

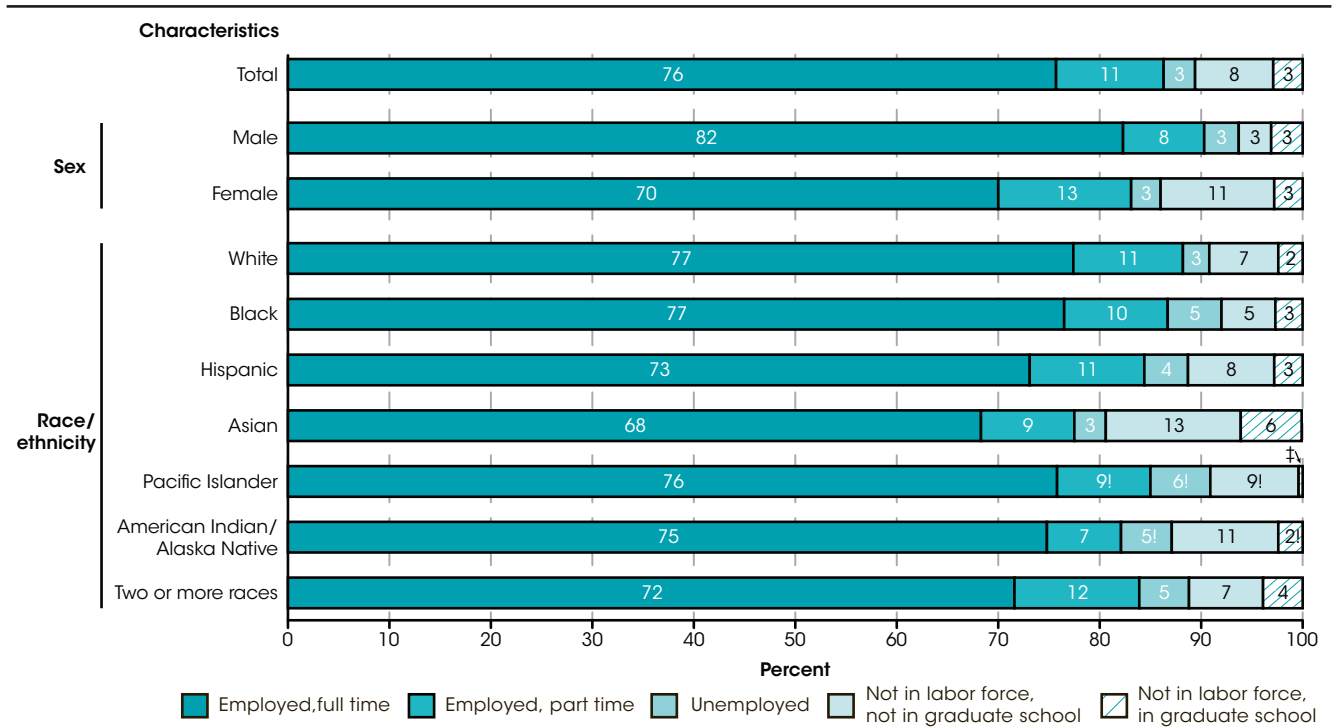
## Post-Bachelor's Employment Outcomes by Sex and Race/Ethnicity

*While 86 percent of all young adults ages 25–34 with a bachelor's or higher degree were employed in 2014, differences in employment outcomes were observed by sex and race/ethnicity. For example, female full-time, year-round workers earned less than their male colleagues in nearly all of the occupation groups examined and for every employment sector (e.g., private for-profit, private nonprofit, government). Black young adults who worked full time, year round also earned less than their White peers in a majority of the occupations analyzed.*

On average, individuals with at least a bachelor's degree earn more and have lower rates of unemployment than their less educated peers, although the benefits of higher education can also vary based on individual characteristics such as sex, race/ethnicity, occupation, field of study, and level of degree.<sup>1</sup> For instance, on average, males ages 25–34 who worked full time, year round<sup>2</sup> and possessed at least a bachelor's degree earned over \$9,000 more than their female counterparts in 2014 (see *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, [table 505.15](#)). Asian young adults with at least a bachelor's degree who worked full-time, year-round earned an average of over \$20,000 more than their Black peers. One factor contributing to the Asian-Black earnings gap is that 20 percent of Asian young adults with

a bachelor's degree or higher were employed in computer and mathematical occupations, one of the top paying job groups examined, compared to 5 percent of Black young adults. This Spotlight, using the latest data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), identifies disparities such as these among bachelor's degree holders by examining employment status, occupation, and employment sector<sup>3</sup> by sex and race/ethnicity. Further research with ACS and other data sources is needed to measure the degree to which the differences observed in occupational and earnings outcomes are related to individual preferences, undergraduate or graduate field of study, family structure, child care responsibilities, “undermatching,”<sup>4</sup> discrimination, or other factors.

