AZURITE CONSULTING
RESEARCH, REIMAGINED

Cosmetology Earnings Insights

Market Intelligence Study, Initial Findings

MARCH 2026

Study Background and Methodology

Research Process and Objectives

Objectives

- Build a first-of-a-kind dataset to **quantify the difference between IRS-reported income and actual take-home pay** for cosmetic and esthetician industry professionals
- Ensure a **representative sample** that is highly accurate and collects **high-quality responses** from the right respondents
- Measure the **volume and frequency of earnings processed through non-traditional apps** (e.g., Venmo, Zelle, Cash App)
- Differentiate earnings and reporting behaviors across major segments
- Gather non-income related datapoints to **understand professional success potential** for cosmetic and aesthetician occupations

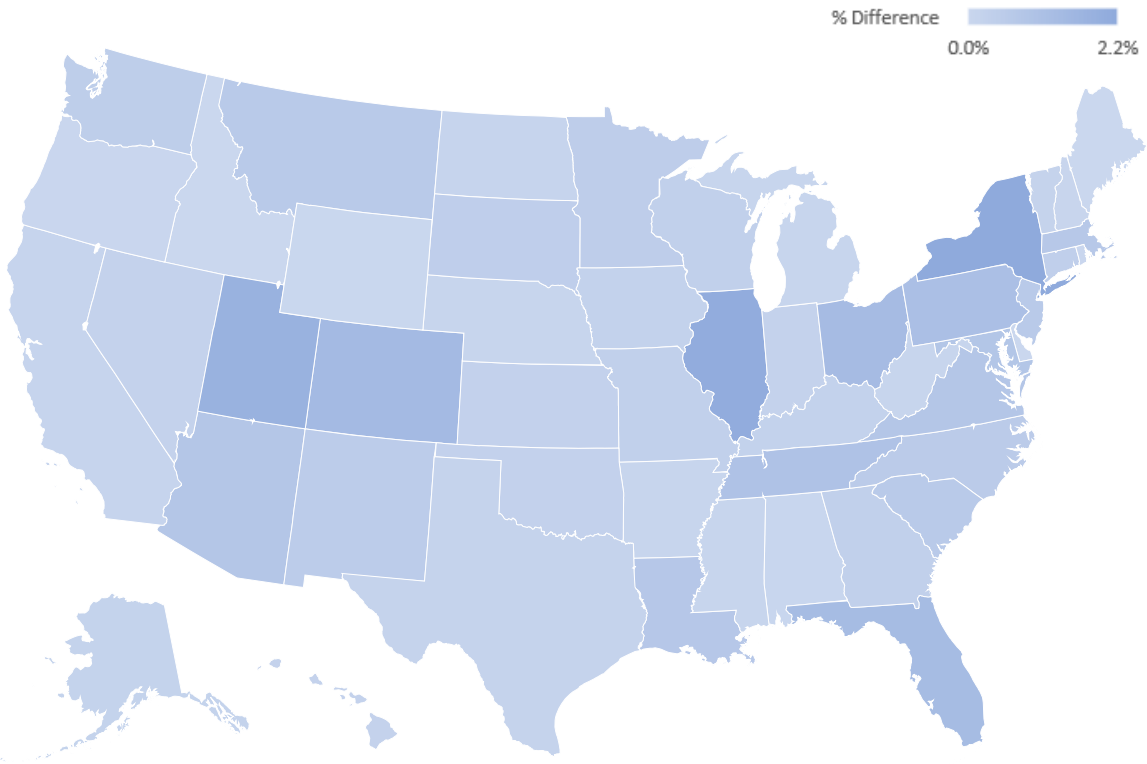
Process

- Survey respondents are recruited **directly from the market using Azurite's proprietary technology and methodology, without using panels or expert networks**
- The end-to-end process, from survey drafting to the analysis is **conducted in-house by Azurite**, with no outsourcing
- Responses are rigorously vetted and quality controlled to ensure the **highest data integrity**
- Population is **closely monitored and managed** to ensure that it is **fully representative of the actual national population in gender, location (e.g., state, zip code), and household income** – respondents were selected and screened to ensure an adequate, statistically significant sample for the year of licensure and type of practice

Who Was Surveyed

1,013 respondents, encompassing a **representative sample** of **cosmetologists and estheticians across the US**

