



Restaurant Employee Demographics

Data Brief – March 2022

Introduction

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, the restaurant and foodservice industry was the nation’s second largest private sector employer, providing 15.4 million jobs – or 10% of the total U.S. workforce. This included 12.2 million jobs at eating and drinking places, plus 3.2 million foodservice jobs in other sectors such as healthcare, accommodations, education, food-and-beverage stores, and arts, entertainment and recreation.

Based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, this National Restaurant Association Data Brief contains an overview of restaurant employee demographics in 2019.

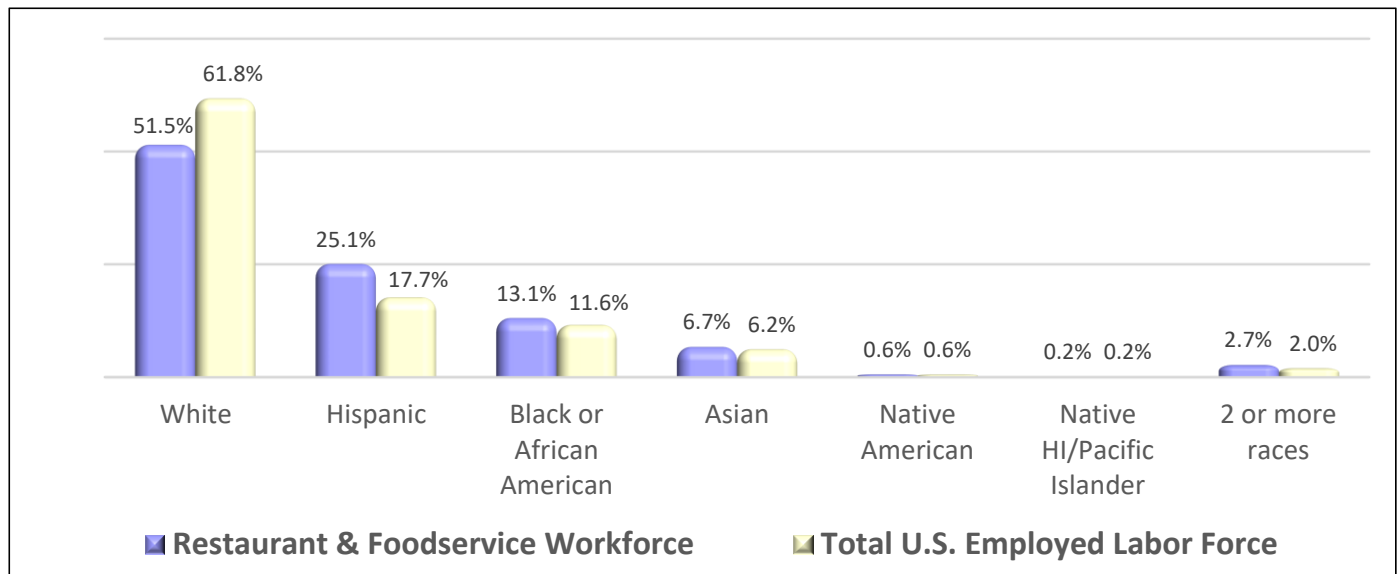
Table of Contents

Race and Ethnicity.....	2
Gender	3
Age	4
Marital Status.....	5
Household Position	6
School Enrollment.....	7
Educational Attainment.....	8
Place of Birth.....	9
Language Spoken at Home	10

Race and Ethnicity

- 49% of restaurant and foodservice employees are minorities – compared to 38% of employees in the total U.S. employed labor force.
- 25% of restaurant and foodservice employees are Hispanic; 13% are Black or African American; and 7% are Asian. Each of these groups have a larger representation in the restaurant industry than they do in the overall U.S. workforce.
- 6 in 10 chefs and cooks are minorities – the highest proportion among the major restaurant occupation categories.
- Nearly 4 in 10 managers are minorities, which means the restaurant and foodservice industry employs more minority managers than any other sector in the economy.

Distribution of Employees by Race and Ethnicity
Restaurant and foodservice workforce versus total U.S. employed labor force



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, National Restaurant Association; 2019 data

