

## Underemployment Among College Graduates with Blindness and Low Vision

### What Were We Trying to Learn?

In this study, we explored how educational underemployment affects college graduates with blindness and low vision (B/LV) compared to sighted college graduates. We sought to determine what percentage of individuals with visual impairments have an education level that exceeds the requirements for their jobs, identify personal and job-related factors that contribute to educational underemployment, and assess whether these factors differ between the two groups.

### How Was This Project Carried Out?

We analyzed data from the 2019 American Community Survey, focusing on employed U.S. adults aged 21–64 who held an associate degree or higher. We compared individuals' education levels to the typical entry-level requirements of their jobs according to Bureau of Labor Statistics data. A multivariable logistic regression model was used to explore the relationship between underemployment and eleven factors, including disability status, education level, and job characteristics.

### What Are the Most Important Things We Learned?

This study revealed that educational underemployment is a significant challenge for college graduates, with individuals with visual impairments experiencing it at higher rates (62.4%) than their peers without visual impairments (55.7%). However, people with visual impairments who held a master's degree were not more likely to be underemployed. Individuals with master's degrees, regardless of visual impairment status, faced very high odds of underemployment.

Other factors, such as gender, age, non-visual disability status, region, and part-time work, also influenced underemployment, though their effects were generally small. These findings suggest disparities individuals with visual impairments face in achieving jobs that match their educational qualifications, highlighting the importance of targeted strategies to better align education, skills, and employment opportunities.

### How Do These Findings Relate to Me?

If you are visually impaired, this study emphasizes the importance of carefully planning your career path. Identifying specific job-related skills and understanding how your education aligns with career goals can help reduce the risk of underemployment. Rehabilitation professionals should help clients

### Research Takeaway

A higher percentage of college graduates with visual impairments were underemployed (62.4%) compared to sighted college graduates (55.7%). Having a visual impairment was associated with being underemployed in a multivariable model, although its effect was small.

who are visually impaired explore their career goals and understand the education level required as well as the skills needed to achieve their goals. These findings emphasize the need for individuals and support systems to focus on skills-based preparation and career-specific education planning to avoid educational underemployment.

## Learn More

Findings were taken from the following article:

McDonnall, M. C., & Cmar, J. L. (2024). [Underemployment among college graduates with blindness and low vision](#). *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 118(3), 151-163.

For more information about this project, visit the [project overview page](#).

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