

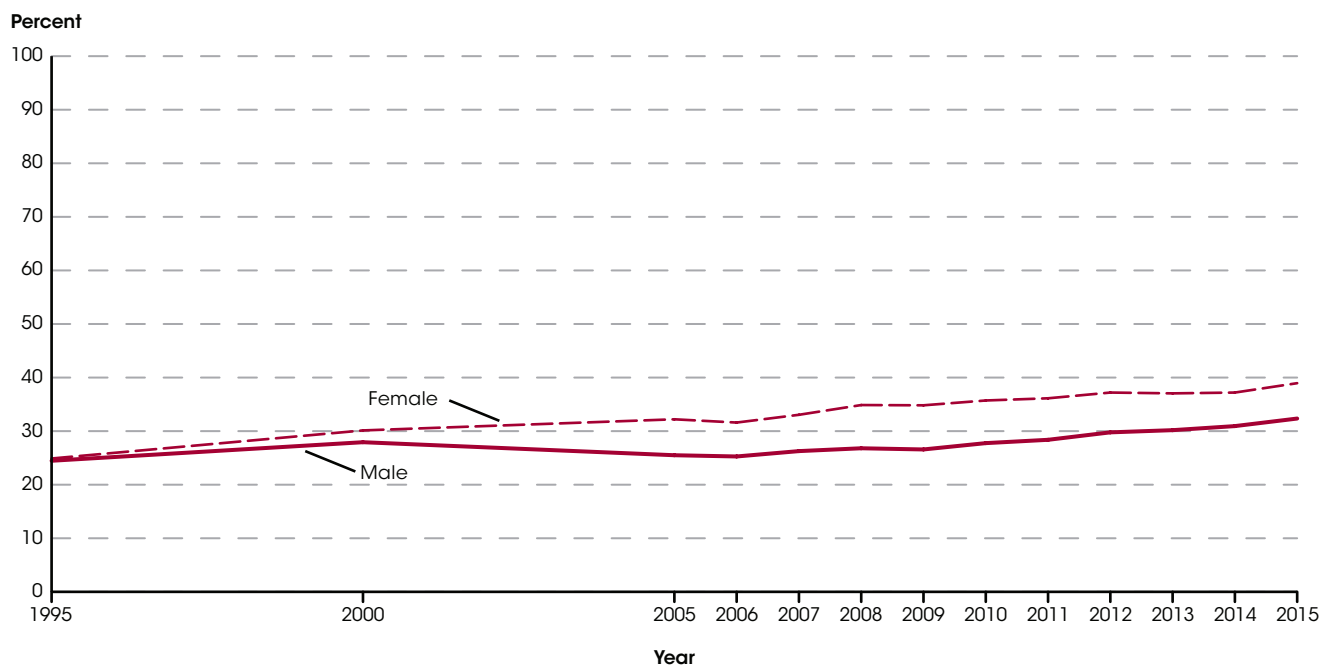
## Educational Attainment of Young Adults

*In 2015, some 36 percent of 25- to 29-year-olds had attained a bachelor's or higher degree. The percentage of White 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained this level of education increased from 1995 to 2015, as the size of the White-Black gap in the attainment of a bachelor's or higher degree widened from 13 to 22 percentage points and the size of the White-Hispanic gap widened from 20 to 27 percentage points.*

*Educational attainment* refers to the highest level of education completed (e.g., a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree, or a master's degree). Between 1995 and 2015, educational attainment rates among 25- to 29-year-olds increased. The percentage who had received at least a high school diploma or its equivalent increased from 87 to 91 percent, with most of the change occurring between

2005 and 2015. The percentage who had completed an associate's or higher degree increased from 33 percent in 1995 to 46 percent in 2015. Similarly, the percentage who had completed a bachelor's or higher degree increased from 25 percent in 1995 to 36 percent in 2015, and the percentage who had completed a master's or higher degree increased from 5 percent in 1995 to 9 percent in 2015.

