



January 21, 2026

ILLINOIS HIGH SCHOOL TO CAREER STUDY

Presented to the Illinois
Board of Higher Education



ILLINOIS WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION
RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE

UCHICAGO **Consortium**
on School Research

IL HIGH SCHOOL TO CAREER STUDY

AGENCY PARTNERS



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ILLINOIS 2018-2022 AMERICAN EDUCATION RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

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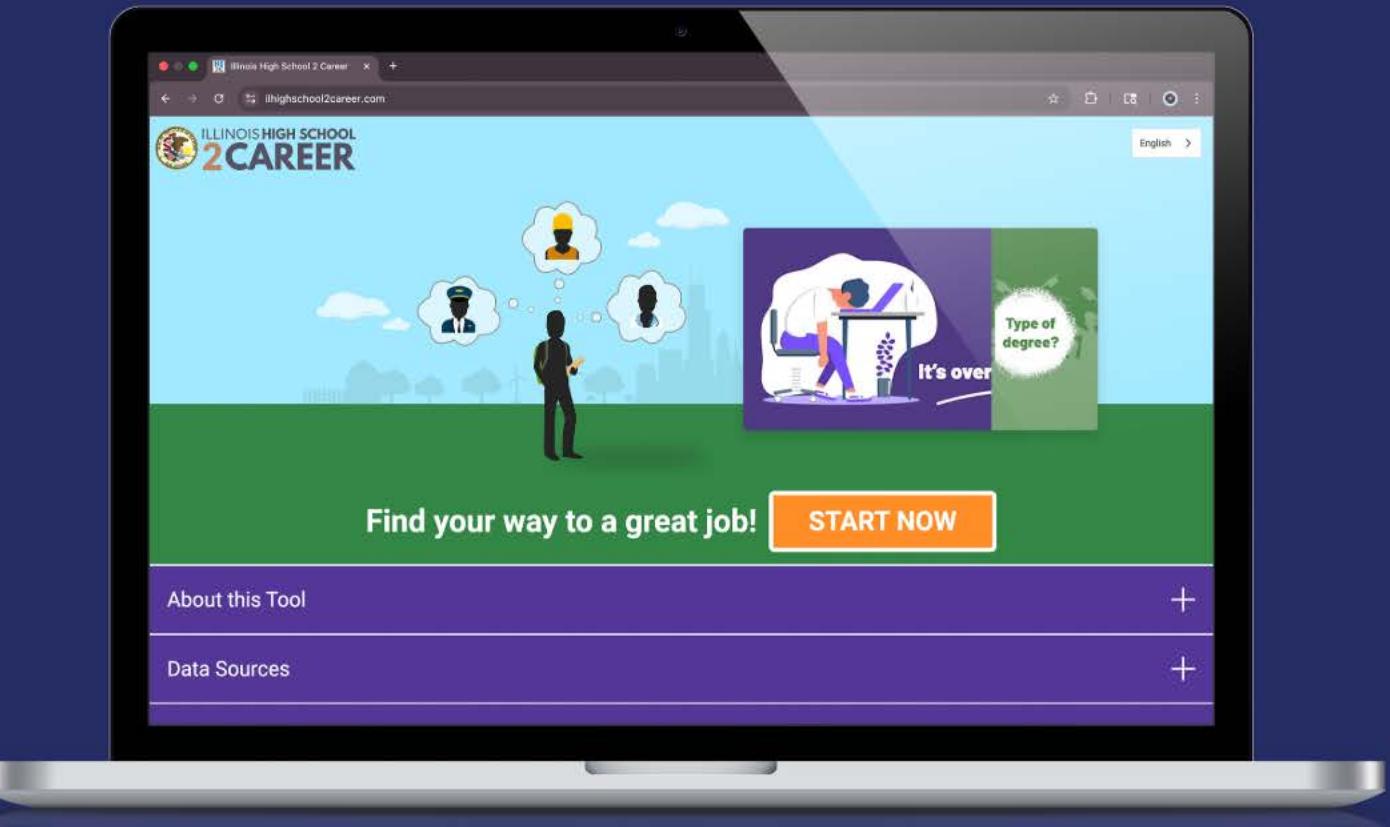
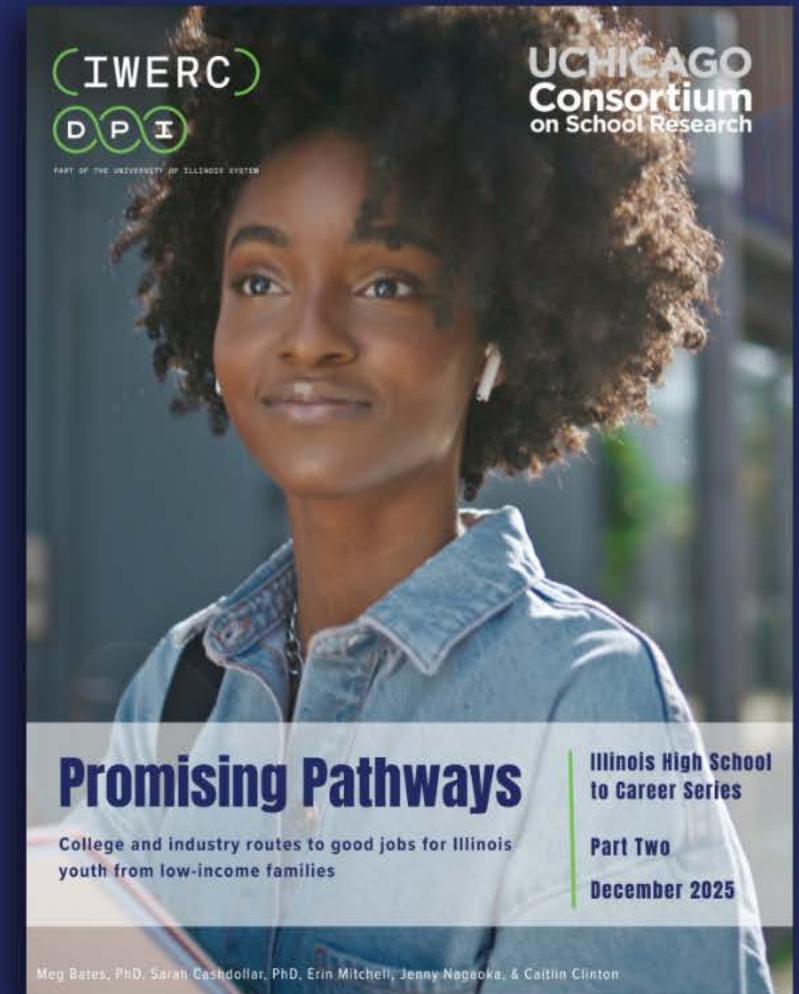
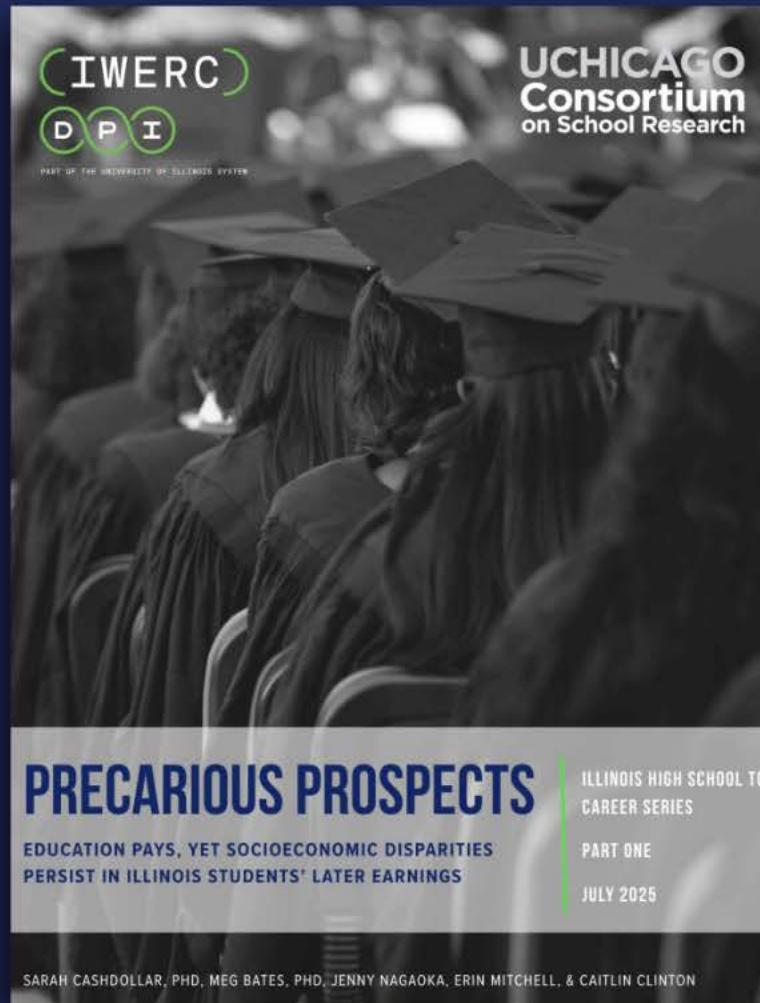


Photo Mockup Designed by D3images / Freepik



<https://www.ilhighschool2career.com/>

IL HIGH SCHOOL TO CAREER STUDY REPORTS



IL HIGH SCHOOL TO CAREER STUDY KEY TAKEAWAYS

Among students from low-income households:

Bachelor's+ pathways (Bachelor's, Master's, professional degrees)

- Earning a BA+ was the **surest route** to upward mobility
- Disparities in access to good jobs were **not eliminated, but were reduced**
- The most common degree outcome was "**some college, no degree**"

Sub-baccalaureate pathways (High school only, some college, certificate, associate)

- Several programs of study and industries provided **access to good jobs**, most commonly for men
- On average, sub-BA pathways led to **lower earnings** and greater racial/ethnic and gender **disparities** in access to good jobs

IL HIGH SCHOOL TO CAREER STUDY

ILLINOIS HS2C DATASET

Sample

- IL senior classes of 2008-2012

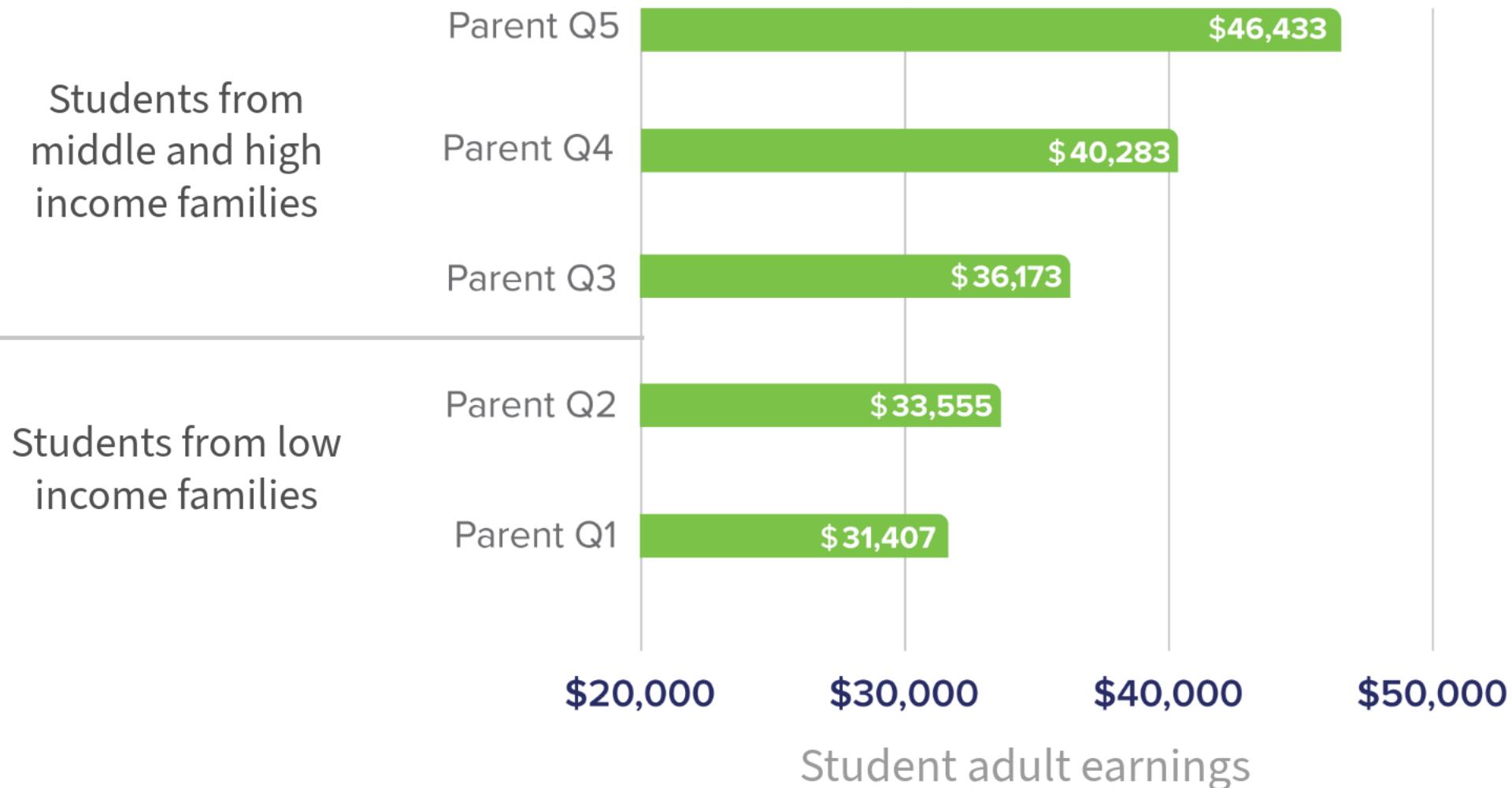
Inclusion Criteria

- Complete the FAFSA
- Work in IL in a stable job 3 years after college

Who is missing?

