

SECTION 2

Workforce Development

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the workforce development assessment is to advance the understanding of barriers community members face to economic advancement. We examine Tacoma's workforce participation and unemployment rates demographically, to better understand who in the community is facing the greatest barriers to workforce participation. We then discuss what the job opportunities looks like in Tacoma, reviewing the job market, educational opportunities, and resources and attributes that enable job retention.

GUIDING DOCUMENTS

TACOMA 2025

Workforce development is addressed in two objectives:

Objective 3: Economic Vibrancy and Employment.

Community Priorities

- 3A. Increase the number and quality of jobs throughout Tacoma.** Tacomans will have more economic opportunities – partners will strive to recruit, retain, and expand job opportunities throughout the community.
- 3B. Diversify Tacoma's living wage business base.** Providing jobs at living wages is a top priority; well-paying jobs help the community meet multiple goals.
- 3C. Improve neighborhood business districts.** A diversity of neighborhoods with vital business activity and housing options is essential to Tacoma.
- 3D. Strengthen downtown Tacoma as a business core and residential option.** A successful downtown Tacoma is a driver of Tacoma's economic health and quality of life.

Accountability Measures

- Increase the number of jobs in Tacoma.
- Increase the percentage of households that meet or exceed living wage standards or are economically self-sufficient.
- Increase business sector diversity.
- Increase the percentage of residents positively rating the quality of neighborhood business districts.
- Increase the number of downtown workers and residents.

Objective 4: Education and Learning

Community Priorities

- 4A. Close the education achievement gaps.** Helping all of Tacoma's youth succeed through quality education is key for the community's future.
- 4B. Prepare people to succeed in Tacoma's workforce.** All residents should be prepared to succeed at jobs that are located in Tacoma or anywhere.

2015-19 CITY OF TACOMA HUMAN SERVICES STRATEGIC PLAN

Workforce Development is addressed in the Tacoma Human Services Strategic Plan, **Priority 3: Increase Employability, Self-Determination, and Empowerment of Adults**. The objective to ensure access and supports are available to allow residents to enter or progress in the job market, or when appropriate, to have other positive and meaningful involvement in the community supports Tacoma's labor force.

- **Workforce Development:** Education, training, and individualized employment support services are available that enable all residents, especially historically marginalized populations, to enter and/or progress in the job market.
- **Self-determination and Empowerment:** Opportunities for individuals to build upon their strengths are available so that they can live as independently as possible and have options for positive and meaningful involvement in the community.

Findings

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

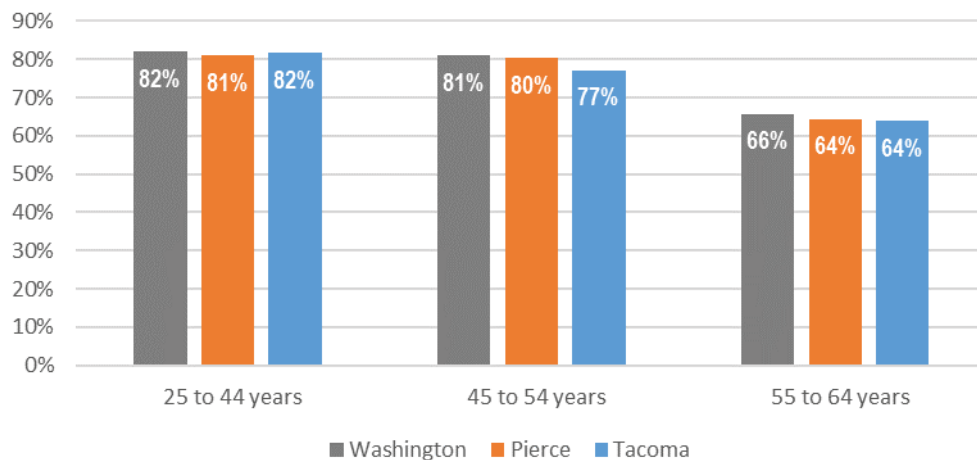
The labor force is defined by the Census as all people classified in the civilian labor force plus members of the U.S. Armed Forces. High labor force participation suggests a healthy and active local economy, where citizens are earning wages to pay for goods, services, and shelter.

One in four Pierce County adults (16 years and over) reside in Tacoma. The Pierce County labor force participation rates include the work status of Tacoma residents.

By Age

Tacoma 25- to 44- years olds are equally active in the labor force as those in their age cohort across the state and slightly more active than those in Pierce County. Labor force participation is slightly lower for Tacoma adults older than 45 compared to the county and state.

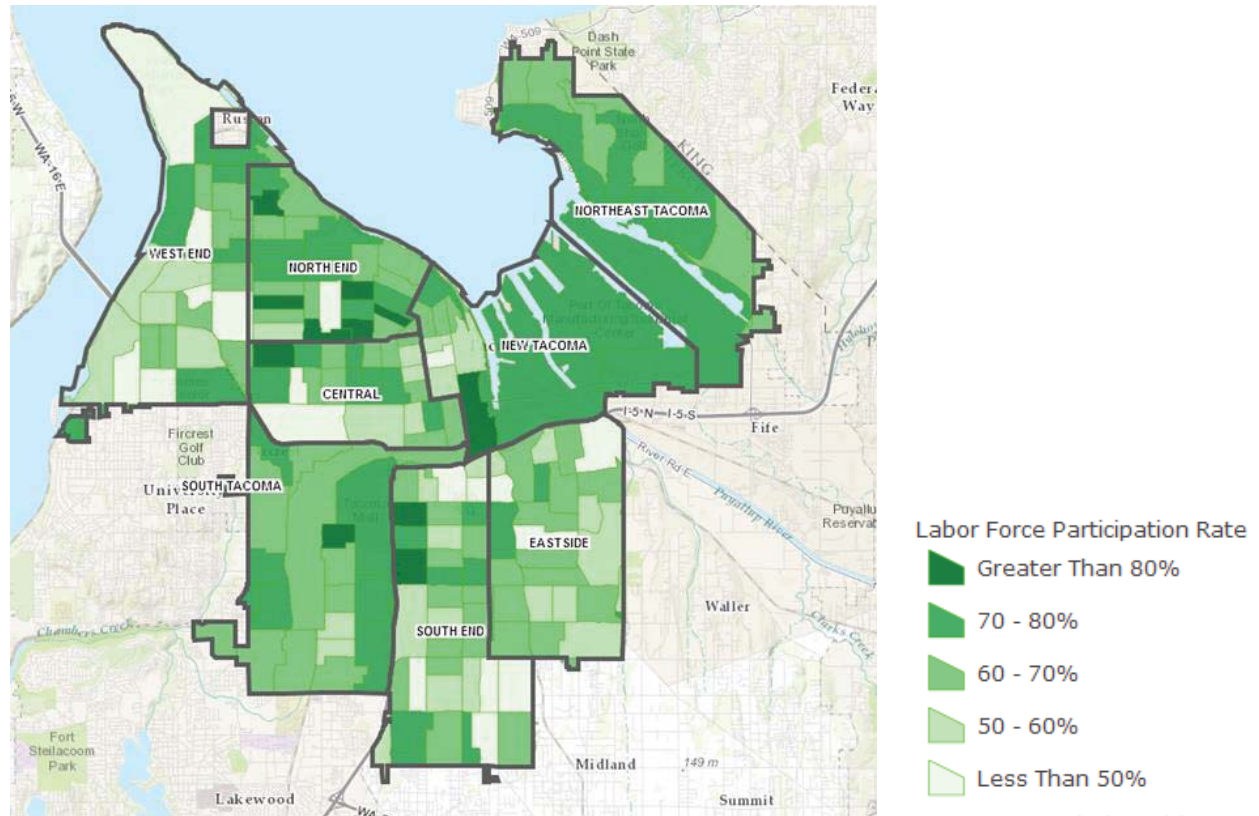
Exhibit 39 Labor Force Participation, 25 to 64 years old, by age group, Tacoma, Pierce County, and Washington



Source: US Census American Community Survey, 5 year estimates, 2010-2014. BERK, 2016.

