AI + COMMUNITY

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fftc FWD
find what you need to lead

fftc:FWD is a civic empowerment platform for everyone.

fftc:FWD is an innovative civic leadership platform from The Robinson Center for Civic Leadership at Foundation for the Carolinas that makes it easier and faster for people, groups, and organizations to find what they need to lead on issues and topics they care about in our community.

Who	What	When	Where	How
is doing what and do they connect to each other?	issues are important in our community and to me?	I want to know more, how can I find what I need?	can I easily see opportunities for collaboration and partnership?	can I help?

fftc:FWD Folios like the one you are reading now provide on-ramps to knowledge, data, and information on key topics and themes to broaden access to the levers of change for everyone's access and use.

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fftc:FWD is focused on the communities within the Charlotte-Mecklenburg region in the state of North Carolina.

Cover art by: **Marcus Kiser**
fftcfwd.net/artists/marcus-kiser

What is AI + Community?

Artificial intelligence (AI) is the capability of computer systems to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence—such as reasoning, learning, problem-solving.

AI has moved from the edges of science fiction into the everyday machinery of modern life.

It now shapes how we apply for a job, route an ambulance, screen a mortgage, write a school assignment, summon a customer service agent, and even hear back from city hall. For most of us, AI is no longer a single product we choose to use; it is a layer of infrastructure quietly running underneath the institutions we already depend on.

That makes AI a community issue, not just a technology issue. Its arrival changes the social and economic structure of a place—what kinds of jobs exist, who can do them, who is left behind, which civic systems work for residents and which leave them stuck on hold. The proliferation of AI brings community challenges related to environmental, land use and economic development impacts.

AI changes the texture of community connectedness, too: how neighbors find one another, how trust is built or eroded, how local government listens. In communities where economic mobility, racial equity, and civic participation have long been central conversations, AI could accelerate progress or deepen old gaps, depending on the choices we make right now.

Key Facts

Here are some key facts around AI + community locally

9th

is where Charlotte ranks among large U.S. metros for workers in AI-enhanced roles

7,000

job postings requiring AI skills in Charlotte metro area in 2025

31%

of Americans in 2025 say they interact with AI at least several times a day, up from 22% in February 2024

23.2

million American jobs have been impacted by AI

33%

of U.S. workers have low or no digital skills due to historic underinvestment

44%

of CMS staff said they've used AI at work, while 59% also expressed concern about academic integrity and its impact on interpersonal skills

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What is happening now?

National momentum on AI policy and workforce readiness has accelerated sharply over the past eighteen months. The U.S. Department of Labor released an AI Literacy Framework in early 2026 to guide public workforce and education systems, while the Brookings Institution's Mapping the AI Economy report and Pew Research Center's tracking of public attitudes have given regions, employers, and civic leaders a shared evidence base.

In North Carolina, Governor Josh Stein's September 2025 Executive Order on AI established an AI Leadership Council, with the stated aim to become the most AI-literate in the nation. Locally, a range of efforts are creating civic infrastructure for AI—one still uneven across neighborhoods, but visibly under construction.

The City of Charlotte's Innovation & Technology Department published a 3-Year Strategic AI Roadmap that governs governance, ethics, and department-by-department adoption. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) is developing classroom guidance that aims to embrace AI without sacrificing critical thinking.

UNC Charlotte launched the Charlotte AI Institute (CLT AI Institute) in February 2025, alongside new bachelor's and master's pathways in AI and a proposed AI-and-humanities program that would be the first of its kind in the UNC System.

The nonprofit sector is beginning to follow suit, as organizations like Apparo, Charlotte Works, the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance, and the Robinson Center for Civic Leadership at Foundation for the Carolinas are exploring use of AI as a tool to help solve large-scale issues in the community and create responsible, equitable, and positive impacts.

Starting Points

These six organizations are good starting points for someone new to this topic to learn more.

Apparo

Amplifies nonprofit impact through technology and process improvement. *apparo.org*

CDE
THE CENTER FOR DIGITAL EQUITY

Partners with community members, organizations, and institutions to make sure technology works for people—in everyday life, at work, and across communities. *thecenterfordigitalequity.org*

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA CHARLOTTE

Elevates and accelerates UNC Charlotte's nationally recognized AI research expertise to positively shape a rapidly emerging AI future. *research.charlotte.edu/cltai2*

CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG LIBRARY

Offers a variety of free digital literacy programs for both beginners and those looking to enhance their technology skills. *digitalbranch.cmlibrary.org/digital-literacy*

CENTRAL PIEDMONT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Provides the opportunity for students to learn about Artificial Intelligence from the ground up, regardless of experience. *cpcc.edu/artificial-intelligence*

NCDIT NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

A single source of accountability and authority for IT budgeting, personnel and oversight of information technology for many state agencies in North Carolina. *it.nc.gov*

These are not the only organizations leading local work around animal welfare. Visit fftcfwd.net to see more!

Tools & Resources

Charlotte AI Institute at UNC Charlotte Events: From campus talks and workshops to partner driven initiatives, this is your place to follow the people and projects shaping responsible AI at UNC Charlotte and across our region. *research.charlotte.edu/cltai2/cltai2-events/*

City of Charlotte 3-Year Strategic Roadmap for AI: Outlines a clear, phased strategy for AI adoption. *charlottenc.gov/files/sharedassets/city/v/1/city-government/departments/documents/iampt/ai-roadmap-strategy_final_booklet-printout_format.pdf*

Explore More

Scan to see resources including articles and reports related to AI + Community.

Take Action

Learn Who is Leading

Learn more about key organizations leading and coordinating around animal welfare in the community. *fftcfwd.net/ai-community*

Give Back Financially

Donate to a 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission focuses on early childhood education, or that offers surround-sound services or programming.

Donate directly: *sharecharlotte.org*

Give through a fund: *fftc.org*

Volunteer

Volunteer for a nonprofit who is using AI to help drive their mission. Visit SHARE Charlotte's website for volunteer opportunities. *sharecharlotte.org*

Advocate for Responsible AI

Support policies and practices that promote transparency, fairness, and public accountability in AI systems.

Build AI Literacy

Take a free or low-cost class to understand how AI works and how it shows up in everyday services. *cpcc.edu/artificial-intelligence*

Align Priorities

Corporations and foundations can align strategic community and philanthropic priorities around issues that use AI to help the community.

Lingo to Know

Automation: The use of technology to complete tasks with minimal human involvement.

Bias (in AI): When an AI system produces unfair results because of flawed data or design choices.

Generative AI: AI that can create original content such as text, images, video, audio or software code in response to a user's prompt or request.

Innovation: The practical implementation of new ideas, methods, products, or services that create value, improve efficiency, or solve problems.

Prompt: A specific input given to an artificial intelligence model to trigger a response or creative output.

Workforce reskilling: Helping workers learn new skills so they can succeed as jobs change.

Connecting the Dots

Explore related folio topics such as those listed below on our website.

Digital Equity — Economic Mobility — Health Care — Small Business — Workforce Development

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fftcfwd.net/ai-community

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Sources for the content of this folio can be found on the AI + Community folio webpage.

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