



# Race & Low-Wage Work

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*July 2020*

# Executive summary

At the Institute, we're committed to frontline workers. Millions in retail, restaurants, healthcare, and other industries do not make a living wage. Low wage work is difficult and every metric shows that it is even harder for people of color.

We have assembled a set of data that can help you isolate statistics for low-wage workers of color, who have worse outcomes in comparison to their white peers. For instance, in retail, you're paid less, hours are shorter, schedules are more erratic, and you're not promoted as much.

Ultimately, there is a abundance of data available – from a variety of sources – about outcomes for low-wage workers. We hope this will help companies look at the research out there and disaggregate impacts by race.

In this report, you will find a set of statistics about:

- US workforce demographics
- Low-wage workforce demographics
- Industry spotlight: Retail workforce demographics
- Industry spotlight: Healthcare and Restaurant workforce demographics
- Wealth inequality
- Impacts on work and the employee experience for people of color in the US workforce

The Good Jobs Strategy values employees, customers, and investor/owners; by combining investment in employees with specific operational choices companies see an increase in employee productivity, contribution, and motivation. As Demos.org's report on racial inequity in the retail industry stated, "Decent employment opportunities, wages, and workplace practices are the *essential bedrock for all Americans* to be able to work toward an adequate, dignified standard of living. Yet our labor market norms have consistently excluded people of color from accessing those foundations of opportunity." With GJS, we know the conventional wisdom that providing jobs with low wages, minimal benefits, little training, and chaotic schedules are the only way companies can keep costs down and prices low is untrue.

Before we can collectively remove the barriers in the workforce for Black employees so businesses can achieve their potential, we must first understand the current state through data.

# US workforce demographics

# BLS data: Sales and office occupations

## Sales and Related Occupation

	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic/Latino
Share of sales & related occupation	80%	11%	5%	17%
Cashier	69%	18%	7%	24%
Retail salesperson	79%	12%	5%	19%
First-line supervisors of retail sales workers	81%	10%	6%	15%
First-line supervisors of non-retail sales workers	86%	7%	6%	14%

# BLS data: Service occupations

## Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations

	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic/Latino
Share of food preparation & serving related occupations	74%	14%	7%	27%
Dishwashers	73%	16%	4%	29%
Host/hostess	78%	9%	4%	18%
Food preparation	74%	13%	8%	28%
Combined food preparation and serving workers, including fast food	70%	20%	5%	20%
Supervisor of food preparation	77%	15%	5%	23%
Cooks	70%	18%	6%	37%
Chefs and head cooks	63%	14%	16%	26%

# BLS data: Professional and related occupations

## Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations

	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic/Latino
Share of healthcare practitioners & technical occupations	75%	13%	10%	9%
Home Health Aides	54%	37%	4%	18%
Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse	67%	27%	3%	14%
Registered Nurses	76%	12%	9%	7%
Nurse Practitioner	77%	12%	10%	3%

# BLS data: Service occupations (con't)

## Personal Care and Service Occupations

	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic/Latino
Share of personal care & service occupations	69%	16%	10%	18%
Personal care aides	60%	25%	8%	22%
Front-line supervisors of personal service workers	72%	5%	20%	13%

## Low-wage workforce demographics



# 15 Largest low-wage Occupations in 2019

	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Total Employed</b>	<b>Median Wage (\$/hour)</b>
<b>1</b>	Retail Salespersons	4,317,950	\$12.14
<b>2</b>	Fast Food and Counter Workers	3,996,820	\$10.93
<b>3</b>	Cashiers	3,596,630	\$11.37
<b>4</b>	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	3,161,500	\$12.15
<b>5</b>	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	2,953,170	\$14.19
<b>6</b>	Waiters and Waitresses	2,579,020	\$11.00
<b>7</b>	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	2,145,450	\$13.19
<b>8</b>	Stockers and Order Fillers	2,135,850	\$13.16
<b>9</b>	Nursing Assistants	1,419,920	\$14.26
<b>10</b>	Cooks, Restaurant	1,401,890	\$13.36
<b>11</b>	Security Guards	1,126,370	\$14.27
<b>12</b>	Receptionists and Information Clerks	1,057,370	\$14.45
<b>13</b>	Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	926,960	\$11.95
<b>14</b>	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	912,660	\$14.63
<b>15</b>	Food Preparation Workers	863,740	\$11.92

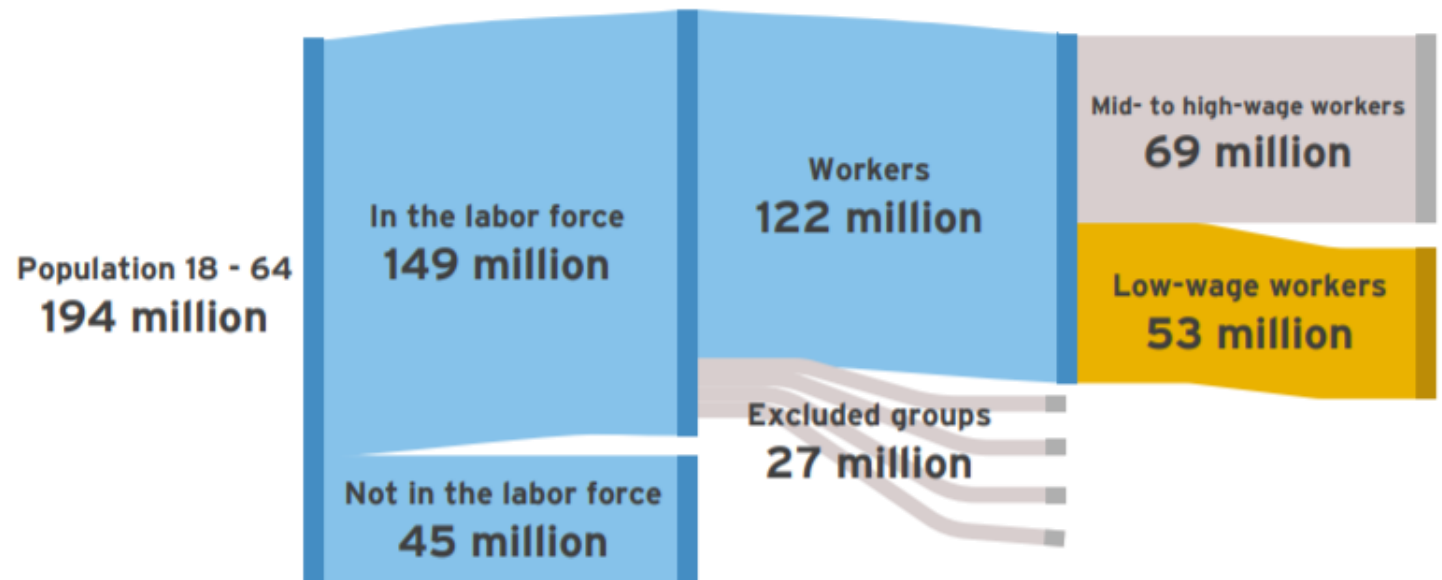
# What are the characteristics of the low-wage workforce? (1/2)

## Definition of a low-wage worker

- **Brookings Institute:** We compare hourly wages to a low-wage threshold.
  - While there is no universal definition of a low-wage worker, we use the often-employed threshold of two-thirds median wages for full-time/full-year workers, with slight modification.
  - When determining median wages, we consider only wages for males. This raises the threshold, since men earn more than women on average, but using the typical male worker as the benchmark limits the extent to which gender inequality in wages affects our definition.

## 53 million people are in the low-wage workforce

Illustration of how we identified low-wage workers



Source: Brookings analysis of 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year Public Use Microdata Samples

# What are the characteristics of the low-wage workforce? (1/2)

## Race and workforce demographics

US by Race and Workforce Group			
	Entire US population	Entire working population	Low-wage population
<b>Female</b>	51%	47%	54%
<b>White</b>	76%	77%	52%
<b>Latino / Hispanic</b>	19%	18%	25%
<b>Black</b>	13%	12%	15%
<b>Asian American</b>	6%	7%	5%
<b>Source</b>	<i>Census.gov</i>	<i>BLS.gov</i>	<i>Brookings Institute</i>

## Facts about low-wage workers

- **Low-wage workers are a racially diverse group, and disproportionately female.**
- **Both Latino or Hispanic and Black workers are overrepresented relative to their share of the total workforce, while whites and Asian Americans are under-represented.**
  - Historical practices of occupational segregation combined with racial inequities in access to housing, lending, and education help explain why people of color are overrepresented in low-wage frontline jobs and continue to face constant barriers to advancement.
- **Nearly two-thirds of low-wage workers are in their prime working years of 25-54**
- **40% of low-wage workers are raising children.**
- **14% of low-wage workers have a bachelor's degree, compared to 44% among mid/high-wage workers, and nearly half (49%) have a high school diploma or less, compared to 25% among mid/high-wage workers.**
- **Only 57% of low-wage workers work full time year-round, considerably lower than the share of mid/high-wage workers (81%). Among those working less than full time year-round, it is not clear if this is voluntary or involuntary, or if it reflects part-time work throughout the year or full-time work for part of the year**
- **26% of low-wage workers are the sole earners in their families, with median family earnings of \$20,400.**
  - **44% of this group live below 150% of the federal poverty line, and half of sole earners are caring for children.**
  - Another **25%** of all low-wage workers live in families in which **all workers earn low wages.**
  - **Median family earnings for this group are \$41,700**, and 30% live below 150% of the poverty line. It **disproportionately includes foreign-born** individuals (33%) and those with limited English proficiency (24%).

