

The Future of Government Jobs: A 5-year Outlook

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Executive Summary

In a time of rapid technological advancements, increasing digitalization and civic-centered service delivery, rising focus on sustainability and climate change, and ongoing demographic and workplace structure changes, governments are facing mounting challenges that will bring on major shifts to the landscape of public sector employment. These trends are reshaping the form, structure and organization of government work and the way it addresses areas of pressing public need and responds to rapidly evolving global conditions. As a result, some jobs/roles are expected to decline over the next five years, while new jobs/roles are likely to emerge.

This report identifies major trends shaping the landscape of government jobs:

1. **Technological advancements:** The integration of AI, robotics, and automation within government operations is significantly redefining job requirements and creating a demand for new skill sets. This transformative integration not only reshapes traditional roles but also necessitates a holistic evolution in the capabilities and proficiencies of the government workforce. The introduction of intelligent systems and automated processes has enabled governments to streamline operations, improve efficiency, and deliver services with unprecedented speed and accuracy. However, these advancements necessitate government employees to acquire new proficiencies in order to adapt. By 2027, jobs involving clerical work, customer service, cash handling, and data entry are projected to decline by around 27 million, highlighting the urgency for public sector employees to acquire competencies in data analysis, machine learning, programming, and ethical issues related to data privacy and cybersecurity.

2. **Digitalization and civic-centric service delivery:** Governments worldwide are shifting towards a consumer-centered approach to service delivery, focusing on personalization and efficiency. While digitization streamlines operations and enhances service delivery, it necessitates comprehensive digital skills across all employee levels. Yet, according to the Global Digital Skills Index, 73% of the general workforce do not feel equipped with the requisite resources to learn digital skills necessary to succeed in their work.¹ As government services become increasingly digitized, acquiring digital skills becomes crucial not only for programmers or software developers but also for employees at all levels and across different sectors. Evidence shows a growing need for emerging skill sets that enable employees to engage citizens and improve service delivery. These skill sets include digital services and user analytics, social media management and communications and crowdsourcing. Equipping public sector employees with digital tools and skills is essential for developing critical insights and delivering efficient services to the public.
3. **Sustainability and climate change:** Governments worldwide are prioritizing sustainability and supporting green transition policies to address environmental challenges. This focus on sustainability is among the primary drivers of job creation mainly through investments in green transition, the adoption of ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) standards, and the localization of supply chains. The pressing need to address global environmental challenges has accelerated the growth of the green economy and highlighted the importance of acquiring "green skills" which has led to an increase in the demand for green jobs across various sectors, including the public sector. By 2030, the green transition is expected to generate around 30 million jobs globally, with a focus on clean energy, efficiency, and low-emission technologies.
4. **Demographic shifts and evolving workplace expectations:** Global trends such as increased life expectancy, gender equality, and ageing populations are leading to significant changes in the composition of the workforce. This includes greater participation of seniors and women in all sectors, including the public sector. As a result, job growth is expected in healthcare and care-related fields. Moreover, to retain older workers, lifelong learning and re-skilling opportunities are becoming crucial. Workplaces are also evolving to embrace diversity and inclusivity, requiring workers to develop advanced people skills. Additionally, the pandemic and communication technology advancements have altered expectations for workplace environments. Governments must adapt public service workplaces to be flexible, fulfilling, and forward-looking. Overall, proactive measures are needed to support workforce diversity, lifelong learning, and inclusive workplaces.

Based on the identified trends and a comprehensive desk review of relevant literature, the report identifies the government jobs at risk of automation and outsourcing and the emerging jobs in the public sector within the coming five years. It also provides specific policy recommendations on how to manage the fallout from jobs lost, as well as how to plan for emerging jobs.

As technology and digitalization advance, occupations like data entry clerks, accounting and payroll clerks, and administrative secretaries are gradually becoming obsolete, as their

responsibilities are increasingly being automated or redefined by new technological tools. Further, with incorporation of AI and digital platforms to handle data storage and management, positions like filing and information/records clerks, paper-based document archivists will also decline. Customer-facing roles, such as telephone operators, receptionists, cashier and ticket clerks, and customer service and transaction clerks are also on the decline, with self-service portals and chatbots becoming the new norm. Similarly, roles for research assistants, judicial clerks, legislators, and paralegals are diminishing, as professionals can rely on advanced AI and algorithms capable of undertaking legal research and other complex tasks.

On the other hand, as governments around the world adapt to the new digital age, opportunities for emerging roles are increasing. Specialists in Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning, data science, big data, and blockchain development are becoming increasingly valuable, as these technologies form the backbone of future digital services. The pressing need for sustainability and environmental conservation has opened increasing roles for environmental scientists, sustainability specialists, and renewable energy engineers. Given the rise in cyber threats, roles such as information security analysts and cybersecurity specialists are becoming paramount. The wave of digital transformation has created demand for new leadership roles, such as digital transformation managers, along with software developers, UX/UI designers, and product managers to implement and maintain new digital strategies. With increasing awareness and compliance requirements around data, roles for data governance, data protection specialists, and privacy officers have become essential. Furthermore, immersive technologies are driving the need for Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality developers. Other emerging roles include IoT and IIoT analysts, FinTech specialists, tech-savvy regulators, and diversity and digital inclusion specialists, reflecting the changing socio-demographic dynamics and inclusive digital transformation in the governmental workforce.

