

The way ahead for states

A collection of policy briefs for 2022



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Contents

Introduction 4

Pressing Challenges

- Program Integrity 5
- Infrastructure 8
- Climate and resiliency 11

Technology Shifts

- Digital transformation 14
- Future-focused state IT 17
- State Cybersecurity 20

Skills for success

- State workforce of the future 23
- Workforce development 26
- Higher education 29

Health and social services

- Housing insecurity and homelessness 32
- Public health systems 35
- Future of Medicaid 38
- Human services transformation 41

Introduction

Explore the four themes impacting states

The path forward begins now. *The way ahead for states* is a collection of policy briefs on some of the most critical topics states are facing today grouped into four themes.

From human services to infrastructure, state governments have significant federal resources to invest in projects that meet citizen needs. At the same time, states must deal with lingering issues from the pandemic in areas such as public health, technology and data, and program integrity.

Many states will be holding elections in 2022, providing a chance to refocus priorities for incumbents and newcomers alike. *The Way Ahead* is a compendium that provides insight into key themes surrounding top-of-mind policy issues.

■ Pressing challenges

Making the best use of federal funds to enhance broadband access, address climate resiliency, and improve infrastructure.

■ Technology shifts

Offering the chance to advance digital transformation and reduce costs. But there are concerns around data ethics, privacy breaches, and growing cybersecurity threats.

■ Skills for success

Ensuring that the state workforce, the labor force, and higher education are preparing skills for the challenges ahead.

■ Health and social services

Exploring agency-specific opportunities for improvement including public health infrastructure, health care, and human services.

Program integrity

Ensuring maximum impact

Reality check

The pandemic has prompted historic flows of federal funds to states, with new programs being stood up in weeks. With these funds come increasing federal scrutiny for program compliance and fraud. As states work to deliver new and urgent services, they are also facing the daunting challenge of ensuring that each dollar goes toward its intended impact.

What's happening now?

- **Outdated technology**
Many agencies found their processes and tech for preventing and detecting improper payments to be inadequate during the pandemic.
- **Public scrutiny**
Government agencies are under pressure to ensure that fraudulent payments are recovered promptly.
- **Uniquely complex**
New, large programs created in CARES, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) involve new and untested application processes, regulations, and reporting requirements.

Compelling stats

\$87.3B

Estimated improper payments in the Unemployment Insurance Program through the CARES Act.¹

900

Number of ongoing investigations announced by the US Secret Service into the misuse of COVID-19 relief funds worth nearly \$100 billion.²

\$450M

Federal funds seized by the OIG and other law enforcement agencies from more than 15,000 possibly fraudulent loans.³

Action strategies

Steps to enhance program integrity

Explore the action strategies to help maximize program integrity

Strategy	Strategy in action
<p>1. Take a “whole of government” approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deploy a shared model of program integrity to drive interagency coordination, helping agencies speak a common language of risk, develop risk reporting standards, design controls, provide guidance, and conduct audits.• Expand risk definitions beyond program fraud and error to include threats to critical infrastructure, cyber risks, and privacy protections.• Encourage all agencies to conduct routine enterprise and fraud risk assessments.	
<p>2. Safeguard the system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that the right people have access to the right parts of the system by integrating identity management strategies into the state’s information technology platforms.• Require that all state systems storing personal data require two-factor authentication.	
<p>3. Promote good behavior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage accurate self-reporting through nudges—soft-touch, inexpensive messages to applicants via email, popups, or chatbots.• Streamline forms to make it easier to comply with program requirements.	<p>New Mexico Department of Workforce</p> <p>New Mexico’s Department of Workforce Solutions designed simple popup messages such as “Nine out of 10 people in your county accurately report earnings each week.” This helped nearly double the self-reported earnings, directly translating to lower improper payments.⁴</p>
<p>4. Leverage the data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enable agencies to harness the power of data from multiple sources to detect fraud, including internal data (e.g., death lists), public data (e.g., social media), and commercial data (e.g., credit alert lists).• Monitor transaction data using forensic analytics to identify potential fraud patterns.• Promote data-sharing across a wide network of federal, state, local, and nonprofit organizations.	<p>Maryland state comptroller</p> <p>The Maryland state comptroller used a data-driven approach to reduce improper tax refunds. Having found higher fraud rates in taxes filed by local tax firms, the office scrutinized these filings more—and stopped US\$35 million in tax refund fraud.⁵</p>

Endnotes

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Learn more.

Check out our thoughtware for a deep dive on program integrity and fraud mitigation in the public sector.

- [Meeting the challenges to program integrity](#)
- [Seven strategies to limit fraud, waste, and abuse of COVID-19 relief dollars](#)

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Infrastructure

An opportunity to invest in the future

Reality check

With the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, as well as funds from the American Rescue Plan Act and other sources, state leaders are positioned to modernize core infrastructure systems such as transportation, water/wastewater, power and the electrical grid, and to prepare for the future with broadband, electric vehicles, and environmental remediation.

What's happening now?

■ Talent challenge

The no.1 challenge to new infrastructure is the lack of skilled talent to plan, develop, operate, and maintain long-lived assets, according to respondents to Deloitte's future of infrastructure survey.⁴

■ Complex regulatory and financial environment

IJJA created myriad funding streams with complex regulatory requirements. This requires a strategic approach to maximize capture of federal funds while instituting processes to ensure regulatory compliance.

■ Technology transformation and cyber challenges

Infrastructure assets are becoming smarter with more integration of digital components enhanced by new technologies (e.g., electric or connected vehicles). Increasing threats against critical infrastructure requires strong cyber processes and resiliency tools.

