National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes

Postsecondary Achievement of Deaf People in California: 2017 - 2021

Carrie Lou Bloom

Jeffrey Levi Palmer

Jonah Winninghoff

NDC
National Deaf Center
on Postsecondary Outcomes

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

IDEAs that Work
Office of Special Education Programs

TA&D
NETWORK

Postsecondary experiences of deaf people vary widely across the nation. National data about educational attainment and employment are available at **www.nationaldeafcenter.org**. This report provides current estimates of postsecondary achievement in California. We used 5-year estimates of data from the American Community Survey (ACS), a national survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, to generate the findings in this report. More information about this dataset and the analyses are shared in the *Method* section at the end of this report.

In California,

1.5%

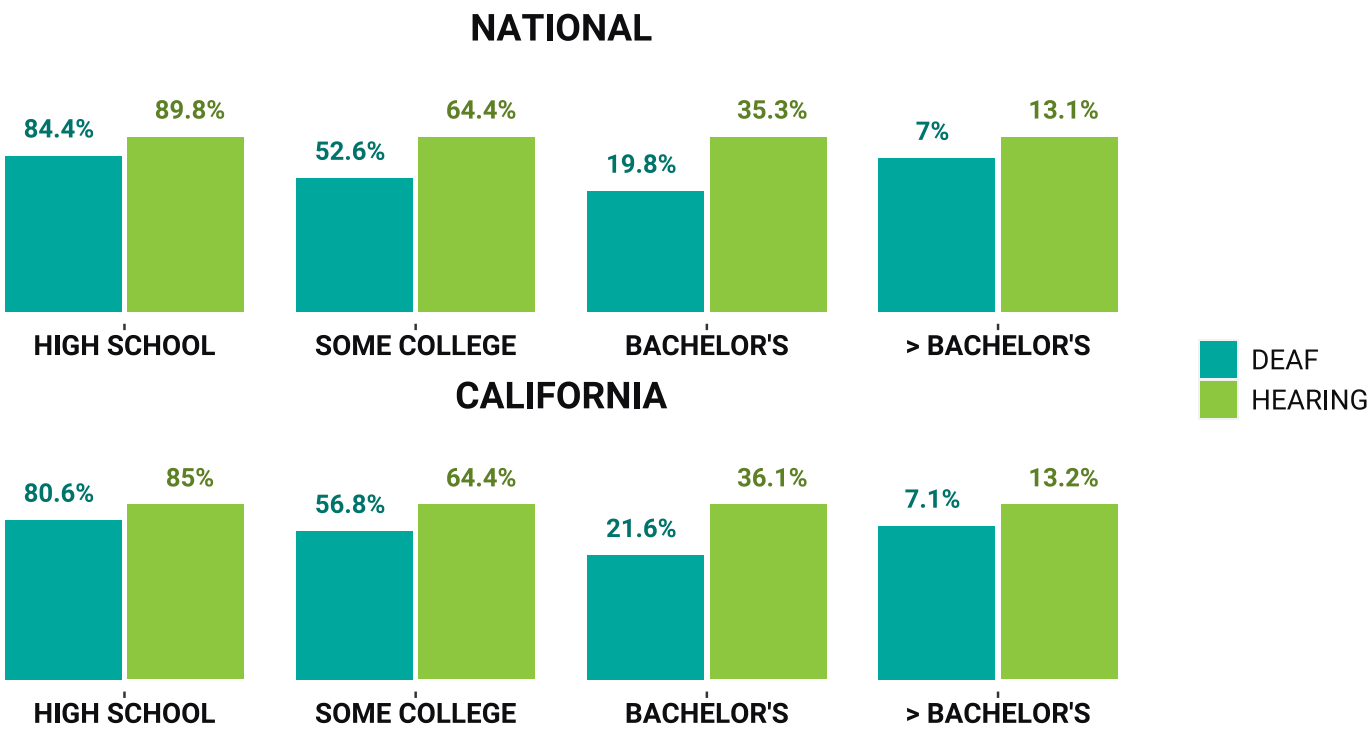
of 16-64 year olds are deaf

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

In the United States, deaf people attained lower levels of education than their hearing peers in 2021, according to national educational attainment data. Educational attainment also varied across gender, race, and ethnicity.

