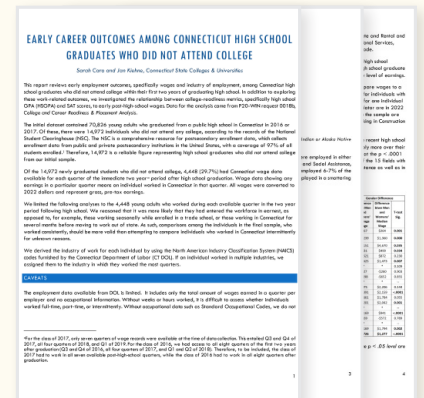


Early Career Outcomes Among Connecticut High School Graduates Who Did Not Attend College

Key Takeaways

- P20-WIN data was leveraged to investigate early wage outcomes for Connecticut high school graduates who did not attend college and who worked consistently for two years after high school graduation.
- Among this population of young workers, less than 10% earned a living wage according to the MIT Living Wage Calculator.
- Women, taken as a group overall, as well as within specific industries, tended to earn significantly less than men.
- Women of Color, especially black women, had the lowest wage outcomes.



This report reviews early employment outcomes, specifically wages and industry of employment, among individuals in Connecticut who graduated high school in 2016 or 2017 and who did not attend college within their first two years post-graduation. The dataset contained 4,448 young adults who had Connecticut wage data available for each quarter of the immediate two-year period after graduation. As such, only

individuals who graduated high school and went directly into the workforce, and who worked consistently for two years after graduating high school, were included. All wages reported herein were converted to 2022 dollars.

Several caveats should be kept in mind regarding the available data. For example, although we could access quarterly wages, the number of hours worked was not available. As such, we cannot make any comparisons in terms of wages per hour. Therefore, while we cannot say whether a given demographic group earned more hourly wages than another, we can make reasonable comparisons between groups in terms of overall quarterly pay.

It is also important to keep in mind that wage differences may be due not only to differences in hourly wages, but also to differences among industries in whether full- or part-time work is more commonly offered. While we have no way of knowing whether individuals worked full- or part-time, lower quarterly wages are regarded in this analysis as a negative outcome. Whether they are due to a low hourly wage or relatively fewer hours of work available, cannot be determined for any individual or group in the sample. The full report, including a description of the data analysis and caveats, can be found [here](#).



Findings

Table 1: Median and Average Wages by Industry

Industry	N	Percent of Sample	Median Quarterly Wage	Average Quarterly Wage	Percent of Industry Earning a Living Wage	Percent Male
Manufacturing	326	7%	\$8,765	\$8,714	40%	87%
Construction	288	6%	\$8,691	\$9,000	41%	98%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	17	0%	\$7,387	\$7,395	*	82%
Wholesale Trade	78	2%	\$6,976	\$7,175	26%	85%
Finance and Insurance	21	0%	\$6,352	\$6,580	*	19%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	21-27	*	\$6,178	\$6,172	*	*
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Svcs	30	1%	\$6,005	\$6,588	*	63%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	280	6%	\$5,778	\$5,865	12%	80%
Transportation and Warehousing	115	3%	\$5,051	\$5,451	7%	86%
Other Services (except Public Admin)	188	4%	\$4,846	\$5,527	11%	53%
Public Administration	31	1%	\$4,813	\$5,566	*	74%
Unknown NAICS Industry	106	2%	\$4,712	\$5,204	9%	61%
Health Care and Social Assistance	298	7%	\$4,481	\$4,529	*	30%
Retail Trade	1198	27%	\$4,264	\$4,595	3%	58%
Accommodation and Food Services	1242	28%	\$4,176	\$4,441	2%	49%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	131	3%	\$4,031	\$4,012	*	63%
Information	20	0%	\$3,513	\$3,904	*	40%
Educational Services	49	1%	\$3,135	\$3,699	*	53%
Mgmt of Companies and Enterprises	*	*	*	*	*	*
Utilities	*	*	*	*	*	*
Total	4448	100%	\$4,742	\$5,357	10%	61%

Findings (continued)

