Civic Solutions Hub Innovation Grant Request Form

Email this completed form to your Regional Manager.

Name of applicant	Douglas County - AI Education and Adoption Program
Date of request	January 14, 2026
Chief Elected Official (CEO) and Title	George Teal, Chair, Douglas County Board of County Commissioners
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Amount of request	$ 50,000
Local match	$ 16,667
Total project cost	$ 66,667

Project Title and Summary

Give a brief overview of the project, including the innovative strategies you intend to test.

Douglas County proposes a 12-month pilot to test an AI Education and Adoption Program that strengthens staff capacity, reduces burnout, and improves job satisfaction through process-first workflow improvement and responsible AI use. The program embeds education, data stewardship, and AI application directly into daily work, ensuring AI is used only where it delivers measurable value and is supported by high-quality, well-governed data.

The pilot focuses on building practical, self-service capability within departments by improving workflows first and applying AI selectively to support efficiency, accuracy, and consistency. By grounding adoption in real work, the program aims to improve workforce experience and operational effectiveness while generating reusable assets that can be scaled across the County.

This pilot is intentionally designed to test feasibility, workforce impact, and operational value before making long-term staffing, funding, or structural decisions.

Explain how the project fits within the program's goals and the specific workforce challenge(s) it will address in your organization.

The project directly supports the goals of the Innovative Local Government Workforce Solutions Pilot Program by addressing staff capacity and technology integration as core workforce challenges. By strengthening staff capability, improving workflow efficiency, and reducing cognitive burden, the project supports employee satisfaction and long-term workforce retention while enabling practical, responsible modernization.

Douglas County, like many local governments, faces increasing workload demands, constrained staffing, burnout risk, and pressure to modernize legacy processes with limited resources. While the County has established foundational AI governance, approved tools, and introductory training, employee feedback indicates a gap between access to technology and effective day-to-day use. This pilot addresses that gap by embedding process improvement, responsible AI use, and data stewardship directly into real operational work—moving beyond awareness or one-time training to build practical capability. The approach strengthens staff capacity, improves how work is performed, and reduces friction in daily tasks, supporting a more engaged, resilient, and sustainable workforce.

The pilot establishes a scalable and sustainable workforce capability model that can be expanded across departments following the pilot period.

Project Scope and Description

Objectives: Clearly outline the main objectives of the pilot program (e.g., improve retention in key departments, develop leadership pipeline, and implement new workforce technology).

The objectives of this 12-month pilot are to:

- Test and refine a practical, hands-on AI education and adoption model that integrates effectively into daily operations while ensuring responsible, ethical, and consistent use.

- Increase staff capacity by equipping employees with practical skills to understand, analyze, and improve workflows, and to apply AI and other digital tools where they deliver measurable value.

- Develop a County-wide library of reusable assets, including AI-enabled workflow examples, role-based playbooks, templates, and lessons learned, to support self-service learning, knowledge sharing, and scalable adoption.

- Demonstrate measurable operational return on investment (ROI) through improved workflows, reduced processing time, and more effective use of existing staff capacity.

- Reduce burnout and strengthen employee satisfaction and retention by applying human-centered design principles to simplify work, reduce cognitive load, and eliminate unnecessary manual effort.

- Build leadership and problem-solving capability by enabling employees to lead workflow improvements and responsible technology use within their existing roles.

Approach: Describe the innovative strategies, and use of new technologies, creative program design, methodologies, or partnerships.

Douglas County's approach centers on an innovative, process-first and human-centered workforce strategy that integrates education, process improvement, and responsible AI use directly into operational work. Rather than introducing AI as a standalone technology, the pilot begins with understanding and improving existing workflows, then applies AI selectively where it delivers measurable improvements in efficiency, accuracy, or consistency. This ensures adoption is practical, trusted, and aligned with how employees actually work.

The program combines a tiered, hands-on education model with a structured adoption approach delivered through facilitated workshops, guided working sessions, and department-level walk-ins. Learning is embedded in real County work and focuses on common operational activities such as drafting, intake handling, documentation, and information organization. The approach emphasizes small, low-risk workflow improvements that deliver early wins, build confidence, and support sustained change—avoiding one-time or abstract training that fails to translate into practice.