Figure 1

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



In this report, we use the term *deaf in an all-encompassing manner to include individuals who identify as Deaf, hard of hearing, hearing impaired, late deafened, and deafdisabled.*

Figure 2

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN CALIFORNIA BY GENDER

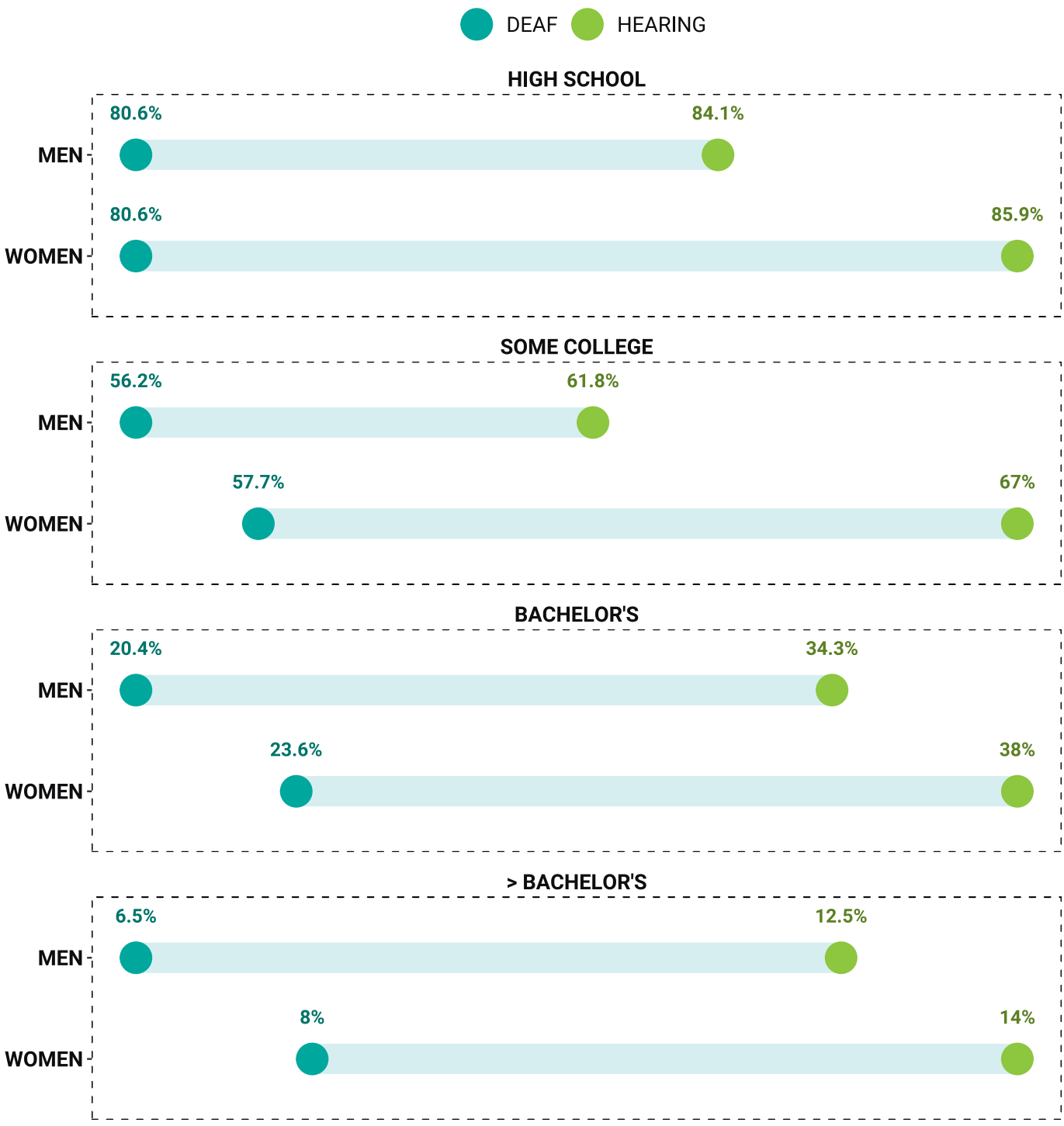


Figure 3

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN CALIFORNIA BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

