

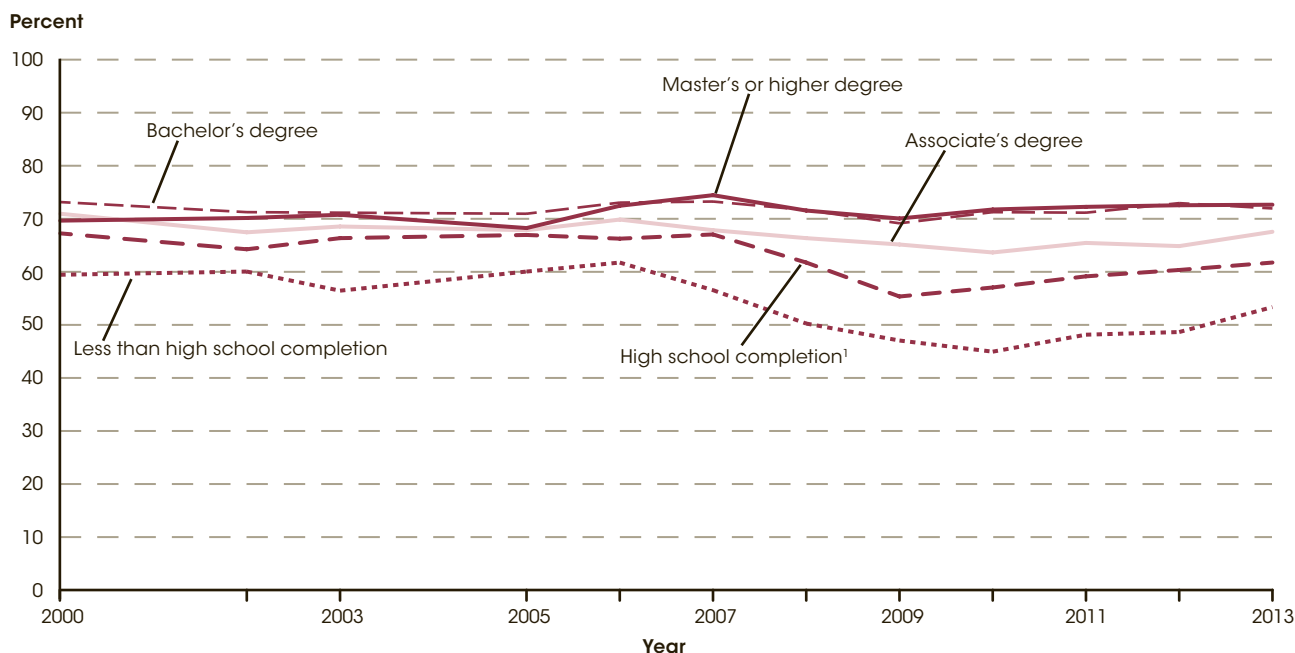
## Annual Earnings of Young Adults

*In 2013, young adults with a bachelor's degree earned more than twice as much as those without a high school credential (\$48,500 vs. \$23,900) and 62 percent more than young adult high school completers (\$48,500 vs. \$30,000).*

This indicator examines the annual earnings of young adults ages 25–34. Many people in this age group have recently completed their education and may be entering the workforce or transitioning from part-time to full-time work. In 2013, some 65 percent of young adults ages 25–34 who were in the labor force worked full time, year round (i.e., worked 35 or more hours per week for 50 or

more weeks per year). The percentage of young adults working full time, year round was generally higher for those with higher levels of educational attainment. For example, 72 percent of young adults with a bachelor's degree worked full time, year round in 2013, compared with 62 percent of young adult high school completers (those with a high school diploma or its equivalent).

**Figure 1. Percentage of the labor force ages 25–34 who worked full time, year round, by educational attainment: Selected years, 2000–2013**



<sup>1</sup> Includes equivalency credentials, such as the General Educational Development (GED) credential.

