Toward an Equitable Future of Work in Kansas City: Critical Indicators for Jobs, Opportunity, and Workforce Equity

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Workforce Demographics

People of color make up nearly a quarter of the Kansas City region's workforce.

Over one million people work in the Kansas City region, including nearly 270,000 people of color.

While white workers are still a large majority of the labor force, the region's population is rapidly diversifying.

White people are slightly overrepresented in the workforce (76 percent) compared to their share of the overall population (73 percent), But this is partly due to the racial generation gap in the region: 36 percent of youth are people of color, compared to just 15 percent of seniors.

See the interactive data.

Number and share of workers by race/ethnicity, Kansas City Metro region, 2019

Ethnicity ▲	Population	Percent
Total	1,095,042	
Asian or Pacific Islander	33,080	3%
Black	120,736	11%
Latinx	88,116	8%
Mixed/Other	22,126	2%
Native American	3,507	0%
White	827,477	76%

Latino includes people of Hispanic origin of any race; all other groups are non-Hispanic.
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Occupational Segregation

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Persistent occupational segregation is a pressing challenge for workforce equity.
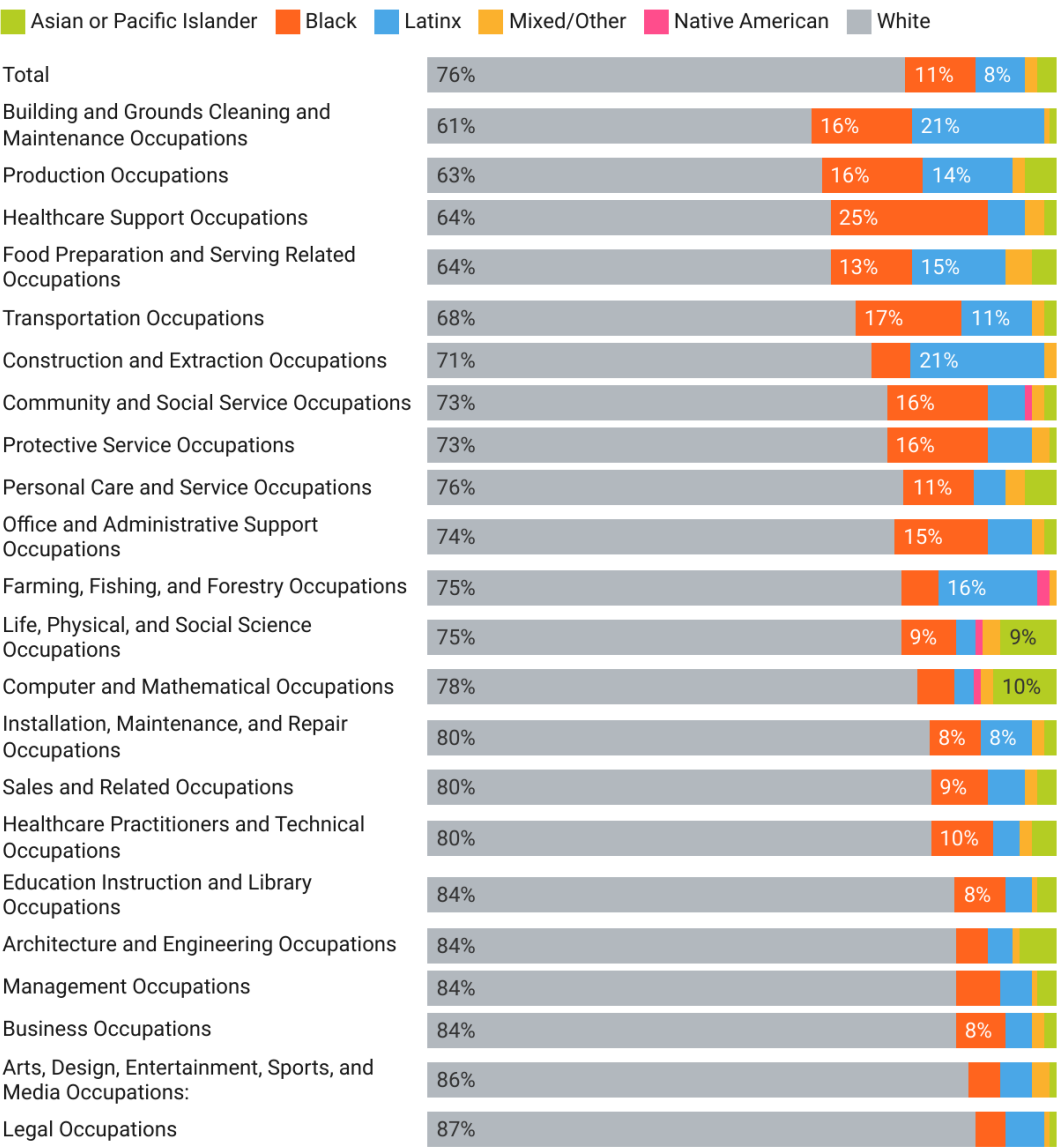
Occupational segregation continues to crowd many workers of color – particularly Black and Latinx workers – into lower wage, lower quality jobs.

Black people are 11 percent of the Kansas City workforce overall, but 25 percent of those in health-care support occupations and 17 percent of those in transportation occupations. They are underrepresented in legal occupations, architecture and engineering, and arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations.

Latinx workers are 8 percent of the total workforce but 21 percent of those in building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations, and construction and extraction occupations.

See the interactive data.

Share of workers by race/ethnicity and occupational group, Kansas City Metro region, 2019

Legend: Asian or Pacific Islander | Black | Latinx | Mixed/Other | Native American | White

Occupational group	White	Black	Latinx
Total	76%	11%	8%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	61%	16%	21%
Production Occupations	63%	16%	14%
Healthcare Support Occupations	64%	25%	
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	64%	13%	15%
Transportation Occupations	68%	17%	11%
Construction and Extraction Occupations	71%		21%
Community and Social Service Occupations	73%	16%	
Protective Service Occupations	73%	16%	
Personal Care and Service Occupations	76%	11%	
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	74%	15%	
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	75%		16%
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	75%	9%	9%
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	78%		10%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	80%	8%	8%
Sales and Related Occupations	80%	9%	
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	80%	10%	
Education Instruction and Library Occupations	84%	8%	
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	84%		
Management Occupations	84%		
Business Occupations	84%	8%	
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations:	86%		
Legal Occupations	87%		

