

GovExec | Intelligence

Engaging the Public Sector Buyer in 2026

RESEARCH REPORT | OCTOBER 2025



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The government market is entering 2026 in a state of flux. Agency turnover, evolving political influence, and rapid shifts in procurement processes are reshaping how public sector buyers evaluate and acquire technology. Engaging buyers has never been more important... and more challenging.

Going into the new year, how can B2G marketers connect to decision makers? It comes down to:

- 1. Being Present:** Showing up regularly in the places your audience is spending time.
- 2. Connecting:** Creating trusted content that sticks—which means it is well researched, educational, and helpful.

In 2025, GovExec Intelligence conducted two studies that provide a clear picture of where public sector buyers are going for information and what they are looking for from their vendors—the Buyer’s Journey Study and the annual Media Engagement Study. This report provides a comprehensive look at what is happening in the market today that will impact your marketing and business development efforts over the next year.

Before going into the data from the two studies, it’s important to paint a picture of what is happening in the market today. While every marketer is acutely aware of all of this, it bears repeating here with just a few headlines:

THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION IS MOVING STAFF INTO JOBS THEY KNOW NOTHING ABOUT

Washington Post, September 4, 2025

YEAR WILL END WITH 300,000 FEWER FEDERAL WORKERS, TRUMP OFFICIAL SAYS

New York Times, August 22, 2025

CONTRACTORS FEEL LIKE THEY’RE ON THE EDGE OF AN ABYSS

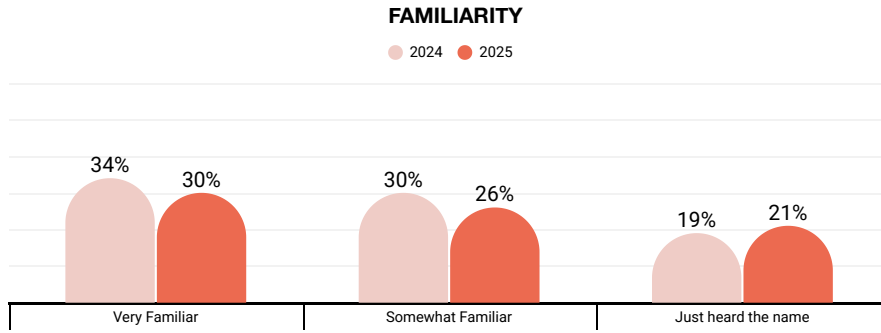
Federal News Network, April 8, 2025

And passage of the Big Beautiful Bill. And changes in the Federal Acquisition Regulations. And, of course, the October government shutdown.

All of this illustrates the chaos, uncertainty, and consistent change that will continue well into 2026.

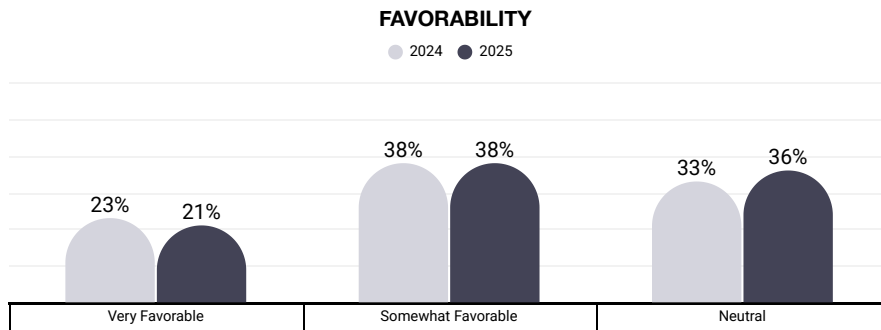
From a marketing perspective, one of the most impactful shifts is the change in the workforce: 2026 will see new people in new roles. The people you need to reach may not be new to the government, or even to the agency, but they are now doing different jobs with different priorities. And they may not have any idea who the legacy contractors are, or what those contractors do for the agency. Our annual study to gauge the familiarity and favorability of 50 government contractors shows the impact of this flux: the familiarity of every brand declined.

In 2025, familiarity with government contractors fell, leading to declines in favorability



From the annual brand assessment study:

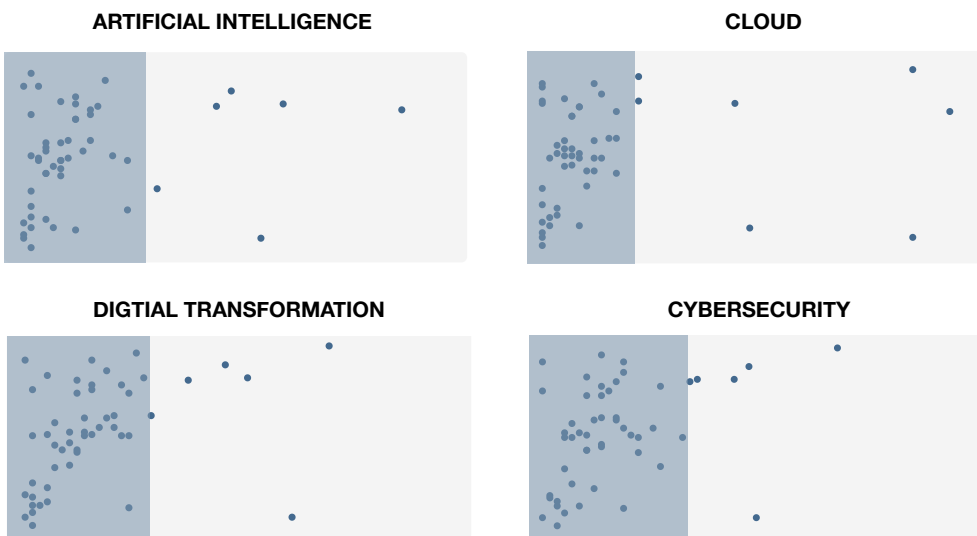
Q: Please indicate your level of familiarity with each of the following firms as it relates to their work with government agencies.



From the annual brand assessment study:

Q: When it comes to their work with government agencies, are your opinions of the following contractors favorable or unfavorable?

Respondents view few contractors as standing out in priority technology areas



From the annual brand assessment study:

Q: Do you associate any of the following brands with [technology area]? Please select all that apply.



Photo by Mavoimages via Adobe Stock.

Declines in familiarity almost always correlate to declines in favorability. When the study was fielded in Spring 2025, the decline may have reflected respondents' reluctance to show preference for any vendor—even anonymously—or, more simply, a lack of familiarity with the vendors themselves. Either way, it underscores a pressing challenge facing every government contractor today.



Declining brand familiarity: Buyers are less likely to know — or trust — vendor brands than in previous years.



Content skepticism: Trust in government contractors' self-published materials continues to fall, pushing vendors to rely on associations, media, and SMEs to lend credibility.



Multi-channel engagement: Buyers toggle between news outlets, newsletters, social platforms, podcasts, and now AI-driven summaries to stay informed.

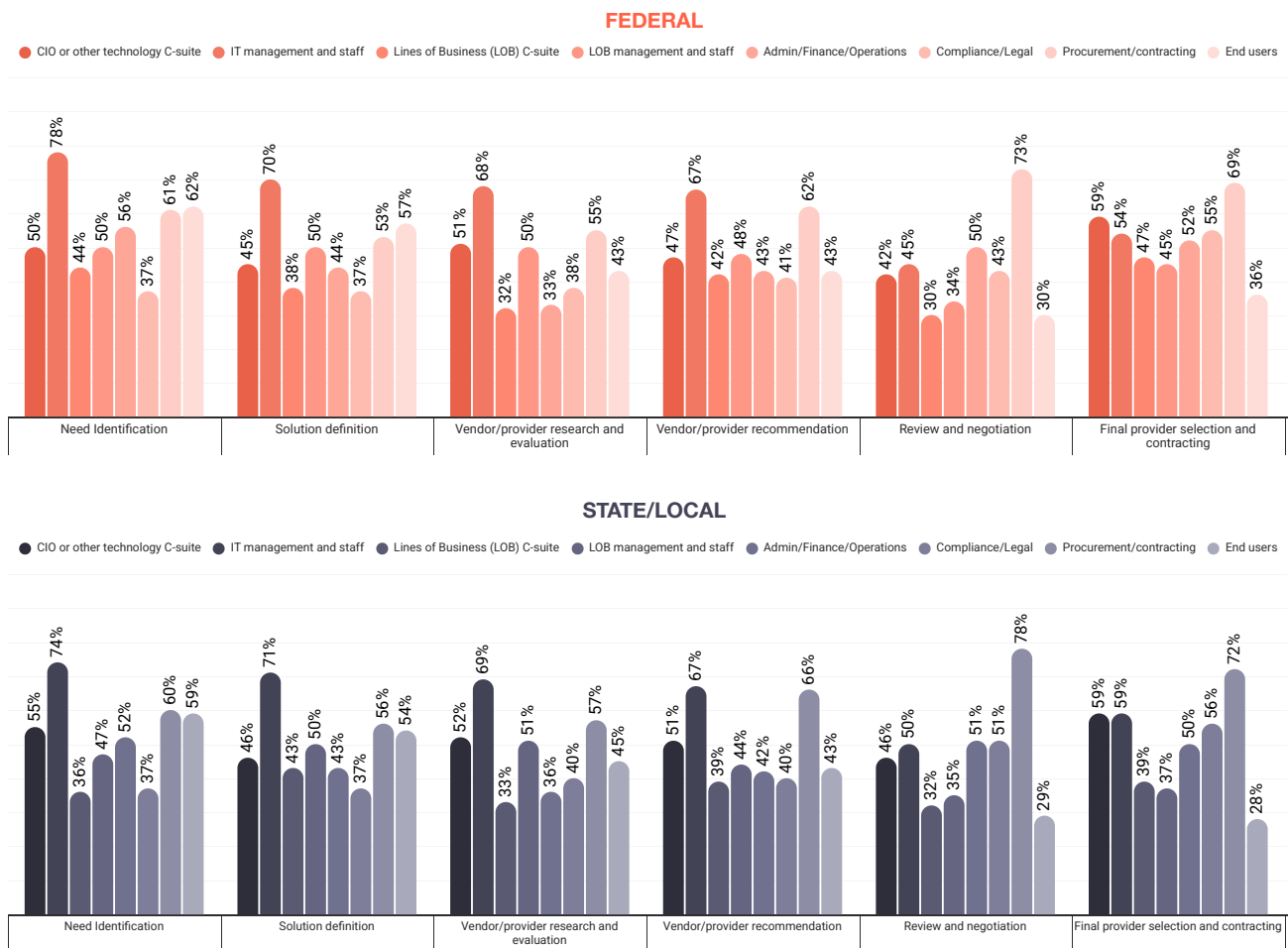
We believe there is an incredible opportunity in this moment for companies that are present in the right channels and connecting with their audience. The following pages summarize data collected in 2025 to paint a picture of where the public sector is spending time and how to connect with them.

