The essay is by Google DeepMind economists Julian Jacobs and Alex Imas. Below, I separate its arguments from my assessment. [Read the essay](#).

🟦 1. Prepare for uncertainty instead of betting on one AI forecast

Essay's point: Economic policy should accommodate several possible levels of AI disruption.

I strongly agree. Neither "technology always creates enough new jobs" nor "most jobs will disappear" is a sufficiently reliable foundation for public policy.

My preferred approach would distinguish actions that help under almost any scenario from measures justified only by severe displacement. Improving benefit delivery, measuring local employment conditions, and testing better service delivery can be worthwhile without settling the AGI debate.

🟦 2. Establish responses before a crisis—but choose the warning signals carefully

Essay's point: Predetermined economic triggers could activate stronger protections.

I agree, with a major qualification: national averages should not become permission to ignore local damage.

I would include falling entry-level hiring, involuntary reductions in hours, prolonged job searches, and regional losses of purchasing power. A rural community could experience serious deterioration while national employment remains healthy.

For PSA, the relevant question would be: **Are people in the communities we serve losing access, income, or opportunity?** That question deserves attention even without a national emergency.

🟦 3. Strengthen existing protections while more ambitious options are developed

Essay's point: Unemployment insurance and wage supplements are practical early responses.

I agree with starting from institutions that already exist. But expanding eligibility on paper is insufficient if applications are difficult, payments arrive late, or people with irregular earnings fall through the cracks.

My test would be operational: Can someone experiencing a sudden income loss obtain timely help without navigating several disconnected agencies? Administrative performance should count as a central policy outcome.

🟨 4. Retraining should lead to demonstrable opportunities

Essay's point: Employer-connected training is more promising than generic retraining.

I agree with the emphasis, but employer involvement alone is no guarantee. Training should develop portable skills and connect participants to credible employment opportunities.

One study linked by the essay found persistent earnings gains from sector-focused programs combining training with support services. That supports a specific program design; it does not establish that retraining can offset economy-wide automation. WorkAdvance research

For IHPF, I would favor training community navigators alongside partners prepared to employ them, with funding and responsibilities defined before recruiting trainees.

🟨 5. Income protection must reach people who cannot find paid work

Essay's point: Deeper displacement could justify a negative income tax.

A **negative income tax** provides payments below an income threshold, with support declining as income rises. Unlike a work-dependent credit, it can be designed to support someone with no earnings. MIT explanation

I agree with that objective. But the design matters more than the label: payment frequency, treatment of fluctuating income, phaseout rates, and interaction with other benefits determine whether it works.

A system based on last year's income could respond poorly to someone who lost work this month.

🟥 6. The case against universal basic income is less decisive than presented

Essay's point: It favors targeted income support over universal basic income.

This is one of my strongest disagreements. A fair comparison must examine the combined payment-and-tax system, not merely the amount initially distributed.

Consider a simplified illustration:

- One system pays everyone $10,000, then recovers it fully from higher earners through taxes.
- Another pays $10,000 only to lower earners.

For those groups, the final financial position can be identical despite very different gross payment totals. Real systems introduce additional complications, but the accounting distinction matters.

Similarly, inflation depends on financing, additional spending, and available supply. Universality alone does not establish inflationary effects. I would compare fully specified designs before declaring a winner.

🟩 7. Broad ownership deserves serious attention—and an earlier start

Essay's point: Universal basic capital could distribute ownership of productive assets.

I agree with the direction, but would begin modest experiments sooner. My concern is timing: if public ownership is desirable, waiting until wealth and political influence are more concentrated could make it harder to establish.

Possible experiments could include independently governed public investment funds or community investment structures.

However, an investment account does not automatically confer meaningful control. A proposal needs explicit rules for voting, fees, withdrawals, representation, and protection against political interference.

🟩 8. Essential services deserve a larger role

Essay's point: Universal basic services scores strongly on durability but receives less emphasis in the proposed sequence.

I would give service provision more prominence. My concern is straightforward: additional cash cannot purchase an appointment that does not exist.

Income support and service capacity address different problems. A strong policy package should consider both household purchasing power and the availability of healthcare, transportation, housing, and other necessities.

For PSA/IHPF, I would evaluate neighborhood diagnostics by **affordability, clinical quality, access, and completed follow-up care**. A lower test price alone would be an incomplete measure of success.

🟨 9. Meaning and agency should extend beyond employment

Essay's point: Policy should protect purpose and participation alongside material living standards.

I strongly agree with that broader goal. My qualification is that paid employment should not become the sole standard for a valuable life.

Caregiving, mentoring, volunteering, civic participation, and creative work deserve recognition. Policy should expand people's ability to contribute while preserving their freedom to choose.

I would also distinguish ownership from power: receiving investment returns and having influence over decisions are separate achievements.

🟥 10. Treat the numerical policy rankings as exploratory

Essay's method: Its scoring uses 51 simulated economist personas informed by real economists' survey responses. Method and tables

This is my largest evidence concern. These are AI-generated evaluations, not independent judgments from 51 economists directly assessing every policy.

Such simulations may help explore arguments, but shared model assumptions can produce correlated errors. Decimal-point scores can imply a degree of precision that has not been demonstrated.

Before relying on the rankings, I would want independent human comparisons, sensitivity tests across models and prompts, and evidence that modest changes in assumptions do not reverse the results. The linked full paper was inaccessible during this review, so I could not inspect those methodological details.

My judgment for PSA: Use the essay to sharpen questions about who benefits, who owns assets, who makes decisions, and whether essential services actually become more accessible. I would give those questions considerable weight—and give the simulated policy rankings substantially less.

TL;DR: I agree with the essay's central direction: prepare for several possible AI futures, protect people during disruption, and make ownership part of the discussion. My biggest reservations concern **the strength of its evidence, its comparison of income-support options, and whether waiting for clear disruption would make some reforms too late.**