Compelling stats

\$550B

Incremental infrastructure funding available through IJJA—the majority flowing to state and local government.¹

C-

The current score for the state of American infrastructure, according to the American Society for Civil Engineers 2021 report card.²

40%

The amount of new funding in IJJA that must benefit disadvantaged communities, creating challenges for planning to identify these communities and then monitoring for regulatory compliance.³

Action strategies

Building the infrastructure of the future

As new federal infrastructure funds begin flowing, state infrastructure leaders can deftly navigate numerous operational and financial challenges to realize the full potential of the investment

Strategy	Strategy in action
<p>1. Create a statewide governance model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a cross-cabinet governance model—i.e., a program management office (PMO) to avoid silos, coordinate planning, and execute programs with a portfolio management approach.• Develop an accompanying talent plan to support these objectives.• Coordinate cross-cabinet to ensure a “dig once” approach and to leverage synergies across transportation, broadband, water, and other asset classes.	<p>Arkansas Infrastructure Planning Advisory Committee</p> <p>In Arkansas, Gov. Hutchinson appointed an Infrastructure Planning Advisory Committee to coordinate across agency strategies, identify best practices, prioritize the needs of the state, and to make recommendations to the governor regarding implementation of IIJA funding.⁵</p>
<p>2. Plan, secure, and maximize federal funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pursue discretionary funding opportunities from IIJA and many other potential sources.• Evaluate benefits of alternative delivery and other creative financing such as Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) to increase the impact of federal grants.• Consider whether the scope of an existing project can be modified or increased to meet a strategic goal outlined in IIJA and ARPA.	<p>Virginia’s Office of Public-Private Partnerships</p> <p>The Virginia Office of Public-Private Partnerships (VAP3) is responsible for developing and implementing a statewide program for project delivery. The agency is currently undergoing options analysis for innovative delivery for developing an existing toll road and the construction of an extension to connect to an existing major thoroughfare.⁶</p>
<p>3. Deploy common processes and innovative tech</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mobilize services to increase benefits of state programs—financial analysis, grants application, regulatory compliance, cybersecurity, and workforce management.• Leverage tech accelerators, like data analytics and AI, to better plan and manage efforts.• Create processes and implement tools to support program integrity and regulatory compliance.	<p>State and local critical infrastructure resiliency efforts</p> <p>From major transportation systems, like the Pennsylvania Turnpike⁸ and Virginia Port Authority,⁷ to water infrastructure, such as the New York City Public Water,⁹ entities across the United States are undertaking cybersecurity design review, operational technology assessments, and investing in system technology improvements in an effort to protect against cyberthreats.</p>

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Learn more.

Check out our thoughtware for a deep dive on preparing for the future of infrastructure.

- [The future of infrastructure](#)
- [Closing the digital divide](#)

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Climate and resiliency

Funds flowing in, but much needs to be done

Reality check

The federal government is allocating billions for climate-resilient infrastructure. Some states will see this as an opportunity to address the challenges of changing climate, while others may see an opportunity to replace crumbling infrastructure with more resilient solutions. These funds—properly spent—represent a chance to boost economic growth and positively affect the lives of citizens.

Compelling stats

\$50B

Federal funding for states in the new infrastructure law (IIJA) for climate resilience projects to protect against events like heat waves, floods, and droughts.¹

61%

The percentage of the US population that reported being directly impacted by at least one extreme weather event over the last six months.²

33

The number of states that have released a climate action plan or are in the process of revising or developing one.³

What's happening now?

Economic growth

Insufficient action on climate change could cost the US economy US\$14.5 trillion over the next 50 years. In contrast, a low-emissions economy could generate over one million new jobs and US\$3 trillion in growth.³

Supply chain disruption

Persistent supply chain and operational disruptions caused by severe weather, global conflicts, and COVID-19 are prompting manufacturers, retailers, and policymakers alike to look for more resilient, and in many cases more sustainable, solutions.⁴

Environmental equity

The fact that systematically disadvantaged and historically disenfranchised communities are disproportionately less able to prepare for—and recover from—the effects of extreme heat, pollution, flooding, and other climate events,⁵ has recently drawn increased attention and new policymaking.

Action strategies

A holistic approach to building climate resilience

Explore the action strategies and examples of how states are implementing them to build climate-resilient infrastructure.

Strategy

1. Operationalize resilience planning

- Appoint a chief resilience officer, or equivalent, with direct line of reporting to the chief executive and empower them to work across agencies and jurisdictions to develop statewide resilience plans and coordinate resiliency investments and efforts within state-owned assets and operations.
- Identify and understand the needs of socially and economically challenged communities through data analytics to help secure discretionary federal grant funding for resiliency-related projects.

2. Prioritize resiliency, mitigation, equity, and innovation

- Work across agencies to educate financial analysts, program planners and managers, grant writers, and other staff on how climate issues and mitigation and adaptation strategies affect their mission.
- Invest in projects that seek to enhance the capacity of the state to withstand and recover from extreme weather events, including both “grey” (e.g., roads, power systems, water treatment) and “green” infrastructure (e.g., wetlands and permeable surfaces, stormwater storage, expanded tree canopy).
- Use tools like predictive analytics and machine learning to identify and plan for the potential effects of future climate-related events and trends on housing, transportation, social services, public health, and economic development, and map those populations that are most at risk and most vulnerable.
- Incorporate insights from that analysis into Climate Action Plans and policymaking where appropriate.

3. Encourage stakeholder engagement

- Explore small-scale policy interventions, like promoting energy-efficient buildings or zero-emission vehicles, to innovate and test future, more expansive approaches.
- Leverage partnerships with other governments and nonprofits to exchange knowledge and best practices.
- Build collaborative public-private ecosystems to help ensure broader community engagement.
- Partner with business and other ecosystem players on funding mechanisms to maximize investment impact.

4. Enable disruptive technologies

- Make it easier for disruptive technologies to enter the market space and level the playing field for nonincumbents by removing/reducing incumbent subsidies, contracts, or other advantages.

Strategy in action

Colorado Resiliency Office

Following historic flooding in 2013, the Governor established the Colorado Resiliency Office (CRO) to coordinate the state’s recovery efforts. The CRO recently updated the Colorado Resiliency Framework,⁶ which outlines the state’s resiliency vision. The CRO also maintains a Resiliency Resource Center that provides a resiliency dashboard, case studies, toolkits, and a local government peer-exchange platform.⁷

Utah Roadmap on climate and air quality

In 2020, Utah released the Utah Roadmap, developed by a 37-person advisory committee at the request of the state legislature. It outlines strategies to help the state meet its goals of reducing carbon dioxide emissions statewide including a 50% reduction by 2030 from a 2005 baseline. Key aspects include: establishing a climate laboratory, expanding electric vehicle infrastructure, providing economic assistance to rural communities, and leading discussions for market-based solutions to reduce carbon emissions.⁸

North Dakota: Carbon neutral by 2030

Working with the state’s agriculture and energy industries, Gov. Burgum in 2021 announced a goal to make the state carbon-neutral by 2030. The governor said the state will achieve the goal by ramping up the state’s capacity for carbon capture and storage as well as enhanced oil recovery efforts.⁹

New York’s Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA)

In April 2020, despite being the epicenter of the COVID-19 outbreak, New York took steps to speed up the siting and construction of clean-energy projects in its 2020–21 budget.¹⁰

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Learn more.