# Characteristics of minimum wage workers, 2017

- **Age.** Minimum wage workers tend to be young. Although workers under age 25 represented only about one-fifth of hourly paid workers, they made up about half of those paid the federal minimum wage or less. Among employed teenagers (ages 16 to 19) paid by the hour, about 8 percent earned the minimum wage or less, compared with about 1 percent of workers age 25 and older.
- **Gender.** Among workers who were paid hourly rates in 2017, about 3 percent of women and about 2 percent of men had wages at or below the prevailing federal minimum.
- **Race and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.** The percentage of hourly paid workers with wages at or below the federal minimum differed little among the major race and ethnicity groups. About 3 percent of African American or Black workers earned the federal minimum wage or less. Among White, Asian, and Hispanic workers, the percentage was about 2 percent.
- **Education.** Among hourly paid workers age 16 and older, about 4 percent of those without a high school diploma earned the federal minimum wage or less, compared with about 2 percent of those who had a high school diploma (with no college), about 2 percent of those with some college or an associate degree, and about 1 percent of college graduates.
- **Marital status.** Of those paid an hourly wage, never-married workers, who tend to be young, were more likely (4 percent) than married workers (1 percent) to earn the federal minimum wage or less.
- **Full- and part-time status.** About 6 percent of part-time workers (persons who usually work fewer than 35 hours per week) were paid the federal minimum wage or less, compared with about 1 percent of full-time workers.
- **Occupation.** Among major occupational groups, service occupations had the highest percentage of hourly paid workers earning at or below the federal minimum wage, at about 7 percent. About two-thirds of workers earning the minimum wage or less in 2017 were employed in service occupations, mostly in food preparation and serving related jobs.
- **Industry.** The industry with the highest percentage of workers earning hourly wages at or below the federal minimum wage was leisure and hospitality (11 percent). About three-fifths of all workers paid at or below the federal minimum wage were employed in this industry, almost entirely in restaurants and other food services. For many of these workers, tips may supplement the hourly wages received.
- **State of residence.** The states with the highest percentages of hourly paid workers earning at or below the minimum wage were in the South: Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, South Carolina, Louisiana, and Virginia (all were about 4 percent). The states with the lowest percentages of hourly paid workers earning at or below the federal minimum wage were in the West or Midwest: California, Washington, Montana, and Minnesota (all were less than 1 percent). It should be noted that many states have minimum wage laws establishing standards that exceed the federal minimum wage.

# Retail

## Employed persons by race

	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic/ Latino
Share of sales & related occupation	80%	11%	5%	17%
Cashier	69%	18%	7%	24%
Retail salesperson	79%	12%	5%	19%
First-line supervisors of retail sales workers	81%	10%	6%	15%
First-line supervisors of non-retail sales workers	86%	7%	6%	14%

# Retail

1

Like the overall retail workforce, the **vast majority of Black retail workers are adults**. More than half have some education after high school, and about one-third are working parents.

2

Minorities are **underrepresented in higher-paying retail management positions**.

Black workers make up 11% of the retail labor force. Here's the breakdown: 18% of cashiers are Black, 12% of retail salespersons are black, and 9.5% of first-line supervisors are Black.

3

**White employees were 2.4 times more likely to be promoted within a given year than Latinx employees and 4.7 times more likely than Black employees.**

4

Black and Latino retail workers are **more likely to be employed part-time despite wanting full-time work**. One-in-five Black retail workers are employed involuntarily part-time, compared to less than 1-in-7 white workers

5

90% of workers in general merchandise (big box, department, and discount stores) earn less than \$15/hour.

6

Retail employers pay Black and Latino full-time retail salespersons just **75 percent of the wages of their white peers**, amounting to losses up to \$7,500 per year.

**Spotlight:**  
**Negative hiring practices**  
 The disadvantage for Blacks is perpetuated through [the routine use of credit checks](#) in job applications, which basically penalize job seekers for being financially insecure.

1, 4, 6. <https://www.demos.org/research/retail-race-divide-how-retail-industry-perpetuating-racial-inequality-21st-century>  
 2. <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>  
 3. <https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/Advancing%20Frontline%20Employees%20of%20Color.pdf>  
 5. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/556496efe4b02c9d26df26a/t/5a2596b20d92971c3d8edf44/1512412852708/Occupational+Segregation+in+Retail+Data+Visualization.pdf>

# On the impact of raising wages in retail

**People of color are key stakeholders in service industries such as retail, hospitality, and food service, and are set to become the majority of the United States population by 2044.**

- Retailers have an opportunity to make changes that will reduce racial disparities and improve living standards overall.
  - A raise to \$15 per hour would affect 70 percent of Black and Latino workers and cut rates of working poverty for the entire retail workforce in half.
  - A raise to \$15 per hour would reduce the racial wage divide.
  - Ending involuntary part-time work would reduce poverty by at least 2 percent, with greater effects on the Black and Latino working poverty rates.
  - Introducing fair scheduling practices would improve working conditions and contribute to equal opportunity in the labor force.

## Other industry spotlights



## Employed persons by race

	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic/ Latino
<b>Share of healthcare practitioners &amp; technical occupations</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>9%</b>
Home Health Aides	54%	37%	4%	18%
Personal Care Aides	60%	25%	8%	22%
Licensed Practical/ Vocational Nurse	67%	27%	3%	14%
Registered Nurses	76%	12%	9%	7%
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# Healthcare

Overall, 26.7% of the healthcare support population is Black. **The median wage is \$10.11/hour (all races).**

Blacks make up more of the lower level positions in health care. 13.4% of the US population is Black but Blacks account for **37% of home health aides, more than a third, 25% of personal care aids, 27.0% of US licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses, and just 12% of RNs and Nurse Practitioners.**

Both **Black RNs and Hispanic RNs earned less than white RNs**, while Asian RNs earned more than white RNs. Specifically, black RNs earned about **\$0.97 cents less per hour than white RNs**

In a survey of nurses, **48%** of respondents said they had you personally **experienced racial discrimination or disadvantage** in their current role over the last 12 months.

**Two-thirds** of home care workers work **part time or for part of the year.**

## Employed persons by race

	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic/ Latino
Restaurants	55%	11%	8%	25%
Fast Casual	64%	14%	3%	16%
<b>Share of food preparation &amp; serving related occupations</b>	74%	14%	7%	27%
Dishwashers	73%	16%	4%	29%
Host/hostess	78%	9%	4%	18%
Food preparation	74%	13%	8%	28%
Combined food preparation/serving workers	70%	20%	5%	20%
Supervisor of food preparation	77%	15%	5%	23%
Cooks	70%	18%	6%	37%
Chefs & head cooks	63%	14%	16%	26%

## Restaurants

1 The restaurant industry **employs nearly 11 million workers** and is one of the fastest growing sectors of the US economy.

2 Only up to **20% of restaurant jobs provide livable-wages**; these jobs are at **high-end** fine dining establishments in cities like San Francisco and limited roles such as server and bartender.

3 Workers of color are **concentrated in lower-level busser and kitchen positions** in fine-dining restaurants, and overall in segments of the industry in which earnings are lower. In the Front-of-House, 15% of employees are males of color, 24% females of color. In the Back-of-House, 37% of employees are males of color, 16% females of color.

4 If you're a white male, there's a bigger differential between Front- and Back-of-House work: \$13.91 vs. \$10.80. **If you're a male of color, you'll make \$10.83 in the Back-of-House, but if you're promoted to the Front-of-House, you'll make less than a dollar more at \$11.69**, which is also less than white counterpart.