Table 2: Annual Wages by Demographic Group

Demographic Group	N	Percent of Sample	Average Yearly Wage	Median Yearly Wage	Percent Earning a Living Wage	Difference from Sample Median
Men	2709	61%	\$24,129	\$21,475	14%	\$2,506
FRPL Men	1461	33%	\$22,323	\$19,964	9%	\$995
Non-FRPL Men	1248	28%	\$26,244	\$24,323	21%	\$5,354
Women	1739	39%	\$17,224	\$16,367	2%	-\$2,603
FRPL Women	1121	25%	\$17,331	\$16,576	2%	-\$2,394
Non-FRPL Women	618	14%	\$17,029	\$15,795	3%	-\$3,175
Asian	43	1%	\$18,891	\$19,361	*	\$392
Asian Women	20	0%	\$16,334	\$16,506	*	-\$2,463
Asian Men	23	1%	\$21,994	\$21,973	*	\$3,004
Black or African American	610	14%	\$17,042	\$15,849	2%	-\$3,120
Black or African American Women	264	6%	\$15,329	\$14,827	*	-\$4,142
Black or African American Men	346	8%	\$18,349	\$16,808	3%	-\$2,161
Hispanic or Latino	1226	28%	\$18,687	\$20,332	5%	\$1,362
Hispanic or Latino Women	523	12%	\$17,779	\$17,059	*	-\$1,911
Hispanic or Latino Men	703	16%	\$22,231	\$20,523	8%	\$1,554
Other Ethnicity	136	3%	\$19,120	\$21,621	*	\$2,651
Other Ethnicity Women	60	1%	\$17,384	\$16,510	*	-\$2,460
Other Ethnicity Men	76	2%	\$24,965	\$21,615	*	\$2,645
Nonwhite Ethnicity	2015	45%	\$19,402	\$17,773	5%	-\$1,197
NonWhite Women	867	19%	\$16,972	\$16,313	1%	-\$2,657
NonWhite Men	1148	26%	\$21,237	\$19,289	7%	\$319
White	2433	55%	\$20,312	\$23,109	14%	\$4,139
White Women	872	20%	\$17,474	\$16,457	3%	-\$2,513
White Men	1561	35%	\$26,256	\$24,150	20%	\$5,180
Graduated in 2016	2126	48%	\$21,546	\$19,086	10%	\$117
Graduated in 2017	2322	52%	\$20,680	\$18,837	9%	-\$133
Total	4448	100%	\$21,430	\$18,970	10%	\$0.00

Note: FRPL = free-or-reduced price lunch status, meaning an individual was eligible for free-or-reduced price lunch in high school. Here, FRPL acts as a proxy for lower family income.

Conclusions

Table 2 shows striking differences in wages according to gender, ethnicity, and FRPL status among Connecticut's young workers. Our full report, with detailed wage comparisons by demographic groups within industry, shows that these demographic differences remain even among individuals working in the same industry.

From a higher education perspective, this analysis provides a relatively uncommon, and perhaps gloomy, glimpse into early work outcomes for students not attending college. The median annualized wage for high school graduates who were consistently employed after graduation was \$18,968. Per month, this would amount to \$1,581, far less than the \$3,078 required monthly for an adult residing in Connecticut with no children, according to the MIT Living Wage Calculator¹. Indeed, only 425 of the young workers (9.55% of the population) in this study

"...only 425 of the young workers (9.55% of the population) in this study earned a living wage, and of those, only 8% were women

earned a living wage, and of those, only 8% were women. Although men made up 61% of the population for the analysis, they made up 92% of the individuals who earned a living wage.

Bearing in mind the stark demographic differences in wages, particularly for women and Black individuals, monthly wages for many are considerably less than the aforementioned median of \$1,581 per month, making the situation is especially dire for these underserved groups. For example,



¹Living wage calculator. Living Wage Calculator. (n.d.). Retrieved January 13, 2023, from <https://livingwage.mit.edu/pages/about>

black women in this sample of consistently employed high school graduates had a median monthly wage of only \$1,236.

We are aware that pay rates over the lifespan can change significantly from those immediately after high school. However, given the importance of a living wage to an individual's health, safety, and mental wellbeing, it is worth striving for wage equity among workers regardless of age, gender, or ethnicity. There are many pathways for society to make improvements in pay equity which are beyond the scope of this report. However, the authors suggest that education leaders should expand the availability, accessibility, and quality of academic pathways to the labor market. Such pathways should begin in high school, and support the attainment of short term, stackable credentials that are tied to local labor market needs, enabling our state's young workers to progress into positions that provide a living wage.

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