

EDUCATION

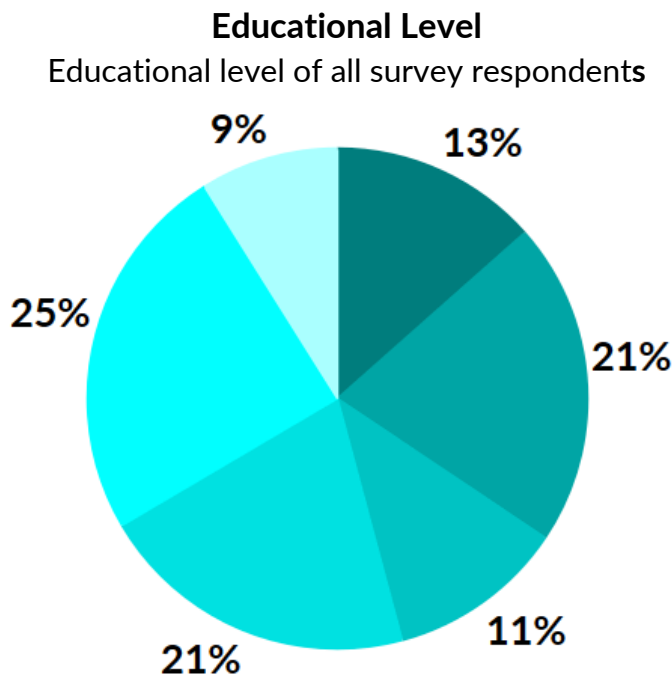
EDUCATION

- 
- Early Childhood Education & Development
 - High School Education
 - Enrollment in Higher Education
 - Language & Literacy
 - Workforce Development
 - Lived Experience
 - Formal Education
 - Trades & Skills
 - Vocational & Educational Training

The **Education** domain of the SDOH includes both the quality and availability of education. In this section, the level of formal educational achievement, which ranges from *Did Not Finish High School* up to *Postgraduate Degree*, is compared across multiple factors. The relationships between education levels and employment and finances, challenges faced at differing levels of educational achievement, and health outcomes based on those educational levels are also explored. Many of the challenges around education quality and availability of non-traditional education programs were discussed during the focus groups and are highlighted in this section.

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Respondents were asked about their educational level. This factor was then explored using a number of other demographic factors such as race and where the respondent lives.



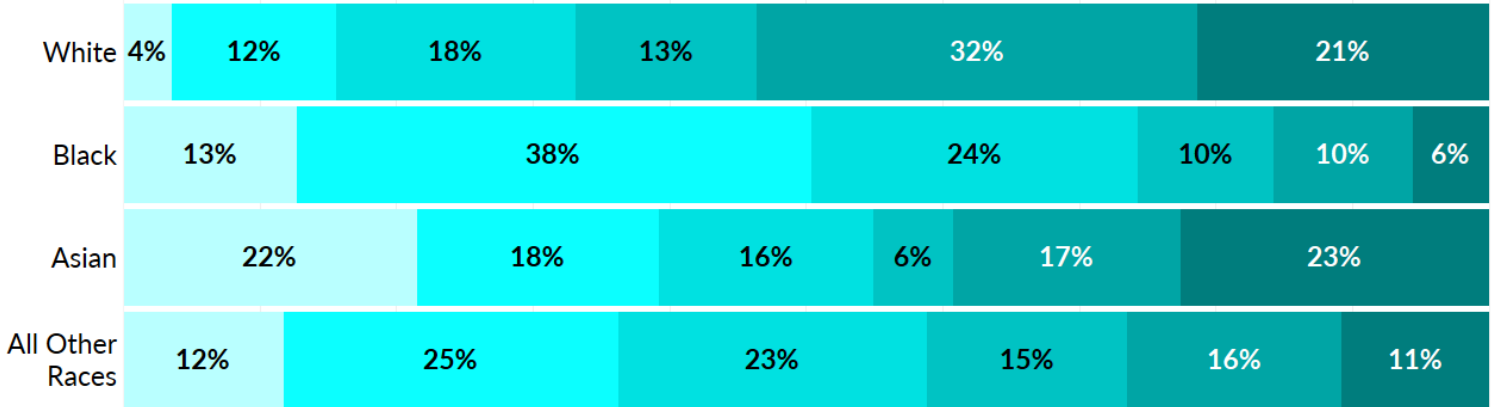
The highest percentage of respondents had a *High School or GED Equivalency* level of education.

Black respondents reported the lowest percentages of *Bachelor's Degree* and *Postgraduate Degree*.

- Postgraduate Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Associate's Degree
- Some College
- High School or GED Equivalency
- Did Not Finish High School

Educational Level by Race

The percentage of respondents and their educational level. Because of smaller numbers of respondents, anyone who did not identify as Asian, Black or White is grouped into Other Races.



When looking at education level by race, Asian respondents had the highest percentage of both *Postgraduate Degree* and *Did Not Finish High School*, highlighting the diversity within that race category (See Appendix A).

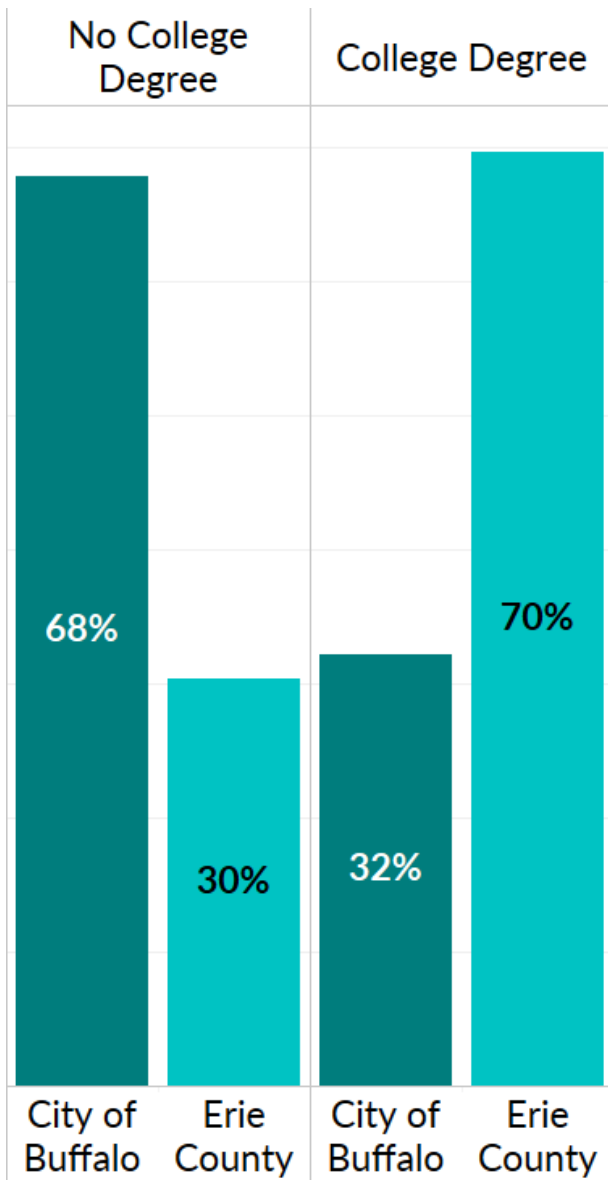
100%
of Chinese respondents (12 of 12)
had a *College Degree*.

69%
of Burmese respondents (9 of 13)
Did Not Finish High School.

