



Black Employment In Los Angeles County



Overview

As we commemorate Black History Month, it's crucial to recognize the Black and African American population's strengths and equity gaps regarding labor market, educational, and employment outcomes in Los Angeles County. Black and African Americans only comprise 7% of the county's workforce but play a significant role in contributing to and shaping the economic landscape.

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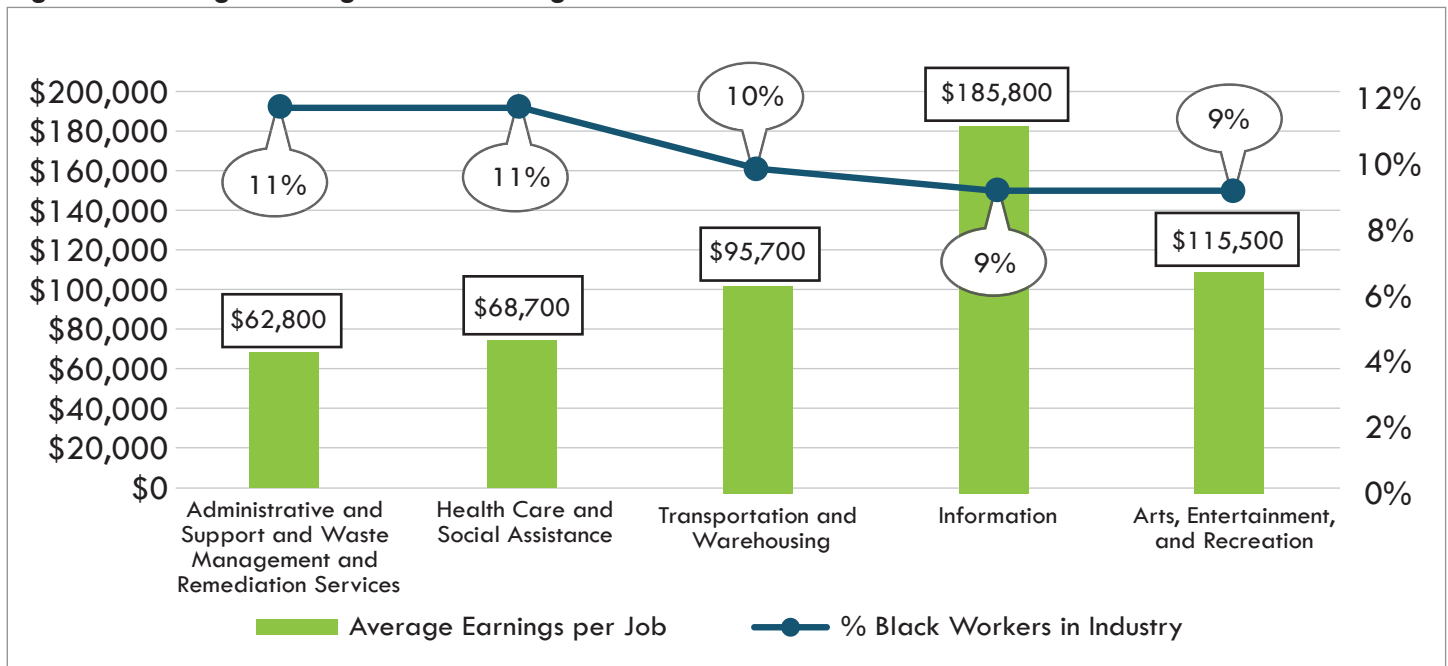


Industries

In Los Angeles County, the distribution of Black employment across industries reveals significant disparities. Figure 1 presents industries¹ with the highest representation of Black workers and the average earnings per job in each industry. All of the Black concentrated industries except for Information are projected to have positive job growth through 2028.

Black Concentrated industries

Figure 1. Average Earnings and Percentage of Black Workers in Black Concentrated Industries²



Note: Average earnings rounded to nearest \$100

¹Industries with less than 10,000 total jobs are excluded to ensure sufficient power for analyses.

