

# Differences among Young Adults Six Years after Graduation by Race and Gender

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April 2018

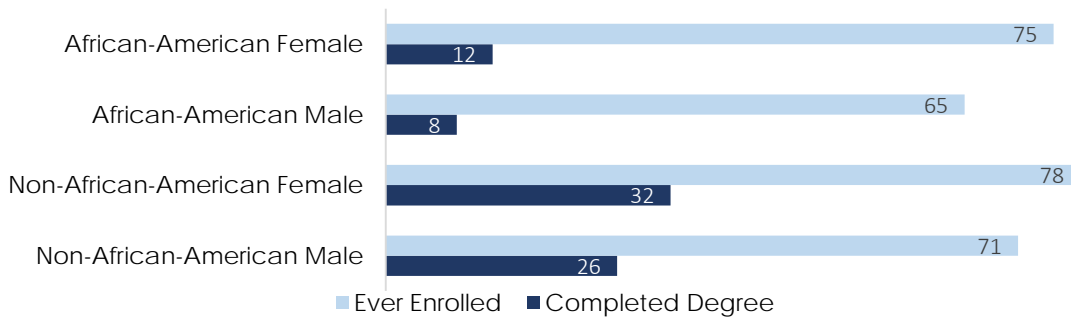
This brief is the sixth in BERC’s *Launching into Adulthood series*, which examines the trajectories of Baltimore graduates over six years. BERC established a partnership with Baltimore’s Promise and the Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS), which has made it possible to examine both college and earnings outcomes among City Schools graduates. We chose a single class, graduates in 2009, to examine college experiences and workforce activity.

This brief explores whether college degree completion, median annual earnings, and earning a livable wage differ by gender and race.

## Enrollment and Degree Completion after Six Years

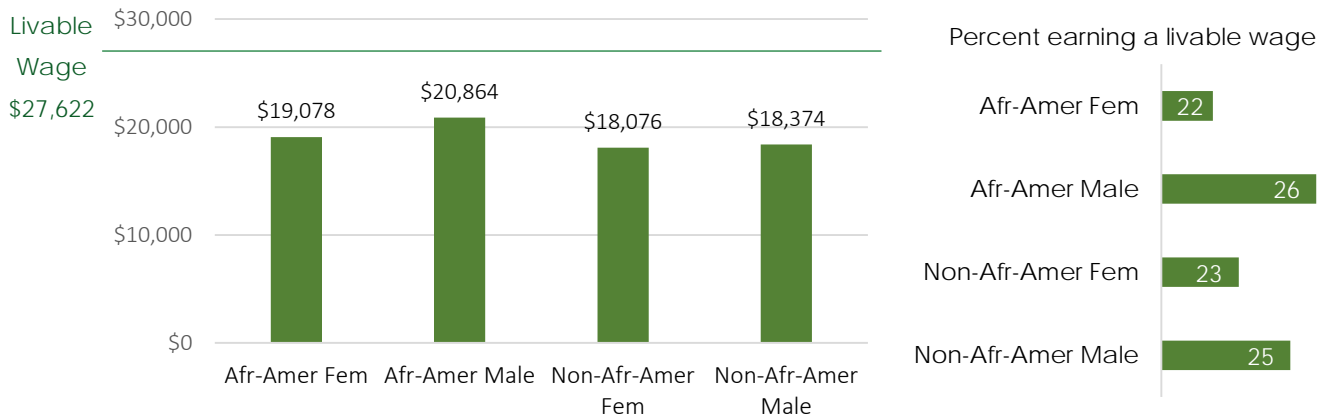
African-American male graduates were less likely to have enrolled in college over six years than African-American female or non-African-American graduates. Specifically, 65% of African-American male graduates enrolled in college, compared to 75% of African-American female, 71% of non-African-American male, and 78% of non-African-American female graduates. After six years, non-African-American graduates were over twice as likely as African-American graduates to have completed a college degree. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1. Percent of graduates enrolling in college and completing degrees by race and gender (class of 2009).



