

National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes

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# Postsecondary Achievement of Deaf People in Tennessee: 2017-2021

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**NDC**  
National Deaf Center  
on Postsecondary Outcomes

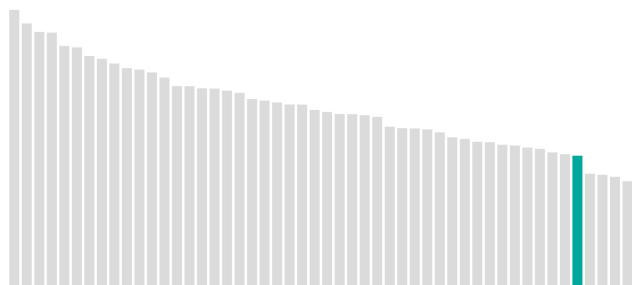


## INTRODUCTION

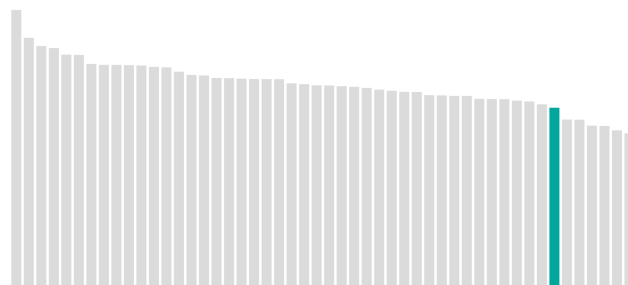
This report uses the American Community Survey (ACS), a national survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, to provide an overview of employment and educational outcomes for deaf people in your state. Over 202,000 deaf people participate in the survey every year, making it a premier source for identifying improvement opportunities in your state. Due to smaller sample sizes or unstable estimates, some data may not be available for your state. We recommend combining these data with community conversations and local data sources to gain a deeper understanding of what resources deaf people need in your area.

## STATE RANKING AMONG DEAF PEOPLE

**Bachelor's degree completion**  
**#46** out of 50



**Employment**  
**#44** out of 50



## KEY FINDINGS: TENNESSEE

- 44.9% of deaf people complete at least some college.
- 16.5% fewer deaf people complete bachelor's degrees than hearing people.
- Bachelor's completion among deaf people differs by race (white 14.5%) and BIPOC (13.5%).
- Fewer deaf people with additional disabilities have completed a bachelor's degree.
- 47.7% of deaf people were employed in 2017 - 2021.
- The employment rate for deaf people with additional disabilities is 24.8%.

In this report, we use the term *deaf* in an all-inclusive manner, to include people who may identify as deaf, deafblind, deafdisabled, hard of hearing, late-deafened, and hearing impaired. NDC recognizes that for many individuals, identity is fluid and can change over time or with setting.

# EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

On the national level, fewer deaf people completed high school or a college degree compared to their hearing peers. The data shown below (Figure 1) shows how your state compares to national averages for educational attainment. More detailed national statistics are available on the NDC Data Dashboard.

