

The Cross-Skilling Advantage

Building Future-Ready, Agile Government Teams

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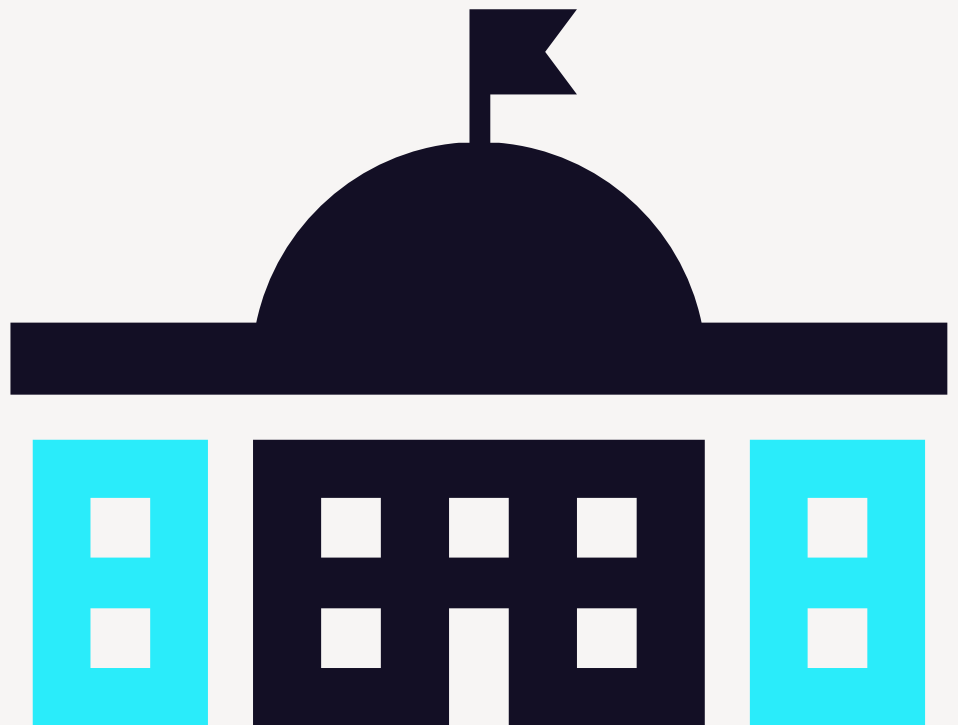


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Executive summary

Empower employees with complementary skills to ensure continuity and effectiveness in a rapidly changing tech landscape

Government agencies today face familiar but growing challenges: rising demand, shrinking budgets, workforce constraints, and ever-evolving technologies like AI, cloud, and cybersecurity. Traditional hiring and reskilling models can't keep pace. **But cross-skilling offers a strategic solution.**

Cross-skilling equips existing teams with the knowledge to flex across domains—strengthening agility, collaboration, and capacity instead of relying on new hires or siloed expertise. By broadening capabilities across related skill sets, agencies can move faster, solve problems more holistically, and build a workforce that's ready for whatever comes next.

“ [Cross-skilling is about building a workforce that can adapt to whatever comes next.](#)”

Tony Holmes, Practice Lead for Solutions Architects, Public Sector, Pluralsight

What is cross-skilling?

Cross-skilling is the development of adjacent, complementary skills that enhance an individual's ability to contribute across disciplines.

While upskilling deepens expertise in a single area and reskilling enables movement into entirely new roles, **cross-skilling supports more agile, flexible talent development**. It builds multidimensional teams that solve problems collaboratively and respond to shifting priorities.

Why cross-skilling matters now

Today's technology is interconnected. AI, cloud, cybersecurity, and data management are no longer separate specialties. They overlap and depend on each other constantly. Government teams must understand how these technologies work together to succeed.

Employees with cross-functional knowledge are the key to developing this understanding. Additionally, a workforce with a wide, yet related, range of skills reduces bottlenecks, enables faster decision making, and keeps projects moving. **Cross-skilling fluency breaks down silos** and improves collaboration, empowering teams to become more flexible and stay ahead in an evolving sector.

When employees understand how their roles connect to broader systems, they not only contribute more effectively, but also uncover new ways to innovate. This broader perspective supports more integrated problem-solving, better risk mitigation, and a stronger sense of mission alignment.

