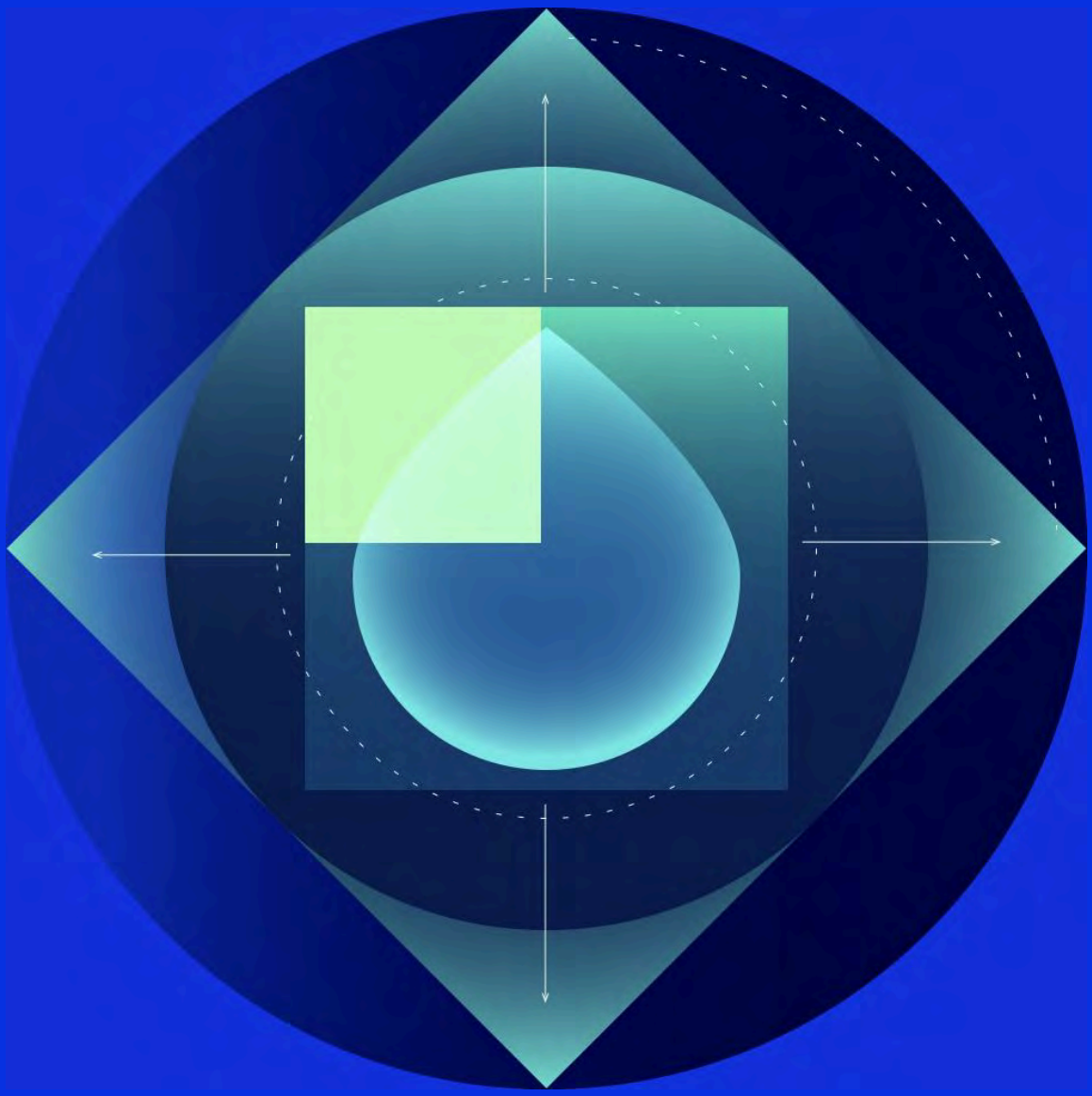
Rhode Island AI Task Force



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Executive Summary: Rhode Island AI Task Force:

Artificial intelligence has rapidly evolved from experimentation to real-world implementation, reshaping expectations across industries. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the ability of machines to make predictions, recommendations, or decisions normally done by people. Today, 71% of business leaders say they'd prefer to hire candidates with AI skills over those with more experience but no AI expertise.*

As AI becomes a core driver of competitiveness and innovation, Rhode Island has a motivating force to prepare its workforce, institutions, and infrastructure for the opportunities and challenges ahead.

To respond to the rapidly evolving AI landscape, Rhode Island's AI Task Force brought together leaders from government, industry, non-profits, and academia to chart a practical and ambitious path for statewide AI readiness. This report outlines the results from their findings, consisting of three components: 1) Differentiators, 2) Sector Focus and 3) Thematic Areas for Focused Action.

Differentiators define areas in which Rhode Island can distinguish itself from other states, prioritizing education and workforce. Sector Focus identifies opportunities to unlock value through AI in education, manufacturing and defense, finance, health, government, and small businesses. Thematic Areas for Focused Action are four cross-cutting themes to inspire statewide AI enablement and safeguard against risks: education and workforce, government leadership, framework development, and collaboration and scale.

Together, these insights form a blueprint for Rhode Island to lead nationally in responsible, inclusive AI adoption, turning ambition into coordinated action across the Ocean State.

*Microsoft & LinkedIn 2024 Work Trend Index

Executive Summary | Key Report Outputs

The AI Task Force (appointed by Governor McKee in 2024) conducted a rigorous, collaborative research process to develop an action plan rooted in the needs and aspirations of Rhode Islanders to ensure our state is AI ready and minimize risk, focusing on ethical and unbiased solutions.

Six economic sector-specific teams examined how AI is currently used and where it can unlock new value; findings drew from surveys, literature reviews, national best practices, task force discussions, and public input.

The report produced three key outputs: Rhode Island Differentiators, Key Sector Opportunities, and Thematic Areas.

Rhode Island Differentiators

Rhode Island can position itself as a national leader in AI through focused attention in four areas that differentiate it from other states, with a priority focus on producing AI graduates and enabling an AI ready workforce.

- Education Ecosystem and Workforce Readiness
- Cross Sector Collaboration
- Defense Industries and Maritime Tech
- Life Sciences

Key Industry Opportunities

Tailored, industry-specific ways to maximize Rhode Island's AI investment & build upon the state's unique assets.

Defense Industries and Maritime Technologies

Build trusted labor-employer relations, establish upskilling programs

Government

Lead development of critical AI frameworks, engage the public, build internal capacity

Finance

Fill current AI talent gaps, leverage AI experience to support building broader AI governance frameworks

Education

Fund technical assistance, teacher training & AI literacy, set ethical AI usage standards for learners

Health

Invest in coordinated development of AI-powered patient centered benefits and biotech

Small Businesses, Startups, & Non-Profits

Create shared infrastructure models, targeted grant programs, and technical assistance initiatives

Theme Areas

Four actions that transcend industry needs and will shape Rhode Island's AI journey and mitigate risk

Education and Upskilling Workforce

Educate Rhode Islanders for an AI future and prepare our graduates for our workforce

Government Leadership

Advance AI use within the Rhode Island government to inspire wider adoption

Framework Development

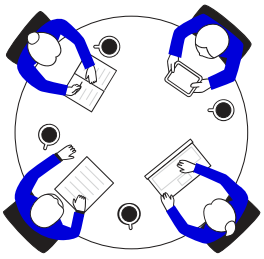
Create guidance, technology infrastructure and safeguards

Collaboration and Scale

Promote scalable innovation and Public-Private collaboration in the form of an AI Hub

How the Action Plan was Developed

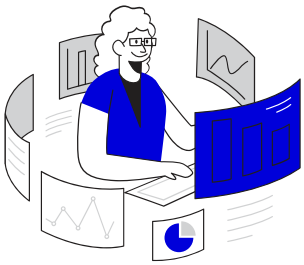
The Action Plan was developed through a rigorous, comprehensive approach where Rhode Island's AI Task Force collaborated across sectors, conducted thorough research, and integrated diverse inputs to inform recommendations.



Multi Sector Collaboration Across Rhode Island

24 members from government, industry, education, and non-profits; along with 8 academic researchers who led each of the fact-finding teams

The AI Task Force was broken down into 6 fact-finding teams (Government, Finance, Education, Health, Manufacturing & Defense, Small Businesses & Startups & Non-Profits)



Evidence Based Approach

The 6 Fact-Finding Teams gathered actionable intelligence on their focus area including:

- Analyzing best practices across the US
- Extensive literature reviews
- Industry stakeholder adoption surveys
- Task force discussions

Inclusive Decision-Making Process

The AI Task Force synthesized the final recommendations for the Action Plan through rigorous consensus of various stakeholder groups, involving cross-sector deliberations, public forums, as well as public input through the RI AI Portal, and expert industry advisors

Areas of Differentiation

Fact-Finding teams compiled Rhode Island's strengths and unique attributes. Areas for focused investment are listed below; prioritizing AI ready graduates and AI workforce readiness investments as Rhode Island's key differentiator for a future with integrated AI.

Education Ecosystem and Workforce Readiness

Cross Sector Collaboration

Defense Industries and Maritime Tech

Life Sciences

Strengths

Education Ecosytem and Workforce Readiness

- Utilize RI's educational institutions to **bridge the skills gap**
- **Design curricula** to prepare graduates for high-demand AI roles; leverage sector specific advisory groups to ensure curriculum meets **modern sector needs**

Cross-Sector/Ecosystem Collaboration

- Create **partnerships** between academia, business, and the state
- Ensure **dense connectivity** throughout the State to eliminate degrees of separation

We recommend Workforce Readiness as Rhode Island's Key Differentiator

Realizing the potential of AI depends on more than infrastructure and innovation hubs. **The state can unlock the full benefits of AI only if it makes parallel investments in people. Workforce readiness** is the bridge between vision and impact, ensuring that Rhode Islanders have the skills, support, and access needed to thrive in an AI-driven economy.

Opportunities

Defense Industries and Maritime Tech

- Leverage **existing established** research institutions and coastal assets, such as the Ocean Tech Hub
- **Incentivize expansion** of ongoing and new government/commercial production, research and development

Life Sciences

- Rapidly expanding with potential to drive RI's **economic growth**
- Collaborate with the **RI Life Sciences Hub** to have a transformative impact
- Focused programming & workforce development

Industry Focuses Overview

The Task Force conducted a detailed analysis of how AI is currently being explored and applied across **six core sectors** in Rhode Island's economy and provided steps to unlock AI value, while safeguarding against risk.

