

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

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Technology in the Public Interest – 2026 Poll

Illinois Residents Are Using AI,
But Remain Skeptical About Its
Impact and Want Stronger
Oversight

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Adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become widespread in Illinois, yet residents remain cautious about its implications. A new poll finds that while most Illinois residents have used AI tools, many express reservations about the technology's reliability, its effects on children, its impact on the future of work, and whether current regulation and safeguards are adequate.

AI has become a regular part of everyday life for many Illinois residents. A new statewide survey conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago finds that nearly eight in ten Illinois adults have used at least one type of AI tool, with AI chatbots becoming particularly common. Residents most often use AI to search for information, but many also use it to brainstorm ideas and assist with writing.

Yet widespread adoption has not translated into widespread confidence – only 12% are very or extremely confident that information produced by AI is reliable and factual, while 40% are not too or not at all confident. Even among those who use AI regularly, only about one-quarter say they are very or extremely confident in their understanding of AI.

When it comes to AI technology's broader impact, Illinois residents have mixed opinions. About half (51%) view AI as equally good and bad for society, while 26% think it is mostly a bad thing versus 14% who think it is mostly a good thing. More Illinois residents say they are pessimistic (58%) than optimistic (41%) about its impact in the next 10 years, and most (72%) do not believe they will ever trust AI to make decisions on their behalf.

Concerns about AI are especially pronounced when it comes to children and education. A large majority of Illinois residents (86%) feel parents do not have enough information to guide their children's use of AI. Illinois residents are particularly worried that AI may make it easier for children to avoid developing important skills, expose them to misinformation, reduce social interaction, and create new privacy risks. Support for AI in education follows a clear pattern: residents favor applications that provide accessibility and support but are more hesitant about uses that directly influence teaching or learning decisions. Majorities support using AI to help students with disabilities (63%) and provide translation services (61%), while fewer than half favor AI for personalized tutoring (46%) or helping teachers grade assignments (42%).

Looking ahead, residents expect AI to reshape the workplace, and some are seeing disruptions to their jobs already. About a third say AI has already required them to learn new skills, and a quarter report it has replaced some of their job duties. Looking ahead, even more expect AI will require them to learn new skills or change the nature of their job. Nearly half of Illinois residents are at least somewhat concerned that AI will replace jobs in their line of work and 70% think it will eliminate more jobs than it creates. Many residents place responsibility for helping workers adapt to AI technology on AI companies themselves (62%), employers (56%) and educational institutions (53%). Still, about three-quarters say it is at least somewhat important for Illinois to invest in job training and education programs to help workers prepare for an AI-driven economy.

Illinois residents also express skepticism about the data center infrastructure supporting AI technology. While awareness of data centers is relatively high (62%), residents are generally more likely to anticipate harm than benefit from local data center development. More residents believe data centers would hurt rather than help local job creation (36% vs. 21%), economic investment (36% vs. 20%), and tax revenue (32% vs. 21%). Opposition is strongest when facilities are proposed close to where people live, with 68% opposing a data center in their neighborhood versus 46% opposing one anywhere in Illinois.

Taken together, the findings suggest that Illinois residents see both promise and risk in the rise of AI. They have embraced many AI tools and recognize their potential benefits, but they also express substantial concerns about impacts on children, jobs, communities, and society more broadly. Reflecting those concerns, residents support stronger oversight of AI and believe existing regulation is insufficient. Overall two-thirds (66%) believe AI should be regulated a great deal or quite a bit, and among AI users, 68% say current regulation is insufficient. However, Illinois residents have limited trust in governments, technology companies, and other institutions to oversee AI development in ways that serve the public interest.

This poll was conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago, with funding from the MacArthur Foundation, from July 9 to July 28, 2026. It used TrueNorth®, which combines a sample from AmeriSpeak®, NORC's probability-based panel, with a non-probability panel sample. Online and telephone interviews were conducted with 1,241 Illinois adults. The margin of sampling error is +/- 4.1 percentage points.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) adoption is widespread among Illinois residents, but use remains concentrated in information seeking.

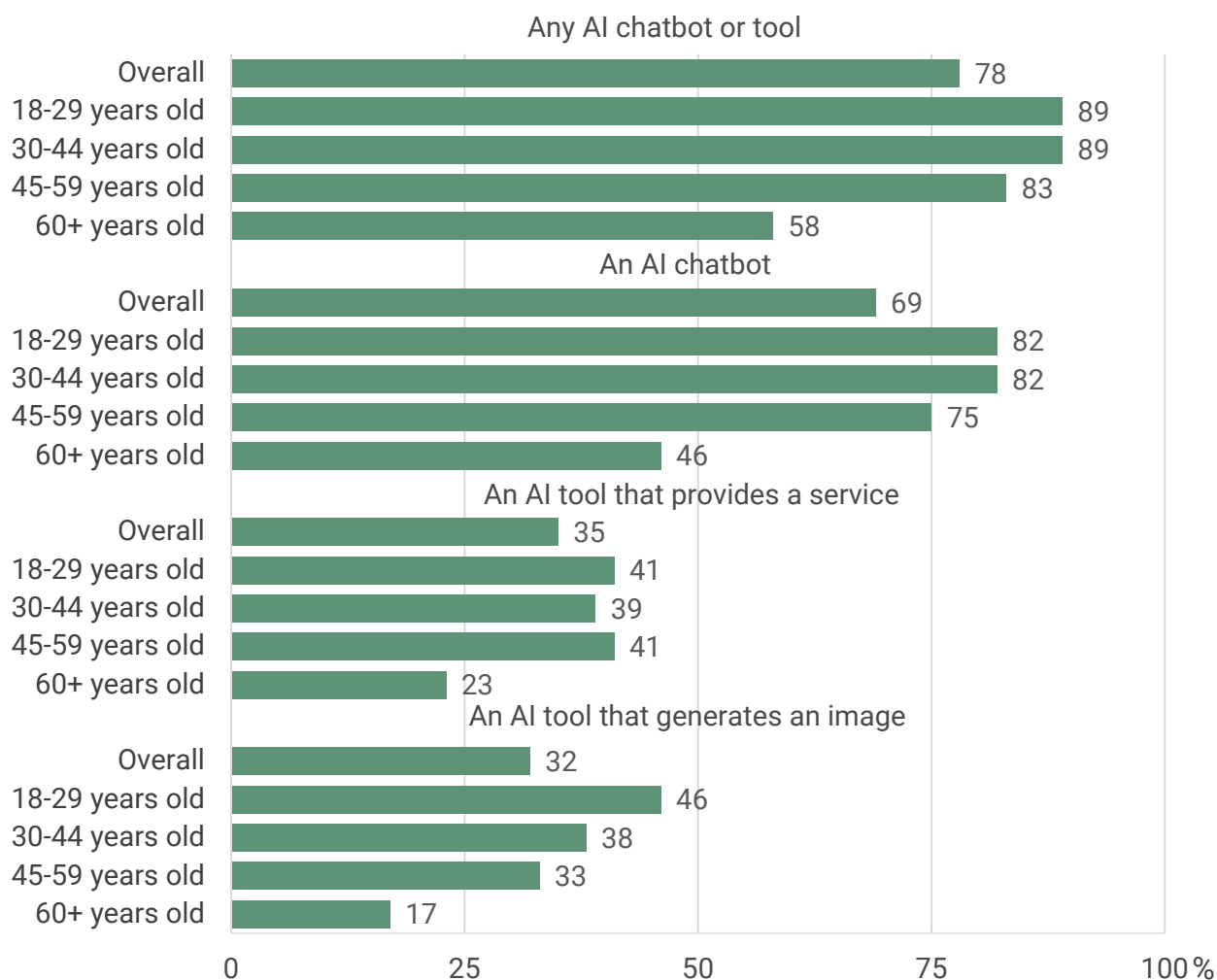
AI¹ use, whether through a chatbot, service, or image-generating tool, has become common among Illinoisians. About two-thirds (69%) have used an AI chatbot such as ChatGPT, Gemini, CoPilot or Claude. About a third have used an AI tool that provides a service such as returning an item or ordering food (35%), or one that generates an image based on a prompt (32%). Overall, 78% have used at least one of these tools.

¹ For this survey, respondents were provided with the following definition of artificial intelligence: The following questions refer to artificial intelligence (AI), which refers to advanced computer systems that can perform tasks typically requiring human intelligence, such as understanding language, recognizing patterns, making decisions, and creating content. Examples of AI tools include chatbots like ChatGPT and Google Gemini, facial recognition technology, smart assistants, and AI-powered analytics tools.

Adults 60 and older are less likely than those ages 18-59 to have ever used an AI chatbot or tool for generating images or providing services.

Most residents of Illinois have used an AI chatbot or tool.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois



Question: Have you ever used any of the following types of AI tools?

Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois.

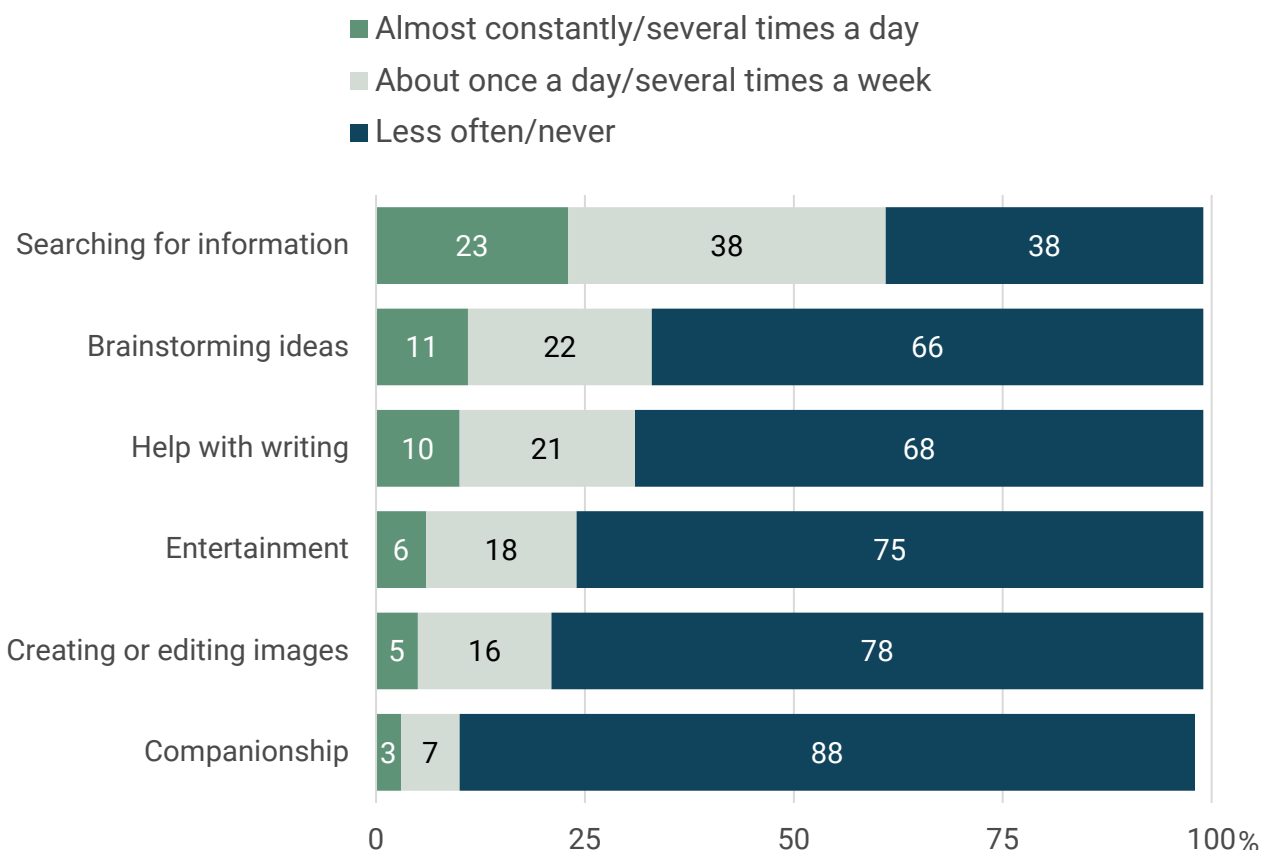
More adults with a college degree than those without a college degree have ever used AI (84% vs. 75%), including AI chatbots like ChatGPT (78% vs. 65%).

When it comes to specific uses of AI, searching for information is the most common of those asked about in the survey, with 61% using AI for this purpose at least several times a week, followed by

brainstorming ideas (33%), help with writing (31%), entertainment (24%), creating or editing images (21%), and companionship (10%).

Most Illinois residents search for information using AI at least several times a week.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois



Question: About how often do you use specific AI tools, such as AI chatbots, image generators, or AI features embedded in mobile applications, for each of the following?

Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

Adults ages 18-59 are more likely than those 60 and older to have used AI for at least one of the activities listed above. More specifically, a larger share of adults under 30 than those 60 and older use AI at least several times a week for help with writing (34% vs. 18%), brainstorming ideas (49% vs. 18%), or creating or editing images (31% vs. 13%).

Employed adults more often than those not currently working to use AI to search for information (66% vs. 55%), brainstorm ideas (39% vs. 25%), get help with writing (36% vs. 22%), or create or edit images (24% vs. 17%).

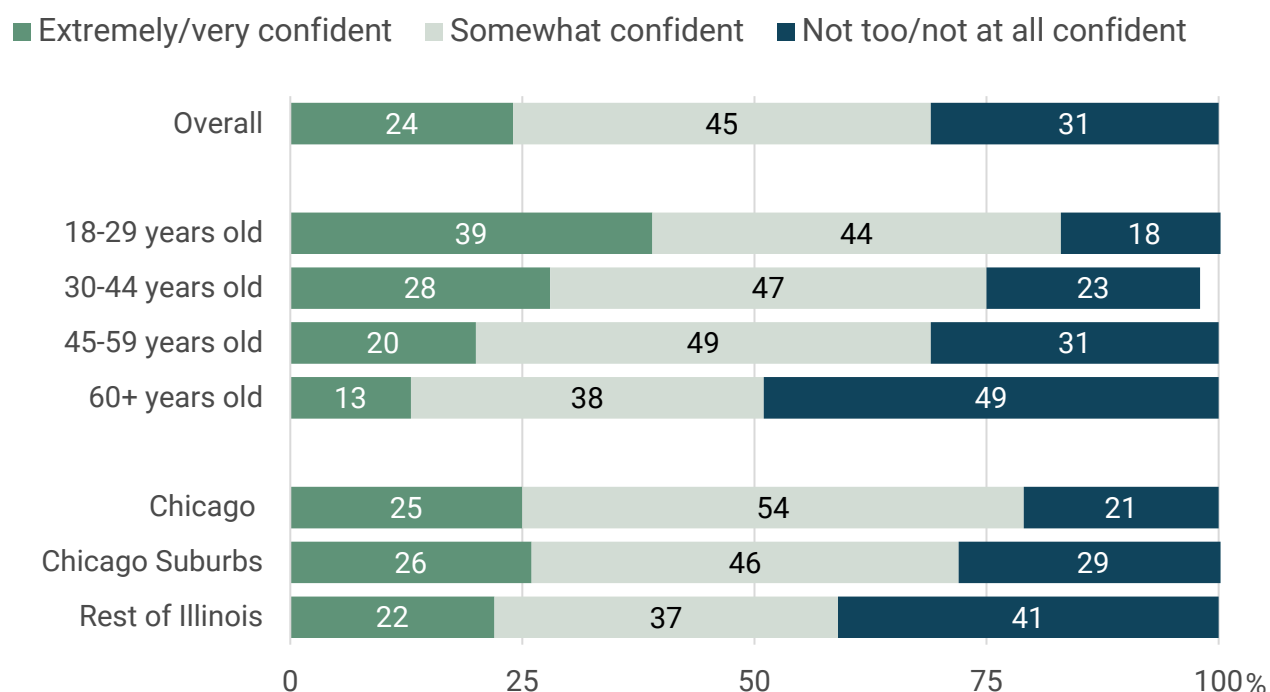
Despite high rates of use, Illinois residents remain skeptical about AI's reliability and pessimistic about its long-term impact.

Nearly seven in ten AI users report at least some confidence in their ability to use AI tools (69%), but only about one-quarter say they are very or extremely confident in their understanding of how to use AI.

But some groups are more confident than others. Adults under 30 are more likely than those 60 and older to say they are at least somewhat confident that they understand how to use AI (82% vs. 51%). Residents of Chicago and the greater Chicago metropolitan region are also more confident than Illinois residents living elsewhere in the state (79% and 71% vs. 58%).

Those living in the Chicagoland area are more confident in their ability to use AI than residents in other parts of the state.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois who use AI



Question: How confident are you that you personally understand how to use AI tools?

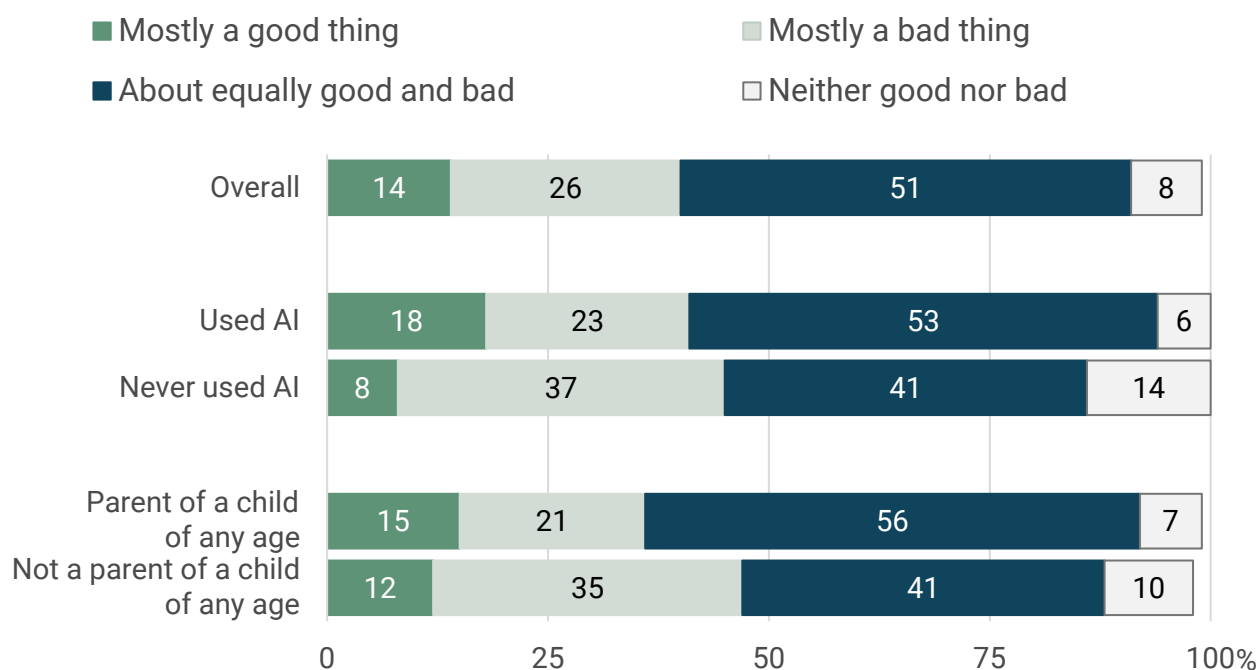
Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

When it comes to the use of AI in society, about half of Illinois residents view AI as having both benefits and drawbacks, with 51% thinking its use is equally good and bad. But an additional 26% think AI is mostly a bad thing, while just 14% think it is mostly a good thing. Eight percent say it is neither good nor bad.

Residents who have never used an AI chatbot or tool are more likely than AI users to say AI is mostly a bad thing for society, as are those without children compared with parents.

AI users are less likely to say AI is a bad thing for society.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois



Question: Overall, do you think the use of AI in society is mostly a good thing, mostly a bad thing, about equally good and bad, or neither good nor bad?

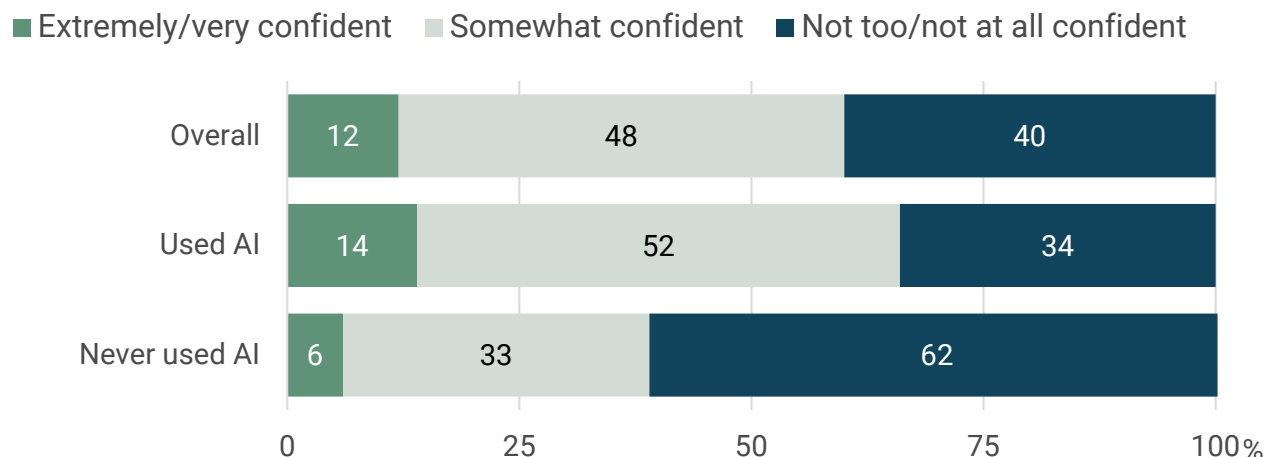
Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

Additionally, white adults are more likely than Black adults to think AI is mostly a bad thing for society (31% vs. 19%).

Even with high rates of use to gather information, confidence in AI-generated information is relatively low. Only 12% are very or extremely confident that information produced by AI is reliable and factual, while 40% are not too or not at all confident. Those who have used AI are more confident in its reliability than those who have not.

Even among AI users, few express high confidence in the reliability of the information it produces.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois



Question: How confident are you that information produced by AI, such as through chatbots, search results, etc. is reliable and factual?

Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

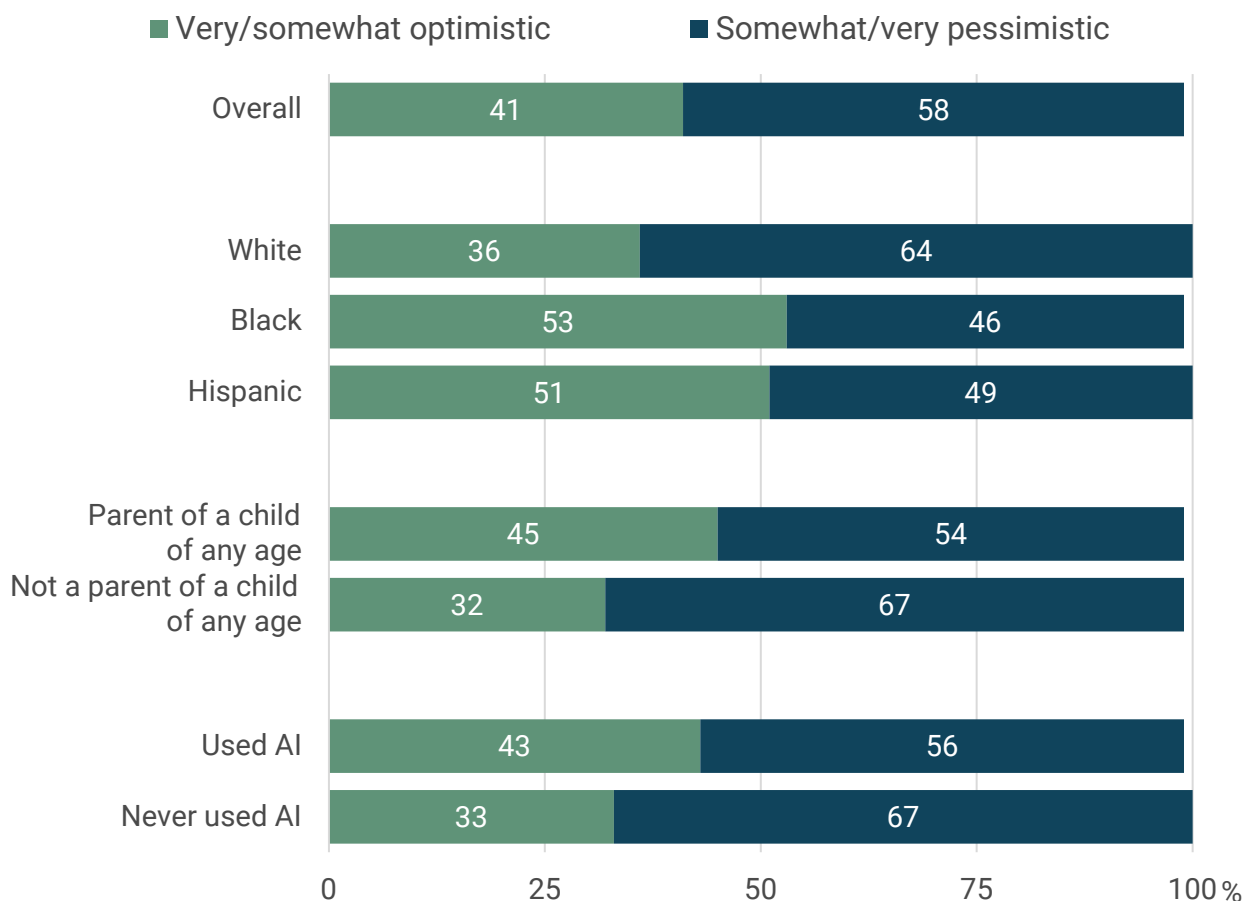
White adults are more likely than Hispanic or Black adults to have less confidence in AI's ability to produce factual information (46% vs. 33% and 26%, respectively).