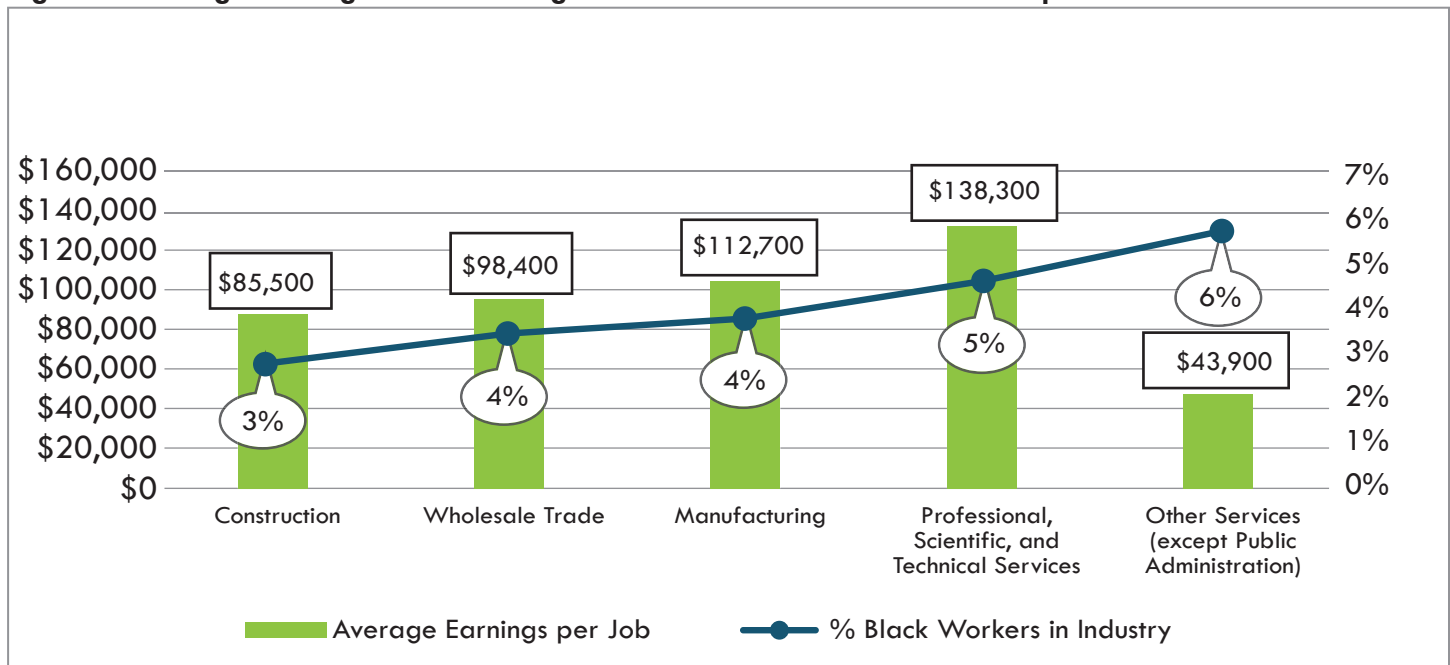
²Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 Datarun



Conversely, the industries³ with the lowest representation of Black workers, along with average annual earnings per job in each industry are depicted in Figure 2. Among the Black underrepresented industries, Other Services (except Public Administration), Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, and Construction anticipate positive job growth through 2028. However, Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade are forecasted to experience a net loss of jobs in the coming years.

Black Underrepresented Industries

Figure 2. Average Earnings and Percentage of Black Workers in Black Underrepresented Industries⁴



Note: Average earnings rounded to nearest \$100

³Industries with less than 10,000 total jobs are excluded to ensure sufficient power for analyses.

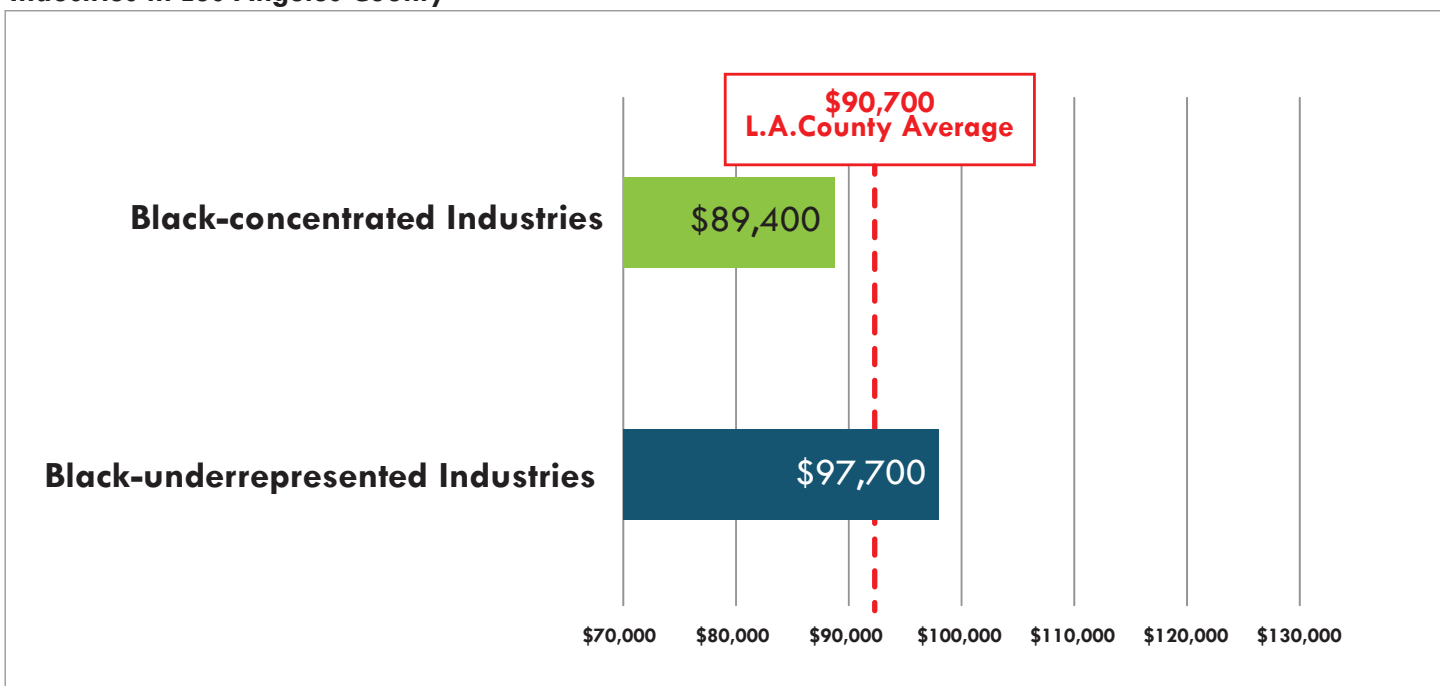
⁴Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 Datarun



The weighted average earnings⁵ for industries with a high concentration of Black workers are below the average for L.A. County. In contrast, industries where Black workers are underrepresented have average earnings that are above the county average. This highlights a small but significant equity gap for the Black community, with a difference in average earnings of over \$8,000 between these two groups of industries. (Figure 3).

