

# AI for Workers and Learners



Survey fielded in November 2024 by

## **About this study**

### **Context of the Study:**

 This study reveals how AI can serve as a critical lever for economic success, provided that access and opportunity are prioritized for people who face barriers to economic advancement.

### **Sample Overview:**

- Sample Size: 2,754 respondents across demographic groups.
- Booster samples employed to over-represent populations facing barriers to advancement.
- Boosted representation of Black African American (529), Hispanic (540), and people with people with records of arrest, conviction, or incarceration *(people with records)* (349).
- Gender representation: 1,069 males, 1,666 females.
- Final data weighted back to statistically reflect the U.S. population, aged 16 and above, in accordance with latest U.S. census data.
- The survey was conducted between November 20 27, 2024.
- AudienceNet classified workers in management. business and financial operations, computer and mathematical, architecture and engineering, life, physical, and social science, community and social service, legal, educational instruction and library, and arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media as "white-collar" workers. Workers in construction and extraction, installation, maintenance, and repair, production, and transport and material moving were classified as "blue-collar."

### Methodology

- Mixed methods approach: quantitative survey complemented by qualitative questions.
- Key topics: Al awareness, skill development, career impact, and barriers to adoption.

### Analysis

- Comparisons have been drawn in the data for populations facing barriers to advancement:
- People without a 4-year college degree
- People of color, even those with a 4-year degree
- Women, even those with a 4-year degree
- People with criminal records





# **Executive Summary**

## JFF

# **Executive Summary**

### Advancing Economic Opportunity with AI

## Interest and use of AI is rising, and impact being felt:

- 35% of respondents report using AI at work, up from 8% in 2023.
- 59% of learners report using AI in their education or training at least weekly, primarily to enhance their learning and understanding (45%), complete assignments (44%), and prepare for exams (44%).
- Younger adults and people of color are leading adopters, leveraging AI tools for innovation and strategic growth.
- 57% of workers reported feeling some or a great deal of impact from AI on their jobs, such as include reducing workloads, automating repetitive or routine tasks, and shifting responsibilities towards more creative work.

## Systemic supports are less common than individual effort:

- Respondents most commonly report using AI for self-directed learning (60%) and were twice as likely to use AI on their own initiative at work (20%) or for education (19%) versus at their employer's direction (11%) or at education institution's direction (8%).
- Only 16% of respondents had access to paid Al tools from their employer or education institution.
   10% were personally paying for them, with people of color more likely to be paying (15%).
- Training gaps exist: only 31% of workers report receiving employer-provided AI training. 34% of the total sample not receiving such training would like their employer to offer it (40% for those with records).

"AI helps me find jobs by matching my skills to opportunities and offering tools to learn and grow."

- Female, 25-34, Hispanic, High School Diploma

## Al is just beginning to influence career plans and skill development:

- 77% of respondents believe AI will have an impact on the job or career they expect to have in the next 3-5 years (39% say they will have a great deal of impact).
- 19% of respondents are actively pursuing or considering different careers in the near future as a result of AI; that number jumps to 30% for people of color
- 19% said they have already used AI tools to obtain a better job.
- Half of respondents (47%) do not feel the need to gain new skills as a result of AI.
   People of color (70%) and people with records (56%) are much more likely to feel the need to gain new skills



# Awareness & Understanding of AI

I have a moderate understanding of AI

I have no understanding of AI

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# Awareness and familiarity with AI

Widespread awareness, but depth of understanding varies

### UNPROMPTED AWARENESS

75% of the total population surveyed were familiar with AI, though it was more commonplace to claim to be fairly familiar (44%) than very familiar (31%). Higher awareness was seen among people of color.



Males (78%) were more likely than females (71%) to be familiar overall.

### PROMPTED UNDERSTANDING

After reading a description, 95% claimed some level of understanding, with overall consistency across groups. However, only 41% felt they had a good understanding, with the highest level among people of color—53% of this group demonstrated a good understanding.



I have a good understanding of AI

I have just a little understanding of AI

# Perceptions of AI –qualitative responses

### 01

## Productivity and assistance

Al was seen to simplify tasks, enhance efficiency, and support work across various fields.

"AI helps with daily tasks, making life easier and faster."

"A tool to perform all types of things that are not performed by humans."

### 02

Learning and adaptation Al is seen as technology that learns, adapts, and improves over time.

"It's a program that learns as it goes."

"Self-learning software that adapts to its environment." 03

Simulation of human intelligence Al was seen to mimic human thought processes, problemsolving, and decisionmaking.

"AI is a system that thinks like a human but faster."

"Artificial intelligence mimics human behavior."



### Mixed feelings Respondents expressed optimism about Al's potential but also fear and skepticism.

"AI is a powerful tool for the future of civilization."

"It's scary because it could replace humans entirely."



Reflection of data and society Al is viewed as a system that aggregates and mirrors human knowledge.

"AI is an aggregate of everything humans have done."

"It gathers data and creates something meaningful."





