



DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF NEW JERSEY'S EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FUND PROGRAM USING THE NEW JERSEY STATEWIDE DATA SYSTEM

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Executive Summary

Overview

This report examines the educational and employment outcomes of students who participated in the New Jersey Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) program, focusing on graduation rates, degree completion time, employment rates, and quarterly median earnings of EOF participants. The EOF program aims to improve higher education accessibility for students from economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds while fostering their academic and professional achievements (see Appendix A). Utilizing the New Jersey Statewide Data System (NJSDS), this study investigates the graduation rates, workforce participation, and quarterly median earnings of non-EOF students versus those EOF students who received an academic year grant (i.e., EOF-funded students), and who completed either an associate or Bachelor's degree after 2013. The analysis is extended until the 2017–18 academic year, accounting for individuals who might have taken longer than the stipulated completion time (two years for a student in a two-year institution and four years for a student in a four-year institution) to finish their degrees.

Methods

The study utilizes data from NJSDS to analyze the progress of students who enrolled in the 2012–13 academic year and received an EOF grant during the 2012–13 academic year. The research only includes students who did receive or did not receive financial aid awards when enrolling for an associate or Bachelor's degree, including only a subset of the EOF population, referred to here as “EOF funded.” The analysis focuses on first-time, full-time students pursuing either an associate or Bachelor's degree, and beginning their studies in the fall semester of 2012–13 by examining their graduation rates and time to completion for six years between 2012–13 and 2017–18. Furthermore, the study emphasizes overall workforce outcomes, segmented by students' characteristics such as gender, race/ethnicity, and major. Specifically, it investigates the percentage of students employed and their full-time quarterly median earnings (2021 \$USD) following graduation in a two-year timeframe for an associate degree and a four-year timeframe for a Bachelor's degree.

Findings

Concerning educational outcomes, researchers found that EOF-funded participants show higher graduation rates (48% for associate degrees and 73% for Bachelor's degrees) compared to the statewide average (23% and 70%, respectively) (New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, 2020a, 2020b). However, while the associate degree graduation rate for EOF students is higher (38%), the same doesn't hold true for Bachelor's degrees (75%) compared to non-participants. In addition, there are variations in the time taken to complete a degree based on the institution type in which EOF-funded students are enrolled. Approximately 34% of students in two-year institutions double the two-year time-to-degree completion or more to graduate, in contrast to 6% of those enrolled in four-year institutions. Similarly, 10% of those enrolled in two-year institutions, and 39% in four-year institutions, complete their studies within four to six years, respectively. These results are consistent with those presented in the most recent EOF progress report (Zimmerman & Carter, 2023). In addition, it is important to note that the EOF program serves students who may have other factors affecting their degree completion, such as socioeconomic status, parental educational attainment, and other factors that will require further analysis in future studies. The EOF program works with students who typically may not meet regular admission standards or have a background that demonstrates a need for enhanced academic support. As such, comparison to the overall student population is presented here as a benchmark, but is not a true comparison given the differences in student backgrounds and barriers.



Turning to workforce outcomes, the overall results indicate that students awarded EOF grants exhibit higher employment rates but lower quarterly median earnings than those who did not enroll in an EOF program. When examining gender-specific outcomes among students who were part of the program and finished their degrees, female students in EOF-funded programs tend to have the highest employment rates but the lowest median wages in contrast to non-EOF female and male students. This employment rate discrepancy is noteworthy and merits further investigation, particularly when considering the broader state-level trends, which typically show higher male employment rates (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023a; Small & Lancaster, 2022). As for the wage disparities between genders, female students tend to earn less than males, which aligns with researchers' findings (U.S. Department of Labor, 2023a).

When reviewing workforce outcomes by race/ethnicity for EOF students holding a Bachelor's degree, notable differences emerge. Researchers found that Black, white, and Hispanic students participating in the EOF program displayed higher employment rates than their non-EOF counterparts. However, even among these groups, EOF participants experienced lower earnings than non-EOF participants. These variations within subgroups mirror the existing state-level trends, where disparities persist among different races/ethnicities in employment rates and earnings (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023b; U.S. Department of Labor, 2023b).

Furthermore, when analyzing workforce outcomes by major for program students who received their degrees, researchers observed that students in the EOF program exhibited higher employment rates in health, humanities, and social sciences. Nevertheless, the trend of lower wages for EOF program participants persisted across all majors compared to their non-EOF counterparts. It is essential to highlight that this is a descriptive analysis, and further research is necessary to ascertain whether these effects are attributed to the program or specific to the sample chosen for this study.

Introduction

Obtaining a college degree offers many advantages to graduates and has proven to create opportunities for economically disadvantaged students (Brown & Brown, 2019; Chen & DesJardins, 2010). Despite this, many students face obstacles in accessing and completing a college degree (Cox, 2016; Hoxby & Turner, 2013). To tackle this issue, the State of New Jersey has implemented the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) program, which offers support and resources to help economically disadvantaged students to thrive academically and professionally. It aims to eliminate financial barriers that might hinder the pursuit of higher education for educationally and economically underprivileged students, such as those from low-income families or first-generation college students.¹

This study analyzes the higher education and workforce outcomes of New Jersey's EOF-funded program participants using data from the New Jersey Statewide Data System (NJSDS). It tracks EOF and non-EOF students who completed either a two- or four-year degree (associate or Bachelor's, respectively), offering insights on graduation rates and time to completion. Additionally, the study focuses on the quarterly employment rates and median earnings following graduation for both EOF-funded participants and non-participants.

¹ See <https://www.nj.gov/highereducation/documents/pdf/index/EOFProgressReport2023.pdf>



The analysis reveals that the graduation rate among students participating in the EOF-funded program is higher than the statewide average. Notably, there are differences in the time required to complete a degree based on whether students are enrolled in a two- or four-year institution, with students enrolled in a two-year institution often taking longer than the expected program completion compared to students enrolled in a four-year institution.

Examining workforce outcomes, a general trend was observed among Bachelor's degree holders enrolled in the EOF program, where they demonstrated higher employment rates, but lower quarterly median earnings compared to their non-participating peers. This pattern remains consistent when disaggregating the data by gender, race/ethnicity, and major for students who receive their degrees. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that further research is necessary to establish whether these effects are not specific to the sample chosen for this study. Furthermore, a comprehensive analysis would be needed even if one could identify that the workforce outcome differences are statistically significant between students who participated in the EOF-funded program and those students who did not participate in the EOF program. This analysis would require the inclusion of other household and student characteristics. Unfortunately, these variables are not available within the NJSDS dataset.

Program Background

The EOF program is funded by New Jersey and provides academic support, personal/career counseling, and financial assistance to low-income students seeking a college education. The program works to increase access to higher education and provide opportunities for academic and personal growth to students who may need more support to attend college.²

The conceptual framework of the EOF program is grounded in the belief that education is a critical factor in promoting individual and societal growth (Chan, 2016; Hout, 2012). The program recognizes that low-income students face unique challenges in accessing and completing a college degree (Berg, 2016). For that reason, it provides intensive support services, such as financial aid,³ academic support (educational enrichment, tutoring, and supplemental instruction), and personal and career counseling (student leadership development and holistic counseling services) (Zimmerman & Carter, 2023). These services, delivered at 41 institutions throughout New Jersey, are designed to help students overcome the challenges they may face and support them as they work toward achieving their educational and career goals.

² For more information related to the program description, please review Appendix A.

³ Provides undergraduate grants, ranging from \$200 to \$3,050 annually, and graduate grants, ranging from \$200 to \$4,900 annually (depending on the type of institution and financial need). These grants are renewable based upon continued eligibility and supplemental financial aid to help cover college costs, such as books, fees, room, and board, not covered by the state's Federal Pell Grant and Tuition Aid Grant program.



Methodology

The study uses integrated data in NJSDS from the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, the Higher Education Student Aid Authority, and the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Researchers combined information from these sources to select all eligible students enrolled in the 2012–13 academic year.⁴

The study considers first-time and full-time students seeking an associate or Bachelor's degree, starting during the fall semester. A cohort was generated, and researchers analyzed students' outcomes from 2013 to 2018.⁵ The outcomes encompass several fundamental aspects, including graduation rate and time to degree completion. Notwithstanding, the primary focus of this report is on workforce outcomes, including the percentage of students employed and the full-time median wages (2021 \$USD) earned after graduation in a two- or four-year timeframe for an associate degree and Bachelor's degree, respectively. These results are estimated for students who were part of the EOF program by receiving financial aid awards and those students who were not part of the EOF program. Given that the available data in NJSDS do not allow researchers to identify an appropriate comparison group for students funded by the EOF program, the study uses non-EOF-funded students enrolled in the 2012–13 academic year as a benchmark by which to have some reference, though researchers caution this should not be considered a comparison group.⁶ Students are categorized as “completers” if they received their associate or Bachelor's degree and “non-completers” if not.⁷

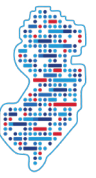
Due to specifications for this analysis, the data for this cohort include 52,020 observations, with 3,129 EOF-funded students and 48,891 non-EOF students. Notably, the 3,129 EOF-funded students represent a subset of the overall population of 12,997 undergraduate participants in the EOF program in the 2012–13 academic year. This subset was determined based on predefined criteria for the study, including characteristics such as students pursuing either an associate or Bachelor's degree; those commencing their academic journey as first-time, full-time students; and those who initiated their studies in the fall semester. This report also presents the descriptive outcomes for demographic characteristics such as gender, race/ethnicity, and major.

⁴ The election of the 2012–13 academic year as the starting point relies on the available data from the the Higher Education Student Aid Authority, which starts in that year for the EOF program.

⁵ Researchers considered the possibility that some students will complete their degrees within one year if they can validate previous credits.

⁶ Inherent differences exist between students who participated in the EOF-funded program and those who enrolled in the academic years from 2011 to 2013. It is essential to clarify that this research is not intended to directly compare these two groups. Instead, one group serves as a benchmark for the other due to the unavailability of additional data for a more precise comparison. To provide context, Tables B-1 and B-2 in Appendix B offer a detailed characterization of both groups, distinguished by gender and race, focusing on students who have obtained their Bachelor's degree.