Illinois residents are more pessimistic than optimistic about the long-term impact of AI on people's lives. Nearly six in ten (58%) are somewhat or very pessimistic, compared with 41% who are somewhat or very optimistic.

Black and Hispanic adults are more likely than white adults to feel optimistic about how AI will impact people in the future (53% and 51% vs. 36%), as are those who have ever used AI compared to those who have not (43% vs. 33%) and parents compared with those without children (45% vs. 32%).

More than half are pessimistic about the impact AI will have on people's lives over the next 10 years.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois



Question: How optimistic or pessimistic do you feel about the impact AI will have on people's lives over the next 10 years?

Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

Men are more optimistic than women about the future of AI (46% vs. 36%).

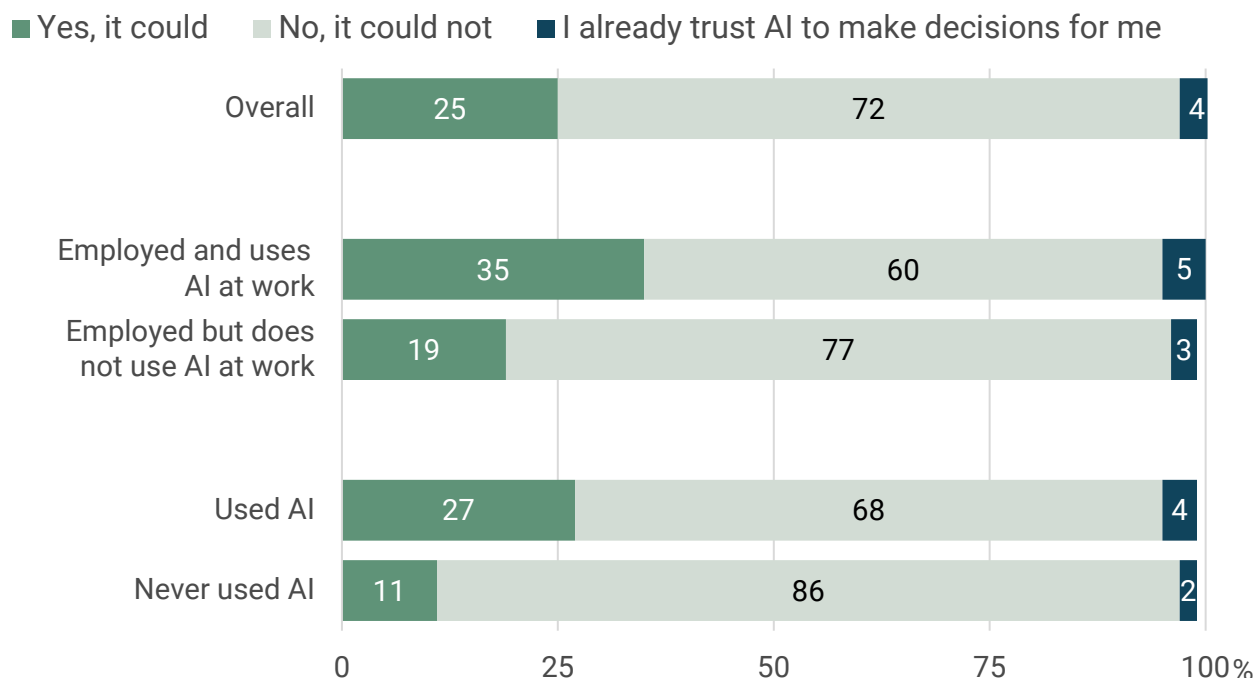
Given this lack of confidence in its reliability and pessimism about its impact, most Illinois residents do not think they will ever trust AI with decision-making. Nearly three-quarters (72%) say AI could never reach a point where they would trust it to make decisions for them, while 24% say it could someday. Four percent say they already do trust it to make decisions for them.

Familiarity appears closely linked to trust in AI to make decisions. Those who have not used AI are more likely than AI users to say they would never trust AI to make decisions for them, as are employed adults who do not use AI tools in their job compared with those who do.

More men than women say AI could get to a point where they could trust it to make decisions for them (33% vs. 15%).

3 in 4 do not think AI will get to the point where they could trust it to make decisions for them.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois



Question: Do you think AI could ever get to a point where you would trust it to make decisions for you?

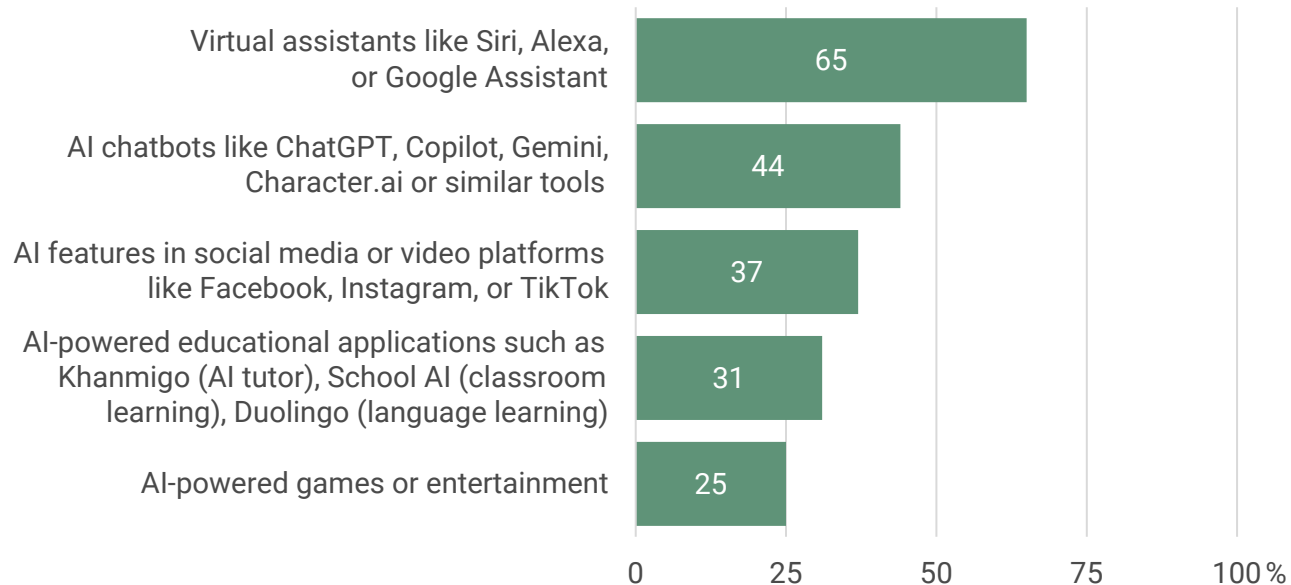
Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

Residents express significant concern about children's use of AI, though there is some support for specific educational applications.

AI-powered technologies are already part of many children's lives. Among parents of children ages 6-17, 65% report their children use virtual assistants, 44% report the use of AI chatbots, 37% report the use of AI features embedded in social media platforms, 31% report the use of AI-powered educational applications, and 25% report the use of AI-powered games or entertainment.

Many Illinois residents report their children using AI powered technologies.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois who have children ages 6-17 and report yes



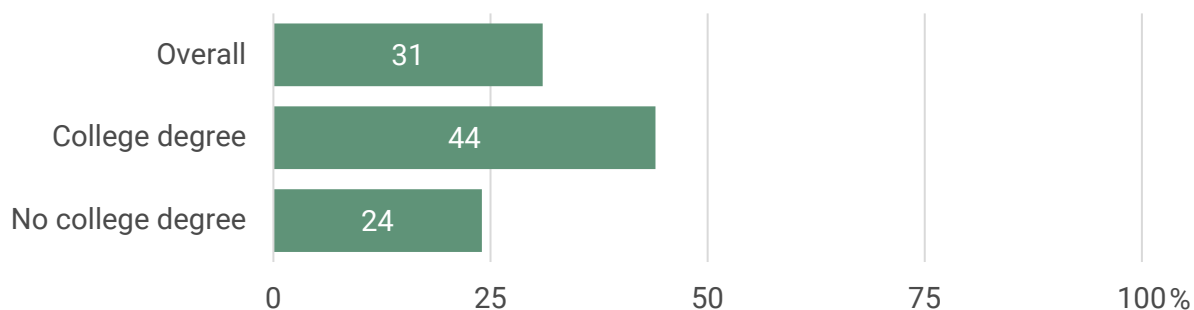
Question: Does your child or children use any of the following AI-powered tools or services?

Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026, with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois.

College educated adults are more likely than less educated adults to say their children use AI-powered educational applications such as the AI tutor Khanmigo, the classroom learning tool School AI, or the language learning platform Duolingo (44% vs. 24%)

Adults with a college degree are more likely than those without a college degree to report that their children use AI-powered education applications.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois who have children ages 6-17 and report yes



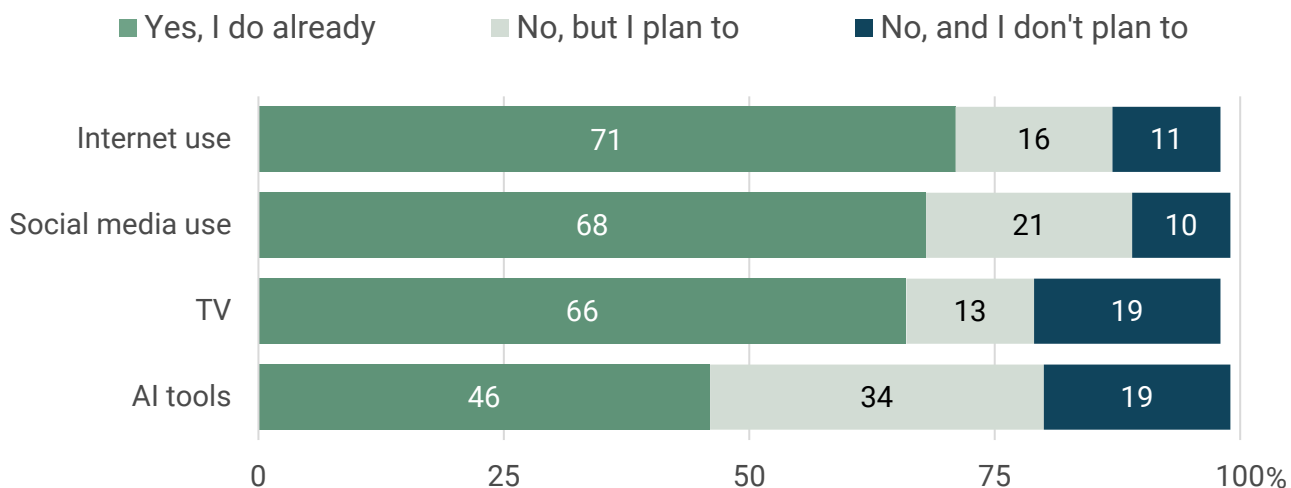
Question: [AI-powered educational applications such as Khanmigo (AI tutor), School AI (classroom learning), Duolingo (language learning)] Does your child or children use any of the following AI-powered tools or services?

Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

Even though AI tools are already integrated into many families, parents are less likely to have established rules for AI use than for other technologies. Many parents report having rules for internet use (71%), social media use (68%), and TV (66%), but fewer (46%) report having rules specifically for AI tools. The likelihood of having rules for AI use is similar regardless of the parents' level of education.

Parents are less likely to set rules for AI than for other technologies.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois who have children ages 6-17



Question: Have you set any rules or guidelines for your child or children about using each of the following?

