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COLLEGE ENROLLMENT AND WORK ACTIVITY OF 2005 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

In October 2005, 68.6 percent of high school graduates from the class of 2005 were enrolled in colleges or universities, according to data released today by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. The college enrollment rate for recent high school graduates was a historical high for the series dating back to 1959.

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 full-time and part-time enrollment status, level of education, and enrollment status a year earlier. 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

Of the 2.7 million youth who graduated from high school between October 2004 and October 2005, 1.8 million (68.6 percent) were attending college in October 2005. The college enrollment rate of young women, 70.4 percent, continued to exceed that of young men, 66.5 percent. Asians were more likely than whites, blacks, and Hispanics to be enrolled in college in the fall following their high school graduation.

Among recent high school graduates enrolled in college, 91.2 percent were full-time students. Of these full-time students, 44.3 percent were in the labor force, either working or looking for work, in October 2005. In contrast, 79.0 percent of part-time college students participated in the labor force.

About two-thirds of the 2005 high school graduates enrolled in college attended 4-year institutions. The labor force participation rate for these students was 39.9 percent, and their unemployment rate was 6.3 percent. In contrast, 61.3 percent of the recent high school graduates enrolled in 2-year institutions were in the labor force, and their unemployment rate was 11.0 percent. (See table 1.)

Recent high school graduates who were not enrolled in college in the fall of 2005 were more likely than enrolled graduates to participate in the labor force (78.5 versus 47.4 percent). The unemployment rate for those not enrolled in college was 20.6 percent in October 2005; the jobless rate for recent high school graduates enrolled in college was 8.4 percent.

Between October 2004 and October 2005, about 400,000 young people dropped out of high school. The labor force participation rate for these dropouts (57.2 percent) was considerably lower than the participation rate for recent high school graduates who had not enrolled in college (78.5 percent). Among recent

high school dropouts, men were more likely than women to be participating in the labor force in October 2005 (59.7 and 54.0 percent, respectively). The unemployment rate for recent high school dropouts was 32.9 percent in October 2005, and the unemployment rate of recent high school graduates who had not enrolled in college was 20.6 percent.

Youth Enrolled in School

In October 2005, 20.9 million 16- to 24-year olds were either enrolled in high school (9.9 million) or college (11.0 million). Among high school students, 31.0 percent were engaged in some form of labor force activity in October. Among college students who were enrolled full time, 52.7 percent participated in the labor force. In contrast, 88.2 percent of part-time college students participated in the labor force. (See table 2.)

Overall, the unemployment rate for high school students (17.0 percent) was higher than for college students (6.1 percent). Unemployment rates for black (35.0 percent) and Hispanic (24.8 percent) high school students continued to be higher than for whites (14.9 percent). Among college students, blacks had the highest unemployment rate (10.5 percent), while Hispanic and white college students had similar rates (5.9 and 5.7 percent, respectively). Asian college students had an unemployment rate of 4.6 percent in October 2005.

Out-of-School Youth

Of the 15.9 million 16- to 24-year olds not enrolled in school in October 2005, 81.3 percent were in the labor force. Among youth not in school, men were more likely than women to be in the labor force, 87.5 percent compared with 74.6 percent. The difference was greatest among those with less than a high school diploma and diminished with more education. (See table 2.)

Unemployment rates for youth not in school were lower among those with higher education levels. The unemployment rates for youths who had college degrees were 5.4 percent for men and 3.6 percent for women. In contrast, youth without a high school diploma who were not enrolled in school had unemployment rates of 15.3 percent for men and 21.2 percent for women.

Technical Note

The estimates in this release were obtained from a supplement to the October 2005 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 revised population controls for the Current Population Survey introduced in January 2005.

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 “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 2005 high school graduates and 2004-05 high school dropouts 16 to 24 years old by school enrollment, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, October 2005