Race and Ethnicity Breakouts for the Major Restaurant Occupation Categories

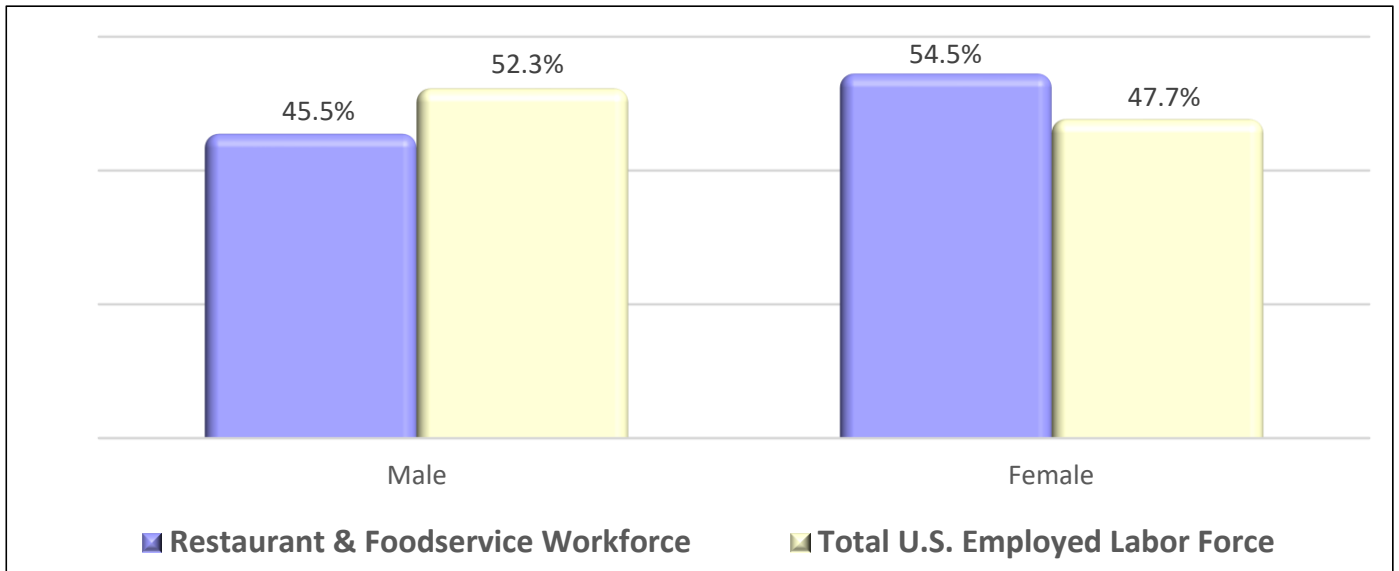
Race/Ethnicity	Managers	Supervisors	Chefs	Cooks	Waitstaff	Bartenders	Food Prep & Counter Workers
White	58.2%	56.7%	40.1%	40.5%	58.2%	73.5%	50.6%
Hispanic	19.9%	22.0%	24.7%	35.6%	22.1%	16.1%	26.8%
Black or African American	10.1%	13.5%	10.1%	15.1%	8.7%	4.3%	11.9%
Asian	9.1%	3.8%	21.7%	5.5%	7.2%	2.9%	6.4%
Native American	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%
Native HI/Pacific Islander	0.2%	0.1%	0.5%	0.2%	0.2%	<0.1%	0.2%
2 or more races	2.1%	3.4%	2.4%	2.5%	3.0%	2.6%	3.4%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, National Restaurant Association; 2019 data

Gender

- 54% of restaurant and foodservice employees are female – compared to 48% of employees in the total U.S. employed labor force.
- 49% of managers and 56% of supervisors are female. As a result, the restaurant and foodservice industry employs more female managers than any other sector in the economy.
- Females make up a majority of tipped positions in the restaurant industry: 70% of waitstaff and 58% of bartenders are female.
- Females have a lower representation in the back of the house: 1 in 5 chefs and 1 in 3 cooks are female.

Distribution of Employees by Gender
Restaurant and foodservice workforce versus total U.S. employed labor force



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, National Restaurant Association; 2019 data

