making budget-year purchases.

School-related vehicles (buses, maintenance trucks) should hit the market in late spring or early summer when districts are planning for fall operations, not during the academic year when budgets are tight and procurement processes are complicated.

Office Equipment: Timing the Technology Cycle

Furniture, computers, and office equipment follow a different pattern. The best-selling periods are typically March-May and September-October, coinciding with fiscal year planning and back-to-school corporate refreshes. Summer actually represents a slower period for office surplus.

However, if you're planning office moves or renovations for summer months, list the surplus equipment in late spring to catch the pre-summer buying wave.

Lawn and Grounds Equipment: Obvious but Overlooked

Mowers, landscaping equipment, and grounds maintenance tools should be listed in March and April, not during peak mowing season when everyone already has what they need. The exception is specialized equipment that contractors might need for specific projects.

The Calendar Reality Check

Here's what many counties miss: matching your surplus disposal timeline to your operational calendar, not the market calendar. If you're replacing snow plows in May, don't wait until November to sell the old ones. If you're upgrading office furniture in August, list it in June.

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The Summer Surplus Calendar: When Timing Equals Money *(continued)*

The most successful counties track both their replacement cycles and market demand patterns. They build 60-90 day lead times into their surplus planning, ensuring items hit the market when buyers are most active and willing to pay premium prices.

How to Make It Work

Start by reviewing your county's typical replacement schedule for major equipment categories. Then work backward from optimal selling seasons to determine when items should be declared surplus and listed. This planning approach consistently generates better returns than reactive surplus disposal.

For counties working with online auction platforms, timing becomes even more critical since you're competing with surplus from across the country. Understanding these demand cycles helps ensure your items stand out when buyers are actively looking.

Curious what your county's vehicles could bring at auction?

For more information on how your county can utilize the GovDeals platform through our partnership with the New Jersey Association of Counties, please contact **Mike Baker** at 609-713-7888 or mbaker@govdeals.com.



SAVE THE DATES

NJAC Virtual Workshop
September 17, 2025

NJAC Board of Directors Meeting
September 19, 2025

NJAC Virtual Workshop
October 29, 2025

Study With The Leader In Online Education

Thomas Edison State University

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS FOR NEW JERSEY PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES



LIVE WEBINAR
Wednesday, July 2, 2025
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Registration: Click [HERE!](#)

(bit.ly/publicsectorjuly2025)

This informative meeting will cover how to:

- Fund your education
- Find time to finish your degree
- Receive college credit for prior course work and professional experiences

Come with your questions—we will have a live Q&A!

Can't make the webinar? Feel free to [schedule a 15 min. appointment](#) for more information!

SHARE THE NEWS!

Let us know what educational or informational articles you would like published in the NJAC COUNTY BIZ

Contact Loren Wizman, Director of Business Development
(609) 394-3467
or
loren@njac.org

**Join MRA International
at our
Annual InterNETworking Event!!!**

Where: Ocean Place Resort in Long Branch, NJ

When: Thursday, July 24th, 2024

Time: 8:00 am – 3:30 pm

Join us for an exclusive annual event by the beach, which offers unique learning and networking opportunities in an open and relaxed environment.

Our Annual **InterNETworking** event immerses professional educators, IT leaders, and passionate learning enthusiasts to explore industry-leading trends and topics that are actionable and beneficial to the public sector. Our event aims to bring innovative technology, practical solutions, and accessible resources to K-12, Higher Education, and State & Local Government organizations while offering a unique day of learning, networking, and collaboration.

- Please register for the event on our website:
interNETworking 2025 — MRA International

MRA International is a leading technology expert and a value-added HP Power Services and HPE Partner with over 20 years of experience providing unique IT solutions and turn-key results to the public sector.

For more information, please contact the MRA Sales Team:

Email: sales@mrainternational.com

Phone: (732) 222-0997



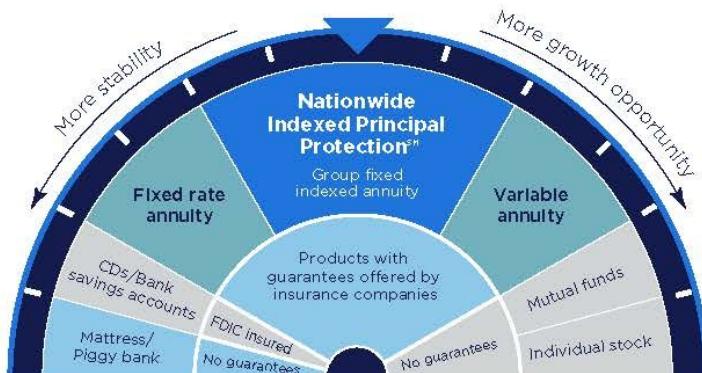


Downside protection with an opportunity for growth



Now more than ever, people want protection from volatility. Nationwide Indexed Principal Protection® (NW-IPP) is a long-term savings option that protects principal. That means no matter what the market does, the account is protected **and** it retains the opportunity for upside potential.