Implementation is supported through time-limited consultant services and experiential learning activities funded by the pilot. External support is intentionally structured to remain flexible and responsive to operational needs identified during implementation, recognizing that the pilot is designed to test and refine an adoption model in real work settings. Services may include facilitated working sessions, curriculum and toolkit development, workflow design support, change management facilitation, documentation of reusable workflows and lessons learned, or targeted technical guidance, depending on where support delivers the greatest value. This flexibility ensures grant funds are directed to demonstrated needs rather than pre-allocated to activities that may not be required. All consultant support remains time-limited and focused on enabling internal capability and self-service practices rather than creating ongoing dependency.

Program design is informed by County-wide employee feedback indicating strong interest in AI-supported work alongside the need for practical training and clear guardrails for responsible use. The pilot produces reusable AI-enabled workflows, templates, and role-based playbooks captured in a County-wide library accessible to all staff. Approved AI tools augment—not replace—human judgment, and success is measured through workflow-level outcomes and operational return on investment rather than tool usage alone.

Implementation Plan: Provide a high-level timeline and key milestones for the up to 12 month pilot term.

The pilot will be implemented over a 12-month period beginning at contract execution, using a phased, month-based roadmap designed to support learning, iteration, and measurable outcomes. The phased structure is intended to remain flexible and responsive to operational readiness rather than tied to a calendar year.

Months 1–2: Foundation and Readiness
The pilot will begin by establishing core program foundations and confirming initial scope. Activities include developing and finalizing education materials, shared templates, role-based playbooks, and responsible AI-use guidance; confirming governance considerations; and finalizing success metrics and evaluation methods. Initial departments will be identified, along with priority teams and workflows for participation. This phase focuses on design, alignment, and readiness to ensure the program is practical and prepared for real-world implementation.

Months 3–5: Education Launch and Early Application
Tiered, hands-on education will be delivered and embedded into participants' day-to-day work. Baseline workflow and workforce measures will be documented for participating departments. Employees will apply process improvement methods to selected workflows and test AI-supported enhancements where appropriate. Tools, templates, and guidance will be refined based on operational feedback, and early lessons learned will be documented.

Months 6–9: Pilot Delivery and Department Expansion
Successful workflows and adoption practices will be refined and applied consistently within participating departments. Additional departments will be introduced as readiness allows, creating a staggered participation model. By this phase, 2–4 departments will be actively progressing through the full program, while additional departments begin earlier stages of the adoption journey. Structured support will reinforce self-service practices, with clear escalation pathways for higher-complexity needs. Reusable workflows, training materials, and role-based playbooks will be finalized and added to a County-wide knowledge library.

Months 10–12: Evaluation and Institutional Readiness
The final phase will focus on evaluating outcomes, documenting lessons learned, and assessing readiness for broader scaling. Workflow efficiency, staff experience, and operational return on investment will be analyzed across departments that completed the full program, as well as those in earlier stages. Findings will inform recommendations for sustaining successful elements and determining whether the program model should be institutionalized or expanded following the pilot period.

Target Population: Identify the key workforce that will be directly impacted by the program (e.g., specific departments, employee levels, or geographic areas).

The pilot will engage approximately 25–50 employees from 2–4 departments in process-intensive administrative, analytical, and service-delivery roles. Participants will include frontline staff, analysts, coordinators, and supervisors to ensure improvements are grounded in real operational work and can be sustained within departmental workflows. County-wide rollout is intentionally deferred until the pilot is evaluated.

Financial Need and Budget

Provide a detailed budget, clearly separating the requested grant amount and the local match contribution. Note if the funding is pending (P) or confirmed (C).

