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COLLEGE ENROLLMENT AND WORK ACTIVITY OF RECENT HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE GRADUATES — 2024

In October 2024, 62.8 percent of 2024 high school graduates ages 16 to 24 were enrolled in colleges or universities, little changed from the previous year, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Among 20- to 29-year-olds who received a bachelor's degree in 2024, 69.6 percent were employed, also little changed over the year.

Information on school enrollment and employment status is collected monthly in the Current Population Survey (CPS), a nationwide survey of about 60,000 households that provides information on employment and unemployment. Each October, a supplement to the CPS gathers more detailed information about recent degree recipients and school enrollment. In addition to data on recent high school graduates ages 16 to 24, this news release presents information on recent degree recipients ages 20 to 29. For more information, see the Technical Note in this news release.

Highlights from the October 2024 data:

- Among recent high school graduates ages 16 to 24, 55.4 percent of men and 69.5 percent of women were enrolled in college. (See table 1.)
- Among 16- to 24-year-olds, 40.0 percent of recent high school dropouts were working or looking for work, lower than the labor force participation rate of 66.4 percent for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college. (See table 1.)
- There were 17.4 million people ages 16 to 24 who were not enrolled in school—44.5 percent of all people in this age group. (See table 2.)
- Among 20- to 29-year-olds, 78.1 percent of recent associate degree recipients, 69.6 percent of recent bachelor's degree recipients, and 74.7 percent of recent advanced degree recipients were employed. (See table 3.)
- Among recent bachelor's degree recipients ages 20 to 29, 25.2 percent were enrolled in school. (See table 3.)

Recent High School Graduates and Dropouts (Ages 16 to 24)

Of the 3.2 million youth ages 16 to 24 who graduated from high school between January and October 2024, 2.0 million were enrolled in college in October. The college enrollment rate of recent high school graduates, at 62.8 percent in October 2024, was little different from the rate of 61.4 percent in October 2023. (See table 1.)

Among 2024 high school graduates ages 16 to 24, the college enrollment rate for young women, at 69.5 percent in October 2024, continued to be higher than the rate for young men (55.4 percent). By race and ethnicity, the college enrollment rate was 94.7 percent for people who are Asian, higher than the rate for those who are White (62.2 percent), Black or African American (59.2 percent), and Hispanic or Latino (55.4 percent).

The labor force participation rate (the proportion of the population that is employed or looking for work) for recent high school graduates enrolled in college in October 2024 was 41.2 percent. The participation rates for male and female graduates enrolled in college were 43.1 percent and 39.9 percent, respectively.

Among recent high school graduates enrolled in college in October 2024, about 9 in 10 were full-time students. Recent graduates enrolled as full-time students were less likely to be in the labor force (37.6 percent) than were their peers enrolled part time (76.2 percent).

Among recent high school graduates enrolled in college, 2 out of 3 attended 4-year colleges in October 2024. Of these students, 32.7 percent participated in the labor force, lower than the rate of recent graduates enrolled in 2-year colleges (58.5 percent).

Recent high school graduates not enrolled in college in October 2024 were more likely to be in the labor force than graduates enrolled in college (66.4 percent versus 41.2 percent). This rate changed little for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college (66.4 percent) over the year. For recent graduates enrolled in college, the labor force participation rate increased by 8.8 percentage points to 41.2 percent over the year. The unemployment rate was 12.0 percent for recent graduates enrolled in college and 20.4 percent for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college.

Between October 2023 and October 2024, 606,000 young people dropped out of high school. The labor force participation rate for recent dropouts (40.0 percent) continued to be much lower than the rate for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college (66.4 percent). The unemployment rate was 18.7 percent for recent high school dropouts and 12.0 percent for recent graduates enrolled in college.

All Youth Enrolled in High School or College (Ages 16 to 24)

In October 2024, 21.7 million 16- to 24-year-olds, or 55.5 percent of youth, were enrolled in high school (9.9 million) or in college (11.8 million). The labor force participation rate for youth enrolled in school, at 36.9 percent, was little changed from October 2023 to October 2024. The

unemployment rate for youth enrolled in school, at 8.3 percent, was little changed from the previous year. (See table 2.)

In October 2024, college students continued to be about twice as likely than high school students to participate in the labor force (49.2 percent versus 22.3 percent). The participation rates for male and female high school students were similar, at 21.2 percent and 23.5 percent, respectively.