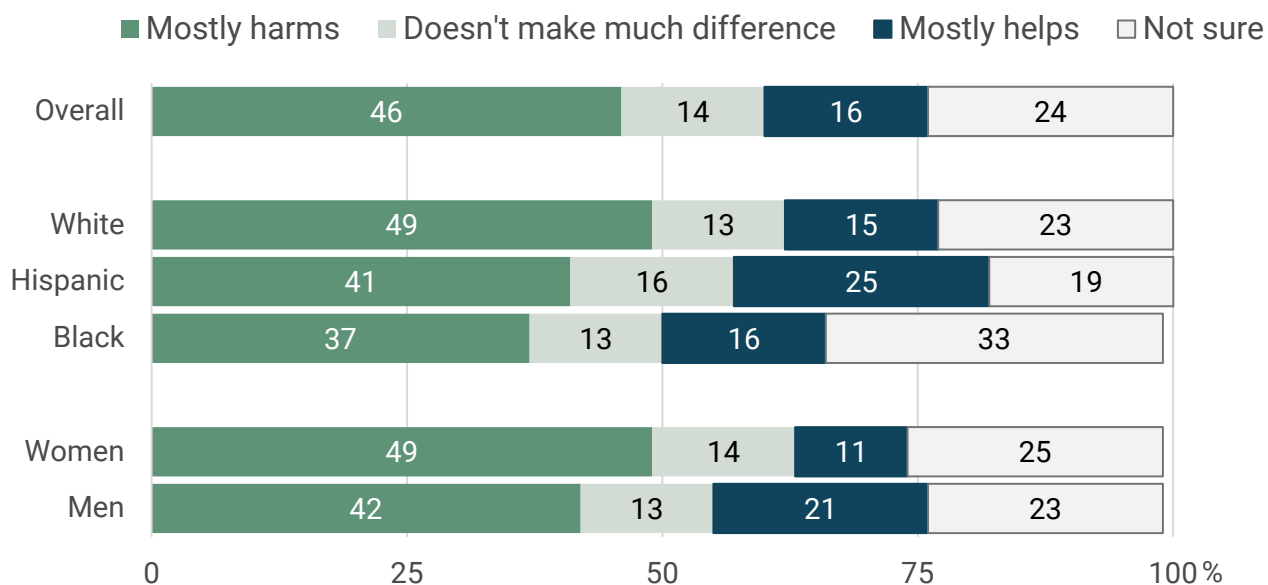
Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

When it comes to whether AI helps or harms children's learning, nearly half of Illinois residents (46%) think AI mostly harms, compared with only 16% who think it mostly helps and 14% who think it doesn't make much difference.

Hispanic adults are more likely than white adults to say AI in education mostly helps.

More Illinois residents think the use of AI in education mostly harms children's learning than say it mostly helps.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois



Question: Do you think the use of AI in education mostly helps children's learning, mostly harms children's learning, or does it not make much difference?

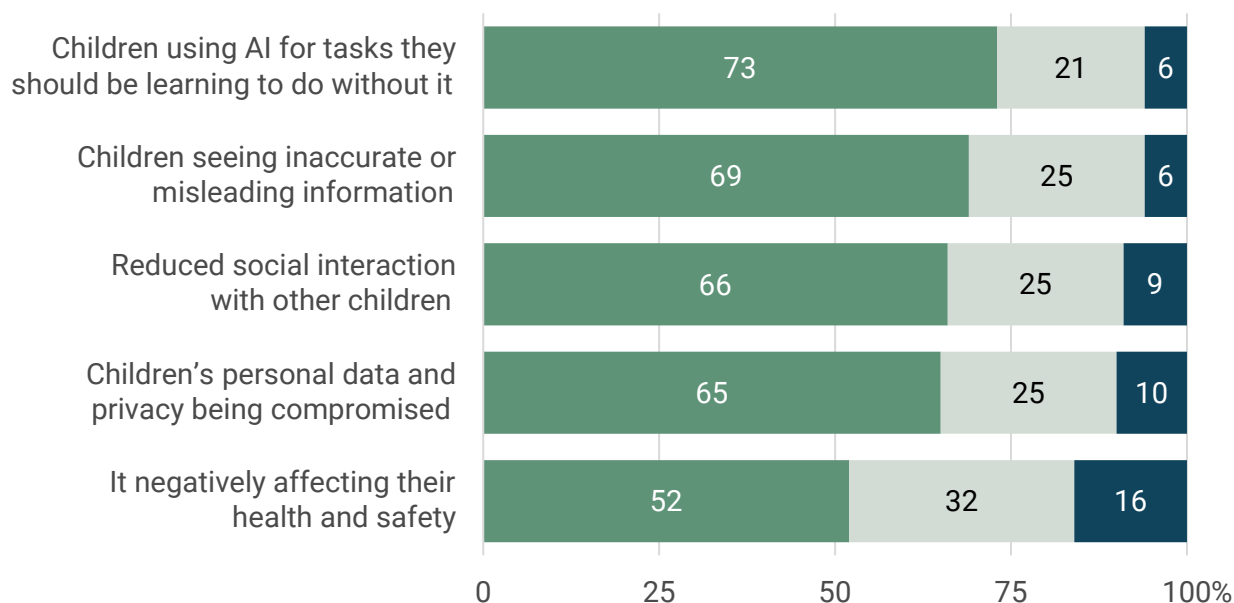
Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

Concerns about children's use of AI are widespread, particularly around learning, misinformation, and privacy. Nearly three-quarters of residents (73%) are very or extremely concerned about children using AI for tasks they should be learning to do themselves, while 69% are concerned about children encountering inaccurate or misleading information, 66% are concerned about reduced social interaction, and 65% are concerned about privacy and personal data. Fewer, but still 52%, are concerned about AI negatively affecting their health and safety.

Illinoisians are concerned about a variety of potential consequences from children's use of AI.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois

■ Extremely/very concerned ■ Somewhat concerned ■ Not very/not at all concerned



Question: How concerned are you about the following issues related to children's use of AI?

Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

While concerns are similar across ages and education levels, adults who haven't used AI are more likely to be extremely or very concerned than AI users when it comes to AI negatively affecting children's health and safety (60% vs. 49%).

Alongside these worries, residents overwhelmingly believe parents do not have enough information to guide their children's use of AI. More than eight in ten (86%) say parents lack sufficient information, while only 13% believe parents have enough information.

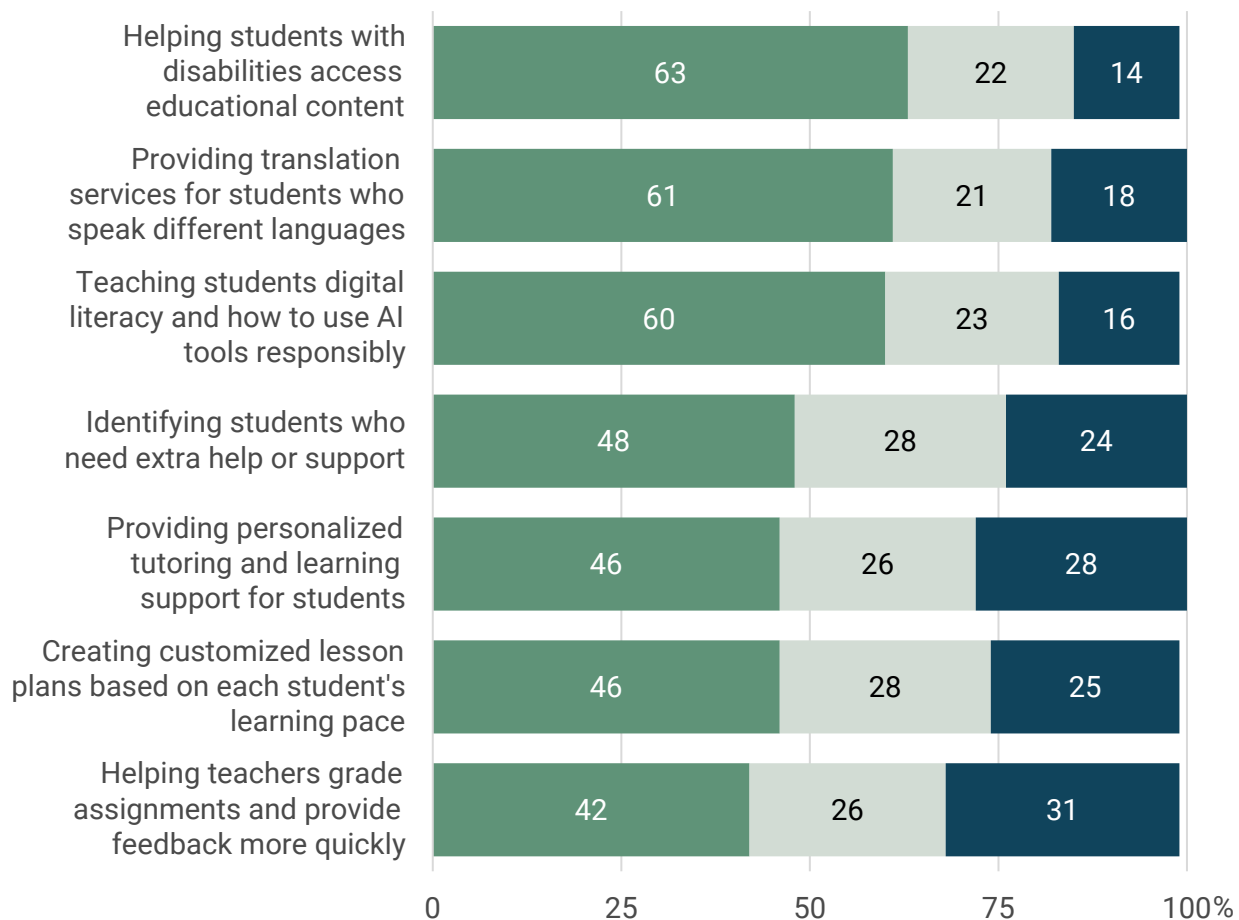
This sense is consistently high across levels of education and other demographics.

Residents distinguish between AI applications they view as beneficial and those they view more skeptically in schools. Support is highest for helping students with disabilities access educational content (63%), providing translation services (61%), and teaching students how to use AI responsibly (60%).

Despite concerns about AI, more than half of Illinois residents support the use of AI in schools for things like helping students with disabilities, providing translation services, and teaching students digital literacy.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois

■ Strongly/ somewhat favor ■ Neither favor nor oppose ■ Somewhat/strongly oppose



Question: Do you favor or oppose each of the following ways AI could be used in K-12 schools?

Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

Support is more mixed for AI applications that directly shape teaching and learning decisions. Fewer than half favor uses such as personalized tutoring (46%), customized lesson plans (46%), or helping teachers grade assignments (42%).

Those who have used AI are more likely than those who haven't to favor providing translation services for students who speak different languages (63% vs. 50%). On the other hand, adults age 18-44 are

more likely than those 45 and older to oppose using AI to identify students who need extra help or support (31% vs. 17%).

Illinois residents expect AI to transform work, and some are already feeling the impact today.

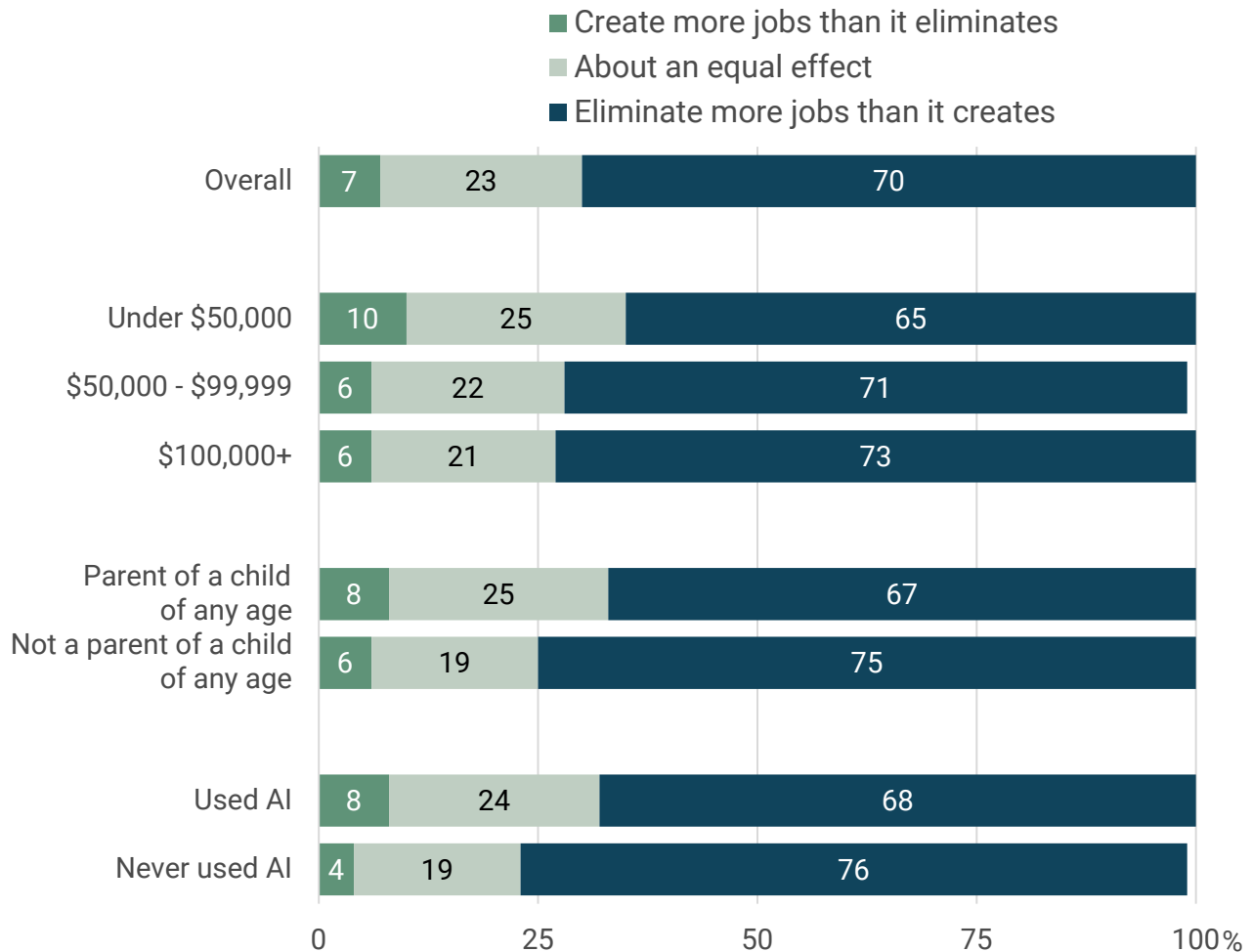
At this point, rates of use of AI on the job are modest. Among workers who use AI tools, nearly half report using them regularly (19%) or occasionally (30%) in their jobs, while another 16% expect to use them in the future. Thirty-three percent don't currently or expect to.

