

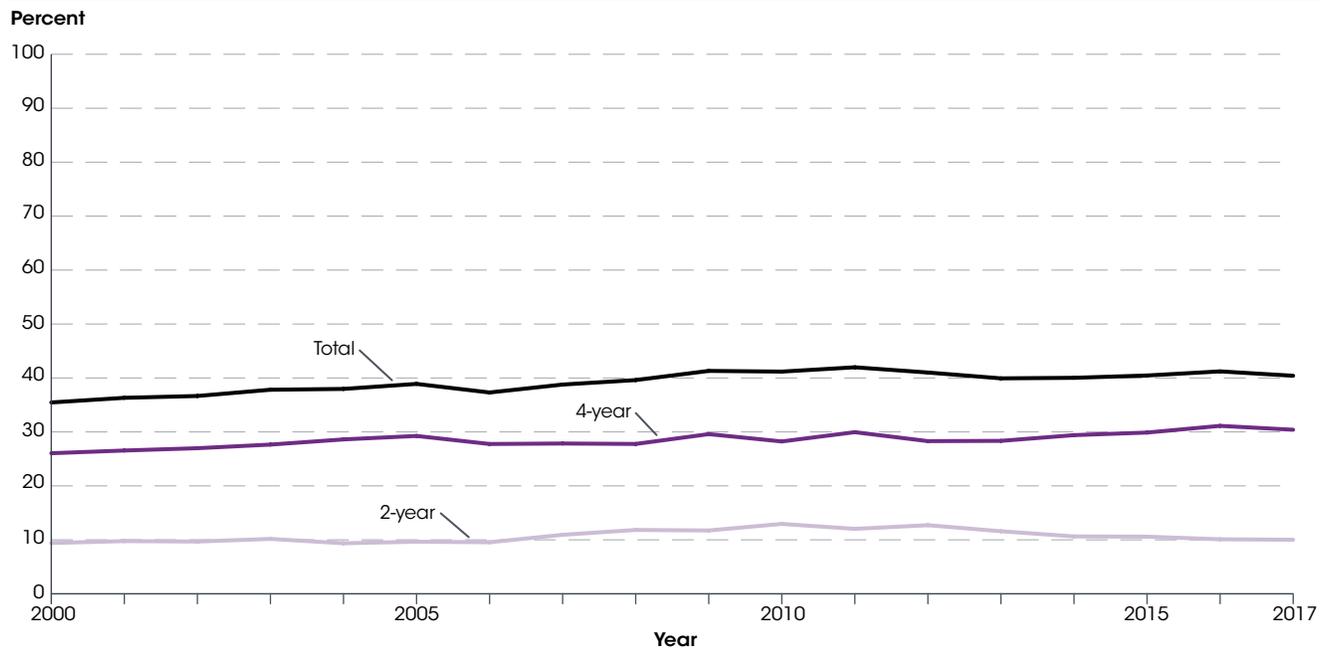
College Enrollment Rates

The overall college enrollment rate for young adults increased from 35 percent in 2000 to 40 percent in 2017. In 2017, the college enrollment rate was higher for Asian (65 percent) young adults than for White (41 percent), Black (36 percent), and Hispanic (36 percent) young adults.

The overall college enrollment rate has increased since 2000. Different factors, such as changes in the labor market and the economy, 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”) enrolled as undergraduate or graduate

students in 2- or 4-year institutions. The Immediate College Enrollment Rate indicator, in contrast, presents data on the percentage of high school completers who enroll in 2- or 4-year institutions in the fall immediately following high school.