⁷ Researchers only analyze the results for associate or Bachelor's degree students. They do not include students that are pursuing a graduate degree. And they use the words “completers” and “non-completers” to indicate whether the associate or Bachelor's degree students finished their degrees.



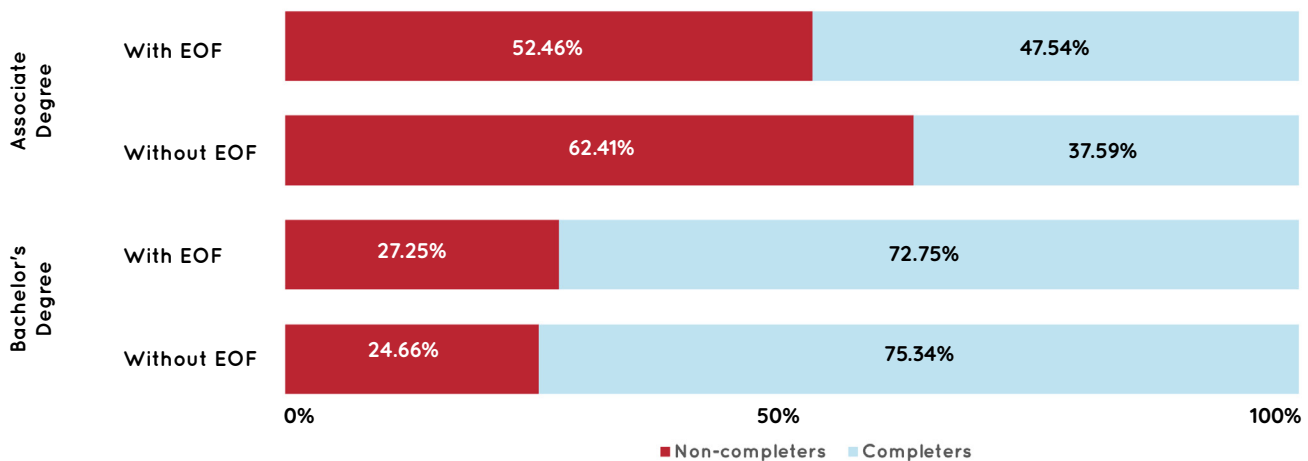
Results and Findings

Educational Outcomes

Graduation Rates

This analysis revealed that funded students in the EOF program had a higher graduation rate than the statewide average for associate and Bachelor's degrees (see Figure 1).⁸ Specifically, the graduation rate for all EOF students was 61% for the period evaluated, while the result was 54% for students who did not participate in the EOF program.⁹ It is relevant to indicate that when comparing associate degrees, the graduation rate for students in EOF is almost 10 percentage points higher than those students not in EOF. In contrast, when analyzing Bachelor's degrees, students who are not in EOF have a graduation rate that is almost two percentage points higher than students who are in EOF.¹⁰

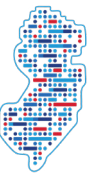
Figure 1: Graduation Rate



⁸ The graduation rate within 150% of the normal time for an associate degree (within three years) was approximately 23% (New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, 2020a), while it was close to 70% for a Bachelor's degree (within six years) (New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, 2020b).

⁹ For more information on the estimated percentages, see Table C-1 in Appendix C.

¹⁰ It is relevant to mention that the differences in the graduation rate between students with or without EOF denoted throughout this study have yet to be tested for statistical significance. As a result, the authors can only report the findings without making definitive claims regarding the program's effectiveness.



Degree Completion Time

This analysis also explores the time students take to complete a degree. Time to completion covers those who completed their degree within the standard timeframe or 100% of the time to degree (two years for a student in a two-year institution and four years for a student in a four-year institution); completed their education within 150% of the time to degree (three years for a student in a two-year institution and six years for a student in a four-year institution); and completed their education within 200% of the time to degree or more (four or more years for a student in a two-year institution and eight years or more for a student in a four-year institution).¹¹

The results presented in Figures 2 and 3 reveal relevant differences according to the type of institution. Generally, for the cohort analyzed, students in a two-year institution tend to take more time to finish their degree (see Figure 2). When reviewing these results for students with EOF, researchers identified that only 3% of students complete their degree in two years, approximately 11% in three years, and almost 34% in four or more years (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Graduation Rate for Students in a Two-year Institution

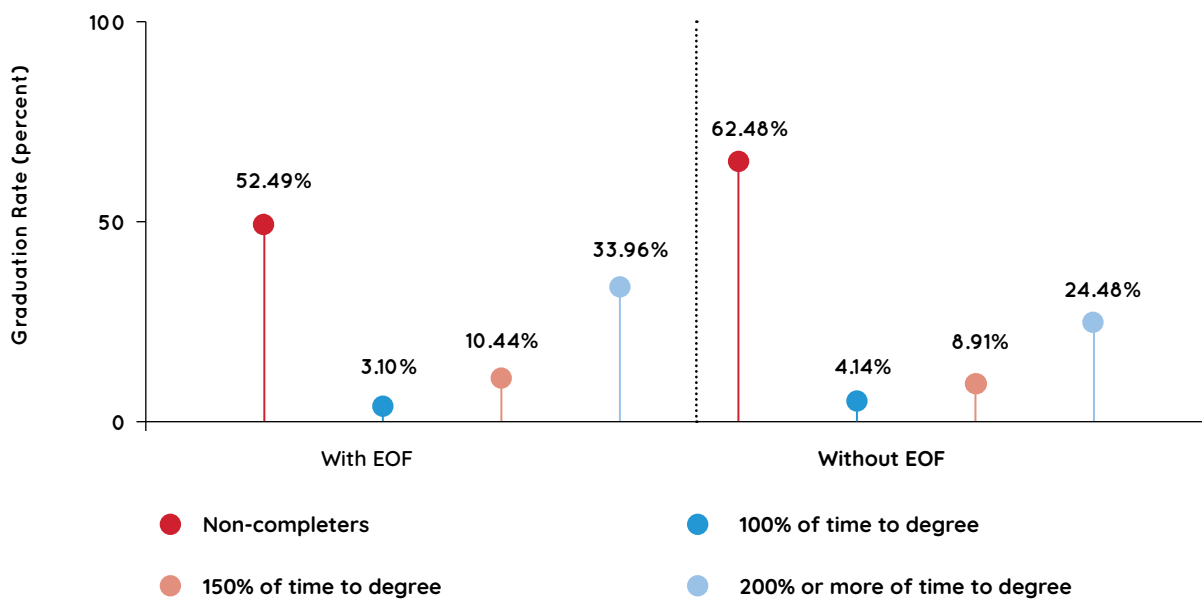
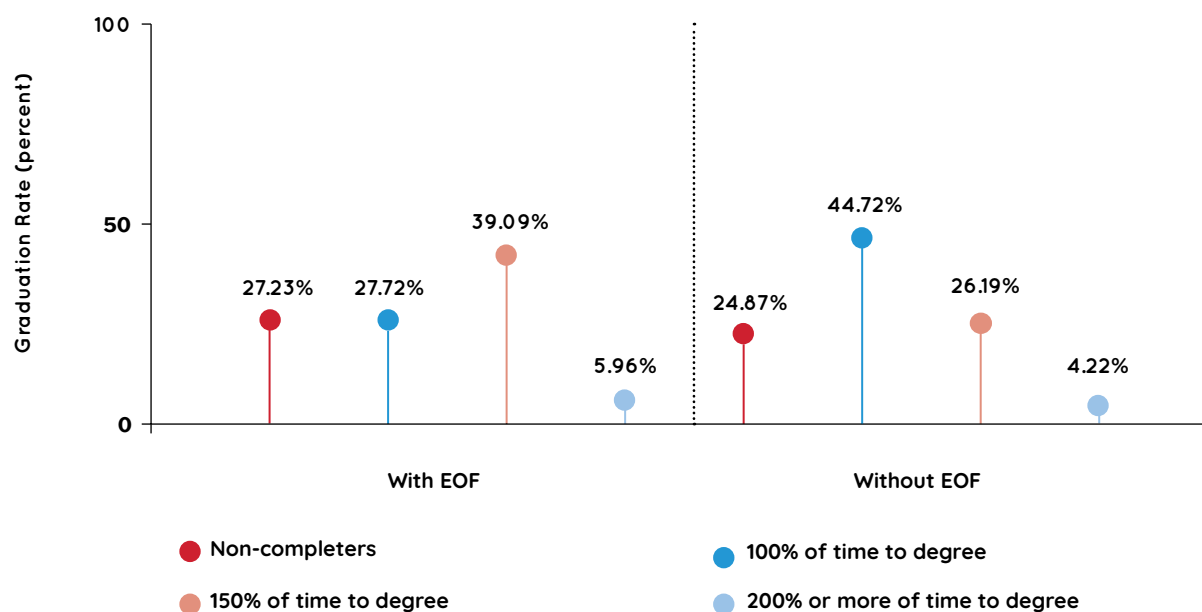


Figure 3 presents the graduation rates by time to degree for students in a four-year institution. The study's authors identified that these students have an opposite trend, mainly completing their degree in four or six years. Another relevant outcome is that students with EOF tend to obtain their degree in six years (39%), while students without EOF finish primarily in four years (45%). This is consistent with the results indicated in the latest EOF progress report, as well as the overall goal of the program (Zimmerman & Carter, 2023).

¹¹ See Tables C-2 and C-3 in Appendix C for data related to the results presented in the following figures. There might be a slight difference between the numbers provided in Table C-1 in Appendix C. These discrepancies are because the authors are accounting for the number of students in a two- or four-year institution, which does not necessarily indicate that the student acquired an associate or Bachelor's degree, respectively.



Figure 3: Graduation Rate for Students in a Four-year Institution



Workforce Outcomes Since Enrollment

Employment Rate

Figure 4 contains information related to the quarterly employment rate for students that completed their degrees and those that did not finish their degrees, divided by degree type and whether they were part of the EOF-funded program. This information is presented over time, starting with a quarter enumerated zero, indicating the first time the student started working after enrollment (denominated post-enrollment quarter).¹² The definition allows the measure of first employment to be either while studying or after completion for all students (without limiting this information to students that completed their degrees). Still, in all cases, it corresponds to the first quarter the students enroll in their degree program.

