

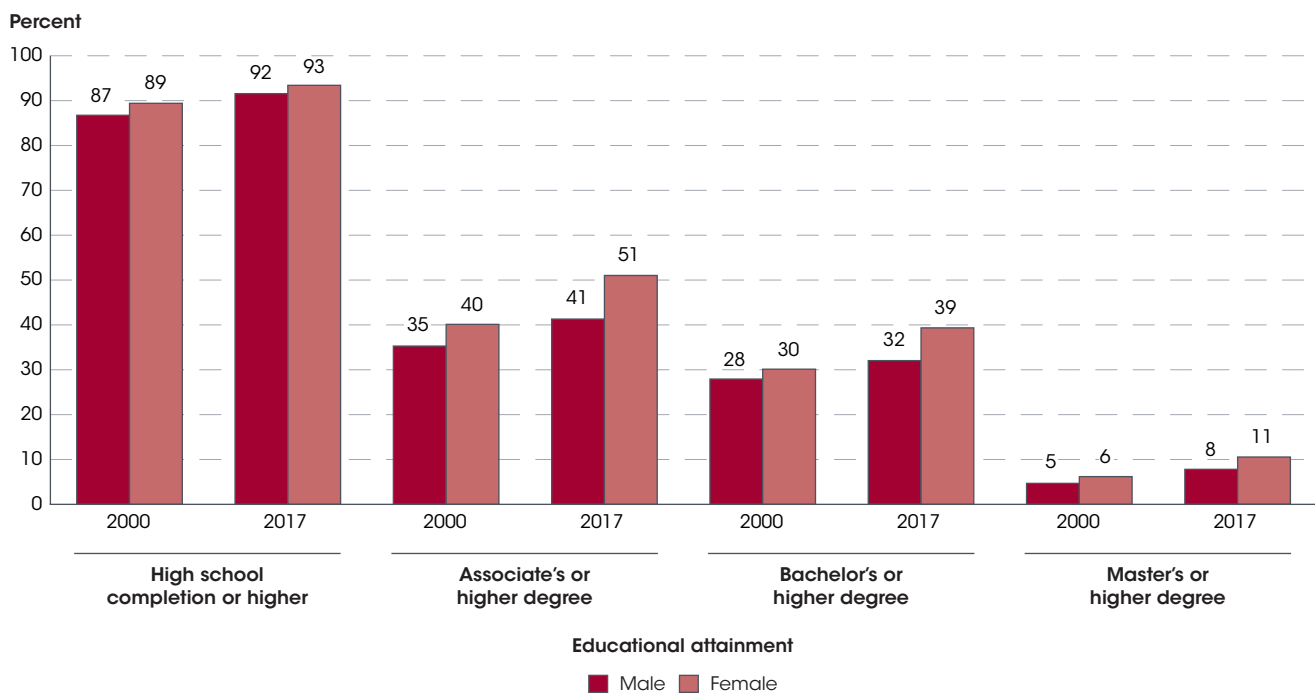
## Educational Attainment of Young Adults

*Educational attainment rates for 25- to 29-year-olds increased at all levels between 2000 and 2017. During this time, the percentage who had completed high school increased from 88 to 92 percent, the percentage with an associate's or higher degree increased from 38 to 46 percent, the percentage with a bachelor's or higher degree increased from 29 to 36 percent, and the percentage with a master's or higher degree increased from 5 to 9 percent.*

*Educational attainment* refers to the highest level of education completed (defined here as a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree, or a master's or higher degree). Between 2000 and 2017, educational attainment rates among 25- to 29-year-olds increased at each attainment level. During this time, the percentage who had received

at least a high school diploma or its equivalent increased from 88 to 92 percent, the percentage with an associate's or higher degree increased from 38 to 46 percent, the percentage with a bachelor's or higher degree increased from 29 to 36 percent, and the percentage with a master's or higher degree increased from 5 to 9 percent.

