



Expanding Apprenticeship to New Sectors and Populations:

Evidence from the U.S. Department of Labor's
American Apprenticeship Initiative

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New Fields for Apprenticeship

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Agenda

- Overview of the U.S. apprenticeship system
- U.S. efforts to expand apprenticeship to new sectors and populations
- Strategies to develop new apprenticeship programs and recruit apprentices
- Characteristics of new apprentices and in-program experiences
- Post-program apprentice outcomes
- Summary and implications for future programs

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this presentation do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Labor.





Overview of the U.S. Apprenticeship System





Apprenticeship in the United States

- Historically, apprenticeship in the United States has been used as a training model for occupations in the building trades
 - E.g., electrician, carpenter
- Apprenticeship is a relatively small, but growing, workforce development model in the U.S.
 - As of 2024, about 26,000 apprenticeship programs and 700,000 apprentices
- The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) oversees the U.S. apprenticeship program
 - Responsible for **“registering”** apprenticeship programs to **ensure standards**
 - Provide **technical assistance** to employers and other organizations that administer apprenticeship programs
 - Provide **grants** to organizations to **support apprenticeship expansion**





Components of Registered Apprenticeship Programs in the U.S.

- Registered Apprenticeship Programs in the U.S. must include:
 - **Related technical instruction (RTI)** of at least 144 hours
 - **On-the-job learning (OJL)** of at least 2,000 hours overseen by a mentor at the employer's job site
 - **Wage increases** over the course of the apprenticeship
 - An **industry-recognized credential** upon completion of the apprenticeship
 - A **Standards of Apprenticeship** document that describes the work process schedule (skill standards) and specifies the RTI, OJL, and wage progression for the registered apprenticeship program
 - A **sponsor** to oversee the program and maintain fidelity to the Standards of Apprenticeship. Sponsors can be employers, consortia of employers, unions, community colleges, state or local workforce agencies, or nonprofits





U.S. efforts to expand apprenticeship to new sectors and populations





American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI) grant program

- In recent years, U.S. DOL has aimed to increase the number of registered apprenticeship programs in the U.S. through various grant programs
- In 2015, DOL initiated the **AAI grant program** as a component of this effort
 - \$175 million in five-year grants
 - Awarded to 46 grantees across the country
- The AAI grants aimed to:
 - Expand registered apprenticeship to
 - **Occupational sectors** with few apprenticeships, such as healthcare and information technology
 - **New populations** to participate in apprenticeship programs





AAI Evaluation

- In 2016, DOL commissioned an evaluation of AAI to build evidence about the effectiveness of RAPs and generate lessons for future programs
- Evaluation was completed in 2022.
- Today's presentation reports findings from the evaluation of the AAI grants.



Implementation study

Documented design and operation of grantees' apprenticeship programs; identified promising practices and challenges



Outcomes study

Examined apprentice and pre-apprentice characteristics, program experiences, and post-program outcomes



Employer return on investment study

Measured the return on employers' investment from using registered apprenticeships to meet talent needs



Employer engagement demonstration

Explored the impacts of training staff to market apprenticeships to employers





Strategies to develop new apprenticeship programs and recruit apprentices





Implementing New Programs and Recruiting Employers

- Grantees collaborated with partners to identify industry needs and develop new apprenticeship programs
 - Many grantees identified **advanced manufacturing** as an important industry in which to expand apprenticeship
 - Programs in new sectors needed to adapt to industry requirements
 - IT: Changing industry needs required more **frequent updates to RTI content**
 - Healthcare: State occupational accreditation standards required programs to identify training providers that could **provide the appropriate RTI and OJL**
- To recruit employers, many grantees funded staff dedicated to employer recruitment
 - Employers were motivated by improvements in **worker productivity** and **training tailored to their specific job requirements**
 - Availability of **funds to offset RTI and OJL** also encouraged employer adoption of apprenticeship





Recruiting Apprentices

- Grantees designed strategies to recruit new populations into apprenticeship
 - **Advertisements** via websites, social media, posters, brochures
 - Providing information through **workforce assistance centers**
 - **Presentations or events** with organizations that served specific populations
 - Engagement with **partner organizations** to recruit specific populations
- Many employers used apprenticeship to train incumbent workers for more highly skilled jobs