The results indicate that students who completed their associate degree have a higher employment rate than those who did not complete their degree (for students with and without EOF). In contrast, Bachelor's students that did not complete their degrees but were part of the EOF-funded program had a higher employment rate, although the gap between completers diminishes over time. Researchers saw generally higher employment rates as time passed, but this relates to the period definition; as students spend more time continuing their studies or entering the labor force after completing their degrees, a higher percentage of them work.

¹² This quarter definition is particular in Figures 4 and 5, given that the data include people that completed and did not complete their degrees. For the following figures, researchers only present information for students that completed their degrees and identified employment rates and wages after graduation.

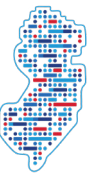
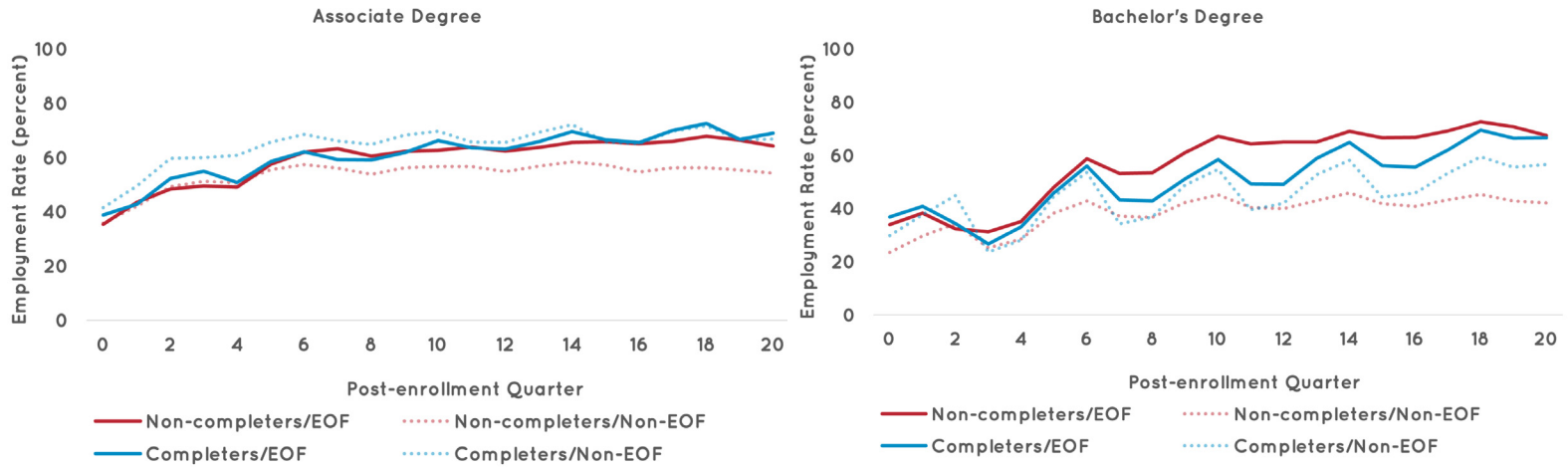


Figure 4: Quarterly Employment Rate



Furthermore, students enrolled in EOF exhibit consistently higher employment rates (for students who completed their education and students who did not complete their degrees), surpassing those without EOF for most quarters for Bachelor's degrees. These results are consistent with the financial background of the students participating in the EOF program and reflect experiences of students who are more likely to need to work during their enrollment (Zimmerman & Carter, 2023).

Median Earnings

Researchers first defined the periods to estimate the median wage earned by the students. Like Figure 4, the quarter, denominated zero, is the first time students start working, either while studying or after completing their degrees. The information is differentiated by program condition (with and without EOF) and whether they completed their degree. Moreover, the median definition considers a fuzzy median between percentiles 45 and 55, including only positive earnings, and adjusted by inflation to 2021 dollars (\$USD).¹³

The results presented in Figure 5 indicate that, as expected, the first quarters show smaller median earnings for all students. Researchers also identified that students who were not completers generally had higher median wages than those who completed their degrees. Still, what is observed might result from a person's years of experience (Mincer, 1958).

As for the outcomes for students with the EOF program, it might seem that students who were part of the program, no matter if they obtained their degrees, consistently receive a smaller median wage than those who were not an EOF participant. Nevertheless, the difference is slight in most cases, and, as mentioned before, further research needs to be done to be able to identify if this is the reality for the students that participated in EOF.

¹³ Fuzzy median wage is calculated by averaging 45th and 55th percentiles of the wage distribution to address privacy and disclosure risks associated with individual-level wage data, ensuring robust estimates of the data's median while introducing controlled uncertainty. To ensure accurate results, researchers utilized the median income instead of the mean income in this analysis. This choice is due to the common skewness observed in the earnings distribution, as using the mean could potentially overestimate the outcomes.

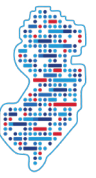
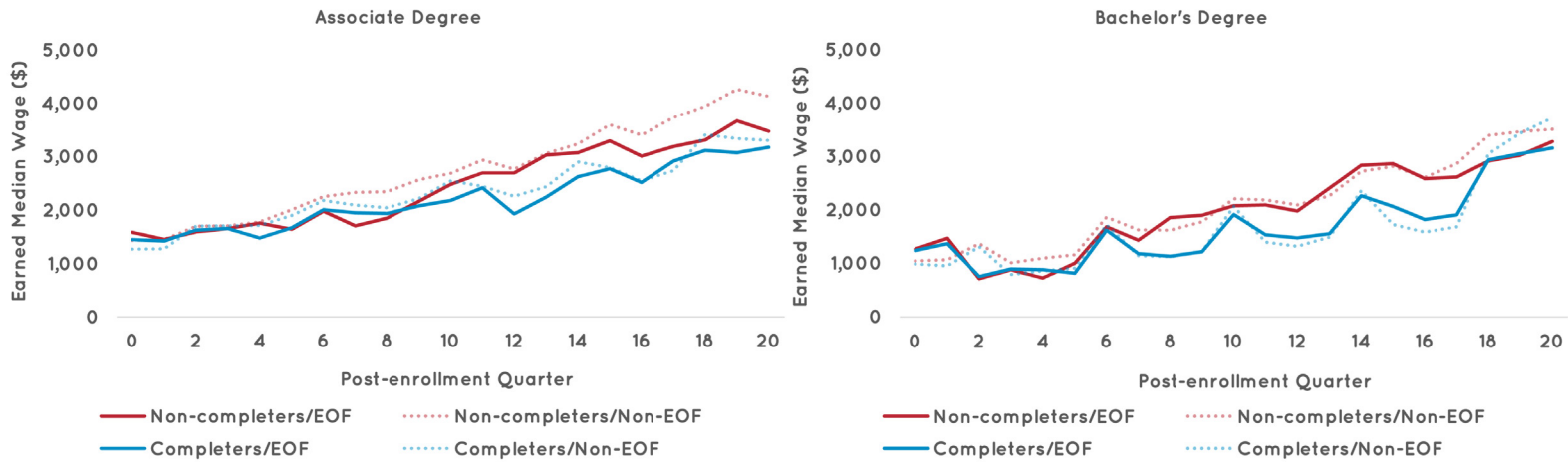


Figure 5: Quarterly Median Earnings (adjusted for 2021 \$USD)



Workforce Outcomes Since Completion

Workforce Outcomes by Students Holding a Bachelor's Degree - Characteristics

The information presented in this section only considers students that obtained their Bachelor's degrees between 2013 and 2018. For this reason, the quarter definition for the following figures is different from what was used earlier in this report. Here, quarter zero is the first quarter a student that received their Bachelor's degree started working after receiving their degree (denominated post-completion quarter). As mentioned, the following analysis only includes information for students who received a Bachelor's degree. Still, researchers include the information related to students who received an associate degree in Appendix D.

By Gender

Figure 6 presents the employment rate by gender for all the students that obtained their Bachelor's degree.¹⁴ Researchers identified that female completers have the highest employment rate compared to their male counterparts. This result is particularly striking when contrasted with the state-level trends, which consistently indicate higher employment rates among males (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023a; Small & Lancaster, 2022).

Focusing on students in the EOF-funded program, female and male students have a higher employment rate than students that were not part of the program. Notwithstanding, all these differences start to diminish after the 17th quarter for males and the 19th quarter for females. Yet, the employment rate trend also decreases with time. Still, this drop might not necessarily reflect a reduction in the labor market but in the number of quarters students worked after completing their degrees. Given that the results presented in Figure 6 and the subsequent figures only include students who started to work after receiving their Bachelor's degree, the first quarters include more students than the latter quarters because some students take longer to complete their degrees.

¹⁴ A trivial proportion of students did not identify female or male as their gender, so researchers recorded them as males to avoid suppressing the small sample, following the Code of Federal Regulation guidelines to disclose information (34 CRF 99). Nevertheless, given its size, the results did not affect the overall male trends.