### Learners

# Optimism and current impact of AI in education



Q: When you think about the future impact of AI on education, generally, how do you feel? / How much impact do you think AI tools are currently having on your education or training? Caution: Low base size for people with records of arrest, conviction, or incarceration (N=40). Results should be interpreted with caution.

## AI's future impact on workers generally: males more optimistic than females

Lower levels of optimism were seen among those without a four-year college degree and among women.

Among those currently in or seeking education or training, nearly half of the total respondents (49%) felt optimistic about the future impact of AI on workers generally, with 25% claiming to be "very optimistic."

Male respondents were significantly more optimistic, with 57% indicating so, compared to 43% of female respondents. This gap is particularly pronounced in the "very optimistic" category: 32% of males described themselves as "very optimistic," nearly double the proportion of females (18%).



When you think about the future impact of AI on workers generally, how do you feel?

Base: All those currently in, or seeking, education 459. Caution: Low base size for people with records (N=40). Results should be interpreted with caution.

39%

# Perceptions of the impact of AI <u>in jobs</u>

### CURRENT IMPACT

Total

57%

53%

The majority of respondents (57%) felt that AI tools were having "some impact" (38%) or "a great deal of impact" (19%) on their jobs. People of color were most likely to cite an impact—and over a quarter of Black African Americans (26%) felt that AI tools were having "a great deal of impact." Males were more likely to report "a great deal of impact" (21%) compared to females (16%).

### Total People People of Women Total People People of People without a color with without a color four year four year records college college degree degree Some Some 38% 43% 36% 37% 37% 38% 38% 37% impact impact A great A great 37% 44% 39% 19% 16% 24% 16% 20% deal of deal of impact impact

FUTURE IMPACT Among those currently in or seeking work

claimed that such tools will have a great deal of impact.

Workers



77%

claimed that AI tools will have an

impact on the job or career they

expect to have in the next 3-5 years.

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Q: How much impact do you think AI tools are currently having on your job? / How much impact do you think AI tools will have on the job or career you expect to have in the next 3-5 years?

### Learners

# AI and society: positive local impact, mixed societal views

We asked respondents to evaluate whether AI is doing "more harm than good," or "more good than harm," regarding people's ability to find jobs, build wealth, and secure their quality of life, both in their local community and in society as a whole.

42% of respondents believe AI is doing "more good than harm" within their local community, with a smaller proportion (32%) feel AI is causing "more harm than good". 26% saw "no real difference" from AI's influence locally.

In comparison, a slightly higher percentage (45%) believe AI is doing "more good than harm" when asked about society on a broader scale. However, a greater number (41%) feel that AI is causing "more harm than good," a significant increase compared to the community perspective.

Positive perceptions were markedly higher among people of color and those with a record as well as male respondents.



SOCIETY AS A WHOLE





### Q. When you think about the impact of AI, do you believe it is having more harm than good, or more good than harm on people's ability to find jobs, build wealth, and secure their quality of life, in: a) your community and b) society as a whole?

Q. Looking into the future, how do you imagine people's ability to find jobs, build wealth and secure a quality life will change due to the increasing development and deployment of AI tools?

## Equal optimism and pessimism about AI's future impact on finding jobs, building wealth and quality of life

Respondents saw benefits to the proliferation of AI as well as setbacks:

- Some mentioned being able to increase one's knowledge with help from AI which would improve all areas of life
- It was seen as particularly useful for job finding, in particular preparing documents such as résumés for job applications, and filtering jobs to best match skill sets
- However, others worried that jobs available to apply to would decrease and that society would have to shift to a model whereby those whose jobs have been taken by Al are cared for
- Other concerns included AI being inherently biased and filtering people out of job processes on certain criteria
- Less was said about building wealth or quality of life, as these were seen as reliant on the first step of finding a job

"I feel that it might get easier for some who struggle writing cover letters. But I also worry about using AI to filter out applicants because they didn't use certain buzz words." MALE, 25-34, LESS THAN \$25,000, OTHER, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

"In the future, AI tools could make finding jobs easier by matching people to opportunities faster and helping them develop new skills. However, building wealth and securing a quality life might change as some jobs could be replaced while new ones are created."

FEMALE, 25-34, \$25,000 - \$49,000, HISPANIC, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

"I don't like the idea of my résumé being read and judged by AI before it ever gets in front of an actual human being." FEMALE, 45-54, \$25,000 - \$49,000, OTHER, RECORD OF ARREST, CONVICTION, OR INCARCERATION, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

# AI promises benefits to some, while others see immediate threats to their competitive edge within society

- Having answered on a general level, many felt that AI would bring changes to their own prospects, though many were less certain of what exactly those changes would be
- Some believed AI would help them in the process of applying for jobs by filtering the most relevant opportunities and helping them write résumés
- A few said AI would help in organizing their general life, such as their schedules and finances which would overall increase their life quality
- Others, however, felt sure that their jobs were immediately threatened, facing competition from powerful machine calibrations
- Black and Hispanic respondents appear more optimistic about the prospects of AI on their future regarding streamlining tasks, though some within this category also voice the same concerns about job security as the general population
- Though quantitively more positive about AI, qualitatively those with records seem equally concerned about certain aspects of AI, with some voicing unease about being ruled out of jobs automatically because of past behavior or levelling the field for others which might disadvantage their own chances further