Figure 1  
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

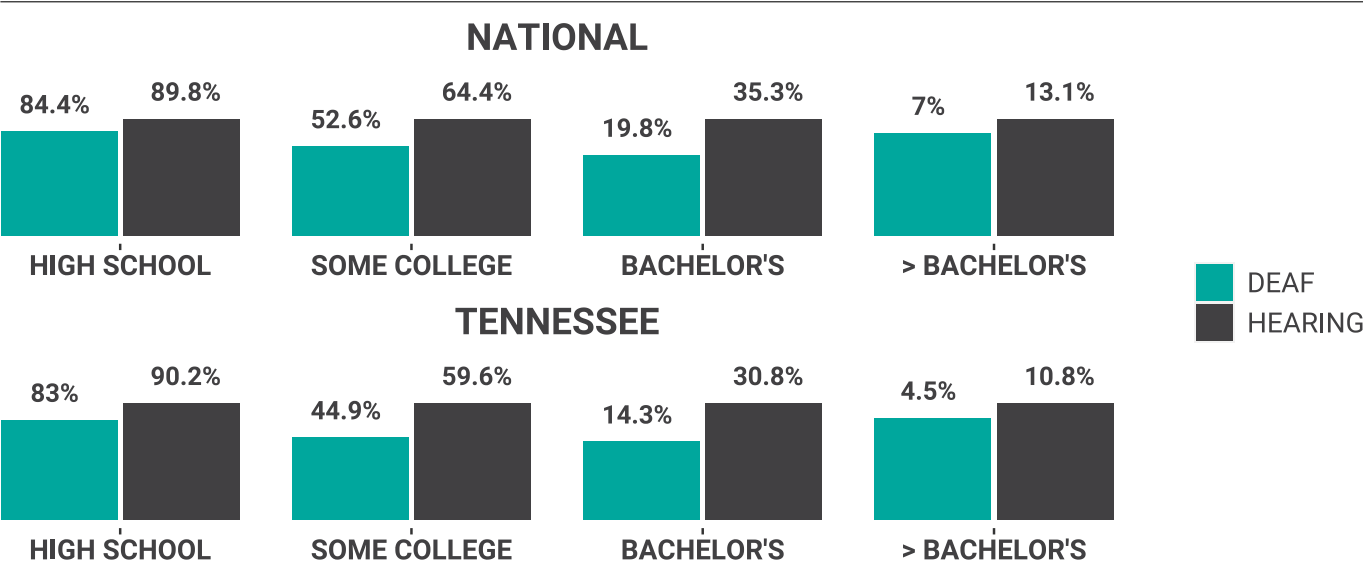


Figure 2  
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN TENNESSEE BY GENDER

<div><div></div> DEAF <div></div> HEARING</div>				
	HIGH SCHOOL	SOME COLLEGE	BACHELOR'S	> BACHELOR'S
DEAF MEN	83.1%	43.6%	13.6%	4.2%
HEARING MEN	88.7%	55.0%	28.2%	9.5%
DEAF WOMEN	82.8%	47.0%	15.5%	5.1%
HEARING WOMEN	91.7%	63.9%	33.2%	12.1%

*Figure 3*  
**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN TENNESSEE BY RACE AND ETHNICITY**

	<div> <div></div> DEAF           <div></div> HEARING         </div>			
	HIGH SCHOOL	SOME COLLEGE	BACHELOR'S	> BACHELOR'S
ASIAN DEAF	--	--	--	--
ASIAN HEARING	89.4%	75.5%	58.2%	29.9%
BLACK DEAF	87.4%	45.8%	12.2%	4.6%
BLACK HEARING	89.6%	55.1%	22.3%	8.0%
LATINX DEAF	--	--	--	--
LATINX HEARING	65.3%	36.5%	17.7%	6.3%
MULTIRACIAL DEAF	--	--	--	--
MULTIRACIAL HEARING	92.2%	67.6%	34.0%	12.6%
NATIVE AMERICAN DEAF	--	--	--	--
NATIVE AMERICAN HEARING	89.3%	62.1%	16.6%	5.4%
WHITE DEAF	83.0%	44.8%	14.5%	4.4%
WHITE HEARING	92.0%	61.5%	32.8%	11.2%

Many deaf people have additional disabilities of varying types which contribute to their unique strengths and needs. National data shows that around 46.2% of deaf people have any type of additional disability. Across the nation, deaf people with additional disabilities experience more barriers in educational systems, which result in lower educational attainment rates. Educational attainment varies by type of disability.

Figure 4  
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN TENNESSEE BY DISABILITY

	HIGH SCHOOL	SOME COLLEGE	BACHELOR'S	> BACHELOR'S
DEAFBLIND	73.8%	35.4%	8.8%	2.3%
DEAFDISABLED	79.7%	39.3%	9.7%	3.3%
DEAF WITHOUT ADDITIONAL DISABILITY	89.3%	52.7%	19.7%	6.3%

## SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME

Deaf individuals receive supplemental security income (SSI) benefits at different rates across the nation. Among the deaf population ages 16-64, 11.3% are recipients of SSI benefits, while in Tennessee, 11.9% of deaf people receive SSI benefits.

