

Findings on AI, Higher Education, Affordability, and Achieving the American Dream

In a time of rapid technological transformation, Merit America, a national nonprofit that prepares workers in low-wage roles for family-sustaining careers, commissioned HarrisX to conduct unique research into how low-wage workers in **Boston** and nationwide feel about the economy, higher education, the rise of artificial intelligence, and whether the American Dream is achievable today.

Low-wage Boston Workers are Particularly Concerned about the Rise of AI

NATIONAL	BOSTON	
-4	-14	Boston workers feel more negative than positive about AI compared to the rest of the country.
70%	77%	Would stop the development of AI that could eliminate jobs.
56%	63%	Believe the U.S. government isn't prepared to address opportunities and challenges posed by AI.

Job Training Better Prepares for Success over Traditional Higher Ed

73%	75%	Think job training and reskilling programs are a better road to the American Dream than traditional higher education.
62%	69%	Feel the current higher education system doesn't provide a good return on investment.
67%	74%	Would prefer the government invest in job training rather than social support programs to combat potential AI job losses.

The American Dream is Moving Further Out of Reach

66%	73%	Doubt the average household can make enough money to reach the American Dream.
57%	67%	Feel the American Dream is less attainable today than it was for previous generations.
70%	73%	Feel their household is currently not on track to achieve the American Dream.

Methodology

The survey was conducted via online panel, and included a base sample of n=1,000 lower-wage workers nationwide and oversamples of at least n=200 lower-wage workers in key states (Colorado, Florida, Texas, Utah, and Washington) and metro areas (Atlanta, The Bay Area, Boston, Los Angeles, and New York City) weighted down into the base to create a total sample of 3,048 lower-wage workers. Survey results were weighted for age, gender, race, and region to U.S. Census data to align with proportions within the population. The sampling margin of error in this poll at the national level is +/- 3.1%. Margin of error is larger among subgroups.