"It would help me spruce up my résumé, help me to prepare for interviews. It would also help me to better understand my finances which would greatly improve my quality of life" FEMALE, 25-34, \$75,000+, BLACK, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

# *"I can see artificial intelligence helping me build a better résumé in order to find a better job"*

MALE, 45-54, \$25,000, BLACK, RECORD OF ARREST, CONVICTION, OR INCARCERATION, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

"AI could help me find jobs by matching my skills to opportunities and offering tools to learn and grow. However, it might also create challenges if jobs are replaced faster than people can adapt"

FEMALE, 25-34, \$25,000 - \$49,000, HISPANIC, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

"AI is going to take my job. It's going to be so hard on me if AI is more accurate." MALE, 35-44, \$75,000, BLACK, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

"I am intelligent and good at speaking eloquently. I believe AI is going to give everyone the same capability that I naturally have so I will no longer stand out when I apply for employment opportunities causing another barrier for me to find a decent job" FEMALE, 35-44, \$50,000, OTHER, RECORD OF ARREST, CONVICTION, OR

INCARCERATION, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

### "I'll be judged for my past mistakes, and not as I am now."

FEMALE, 45-54, CHILDREN, LESS THAN \$25,000, OTHER, RECORD OF ARREST, CONVICTION, OR INCARCERATION, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA





# AI Tools: Knowledge & Skills

## AI awareness and learning: social media dominates

People of color and those with records were more likely to seek out information on social media and perceive this to be the most useful source.

### WHERE PEOPLE HEAR ABOUT AI

ACTIVE LEARNING SOURCES

### MOST USEFUL SOURCES





SOCIAL MEDIA

People of color

Total





# AI usage: self-directed learning leads, formal and employer-driven adoption trails

*More than one-third of the total sample* 

<b>JJ 70</b> Daily: <b>18%</b> Weekly: <b>21%</b>	<ul> <li>(39%) reported using AI tools either on a daily or weekly basis. A significant portion of the sample (53%), however, rarely (26%) or never (27%) use AI tools.</li> <li>Usage was higher for people of color and those with a record. These groups also reported higher doily use</li> </ul>			
	51%	<b>46%</b>		
	Daily: <b>25%</b>	Daily: <b>24%</b>		
	Weekly: 26%	Weekly: 22%		
Total surveyed	People of color	People with records		

People of color are more likely than the general population to use AI across all contexts, with differences in self-directed learning (64% vs. 60%), using AI for their job on their own initiative (27% vs. 21%), and leveraging AI for education or training programs (25% vs. 19%).

USE OF AI	Total	People of color
To learn on my own	60%	64%
For my job, on my own initiative	20%	27%
For my education or training program, on my own initiative	19%	25%
For my job, at my employer's direction or with my employer's support	11%	17%
To find a job or a career direction	11%	15%
For my education or training program, with my teacher or instructor's direction	8%	13%
To start or grow a business	8%	11%

Q:. How often do you use AI tools? / How do you use AI?

200/



AI FOR WORKERS

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# Using a variety of sources for knowledge on AI, though ChatGPT currently dominates use

It is worth noting that some respondents mentioned not knowing where to turn for information on AI, or that they hadn't attempted to learn more

Among those with more knowledge, most mentions of sources cycled through the following:

- Social media, including mentions of watching videos on the topic on YouTube and reading discussions about AI on X.
- · News articles and articles of various sorts
- Some mentioned learning from other family members, especially if younger and 'tapped in' to Al
- Some mentioned their employers introducing AI processes to them
- Others said they typed questions about AI into Google and other search machines
- Some mentioned learning through AI tools themselves such as ChatGPT

The most common AI platforms mentioned qualitatively were:

- Chat GPT
- Google Gemini
- Microsoft Copilot
- Meta AI
- Grammarly
- Each of these was reportedly used for formulating emails, whether in professional or personal contexts, such as to colleagues, clients or customer queries.
- A large portion of use went towards searching information such as general queries, within which health related questions were mentioned quite commonly.
- Other uses mentioned were for writing business ads, résumés and job applications.



# High interest in AI learning among JFF's focus populations, driven by curiosity

When asked about increasing familiarity with AI tools, almost half (48%) of respondents expressed interest.

Young adults (16-34) showed the highest interest (58%), while people of color (62%) and people with records (54%) also demonstrated above-average interest. Men were more likely than women to express interest (56% vs 42%),



### DRIVERS TO LEARN MORE

Driving this interest for over half of respondents (56%) was curiosity, with almost half (47%) thinking that such tools will benefit them in education/training. At 59%, curiosity was highest for those with records.



