

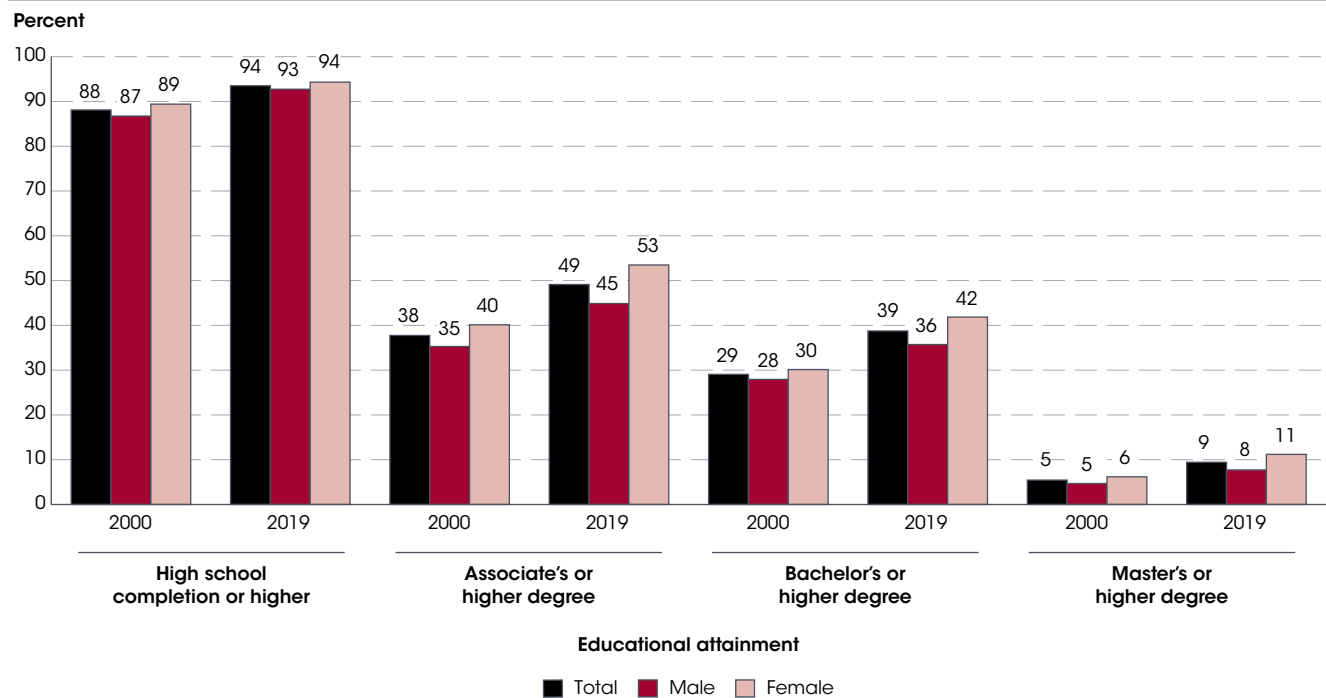
Educational Attainment of Young Adults

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 6 percentage points in 2019 with a higher percentage of females obtaining bachelor's or higher degrees than males.

Educational attainment refers to the level of education completed (reported here as high school completion or higher,¹ an associate's or higher degree, a bachelor's or higher degree, or a master's or higher degree). Between 2000 and 2019, 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 94 percent, the percentage with an associate's or higher degree increased from 38 to 49 percent, the percentage with a bachelor's or higher degree increased from 29 to 39 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 2019



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. 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 2019. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 104.20.