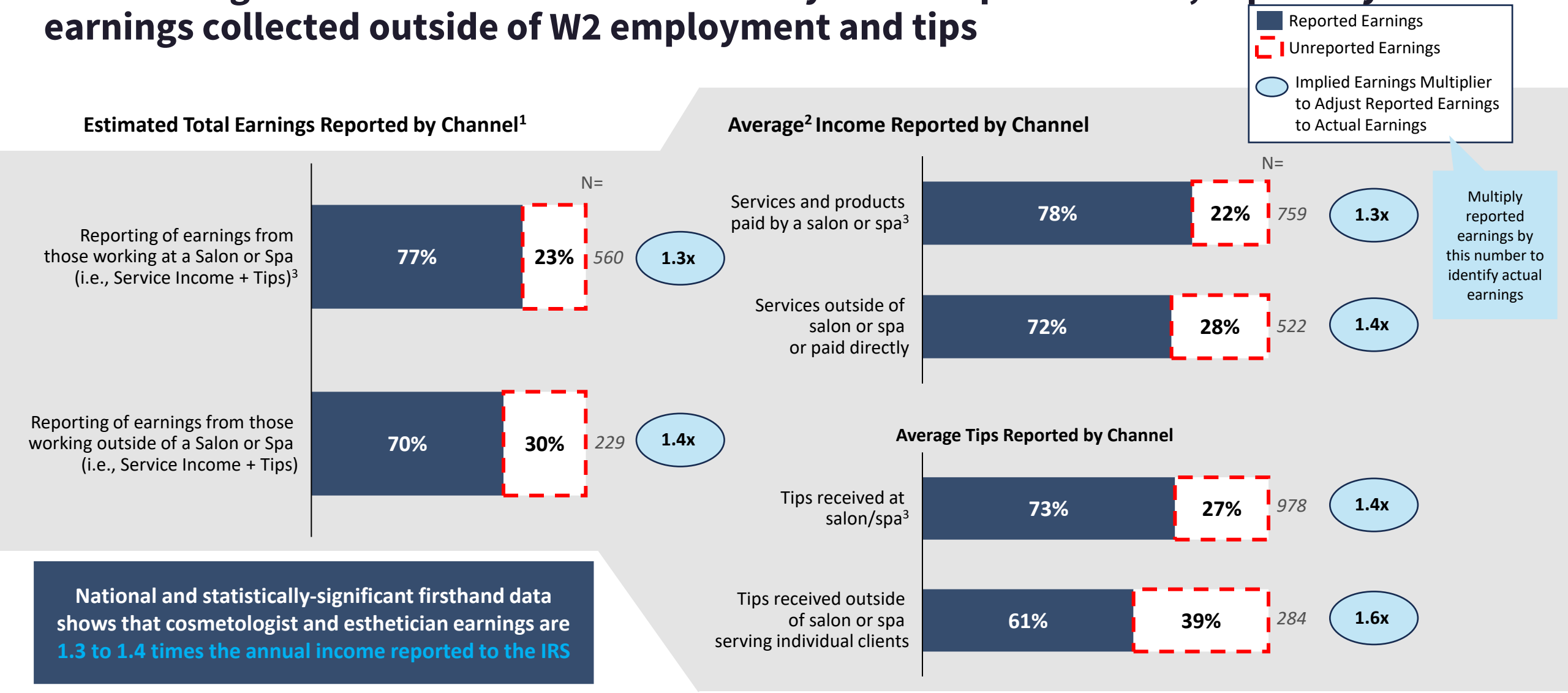
Survey Representation vs. Actual US Population By State[1]



1. Values represent the percentage point difference between each state's share of survey respondents and its share of the total US population.

Source: Azurite Cosmetology Survey. Total N=1,013.

Cosmetologists and Estheticians consistently under report income, especially earnings collected outside of W2 employment and tips



National and statistically-significant firsthand data shows that cosmetologist and esthetician earnings are 1.3 to 1.4 times the annual income reported to the IRS

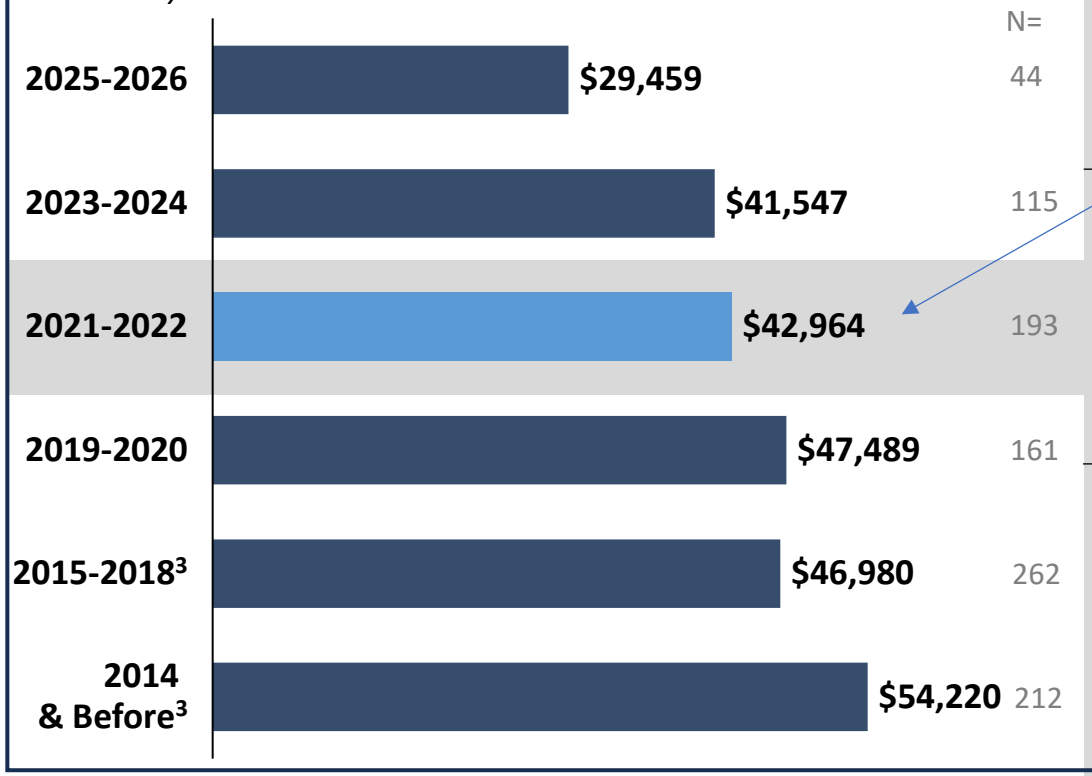
1. Estimated Total Actual Income based on 80/20 split of respondent estimated actual service income and actual tips received. 80/20 mix derived from N=1,013 respondent data.
2. Average reporting calculated using a weighted average of ranges selected by respondents. 3. Includes products and services as part of brand or education work.
Source: Azurite Cosmetology Survey. Total N=1,013.