People of color expressed more excitement about the potential of such tools compared to the total (45% vs. 40%).

# Consistent barriers across interested groups. Privacy concerns $\P$ and perceived lack of benefits drive reluctance to embrace AI

### Limited time for learning 31% Difficulty in finding reliable information 30% 28% High cost of courses or tools Lack of access to resources (e.g. courses, tools) 25% 20% Limited access to mentorship or guidance My employer hasn't offered training on how to use AI 16% 8% My school hasn't offered training on how to use AI 6% My employer doesn't permit the use of AI at work My school doesn't permit the use of AI 5%

**BIGGEST BARRIERS FOR THOSE WISHING TO LEARN MORE** 

### DETERRANTS FOR THOSE NOT WISHING TO LEARN MORE

Key barriers to AI adoption include a belief that it lacks personal benefit (46%) and privacy concerns (45%).

People of color showed mixed concerns—this group were less likely to feel AI isn't worth their time, showed fewer concerns about privacy and more concern for the climate impacts.

	Total	People of color
I do not think AI tools will benefit me, or it is worth my time/energy	46%	39%
I am concerned about privacy and sharing my personal data with AI tools	45%	35%
I do not agree with the motivations behind the development and deployment of AI tools	35%	31%
I am concerned about potential bias or discrimination	25%	19%
I am concerned that AI use could be viewed as cheating	22%	21%
I am concerned with the energy and climate impacts of AI	17%	24%

Q:. What are the biggest barriers to increasing your familiarity and use of AI tools for work or learning? / Why do you not want to increase your familiarity and use of AI tools?





# Access to AI Tools

# Access to AI tools – predominantly via personal devices



of the total sample had access to broadband internet at home, with similar levels of access seen across all groups. The majority of respondents reported accessing AI tools via a personal smartphone or tablet (57%). Personal laptops or computers (48%) were the second most common access point—with this access method lower for those without a four-year college degree (43%), women (42%), and people with records (41%).



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# Limited personal spending with increased access among JFF's focus populations

1 in 10

Just 10% of respondents overall were personally paying for AI tools. At 15%, people of color were more likely to be paying.



of respondents reported having access to employer- or schoolprovided paid AI tools.

Access was highest among younger age groups, particularly 16-to-34-yearolds (25%). Access was also more common among people of color.



# The greatest barrier to AI for many remains an unfamiliarity with the tools and how to use AI

- Barring those who had little interest in AI, the most commonly mentioned barrier qualitatively was a lack of knowledge of AI tools; where to find the right AI tool for a given task or information about them.
- The next barriers were financial in the direct cost of tools for versions which respondents wanted to use.
- Some respondents also mentioned not fully trusting AI or having concerns about privacy.
- Following this, respondents mentioned the AI not interpreting their prompts correctly, giving false information or struggling to produce the results which respondents expected.
- Fewer respondents mentioned a lack of internet or reliable Wi-Fi connection or devices in order to access AI.
- Notably, Black and Hispanic respondents mentioned comparatively fewer of these difficulties when using AI.

"I don't even know where to look, which tools to access or where to even start" FEMALE, 65+, \$25,000 - \$49,000, OTHER, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

"Well I don't have any money for the paid versions. I can't purchase certain tools although I'd like to all I can do is use the free stuff that comes with the Google searches" MALE, 45-54, LESS THAN \$25,000, OTHER, RECORD OF ARREST, CONVICTION, OR INCARCERATION, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

"Often times my difficulty lies in it misunderstanding me and when I make a correction over time it will completely change the output to something less desirable" MALE, 25-34, LESS THAN \$25,000, OTHER, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

"Bias in AI models, privacy, Security, and Transparency" FEMALE, 45-54, \$25,000 – \$49,000, BLACK, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA





# AI & Work

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# AI in the workplace: usage and preparedness reflect disparities and opportunities

People of color with a four-year degree feel the most prepared to use AI in their jobs, with 26% reporting they have the training and resources needed, compared to 19% overall. Men (21%) are also more likely than women (17%) to feel very prepared. White-collar workers feel more prepared to use AI at work (56% NET prepared) compared to blue-collar workers (40%). Conversely, blue-collar workers are more likely to feel unprepared (23% NET unprepared vs. 17% for white-collar workers), highlighting a gap in training and resources across occupational groups.



More than one-third reported using AI tools in their work. Usage was significantly higher among people of color.



White-collar workers (50%) are more likely to use AI tools at work than bluecollar workers (27%), reflecting greater AI adoption in office-based roles where technology is more integral.

Q:. To the best of your knowledge, are you currently using any AI tools to do your work? / How prepared do you feel to use AI successfully in your job?



# Bridging the AI training gap: workers seek more support from employers

Among workers, 35% reported that their employer provides clear guidance on the use of AI tools, a proportion higher among people of color (44%). Guidance was more likely to be provided for whitecollar workers (45% vs 29% for bluecollar workers).

