

# Adoption Ready?



## The AI Exposure of Jobs and Skills in Canada's Public Sector Workforce

Graham Dobbs, Vivian Li, Viet Vu and André Côté  
August 2025



## What We Found

- Canada's public sector workers, numbering just over 1.1 million, are **significantly more likely to be in occupations that are exposed to AI applications** than workers in the overall Canadian labour force (74 percent versus 56 percent).
- Compared with the overall Canadian workforce, a similar share of jobs are in high-exposure occupations (25 percent versus 27 percent) with tasks more likely to be assisted or augmented by current AI technologies—but **a much larger proportion are in low-complementarity occupations** (49 percent versus 29 percent) comprised of tasks that are **more likely to be substituted or replaced**.
- **The federal public sector has a much higher concentration of workers in the high-exposure and low-complementarity quadrant (58 percent), reflecting a larger proportion of jobs in business, finance, and administration occupations than Canada's overall workforce.** By contrast, in the higher-complementarity quadrant, the public sector has a larger concentration of workers in occupational groups such as senior management; natural and applied sciences; and education, law and social, community and government services.
- **Our assessment of AI applications that are most useful based on the public sector's major occupational groups identifies four categories:** interpreting and reproducing language (e.g. reading and writing tasks); recognizing and interpreting images (analytics); applications in abstract strategy games (data analysis and pattern recognition); and interpreting auditory information (speech recognition).
- **The evidence around public sector technology adoption suggests that non-technology factors are also important determinants of success.** These include the role of human oversight, access to AI tools and training for workers, and consistent application of core non-technological values and ethical principles to ensure successful, responsible deployment of AI in the public sector.

”

**Relative to the total Canadian workforce, public sector workers comprise a higher share of workers that perform routine cognitive tasks that current AI technologies are well positioned to substitute or replace.**

## Action Items for Public Sector Organizations

In view of these findings, we propose a number of immediate actions to guide effective strategy and execution. Public sector organizations should:

1. Develop and publicly release clear, plain-language **strategies for internal AI adoption and use**.
2. Equip workers with the AI tools and governance framework—and clear **“social license”** from management—to encourage responsible AI experimentation in day-to-day work, with tracking of outcomes, successes, and failures.
3. Identify **priority applications** for trialling AI in public organizations, with a focus on high-volume, low-risk repetitive tasks where AI can augment existing jobs.
4. Deploy **AI literacy and responsible-use training** and **upskilling programs** at scale across the workforce, to support adoption opportunities and general AI skills development.
5. Launch a rolling process for **realigning job classifications**, to reflect AI exposure and job change resulting from adoption.
6. Develop **longer-term plans** for managing the AI-driven workforce disruption, job change, and transition.

Read the full report at [dais.ca](https://dais.ca)

”

The scale of both opportunity and disruption from the application of AI in public sector organizations could be significant.