

College Enrollment Rates

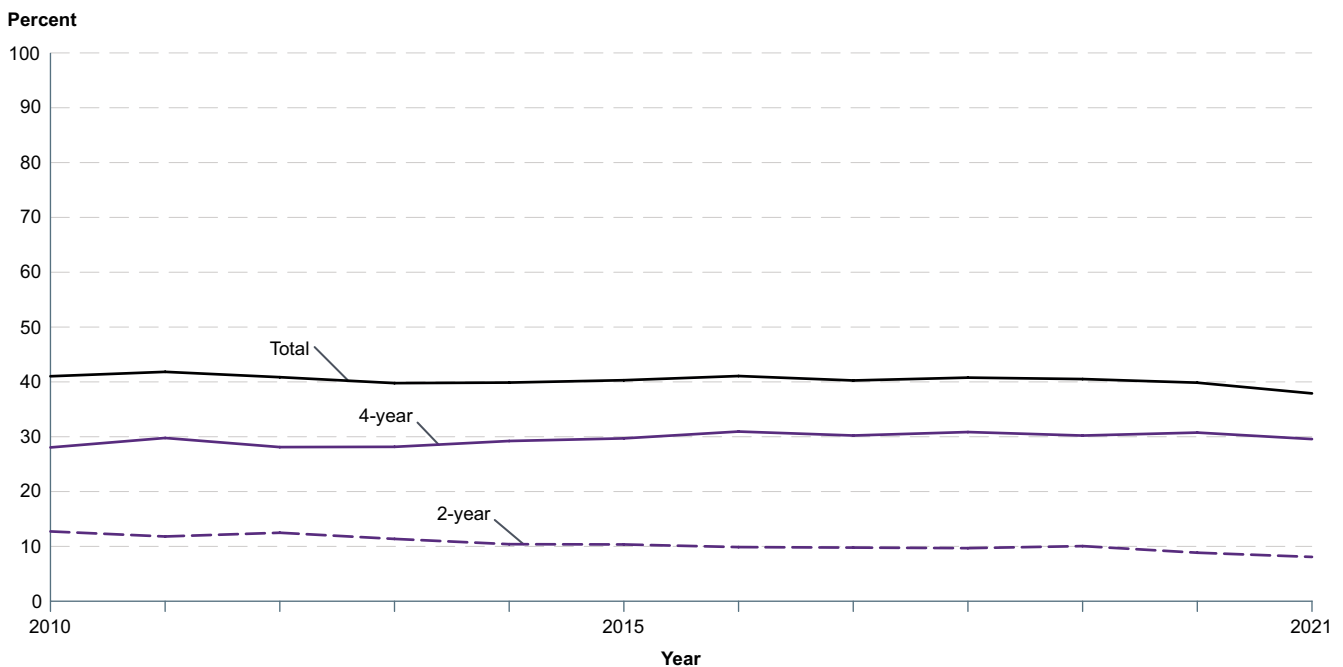
The overall college enrollment rate for 18- to 24-year-olds decreased from 41 percent in 2010 to 38 percent in 2021. The college enrollment rate in 2021 was higher for 18- to 24-year-olds who were Asian (60 percent) than for those who were White (38 percent), Black (37 percent), of Two or more races (35 percent), Hispanic (33 percent), and American Indian/Alaska Native (28 percent).

The overall college enrollment rate of 18- to 24-year-olds (ages in which students traditionally enroll in college) was 38 percent in 2021. In this indicator, *college enrollment rate* is defined as the percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds enrolled as undergraduate or graduate

students in 2- or 4-year institutions. The Immediate College Enrollment Rate indicator, in contrast, presents data on the percentage of high school completers who enroll in 2- or 4-year institutions in the fall immediately following high school.

