

National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes

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# Postsecondary Achievement of Deaf People in Alabama: 2017

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**NDC**  
National Deaf Center  
on Postsecondary Outcomes



**IDEAs**  
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Office of Special Education Programs  
U.S. Department of Education



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Postsecondary experiences of deaf people vary widely across the nation. National reports about educational attainment and employment are available at [nationaldeafcenter.org](http://nationaldeafcenter.org) (Garberoglio, Cawthon, & Bond, 2016; Garberoglio, Cawthon, & Sales, 2017). This report provides current estimates of postsecondary achievement in Alabama. We used 5-year estimates of data from the American Community Survey (ACS), a national survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, to generate the findings in this report. More information about this dataset and the analyses are shared in the Methods section at the end of this report.

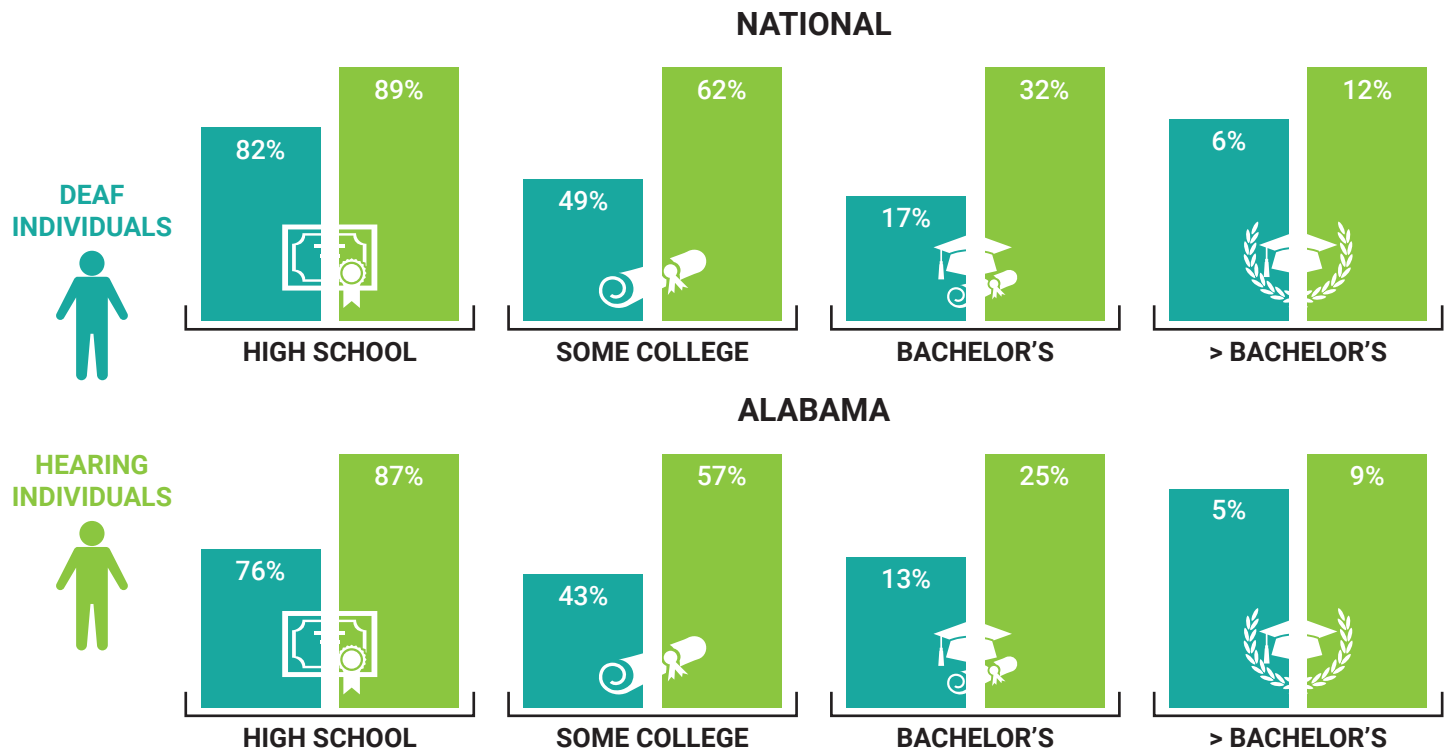
In Alabama,  
**3.1%**  
 of 25–64 year  
 olds are deaf.