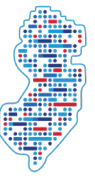
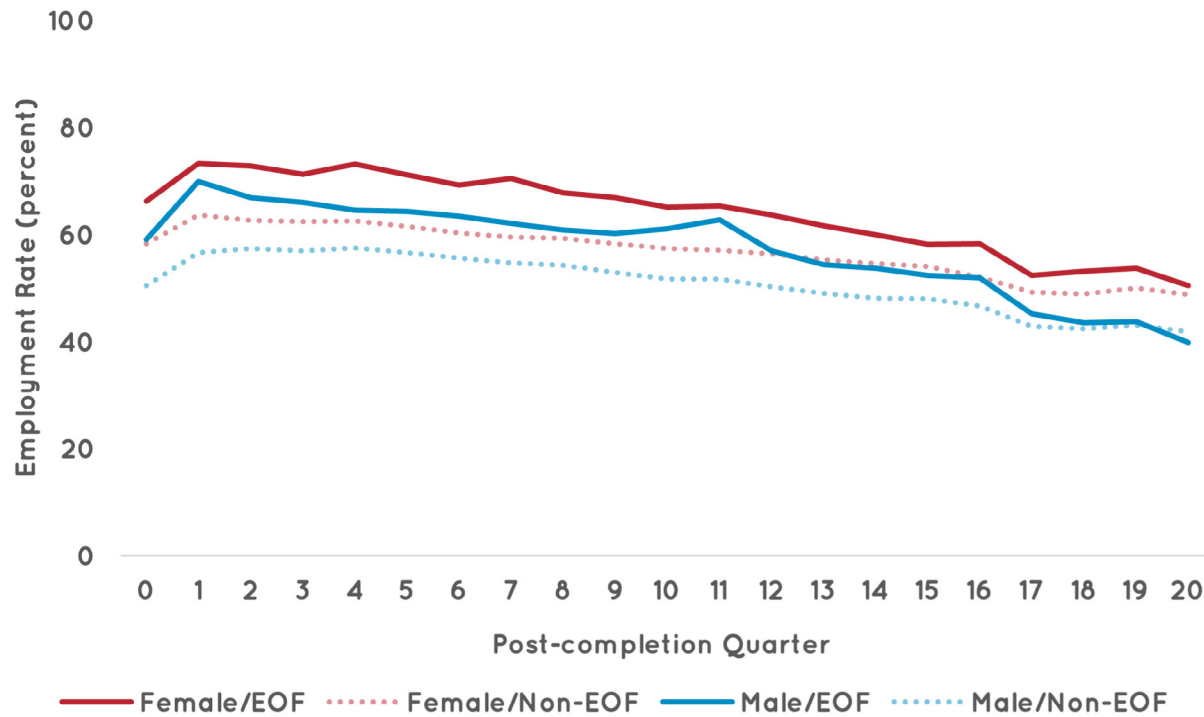


Figure 6: Quarterly Employment Rate for Students Holding a Bachelor's Degree, by Gender



The median wages of the students who received their Bachelor's degrees by gender are presented in Figure 7. Researchers found that female completers tend to have smaller median earnings for all quarters than males, which aligns with information from the U.S. Department of Labor (2023a). They also identified similar results to the ones observed in Figure 5, noticing that students with EOF tend to have smaller earnings than those who completed their degrees that were not part of the program.

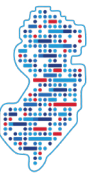
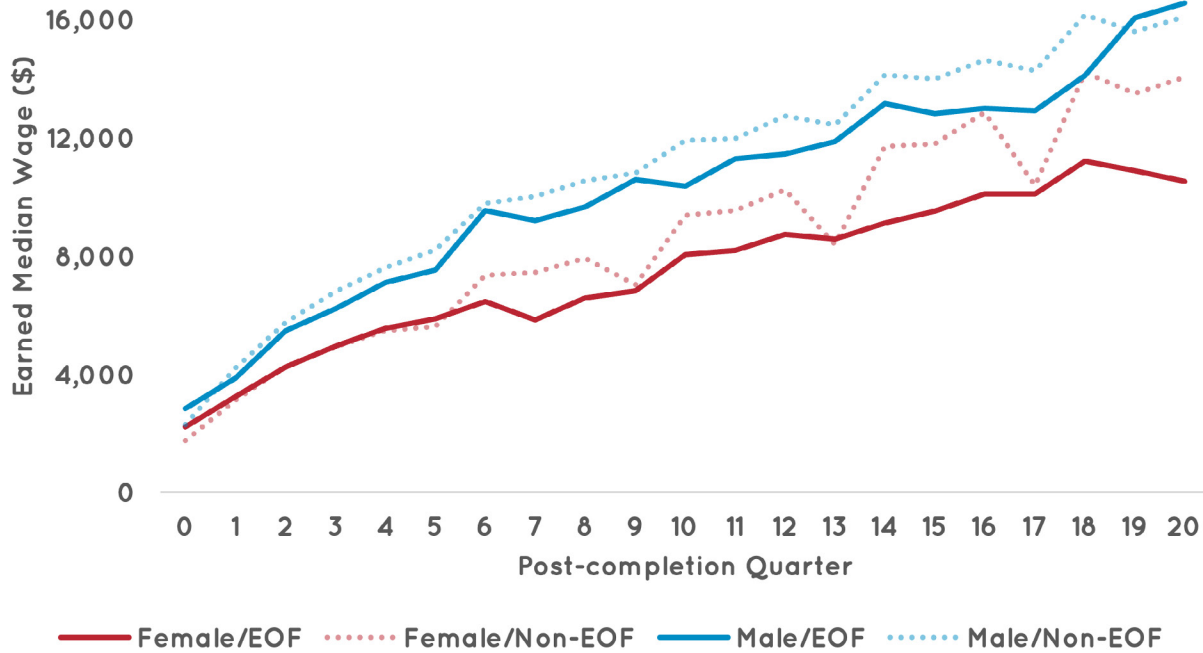


Figure 7: Quarterly Median Earnings for Students Holding a Bachelor's Degree, by Gender (adjusted for 2021 \$USD)



By Race/Ethnicity

The employment rate considering the race/ethnicity of the students that completed their degrees in the sample was also analyzed. Given the data security and confidentiality provision NJSDS has, researchers combined categories in which the total number of students was significantly small.

For the reason mentioned previously in this report, the data include the following races/ethnicities (the names that appear in the figures are included in parentheses): Hispanic/Latino (Hispanic); Black/African American (Black); American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (Other); white (White); and Multiple/Unspecified (Multiple).

Figure 8 presents the quarterly employment rate for students that completed their degrees, given their race/ethnicity and whether they were part of the EOF program. The data show that Black/African-American students that received EOF have the highest employment rate, followed by white and Hispanic/Latino students. At the same time, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiple/Unspecified students have the lowest employment rates.

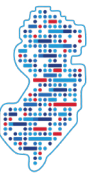
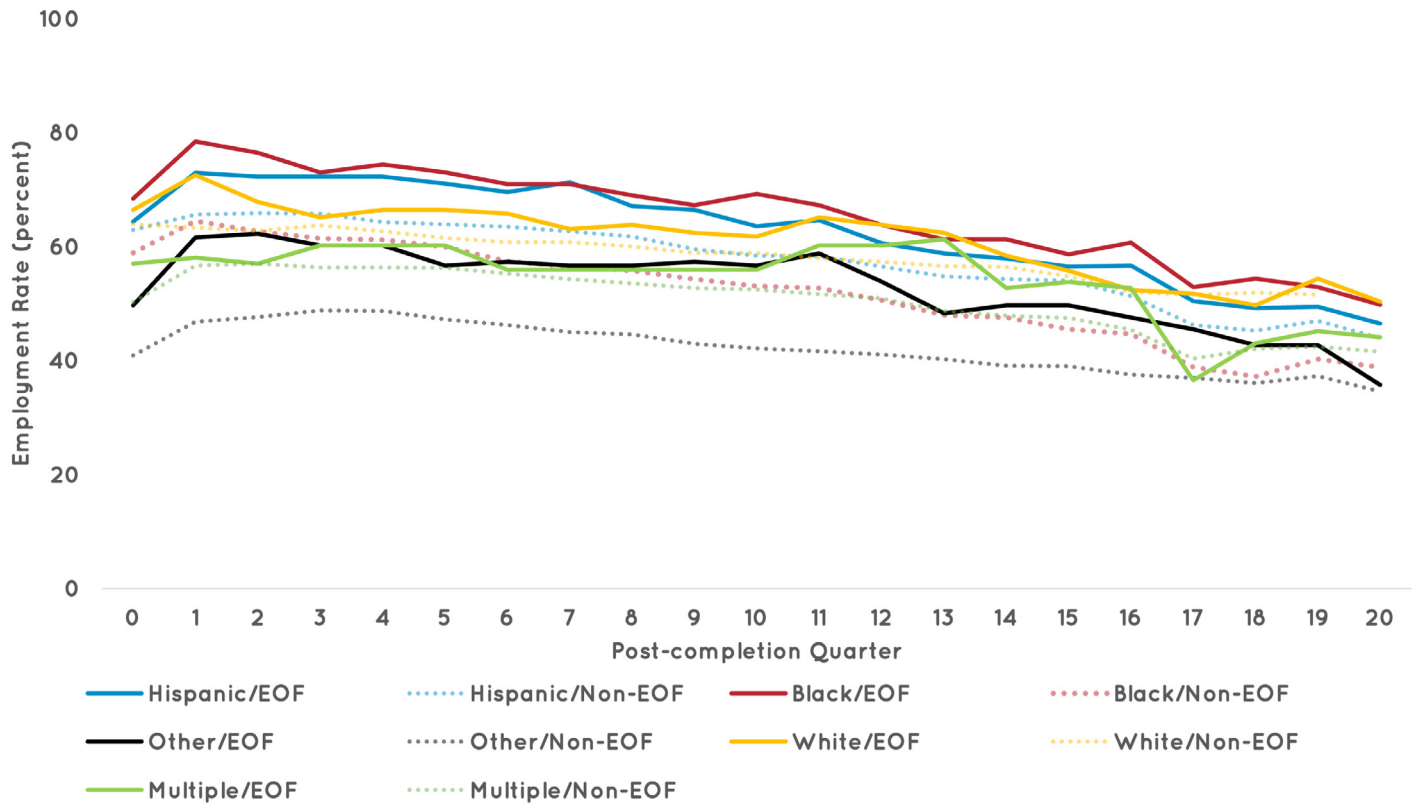


Figure 8: Quarterly Employment Rate for Students Holding a Bachelor's Degree, by Race/Ethnicity



Note: Due to small group sizes, the category "Other" includes American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