The Public Sector IT Buyer Journey

The public sector has a complex ecosystem where stakeholder involvement ebbs and flows throughout the decision cycle. This has always been true and continues to be so. However, there is a shift coming: expect to see executives and political leaders more involved at every point in the buying process.

This year also saw an increase of C-suite involvement in vendor research and recommendations, where in the past it has fallen to the IT and Program Managers to do this legwork. Whether these changes will speed or stall technology investments remains to be seen.

IT management & staff have the most influence throughout the procurement process



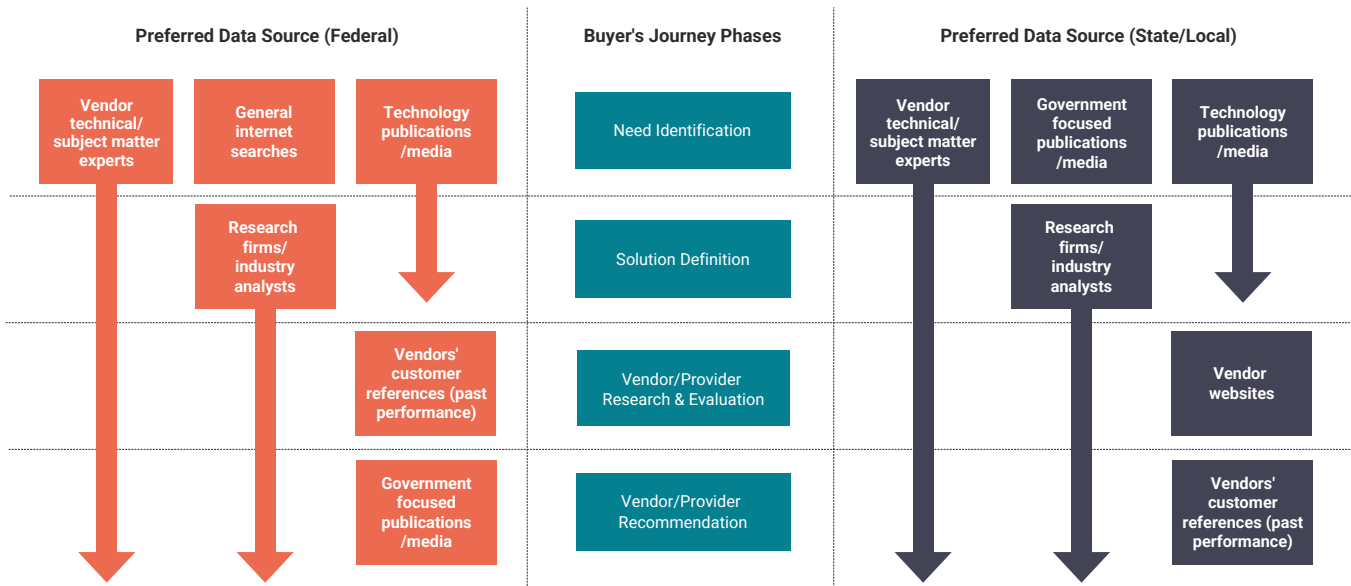
From the 2025 Buyer Journey Study

Q: How involved are each of the following stakeholders in your organization's IT product, service, and solution procurements during:

The sources of information they are specifically looking to also differ. Regardless of where they are in the buyer journey, decision makers rely on a mix of information sources, from internal agency updates to trusted media outlets. Later in this report, we look at media engagement preferences.

From a procurement standpoint, influence at the solutions definition stage is important because this will help shape the requirements. Federal buyers rely heavily on federal contract vehicles (e.g., GSA Schedules, GWACs) and government-focused industry events when they get to the defining solutions stage. Peer networking, state associations, and vendor websites have more impact on state and local buyers. A common thread is that both go to sources where they are hearing from people with direct experience in real time. This aligns with a key finding in the media engagement study that shows the market is looking for answers to specific questions.

Buyers turn to various sources for information at different stages of the journey



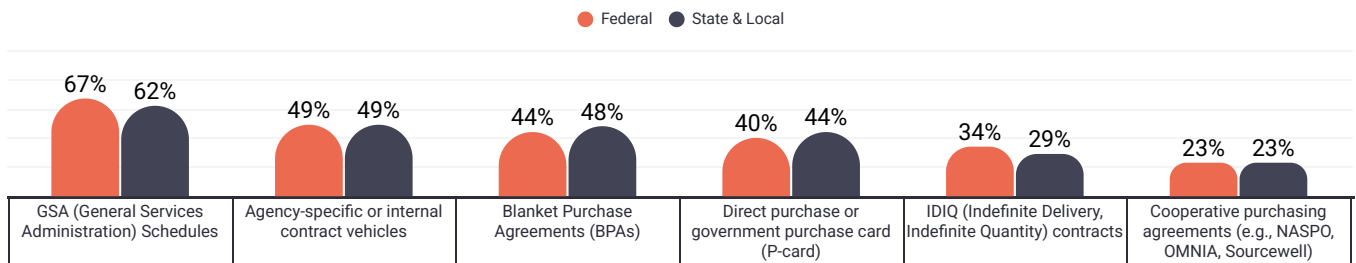
From the 2025 Buyer Journey Study

Q: Thinking about the last time you were involved with an IT solution (products and services) purchase, what external sources of information did you obtain information from when involved in each of the following steps in the procurement process? Select up to three.

The Procurement Process

Selling to the public sector has always been a long game. With all the other changes happening in the government (including the Revolutionary FAR Overhaul), we were curious how procurement might change in the coming year both for federal and state and local agencies. It is still, for the most part, a long process. But

Agile contracts are becoming more prevalent across the public sector



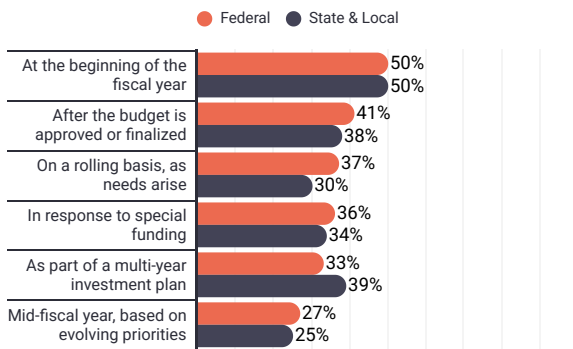
From the 2025 Buyer Journey Study

Q: Which of the following types of contract vehicles does your organization typically use for IT solution purchases?

pressure to speed procurements is leading to some change. One area of change across the public sector is the consolidation and centralization of contract vehicles. The use of GWACs, OTAs, and other agile, quick turnaround types of contracts are becoming increasingly popular, likely due to the need for more rapid technology adoption. While the process will never be “quick,” these contracts offer a way to help shorten procurement times for some projects.

While respondents are turning to these consolidated contract mechanisms, they still must manage the realities of funding cycles, which are most often tied to the beginning of the fiscal year or after the budget is approved. State and local agencies are more likely to tie funding to multi-year investment plans.

