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COLLEGE ENROLLMENT AND WORK ACTIVITY OF RECENT HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE GRADUATES — 2017

In October 2017, 66.7 percent of 2017 high school graduates age 16 to 24 were enrolled in colleges or universities, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Among persons age 20 to 29 who received a bachelor's degree in 2017, 77.6 percent were employed.

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, this release for the first time presents information on recent degree recipients age 20 to 29. Additional information about the October supplement is included in the Technical Note.

Highlights from the October 2017 data:

- Among recent high school graduates age 16 to 24, women remained more likely to be enrolled in college (71.7 percent) than men (61.1 percent). (See table 1.)
- Among 16- to 24-year-olds, 41.8 percent of recent high school dropouts were working or looking for work, lower than the labor force participation rate of 67.4 percent for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college. (See table 1.)
- About 16.3 million people age 16 to 24 were not enrolled in school—42.7 percent of the total. (See table 2.)
- Among 20- to 29-year-olds, 79.8 percent of recent associate degree recipients, 77.6 percent of recent bachelor's degree recipients, and 77.5 percent of recent advanced degree recipients were employed. (See table 3.)
- About one-fourth of recent bachelor's degree recipients age 20 to 29 were enrolled in school. (See table 3.)
- Among those age 20 to 29, unemployment rates for recent associate degree recipients, recent bachelor's degree recipients, and recent advanced degree recipients were 5.6 percent, 8.3 percent, and 11.9 percent, respectively. (See table 3.)

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

Of the 2.9 million youth age 16 to 24 who graduated from high school between January and October 2017, about 1.9 million (66.7 percent) were enrolled in college in October. The college enrollment rate of recent high school graduates in October 2017 was slightly lower than the rate in October 2016 (69.7 percent). (See table 1.)

Among 2017 high school graduates age 16 to 24, the college enrollment rate for young women was 71.7 percent, higher than the rate of 61.1 percent for young men. The college enrollment rate of recent Asian graduates (83.0 percent) was higher than for their White (67.1 percent), Hispanic (61.0 percent), and Black (59.4 percent) counterparts.

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 was 39.8 percent. The participation rates for male and female graduates enrolled in college were about the same, at 41.2 percent and 38.8 percent, respectively.

Among recent high school graduates enrolled in college in October 2017, 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 (36.9 percent) as were their peers enrolled part time (74.0 percent).

About 2 in 3 recent high school graduates enrolled in college attended 4-year colleges. Of these students, 30.3 percent participated in the labor force in October 2017, lower than the 58.4 percent for recent graduates enrolled in 2-year colleges.

Recent high school graduates not enrolled in college in the fall of 2017 were much more likely than enrolled graduates to be in the labor force (67.4 percent, compared with 39.8 percent). The unemployment rate for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college was 16.8 percent, higher than the rate of 10.2 percent for recent graduates enrolled in college.

Between October 2016 and October 2017, 530,000 young people dropped out of high school. The labor force participation rate for recent dropouts (41.8 percent) was much lower than the rate for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college (67.4 percent). The jobless rate for recent high school dropouts was 18.9 percent in October 2017, little different from the rate for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college (16.8 percent).

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

In October 2017, 57.3 percent of 16- to 24-year-olds, or 21.8 million youth, were enrolled in high school (9.7 million) or in college (12.1 million). The labor force participation rate for youth enrolled in school, at 37.6 percent, increased from October 2016 to October 2017. The unemployment rate (8.0 percent) for youth enrolled in school in October 2017 was about unchanged from the previous year. (See table 2.)

In October 2017, high school students continued to be less than half as likely as college students to participate in the labor force (22.8 percent, compared with 49.5 percent). In both high school and college, female students are more likely to participate in the labor force than their male counterparts.

Among college students, those enrolled full time were much less likely to participate in the labor force

in October 2017 than were part-time students (43.9 percent versus 85.4 percent). Similarly, students at 4-year colleges were much less likely to be in the labor force than were students at 2-year schools (46.0 percent and 60.0 percent, respectively). The labor force participation rate was lower for Asian college students (32.7 percent) than for their Black (46.9 percent), Hispanic (53.9 percent), and White (52.4 percent) counterparts.

