

Exiting Vocational Rehabilitation with Employment, by Race, for Individuals with an Intellectual Disability

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There is a long-standing pattern of black/white racial disparity in employment in the general U.S. population. This Data Note explores whether this racial employment disparity, that characterizes the general population, is also found in the employment outcomes of people with intellectual disability (ID) who receive services from the vocational rehabilitation (VR) system.

Currently, in a tight labor market, black/white racial disparities in employment are at a low-point, but persist. In 2017, 60.4% of white individuals over 16 were employed, and 3.8% were unemployed. In that same year, only 57.6% of black individuals in the same age group were employed, while 7.5% were unemployed (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018).

During the 2017 data collection period, 34% of people with ID who exited the VR program gained employment. However, there were differences by race similar to those found in the general population. While 36% of white individuals with ID left VR with employment, only 29% of black individuals with ID left VR with employment.

Figure 1 shows how this gap varied by state. Although, in 14 states, black people with ID had higher employment rates than their white peers, in the majority of states, the employment rate of black people with ID was lower than that of their white counterparts.

These data illustrate that the pervasive race-based employment gap in the United States is also present within the sub-population of people with ID served by VR.

REFERENCES

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018). Labor force characteristics by race and ethnicity, 2017. Report 1076. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/race-and-ethnicity/2017/home.htm>

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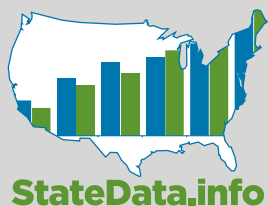
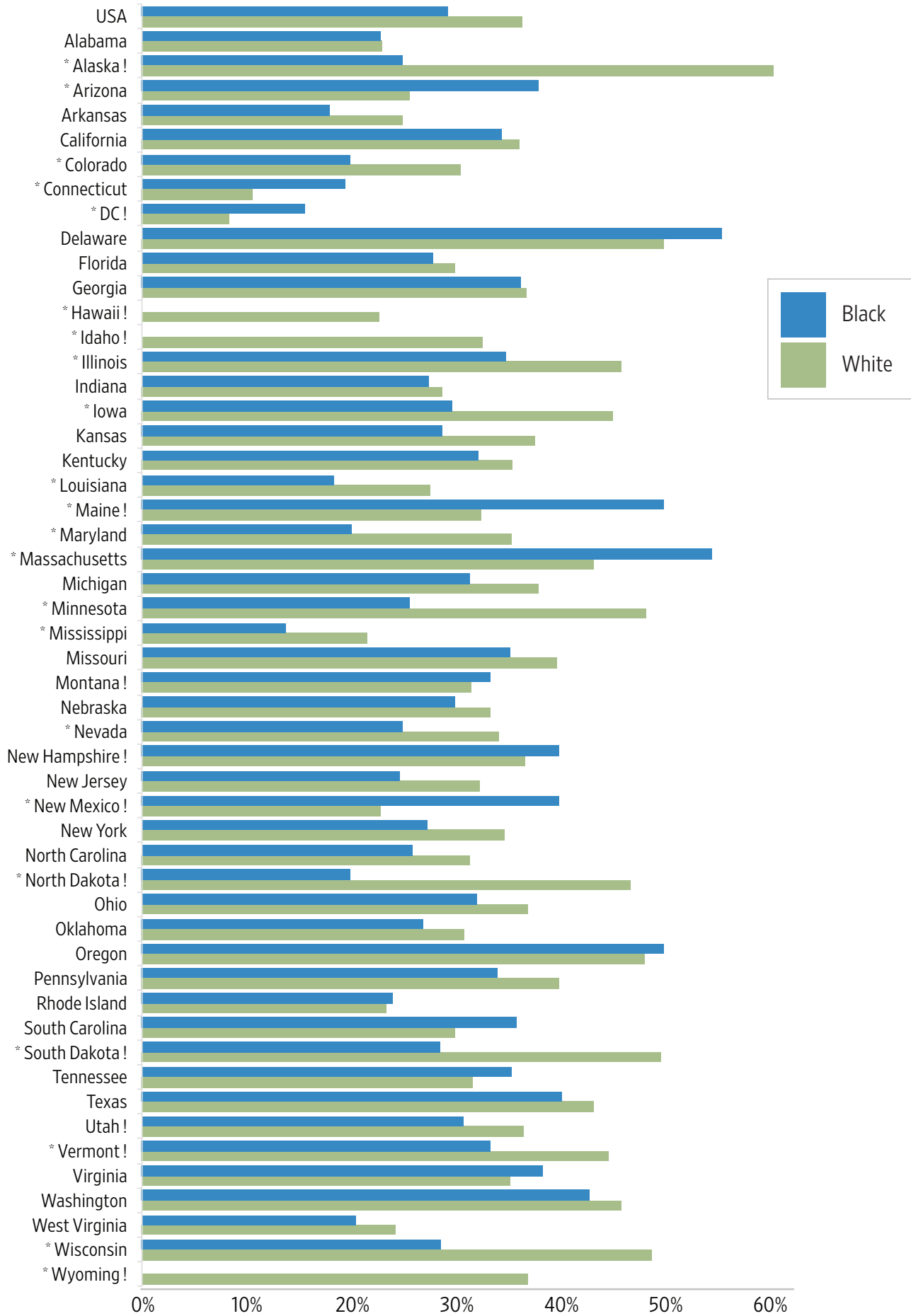


Figure 1. Employment rates by race for people exiting VR



* Cohen effect size $h > 0.20$

! denominator for individuals identified as black or white < 20