5 Blacks make up **18% of cooks but only 15% of food prep supervisors and 14% of chefs and head cooks.**

6 In low-wage states, African Americans made up 15% of the total restaurant workforce.

# Restaurant workers by position

FIG 2 Tier I and Tier II positions in the Front and Back-of-the-House

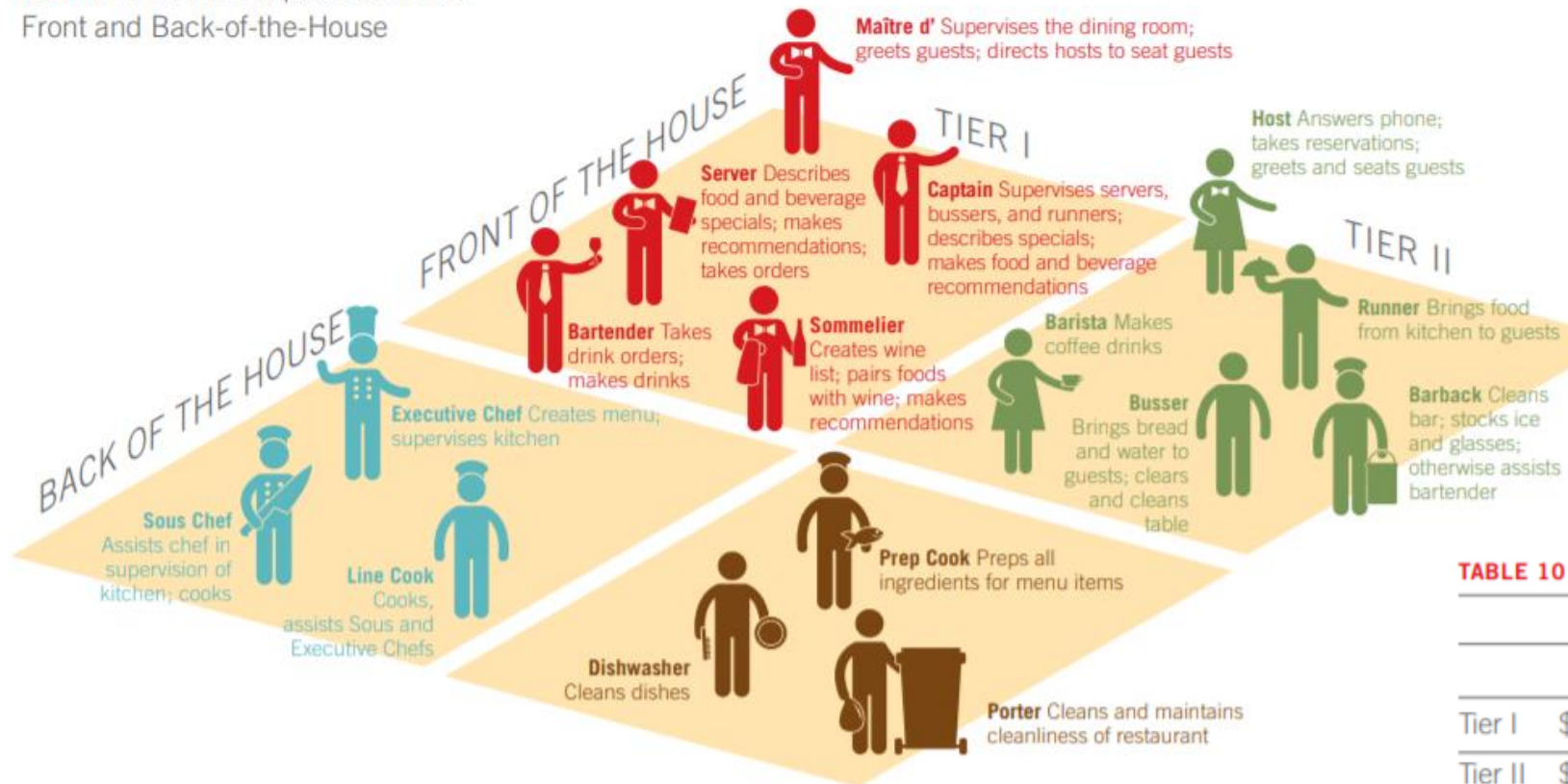


TABLE 10 Average wage by race, gender, and tier

	White		People of Color		All
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Tier I	\$15.15	\$9.92	\$12.53	\$10.49	\$11.64
Tier II	\$10.08	\$9.22	\$10.44	\$9.28	\$9.83
All	\$12.45	\$9.69	\$11.19	\$9.83	\$10.74

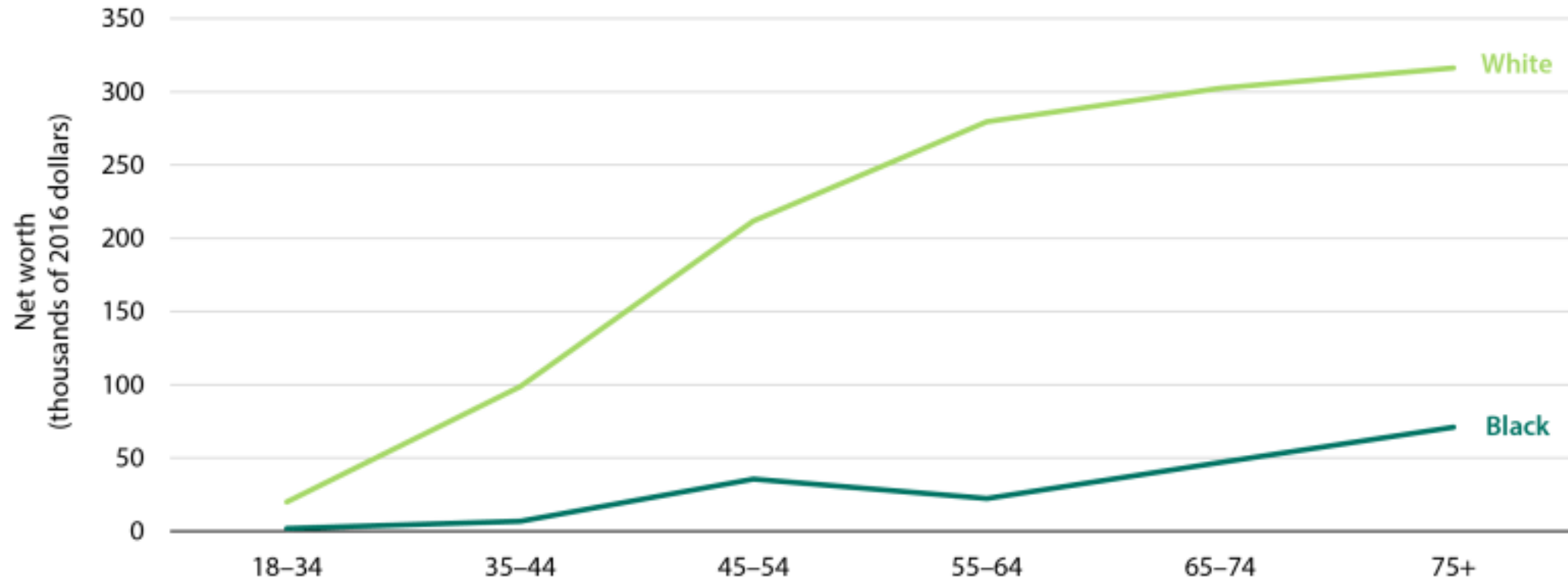
  

	White		People of Color		All
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Tier I	22%	42%	17%	19%	100%
Tier II	26%	21%	30%	23%	100%
All	24%	31%	23%	21%	100%

## Wealth inequality

Based on the evidence from the Survey of Consumer Finances, the Federal Reserve Board reported there is a large disparity between Black and White net worth

FIGURE 2.  
Median Net Worth, by age of Household Head



Source: Survey of Consumer Finances 2016; authors' calculations.

Note: Data are from 2016. Net worth refers to the difference between assets and debt for a household head. Race and ethnicity are those of the survey respondent.

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# In Boston, Black households median net worth is just **\$8** compared to white families' **\$247,500**

## Comparison of white and nonwhite households

Median Net Worth		
	Amount	Nonwhite household % of white household median net worth
White	247,500	100
U.S. Black	8	0*
Caribbean Black	12,000	4.8*
Cape Verdean	-	-
Puerto Rican	3,020	1.2*
Dominican	0	0*
Other Hispanic	2,700	1.1*
NEC*	12,000	4.8*

Source: NASCC survey, authors' calculations

Note: Difference in findings of nonwhite household median or mean net worth values were statistically significant at the \*\*\*99 percent level.

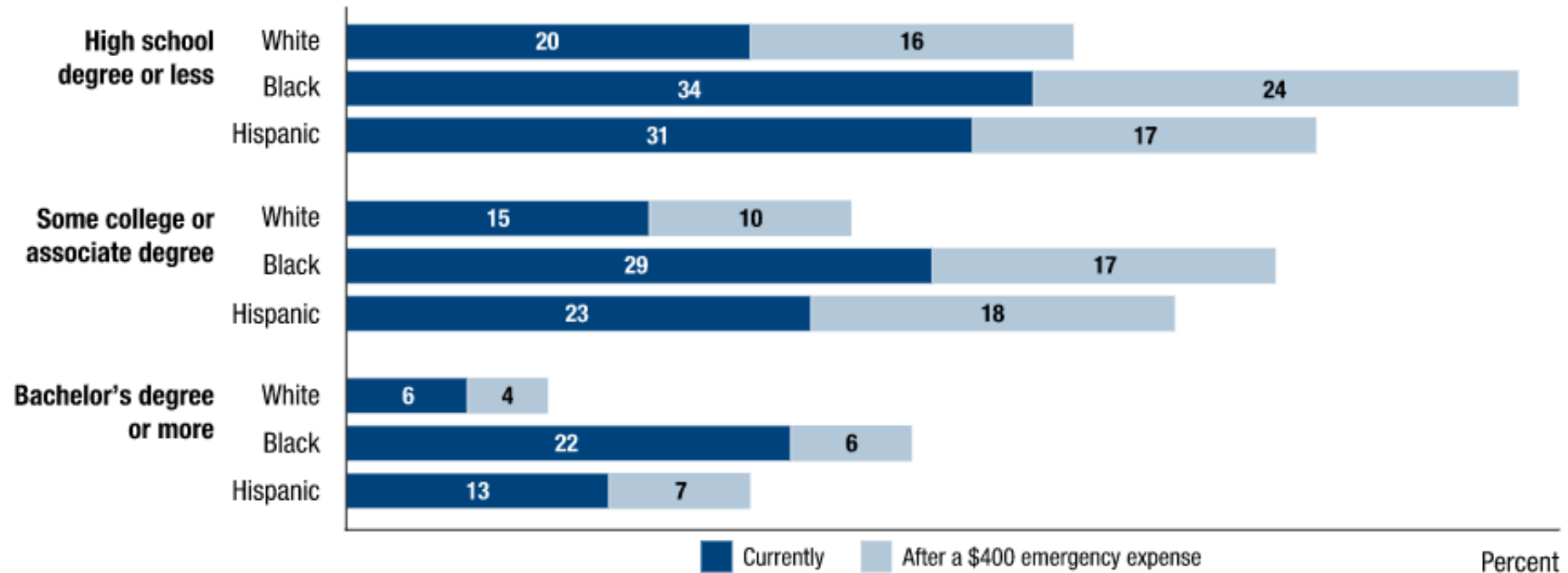
\* The "not elsewhere classified" (NEC) category includes mainly respondents that chose more than one race.

† Net worth values for Cape Verdeans were not calculated because sample sizes were too small.