Gender Breakouts for the Major Restaurant Occupation Categories

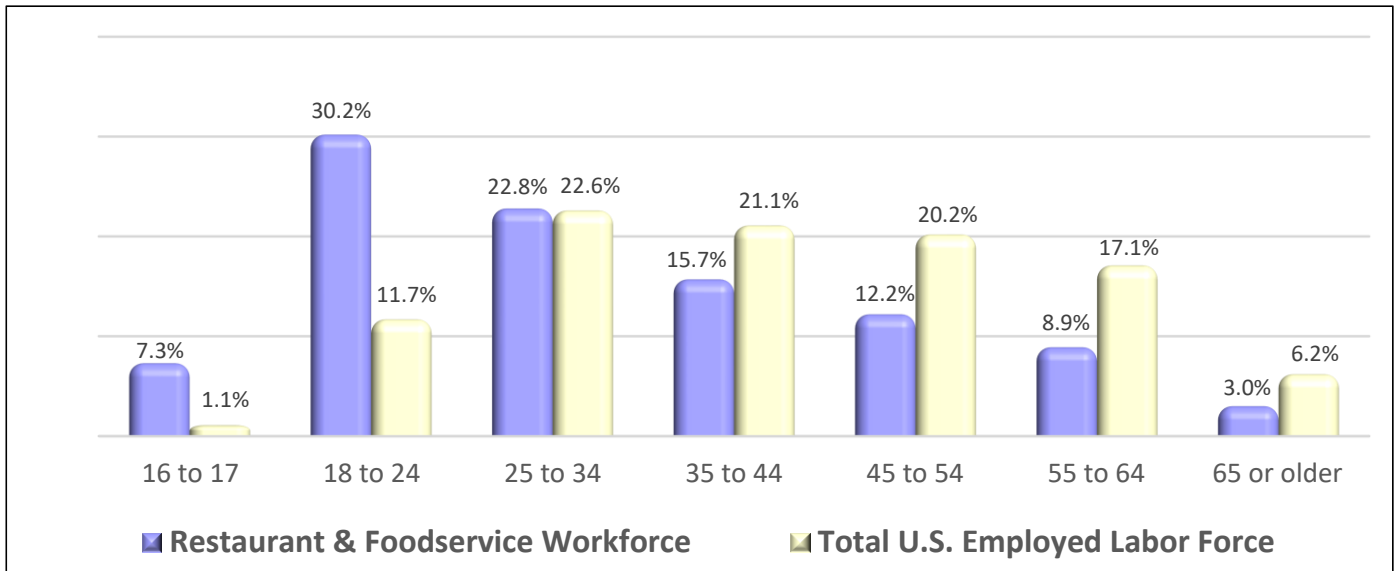
Gender	Managers	Supervisors	Chefs	Cooks	Waitstaff	Bartenders	Food Prep & Counter Workers
Male	50.7%	44.0%	80.5%	66.8%	30.0%	42.3%	41.2%
Female	49.3%	56.0%	19.5%	33.2%	70.0%	57.7%	58.8%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, National Restaurant Association; 2019 data

Age

- The restaurant industry employs a much higher proportion of younger workers than the overall economy. 37% of restaurant and foodservice employees are under the age of 25, while 60% are under the age of 35.
- Only 13% of employees in the overall employed labor force are under the age of 25, while 35% are under the age of 35.
- 59% of food preparation and counter workers and 48% of waitstaff are under the age of 25.
- Adults aged 55 and older have the highest representation in the manager (15%) and chef (14%) occupations.

Distribution of Employees by Age
Restaurant and foodservice workforce versus total U.S. employed labor force



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, National Restaurant Association; 2019 data

Age Breakouts for the Major Restaurant Occupation Categories

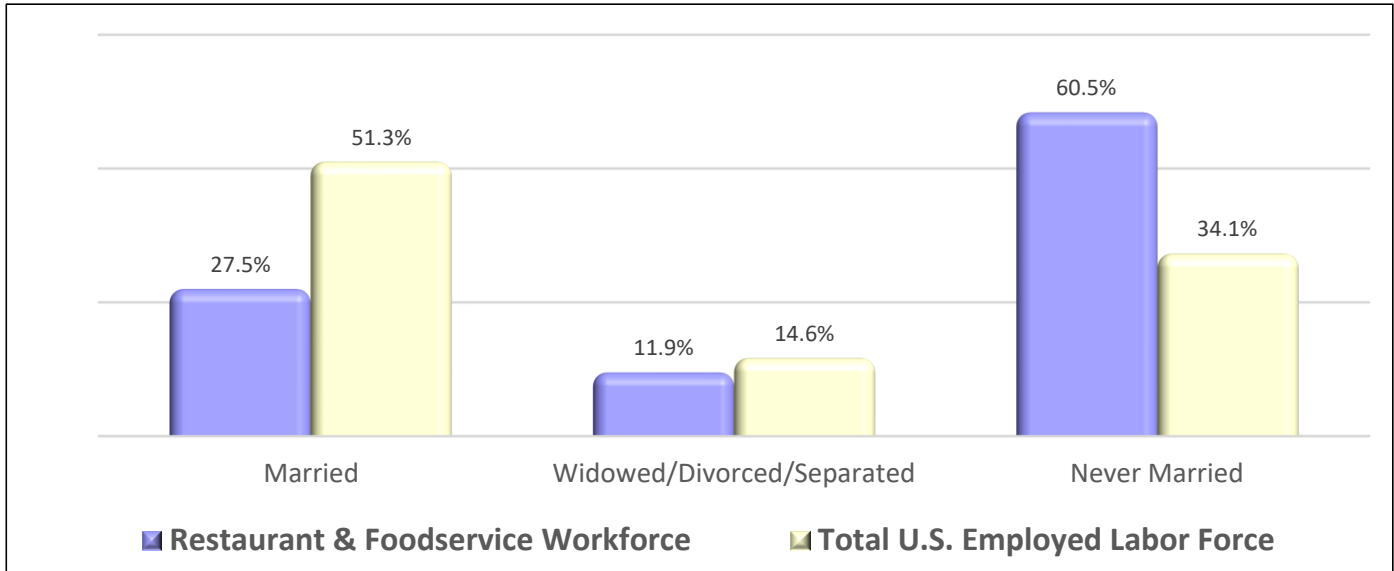
Age Group	Managers	Supervisors	Chefs	Cooks	Waitstaff	Bartenders	Food Prep & Counter Workers
16 to 17	0.3%	0.9%	0.4%	7.2%	5.6%	0.3%	14.5%
18 to 24	15.6%	27.2%	9.6%	28.2%	42.0%	16.4%	44.2%
25 to 34	27.1%	30.3%	30.3%	22.8%	26.4%	44.5%	18.1%
35 to 44	23.5%	18.4%	26.7%	18.6%	12.0%	23.2%	10.1%
45 to 54	18.4%	12.9%	19.2%	13.7%	7.6%	9.0%	6.6%
55 to 64	11.6%	7.7%	11.6%	7.5%	5.0%	5.3%	5.1%
65 or older	3.4%	2.5%	2.2%	2.0%	1.4%	1.4%	1.5%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, National Restaurant Association; 2019 data