Cross-skilling provides a built-in safeguard against resource constraints. Teams become more resilient when they are more able to adapt to changes in headcount or funding and become more engaged when they have opportunities to grow their skill sets and careers.

“ [When team members understand multiple domains, they see how their work fits into larger systems and can pivot as priorities shift...Cross-skilling isn't about becoming an expert in everything. It's about having enough literacy to contribute meaningfully across disciplines.](#) ”

Tony Holmes, Practice Lead for Solutions Architects, Public Sector, Pluralsight



How to implement cross-skilling: **Practical strategies**

Cross-skilling as a strategy requires more than a one-off training initiative. It calls for intentional design, supported by data, leadership, and a culture that values continuous learning. Bring cross-skilling to life within your agency with an actionable, step-by-step framework:

1. Design learning around the work

Expecting employees to find time for long training sessions outside their regular responsibilities isn't realistic. That's why cross-skilling is most effective when leaders embed learning into daily workflows.



Microlearning

allows learners to build knowledge in short, digestible bursts—ideal for high-pressure or fast-paced environments.



Just-in-time learning

provides targeted support at the moment of need, such as a new project, emerging issue, or technology rollout.



Hands-on learning

environments like labs and sandboxes allow teams to apply new skills and gain practical experience without consequence.

2. Use data to drive learning

Every team has different needs, and each individual brings a different baseline of knowledge. Effective cross-skilling starts with visibility.



Skill assessments

provide clarity on where learners are starting in their knowledge and what gaps exist.



Personalized learning paths

ensure training is relevant and immediately applicable to agency goals and individual responsibilities.



Progress tracking

lets agencies measure growth over time—not just the number of course completions, but proficiency gains and on-the-job impact.

“ [An effective learning approach begins with assessing existing knowledge and delivering targeted training to fill gaps, ensuring that learning is aligned with agency priorities.](#) ”

Tony Holmes, Practice Lead for Solutions Architects, Public Sector, Pluralsight

3. Foster collaboration across boundaries

Cross-skilling works best when paired with real opportunities to apply new skills. Encourage collaboration across functions to reinforce learning and accelerate transformation.



Cross-functional
projects bring together
diverse teams to work on
shared goals. This builds
technical fluency and drives
systems-level thinking.



Job shadowing
and rotational programs
are an approachable way
for employees to learn
from peers, understand
workflows, and develop
empathy across roles.



Regular joint meetings
across teams foster a shared
language, open dialogue,
and alignment on challenges
and solutions.

4. Create a culture of continuous learning

Learning must be at the core of the employee experience for cross-skilling to be most effective.



Leadership
plays a critical role by
modeling curiosity, investing
in development, and tying
learning to organizational
outcomes.



Recognize and reward
employees who pursue
growth to show that
learning is a priority.



Integrate learning goals
into performance reviews and
operational plans to show
that leaders both expect and
support skill development.

The payoff: Mission-ready, resilient teams

Cross-skilling is more than an efficiency play. **It's a proactive strategy to build a future-ready workforce.** When employees expand and flex their skill sets, teams are more agile, collaborative, and capable of responding to complex challenges. Agencies that embrace cross-skilling:

- Move faster with less reliance on handoffs or external support
- Maximize existing talent by unlocking untapped potential
- Minimize risk by ensuring continuity and flexibility during workforce or budget changes
- Retain skilled employees by investing in their growth and mobility

“ [Cross-skilling builds resilience into your team by design.](#)

Tony Holmes, Practice Lead for Solutions Architects, Public Sector, Pluralsight

Cross-skilling empowers public sector teams to do more with what they have, without sacrificing quality, innovation, or mission delivery. In today's landscape of budget constraints and evolving priorities, that kind of flexibility is more than valuable. **It's mission-critical.**

Start cross-skilling and reach organizational goals

Collaborate with Pluralsight to design and implement a cross-skilling strategy tailored to your **agency's unique mission and challenges.** With expert-led content, hands-on labs, skill assessments, and personalized learning paths, we empower public sector teams to develop mission-critical capabilities with speed, confidence, and impact.

Let us show you how a data-driven approach to learning can accelerate your mission and equip your workforce to stay ahead of the curve.

