AI and Older Workers

Implications and Strategies for Preparing Older Adults for AI in the Workplace

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This brief describes how artificial intelligence (AI) is changing the workplace for older workers; the digital, AI, and information literacy skills and training older workers will need to be successful on the job; and the opportunities and challenges AI creates for older adults. We offer strategies and considerations for education and training providers, employers, and policymakers to support the resilience of older workers and job seekers age 50 and older amid this changing landscape and highlight the unique assets of older workers and the opportunities new technology can offer them.

In recent years, the progression and sophistication of AI has led education and training providers and employers to consider the evolution of workplace roles and what it means to be job-ready (Kimbrough and Carpanelli 2023; Shook and Daugherty 2025). Much of the public discourse and research has focused on task augmentation, or how specific aspects of jobs will change due to automation, and job displacement—involuntary job loss due to technological change (Ellingrud et al. 2023; Milanez 2023). Fears about task augmentation and automation span a wide range of industries and work experience levels, from entry-level customer service roles to analysts in the financial sector, to advanced machinists.[1]

This brief summarizes research on the implications of AI for adults age 50 and older, who contribute significantly to the workforce but face age bias and digital skills barriers that pose challenges to meaningful integration of this technology (Perron 2025a).[2, 3] A shorter companion brief focuses on the strategies education and training providers, employers, and policymakers can take to address these challenges and prepare older adults for AI in the workplace (Briggs and D'Elia 2026).

While this research focuses on implications for older workers and training providers who are working with older adults, our findings are applicable to workers more broadly, as task augmentation and automation become a reality across sectors and work experience levels. More information is needed about how to prepare workers and job seekers so that they can benefit from this increasingly powerful technology—regardless of age, industry, or role.

To inform our understanding of how AI is affecting the workforce generally, and older workers specifically, we conducted a literature review and held interviews and focus groups with 20 individuals across 19 organizations. Respondents included education and training providers, researchers, and business and industry experts.[4] Box 1 provides more information on the scope of our research.

BOX 1

Key Terms and Research Background

- **Defining artificial intelligence (AI) and generative AI:** In this brief and in our interviews with experts, we define *AI* as any technology or machine that can perform complex tasks that are typically associated with human intelligence.[5] Examples of artificial intelligence include, but are not limited to, generative AI chatbots like ChatGPT, language translation tools like Google Translate, and voice-activated personal assistants such as Amazon's Alexa. We take a broader view than just *generative AI*—AI models that can generate new content—but note where an insight from an interview or the literature refers to generative AI specifically.
- **Defining digital literacy, AI literacy, and information literacy:** *Digital literacy* refers to the ability to use technologies to navigate, problem-solve, and communicate with digital tools.[6] *AI literacy* refers to the ability to understand, interpret, and use AI systems and tools safely and ethically.[7] *Information literacy* refers to the ability to locate, evaluate, and use information ethically.[8]
- **Our research focused on the following questions:**
  1. How is AI changing the workplace?
  2. What does it mean to be "job-ready" in the age of AI, and what skills, training, and tools will older workers need to be successful on the job? Which barriers exist?
  3. What opportunities or challenges does AI create for older workers?
- **Research limitations:** In this study, we did not focus explicitly on job displacement due to AI or on AI governance or ethics, although those are important considerations explored in other research (Chen, Srinivasan. and Zakerinia 2025; Lazerson, Siddiqui, and Amezaga 2025; Obermeyer et al. 2019; Papagiannidis, Mikalef, and Conboy 2025). Our team contacted multiple employers and industry experts for interviews to understand how AI is changing the workplace and worker training, especially for older workers. Few employers agreed to participate. Those we did interview varied widely by size and organization type (e.g., private versus nonprofit), limiting our ability to draw generalizable conclusions from this work. Limited employer participation may be due to ongoing development of AI workplace training programs or because information about AI business adaptation is considered proprietary. Future research should build knowledge in this area, as employer training and outcomes of those training programs become more established.

Challenges and Opportunities

As the workforce continues to age, older workers make up a growing share of the labor force.[9] This demographic shift is driven by several factors in addition to population aging and increases in the Social Security retirement age, including technological advances that enable highly skilled older adults to work longer than previous generations (Aisa, Cabeza, and Martin 2023). Many older adults remain in the workforce not just for income, but also for a sense of purpose and to stay socially connected (Kosick 2025). AI is becoming more deeply embedded in the workplace, and while it presents obstacles that disproportionately affect older adults, it can also provide them with promising opportunities. We describe these in turn below.