55%	No, my employer does not have clear guidance
10%	My employer does not allow the use of AI tools
35%	Yes, my employer has clear guidance for how to use Al tools

- 31% of those in work reported that their employer offers training on general AI fundamentals, how to use specific AI tools and systems, or both.
- 34% of the total sample not receiving such training would like their employer to offer it. Less than a fifth of workers (18%) expressed no interest in AI training.
- People of color were more likely to report training availability.
- A substantial 40% of currently employed people with a record, who were not receiving AI training at work, expressed a desire for such training.
- White-collar workers are more likely to receive AI training from their employers (42% total across training types) compared to blue-collar workers (28%).

- Yes, my employer offers training on both general AI fundamentals and specific AI tools and systems
- Yes, my employer offers training on how to use AI tools and systems
- Yes, my employer offers training on general AI fundamentals





# AI tools power content creation, data analysis, and automation

Respondents reported a variety of ways in which they use AI tools at work, with content generation (37%), such as writing emails, social media or drafting reports, being the most common use case.

### USES OF AI: TOTAL SAMPLE



White-collar workers stand out in using AI for innovation (32% vs. 17% for blue-collar workers) and communication support (32% vs. 13%), reflecting their reliance on AI for creative and strategic tasks.

### AMONG JFF'S FOCUS POPULATIONS:

People with records reported higher usage for content generation (52%).

People of color showed above-average usage for data analysis (40%).

Black African American respondents had aboveaverage usage for content generation. Women showed higher usage of AI tools to support customer interactions and project management

People without a four-year college degree were less likely to use AI tools for research purposes.



# AI reduces manual work for some, with most positive impacts for people of color, but many remain unaffected

While 48% of respondents reported that AI has not impacted their responsibilities, a significant proportion highlighted specific effects. People without a four-year degree and women with a four-year degree are more likely to report no impact from AI tools (52% each), suggesting a gap in adoption or integration for these groups.

People of color with a four-year degree report the greatest positive impacts from AI at work, including reduced manual work (23%), workload (20%), and automated tasks (17%), along with more collaborative (15%) and technical (15%) responsibilities.

Blue-collar workers are less likely to report changes in responsibilities, with 51% stating AI has not impacted their work compared to 33% of white-collar workers.

White-collar workers experience more transformative impacts from AI, with higher reports of reduced workloads (23% vs. 10% for blue-collar workers) and shifts toward creative or strategic work (19% vs. 10%), reflecting greater integration of AI in non-manual roles.



Total People of color

### Learners

# AI tools enhance productivity, and shift focus to strategic tasks. Positive experiences outweigh the negative.

Al tools have significantly shaped work experiences, with 36% of respondents currently using Al tools at work stating they make tasks more efficient and productive. They also reduce repetitive tasks (29%) and make jobs more interesting and engaging (26%).

White-collar workers benefit more from reduced repetitive tasks (30%) and creative opportunities (32%)

### 🕨 Positive 🛛 🛑 Negative 🔍 No impact

They make my tasks more efficient and productive They reduce the amount of repetitive or tedious tasks I need to do They provide new learning opportunities and skill development They allow me more time to focus on creative or strategic work They make my job more interesting and engaging They help me achieve a better work/life balance They improve collaboration and communication within my team They create concerns about job security They lead to stress or pressure to constantly learn and adapt to new tools They cause a feeling of being monitored or micromanaged They increase my workload or require me to do more work in less time They decrease job satisfaction due to over-reliance on technology They make my work less interesting or more monotonous They do not have a significant impact on my work experience



36%

# AI is reshaping skill priorities, elevating problemsolving, adaptability and creativity



People of color with a four-year degree report the greatest impact of AI on required skills, with higher emphasis on adaptability and learning new skills (24%), creativity and innovation (24%), and strategic thinking (21%).

People with records highlight increased collaboration (16%) and interpersonal skills (16%) as key areas influenced by AI.

White-collar workers report greater skill shifts due to AI, with increased importance placed on problem-solving (25%), creativity (24%), and technical skills (23%), while blue-collar workers are less likely to see significant skill changes, with 43% indicating no notable impact compared to 30% of white-collar workers.

42%



# AI is expected to make definite changes in people's careers over time though with mixed results

- Many made no differentiation between the timespan of 1-3 years or 3-5, as they were not sure exactly how AI would impact their work concretely to predict this nuance in timeframe.
- Some spoke about how AI would automate some of the repetitive aspects of their work—this was seen as beneficial by some in freeing them up to be more productive while others feared that this would bring their role closer to redundancy.
- Those in practical jobs such as construction, catering or other manual work feared little from AI, seeing their jobs as relatively safe.
- Once again, Black and Hispanic respondents mentioned a more positive outlook comparatively on the streamlining of their work in the near future through AI.

