

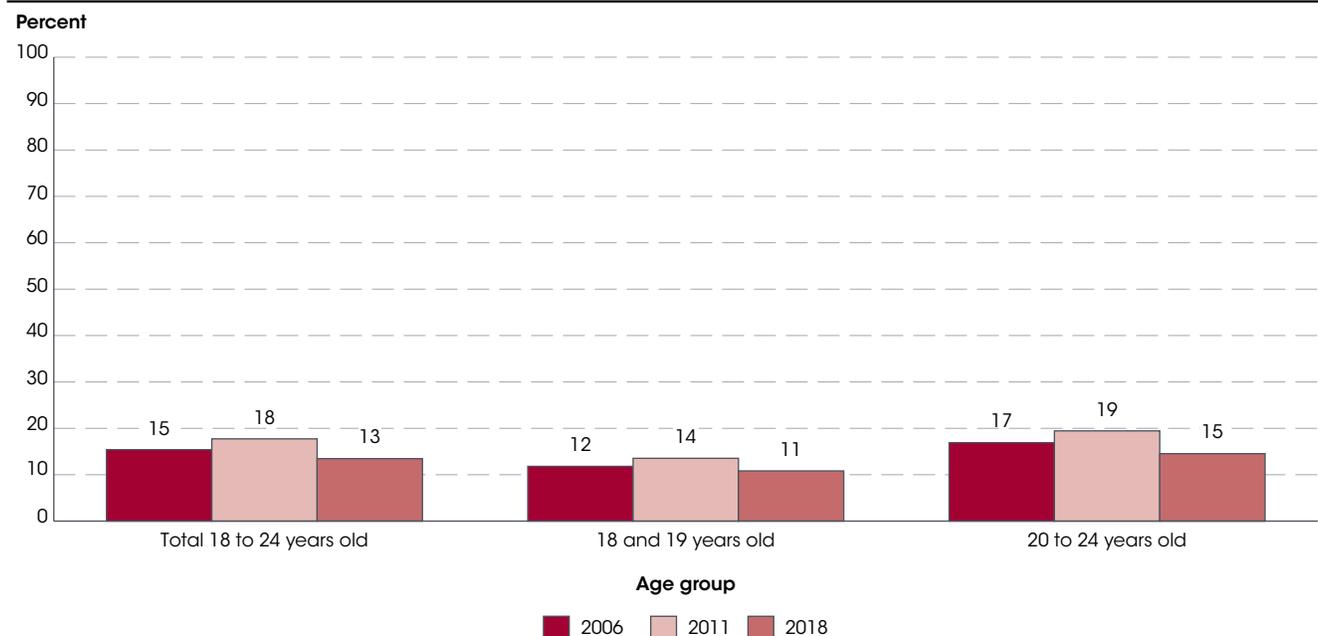
Young Adults Neither Enrolled in School nor Working

Overall, the percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds neither enrolled in school nor working was lower in 2018 (13 percent) than shortly before the recession in 2006 (15 percent) and shortly after the recession in 2011 (18 percent). In 2018, the percentage of 20- to 24-year-olds neither enrolled in school nor working was higher for those who had not completed high school (41 percent) than for those who had completed high school (12 percent).

Schooling and working are core activities in the transition from childhood to adulthood. Young adults who are detached from these activities, particularly if they are detached for several years, may have difficulty building a work history that contributes to future employability and higher wages.¹ Young adults who are neither enrolled in school nor working may be detached from these activities for a variety of reasons. For example, they may be seeking educational opportunities or work but are unable to find them, or they may have left school or the workforce

temporarily or permanently for personal, family, or financial reasons. This indicator examines rates at which young adults in a variety of age groups are neither enrolled in school nor working. The indicator presents data across three years: 2006, 2011, and 2018. The 2006 data provide information on outcomes prior to the recession experienced by the U.S. economy between December 2007 and June 2009,² the 2011 data represent the period shortly after the recession ended, and the 2018 data provide the most recent information available.