Budget Line Items	Total Cost	State Funds	Matching Funds	In-Kind	Fund Source	P or C
Consultant Services	$ 48,667	$ 36,500	$ 12,167		Grant/County	C
Experiential Peer Learning	$ 15,000	$ 11,250	$ 3,750		Grant/County	C
Materials	$ 3,000	$ 2,250	$ 750		Grant/County	C
TOTAL	$ 66,667	$ 50,000	$ 16,667	$ 0		

Provide any detail, if needed:

Douglas County is requesting $50,000 in grant funding to support a 12-month pilot of an AI Education and Adoption Program through time-limited professional services and experiential learning activities, as detailed in the budget table above. The County will provide a confirmed local cash match of $16,667 to support complementary services and materials.

To support effective delivery of the pilot, the grant and matching funds are intended to remain flexible and may be shifted among approved pilot activities and budget line items as implementation priorities and needs are refined, while remaining within allowable budget parameters and match requirements.

No grant or matching funds are requested for salaries, benefits, or technology purchases; the pilot will utilize existing, approved, and funded County tools.

Douglas County - AI Education and Adoption Program

Provide a breakdown of major expenses (e.g., personnel costs, technology purchases, training programs, consultant fees, etc.)

Grant Funding

Douglas County will use $50,000 in grant funding for time-limited professional services to deliver the AI Education and Adoption Program pilot. Grant-funded services will focus on improving program quality and providing targeted support as needed, including hands-on workshops and working sessions, curriculum and toolkit development, workflow improvement guidance, documentation of reusable assets, and experiential learning and peer engagement activities.

Experiential learning may include facilitated workshops, practitioner-led sessions, and structured peer exchanges, including reasonable travel costs when required to support direct, hands-on learning with other government entities or organizations.

To support effective delivery of the pilot, grant-funded services are intentionally structured to remain flexible and responsive as program needs are identified and refined. Funds may be allocated or reallocated among approved pilot activities and budget line items to ensure resources are directed to the highest-value supports during implementation, while remaining within allowable budget limits. All services are time-limited and focused on building internal capability rather than creating ongoing dependency.

County Match

The County will provide a confirmed cash match of $16,667 to support complementary professional services, experiential learning and peer engagement activities (including associated workshops and limited travel where appropriate), and limited program materials.

To support effective delivery of the pilot, matching funds are intentionally structured to remain flexible and may be allocated or reallocated among approved pilot activities and budget line items as implementation priorities and needs are refined, while maintaining required match ratios and allowable budget limits.

No grant or matching funds will be used for salaries, benefits, or technology purchases. The pilot will utilize existing, approved, and funded County tools, with no new technology purchases required.

Clarify how the local match will be sourced.

Douglas County will provide a confirmed local cash match of $16,667, representing 25% of the total project cost, funded through the County's Technology Fund. These funds will support targeted consultant support, professional learning, and limited materials in support of the pilot.

Describe the financial need for the project and how the funding will help support the pilot.

The County faces increasing workload demands and burnout risk at the same time that artificial intelligence is receiving significant attention and investment across government. While Douglas County has invested in approved AI tools, adoption and effective use are uneven across departments, resulting in inconsistent practices, variable outcomes, and limited return on investment. Without structured workforce support, staff experience uncertainty and frustration, and AI tools do not consistently translate into meaningful improvements in day-to-day work.

While Douglas County is developing an AI education and workforce program using internal resources, delivering a high-quality, consistent, and effective adoption model requires external expertise and support. Grant funding provides access to specialized facilitation, experiential learning, and independent guidance needed to test and refine a structured adoption approach across departments. This support strengthens program quality, improves consistency in adoption, and ensures the pilot produces practical, transferable results. Funding enables the County to evaluate workforce and operational outcomes, assess return on investment, and make informed decisions about scalability before committing to long-term staffing or financial investments.

Tracking Success

Metrics and Evaluation: Outline specific, quantifiable metrics to measure success.

Retention Rates: Describe the increase in employee retention for targeted departments or positions.

Employee retention will be considered a longer-term indicator of program impact rather than a direct outcome of the 12-month pilot. While the pilot will not track changes in turnover rates during implementation, it will establish baseline measures related to burnout risk, workload manageability, and job satisfaction through employee surveys. Changes in these leading indicators will be used to assess the program's potential contribution to retention over time, recognizing that sustained workforce stability depends on multiple factors beyond the scope of the pilot.