Figure 1. Percentage distribution of 25- to 34-year-old bachelor's or higher degree recipients, by sex, race/ethnicity, and employment status: 2014



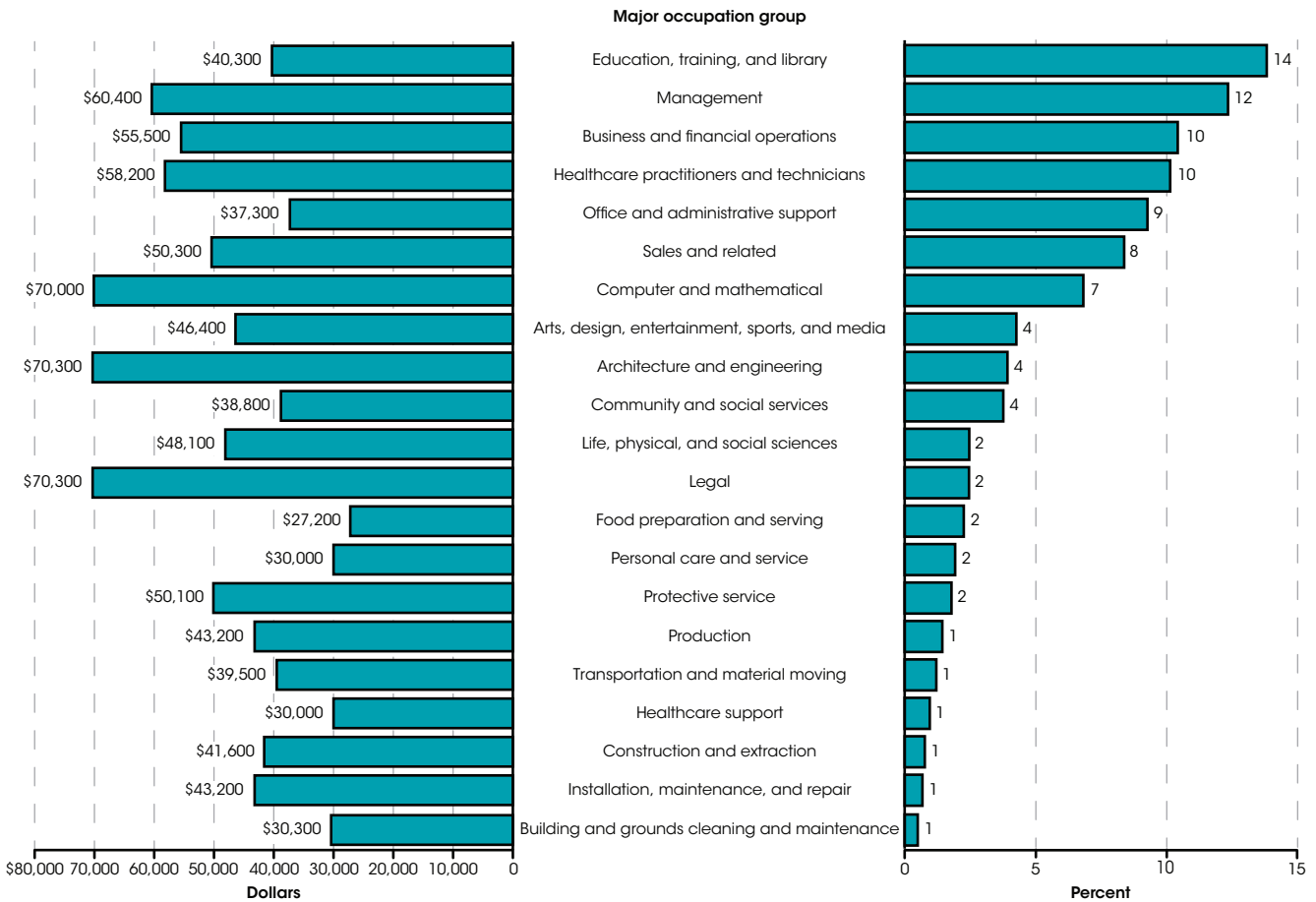
! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.  
 ‡ Reporting standards not met. Either there are too few cases for a reliable estimate or the coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is 50 percent or greater.  
 NOTE: Estimates are for the entire population of civilian 25- to 34-year-old bachelor's degree holders including persons living in households and persons living in group quarters (such as college residence halls, residential treatment centers, and correctional facilities). Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Total includes other racial/ethnic groups not separately shown. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded estimates.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 505.15.