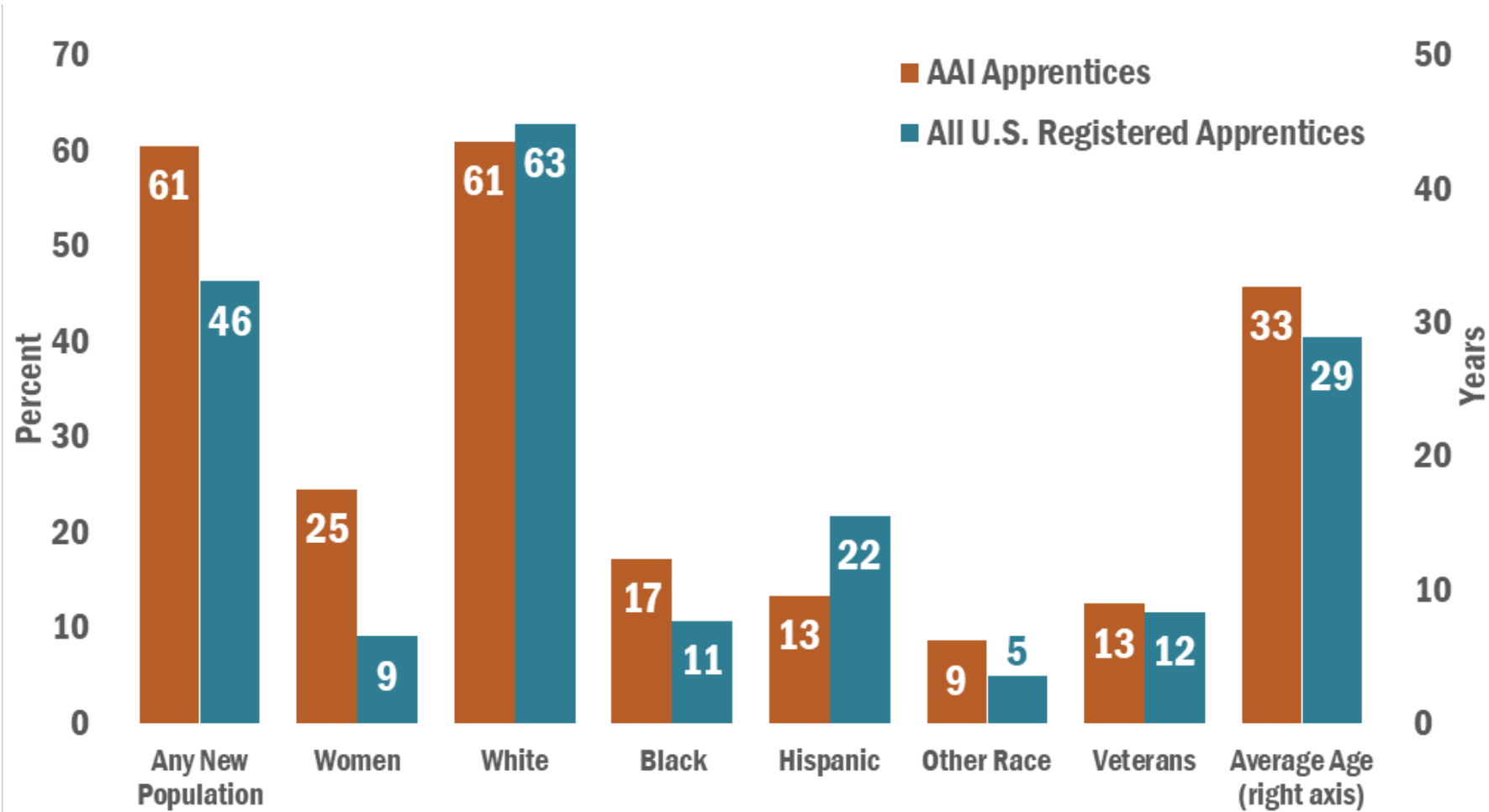


Characteristics of new apprentices and in-program experiences





Most AAI apprentices were from new populations



Source: Walton, Gardiner, and Barnow. 2022. *Expanding Apprenticeship to New Sectors and Populations: The Experiences and Outcomes of Apprentices in the American Apprenticeship Initiative.*

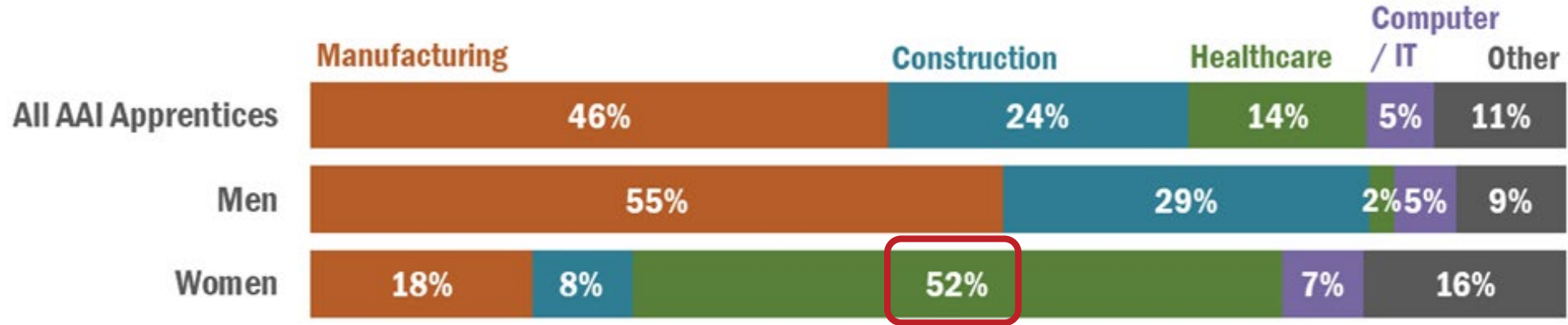


AAI apprentices enrolled primarily in non-traditional occupations, most commonly manufacturing