Check out our thoughtware on climate change and related topics from a public sector perspective for a deep dive.

- [The United States' turning point on climate change](#)
- [Climate-forward government](#)
- [Building climate-resilient cities](#)

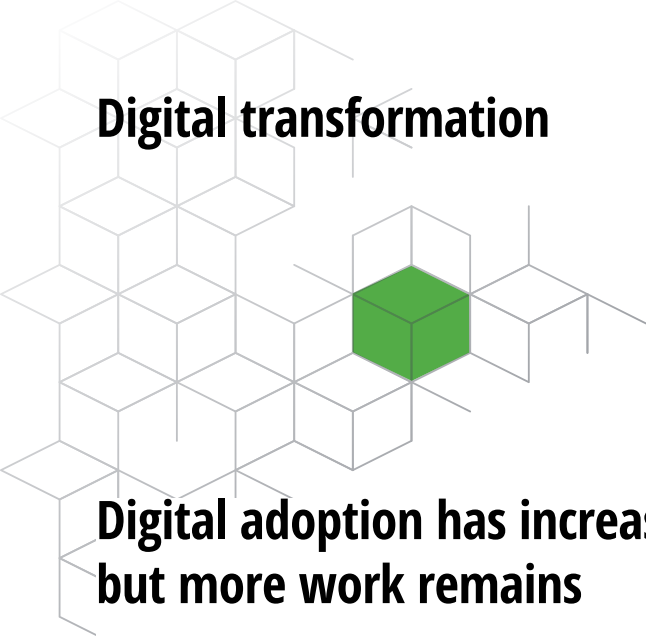
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Digital transformation



**Digital adoption has increased
but more work remains**

Reality check

The pandemic showed that many government agencies weren't digitally equipped to respond to massive public demand. Delivering digital services for constituents is essential for states to usher in a new normal.

What's happening now?

■ Digital-first efficiencies

Agencies have started using advanced technologies, but mostly ad hoc. For meaningful results, digital should be fully embedded across all processes.

■ Customer experience

People now expect high-quality, on-demand access to online services—standing in line or waiting on hold won't cut it.

■ Digitally savvy workforce

The demand for workers with advanced tech skills is continuing to outpace supply, particularly in state government.⁴

Compelling stats

74%

Respondents who say that digital helped their agencies cope with the pandemic.¹

80%

Respondents who say their organizations' digital efforts haven't gone far enough.²

Digital



Trust

Another Deloitte survey found that a positive digital experience drives trust in state government.³



Action strategies

Accelerating digital services

Building on their digital momentum, state governments should commit to creating “digital-first” organizations that match citizen expectations and restore their trust.

Strategy	Strategy in action
<p>1. Put the customer first</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personalize services based on a 360-degree view of individuals. Redesign service-delivery workflows around constituents, not agencies. Use modern tech tools like AI to identify personalized needs. 	<p>Texas Digital Services</p> <p>In 2021, Texas launched Texas by Texas (TxT), a digital assistant that allows Texans to complete transactions quickly and securely with multiple state agencies.⁵</p>
<p>2. Focus on life events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a life event (death, job loss, etc.) and assign single-agency “ownership.” Proactively offer bundled services to citizens—for example, job loss might trigger unemployment and health care benefits. 	<p>Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles</p> <p>In 2019, Nebraska modernized its vehicle titling system, enabling 2.5 million vehicle registrations annually and collecting nearly US\$720 million in revenue. The upgrade allowed the agency to simplify forms, automate manual processes, and offer more online services.⁶</p>
<p>3. Ask for data only once</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask citizens for their information only once and share appropriately with related services. Adopt interagency data-sharing mechanisms to exchange citizen data to provide frictionless services. Consider digital identity as a backbone for digital services. 	<p>Oregon Children Services</p> <p>Oregon integrates data from five different agencies to fully understand and compare the impact of its programs and services on children’s lives. This data integration also allows the state to identify and pursue opportunities to improve positive outcomes for children.⁷</p>
<p>4. Design resilient systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a robust cybersecurity strategy. Modernize legacy systems by embracing cloud infrastructure to capture digital efficiencies. Promote equitable access to digital services, including broadband access. Embrace “no wrong door” omnichannel strategy, including at digital contact centers. 	<p>Rhode Island unemployment insurance</p> <p>Rhode Island upgraded its unemployment insurance contact center operations to cloud during the pandemic. The move enabled it to increase its concurrent call-handling capacity from 75 calls to 2,000 and to better serve constituents.⁸</p>
<p>5. Shift the culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed a customer-first mindset in the workforce providing digital services. Reskill workers as needed. Engage citizens in codeveloping services. 	<p>Multiple states’ vehicle agency services</p> <p>Motor vehicle agencies serve a key role in resident identification and are also a significant transaction center. Several states are experimenting with digital drivers’ licenses, including Colorado, Texas, and Delaware, shifting the mindset towards digital.</p>
<p>6. Balance privacy needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empower citizens to control information they want to share. Adopt data tokenization to protect privacy. Adopt zero-trust cybersecurity practices. 	

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Learn more.

Check out our thoughtware for a deep dive on digital transformation in the public sector.

- [Seven pivots for governments' digital transformation](#)
- [Delivering the digital state](#)

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Future-focused state IT

IT has advanced, but more needs to be done

Reality check

The pandemic prompted many state government agencies to accelerate IT modernization and cloud adoption. The flexibility and scalability of these modern systems helped agencies to meet constituents' urgent needs during the crisis. State chief information officers (CIOs) and tech leaders must now decide how to maintain, develop, and build on those investments.

What's happening now?

- **Citizen expectations**
Citizens are relying on digital services more than ever. Studies show that there is a correlation between their online experience and trust in government.
- **Outdated systems remain**
Many platforms do not effectively meet demands, are expensive to maintain, and are vulnerable to attacks.
- **Talent retention**
Government organizations are seeking the right skills but are competing with the private sector for the same talent.

Compelling stats

70%

State and local government surveyed executives who said that cloud is their preferred environment for hosting citizen and mission data.¹

60%

State CIOs who said they would like to expand the managed services model over the next three years.²

\$8.1 B

Federal spending on cloud grew to US\$8.1 billion in FY21—a 13.1% CAGR. State budgets show a similar trajectory for cloud.³

Action strategies

IT for the way ahead

State technology leaders have a unique opportunity to expand on the benefits of their pandemic-related IT modernization efforts.

