



CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
FOR LABOR MARKET RESEARCH
LOS ANGELES

BLACK EMPLOYMENT IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

LOS ANGELES COUNTY - 2026



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BLACK EMPLOYMENT IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Los Angeles County – 2026

This report was produced in honor of Black Heritage Month.



CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
FOR LABOR MARKET RESEARCH
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OUR MISSION

We're the leading source of regional workforce information and insight for California Community Colleges.

Who We Are

The Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Research are part of the Workforce and Economic Development Division. As grant-funded technical assistance providers, the nine Centers are located strategically across the state to study California's regional economies. Our work supports the community colleges by providing customized data on high growth, emerging, and economically-critical industries and occupations.

What We Do

The Centers produce reports and tools that provide a real-time picture of the labor market, where it is headed, and what programs and training are needed to meet future workforce demand. This research helps community colleges tailor their programs to support the state's dynamic and competitive workforce. Our work can also be applied to educational policy, faculty professional development, and work-based learning opportunities for students.

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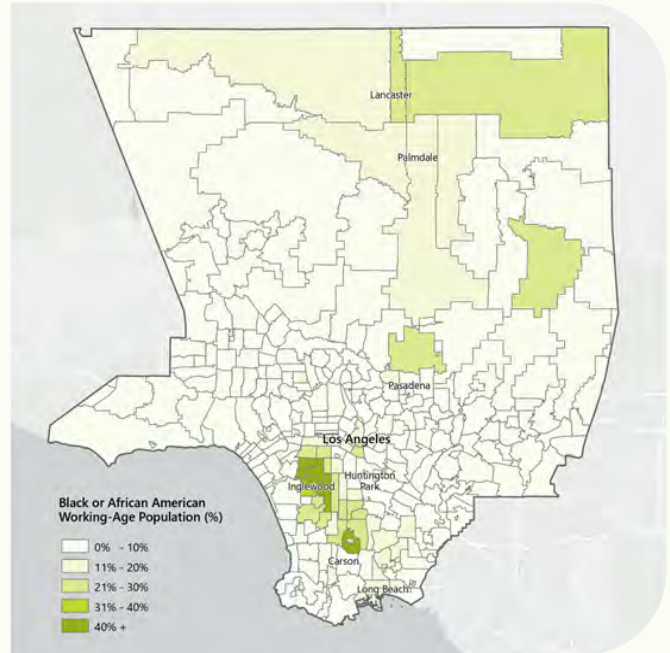
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Black Employment in Los Angeles County

As we commemorate Black Heritage Month, it is important to acknowledge that any assessment must account for the dual reality of the Black populations' contributions to the workforce alongside enduring inequities in labor market, educational, and employment outcomes within Los Angeles County. Black Americans make up only about 7% of the county's workforce but meaningfully influence the broader economic landscape.

According to Census data, Los Angeles County has one of the largest Black populations in the nation by total population size. An estimated 794,364 Black residents make up approximately 8% of the county's total population, a share that is notably lower than the national average of 12.4%, yet much larger in sheer numbers due to Los Angeles County's nearly 10 million residents. Figure 1 illustrates the geographic distribution of Black workers across Los Angeles County. The highest concentrations of Black workers are found in Inglewood (39%), Carson (24%), and Hawthorne (24%).

Figure 1. Concentration of Black Workers in L.A. County¹



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, County of Los Angeles, map powered by Enterprise GIS, Esri

Industries

In Los Angeles County, the distribution of Black employment across industries reveals significant differences. **Figure 2** presents industries² with the highest representation of Black workers and the average earnings per job in each industry. Only one of the five Black concentrated industries (Information) is projected to experience negative job growth through 2029; however, this decrease is negligible (-0.48%) and

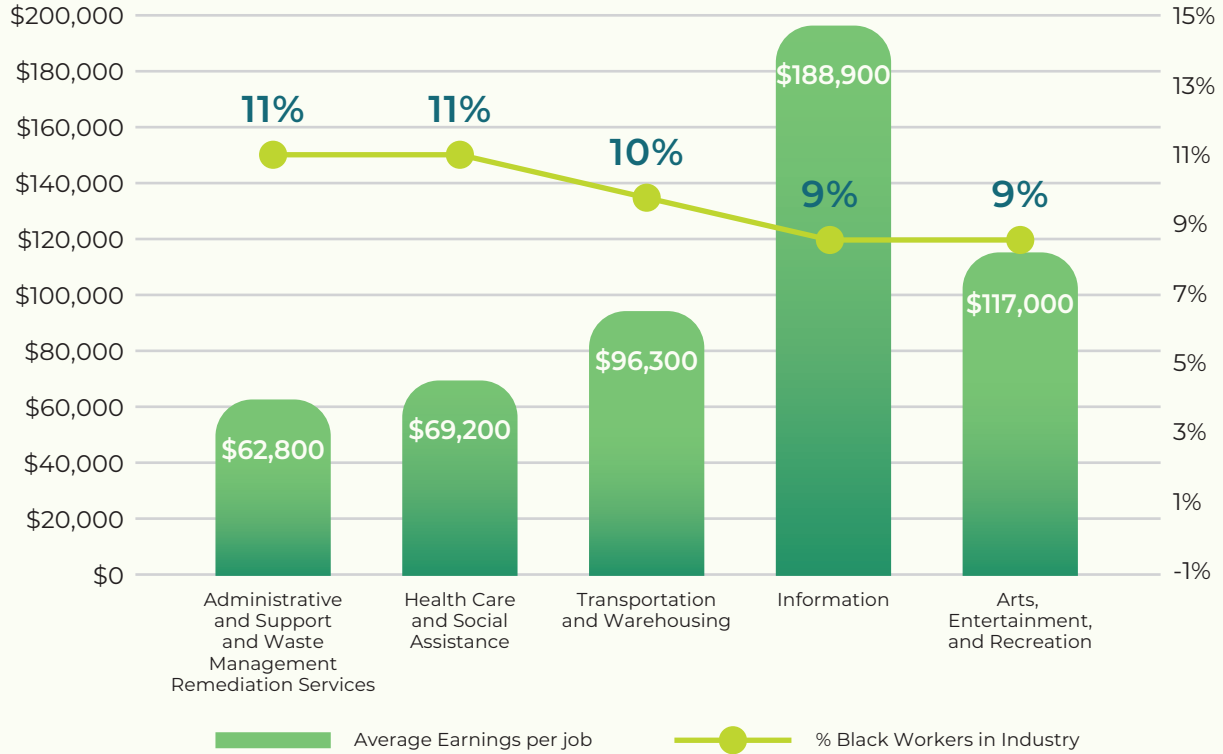
could be characterized as stagnant. Three Black-concentrated industries, Transportation and Warehousing, Information, as well as Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, have higher earnings compared to the county average of \$94,100, but make up only 33% of the total jobs across these 5 industries (**see Table 1**).