Among college students, those enrolled full time were much less likely to participate in the labor force in October 2024 than were part-time students (44.6 percent versus 81.6 percent). Students at 4-year colleges were also less likely to be in the labor force than were students at 2-year colleges (46.6 percent and 57.4 percent, respectively). Female college students' participation rate was higher than the rate for male college students (52.7 percent, compared with 44.8 percent). By race and ethnicity, the labor force participation rate was lower for Asian college students (37.2 percent) than for their Black or African American (48.3 percent), White (51.4 percent), and Hispanic or Latino (51.8 percent) counterparts.

In October 2024, the unemployment rate for college students increased by 1.9 percentage points over the year, to 7.1 percent, while the rate for high school students, at 11.5 percent, was little changed.

All Youth Not Enrolled in School (Ages 16 to 24)

In October 2024, 17.4 million people ages 16 to 24 were not enrolled in school. The labor force participation rate of youth not enrolled in school was 78.5 percent. Among youth not enrolled in school in October 2024, young men continued to be more likely than young women to participate in the labor force (80.6 percent, compared with 76.1 percent). (See table 2.)

Labor force participation rates for young men and young women not enrolled in school were highest for those with a bachelor's degree or higher (91.9 percent and 93.7 percent, respectively) and lowest for young men and young women with less than a high school diploma (60.8 percent and 48.5 percent, respectively).

The unemployment rate for youth ages 16 to 24 not enrolled in school, at 9.7 percent in October 2024, changed little over the year. Among those not-enrolled youth who did not have a high school diploma, unemployment rates were 17.7 percent for young men and 7.1 percent for young women. The jobless rates of young men and young women with at least a bachelor's degree were 7.9 percent and 7.3 percent, respectively. Among youth not enrolled in school, the unemployment rates were 13.6 percent for people who are Black or African American, 13.6 percent for people who are Asian, 9.8 percent for people who are Hispanic or Latino, and 8.7 percent for those who are White.

Recent College Graduates (Ages 20 to 29)

Between January and October 2024, 1.2 million 20- to 29-year-olds earned a bachelor's degree; of these, 868,000 (or 69.6 percent) were employed in October 2024. Among recent bachelor's

degree recipients, 66.7 percent of men were employed, compared with 71.5 percent of women. The unemployment rate for recent college graduates with a bachelor's degree, at 15.3 percent, changed little from the previous year. (See table 3.)

Among recent bachelor's degree recipients, 25.2 percent were enrolled in school in October 2024. These recent graduates who were enrolled in school were less likely to be employed than those who were not enrolled (46.1 percent versus 77.5 percent).

Between January and October 2024, 405,000 people ages 20 to 29 earned an advanced degree—that is, a master's, professional, or doctoral degree. Among these recent graduates, 74.7 percent were employed in October 2024, down by 9.8 percentage points over the year. The unemployment rate for recent advanced degree recipients was 8.4 percent, little changed over the year.

Recent Associate Degree Recipients (Ages 20 to 29)

Of the 352,000 20- to 29-year-olds who completed an associate degree between January and October 2024, 78.1 percent were employed in October 2024. The unemployment rate for recent associate degree recipients was 2.1 percent. (See table 3.)

Recent associate degree recipients ages 20 to 29 were twice as likely to have completed an academic program (67.6 percent) than a vocational program (32.4 percent) in October 2024. Associate degrees in academic programs are primarily in the arts and sciences and are often transferable to a bachelor's degree program, while associate degrees in vocational programs prepare graduates for a specific occupation.

In October 2024, 42.3 percent of recent associate degree recipients were enrolled in school. Of the 149,000 recent recipients who were enrolled in school, 71.0 percent were employed. By contrast, 83.3 percent of the 202,000 recent associate degree recipients who were not enrolled in school were employed.

Technical Note

The estimates in this news release were obtained from a supplement to the October Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly survey of about 60,000 eligible households that provides information on the labor force, employment, and unemployment for the nation. The CPS is conducted monthly for the Bureau of Labor Statistics by the U.S. Census Bureau. Data in this news release relate to the school enrollment status of people in the civilian noninstitutional population in the calendar week that includes the 12th of October. Data about recent high school graduates and dropouts and the enrollment status of youth refer to people 16 to 24 years of age. Data about recent associate degree recipients and college graduates refer to people 20 to 29 years of age.

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Definitions

Definitions of the principal terms used in this news release are described briefly below.

