

Striving and Thriving:

Building Effective Pathways to
Upward Mobility for Youth of Color

ARNOLD CHANDLER, PRESIDENT



About Forward Change

Forward Change exists to advance racial, gender, and economic justice. We are a research, social change strategy and advocacy organization. We help foundations, government and nonprofits in the development and implementation of holistic strategies to address major equity challenges, informed by extensive research and substantive knowledge.

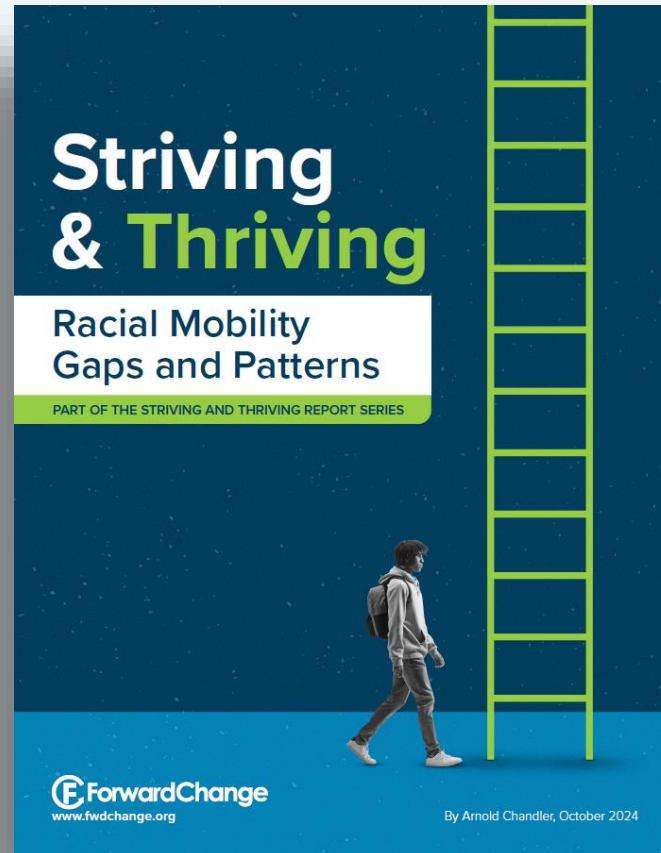
Session Overview

1. **About the Striving and Thriving Research Project**
2. **Income Mobility Gaps and Patterns: Race and Gender**
3. **Mobility Drivers: What life course milestones predict mobility**
4. **Employment Interventions:** What improves employment mobility milestones for youth of color?
5. **Success Factors Behind Existing Employment Models**

About the Striving and Thriving Research Project

The Striving and Thriving project:

- ▶ Examines gaps in education, income and health mobility.
- ▶ Explores mobility milestones that put youth of color on-track or off-track to upward mobility
- ▶ Identifies interventions that effectively mobility prospects for youth of color



Striving and Thriving: Racial Mobility Gaps and Patterns



Scan to read

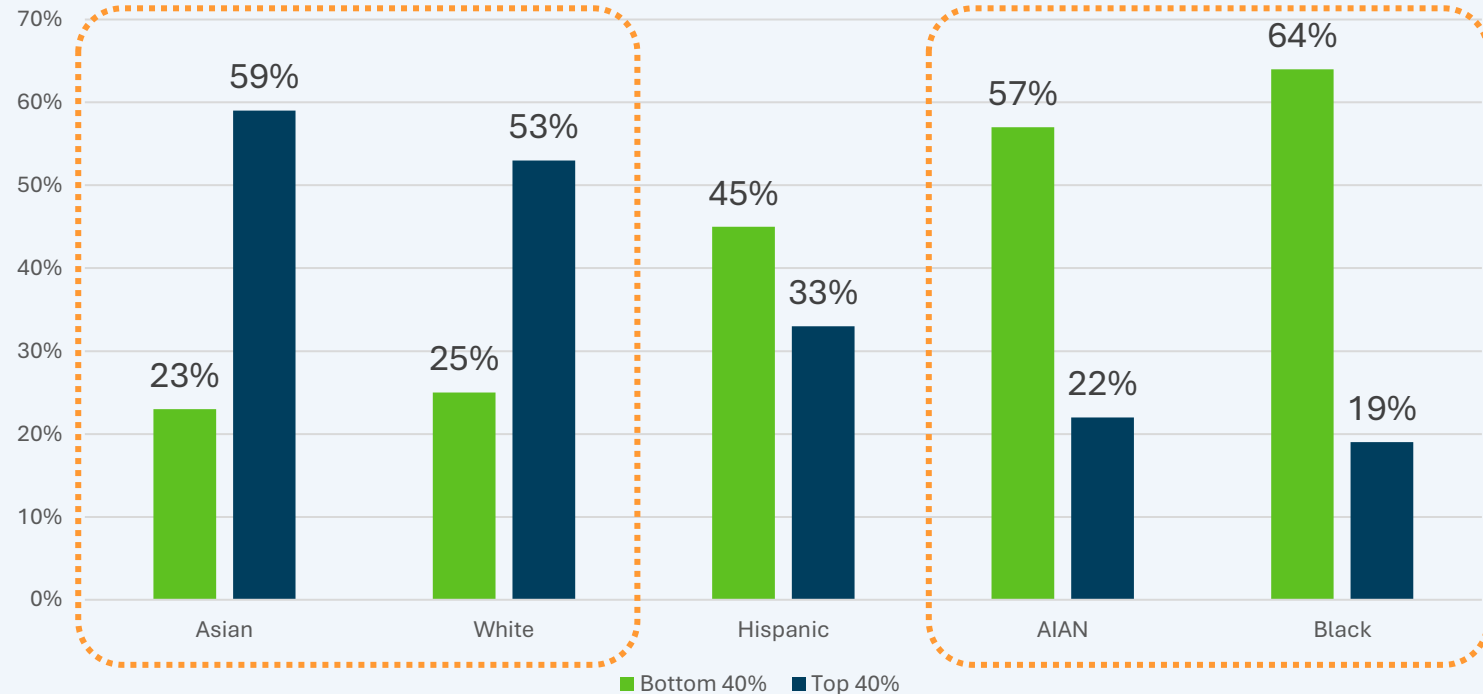
Income Mobility Gaps and Patterns: Race and Gender



