



EDUCATION
NETWORK

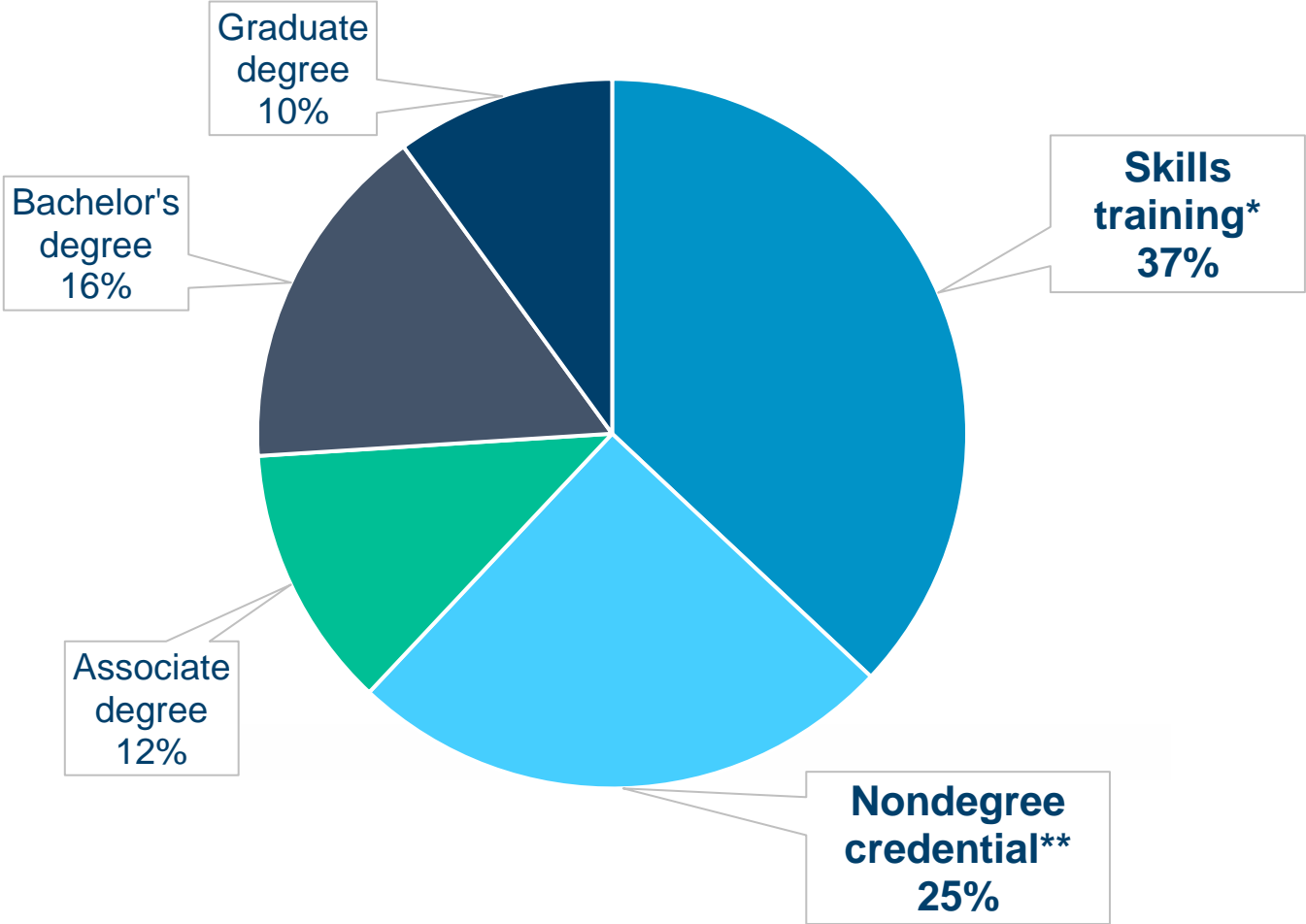
Public Viewpoint

Examining the Value of Nondegree Credentials

July 28, 2021

Since the onset of the pandemic, Americans have expressed a consistent preference for **nondegree** and **skills training** options

Preferred education option if you were to enroll in the next six months:



Strada Center for Consumer Insights Public Viewpoint survey, April 15-Aug. 6, 2020. Base: adults ages 18 and older, n=5,272. *Courses for skills training or personal development.

**Certificate, certification, or license.

Interest is high and growing,
but questions about quality and
value remain

2020 Strada-Gallup Education Survey

- Nationally representative mail and web survey of nearly 14,000 adults of varying education levels
- Fielded April to December 2020
- Detailed questions about nondegree credentials:
 - Type of credential
 - Provider
 - Length
 - Alumni perspectives of quality and value

Types of nondegree credentials

Educational certificate

- Similar to degree programs but usually shorter
- Complete sequence of courses in career, technical, trade, vocational, or professional education program
- Does not include attendance-based certificates

