

# News

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## **COLLEGE ENROLLMENT AND WORK ACTIVITY OF 2008 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES**

In October 2008, 68.6 percent of 2008 high school graduates were enrolled in colleges or universities, according to data released today by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor.

Information on school enrollment and work activity is collected monthly in the Current Population Survey (CPS). Each October, a supplement to the basic CPS gathers more detailed information on employment, unemployment, earnings, demographics, and other characteristics of the civilian noninstitutional population age 16 and over. Additional information about the October supplement is included in the Technical Note.

### Recent High School Graduates and Dropouts

Of the 3.2 million youth who graduated from high school from October 2007 to October 2008, 2.2 million (68.6 percent) were attending college in October 2008. College enrollment rates were 71.5 percent for young women and 65.9 percent for young men. (See table 1.)

The labor force participation rate (the proportion of the population with a job or looking for work) was higher for young women enrolled in college (46.1 percent) than for their male counterparts (36.0 percent).

Among recent high school graduates enrolled in college in October 2008, 93.2 percent were full-time students. The labor force participation rate was 38.5 percent for full-time students and 75.9 percent for part-time students.

About 6 in 10 recent high school graduates who were enrolled in college attended 4-year institutions. Of these students, 31.0 percent participated in the labor force, while 55.9 percent of recent graduates enrolled in 2-year colleges were in the labor force.

Recent high school graduates not enrolled in college in the fall of 2008 were more likely than enrolled graduates to be in the labor force (76.4 versus 41.1 percent). The unemployment rate for high school graduates not enrolled in college was 26.7 percent, compared with 14.9 percent for graduates enrolled in college (in either 2- or 4-year institutions.)

From October 2007 to October 2008, 400,000 persons between the ages of 16 and 24 dropped out of high school. The labor force participation rate for dropouts (48.4 percent) was lower than for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college (76.4 percent). The jobless rate for recent high school dropouts was 39.5 percent.

### Youth Enrolled in School

In October 2008, 56.8 percent of the nation's 16- to 24-year-olds, or 21.3 million young people, were either enrolled in high school (9.7 million) or in college (11.7 million). (See table 2.)

College students were more likely to participate in the labor force than high school students (54.1 percent compared with 27.5 percent). Among college students, those attending full time had lower participation rates than part-time students. The rate of labor force participation was higher for female college students (56.6 percent) than for their male counterparts (51.2 percent).

The unemployment rate for high school students, at 21.1 percent in October 2008, was higher than for college students (8.0 percent). The jobless rate for white high school students was 19.7 percent, which was lower than for black high school students (30.5 percent) and for Hispanic high school students (34.8 percent). Among college students, the white unemployment rate of 7.4 percent was below that for black students (14.3 percent) and Hispanic students (12.0 percent).

### Out-of-School Youth

In October 2008, 16.2 million persons age 16 to 24 were not enrolled in school. Of these out-of-school youth, 79.9 percent were in the labor force. Young men who were not in school were more likely to be working or looking for work (85.4 percent) than young women not in school (73.9 percent). Labor force participation rates for out-of-school 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 out-of-school youth age 16 to 24 was 14.2 percent in October 2008. Among the educational attainment categories, unemployment rates for youth not in school were highest for those without a high school diploma—26.3 percent for young men and 25.0 percent for young women. In contrast, the unemployment rates for young male and female college graduates were 8.7 and 6.6 percent, respectively. Black out-of-school youth had an unemployment rate of 23.7 percent in October 2008, compared with 12.4 percent for whites, 15.1 percent for Hispanics, and 7.3 percent for Asians.

# Technical Note

The estimates in this release were obtained from a supplement to the October 2008 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.

The supplement weights used in estimation were revised with the release of October 2007 data. An additional weighting step was added in order to bring the CPS estimates for persons receiving a high school diploma or GED more in line with administrative records. The 2007 and 2008 October supplement data are not strictly comparable with published estimates from earlier years.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

## 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.

For a full discussion of the reliability of data from the CPS and information on estimating standard errors, see the Household Data section of the "Explanatory Notes and Estimates of Error" at [http://www.bls.gov/cps/eetech\\_methods.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/cps/eetech_methods.pdf).

## 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.

**Table 1. Labor force status of 2008 high school graduates and 2007-08 high school dropouts 16 to 24 years old by school enrollment, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, October 2008**

