



The racial wealth gap in the United States is one of the most persistent measures of economic inequality. Without safeguards, AI will widen this gap – not narrow it.

To better understand how AI systems affect individuals and shape the racial wealth gap, we conducted a literature and policy review alongside exploratory qualitative interviews with people of color. The interviews revealed seven key takeaways:

- 1 AI is scaling existing patterns of racial discrimination.**
Systems trained on historically biased data reproduce those biases across millions of decisions simultaneously.

- 2 The harm is not domain-specific.**
Housing, employment, and lending are connected by shared AI-powered infrastructure. Exclusion in one domain actively damages access in the others.

- 3 Communities of color are disproportionately exposed to AI's impacts on wealth.**
91% of Black Americans see AI as a job threat; 24% of Black workers are in roles with 75%+ automation potential; Black mortgage applicants are 80% more likely to be denied.

- 4 AI hardens the structural barriers faced by first-generation wealth-builders.**
AI has been given the authority to make life-altering decisions, it cannot take context into account in the same way that a human decision-maker could.

5 **People cannot fight what they cannot see.**
The transparency deficit means most participants had no idea AI was involved in decisions that shaped their financial lives — and no path to appeal.

6 **Generational wealth feels unattainable to many.**
The compounding weight of algorithmic barriers makes generational wealth feel structurally out of reach, not just personally difficult.

7 **AI could help close the racial wealth gap, with safeguards.**
With guardrails and equitable development and deployment, AI could be a beneficial tool to support economic mobility and increase generational wealth.