

# LA FIRST Overview

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Louisiana Board of Regents  
2025 Fiscal Summit

November 19, 2025

Stephen Barnes, PhD



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Public Policy Center



# Overview of LA FIRST

- Act 394 of the 2023 Louisiana Legislature created LA FIRST at the Blanco Center
- LA FIRST links existing state administrative data for public policy research
- 8 state and local data partners are participating

Louisiana Department of Education	Louisiana Dept of Public Safety & Corrections
Louisiana Workforce Commission	Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice
Louisiana Dept of Children & Family Services	Louisiana Board of Regents
Louisiana Department of Health	Local Education Agencies

- Legislation mandates three annual legislative research reports
- Act 330 of the 2024 Regular Session authorized LA FIRST to be used for ad hoc reports requested by state entities

# LA FIRST is a data partnership for public policy research



# Launch Louisiana

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## 2025 Report Highlights

Himani Sharma, PhD

Truc Bui, PhD

Rachel Veron, MPAff, PhD

Stephen Barnes, PhD

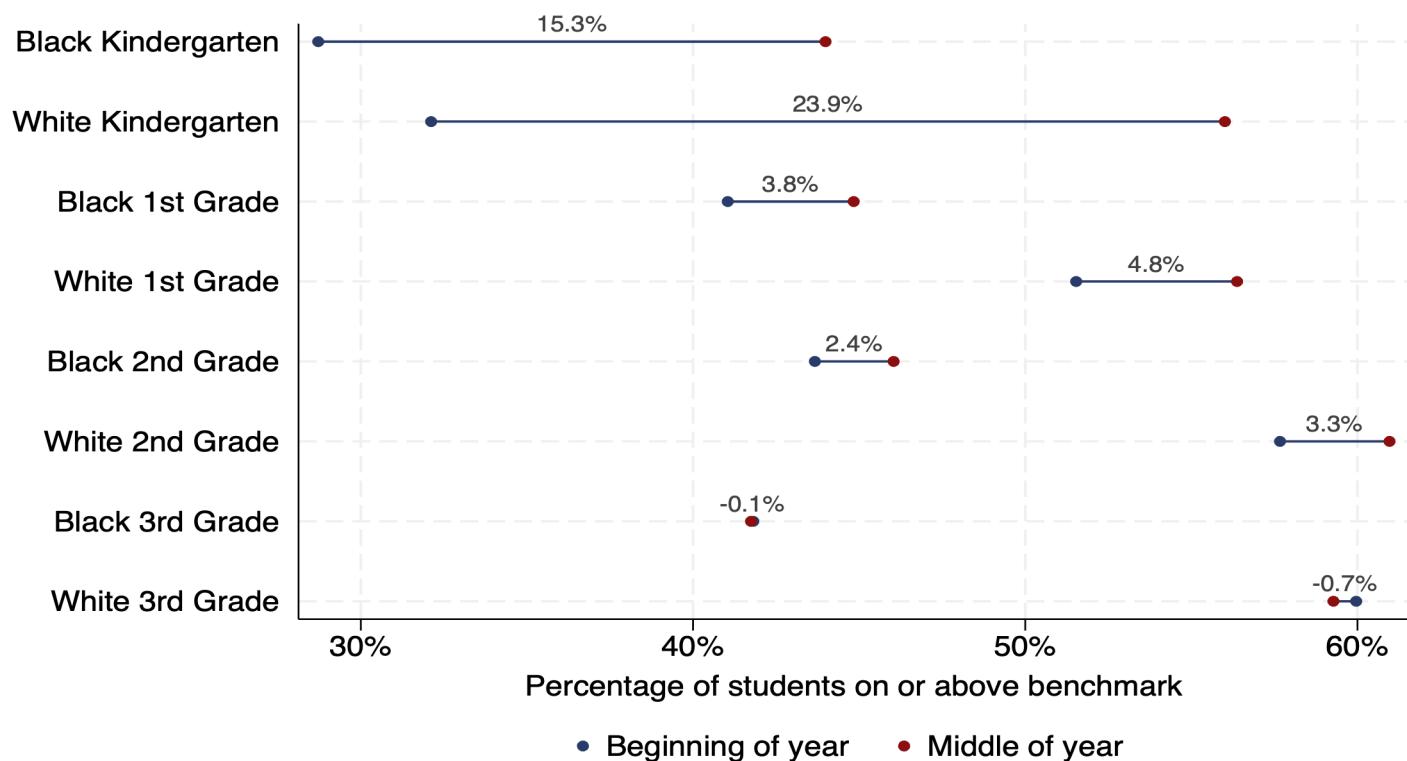