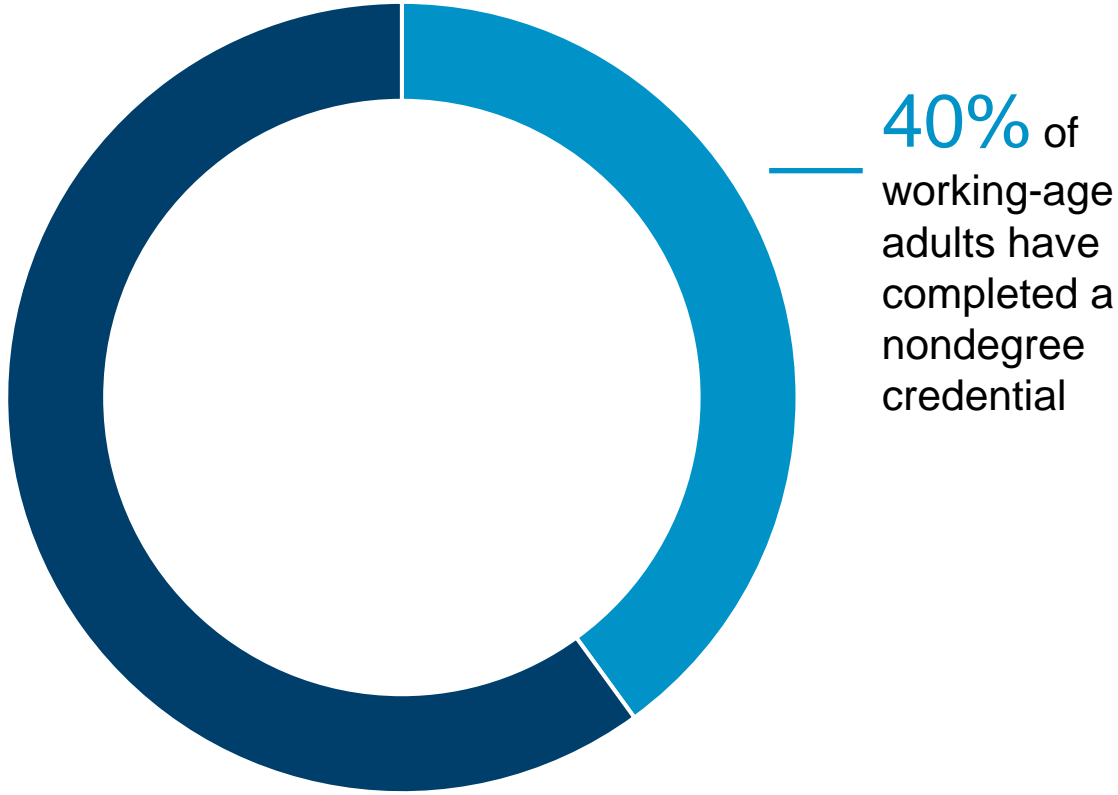
Professional license/certification

- Shows an individual has the required qualifications to work in a specific job or occupation
- Usually requires passing an exam

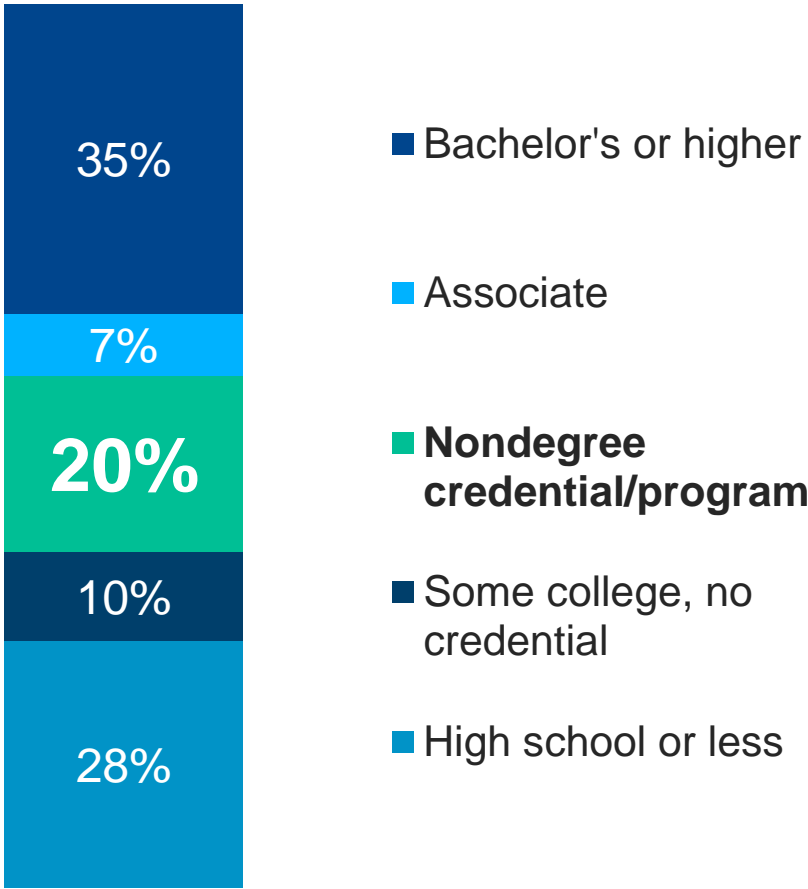
Understanding the Nondegree Credential Market

2 in 5 working-age adults have completed a nondegree credential; 1 in 5 report it as their highest level of education