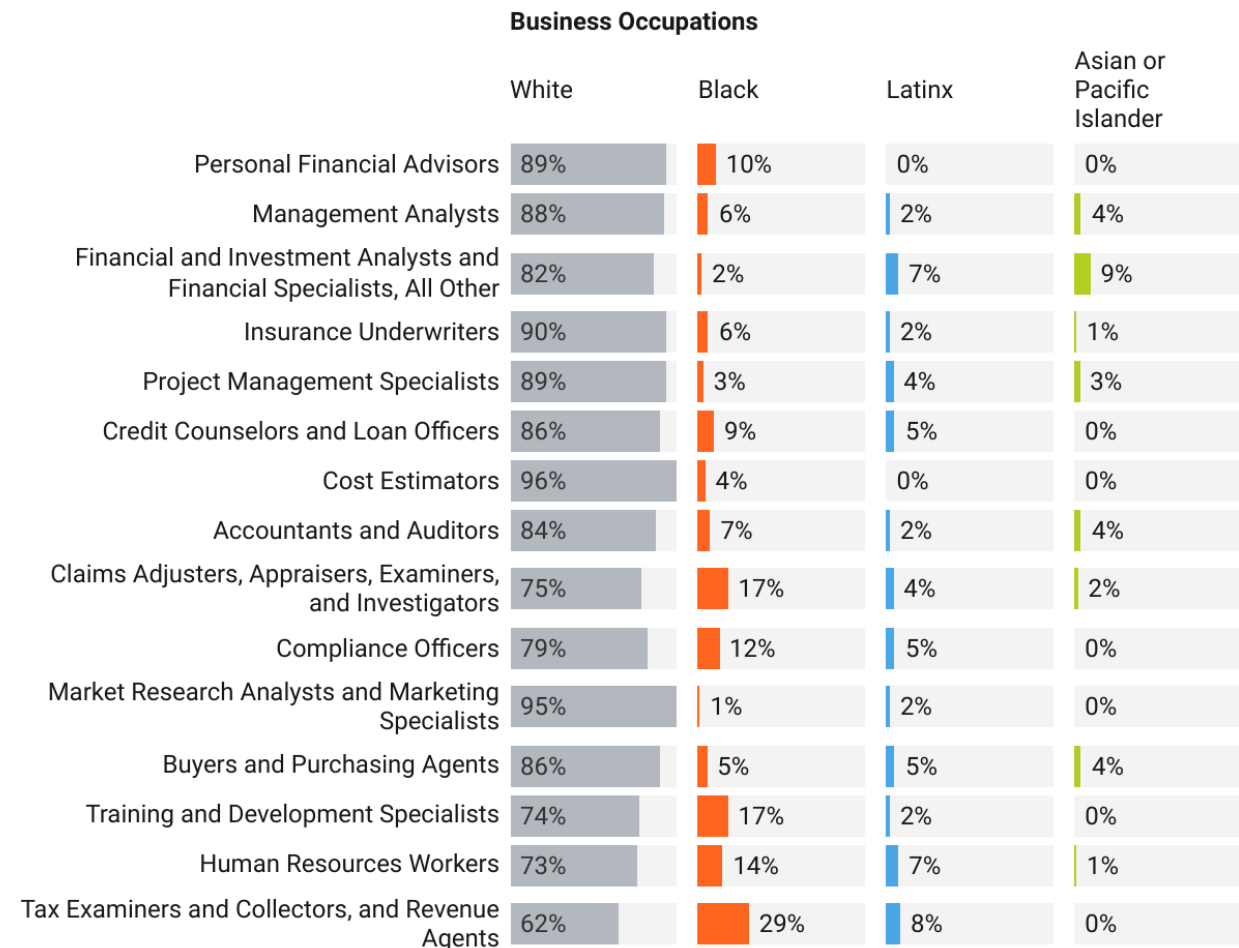# Persistent occupational segregation is a pressing challenge for workforce equity.

White workers are overrepresented among most of the region's largest business occupations – especially cost estimators and market research analysts and marking specialists.

In business occupations, Black workers are most concentrated among tax examiners and collectors and revenue agents; claims adjusters, appraisers, examiners, and investigators; and training and development specialists. They are most dramatically underrepresented among market research analysts and market specialists and financial and investment analysts.

[See the interactive data](#).

Share of workers by race/ethnicity and detailed occupation, Kansas City Metro region, 2019

🟩 Asian or Pacific Islander 🟧 Black 🟦 Latinx ⬜ White

Business Occupations

	White	Black	Latinx	Asian or Pacific Islander
Personal Financial Advisors	89%	10%	0%	0%
Management Analysts	88%	6%	2%	4%
Financial and Investment Analysts and Financial Specialists, All Other	82%	2%	7%	9%
Insurance Underwriters	90%	6%	2%	1%
Project Management Specialists	89%	3%	4%	3%
Credit Counselors and Loan Officers	86%	9%	5%	0%
Cost Estimators	96%	4%	0%	0%
Accountants and Auditors	84%	7%	2%	4%
Claims Adjusters, Appraisers, Examiners, and Investigators	75%	17%	4%	2%
Compliance Officers	79%	12%	5%	0%
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	95%	1%	2%	0%
Buyers and Purchasing Agents	86%	5%	5%	4%
Training and Development Specialists	74%	17%	2%	0%
Human Resources Workers	73%	14%	7%	1%
Tax Examiners and Collectors, and Revenue Agents	62%	29%	8%	0%