	White	US-born Blacks
Median Income	\$90,000	\$41,200
Have a checking account	91.8%	73.8%
Have a savings account	73.7%	55.1%
Own a home	79.1%	33.8%
Own a vehicle	83.6%	50.7%
Own stock	39.5%	9.6%
Own IRA or private annuity	56.2%	21.2%
Have student loan debt	18.9%	28%
Have medical debt	10.9%	17.1%
TOTAL liquid assets	\$25,000	\$670
TOTAL assets	\$256,500	\$700

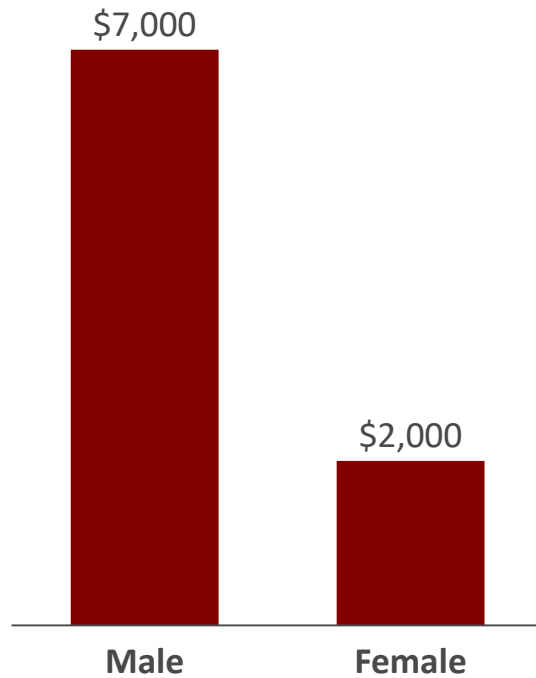
# The Fed has found that 40% of Americans, disproportionately Black, cannot absorb an unexpected \$400 expense

Figure 12. Not able to fully pay current month's bills (by education and race/ethnicity)

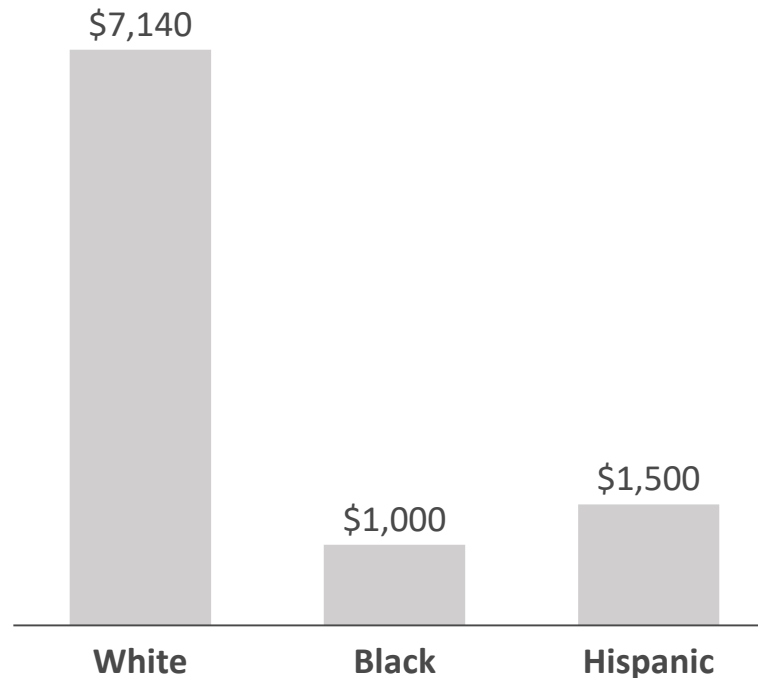


# As further evidence of the wealth gap, the median Black household has a savings balance of only \$1,000

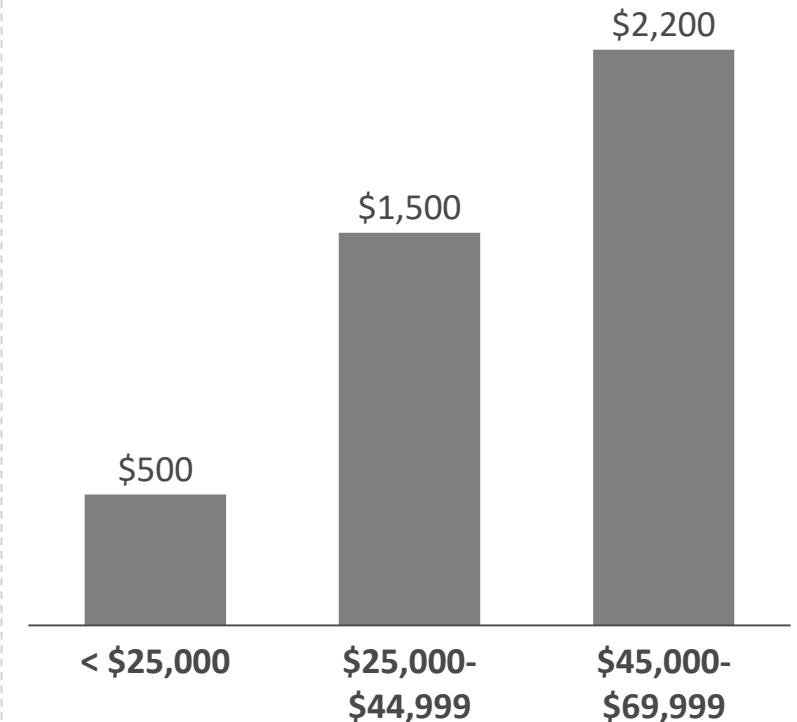
**Median savings account balance**  
By gender



By race



By income



***Of the Americans who have savings accounts, the median savings account balance is \$5,200***



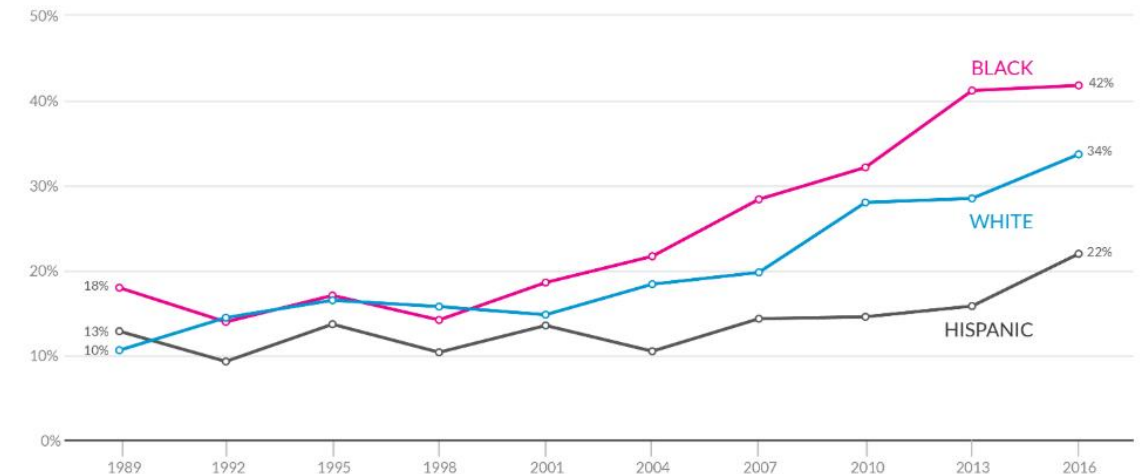
# Black graduates have more student debt & less household wealth

## Black vs. White student debt

- Recent Black graduates of four-year colleges owe, on average, \$7,400 more than their white peers, according to [research from](#) the Brookings Institution. Four years after graduation, they still owe an average of \$53,000, almost twice as much as whites.
- 86.6% of Black students borrow federal loans to attend four-year colleges, compared to 59.9% of white students. This disparity grows by 6.7% annually.
- Black student-loan borrowers default on their loans at 5x the rate of white graduates.
- White borrowers pay down their education debt at a rate of 10% a year, compared with 4% for Black borrowers.
- Black college graduates ages 21 to 24 earn \$3.34 less per hour than their white peers; that contributes to a \$7,000 annual difference.
- Since 2017, nearly 24,000 federal fraud complaints have been filed against for-profit colleges. **Students of color experience the worst outcomes.** The disproportionate impact of this system on people of color highlights the continued need to explore why an individual may choose a for-profit college, the role that targeting plays in this decision, and whether the promise of economic mobility is worth the financial risks.

## Black vs. White household student debt

Share of Families with Student Loan Debt for Those Ages 25–55, 1989–2016



Source: Urban Institute calculations from Survey of Consumer Finances 1983–2016.  
Notes: Age is defined as the age of the household head.

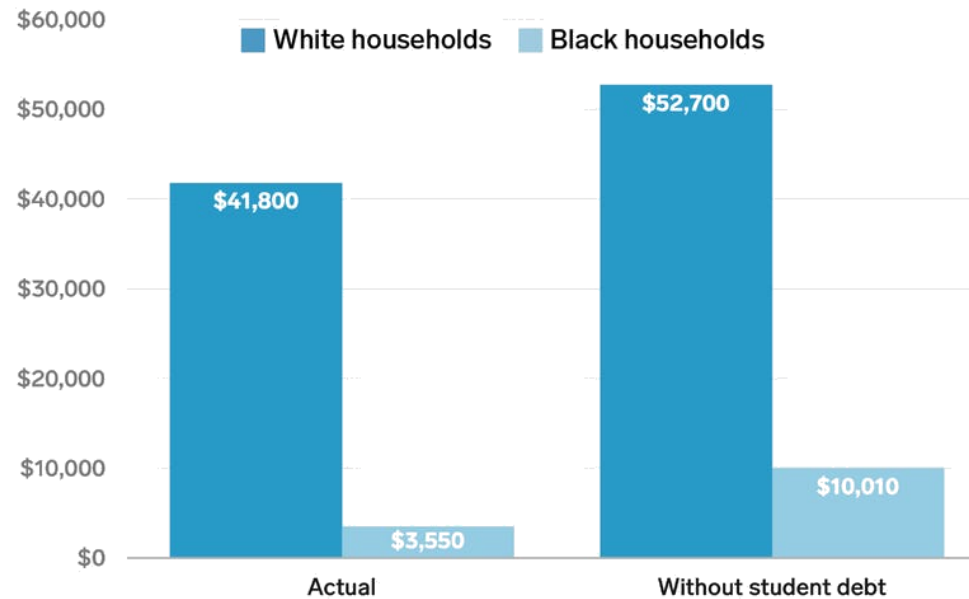
URBAN INSTITUTE

**42% of Black families have student loan debt compared to 34% of white families.**

# Student loan debt drives down median household wealth

## Household wealth

**Median household wealth among 25–40 year olds**



Source: Marshall Steinbaum/Matt Bruenig analysis of data from Federal Reserve 2016 Survey of Consumer Finances

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***White households headed by people between the ages of 25 and 40 have 12 times the amount of wealth on average than Black households.***