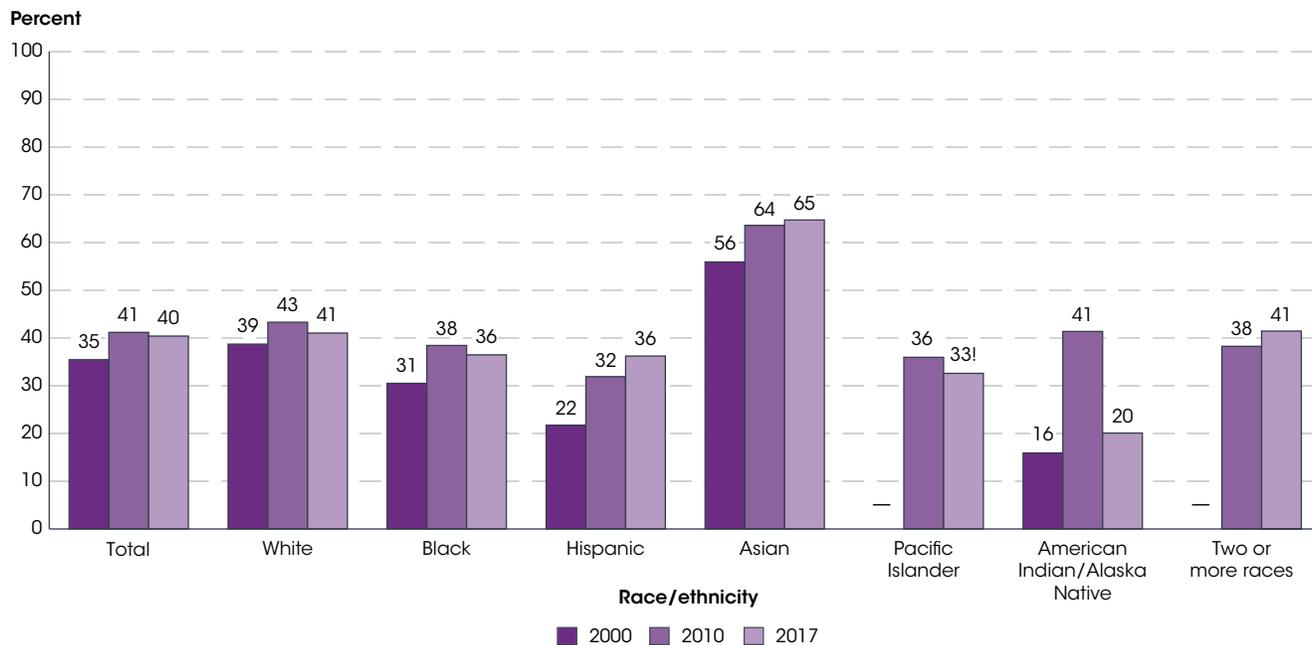
Figure 1. College enrollment rates of 18- to 24-year-olds, by level of institution: 2000 through 2017



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 through 2017. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2018*, table 302.60.

The overall college enrollment rate increased from 2000 to 2010. Similarly, the college enrollment rate increased at 4-year institutions and 2-year institutions during this period. Over a more recent time period, the overall college enrollment rate in 2017 was not measurably different

from the rate in 2010, but the rate at 4-year institutions increased from 2010 (28 percent) to 2017 (30 percent), and the rate at 2-year institutions decreased from 13 percent to 10 percent during this period.

Figure 2. College enrollment rates of 18- to 24-year-olds, by race/ethnicity: 2000, 2010, and 2017

— Not available.

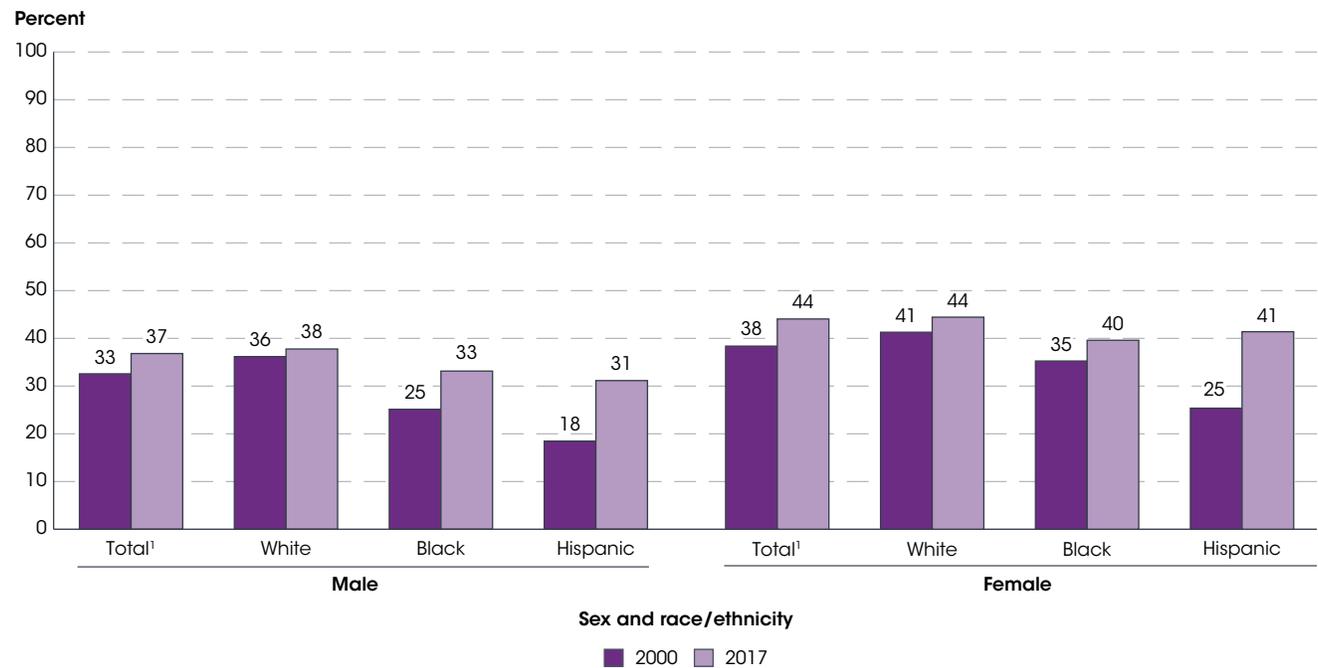
! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. Separate data for young adults who were Pacific Islander and of Two or more races were not available in 2000. In 2000, data for individual race categories include persons of Two or more races. Prior to 2003, data for Asian young adults include Pacific Islander young adults. 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, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 2000, 2010, and 2017. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2018*, table 302.60.