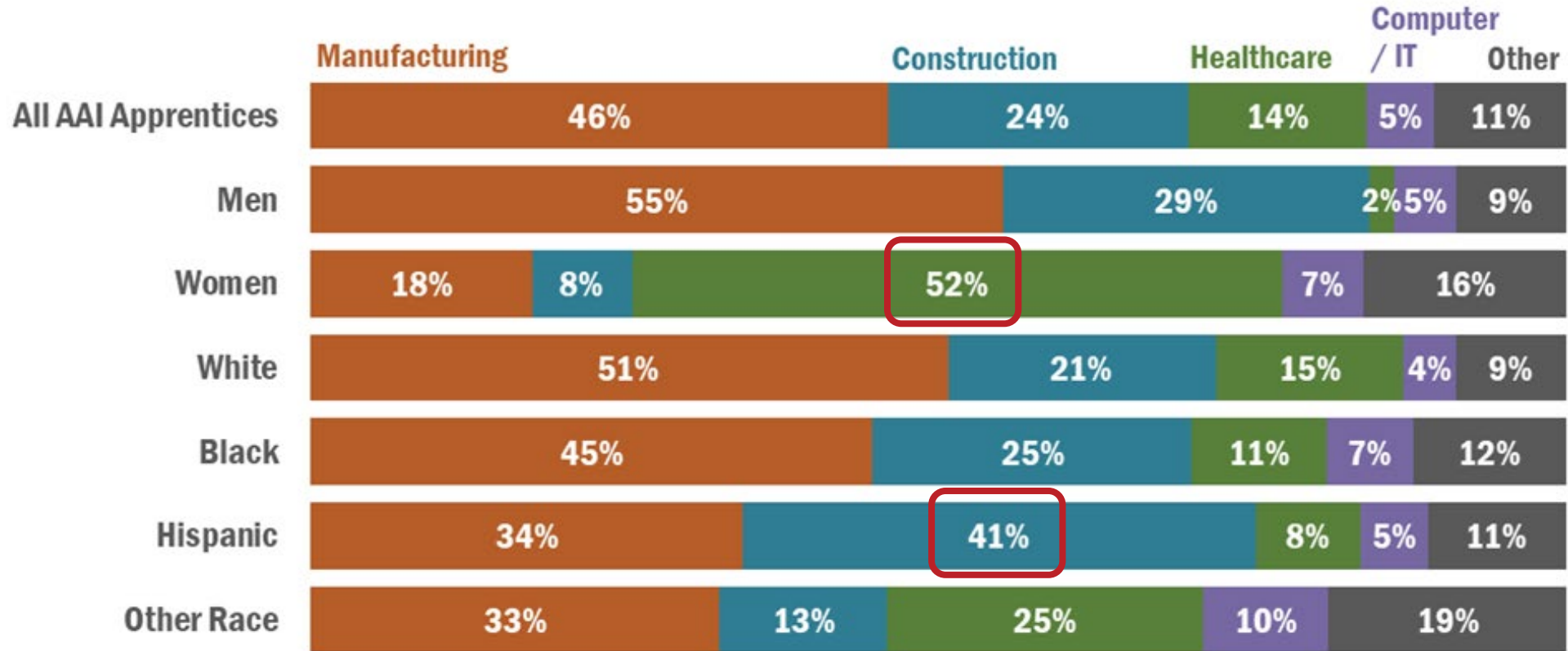
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Source: Walton, Gardiner, and Barnow, 2022.