**Figure 1. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who completed a bachelor's or higher degree, by sex: Selected years, 1995-2015**

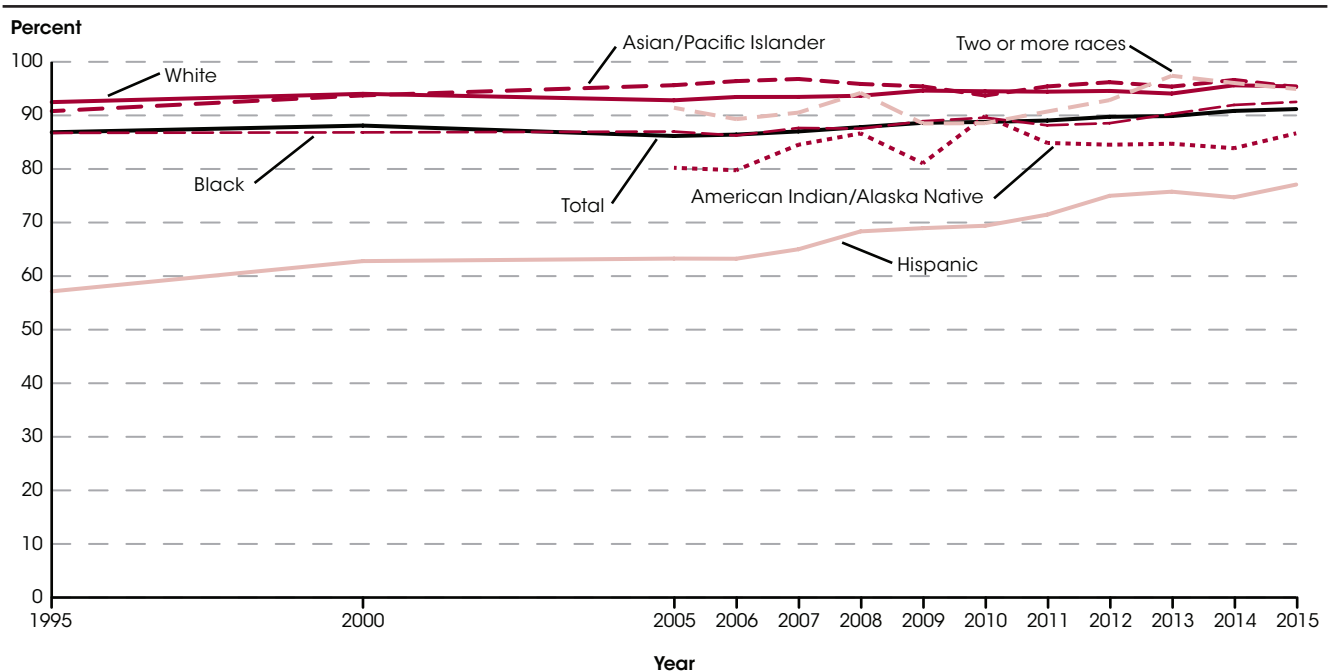


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, selected years, 1995-2015. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 104.20.

Since 2000, attainment rates among 25- to 29-year-olds have generally been higher for females than for males at each education level. Postsecondary degree attainment rates have increased more rapidly for females than for males since 1995. This pattern was observed across all levels of postsecondary education. For example, in 1995 the percentages of males and females who had completed an associate's or higher degree were not measurably different, but in 2015 some 50 percent of females had

completed an associate's or higher degree, compared with 41 percent of males. Similarly, in 1995 the percentages of male and female 25- to 29-year-olds who had completed a bachelor's or higher degree were not measurably different, but in 2015 the percentage of females (39 percent) who had attained this level of education was 7 percentage points higher than the percentage of males doing so (32 percent).

Figure 2. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who completed at least a high school diploma or its equivalent, by race/ethnicity: Selected years, 1995-2015