Starting at the Bottom

Black and American Indian children are raised on **opposite sides of the income spectrum** as Whites and Asians. Latino children are raised in the middle.

Children Raised in Bottom or Top 40 percent of the Income Distribution
(All U.S. born children, 1978-1983)

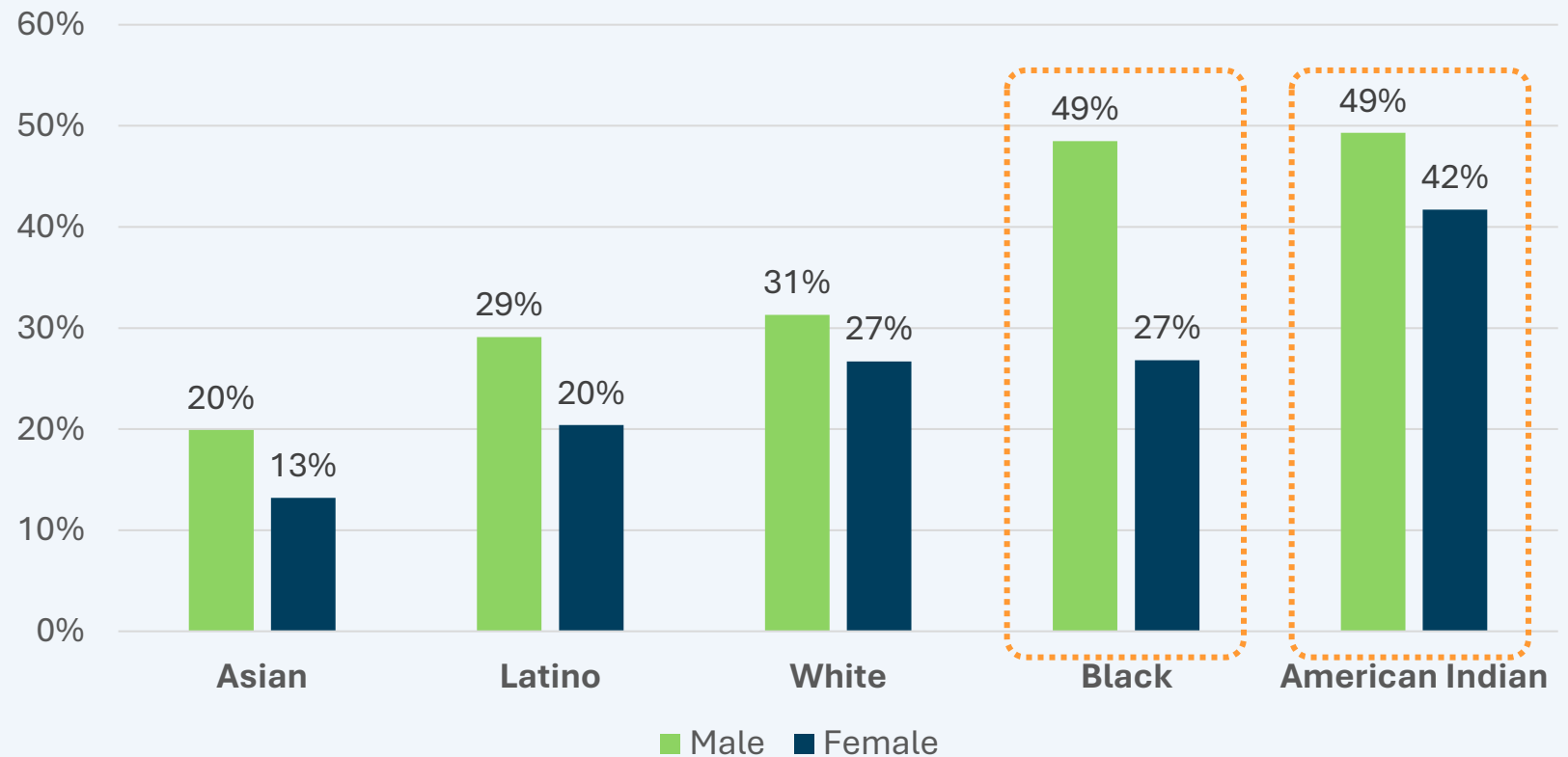


Trapped at the Bottom

Large shares of Black males and American Indian males and females are **trapped at the bottom of the income distribution** across generations