1 - Percentage of Black workers was calculated by dividing the Black working-age population by the total working-age population at the census tract level, using data from the U.S. Census Bureau; Disclaimer: Age-specific (15–64) population data for the Black or African American population are not consistently available at the census tract level from the U.S. Census Bureau. To maintain methodological consistency, this map is presented at the ZIP code level, where working-age race data are available.

2 - Industries with total jobs falling below the ½ the 1st quartile (Q1, 61,253 jobs) were excluded to mitigate the influence of low-end variability and improve the robustness of the analysis.



Figure 2: Average Earnings per Job and Percentage for Black Concentrated Industries



Note: Average earnings per job rounded to the nearest \$100.
 Source: Lightcast, 2025.4 Datarun

Table 1: Industries with the Highest Concentration of Black Workers

Industry (4-Digit NAICS)	Total Jobs	% of Black Workers
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	318,390	11%
Health Care and Social Assistance	879,377	11%
Transportation and Warehousing	236,911	10%
Information	211,825	9%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	139,632	9%
Total	1,786,135	
Average		10%

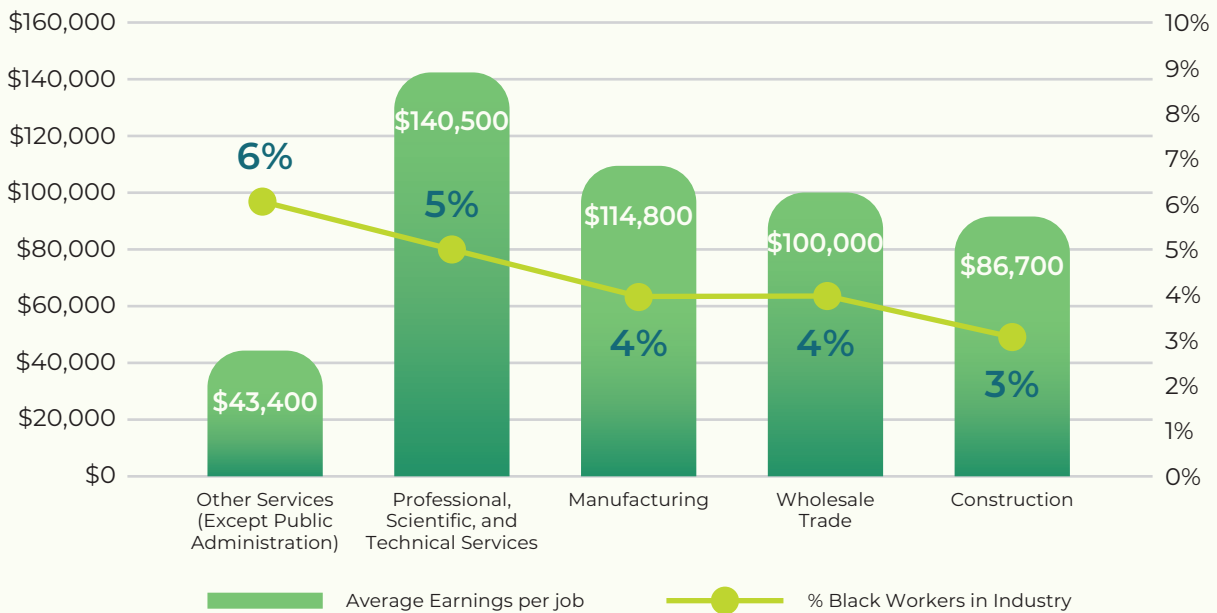
Source: Lightcast, 2025.4 Datarun



Conversely, **Figure 3** illustrates the industries³ with the lowest representation of Black workers, as well as average annual earnings per job in each industry. Three of five Black underrepresented industries are projected to experience positive job growth through 2029, whereas Manufacturing (-7%) and Wholesale Trade (-8%)

are projected to experience negative job growth. Here, three of the five industries have average earnings above the county average, while Other Services (except Public Administration) has earnings below half the county average. **Table 2** presents a breakdown of total jobs by industry, along with the percentage of Black workers.

Figure 3. Average Earnings per Job and Percentage for Black Underrepresented Industries



Note: Average earnings rounded to the nearest \$100.
Source: Lightcast, 2025.4 Datarun

Table 2: Industries with the Lowest Representation of Black Workers

Industry (4-Digit NAICS)	Total Jobs	% of Black Workers
Other Services (except Public Administration)	329,473	6%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	373,164	5%
Manufacturing	324,059	4%
Wholesale Trade	198,438	4%
Construction	216,706	3%
Total	1,441,840	
Average		4%