Exhibit 40 provides the labor force participation of adults in the City in 2014. Darker shades represent higher levels of participation. In the lightest areas, such as the areas neighboring Lincoln High School, labor force participation is lower than 50%, meaning that 1 out of 2 persons over the age of 16 are working or looking for work.

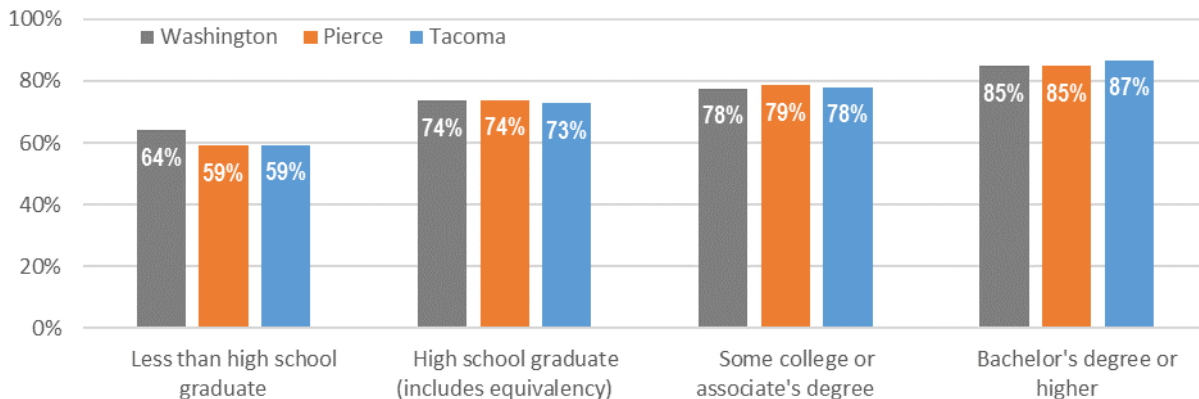
Exhibit 40 Labor Force Participation of Adults, Tacoma



Source: US Census American Community Survey, 5 year estimates, 2010-2014. BERK, 2016.

By Educational Attainment

Exhibit 41 Labor Force Participation, 25 to 64 years old, by educational attainment, Tacoma



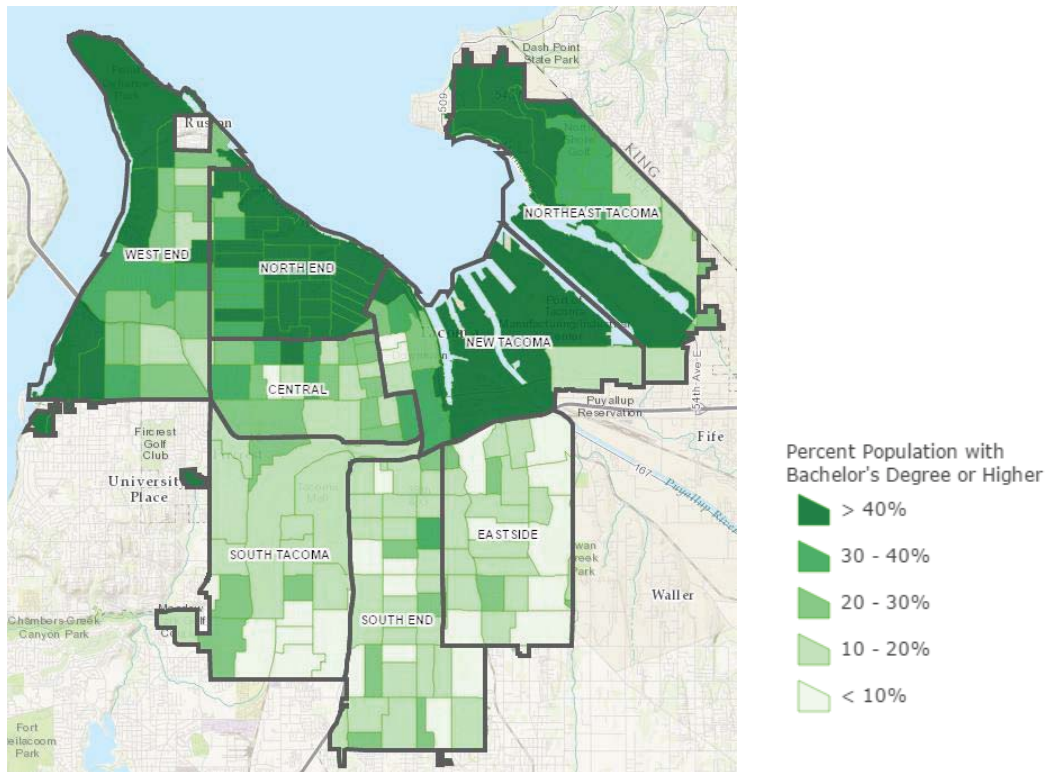
Source: US Census American Community Survey, 5 year estimates, 2010-2014. BERK, 2016.

- Pierce County and Tacoma individuals who did not graduate high school in are less active in the labor force than others with the same level of educational attainment. Tacoma residents who at least graduated high school are equally, or slightly more, active in the labor force as those with comparable education across the county and state.

Exhibit 42 displays the proportion of the population age 25 years or older with a bachelor's degree or higher within the City. Darker shades represent higher densities of adults with at least a bachelor's degree. The populations in census tracts in the north portion of Tacoma have the highest proportion of individuals with a bachelor's degree, which contrasts significantly with the census tracts in the south end of Tacoma.

- 25.5% of Tacoma's population age 25 years or older has a bachelor's degree or higher, similar to Pierce County (24.2%) but lower than the statewide rate (32.3%).
- The median earnings of Tacoma residents with a bachelor's degree is approximately \$20,000 higher than for Tacoma residents with only a high school diploma (including equivalency).