"Streamlining the extraction of data. Will allow me the time to accumulate additional skills." FEMALE, 45-54, \$75,000+, HISPANIC, DEGREE LEVEL

## *"Helping to make my time a little bit easier. A middleman helping to create the bigger picture."*

FEMALE, 25-34, \$50,000 - \$74,000, BLACK, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

"I think AI will most likely take over my work entirely. I plan to develop my own skills to have my own business since I think AI will displace me from my job." FEMALE, 35-44, \$50,000 - \$74,000, OTHER, DEGREE LEVEL

"I see AI doing 75% of what I currently do for work. I am not looking forward to it. I foresee having to learn a bunch of AI tools which will make my job far less satisfying to me." MALE, 35-44, \$25,000 - \$49,000, OTHER, DEGREE LEVEL



# AI & Education



# AI adoption soaring in education: diverse applications and frequent use

Among those in education or looking to continue their studies, the uses of AI were varied. Half (50%) use or intend to use AI for writing assistance, such as grammar and style checking. Notably, only 16% indicated they do not use or plan to use AI in their education or training.

### TOP USES



People of color were the most active users of AI tools in education, particularly for writing assistance (53%) and study aids (42%). This group were the most likely to use AI tools for career guidance (28%). People of color were the most likely to use AI tools on a regular basis in their education or training. 64% use AI weekly or daily compared to 59% of the total sample. Women with a four-year degree are more likely to report never using AI tools (18%) compared to the total (14%).





## AI boosting efficiency and learning, but trust and preferences pose barriers

### DRIVERS

Among respondents who use AI tools on at least a monthly basis in their education or training, the reasons were varied and broadly consistent for JFF's focus populations.

To enhance learning and understanding of complex subjects	
To complete assignments or projects more efficiently	44%
To prepare for exams or assessments	44%
To improve research and data analysis capabilities	39%
To explore additional learning resources and study materials	37%
To gain access to Al-driven tutoring or assistance	34%
To receive personalized feedback or recommendations for improvement	31%

People of color were more likely to be driven by improving research and data analysis capabilities (45%) and receiving personalized feedback (39%).

### BARRIERS

Trust and preference dominate as primary barriers to Al use in education. About one-third cite a lack of trust in Al tools or a preference for traditional learning methods. Privacy concerns and perceived lack of value are noted by a quarter, while limited awareness or institutional support is a barrier for a small minority.

(Note: Small base size of 58, interpret with caution.)

Q:. What are the main reasons you use AI tools frequently in your education or training? Please select all that apply. / What are the main reasons you are not frequently using AI tools in your education or training? Please select all that apply.

AI FOR WORKERS

EARNERS

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# AI has been used and relied on by many in an educational setting

- Overall, AI was reported to have played a beneficial role in education among the majority of respondents who answered this question.
- Al had helped on an organizational level with scheduling of tasks, helping keep students on track and generally allowed many respondents to complete work more quickly and efficiently.
- It specifically helped with tasks as varied as math problems, idea generation for topics, checking grammar and proofreading, and compiling flashcards. The use of ChatGPT to start off ideas for papers or answer questions was particularly prominent.
- Only a few mentioned that AI had not helped them because there were too many concerns with plagiarism or that AI didn't make them any smarter, resisting the idea of AI being used for intellectual tasks.

"They have helped me create reminders, create content, they've helped me learn about things."

FEMALE, 45-54, \$25,000 - \$49,000, OTHER, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

*"I used to ask AI for ideas to start me off"* MALE, 25-34, LESS THAN \$25,000, BLACK, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

"Yes in education and with writing papers you sometimes need guidance and chat GPT is a great source" FEMALE, 35-44, \$50,000 - \$74,000, BLACK, DEGREE LEVEL

"Yes, I could be doing some other assignments while the AI is taking my notes for me. It also helps when I have a question." MALE, 35-44, \$75,000+, HISPANIC, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

"No, AI does not help cognitive skills but makes humans use less intelligence"

MALE, 35-44, \$25,000 - \$50,000, BLACK, RECORD OF ARREST, CONVICTION, OR INCARCERATION, DEGREE LEVEL



# AI in education: balancing integration, relationships, and collaboration

### **AI INTEGRATION IN EDUCATION**

57% of students report AI tools being incorporated into lessons.

21%

seeing frequent use and 36% occasional integration by teachers/instructors.

24%

want AI integration, but aren't experiencing it, while 20% prefer no AI integration.

IMPACT ON STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS

29%

feel more supported through Al-assisted resources, and 22% feel more connected to teachers.

An almost equal proportion note both increases and decreases in 1:1 time and communication effectiveness (16% vs. 15%).

23%

Almost a quarter (23%) of respondents indicate that Al tools have had no significant impact on their relationship with their teachers/instructors.

### IMPACT ON PEER RELATIONSHIPS

22%

reported improved collaboration through Alfacilitated group projects, but 21% claimed to find collaboration more difficult. People of color were more likely to cite improved collaboration.

20%

report both spending more and less time collaborating with peers, highlighting mixed outcomes.

17%

claimed to feel feel more connected to peers through enhanced group discussions and teamwork.

19% feel more isolated or less connected to teachers and peers due to AI replacing interactions.

