

National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes

---

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

---

Carrie Lou Bloom

Jeffrey Levi Palmer

Jonah Winninghoff



**NDC**  
National Deaf Center  
on Postsecondary Outcomes

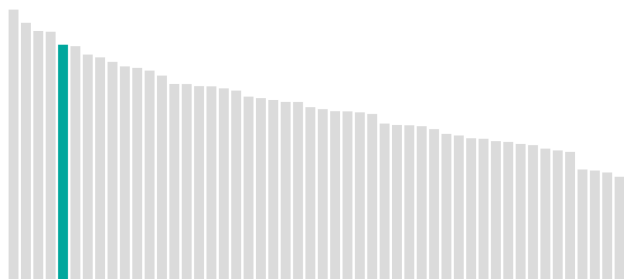


## INTRODUCTION

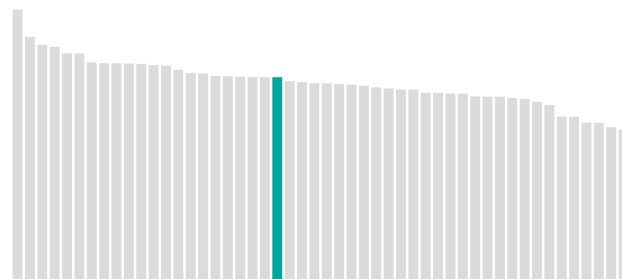
This report uses the American Community Survey (ACS), a national survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, to provide an overview of employment and educational outcomes for deaf people in your state. Over 202,000 deaf people participate in the survey every year, making it a premier source for identifying 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**  
**#5** out of 50



**Employment**  
**#17** out of 50



## KEY FINDINGS: MASSACHUSETTS

- 54.7% of deaf people complete at least some college.
- 22% fewer deaf people complete bachelor's degrees than hearing people.
- Bachelor's completion among deaf people differs by race (white 28.8%; BIPOC 18.3%).
- Fewer deaf people with additional disabilities have completed a bachelor's degree.
- 55.3% of deaf people were employed in 2017 - 2021.
- The employment rate for deaf people with additional disabilities is 29.2%.

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 people, 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

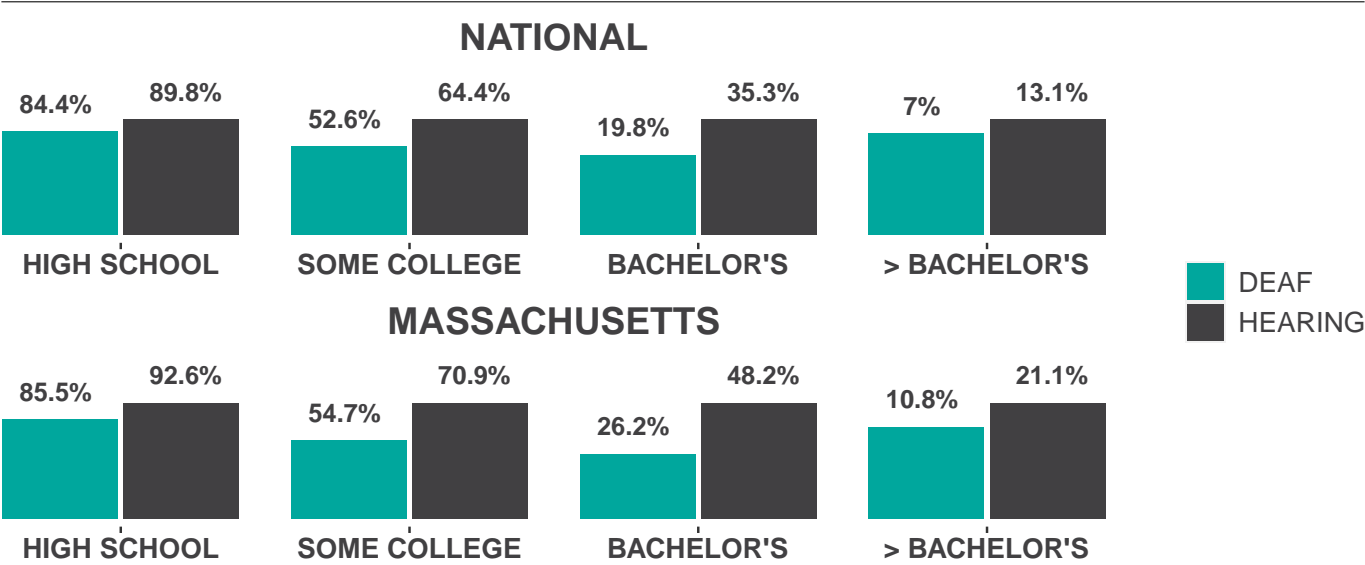


Figure 2  
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN MASSACHUSETTS BY GENDER