Figure 1. Percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds who were neither enrolled in school nor working, by age group: 2006, 2011, and 2018



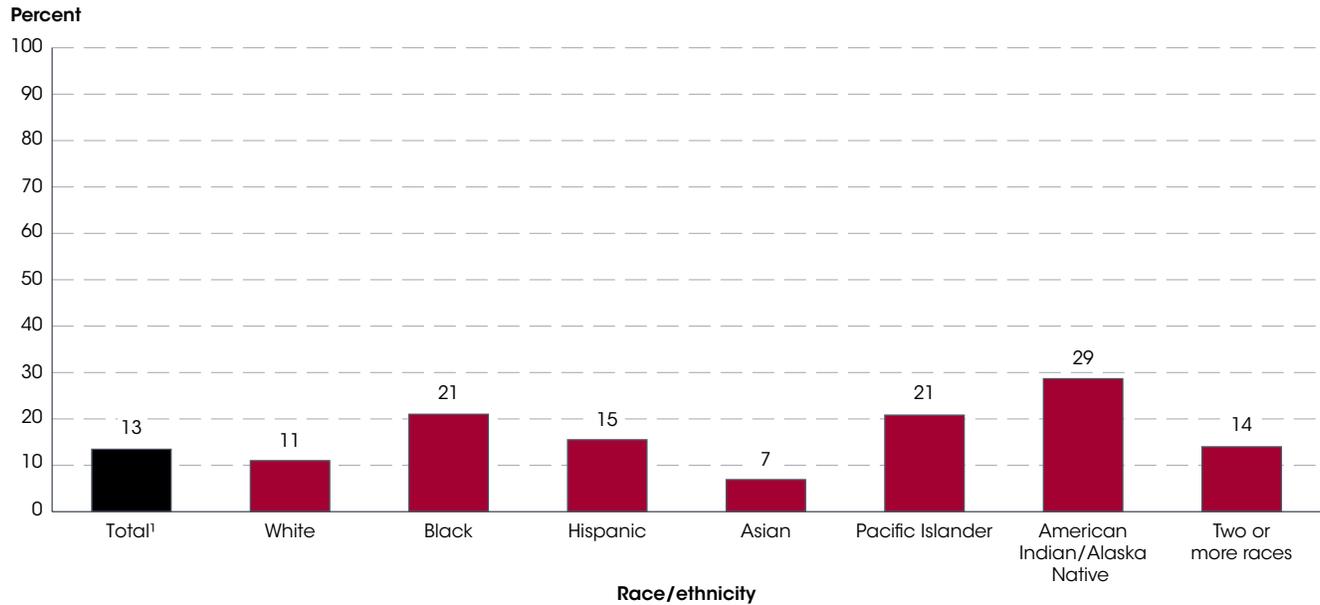
NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the entire population in the given age range residing within the United States, including the 50 states, the District of Columbia (D.C.), and Puerto Rico. Both noninstitutionalized persons (e.g., those living in households, college housing, or military housing located within the United States) and institutionalized persons (e.g., those living in prisons, nursing facilities, or other healthcare facilities) are included. Institutionalized persons made up 1 percent of all 18- to 24-year-olds in 2018. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2006, 2011, and 2018. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 501.30.

Thirteen percent of 18- to 24-year-olds were neither in school nor working in 2018 overall. The percentage was higher for 20- to 24-year-olds (15 percent) than for 18- and 19-year-olds (11 percent).

Overall, the percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds neither in school nor working was lower in 2018 (13 percent) than shortly before the recession in 2006 (15 percent) and

shortly after the recession in 2011 (18 percent). Specifically, among 18- and 19-year-olds, the percentage neither in school nor working was lower in 2018 (11 percent) than in 2006 (12 percent) and 2011 (14 percent). Likewise, the percentage of 20- to 24-year-olds neither in school nor working was also lower in 2018 (15 percent) than in 2006 (17 percent) and 2011 (19 percent).

Figure 2. Percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds who were neither enrolled in school nor working, by race/ethnicity: 2018

