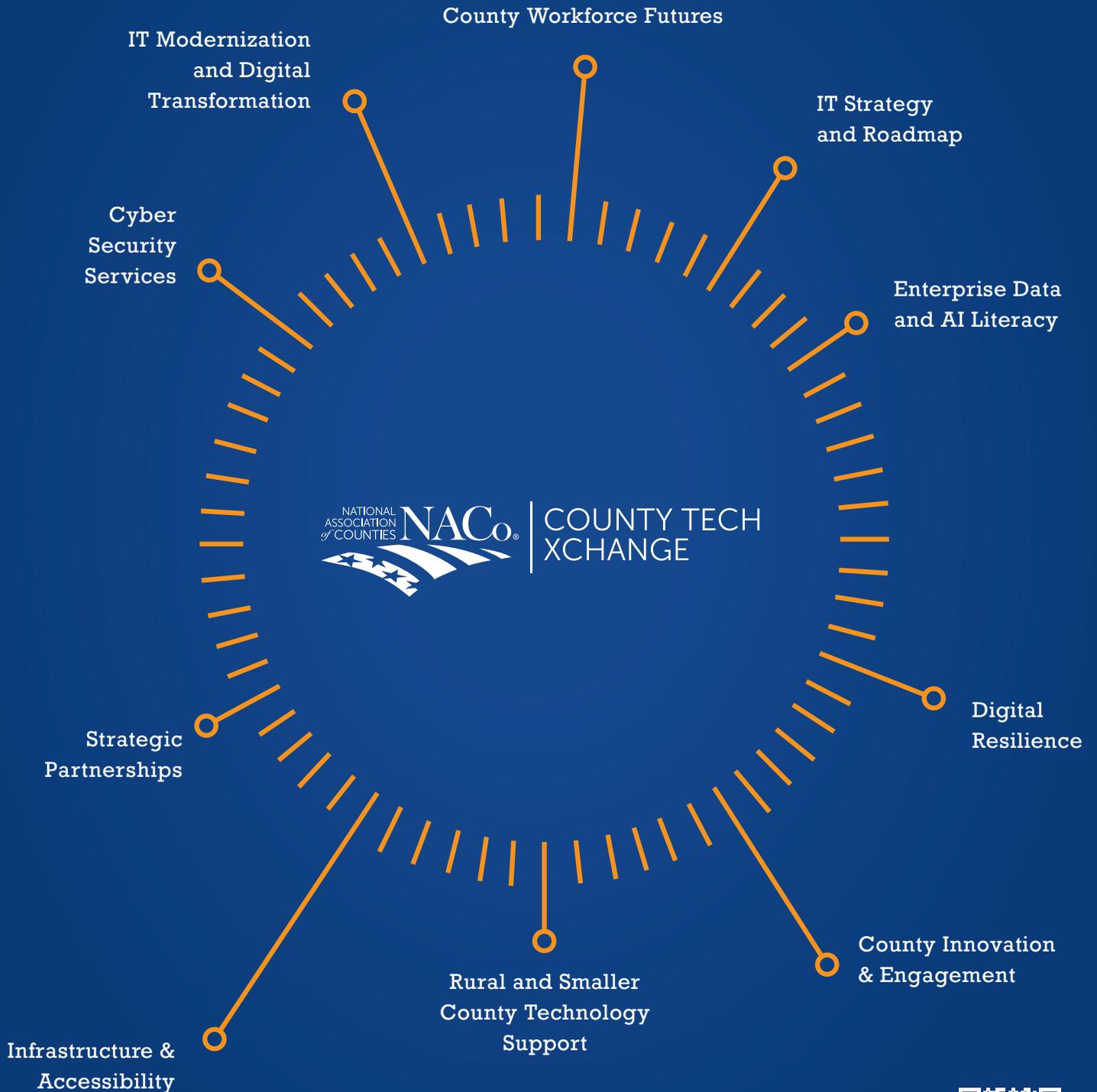




NACo County Technology Agenda: **2026 Priorities**

NACo Technology Priorities for 2026

While there are ten priorities, the accomplishments within these priorities will depend on available resources, time and budget. For more information, scan the QR code or visit <https://www.naco.org/page/county-tech-xchange>



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Cyber Security Services:

Emphasize governance, risk management, compliance and partnerships for enhanced security measures, including training, simulations, backup/recovery and identity management. Assess, address and integrate AI and third-party provider management, as appropriate.



