

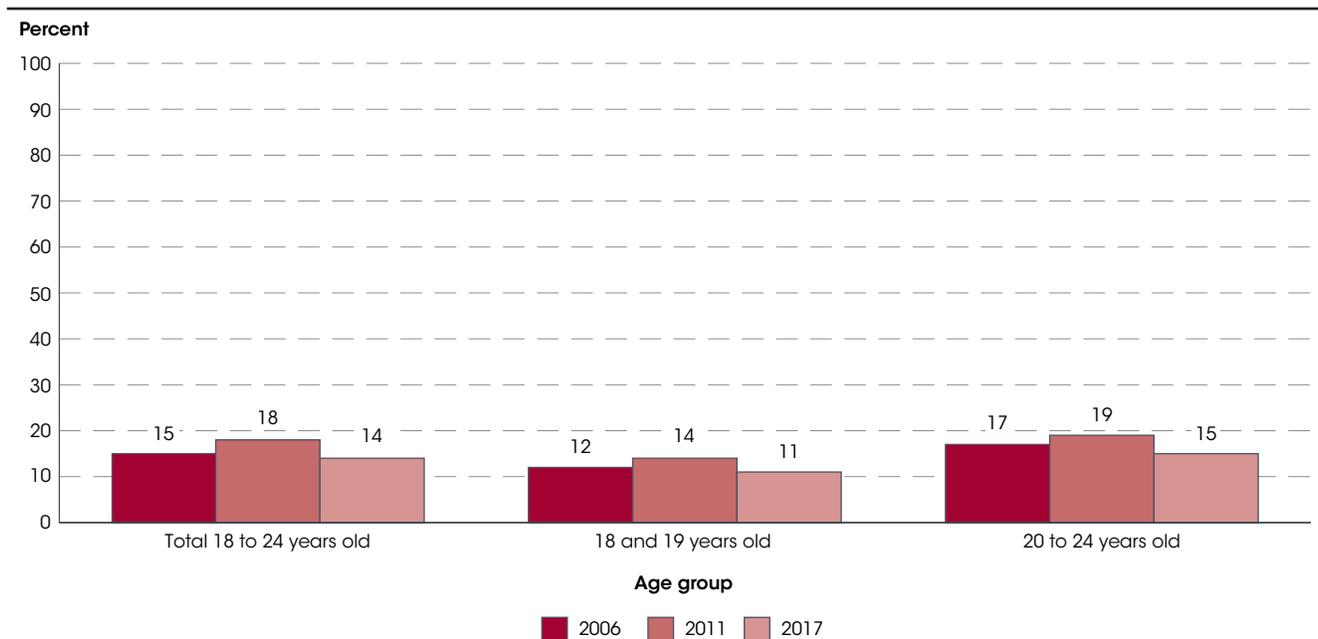
## Young Adults Neither Enrolled in School nor Working

Overall, the percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds neither enrolled in school nor working was lower in 2017 (14 percent) than shortly before the recession in 2006 (15 percent) and shortly after the recession in 2011 (18 percent). In 2017, the percentage of 20- to 24-year-olds neither enrolled in school nor working was higher for those who had not completed high school (42 percent) than for those who had completed high school (13 percent).

Schooling and working are core activities in the transition from childhood to adulthood. Young adults who are detached from these 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> Young adults who are neither enrolled in school nor working may be detached from these activities for a variety of reasons. For example, they may be seeking educational opportunities or work but are unable to find them, or they may have left school or the workforce

temporarily or permanently for personal, family, or financial reasons. This indicator examines rates at which young adults in a variety of age groups are neither enrolled in school nor working. The indicator presents data across three years: 2006, 2011, and 2017. The 2006 data provide information on outcomes prior to the recession experienced by the U.S. economy between December 2007 and June 2009,<sup>2</sup> the 2011 data represent the period shortly after the recession ended, and the 2017 data provide the most recent information available.

**Figure 1. Percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds who were neither enrolled in school nor working, by age group: 2006, 2011, and 2017**