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The logo for LA1, consisting of a stylized blue 'LA' with a small outline of the state of Louisiana inside the letter 'A', followed by the word "LA FIRST" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

- Analyzed early reading assessment race gaps among students by grade level using statewide DIBELS 8<sup>th</sup> Composite Scores K-3
- Reading assessment results of White students were higher than those of Black students at all grade levels
  - Race gap was smallest at the beginning of school for Kindergarteners and had widened by mid-year
  - Race gaps increased at each grade level
  - Race gap was largest in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

**Figure 4.6 Comparison: DIBELS 8 Composite Assessment in Academic Year 2023- 2024 by Assessment Period, Race, Ethnicity, and Grade Level**



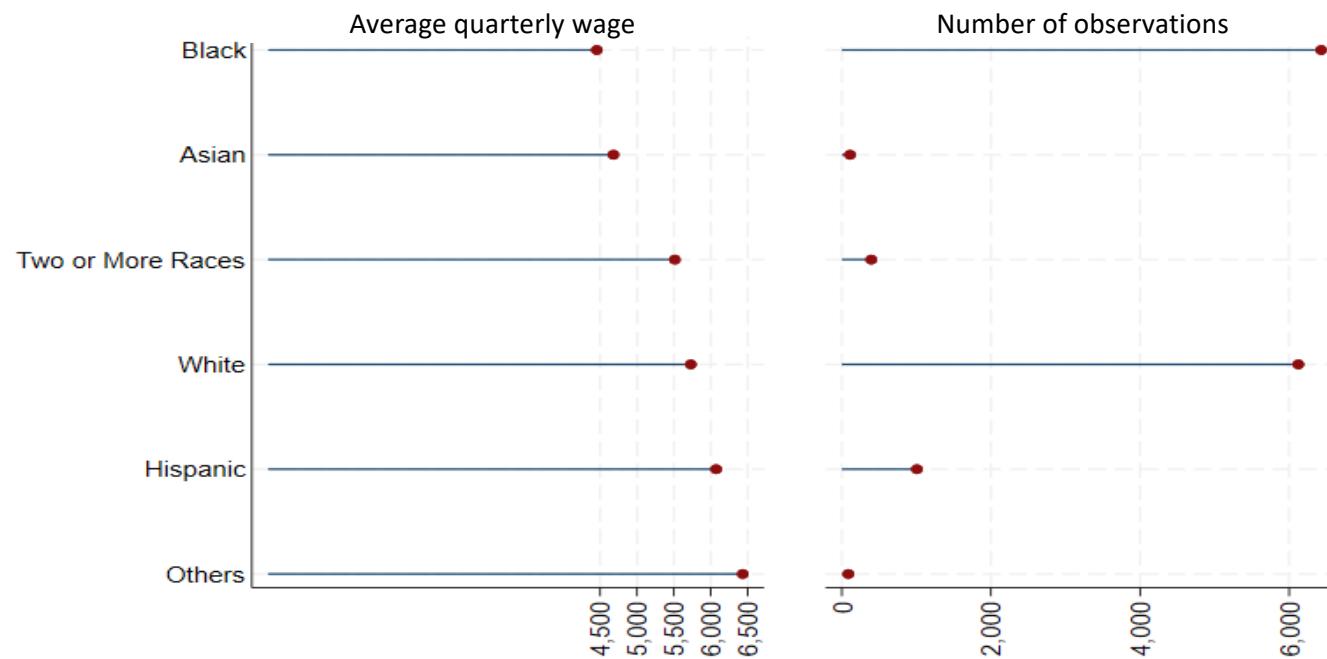
- Analyzed wage outcomes of recent high school graduates
- Cohort analysis of
  - Louisiana public high school graduates 2021-22 in participating LEAs\*
  - Not enrolled in a LA public higher ed institution between 2009-10 and 2023-24
  - Who had positive wages reported by LWC in 2023
  - Average quarterly wages were notably higher for males after high school in the cohort