# EMPLOYMENT RATES

On the national level, fewer deaf people have jobs compared to their hearing peers. Almost half of deaf people are not in the labor force. The data shown below shows how your state compares to national employment rates. Employment also varies across gender, race, ethnicity, and disability. More detailed statistics are on the NDC Data Dashboard.

Figure 5  
EMPLOYMENT RATES

## NATIONAL



## TENNESSEE

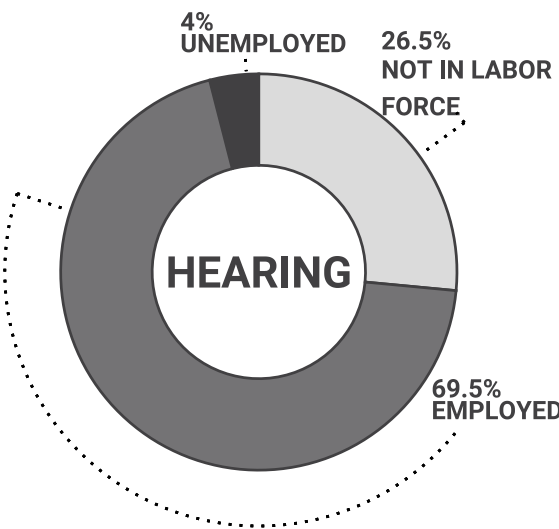
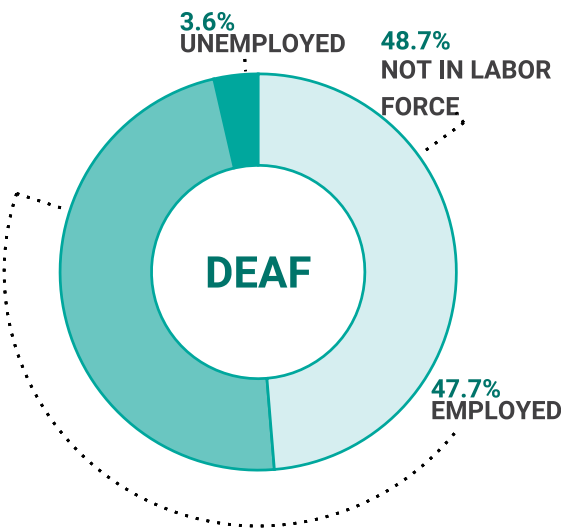
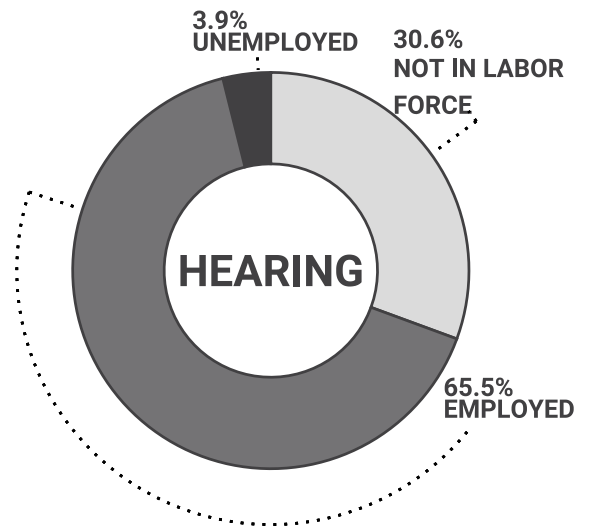
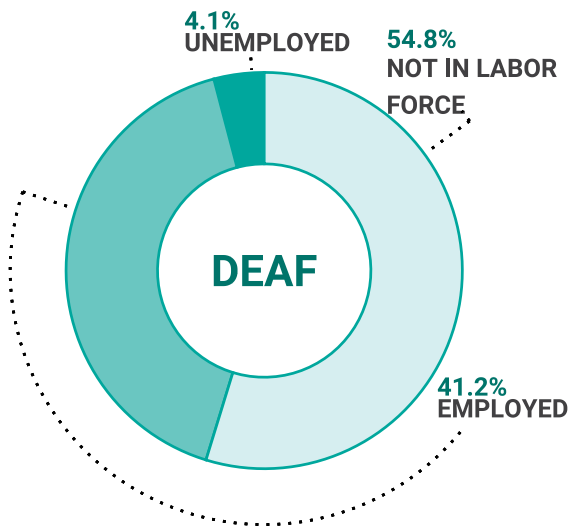