DEAF HEARING

	HIGH SCHOOL	SOME COLLEGE	BACHELOR'S	> BACHELOR'S
DEAF ASIAN	80.7%	61.9%	34.3%	9.7%
HEARING ASIAN	92.0%	79.4%	58.5%	23.3%
DEAF BLACK	82.0%	55.8%	15.7%	4.6%
HEARING BLACK	91.4%	67.5%	29.0%	10.4%
DEAF LATINX	64.7%	40.5%	11.6%	3.3%
HEARING LATINX	69.6%	42.1%	15.5%	4.4%
DEAF MULTIRACIAL	90.4%	71.7%	28.3%	8.3%
HEARING MULTIRACIAL	94.4%	78.7%	45.5%	16.5%
DEAF NATIVE AMERICAN	– –	– –	– –	– –
HEARING NATIVE AMERICAN	85.8%	56.1%	18.4%	5.9%
DEAF WHITE	91.3%	66.6%	26.9%	9.7%
HEARING WHITE	96.0%	79.0%	47.8%	18.1%
DEAF BIPOC	80.6%	56.8%	21.6%	7.1%
HEARING BIPOC	85.0%	64.4%	36.1%	13.2%

A large percentage of deaf individuals have additional disabilities, and each combination of which results in unique strengths and challenges. Educational attainment rates vary by type of disability. Across the nation, deaf individuals with any type of additional disability reported lower educational attainment levels.

Figure 4

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN CALIFORNIA BY DISABILITY

	HIGH SCHOOL	SOME COLLEGE	BACHELOR'S	> BACHELOR'S
DEAFBLIND	70.7%	45.2%	13.7%	4.2%
DEAFDISABLED	76.6%	48.7%	13.6%	4%
DEAF WITHOUT ADDITIONAL DISABILITY	86.2%	64.9%	28.4%	9.7%

EMPLOYMENT RATES

National employment statistics show lower employment rates among deaf individuals. Almost half of deaf people are not in the labor force. Employment rates also vary by gender, race, and ethnicity.

