



**Jordan Loewen-Colón**



**Ayodele Odubela**

**With support from  
Jeanette Jordan**

To learn more about  
this project, please visit  
[aspenpolicyacademy.org](https://aspenpolicyacademy.org)



# Implementing an AI Evaluation Framework in Utah

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Utah Office of Artificial Intelligence (OAIP) should adopt a standardized evaluation framework for its partners, then publicize these criteria and a running list of its AI Learning Lab participants. Specifically, the OAIP should use a new PIONR Framework — a set of guidelines for assessing artificial intelligence (AI) technologies across the categories of Prosperity, Integrity and Innovation, Openness, Natural Resource Stewardship, and Respect for Culture and Values — to ensure a holistic and objective assessment of AI Learning Lab applicants. By taking these steps to make its evaluation criteria more transparent, the OAIP would ensure that Utah remains a model for responsible AI development while fostering a thriving innovation ecosystem.

Since this recommendation was first made in 2024, the OAIP has begun adopting aspects of the PIONR Framework and created a [web page](#) listing companies in regulatory mitigation.

## PROBLEM

The United States is experiencing an escalating AI [public trust crisis](#). Utah's OAIP shoulders the task of establishing trust in statewide AI activities. In 2024, global trust in companies building and selling AI

tools fell to 53% and sank [as low as 35%](#) in the United States. Despite studies showing that this lack of trust can [reduce consumers' interest](#) in and willingness to use AI tools, [governments and institutions are racing to adopt AI systems](#). This public sentiment and the prevalence of AI tools amplifies the OAIP's need for transparent regulatory processes and policies that encourage engagement from the public and potential stakeholders.

*This tailored framework approach has the possibility to bring massive change to the global conversation on AI. It bucks the trend of one-size-fits-all approaches to AI governance.*

*- Zach Boyd | OAIP Director*

## SOLUTION

OAIP should (1) adopt the qualitative PIONR [evaluation framework](#) to ensure that partners are aligned with the [OAIP's values](#) and (2) update the Office's website to include this framework and the details of its work with AI companies. The Office could use existing Department of Commerce resources to efficiently administer the web page and easily update it to iterate on the PIONR Framework as AI technology and laws evolve. These trust-building measures could reduce regulatory uncertainty, encourage public engagement with the OAIP's work, and set an example of balanced AI regulation for other state and local governments.

For more information about this proposal, see: [\(1\) a policy memo to the Utah OAIP](#) and [\(2\) an overview of the PIONR Framework](#)



## ABOUT THE POLICY ACADEMY

The Aspen Policy Academy offers innovative training programs to equip leaders across sectors - from tech to climate, science to social impact - with the practical policy skills to craft solutions for society's most pressing challenges.