Nondegree credential attainment

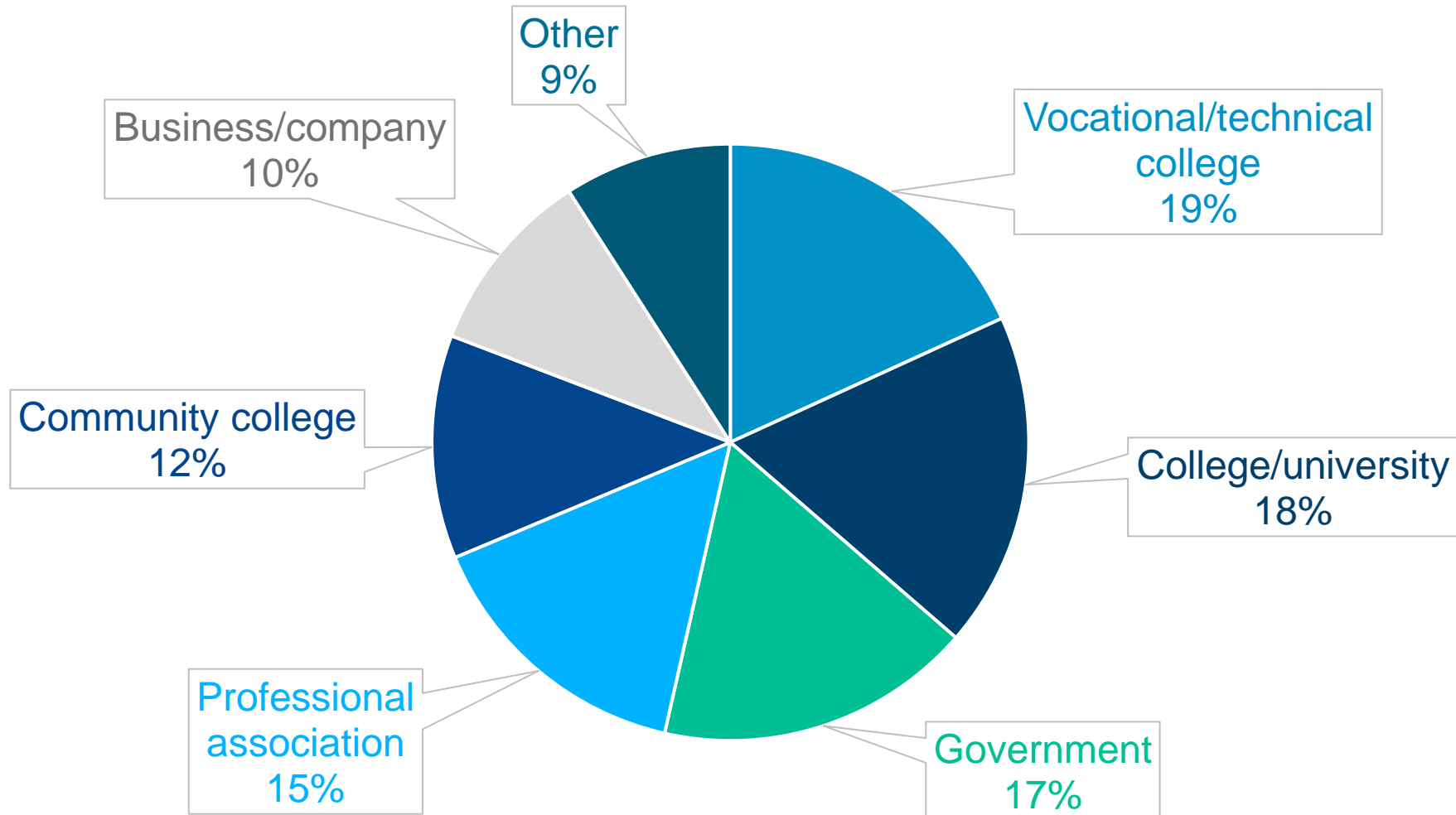


Highest level of education



The institutions that issue nondegree credentials are diverse

Issuers of nondegree credentials



Examining the Quality and Value of Nondegree Credentials

Outcome Measurement Framework

Alumni Perspectives of Quality and Value

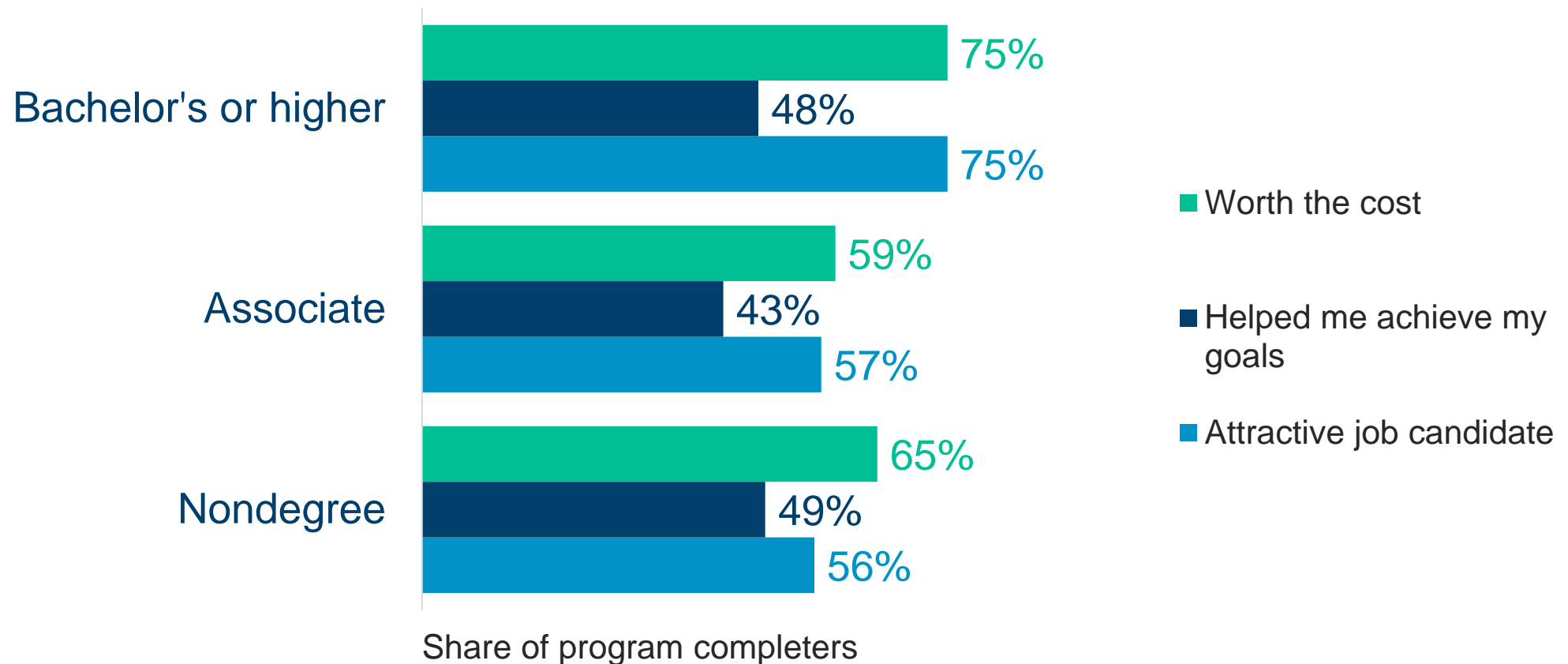
- Was it worth the cost?
- Did it help you achieve your goals?
- Did it make you an attractive candidate for jobs?

