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Technical information: (202) 691-6378 • cpsinfo@bls.gov • www.bls.gov/cps
Media contact: (202) 691-5902 • PressOffice@bls.gov

COLLEGE ENROLLMENT AND WORK ACTIVITY OF 2010 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

In October 2010, 68.1 percent of 2010 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 2010 were more likely than enrolled graduates to be working or looking for work (76.6 percent compared with 40.0 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 3.2 million youth age 16 to 24 who graduated from high school between January and October 2010, about 2.2 million (68.1 percent) were enrolled in college in October 2010. The college enrollment rate of recent high school graduates was slightly lower than the record high set in October 2009 (70.1 percent). For 2010 graduates, the college enrollment rate was 74.0 percent for young women and 62.8 percent for young men. The college enrollment rate of Asians (84.0 percent) was higher than for recent white (68.6 percent), black (61.4 percent), and Hispanic (59.6 percent) graduates. (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 40.0 percent. The participation rates for male and female graduates enrolled in college were about the same (41.1 and 38.9 percent, respectively).

Among recent high school graduates enrolled in college in October 2010, 90.4 percent were full-time students. Recent graduates enrolled as full-time students were about half as likely to be in the labor force (36.7 percent) as were their peers enrolled part time (71.3 percent).

About 6 in 10 recent high school graduates who were enrolled in college attended 4-year institutions. Of these students, 32.0 percent participated in the labor force, compared with 52.4 percent of recent graduates enrolled in 2-year colleges.

Recent high school graduates not enrolled in college in the fall of 2010 were more likely than enrolled graduates to be in the labor force (76.6 percent compared with 40.0 percent). The unemployment rate for

recent high school graduates not enrolled in school was 33.4 percent, compared with 22.8 percent for recent graduates enrolled in college.

Between October 2009 and October 2010, 340,000 young people dropped out of high school. The labor force participation rate for recent dropouts (53.9 percent) was lower than for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college (76.6 percent). The jobless rate for recent high school dropouts was 42.7 percent, compared with 33.4 percent for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college.

All Youth Enrolled in High School or College

In October 2010, 58.0 percent of the nation's 16- to -24 year olds, or 22.0 million young people, either were enrolled in high school (9.6 million) or in college (12.4 million). The labor force participation rate (38.6 percent) and unemployment rate (16.8 percent) of youth enrolled in school were essentially unchanged from October 2009 to October 2010. (See table 2.)

In October 2010, college students continued to be more likely to participate in the labor force than high school students (51.3 percent compared with 22.1 percent). About 85 percent of college students were enrolled full time. Those attending college full time had a much lower labor force participation rate than did part-time students. Asian college students were less likely to participate in the labor force than black, white, or Hispanic college students. Female college students were more likely to be in the labor force (53.5 percent) than their male counterparts (48.8 percent). Female high school students were also somewhat more likely to be in the labor force (24.2 percent) than were males (20.1 percent).

The unemployment rate for high school students, at 28.8 percent in October 2010, was more than twice the rate for college students (12.8 percent). Unemployment rates for black (49.3 percent) and Hispanic (32.7 percent) high school students continued to be higher than for white students (24.8 percent).

All Youth Not Enrolled in School

In October 2010, 15.9 million persons age 16 to 24 were not enrolled in school. The labor force participation rate of youth not enrolled in school was little changed from a year earlier at 79.4 percent in October 2010. Among youth not enrolled in school in October 2010, men continued to be more likely than women to participate in the labor force—83.7 percent compared with 74.8 percent. Labor force participation rates for not-enrolled men and women were highest for college graduates and lowest for those with less than a high school diploma. (See table 2.)

The unemployment rate for youths age 16 to 24 not enrolled in school fell from 20.3 percent in October 2009 to 18.7 percent in October 2010. Among the educational attainment categories, unemployment rates for youth not in school in October 2010 were highest for those without a high school diploma—27.7 percent for young men and 31.4 percent for young women. In contrast, the jobless rates for young male and female college graduates were 9.9 percent and 9.3 percent, respectively. Black youth not enrolled in school had an unemployment rate of 30.0 percent in October 2010, higher than the rates for their white (16.2 percent), Asian (20.8 percent), and Hispanic (20.8 percent) counterparts.

Technical Note

The estimates in this release were obtained from a supplement to the October 2010 Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly survey of about 60,000 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 Web site at 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 exact difference, or sampling error, varies depending on the particular sample selected, and this 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.

A full discussion of the reliability of data from the CPS and information on estimating standard errors is available at 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 2010 high school graduates and 2009-10 high school dropouts 16 to 24 years old by school enrollment, educational attainment, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, October 2010

