



**NAAIC**

NATIONAL APPLIED  
AI CONSORTIUM

# YEAR ONE IMPACT REPORT

Expanding access to AI education nationwide

## Developing America's AI Workforce

Artificial intelligence is rapidly redefining expectations for the everyday professional in today's workforce. Industries across the board are calling for new skills almost overnight, but questions remain about how to develop an AI workforce at scale. The answer? Community colleges. Found across the country, community colleges provide reach, infrastructure, and connections to local economies. That's where the National Applied AI Consortium (NAAIC), led by Miami Dade College, comes in: it has created a community-college-driven roadmap to prepare America's workforce for the AI era.



Jazmin Even Dorra, MDC Graduate and AI Lab Technician

The impact of AI education at the community college level is already visible in classrooms nationwide, including at Miami Dade College, where students are applying AI skills to real-world challenges. There, students crowd around Pepper, a ChatGPT-powered humanoid robot. For Jazmin Even Dorra, one of the first graduates of the associate degree in applied AI and now an AI lab technician, the robot is more than a teaching tool. It represents how applied AI education at the community college level can change the trajectory of a career. "We're not just learning models," Even Dorra explained. "We're learning how to use AI as a tool for our careers, our communities, even our daily lives."



**"NAAIC is the go-to place for AI education at community colleges"**

Antonio Delgado, Vice President of Innovation and Technology Partnerships at MDC



That vision drives the NAAIC. Backed by the National Science Foundation and led by Miami Dade College in partnership with Houston City College and Maricopa Community Colleges, the consortium was created in 2024 to democratize AI education through community colleges. NAAIC is focused on preparing the next generation of talent for the AI economy—with an emphasis on applied AI, meaning hands-on, industry-aligned skills like large language model tooling, computer vision, and machine learning operations that can be used immediately in the workplace. In just one year, NAAIC has become the national hub for applied AI at the community college level, connecting faculty, industry, and students in a single workforce mission.

"NAAIC is the go-to place for AI education at community colleges," said Antonio Delgado, Vice President of Innovation and Technology Partnerships at MDC. "Faculty and administrators can find resources, training, and mentorship to build or improve their programs, while companies plug in their expertise and tools through one source."



## Year One Impact: Scale and Reach

In just its first year, NAAIC's influence has stretched across the country. As of September 2025, more than 1,000 faculty members, representing over 320 academic institutions across 46 states, Washington, D.C., and two U.S. territories, have taken part in NAAIC's AI training. These educators are now equipped to bring applied AI directly into their classrooms. With each trained faculty member teaching an average of 30 students, NAAIC's programs have impacted more than 31,000 students nationwide.

Without NAAIC, access to AI training would be out of reach for many students before they enter a tech-dominated workforce. "Community colleges are the tool the country needs to prepare an AI workforce at scale," said Denzel Wilson, USA Program Manager at Sustainable Living Lab and a graduate of Houston City College's first AI program. "They're affordable, they're accessible, and they're agile in ways universities simply aren't. I've seen students gain the skills to land jobs, start companies, and even shape federal conversations about AI. That's the kind of reach NAAIC makes possible." By embedding AI into these classrooms, NAAIC is ensuring the skills of the future aren't limited to universities or major tech hubs. Instead, they are being taught in local classrooms to students who will carry them into diverse industries, businesses, and local economies.



### YEAR ONE IMPACT



**1,056**

FACULTY TRAINED



**321**

ACADEMIC  
INSTITUTIONS ENGAGED



**46**

STATES + WASHINGTON, D.C.,  
PUERTO RICO & U.S. VIRGIN  
ISLANDS REACHED



**10,000+**

HOURS OF AI TRAINING  
DELIVERED



**31,000+**

ESTIMATED STUDENTS  
IMPACTED

## Training the Faculty

The single biggest obstacle to bringing AI into community colleges isn't demand, it's staffing. Few institutions can afford to hire experts, and those with AI backgrounds are quickly recruited by companies. NAAIC solves the problem by training the faculty already in place.

Through free, industry-backed certifications from partners like Microsoft, Intel, AWS, Google, and OpenAI, instructors teaching IT, business, or even liberal arts have begun incorporating AI into their classrooms. In the past year, faculty members nationwide have gone through over 10,000 hours of AI training and have developed new courses, certificates, and degree programs being launched across the country.

At Houston City College, Dean Samir Saber watched this transformation unfold firsthand. HCC had already launched one of the nation's first associate degrees in AI, followed by the first bachelor's in applied AI and robotics. But scaling those programs depended on training teachers. "The demand has been overwhelming," Saber recalls. "Faculty who had never touched AI are now weaving it into their courses. When you train teachers in numbers, you're not just creating new programs, you're creating a movement."

### INDUSTRY PARTNERS



Microsoft



OpenAI

## Colleges Helping Colleges

That movement spreads through mentorship. Drawing on the experience of its lead institutions, NAAIC pairs colleges just beginning their AI journey with those further along.

