African Americans: College Majors and Earnings

Prevalence of African American Bachelor's Degree Holders

African Americans tend to be overrepresented in low-earning majors

Top 10 Majors by Percentage of African American Bachelor’s Degree Holders

1. Health and Medical Administration Services, 21%
2. Human Services and Community Organization, 20%
3. Social Work, 19%
4. Public Administration, 17%
5. Criminal Justice and Fire Protection, 15%
6. Sociology, 14%
7. Computer and Information Systems, 14%
8. Human Resources and Personnel Management, 14%
9. Interdisciplinary Social Sciences, 13%
10. Pre-Law and Legal Studies, 13%

10 Highest-Earnings Majors for African Americans

African Americans who majored in pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences and administration have the highest median earnings at $84,000.

1. Pharmacy, Pharmaceutical Sciences and Administration
2. Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering
3. Chemical Engineering
4. Electrical Engineering
5. Mechanical Engineering
6. Computer Engineering
7. Civil Engineering
8. Nursing
9. General Engineering
10. Computer Science

10 Lowest-Earnings Majors for African Americans

Most of the majors on the list of lowest median earnings for African Americans with Bachelor’s degrees tend to be part of “intellectual and caring professions”—that is, highly-educated workers whose earnings tend not to reflect their years of higher education.

1. Early Childhood Education
2. Human Services and Community Organization
3. Area, Ethnic, and Civilization Studies
4. Family and Consumer Sciences
5. Drama and Theater Arts
6. Miscellaneous Industrial Arts And Consumer Services
7. Social Work
8. Physical Fitness, Parks, Recreation, and Leisure
9. Theology and Religious Vocations
10. Philosophy and Religious Studies

Bachelor’s degree holders refers to adults between the ages of 21 and 59 with a Bachelor’s degree but no graduate degree. Earnings data are reported for workers employed full-time, full-year. Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey micro data, 2010-2014.

To view the research this graphic is based on, download African Americans: College Majors and Earnings.