**Table 4.7 Average quarterly wage (2023) of recent Louisiana high school graduates not enrolled in a Louisiana public higher education institution by gender**

Gender	Average Wage Across Quarters (US dollars)*	Observations
Female	\$4,019	6,189
Male	\$6,055	7,970

\* For students in 42 LEAs in 27 parishes that opted in to the LA FIRST DSA at time of analysis  
 Source: Blanco Center analysis of LA FIRST data

**Figure 4.17 Average Quarterly Wage(2023) of recent Louisiana high school graduates not enrolled in a Louisiana public higher education institution by race and ethnicity\***



\* Others include American Indian, Alaskan Pacific, Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander

Source: Blanco Center analysis of LA FIRST data

# Causes and Consequences of Criminal and Delinquent Acts

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## 2025 Report Highlights

Alejandra Leyton, PhD

Margaret Storms, MS

Inioluwa Oyetunji, MA

Rachel Veron, MPAff, PhD

Stephen Barnes, PhD



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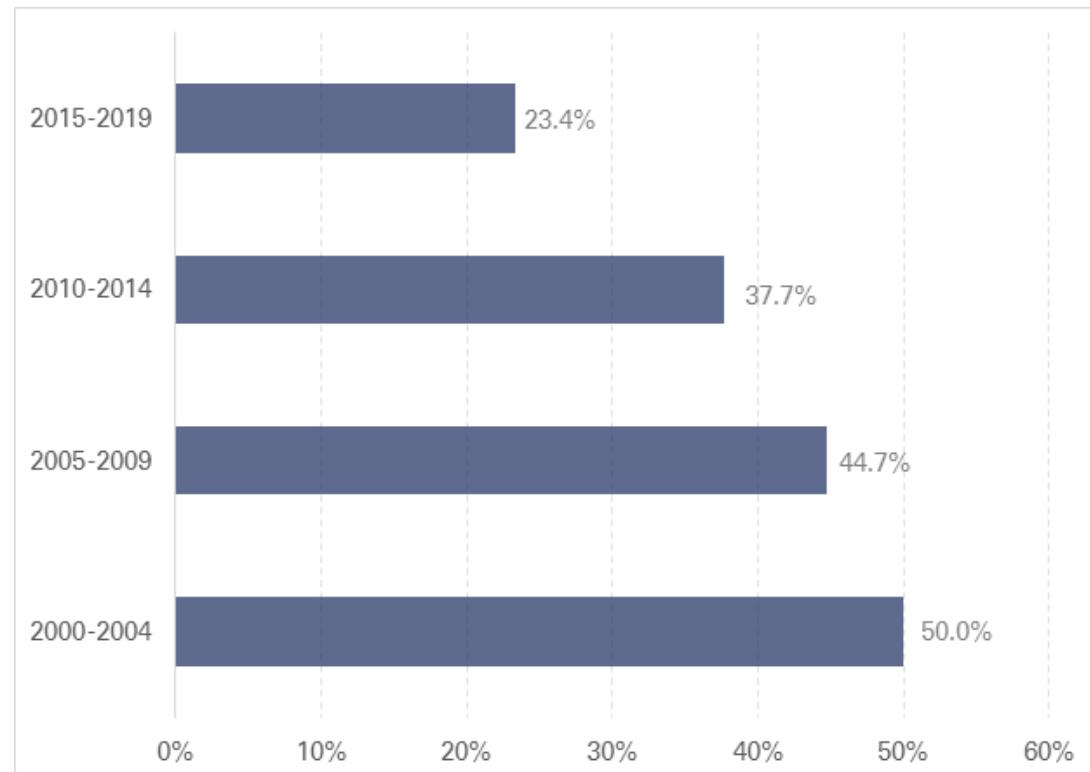