Challenges

Some of the challenges older workers face around AI include negative stereotypes about older workers' readiness for AI, lack of training, AI and digital tools that are not designed with older adults in mind, and uneven access to technology.

Negative stereotypes that undermine labor force participation and confidence. Despite their interest in continued workforce participation, older adults often encounter negative stereotypes—such as being resistant to change, uncomfortable with technology, or less capable or willing to learn new skills. These stereotypes can make it difficult for them to get hired or retain their jobs, despite federal protections against age discrimination (Button 2019; Mermin, Johnson, and Toder 2008; Munnell, Sass, and Soto 2006; Pitt-Catsouphes et al. 2007; Posthuma and Campion 2009; Toomey and Rudolph 2017).[10] Many of these stereotypes have been overstated or proved incorrect (Berg et al. 2016; Posthuma and Campion 2009).

Although studies confirm that older adults tend to lag younger adults in digital skills, the actual digital skills gap is smaller than the stereotypes suggest: digital skills scores averaged 257 for workers ages 50 and older, compared with 280 for younger workers (Hecker, Spaulding, and Kuehn 2021).[11] Moreover, the digital skills gap has been narrowing over time (Faverio 2022),[12] as "digital natives—younger individuals who grew up familiar with technology—age into an older workforce, with recent research suggesting older workers age 50-plus continue to close tech skill gaps (AARP Research and LinkedIn 2025). Still, some older workers and the employers that hire them have internalized these negative stereotypes.

"Helping people develop a sense of agency and self-efficacy, it's important at any age, but it's particularly important in a society that is saturated with messages about how older workers are bad with technology."—Interview respondent

Barriers to training. Major obstacles to older workers' successful preparation for AI include insufficient access to training. Even though individuals have already been interacting with AI in their daily lives for some time, many older adults, like much of the general population, have only a vague understanding of what AI is and how it works. To maximize its benefits, training in AI tools is important in today's workforce. However, as one workforce training provider we interviewed noted, there is a lack of broader investment in training targeted to older workers. One possible reason for this is that research has shown employers may be reluctant to invest in training individuals who they assume are close to retirement (Taylor and Urwin 2001).

Compounding the issue, some older workers themselves may have internalized negative stereotypes about their ability to learn new digital skills. Experimenting with AI, and engaging with it in a non-pressured way, may be important for building familiarity and comfort with the technology. A recent study found that older workers who frequently used digital skills practiced a wider variety of digital skills both at work and outside of work compared with those who used digital skills less often (Yamashita et al. 2024).

The reasons for some older workers' reluctance to engage in training are unclear and likely vary by individual. One expert suggested that "it's finding ways to communicate to older workers that this [training] is available and accessible and that there's value in it for them. So, I think a lot of it is this sort of information problem and not a resource problem."

Recent survey research from AARP finds that while approximately half (47 percent) of older workers age 50-plus are interested in taking AI training in their line of work, only 10 percent reported taking it. This gap between training completion and employee interest suggests a need for employer-provided AI training on the job (Perron 2025b). Moreover, recent survey data of US hiring managers who evaluate workers age 45+ for entry- and mid-level roles finds that almost half of their companies (47 percent) have started providing AI tools for employees to use on the job and another quarter (24 percent) plan to do so in the next year (Generation 2024). As employers expand access to AI technologies, it will be important to train workers to maximize the benefits of these tools and to tailor training to different ages, skill levels, learning styles, and industry contexts (Picchio 2021; Urick 2017; Zwick 2015).

Design limitations in AI and digital tools. Even when training is available and motivation is high, older workers may face difficulty using AI tools that are not designed with them in mind. Many current technologies, including smartphones and software interfaces, are developed for younger users and often overlook the physical and cognitive changes that come with aging. For example, one interviewed expert highlighted that smartphone touchscreens function based on the electrical conductivity of the fingertips—a characteristic that decreases with age due to drier skin (Lindsay et al. 2024). As a result, older users may experience frustration using devices that were never tested on their age group.

Similarly, while certain AI-enabled tools and features increase accessibility, such as Adobe Liquid Mode, which transforms PDFs to read like a webpage on a phone or tablet with customizable text,[13] some AI tools fail to account for common age-related changes. For example, changes in vision, such as

increased farsightedness, make it difficult for older adults to read on-screen text or interact with small interface elements. If AI and digital tools continue to overlook these accessibility issues for older adults, even the best training programs may fall short.