# Blacks who were once incarcerated are the most challenged to build wealth

## Disparities in incarceration & sentencing

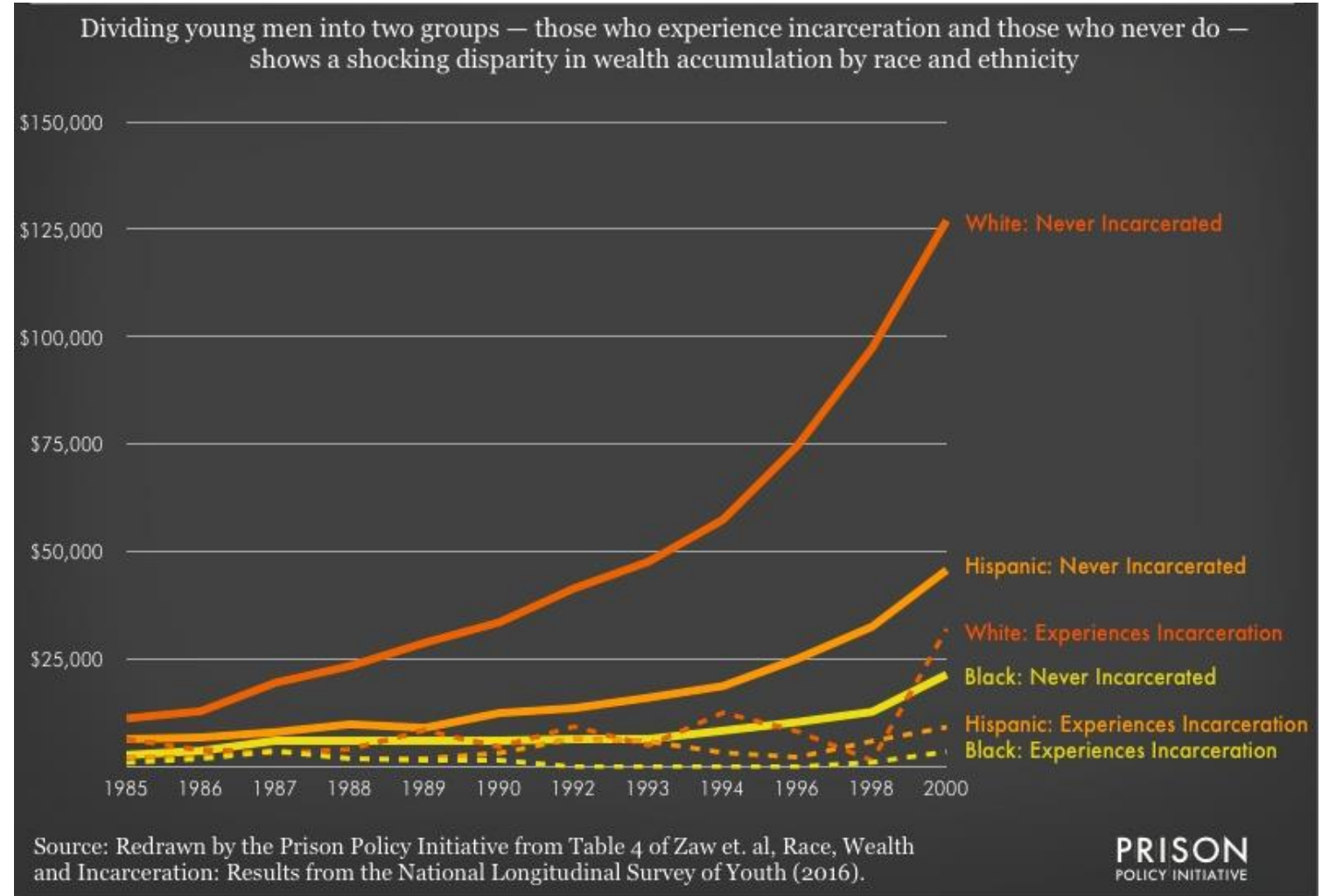
### Racial Disparities in Incarceration

- In 2014, African Americans constituted 2.3 million, or 34%, of the total 6.8 million correctional population.
- African Americans are incarcerated at more than 5 times the rate of whites.
- The imprisonment rate for African American women is twice that of white women.
- Nationwide, African American children represent 32% of children who are arrested, 42% of children who are detained, and 52% of children whose cases are judicially waived to criminal court.
- Though African Americans and Hispanics make up approximately 32% of the US population, they comprised 56% of all incarcerated people in 2015.
- If African Americans and Hispanics were incarcerated at the same rates as whites, prison and jail populations would decline by almost 40%.

### Drug Sentencing Disparities

- In the 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, about 17 million whites and 4 million African Americans reported having used an illicit drug within the last month.
- African Americans and whites use drugs at similar rates, but the imprisonment rate of African Americans for drug charges is almost 6 times that of whites.
- African Americans represent 12.5% of illicit drug users, but 29% of those arrested for drug offenses and 33% of those incarcerated in state facilities for drug offenses

## Wealth accumulation and incarceration by race & ethnicity



[More info on race and work in the US](#)

# On scheduling

- **Black and Latino workers face greater costs associated with part-time and “just-in-time” scheduling.**
  - Black and Latino retail workers are more likely to be employed part-time despite wanting full-time work. One-in-five Black retail workers are employed involuntarily part-time, compared to less than 1-in-7 white workers.
  - On-call, unstable, and unpredictable schedules pose costs to employees that exacerbate the problems associated with occupational segregation and the racial wage divide.
    - 49% of Black hourly workers get 1 week or less advance notice of their schedule compared to 39% of their white peers (see appendix slide 36)
- **1.) Predictable and flexible scheduling practices give employees more control and ability to juggle life and work responsibilities.**
  - A recent study of 30,000 hourly retail and food service employees found that those with unpredictable schedules were twice as likely to report hardships including hunger, homelessness, sleep loss, stress, poor health, and child behavioral problems as those with stable schedules.
- **2.) Unpredictable schedules and transportation challenges disproportionately impact workers of color**
  - Frontline employees of color were 10 percent more likely to be exposed to schedule instability than White employees at the exact same firm—a discrepancy that researchers say can only be explained by managers’ racial discrimination in assigning shifts. This hurts employers’ bottom lines: frontline employees with precarious schedules are 35-42 percent likely to turn over, compared with an industry average of 28 percent.
    - Walmart found frontline employees of color have 14 percent higher week-to-week income instability than their White counterparts, and those who work part-time are more likely than their White peers to be underemployed, meaning they would prefer to work more hours than they are assigned. To combat this, they have improved schedule predictability with a core hours system, in which associates work the same weekly shifts for at least 13 weeks
  - While some employers voluntarily—or as a result of public pressure—adopted fair scheduling systems, many of the country’s largest employing retailers still rely on just-in-time scheduling practices that destabilize households and leave workers in poverty.
    - African Americans spend more time than any other group getting to work and in some cases spend about 15 minutes more commuting per day than whites. That can be a 25% increase over an average urban two-way commute of about an hour. For low wage workers, the difference is 7 minutes each way when compared with whites with similar jobs.
    - When companies practice just-in-time scheduling, it makes it hard for disadvantaged groups to make it to work on time and coordinate their personal responsibilities (e.g., childcare, second job) accordingly; in turn, it is more difficult for them to meet their employers’ expectations.

# On career paths

- **Cross-training employees in tasks outside of those required for their primary roles allows companies to deploy them where they are needed most at any given time and increases employees' morale by affording them more variety in their work.**
  - Gap, for example, runs a Rotational Management Program (RMP) for entry-level talent seeking to advance into management and leadership positions in the company. The program, in addition to inclusive mentoring and learning programs, has played a part in the company's increase in its proportion of managers of color from 25 percent to 29 percent from 2013 to 2017.
- **Simply making training programs available is not enough: systemic barriers remain that prevent frontline employees of color from taking advantage of them. These include bias among the supervisors required to recommend candidates as well as rigid application processes and skill requirements that limit who has access to training opportunities. Targeted recruiting of employees of color to participate in management trainings is one method of overcoming these dynamics.**
  - Marriott views its Emerging Leader Program as a key tool for increasing diversity in its management ranks; 36 percent of participants are employees of color and 60 percent have been promoted at least once since the program's inception in 2014. Clear career pathways help frontline employees understand their promotion opportunities and identify what skills they need to develop to advance within their organization, while also reducing hidden inequities in pay and promotion through standardization and transparency.

# On performance management (biases impacting career advancement for frontline employees of color)

## Why are minorities disadvantaged at work?

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- **Limited availability of and access to career development opportunities** Implicit biases also have real effects on career advancement for frontline employees of color when biases translate into discrimination in evaluation and promotion.
- **Employers are not promoting their employees of color into management positions and as a result are not tapping into the full potential of their talent force. White employees were 2.4 times more likely to be promoted within a given year than Latinx employees and 4.7 times more likely than Black employees.**
- **The ways in which prevalent negative stereotypes about people of color affect their experiences at work include:**
  - A psychology professor shared her research stating that Black employees in the service industry pay an emotional tax at work. She found that beliefs that Black people are unfriendly, hostile, or rude result in lower performance evaluations for Black employees than for their White peers with the same qualifications.
  - Scholars studying employment barriers for Latinos reported racism is the real problem facing Latinos in America, supported by their research about discrimination toward Latinos in the workplace. Perceptions around Latinx employees being family-oriented, religious, and overly emotional can keep these employees from being seen as potential leaders. Latinx employees also report being questioned on their education level, immigration status, and nationality when they speak Spanish.
  - Based on HBR report that Asian Americans are the Least Likely Group in the U.S. to be Promoted to Management, Asian Americans are expected to be passive, meek, and antisocial. As a result they are the group least likely to be promoted into management, despite being the most highly-educated group.

# Gender and low wage jobs

- **Twenty two occupations have median earnings of less than \$15 per hour, employ at least 100,000 women, have a majority (more than 60 percent) female workforce, and are projected to add at least one percent more jobs between 2014 and 2024. These large, growing, low wage, female-dominated occupations employ more than a quarter of all employed women, and 23.5 million workers altogether.**
  - The 22 occupations include:
    - 5 million workers in office and administrative assistance,
    - 4.5 million workers in healthcare and care assistance,
    - 3.8 million cashiers,
    - 3.5 million workers in food preparation and serving,
    - 3.2 million worker in childcare and education,
    - 1.7 million workers in beauty and personal services, and
    - 1.7 million housekeepers and cleaners.