# Analysis conducted

Three topics		
1. Convicted offenses that resulted in DPS&C custody or supervision and associated characteristics	2. Trends and characteristics of admissions to OJJ's care	3. The progression from involvement with OJJ to DPS&C and associated characteristics

Up to 50 percent of youth released from OJJ were eventually sentenced to custody or supervision by DPS&C

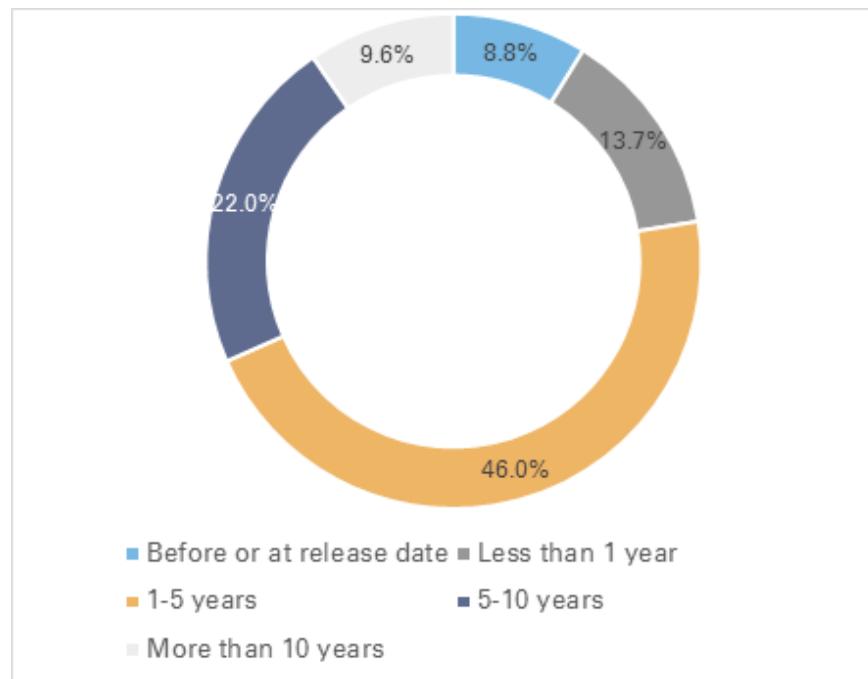
Figure 30. DPS&C involvement rates for OJJ releasee cohorts



Source: Blanco Center analysis of LA FIRST data.

For a large share of youth involved with both systems, it took between 1 to 5 years from their date of first release from OJJ to commit an offense that resulted in a DPS&C conviction

Figure 31. Time between first OJJ release and first DPS&C convicted offense for OJJ releasees with DPS&C involvement, 2000-2019