Labor Market Outcomes

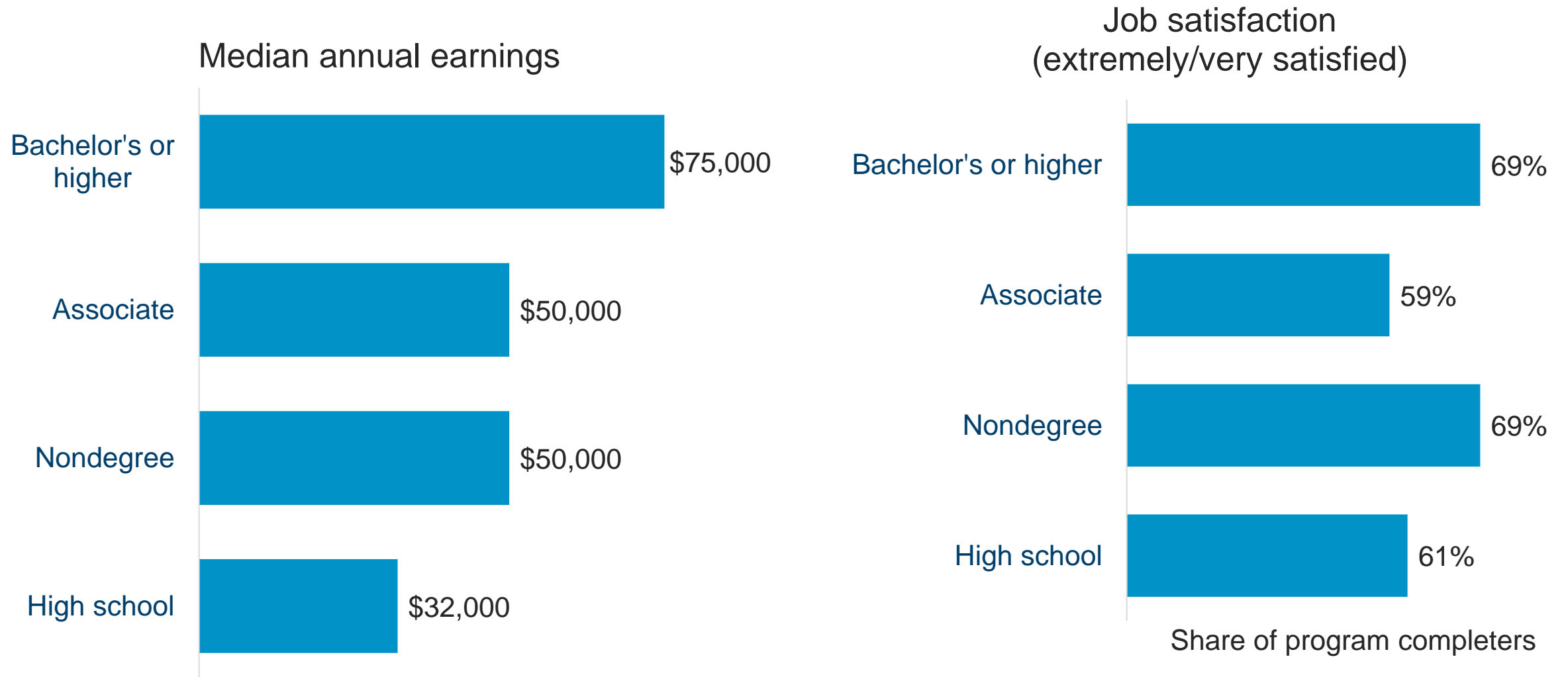
- Earnings
- Job Satisfaction

Alumni outcomes of nondegree programs are slightly higher than associate degree programs, though not as high as bachelor's degree programs

Alumni ratings (strongly agree/agree)