Uneven access to technology. A significant challenge for older workers in preparing for an AI-enhanced workforce is uneven access to technology. These age-related digital access issues that have existed for decades risk exacerbating the challenges for AI adoption. For example, one workforce provider shared that when they first offered digital skills training to older job seekers, they allowed them to use laptops only during class time. However, this approach was quickly reassessed after realizing that learners needed access to the laptops throughout the day to fully engage with the training.

Some older adults, especially individuals with low incomes or those living in rural areas, may be unable to fully engage with AI tools due to limited access to computers or broadband. This challenge is exacerbated by the high computing power required to run AI, which may further strain broadband connections and require more powerful devices.[14] Even in workplaces where AI tools are provided, older workers may find themselves at a disadvantage if they do not have personal access to the same technologies at home for remote work or even to practice new skills. This highlights the critical importance of access to technology, computer ownership,[15] and high-speed broadband, without which engaging with AI tools becomes much more difficult.

Opportunities

As AI reshapes how work is performed, automating routine tasks and augmenting human decision-making (Ellingrud et al. 2023; Milanez 2023), it creates new roles that draw on the strengths of experienced workers, such as problem-solving, leadership, and contextual judgment. With the right investments in training and support, AI could become a catalyst for extending and enriching older adults' careers, rather than a barrier to participation. We describe these opportunities unearthed through our literature review and conversations with experts in more detail below.

Support job search. AI offers practical support for older adults seeking new employment, a career change, or re-entry into the labor market. AI tools can create cover letters, identify which skills and jobs to highlight to impress employers, and suggest jobs that align with their experiences and preferences. Some tools can even analyze an existing résumé and suggest improvements or create a résumé from scratch based on a list of previous roles and responsibilities. In addition, AI tools can provide role play activities and coaching support for individuals preparing for job interviews. And for older workers who are learning English, these tools, if designed inclusively, can increase confidence in their speaking skills.

Expand access to training and application of AI tools on the job. Beyond the job search, older workers can leverage AI tools during workforce training and at their workplace. One expert shared that unlike traditional training settings, where some older learners may feel intimidated or self-conscious, AI tools allow older workers to learn at their own pace and to ask questions and revisit concepts without embarrassment or stigma (Hossain, Abdulla, and Huq 2025). Multiple experts we interviewed shared that while foundational digital skills are needed to reap the benefits of AI, in some ways, the application

of AI tools might be easier to master than other digital skills. This is because AI is based on natural language and streamlined interactions. Experts described how users can interact with AI in the same way they would when they ask questions or request help from a friend, a coworker, or even a boss, rather than needing advanced technical skills to operate AI tools. One expert shared, "with older workers, I wonder if [leveraging AI] could be perceived as a sort of technology leapfrogging strategy, where they might be struggling with some other, non-AI, digital tools for their workflow, and [now] … maybe they just get to bypass that, because they can use generative AI [for their tasks]."

As another expert observed, when older workers begin using AI to generate content or research ideas, they can quickly reach the same level of proficiency as their peers. Thus, AI has the potential to significantly level the playing field between older workers and younger workers who may be more comfortable with technology by providing accessible and adaptive learning experiences. Research supports the idea that one potentially positive labor market outcome of AI is helping workers gain expertise and new skills, leveraging their experience to accomplish a broader range of valuable tasks (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2024).

Box 2 provides examples of training focused on digital skills development and AI readiness. These programs, which were identified by our interview and focus group participants, are available online or through education and workforce system providers, many of whom serve older workers.

BOX 2

AI Readiness Training Examples Shared in Our Interviews

- **The Center for Workforce Inclusion** is creating AI training for older workers that builds off prior digital skills trainings and is partnering with Coursera to offer this resource.
- **The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office** offers Microsoft AI bootcamps for Copilot to instructors through their Microsoft Education partnership.
- **Florida State University College of Nursing** is embedding AI training into a certificate microcredentialing program that is expected to launch early 2026.
- **The WorkPlace** is the workforce development board for Southwestern Connecticut and offers programs providing specialized training to seniors. A staff member described a partnership between the Connecticut Community College system and Google to offer the Google AI Essentials program, a free, entry-level course that is highly sought after. The organization also offers "Tech Ready Career Training," which covers topics including generative AI, Amazon Web Services Cloud, and Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA) certificates.
- **LinkedIn Learning** developed a variety of trainings around generative AI and other AI topics. Their online course content is separated into three libraries: business, technology, and creative fields. Course topics include how to understand AI, what is generative AI, use cases for project management, prompt engineering basics, and how to use tools like ChatGPT or build custom AI agents—systems that autonomously perform tasks by designing workflows with available tools.[16] LinkedIn also has a course called AI-Powered Role Play for Learners that allows individuals to practice high-stakes conversations using AI.