Industry	Steps to Unlock Potential Value
Education	• Incentivize the implementation of vetted AI-integrated education tools • Establish a content governance framework so there is a standard for public education • Develop an AI-powered portal for researchers to be matched with funding opportunities • Deploy predictive analytics platforms for forecasting needs for K-12 and higher ed
Defense Industries and Maritime Technologies	• Expand on programs such as the Rhode Island Innovation Hub • Leverage Defense contracting opportunities (autonomous vehicles and augmented targeting systems) • Leverage Federal Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs) • Launch demonstration projects • Invest in technicians and engineers workforce upskilling and infrastructure • Identify or create an AI equipment grant program
Finance	• Lead AI governance development • Foster industry-academia collaboration for FinTech development • Support joint research & internships to funnel resources into FinTech • Develop AI compliance toolkits for financial institutions • Create a model validation and bias testing lab • Require use of explainable AI in customer-facing applications • Integrate AI-based cyber and fraud detection in financial infrastructure
Health	• Establish coalitions and programs to accelerate health AI initiatives • Launch AI-powered health initiatives • Embed AI & ethics in medical education • Develop AI-assisted rural & underserved healthcare programs • Create a statewide AI & health data sharing network • Encourage AI driven biotech
Government	• Develop local data infrastructure & governance framework • Establish a data analytics center • Launch a statewide AI-Cyber response initiative • Modernize data systems using AI to clean records, update policies, and structure legacy data • Pilot and scale AI automation use cases for government agencies • Require AI decision monitoring for bias and disparities • Launch AI initiatives to improve citizen experiences for government services and information access
Small Businesses, Start Ups, Non-Profits	• Create an AI adoption sandbox • Establish an online and physical resource hub for businesses and non-profits; provide technical assistance • Create a state-endorsed open AI resource library • Drive ocean technologies and climate research AI innovation • Offer grant programs and tax incentives to assist small businesses in adopting AI • Launch business-specific chatbots • Partner with cloud providers and universities to offer subsidized AI tools

Thematic Areas for Focused Action

Across every domain—public and private, large enterprise and small organization—the Task Force identified a set of shared challenges and opportunities that will shape Rhode Island's AI journey. These insights are organized into **four themes** that transcend individual industries.

Theme	Steps to Unlock Potential Value
Education & Upskilling Workforce	• Drive workforce training: AI accreditation and micro-credentialing programs • Drive workforce training: certify registered apprenticeships in AI • Facilitate mentorship & partnership programs • Create incentives & support for AI training • Promote the public's AI awareness and opportunities through communications and engagement
Government Leadership	• Pilot AI in key government functions • Pioneer an AI-driven policy management system • Invest in security • Align regulations with other jurisdictions
Framework Development	• Establish a centralized AI guidance body • Creation of secure and stable technology stacks for state-wide stakeholders in AI operations • Streamline and facilitate data sharing capabilities of industry, government, education, and businesses
Collaboration and Scale	• Expand AI integration in life sciences, biotech, and ocean technology • Create regional partnerships across New England (e.g. Massachusetts' AICR) • Fund AI innovation grants to spur research and adoption • Establish AI for Rhode Island (AI-RI), a physical and online innovation hub, as a statewide resource

AI-RI: AI for Rhode Island

AI-RI will serve as Rhode Island's physical and online hub to provide AI guidance, support, foster research & collaboration.

Provide AI Enablement Services

- Facilitate the development of high impact, feasible projects that will benefit all of Rhode Island
  - Directly partner with the state to reduce "red tape" and increase speed to deliver
- Support the RI government incorporating AI into its public facing services and internal processes
- Foster deeper collaboration between government, industry, and academia interested organizations
  - Host events for stakeholders to network, share lessons learned, and provide resources and support
- Act as a thought leader and publish perspectives on AI ethics, research, applications, and emerging technologies
- Serve as the convener to ensure the rapid adoption of ethical AI across academia to ensure all Rhode Island graduates are AI Ready

Be a Statewide AI Resource

- Offer expert services, such as technical advisory, project management support, resource guidance, directly to partner organizations
  - Connect to stakeholders through a variety of mechanisms such as regular office hours or request a consult or longer-term support
  - Services offered on a sliding scale
- Services would be offered at sliding scale
- Create learning resources on common AI enablement needs that are publicly available; incorporate ethical and responsible AI
- Develop compute resources and tools that any RI stakeholder can access and use
- Facilitate research through providing researchers access to technical resources and support

Realizing the Action Plan

Rhode Island's goal is to improve the economic standing of its citizens and stakeholders through AI innovation.

Education Ecosystem and Workforce Readiness

Key Differentiator

Prioritize and focus investment and initiatives

- When prioritizing initiatives and resources; stakeholders should focus majority of efforts to target the Education Ecosystem and Workforce. Higher education stakeholders should be leveraged.
- Combined with Rhode Island's already strong ecosystem in higher education and workforce dedicated investment will allow RI to differentiate itself from other states in the AI economy.

Education and Workforce | **Government Leadership** | **Framework Development** | **Collaboration and Scale**

Governance & Implementation

Drive implementation of themes for all of Rhode Island to benefit

- Appoint owners for each of the thematic areas to drive opportunities outlined in this report.
- Owners might consider:
  - Focusing on prioritized opportunities in their thematic areas
  - Prioritizing remaining opportunities
  - Identifying funding mechanisms
  - Establishing partnerships with industry, academia, and community leaders

Manufacturing, Trade, & Defense | **Small Businesses, Start Ups & Non-Profits** | **Education** | **Health** | **Finance**

Industry Leadership

Industry lead coordination, implementation, innovation

- Implementation and coordination and innovation of how Rhode Island's AI journey occurs should industry led, in close collaboration with academic, government, and community partners.
- To move forward, the State of Rhode Island should consider leading initiatives that spearhead the opportunities outlined in this report.

02

Why Act Now?

Impetus to Act: Once in Generation Opportunity

We stand at a transformative moment in technological history. Artificial Intelligence (AI), and particularly Generative AI, has evolved from niche experimentation into a powerful driver of change across industries, government, and society. This transformation is unfolding rapidly, presenting both unprecedented opportunities and significant challenges for states.

What was once confined to research labs can now be embedded in everyday tools and decisions, shaping how we work, learn, communicate, and govern. As this digital revolution accelerates, states must navigate it with both urgency and care.

Rhode Island has a rare opportunity to be a national leader with its responsible and inclusive state-wide AI implementation.

This report outlines how we get there.

AI Inflection Point: Across Industry and Public Service

AI is already transforming industry and government—reshaping economies, enhancing public services, and redefining what's possible. Rhode Island has the opportunity to lead by accelerating responsible, statewide adoption.

Artificial Intelligence is transforming industry...

AI has Moved Beyond Experimentation

Industries are moving from AI pilots to enterprise-wide adoption, making AI a key driver of productivity and innovation

Driving Economic Resilience and Growth

Strategic AI investment is now essential to stay competitive

Balancing Innovation with Governance

Strong risk management, ethical data use, and transparent regulation are key to ensuring AI serves society

Transforming Business Models

AI is reshaping business models, unlocking new revenue, and driving operational reinvention

Cross-Sector Collaboration is Key

Collaboration across industry, government, academia, and civil society is vital to build ethical, effective AI governance

Integrating AI to Increase Efficiency

AI boosts productivity by automating tasks, improving forecasts, and enabling real-time decisions

...and being implemented in US state and federal agencies

Microsoft opens first AI lab focused on manufacturing in Wisconsin

As part of Microsoft's AI partnership with Wisconsin, a new AI Lab for manufacturing innovation has opened at the University of Milwaukee, collaborating with startups and enterprises

Maryland Department of Transportation AI Traffic Management Solution

NoTraffic uses AI-powered sensors to retrofit intersections, reducing congestion in real time by detecting vehicles, transit, emergency services, and pedestrians

Internal Department of Homeland Security Chatbot

DHS has developed an internal AI tool, similar to ChatGPT, to draft reports, summarize key information, build software, and streamline admin tasks

California Department of Tax Fee and Administration Call Center AI Support Bot

Call center agents use GenAI to search 16,000+ pages of reference material, cutting call times by quickly delivering accurate support

Sources: WEF | AI in Action: Beyond Experimentation to Transform Industry, Microsoft opens AI Co-Innovation Lab at UW-Milwaukee, Maryland activates traffic management platform to combat gridlock

RI 2030: Priorities

As AI rapidly changes the world, Rhode Island must consider the impact to the state and our priorities. The Rhode Island AI Action Plan aligns with Governor McKee's RI 2030 Goals, encouraging practical, forward-thinking steps to guide Rhode Island's ethical and effective adoption of AI.

Rhode Island aims to

Enhance Workforce Development Opportunities

Increase AI learning at all levels of schooling, thus improving educational outcomes and raising household incomes

Driving Economic Growth

Use existing resources more effectively to promote AI adoption across all sectors of the economy

Leading to other key benefits

Advancing Infrastructure and Innovation

Moving State Government into 2030

Investing in our Children, Early Education, and Families

Enhancing Public Health and Wellness

Supporting Small Businesses

Prioritizing Housing

Strengthening K-12 Education

Source: https://www.ri2030.com/_files/public/RI2030-Version2022-final-optimized.pdf

Task Force Creation

Executive Order 24-06

Governor Dan McKee of Rhode Island issued Executive Order 24-06 with guidelines for the **ethical and transparent adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Data Centers of Excellence** within state government operations.

This executive action laid the foundation for a coordinated state response, including the creation of **Rhode Island's AI Task Force**. Rhode Island joined other states with established AI task forces, positioning itself as a proactive leader in navigating the digital transformation.

Key directives from the Executive Order

AI Task Force

Establish a Task Force to understand AI's potential impact on various sectors, including business, education, healthcare, and government.
Key Task Force goals include promoting AI development, assessing opportunities and risks, developing regulations and policies, and focusing on workforce development

Robust Data Governance Structure

Establishment of the Rhode Island Longitudinal Data System (RILDS) Executive Board and issuance of the Rhode Island Data Governance Program Plan

Transparent Data Sharing

Improve transparency and public accessibility of data, through increasing dashboard availability, data summaries; public data catalogs of research & reports

Chief Data and Analytics Officer (CDAO)

Appointment of a Chief Data and Analytics Officer (CDAO) to oversee data-related activities, including establishing a Center of AI Excellence

Objectives

Objectives were informed by Executive Order and the structure other states followed with their task forces.