Strategy		Strategy in action
1.	<p>Adapt to new technologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create cloud-based platforms that can share solutions developed for one agency with other agencies. • Adjust business processes to allow for data-sharing across silos to help create seamless services to citizens. 	<p>Utah Department of Human Services</p> <p>The Office of Recovery Services (ORS), a Utah Department of Human Services division, migrated its 25-year-old information system for child support from legacy mainframe to a cloud-hosted Java-based application, resulting in flexibility, scalability, and cost-efficiency.⁴</p>
2.	<p>Balance security and privacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify security roles up front with vendors and partners, as responsibility for different aspects of security can vary widely between IaaS, SaaS, etc. • Embrace methodologies to integrate security throughout IT life cycle. 	
3.	<p>Adjust talent models</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create new, flexible career pathways specifically for talent with digital skills and ensure workers have access to learning and development opportunities. • Augment hired staff with talent available from other sources ranging from managed service providers to gig arrangements. 	<p>Maryland Department of Human Services</p> <p>MD THINK (Maryland's Total Human-services Information Network) is a cloud-based system created to break down data silos between agencies. The platform reinvented technology in Maryland by moving 40+ applications, development environments, and data to the cloud.⁵</p>
4.	<p>Measure mission value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement cloud financial operations (FinOps) to bring clarity around IT modernization costs. • Work with department leaders to measure improvements in service delivery outcomes. 	<p>Rhode Island unemployment insurance</p> <p>Rhode Island modernized its unemployment insurance contact center during the pandemic using cloud technology. Within 10 days of migrating to the cloud, the state went from a capacity of 75 concurrent calls to 2,000.⁶</p>

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Learn more.

Check out our thoughtware for a deep dive on IT modernization and cloud adoption in the public sector.

- [Don't just adopt cloud computing, adapt to it](#)
- [Trusted AI, trusted government](#)

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State cybersecurity

Reality check

What's happening now?

Organizations from federal agencies to school districts have suffered ransomware and other cyberattacks. States should improve their cyber posture—or risk serious consequences including data breach and financial loss.

Unprecedented benefits come with unprecedented risks

Increasing threats

Fragmentation of networks and the rise of malware-as-a-service have made entry easier for both criminals and nation-states.

Physical-digital convergence

The growing convergence of IT and operational technology means that cyberattacks can have massive real-world impacts.

Global interconnectedness

Technology services are increasingly delivered by providers from across the globe. This introduces the potential for new cyberthreats that can be motivated by anything from criminal intent to national cyberattacks related to global conflicts.

Compelling stats

57%

Percentage of surveyed state CIOs who identified ransomware as their top security threat—nearly six times the next leading threat.¹

150%

Increase in the number of disclosed ransomware attacks in the United States from 2019 to 2020.²

3.5M

The estimated number of cybersecurity jobs unfilled in 2021.³

Action strategies

Protect, prevent, and plan

Explore the action strategies that states can take to ramp up their cybersecurity strategy

Strategy	Strategy in action
<p>1. Take a whole-of-state approach to cybersecurity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empower state chief information security officers (CISOs) to set security standards for all state agencies. Hackers will find the weakest link. Where state programs are administered through county or municipal partners, states should provide cybersecurity leadership. Leverage funding in IJA state and local cybersecurity grants to upgrade state and local government cybersecurity under centralized state CISO guidance. 	<p>Executive order prompts state action on zero trust</p> <p>Executive order 14028, which directs federal agencies to implement a zero trust environment, has prompted several states to look into zero-trust for their enterprise technology. Several states including Arizona and South Carolina are looking at using zero trust to enhance security controls and protect critical data.⁴</p>
<p>2. Establish secure digital credentials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many states moved to more digital and remote operations during the pandemic. A solid digital identity can be critical to secure digital operations. High-quality digital credentials for residents and employees, with appropriate privacy safeguards, can form the basis for multiagency information-sharing to enhance service quality and reduce fraud. 	<p>Michigan’s identity management system</p> <p>Michigan’s MILogin identity management system allows users to securely access state information from multiple agencies with a single sign-in. The winner of StateScoop’s 2022 Innovation of the Year Award, the system boasts 8.6 million users with secure access to unemployment insurance, state drivers’ license services, Medicaid claims, and business filings.⁵</p>
<p>3. Explore a “cosourcing” model for cybersecurity talent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When it comes to cybersecurity and data professionals, many state governments are struggling to attract and retain qualified employees. State IT organizations typically average just six to 15 dedicated cyber professionals versus 100+ for similarly sized commercial organizations.⁶ Cosourcing cyber talent among agencies and with external partners, such as MS-ISAC or universities, can improve access to skilled talent. 	
<p>4. Adopt a more active cybersecurity posture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement multifactor authentication (MFA) to quickly reduce vulnerability to 99% of common cyberattacks. Embrace “zero trust” principles to create flexible defenses that are context-aware and risk-driven. Use active threat hunting to help uncover attacks that may go undetected by other defensive means. 	<p>InnovateOhio Platform</p> <p>The InnovateOhio Platform provides a common user experience and enhanced security through use of a single identity, OHID. Accounts are secured through the use of MFA, identity proofing, and risk-based authentication. Users have enhanced self-service capabilities on the platform, which currently has 2.1M users (citizens, employees, contractors, etc.), over 850 applications, and more than 100 state websites.⁷</p>
<p>5. Enhance data protection and data-sharing capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowing the data one has and where it is stored is the first step to having trust and confidence in that data. Create platforms to make data accessible to authorized workers—80% of business analysts’ time is spent on finding the right data and only 20% on analyzing it.⁸ 	

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Learn more.

Check out our thoughtware for a deep dive on cybersecurity in public sector.

- [Ransoming government](#)
- [Incentives are key to breaking the cycle of cyberattacks on critical infrastructure](#)

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State workforce of the future

Reality check

State workforces across the country are experiencing high turnover and low morale. To compete for skilled talent, state leaders should reframe their approach to public sector employment—adopting new concepts of work, workers, and the workplace.