Most Illinois residents believe AI will do away with more jobs than it produces. Seven in ten (70%) think AI will eliminate more jobs than it creates, while only 7% believe it will create more jobs than it eliminates.

Adults in households making \$100,000 or more are more likely than those in households making less than \$50,000 to say AI will cause job loss rather than job creation as are those who have used AI compared with those who have not, and those without children compared with parents.

Few Illinois residents expect AI to create more jobs than it eliminates.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois



Question: In general, do you think AI will create more jobs than it eliminates, eliminates more jobs than it creates, or will it have about an equal effect?

Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

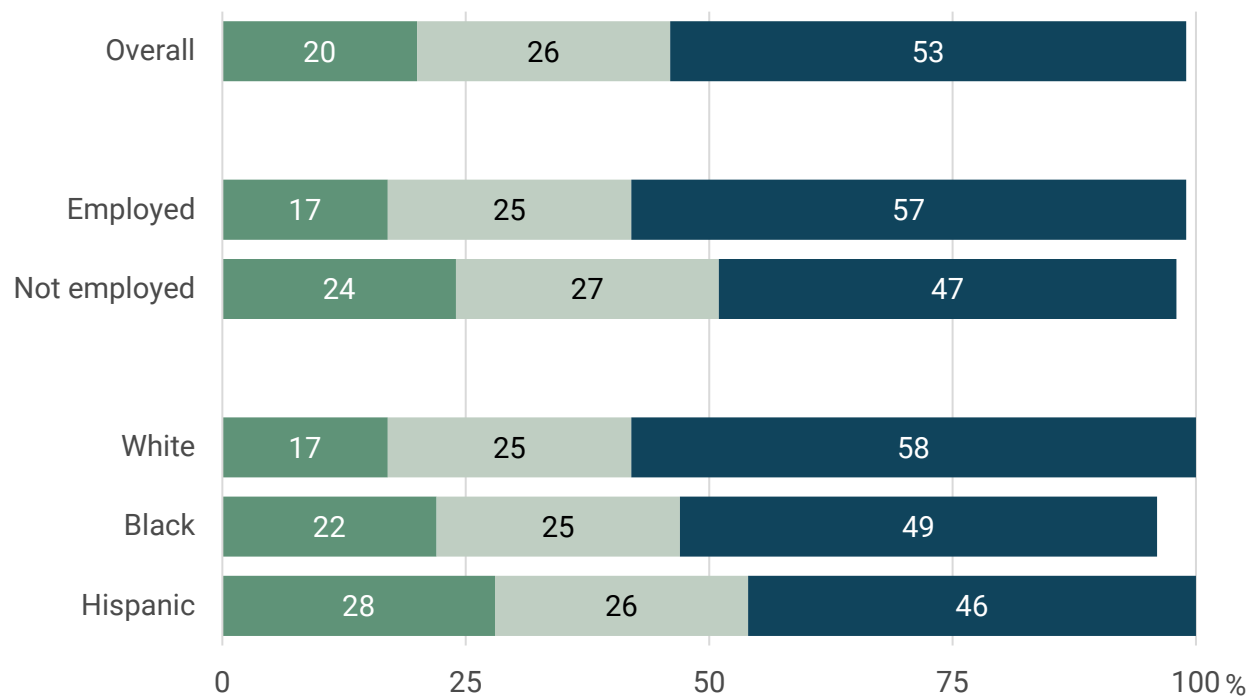
Personal worries about job replacement appears to be lower than broader concern about AI and employment. While 70% of residents believe AI will eliminate more jobs than it creates, just 20% are very or extremely concerned about AI replacing jobs in their own profession, and a majority (53%) are not very or not at all concerned.

Working adults are less likely than those without a job to say they are at least somewhat concerned that AI will replace jobs in their own profession (43% vs. 52%), as are Hispanic adults compared with white adults (54% vs. 41%).

About half of Illinois residents are at least somewhat concerned about AI replacing jobs in their own line of work.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois

■ Extremely/very concerned ■ Somewhat concerned ■ Not very/not at all concerned



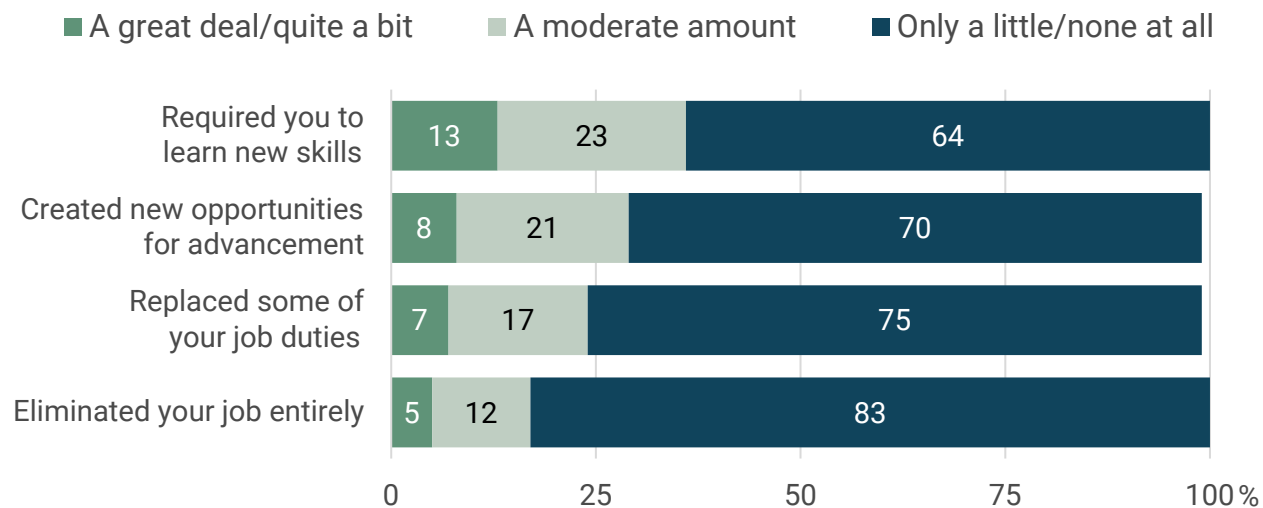
Question: How concerned are you about AI replacing jobs in your own line of work or profession?

Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

Similarly, most workers familiar with AI report that AI has had limited effects on their jobs so far. A large majority say AI has not eliminated their jobs (83%), replaced their job duties (75%), or created advancement opportunities (70%). About one-third (35%) report that AI has already required them to learn new skills to least a moderate degree.

Few say they have had to pick up a lot of skills or lost their job entirely because of AI.

Percent of employed adult residents of Illinois who use AI



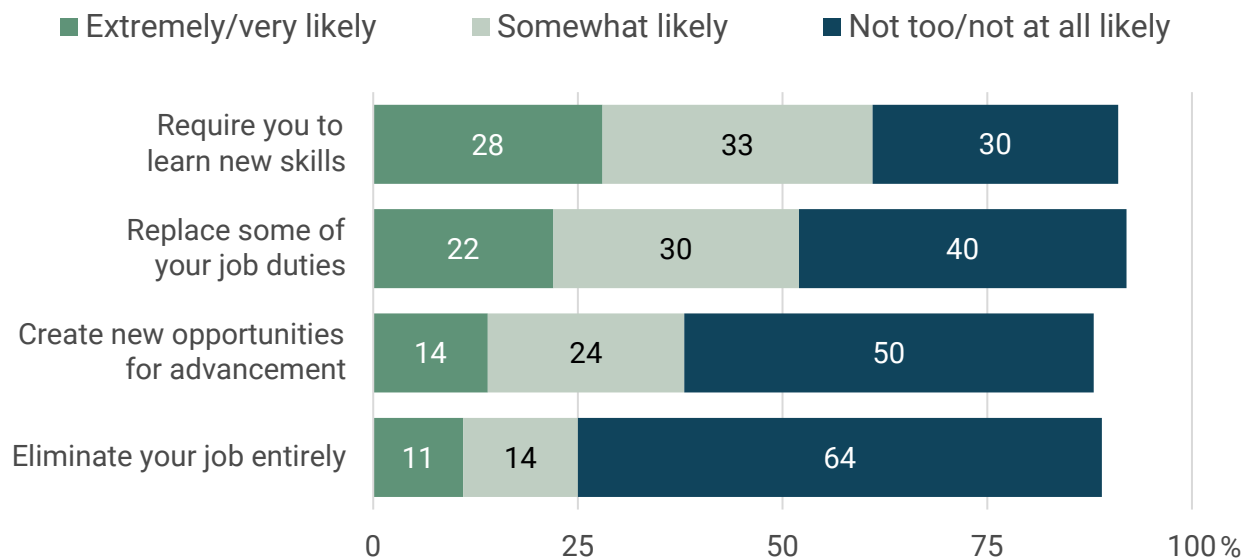
Question: Thinking about your own job, to what extent has AI had the following effects?

Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

Workers expect more workplace disruption from AI in the future than they have experienced so far. A majority believe AI is at least somewhat likely to require learning new skills (61%) or replace some of their job duties (51%) in the future.

Few working Illinois residents expect AI to eliminate their job entirely.

Percent of employed adult residents of Illinois



Question: Thinking about your own job, how likely do you think it is that in the future AI will...

Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

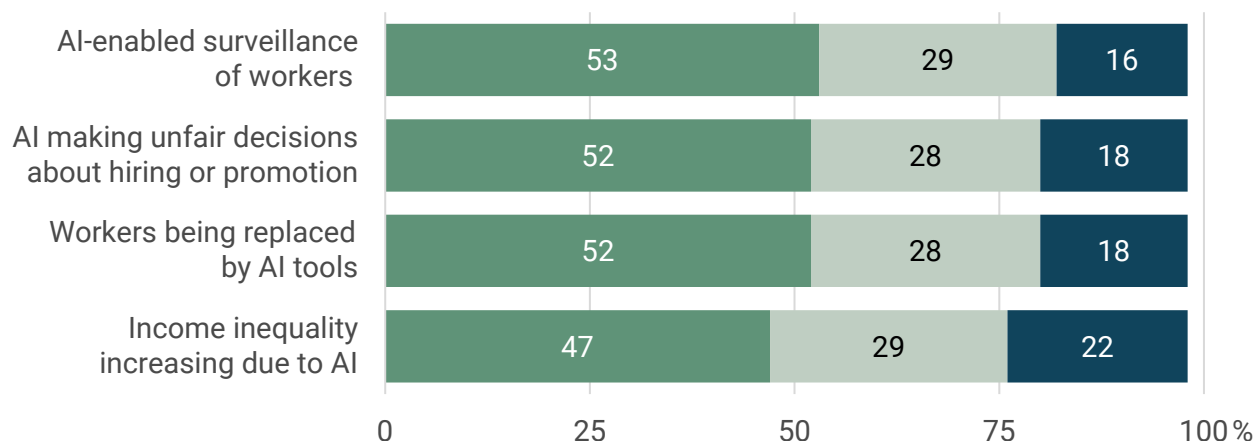
Demographic differences emerge about some of these changes. College educated adults are more likely than those without one to say AI is at least somewhat likely to require them to learn new skills at their job (74% vs. 52%). And 43% of men compared with 31% of women say it is at least somewhat likely that AI will create new opportunities for advancement for them.