# Mixed AI policies in education and training gaps

10% of students report full permission and encouragement. Restricted use is the most common approach, reported by over a guarter (27%), while 23% note AI is only allowed for non-assessment purposes.

# 

•	Fully permitted and encouraged	
	Allowed with some restrictions	27%
	Allowed only for non-assessment purposes	23%
	Prohibited in all exams, assessments, and assignments	18%
	I'm not sure what the policy is	17%
	Does not apply to me	6%

Training on AI tools in education shows varied 38% effectiveness: 15% of students found their training of respondents highly effective, rising to 20% among people of color. reported receiving no training Yes, and the training was highly effective Yes, and the training was somewhat effective 42% NET EFFECTIVE 35% 32% 28% 22% 20% 19% 15%



Q:. What is your school's or educational institution's policy on the use of AI tools in exams, assessments, and assignments? / Have you received any training on how to use AI tools in your education from your education or training provider? If so, how effective was it?

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# AI tools shaping educational experiences



### OTHER SUPPORT OFFERED BY AI



27% 25% 24% 24% 23% 21%

It has made group projects and collaboration more effective

# AI is seen to offer great benefits despite concerns over the mis-or overuse of AI tools in an educational setting

- Overall, younger respondents appeared more positive about the benefits of AI tools in education, though respondents across all age groups saw the danger of overusing such tools.
- Respondents mainly spoke about the opportunities to use AI as a research tool, to find answers to questions more quickly and guide them through processes, and to become an assistant in the education process overall.
- However, some expressed concerns about relying on such tools too heavily, quality of work potentially decreasing if simply copying the answers from AI tools, or taking over key cognitive tasks which would leave students less developed.

*"It explains certain topics in a clear and consistent manner"* MALE, 16-24, \$75,000+, BLACK, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

*"I think it provides a variety of learning opportunities"* FEMALE, 25-34, \$50,000-\$74,000, BLACK, DEGREE LEVEL

"A great research tool with personalized answers to you. But the line is thin in regards to what is acceptable use of AI and what is not"

FEMALE, 35-44, \$50,000 - \$74,000, OTHER, RECORD OF ARREST, CONVICTION, OR INCARCERATION, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

"The challenge would be to actually have the students learn something and think about things instead of the AI doing it" MALE, 55-65, \$25,000 - \$49,000, OTHER, RECORD OF ARREST, CONVICTION, OR INCARCERATION, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA





Impact on Career Pathways



## AI as a tool for economic mobility: opportunities yet to be fully realized

*AI tools support job seekers in résumé building and skill matching with similar usage across JFF's focus populations.* 



A notable proportion of both white-collar (32%) and blue-collar (31%) workers report encountering AI tools during job application processes, highlighting AI's growing presence in recruitment across a range of occupational sectors. 19% of respondents used AI tools to get a better job. 9% reported significant career improvements while 10% reported minimal impact. People of color were most likely to have experienced significant benefits (17%). While the majority (61%) have not yet used Al for job advancement, nearly one in five (18%) plan to explore Al for job improvements/career growth in the future, with interest being slightly higher among people with records (21%).

Yes, and it led to a significant career improvement			significant t	Pre	Prefer not to say: 2%	
9%	6 10%		61%		18%	
es, but the impact was minimal			No, I have not used AI for job improvement	No, b AI for	ut I plan to use this purpose in the future	

White-collar workers are more likely to report significant career improvements from using AI (18%) compared to blue-collar workers (13%), highlighting a stronger impact of AI on upward mobility in professional roles. However, blue-collar workers show slightly higher interest in future AI use for job advancement (22% vs. 16%).

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# AI is becoming a key support in the job application process

1 in 5 20% of respondents reported

encountering AI tools during a job application process, including interviews.

This experience was more common among people of color (28%) and people with a record (29%).

- Many spoke about using AI to help create résumés, both the text and format, as well as occasionally using it for prompts on questions on the actual application forms.
- Some also used AI as a research tool to find out more about certain areas or industries which might help their application or asked for advice on how to handle interviews.
- Some described potential employers were using AI to screen for bots, to screen applications and even to conduct initial interviews.
- A few mentioned that their interviews were conducted through a chatbot, which seemed to be a neutral experience for some. However, a few others said this was frustrating as the bot didn't always understand their responses.

## *"It provides excellent information and helps me build my résumé when searching for a job"*

FEMALE, 35-44, LESS THAN \$25,000, OTHER, RECORD OF ARREST, CONVICTION, OR INCARCERATION, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

## "It helps you to think of what to say or which words would work well"

FEMALE, 25-34, \$50,000 - \$74,000, BLACK, DEGREE LEVEL

"It helped me answer questions on the application form which made filling it out a lot easier" FEMALE, 25-34, \$75,000+, BLACK, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

"I have used AI to help build my résumé when searching for a job and it created a better résumé format for me" FEMALE, 35-44, LESS THAN \$25,000, OTHER, RECORD OF ARREST, CONVICTION, OR INCARCERATION, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

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# Multiple benefits for those using AI to enhance their careers

- Respondents answering this question were clear and very positive about the ways in which AI had helped their careers.
- Many responses noted personal organization and a streamlining of tasks in order to be more efficient as well as more creative in their writing and idea generation.
- Some had leveraged AI in order to write successful business proposals or gain advice on how best to approach a strategic matter.
- Others had made use of aspects such as enhanced analysis of data sets and models to inform their business decisions with positive outcomes.