Objective 1: Maximize Benefits and Assess Risks

Assess the opportunities and risks presented by the advancement of AI

- Literature scan on industry-specific key benefits and risks of AI, broadly
- Fact-Finding Team survey on risks and benefits impacting their companies/industry
- Industry-specific synthesis around what is most relevant to RI

Objective 2: Understand the Role of Each Stakeholder

Evaluate the role of each stakeholder in enabling the Rhode Island AI ecosystem to thrive

- Stakeholder analysis on how groups (State, private sector, government, non-profits, community) manage AI-related opportunities and risks
- Synthesis around what is most relevant to RI given current context

Objective 3: Assess Workforce Potential and Implications

Understand implications for skills shifting in private and public sectors

- Industry-specific workforce and skilling implication summary
- Tailored review of skilling impacts most relevant to Rhode Island's industries
- Training / policy recommendations

Action Plan Output

Create a comprehensive action plan with recommended steps to prepare Rhode Island to implement artificial intelligence effectively and ethically

03

How the Action Plan was Developed

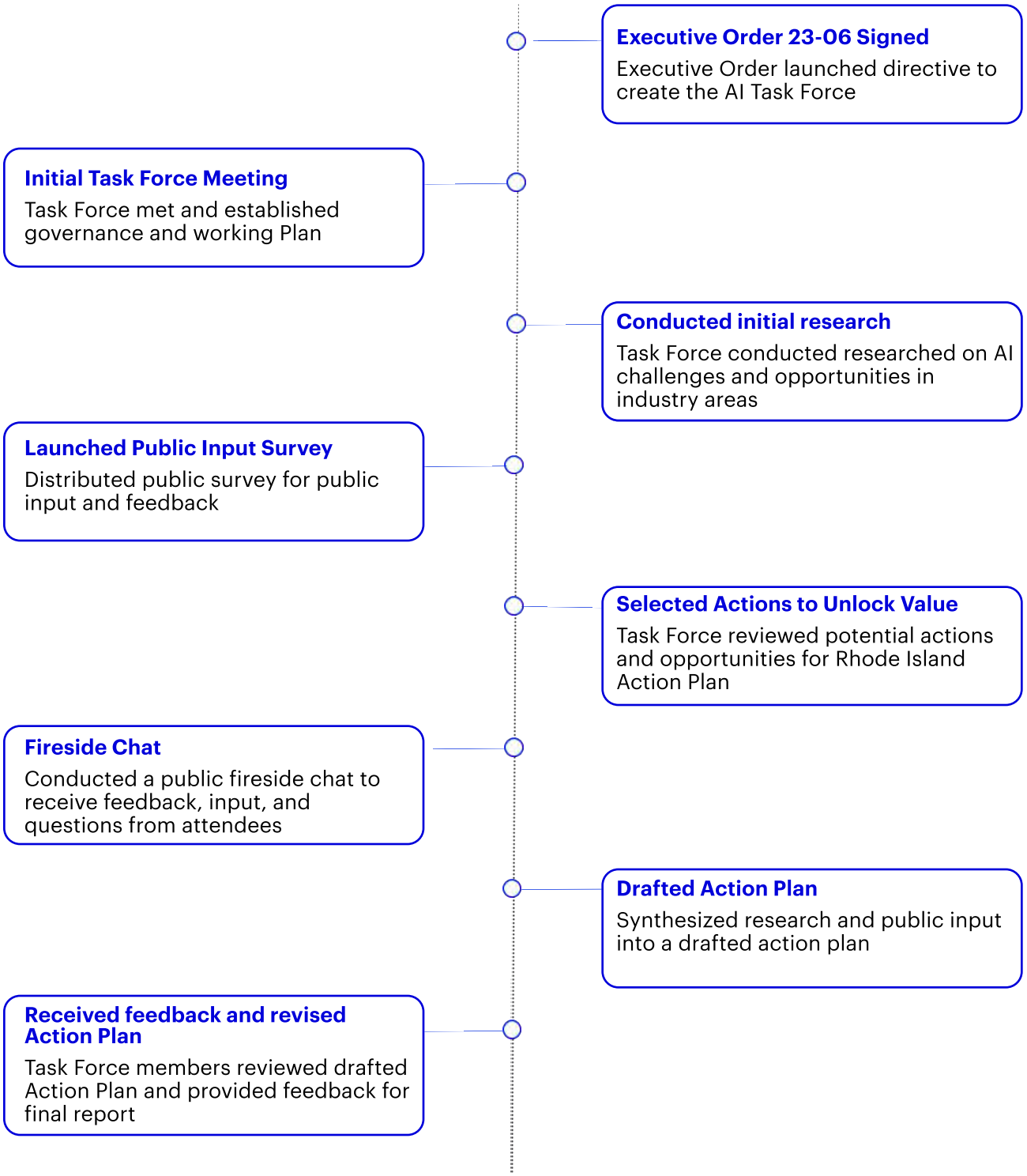
How We Got Here: Statewide, Multi-Faceted Process

Creating Rhode Island's AI Action Plan required more than technical expertise. To make an Action Plan that meets the needs of all Rhode Islanders, it called for inclusive, collaborative leadership. To meet this challenge, the state assembled a diverse AI Task Force, bringing together leaders from government, business, academia, and the non-profit sector.

Six Fact-Finding Teams examined how AI is impacting key sectors. Their work drew on research, expert insight, and community input—shaped by Rhode Island's core values. The resulting opportunities to impact Rhode Island's economy balance national guidance with Rhode Island's distinct perspective.

Rhode Island Action Plan Key Milestones

Executive Order 23-06 launched Rhode Island's AI Task Force, guiding a collaborative journey through research, public input, and strategic planning.



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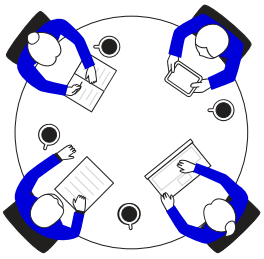

Multi Sector Collaboration Across Rhode Island

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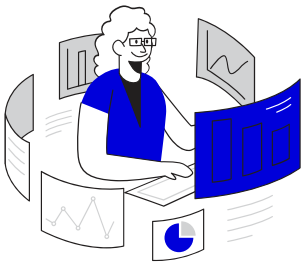

Evidence Based Approach

The 6 Fact-Finding Teams gathered actionable intelligence on their focus area including:

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Inclusive Decision Making Process

The AI Task Force synthesized the final recommendations for the Action Plan through rigorous consensus of various stakeholder groups, involving cross-sector deliberations, public forums, as well as public input through the RI AI portal and expert industry advisors

Multi Sector Collaboration Across Rhode Island

The AI Task Force consists of business leaders across various industries in Rhode Island and brings together public, private, and higher ed institutions - emphasizing cross-sector collaboration and Rhode Island's connectivity throughout the state.

Planning Group

The Planning Group set the strategic direction of the Task Force, prepared Task Force convenings, and coordinated activities of the Fact-Finding teams. Members include the Task Force Chair (Congressman James Langevin), the Task Force Vice Chair (Christopher Parisi) and additional senior leaders.

Task Force

The Task Force discussed opportunities and risks presented by the advancement of AI, reviewed advancements in AI across the US and internationally, and participated in Fact-Finding teams to provide industry expertise.

Fact-Finding Teams

The Fact-Finding Teams provide insight into how each industry is impacted by AI and how the state can responsibility support the advancement of this technology in Rhode Island. Their efforts include:

- A literature scan and survey on industry-specific benefits, risks, levels of awareness, and workforce impacts due to AI
- Research on the top risks and opportunities facing industries due to AI
- Research on current uses of AI in Rhode Island and the associated challenges faced and benefits received
- Reflections on common considerations across state task force initiatives
- Input on areas of differentiation for Rhode Island

Focus Areas

Government	Finance	Education
Health	Defense Industries and Maritime Technologies	Small Businesses, Startups, Non-Profits

Evidence Based Approach: Components

Analysis of key themes from other state's task force reports reveal a strategic progression, from defining scope to driving responsible AI outcomes and long-term adoption.

Scope

Establish clear goals and measure of success (e.g., economic growth, job creation)

- Task forces are explicit about their areas of focus (public sector, private sector, workforce, their policy purview)

Outcomes

Develop policies on the responsible use of AI. Other task force commitments include:

- Research on how their state can support the advancement of AI
- Documenting efforts through public reports to ensure transparency and accountability
- Strong governance through diverse task force membership

Evolution

Initially focused on understanding the impact of AI on their state. Over time, task forces will focus more on access to AI, adoption of AI, and the application of AI across industries

Evidence Based Approach: Priorities of AI Task Forces Across States

Five common topics emerged as areas other state AI Task Forces frequently explore.

Ethics and Responsible AI Use

Develop guidelines to ensure AI is used ethically and responsibly, focusing on transparency, accountability, and mitigating bias

Data Privacy, Governance, and Security

Ensure data protection, cybersecurity, and compliance with privacy laws are top concerns, especially with the risks associated with AI systems accessing sensitive information

Workforce Development & Training

Equip the workforce for an AI-driven future through training for state employees, citizen upskilling, and AI literacy in education, addressing job displacement and building new skillsets

Public Transparency and Community Engagement

Prioritize public transparency to build trust in AI technologies through consultations, citizen education, and establishing standards for clear, accessible information on AI usage in government and beyond

Economic and Innovation Impact

Explore AI's role in driving economic growth, innovation, and new industries by evaluating its potential to attract investment, generate jobs, boost competitiveness, and support responsible regulation

Task Force Discussions

In each key Task Force meeting, agendas were structured to make collaborative process on building the AI Action Plan.