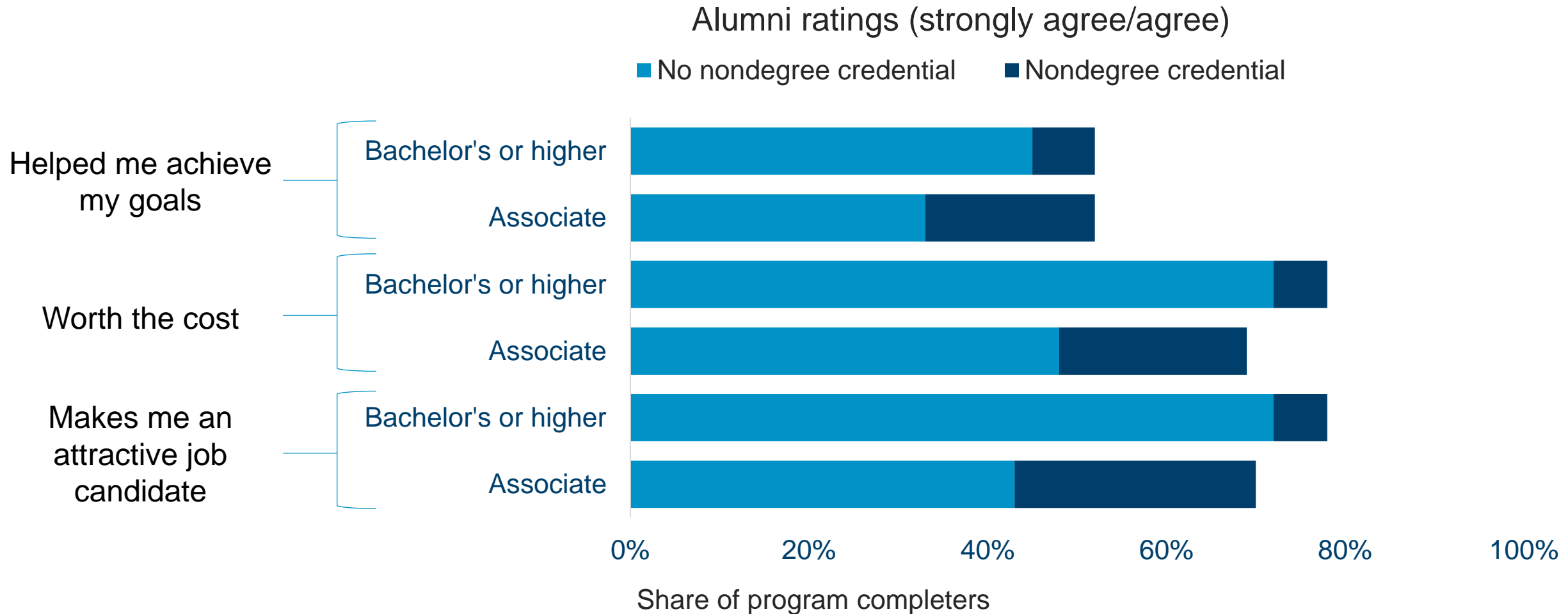


The labor market outcomes of nondegree programs are similar to associate degree programs



BASE: Employed 25- to 64-year-olds with a nondegree credential or higher (n=8,417). Note: "Bachelor's or higher" and "Associate" categories are inclusive of individuals who may have additionally completed a nondegree credential. "Nondegree" is inclusive of individuals who completed a nondegree credential but not a degree.

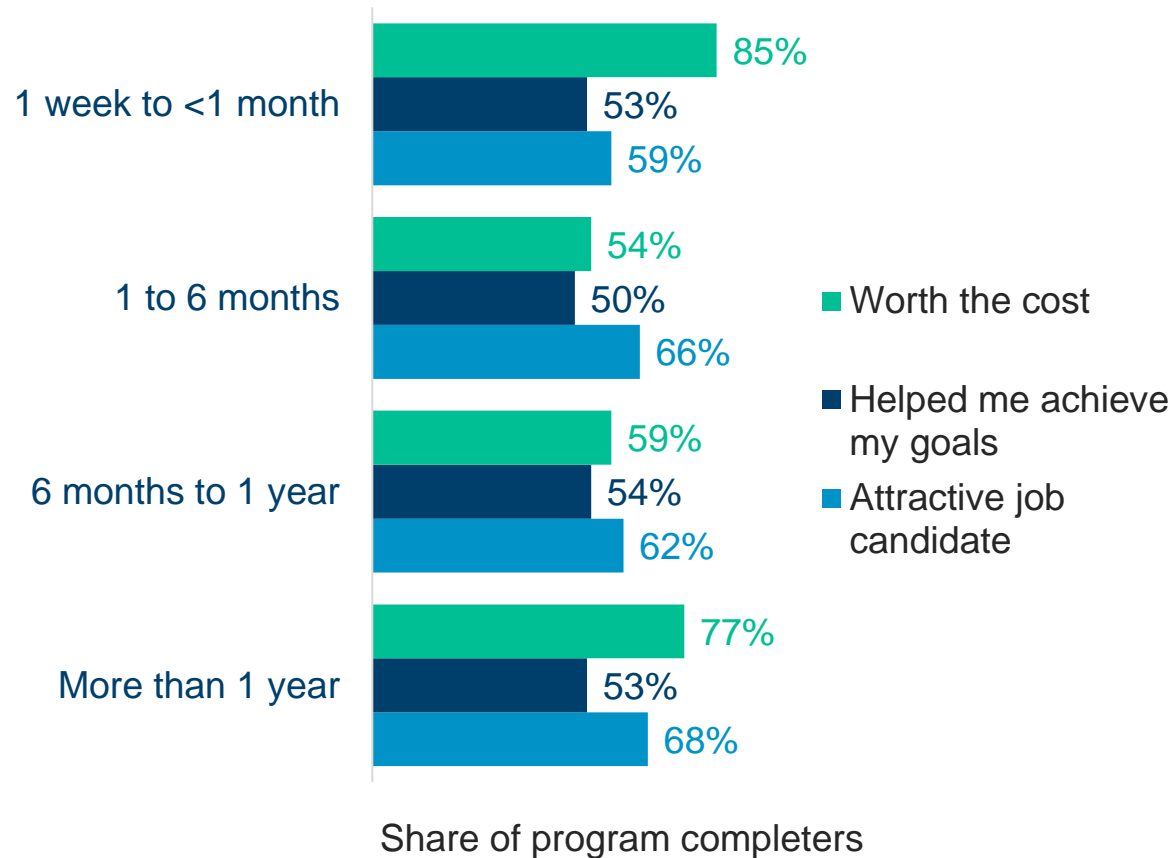
Adults who combine a college degree with a nondegree credential experience greater quality and value than those with a college degree alone



