

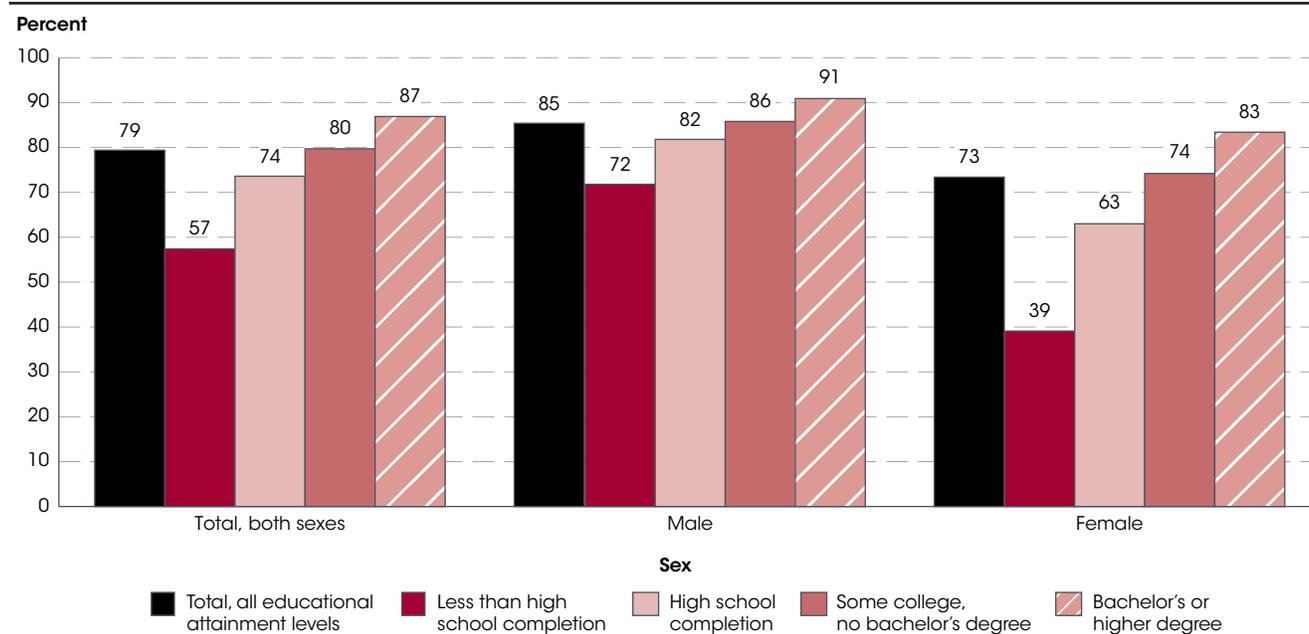
## Employment and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment

*In 2019, the employment rate for female 25- to 34-year-olds with a bachelor's or higher degree was 44 percentage points higher than for similar individuals who had not completed high school.*

This indicator focuses on 25- to 34-year-olds and examines recent trends in two distinct yet related measures of labor market conditions: the employment rate and the unemployment rate. The *employment rate* (also known as the employment to population ratio) is the percentage of persons in the civilian noninstitutionalized

population who are employed.<sup>1</sup> The *unemployment rate* is the percentage of persons in the civilian labor force (i.e., all civilians who are employed or seeking employment) who are not working and who made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the prior 4 weeks.