The current federal minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour, which works out to \$15,080 a year for a full-time worker.

**African Americans always fare worse than whites**, with Black women often experiencing the harshest impacts. Worse labor market outcomes—higher unemployment, fewer benefits, and less job stability—contribute in part to the growing racial wealth gap, leaving African Americans in a more precarious financial situation.

### Employed persons by race

	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic/ Latino
Female working population	77%	14%	7%	16%

**Black women have the highest student loan debt of any racial or ethnic group**

**African American workers often see their unemployment rates go up sooner than white workers** when the economy sours, and their unemployment rates also take longer to decline when the economy improves than is the case for whites—a phenomenon often described as “last hired, first fired.”

**84.4 percent of Black mothers are breadwinners**, which represents a larger share than for any other racial or ethnic group.

**Black women have a much harder time finding a job** than white women and white men.

## Black women

<https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat10.htm>

1. <https://www.epi.org/publication/minimum-wage-workers-poverty-anymore-raising/>

2. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2019/12/05/478150/african-americans-face-systematic-obstacles-getting-good-jobs/>

3. <https://www.freep.com/in-depth/money/personal-finance/susan-tompor/2019/10/10/student-debt-crisis-us-black-women/2233035001/>

4, 5, 6. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2019/12/05/478150/african-americans-face-systematic-obstacles-getting-good-jobs/>

## Appendix: Graphs & Figures

## BLS data: Management, professional and related occupations

Occupation	White	Black or African American	Asian	Hispanic or Latino
<b>Management, professional, and related occupations</b>	79.0	9.6	8.7	10.1
<b>Management, business, and financial operations occupations</b>	82.1	8.4	7.0	10.4
Management occupations	83.6	7.8	6.1	10.7
Chief executives	88.8	4.1	5.8	6.2
General and operations managers	86.4	6.6	3.5	12.5
Food service managers	76.3	9.8	9.6	19.8
Lodging managers	80.9	7.0	9.3	14.6
Medical and health services managers	79.0	12.7	5.7	11.8

***Only 5 CEOs in fortune 500 are Black—1%***

# On getting advanced notice of your work schedule

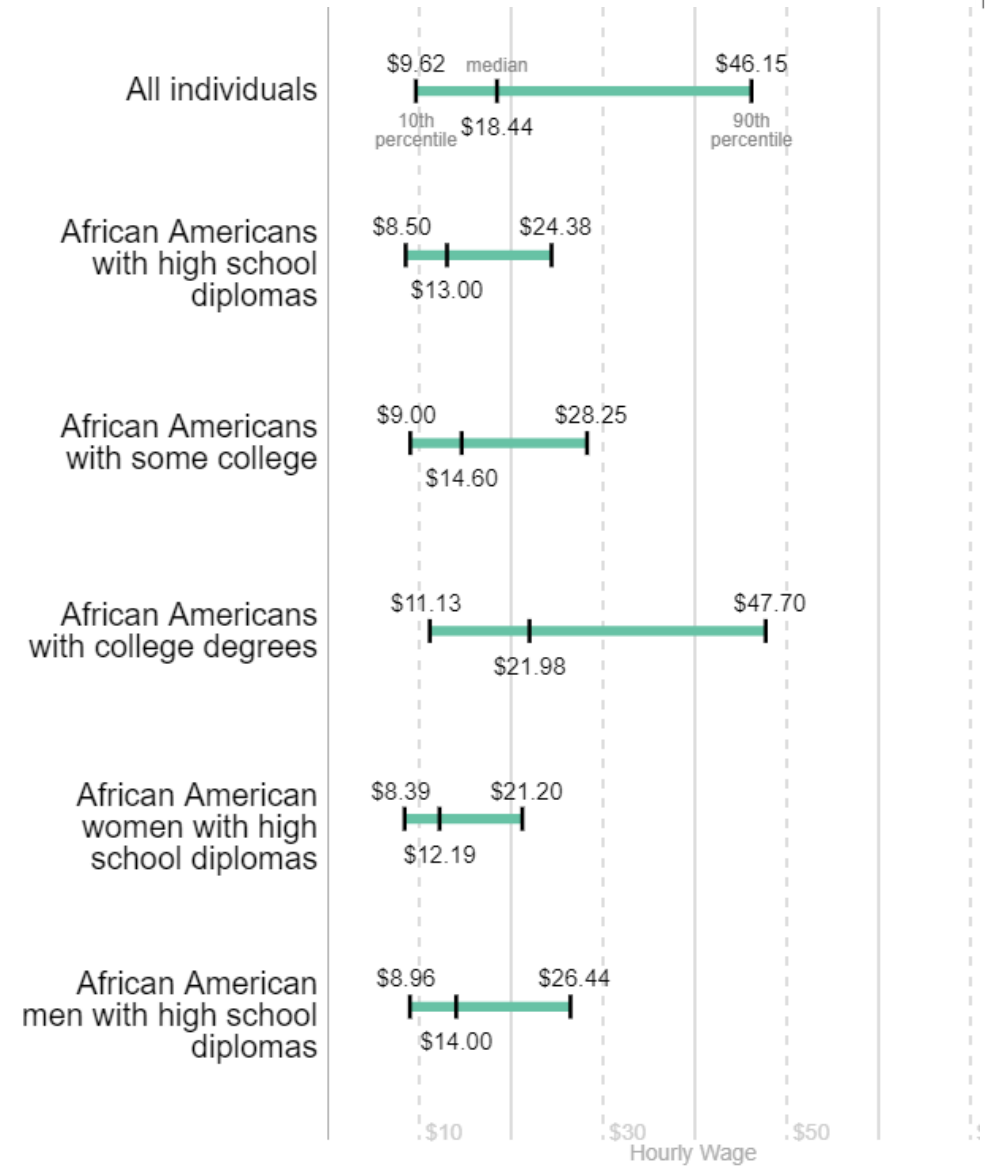
**Table 2. Advance notice**  
(NLSY97, hourly workers ages 26-32 in 2011)

-	1 week or less		1-2 weeks		3-4 weeks		4+ weeks	
	hourly	not hourly	hourly	not hourly	hourly	not hourly	hourly	not hourly
all employees	41%	33%	13%	9%	6%	4%	39%	54%
full-time	39%	29%	12%	8%	5%	4%	44%	58%
part-time	47%	52%	17%	15%	10%	4%	27%	29%
men	48%	41%	12%	11%	4%	4%	35%	45%
women	34%	25%	14%	8%	8%	5%	43%	63%
white	39%	30%	12%	8%	7%	4%	42%	57%
black	49%	33%	15%	13%	5%	5%	31%	50%
Hispanic	46%	43%	15%	8%	4%	4%	35%	45%

Source: Lambert, Fugiel and Henly, 2014. The "hourly" row entries sum to 100%, and the "not hourly" row entries sum to 100%.

The median Black worker still makes 79 cents to the median white worker's \$1 each week.

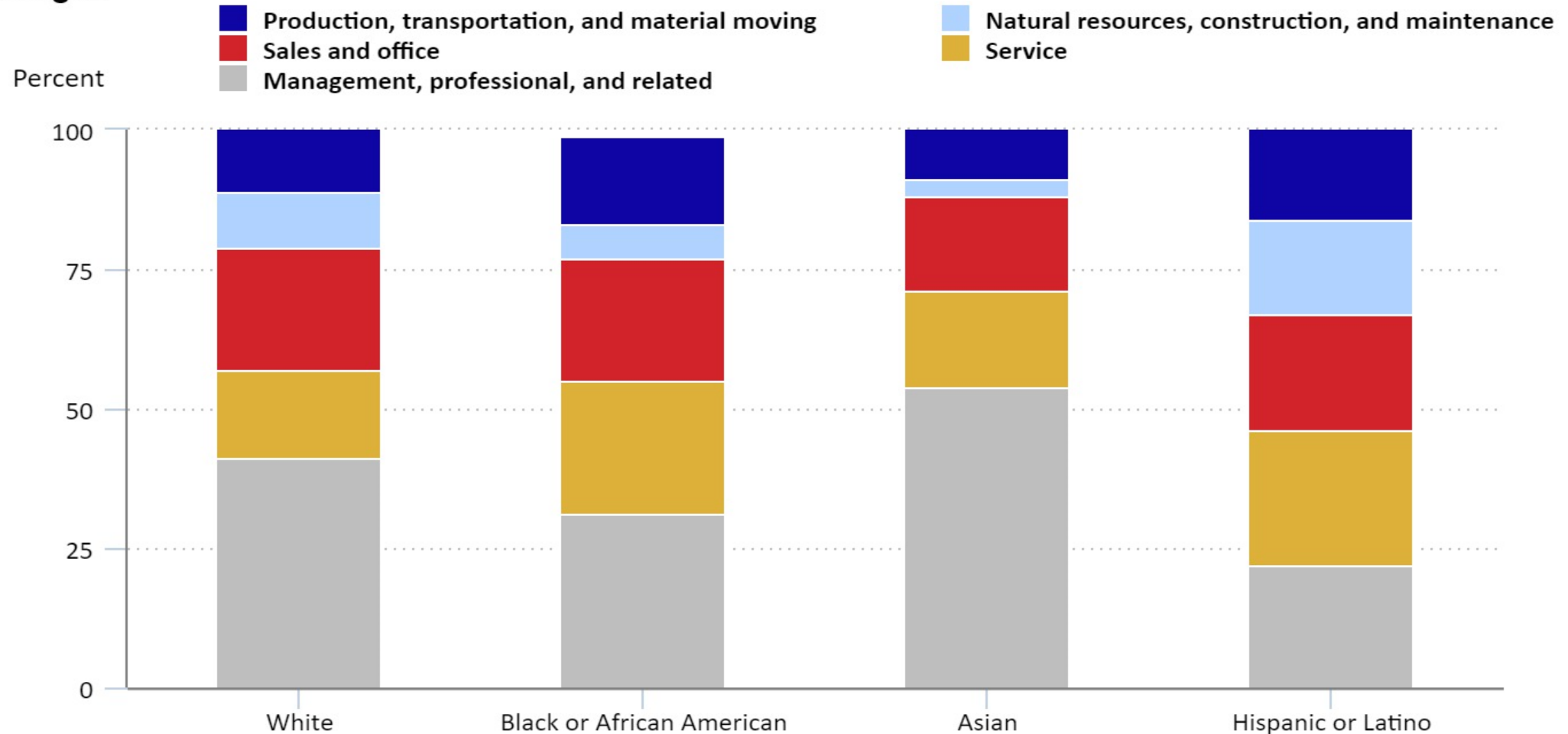
# Pay inequity



Authors' analysis using pooled data from 2013-2016 of: Center for Economic and Policy Research. 2016. CPS ORG Uniform Extracts, Version 2.1. Washington, DC.