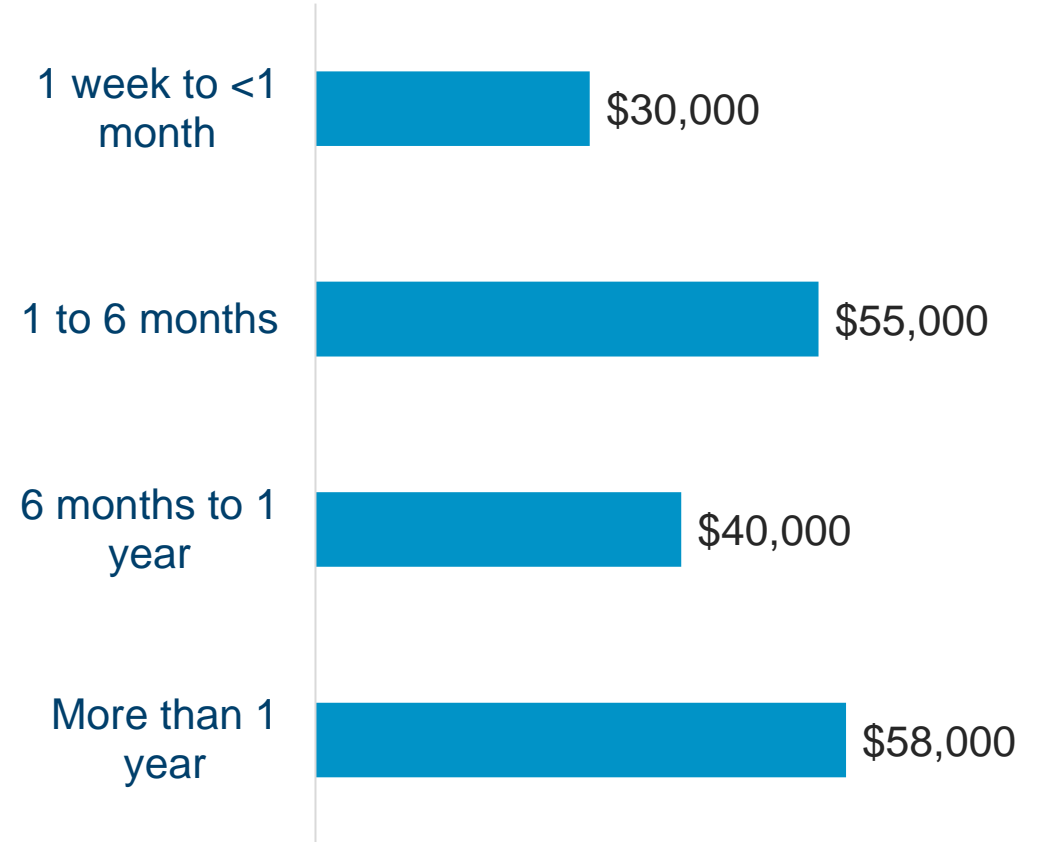
Program/Credential Characteristics

Longer certificate programs do not necessarily lead to better alumni outcomes than shorter programs

