

LA FIRST Overview

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

2025 Report Highlights

Himani Sharma, PhD
Truc Bui, PhD
Rachel Veron, MPAff, PhD
Stephen Barnes, PhD

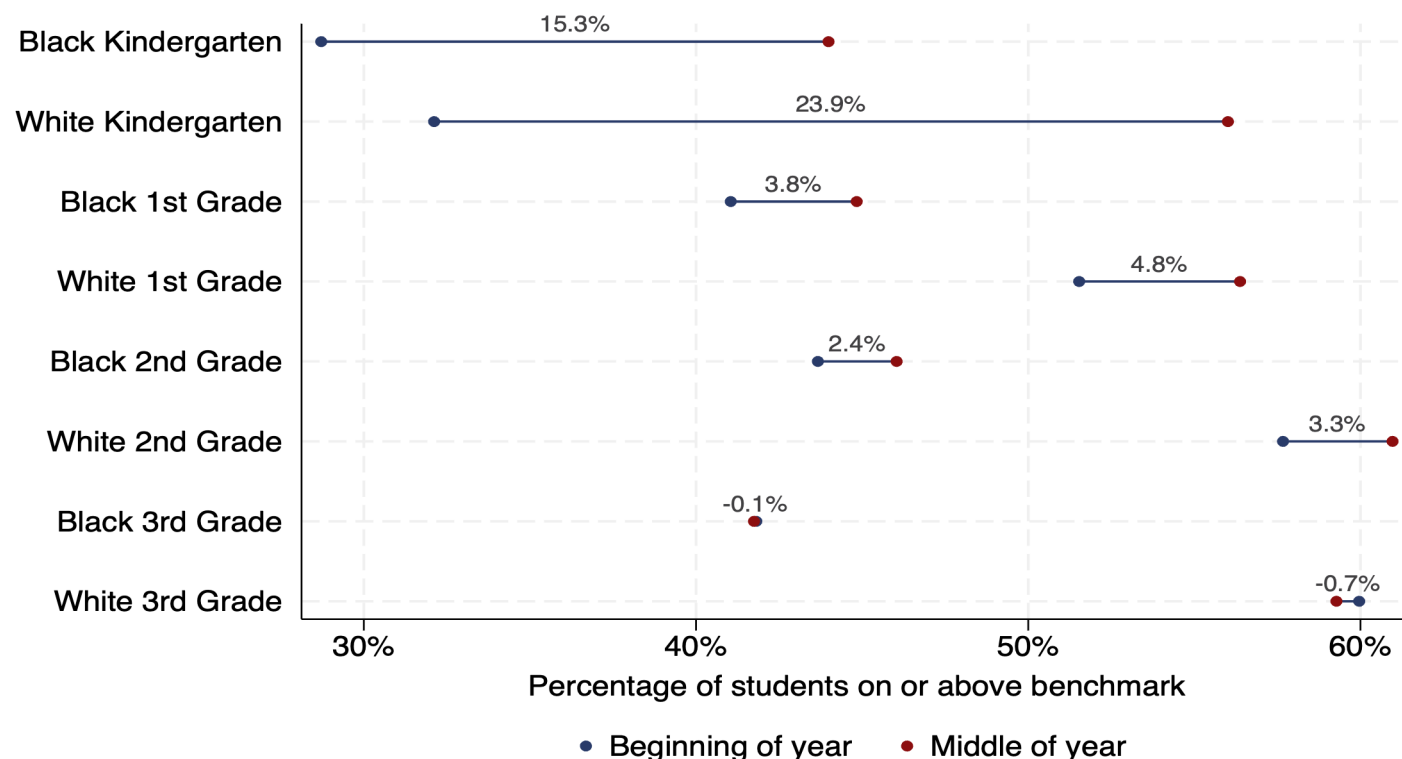


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- Analyzed early reading assessment race gaps among students by grade level using statewide DIBELS 8th Composite Scores K-3
- Reading assessment results of White students were higher than those of Black students at all grade levels
 - Race gap was 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 3rd grade