Weighted Annual Earnings

Figure 3. Weighted Average Earnings per Job Between Black-concentrated and underrepresented Industries in Los Angeles County⁶



⁵As there is high variance in the number of jobs in each industry, the weighted average earnings across industries is used instead of median average earnings across industries. The weighted average earnings is calculated with the formula: Average (Average Earnings Per Job x 2023 Jobs in Industry for all five Black Concentrated Industries)/Total 2023 Jobs for all five Black Concentrated Industries.

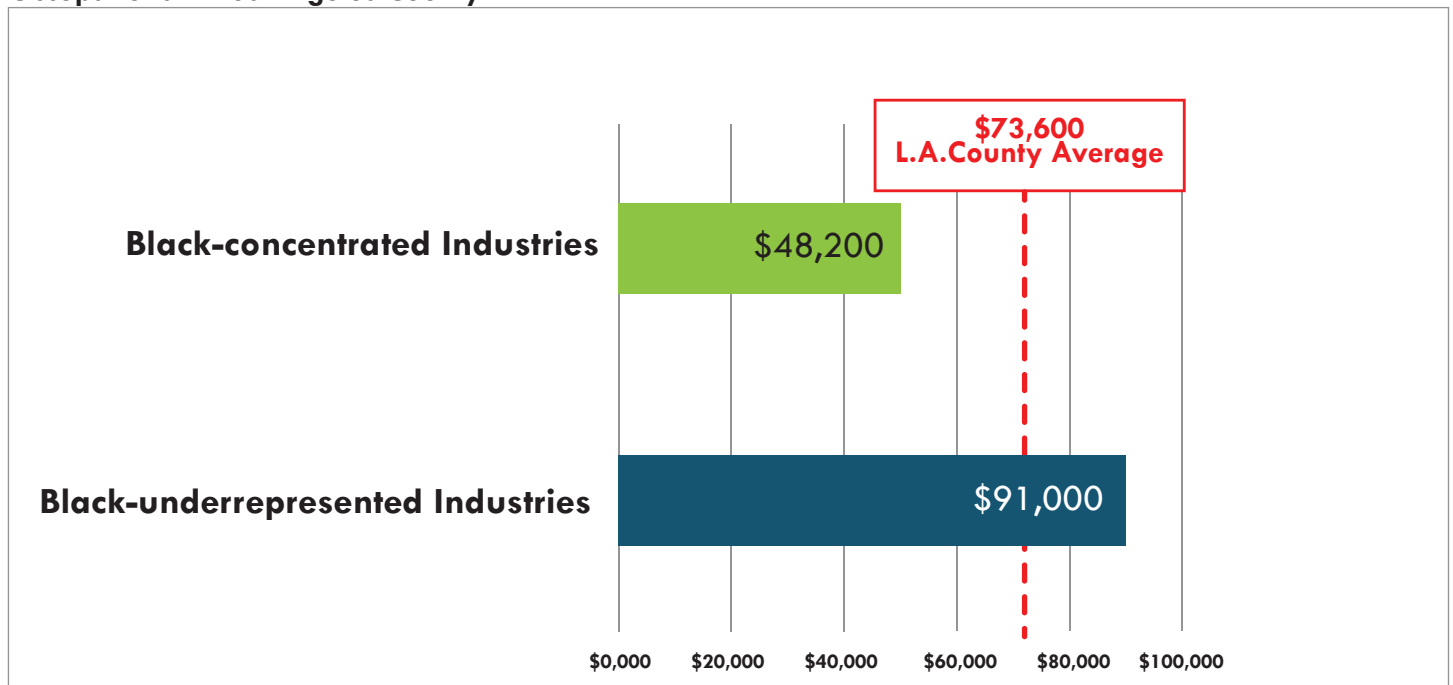
⁶Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 Datarun

Occupations

This equity gap greatly widens when comparing occupations ⁷. The medial median annual earnings for Black underrepresented occupations is \$42,800 higher than earnings for Black concentrated occupations (Figure 4).

Medial Median Annual Earnings

Figure 4. Medial Median Annual Earnings⁸ Between Black-concentrated and underrepresented Occupations in Los Angeles County⁹



⁷To ensure adequate sample size, occupations with less than 1,500 Black workers were excluded from analysis.

⁸Occupational earnings differ from Industry earnings. Industry earnings include wages and salaries and supplements (such as pensions), while occupational earnings only include wages and salaries.

