

Make America **AI-Ready**

The federal government just made AI workforce readiness the single highest priority of the public workforce system. Here is what it means for Hamilton County employers – and how to get ahead of it.

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SECTION 01

WHAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT JUST DID

In a coordinated federal rollout between February and April 2026, the U.S. Department of Labor fundamentally shifted how America trains its workforce. **AI literacy is no longer optional** – it is being embedded into every federally-funded workforce program, every Registered Apprenticeship, and every American Job Center in the country.

\$369M+

FEDERAL AI WORKFORCE FUNDING COMMITTED IN 2026

56

STATE/TERRITORY AI-READY COORDINATION HUBS PLANNED

5-Year

NATIONAL CONTRACT TO REWRITE APPRENTICESHIP STANDARDS

The Four Key Actions (February–April 2026)

INITIATIVE	WHAT IT DOES	EMPLOYER IMPACT
AI Literacy Framework FEB 13	Mandates every workforce agency, Job Center, and community college to integrate AI literacy. Defines 5 content areas: understanding AI, exploring uses, prompting AI, evaluating outputs, using AI responsibly.	Workers coming through public workforce programs will arrive with baseline AI literacy. Your training must build on it, not start from scratch.
\$145M Apprenticeship Expansion FEB 13	Pay-for-Performance funding targeting AI, semiconductors, healthcare, IT, defense, advanced manufacturing, and telecom apprenticeships.	If you operate or sponsor an apprenticeship program, new federal funding is available to expand it with AI components.
NSF AI-Ready Hubs MAR 25	\$224M for up to 56 coordination hubs (one per state) linking employers, colleges, workforce boards, and government. \$1M/year for 3 years per hub.	Indiana will likely get one hub. Employers who engage early shape what AI training looks like in their region.
AI Apprenticeship Contract APR 1	Single national intermediary to develop AI curricula, training modules, and apprenticeship standards across all industries. 1-year base + 4 option years.	New AI-integrated apprenticeship standards are coming. Every existing apprenticeship – from trades to tech – will be updated.

SECTION 02

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

The Three Employer Scenarios

YOU ALREADY USE AI

You're ahead of the curve. The federal framework validates your investment and creates a pipeline of AI-literate workers from public programs. **Opportunity:** Formalize your AI training into a Registered Apprenticeship to access federal funding and build your talent pipeline.

YOU'RE EXPLORING AI

Most Hamilton County employers are here. The federal push means free and subsidized training resources are coming to your workforce board. **Opportunity:** Use Power Up Indiana (\$5K/worker) to train existing employees in AI skills before your competitors do.

AI ISN'T ON YOUR RADAR

It needs to be. Even traditional industries – construction, healthcare, logistics – are getting AI-integrated apprenticeship standards. **Risk:** Competitors who adopt early will attract better talent and operate more efficiently.

SECTION 03 HAMILTON COUNTY'S AI WORKFORCE LANDSCAPE

Hamilton County is one of the most AI-ready labor markets in the United States – but demand is outpacing supply in critical occupations.

Fastest-Growing AI-Adjacent Occupations in Hamilton County

OCCUPATION	JOBS (2026)	GROWTH (2019–26)	MEDIAN SALARY	AI RELEVANCE
Data Scientists	305	+165.8%	\$108,000	CORE AI
Information Security Analysts	373	+153.0%	\$112,000	CORE AI
Software Developers	1,624	+37.3%	\$132,864	CORE AI
Computer Systems Analysts	1,031	+25.0%	\$98,000	AI-ENHANCED
Computer Network Support	441	+133.3%	\$72,000	AI-ENHANCED
Management Consultants	4,089	+51.2%	\$95,000	AI-AUGMENTED
Engineers (All Disciplines)	1,444	+25.7%	\$116,305	AI-AUGMENTED

Hottest AI-Related Skills in Local Job Postings

Fastest-growing skill demand:

SKILL	GROWTH RATE
Artificial Intelligence	+51.5% monthly
Root Cause Analysis (AI-driven)	+333%
Structural Analysis (AI/BIM)	+700%
Autodesk Revit (BIM/AI)	+43%

Hamilton County competitive advantages:

METRIC	VALUE	NATIONAL RANK
Education Subindex	98.3	#1 of 292
Bachelor's Degree+	61.8%	#7 of 292
Computer Systems Design LQ	1.80x	Above national avg.
Prof./Tech Services Growth	+37.3%	Top decile

SECTION 04 MONEY ON THE TABLE: INCENTIVES YOU CAN STACK

Hamilton County employers have access to an unprecedented combination of federal and state incentives for AI-related workforce training – and they stack.