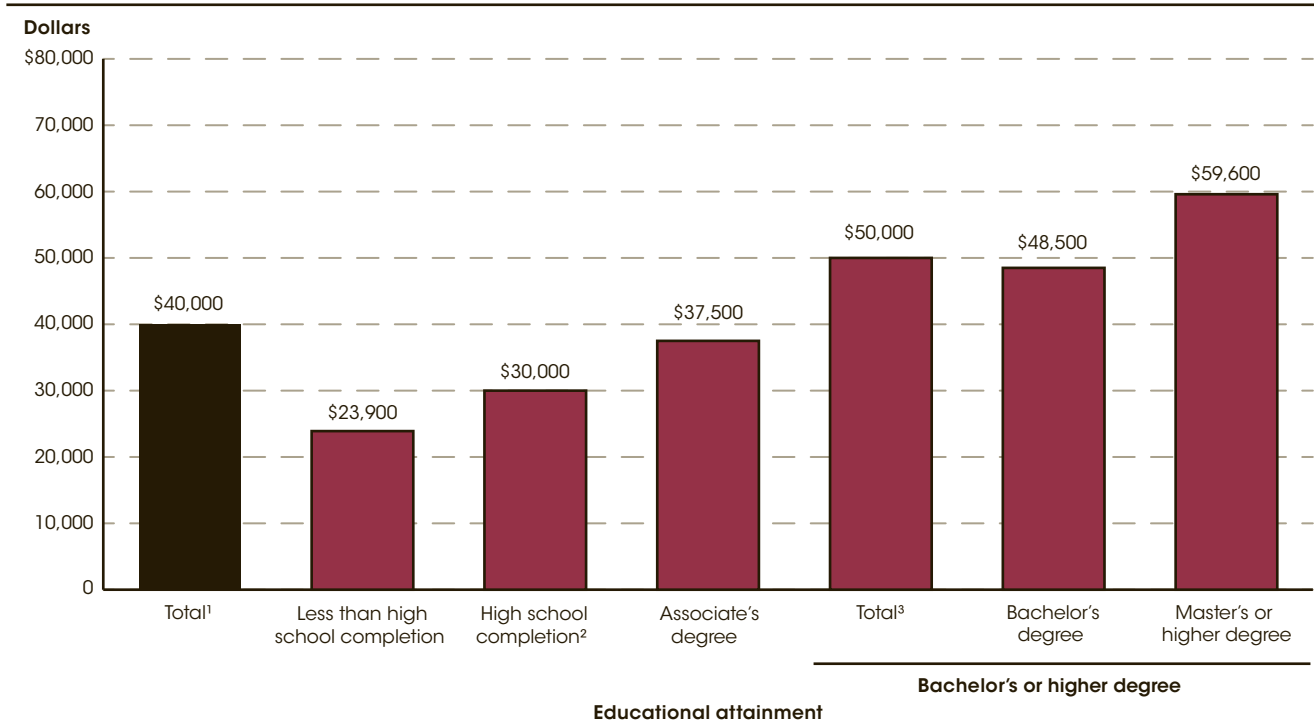
NOTE: Full-time year-round workers are those who worked 35 or more hours per week for 50 or more weeks per year.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS). "Annual Social and Economic Supplement," selected years 2001–2014; and previously unpublished tabulations. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 502.30.

Changes over time in the percentage of young adults in the labor force who worked full time, year round varied by level of educational attainment. From 2000 to 2013, the percentage of young adults without a high school credential (i.e., without a high school diploma or its equivalent) who worked full time, year round decreased from 59 to 49 percent, and the corresponding percentage of high school completers decreased from 67 to 62 percent. However, during the same period the percentages of young adults with an associate's degree,

bachelor's degree, or master's degree or higher who worked full time, year round did not change measurably. Between the most recent years of 2012 and 2013, the percentages of young adults working full time, year round did not change measurably for most levels of educational attainment. The exception was the percentage of young adults without a high school credential who worked full time, year round, which was higher in 2013 (49 percent) than in 2012 (49 percent).

**Figure 2. Median annual earnings of full-time year-round workers ages 25–34, by educational attainment: 2013**



<sup>1</sup> Represents median annual earnings of all full-time year-round workers ages 25–34.

<sup>2</sup> Includes equivalency credentials, such as the General Educational Development (GED) credential.

<sup>3</sup> Represents median annual earnings of full-time year-round workers ages 25–34 with a bachelor's or higher degree.

