

# **Paid Medical Leave: Disparities in Affordable Access and Job Protection Across the U.S. States and DC**

**June 2023**



# Access to Paid Leave Matters for Workers, Families, and Equity for All

- The U.S. stands nearly alone in the world in failing to guarantee paid time to care
- A lack of paid leave can perpetuate health inequities and contribute to economic insecurity
- Research has shown that access to paid leave improves family economic stability and opportunity, gender and racial equity, and public and individual health.
- Workers are often trapped in a revolving door of economic instability due to lack of paid leave



# In the United States, Eligibility Criteria Create Structural Inequities in Access to Even Unpaid Leave

- Federally, structural inequities are built into who can take unpaid family and medical leave (FML)
- Only half of private sector workers are eligible for unpaid FML
- Eligibility criteria disproportionately exclude Latinx workers and women. Such as:
  - ❖ minimum firm size
  - ❖ tenure requirements
  - ❖ minimum hours of work



# Improving Health and Equity

- In passing paid leave laws, U.S. states and other geographies have managed to expand coverage and reduce inequities
- But there remain important gaps states can fill



## Three Dimensions of Inequities Remain

- 1. Eligibility:** Workers are ineligible to take paid leave due to requirements based on firm size, employment history, earnings history, or hours of work
- 2. Affordability:** Workers cannot afford to take leave because the wage replacement rate is too low or the duration of paid leave is too short to cover their health need
- 3. Job Protection:** Workers can access paid leave benefits, but are not entitled to job protection, and fear losing their job if they take leave



## Our Approach

- Analysis of the Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplements, 2018-2022.
- We examine a sample of primary respondents who were aged 18 to 64 who were employed at some time during the year prior to the survey.
- The analyses of affordability examine the impact of leave taking on family income over a 12-week period, including the weeks that the state provides pay and the weeks that the state does not provide pay.

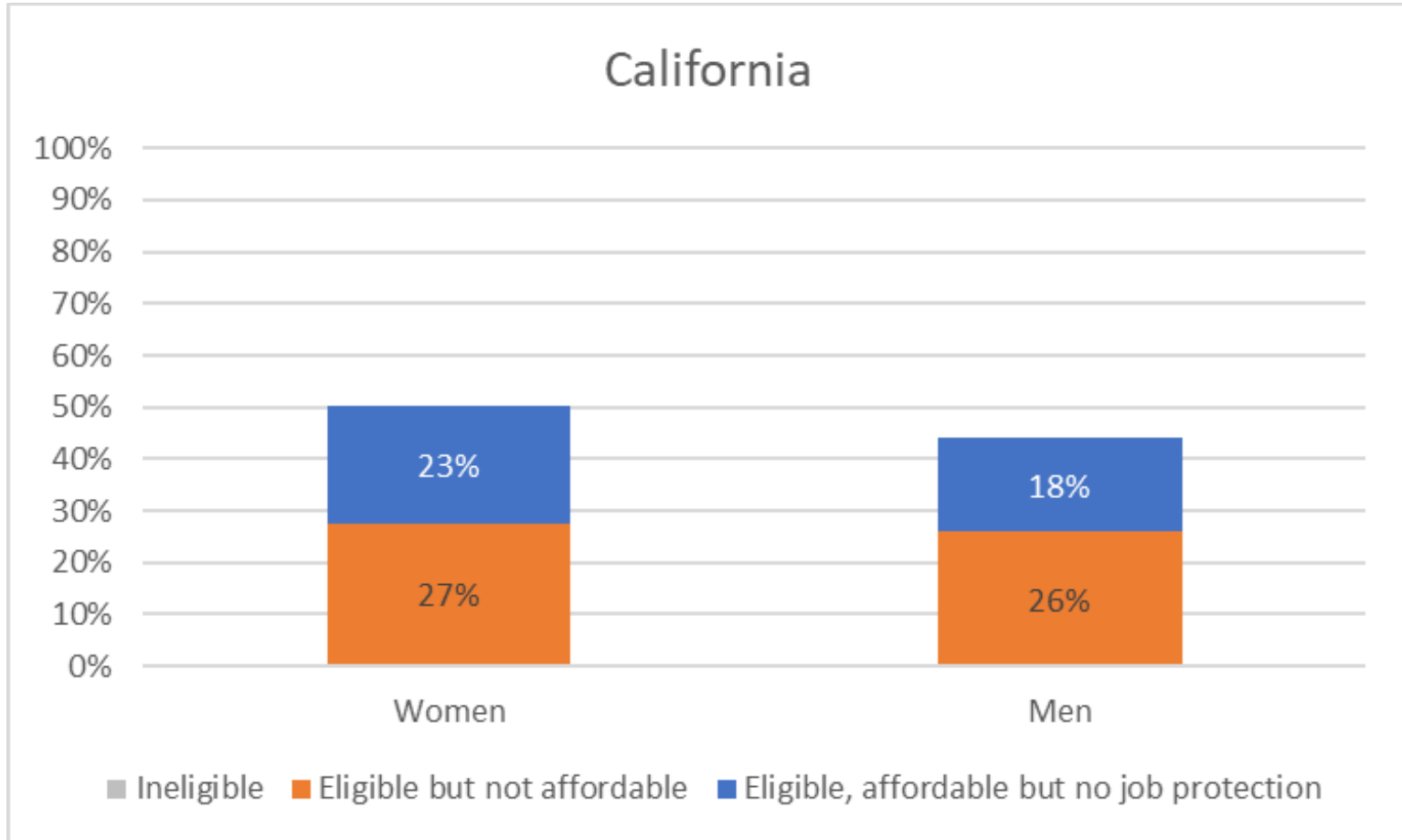


# Disparities by Gender

- We examined disparities by gender in access to 12 weeks of job-protected paid medical leave in the following geographies:
  - California
  - Colorado
  - Connecticut
  - District of Columbia
  - Hawaii
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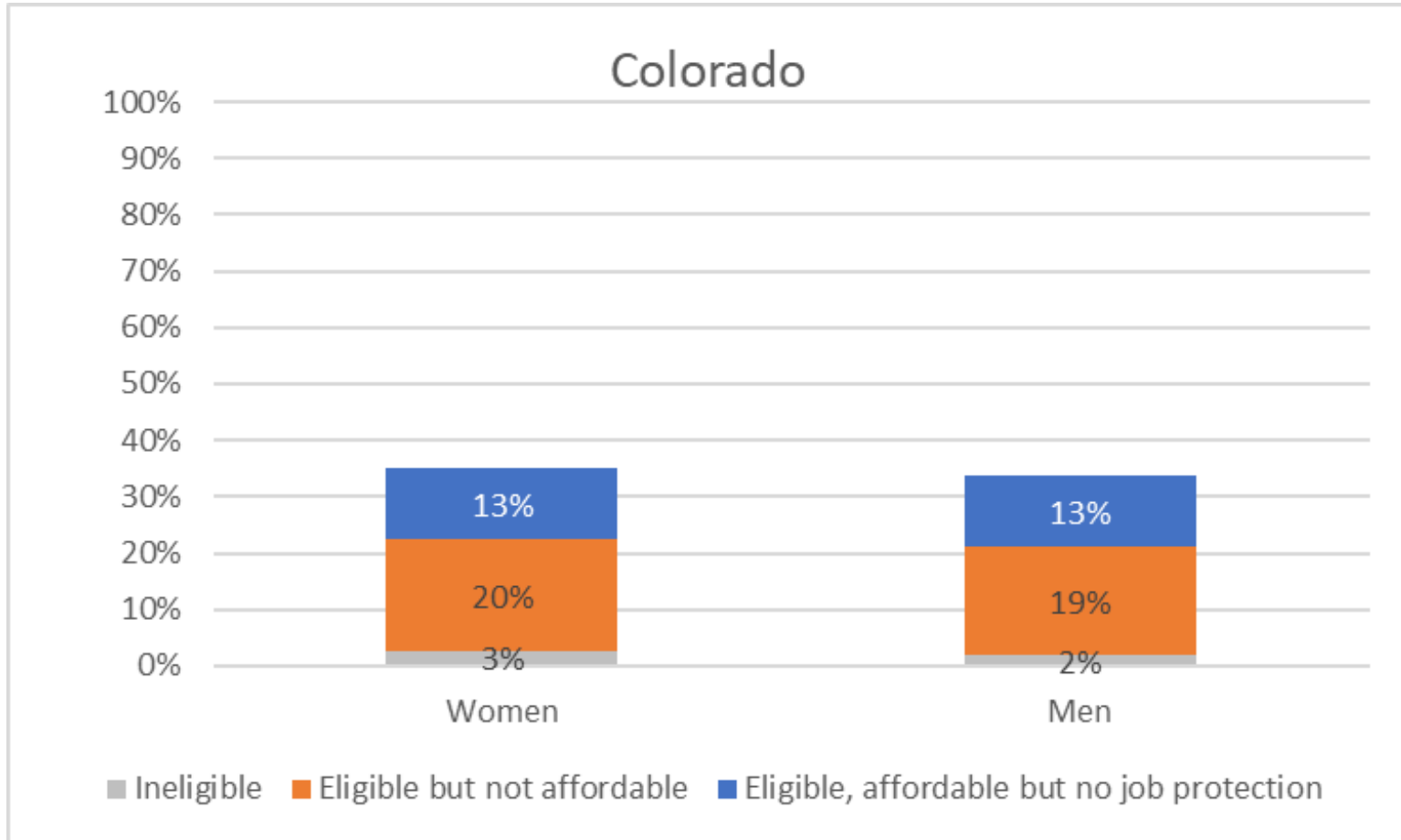