The unemployment rate for high school students, at 14.4 percent in October 2017, continued to be higher than the rate for college students (5.7 percent).

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

In October 2017, 16.3 million persons age 16 to 24 were not enrolled in school—42.7 percent of the total. The labor force participation rate of youth not enrolled in school, at 79.5 percent, was little changed over the year. Among youth not enrolled in school in October 2017, young men continued to be more likely than young women to participate in the labor force (83.4 percent, compared with 75.2 percent). Labor force participation rates for not-enrolled men and women were highest for those with a bachelor's degree or higher (93.9 percent and 92.3 percent, respectively) and lowest for men and women with less than a high school diploma (62.0 percent and 45.7 percent, respectively). (See table 2.)

The unemployment rate for youth age 16 to 24 not enrolled in school, at 9.2 percent, was down by 2.0 percentage points over the year. Among not-enrolled youth who did not have a high school diploma, unemployment rates in October 2017 were 15.1 percent for both young men and young women. In contrast, the jobless rates of young men and women with at least a bachelor's degree were 8.8 percent and 5.3 percent, respectively. Black youth not enrolled in school had an unemployment rate of 16.1 percent in October 2017, higher than the rates for their Hispanic (9.4 percent), White (7.6 percent), and Asian (6.8 percent) counterparts.

Recent College Graduates (Age 20 to 29)

Between January and October 2017, 1.2 million 20- to 29-year-olds earned a bachelor's degree; of these, 945,000 (or 77.6 percent) were employed in October 2017. The unemployment rate for recent college graduates with a bachelor's degree was 8.3 percent in October 2017. (See table 3.)

There was little difference in the likelihood of being employed among male and female college graduates; 76.1 percent of men and 79.0 percent of women who recently earned a bachelor's degree were employed in October 2017. However, the jobless rate for recent male bachelor's degree recipients was 12.0 percent, more than double the rate of 4.7 percent for their female counterparts.

About one-quarter (or 311,000) of recent bachelor's degree recipients were enrolled in school in October 2017. These recent graduates who were enrolled in school were much less likely to be employed than those who were not enrolled (55.7 percent versus 85.1 percent).

Between January and October 2017, 442,000 20- to 29-year-olds earned an advanced degree—that is, a master's, professional, or doctoral degree. Those who recently earned an advanced degree were about as likely as those who recently earned a bachelor's degree to be employed (77.5 percent, compared with 77.6 percent). In October 2017, the unemployment rate for recent advanced degree recipients was 11.9 percent.

Recent Associate Degree Recipients (Age 20 to 29)

Of the 378,000 20- to 29-year-olds who completed an associate degree between January and October 2017, 79.8 percent were employed in October 2017. The unemployment rate for recent associate degree recipients was 5.6 percent. (See table 3.)

Recent associate degree recipients age 20 to 29 were more likely to have completed an academic program than a vocational program (62 percent and 38 percent, respectively). 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.

About one-third of recent associate degree recipients were enrolled in school in October 2017. These recent graduates who were enrolled in school were less likely to be employed than those who were not enrolled (71.0 percent versus 84.7 percent).

Technical Note

The estimates in this release were obtained from a supplement to the October 2017 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 release relate to the school enrollment status of persons 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 persons 16 to 24 years of age. Data about recent associate degree recipients and college graduates refer to persons 20 to 29 years of age.

Updated population controls for the CPS 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.

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 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.

Concepts

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 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. Persons 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. Persons 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. Persons 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.

Table 1. Labor force status of 2017 high school graduates and 2016-17 high school dropouts 16 to 24 years old by school enrollment, educational attainment, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, October 2017