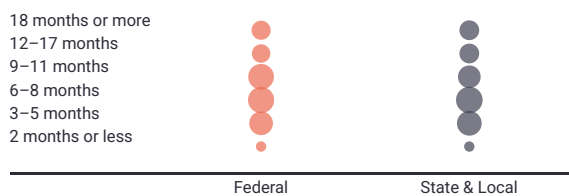
Across the public sector, budget allocations are most commonly tied to the fiscal year



From the 2025 Buyer Journey Study
Q: When is funding allocated for new IT solution purchases in your organization? Select all that apply.

There is some opportunity to shorten the sales cycle in some cases—respondents indicate some purchases can be made in a few months. But in general, procurements will take six to twelve months.

Government contracting is a long game—most procurements take more than six months



From the 2025 Buyer Journey Study
Q: On average, how long does your organization’s IT solution procurement process take, from identifying a need to awarding a contract?

Procurements and the FAR Overhaul

The Revolutionary FAR Overhaul (RFO) launched under Executive Order 14275, “Restoring Common Sense to Federal Procurement,” continues to advance toward full implementation. The Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) and the FAR Council, guided by OMB Memorandum M-25-25, are leading a comprehensive effort to simplify and modernize the Federal Acquisition Regulation by removing outdated, redundant, and non-statutory provisions.

Where things stand as of October, 2025

Agencies are currently operating under class deviations and interim guidance while the formal rulemaking process progresses. The newly released FAR Companion Guide (September 2025) offers practical, non-binding context to help contracting officials apply their expanded discretion effectively. Revisions to more than 20 FAR parts—including Parts 4-9, 12, 33, 36, 40, and 44—signal a government-wide shift toward more flexible, digital, and outcomes-based acquisition practices.

What matters most for vendors

- Expanded agency discretion in planning, competition, and award processes creates more room for tailored, mission-specific acquisition strategies. Rewarding vendors who build early, informed relationships with contracting offices.
- Emphasis on Best-in-Class (BIC) and new “Required Use” contracts (FAR Part 8) will focus federal spending through established vehicles, creating clearer pathways for qualified firms and strategic partnerships.
- Unified cybersecurity and supply chain standards under the restructured FAR Part 40 bring greater consistency across agencies, promoting trust, resilience, and transparency in technology supply chains.
- Streamlined and digitalized procedures across FAR Parts 4, 5, and 7 reduce administrative burden and modernize acquisition workflows, benefiting vendors that leverage automation and digital readiness.

Implications for State & Local (S&L) Entities

FAR primarily affects S&L organizations when they receive federal funds either directly through grants or as subcontractors on federal contracts. Changes in reporting, procurement, and compliance requirements may apply, and S&L entities may need to align with updated processes if they participate in federally funded programs or contracts.

What’s next

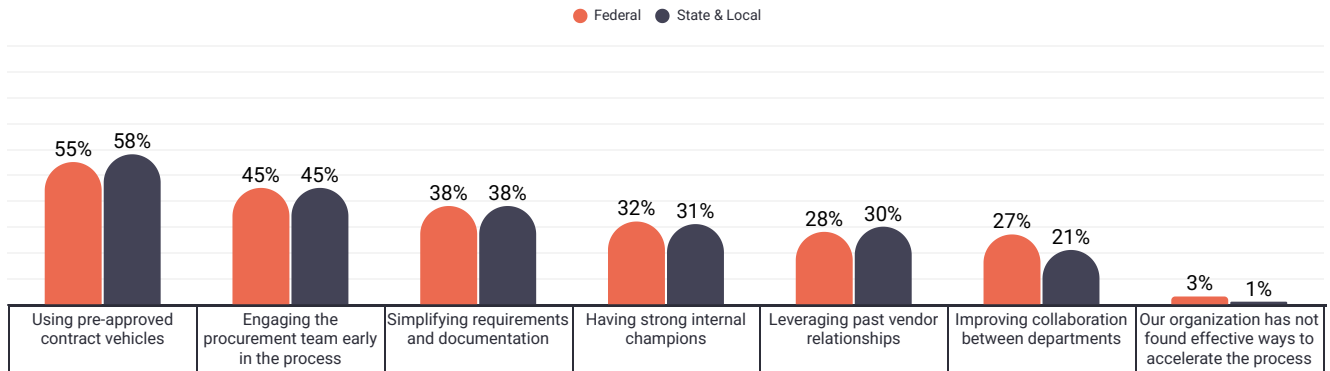
Over the coming months, agencies will continue issuing deviations and refining guidance as the formal rulemaking period opens for public input. OFPP is expected to expand its Strategic Acquisition Guidance to promote consistency and potentially update small-business participation rules under the revised competition framework in FAR Part 6.

Bottom line

FAR 2.0 is moving from reform to reality. It sets the stage for a more agile, transparent, and secure procurement environment—one that rewards vendors and S&L partners who are proactive, compliant, and aligned with agency missions and evolving acquisition strategies.

Aside from the quick turnaround contracts, are there other ways to accelerate purchases? Federal respondents point to pre-competed vehicles, while state and local respondents highlight simplified modifications to existing contracts. Although once a contract is in place, more than half of respondents say it is difficult to modify it—pointing to the importance of working with stakeholders to ensure the requirements allow for technology advances and changes throughout the period of performance. This means contractors will need to consistently be present to be top of mind when decision makers look for help defining solutions.

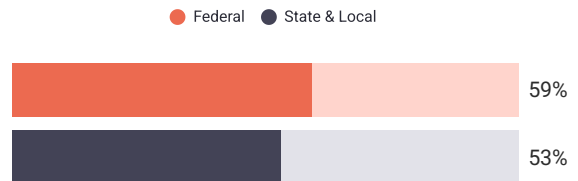
Buyers use pre-approved vehicles to speed procurement



From the 2025 Buyer Journey Study

Q: What has your organization found to be the most effective ways to accelerate the IT solution procurement process? Select up to three.

Respondents find existing contract modification difficult



From the 2025 Buyer Journey Study

Q: How easy or difficult is it for your organization to modify or augment existing IT contracts to respond to new or evolving needs and requirements?

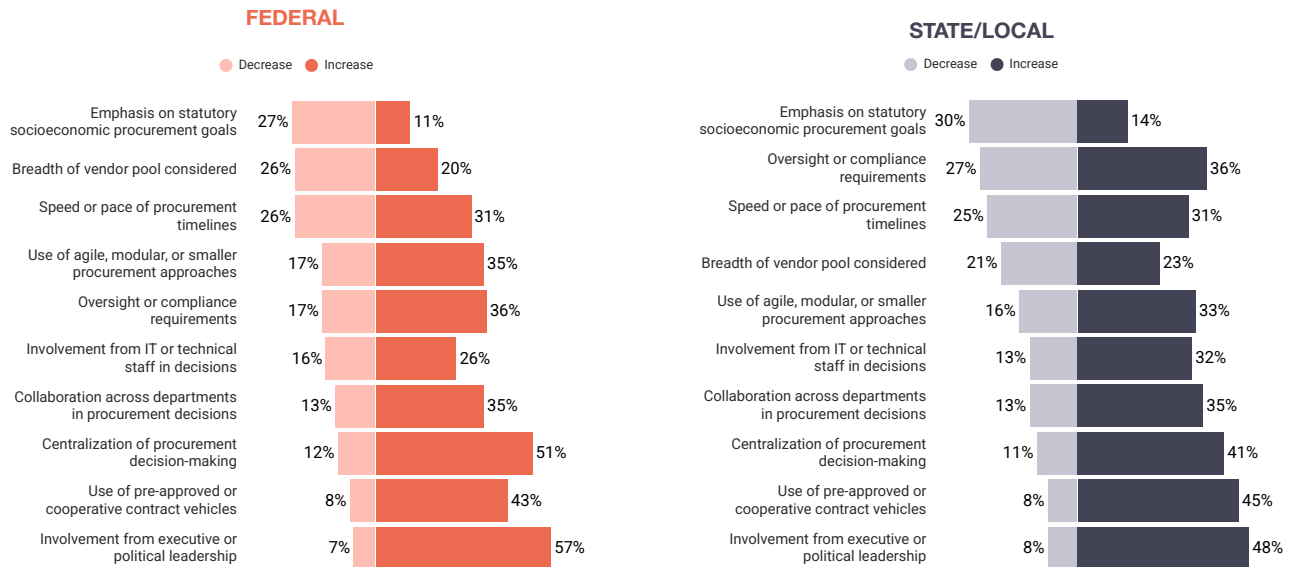


Photo by Dragana Gordic via Adobe Stock.

To sum up the big procurement changes in the next one to two years:

- Executive and political leaders will have a larger role in the procurement process—more so for federal agencies than state and local.
- Centralizing procurement decision making and use of pre-approved or cooperative contract vehicles will increase throughout the public sector.
- The emphasis on statutory socio-economic procurement goals will start decreasing.

Respondents expect increased involvement from executives and political leaders



From the 2025 Buyer Journey Study

Q: Over the next 12-24 months, do you expect the following aspects of your organization's IT solution procurement process to increase, decrease, or stay the same?



