Department of Labor AI Literacy Framework: Components and Application

- Use the DOL AI Literacy Framework as a design and alignment tool
- Published February 13, 2026, as voluntary guidance
- Covers five content areas and seven delivery principles
- Roadmap: policy background, architecture, design application, assessment, governance
- Outcome: explain, map curricula, design one learning intervention



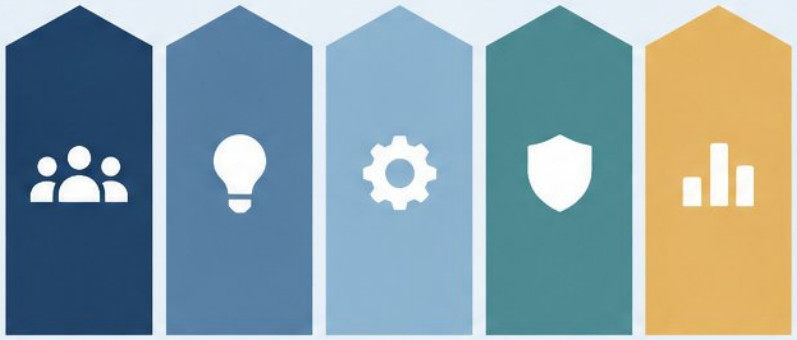
Background: Why the Framework Exists

- Responds to the White House AI Action Plan and America's Talent Strategy
- Builds on Executive Order 14277 on AI education for American youth
- Extends August 2025 TEGL 03-25 guidance on WIOA-funded AI skills
- Published February 13, 2026 as voluntary guidance for program design
- Positioned as an evolving document, updated as AI and labor markets change

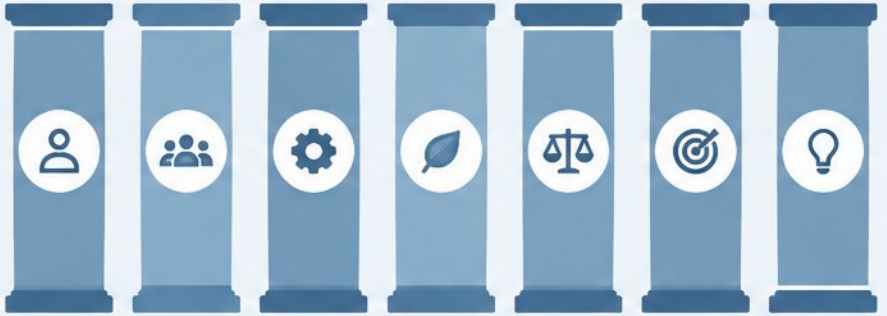


Framework Architecture at a Glance

Five Foundational Content Areas



Seven Delivery Principles



AI literacy defined as foundational competencies for responsible use and evaluation.

- Two parts: five foundational content areas and seven delivery principles
- Each content area includes five example sub-competencies—a ready-made skill inventory
- Explicitly voluntary: no new requirements imposed on companies or workers
- AI literacy defined as foundational competencies for responsible use and evaluation
- Primary focus on generative AI, with flexibility across industries and roles

Content Area 1: Understand AI Principles

Goal: build vocabulary and mental models, not technical mastery

Key concepts: pattern recognition, probabilistic outputs, training vs. inference

Also cover: capabilities and modalities, hallucinations, human design and oversight

Training implication: demystify AI; the same input can yield different outputs

Misconception to correct: assuming AI output is deterministic or authoritative



Goal

Key concepts

Also cover

Training implication

Misconception to correct

Content Area 2: Explore AI Uses

- Workers benefit from practical use cases showing AI complementing human expertise
- Five example areas: productivity tools, information support, creative assistance, task-specific applications, decision-support systems
- Design exploration around actual job functions, not generic tool demos
- Help learners spot where human input remains essential
- Exploration builds familiarity and judgment for applying AI effectively