[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, 2017 high school graduates ¹	2,870	1,407	49.0	1,221	42.5	186	13.2	1,463
Men.....	1,345	712	52.9	604	44.9	108	15.2	633
Women.....	1,525	695	45.6	617	40.5	78	11.2	830
White.....	2,142	1,076	50.3	938	43.8	139	12.9	1,065
Black or African American.....	421	198	47.1	165	39.3	33	16.6	223
Asian.....	165	62	37.7	58	35.0	5	-	103
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	597	336	56.3	286	47.9	50	15.0	261
Enrolled in college								
Total, enrolled in college.....	1,915	763	39.8	685	35.8	78	10.2	1,152
Enrolled in 2-year college.....	648	378	58.4	346	53.5	32	8.4	269
Enrolled in 4-year college.....	1,267	384	30.3	338	26.7	46	11.9	883
Full-time students.....	1,764	651	36.9	574	32.5	78	11.9	1,113
Part-time students.....	150	111	74.0	111	74.0	-	-	39
Men.....	822	339	41.2	303	36.8	36	10.6	483
Women.....	1,093	424	38.8	382	35.0	42	9.9	669
White.....	1,437	605	42.1	540	37.6	64	10.6	832
Black or African American.....	250	83	33.2	71	28.4	12	14.5	167
Asian.....	137	42	30.5	40	29.4	2	-	95
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	364	193	52.8	164	45.1	28	14.7	172
Not enrolled in college								
Total, not enrolled in college.....	955	644	67.4	536	56.1	108	16.8	311
Men.....	523	373	71.3	301	57.6	72	19.3	150
Women.....	432	271	62.7	235	54.3	36	13.3	161
White.....	705	472	66.9	397	56.4	74	15.8	233
Black or African American.....	171	115	67.4	94	55.2	21	18.2	56
Asian.....	29	21	-	18	-	3	-	8
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	233	144	61.7	122	52.3	22	15.3	89
RECENT HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS								
Total, 2016-17 high school dropouts ²	530	222	41.8	180	33.9	42	18.9	308
Men.....	313	152	48.7	127	40.4	26	17.0	161
Women.....	217	69	31.9	53	24.5	16	-	148
White.....	379	184	48.6	151	39.8	33	18.0	195
Black or African American.....	86	15	17.0	12	13.6	3	-	72
Asian.....	42	8	-	8	-	-	-	34
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	162	52	32.3	36	22.3	16	-	110

¹ Data refer to persons who graduated from high school in January through October 2017.

² Data refer to persons who dropped out of school between October 2016 and October 2017.

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 2017

[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.....	38,079	21,151	55.5	19,298	50.7	1,853	8.8	16,928
Enrolled in school								
Total, enrolled in school.....	21,805	8,207	37.6	7,548	34.6	659	8.0	13,597
Enrolled in high school ¹	9,667	2,202	22.8	1,884	19.5	318	14.4	7,466
Men.....	5,063	1,060	20.9	874	17.3	186	17.5	4,002
Women.....	4,605	1,141	24.8	1,010	21.9	132	11.5	3,463
White.....	6,978	1,698	24.3	1,476	21.1	222	13.1	5,281
Black or African American.....	1,509	278	18.4	239	15.8	39	14.1	1,231
Asian.....	499	51	10.3	39	7.8	13	-	448
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	2,187	391	17.9	302	13.8	89	22.7	1,797
Enrolled in college.....	12,137	6,006	49.5	5,664	46.7	342	5.7	6,131
Enrolled in 2-year college.....	3,009	1,806	60.0	1,686	56.0	120	6.7	1,202
Enrolled in 4-year college.....	9,129	4,200	46.0	3,978	43.6	221	5.3	4,929
Full-time students.....	10,502	4,608	43.9	4,319	41.1	289	6.3	5,893
Part-time students.....	1,636	1,398	85.4	1,345	82.2	52	3.7	238
Men.....	5,523	2,602	47.1	2,444	44.2	158	6.1	2,921
Women.....	6,614	3,404	51.5	3,221	48.7	183	5.4	3,211
White.....	8,831	4,626	52.4	4,389	49.7	237	5.1	4,206
Black or African American.....	1,613	757	46.9	673	41.7	85	11.2	856
Asian.....	1,129	369	32.7	353	31.2	16	4.4	760
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	2,489	1,340	53.9	1,274	51.2	66	4.9	1,149
Not enrolled in school								
Total, not enrolled in school.....	16,274	12,943	79.5	11,749	72.2	1,194	9.2	3,331
16 to 19 years.....	3,224	2,044	63.4	1,737	53.9	307	15.0	1,180
20 to 24 years.....	13,050	10,899	83.5	10,013	76.7	887	8.1	2,150
Men.....	8,591	7,162	83.4	6,443	75.0	719	10.0	1,429
Less than a high school diploma.....	1,262	782	62.0	664	52.6	118	15.1	480
High school graduates, no college ²	4,150	3,461	83.4	3,099	74.7	362	10.5	689
Some college or associate degree.....	1,951	1,766	90.5	1,628	83.5	138	7.8	185
Bachelor's degree and higher ³	1,228	1,153	93.9	1,052	85.6	101	8.8	75
Women.....	7,683	5,781	75.2	5,306	69.1	475	8.2	1,902
Less than a high school diploma.....	936	428	45.7	363	38.8	65	15.1	508
High school graduates, no college ²	3,197	2,246	70.2	2,010	62.9	236	10.5	951
Some college or associate degree.....	2,014	1,689	83.9	1,591	79.0	98	5.8	325
Bachelor's degree and higher ³	1,536	1,418	92.3	1,342	87.4	76	5.3	118
White.....	12,164	9,760	80.2	9,016	74.1	744	7.6	2,404
Black or African American.....	2,600	2,049	78.8	1,718	66.1	330	16.1	552
Asian.....	616	451	73.3	421	68.3	31	6.8	165
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	3,892	2,886	74.2	2,614	67.2	272	9.4	1,006