Talent for the tasks ahead

Compelling stats

52%

Percentage of state and local employees surveyed who are considering changing jobs due to stress, burnout, and inadequate pay.¹

38%

Annual turnover rate in a large state for state workers under 30 years of age. Primary reasons for leaving are pay and retirement benefits.²

600K

More than 600,000 workers have left state and local government jobs since the beginning of the pandemic.³

What's happening now?

Competition

There is fierce private sector competition for skilled workers—especially in tech.

Hybrid management

Remote and hybrid work models have emerged that require new ways of managing workers.

Technology

Opportunities exist to boost worker productivity through technologies such as AI and cloud.

Action strategies

New talent strategies

The changes brought on by the pandemic create a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for state leaders to redesign state workforce systems and make government the employer of choice for top talent.

Strategy		Strategy in action
1.	<p>Get hybrid work right</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt hybrid work models to attract new and diverse talent outside of the capital city. Leverage varied work arrangements to access wider pools of skills. Equip workers with the right tools to work anywhere. 	<p>Massachusetts' Modern Workplace Program</p> <p>Massachusetts launched a program to deploy hardware, software, and other tools for state workers working remotely. It enabled remote work options for executive branch employees, increased collaboration, and further strengthened the Commonwealth's cybersecurity posture.⁴</p>
2.	<p>Rearchitect work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade technology and productivity tools for workers. Redesign jobs incorporating modern technologies. Increase work-from-anywhere roles. 	
3.	<p>Boost employee skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train those who need it—job-centric, experiential programs like one-on-one mentorships are proven to be most effective. Partner with a local university or other learning platforms to deliver custom curricula. 	
4.	<p>Offer competitive benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design portable and flexible benefits packages. Leverage relief funds to offer cash incentives/premium pay. 	<p>US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Cyber Talent Management System (CTMS)</p> <p>A new personnel system launched by the DHS in November 2021 equipped the department with new tools to recruit and reward cybersecurity professionals, including more competitive pay and recognition payments.⁵</p>
5.	<p>Emphasize mission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind employees of the mission and purpose, using data to show impact. Focus on fostering engagement and trust. 	<p>Denver's branding campaign</p> <p>The city of Denver launched a branding campaign called "Be a part of the city that you love" to make multigenerational citizens feel a sense of pride in working for the government. The campaign led to a 19% increase in job applications.⁶</p>
6.	<p>Focus on well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attract and retain next-gen workers by delivering what matters most to them: flexibility, wellness, and diversity. 	

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Learn more.

Check out our thoughtware for a deep dive on workforce engagement and the future of work in public sector.

- [Hybrid hiccups](#)
- [Focusing inward](#)
- [The future of work in government](#)

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Workforce development

Enhancing skills for economic growth

Reality check

The pandemic has fundamentally altered the US labor market, and industry is experiencing a labor shortage particularly among skilled workers. Adapting to these shifts and addressing the widening skills gap will require governments to pursue innovative solutions to attract, retain, and engage with workers.

What's happening now?

Tech advances

The pandemic pushed companies to invest in automation and other technologies, requiring many workers and their managers to adapt.

High job turnover

In November 2021, a record 4.5 million workers quit their job and a recent survey found that 40% were planning to change jobs within the next year.⁴

Uneven worker return

Parents of school-aged children and women of color have experienced relatively large declines in labor force participation during and following the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵

Compelling stats

11.3M

Total number of job openings in February 2022; there are about 5 million more job openings than people looking for work.¹

2.9M

Decline in total US employment between February 2020 (prepandemic) and January 2022.²

69%

Percentage of employers struggling to find skilled workers.³

Action strategies

Building a 21st-century workforce

As state leaders navigate an evolving labor market and economic landscape, they have an opportunity to leverage proven strategies to bolster both their workforce and the business community.

Strategy	Strategy in action
<p>1. Address the skills gap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create upskilling/reskilling programs that target industry needs, support job seekers, and measure results.• Support private and public sector initiatives to retrain and retain workers in industries being reshaped by advanced technologies, like robotics and automation.• Promote on-the-job training programs specifically for nontraditional workers.	<p>Markle Foundation’s Skillful Initiative</p> <p>Launched in Colorado in 2016, the Markle Foundation’s “Skillful Initiative” is a collaborative effort between business, the state government, and local partners that helps job seekers learn what skills are in demand and find relevant training.⁶</p>
<p>2. Focus on vulnerable populations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customize upskilling support strategies to fit specific populations such as high school dropouts, former prisoners, or older workers.• Partner with nonprofits and mobilize companies to support training low-wage workers.• Expand broadband access to cover both rural and urban demographics as well as low- and high-income earners.	<p>Back to work, Rhode Island</p> <p>Through a public-private partnership called “Back to Work RI,” the state of Rhode Island provides targeted skills training and support services to displaced workers, ushering them into growing sectors such as health care and IT.⁷</p>
<p>3. Strengthen the workforce ecosystem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partner with colleges and universities to implement lifelong learning approaches, allowing students to dip in and out of school to keep skills current.• Work with companies and educational institutions to facilitate apprenticeship programs that provide training for working adults earning a degree.	<p>South Carolina apprenticeship program</p> <p>The state of South Carolina offers a tax credit of US\$1,000 per apprentice to employers that sponsor apprentices and provides access to program consultants. In November 2021, South Carolina had 36,940 apprentices and more than 1,177 participating companies.⁸</p>
<p>4. Harness data and technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Measure success and inform future funding choices by tracking data like wages, employment rates, and retention and advancement rates.• Leverage data- and AI-based reemployment tools to better advise job seekers on skill attainment that can result in career advancement, while also helping employers access workers with needed skills.	<p>EARN Maryland program</p> <p>EARN funds training programs for in-demand job skills based on employer proposals. By February 2020, of the approximately 4,500 individuals who completed EARN training for entry-level jobs, more than 84% secured employment.⁹</p>

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Learn more.

Check out our thoughtware for a deep dive on IT modernization and cloud adoption in the public sector.

- [Job-centric upskilling](#)
- [Closing the talent gap](#)

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Higher education

Reality check

What's happening now?

A rapidly changing landscape

The pandemic upended nearly every facet of traditional higher education delivery models, giving colleges the opportunity to reimagine how they operate. States can help higher ed deal with rapidly evolving student needs and the demographic challenge of a declining number of high school graduates.

Federal funding

The Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) provides nearly US\$40 billion for colleges and universities.⁵ This includes substantial investments in traditionally under resourced areas including minority-serving institutions and community colleges.

