AI TASK FORCE MEMO 2026

OVERVIEW

Artificial intelligence is not some abstract concept, but a current reality in New Hampshire. Today, our businesses, schools, and hospitals use these tools to solve complex problems and scale their work. While this technology offers great potential, it also raises important questions about data privacy and the future of work. The NH Tech Alliance's AI Task Force developed this memo to help our state navigate these changes. Our group includes 16 members from 11 different sectors who have spent the last quarter listening to the NH community. Through surveys and roundtable discussions, we have gathered early signals about how AI is emerging statewide.

This document serves as a shared starting point. It is not a regulatory proposal or a technical manual. Instead, it is a practical guide designed to support better conversations and smarter actions. The Task Force is built to be an ongoing resource. Because technology moves quickly, we intend to keep a pulse on these developments over the long-term. Our goal is to help New Hampshire leaders make informed decisions that protect public trust and support economic growth for all residents.

Based on the input collected to date, several areas warrant deeper examination. These include workforce development and AI fluency, data readiness industry-wide, regulatory clarity, wide-scale access, and the long-term economic implications of uneven adoption. Over the coming months, the Task Force will conduct more focused analysis in these priority areas, expanding stakeholder engagement and gathering more detailed sector-level insight.

This memo represents the first phase of that effort. The Task Force intends to publish a comprehensive statewide report in fall 2026 that builds on this early foundation, incorporates broader participation, and offers more detailed recommendations. Our goal is to move from initial signals to an actionable strategy, helping New Hampshire remain competitive, resilient, and aligned with the responsible use of artificial intelligence.

NH AI Task Force Members

Executive Committee

Name	Company
Phil Magnuszewski (Chair)	D!srupt AI & Infused Innovations
Julie Demers	NH Tech Alliance
Scott Merrick	Darby Field Advisors

Members

Name	Company
Brian Bouchard	Sheehan Phinney
DJ Burke	Business & Industry Association of NH
Katie Destramp	Fastly
Dave Gerry	Bugcrowd
Jim Kisch	Passumpsic Bank
Melanie McDonough	City of Lebanon
Chris Norwood	NAI Norwood Group
Jack Potvin	Business Automation
Cameron Shilling	McLane Middleton
David Smith	New Balance
Shawn Stapp, DO	Elliot Health System
Brian Stumm	Hypertherm
Scott Weller	EnFi, Inc.

Section 1: The AI Moment for New Hampshire

Why “now” matters

New Hampshire is at a pivotal turning point. Artificial intelligence is moving faster than our laws, training programs, or public understanding can keep up. This shift is already happening in our offices and homes. Many local businesses use AI today to gain an edge, often without formal rules or internal standards. While this experimentation leads to new ideas, it also creates risks regarding security and trust. Most residents interact with AI every day through search engines and digital platforms, often without realizing how it shapes the information they see.

The speed of this change requires a deliberate choice. States that engage early can shape how technology is used. We have the opportunity to build local skills and set high expectations for responsible use. If we wait, we may be forced to react to standards set elsewhere. This memo is based on the belief that New Hampshire can take a balanced path. We can support innovation without ignoring the risks. By bringing people together now, we ensure that our future reflects our state values and long-term interests.

Section 2: What AI Means for the State of NH

Implications for Government and the Public Sector

In the public sector, the impact of AI is visible in daily operations and public services. State and local agencies often face tight budgets and limited staffing. When used carefully, AI can help public employees manage these burdens as well as make information and services more accessible to the public. These tools can handle routine tasks and analyze large amounts of data quickly. This efficiency does not replace workers. Instead, it allows staff to focus on higher-level tasks and direct resident support.

Using AI in government also brings serious responsibilities. Public agencies hold sensitive data about every resident. Many AI tools are provided by outside vendors, which can make it hard to see how data is stored or shared. Public trust depends on strong protections and clear rules. We must also prepare the public sector workforce for these changes. Employees need training to use AI responsibly and understand its limits. A shared approach across the state will help agencies learn from one another and prevent inconsistent practices.

Section 3: What AI Means for NH Businesses

Economic Competitiveness and Readiness

Artificial intelligence is fundamentally changing how New Hampshire businesses operate. This is especially true for small and mid-sized companies, which serve as the backbone of our economy. For many of these firms, AI functions as a productivity accelerator that enables them do more with limited time, talent, and capital. In a state with a tight labor market, that capability represents a meaningful competitive advantage. However, adoption remains uneven. Some companies are moving quickly and experimenting with new workflows, while others remain uncertain about where to begin.