	HIGH SCHOOL	SOME COLLEGE	BACHELOR'S	> BACHELOR'S
DEAF MEN	84.8%	51.9%	23.0%	9.0%
HEARING MEN	91.8%	66.9%	45.7%	19.3%
DEAF WOMEN	86.5%	58.5%	30.5%	13.3%
HEARING WOMEN	93.3%	74.8%	50.7%	22.9%

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

	<div> <div></div> DEAF           <div></div> HEARING         </div>			
	HIGH SCHOOL	SOME COLLEGE	BACHELOR'S	> BACHELOR'S
ASIAN DEAF	--	--	--	--
ASIAN HEARING	90.0%	78.0%	67.6%	40.9%
BLACK DEAF	--	--	--	--
BLACK HEARING	90.5%	64.0%	31.7%	11.9%
LATINX DEAF	--	--	--	--
LATINX HEARING	75.8%	46.3%	22.2%	9.1%
MULTIRACIAL DEAF	--	--	--	--
MULTIRACIAL HEARING	88.4%	64.3%	41.4%	18.0%
NATIVE AMERICAN DEAF	--	--	--	--
NATIVE AMERICAN HEARING	--	--	--	--
WHITE DEAF	90.8%	57.8%	28.8%	11.8%
WHITE HEARING	96.1%	75.3%	52.5%	22.1%
DEAF WHITE	90.8%	57.8%	28.8%	11.8%
HEARING WHITE	96.1%	75.3%	52.5%	22.1%
DEAF BIPOC	69.8%	45.2%	18.3%	8.0%
HEARING BIPOC	84.3%	60.7%	38.3%	18.9%

Many deaf people have additional disabilities of varying types which contribute to their unique strengths and needs. National data shows that 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 MASSACHUSETTS BY DISABILITY

	HIGH SCHOOL	SOME COLLEGE	BACHELOR'S	> BACHELOR'S
DEAFBLIND	71.7%	40.1%	19.2%	6.3%
DEAFDISABLED	77.6%	42%	14.4%	5.2%
DEAF WITHOUT ADDITIONAL DISABILITY	92.5%	63.9%	33.1%	14.4%

## SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME

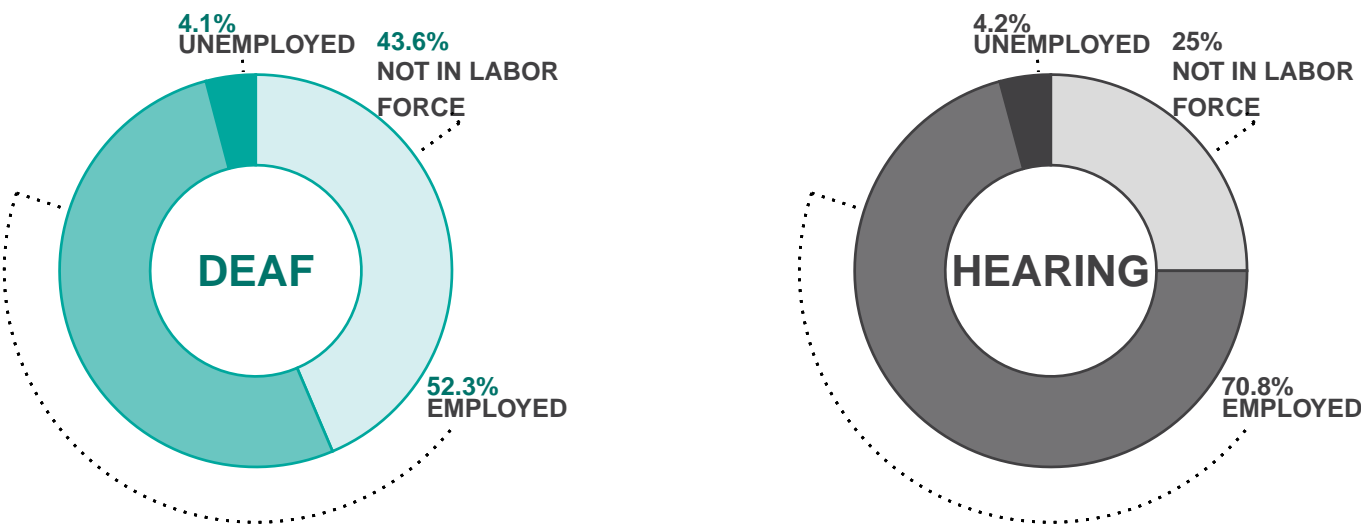
Deaf people receive supplemental security income (SSI) benefits at different rates across the nation. Among the deaf population ages 16-64, 11.3% are recipients of SSI benefits, while in Massachusetts, 12.4% of deaf people receive SSI benefits.