Flexibility is key

Many college students are increasingly seeking flexible learning options. As a result, academic calendars and course offerings are being revised while still serving residential populations.

Widening inequalities

In 2020, 29% of households with a student planning to attend college canceled their fall enrollment, with minority families, the economically challenged, and first-generation households being the most likely to do so.⁶

Compelling stats

-1.2M

Total US undergraduate enrollment has declined by 1.2 million students, or about 6.6%, since the fall of 2019.¹ Public 2-year college enrollment is down 11.6%.²

1 in 3

College students reported having a mental health disorder in 2020.³

21%

Low-income and first-generation college learners have only a 21% chance of completing a bachelor's degree in six years, compared to 66% among other students.⁴

Action strategies

A new era for higher education

An opportunity now exists for institutions of higher learning to harness new investments into digital technology, enhance the student experience, and help ensure the success of future generations of students.

Strategy	Strategy in action
<p>1. Focus on student success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify obstacles to graduation. Scale intervention efforts by investing in analytic capabilities combined with significant improvements to functions like advising, career services, and mental health.• Ease the path from community college to a four-year degree by implementing a statewide approach to credit transfers.• Proactively address student mental health needs by providing on-campus access to services including nutrition assistance, health care, child care, and housing assistance.	<p>Colorado’s approach to rewarding institutions for increasing diversity</p> <p>In 2021, Colorado introduced a new funding formula to encourage enrollment of students from underrepresented minority groups, first generation students, and those eligible for Pell Grants.⁷</p>
<p>2. Expand experiential opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrate work experiences into the curriculum, with students toggling between long stretches in the classroom and work world related to their area of study.• Build deeper ties with alumni, providing them with virtual learning opportunities to upskill throughout their career.	<p>Georgia State University student retention</p> <p>Since 2003, Georgia State University’s graduation rate increased by 23 points, with no gaps by race, ethnicity, or income. The gains were made possible in part by data analytics and shifts in instruction.⁸</p>
<p>3. Align resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce expenses and capitalize on expertise of other institutions by coordinating core campus services—like legal affairs, financial aid, and human resources—across the state university system.• Automate or outsource routine activities like processing payroll to a single institution within the system, enabling the other campuses to focus resources on more strategic activities.	<p>Massachusetts MassTransfer Pathways</p> <p>MassTransfer is a joint initiative between Massachusetts’ public colleges and universities that make it easier to transfer between different institutions, helping students earn a bachelor’s degree on time.⁹</p>
<p>4. Get hybrid right</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a robust tech infrastructure, with supporting data and analytics tools, to modernize campus operations, support virtual interactions, and create a tech-enabled student experience that enhances not only online interactions but also the residential experience.• Design new collaboration spaces for students, including virtual communities.• Increase capacity or use the campus in new ways by rethinking the academic calendar to accommodate students beyond traditional semester schedules.	<p>University of Central Florida’s approach to hybrid learning</p> <p>The university offers a “mixed mode” format, in which the class meets face-to-face only once a week, and the rest of the work is shifted online. Roughly 90% of the university’s 59,000 undergraduates take blended or online classes, which receive the highest marks in satisfaction surveys.¹⁰</p>

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Learn more.

Check out our thoughtware for a deep dive on higher education in public sector:

- [Five strategies for student success](#)
- [The hybrid campus](#)
- [The future\(s\) of public higher education](#)

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Housing insecurity and homelessness

Taking an ecosystem approach to housing insecurity

Reality check

Access to housing is linked to an individual's overall health and well-being, and during the pandemic, those facing housing insecurity or homelessness were at higher risk.¹ As the pandemic cemented the connection between housing and public health, state leaders should focus on developing long-term prevention and mitigation strategies.

Compelling stats

49%

The percentage of Americans who say the availability of affordable housing in their local community is a major problem—up 10% from early 2018.²

2%

The increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness between 2019 and 2020, including a 7% increase in people staying outdoors instead of sheltered locations.³

40%

The percentage of adult renters reporting they are “very likely” or “somewhat likely” to be evicted from their homes within the next two months.⁴

What's happening now?

■ Increase in vulnerable populations

Economic disruption has left many segments of the population newly vulnerable, pushing more people into homelessness or to the brink of it.

■ Rising costs

Even before the pandemic, nearly half of all renter households were cost-burdened, meaning more than 30% of their income went toward rent.⁵

■ Housing shortage

There is a nationwide shortage of housing, with an estimated 7 million affordable rental homes needed for extremely low-income renters.⁶

■ Recovery funds

With federal funds made available through ARPA, states have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to invest in new or enhanced strategies that can help reduce housing insecurity.

Action strategies

Reducing housing insecurity

Explore the action strategies governments can take to address housing insecurity and homelessness.

Strategy	Strategy in action
<p>1. Lead with data-driven interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a system for collecting and integrating high-quality, real-time data as the foundation for understanding a given jurisdiction’s homeless and housing-insecure populations, and use that data to tailor interventions. 	
<p>2. Adopt an ecosystem approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring nonprofits, the private sector, the court system, and citizen activists together to tackle the issue, identify potential areas of cooperation as well as areas of conflict, and encourage open exchange of information and ideas. 	<p>North Carolina Interagency Council for Coordinating Homeless Programs (ICCHP)</p> <p>Established in 2017, the council focuses on an ecosystem approach to combatting homelessness, noting: “Effective elimination of homelessness across North Carolina requires the eradication of silos between and within service providers, funders, and government.”⁷ The state has a multiagency strategic approach to address homelessness.⁸</p>
<p>3. Use human-centered design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group individuals experiencing housing insecurity along a spectrum of need to better understand the common challenges they face as they navigate the system. Use human-centered design to pinpoint both barriers and accelerators and design interventions tailored to different needs across the spectrum of needs—from the unsheltered homeless and the housing-insecure to the housing cost-burdened. 	
<p>4. Focus on an outcomes-based approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rethink procurement practices and implement results-driven contracting that focuses on performance. Help ensure incentives are both workable and trackable, with an emphasis on shared risk. 	<p>Bergen County, New Jersey</p> <p>Bergen County made national headlines by successfully addressing chronic homelessness. The county assembled a regional team that collected real-time, person-specific data, and used this data to redesign its response. In addition, Bergen County reached “functional zero” for its homeless veteran population, helping ensure that homelessness for veterans is both rare and brief.⁹</p>
<p>5. Integrate supports and services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create more “wraparound” social services that integrate housing aid with other supports to help clients in crisis achieve stability more quickly. 	<p>State of Arkansas emergency rental assistance program</p> <p>The Arkansas COVID-19 Rent Relief Program developed an integrated outreach strategy to hyper-target Arkansans most in need. The team not only issued press releases and op-eds, it also equipped over 200 community-based organizations with toolkits to promote the program.¹⁰ In spring 2022, Arkansas announced it would partner with nonprofits to provide wraparound services using unspent ERAP funds.¹¹</p>

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Learn more.