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Percentage of Respondents With a College Degree Comparing the City of Buffalo to Erie County

Those in ZIP codes representing the City of Buffalo are compared to all other ZIP codes in Erie County (excluding the City of Buffalo).



82%

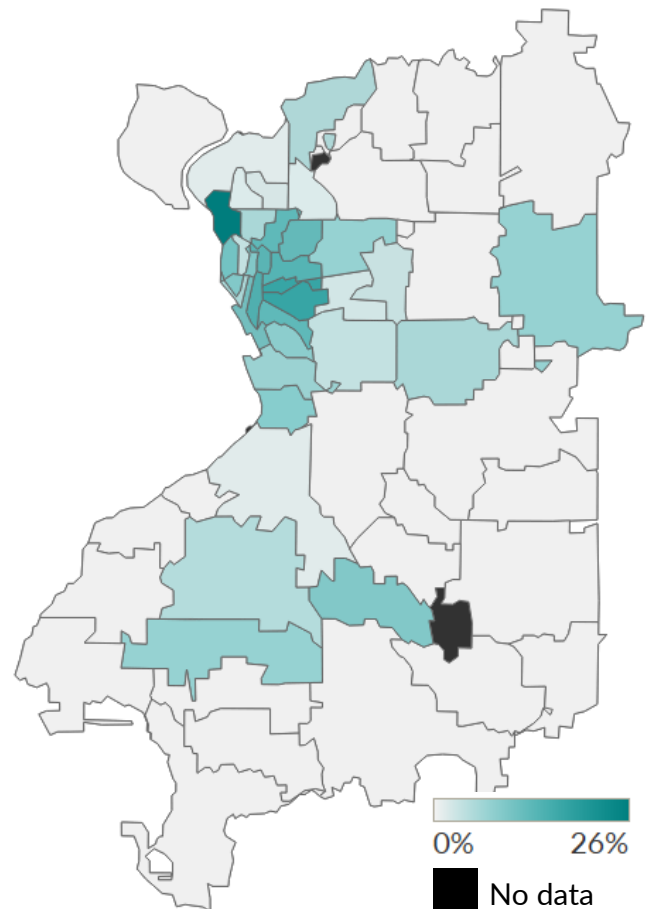
of respondents with a *History of Incarceration* had No College Degree compared to 46% with *No History of Incarceration*.

Location and Education

Respondents living in the City of Buffalo were less likely to have at least *Some College* or a *College Degree*. The ZIP codes with the highest percentages of respondents who *Did Not Finish High School* are concentrated in the City of Buffalo.

Percentage of Respondents That Did Not Finish High School by ZIP Code

Darker colors indicate ZIP codes with higher rates of respondents that *Did Not Finish High School*.



Some ZIP codes have fewer than 10 respondents. Therefore, the rates depicted on the map may not be representative of the community within these areas.

62%

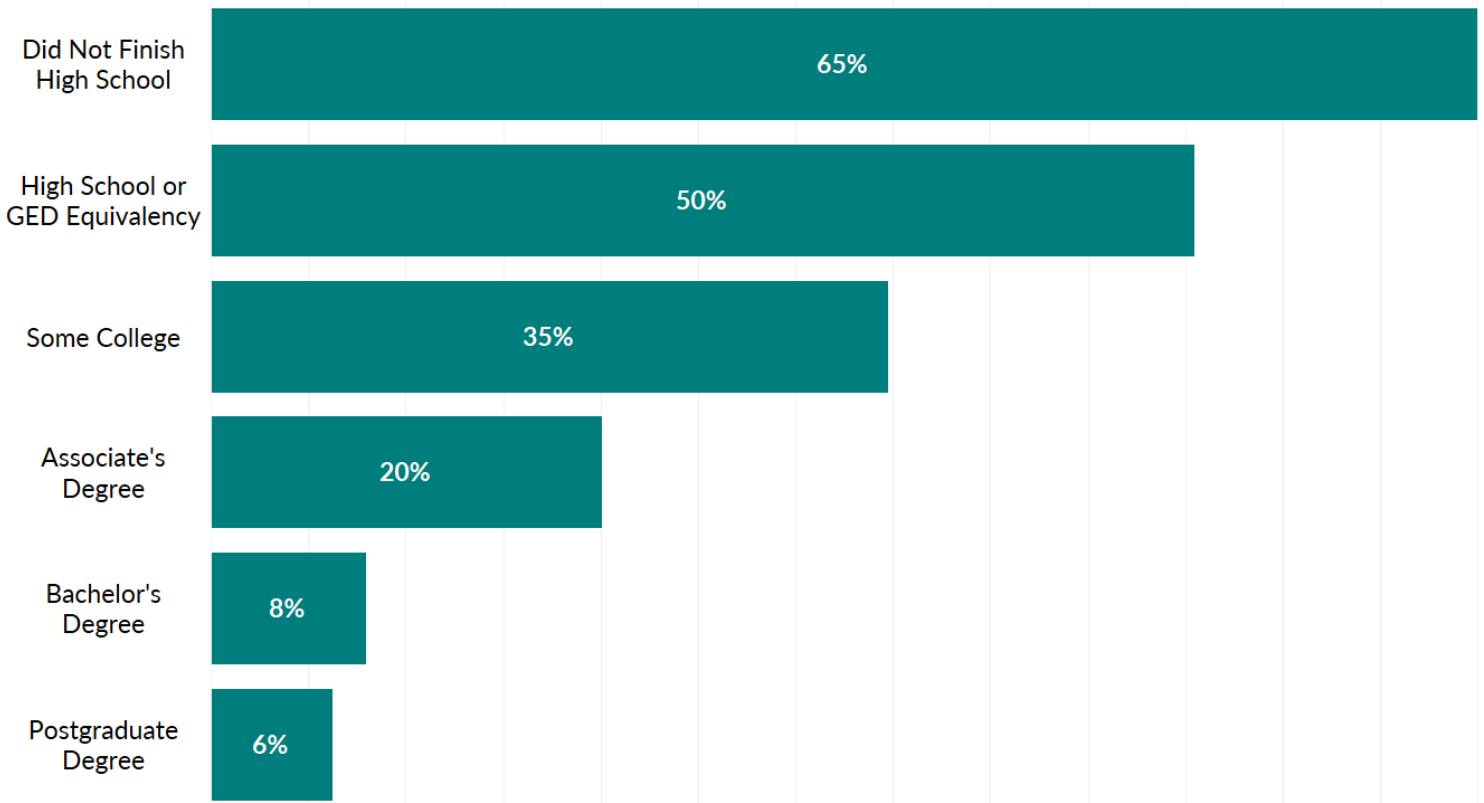
of respondents *With a Disability* had No College Degree compared to 45% *Without a Disability*.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND FINANCES

Education level can impact an individual’s likelihood of employment and can be a crucial driver of income and the ability to own a home. These factors can then affect how someone feels about their financial security. Respondents were asked about their employment (see Appendix G, Question 15).

Percentage of Respondents Unemployed by Educational Level

The percentage of respondents at each educational level who said they were *Unemployed* is displayed below. This table also excludes anyone younger than 18 (as they are likely still in school) and respondents who indicated that they are *Retired*.



Every increase in formal educational level corresponded with decreasing unemployment.

75%

of White respondents who were *Employed* had a *College Degree*, while only 47% of *Employed* People of Color had a *College Degree*. However, this finding ranged widely when this group was looked at by individual race categories. The lowest rate of *Employed* respondents who had a *College Degree* was among American Indian or Alaska Native respondents at 38%, while the highest rate was among Pacific Islander or Hawaii Native respondents at 73%. Of note, the rate among Asian respondents was 70%, and among Black respondents the rate was 42%.

