

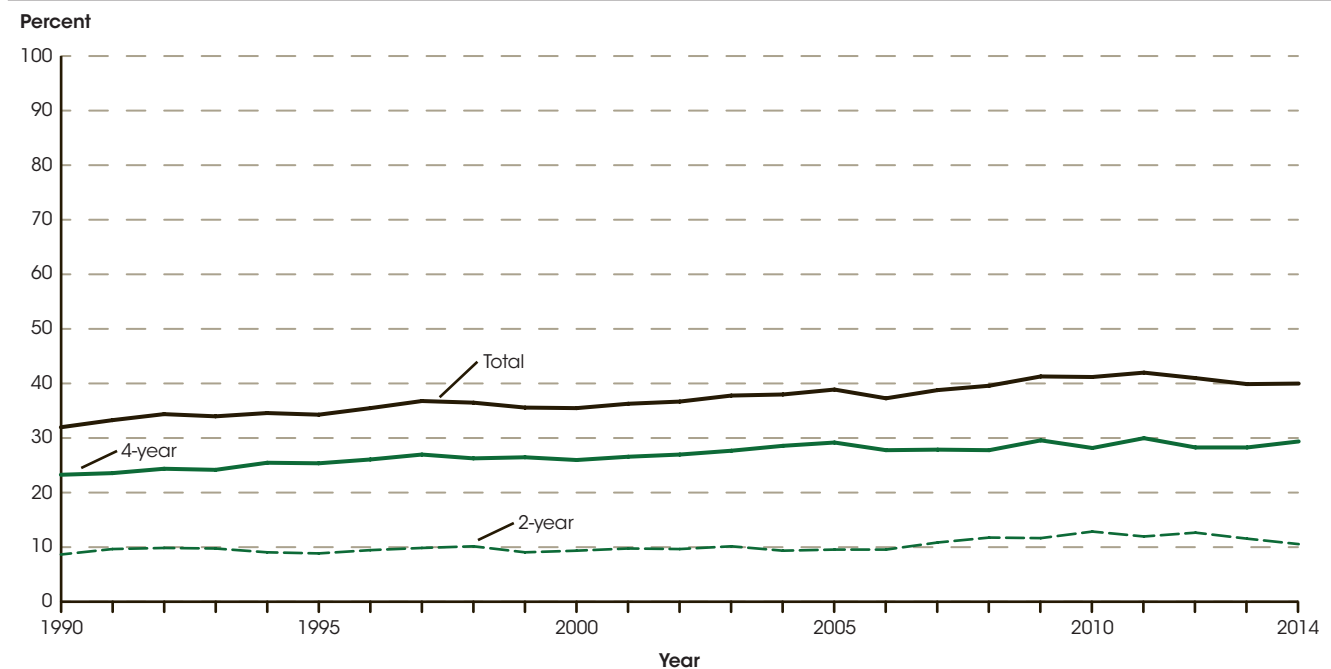
## College Participation Rates

Although the college enrollment rate increased between 2004 and 2014 for Hispanic young adults (25 vs. 35 percent), it did not measurably differ between 2004 and 2014 for young adults who were White, Black, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, and of Two or more races.

The college participation rate has increased over the past two decades. Different factors, such as changes in the labor market and, more recently, the economic downturn, have contributed to this increase.<sup>1</sup> In this indicator, the

college participation rate, or the college enrollment rate, is defined as the percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds (the traditional college-age population) enrolled in 2- or 4-year degree-granting postsecondary institutions.

**Figure 1. Enrollment rates of 18- to 24-year-olds in postsecondary degree-granting institutions, by level of institution: 1990-2014**

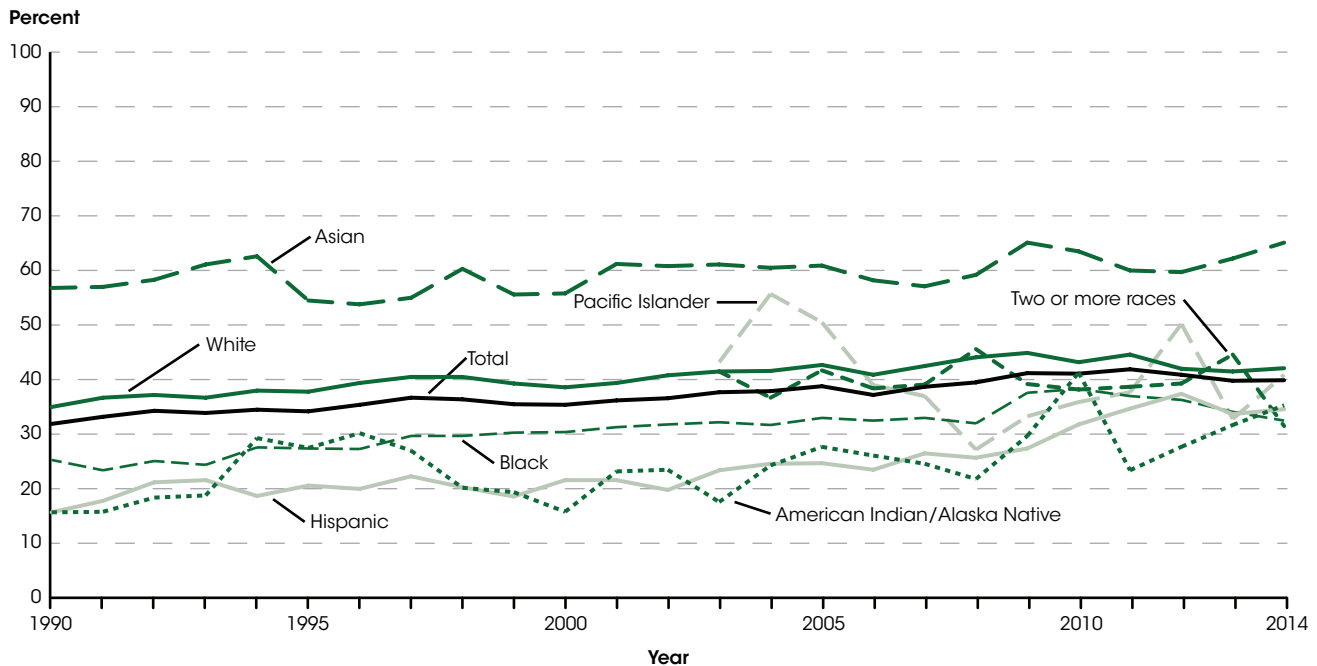


NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October, 1990-2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 302.60.

The overall college enrollment rate increased from 32 percent in 1990 to 40 percent in 2014. More recently, from 2004 to 2014, the total college enrollment rate

increased by 2 percentage points. In 2014, the college enrollment rate at 4-year colleges was 29 percent compared with 11 percent at 2-year colleges.

Figure 2. Enrollment rates of 18- to 24-year-olds in postsecondary degree-granting institutions, by race/ethnicity: 1990-2014



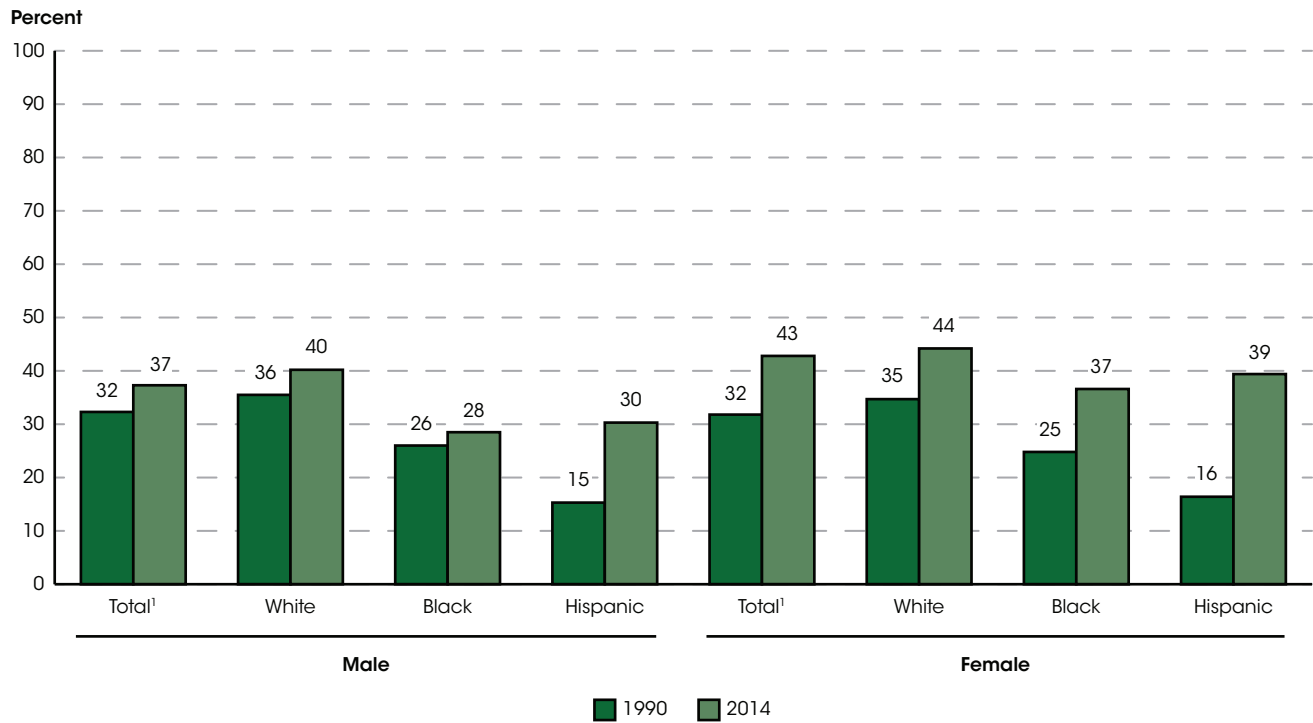
NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. Prior to 2003, data for individual race categories include persons of Two or more races and data for Asians include Pacific Islanders. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October, 1990-2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 302.60.

From 1990 to 2014, the college enrollment rate increased for young adults who were White (from 35 to 42 percent), Black (from 25 to 33 percent), Hispanic (from 16 to 35 percent), Asian (from 57 to 65 percent), and American Indian/Alaska Native (from 16 to 35 percent). Although the college enrollment rate increased between 2004 and 2014 for Hispanic young adults (25 vs. 35 percent), it did not measurably differ between 2004 to 2014 for young adults who were White, Black, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, and of Two or more races.

In 2014, the college enrollment rate was higher for Asian young adults (65 percent) than for young adults

who were White (42 percent), Black (33 percent), and Hispanic (35 percent)—a pattern that has held for the past two decades. The 2014 college enrollment rate was also higher for Asian young adults than for young adults who were Pacific Islander (41 percent), American Indian/Alaska Native (35 percent), and of Two or more races (32 percent). In addition, the college enrollment rate for White young adults was higher than the rates for young adults who were Black, Hispanic, and of Two or more races. The 2014 college enrollment rates for young adults who were Black, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, and of Two or more races were not measurably different from each other.

Figure 3. Enrollment rates of 18- to 24-year-olds in postsecondary degree-granting institutions, by sex and race/ethnicity: 1990 and 2014



<sup>1</sup> Includes other racial/ethnic groups not shown separately.

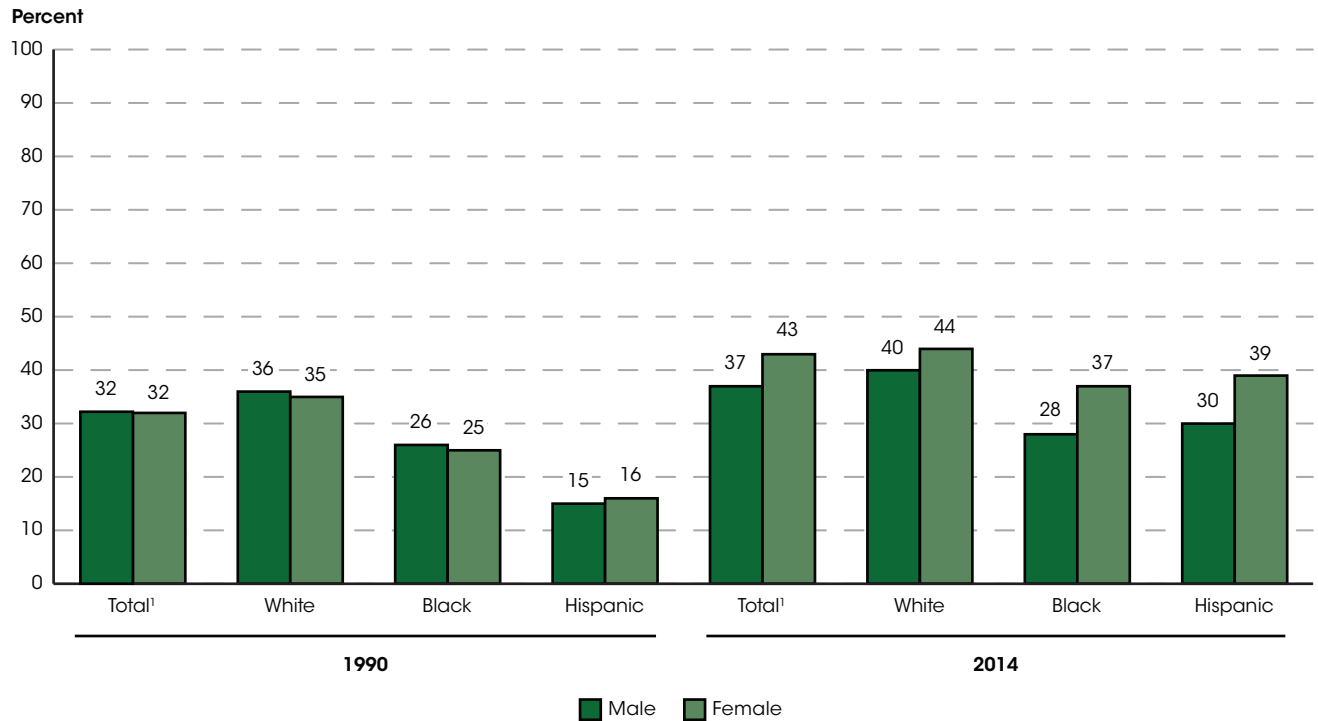
NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. In 2014, White and Black data exclude persons identifying as Two or more races. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October, 1990 and 2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 302.60.

The college enrollment rate for males was higher in 2014 (37 percent) than in 1990 (32 percent). White (40 vs. 36 percent), Black (28 vs. 26 percent), and Hispanic (30 vs. 15 percent) males all had higher college enrollment rates in 2014 than in 1990. However, the college enrollment rate for Black males in 2014 was not measurably different from the rate in 1990.

The college enrollment rate for females was higher in 2014 (43 percent) than in 1990 (32 percent). White (44 vs. 35 percent), Black (37 vs. 25 percent), and Hispanic (39 vs. 16 percent) females all had higher college enrollment rates in 2014 than in 1990. However, the college enrollment rate for Black females in 2014 was not measurably different from the rate in 1990.

Figure 4. Enrollment rates of 18- to 24-year-olds in postsecondary degree-granting institutions, by race/ethnicity and sex: 1990 and 2014



<sup>1</sup> Includes other racial/ethnic groups not shown separately.

NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. In 2014, White and Black data exclude persons identifying as Two or more races. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October, 1990 and 2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 302.60.

In 2014, higher percentages of females than of males overall (43 vs. 37 percent), as well as within the White (44 vs. 40 percent), Black (37 vs. 28 percent), and Hispanic (39 vs. 30 percent) subgroups, were enrolled in college. In 1990, however, there was no measurable

difference between female and male college enrollment rates overall, nor were there measurable differences between female and male college enrollment rates within the White, Black, and Hispanic subgroups.

**Endnotes:**

<sup>1</sup> Fry, R. (2009). *College Enrollment Hits All Time High, Fueled by Community College Surge*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 302.60

**Related indicators:** Undergraduate Enrollment, Immediate College Enrollment Rate

**Glossary:** College, Enrollment, Postsecondary institutions (basic classification by level), Racial/ethnic group