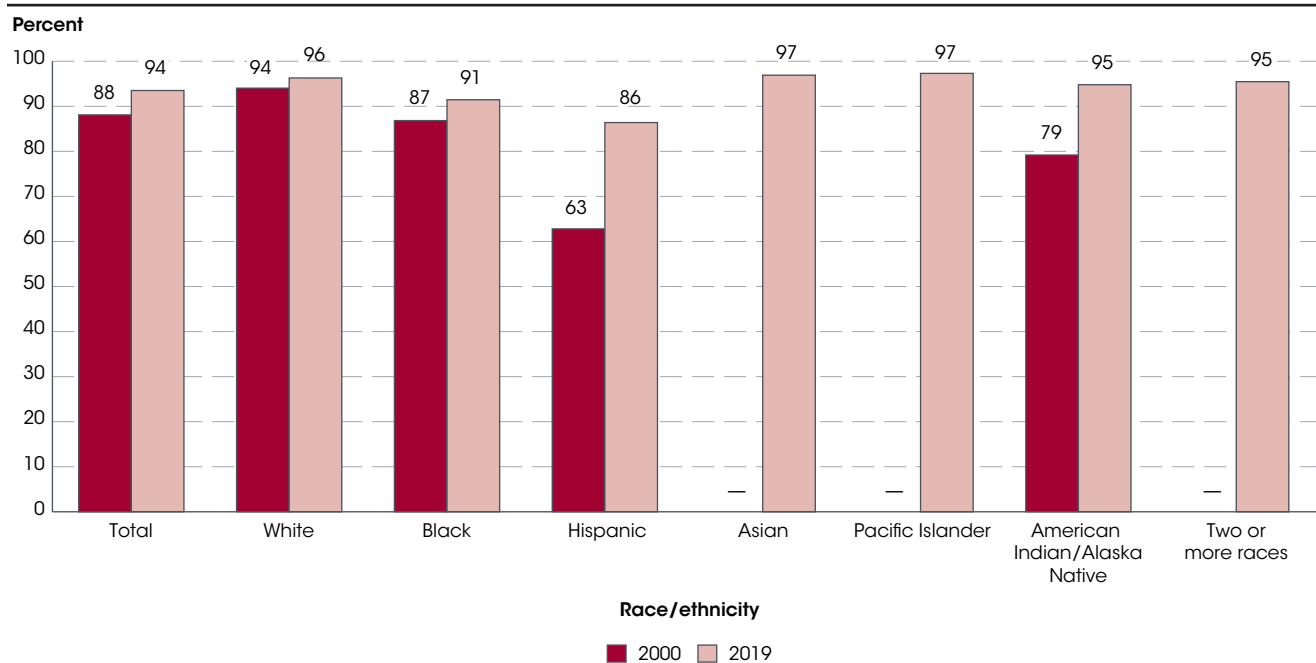
Between 2000 and 2019, educational attainment rates increased for both female and male 25- to 29-year-olds across all attainment levels. During this period, attainment rates for this age group were generally higher for females than for males, and the difference between the attainment rates for females 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, at the bachelor's or higher degree level, the gender gap widened from 2 percentage points in 2000 to 6 percentage points in 2019. Similarly, at the master's or higher degree level, the gender gap widened from 1 percentage point in 2000 to 3 percentage points in 2019. However, the gender gap at the high school completion or higher level in 2019 (2 percentage points) was not measurably different from the gap in 2000.

Gender gaps in educational attainment rates were observed across racial/ethnic groups in 2019. For White and Hispanic 25- to 29-year-olds, attainment rates were higher for females than for males at most attainment levels in 2019. For example, the Hispanic gender gap was 9 percentage points at the associate’s or higher degree level and 5 percentage points at the bachelor’s or higher degree level. The only exception was that there was no measurable gender gap at the high school completion or

higher level for White 25- to 29-year-olds. In addition, the Black attainment rates were 5 percentage points higher for females than for males in 2019 at the master’s or higher degree level, and for those who were American Indian/Alaska Native, attainment rates were 14 percentage points higher for females than males at the bachelor’s or higher degree level.² There was no measurable gender gap at any attainment level in 2019 for those who were Asian and for those of Two or more races.³

Figure 2. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds with high school completion or higher, by race/ethnicity: 2000 and 2019



— Not available.