School enrollment. Respondents were asked whether they were currently enrolled in a regular school, including day or night school in any type of public, parochial, or other private school. Regular schooling is that which may advance a person toward a high school diploma or a college, university, or professional degree. Such schools include elementary schools, junior or senior high schools, and colleges and universities.

Other schooling, including trade schools; on-the-job training; and courses that do not require physical presence in school, such as correspondence courses or other courses of independent study, is included only if the credits granted count towards promotion in regular school.

Full-time and part-time enrollment in college. College students are classified as attending full

time if they were taking 12 hours of classes or more (or 9 hours of graduate classes) during an average school week and as part time if they were taking fewer hours.

High school graduation status. People who were not enrolled in school at the time of the survey were asked whether they had graduated from high school. Those who had graduated were asked when they completed their high school education. People who had not graduated, that is, school dropouts, were asked when they last attended a regular school. Those who were enrolled in college at the time of the survey also were asked when they graduated from high school.

Recent high school graduates. People age 16 to 24 who completed high school in the calendar year of the survey (January through October) are recent high school graduates.

Recent high school dropouts. People age 16 to 24 who were not enrolled in school at the time of the survey, attended school a year earlier, and did not have a high school diploma are recent dropouts.

Recent college graduates. People age 20 to 29 who completed a bachelor's degree or an advanced degree—that is, a master's, professional (such as law or medicine), or doctoral degree—in the calendar year of the survey (January through October) are recent college graduates.

Recent associate degree recipients. People age 20 to 29 who completed an associate degree (either an academic program or a vocational program) in the calendar year of the survey (January through October) are recent associate degree recipients. Associate degrees in academic programs are primarily in the arts and sciences and may be transferable to a bachelor's degree program, while associate degrees in vocational programs prepare graduates for a specific occupation.

Reliability of the estimates

Statistics based on the CPS are subject to both sampling and nonsampling error. When a sample, rather than the entire population, is surveyed, there is a chance that the sample estimates may differ from the true population values they represent. The component of this difference that occurs because samples differ by chance is known as *sampling error*, and its variability is measured by the standard error of the estimate. There is about a 90-percent chance, or level of confidence, that an estimate based on a sample will differ by no more than 1.6 standard errors from the true population value because of sampling error. BLS analyses are generally conducted at the 90-percent level of confidence.

The CPS data also are affected by *nonsampling error*. Nonsampling error can occur for many reasons, including the failure to sample a segment of the population, inability to obtain information for all respondents in the sample, inability or unwillingness of respondents to provide correct information, and errors made in the collection or processing of the data.

Additional information about the reliability of data from the CPS and estimating standard errors is available at www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#reliability.

Table 1. Labor force status of 2024 high school graduates and 2023-2024 high school dropouts 16 to 24 years old by school enrollment, educational attainment, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, October 2024

[Numbers in thousands]

Characteristic	Civilian noninstitutional population	Civilian labor force						Not in labor force
		Total	Percent of population	Employed		Unemployed		
				Total	Percent of population	Number	Rate	
RECENT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES								
Total, 2024 high school graduates ¹	3,222	1,630	50.6	1,367	42.4	262	16.1	1,592
Men.....	1,523	808	53.1	702	46.1	106	13.2	715
Women.....	1,699	821	48.3	665	39.2	156	19.0	878
White.....	2,288	1,223	53.4	1,014	44.3	208	17.0	1,066
Black or African American.....	478	199	41.5	160	33.5	38	19.3	280
Asian.....	190	65	34.0	65	34.0	-	-	126
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	774	409	52.8	349	45.1	60	14.6	366
Enrolled in college								
Total, enrolled in college.....	2,023	834	41.2	734	36.3	100	12.0	1,189
Enrolled in 2-year college.....	667	391	58.5	314	47.1	76	19.6	277
Enrolled in 4-year college.....	1,356	443	32.7	420	31.0	24	5.3	912
Full-time students.....	1,832	688	37.6	610	33.3	78	11.3	1,143
Part-time students.....	192	146	76.2	124	64.5	22	15.3	46
Men.....	843	363	43.1	332	39.4	31	8.5	480
Women.....	1,180	471	39.9	402	34.1	69	14.7	709
White.....	1,423	628	44.1	530	37.2	98	15.6	795
Black or African American.....	283	102	35.9	100	35.2	2	2.0	181
Asian.....	180	55	30.3	55	30.3	-	-	126
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	429	192	44.7	174	40.6	17	9.1	238
Not enrolled in college								
Total, not enrolled in college.....	1,199	795	66.4	633	52.8	162	20.4	403
Men.....	680	445	65.5	370	54.4	76	17.0	235
Women.....	519	350	67.5	263	50.8	87	24.8	168
White.....	865	595	68.7	484	56.0	110	18.6	270
Black or African American.....	195	97	49.6	61	31.0	36	37.4	98
Asian.....	10	10	-	10	-	-	-	-
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	345	217	62.9	175	50.7	42	19.4	128
RECENT HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS								
Total, 2023-2024 high school dropouts ²	606	242	40.0	197	32.5	45	18.7	364
Men.....	335	145	43.2	109	32.6	36	24.6	190
Women.....	271	97	35.9	88	32.4	10	9.8	174
White.....	388	159	40.9	124	32.0	35	21.7	229
Black or African American.....	120	68	56.8	58	48.5	10	-	52
Asian.....	29	5	-	5	-	-	-	24
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	187	73	38.9	45	23.9	28	-	114