Explore Real-World Use Cases

Productivity tools

Human expertise remains essential

Information support

Human expertise remains essential

Creative assistance

Human expertise remains essential

Task-specific applications

Human expertise remains essential

Decision-support systems

Human expertise remains essential



Content Area 3: Direct AI Effectively

- No coding needed—requires a mental model for prompts, context, and iteration
- Core techniques: contextual framing, prompting, relevant input data, iteration
- Avoid vague or misleading prompts—word choice changes outcomes
- Hands-on exercises: include intentionally poor prompts and live feedback
- Treat iteration as a normal part of the process, not failure

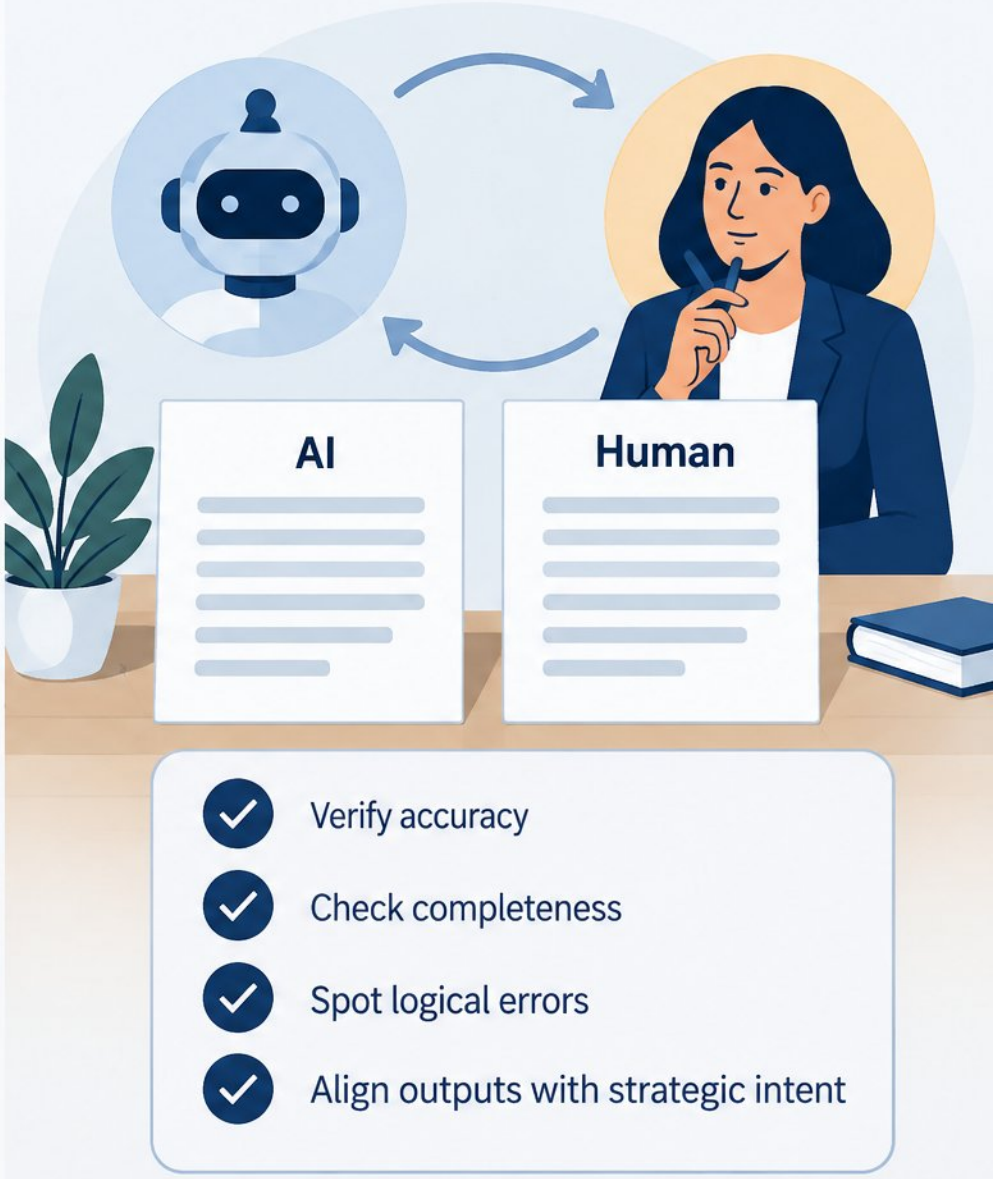






Content Area 4: Evaluate AI Outputs

- Evaluation keeps workers in control; AI is a support tool, not final authority
- Core practices: verify accuracy, check completeness, spot logical errors
- Align outputs with strategic intent and apply human judgment
- Use side-by-side comparisons of AI and human work to build discernment
- Make evaluation a design requirement, not an optional module



Content Area 5: Use AI Responsibly

- Responsible use means protecting data, following policy, and maintaining accountability
- Workers remain accountable for decisions and outputs produced with AI tools
- Connect training to your acceptable-use policy and escalation paths
- Risk varies by task and stakes—teach context-sensitive caution, not blanket rules
- DOL examples: protect sensitive information, avoid misuse, manage context-specific risks



PEOPLE
SKILLS
BRIGHTER
FUTURES

Seven Delivery Principles: The 'How' of AI Literacy

Enable experiential learning and embed learning in real-world context

Build complementary human skills: judgment, creativity, communication, problem-solving

Address prerequisites: digital literacy, device access, and broadband

Create pathways for continued learning beyond baseline literacy

Prepare enabling roles: managers, trainers, coaches, HR/L&D partners

Design for agility with modular, feedback-driven content

Translate principles into design constraints and quality-review criteria

DESIGN CONSTRAINTS & QUALITY-REVIEW CHECKLIST

- Put each principle into practice through clear design constraints
- Use the checklist to guide development and review
- Ensure learning experiences are high-quality, relevant, and effective



Proficiency Levels and Role Mapping

- AI literacy is the baseline for all workers, in any job