Hiring Outcomes: Explain the number of new hires or improvements in recruitment efforts.

Leadership Development Success: Explain the number of employees promoted through leadership training or initiatives.

Leadership development success will be measured by the number of participants who develop and demonstrate modern leadership skills related to process improvement, responsible AI and automation use, and workflow redesign. Indicators include participants leading or contributing to process improvement efforts, applying AI- or automation-supported solutions to team workflows, and guiding peers through changes to how work is performed. The primary outcome is the development of practical, future-ready leadership capabilities rather than immediate promotion.

Employee Engagement and Satisfaction: Explain the improvements in employee satisfaction surveys or other engagement metrics.

Employee engagement and satisfaction will be measured through brief follow-up surveys and pulse feedback administered to pilot participants and participating departments. Metrics will focus on changes in employee confidence, perceived workload manageability, and satisfaction with improved workflows and AI-supported processes compared to baseline survey results. Qualitative feedback will supplement survey data to capture how the program affects day-to-day work experience, perceived support, and burnout risk. These measures will help determine whether the human-centered, hands-on approach improves employee experience and supports workforce retention.

Technology Adoption: If technology is integrated into the pilot program, determine the metrics on how new technologies improve efficiency, reduce employee turnover, improve organizational culture or increase employee productivity.

These metrics are designed to confirm that technology integration leads to tangible productivity gains, improves the quality and consistency of work, and strengthens workforce capability. In particular, the measures will demonstrate increased staff capacity by reducing time spent on routine, manual tasks and enabling employees to redirect time and attention toward higher-value work, such as complex case review, problem-solving, and direct engagement with the public where judgment, context, and service quality matter most.

Measures:

Workflow & Efficiency Gains
- Percentage reduction in processing time for selected, targeted workflows
- Number of workflows piloted and successfully moved into regular use
- Estimated staff hours saved or repurposed per quarter as a result of improved workflows

Adoption & Engagement
- Number of departments actively using the adoption workflow and shared tools
- Percentage of participating departments operating at a self-service level
- Attendance and participation rates in hands-on training sessions, office hours, or communities of practice

Quality & Service Outcomes
- Change in error, rework, or correction rates for AI-enabled or improved workflows
- Average turnaround time for selected processes before and after implementation

Capability & Culture
- Percentage of trained staff reporting increased confidence using AI-supported tools and improved workflows
- Number of reusable workflow patterns, templates, or playbooks documented and reused across departments

Data Collection: Describe how data will be collected and reported, and how program outcomes will be tracked throughout the implementation phase.

Douglas County will collect and track program data using practical, low-burden methods aligned with the pilot's success metrics and integrated into existing workflows. Baseline data will be established at the start of the pilot and compared to follow-up measures throughout implementation.

Data collection will include workflow and productivity metrics (e.g., cycle times, error or rework rates, workflows moved into regular use, and estimated staff time saved or repurposed), captured through before-and-after workflow documentation and simple time or effort estimates; technology adoption and engagement indicators (e.g., departmental participation, self-service capability, and participation in hands-on activities), tracked through participation records and adoption documentation; and workforce experience measures, including employee engagement, job satisfaction, workload manageability, burnout risk, and confidence using AI-supported workflows, collected through brief baseline and follow-up surveys and targeted qualitative feedback.

Leadership development indicators will be assessed through employee self-reported growth in process improvement and problem-solving skills and participation in leading workflow improvements. Retention will be monitored as a longer-term, secondary indicator using available workforce data to assess trends over time.

Evaluation Process: Define how the program will be evaluated during and after the pilot to determine impact and scalability.

The program will be evaluated throughout and at the conclusion of the 12-month pilot to assess effectiveness, feasibility, and readiness for broader adoption.

End-of-pilot evaluation will assess overall impact and scalability by reviewing:

• Achievement of stated objectives and success metrics
• Workflow-level efficiency gains and operational return on investment
• Increases in staff capacity, including time saved or repurposed and self-service capability
• Changes in employee engagement, job satisfaction, and burnout risk
• Leadership development outcomes, including participation in leading workflow improvements
• Retention trends as a longer-term, secondary indicator, where available
• Effectiveness of the self-service model and County-wide library of reusable assets
• Feasibility of sustaining and scaling the approach within existing organizational capacity

Douglas County will provide progress and outcome reports in accordance with grant requirements.