Alumni ratings (strongly agree/agree) by length of certificate program

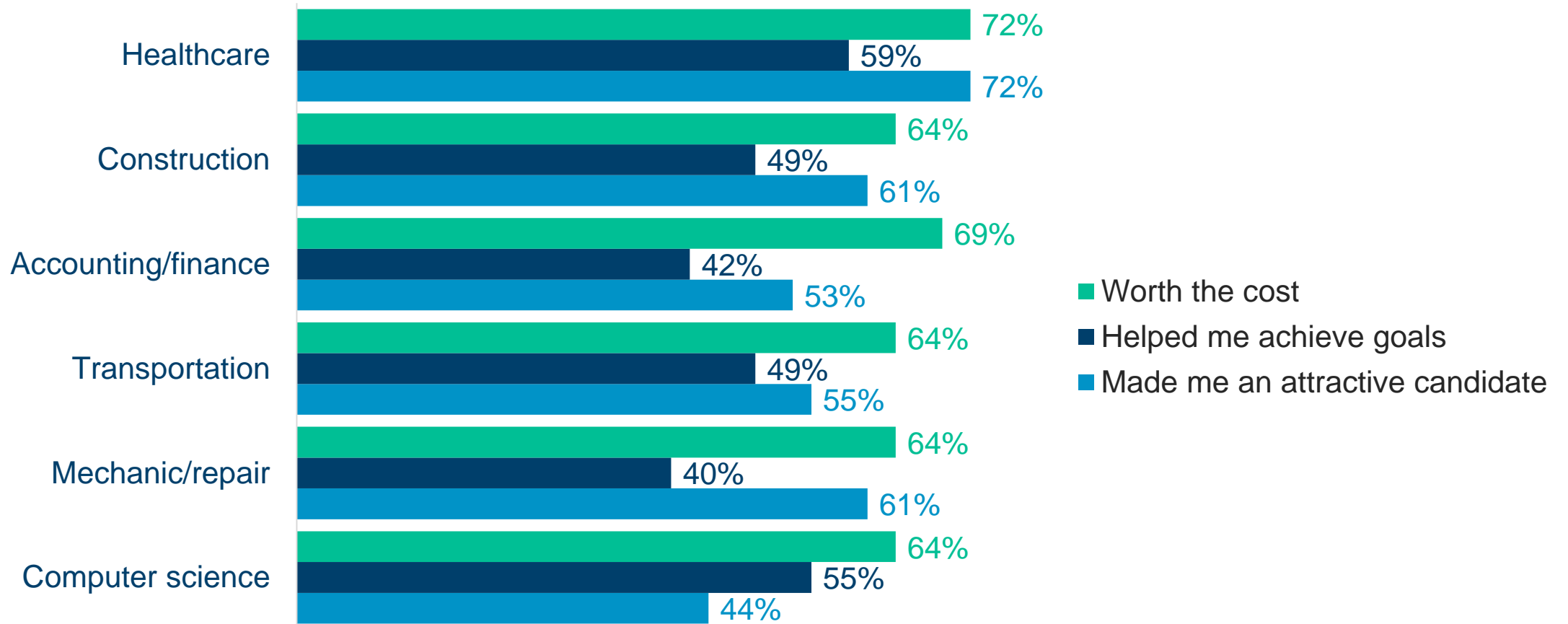


Median annual earnings by length of certificate program



Health care nondegree credentials receive the highest ratings of quality and value

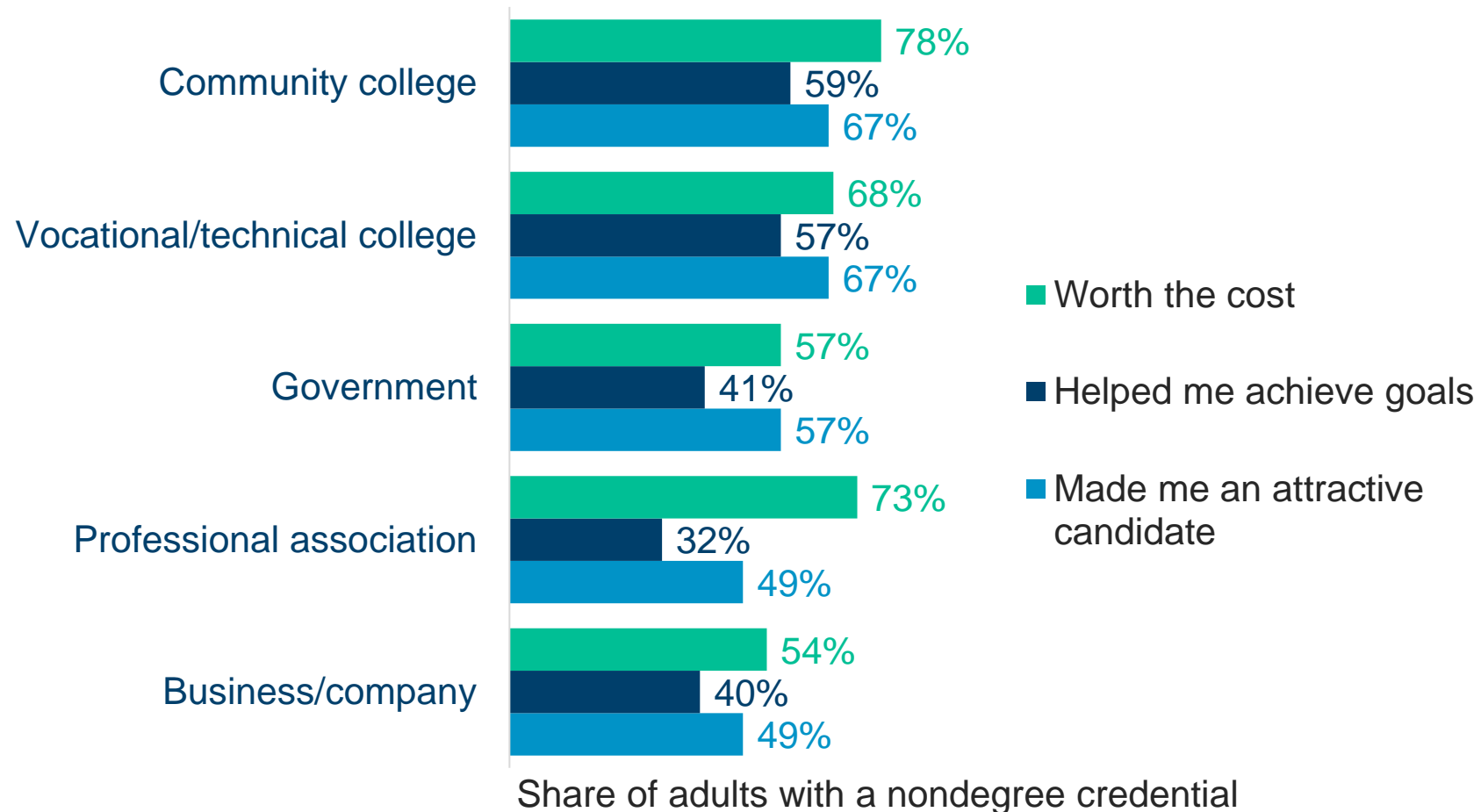
Alumni ratings (strongly agree/agree) by field of program