## *"I have reduced repetitive tasks and been more creative in my written communication"*

FEMALE, 45-54, \$25,000 - \$49,000, BLACK, RECORD OF ARREST, CONVICTION, OR INCARCERATION, DEGREE LEVEL

"As a small business owner, I use AI supported software to create marketing content that is helping to grow my business" FEMALE, 45-54, \$50,000 - \$74,000, OTHER, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

"AI has enhanced my organization by helping me make more informed decisions based on data analysis and predictive modelling"

FEMALE, 35-44, \$75,000+, BLACK, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

### "I got a raise because AI told me how to more efficiently maintain apartments where I am property manager"

SELF-ASCRIBED GENDER, 25-34, \$50,000-\$74,000, OTHER, RECORD OF ARREST, CONVICTION, OR INCARCERATION, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

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## AI for career transformation: people of color most influenced in decisions

People of color stand out as being more influenced by AI in their career decisions; due to its impact, 12% actively pursue a different career path. Additionally, this group shows a heightened likelihood of considering career changes in the near future (18%).

The impact of AI is prompting more white-collar workers to consider near-term career changes (21%) compared to bluecollar workers (15%). However, blue-collar workers are slightly more likely to consider long-term career changes (19% vs. 15%).

### • Yes, I have changed my plans and am actively pursuing a different career as a result of the impact of AI

- Yes, I am considering changing my career paths or work in the near future as a result of the impact of AI
- I'm considering changing my career paths / work someday, but not in the near future, as a result
- No, I don't believe I need to change career paths as a result of the impact of AI
- Don't know/Not sure



### CHANGED PLANS OR CHANGING PLANS AS A RESULT OF THE IMPACT OF AI



# AI is causing both push and pull factors away from and toward certain industries

- The rise of AI has many feeling that they need to learn more about this technology to compete in the workplace later on. Some say they plan to educate themselves either formally or informally on AI.
- Some mentioned that the most lucrative jobs may be in the tech industry, as part of the workforce controlling or working with AI, and they are targeting jobs in this area.
- Those in industries perceived to be threatened by the rise of AI, such as the creative industries, were pessimistic, fearing that their skills would become redundant and they would have to retrain.

"I plan to educate myself further on AI. I might want to get into the tech field to really make use of my new skills" FEMALE, 25-34, \$75,000+, BLACK, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

"I plan on learning as much as possible about AI either through my own on the Internet or taking a course at my local city college"

MALE, 55-64, \$25,000 - \$49,000, HISPANIC, HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

"I realize that many of the things I am good at and enjoy doing, will likely be taken over by AI. I work in a creative field. Because of how popular AI is becoming, I am actively thinking of different areas to pursue"

MALE, 35-44, \$25,000 - \$49,000, OTHER, DEGREE LEVEL

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of people of color feel the need to gain new skills as a result of the impact of Al tools on their work or education, compared to 53% of the total.

### **47%** №

53% Yes

56%

yes

11%

12%

13%

20%

People with records

Over half of the total sample feel the need to gain new skills.

White-collar workers feel a more immediate need to gain new skills due to AI, with 67% identifying a timeframe for skill building compared to 53% of blue-collar workers. Notably, 1 in 5 of both groups feel the need for immediate skill acquisition, reflecting growing awareness of AI's impact across both occupational groups.



Q:. Do you feel the need to gain new skills as a result of the impact of AI tools on your work or education and, if so, in what timeframe?

Yes, immediately
Yes, in the next 6-12 months
Yes, in the next two years
Yes, in 3-5 years plius

## **Strategic Recommendations:** AI's Transformative Potential

### Expand Access to Al Tools and Training

- Develop programs targeting groups facing barriers to ensure broad access to AI resources.
- Collaborate with employers to provide Al-specific training and mentorship.

## Foster Awareness and Adoption

- Address privacy concerns and misconceptions to encourage broader adoption of AI tools.
- Promote AI literacy through accessible educational campaigns.
- Address barriers like limited time, cost, and mentorship opportunities to expand AI familiarity and competency.

## Leverage AI for Economic Advancement

- Highlight Al's potential in automating tasks, enabling career changes, and enhancing innovation.
- Create targeted pathways for groups facing barriers to use AI for skillbuilding and career growth.
- Expand access to paid AI tools through institutional or employer sponsorships, particularly for populations facing barriers.

Bridging disparities in AI literacy and access can empower all demographics to leverage AI for skill-building, career growth, and economic opportunity.