Governor's Artificial Intelligence Task Force Meeting Summary

Dec 18, 2024

- Formed six sector-specific teams to assess AI opportunities, risks, and workforce impact across domains
- Conducted a literature review that highlighted other states and organizations varying AI maturity, with needs ranging from training and ethical use to safety, support, and responsible deployment

Jan 23, 2025

- Reviewed results from industry specific surveys on AI adoption in Rhode Island
- Key challenges identified included data quality, equitable service delivery, educator and clinician training, and support for small businesses
- Discussed possible solutions for challenges

Mar 6, 2025

- Identified sector-specific AI use cases and positioned Rhode Island as an AI and ocean tech leader.
- Aligned on common considerations and challenges from each of the Fact-Finding Teams

Mar 27, 2025

- Prioritized key differentiators
- Determined opportunity areas based on impact and feasibility

Evidence Based Approach: Impact vs. Feasibility

In considering the opportunities for Rhode Island, the impact and feasibility were evaluated to prioritize them.

Impact

Impact was evaluated based on expected:

- Number of people who will be directly affected
- Level of engagement
- Impact on workforce, government, governance, innovation, and collaboration

Feasibility

Feasibility was evaluated based on expected:

- Cost
- Level of effort
- Level of investment
- Technical Readiness
- Alignment with Existing Infrastructure

Inclusive Decision Process | Public Input

The Rhode Island AI Task Force sought public input primarily through a public survey and a fireside chat.

Public Survey

In April 2025, a public survey was released on aitaskforce.ri.gov for anyone to complete. The survey asked for respondents to share their awareness and experiences with AI. The insights helped inform recommendations shared in this Action Plan.

Fireside Chat

In May 2025, the RI AI Task Force organized a fireside chat to share progress, seek feedback, and discuss the future of AI in Rhode Island.

04

Rhode Island Differentiators

Differentiators: Leveraging Rhode Island's Strengths

Rhode Island's scale, assets, and collaborative culture present unique opportunities to lead. The state's path forward in AI is shaped not only by the technology's promise but by the state's unique characteristics.

Through research, stakeholder engagement, and cross-sector collaboration, the AI Task Force identified several areas where Rhode Island is particularly well-positioned to lead. These differentiators should form the bedrock of the state's long-term AI strategy and guide where early investments and pilots can have outsized impact.

Areas of Differentiation

Fact-finding teams compiled Rhode Island's strengths and unique attributes. Areas for investment are listed-prioritizing AI-ready graduates and AI workforce readiness investments as Rhode Island's key differentiators for a future with integrated AI.

Education Ecosystem & Workforce Readiness

Cross-Sector / Ecosystem Collaboration

Defense Industries and Maritime Technologies

Life Sciences

Strengths

Education Ecosystem & Workforce Readiness

- Utilize RI's educational institutions to **bridge the skills gap**
- **Design curricula** to prepare graduates for high-demand AI roles; leverage sector specific advisory groups to ensure curriculum meets **modern sector needs**

Cross-Sector/Ecosystem Collaboration

- Create **partnerships** between academia, business, and the State
- Ensure **dense connectivity** throughout the State to eliminate degrees of separation

We recommend Workforce Readiness as Rhode Island's Key Differentiator

Realizing the potential of AI depends on more than infrastructure and innovation hubs. **The state can unlock the full benefits of AI only if it makes parallel investments in people. Workforce readiness** is the bridge between vision and impact, ensuring that Rhode Islanders have the skills, support, and access needed to thrive in an AI-driven economy.

Opportunities

Defense Industries and Maritime Tech

- Leverage **existing established** research institutions and coastal assets, such as the Ocean Tech Hub
- **Incentivize expansion** of ongoing and new government/commercial production, research and development

Life Sciences

- Rapidly expanding with potential to drive RI's **economic growth**
- Collaborate with the **RI Life Sciences Hub** to have a transformative impact
- **Focused programming & workforce** development

Key Differentiator: Education Ecosystem and Workforce Readiness

Rhode Island's education ecosystem is not just responsive—it's collaborative, agile, and ready to lead in AI workforce transformation.

Rhode Island's Strengths

- Strong collaboration between public and private higher education institutions
- Unique potential for cross-sector partnerships with industry to shape curriculum
- Compact geography enables faster coordination and implementation
- A culture of innovation in education that supports AI literacy and ethical reasoning
- Rhode Island's colleges and universities form a robust educational ecosystem and are positioned to integrate AI into curricula

Opportunities

- Developing a future-ready workforce by aligning K-12 and higher education with evolving job market demands
- Lifelong learning and credentialing pathways that allow for adaptability in a rapidly changing AI landscape

Cross-Sector Collaboration

Rhode Island's small size is a strategic asset. Dense connectivity across government, academia, and industry enables agile partnerships and rapid coordination.

Rhode Island's Strengths

- Rhode Island's small size enables:
  - Dense institutional and industry connectivity
  - Agile coordination across government, academia, and industry
  - Accelerated decision-making and implementation
- Administrative structure naturally supports rapid innovation cycles, which is critical to keep up with the fast pace of AI advancement

Opportunities

- Cross-sector partnerships to enable fast design, piloting, and scaling of AI solutions
- Informal natural communication across government, academia, and industry provide the opportunity to rapid innovation cycles and respond to fast changing AI landscape

Defense Industry and Maritime Technology

Rhode Island's maritime technology ecosystem is where AI meets sustainability, defense, and economic growth.

Rhode Island's Strengths

- Natural coastal geography ideal for marine innovation
- Home to key institutions like the Naval Undersea Warfare Center
- Strong base of maritime industries and federal partnerships
- Positioned to lead in ocean-based AI applications

Opportunities

- Use of AI in marine logistics, environmental monitoring, and climate resilience
- Defense innovation through smart sensing and autonomous systems
- Potential to become a national model for sustainable, AI-powered ocean economies

Life Sciences

Rhode Island's growing life sciences sector offers a powerful platform for AI-driven research and commercialization.

Rhode Island's Strengths

- Rhode Island's life sciences sector is expanding rapidly
- The RI Life Science Hub provides a central platform for innovation
- Strong presence of academic medical centers and research institutions

Opportunities

- Positioned to lead in biotech, health data analytics, and clinical research; attract investment by showcasing AI-enabled research potential
- Accelerate drug discovery and clinical trial matching through AI
- Enable precision medicine and advanced health data analytics
- Strategic and impactful partnerships with biotech and academia

05

Sector Focus

Sector Focus

The Task Force began by analyzing how AI is being explored across six key sectors in Rhode Island, identifying both challenges and high-impact opportunities.

Based on this assessment, it developed targeted steps for industry leaders to unlock AI's potential—tailored to each sector's unique needs, assets, and implementation pathways, and aligned with broader statewide efforts.

Sectors

These six industry domains are key drivers of the Rhode Island economy and align with the state's 2030 Plan priorities. After introducing each industry, this section address valuable transformations presented by AI and the steps to unlock that value.

Defense Industries and Maritime Technologies

Government

Finance

Education

Health

Small Businesses, Startups & Non-Profits

Sector Focus Analysis Structure

Sector overview

Value case for AI

Steps to unlock AI value

Defense Industries and Maritime Technologies

AI can revitalize Rhode Island's defense industries and maritime technologies sector by improving supply-chain efficiency, strengthening cybersecurity, and advancing maritime and national-security innovation. Technologies such as predictive maintenance, digital twins, and AI-driven logistics boost production, while advanced threat detection protects sensitive defense data. AI-powered talent-matching and upskilling platforms can also address workforce gaps and support tech adaptation.

To realize this potential, Rhode Island must address challenges including model reliability, legacy system integration, and cultural resistance. Scaling impact will require expanding the Innovation Hub, leveraging federal defense partnerships, and establishing innovation-friendly AI policies. A statewide framework that includes shared data infrastructure, transparent best practices, and collaboration across public, private and academic sectors will be essential for building a strong talent pipeline and positioning the state as a leader in secure, ethical AI adoption.

Rhode Island's AI Pathway

- Improving reliability: Enhancing statistical accuracy, refining generative AI outputs, and advancing integration with legacy systems
- Strengthening data & compliance: Proactively addressing data residency requirements, ensuring secure handling of sensitive information, and fortifying models against vulnerabilities
- Evolving the workforce: Building AI readiness, closing skill gaps through training, and redefining human-AI collaboration for greater productivity and innovation

Defense Industries and Maritime Technologies

The sector must address reliability, security, and cultural challenges while leveraging opportunities in supply chain, cybersecurity, and talent development through proactive policy and strategic partnerships

Potential Value Unlocked

- Optimized supply chain, inventory, & manufacturing processes through predicative maintenance, digital twins for production lines, and enhanced logistics
- Improved cybersecurity through advanced threat detection, streamlined regulatory compliance, and state/local defense collaborations
- Enhanced Talent & HR Management function through qualified candidate recommendations, process automation, and AI-driven personalized upskilling

Steps to Unlock Value

- Invest in Technicians and Engineers Workforce Upskilling and Infrastructure
- Expand on programs such as the Rhode Island Innovation Hub
- Leverage Defense contracting opportunities (autonomous vehicles and augmented targeting systems)
- Leverage Federal Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs)
- Launch demonstration projects
- Identify or create an AI Equipment Grant Program

Defense Industries and Maritime Technologies

Illuminating the steps to unlock the potential of AI in Defense Industries and Maritime Technologies

Invest in technicians and engineers workforce upskilling and Infrastructure

- Fund training programs to equip technicians and engineers with AI and data analytics skills
- Facilitate Supply Chain Data Integration Workshops: Organize training and technical assistance programs to help businesses integrate AI with supplier and logistics systems, enabling real-time, end-to-end supply chain visibility

Expand on programs such as the Rhode Island Innovation Hub

- Create a regulatory framework that is pro-adoption and experimentation to facilitate AI adoption
- Expand on programs such as the Rhode Island Innovation Hub (rihub.org) with pre-incubator services, investments (technical and financial), or co-investment (State, Industry, and Universities)

Leverage Defense contracting opportunities (autonomous vehicles and augmented targeting systems)

- Leverage Defense contracting opportunities in areas such as autonomous vehicles and augmented targeting systems
  - Undersea Warfare Center
  - Expand existing/attract additional defense companies

Leverage Federal Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs)

- Leverage Federal Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs)
- Provide government contracting opportunities to develop AI platforms that can be leveraged by both businesses and government agencies (Example – Empire AI)

Launch demonstration projects

- Partner with key manufacturing firms, state agencies, and academic institutions to launch demonstration projects that showcase predictive maintenance using AI and sensor data
- Provide grants or incentives for companies to adopt IoT sensors and cloud-based monitoring platforms

Identify or create an AI equipment grant program

- Provide financial incentives or matching grants to help manufacturers acquire high-resolution imaging systems and AI-powered inspection tools

Government

AI can help Rhode Island deliver faster, fairer government by automating citizen interactions, modernizing decades-old records, and using predictive analytics to guide disaster response, traffic flow, and law-enforcement resources. Chatbots, multilingual voice assistants, and AI-powered document processing make services easier to navigate while improving data quality for policy decisions.