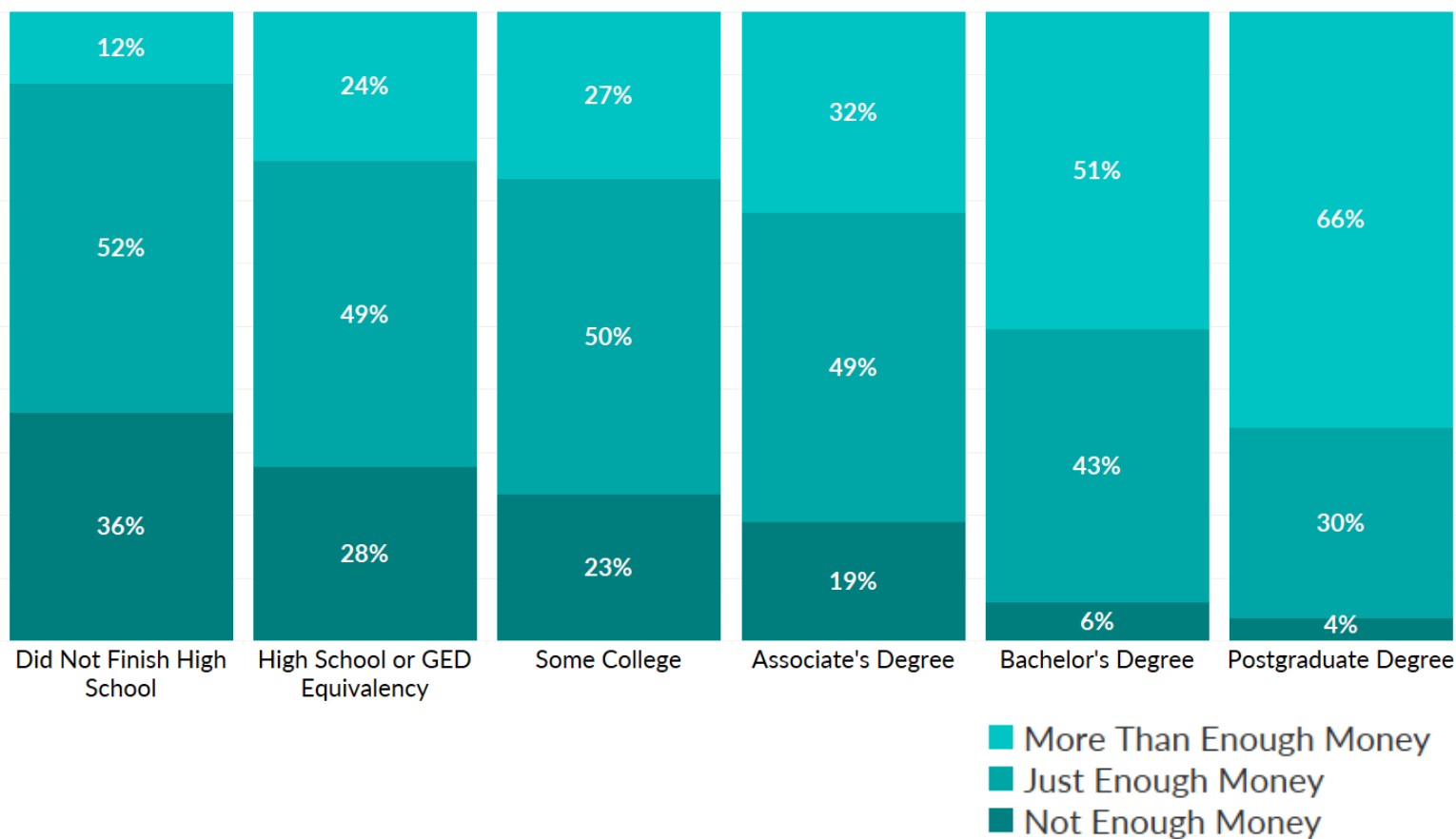
Across every race category, respondents who were *Employed* were more likely to have a *College Degree*.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND FINANCES

The survey asked, “What best describes your financial situation?” (see Appendix G, Question 28). Respondents could only select one of the options.

Educational Level and Financial Situation

Respondents' educational level and self-reported financial situation based on the options of *More Than Enough Money*, *Just Enough Money*, or *Not Enough Money*.



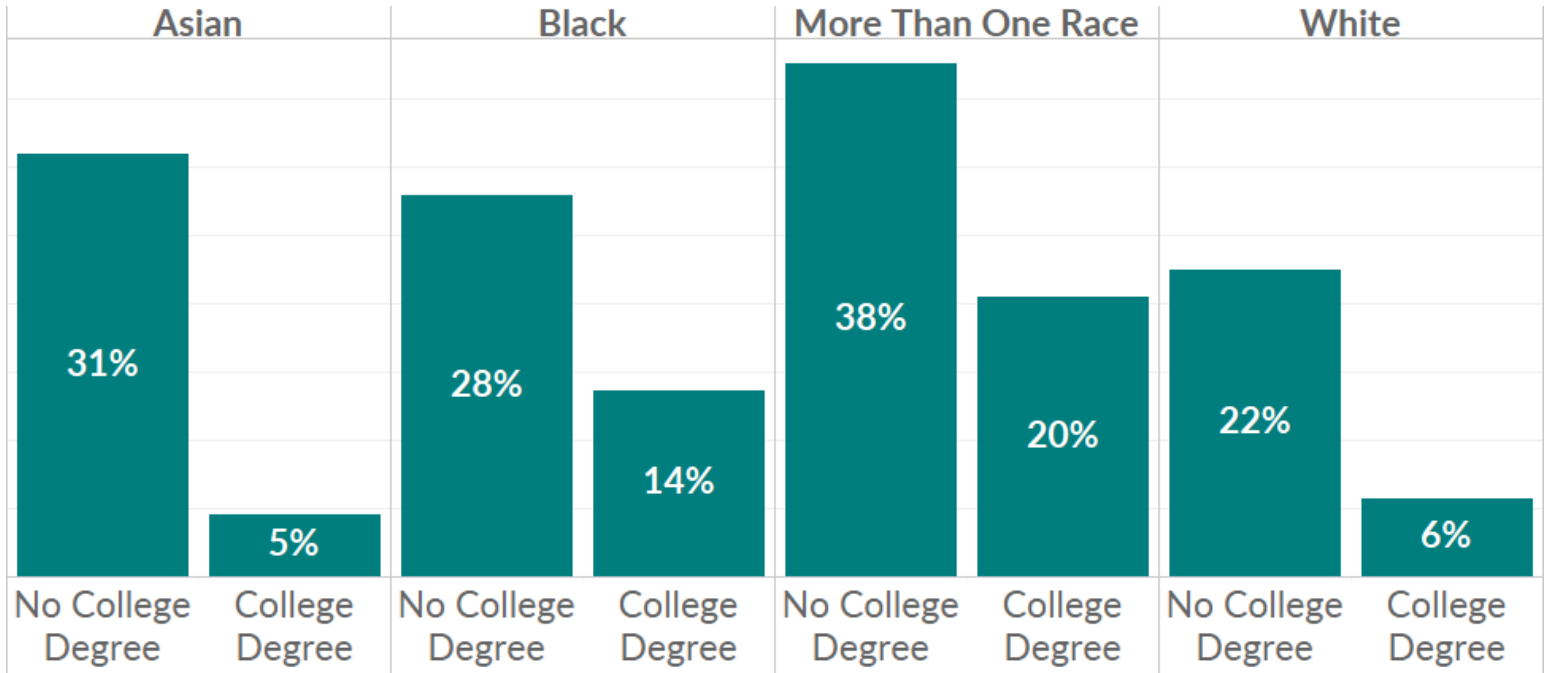
Education & Financial Status

The more formal education respondents had, the more likely they were to report having *More Than Enough Money* and the less likely they were to report having *Not Enough Money*.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND FINANCES

Comparing Respondents With *Not Enough Money* by Education Level and Race

Educational level was grouped into either *College Degree* or *No College Degree*. Each grouped level then compares the percentage of respondents that stated *Not Enough Money* by race.