Share of working-age adults with nondegree credentials

Nondegree credentials issued by community colleges have the highest alumni ratings, while those issued by individual businesses and companies have the lowest

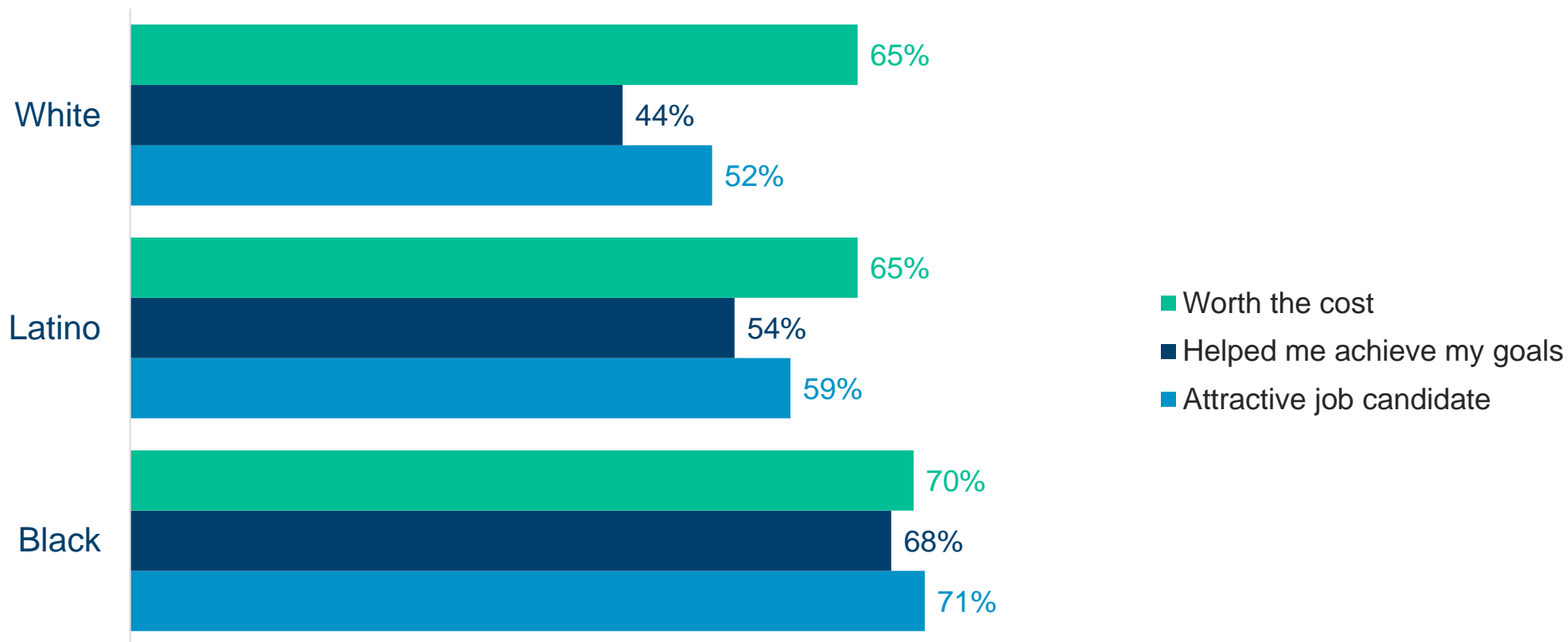
Alumni ratings (strongly agree/agree) by provider type



Demographics

Among racial groups, Black Americans rate nondegree credentials the highest

Alumni ratings (strongly agree/agree) by demographic characteristics



Share of adults with nondegree credentials

Key Findings

- **The outcomes of nondegree credentials earned in isolation are comparable to associate degree programs.** For example, 65 percent of those who complete nondegree programs said their education was worth the cost and 49 percent said it helped them achieve their goals, compared to 59 percent and 43 percent, respectively, of associate degree holders.
- **College graduates who combine their degree with a nondegree credential have substantially higher ratings of their education than those without nondegree credentials, especially associate degree holders.** For example, 43 percent of associate degree holders but not a nondegree credential said their education made them an attractive job candidate, compared to 70 percent of those who had both an associate degree and a nondegree credential.
- **Longer programs do not necessarily lead to better outcomes than shorter programs.** For example, 85 percent of those who completed a certificate program that took between a week and a month to complete said it was worth the cost, compared to 59 percent of those who completed a program that took between six months and a year to complete.
- **Among nondegree education and training providers, alumni rated community colleges the highest in terms of quality and value.** For example, 78 percent of those with a nondegree credential from a community college said it was worth the cost, compared to 54 percent of those with a nondegree credential from an individual business or company.
- **Black Americans rated nondegree programs the highest among racial groups, while white Americans rated them the lowest.** For example, 68 percent of Black Americans with a nondegree credential said their education helped them achieve their goals, compared to only 44 percent of white Americans with a nondegree credential.

Learn more at
StradaInsights.org

Methodology

- The 2020 Strada-Gallup Education Survey is a nationally representative survey using both mail and web data collection modes. The survey was conducted from April 2 to Dec. 22, 2020; n=13,839.
- Please contact Strada Education Network with questions or information requests at stradaresearch@stradaeducation.org or learn more at StradaEducation.org/PublicViewpoint.