## Disparities across Gender in Access to 12 weeks of Paid Medical Leave with Job Protection

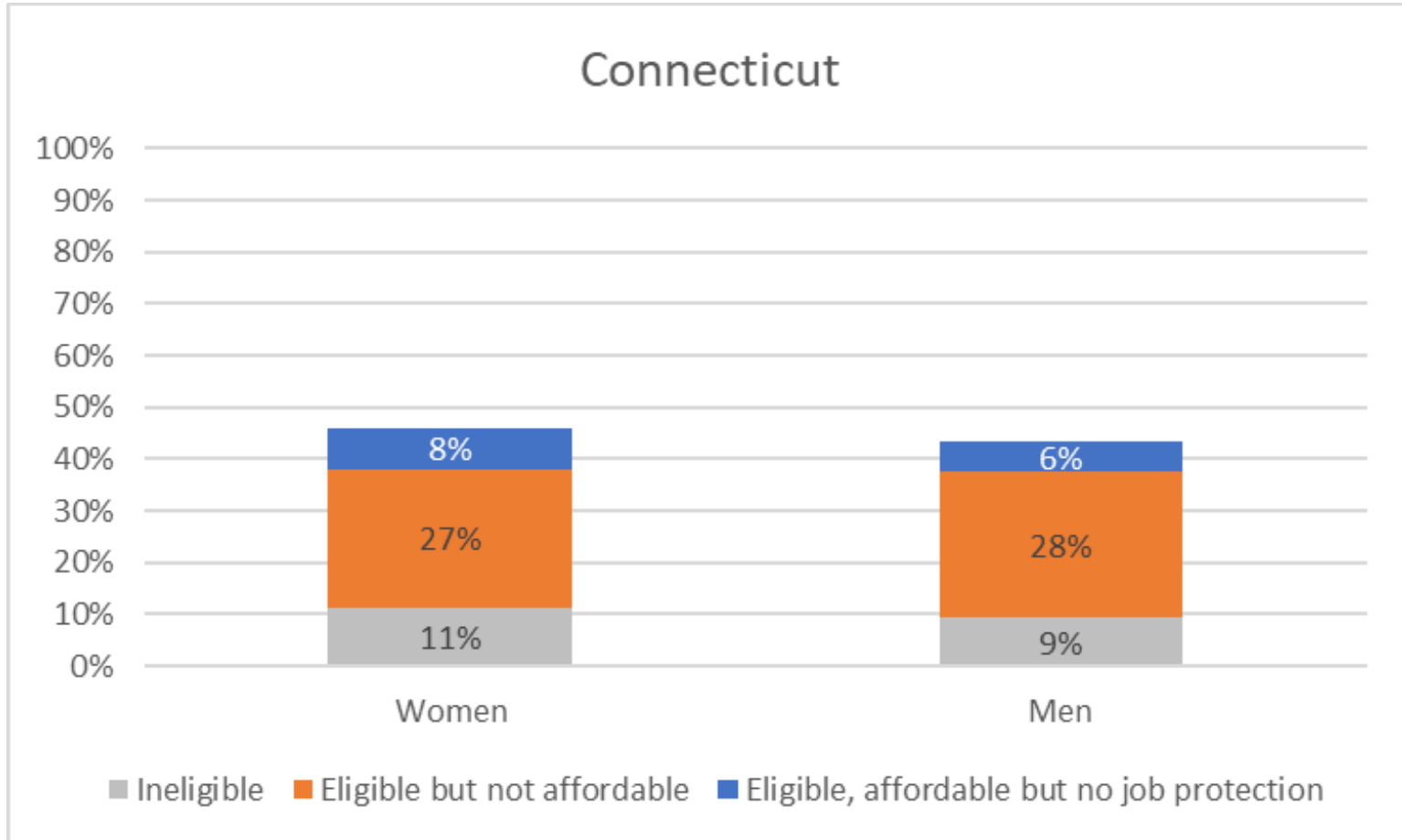




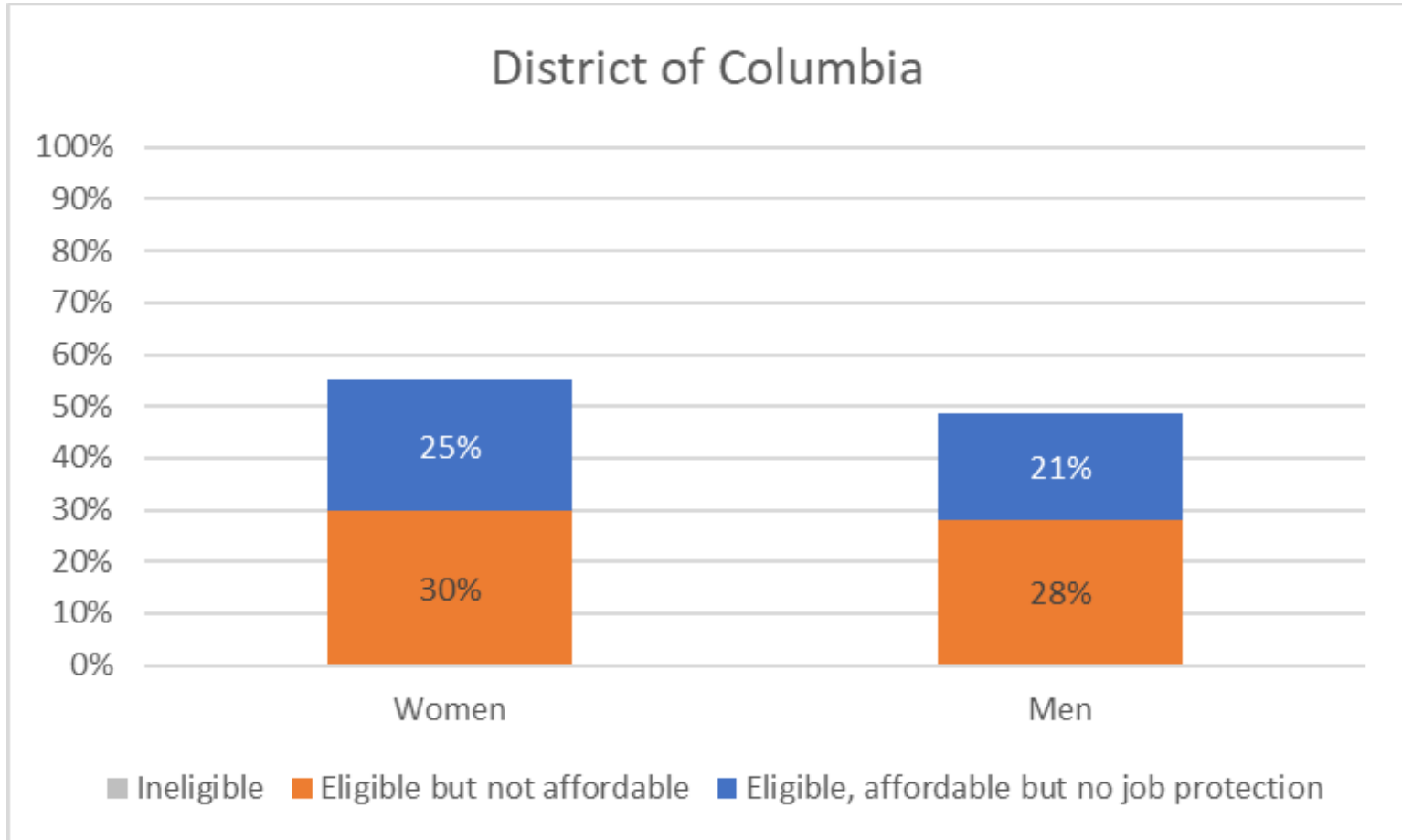
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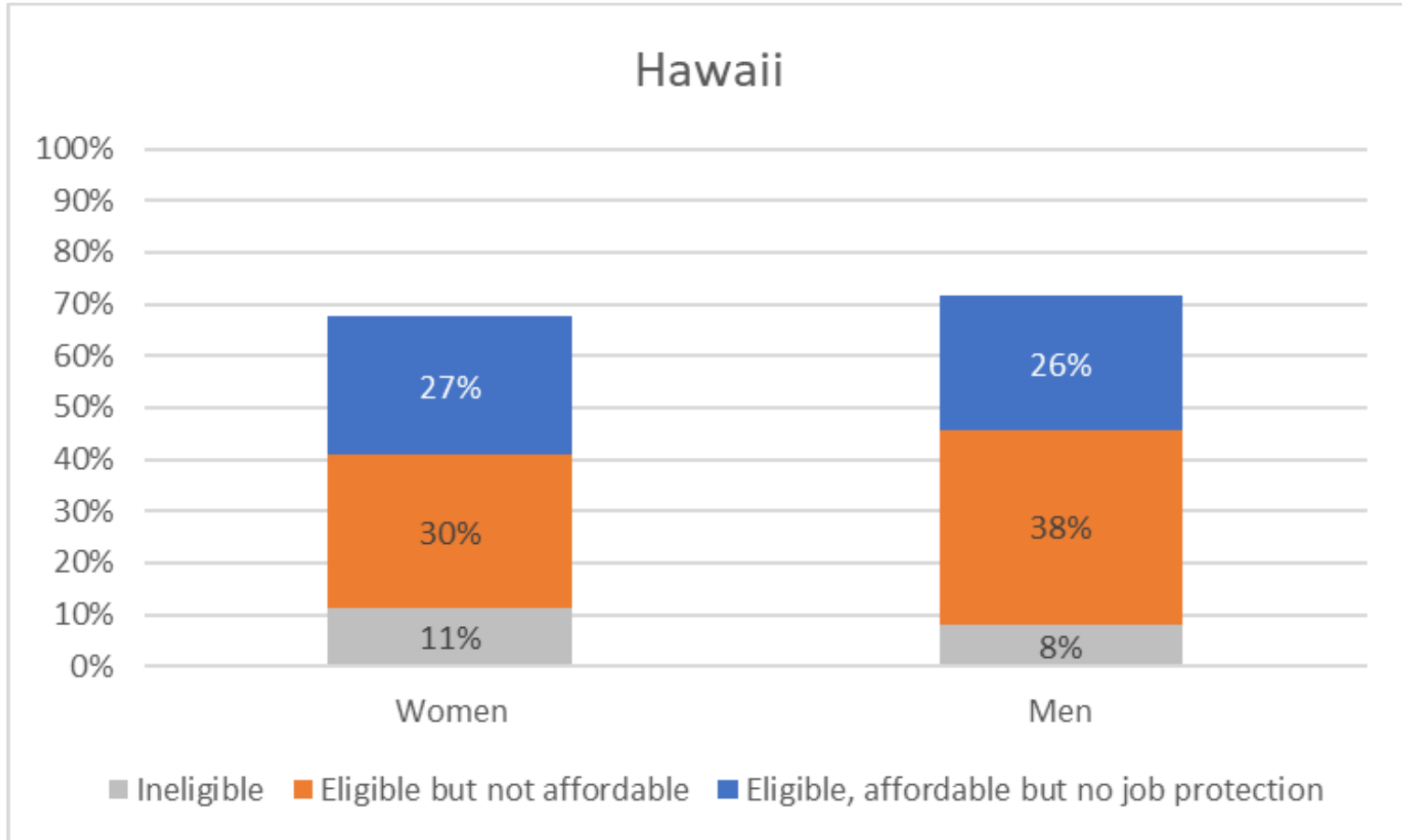
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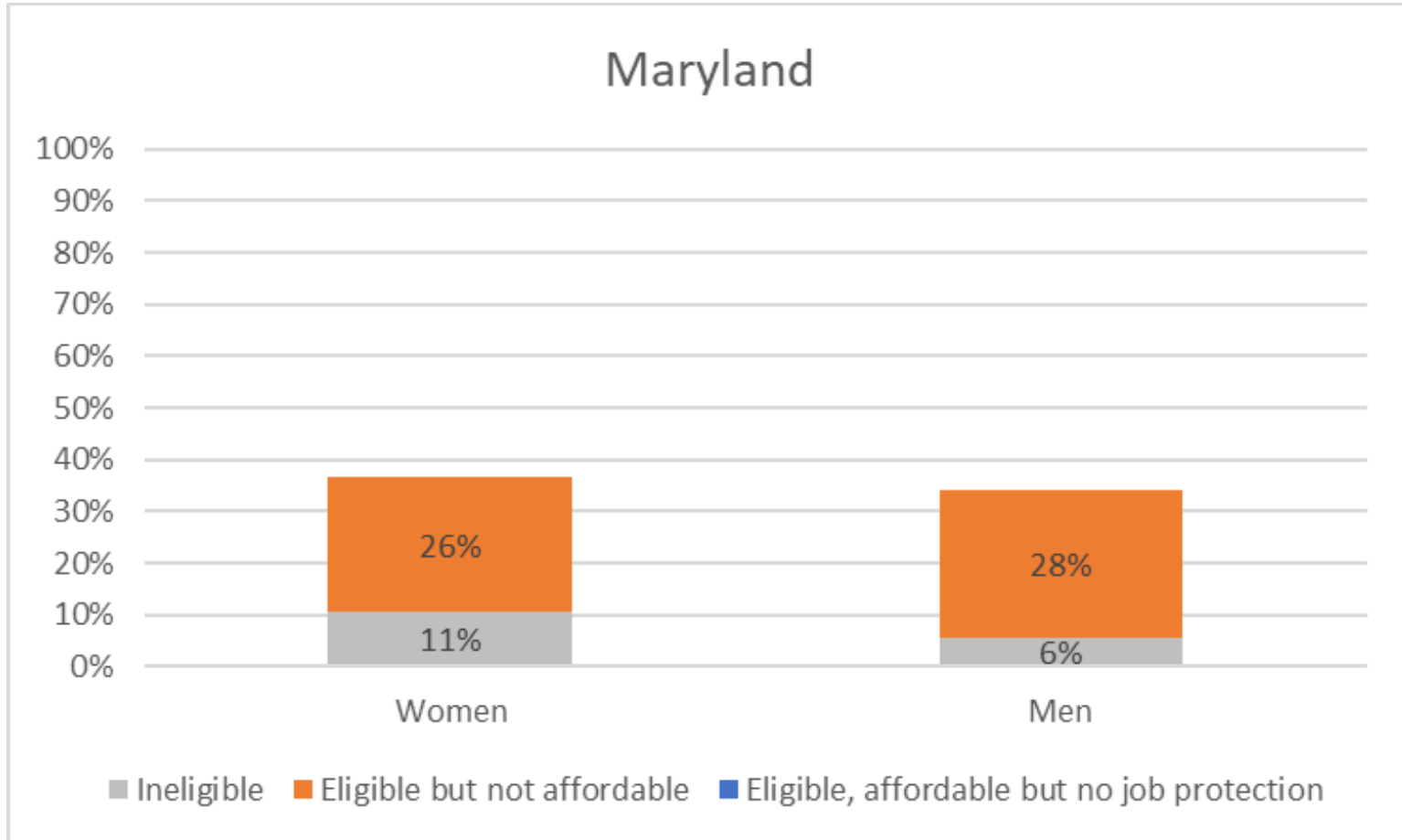
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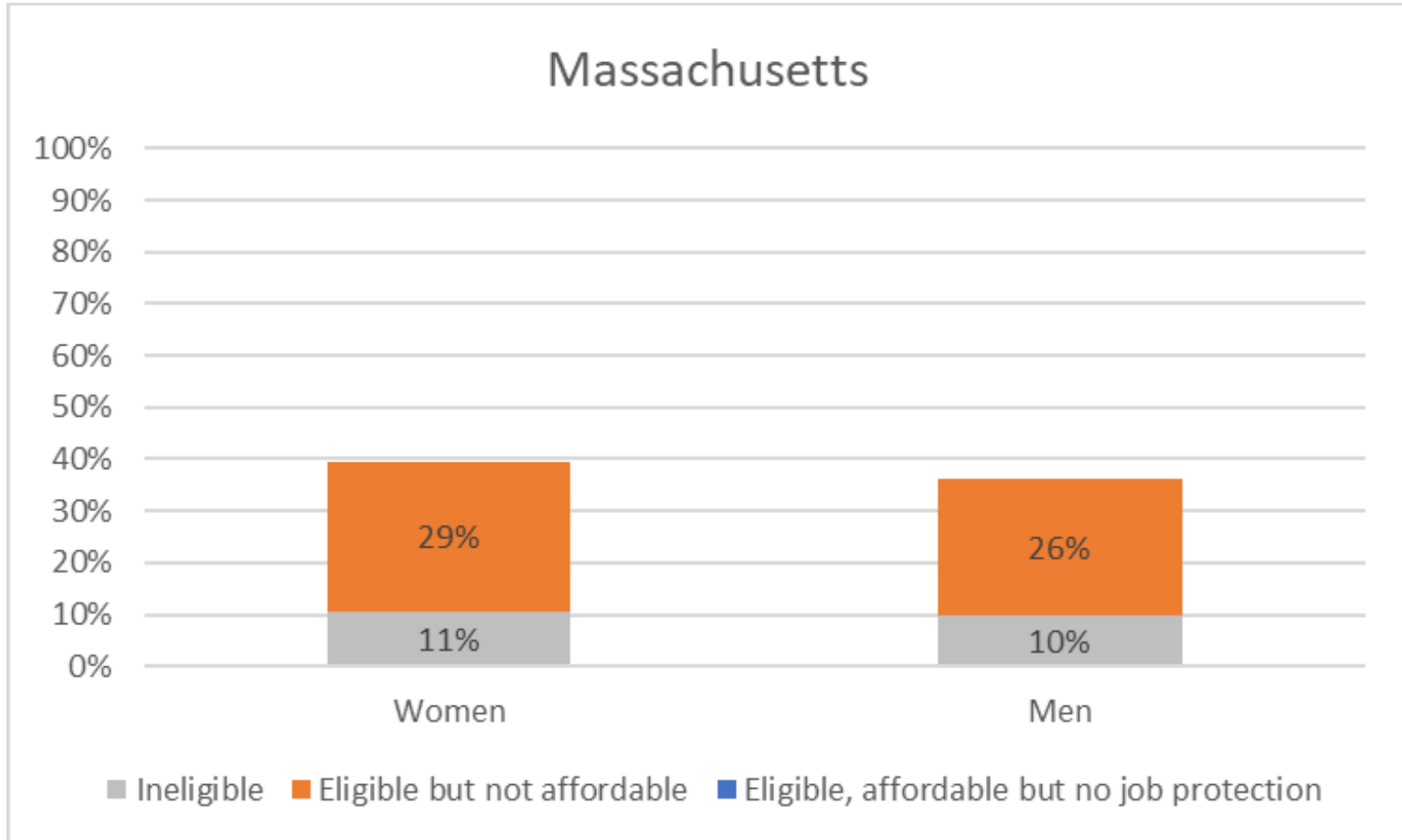
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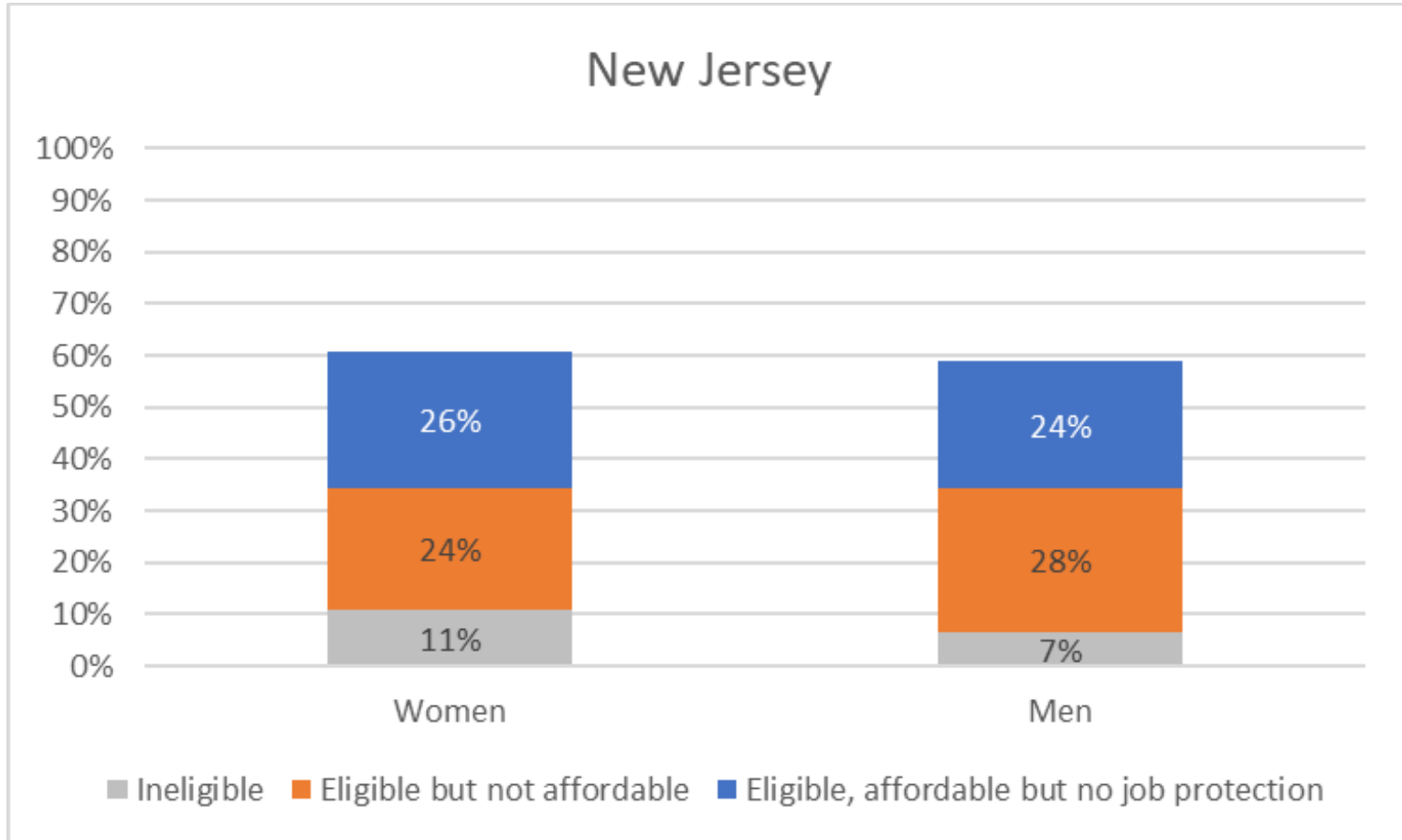
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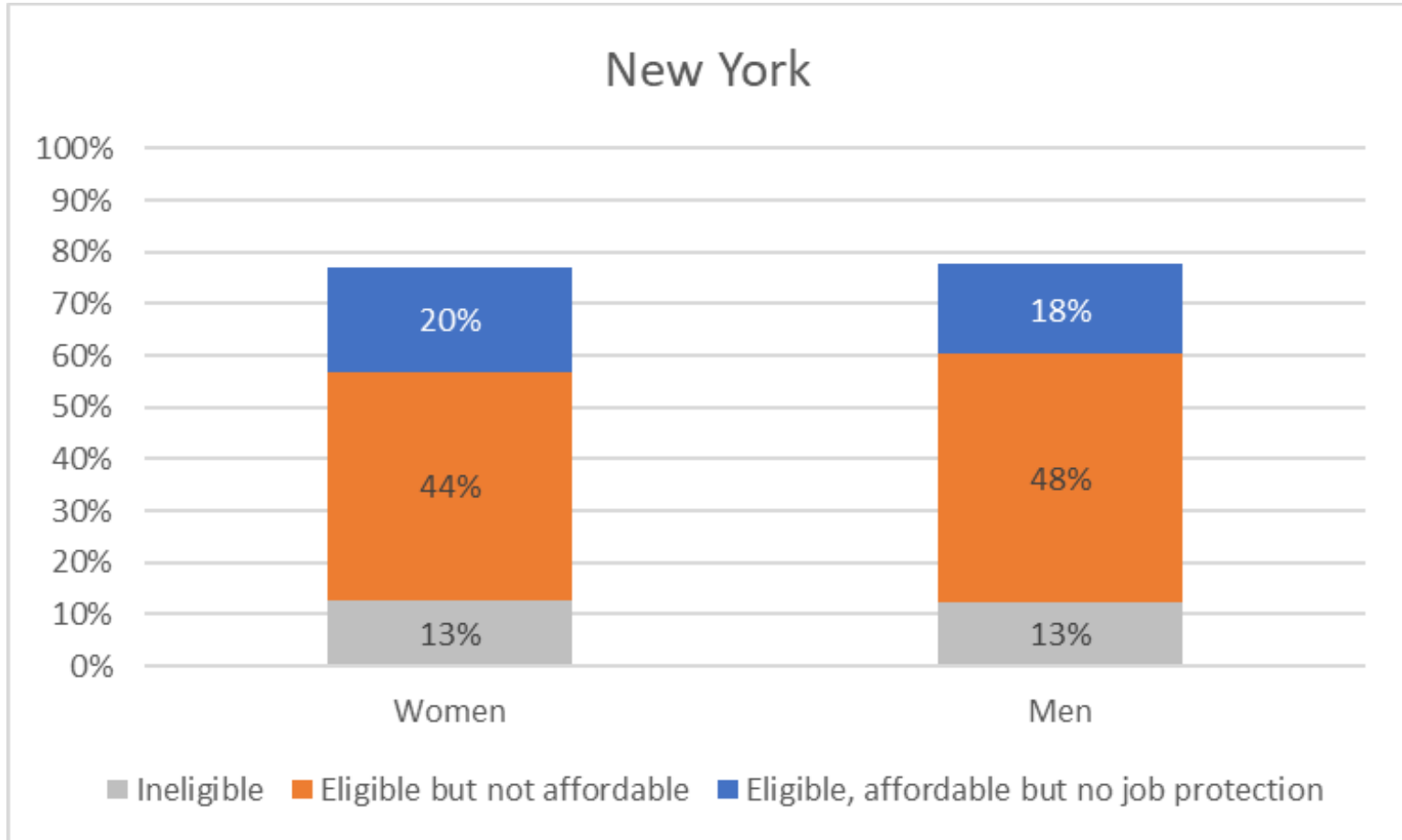
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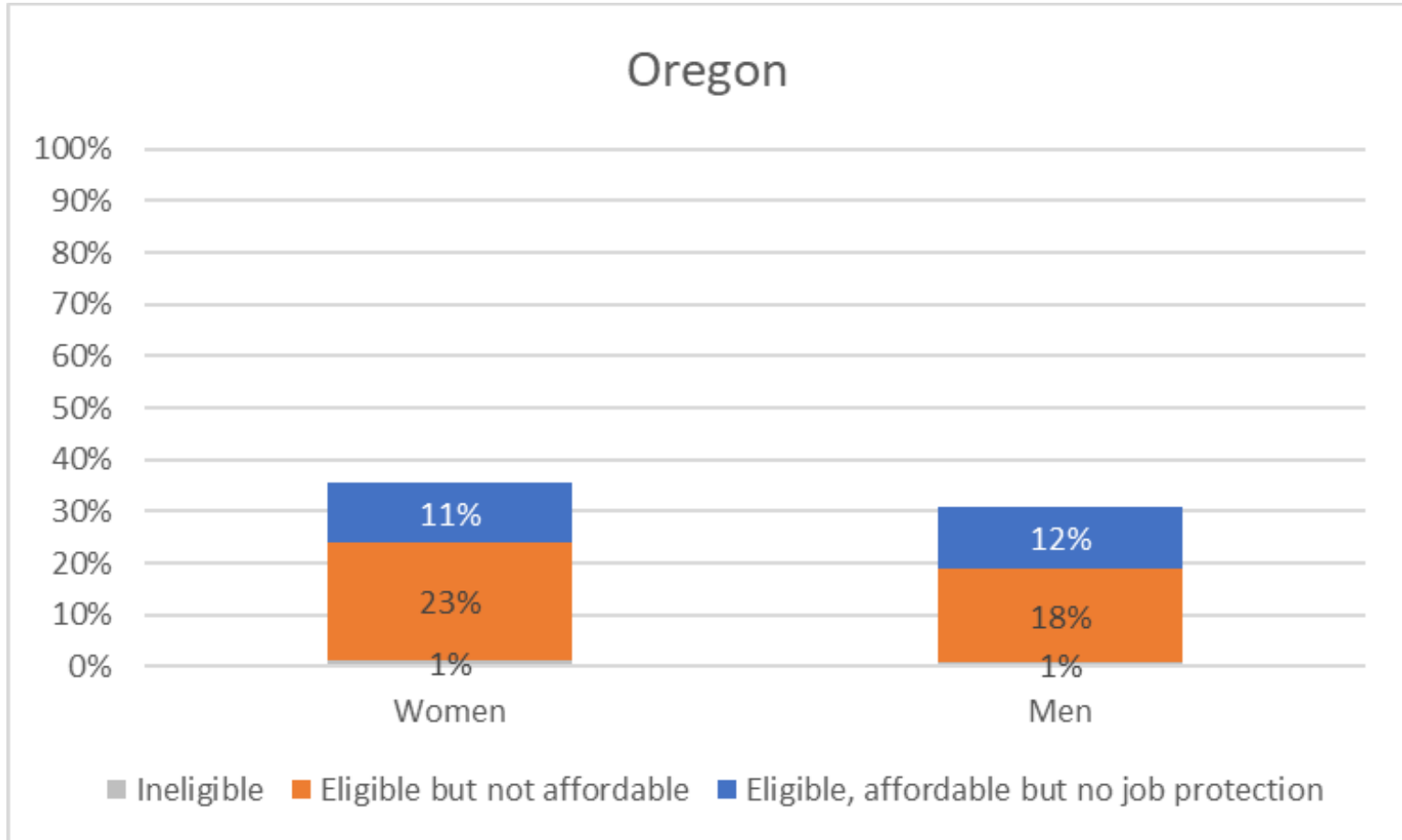


