

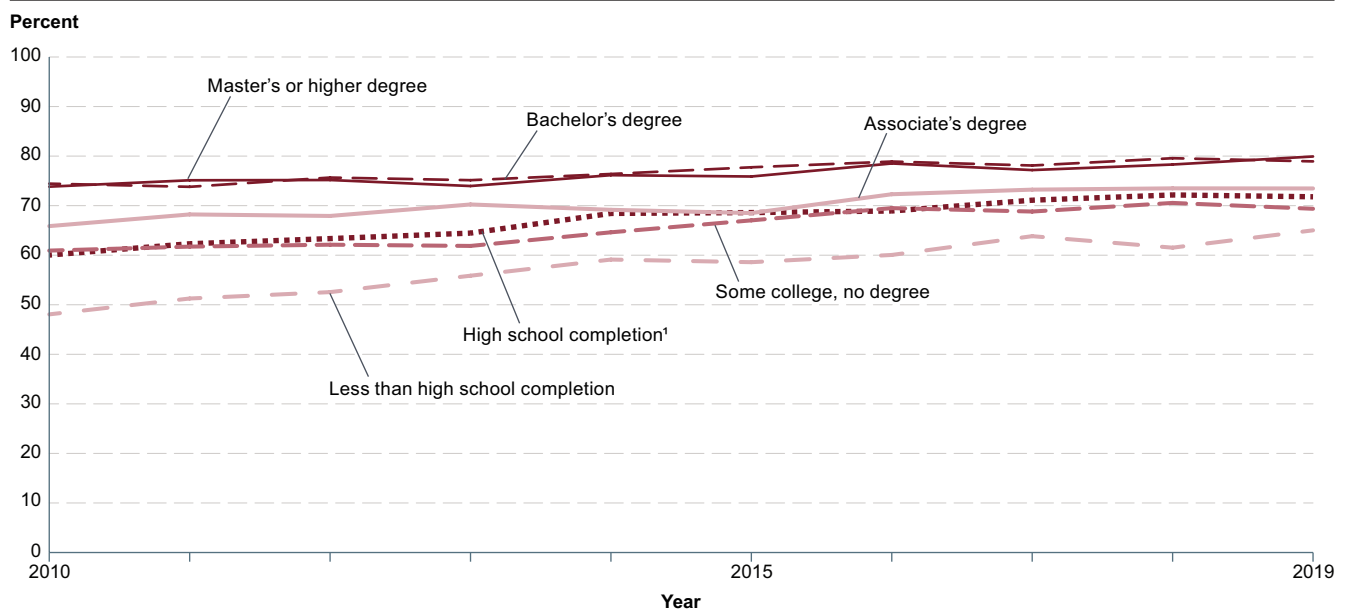
Annual Earnings by Educational Attainment

For 25- to 34-year-olds who worked full time, year round in 2019, higher educational attainment was associated with higher median earnings. This pattern was consistent from 2010 through 2019. For example, in 2019 the median earnings of those with a master’s or higher degree (\$70,000) were 26 percent higher than the earnings of those with a bachelor’s degree (\$55,700), and the median earnings of those with a bachelor’s degree were 59 percent higher than the earnings of those who completed high school (\$35,000).

This indicator examines the annual earnings of 25- to 34-year-olds who worked full time, year round (i.e., worked 35 or more hours per week for 50 or more weeks per year). Many people in this age group recently exited formal education and may be entering the workforce for the first time or transitioning from part-time to full-time work. In 2019, some 75 percent of those in this age group who were in the labor force¹ worked full time, year

round. This percentage was generally higher for those with higher levels of educational attainment. Levels of educational attainment refer to the highest levels of education attained. For example, 79 percent of those with a bachelor’s degree worked full time, year round in 2019, compared with 72 percent of those who completed high school (those with only a high school diploma or an equivalency credential such as a GED) in this age group.

Figure 1. Percentage of 25- to 34-year-olds in the labor force who worked full time, year round, by educational attainment: 2010 through 2019



¹ Includes equivalency credentials, such as the GED.