One of the most significant gaps is not solely related to safety or cybersecurity. It is awareness. Many business leaders and employees do not yet fully understand what is possible with today's AI tools or how those capabilities translate into measurable top-line growth and bottom-line efficiency. The technology is often viewed as experimental or abstract rather than as a practical driver of operational improvement, revenue expansion, cost reduction, and service differentiation. Closing this awareness gap is essential to unlocking economic impact.

Change management is also emerging as a central challenge. AI fluency requires more than tool access. It requires cultural adaptation, incentive alignment, and workforce engagement. Employees often understand their workflows and bottlenecks better than executives or managers. They are closest to the friction points in daily operations. However, they are not always empowered with the technical awareness or strategic context needed to identify where AI could meaningfully improve processes, expand capabilities, or reduce inefficiencies. Organizations that intentionally cultivate AI fluency across teams, rather than confining experimentation to leadership or IT departments, are more likely to realize sustainable gains.

At the foundation of all of this is data readiness. AI impact is directly tied to the quality, accessibility, and structure of an organization's data. For many New Hampshire businesses, particularly small and mid-sized firms, legacy systems and fragmented records limit what AI can realistically accomplish. Without clean, organized, and well-governed data, even the most advanced tools will underperform. Strengthening data hygiene and governance is not a secondary issue. It is a prerequisite for meaningful AI-driven impact.

The implications for economic competitiveness are significant. Businesses that effectively combine awareness, workforce enablement, and data readiness may gain a durable advantage over those that do not. This dynamic will not affect all sectors equally.

A manufacturer in the North Country faces different constraints than a retail business in the Seacoast or a financial services firm in Manchester. Employers and workers alike are seeking practical guidance on how to adapt responsibly and strategically.

By providing clear frameworks, educational pathways, and shared best practices, the state can help businesses invest in AI with greater confidence and stability. The near-term question is not whether AI will influence New Hampshire's economy. It already is. The more urgent question is whether the state can help ensure that its benefits are broad-based, responsibly implemented, and aligned with long-term economic resilience.

Section 4: Guiding Principles for New Hampshire

A shared foundation

We have developed a set of guiding principles to provide a foundation for future decisions. These values are meant to guide our thinking as AI use grows.

Put people first

AI should support people, not replace them. The goal is to help individuals work better, make informed decisions, and focus on what humans do best. Important decisions should include human judgment and oversight.

Build responsibility in from the start

Privacy, security, and fairness matter. These concerns should be addressed early, not after problems appear. Data should be handled carefully. AI systems should be used in ways that people can understand and trust.

Encourage learning, not paralysis

New Hampshire does not need to rush into AI. It also should not avoid it out of fear. The best approach is to learn by doing. Small pilots, testing, and shared lessons allow progress while managing risk.

Recognize that one size does not fit all

AI affects industries and communities differently. What works for one sector may not work for another. Decisions should reflect local context, industry needs, and real-world conditions.

Make AI accessible and inclusive

AI should not benefit only a small group of people or organizations. Access to tools, training, and knowledge should be broad. AI literacy should be treated as a shared capability, not a luxury.

Work together across sectors

No single group has all the answers. Government, businesses, schools, nonprofits, and communities all play a role. Collaboration and open dialogue help build trust and lead to better outcomes.

These principles are meant to serve as a common reference point. They can help guide future conversations, programs, and decisions. Most importantly, they reflect New Hampshire's commitment to using AI in practical, responsible, and grounded ways that are grounded in shared values.

Section 5: What We're Hearing So Far

Early Signals

The survey responses and cross-sector roundtables conducted by the AI Task Force provide an early view into how artificial intelligence is showing up across New Hampshire today. While the data is directional rather than comprehensive, consistent themes are emerging across industries, roles, and regions. These early signals reflect both momentum and uncertainty. They suggest that AI is already influencing operations and decision-making, but that readiness, coordination, and clarity vary widely. The following themes represent what we are hearing most consistently so far.

1. AI is already in use, but adoption is uneven

AI is not theoretical in New Hampshire. It is actively being used across business, education, government, and technology sectors. However, most adoption is occurring at the individual or team level rather than through coordinated organizational strategies.

Formal governance, enterprise frameworks, and statewide alignment are the exception rather than the norm. Innovation is happening, but often in isolation.