PROGRAM	BENEFIT	ELIGIBLE FOR	HOW TO ACCESS
Power Up Indiana	Up to \$5,000/worker, \$50K/employer/year	Upskilling existing workers to 25%+ higher wages exceeding \$48,210/yr	WorkOne Central / Region 5
On-the-Job Training	50% wage reimbursement (\$13.50+/hr min)	New hires learning on the job, including AI tools	WorkOne Central
WOTC Tax Credit	\$2,400–\$9,600 per hire	Hiring from targeted groups (veterans, re-entry, SNAP recipients)	WorkOne Central
Workforce Ready Grant	Free tuition for certificates	High-demand industry certifications including IT/cyber	Ivy Tech Hamilton County
Registered Apprenticeship	Federal recognition + access to \$145M expansion fund	Structured earn-and-learn programs with AI integration	DOL Office of Apprenticeship
Federal Bonding	\$5K–\$25K free insurance	Hiring candidates with barriers (complements InvestOnward)	WorkOne Central

MAXIMUM INCENTIVE STACK: \$55,000+ PER EMPLOYER

A Hamilton County manufacturer who hires a veteran through InvestOnward, trains them in AI-augmented CNC programming via a Registered Apprenticeship, and achieves a 25%+ wage increase could stack: Power Up (\$5K) + OJT wage reimbursement + WOTC (\$9,600) + Federal Bonding + apprenticeship support. IHC's WorkOne Synergy Guide maps every combination.

SECTION 05 YOUR AI READINESS CHECKLIST

Regardless of your industry or company size, these are the steps every Hamilton County employer should take in the next 90 days.

Immediate (April 2026)

- Assess your AI exposure.** Which roles in your organization will be augmented by AI? Which are at risk of displacement? Which need new AI skills?
- Inventory current training.** What AI training, if any, are you already providing? Does it align with DOL's 5-area framework?
- Talk to WorkOne.** Contact Kristal Heffley (317-431-8383) to discuss Power Up Indiana eligibility and OJT options for AI-related upskilling.
- Text READY to 20202.** Take the free federal AI literacy course yourself. It takes 10 minutes a day for one week. Understand what baseline your workers will be getting.

Near-Term (May–June 2026)

- Identify Power Up candidates.** Which employees earning below \$48,210 could be upskilled into AI-augmented roles at 25%+ higher wages?
- Explore apprenticeship options.** Could your organization create or join a Registered Apprenticeship with AI components?
- Engage with IHC.** Request a free employer AI readiness consultation through Alex Business Services.
- Connect with Ivy Tech.** Explore Workforce Ready Grant options for IT and cybersecurity certifications.

DOL's 5 AI Literacy Content Areas

The federal framework that will shape all publicly-funded AI training:

1. UNDERSTANDING AI PRINCIPLES

How AI systems work, their capabilities and limitations

2. EXPLORING REAL-WORLD AI USES

Industry-specific applications relevant to each worker's context

3. DIRECTING AI EFFECTIVELY

Prompting, configuring, and guiding AI tools for work tasks

4. EVALUATING AI OUTPUTS

Critical assessment of AI-generated content for accuracy and bias

5. USING AI RESPONSIBLY

Security, privacy, ethics, and responsible deployment

SECTION 06 INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC AI IMPACT

INDUSTRY	HC EMPLOYMENT	AI IMPACT	PRIORITY AI SKILLS
Healthcare	22,380	Clinical decision support, medical records AI, diagnostic imaging, scheduling optimization	AI-assisted documentation, data interpretation, workflow automation
Professional Services	15,700	AI-augmented analysis, automated reporting, client intelligence, predictive modeling	Prompt engineering, AI output evaluation, data pipeline management
Finance & Insurance	15,613	Fraud detection, algorithmic underwriting, AI-driven risk assessment, chatbot deployment	AI model oversight, regulatory compliance with AI, data governance
Retail Trade	18,294	Inventory optimization, demand forecasting, personalized marketing, self-checkout AI	AI tool operation, customer data analysis, digital merchandising
Manufacturing	7,644	Predictive maintenance, quality control AI, robotic process automation, digital twins	AI-integrated CNC, sensor data interpretation, process optimization
Construction	9,789	BIM/AI design, drone surveys, safety monitoring, project scheduling AI	BIM software (Revit +43% demand), AI estimating, drone operation

Invest Hamilton County Is Here to Help

Free Employer Consultation: IHC offers complimentary AI workforce readiness assessments through our Alex Business Services platform. We combine proprietary labor market data with federal workforce intelligence to give you a clear picture of your AI skills gaps and the incentives available to close them.

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Sources: DOL News Release 26-592-NAT (Apr 1, 2026) · DOL TEN 07-25 AI Literacy Framework (Feb 2026) · NSF 26-508 TechAccess · BLS QCEW Q1 2025 Hamilton County · Lightcast Economy Overview & Skills Analysis 2026 · Power Up Indiana (DWD/Office of Commerce) · IHC WorkOne/DWD Synergy Guide 2026 · Census ACS 2023 · National Benchmarking Index (292 counties)