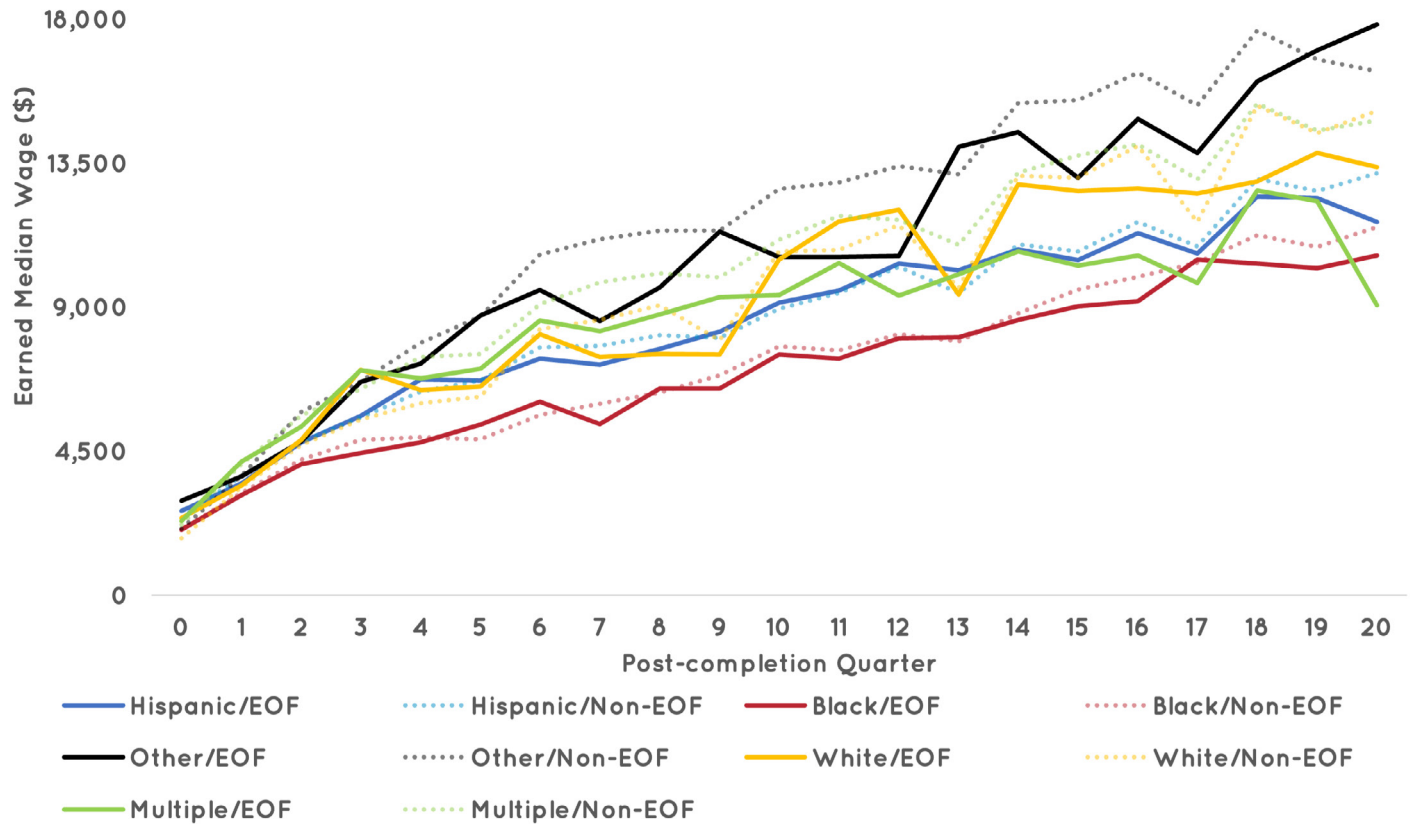
Upon examining the results specifically for students who participated in the EOF program, in general, for all the categories and quarters, students who were part of the EOF program had a higher employment rate than those who did not participate in the program. Nevertheless, these employment rate disparities among race/ethnicity are also observed at the state level (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023b).

Figure 9 presents the results for the wages of the students holding a Bachelor's degree, given their race/ethnicity. The data show an increase in wages for all students as time passes. It also appears that students that are American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander are the ones with the higher earnings across all periods, a result also observed at the state level (U.S. Department of Labor, 2023b).

Upon examining the outcomes for students with and without EOF, it becomes apparent that, for most races/ethnicities and quarters, students enrolled in the program tend to have lower earnings than their non-participating counterparts.



Figure 9: Quarterly Median Earnings for Students Holding a Bachelor's Degree, by Race/Ethnicity (adjusted for 2021 \$USD)



By Major

The last set of student characteristics pertains to participants' chosen majors of study. To effectively analyze the data and given the number of observations for each category, researchers also needed to combine some majors and suppress information for the latest periods in some cases, like for the race/ethnicity characteristics. This resulted in six categories: business, management, marketing, and related support services ("Business"); health professions and related clinical sciences ("Health"); education and humanities ("Humanities"); social sciences ("Social Sciences"); science, technology, engineering, and math ("STEM"); and communication, trade, and other miscellaneous fields ("Other").¹⁵

Figure 10 displays the quarterly employment rates for students that completed their Bachelor's degree across the six major categories. Upon analysis, it becomes evident that the Health major exhibits the highest employment rate. Humanities and Social Sciences follow closely behind, with a somewhat consistent difference of over five percentage points for most periods examined. On the other hand, STEM and Other consistently display the lowest employment rates.

¹⁵ The complete aggrupation process is as follows: business, management, marketing, and related support services ("Business"); health professions and related clinical sciences ("Health"); education; area, ethnic, cultural and gender studies; personal and culinary services; foreign language, literature, and linguistics; legal profession and studies; English language and literature/letters; liberal arts and sciences, general studies and humanities; multi/interdisciplinary studies; parks, recreation, leisure, and fitness studies; leisure and recreational activities; philosophy and religious studies; theology and religious vocation; security and protective services; public administration and social services professions; visual and performing arts; and history ("Humanities"); and family and consumer sciences/human sciences; psychology; and social sciences ("Social Sciences"); agriculture, agriculture operations, and related sciences; nature resources and conservation; architecture and related sciences; computer and information sciences and support services; engineering; engineering technologies/technicians; biological and biomedical sciences; mathematics and statistics; military technologies; physical sciences; sciences technologies/technicians; communication, journalism, and related programs; communication technologies/technicians and support services; construction trade; mechanic and repair technologies/technicians; precision production; transportation and material moving; and others ("Other").

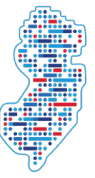
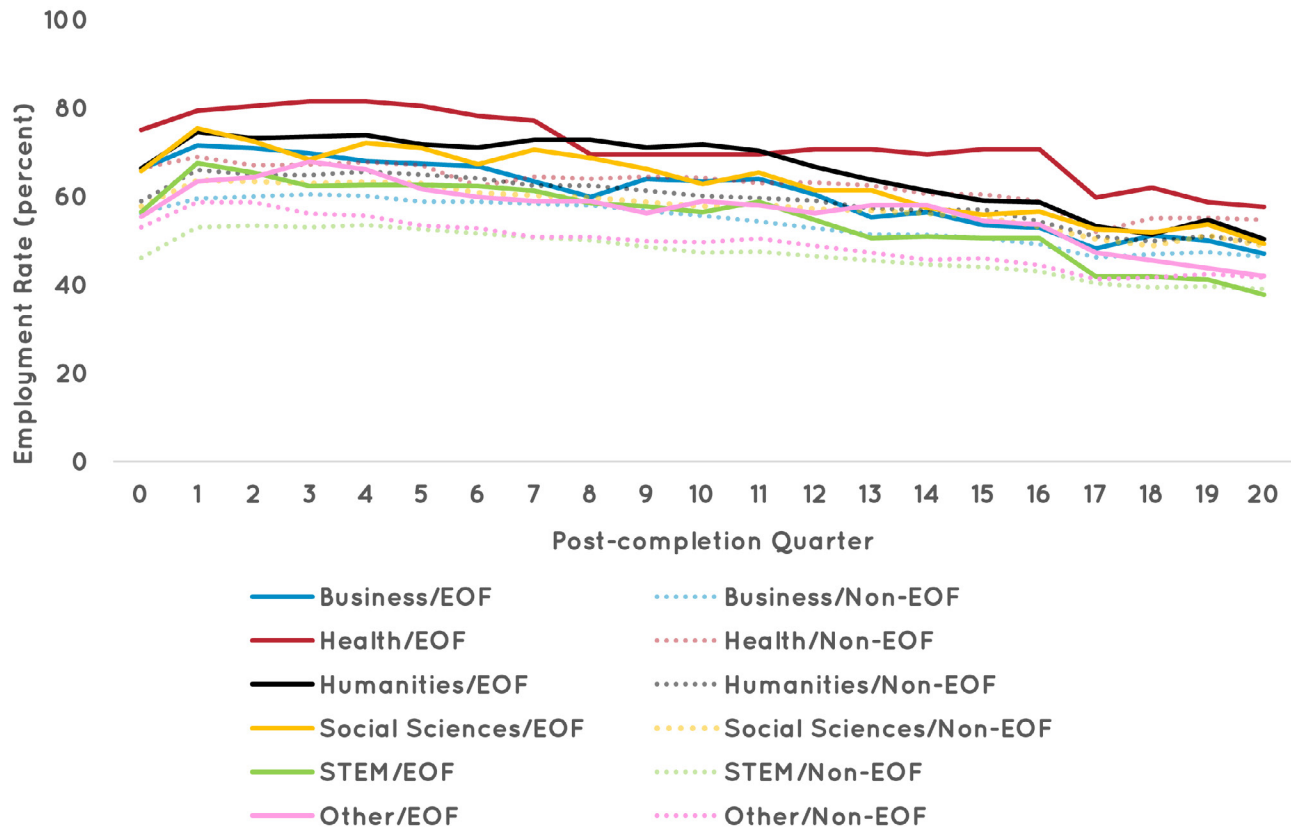


Figure 10: Quarterly Employment Rate for Students Holding a Bachelor's Degree, by Major



The results for employment rates for students with EOF indicate that those students who were part of the program always had a higher employment rate than those who did not participate. Nevertheless, those differences tend to diminish over time.

The results for the quarterly median wages are presented in Figure 11. These data show that STEM leads with the highest earnings for most periods, followed by Business. In comparison, the major with the lowest wages is Other, followed by Social Sciences and Humanities.