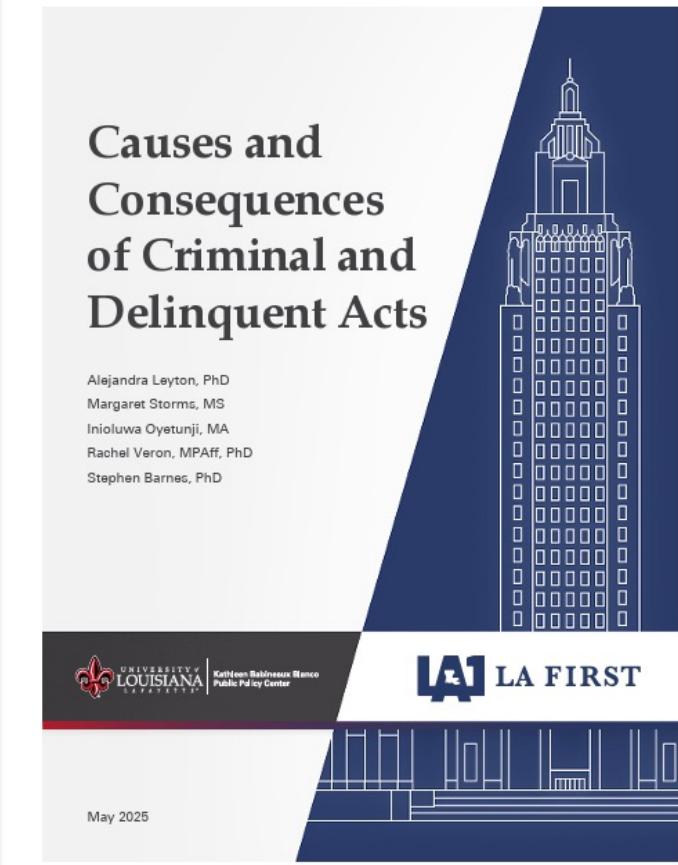


**Source:** Blanco Center analysis of LA FIRST data.

**Notes:** We calculate the difference between OJJ's first release date within the period of analysis (2000-2019) and the first conviction observed for each individual in DPS&C's data.

The likelihood of crossing over into adult corrections was higher for certain groups of youth involved with OJJ:

- Detention facilities
- Severe offenses
- Multiple episodes
- Longer episode duration
- Specific demographic characteristics



