



**National Science Foundation**

# **AI-Ready Arkansas**

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**Strategic Planning Overview + Proposal Submission Progress**

**Friday May 29, 2026**

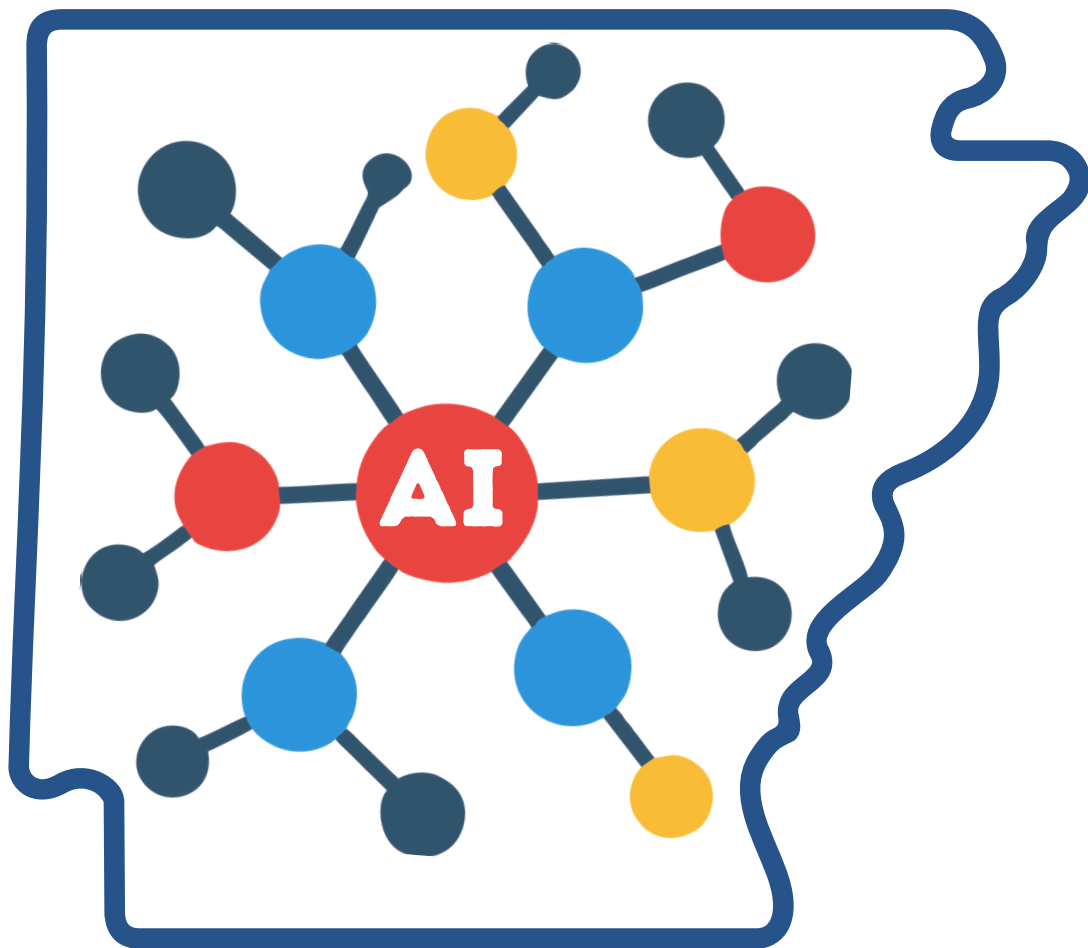
# RECAP: PROGRAM OVERVIEW



- **Only 1 award per state, 3 rounds of awards planned**
- **\$1 million / year for 3 years, possible 1-year extension**
- **First round of awards 6-12 months after deadline (dependent on \$\$ and volume of proposals)**
- **Anticipated award period: July 1, 2027 - June 30, 2030**