Figure 6  
EMPLOYMENT RATES IN TENNESSEE BY GENDER

## WOMEN



## MEN

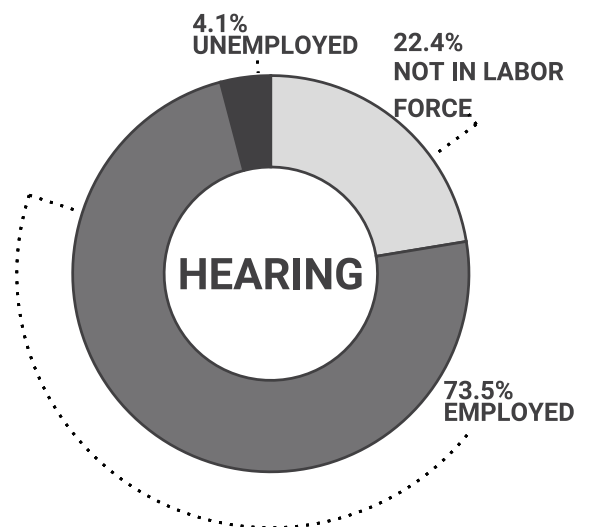
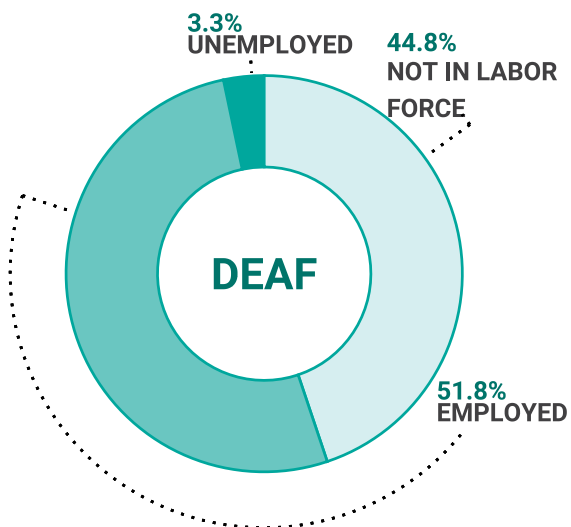
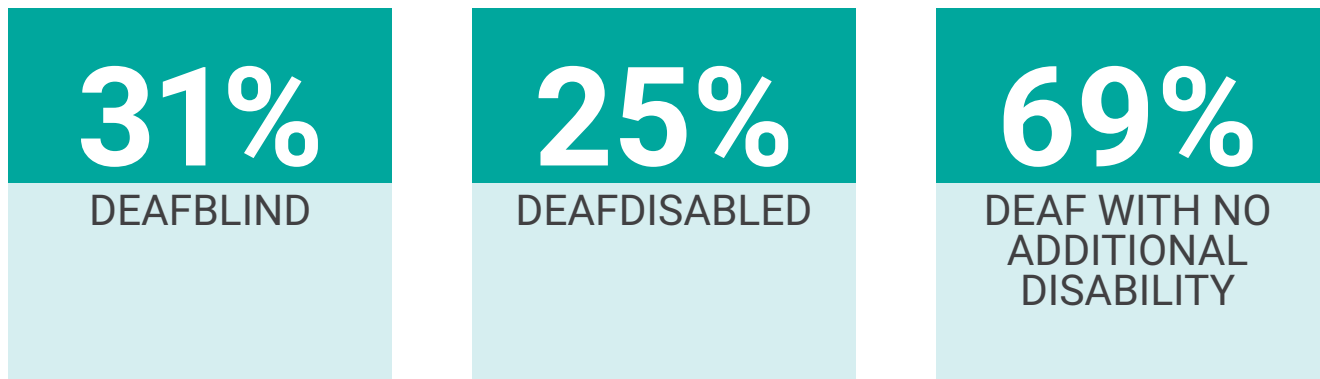


Figure 7  
EMPLOYMENT RATES IN TENNESSEE BY RACE AND ETHNICITY



Figure 8  
EMPLOYMENT RATES IN TENNESSEE BY DISABILITY





# EARNINGS

National data show lower median earnings among deaf individuals who were employed full time. Earnings also vary across gender, race, ethnicity, and disability status.