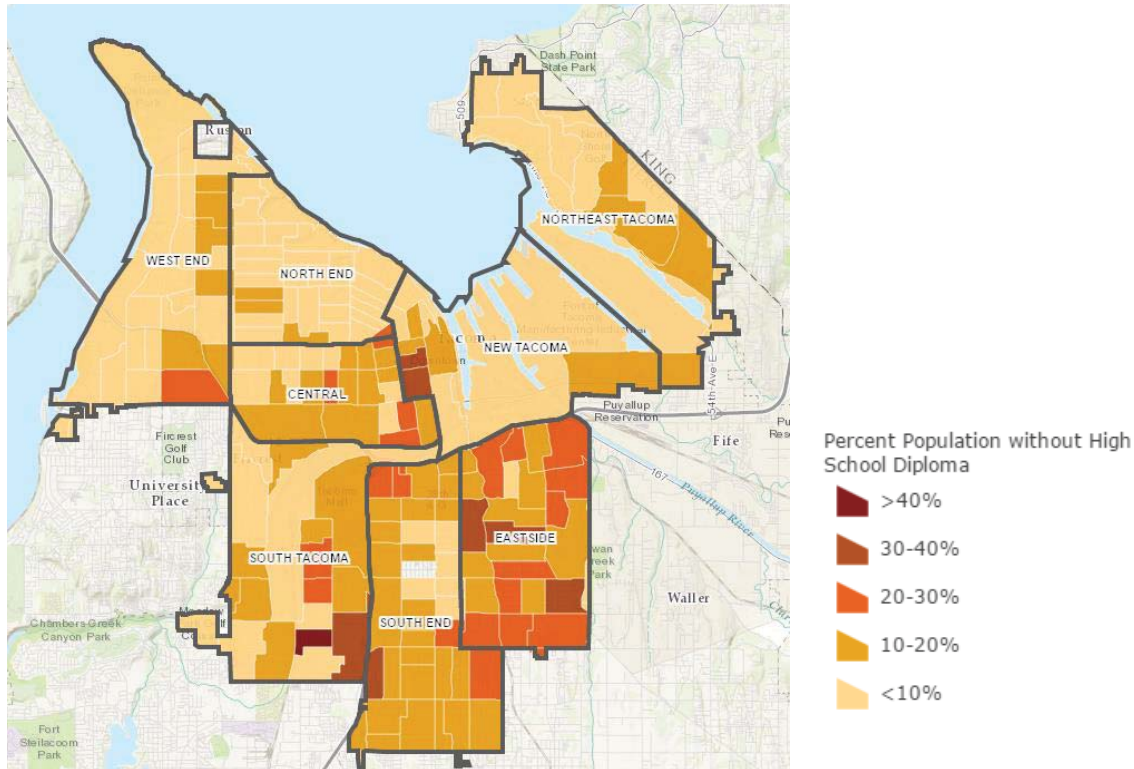
Exhibit 42 Proportion of the Population age 25 Years or Older with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, Tacoma



Source: US Census American Community Survey, 5 year estimates, 2010-2014. BERK, 2016.

Exhibit 43 displays the proportion of the population age 25 years or older without a high school diploma within the City. Darker shades represent higher densities of adults without a high school diploma. The populations in census tracts in the southeast portion of Tacoma have the highest proportion of citizens without a high school diploma.

Exhibit 43 Proportion of the Population age 25 Years or Older without a High School Diploma, Tacoma



Source: US Census American Community Survey, 5 year estimates, 2010-2014. BERK, 2016.

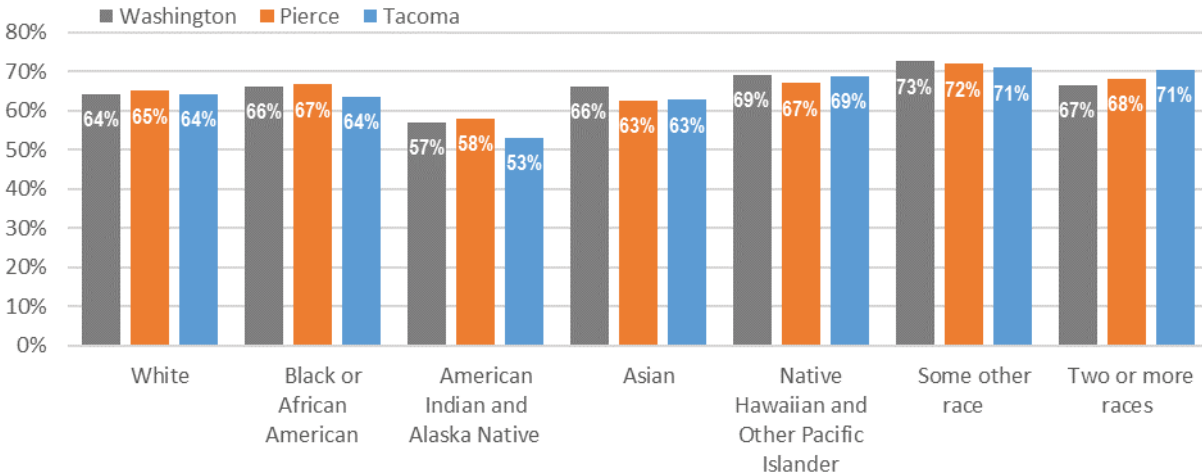
By Race and Hispanic Origin

The Tacoma labor force participation rates for American Indian and Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders reflect the relatively low population living in Tacoma.

Comparing Tacoma participation rates to reference geographies:

- White: Pierce County: -1%. State: 0%.
- Black or African American: Pierce County: -3%. State: -2%.
- American Indian and Alaska Native: Pierce County: -5%. State: -4%. The margin of error for the Tacoma rate is +/- 8.4%.
- Asian: Pierce County: 0%. State: -3%
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: Pierce County: +2%. State: 0%. The margin of error for the Tacoma rate is +/- 9.7%.
- Some other race: Pierce County: -1%. State: -2%.
- Two or more races: Pierce County: +3%. State: +4%.

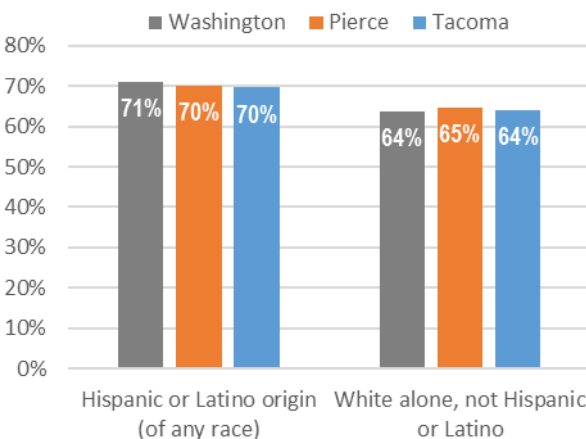
Exhibit 44 Labor Force Participation of Adults, 16 years and over, by race, Tacoma



Source: US Census American Community Survey, 5 year estimates, 2010-2014. BERK, 2016.

Labor force participation is slightly lower for individuals of Hispanic or Latino origin in Tacoma and Pierce County than statewide. Tacoma residents who are white alone, not Hispanic or Latino, are as active in the labor force as their cohort statewide. Pierce County residents are slightly more active than Tacoma or Washington as a whole.

Exhibit 45 Labor Force Participation of Adults, 16 years and over, by Hispanic origin, Tacoma, Pierce County, and Washington



Source: US Census American Community Survey, 5 year estimates, 2010-2014. BERK, 2016.

UNEMPLOYMENT

The ACS unemployment rate is based on the work status of individuals age 16-years and over. A person must report looking for work to be considered unemployed. While many individuals between 16 and 24 years old are enrolled in school and individuals 66 and over may be retired, youth and older adults tend to have higher unemployment rates and be unemployed longer. Many become discouraged and drop out of the labor force. The unemployment rate of the state, county, and city is lower among 25-65 year olds.