Source: Lightcast, 2025.4 Datarun

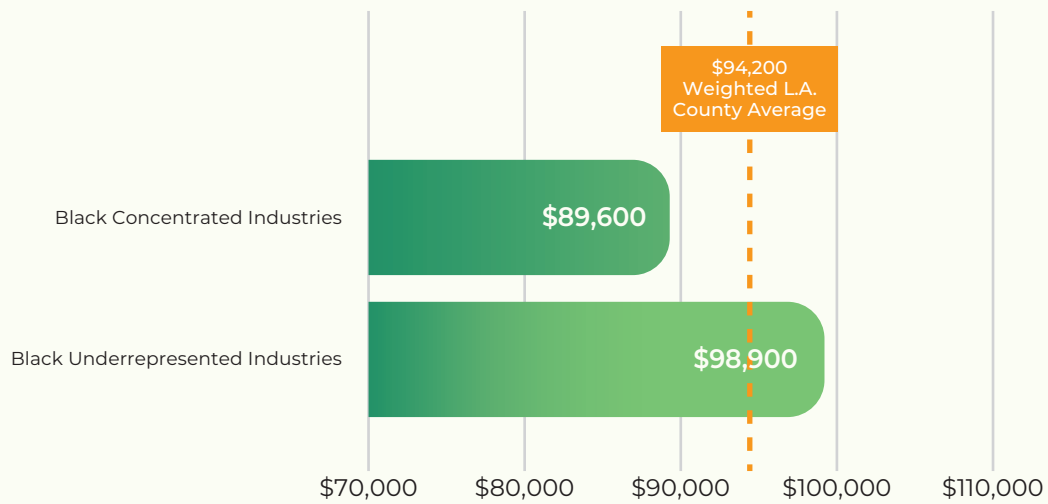
3 - Industries with total jobs falling below ½ of the 1st quartile (Q1, 61,253 jobs) were excluded to mitigate the influence of low-end variability and improve the robustness of the analysis.



The weighted average earnings per job⁴ for industries with a high concentration of Black workers is \$4,600 lower than the overall average for L.A. County. In contrast, industries where Black workers are underrepresented offer higher than average earnings, at

\$4,700 above the average. This highlights a small equity gap for the Black community, with a difference in average earnings per job of only \$9,300 between the concentrated and underrepresented groups of industries (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Weighted Average Earnings per Job Between Black concentrated and underrepresented Industries in Los Angeles County



Average earnings rounded to the nearest \$100.
Source: Lightcast, 2025.4 Datarun

Tables 3–5 provide a detailed breakdown of the three largest industries by employment in L.A. County. Health Care and Social Assistance is the county’s largest industry, employing 879,377 workers, and is also among the most represented industries for Black workers. Black representation exceeds the overall 11% industry average in only 6 of the 18 four-digit industry categories.

4 - As there is high variance in the number of jobs in each industry, the weighted average earnings per job across industries is used instead of median average earnings across industries. The weighted average earnings per job is calculated with the formula: Average (Average Earnings Per Job x 2024 Jobs in Industry for all five Black Concentrated/Underrepresented Industries)/Total 2024 Jobs for all five Black Concentrated and Underrepresented Industries.



Table 3. NAICS 62: Health Care and Social Assistance

Industry (4-Digit NAICS)	Total Jobs	Black Workers	% of Black Workers	LQ	2024 Average Earnings Per Job	2024 - 2029 % Change
Community Food and Housing, and Emergency and Other Relief Services	9,952	2,450	25%	1.39	\$78,298	12%
Other Residential Care Facilities	4,280	951	22%	0.84	\$64,507	(6%)
Vocational Rehabilitation Services	7,581	1,539	20%	0.86	\$53,698	(5%)
Psychiatric and Substance Abuse Hospitals	3,013	497	17%	0.75	\$80,543	(4%)
Residential Intellectual and Developmental Disability, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Facilities	20,981	3,408	16%	1.02	\$62,962	11%
Individual and Family Services	315,805	50,293	16%	3.08	\$35,047	19%
Home Health Care Services	48,175	5,294	11%	0.88	\$43,973	19%
Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	51,244	5,417	11%	1.11	\$68,580	10%
Continuing Care Retirement Communities and Assisted Living Facilities for the Elderly	20,728	2,150	10%	0.69	\$57,524	15%
Outpatient Care Centers	73,474	6,524	9%	2.00	\$111,599	18%
Child Care Services	32,693	2,730	8%	0.87	\$42,335	(3%)
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	110,854	8,967	8%	0.72	\$121,942	(0%)
Specialty (except Psychiatric and Substance Abuse) Hospitals	9,123	688	8%	1.09	\$125,997	39%
Other Ambulatory Health Care Services	8,664	584	7%	0.71	\$76,514	1%
Offices of Other Health Practitioners	48,957	2,901	6%	1.16	\$59,147	15%
Offices of Physicians	65,979	3,558	5%	0.72	\$127,829	(2%)
Medical and Diagnostic Laboratories	10,679	539	5%	1.09	\$92,017	(1%)
Offices of Dentists	37,195	1,190	3%	1.12	\$72,545	6%
Total	879,377	99,681				
Average			11%	1.12	\$69,189	12%

Note: LQ is also known as Employment Concentration, which is a way of quantifying how concentrated a characteristic of a particular region is compared to the national average. Source: Lightcast, 2025.4 Datarun

Government is the second-largest industry in Los Angeles County, yet Black workers comprise only 7% of its workforce. Although most job categories within this industry offer wages well above the county average, one category, Federal Government (Military), is an exception. This category offers below-average earnings, is projected to experience negative job growth, and

employs the highest share of Black workers within the government sector.

Accommodation and Food Services, the third-largest industry, has a 6% Black workforce. Unfortunately, all sub-industries here have average earnings well below the county average.



Table 4. NAICS 90: Government

Industry (4-Digit NAICS)	Total Jobs	Black Workers	% of Black Workers	LQ	2024 Average Earnings Per Job	2024 - 2029 % Change
Federal Government, Military	14,967	1,676	11%	0.27	\$37,860	(5%)
Federal Government, Civilian	49,630	5,018	10%	0.53	\$147,553	(0%)
State Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	16,899	1,529	9%	0.24	\$132,473	6%
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	211,295	18,764	9%	1.18	\$158,476	4%
Education and Hospitals (Local Government)	254,464	14,672	6%	0.96	\$106,130	0%
Education and Hospitals (State Government)	82,666	4,238	5%	0.85	\$153,449	8%
Total	629,921	45,897				
Average			7%	0.67	\$132,247	2%

Note: LQ is also known as Employment Concentration, which quantifies how concentrated a characteristic of a particular region is compared to the national average. These characteristics could be an industry's or occupation's share of employment, resident demographics, online profiles, or job postings.