**Figure 1. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds, by educational attainment and sex: 2000 and 2017**

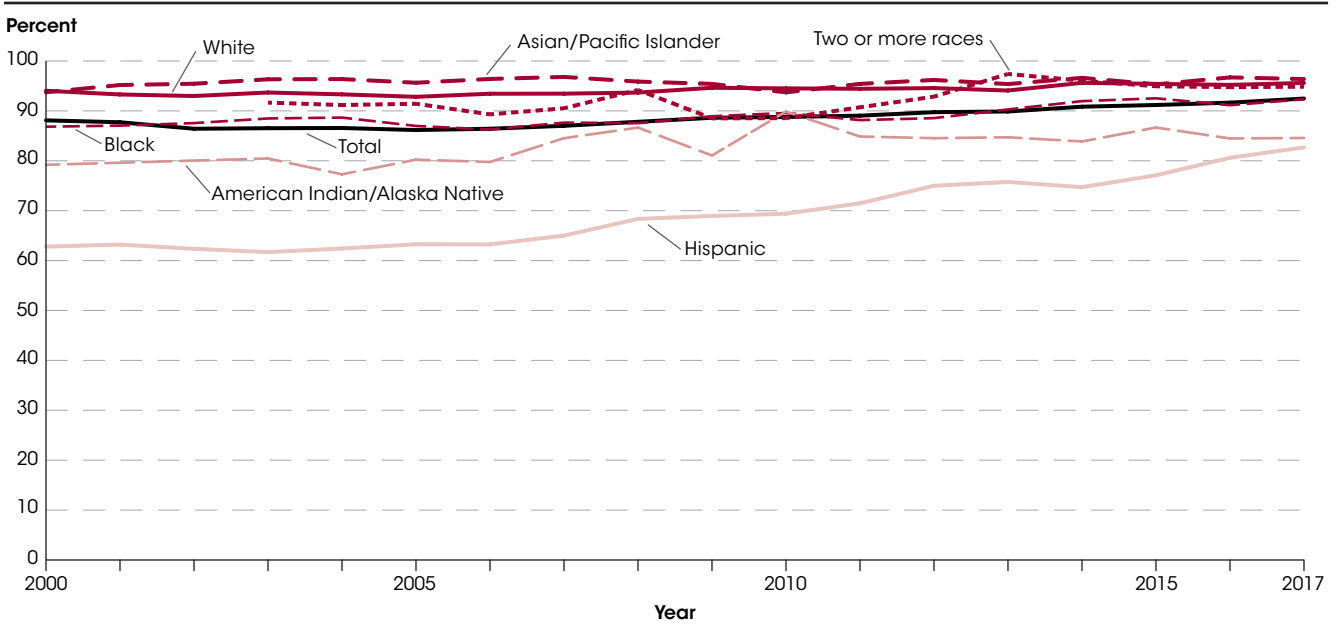


NOTE: High school completion includes those persons who graduated from high school with a diploma as well as those who completed high school through equivalency programs, such as a GED program.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2000 and 2017. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 104.20.

Between 2000 and 2017, attainment rates increased for both female and male 25- to 29-year-olds across all education levels. Attainment rates for 25- to 29-year-olds were generally higher for females than for males during this period. Between 2000 and 2017, the difference between the attainment rates for 25- to 29-year-old females and males (also referred to in this indicator as the gender gap) did not vary measurably at the high school completion or higher and master's or higher degree

attainment levels; however, the gender gap did widen at the associate's or higher degree and bachelor's or higher degree attainment levels. Among 25- to 29-year-olds who had completed an associate's or higher degree, the gender gap widened from 5 percentage points in 2000 to 10 percentage points in 2017. Similarly, among 25- to 29-year-olds who had completed a bachelor's or higher degree, the gender gap widened from 2 percentage points in 2000 to 7 percentage points in 2017.

**Figure 2. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds with at least a high school diploma or its equivalent, by race/ethnicity: 2000 through 2017**



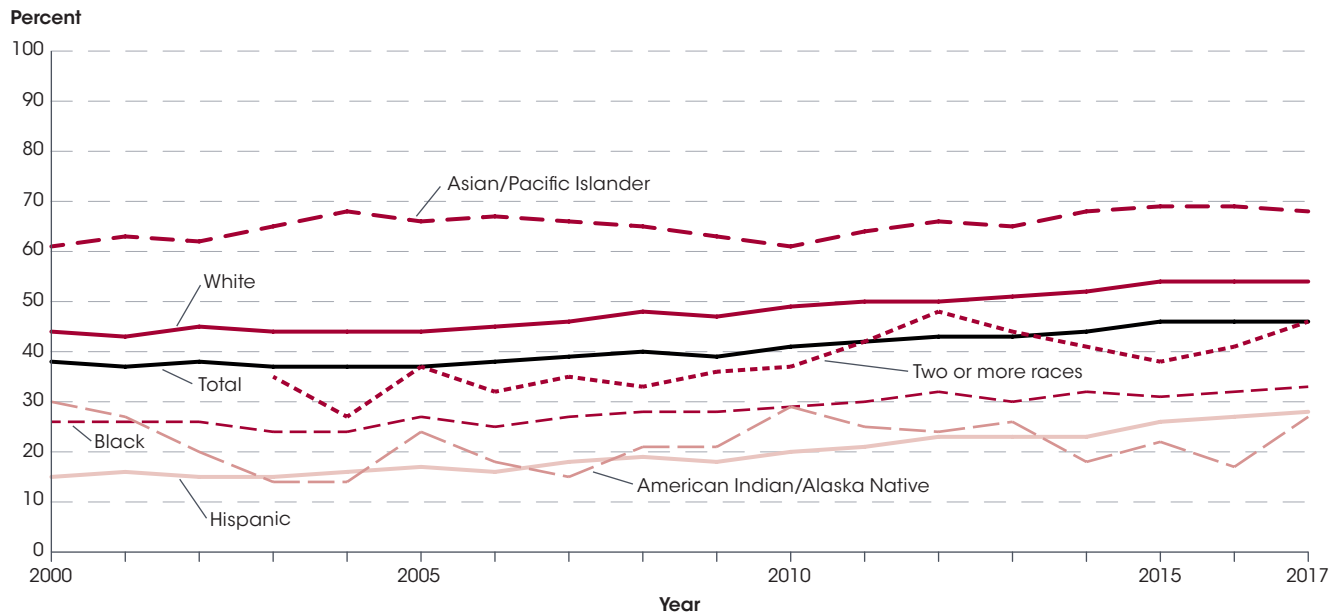
NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Separate data on persons of Two or more races were not available prior to 2003. Data on American Indian/Alaska Natives were not available in 2001 and 2002.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, selected years, 2000 through 2017. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2011*, table 8, and *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, 2016, and 2017, table 104.20.