- Most (3/4) students with only a high school education
- Students who worked outside of IL

The problem: Students from low-income families earned less as adults



BACHELOR'S+ PATHWAYS

**Bachelor's, Master's, and Professional
Degrees**

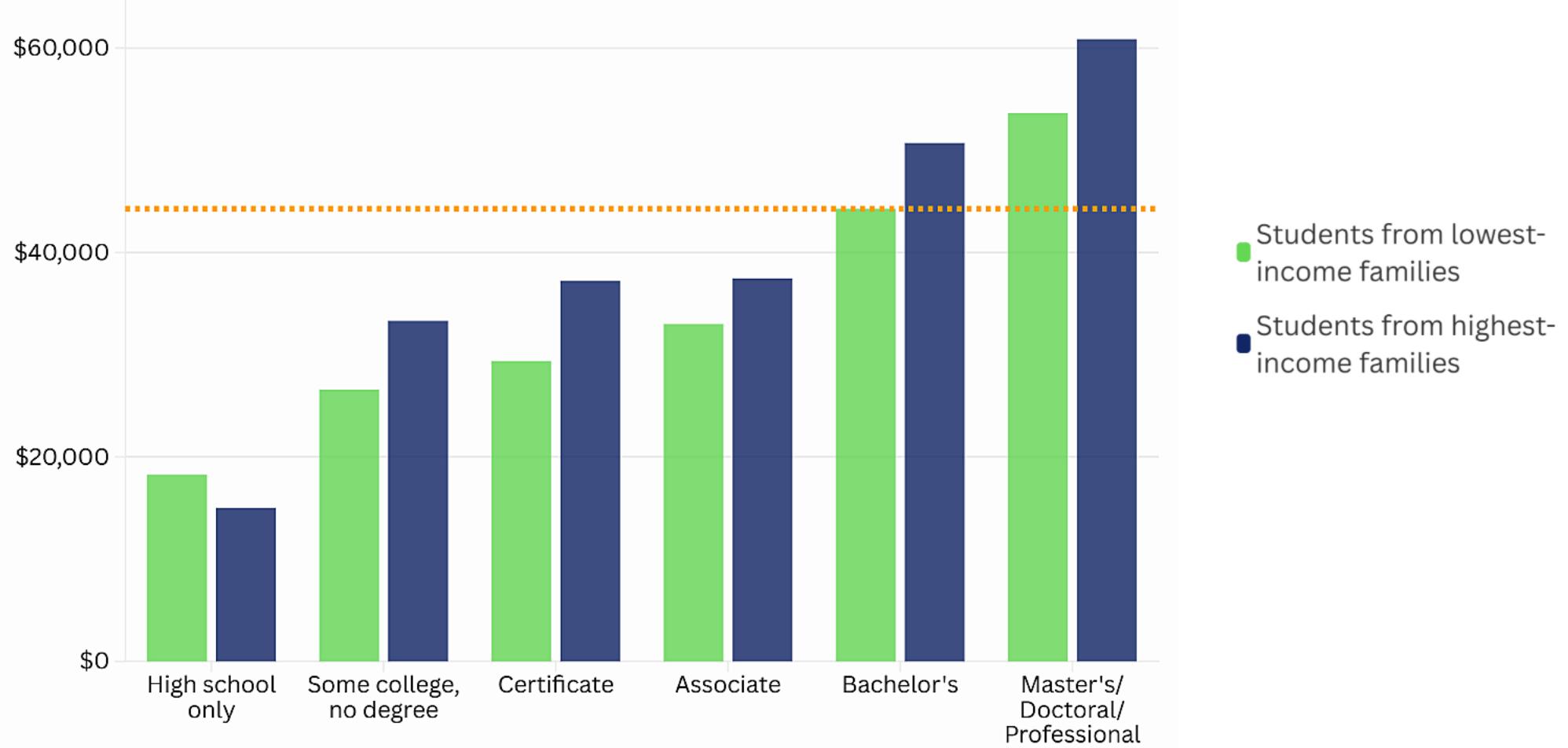


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ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE

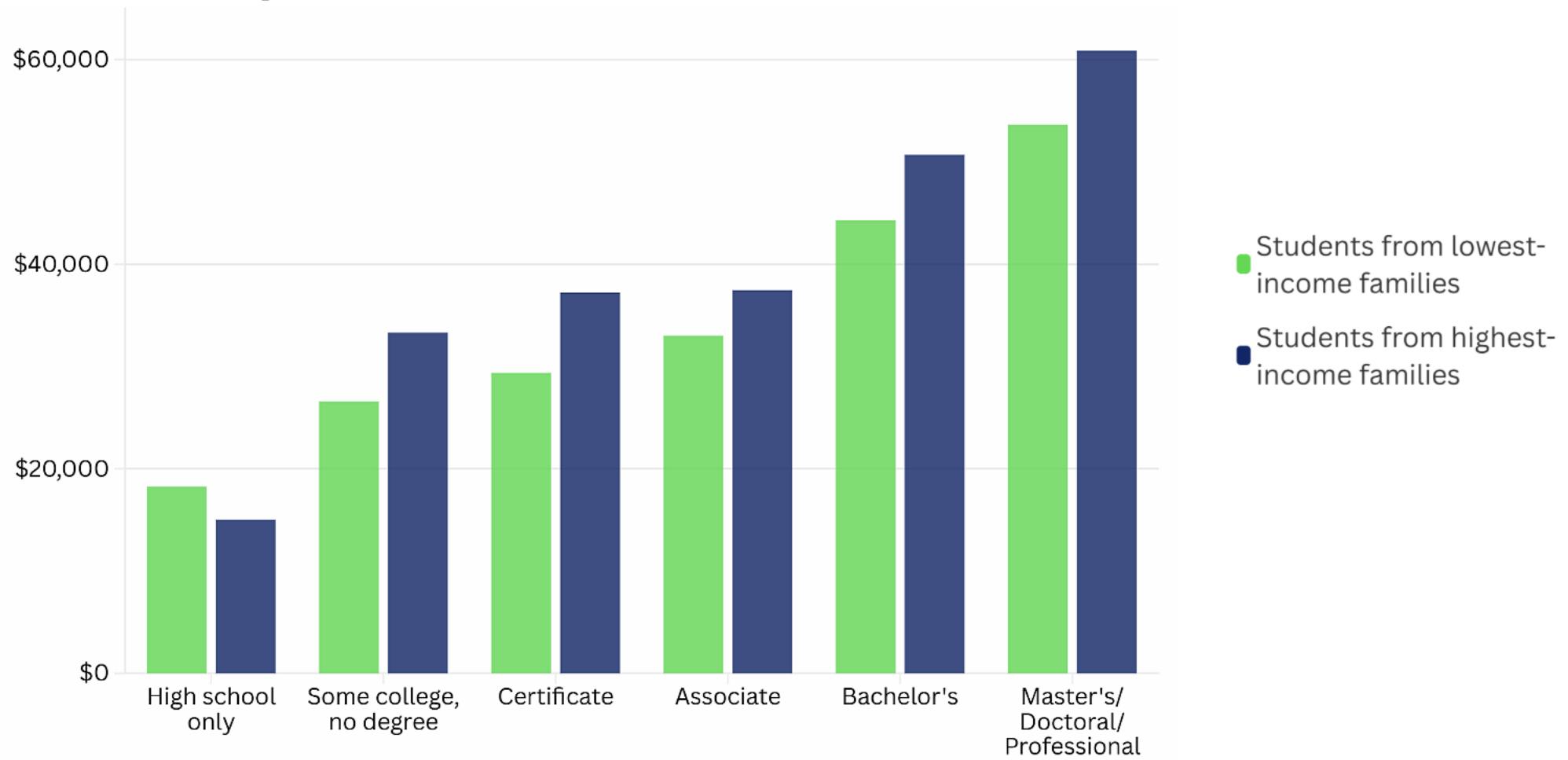
Pathways

Earning a BA+ was the surest route to upward mobility



Pathways

Socioeconomic disparities