Bottom income quintile across two generations

(All U.S. Children Born 1978-1983)

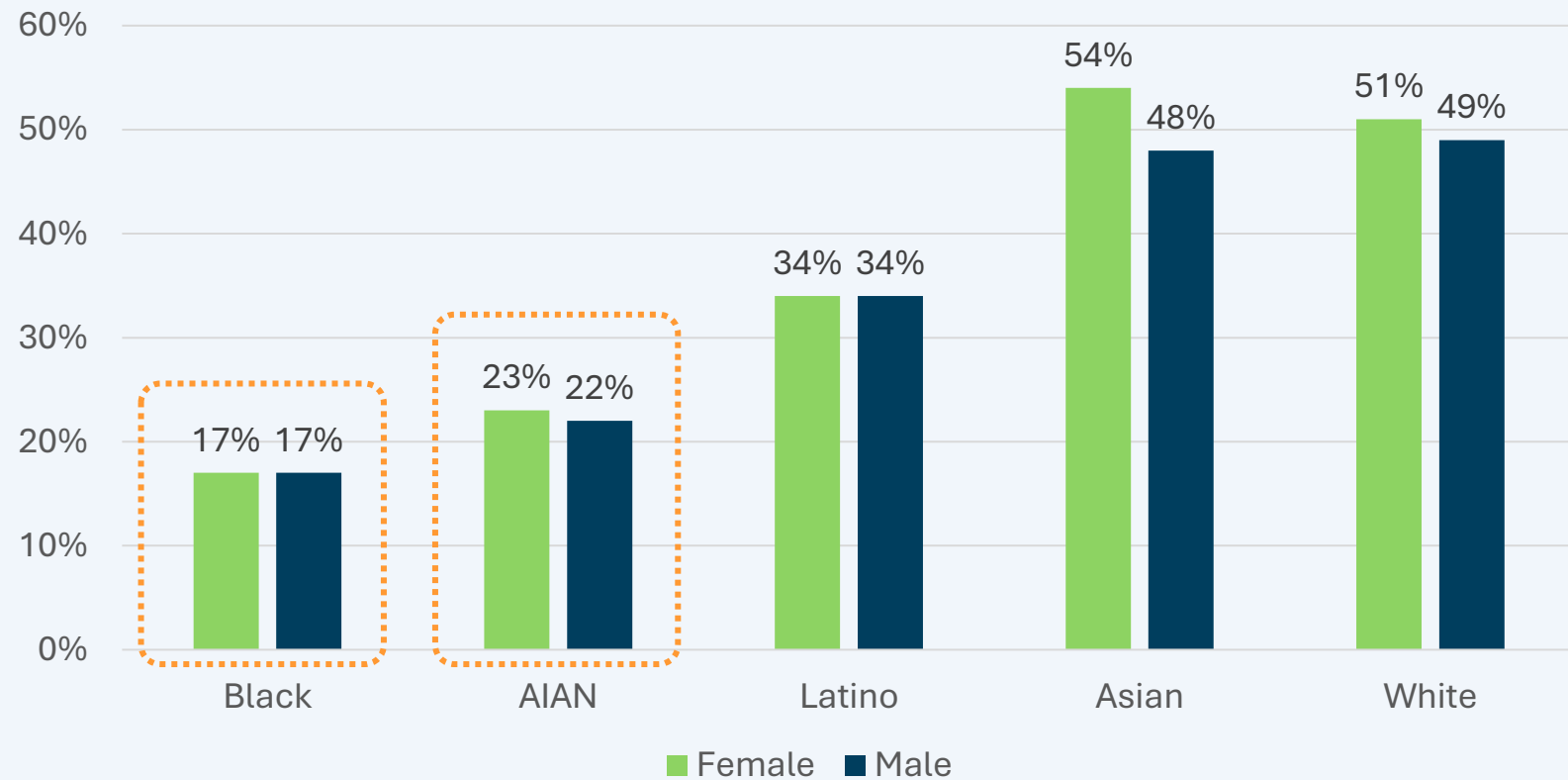


Reaching the Middle Class

Most Blacks, American Indians and Latinos will **not reach the middle class.**

Reaching the 4th or 5th Quintile

(All U.S. Children Born 1978-1983)