Check out our thoughtware for a deep dive on addressing homelessness from a public sector perspective.

- [Disrupting housing insecurity and homelessness](#)
- [Addressing homelessness with data analytics](#)

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Public health systems

Building resilient, equitable, and sustainable health systems

Reality check

The pandemic ravaged already fragile public health systems. Significant federal investments are now providing states and localities with billions in funding to address long-standing public health infrastructure deficiencies. States should be innovative as they use these short-term investments to build resilient and sustainable public health systems that meet the needs of today as well as future generations.

Compelling stats

\$3.6T

Annual amount the United States spends on health care; less than 3% of that is estimated to be directed to public health and prevention.¹

303

The number of state and local public health leaders across 41 states who have left their roles since the pandemic began.²

50%

The estimated percentage of public health agencies today that are reportedly unable to exchange data with hospital systems.³

What's happening now?

- **Chronic underfunding**
Decades of underfunding has weakened public health capacity.⁴
- **High turnover, low retention**
The nation's public health workforce is insufficiently equipped and understaffed.⁵
- **Outdated data systems**
Today's data systems do not support rapid detection, response, and mitigation of health threats.⁶
- **Pervasive inequities**
The economically disadvantaged disproportionately face poor health outcomes.⁷

Action strategies

Building systems to improve health outcomes

Explore the action strategies states can adopt to build resilient health systems.

Strategy	Strategy in action
<p>1. Put health equity at the center</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate health equity measures into public health initiatives from the start. • Empower community partners to lead change. 	<p>Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS)</p> <p>To actively administer COVID-19 vaccines, Missouri’s DHSS conducted vulnerable population analyses and geospatially identified vaccine-uptake deserts to close gaps in access especially in rural areas. The agency also evaluated vaccine hesitancy and used findings to plan audience-specific communications to bolster vaccine rates.⁸</p>
<p>2. Modernize data and technology systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a public health data governance organization to oversee public health data collection and security. • Create a modern data system to share real-time, actionable data across programs and sectors. • Build 21st century tools into the new data system, like AI, data analytics, and predictive modeling. • Leverage nontraditional health data sources—like consumer spending and internet searches—for early indicators of public health events. 	<p>New York State Department of Health</p> <p>New York state built Excelsior Pass, a first-of-its-kind solution to provide users secure, digital proof of COVID-19 vaccination or negative test results for entry into an event or business. Over 100 business partners have adopted Excelsior Pass, with over 10 million passes generated since March 2021.⁹</p>
<p>3. Build a diverse, 21st century workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus public health recruitment efforts on building a workforce that understands and is representative of the community served. • Enhance data science and communications workforce capacity. • Invest in worker upskilling. • Focus on improving the effectiveness of state health officials, including taking input from boards of health on possible leadership appointees. • Build a pipeline and career path for public health workers. 	<p>Virginia Department of Health (VDH)</p> <p>The Virginia Department of Health sponsored leadership visioning labs which included local health districts to help shape a statewide vision for the future of public health, including building workforce capabilities. The labs identified workforce priorities, explored strategies to maximize the impact of federal workforce funding, and to develop a roadmap of strategic projects.¹⁰</p>
<p>4. Strengthen ecosystem collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public health agencies should work with private and public stakeholders at the local level to create public health improvement coalitions in every community. • Convene and support regional collaborative innovation hubs where local leaders can share ideas, test innovations, and pool resources. • Promote cross-agency collaboration to generate diverse perspectives. 	<p>San Diego county: Live Well San Diego</p> <p>Adopted by the county government, Live Well San Diego is a collaborative of 500 partners, including health care providers, governments, community-based nonprofits, and others. Partners commit to a collective vision that focuses on improving the health of residents and supports healthy choices; ensuring communities are protected from crime and resilient to disasters; and cultivating opportunities for all communities to thrive.¹¹</p>
<p>5. Explore innovative funding models</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use untapped funding sources to address ecosystem challenges. • Leverage next-gen investment tools, like blended or braided financing models, to streamline funding towards a single purpose. • Partner with health plans, health systems, and providers to address mutual prevention goals within the community. 	<p>Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation</p> <p>The US\$50 million private Healthy Neighborhoods Equity Fund II, a joint effort of the Conservation Law Foundation and the Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation, invests in mixed-income, mixed-use developments near public transit in urban areas in and around Boston, with the support of banks, corporate and individual investors, hospitals, and insurers. The investments support the fund’s mission to create healthy neighborhoods that can improve public health and well-being.¹²</p>

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Future of Medicaid

Emerging from the pandemic

Reality check

During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE), states have maintained continuous eligibility for Medicaid beneficiaries thanks to enhanced federal funding. Once the PHE is declared over, states will need to redetermine eligibility for millions of individuals—a daunting task. Additionally, states leveraged federal COVID-19 relief funding to enhance certain coverage programs like in-home and community-based services (HCBS) and telehealth services. The continuation of these new or enhanced services will need to be evaluated and, where needed, funded.

What's happening now?

- **Ending the PHE**
States will need to redetermine their Medicaid population in a timely manner³ once the PHE ends.⁴
- **Improved HCBS delivery**
A one-time increase in federal matching funds can help states make systemic changes to support the growing needs of older adults and those with disabilities.⁵
- **Equity at the center**
Driven mainly by the pandemic, states are implementing health equity requirements for Medicaid-managed care organizations (MCOs) and additional quality-reporting measures.⁶

Compelling stats

15M

The number of Medicaid beneficiaries that may no longer be eligible for the program once the PHE ends.¹

\$12.7B

The amount of ARPA-H funds being used by states to improve home and community-based services (HCBS) delivery.²

6.2

Percentage points of enhanced federal share of Medicaid funding provided to states during the pandemic—scheduled to sunset in the quarter following the end of the PHE.³

Action strategies

Building an innovative, resilient, and inclusive public health system

Explore the action strategies that states can adopt to navigate the changing health care landscape.