There are concerns about AI in the workplace beyond just job loss. Roughly half of workers are very or extremely concerned about AI-enabled surveillance (53%) as well as workers being replaced by AI (52%), and AI making unfair hiring or promotion decisions (52%). Concerns about income inequality resulting from AI are also widespread (47%).

Half of working Illinois residents are very concerned about AI surveilling workers and making unfair decisions about hiring.

Percent of employed adult residents of Illinois

■ Extremely/very concerned ■ Somewhat concerned ■ Not very/not at all concerned



Question: How concerned are you about each of the following when it comes to AI in the workplace?

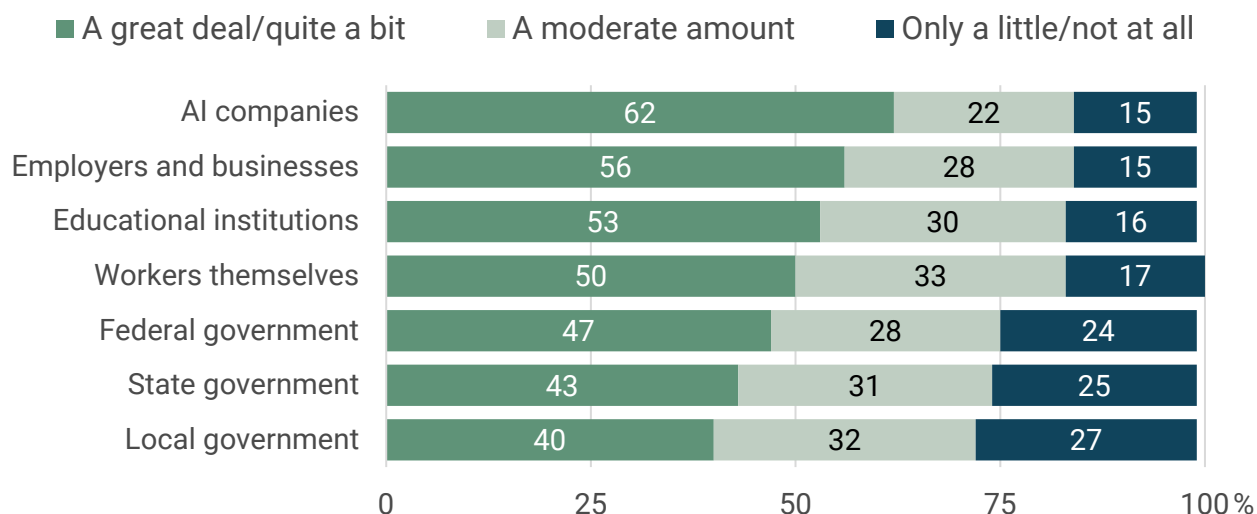
Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

More white adults than Hispanic adults say they are very or extremely concerned about AI making unfair decisions about hiring or promotion (55% vs. 41%).

When it comes to helping workers adapt to AI in the workplace, many Illinois residents place quite a bit or a great deal of responsibility on AI companies (62%), employers (56%), and educational institutions (53%). Fewer think federal, state, or local governments should be responsible.

Most Illinois residents think AI companies should help workers adapt to changes brought by AI.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois



Question: How much responsibility should each of the following have to help workers adapt to changes brought by AI?

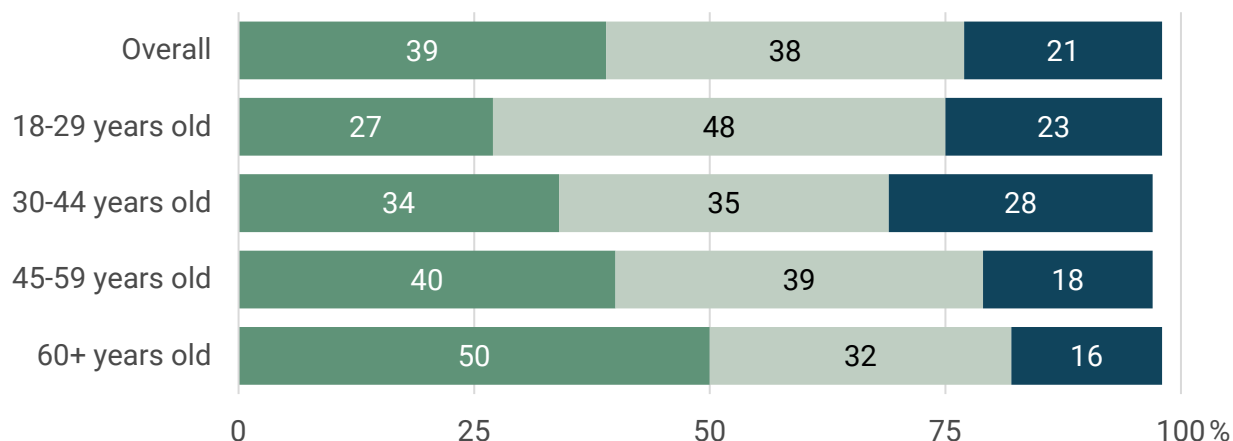
Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

Still, there is broad support for the state of Illinois helping workers prepare for an AI-driven economy. More than three-quarters of Illinois residents (77%) say it is at least somewhat important for Illinois to invest in job training and education programs that help workers use AI in the workplace. Support for this investment is particularly strong among adults 60 and older.

More older than younger residents say the state should prioritize investment of job training to help workers adjust to AI in the workplace.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois

■ Extremely/very important ■ Somewhat important ■ Not very/not important at all



Question: How important is it for Illinois to invest in job training and education programs to help workers use AI in the workplace?

Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

Black adults are more likely than white or Hispanic adults say it is very or extremely important for Illinois to invest in job training and education programs to help workers use AI in the workplace (50% vs. 36% and 35%).

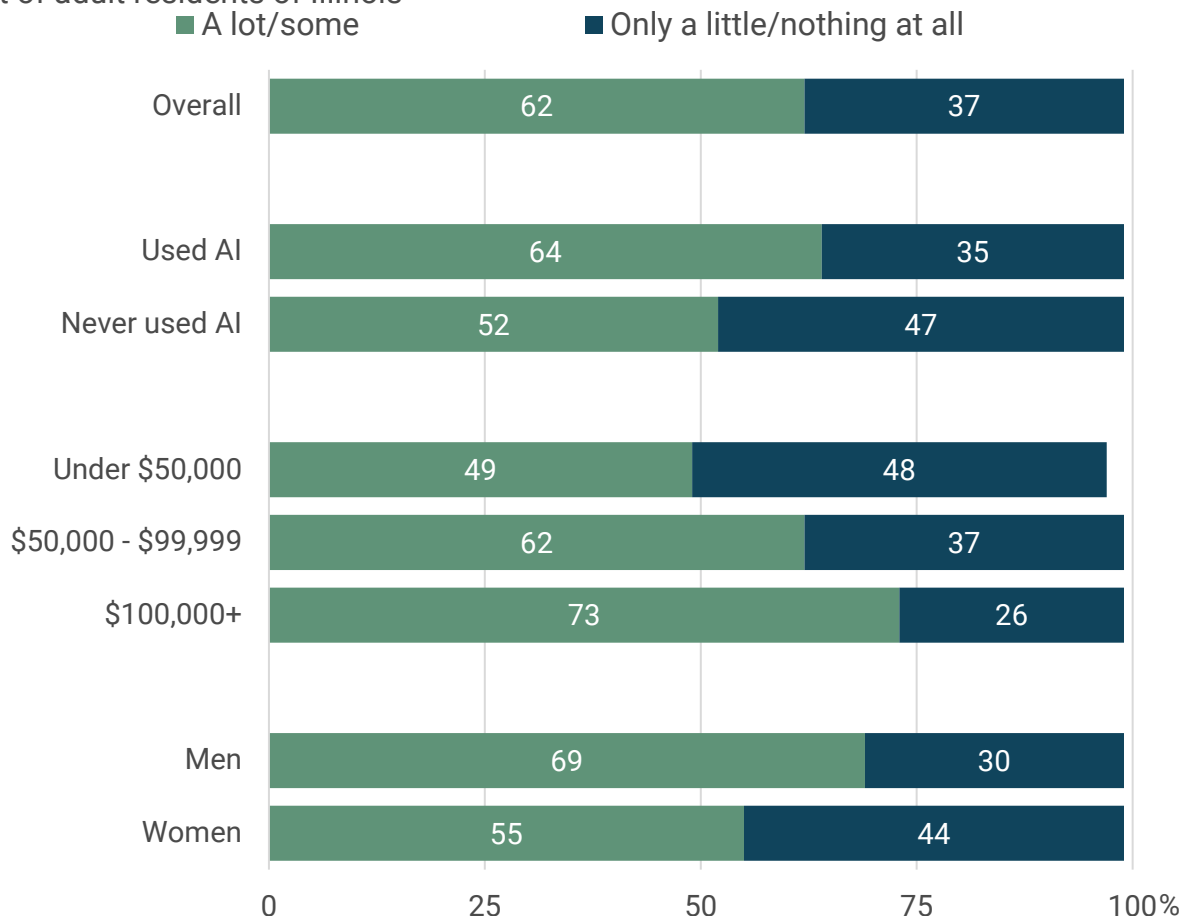
About two-thirds of Illinois residents are aware of data centers, and few support their construction, especially close to home.

Awareness of data centers is relatively high among Illinois residents. Nearly two-thirds (62%) report having heard at least some information about data centers before taking the survey, including 24% who say they have heard a lot. About a third have heard little or nothing at all.

Adults making \$100,000 or more are more likely than those making less than \$50,000 to have heard at least some information about data centers (73% vs. 49%), as are men compared with women (69% vs. 55%), and adults who have used AI compared with those who have not (64% vs. 52%).

Most have heard or read about data centers, though men and those with higher incomes are more likely to have heard about them.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois



Question: Before today, how much had you heard or read about data centers?

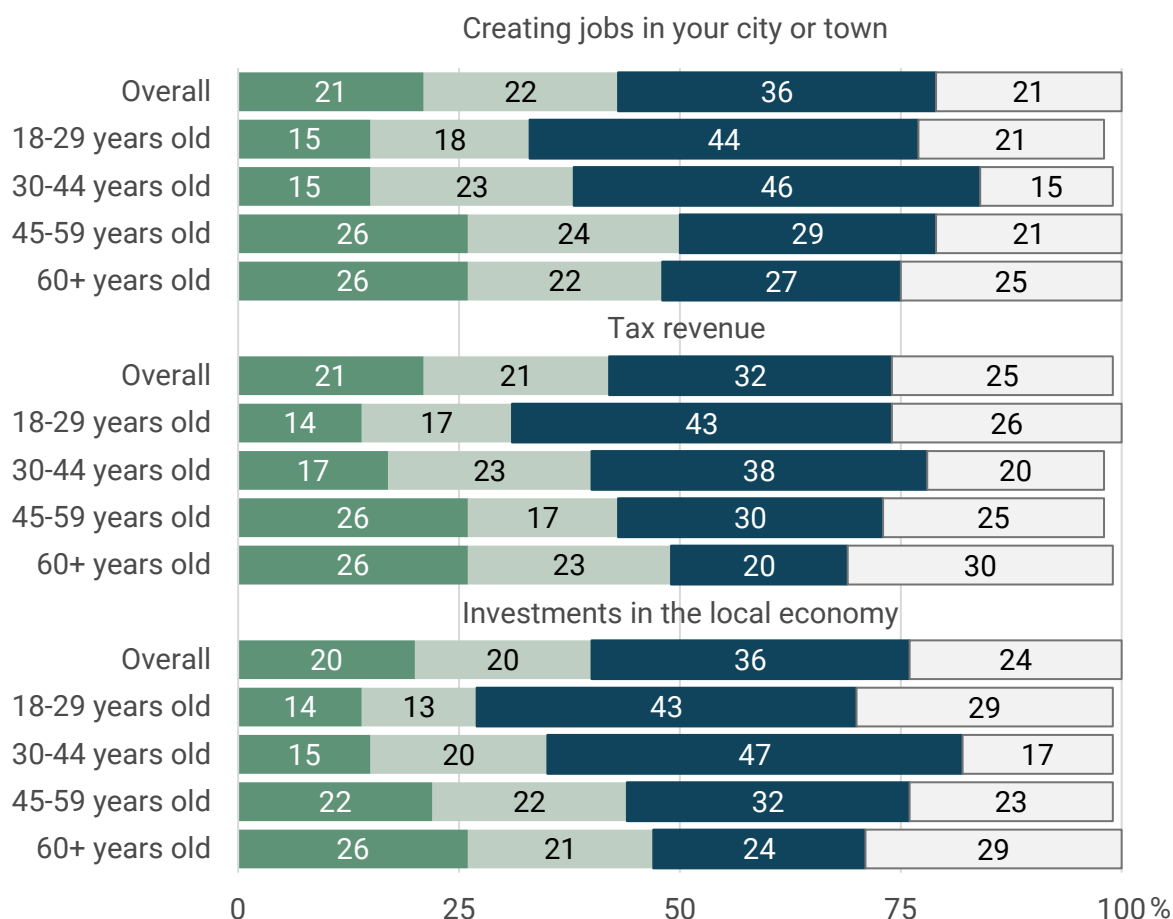
Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

Residents reported seeing more potential harm than benefit from data centers in their communities. More residents believe a local data center would hurt rather than help job creation (36% vs. 21%), local economic investment (36% vs. 20%), and tax revenue (32% vs. 21%). Adults under the age of 45 are more likely than adults 60 and older to say that data centers will do more to hurt than to help each of the items listed.