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

In the United States, deaf people attained lower levels of education than their hearing peers in 2015, according to national educational attainment data (Garberoglio et al., 2017). Educational attainment also varied across gender, race, and ethnicity.

Figure 1

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



In this report, we use the term *deaf* in an all-encompassing manner to include individuals who identify as Deaf, hard of hearing, hearing impaired, late deafened, and deafdisabled.

Figure 2

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN ALABAMA BY GENDER

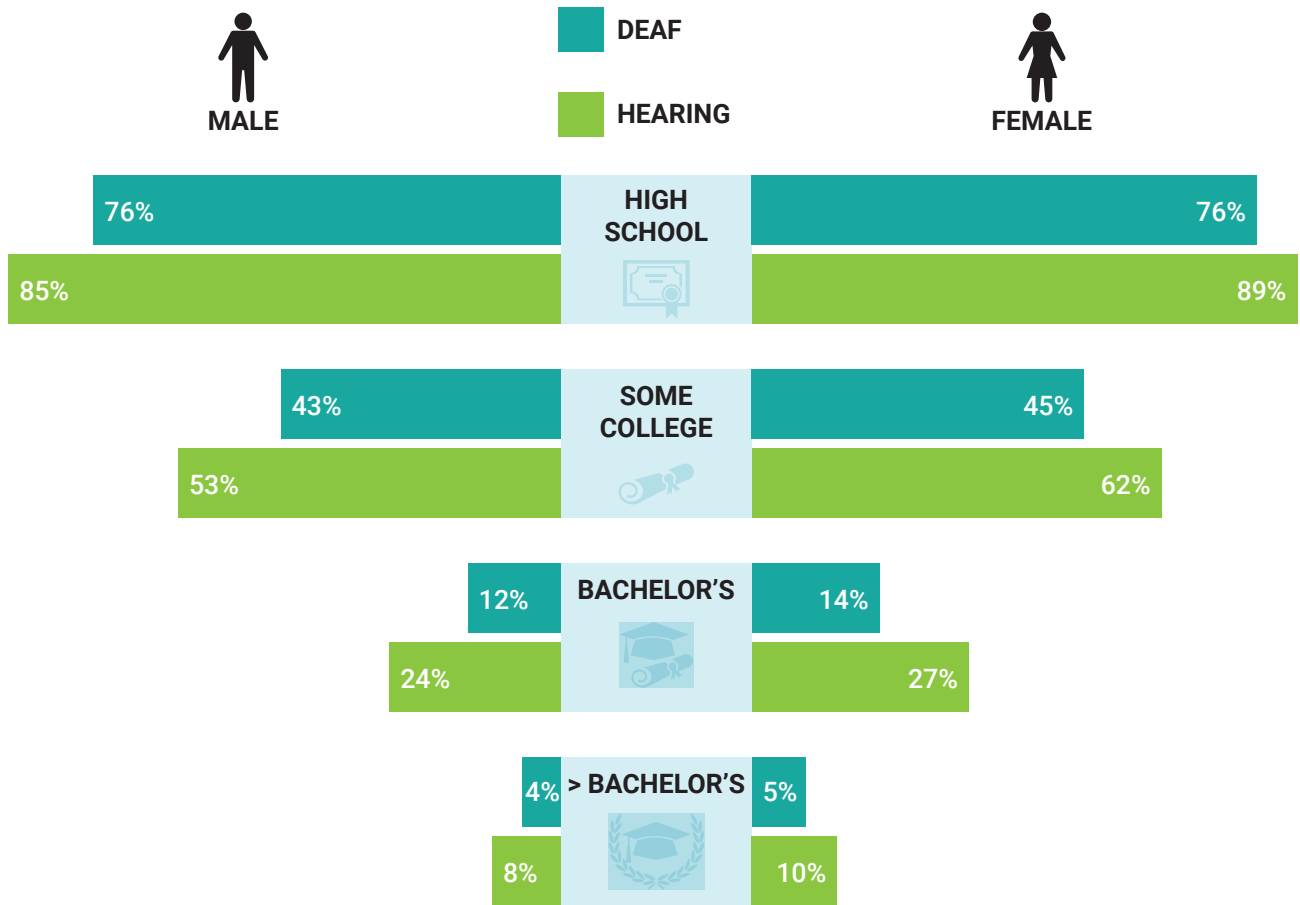
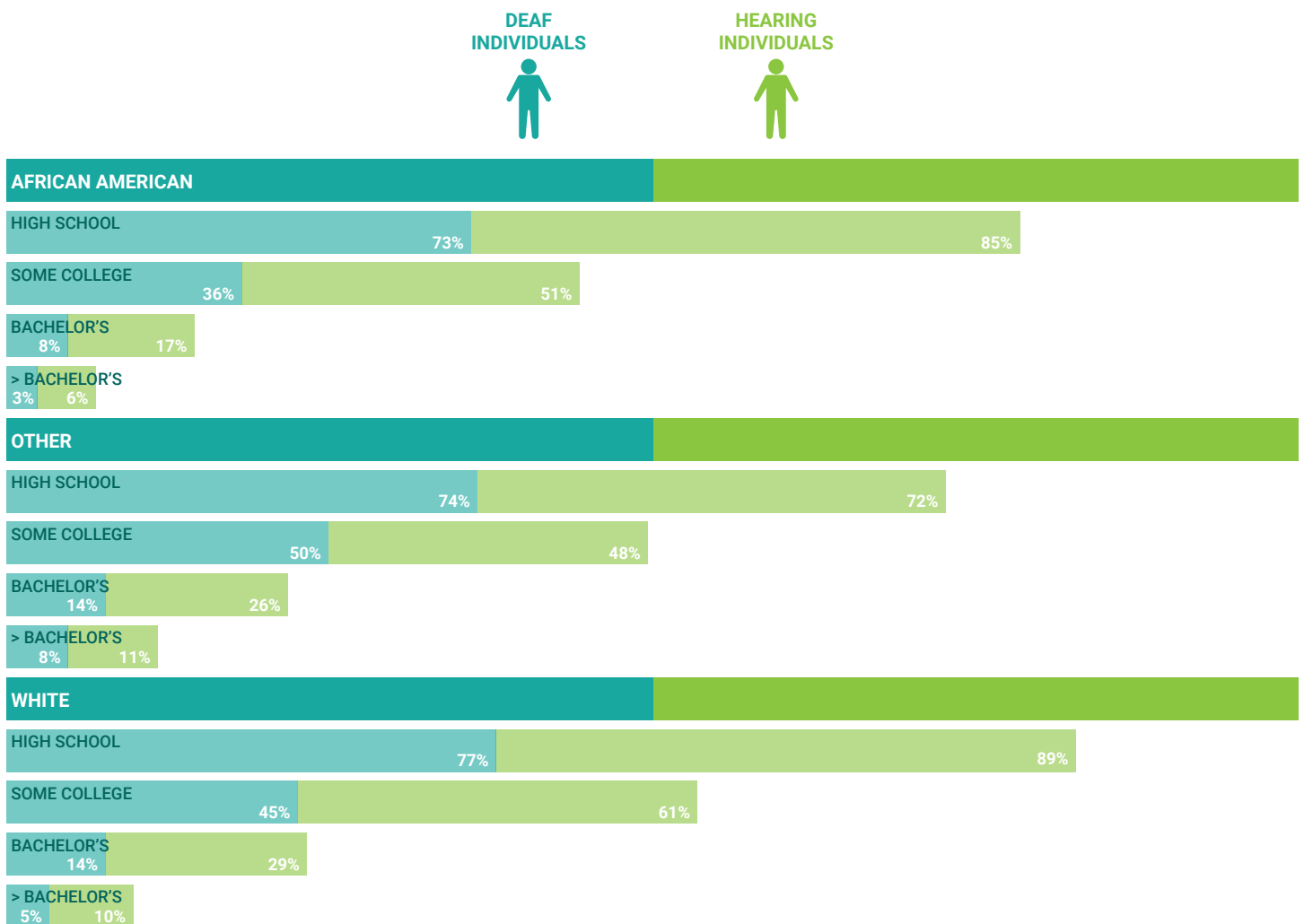