As for the students participating in the EOF program, the data generally show they have lower earnings than their counterparts.

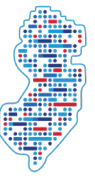
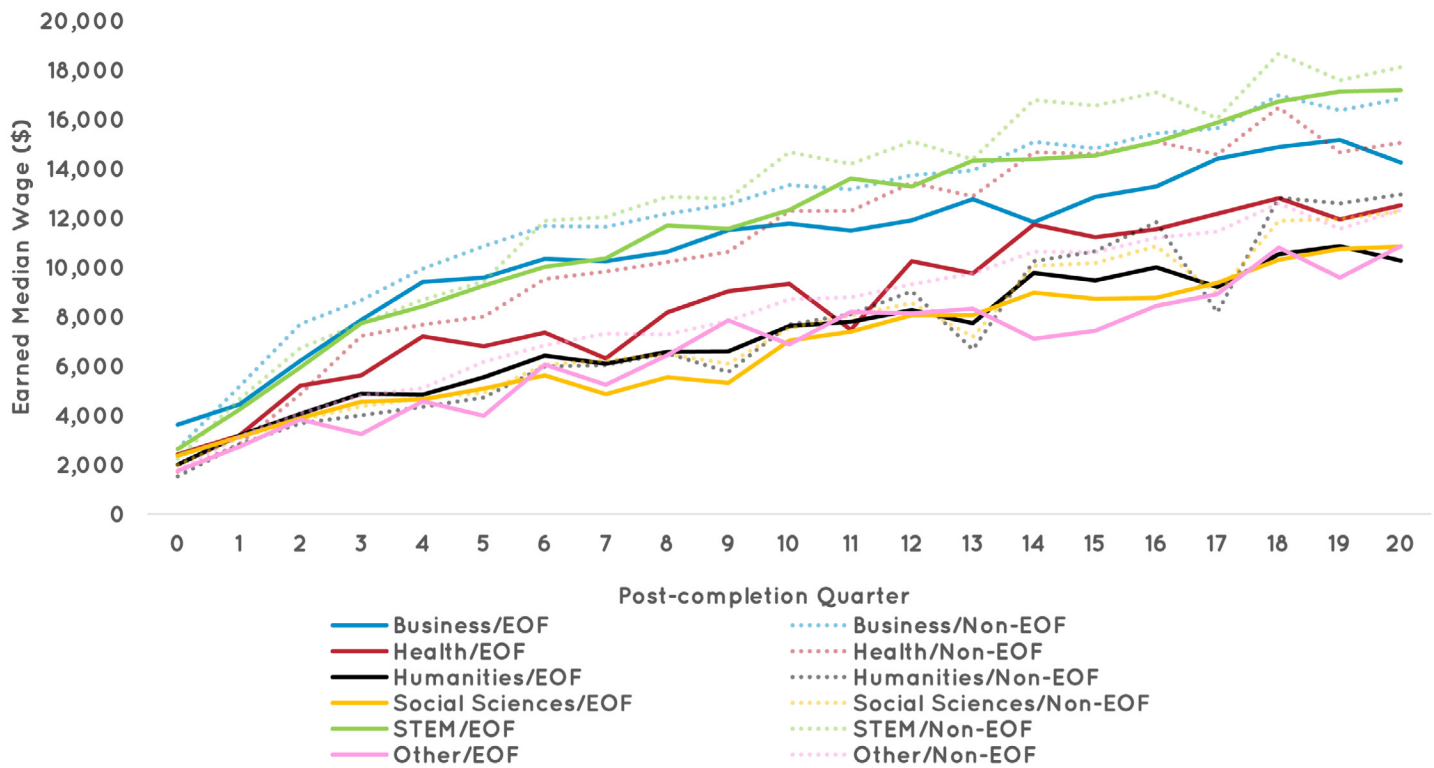


Figure 11: Quarterly Median Earnings for Students Holding a Bachelor's Degree, by Major (adjusted for 2021 \$USD)



Conclusion

The New Jersey EOF program is critical in granting economically and educationally disadvantaged students access to higher education. This study underscores the significance of higher education in today's workforce and demonstrates that participants of the EOF program reap positive benefits regarding their employment outcomes. The findings emphasize that enrollment in the EOF program presents valuable opportunities for participants to enhance their educational and workforce outcomes. It provides nuance to these results by student demographic characteristics. Nevertheless, as noted, this is a descriptive study, and future research could identify the statistical significance and causal mechanisms of these observed differences. There may be differences among this particular cohort or between EOF and non-EOF students attributable to factors outside EOF services alone. As such, future research should explore statistically significant correlations between multiple variables, seeking to build a comparison group to inventory the types of supports and their impact on students for policy development and program improvement. Finally, further analysis should also focus on the differences between part-time and full-time employment to gain insight into specific employment rates and median earnings. This condition is relevant to understand, given that it might significantly affect employment outcomes, graduation rate, and time to completion.



Appendix A

Established in 1968, the EOF program aims to ensure meaningful access to higher education for economically disadvantaged, low-income New Jersey residents (Zimmerman & Carter, 2023). The program is offered at various state public and private colleges and universities, including community colleges, four-year colleges, and graduate and professional schools. Forty-two universities and colleges in New Jersey currently participate in EOF (Zimmerman & Carter, 2023).¹⁶ Since EOF is a campus-based program, each program's requirements and design differ. Many universities mandate a pre-college summer program for successful enrollment into EOF to assist students in their transition into the academic rigor of college study and campus life, such as the Pre-college Institute at Rowan University.¹⁷ Others also introduce special extension programs to some or all EOF students to provide further assistance during their studies (counseling, tutoring, scholarships, leadership opportunities, and housing), such as The College of New Jersey's EOF Plus program.¹⁸ At the same time, a few programs support alumni beyond obtaining their degree, such as the EOF Alumni Program at the School of Arts and Sciences at Rutgers University.¹⁹ Students must meet specific criteria to be eligible for EOF. The requirements are outlined in Table A-1.

Table A-1: Eligibility Criteria for Students to Qualify for the New Jersey Educational Opportunity Fund

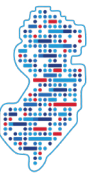
Undergraduate Eligibility
1. Must demonstrate an educationally and economically disadvantaged background.
2. Must be a New Jersey resident 12 consecutive months prior to receiving the award.
3. Must apply and be accepted to a participating New Jersey college or university.
4. Must meet the financial eligibility criteria (gross income and assets).
5. Must meet the academic criteria as set by the institution of choice.
6. Must file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid or the New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application.

¹⁶ EOF participating institutions include: public research universities, state colleges and universities, community colleges, and independent colleges and universities.

¹⁷ The Pre-college Institute program is a six-week mandatory and free residential summer program designed to assist EOF students in transitioning into college through structured classes, orientation into student clubs and campus life, and co-curricular activities.

¹⁸ The EOF Plus program at The College of New Jersey provides further extension support services to EOF students, such as mentoring, social development support, career counseling, summer course grants, sponsored conferences, seminars and workshops, and exclusive networking opportunities.

¹⁹ The Rutgers University School of Arts and Sciences' EOF Alumni Program includes the mentoring program, externship and internship opportunities, and exclusive EOF alumni networking events.



Appendix B

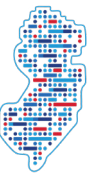
Table B-1: EOF and Non-EOF Students, by Gender

Degree Type	Gender	EOF	Non-EOF	Total
Associate	Female	447	5,249	5,696
	Male	242	4,410	4,652
Bachelor's	Female	751	9,140	9,891
	Male	462	7,630	8,092
Total		1,902	26,429	28,331

Table B-2: EOF and Non-EOF Students, by Gender

Degree Type	Race/Ethnicity	EOF	Non-EOF	Total
Associate	Hispanic	239	1,903	2,142
	Black	186	863	1,049
	Other	35	589	624
	White	156	5,338	5,494
	Multiple	73	966	1,039
Bachelor's	Hispanic	480	2,200	2,680
	Black	348	1,323	1,671
	Other	143	2,819	2,962
	White	149	8,618	8,767
	Multiple	93	1,810	1,903
Total		1,902	26,429	28,331

Note: Due to small group sizes, the category "Other" includes American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.



Appendix C

Table C-1: Graduation Rate

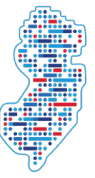
Degree Type	Program Condition	Non- completers	Completers	Total
Associate	With EOF	779	706	1,485
	Without EOF	17,204	10,362	27,566
Bachelor's	With EOF	448	1,196	1,644
	Without EOF	5,258	16,067	21,325
Total		23,689	28,331	52,020

Table C-2: Graduation Rate for Students in a Two-year Institution

Program Condition	Non-Completers	100% of Normal Time	150% of Normal Time	200% of Normal Time or More	Total
With EOF	779	46	155	504	1,484
Without EOF	17,118	1,133	2,440	6,708	27,399
Total	17,897	1,179	2,595	7,212	28,883

Table C-3: Graduation Rate for Students in a Four-year Institution

Program Condition	Non-completers	100% of Normal Time	150% of Normal Time	200% of Normal Time or More	Total
With EOF	448	456	643	98	1,645
Without EOF	5,344	9,612	5,628	908	21,492
Total	5,792	10,068	6,271	1,006	23,137



Appendix D

Figure D-1: Quarterly Employment Rate for Students Holding an Associate Degree, by Gender

