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## **COLLEGE ENROLLMENT AND WORK ACTIVITY OF 2015 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES**

In October 2015, 69.2 percent of 2015 high school graduates were enrolled in colleges or universities, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Recent high school graduates not enrolled in college in October 2015 were about twice as likely as enrolled graduates to be working or looking for work (72.7 percent compared with 36.0 percent).

Information on school enrollment and work activity 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 school enrollment, such as full- and part-time enrollment status. Additional information about the October supplement is included in the Technical Note.

### **Recent High School Graduates and Dropouts**

Of the 3.0 million youth age 16 to 24 who graduated from high school between January and October 2015, about 2.1 million (69.2 percent) were enrolled in college in October. The college enrollment rate of recent high school graduates in October 2015 was little different from the rate in October 2014 (68.4 percent). For 2015 high school graduates, the college enrollment rate was 72.6 percent for young women and 65.8 percent for young men. The college enrollment rate of recent Asian (83.0 percent) graduates was higher than for their White (71.1 percent), Hispanic (68.9 percent), and Black (54.6 percent) counterparts. (See table 1.)

The labor force participation rate (the proportion of the population working or looking for work) for recent high school graduates enrolled in college was 36.0 percent in October 2015. The participation rates for male and female graduates enrolled in college were 37.9 percent and 34.3 percent, respectively.

Among recent high school graduates enrolled in college in October 2015, about 9 in 10 were full-time students. Recent graduates enrolled as full-time students were about half as likely to be in the labor force (32.9 percent) as were their peers enrolled part time (69.3 percent).

About 2 in 3 recent high school graduates enrolled in college attended 4-year colleges. Of these students, 29.5 percent participated in the labor force, compared with 47.3 percent of recent graduates enrolled in 2-year colleges.

Recent high school graduates not enrolled in college in the fall of 2015 were much more likely than enrolled graduates to be in the labor force (72.7 percent compared with 36.0 percent). The

unemployment rate for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college was 20.7 percent, higher than the rate of 12.6 percent for recent graduates enrolled in college.

Between October 2014 and October 2015, 521,000 young people dropped out of high school. The labor force participation rate for recent dropouts (45.9 percent) was much lower than for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college (72.7 percent). The jobless rate for recent high school dropouts was 19.8 percent, similar to the rate for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college (20.7 percent).

### **All Youth Enrolled in High School or College**

In October 2015, 57.0 percent of the nation's 16- to -24 year olds, or 21.9 million young people, were enrolled in high school (9.6 million) or in college (12.3 million). The labor force participation rate (36.2 percent) of youth enrolled in school was down from October 2014 to October 2015. The unemployment rate for this group (8.8 percent) was also down over the year. (See table 2.)

In October 2015, college students continued to be more likely to participate in the labor force than high school students (47.7 percent compared with 21.3 percent). Those attending college full time had a much lower labor force participation rate than did part-time students (42.5 percent versus 79.9 percent). For high school and college students, Asians were less likely to participate in the labor force than Blacks, Whites, or Hispanics. Female college students were more likely to be in the labor force (49.8 percent) than their male counterparts (45.4 percent). Labor force participation rates for female and male high school students were similar (22.5 percent and 20.2 percent, respectively).

The unemployment rate for high school students, at 14.6 percent in October 2015, was more than twice the rate for college students (6.8 percent). Unemployment rates were higher for high school students than for college students for Blacks, Whites, and Hispanics.

### **All Youth Not Enrolled in School**

In October 2015, 16.5 million persons age 16 to 24 were not enrolled in school. The labor force participation rate of youth not enrolled in school increased over the year from 78.9 percent to 80.1 percent. Among youth not enrolled in school in October 2015, young men continued to be more likely than young women to participate in the labor force—84.1 percent compared with 75.7 percent. Labor force participation rates for not-enrolled men and women were highest for those with a bachelor's degree or higher (95.5 percent and 92.3 percent, respectively) and lowest for men and women with less than a high school diploma (65.5 percent and 44.6 percent, respectively). (See table 2.)