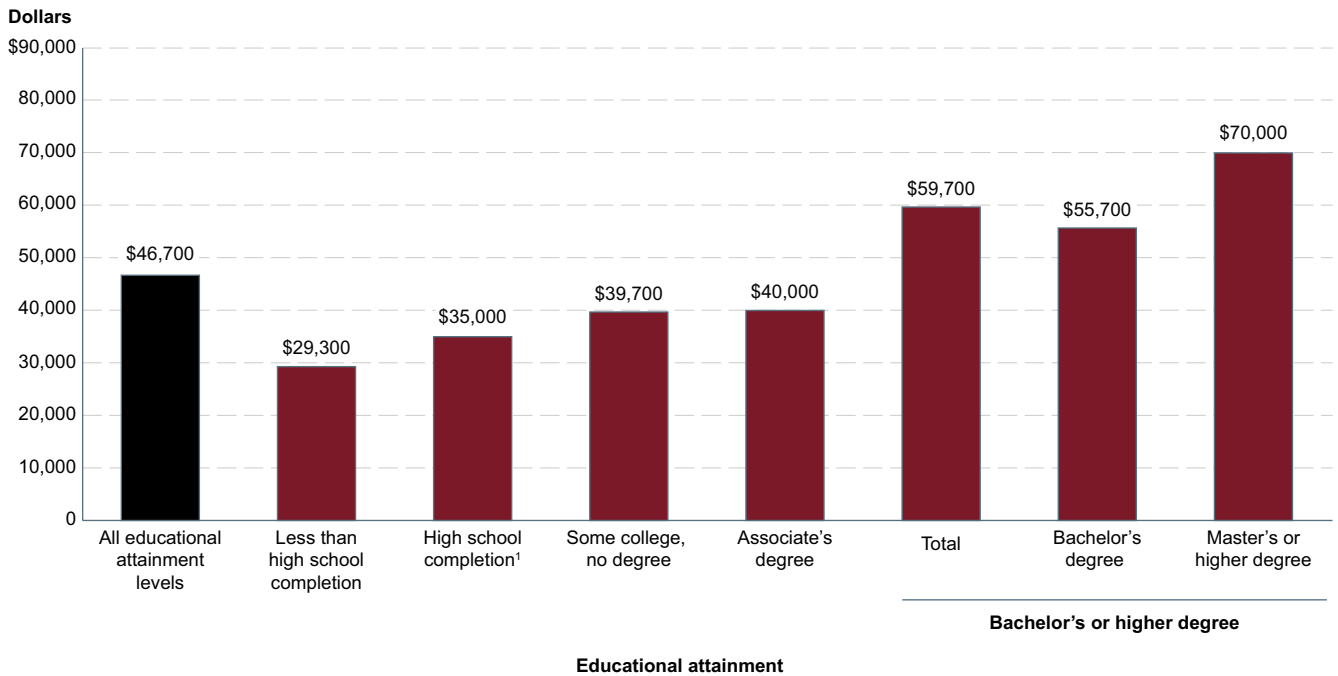
NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities) and military barracks. *Full-time, year-round* workers are those who worked 35 or more hours per week for 50 or more weeks per year. The labor force refers to the population who reported working or looking for work in the given year. Caution should be used when comparing 2019 estimates to those of earlier years due to the impact that the coronavirus pandemic had on interviewing and response rates. For additional information about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the March CPS data collection, please see <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsmar20.pdf>.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2011 through 2020; and previously unpublished tabulations. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 502.30.

Between 2010 and 2019, the percentages of 25- to 34-year-olds in the labor force who worked full time, year round increased for every level of educational attainment.² During this period, the percentages of 25- to 34-year olds in the labor force who worked full time, year round increased among those who completed less than high school (from 48 to 65 percent), those who completed

high school (from 60 to 72 percent), and those with some college but no degree (from 61 to 69 percent). Similarly, between 2010 and 2019 the corresponding percentages also increased among those with an associate’s degree (from 66 to 73 percent), those with a bachelor’s degree (from 74 to 79 percent), and those with a master’s or higher degree (from 74 to 80 percent).

Figure 2. Median annual earnings of full-time, year-round workers ages 25–34, by educational attainment: 2019



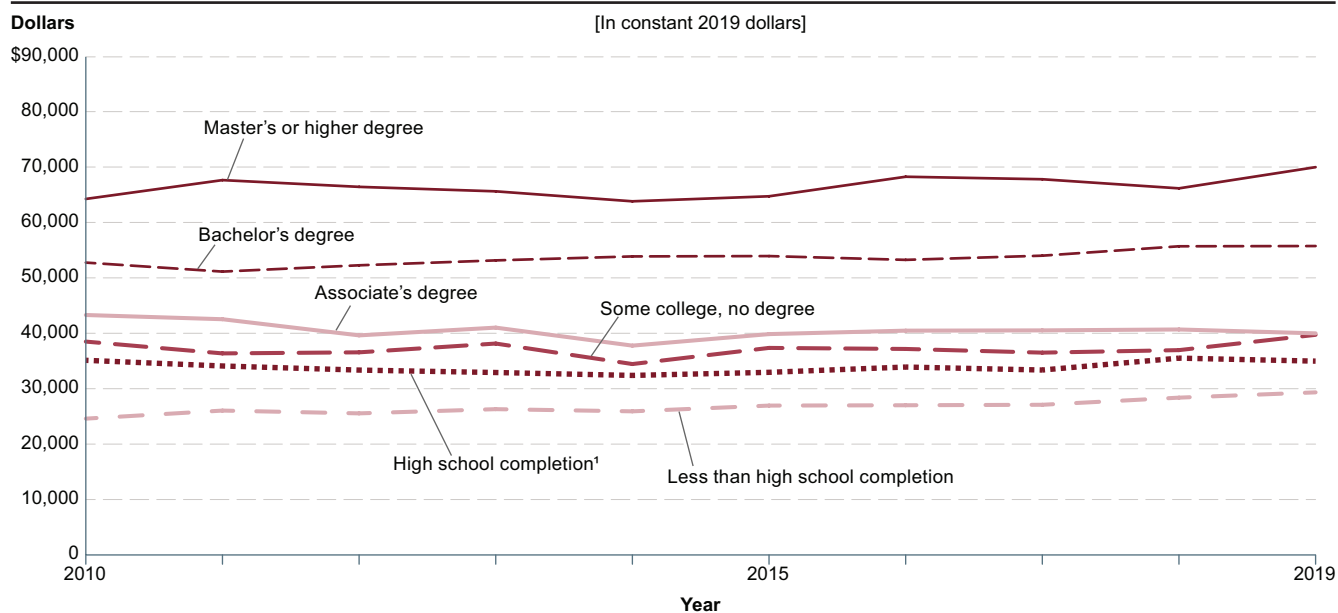
¹ Includes equivalency credentials, such as the GED.

NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities) and military barracks. *Full-time, year-round* workers are those who worked 35 or more hours per week for 50 or more weeks per year.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2020. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 502.30.

For 25- to 34-year-olds who worked full time, year round, higher educational attainment was associated with higher median earnings; this pattern was consistent within each year from 2010 through 2019. For example, within 2019, the median earnings of those with a master’s or higher degree were \$70,000, some 26 percent higher than the earnings of those with a bachelor’s degree (\$55,700). In the same year, the median earnings of those

with a bachelor’s degree were 59 percent higher than the earnings of those who completed high school (\$35,000), and the median earnings of high school were 19 percent higher than the earnings of those who completed less than high school (\$29,300). This pattern of higher earnings associated with higher levels of educational attainment also held for both males and females, as well as for those who were White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian.³

Figure 3. Median annual earnings of full-time, year-round workers ages 25–34, by educational attainment: 2010 through 2019

¹ Includes equivalency credentials, such as the GED.

NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities) and military barracks. *Full-time, year-round* workers are those who worked 35 or more hours per week for 50 or more weeks per year. Earnings are presented in constant 2019 dollars, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), to eliminate inflationary factors and to allow for direct comparison across years. Caution should be used when comparing 2019 estimates to those of earlier years due to the impact that the coronavirus pandemic had on interviewing and response rates. For additional information about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the March CPS data collection, please see <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsmar20.pdf>.

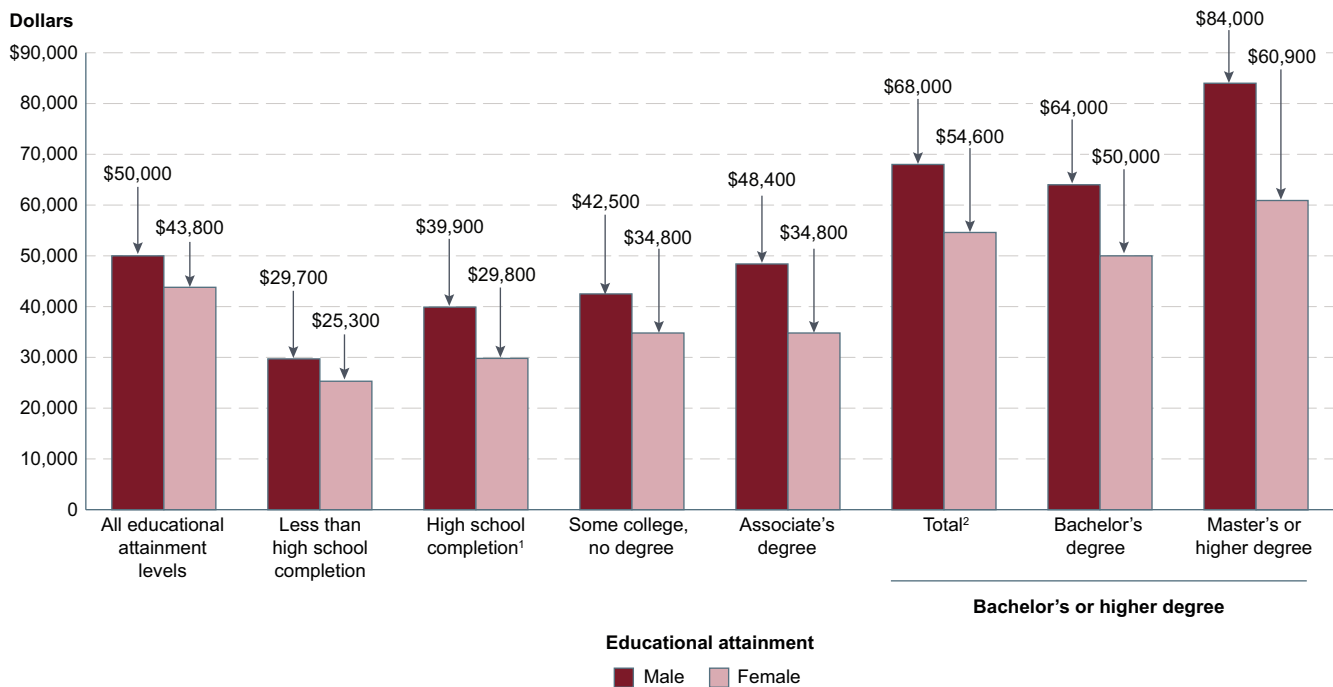
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2011 through 2020; and previously unpublished tabulations. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 502.30.