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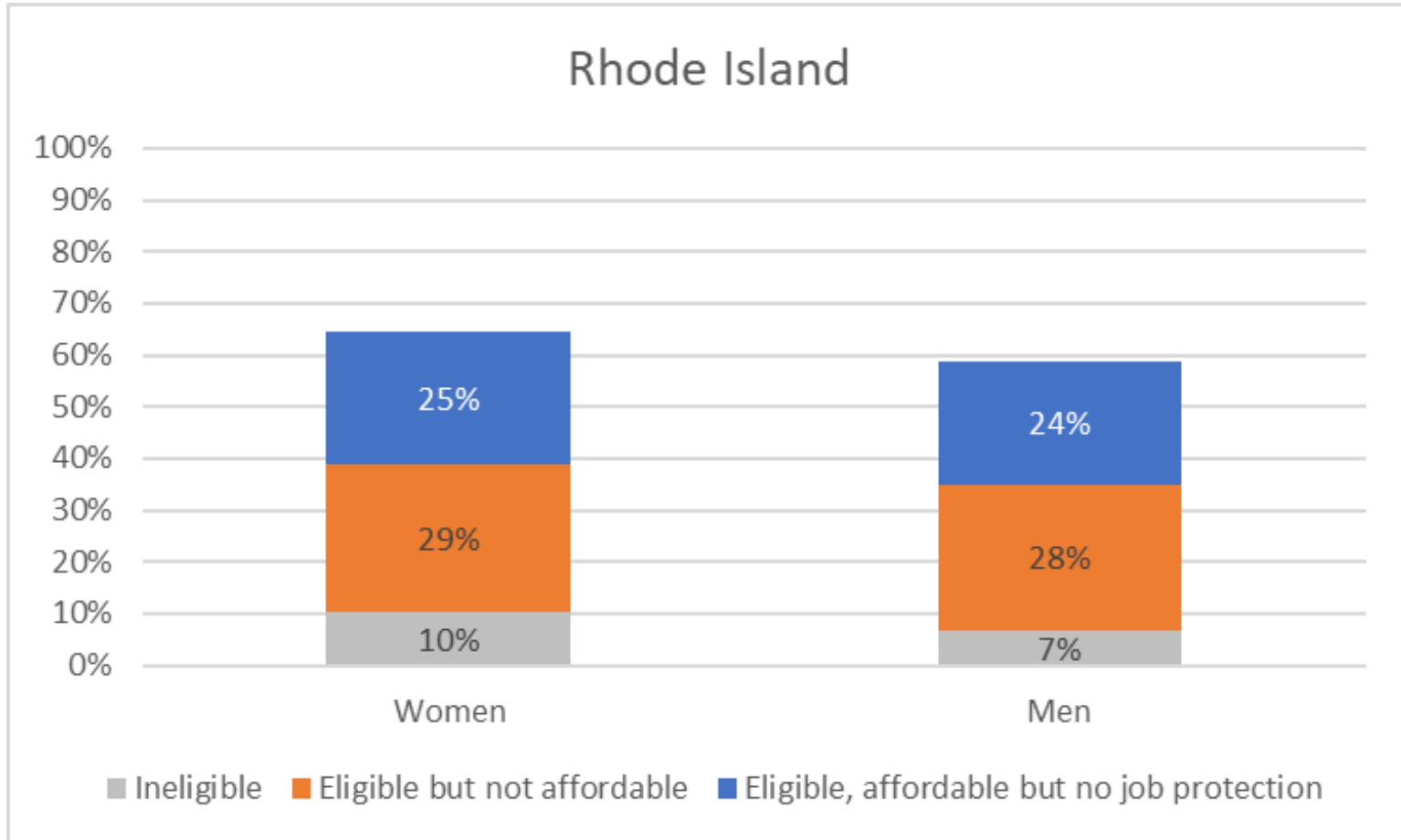




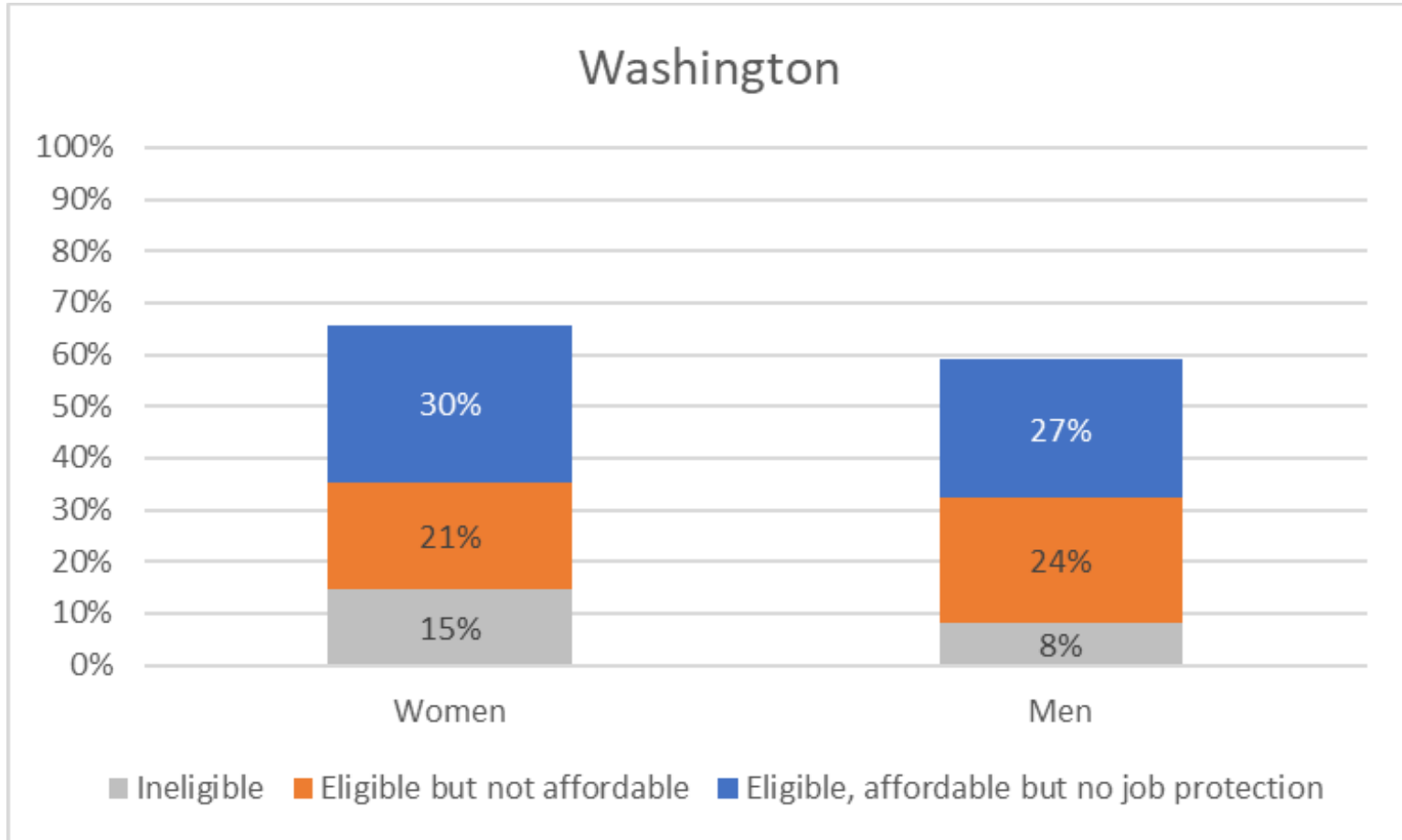
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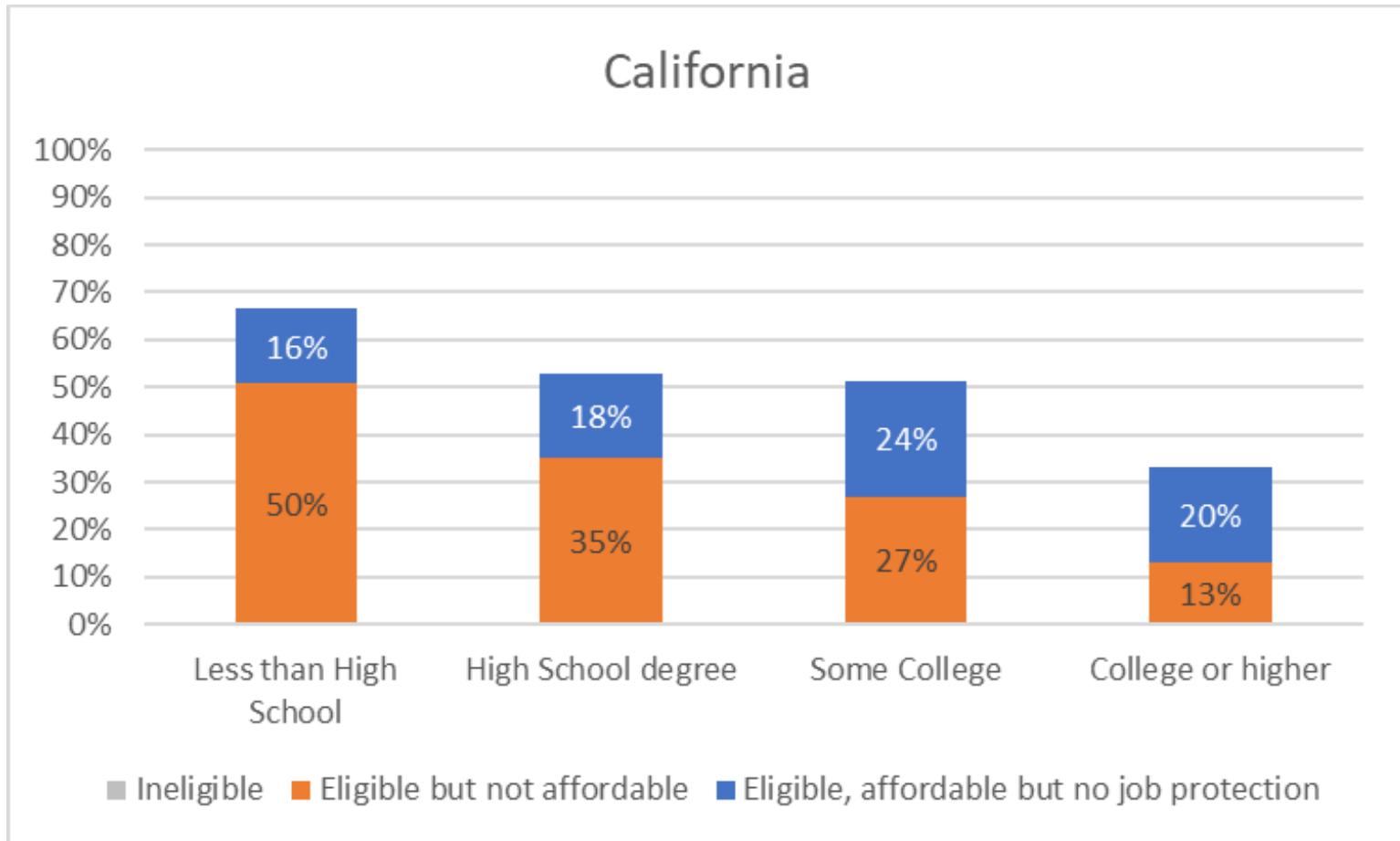