(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, 2005 high school graduates ¹	2,675	1,529	57.2	1,320	49.3	209	13.7	1,146
Men	1,262	751	59.5	652	51.7	99	13.1	511
Women	1,414	778	55.0	668	47.2	110	14.2	635
White	2,147	1,256	58.5	1,106	51.5	149	11.9	891
Black or African American	354	196	55.3	146	41.1	50	25.5	159
Asian	80	22	27.1	22	27.1	—	(²)	58
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	390	237	60.6	193	49.4	44	18.5	154
Enrolled in college	1,834	869	47.4	795	43.4	73	8.4	965
Enrolled in 2-year college	642	393	61.3	350	54.5	43	11.0	249
Enrolled in 4-year college	1,192	475	39.9	445	37.4	30	6.3	717
Full-time students	1,672	741	44.3	676	40.4	65	8.7	931
Part-time students	162	128	79.0	120	73.8	8	6.6	34
Men	839	406	48.4	364	43.4	42	10.3	433
Women	995	463	46.5	431	43.3	31	6.8	533
White	1,490	728	48.8	674	45.2	54	7.4	762
Black or African American	201	82	40.7	68	33.9	14	16.8	119
Asian	70	19	(²)	19	(²)	—	(²)	50
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	211	96	45.7	91	43.1	6	5.8	114
Not enrolled in college	841	660	78.5	525	62.4	136	20.6	181
Men	423	345	81.6	288	68.2	57	16.4	78
Women	418	315	75.4	236	56.5	79	25.1	103
White	656	528	80.4	432	65.9	96	18.1	128
Black or African American	153	114	74.4	78	50.7	36	31.9	39
Asian	10	2	(²)	2	(²)	—	(²)	8
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	179	140	78.2	102	56.9	38	27.3	39
Total, 2004-05 high school dropouts ³	407	233	57.2	156	38.3	77	32.9	174
Men	227	136	59.7	87	38.3	49	35.9	91
Women	180	97	54.0	69	38.4	28	28.8	83
White	273	166	61.1	114	41.9	52	31.4	106
Black or African American	114	52	45.4	31	27.6	20	(²)	62
Asian	7	6	(²)	6	(²)	1	(²)	—
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	86	55	64.3	39	45.1	17	(²)	31

¹ Data refer to persons who graduated from high school between October 2004 and October 2005.

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

³ Data refer to persons who dropped out of school between October 2004 and October 2005.

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. In addition, persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race and, therefore, are classified by ethnicity as well as by race. Because of rounding, sums of individual items may not equal totals. Dash represents or rounds to zero. Data reflect revised population controls for the Current Population Survey introduced in January 2005.

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 2005

(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	36,761	22,338	60.8	20,032	54.5	2,306	10.3	14,423
Enrolled in school	20,905	9,442	45.2	8,528	40.8	914	9.7	11,462
Enrolled in high school ¹	9,905	3,075	31.0	2,552	25.8	523	17.0	6,830
Men	5,234	1,528	29.2	1,292	24.7	236	15.4	3,706
Women	4,671	1,547	33.1	1,260	27.0	287	18.6	3,123
White	7,597	2,587	34.1	2,200	29.0	387	14.9	5,010
Black or African American	1,565	292	18.7	190	12.1	102	35.0	1,273
Asian	343	74	21.5	70	20.4	4	(²)	269
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	1,661	391	23.5	294	17.7	97	24.8	1,270
Enrolled in college	11,000	6,367	57.9	5,976	54.3	391	6.1	4,633
Enrolled in 2-year college	2,749	1,845	67.1	1,693	61.6	152	8.2	904
Enrolled in 4-year college	8,250	4,522	54.8	4,282	51.9	240	5.3	3,728
Full-time students	9,396	4,952	52.7	4,612	49.1	340	6.9	4,443
Part-time students	1,604	1,414	88.2	1,363	85.0	51	3.6	189
Men	5,034	2,816	55.9	2,620	52.0	196	7.0	2,218
Women	5,965	3,551	59.5	3,356	56.3	195	5.5	2,414
White	8,603	5,169	60.1	4,877	56.7	292	5.7	3,433
Black or African American	1,328	656	49.4	587	44.2	69	10.5	672
Asian	715	326	45.6	311	43.5	15	4.6	389
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	1,243	681	54.8	641	51.6	40	5.9	561
Not enrolled in school	15,856	12,896	81.3	11,504	72.6	1,392	10.8	2,960
16 to 19 years	2,884	2,070	71.8	1,681	58.3	389	18.8	813
20 to 24 years	12,973	10,826	83.5	9,823	75.7	1,003	9.3	2,147
Men	8,279	7,240	87.5	6,442	77.8	798	11.0	1,039
Less than a high school diploma	2,009	1,602	79.8	1,357	67.5	246	15.3	406
High school graduates, no college ³	3,849	3,381	87.8	3,018	78.4	363	10.7	468
Some college or associate degree	1,713	1,576	92.0	1,424	83.1	153	9.7	137
Bachelor's degree and higher	708	681	96.1	644	90.9	37	5.4	27
Women	7,578	5,656	74.6	5,062	66.8	594	10.5	1,921
Less than a high school diploma	1,449	776	53.5	611	42.2	165	21.2	673
High school graduates, no college ³	3,219	2,355	73.2	2,083	64.7	271	11.5	864
Some college or associate degree	1,861	1,553	83.4	1,430	76.8	123	7.9	308
Bachelor's degree and higher	1,049	973	92.8	938	89.4	35	3.6	76
White	12,412	10,285	82.9	9,323	75.1	962	9.4	2,127
Black or African American	2,448	1,843	75.3	1,506	61.5	338	18.3	605
Asian	419	339	81.0	314	74.9	25	7.5	80
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	3,460	2,663	77.0	2,367	68.4	295	11.1	798

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 high school diploma or equivalent.

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.

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