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



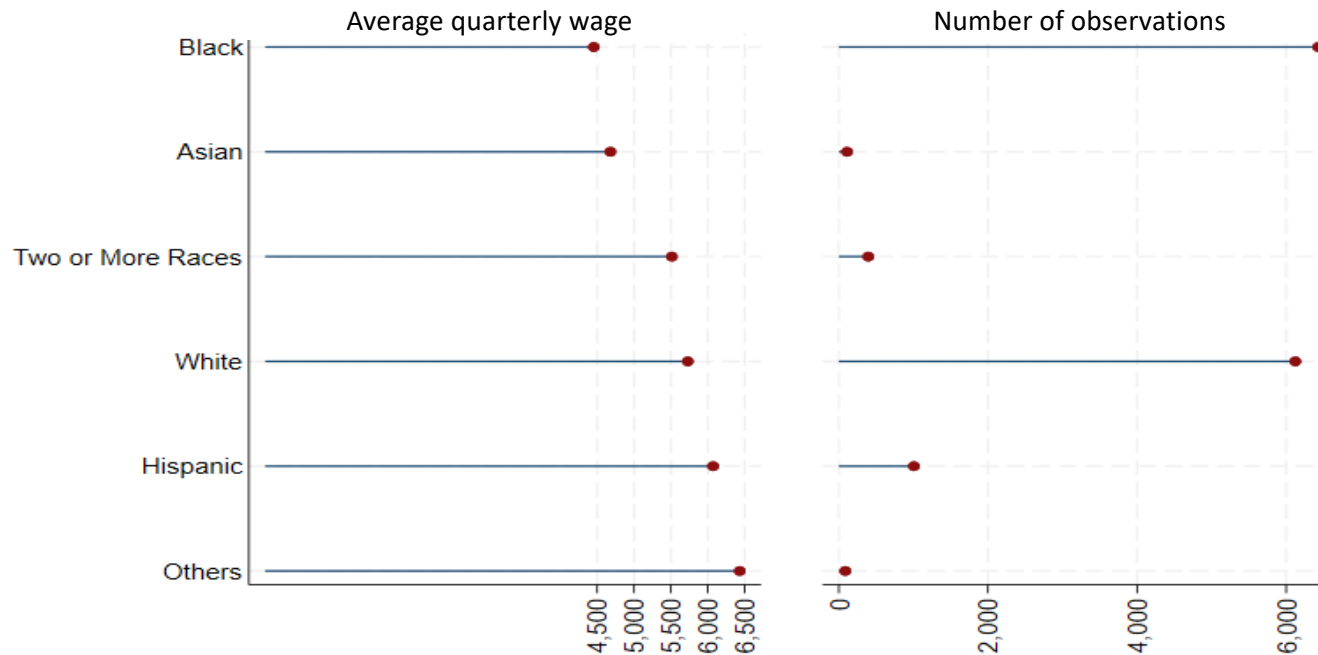
- Analyzed wage outcomes of recent high school graduates
- Cohort analysis of
 - Louisiana public high school graduates 2021-22 in participating LEAs*
 - Not enrolled in a LA public higher ed institution between 2009-10 and 2023-24
 - Who had positive wages reported by LWC in 2023
- Average quarterly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

2025 Report Highlights

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Stephen Barnes, PhD



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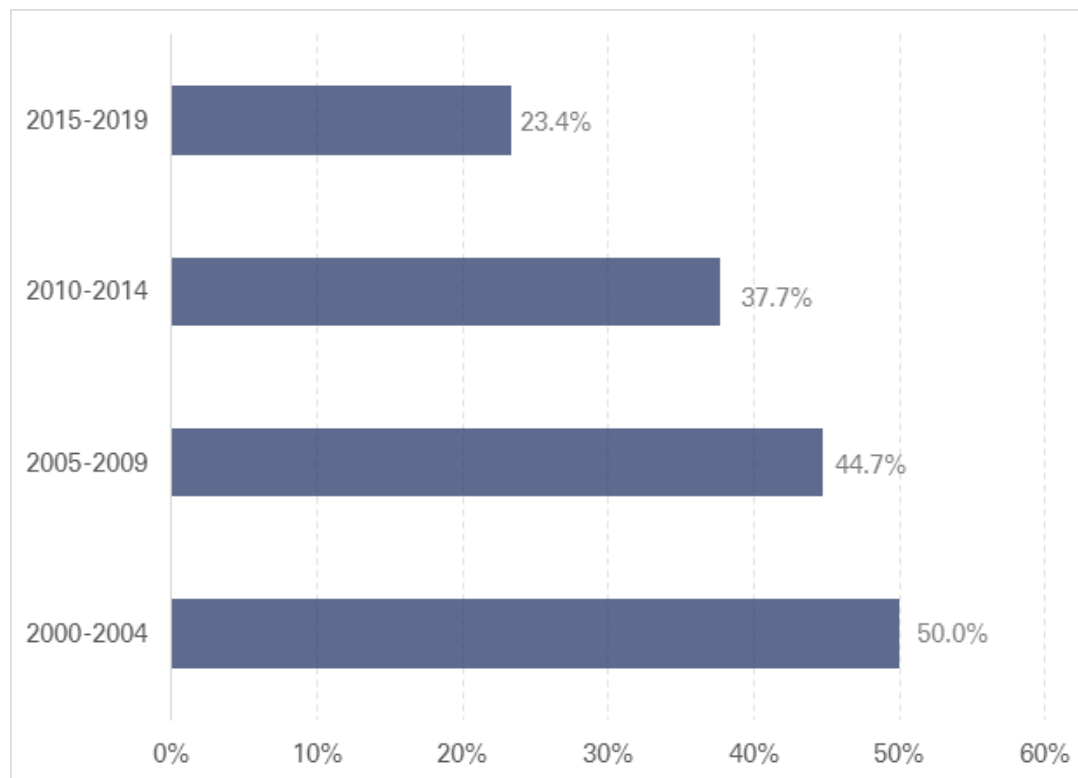