# Louisiana's Employment Outcomes

## 2025 Report Highlights

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Jenna Losh, MS

Rachel Veron, MPAff, PhD

Stephen Barnes, PhD

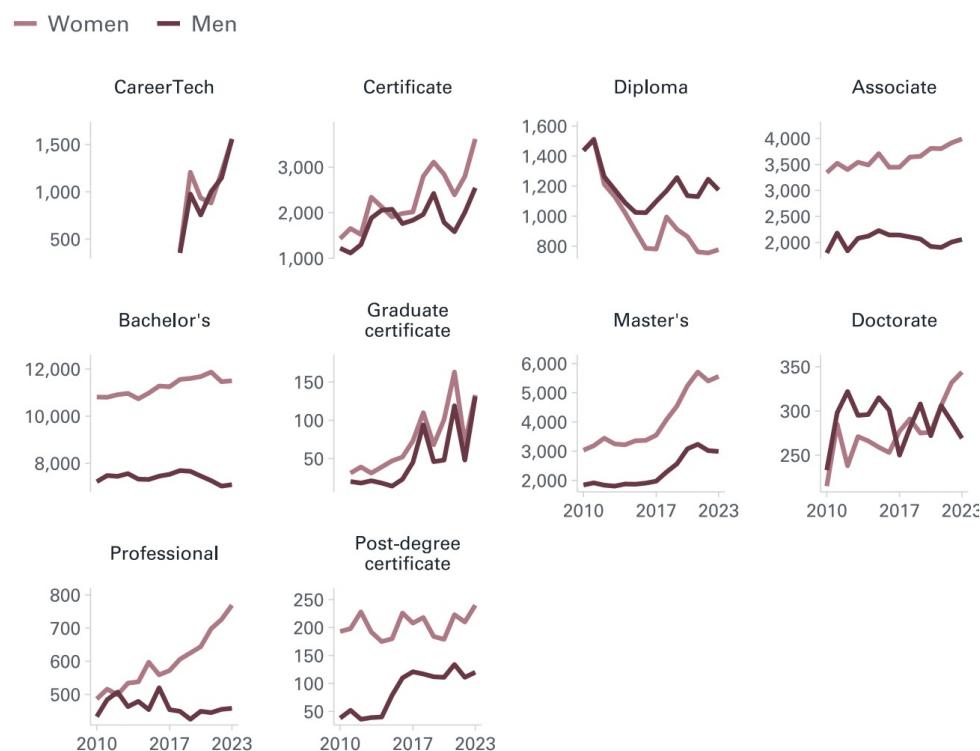


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- A growing share of completers are earning certificates.
- With 55 percent more completions than men in academic year 2023-24, women account for a growing majority of completers.
- Across credential levels, women earn substantially more health and social science degrees, while men earn more construction and engineering degrees.

**Figure 4.3** Annual completers by credential level and gender at Louisiana public institutions, AY2010-11 to 2023-24



**Source:** Blanco Center analysis of LA FIRST data

**Note:** Counts of completers only include the highest level credential an individual completed during an academic year. Years shown on the charts represent academic year, e.g., "2010" refers to the 2010-2011 academic year.

## Wages by **degree level** for completers in AY2014-15

- By 2023, men who completed an associate degree in this cohort were earning a median of \$75,000 annually, while women at the same degree level were earning about \$47,000, and men with a bachelor's were earning \$68,000.

**Figure 4.16** Median real Louisiana wages for completers at Louisiana public institutions in AY2014-15 by gender, 2014-2023



Source: Blanco Center analysis of LA FIRST data

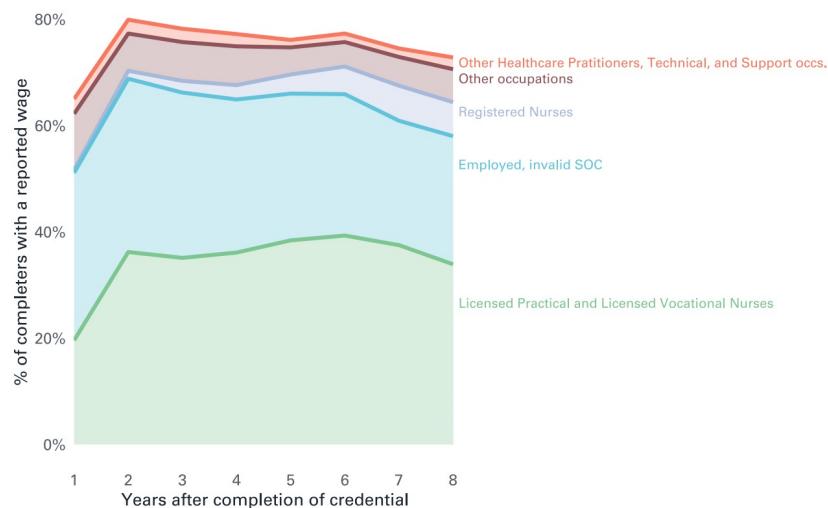
## Outcomes for **specific degree programs**

Four pilot case studies with well-defined career pathways

- LPN
- RN
- Electrical
- HVAC

Comparing **occupational** outcomes for **LPN** and **RN** programs, most were employed in-state and in related fields, though RN completers were less likely to stay employed in Louisiana.

