

## THE JUNE 2026 SIMPLYWISE TRADES &amp; TECHNOLOGY INDEX

# Two-Thirds of Gen Z Would Steer a Friend Toward the Skilled Trades, New SimplyWise Index Finds

The inaugural SimplyWise Trades & Technology Index surveyed 1,140 U.S. adults ages 18 to 29 on how they view artificial intelligence, college, and the future of work. Across the board, young Americans increasingly see the skilled trades as a smart, AI-resilient path, and they are extending the trades a respect earlier generations often withheld.

## KEY FINDINGS

## 52%

current college students say skilled trades feel safer than office jobs in an AI future

## 66%

of Gen Z would encourage a friend to consider a skilled trade

## 34%

of Gen Z choose a trade school as top path to financial stability by 30 (vs. 23% who pick a four-year degree).

## 30%

of Gen Z name skilled trades the single most-respected career path today

## 25%

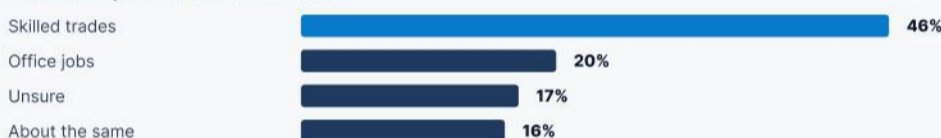
would choose trade school if starting over

## CHARTS · FREE TO EMBED (CREDIT: SIMPLYWISE TRADES &amp; TECHNOLOGY INDEX)

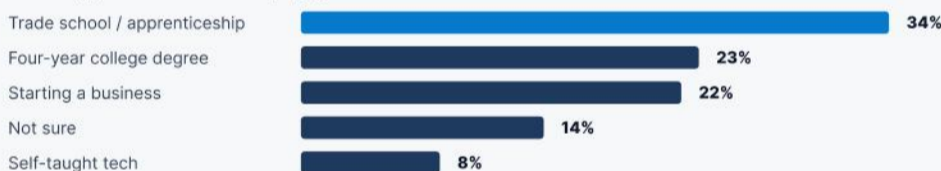
### Which jobs will AI replace first? (mean rank, 1 to 6, higher = more exposed)



### Which career path feels safer in an AI future?



### Most likely path to financial stability by age 30



### Most-respected career path today



## IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"Since a lot of jobs are being replaced by AI, I have to consider being replaced before I spend years studying for a career I can never have."

"I think computer work is going to be handed to AI. I do customer service jobs most, and they will definitely all be AI."

"It makes me wanna learn my craft even more."

## METHODOLOGY

## How the survey was conducted

Online survey of 1,140 U.S. adults ages 18 to 29, fielded via SurveyMonkey Audience in May 2026. The sample is a non-probability, opt-in panel and is not weighted to U.S. population benchmarks; as with all opt-in samples, a classical margin of error does not strictly apply and results should be treated as directional. A separately screened sample of working tradespeople (n=38) was too small to support quantitative estimates and is used only for qualitative context. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

## ABOUT SIMPLYWISE

SimplyWise builds software for tradespeople and contractors, including tools for estimating, receipts, and back-office work. The SimplyWise Trades & Technology Index is an ongoing survey series tracking how young Americans think about skilled trades, higher education, AI, and career opportunities. Future editions will enable year-over-year trend analysis.

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