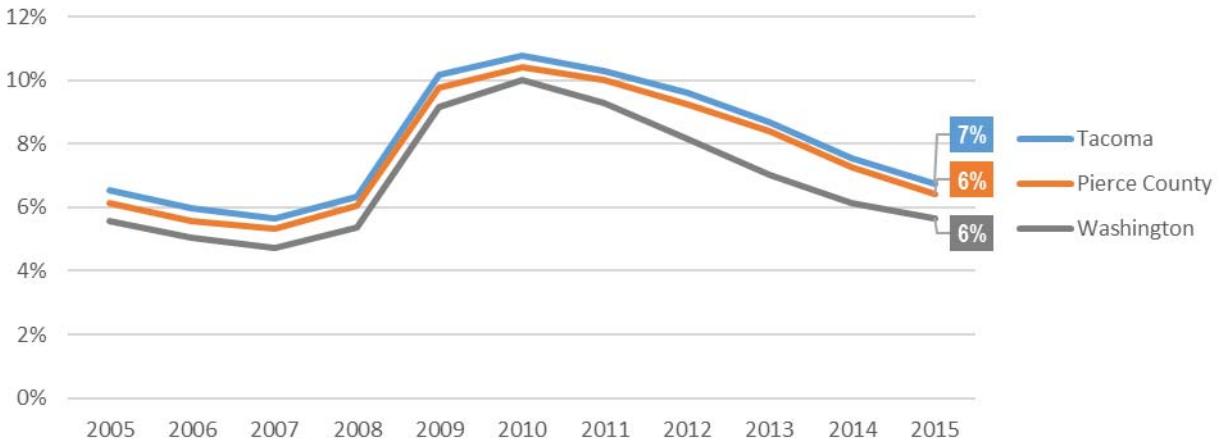
Between 2007 and 2010, the North American economy experienced a historically significant recession. The economy has been in recovery since 2010, with unemployment trending downward toward pre-recession levels.

The unemployment rates in Washington, Pierce County, and the City have been declining the past five years, but are still higher than the pre-recession rates. The City's unemployment rate has tracked closely with the

County's rate. Yet, the City's unemployment rate is consistently higher than the County's by an average of 0.3%. The City's unemployment rate over the past five years has been an average of 2 percentage points than the State's rate.

Exhibit 46 Unemployment rate, Tacoma, Pierce County, and Washington

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005-2015. BERK, 2016.

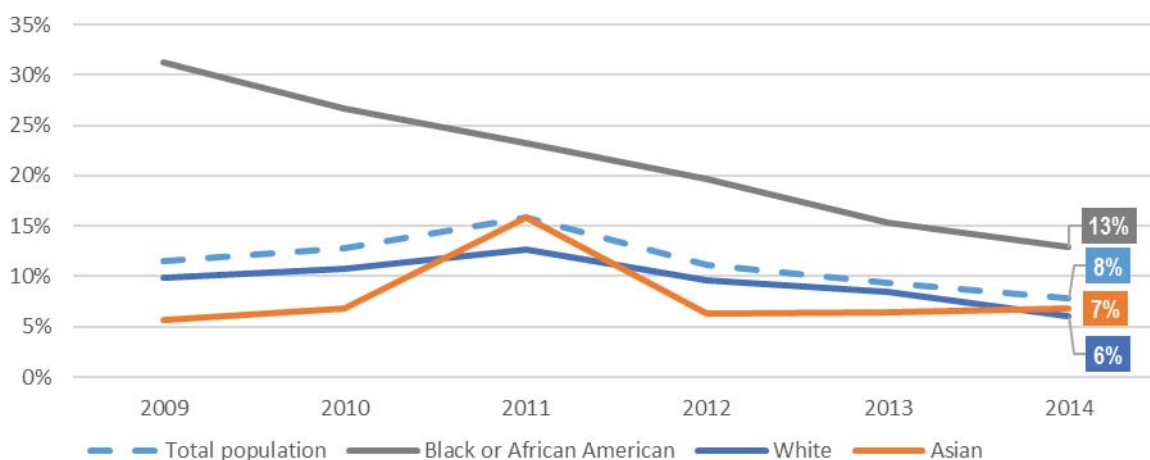


The Bureau of Labor Statistics is widely considered the official source of unemployment rate information for jurisdictions across the county. However, the Bureau does not report unemployment rates by demographic classification for cities. The Census asks survey respondents about their employment status on the American Community Survey and provides estimates of unemployment rates based on demographics. To explore how unemployment is experienced differently for Tacoma residents by race, origin, educational level, and gender, we examine ACS data in the following sections.

By Race

From 2010-2015, unemployment in Tacoma among Black or African American individuals has been on average of 65% higher than the city-wide unemployment rate. ACS does not calculate the Tacoma unemployment rate for the following race classifications: American Indian and Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiian and Other, One race, Some other race, and Two or more races.

Exhibit 47 Unemployment rate, Total population, Black or African American, Asian, and White, Tacoma

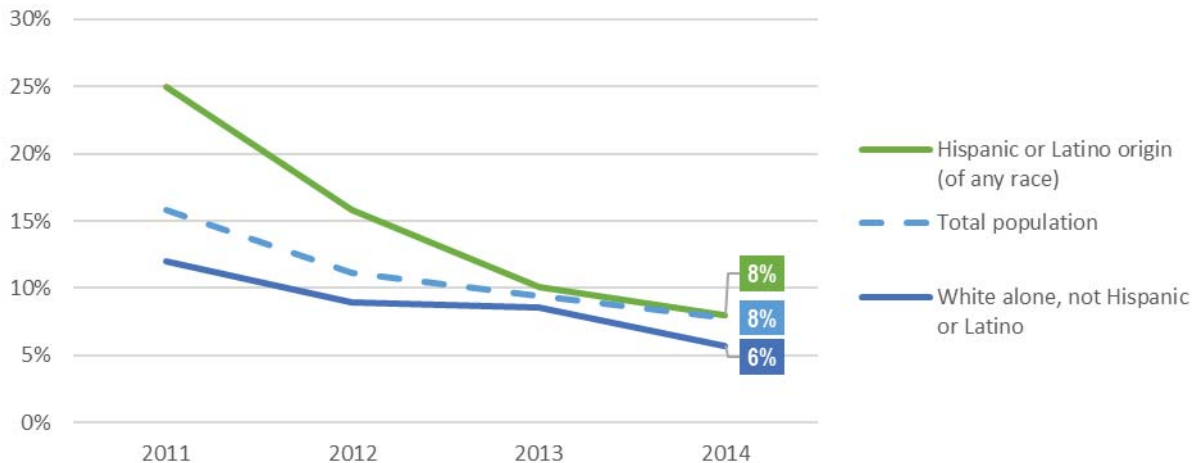


Source: US Census American Community Survey, 1 year estimates, 2009-2014. BERK, 2016.

*The Census reported a 31.2% unemployment rate for Black or African American individuals in Tacoma in 2009. The margin of error is +/- 9.8%. The lowest estimate (21.4%) is 9.9 percentage points higher than the 2009 citywide unemployment rate.

Tacoma unemployment rate for individuals of Hispanic or Latino origin is available from 2011-2014. The disparity in Tacoma unemployment among Hispanic or Latino and white alone, non-Hispanic or Latino individuals has decreased over time.