In 2014, some 86 percent of all young adults ages 25–34 with a bachelor's or higher degree were employed, 3 percent were unemployed, and 11 percent were not in the labor force (NILF).<sup>5</sup> However, these percentages varied by sex and race/ethnicity. For example, in 2014 a higher percentage of male than female young adults were employed (90 vs. 83 percent). In addition, a higher percentage of females were employed part time<sup>6</sup> (13 percent) than their male peers (8 percent). The percentage of those who were NILF was also higher for females than males (14 vs. 6 percent). For males, the 6 percent included 3 percent who were enrolled in graduate school and 3 percent who were not enrolled. For females, the 14 percent included 3 percent who were enrolled in graduate school and 11 percent who were not enrolled in graduate school.

The employment percentage for those with a bachelor's or higher degree was higher for White young adults

(88 percent) than young adults who were Black (87 percent), Hispanic (84 percent), of Two or more races (84 percent), American Indian/Alaska Native (82 percent), and Asian (78 percent). A higher percentage of Hispanic (11 percent), White (11 percent), and Black young adults (10 percent) held part-time employment than Asian young adults (9 percent). In terms of unemployment, a lower percentage of White and Asian young adults were unemployed (both 3 percent) than Black (5 percent) and Hispanic young adults (4 percent). Asian young adults had a higher NILF rate (19 percent) than young adults who were Hispanic (11 percent), of Two or more races (11 percent), White (9 percent), and Black (8 percent). The percentage classified as NILF who were attending graduate school was higher for Asian young adults (6 percent) than for Hispanic (3 percent), Black (3 percent), and White (2 percent) young adults.

**Figure 2. Median earnings and percentage distribution of 25- to 34-year-old bachelor's or higher degree recipients who were employed, by major occupation group: 2014**



NOTE: Percentage distribution estimates are for the entire population of employed civilian 25- to 34-year-old bachelor's or higher degree holders including persons living in households and persons living in group quarters (such as college residence halls, residential treatment centers, and correctional facilities). Estimates for median earnings are for those who worked full time, year round. Excludes Farming, fishing, and forestry and Military-specific occupation groups whose shares of employed bachelor's degree recipients are negligible. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded estimates.