Getting there means focusing on the basics: build in-state data infrastructure and a data-analytics center, enact legal frameworks for secure data sharing and AI impact audits, and run targeted pilots in high-traffic offices to prove value. Coupled with workforce upskilling and partnerships in ocean economy and cybersecurity niches, these steps position Rhode Island to lead in transparent, resident-centric AI governance.

Rhode Island's AI Pathway

- Improving outputs: AI tools face quality and consistency issues, limiting use in high-risk areas
- Ensure confidentiality and security: Data exposure and strict privacy rules hinder broader adoption
- Reduce bias and harm: Ensuring equity and avoiding skewed decisions remains challenging; existing guidelines (e.g., OMB, NIST) are underused

Government

While navigating challenges like unreliable outputs and data security, Government AI presents opportunities in constituent services, data modernization, and public safety, requiring a focus on policy, partnerships, talent, and unique AI solutions

Potential Value Unlocked

- Enhanced preparedness and security with predictive analytics for disaster response, law enforcement, and cybersecurity
- Modernized data systems using AI to clean records, update policies, and structure legacy data
- Improved access to services for residents with AI chatbots to reduce confusion
- Improved data accessibility and decision-making through AI-powered document processing, NLP, and analytics
- Utilize AI predictive analytics to inform budgeting, staffing, and resource allocation
- Reduced bias and disparity in decision making

Steps to Unlock Value

- Develop Local Data Infrastructure & Governance framework
- Launch a statewide AI-Cyber response initiative
- Modernize data systems using AI to clean records, update policies, and structure legacy data
- Pilot and scale AI automation use cases for government agencies
- Require AI decision monitoring for bias and disparities
- Launch AI initiatives to improve citizen experiences for government services and information access

Government

Illuminating the steps to unlock the potential of AI in Government

Develop local data infrastructure & governance framework

- Build local data stores in Rhode Island to support the development of customized AI models
- Focus on improving data quality and governance practices
- Create legal frameworks for intergovernmental data sharing and secure dedicated legal support

Launch a statewide AI-Cyber response initiative

- Deploy AI-based monitoring systems in critical infrastructure networks (e.g., finance, health, elections)
- Enhance preparedness and security with predictive analytics for disaster response, law enforcement, and cybersecurity to analyze anomalies and respond to threats in real time

Modernize data systems using AI to clean records, update policies, and structure legacy data

- Strengthen the foundation for new technologies through data cleanup and modernization
- Improve data accessibility and decision-making through AI-powered document processing

Pilot and scale AI automation use cases for government agencies

- Conduct a cross-agency assessment to identify high-impact, repetitive tasks ripe for automation
- Fund pilot programs in key agencies (e.g., DMV, HR, procurement) to demonstrate value and scalability of AI-driven automation tools
  - Support agencies in adopting AI forecasting tools for budget planning, case management, and workforce deployment

Require AI decision monitoring for bias and disparities

- Require AI impact assessments for all state AI systems to track equity, bias, and outcomes
- Partner with universities or ethics labs to develop open-source AI audit tools and dashboards for public reporting

Launch AI initiatives to improve citizen experiences for government services and information access

- Deploy AI-enabled digital assistants across high-demand public interfaces
- Invest in multilingual AI tools (e.g., auto-translation, speech-to-text) to reduce language and literacy barriers
- Incorporate AI accessibility standards into state IT procurement and digital service design requirements

Finance

AI can transform Rhode Island's finance sector by improving customer service, automating document and meeting analysis, and streamlining back-office workflows. Tools that analyze call transcripts and sentiment data support real-time decisions, while compliance automation reduces operational risk. Adoption is slowed by limited AI talent, overlapping data regulations, and concerns about model bias and transparency.

Financial firms are already operating under strict risk regimes, are well positioned to lead AI governance statewide. Rhode Island can grow local expertise through state-backed talent investments, partnerships with academia, and internship pipelines. With clear regulatory guidance and incentives for collaborative research, the finance community can become trusted advisers and early adopters of ethical AI across sectors.

Rhode Island's AI Pathway

- Relieve talent shortages: Competitive salaries and tech hub opportunities make it hard to hire and retain AI talent, slowing innovation
- Streamline regulatory complexity: Overlapping rules, especially for unstructured data, create major compliance challenges
- Increase output reliability: Inaccurate or biased AI results can harm users and damage reputations
- Build trust and adoption: Lack of transparency in AI decisions fosters mistrust and cautious adoption

Finance

Navigating talent shortages, rigorous compliance, and consumer trust challenges, the finance sector is poised to capitalize on AI's potential in customer service, document analysis, and operational efficiency through strategic partnerships and localized initiatives

Potential Value Unlocked

- Enhanced customer service through real-time info, sentiment analysis, and call support
- Increased workplace efficiency via automated communications, document analysis, and meeting summaries
- Automated Regulatory Monitoring and Reporting
- Reduced Decision Bias and Enhanced Fraud Protection
- Improved Bias mitigation and transparency through AI monitoring of transactions and decisions

Steps to Unlock Value

- Lead AI Governance Development
- Foster Industry-Academia Collaboration for FinTech Development
- Support Joint Research & Internships to Funnel Resources into FinTech
- Develop AI Compliance Toolkits for Financial Institutions
- Create a Model Validation and Bias Testing Lab
- Require Use of Explainable AI in Customer-Facing Applications
- Integrate AI-Based Cyber and Fraud Detection in Financial Infrastructure

Finance

Illuminating the steps to unlock the potential of AI in Finance

Lead AI Governance development

- Take a leadership role in developing AI governance and guiding principles for other industries
- Finance companies can share their best practice and learnings to educate state agencies and inform their governance structure

Foster industry-academia collaboration for FinTech development

- Organize partnerships so industry employees can learn new skills and academics gain access to real-world problems and data
- Support development of open-source or low-cost explainable and compliant AI models that can be adopted by small and mid-sized financial institutions

Support joint research & internships to funnel resources into FinTech

- Fund or subsidize collaborative research projects and student internship opportunities
- Partner with universities, fintech companies, and workforce boards to create AI training, certifications, and internship pipelines tailored to finance roles
- Dedicate funding (or tax breaks) to companies that grow or hire AI talent

Develop AI compliance toolkits for financial institutions

- Fund and distribute ready-to-deploy AI tools that automate regulatory monitoring, flag risks, and assist in reporting across local, state, and federal finance laws

Create a model validation and bias testing lab

- Establish a centralized resource (possibly within a university or regulatory body) to help firms test AI models for fairness, accuracy, and compliance before deployment

Require use of explainable AI in customer-facing applications

- Mandate or incentivize Explainable AI adoption in areas like loan decisions, fraud detection, and risk assessment to build user trust and reduce opacity

Integrate AI-based Cyber and fraud detection in financial infrastructure

- Deploy AI-driven anomaly detection systems across public financial systems and encourage private-sector adoption through matching grants or shared services

Education

Artificial intelligence can elevate Rhode Island's education system by expanding student support, accelerating research, and easing educator workloads. Tools like chatbots, adaptive learning platforms, and AI-assisted grading offer personalized insights, automate routine tasks, and free up time for high-value instruction. However, adoption is slowed by concerns over data privacy, algorithmic bias, budget constraints, and limited educator training.

Rhode Island can address these barriers with a statewide AI education framework, investments in school infrastructure, and broad AI-literacy programs. A multidisciplinary advisory council and strong public-private-academic collaboration can guide ethical standards and ensure equitable access. These efforts would build trust, grow talent, and position the state as a national leader in responsible AI for education.

Rhode Island's AI Pathway

- Address ethical concerns: Mitigate student data privacy, algorithmic bias, fairness, digital divide, and data reliability
- Promote adoption: Support uptake of tools and educator training to address resistance and job displacement
- Support infrastructure: Budget constraints and need for strong tech infrastructure like cloud and internet access

Education

Addressing ethical, implementation, and cost hurdles through robust mitigation strategies, education can leverage AI to boost student support, empower educators, and drive research innovation

Potential Value Unlocked

- Expanded support of student learning through interactive generative AI customized by topic content and student learning history to boost learning, engagement, and access
- Improved accessibility, early intervention, and student success prediction
- Empowered educators with AI-driven course creation, automated grading, adaptive learning insights, and teaching support
- Streamlined research and grants with AI tools for grant matching, proposal assistance, updates, and funding categorization
- Improved institutional decision support and strategic planning

Steps to Unlock Value

- Incentivize the implementation of vetted AI-integrated education tools
- Establish a content governance framework so there is a standard for public education
- Develop an AI-powered portal for researchers to be matched with funding opportunities
- Deploy predictive analytics platforms for forecasting needs for K-12 and higher ed

Education

Illuminating steps to unlock the potential of AI in Education

Incentivize the implementation of vetted AI-integrated education tools

- Provide funding for school to implement AI learning tools and train educators on the use of the tools
- Train educators, school counselors, advisors, and administrators to interpret AI-driven alerts and create targeted intervention plans
- Offer statewide professional development grants for teachers and faculty to learn and use AI teaching tools, such as lesson generators, rubric-based grading assistants, and smart analytics dashboards
- Develop a Statewide AI Education and Infrastructure Framework to position RI as a national leader in AI-driven education and building a pipeline from K–12 through the workforce
- Pilot interactive generative AI tools in classrooms to provide tailored content explanations, practice problems, and writing support based on individual student performance data

Establish a content governance framework so there is a standard for public education

- Leverage existing stakeholders from education, government, and industry to provide guidance on ethical standards, workforce needs, and community engagement
- Frameworks should ensure AI tools align with state learning standards, guard against bias, and maintain student data privacy

Develop an AI-powered portal for researchers to be matched with funding opportunities

- Apply for federal innovation grants (e.g., NSF, EDA) or allocate state innovation funds to contract with a tech vendor or university IT team to build and maintain the AI-driven portal to match researchers and institutions with relevant funding opportunities, deadlines, and collaborators
- Convene a working group of research administrators, faculty, grant writers, and AI developers from RI institutions to define the portal's features—such as AI-driven grant matching, deadline alerts, and collaboration tools

Deploy predictive analytics platforms for forecasting needs for K-12 and higher ed

- Create a statewide data and analytics advisory unit to support smaller institutions in using AI-driven planning tools and sharing best practices in data-informed governance
- Model should target district and higher education system levels to forecast enrollment trends, staffing needs, and course demand
- Develop statewide data interoperability standards and templates to ensure that district and higher ed data (e.g., student records, staffing, course registration) can feed cleanly into analytics platforms

Health

AI can help Rhode Island modernize its healthcare system by streamlining operations, improving diagnostics, and enabling personalized care. Tools already support administrative tasks such as transcription, scheduling, and claims processing, but broader applications in precision medicine and advanced diagnostics remains limited. Progress is slowed by inconsistent data quality, regulatory uncertainty, and limited workforce readiness.

