Commentary/Op-Ed - November 2026

To make NYC more affordable, help New Yorkers build digital skills

In this amNY op-ed, Eli Dvorkin and Rachel Neches explain the rapidly growing demand for digital skills across occupations and provide concrete solutions to help more New Yorkers gain the skills they need to get ahead of a changing economy.

by Eli Dvorkin and Rachel Neches

A warehouse worker may never write a line of code. Neither will most construction workers, medical assistants, or retail managers. But increasingly, they can't get hired without digital skills. Unless city leaders act quickly to help more New Yorkers develop these skills, workers will find it increasingly difficult to qualify for entry-level jobs—and to advance in jobs that are becoming more technology-enabled.

In this op-ed, the Center for an Urban Future's Eli Dvorkin and Rachel Neches explore how the demand for digital skills is rising rapidly in industries and occupations far beyond tech, including many that have long offered more accessible entry points into the labor market and where strong digital skills have not typically been required. This trend, detailed in CUF's new report, has significant consequences for the city's efforts to expand economic mobility and make New York more affordable by opening pathways into first jobs and better-paying work.

While city leaders are taking promising steps to address this issue, the scale of the shift in the labor market calls for a much broader response. Investments should include funding for a renewed Digital Equity Plan, launching a Computer Science for All 2.0, and more.

For the full list of recommendations, read the op-ed here.

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