## Establish State-level AI Resource Hubs



**Act as neutral convening entity to connect local partners across education, industry, and government**

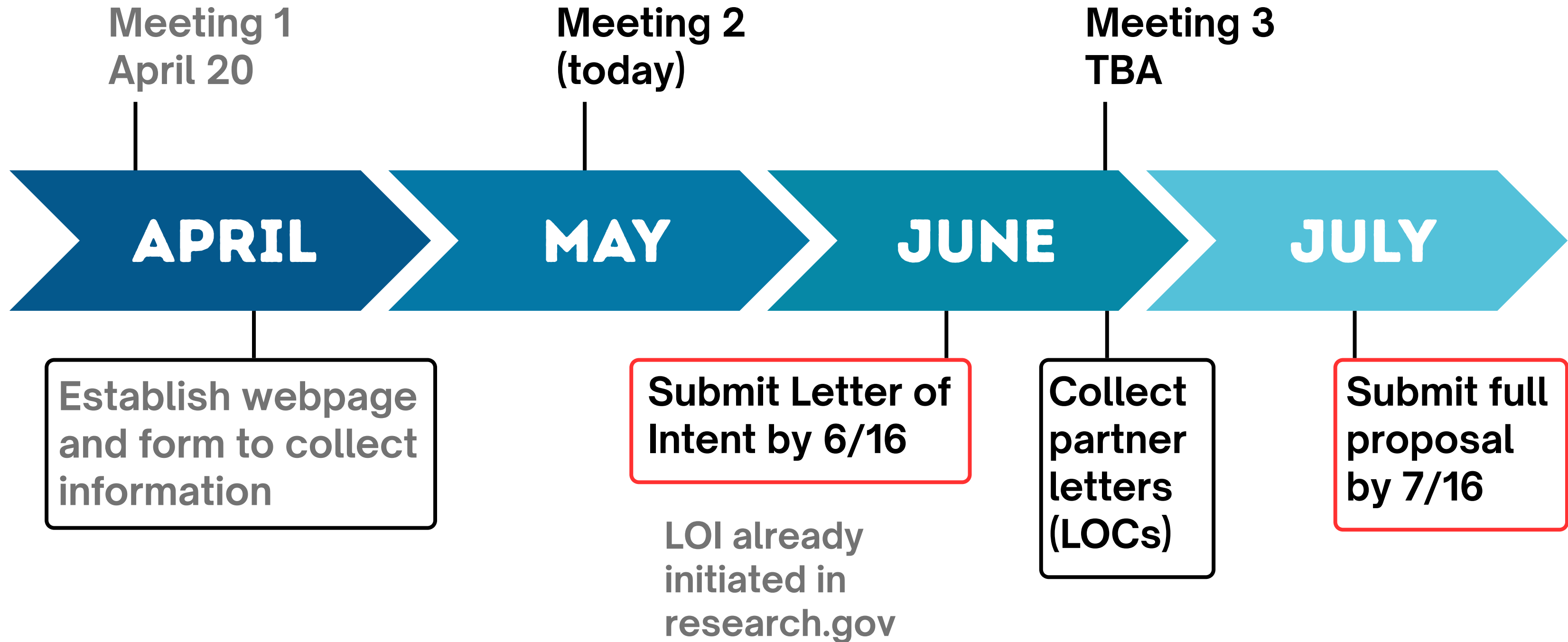


**Establish a repository for high-quality AI resources, training, and practitioners**



**Develop state-level AI readiness plan in coordination with key stakeholders**

# GENERAL TIMELINE



http://www.

[commerce.arkansas.gov/ai-ready-america](http://www.commerce.arkansas.gov/ai-ready-america)



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## AI-READY AMERICA

AI-READY AMERICA

On March 25, a new Federal initiative and funding opportunity was announced in partnership with the National Science Foundation (NSF), the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (DOL ETA), The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Small Business Administration (SBA).



"AI Ready America is a national-scale initiative to accelerate Artificial Intelligence (AI) readiness and adoption across the U.S. by strengthening coordination, leveraging partnerships and resources, filling gaps, and scaling what works—so local and state priorities can lead in shaping an AI-driven economy that benefits all Americans.

Unlike initiatives centered around K-16 education, AI Ready America additionally reaches businesses, public-serving organizations, and individuals, among others, expanding access to AI knowledge, tools, and resources. The program also emphasizes practical implementation through hands on assistance and workforce upskilling, including experiential learning such as internships, project based work, and apprenticeships, to ensure stakeholders can effectively apply and innovate with AI."

*National Science Foundation (NSF)*



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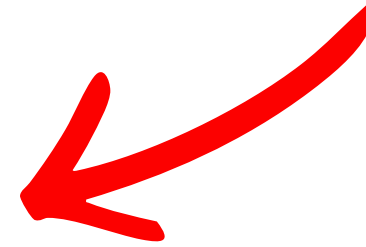
Secretary of Commerce

SEARCH

## GET INVOLVED

If you'd like to be involved or contribute to the Arkansas AI-Ready Hub effort, please complete the contact form linked below.