Persistent occupational segregation is a pressing challenge for workforce equity.
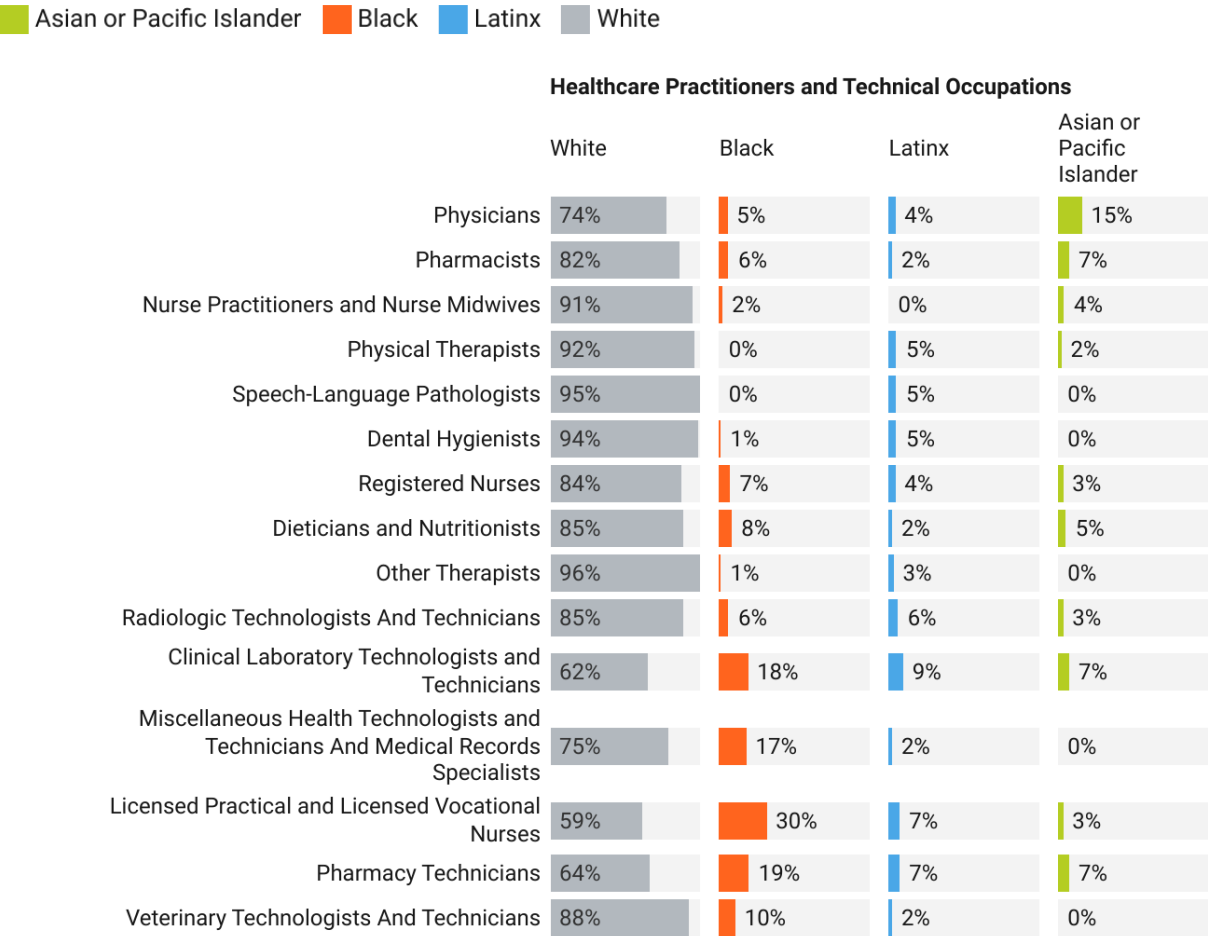
Among health-care jobs, Black workers are significantly concentrated among licensed practical and vocational nurses (30 percent), pharmacy technicians, and clinical laboratory technologists and technicians. They are least likely to hold jobs as physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, dental hygienists, and other therapists.

Latinx workers are underrepresented among most large health-care occupations, with the exception of clinical laboratory technologists and technicians.

See the interactive data.

Share of workers by race/ethnicity and detailed occupation, Kansas City Metro region, 2019

■ Asian or Pacific Islander   ■ Black   ■ Latinx   ■ White

Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations

	White	Black	Latinx	Asian or Pacific Islander
Physicians	74%	5%	4%	15%
Pharmacists	82%	6%	2%	7%
Nurse Practitioners and Nurse Midwives	91%	2%	0%	4%
Physical Therapists	92%	0%	5%	2%
Speech-Language Pathologists	95%	0%	5%	0%
Dental Hygienists	94%	1%	5%	0%
Registered Nurses	84%	7%	4%	3%
Dieticians and Nutritionists	85%	8%	2%	5%
Other Therapists	96%	1%	3%	0%
Radiologic Technologists And Technicians	85%	6%	6%	3%
Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians	62%	18%	9%	7%
Miscellaneous Health Technologists and Technicians And Medical Records Specialists	75%	17%	2%	0%
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	59%	30%	7%	3%
Pharmacy Technicians	64%	19%	7%	7%
Veterinary Technologists And Technicians	88%	10%	2%	0%

Values reported are estimates and subject to error. As such, values of 0 or 100 percent should be interpreted as approaching those values and not exactly those values.
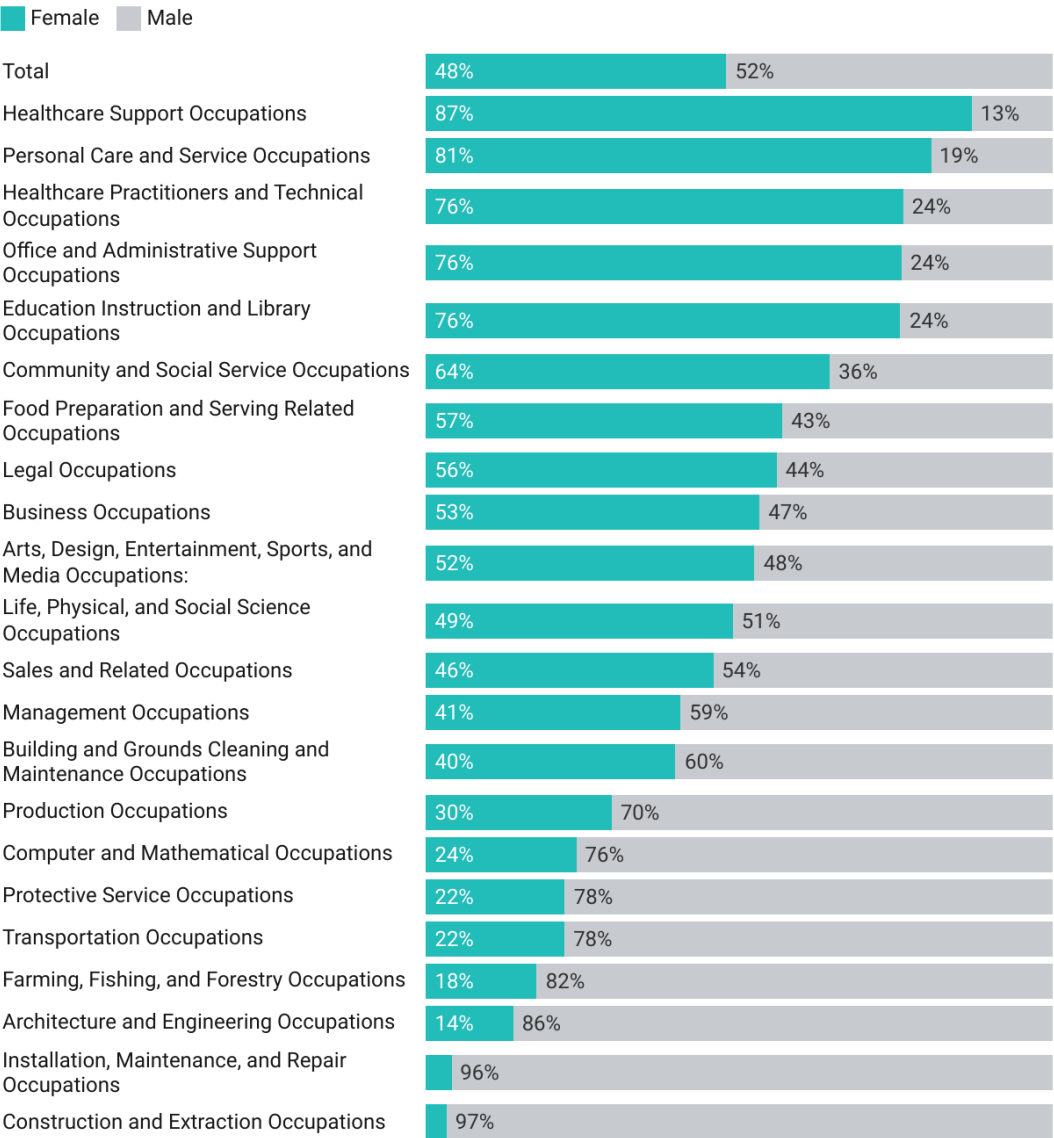
Most occupational groups are also segregated by gender.

