

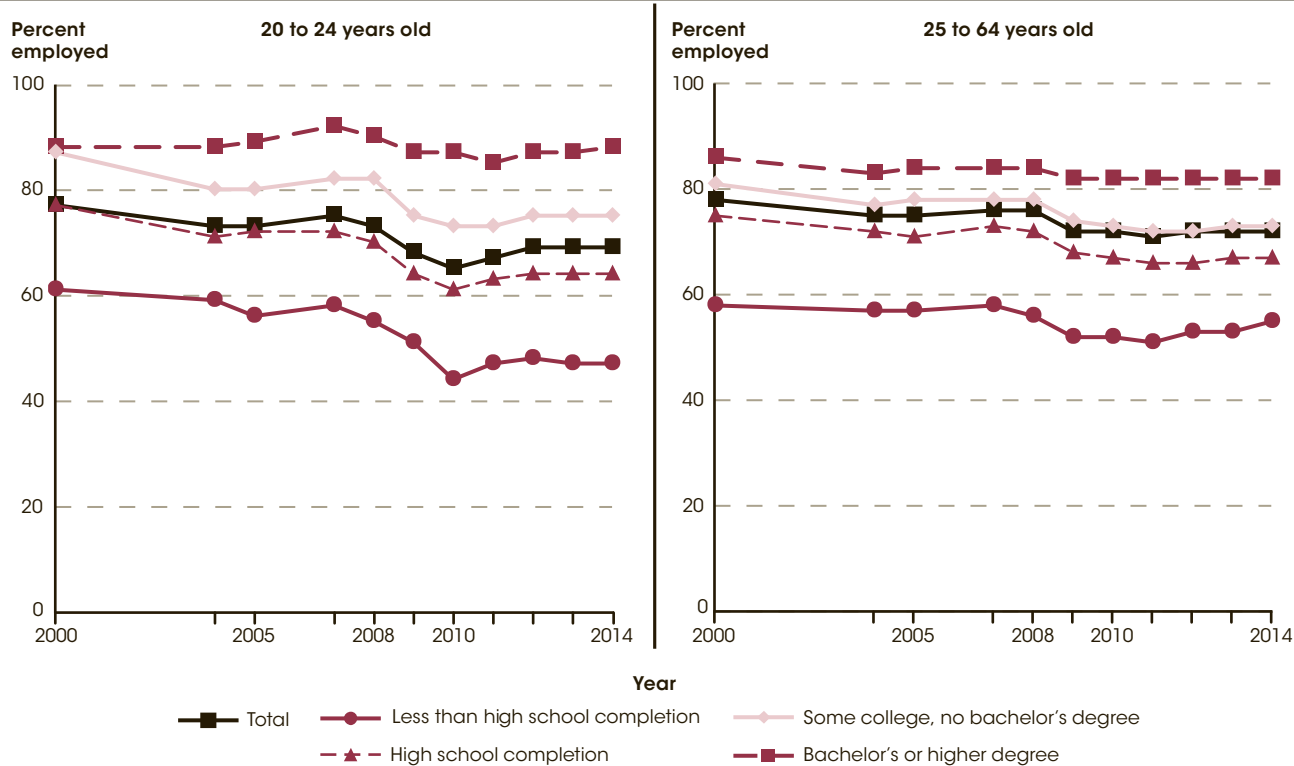
## Employment Rates and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment

*The percentage of the adult population who were employed was higher in 2014 than at the end of the recent recession in 2010, but lower than before the recession began in 2008.*

This indicator examines recent trends in two measures of labor market conditions—the employment to population ratio (also referred to as the employment rate) and the unemployment rate—by age group and educational attainment level. The employment to population ratio and the unemployment rate are distinct, although related. For each age group, the *employment to population* ratio is the number of persons in that age group who are employed as a percentage of the civilian population in that age group. The *unemployment rate* is the percentage of persons in the

civilian labor force who are not working and who made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the prior 4 weeks. (Note that the civilian labor force consists of all civilians who are employed or seeking employment.) Trends in the unemployment rate reflect net changes in the relative number of people who are looking for work, while the employment rate reflects whether the economy is generating jobs relative to population growth in a specific age group.