⁹Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 Datarun

The modest annual earnings are consistent with these occupations' lower entry-level educational requirements. Eight out of ten occupations require a postsecondary non degree award or below. Table 1 lists occupations with the highest percentage of Black workers along with average annual earnings, resilience to automation¹⁰, and educational requirements.

Table 1. Black Concentrated Occupations¹¹

Occupation	% Black Workers	Median Annual Earnings	Automation Resilience	Educational Requirements
<i>Security Guards</i>	<i>26%</i>	<i>\$38,400</i>	<i>(9.8)</i>	<i>High school diploma or equivalent</i>
<i>Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity</i>	<i>19%</i>	<i>\$69,900</i>	<i>2.0</i>	<i>High school diploma or equivalent</i>
<i>Nursing Assistants</i>	<i>18%</i>	<i>\$44,200</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>Postsecondary nondegree award</i>
<i>Social and Human Service Assistants</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>\$48,900</i>	<i>10.6</i>	<i>High school diploma or equivalent</i>
<i>Taxi Drivers</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>\$33,400</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>No formal Educational credential</i>
<i>Child, Family, and School Social Workers</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>\$69,700</i>	<i>16.3</i>	<i>Bachelor's degree</i>
<i>Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>\$74,500</i>	<i>15.2</i>	<i>Postsecondary nondegree award</i>
<i>Home Health and Personal Care Aides</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>\$33,900</i>	<i>6.4</i>	<i>High school diploma or equivalent</i>
<i>Actors</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>\$47,600</i>	<i>(12.5)</i>	<i>Some college, no degree</i>
<i>Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>\$56,500</i>	<i>15.1</i>	<i>Bachelor's degree</i>

¹⁰Automation resilience is calculated based on the percentage of time spent on high-risk compared to low-risk work, the number of high-risk jobs in compatible occupations, and the overall industry automation risk. Positive scores for automation resilience reflect a lower-than-average threat of the occupation(s) being replaced by automation, while negative scores reflect a greater-than-average risk of automation.

¹¹Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 Datarun

Occupations with the lowest representation of Black workers have medial median annual earnings of \$91,000, well above the Los Angeles County average. These high earnings align with the elevated educational requirements, as seven out of ten occupations require attending college, and two occupations require doctoral or professional degrees (Table 2).

Table 2. Black Underrepresented Occupations¹²

Occupation	% Black Workers	Median Annual Earnings	Automation Resilience	Educational Requirements
<i>Management Analysts</i>	5%	\$100,500	8.9	<i>Bachelor's degree</i>
<i>Accountants and Auditors</i>	5%	\$86,500	6.9	<i>Bachelor's degree</i>
<i>Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education</i>	5%	\$95,400	17.7	<i>Bachelor's degree</i>
<i>Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks</i>	5%	\$52,800	(3.6)	<i>Some college, no degree</i>
<i>General and Operations Managers</i>	4%	\$118,200	17.8	<i>Bachelor's degree</i>
<i>Lawyers</i>	4%	\$189,500	18.9	<i>Doctoral or professional degree</i>
<i>Postsecondary Teachers</i>	4%	\$111,400	13.4	<i>Doctoral or professional degree</i>
<i>Waiters and Waitresses</i>	4%	\$34,700	(29.8)	<i>No formal educational credential</i>
<i>Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners</i>	4%	\$38,200	(24.5)	<i>No formal educational credential</i>
<i>First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers</i>	4%	\$46,200	12.2	<i>High school diploma or equivalent</i>

The significant earnings gap between occupations with a high concentration of Black workers and those where they are underrepresented underscores the critical role of educational access in promoting wealth equity and success for minority populations structurally excluded from job opportunities in Los Angeles County.

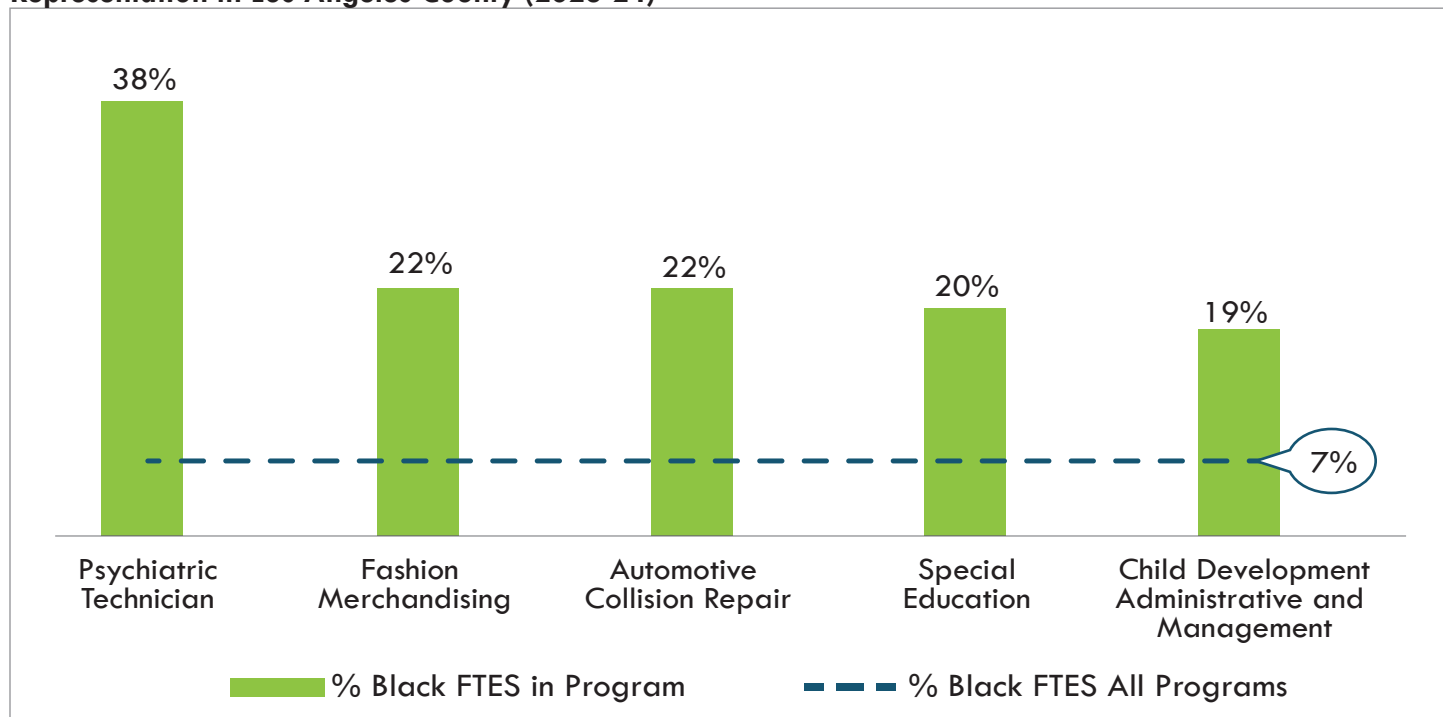
¹²Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 Datarun



