Opportunity Imbalance: Race, Gender, And California’s Education-To-Employment Pipeline

Focus on Blacks

Black Californians comprise about 6% of the state’s population, a share that has remained steady for the past 15 years. California’s Black population has made incremental gains in degree attainment and wages over time, but more so for women than men.

Black students’ high school outcomes are behind the state average but have improved over time. Black women are faring better than Black men by considerable margins in high school outcomes.

Black students enroll primarily in postsecondary institutions with low completion rates: community colleges, followed by for-profit institutions. Black students are twice as likely to enroll in private for-profit colleges than the state average. This is most pronounced in the San Diego-Imperial region, where 54% of Black men and 74% of Black women college students are enrolled at a for-profit institution, respectively.

38% of Black college students earn an associate’s degree within 3 years or a bachelor’s degree within 6 years, compared to the state average of 55%. Low completion rates are a major leak in the pipeline for Black college students. Black adults are more likely than any other racial/ethnic group to have started college but not finished.
SNAPSHOT
Gender Gaps in Outcomes for Black Californians

Gender differences in high school and college outcomes are particularly pronounced for Black Californians. Further, while workforce gaps between Black men and women are much smaller than the state’s overall gender gap, this is largely due to low indicators for Black men, rather than high ones for Black women.

While workforce participation for Black women is similar to the state average, Black men’s participation rate of 70% is far below the state average. As a result, Blacks are the only racial/ethnic group without a gender gap in workforce participation rates.

Black adults largely enter lower-paying fields such as transportation, office and administrative support, and personal care. Within occupational fields, Black employees’ wages are often below that of the statewide workforce in the same fields.

Among working Black adults, men earn 16% more than women in California’s workforce, a much smaller gap than the state gender gap of 32%.

Black Gender Gap (Men - Women) | State Gender Gap (Men - Women)
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High School Graduation Rate | -14% | -8%
UC/CSU Eligibility Rate | -67% | -29%
Postsecondary Completion Rate | -28% | -12%
Workforce Participation Rate | -2% | +17%
Median Wage | +14% | +24%

Top Occupations for Black Men (Black Median Wage - State Median Wage)
- Transportation and Material Moving (+0%)
- Office and Administrative Support (+2%)
- Management (-20%)
- Sales and Related Occupations (-24%)
- Protective Service (-45%)

Top Occupations for Black Women (Black Median Wage - State Median Wage)
- Office and Administrative Support (+8%)
- Personal Care and Service (+2%)
- Sales and Related Occupations (-12%)
- Management (-5%)
- Healthcare Practitioners and Technical (-13%)

Sources
Fig 1: California Competes’ calculations of California Department of Education data for 2015-16
Fig 2: California Competes’ calculations of Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data for 2015-16
Fig 3: California Competes’ calculations of IPEDS data for 4-year cohort starting in 2010 and 2-year cohort starting in 2013
Fig 5: California Competes’ calculations of California Department of Education data for 2015-16, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System data for 2015-16, and American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) 2016 five-year estimate data
Fig 4, 6, 7, 8: California Competes’ calculations of American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) 2016 five-year estimate data