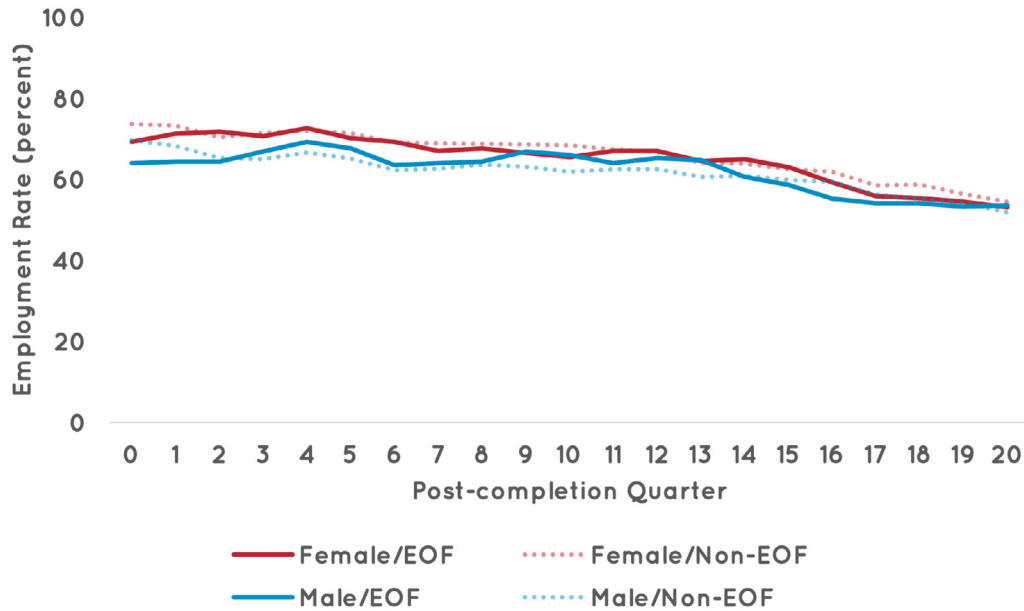
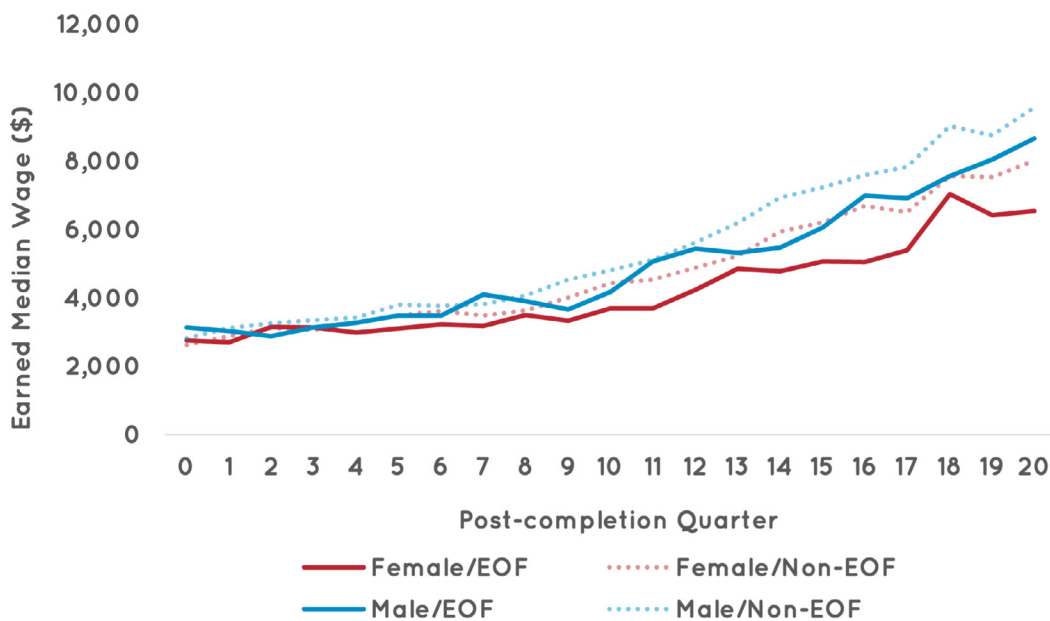


Figure D-2: Quarterly Median Earnings for Students Holding an Associate Degree, by Gender (adjusted for 2021 \$USD)



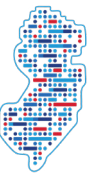
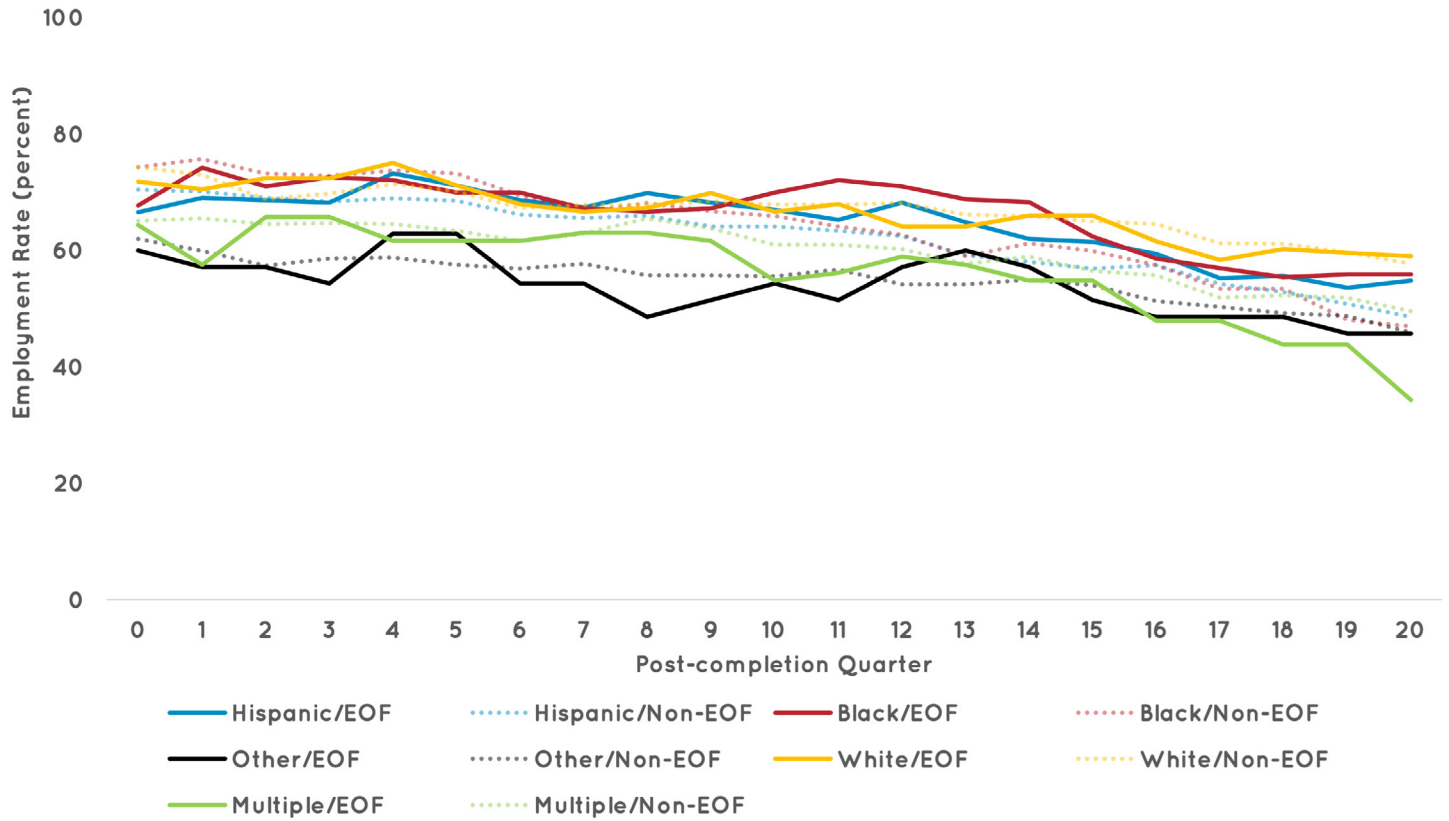
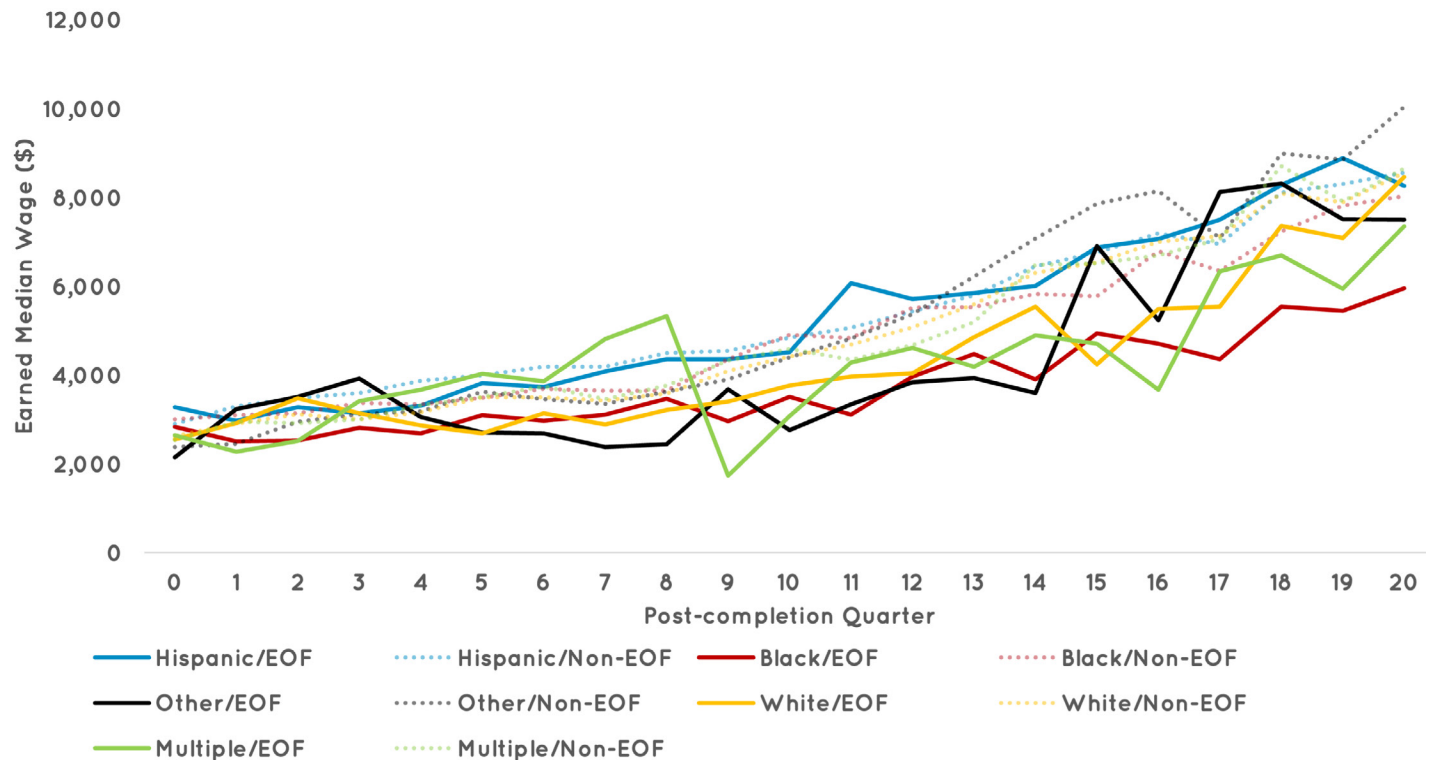