**Figure 1. Employment rates of 25- to 34-year-olds, by sex and educational attainment: 2019**

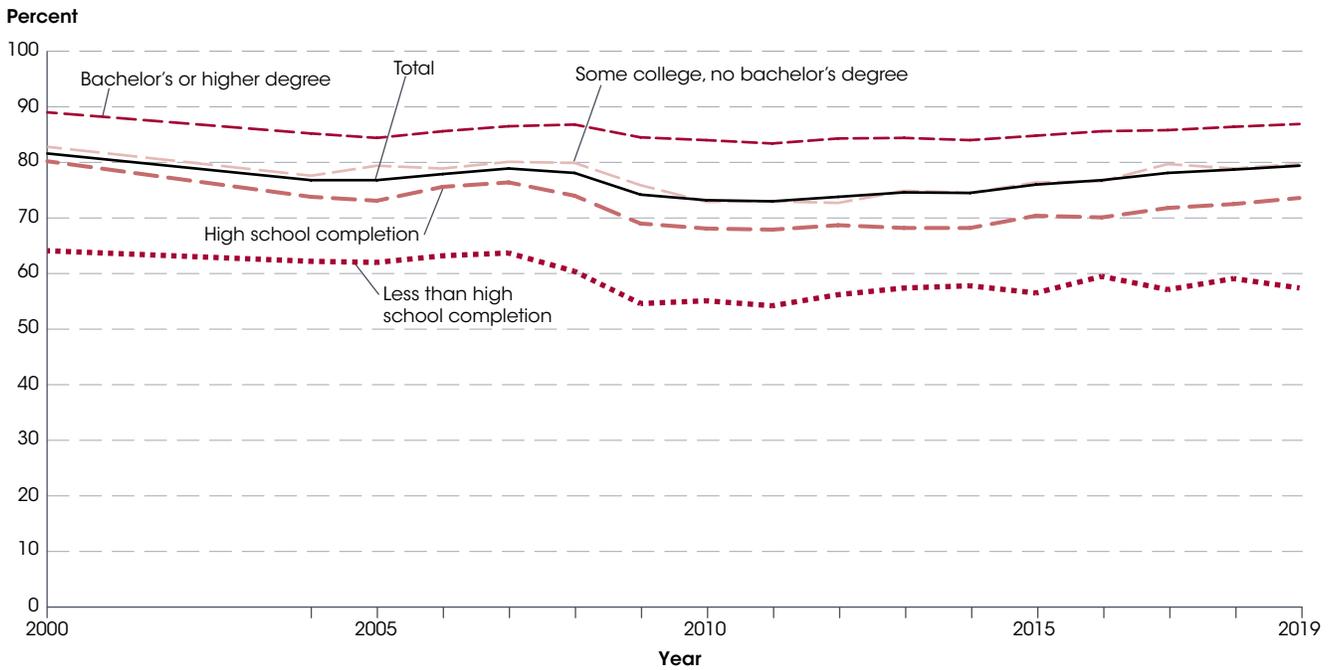


NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities) and all military personnel. The employment rate, or employment to population ratio, is the number of persons in each group who are employed as a percentage of the civilian population in that group. "Some college, no bachelor's degree" includes persons with an associate's degree. "High school completion" includes equivalency credentials, such as the GED. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, March 2019. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, tables 501.50, 501.60, and 501.70.

In 2019, the employment rate was higher for those with higher levels of educational attainment. For example, the employment rate was highest for 25- to 34-year-olds with a bachelor's or higher degree (87 percent). The employment rate for those with some college<sup>2</sup> (80 percent) was higher than the rate for those who had completed high school<sup>3</sup> (74 percent), which was higher than the employment rate for those who had not completed high school (57 percent). The same pattern was observed among both sexes. For example, the employment rate for females was highest for those with a bachelor's or higher degree (83 percent) and lowest for those who had not completed high school (39 percent).

Employment rates were higher for 25- to 34-year-old males than for their female peers in 2019, overall and at each level of educational attainment. The difference in employment rates between males and females (also referred to in this indicator as the gender gap) was narrower at higher levels of educational attainment. For instance, the gender gap was 7 percentage points for those with a bachelor's or higher degree, while the gender gap was 19 percentage points for those who had completed high school and 33 percentage points for those who had not completed high school.

