



Tips to Verify the Accuracy of AI

As cities across Florida begin exploring artificial intelligence (AI) to support services like public communication, document drafting, and workflow automation, one concern stands out: accuracy.

According to surveys by the Florida League of Cities, both city managers and elected officials ranked “accuracy, bias, and fairness of outputs” among their top concerns regarding AI. These concerns are valid as some AI tools still “hallucinate” (inventing facts or citing nonexistent sources) or reflect biased training data. While these issues have become less frequent and will continue to improve, they remain important to watch and mitigate.

Here are six practical tips city leaders and staff can use to ensure AI-generated content is accurate, fair, and fit for public use.

1. Use AI for Drafting, Not Final Decisions

AI works best as a first draft or editing assistant, not a final authority. Treat its outputs as a starting point to refine and verify before anything is released publicly or used for official decisions.

Appropriate use: Drafting a social media post about a local event.

Cautionary use: Automatically approving permits based solely on AI evaluation.

2. Cross-Check with Reliable Sources

Always verify facts, figures, or references generated by AI, especially for legal, budgetary, or policy content. Use city records, government databases, or subject matter experts to confirm accuracy. If the AI cites a source, check that it actually exists and says what the AI claims.

3. Watch for Bias and Framing

AI reflects the data it was trained on, which may contain unintentional bias. Watch for language that seems skewed, overly technical, or excludes community perspectives.

Reframe outputs to match your city's tone, values, and inclusive practices. Ensure phrasing is neutral and accessible for a broad audience.

4. Keep Context in Mind

AI sometimes misses the nuances of local context. Double-check that a response actually fits your question and your city's specific circumstances.

Add clear guidance in your prompt, such as “for a small city” or “in accordance with Florida Sunshine Law,” to help keep responses relevant.

5. Build an Internal Review Process

Establish a review step before using AI-generated content for public-facing materials or operations. Include input from relevant departments (e.g., legal, IT, communications), especially when testing new tools or workflows. Encourage staff to flag any responses that seem inaccurate, incomplete, or speculative.

6. Write Better Prompts to Prevent “Hallucinations”

How you phrase a prompt directly affects the accuracy and trustworthiness of the AI's response. Well-crafted prompts set clear boundaries and reduce errors.

Try these approaches to improve your AI prompts:

- **Be explicit:** “Base all responses only on verified, factual information.”
- **Add guardrails:** “If unsure, respond with ‘Not specified’ instead of guessing.”
- **Narrow the scope:** “Use only the information provided in this document.”
- **Require reasoning:** “Explain which part of the text supports each claim.”
- **Set reminders:** Begin each session with, “Do not make up names, dates, or statistics.”

AI can be a valuable co-pilot for local government work, helping staff draft, research, and communicate more efficiently. But human oversight remains vital. With careful verification, strong prompts, and a clear review process, cities can harness the benefits of AI while upholding accuracy, fairness, and public trust.