# 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



## MASSACHUSETTS

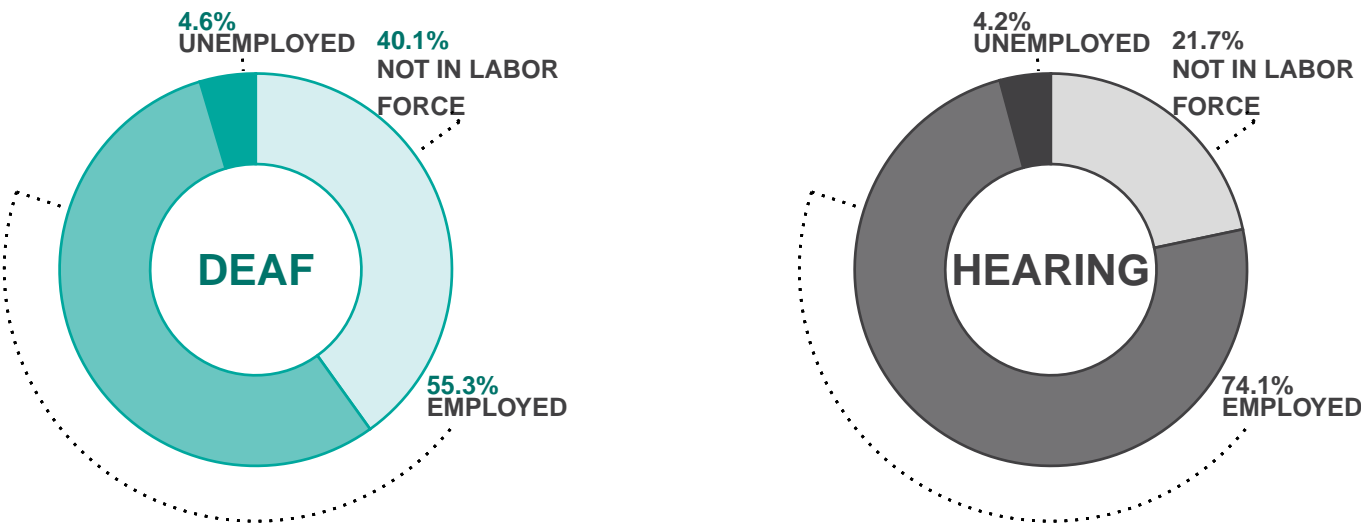
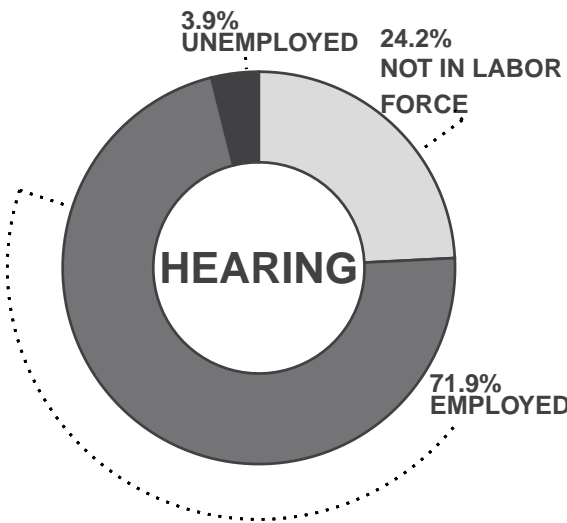
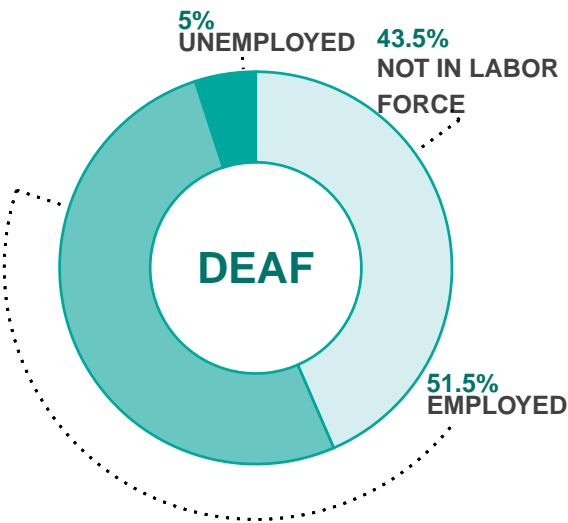