Marital Status

- The restaurant industry employs a much higher proportion of single workers than the overall economy. 61% of restaurant and foodservice employees have never been married – compared to 34% of employees in the total U.S. employed labor force.
- 28% of restaurant and foodservice employees are married, while 12% are widowed, divorced or separated.
- Among the major restaurant occupation categories, food preparation and counter workers (75%) and waitstaff (70%) are the most likely to be single.
- Chefs (47%) and managers (44%) are the most likely to be married.

Distribution of Employees by Marital Status
Restaurant and foodservice workforce versus total U.S. employed labor force



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, National Restaurant Association; 2019 data

Marital Status Breakouts for the Major Restaurant Occupation Categories

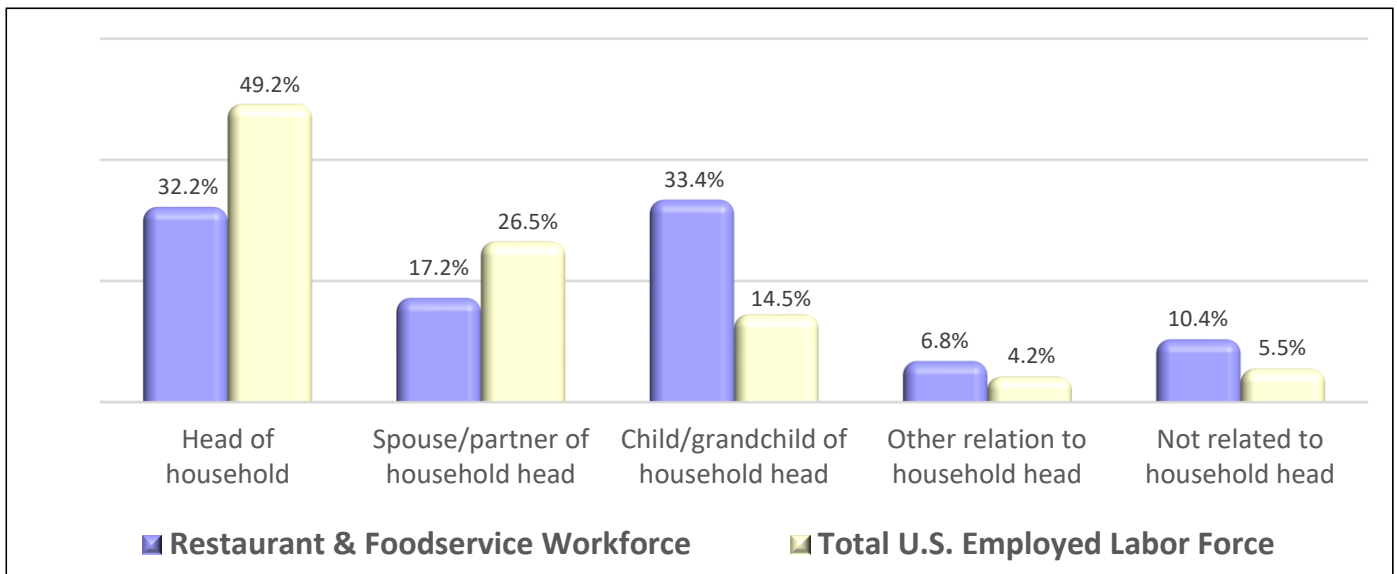
Marital Status	Managers	Supervisors	Chefs	Cooks	Waitstaff	Bartenders	Food Prep & Counter Workers
Married	44.4%	31.6%	46.5%	26.8%	19.7%	23.6%	17.3%
Widowed/Divorced/Separated	15.1%	14.0%	12.6%	11.2%	10.2%	13.3%	7.3%
Never Married	40.5%	54.4%	40.8%	62.0%	70.1%	63.1%	75.4%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, National Restaurant Association; 2019 data