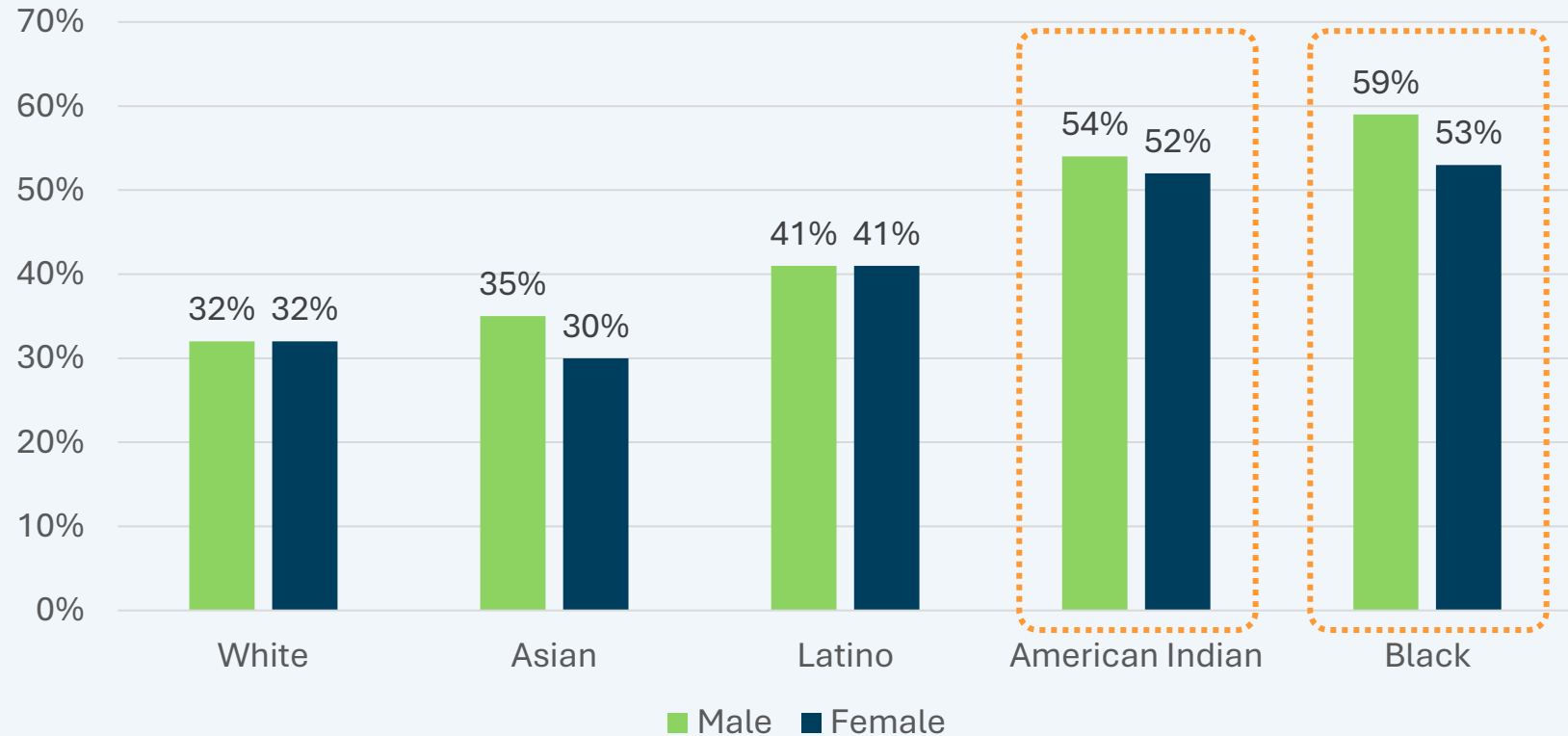


Falling out of Middle Class

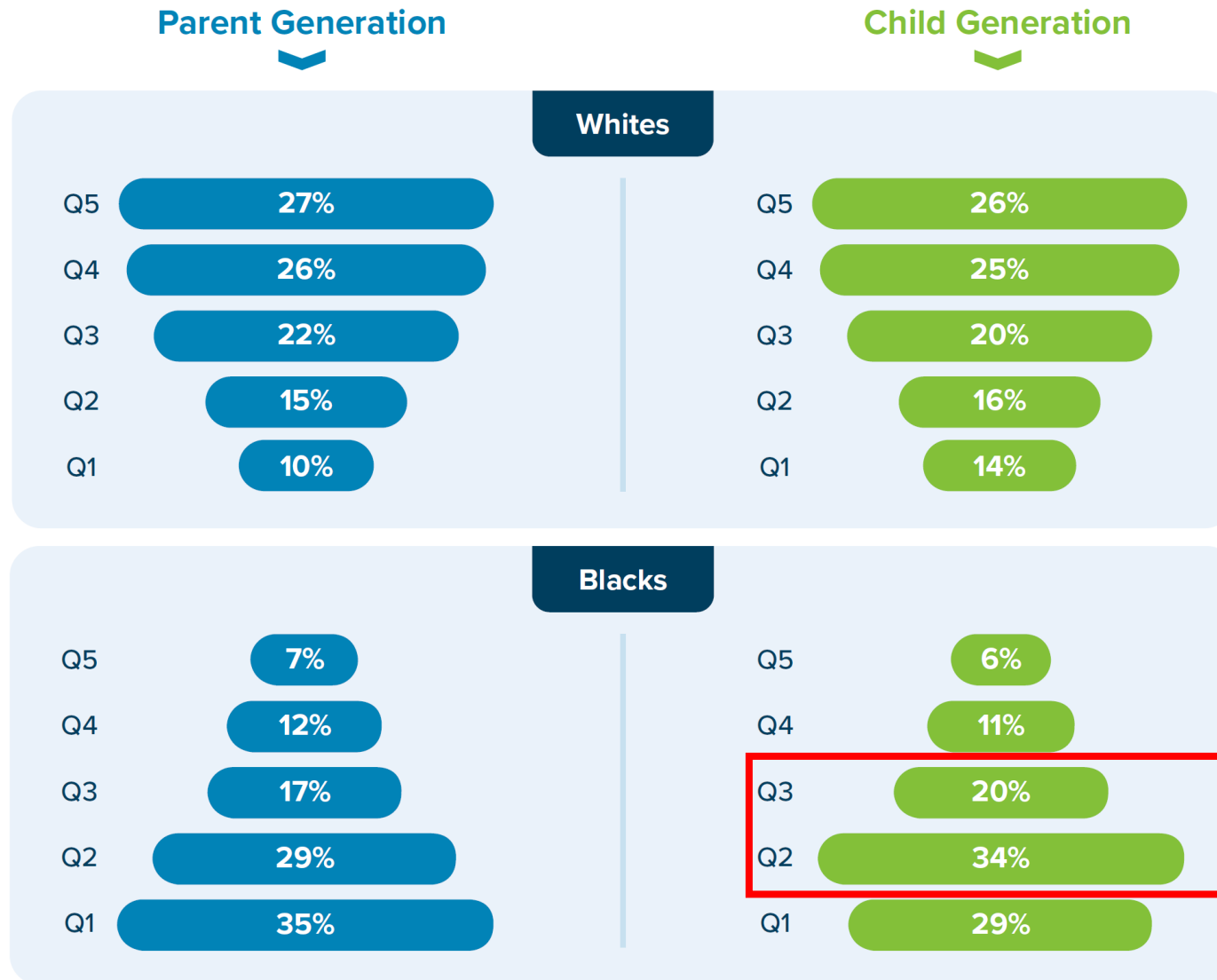
Black and American Indian children have a **high likelihood of falling out of the middle class** as adults