Figure 5

EMPLOYMENT RATES

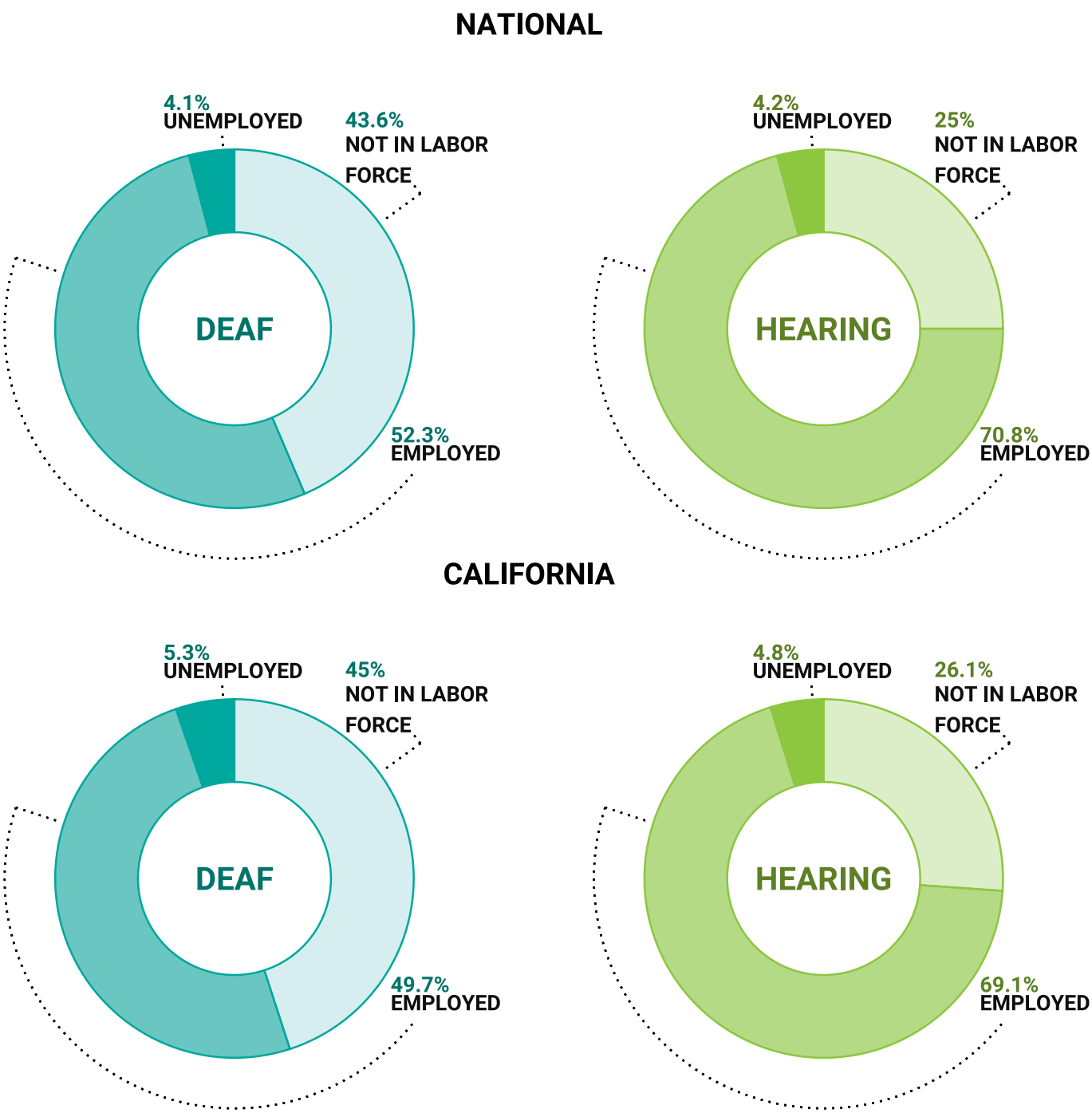


Figure 6

EMPLOYMENT RATES IN CALIFORNIA BY GENDER

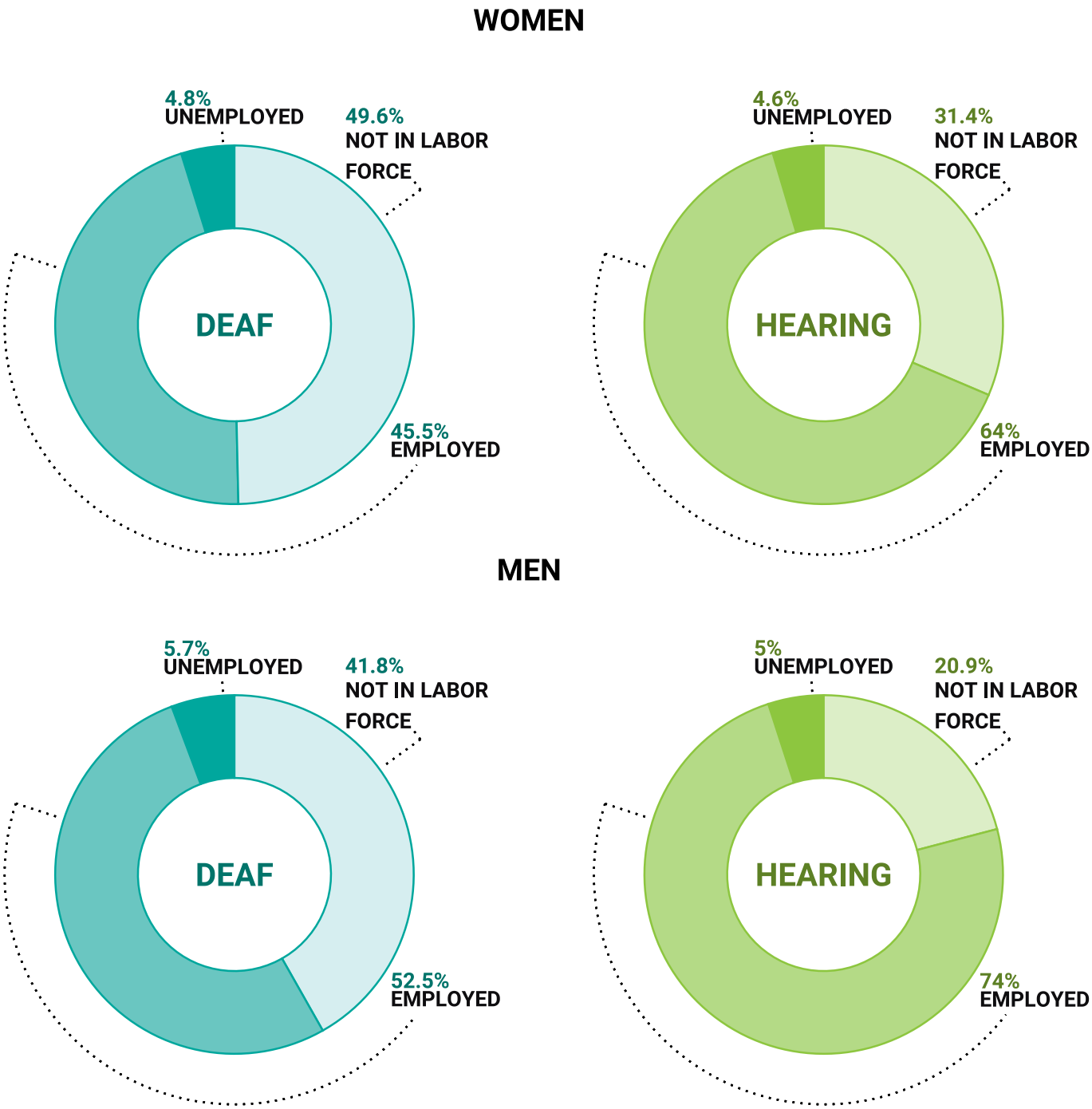


Figure 7

EMPLOYMENT RATES IN CALIFORNIA BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

Figure 8

EMPLOYMENT RATES IN CALIFORNIA BY DISABILITY

33%
DEAFBLIND

27%
DEAFDISABLED

67%
DEAF WITH NO ADDITIONAL DISABILITY

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME

Deaf individuals receive supplemental security income (SSI) benefits at different rates across the nation. 11.3% of deaf people ages 16–64 in the U.S. receive SSI benefits. In California, 11.8% of deaf people receive SSI benefits.