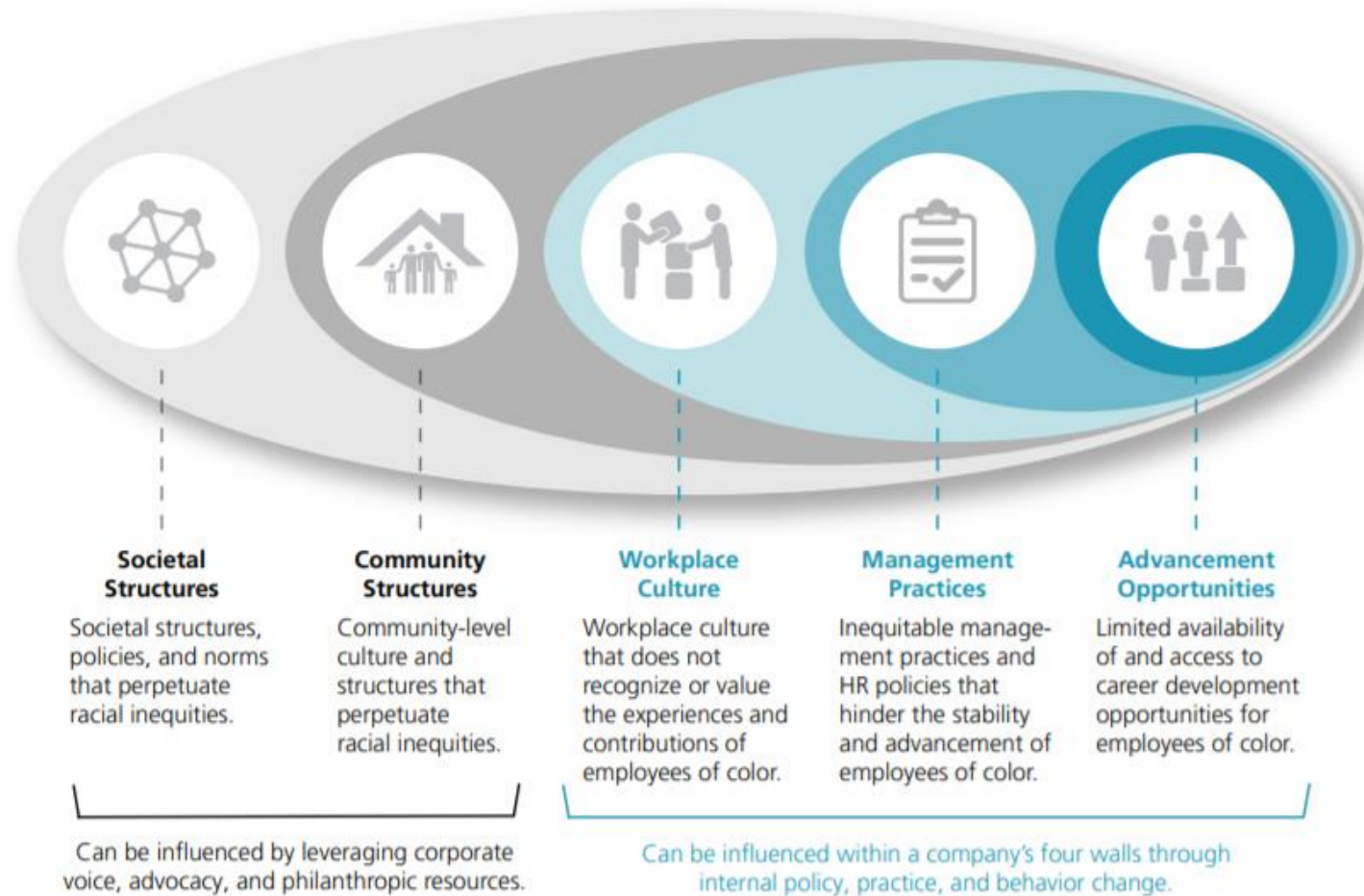
# Occupation by race

**Chart 3. Employed people by occupation, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, 2018 annual averages**



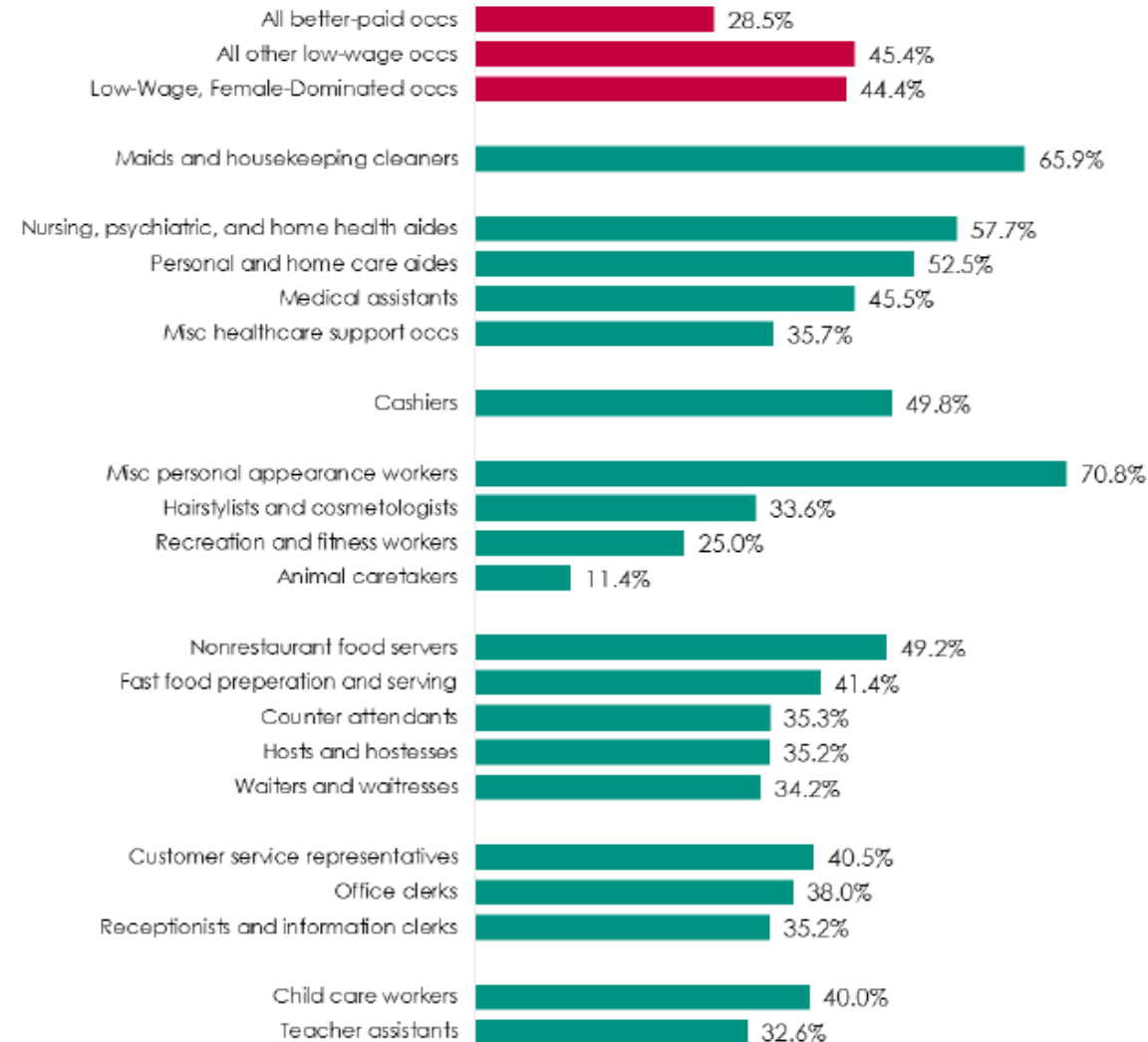
# Advancing Frontline Employees of Color 2020 report identifies barriers

