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COLLEGE ENROLLMENT AND WORK ACTIVITY OF RECENT HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE GRADUATES — 2023

In October 2023, 61.4 percent of 2023 high school graduates ages 16 to 24 were enrolled in colleges or universities, little changed from the previous year, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Among 20- to 29-year-olds who received a bachelor's degree in 2023, 70.2 percent were employed, down from 76.4 percent over the year.

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 ages 16 to 24, this news release presents information on recent degree recipients ages 20 to 29. For more information, see the Technical Note in this news release.

Highlights from the October 2023 data:

- Among recent high school graduates ages 16 to 24, 57.6 percent of men and 65.3 percent of women were enrolled in college. (See table 1.)
- Among 16- to 24-year-olds, 43.7 percent of recent high school dropouts were working or looking for work, lower than the labor force participation rate of 71.7 percent for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college. (See table 1.)
- There were 18.0 million people ages 16 to 24 who were not enrolled in school—45.6 percent of all people in this age group. (See table 2.)
- Among 20- to 29-year-olds, 61.0 percent of recent associate degree recipients, 70.2 percent of recent bachelor's degree recipients, and 84.5 percent of recent advanced degree recipients were employed. (See table 3.)
- Twenty-six percent of recent bachelor's degree recipients ages 20 to 29 were enrolled in school. (See table 3.)

- Among 20- to 29-year-olds, unemployment rates were 6.8 percent for recent associate degree recipients, 12.3 percent for recent bachelor's degree recipients, and 6.8 percent for recent advanced degree recipients. (See table 3.)

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

Of the 3.1 million youth ages 16 to 24 who graduated from high school between January and October 2023, 1.9 million were enrolled in college in October. The college enrollment rate of recent high school graduates, at 61.4 percent in October 2023, was little different from the rate of 62.0 percent in October 2022. (See table 1.)

Among 2023 high school graduates ages 16 to 24, the college enrollment rate for young women, at 65.3 percent in October 2023, continued to be higher than the rate for young men (57.6 percent). By race and ethnicity, the college enrollment rates in October 2023 were 84.7 percent for Asians, 59.9 percent for Whites, 59.6 percent for Blacks, and 51.8 percent for Hispanics.

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 in October 2023 was 32.4 percent. The participation rates for male and female graduates enrolled in college were 31.4 percent and 33.2 percent, respectively.

Among recent high school graduates enrolled in college in October 2023, about 9 in 10 were full-time students. Recent graduates enrolled as full-time students were less likely to be in the labor force (29.6 percent) than were their peers enrolled part time (68.9 percent).

Among recent high school graduates enrolled in college, 3 out of 4 attended 4-year colleges in October 2023. Of these students, 26.1 percent participated in the labor force, about half the rate of recent graduates enrolled in 2-year colleges (50.8 percent).

Recent high school graduates not enrolled in college in October 2023 were more than twice as likely to be in the labor force as graduates enrolled in college (71.7 percent versus 32.4 percent). For both groups, labor force participation was little changed from the previous year. The unemployment rate was 12.9 percent for recent graduates enrolled in college and 17.8 percent for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college.

Between October 2022 and October 2023, 614,000 young people dropped out of high school. The labor force participation rate for recent dropouts (43.7 percent) continued to be much lower than the rate for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college (71.7 percent). The unemployment rate for recent high school dropouts was 23.5 percent, nearly double the rate for recent graduates enrolled in college (12.9 percent).

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

In October 2023, 21.4 million 16- to 24-year-olds, or 54.4 percent of youth, were enrolled in high school (9.5 million) or in college (11.9 million). The labor force participation rate for youth enrolled in school, at 37.3 percent, was little changed from October 2022 to October 2023. The

unemployment rate for youth enrolled in school edged up to 7.4 percent from the previous year. (See table 2.)

In October 2023, high school students continued to be less likely than college students to participate in the labor force (25.7 percent versus 46.7 percent). The participation rates for male and female high school students were 24.6 percent and 26.8 percent, respectively.