¹ Data refer to people who graduated from high school in January through October 2024.

² Data refer to people who dropped out of school between October 2023 and October 2024.

NOTE: Detail for the above race groups (White, Black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. People whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data. Dash indicates no data or data that do not meet publication criteria (values not shown where base is less than 75,000).

Table 2. Labor force status of people 16 to 24 years old by school enrollment, educational attainment, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, October 2024

[Numbers in thousands]

Characteristic	Civilian noninstitutional population	Civilian labor force						Not in labor force
		Total	Percent of population	Employed		Unemployed		
				Total	Percent of population	Number	Rate	
Total, 16 to 24 years.....	39,072	21,661	55.4	19,669	50.3	1,993	9.2	17,410
Enrolled in school								
Total, enrolled in school.....	21,696	8,012	36.9	7,350	33.9	663	8.3	13,683
Enrolled in high school ¹	9,897	2,211	22.3	1,957	19.8	254	11.5	7,686
Men.....	5,046	1,070	21.2	946	18.7	124	11.6	3,976
Women.....	4,850	1,141	23.5	1,011	20.8	130	11.4	3,710
White.....	7,078	1,690	23.9	1,478	20.9	211	12.5	5,388
Black or African American.....	1,547	242	15.6	220	14.2	21	8.9	1,305
Asian.....	501	85	17.1	85	17.1	-	-	416
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	2,539	401	15.8	307	12.1	94	23.5	2,138
Enrolled in college.....	11,799	5,802	49.2	5,393	45.7	409	7.1	5,997
Enrolled in 2-year college.....	2,765	1,588	57.4	1,449	52.4	139	8.8	1,178
Enrolled in 4-year college.....	9,034	4,214	46.6	3,944	43.7	270	6.4	4,820
Full-time students.....	10,354	4,623	44.6	4,287	41.4	335	7.3	5,731
Part-time students.....	1,445	1,179	81.6	1,105	76.5	74	6.3	266
Men.....	5,209	2,331	44.8	2,130	40.9	201	8.6	2,878
Women.....	6,591	3,471	52.7	3,263	49.5	208	6.0	3,120
White.....	8,247	4,238	51.4	3,965	48.1	273	6.4	4,008
Black or African American.....	1,698	819	48.3	744	43.8	75	9.2	878
Asian.....	1,192	444	37.2	407	34.2	37	8.3	748
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	2,444	1,267	51.8	1,175	48.1	93	7.3	1,177
Not enrolled in school								
Total, not enrolled in school.....	17,376	13,649	78.5	12,319	70.9	1,330	9.7	3,727
16 to 19 years.....	3,708	2,328	62.8	1,926	51.9	402	17.3	1,380
20 to 24 years.....	13,668	11,321	82.8	10,393	76.0	928	8.2	2,347
Men.....	9,450	7,617	80.6	6,833	72.3	784	10.3	1,833
Less than a high school diploma.....	1,226	746	60.8	614	50.1	132	17.7	480
High school graduates, no college ²	5,182	4,131	79.7	3,689	71.2	442	10.7	1,051
Some college or associate degree.....	1,667	1,477	88.6	1,366	81.9	111	7.5	190
Bachelor's degree and higher ³	1,375	1,264	91.9	1,165	84.7	99	7.9	111
Women.....	7,926	6,032	76.1	5,486	69.2	546	9.0	1,894
Less than a high school diploma.....	851	413	48.5	384	45.1	29	7.1	438
High school graduates, no college ²	3,772	2,732	72.4	2,415	64.0	316	11.6	1,040
Some college or associate degree.....	1,550	1,245	80.3	1,165	75.2	80	6.4	305
Bachelor's degree and higher ³	1,752	1,642	93.7	1,522	86.8	120	7.3	110
White.....	13,006	10,370	79.7	9,465	72.8	905	8.7	2,636
Black or African American.....	2,481	1,888	76.1	1,631	65.7	257	13.6	594
Asian.....	726	579	79.8	500	68.9	79	13.6	147
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	4,933	3,772	76.5	3,401	68.9	371	9.8	1,161

