

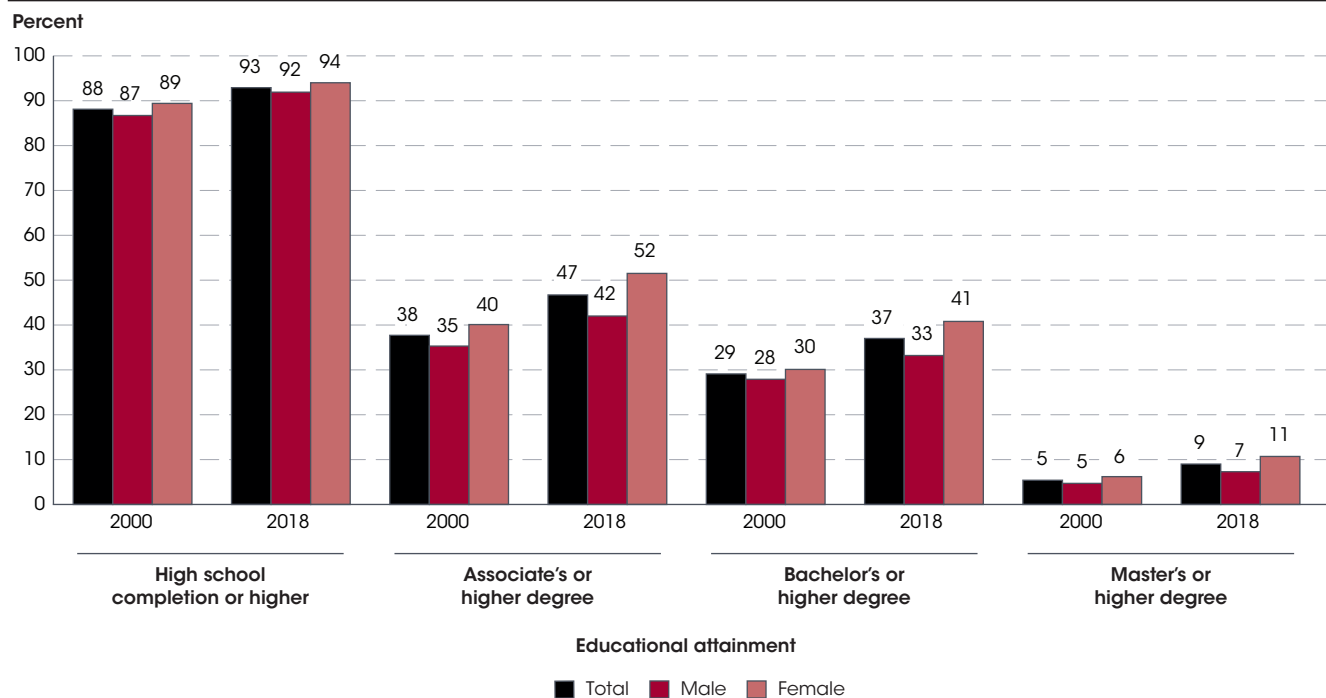
## Educational Attainment of Young Adults

*Educational attainment rates for 25- to 29-year-olds increased at all levels between 2000 and 2018. During this time, the percentage with high school completion or higher increased from 88 to 93 percent, the percentage with an associate's or higher degree increased from 38 to 47 percent, the percentage with a bachelor's or higher degree increased from 29 to 37 percent, and the percentage with a master's or higher degree increased from 5 to 9 percent.*

*Educational attainment* refers to the level of education completed (reported here as high school completion or higher,<sup>1</sup> an associate's or higher degree, a bachelor's or higher degree, or a master's or higher degree). Between 2000 and 2018, educational attainment rates among 25- to 29-year-olds increased at each attainment level. During this time, the percentage with high school

completion or higher increased from 88 to 93 percent, the percentage with an associate's or higher degree increased from 38 to 47 percent, the percentage with a bachelor's or higher degree increased from 29 to 37 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 2018**



NOTE: High school completion includes those 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 2018. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2018*, table 104.20.