## Disparities by Education

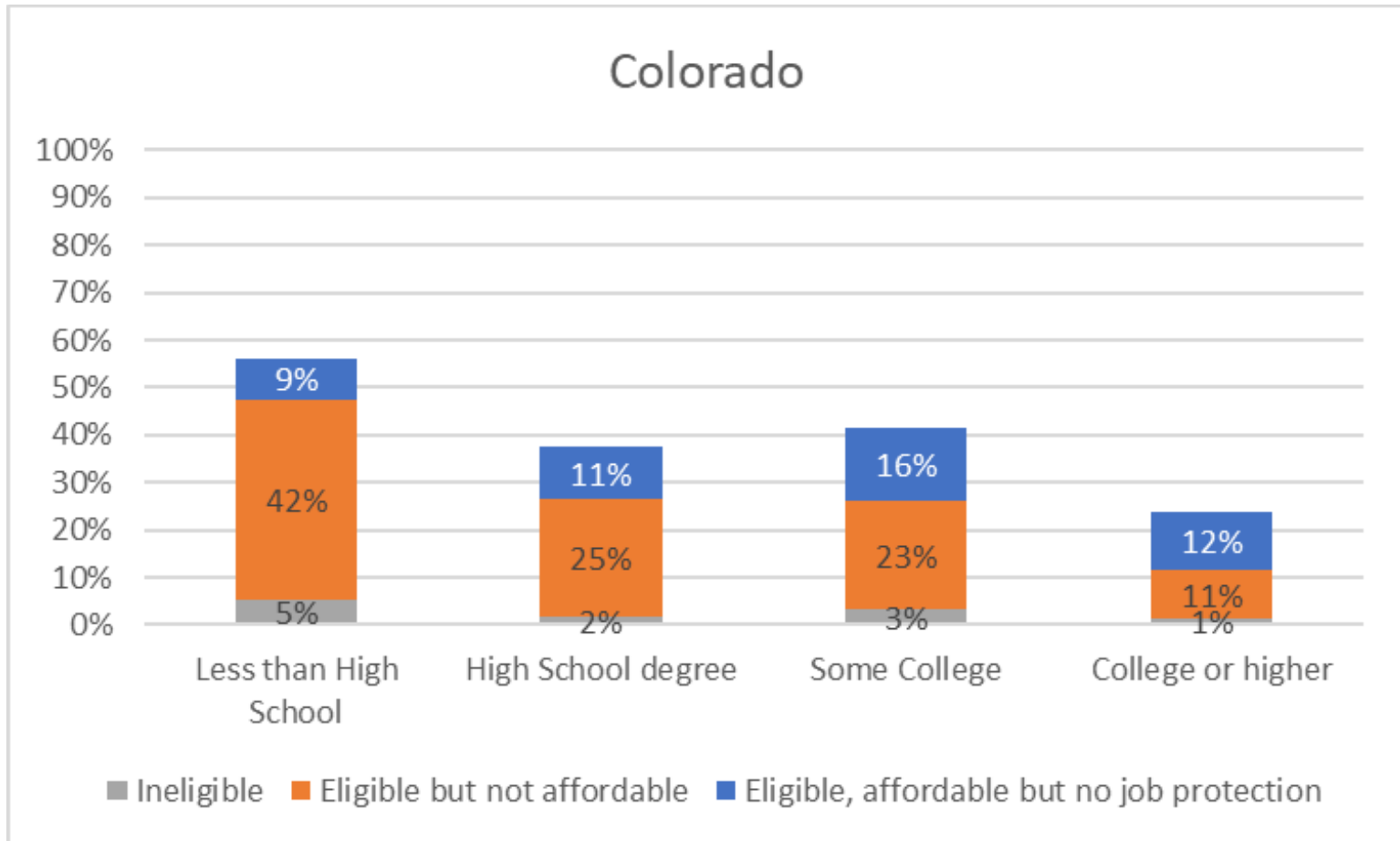
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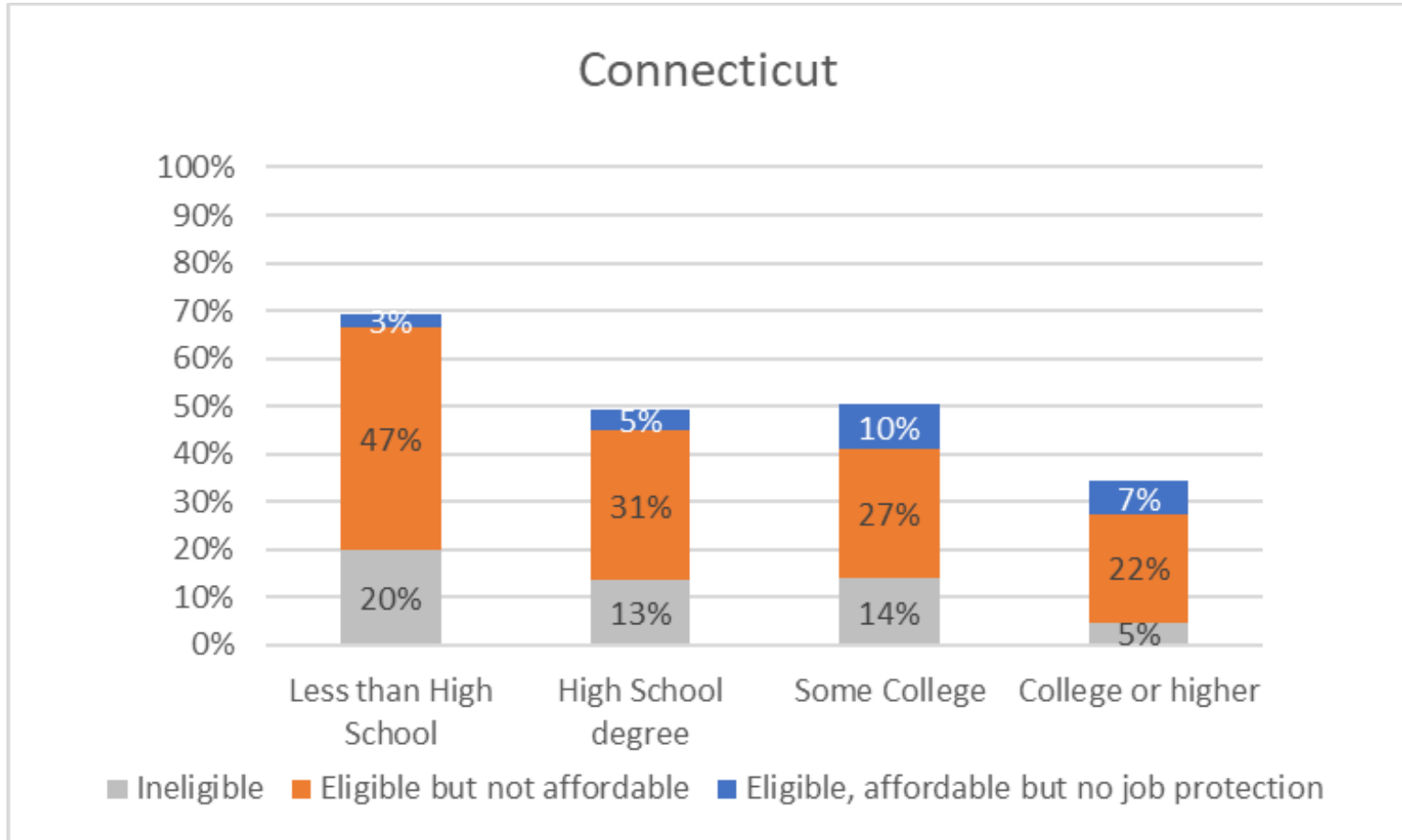
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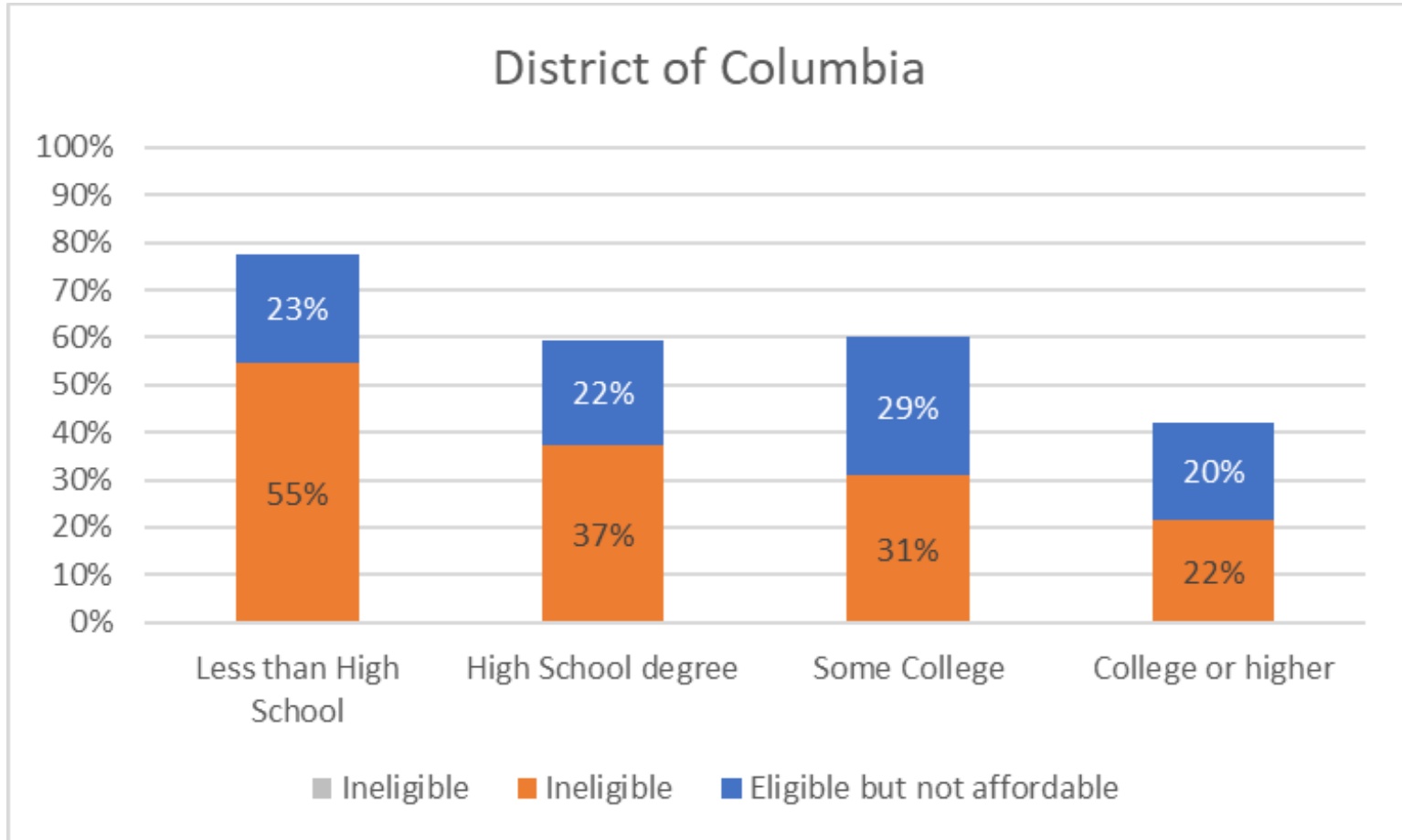
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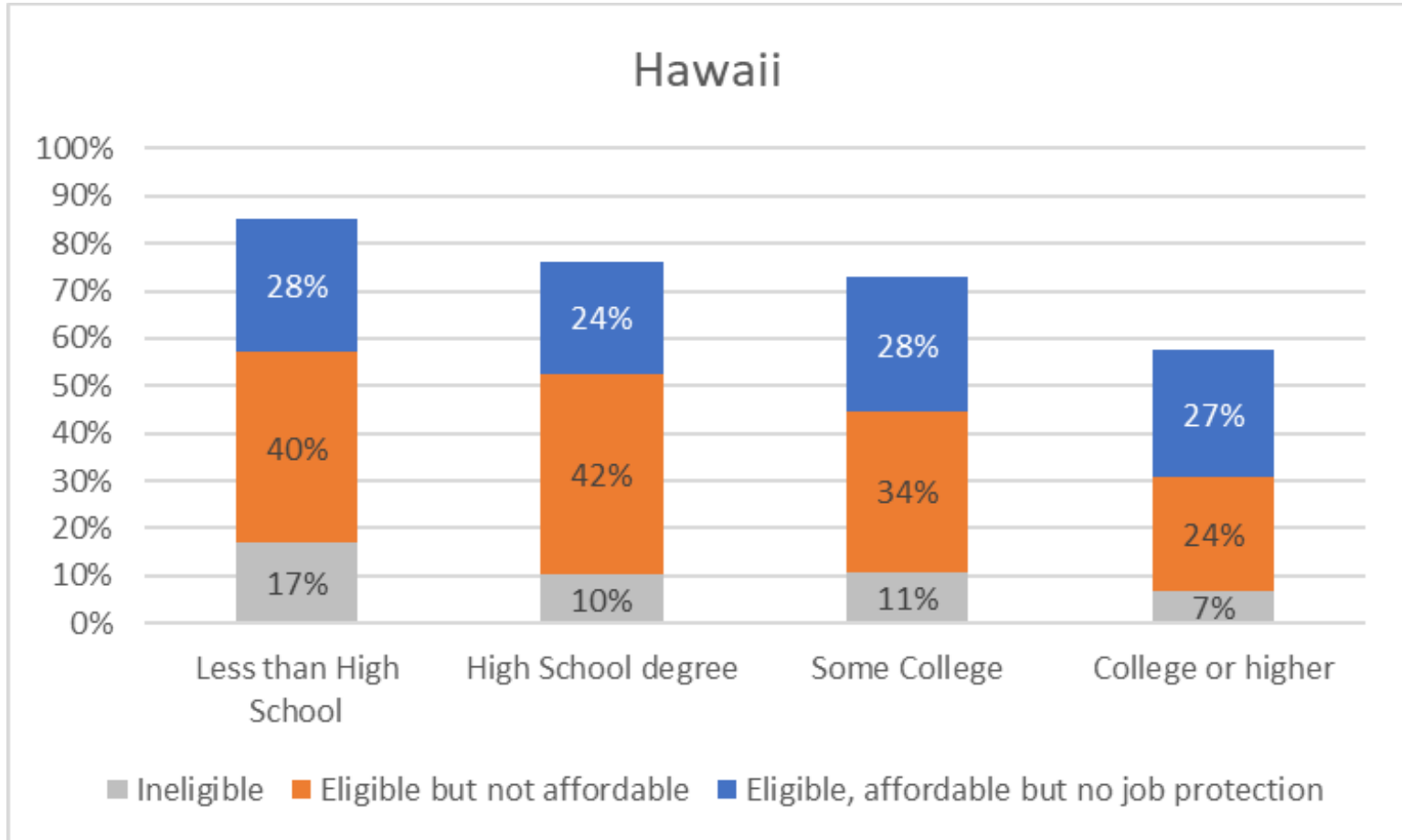