Figure 6  
EMPLOYMENT RATES IN MASSACHUSETTS BY GENDER

WOMEN



MEN

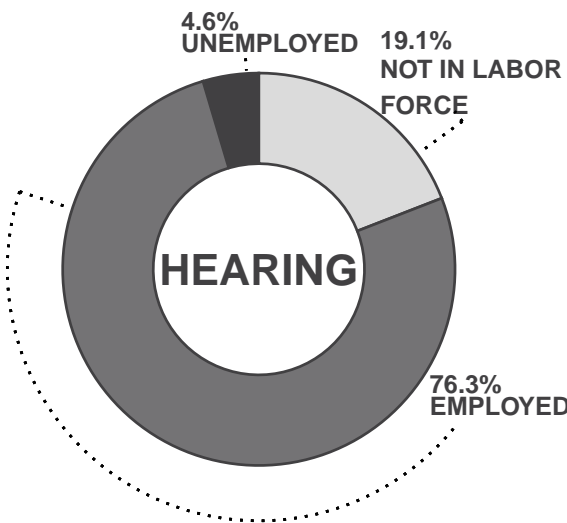
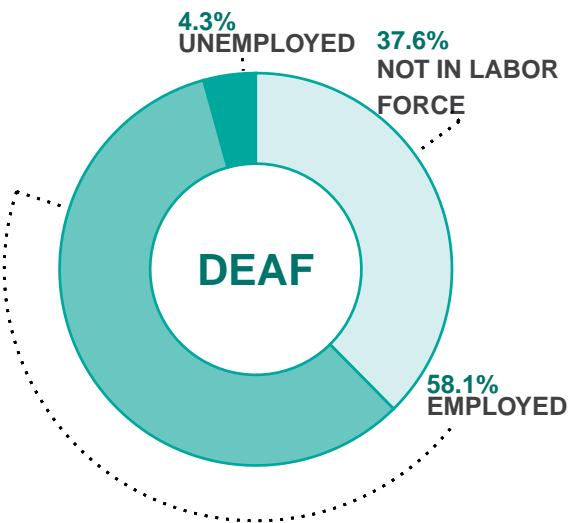
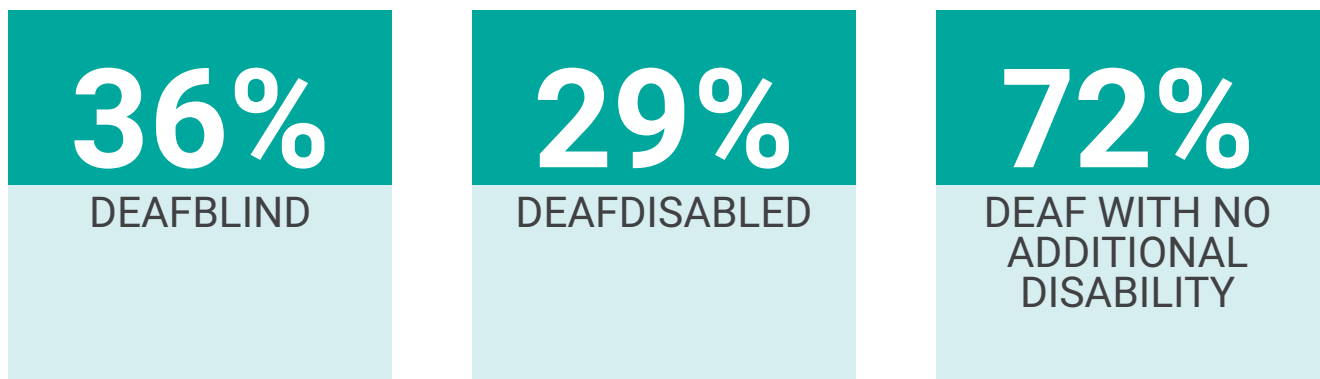