The unemployment rate for youth age 16 to 24 not enrolled in school declined over the year from 13.7 percent to 11.7 percent. Among not-enrolled youth who did not have a high school diploma, unemployment rates in October 2015 were 27.0 percent for young men and 22.6 percent for young women. In contrast, the jobless rates of young men and women with at least a bachelor's degree were 4.5 percent and 7.7 percent, respectively. Black youth not enrolled in school had an unemployment rate of 21.6 percent in October 2015, higher than the rates for their White (9.5 percent), Asian (6.5 percent), and Hispanic (12.8 percent) counterparts.

# Technical Note

The estimates in this release were obtained from a supplement to the October 2015 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 survey is conducted monthly for the Bureau of Labor Statistics by the U.S. Census Bureau. Data in this release relate to the school enrollment status of persons 16 to 24 years of age in the civilian noninstitutional population in the calendar week that includes the 12th of October. Updated population controls for the Current Population Survey are introduced annually with the release of January data. Additional information about population controls is available on the BLS website at [www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#pop](http://www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#pop).

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

## 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 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](http://www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#reliability).

## Concepts

The principal concepts used in connection with the school enrollment series 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.* Persons 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. Persons 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.* Persons who completed high school in the calendar year of the survey (January through October) are recent high school graduates.

*Recent high school dropouts.* Persons 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.

**Table 1. Labor force status of 2015 high school graduates and 2014-15 high school dropouts 16 to 24 years old by school enrollment, educational attainment, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, October 2015.**

[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	
<b>RECENT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES</b>								
Total, 2015 high school graduates <sup>1</sup> .....	2,965	1,401	47.3	1,171	39.5	230	16.4	1,563
Men.....	1,448	742	51.2	628	43.4	114	15.3	706
Women.....	1,516	659	43.5	543	35.8	116	17.7	857
White.....	2,286	1,084	47.4	920	40.2	164	15.1	1,202
Black or African American.....	394	207	52.5	159	40.3	48	23.3	187
Asian.....	153	41	26.7	37	24.5	3	-	112
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	589	293	49.6	217	36.8	76	25.9	297
<b>Enrolled in college</b>								
Total, enrolled in college.....	2,053	738	36.0	645	31.4	93	12.6	1,314
Enrolled in 2-year college.....	748	354	47.3	305	40.7	49	14.0	394
Enrolled in 4-year college.....	1,304	384	29.5	341	26.1	43	11.3	920
Full-time students.....	1,880	619	32.9	540	28.7	79	12.8	1,262
Part-time students.....	172	119	69.3	106	61.2	14	11.7	53
Men.....	953	361	37.9	302	31.7	59	16.3	592
Women.....	1,100	377	34.3	343	31.2	34	9.0	723
White.....	1,625	605	37.2	526	32.4	79	13.0	1,020
Black or African American.....	215	70	32.8	62	28.9	8	-	145
Asian.....	127	26	20.7	23	18.0	3	-	101
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	406	155	38.1	121	29.8	34	21.7	251
<b>Not enrolled in college</b>								
Total, not enrolled in college.....	912	663	72.7	526	57.7	137	20.7	249
Men.....	495	381	76.9	326	65.9	55	14.3	114
Women.....	416	282	67.7	199	47.9	82	29.3	135
White.....	661	479	72.4	394	59.6	85	17.7	182
Black or African American.....	179	136	76.1	97	53.9	40	29.2	43
Asian.....	26	14	-	14	-	-	-	11
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	184	138	75.2	96	52.2	42	30.6	46
<b>RECENT HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS</b>								
Total, 2014-15 high school dropouts <sup>2</sup> .....	521	239	45.9	192	36.8	47	19.8	282
Men.....	281	135	48.1	101	36.0	34	25.2	146
Women.....	240	104	43.3	91	37.8	13	12.7	136
White.....	358	172	48.0	150	41.9	22	12.8	186
Black or African American.....	109	48	44.5	27	24.6	22	-	60
Asian.....	34	9	-	9	-	-	-	25
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	145	44	30.1	27	18.4	17	-	101

<sup>1</sup> Data refer to persons who graduated from high school in January through October 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Data refer to persons who dropped out of school between October 2014 and October 2015.

