

Long-Range Planning Issue Brief

AI & the Workforce



The use and development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is expanding rapidly. AI refers to technologies that enable machines to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, and problem-solving. As AI becomes more integrated into workplaces and daily life, it brings both promising opportunities and serious challenges for Minnesota's workforce. Automation could lead to job loss, wage pressure, and increased inequality as certain tasks are replaced by machines. At the same time, AI can support workers across a wide range of fields—from electricians and plumbers to finance and tech professionals—by helping them do their jobs more efficiently and effectively. With the right tools and training, AI has the potential to boost productivity and open the door to more complex and meaningful work.¹ **Securing a balanced future with AI requires understanding its potential impact on the state's economy and taking proactive measures – like creating complementary policies and standards, supporting AI research and innovation, developing technology responsibly, and investing in training – to shape a future where AI uplifts every Minnesotan.**

Where Are We Now?

AI is already shaping how Minnesotans work. The University of Minnesota's Data Science and AI Initiative notes that tools like ChatGPT are changing how tasks are completed—and even creating new roles, such as prompt engineering. But that's just the beginning. AI is accelerating drug discovery, advancing scientific research, expanding access to personalized education, and transforming many other industries.²

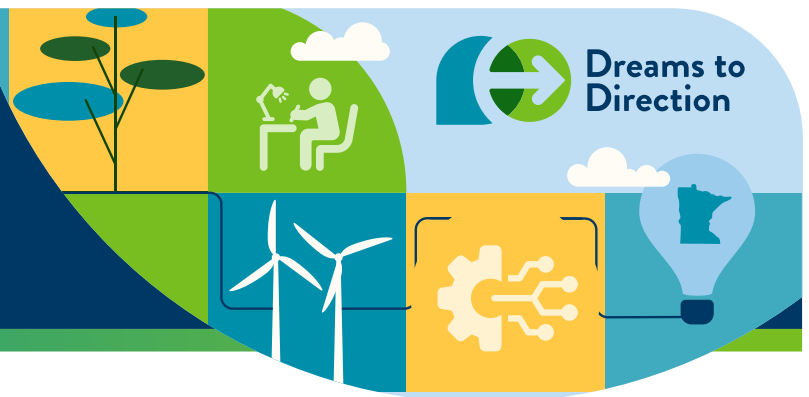
Healthcare and social services is the largest sector in Minnesota's economy, and AI is making a growing impact across the field. AI is streamlining administrative tasks like billing and scheduling, and converting spoken notes into clinical records to help providers document care more efficiently. AI is being used to analyze medical images to support accurate diagnoses, and free up time for patient care.

Minnesota has an opportunity to lead. State agencies, educators, and employers are planning ahead, laying the foundation for a future where AI enhances, not replaces human work. For example, the Transparent AI Governance Alliance and Minnesota IT Services are working across state agencies to develop safe, effective policies that ensure equal access to government services for people of all backgrounds and abilities.³

By the Numbers

The Department of Employment and Economic Development estimates that more than half of Minnesota jobs will be affected by AI.⁴ And about 17%, or roughly 500,000 jobs – face a high risk of major disruption, according to North Star Policy Action. This ranks Minnesota tenth nationally and second in the Midwest for jobs most vulnerable to AI-related disruption.⁵ However, the impact won't be felt evenly. Routine or repetitive roles, such as office administration and customer service, are already being replaced by automation and chatbots. In contrast, jobs that rely on human judgment, empathy, or physical presence—like nursing and social work—are expected to remain more stable in the near term.

AI & the Workforce



What Could Progress Look Like?

Progress means building a future where Minnesotans are prepared to thrive in a rapidly changing economy. That begins with rethinking and reinvesting in education. Entry-level positions in data entry and processing, once a first job for many, are increasingly automated. Schools, colleges, and workforce training programs must evolve to help students build a broader and more flexible skill set, particularly in understanding and applying new technologies. Early and sustained investments in K-12 and higher education are critical to helping Minnesotans navigate the impacts of AI.⁶

Supporting workers also means ensuring they are equipped to succeed through change. Strong worker protections can bolster job security and job quality, while upskilling, reskilling, and retraining efforts can help workers stay competitive. For those whose jobs are displaced, employers should act quickly to connect them with timely information, guidance, and clear pathways to pursue opportunities before they fall out of the labor force. Proactive support and access to high-quality retraining programs will also be key to managing these transitions effectively.

Minnesota must manage this shift with care: educate policymakers and Tribal Nation leaders, invest in research into AI's economic and workforce impacts, and prioritize technologies that enhance human expertise rather than replace it.

AI is a powerful tool, but it is still a tool that requires direction by humans. Policymakers, Tribal Nations, educators, employers, and communities all have a role to play in shaping a thoughtful, coordinated, ethical response. With the right investments and coordination across sectors, AI can enhance human work and contribute to a more inclusive, equitable and resilient economy for all Minnesotans.

How Can Long-Range Planning Help?

The Long-Range Planning (LRP) Team can play a key role in helping Minnesota navigate the workforce shifts brought on by AI. By building a shared long-term vision, LRP can help align partners across sectors on proactive strategies that support workers, strengthen education systems, educate policymakers and guide the responsible use of AI. The team is well-positioned to convene policymakers, educators, researchers, employers, subject-matter experts, and community voices to co-develop a planning and policy framework.

LRP can work to elevate AI and the workforce transformation as a statewide priority and guide future policies, planning efforts, and investments that prepare Minnesotans for a changing economy. The team can also lead efforts to develop common language around the evolving role of AI, identify gaps in research and capacity, and provide recommendations that help ensure no community is left behind. Through collaborative planning, the team can help create pathways for continued engagement, track long-term progress, and shape implementation plans that guide thoughtful, people-centered adaptation.

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Get Involved

Join us in shaping Minnesota's future! If you have questions or want to participate, contact the Long-range Planning team at planning.mmb@state.mn.us.