Between 2000 and 2017, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who had received at least a high school diploma or its equivalent increased for those who were White (from 94 to 96 percent), Black (from 87 to 92 percent), and Hispanic (from 63 to 83 percent). However, the percentages of Asian/Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaska Native 25- to 29-year-olds with at least a high school diploma or its equivalent in 2017 (96 percent and 85 percent, respectively) were not measurably different from the corresponding percentages in 2000. In addition, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds of Two or more races who had received a high school diploma or its equivalent in 2017 (95 percent) was not measurably different from the percentage who had attained this

education level in 2003, the first year for which data on persons of Two or more races were available.

Between 2000 and 2017, the percentage of White 25- to 29-year-olds who had received at least a high school diploma or its equivalent remained higher than the percentages of Black and Hispanic 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained this education level. However, the White-Black attainment gap at this attainment level narrowed from 7 to 3 percentage points over this period. In addition, the White-Hispanic gap at this attainment level narrowed from 31 to 13 percentage points, primarily due to the increase in the percentage of Hispanic 25- to 29-year-olds who had completed high school.

**Figure 3. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds with an associate's or higher degree, by race/ethnicity: 2000 through 2017**



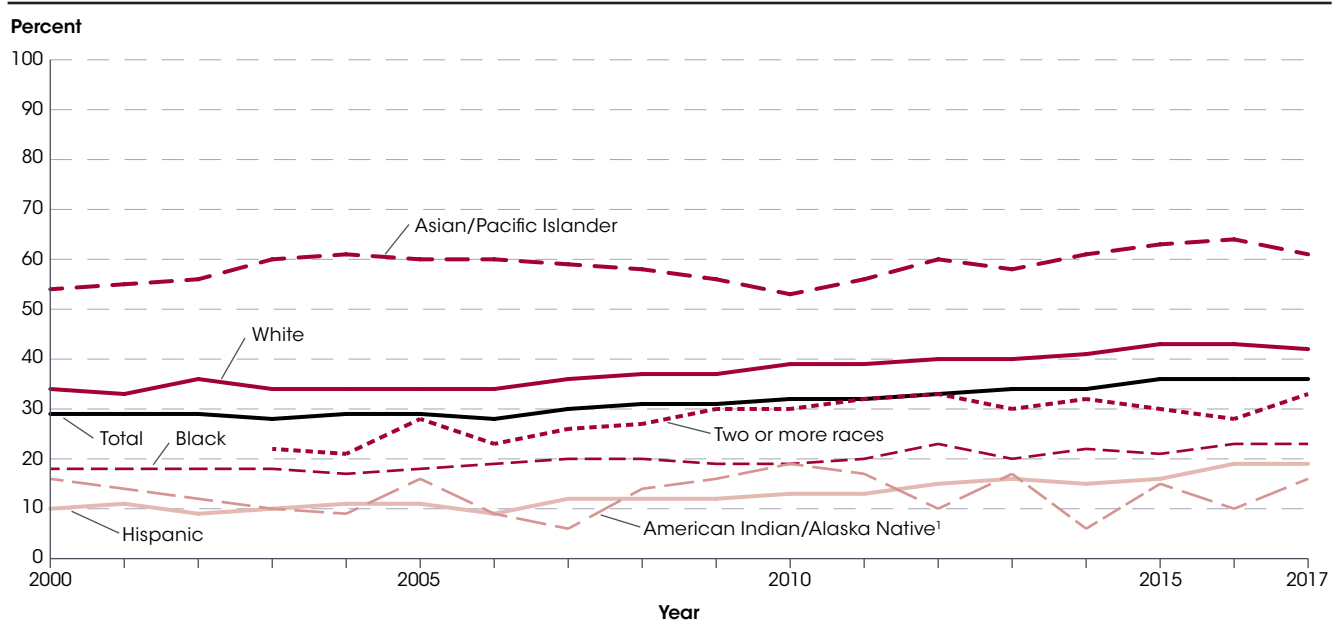
NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Prior to 2003, separate data on persons of Two or more races were not available.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2000 through 2017. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 104.65, and *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 104.20.