Moving from 3rd Quintile to lower one

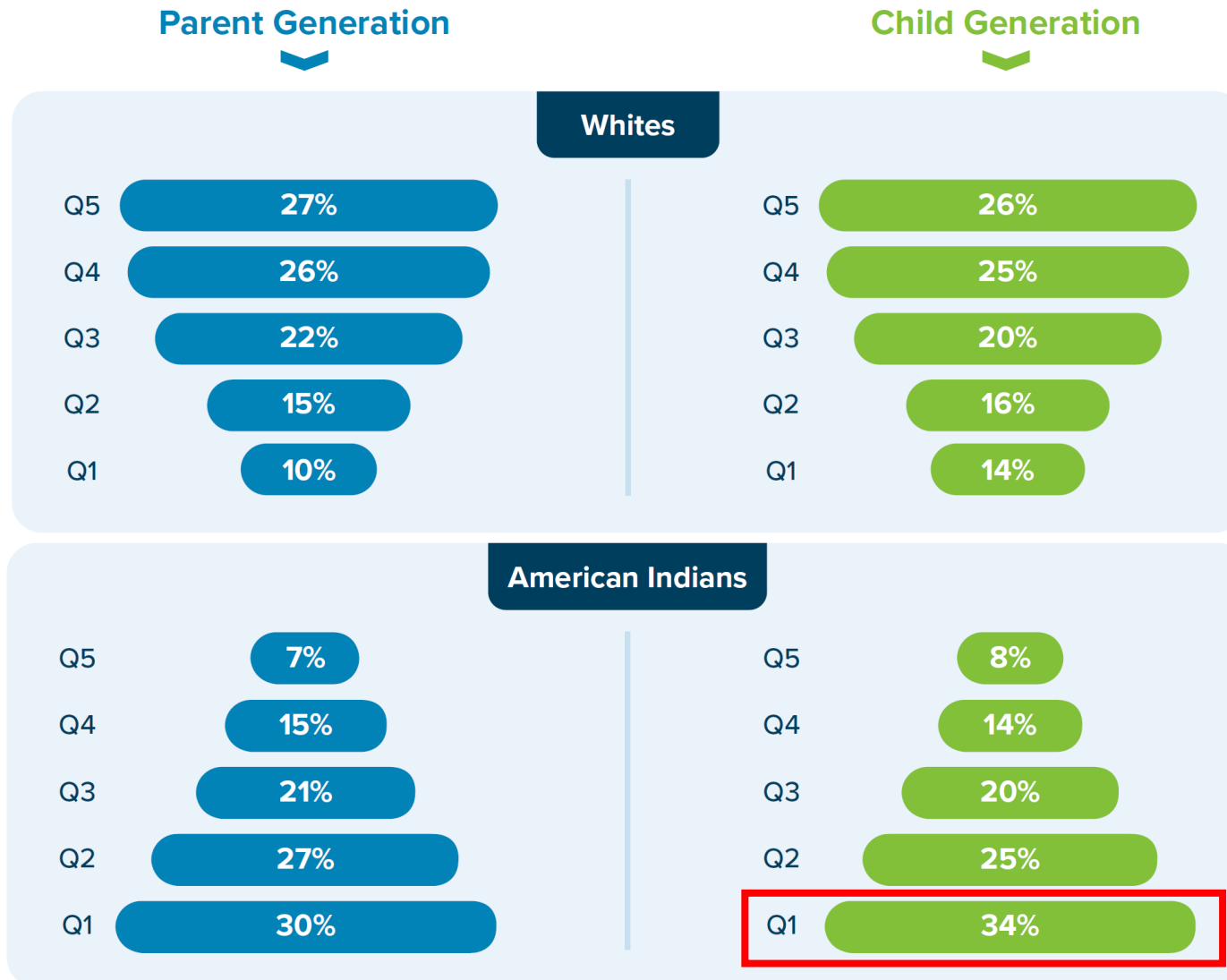
(All U.S. Children Born 1978-1983)



