

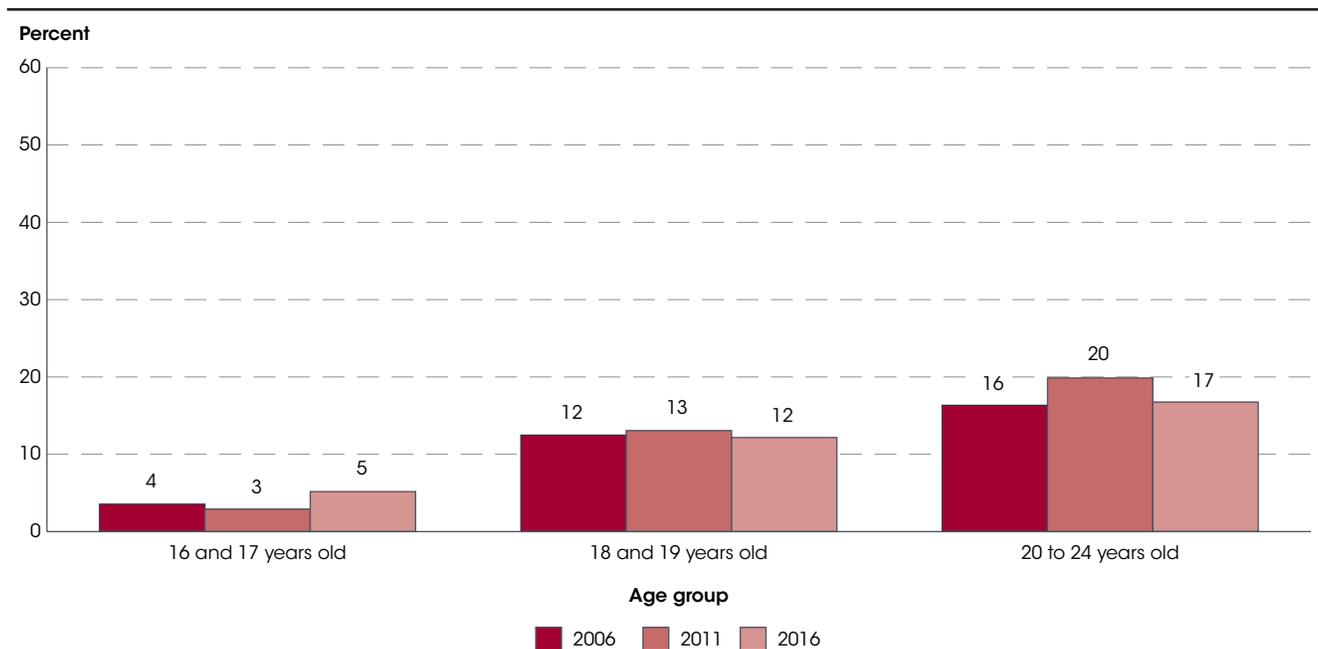
## Youth Neither Enrolled in School nor Working

*In 2016, some 17 percent of 20- to 24-year-olds were neither enrolled in school nor working, compared to 12 percent of 18- and 19-year-olds and 5 percent of 16- and 17-year-olds. In each age group, the percentage who were neither in school nor working was higher for those in poor households than for those in nonpoor households. For example, among 20- to 24-year-olds in 2016, some 31 percent of those in poor households were neither in school nor working, compared to 13 percent of those in nonpoor households.*

Schooling and work are considered core activities in the transition from childhood to adulthood. Youth who are detached from these core activities, particularly if they are detached for several years, may have difficulty building a work history that contributes to future employability and higher wages.<sup>1</sup> Youth who are neither enrolled in school nor working<sup>2</sup> may be detached from these activities for several reasons. They may be seeking educational opportunities or work but are unable to find them. They may have left the workforce or school temporarily or permanently, for personal, family, or financial reasons.

This indicator examines rates of being neither in school nor working for 16- to 24-year-olds<sup>3</sup> (also referred to as “youth” in this indicator), including comparisons between younger and older youth within this age range. The indicator presents data across three years: 2006, 2011, and 2016. The 2006 data provide information on outcomes prior to the recession experienced by the U.S. economy between December 2007 and June 2009.<sup>4</sup> The 2011 data represent the period shortly after the recession ended, and the 2016 data provide the most recently available data.