Household Position

- A majority of restaurant workers are not the heads of their household. Only 32% of restaurant and foodservice employees are the heads of their household – compared to 49% of employees in the total U.S. employed labor force.
- 17% of restaurant and foodservice employees are the spouse or partner of the household head, while 33% are the child or grandchild of the household head.
- Among the major restaurant occupation categories, managers (47%), bartenders (46%), supervisors (42%) and chefs (42%) are the most likely to be heads of their household.
- 49% of food preparation and counter workers are the child or grandchild of the household head, while only 20% are the head of their household.

Distribution of Employees by Household Position
Restaurant and foodservice workforce versus total U.S. employed labor force



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, National Restaurant Association; 2019 data

Household Position Breakouts for the Major Restaurant Occupation Categories

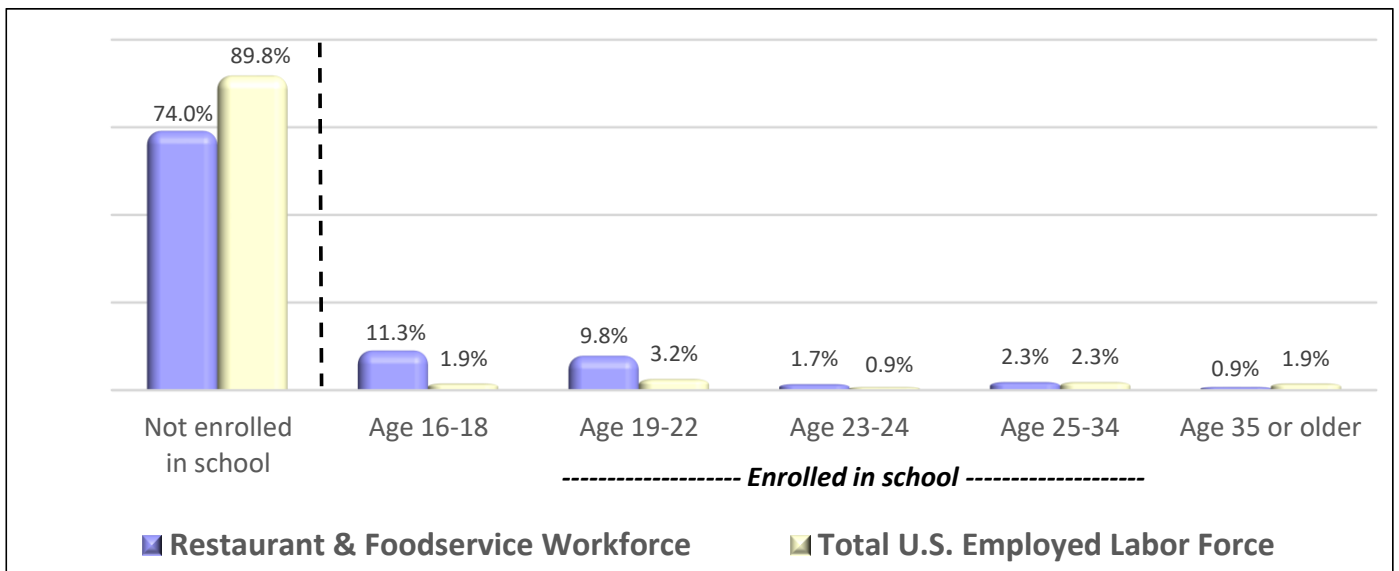
Household Position	Managers	Supervisors	Chefs	Cooks	Waitstaff	Bartenders	Food Prep & Counter Workers
Head of household	47.4%	42.2%	41.7%	29.9%	27.9%	45.8%	20.2%
Spouse or partner of household head	25.0%	20.4%	27.1%	17.1%	14.1%	20.7%	11.5%
Child or grandchild of household head	16.6%	22.7%	14.3%	32.9%	37.8%	14.9%	48.9%
Other relation to household head	4.9%	5.3%	7.9%	9.3%	6.7%	3.9%	7.0%
Not related to household head	6.2%	9.3%	9.1%	10.8%	13.6%	14.7%	12.5%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, National Restaurant Association; 2019 data

School Enrollment

- 26% of restaurant and foodservice employees are enrolled in school – compared to 11% of employees in the total U.S. employed labor force.
- 11% of restaurant and foodservice employees are 16-to-18-year-olds that are enrolled in school, while 10% are 19-to-22-year-olds that are enrolled in school.
- An additional 5% of restaurant and foodservice employees are individuals aged 23 and older that are enrolled in school.
- Among the major restaurant occupation categories, food preparation and counter workers (42%) and waitstaff (34%) are the most likely to be enrolled in school.
- 10% of bartenders and 8% of waitstaff are individuals aged 23 and older that are enrolled in school.