**Figure 1. Employment to population ratios, by age group and educational attainment: Selected years, 2000 through 2014**



NOTE: For each age group, the employment to population ratio, or employment rate, is the number of persons in that age group who are employed as a percentage of the civilian population in that age group. Data for 20- to 24-year-olds exclude persons enrolled in school. High school completion includes equivalency credentials, such as the General Educational Development (GED) credential. The data for the "Some college, no bachelor's degree" category includes persons with no bachelor's degree as well as those with an associate's degree.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Employment and Unemployment Statistics, unpublished annual average data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), selected years, 2000 through 2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 501.50.

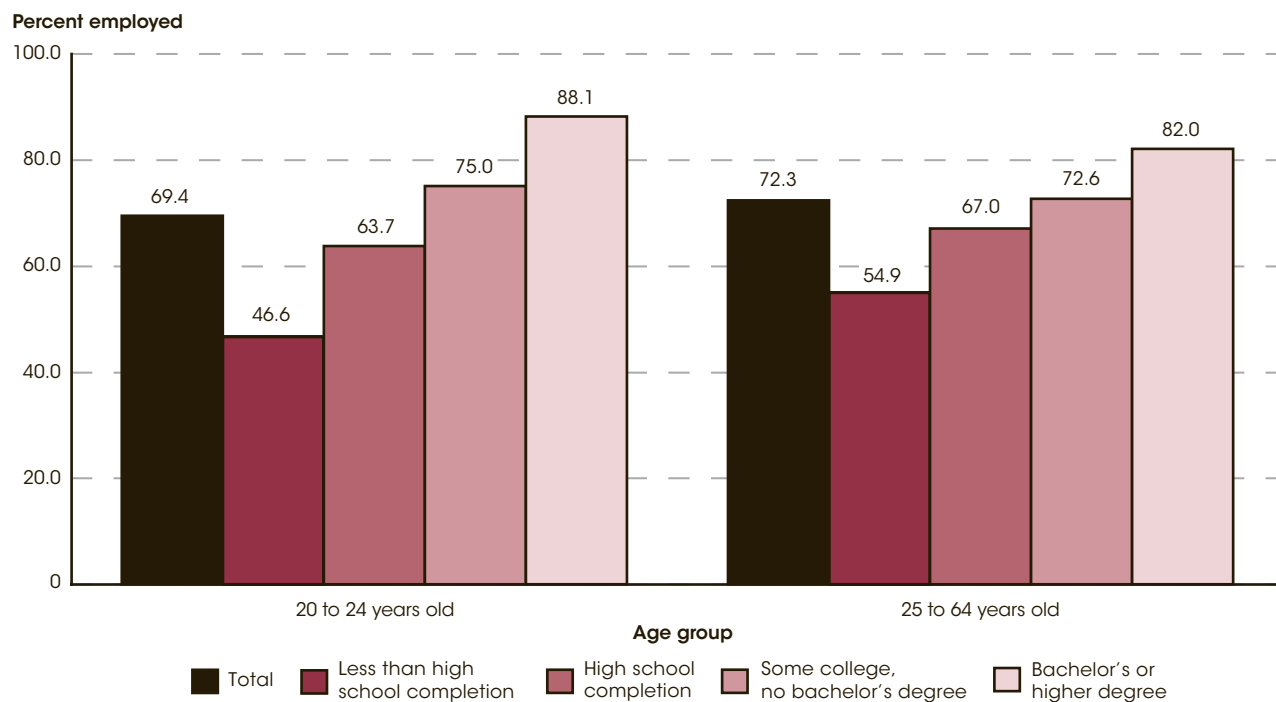
During the period from 2008 to 2010, the U.S. economy experienced a recession.<sup>1</sup> For young adults ages 20 to 24, the employment rate was lower in 2008, when the recession began, than it was in 2000 (73.4 vs. 77.4 percent). The employment rate was even

lower in 2010 (65.5 percent), after the end of the recession, than it was in 2008. While the employment rate for young adults was higher in 2014 (69.4 percent) than in 2010, the 2014 rate was still lower than the rate in 2008 or 2000.