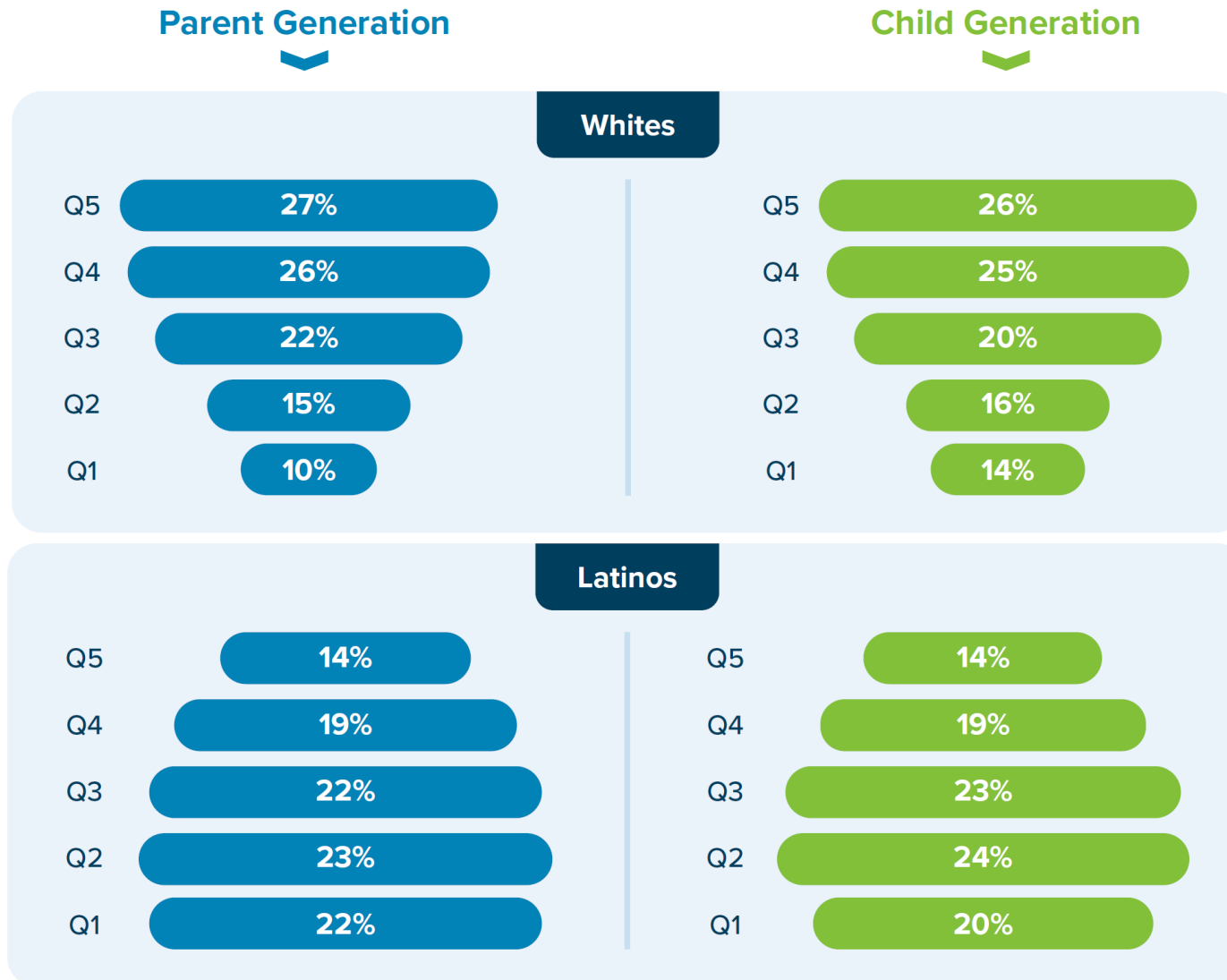
Overall Income Distribution: Whites vs. Blacks