Women make up just under half of the Kansas City region's workforce (48 percent) but only 14 percent of those in architecture and engineering jobs and 24 percent of those in computer and mathematical jobs.

They are most overrepresented among health-care support occupations (87 percent), personal care and service occupations (81percent), healthcare practitioners and technical occupations (76 percent), office and administrative support occupations (76 percent), and education instruction and library occupations (76 percent).

See the interactive data.

Share of workers by gender and occupational group, Kansas City, 2019

■ Female   ■ Male

Occupational Group	Female	Male
Total	48%	52%
Healthcare Support Occupations	87%	13%
Personal Care and Service Occupations	81%	19%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	76%	24%
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	76%	24%
Education Instruction and Library Occupations	76%	24%
Community and Social Service Occupations	64%	36%
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	57%	43%
Legal Occupations	56%	44%
Business Occupations	53%	47%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations:	52%	48%
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	49%	51%
Sales and Related Occupations	46%	54%
Management Occupations	41%	59%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	40%	60%
Production Occupations	30%	70%
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	24%	76%
Protective Service Occupations	22%	78%
Transportation Occupations	22%	78%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	18%	82%
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	14%	86%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations		96%
Construction and Extraction Occupations		97%

Future-Ready Jobs

Growing the number of future-ready jobs — and ensuring equitable access to those opportunities — is key to a thriving and sustainable Kansas City economy.

Future-ready jobs are those that provide stable, family-supporting incomes for workers and strong future prospects for employers and communities, as defined below.

Living wage compensation:

Average wage for the occupation is sufficient to sustain a family of two working adults and two children — $42,120 in Kansas City (for an annual family income just over $84,000).

Adequate wages are essential for families to meet their basic needs, weather emergency expenses, and plan for the future.

Stable or growing base of employment:

The number of jobs is projected to grow or to remain relatively stable for the next decade. That is, employment in the occupation is not declining by more than 10 percent over 10 years for large occupations, or more than 2 percent over 10 years for small occupations.

A reliable base of employment provides stability for businesses and communities.

Automation resilient:

The occupation has a probability of computerization lower than 50 percent, given the full array of tasks that compose the role.

Automation and digitization change the way work gets done, and some workers are at heightened risk of job displacement. If more than half the tasks of a job can be computerized, that job is considered vulnerable to automation.
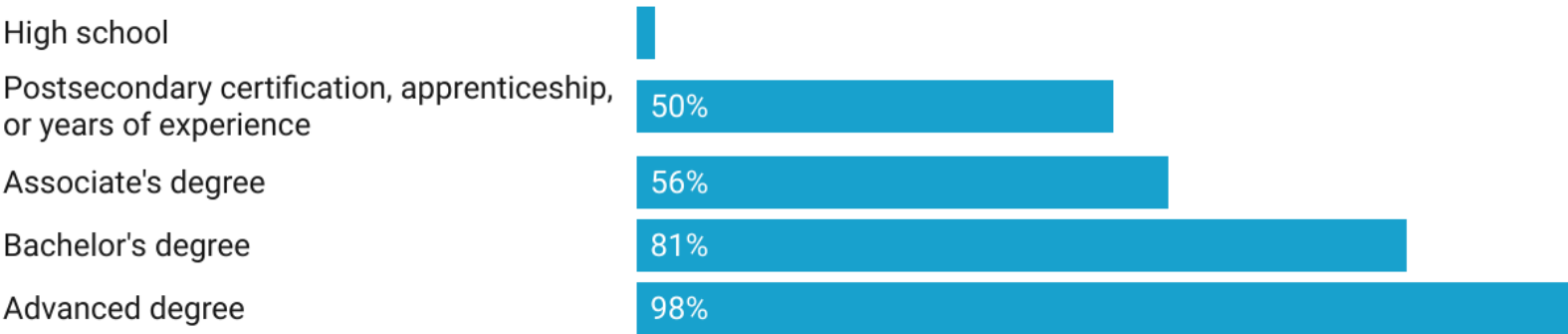
The majority of jobs in Kansas City that require at least a four-year degree are future-ready.

Nearly all jobs in Kansas City that require an advanced degree are future-ready – providing family-sustaining wages, a stable base of employment, and resilience to automation. More than 80 percent of jobs that require a bachelor's degree are also good jobs.

In contrast, only 2 percent of jobs that require only a high school diploma are future ready.

See the interactive data.

Future-ready job rate, by required education, Kansas City Metro region, 2019

Education	Rate
High school	
Postsecondary certification, apprenticeship, or years of experience	50%
Associate's degree	56%
Bachelor's degree	81%
Advanced degree	98%

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Among jobs that do not require a college degree, there are pronounced racial gaps in access to future-ready roles.

Very few jobs in Kansas City that require less than an associate's degree are considered future-ready. Among workers in jobs that do not require a college degree, white workers are more likely than workers of color to have future-ready roles.

Among occupations that require at least a four-year college degree, racial gaps are quite narrow.
See the interactive data.

Share of workers in future-ready jobs by race/ethnicity and educational requirements, Kansas City region, 2019

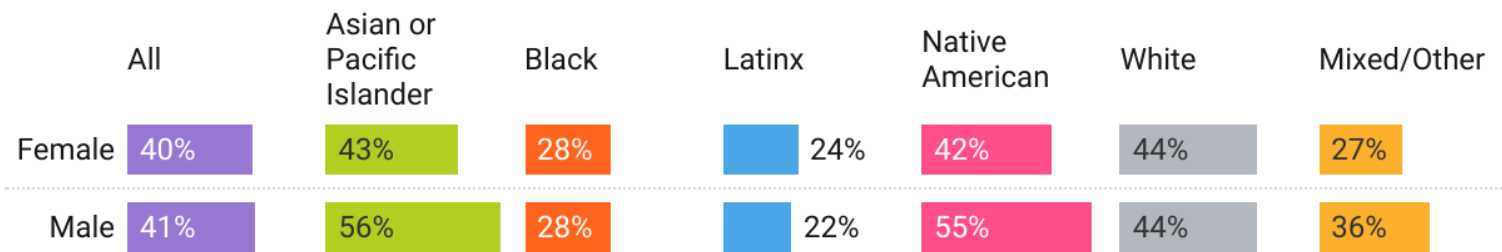|	All	Asian or Pacific Islander	Black	Latinx	Native American	White	Mixed/ Other
High school	2%	0%	1%	1%	0%	3%	2%
Postsecondary certification, apprenticeship, or years of experience	50%	50%	47%	43%	71%	51%	37%
Associate's degree	56%	88%	61%	46%		55%	
Bachelor's degree	81%	89%	81%	83%	92%	81%	77%
Advanced degree	98%	100%	99%	97%		98%	100%