Rhode Island can accelerate adoption through smart hospital pilots, AI-integrated medical education, and targeted support for underserved communities. A statewide strategy built on secure data infrastructure, ethical standards, and collaboration among public, private, and academic sectors will expand access, build trust, and position the state as a leader in responsible healthcare innovation.

Rhode Island's AI Pathway

- Building trust in AI outputs: Improve consistency, reduce hallucinations, and enhancing generalization will strengthen confidence in AI-driven clinical decisions
- Advancing confidentiality and compliance: Safeguard patient privacy through robust access controls, secure data handling, and strong protections against re-identification during data transfers
- Clarifying liability and compliance: Establish clear accountability for AI-assisted outcomes, staying ahead of evolving regulatory requirements, and ensuring fairness and bias mitigation in outputs

Health

By addressing challenges through robust validation and governance, healthcare can unlock improved operational efficiency, diagnostic accuracy, and personalized care through strategic collaboration and targeted upskilling

Potential Value Unlocked

- Automate routine tasks (e.g., transcription, documentation, scheduling, claims) to free up resources for patient care
- Integrate AI diagnostics for early detection and improved outcomes in routine clinical practice
- Personalize treatment and accelerate drug discovery using AI, reducing adverse events
- Apply AI analytics to strengthen public health efforts—monitor outbreaks, predict ER surges, and optimize resources
- Enhance mental health care with AI-driven early intervention, crisis management, and personalized support

Steps to Unlock Value

- Establish coalitions and programs to accelerate health AI initiatives
- Launch Health AI-Powered Initiatives
- Embed AI & Ethics in Medical Education
- Develop AI-Assisted Rural & Underserved Healthcare Programs
- Create a Statewide AI & Health Data Sharing Network
- Encourage AI-driven biotech

Health

Illuminating steps to unlock the potential of AI in Health

Establish coalitions and programs to accelerate health AI initiatives

- Build cross-sector partnerships between industry, academia, and community organizations to advance AI initiatives

Launch health AI-powered initiatives

- Smart Hospitals Initiative: Support major hospitals in adopting AI for real-time patient monitoring, robotics-assisted surgeries, and personalized treatment plans
- AI-powered personalized medicine for tailoring treatments using genetic and medical data
- AI-driven mental health tools to address low-acuity challenges, especially among youth
- AI-enabled drug discovery and clinical trial matching through collaboration with pharma and research institutions

Embed AI & ethics in medical education

- Work with universities to integrate AI literacy into nursing and medical school and other relevant curriculums.

Develop AI-assisted rural & underserved healthcare programs

- Use AI tools to improve access to quality care in remote or underserved areas of Rhode Island (including mental health)

Create a statewide AI & health data sharing network

- Securely share health data across hospitals and research institutions for better AI-driven insights

Encourage AI driven biotech

- Encourage increased investment in research that leads to implementation of AI driven biotech such as drug discovery, via in increased grants, industry incentives, and RI Hub innovation ecosystem

Small Business, Startups, Non-Profits

AI can help Rhode Island's small businesses, startups, and non-profits gain big-company capabilities by automating back-office tasks, improving marketing and fundraising, and allowing staff to focus on core work. Cloud-based tools already support scheduling, invoicing, content creation, CRM personalization, and grant writing. Adoption remains limited due to low awareness, tight budgets, privacy and compliance concerns, and a shortage of AI-skilled workers.

To close these gaps, Rhode Island can pursue a lightweight and inclusive strategy: create a shared AI adoption sandbox for safe experimentation; build online and physical hubs for training, apprenticeships, and technical support; and offer pilot grants and tax credits. These efforts, along with micro-certifications, trusted-provider standards, and an innovation hub focused on ocean and climate tech, would reduce costs, build confidence, and grow local talent. This would position the state as a launchpad for ethical and community-focused AI innovation.

Rhode Island's AI Pathway

- Reduce barriers to adoption: Proactively educate on AI use cases, address cost/time concerns, privacy fears to reduce reliance on external experts
- Increase AI literacy: Train and upskill broad workforce on AI literacy and skills to address job displacement risks and need for support
- Address data & compliance concerns: Mitigate risks regarding confidentiality (e.g., HIPAA), biased outputs, and complex regulations, resulting from inexperienced use and limited knowledge of AI

Small Business, Startups, Non-Profits

Small businesses, startups, and non-profits need support in driving awareness, affordability, and navigating data-privacy hurdles to seize opportunities in back-office automation, personalized outreach, and grant-driven growth.

Potential Value Unlocked

- Use AI to automate admin tasks like scheduling and invoicing, and enhance marketing and sales through content generation and personalized outreach
- Apply AI to streamline grant writing and reporting, personalize messaging with AI-driven CRMs, deploy chatbots for support, and use predictive analytics to improve fundraising and retention

Steps to Unlock Value

- Create an AI Adoption Sandbox
- Establish an online and physical resource hub for businesses and nonprofits
- Create a State-Endorsed Open AI Resource Library
- Drive Ocean Economy and Climate Research AI innovation
- Offer grant programs and tax incentives to assist small businesses in adopting AI
- Launch business-specific chatbots
- Partner with Cloud Providers and Universities to Offer Subsidized AI Tools

Small Business, Startups, Non-Profits

Illuminating the steps to unlock the potential of AI in Small Businesses, Startups, and Non-Profits

Create an AI adoption sandbox

- Adopt sandbox/experiment environment for AI developers to test their solutions

Establish an online and physical resource hub for businesses and nonprofits

- Create AI resource hubs, both online and physical, to offer training, apprenticeships, and internships for businesses and nonprofits
- Launch AI awareness efforts, such as hosting an Ocean Tech Summit to spotlight innovation

Create a state-endorsed open AI resource library

- Open-Source and Community Resources: Participate in state- or university-sponsored AI initiatives for small organizations
- Curate and maintain an online repository of open-source models, tutorials, and best practices, hosted by a state agency or public university, to make trusted AI resources easily accessible to local organizations

Drive ocean economy and climate research AI innovation

- Automate ports and supply chains with AI to boost efficiency, cut costs, and enhance security
- Invest in AI for sustainability by optimizing energy use and predicting climate trends
- Apply AI sensors and robotics for marine conservation, fisheries management, and defense R&D

Offer grant programs and tax incentives to assist small businesses in adopting AI

- Offer tax incentives to companies that adopt AI and contribute to community initiatives
- Fund AI pilot grants for businesses testing AI solutions, supported by mentorship and resources within an AI Hub

Launch business-specific chatbots

- Create industry-specific chatbots tailored to meet the unique needs of various sectors, enhancing efficiency and customer engagement

Partner with cloud providers and universities to offer subsidized AI tools

- AI-as-a-Service Platforms: Leverage cloud-based AI tools without needing in-house data scientists
- Negotiate statewide agreements with cloud platforms (e.g., AWS, Microsoft, Google) and academic institutions to provide discounted or free access to AI-as-a-Service tools for small businesses and non-profits

06

Thematic Areas for Focused Action

Thematic Areas for Focused Action

After conducting the industry analysis, common challenges and opportunities reoccurred across industries that will shape Rhode Island's AI journey.

The Task Force organized these set of shared challenges and opportunities into four themes that transcend individual industries; each theme requires focused action to realize the potential value to Rhode Islanders.

Education and Workforce

To ensure every Rhode Islander benefits from AI investments, the state must prioritize people. Public education and workforce readiness are the linchpins that hold together and connect innovation to inclusion. They form the bridge between high-level strategy and real-world impact.

These following opportunities focus on upskilling, reskilling, and empowering workers, students, and employers to participate fully in the AI-driven economy.

Inspiration to Act

- AI is reshaping the nature of work and there is a growing skills gap in technical and analytical capabilities
- Employers and educators in Rhode Island are under pressure to adapt
- Workers are seeking upskilling opportunities to mitigate uncertainty about AI's impact on their roles

Education and Workforce

Equip Rhode Islanders with future-ready skills by reimagining education and training through an AI lens

Potential Value Unlocked

- Lead in workforce development with increased competitiveness of Rhode Island talent and workforce
- Highly AI literate educator workforce to inspire and educate the current general workforce and prepare the workforce of the future
- Reduced burnout in workers through utilizing AI tools in workflows, such as automating administrative and time-consuming tasks
- Increased educational content and quality (such as, translation for ESL, early Intervention, predictive AI - personalized education plans)

Steps to Unlock Value

- Drive Workforce Training: AI Accreditation and Micro-Credentialing Programs
- Drive Workforce Training: Certify Registered Apprenticeships in AI
- Facilitate Mentorship & Partnership Programs
- Create Incentives & Support for AI Training
- Promote the Public's AI Awareness and Opportunities through Communications and Engagement

Education and Workforce

Illuminating steps to unlock the potential of AI in Education

Formalize AI education in K-12 and higher education

- Integrate AI-focused curricula across K–12 and higher ed by 2030, with measurable, incremental progress
- Invest in curriculum development and teacher professional development to embed AI, coding, and digital fluency across subjects
- Appoint a state-level orchestrator to lead and coordinate AI curriculum integration with industry
- Build inclusive, scalable AI education pathways to ensure equitable access to opportunity

Drive workforce training: AI accreditation and micro-credentialing programs

- Establish AI accreditation pathways by developing degrees and certifications in areas like AI engineering, cybersecurity, and applied AI
- Expand AI literacy and micro-credential programs through short, stackable courses in AI fundamentals, data literacy, and ethics
- Leverage workforce development agencies and programs like RealJobsRI to help non-technical professionals transition into AI-enabled roles

Drive workforce training: certify registered apprenticeships in AI

- Encourage employers to expand registered apprenticeships as a pathway to build AI and tech talent
- Partner with Apprenticeship Rhode Island to help businesses design, develop, and register apprenticeship programs

Facilitate mentorship & partnership programs

- Launch state-sponsored AI mentorships to give students and workers hands-on experience
- Strengthen industry partnerships to expand access to mentorships and internships in AI-focused careers

Create incentives & support for AI training

- Offer AI training incentives through subsidies for small businesses and individuals
- Provide free access to open-source development tools and infrastructure to support adoption

Promote the public's AI awareness and opportunities through communications and engagement

- Launch an AI awareness campaign to promote AI services, opportunities, risks
- Use multiple channels—digital platforms and in-person events—with time for Q&A to engage the public effectively
- Leverage initiatives like Learn365RI and Math Matters RI to offer AI literacy programs to students and the public
- Offer public workshops—such as at Learn365 centers—at low or no cost to ensure broad access and participation through partnerships with community learning centers, colleges, and school districts

Government Leadership

The state's government has a unique opportunity—and responsibility—to lead by example in adopting AI. By using AI to improve service delivery, streamline operations, and enhance decision-making, the state can demonstrate the public value of AI while building internal capacity. Responsible deployment within government also sets the tone for ethical innovation across the broader ecosystem.