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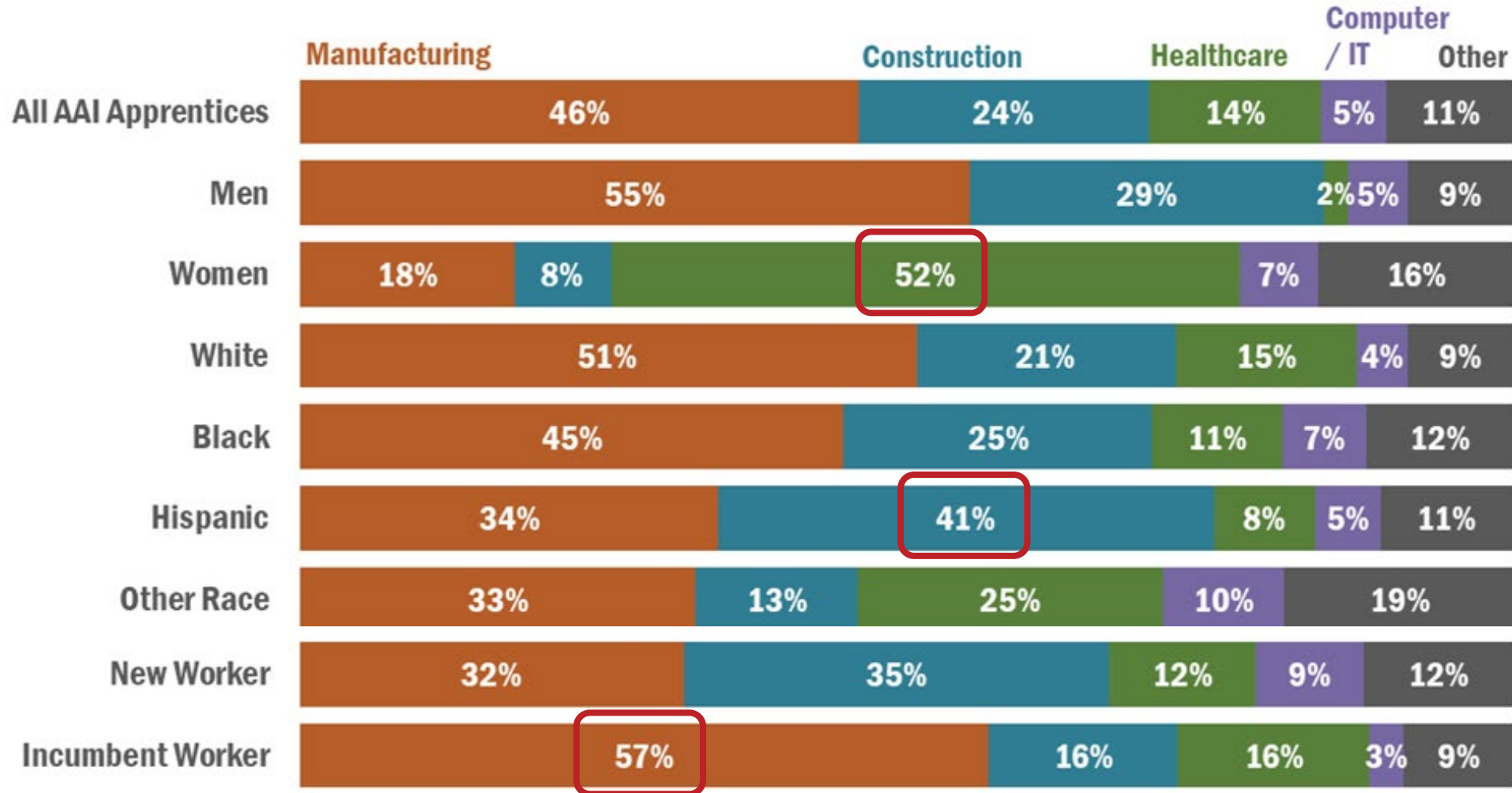


Source: Walton, Gardiner, and Barnow, 2022.





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Post-program outcomes of AAI apprentices





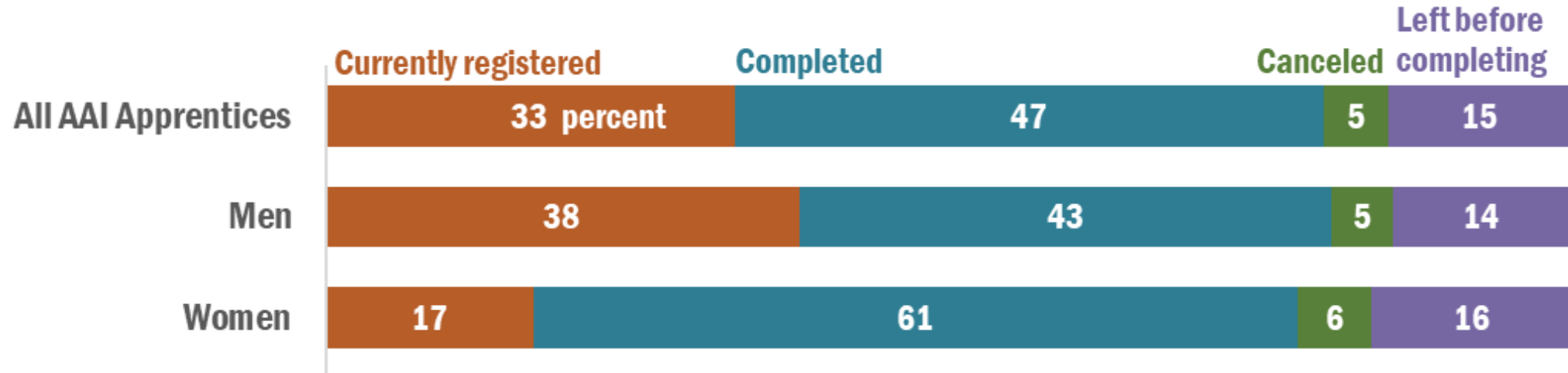
Most AAI apprentices had completed their programs or were still enrolled at the time of the survey



Source: Walton, Gardiner, and Barnow.
2022.