(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, 2008 high school graduates <sup>1</sup> .....	3,151	1,644	52.2	1,310	41.6	334	20.3	1,507
Men .....	1,640	827	50.4	641	39.1	186	22.5	813
Women .....	1,511	817	54.1	668	44.2	148	18.2	694
White .....	2,521	1,373	54.5	1,114	44.2	260	18.9	1,148
Black or African American .....	428	202	47.3	148	34.6	54	26.9	226
Asian .....	96	22	23.0	22	23.0	—	—	74
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity .....	458	246	53.7	185	40.4	61	24.8	212
Enrolled in college .....	2,161	888	41.1	756	35.0	132	14.9	1,274
Enrolled in 2-year college .....	871	488	55.9	419	48.1	69	14.1	384
Enrolled in 4-year college .....	1,290	400	31.0	337	26.1	64	15.9	890
Full-time students .....	2,013	775	38.5	662	32.9	113	14.5	1,238
Part-time students .....	149	113	75.9	93	62.8	20	17.3	36
Men .....	1,080	389	36.0	327	30.3	62	15.9	691
Women .....	1,081	499	46.1	428	39.6	70	14.1	583
White .....	1,785	778	43.6	664	37.2	114	14.7	1,007
Black or African American .....	235	77	32.6	63	27.0	13	17.4	158
Asian .....	84	15	18.3	15	18.3	—	—	69
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity .....	292	130	44.6	101	34.7	29	22.2	162
Not enrolled in college .....	989	756	76.4	554	56.0	202	26.7	234
Men .....	560	438	78.1	314	56.1	124	28.2	122
Women .....	430	318	74.1	240	55.9	78	24.6	111
White .....	736	595	80.8	449	61.1	145	24.5	141
Black or African American .....	193	126	65.1	85	43.8	41	32.7	68
Asian .....	11	6	( <sup>2</sup> )	6	( <sup>2</sup> )	—	—	5
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity .....	165	115	69.9	83	50.5	32	27.7	50
Total, 2007-08 high school dropouts <sup>3</sup> .....	400	194	48.4	117	29.3	77	39.5	206
Men .....	191	103	53.9	56	29.3	47	45.6	88
Women .....	210	91	43.4	61	29.2	30	32.7	119
White .....	253	142	56.2	94	37.3	48	33.6	111
Black or African American .....	117	44	37.6	20	16.8	24	( <sup>2</sup> )	73
Asian .....	17	—	—	—	—	—	—	17
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity .....	111	63	56.3	35	31.9	27	( <sup>2</sup> )	49

<sup>1</sup> Data refer to persons who graduated from high school between October 2007 and October 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Data not shown where base is less than 75,000.

<sup>3</sup> Data refer to persons who dropped out of school between October 2007 and October 2008.

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 2008**

(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 .....	37,569	21,931	58.4	19,020	50.6	2,911	13.3	15,637
Enrolled in school .....	21,348	8,974	42.0	7,907	37.0	1,067	11.9	12,374
Enrolled in high school <sup>1</sup> .....	9,677	2,661	27.5	2,099	21.7	562	21.1	7,016
Men .....	4,991	1,272	25.5	960	19.2	311	24.5	3,720
Women .....	4,686	1,389	29.6	1,139	24.3	251	18.0	3,297
White .....	7,274	2,153	29.6	1,729	23.8	424	19.7	5,120
Black or African American .....	1,604	339	21.2	236	14.7	104	30.5	1,264
Asian .....	349	66	18.9	57	16.4	9	( <sup>2</sup> )	283
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity .....	1,804	365	20.2	238	13.2	127	34.8	1,439
Enrolled in college .....	11,671	6,313	54.1	5,809	49.8	505	8.0	5,358
Enrolled in 2-year college .....	3,521	2,229	63.3	2,035	57.8	194	8.7	1,292
Enrolled in 4-year college .....	8,150	4,084	50.1	3,773	46.3	311	7.6	4,065
Full-time students .....	10,148	5,010	49.4	4,599	45.3	412	8.2	5,137
Part-time students .....	1,523	1,303	85.5	1,210	79.4	93	7.1	220
Men .....	5,492	2,814	51.2	2,522	45.9	293	10.4	2,678
Women .....	6,179	3,499	56.6	3,287	53.2	212	6.1	2,680
White .....	9,283	5,289	57.0	4,900	52.8	389	7.4	3,994
Black or African American .....	1,381	630	45.6	540	39.1	90	14.3	751
Asian .....	680	238	35.1	223	32.7	16	6.6	441
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity .....	1,385	775	55.9	682	49.2	93	12.0	610
Not enrolled in school .....	16,220	12,957	79.9	11,113	68.5	1,845	14.2	3,263
16 to 19 years .....	3,301	2,253	68.3	1,719	52.1	534	23.7	1,048
20 to 24 years .....	12,920	10,704	82.9	9,394	72.7	1,310	12.2	2,216
Men .....	8,465	7,229	85.4	6,028	71.2	1,201	16.6	1,236
Less than a high school diploma .....	1,606	1,204	74.9	887	55.2	317	26.3	403
High school graduates, no college <sup>3</sup> .....	4,121	3,487	84.6	2,874	69.7	613	17.6	634
Some college or associate degree .....	1,859	1,696	91.3	1,498	80.6	198	11.7	162
Bachelor's degree and higher <sup>4</sup> .....	879	842	95.8	769	87.5	73	8.7	37
Women .....	7,756	5,728	73.9	5,084	65.6	644	11.2	2,028
Less than a high school diploma .....	1,403	697	49.6	523	37.2	174	25.0	707
High school graduates, no college <sup>3</sup> .....	3,200	2,274	71.1	1,982	61.9	292	12.8	926
Some college or associate degree .....	1,953	1,629	83.4	1,525	78.1	104	6.4	324
Bachelor's degree and higher <sup>4</sup> .....	1,200	1,128	94.1	1,054	87.9	74	6.6	71
White .....	12,485	10,244	82.0	8,971	71.8	1,273	12.4	2,242
Black or African American .....	2,630	1,878	71.4	1,433	54.5	446	23.7	752
Asian .....	435	320	73.7	297	68.3	23	7.3	114
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity .....	3,531	2,684	76.0	2,279	64.5	405	15.1	848

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

<sup>2</sup> Data not shown where base is less than 75,000.

<sup>3</sup> Includes persons with a high school diploma or equivalent.

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