The trend over time of the employment rate for adults ages 25 to 64 was similar to that for young adults ages 20 to 24. The rate for 25- to 64-year-olds was lower in 2010 (71.5 percent) than it was in either 2008 or 2000 (75.5 and 77.7 percent, respectively). The rate in 2014 (72.3 percent) was higher than it was in 2010

but lower than it was in 2008 or 2000. In addition, the employment rates in both 2014 and 2010, at each level of educational attainment for both age groups, were generally lower than the rate in 2008, when the recession began.

**Figure 2. Employment to population ratios, by age group and educational attainment: 2014**



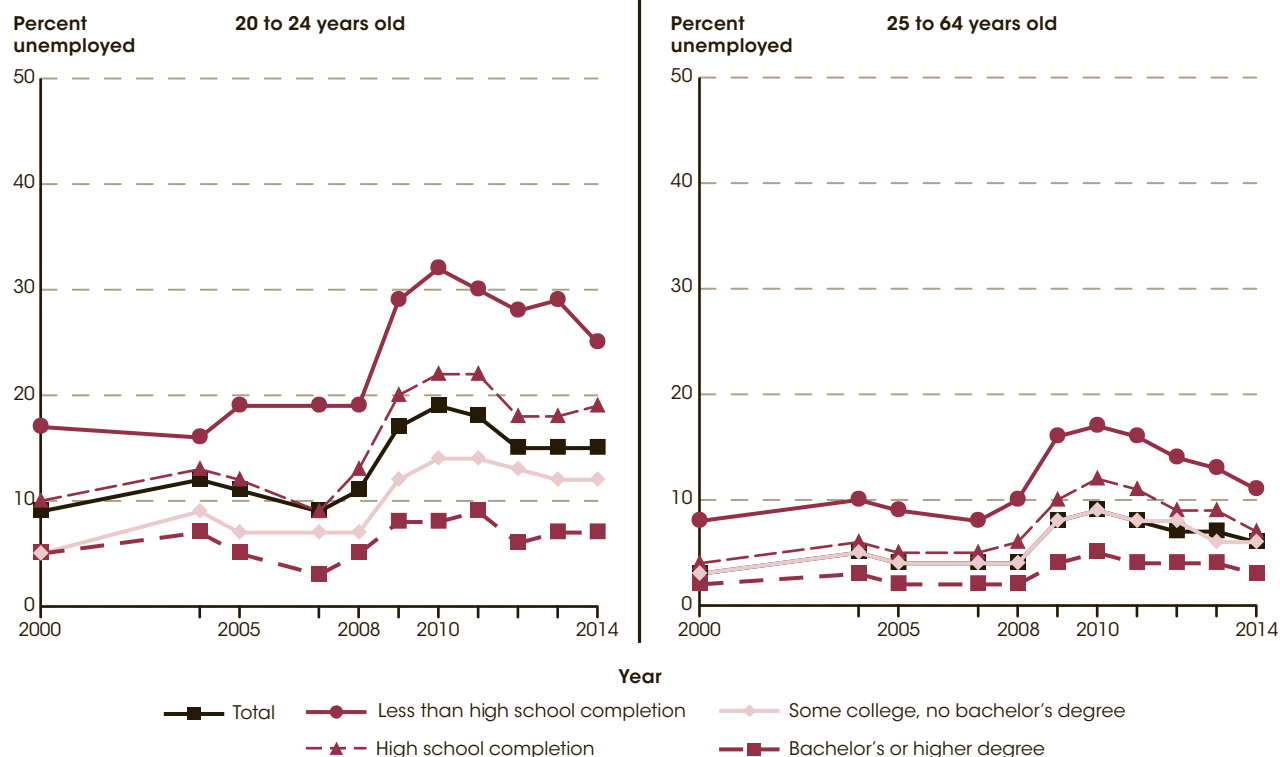
NOTE: For each age group, the employment to population ratio, or employment rate, is the number of persons in that age group who are employed as a percentage of the civilian population in that age group. Data for 20- to 24-year-olds exclude persons enrolled in school. The data for the "Some college, no bachelor's degree" category includes persons with no bachelor's degree as well as those with an associate's degree. High school completion includes equivalency credentials, such as the General Educational Development (GED) credential.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Employment and Unemployment Statistics, unpublished annual average data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), 2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 501.50.