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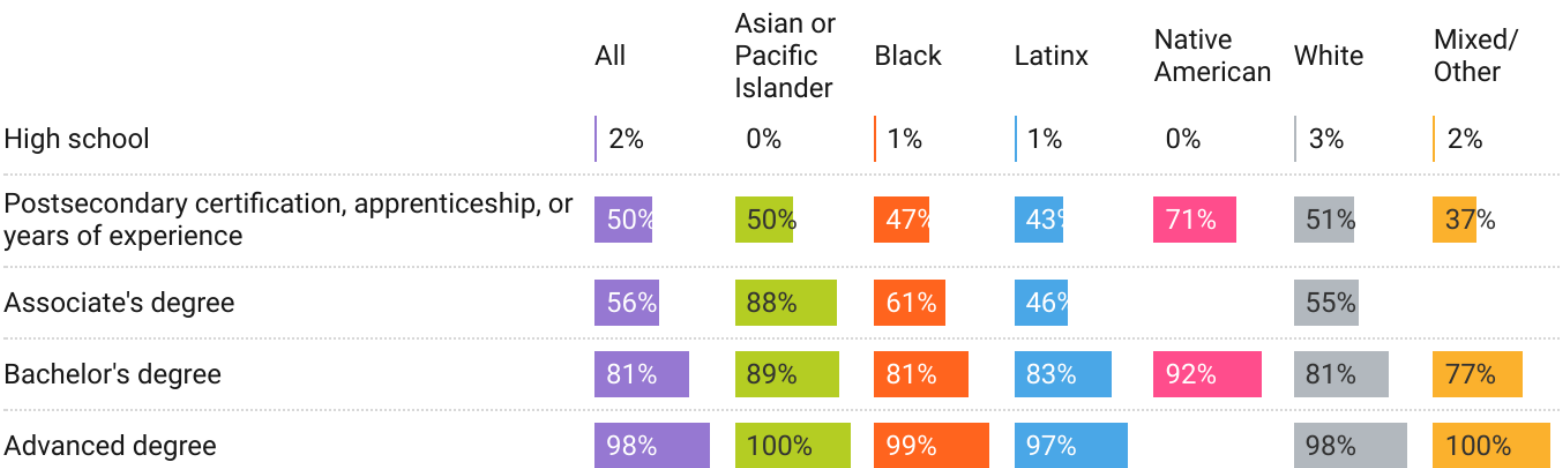
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Among some racial/ethnic groups, access to future-ready jobs differs considerably by gender.

Overall, men are slightly more likely than women to hold future-ready jobs (41 percent compared to 40 percent). The gap is largest among Asian or Pacific Islander workers: 56 percent of men are in future-ready roles, compared to just 43 percent of women.

Among both men and women, Latinx workers are the least likely to be in future-ready occupations: just 22 percent of male Latinx workers and 24 percent of female Latinx workers hold future-ready jobs.

See the interactive data.

Share of workers in future-ready jobs by race/ethnicity and gender, Kansas City Metro region, 2019

	All	Asian or Pacific Islander	Black	Latinx	Native American	White	Mixed/Other
Female	40%	43%	28%	24%	42%	44%	27%
Male	41%	56%	28%	22%	55%	44%	36%

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Labor Market Trends

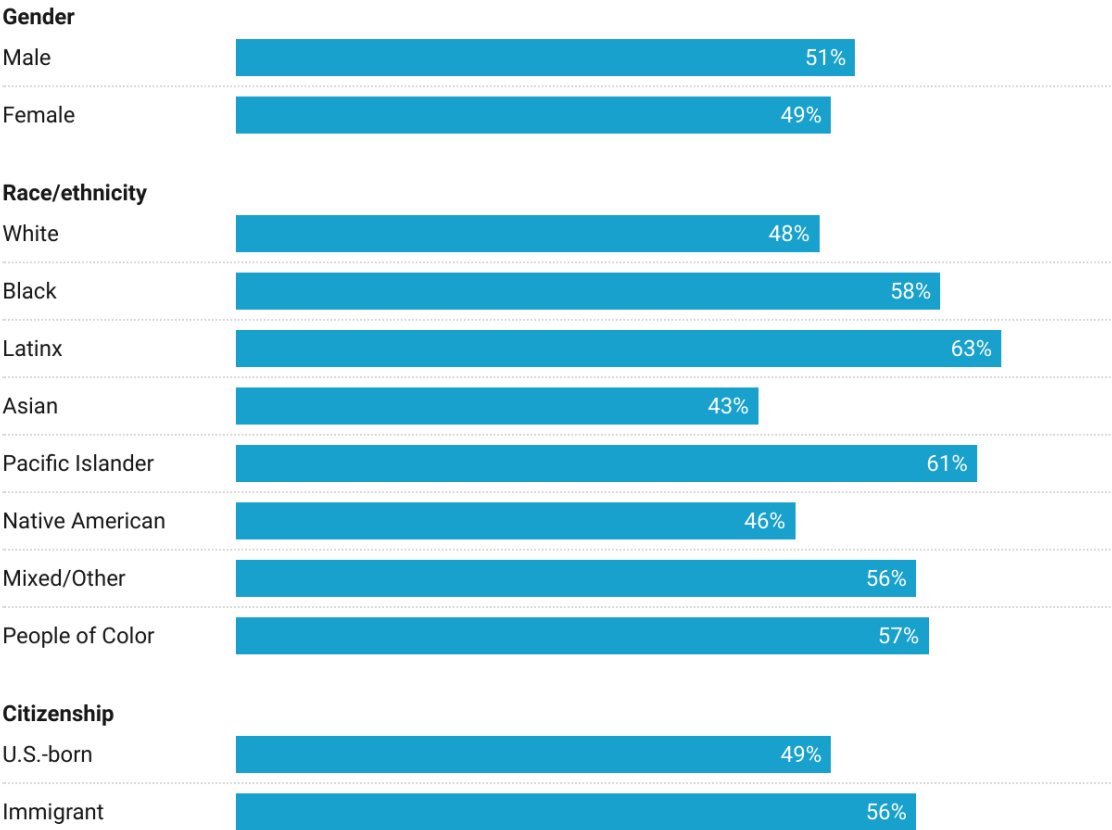National Equity Atlas .ıl Emsi | burningglass

Automation risk is highest for Latinx, Pacific Islander, and Black workers.