Source: Lightcast, 2025.4 Datarun

Table 5. NAICS 72: Accommodation and Food Services

Industry (4-Digit NAICS)	Total Jobs	Black Workers	% of Black Workers	LQ	2024 Average Earnings Per Job	2024 - 2029 % Change
Special Food Services	36,452	2,818	8%	1.24	\$43,742	12%
Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages)	9,202	671	7%	0.71	\$35,605	15%
Traveler Accommodation	47,725	2,943	6%	0.85	\$64,322	12%
Restaurants and Other Eating Places	358,319	20,703	6%	1.07	\$38,460	6%
Rooming and Boarding Houses, Dormitories, and Workers' Camps	268	15	6%	0.59	\$42,418	(25%)
Gambling Industries	5,696	311	5%	1.37	\$62,563	(12%)
RV (Recreational Vehicle) Parks and Recreational Camps	701	25	4%	0.29	\$50,246	9%
Total	458,364	27,487				
Average			6%	0.87	\$41,835	7%

Note: LQ is also known as Employment Concentration, which quantifies how concentrated a characteristic of a particular region is compared to the national average. These characteristics could be an industry's or occupation's share of employment, resident demographics, online profiles, or job postings.

Source: Lightcast, 2025.4 Datarun

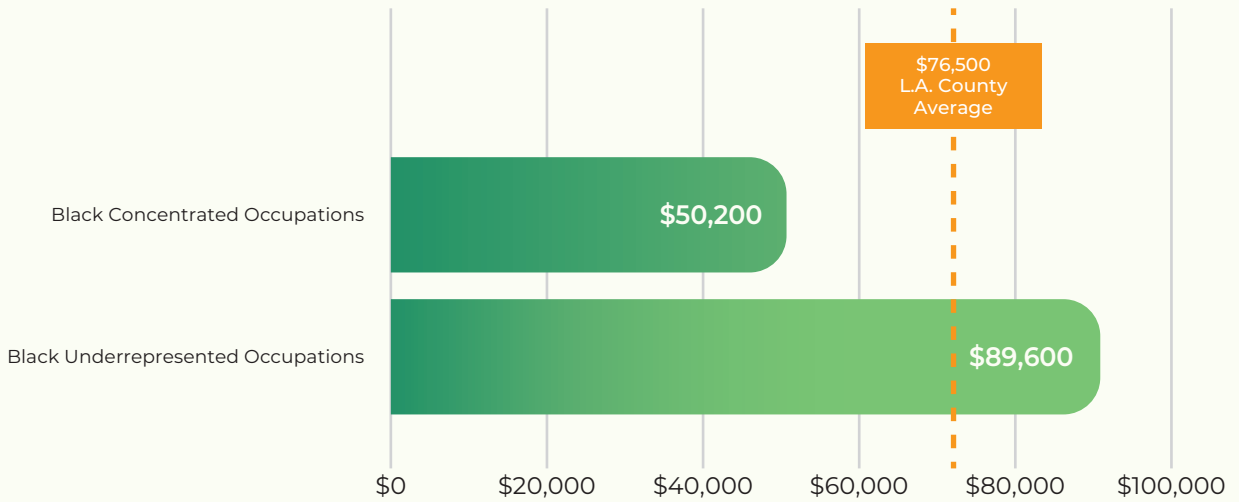


Occupations

When comparing occupations⁵, this trend becomes more pronounced. The weighted average annual earnings for Black concentrated occupations are approximately \$39,400 lower than those for Black underrepresented occupations (**Figure 5**). For a broader view we also examine differences in median salaries, which provides additional insight by accounting for skewed income distributions that can distort average earnings. The median salary for occupations with high concentrations of Black workers is \$53,000, compared to \$62,200 for occupations in which Black workers are underrepresented, a gap of \$9,200. Notably, both groups of occupations fall into relatively low-wage categories, highlighting persistent earnings disparities even within similar segments of the labor market.

These earnings patterns are largely expected, given that 14 of the 20 occupations in which Black workers are either concentrated or underrepresented have low educational requirements. **Table 6** presents occupations with the highest shares of Black workers, along with their average annual earnings, educational requirements, and typical on-the-job training. Among Black-concentrated occupations, seven of the ten require a high school diploma, and one requires no formal education. The remaining two occupations, Nursing Assistants and Rehabilitation Counselors, require postsecondary education and a master's degree, respectively, yet still offer average salaries well below the Los Angeles County average. Notably, all Black-concentrated occupations earn less than the county's average annual wage

Figure 5. Weighted Average Annual Earnings between Black Concentrated and Underrepresented Occupations in Los Angeles County⁶



Source: Lightcast, 2025.4 Datarun

5 - The interquartile range was used as a cutoff to ensure adequate occupation size for analysis (456).

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



Table 6. Black Concentrated Occupations

Occupation	Total Jobs	Median Annual Earnings	Typical On-The-Job Training	Educational Requirements
Residential Advisors	26%	\$46,100	Short-term	High school diploma or equivalent
Security Guards	26%	\$42,900	Short-term	High school diploma or equivalent
Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity	19%	\$65,000	Moderate-term	High school diploma or equivalent
First-Line Supervisors of Security Workers	19%	\$58,900	None	High school diploma or equivalent
Correctional Officers and Jailers	18%	\$80,900	Moderate-term	High school diploma or equivalent
Bus Drivers, School	18%	\$59,700	Short-term	No formal educational credential
Postal Service Mail Sorters, Processors, and Processing Machine Operators	18%	\$58,300	Short-term	High school diploma or equivalent
Reservation and Transportation Ticket Agents and Travel Clerks	18%	\$47,700	Short-term	High school diploma or equivalent
Nursing Assistants	18%	\$45,600	None	Postsecondary nondegree award
Rehabilitation Counselors	17%	\$43,600	None	Master's degree
Medial Median		\$53,000		
Average	20%			

Note: Median Annual Earnings are rounded to the nearest \$100.
 Source: Lightcast, 2025.4 Datarun

By comparison, as presented in **Table 7**, educational requirements among Black-underrepresented occupations are more varied: three require no formal education, three require a high school diploma, one requires non-degree postsecondary education, and three require a bachelor’s degree. This contrast highlights how differences in educational requirements are closely linked to earnings outcomes across occupations.