Figure 7  
**EMPLOYMENT RATES IN MASSACHUSETTS BY RACE AND ETHNICITY**



Figure 8  
**EMPLOYMENT RATES IN MASSACHUSETTS BY DISABILITY**





# EARNINGS

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

Figure 9  
MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR PEOPLE



Figure 10  
MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR PEOPLE IN MASSACHUSETTS BY GENDER

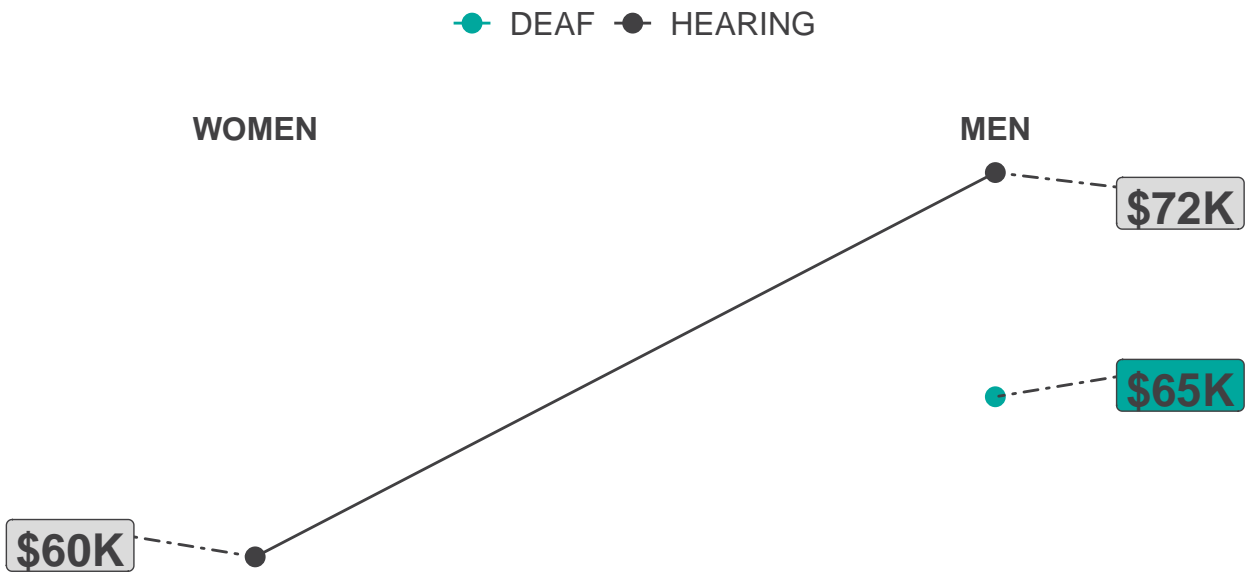


Figure 11

**MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR PEOPLE IN MASSACHUSETTS BY RACE AND ETHNICITY**

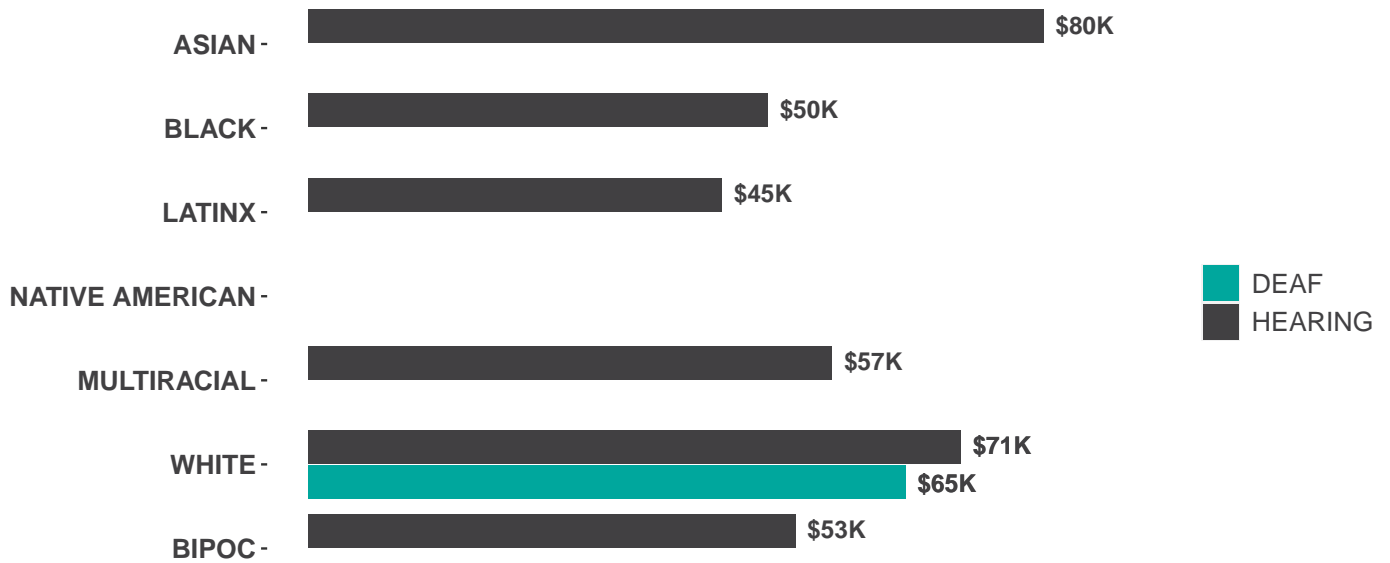
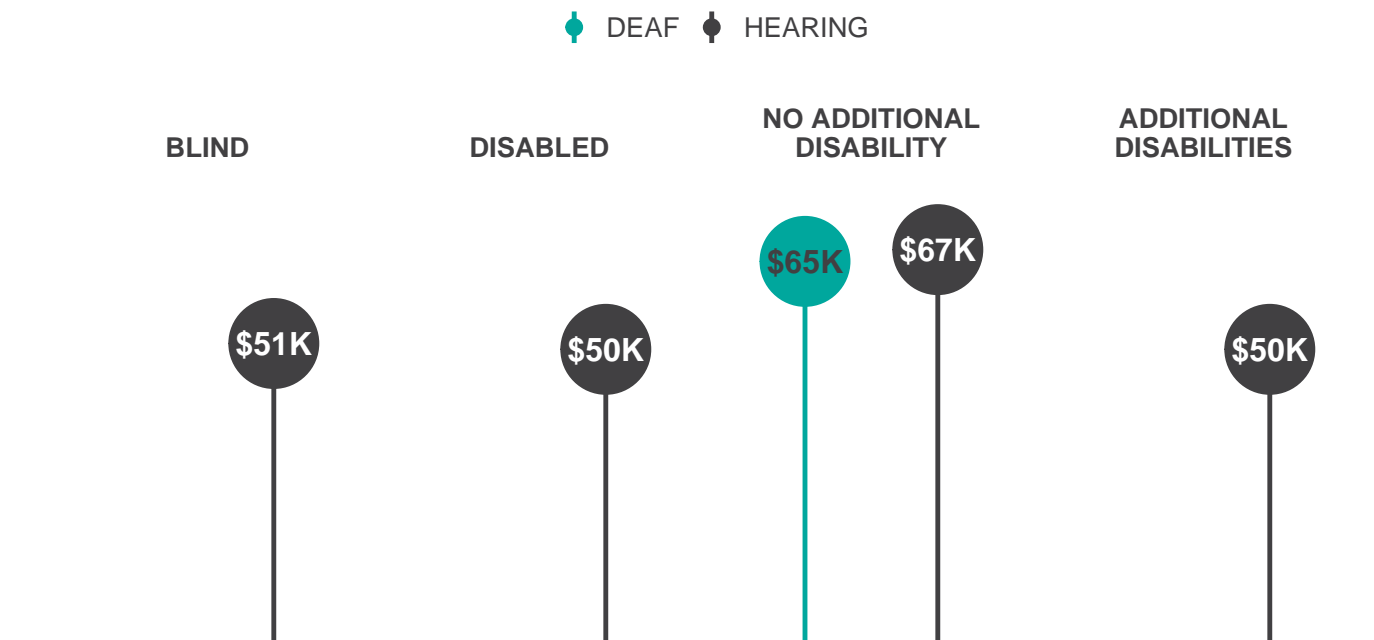


Figure 12

**MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR PEOPLE IN MASSACHUSETTS BY DISABILITY**



## METHOD

### Where does this data come from?

The data for this report comes from the American Community Survey (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: 3,256 (Massachusetts), 202,128 (United States)
- Minimum sample size to report: 351
- Maximum relative standard error to report: 30%

### THIS REPORT MAY BE CITED AS:

Bloom, C. L., Palmer, J.L., & Winninghoff, J. (2023). *Postsecondary Achievement of Deaf People in Massachusetts: 2021*. National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes, The University of Texas at Austin. [www.nationaldeafcenter.org](http://www.nationaldeafcenter.org).

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.