Intended Outcomes and Long-Term Impact

Clearly articulate the expected outcomes of the pilot program in both the short and long term. For example: Explain how the program will result in a more diverse applicant pool for local government positions.

During the 12-month pilot, Douglas County expects to improve workforce experience and operational effectiveness by embedding process improvement and responsible AI use into everyday work.

Short-Term Outcomes

The pilot is expected to:
- Improve employee satisfaction and engagement by reducing friction in daily work and increasing confidence using modern tools
- Reduce burnout risk by streamlining repetitive, manual, and low-value tasks
- Build leadership skills by helping employees lead workflow improvements and responsible AI use within their roles
- Improve efficiency, consistency, and quality of work through standardized workflows, templates, and playbooks
- Increase staff capacity by freeing up time for higher-value, service-focused work

Long-Term Impact

Over time, the pilot is intended to establish a repeatable and scalable workforce model that supports continuous improvement and responsible technology adoption.

Long-term impacts include:
- Stronger workforce stability and retention, supported by higher job satisfaction and reduced burnout
- A stronger internal pipeline of employees with modern leadership and problem-solving skills
- Process improvement becoming a routine part of daily operations
- Measurable return on investment through ongoing efficiency gains, better use of staff time, and reduced rework

Together, these outcomes position Douglas County to meet changing service demands while supporting a capable, resilient, and future-ready workforce.

Clearly articulate the expected outcomes of the pilot program in both the short and long term. For example: Explain how the pilot will improve employee satisfaction or reduce turnover rates.

Clearly articulate the expected outcomes of the pilot program in both the short and long term. For example: Explain how leadership development strategies will create a more skilled pool of internal candidates for future roles.

Explain how the results of this pilot could be scaled or applied to other departments or local governments.

The pilot is designed to scale beyond the initial participating departments and be applied across the County. Core outputs, including the adoption approach, training materials, workflow templates, and role-based playbooks, will be documented in a County-wide library that departments can access and use independently. This self-service model supports broader adoption without requiring significant new resources.

Because the program uses a process-first, human-centered approach, it can be applied across different functions and adapted as technologies evolve. Lessons learned from the pilot will inform future expansion within the County and can be shared with peer jurisdictions through regional networks and professional associations, allowing other local governments to apply the approach to similar workforce capacity and modernization challenges.

Include plans for sustaining the program after the pilot ends (e.g., securing additional funding, integrating strategies into regular operations).

Based on the results of the pilot, Douglas County will refine the AI Education and Adoption Program and continue its use in additional departments where it demonstrates clear value. Successful elements—such as the education approach, adoption framework, and County-wide library of reusable workflows and playbooks—will be integrated into regular operations to support ongoing workforce capability.

Pilot results, including measured efficiency gains and operational return on investment, will guide decisions about long-term program support, including whether to formalize coordination responsibilities within existing structures or through future funding. By grounding sustainability decisions in demonstrated outcomes, the County will scale the program in a way that is practical, accountable, and aligned with organizational priorities.

Local Match Commitment

Local Match Explanation: Describe how the 25% local financial match requirement will be met. Note: In-kind contributions may be considered depending on overall financial need but will be carefully evaluated on a case-by-case basis).

Douglas County will meet the required 25% local financial match through confirmed cash contributions funded through the County's Technology Fund.

Local matching funds will support complementary professional services and program resources, including targeted consultant support, experiential peer engagement activities, professional learning resources, and limited materials that strengthen program quality and reusability. These investments are designed to enhance the effectiveness of the pilot while maintaining flexibility to address needs identified during implementation.

Verification of Match: Indicate whether the local match is confirmed or pending. A contract will not be finalized until the local match has been committed by the jurisdiction.

Confirmed. Funds will be formally committed prior to contract execution in accordance with grant requirements.