

BRIEF 7: RISING-WAGE INDUSTRIES

Industries where additional educational attainment translates into higher wages.

About This Series

To build a clear picture of the opportunities and supports driving economic mobility, the Office of Education Through Employment Pathways (ETEP) is releasing public-facing dashboards and briefs on education and employment outcomes for DC residents who work in the District, attended DC public schools, and participated in District-funded programs. These outcomes reflect residents whose education records could be matched to employment records – meaning the data does not yet include some residents, such as those working for the federal government or outside the District. This series will help District residents, program providers, policymakers, agency leaders, and educators better understand the impact of education and workforce programs on residents' employment outcomes.

About This Brief

This analysis examines wages **six years after expected high school graduation in three industries – Educational Services, Health Care & Social Assistance, and Public Administration** – which offer evidence that educational attainment translates into higher wages for former DC public high school students.

These industries offer substantially stronger earnings and clearer wage progression at each level of educational attainment – a clear, consistent return on additional education that shows how postsecondary education can open doors to higher-paying work and long-term economic mobility.

Key Finding 1

In Educational Services, a bachelor's degree carries a substantial wage premium.

Six years post-high school, bachelor's degree holders in Educational Services earn **\$53,810 – nearly \$20,000 more** than peers with only a high school diploma* in the same industry.

Bachelor's degree holders also out-earn those who began college but did not earn a degree by almost **\$16,000** annually.



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Key Finding 2

In Health Care & Social Assistance, **wages rise steadily** with each additional level of educational attainment.

Graduating high school on time has a wage advantage in this industry — on-time completers earn **\$39,141**, almost **\$10,000 more** than those who completed high school in longer than four years (**\$30,330**)*.

Six years post-high school, bachelor's degree holders earn **\$50,200** — significantly higher than those with a high school diploma, and about **\$5,000** more annually than those with some college but no degree.

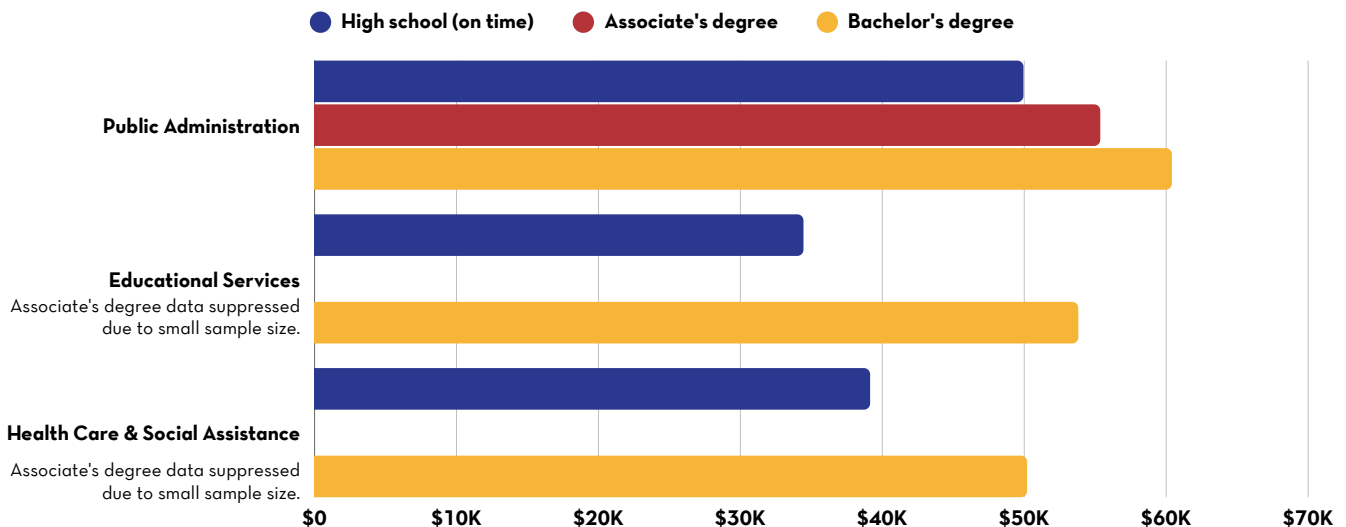
Key Finding 3

Public Administration offers some of the **highest wages across any industry** in this analysis, rising sharply with postsecondary degree attainment.

Six years post-high school, associate's degree holders* earn **\$55,356**. Wages rise to **\$60,400** with a bachelor's degree.

For on-time high school completers*, earnings average **\$49,944** annually, a higher figure for this group than many other industries offer.

Annual Wages By Educational Attainment Within Industries



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Additional Context



Data Note: Asterisks (*) denote instances in this brief where the population referenced has a sample size of $n=25-50$. All other instances mentioned have sample sizes greater than or equal to 50.



For analyses of DC's flat-wage industries and how many DC public high school alumni these industries employ, see Briefs 8 "Industries where wages remain flat even with additional educational attainment." and 9 "DC alumni are employed most often by industries that do not reward additional educational attainment."



Definitions of industries in this analysis:

- Health Care & Social Assistance: Provision of health care and social assistance for individuals.
 - Examples: Hospitals, doctors' offices, nursing homes, child care services
- Public Administration: Government establishments engaged in administering, overseeing, and managing public programs. Note that ETEP's data set does not include federal employees.
 - Examples specific to DC: DC Housing Authority, DC Government Personnel Office.
- Educational Services: Instruction and training in a wide variety of subjects, provided by specialized establishments.
 - Examples: Schools, colleges, universities, training centers

Explore the Dashboard

Use the interactive dashboards to explore these findings.

Key Finding 1, 2, and 3:

Employed Individuals by Education Level 6 Years After High School Graduation

[LINK](#)