Putting this Information into Action

The complexity of this buying landscape, coupled with the challenges B2G vendors face across the board, means engaging with public sector buyers is not only about targeting advertising and marketing dollars to the channels where prospects are spending time, it's about aligning with the channels they trust.

Contractors need to be present in the right place, connect to the individuals with the right message at the right time, and deliver the information they need to make decisions.

The following pages explore findings from the 2025 Media Engagement study, focusing on the sources public sector buyers turn to and their trust in the information.

Trust Is Key in Connecting

“Brands that advertise on trusted news platforms experience 1.5x higher perceived trust.”

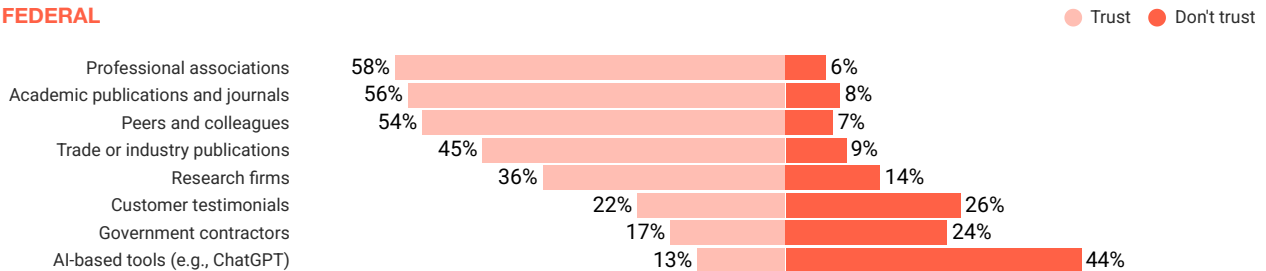
—WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

While the media engagement study takes a deep dive into digital channels, we always ask what sources, in general, the public sector trusts. Respondents generally trust government contractors as partners, but they don’t see contractors (or customer testimonials) as reliable sources of news and information.

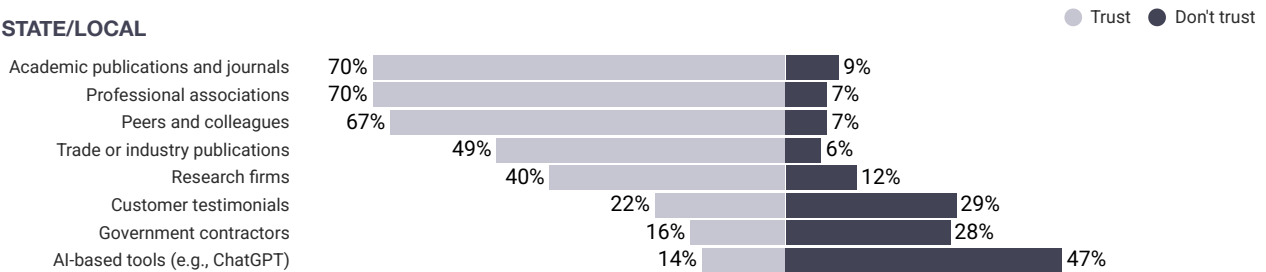
What they do trust is information their peers share, whether the source is professional associations, academic publications, or discussions directly with their peers. All of these are sources where they can go for direct answers to direct questions, and that is key. Marketing lingo and seemingly empty claims don’t resonate with this audience. They want something deeper.

Respondents are skeptical of contractors and the testimonials they use

FEDERAL



STATE/LOCAL



From the 2025 Media Engagement Study

Q: Generally, to what extent do you trust news and information you seek for your job from each of the following?

This raises a key question: how can contractors effectively reach their audience through trusted channels? The answer is being present in trade or industry publications. After the top-three peer-focused sources they trust, half of the respondents say they trust trade and industry publications. This is likely due to the perception that information in these sources is unbiased.

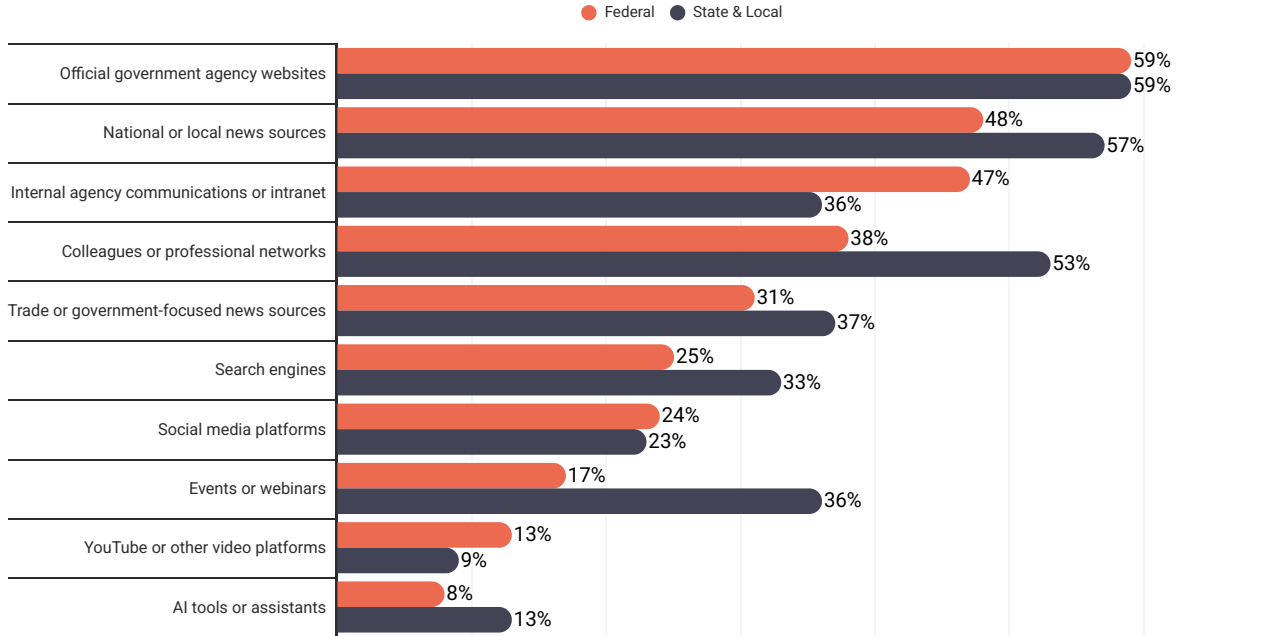
Trust tends to lead to a halo effect. A study from the *World Economic Forum* found that **brands that advertise on trusted news platforms experience 1.5x higher perceived trust**¹. Simply being seen in digital channels your customers and prospects already trust will help shape a favorable opinion of your brand. That is a powerful connection for companies that want to build trust.

¹ World Economic Forum. “[Future of News.](#)” January 2025.

Engaging Buyers Through Online News

When it comes to staying informed, public sector buyers continue to rely heavily on online news outlets, but the type of news they trust and consume varies by segment. Official government websites top the list across the public sector, but that is where the similarities end. Significantly more state and local respondents go to national or local news sources, colleagues or professional networks, and events or webinars—they are clearly looking for information from a variety of sources.

Respondents turn to news sites for job-related information



From the 2025 Media Engagement Study

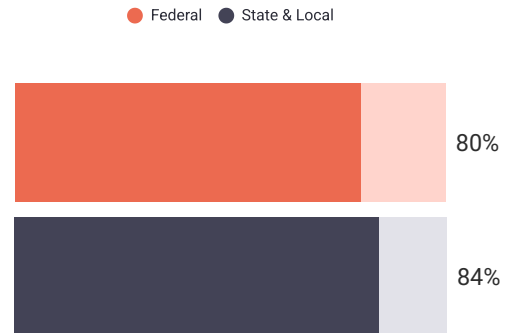
Q: Where do you go to stay informed about government agency changes, program updates, or administration priorities? Select all that apply.

Federal respondents are significantly more likely to use internal agency communications. Yet official websites don't always tell the whole story, which is why the feds turn to online news outlets.

For both audiences, keeping abreast of rapid changes keeps respondents consuming work-related news—significantly more so for federal respondents. They are looking for updates about government agency operations and leadership priorities, new policies and regulations, and workforce-related issues. In short, if it impacts their job, they are keeping up-to-date on it.

For that work-related news, federal audiences prioritize government-focused publications such as *Federal News Network* and *Defense One*, which deliver timely updates that align closely with their professional needs.