Exhibit 48 Unemployment rate, Total population, Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race), and White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, Tacoma

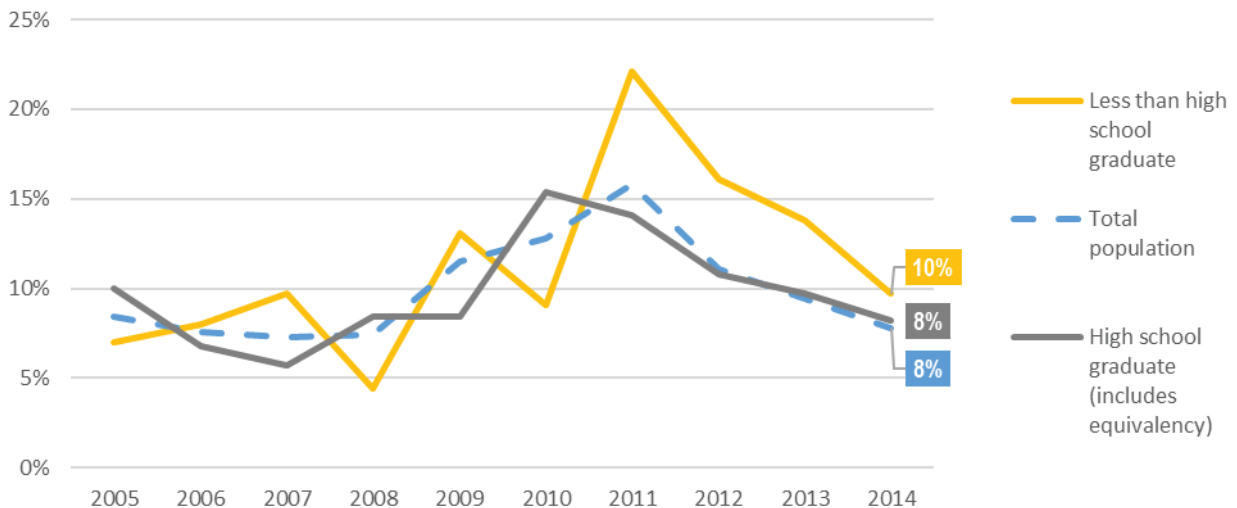


Source: US Census American Community Survey, 1 year estimates, 2011-2014. BERK, 2016.

By Educational Attainment

Since 2011, the unemployment rate for Tacoma residents with some college or associate's degree has been lower than the citywide rate.

Exhibit 49 Unemployment Rate, Total population, Less than high school graduate, & High school graduate, Tacoma



Source: US Census American Community Survey, 1 year estimates, 2005-2014. BERK, 2016.

The job market in Tacoma has recovered from the recession more rapidly for individuals who have graduated high school than those who have not. In 2014, the unemployment rate for Tacoma residents that did not graduate high school was 1.9% higher than the citywide rate.

By Gender

Since 2006, the unemployment rate for female Tacoma residents has been lower than the citywide rate. Unemployment for male Tacoma residents increased more rapidly between 2008 and 2010 than

unemployment among female residents. Since 2009, female unemployment has been an average of 3.2% lower than male unemployment in Tacoma.

Exhibit 50 Unemployment Rate, Total population, Male and Female, Tacoma



Source: US Census American Community Survey, 1 year estimates, 2005-2014. BERK, 2016.

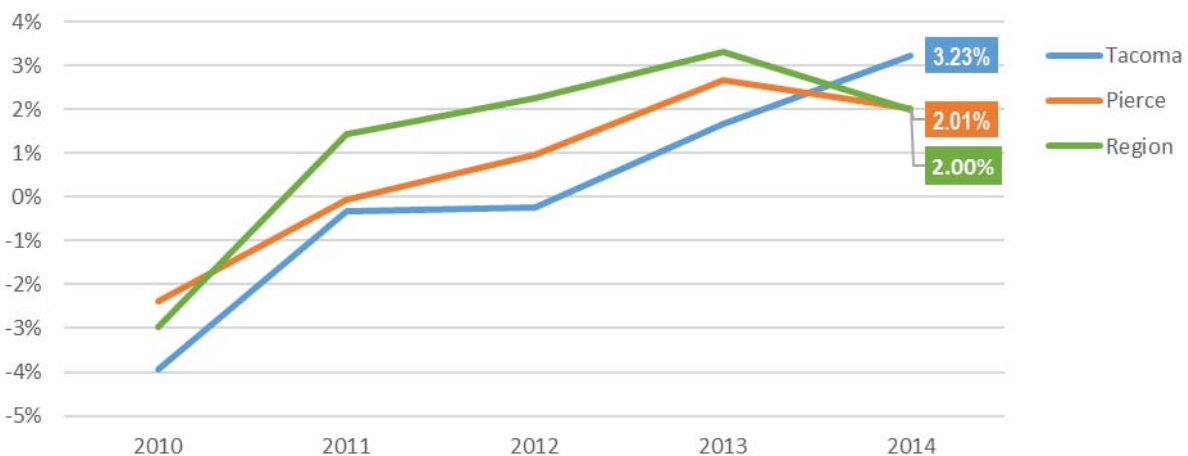
JOBS

Covered employment includes all employees for the State's unemployment insurance program. The data accounts for 90- 95% of all jobs, which includes part-time and seasonal employment.

Like all communities, Tacoma experienced a decrease in employment during the recent recession. Between 2009 and 2010, Tacoma lost 3,800 jobs, approximately 3.9% of its employment base. This was a more significant employment contraction than Pierce County which lost 2.27% of its employment base and Washington state which lost 2.98%.

Tacoma experienced more losses annually, and took longer to recover from the recession than both Pierce County and the State. In 2014, Tacoma showed stronger growth than both the County and State, finally reaching pre-recession employment numbers.

Exhibit 51 Annual Change in Covered Employment, Tacoma, Pierce County, and Puget Sound Region

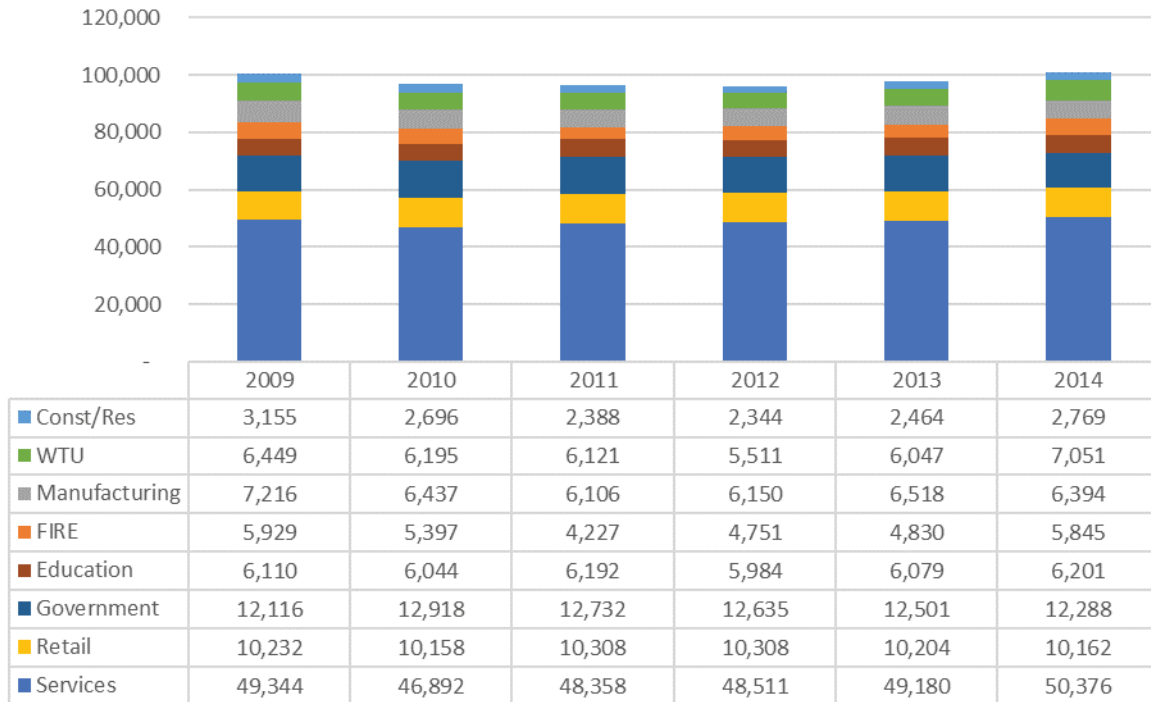


Source: Puget Sound Regional Council, 2010-2014. BERK, 2016.