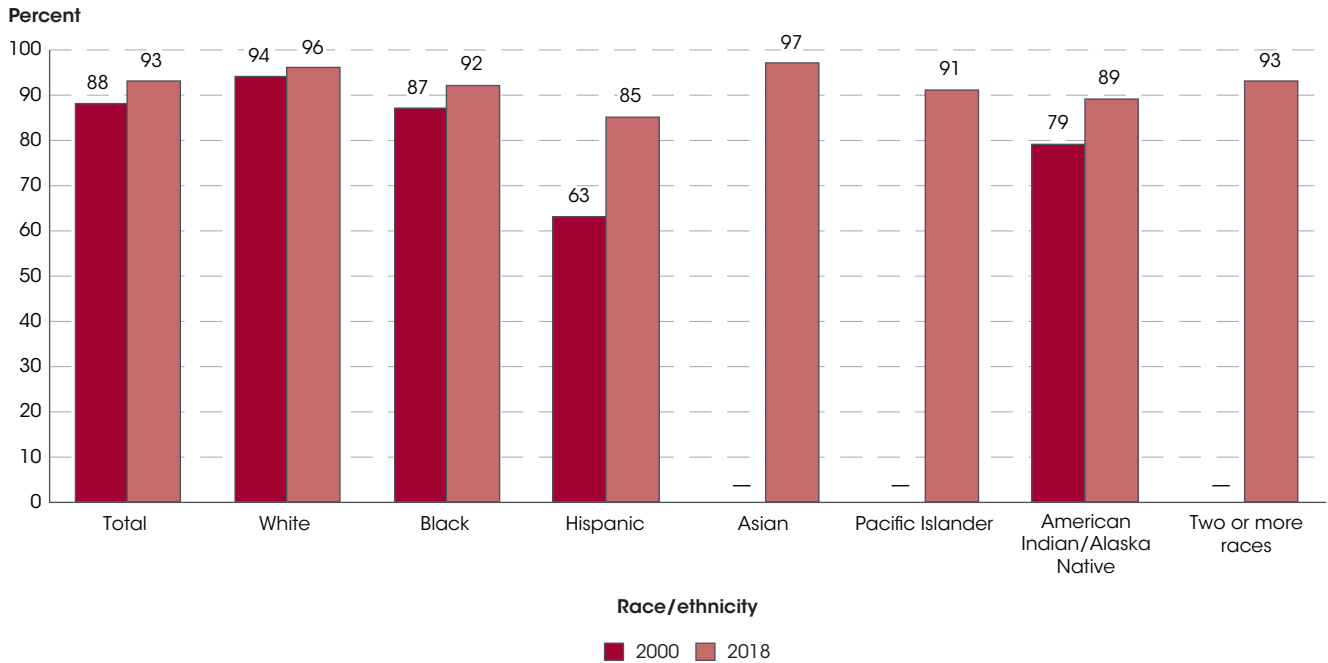
Between 2000 and 2018, attainment rates increased for both female and male 25- to 29-year-olds across all education levels. During this period, attainment rates for 25- to 29-year-olds were generally higher for females than for males, and the difference between the attainment rates for 25- to 29-year-old females and males (also referred to in this indicator as the gender gap) widened at all attainment levels, except for the high school completion or higher level. For example, the gender gap in the

percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a bachelor's or higher degree widened from 2 percentage points in 2000 to 8 percentage points in 2018. Similarly, at the master's or higher degree level, the gender gap widened from 1 percentage point in 2000 to 3 percentage points in 2018. However, the gender gap at the high school completion or higher level showed no measurable change between 2000 and 2018.