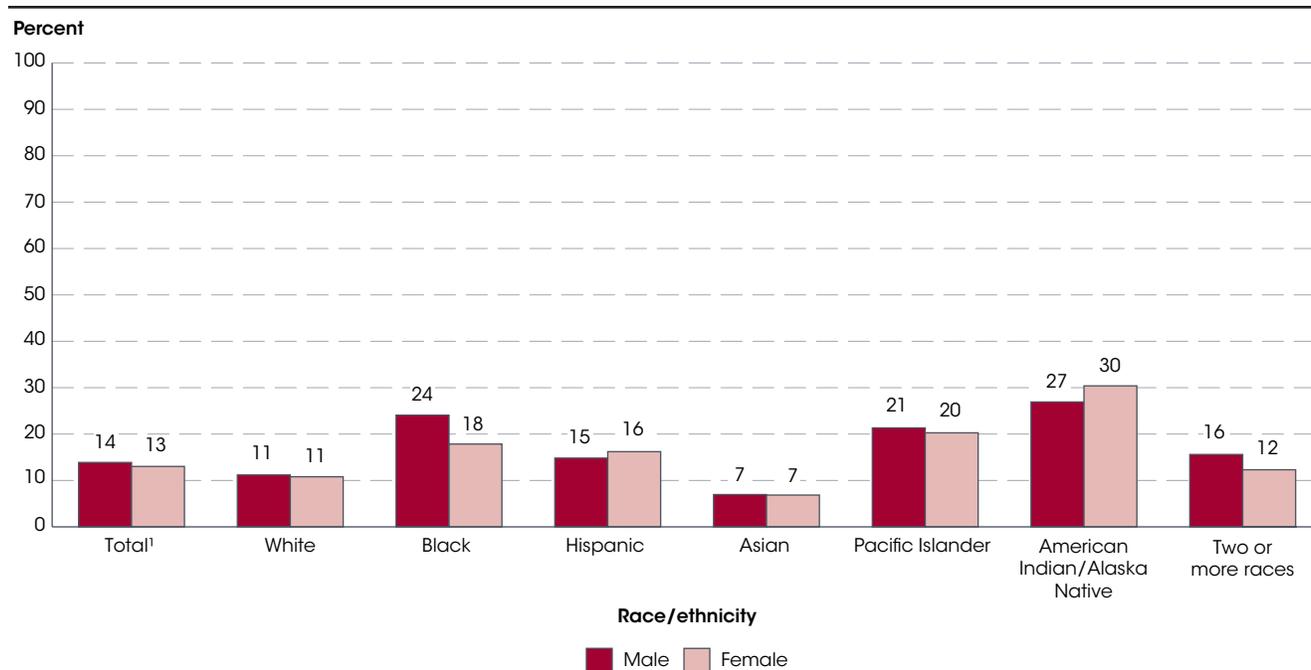


¹ Includes respondents who wrote in some other race that was not included as an option on the questionnaire.
NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the entire population in the given age range residing within the United States, including the 50 states, the District of Columbia (D.C.), and Puerto Rico. Both noninstitutionalized persons (e.g., those living in households, college housing, or military housing located within the United States) and institutionalized persons (e.g., those living in prisons, nursing facilities, or other healthcare facilities) are included. Institutionalized persons made up 1 percent of all 18- to 24-year-olds in 2018. 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, American Community Survey (ACS), 2018. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 501.30.

In 2018, the percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds neither in school nor working varied by race/ethnicity. The percentage neither in school nor working was higher for those who were American Indian/Alaska Native (29 percent) than for their peers of any other racial/ethnic group. This percentage was lowest for those who were

Asian (7 percent). The percentage was also lower for those who were White (11 percent) than for their peers of any other racial/ethnic group. In addition, the percentage neither in school nor working was lower for those who were of Two or more races (14 percent) and Hispanic (15 percent) than for their Black peers (21 percent).

Figure 3. Percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds who were neither enrolled in school nor working, by race/ethnicity and sex: 2018