¹ Includes a small number of people enrolled in grades below high school.

² Includes people with a high school diploma or equivalent.

³ Includes people with bachelor's, master's, professional, and doctoral degrees.

NOTE: Detail for the above race groups (White, Black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. People whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data. Dash indicates no data or data that do not meet publication criteria (values not shown where base is less than 75,000).

Table 3. Labor force status of 2024 associate degree recipients and college graduates 20 to 29 years old by selected characteristics, October 2024

[Numbers in thousands]

Characteristic	Civilian noninstitutional population	Civilian labor force						Not in labor force
		Total	Percent of population	Employed		Unemployed		
				Total	Percent of population	Number	Rate	
RECENT ASSOCIATE DEGREE RECIPIENTS¹								
Total, 20 to 29 years.....	352	281	79.8	275	78.1	6	2.1	71
Men.....	154	129	83.6	123	79.8	6	4.5	25
Women.....	198	152	76.8	152	76.8	-	-	46
20 to 24 years.....	236	200	84.9	200	84.9	-	-	36
25 to 29 years.....	116	80	69.3	75	64.3	6	7.2	36
Vocational program.....	114	90	79.3	86	75.2	5	5.2	24
Academic program.....	238	190	80.0	189	79.5	1	0.6	48
Enrolled in school.....	149	106	71.0	106	71.0	-	-	43
Not enrolled in school.....	202	174	86.2	169	83.3	6	3.3	28
RECENT COLLEGE GRADUATES²								
Total, 20 to 29 years.....	1,653	1,354	82.0	1,170	70.8	184	13.6	298
Men.....	634	491	77.4	429	67.7	62	12.6	143
Women.....	1,019	864	84.8	741	72.8	122	14.2	155
20 to 24 years.....	1,197	955	79.8	815	68.1	139	14.6	242
25 to 29 years.....	456	400	87.7	355	77.9	45	11.2	56
Enrolled in school.....	383	196	51.1	179	46.8	16	8.4	187
Not enrolled in school.....	1,270	1,159	91.3	991	78.1	168	14.5	111
White.....	1,141	971	85.0	851	74.6	120	12.3	171
Black or African American.....	217	147	67.7	127	58.8	19	13.2	70
Asian.....	226	183	80.8	148	65.3	35	19.2	43
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	261	211	81.0	190	72.8	21	10.1	50
Bachelor's degree								
Total, 20 to 29 years.....	1,248	1,024	82.1	868	69.6	156	15.3	223
Men.....	495	383	77.4	330	66.7	53	13.8	112
Women.....	753	642	85.2	538	71.5	104	16.1	111
20 to 24 years.....	1,079	863	80.0	733	67.9	131	15.1	216
25 to 29 years.....	168	161	95.6	135	80.3	26	16.0	7
Enrolled in school.....	314	161	51.4	145	46.1	16	10.2	153
Not enrolled in school.....	934	863	92.4	723	77.5	140	16.2	71
Advanced degree³								
Total, 20 to 29 years.....	405	330	81.5	302	74.7	28	8.4	75
Men.....	139	108	77.7	99	71.4	9	8.2	31
Women.....	266	222	83.5	203	76.4	19	8.5	44
20 to 24 years.....	117	91	77.8	82	70.2	9	9.8	26
25 to 29 years.....	288	239	83.0	220	76.5	19	7.9	49

¹ Data refer to people who received an associate degree in January through October 2024.

² Data refer to people who received a bachelor's or higher degree in January through October 2024.

³ Data refer to people who received a master's, professional, or doctoral degree in January through October 2024.

NOTE: Detail for the above race groups (White, Black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. People whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data. Dash indicates no data or data that do not meet publication criteria (values not shown where base is less than 75,000).