Having a *College Degree* decreased the likelihood of a respondent stating they have *Not Enough Money*. This was true across nearly all race categories.

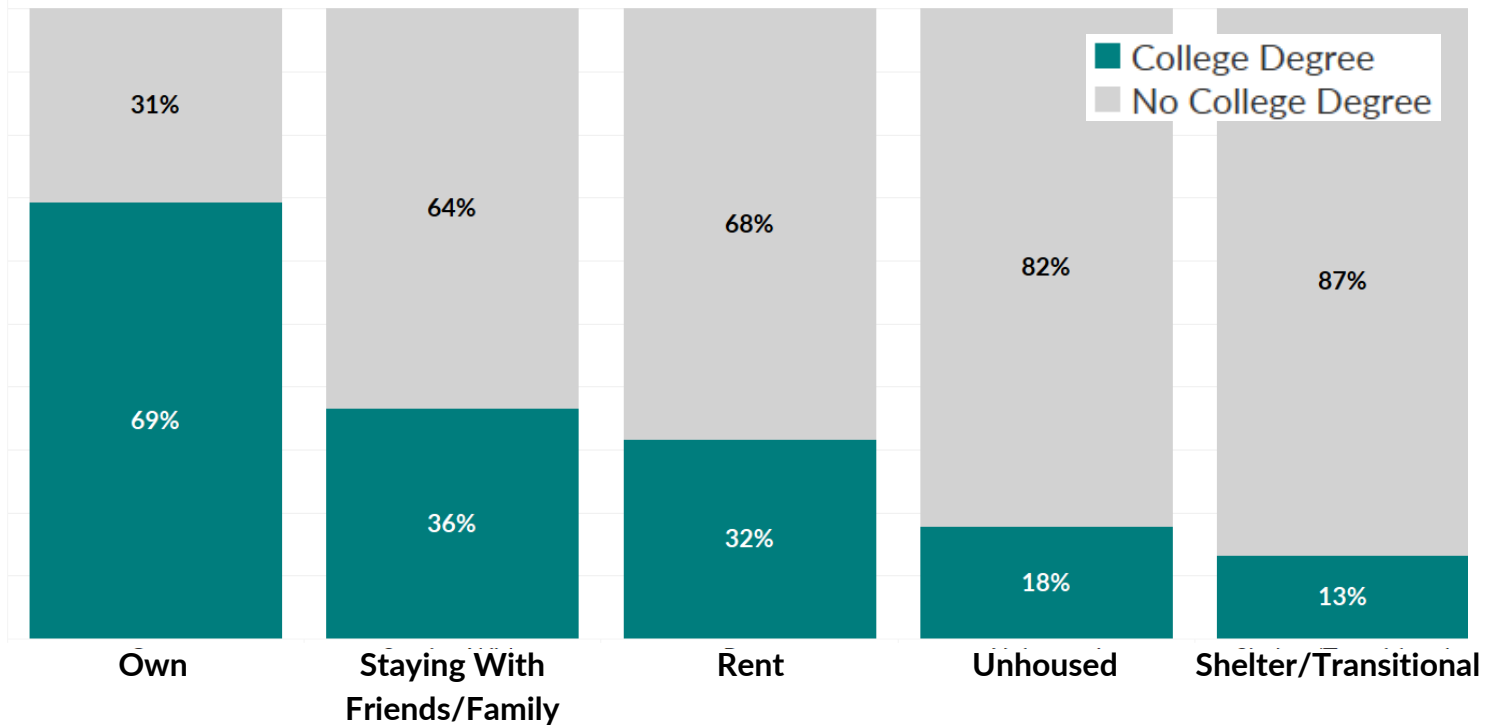
The impact of a *College Degree* was most pronounced among Asian respondents, where 31% with *No College Degree* reported *Not Enough Money* compared to only 5% with a *College Degree*.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND FINANCES

A combination of income, employment, and the availability and cost of housing options generally influences an individual’s housing situation. Analysis of survey responses has shown the association between education and employment as well as educational level and financial status. The charts below show that educational level can also directly relate to homeownership and housing challenges.

Housing Situation by College Degree

The survey asked “Which describes your housing situation?” (see Appendix G, Question 20). Respondents' housing situation is displayed by whether or not they have a college degree.



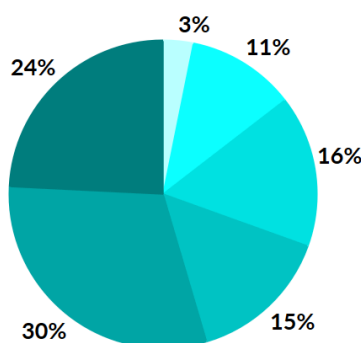
Formal Education Directly Relates to Homeownership and Housing Challenges

Respondents with more formal education were more likely to Own their home and less likely to be Unhoused or in a Shelter/Transitional Housing.

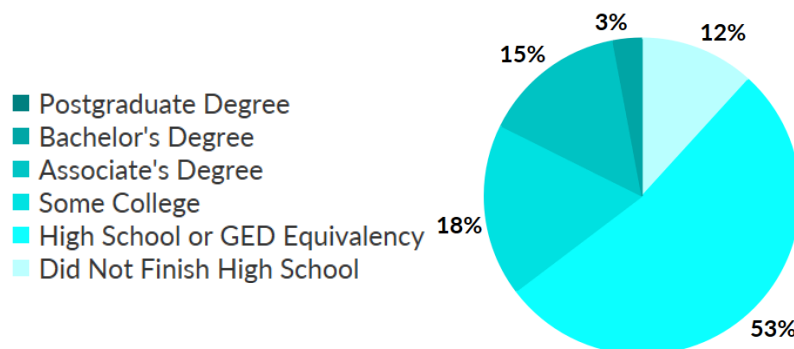
64% of those in a Shelter/Transitional Housing reported that they Did Not Finish High School. The percentage of each Homeowner and Unhoused respondent's education level is broken out below.