Figure 9  
MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR INDIVIDUALS

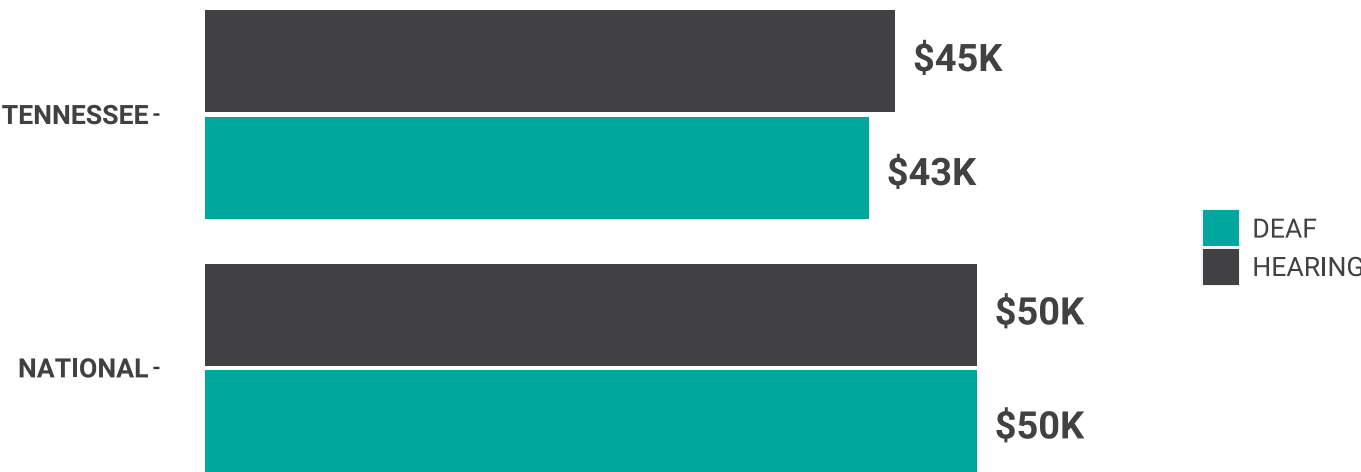


Figure 10  
MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR INDIVIDUALS IN TENNESSEE BY GENDER