Inspiration to Act

- Strong government leadership sets the direction for industry, the public, and other stakeholders
- Government actions broadly influence the perception and acceptance of new technology
- Clarifying and improved access to government processes, regulations, and services increases productivity of the state overall

Government Leadership

Empowering state agencies to become AI pioneers through hands-on adoption and internal capability building

Potential Value Unlocked

- State government seizes a unique opportunity to lead by example in AI adoption
- Improve perception and trust of AI through innovative implementations for the public good, such as optimizing public safety, transportation, and infrastructure through AI
- Encourage expanded adoption of AI by integrating AI into constituent experiences and support of AI literacy programs
- Expand the AI skilled workforce through education and preparing state employees
- Streamline regulations that promote clarity and compliance requirements across industry, academia, and general public

Steps to Unlock Value

- Encourage Workforce Training: AI Accreditation and Micro-Credentialing Programs
- Implement AI in public facing functions and services
- Pioneer an AI-Driven Policy Management System
- Align Regulations with Other Jurisdictions

Government Leadership

Illluminating the steps to unlock the potential of AI in Government Leadership

Encourage workforce training: AI accreditation and micro-credentialing programs

- Encourage AI Accreditation and Micro-Credentialing program through integration of information on state website, resources, and in state workforce programming

See Education and Workforce for more information on AI Accreditation and Micro-Credentialing

Implement AI in public facing functions and services

- Improve accessibility, usability of government information and regulations through interactive AI tools
- Streamline process for constituents to access licensing and benefits administration, such as SNAP, Medicaid, TANF
- Visible integration of AI into physical government services such as RIPTA
- Improve constituent customer services through a statewide AI Constituent Service Hub (e.g., chatbot or virtual assistant interface)

Pioneer an AI-driven policy management system

- Develop a centralized policy management system to help regulators, compliance managers, and others, track, and update, to supporting data modernization and operational efficiency
- Create clear AI usage policies to define appropriate applications within each agency's portfolio
- Support decision-making effectiveness by leveraging AI to interpret and apply existing policies, complementing efficiency efforts and aligning with the state's Data and AI Center of Excellence's role

Align regulations with other jurisdictions

- Align Rhode Island regulations with common standards, where feasible, to ease business operations

Framework Development

A state guidance model should support the responsible and transparent deployment of AI. A centralized AI guidance body serves as the anchor for this effort. By embedding this formalized guidance into the foundation of our AI strategy, Rhode Island can build public trust, foster innovation with integrity, and advance equity across sectors.

Inspiration to Act

- Clear ethical policies and guidelines for AI adoption can safeguard data and minimize risks
- Governed leadership can guide innovative AI adoption and implementation
- Share technology costs inspires collaboration across stakeholder groups

Framework Development

Create guidance, technology infrastructure and safeguard recommendations to set a framework for all AI Rhode Island initiatives

Potential Value Unlocked

- Address algorithmic bias, transparency, and accountability through proactive oversight
- Establish clear guidelines for responsible AI, including validation, auditing, and ethical review
- Maintain secure, modern tech infrastructure capable of supporting AI operations
- Enable secure data sharing across sectors to support aligned, AI-driven decision-making
- Sustain AI leadership through continuous engagement and governance by a central AI body

Steps to Unlock Value

- Establish a Centralized AI Guidance Body
- Creation of secure and stable technology stacks for state-wide stakeholders in AI operations
- Streamline and facilitate data sharing capabilities of industry, government, education, and businesses
- Invest in Security to ensure robust protection of data and systems

Framework Development

Illuminating the steps to unlock the potential of AI in Framework Development

Establish a centralized AI guidance body

- Enact executive or legislative authority to formally create an AI Guidance office with cross-sector representation (government, industry, academia, civil society)
- Develop a statewide AI policy framework and charter, outlining responsibilities, priorities (e.g., equity, transparency, security), and mechanisms for enforcement and collaboration
- Provide continuous engagement and thought leadership for example:
  - Host regular statewide AI forums, workshops, and public consultations to gather input, share best practices, and inform adaptive policy updates
  - Publish regular communications covering use cases, risks, metrics, and emerging trends, with recommendations for continuous improvement

Creation of secure and stable technology stacks for state-wide stakeholders in AI operations

- Incentivize government-academic coalition to implement innovative AI and data technology stacks using industry standard best practices
- Fund upgrade of legacy IT systems in state agencies to cloud-ready, API-compatible platforms that support AI workloads
- Build or designate a secure, shared data and compute environment for approved AI projects

Streamline and facilitate data sharing capabilities of industry, government, education, and businesses

- Develop legal and technical data-sharing agreements with standardized privacy, consent, and use-case guidelines
- Build the infrastructure and standards to enable secure, ethical data collaboration across agencies, research institutions, and industry

Invest in security to ensure robust protection of data and systems

- Establish a fund to strengthen the security of AI infrastructure to help with robust protection against cyber threats and data breaches

Collaboration and Scale

Rhode Island's compact size and collaborative culture give it a unique advantage in scaling innovation. By deepening partnerships between government, academia, and industry, and by working across state lines, the state can accelerate responsible AI adoption. Coordinated efforts will maximize impact, reduce duplication, and help Rhode Island achieve an outsized impact in the national AI landscape.

Inspiration to Act

- Rhode Island's compact size and strong institutional connectivity enable rapid cross-sector coordination
- Rhode Island is uniquely positioned to pilot AI solutions at scale and respond with agility to the fast-changing AI landscape

Collaboration and Scale

Turning Rhode Island's close-knit ecosystem into a launchpad for scalable, cross-sector AI experimentation

Potential Value Unlocked

- Boost business competitiveness and drive economic growth through AI innovation.
- Increased talent pool as AI adoption equips the workforce with in-demand technical skills.
- Increase productivity across industries by automating tasks, streamlining workflows, and enabling data-driven insights.
- Enhance non-profit fundraising by automating donor management and optimizing engagement strategies.

Steps to Unlock Value

- Expand AI Integration in Life Sciences, Biotech, and Ocean Technology
- Create Regional Partnerships Across New England
- Fund AI Innovation Grants to Spur Research and Adoption
- Establish AI-RI, an online and physical innovation hub, as a Statewide Resource

Collaboration and Scale

Illuminating the steps to unlock the potential of AI in Collaboration and Scale

Expand AI Integration in life sciences, biotech, and ocean technology

- Include AI in economic efforts focused on attracting growing industries in Rhode Island, including life sciences, biotech, and ocean technology
- Leverage Rhode Island's existing strengths, such as established research institutions, to advance AI applications
- Leverage the state's agility to accelerate innovation through shared initiatives

Create regional partnerships across New England

- Collaborate with nearby states to share risk, pool resources, and co-develop regulatory sandboxes and joint funding applications

Fund AI innovation grants to spur research and adoption

- Provide targeted funding and shared AI infrastructure to support experimentation in underserved and resource-constrained sectors
- Prioritize small businesses, startups, and non-profits to ensure inclusive access to AI innovation

Establish AI for Rhode Island (AI-RI), a physical and online innovation hub, as a statewide resource

- Establish AI-RI , Rhode Island's physical and online innovation hub to provide AI guidance, support, foster research & collaboration

See next page for details

AI-RI: AI for Rhode Island

AI-RI will serve as Rhode Island's physical and online hub to provide AI guidance, support, foster research & collaboration.

Provide AI Enablement Services

- Facilitate the development of high impact, feasible projects that will benefit all of Rhode Island
  - Directly partner with the state to reduce "red tape" and increase speed to deliver
- Support the RI government incorporating AI into its public facing services and internal processes
- Foster deeper collaboration between government, industry, and academia interested organizations
  - Host events for stakeholders to network, share lessons learned, and provide resources and support
- Act as a thought leader and publish perspectives on AI ethics, research, applications, and emerging technologies
- Serve as the convener to ensure the rapid adoption of ethical AI across academia to ensure all Rhode Island graduates are AI Ready

Be Statewide A Resource

- Offer expert services, such as technical advisory, project management support, resource guidance, directly to partner organizations
  - Connect to stakeholders through a variety of mechanisms such as regular office hours or request a consult or longer-term support
  - Services offered on a sliding scale
- Services would be offered at sliding scale
- Create learning resources on common AI enablement needs that are publicly available; incorporate ethical and responsible AI
- Develop compute resources and tools that any RI stakeholder can access and use
- Facilitate research through providing researchers access to technical resources and support

07 Conclusion

Conclusion

Rhode Island has a unique opportunity to lead in the age of AI by investing in what sets it apart: its strong foundation in education and workforce readiness. By prioritizing higher education and upskilling, the state can prepare its people for the jobs of tomorrow and position itself as a model for inclusive, innovation-driven growth. This strength will be the catalyst for statewide progress and long-term leadership in the AI economy.

