



RACIAL DIFFERENCES ON THE FUTURE OF WORK: A SURVEY OF THE AMERICAN WORKFORCE

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Executive Summary

This report summarizes findings from the Joint Center’s 2018 survey of 2,000 Black, Latino, Asian American, and White workers on the future of work.

- **While 38 percent of American workers reported “increased use of technology” on their job, only 12 percent noticed “more automation.”** More White and Asian American respondents saw technological change than did Latino and African American respondents.
- **A quarter of Latino workers reported moving from salaried to hourly work** over the course of their current employment—more than twice the percentage of other racial groups.
- **Americans of all racial backgrounds are more likely to believe that technology provides more opportunity rather than less opportunity and/or worker displacement.** Racial disparities exist, however. For example, 41 percent of Asian American workers see technology as creating greater opportunities, compared with only 24 percent of Black workers. African American and Latino workers are significantly less likely than White and Asian American workers to see technology as creating greater workplace efficiencies.
- **American workers value job security above other benefits, including pathways to new opportunities and paid training.** However, Black and Asian American workers see job security as particularly important. About 40 percent of African American and 38 percent of Asian American workers ranked job security as the most important benefit offered by their employer. A relatively low number of African American and White workers—7 percent of each—prioritized pathways to new opportunities. Latino workers, more than workers of other racial groups, value retirement benefits and pathways to new opportunities. White workers were more likely than others to value healthcare benefits.

- **Workers are interested in employer-provided training.** Respondents from all racial backgrounds were very interested or somewhat interested in participating in employer-provided training (85 percent of Asian American workers and approximately 70 percent of White, Black, and Latino workers).
- **A majority of respondents from all racial backgrounds are willing to invest some of their own money to obtain additional job training that could potentially advance their careers.** However, the interest seems concentrated in spending \$1–\$2000 and declines significantly for higher amounts. A larger percentage of African Americans (24 percent) and Whites (19 percent) expressed an unwillingness to invest any of their own money in training than Latinos (15 percent) and Asian Americans (14 percent). Significant racial disparities in interest for spending one’s own money for training begin to appear at amounts over \$500.
- **Regardless of race, financial constraints were the most cited barrier to obtaining additional job training.** Roughly 50 percent of the respondents from each racial group reported that financial constraints stood in the way of obtaining additional job training. The least cited barrier was feeling personally incapable of acquiring new skills.
- **Americans across racial groups generally see the federal government, individuals/families, and employers as bearing greater responsibility than schools and state governments for preparing the workforce for a changing economy.** However, African Americans were more likely to believe that the federal government has the greatest responsibility, and they were less likely to believe that individuals/families bear the greatest responsibility. Whites and Asian Americans were more likely than African Americans and Latinos to believe that employers bear the greatest responsibility.
- **A significant majority of Americans support free college or training as a response to job displacement.** African Americans (85 percent) expressed the highest support of this policy, followed by Asian Americans (78 percent), Latinos (75 percent), and Whites (70 percent). In addition, people of color favored a federal jobs guarantee and universal basic income as policy solutions to job displacement.
- **People of color have a significant interest in education and training.** Asian Americans, African Americans, and Latinos were all more likely than Whites to be interested in obtaining education or training from all the provided options, including a college degree program, online college, community college, online training, a trade union, and a GED.
- **With regard to the most impactful steps schools can take to prepare children for the future economy,** African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans were much more likely than Whites to prioritize teaching computer programming. Latino and White Americans were more likely than African Americans and Asian Americans to prioritize vocational training. African Americans and Whites were more likely than Asian Americans and Latinos to prioritize core educational subjects such as math, science, and language arts.