Distribution of Employees by School Enrollment
Restaurant and foodservice workforce versus total U.S. employed labor force



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, National Restaurant Association; 2019 data

School Enrollment Breakouts for the Major Restaurant Occupation Categories

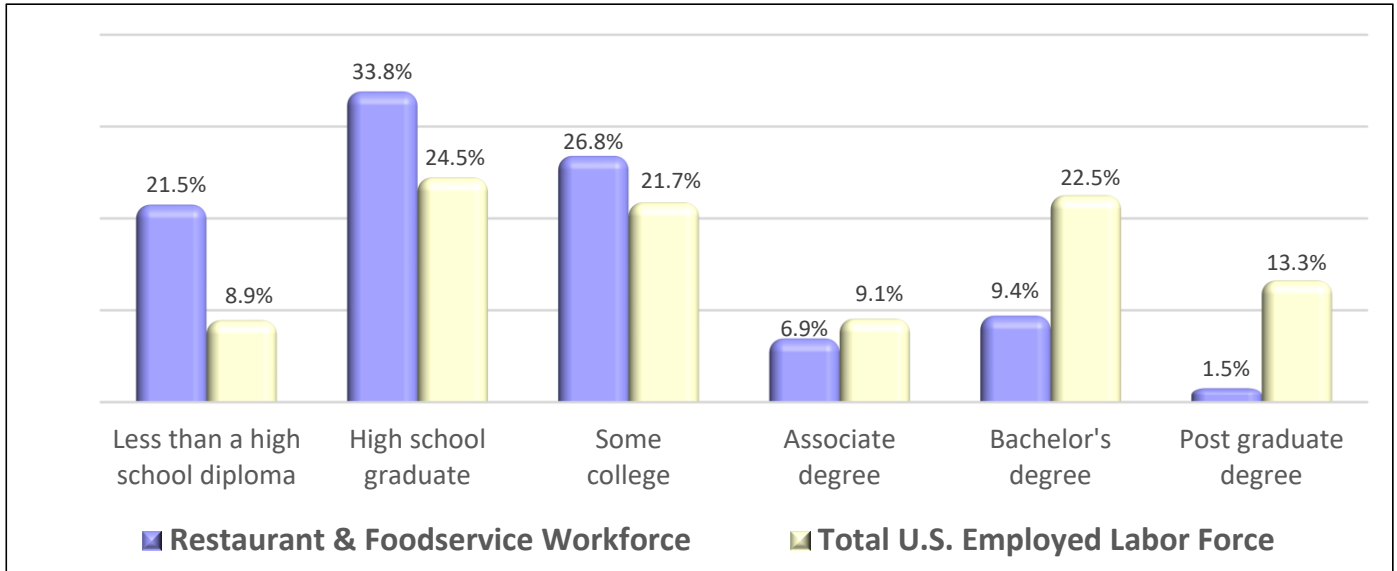
School Enrollment	Managers	Supervisors	Chefs	Cooks	Waitstaff	Bartenders	Food Prep & Counter Workers
Not enrolled in school	91.2%	83.8%	94.2%	79.4%	65.7%	85.6%	58.1%
Enrolled in school							
Age 16-18	0.8%	3.0%	1.1%	11.1%	10.0%	0.7%	22.3%
Age 19-22	3.6%	8.7%	1.9%	6.4%	16.3%	3.9%	15.2%
Age 23-24	1.2%	1.2%	0.2%	1.0%	3.1%	2.4%	1.8%
Age 25-34	2.0%	2.3%	1.6%	1.4%	4.0%	6.0%	2.2%
Age 35 or older	1.3%	1.0%	1.0%	0.8%	0.8%	1.4%	0.5%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, National Restaurant Association; 2019 data

Educational Attainment

- Employees in the restaurant industry have a lower educational attainment than workers in the overall economy, which is due in part to the fact that many are still enrolled in school.
- 22% of restaurant and foodservice employees have less than a high school diploma – compared to 9% of employees in the total U.S. employed labor force.
- 32% of cooks and 30% of food preparation and counter workers have less than a high school diploma.
- Among the major restaurant occupation categories, managers (23%) and bartenders (22%) are the most likely to hold either bachelor’s or post graduate degrees.