**Figure 1. Percentage of youth ages 16 to 24 who were neither enrolled in school nor working, by age group: 2006, 2011, and 2016**

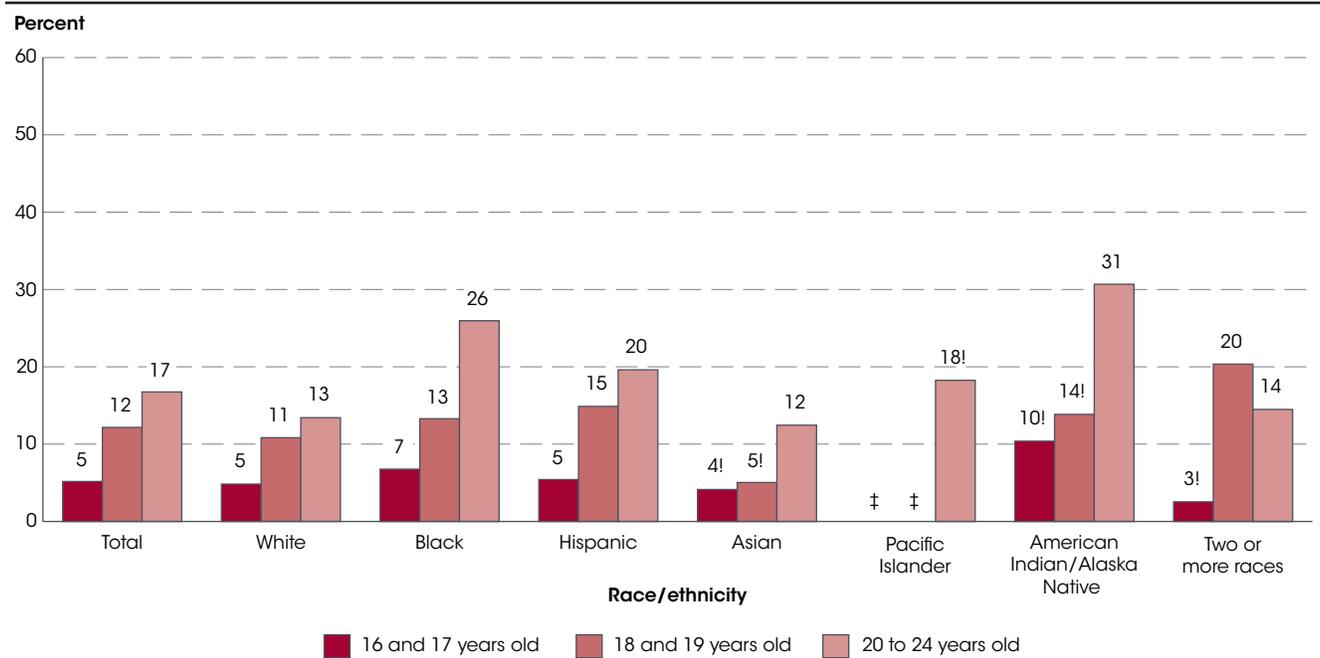


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2006, 2011, and 2016. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 501.30.

In 2016, the percentage of youth neither in school nor working was higher for older youth than for younger youth. Specifically, 17 percent of 20- to 24-year-olds were neither in school nor working, compared to 12 percent of 18- and 19-year-olds and 5 percent of 16- and 17-year-olds. Among 16- and 17-year-olds, the percentage neither in school nor working was higher in 2016 (5 percent) than

in 2006 (4 percent) and 2011 (3 percent). Among 18- and 19-year-olds, there were no measurable differences in the percentage neither in school nor working across 2006, 2011, and 2016. The percentage of 20- to 24-year-olds neither in school nor working was lower in 2016 (17 percent) than in 2011 (20 percent), but not measurably different than in 2006.