At Valencia College, faculty lead Jerry Hensel has had a front-row seat to how mentorship accelerates progress. In early 2024, Valencia established a presidential commission on AI, but moving from policy to practice required guidance.



**"In a matter of weeks, we had new courses in machine learning, language processing, and computer vision. That kind of acceleration just wouldn't have been possible on our own."**

Jerry Hensel, Lead AI Faculty at Valencia College



Through NAAIC, Hensel and his colleagues gained access to a roadmap with vetted resources, industry partnerships, and the experience of colleges that had already walked the walk.

"The consortium gave us structure and connected us to the right partners. In a matter of weeks, we had new courses in machine learning, natural language processing, and computer vision, all supported by Intel's curriculum and certifications," Hensel explained. "That kind of acceleration just wouldn't have been possible on our own."



As of Fall 2025, NAAIC's mentorship network has helped launch 12 new AI programs across the country, with more than 2,000 students enrolled in these associate degrees, certificates, and workforce pathways.

For colleges like Valencia, it has meant stepping into a leadership role not just in Florida, but nationwide. "When you see students who never imagined themselves working in AI building projects and landing internships, you realize the pipeline is real. It's working," Hensel says.



## Student Impact

For students, NAAIC isn't just an initiative; it's a launchpad. Denzel Wilson credits his community college experience with opportunities he never imagined, such as co-founding student-led conferences, winning Intel's Global Impact Festival, and even testifying before the U.S. Senate on AI workforce preparation. "Thanks to NAAIC, students like me are finding pathways into AI careers and into national conversations about the future of work," Wilson said.



**"We're not just talking about AI. We're using it in ways that connect directly to jobs and real-world needs."**

Jazmin Even Dorra, MDC Graduate and AI Lab Technician



Back at Miami Dade College, Jazmin Even Dorra shows how those pathways take root locally. Dorra was studying Fine Arts when AI caught her eye, specifically, how generative AI can be used in creating art. She enrolled in MDC's applied AI program and joined the AI Center as a lab technician. There, she helps peers with coding and robotics while also pursuing her own projects, including a computer vision tool to detect plant health. Beyond campus, she consults with companies exploring AI integration, an experience that has already shifted her career ambitions. "The difference with MDC's program is that we're not just talking about AI," Dorra explained. "We're using it in ways that connect directly to jobs and real-world needs."

Across the country, students like Wilson and Dorra are building portfolios, connecting with industry partners, and entering the job market with credentials once inaccessible to them. NAAIC gives them not just technical know-how, but the confidence to step into an AI-powered workforce.

## Connecting Policy and Industry

For policymakers and funders, the stakes are clear. A strong AI workforce is essential to U.S. competitiveness. Community colleges, with their reach and accessibility, are the fastest way to build that workforce broadly. NAAIC's Business & Industry Leadership Team (BILT) ensures training stays aligned with employer needs. By bringing together AI experts from Intel, AWS, Microsoft, Jobs for the Future, and others, the BILT keeps the curriculum focused on real-world skills instead of academic theory.

Aaron Burciaga, founder of "Blue Collar AI" and BILT member, puts it plainly. "We're not training PhDs – we're giving workers the skills to apply AI in small businesses, nonprofits, and local industries. That's what makes it blue collar AI – it's practical, it's tactical, and it's essential."



**"Community colleges give the U.S. an edge. If we expand this effort, we don't just compete, we lead."**

Aaron Burciaga, Founder of "Blue Collar AI" and BILT Member



Burciaga points to student projects as proof. Students participating in the program have created an AI-driven donor tool for Scouting America and built AI applications for a local barber shop, showing how applied AI skills translate into immediate value for communities. "This is an economic and national security imperative," Burciaga said. "While other countries invest heavily in AI, community colleges give the U.S. an edge by producing workforce-ready graduates faster than universities. If we expand this effort, we don't just compete, we lead."

## Building Tomorrow, Today

The momentum is only building. Thanks to \$2 million in funding from Google.org, NAAIC will expand its mentorship program to community colleges and introduce new AI professional development opportunities and certifications for college faculty and K-12 educators. Additionally, this funding will be leveraged to host the NAAIC AI Summit in February 2026 at Miami Dade College. Partnerships with Microsoft, Google, AWS, Intel, and OpenAI will also continue to deepen, opening the door to more faculty certifications, student opportunities, and curriculum resources that keep programs on the cutting edge.

As the first year has shown, NAAIC is now the nation's go-to hub for applied AI workforce education, where colleges, companies, and communities work together to prepare the workforce of tomorrow. AI is already reshaping every sector of the economy. The question isn't whether America can afford to invest in community college AI training, it's whether it can afford not to.







# **NAAIC** NATIONAL APPLIED AI CONSORTIUM

## NAAIC LEADERSHIP:



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