Tacoma's employment is dominated by jobs in the service sector, followed by retail and government employment. These three sectors represented more than 72,000 jobs in 2014.

Between 2009 and 2014, Tacoma lost jobs in the Manufacturing and Private Education fields, while recovering in Construction and Resources employment and Retail. By 2014, Tacoma's employment had surpassed pre-recession levels. However, the rebound has been slower for Tacoma than Pierce County and the Puget Sound Region. Tacoma annual job growth since 2009 has averaged .11% compared to .66% for Pierce County and 1.24% for the Region.

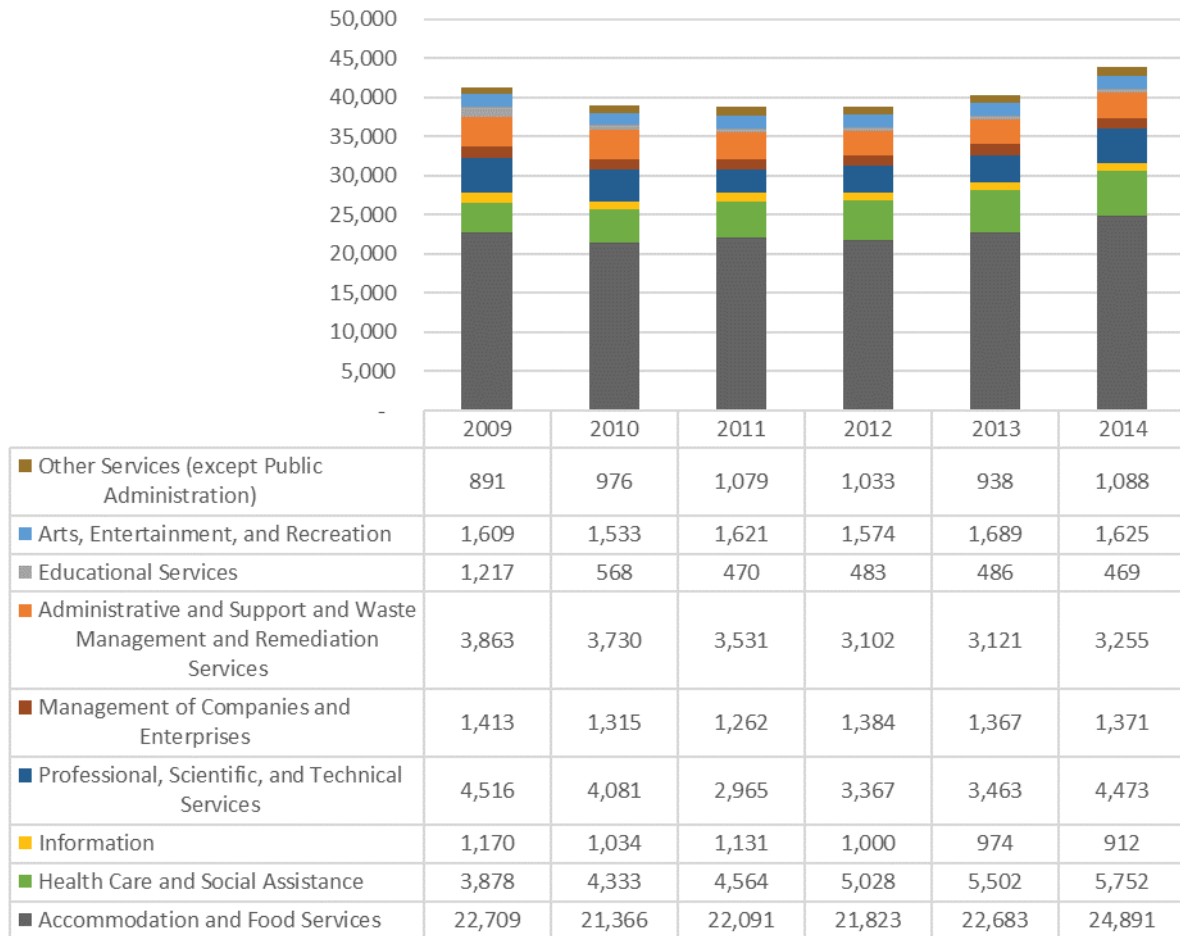
Exhibit 52 Covered Employment by Major Sector, Tacoma



Source: Puget Sound Regional Council, 2009-2014. BERK, 2016.

Exhibit 53 presents a breakdown of the services sector. Since 2010, the largest area of growth has been in Accommodation and Food Services (3,525 jobs), followed by Health Care and Social Assistance (1,419 jobs).

Exhibit 53 Composition of Service Sector Jobs by Major Sector, Tacoma



Source: Puget Sound Regional Council, 2009-2014; BERK, 2016.

EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS

Research shows that ability to speak English and access to reliable means of transportation to work are important factors for obtaining and retaining employment.

Language

In 2014, 81% of Tacoma's workers only spoke English and 8.5% spoke English "less than very well." About 7% of the population spoke Spanish, and another 12.1% spoke languages other than English or Spanish. In addition to language barriers, speakers of languages other than English may face barriers to work due to immigration status and cultural barriers to finding work.

Exhibit 54 Ability to Speak English, Tacoma

Ability to Speak English	Percent of workers 16 years and over
Speak only English	81.0%
Speak Spanish:	7.0%
Speak English "very well"	3.8%
Speak English less than "very well"	3.1%
Speak other languages:	12.1%
Speak English "very well"	6.6%
Speak English less than "very well"	5.4%

Source: US Census American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, 2010-2014. BERK, 2016.

Means of Transportation

In 2014, the majority of Tacoma residents (86%) traveled to work in a car, truck, or van, either driving alone or in a carpool. This high rate of reliance on personal vehicles indicates a barrier for those who do not have access to a reliable personal vehicle or lacks a driver's license.

Exhibit 55 Means of Transportation to Work, Tacoma

Means of transportation to work	Percent of workers 16 years and over
Car, truck, or van - drove alone:	76%
Car, truck, or van - carpooled:	10%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab):	5%
Walked:	4%
Taxicab, motorcycle, bicycle, or other means:	2%
Worked at home:	3%

Source: US Census American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, 2010-2014. BERK, 2016.

Youth in particular face transportation challenges for work. In recruiting for Tacoma's Trade Occupations Opportunity Learning (TOOL program), initial assessments indicate as many as two out of three eligible applicants lacked a driver's license. Others had a suspended driver's license due to an inability to pay fines. Lack of access to a reliable car suitable for taking the driver's license exam, as well as a lack of support from adults to teach and coach driving skills, are barriers for earning a driver's license for youth. In addition to ability to drive, other youth report difficulty in using public transportation for work. While cost is a factor, the availability of service when and where youth need access may be a greater barrier. Many jobs available to youth are in the evening or at odd hours. Youth report difficulty in using the bus for work that is outside of the corporate work day of 9am to 5pm.