Draw on experience to enhance AI collaboration. As AI automates routine tasks and augments decision-making processes, humans will still be essential—especially for tasks that require critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and ethical oversight. Older workers, who have accumulated years of professional experience, may be particularly well-suited to serve as the "human-in-the-loop" needed to supervise, interpret, or evaluate AI outputs (AARP and LinkedIn 2025).[17]

The most important skills for the future workforce, as reported by employers, include creative thinking, analytical thinking, technological literacy, curiosity, life-long learning, resilience, flexibility, and agility (Di Battista at el. 2023). These "durable skills"—transferable skills or attributes that enable success across job roles and industries—are often the areas where older, experienced workers shine.[18] In fact, older workers may be better at querying AI (asking the right questions) and analyzing data (applying judgement) because of their lifelong experience and knowledge.

Offer flexible and remote work and consider other opportunities to improve job quality. AI also offers older workers the potential to engage in flexible and remote work. AI tools that support virtual communication and collaboration can enable those with mobility issues, health conditions, caregiving responsibilities, and transportation barriers to remain active in the workforce.

Moreover, AI could enhance workplace safety and job quality by supporting automation of dangerous physical tasks, reducing safety risks. In addition, AI can support better ergonomics and work design, especially in remote work settings. For example, AI tools can suggest regular breaks to reduce fatigue, help balance workloads across workers and manage schedules. These features can reduce physical strain from long periods of sitting or repetitive tasks and promote better work–life balance. In these ways, AI can support flexible and remote work and helps create healthier, more sustainable work environments.

Summary

AI is a part of our lives in both hidden and obvious ways—from our phones to our computers and beyond—and thus there are good reasons for workers of all ages to improve their comfort level with AI. Those who are not using AI, or do not realize when it is present, risk falling short of their full potential because, as one interviewed expert noted, there is a lot of opportunity because "generative AI [in] particular democratized access to data, expertise, knowledge, [and] information."

The challenges with adopting AI are not age-specific. Older workers should be encouraged to embrace AI as a tool for learning new skills, refreshing current skills, and increasing their productivity at work, while continuing to draw on and promote the value of their own experience and expertise. In speaking about older workers, one expert said, "You have these abilities. You have these competencies and skills. You're [just] going to be contextualizing them in a new way." In this way, AI is not just a challenge to be managed but an opportunity to be embraced.

Strategies and Recommendations to Prepare Older Adults for Workplace Transformation

In addition to identifying opportunities and challenges related to AI and the future of work, our research also surfaced strategies to better prepare older adults for job readiness and workplace transformation in the age of AI. Below we describe strategies and recommendations for education and training providers, policymakers, and employers who train, support, and hire older workers.

1. Continued investment in and focus on the development of older workers' digital, AI, and information literacy skills

As part of this research, we explored what it means for older workers to be AI literate and job-ready. There are many published AI literacy frameworks that identify and categorize the skills, competencies, and tools required to understand and use AI in everyday life (see Laupichler et al. 2022; Long and Magerko 2020; Mills et al. 2024; Ng et al. 2021). Because AI is rapidly advancing, experts we interviewed advised against developing an AI literacy framework for older workers that maps specific skill levels (e.g., basic, intermediate, or advanced) required for particular jobs. The skills and tools needed shift as the technology advances—it is a moving target. One expert noted, "in a future world where AI is much more integrated into the products that we already use, specific AI literacy is going to become less important. What is going to be more important are those durable skills, the ability to think critically, the ability to marry expertise and domain knowledge with AI competency to be able to use those tools in a more effective manner."