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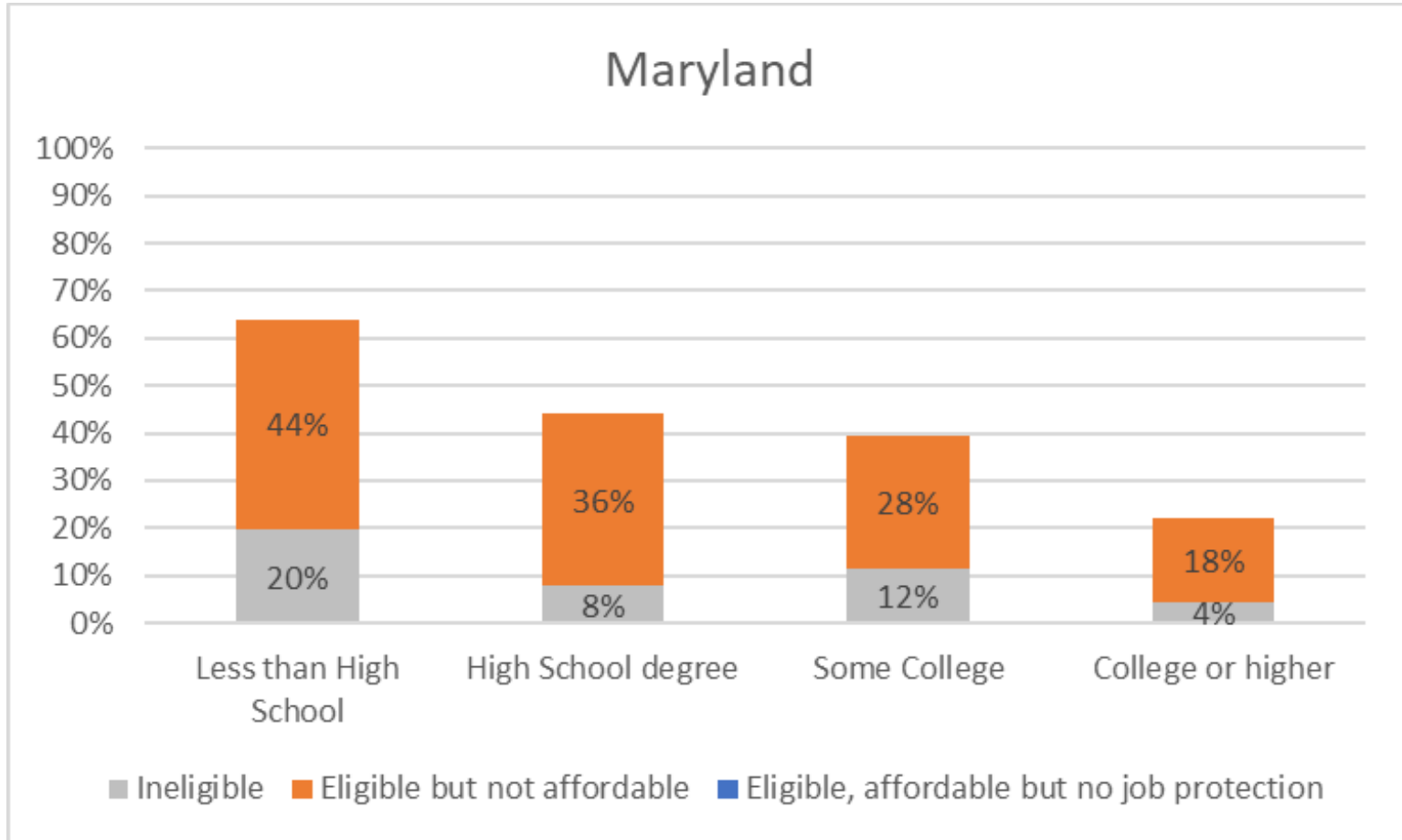