were not eliminated

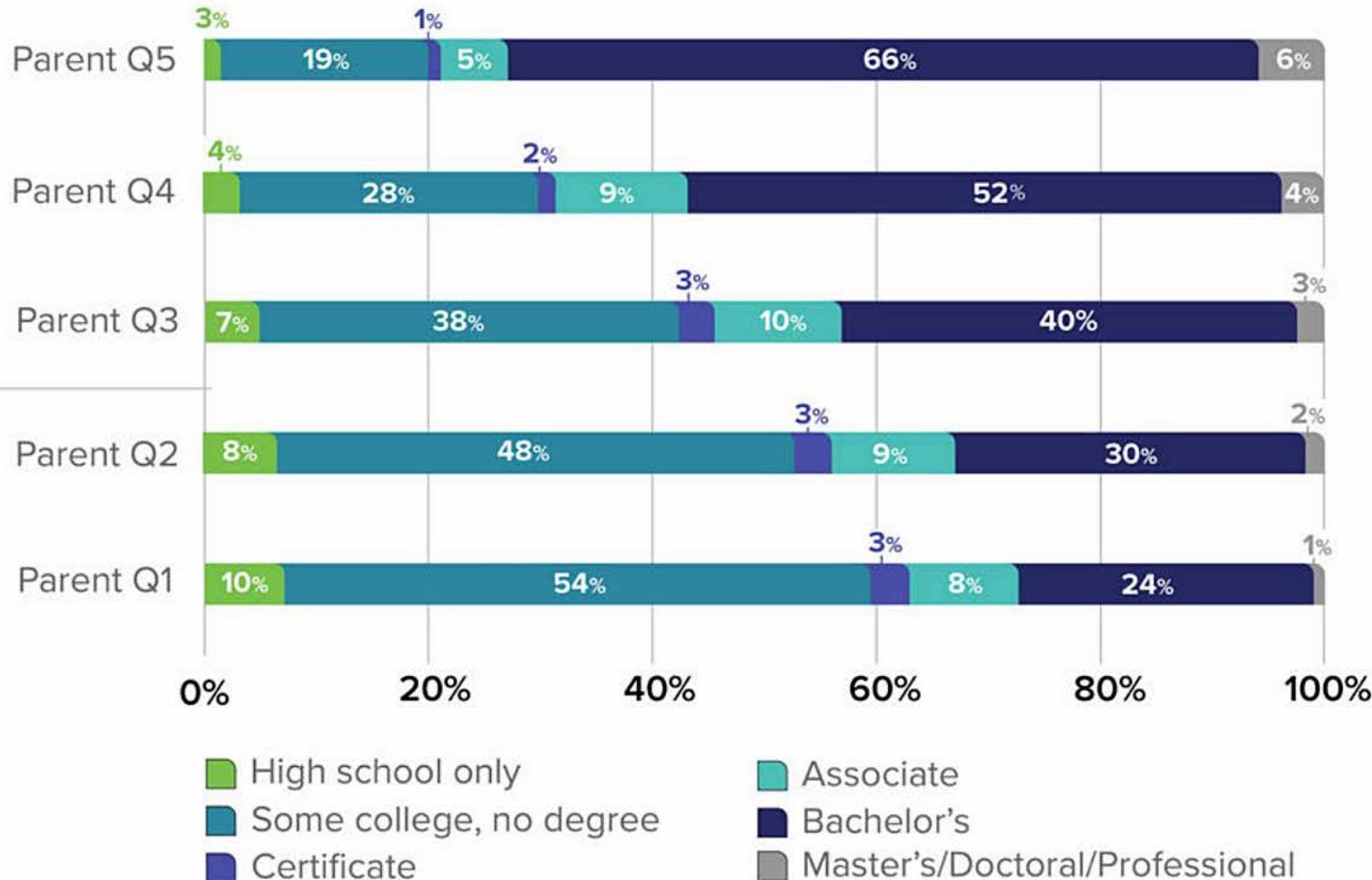


Pathways

The most common degree outcome was "some college, no degree"