Public sector respondents prefer to read articles

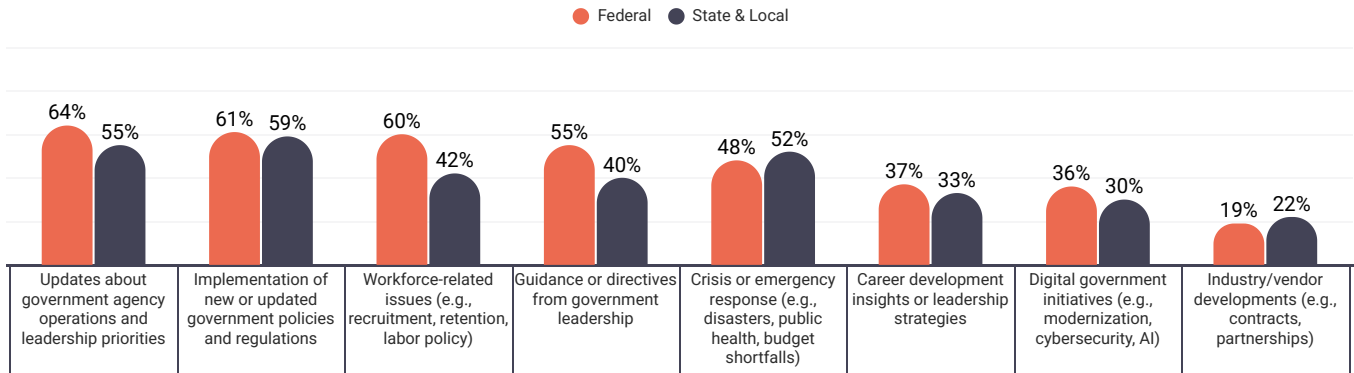


From the 2025 Media Engagement Study

Q: Which is your preferred way to consume online news content?

Defense audiences, unsurprisingly, gravitate toward military-specific publications. State and local decision makers, however, operate in a more fragmented media landscape. While they draw on local publications for coverage of immediate issues, for insights into government issues they increasingly turn to national outlets like *Politico*, which saw a notable uptick in readership in 2025.

Respondents visit news sources to keep up-to-date on changes impacting their job



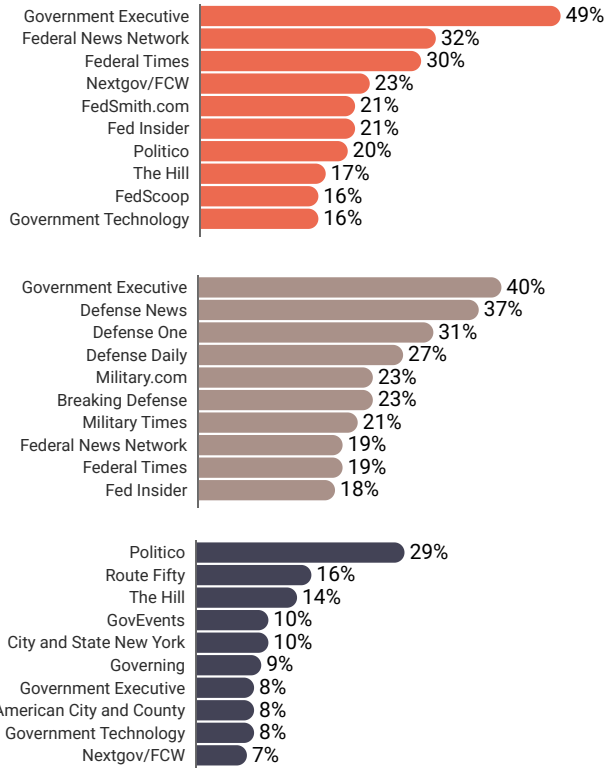
From the 2025 Media Engagement Study

Q: Which of the following topics most often motivates you to read work-related news and reporting? Select all that apply.

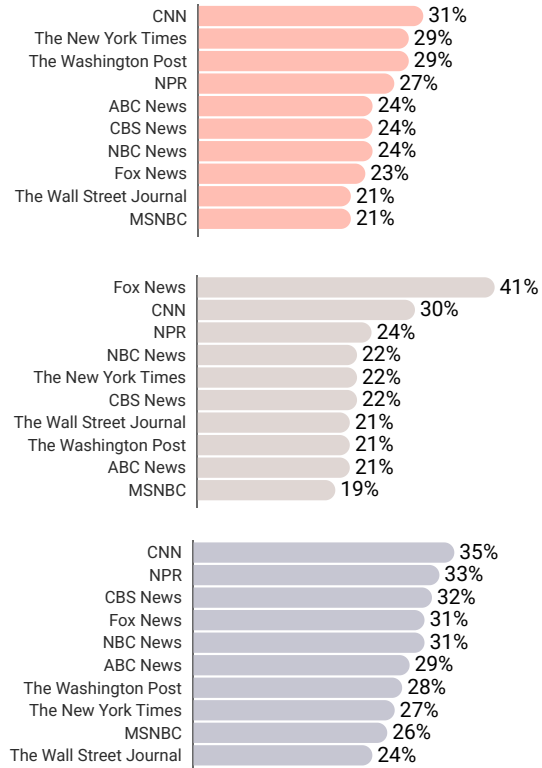
Government focused digital news site edge out general news for feds, but state and local respondents turn to the general news

Federal Civilian Defense State & Local

GOVERNMENT FOCUSED NEWS SOURCES



GENERAL NEWS SOURCES

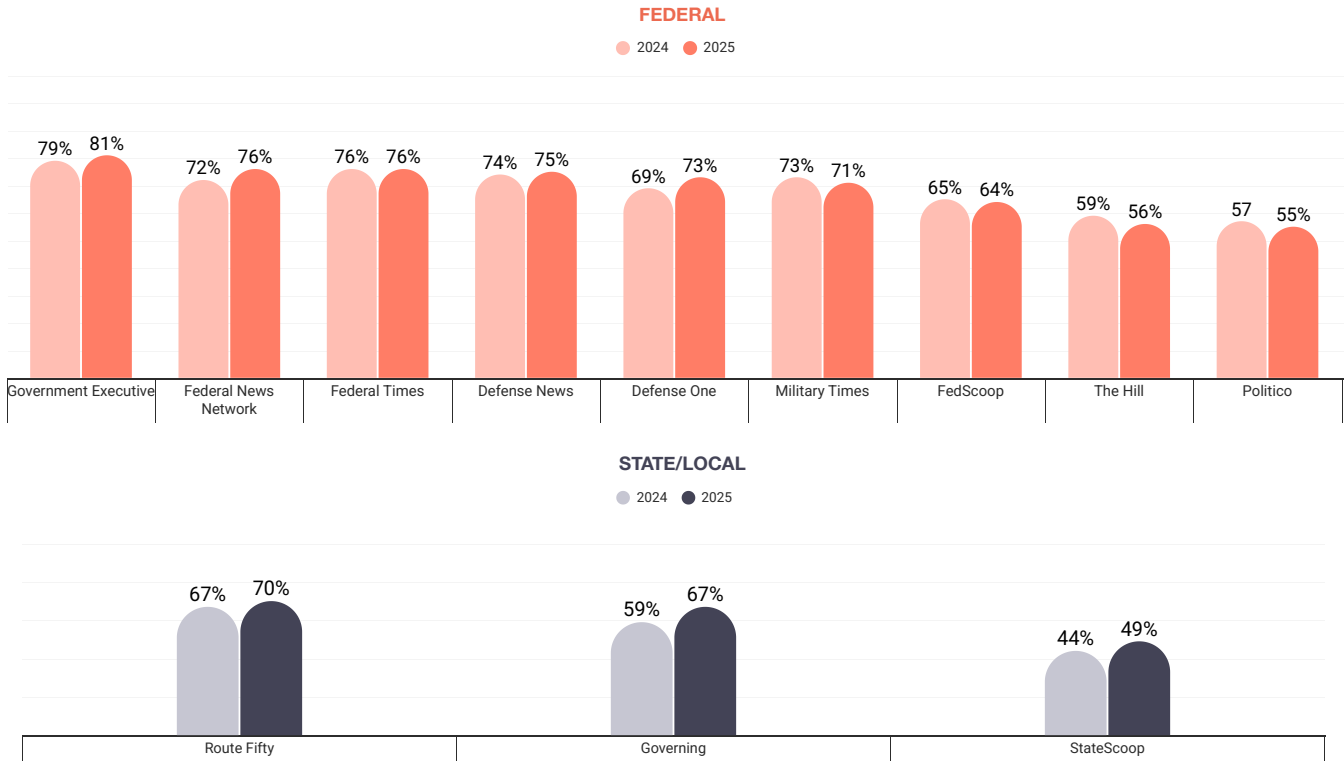


From the 2025 Media Engagement Study

Q: From the list below, please indicate which of the following you access digitally (i.e. websites, mobile sites, apps) for news or information. (visit 2 times a week or more)

The public sector is turning to these government focused news sites because they have confidence in what is being delivered to them—three quarters of respondents have confidence in the top five federally focused news sources. Confidence in state and local publications is also high.