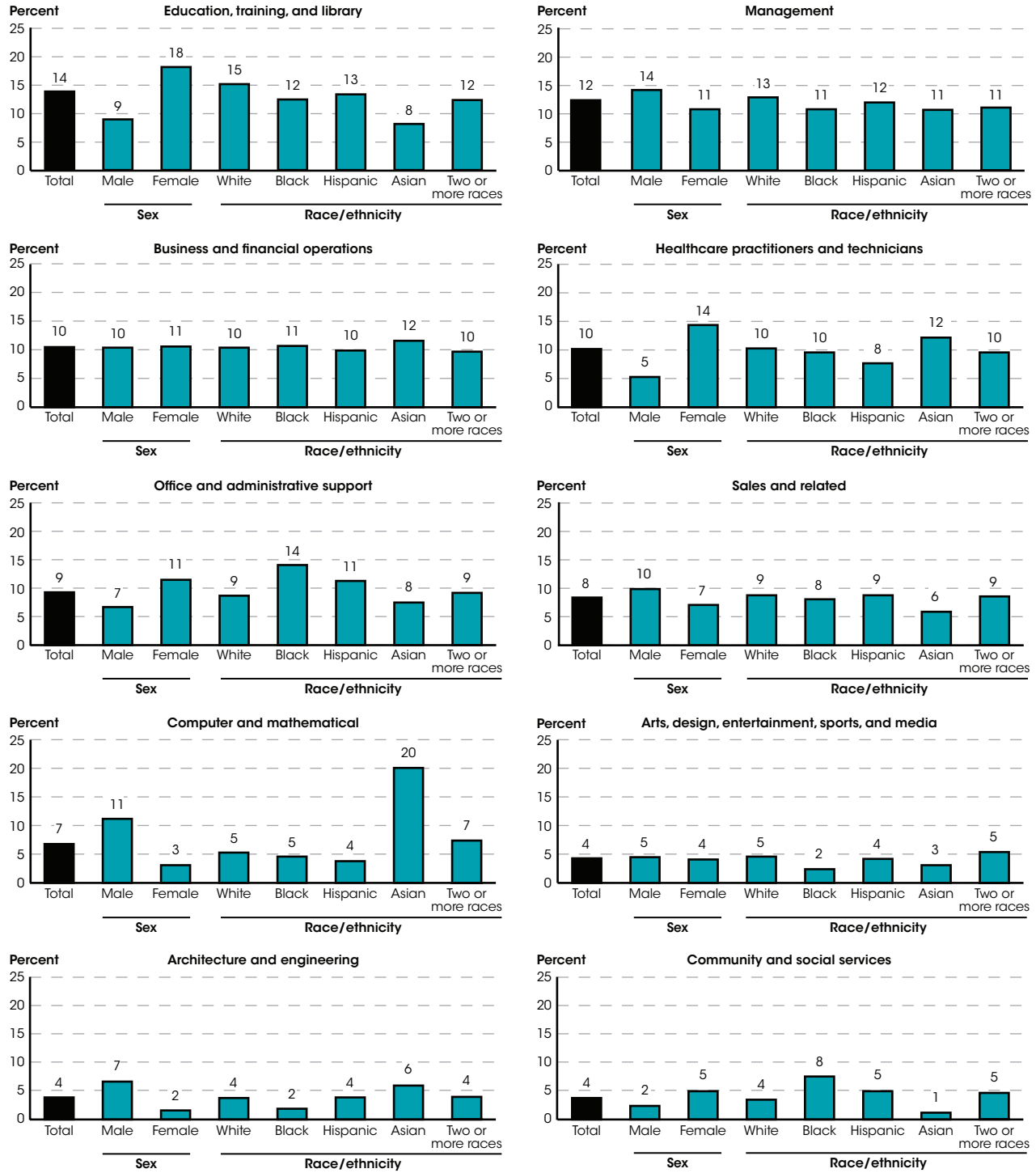
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 505.15.

About 4 out of 5 (83 percent) employed young adults ages 25–34 with a bachelor's or higher degree worked in one of the 10 largest occupation groups in 2014. These groups, along with the percentages constituting them, were as follows: education, training, and library (hereinafter, “education”), 14 percent; management, 12 percent; business and financial operations, 10 percent; healthcare practitioners and technicians (hereinafter, “healthcare”), 10 percent; office and administrative support (hereinafter, “office support”), 9 percent; sales and related (hereinafter, “sales”), 8 percent; computer and mathematical (hereinafter, “computer/mathematical”), 7 percent; arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media (hereinafter, “arts and media”), 4 percent; architecture

and engineering, 4 percent; and community and social services, 4 percent.

Median earnings of young adults ages 25–34 who were employed in the 10 largest occupations full time, year round were higher for those working in architecture and engineering (\$70,300) and computer/mathematical occupations (\$70,000) than those in the remaining eight most common occupations. Median earnings in these occupations were as follows: management (\$60,400), healthcare (\$58,200), business and financial operations (\$55,500), sales (\$50,300), arts and media (\$46,400), education (\$40,300), community and social services (\$38,800), and office support (\$37,300).