Common retirement savings options



Potential benefits of NW-IPP

Principal protection

- Principal investment protection from market declines can help provide confidence through unstable market conditions

Growth potential

- Any gains are locked in and become part of the principal at the end of the one-year Index Term*

Balanced approach

- NW-IPP is a group fixed indexed annuity, so as part of a wide range of investment options, it may offer a balance between protection and growth

Flexibility of choice

- Two contribution options: payroll deductions or a lump-sum dollar amount exchanged from another investment option in the plan (no minimum required)
- Money can be exchanged out of this investment option at any time without penalties (restrictions may apply)



Find out more by visiting our website. Contact your Nationwide Representative to learn more or to discuss adding this solution to your Plan.

NACo Annual Conference & Exposition

July 11-14 City and County of Philadelphia, Pa.



About the Conference

The National Association of Counties (NACo) Annual Conference is the premier gathering of elected and appointed officials from the nation's 3,069 counties, parishes and boroughs. Conference content includes discussion of federal policies impacting counties, workshops lifting up county best practices, engaging general sessions, mobile tours across our host county, and more. NACo members also have the opportunity to influence the association's direction and future during the Annual Business Meeting on the final day of the conference.

Registration

Registration includes access to all workshops, committee meetings, general sessions and conference-wide receptions.

All correspondence regarding registration will come from either nacomeetings@naco.org or naco@naco.org. Please add these email addresses to your safe sender list. Should you receive false correspondence, please report and email nacomeetings@naco.org.

Register Today



NACo Webinars

Unlock the Full Potential of Retirement Plans: Discover the Advantages of Today's Lifetime Income

Wednesday, July 16, 2025
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. ET



[Register](#)

A recent survey by the Nationwide Retirement Institute® revealed that roughly 3/4 of Americans fear they'll run out of money before they run out of time. (1)

Join Nationwide and NACo EDGE for a presentation that discusses how lifetime income solutions can build participant confidence. Many misconceptions surround incorporating lifetime income into retirement planning. This presentation offers positive reality checks about solutions that can help participants achieve a more secure retirement.

(1) "Century Club Insights Report," prepared by Edelman for Nationwide, March 2025. Guarantees are subject to the claims-paying ability of the issuing insurance company. Provisions of these options may vary based on plan selection and/or by state regulation. These investment options may not be available in all states. This material is not a recommendation to buy or sell a financial product or to adopt an investment strategy. Investors should discuss NRM-23166AO.1 (06/25)

For more information, visit the [event page](#)!

Proactively Defend Your Collection Rate; How Automation Makes It Possible

Tuesday, July 22, 2025
2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. ET

[Register](#)

The path to payment is more complex than ever—and for county providers, that means that having a strong understanding of payer policies, claim prioritization and opportunities for automation is crucial.

By using automation and analytics to drive decision-making, county providers can have confidence in the actions they're taking to facilitate cash flow and support the mission of the organizations they serve. Even in the midst of uncertainty.

Join Leah Bezanson, Patient Revenue Supervisor at Minnesota Department of Human Services and Erica Gregory, SVP & GM, Revenue Cycle Management at Netsmart, for insights on how automation can help protect collection rates, enhance accuracy and improve data visibility.



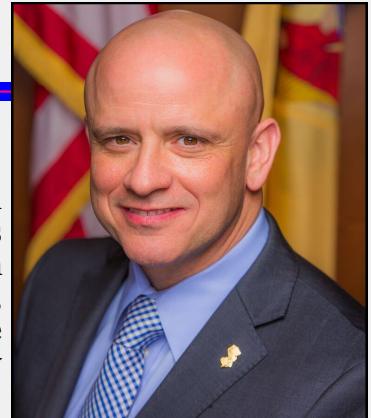
Attendees can expect to gain an understanding of:

- Strategies for addressing large volumes of denials, especially as the move to privatized plans may be driving more denials and strenuous adjudication rules
- How to keep pace with the use of AI and automation among payers
- Real-world examples of a public sector organization using revenue cycle automation to accelerate cash and strengthen collection rates
- How supervisors and finance leaders can use automation to simplify the reimbursement process and support staff

For more information, visit the [event page](#).