Respondents now trust government-focused sites more than last year



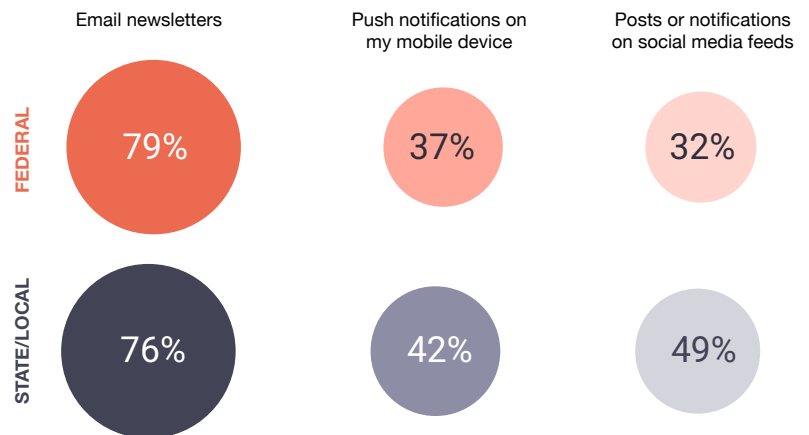
From the 2025 Media Engagement Study

Q: How much confidence do you have in the following sources in the news that they report?

This confidence matters because right now, that is where public sector decision makers are most likely to turn for news and information about their jobs. Connecting is about being in the places the audience trusts.

While company leaders often want their stories in national business publications like the *Wall Street Journal* or *Forbes*, the reality is that government audiences place far more weight on outlets that specialize in their world. A federal IT manager scanning their inbox is far more likely to click into a newsletter from a trusted trade publication than to actively seek out a vendor’s article in the general press.

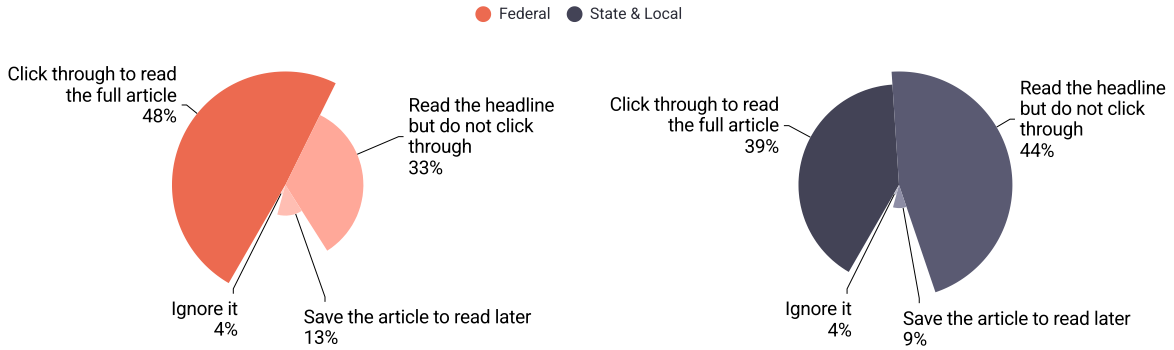
Respondents most often access work news via email



From the 2025 Media Engagement Study

Q: How do you typically access work-related news and reporting online?
Select all that apply.

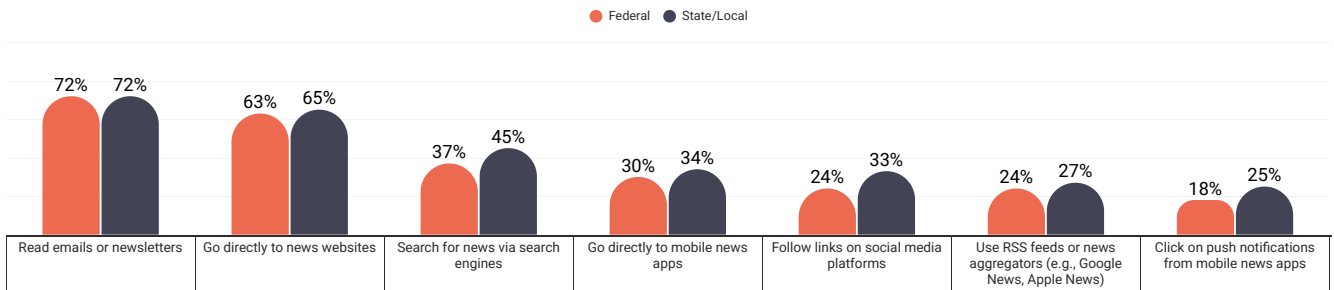
Feds click through to the article while state and local respondents read the headlines



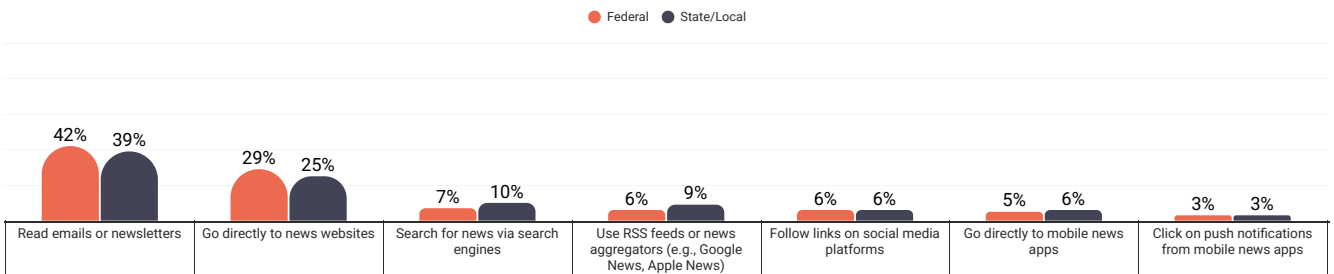
From the 2025 Media Engagement Study
Q: [IF NEWS DELIVERED IS >0%] When news is pushed/delivered to you, what do you usually do?

Which leads us to how public sector audiences access online news. Both federal and state and local audiences demonstrate a deep reliance on e-newsletters—with 72% saying it’s their typical access point for news (and it is the most frequent access point for 42% Fed and 39% SL). The second spot is going directly to news websites (63% Fed and 65% SL). Email alerts are the most common way to learn about breaking news (32% Fed and 31% SL).

Respondents most often access news via email or directly from the website



From the 2025 Media Engagement Study
Q: How do you typically access work-related news and reporting online? (select all that apply)



From the 2025 Media Engagement Study
Q: How do you most frequently access work-related news and reporting online? [PIPE IN OPTIONS SELECTED IN PREVIOUS QUESTION] (select all that apply)

When they get that newsletter, Federal respondents are more likely to click through to the full article. State and local audiences, by contrast, are more likely to skim subject lines and headlines, engaging less deeply with the content itself. This skimming behavior suggests that for state and local outreach, clear, concise headlines may be more important than long-form articles.

For contractors, the implication of these preferred access points is clear: It is not sufficient to expect buyers to “find” vendor content organically. Instead, effective outreach requires meeting audiences where they already go, embedding messages within the trusted newsletters and news apps they rely on daily.

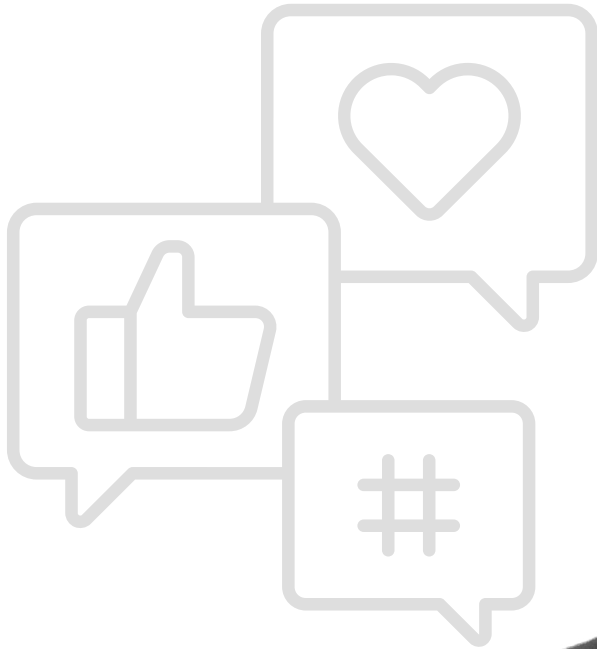


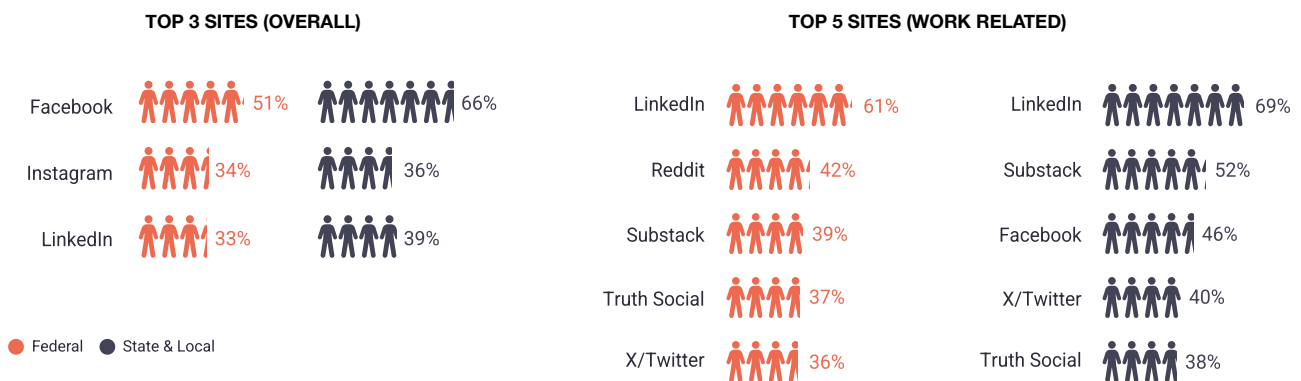
Photo by insta_photos via Adobe Stock.

