

# **RECOMMENDATIONS: Second Chance Skills and Opportunity Moonshot**

[The National Artificial Intelligence Advisory Committee \(NAIAC\)](#)

**October 2023**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Recommendation 1:**

**As AI increasingly impacts the workforce, the administration should launch a moonshot to support adults in need of second chance skills and opportunities.**

Currently, millions of Americans lack the skills necessary to succeed in the workforce. According to the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC),<sup>1</sup> nearly 20 percent of Americans aged 16 to 64 perform at the lowest literacy level; nearly a third at the lowest numeracy levels; and nearly one quarter at the lowest levels for digital problem solving.

The administration should launch a moonshot to make the U.S. the top performing PIAAC country in literacy, numeracy, and digital problem solving within a decade. It should also ensure universal basic skills competency as a foundation of workforce success and American competitiveness within a generation. This would ensure all workers — and especially adults who missed out during traditional school years — are equipped to benefit from AI's positive impacts on the workforce.

To advance this effort, the administration should:

- Frame and champion the national goal
- Muster and spotlight all-of-society commitments
- Enhance measurement and evaluation

## CONTEXT

Evidence suggests that generative AI can improve the quality of output<sup>2</sup> for those who are mid-range performers in professional writing tasks, perhaps even closing the gap with top performers. When coupled with the clear rise in skills-based hiring<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Highlights of PIAAC 2017 U.S. Results," National Center for Educational Statistics, 2017, [https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/national\\_results.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/national_results.asp).

<sup>2</sup> Mariana Lenharo, "ChatGPT gives an extra productivity boost to weaker writers," *Nature*, July 13, 2023, <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-023-02270-9#>.

<sup>3</sup> "Skills-Based Hiring," Opportunity @ Work, n.d., <https://opportunityatwork.org/key-topics/skills-based-hiring/>.

and stackable credentials,<sup>4</sup> a wider range of workers have more pathways to attain meaningful employment and careers.

However, all of this assumes that workers have the basic set of skills and capabilities that allows them to use generative AI technologies in the first place. According to the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), nearly 20 percent of Americans aged 16 to 64 perform at the lowest literacy level; nearly a third at the lowest numeracy levels; and nearly one quarter at the lowest levels for digital problem solving. The upshot is that tens of millions of Americans are opportunity shutouts, making many earnest efforts supporting workers in the age of AI irrelevant in their lives.

Despite these challenges, the U.S. has a range of pathways — and unique roles for federal, state, and local government, as well as the private and nonprofit sectors — to help adults who missed out during traditional school years to gain the skills they need to get ahead in the workforce.

## ABOUT NAIAC

The National Artificial Intelligence Advisory Committee (NAIAC) advises the President and the White House National AI Initiative Office (NAIIO) on the intersection of AI and innovation, competition, societal issues, the economy, law, international relations, and other areas that can and will be impacted by AI in the near and long term. Their work guides the U.S. government in leveraging AI in a uniquely American way — one that prioritizes democratic values and civil liberties, while also increasing opportunity.

NAIAC was established in April 2022 by the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act. It first convened in May 2022. It consists of leading experts in AI across a wide range of domains, from industry to academia to civil society.

<https://www.ai.gov/naiac/>

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<sup>4</sup> Katharine Meyer and Ben Castleman, “Stackable credentials can open doors to new career opportunities,” Brookings, February 2, 2021, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/stackable-credentials-can-open-doors-to-new-career-opportunities/>.