Educational attainment often functions as a structural gateway to higher-paying occupations, particularly in industries with formal degree requirements. Examining educational attainment by ethnicity, therefore, provides important context for understanding observed wage disparities (**Figure 6**). According to Census data, 32.3% of Black adults aged 25 and older hold a bachelor’s degree

or higher, compared to 36.5% of the overall population. Although this represents the third-highest attainment rate among racial and ethnic groups, it remains more than 20% lower than the rates observed among White (non-Hispanic) and Asian adults.

When examining degree requirements across occupations, only one of the fields with high concentrations of Black workers, Correctional Officers and Jailers, has average annual earnings that exceed the Los Angeles County average earnings. By contrast, five of the occupations in which Black workers are underrepresented are above the county average. Of these, three require a bachelor’s degree. Together, these findings highlight the critical role of educational attainment in promoting equitable access to well-paying and sustainable career pathways.

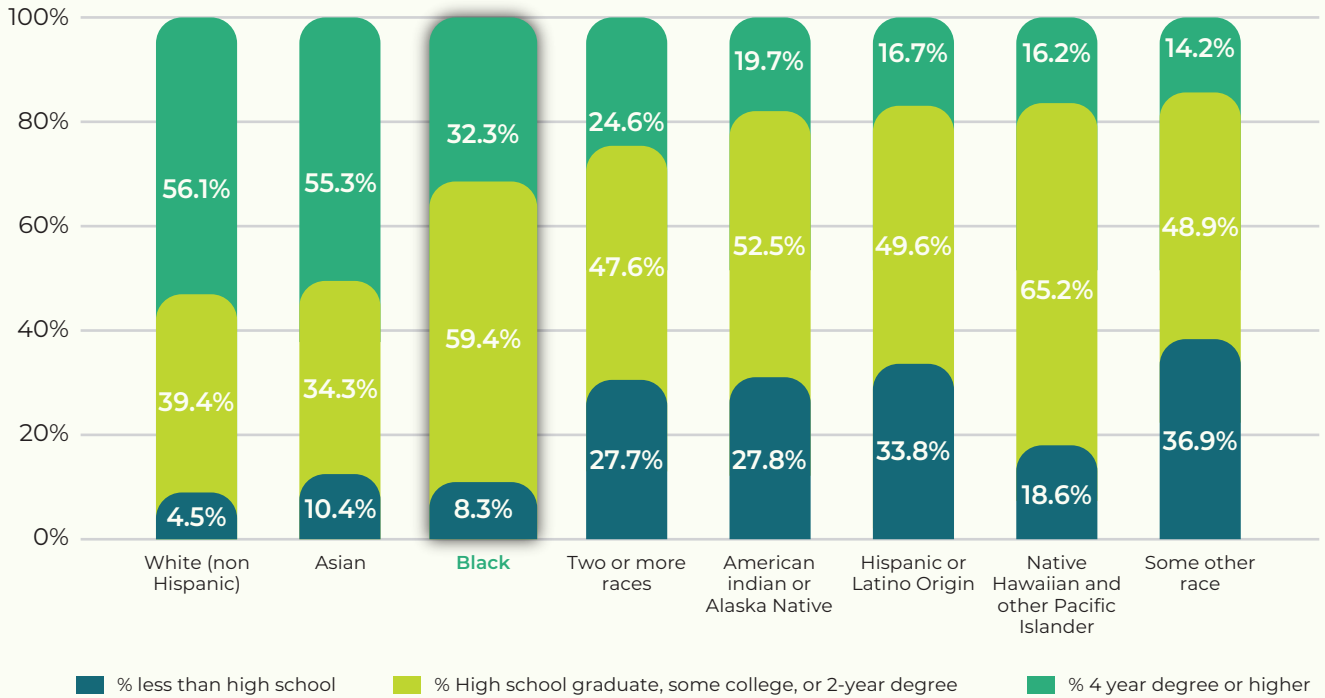
Table 7. Black Underrepresented Occupations

Occupation	% Black Workers	Median Annual Earnings	Typical On-The-Job Training	Educational Requirements
Graphic Designers	4%	\$71,800	None	Bachelor's degree
Bartenders	4%	\$36,000	Short-term	No formal educational credential
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	4%	\$40,000	Short-term	No formal educational credential
Sales Managers	3%	\$125,500	None	Bachelor's degree
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	3%	\$55,800	Short-term	Postsecondary nondegree award
Real Estate Sales Agents	3%	\$62,200	Moderate-term	High school diploma or equivalent
Construction Laborers	3%	\$48,900	Short-term	No formal educational credential
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	3%	\$68,800	Moderate-term	High school diploma or equivalent
Carpenters	3%	\$62,200	Apprenticeship	High school diploma or equivalent
Software Developers	2%	\$154,900	None	Bachelor's degree
Medial Median				
Average	3%	\$62,200		

Note: Median Annual Earnings are rounded to the nearest \$100.
 Source: Lightcast, 2025.4 Datarun



Figure 6. Educational Attainment by Ethnicity⁷



Data Source: US Census 2024, <https://data.census.gov/>



7 - Author's calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau educational attainment data by ethnicity. Since the demographic dataset only disaggregated by total demographic population, "high school graduate or higher," and "bachelor's degree or higher," current categories were derived by subtraction, percentages calculated.