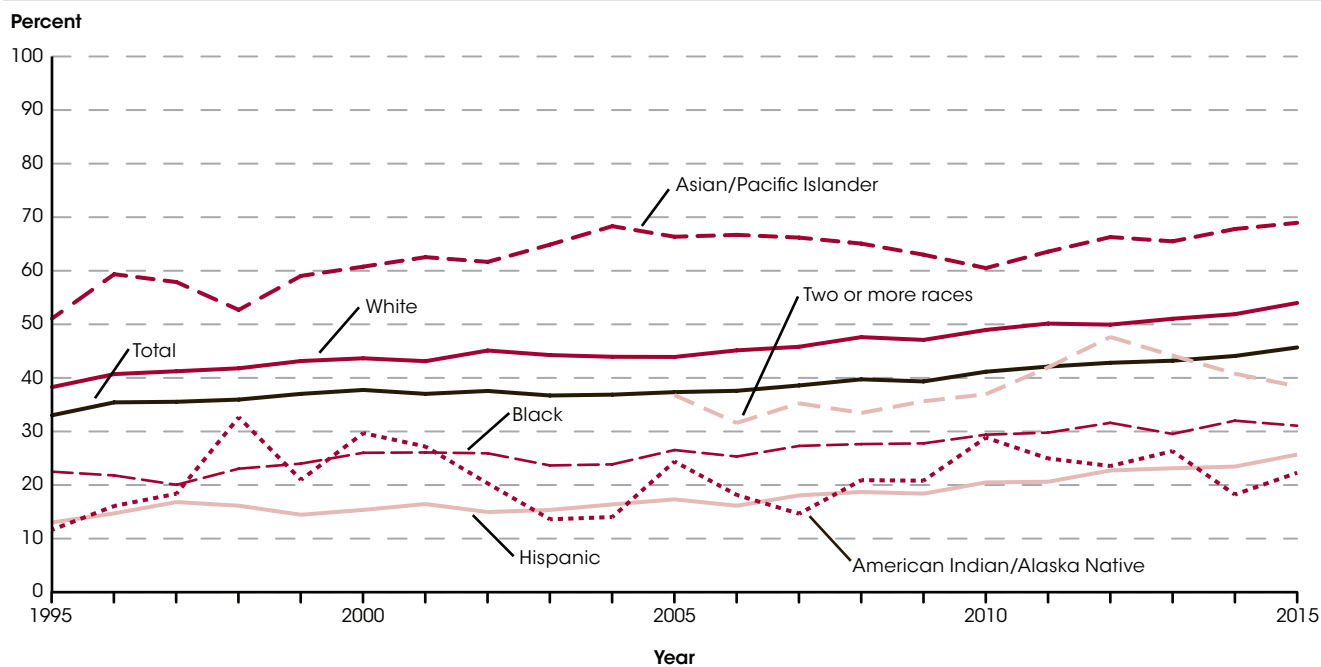
NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Prior to 2005, separate data on persons of Two or more races were not available; data for American Indians/Alaska Natives are not shown prior to 2005.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, selected years, 1995-2015. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 104.20.

Between 1995 and 2015, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who had completed at least a high school diploma or its equivalent increased for those who were White (from 92 to 95 percent), Black (from 87 to 93 percent), and Hispanic (from 57 to 77 percent). For those who were Hispanic, most of the change over this period (i.e., 14 percentage points out of the total 20 percentage point change) occurred between 2005 and 2015. The percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander 25- to 29-year-olds who had completed at least a high school diploma or its equivalent in 2015 (95 percent) was not measurably different from the percentage who had attained this education level in 1995. In 2015, some 87 percent of American Indians/Alaska Natives and 95 percent of persons of Two or more races had completed at least a

high school diploma or its equivalent; neither percentage was measurably different from its 2005 counterpart.<sup>1</sup>

Between 1995 and 2015, the percentage of White 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained at least a high school diploma or its equivalent remained higher than the percentages of Hispanic and Black 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained this education level. Over this period, the size of the White-Hispanic attainment gap at this education level narrowed from 35 to 18 percentage points, primarily due to an increase in percentage of Hispanic 25- to 29-year-olds who had completed at least a high school diploma. In contrast, the White-Black gap at this education level in 2015 (3 percentage points) did not differ measurably from the gap in 1995.

Figure 3. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who completed an associate's or higher degree, by race/ethnicity: 1995-2015