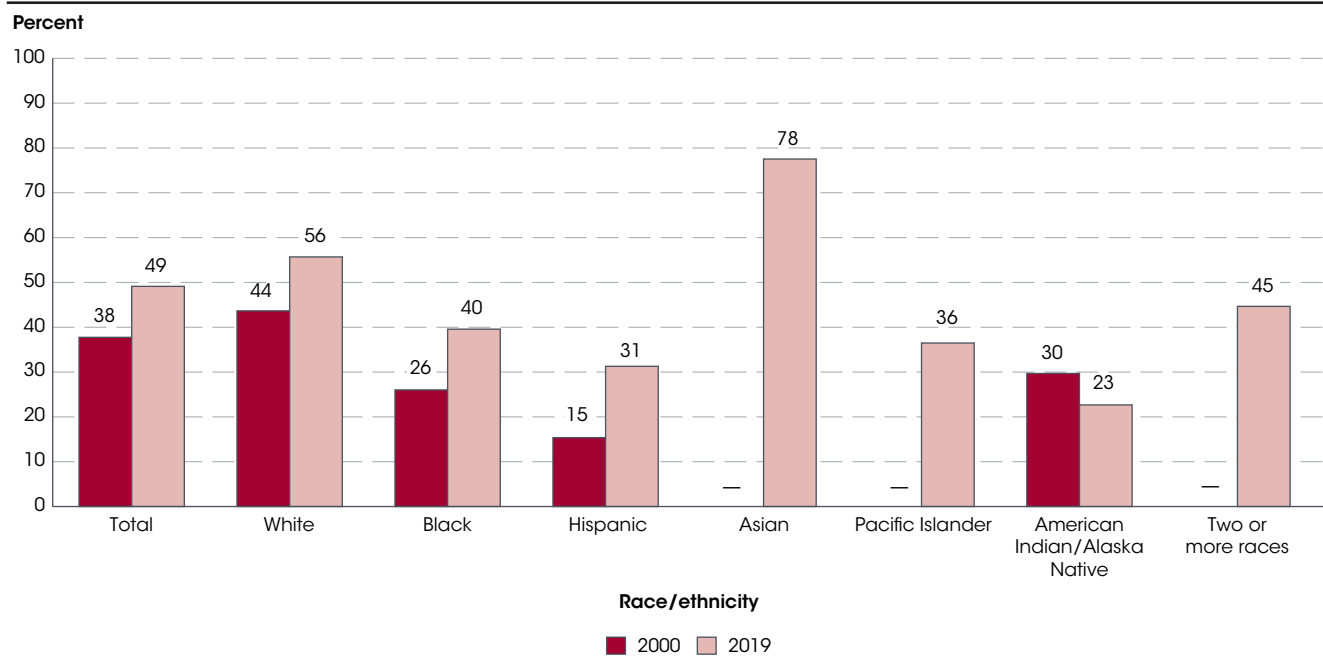
NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Separate data on those who were Asian, Pacific Islander, and of Two or more races were not available in 2000. In 2000, individuals of Two or more races were required to select a single race category. High school completion includes those who graduated from high school with a diploma as well as those who completed high school through equivalency programs, such as a GED program. 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 2019. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 104.20.

In 2019, 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 (91 percent) and Hispanic (86 percent). Between 2000 and 2019, the percentages with high school completion or higher increased for those who were White (from 94 to 96 percent), Black (from 87 to 91 percent), Hispanic (from 63 to 86 percent), and American Indian/Alaska Native (from 79 to 95 percent). In addition, the percentage of Pacific Islander 25- to 29-year-olds with high school completion or higher was higher in 2019 (97 percent) than in 2003 (82 percent), the first year for which separate data on individuals who were Pacific Islander, Asian, and of Two or more races were available. The percentages who were Asian (97 percent)

and of Two or more races (95 percent) with high school completion or higher in 2019 were not measurably different from the corresponding percentages in 2003.

Between 2000 and 2019, 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 educational attainment level. The White-Black attainment gap at this level in 2019 (5 percentage points) was not measurably different from the corresponding gap in 2000. However, 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 2019



— Not available.