**Figure 2. Percentage of youth ages 16 to 24 who were neither enrolled in school nor working, by race/ethnicity and age group: 2016**



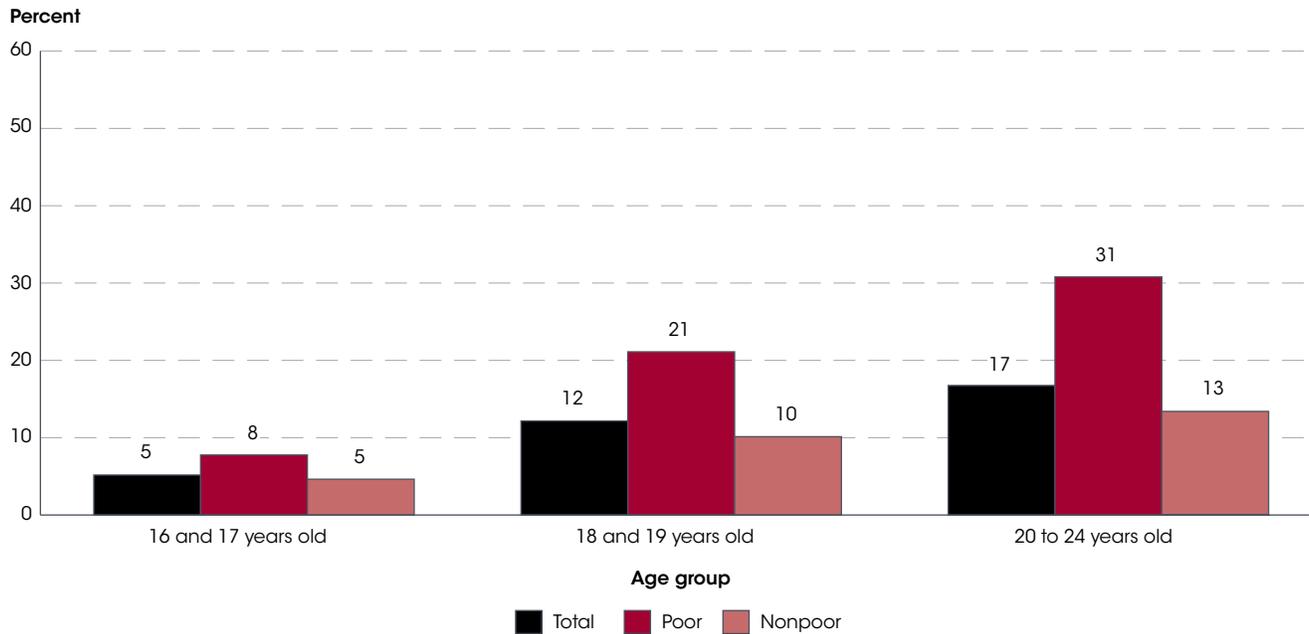
! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.  
‡ Reporting standards not met. Either there are too few cases for a reliable estimate or the coefficient of variation (CV) is 50 percent or greater.  
NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2016. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 501.30.

The percentage of youth who were neither in school nor working varied by race/ethnicity in 2016. For example, the percentage of 20- to 24-year-olds neither in school nor working was higher for American Indian/Alaska Native, Black, and Hispanic youth (31, 26, and 20 percent, respectively) than for their White and Asian peers (13 and 12 percent, respectively). In addition, the percentage neither in school nor working was higher for Black and American Indian/Alaska Native 20- to 24-year-olds than for their peers of Two or more races (14 percent), while the percentage for Pacific Islander 20- to 24-year-olds (18 percent) was not measurably different from that of any other racial/ethnic group.

Among 18- and 19-year-olds, the percentage neither in school nor working was higher for Hispanic youth

(15 percent) than for White youth (11 percent), and the percentages for both groups were higher than the percentage for Asian youth (5 percent). The percentage for Black 18- and 19-year-olds (13 percent) was higher than the percentage for Asian 18- and 19-year-olds, but not measurably different from the percentages for White and Hispanic youth in the same age range. Among 16- and 17-year-olds, the percentage neither in school nor working was higher for Hispanic (5 percent) and Black youth (7 percent) than for youth of Two or more races (3 percent), but there were no other measurable differences among racial/ethnic groups (excluding Pacific Islander youth, for whom reliable estimates were not available).