Although advanced digital skills may not be needed to use AI, workers do need foundational digital skills as a prerequisite to access and benefit from AI training. Examples of foundational digital skills include using technology to navigate a web browser or checking AI-enabled voice-to-text content for accuracy. Research from the National Skills Coalition (Bergson-Shilcock 2020) indicates that 31 percent of American workers lack foundational digital skills (no or very limited digital skills) and that this skills gap affects workers' economic mobility and businesses' competitive advantage.[19]

To build older workers' digital resilience—empowering individuals with the confidence to use technology to meet changing skill demands[20]—education and training institutions can provide accessible training tailored to older workers' needs. This training should focus not just on skills development but on the context of how AI and related technologies are used in the workplace and within specific industries. Doing so will support increased adoption of AI on the job and in the job search process.

In addition, education and training providers can integrate durable skills (such as critical thinking) and information literacy into AI training to help older workers maximize the benefits of AI tools and technology. While AI provides easier access to information with fewer specialized skills required, this convenience makes information literacy and transferable skills like leadership and problem-solving

more critical than ever. This is because the fundamental challenges with new generative AI tools may lie more in the context of their usage rather than the technical skills needed to operate them. One expert shared, "I would say information literacy skills that we've arguably [always] needed to have are coming into play more and more, and we have to have conversations around what that means, especially when we're talking about the workplace, where it is very specific and nuanced."

"What we should be developing in people is digital resilience. And enough information literacy that [individuals] can use good practices regardless of what new technology they keep getting confronted with."—Interview respondent

Policymakers can support investments that target older adults' foundational digital skills and digital access needs. These investments can help address the challenges older workers encounter in accessing training, such as cost constraints and limited access to high-speed broadband and physical devices. Digital navigators are one strategy to help older workers navigate these access barriers. Digital navigators provide on-demand technology support and information to connect individuals with internet access, technology, and resources to support their skills or job training goals.[21] Recent federal policy shifts, including the cancellation of Digital Equity Act federal grant funding may limit access to digital navigators and skills training.[22] Especially in light of this resource gap, policymakers and funders should consider investing in digital access initiatives that help older workers navigate barriers and develop skills via digital literacy training programs.

To offset these resource constraints, government entities like public workforce system programs in addition to public libraries can partner with businesses to offer free online skills development trainings. For example, many local libraries can get free access to LinkedIn Learning for Library that offers over 16,000 courses to support patrons with skill-building, with courses ranging in topics from leadership to job hunting and data science.[23] In addition, through December 2025, the Microsoft–LinkedIn Global Skills Initiative offered free and unlocked AI-related learning paths, including Career Essentials in Generative AI.[24]

2. Expand employer-provided training opportunities to improve access to and application of AI in real-world settings

Another important avenue to provide training for older workers and enable access to AI tools is on-the-job training provided by employers (Lane, Williams, and Broecke 2023). A recent report from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) notes that employees who lack access to AI tools in the workplace miss out on its potential benefits, such as increased productivity, support in overcoming disability-related challenges, and opportunities to pursue new roles created by

AI (Scarpetta 2024). Survey data indicate employers that hire older adults are providing required AI training programs or funding training so that employees can work with AI, but it is not available to all employees who could benefit (Generation 2024). As noted earlier, a recent survey sponsored by AARP finds that only 10 percent of older workers age 50 and older reported taking AI training at work, supporting that there are gaps in access or uptake (Perron 2025b).

To help address this access gap, employers can provide AI training on the job, emphasizing relevance to industry and employee role. Interviews conducted for this study did not uncover examples of employers offering targeted training for specific employee roles about how to use AI on the job. One expert shared, "We're seeing more acceleration on an individual level internally for folks who are already employed. And less directive [guidance] from the corporate entity of like, now we will use AI to do 'X' thing." Another expert noted that, according to a recent OECD survey, the most common barriers to firms' adoption of AI include employee skills gaps and the cost to the employer of providing the technology (Lane et al. 2023). Partnering with education and training institutions, public workforce programs, public libraries, and community-based organizations can help reduce costs for firms and expand employer capacity to provide training, especially for small businesses (Mayer et al. 2025).

One expert shared that company leaders can also benefit from expanded employer-provided training opportunities. "It's not [just] employees, it's also managers—leaders and managers' skills matter too, and so there needs to be a greater effort to focus on that group and not just employees themselves, in terms of how to support workers in taking up training in AI." Another expert noted that because company leaders often make higher wages than entry-level workers, achieving productivity gains with AI can yield a higher economic impact (i.e., return on investment). Because many workers age 50 and older are in leadership positions at their organizations, it is paramount to ensure that not just entry-level workers, but also senior-level workers have the necessary skills to succeed with this technology.[25]

One expert we spoke with recently rolled out use of Microsoft's AI tool Copilot at their organization and ran a six-week onboarding via email along with lunchtime training sessions. While the organization is encouraging people to self-train on how to use Copilot as part of their roles, they noted that they're providing an onboarding path with simple exercises to pique interest and curiosity in using the tool. The organization subsequently surveyed employees and found that they still preferred the face-to-face or live training offered during the lunch sessions. Providing these types of training in person, on site, can support all employees in adopting new technologies, not just older workers.