Distribution of Employees by Educational Attainment
Restaurant and foodservice workforce versus total U.S. employed labor force



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, National Restaurant Association; 2019 data

Educational Attainment Breakouts for the Major Restaurant Occupation Categories

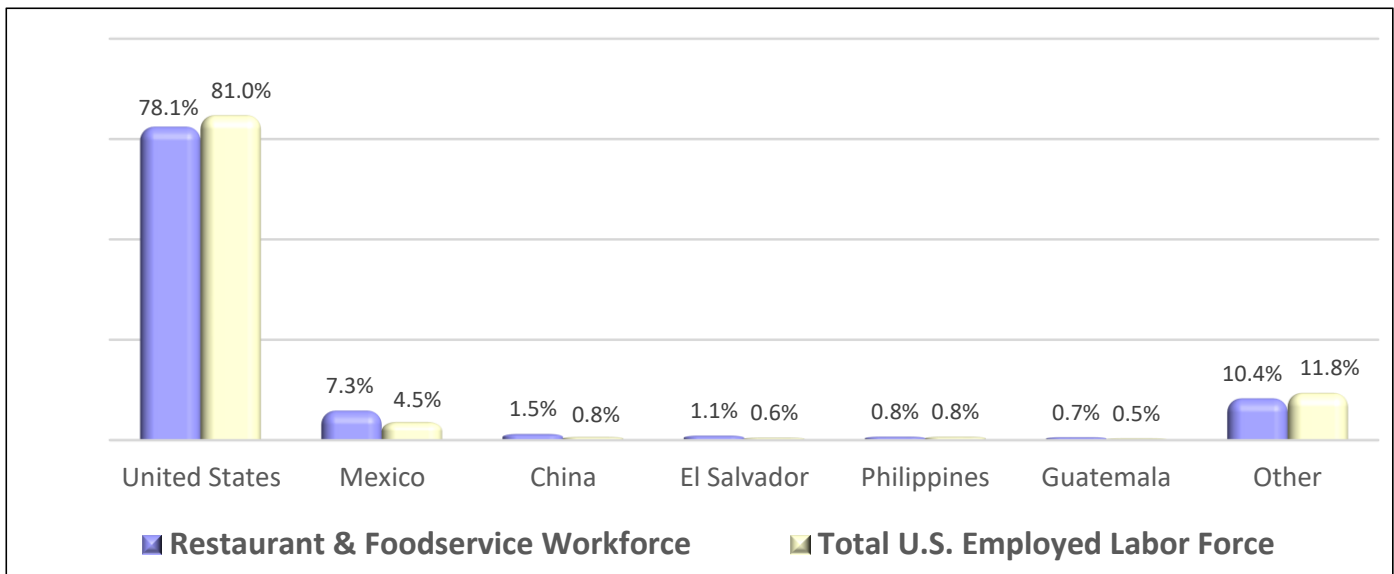
Educational Attainment	Managers	Supervisors	Chefs	Cooks	Waitstaff	Bartenders	Food Prep & Counter Workers
Less than high school diploma	10.2%	11.8%	18.3%	32.0%	15.8%	5.3%	29.7%
High school graduate	30.4%	35.7%	32.5%	39.1%	31.2%	26.5%	31.1%
Some college	28.0%	32.4%	20.2%	19.7%	33.9%	35.4%	27.5%
Associate degree	8.7%	8.0%	14.3%	4.5%	7.5%	10.3%	4.8%
Bachelor’s degree	19.4%	11.0%	12.5%	4.1%	10.4%	20.2%	6.1%
Post graduate degree	3.4%	1.2%	2.2%	0.5%	1.3%	2.2%	0.8%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, National Restaurant Association; 2019 data

Place of Birth

- 22% of restaurant and foodservice employees were born outside of the United States – compared to 19% of employees in the total U.S. employed labor force.
- The top non-U.S. countries of birth for restaurant and foodservice employees are Mexico, China and El Salvador.
- Among the major restaurant occupation categories, chefs (42%) and cooks (31%) are the most likely to have been born outside of the U.S.
- 23% of managers and 16% of supervisors were born outside of the U.S.