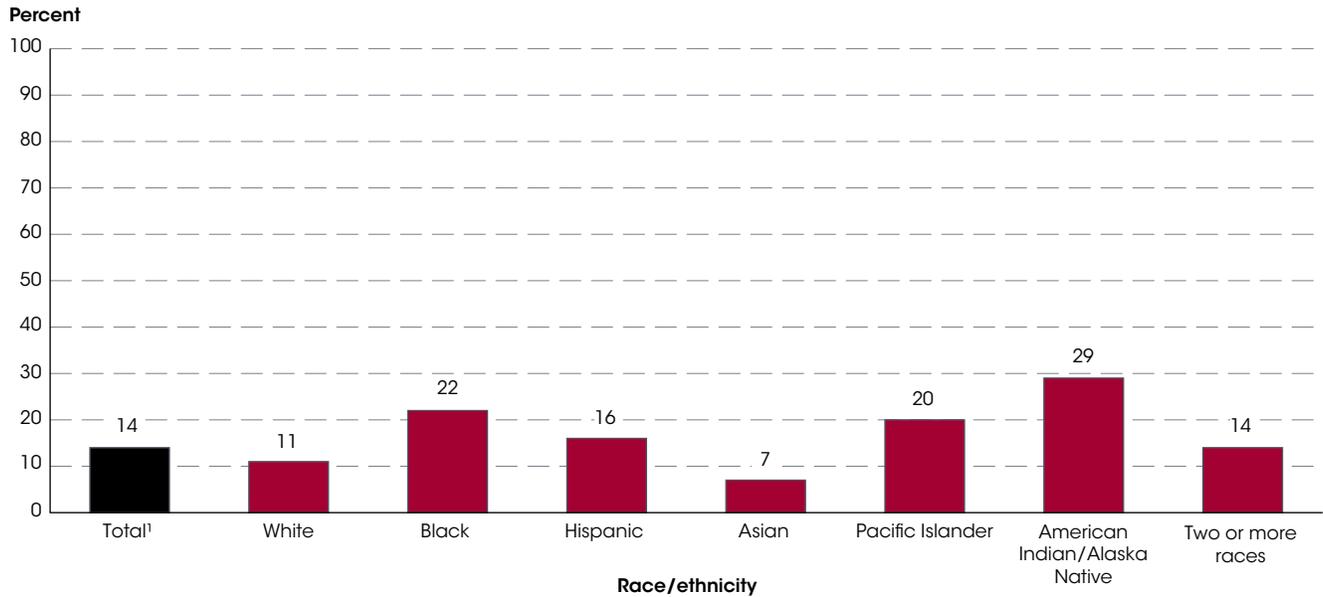
NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the entire population in the given age range residing within the United States, including the 50 states, the District of Columbia (D.C.), and Puerto Rico. Both noninstitutionalized persons (e.g., those living in households, college housing, or military housing located within the United States) and institutionalized persons (e.g., those living in prisons, nursing facilities, or other healthcare facilities) are included. Institutionalized persons made up 1 percent of all 18- to 24-year-olds in 2017. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2006, 2011, and 2017. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2018*, table 501.30.

Overall, 14 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds were neither enrolled in school nor working in 2017. The percentage of young adults neither in school nor working was higher for 20- to 24-year-olds (15 percent) than for 18- and 19-year-olds (11 percent).

Overall, the percentage of young adults neither in school nor working was lower in 2017 (14 percent) than shortly

before the recession in 2006 (15 percent) and shortly after the recession in 2011 (18 percent). Specifically, among 18- and 19-year-olds, the percentage neither in school nor working was lower in 2017 (11 percent) than in 2006 (12 percent) and 2011 (14 percent). Likewise, the percentage of 20- to 24-year-olds neither in school nor working was also lower in 2017 (15 percent) than in 2006 (17 percent) and 2011 (19 percent).

**Figure 2. Percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds who were neither enrolled in school nor working, by race/ethnicity: 2017**