2. Data readiness is a primary bottleneck

Across sectors, a consistent message is emerging: organizations cannot scale AI without first addressing data quality and structure.

Legacy systems, siloed information, inconsistent records, and unclear data ownership are limiting effective deployment. Many institutions recognize that AI readiness begins with data governance and cleanup.

3. AI is seen as efficiency, not replacement

The conversation has shifted toward practical productivity gains. Many organizations describe AI as a tool for handling repetitive tasks so employees can focus on higher-value work.

Common use cases include drafting, summarization, research support, analytics, and workflow acceleration. While long-term workforce implications remain uncertain, the immediate focus is centered on augmentation rather than displacement.

4. Workforce readiness is lagging behind tool availability

Even where AI tools are accessible, skills and training are not keeping pace.

Organizations report difficulty recruiting AI-capable talent, limited internal training capacity, and uncertainty about how to design effective upskilling pathways. There are also concerns about how reliance on AI tools may affect the development of junior talent in fields such as law and software development.

5. Demand for practical guidance is strong

Across sectors, there is a clear desire for applied frameworks and shared resources.

Stakeholders are asking for training, playbooks, model policies, and practical examples of responsible use. There is interest in coordination and support at the state level, particularly in ways that promote innovation without creating unnecessary constraints.

6. Risk awareness is high, but maturity varies

Data privacy, cybersecurity, bias, hallucinations, and compliance risks are widely recognized. However, approaches to risk management differ significantly across organizations.

Some institutions are building formal governance structures and validation processes. Others are relying primarily on vendor assurances or informal awareness. Risk is acknowledged, but implementation of safeguards is uneven.

7. Heavy reliance on vendors is the norm

Most organizations are adopting AI through embedded capabilities in existing platforms rather than building custom models or solutions.

This lowers the barrier to entry and accelerates experimentation. However, it also increases dependency on vendors for functionality, security, compliance, and long-term innovation.

8. Access concerns are emerging

In education and small business settings in particular, disparities in funding, policy clarity, and tool access are creating uneven exposure to AI.

Some institutions are moving from literacy to fluency, while others remain in early stages or are restricting use entirely. There is concern that AI adoption could widen existing gaps if not addressed intentionally.

9. Policy uncertainty is slowing some decisions

There is not a broad call for immediate regulation. However, organizations are seeking predictability and clarity.

Questions remain regarding compliance expectations, public records requirements, liability, and sector-specific oversight. In regulated industries, uncertainty is contributing to a cautious approach.

In particular, there is a real need for state-level guidance regarding where and how our schools should be using artificial intelligence.

10. New Hampshire is at an inflection point

Taken together, these early signals suggest that New Hampshire is actively engaging with AI, but without a fully coordinated support system.

Interest and experimentation are present. Value is being realized in specific use cases. At the same time, foundational gaps in data readiness, workforce development, governance, and alignment remain.

The direction the state takes next may determine whether AI becomes a source of broad-based competitiveness and opportunity, or a set of fragmented initiatives with uneven outcomes.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS | INDUSTRY CALLOUTS

Industry Callouts highlight early signals emerging from sector-specific roundtables, surfacing how different industries are interpreting, adopting, and responding to AI in real time. These snapshots capture both mindset shifts and practical use cases that illustrate where AI is creating immediate value and where deeper transformation may follow.

Education: The Shift from Policing to Process

Some educators are discussing shifting their assessment strategy away from policing AI-generated products and toward measuring the actual learning process, prioritizing "AI Fluency" where the human expert adds value to the AI's baseline output.

Finance: The "Laundry and Dishes" Mandate

Banking leaders view AI as the ultimate tool for automating high-volume "grunt work" (such as summarizing credit reports and audit findings) so staff can focus on high-value work and innovation.

Local Government: The Hallucination Hazard

Municipalities remain hesitant to deploy public-facing AI tools because early pilots have struggled with accuracy requirements. One example noted was failing to identify the current date, raising significant concerns about trusting these systems to interpret complex information, such as zoning ordinances for residents.

Legal: The Erosion of "Legal Thinking"

Senior practitioners expressed deep concern that because "clear writing is clear thinking," a generation of young lawyers relying on AI for drafting may fail to develop the essential cognitive skills required to analyze evidence and form arguments, creating a crisis in how firms evaluate the competency of new associates.