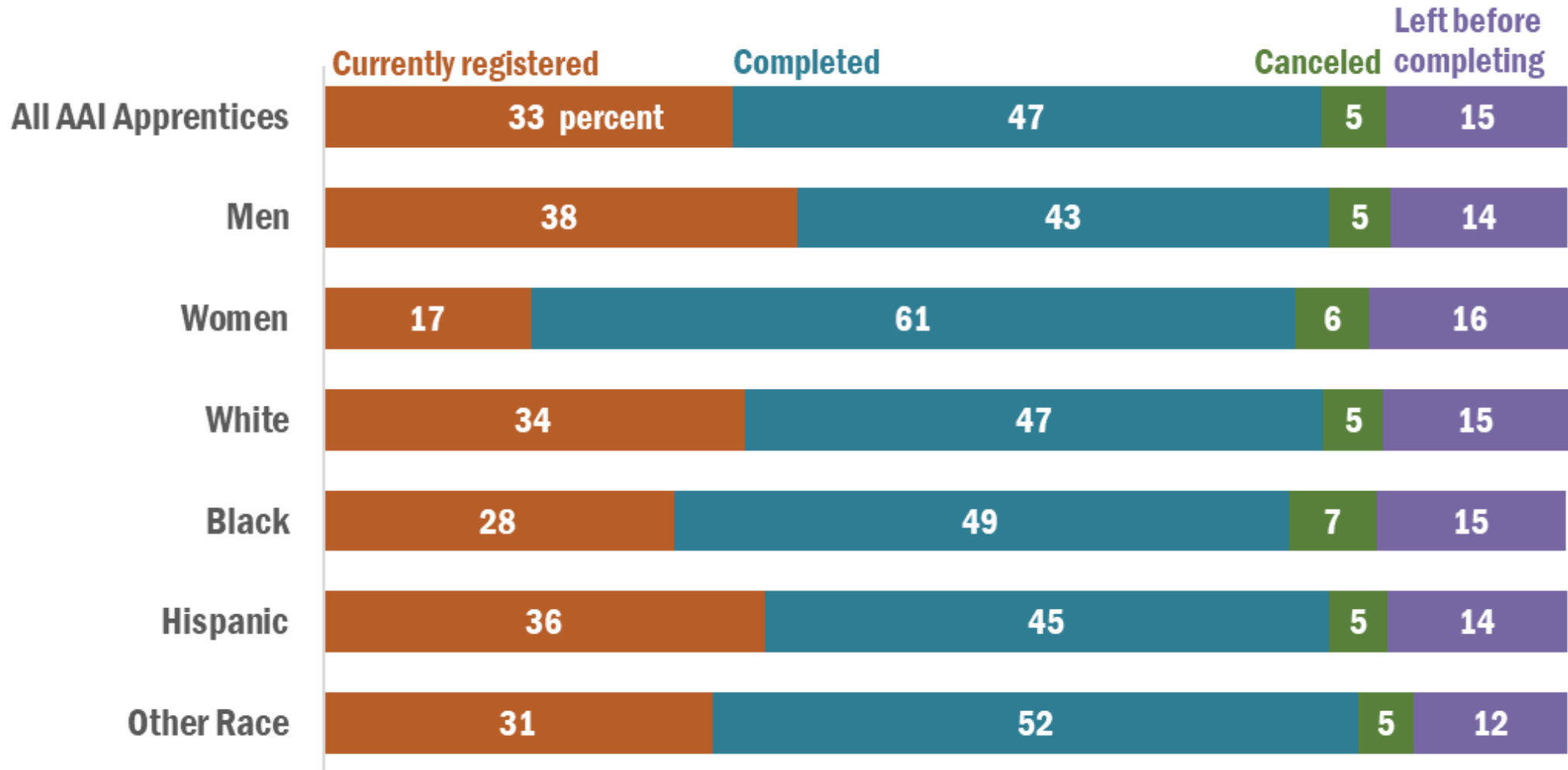
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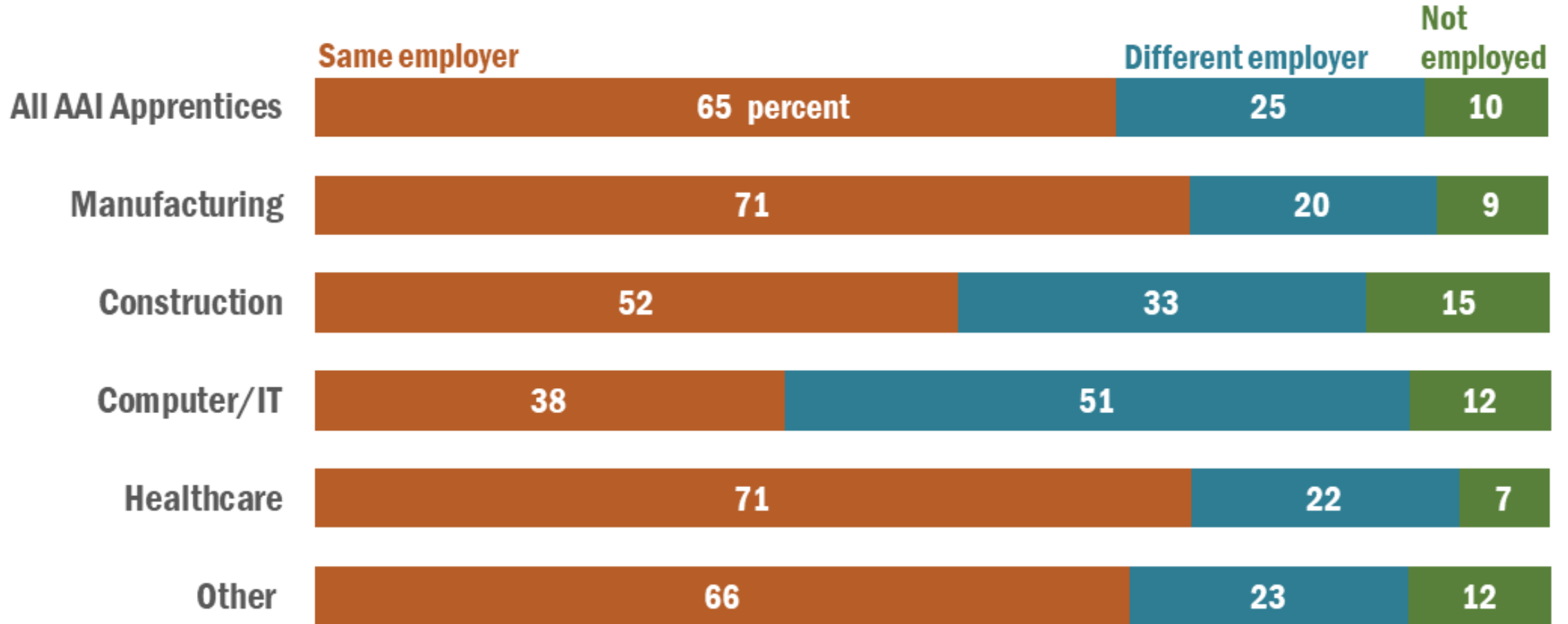
Most apprentices remained with the same employer after completing their apprenticeship