Figure D-3: Quarterly Employment Rate for Students Holding an Associate Degree, by Race/Ethnicity



Note: Due to small group sizes, the category "Other" includes American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Figure D-4: Quarterly Median Earnings for Students Holding an Associate Degree, by Race/Ethnicity (adjusted for 2021 \$USD)



Note: Due to small group sizes, the category "Other" includes American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

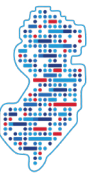
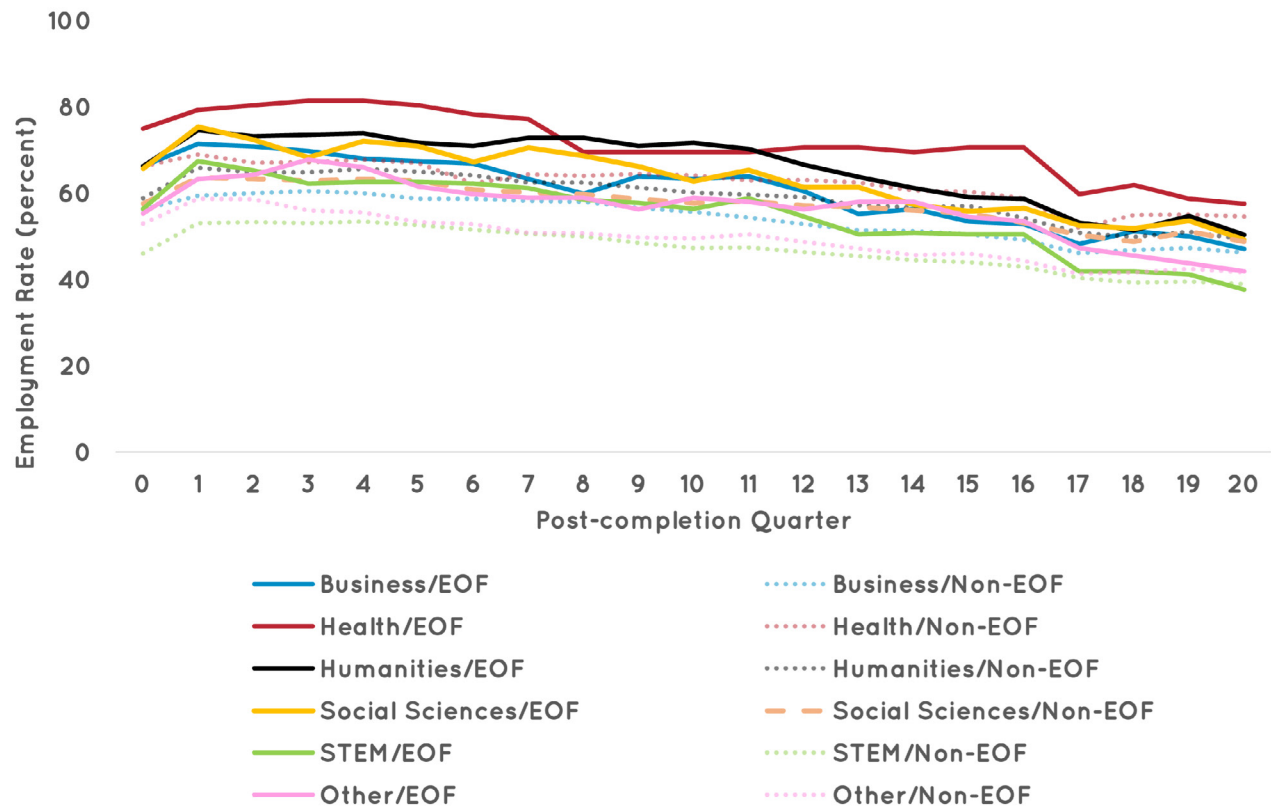


Figure D-5: Quarterly Employment Rate for Students Holding an Associate Degree, by Major²⁰



²⁰ Information related to the "Other" category for students that participated in EOF and those who did not has been suppressed because there were several students fewer than 10 in those categories.

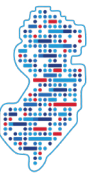
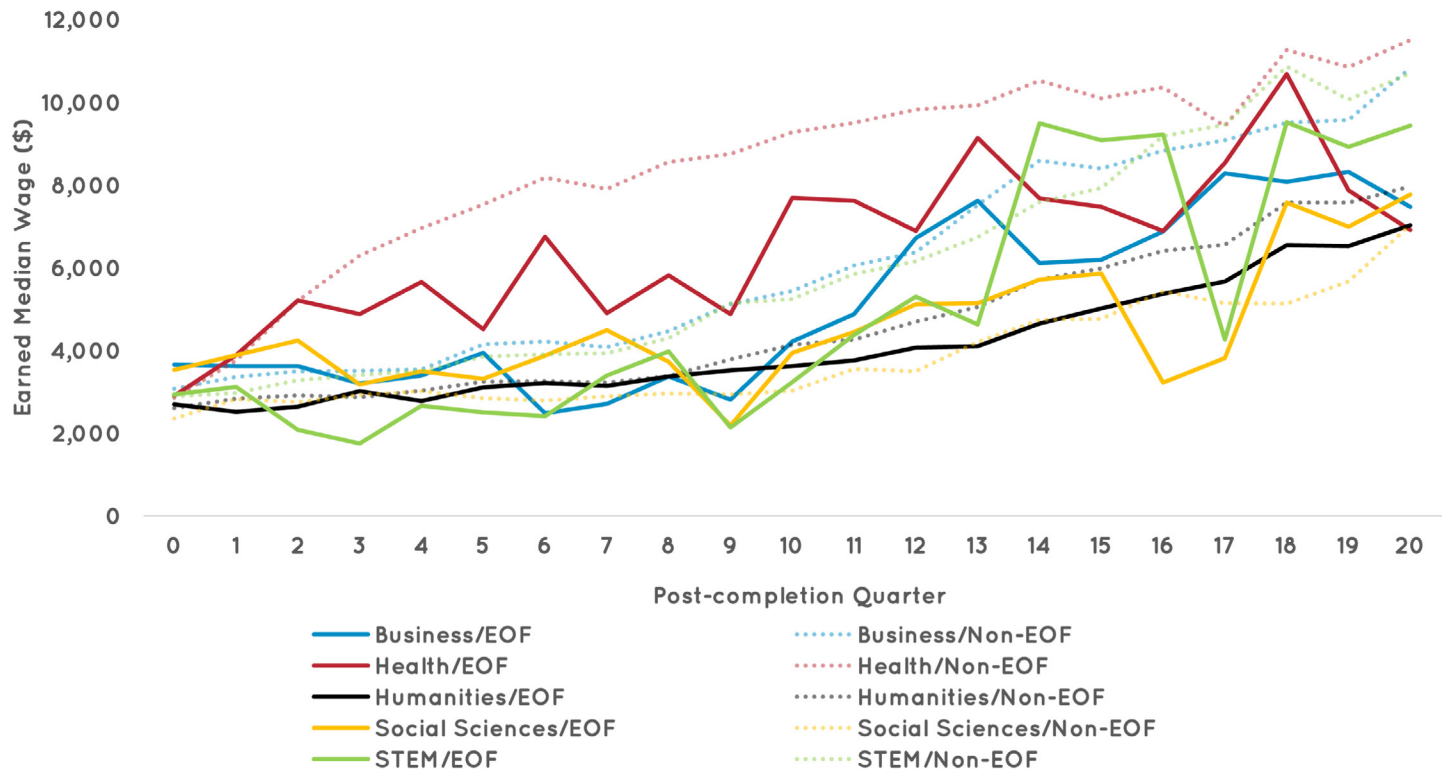


Figure D-6: Quarterly Median Earnings for Students Holding an Associate Degree, by Major (adjusted for 2021 \$USD)²¹

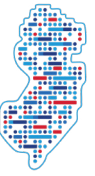


²¹ For Figure D-6, the data related to the Other category have been suppressed for the same reason as Figure D-5.



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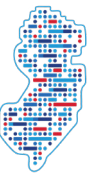


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About the New Jersey Statewide Data System

The **New Jersey Statewide Data System** (NJSDS) is the State of New Jersey's centralized longitudinal data system for education and workforce data. Its mission is to safely use the state's existing administrative data for evidence-based policymaking. Developed in 2012 through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, NJSDS creates a single place where state education, postsecondary education, employment, and workforce longitudinal data are securely stored to help stakeholders make data-informed decisions to improve student learning and labor market outcomes. The data system is owned by the State of New Jersey and operated by the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. NJSDS is a collaboration between the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the New Jersey Department of Education, and the New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority.

About the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development

The **John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development** at Rutgers University is devoted to transforming the workforce development system at the local, state, and federal levels. The center, located within the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, provides an independent source of analysis for reform and innovation in policymaking and employs cutting-edge research and evaluation methods to identify best practices in workforce development, education, and employment policy. It is also engaged in significant partnerships with the private sector, workforce organizations, and educational institutions to design effective education and training programs. It is deeply committed to assisting job seekers and workers attain the information, education, and skills training they need to move up the economic ladder.

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