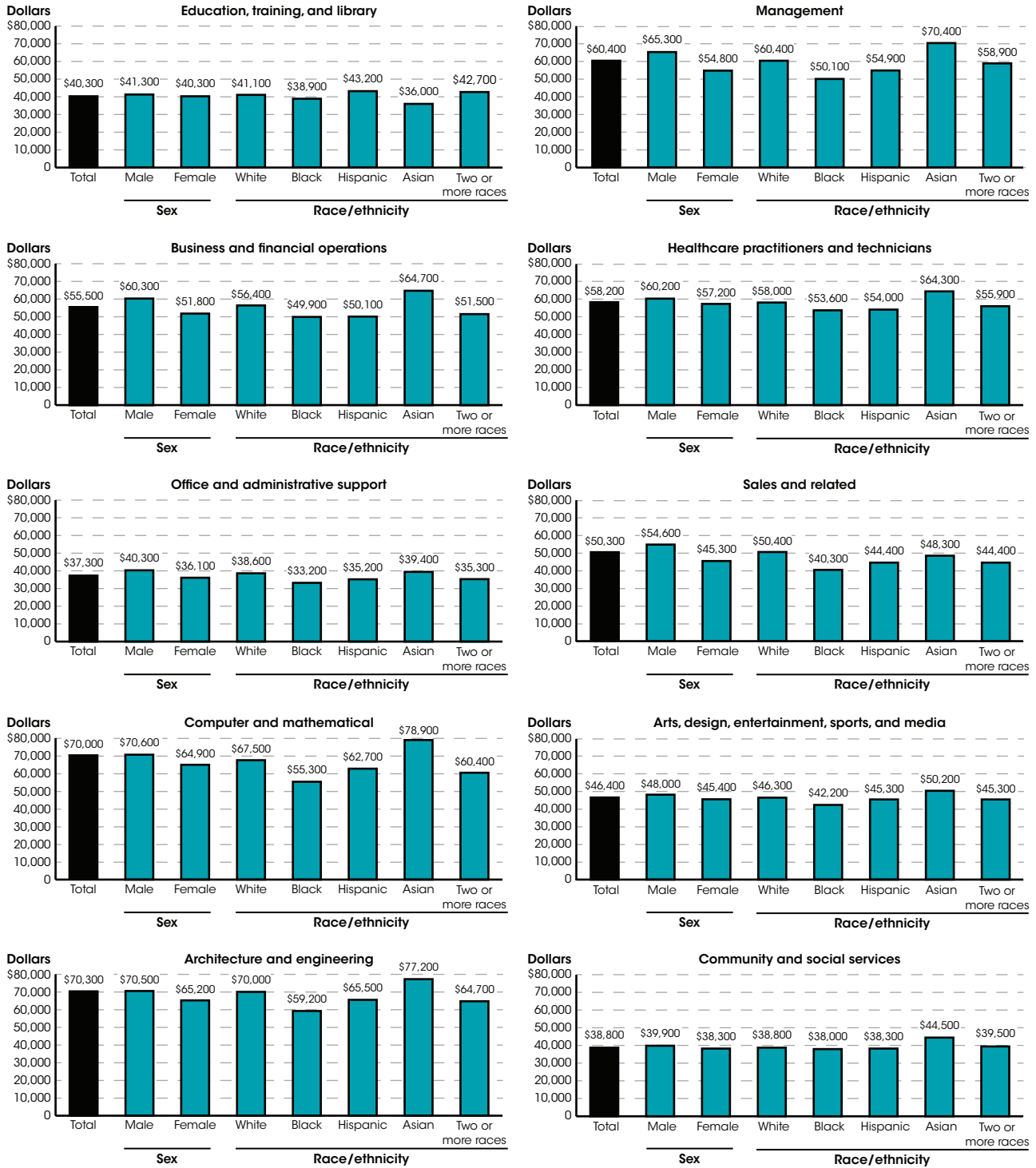
**Figure 3. Percentage of 25- to 34-year-old bachelor's or higher degree recipients who were employed in the 10 largest major occupation groups, by sex and race/ethnicity: 2014**



NOTE: Estimates are for the entire population of employed civilian 25- to 34-year-old bachelor's or higher degree holders including persons living in households and persons living in group quarters (such as college residence halls, residential treatment centers, and correctional facilities). Totals include other racial/ethnic groups not separately shown. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded estimates.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 505.15.

Figure 4. Median earnings of 25- to 34-year-old bachelor's or higher degree recipients who worked full time, year round in the 10 largest major occupation groups, by sex and race/ethnicity: 2014



NOTE: Estimates are for the entire population of civilian 25- to 34-year-old bachelor's or higher degree holders who worked full time, year round including persons living in households and persons living in group quarters (such as college residence halls, residential treatment centers, and correctional facilities). Totals include other racial/ethnic groups not separately shown. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 505.15.