(For more, see Appendix A)

Educational Levels: Homeowners



Educational Levels: Unhoused Respondents



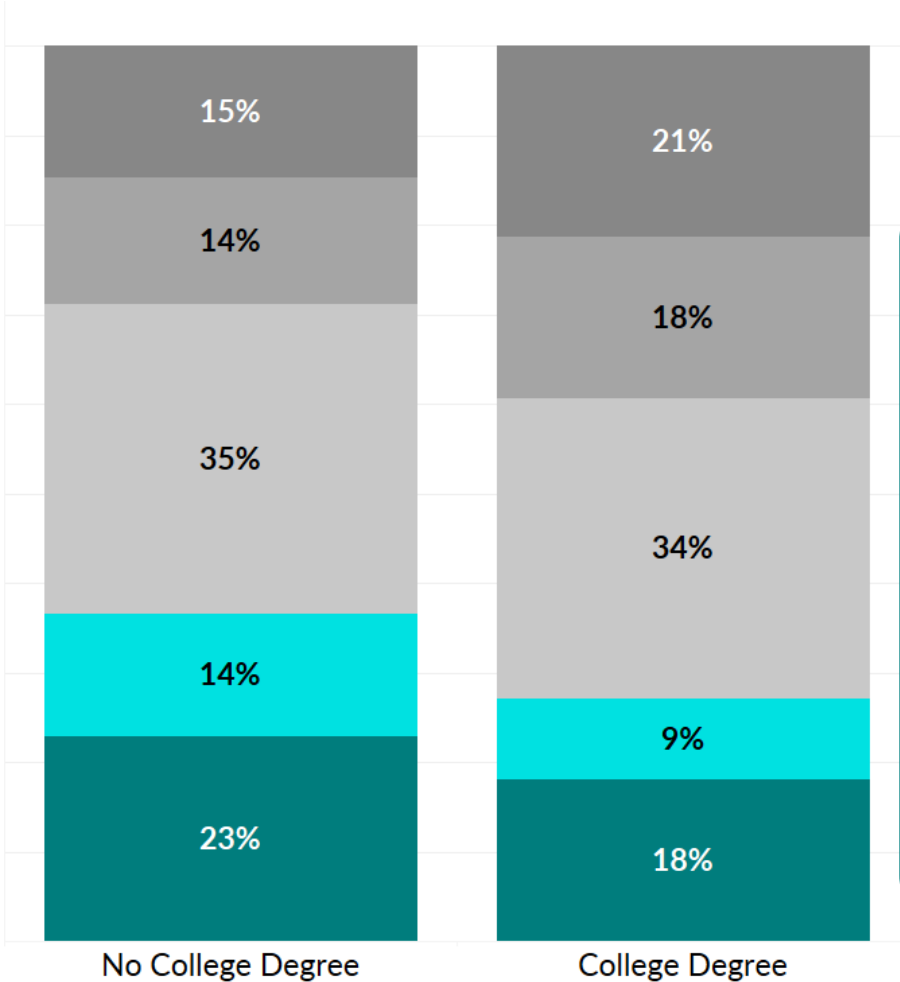
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND FINANCES

The survey asked respondents, “Which best describes your hopes for your financial situation?” (see Appendix G, Question 29). Respondents could select multiple responses that reflected their hopes.

Financial Hopes by College Degree

The percentage of responses for each of the five options to the right. Educational level is grouped into *College Degree* or *No College Degree*.

- Comfortable
- I am aware of resources
- I have a plan
- I don't have resources
- I don't know how



Education & Financial Hopes

Respondents with a *College Degree* were more likely to be *Comfortable* with their current financial situation compared to those with *No College Degree*.

Respondents with a *College Degree* were also more likely to be aware of resources to improve their financial situation.

The highest percentage of respondents who would like to improve their financial situation but don't know how was among those who *Did Not Finish High School*.

Comfort With Financial Situation by Race

White respondents were increasingly more *Comfortable* with their financial situation as their level of formal education increased. This trend was not apparent for People of Color. As the level of formal education increased for People of Color, the rate at which they reported feeling *Comfortable* with their financial situation was relatively consistent and was much lower than White respondents at nearly every educational level (See Appendix A).

EDUCATION & CHALLENGES

Achieving higher levels of formal education can be more difficult for those with those without social supports.

Average Social Supports by Educational Level

Social supports can be in the form of *Emotional Support*, *Having Fun*, and *Practical Help*. Perceived available support from friends and family was rated on a scale from *Never* to *Always*, to which values of 0-4 were assigned. The shapes on the social support charts represent averages of these values for each type of support, comparing respondents at each educational level. The numerical values represent the following: 0 = *Never* 1 = *Rarely* 2 = *Sometimes* 3 = *Often* 4 = *Always*



* *Emotional Support* and *Having Fun* have nearly identical values for those with a *Postgraduate Degree*.

Social Supports and Education Levels

Practical Help was the lowest reported social support across all levels of education. Notably, all types of social supports increased as the levels of formal education increased.

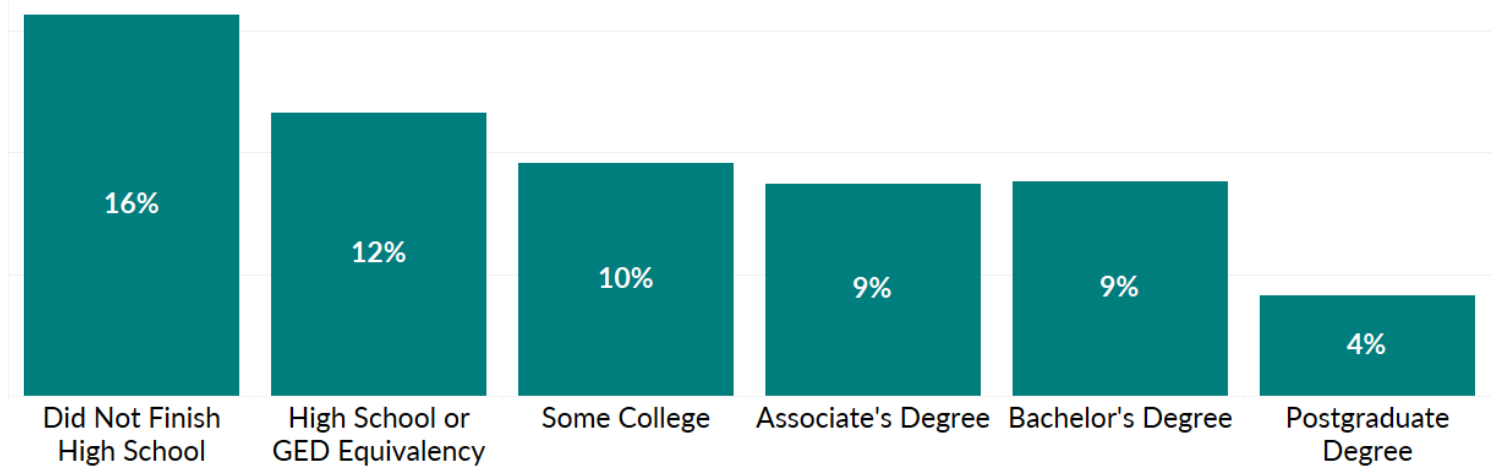
This finding was seen across many demographic groups, regardless of race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. For Social Supports by Race and Education, see Appendix A.

EDUCATION & CHALLENGES

Obtaining a formal education can be more challenging for people who are *Struggling With Substance Use*. Having different levels of formal education can also impact an individual’s food situation.