Students from
middle and high
income families

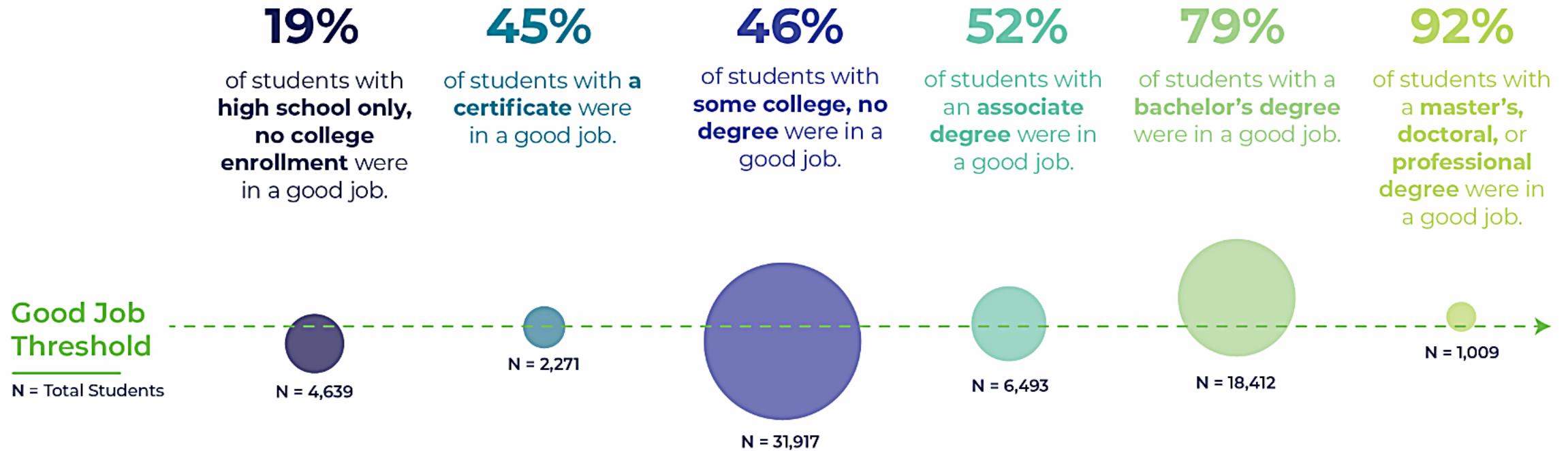
Students from low
income families



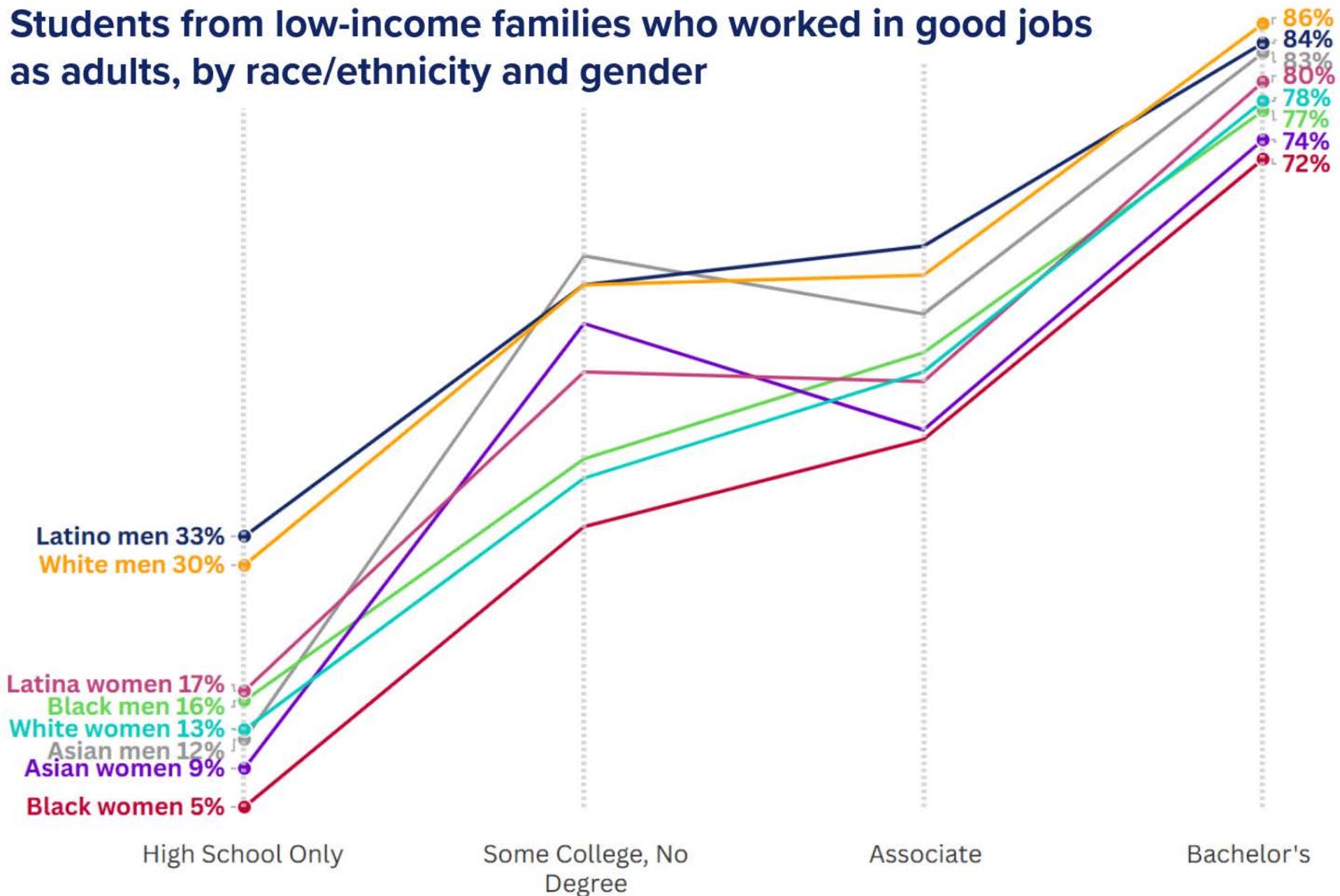
GOOD JOB

A job in which a person's earnings are in the top three quintiles (i.e., top 60%) relative to their peers in the same high school cohort

Among students from low-income families...



Students from low-income families who worked in good jobs as adults, by race/ethnicity and gender



SUB-BACCALAUREATE PATHWAYS

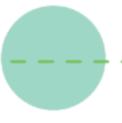
**High school only, some college,
certificate, associate**

Pathways

Several programs of study and industries provided access to good jobs

52%

of students with
an **associate
degree** were in
a good job.