"We need [training on using AI on the job] that's in-person as well as virtual because I found that older workers prefer hands-on training in person. Even if we're trying to provide self-training resources … I still feel that they may prefer that guidance or that human connection."—Interview respondent

We also spoke with organizations (e.g., Microsoft, LinkedIn) that develop trainings for educational institutions (e.g., colleges) and for employers to use via enterprise licenses that provide access to trainings for employees, such as those described earlier in box 2. These enterprise licenses can support self-training provided at no cost to employees, but if implemented broadly, can have the downside of potentially not reflecting the wider industry context the employee is working in. Employer-provided training on general tools and use cases is a good starting point, but working groups with team members and other forms of collaboration may help employees identify where AI integration has the most potential to support their specific tasks, and help managers design trainings that meet staff needs.

Employers have an incentive to engage workers directly in AI adoption because research shows that productivity gains are higher when workers have a say in how and why they're using AI (Lane, Williams, and Broecke 2023). Seeking input from older workers in decisions about the adoption of AI is important because survey data from Gallup shows that the benefits of using AI are not always clear to workers and that employers can help employees find the value of using AI tools. Perceptions of AI's utility also vary based on firsthand experience using AI (which tends to correlate with favorable perceptions) versus not using it (less favorable).[26] Survey data from OECD supports this—around 80 percent of AI users said that AI had improved their performance at work, and AI users were more than four times as likely to say that AI had improved rather than worsened their working conditions (Lane, Williams, and Broecke 2023).

"Part of it is about worker power, right? Do workers have an opportunity to make their voices heard in not only how and why technology has been introduced, but … where it could be most useful?" —Interview respondent

3. Provide paid time for older workers to experiment and practice with AI tools

While employer-provided training at work is needed, experts we spoke with also stressed the need for a balance between information taught through formal training (employer-required AI training programs) and self-teaching with AI. This new paradigm presents an opportunity for older learners and workers who may be more comfortable than younger workers "learning by doing" and adapting to new circumstances. Employers and organizations that train older adults and support their job search can provide paid time to experiment with AI tools. Doing so will support more meaningful integration of technology into individual workflows and roles.

"Folks will learn a heck of a lot just by exploring and playing … doing the homework and the research around what's possible with these individual tools, knowing that those possibilities are going to continue to change … trying and testing things out, and learning from those failures, those are all strengths that our older learners have."—Interview respondent

To accomplish this, training organizations and employers must build time for paid practice or exploration into their training infrastructure (e.g., compensating employees for their time testing out AI tools) to allow space for older workers to experiment with technology. Older adults who are out of the workforce and looking to return to work, or those who are looking to transition to a new industry or occupation may face challenges with accessing the latest AI tools. One expert we spoke with shared, "One thing I keep hearing from business leaders again and again is we've just got to get people playing with it and experimenting with it. To a point I do agree. That's true. [But] if somebody is not currently in the workforce and they're going to go back [to] employment … What are the tools available to them to make sure they're practicing and playing with it and getting the most out of it? There's some stuff out there that is free [which is] … a fraction as powerful as the [AI tools] that you pay for."

4. Increase transparency by communicating skill expectations and desired AI competencies to job seekers

Through conversations for this study, we surfaced a common theme: business leaders want their workers to leverage AI and be at the "cutting edge," but they themselves may not know what that looks like. As one expert we spoke with shared, "[company] leaders are saying use it [AI], to get productivity gains out of this, and workers are saying, 'how'?" This sentiment is supported by recent research[27] that found that leaders do not fully understand their employees' use of and readiness for AI. Another expert described how, given the emergent nature of the technology, "we haven't [yet] reached a place where the company is dictating how AI should be used to do the work."