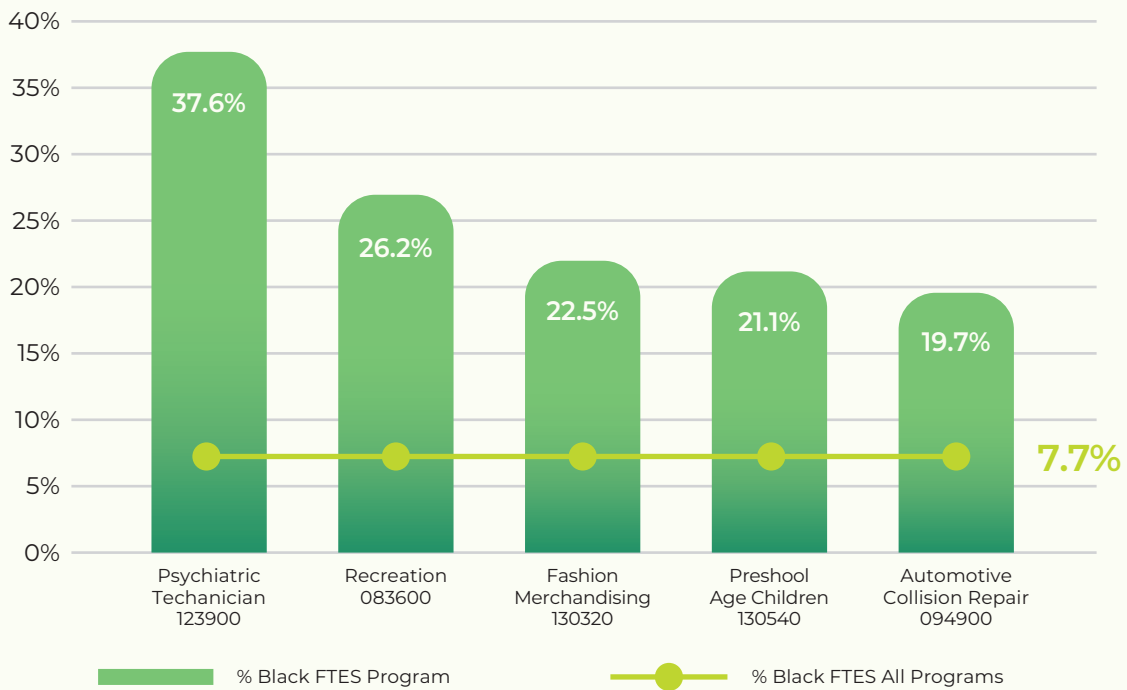


California Community College Career & Technical Education Programs

These disparities in educational attainment underscore the importance of accessible postsecondary pathways that support upward mobility. The California Community Colleges serve as a vital gateway to equitable and affordable education, enabling students to either continue their academic journey at four-year institutions or acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) necessary to enter the workforce

directly. Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, in particular, offer structured pathways that integrate academic instruction with hands-on, applied learning in specific occupational fields. **Figure 7** shows the programs with the most substantial Black student representation⁸ among the 19 community colleges in Los Angeles.

Figure 7. Community College CTE Programs with the Highest Percentage of Black Full-time Enrolled Students (FTES)⁹ in Los Angeles County (2024-25)



Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems (MIS) Data Mart, <https://datamart.cccco.edu>

8 - To ensure sample size adequacy, only programs with more than 19.43 Total FTES (1st Quartile Median) were included in the analysis.

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



Strong Workforce Program Outcomes

Students participating in the Strong Workforce Program (SWP) are those enrolled in Career Technical Education (CTE) programs that align with one or more of California’s designated vocational industry sectors within the community college system. These programs are designed to equip learners with practical skills and

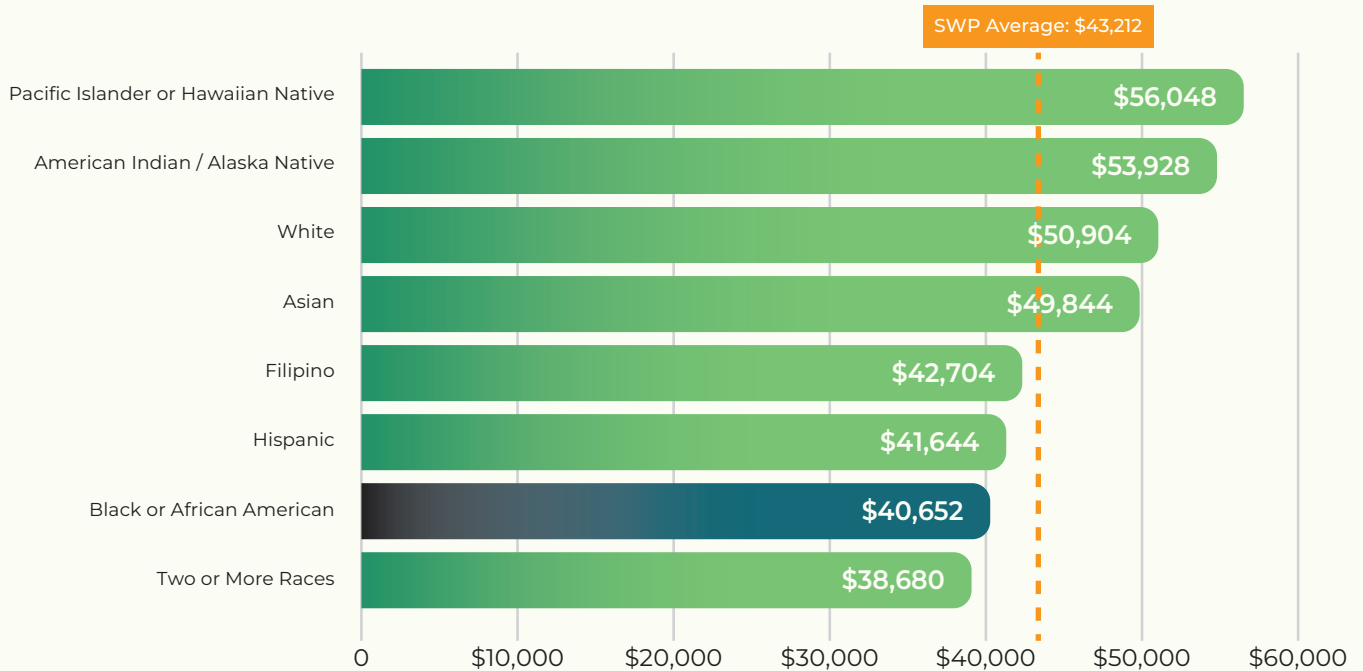
industry-recognized credentials that lead to gainful employment and career advancement. Examining outcomes across diverse SWP student demographic groups provide valuable insight into the persistent equity gaps they face.

Median Annual Earnings

Black students (n = 3,245) in CTE programs who exited the community college system without transferring to any postsecondary institution had the second lowest annual earnings in the year following exit among all racial and ethnic student groups (**Figure 8**).

This outcome suggests that, despite participation in workforce-oriented programs, Black CTE students face limited access to higher-paying employment opportunities immediately after leaving the system.

