



Technical information: (202) 691-6378  
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Media contact: 691-5902

## **COLLEGE ENROLLMENT AND WORK ACTIVITY OF 2002 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES**

Over sixty-five percent of the high school graduating class of 2002 were enrolled in colleges or universities in the fall, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. This proportion was 3.5 percentage points higher than a year earlier and was the highest rate reached since 1998.

Information on school enrollment and the work activity of high school graduates comes from an October supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is a monthly nationwide survey of about 60,000 households that obtains 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

Among the 2.8 million high school graduates in 2002, 1.8 million (65.2 percent) were enrolled in college the following October. Young men represented 50.5 percent of high school graduates in 2002, but accounted for less than half of those who enrolled in college. The college enrollment rate of young women (68.4 percent) exceeded that for young men (62.1 percent). The percentage of women attending college following high school graduation has exceeded that of men in almost every year since 1988. White graduates continued to enroll in college in greater proportions (66.7 percent) than either black (58.7 percent) or Hispanic graduates (53.5 percent). (See table 1.)

Over 90 percent of recent high school graduates enrolled in college attended full time. Of these full-time students, 42.6 percent were employed or looking for work in October 2002, compared with 75.7 percent of part-time college students. Similarly, a much smaller proportion of students attending 4-year institutions (39.2 percent) participated in the labor force than students attending 2-year schools (58.0 percent).

Among recent high school graduates not enrolled in college in the fall, 79.7 percent were in the labor force in October 2002. The unemployment rate for this group was 16.9 percent.

Between October 2001 and October 2002, about 400,000 persons dropped out of high school. Among these high school dropouts, two-thirds were in the labor force in October 2002. The unemployment rate for this group was 29.8 percent—almost 13 percentage points higher than the unemployment rate for recent high school graduates who were not enrolled in college.

### Youth Enrolled in School

Over half of the nation's 35.5 million 16- to 24-year-olds were enrolled in school in October 2002. Over 9 million of these youth were enrolled in high school, and over 10 million attended college. College students were much more likely to work or look for work than were high school students (56.8 percent and 34.7 percent, respectively). The unemployment rate for college students was 7.5 percent—almost half the rate (14.5 percent) for high school students. Full-time college students were less likely to be in the labor force than part-time students, 51.8 percent versus 84.5 percent. About 3 out of 5 white and Hispanic college students were in the labor force, compared with less than half of black students. Among high school students, whites (38.7 percent) were more likely to participate in the labor force than either blacks (20.5 percent) or Hispanics (23.1 percent). (See table 2.)

### Out-of-School Youth

Four out of five of the 16- to 24-year-olds not enrolled in school were in the labor force in October 2002. The labor force participation rate for men in this group was 88.5 percent, compared with 74.0 percent for women. This disparity in labor force activity between young men and women appeared at all educational levels, although it was greatest among those with less than a high school diploma. Black and Hispanic out-of-school youth had lower labor force participation rates than whites. Also, the unemployment rate for black out-of-school youth (25.0 percent) was double the rate for Hispanic youth (12.4 percent) and nearly two and one-half times the rate for white youth (10.1 percent). (See table 2.)

# Technical Note

The estimates in this release were obtained from a supplement to the October 2002 Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly survey of about 60,000 households which 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 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 the month. Data reflect the introduction of Census 2000-based population controls and are not strictly comparable with data for previous 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 infor-

mation, 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 “Explanatory Notes and Estimates of Error” section of *Employment and Earnings*.

## 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 2002 high school graduates and 2001-02 high school dropouts 16 to 24 years old by school enrollment, sex, race, and Hispanic origin, October 2002**

(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, 2002 high school graduates .....	2,796	1,604	57.3	1,375	49.2	228	14.2	1,193
Men .....	1,412	829	58.7	730	51.7	100	12.0	582
Women .....	1,384	774	55.9	645	46.6	129	16.6	610
White .....	2,231	1,300	58.3	1,150	51.5	150	11.6	931
Black .....	387	205	53.0	143	36.9	62	30.3	182
Hispanic origin .....	344	215	62.6	167	48.7	48	22.2	129
Enrolled in college .....	1,824	829	45.4	731	40.1	98	11.8	996
Enrolled in 2-year college .....	605	351	58.0	306	50.6	45	12.8	254
Enrolled in 4-year college .....	1,220	478	39.2	425	34.8	53	11.1	742
Full-time students .....	1,668	711	42.6	632	37.9	79	11.1	958
Part-time students .....	156	118	75.7	99	63.4	19	16.3	38
Men .....	877	385	43.9	347	39.5	38	9.9	492
Women .....	947	444	46.9	384	40.6	60	13.4	503
White .....	1,488	693	46.6	622	41.8	71	10.2	795
Black .....	227	86	37.9	64	28.3	22	25.4	141
Hispanic origin .....	184	91	49.4	81	44.1	10	10.7	93
Not enrolled in college .....	972	775	79.7	644	66.3	131	16.9	197
Men .....	535	444	83.1	383	71.7	61	13.8	90
Women .....	437	330	75.6	261	59.7	69	21.0	107
White .....	743	607	81.7	528	71.0	80	13.1	136
Black .....	160	119	74.5	79	49.3	40	33.9	41
Hispanic origin .....	160	124	77.7	86	54.0	38	30.6	36
Total, 2001-02 high school dropouts <sup>1</sup> .....	401	271	67.7	191	47.5	81	29.8	129
Men .....	214	149	69.5	114	53.3	35	23.4	65
Women .....	187	122	65.6	76	40.9	46	37.6	64
White .....	281	188	67.0	140	49.8	48	25.6	93
Black .....	79	55	69.8	28	35.6	27	( <sup>2</sup> )	24
Hispanic origin .....	94	62	66.5	40	42.2	23	( <sup>2</sup> )	31