(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, 2010 high school graduates ¹	3,160	1,633	51.7	1,179	37.3	454	27.8	1,528
Men	1,679	926	55.2	659	39.3	267	28.9	752
Women	1,482	706	47.7	520	35.1	187	26.4	775
White	2,388	1,285	53.8	989	41.4	296	23.0	1,103
Black or African American	495	241	48.7	120	24.3	121	50.2	254
Asian	144	40	27.8	33	22.7	7	(²)	104
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	507	278	54.9	215	42.5	63	22.5	229
Enrolled in college	2,152	860	40.0	664	30.9	196	22.8	1,292
Enrolled in 2-year college	842	441	52.4	359	42.6	82	18.7	401
Enrolled in 4-year college	1,309	419	32.0	305	23.3	114	27.1	890
Full-time students	1,946	714	36.7	537	27.6	176	24.7	1,233
Part-time students	206	147	71.3	127	61.7	20	13.4	59
Men	1,055	433	41.1	317	30.1	116	26.8	621
Women	1,097	427	38.9	347	31.6	80	18.7	670
White	1,637	692	42.2	547	33.4	145	20.9	946
Black or African American	304	107	35.1	68	22.5	38	35.8	197
Asian	121	24	19.9	24	19.9	—	—	97
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	302	114	37.6	93	30.8	21	18.1	189
Not enrolled in college	1,009	773	76.6	515	51.0	258	33.4	236
Men	624	493	79.0	342	54.8	151	30.7	131
Women	385	280	72.7	173	45.0	107	38.2	105
White	750	593	79.1	442	58.9	151	25.5	157
Black or African American	191	134	70.2	52	27.0	83	61.6	57
Asian	22	16	(²)	8	(²)	7	(²)	7
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	204	164	80.4	122	59.9	42	25.5	40
Total, 2009-10 high school dropouts ³	340	183	53.9	105	30.9	78	42.7	157
Men	179	77	43.1	47	25.9	31	39.8	102
Women	161	106	66.0	59	36.4	48	44.8	55
White	231	122	52.8	78	33.7	44	36.2	109
Black or African American	65	29	(²)	12	(²)	17	(²)	36
Asian	12	9	(²)	9	(²)	—	—	3
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	93	54	58.0	32	33.9	22	(²)	39

¹ Data refer to persons who graduated from high school in January through October 2010.

² Data not shown where base is less than 75,000.

³ Data refer to persons who dropped out of school between October 2009 and October 2010.

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. Because of rounding, sums of individual items may not equal totals. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data. Dash represents or rounds to zero.

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 2010

(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	37,949	21,144	55.7	17,347	45.7	3,797	18.0	16,805
Enrolled in school	22,021	8,491	38.6	7,065	32.1	1,426	16.8	13,530
Enrolled in high school ¹	9,598	2,120	22.1	1,509	15.7	611	28.8	7,478
Men	4,976	1,003	20.1	687	13.8	315	31.4	3,973
Women	4,622	1,117	24.2	822	17.8	296	26.5	3,505
White	7,311	1,759	24.1	1,322	18.1	436	24.8	5,552
Black or African American	1,553	250	16.1	127	8.2	123	49.3	1,304
Asian	289	22	7.7	17	5.9	5	(²)	267
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	1,909	266	13.9	179	9.4	87	32.7	1,643
Enrolled in college	12,423	6,372	51.3	5,556	44.7	815	12.8	6,052
Enrolled in 2-year college	3,938	2,303	58.5	1,933	49.1	370	16.1	1,635
Enrolled in 4-year college	8,485	4,068	47.9	3,623	42.7	445	10.9	4,417
Full-time students	10,590	4,855	45.8	4,210	39.8	645	13.3	5,735
Part-time students	1,834	1,517	82.7	1,346	73.4	171	11.3	317
Men	5,788	2,823	48.8	2,436	42.1	388	13.7	2,965
Women	6,635	3,548	53.5	3,121	47.0	428	12.1	3,087
White	9,466	5,055	53.4	4,453	47.0	602	11.9	4,410
Black or African American	1,721	830	48.2	667	38.7	164	19.7	891
Asian	843	305	36.2	281	33.3	24	7.9	538
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	1,850	953	51.5	817	44.2	136	14.3	897
Not enrolled in school	15,928	12,653	79.4	10,281	64.5	2,371	18.7	3,275
16 to 19 years	2,952	2,039	69.1	1,411	47.8	628	30.8	913
20 to 24 years	12,975	10,614	81.8	8,870	68.4	1,744	16.4	2,362
Men	8,362	6,996	83.7	5,612	67.1	1,384	19.8	1,367
Less than a high school diploma	1,625	1,164	71.6	842	51.8	322	27.7	461
High school graduates, no college ³	3,963	3,293	83.1	2,579	65.1	714	21.7	670
Some college or associate degree	1,926	1,745	90.6	1,475	76.6	269	15.4	181
Bachelor's degree and higher ⁴	849	794	93.6	715	84.3	79	9.9	55
Women	7,565	5,657	74.8	4,670	61.7	987	17.5	1,908
Less than a high school diploma	1,192	653	54.8	448	37.6	205	31.4	538
High school graduates, no college ³	3,036	2,114	69.6	1,622	53.4	492	23.3	922
Some college or associate degree	2,005	1,633	81.4	1,461	72.8	172	10.6	372
Bachelor's degree and higher ⁴	1,333	1,256	94.3	1,139	85.5	117	9.3	76
White	12,375	10,043	81.2	8,416	68.0	1,627	16.2	2,332
Black or African American	2,486	1,834	73.7	1,283	51.6	551	30.0	653
Asian	460	340	74.0	269	58.6	71	20.8	120
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	3,433	2,599	75.7	2,057	59.9	542	20.8	834

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

² Data not shown where base is less than 75,000.

³ Includes persons with a high school diploma or equivalent.

⁴ 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. Because of rounding, sums of individual items may not equal totals. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.