Survey findings indicate that the actual income of cosmetologists and estheticians significantly exceeds their IRS-reported income

Difference between primary survey data and other source

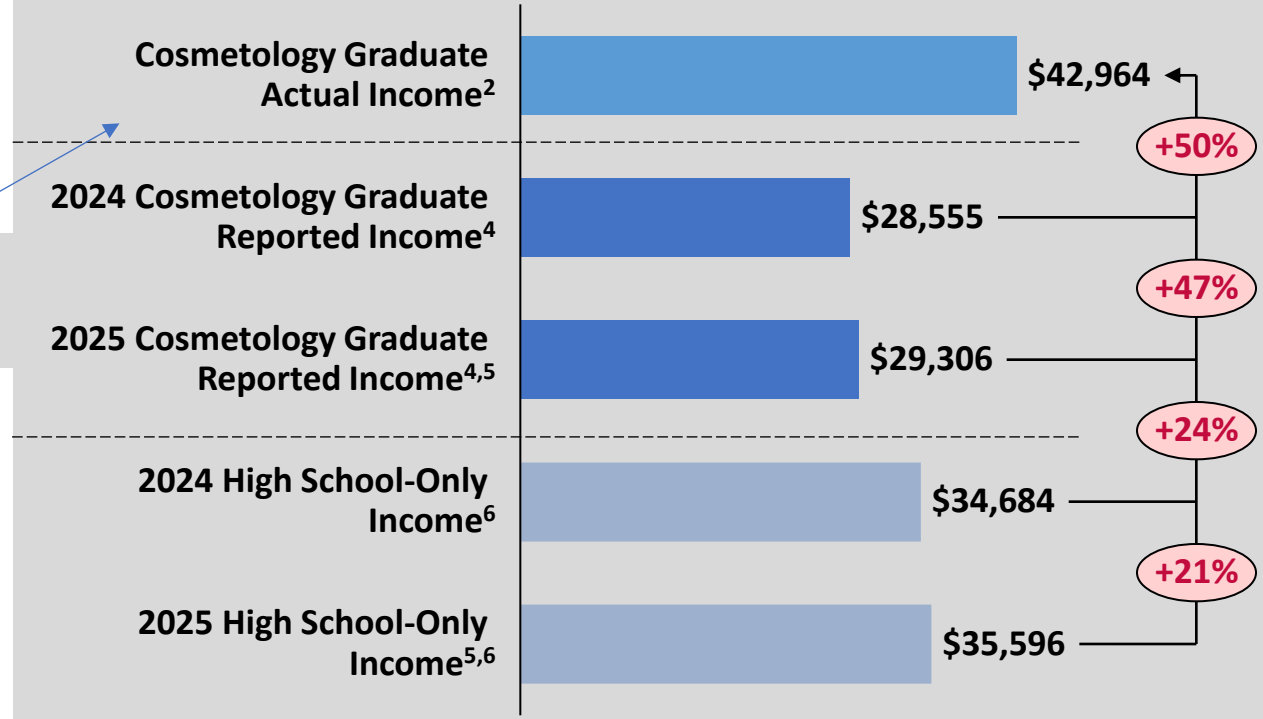
Normalized Annual Earnings[1] Reported by Year of First Licensure,[2]

From Survey Data



Annual Earnings for Cosmetologists / Estheticians Licensed in 2021-2022,

Range of Sources



Actual cosmetologist and esthetician graduate annual income exceeds the reported annual income figures used by the DOE[4] by 46% implying significant cushion above the earnings premium high school-only graduate cohort test standard[5].

1. Earnings normalized to a 40-hour work week for part time and overtime workers. 2. Source: Azurite Cosmetology Survey. Total N=1,013. 3. Represents the average of the means of the underlying two-year periods. 4. Based on Ogle and Tricoci graduate earnings four years after graduation as provided by the US Dept. of Education. 5. Inflation adjusted to 2025 using the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers "CPI-U." 6. Data provided by the US Dept. of Education for median income of high school degree-only individuals aged 25-34.
Note: Some respondents who indicated they preferred not to share earnings were excluded.