Among college students, those enrolled full time were much less likely to participate in the labor force in October 2023 than were part-time students (41.7 percent versus 82.7 percent). Students at 4-year colleges were also less likely to be in the labor force than were students at 2-year colleges (43.7 percent and 57.6 percent, respectively). Female college students' participation rate was higher than the rate for male college students (51.4 percent, compared with 40.9 percent). By race and ethnicity, the labor force participation rate was lower for Asian college students (32.9 percent) than for their Black (43.9 percent), White (48.9 percent), and Hispanic (50.6 percent) counterparts.

In October 2023, the unemployment rate for high school students increased by 4.9 percentage points over the year, to 12.4 percent, while the rate for college students, at 5.2 percent, was little changed.

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

In October 2023, 18.0 million people ages 16 to 24 were not enrolled in school. The labor force participation rate of youth not enrolled in school was 79.4 percent. Among youth not enrolled in school in October 2023, young men continued to be more likely than young women to participate in the labor force (81.6 percent, compared with 76.9 percent). (See table 2.)

Labor force participation rates for young men and young women not enrolled in school were highest for those with a bachelor's degree or higher (92.2 percent and 91.0 percent, respectively) and lowest for young men and young women with less than a high school diploma (69.0 percent and 54.6 percent, respectively).

The unemployment rate for youth ages 16 to 24 not enrolled in school, at 9.2 percent in October 2023, changed little over the year. Among those not-enrolled youth who did not have a high school diploma, unemployment rates were 14.0 percent for young men and 13.7 percent for young women. The jobless rates of young men and young women with at least a bachelor's degree were 7.4 percent and 7.1 percent, respectively. Among youth not enrolled in school, the unemployment rates were 14.0 percent for Blacks, 10.1 percent for Hispanics, 7.9 percent for Whites, and 6.7 percent for Asians.

Recent College Graduates (Ages 20 to 29)

Between January and October 2023, 1.1 million 20- to 29-year-olds earned a bachelor's degree; of these, 757,000 (or 70.2 percent) were employed in October 2023. Among recent bachelor's degree recipients, 75.2 percent of men were employed, compared with 66.8 percent of women. The unemployment rate for recent college graduates with a bachelor's degree, at 12.3 percent,

increased by 3.7 percentage points from the previous year. In October 2023, the jobless rate for female bachelor's degree recipients increased to 14.8 percent over the year, while the rate for male bachelor's degree recipients (8.8 percent) was little changed. (See table 3.)

Twenty-six percent of bachelor's degree recipients were enrolled in school in October 2023. These recent graduates who were enrolled in school were less likely to be employed than those who were not enrolled (44.0 percent versus 79.2 percent).

Between January and October 2023, 403,000 people ages 20 to 29 earned an advanced degree—that is, a master's, professional, or doctoral degree. Among these recent graduates, 84.5 percent were employed in October 2023. The unemployment rate for recent advanced degree recipients was 6.8 percent.

Recent Associate Degree Recipients (Ages 20 to 29)

Of the 299,000 20- to 29-year-olds who completed an associate degree between January and October 2023, 61.0 percent were employed in October 2023. The unemployment rate for recent associate degree recipients was 6.8 percent. (See table 3.)

Recent associate degree recipients ages 20 to 29 were much more likely to have completed an academic program (74.2 percent) than a vocational program (25.8 percent) in October 2023. 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.

In October 2023, 44.1 percent of recent associate degree recipients were enrolled in school. Of the 132,000 recent recipients who were enrolled in school, 46.1 percent were employed. By contrast, 72.7 percent of the 167,000 recent associate degree recipients who were not enrolled in school were employed.

Technical Note

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

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Definitions

Definitions of the principal terms used in this news release 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. People 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. People 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. People 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. People 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. People 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. People 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.

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.

Table 1. Labor force status of 2023 high school graduates and 2022-2023 high school dropouts 16 to 24 years old by school enrollment, educational attainment, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, October 2023