Overall College Enrollment Rates

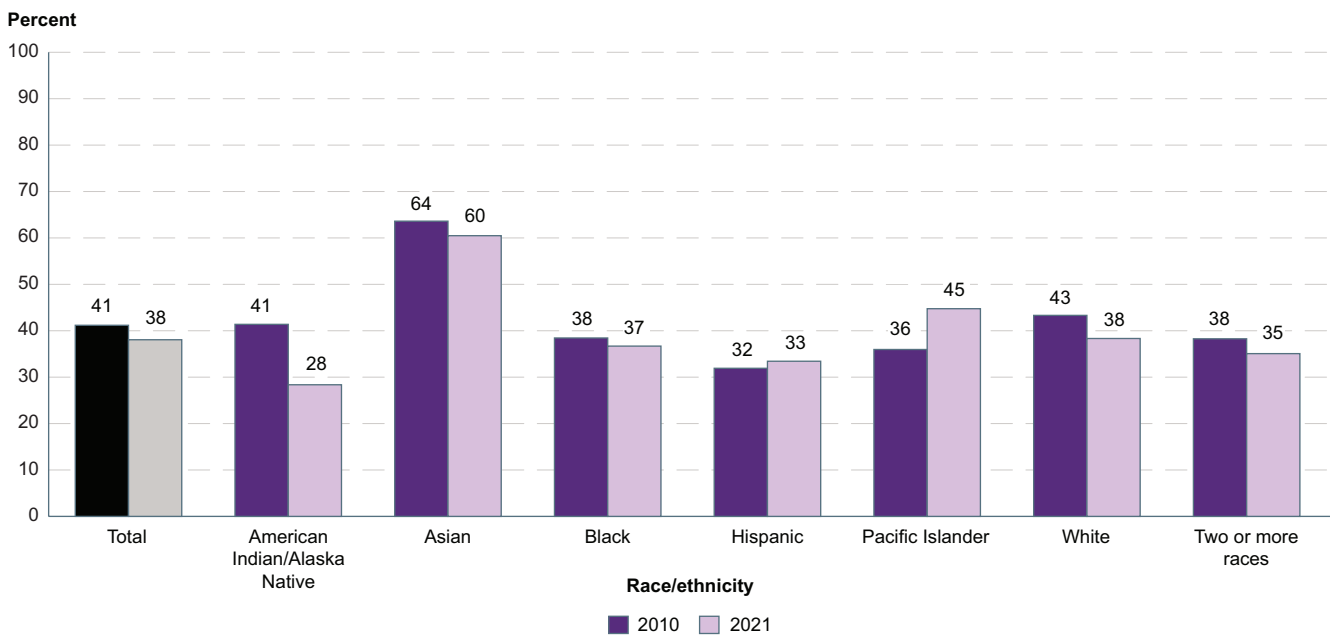
Figure 1. College enrollment rates of 18- to 24-year-olds, by level of institution: 2010 through 2021



NOTE: Includes 18- to 24-year-olds enrolled in college or graduate school. Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons in the military and persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities).
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 2010 through 2021. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, table 302.60.

The overall college enrollment rate decreased from 41 percent in 2010 to 38 percent in 2021. This was driven by the decrease in the college enrollment rate for 2-year institutions, which fell from 13 to 8 percent over the same

period. In comparison, the rate for 4-year institutions in 2021 (30 percent) was not measurably different from the rate in 2010. More recently, the overall college enrollment rate was lower in 2021 than in 2020 (38 vs. 40 percent).

College Enrollment Rates by Student Demographics**Figure 2. College enrollment rates of 18- to 24-year-olds, by race/ethnicity: 2010 and 2021**

NOTE: Includes 18- to 24-year-olds enrolled in college or graduate school. Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons in the military and persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities). Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 2010 and 2021. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, table 302.60.

Despite the overall decline in college enrollment rates among 18- to 24-year-olds, there was no measurable difference between college enrollments rates in 2010 and 2021 for most racial/ethnic groups. However, for White 18- to 24-year-olds, the college enrollment rate decreased from 43 to 38 percent over this period.