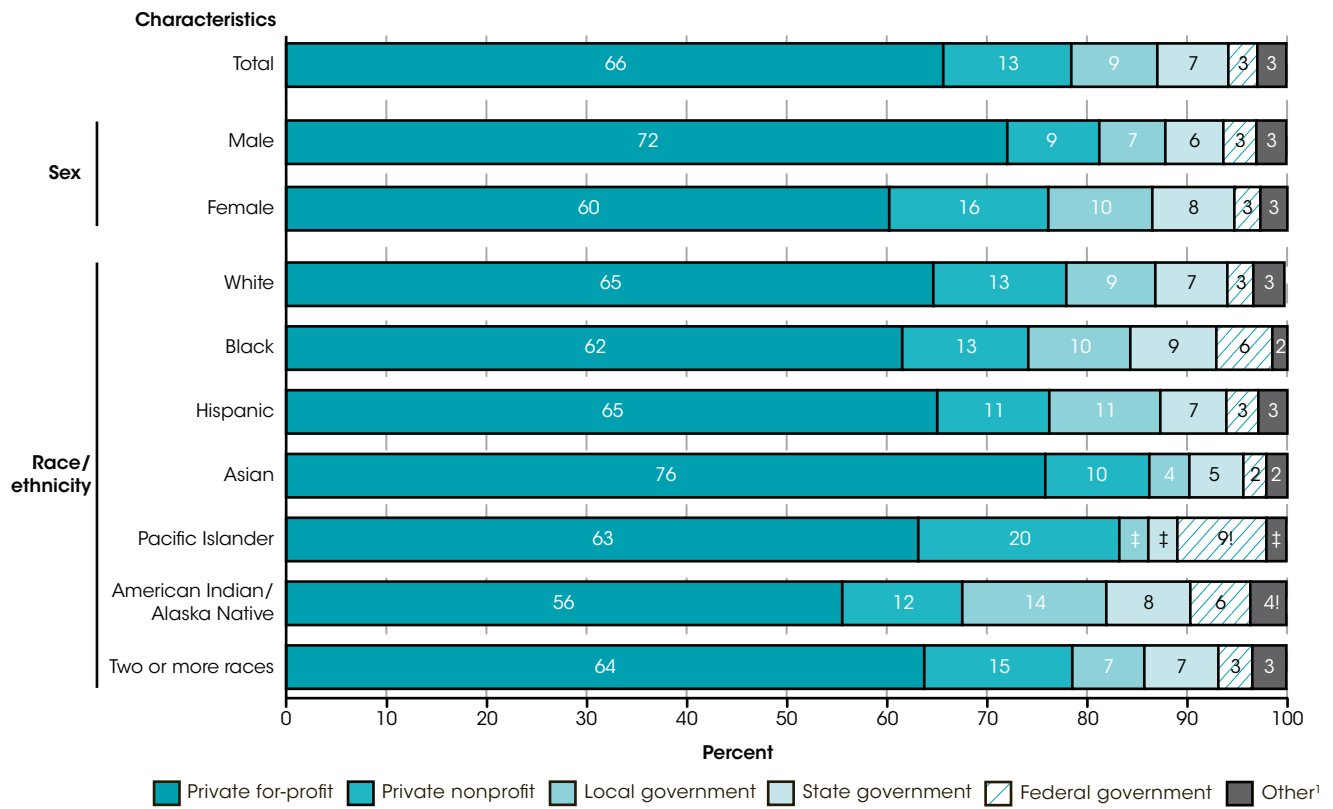
Concerning employment in these occupations, a higher percentage of females ages 25–34 than males held occupations in education (18 vs. 9 percent), healthcare (14 vs. 5 percent), office support (11 vs. 7 percent), and community and social services (5 vs. 2 percent). Conversely, a higher percentage of males than females held positions in computer/mathematical occupations (11 vs. 3 percent), architecture and engineering (7 vs. 2 percent), management (14 vs. 11 percent), sales (10 vs. 7 percent), and arts and media (5 vs. 4 percent). Females who worked full-time, year-round earned less than males in all of the 10 largest occupations except education and arts and media, where the male-female differences in earnings were not measurably different. For instance, median earnings for males in management were \$65,300, whereas median earnings for their female peers were \$54,800.

There were also notable differences in the percentages of racial/ethnic groups working in various occupations. For instance, the percentage of those with at least a bachelor's degree working in office support (the lowest paying occupation among the 10 examined) was higher for Black young adults (14 percent) than young adults who were Hispanic (11 percent), of Two or more races (9 percent), White (9 percent), and Asian (8 percent). Also, there was a higher percentage of Black young adults (8 percent) in community and social services than those who were Hispanic (5 percent), of Two or more races (5 percent), White (4 percent), and Asian (1 percent). The percentage of Asian young adults who were employed in education (8 percent) was lower than the percentages of young adults in this occupation group who were White (15 percent), Hispanic (13 percent), Black (12 percent), and of Two or

more races (12 percent). Conversely, the percentage of Asian young adults employed in healthcare (12 percent) was higher than the percentage in this occupation group who were White (10 percent), of Two or more races (10 percent), Black (10 percent), and Hispanic (8 percent). Also, the percentage of Asian young adults in high-paying computer/mathematical occupations (20 percent) was higher than the corresponding percentages of young adults in these occupations who were of Two or more races (7 percent), White (5 percent), Black (5 percent), and Hispanic (4 percent). Similarly, the percentage of Asian young adults (6 percent) working in architecture and engineering, another top-paying occupation, was higher than the corresponding percentages of young adults who were of Two or more races (4 percent), Hispanic (4 percent), White (4 percent), and Black (2 percent) working in these occupations.