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. Persons 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 persons 16 to 24 years old by school enrollment, educational attainment, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, October 2015.**

[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.....	38,491	21,190	55.1	18,945	49.2	2,245	10.6	17,302
<b>Enrolled in school</b>								
Total, enrolled in school.....	21,948	7,943	36.2	7,242	33.0	702	8.8	14,005
Enrolled in high school <sup>1</sup> .....	9,604	2,050	21.3	1,752	18.2	299	14.6	7,554
Men.....	4,937	999	20.2	849	17.2	150	15.0	3,939
Women.....	4,667	1,051	22.5	903	19.3	149	14.1	3,615
White.....	7,019	1,587	22.6	1,363	19.4	224	14.1	5,431
Black or African American.....	1,480	251	16.9	213	14.4	37	14.9	1,229
Asian.....	430	33	7.6	28	6.4	5	-	397
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	2,190	383	17.5	304	13.9	79	20.7	1,807
Enrolled in college.....	12,344	5,893	47.7	5,490	44.5	403	6.8	6,451
Enrolled in 2-year college.....	3,258	1,870	57.4	1,715	52.6	155	8.3	1,387
Enrolled in 4-year college.....	9,087	4,023	44.3	3,775	41.5	247	6.2	5,064
Full-time students.....	10,628	4,522	42.5	4,198	39.5	324	7.2	6,106
Part-time students.....	1,716	1,371	79.9	1,292	75.3	78	5.7	345
Men.....	5,785	2,627	45.4	2,396	41.4	231	8.8	3,159
Women.....	6,559	3,266	49.8	3,094	47.2	172	5.3	3,292
White.....	9,096	4,544	50.0	4,234	46.5	310	6.8	4,552
Black or African American.....	1,657	773	46.7	713	43.0	60	7.8	884
Asian.....	1,046	292	27.9	282	27.0	10	3.4	754
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	2,411	1,207	50.0	1,100	45.6	107	8.8	1,205
<b>Not enrolled in school</b>								
Total, not enrolled in school.....	16,543	13,246	80.1	11,703	70.7	1,543	11.7	3,297
16 to 19 years.....	3,098	2,091	67.5	1,705	55.0	386	18.5	1,007
20 to 24 years.....	13,445	11,155	83.0	9,998	74.4	1,157	10.4	2,290
Men.....	8,670	7,289	84.1	6,436	74.2	853	11.7	1,381
Less than a high school diploma.....	1,220	799	65.5	584	47.9	216	27.0	420
High school graduates, no college <sup>2</sup> .....	4,243	3,578	84.3	3,144	74.1	434	12.1	665
Some college or associate degree.....	2,101	1,855	88.3	1,699	80.9	156	8.4	247
Bachelor's degree and higher <sup>3</sup> .....	1,106	1,057	95.5	1,009	91.2	48	4.5	49
Women.....	7,874	5,958	75.7	5,268	66.9	690	11.6	1,916
Less than a high school diploma.....	1,034	461	44.6	357	34.5	104	22.6	573
High school graduates, no college <sup>2</sup> .....	3,175	2,302	72.5	1,951	61.4	351	15.2	874
Some college or associate degree.....	2,147	1,796	83.6	1,669	77.7	127	7.1	351
Bachelor's degree and higher <sup>3</sup> .....	1,517	1,399	92.3	1,291	85.1	108	7.7	117
White.....	12,293	10,001	81.4	9,050	73.6	952	9.5	2,292
Black or African American.....	2,753	2,117	76.9	1,659	60.3	458	21.6	635
Asian.....	581	408	70.3	382	65.7	26	6.5	173
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	3,811	2,947	77.3	2,571	67.5	377	12.8	864

<sup>1</sup> Includes a small number of persons enrolled in grades below high school.

<sup>2</sup> Includes persons with a high school diploma or equivalent.

<sup>3</sup> Includes persons 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. Persons 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).