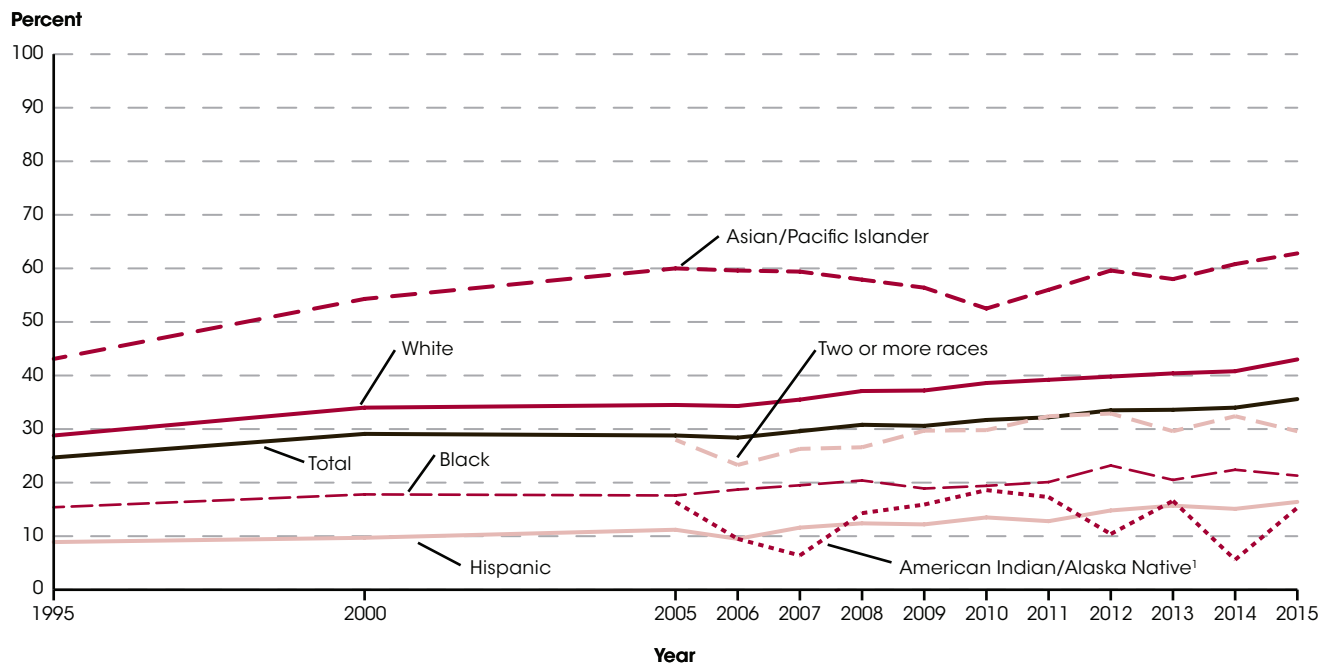


NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Prior to 2005, separate data on persons of Two or more races were not available.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 1995-2015. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 104.65.

From 1995 to 2015, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained an associate's or higher degree increased for those who were White (from 38 to 54 percent), Black (from 22 to 31 percent), Hispanic (from 13 to 26 percent), and Asian/Pacific Islander (from 51 to 69 percent). Neither the percentage of American Indians/Alaska Natives (22 percent) nor the percentage of persons of Two or more races (38 percent) who had attained an associate's or higher degree in 2015 were measurably different from

the corresponding percentages in 2005. Between 1995 and 2015, the gap between White and Black 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained an associate's or higher degree widened from 16 to 23 percentage points, primarily due to an increase in the percentage of White 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained this level of education. The White-Hispanic gap at this education level did not change measurably over this period; in 2015, the gap was 28 percentage points.

Figure 4. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who completed a bachelor's or higher degree, by race/ethnicity: Selected years, 1995-2015



<sup>1</sup> Interpret data for 2006, 2007, and 2014 with caution. The coefficients of variation (CVs) for these estimates are between 30 and 50 percent. NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Prior to 2005, separate data on persons of Two or more races were not available; data for American Indians/Alaska Natives are not shown prior to 2005. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, selected years, 1995-2015. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 104.20.

From 1995 to 2015, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a bachelor's or higher degree increased for those who were White (from 29 to 43 percent), Black (from 15 to 21 percent), Hispanic (from 9 to 16 percent), and Asian/Pacific Islander (from 43 to 63 percent). The 2015 percentages of American Indians/Alaska Natives (15 percent) and of persons of Two or more races (30 percent) who had attained a bachelor's or higher degree were not measurably different from their 2005 counterparts. Over the period from 1995 to 2015, the gap between White and Black 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a bachelor's or higher degree widened from 13 to 22 percentage points, and the gap between White and Hispanic 25- to 29-year-olds at this level widened from 20 to 27 percentage points.

From 1995 to 2015, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a master's or higher degree increased for those who were White (from 5 to 10 percent), Black (from 2 to 5 percent), Hispanic (from 2 to 3 percent), and Asian/Pacific Islander (from 11 to 22 percent). The gap between the percentages of White and Hispanic 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a master's or higher degree widened from 4 to 7 percentage points from 1995 to 2015. In contrast, the gap between the percentages of White and Black 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained this education level in 2015 (5 percentage points) was not measurably different from the gap in 1995.

**Endnotes:**

<sup>1</sup> In 1995, data on attainment rates at all education levels were not available for American Indians/Alaska Natives and persons of Two or more races.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, tables 104.20 and 104.65

**Related indicators:** International Educational Attainment, Annual Earnings of Young Adults, 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), High school completer, High school diploma, Master's degree, Postsecondary education, Racial/ethnic group