Suggested policy recommendations to manage declining government jobs include:

- 1. Develop reskilling and upskilling initiatives and utilize private sector partnership programs:** The potential obsolescence of various governmental roles in the coming years underscores the need for upskilling and reskilling initiatives to equip individuals with the necessary competencies to embrace emerging opportunities. To do so, it is imperative for the government to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the current job landscape and identify prevailing skill and competency gaps. This meticulous analysis will serve as the foundation for designing job-centric upskilling and reskilling programs that effectively address the identified gaps. The report provides tangible examples of the existing skill sets, potential future job positions, and recommended reskilling and upskilling initiatives for employees in declining jobs. Additionally, it is crucial for the government to promote the development of lifelong learning skills and foster a culture of continuous learning by eliminating any barriers that hinder employees' active participation in these programs. Private sector partnership programs can play a crucial role in this effort. Many private sector companies are at the forefront of technological advancements, and thus their insights and training modules can be invaluable for government employees needing to upgrade their skills. By leveraging the resources, innovation, and expertise of the private sector, the

government can help facilitate the design and implementation of these reskilling and upskilling programs.

2. **Support internal job mobility:** To support government employees who are currently in roles that are becoming obsolete, it is crucial for the government to facilitate career advancement and internal mobility. This entails providing opportunities for employees to acquire new skills and gain diverse experiences. Additionally, the government could encourage mobility between different governmental entities and agencies, enabling employees to explore new roles and contribute their expertise in different contexts. To effectively support internal job mobility, the government could communicate internal jobs postings transparently; develop formal internal job mobility programs such as rotational assignments, job shadowing, and temporary assignments in different departments or locations; align annual evaluation criteria with the internal job mobility initiatives; develop coaching and mentoring programs; foster a culture of knowledge sharing; and provide incentives for internal mobility.
3. **Enhance job placement support and career counseling:** Considering potential displacement of government workers in declining jobs, it is crucial to prioritize the enhancement of job placement support and career counseling. This proactive approach aims to safeguard the employees' livelihoods and well-being by providing tailored assistance during the transition process. By alleviating anxiety and uncertainty, the government demonstrates its commitment to supporting the workforce through change and enabling individuals to find sustainable employment opportunities. Specifically, in order to enhance job placement support and career counseling, the government could develop career counseling initiatives providing personalized counseling and career support; develop and disseminate up-to-date labor market information to help workers make informed decisions; provide financial support to employees engaged in upskilling and reskilling programs; and provide entrepreneurship support to employees interested in starting their own businesses, such as the UAE Federal Government 1-year paid entrepreneurship leave.ⁱⁱ
4. **Involve employees and incorporate their preferences in decision making:** To address job insecurity among government workers, it is crucial to prioritize their inclusion in decision-making processes and facilitate their transition to new roles. This can be achieved by actively involving employees, considering their preferences and concerns, and incorporating their input into the transition process. By adopting an inclusive approach, trust and collaboration can be fostered between employees and management, creating a supportive work environment during periods of change. To do so, the government could increase information flow and promote transparency; employ human-centered design principles that prioritize the needs and preferences of individuals involved by implementing mechanisms for open and honest communication such as town hall meetings, regular meetings, or surveys; and conduct a survey for employees in declining jobs to identify their skills and understand their career preferences.

Suggested policy recommendations to manage emerging government jobs include:

- 1. Recruit the right workers: Revamp recruitment and hiring structures:** In today's fast-paced and dynamic digital age, effective government work requires the availability of diverse talents and the proper organizational structures to manage them. To ensure government agencies are staffed with the requisite capabilities to guide it through fast paced technological change and pressing environmental demands/ to guide it through the digital and green transitions, government agencies must first identify the roles, responsibilities and skills of workers needed to fill emerging jobs, and then create more efficient structures to recruit, hire and retain them. Agencies can innovate recruitment and hiring structures by building talent cloud and incorporating advanced technology such as predictive analytics into recruitment procedures.
- 2. Create the right workplace environment:** As technological and societal changes have disrupted traditional ways of working; government agencies could reorganize their workplace and talent management structures to create a more efficient and agile public sector. As part of this transformation, the government could embrace more non-hierarchical and flexible jobs categories that provide opportunities for internal mobility and knowledge sharing across departments and agencies. Furthermore, efforts to promote worker well-being and better work-life balance will help ensure a more productive and motivated public service. The government can utilize advancements in knowledge sharing platforms and internal communication tools and establish multidisciplinary teams of digital professionals in order to facilitate systematic knowledge-sharing, learning and collaboration across different government functions.
- 3. Put in place the right structures: engage training and educational institutions and realign curricula to meet emerging job demands:** To ensure a sustainable and future-ready public workforce, the government could enhance engagement and collaboration between educational/training institutions and government employers. By establishing formal platforms for coordination and targeting future government workers early in their education, the government can ensure an effective feedback loop between emerging job demands and education systems. These efforts could include a prioritization of skill-based and practical learning, creation of scholarship programs for emerging job roles, the expansion of STEM curriculum throughout all levels of education, investment in educational technology and the development of a centralized evidence base to develop and implement policy measures.

ⁱ Salesforce.(2022). [Digital Skills Index](#). *Tableau Software*.

ⁱⁱ Gulfnews. (2022). [1-Year Paid Entrepreneurship Leave System for UAE Citizens from January 2, 2023](#).