Gender gaps in attainment rates were observed across racial/ethnic groups in 2018. For White and Black 25- to 29-year-olds, attainment rates were higher for females than for males at most education levels in 2018. For example, for Black 25- to 29-year-olds, the gender gap was 7 percentage points both at the associate's or higher degree level and at the bachelor's or higher degree level. The only exception was that there was no measurable gender gap in high school completion or higher for White or Black 25- to 29-year-olds. In addition, for Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native 25- to 29-year-olds,

attainment rates were higher for females than for males in 2018 at most education levels. For example, for Hispanic 25- to 29-year-olds, the gender gap was 4 percentage points at the high school completion or higher level and 7 percentage points at the associate's or higher degree level. The only exception was the master's or higher degree level, at which there was no measurable gender gap in 2018 for Hispanic 25- to 29-year-olds.<sup>2</sup> For 25- to 29-year-olds who were Asian, Pacific Islander, and of Two or more races, there was no measurable gender gap at any education level in 2018.

**Figure 2. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds with high school completion or higher, by race/ethnicity: 2000 and 2018**



— Not available.

NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Separate data on Asians, Pacific Islanders, and persons of Two or more races were not available in 2000. Data on Asians, Pacific Islanders, and persons of Two or more races were for 2003. High school completion includes those who graduated from high school with a diploma as well as those who completed high school through equivalency programs, such as a GED program.

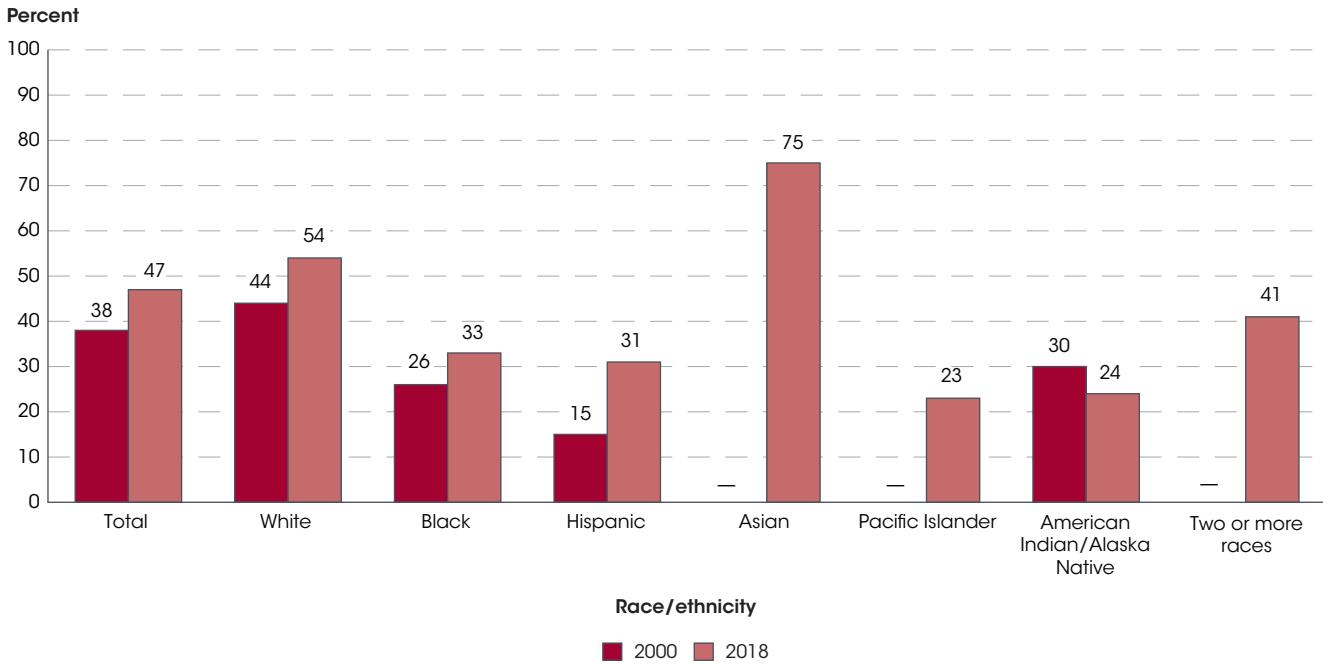
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2000 and 2018. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2018*, table 104.20.