If more than half the tasks of a job can be computerized, that job is considered vulnerable to automation. In Kansas City, 51 percent of male workers and 49 percent of female workers are in automation-vulnerable jobs.

The risk of automation-driven job displacement varies considerably by race/ethnicity: 63 percent of Latinx workers, 61 percent of Pacific Islander workers, and 58 percent of Black workers are in automation-vulnerable occupations in the region, compared with 43 percent of Asian workers and 48 percent of white workers.

See the interactive data.

Automation risk by demographic characteristics, Kansas City Metro region, 2019

Gender

Male	51%
Female	49%

Race/ethnicity

White	48%
Black	58%
Latinx	63%
Asian	43%
Pacific Islander	61%
Native American	46%
Mixed/Other	56%
People of Color	57%

Citizenship

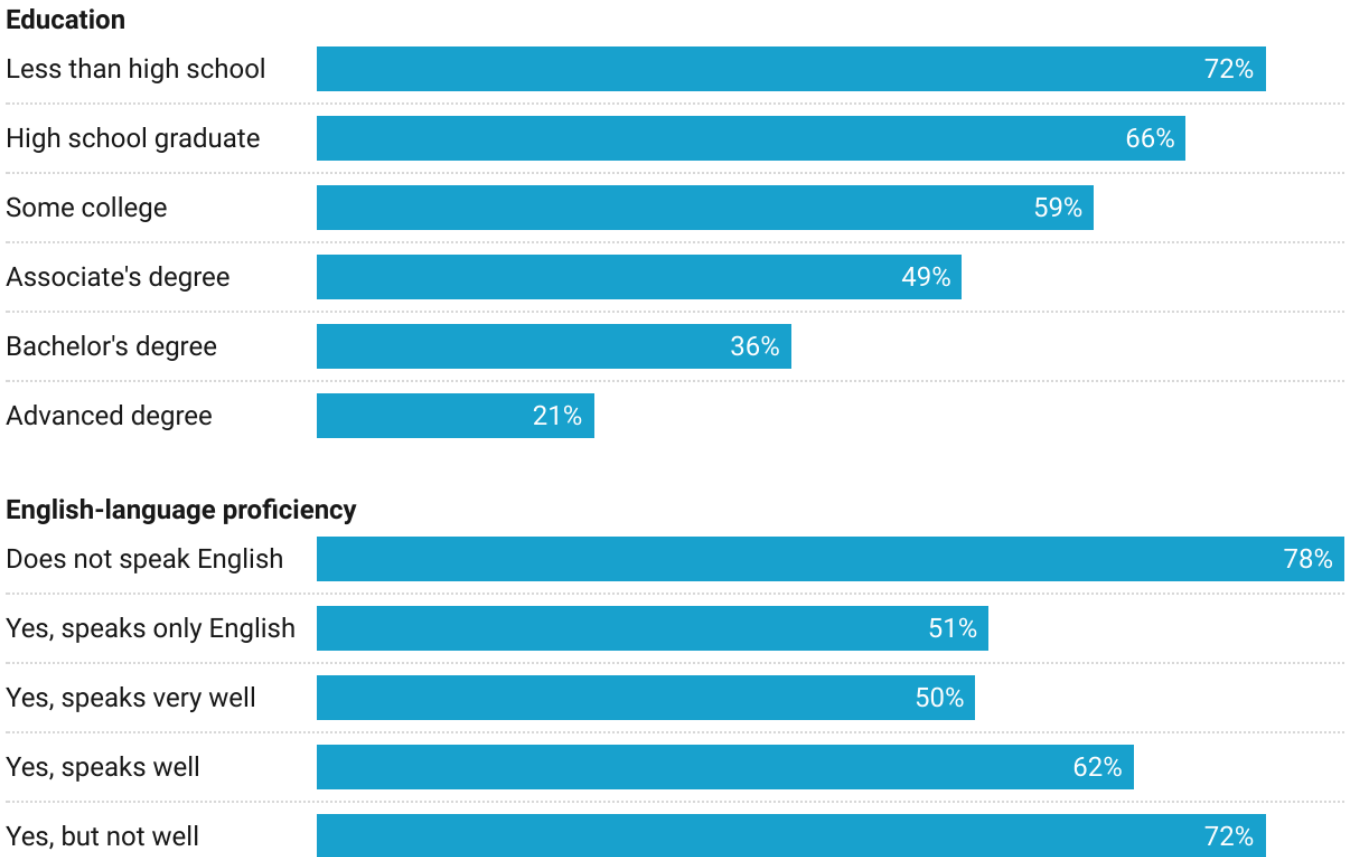|	
U.S.-born	49%
Immigrant	56%

Workers with higher educational attainment and greater English proficiency are more likely to be in automation-resilient jobs.

Higher education is strongly correlated with lower risk of automation. Just 21 percent of workers with an advanced degree are in automation-vulnerable jobs, compared to 72 percent of those without a high school diploma and 66 percent workers with only a high school diploma.

Greater English-language proficiency is likewise associated with greater resilience to automation. About 50 percent of workers who speak English very well are at risk of automation, compared with 78 percent of those who do not speak English.

See the interactive data.

Automation risk by education, Kansas City Metro region, 2019

Education

Less than high school	72%
High school graduate	66%
Some college	59%
Associate's degree	49%
Bachelor's degree	36%
Advanced degree	21%

