

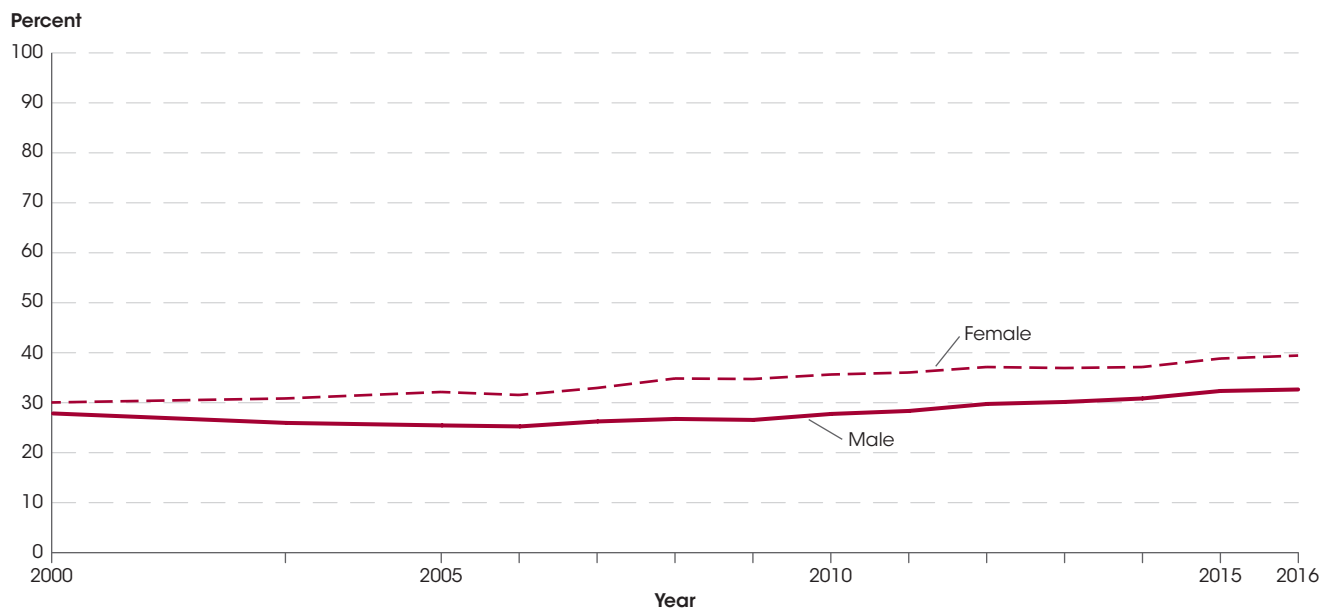
## Educational Attainment of Young Adults

*Between 2000 and 2016, educational attainment rates among 25- to 29-year-olds increased. During this time, the percentage who had received at least a high school diploma or its equivalent increased from 88 to 92 percent, the percentage with an associate's or higher degree increased from 38 to 46 percent, the percentage with a bachelor's or higher degree increased from 29 to 36 percent, and the percentage with a master's or higher degree increased from 5 to 9 percent.*

*Educational attainment* refers to the highest level of education completed (e.g., a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree, or a master's degree). Between 2000 and 2016, educational attainment rates among 25- to 29-year-olds increased. During this time, the percentage who had received at least a high school diploma or its equivalent

increased from 88 to 92 percent, the percentage with an associate's or higher degree increased from 38 to 46 percent, the percentage with a bachelor's or higher degree increased from 29 to 36 percent, and the percentage with a master's or higher degree increased from 5 to 9 percent.

**Figure 1. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds with a bachelor's or higher degree, by sex: Selected years, 2000–2016**