In 2018, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds with high school completion or higher was higher for those who were Asian (97 percent) and White (96 percent) than for those who were Black (92 percent) and Hispanic (85 percent). Between 2000 and 2018, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds with high school completion or higher increased for those who were White (from 94 to 96 percent), Black (from 87 to 92 percent), and Hispanic (from 63 to 85 percent). The percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native 25- to 29-year-olds with high school completion or higher in 2018 (89 percent) was not measurably different from the percentage in 2000. Similarly, the percentages of 25- to 29-year-olds who were Asian (97 percent), of Two or more races (93 percent), and Pacific Islander (91 percent) with high school completion or higher in 2018 were not

measurably different from the corresponding percentages in 2003, the first year for which separate data on these three racial groups were available.

Between 2000 and 2018, the percentage of White 25- to 29-year-olds with high school completion or higher 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 level narrowed from 7 to 4 percentage points over this period. In addition, the White-Hispanic gap at this level narrowed from 31 to 10 percentage points, primarily due to the increase in the percentage of Hispanic 25- to 29-year-olds with high school completion or higher.

**Figure 3. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds with an associate's or higher degree, by race/ethnicity: 2000 and 2018**



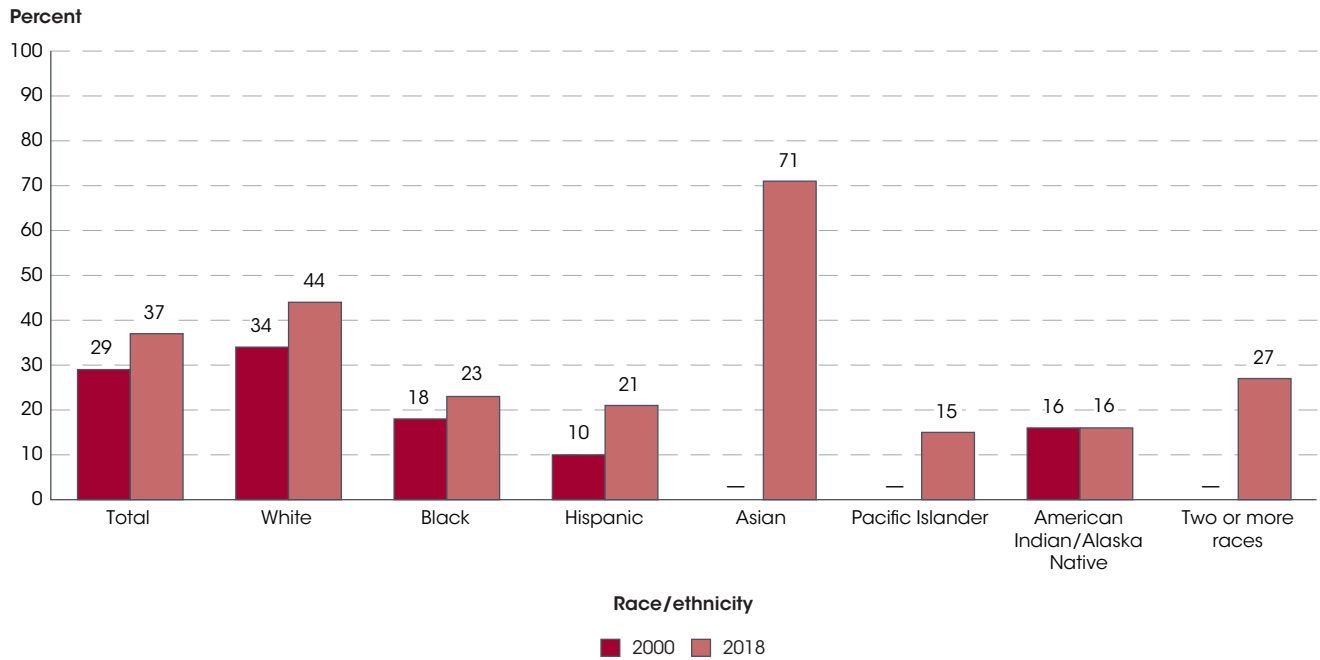
— Not available.  
 NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Separate data on Asians, Pacific Islanders, and persons of Two or more races were not available in 2000.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2000 and 2018. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2018*, table 104.20.