## Degree Completers

Figure 2. Median annual income and the percent earning a livable wage among college degree completers by race/gender (class of 2009).



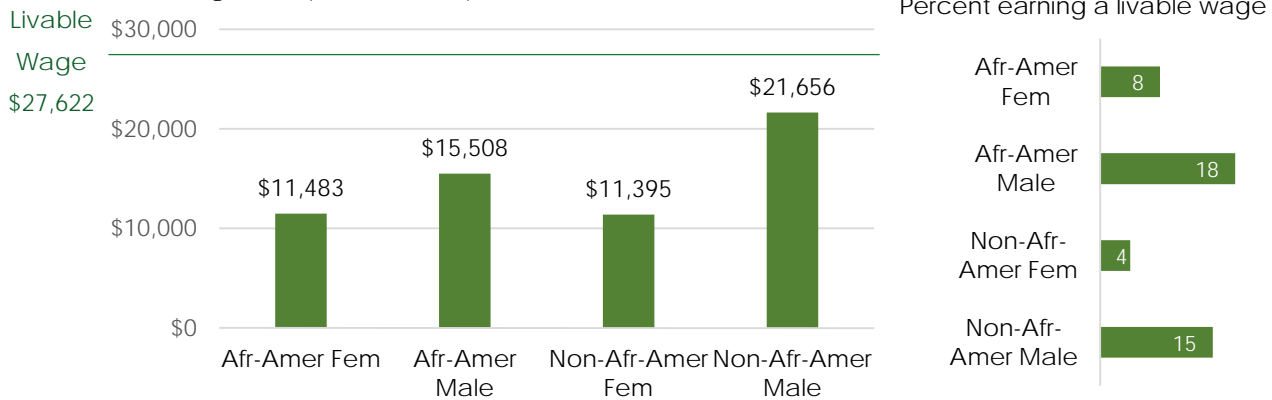
Among graduates who completed college degrees, African-American male graduates earned the highest median annual income in year six, at \$20,864, followed by African-American female graduates at \$19,078. Non-African-American male graduates' median annual income was \$18,374, and for non-African-American female graduates, \$18,076. (See Figure 2, left-hand panel.)

African-American male graduates with college degrees were the most likely, at 26%, to earn a [livable wage](#), compared to non-African-American male (25%), non-African-American female (23%), and African-American female graduates (22%). (See Figure 2, right-hand panel.)

### Young Adults with No College Experience

Among students who did not enroll in college, non-African-American male graduates had higher annual median earnings six years out of high school (\$21,656) than African-American male (\$15,508), African-American female (\$11,483), or non-African-American female graduates (\$11,395). (See Figure 3, left-hand panel.) However, African-American male graduates were the most likely to be earning a livable wage at 18%, compared to African-American female (8%), non-African-American male (15%), or non-African-American female graduates (4%). (See Figure 3, right-hand panel.)

Figure 3. Median annual income and the percent of those who never enrolled earning a livable wage by race/gender (class of 2009).



### Conclusions

Taken as a whole, these results show that differences in median annual earnings by both race and gender are less pronounced for high school graduates with college degrees than for high school graduates with no college experience. A college degree appears to be especially beneficial for African-Americans' earnings, as well as their likelihood of earning a livable wage. Among those who completed degrees, African-American male graduates had higher median annual earnings and were more likely than African-American female or non-African-American graduates with a college degree to earn a livable wage.

At the same time, African-American male graduates who never enrolled in college were the most likely to earn a livable wage relative to African-American female and non-African-American graduates with no college experience. These results point to a stark gender disparity, as well, since female graduates of any race, regardless of degree completion, were less likely to earn a livable wage than male graduates. Further research is necessary to determine whether household factors – perhaps family formation and child care – are responsible for such gender differences.

For details about the data source and methodology [see Launching into Adulthood Methodology brief](#).

*We are grateful for support from Baltimore's Promise, which allowed BERC to complete this research.*