From 2000 to 2017, college enrollment rates increased for Black (from 31 to 36 percent) and Hispanic (from 22 to 36 percent) young adults. The rates in 2017 were also higher than in 2000 for White (41 vs. 39 percent) and Asian (65 vs. 56 percent) young adults.³ The rate was not measurably different between 2000 and 2017 for American Indian/Alaska Native young adults. More recently, college enrollment rates were higher in 2017 than in 2010 for Hispanic (36 vs. 32 percent) young adults and lower in 2017 than in 2010 for White (41 vs. 43 percent) and American Indian/Alaska Native (20 vs. 41 percent) young adults. There was no measurable difference between the 2010 and 2017 college enrollment rates for young adults who were Black, Asian, Pacific Islander, and of Two or more races.

In 2017, the college enrollment rate was higher for Asian young adults (65 percent) than for young adults who were of Two or more races (41 percent), White (41 percent), Black (36 percent), Hispanic (36 percent), Pacific Islander (33 percent), and American Indian/Alaska Native (20 percent). In every year between 2000 and 2017, the college enrollment rate for Asian young adults was higher than the rates for White, Black, and Hispanic young adults; and the rate for White young adults was higher than the rate for Black young adults. The college enrollment rate for White young adults was also higher than the rate for Hispanic young adults in every year between 2000 and 2017, except 2016.

Figure 3. College enrollment rates of 18- to 24-year-olds, by sex and race/ethnicity: 2000 and 2017

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. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 2000 and 2017. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2018*, table 302.60.

Between 2000 and 2017, overall college enrollment rates increased for both young adult males (from 33 to 37 percent) and young adult females (from 38 to 44 percent). Among males, college enrollment rates were higher in 2017 than in 2000 for Black (33 vs. 25 percent) and Hispanic (31 vs. 18 percent) young adults. Among females, college enrollment rates were also higher in 2017 than in 2000 for White (44 vs. 41 percent) and Hispanic (41 vs. 25 percent) young adults. The rates in 2017 were not measurably different from the rates in 2000 for White young adult males and Black young adult females.

In every year since 2000, the college enrollment rate for young adults was higher for females than for males.

This pattern was observed for young adults overall and for White and Hispanic young adults specifically. For example, in 2017 the female-male gap in college enrollment rates was 7 percentage points for young adults overall, 7 percentage points for White young adults, and 10 percentage points for Hispanic young adults. Among Black young adults, the college enrollment rate was higher for females than for males in most years since 2000, except in 2007, 2012, 2015, and 2016, when the rates were not measurably different. In 2017, the female-male gap in college enrollment rates was 6 percentage points for Black young adults.

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 young adults who were Pacific Islander or of Two or more races were not available in 2000. Prior to 2003, data for Asian young adults included Pacific Islander young adults. Information from *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, 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 2018*, table 302.60

Related indicators and resources: [College Participation Rates](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]; [Immediate College Enrollment Rate](#); [Snapshot: College Participation Rates for Racial/Ethnic Subgroups](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]; [Undergraduate Enrollment](#); [Young Adult Educational and](#)

[Employment Outcomes by Family Socioeconomic Status](#) [*The Condition of Education 2019 Spotlight*]

Glossary: College; Enrollment; Racial/ethnic group

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