Figure 3  
**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN ALABAMA BY RACE AND ETHNICITY**



A large percentage of deaf individuals have additional disabilities, and each combination of which results in unique strengths and challenges. Educational attainment rates vary by type of disability. Across the nation, deaf individuals with any type of additional disability reported lower educational attainment levels.

Figure 4  
**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT BY DISABILITY**

|                                  | HIGH SCHOOL | SOME COLLEGE | BACHELOR'S | > BACHELOR'S |
|----------------------------------|-------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| DEAF + NO ADDITIONAL DISABILITY  | 83%         | 49%          | 17%        | 6%           |
| DEAF + ANY ADDITIONAL DISABILITY | 70%         | 37%          | 8%         | 3%           |
| DEAFBLIND                        | 67%         | 37%          | 6%         | 2%           |

## EMPLOYMENT RATES

National employment statistics show lower employment rates among deaf individuals. Almost half of deaf people are not in the labor force (Garberoglio, Cawthon, & Bond, 2016). Employment rates also vary by gender, race, and ethnicity.

Figure 5  
**EMPLOYMENT RATES IN ALABAMA**

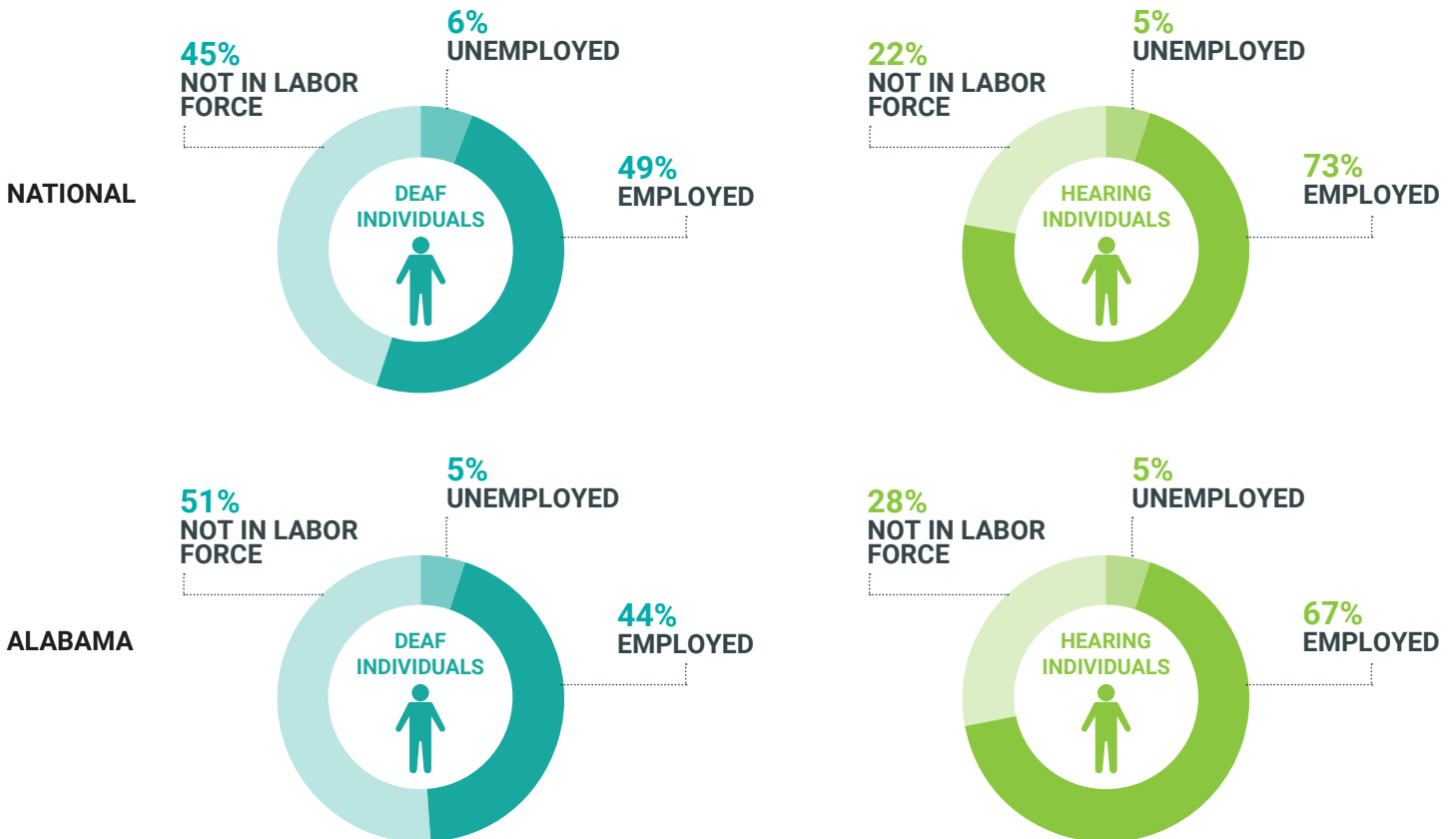


Figure 6

**EMPLOYMENT RATES IN ALABAMA BY GENDER**

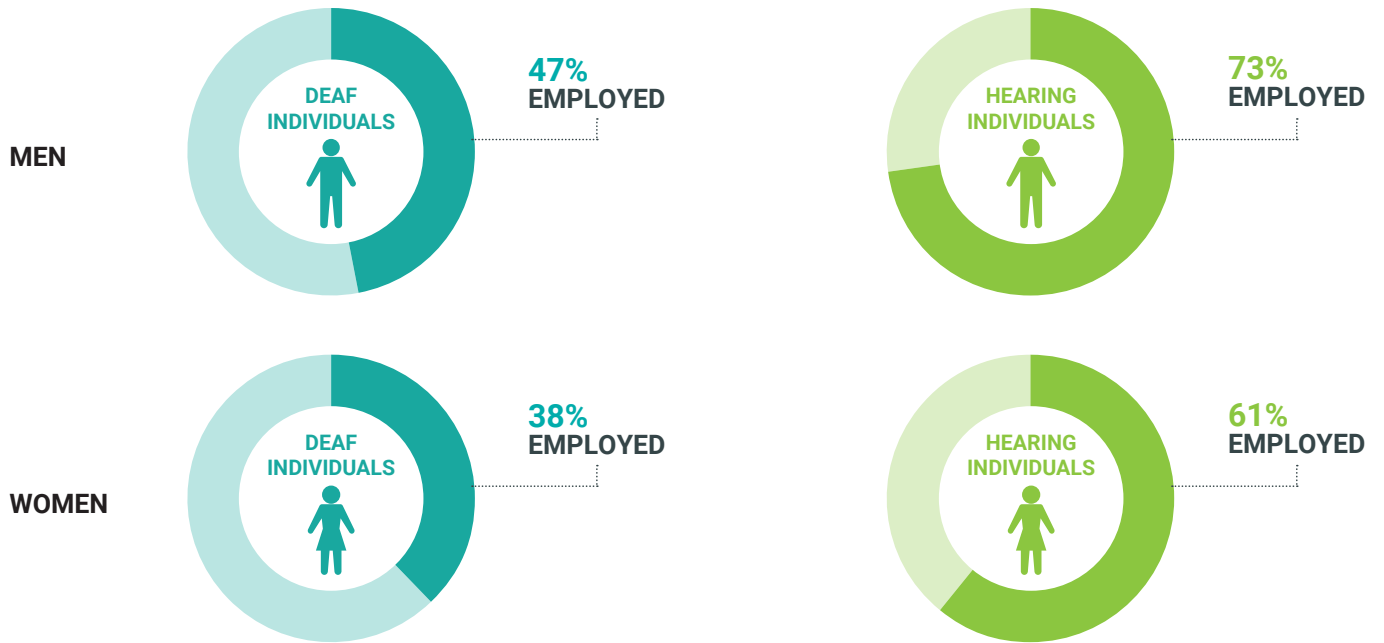


Figure 7

**EMPLOYMENT RATES IN ALABAMA BY RACE AND ETHNICITY**

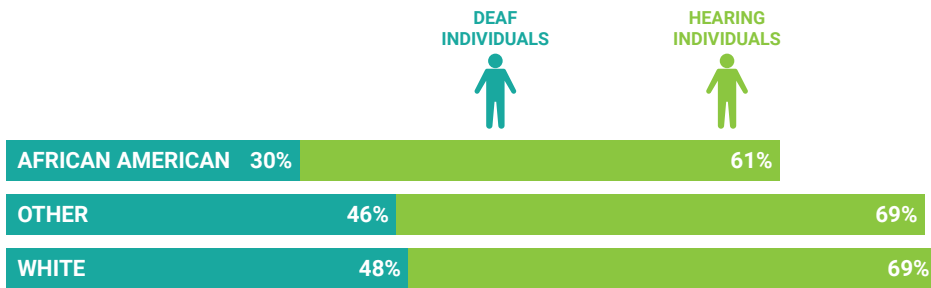


Figure 8

**EMPLOYMENT RATES IN ALABAMA BY DISABILITY**



**SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME**

Deaf individuals receive supplemental security income (SSI) benefits at different rates across the nation. 11.9% of deaf people ages 25–64 in the U.S. receive SSI benefits. In Alabama, 11.5% of deaf people receive SSI benefits.