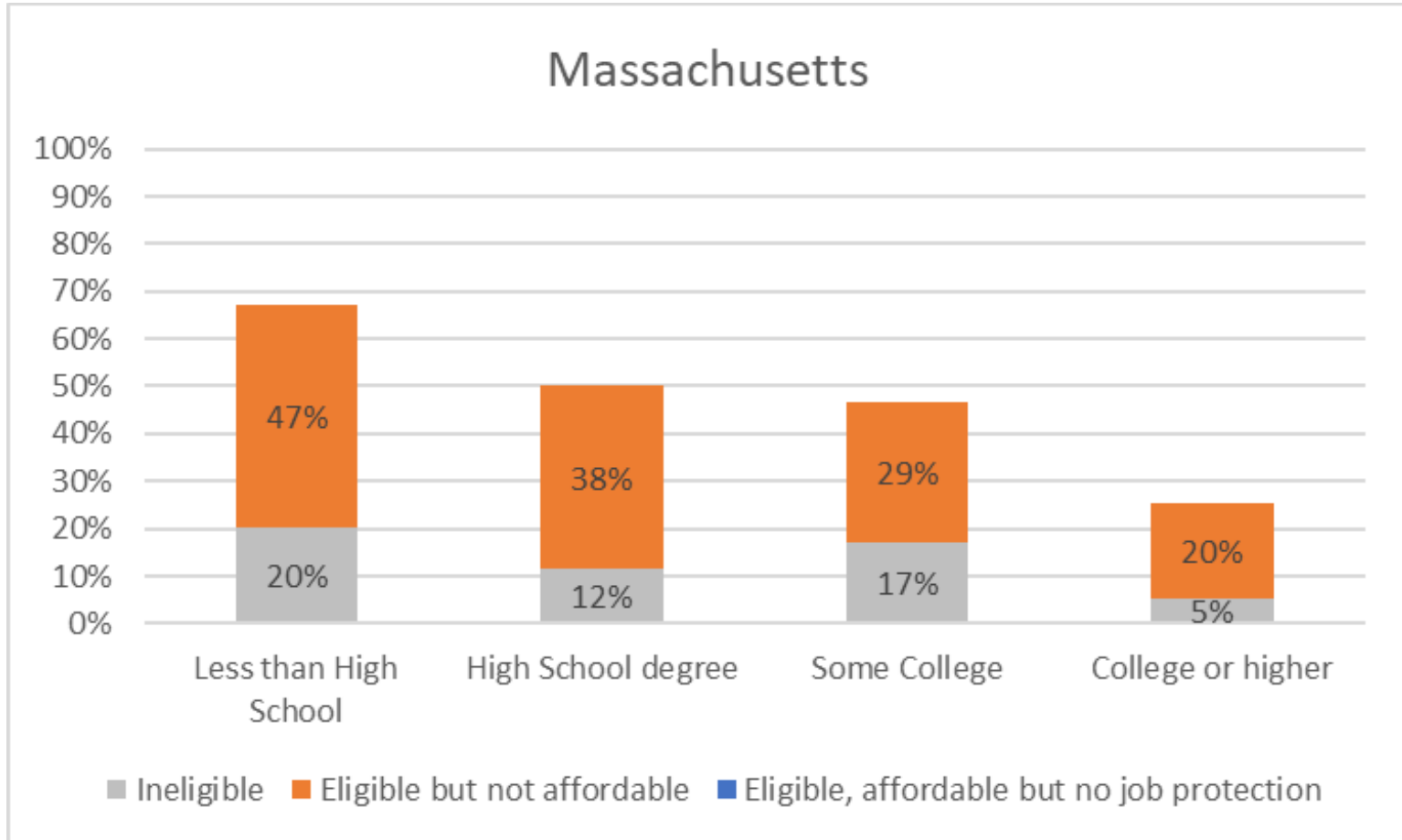
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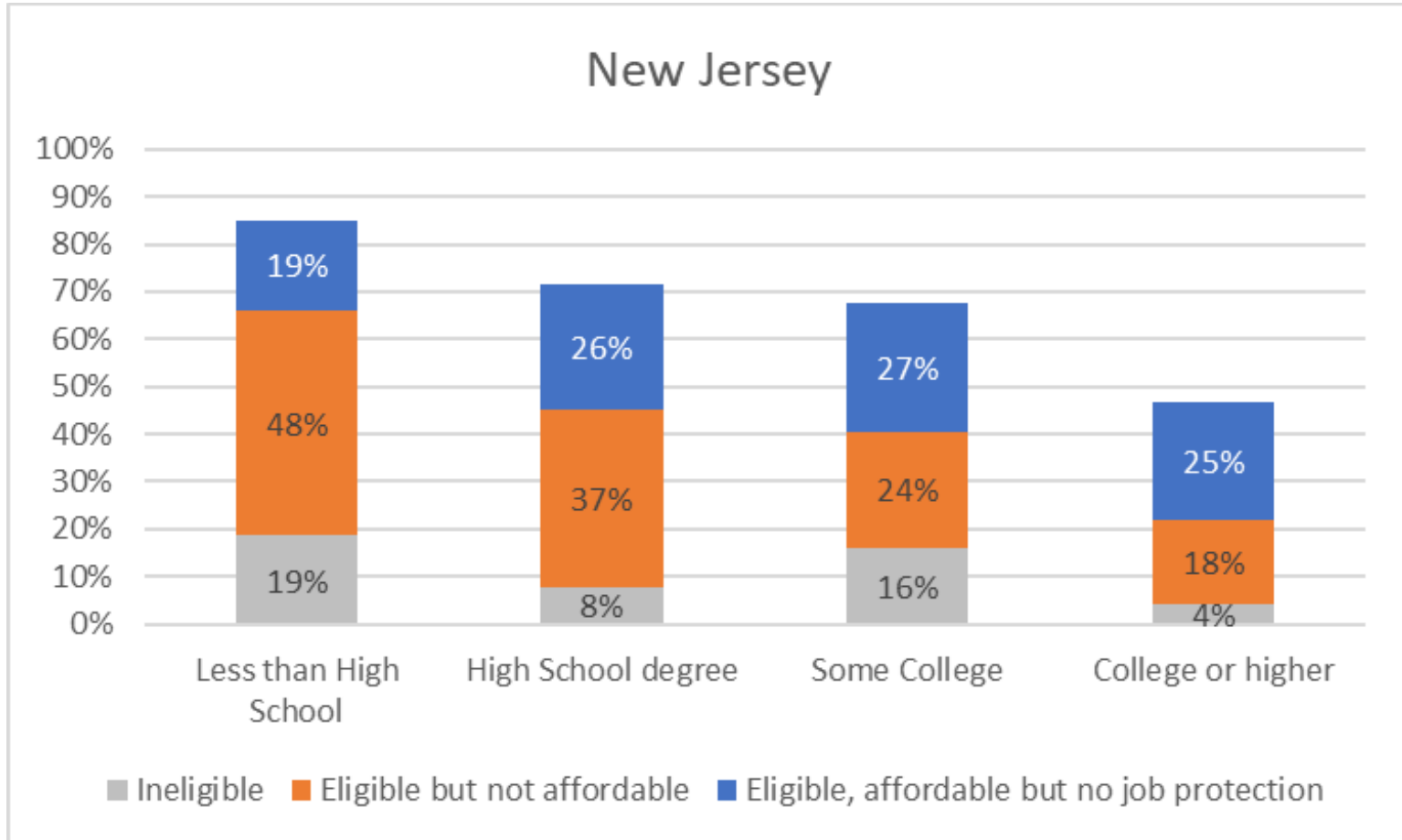
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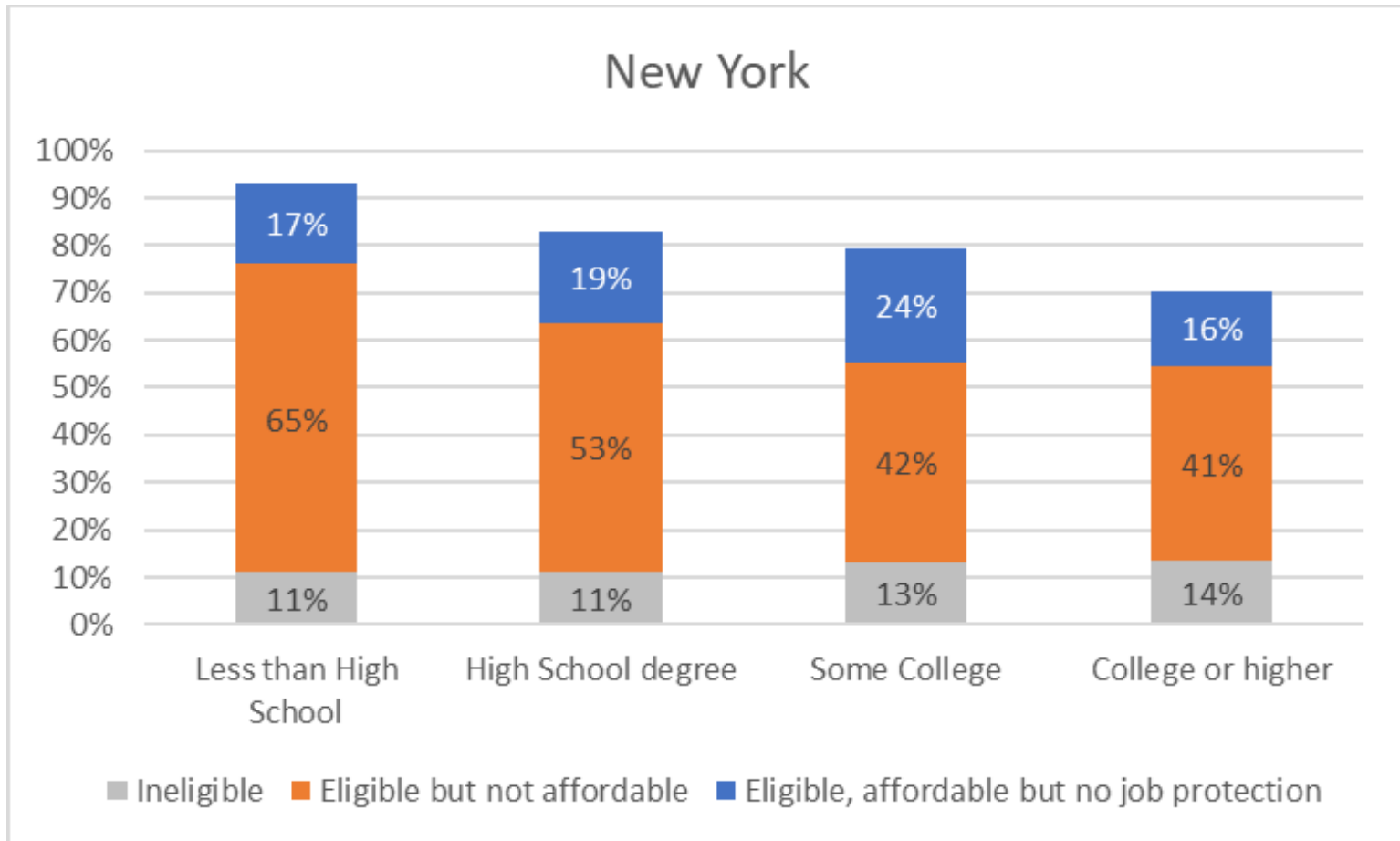
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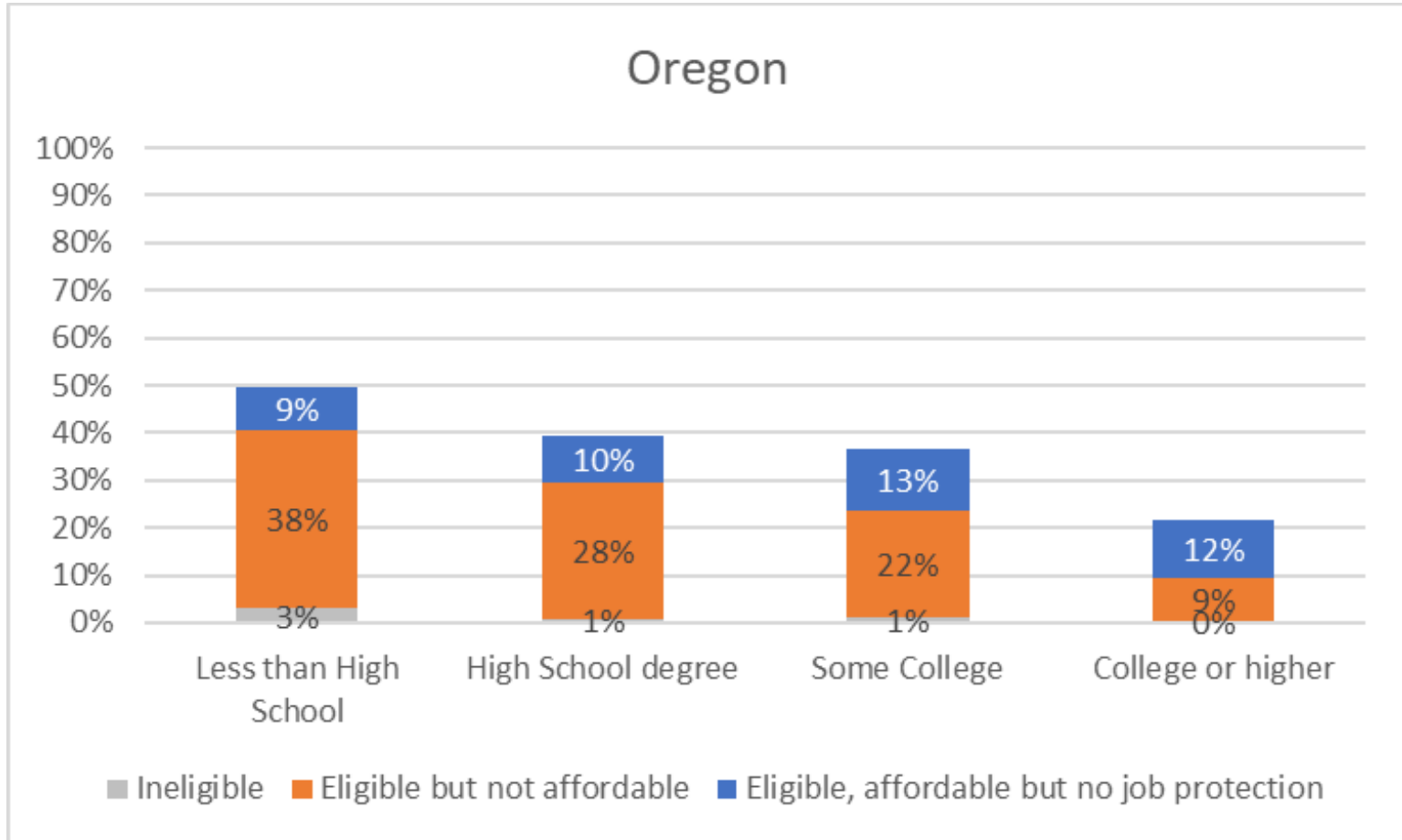
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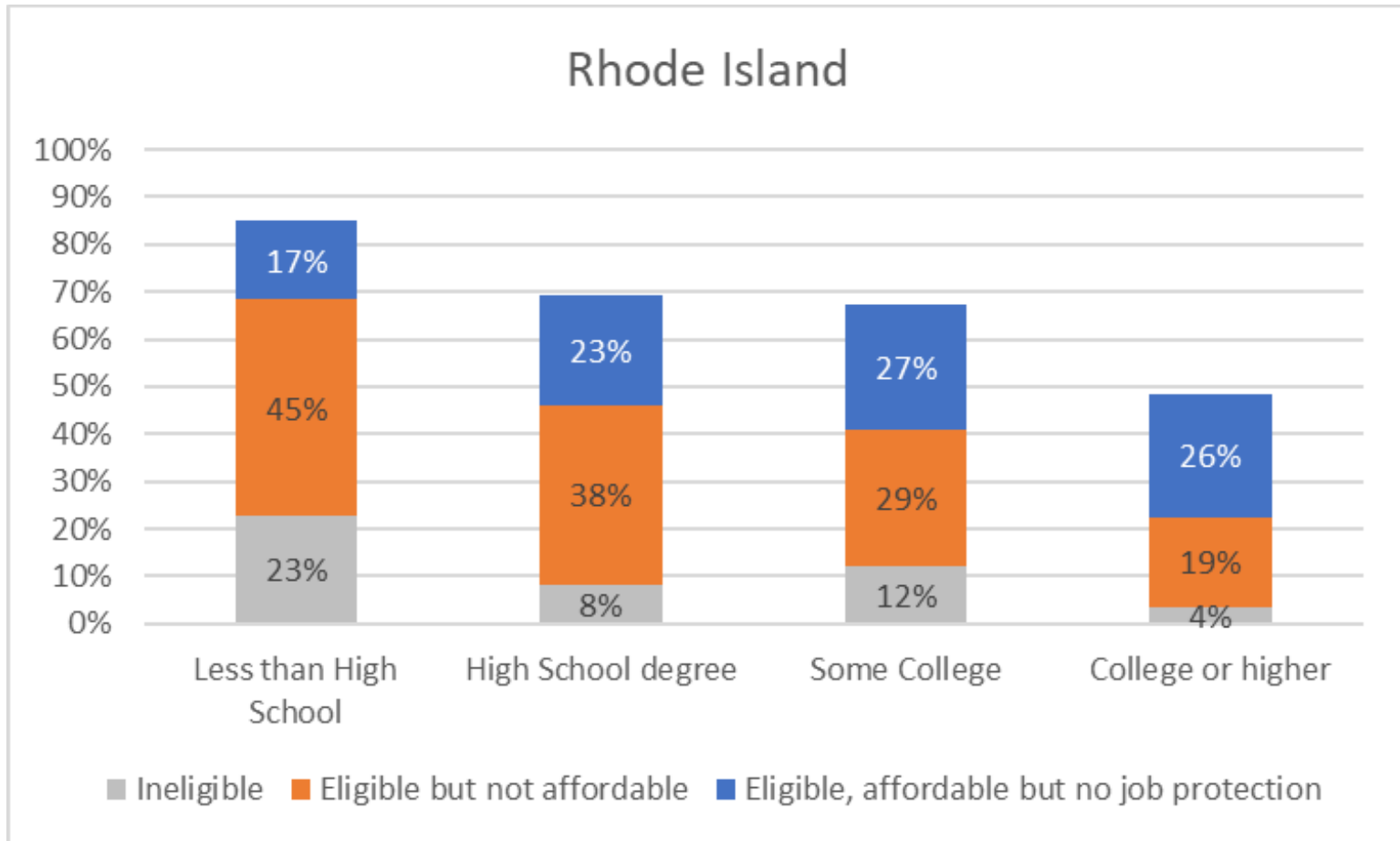
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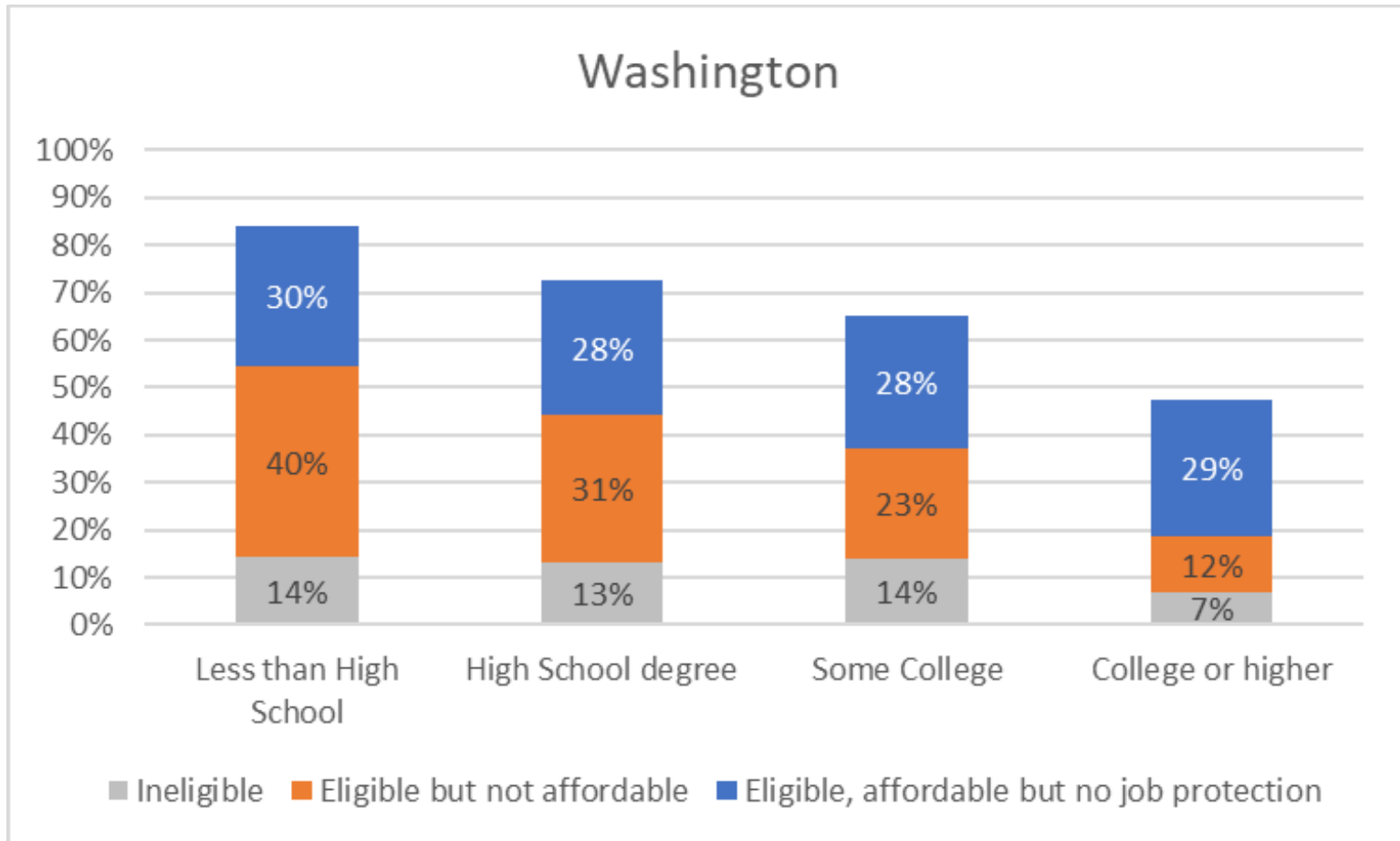
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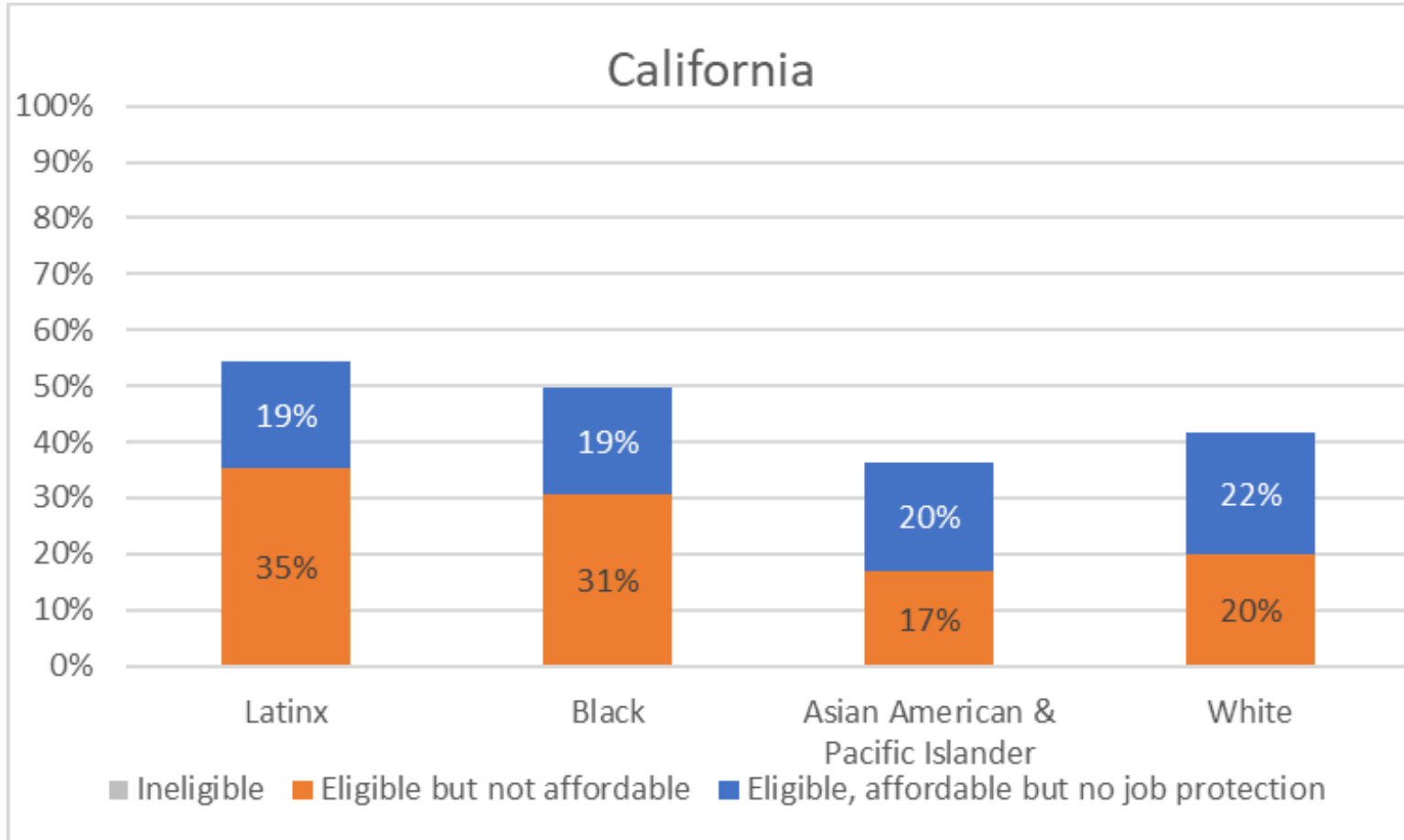
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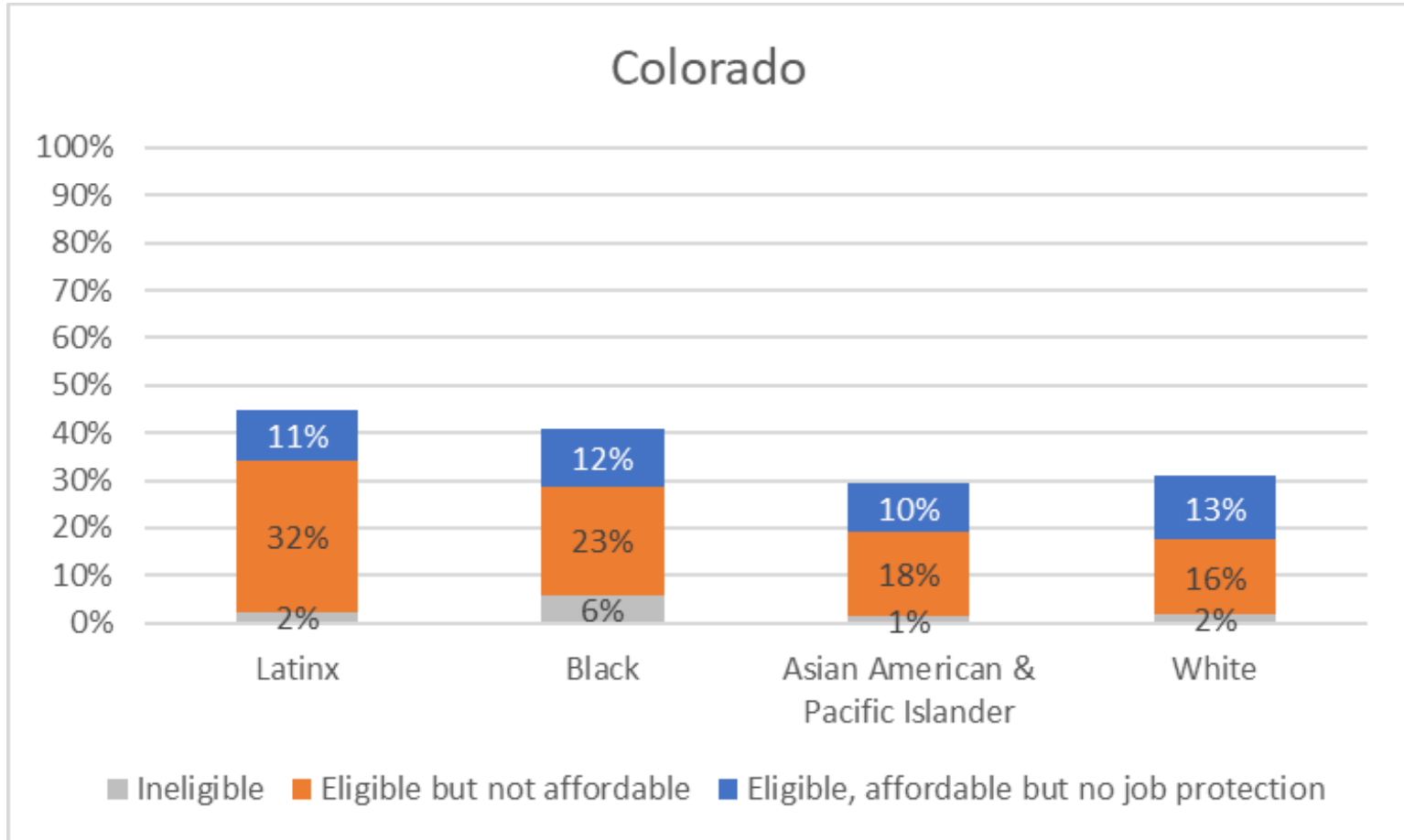
Note: Analysis was limited based upon having at least 100 workers to analyze in all states for each of the racial and ethnic groups studied