**Figure 3. Percentage of youth ages 16 to 24 who were neither enrolled in school nor working, by age group and family poverty status: 2016**



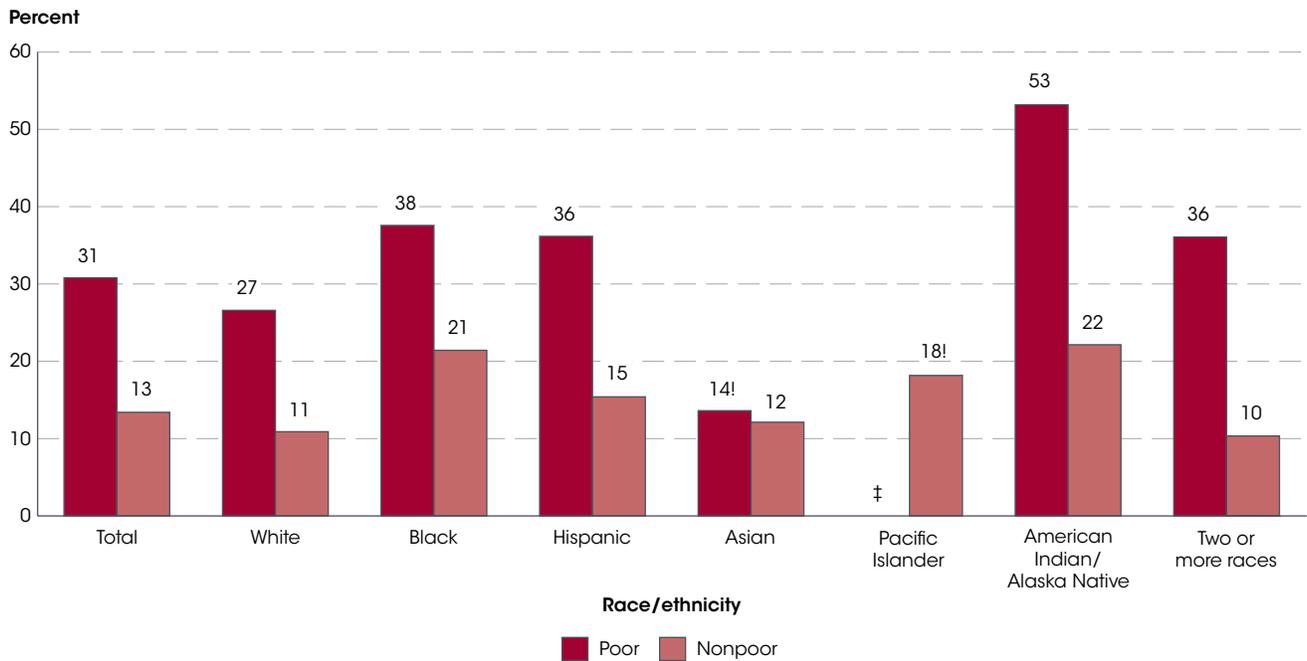
NOTE: Poor is defined to include families below the poverty threshold, and nonpoor is defined to include families at or above the poverty threshold. For information about how the Census Bureau determines who is in poverty, see <http://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html>.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2016. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 501.30.

In 2016, the percentage of youth in each age group who were neither in school nor working was higher for youth in poor households than for youth in nonpoor households. For the purposes of this indicator, poor is defined to include families below the Census-defined poverty threshold, and nonpoor is defined to include

families at or above the poverty threshold.<sup>5</sup> For example, 31 percent of poor 20- to 24-year-olds were neither in school nor working compared with 13 percent of nonpoor 20- to 24-year-olds. Similar patterns were observed in 2006 and 2011.

**Figure 4. Percentage of youth ages 20 to 24 who were neither enrolled in school nor working, by race/ethnicity and family poverty status: 2016**