"I'm not sure business leaders actually know what it looks like to be highly skilled in AI. I think they're looking for experience, and they're looking for someone to tell them what that [high level of skill] looks like."—Interview respondent

Business leaders may still be developing an understanding of what advanced AI skills look like in practice and how to document those changes publicly due to the pace of technological change. Existing

frameworks, such as LinkedIn's AI Upskilling Framework, describe different levels of digital expertise employees will need to advance their knowledge across a range of roles and levels of proficiency, including foundational knowledge such as understanding and applying AI tools.[28] Such frameworks can inform institutions and firms that train, hire, and/or employ older workers by providing a starting point for identifying the foundational, intermediate, and advanced AI skills that are relevant to their jobs.

Due to limited public disclosures from companies about AI use on the job and the AI skills and competencies employers want job applicants to have, older job seekers have limited information about what is expected of them at work. To address this information gap, employers can be transparent about desired AI competencies so that job seekers and current employees understand sought-after skills and how they are expected to leverage AI on the job.

5. Leverage AI-driven tools to streamline job search and provide career navigation support

Finally, several AI tools can support career navigation and older job seekers in their job search. Education and training providers as well as government entities such as public workforce system job centers and public libraries can provide older adults with AI-driven job search tools to streamline job searches, enhance résumés, and receive targeted career navigation support.

One expert we interviewed who serves older workers described how they are developing an AI training program that will identify jobs aligned with older adults' experiences and preferences. For example, résumés can be uploaded into an AI tool, which will then identify promising jobs or career opportunities that best match a person's background. By inputting past job experiences, personal interests, and desired work conditions, older job seekers can receive tailored recommendations for open positions and career paths. In addition, another business expert we interviewed noted that job seekers can utilize AI to review and tweak their resumes and cover letters by inputting the job description and having the AI tool identify the key terms most important to include in both. One challenge is that algorithms underlying chatbot résumé evaluation can amplify biases and hiring preferences, such as assuming women applicants are younger and less experienced for roles (Guilbeault, Delecourt, and Desikan 2025).

Other tools can assess older workers' current skills, suggest the skills they need to learn or brush up on, and provide training on those skills. Jobs for the Future (JFF) recently published a report on use cases for generative AI in workforce development for both individual job seekers as well as the organizations that support them (Hsieh and Fu 2024). The report offers a framework and discusses the landscape of career navigation (e.g., job search or job-readiness skill attainment), identifies which AI tools align with these use case categories, and highlights key opportunities for workforce professionals to adopt generative AI on the job.[29] Use cases may be instructive to individuals who train and hire older adults and who are interested in identifying ways to support their job search needs.

JFF identified JobHunnt (a résumé and cover letter builder), Dice (a job search tool), and AIMY by CoachHub (professional skills coaching), as examples of workforce development tools that can support

potential applicants in finding jobs aligned with their interests (Hsieh and Fu 2024). AI credentials are also rapidly coming online due to offerings by technology companies, colleges, and other training providers (e.g., Coursera) and are one way to demonstrate AI competency in the labor market.

"Think about career navigation, for example. More information being available to folks [in an] on demand way … in a cost effective manner will allow a lot of the organizations that we work with to do more with what they have, within a resource constrained environment and reach more people [with navigation support], and enable people to find [quality] jobs."
—Interview respondent

AI job search and career navigation tools need to be designed with the needs and experiences of a diverse group of users, including older workers, in mind. In addition to digital access and foundational skill barriers, challenges to using AI job search and career navigation tools include cost and algorithmic bias embedded in technology that may not capture the lived experience of a diverse workforce or serve users effectively (e.g., a large language model used by English language learners that has not been exposed to multiple languages or has not been trained with sufficient data, affecting speech translation). The guidance these tools provide is only as good as the information that was used to develop them, and more research is needed on their practical utility. For this reason, personal connection and navigation support should complement the use of AI tools when supporting older workers' job search and career navigation goals.

Conclusion

This brief highlights how training providers and employers can strengthen older workers' resilience in the age of AI. We identified practical strategies that support older workers while also benefiting workers more broadly, regardless of age and level of work experience. Our research and conversations with individuals who hire, train, and support older workers surfaced a demand for more information about the specific skills and readiness training needed for older workers to succeed with AI and other emerging technologies—training that is often industry- and role-specific. We also identified gaps in knowledge about which AI skills employers want job seekers to have and about how employers are developing those skills within their workforce. Access to this information and more robust training will empower older workers and older job seekers to embrace new opportunities and ultimately support older workers' economic security and mobility in an AI-enhanced workforce.

Notes

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