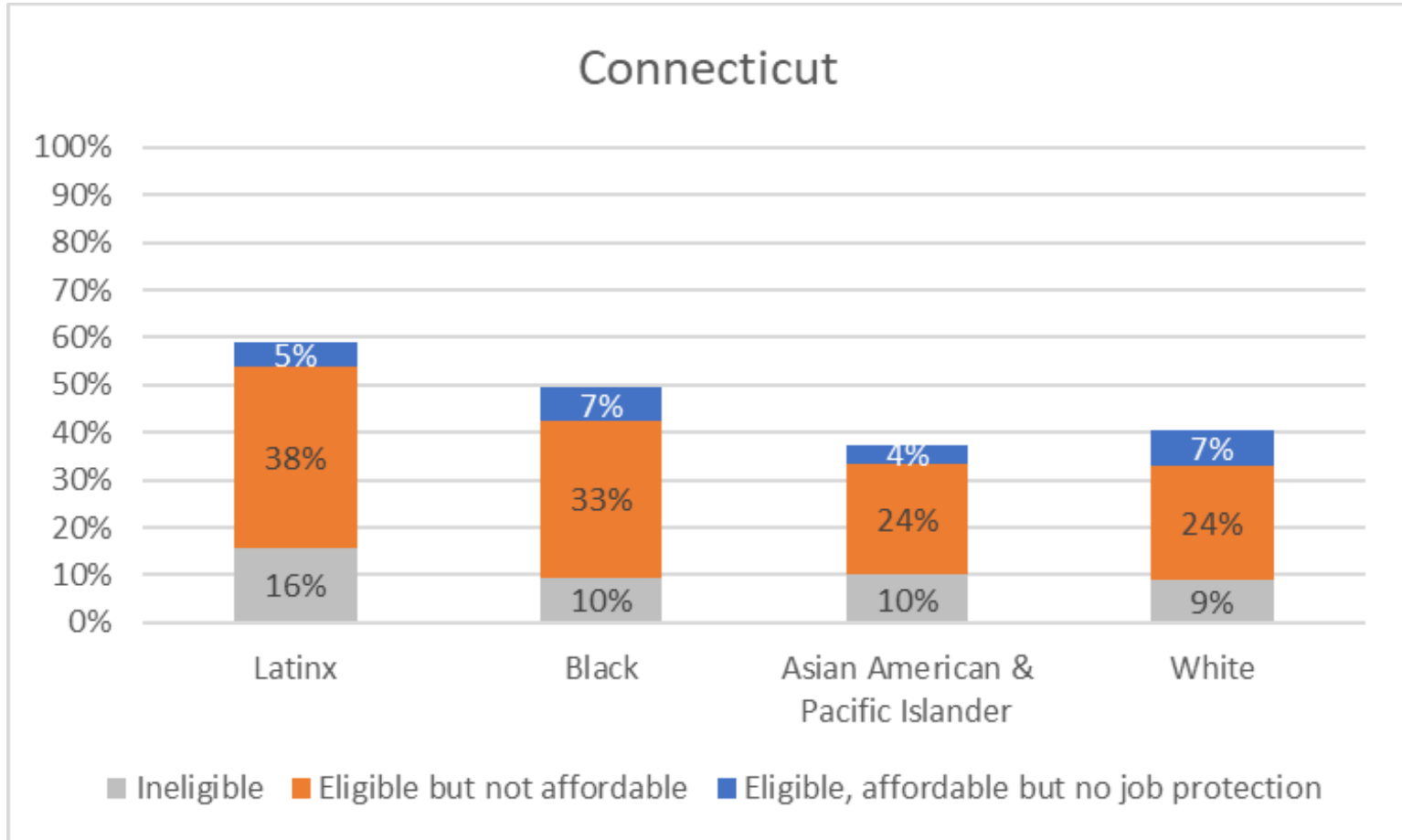
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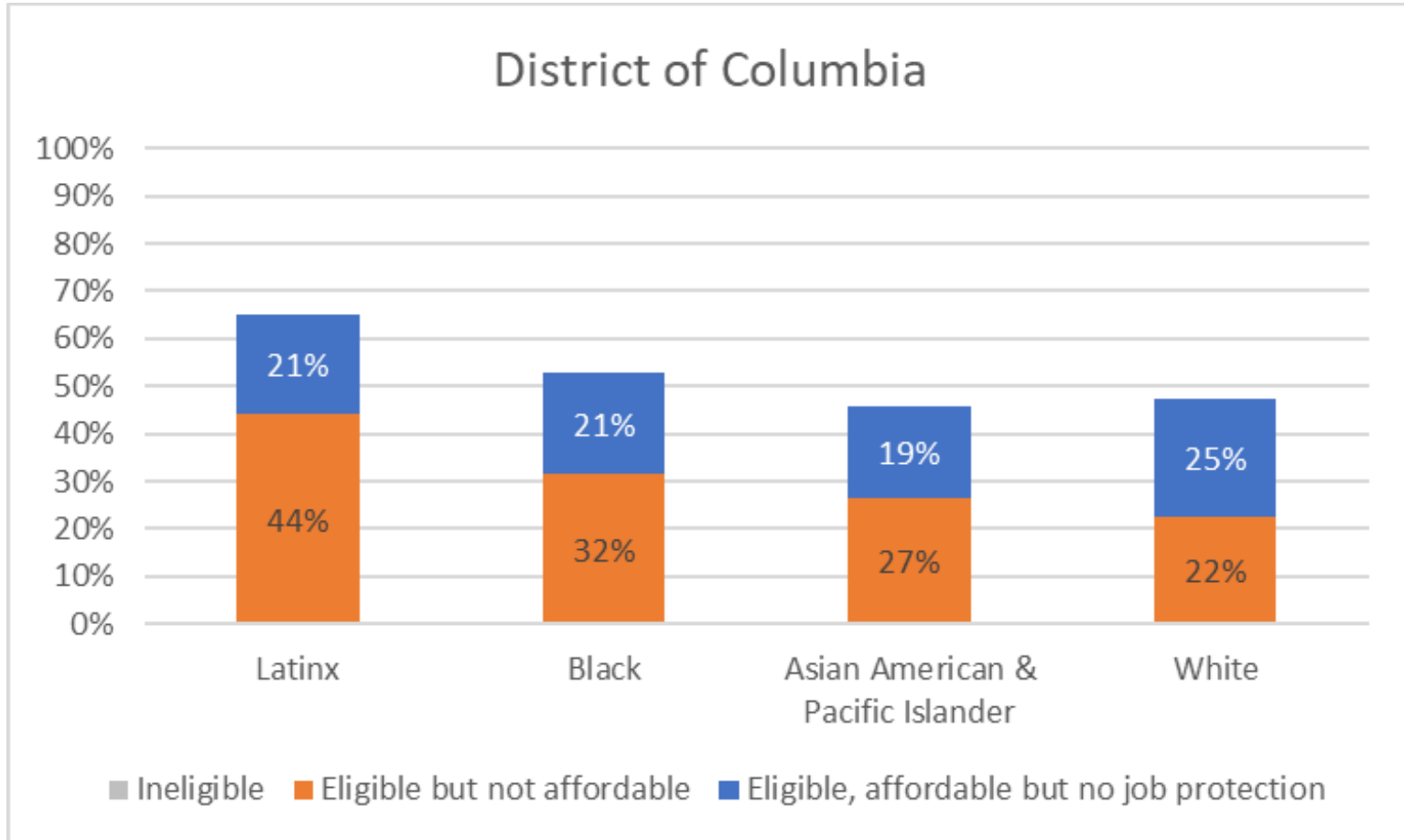
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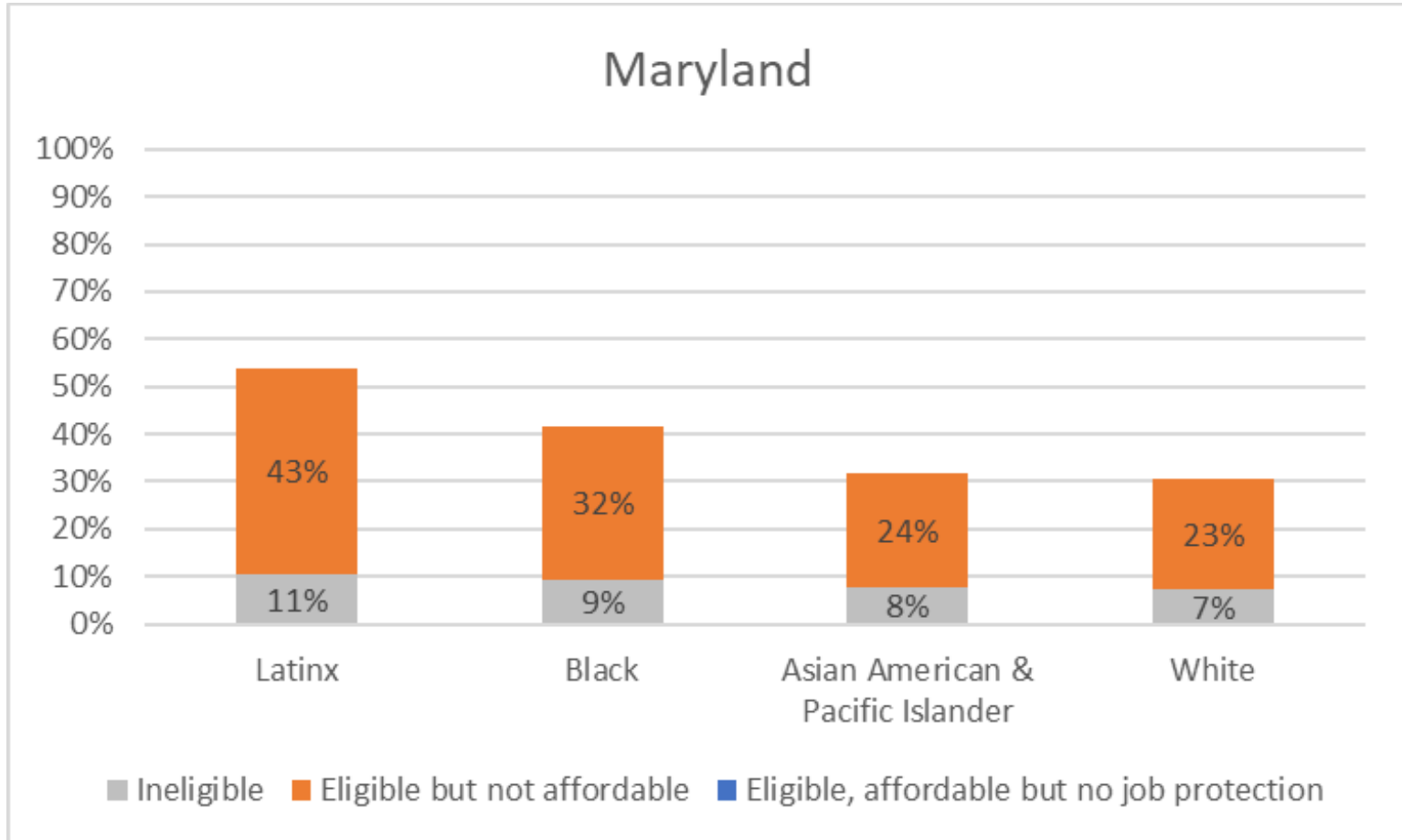
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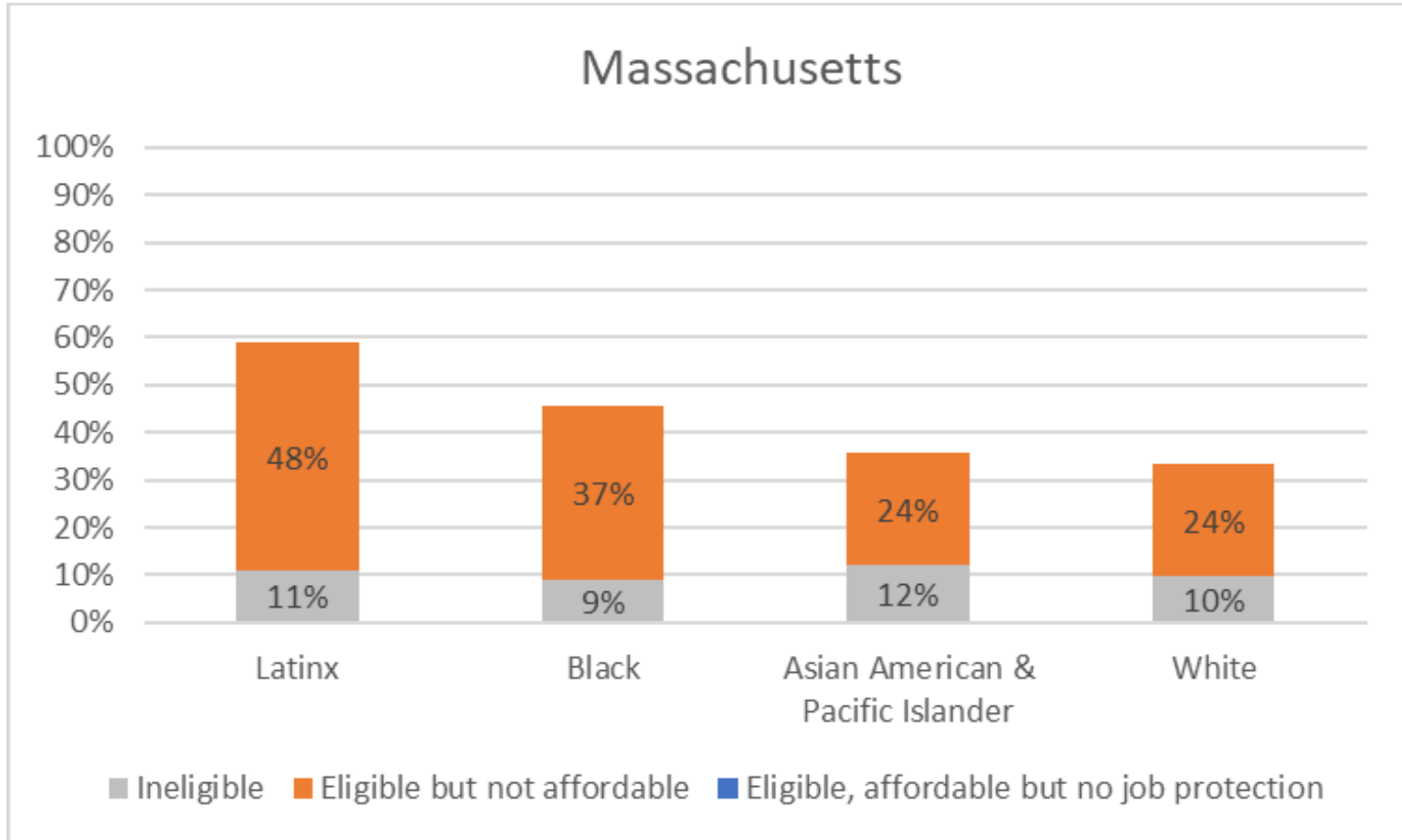
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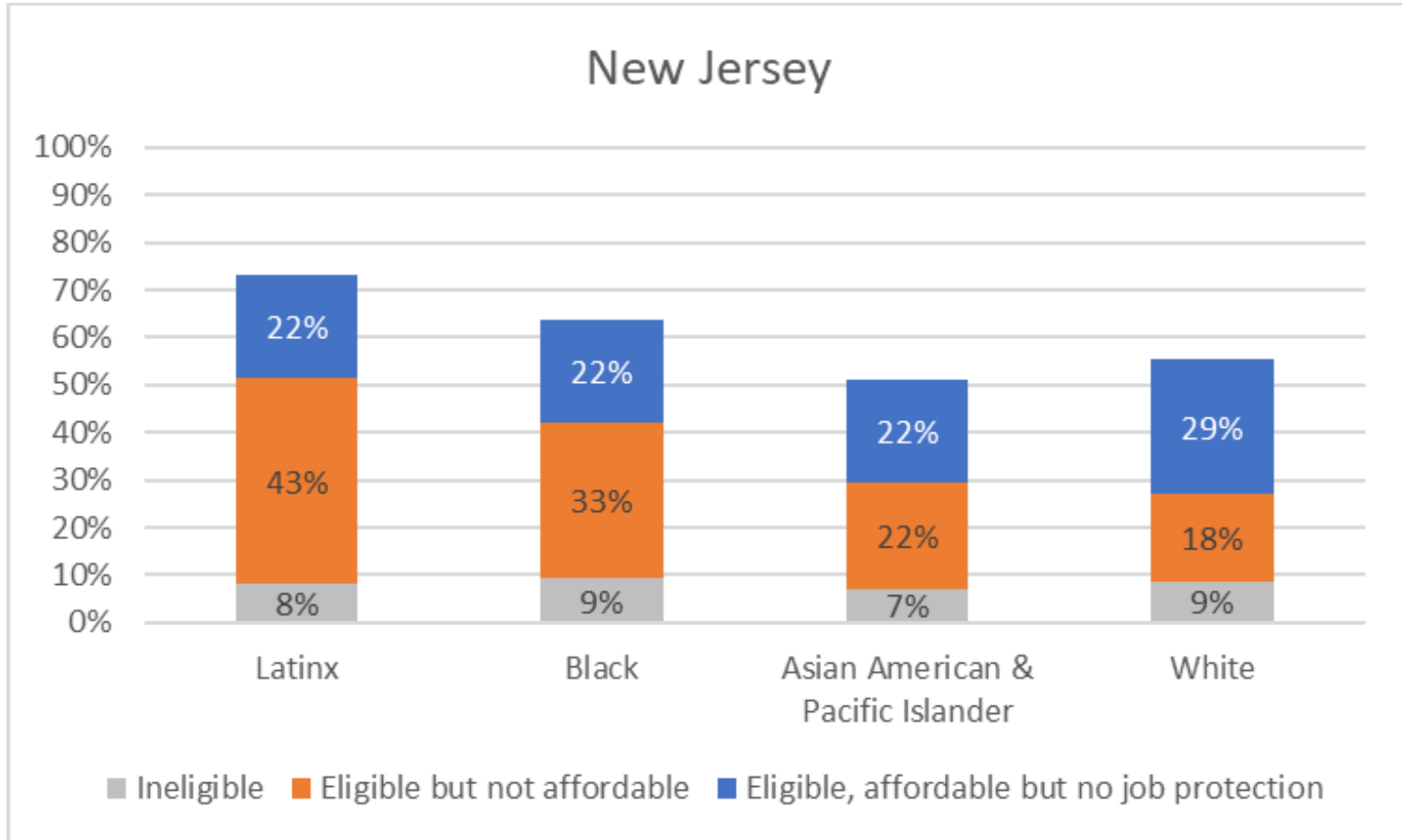
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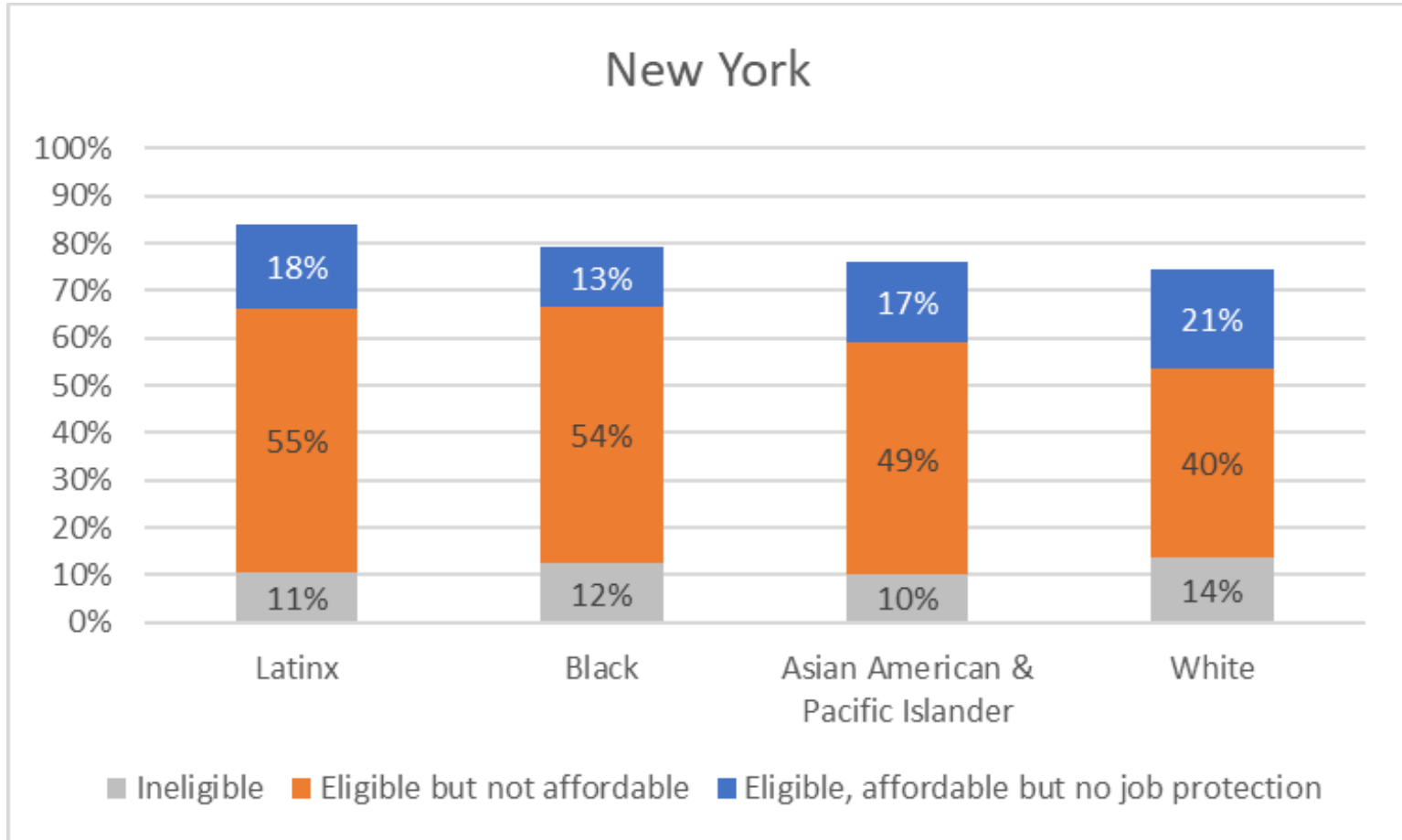