Figure 8. Median Annual Earnings Among Black Students Following Academic Year of Exit (2022-23)



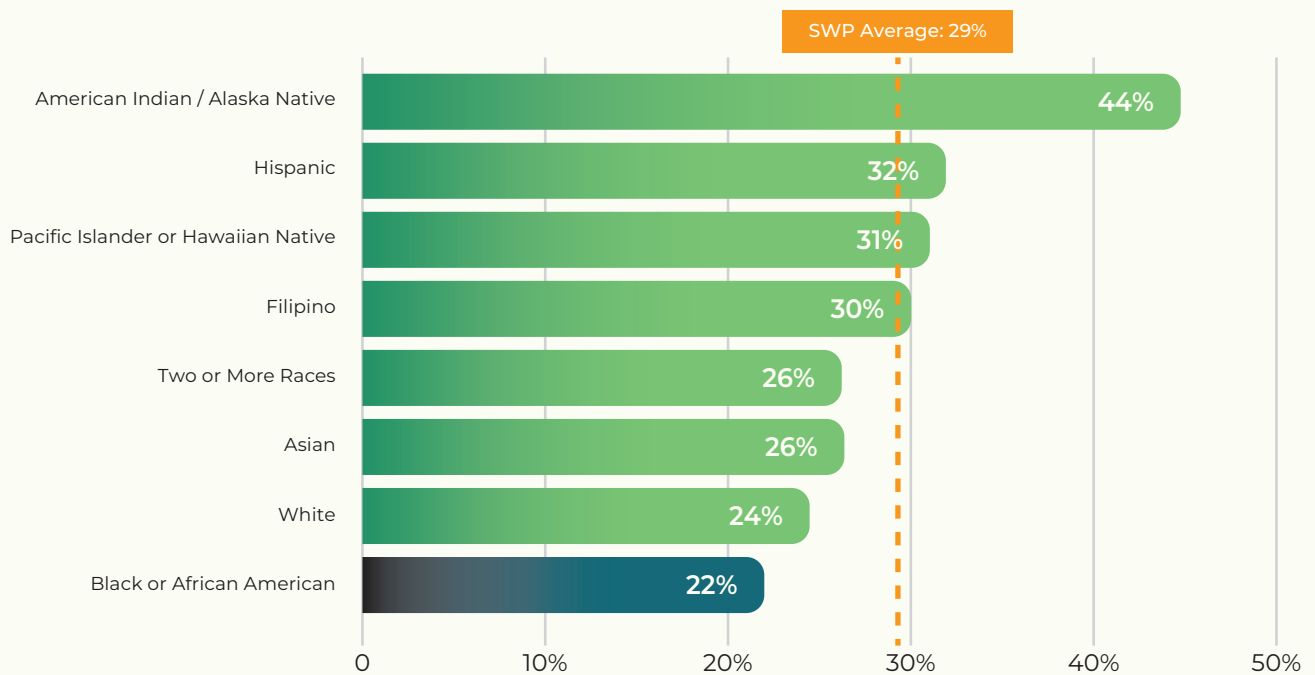
Source: <https://datavista.cccco.edu/>

Median Change in Earnings

Figure 9 illustrates changes in student earnings, measured as the difference between income prior to entering and after exiting the California Community College system. Among all demographic groups, Black students (n = 2,287) experienced the smallest increase in earnings following their college attendance.

This finding indicates that, on average, Black students experienced more limited financial returns from their postsecondary education in the period immediately after graduation, underscoring persistent equity challenges in translating educational participation into improved labor market outcomes.

Figure 9. Median Change in Earnings Among Black Students Before Academic Entry and After Exit (2022-23)



Source: <https://datavista.cccco.edu/>

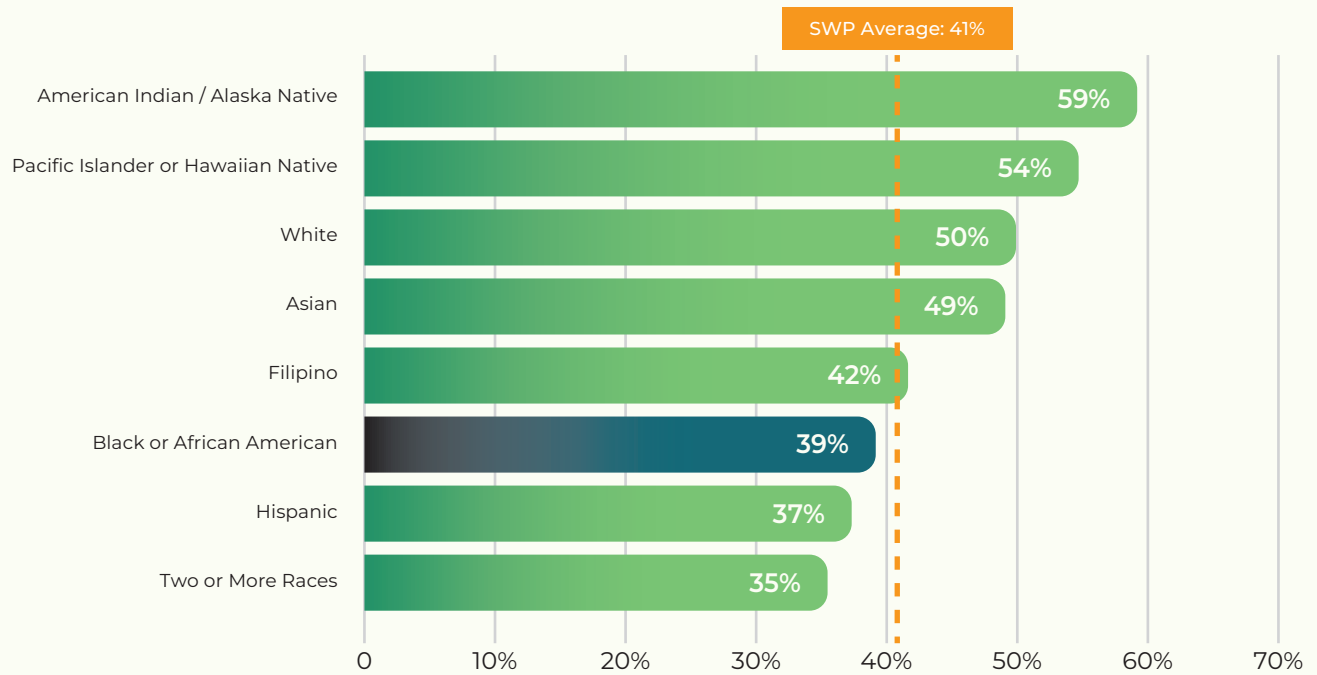


Attaining a Living Wage

Among SWP students who exited college and did not transfer to any postsecondary institution, Black students (n = 3,245) had a lower than average rate of living wage attainment for a single adult in Los Angeles

County for this category (**Figure 10**). This finding highlights the persistent equity gaps in post-college economic outcomes among Black workers.