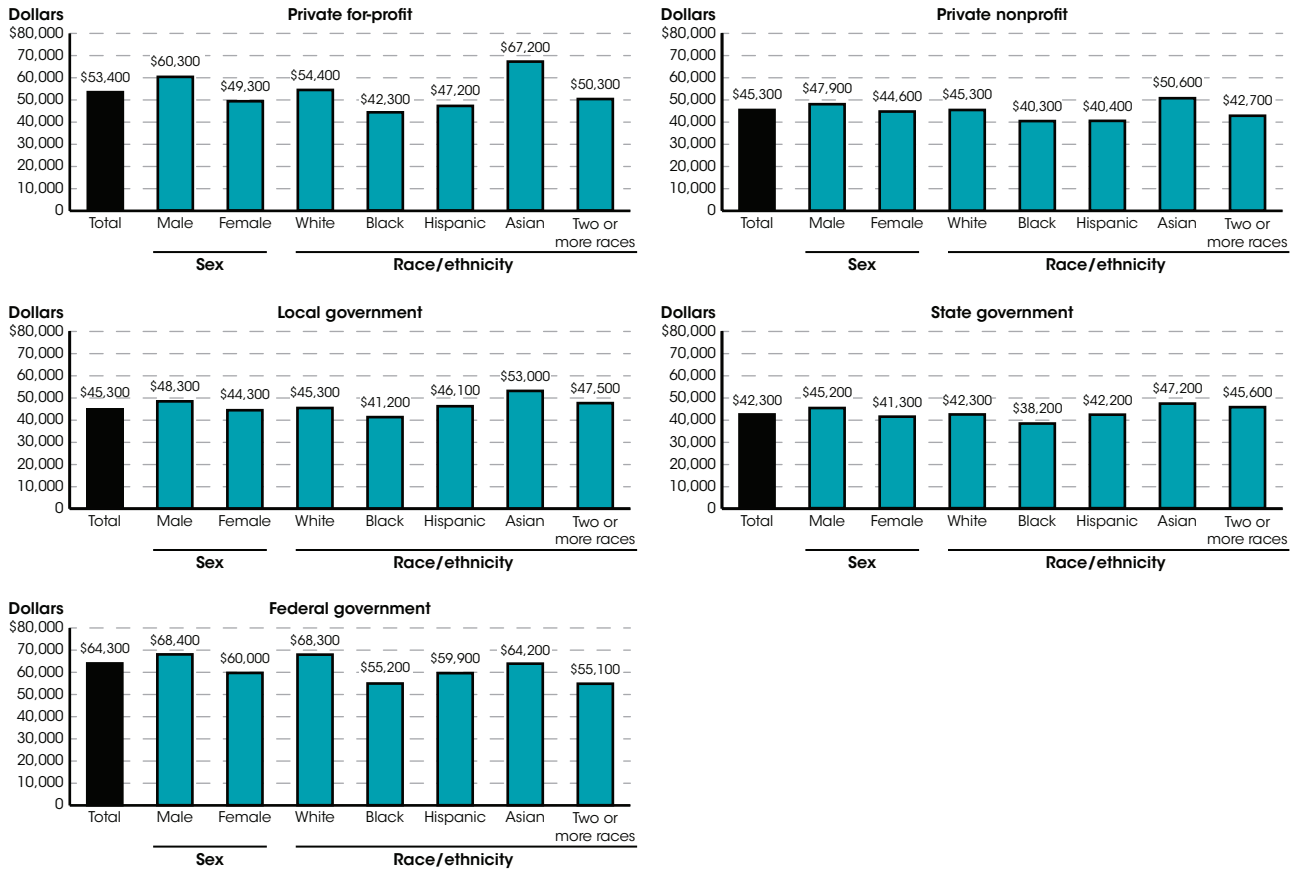
Hispanic young adults ages 25–34 who worked full time, year round in education had median earnings of \$43,200, higher than the earnings of their counterparts in all other racial/ethnic groups<sup>7</sup> except those of Two or more races, whose earnings were not measurably different. Asian and White young adults both had higher earnings than their Black and Hispanic peers in management, business and financial operations, and office support. In management, for instance, Asian young adults had the highest median earnings (\$70,400), followed by White (\$60,400), Hispanic (\$54,900), and Black young adults (\$50,100). Black young adults employed in computer/mathematical occupations and architecture and engineering earned less than their White counterparts.