Engaging Buyers Through Social Media

Social media. Everyone is there, likely spending more time than anyone wants to admit scrolling through memes, friends' updates, and news. Yes, your audience is there. Yet, when it comes to delivering information the public sector trusts, social media sites continue to be met with skepticism and mistrust.

While public sector decision makers don't turn to social media to access trusted information, it is a mechanism for delivering information to them because they *are* there. The question is not should a brand be there, it's a question of choosing the right platform for the message.

Respondents may use Facebook most often, but they go to LinkedIn and Reddit for work



From the 2025 Media Engagement Study

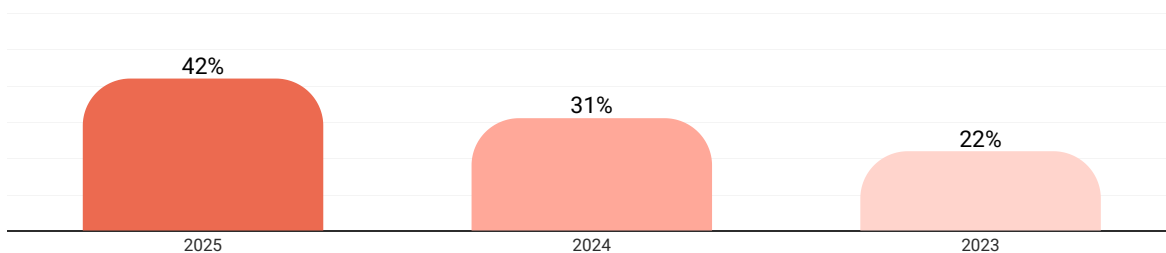
Q: Please indicate how often you visit the following social media sites.

Q: How frequently do you use each of the following social media sites for work-related purposes? [INSERT THOSE VISITED AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK OR LESS]"

Among platforms, LinkedIn remains the dominant force for work-related information. It is both the most trusted and the most integrated into professional life, with buyers viewing it as an extension of their daily responsibilities. This makes LinkedIn a particularly valuable channel for thought leadership and SME-driven content.

The social media data illustrates a newer trend we're seeing: the extent to which people want specific answers to specific questions. The rise of Reddit shows this trend. Just two years ago, only 22% of federal respondents reported using Reddit for professional purposes. This year that number soared to 42%.

Reddit use among federal respondents is increasing

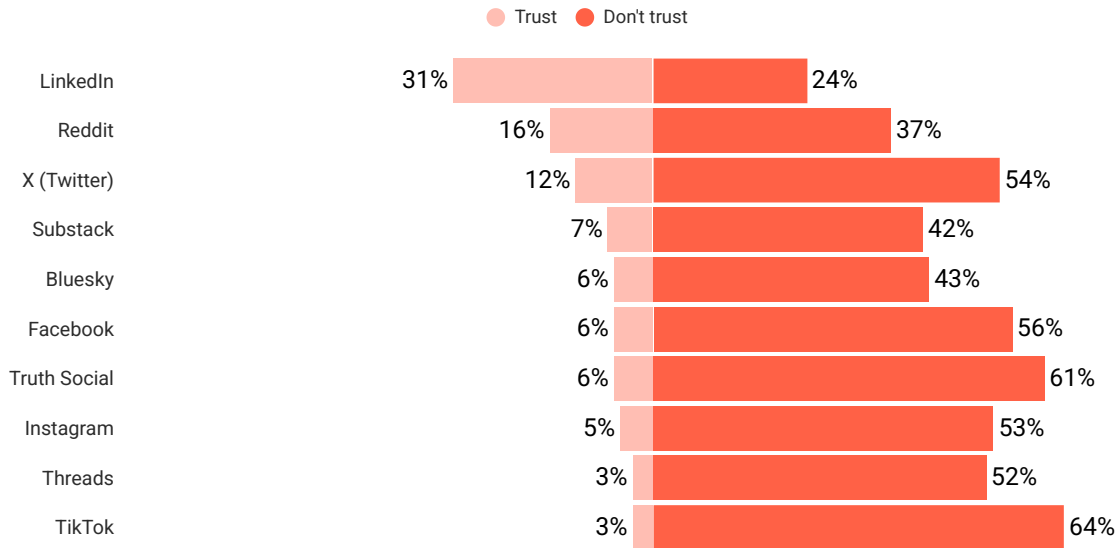


From the 2025 Media Engagement Study

Q: Please indicate how often you visit the following social media sites for work related purposes: (Reddit responses only)

What makes Reddit compelling is not broad-brush corporate messaging but its micro-communities. These niche forums allow decision makers to ask specific, practical questions and receive peer-to-peer answers. People want genuine connections, and Reddit gives it to them. The power of Reddit is that it's authentic, crowdsourced expertise rather than top-down corporate promotion—making it a powerful way to build relationships via social media.

While feds use Reddit, they don't trust it as much as LinkedIn



From the 2025 Media Engagement Study

Q: Generally, to what extent do you trust news and information on each of the following social media sites?

Trust also factors into the use of LinkedIn and Reddit. LinkedIn tops the rankings, but Reddit now occupies second place. While 16% is not an overwhelming endorsement of trust, that trust factor rose significantly from 2024 (10%). As people continue looking for peer-to-peer answers, that trust is likely to rise. By contrast, Bluesky, Facebook, and Truth Social lag significantly in both credibility and relevance. In fact, Truth Social's trust value dropped significantly from 10% in 2024 to 6%.

What the usage and trust data suggests is that social media is no longer about broadcasting—it's about using the platform to build real connections through people-first engagement. It also means that time and resources should be carefully allocated: pursuing engagement on every platform is far less effective than doubling down where buyers are most active and most trusting.

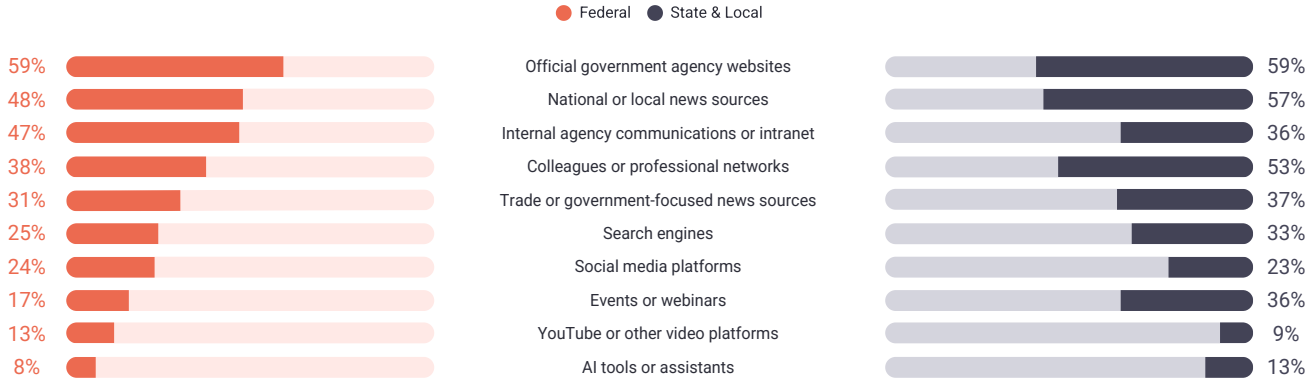


Photo by Krakenimages.com via Adobe Stock.

Expanding Engagement Channels

While online news sources continue to be an effective way to reach your audience, buyers—especially state and local respondents—are diversifying how they consume information.

Respondents use professional networks and colleagues for information



From the 2025 Media Engagement Report

Q: Where do you go to stay informed about government agency changes, program updates, or administration priorities? (select all that apply)

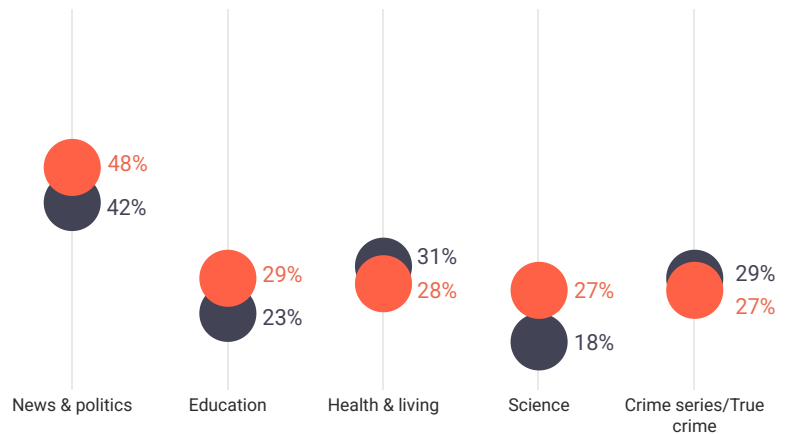
For the state and local markets, professional associations and events are excellent ways to build relationships with buyers. This type of engagement remains among the most trusted sources for information, where associations like NASCIO provide not only structured programming but also invaluable peer-to-peer validation.