From 2000 to 2017, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained an associate's or higher degree increased for those who were White (from 44 to 54 percent), Black (from 26 to 33 percent), Hispanic (from 15 to 28 percent), and Asian/Pacific Islander (from 61 to 68 percent). The percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native 25- to 29-year-olds (27 percent) who had attained an associate's or higher degree in 2017 was not measurably different from the percentage attaining this education level in 2000. Similarly, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds of Two or more races in 2017 with an associate's or higher

degree (46 percent) was not measurably different from the corresponding percentage in 2003.

The gap between the percentages of White and Black 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained an associate's or higher degree in 2017 (21 percent) was not measurably different from the corresponding gap in 2000. Similarly, the gap between the percentages of White and Hispanic 25- to 29-year-olds with an associate's or higher degree in 2017 (26 percent) was not measurably different from the corresponding gap in 2000.

**Figure 4. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds with a bachelor's or higher degree, by race/ethnicity: Selected years, 2000 through 2017**



<sup>1</sup> Interpret data for 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2014, and 2017 with caution. The coefficients of variation (CVs) for these estimates are between 30 and 50 percent. NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Separate data on persons of Two or more races were not available prior to 2003. Data on American Indians/Alaska Natives were not available in 2001 and 2002. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, selected years, 2000 through 2017. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2011*, table 8, and *Digest of Education Statistics 2014, 2016, and 2017*, table 104.20.

From 2000 to 2017, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a bachelor's or higher degree increased for those who were White (from 34 to 42 percent), Black (from 18 to 23 percent), and Hispanic (from 10 to 19 percent). Similarly, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds of Two or more races who had attained a bachelor's or higher degree increased from 2003 to 2017 (from 22 to 33 percent). However, the percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a bachelor's or higher degree in 2017 (61 percent) was not measurably different from the percentage in 2000, and the percentage of their American Indian/Alaska Native peers who had attained a bachelor's or higher degree in 2017 (16 percent) was not measurably different from the percentage in 2000.

The gap between the percentages of White and Black 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a bachelor's or higher degree in 2017 (19 percent) was not measurably different from the corresponding gap in 2000; similarly, the gap between the percentages of White and Hispanic 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a bachelor's or

higher degree in 2017 (24 percent) was not measurably different from the corresponding gap in 2000.

From 2000 to 2017, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a master's or higher degree increased for those who were White (from 6 to 10 percent), Hispanic (from 2 to 4 percent), and Asian/Pacific Islander (from 16 to 25 percent). The percentage of Black 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a master's or higher degree in 2017 (5 percent) was not measurably different from the percentage in 2000. Similarly, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds of Two or more races with a master's or higher degree in 2017 (5 percent) was not measurably different from the percentage in 2003.<sup>1</sup>

The gap between the percentages of White and Black 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a master's or higher degree widened from 2 to 5 percentage points between 2000 and 2017. The White-Hispanic gap at the master's or higher degree attainment level also widened during this time, from 4 to 6 percentage points.

**Endnotes:**

<sup>1</sup> American Indian/Alaska Native students who had attained a master's or higher degree are not included in this comparison

because sample sizes were too small to provide a reliable estimate in 2000.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2011*, table 8; *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 104.65; *Digest of Education Statistics 2014, 2016, and 2017*, table 104.20

**Related indicators and resources:** [Disability Rates and Employment Status by Educational Attainment](#) [*The Condition of Education 2017 Spotlight*]; [Educational Attainment](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]; [International Educational Attainment](#); [Snapshot: Attainment of a Bachelor's or Higher Degree for Racial/Ethnic Subgroups](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]; [Trends in Employment Rates by Educational Attainment](#) [*The Condition of Education 2013 Spotlight*]

**Glossary:** Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree, Educational attainment (Current Population Survey), Gap, High school completer, High school diploma, Master's degree, Postsecondary education, Racial/ethnic group