<sup>1</sup> Data refer to persons who dropped out of school between October 2001 and October 2002.

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

NOTE: Detail for the above race and Hispanic-origin groups will not sum to totals because data for the "other races" groups are not presented and

Hispanics are included in both the white and black population groups. Because of rounding, sums of individual items may not equal totals. Data reflect the introduction of Census 2000-based population controls and are not strictly comparable with data for previous years.

**Table 2. Labor force status of persons 16 to 24 years old by school enrollment, educational attainment, sex, race, and Hispanic origin, October 2002**

(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 .....	35,498	22,128	62.3	19,612	55.2	2,515	11.4	13,370
Enrolled in school .....	19,376	8,984	46.4	8,088	41.7	895	10.0	10,392
Enrolled in high school <sup>1</sup> .....	9,163	3,182	34.7	2,721	29.7	461	14.5	5,981
Men .....	4,823	1,548	32.1	1,298	26.9	251	16.2	3,275
Women .....	4,340	1,634	37.6	1,423	32.8	210	12.9	2,706
White .....	7,173	2,776	38.7	2,397	33.4	379	13.6	4,397
Black .....	1,478	303	20.5	240	16.2	63	20.8	1,175
Hispanic origin .....	1,440	333	23.1	253	17.6	80	23.9	1,108
Enrolled in college .....	10,213	5,802	56.8	5,367	52.6	435	7.5	4,411
Enrolled in 2-year college .....	2,736	1,875	68.5	1,708	62.4	166	8.9	861
Enrolled in 4-year college .....	7,477	3,927	52.5	3,659	48.9	268	6.8	3,550
Full-time students .....	8,660	4,490	51.8	4,141	47.8	349	7.8	4,170
Part-time students .....	1,553	1,312	84.5	1,226	78.9	86	6.5	241
Men .....	4,701	2,521	53.6	2,343	49.8	178	7.1	2,179
Women .....	5,512	3,281	59.5	3,025	54.9	256	7.8	2,232
White .....	8,020	4,734	59.0	4,423	55.1	311	6.6	3,287
Black .....	1,279	620	48.5	527	41.2	93	15.0	658
Hispanic origin .....	992	598	60.3	543	54.8	55	9.1	394
Not enrolled in school .....	16,122	13,144	81.5	11,524	71.5	1,620	12.3	2,979
16 to 19 years .....	3,361	2,490	74.1	2,021	60.1	469	18.8	871
20 to 24 years .....	12,762	10,654	83.5	9,503	74.5	1,151	10.8	2,108
Men .....	8,370	7,403	88.5	6,506	77.7	897	12.1	967
Less than a high school diploma .....	2,108	1,744	82.7	1,468	69.6	276	15.8	364
High school graduates, no college .....	3,876	3,428	88.4	3,010	77.7	418	12.2	448
Less than a bachelor's degree .....	1,722	1,601	93.0	1,449	84.2	151	9.5	121
College graduates .....	664	631	95.0	579	87.2	51	8.2	33
Women .....	7,753	5,741	74.0	5,018	64.7	723	12.6	2,012
Less than a high school diploma .....	1,612	888	55.1	668	41.5	220	24.7	724
High school graduates, no college .....	3,462	2,564	74.1	2,213	63.9	351	13.7	898
Less than a bachelor's degree .....	1,721	1,438	83.6	1,327	77.1	112	7.8	283
College graduates .....	957	851	88.9	810	84.7	40	4.7	106
White .....	12,854	10,683	83.1	9,605	74.7	1,078	10.1	2,171
Black .....	2,472	1,842	74.5	1,381	55.9	461	25.0	630
Hispanic origin .....	3,687	2,898	78.6	2,538	68.8	360	12.4	789

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

NOTE: Detail for the above race and Hispanic-origin groups will not sum to totals because data for the "other races" groups are not presented and

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