Community College Career & Technical Education Programs

The California Community College system provides equitable and accessible educational opportunities for ethnic minority students by preparing students to continue their educational journey at four-year institutions or gain the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) to join the workforce immediately. Career Technical Education (CTE) programs are educational pathways that combine academic instruction with hands-on training in specific occupations. Figure 5 shows the programs with the strongest Black representation among the 19 community colleges in Los Angeles County¹³.

Figure 5. Community College CTE Programs with Highest Black Full-time Enrolled Student (FTES)¹⁴ Representation in Los Angeles County (2023-24)¹⁵



¹³To ensure sample size adequacy, only programs with more than 22.2 Total FTES (1st Quartile Median) were included in the analysis.

¹⁴The FTES value is calculated by summing the "Total Hours" (refer to [SXD4](#) in CCCCCO MIS Data Element Dictionary) in all the enrollment records reported to CCCCCO MIS during the requested time period, then dividing by 525.

¹⁵Source: [California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Data Mart](#)



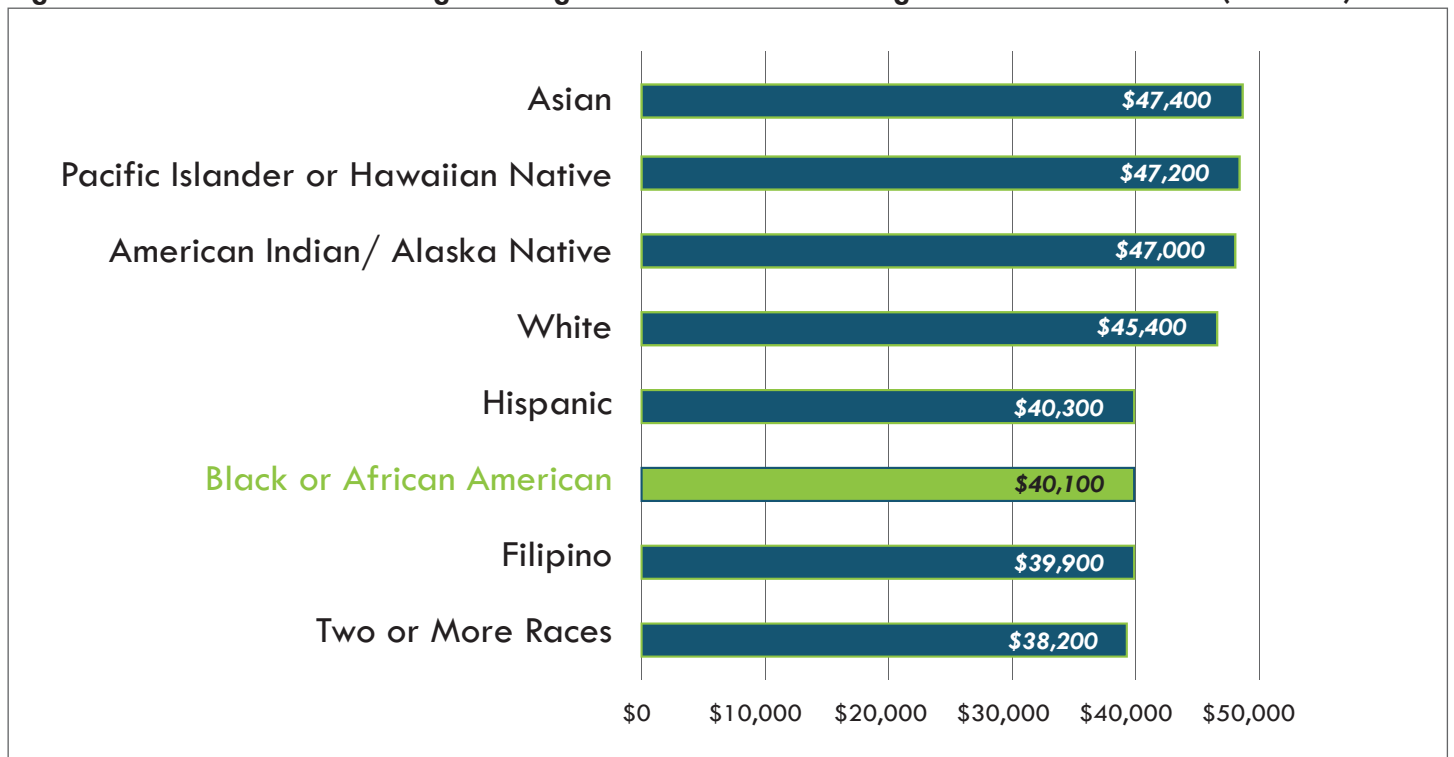
Strong Workforce Program Outcomes

Strong Workforce Program (SWP) students comprise those enrolled in a Career Technical Education (CTE) program assigned to a vocational industry sector at a California Community College. Black or African American students have slightly higher enrollment rates in CTE programs (8%) than across all programs (7%).

Median Annual Earnings

Black students in CTE programs who exited the community college system and did not transfer to any postsecondary institution had the third lowest median annual earnings of all ethnicities¹⁶ following the academic year of exit (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Median Annual Earnings Among Black Students Following Academic Year of Exit (2021-22)¹⁷.



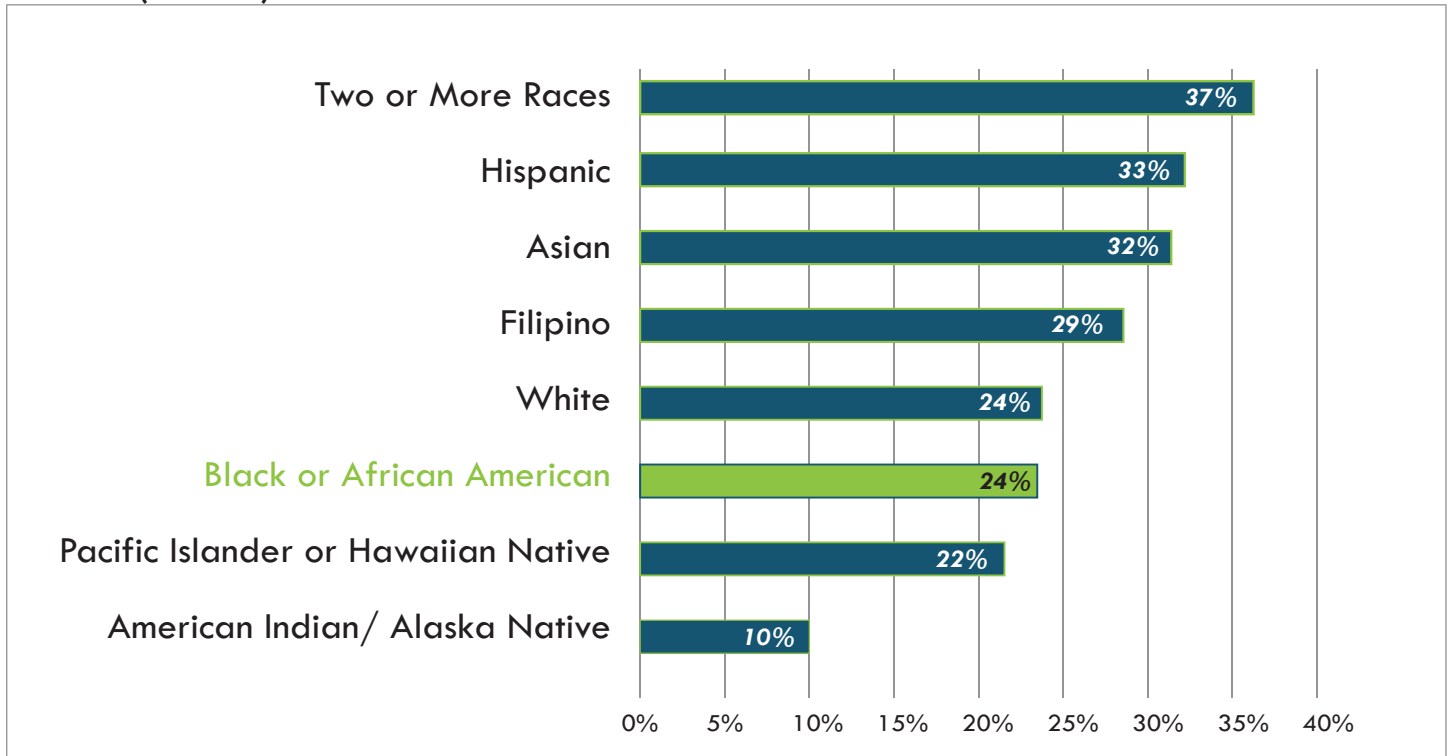
¹⁶Average median annual earnings for all SWP students in Los Angeles County: \$41,600