**Figure 2. Employment rates of 25- to 34-year-olds, by educational attainment: Selected years, 2000 through 2019**



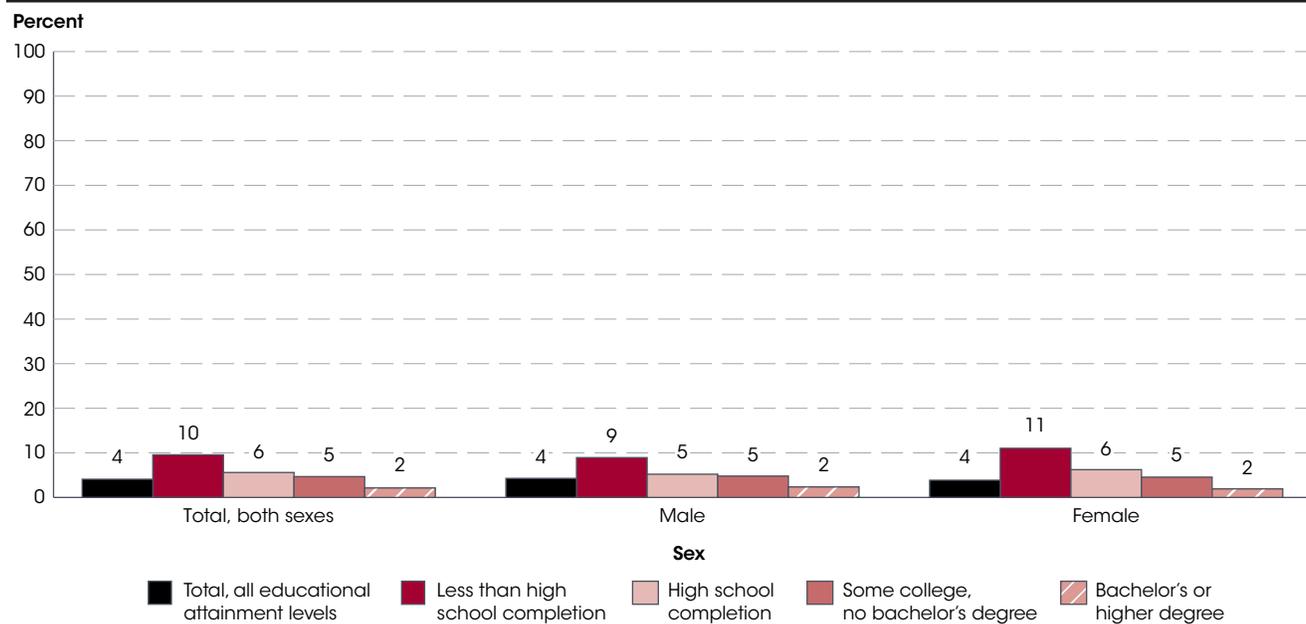
NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities) and all military personnel. The employment rate, or employment to population ratio, is the number of persons in each group who are employed as a percentage of the civilian population in that group. "Some college, no bachelor's degree" includes persons with an associate's degree. "High school completion" includes equivalency credentials, such as the GED.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, selected years, March 2000 through 2019. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2013, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2019*, table 501.50.

From December 2007 through June 2009, the U.S. economy experienced a recession.<sup>4</sup> For 25- to 34-year-olds overall, the employment rate was lower in 2010 (73 percent), immediately after the recession, than in 2000 (82 percent), prior to the recession. The employment rate increased after 2010, reaching 79 percent in 2019; however, the rate in 2019 was still lower than the rate in 2000. During these years, the same patterns in employment rates were observed for those at most levels of

educational attainment. For instance, for those who had completed high school, the employment rate was lower in 2010 (68 percent) than in 2000 (80 percent). Although the employment rate then increased to 74 percent in 2019, this rate was still lower than the rate in 2000. The only exception was for those who had not completed high school, where there was no measurable difference between the employment rates in 2010 and 2019.

Figure 3. Unemployment rates of 25- to 34-year-olds, by sex and educational attainment: 2019