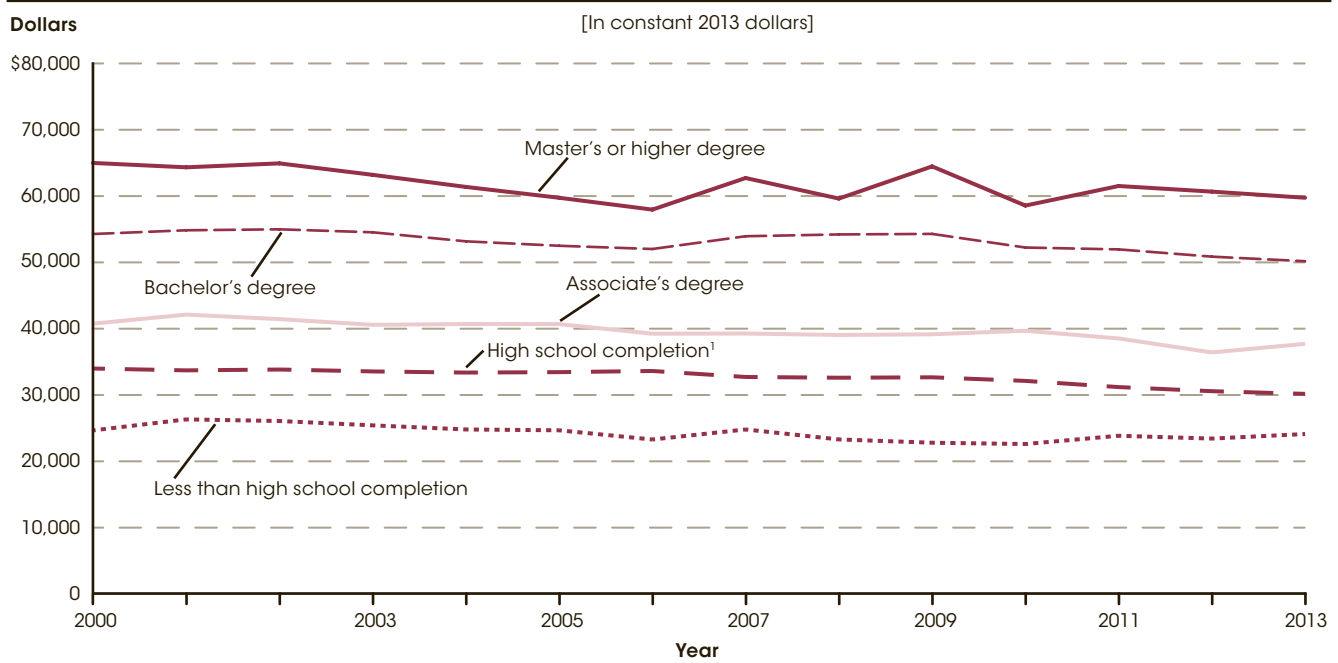
NOTE: Full-time year-round workers are those who worked 35 or more hours per week for 50 or more weeks per year.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), "Annual Social and Economic Supplement," 2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 502.30.

For young adults ages 25–34 who worked full time, year round, higher educational attainment was associated with higher median earnings; this pattern was consistent for 2000, 2003, and 2005 through 2013. For example, in 2013 median earnings for young adults with a bachelor's degree were \$48,500, compared with \$23,900 for those without a high school credential, \$30,000 for those with a high school credential, and \$37,500 for those with an associate's degree. In other words, young adults with a bachelor's degree earned more than twice as much as

those without a high school credential (103 percent more), 62 percent more than young adult high school completers, and 29 percent more than associate's degree holders. Additionally, in 2013 median earnings for young adults with a master's or higher degree were \$59,600, some 23 percent more than median earnings for young adults with a bachelor's degree. This pattern of higher earnings associated with higher levels of educational attainment also held for both males and females and across racial/ethnic groups (White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian).

Figure 3. Median annual earnings of full-time year-round workers ages 25-34, by educational attainment: 2000-2013



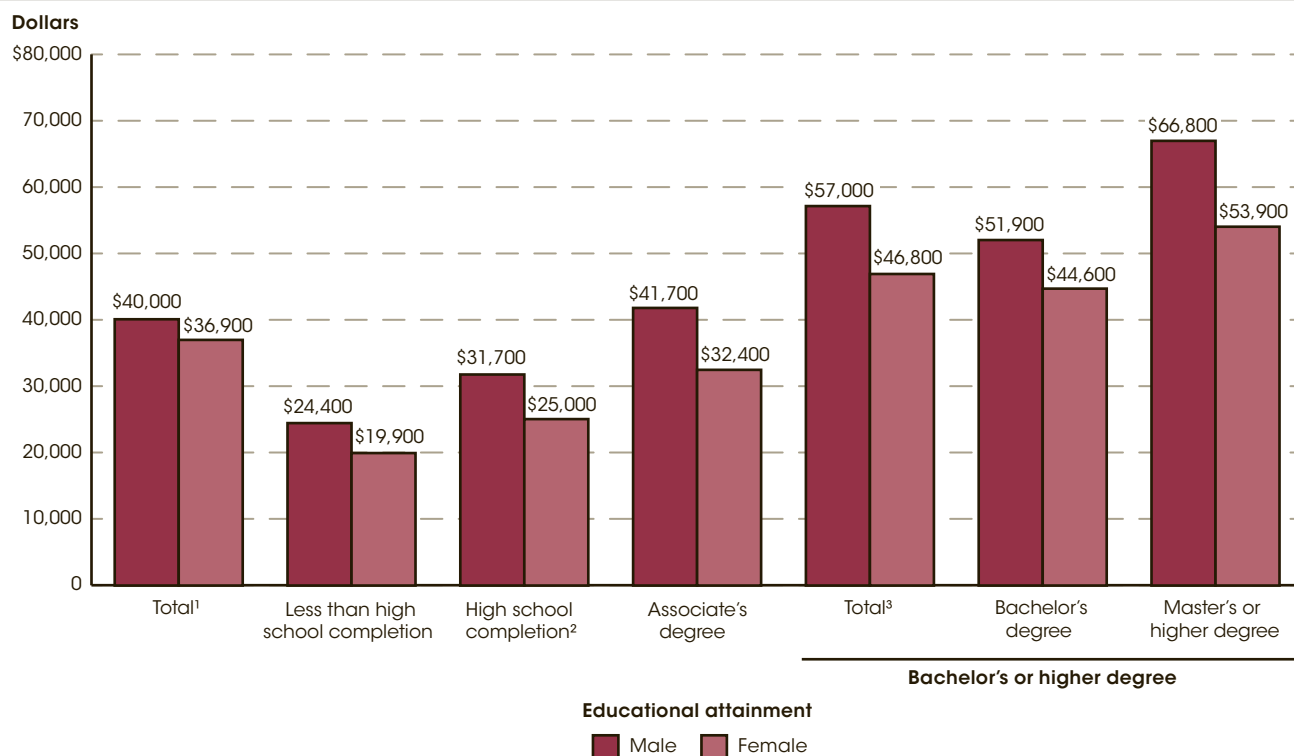
<sup>1</sup> Includes equivalency credentials, such as the General Educational Development (GED) credential.  
NOTE: Earnings are presented in constant dollars, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), to eliminate inflationary factors and to allow for direct comparison across years. Full-time year-round workers are those who worked 35 or more hours per week for 50 or more weeks per year.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), "Annual Social and Economic Supplement," 2001-2014; and previously unpublished tabulations. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 502.30.