Strategy	Strategy in action
<p>1. Strategically allocate one-time HCBS matching funds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By March 31, 2022, all 50 states and the District of Columbia submitted plans to access enhanced federal home and community-based services (HCBS) matching funds authorized under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.⁷ States should continue engagement with HCBS providers and consumers to develop initiatives that are sustainable and focus on improving value of HCBS services. 	<p>Tennessee’s CMS approval for HCBS spending</p> <p>Tennessee gained CMS approval in late 2021 for a US\$400 million investment in HCBS programs, specifically designed to improve access to home and community-based services (adding new recipients and reducing the wait list for intellectual and developmentally disabled individuals needing care) and strengthen the existing HCBS workforce through recruitment and retention activities.⁸</p>
<p>2. Manage Medicaid eligibility redeterminations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement process and workload improvements to efficiently process redeterminations, remove individuals who are no longer eligible, while at the same time, reduce the number of eligible individuals who become disenrolled because beneficiaries fail to respond to mailed notifications. Partner with Medicaid MCOs, providers, and community groups to manage outreach and other operational challenges. 	
<p>3. Put equity at the center of Medicaid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with MCOs and other stakeholders to identify equity challenges. Embed equity related requirements into value-based purchasing arrangements on MCO contracts. Seek to network with a broad array of stakeholders and community partners to promote common equity goals. 	<p>Oregon’s health equity strategy</p> <p>Oregon requires Medicaid coordinated care organizations (CCO) to develop a health equity plan—including the appointment of a health equity administrator—that seeks to address racial, cultural, and socioeconomic disparities among its beneficiaries and the communities within its service area.⁹</p>
<p>4. Build sustainable framework for expanded telehealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the potential to maintain the expanded use of telehealth services indefinitely, addressing issues such as reimbursement and technological barriers in accessing care. 	<p>Wisconsin’s Medicaid telehealth services</p> <p>Wisconsin is providing more flexibility to Medicaid members by permanently expanding telehealth services beginning the month after the PHE ends, ensuring no lapse in coverage. The state will provide reimbursement to providers for interprofessional consultations and physical and behavioral health services that can be delivered in a functionally equivalent manner to that of in-person contact.¹⁰</p>

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Learn more.

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Human services transformation

Solving problems at their source

Reality check

The pandemic exposed significant weaknesses in many social care systems. Leaders now have an opportunity to introduce innovative models designed for today's needs that can serve a broader array of stakeholders. Leaders should focus on making their systems resilient through early intervention, addressing problems at their root, and creating paths to greater self-sufficiency.

What's happening now?

Increased vulnerabilities

The pandemic's economic disruption has left many segments of the population vulnerable, particularly millions of low-wage workers, younger employees, and women.⁴

Persistent challenges

Aging populations, rising homelessness, and food insecurity, as well as increased prevalence of mental health issues and drug abuse will likely increase demand for services.

Rising economic insecurity

There are more workers in low-wage jobs that provide few or no benefits, leaving them to turn to social care agencies for help with basic needs.

Compelling stats

4.2M

Between 2020 and 2021, over four million workers left the US labor force—neither working nor actively looking for work, thereby losing access to the employer benefits they formerly received.¹

80:100

According to the US Private Sector Job Quality Index, for roughly every 80 Americans working in "high-quality" jobs, 100 were working in "low-quality" jobs.²

44%

Low-wage workers account for 44% of the US workforce.³

What you can do

New talent strategies

Explore the action steps leaders can take to create social care systems for today's needs.

Strategy	Strategy in action
<p>1. Invest early and holistically</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human services programs can keep incipient issues from erupting into major problems if they utilize a holistic support approach that considers multiple, interconnected needs. Take a preventative approach using tools like community resource engines that bring together a broad range of governmental and community resources curated to fit an individual's specific needs, from housing and food assistance to employment services.⁵ 	<p>Colorado's Child Support Services (CSS)</p> <p>Colorado's Department of Human Services' Division of Child Support Services (CSS) partnered with counties across the state to transform its child support program from traditional enforcement to a family-centered, multigenerational approach called "2Gen." The goal is to grow family income by giving both custodial parents and noncustodial parents access to employment services. An evaluation of the program showed increased participant earnings, enhanced connection to children, and improved attitudes toward child support.⁶</p>
<p>2. Focus on outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put outcomes at the center of program design, procurement, delivery, and evaluation. Use metrics to measure the quality of engagement and tangible improvements. 	<p>Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF)</p> <p>In 2016, Rhode Island's DCYF used outcome-based contracting that resulted in 116 new contracts organized around 15 outcome-based service categories tied to specific objectives. The contracts provided flexibility that allowed providers to offer ideas DCYF hadn't considered before. DCYF has seen a 66% increase in its number of contracts with family-based foster homes and a 23% reduction in its share of foster children living in group settings.⁷</p>
<p>3. Embrace a human-centered mindset</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring clients into the room with providers, caseworkers, and other stakeholders to engage in rapid prototyping, testing, and iteration of realistic, workable solutions. To scale its adoption, agency leaders should adapt their procurement approaches to facilitate widespread use of human-centered design. 	<p>Kentucky Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T)</p> <p>The state used human-centered design to learn why individuals eligible for the SNAP E&T program failed to use it. Researchers interviewed SNAP recipients and others and found that many faced difficulty complying with the program's requirements; weren't finding jobs that matched their long-term interests; and worried about losing other benefits. Kentucky used this information to develop a new communications campaign and improve SNAP E&T to better address participants' needs.⁸</p>
<p>4. Fortify family and community-based support networks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the role of informal care networks by supporting and investing in programs that build relationships within the community. Extended families, faith communities, local nonprofits, and neighborhood groups, among others, can provide important support to individuals and families, and government should embrace and invest in them. Support unpaid caregivers through financial allowances, tax credits, and grants to local and community organizations that provide training and assistance. 	
<p>5. Reduce administrative burdens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help ensure resources and workers are focused on supporting people rather than administrative processes by defining clear and accessible service standards, advancing data-driven process improvements, increasing opportunities for self-service, and using intelligent automation and robotic process automation. 	<p>Idaho Division of Family and Community Services</p> <p>Idaho transformed its child welfare system, streamlining data entry for case management and improving operations through a new portal for foster parents to access children information. Assessments are completed in less than 20 days on average, compared to a previous average of 60 days.⁹</p>

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