Generally, the employment rate was higher for those with higher levels of educational attainment. For example, in 2014, the employment rate for young adults ages 20 to 24 with a bachelor's degree or higher was higher than the rate for young adults with some college (88.1 vs. 75.0 percent). The employment rate for young adults with some college was higher than the rate for those who had completed high school (63.7 percent), which was, in turn, higher than the employment rate for those young adults who had not finished high school (46.6 percent). This pattern of employment rates being higher for those with higher levels of educational attainment was also seen for those 25 to 64 years old and for men as well as women in both age groups.

In addition to the employment rate being higher for those with higher levels of educational attainment, employment rates were generally higher for males than females at

each level of educational attainment in 2014. The overall employment rate for young males 20 to 24 years old was higher than the rate for young females 20 to 24 years old (72.4 vs. 66.3 percent). It was also higher for young males with some college than for young females with the same level of educational attainment (78.6 vs. 71.6 percent). Similarly, the employment rate for young males who had completed high school was greater than the rate for young females who had completed high school (66.6 vs. 60.2 percent) and it was higher for young males who had not completed high school than for their female peers (58.3 vs. 30.5 percent). As with the younger cohort, the overall employment rate for males 25 to 64 years old was higher than the rate for females 25 to 64 years old (78.2 vs. 66.6 percent). This pattern held for older adults at each level of educational attainment, including those with a bachelor's degree or higher, which was not the case for young adults.

Figure 3. Unemployment rates, by age group and educational attainment: Selected years, 2000 through 2014



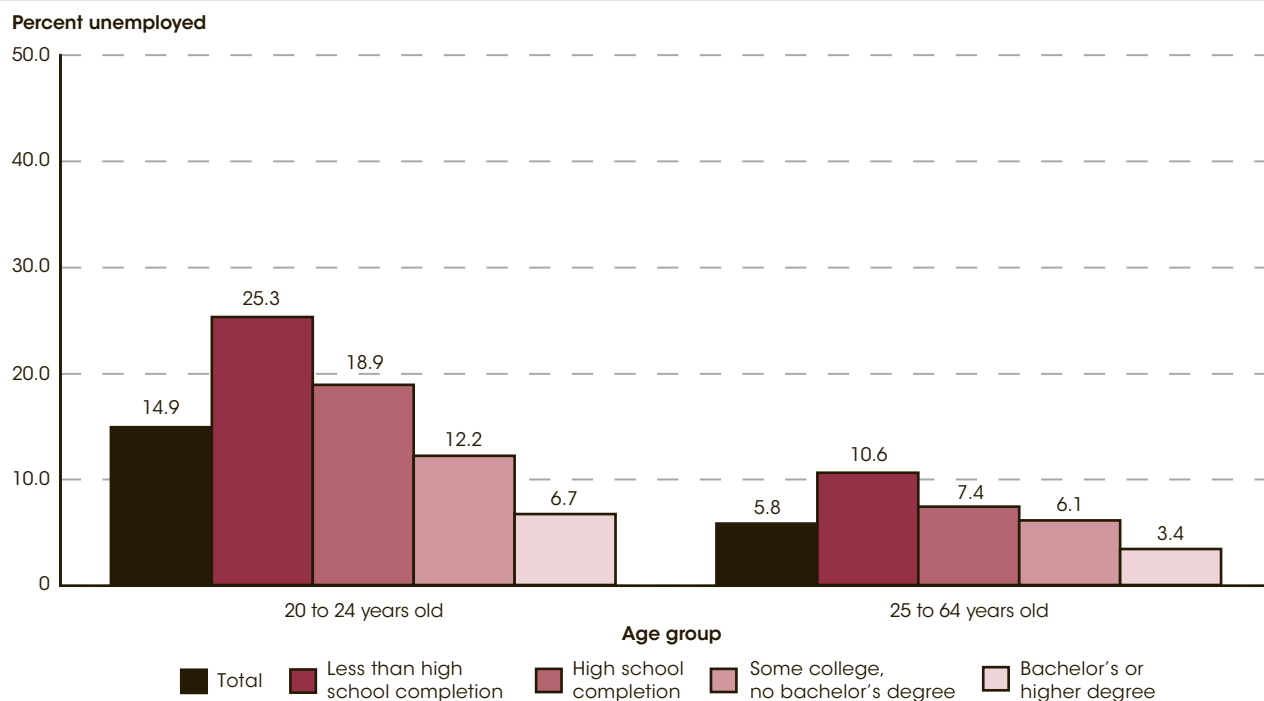
NOTE: The unemployment rate is the percentage of persons in the civilian labor force who are not working and who made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the prior 4 weeks. The civilian labor force consists of all civilians who are employed or seeking employment. Data for 20- to 24-year-olds exclude persons enrolled in school. The data for the "Some college, no bachelor's degree" category includes persons with no bachelor's degree as well as those with an associate's degree. High school completion includes equivalency credentials, such as the General Educational Development (GED) credential. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Employment and Unemployment Statistics, unpublished annual average data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), selected years, 2000 through 2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 501.80.