English-language proficiency

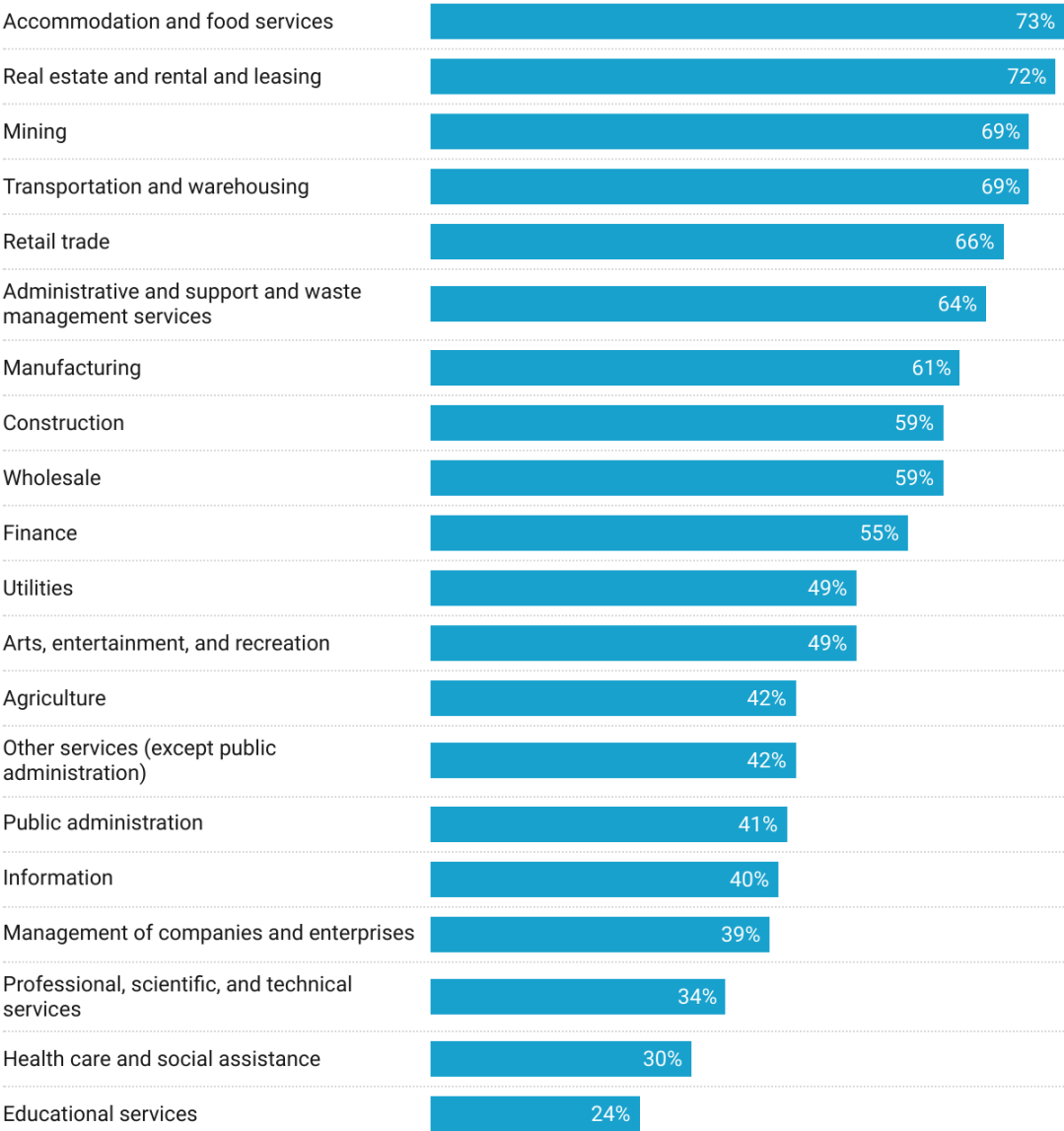|	
Does not speak English	78%
Yes, speaks only English	51%
Yes, speaks very well	50%
Yes, speaks well	62%
Yes, but not well	72%

Workers in educational services have the lowest risk of automation, while those in accommodation and food services are at the highest risk.

Automation risk also varies by industry. In Kansas City, the risk is highest among the accommodation and food services industry(73 percent) and the real estate and rental and leasing industry (72 percent), in which more than seven out of ten workers are in jobs vulnerable to automation.

The most automation-resilient industries are educational services (24 percent of jobs at risk of automation) and health care and social assistance (30 percent of jobs at risk).

See the interactive data.

Automation risk by industry, Kansas City Metro region, 2019

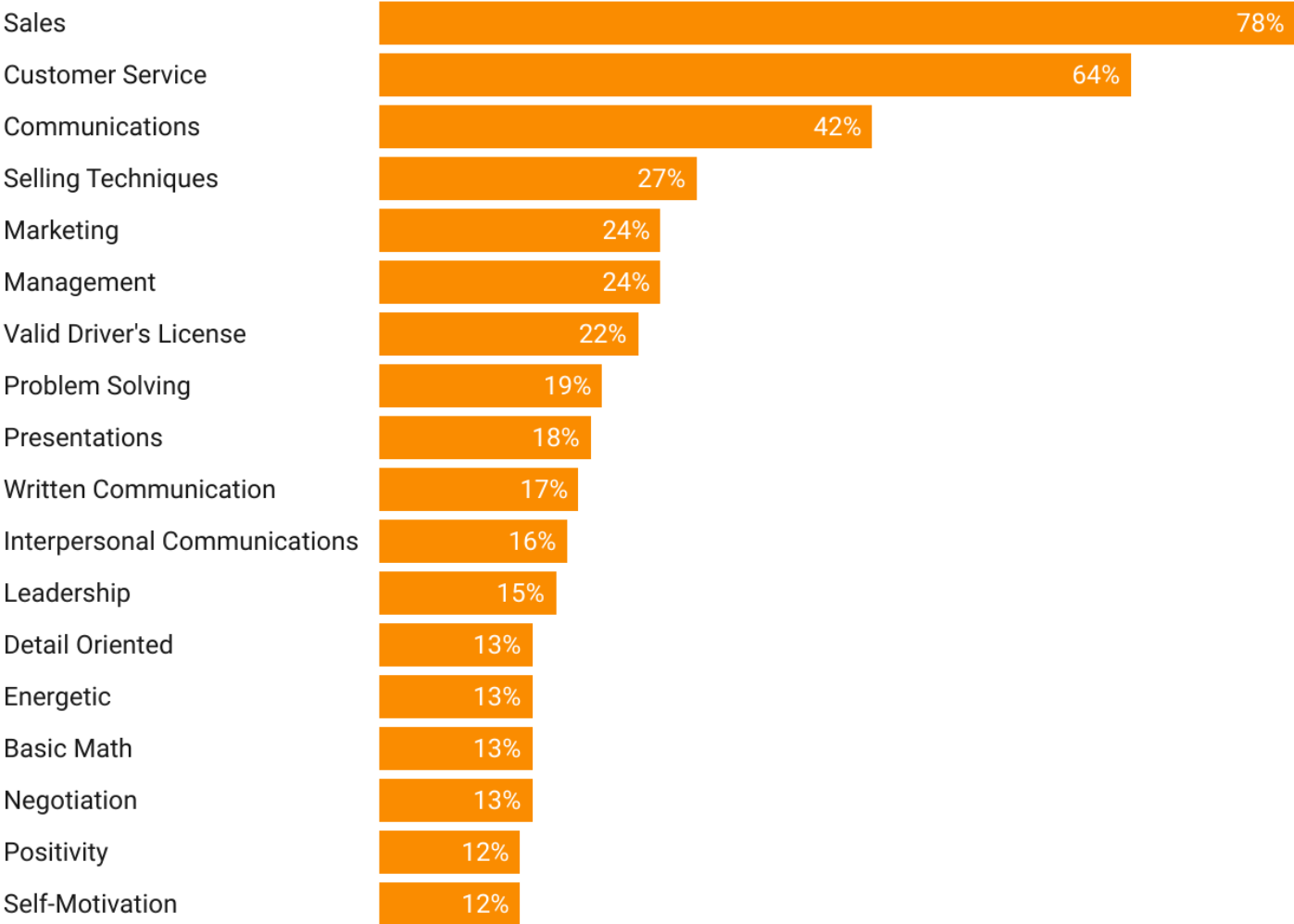| Industry	Risk
Accommodation and food services	73%
Real estate and rental and leasing	72%
Mining	69%
Transportation and warehousing	69%
Retail trade	66%
Administrative and support and waste management services	64%
Manufacturing	61%
Construction	59%
Wholesale	59%
Finance	55%
Utilities	49%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	49%
Agriculture	42%
Other services (except public administration)	42%
Public administration	41%
Information	40%
Management of companies and enterprises	39%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	34%
Health care and social assistance	30%
Educational services	24%

Building skills that are in demand for future-ready jobs can help workers access high quality employment opportunities.