Similar to the pattern observed at the high school completion or higher level, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained an associate's or higher degree was higher for those who were Asian (75 percent) and White (54 percent) than for those who were Black (33 percent) and Hispanic (31 percent) in 2018. From 2000 to 2018, 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), and Hispanic (from 15 to 31 percent). In addition, the percentage of Asian 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained an associate's or higher degree increased from 2003 to 2018 (from 67 to 75 percent). The percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native 25- to 29-year-olds (24 percent) who had attained an associate's or higher degree in 2018 was not measurably

different from the percentage in 2000. Similarly, the percentages of 25- to 29-year-olds of Two or more races (41 percent) and of Pacific Islander 25- to 29-year-olds (23 percent) in 2018 with an associate's or higher degree were not measurably different from the corresponding percentages 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 2018 (21 percentage points) was not measurably different from the corresponding gap in 2000, while the gap between the percentages of White and Hispanic 25- to 29-year-olds with an associate's or higher degree in 2018 (23 percentage points) was smaller than the corresponding gap in 2000 (28 percentage points).

**Figure 4. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds with a bachelor's or higher degree, by race/ethnicity: 2000 and 2018**



— Not available.  
NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Separate data on Asians, Pacific Islanders, and persons of Two or more races were not available in 2000. 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, 2000 and 2018. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2018*, table 104.20.

In 2018, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a bachelor's or higher degree was higher for Asian 25- to 29-year-olds (71 percent) than 25- to 29-year-olds of any other racial/ethnic group. In addition, the percentage was higher for those who were White (44 percent) than for those who were Black (23 percent) and Hispanic (21 percent). From 2000 to 2018, 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 44 percent), Black (from 18 to 23 percent), and Hispanic (from 10 to 21 percent). The percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a bachelor's or higher degree in 2018 (16 percent) was not measurably different from the percentage in 2000. Similarly, the percentages of Asian 25- to 29-year-olds (71 percent), 25- to 29-year-olds of Two or more races (27 percent), and Pacific Islander 25- to 29-year-olds (15 percent) who had attained a bachelor's or higher degree in 2018 were not measurably different from the corresponding percentages in 2003.

The gap between the percentages of White and Black 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a bachelor's or higher degree in 2018 (21 percentage points) was greater than the corresponding gap in 2000 (16 percentage points), while the gap between the percentages of White and Hispanic 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a bachelor's or higher degree in 2018 (23 percentage points) was not measurably different from the corresponding gap in 2000.

Similar to the pattern observed at the bachelor's or higher degree level, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a master's or higher degree was higher for Asian 25- to 29-year-olds (29 percent) than for 25- to 29-year-olds of any other racial/ethnic group in 2018. In addition, the percentage was higher for those who were White (10 percent) than for those who were Black (5 percent), Hispanic (3 percent), and of Two or more races (3 percent).<sup>3</sup> From 2000 to 2018, 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) and Hispanic (from 2 to 3 percent). In addition, the percentage of Asian 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a master's or higher degree increased from 2003 to 2018 (from 19 to 29 percent). The percentage of Black 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a master's or higher degree in 2018 (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 2018 (3 percent) was not measurably different from the percentage in 2003.

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 6 percentage points between 2000 and 2018. The White-Hispanic gap at the master's or higher degree attainment level also widened during this time, from 4 to 7 percentage points.

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**Endnotes:**

<sup>1</sup> High school completion includes those who graduated from high school with a diploma as well as those who completed high school through equivalency programs, such as a GED program.  
<sup>2</sup> American Indian/Alaska Native 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a master's or higher degree are not included in this comparison because the sample size in 2018 was too small to provide reliable estimates.

<sup>3</sup> American Indian/Alaska Native and Pacific Islander 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a master's or higher degree are not included in this comparison because sample sizes were too small to provide reliable estimates.

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**Reference table:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2018*, 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*]

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**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