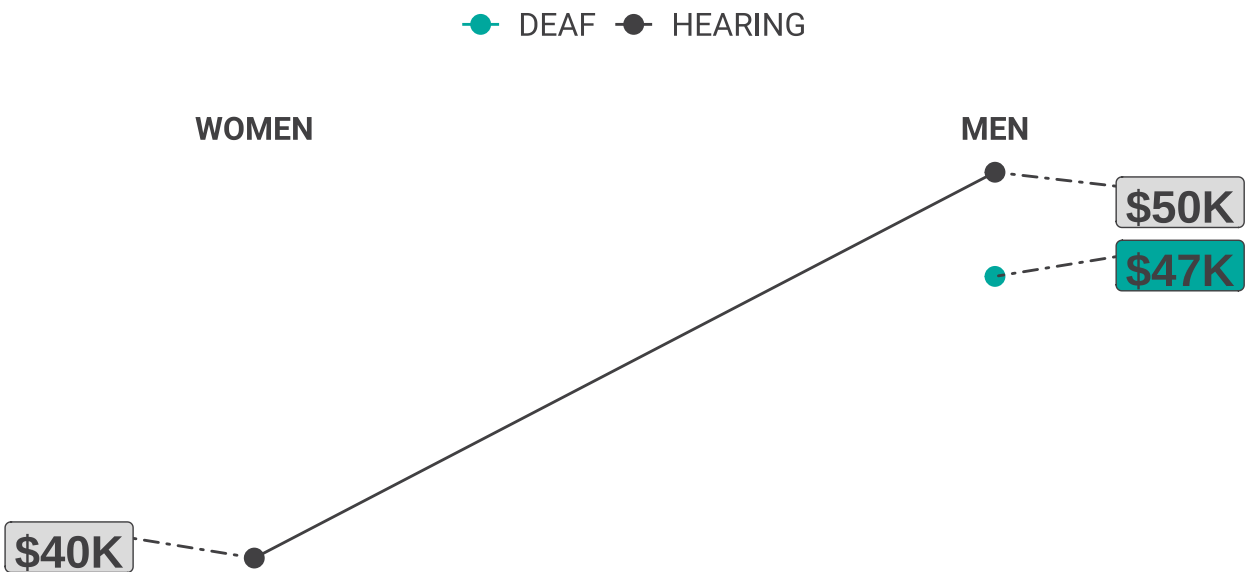


Figure 11  
**MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR INDIVIDUALS IN TENNESSEE BY RACE AND ETHNICITY**

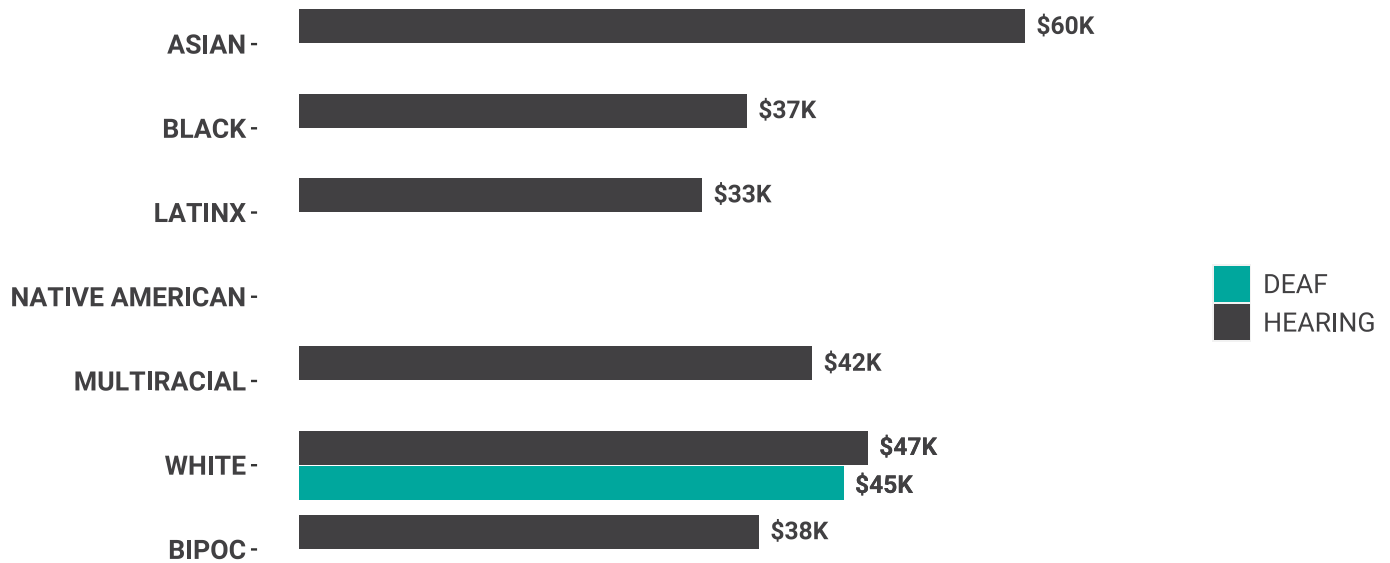
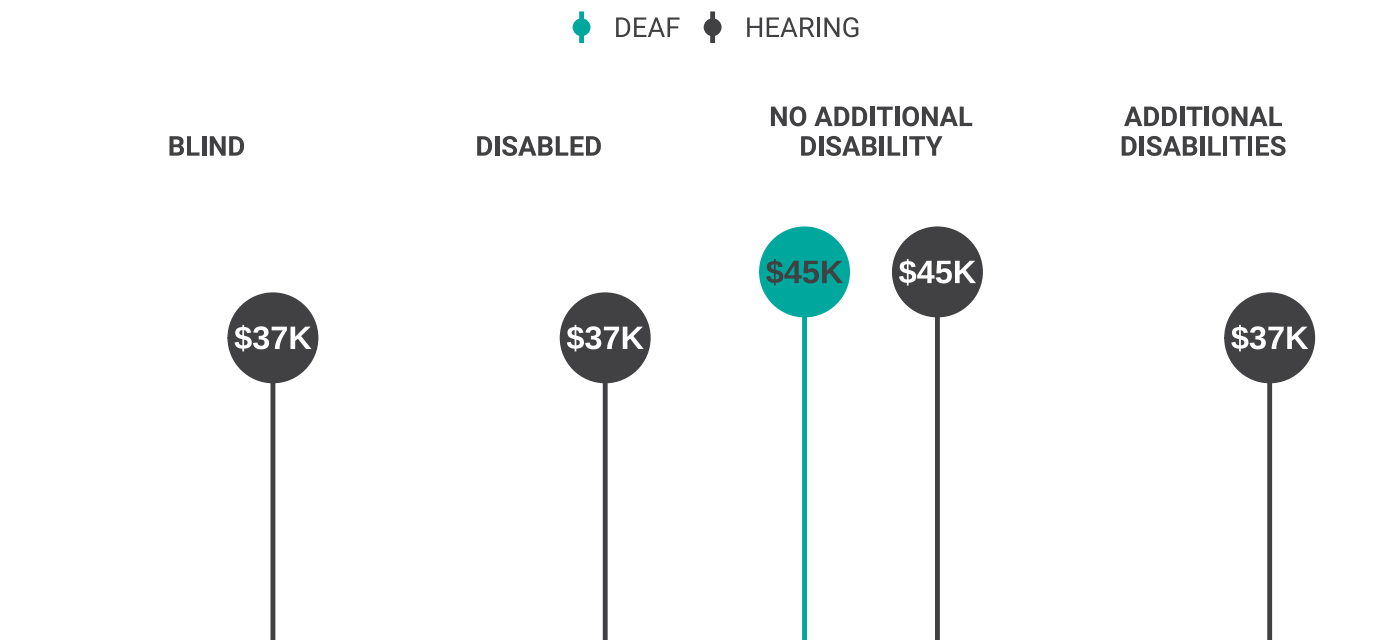