**EARNINGS**

National data show lower median earnings among deaf individuals who were employed full time. Earnings also vary across gender, race, ethnicity, and disability status.

Figure 9

**MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR FULL-TIME EMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS**



|  | NATIONAL | ALABAMA |
|--|----------|---------|
|  <b>DEAF INDIVIDUALS</b>    | 43,800   | 40,041  |
|  <b>HEARING INDIVIDUALS</b> | 45,000   | 40,000  |



Figure 10

**MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR FULL-TIME EMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS IN ALABAMA BY GENDER**

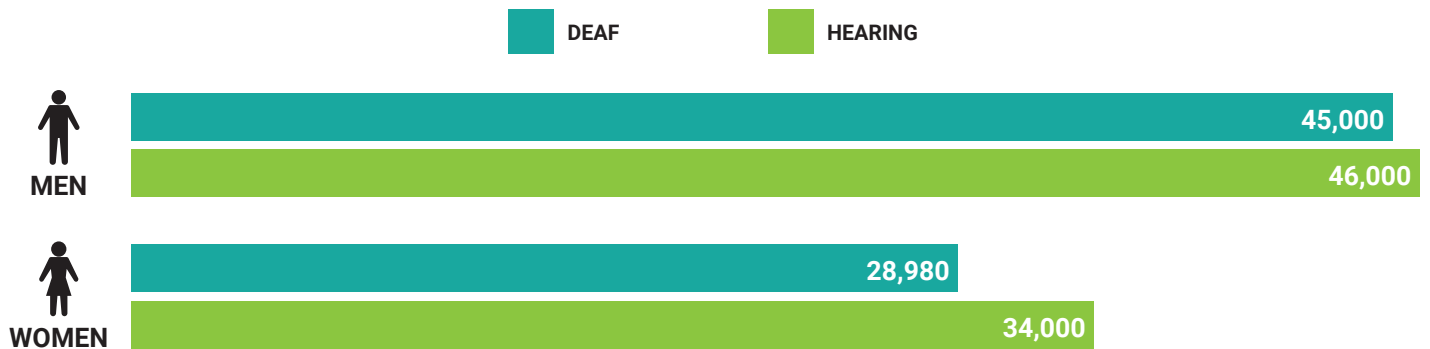


Figure 11

**MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR FULL-TIME EMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS IN ALABAMA BY RACE AND ETHNICITY**