- Many roles require more advanced capabilities, such as managing or building AI systems
- Terms like 'AI proficiency' and 'AI fluency' are used inconsistently — define them locally
- Set a baseline expectation for most roles; deeper, role-specific expectations for select roles
- Use proficiency descriptions to write learning objectives and assessment criteria per employee group



Applying the Framework to Training Design

PEOPLE
SKILLS
BRIGHTER WORK

Needs Assessment → **Role Mapping** → **Objectives** → **Blended Methods** → **Reinforcement**

- Start with needs assessment, role mapping, objectives, blended methods, reinforcement
- Review workflows where AI already appears: drafting reports, analyzing data, customer responses
- Map current curricula against the five content areas to spot gaps and duplication
- Avoid generic awareness sessions; build role-specific capability with hands-on practice
- Define baseline literacy for most roles, deeper proficiency for selected roles

Curriculum Audit

Check for gaps and duplication across the five content areas





Assessment, Measurement, and Continuous Improvement



- Use scenario-based, task-oriented assessments, not abstract knowledge quizzes



- Build rubrics aligned to proficiency levels: knowledge, applied skills, responsible use



- Track behavior signals early: adoption, quality of use, internal AI conversations



- Look beyond ROI when training is still in its early stages



- Build feedback loops so curricula refresh as tools and expectations change

Implementation Roadmap and Governance

Readiness Assessment → **Pilot** → **Scaling** → **Sustainment**

Owners	L&D	HR	Compliance	Business Leaders

Governance

- Publish internal guidance
- Restricted data
- Human review rules
- Accountability

- Phased adoption: readiness assessment, pilot, scaling, sustainment
- Assign clear owners across L&D, HR, compliance, and business leaders
- Publish internal guidance: restricted data, human review rules, accountability
- Train managers and trainers separately via train-the-trainer and upskilling models
- Keep content modular; schedule regular refreshes for design-for-agility



Action Planning Workshop and Key Takeaways

- Draft a 90-day outline: needs assessment, pilot scope, success measures
- Build one intervention mapped to a content area and delivery principle
- Use the framework as a shared baseline, audit tool, and governance anchor
- Commit: who to involve, what to pilot, how progress is reviewed



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