Median earnings (in constant 2013 dollars) of young adults declined from 2000 to 2013 for high school completers, those with a bachelor's degree, and those with a master's or higher degree. During this period, the median earnings of young adult high school completers declined from \$33,800 to \$30,000 (an 11 percent decrease), the median earnings of young adults with a bachelor's degree declined from \$54,000 to \$48,500 (a 10 percent decrease), and the median earnings of young adults with a master's or higher degree declined from \$64,800 to \$59,600 (an 8 percent decrease). In general, median earnings for young adults did not change measurably between 2012 and 2013.

Gaps in median earnings (in constant 2013 dollars) among those with varying levels of educational attainment

exhibited different patterns of change over time. The difference in median earnings between those with a bachelor's degree and those without a high school credential narrowed between 2000 and 2013. In 2000, median earnings for young adults with a bachelor's degree were \$29,500 greater than median earnings for those without a high school credential; in 2013, this earnings differential was \$24,600. In addition, median earnings for high school completers were \$9,300 greater than median earnings for those without a high school credential in 2000, compared with the corresponding difference of \$6,100 in 2013. Differences in median earnings between those with a bachelor's degree and high school completers, and between those with a bachelor's degree and those with a master's or higher degree did not change measurably during the same period.

Figure 4. Median annual earnings of full-time year-round workers ages 25-34, by educational attainment and sex: 2013



<sup>1</sup> Represents median annual earnings of all full-time year-round workers ages 25-34.

<sup>2</sup> Includes equivalency credentials, such as the General Educational Development (GED) credential.

<sup>3</sup> Represents median annual earnings of full-time year-round workers ages 25-34 with a bachelor's or higher degree.

NOTE: Full-time year-round workers are those who worked 35 or more hours per week for 50 or more weeks per year.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), "Annual Social and Economic Supplement," 2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 502.30.

In 2013, median earnings for young adult males were higher than median earnings for young adult females at every level of educational attainment. For example, in 2013 young adult males with a bachelor's degree earned \$51,900, while their female counterparts earned \$44,600. In the same year, median earnings for White young adults exceeded the corresponding medians for Black and Hispanic young adults among those who did not complete high school, high school completers, and those with a bachelor's or higher degree. For instance, median earnings

in 2013 for young adults with a bachelor's or higher degree were \$50,000 for Whites, \$45,800 for Hispanics, and \$44,600 for Blacks. Among those with a bachelor's degree and those with a master's or higher degree, Asian young adults had higher median earnings than their peers in other racial/ethnic groups. For example, median earnings in 2013 for young adults with at least a master's degree were \$74,600 for Asians, \$58,800 for Whites, \$54,500 for Blacks, and \$49,500 for Hispanics.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 502.30

**Related indicators:** Employment Rates and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment (indicator 4)

**Glossary:** Bachelor's degree, Constant dollars, Consumer Price Index (CPI), Educational attainment (Current Population Survey), High school completer, Master's degree