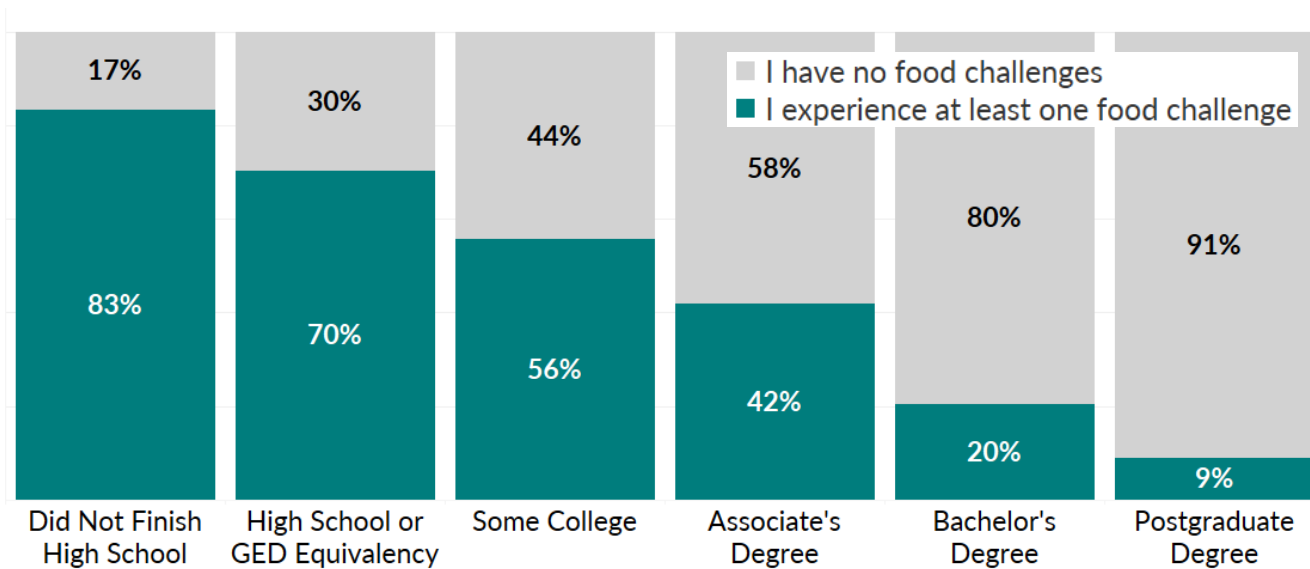
Percentage of Respondents Struggling With Substance Use By Educational Level

The percentage of respondents at each educational level who said Yes when asked, "Are you struggling with the use of any type of substance?"



Percentage of Respondents With Food Challenges by Educational Level

Respondents were asked, "Which best describes your food situation?" (See Appendix G, Question 25). Respondents could select multiple options. Respondents who selected only *My household is able to buy enough food with salary/wage money* were grouped into *I have no food challenges*, and any respondent who selected any one or more than one of the other options was grouped into *I experience at least one food challenge*. The percentage of respondents in each group at each educational level is below.



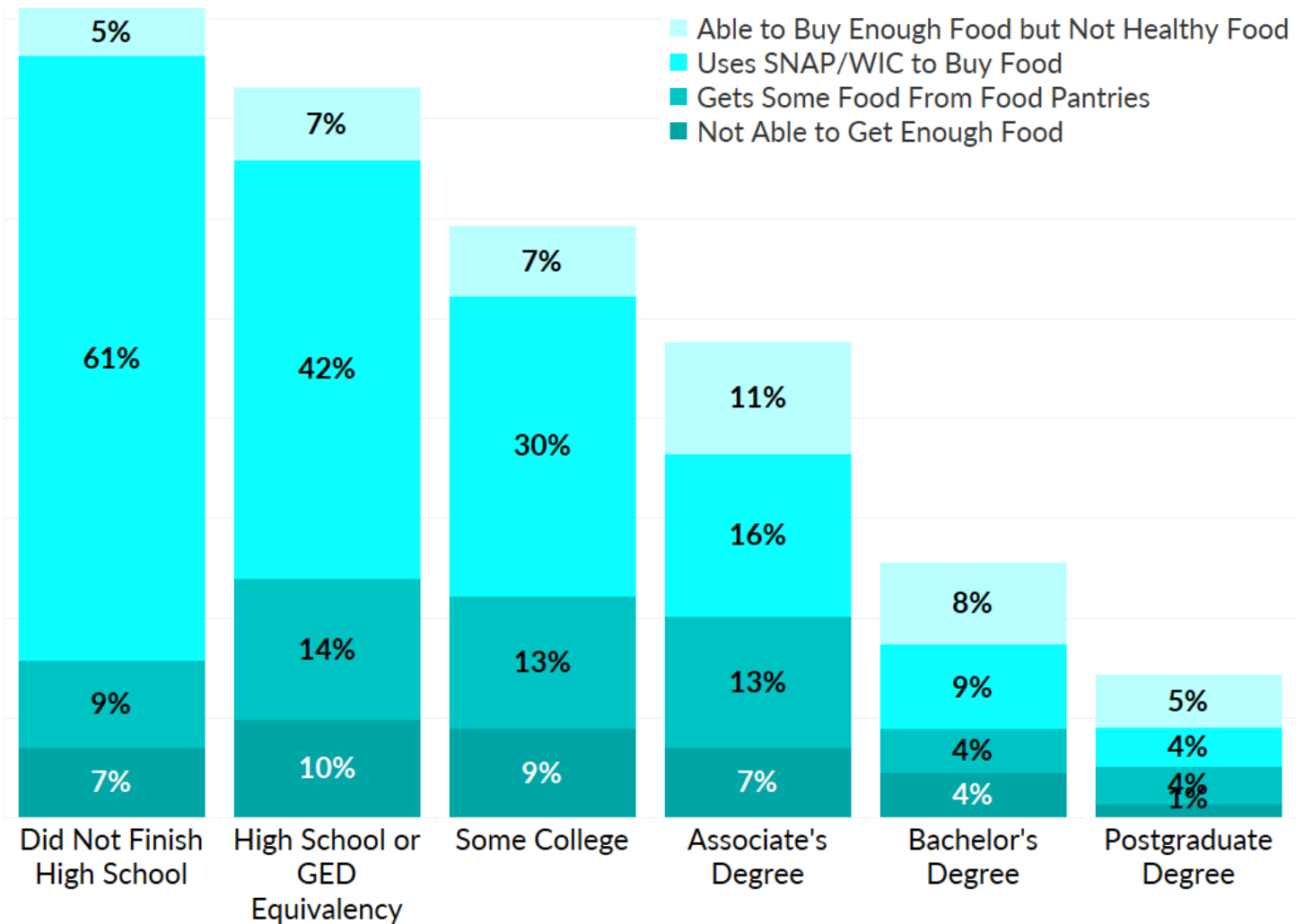
Respondents were less likely to be *Struggling With Substance Use* as educational levels increased. Similarly, as educational levels increased, food challenges decreased.

EDUCATION & CHALLENGES

Looking further into the question “Which best describes your food situation?” reveals that at each educational level, different challenges around food are reported.

Food Challenges by Educational Level

Below are the percentage of responses selected for “Which best describes your food situation?” at each educational level, excluding responses from those who stated they are able to get enough food.



70%

of Hispanic/Latino respondents who *Did Not Finish High School* reported *Using SNAP/WIC to Buy Food*.

Gets Food From Food Pantries and Not Able to Get Enough Food were selected most frequently by respondents with *High School or GED Equivalency, Some College, or an Associate's Degree*.

The lower the level of formal education, the more likely respondents were to use *SNAP/WIC to Buy Food*.

EDUCATION & CHALLENGES

Eating healthy is not just a personal choice. Very often, an individual's environment, access, and resources limit their ability to eat healthy food options. To explore challenges to healthy eating, respondents were asked, "Which of the following about your diet is true?" (See Appendix G, Question 26).

Challenges to a Healthy Diet by Educational Level

Respondents could select multiple options. The percentage of responses for each challenge at each educational level is below. The higher percentage of responses, the darker the cell is shaded.

Respondents that selected *My diet is mostly healthy* are excluded from this table.