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

² Includes persons with a high school diploma or equivalent.

³ 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).

Table 3. Labor force status of 2017 associate degree recipients and college graduates 20 to 29 years old by selected characteristics, October 2017

[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.....	378	320	84.6	302	79.8	18	5.6	58
Men.....	186	146	78.7	141	75.6	6	3.9	40
Women.....	192	173	90.3	161	84.0	12	7.0	19
20 to 24 years.....	244	210	85.7	200	82.0	9	4.4	35
25 to 29 years.....	133	110	82.5	101	75.9	9	7.9	23
Vocational program.....	145	117	80.8	109	75.3	8	6.8	28
Academic program.....	233	202	87.0	192	82.7	10	4.9	30
Enrolled in school.....	134	101	75.0	95	71.0	5	5.3	34
Not enrolled in school.....	244	219	89.9	206	84.7	13	5.7	25
RECENT COLLEGE GRADUATES²								
Total, 20 to 29 years.....	1,660	1,419	85.5	1,288	77.6	131	9.3	241
Men.....	796	696	87.5	615	77.2	81	11.7	100
Women.....	864	723	83.6	673	77.9	50	6.9	141
20 to 24 years.....	1,156	984	85.1	896	77.5	88	9.0	172
25 to 29 years.....	505	435	86.2	392	77.7	43	9.9	69
Enrolled in school.....	373	232	62.1	220	59.0	12	5.0	142
Not enrolled in school.....	1,287	1,187	92.3	1,067	83.0	120	10.1	99
White.....	1,220	1,078	88.4	983	80.6	95	8.8	142
Black or African American.....	150	125	83.1	98	65.2	27	21.6	25
Asian.....	237	173	73.2	167	70.5	6	3.6	64
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	179	148	82.4	144	80.3	4	2.5	32
Bachelor's degree								
Total, 20 to 29 years.....	1,218	1,030	84.6	945	77.6	85	8.3	188
Men.....	585	506	86.5	445	76.1	61	12.0	79
Women.....	632	524	82.9	500	79.0	24	4.7	108
20 to 24 years.....	1,005	852	84.7	775	77.1	77	9.0	153
25 to 29 years.....	213	178	83.8	170	79.8	8	4.8	34
Enrolled in school.....	311	181	58.1	173	55.7	7	4.1	130
Not enrolled in school.....	906	849	93.7	771	85.1	78	9.2	57
Advanced degree³								
Total, 20 to 29 years.....	442	389	87.9	343	77.5	46	11.9	53
Men.....	210	190	90.4	169	80.5	21	10.9	20
Women.....	232	199	85.8	174	74.8	25	12.8	33
20 to 24 years.....	151	132	87.8	121	80.2	11	8.6	18
25 to 29 years.....	292	257	88.0	222	76.1	35	13.5	35

¹ Data refer to persons who received an associate degree in January through October 2017.

² Data refer to persons who received a bachelor's or higher degree in January through October 2017.

³ Data refer to persons who received a master's, professional, or doctoral degree in January through October 2017.

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.