N = 6,493

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PROMISING PROGRAMS OF STUDY (ASSOCIATE DEGREE)

- Agricultural/animal/plant/veterinary science and related fields
- Engineering/engineering-related technologies/technicians
- Health professions and related programs
- Mechanic and repair technologies/technicians

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PROMISING INDUSTRIES (ASSOCIATE DEGREE)

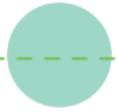
- Construction
- Management of companies and enterprises
- Manufacturing
- Professional, scientific, and technical services
- Public administration
- Wholesale trade

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Several programs of study and industries provided access to good jobs, most commonly for men

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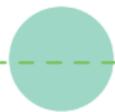
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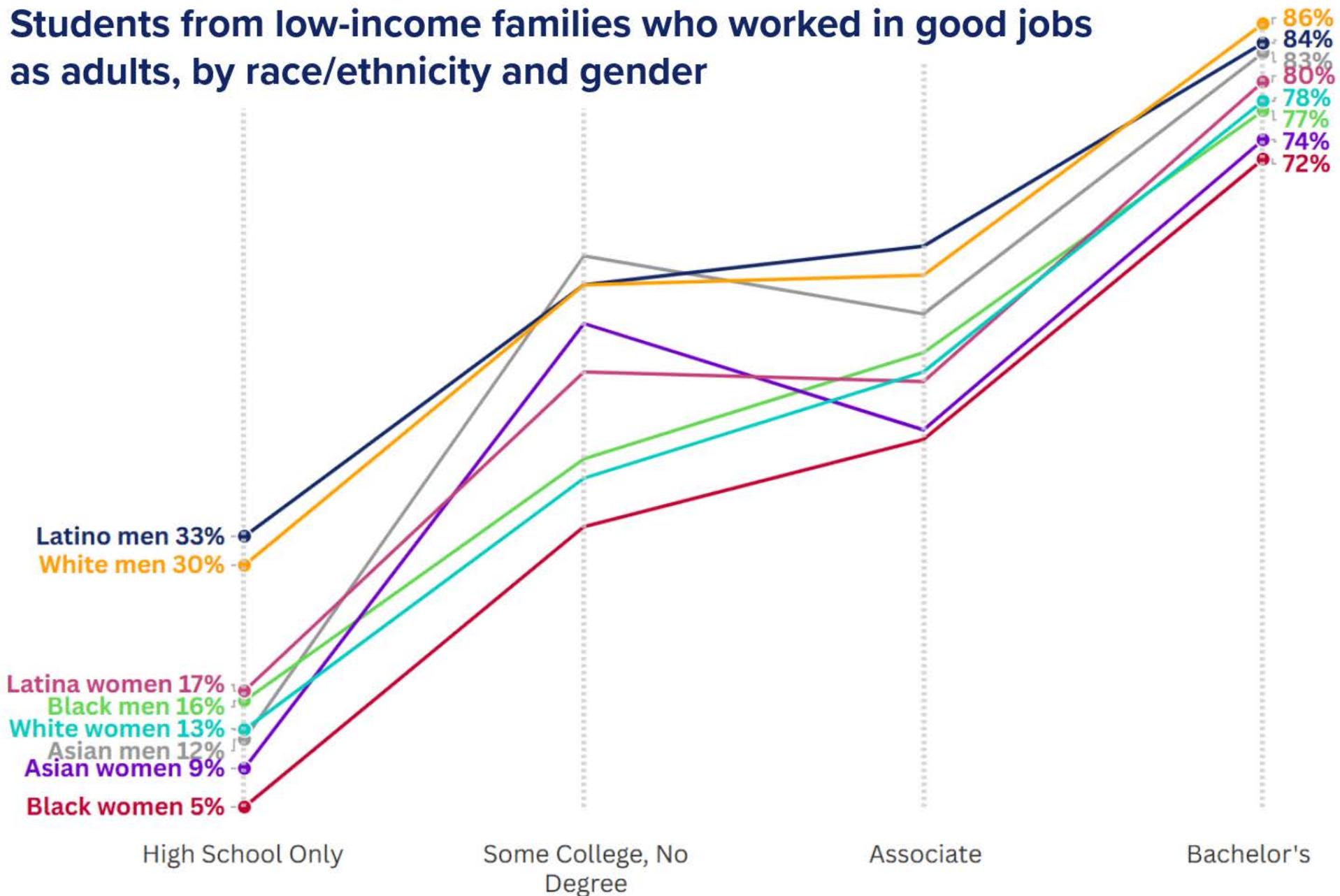
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Program of study	Overall	Men					Women				
		Asian	Black	Latino	White	All men	Asian	Black	Latina	White	All women
Agricultural/animal/plant/veterinary science	76%				92%	92%				61%	60%
Engineering/engineering-related technologies	84%				88%	85%					
Health professions and related programs	78%				90%	92%		59%	76%	79%	77%
Mechanic and repair technologies	75%				81%	76%					

Students from low-income families who worked in good jobs as adults, by race/ethnicity and gender



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IL HIGH SCHOOL TO CAREER STUDY

READ THE REPORTS



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IL HIGH SCHOOL TO CAREER STUDY

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IWERC

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UChicago Consortium on School Research

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RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE
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IWERC

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UChicago Consortium on School Research

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