Figure 12  
**MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR INDIVIDUALS IN TENNESSEE BY DISABILITY**



This document was developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, OSEP #H326210002. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

## METHOD

### Where does this data come from?

As mentioned earlier, the data for this report comes from ACS, an annual, nationwide survey conducted by the United States Census Bureau. Unlike the Census, which is filled out by everyone, the ACS is filled out by just a sample of people in each community, and their answers are used to generate estimates. More information may be found at [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/about.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/about.html).

### What does the word *deaf* mean in this report?

The ACS gathers information about functional limitations rather than disability or identity labels. In this report, anyone who answers yes to question 18a “**Is this person deaf or does he/she have serious difficulty hearing?**” is considered deaf. Unfortunately, this dataset has no information about sign language use, or type of school attended (e.g., mainstream vs. deaf school).

### Why is some data not available in this report?

When examining subgroups within the deaf community, such as deafblind people, there are instances where the sample size is too small or the standard error is too large to reliably present these estimates. In such cases, the data points are excluded from the report. Please feel free to contact us for more information or if you have any specific requests.

For more Frequently Asked Question, visit our website: [www.nationaldeafcenter.org/datafaqs](http://www.nationaldeafcenter.org/datafaqs)

### Technical Information

- Dataset: Public Microdata Sample (PUMS), 5-year Estimates (2017-2021)
- Age Range: 16-64 for employment data, 25-64 for educational data
- Weighting: Person Weight (PWGT)
- Sample Size: 5,322 (Tennessee), 202,128 (United States)
- Minimum sample size to report: 351
- Maximum relative standard error to report: 30%

### THIS REPORT MAY BE CITED AS:

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