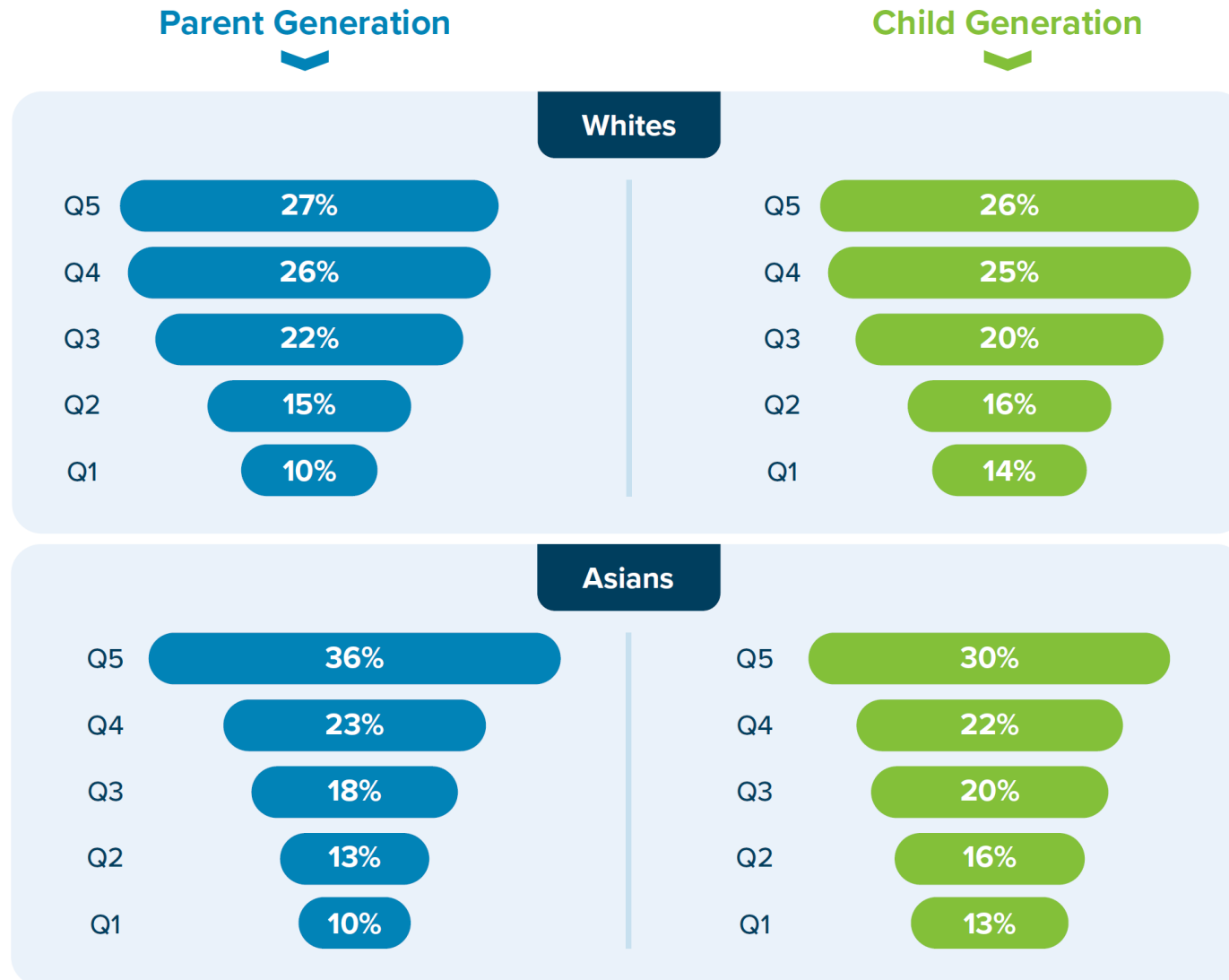
Overall Income Distribution: Whites vs. American Indians



Overall Income Distribution: Whites vs. Latinos



Overall Income Distribution: Whites vs. Asians



Summary



Income Mobility

Starting at the Bottom: Black and American Indian children start mostly at the bottom of the income distribution.

Trapped at the bottom: Large shares of Black males (49%) and American Indian males (49%) and females (42%) remain trapped in poverty across generations.

Failing to Reach the Middle Class: Large majorities of Blacks (83%), American Indians (78%), and Latinos (77%) fail to reach the middle class.

Falling out of the Middle Class: Most Blacks (56%) and American Indians (53%) fall out of the middle class.

Overall income distributions changed little across generations between those born mostly in the 50-60s and those born in the 1970s-80s

Mobility Drivers:

What life course milestones predict mobility?



Identifying Life Course Mobility Milestones



We sought to identify what **life course milestones** predict upward mobility in education, income and health?



A host **environmental factors also influence mobility** (e.g. family poverty, neighborhood poverty, violence, school quality, etc.), but they do so primarily through how they impact life course milestones.



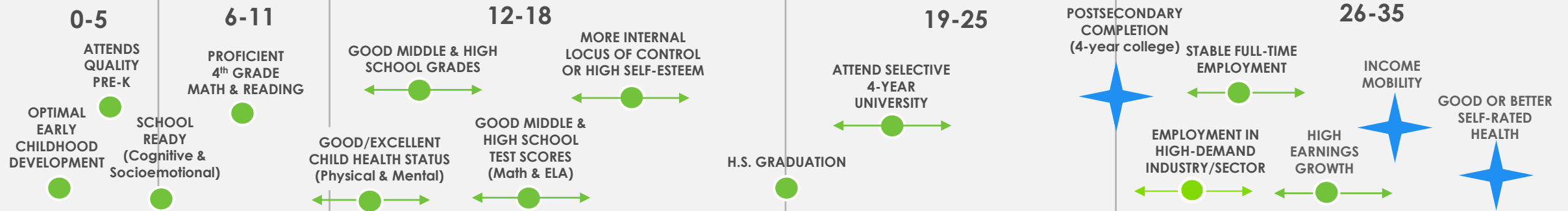
Some mobility milestones are “**positive,**” (e.g. college completion) and predict upward mobility, some are “**negative,**” (e.g. a felony conviction) and predict a lack of upward mobility



