AI in the Racial Wealth Gap: deciding our future

the CENTER for Civil Rights and Technology

For educators

Recommendations to ensure AI systems help close the racial wealth gap.

The evidence presented in this report demonstrates that without deliberate and outcome-oriented interventions, AI will likely amplify the racial wealth gap rather than narrow it. To be clear, this does not have to be a foregone conclusion. AI technologies can produce positive outcomes when developed, tested, and adopted with principled and civil-rights-protective guardrails. But without safeguards, governance, and corrective measures, AI risks reinforcing existing disparities under the guise of neutrality and efficiency.

AI is transforming the workforce with unequal consequences. A substantial body of scholarship documents how AI-driven automation accelerates worker displacement, how concerned communities are about AI's impact on jobs, and raises serious concerns about the racial wealth gap. Studies consistently show that the jobs most susceptible to automation are disproportionately held by people of color, particularly by Black women.

Educators preparing the next generation of workers must do so responsibly. To address these concerns, transparency and accountability in algorithmic decision-making must be established.

- **Prioritize future-proof skills.** One of the most important strategies to mitigate the effects of AI job displacement is to shift from preparing workers for "future-proof jobs" to preparing them with "future-proof skills." Reskilling workers with transferable competencies can help reduce displacement from future waves of automation. This will require collaboration with employers to determine what skills they are looking for in future hires.

- **Prioritize pathways into occupations with low automation risk.** Workforce development efforts should focus on occupations with low automation potential across education pathways to support long-term economic mobility. Roles that require sustained human presence, judgment, and care, such as hands-on health professionals, remain essential. More broadly, occupations with low AI adoption tend to rely on skills that are difficult to automate, including those requiring high emotional intelligence (such as therapy or communications management), physical presence and dexterity (such as physical therapy), and the ability to navigate problem-solving (such as leadership roles).