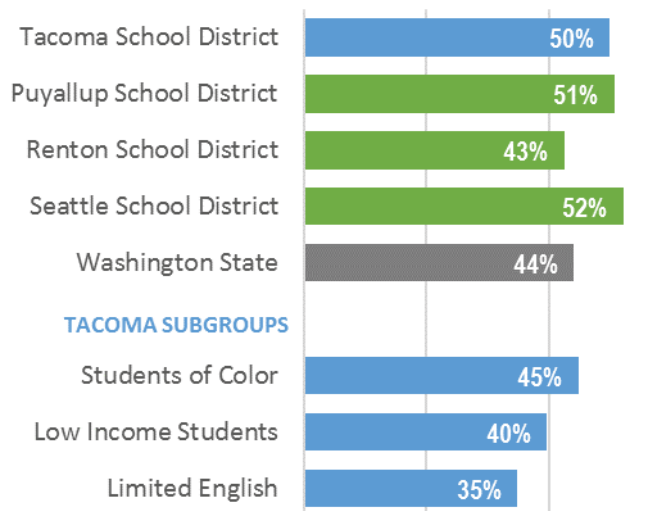
Other barriers to work include homelessness, lack of educational credentials, poverty, mental health issues, and personal factors such as early parenthood and lack of affordable childhood. These factors are covered in **Section 1**.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Early Environments

Educational opportunity starts at birth. Children who are exposed to quality early-learning environments are more likely to meet developmental milestones, and arrive at kindergarten with appropriate foundation skills to help them thrive in school. WaKids is Washington’s whole-child assessment focused on social-emotional, physical, cognitive, language, literacy and mathematics skills.

Exhibit 56 Percent Children Meeting Developmental Benchmarks for Kindergarten, Tacoma School District and selected school districts

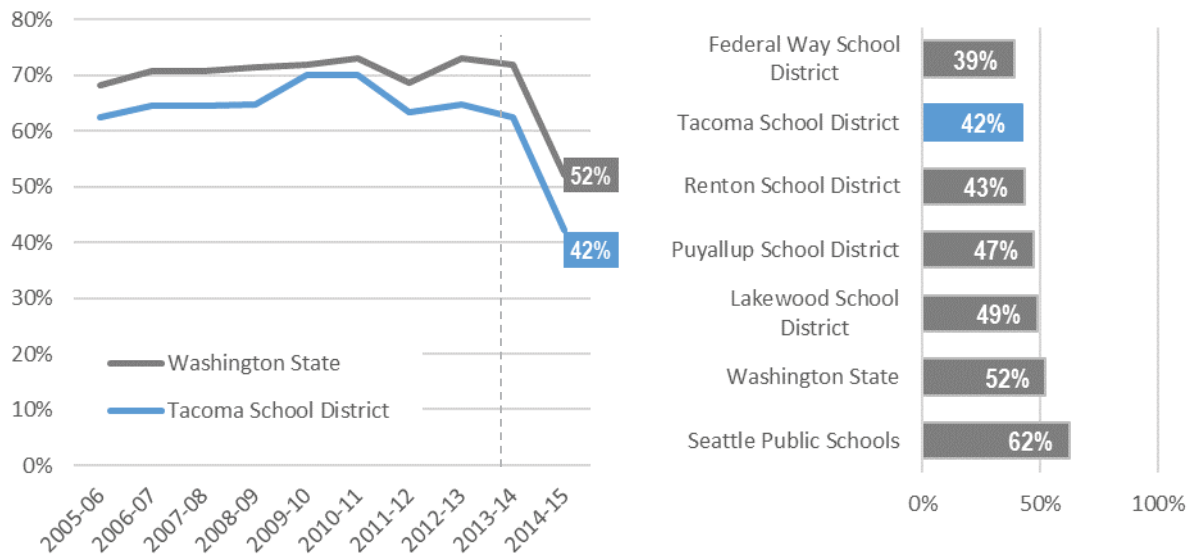


Source: OSPI, 2016; BERK, 2016

- In the fall of 2015, about 50% of Tacoma’s students met benchmarks in all 6 domains. This rate is comparable to neighboring school districts.
- Students of Color, Low Income Students, and students with Limited English proficiency were less likely to meet benchmarks in all six domains.

K-12 Education

Exhibit 57 3rd Graders Meeting Reading Standard

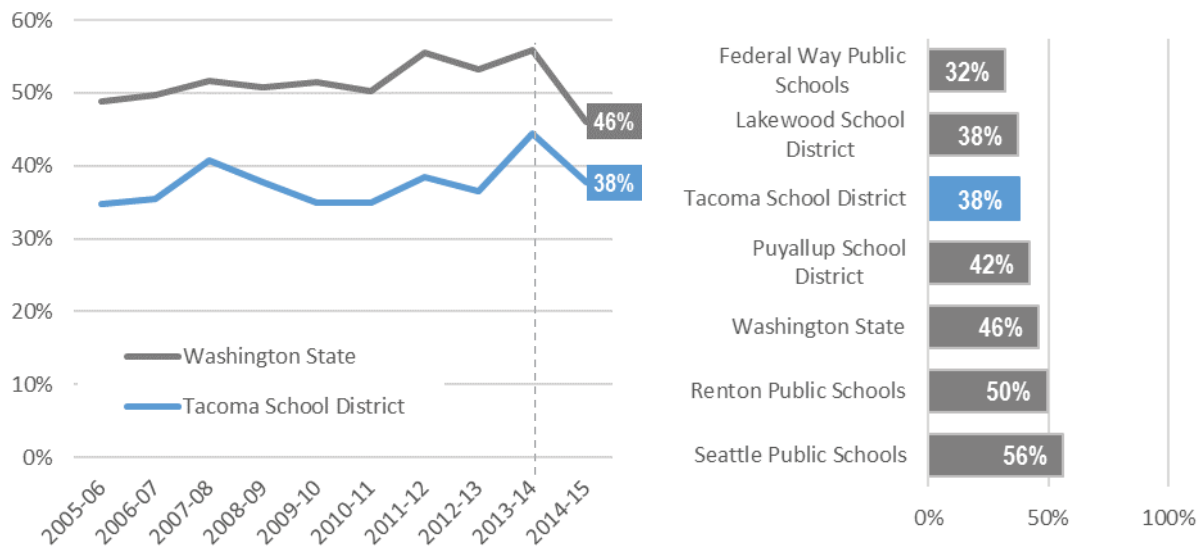


Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, SY 2005-06 – 2015-16. BERK, 2016

Note: The calculation of the percent of 3rd graders meeting the reading standard changed during the 2014-15 school year. The data prior to that school year cannot be compared to the 2014-15 value.

- Since the 2005-06 school year, the percentage of 3rd graders meeting reading standards has trailed the State rate by an average of 6%, annually. In the 2014-15 school year, the percent of Tacoma students meeting standards was 10% lower than the State average.
- During the 2014-15 school year, a lesser proportion of Tacoma School District students met the 3rd grade reading standard than four analogous school districts: Renton School District, Puyallup School District, Lakewood School District, and Seattle School District.

Exhibit 58 8th Graders Meeting Math Standard



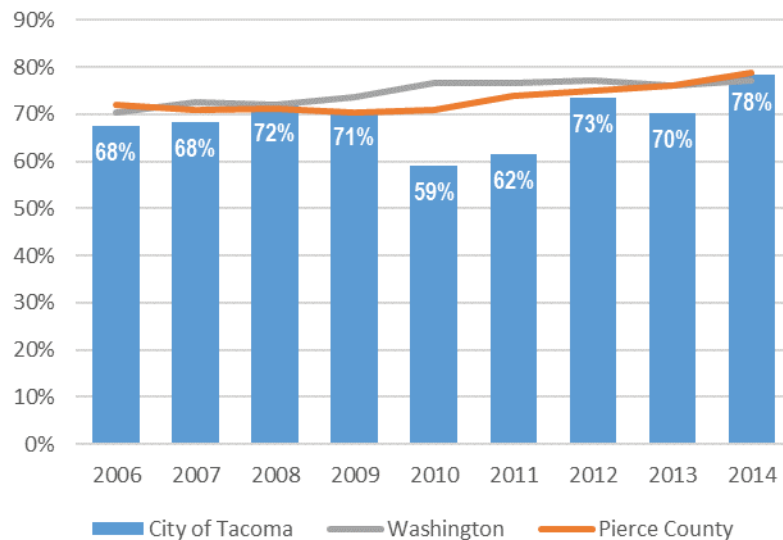
Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, SY 2005-06 – 2015-16. BERK, 2016

Note: The calculation of the percent of 8th graders meeting the math standard changed during the 2014-15 school year. The data prior to that school year cannot be compared to the 2014-15 value.