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 CALIFORNIA BY GENDER

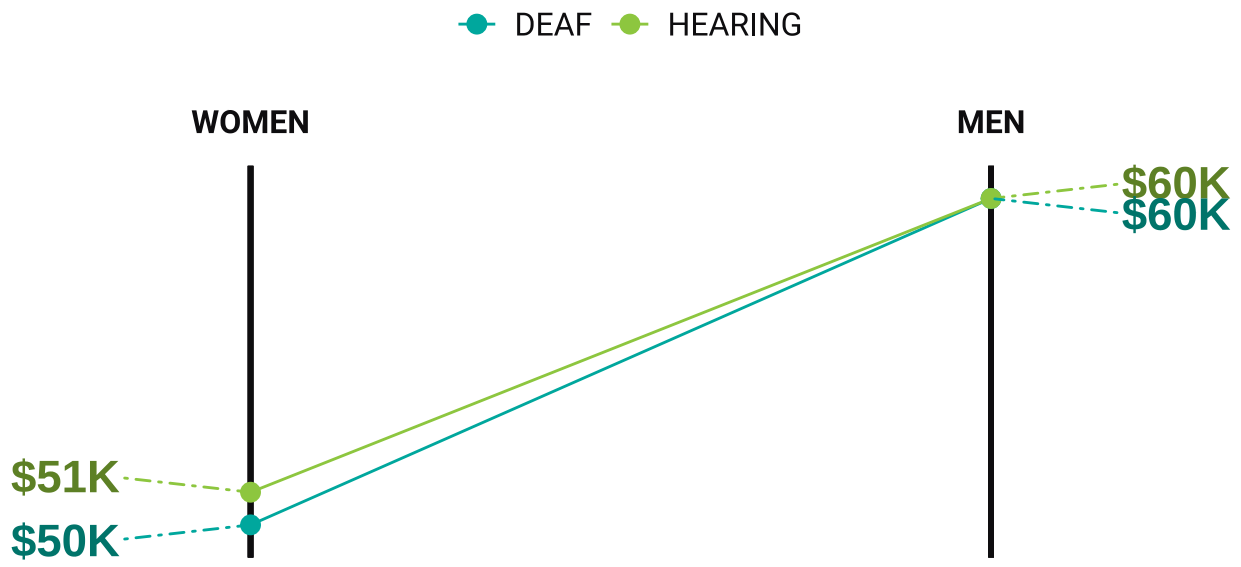


Figure 11

MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR INDIVIDUALS IN CALIFORNIA BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

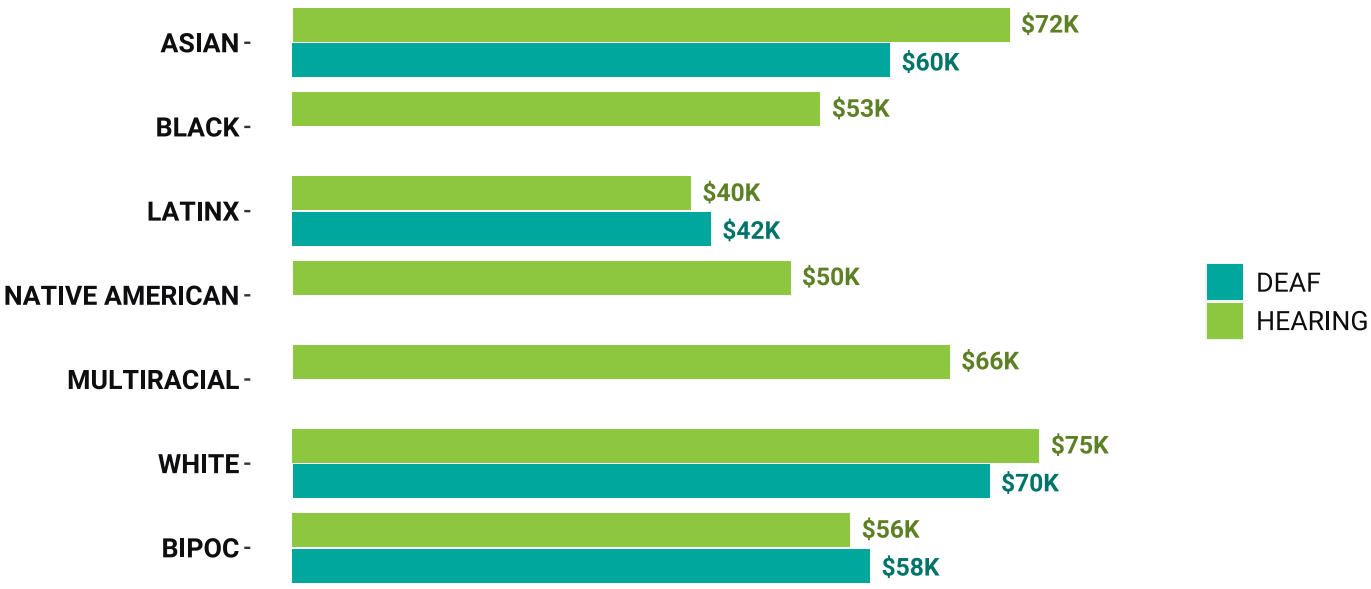
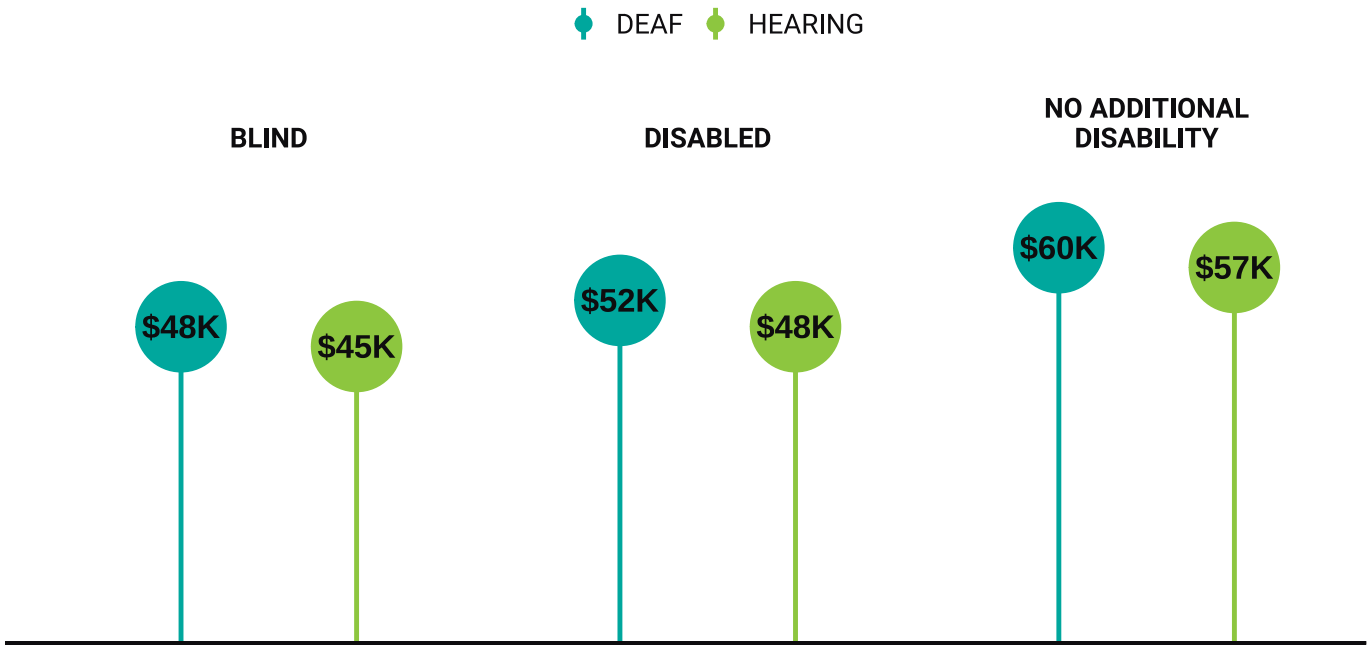


