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Submitter Information

Name: Kaled Alamarie

General Comment

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the 2025 National Artificial Intelligence Research and Development Strategic Plan. I write not only as someone who has worked in local government, but as a proud New Yorker who has seen firsthand how transformative federal investment can be when paired with local leadership and long-term strategy.

AI presents a powerful opportunity to improve how governments serve their communities. But in many cities—including New York—there remains deep hesitation. This is not due to lack of interest or imagination, but because implementing AI without adequate support brings real risks: reputational damage, operational failure, and erosion of public trust.

We've seen the power of federal-local collaboration in other domains. In the years after 9/11, federal support helped New York City modernize its emergency communications systems, transforming how agencies share data and respond to crises. Later, smart infrastructure projects such as citywide sensor networks, environmental monitoring, and intelligent traffic systems were launched with federal support—becoming deeply embedded in NYC's operational fabric. These efforts succeeded because they came with funding, technical assistance, and space for cities to learn, adapt, and lead.

AI deserves the same approach. I respectfully urge the national strategy to include:

- Federal pilot grant programs tailored to local governments—not just for acquiring AI tools, but for building the organizational and human systems around them;
- Investment in IT infrastructure upgrades, ensuring older systems can safely and effectively integrate AI solutions;
- Reliable cloud architecture standards, especially for departments delivering public safety, health, or utility services, where disruptions are unacceptable;
- Capacity-building for civil servants, empowering local staff to develop, manage, and govern AI systems in-house, not solely through external vendors;
- A requirement that AI initiatives be embedded in local government strategic plans, agency visions, and annual KPIs, ensuring alignment with mission-driven public service.

Additionally, we must measure success through Return on Adoption (ROA)—not just fiscal return, but workforce engagement, resident trust, and equitable outcomes. AI must not be a passing trend or a “gadget”—it must be a tool that strengthens institutions and serves people.

Local government is where national policy becomes real. As a New Yorker, I've seen what's possible when cities are supported—not just with tools, but with resources, trust, and vision. I believe AI can become a defining success story—but only if we build it on that same foundation.