For young adults ages 20 to 24, the unemployment rate in 2010 (18.8 percent) was higher than it was in either 2008 or 2000 (10.7 and 9.2 percent, respectively). The unemployment rate for young adults was lower in 2014 (14.9 percent) than it was in 2010, when the recession ended, but higher than in either 2008 or 2000.

The trend over time of the unemployment rate for adults ages 25 to 64 was similar to that for young

adults ages 20 to 24. The unemployment rate was higher in 2010 (9.1 percent) than it was in either 2008 or 2000 (4.4 and 3.3 percent, respectively). The rate in 2014 (5.8 percent) was lower than in 2010 but higher than it had been in either 2008 or 2000. Generally, at each level of educational attainment for both age groups, the unemployment rate in 2014 was lower than the unemployment rate in 2010, but higher than the rates in 2008 and 2000.

Figure 4. Unemployment rates, by age group and educational attainment: 2014



NOTE: The unemployment rate is the percentage of persons in the civilian labor force who are not working and who made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the prior 4 weeks. The civilian labor force consists of all civilians who are employed or seeking employment. Data for 20- to 24-year-olds exclude persons enrolled in school. The data for the "Some college, no bachelor's degree" category includes persons with no bachelor's degree as well as those with an associate's degree. High school completion includes equivalency credentials, such as the General Educational Development (GED) credential. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Employment and Unemployment Statistics, unpublished annual average data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), 2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 501.80.

Generally, the unemployment rate was lower for those with higher levels of educational attainment. For example, in 2014, the unemployment rate for young adults 20 to 24 years old with a bachelor's degree or higher was lower than the rate for young adults with some college (6.7 vs. 12.2 percent). The unemployment rate for young adults with some college was lower than the rate for those who had completed high school (18.9 percent), which was lower than the unemployment rate of 25.3 percent for those who had not finished high school. This pattern of unemployment rates being lower for those with higher levels of educational attainment was also seen for those 25 to 64 years old and, generally, for men and for women within both age groups.

In 2014, the overall unemployment rate for young males 20 to 24 years old was higher than the overall rate for young females 20 to 24 years old (17.0 vs. 12.4 percent). The unemployment rate for young males who had graduated from high school was greater than the rate for young females with the same level of educational attainment (21.1 vs. 15.8 percent). The unemployment rate for males ages 25 to 64 who had not graduated from high school was lower than the rate for females ages 25 to 64 who had not graduated from high school (9.4 vs. 12.7 percent). However, there were no measurable differences between older males and females at the other levels of educational attainment.

#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> The National Bureau of Economic Research determined that the recession began in December 2007 and continued through June 2009. See <http://www.nber.org/cycles.html>.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, tables 501.50, 501.60, 501.70, 501.80, 501.85, and 501.90

**Related indicators:** Annual Earnings of Young Adults (indicator 3), Trends in Employment Rates by Educational Attainment [*The Condition of Education 2013 Spotlight*]

**Glossary:** Bachelor's degree, Educational attainment (Current Population Survey), High school completer