Figure 5. Percentage distribution of 25- to 34-year-old bachelor's or higher degree recipients who were employed, by sex, race/ethnicity, and employment sector: 2014



! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.  
 ‡ Reporting standards not met. Either there are too few cases for a reliable estimate or the coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is 50 percent or greater.  
<sup>1</sup> Includes unpaid family members and self-employed individuals with nonincorporated businesses.  
 NOTE: Estimates are for the entire population of employed civilian 25- to 34-year-old bachelor's degree holders, including persons living in households and persons living in group quarters (such as college residence halls, residential treatment centers, and correctional facilities). Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Total includes other racial/ethnic groups not separately shown. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded estimates.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 505.15.

Figure 6. Median earnings of 25- to 34-year-old bachelor's or higher degree recipients who worked full time, year round, by selected employment sector, sex, and race/ethnicity: 2014



NOTE: Estimates are for the entire population of civilian 25- to 34-year-old bachelor's or higher degree holders who worked full time, year round including persons living in households and persons living in group quarters (such as college residence halls, residential treatment centers, and correctional facilities). Totals include other racial/ethnic groups not separately shown. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 505.15.



The private for-profit sector employed the highest percentage (66 percent) of workers ages 25–34 with a bachelor’s or higher degree, followed by the private nonprofit sector (13 percent), local government (9 percent), state government (7 percent), and the federal government (3 percent). Full-time, year-round workers in the federal government had higher median earnings (\$64,300) than employees in the private for-profit (\$53,400), private nonprofit, local government (both \$45,300), and state government (\$42,300) sectors.

A higher percentage of male than female young adults ages 25–34 worked in the private for-profit sector (72 and 60 percent, respectively), while a higher percentage of females than males were employed in the private nonprofit sector and in state and local governments. Females also earned less than their male colleagues in each employment sector observed. For instance, females in the private for-

profit sector earned \$11,000 less than their male peers (\$49,300 vs. \$60,300).

The percentage of employed Asian young adults ages 25–34 with a bachelor’s or higher degree working in the private for-profit sector (76 percent) was higher than that of Hispanic (65 percent), White (65 percent), and Black (62 percent) young adults. Conversely, a higher percentage of Black young adults were employed in federal and state governments (6 and 9 percent, respectively) than of White, Hispanic, and Asian young adults. In the private for-profit sector, Asian young adults who worked full-time, year-round earned the most (\$67,200), followed by White (\$54,400), Hispanic (\$47,200), and Black (\$42,300) young adults. Black young adults also earned less than their White peers in the private nonprofit sector as well as in all three levels of government.

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### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> See [Annual Earnings of Young Adults, Employment Rates and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment, Employment Outcomes of Bachelor’s Degree Recipients](#).

<sup>2</sup> Median earnings by occupation and employment sector are restricted to full-time, year-round workers. Full-time, year-round workers are those who worked at least 35 hours per week for the past year.

<sup>3</sup> Employment sector refers to the Census Bureau’s “class of worker” classification which categorizes people according to the type of ownership of their employing organization. Assigning class of worker categories is, in most cases, independent of industry and occupation. In this indicator, employment sector includes private for-profit, private nonprofit, local, state, and federal government, and other.

<sup>4</sup> “Undermatching” is a term usually used to describe students attending less-competitive colleges than

their academic credentials warrant. In this context, “undermatching” refers to a similar concept in the labor market: candidates accepting or settling for positions that pay lower than their qualifications allow.

<sup>5</sup> This category consists mainly of students, homemakers, seasonal workers interviewed in an off season who were not looking for work, institutionalized people, and people doing only incidental unpaid family work (less than 15 hours during the reference week).

<sup>6</sup> Part-time work is defined as less than 35 hours per week.

<sup>7</sup> A comparison between Hispanic and Pacific Islander young adults is not possible since reporting standards were not met for the latter group.

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**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 505.15

**Related indicators:** Educational Attainment of Young Adults, Annual Earnings of Young Adults, Employment and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment

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**Glossary:** Bachelor’s degree, Employment status, Median earnings, Racial/ethnic group