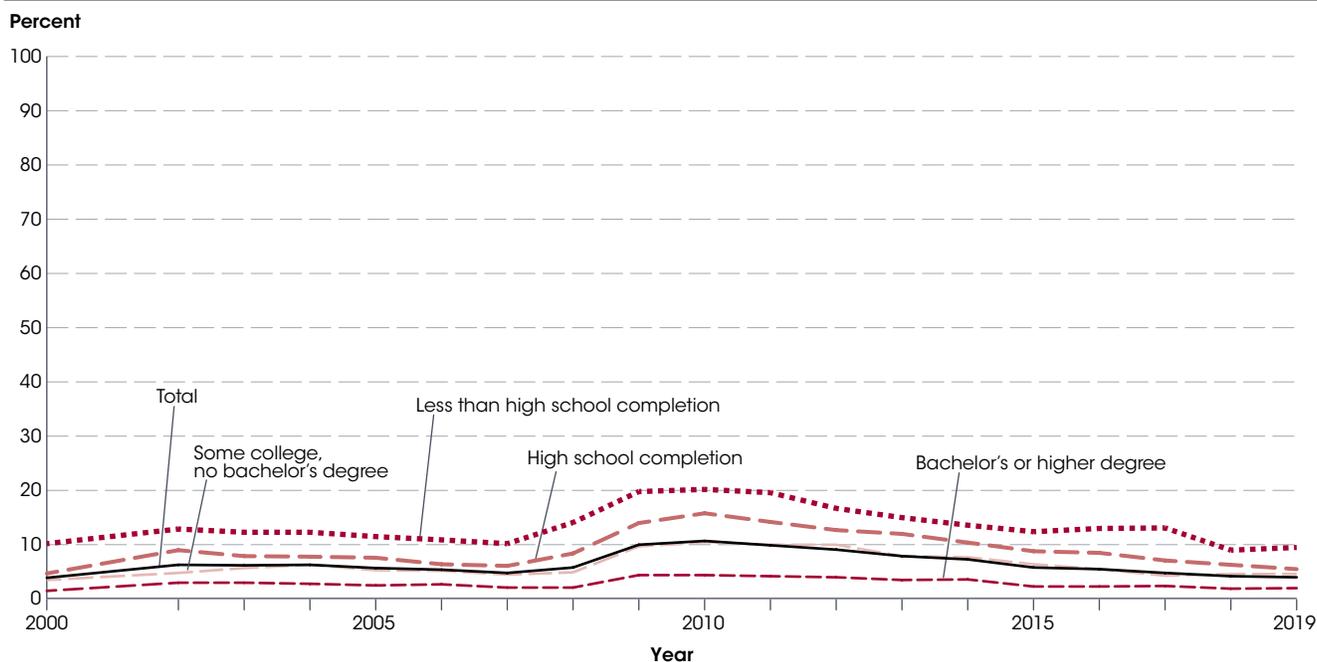


NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities); this figure includes data only on the civilian population (excludes all military personnel). The unemployment rate is the percentage of persons in the civilian labor force who are not working and who made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the prior 4 weeks. The civilian labor force consists of all civilians who are employed or seeking employment. "Some college, no bachelor's degree" includes persons with an associate's degree. "High school completion" includes equivalency credentials, such as the GED. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, March 2019. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, tables 501.80, 501.85, and 501.90.

Overall, the unemployment rate in 2019 was lower for 25- to 34-year-olds with higher levels of educational attainment. For example, the unemployment rate was lowest for those with a bachelor's or higher degree (2 percent). The unemployment rate was also lower for individuals with some college (5 percent) and those who had completed high school (6 percent) compared with those who had not completed high school (10 percent). A similar pattern was observed by sex.

There was no measurable difference between the overall unemployment rates for male and female 25- to 34-year-olds in 2019. In addition, there were no measurable differences between the unemployment rates by sex at any level of educational attainment.

**Figure 4. Unemployment rates of 25- to 34-year-olds, by educational attainment: Selected years, 2000 through 2019**



NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities); this figure includes data only on the civilian population (excludes all military personnel). The unemployment rate is the percentage of persons in the civilian labor force who are not working and who made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the prior 4 weeks. The civilian labor force consists of all civilians who are employed or seeking employment. "Some college, no bachelor's degree" includes persons with an associate's degree. "High school completion" includes equivalency credentials, such as the GED.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, selected years, March 2000 through 2019. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2013, 2017, 2018, and 2019*, table 501.80.

For 25- to 34-year-olds overall, the unemployment rate was higher in 2010 (11 percent), immediately after the recession, than in 2000 (4 percent), prior to the recession. The unemployment rate decreased after 2010, to 4 percent

in 2019, and this rate was not measurably different from the rate in 2000. During these years, the same patterns in unemployment rates were observed at each level of educational attainment.

**Endnotes:**

<sup>1</sup> Data in this indicator are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities) and excludes all military personnel.  
<sup>2</sup> In this indicator, "some college" includes those with an associate's degree and those who have attended college but have not obtained a bachelor's degree.

<sup>3</sup> Includes equivalency credentials, such as the GED.  
<sup>4</sup> National Bureau of Economic Research. (2010). *U.S. Business Cycle Expansions and Contractions*. Retrieved October 22, 2018, from <https://www.nber.org/cycles.html>.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, tables 501.50, 501.60, 501.70, 501.80, 501.85, and 501.90; *Digest of Education Statistics 2013, 2014, 2016, and 2018*, table 501.50; and *Digest of Education Statistics 2013, 2017, and 2018*, table 501.80

**Glossary:** Bachelor's degree; College; Educational attainment (Current Population Survey); Employment status; Gap; High school completer

**Related indicators and resources:** [Annual Earnings](#); [Disability Rates and Employment Status by Educational Attainment](#) [*The Condition of Education 2017 Spotlight*]; [Employment Outcomes of Bachelor's Degree Holders](#) [*web-only*]; [Post-College Employment Outcomes by Field of Study and Race/Ethnicity](#) [*The Condition of Education 2016 Spotlight*]; [Trends in Employment Rates by Educational Attainment](#) [*The Condition of Education 2013 Spotlight*]; [Unemployment](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]