[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, 2023 high school graduates ¹	3,086	1,467	47.5	1,235	40.0	231	15.8	1,619
Men.....	1,551	770	49.7	614	39.6	156	20.3	780
Women.....	1,535	696	45.4	622	40.5	75	10.7	839
White.....	2,267	1,147	50.6	967	42.7	180	15.7	1,119
Black or African American.....	408	191	46.9	158	38.8	33	17.3	217
Asian.....	209	42	20.2	42	20.2	-	-	166
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	739	413	56.0	332	44.9	81	19.7	325
Enrolled in college								
Total, enrolled in college.....	1,896	614	32.4	534	28.2	79	12.9	1,283
Enrolled in 2-year college.....	481	244	50.8	213	44.3	31	12.9	237
Enrolled in 4-year college.....	1,415	369	26.1	321	22.7	48	13.0	1,046
Full-time students.....	1,763	522	29.6	449	25.5	73	14.0	1,241
Part-time students.....	133	92	68.9	86	64.3	6	6.8	41
Men.....	893	280	31.4	242	27.0	39	13.8	613
Women.....	1,003	333	33.2	293	29.2	41	12.2	670
White.....	1,358	466	34.4	409	30.1	57	12.3	891
Black or African American.....	243	73	30.1	65	26.9	8	-	169
Asian.....	177	29	16.5	29	16.5	-	-	148
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	383	145	38.0	128	33.4	18	12.1	237
Not enrolled in college								
Total, not enrolled in college.....	1,190	853	71.7	701	58.9	152	17.8	337
Men.....	657	490	74.5	372	56.6	118	24.0	167
Women.....	532	363	68.2	329	61.8	34	9.4	169
White.....	909	681	74.9	558	61.4	123	18.1	228
Black or African American.....	165	118	71.4	93	56.1	25	21.4	47
Asian.....	32	13	-	13	-	-	-	19
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	356	268	75.3	204	57.4	64	23.8	88
RECENT HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS								
Total, 2022-2023 high school dropouts ²	614	268	43.7	205	33.4	63	23.5	346
Men.....	330	141	42.7	105	31.7	36	25.6	189
Women.....	284	128	44.9	101	35.4	27	21.1	157
White.....	474	186	39.2	144	30.4	42	22.6	288
Black or African American.....	79	47	60.0	36	45.1	12	-	31
Asian.....	20	5	-	5	-	-	-	15
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	204	84	41.1	60	29.4	24	28.4	120

¹ Data refer to persons who graduated from high school in January through October 2023.

² Data refer to persons who dropped out of school between October 2022 and October 2023.

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 2023

[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.....	39,392	22,255	56.5	20,358	51.7	1,897	8.5	17,138
Enrolled in school								
Total, enrolled in school.....	21,439	8,003	37.3	7,413	34.6	590	7.4	13,436
Enrolled in high school ¹	9,533	2,447	25.7	2,144	22.5	303	12.4	7,085
Men.....	4,995	1,231	24.6	1,051	21.0	180	14.6	3,764
Women.....	4,538	1,217	26.8	1,093	24.1	124	10.2	3,321
White.....	6,851	1,943	28.4	1,720	25.1	223	11.5	4,907
Black or African American.....	1,493	261	17.5	221	14.8	40	15.5	1,232
Asian.....	458	29	6.3	28	6.1	1	-	429
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	2,421	496	20.5	399	16.5	97	19.6	1,925
Enrolled in college.....	11,906	5,556	46.7	5,269	44.3	287	5.2	6,350
Enrolled in 2-year college.....	2,563	1,477	57.6	1,404	54.8	72	4.9	1,086
Enrolled in 4-year college.....	9,343	4,079	43.7	3,865	41.4	214	5.3	5,264
Full-time students.....	10,457	4,358	41.7	4,142	39.6	215	4.9	6,099
Part-time students.....	1,450	1,198	82.7	1,127	77.7	71	6.0	251
Men.....	5,356	2,188	40.9	2,072	38.7	116	5.3	3,168
Women.....	6,551	3,368	51.4	3,197	48.8	171	5.1	3,183
White.....	8,507	4,164	48.9	3,982	46.8	182	4.4	4,343
Black or African American.....	1,594	700	43.9	646	40.5	54	7.7	895
Asian.....	1,176	386	32.9	357	30.4	29	7.6	789
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	2,340	1,184	50.6	1,143	48.9	40	3.4	1,156
Not enrolled in school								
Total, not enrolled in school.....	17,953	14,251	79.4	12,945	72.1	1,307	9.2	3,702
16 to 19 years.....	3,799	2,548	67.1	2,193	57.7	355	13.9	1,252
20 to 24 years.....	14,154	11,704	82.7	10,752	76.0	952	8.1	2,450
Men.....	9,517	7,763	81.6	7,028	73.8	735	9.5	1,754
Less than a high school diploma.....	1,301	898	69.0	772	59.4	125	14.0	403
High school graduates, no college ²	5,137	4,136	80.5	3,714	72.3	422	10.2	1,001
Some college or associate degree.....	1,816	1,565	86.2	1,464	80.6	101	6.4	251
Bachelor's degree and higher ³	1,262	1,164	92.2	1,078	85.4	86	7.4	98
Women.....	8,437	6,489	76.9	5,917	70.1	572	8.8	1,948
Less than a high school diploma.....	930	508	54.6	438	47.1	69	13.7	423
High school graduates, no college ²	4,061	2,992	73.7	2,690	66.2	302	10.1	1,069
Some college or associate degree.....	1,701	1,401	82.4	1,315	77.3	87	6.2	299
Bachelor's degree and higher ³	1,744	1,587	91.0	1,474	84.5	113	7.1	157
White.....	13,315	10,595	79.6	9,758	73.3	837	7.9	2,720
Black or African American.....	2,691	2,188	81.3	1,881	69.9	307	14.0	503
Asian.....	698	515	73.7	480	68.8	34	6.7	184
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	5,002	3,981	79.6	3,578	71.5	403	10.1	1,021

