



# Building federal workforce resiliency in the accelerating technology landscape



The rise of artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, and cloud computing is reshaping how Federal agencies operate, and the rapid pace of technological change will continue to drive profound shifts. As technology evolves faster than the Federal workforce can adapt, agencies face growing talent shortages and increasing demands for cross-domain fluency. Examples include:

- Cybersecurity professionals must understand how threat actors are using AI to automate attacks and manipulate data in order to respond to these new cyber threats
- AI fluency in cloud is becoming nonnegotiable. Cloud professionals need to be able to leverage AI for automation, workload optimization, and anomaly detection to ensure effective deployment and management of cloud infrastructure
- Because AI relies on vast amounts of data, data management professionals must ensure data is accurate and structured properly for AI systems to function effectively

Technologies are advancing faster than traditional training and hiring cycles, so recruiting specialists for every new need is ineffective – and fundamentally impossible, amid layoffs, hiring freezes, and reduced budgets. In contrast, cross skilling and upskilling are powerful and effective approaches to skill development that enable agencies to put technology advancements to work, even in resource-constrained environments.

By continuously strengthening their existing teams, agencies can build flexible workforces that can quickly adapt to evolving missions, navigate staffing limitations, and seamlessly adopt new technologies, ensuring mission continuity and efficiency.

**86 percent**

of Federal agency leaders believe that adopting emerging technologies will increase their agency's overall efficiency.

— 2024 EY Federal, State, and Local Trends Report



## Why traditional training doesn't meet today's needs

A resilient workforce is not just technically skilled; it is adaptable and capable of navigating multi-faceted issues. But traditional one-size-fits-all models of training fail to provide the agility and skills needed to address the government's dynamic mission demands.

Boot camps and certifications, for example, may not align with the real-time needs of the workforce. Boot camps often require employees to review familiar material before accessing new content, while certifications may not reflect up-to-date knowledge, as they only indicate past exam success. Similarly, continuing education units often involve minimal tasks, like attending conferences, rather than providing hands-on, real-world knowledge.

These training models lack the flexibility and real-time support that modern, agile learning environments provide, leading to disengagement and reduced productivity. They can require employees to choose between core responsibilities and learning opportunities. And the inability to address the diverse learning needs and experience levels of employees results in diminished knowledge retention and stalled professional growth.

Not only are these traditional training methods inconsistent with the needs of today's workforce, their cost of attendance and travel are impractical given current agency constraints on budgets and staffing.

**73 percent**

of public sector workers feel underequipped to learn key digital skills.

— Salesforce Digital Government Transformation



## How a new approach to workforce development can enable adaptability and resiliency

Investing in continuous employee development is key to building a versatile workforce. Upskilling in core areas can address immediate skill gaps, and cross skilling plays a critical role in strengthening adaptability by expanding knowledge across various domains, enabling teams to address changing mission priorities, manage shifting compliance requirements, and stay abreast of evolving technologies, and accomplish more with existing or fewer resources.

Upskilling and cross skilling enables Federal agencies to balance deep, specialized expertise with broad, cross-functional knowledge. Today, most agencies have a disproportionate number of specialists compared to broad thinkers, despite the fact that technology no longer evolves in neatly defined silos.

### It's important to note that agencies don't need to provide more training – they need smarter training.

An effective learning approach begins with assessing existing knowledge and delivering targeted training to fill gaps, ensuring that learning is aligned with agency priorities, such as enhancing cybersecurity or deepening AI expertise. This strategy addresses both immediate workforce needs and supports long-term growth and adaptability by focusing on the most relevant areas for development.

Successfully implementing upskilling and cross skilling requires a cultural shift, led by leadership, to prioritize ongoing skill development. By integrating learning into employees' daily workflow, agencies can ensure training doesn't interfere with productivity while encouraging continuous engagement with learning opportunities. Cross skilling, specifically, moves the workforce away from siloed expertise toward a more flexible, collaborative mindset.

Half of all technology professionals struggle to find a way to upskill swiftly or effectively.

— Pluralsight Tech Learning Survey

## Leveraging data-driven learning enhances workforce agility

Learning that is continuous, role specific, and embedded into daily work achieves better returns than traditional training methods. Pluralsight delivers these capabilities in a comprehensive platform for upskilling and cross skilling the Federal workforce. The Pluralsight platform features tailored learning pathways, hands-on experiences, and advanced analytics.

When an employee encounters a challenge, Pluralsight's just-in-time learning resources offer flexible, on-demand access to the support they need. After 20- to 40-minute microlearning sessions, employees can immediately apply what they've learned, reinforcing retention. The microlearning approach also ensures that employees stay up to date with evolving technologies without disrupting critical work.

To make learning even more impactful, agencies can incorporate practical experiences, such as labs where employees apply their new skill in real-world contexts. For instance, AI sandboxes provide a secure space for experimentation, allowing employees to test AI tools and build practical expertise without the risk of compromising sensitive information.

The platform helps agencies adopt a data-driven approach to track skill development and adjust training in real time. Tools like [Skill IQ](#) and [Role IQ](#) allow agencies to assess employees' skill levels, create targeted development plans, track progress, and adjust training in real time. This approach supports agile decision-making by providing actionable insights that help agencies redeploy teams to address shifting priorities.

Additionally, it enhances workforce engagement by offering employees opportunities for skill development, leading to career growth, improved retention, and reduced reliance on external hires. By promoting cross skilling and providing a broad range of learning content, Pluralsight helps build teams that can collaborate across domains, enabling agencies to rapidly adapt to new challenges and changing priorities.

### Key benefits

- **Tailored learning aligned with mission needs:**  
Customizing learning pathways addresses specific skill gaps and ensures training is relevant and directly in line with the mission
- **Advanced analytics for real-time adjustments:**  
Tracking progress with skill-level assessments refines training in real time, ensuring learning is always aligned with evolving needs
- **Increased workforce agility:**  
Implementing a data-driven approach supports agile decision-making, allowing teams to adapt and redeploy quickly in response to shifting priorities
- **Internal talent growth:**  
Identifying emerging skills and future leaders reduces reliance on external hires and fosters long-term workforce sustainability
- **Enhanced employee engagement and career growth:**  
Providing continuous learning opportunities boosts employee engagement, supports career development, and improves retention