Buyers are far more likely to consider a solution a colleague endorses or presents at a trusted association conference than a standalone vendor pitch. Therefore, contractors can amplify their credibility by partnering with associations to co-sponsor research, co-develop content, or simply show up where buyers are already congregating. These partnerships provide a dual benefit—boosting the association’s value while positioning the vendor as a trusted, credible source of expertise.

Advertise on Podcasts: Two thirds of federal respondents and three quarters of state and local respondents report listening to podcasts regularly. They are most interested in news and politics (although not necessarily work related news), but more than a quarter love a true crime podcast.

Regardless of the topic, podcasts offer a unique opportunity for vendors to engage audiences during commutes, workouts, or other moments when traditional media consumption isn’t possible. Now that federal workers are back in the office, they are spending commute time listening.

Respondents most often listen to podcasts focused on news and politics



From the 2025 Media Engagement Report

Q: Which of the following, if any, types of audio podcasts do you listen/subscribe to? Select all that apply.

Using AI for Search and Discovery

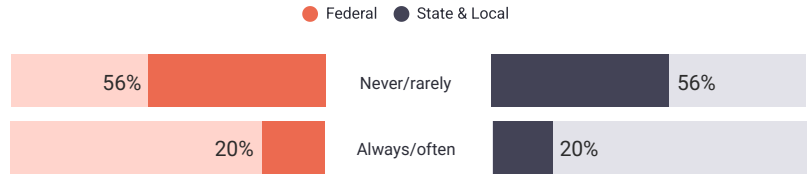
We can't talk about engagement without addressing AI. As AI tools evolve, they are reshaping how public sector buyers discover information. Roughly 20% of respondents are now experimenting with AI-enabled search, though adoption is uneven. While that may not seem significant, remember that these tools are relatively new. We expect that number to be much larger next year.

For those who use AI search, behaviors vary. Many will read the AI-generated summary before scrolling to traditional results, but 20% rely solely on the summary without clicking through to vendor websites. This creates a new risk: even if contractors produce high-quality content, it may never be seen if it doesn't appear in the AI-generated overview. A smaller but still important group bypasses the summary altogether, relying exclusively on traditional search results optimized through SEO.

The barriers to broader AI adoption are familiar—security, accuracy, and transparency. Yet preferences are evolving, and as AI becomes more embedded in workflows, vendors cannot afford to ignore it.

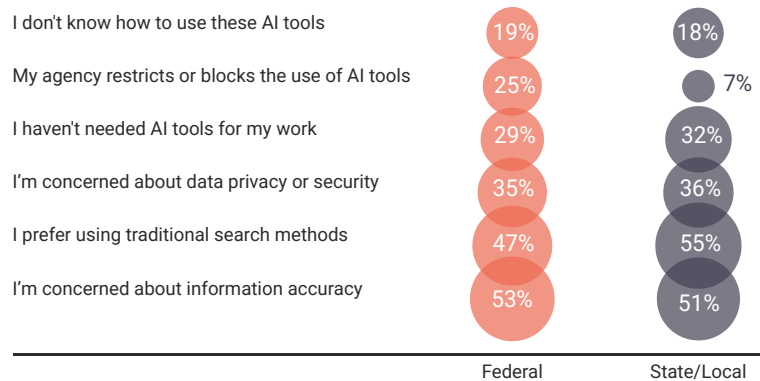
The takeaway is that SEO alone is no longer enough. Contractors must now embrace Generative Engine Optimization (GEO)—structuring content so that it is easily scraped, summarized, and cited by AI models. This means crafting content that is fact-based, concise, expert-cited, and written in a Q&A style that directly addresses the questions buyers are asking. Increasingly, AI summaries function as the new “newsletter”—the first thing a buyer sees, and often the only thing they need.

Most respondents rarely use AI tools instead of search



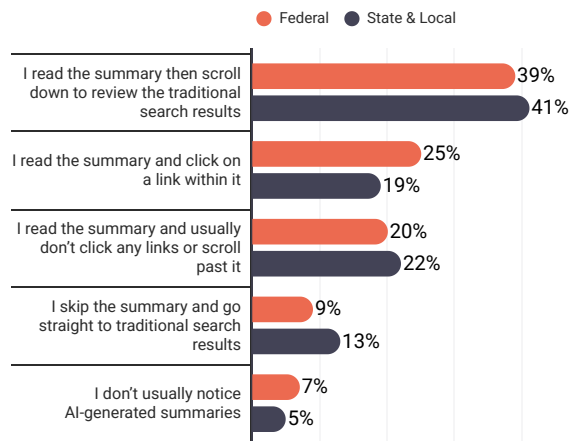
From the 2025 Media Engagement Report
Q: How often do you use AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, or Copilot) instead of a traditional search engine (e.g., Google, Bing) to find work-related information?

Respondents don't trust the accuracy of the AI results



From the 2025 Media Engagement Report
Q: [IF RARELY OR NEVER] Why do you [pipe in previous response of "rarely" or "never"] use AI tools instead of a traditional search engine to find work-related information? Select all that apply.

But they still read the summary before scrolling on to search results



From the 2025 Media Engagement Report
Q: Which of the following best describes what you typically do when you see an AI-generated summary that appears at the top of search engine results (e.g., Google, Bing)?

Strategic Implications for 2026

As the market heads into 2026, the path forward for contractors is both clearer and more demanding. Success will depend on aligning outreach with buyer habits while building credibility through trusted channels. To cut through the noise, contractors need to:

- 1 Be Present and Connected.** Buyers make decisions in stages, and vendors must ensure their brand is visible at each point—whether through newsletters, social platforms, or association events.
- 2 Prioritize Trust.** Confidence in vendor-produced content continues to decline. Contractors must instead lean on associations, trade media, and SMEs to deliver messages buyers will believe.
- 3 Adopt People-First Thought Leadership.** Elevating SMEs and human voices—particularly on LinkedIn and Reddit—will generate stronger engagement than corporate branding alone.
- 4 Prepare for AI Discovery.** GEO is no longer optional. Vendors must anticipate that buyers will encounter their brand through AI summaries and structure content accordingly.
- 5 Segment Outreach.** Federal, state, and local buyers differ significantly in habits and demographics. Federal audiences value in-depth newsletters and trade coverage, while younger state and local buyers engage more with social media, events, and podcasts. Tailored strategies will outperform one-size-fits-all approaches.

Conclusion

The 2026 public sector buyer is more informed, more selective, and more skeptical than ever before. Most importantly, they respond to people, not brands. Audiences first trust the content, then the individual creating the content, and finally the brand behind the individual.

In a space where the audience is inundated with similar messages from contractors claiming to be “trusted partners,” meeting them where they are naturally gravitating for meaningful connection is a way to stand out from the crowd. By showing up consistently in trusted media, partnering with professional associations, empowering SMEs as authentic voices, and preparing for the rise of AI-driven discovery, contractors can get their message heard.

Those who embrace credibility and adaptability will stand out in a crowded market. Those who cling to traditional approaches risk being overlooked entirely.

The mandate for 2026 is clear: build trust, diversify channels, and prepare for a future where discovery is mediated not just by search engines, but by algorithms, associations, and authentic human voices.



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ABOUT THE STUDIES

Annual Brand Assessment Study

The online blind survey of more than 1,000 federal IT purchasers was fielded in March-April 2025. The survey assessed brand awareness and perceptions of more than 50 government contractors working in both the Federal Civilian and Defense markets.

2025 Buyer Journey Methodology

The online blind survey of 600 public sector IT purchasers fielded in April-May 2025. Federal government respondents included 60% from Federal Civilian agencies and 40% from Defense agencies. State and local government respondents included 30% state, 35% county, and 35% city or municipal government.

2025 Media Engagement Methodology

The online, blind survey of 1,000 public sector employees was fielded in July 2025. The data was weighted to ensure sample sources were not over- or under-represented. Federal government respondents included 58% from Federal Civilian agencies and 42% from Defense agencies. State and local government respondents included 21% state, 37% county, and 42% city or municipal government.

ABOUT GOVEXEC INTELLIGENCE

GovExec Intelligence

GovExec Intelligence delivers actionable information and insights that enable improved business performance and positioning for leading businesses, trade associations, and the public sector. Market Connections, the custom market research division, is a sought-after authority on preferences, perceptions, and trends among the public sector and the contractors who serve them. For more information visit: www.govexecintelligence.com