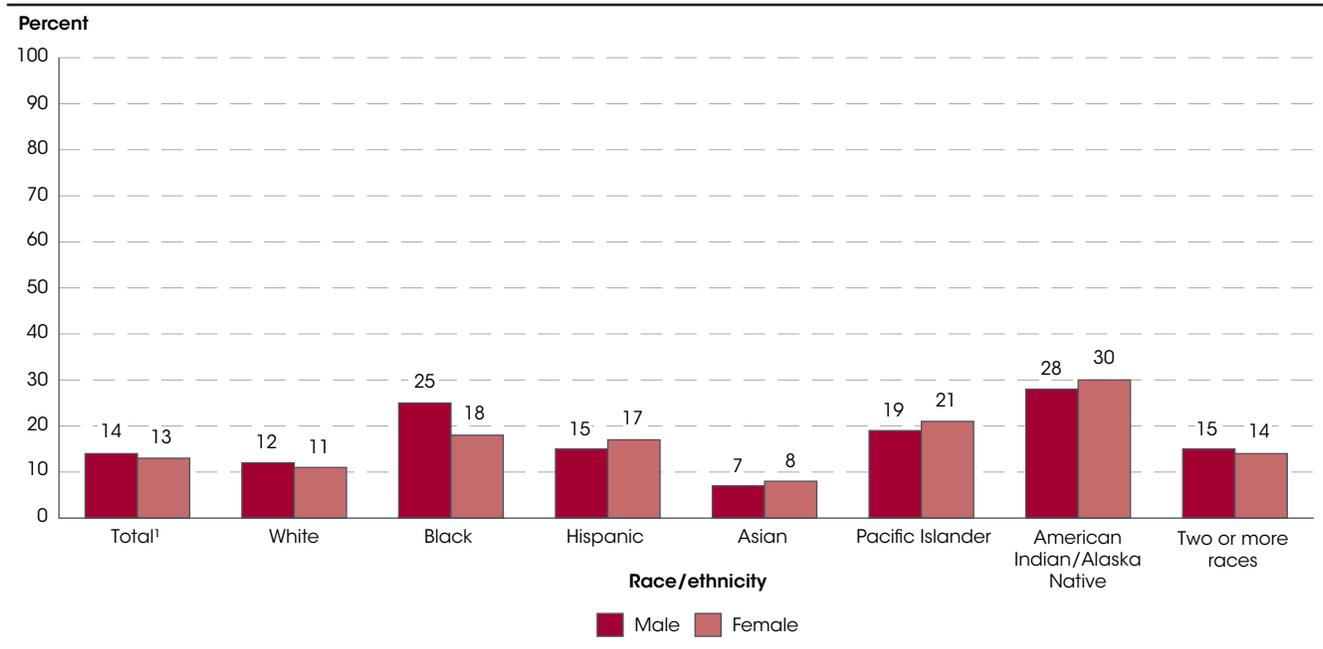


<sup>1</sup> Includes respondents who wrote in some other race that was not included as an option on the questionnaire.  
NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the entire population in the given age range residing within the United States, including the 50 states, the District of Columbia (D.C.), and Puerto Rico. Both noninstitutionalized persons (e.g., those living in households, college housing, or military housing located within the United States) and institutionalized persons (e.g., those living in prisons, nursing facilities, or other healthcare facilities) are included. Institutionalized persons made up 1 percent of all 18- to 24-year-olds in 2017. 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, American Community Survey (ACS), 2017. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2018*, table 501.30.

In 2017, the percentage of young adults neither in school nor working varied by race/ethnicity. The percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds neither in school nor working was higher for American Indian/Alaska Native young adults (29 percent) than for any other racial/ethnic group, and this percentage was lower for White and Asian young

adults (11 and 7 percent, respectively) than for any other racial/ethnic group. In addition, the percentage neither in school nor working was lower for young adults of Two or more races (14 percent) and Hispanic young adults (16 percent) than for Black young adults (22 percent).

**Figure 3. Percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds who were neither enrolled in school nor working, by race/ethnicity and sex: 2017**