Younger adults are more likely than older adults to say AI will do more to hurt than to help job creation, local investment, and tax revenue.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois

■ More to help ■ Would not make much difference ■ More to hurt □ Not sure



Question: Do you think a data center in your area would do more to help or to hurt each of the following, or would it not make much difference?

Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

More men than women think a data center in their area would help tax revenue (29% vs. 14%), investment in the local economy (26% vs. 14%), and job creation (27% vs. 16%).

Adults who have not used AI are more unsure than those who have used it about whether data centers will do more to help or to hurt tax revenue (34% vs. 23%), investment in the local economy (34% vs. 22%), or the creation of jobs (32% vs. 17%).

Opposition to data center development is most acute for facilities close to home, with more than two-thirds (68%) opposing building a data center in their neighborhood and 60% opposing one in their city or town. And nearly half (46%) oppose one anywhere in Illinois.

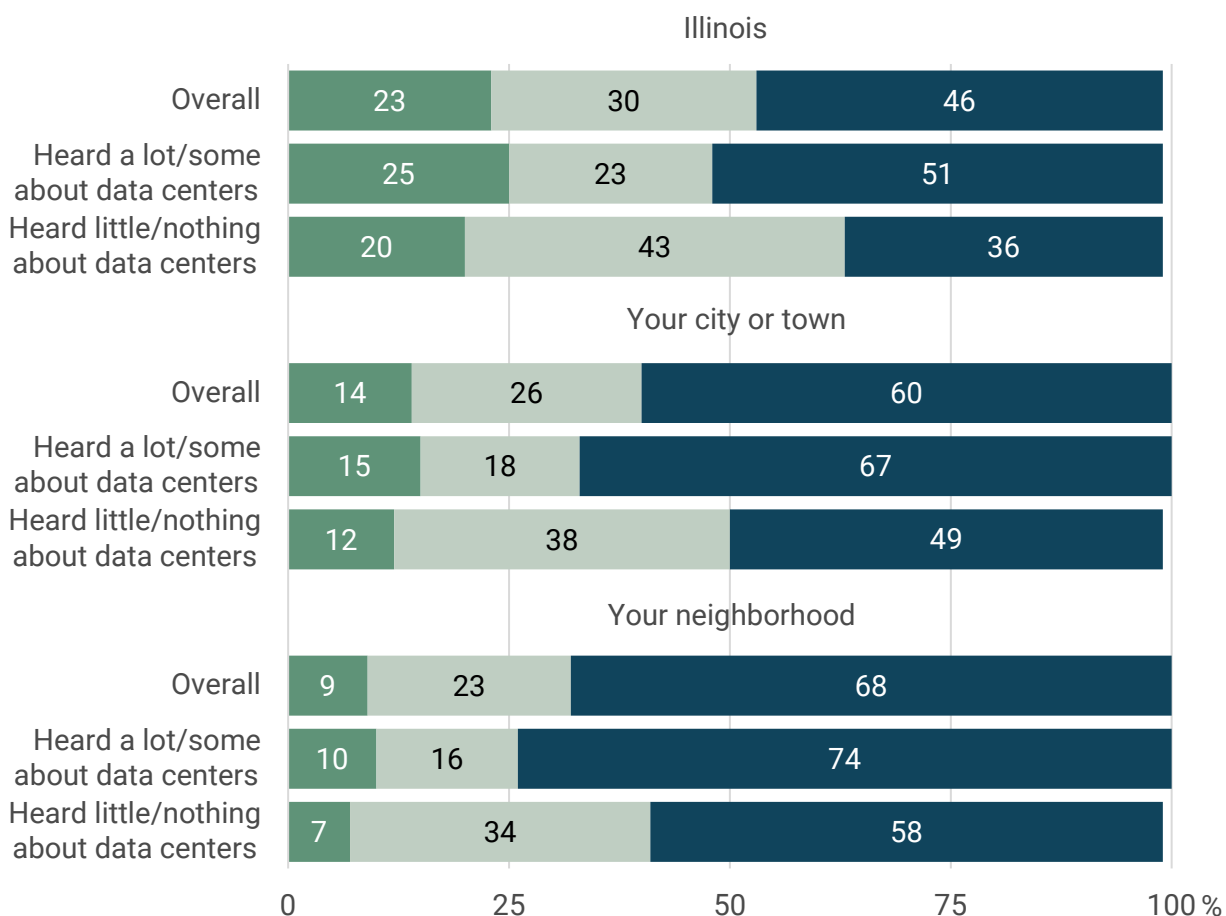
Adults who have heard or read at least something about data centers are more likely to oppose their construction in their neighborhoods, city or town, or the state.

White adults are more likely than Black adults to oppose data centers in their neighborhood (74% vs. 45%), city or town (66% vs. 35%), or the state (50% vs. 31%). White adults also oppose the construction of data centers in their neighborhood at a higher rate than Hispanic adults (74% vs. 60%).

Illinois residents who have heard about data centers are more likely to oppose their construction.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois

■ Strongly/somewhat favor ■ Neither favor nor oppose ■ Strongly/somewhat oppose



Question: Would you favor or oppose building a data center in each of the following?

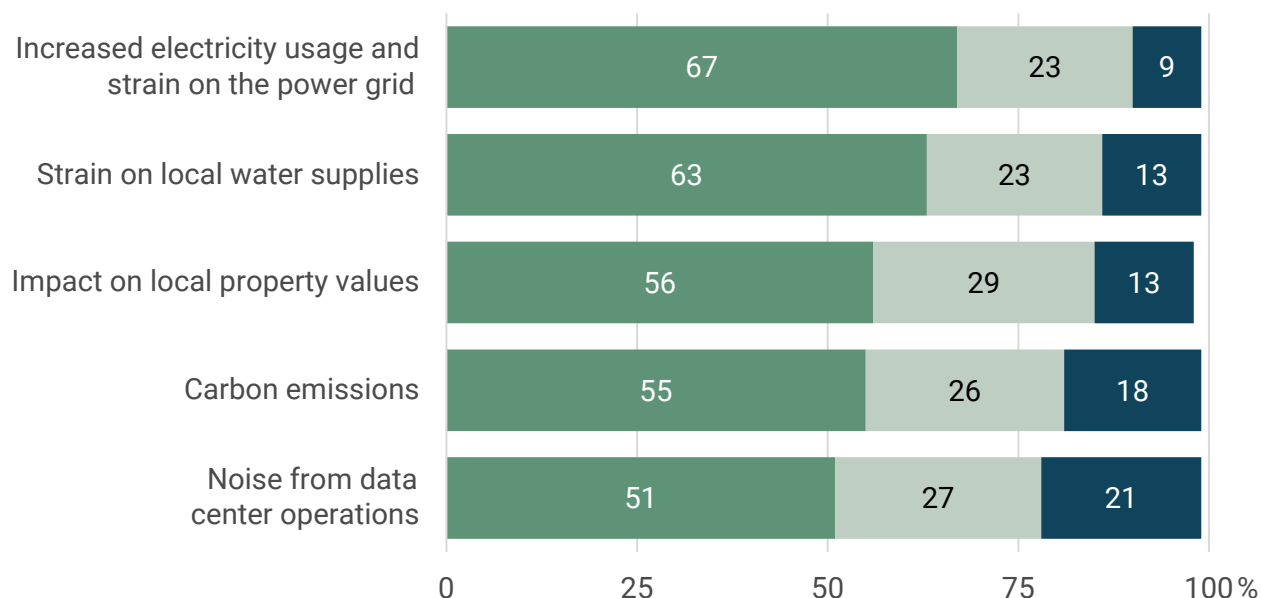
Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

Residents express widespread concern about the potential strain data centers could place on local infrastructure. Worry about infrastructure impacts is especially prominent, with two-thirds (67%) concerned about increased electricity usage and strain on the power grid and 63% concerned about impacts on local water supplies. Environmental impacts also appear to be a major concern for many Illinois residents. More than half are concerned about impacts on local property values (56%) and carbon emissions (55%), while 51% are concerned about noise from data center operations.

Most are concerned about the environmental impacts of data centers.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois

■ Extremely/very concerned ■ Somewhat concerned ■ Not very/not at all concerned



Question: How concerned are you about each of the following potential impacts of data centers in Illinois communities?

Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

White adults are more likely than Black adults to say they are extremely or very concerned about increased electricity usage (71% vs. 54%), strain on local water supplies (67% vs. 51%), and the impact on local property values (60% vs. 48%).

Women are more concerned than men about increased electricity usage (71% vs. 63%), carbon emissions (62% vs. 47%), the impact on local property values (62% vs. 50%), or noise from data center operations (58% vs. 44%).

Concern did not differ between residents living in Chicago, the suburbs, or other parts of the state.

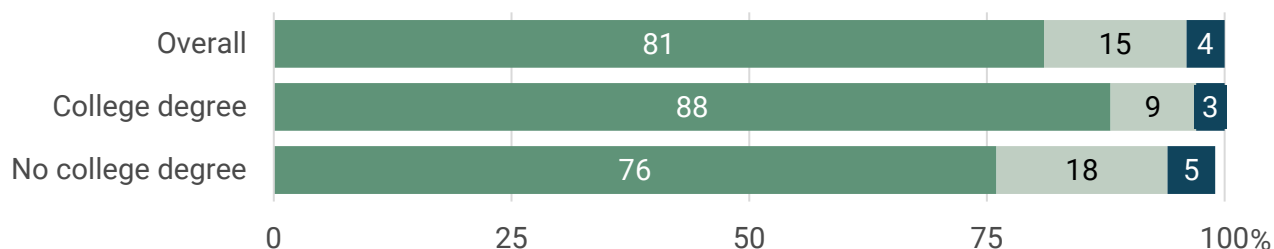
Residents support stronger oversight and regulation of AI, but express limited trust in existing institutions.

Illinois residents overwhelmingly support independent testing of AI systems before they are released to the public. More than eight in ten (81%) say independent testing is very or extremely important, while only 4% say it is not important. College educated adults are especially likely to say independent testing is very or extremely important compared with those without a degree (88% vs. 76%).

8 in 10 Illinois residents say independently testing AI tools prior to their public release should be a high priority.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois

■ Extremely/very important ■ Somewhat important ■ Not very/not important at all



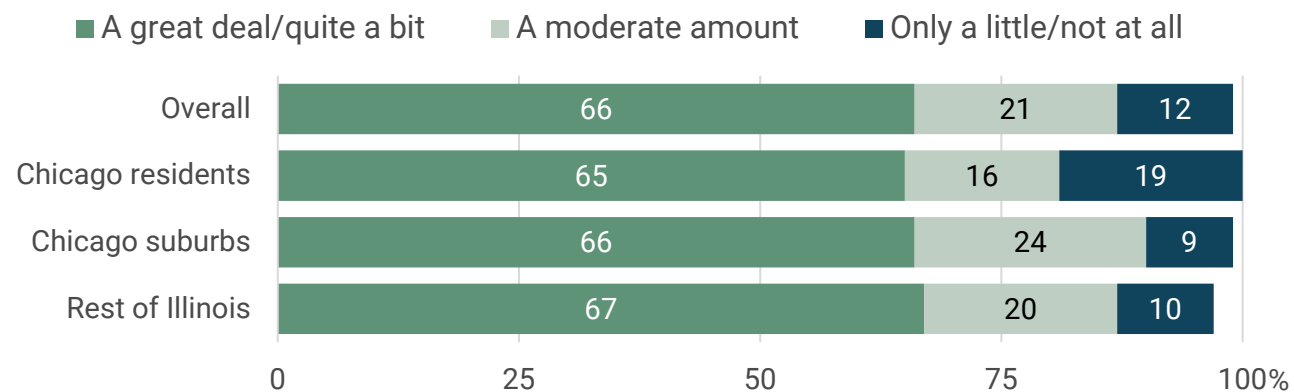
Question: How important is it that AI tools be independently tested before being released to the public?

Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

Additionally, most Illinois residents believe AI should be regulated by the government. Two-thirds (66%) say AI should be regulated a great deal or quite a bit, compared with just 12% who believe it should be regulated only a little or not at all. Despite similar numbers supporting regulation a great deal or quite a bit, Chicagoans are more likely than those who live in other parts of the state to say that AI should only be regulated a little or not at all (19% vs. 10%).

Most Illinois residents want the government to regulate AI.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois

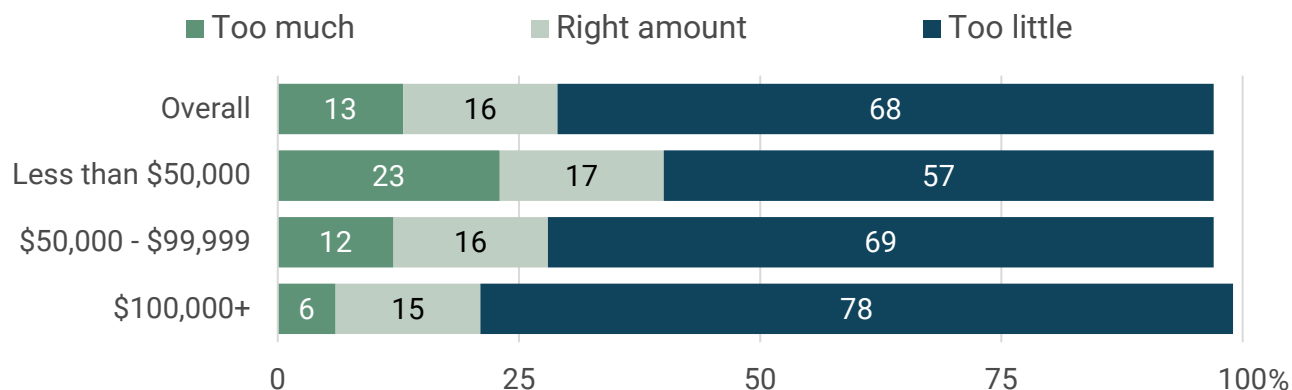
**Question:** How much do you think AI should be regulated by the government?**Source:** NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

A greater share of women than men say AI should be regulated a great deal or quite a bit (70% vs. 61%) and those who do not have children are more likely to say the same than parents (73% vs. 62%).

Among AI users, there is a widespread perception that existing regulation is insufficient. More than two-thirds (68%) say there is currently too little government regulation of AI, while only 13% believe there is too much. Adults in households making \$100,000 or more are more likely than those making less than \$50,000 to say there is currently too little government regulation of AI (78% vs. 57%) as are white adults compared with Black adults (73% vs. 45%).

Higher income workers want the government to regulate AI more.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois who use AI



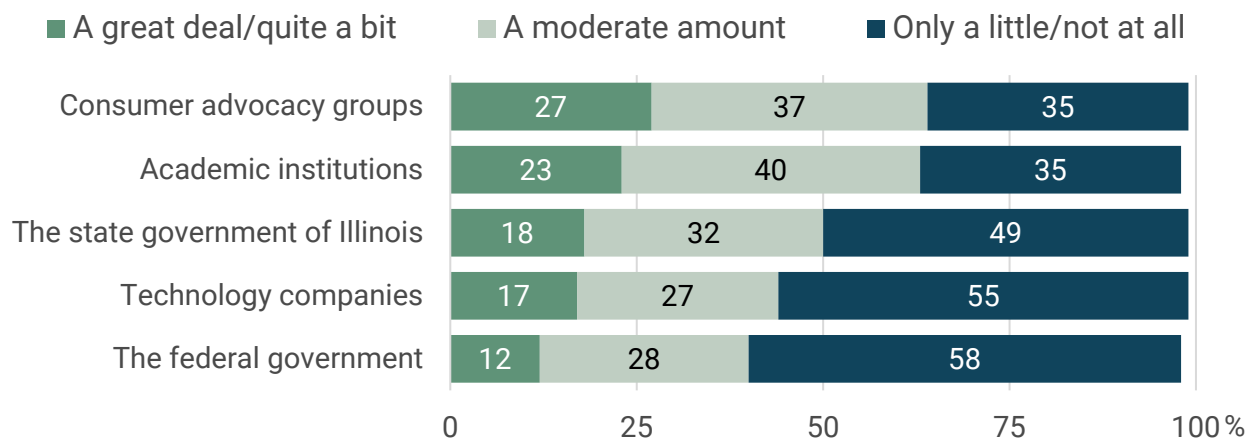
Question: Do you think there is currently too much, too little, or about the right amount of government regulation of AI?

Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

Despite support for regulation, residents express limited trust in institutions to oversee AI development. They are especially likely to report little or no trust in the federal government (58%), technology companies (55%), or the Illinois state government (49%) to oversee AI in ways that serve the public good. Academic institutions and consumer advocacy groups receive comparatively higher levels of trust than governments or technology companies, though trust remains modest overall.

Few Illinois residents have a lot of trust in the federal or state government to oversee AI development.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois



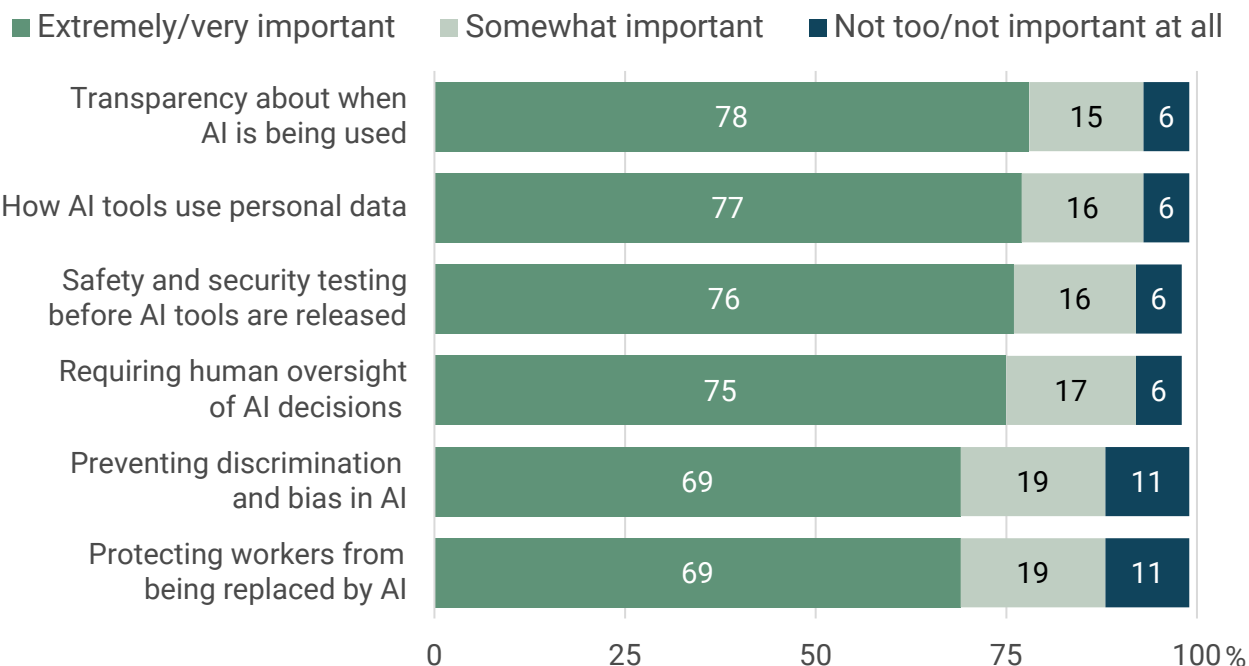
Question: How much do you trust each of the following to oversee the development of AI in a way that's best for the public good?

Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

Residents support government regulation across a broad range of AI-related issues. Roughly three-quarters or more consider regulation of transparency (78%), personal data use (77%), safety and security testing (76%), and human oversight of AI decisions (75%) to be very or extremely important.

Illinois residents want government regulations for transparency about the use of AI, how AI uses personal data, and testing of AI tools.

Percent of adult residents of Illinois



Question: How important is it for the government to regulate each of the following aspects of AI?

Source: NORC poll conducted July 9-28, 2026 with 1,241 adult residents of Illinois

More adults who have not used AI than those who have say it is important that the government conduct safety and security testing (84% vs. 74%).

Women more often than men say it is at least very important that the government require human oversight of AI decisions (78% vs. 71%), prevent discrimination and bias in AI (76% vs. 62%), and protect workers from being replaced by AI (73% vs. 65%).

White adults are more likely than Black adults to say that it is extremely or very important that the government regulate how AI tools use personal data (80% vs. 64%), safety and security testing before and after AI tools are released (80% vs. 64%), and requiring human oversight of AI decisions (79% vs. 61%). More white adults than Hispanic adults also prioritize safety and security testing (80% vs. 69%).

Study Methodology

This survey was conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago with funding from the MacArthur Foundation. Findings reflect the views of survey respondents and analysis conducted by NORC. They do not necessarily represent positions of the MacArthur Foundation.

Data were collected using both probability and non-probability sample sources. Interviews for this survey were conducted between July 9-28, 2026 with adults age 18 and over representing the state of Illinois.

The probability sample source is AmeriSpeak®, NORC's probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. During the initial recruitment phase of the panel, randomly selected U.S. households were sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame and then contacted by U.S. mail, email, telephone, and field interviewers (face to face). The National Sample Frame provides coverage of approximately 97% of the U.S. household population. The U.S. Postal Service delivery-sequence file (DSF) and National Consumer Address File have been used in a subset of years as a supplemental sample during AmeriSpeak panel recruitment for low coverage states. Those excluded from the sample include people with P.O. Box only addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings.

Panel members who are residents of Illinois ages 18 and older were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak, and 916 completed the survey – 899 via the web and 17 via telephone. Panel members were invited by email or by phone from a NORC telephone interviewer. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, depending on respondent preference. Respondents were offered a small monetary incentive (\$3) for completing the survey. The weighted household panel recruitment rate is 24.8 percent, and the survey completion rate is 47.2 percent, for a weighted cumulative response rate of 11.7 percent.

Dynata provided 325 non-probability interviews with residents of Illinois age 18 and over. The Dynata sample was derived based on quotas related to age, race and ethnicity, gender, and education. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and via the web only. For panel recruitment, Dynata uses invitations of all types including email invitations, phone alerts, banners, and messaging on panel community sites to include people with a diversity of motivations to take part in research. Because non-probability panels do not start with a frame where there is known probability of selection, standard measures of sampling error and response rates cannot be calculated.

Quality assurance checks were conducted to ensure data quality. In total, 64 interviews were removed for nonresponse to at least 50% of the questions asked of them, for completing the survey in less than one-third the median interview time for the full sample, or for straight-lining all grid questions asked of them. These interviews were excluded from the data file prior to weighting.

In order to incorporate the nonprobability sample, NORC used TrueNorth calibration, an innovative hybrid calibration approach developed at NORC in order to explicitly account for potential bias associated with the nonprobability sample. TrueNorth uses a tree-based non-parametric supervised learning algorithm to classify respondents based on their survey responses and apply a ratio adjustment to adjust the weights for the nonprobability sample to bring weighted distributions of the nonprobability sample in line with the population distribution for characteristics correlated with the survey variables. Such calibration adjustments help to reduce potential bias, yielding more accurate population estimates.

A raking process is used to adjust for any survey nonresponse as well as any noncoverage or under and oversampling in both probability and non-probability samples resulting from the study-specific sample design. Demographic raking variables for the probability sample included age, gender, Illinois geographic region, race/ethnicity, and education. Demographic raking variables for the nonprobability samples included age, gender, Illinois geographic region, race/ethnicity, and education. Population control totals for the raking variables were obtained from the 2026 Current Population Survey. The weighted data reflect the Illinois population of people age 18 and over.

The overall margin of sampling error for the combined sample is +/- 4.1 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups.

Sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error and there may be other unmeasured error in this or any other survey.

Additional information on the TrueNorth approach can be found here: <https://amerispeak.norc.org/our-capabilities/Pages/TrueNorth.aspx>.

For more information, email info@norc.org.

About NORC at the University of Chicago

NORC at the University of Chicago conducts research and analysis that decision-makers trust. As a nonpartisan research organization and a pioneer in measuring and understanding the world, we have studied almost every aspect of the human experience and every major news event for more than eight decades. Today, we partner with government, corporate, and nonprofit clients around the world to provide the objectivity and expertise necessary to inform the critical decisions facing society.