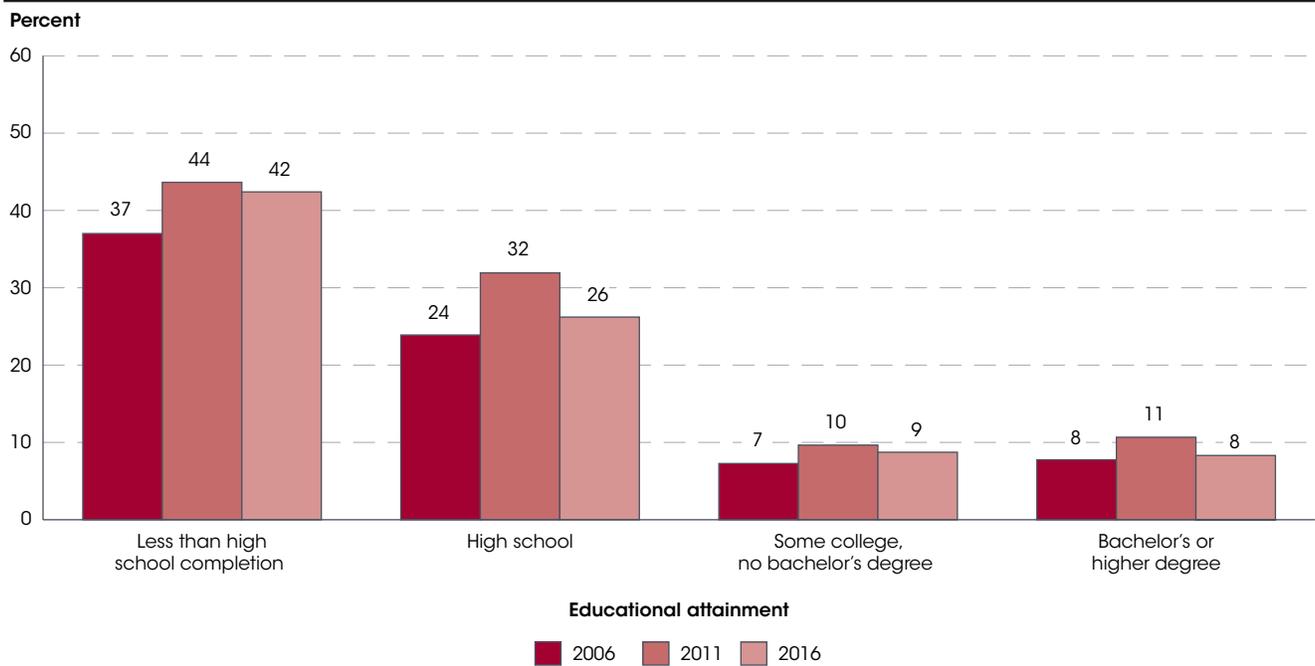


! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.  
 ‡ Reporting standards not met. Either there are too few cases for a reliable estimate or the coefficient of variation (CV) is 50 percent or greater.  
 NOTE: Poor is defined to include families below the poverty threshold, and nonpoor is defined to include families at or above the poverty threshold. For information about how the Census Bureau determines who is in poverty, see <http://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html>. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2016. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 501.30.

Across all racial/ethnic groups except Asian and Pacific Islanders, the percentage of 20- to 24-year-olds who were neither in school nor working was higher for those in poor households than for those in nonpoor households. For Asian 20- to 24-year-olds, there was no measurable difference between the percentages for those in poor and nonpoor households. Reliable estimates were not

available for Pacific Islander 20- to 24-year-olds. The gap between the percentages of poor and nonpoor 20- to 24-year-olds who were neither in school nor working ranged from 16 percentage points for White and Black youth to 31 percentage points for American Indian/Alaska Native youth.

**Figure 5. Percentage of youth ages 20 to 24 who were neither enrolled in school nor working, by educational attainment: 2006, 2011, and 2016**

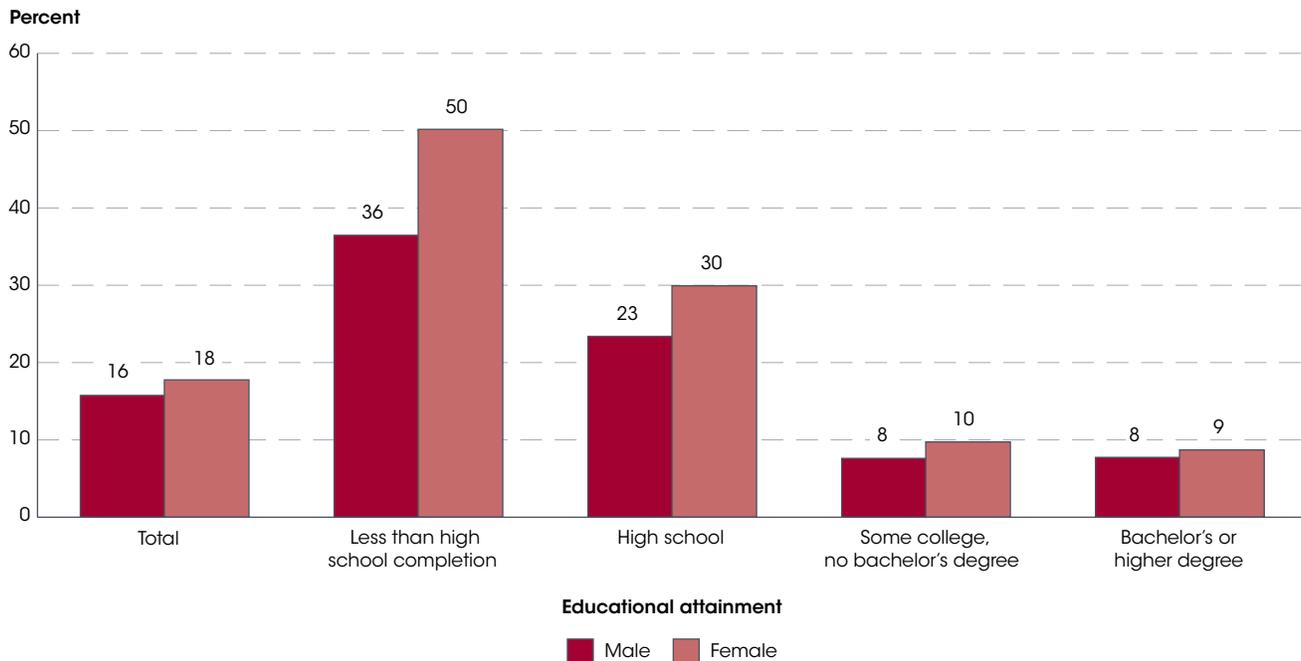


NOTE: High school completion includes equivalency credentials, such as the GED credential. Some college, no bachelor's degree includes persons with no college degree as well as those with an associate's degree.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2006, 2011, and 2016. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 501.30.

In 2016, the percentage of 20- to 24-year-olds neither in school nor working was generally higher for those with lower levels of educational attainment than for those with higher levels of educational attainment. The percentage neither in school nor working was higher for 20- to 24-year-olds who had not completed high school (42 percent) than for those who had completed high school (26 percent), and the percentages for both groups were higher than the percentages for those with some college (9 percent) and those with a bachelor's degree or higher (8 percent).

Among 20- to 24-year-olds who had not completed high school, the percentage neither in school nor working was 42 percent in 2016, compared with 44 percent in 2011 and 37 percent in 2006. Meanwhile, among 20- to 24-year-olds with a bachelor's degree or higher, the percentage neither in school nor working was 8 percent in 2016, which was not measurably different from the percentages in 2006 or 2011. However, the percentage for the same group in 2011 (11 percent) was higher than the percentage in 2006 (8 percent).

**Figure 6. Percentage of youth ages 20 to 24 who were neither enrolled in school nor working, by educational attainment and sex: 2016**



NOTE: High school completion includes equivalency credentials, such as the GED credential. Some college, no bachelor's degree includes persons with no college degree as well as those with an associate's degree.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2016. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 501.30.

In 2016, the percentage of 20- to 24-year-olds who were neither in school nor working was higher for females (18 percent) than for males (16 percent). This gap ranged from 14 percentage points for 20- to 24-year-olds who had not completed high school to 2 percentage points for

those with some college. Among 20- to 24-year-olds with a bachelor's degree, there was no measurable difference between the percentages of males and females who were neither in school nor working.

**Endnotes:**

<sup>1</sup> Fernandes-Alcantara, A. (2015). *Disconnected Youth: A Look at 16- to 24-Year-Olds Who Are Not Working or in School* (CRS Report No. R40535). Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service. Retrieved February 7, 2017, from <http://www.fas.org/spp/crs/misc/R40535.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Referred to as “youth neither in school nor working” in this indicator.

<sup>3</sup> Prior editions of this indicator presented data on 18- to 24-year-olds. This edition has been expanded to include data on 16- and

17-year-olds, allowing for a discussion of differences between younger and older youth.

<sup>4</sup> National Bureau of Economic Research. (2010). *U.S. Business Cycle Expansions and Contractions*. Retrieved January 23, 2018, from <http://www.nber.org/cycles.html>.

<sup>5</sup> For information about how the Census Bureau determines who is in poverty, see <http://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html>.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 501.30

**Related indicators and resources:** [College Enrollment Rates](#); [Employment and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment](#); [Immediate College Enrollment Rate](#); [Youth and Young Adults Neither Enrolled in School nor Working](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]

**Glossary:** Bachelor's degree, College, Educational attainment (Current Population Survey), Enrollment, Gap, High school completer, Household, Poverty (official measure), Racial/ethnic group