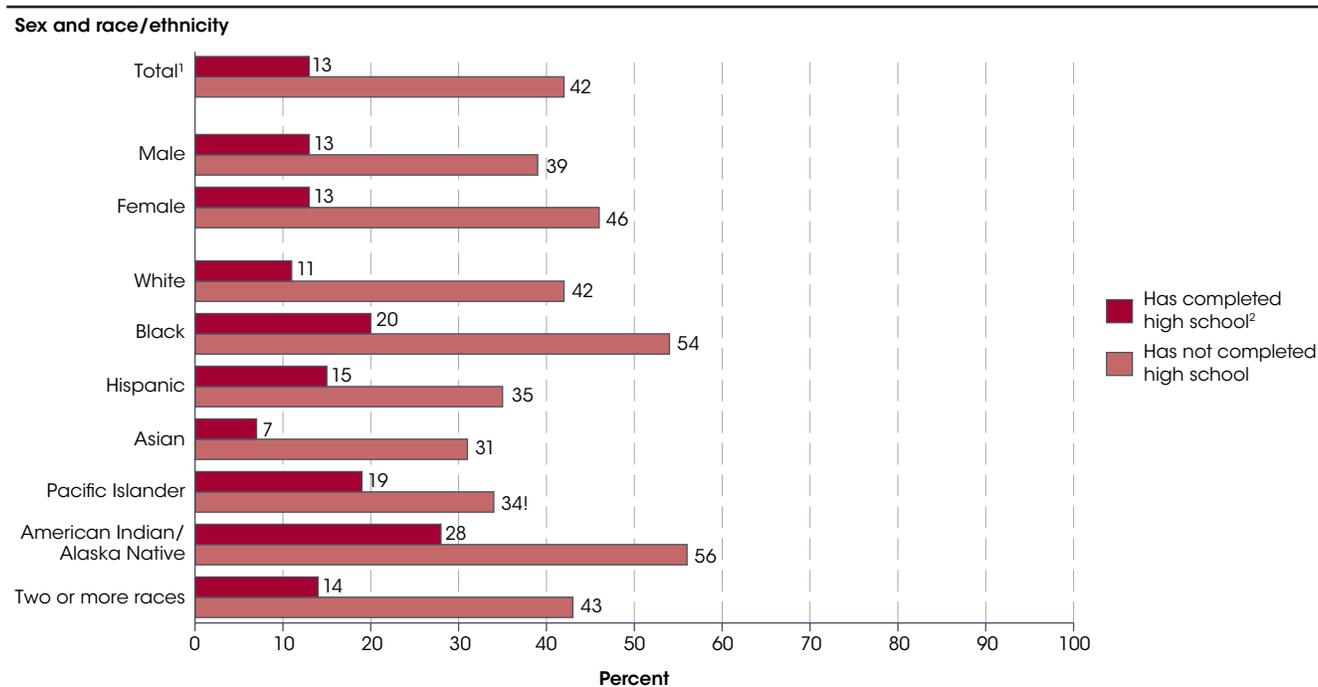


<sup>1</sup> Includes respondents who wrote in some other race that was not included as an option on the questionnaire.  
NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the entire population in the given age range residing within the United States, including the 50 states, the District of Columbia (D.C.), and Puerto Rico. Both noninstitutionalized persons (e.g., those living in households, college housing, or military housing located within the United States) and institutionalized persons (e.g., those living in prisons, nursing facilities, or other healthcare facilities) are included. Institutionalized persons made up 1 percent of all 18- to 24-year-olds in 2017. 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, American Community Survey (ACS), 2017. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2018*, table 501.30.

The percentage of young adults who were neither in school nor working in 2017 was higher for males than for females overall (14 vs. 13 percent). This pattern was also observed for Black young adults (25 percent for males vs. 18 percent for females), young adults of Two or more

racess (15 vs. 14 percent), and White young adults (12 vs. 11 percent). However, the percentage neither in school nor working was lower for Hispanic males (15 percent) than for Hispanic females (17 percent).

**Figure 4. Percentage of 20- to 24-year-olds who were neither enrolled in school nor working, by sex, race/ethnicity, and high school completion status: 2017**



<sup>1</sup> Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

<sup>2</sup> Includes respondents who wrote in some other race that was not included as an option on the questionnaire.

<sup>3</sup> Includes completing high school through equivalency programs, such as a GED program.

NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the entire population in the given age range residing within the United States, including the 50 states, the District of Columbia (D.C.), and Puerto Rico. Both noninstitutionalized persons (e.g., those living in households, college housing, or military housing located within the United States) and institutionalized persons (e.g., those living in prisons, nursing facilities, or other healthcare facilities) are included. Institutionalized persons made up 1 percent of all 18- to 24-year-olds in 2017. 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, American Community Survey (ACS), 2017. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2018*, table 501.30.

In 2017, the percentage of 20- to 24-year-olds<sup>3</sup> who were neither in school nor working was higher for those who had not completed high school<sup>4</sup> (42 percent) than for those who had completed high school (13 percent). These differences by high school completion status were observed for males and for females as well as for most racial/ethnic groups.<sup>5</sup> For example, the percentage of 20- to 24-year-olds who were neither in school nor working was 26 percentage points higher for male high school dropouts than for male high school completers,

and 33 percentage points higher for female high school dropouts than for female high school completers. The gap by high school completion status was larger for female 20- to 24-year-olds than for male 20- to 24-year-olds. In addition, the gap by high school completion status was larger for Black and White 20- to 24-year-olds (34 and 32 percentage points, respectively) than for Asian and Hispanic 20- to 24-year-olds (23 and 20 percentage points, respectively).

**Endnotes:**

<sup>1</sup> Fernandes-Alcantara, A.L. (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 January 11, 2018, from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R40535.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> National Bureau of Economic Research. (2010). *U.S. Business Cycle Expansions and Contractions*. Retrieved January 11, 2018, from <http://www.nber.org/cycles.html>.

<sup>3</sup> The narrower 20- to 24-year old range was chosen to reduce the number of high school students in this analysis.

<sup>4</sup> High school completion includes those persons who graduated from high school with a diploma as well as those who completed high school through equivalency programs, such as a GED program.

<sup>5</sup> The seemingly large difference between Pacific Islanders who had and had not completed high school was not statistically significant due to large standard errors that resulted from the small number of individuals in this subgroup.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2018*, 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:** Gap; High school completer; Racial/ethnic group