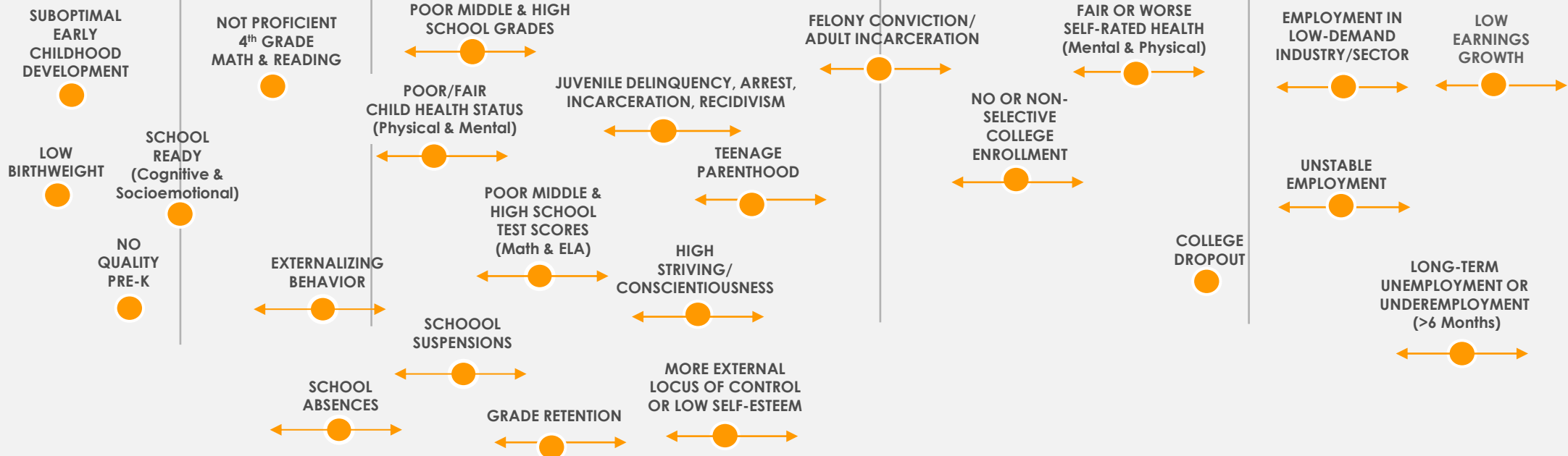
We conducted a large systematic scan and **identified 24 mobility milestones** based on longitudinal studies.

Mobility Milestone Predictors

POSITIVE



NEGATIVE



Employment Interventions

What interventions can improve employment mobility milestones for youth of color?



Research Process

1

Conducted **several research scans**, including consulting **12 evidence registries** (e.g. What Works Clearinghouse, Blueprints, etc.)

2

Looked for **experimental interventions** that improved at least one mobility milestone for **youth of color (ages 10-25)**

3

This yielded a final list of **62 experimental interventions**.

11 interventions that targeted employment and earnings.

Key Questions about Employment Interventions



What were the impacts for employment, high-demand employment and earnings?



Who benefited: Who was targeted and who benefitted the most?



How long did the benefits last: Months, years?

Characteristics of Target Populations

- ✔ Mostly young adults of color
- ✔ Low-income
- ✔ Incarceration or criminal conviction histories
- ✔ Receiving public assistance
- ✔ High school dropouts or GED recipients
- ✔ Living in high poverty neighborhoods

Employment and Earnings Interventions: Impacts & Durations

AGE 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41

EFFECT SIZE

Employment

Career Academies

8 years

National Guard Youth Challenge

1.6 years

Job Corps

19 years

New Hope for Children and Families

2 years

↑ 8% employment rates for **males only**

↑ 5% employment rate (**mostly males**)

↑ 4.5% employment rates

↑ .19 SD for Blacks and .43 for Latinos in year 2. None for Whites (**mostly females**)

Employment in a High Demand Industry

Project Quest

3.2 years

Per Scholas

1.6 years

↑ 48% working in healthcare industry (**mostly females**)

↑ 200% working in IT sector (**mostly males**)

Earnings

Career Academies

8 years

National Guard Youth Challenge

1.6 years

Youth Build

2 years

↑ 17% monthly earnings for **males only**

↑ 20% annual earnings (**mostly males**)

↑ 29% those earning at least \$10/hour

Employment and Earnings Interventions: Impacts & Durations

AGE 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41

EFFECT SIZE

Earnings cont...

Year Up

● .8 years

New Hope for Children and Families

● 5 years

Project Quest

● 7.2 years

Per Scholas

● 6.6 years

JVS-Boston

● 1.5 years

Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership

● 1.9 years

Paycheck Plus

● 0 years

↑ 53% quarterly earnings.
52% Blacks, 53% Latinos,
57% Whites

↑ .23 SD annual earnings for
Blacks (year 1 only) and .31
for Latinos (years 1-5)
(mostly females)

↑ 18% annual earnings for
females only

↑ 14% annual earnings
(mostly males)

↑ 21% annual earnings
overall, 30% for Blacks.
No effects for Latinos.

↑ 24% annual earnings
overall. 18% for Blacks.
Larger gains for females
(30%).

↑ 9% for females only

Success Factors of Existing Employment Models



Success Factors

- ✔ Upfront screen of applicants for basic skills and motivation
- ✔ Providing both occupational skills and soft skills/career readiness training
- ✔ Wraparound supports to facilitate program completion
- ✔ Employment training and placement targeting strong demand jobs.
- ✔ Helping participants to attain industry certifications
- ✔ Post-employment follow-up services and counseling helped participants maintain employment
- ✔ Close involvement between providers and employers



Contact

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