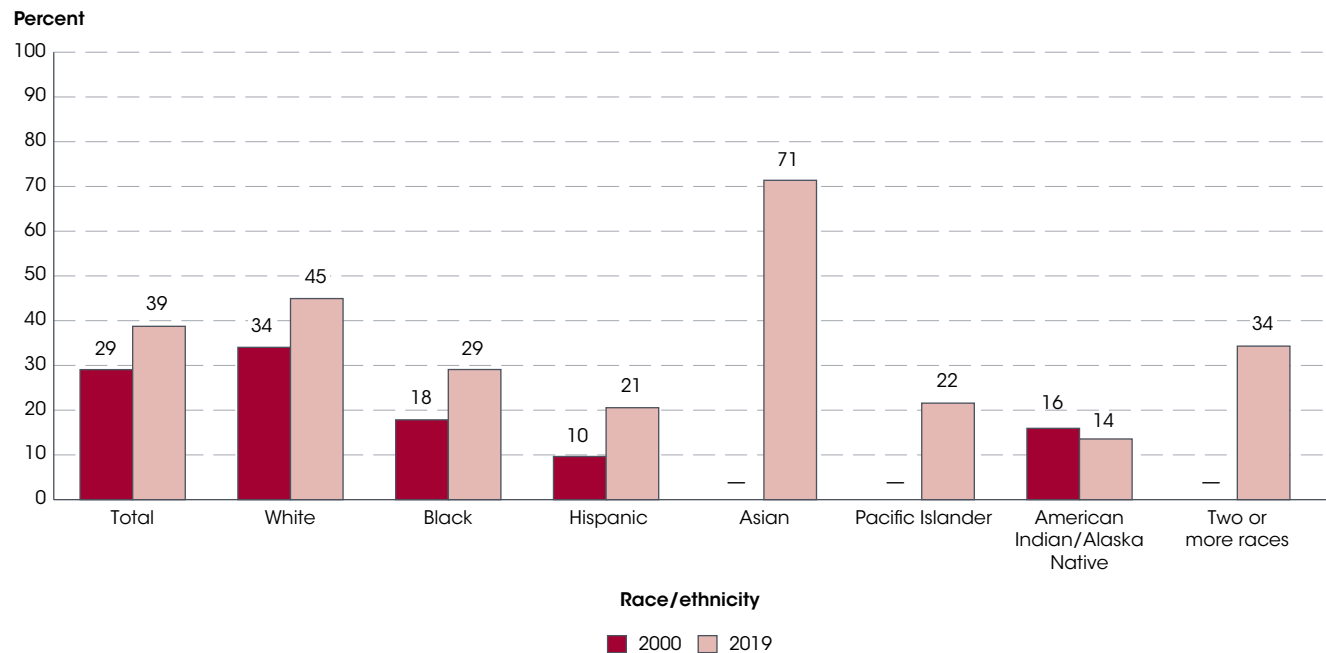
NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Separate data on those who were Asian, Pacific Islander, and of Two or more races were not available in 2000. In 2000, individuals of Two or more races were required to select a single race category.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2000 and 2019. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, 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 (78 percent) and White (56 percent) than for those of any other racial/ethnic group in 2019. In addition, the percentage was higher for those who were Black (40 percent) than for those who were Hispanic (31 percent) and American Indian/Alaska Native (23 percent). From 2000 to 2019, the percentages who had attained an associate's or higher degree increased for those who were White (from 44 to 56 percent), Black (from 26 to 40 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 2019 (from 67 to 78 percent). The percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native 25- to 29-year-olds (23 percent) who had attained

an associate's or higher degree in 2019 was not measurably different from the percentage in 2000. Similarly, for those who were Pacific Islander or of Two or more races, the percentages with an associate's or higher degree in 2019 (36 percent and 45 percent, respectively) 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 2019 (16 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 2019 (24 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 2019



— Not available.

NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Separate data on those who were Asian, Pacific Islander, and of Two or more races were not available in 2000. In 2000, individuals of Two or more races were required to select a single race category. 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 2019. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 104.20.

In 2019, among 25- to 29-year-olds, the percentages who had attained a bachelor's or higher degree were higher for those who were Asian (71 percent) and White (45 percent) than for those of any other racial/ethnic group. From 2000 to 2019, the percentages of 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a bachelor's or higher degree increased for those who were White (from 34 to 45 percent), Black (from 18 to 29 percent), and Hispanic (from 10 to 21 percent). Similarly, the percentages of 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a bachelor's or higher degree increased between 2003 and 2019 for those who were Asian (from 62 to 71 percent) and of Two or more races (from 22 to 34 percent). The percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a bachelor's or higher degree in 2019 (14 percent) was not measurably different from the percentage in 2000, and the percentage of Pacific Islander 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a bachelor's or higher degree in 2019 (22 percent) was not measurably different from the percentage in 2003.

The gaps between the percentages of White and Black 25- to 29-year-olds and between the percentages of White and Hispanic 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a bachelor's or higher degree in 2019 (16 percentage points and 24 percentage points, respectively) were not measurably different from the corresponding gaps 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 those of any other racial/ethnic group in 2019.⁴ In addition, the percentage was higher for those who were White (10 percent) than for those who were Black (6 percent) and Hispanic (3 percent). From 2000 to 2019, the percentages who had attained a master's or higher degree increased for those who were White (from 6 to 10 percent), Black (from 4 to 6 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 2019 (from 19 to 29 percent). The percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds of Two or more races with a master's or higher degree in 2019 (10 percent) was also higher than the percentage in 2003 (4 percent).

The gap between the percentages of White and Black 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a master's or higher degree in 2019 (4 percentage points) was not measurably different from the gap in 2000. However, the White-Hispanic gap at the master's or higher degree level widened during this time, from 4 to 7 percentage points.

Endnotes:

¹ 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.

² 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 2019 was too small to provide reliable estimates.

³ In 2019, the sample of male Pacific Islander 25- to 29-year-olds was too small to provide reliable comparisons by gender at any level of educational attainment.

⁴ 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 in 2019 were too small to provide reliable estimates.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 104.20; *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, 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*]

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