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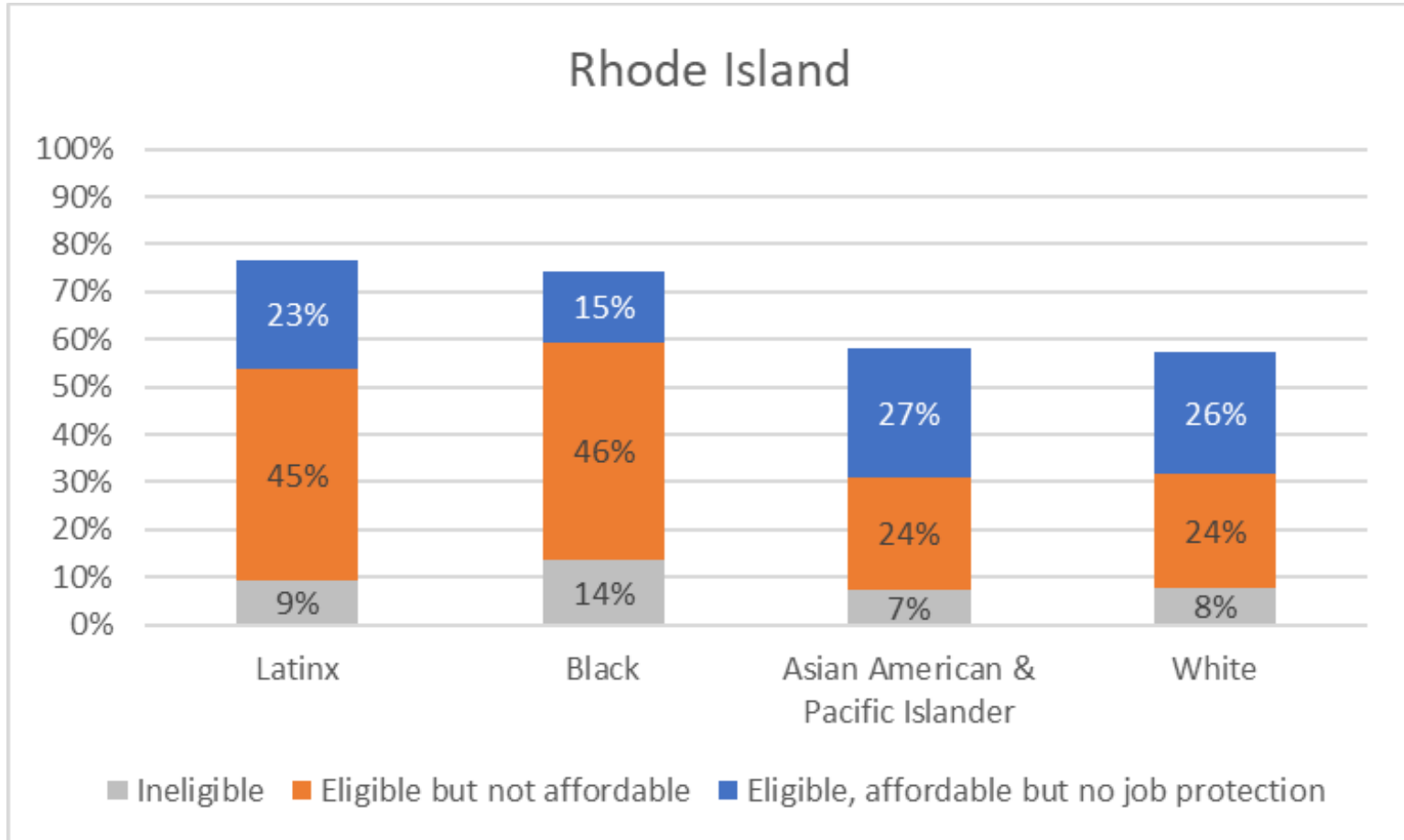




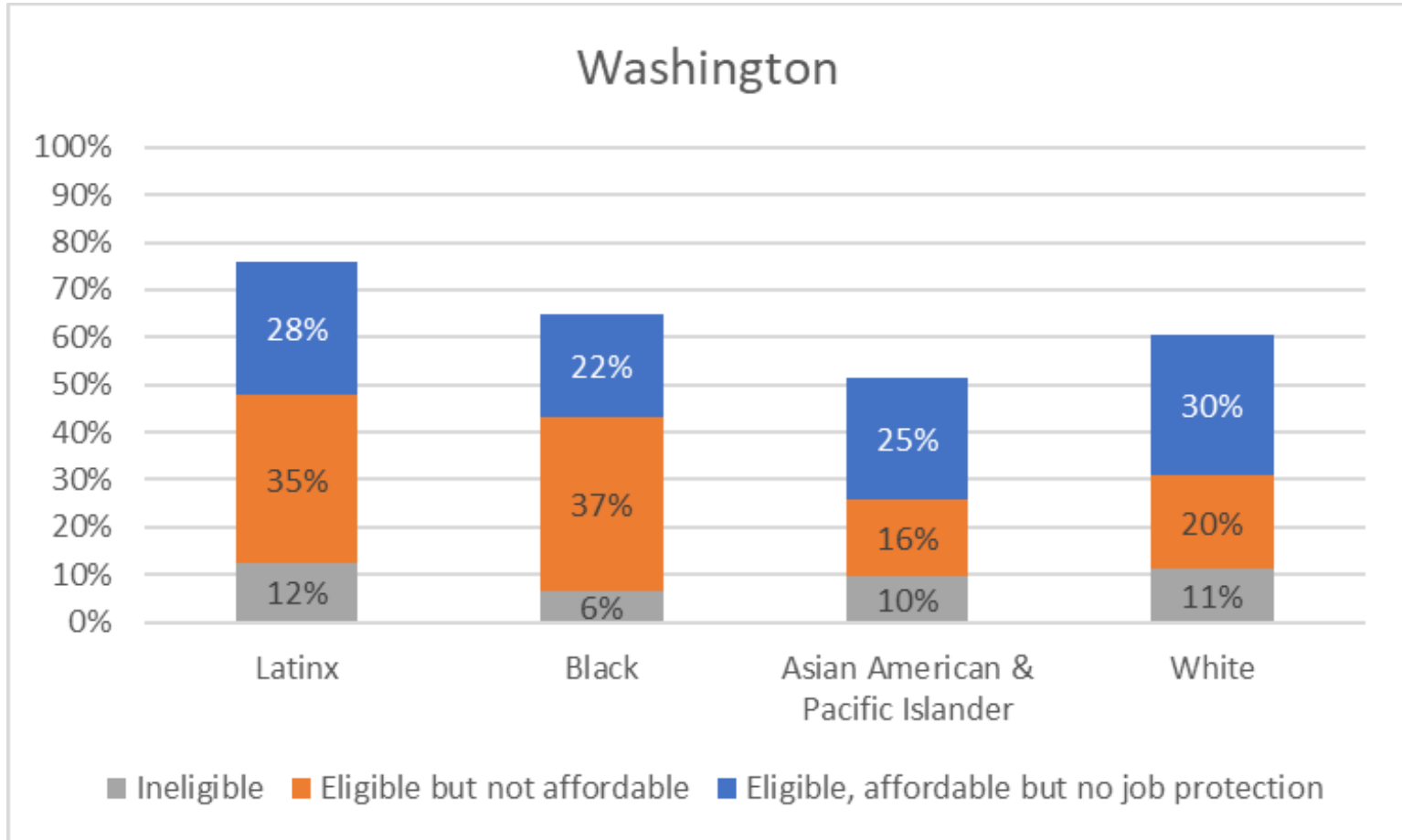
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## For more information

- To learn more about paid leave in the US, download the policy data, and explore additional material please visit:

<https://worldpolicycenter.org>