- A smaller percent of Tacoma 8th graders meet the 8th grade math standard than the State as a whole.
- In the 2013-14 school year, 44% of Tacoma 8th graders met the 8th grade math standards. This trails the statewide rate by 11 percentage points. This gap has been relatively persistent over time.
- In pre-employment testing for the TOOL program, as much as half the applicants do not have sufficient math skills for the pre-apprenticeship program. Recruitment specialists report that applicants have feelings of discouragement and insecurity around their ability in math. However, most program participants gain the necessary skills through applied math training and report improved confidence with math in post-program assessments.

High School Graduation

Exhibit 59 On-Time Graduation, Tacoma, Pierce County, and Washington



- Tacoma's on-time graduation rate was below 60% in 2010. The district and community has made great efforts in bring the graduation rates in alignment with Statewide rates in 2014.

Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2006-2014. BERK, 2016

- Tacoma exceeds the County in both the low and high ranges of the educational attainment spectrum.
- The percent of Tacoma with post-secondary education (Bachelor's, Graduate, or Professional degree) is consistent with the Pierce County rate.
- In 2014, approximately 6,500 Tacoma residents had less than a 9th grade education and 14,000 residents had a 9th to 12th grade education and no diploma.

Source: US Census American Community Survey, 1 year estimates, 2014. BERK, 2016.

Exhibit 60 Educational Attainment of Adult 25 Years and Over, Tacoma and Pierce County

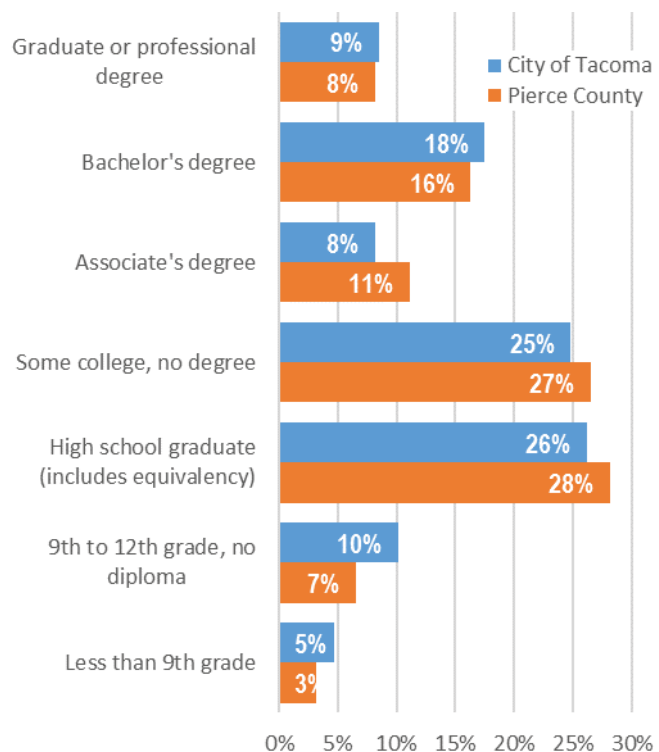
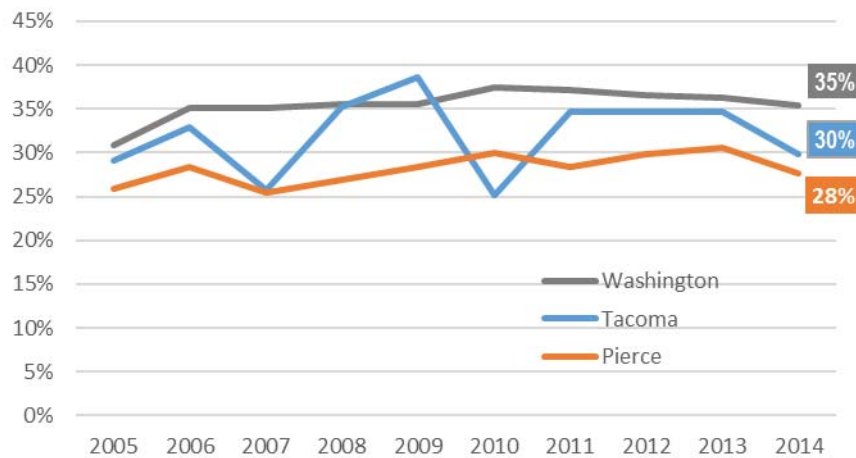
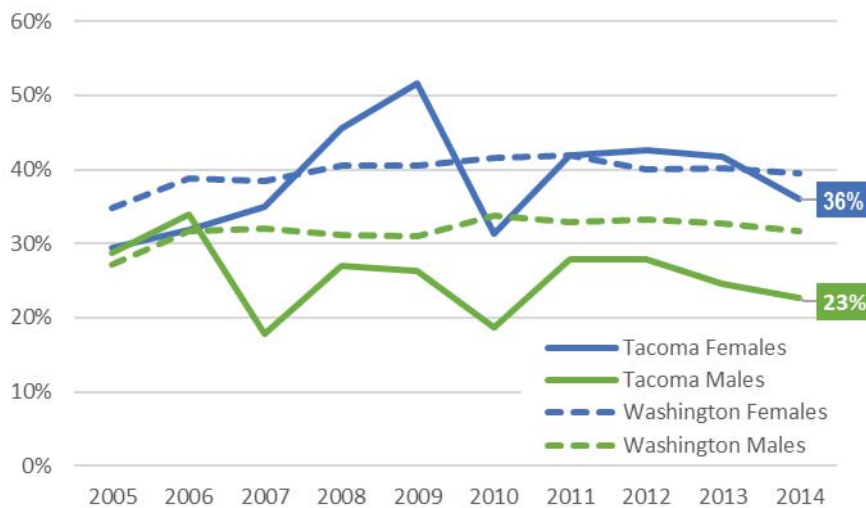


Exhibit 61 Enrolled in college or graduate school, Population 18 to 24 years old, Tacoma, Pierce County, and Washington



Source: US Census American Community Survey, 1 year estimates, 2005-2014. BERK, 2016.

Exhibit 62 Enrolled in college or graduate school, by gender, 18 to 24 years old, Tacoma, and Washington



Source: US Census American Community Survey, 1 year estimates, 2005-14; BERK, 2016.

- Since 2010, a smaller portion of Tacoma 18- to 24- year olds have enrolled in college or graduate school than across the State as a whole.
- Male college enrollment in Tacoma has been lower than the State rate since 2007. In 2014, male enrollment in Tacoma trailed the State rate by 9 percentage points
- Female college enrollment in Tacoma lagged behind the State rate from 2005 through 2007. Since 2007, female college enrollment in Tacoma has been a median of 1.5% higher than the State rate.