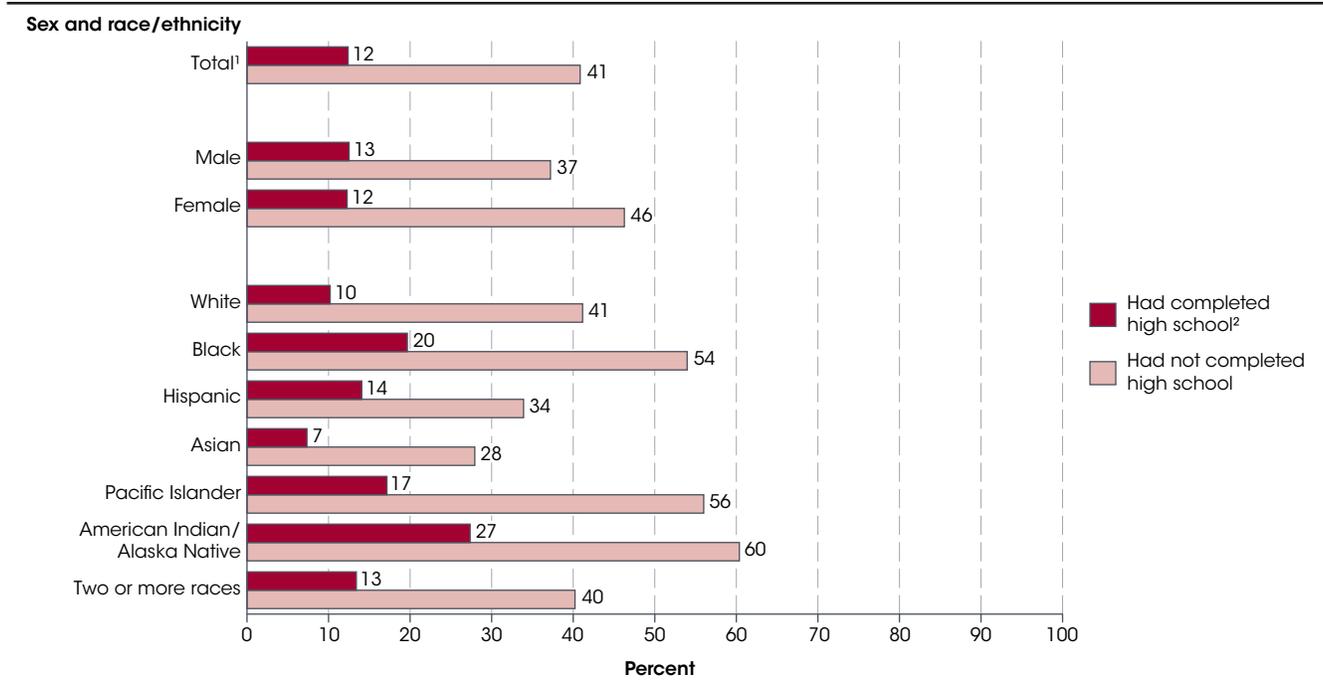


¹ Includes respondents who wrote in some other race that was not included as an option on the questionnaire.
NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the entire population in the given age range residing within the United States, including the 50 states, the District of Columbia (D.C.), and Puerto Rico. Both noninstitutionalized persons (e.g., those living in households, college housing, or military housing located within the United States) and institutionalized persons (e.g., those living in prisons, nursing facilities, or other healthcare facilities) are included. Institutionalized persons made up 1 percent of all 18- to 24-year-olds in 2018. 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, American Community Survey (ACS), 2018. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 501.30.

The percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds who were neither in school nor working in 2018 was higher for males than for females overall (14 vs. 13 percent). This pattern was also observed for those who were Black (24 vs. 18 percent) and

of Two or more races (16 vs. 12 percent).³ However, for those who were Hispanic, the percentage neither in school nor working was lower for males than for females (15 vs. 16 percent).⁴

Figure 4. Percentage of 20- to 24-year-olds who were neither enrolled in school nor working, by sex, race/ethnicity, and high school completion status: 2018



¹ Includes respondents who wrote in some other race that was not included as an option on the questionnaire.
² Includes respondents who completed high school through equivalency programs, such as a GED program.
 NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the entire population in the given age range residing within the United States, including the 50 states, the District of Columbia (D.C.), and Puerto Rico. Both noninstitutionalized persons (e.g., those living in households, college housing, or military housing located within the United States) and institutionalized persons (e.g., those living in prisons, nursing facilities, or other healthcare facilities) are included. Institutionalized persons made up 1 percent of all 18- to 24-year-olds in 2018. 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, American Community Survey (ACS), 2018. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 501.30.

In 2018, the percentage of 20- to 24-year-olds⁵ who were neither in school nor working was higher for those who had not completed high school⁶ (41 percent) than for those who had completed high school (12 percent). These differences by high school completion status were observed for males and females as well as for all racial/ethnic groups. For example, the percentage who were neither in school nor working was 25 percentage points higher for males who had not completed high school than for males

who had completed high school and 34 percentage points higher for females who had not completed high school than for females who had completed high school. The gap by high school completion status was larger for females than for males. In addition, the gap by high school completion status was larger for those who were Black and White (34 and 31 percentage points, respectively) than for their Asian and Hispanic peers (21 and 20 percentage points, respectively).

Endnotes:

¹ Fernandes-Alcantara, A.L. (2015). *Disconnected Youth: A Look at 16 to 24 Year Olds Who Are Not Working or In School* (CRS Report No. R40535). Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service. Retrieved January 3, 2020, from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R40535.pdf>.

² National Bureau of Economic Research. (2010). *U.S. Business Cycle Expansions and Contractions*. Retrieved January 3, 2020, from <https://www.nber.org/cycles.html>.

³ For White 18- to 24-year-olds, the percentage was also higher for males (11.2 percent) than for females (10.8 percent), though both percentages rounded to 11 percent.

⁴ For American Indian/Alaska Native 18- to 24-year-olds, this percentage was not measurably different between males (27 percent) and females (30 percent).

⁵ The narrower 20- to 24-year old range was chosen to reduce the number of high school students in this analysis.

⁶ 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.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 501.30

Related indicators and resources: [College Enrollment Rates](#); [Employment and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment](#); [Immediate College Enrollment Rate](#); [Youth and Young Adults Neither Enrolled in School nor Working](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]

Glossary: Gap; High school completer; Racial/ethnic group