IT Modernization and Digital Transformation:

Prioritize upgrading systems, eliminating legacy technical debt and process waste, automating workflows, addressing the asset lifecycle, mobilizing the workforce and leveraging AI and third-party provider management, as appropriate.



County Workforce Futures:

Implement strategies for retaining talent through competitive compensation, continuous leadership and staff development while fostering an engaging culture.



IT Strategy and Roadmap:

Develop comprehensive strategies with tools to mature IT infrastructure, manage end-of-life support and stabilize future budgets, keeping in mind other revenue sources such as grants.



Enterprise Data and AI Literacy:

Enhance privacy measures, digitize records, and provide resources like data asset inventory templates to improve transparency, while considering the impact of AI and legislative impacts.



Digital Resilience:

Focus on best practices for business & technology continuity, modernizing vendor management & procurement processes and adopting customer-centric approaches for cloud technologies.



County Innovation and Engagement:

Enhance services and constituent-benefiting capabilities through the adoption of emerging technologies like Generative AI, drones, autonomous vehicles, eVTOLS, AIOps, IoT sensors, VR/AR and other innovative solutions in local governance.



Rural and Smaller County Technology Support:

Provide tailored resources, such as an IT handbook and security solutions, such as assessments and pilots, to address unique challenges faced by smaller counties.



Infrastructure and Accessibility:

Ensure that all members of the community have inclusive and affordable access to digital resources and connectivity.



Strategic Partnerships:

Cultivate collaborations with internal and external stakeholders including universities, nonprofits and regional entities to drive innovation.

County Technology Advisory Council Top 6 Predictions for 2026

1. Cybersecurity Will Remain Counties' Top Operational Risk

As threats grow more sophisticated, county leaders will elevate cyber resilience as a governance priority. Expect increased investment in prevention, workforce training and regional collaboration to protect critical local infrastructure.

2. Counties Will Navigate a Post-ARPA Fiscal Reset

With federal recovery funds fully deployed, counties will operate in a tighter budget environment. Strategic budgeting, shared services and performance-driven investments will define the next phase of county fiscal stewardship.

3. AI Adoption Will Accelerate - With Governance Front and Center

Counties will increasingly integrate AI tools into service delivery and internal operations. At the same time, county officials will prioritize transparency, accountability and ethical frameworks to ensure responsible implementation.

4. Workforce Challenges Will Drive Innovation in Service Delivery

Persistent recruitment and retention pressures — particularly in IT, public health and skilled trades — will push counties to adopt automation, expand talent pipelines and modernize workplace policies.

5. Resident Expectations for Digital Services Will Continue to Rise

Counties will face growing demand for seamless, secure online services. Investments in modern digital infrastructure will be essential to meeting constituent expectations while improving efficiency and access.

6. AI-Driven Hardware Demand Will Disrupt Procurement and Refresh Cycles

As artificial intelligence adoption expands, demand for advanced RAM, GPUs and high-performance processors will strain manufacturing capacity and disrupt supply chains. Counties may face higher costs and longer lead times for hardware procurement. In response, IT leaders will reassess device refresh strategies, expand cloud virtual desktop utilization and evaluate thin-client models to manage performance needs while controlling costs.

For more information on the Tech Xchange:

John Matelski

NACo CIO

jmatelski@naco.org

Kimberly Ransom

NACo Technology Programs Manager

kransom@naco.org

660 North Capitol Street NW

Suite 400 | Washington, D.C. 20001

202-393-6226 | www.NACo.org