Survey identifies a growing need to hire data analysts for government jobs

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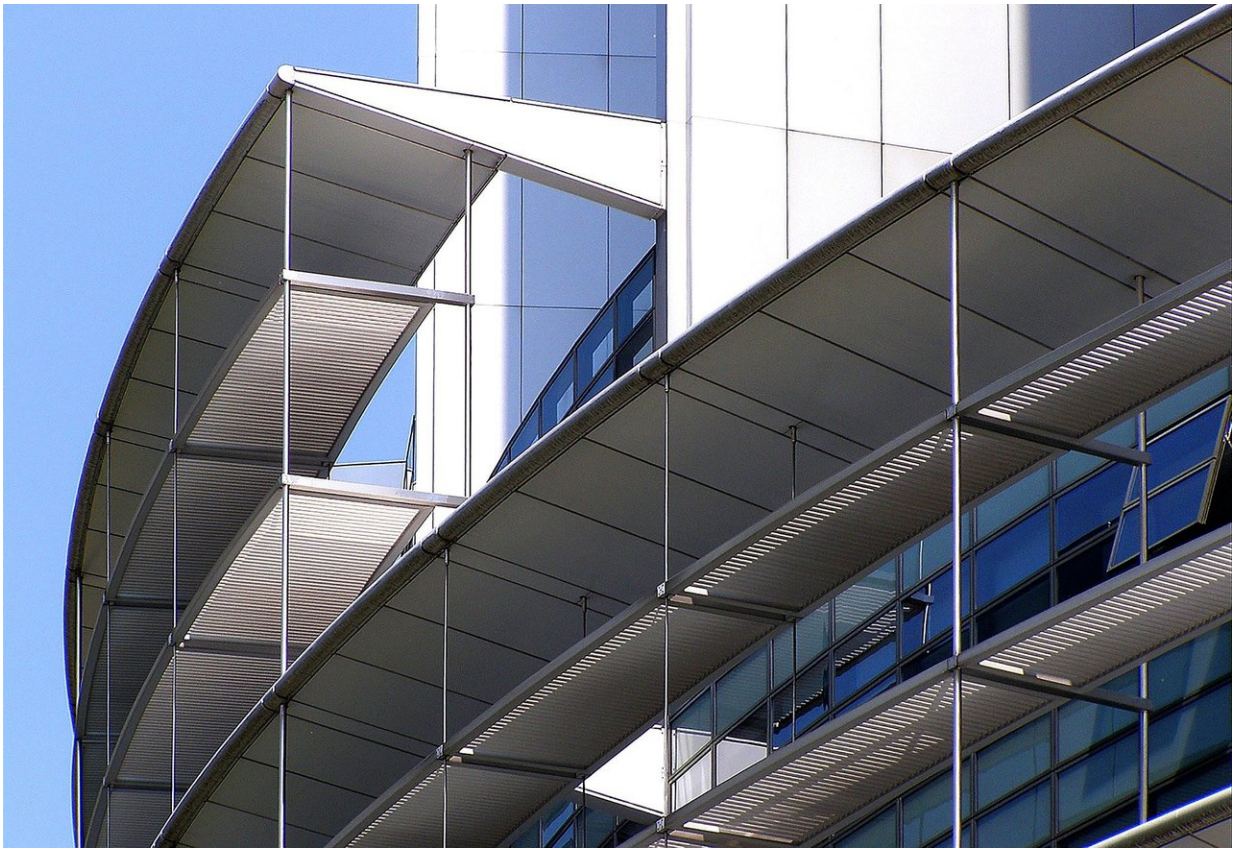

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As public agencies across the nation increasingly rely on data to improve operations, the market for careers in the field of data analytics is expected to expand in federal, state, and local governments over the next

two years, according to a new survey conducted by Johns Hopkins University and two partners, REI Systems and ACT-IAC.

For the survey, researchers from the Government Analytics Program at Johns Hopkins analyzed responses from 106 experienced government analytics professionals to identify issues and trends in the field. These professionals said they intend to hire more people "in a broad range of skill areas over the next 24 months," and more than half said they intend to build their data teams with people who have a "credential in the field of analytics."

Data analytics offices need more employees to help fix a glaring disconnect discovered by the survey: agencies spend far more time gathering data than analyzing, communicating, and acting on it.

"The survey makes it clear that data analytics is a critical need for improving government operations, and that most agencies do not yet have enough support to make the best use of the data at their disposal," said Jennifer Bachner, director of JHU's Government Analytics Program. "The need for qualified staff in this area is expected to grow as agencies incorporate artificial intelligence and machine learning tools into their data-driven policymaking approaches."

AI and machine learning tools are rarely used currently but "hold the most promise for improving government," survey respondents said.

For example, the U.S. Bureau of Transportation has been using data it collects from the Waze app to deploy emergency vehicles to more quickly respond to and clear accidents. But having access to more data and the ability to quickly analyze it would empower the agency to accurately project future needs for safety response in order to plan accordingly.

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Provided by Johns Hopkins University

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