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

NJAC is optimistic that the Legislature's proposed fiscal year 2026 state budget will include budget resolutions in funding for emergency shelters and homeless prevention based on the recommendations of NJAC's Working Group on Transitional Housing. At the request of Mercer County Executive Dan Benson, NJAC formed the Working Group to share resources and ideas, and make recommendations on how counties may provide vital housing services, temporary shelters, and permanent placement for those in need.



John G. Donnadio, Esq.

After several months of meetings with human and social service county leaders from across the State, the Working Group recommended, in part, that the State provide additional Social Services for the Homeless Prevention (SSH) dollars and funding for emergency shelters. The Working Group reported that although services and resources may be readily available for individuals with no income, those with limited income are often ineligible for the same level of assistance and are in grave jeopardy of becoming homeless. With this in mind, the Group recommended increasing the State's annual appropriation and expanding the use of SSH dollars to better capture this underserved population and provide enhanced transitional housing opportunities. The Working Group's recommendation is for the Department of Human Services (DHS) to allocate an additional \$5,250,000.00 in SSH funding for counties in fiscal year 2026 contingent on matching county funds of up to \$250,000.00 per county.

The Working Group further reported that nonprofit organizations, civic centers, and churches are struggling to provide temporary shelter for those in need and have become more reliant on assistance from county governments. As such, the Working Group recommended increasing the State's annual appropriation for emergency shelters in direct grants that a county may use to contract with selected agencies to manage temporary shelters accordingly. The Working Group's recommendation is for the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to allocate \$5,250,000.00 in emergency shelter funding for counties in fiscal year 2026 contingent on matching county funds of up to \$250,000.00 per county. NJAC is mindful of the well-documented challenges the fiscal year 2026 state budget will present and intends to be part of the solution that provides critical services to those in need with the opportunity for county governments to match any new additional investments made by the State in SSH and emergency shelter funding. In addition to contacting DHS and DCA concerning our request for additional SSH dollars and funding for emergency shelters, NJAC testified before the budget committees in both houses and recently met with Senator Troy Singleton (D-7), Chairman of Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee.

**NJAC Virtual Workshop
A County Overview of SNAP & Medicaid
July 9, 2025
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Registration Form Can Be Found [Here](#)**

EVENTS & HOLIDAYS

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1 Mark Heter Band 2:00pm - 3:30pm Thompson Park Jamesburg Middlesex County	2 Fireworks 9:00pm Main Street Flemington Borough Hunterdon County	3 4th of July Festival 4:00pm - 10:00pm Salem County Fairgrounds Pilesgrove Salem County	4 5
Funk Salsa Urban 6:30pm - 8:00 pm Duke Island Park Bridgewater Somerset County	Butterfly Festival 7/12 11:00am - 4:00pm Red Bank Battlefield Park National Park Gloucester County	NJ Symphony: How to Train Your Dragon in Concert 7/11 7:00pm MAYO PAC Morristown Morris County	8 Passaic County Music School Showcase 6:30pm - 8:30pm Rifle Camp Park Amphitheater Woodland Park Passaic County	9 Formerly of Chicago The Players 7/11 6:30pm Mercer County Festival Grounds West Windsor Mercer County	10 Rock & Roll Heaven Bank 4:00pm Opens 4:00pm - 10:00pm Amphitheater Westampton Burlington County	11 3rd Annual Sunset Party Ridgefield Park Ridgefield Bergen County
Ocean County Fair 7/9-7/13 11:00am - 5:00 pm Robert J. Miller Airpark Berkley Township Ocean County	13 The Live Mixtape Band Sunset Jazz Series 8:00pm Wiggins Waterfront Park & Marina Camden Camden County	14 LUCA Movies in the Park Sundown West Hudson Park	15 The Soar & Shore Festival 7/15 & 7/16 12:00pm - 2:30pm Beach Area	16 SC Amateur Radio Club HAMFEST 7/13 10:00am - 10:00pm Fairgrounds Augusta Sussex County	17 4-H Fair 7/19 10:00am - 10:00pm 4-H Grounds Cape May Court House Cape May County	18 19 Coast 2 Coast 7:00pm Giampietro Park Vineland Cumberland County
	20 21	22	23	24 Men of Soul: An Evening of Motown 7:30pm Brookdale Park Bloomfield/Montclair Essex County	25 26 Warren County Farmer's Fair & Balloon Festival 7/26 - 8/2 12:00pm - 10:00pm Fairgrounds Phillipsburg Warren County	
Monmouth County Fair 7/23 - 7/27 11:00am - 6:00pm Show Grounds East Freehold Monmouth County	27 Summer Fair 7/27 11:00am - 1:00pm Warinanco Sports Center Roselle Union County	28 29	30	31		