Tech Industry: The Junior Developer Crisis

Industry veterans fear a looming skills gap as AI tools eliminate entry-level coding tasks, effectively destroying the "junior path" necessary for training the next generation of senior software architects.

Section 6: Near-Term Opportunities (Next 6–12 Months)

Action without overcommitting

The early signals suggest that New Hampshire does not need to start from zero. AI experimentation is already underway across sectors. The opportunity in the next 6 to 12 months is not to build entirely new systems, but to reduce fragmentation, accelerate responsible adoption, and close foundational gaps. The following near-term opportunities focus on practical, achievable actions that can improve coordination, increase confidence, and strengthen competitiveness without requiring large-scale structural change.

1. Develop shared, practical guidance

There is strong demand for clear, usable frameworks rather than abstract strategy documents.

Near-term actions could include:

- Publishing model AI use guidelines for different sectors
- Creating a plain-language risk management checklist
- Providing template policies that organizations can adapt
- Clarifying how existing laws apply to AI tools

This would reduce uncertainty and help organizations move forward responsibly.

2. Launch sector-specific learning exchanges

Many challenges are shared within sectors but are being addressed in isolation.

Convening focused working groups for finance, education, local government, legal, and small business could allow organizations to:

- Share real use cases
- Compare governance approaches
- Identify common barriers
- Develop peer-driven best practices

These exchanges could accelerate maturity without requiring formal mandates.

3. Prioritize data readiness initiatives

AI readiness is consistently tied to data quality.

Near-term opportunities include:

- Offering guidance on basic data governance and cleanup
- Providing workshops focused on breaking down data silos
- Identifying common statewide data challenges that could be addressed collaboratively

Even modest improvements in data hygiene would unlock more effective AI use.

4. Expand workforce upskilling pathways

Tool adoption is outpacing workforce preparedness.

In the next 6 to 12 months, efforts could focus on:

- AI literacy programs for non-technical professionals
- Sector-specific AI training modules
- Partnerships between employers and higher education
- Guidance for leaders on how to structure internal upskilling

Targeted, applied training would help ensure that adoption does not widen capability gaps.

5. Provide clear signals around responsible innovation

Organizations are seeking predictability.

Near-term actions could include:

- Clarifying expectations around public records and compliance
- Hosting informational sessions with regulators and legal experts
- Publishing frequently asked questions related to AI use in regulated sectors

Even incremental clarity would reduce hesitation in finance, government, and legal environments.

6. Address access early

Disparities in funding and policy clarity are already emerging, particularly in education and small business.

The next year presents an opportunity to:

- Ensure access to secure AI tools across districts
- Support rural and smaller organizations with shared resources
- Highlight inclusive workforce development pathways

Early attention to access can prevent widening gaps later.

7. Encourage responsible vendor engagement

Since most AI adoption is occurring through embedded tools, vendor relationships matter.

Near-term guidance could help organizations:

- Ask better questions about security and compliance
- Understand data retention and model training policies
- Evaluate risk before enabling new features

Improved vendor literacy would strengthen organizational resilience.

8. Establish a lightweight coordination mechanism

Fragmentation is one of the clearest themes emerging from the data.

Without creating new bureaucracy, the state and ecosystem partners could:

- Maintain a shared knowledge hub
- Track adoption patterns and emerging risks
- Continue cross-sector listening sessions
- Publish periodic updates on AI trends in New Hampshire

Even modest coordination could create alignment and shared learning across sectors.

Framing the Moment

The next 6 to 12 months represent a window to move from informal experimentation toward structured, responsible adoption. These actions do not require sweeping regulation or large capital investments. They require coordination, clarity, and practical support.

If New Hampshire acts deliberately in this near-term window, it can strengthen competitiveness, build workforce confidence, and establish a foundation for longer-term strategic positioning in an AI-driven economy.

Call to Participation

An Open Invitation

This memo is the beginning of a much larger conversation. Because artificial intelligence affects every part of life in New Hampshire, we need many perspectives to get this right. The AI Task Force invites participation from across the state. Whether you are a business owner, an educator, or a concerned resident, your voice matters. We will continue to host roundtables and public forums to gather real-world experiences and share what we have learned.

Our approach to technology should reflect the people of New Hampshire. This requires ongoing attention as the technology continues to evolve. The Task Force is committed to keeping this work active and accessible. By staying engaged and learning together, we can shape an AI approach that strengthens our state and protects our future. We encourage all interested parties to join us in this ongoing effort.