	Did Not Finish High School	High School or GED Equivalency	Associate's Degree	Some College	Bachelor's Degree	Postgraduate Degree
Affordability	26%	29%	44%	37%	35%	33%
Time	15%	10%	21%	17%	31%	38%
Knowledge	22%	22%	9%	15%	9%	7%
Taste	14%	16%	12%	13%	13%	10%
Availability	6%	12%	9%	10%	7%	6%
Interest	9%	6%	2%	4%	3%	5%
Transportation	8%	6%	3%	5%	2%	1%

Biggest Challenges to a Healthy Diet

For those with higher education, *Time* was among the biggest challenges to eating a healthy diet, while those with less education listed *Knowledge* of healthy foods as one of their biggest challenges. Challenges to a healthy diet were reported at higher rates when education level was examined in combination with additional factors like caregiver status.

10%

of respondents with *No College Degree* who *Have a Disability* reported they would eat healthier if they had better *Transportation*, compared to 5% of respondents with a *College Degree* who *Have a Disability*.

16%

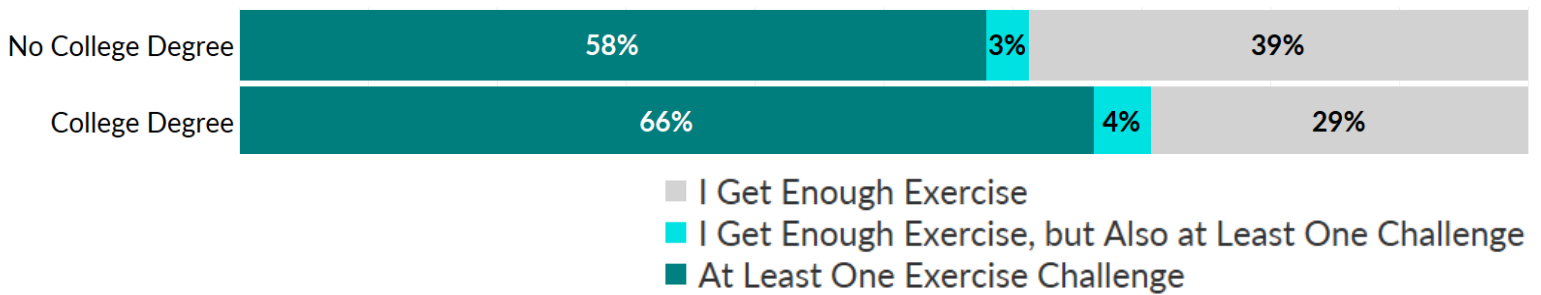
of respondents with *No College Degree* and who were responsible for *Child Care* reported they would eat healthier if they had more *Knowledge* of healthy foods, compared to 8% of respondents with a *College Degree* and were responsible for *Child Care*.

EDUCATION & CHALLENGES

Much like healthy eating, exercise is not just a personal decision but is shaped by the situation and environment of each individual. To explore challenges to exercise, respondents were asked, “Which of the following about exercise is true?” (See Appendix G, Question 27).

Percentage of Respondents With Exercise Challenges by College Degree

Respondents could select multiple options. Respondents who selected only *I feel that I get enough exercise* were grouped into *I Get Enough Exercise*. Respondents who selected *I feel that I get enough exercise* and any other challenge were grouped into *I Get Enough Exercise, but Also at Least One Challenge*. Any respondent who selected at least one challenge was grouped into *At Least One Exercise Challenge*. The percentage of respondents in each exercise group for *College Degree* compared to *No College Degree* is below.

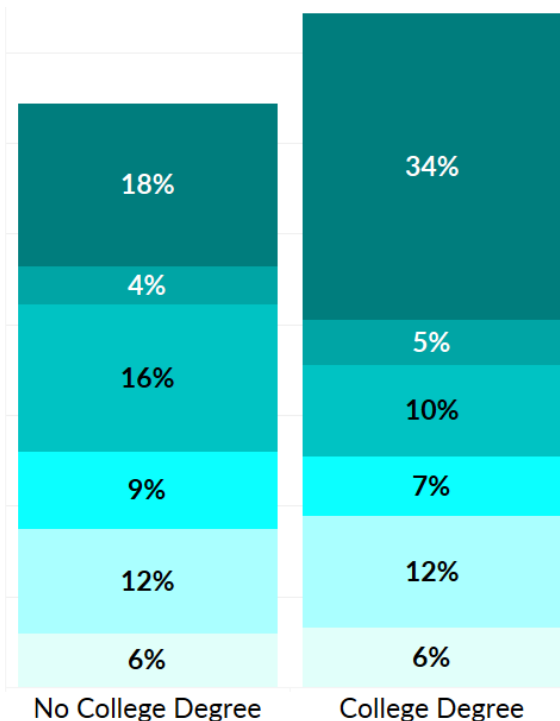


Challenges to Exercise by Educational Level

Below is the percentage of responses selected for “Which of the following about exercise is true?” among those with and without a college degree. Response options are on the right. The response *I feel that I get enough exercise* was excluded.

Time was the leading challenge for those with a *College Degree*. This was followed by *Pain or Illness*, then *Gym Access*. As levels of formal education decreased, respondents increasingly reported *Gym Access* as a challenge.

20%
of respondents who *Did Not Finish High School* listed *Gym Access* as a challenge to exercise compared with only 9% of respondents with a *Postgraduate Degree*.



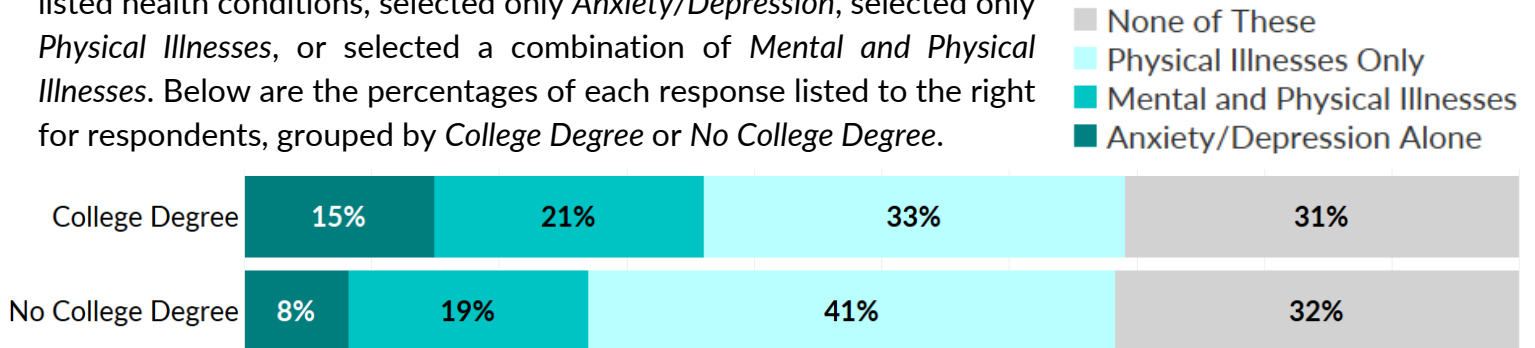
- If I Had More Time
- If I Felt Safer in My Neighborhood
- If I Had Access to a Gym
- If I Knew What Exercise Was Good for Me
- I Don't Because of Pain, Injury, or Illness
- I Don't Want to Exercise

EDUCATION & HEALTH CONDITIONS

SDOH factors like education can influence mental and physical health conditions. To determine respondents' health conditions, they were asked to select from a list of possible health conditions (See Appendix G, Question 34).

