

AI Workforce and Business Training

Strategic Initiative Summary

Initiative Overview

For small and mid-sized businesses in Central Texas, AI is increasingly integral to long-term business strategy. Nationally, 82 percent of small business owners believe adopting AI is essential to staying competitive, yet most lack a structured, affordable way to build that capacity. For smaller firms, that challenge grows increasingly difficult to overcome as AI becomes more deeply embedded in how industries operate, prompting local employers and entrepreneurs to approach ACC directly.

ACC's AI Workforce and Business Training program, launched at the Rio Grande Campus in March 2026, was developed in direct response to that need. One of three initiatives supported by an \$875,000 three-year Trellis Foundation grant for AI-powered student and workforce pathways, the program delivers role-specific, hands-on training developed in collaboration with industry experts. Participants build AI fluency through their actual work. U.S. Representative Lloyd Doggett commended ACC's leadership at the launch, citing the college's track record at the [Software Factory](#) and [Impact Lab](#) as proof of its capacity to prepare the region for an AI-influenced economy. The purpose of this initiative is to provide small and mid-sized business owners in Central Texas with affordable, accessible training that equips them with the AI skills needed to stay competitive in a continuously evolving economy.

Expected Outcomes

1. **Business Community Engagement:** Identify priority AI skills, practical use cases, and desired learning outcomes through direct employer and stakeholder engagement.
2. **Training Launch:** Launch one or more AI training offerings through ACC Continuing Education.
3. **Curriculum Improvement:** Refine training content based on participant and employer feedback.
4. **Scalable Roadmap:** Establish a roadmap for future AI workforce and business training aligned with changing technologies and market needs.

Progress To-Date

Last updated July 2026

Fiscal Support and Grant Awards

- **Trellis Foundation Grant:** On March 11, 2026, ACC announced an **\$875,000**, three-year grant from the Trellis Foundation with first-year priorities that include AI-powered student support, AI workforce pathways, and AI Workforce and Business Training.

Program Development

- Existing AI training offerings are being reviewed for pilot participant feedback and alignment to the needs of the regional business community.
- Partnership development, operational setup, and marketing coordination are planned for early summer ahead of a September launch.
- A pilot training program launched in March with approximately 50 ACC employees and business community members to inform further development.

Community Engagement

- Listening sessions have begun to gather feedback from stakeholders and refine pilot training models.
- Engagement with the local business community is helping shape the initiative's training relevance, accessibility, and future roadmap.

Initiative Team

Initiative Team Role	Name	Position	Department/Division
Strategic Lead	Laura Lucas	Senior Director	Office of Strategic Initiatives
Project Manager	Laura Lucas	Senior Director	Office of Strategic Initiatives
Functional Lead	Karina Hernandez Don Tracy	Dean, Digital Learning Interim Dean, Continuing Education	Academic Affairs
Implementation Partner	Karina Hernandez	Dean, Digital Learning	Academic Affairs
Executive Sponsor	Russell Lowery-Hart	Chancellor	Office of the Chancellor

Further Reading

- [ACC Launches AI Initiative to Predict Student Needs and Strengthen Workforce Training](#), ACC Newsroom
- [Great to join Chancellor Russell Lowery-Hart and Austin Community College trustees in partnership with the Trellis Foundation to make greater use of AI to help support and train students](#), Rep Lloyd Doggett Instagram
- [Austin Community College Impact Lab](#), ACC Advanced Manufacturing
- [ACC & U.S. Army Expand Software Factory Partnership, Opening New Pathways in Tech](#), ACC Student Info Hub
- [Austin Community College District & U.S. Army Deepen Landmark Partnership to Redefine Military Technical Training](#), ACC Newsroom
- [Army & ACC Partnership extended for Army Software Factory](#), U.S. Army