Understanding the skills that employers are seeking in candidates for future-ready occupations can help jobseekers and training providers craft career pathways into good jobs.

This chart details the most-requested skills in job postings for sales representatives of services (except advertising, insurance, financial services, and travel) in Kansas City, with sales, customer service, and communications skills topping the list.

See the interactive data.

Top skills for sales representatives of services, except advertising, insurance, financial services, and travel, Kansas City Metro region, 2019

Skill	Percent
Sales	78%
Customer Service	64%
Communications	42%
Selling Techniques	27%
Marketing	24%
Management	24%
Valid Driver's License	22%
Problem Solving	19%
Presentations	18%
Written Communication	17%
Interpersonal Communications	16%
Leadership	15%
Detail Oriented	13%
Energetic	13%
Basic Math	13%
Negotiation	13%
Positivity	12%
Self-Motivation	12%

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This chart details the most-requested skills in job postings for first-line supervisors of production and operating workers in Kansas City. Communications, leadership, and management skills are listed in about 40 percent of postings for these occupations.

See the interactive data.

Top skills for first-line supervisors of production and operating workers, Kansas City Metro region, 2019

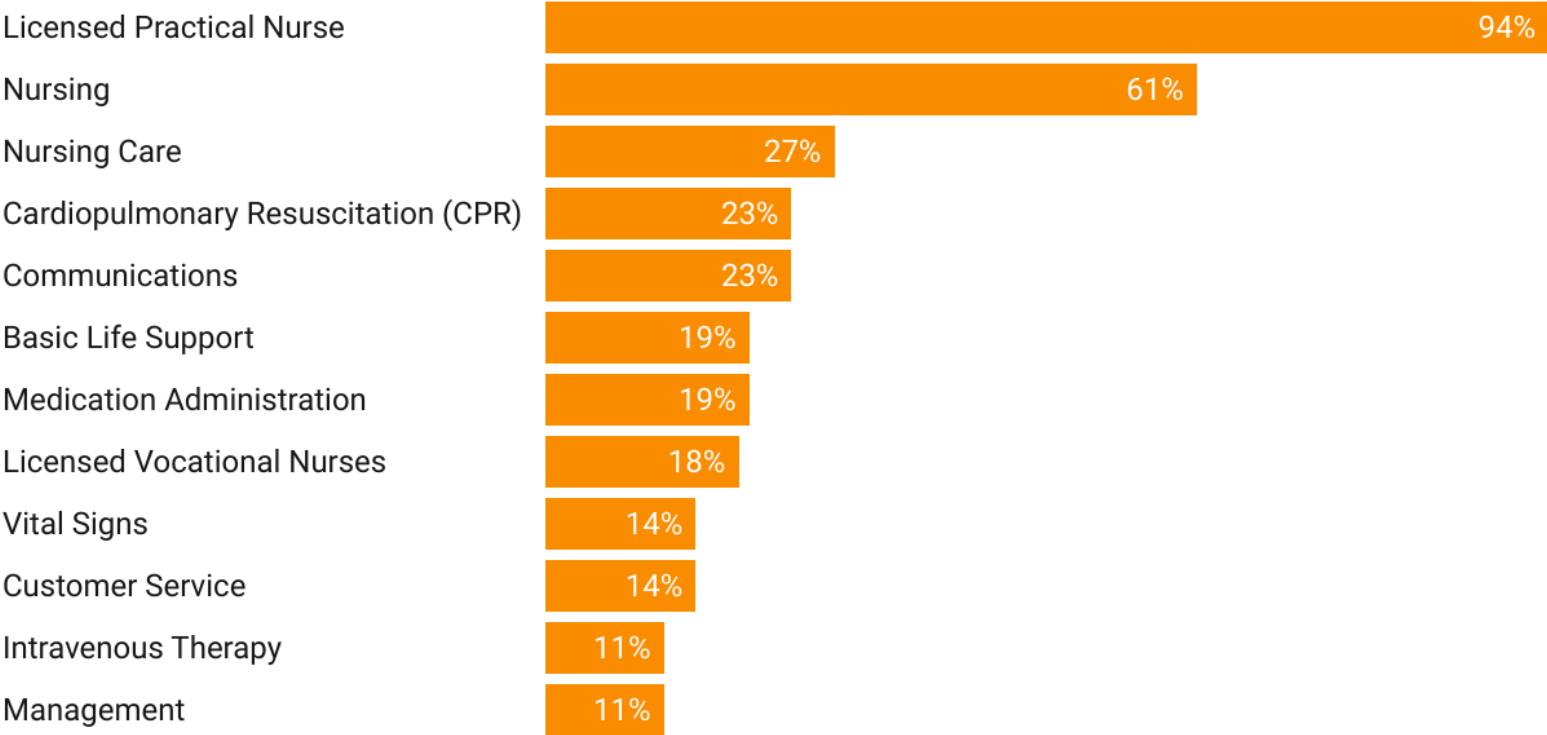| Skill	Percent
Communications	44%
Operations	42%
Leadership	41%
Management	39%
Problem Solving	23%
Supervision	22%
Lean Manufacturing	20%
Planning	17%
Microsoft Excel	16%
Customer Service	16%
Continuous Improvement Process	16%
Housekeeping	15%
Microsoft Office	15%
Scheduling	15%
Corrective And Preventive Action (CAPA)	13%
Coordinating	13%
Basic Math	13%
Computer Literacy	13%
Good Manufacturing Practices	12%
Auditing	12%

Building skills that are in demand for future-ready jobs can help workers access high quality employment opportunities.

Understanding the skills that employers are seeking in candidates for future-ready occupations can help jobseekers and training providers craft career pathways into good jobs.

This chart details the most-requested skills in job postings for licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses in Kansas City, many of which can be developed and honed through other healthcare occupations (skills such as CPR, communications, and vital signs).

See the interactive data.

Top skills for licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses, Kansas City Metro region, 2019

Skill	Percentage
Licensed Practical Nurse	94%
Nursing	61%
Nursing Care	27%
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	23%
Communications	23%
Basic Life Support	19%
Medication Administration	19%
Licensed Vocational Nurses	18%
Vital Signs	14%
Customer Service	14%
Intravenous Therapy	11%
Management	11%

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