Figure 12

MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR INDIVIDUALS IN CALIFORNIA BY DISABILITY



METHOD

The data for this project are sourced from the Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) of 5-year estimates (2017-2021) from the American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. The PUMS offers a confidential subset of the ACS for public analysis. The ACS, a legally mandated survey, is primarily used to determine the allocation of federal funds across regions. As such, addresses of homes and group quarters, rather than individuals, are sampled, meaning that these data are meant to generalize to housing units, not individuals. Though the PUMS provides data on both individuals and housing units, only the individual-level data were utilized for this project. More information on the ACS may be found at **www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/about.html**.

The sample in these analyses comprised individuals aged 16–64. The U.S. Census gathers data on functional limitations rather than disability or identity labels so that we utilized the "hearing difficulties" variable to identify deaf individuals. The survey respondents who stated that they had "hearing difficulties" were used to represent the deaf population in these analyses. In the complete 5-year sample, there were 202,128 deaf individuals, while in California, the deaf sample size was 18,226. The comparison group was those who did not report any "hearing difficulties," labeled as hearing people. For the most part, the datasets for the group of hearing people align closely to the broader population. Thus, these analyses treat the hearing people as a benchmark—allowing for an understanding of what aspects of employment experiences might be unique, or not, to the deaf population.

The descriptive statistics in this report have been adjusted using the person-level survey weights provided by the U.S. Census. These weights aim to address the complexities of obtaining a sample representative of the U.S. population. When comparing numbers within this report, a survey-corrected t-test is employed to ascertain if differences in the numbers arose from statistical noise. These statistical tests are purely descriptive in nature and do not suggest that any of the associations described are causal in nature. Therefore, no corrections are made for any other variables when presenting these descriptive statistics.

THIS REPORT MAY BE CITED AS:

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