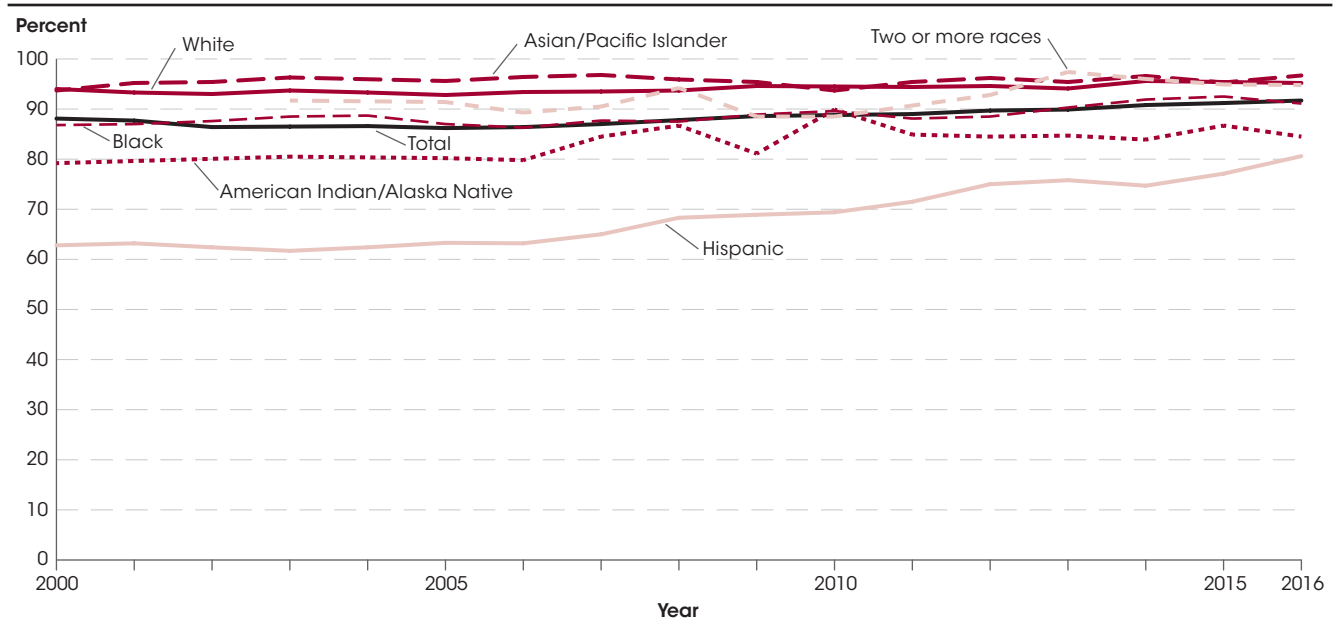


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, selected years, 2000–2016. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 104.20.

Since 2000, attainment rates among 25- to 29-year-olds have generally been higher for females than for males at each education level. Additionally, attainment rates have increased for both female and male 25- to 29-year-olds across all education levels. During this time period, there was no measurable change in the gender gap at the high school completion level, while the gender gaps have widened at the associate's and higher degree levels. Among 25- to 29-year-olds who had completed an associate's or higher degree, the gender gap widened from 5 percentage

points in 2000 to 10 percentage points in 2011, but has remained around 9 percentage points in every year since. Similarly, among 25- to 29-year-olds who had completed a bachelor's or higher degree, the gender gap widened from 2 percentage points in 2000 to 8 percentage points in 2009, but the gender gap has remained between 6 and 8 percentage points since 2009. Among 25- to 29-year-olds who had completed a master's or higher degree, the gender gap widened from 1 percentage point in 2000 to 4 percentage points in 2016.

**Figure 2. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds with at least a high school diploma or its equivalent, by race/ethnicity: 2000-2016**