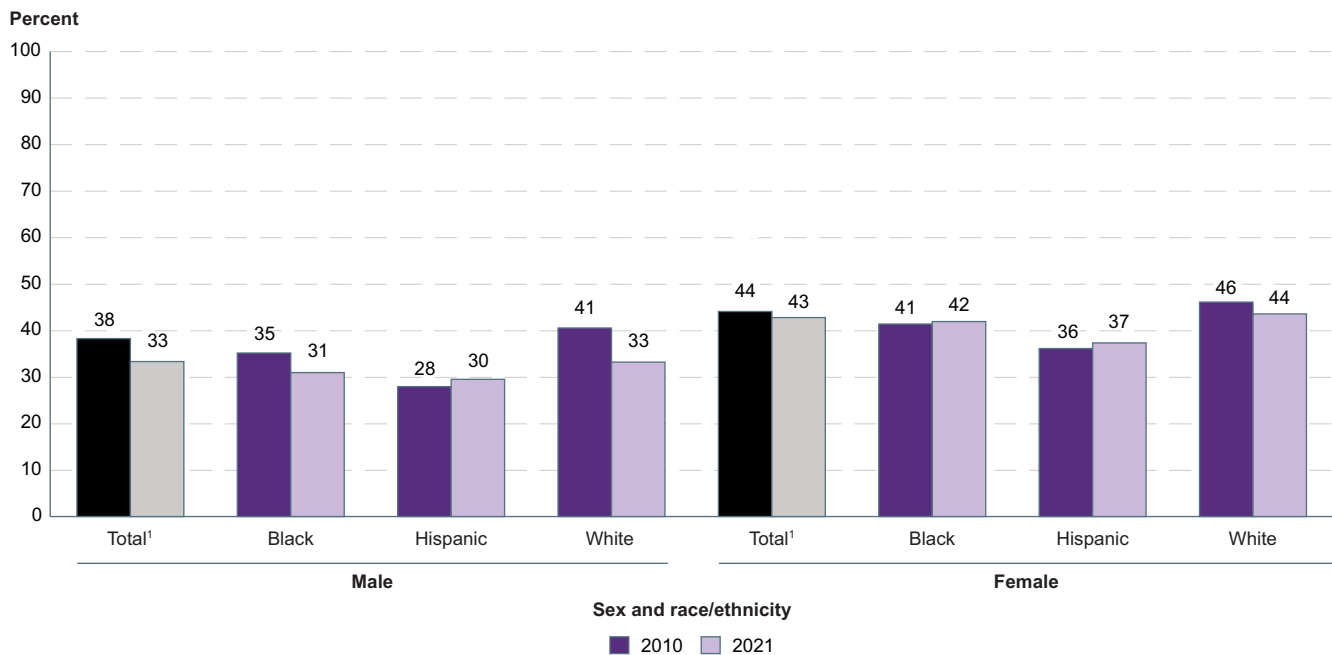
In 2021, the college enrollment rate among 18- to 24-year-olds was higher for those who were Asian (60 percent) than for those who were

- White (38 percent);
- Black (37 percent);
- of Two or more races (35 percent);
- Hispanic (33 percent); and
- American Indian/Alaska Native (28 percent).

In fact, the college enrollment rate for those who were Asian was higher than the rates for those who were White,

Black, of Two or more races, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native in every year from 2010 to 2021. For Pacific Islander 18- to 24-year-olds, the college enrollment rate in 2021 was 45 percent, which was not measurably different from the rate for Asian students. However, in most other years over this period, the enrollment rate for Asian 18- to 24-year-olds was higher than that for their Pacific Islander peers.

In 2021, the college enrollment rate was also higher for those who were White than for those who were Hispanic. There were no other measurable differences between racial/ethnic groups. In most years between 2010 and 2020, by comparison, the enrollment rate for those who were White was higher than the rates for those who were Black, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native.

Figure 3. College enrollment rates of 18- to 24-year-olds, by sex and race/ethnicity: 2010 and 2021

¹ Includes other racial/ethnic groups not shown separately.

NOTE: Includes 18- to 24-year-olds enrolled in college or graduate school. Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons in the military and persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities). Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 2010 and 2021. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, table 302.60.

In every year since 2010, the college enrollment rate for 18- to 24-year-olds overall was higher for females than for males. This pattern was also observed for both White and Hispanic 18- to 24-year-olds. Among those who were Black, the college enrollment rate was higher for females than for males in 8 of the last 12 years.

The college enrollment rate for 18- to 24-year-old females did not measurably differ in 2021 compared with 2010, either overall (43 percent in 2021) or for White, Black, and

Hispanic females (44, 42, and 37 percent, respectively, in 2021).¹ In contrast, the college enrollment rate for 18- to 24-year-old males decreased from 38 to 33 percent over this period. This was driven by the decrease in the college enrollment rate for White males (from 41 to 33 percent). Meanwhile, the rate in 2021 was not measurably different from the rate in 2010 for either Black or Hispanic males (31 and 30 percent, respectively, in 2021). The gender gap in enrollment rates increased between 2010 and 2021, both overall and for those who were White.

Endnotes:

¹ College enrollment rates by race/ethnicity and sex were only available for White, Black, and Hispanic 18- to 24-year-olds. Analyses were not available for other racial/ethnic groups.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, table 302.60

Glossary: College; Enrollment; Gap; Racial/ethnic group

Related indicators and resources: [College Participation Rates](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]; [Immediate College Enrollment Rate](#); [Snapshot: College Participation Rates for Racial/Ethnic Subgroups](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]; [Undergraduate Enrollment](#); [Young Adult Educational and Employment Outcomes by Family Socioeconomic Status](#) [*The Condition of Education 2019 Spotlight*]