The median earnings (in constant 2019 dollars)⁴ of 25- to 34-year-olds who worked full time, year round were higher in 2019 than 2010 for those who completed less than high school (\$29,300 vs. \$24,600), those with a bachelor's degree (\$55,700 vs. \$52,800), and those with a master's or higher degree (\$70,000 vs. \$64,200). However, the median earnings were lower in 2019 than 2010 for those who completed high school (\$35,000 vs. \$35,100) and those with an associate's degree (\$40,000 vs. 43,300). The median earnings of those with some college but no degree did not differ measurably between these two years.

The difference in median earnings (in constant 2019 dollars) between 25- to 34-year-olds who only completed high school and those who completed less than high school was narrower in 2019 than 2010. In 2010, the

median earnings of those who completed high school were \$10,500 higher than the median earnings of those who completed less than high school; in 2019, this difference was \$5,600. The narrower gap in 2019 was primarily due to the increase in earnings for those who completed less than high school. In contrast, the difference in median earnings between individuals with a bachelor's degree and those who completed high school was larger in 2019 than 2010. In 2010, the median earnings of those with a bachelor's degree were \$17,600 higher than the median earnings of those who completed high school; in 2019, this difference was \$20,800. The larger gap in 2019 was primarily due to the increase in earnings for those with a bachelor's degree. The difference in median earnings of individuals with a master's or higher degree and those with a bachelor's degree did not differ measurably between 2019 and 2010.

Figure 4. Median annual earnings of full-time, year-round workers ages 25–34, by educational attainment and sex: 2019



¹ Includes equivalency credentials, such as the GED.

² Represents median annual earnings of full-time, year-round workers ages 25–34 with a bachelor's or higher degree.

NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities) and military barracks. Full-time, year-round workers are those who worked 35 or more hours per week for 50 or more weeks per year. 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, 2020. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 502.30.

In 2019, the median earnings of 25- to 34-year-old males who worked full time, year round were higher than the corresponding median earnings of their female peers at every level of educational attainment, ranging from 17 percent higher for those who completed less than high school to 39 percent higher for those with an associate's degree. For example, the median earnings of males in this age group with a master's or higher degree (\$84,000) were 38 percent higher than those of their female peers (\$60,900). The median earnings of males who completed high school in this age group (\$39,900) were 34 percent higher than those of their female peers (\$29,800).

In general, the median earnings of White 25- to 34-year-olds who worked full time, year round exceeded the

corresponding median earnings of their Black and Hispanic peers at most attainment levels in 2019. For instance, the median earnings for those with a bachelor's degree were \$59,600 for those who were White, compared with \$45,200 for their Hispanic peers and \$44,300 for their Black peers. Among those with a master's or higher degree, Asian full-time, year-round workers (\$85,500) had higher median earnings than their White (\$69,600) peers who in turn had higher earnings than their Hispanic (\$59,400) and Black (\$53,500) peers. However, among those who completed high school in this age group, those who were Asian (\$29,300) had lower median earnings than their White (\$38,500) and Hispanic (\$34,900) peers.

Endnotes:

¹ The labor force consists of all civilians who are employed or seeking employment. In 2019, some 85 percent of 25- to 34-year-olds were in the labor force.

² Caution should be used when comparing 2019 estimates to those of earlier years due to the impact that the coronavirus pandemic had on interviewing and response rates. For additional information about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on

the March CPS data collection, please see <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsmar20.pdf>.

³ Data for other racial/ethnic groups were not analyzed separately.

⁴ Constant dollars based on the Consumer Price Index, prepared by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 502.30

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

Glossary: Associate's degree; Bachelor's degree; Constant dollars; Consumer Price Index (CPI); Educational attainment (Current Population Survey); Employment status; High school completer; High school diploma; Master's degree; Median earnings; Racial/ethnic group