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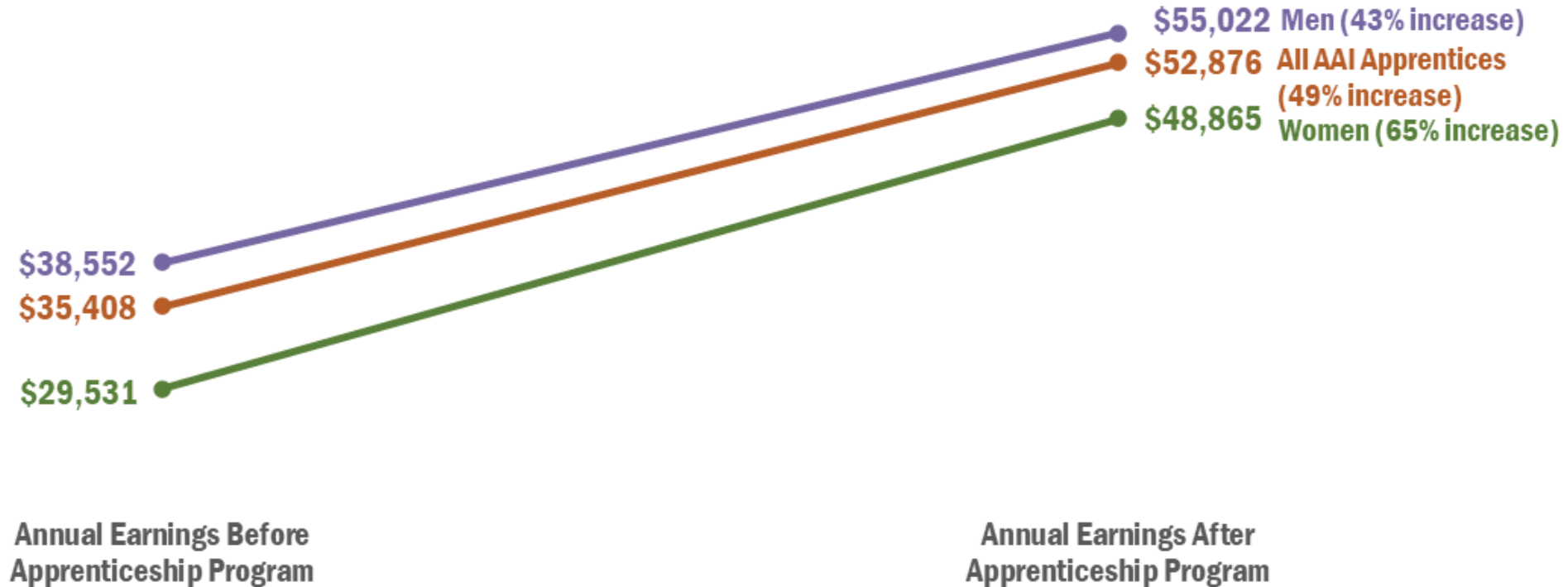


Source: Walton, Gardiner, and Barnow.
2022.