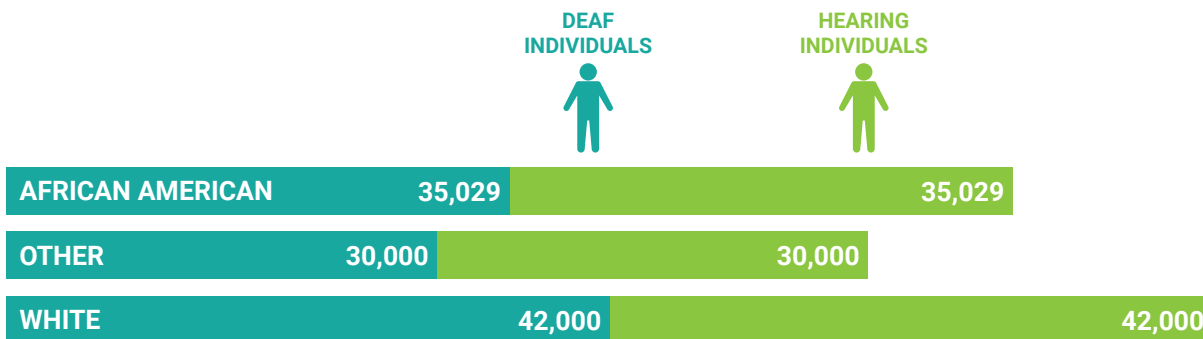


Figure 12

**MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR FULL-TIME EMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS IN ALABAMA BY DISABILITY**



## METHODS

The data for this project come from the Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) of 5-year estimates (2011–2015) from the American Community Survey (ACS), conducted by the U.S. Census. The PUMS provides a confidential subset of the ACS for the public to analyze. The ACS is a legally mandated questionnaire that is typically used to determine how federal funds may be allocated from region to region. As such, addresses of homes and group quarters, rather than individuals, are sampled, meaning that these data are meant to generalize to housing units, not individuals. Although the PUMS provides data on both individuals and housing units, only individual-level data were used for this project. More information on the ACS may be found at <http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/about.html>.

The sample in these analyses was people ages 25–64. Recall that the U.S. Census collects data on functional limitations and not disability or identity labels, so we used the variable “hearing difficulties” to track deaf individuals. The survey respondents who stated that they had “hearing difficulties” were used to represent the deaf population in these analyses. More than 38,000 deaf individuals were in the full 5-year sample. The comparison group, what we label as hearing individuals, were those who did not report having any “hearing difficulties.” For the most part, the data for the group of hearing individuals are largely comparable to data for the general population. But for comparison purposes, we focused on individuals in the general population who did not report any type of “hearing difficulties,” which allows for an understanding of what educational experiences may be unique to the deaf population.

The descriptive statistics in this report are all corrected by the person-level survey weights provided by the U.S. Census. These survey weights are intended to account for the intricacies involved in getting a sample that is representative of the United States population. When numbers are compared to each other in this report, we used a survey-corrected t-test to determine if difference in the numbers were due to statistical noise. These statistical tests are purely descriptive in nature, and we do not intend to suggest that any of the associations described are causal in nature. As such, we did not correct for any other variables in providing these descriptive statistics.

### **THIS REPORT MAY BE CITED AS:**

Garberoglio, C. L., Cawthon, S., & Sales, A. (2017). *Postsecondary Achievement of Deaf People in Alabama: 2017*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes.

### **References:**

Garberoglio, C. L., Cawthon, S., & Bond, M. (2016). *Deaf People and Employment in the United States: 2016*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes.

Garberoglio, C. L., Cawthon, S., & Sales, A. (2017). *Deaf People and Educational Attainment in the United States: 2017*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes.