

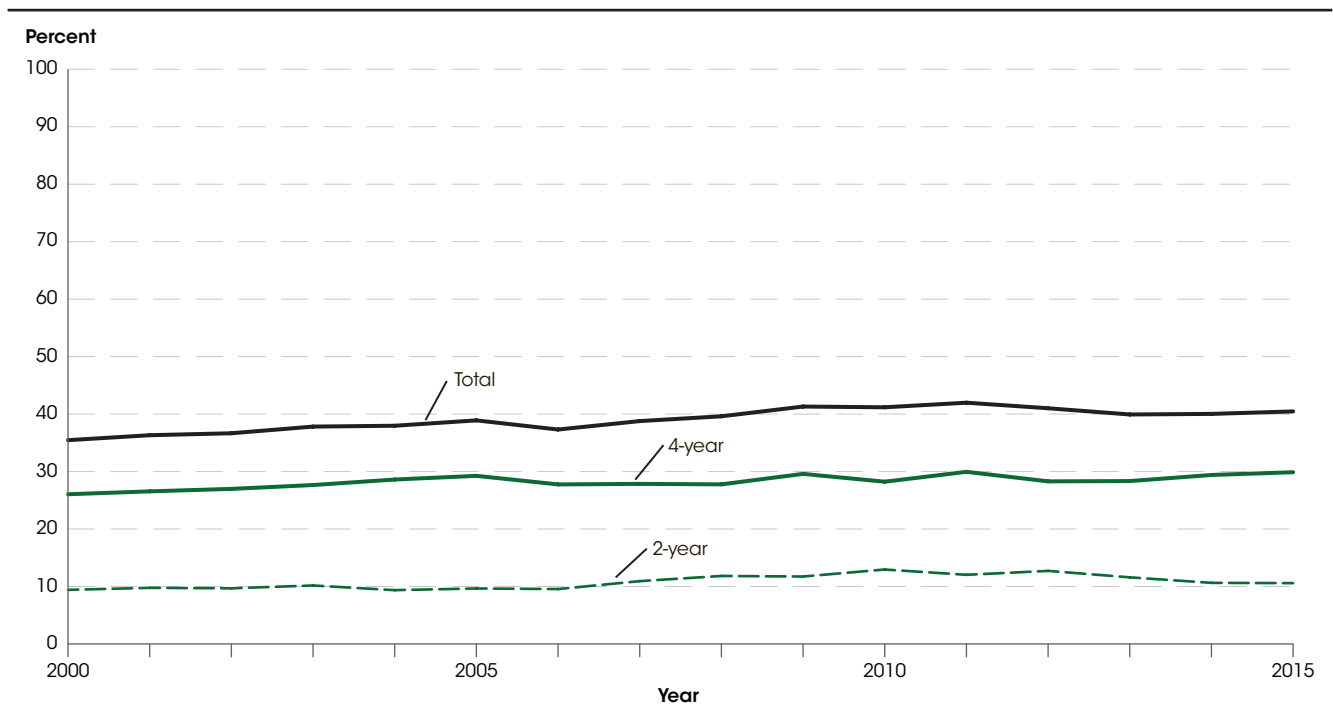
College Enrollment Rates

The overall college enrollment rate for young adults increased from 35 percent in 2000 to 40 percent in 2015. During this time period, the enrollment rates also increased for Black and Hispanic young adult males, as well as for White and Hispanic young adult females.

The college enrollment rate has increased since 2000. Different factors, such as changes in the labor market and the economic downturn, may have contributed to this increase.^{1,2} In this indicator, *college enrollment*

rate is defined as the percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds (referred to as young adults in this indicator) enrolled as undergraduate and graduate students in 2- or 4-year degree-granting postsecondary institutions.

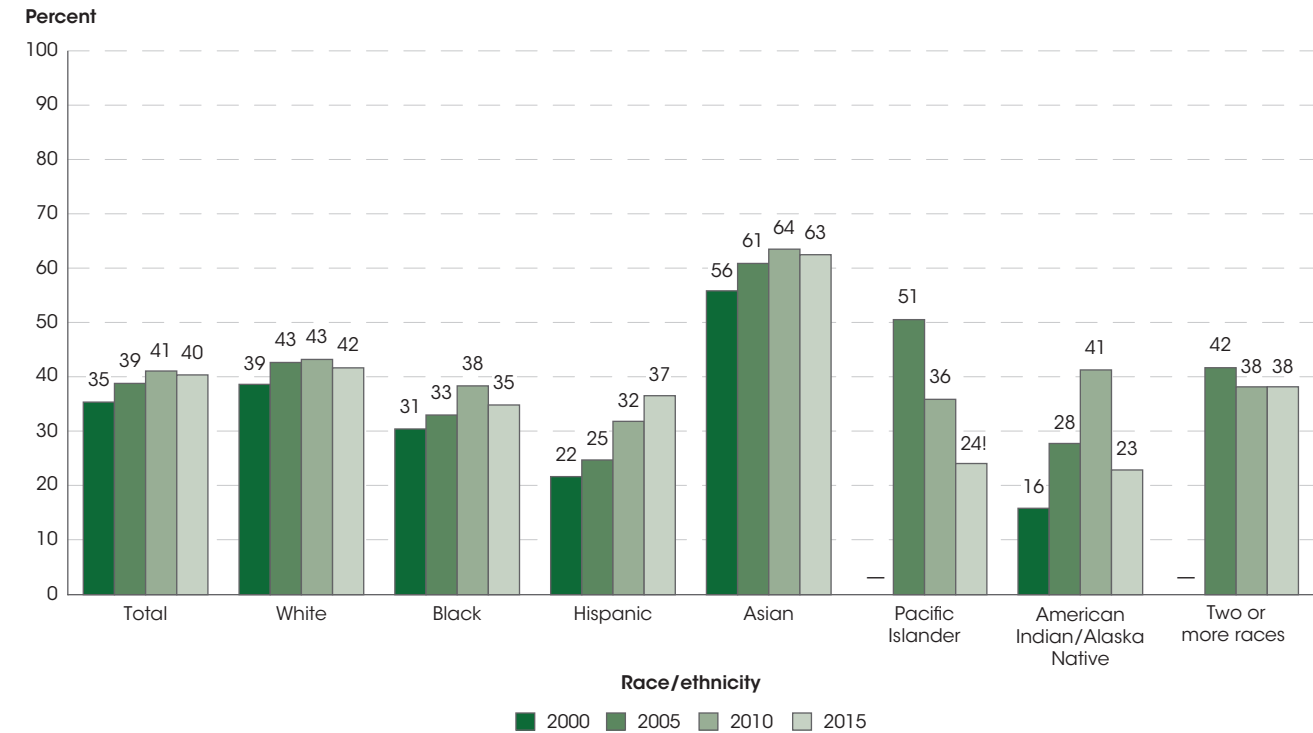
Figure 1. Enrollment rates of 18- to 24-year-olds in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by level of institution: 2000-2015



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 Supplement, 2000-2015. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 302.60.

The overall college enrollment rate for young adults increased from 35 percent in 2000 to 40 percent in 2015. During this period, the rates increased at both 4-year (from 26 to 30 percent) and 2-year (from 9 to 11 percent) institutions. Despite this general increase, over the more

recent time period from 2010 to 2015 the enrollment rate at 2-year institutions declined from 13 to 11 percent, while the rate at 4-year institutions did not change measurably.

Figure 2. Enrollment rates of 18- to 24-year-olds in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity: 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2015

— Not available.

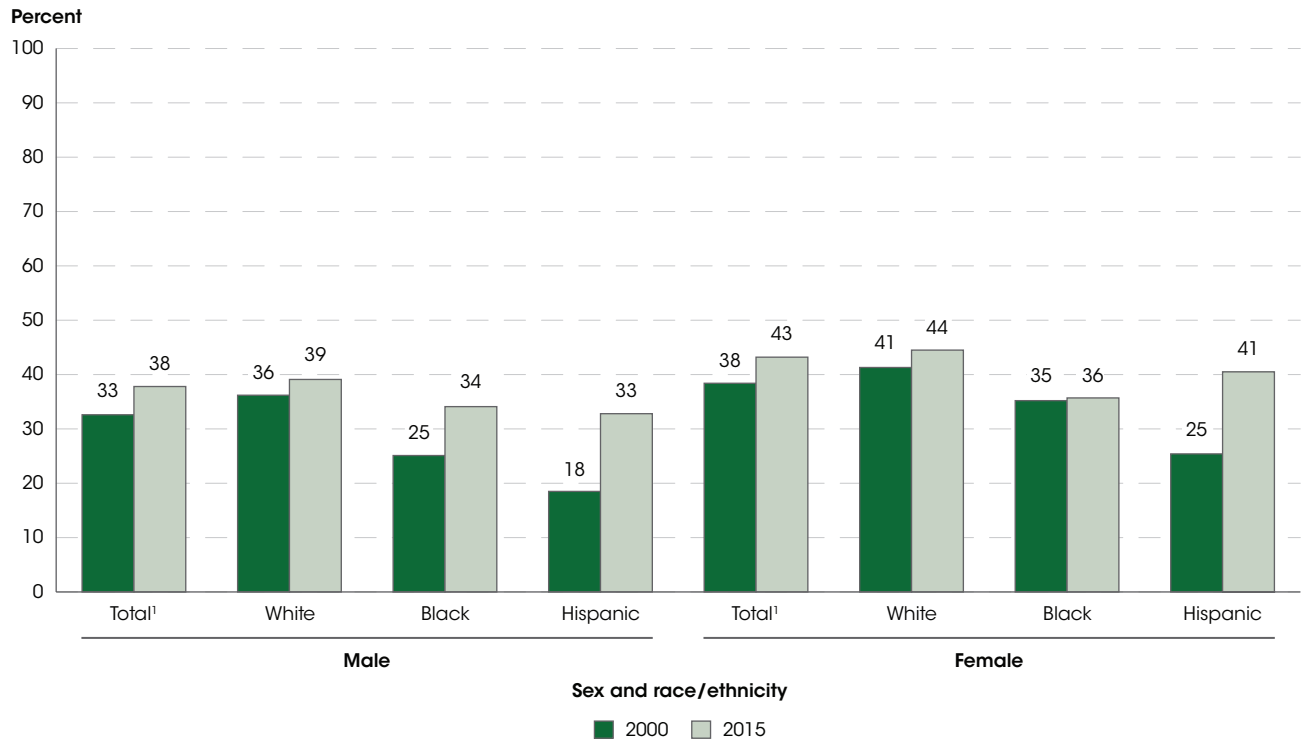
! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. Separate data for Pacific Islanders and persons of Two or more races were not available in 2000. Prior to 2003, 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 Supplement, 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2015. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 302.60.

From 2000 to 2015, college enrollment rates increased for young adults who were White (from 39 to 42 percent), Black (from 31 to 35 percent), and Hispanic (from 22 to 37 percent). The rates did not measurably differ between 2000 and 2015 for young adults who were Asian and American Indian/Alaska Native. College enrollment was lower for Pacific Islander young adults in 2015 than in 2005 (24 vs. 51 percent), and showed no measurable change during this time for young adults of Two or more races.³ More recently, college enrollment rates in 2015 compared to in 2010 were higher for Hispanic young adults (37 vs. 32 percent) and lower for American Indian/Alaska Native young adults (23 vs. 41 percent), but not measurably different for young adults who were White, Black, Asian, Pacific Islander, and of Two or more races.

In 2015, the college enrollment rate was higher for Asian young adults (63 percent) than for young adults who were White (42 percent), Black (35 percent), and Hispanic (37 percent); and the rate for White young adults was higher than the rates for young adults who were Black and Hispanic. This pattern has held since 2000. The 2015 enrollment rate was also higher for Asian young adults than for young adults who were Pacific Islander (24 percent), American Indian/Alaska Native (23 percent), and of Two or more races (38 percent). In addition, the 2015 enrollment rate for White young adults was higher than the rates for Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaska Native young adults; and the rates for Black and Hispanic young adults were higher than the rate for American Indian/Alaska Native young adults.

Figure 3. Enrollment rates of 18- to 24-year-olds in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by sex and race/ethnicity: 2000 and 2015

¹ Includes other racial/ethnic groups not shown separately.

NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. In 2000, data for individual race categories include persons of Two or more races. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 2000 and 2015. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 302.60.

Between 2000 and 2015, college enrollment rates increased overall for both young adult males (from 33 to 38 percent) and young adult females (from 38 to 43 percent). For young adult males, enrollment rates were higher in 2015 than in 2000 for White (39 vs. 36 percent), Black (34 vs. 25 percent), and Hispanic (33 vs. 18 percent). For young adult females, rates were also higher for White (44 vs. 41 percent) and Hispanic (41 vs. 25 percent). The rate for Black young adult females in 2015 (36 percent) was not measurably different from the rate in 2000.

In every year since 2000, the college enrollment rate was higher for young adult females than for young adult males; the same was true for White and Hispanic young adults. In 2015, for example, higher percentages of young adult females than males overall (43 vs. 38 percent), as well as of White (44 vs. 39 percent) and Hispanic (41 vs. 33 percent) young adults, were enrolled in college. Among Black young adults, the college enrollment rate was generally higher for females than for males, except in 2007, 2012, and 2015, when no measurable differences between female and male college enrollment rates were observed.

Endnotes:

¹ Fry, R. (2009). *College Enrollment Hits All Time High, Fueled by Community College Surge*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center. Retrieved May 3, 2017, from <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2009/10/29/college-enrollment-hits-all-time-high-fueled-by-community-college-surge/>.

² Brown, J.R., and Hoxby, C.M. (Eds.) (2014). *How the Financial Crisis and Great Recession Affected Higher Education*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

³ Separate data for Pacific Islanders and persons of Two or more races were not available in 2000. Prior to 2003, data for Asians include Pacific Islanders. Information from *Digest of Education Statistics 2015* table 101.20, based on the Census Bureau Current Population Reports, indicates that 96 percent of all Asian/Pacific Islander 18- to 24-year-olds are Asian.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 302.60

Related indicators and resources: Undergraduate Enrollment, Immediate College Enrollment Rate

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