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Implementing a Public AI Accountability Framework in New York City

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Executive Summary

This project recommends that New York City's Office of Algorithmic Accountability (OAA) adopt a framework for incorporating public input when government agencies are considering using artificial intelligence (AI) tools. New York City (NYC) is expanding its AI use across city government departments, but the City does not currently have a standard process for soliciting and addressing community members' feedback or concerns on the government's use of this technology. By making the City's AI evaluation and adoption processes more transparent and taking community input into consideration, this project intends to bring visibility into government decisions, build trust between city government and its residents, and help governments better serve their communities.

Problem

NYC is in the process of broadening its use of AI across municipal agencies, but residents impacted by AI systems may not be regularly involved in deciding how these tools are used. While current NYC legislation requires agencies to report annually on their use of algorithmic tools, this reporting is not standardized and may be missing key details about AI system vendors, tools, and risks. Additionally, recent discussions about government AI use have highlighted the need to bring community perspectives into AI evaluation and implementation. NYC is working to build an online complaint portal to give residents a place to voice concerns about government technology, but these community input channels have not yet been systematically incorporated into decisionmaking processes.

Solution

This project proposes that the NYC OAA should implement the novel "Public Accountability for Community Trusted AI" (PACT AI) Playbook to effectively incorporate public input into its AI evaluation and adoption processes. Following the PACT AI Playbook's guidance would enable the OAA to effectively collect community input before decisions are made, translate residents' feedback into standard evaluation metrics, and report the findings back to the community. This proposal would strengthen public trust and government decisionmaking by giving residents an opportunity to shape how AI is used in their city and voice concerns that policymakers may not have considered. Together, these recommendations would ultimately help ensure that governments are responsive to their constituents and make decisions that reflect community needs, and make public engagement an important part of AI governance.

> *"By adopting the PACT AI Playbook, NYC OAA will be able to effectively leverage existing infrastructure to build trust with residents by making the AI procurement process more objective, transparent, and accountable to the residents it serves."*
>
> **Addie Achan and Rebecca Odim**

If you'd like to learn more, see the full project at aspenpolicyacademy.org/project/nyc-public-ai-accountability-2026.

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