Analysis conducted

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

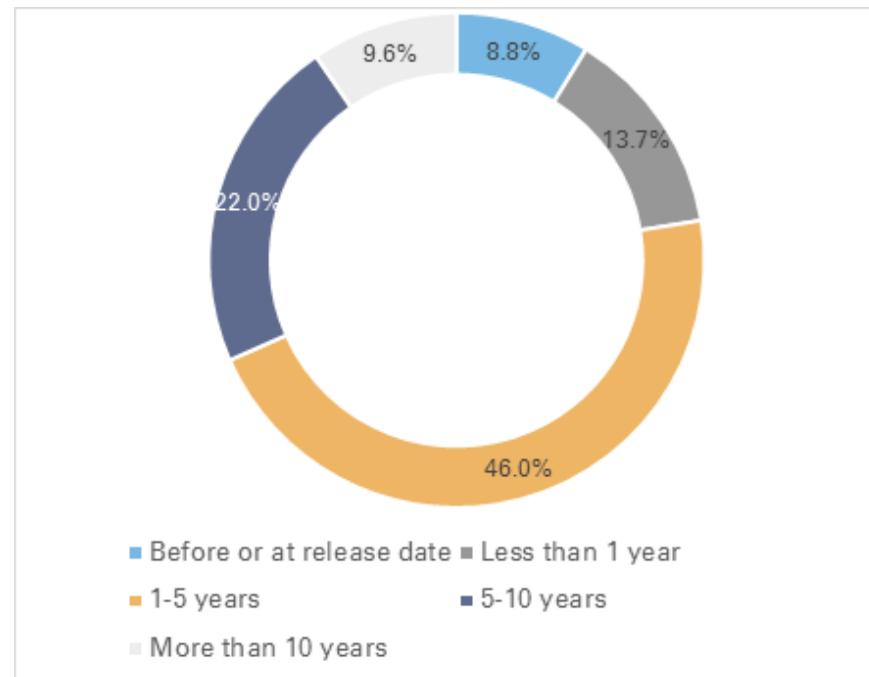
Figure 30. DPS&C involvement rates for OJJ releasee cohorts