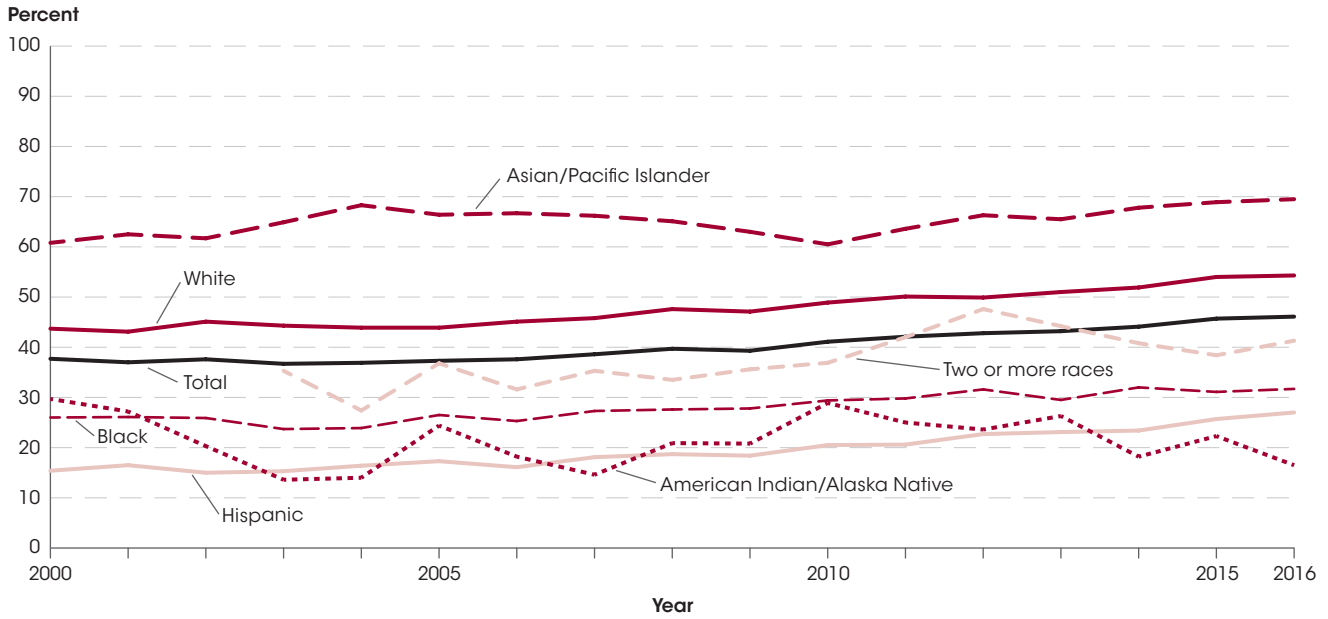


NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Prior to 2003, separate data on persons of Two or more races were not available and data were missing in 2004. Data on Asians/Pacific Islanders were missing in 2004. Data on American Indians/Alaska Natives were missing in 2001, 2002, and 2004. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, selected years, 2000-2016. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2011*, table 8 and *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 104.20.

Between 2000 and 2016, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who had completed at least a high school diploma or its equivalent increased for those who were White (from 94 to 95 percent), Black (from 87 to 91 percent), Hispanic (from 63 to 81 percent), and Asian/Pacific Islander (from 94 to 97 percent). The percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native 25- to 29-year-olds with at least a high school diploma or its equivalent in 2016 (84 percent) was not measurably different from the percentage in 2000, and the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds of Two or more races who had attained this level of education in 2016 (95 percent) was not measurably different from the percentage in 2003, the first year for which data on persons of Two or more races were available.

Between 2000 and 2016, the percentage of White 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained at least a high school diploma or its equivalent remained higher than the percentages of Black and Hispanic 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained this education level. However, the White-Black attainment gap at this education level narrowed from 7 to 4 percentage points over this period. The White-Hispanic gap at this education level narrowed from 31 to 15 percentage points, primarily due to the increase in the percentage of Hispanic 25- to 29-year-olds who had completed at least a high school diploma.

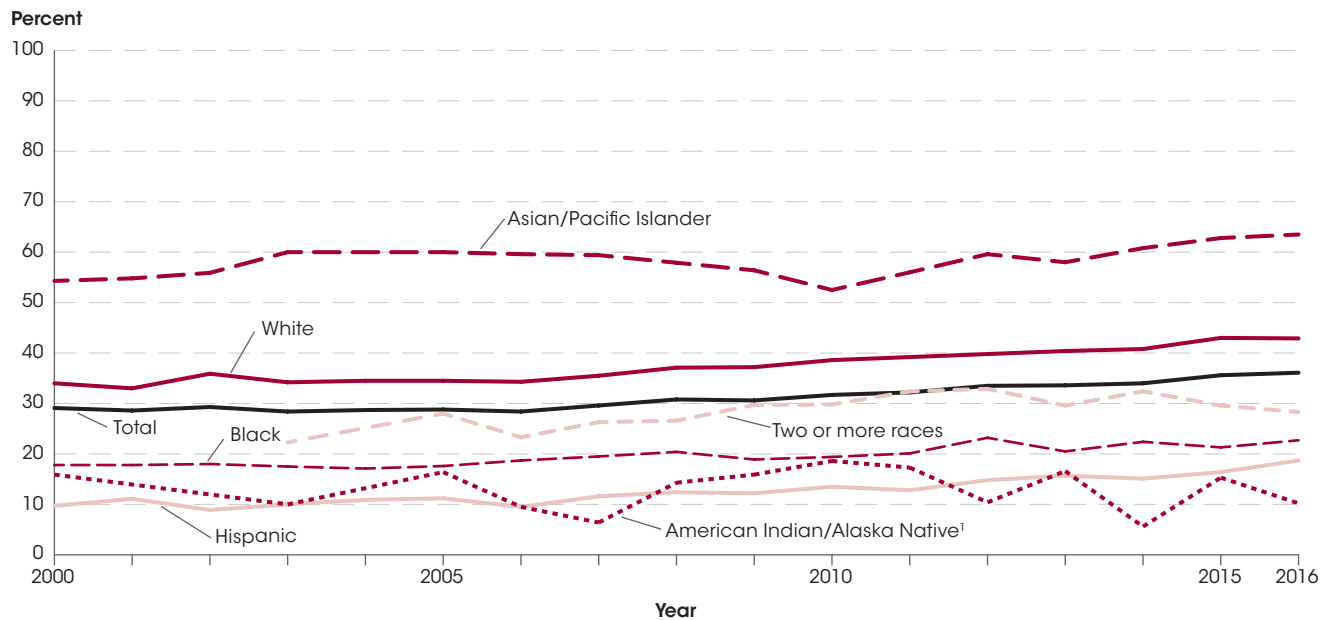
Figure 3. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds with an associate's or higher degree, by race/ethnicity: 2000-2016



NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Prior to 2003, separate data on persons of Two or more races were not available. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2000-2016. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 104.65 and *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 104.20.

From 2000 to 2016, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained an associate's or higher degree increased for those who were White (from 44 to 54 percent), Black (from 26 to 32 percent), Hispanic (from 15 to 27 percent), and Asian/Pacific Islander (from 61 to 69 percent). The 2016 percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native 25- to 29-year-olds (17 percent) who had attained an associate's or higher degree was not measurably different from the corresponding percentage in 2000. Similarly, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds of Two or more races in 2016 with an associate's or higher

degree (41 percent) was not measurably different from the corresponding percentage in 2003. Between 2000 and 2016, the gap between the percentages of White and Black 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained an associate's or higher degree widened from 18 to 23 percentage points, primarily due to the increase in the percentage of White 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained this level of education. The White-Hispanic gap at this education level did not change measurably over this period; in 2016, the gap was 27 percentage points.

**Figure 4. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds with a bachelor's or higher degree, by race/ethnicity: 2000-2016**

<sup>1</sup> Interpret data for 2003, 2006, 2007, and 2014 with caution. The coefficients of variation (CVs) for these estimates are between 30 and 50 percent. NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Prior to 2003, separate data on persons of Two or more races were not available and data were missing in 2004. Data on Asians/Pacific Islanders were missing in 2004. Data on American Indians/Alaska Natives were missing in 2001, 2002, and 2004. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, selected years, 2000-2016. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2011*, table 8 and *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 104.20.

From 2000 to 2016, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a bachelor's or higher degree increased for those who were White (from 34 to 43 percent), Black (from 18 to 23 percent), Hispanic (from 10 to 19 percent), and Asian/Pacific Islander (from 54 to 64 percent). The percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a bachelor's or higher degree (10 percent) in 2016 was not measurably different from the corresponding percentage in 2000. Similarly, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds of Two or more races (28 percent) who had attained this level of education in 2016 was not measurably different from the percentage in 2003. In 2016, neither the gap between White and Black 25- to 29-year-olds nor the gap between White and Hispanic 25- to 29-year-olds at this education level was measurably different from its corresponding gap in 2000.

From 2000 to 2016, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a master's or higher degree increased for those who were White (from 6 to 10 percent), Hispanic (from 2 to 4 percent), and Asian/Pacific Islander (from 16 to 24 percent). The 2016 percentage of Black 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a master's or higher degree (5 percent) was not measurably different from the percentage in 2000. Similarly, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds of Two or more races with a master's or higher degree in 2016 (5 percent) was not measurably different from the percentage in 2003.<sup>1</sup> The gap between the percentages of White and Black 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained this level of education widened from 2 to 5 percentage points from 2000 to 2016. The White-Hispanic gap also widened during this time, from 4 to 6 percentage points.

#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> American Indian/Alaska Native students who had attained a master's or higher degree are not included in this comparison because sample sizes were too small to provide a reliable estimate in 2000.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 104.20

**Related indicators and resources:** International Educational Attainment, Annual Earnings of Young Adults, Trends in Employment Rates by Educational Attainment [*The Condition of Education 2013 Spotlight*], Disability Rates and Employment Status by Educational Attainment [*The Condition of Education 2017 Spotlight*]

**Glossary:** Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree, Educational attainment (Current Population Survey), Gap, High school completer, High school diploma, Master's degree, Postsecondary education, Racial/ethnic group