Earnings grew by nearly 50 percent between the year before starting the program and the year after program end



Source: Walton, Gardiner, and Barnow.
2022.



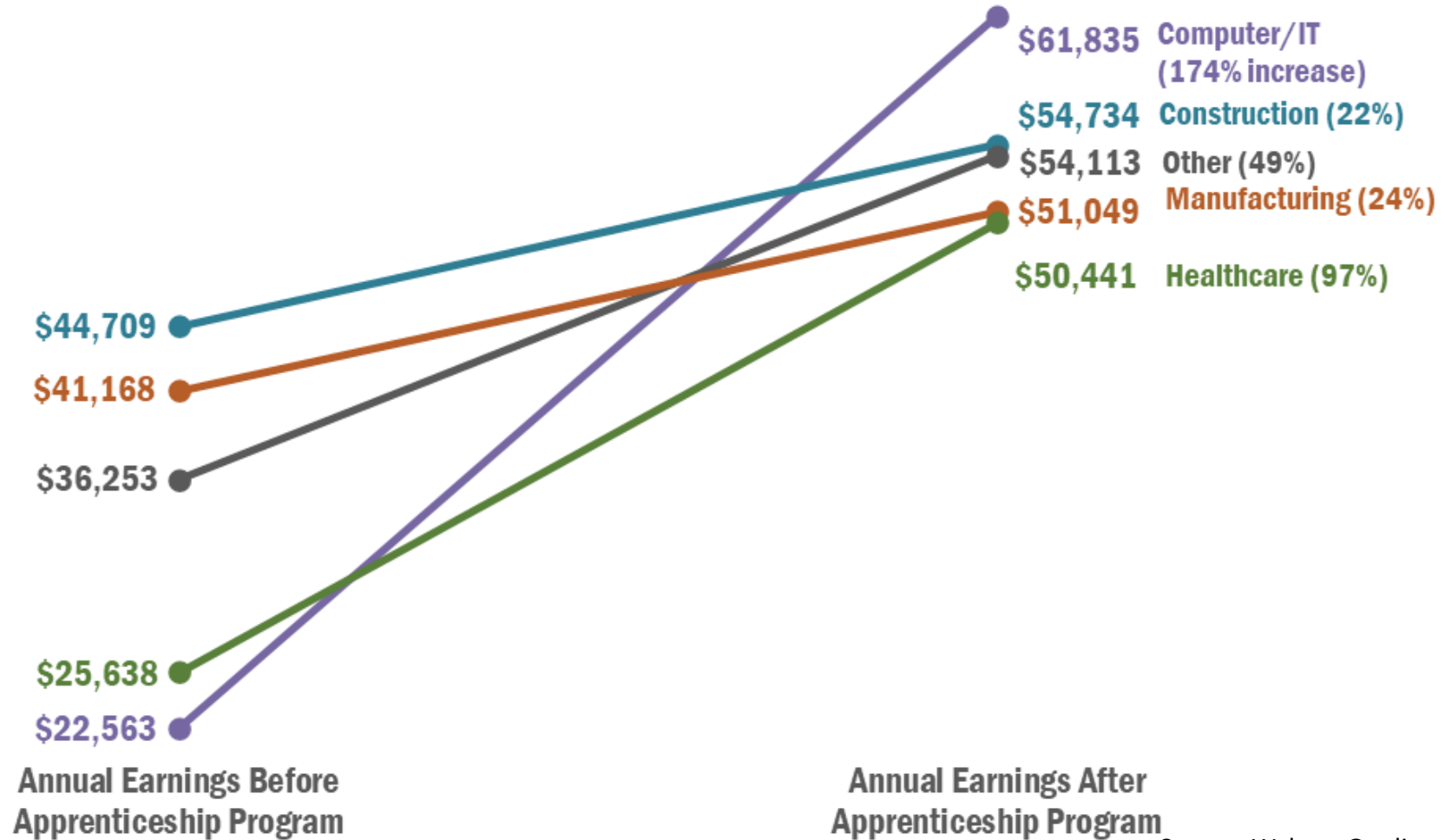
Earnings grew across all racial and ethnic groups



Source: Walton, Gardiner, and Barnow.
2022.