Figure 10. Percentage of Black Students Attaining the Living Wage After Exit (2022-23)



Source: <https://datavista.cccco.edu/>

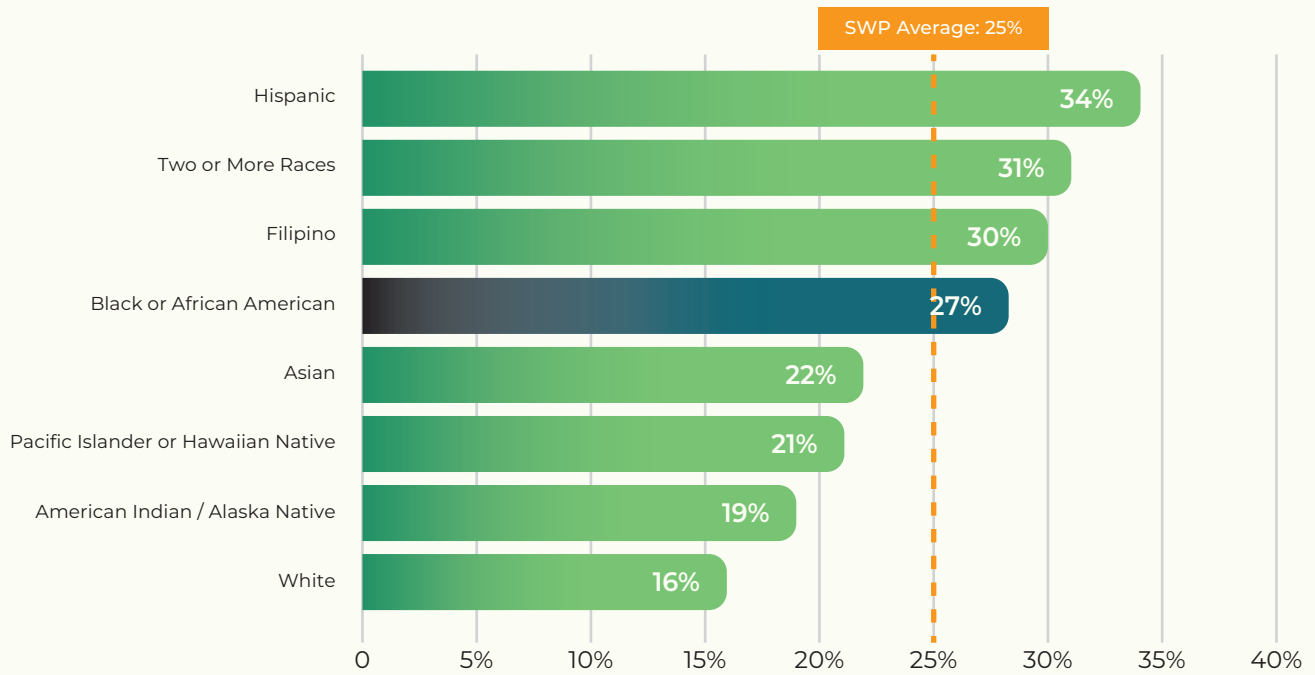


Gaining Employment

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. Among SWP participants, Black students (n = 2,459) had employment rates slightly higher than the overall SWP average after college attendance (**Figure 11**). However, when viewed

alongside earlier findings on earnings, earnings growth, and living-wage attainment, this result suggests that employment alone does not necessarily translate into improved economic outcomes. Despite relatively strong post-college employment rates, Black students continue to face challenges accessing higher-paying jobs and achieving wages sufficient to meet local living-wage standards, underscoring the need for strategies that address both job placement and job quality.

Figure 11. Percentage of Black Students Who Become Employed After Exit



Source: <https://datavista.cccco.edu/>





Conclusion

This report highlights persistent disparities in labor market and educational outcomes for Black workers and students across the Los Angeles region. While earnings patterns vary by industry, analysis at the occupational level reveals a more consistent trend: occupations with higher concentrations of Black workers tend to offer lower average earnings than those in which Black workers are underrepresented. Although Black workers make up approximately 7% of the county's total workforce, they face significant equity gaps. Notably, many occupations with the highest representation of Black workers require minimal formal education and limited prior experience, including roles in security services, bus transportation, and postal operations.

The California Community Colleges play a key role in expanding access to workforce opportunities for Black students through CTE programs; however, more work remains. Our findings indicate that while Black students secure employment at rates slightly above the overall average, their economic mobility remains more limited than that of other groups. Black students experience lower median earnings, smaller increases in earnings, and lower rates of living-wage attainment. These patterns reinforce the need to strengthen educational and workforce pipelines, particularly for students entering occupations with high concentrations of Black workers that are also associated with lower wages. Although Black students attain bachelor's degrees at higher rates than some other demographic groups, continued gaps in educational attainment persist. Addressing these gaps, alongside improvements in job quality and career advancement opportunities, will be critical to achieving more equitable labor market outcomes for this population.

In light of these findings, aligning educational programs with high-demand, high-wage occupations is essential to improving economic outcomes for Black students and workers¹⁰. Expanding access to

mentorship, targeted academic and career support, and culturally responsive services can help address the structural barriers identified throughout this report. Together, these strategies underscore the importance of equity-centered policies and practices that ensure Black students and workers across the Los Angeles region are not only able to access employment but also positioned to achieve upward mobility and thrive in a competitive, rapidly evolving economy.

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.



10 - Equity in Priority Jobs and Programs: Los Angeles Region - Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Research
<https://coecc.net/los-angeles/2025/01/equity-in-priority-jobs-and-programs-los-angeles-region/>



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