Distribution of Employees by Place of Birth
Restaurant and foodservice workforce versus total U.S. employed labor force



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, National Restaurant Association; 2019 data

Place of Birth Breakouts for the Major Restaurant Occupation Categories

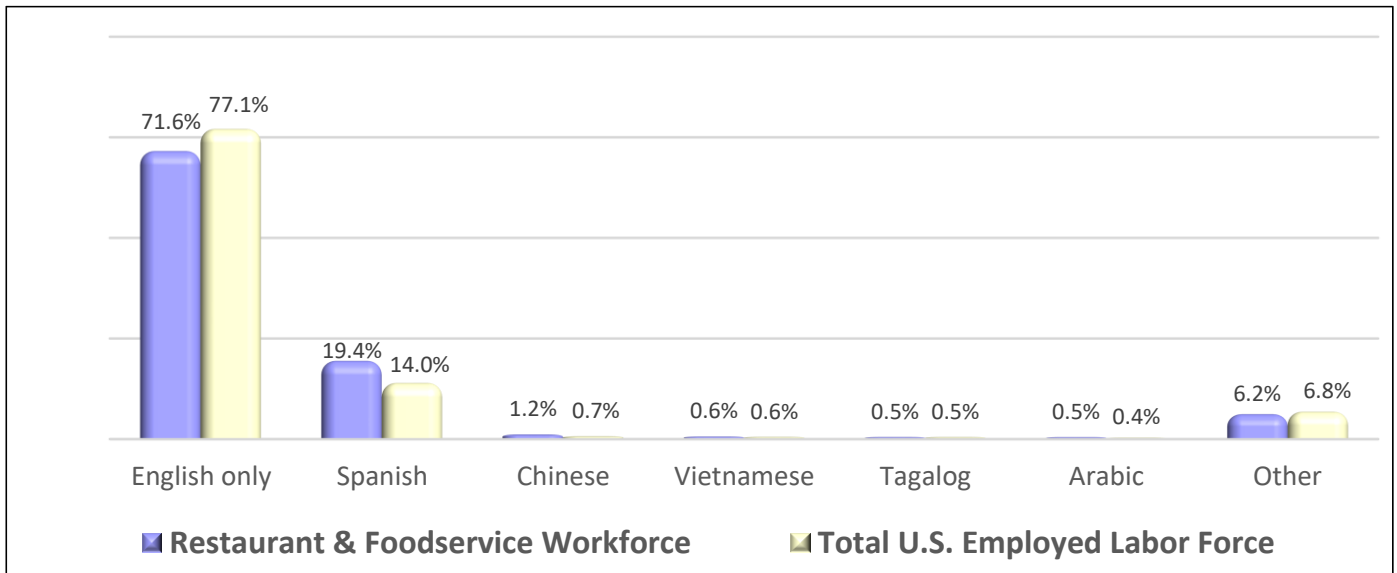
Place of Birth	Managers	Supervisors	Chefs	Cooks	Waitstaff	Bartenders	Food Prep & Counter Workers
United States	77.3%	84.4%	57.6%	68.8%	82.1%	89.3%	80.4%
Mexico	6.6%	6.0%	8.7%	15.3%	5.0%	1.7%	6.8%
China	1.9%	0.4%	8.8%	1.5%	1.9%	0.3%	1.3%
El Salvador	0.4%	0.5%	1.4%	2.3%	0.8%	0.4%	1.4%
Philippines	0.5%	0.4%	1.0%	0.7%	0.5%	0.2%	0.8%
Guatemala	0.3%	0.7%	0.9%	1.7%	0.5%	0.3%	0.8%
Other	13.0%	7.6%	21.6%	9.7%	9.4%	7.7%	8.5%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, National Restaurant Association; 2019 data

Language Spoken at Home

- 28% of restaurant and foodservice employees speak a language other than English at home. In the overall U.S. employed labor force, 23% of employees speak a language other than English at home.
- 19% of restaurant and foodservice employees speak Spanish at home, compared to 14% of the total U.S. employed labor force.
- Among the major restaurant occupation categories, chefs (46%) and cooks (37%) are the most likely to speak a language other than English at home.

Distribution of Employees by Language Spoken at Home
Restaurant and foodservice workforce versus total U.S. employed labor force



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, National Restaurant Association; 2019 data

Language Spoken at Home Breakouts for the Major Restaurant Occupation Categories

Language Spoken at Home	Managers	Supervisors	Chefs	Cooks	Waitstaff	Bartenders	Food Prep & Counter Workers
English only	72.1%	77.1%	54.1%	63.1%	74.9%	86.5%	71.8%
Spanish	15.8%	16.6%	21.7%	29.4%	16.4%	9.2%	19.9%
Chinese	1.8%	0.3%	6.7%	1.0%	1.3%	0.5%	0.9%
Vietnamese	0.8%	0.3%	1.3%	0.6%	0.9%	0.2%	0.7%
Tagalog	0.3%	0.2%	0.7%	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%	0.5%
Arabic	0.9%	0.8%	0.7%	0.3%	0.4%	0.1%	0.5%
Other	8.3%	4.8%	14.7%	5.2%	5.8%	3.3%	5.7%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, National Restaurant Association; 2019 data