Earnings growth was highest for apprentices in computer/IT and healthcare occupations

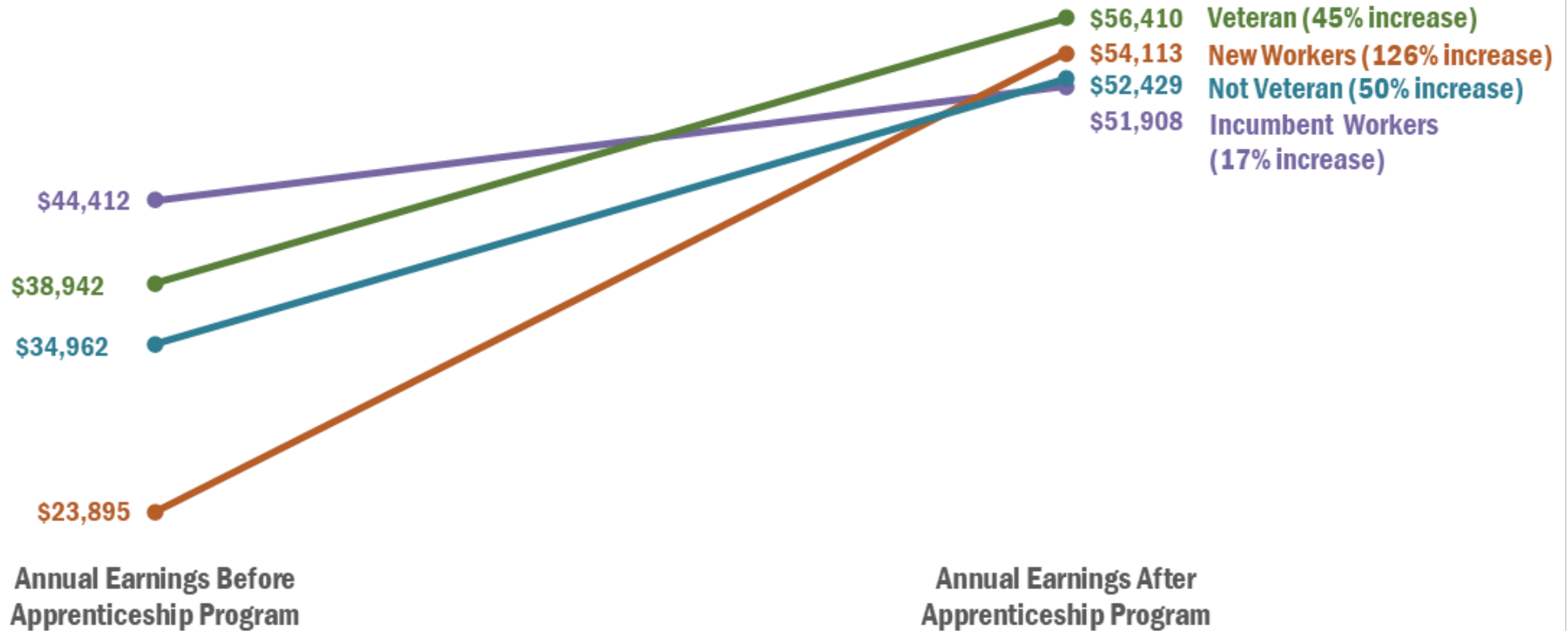


Source: Walton, Gardiner, and Barnow.
2022.





Earnings growth was higher for new workers than for incumbent workers



Source: Walton, Gardiner, and Barnow.
2022.



Summary and Implications





Summary of Findings

- In the United States, the apprenticeship system is overseen by the U.S. Department of Labor
- Recent DOL grant funding—such as the American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI)—have sought to expand apprenticeship into new sectors and to new populations
- The evaluation of AAI found that:
 - AAI grantees used new strategies to **develop programs** and **recruit employers and apprentices**
 - Most AAI-funded apprenticeships were in **new sectors**
 - Most apprentices were from **new populations**
 - Most apprentices made **successful progress towards completing their programs**
 - Apprentice **earnings grew by nearly 50 percent** on average between the year before starting the apprenticeship and the year after completion





Implications for future efforts to expand apprenticeship into new sectors

- Focus on occupations with opportunities for **large earnings gains**
 - Earnings gains varied substantially by occupation
 - Future programs could consider strategies to promote apprenticeships in higher-paying occupations, especially for new populations
- Consider whether programs focus on **new or incumbent workers**
 - Most apprentices were incumbent workers; however, earnings growth was highest for new workers
 - Programs could consider approaches to encouraging employers to hire new workers in apprenticeship programs
- Identify opportunities to **improve program completion rates**
 - Fifteen (15) percent of apprentices left their programs without completing, with many citing personal or family problems as the reason for leaving.
 - Additional supportive services or mentorship could help apprentices to persist and complete their programs





Where to find AAI evaluation publications

Abt Global Website

<https://www.abtglobal.com/projects/do-apprenticeships-help-workers-and-employers>

U.S. DOL/ETA Office of Policy
Development and Research's Division
of Research and Evaluation,
Publication Database

www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/research/Registered-Apprenticeship-Evidence

U.S. DOL/Office of the Assistant
Secretary for Policy, Chief Evaluation
Office, Completed Reports

www.dol.gov/agencies/oasp/evaluation/completedstudies/Evaluation-of-the-American-Apprenticeship-Initiative





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