FORM LINK



## STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

A preliminary meeting was held on April 20 to review the opportunity with community stakeholders. Additional meetings will be scheduled in May and June.

## April 20 Meeting Resources

RECORDING

PRESENTATION SLIDES

# 5 MAJOR GOALS FOR HUBS



- 1 AI Learning & Resource Navigator
- 2 AI Readiness Training & Capacity Building
- 3 AI Deployment Support
- 4 Coordination Within Priority Industry Sectors
- 5 State-level AI Readiness Strategic Plan

*\* These do NOT have to be ready on day 1 - this is what the hub will do over the course of the project*

# 1 AI Learning and Resource Navigator

→ Maintain a publicly accessible and user-friendly inventory of state and territory AI-related resources, including training programs, physical infrastructure, and support services.

## STRATEGY:

Integrate and expand existing resources, supported by LAUNCH and AR Data Hub as core infrastructure, in alignment with State priorities





# AI Learning and Resource Navigator

## Existing:

- LAUNCH for Students
- LAUNCH for Jobseekers
- LAUNCH for Employers (pilot)
- Economic Security Report / Higher Education Planning Guide
- Credential Registry / list of training programs and providers
- Grow with Google (State)
- Google Higher Education Accelerator
- State Longitudinal Data System
- Common course numbering across UA system
- Statewide course inventory management system
- Robust registered apprenticeships

## Planned:

- AI Workforce Impact measures
- Course-level skill tagging and skills-based hiring tools
- Curated resources specific to AI
- Enhanced wage records

## **2 AI Readiness Training & Capacity Building**

Coordinate across education, workforce, and industry to expand access to experiential AI learning opportunities and align curriculum with national AI literacy guidance.

### **STRATEGIES:**

- **Establish a statewide AI literacy framework**
- **Promote awareness and access to high-quality curricula and training programs via Resource Navigator**
- **Develop tools, measures, and data products to understand AI impacts to workforce and education**
- **Incentivize professional development and cross-training of educators (K20 and non-traditional), service providers (ASBTDC, ESOs, Ag Extension, AMS, chambers, etc.), and practitioners (economic developers, researchers, etc.)**

**3**

# AI Deployment Support

Provide assistance for AI adoption to municipalities, businesses, entrepreneurs, academic organizations, and others in coordination with implementation partners.

## STRATEGIES:

- **Conduct broad outreach and discovery to identify current needs**
- **Identify developers, consultants, and other providers to support AI deployment and adoption**
- **Establish AI innovation exchange forums or networks for organizations to share applied deployment knowledge and resources**
- **Promote awareness and access to compute, data, and other technical resources for research and innovation**
- **Incentivize collaboration between academia, government, and industry**



## **Coordination Within Priority Industry Sectors**

↳ Convene stakeholders in critical economic sectors and facilitate collaboration through events and resource sharing.

### **STRATEGY:**

- **Incentivize Talent Pipeline Management Employer consortia for AI in key industry sectors**
- **Develop strategic partnerships and collaborate with stakeholders nationwide on sector-specific events and initiatives (including but not limited to):**
  - **NSF Industries of Ideas**
  - **NSF Strategic Partnerships Hub / Applied Partnerships CoP**
  - **Lithium Summit**

# **5 State-level AI Readiness Strategic Plan**

↳ **Develop a strategic plan to meet State priorities around AI readiness, integrating data collection and evaluation to monitor progress and support evidence-based decision-making.**

## **STRATEGIES:**

- **Build on relevant strategies and objectives from existing plans and reports (including but not limited to):**
  - **State Science & Technology Plan**
  - **Forward Arkansas Report**
  - **AI Center of Excellence Reports**
  - **WIOA State Plan**
- **Partner with philanthropic and business community for further investment and Hub sustainability**
- **Develop actionable and clear plans for AI adoption within State Gov**

# NEXT STEPS



- **Anyone interested in getting involved should read solicitation and share ideas through the ACOM webpage**
- **Outreach underway with key partners for input and Letters of Collaboration**
- **Third stakeholder meeting will be scheduled in June after LOI submission**
- **[www.nsf.gov/funding/initiatives/ai-ready](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/initiatives/ai-ready)**

# Questions / Discussion