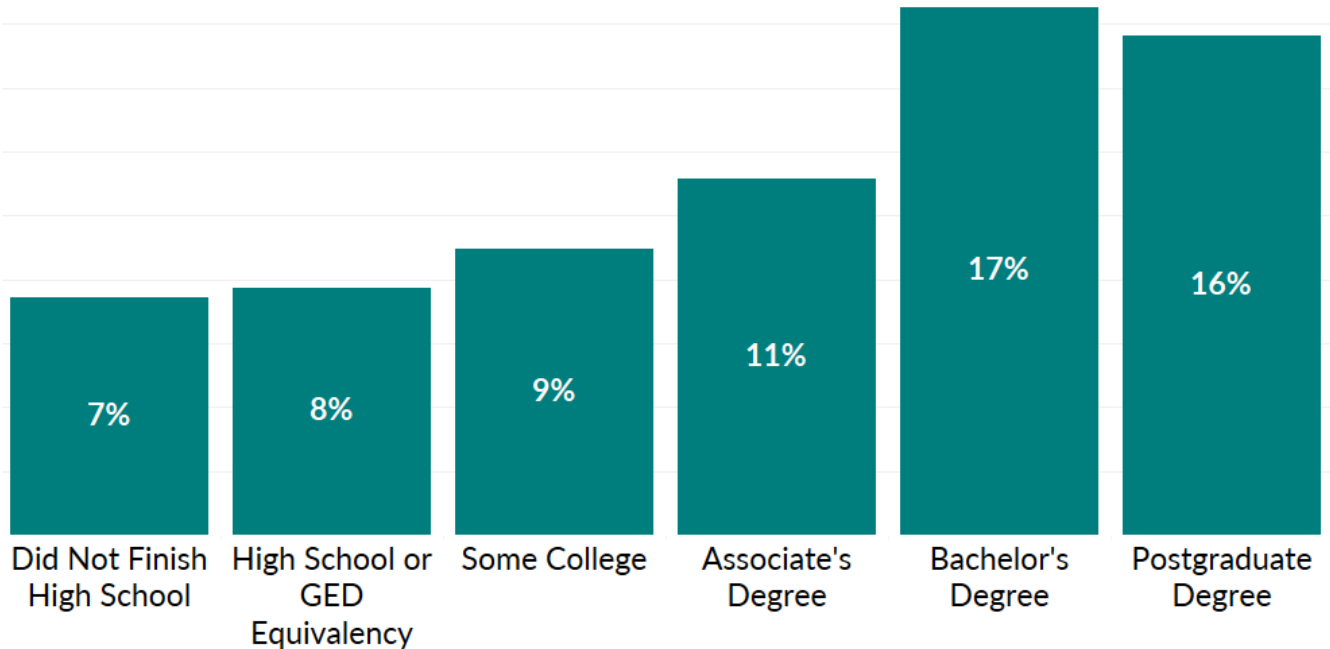
Health Outcomes by Educational Level

Responses were grouped into those who stated they had *None* of the listed health conditions, selected only *Anxiety/Depression*, selected only *Physical Illnesses*, or selected a combination of *Mental and Physical Illnesses*. Below are the percentages of each response listed to the right for respondents, grouped by *College Degree* or *No College Degree*.



Anxiety and Depression by Educational Level

The percentage of respondents who selected only *Anxiety/Depression* at each educational level. This excludes those who selected *Anxiety/Depression* in combination with a physical health condition.



Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation, and Higher Rates of Anxiety/Depression

In general, those with lower levels of formal education reported higher rates of *Physical Illnesses Only*, while those with higher levels of formal education indicated higher rates of *Anxiety/Depression*.

However, LGBTQ+ respondents and respondents of Trans, Nonbinary, and All Other Genders reported higher rates of *Anxiety/Depression* across all levels of education.

EDUCATION & HEALTH CONDITIONS

Health Conditions by Educational Level

The percentage of responses for each condition at each educational level is shown below. The higher the percentage of responses, the darker the cell is shaded. Respondents could select multiple options. Respondents who selected *None of These* are excluded from this table.

	Did Not Finish High School	High School or GED Equivalency	Some College	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Postgraduate Degree
Anxiety/Depression	19%	20%	22%	22%	32%	30%
High Blood Pressure	29%	25%	21%	22%	17%	18%
Asthma	25%	16%	15%	13%	14%	12%
Obesity	5%	9%	13%	14%	20%	19%
Diabetes	10%	14%	11%	10%	7%	8%
Other Lower Respiratory Disease	3%	4%	4%	4%	2%	1%
Cancer (Any Type)	2%	3%	2%	4%	3%	4%
Disease of the Heart	2%	3%	5%	4%	1%	2%
Long Term COVID-19	0%	2%	3%	4%	2%	4%
Kidney Disease	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%
Disease of the Liver	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%

Rates of Health Conditions by Race, Ethnicity, and Education Level

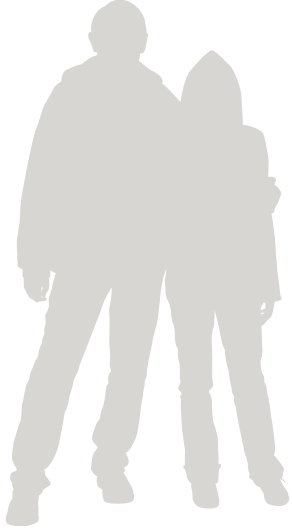
When health outcomes were analyzed by race and education level, People of Color with a *College Degree* were more likely to report *High Blood Pressure* and *Obesity* than White respondents with a *College Degree*.

When health outcomes were analyzed by ethnicity and educational level, Hispanic/Latino respondents with a *College Degree* were more likely to report *Obesity* and *Diabetes* than Non-Hispanic/Latino respondents with a *College Degree*.

FOCUS GROUPS ON EDUCATION

On School and Education Quality

Many participants across focus groups spoke to inequities that they see in resources and education quality in the City of Buffalo compared to some suburban school districts.



“I think the Buffalo public school district is a big challenge. [...] Everyone is college-focused and I think we need to understand that a lot of our kids are not going to college, and so they're being limited on opportunities.”

-Hispanic/Latino Focus Group

On Educational and Trade Programs

Several focus groups mentioned the importance and value of non-traditional education programs.

“Even the GED program here. There are girls that don't have their GED and they are not called down for the program. There's no educational benefits. [...] They can't better themselves, they can't go to school, they can't do anything to get a leg up when they go out these doors.”

-Incarcerated Women Focus Group



“[We need trade schools] and more programs for us to get skills. I didn't get to finish college, but I would like to go back. But I would like to have a place where I would see people who look like me that are entering school. I wish we had [...] something for us.”

-Trans and Nonbinary Focus Group

FOCUS GROUPS ON EDUCATION

Other Quotes About Education

Other issues around education were also discussed within focus groups. These included the importance of good grades, the challenge of getting credit for education acquired in another country, forced reliance on government programs, and the value of lived experience.

“These agencies only provide enough information and knowledge for us to have to keep coming to them to be fed fish. They're not teaching us how to do our own fishing. They're not giving us the adequate knowledge and information and resources we need to become self-reliant and self-sufficient. The only thing they're doing is they're giving us enough information and resources to keep us dependent.”

-LGBTQ+ Focus Group



“So now there's a big push for lived experience. So when it comes to directly impacting problematic situations that exist in communities, it is the grassroots people that are going to give you the answers that you need. It is really the lived experience people that are crucial to you really getting the assistance needed. [...] Anybody with a degree can assume what the problem is but these people with lived experience know what the problem is. They live with the problem. They've made it through the problem. They've transitioned through [the] problem before [or] they're still currently in the problem. So why would you go to a college graduate who has never experienced the problem?”

-LGBTQ+ Focus Group