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

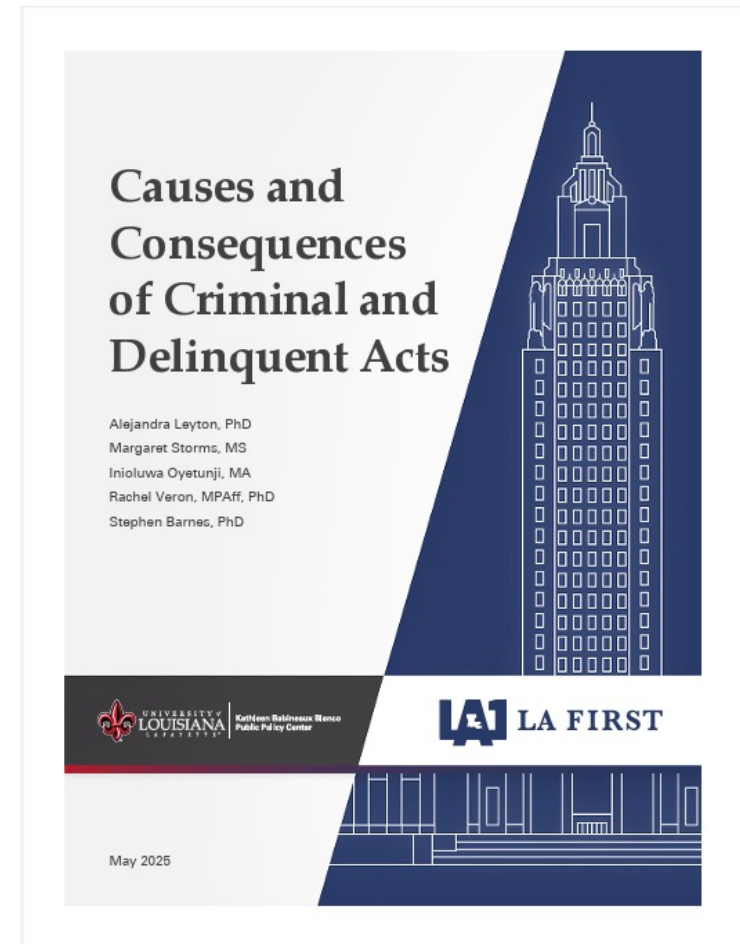


Source: Blanco Center analysis of LA FIRST data.

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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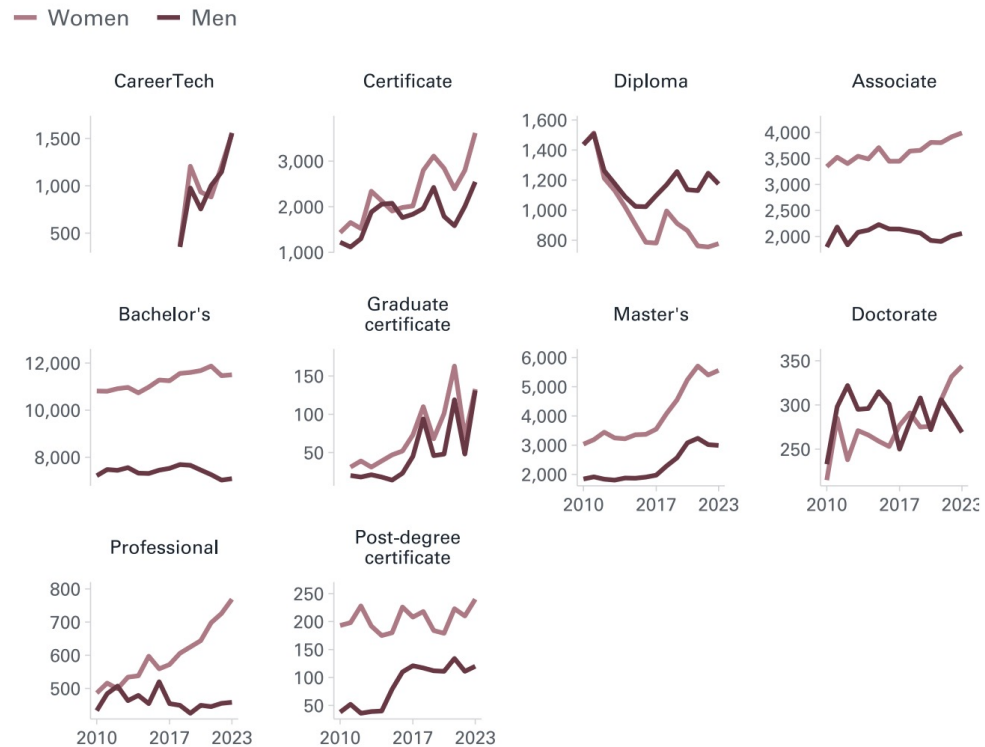


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- A growing share of completers are earning certificates.
- With 55 percent more completions than men in academic year 2023-24, women account for a growing majority of completers.
- Across credential levels, women earn substantially more health and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