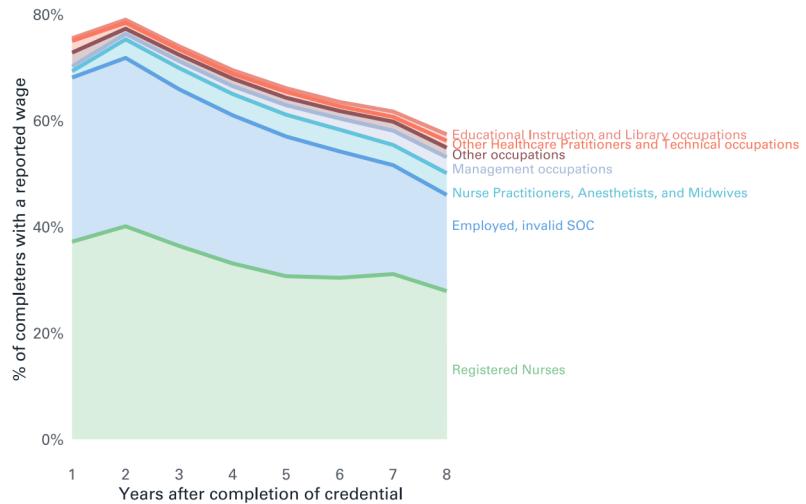
**Figure 4.17** Louisiana employment by occupation for LPN completers at Louisiana public institutions



Source: Blanco Center analysis of LA FIRST data

Note: Rolling cohort includes completers from AY2015-2016 to 2021-2022. Wages are observed from up to 8 years after completion.

**Figure 4.19** Louisiana employment by occupation for RN completers at Louisiana public institutions



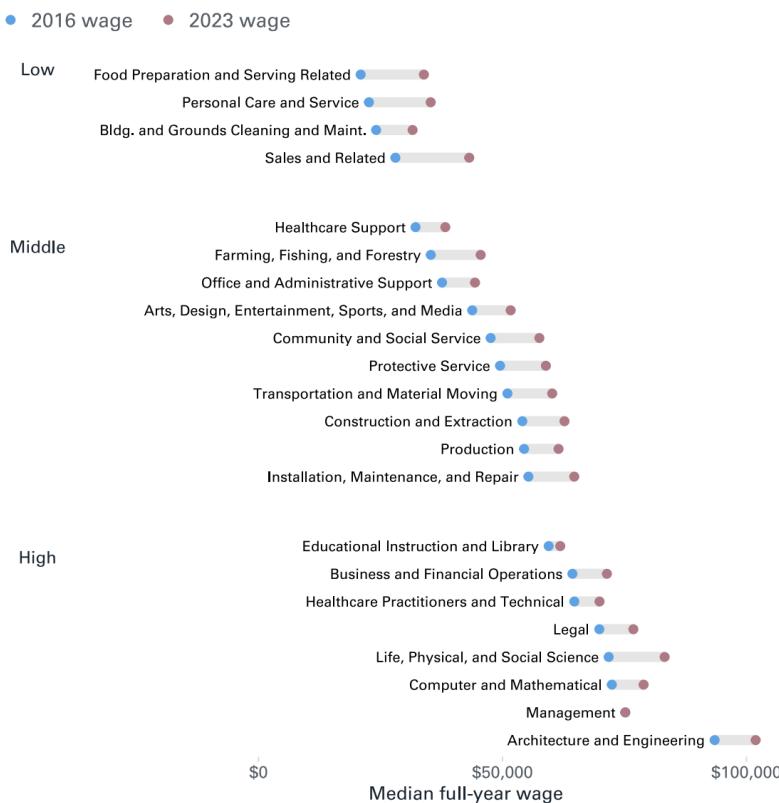
Source: Blanco Center analysis of LA FIRST data

Note: Rolling cohort includes completers from AY2015-2016 to 2021-2022. Wages are observed from up to 8 years after completion.

## Nuances of wage mobility

- Workers in lower-earning occupations had the highest wage mobility **relative to their starting point in 2016**.
- But the distribution of wages in 2023 remained linked to the worker's initial occupation in 2016, suggesting **limited wage mobility**.
- Workers in lower-earning occupations were also **less likely to persist** in their same occupation and in Louisiana employment in later years.

**Figure 4.8** Median real wages by 2016 occupation group and wage tier, 2016 and 2023



Source: Blanco Center analysis of LA FIRST data

# Q&A

## 2025 Report Highlights



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