

BRIEF 9: EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY

DC alumni are employed most often by industries that do not reward additional educational attainment.

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 the share of DC public high school alumni employed in different industries, and median wages by postsecondary degree level within those industries – to **compare the industries where alumni actually work against where additional education** pays off.

Key Finding 1

The **most common industries** for DC public school alumni, across all postsecondary degree levels, are also among the **least rewarding** for additional education.

Administrative & Support, Waste Management, & Remediation Services is the top industry for on-time high school completers (26.25%, median wage \$37,568) and an even larger share of extended completers (38.39%, but at a lower wage of \$34,926) – meaning the alumni with the lowest educational attainment are the most concentrated in this industry and paid the least within it.

In Administrative & Support, Waste Management, & Remediation Services, bachelor's degree holders have annual median wages of \$29,294 – less than what on-time high school completers earn in the same industry (\$37,568).

Key Finding 2

The **industries that most reward post secondary degree attainment** employ a **smaller and more credentialed** share of alumni.

Public Administration is the top or near-top industry for both associate's degree holders* (31.78%, \$55,356) and bachelor's degree holders (17.3%, \$60,400)— with the highest wages recorded in this analysis — but does not appear among the top industries for on-time or extended high school completers.

Health Care & Social Assistance is the one industry that appears across every postsecondary degree level, and its wages rise sharply with each step: \$30,330 for extended high school completers*, \$39,141 for on-time high school completers, and \$50,200 for bachelor's degree holders — nearly a \$20,000 spread within a single industry, purely by postsecondary degree.

Educational Services appears only among bachelor's degree holders in this data (15.96%, \$53,810); it isn't among the top four industries for any other postsecondary degree group shown, suggesting employment in this industry might overwhelmingly require a bachelor's degree.

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 rising-wage and flat-wage industries see Briefs 7 "Industries where additional educational attainment translates into higher wages." and 8 "Industries where wages remain flat even with additional educational attainment."

Additional Context



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
- Retail Trade: Sale of goods and services directly to consumers.
 - Examples: Clothing stores, electronics retailers, grocery stores
- Administrative & Support, Waste Management, & Remediation Services: Routine support activities for the day-to-day operations of other organizations.
 - Examples: Employment agencies, janitorial services, waste collection
- Accommodation & Food Services: Provision of lodging and/or meals, snacks, and beverages for immediate consumption.
 - Examples: Hotels, restaurants, cafes

Explore the Dashboard

Use the interactive dashboards to explore these findings.

Key Finding 1 and 2:

Employed Individuals
by Education Level 6
Years After High
School Graduation

[LINK](#)

Industries of Employment for
Students Served by DC Public &
Public Charter High Schools 6
Years After Expected High
School Graduation

[LINK](#)

Industries Of Employment
Among Those Who Pursue
Postsecondary Education 6
Years After Expected High
School Graduation

[LINK](#)