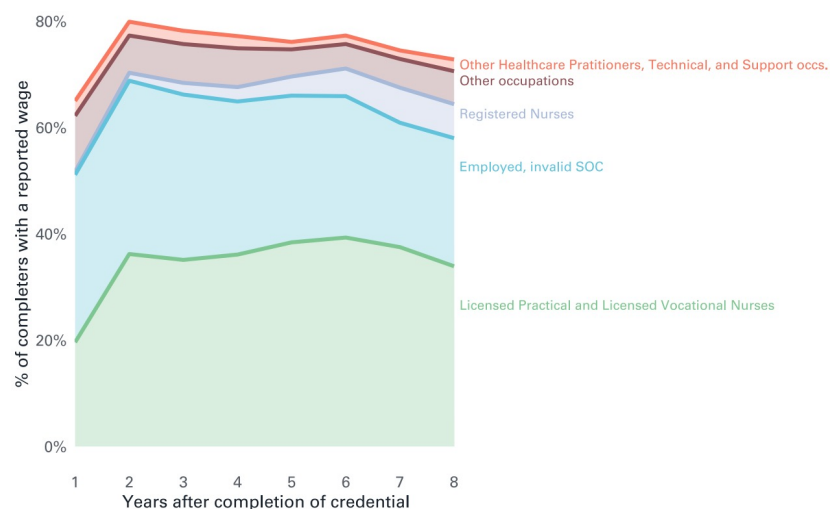
Outcomes for **specific degree programs**

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.

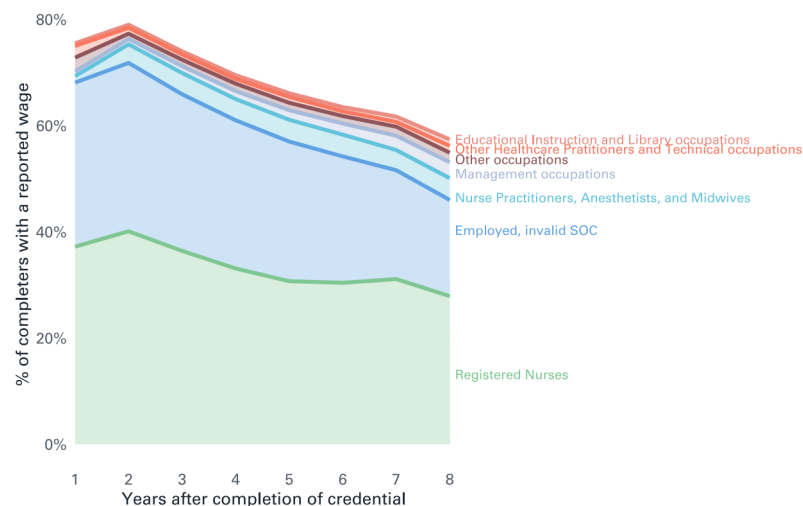
Figure 4.17 Louisiana employment by occupation for LPN completers at Louisiana public institutions



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



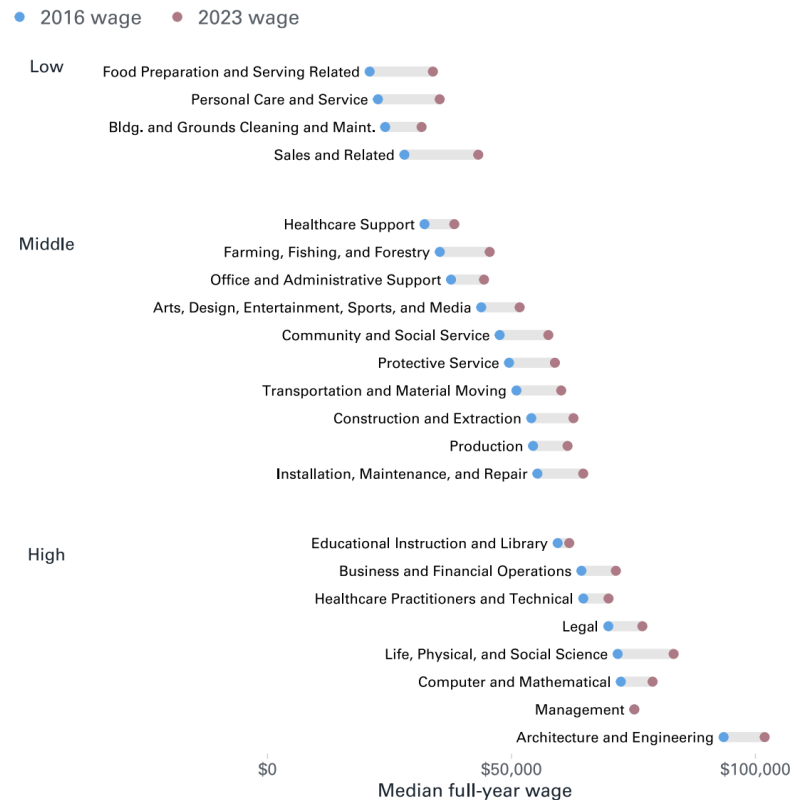
Source: Blanco Center analysis of LA FIRST data

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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