Tips & Tricks: Using AI in Daily Work as a Municipal Employee

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What we'll cover today

- 7 practical tips
- How to keep your authentic voice and save time
- Verification habits
- Privacy and data guardrails
- Choosing the right AI platform
- Creating a repeatable workflow your team can adopt

What AI is (and isn't) in municipal work

AI is:

- A tool that generates drafts based on patterns in data.

- A fast partner for writing, organizing, simplifying, and translating messages.

- Helpful for brainstorming options, FAQs, meeting scripts, and stakeholder talking points.

- Great for turning notes into agendas, action items, and follow-up emails.

What AI is (and isn't) in municipal work

AI isn't:

- A source of truth

- Legal advice or policy authority

- Automatically aware of local context

- Automatically private

Rule of thumb: If it would be sensitive in a public records request, don't enter it into an unapproved AI tool.

TIP 1: Be Yourself

- Why it matters:
  - Residents/employees trust clarity and authenticity.
- How to use it:
  - Start with your own outline, then ask AI to tighten or translate it for different audiences.
  - Create a "voice guide" (your preferred phrases,

Quick prompt to try:
"Rewrite this announcement in my voice: clear, calm, and neighborly. Keep it under 180 words. Draft 3 options."

TIP 2: Verify information

- Why it matters:
  - AI can hallucinate or miss local context; unchecked errors can undermine credibility.
- How to use it:
  - Require sources: ask for citations and then open the originals.
  - Cross-check numbers and legal references against

Quick prompt to try:
"List the key claims in this draft and what source would verify each. Flag anything uncertain or likely wrong."

TIP 3: Protect Privacy & Sensitive Data

- Why it matters:
  - Municipal work often involves confidential, personal, or protected information.
- How to use it:
  - **Never** paste personal data, case details, or non-public documents.
  - Redact and summarize: replace names/addresses

Quick prompt to try:
"Here is a redacted summary. Draft a response that is empathetic and factual, avoiding speculation and personal details."

TIP 4: Use AI for faster writing and better communication

- Why it matters:
  - AI is great at structuring, simplifying, and translating.
- How to use it:
  - Turn dense memos into plain language summaries.
  - Generate meeting agendas, minutes templates,

Quick prompt to try:
"Summarize this memo for the public at an 8th-grade reading level. Include a 3-bullet 'What it means for you.'"

TIP 5: Make it a Thought Partner

- ## Why it matters:
    - Leaders benefit from seeing alternatives.
- ## How to use it:
    - Ask for pros/cons and unintended consequences of a policy option.
    - Generate specific talking points (business owners, renters, seniors, etc.).

Quick prompt to try:
"Act as a critical reviewer. What are the top 5 risks, equity impacts, and questions residents will ask about this proposal?"

TIP 6: Build Repeatable Workflows

- ## Why it matters:
  - Consistency reduces risk and saves time.
- ## How to use it:
  - Create prompt templates for common tasks (press releases, council packets, FAQs).
  - Add a verification checklist (facts, dates, names, sources, approvals).

Quick prompt to try:
"Create a reusable prompt template for drafting a council update: context, decision needed, options, impacts, and next steps."

TIP 7: Choose the Right Platform

- ## Why it matters:
  - Picking the right tool improves quality, saves time, and reduces risk

- ## How to use it:
  - Use general chat tools for drafting, brainstorming, and summarizing.
  - Use research enabled tools when you need ~~citations or current information – still verify~~

> **Quick prompt to try:**
> "Given my task and constraints, recommend the best type of AI tool and workflow. Ask me 3 clarifying questions first."

email/docs/spreadsheets (with org controls).

REMINDER: DOs and DON'Ts

- DO
  - Use AI to draft, summarize, and translate, then edit.

  - Verify facts, numbers, and dates.

  - Use approved tools and follow your city's/town's privacy and security policies.

- **DON'T**
  - Don't treat AI output as legal/policy advice.

  - Don't paste confidential info

  - Don't publish AI generated content without review for accuracy, bias, and local context.

  - Don't bypass records retention.

  - Don't assume AI is neutral - check for equity impacts and unintended consequences.

Bonus: prompts you can keep on a sticky note

- "Turn this into a 1-minute speaking script."
- "Give me 5 FAQs residents will ask - and concise answers."
- "Rewrite this for clarity; keep it respectful."
- "What could go wrong? List risks and mitigations."
- "Extract action items, owners, and deadlines from these notes."

Thank you