¹⁷ Source: [California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office DataVista](#)

Median Change Earnings

Change in earnings refers to the difference in earnings between the time before a student enters the California Community College system and when they exit it. Similarly, Black SWP students also reported lower median change in earnings compared to most other community college student ethnicity groups¹⁸ in Los Angeles County (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Median Change in Earnings Among Black Students Before Academic Entry and After Exit (2021-22)¹⁹



¹⁸ Average median annual earnings for all SWP students in Los Angeles County: 30%

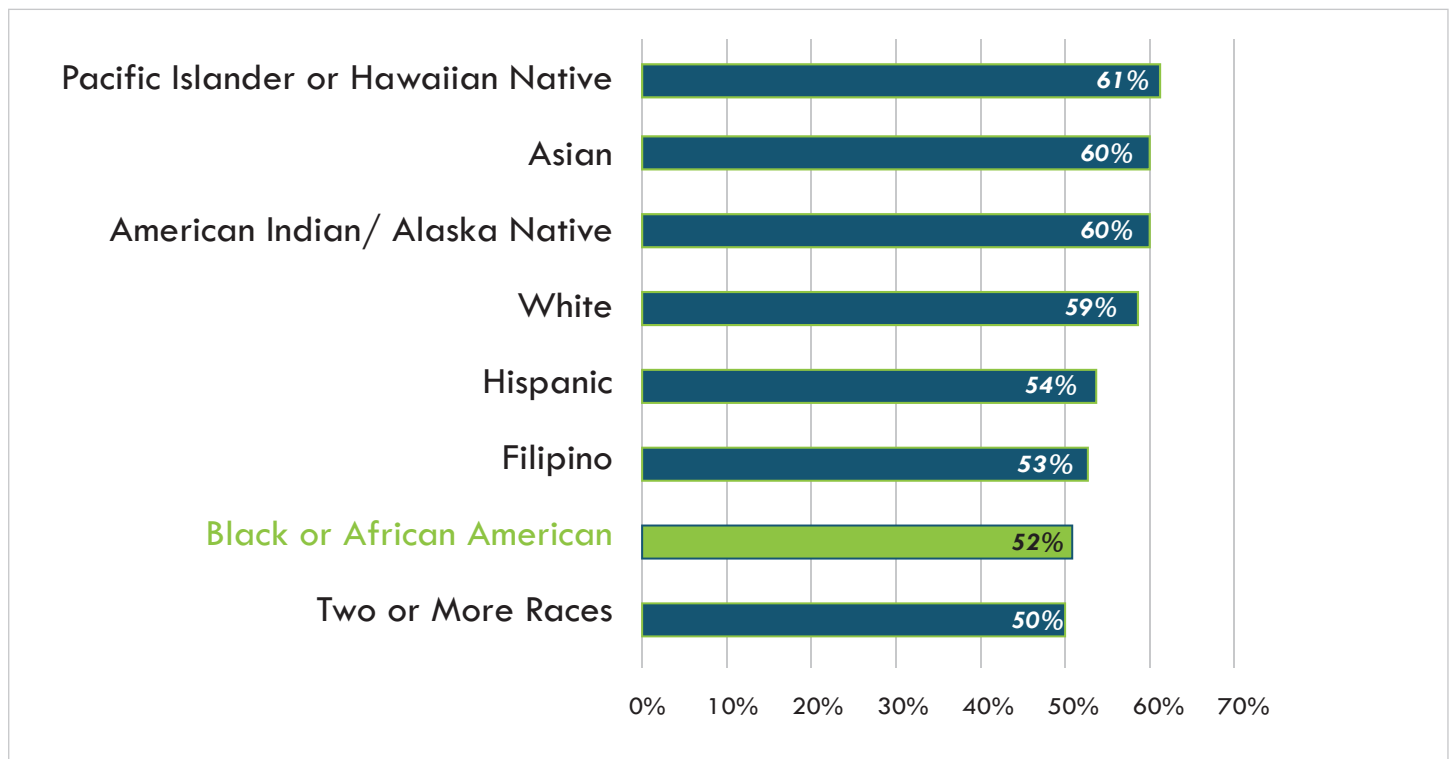
¹⁹ Source: [California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office DataVista](#)



Attaining a Living Wage

This trend extends to the percentage of SWP students attaining a living wage after workforce matriculation in Los Angeles County. Among SWP students who exited college and did not transfer to any postsecondary institution, Black students had the second lowest percentage of having attained a living wage for a single adult compared to students across all ethnicities²⁰ in the county (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Percentage of Black Students Attaining the Living Wage After Exit (2021-22)²¹