FIGURE 3. BARRIERS AFFECTING THE EXPERIENCE OF FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES OF COLOR



# Women of color in low-wage, female-dominated occupations

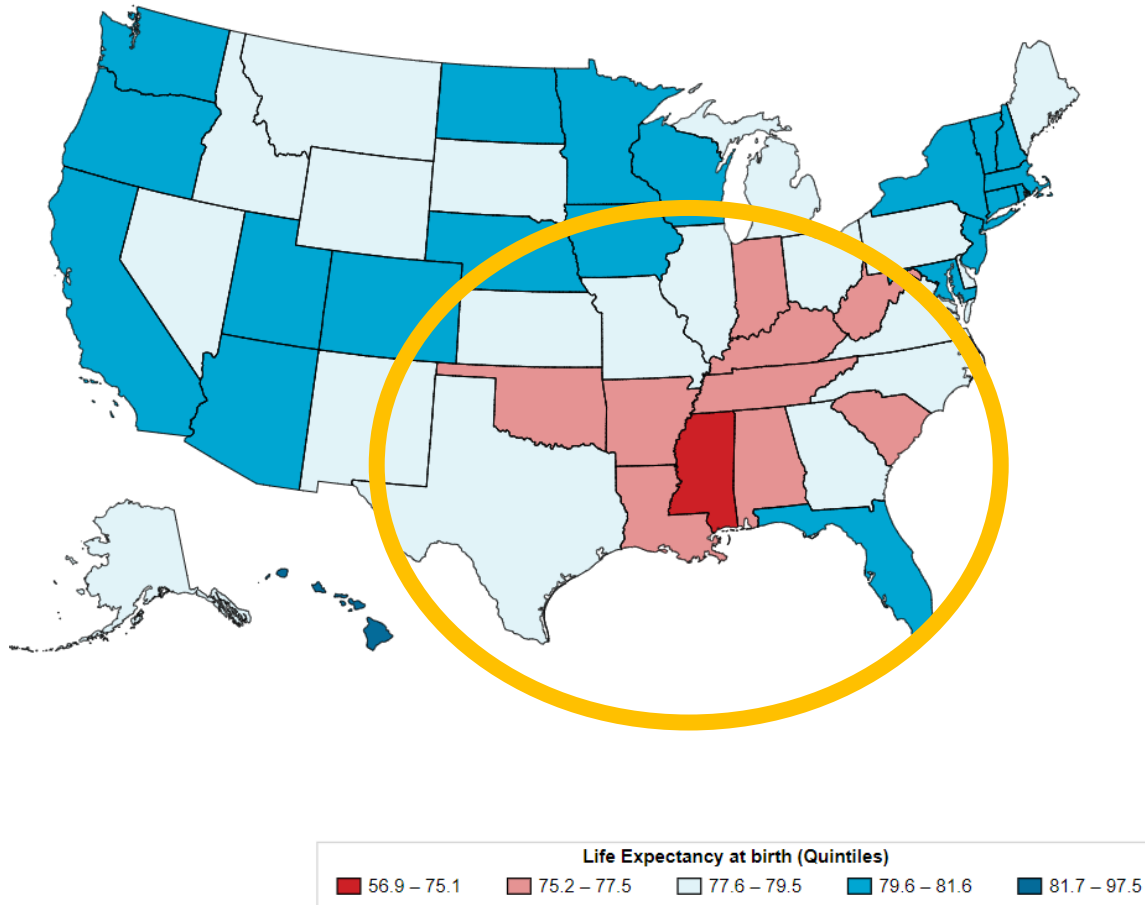
**Figure 14: The Share of Women of Color Varies Substantially Among Low-Wage, Female-Dominated Occupations**



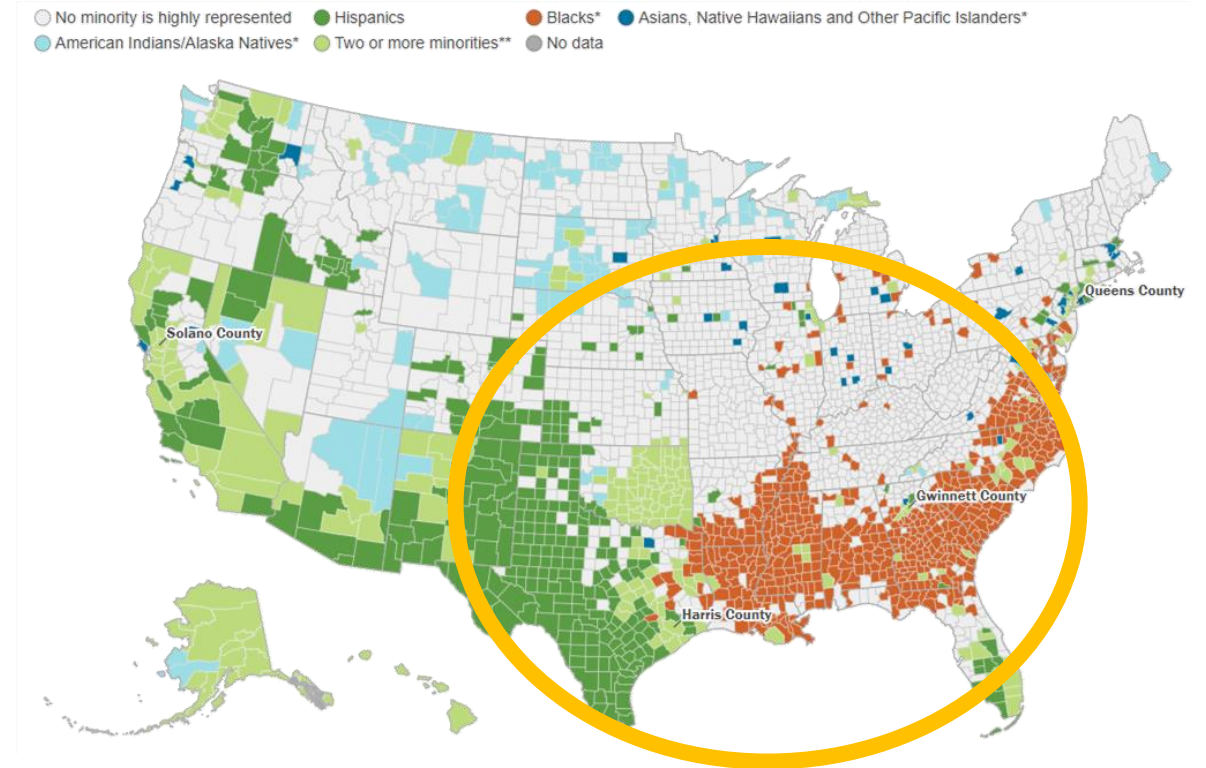


# Lowest life expectancy region overlaps with highest concentration of Blacks

## Life Expectancy by ZIP Code



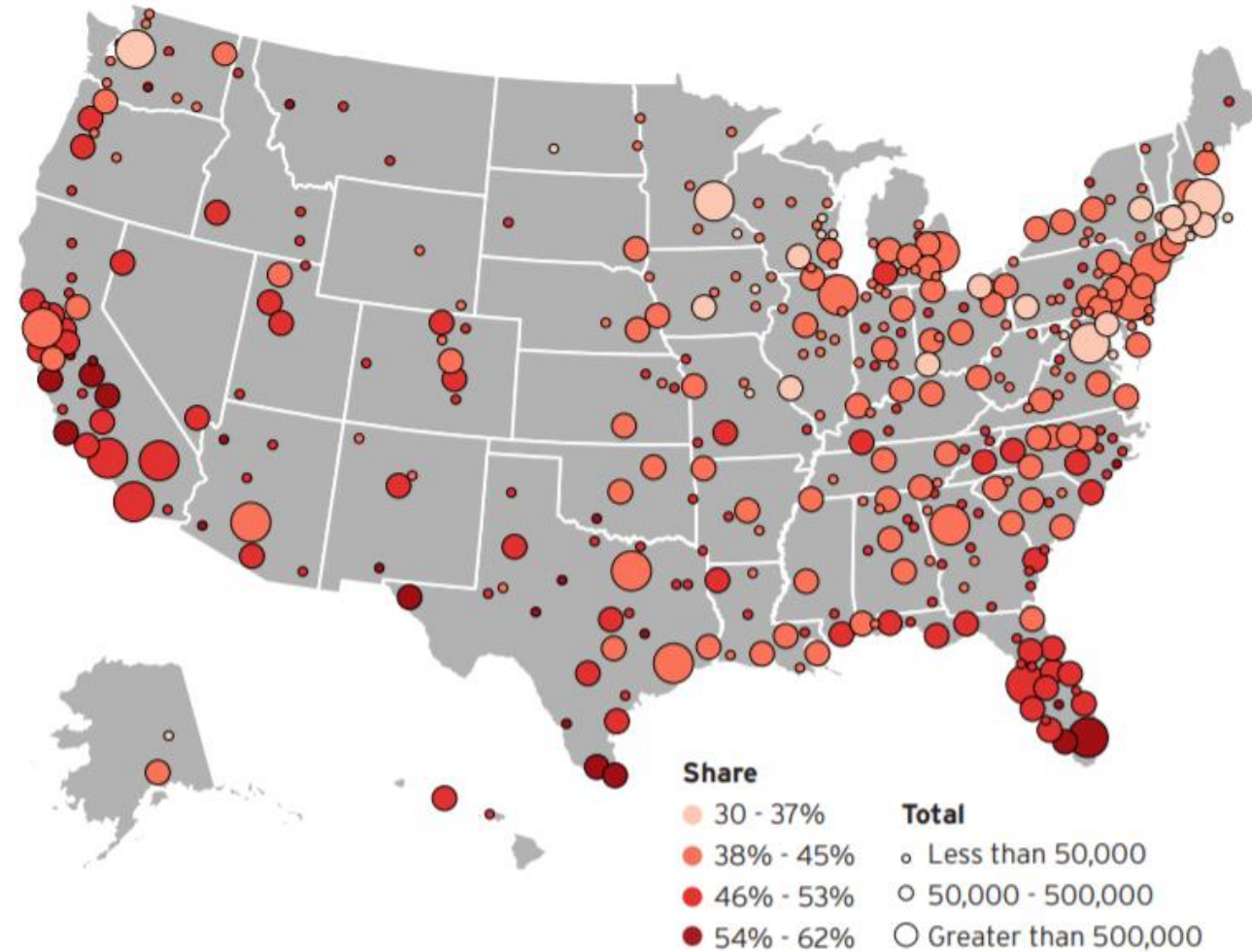
## Where Race-Ethnic Minority Groups are Highly Represented



# Low-wage workers by metro

The number and share of workers who are low-wage varies by metro

373 metro areas



Source: Brookings analysis of 5-year, 2012-2016 American Community Survey microdata

# 15 Largest low-wage Occupations in 2019



# Best resources

- [Advancing Frontline Employees of Color](#)
- [The Retail Race Divide](#)
- [African Americans Face Systematic Obstacles to Getting Good Jobs](#)
- [Interactive: Comparing wages within and across demographic groups in the United States](#)
- [MEET the LOW-WAGE WORKFORCE](#)
- [The Retail Trade Workforce in the United States](#)