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 2023 associate degree recipients and college graduates 20 to 29 years old by selected characteristics, October 2023

[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.....	299	196	65.4	183	61.0	13	6.8	104
Men.....	135	89	66.0	89	66.0	-	-	46
Women.....	165	107	64.9	94	56.9	13	12.4	58
20 to 24 years.....	163	108	65.9	94	57.8	13	12.3	56
25 to 29 years.....	136	88	64.8	88	64.8	-	-	48
Vocational program.....	77	54	69.5	49	63.0	5	-	24
Academic program.....	222	142	63.9	134	60.3	8	5.8	80
Enrolled in school.....	132	61	46.1	61	46.1	-	-	71
Not enrolled in school.....	167	135	80.6	122	72.7	13	9.8	32
RECENT COLLEGE GRADUATES²								
Total, 20 to 29 years.....	1,481	1,228	82.9	1,098	74.1	131	10.6	253
Men.....	610	506	82.9	464	76.0	42	8.3	104
Women.....	871	722	83.0	634	72.8	88	12.3	148
20 to 24 years.....	1,013	805	79.5	712	70.3	94	11.6	207
25 to 29 years.....	468	423	90.3	386	82.4	37	8.8	45
Enrolled in school.....	349	190	54.4	176	50.2	14	7.6	159
Not enrolled in school.....	1,132	1,038	91.8	922	81.5	116	11.2	93
White.....	1,074	926	86.2	853	79.4	73	7.9	148
Black or African American.....	172	124	72.1	88	51.4	35	28.7	48
Asian.....	196	140	71.1	123	62.8	16	11.6	57
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	173	141	81.6	122	70.3	19	13.8	32
Bachelor's degree								
Total, 20 to 29 years.....	1,078	863	80.0	757	70.2	106	12.3	215
Men.....	435	359	82.5	327	75.2	31	8.8	76
Women.....	643	504	78.4	429	66.8	75	14.8	139
20 to 24 years.....	892	700	78.5	620	69.5	80	11.4	192
25 to 29 years.....	186	163	87.6	137	73.7	26	15.9	23
Enrolled in school.....	276	136	49.2	122	44.0	14	10.6	140
Not enrolled in school.....	802	727	90.7	635	79.2	92	12.6	75
Advanced degree³								
Total, 20 to 29 years.....	403	366	90.7	341	84.5	25	6.8	38
Men.....	175	147	84.1	137	78.0	11	7.3	28
Women.....	228	218	95.7	204	89.6	14	6.4	10
20 to 24 years.....	120	105	87.3	92	76.1	13	12.8	15
25 to 29 years.....	283	260	92.1	249	88.1	11	4.3	22

¹ Data refer to persons who received an associate degree in January through October 2023.

² Data refer to persons who received a bachelor's or higher degree in January through October 2023.

³ Data refer to persons who received a master's, professional, or doctoral degree in January through October 2023.

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).