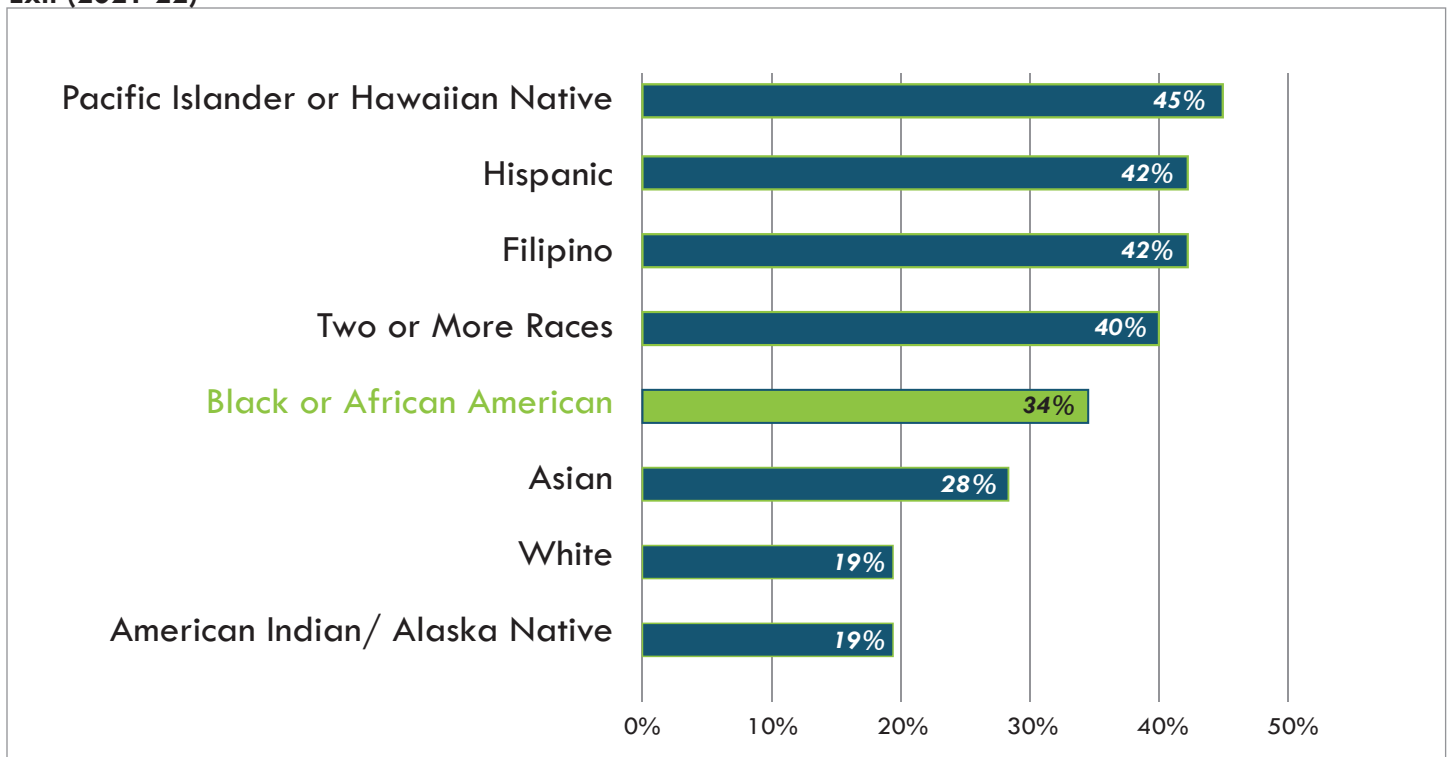
²⁰ Average percentage of attaining a living wage for all SWP students in Los Angeles County: 55%

²¹ Source: [California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office DataVista](#)



CTE programs are instrumental in enabling unemployed individuals or those seeking career transitions to gain employment. These programs prepare students to immediately apply to high-demand jobs by equipping them with relevant skills, certifications, and real-world experience. The percentage of Black students who were unemployed before entry or re-entry into college and subsequently became employed after exit is higher than the Los Angeles County average²² for all SWP students and ranks in the middle among all ethnicities (Figure 9). As such, CTE programs are an especially useful resource in addressing Black unemployment rates in Los Angeles County.

Figure 9. Percentage of Black Students Unemployed Before Entry/Re-entry and Gaining Employment After Exit (2021-22) ²³



²²Average percentage of SWP students who exited all postsecondary and who were unemployed 2 quarters before entry or re-entry and became employed 2 quarters after exit: 30%

²³ Source: [California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office DataVista](#)

Conclusion

The findings from this study highlight the substantial equity gaps Black workers and students face in Los Angeles County. Black concentrated industries and occupations continue to have lower earnings compared to those underrepresented by Black workers and fall below the Los Angeles County average. When considering the potential causes behind these inequalities in employment, unequal access to higher education is a major contributing factor.

The California Community College System is instrumental in addressing these disparities by providing affordable and accessible educational pathways for our communities. However, these long-standing structural inequities continue to persist, although to a lesser extent, in employment outcomes for Black students. Although all SWP students experience a significant boost in earnings after attending college, our findings show small to medium equity gaps in median annual earnings, median change in earnings, and attaining a living wage for Black students. This underscores the importance of understanding and addressing barriers Black students face in the educational system. Furthermore, by emphasizing priority jobs and programs²⁴ Colleges can provide targeted career guidance that will empower students to achieve long-term financial stability and narrow the equity gaps in the Los Angeles region.

²⁴[Equity in Priority Jobs and Programs: Los Angeles Region - Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Research](#)

Important Disclaimer

All representations included in this report have been produced from primary research and/or secondary review of publicly and/or privately available data and/or research reports. Efforts have been made to qualify and validate the accuracy of the data and the reported findings; however, neither the Centers of Excellence, COE host District, nor California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office are responsible for applications or decisions made based upon components or recommendations contained in this study.

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