Achieving this vision will take collective effort. Government must drive implementation with clear ownership and focused strategy, while industry leads in innovation and delivery. Success depends on collaboration—across sectors, communities, and institutions. With shared leadership and intentional action, Rhode Island can shape its own future and emerge as a national example of responsible, forward-looking AI adoption.

Rhode Island's goal is to improve the economic standing of its citizens and stakeholders through AI innovation. To do this, we have identified four differentiators where our small state can excel and compete; with education and workforce readiness as the most essential to develop.

To implement these differentiators, the state must focus on and support four cross cutting themes that encapsulate key actions to move Rhode Island forward.

Government action alone is not enough to accomplish this; industry leaders must also consider the specifics of how to implement these themes so that Rhode Island can be a leader in AI innovation and adoption.

Conclusion: Realizing the Action Plan

Rhode Island's goal is to improve the economic standing of its citizens and stakeholders through AI innovation.

Education Ecosystem and Workforce Readiness

Key Differentiator

Prioritize and focus investment and initiatives

- When prioritizing initiatives and resources; stakeholders should focus majority of efforts to target the Education Ecosystem and Workforce. Higher education stakeholders should be leveraged.
- Combined with Rhode Island's already strong ecosystem in higher education and workforce dedicated investment will allow RI to differentiate itself from other states in the AI economy.

Education and Workforce | **Government Leadership** | **Framework Development** | **Collaboration and Scale**

Governance & Implementation

Drive implementation of themes for all of Rhode Island to benefit

- Appoint owners for each of the thematic areas to drive opportunities outlined in this report.
- Owners might consider:
  - Focusing on prioritized opportunities in their thematic areas
  - Prioritizing remaining opportunities
  - Identifying funding mechanisms
  - Establishing partnerships with industry, academia, and community leaders

Manufacturing, Trade, & Defense | **Small Businesses, Start Ups & Non-Profits** | **Education** | **Health** | **Finance**

Industry Leadership

Industry lead coordination, implementation, innovation

- Implementation and coordination and innovation of how Rhode Island's AI journey occurs should industry led, in close collaboration with academic, government, and community partners.
- To move forward, the State of Rhode Island should consider leading initiatives that spearhead the opportunities outlined in this report.

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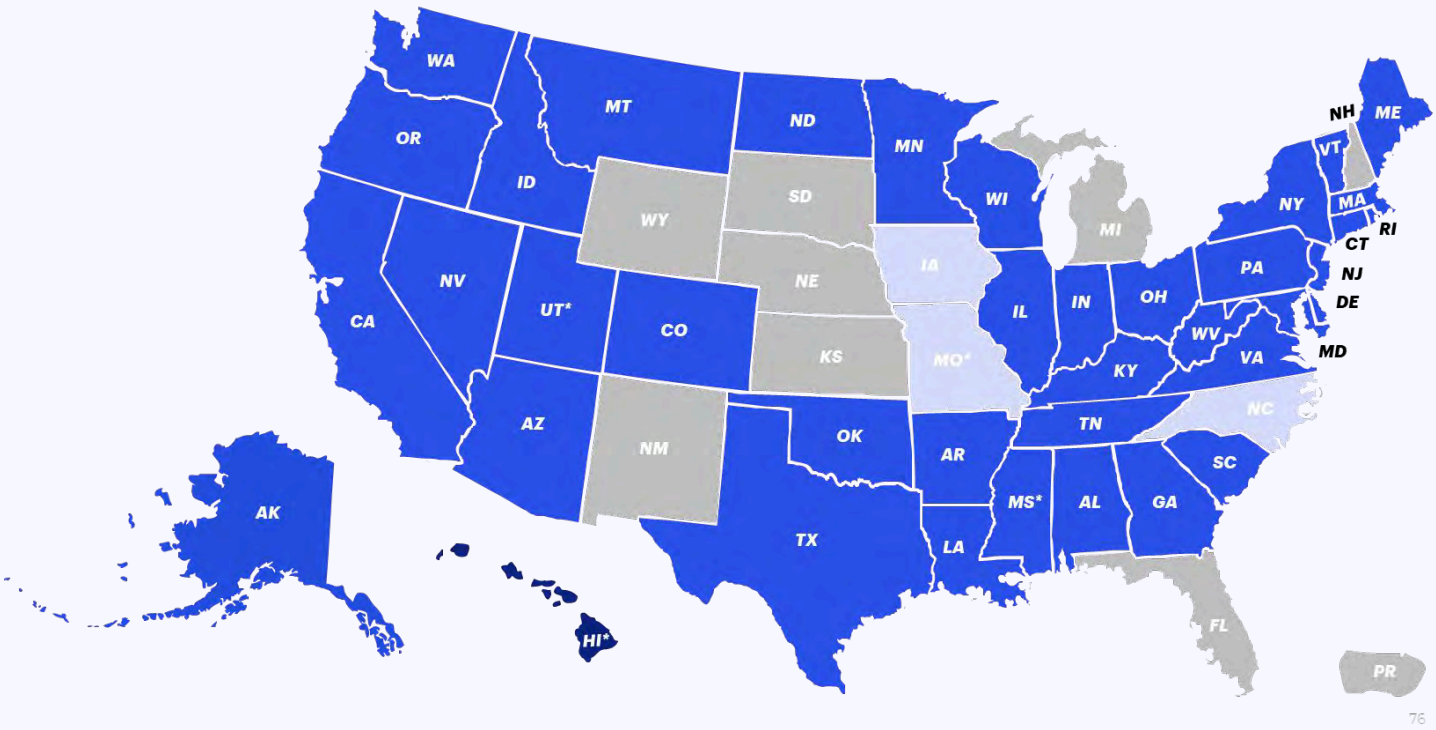
Appendix

A Look at AI Task Forces / Councils Around the Nation

As of June 2025, there are 38 established AI task forces around the nation. The Government Technology's Interactive AI Tracker, is a useful resource to help discover and understand which states are adopting and regulating AI in government through task forces, leadership roles, policies, projects and restrictions.



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Established AI task-force
AK, AL, AR, AZ, CA, CT, CO, DE, GA, ID, IL, IN, KY, LA, MA, MD, ME, MN, MS*, MT, ND, NJ, NV, NY, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, TN, TX, UT*, VA, VT, WA, WI, WV

No established AI task-force
AFL, KS, MI, NE, NH, NM, SD, WY

New legislation on AI task-force introduced
HI*

New legislation on AI task-force introduced but got rejected
IA, MO*, NC

*Mississippi's task force is termed as an Artificial Intelligence Regulation (AIR) task force | *Utah has an Office of AI Policy | *Hawaii's task force is termed as a Data Task Force but works with Artificial Intelligence as well as Data | *Montana's AI Task Force is an interim committee

AI at Work is Here

Microsoft's Work Index Research

Finding 1

Employees want AI at work—and won't wait for companies to catch up. They're bringing their own tools even as leaders face AI inertia.

- **75%** of knowledge workers around the world use generative AI at work
- **78%** of AI users are bringing their own AI to work (BYOAI)
- While **79%** of leaders believe their company needs to adopt AI to stay competitive, **60%** of leaders worry their organization's leadership lacks a plan and vision to implement it

Finding 2

For employees, AI raises the bar and breaks the career ceiling. Some are itching for a career change, and there is a massive opportunity for those willing to skill up on AI.

- **66%** of leaders say they would not hire someone without AI skills
- **71%** say they'd rather hire a less experienced candidate with AI skills than a more experienced candidate without
- There was a **142x** increase in skill like Copilot and ChatGPT added to LinkedIn profiles last year

Finding 3

The rise of the AI power user—and what they reveal about the future. Power users use AI at least several times per week. They say it saves them more than 30 minutes per day.

- Frequently experimenting with AI is the **#1** predictor of an AI power user
- Power users say AI boosts their creativity (**92%**) and helps them focus on the most important work (**93%**)
- AI also helps them feel more motivated (**91%**) and enjoy work more (**91%**)

Source: Microsoft 2024 Word Trend Index Annual Report

Public Input: Key Insights

Most respondents expressed cautious optimism about AI's impact on Rhode Island, while also highlighting challenges that need to be monitored.

Opportunities

Increasing Productivity and Efficiency

- Most respondents highlighted AI's ability to handle basic tasks, automate processes, and enable faster access to information. This allows workers to focus more on creative, complex, or strategic work

Staying Competitive and Innovative

- AI is rapidly transforming ways of working, and early adoption will help Rhode Island attract new businesses, retain talent, and prepare for the future of work

Leveraging Rhode Island's Differentiators

- Rhode Island's small size and strong academic institutions make it well positioned to pilot new AI initiatives, scale successful programs quickly, create strong partnerships

Risks to Monitor

Safeguarding Privacy

- Most respondents were concerned about privacy risks from AI, especially regarding data collection, use, and potential misuse. They largely supported AI regulation at both the state and federal level to help ensure personal information is protected

Preparing the Workforce

- Proactive investment in workforce development is essential to prepare Rhode Islanders for evolving job market demands

Promoting Responsible AI Use

- It's important for the public to receive training on how to use AI responsibly. AI should be used as a tool, not as a replacement for learning, creativity, or ethical decision-making

Public Input: Environmental Sustainability

In the Public Survey, Rhode Islanders noted AI's high energy use and carbon footprint. While AI can enhance sustainability, its computational demands pose environmental challenges. Responsible AI should prioritize energy efficiency.

Minimize the Computational Cost of Generative AI models

Researchers from Google and University of California, Berkeley have shown that the carbon footprint of large language models can be **reduced by 100 to 1,000 times** with the appropriate choice of **algorithms, customized hardware** and **energy efficient cloud data centers**

Use AI Thoughtfully

Businesses that deploy AI strategically, matching **the right models to the right tasks**, can minimize energy use. Instead of defaulting to large-scale LLMs, businesses should deploy **task-specific AI models**. Additionally, businesses **should incentivize efficiency** by transitioning from flat-rate AI pricing to **usage-based pricing models** to optimize how and when AI resources are consumed.

Invest in AI for Sustainability

Applying AI to the **ocean economy** can contribute to improved sustainability outcomes. By unlocking **efficiencies** and enabling **new uses for existing infrastructure**, AI can support both economic growth and ocean health.

Sources: Making generative AI green, Powering sustainable AI, Using AI to enhance heavy assets and forge a sustainable blue economy